

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/012

**Church House, Church Road, Bardwell
BAR 074**

HER Information

Planning Application No: SE/07/1258

Date of Fieldwork: 26th November 2008 and 6th, 8th and 9th January 2009

Grid Reference: TL 9408 7356

Funding Body: Mr P Tew

Curatorial Officer: Dr. Jess Tipper

Project Officer: Mo Muldowney

Oasis Reference: suffolkc1_56221

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Summary

Multiple phases of monitoring were carried out on land to the rear of Church House, Bardwell, during which no medieval or earlier archaeological deposits were encountered. The excavated footing and drainage trenches instead revealed evidence for post-medieval pits and deposits, generally backfilled with or comprising demolition/construction material.

Additionally, part of the foundation wall of a previous extension to the property was identified, which was erected in the 19th century.

1. Introduction and methodology

A series of monitoring exercises was carried out at the rear of Church House, Church Road, Bardwell during November 2008 and January 2009. The work was commissioned by Mr P Tew and carried out in accordance with a Brief and Specification produced by Dr. Jess Tipper (SCCAS/CT) in order to fulfil the requirements of a planning application (SE/07/1258).

The development area lies at the top of a predominantly rectangular plot of land that slopes down gently south-westwards towards The Black Bourn river and covers an area of approximately 0.4ha. At the top of the plot, there is a plateau lying at approximately 30m OD, on which the present building sits.



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Figure 1. Site location (marked with red star)

Church House lies within the historic core of the medieval settlement of Bardwell and is located to the south-west of the medieval church (BAR 026) (Fig. 1) and south-east of the location of a medieval manor house and moat (BAR 005). Few finds have been identified this side of the village, but include a Saxon silver coin of Beonna, King of East Anglia (c. 760) and c.13th century carved stone and pillar bases from the fabric of a demolished house near the church (BAR 004).

The footing and drainage trenches in the proposed development area (Fig. 2) were excavated prior to the arrival of the archaeologist using a rubber-tracked 1.5 tonne mechanical excavator fitted with a narrow toothed ditching bucket. All the trenches were 0.45m wide but varied in depth depending on their function. In total, five trenches were excavated and monitored. The long drainage trench varied in depth between 0.6m at the south-west end and 0.7m at the north-east end. The rectangular trench was 5.7m long by 3.4m wide and the trench adjacent to the house was 5m long by 2.9m wide. Two additional drainage trenches were both 6m long. The sides and base of each trench were carefully examined by an experienced archaeologist and any features and/or deposits were recorded on site. A digital

colour photographic record of the excavations and, where appropriate, deposits/features was taken, supplemented by a GPS and hand-drawn plan and sections (1:10).

In addition, two returns of a wall were also examined and their position plotted using the GPS. A digital colour photographic record was also taken.

The site archive is kept in the main store of SCCAS at Bury St Edmunds under HER no. BAR 074 and a digital copy of the report was submitted to the Archaeological Data Service: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

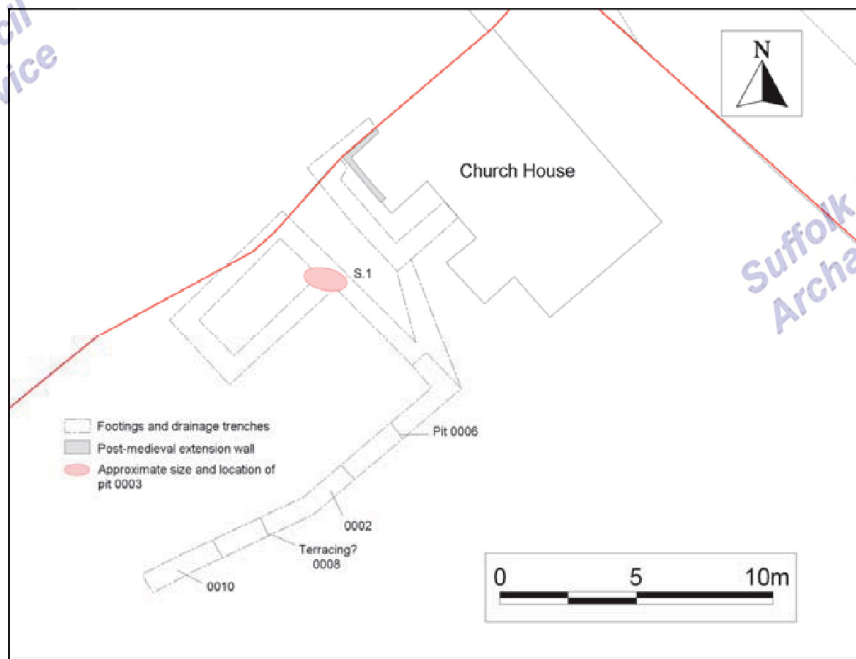
2. Results

Monitoring identified the remains of a post-medieval pit located in the east corner of the rectangular footing trench and a second possible pit in the long drainage trench leading towards The Black Bourn (Fig. 2). An abrupt change in the sequence of deposits observed in the long drainage trench may indicate an earlier terracing of the site.

Underlying all deposits and truncated by pit 0003 was the mid brownish yellow clay natural (0002) that contained frequent chalk and occasional flint. In some places the natural also contained lenses of sandy clay of the same colour. Subsoil (0010) was present on the site, but only at the south-west end of the long drainage trench. It was dark orange brown sandy silt and contained post-medieval and modern finds, including iron, glass, leather, brick and plastic. None of these finds were retained.

An abrupt vertical change at 8.3m from the north-east end of the long drainage trench from natural to mid brownish orange silt (0009) suggested the presence of a possible terracing cut (0008), which, at its south-west end overlay the subsoil deposit.

Rubble layer 0005 was located at the extreme north-east end of the long drainage trench. Only 2m of this light greyish yellow chalky clay deposit was visible. It was likely to have extended further to the south-west, but was truncated by possible pit



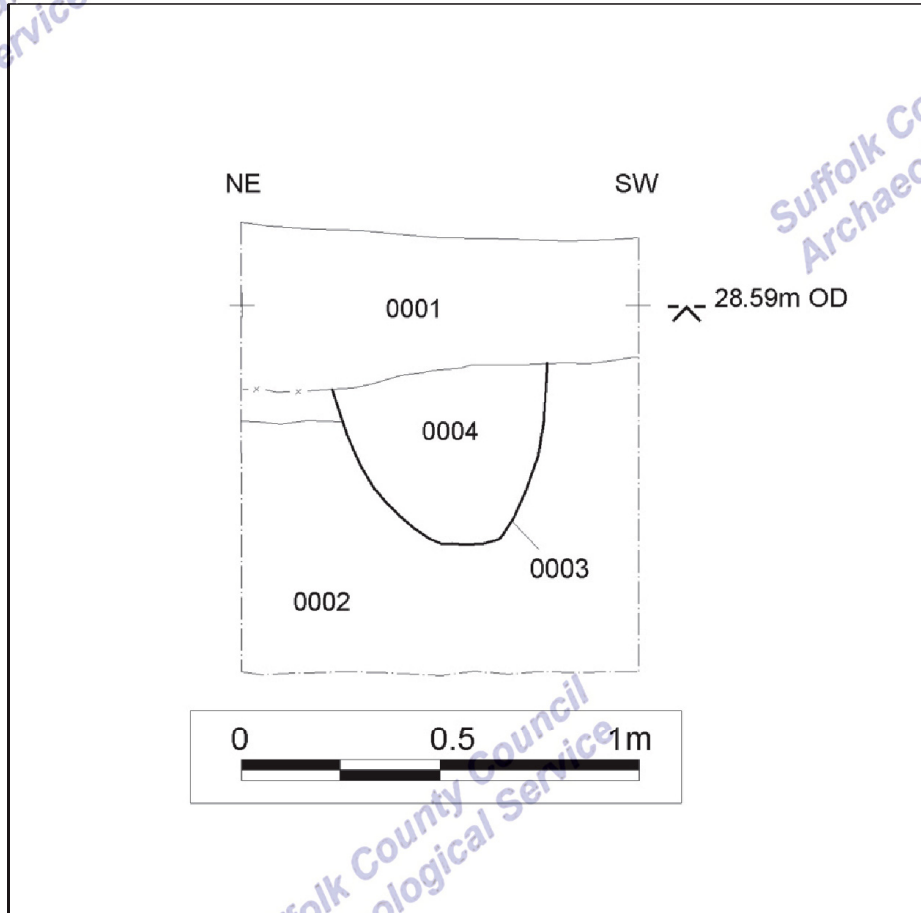
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Figure 2. Trench plan with outline of development area (red)

0006, which was located between 2m and 4.3m from the north-east end of the long drainage trench. The full profile of this pit was not visible as it was deeper than the trench (0.7m) but it had steeply sloping sides and was filled by 0007, mid brownish grey clay silt. Multiple sherds of TPW (transfer printed ware) were observed in the fill, in addition to glass and CBM fragments. All these finds strongly indicate that this pit was of post-medieval origin. Again, none of the finds were recovered.

Pit 0003 was probably oval – its full extent was not seen – and located in the east corner of the rectangular footing (Fig. 2). It was 0.55m wide by 0.45m deep and had a flat-based u-shape profile (Fig. 3). A single fill (0004) was observed that comprised light greyish yellow loose chalky clay. Occasional very small CBM (ceramic building material) fragments were observed but not collected.

Topsoil (0001) covered the entire site and was observed in all footing and drainage trenches. It comprised dark brown silty clay and varied between 0.24m and 0.42m thick and contained flint, CBM and post-medieval domestic rubbish, including TPW pottery sherds, iron fragments and steel cutlery. None of these finds were retained. Two additional short trenches (Fig. 2) that joined the long drainage trench to both rectangular footings contained the same post-medieval deposits already observed containing a similar array of post-medieval finds (not kept).



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Figure 3. Section 1, north-west facing (*JPEG version*)

Abutting the rear of Church House were the 1m deep remains of an extension erected in the post-medieval period (Fig. 2). The wall comprised two returns and was composed of irregularly coursed flint with a small amount of brick (Plate 1). Eight (visible) courses of brick formed the end of the wall where it abutted the main house. The walls measured 2.2m by 1.6m and had been truncated down to the present ground level.



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Plate 1. North-west facing external elevation of the post-medieval extension abutting the rear of Church House

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3. Discussion and Conclusion

Monitoring on land to the rear of Church House, Bardwell has demonstrated the presence of post-medieval construction/demolition layers and pits that were deposited during the last 250 years. They relate to the domestic occupation of the site over that time and the building debris in particular may relate to the construction and/or demolition of the small brick and flint extension on the rear corner of the property. All of the artefacts observed within the layers and in the features are domestic in origin and will almost certainly have been used in Church House itself.

Church House is a Listed Building (Grade II) of late 16th century origin, so it is perhaps surprising that no medieval deposits were encountered immediately behind the property. This absence may be accounted for however, by truncation in the post-medieval period, or because any medieval or earlier activity was undertaken away from the house. Whilst the evidence for possible terracing (0008) of the site in the long drainage trench was undated, it was overlain by post-medieval deposits and therefore it is not unreasonable - on the basis of the stratigraphic evidence - to postulate that this event could have taken place during the medieval period.

Mo Muldowney

March 2009