

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/118

**The Cromwell Inn, 76 High Street,
Lakenheath
LKH 318**

J. A. Craven

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HER Information

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Curatorial Officer: Dr Jess Tipper

Project Officer: J. A. Craven

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Digital report submitted to Archaeological Data Service:
<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of development at the site of the former Cromwell Inn, 76 High Street which lies in the centre of Lakenheath, opposite the parish church. A desk based assessment (Craven 2009) had demonstrated the potential for multi-period deposits to exist, in particular relating to the medieval history and development of the town.

The evaluation has principally identified evidence relating to the post-medieval use of the site with an occupation soil of 16th-18th century date being cut by later pits and sealed by a chalk yard surface that is broadly contemporary with the early history of the 19th century Cromwell Inn and associated coachhouse. A single posthole was identified that may relate to the earlier medieval history of the site at a depth of c.1m below groundlevel.

Due to the small scale of the development proposal, the depth of the potential deposits and the absence of any significant evidence of activity pre-dating the post-medieval period a suitable recommendation for a final stage of archaeological work as part of the mitigation strategy for the site is considered to be the monitoring of footing trenches once excavated.

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1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of development at the site of the former Cromwell Inn, 76 High Street, Lakenheath. The work was carried out at the request of Dr Jess Tipper (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team), following a desk based assessment of the site, to fulfil a planning condition on application F/2008/0636/FUL. The work was funded by the developer, Baker Nisbet Ltd.

The site, an area of approximately 912sqm, is centred at TL 7142 8270, in the parish of Lakenheath (Figs. 1 and 2). The village of Lakenheath lies on the south-east edge of the fens, now marked by the modern 'Cut-Off Channel'. The site lies in the centre of the town Conservation Area, forming part of the western road frontage to the High Street, opposite the graveyard of the Church of St Mary's, with the Cut-Off Channel to its rear.

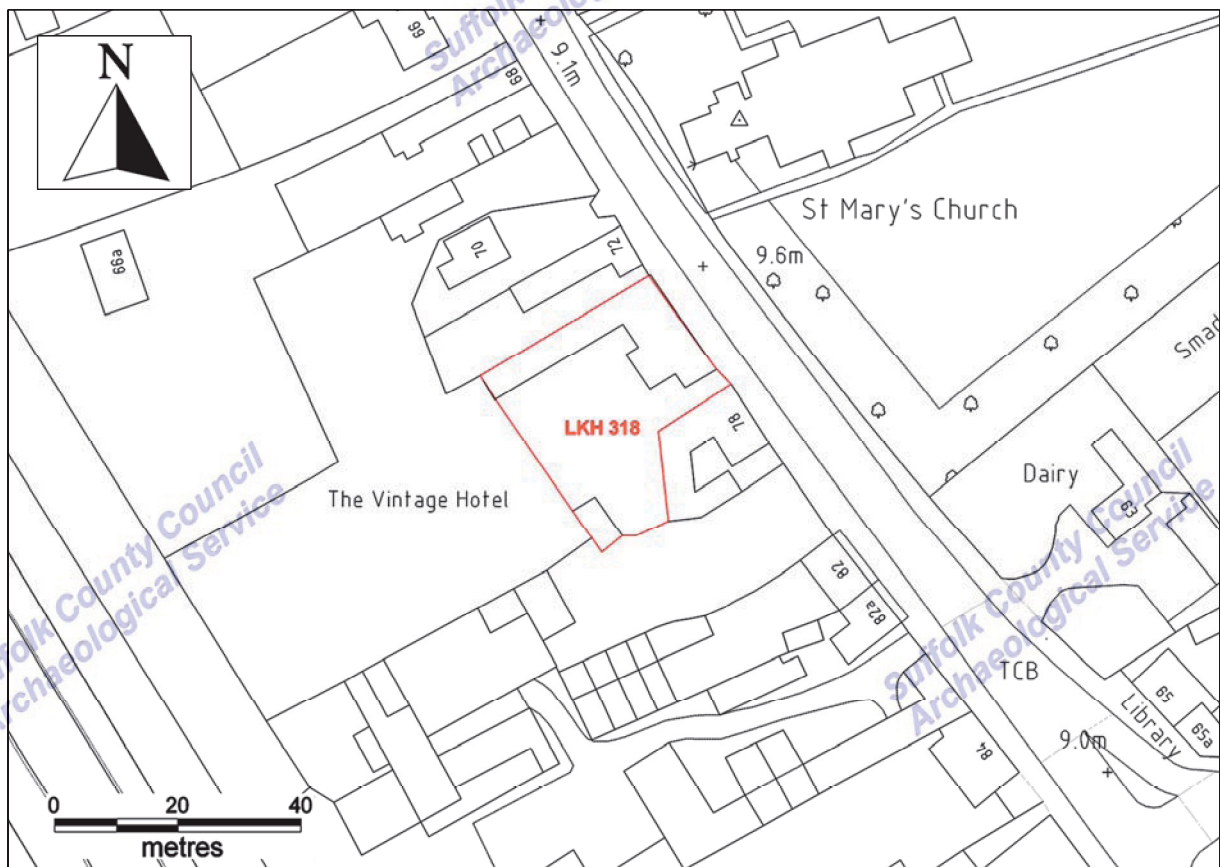


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Figure 1. Site location plan

The site is comprised of the former inn itself, which forms the road frontage to the east, with a terraced flint built row extending west wards from its rear on the northern side. Another row of flint built buildings on the western side of the site, the 'coachhouse', had been recently demolished. The centre of the site is occupied by a courtyard of modern tarmac and is bounded on the southern edge by chalk block constructed buildings in the neighbouring plot, at least two of which have been demolished.

The planning application for the redevelopment of the site to residential dwellings, involving the conversion of The Cromwell Inn public house, the demolition of the coachhouse and the construction of a new building in its place, was approved with a condition requiring a programme of work to record archaeological remains. The first stage of this work was a Desk Based Assessment (Craven 2009) which assessed the site as having high potential for multi-period deposits and recommended a programme of archaeological evaluation to confirm the archaeological potential of the site and to establish any archaeological implications for its development.



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Figure 2. Site outline

2. Geology and topography

The PDA is located 80m east of the Cut-Off Channel and modern fen edge on a slight west facing slope, which rises from the fen to a height of c.8-9m above sea level within the site (Craven 2009). The site lies on well drained calcareous sandy soils overlying chalky drift (Ordnance Survey 1983).

3. Archaeological and historical background

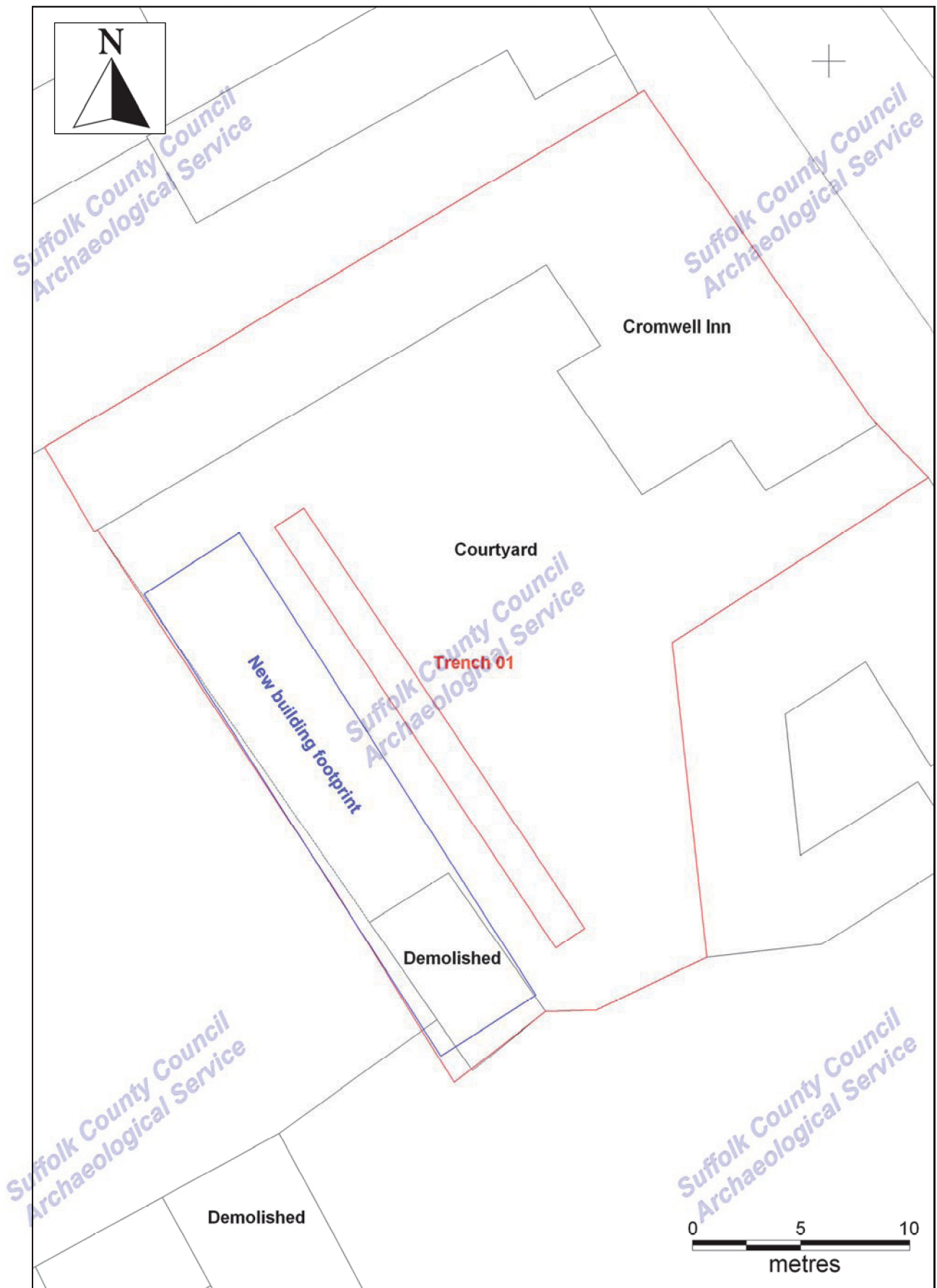
The Desk Based Assessment for the site (Craven 2009) shows that there is high potential for multi-period archaeological deposits to exist upon the site due to its fen-edge location within a dense band of prehistoric and Roman activity and its position within the area of archaeological importance for Lakenheath, a designation which encompasses the area of the medieval town.

Documentary research and results from archaeological fieldwork on the adjacent plot to the south (LKH 315) suggest that the site will have been in use since at least the thirteenth century, with possible origins for occupation in the Anglo-Saxon period.

4. Methodology

The DBA report assessed the main threat to any archaeological deposits to be the excavation of footing trenches for the new building range on the western edge of the site. The evaluation of the plot immediately to the south (Craven and Caruth 2008) had shown that archaeological levels lay at a depth of at least 0.5m and so shallow groundworks caused by resurfacing of the courtyard, or the construction of small garden walls, were thought unlikely to have a detrimental impact.

A single trench was therefore considered adequate to assess the area of the new buildings footprint. The placement of the trench was moved from the centre of the building footprint itself, after a request by the developer, to immediately east of the building (Fig. 3).



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Figure 3. Trench layout

The trench was excavated by a machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist, to the top of the natural subsoil surface. This involved the removal of 0.1m of modern tarmac and up to 0.5m of modern hardcore layers before post-medieval deposits were encountered and removed (see section 5 below). The natural subsoil, of mixed mid orange/yellow sands, lay at a depth of 0.95m–1.1m. Excavated soil was examined for unstratified finds.

Archaeological features were then clearly visible and only limited cleaning by hand was required. Three 1m sections of the trench profile were cleaned and recorded. Features were then excavated by hand, with 50% of pits or postholes being removed.

The site was recorded using a single context continuous numbering system. The trenches and features were planned by hand at a scale of 1:50. Feature sections and trench profiles were drawn by hand at a scale of 1:20. Digital colour photographs were taken of all stages of the fieldwork, and are included in the site archive.

Bulk finds were washed, marked and quantified. Inked copies of section drawings have been made.

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-60404) and a digital copy of the report submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>).

The site archive is kept in the main store of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Bury St Edmunds under HER No. LKH 318.

5. Results

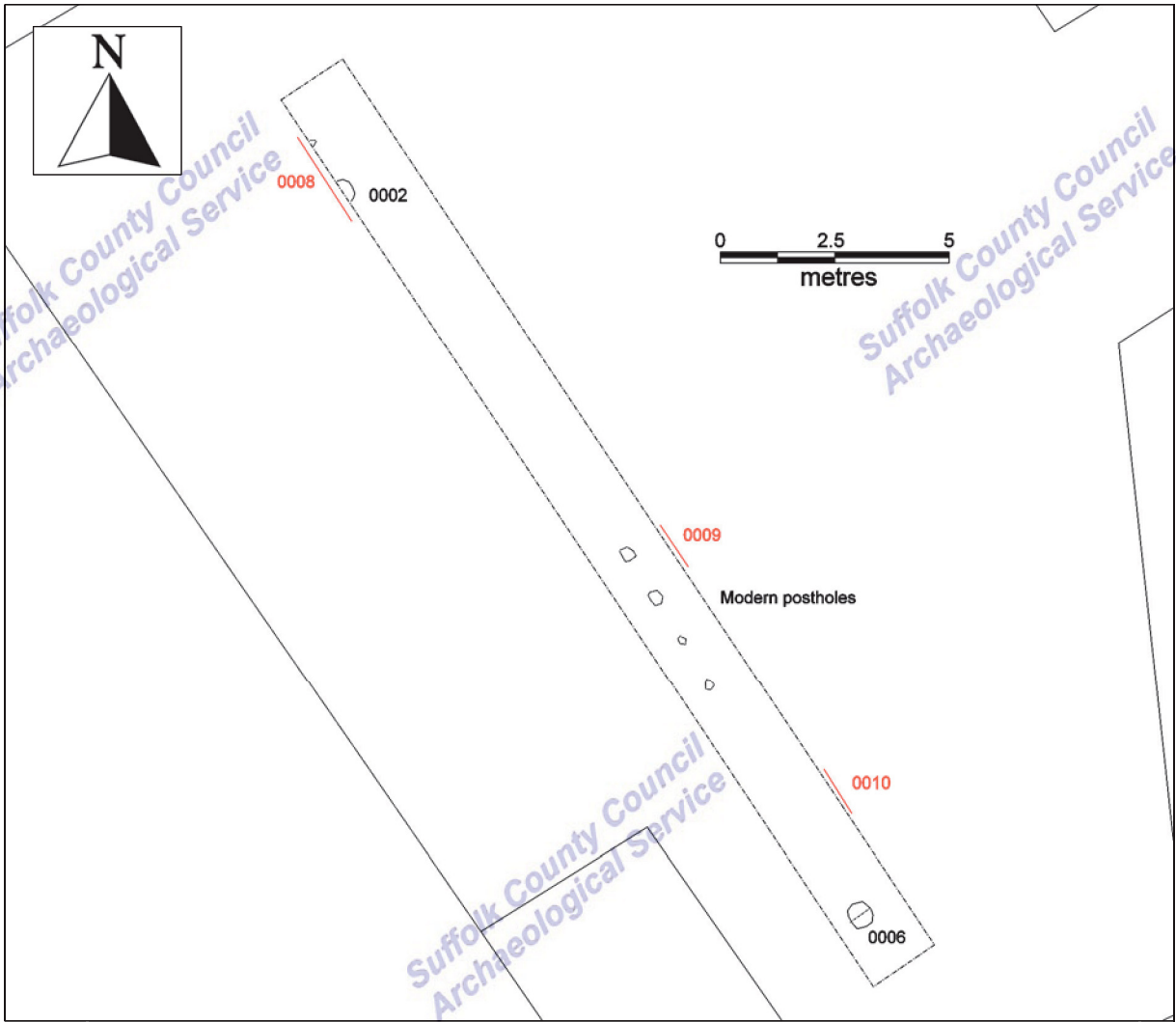
The trench measured 23.2m long, 1.6m wide and was aligned north-west to south-east, cutting across the natural slope. Its depth varied from 0.8m -1.2m.

Lying under the modern tarmac and hardcore was a layer, 0001, of packed chalk measuring up to 0.1m thick. Visible in section throughout it lay at a depth of 0.8m at the north end of the trench, before steadily rising to just below the tarmac at the south end. Beneath 0001 across the majority of the trench was a layer, 0005, of mid grey/brown sand/silt with occasional flecks of chalk and small flints that ranged from 0.3m to 0.6m thick. A single post-medieval pottery sherd was collected from the deposit. At the south end of the trench section 0010 shows how 0001 had risen close to the surface and a series of thin deposits separated it from 0005.

Under 0005 was the natural subsoil of yellow/orange sands. This showed frequent evidence of modern disturbance with a line of postholes in the centre of the trench and another posthole seen in the 0008 trench profile at the northern end. Three soil profiles, 0008-0010, of the trench were recorded.

Three features predating the 0001 chalk surface were identified and excavated. 0002 was a small pit or posthole lying partially within the trench and recorded in section 0008. Sub-square in plan, measuring 0.5m in diameter with steep sides and a flat base, it was sealed below layer 0001 but cut layer 0005. Its basal fill, 0004, was an initial slumping deposit of light/mid yellow/grey/brown silt/sand. Above this the main fill of the feature, 0003, was a mid grey/brown silt/sand with chalk flecks. 0011 was a small pit, seen in section 0010, cutting the top of 0005. Measuring 0.5m wide and 0.3m thick its fill, 0012, was a light/mid grey/yellow/brown silty sand.

0006 was a circular posthole, measuring 0.5m wide and 0.6m deep, with vertical sides and a pointed base. The northern half was excavated showing a fill, 0007, of friable dark grey/brown silt/sand with frequent chalk. Two fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material were recovered from near its top. No environmental sample was taken.



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Figure 4. Trench plan

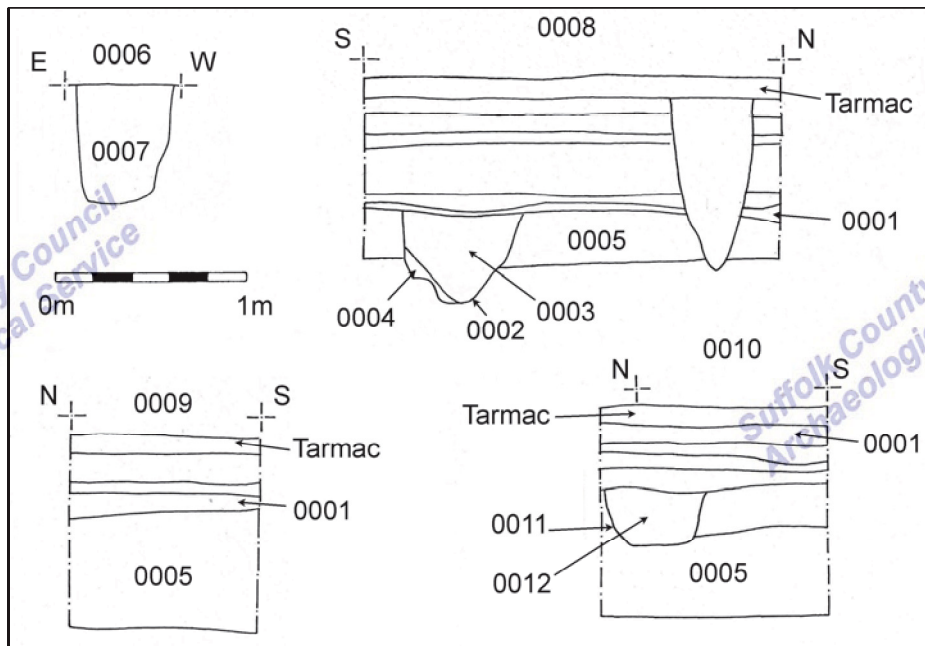


Figure 5. Sections



Figure 6. Cromwell Inn and courtyard looking north-east, pre-excitation of trench

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6. Finds and environmental evidence

6.1. Introduction

Finds were collected from two contexts, as shown in the table below.

Context	Pottery		CBM		Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	
0005	1	52			16th-18th C
0007			2	588	
Total	1	52	2	588	

6.2. Pottery

A single fragment from the base of a Glazed Red Earthenware jar was recovered from 0005, a deposit underlying the yard surface 0001.

6.3. Ceramic building material

Two fragments of ceramic building material were collected from posthole fill 0007. A single roof tile made in a hard sandy poorly mixed cream and red fabric with white grog inclusions which has similarities to estuarine fabrics dating to the medieval period but is probably post-medieval (Anderson, 2000). The partial remains of a brick also with poorly fired red, cream and grey mixed clays and white grog inclusions is also of the same date. It is of uneven thickness (c49mm) and is partially covered with an off-white limey mortar.

6.4. Discussion of the material evidence

The small quantity of finds recovered from the evaluation date to the post-medieval period, although the ceramic building material may belong to the earlier part of this period. There was no artefactual evidence of any medieval activity, despite the location of the site in the heart of the village and its proximity to the church.

7. Discussion

0001 is most likely to represent a former yard surface associated with the 19th century inn and coachhouse; it post-dates 0005, an earlier garden soil containing post-medieval material of 16th -18th century date. This latter deposit is, therefore, probably contemporary with the surviving buildings of the 17th century farm complex that lies in the plot to the south.

The two features 0002 and 0012 indicate some other activity in the later post-medieval period, lying stratigraphically between 0001 and 0005.

The earliest feature seen in the trench is posthole 0006. This was a substantial feature, presumably part of a former post-built structure. The two pieces of ceramic building material were recovered from near the top of its fill. They are probably post-medieval in date but may perhaps be earlier. This, combined with their position in the final backfill of the feature, indicates that the actual cutting and usage of the posthole may in fact have been in the medieval period.

8. Conclusions and recommendations for further work

The evaluation has principally identified evidence relating to the post-medieval use of the site with an occupation soil of 16th-18th century date being cut by later pits and sealed by a chalk yard surface that is broadly contemporary with the early history of the Cromwell Inn and coachhouse.

One feature that may relate to the earlier medieval history of the site was identified and so the small adjacent area of the proposed development is unlikely to contain any significant deposits. With such deposits and the natural subsoil also lying at a considerable depth of c.1.1m, the footing trenches are unlikely to have a serious impact upon archaeological remains. Shallow groundworks up to c.0.5m deep, such as new service trenches or carpark areas, are also unlikely to cause disturbance to deposits deeper than the later post-medieval layers. Accordingly a suitable final stage of archaeological work, as part of the mitigation strategy for the site, is considered to be the monitoring of footing trenches once excavated.

9. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds T:\Arc\archive field proj\lakenheath\LKH 318 Cromwell Inn\Evaluation\

Finds and environmental archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds.

10. List of contributors and acknowledgements

The evaluation was carried out by a number John Craven and Andy Beverton from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

The project was directed by John Craven, and managed by Jo Caruth, who also provided advice during the production of the report.

The post-excavation was managed by Richenda Goffin. Finds processing was carried out by Rebekah Pressler and the production of sections by Gemma Adams. The specialist finds report is by Richenda Goffin.

11. Bibliography

Anderson, S., 'The Ceramic Building Material' in Shelley, A., 2005, Excavations at Dragon Hall, King Street, Norwich, EAA No 112.

Craven, J. A., 2009, The Cromwell Inn, 76 High Street, Lakenheath, LKH 318, Desk Based Assessment. SCCAS Report No. 2009/112.

Ordnance Survey, 1983, 'Soils of England and Wales' *Soil survey of England and Wales, sheet 4 Eastern England 1:250,000*. Harpenden.

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.