

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/131

**Banham's Coach Depot, The Row,
Hartest
HRT 022**

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HER Information

Planning Application No: B/07/0072
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Funding Body: Elanbrook Homes Ltd
Curatorial Officer: Jess Tipper
Project Officer: John Craven
Oasis Reference: Suffolkc1-61267

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 on land at the former Banham's Coach Depot, The Row, Hartest in advance of housing development as the site lay within the medieval core of the village.

The evaluation has identified evidence, consisting of two boundary ditches, relating to the medieval or post-medieval use of the site. One of these ditches may relate to the late 19th century edge of the field in which the site lay at that time while the other, which was recut at some stage, was infilled prior to the late 19th century and may mark subdivision of the field in an earlier period. The presence of fired clay daub, dating to the medieval or post-medieval period, in the fills of the latter ditch indicate occupation activity in the nearby vicinity.

Due to the small scale of the development proposal, and the absence of any significant evidence of medieval occupation, no recommendations for further archaeological work have been made.

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1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of development at the site of the former Banham's Coach Depot, Hartest. The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by Dr Jess Tipper (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team – Appendix 1) to fulfil a planning condition on application B/07/0072. The work was funded by the developer, Elanbrook Homes Ltd.

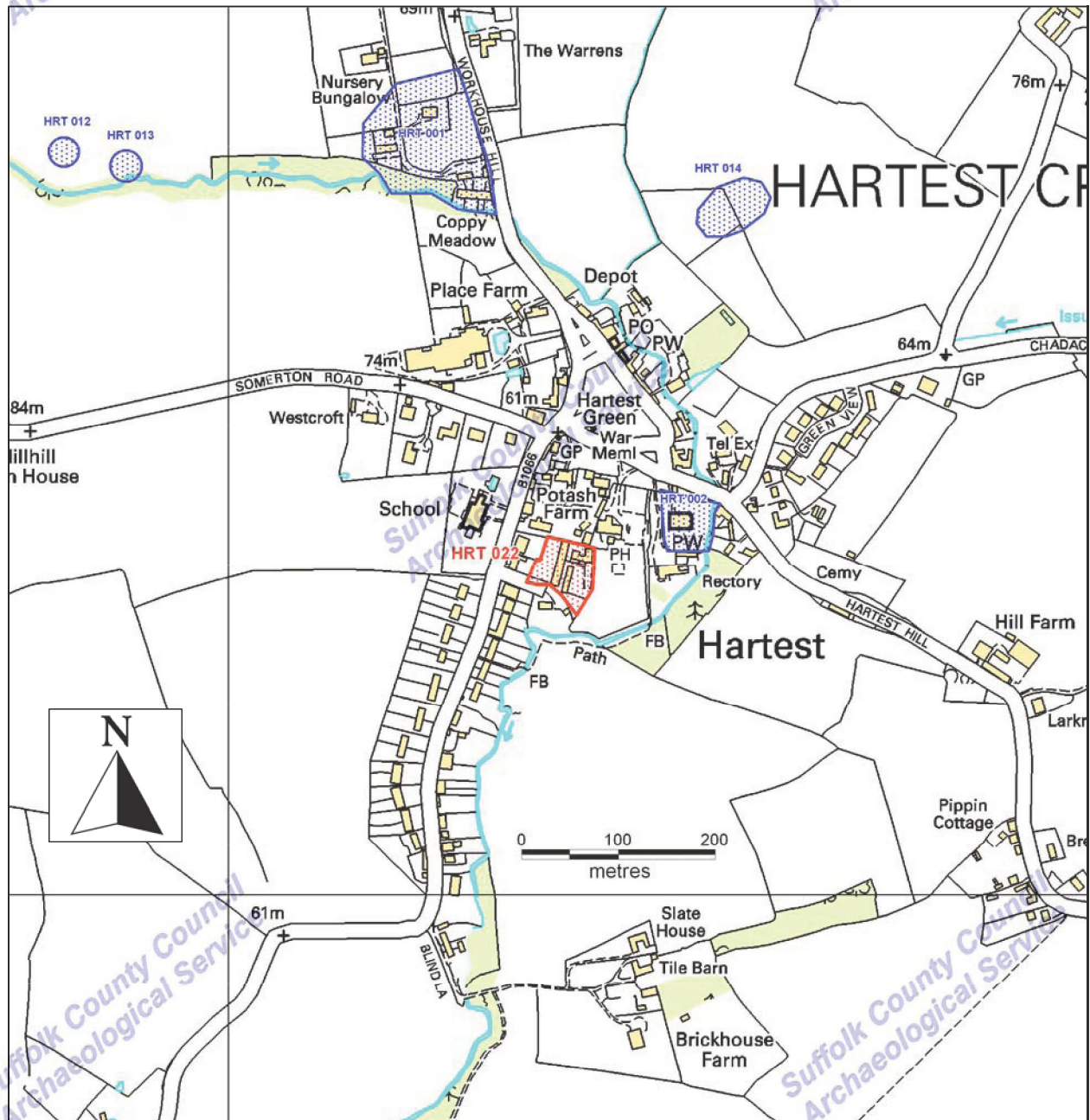
The site, an overall area of approximately c.0.34ha, is centred at TL 8334 5234, in the parish of Hartest (Figs. 1 and 2). The site lies near the centre of the village, a 100m south of the village green and 75m south-west of the parish Church of All Saints, in an area of archaeological importance recorded in the County Historic Environment Record (HER). The site is comprised of open land, interspersed with now demolished buildings relating to the former landuse of the site as a coach depot.



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Figure 1. Site location plan

The planning application for the redevelopment of the site to four residential dwellings and associated garages was approved with a condition requiring a programme of work to record archaeological remains. The first two houses however had been constructed with no archaeological investigation and a programme of archaeological evaluation was required to confirm the archaeological potential of the remainder of the site and to establish any archaeological implications for its development.



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Figure 2. Nearby sites recorded on the County HER

2. Geology and topography

The site lies on an east and south-east facing slope, overlooking a tributary of the River Glem, at a height of 54m-55m AOD. The underlying geology is deep clay chalky till.

3. Archaeological and historical background

As stated above the site lies within the medieval settlement core of Hartest, lying in close proximity to village green and parish church, HRT 002. Lying to the rear of properties forming the eastern road frontage of The Row, the site also lies immediately south of Potash Cottage, a 17th-18th century timber framed Grade II listed building (278069) and the Crown Inn, a 16th century timber framed jettied house, also a Grade II listed building (No. 278051).

Archaeological fieldwork investigation in the vicinity has been limited. Roman pottery, HRT 001, has been recorded 350m to the north and a Late Saxon strap end metal-detected 350m to the north-east, HRT 014. Two circular cropmarks, HRT 012 and 013, have been identified 600m to the north-east in a similar topographical position, close to the tributary stream of the Glem.

The site was therefore thought to have high potential for archaeological deposits relating to the medieval and post-medieval settlement of the village and for multi-period deposits overlooking the watercourse.

4. Methodology

The brief for the evaluation required three 10m long trenches to be excavated through Plots 1 and 2 and the garage block between the already constructed Plots 3 and 4 (Fig. 3). The garage block trench was halted short at 6m long as it ran into a large area which had been substantially disturbed by the recent building works.

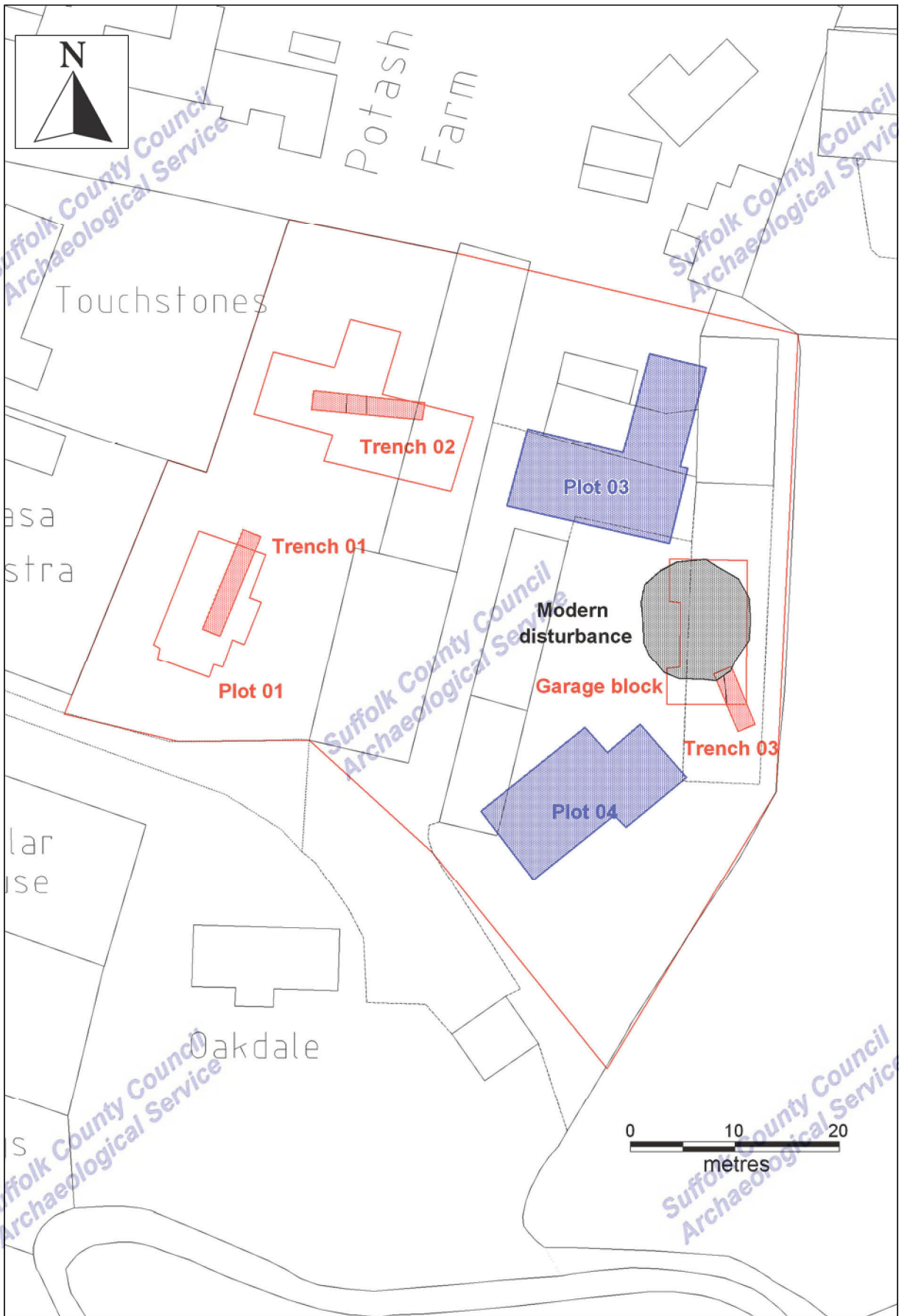
The trenches were excavated by a machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist, to the top of the natural subsoil surface. This involved the removal of a thin c.0.2m of modern topsoil and a colluvial layer of mid orange/brown clay (0002) which lay directly above the natural subsoil of mid yellow/brown clay with chalk with patches of gravelly orange clay. Excavated soil was examined for unstratified finds and both spoilheaps and trench were searched by an experienced metal-detectorist.

Archaeological features were then clearly visible and only limited cleaning by hand was required. Two 1m wide sections were excavated and recorded across the two identified linear features.

The site was recorded using a single context continuous numbering system, with 0001 being reserved for unstratified finds. The trenches were planned by hand at a scale of 1:50 and positions measured by hand onto the Ordnance Survey map. Trench profiles and feature sections were recorded at a scale of 1:20. Site levels were recorded using a dumpy level and relate to a spot height of 59.2m AOD, recorded by the Ordnance Survey on the road to the west at TL 8329 5238. Digital colour and black and white film photographs were taken of all stages of the fieldwork, and are included in the site archive.

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-61267) 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. HRT 022.



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Figure 3. Trench plan

5. Results

5.1 Trench 01

Trench 01 measured 10.3m long, 1.8m wide and 0.4m deep and was placed south-west to north-east across the natural slope and in an area which had already had c.0.1m of topsoil removed. A further 0.1m of topsoil was seen to overlie a 0.3m thick layer of colluvial mid brown fine clay/silt, 0002, which in turn sealed the natural subsoil surface of mid yellow/brown clay with chalk at a height of 54.56m AOD. No archaeological deposits were identified in the trench.

5.2 Trench 02

Trench 02 measured 10.5m long, 1.8m wide and 0.4m deep and was placed south-east to north-west across an area which had already had c.0.1m of topsoil removed. A further 0.25m of topsoil overlaid 0.15m of colluvial mid brown fine clay/silt, 0002, which in turn sealed the natural subsoil surface of mid yellow/brown clay with chalk. This lay at a height of 55.1m AOD at the north-west end and 54.79m AOD at the south-east.

A linear feature was identified running across the centre of the trench on a south-west to north-east alignment, lying immediately below the topsoil and cutting layer 0002 (Fig. 4). This consisted of two separate ditch cuts, the earliest 0009, lying on the northern side. 0009 measured 0.7m wide and 0.5m deep, was steep sided with a concave base and had a fill, 0010, of mid grey clay with frequent chalk and flints. 0011 was a later recut on the southern edge of this ditch, measuring up to 2m wide at its top. Its upper sides were gently-moderately sloped steepening to a 'V' shaped base at a depth of 0.8m. The basal fill, 0012, was a deposit of mid yellow/brown clay with flints and clay which slumped in from the eastern side. Above this was 0013, a dark grey clay with occasional flints. The upper part of the ditch, which also overlaid 0009, was infilled with 0014, a mid/dark grey/brown clay/loam with frequent chalk and flints.

Fragments of daub were present in all four of these fills, being particularly frequent in 0014, and a representative sample was collected.

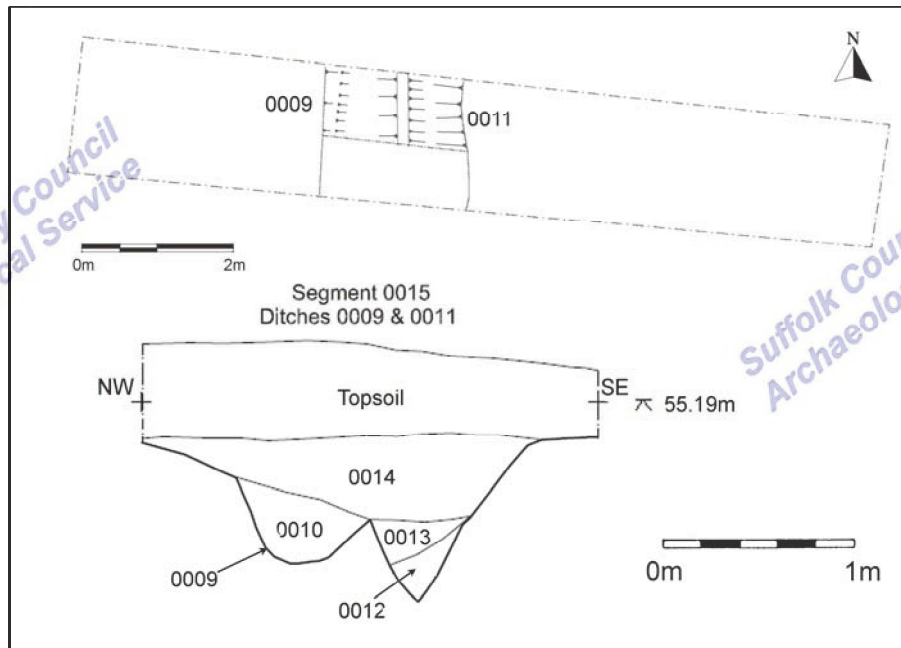


Figure 4. Trench 02 plan and section

5.3 Trench 03

Trench 03 measured 6m long, 1.8m wide and up to 0.9m deep. Aligned north to south it was halted when it ran into a large area of disturbance over 1m deep, infilled with brick and concrete rubble, created by the recent demolition and building works. At the southern end a thin topsoil overlaid a 0.3m thick redeposited layer, 0003, of natural clay subsoil. This sealed 0004, 0.5m thick deposit of dark grey/brown clay/loam with occasional chalk flecks. The natural subsoil of mid orange/brown clay and gravel was seen at 53.33m AOD, rising to 53.45m AOD at the northern end.

A linear feature, 0006, was partially seen in the north-west corner of the trench and was excavated in section 0007 (Fig. 5). Aligned north-east to south-west it measuring at least 0.6m wide, the one observed side having a moderate slope. The base was not seen at a depth of 0.45m. Its fill, 0008, was a mid/dark grey/brown clay/silt with flints and flecks of chalk and charcoal. Three fragments of animal bone were collected.

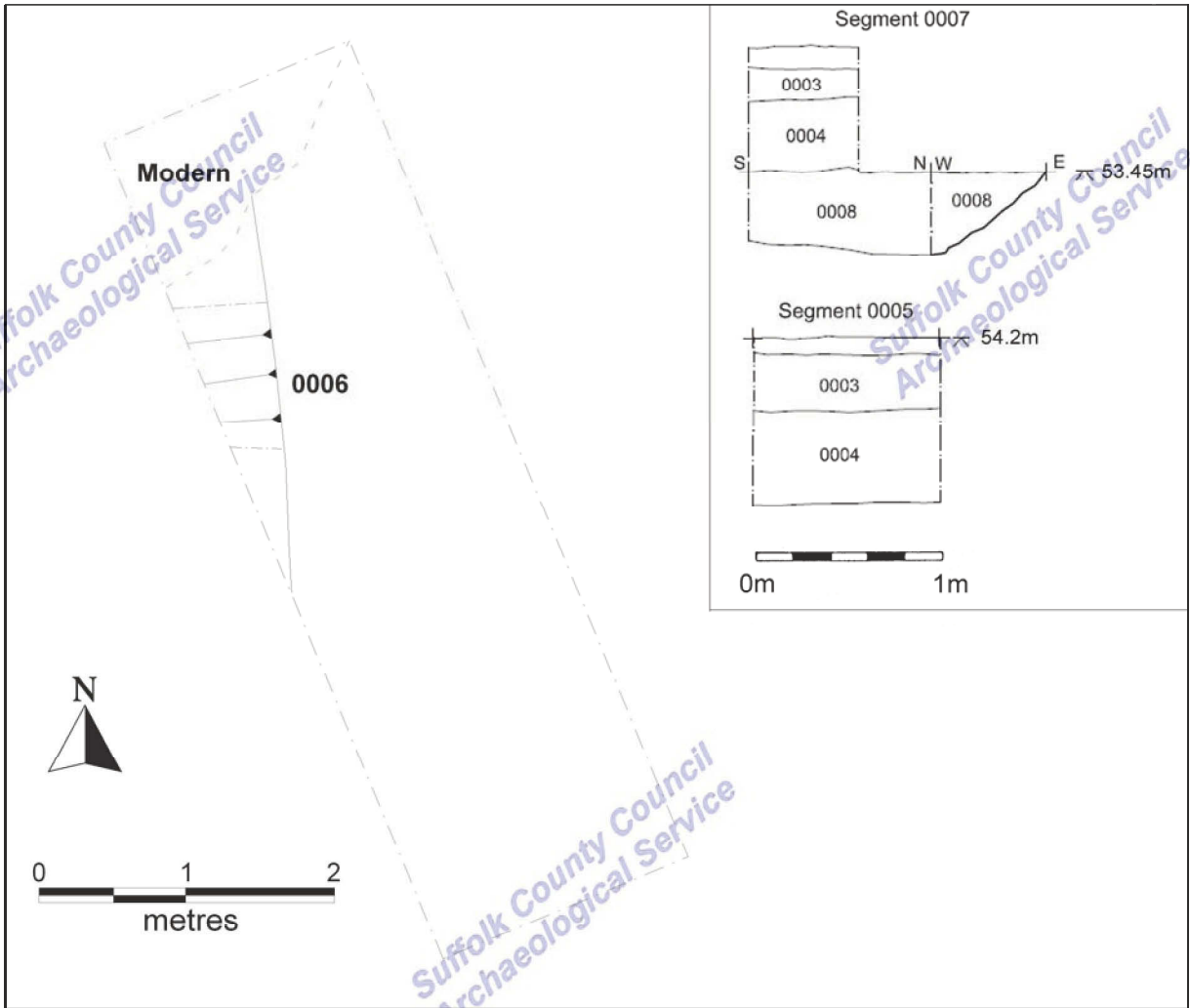


Figure 5. Trench 03 plan and sections

6. The Finds

Cathy Tester

6.1 Introduction

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

Ctxt	Fired clay		Lava Quern		Animal bone	
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g
0008					3	112
0010	6	42				
0012	5	47				
0013	3	217				
0014	25	1392	10	63	1	21
Total	39	1698	10	63	4	133

Table 1. Finds Quantities

6.2 Fired clay

Thirty-nine fragments of daub weighing 1696g were collected from four related contexts in Trench 02, the fills of adjacent/double ditches 0009 (0010) and 0011 (0012 and 0013) and deposit 0014 which lay above them both.

The daub is very uniform in appearance, all made of a medium–fine sandy fabric with abundant coarse chalk and ferrous inclusions. Several pieces have burnt grey and black patches but most are buff-orange coloured. The pieces are well-preserved, large with sharp edges. Outer surfaces are roughly smoothed and relatively flat and there are impressions of wattles running parallel and also at right angles. Diameters of the wattles varied from 15mm to 25mm. The daub was particularly abundant in layer 0014 and the amount collected is only a sample of what was present.

6.3 Lava Stone

Ten fragments of lava stone weighing 65g were recovered from layer 0014. The pieces are too small and fragmentary to have any distinguishing features which could suggest its size, type and date, but the material is presumed to come from a hand-operated rotary quern which by association could be medieval or later. The stone is grey vesicular lava which is almost certainly of Rhenish origin although its exact source cannot be confirmed.

6.4 Animal bone

Four fragments of animal bone were collected from two contexts. Three large mammal bone fragments from linear feature 0006 (0008) in Trench 03 and a medium mammal long bone fragment from layer 0014 in Trench 01 were recovered.

6.5 Discussion

The evaluation produced a small group of finds with a limited range of types, none of which are closely datable. However, the heavily chalk-tempered daub is very likely to be medieval or later. This evidence for medieval or post-medieval activity is further supported by the fact that the site lies within the medieval core of the village in close proximity to the church, the green and standing buildings.

7. Discussion

Trenches 01 and 02 showed an undisturbed soil profile, with a colluvial layer of fine clay/silt overlying the natural subsoil. The two observed ditches which cut through this deposit are of medieval or later date and, being parallel to the adjacent modern fenceline and road, probably mark a former boundary to the rear of any properties fronting the road. Both ditches were infilled prior to the late 19th century as there is no comparable boundary shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1885 (Fig. 6) where the site lies within a single field.

Trench 03 showed a similar, thicker colluvial deposit, sealed under modern landscaping deposits. Until the large area of modern disturbance was reached to the north the natural subsoil and archaeological levels were preserved intact. The single feature, probably another ditch, was undated but may correspond with the eastern boundary of the field shown on the 1885 map, which appears to have shifted slightly eastwards in the past century.

8. Conclusions and recommendations for further work

The two ditch boundaries indicate some activity in the area during the medieval or post-medieval period but may have been open land, subdivided into smaller fields than those shown in 1885. There were no features or finds material indicating more substantial occupation, such as postholes or refuse pits although the daub present in the 0009/0011 ditch fills will have derived from nearby structures.

Of the three plots to be built the garage area is almost wholly truncated while Trenches 01 and 02 occupy substantial proportions of their respective plots. The limited size of the remaining development therefore is unlikely to affect any further deposits and means that no further archaeological work is thought necessary.

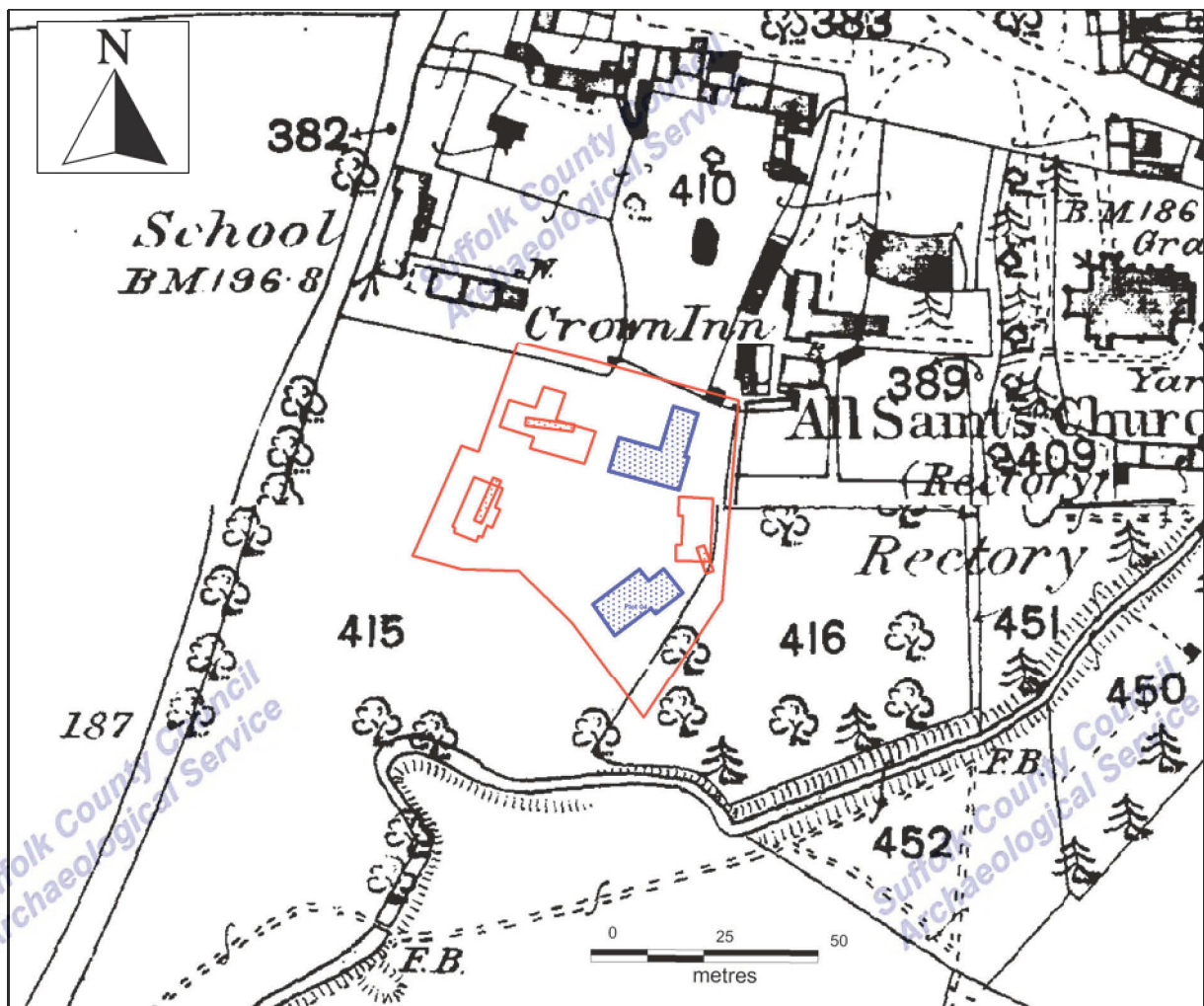


Figure 6. Site as shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1885.

9. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds T:arc\archive field
proj\Hartest\HRT 022 banhams coach depot eval

Finds and environmental archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds. Store Location: H/80/3 –
parish box

10. List of contributors and acknowledgements

The project was directed and managed by John Craven, with the evaluation fieldwork being carried out by John Craven, Alan Smith and John Sims, all from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

The post-excavation was managed by Richenda Goffin. Finds processing was carried out by Jonathan Van Jennians and Rebekah Pressler, the production of site sections by Gemma Adams, and the finds report by Cathy Tester with specialist identification and advice provided by Richenda Goffin.

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.