

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/192

Belgic House, Spring Lane, Polstead, Suffolk BXF 001

HER Information

Planning Application No: B/09/00090/FUL

Date of Fieldwork: 10 July 2009

Grid Reference: TL 9740 3940

Funding Body: Dr . and Mrs. Flather

Curatorial Officer: Jess Tipper

Project Officer: Kieron Heard

Oasis Reference: suffolkc1-61904

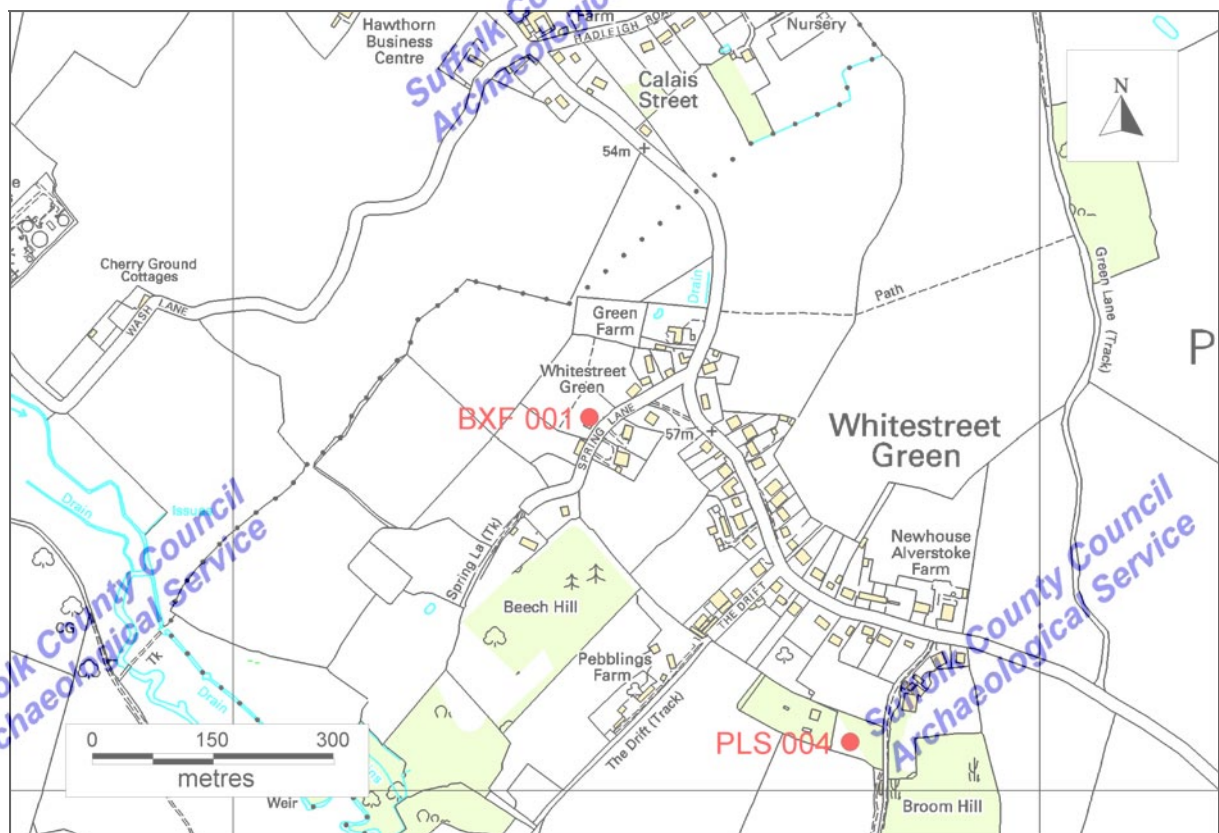
Digital report submitted to Archaeological Data Service:
<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/grey/it>

Summary

BXF 001, Belgic House, Spring Lane, Polstead: An archaeological monitoring was carried out in advance of the construction of a porch. It revealed up to 0.50m of recently made ground over natural sands and gravels. No archaeological deposits or features were found and no artefacts recovered.

1. Introduction and methodology

An archaeological monitoring was carried out at Belgic House, Spring Lane, Polstead (Fig. 1) in accordance with an archaeological condition relating to planning permission for the construction of a porch (planning application number B/09/00090/FUL). It was commissioned and funded by the owners, Dr. and Mrs. Flather. The Brief and Specification for the monitoring was written by Dr. Jess Tipper (SCCAS, Conservation Team) and a copy is appended to this report.



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Figure 1. Location map showing the site of Belgic House (BXF 001) and the nearby late Iron Age cemetery PLS 004

The site is of great archaeological significance, being within a late Iron Age cremation cemetery (Historic Environment Record number: BXF 001). When the existing house was built, in 1966, 18 cremation vessels and accompanying grave goods were found within its foundation trenches (Owles & Smedley, 1968). Another cremation cemetery, of similar date, was found in a gravel pit about 500m to the southeast, in 1922 (HER number: PLS 004; shown on Fig. 1). Due to the high potential for additional burials to exist on the Belgic House site the Brief and Specification called for continuous monitoring of the groundwork associated with the development.

The writer monitored the excavation of the trenches for the strip foundations of the proposed porch, which were dug by site contractors using hand tools. The trenches measured 0.45m wide by 0.75m deep and had a combined length of 10.20m. The overall dimensions of the proposed porch are 4.20 x 1.80m (Fig. 2).

Written records were made in a field notebook and all salient details have been reproduced in this report. A digital photographic record was made; this forms part of the SCCAS photographic archive, referenced as GBQ 062–064. A metal detector was used to scan the excavated soil, with negative results.

During the site visit Dr. and Mrs. Flather kindly allowed access to a number of photographs and newspaper cuttings from the time of the original excavation at Belgic House and to one of the cinerary vessels that has come into their possession, it having been retained by the original owner of the house. The documents and vessel were photographed by the writer and the resulting images form part of the current site archive.

Note that the Historic Environment Record number for the original discovery at Belgic House (BXF 001) has been applied also to the current site investigation, despite that fact that the site is located now in Polstead, rather than Boxford, parish.



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Figure 2. Plan showing the existing building (black) and the proposed porch (red)

2. Results

The monitoring revealed 0.40–0.50m of recently made ground, this being the tarmac surface of the drive in front of the house and approximately 0.45m of associated make-up. These deposits overlie a natural stratum of horizontally bedded, loose, orangey brown sands and gravels, extending to the base of the trenches at 0.75m below ground level. No archaeological deposits or features were seen and no artefacts were recovered.

Representative views of the natural stratum and overlying made-ground deposits are shown in Figures 3 and 4.



Figure 3. Northeast-facing section at the southwest end of the longer foundation trench (0.5m scale)



Figure 4. General view of the longer foundation trench, looking west

3. Conclusion

The archaeological monitoring has revealed 0.40–0.50m of recently made ground over natural sands and gravels. The made ground clearly dates to the time of the construction of Belgic House in 1966.

No archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were found. The absence of topsoil or former ploughsoil indicates that there has been some horizontal truncation of the site, presumably when the house was constructed.

In view of this negative result it is anticipated that no further fieldwork will be required on this site in relation to the current development. This document will be disseminated as a 'grey literature' report *via* the OASIS on-line archaeological database and a summary will appear in the Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History.

4. Bibliography

Owles, E., & Smedley, N., 1968, *Two Belgic Cemeteries at Boxford*, in Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology for 1967, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 1

Kieron Heard, Project Officer, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

July 2009

Appendix: Brief and Specification

Brief and Specification for Continuous Archaeological Monitoring

BELGIC HOUSE, SPRING LANE, POLSTEAD (B/09/00090/FUL)

Although this document is fundamental to the work of the specialist archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that certain of its requirements are likely to impinge upon the working practices of a general building contractor and may have financial implications

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission to erect a new porch at Belgic House, Spring Lane, Polstead (TL 974 394), has been granted by Babergh District Council conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application B/09/00090/FUL).
- 1.2 Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by continuous archaeological monitoring during all groundworks, including the removal of any modern deposits (**Please contact the developer for an accurate plan of the development**).
- 1.3 This application lies in an area of high archaeological importance, recorded in the County Historic Environment Record, within the area of a late Iron Age cremation cemetery (HER no. BXF 001). Groundworks for the construction of the existing dwelling in 1966 produced the remains of 18 urned cremations and associated grave goods within the foundation trenches. However, it was not possible to define their exact location and the majority were not the subject of any detailed or systematic archaeological investigation (13 were lifted by the builder). There is a strong possibility that further burials will be encountered at this location. The proposed works would cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.
- 1.4 In accordance with the standards and guidance produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists this brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based upon this brief and the accompanying outline specification of minimum requirements, is an essential requirement. This must be submitted by the developers, or their agent, to the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (9-10 The Churchyard, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443) for approval. The work must not commence until this office has approved both the archaeological contractor as suitable to undertake the work, and the WSI as satisfactory, and until confirmation has been sought by the applicant from the Local Planning Authority. The WSI will *provide the basis for measurable standards* and will be

used to establish whether the requirements of the planning condition will be adequately met.

- 1.5 Before commencing work the project manager must carry out a risk assessment and liaise with the site owner, client and the Conservation Team of SCCAS (SCCAS/CT) in ensuring that all potential risks are minimised.
- 1.6 All arrangements for the excavation of the site, the timing of the work, access to the site, the definition of the precise area of landholding and area for proposed development are to be defined and negotiated by the archaeological contractor with the commissioning body.
- 1.7 The responsibility for identifying any constraints on field-work (e.g. Scheduled Monument status, Listed Building status, public utilities or other services, tree preservation orders, SSSIs, wildlife sites &c., ecological considerations rests with the commissioning body and its archaeological contractor. The existence and content of the archaeological brief does not over-ride such constraints or imply that the target area is freely available.
- 1.8 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, 2003.
- 1.9 The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (revised 2001) should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which are damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the groundworks associated with the new porch, which measures c. 4.00 x 1.80m in size (and any groundworks associated with the removal of previous modern features). All groundworks relating to the current planning permission, and the upcast soil, are to be observed during and after they have been excavated by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation.

3. Arrangements for Monitoring

- 3.1 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the archaeological contractor) who must be approved by SCCAS/CT.
- 3.2 The developer or his contracted archaeologist will give SCCAS/CT five working days notice of the commencement of ground works on the site, in

order that the work of the archaeological contractor may be monitored. The method and form of development will also be monitored to ensure that it conforms to previously agreed locations and techniques upon which this brief is based.

- 3.3 Allowance must be made to cover archaeological costs incurred in monitoring the development works by the contract archaeologist. The size of the contingency should be estimated by the approved archaeological contractor, based upon the outline works in this Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and time-table.
- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered SCCAS/CT must be informed immediately. Amendments to this specification may be made to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

4. Specification

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to SCCAS/CT and the contracted archaeologist to allow archaeological monitoring of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity must be given to the contracted archaeologist to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.
- 4.3 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development, depending on the complexity of the data to be recorded. Sections should be drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 again depending on the complexity to be recorded.
- 4.4 A photographic record of the work is to be made of any archaeological features, consisting of both monochrome photographs and colour transparencies/high resolution digital images.
- 4.5 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum.
- 4.6 Archaeological contexts should, where possible, be sampled for palaeoenvironmental remains. Best practice should allow for sampling of interpretable and datable archaeological deposits and provision should be made for this. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from Rachael Ballantyne, English Heritage Regional Adviser for Archaeological Science (East of England). A guide to sampling archaeological deposits (Murphy, P.L. and Wiltshire, P.E.J., 1994, *A guide to sampling archaeological deposits for environmental analysis*) is available for viewing from SCCAS.
- 4.7 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with SCCAS/CT during the course of the monitoring).

4.8 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Historic Environment Record.

5. Report Requirements

5.1 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*, particularly Appendix 3. This must be deposited with the County Historic Environment Record within three months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.

5.2 The project manager must consult the County Historic Environment Record Officer to obtain an event number for the work. This number will be unique for each project or site and must be clearly marked on any documentation relating to the work.

5.3 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*.

5.4 The project manager should consult the SCC Archive Guidelines 2008 and also the County HER Officer regarding the requirements for the deposition of the archive (conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage) of excavated material and the archive.

5.5 The WSI should state proposals for the deposition of the digital archive relating to this project with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), and allowance should be made for costs incurred to ensure proper deposition (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>).

5.6 The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County Historic Environment Record if the landowner can be persuaded to agree to this. If this is not possible for all or any part of the finds archive, then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, analysis) as appropriate.

5.7 A report on the fieldwork and archive, consistent with the principles of *MAP2*, particularly Appendix 4, must be provided. The report must summarise the methodology employed, the stratigraphic sequence, and give a period by period description of the contexts recorded, and an inventory of finds. The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its interpretation. The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence, including palaeoenvironmental remains recovered from palaeosols and cut features. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological value of the results, and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).

5.8 An unbound copy of the assessment report, clearly marked DRAFT, must be presented to both SCCAS/CT for approval within six months of the completion

of fieldwork unless other arrangements are negotiated with the project sponsor and SCCAS/CT.

- 5.9 Following acceptance, two copies of the assessment report should be submitted to SCCAS/CT. A single hard copy should be presented to the County Historic Environment Record as well as a digital copy of the approved report.
- 5.10 A summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, must be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.11 Where appropriate, a digital vector trench plan should be included with the report, which must be compatible with MapInfo GIS software, for integration in the County Historic Environment Record. AutoCAD files should be also exported and saved into a format that can be imported into MapInfo (for example, as a Drawing Interchange File or .dxf) or already transferred to .TAB files.
- 5.12 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.13 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to County Historic Environment Record. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

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Polstead2009

Reference: /BelgicHouse-

This brief and specification remains valid for six months from the above date. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the authority should be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued.

If the work defined by this brief forms a part of a programme of archaeological work required by a Planning Condition, the results must be considered by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council, who have the responsibility for advising the appropriate Planning Authority.