

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/132

**51 Brunel Way, Thetford
Norfolk
HER No. 52920**

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www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/e-and-t/archaeology

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HER Information

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Curatorial Officer: Ken Hamilton

Project Officer: Andrew Tester

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<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

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Summary

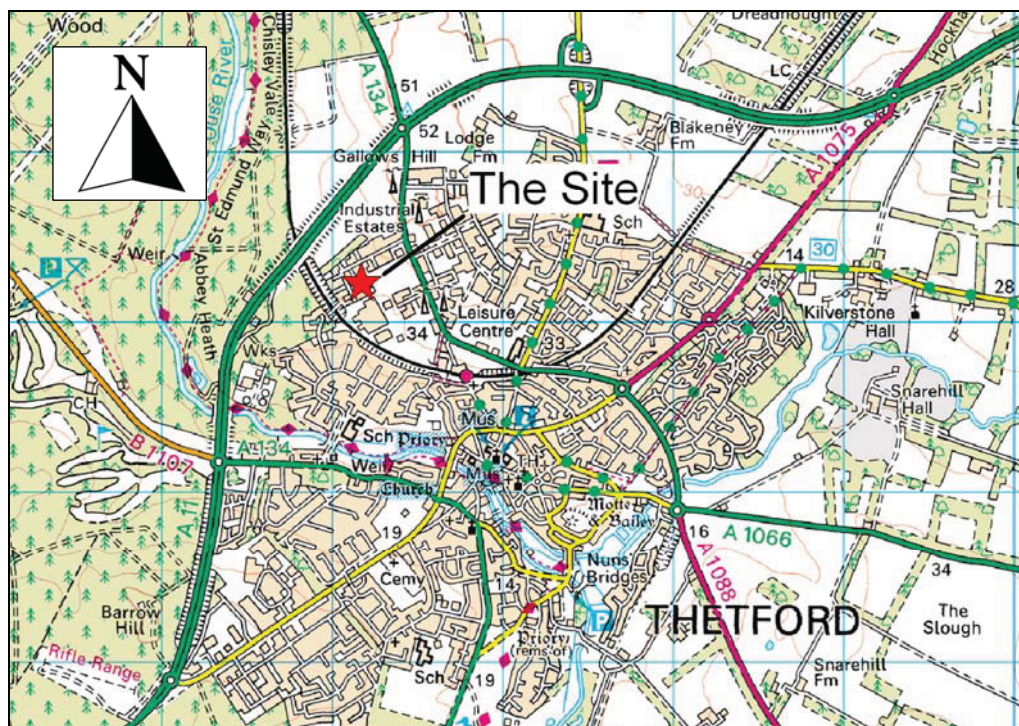
An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of development at 51 Brunel, Way, Thetford. Trial trenching showed the site to have been severely truncated.

Disturbed topsoil produced two silver coins, a penny and halfpenny; the first of John or Henry III, the second a cut halfpenny of Henry III.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of development at Brunel Way Thetford on the site of a former day school. The work was carried out to a brief set by Ken Hamilton, Head of Archaeological Planning at Norfolk Landscape Archaeology as a condition on planning application 3PL/2009/0113/F. The work is funded by the developer, Cameron Ventures.

The site, an area of approximately 1,200sqm, is centred at TL 8617 8423, in the parish of Thetford, Norfolk, and lies on a slight south-west facing slope at 34m OD. Interest in the site is based on a range of evidence dating from the prehistoric to medieval periods, metal detected finds and excavated sites located on this high ground overlooking the floodplain of the Little Ouse to the south and west.

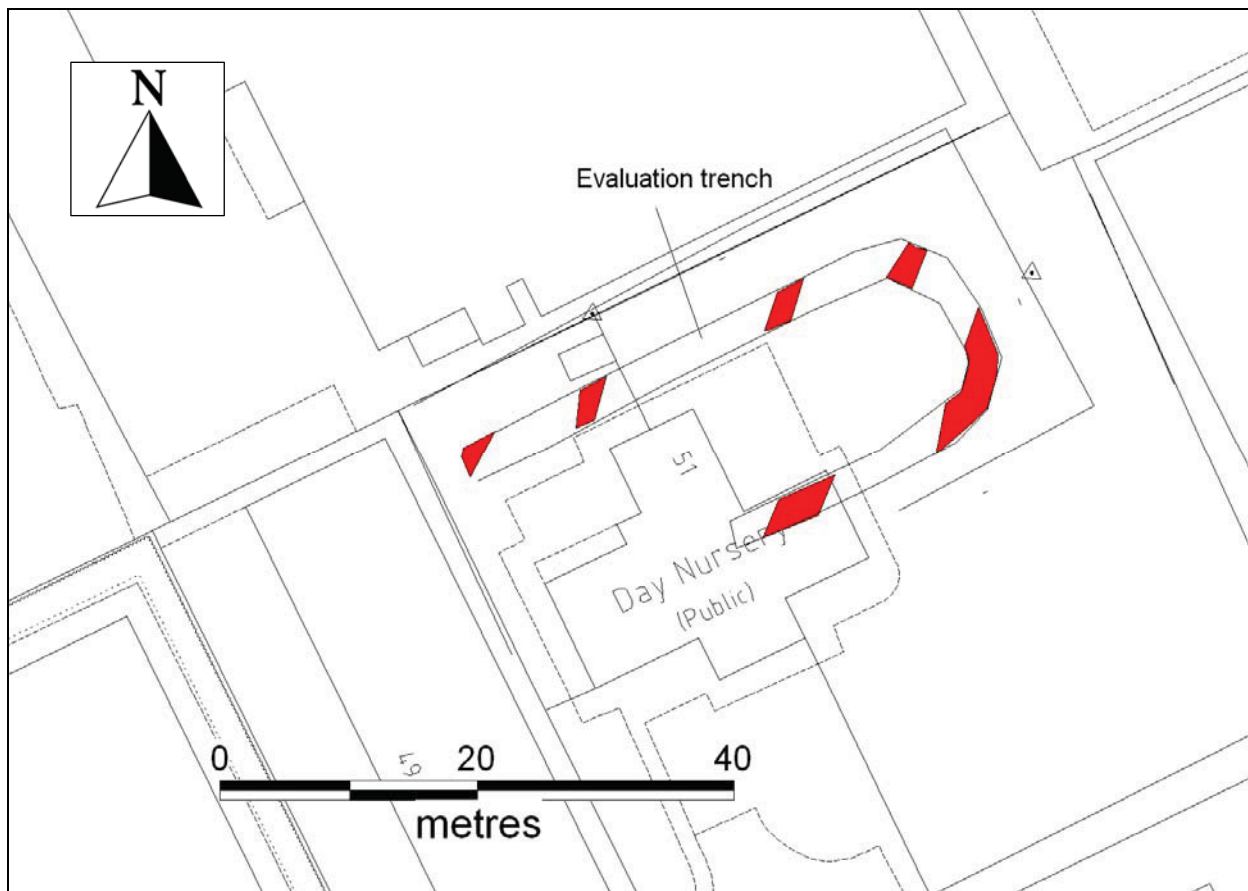


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Figure 1. Site location plan

2. Methodology

The site was evaluated following the clearance of debris from the previous building which had burnt down. This revealed modern debris lying directly over natural chalk over most of the site. On inspection it was found that a surface scrape was sufficient to expose any archaeological features that may have been preserved. Given the low potential a single trench was excavated into the available areas avoiding the various disturbances, (Fig. 2) and planned using a TST. Spoil heaps and the surrounding baulks were metal detected. Digital images were taken of the site and the sections alongside it. A digital copy of the report has been submitted to Archaeological Data Service: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>. using the reference Suffolk1-62185.



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Figure 2. Trench layout showing location of ice wedges in red

3. Results

The trench measured 75m in length and was 3m wide. This was effectively a scrape of the surface, and revealed solid chalk and natural frost wedges (Fig. 2 with frost wedges marked in red). Sections recorded surrounding the site revealed that between 0.45m and 0.60m of natural chalk had been removed, the deeper cut being towards the top of the slope (north). The site was metal detected, including the existing heaps (containing a mixture of building debris) and two coins were recovered from the upcast spoil from the trenching.

4. The coins

Two coins, which were metal detected from the topsoil were the only finds recovered. These were a medieval silver penny and cut halfpenny from the Short-Cross coinage (1180-1247 AD) spanning the reigns of Kings Henry II to Henry III in the late-12th to early-13th centuries AD. Both coins show some signs of wear and are slightly bent and the penny appears to have been struck more than once.

Coin catalogue

SF1001

A penny of John or Henry III, probably of Classes 5b to 6d, c.1205-1217 AD. It measures 17.58mm in diameter and weighs 1.01g.

Obverse: The obverse face, which would usually depict the facing bust of the king, is complicated by being struck with both an obverse and reverse die. Presumably this was a result of the initial minting process although a later re-strike is plausible. It depicts on the upper half a voided short cross with four pellets in each angle of the cross and on the lower half the bottom half of a crowned bust facing with a pellet at the chin, a beard formed of short strokes and a sceptre in right hand. This is all contained within an inner circle. The legend is similarly divided between an obverse and reverse type, reading [AMV]ON.VS R/EX . This appears to represent a combination of the reverse type (see below) and the standard obverse legend HENRICVS REX .

Reverse: A voided short cross, four pellets in each angle of the cross, all within an inner circle. The legend reads +SAMVEL.ON.[E] :

This coin is from the moneyer Samuel who according to Wren (1992, 31) only minted coins at the Canterbury mint. The damage to the obverse face makes attribution to a specific type complicated, but the combination of moneyer and lettering indicate it probably belongs to Classes 5b-6d.

SF 1002

A cut halfpenny of Henry III, Class 1b, c.1180-1189 AD. It measures 19.74mm in length/original diameter and weighs 0.72g.

Obverse: Crowned bust facing within an inner circle, five hair curls to the right of the head. The legend reads [h]ENRICVS [REX].

Reverse: A voided short cross, four pellets in each angle of the cross, all within an inner circle. The legend reads +PIERES.M[]

This halfpenny is from the London mint by the moneyer Pieres M. The lettering and hair curls indicate that it belongs to the Class 1b Short-Cross coinage.

5. Conclusions and recommendations for further work

The evaluation revealed that the site had been severely truncated prior to the present development. In the circumstances only very deep features such as large pits or ditches could have survived. None of these were observed. The recovery of two silver medieval coins possibly close in date is of interest, but despite a thorough search no further finds were made. This is unsurprising given the very disturbed nature of the ground and it is recommended that no further work is required on this site.

6. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: Norfolk Museums and Archaeological Service

Finds and environmental archive: Norfolk Museums and Archaeological Service

7. List of contributors and acknowledgements

The evaluation was carried out by Andrew Tester and Jonathan Van Jennians, from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team. The coins were identified by Andrew Brown (Suffolk Portable Antiquities Officer).

8. Bibliography

Wren, C. R., 1992 *The Short-Cross Coinage 1180-1247: Henry II to Henry II.*, (Herne Bay, Kent), Plantagenet Books.

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.