

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/145

**Mill Cottage, Hengrave
HNV 027**

J. A. Craven

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HER Information

Planning Application No: SE/09/0593
Date of Fieldwork: 6th and 11th August 2009
Grid Reference: TL 8288 6885
Funding Body: Mr I. Hughes
Curatorial Officer: Dr Jess Tipper
Project Officer: J. A. Craven
Oasis Reference: Suffolkc1-63147

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

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Summary

An archaeological monitoring of garage footing trenches at Mill Cottage, Hengrave identified a large, undated ditch. This may relate to Anglo-Saxon settlement activity, identified as cropmarks on aerial photographs, on the adjacent fields to the north-west (Scheduled Monument SF 170) or to the prehistoric Fornham Cursus and its associated features (Scheduled Monument SF 114), which terminates in the field 100m to the south.

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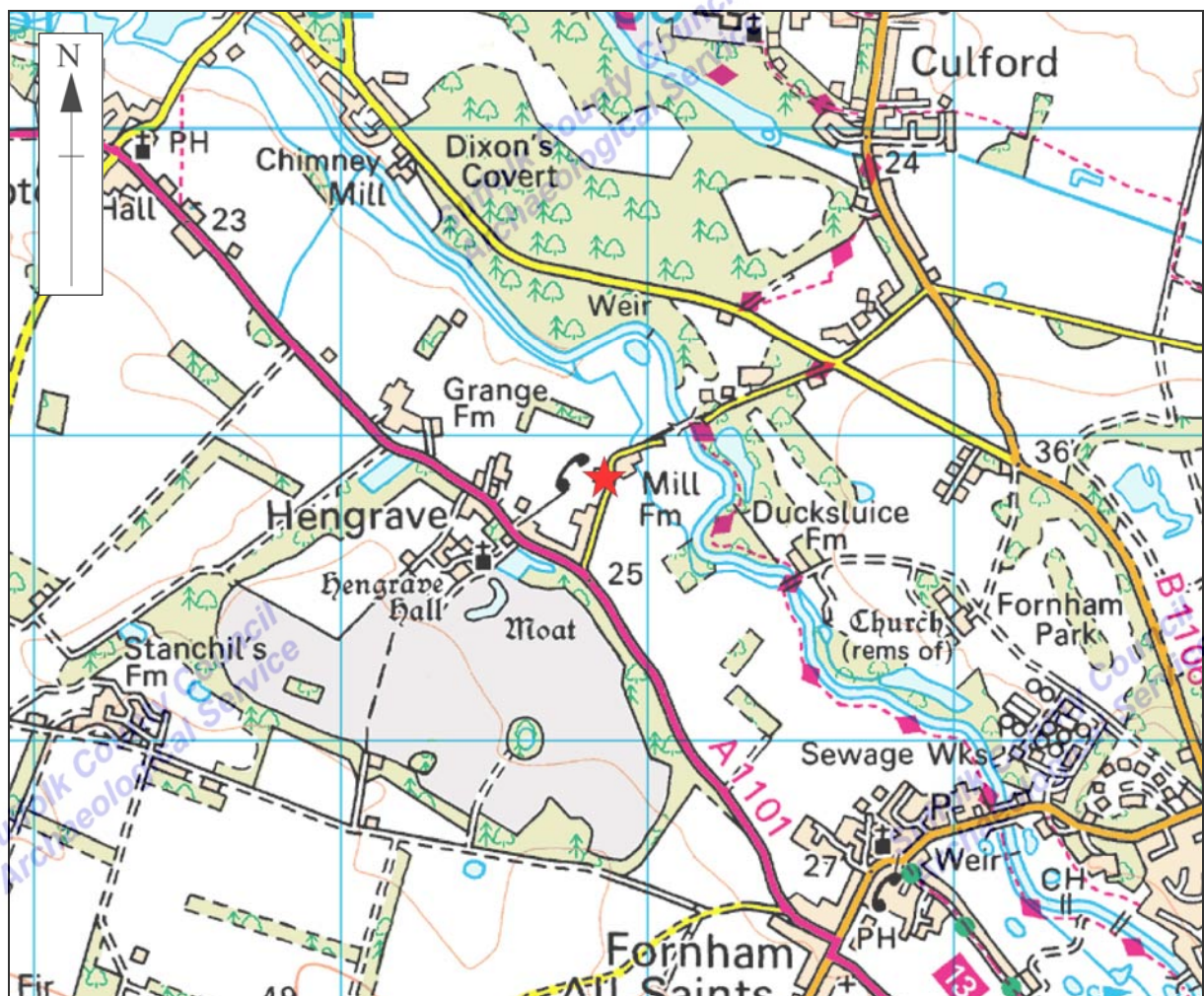
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1. Introduction

An archaeological monitoring was carried out at Mill Cottage, Hengrave during the groundworks for a new garage at the property on the 6th and 11th August 2009 (Figs. 1 and 5). The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by Jess Tipper (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) to fulfil a planning condition on application SE/09/0593. The work was funded by the developer, Mr I. Hughes.

The planning condition had been placed as the site had high potential for important archaeological deposits to be disturbed or destroyed by the development (see below) and so continuous archaeological monitoring was required to record any affected deposits.



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Figure 1. Site location plan

2. Geology and topography

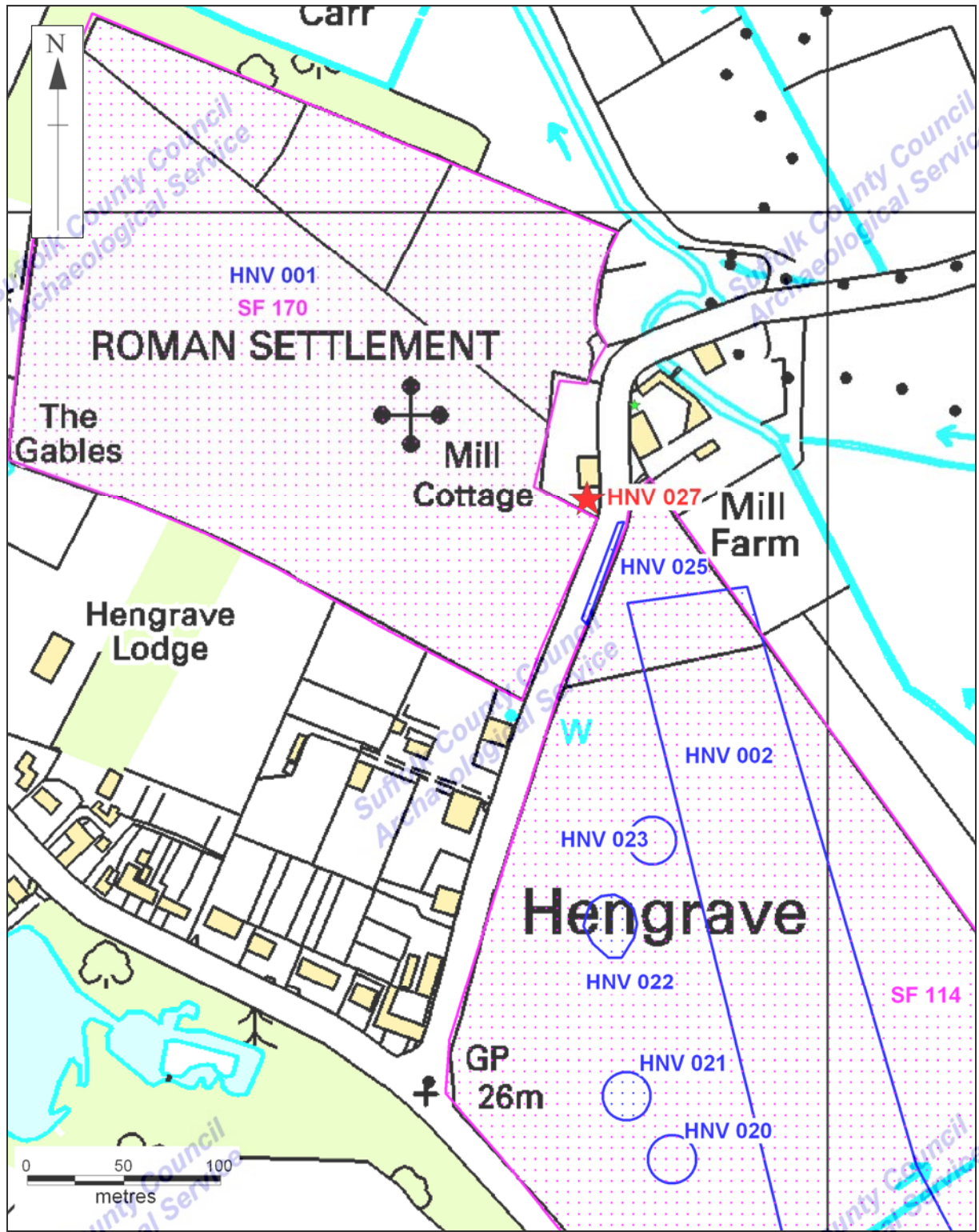
The site lies 300m to the west of the River Lark, on the very edge of the floodplain at a height of 25m AOD. The site geology is of deep sandy soils over glaciofluvial drift (Ordnance Survey 1983).

3. Archaeological and historical background

The site lies within an extensive multi-period landscape along the Lark valley (Fig. 2). The open field immediately to the west contains a series of features, identified by cropmarks visible in aerial photographs, which are recorded in the County Historic Environment Record (HER) as HNV 001. Figure 3, an aerial photograph taken 11 June 1973 (Ref: CUCAP BNB 36) shows Mill Cottage and HNV 001 from the north-west, looking south-east at an oblique angle. A right angled double ditched enclosure is apparent in the south-east corner of the field, probably extending under Mill Cottage itself. The remainder of the field contains scatters of features, right up to the Mill Cottage property boundary, which have been interpreted as possible evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlement. The field is statutorily protected as a Scheduled Monument (SF 170).

To the south of Mill Cottage lies an extensive area of cropmarks, centred upon the Fornham Cursus (HNV 002/FAS004), including four ring ditch cropmarks lying 200m-350m to the south (HNV 020, 021, 022 and 023). The cursus, a Scheduled Monument (SF114), begins 2km to the south-east and extends through Fornham All Saints until terminating in the field, c.100m to the south of Mill Cottage. Figure 4, an aerial photograph taken 26 July 1975 (Ref: SAU MOWAT ABB 17), looks north-east at an oblique angle across the northern extent of the monument and clearly shows the position of the cursus and its possible terminus, with Mill Cottage in the background.

Archaeological monitoring of a pipeline along Mill Road in 1994 (HNV 025) identified a large possible ditch, which would be broadly in line with a projected continuation of the western side of the cursus (Tester 1994). This projected line would then see the cursus pass through the site of Mill Cottage.



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Figure 2. Sites recorded on the County HER



Figure 3. Aerial photograph of HNV 001, looking south-west towards Mill Cottage



Figure 4. Aerial photograph of the Fornham Cursus, looking north-east towards Mill Cottage

4. Methodology

A smaller pre-existing garage that had occupied part of the site had been demolished and the first groundworks involved the removal of its foundations, a 0.15m thick concrete pad measuring c.3m by 5m.

Footing trenches for the 9m by 6m garage were then excavated by a machine with a toothed bucket, under the observation of an archaeologist. The trenches (Fig. 5) measured c.0.5m wide and up to c.1.5m deep.

Excavated spoil was examined for finds. The site was planned by annotating a supplied architectural plan of the development. Due to the depth and narrowness of the trenches, and the loose nature of the subsoil which was frequently collapsing it was not possible to enter the deeper parts of the trench to hand clean the single identified feature although a section was recorded at a scale of 1:20. Digital colour and black and white photographs were taken at all stages of the fieldwork.

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-63147) and a digital copy of the report submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>).

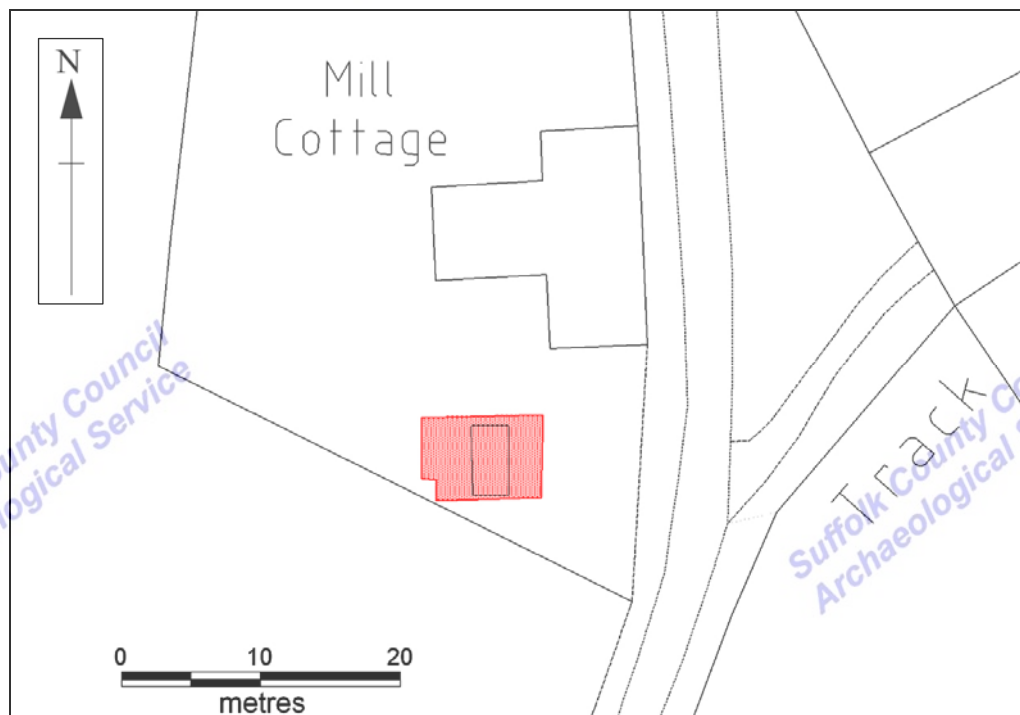
The site archive is kept in the main store of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Bury St Edmunds under HER No. HNV 027.

5. Results

The removal of the concrete pad revealed a still intact deposit of topsoil beneath it, confirming that the site was potentially unaffected by modern disturbance other than the presence of frequent tree roots in the upper 0.4m of the western and southern trenches.

The soil profile, of up to 0.3m of topsoil immediately overlying the natural subsoil of mid yellow sands with occasional gravels was consistent across the western 3m of the site with no evidence of archaeological deposits. Through the centre of the site however a layer of mid brown sands, 0001, c.0.1m-0.2m thick was identified underlying the topsoil and sealing the natural subsoil. Then, c.3m from the eastern end of the site, this layer began to gradually thicken and then merged into the fill of a substantial feature (Fig. 6). This feature, 0002, an apparent ditch, was broadly aligned north to south and measured at least 2.6m wide and 1.5m deep. Only the western side of the ditch cut was observed, being a steep sided slope which was beginning to turn into a probable concave base.

The fill of the ditch, 0003, was a homogenous mid grey/brown fine sand with occasional fine gravel. The upper 0.3m of the fill were affected by root disturbance. No datable material was observed or recovered.



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Figure 5. Site outline

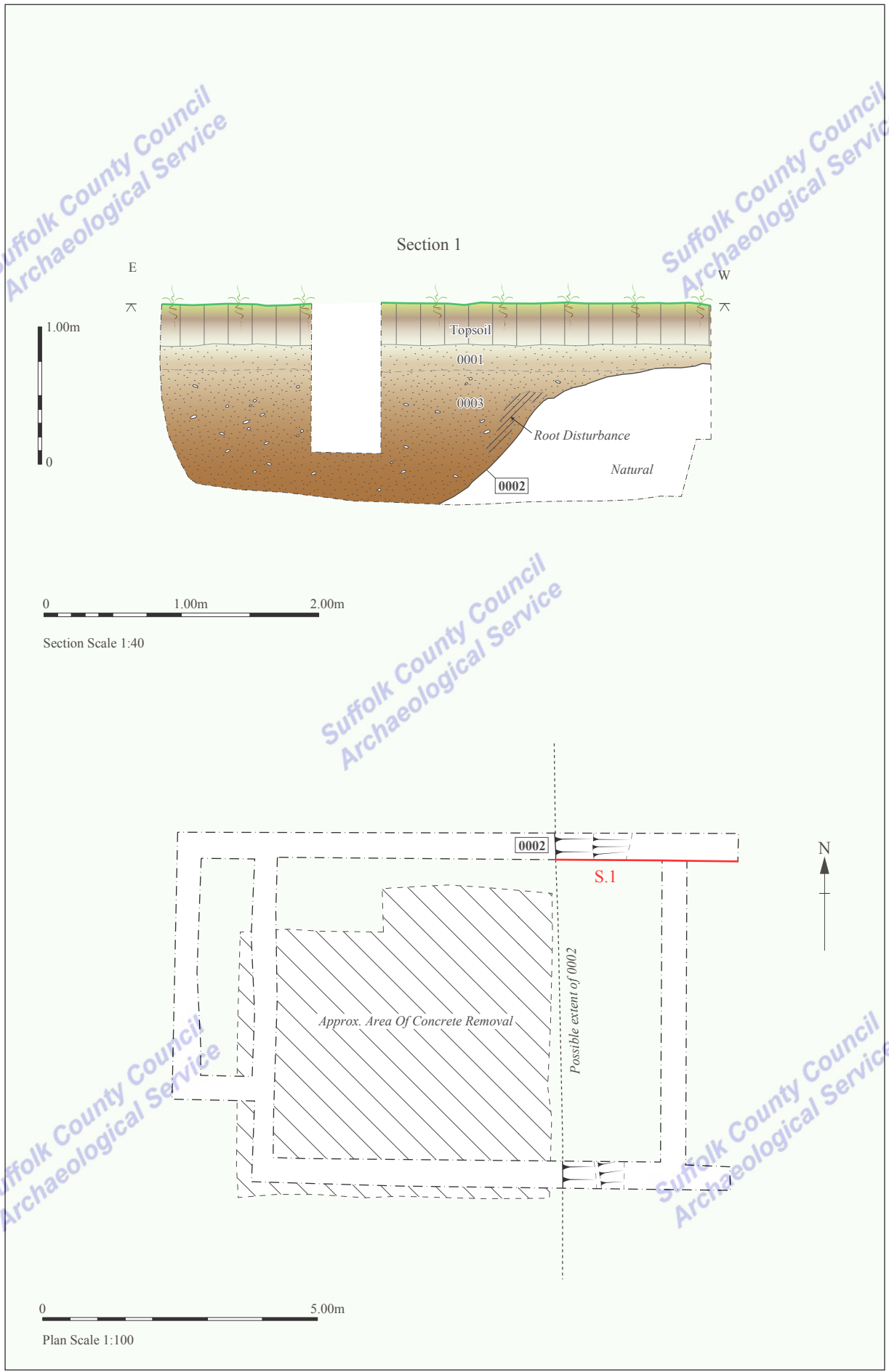


Figure 6. Site plan and 0002 ditch section

7. Discussion

The single feature identified, an undated ditch of substantial size, is most likely to be contemporary with the substantial activity identified by aerial photographs at either of the two adjacent Scheduled Monuments. For instance Figure 3 shows a possible linear cropmark running broadly adjacent to Mill Lane along the southern edge of the field to the west which could relate to ditch 0002. The absence however of any evidence in the trenching for occupation activity associated with the believed Anglo-Saxon settlement in that field indicates that the ditch is perhaps more likely to relate to the monumental prehistoric activity to the south.

Although ditch 0002 and the feature seen in HNV 025 lie broadly upon any projected continuation of the Fornham Cursus, particularly as its course is known to have several alterations along its length, they are unlikely to relate directly to it as such an extension has not been apparent on any aerial photographs of the area. More likely is that the ditch is part of one of the many features, such as enclosures and trackways, that are visible on the aerial photographs of the area and which are likely to be contemporary with the Cursus monument.

8. Conclusions and significance of the fieldwork

Results from the monitoring of the site were limited, with only one feature being identified and no archaeological material of any type recovered. However this feature, a substantial ditch, is potentially of significant importance, probably being related to multi-period activity at either of the two adjacent Scheduled Monuments.

9. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds store

Digital archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds T:arc\rarchive field proj\hengrave\HNV 027

Mill cottage

10. Bibliography

Aerial photographs CUCAP BNB 36 and MOWAT ABB 17 held at Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service.

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

Tester, A., 1994, *Pipelaying at Hengrave July-August 1994*. SCCAS Report No. 1994/049.

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