

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT**

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SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/147

**4 Back Street, Lakenheath  
LKH 322**

J. A. Craven  
© August 2009  
[www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/e-and-t/archaeology](http://www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/e-and-t/archaeology)

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## HER Information

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Planning Application No: F/2009/0194/FUL

Date of Fieldwork: 14th August 2009

Grid Reference: TL 7147 8279

Funding Body: Mr T. Parfitt

Curatorial Officer: Dr Jess Tipper

Project Officer: J. A. Craven

Oasis Reference: Suffolkc1-63215

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## Summary

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An archaeological monitoring was carried out during groundworks for a new extension to 4 Back Street, Lakenheath. A single broad ditch was identified, lying parallel and immediately adjacent to the boundary graveyard wall of the parish church. The feature was undated but is thought to likely to mark the original churchyard boundary, either pre-dating, or contemporary with, the adjacent wall.

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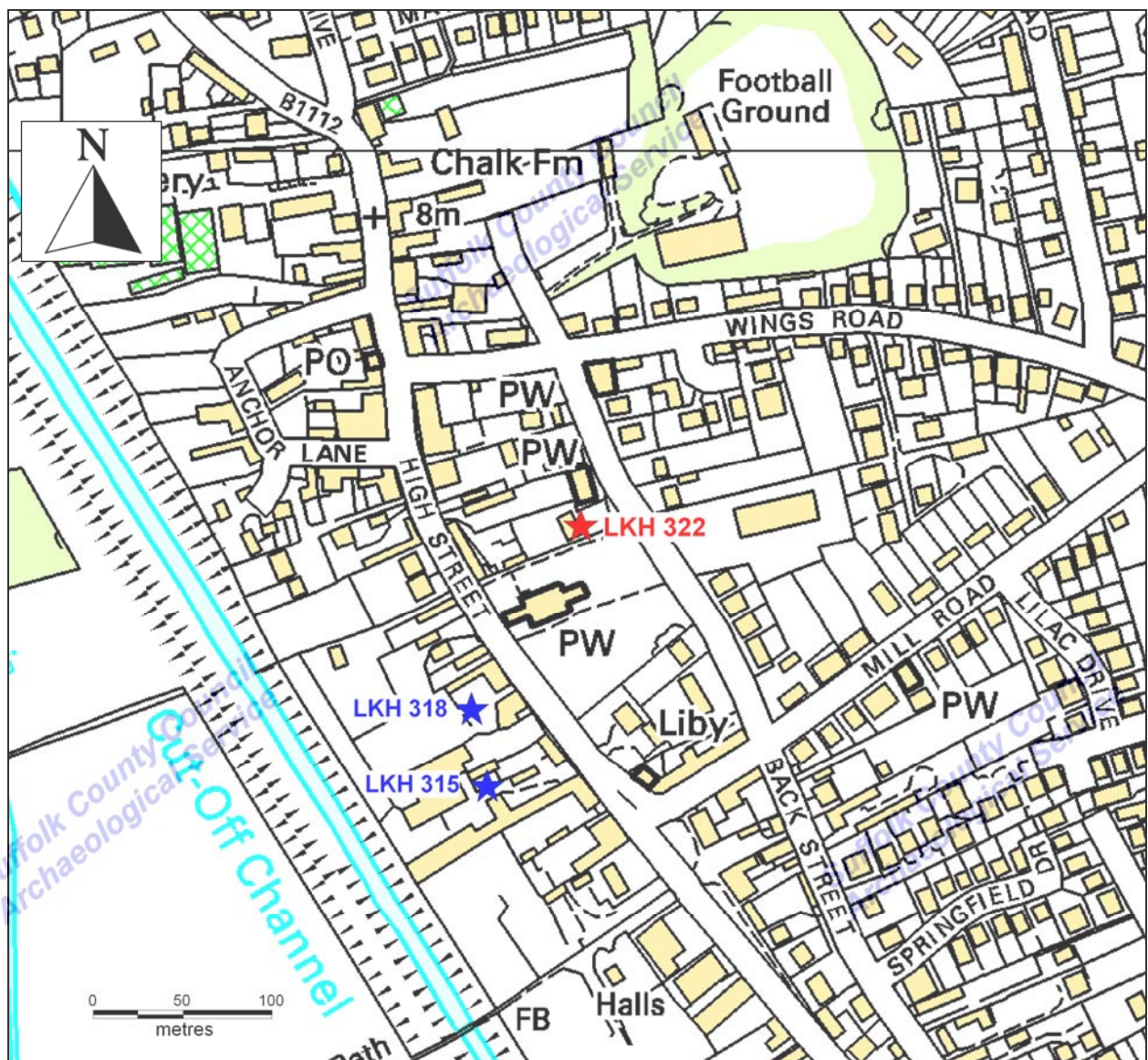
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# 1. Introduction

An archaeological monitoring was carried out at 4 Back Street, Lakenheath, during the groundworks for a new extension at the property on the 14th August 2009 (Fig. 1). 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 F/2009/0194/FUL. The work was funded by the developer, Mr T. Parfitt.

The planning condition had been placed as the site had high potential for 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

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The site lies on a west facing slope overlooking the fen-edge at a height of 12m AOD. The modern 'Cut-Off' channel, which marks the present fen-edge, lies 200m to the west. The site geology is of deep sandy soils over chalky drift (Ordnance Survey 1983).

## 3. Archaeological and historical background

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The site lies in the historic core of Lakenheath, within the town Conservation Area and LKH 254, the designated area of archaeological importance recorded in the County Historic Environment Record (HER). The settlement was recorded as a town in c.1100, was granted a market in 1201 and a later fair and market in 1309. The sites location, between the High Street and Back Street, meant that it was likely to be in an area of medieval occupation.

The site is also immediately adjacent to the graveyard of the parish church of St Mary's, a Grade I listed building (LKH 112, LBS No. 275834) with origins in the 12th century and substantial additions through the 13th to 15th centuries. The boundary wall of the graveyard, a structure c.2m in height, lay within 1m of the proposed extension. The lower part of the wall was of mixed flint and brick construction, with the upper metre apparently being a later addition predominantly in chalk clunch.

Evidence of medieval activity dating back to the 13th century has previously been seen at LKH 315 (Caruth and Craven 2008) and LKH 318 (Craven 2009) on land to the rear of properties fronting the High Street, 140m to the south-west. Rubbish pits with medieval pottery, medieval building debris and postholes indicated existence of a medieval farm, pre-dating the existing 17th\18th century farm complex of chalk clunch buildings at LKH 315. Documentary research for LKH 318 (Breen 2009) suggested that the site was in use since at least the thirteenth century, with possible origins for occupation in the Anglo-Saxon period.

Finally the site's fen-edge location places it within the dense band of known prehistoric and Roman activity recorded in the County HER.

The site therefore had high potential for multi-period archaeological deposits, particularly of medieval or Anglo-Saxon date, to be disturbed by the development groundworks. The program of continuous monitoring was therefore required to record any such deposits.

## 4. Methodology

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The first works involved the removal of a concrete pad, c.0.15m thick and its hardcore foundations. This was shown to lie on undisturbed topsoil and the whole extension footprint was subsequently lowered to a depth of 0.3m below groundlevel.

Footing trenches for the 4m by 6m extension were then excavated by a machine with a toothed bucket, under the observation of an archaeologist. The trenches (Figs. 2 and 3) measured c.0.6m wide and up to c.1.2m deep and showed the remaining c.0.2m of topsoil overlying a buried soil layer and then the natural chalk subsoil.

Excavated spoil was examined for finds. The site was planned at a scale of 1:50 on A3 gridded permatrace and a feature section recorded at a scale of 1:20 (Fig. 3). Digital colour photographs were taken at all stages of the fieldwork.

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-63215) 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 322.

## 5. Results

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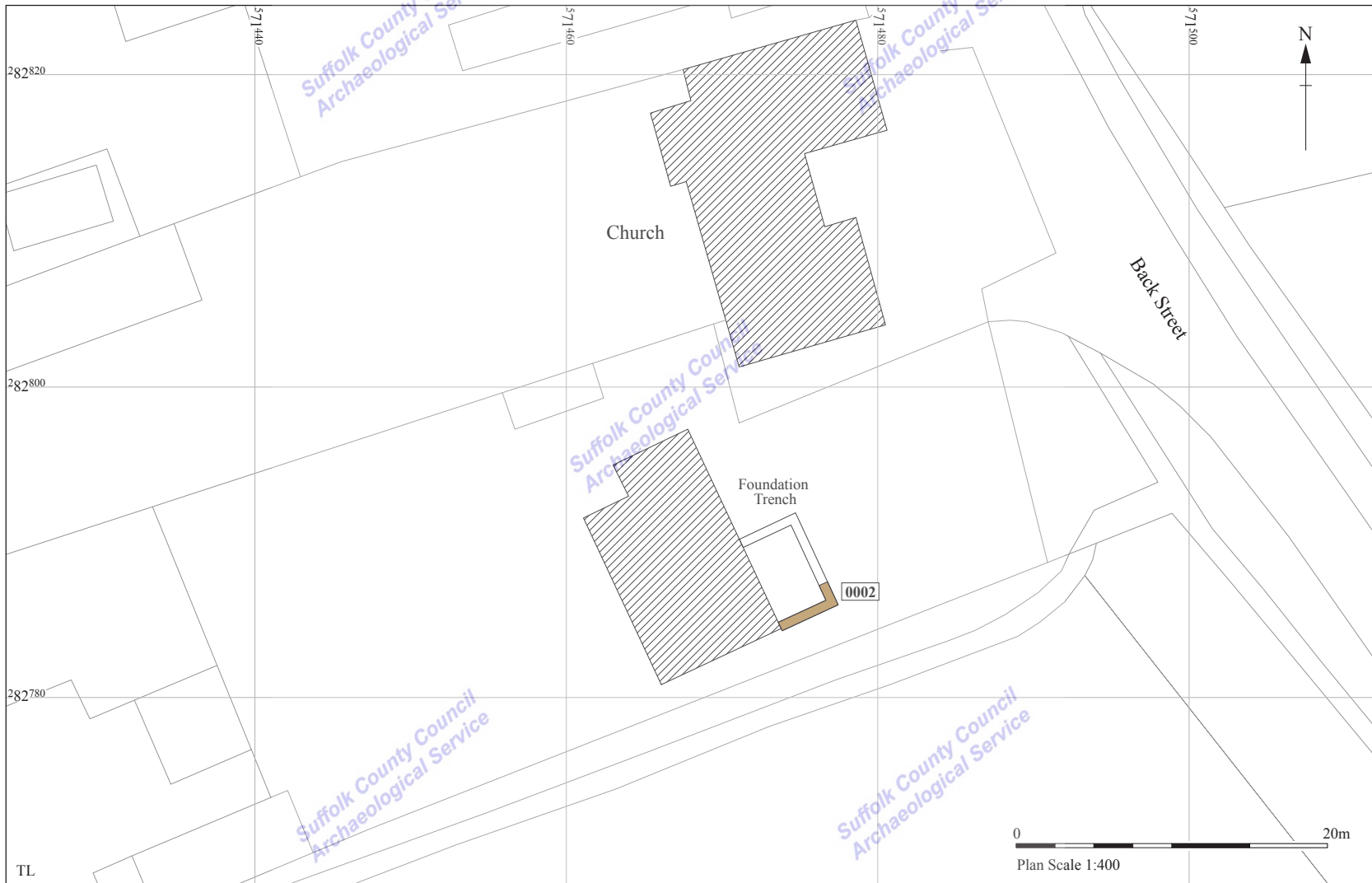
The northern and eastern arms of the footing trenches showed an undisturbed soil profile. Under the remaining 0.1m-0.2m of topsoil was a buried soil layer, 0001. This was a c.0.2m thick deposit of homogenous, fine mid brown silty sand. This layer was immediately above the natural chalk subsoil.

The southern trench arm was seen to cut directly through a substantial ditch, 0002. This feature was aligned south-west to north-east, parallel to the adjacent graveyard wall, and measured c.1.8m wide. With moderate-steep sloping sides it had a concave base, 1.4m below groundlevel. Its fill, 0003, was a homogenous mid brown/silt/sand with occasional small stones that was indistinguishable from layer 0001. Although a substantial part of the feature was excavated by machine no finds were observed or recovered from its fill. Two fragments of animal bone were collected from layer 0001 above the ditch.

## 6. The Finds

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Two animal bone fragments weighing 122g were collected from context 0001. The first is a nearly complete horse metacarpal and the other is a small fragment of mammal skull.



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Figure 2. Site plan

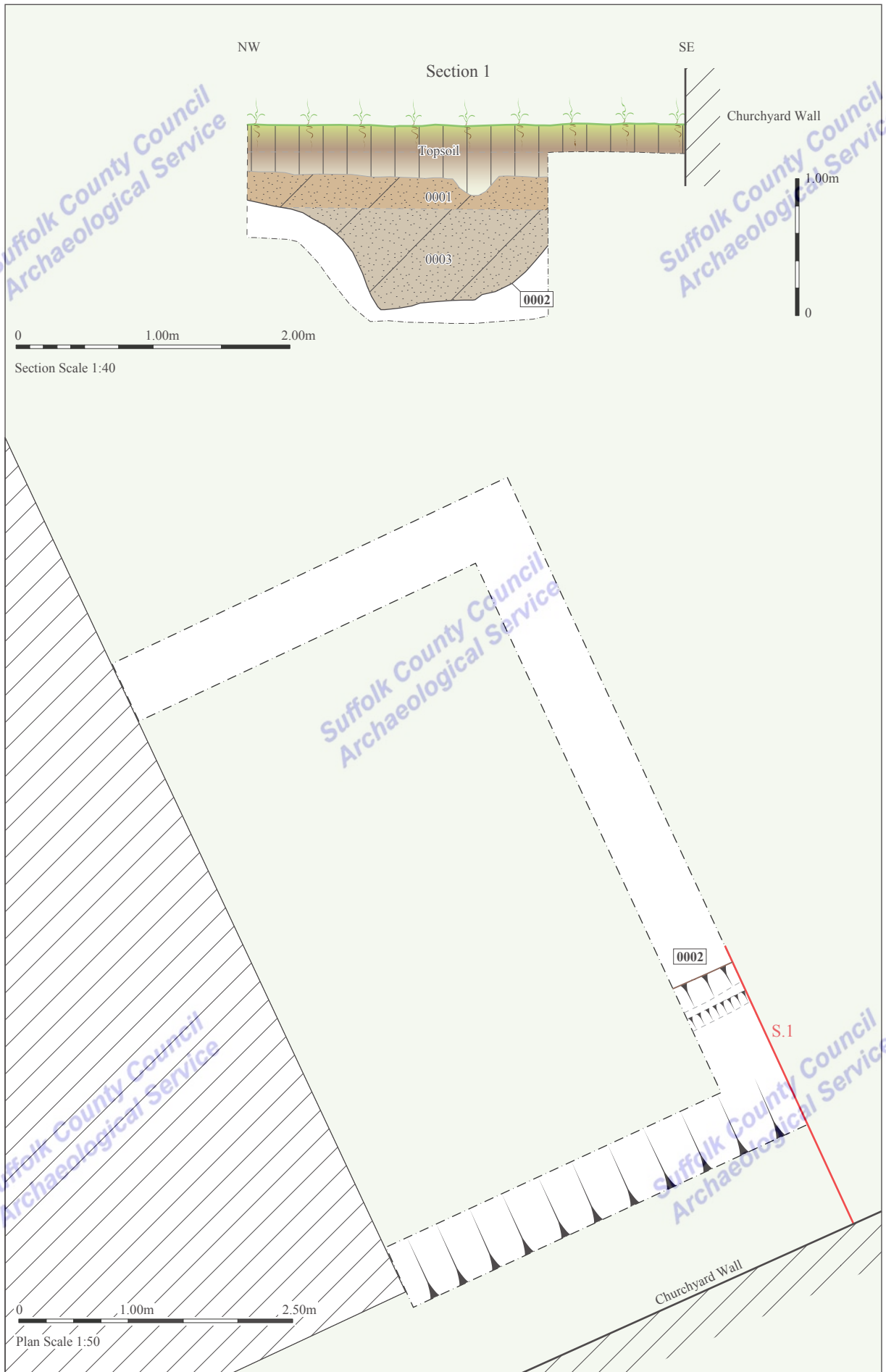


Figure 3. Trench plan and 0002 section

# 7. Discussion

The majority of the trenching contained no evidence of previous activity, with a thick topsoil overlying an intact buried soil. The site is therefore likely to have been open land throughout the medieval and post-medieval history of the settlement, perhaps as gardens to the rear of any properties fronting Back Street or the High Street. The First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1882 (Fig. 4) and the 1853 Lakenheath ex Fen Tithe map (Fig. 5) both show the current property as an open plot.

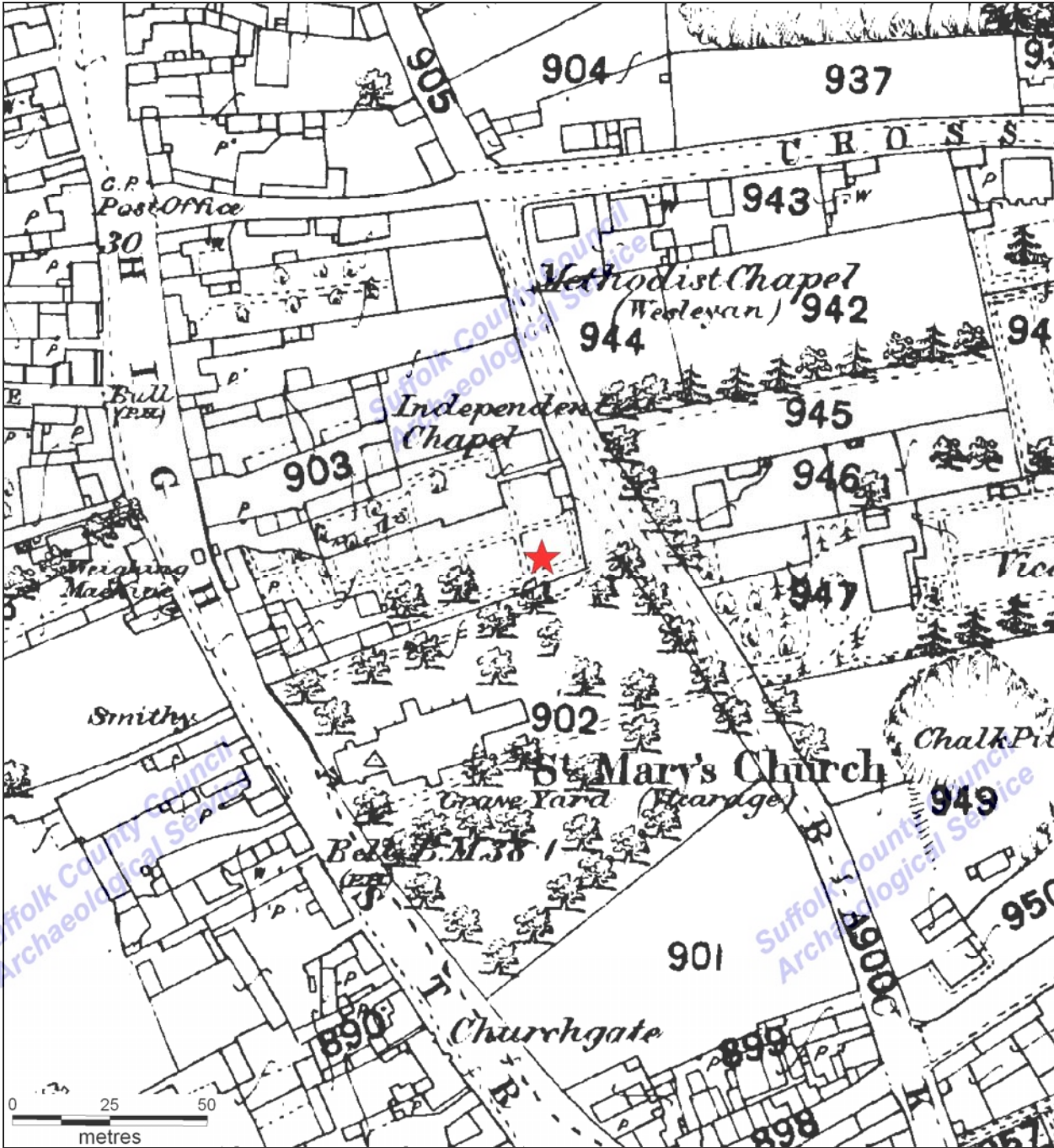


Figure 4. Site as shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1882



Figure 5. Site as shown on the Lakenheath ex Fen tithe map, 1853

The single identified feature, a substantial ditch, was undated. Its position though, immediately next to the St Mary's boundary wall, indicates that it is likely to mark the original edge of the graveyard, either pre-dating or contemporary with the original wall construction. The 19th century maps do not show any changes to the position of the boundary and the complete absence of any activity to the north of the ditch demonstrates that the graveyard has not at any time extended beyond it.



## 8. Conclusions and significance of the fieldwork

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No evidence of medieval occupation activity was identified in the trenching, indicating that the site had likely been open land to the rear of any properties fronting Back Street or the High Street. The identified ditch is likely to be of medieval date however, marking the edge of the adjacent churchyard.

## 9. Archive deposition

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Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds.

Digital archive: SCCAS T:arc\archive field proj \Lakenheath\LKH 322 4 Back Street Mon

## 10. List of contributors and acknowledgements

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The project was managed and carried out by John Craven. Finds identification was carried out by Cathy Tester and the production of the digital site plans and section by Crane Begg.

## 11. Bibliography

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Breen, A., 2009, 'Documentary Study' in Craven, J. A., 2009, *The Cromwell Inn, 76 High Street, Lakenheath LKH 318*. SCCAS Report No.209/112.

Caruth, J., and Craven, J. A., 2008, *Land to rear of 82/82A High Street, Lakenheath, LKH 315*. SCCAS Report No. 2008/109.

Craven, J. A., 2009, *The Cromwell Inn, 76 High Street, Lakenheath LKH 318*. SCCAS Report No.209/112.