

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

## LAND BETWEEN NEWGATE AND GRESHAM ROAD, BECCLES (SMR ref. BCC 041)

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF PART OF THE  
GROUNDWORK ASSOCIATED WITH THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE  
FORMER WILLIAM CLOWES PRINT WORKS, BECCLES  
(Application No. W/6116/12)

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2005/6  
(OASIS Ref. suffolke1-6605)

**Summary:** Archaeological monitoring of part of the groundwork associated with the redevelopment of the former William Clowes Print Works, Beccles (NGR TM 4230 9054), was undertaken during December 2004 and January 2005. Despite being immediately adjacent the believed location of the medieval town defences of Beccles no significant archaeological deposits were identified and no artefacts, other than a single sherd of unstratified medieval pottery, were recovered. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference BCC 041. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, with funding from the site's developers.

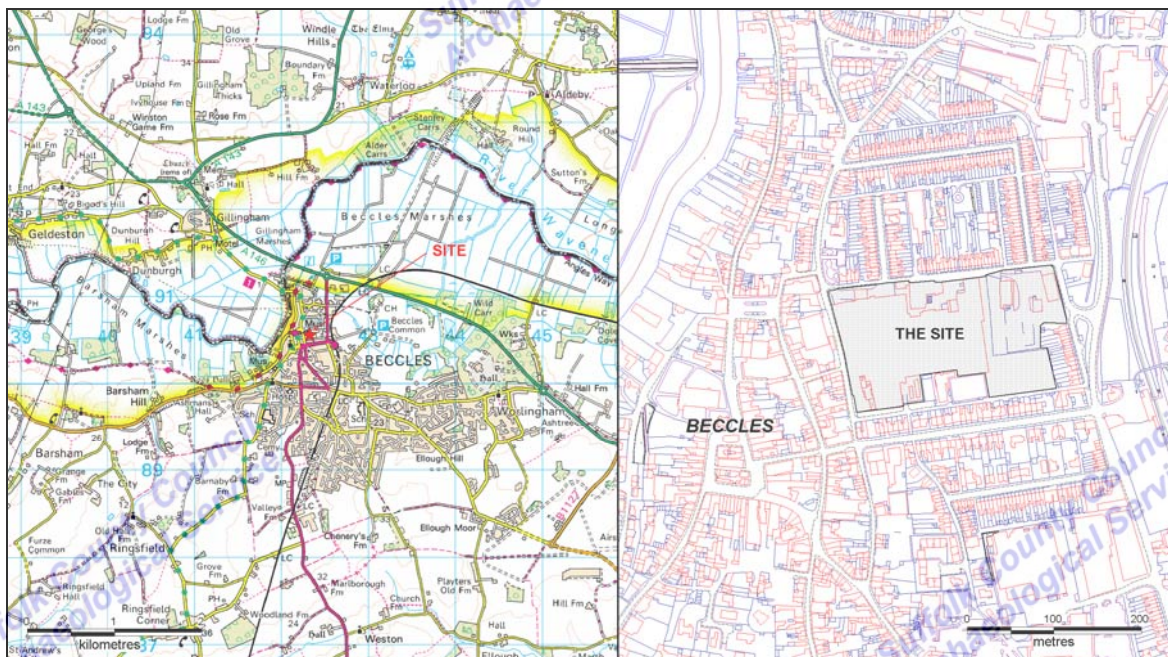


Figure 1: Location Plan

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## Introduction

An application for the construction of a retail store on the site of the former William Clowes Print Works and an adjacent Auction Mart, both situated on land between Newgate and Gresham Road, Beccles (application no. W/6116/12), was approved with an attached condition requiring a programme of archaeological works to be put in place prior

to any construction work. The archaeological interest in the site was due to its location adjacent the assumed location of the medieval town's defences which are likely to have run along the line of Newgate and may have been in the form of a large ditch or wall or possibly both. The development area is also the known site of an Elizabethan Manor House.

A Brief and Specification (B&S) for archaeological monitoring of certain groundwork associated with the proposed development was produced by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team (Appendix 1). A large proportion of the development area had been heavily disturbed by the former print works as many of its buildings had half-basements which had cut deeply into the original ground surface and would have destroyed any archaeological deposits that may have existed. Consequently only two areas within the former print works site were considered worthy of investigation, these being the northwest and southwest corners of the development area where previous disturbance was thought to have been negligible (see figure 2 below).

The area of the Auction Mart, which comprised the northeastern quarter of the development area, was thought to be relatively undisturbed although the proposed development has minimal impact on this area.

The National Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is TM 4238 9055; for a location plan see figure 1 above. This monitoring event is recorded on the Suffolk County Sites and Monuments Record under the reference BCC 041. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, with funding from the site's developers.

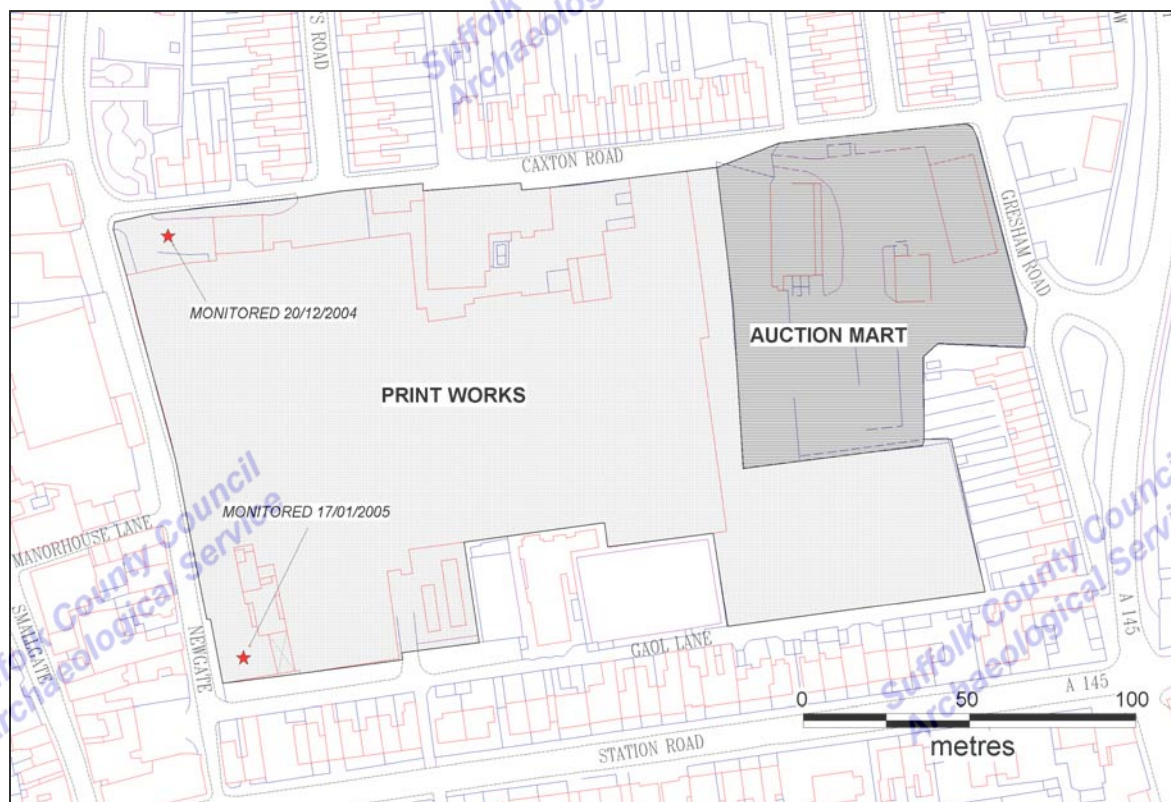


Figure 2: Areas Monitored

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## Methodology

Visits were made to the site in accordance with a prearranged programme agreed with the developer's archaeological consultant (Mr P. Chadwick of CgMs Consulting) and were designed to coincide with particular aspects of the works then in progress. During visits groundwork was to be observed and any significant archaeological deposits or features revealed were to be excavated and recorded. The depths and nature of the subsoil was also to be recorded and a limited photographic record was compiled during visits.

## Results

The site was visited on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 2004 to observe the lifting of a concrete roadway in the northwest corner of the former print works. Upon lifting it was found that the concrete was c.100mm thick and was laid on a thin layer of sand which in turn overlaid a spread of brick rubble. The on-site contractors then excavated a sample trench, c. 1m by 2m, through the underlying material. This revealed that the concrete surface and its foundation appeared to be laid onto the former topsoil, which was c.0.2m thick and overlaid a natural subsoil comprising yellow sand and gravels. The interface between the top and subsoil was relatively abrupt suggest the natural had been previously truncated. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were exposed

The site was again visited on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2005 to observe the removal of the concrete floor of an office building that formerly stood in the southwest corner of the print works. Upon removal it was found to have been laid on a foundation of brick rubble and sand and immediately overlay a surface of blue stable block type bricks set into a layer of cement. The contractors then excavated a small test trench to ascertain the soil make-up. This revealed a 0.5m thick deposit of topsoil, which in turn overlay a natural subsoil of orange sand and gravel. The interface was relatively blurred indicating that the subsoil surface was generally undisturbed. Again no features, deposits or artefacts were recovered from this work although a single unstratified sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from a nearby spoil heap.

The monitoring archive from this project will be deposited at the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service offices in Bury St Edmunds under the reference BCC041, it is also recorded on the OASIS, online database, reference: suffolkc1-6605.

## Conclusion

No evidence for early occupation of this site, other than the single unstratified sherd, was identified during the monitoring visits although only a small proportion of the area of the former print works was investigated. No indication of any defensive works were identified. If a large ditch associated with any town defence had been present it would have undoubtedly been recognised within the monitored areas. All other areas within the print works did indeed appear to have been basemented to depths that would have truncated the natural subsoil by at least c.1m if not more in the western half of the site. It was noted that the natural topography fell away to the east and it is possible that undisturbed areas could survive towards the Auction Mart although the development will have minimal impact in this area.



Plate I: Soil profile revealed during first visit (20/12/204)

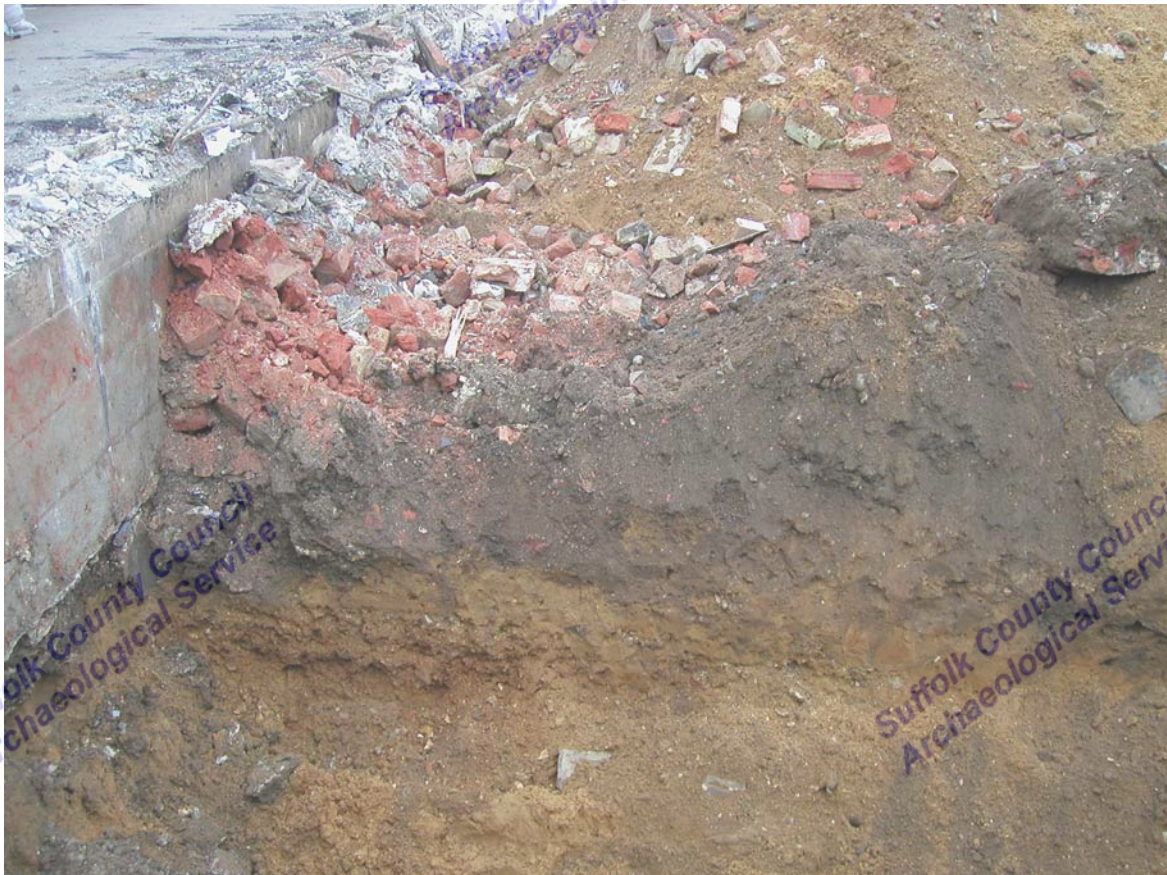


Plate II: Soil profile revealed during second visit (17/01/2005)

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM**

**Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring**

**LAND BETWEEN NEWGATE AND GRESHAM ROAD, BECCLES**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Planning permission to erect a retail store on this site has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (W/6116/12). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence and the proposed foundation methods indicates that the area affected by new building can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The proposal lies immediately adjacent to the Area of Archaeological Importance for Beccles, as defined in the Waveney Local Plan, and will involve significant ground disturbance.
- 1.3 An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of the site was completed by CgMs Consulting in December 2003 (**William Clowes Works, Newgate, Beccles, Suffolk**, Paul Chadwick). This has shown that two buildings stood to the east of Newgate in the 18th century, one of which appears to have been the Elizabethan Manor House which had escaped the fires of 1586 and 1662.
- 1.4 Little is known about the extent of the town during the medieval or later Saxon periods but it is assumed that the area east of Newgate was outside the town at that date. However, any town defence of this earlier period may well have followed the line of Newgate (either east or west of it). The site does, therefore, have significant archaeological potential.
- 1.5 The later use of the site as a printing works, however, will have caused significant damage to any archaeological remains. In particular, the Newgate frontage is basemented, and most of the site is covered with old foundations. The new ground disturbance associated with construction of the retail store will, therefore, be limited.
- 1.6 There are, however, areas of the site where archaeological remains could survive, e.g. the area of the Auction Mart, and the removal of old walls and their foundations might reveal "free sections" which could provide useful archaeological information.

**2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring**

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which would be damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for medieval occupation of the site.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activities in this proposal are the removal of old foundations and excavation of new building footing trenches. These, and the upcast soil, are to be observed during and after they have been excavated by the building contractor.
- 2.4 It is envisaged that a 'light touch' monitoring is appropriate on this site, i.e. visits should be in proportion to the archaeological information being revealed. The County Archaeologist should be consulted during the groundworks as to the frequency of visits necessary.

**3. Arrangements for Monitoring**

- 3.1 The developer or his archaeologist will give the County Archaeologist (Keith Wade, Archaeological Service, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR. Telephone: 01284 352440; Fax: 01284 352443) 48 hours notice of the commencement of site works.
- 3.2 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the observing archaeologist) who must be approved by the Planning Authority's archaeological adviser (the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service).

- 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 paragraph 2.3 of the Brief and Specification and the building contractor 's programme of works and time-table.
- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered, the County Archaeologist should be immediately informed so that any amendments deemed necessary to this specification to ensure adequate provision for recording, can be made without delay. This could include the need for archaeological excavation of parts of the site which would otherwise be damaged or destroyed.

#### 4. **Specification**

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Archaeologist and the 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity should be given to the 'observing archaeologist' to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.
- 4.3 In the case of footing trenches unimpeded access at the rate of one and half hours per 10 metres of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.
- 4.4 All archaeological features exposed should be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.5 All contexts should be numbered and finds recorded by context as far as possible.
- 4.6 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments 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 Sites and Monuments Record within 3 months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.2 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*. The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County SMR 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.
- 5.3 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. 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).
- 5.4 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*, should be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 County Sites and Monuments Record sheets should be completed, as per the county SMR manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.

Specification by: Keith Wade

Suffolk County Council  
Archaeological Service Conservation Team  
Environment and Transport Department  
Shire Hall  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Date: 30 January 2004

Reference: /Beccles-Newgate01

**This brief and specification remains valid for 12 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.**