

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/170

Abbey Farm Habitat Creation Scheme, Snape SNP 097

HER Information

Planning Application No: C/08/0009

Date of Fieldwork: March – April 2009; October 2009

Grid Reference: TM 388 579

Funding Body: RSPB

Curatorial Officer: Will Fletcher

Project Officer: Linzi Everett

OASIS Ref: suffolkc1-70983

Summary

The excavation of new ditches and ponds, and re-profiling of existing ditches as a part of an RSPB/Environment Agency habitat creation scheme was carried out on land at Abbey Farm, Snape. This required a programme of archaeological monitoring in order to record the deposit sequences revealed and any archaeological interventions present. No archaeological evidence was observed in the course of these groundworks, either in the form of incised features or pre-modern artefacts.

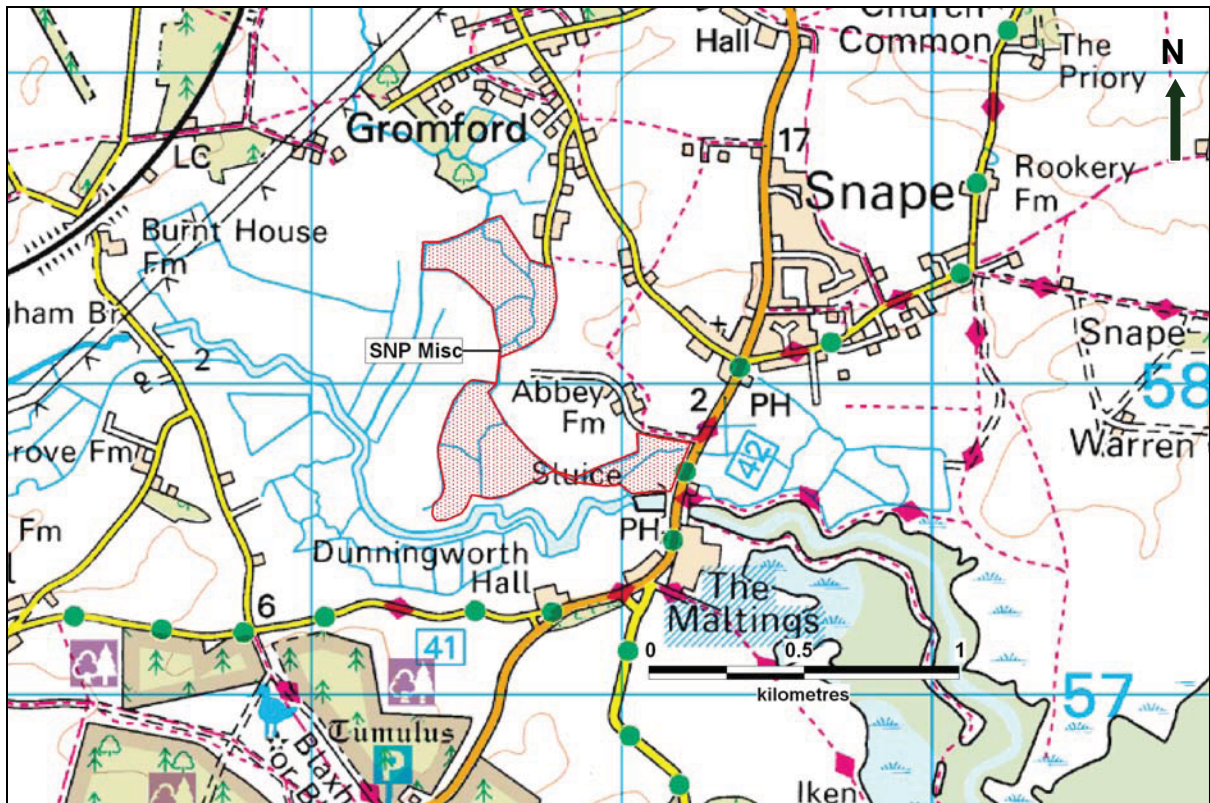
A second phase of work monitored the insertion of a sluice gate along the southern boundary of the site and on the line of the former Great Eastern Railway (Snape Branch). A series of crag sand layers were revealed which were likely to have been imported deposits associated with the construction of the railway line during the nineteenth century. A layer of material which included fragments of medieval masonry likely to have originated from Snape Priory, to which this land formerly belonged, was also incorporated into the railway line construction material.

1. Introduction and methodology

Monitoring was required on land at Abbey Farm, Snape, where new drainage ditches and ponds were excavated as part of a scheme to create a new wetland habitat on the north side of the River Alde (Planning application C/08/0009). Existing drainage ditches were also cleaned out and re-profiled as a part of the work. During the initial phase of this work, groundworks were monitored intermittently over the course of several weeks, either viewing the clean ditch sections following re-profiling or observing the deeper excavations as they took place. A second phase of work covered monitoring the creation of Sluice 3 (Fig. 2).

The site lies at TM 388 579 (Fig. 1), just below the 5m OD contour, with potential for the recovery of material from all periods as well as for the survival of palaeo-environmental and waterlogged deposits. The proposed area comprises pasture and former floodplain of the Rivers Alde and Fromus. This land formerly belonged to Snape Priory, a once extensive monastic site dating back to the twelfth century. There is potential for the remains of buildings or activity associated with the Priory to exist within the development area.

Monitoring of the site was carried out by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Field Team, following a 'Brief and Specification' by Will Fletcher of the SCCAS Conservation Team (Appendix I). The fieldwork took place between March and April 2009, and in October 2009, and was funded by the RSPB.



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Figure 1. Site location

In total, twelve visits were made to the site by the Field Projects Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (SCCAS) in order to inspect the various groundworks. The site was recorded under the Historic Environment Record (HER) code SNP 097. The stripped surfaces were examined visually for significant deposits and incised features and the upcast spoil for artefactual evidence. Where necessary, sections were drawn at 1:20 and a photographic record made to form a part of the site archive.

All finds were washed and marked before being quantified, identified and dated by the Finds Team of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service. The monitoring archive is held in the county HER in Bury St. Edmunds.

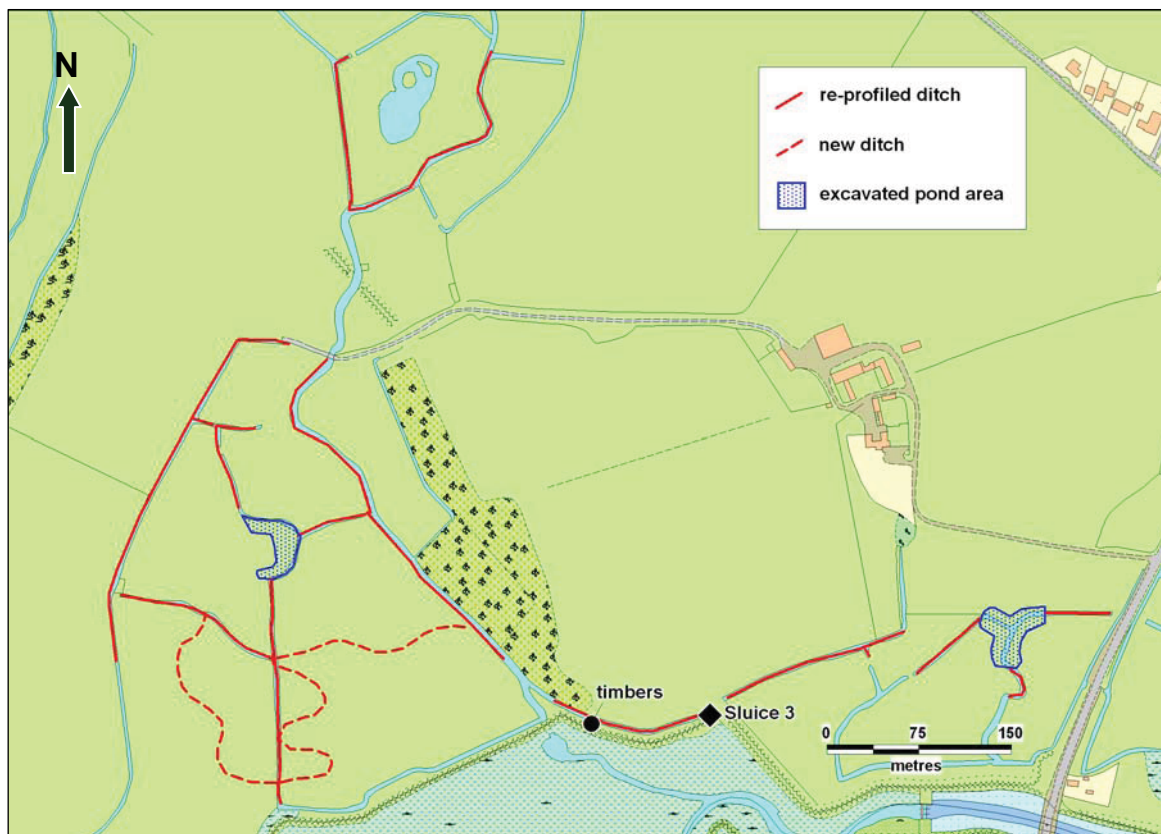
2. Results

2.1 Ditch creation/reprofiling

Generally speaking, the groundworks were excavated through broadly the same stratigraphy:

- *Topsoil* 0009 Mid–dark brown humic loam with frequent root disturbance and occasional small flint pebbles. 0.1m-0.2m thick.
- *Subsoil* 0010 Pale greyish brown homogenous clay. 0.5m thick.
- *Natural subsoil* Mid bluish grey gravelly clay.

A layer of peat (0011) was observed through the new E-W ditch shown on Figure 2. This was present below the subsoil layer 0010 but sealed the natural subsoil and measured 0.4m thick at the east end, thinning to 0.3m thick at the west.



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Figure 2. Location of monitored groundworks

West of Sluice 3 (Fig. 2), peaty/humic clay deposits (0012) were seen below the topsoil in the re-profiled ditch sides to a depth of c.0.8m. Below this, in the base of the ditch, the natural gravelly clay subsoil was revealed. Whilst no interventions

were observed, machining exposed a series of squared, upright timbers in the southern bank. These appeared to be a softwood such as pine and measured approximately 0.15m square and 0.8m long (Plate 1). They were associated with a set of metal steps and thus dismissed as modern in origin (Plate 2).

No archaeological interventions were observed at any point within the groundworks nor was any pre-modern artefactual evidence revealed in the sections or recovered from the upcast spoil.

2.2 Sluice 3 monitoring

A rectangular hole measuring 6m long, 5m wide and 3m deep was machine excavated, with a 1m wide trench cut to the east to accommodate a pipe linking two drainage ditches. It was located directly on the line of the former Great Eastern Railway (Snape Branch), as shown by Figure 3. Groundworks were excavated through the following stratigraphy:

- *Topsoil* 0001 Dark brown humic clay loam, loose, with frequent root disturbance and occasional fragments of modern brick, burnt coke, slag and glass. c.0.3m thick.
- *Subsoil* 0002 Mid brown humic clay loam, loose, regular root disturbance, no finds. c.0.12m thick
- *Layer* 0003 Loose orange crag sand with regular small pebbles and flints measuring <0.08m. Visible in section (Fig. 3) and continuing through the length of the SW-NE connecting pipe section. c.0.18m thick.
- *Layer* 0004 Dark greyish brown clay, compact, some root action, occasional oyster shell fragments and flints <0.09m. Contains a discreet patch of larger flints, septaria and cragstone fragments as well as quern, brick and tile fragments. Layer only extends c.0.5m NE in the connecting pipe section. Up to 0.65m thick.
- *Layer* 0005 Dirty orange crag sand with solid crag lumps and regular small pebbles and flints measuring <0.08m. Occasional charcoal fragments. Up to 0.1m thick.
- *Layer* 0006 Mid greyish brown silty sand mottled with orange sand. Friable. Includes regular-frequent flint pebbles <0.08m and small fragments of brick.

Images of the sluice gate and connecting trench are included as Plates 3 and 4.

Figure 4 is a drawn section through the excavated soil sequence.

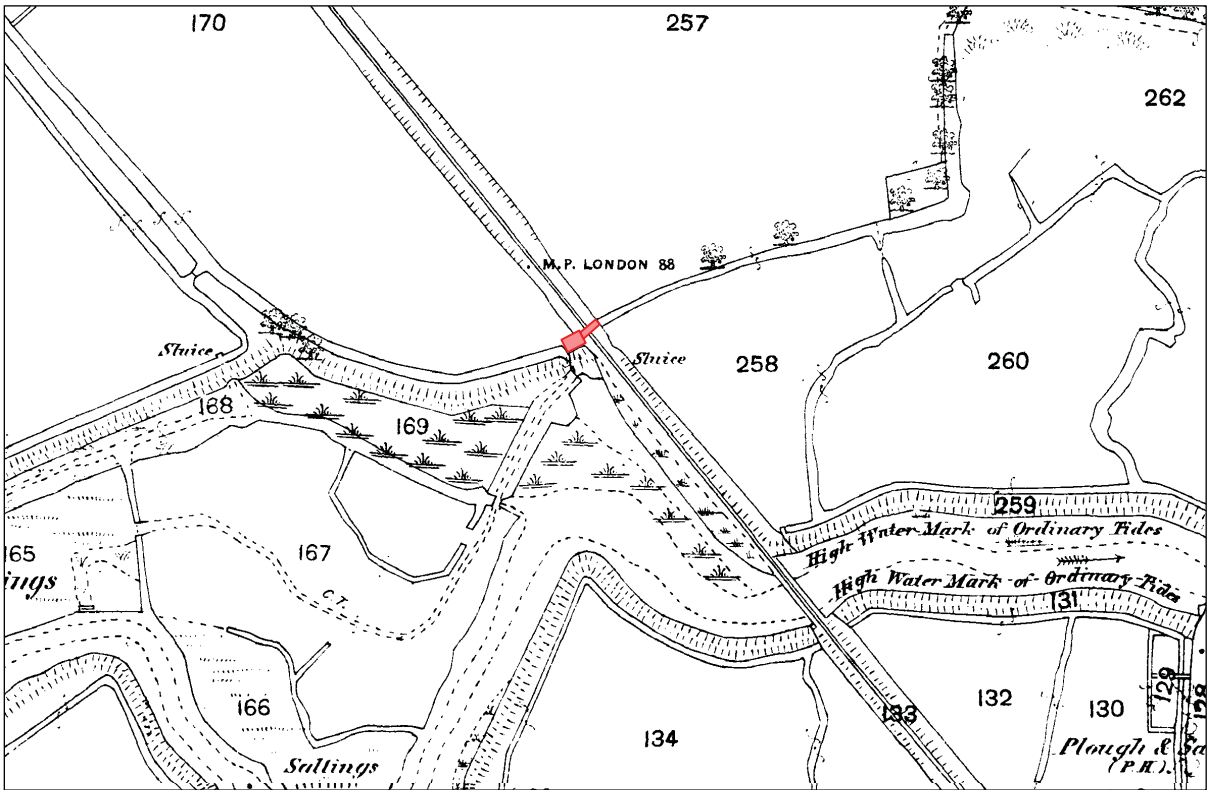


Figure 3. Extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, showing location of Sluice 3 in relation to the former railway line

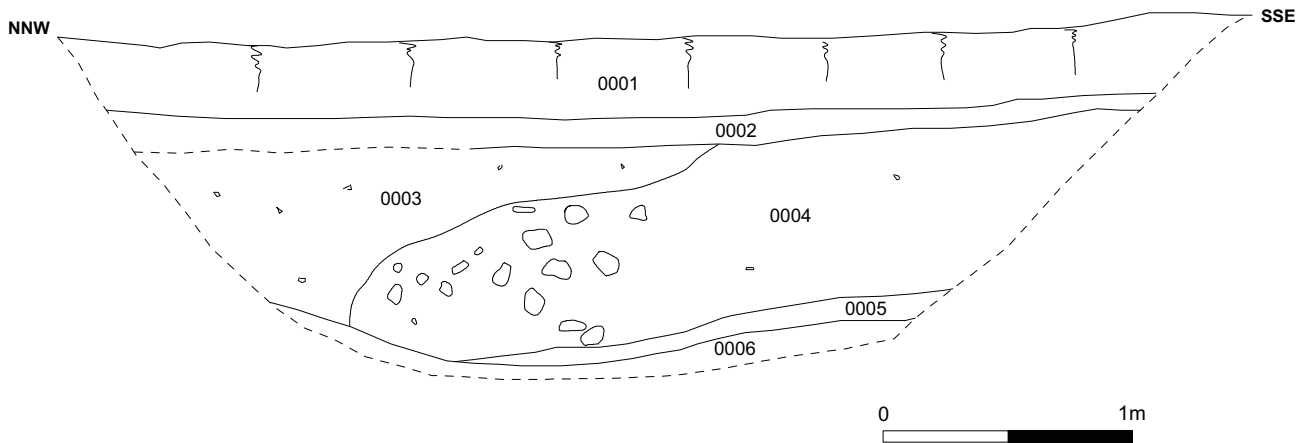


Figure 4. Section showing the stratigraphy revealed by the sluice excavation

3. The finds

Introduction

Finds were collected from four contexts, as shown in the table below.

Context	CBM		Stone		Lava quern		Miscellaneous	Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g		
0004	3	1489	1	1866	1	314		Med/post -med
0006	3	1210						Late-p- medieval
0007	1	47	7	9710				Unstrat
0008			1	5011			1 frag ?concrete @ 2008g, 1 frag AnB @ 21g	Unstrat
Total	7	2746	9	16587	1	314		

Table 1 Bulk finds

Ceramic building material

Seven fragments of ceramic building material were recovered in total weighing 2746g. Pieces of red-fired late and post-medieval roofing tile were collected from deposits 0004, 0006, and 0007, a number allocated to unstratified finds. The remains of a large and abraded plain floortile with knife-trimmed chamfered edges was identified in 0004. It is made in a medium sandy fabric with a height of 28mm, and it is likely to be English, rather than a Flemish tile of medieval date. It was found with a fully oxidised, coarse sandy brick (height 55mm, width 115mm), which is post-medieval (Drury, 165). A highly abraded fragment of a probable brick made in a fine fabric with clay pellet inclusions dating to the late/post-medieval period and another fragment of post-medieval brick were recovered from deposit 0006.

Stone

Nine fragments of worked stone were collected from three contexts. Four dressed blocks of coarse, possibly ferruginous sandstone were present amongst the finds recovered from 0007, a number given to the unstratified finds from the upcast spoil of the sluice excavation. Two of these had the remains of an off-white chalk rich mortar adhering to one surface. A further three more fragments of worked stone from 0007 are made in a soft, fine-grained clunch-type stone. One of these has a semi-circular profile with a diameter of 200mm, with the remains of an angular section above this. The second fragment is more highly decorated, and has several worked faces, with tooling marks being clearly visible. It may be part of a medieval window mullion, and has a circular recess for jointing on one side. A further large

fragment of the same clunch-type stone from 0008 is almost rectangular in section with mortar on one of the faces. It is very worn and the original faces have been mainly destroyed but some tooling marks are still visible. A fragment of septaria recovered from deposit 0004 may have been used to make up the rough internal core of a wall, although it has little sign of being worked (Edward Martin, pers.comm.).

Lava quern

A single fragment of Rhenish lavastone was recovered from deposit 0004 (height 36mm). It has one dressed face which is made up of wide furrows, suggesting that it was originally part of a millstone rather than a smaller hand-turned domestic quern.

Miscellaneous

A large fragment of concrete with a semi-circular profile was collected as an unstratified find from 0008 the spoil from the ditch.

Animal bone

Part of a probably bovine femur head was recovered as an unstratified find from 0008.

4. Discussion

Despite the sites location close to the site of Snape Priory where evidence of associated activity might be expected, no incised features were observed. This suggests that the development area was not subject to intensive activity in antiquity, but as the groundworks only represent a small percentage of the sites total area, it is possible for features to exist but not to have been disturbed during this event.

Monitoring of the sluice gate excavation revealed very different deposits to those seen during the initial phase of work. A series of clean crag sand layers are likely to represent imported material used in the construction of the redundant railway line, probably from a local quarry pit on higher ground. Layer 0004, which contained medieval building debris, also appears to have been deposited during

this event but probably derives from the clays which make up the flood plains and water meadows in the low area around Abbey Farm.

In addition to a number of finds dating to the post-medieval period, a fragment of a medieval floortile and several pieces of medieval moulded stone were collected as unstratified finds which clearly derive from the Priory nearby. The presence of the Rhenish lavastone millstone fragment is of note as a water mill is recorded in the dissolution survey of Snape c.1525-1528 (Suffolk County HER).

Linzi Everett
January 2010

References

Drury, P., 1993, 'Ceramic Building Materials', in Margeson, S., *Norwich Households*. East Anglian Archaeology 58, Norwich Survey.



Plate 1. Softwood timbers removed from ditch west of Sluice 3



Plate 2. Metal steps removed from ditch west of Sluice 3



Plate 3. Sluice gate excavation showing NW-SE section drawn as Figure 3



Plate 4. NE-SW section of connecting trench east of sluice gate

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for Archaeological Recording and Monitoring of Development

HABITAT CREATION SCHEME AT, ABBEY FARM, SNAPE

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 The holding is situated to the north side of the river Alde, upstream of Snape Bridge. It consists of a mainly arable farm situated on the light sandy soils above the floodplain, however the holding also consists of important pasture and former meadows which once formed the floodplain of the Rivers Alde and Fromus. This area once belonged to Snape Priory, a Benedictine monastic site dating to 1155. It is likely to have been an extensive establishment with a church, monk's cloisters and accommodation. The priory also had an associated demesne comprising of farmland with barns, and a mill. There are no surviving above ground remains and the full extent Abbey has yet to be fully established. Some documentary and field survey work has been completed and published in 1983¹, and extensive documentary work has been undertaken as part of the mitigation for this proposal².
- 1.2 In 2007 a partnership between the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Environment Agency allowed the purchase of land at Abbey Farm, Snape for habitat creation. The archaeological potential of the site was initially identified as significant, with a high probability for the survival of below ground archaeological remains, buried waterlogged sites, and features of the historic landscape. During the initial consultation process a Brief and Specification³ was issued by the Conservation Team from Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service (SCCAS/CT) for an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment⁴. This assessment was completed in January 2007 and the conclusions indicate a significant potential still exists at the site for the recovery of material from all periods, including waterlogged archaeological and palaeo-environmental material during the proposed scheme. Following the DBA an outline plan of works was established in May 2007⁵, followed by a scoping consultation for Environmental Impact Assessment in July 2007⁶. The scoping document recommended that aspects of the Cultural Heritage, Archaeology & Material Assets amongst other issues 'should be investigated further in the next stage of the EIA'. Further to this scoping documentation, The Conservation Team from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS/CT) have been asked by the developer (RSPB) to provide a Brief and Specification for the mitigation work required for the development phase of the project.
- 1.3 The developers have been advised that during the groundwork phase of the project, activities associated with the creation and management of habitat could cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists here.

¹ Flimer-Sankey, W. 1983, **The Dissolution of Snape Priory**, Proc. Suff. Inst. Archaeol. Hist 35/3, pp 213-221

² **Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: Land at Abbey Farm, Snape (SNP 095)**, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (January 2007) (SCCAS Report No.2007/012)

³ **Brief and Specification for a Desk-Based Assessment**, Land at Abbey Farm, Snape (SCCAS-CT Ref:/AbbeyFarm_Snape 2006)

⁴ see ²

⁵ **Abbey Farm, Snape: Outline Plan of Works**, Environment Agency (May 2007, revised June 2007)

⁶ **Abbey Farm (Snape), Scoping Consultation Document**. Environment Agency (July 2007)

- 1.4 No archaeological mitigation work is required prior to the work commencing, and an archaeological monitoring of works as they are being undertaken is deemed sufficient to fulfil the requirements of this Brief. Aspects of the work will however need to be monitored throughout the project to allow all significant sites and finds to be identified, recorded and recovered.
- 1.5 Based on the currently available Outline Scheme of works⁷ aspects of the project that will require archaeological monitoring, by area, will include:
Area 1: Excavation to create open water areas, new ditches, the 'creek system', ditch cleaning and re-profiling (ref. 1, 2, 2a, 4, and 5), and work on the sluices (ref. S2 and S3).
Area 2: New ditches, ditch cleaning and re-profiling (ref. 7, 8, 9a, and 12)
Area 3: Excavation to create open water areas, ditch cleaning and re-profiling (ref. 17, 18, 19, 20, 20a and 25)
- 1.6 This list will need to be finalised and agreed with SCCAS/CT, after the Scoping process has been completed, a final Scheme of Works has been published and prior to the project commencing.
- 1.7 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 Project Design or Written Scheme of Investigation (PD/WSI) based upon this brief and the accompanying outline specification 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 (Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443) for approval. The work must not commence until this office has approved the archaeological contractor as suitable to undertake the work, and the PD/WSI as satisfactory. The PD/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.
- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 Before any archaeological site work can commence it is the responsibility of the developer to provide the archaeological contractor with either the contaminated land report for the site or a written statement that there is no contamination. The developer should be aware that investigative sampling to test for contamination is likely to have an impact on any archaeological deposit, which exists; proposals for sampling should be discussed with SCCAS/CT before execution.
- 1.10 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.
- 1.11 Any changes to the specification that the project manager may wish to make after approval by this office should be communicated directly to SCCAS/CT for approval.

2. **Brief for Archaeological Monitoring**

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits that are damaged or removed as part of this development.
- 2.2 The main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for medieval remains relating to Snape Priory, particularly the mill, and for the wet areas to produce waterlogged archaeological remains which predate the reclamation of the meadows for pasture.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the excavation of areas to create open water, the excavation of new ditches, and the re-excavation of old 'creek' systems. Work undertaken to clean and then re-profile the current ditch system, and to excavate and replace worn sluices will also require monitoring. These activities and the

⁷ See ⁶

subsequent upcast soils are to be closely monitored during and after the building contractor has excavated them. 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 - see 1.7 above.
- 3.2 The developer or his 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 Outline Programme of Works, as proposed by the developer, should provide approved archaeological contractor with a guide on which to estimate the size of the contingency needed.
- 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 both the County Council Conservation Team archaeologist 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 minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 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 J Heathcote, 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 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 three months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.

- 5.2 The project manager must consult the SMR 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*. 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. Account must be taken of any requirements the County SMR may have regarding the conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage of excavated material and the archive.
- 5.4 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).
- 5.5 An unbound copy of the report, clearly marked DRAFT, must be presented to SCCAS/CT for approval within six months of the completion of fieldwork unless other arrangements are negotiated with the project sponsor and SCCAS/CT.
- 5.6 Following acceptance, two copies of the evaluation report should be submitted to SCCAS/CT and also a single hard copy to the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments. A single hard copy should be presented to the county SMR as well as a digital copy of the approved report.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 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 Sites and Monuments 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.
- 5.9 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.
- 5.10 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the SMR. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: William Fletcher

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Date: 03rd September 2007

Reference: /AbbeyFarm_Snape2007/MON

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.

Appendix II

Context	Identifier	Description	Over	Under
0001	Topsoil	Dark brown humic clay loam, loose, with frequent root disturbance and occasional fragments of modern brick, burnt coke, slag and glass. c.0.3m	0002	
0002	Subsoil	Mid brown humic clay loam, loose, regular root disturbance, no finds. c.0.12	0003; 0004	0001
0003	Layer	Loose orange crag sand with regular small pebbles and flints measuring 80mm. Visible in section and continuing in connecting pipe section. c.0.18m	0004	0002
0004	Layer	Dark greyish brown clay, compact, some root action, occasional oyster shell fragments and flints 90mm. Contains discreet patch of larger flints, septaria and cragstone fragments as well as quern, brick and tile fragments. Layer only extends c.0.5m in connecting pipe section	0005	0002; 0003
0005	Layer	Thin layer of dirty orange crag sand with solid crag lumps and regular small pebbles and flints measuring 80mm. Occasional charcoal frags	0006	0004
0006	Layer	Mid greyish brown silty sand mottled with orange sand. Friable. Includes regular-frequent flint pebbles 80mm and small frags of brick		0005
0007	U/S finds	Unstratified finds collected from the upcast spoil of the sluiceway excavation		
0008	U/S finds	Unstratified finds collected from the spoil cleared out of peat filled ditch west of sluice 3		
0009	Topsoil	Mid-dark brown humic loam with frequent root disturbance and occasional small flint pebbles.	0010	
0010	Subsoil	Pale greyish brown homogenous clay		0009
0011	Layer	Discrete peat layer, 0.4-0.3m thick		0010
0012	Layer	Peaty/humic clay layer west of sluice 3, 0.6m thick		0009