

Land to rear of Post Office, Commister Lane, Ixworth IXW 058

Application No. SE/04/2236/P

TL 9320 7044

Oasis No. suffolkc1-7259

Report No. 2005/50

Summary

An archaeological monitoring of footing trenches at the rear of the Post Office, Commister Lane, Ixworth, located evidence of post-medieval deposits, including two brick lined wells or soakaways.

Introduction

Two visits were made to the site (Fig. 1) on the 9th and 14th March 2005 to monitor the excavation of footing trenches for the construction of two houses. The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by R.D.Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) to fulfil a planning condition on application SE/04/2236/P. The work was funded by the developer, Percy Brown Ltd.

Interest in the site was based upon its general location within the medieval urban core of Ixworth, lying adjacent to the medieval church and churchyard. The development therefore had the potential to disturb archaeological evidence of medieval occupation across the site.

Methodology and Results

The footing trenches were excavated by machine to a depth of 1m to 1.5m. They were approximately 0.8m wide and were all observed when fully open. This identified a thick layer of modern material, generally rubble and hardcore, lying immediately above the natural chalk subsoil at a depth of 0.4-0.5m although in several places modern disturbance extended to a greater depth.

A total of four features were identified in the trenches (Fig. 2) together with a surviving soil layer, sealed beneath the modern deposits. No finds were collected from any of the contexts.

0002 was a layer, 0.3m thick, seen beneath the modern deposits but above the natural chalk, which was at a depth of 0.6m. The deposit was a dark grey silt/loam with flecks of chalk and building material.

0003 was a pit, 1m wide and 0.8m deep, cutting into the natural chalk. Its fill, 0004, was a dark grey silt/loam with flecks of brick.

0005 was a pit or ditch, 1.4m wide and deep, with vertical sides. The feature was not fully excavated and the base was not seen. Its fill, 0006, was similar to 0004, a dark grey/brown silt/loam with flecks of brick and chalk.

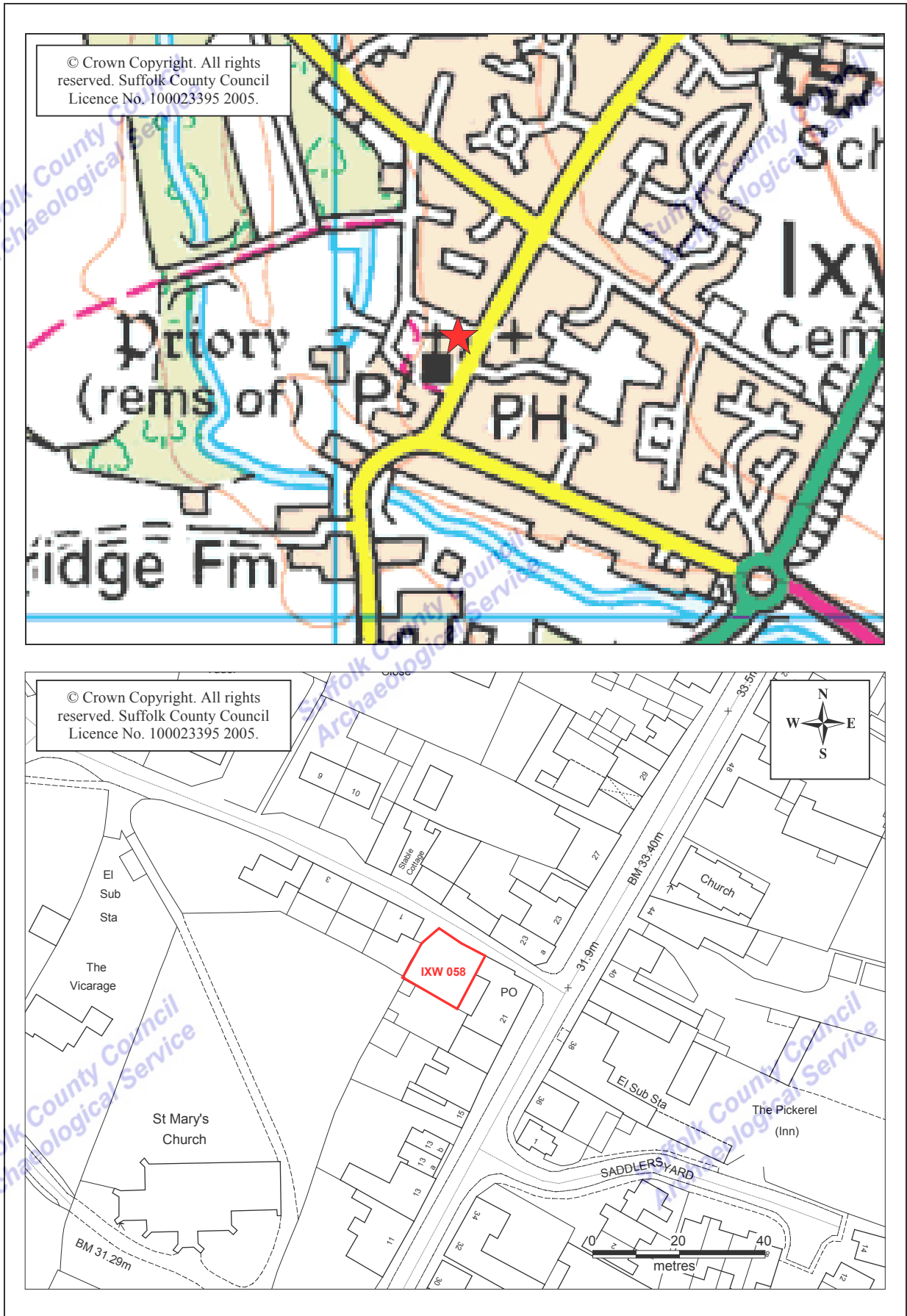


Figure 1. Site location plan

0007 was a red brick lined well or soakaway with a domed cap 0.2m below the surface. It was approximately 1.3m wide and at least 1.4m deep but was not fully excavated. The fill of the shaft, 0008, was a dark grey/brown silt/loam with some mixed rubble.

0009, situated 1m north-east of 0007, was a slightly smaller well or soakaway at approximately 1.2m wide and at least 1.4m deep but was not fully excavated. It was lined with red brick and lay 0.2m below the surface although no cap was apparent. The fill of the shaft, 0010, was a dark grey/brown silt/loam with some mixed rubble.

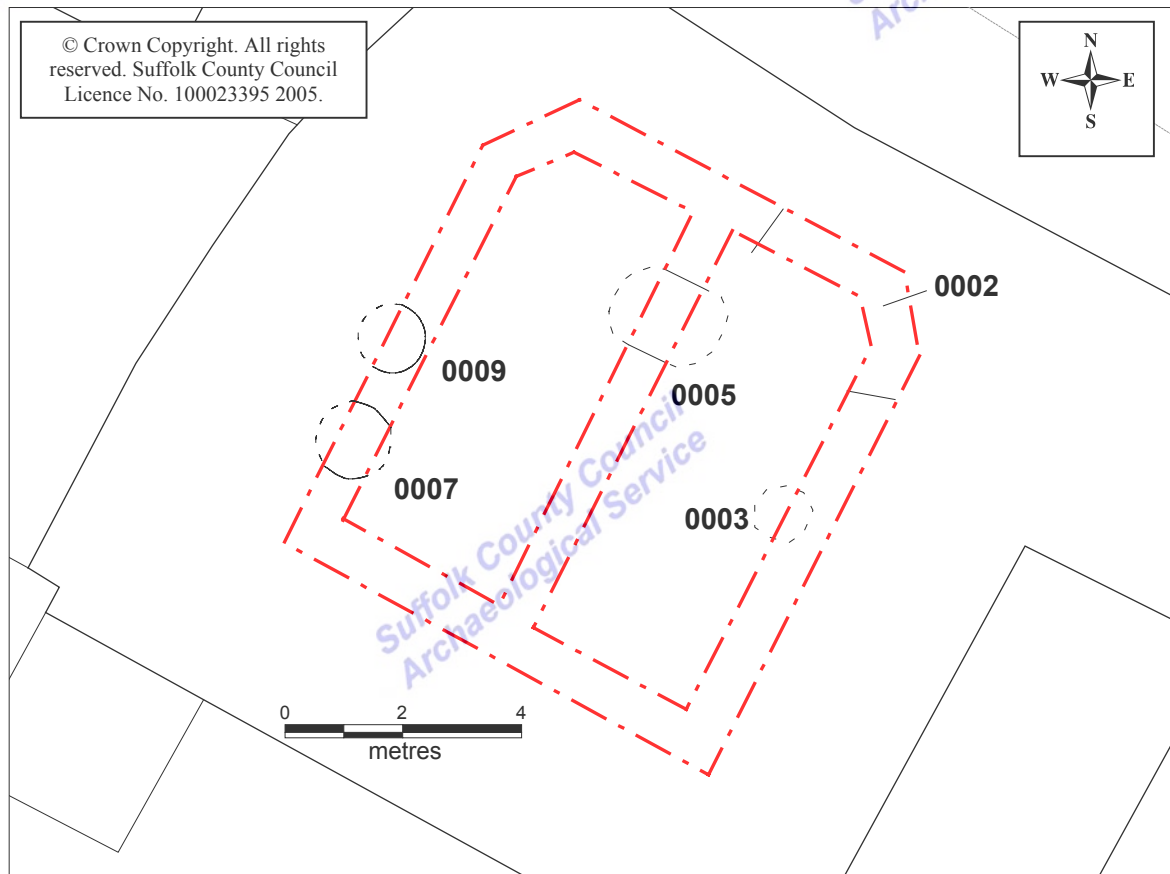


Figure 2. Site plan

Discussion

The site has been subject to significant recent activity, with modern deposits overlying and truncating the natural subsoil, leaving 0002 as the only evidence of a former preserved soil or ground level lying above the chalk. This truncation indicates that shallow, archaeological deposits may have been lost.

There is no evidence that any of these features pre-date the post-medieval period. They most likely represent post-medieval activity prior to the 20th century land use of the site, possibly associated with the buildings shown occupying the site on the 1880 OS map.

John Craven, March 2005