

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SIR ROBERT HITCHAM CEVAP SCHOOL DEBENHAM (SMR ref. DBN 123)

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF
GROUNDWORK ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN
EXTENSION TO DEBENHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL
(Application No. MS/1231/04)

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2005/46
(OASIS Ref. suffolkc1-7386)

Summary: Archaeological monitoring of the groundwork associated with the construction of an extension to the Sir Robert Hitcham CEVAP School, Debenham (NGR TM 1731 6368), was undertaken during March 2005. Trenches excavated for ground beams spanning between piles were observed but these were too shallow to reveal the natural subsoil or any significant archaeological deposits. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference DBN 123. The archaeological monitoring was commissioned by WPP Architects and Seamans Building on behalf of their clients, Suffolk County Council, who funded the work. The monitoring work was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team.

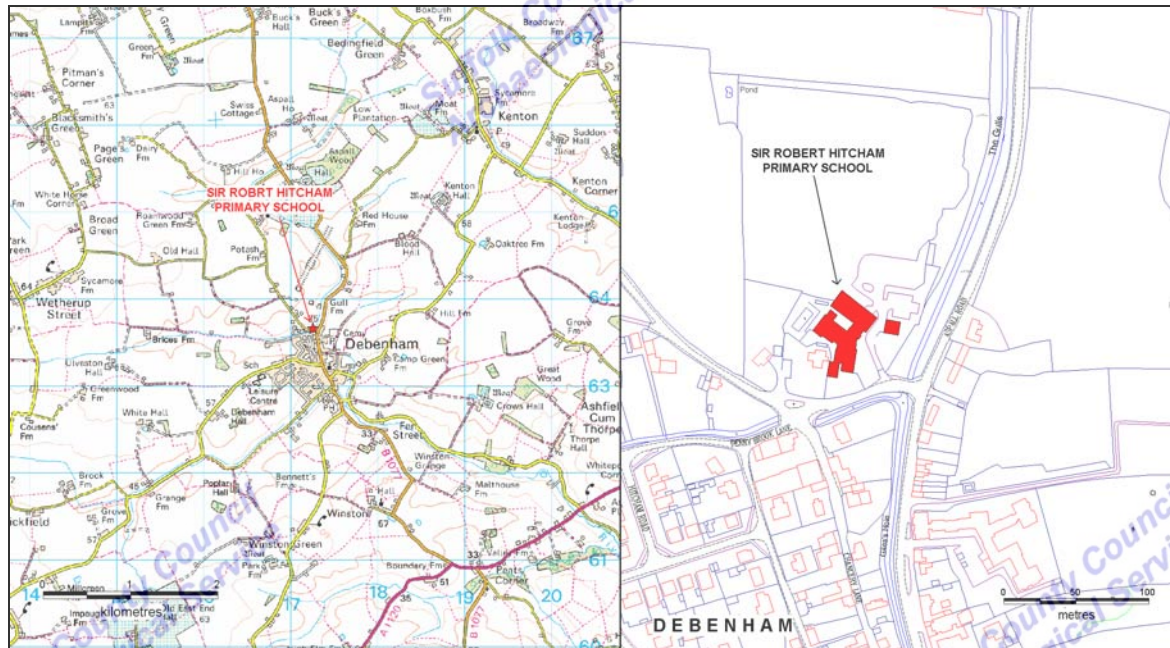


Figure 1: Location Plan

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Introduction

An application to construct an extension to the catering facilities at the Sir Robert Hitcham CEVAP School, Debenham (application no. MS/1231/04), 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 within the area of medieval Debenham.

The extension was to be built on pilings with connecting ground beams and it was the excavation of the ground beam trenches that had the greatest potential to damage or destroy any archaeological deposits or features that may exist. As only limited ground disturbance was proposed a monitoring condition was deemed appropriate and for this a Brief and Specification was produced by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team (Appendix 1).

The National Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is TM 1731 6368; for a location plan see figure 1 above. This monitoring event is recorded on the Suffolk County Sites and Monuments Record under the reference DBN 123. The archaeological monitoring was commissioned by WPP Architects and Seamans Building on behalf of their client, Suffolk County Council, who funded the work. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team.

Results

A single visit was made to the site on the 4th March 2005 in response to a telephone call from the developers to inspect the works then underway. All of the ground beam trenches had been excavated by machine and these were examined. They had been excavated to a depth of c.0.6m although they only revealed a thick deposit of topsoil with occasional flints. No artefacts were seen in any of the exposed surfaces within the trench although at the time of the visit it had been snowing and it was necessary to scrape clean areas for examination.



Figure 2: Extension Location

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A ground investigation had been carried out by Geotechnical Services (job ref. G40828) which indicated that the top 0.8 to 0.9m comprised of 'made-ground' which overlay sand and gravel, which presumably was a natural subsoil. The inspected ground beam trenches had not penetrated through this 'made-ground'

The monitoring archive from this project will be deposited at the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service offices in Bury St Edmunds under the reference DBN 123, it is also recorded on the OASIS, online database, reference: suffolk1-7386.

Conclusion

No archaeological deposits or features have been destroyed or damaged by the works observed as the ground beam trenches only cut into a deposit of made ground.

The precise nature of the made ground was not fully confirmed. The site is located in the bottom of a small valley and the made ground could be a deposit of natural colluvium. No artefacts were recovered from this deposit and this could be seen to confirm the deposit's natural origin. Alternatively it could be the result of landscaping associated with the construction of the original school building in the 19th century, or its later extensions.

Mark Sommers
Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Field Projects Team

15th March 2005



Plate I: The excavated ground beam trenches (4th March 2005)

APPENDIX

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring

SIR ROBERT HITCHAM CEVAP SCHOOL, DEBENHAM

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission to extend Sir Robert Hitcham CEVAP School, Debenham, has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (1231/04). 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 within the area of archaeological interest for medieval Debenham in the County Sites and Monuments Record and will involve significant ground disturbance.
- 1.3 As pile and beam foundations are proposed there will only be limited damage to any archaeological deposits, which can be recorded by a trained archaeologist during excavation of the trenches by the building contractor.

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 the medieval occupation of the site.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the excavation of footing trenches for foundation beams and drainage trenches. These, and the upcast soil, are to be observed during and after they have been excavated by the building contractor.

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 timetable.
- 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.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 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: Keith Wade

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

Date: 18 January 2005

Reference: Debenham-RobertHitchamSchool01

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.

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