

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/326

Hoo Hall, Church Lane, Hoo HOO 012



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HER Information

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Funding Body: Mr Graham Nicholson

Curatorial Officer: Jess Tipper

Project Officer: Duncan Stirk

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Summary

An archaeological monitoring was carried out on land at Hoo Hall, Church Lane, Hoo (TM 2556 5933); HOO 012.

Monitoring of ground reduction and foundation trenching related to the conversion of a farm building was undertaken in November 2009. A number of archaeological features were recorded, including pits and ditches of post-medieval date. A large pit of probable post-medieval date was also recorded, from which the remains of a large wooden wheel were recovered. Finds of post-medieval date were recovered during the fieldwork.

1. Introduction

Archaeological monitoring of building work was carried out at Hoo Hall, Hoo as part of an archaeological condition in relation to a planning permission (Application number: C/07/1122) for the conversion of barn and associated groundworks. The condition was applied as the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential, being located near to the medieval church (Historic Environment Record (HER) number HOO 006)

The barn is a former granary that lies within the curtilage of the Grade II listed Hoo Hall, and was the subject of building recording prior to its conversion (Alston, 2009). The archaeological work was carried out by members of the SCCAS Field Team in accordance with the requirements of a Brief & Specification produced by Jess Tipper of the SCCAS Conservation Team (Appendix 1).

2. Geology and topography

The site is located to the north of the village of Hoo (Figure 1). The ground prior to the building work was occupied by the former granary building and a courtyard to the south. The ground was relatively level at the 35m AOD contour line. The site is located on glacial till laid down in the Anglian Glaciation. The site is bounded to the west and south by gardens of Hoo Hall, and by farm buildings to the north and east.

3. Archaeological and historical background

No archaeological work has been conducted in the vicinity of the site. The modern farm is thought to occupy the position of a medieval manor, although the hall has elements that only date to the early 17th century. The granary is likely to be late 19th century, with a construction date around 1870 (Alston, 2009).

Historic Environment Record entries in the immediate vicinity are limited: Roman pottery was found at Hall Farm less than 150m to the northeast of the site (HER Number HOO 005), and the medieval church of St. Andrew and St. Eustachius (HER Number HOO 006) is to the southeast.

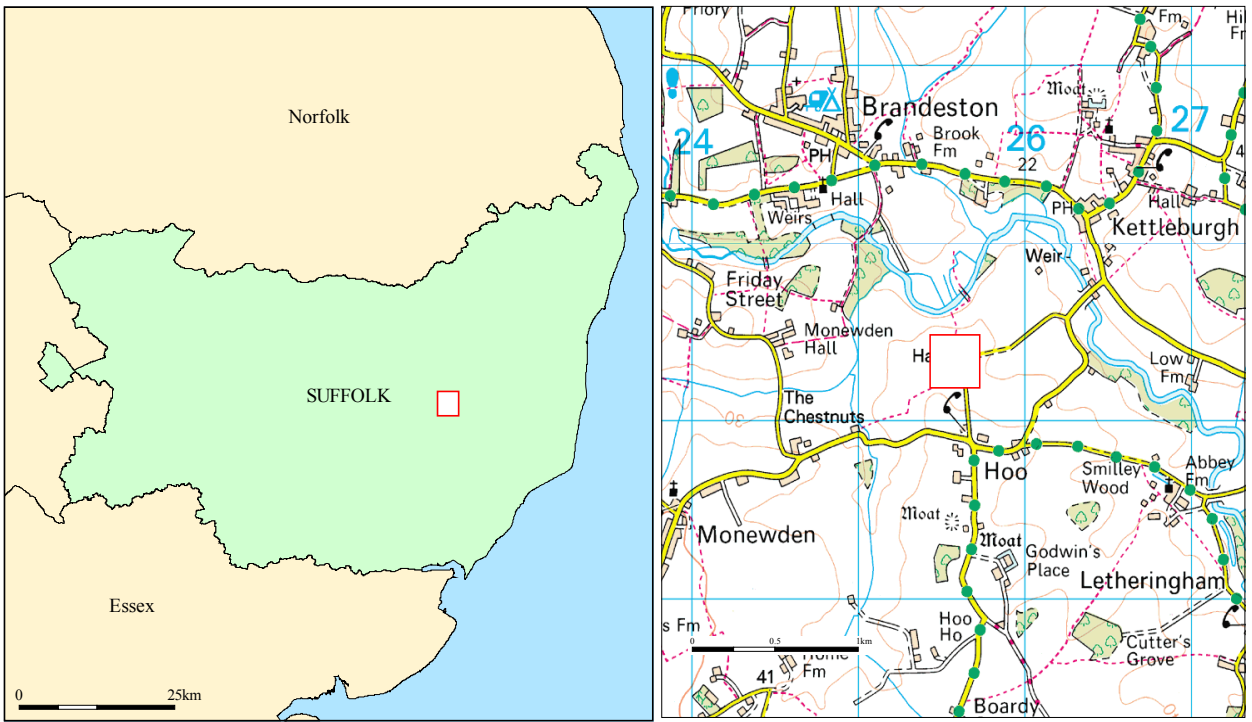


Figure 1. Site location

4. Methodology

Monitoring of the reduced ground in the barns and excavation of foundation trenches was carried out on the 9th and 12th November 2009 and recorded under the new HER number HOO012. The work involved examination of the reduced ground level within the barn, and the excavated foundation trenches to determine the presence of archaeological features.

The foundations were excavated in advance of the archaeological monitoring with a 360° mechanical excavator using a 0.4m wide toothed bucket. The exposed surfaces were then selectively cleaned by hand to better reveal changes in colour and composition that would indicate the presence of archaeological deposits and features. Finds were collected during this phase of work. All observed deposits were allocated unique context numbers and recorded on *pro-forma* recording forms, following guidelines set out by SCC Archaeological Service. All archaeological deposits were drawn in a series of sections and 1:50 scale plans, and photographed. The drawings in this report have been produced using MapInfo mapping software.

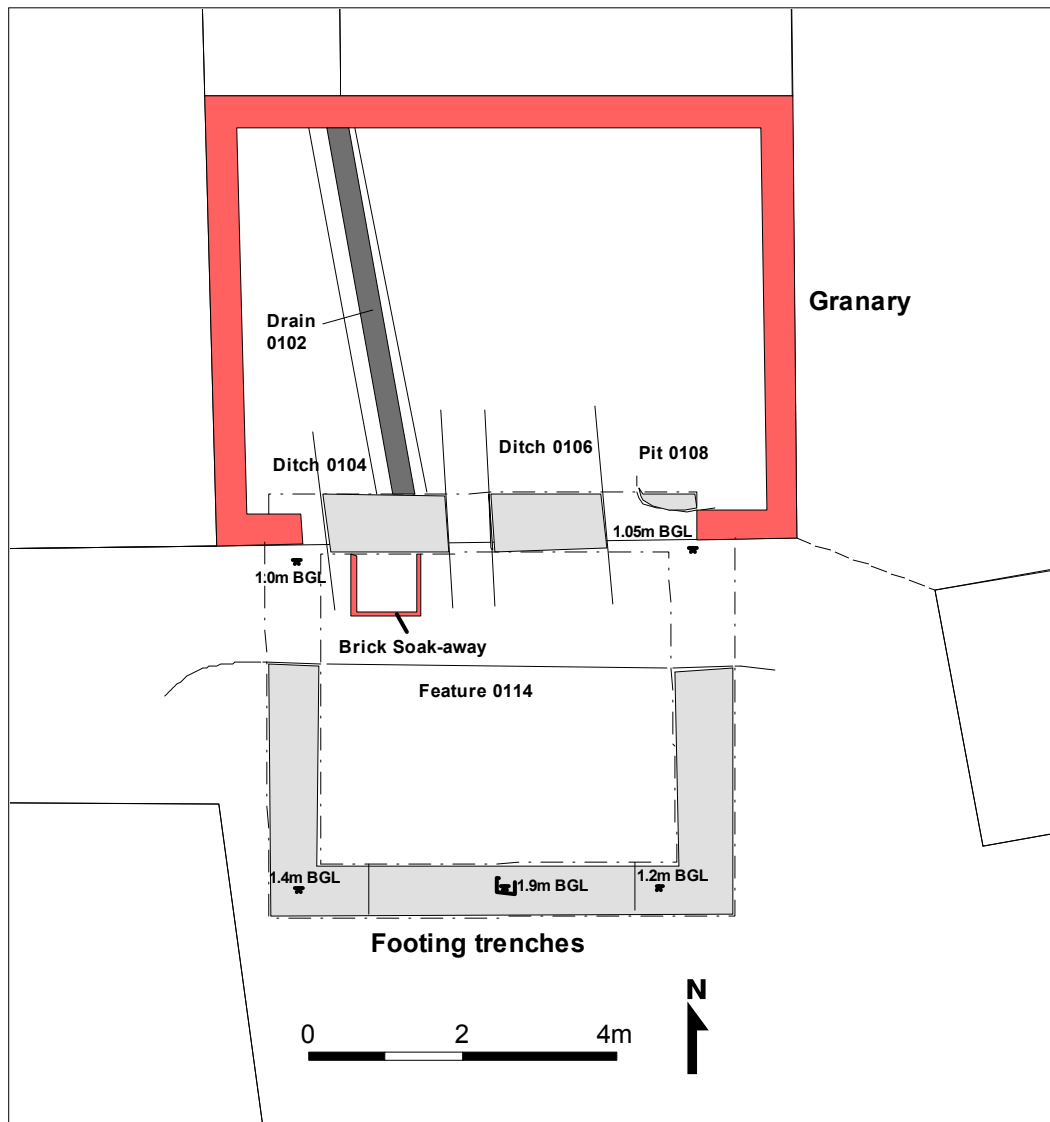
5. Results

5.1 Ground reduction in the granary.

Prior to the monitoring work the internal floor of the granary had been removed and the ground reduced slightly. This revealed a deposit of mixed orange brown sand with frequent CBM and chalk inclusions 0109 that was 0.3m thick. The remains of a demolished east-west aligned partition wall were also visible. The course of a drain 0104, aligned NW-SE, had been determined through excavation to the top of the pipe, at a depth of about 0.3m. No archaeological features were visible at this level.

5.2 Foundation trenches for the extension

Foundation trenches that were between 0.7 and 0.8m wide were examined on the perimeter of a rectangular building extension, measuring 6.2m by 5.5m. The foundations were of variable depth depending on where the solid natural geology was reached. For example the foundations along the northern edge were 1.0m deep while the foundation along the southern edge was over 1.8m deep.



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Figure 2. Trench location and features

The geological natural was visible in the northern western and eastern foundation trenches. It was a mottled grey and blueish grey clay containing frequent chalk and flint inclusions 0116. This was cut by a large feature 0114 that took up the majority of the southern part of the extension footprint. This cut had moderately steep concave sides and a concave base that measured over 3.25m north to south, by over 6.2m east to west, and was 1.6m deep. At the base of 0114 was a primary fill 0113 that was light grey clay with frequent organic inclusions. A number of timbers were visible within this fill, two of which had been retained. These were a large hub of a wheel and part of a rim, presumably from the same wheel.

This fill was sealed by a light to mid grey silty clay fill with frequent wood and ceramic building material (CBM) inclusions, 0112, followed by a light orange brown and light grey silty clay fill, 0111, and finally a dark grey brown sandy silt fill with occasional chalk and CBM inclusions, 0110. A single fragment of an earthenware plate dating from the mid 19th to 20th century was recovered from fill 0112, along with a fragment of post-medieval CBM.



Figure 3. Ditch 0104, Ditch 0106, Pit 0108



Figure 4. Wheel hub & rim

In the northern foundation trench the natural geology was cut by a series of features. In the north-eastern corner of the foundations was a possible pit 0108. This feature had steep and straight sides and a concave base, that was over 0.9m wide and 0.95m deep. It held a mixed light orangy brown and mid grey silty sand fill containing frequent flecks of wood 0107. A single fragment of post-medieval CBM

Just to the west of pit 0108 was a north-south aligned ditch 0106, that had moderately steep concave sides and a concave base that was 0.55m deep. Ditch 0106 held a mottled greenish grey and mid grey sandy clay fill containing frequent chalk inclusions

0105. A single sherd of post-medieval pottery and a fragment of un-datable fired clay was recovered from this feature.

Further west a second north-south aligned ditch 0104 cut the natural geology. This ditch had moderately steep concave sides and a concave base that was 0.55m deep. It was filled with a mixed light grey brown and dark grey silty clay and organic silt 0103. The ditch was cut by the cut of a drain that had vertical sides and a flat base 0115, and held circa 0.25m diameter pipe 0102. This drain ran into a brick lined soak-away that was located on the southern side of the foundation trench.

6. Finds and Environmental Evidence

Andy Fawcett

6.1 Introduction

A total of 5 finds with a weight of 150g was recovered from the three contexts at Hoo Hall. Two of these fills belong to pits 0105 and 0107, and finally 0112 is the basal fill of a large pit/pond.

Find type	No.	Wt/g
Pottery	2	70
CBM	2	73
Fired clay	1	7
Stone		

Table 1. Finds quantities

6.2 Pottery

Just two sherds of pottery have been noted, one each in fills 0105 and 0112 (70g). The first is an early glazed red earthenware (GRE) body sherd weighing 47g which only displays slight abrasion. Although the sherd is dated from the 16th to 18th century, its fabric and glaze suggest that it might be at the earlier end of this range. The second piece of pottery is a refined white earthenware, dated from around the mid 19th to 20th century (23g). Even though the fragment is quite abraded, it is clearly part of a plate rim, which displays blue transfer decoration on its surface.

6.3 Ceramic building material

Two pieces of abraded post-medieval roof tile have been recorded in fills 0107 and 0112 (73g). The examples are both in a medium sandy fabric (ms), although the latter also contains common ferrous inclusions (msfe) as well.

6.4 Fired Clay

The single example of fired clay is located in fill 0105 (7g). It is characterised mainly by the presence of chalk, although there are occasional pieces of flint within the mix.

6.5 Conclusion

This group of finds is all dated to the post-medieval period. The level of abrasion suggests, for the most part, that they are not in their original place of deposition. Only the pottery sherd in pit 0105 displays a slightly lesser amount of deterioration.

7. Discussion

The archaeological features recorded during the ground-works all appear to date to the post-medieval period; in the time since the construction of Hoo Hall. The ditches and large pit were probably of a similar date.

Pit 0114 had a well defined cut with steep sides and therefore it is likely that it was a man-made rather than long-standing natural feature, however its base was underwater during the monitoring and the silty clay fills with organic inclusions could have been partly water lain, so it is possible that it contained water or served as a pond during its use. The two ditches, 0104 and 0106 appeared to lead to it and could have been part of an early drainage system for the farm. The earliest dated find was from one of these ditches and was probably deposited in the 16th or 17th century which is around the time that the earliest known elements of the hall were first in use.

One of the ditches, 0104, that may have drained into the 'pond' appears to have been replaced by a drain that ran beneath the granary building. The granary building can be dated by its form and from the map evidence to about 1870. The ditch probably went out of use when the granary was built, along with pit/pond 0114 which was infilled. The drain fed into a brick lined soak-away that was located on the edge of pit/pond 0114. The finds from 0114 are consistent with a 19th century date for the infilling, but the absence of any record of a pond in this location on the 19th century maps may suggest that it was a large pit, possibly dug for the disposal of farm rubbish.

The timbers from the base of pit 0114 were components of a very large diameter wheel. Wheels of this size were used on a specialized cart, used to move felled trees, called a “Timber Bob” or “Whim”. The timber was slung below the level of the axle so a large diameter wheel was necessary when moving large logs. Management of the woodlands would have been an essential part of the working estate, and a “Timber Bob” would have been an important part of that. This particular “Timber Bob” wheel may have been discarded at a time in the later 19th century when the work was being increasingly done by steam powered machinery.

8. Conclusions and significance of the fieldwork

The archaeological monitoring of groundworks at Hoo Hall recorded part of a pit/pond and a related drainage system from the earliest days of the estate. These probably went out of use and were infilled in the late 19th century about the time the Granary building was built. Portions of a large wheel that was recovered from the pit fill may be typical of a type of cart that was integral to the working of the estate woodland.

9. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

Finds and environmental archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

10. List of contributors and acknowledgements

The monitoring was carried out by Duncan Stirk from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

The project was directed by Duncan Stirk, and managed by Rhodri Gardner, who also provided advice during the production of the report.

Finds processing was done by Jonathon Van Jennians and the production of site plans and sections was carried out by Duncan Stirk. The specialist finds report was produced by Andy Fawcett.

11. Bibliography

- Alston, L., 2009 The Granary, Hoo Hall, Hoo, Suffolk Archaeological Record. SCCAS Report
- Brown, D., 2007 Archaeological archives A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation, IFA

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.