

Archaeological Monitoring Report

New Building, St. Louis Catholic Middle School BSE 244

Report No. 2005/174

Planning Application No: SE/05/1141/P

Oasis reference: suffolkc1-7659

Grid reference: TL 8512 6390

Date of fieldwork: 8/4/05

Funding body: Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia

Summary

A programme of archaeological monitoring was conducted ahead of the construction of a new building at St. Louis Catholic Middle School, Bury St. Edmunds. The development area was stripped of topsoil and footing trenches were excavated. No archaeological features were identified.

Introduction

Archaeological monitoring was commissioned on excavation work for the construction of a new building at St. Louis Catholic Middle School, Bury St. Edmunds (TL 8512 6390). The new building is to replace three temporary classrooms. The archaeological brief for the site was prepared by R. Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service, Conservation Team). The project was managed by Andrew Tester and the fieldwork was conducted by John Duffy (both S.C.C.A.S., Field Team).

The development area is located on the west of Bury St. Edmunds between Parkway and St. Andrews Street South. It is outside of the medieval town core with the town ditch to the east alongside St. Andrews Street. The site has the potential for post-medieval chalk pitting/limeworking as indicated on Warren's Map (1741). There is also the possibility for archaeological remains indicating dispersed Bronze Age occupation, as previously evidenced 130m to the north-east (BSE 181 - Tester 2000).

Methodology

The footing trenches were excavated using a 360 degree machine fitted with a 0.6m toothed bucket to a depth of approximately 1.25m. The archaeological monitoring of the footing trenches was done in two visits (8/4/05 and 11/4/05). During the visits a record was made of the trenches and the deposits which they cut through. A plan of the site was drawn and placed on the OS map using MapInfo. Profiles of the trenches were also drawn.

The area strip within the building plan was done using a 360 degree machine fitted with a 2m wide toothless bucket. The topsoil was stripped to a depth of around 0.3m which took the ground level onto the top of the underlying natural chalk. One visit was made to monitor the stripping. The results were added to the overall site plan using MapInfo.



Figure 1. Site location

Results

During the monitoring of the footing trench excavation no archaeological features were identified. The site appeared to be a 0.25m to 0.3m deep topsoil over natural white chalk. Two sample profiles from the footing trenches were recorded.

The area strip within the limits of the building plan showed similar results. Across the entire area the topsoil was stripped down to the top of the chalk natural. No archaeological features were identified. The only visible ground disturbance was from a series of modern pipes, within the topsoil, leading to a modern soakaway excavated into the chalk.



Figure 2. Site plan

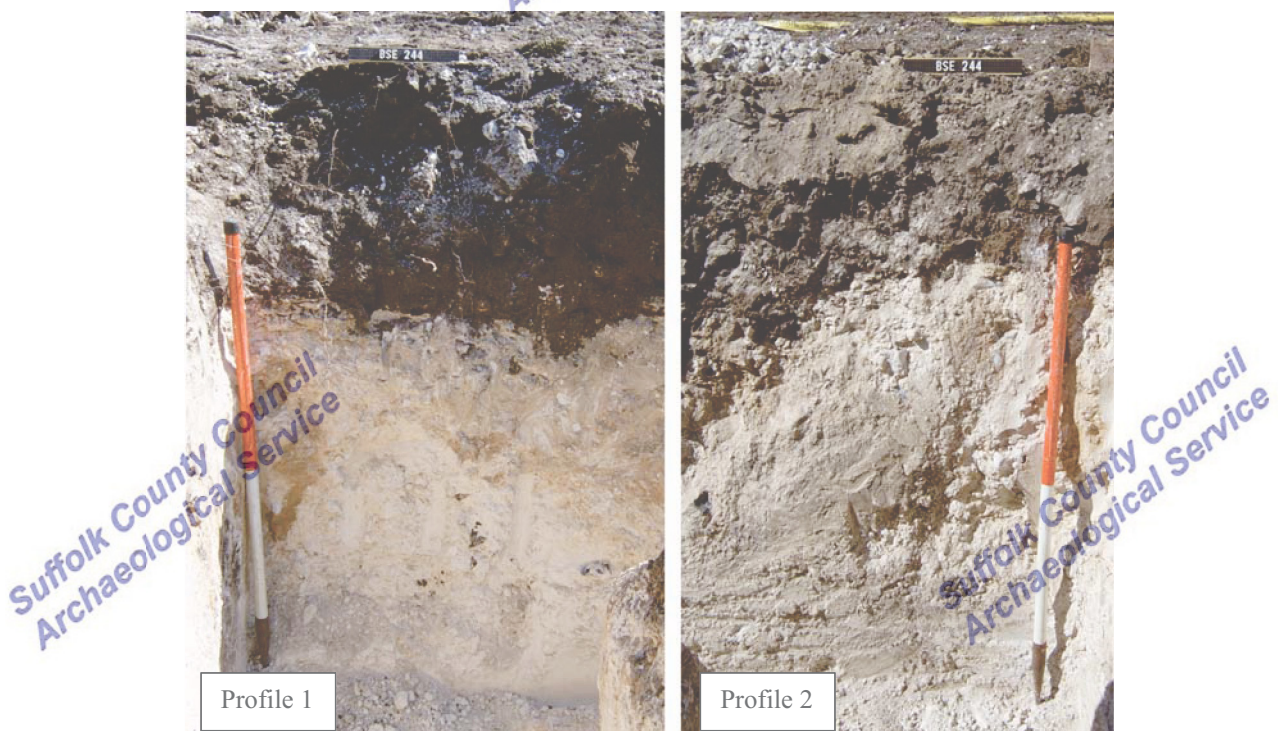


Figure 3. Footing trench profiles

Conclusion

Few conclusions can be reached about this site as no archaeological features were identified. No evidence was found to indicate any dispersed Bronze Age activity present on the site suggesting the remains identified during archaeological work on Andrews and Plumptions Yard (BSE 181) do not continue this far. However, it is unclear if this site had been truncated by works associated with known chalk extraction sites to the south.

The lack of archaeological evidence does not mean that the surrounding area is devoid of archaeology as the presence of chalk so close to the ground surface shows the potential of this part of Bury St. Edmunds as an area for chalk extraction.

References

Tester, A., 2000 Andrews and Plumptions Yard, St. Andrews St. South, Bury St. Edmunds (BSE 181). SCCAS Report 2000/39.

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