

Archaeological Monitoring Report

St. Edmunds Church, Bury St. Edmunds. BSE 245

Report No. 2006/087

Planning Application No: SE/04/3323/P

Oasis reference: suffolkc1-7660

Grid reference: TL 8535 6373

Date of fieldwork: 18/4/05 and 19/4/05

Funding body: Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia

Summary

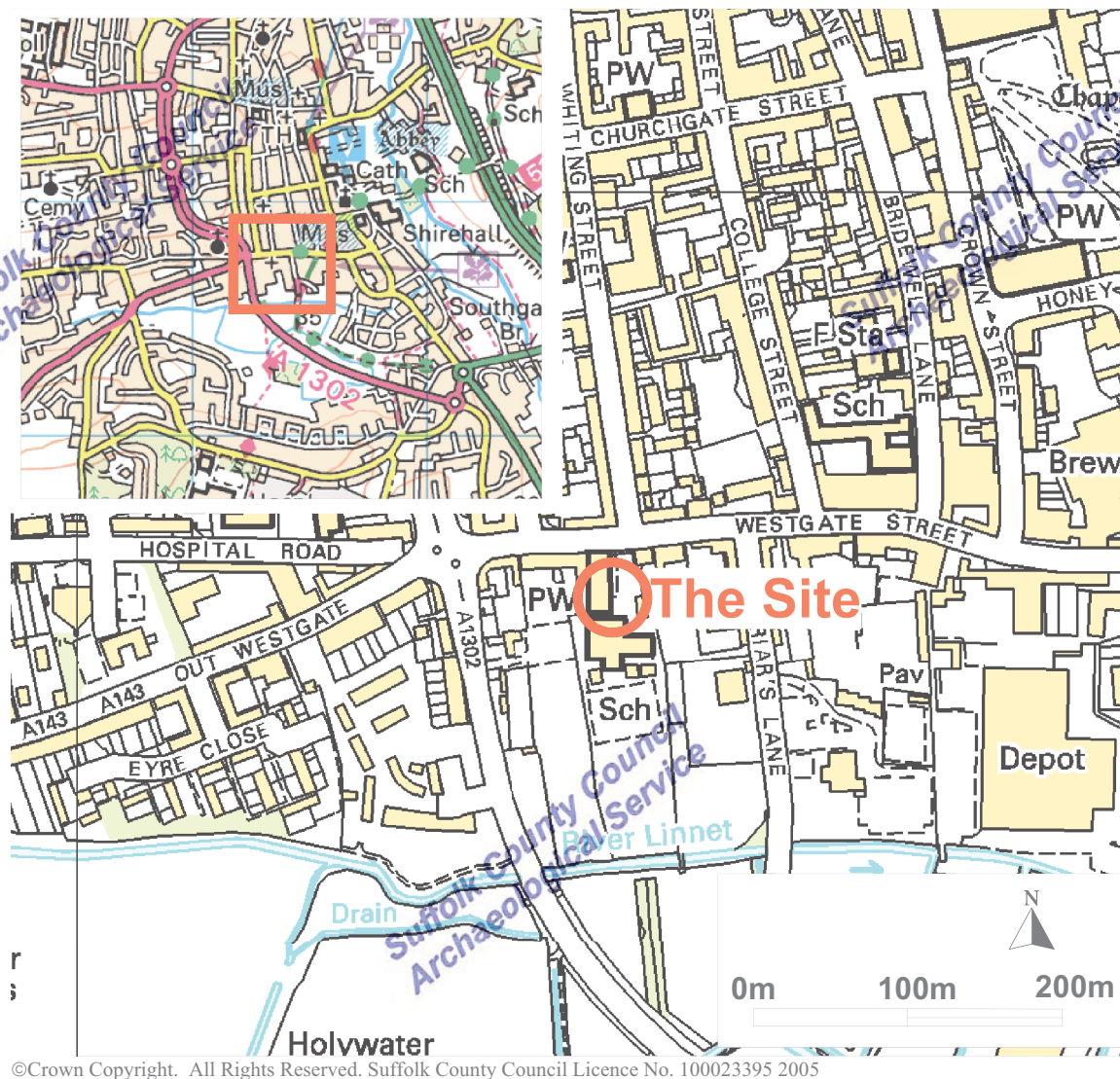
An archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the construction of a wheelchair ramp on the eastern side of St. Edmunds Church, Bury St. Edmunds. The monitoring revealed a wall running approximately north south, cutting into a clay layer under which two features, a pit and posthole, were identified and excavated.

Introduction

An archaeological monitoring of construction work along the eastern side of St. Edmunds Church, Westgate Street, Bury St. Edmunds was undertaken as part of the planning consent (Planning Application SE/04/3323/P). This followed the brief and specification prepared by R. Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team), Appendix 1.

The site was situated approximately 25m back from the street frontage along the eastern edge of the Church of St. Edmund (BSE 056), which was constructed in 1838, and lay within the area defined as the town's medieval urban core (BSE 241). Historic maps, including Warren's map (1747), show the area of the site to be located within the rear of one of the many properties fronting onto Westgate Street before the construction of the church.

Westgate Street is one of the main roads laid out as early as the 11th century. Any archaeological remains identified on the site may relate to activity directly behind the street frontage properties.



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Figure 1. Site location

Methodology

The trench was excavated using a 360 degree machine fitted with a 2m wide toothless bucket. The trench was excavated to the depth required for the construction of the ramp but when archaeological levels were reached then features were fully excavated and recorded before machine excavation continued.

All archaeological features were recorded using a written record based on a unique number recording system. All archaeological contexts were recorded in plan at 1:50 and in section at 1:20. Archaeological contexts were also recorded photographically using a digital camera. All excavated finds were recovered and processed at the Bury St. Edmunds office of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service.

The site archive is kept at the County Council Archaeological Store, Shire Hall, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk under the code BSE 245.

Results

The excavated area consisted of a modern topsoil layer, 0.2m deep, over a heavily disturbed rubble and dark brown/grey sandy clay (0012), which at its deepest point was 0.5m deep. This layer appears to be built up over an earlier wall (0002) and may indicate landscaping around the church building. The footing trench for the construction of the church is also visible running parallel to the church wall about 0.5m wide.

Further layers, located to the west of wall 0002, consisted of a dark grey/brown sandy silt, 0010. This layer is 0.55m deep and is sealed by a gravelly hardcore layer, 0011. These layers appear to form the build-up for the levelling of the ground around the church.

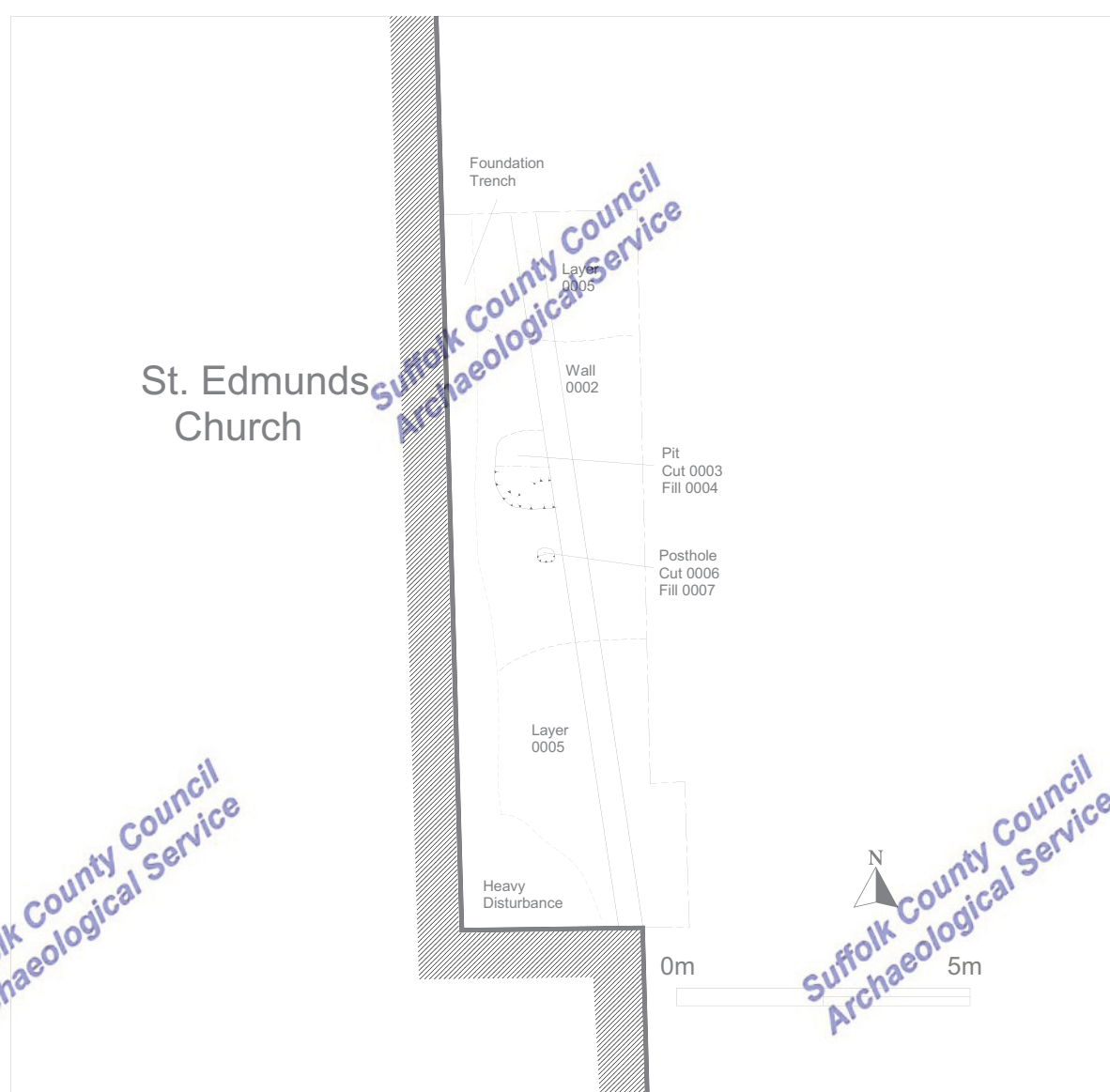


Figure 2. Site Plan

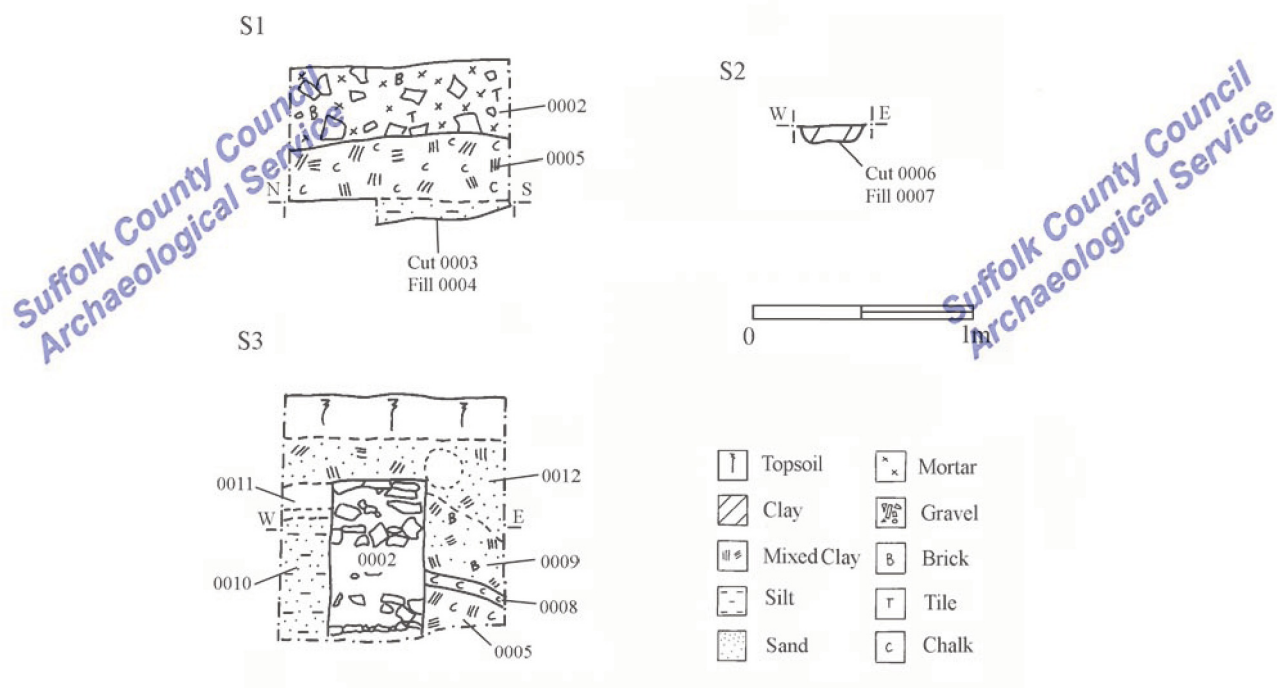


Figure 3. Sections.

A linear wall, 0002, running in an approximately north to south direction was uncovered immediately below a modern gas pipe. The wall is roughly constructed using brick rubble bonded by a white mortar. The wall appears to be bedded on a single layer of broken brick fragments. The wall cuts into layer 0005. The wall is heavily truncated by later activity possibly associated with the construction of the church and landscaping of the surrounding area. The wall appears to be on the same alignment as the properties to the east suggesting the wall marks the limit of an earlier property before the construction of the church in 19th century.

Two layers were identified to the east of wall 0002. The lowest layer was chalk with occasional flint (0008). The layer butted up against wall 0002 and sat directly on layer 0005. Layer 0008 was only clearly visible in the section at the north end of the trench but appeared intermittently along the length of the trench to the east of wall 0002. The layer appears to form the remains of a surface but the extent and function cannot easily be determined from this trench. Above layer 0008 was a mixed mid to dark brown/grey sandy clay, 0009, with occasional brick rubble. This layer is built up against wall 0002 and may represent the building up of ground around the church.

Layer 0005, a mid to light brown clay with moderate chalk, extends across most of the excavated area though it appears patchy in the centre around pit 0003. At its maximum the layer is 0.4m deep and is cut by wall 0002. The layer seals pit 0003 and posthole 0006. The layer contained two sherds of medieval pottery dating from the 11th to 13th centuries and a fragment of a possible medieval strap end.

Pit 0003 was visible below wall 0002 and appears to be below layer 0005, though the layer only remained in patches in this area. The pit was roughly circular in plan, measuring 1.37m in width, and was cut into natural chalk. The eastern half of the feature was unclear in plan and appeared heavily disturbed. The pit survived to a

depth of 0.1m and was filled by a single mid brown silty sand (0004) which included moderate chalk and flint. The identifiable undisturbed fill was 50 per cent excavated. Recovered from the fill was a sherd of Bury Medieval Shelly ware dating from the 11th to 13th centuries and a possibly intrusive piece of post-medieval clay tobacco pipe stem.

Posthole 0006 was visible below layer 0005 and was cut directly into natural chalk. The posthole was oval in plan measuring 0.29m by 0.2m and survived to a depth of 0.06m. The sides were near vertical and the base was uneven. The posthole was filled by a single mid grey/brown silty clay fill (0007) and included moderate chalk flecks. The posthole was 100 per cent excavated and no finds were recovered.

Finds

Richenda Goffin

Introduction

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

Context	Pottery		Clay Pipe		CBM		Animal Bone		Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	
0001	2	61	3	21	1	13	8	387	16th-18th C
0004	1	6	1	2			1	3	Post-medieval?
0005	2	17					3	30	11th-13th C
Total	5	84	4	23	1	13	12	420	

Table 1. Finds quantities.

Pottery

A total of five sherds of post-medieval and medieval pottery was found, weighing 84g. A large abraded fragment of a Glazed red earthenware dish was an unstratified find (0001), together with an unglazed sherd of a coarseware jar. A single sooted medieval fragment, identified as Bury Medieval Shelly ware with a dusting of surface shell, was the only sherd present in pitfill 0004. It is dated to c11th-13th century, but may be residual since it was found with a fragment of clay tobacco pipe. Two further sherds of medieval date were recovered from layer 0005. One of these is a fragment of Bury Medieval Shelly ware, whilst the second fragment is from a glazed medieval jug which is probably a Hedingham ware variant, dating from the mid 12th-mid 13th century.

Clay Pipe

Four fragments of ceramic tobacco pipe were recovered from two contexts. An almost complete pipe bowl with part of the stem was an unstratified find found in 0001. The pipe fragment has a broad foot and an upright rim with slight rouletting, a type which dates to c1690-1740 (Oswald 12). Two stem pieces were also found in this context, and another stem was present in pitfill 0004, which may be intrusive.

Ceramic building material

A single, very abraded and laminated fragment of ceramic building material was present in 0004. It is made from a silty fabric containing moderate calcareous inclusions and red clay pellets, and has one sanded surface. The fragment may be part of a post-medieval floortile.

Metalwork

A fragment of copper alloy was present in layer 0005. It is made from a folded sheet which has iron rivets on the underside. One edge of the external surface has been decorated with four scalloped shapes, and the other side is plain. Although medieval, and possibly a strap-end, the object has not been fully identified.

Animal bone

Twelve fragments of animal bone were recorded, all of which were in poor condition. Most of the bone was recovered from unstratified deposit 0001. The small assemblage includes a cattle metacarpus and metatarsus, and the shaft of a larger limb bone which has cut marks. Three small fragments were present in layer 0005, the most identifiable being part of the limb of a small mammal such as a sheep or a pig.

Discussion

The earliest finds from the monitoring are the sherds of medieval coarseware dating from the late 11th-13th century, which were present in pitfill 0003 and spread 0005. These sherds are likely to represent evidence of activity following the initial laying out of Westgate Street in the early medieval period, and may have come from occupation deposits relating to properties fronting the street.

The remainder of the finds are post-medieval in date.

Conclusion

The excavation along the eastern side of St Edmunds Church identified a high level of disturbance of the earlier archaeological levels by the construction of the church building and the associated landscaping around it.

Although heavily disturbed, a wall, 0002, survived and was the remains of a post-medieval property boundary running at right angles to Westgate Street and parallel to other surviving boundaries to the east. The heavily disturbed remains of a chalk surface possibly associated with this wall was also identified, 0008.

Below these post-medieval features a series of very heavily disturbed medieval deposits were identified. These were a layer, 0005, which sealed a pit, 0003, and a posthole, 0006. However, very little dating evidence was recovered and the heavily disturbed nature of these features meant it was difficult to be certain of their date. It

may be that these features may represent activity during the earliest phases of the development of Westgate Street and the properties along it.

Overall the archaeological monitoring showed some preservation of medieval and post-medieval deposits though on this site it was difficult to interpret as such a limited area was exposed. Although no survival of these deposits can be expected to the west under the present church there may be survival to the east under the existing access road. Preservation was seen to extend at least 30m back from the street frontage before the land steeply drops down to Great Sexton's Meadow to the south. This slope can be seen in the modern topography and has been identified during archaeological monitoring work at St. Edmunds Roman Catholic Primary School to the south (A. Tester pers. comm.).

References

Oswald, A., 1960, English clay tobacco pipes. Reprinted from the Journal of the British Archaeological Association Vol 23

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July 2006

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APPENDIX 1 Brief and specification

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM



Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development

ST EDMUND CHURCH, BURY ST EDMUNDS

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, for example see paragraphs 2.3 & 4.3. The commissioning body should also be aware that it may have Health & Safety responsibilities, see paragraph 1.5.

1. Background

1.1 Planning permission to develop on this site has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application SE/04/3323/P – to provide an access ramp on the east side of the church). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.

1.2 The development area is within the medieval urban area, close to one of the main axial medieval streets laid out in the mid 11th century. There is potential for archaeological deposits behind any frontage property which may have existed. There are properties marked on the frontage on Warren's mid 18th century map.

The proposal involves widening by c.2m of a c.7m length of the existing sunken area on the east of the church, coupled with some deepening and provision of new footings for a wheelchair ramp. There are also new drains for surface water. It has been accepted that evaluation is not required for this degree of disturbance and that monitoring with a contingency for delays necessary to excavate and record any archaeological deposit encountered is a suitable programme of work.

1.3 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 of minimum requirements, 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 both 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

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to establish whether the requirements of the planning condition will be adequately met.

- 1.4 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in “Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England” Occasional Papers 14, East Anglian Archaeology, 2003.

- 1.5 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 this office before execution.

2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which are 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 earlier occupation of the site.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activities in this proposal are likely to be the site preparation works involving soil removal in the area to be excavated for the ramp, the subsequent excavation of wall footings and the provision of drains.

Site preparation works involve soil removal are to be observed whilst they are excavated by the building contractor.

In the case of footing trenches the excavation and the upcast soil, are to be observed whilst they are excavated by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for the recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation (see 4.3).

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 the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council’s Archaeological Service (SCCAS) –see 1.3 above.
- 3.2 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of SCCAS 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.

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- 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 time-table.

- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered the Conservation Team of SCCAS 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 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.

- 4.2 Opportunity must 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 event that an archaeological deposit exists in the work area and would be removed in the course of development, adequate unimpeded access to the area must be given to allow archaeological excavation and recording. As a guide it may be expected that a worst case might require five working days but a more likely period would be two working days.

- 4.4 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.

- 4.5 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context.

- 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.

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- 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*, must be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 County Sites and Monuments Record sheets must 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: R D Carr

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

Date: 15 March 2005

Reference: /BSE-StEdmundChurch03

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.

Appendix 2 Context list

<i>context</i>	<i>feature</i>	<i>identifier</i>	<i>description</i>	<i>spotdate</i>
0001		Unstratified Finds	Finds recovered from unstratified context	16th-18th C
0002	0002	Wall	Brick rubble bonded by a white mortar wall. Bedded on layer of broken brick.	
0003	0003	Pit Cut	Cut of circular pit. Partly visible in excavated area. Under wall 0002 and layer 0005. Shallow sloping sides and undulating base. Cuts natural chalk. Length 1.37m (N-S), visible width 0.8m (E-W), depth 0.1m.	
0004	0003	Pit Fill	Mid brown silty sand with moderate chalk and flint.	Post-medieval?
0005	0005	Layer	Mid to light brown clay layer with moderate chalk fragments. Extends across entire excavated area. Patchy in the middle of trench. 0.4m deep.	11th-13th C
0006	0006	Posthole Cut	Cut of posthole. Oval in plan. 0.29m (E-W) long, 0.2m wide, 0.06m deep. Steep-sided with uneven base. Under wall 0002 and layer 0005.	
0007	0006	Posthole Fill	Mid grey/brown silty clay with moderate chalk flecks. 100% excavated. No finds.	
0008	0008	Layer	Chalk with occasional flint layer. Possible surface butting up to wall 0002.	
0009	0009	Layer	Mixed mid to dark brown/grey sandy clay with occasional brick rubble.	
0010	0010	Layer	Dark grey/brown sandy silt.	
0011	0011	Layer	Gravelly hardcore layer.	
0012	0012	Layer	Heavily disturbed rubble and dark brown/grey sandy clay.	