

WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Rear of The Limes, 12/14 Queensway, Mildenhall MNL 555

Application No. F/2002/495
TL 7101 7483
Oasis No. suffolkc1-7962
Report No. 2005/60

Summary

An archaeological monitoring of footing trenches at 12/14 Queensway, Mildenhall located two large brick capped soakaways and a probable cellar with arched doorway, all of an uncertain date but assumed to be post-medieval, possibly relating to buildings shown on Hodskinsons map of 1783.

Introduction

One visit was made to the site (Fig.1) on 25th April 2005 to monitor the excavation of footing trenches for the development of a block of flats. The work was carried out to fulfill a Watching Brief recommendation made by Keith Wade (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) on planning application F/2002/495. The work was funded by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service.

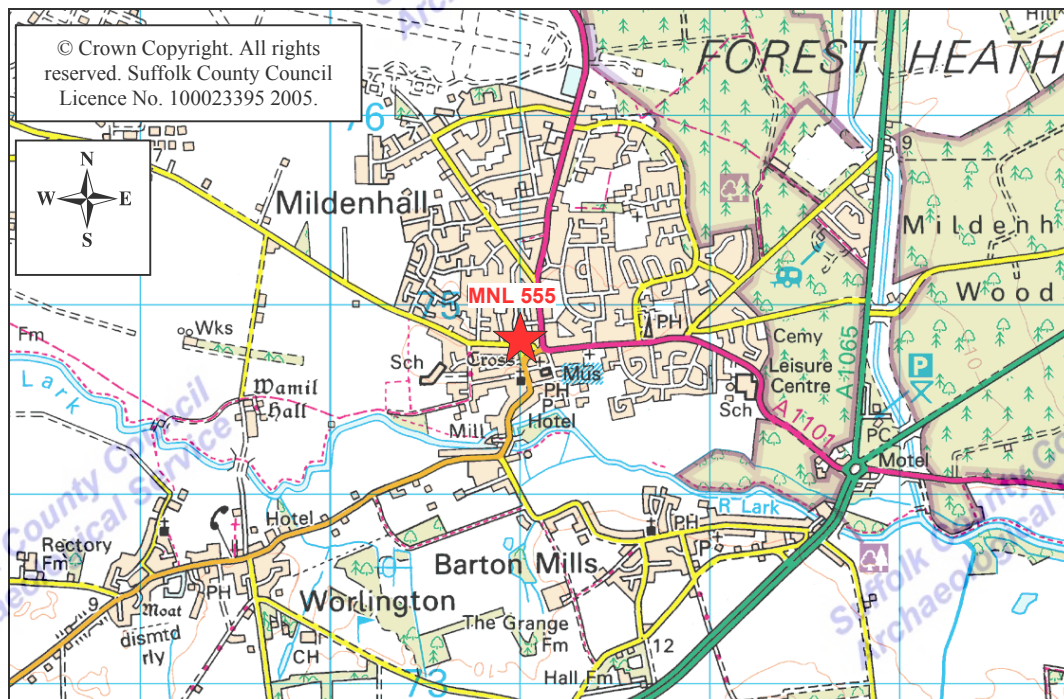


Figure 1. Site location plan

Interest in the site was based upon its general location to the north of MNL 329, the site of 'The Manor House', a 16th century Great House, demolished in the 1930's.

The Limes also appears to be marked upon Hodskinsons 1783 map and so there was a possibility that post-medieval structures would be disturbed by the development.

Methodology and Results

Approximately 60% of the footing trenches were seen when fully excavated, the western side of the plot not being observed. The trenches measured c.0.8m wide and up to 1.5m deep. This generally showed a loose modern topsoil directly overlying the natural chalk, which had probably been truncated and lay at a depth of 0.3m-0.4m.

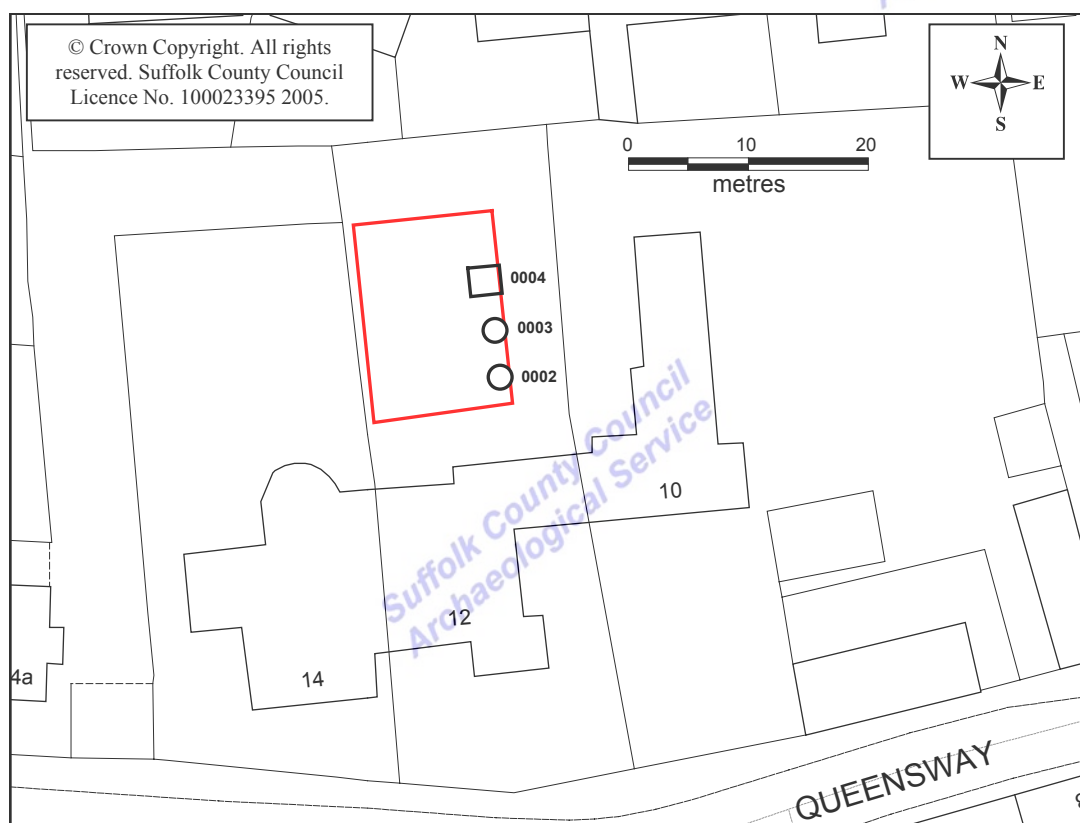


Figure 2. Site plan

Two large soakaways, 0002 and 0003, had been emptied out by machine prior to the site visit (Fig. 2). Each measured c.2m in diameter, c.1.6m deep and were cut vertically into the natural chalk. Neither shaft was lined but apparently both had had a brick cap, again removed by machine prior to the site visit.

The third feature identified was a possible cellar, 0004 (Fig. 3). This consisted of three walls, constructed from buff/grey bricks, enclosing an area measuring c.1.6m by 2m+. The top of the walls were at a depth of c.0.2m and extended to the base of the trench at c.1.3m. In the northern wall, cut through by the footing trench was an archway, the top of which was c.0.3m below ground level. The archway was approximately 2m wide and had been roughly bricked up, prior to the cellars infilling. To the north of this archway for c.1.2m the ground was disturbed, consisting of a mix of loose chalk and soil, 0005.

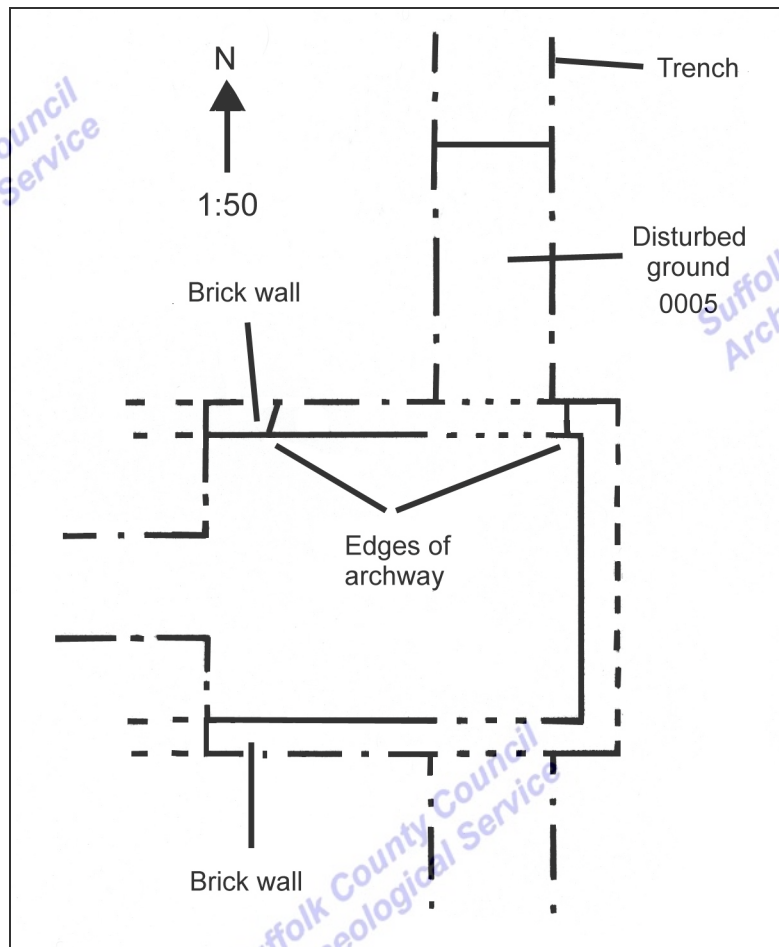


Figure 3. Sketch plan of 0004 cellar

Discussion

The footing trenches clearly cut through surviving elements of a former structure, which is assumed to be post-medieval in date as there is no building marked on the site on either the 1880 or subsequent OS maps. The possible cellar, 0004, was probably part of a larger building, perhaps the one marked on Hodskinsons map of 1783.

The cellar, although its western wall was not seen, appeared to be quite small, measuring only c.1.6m wide. The archway in the north wall is probably the access to the room, with the area of ground disturbance to the north, 0005, possibly infilling where a ramp or stairs led down to the arch. The blocking of the archway indicates that the cellar was deliberately taken out of use, probably at the time of any associated structures demolition.

The two soakaways were substantial features and perhaps unusual in not having a brick or flint lining, although the solid nature of the surrounding chalk probably meant that this was not necessary. The presence of a brick cap on each shaft however indicates that these features were deliberately, and safely, put out of use. The usage and capping of these soakaways may be contemporary with the cellar and the blocking of the archway, but this is not certain.

J.A. Craven, May 2005