OS 0270, Ash Street, Semer
SMR 033

Application No. B/04/1606/FUL
TL 01034664
Oasis No. suffolkc1-8050
Report No. 2005/66

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Summary

An archaeological monitoring of footing trenches at Ash Street, Semer, did not locate any archaeological evidence.

Introduction

A single visit was made to the site on 3rd May 2005 to monitor the footing trenches for an agricultural building (Fig. 1). The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by Judith Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) to fulfil a planning condition on application B/04/1606/FUL. The work was funded by the developer, Mrs I Pryke.

The site lay in a pasture field at the base of a south facing slope, the northern side of the Brett river valley. Interest in the site was based upon its close proximity to two faint cropmarks of ring ditches, SMR 003 and 009, which lay c.100m to the north-east and c.20m to the north-west respectively, and probably indicate the sites of prehistoric burial mounds. Therefore there was high potential for the development to disturb evidence of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of these barrows, including the possibility of peripheral burials.

Methodology and Results

The footing trenches and spoilheap were observed when fully excavated. The trenches were approximately 0.8m wide and 0.8m-1m deep and exposed a deep, clean, topsoil, c.0.8m deep overlying the natural subsoil of dense gravel and clay/silt. No archaeological features were seen at any point and no material was apparent in the spoilheap.

Discussion

There was no sign in the trenches of any prehistoric activity relating to the nearby ring ditches, or of activity in any other period. However only the top of the subsoil was exposed, it was not seen in section, and observation was difficult.

The depth of the topsoil is probably due to natural processes, such as hill wash and soil creep, bringing material down the slope. The fact that the two cropmarks are particularly faint is probably due to the ring ditches being covered by this thick soil, masking the effects of the ditches on the overlying vegetation. This deep topsoil also means that any archaeological deposits within these fields is likely to be well preserved at depth, unaffected by any possible ground disturbance such as ploughing.

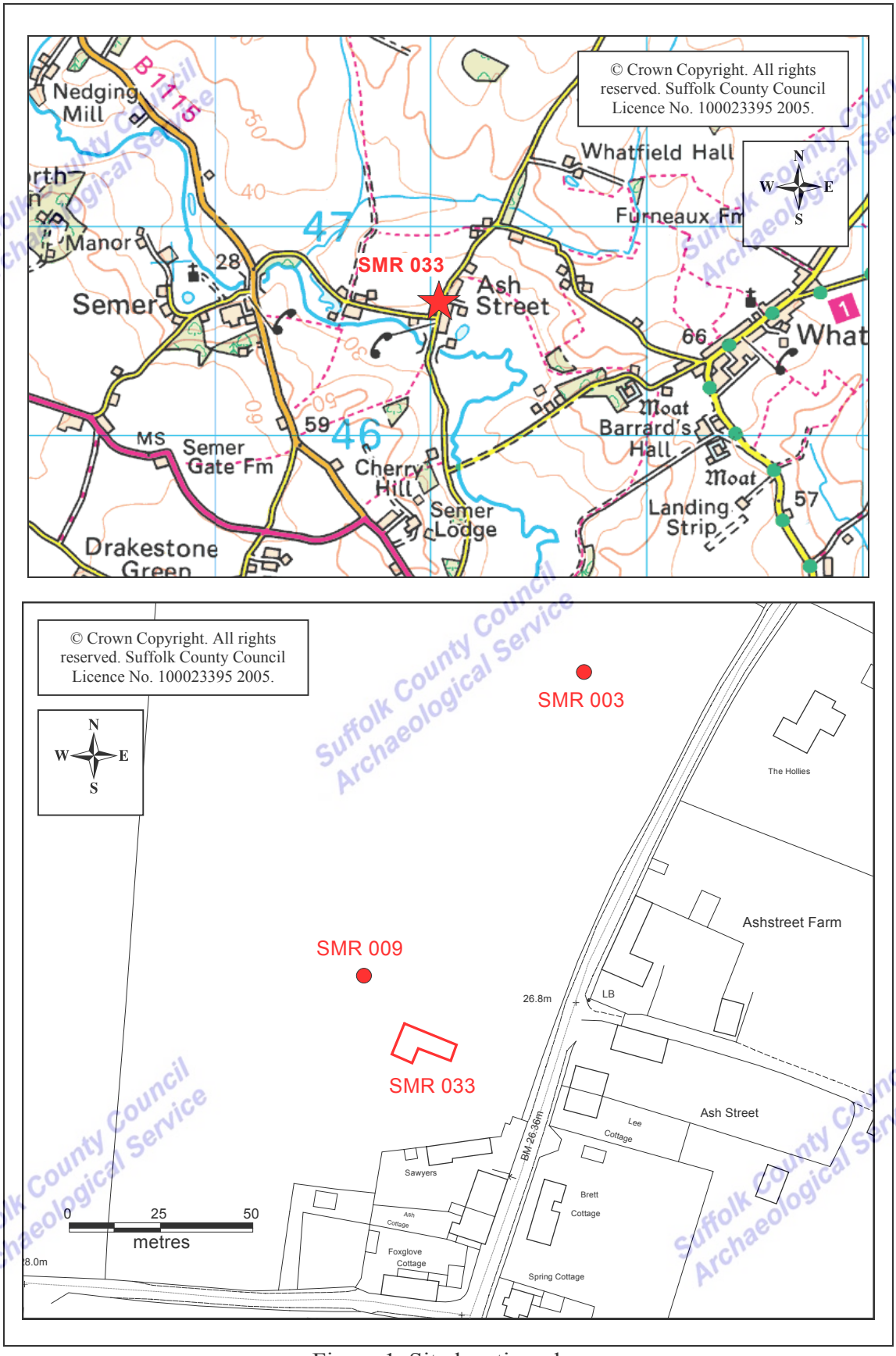

Figure 1. Site location plan

J. A. Craven, May 2005