

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/163

**Three Ponds, Chickering Road, Hoxne
HXN 050**

J. A. Craven

© September 2010

www.suffolk.gov.uk/environment/archaeology

Lucy Robinson, County Director of Economy, Skills and Environment
Endeavour House, Russel Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX.

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

HER Information

Planning Application No: 0845/09
Date of Fieldwork: 23rd August 2010
Grid Reference: TM 1890 7597
Funding Body: Mr and Mrs Coombs
Curatorial Officer: DrJess Tipper
Project Officer: J. A. Craven
Oasis Reference: Suffolkc1-81470

Digital report submitted to Archaeological Data Service:
<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Contents

Summary

| | Page |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. Geology and topography | 1 |
| 3. Archaeological and historical background | 1 |
| 4. Methodology | 3 |
| 5. Results | 6 |
| 6. The finds | 10 |
| 6.1. Introduction | 10 |
| 6.2. Pottery | 10 |
| 6.3. Slag | 11 |
| 6.4. Metalwork | 11 |
| 6.5. Discussion | 11 |
| 7. Discussion | 12 |
| 8. Conclusions and recommendations for further work | 13 |
| 9. Archive deposition | 14 |
| 10. Contributors and acknowledgements | 14 |
| 11. Bibliography | 14 |
| Disclaimer | 14 |

List of Figures

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Site location | 2 |
| 2. Site plan | 5 |
| 3. Trench 1 plan and section | 7 |
| 4. Trench 2 plan and section | 8 |
| 5. Trench 01 facing south | 9 |
| 6. Trench 02 facing east | 9 |

List of Tables

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| 1. Finds quantities | 10 |
|---------------------|----|

List of Appendices

1. Pottery

Summary

An archaeological evaluation, carried out on land at Three Ponds, Hoxne, in advance of potential housing development, has identified evidence of early medieval and medieval occupation within an area partially enclosed by a series of existing ditches and ponds sited on the edge of a medieval green. Although the site appears to have been truncated a small assemblage of pottery and metalworking slag was collected from a ditch and possible pits.

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of potential housing development within the grounds of Three Ponds, Chickering Road, Hoxne, Suffolk (Fig. 1). The evaluation was required to assess the archaeological potential of the site in advance of determination of planning application 0845/09 and was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by Dr Jess Tipper (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team – Appendix 1). The project was funded by the developer, Mr and Mrs Coombs.

2. Geology and topography

The site, which consists of an area of 0.16ha within the gardens of 'Three Ponds', lies at TM 1890 7597, at Heckfield Green in the parish of Hoxne. The site lies on an area of high, level ground, at c.45m AOD overlooking the Goldbrook, c.500m to the south-west and a second watercourse, c.900m to the north-east.

The site geology is of deep loam/clay soils over chalky till (Ordnance Survey 1983).

3. Archaeological and historical background

The property, a Grade II listed late 16th century farmhouse (LBS No. 281038) is named after the network of ponds and ditches that lie within its gardens. Although not recorded on the County Historic Environment Record these ponds had obvious potential to be of medieval or post-medieval date and so Dr Tipper had advised the applicant and the planning authority (Mid Suffolk) that a Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) and trenched evaluation of the site was required to assess the impact of the development on potential heritage assets, prior to determination of the planning application.

The DBA of the site (Craven 2010) confirmed that the site lay on the edge of the former medieval Heckfield Green which, being shown on estate maps dating to 1757, was enclosed in a piecemeal fashion through the 18th and 19th centuries. The network of ponds was identified as probably representing enclosed areas of medieval settlement

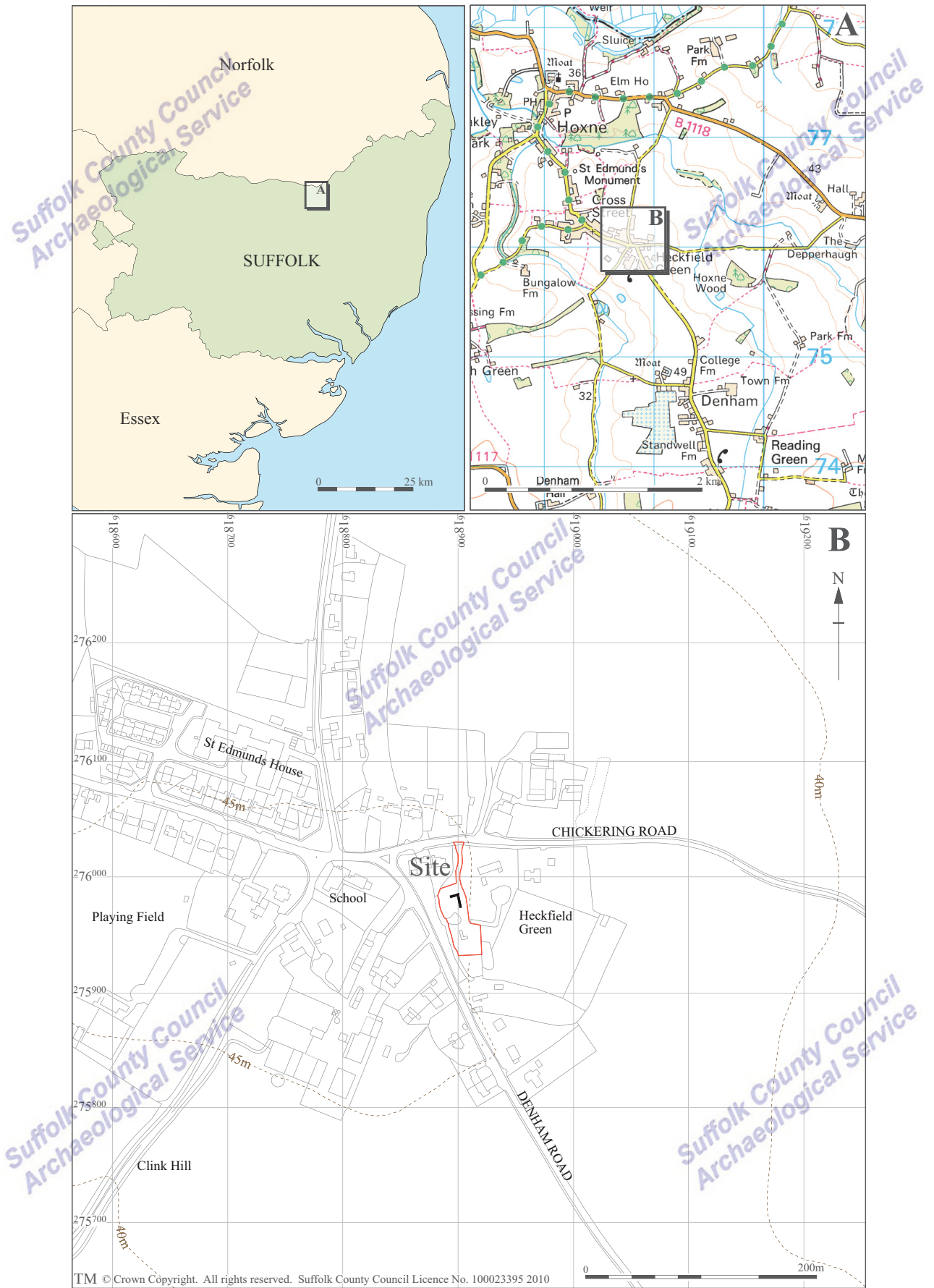


Figure 1. Site Location, with development area (red) and trenches (black)

fronting the Green. The ditch delineating the western boundary of the garden was likely to have marked the green edge itself. Some differences to the pond layout as shown on the modern Ordnance survey were identified, and the extant plan is shown in Figure 2.

The site therefore was still thought to have high potential for evidence of medieval occupation which could be affected by development. However it was also apparent that only the northern one of the two proposed development plots was available for evaluation prior to determination of the planning application due to the presence of an existing stable block and trees on the southern site. It was agreed with Dr Tipper that two 10m trenches would be placed on the available plot and that further evaluation of the southern plot would be required by a condition on the planning consent.

4. Methodology

The two trenches, measuring 18m in length and 1.8m wide (Fig. 2), were marked out by hand and were shifted slightly from the layout agreed with Dr Tipper in the project WSI to avoid existing trees to the north and west. They were excavated by a mechanical digger, equipped with a ditching bucket, to the top of the subsoil surface or archaeological levels, under the supervision of an archaeologist. Trench 2 was slightly shorter than planned due to the presence of existing trees on the western side.

The depth of the trenching varied from 0.25m to 0.4m. In Trench 01 the soil profile consisted of 0.25-0.3m of modern topsoil overlying a disturbed deposit comprised of mixed topsoil and the underlying natural mid orange/brown clay subsoil. In Trench 02 the topsoil directly overlaid the clay subsoil. Trenches and spoilheaps were thoroughly examined for archaeological material both during the machining and subsequent hand-excavation of features.

Archaeological features or deposits were generally visible cutting the natural subsoil and were cleaned and excavated by hand as required. The site was recorded using a single context continuous numbering system. Trench plans were drawn by hand at a scale of 1:50 on A3 gridded permatrace, feature sections at a scale of 1:20. Digital colour and black and white print photographs were taken of all stages of the fieldwork, and are included in the digital and physical archives respectively. Bulk environmental

samples were not collected as the potential features were either indistinct, or very shallow and disturbed, meaning that it was not possible to obtain uncontaminated samples of adequate size.

Site data has been input onto an MS Access database and recorded using the County HER code HXN 050. Bulk finds were washed, marked and quantified.

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-81470) and a digital copy of the report will be submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>) upon completion of the project.

The site archives are kept in the main store of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Bury St Edmunds under HER No. HXN 050.

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

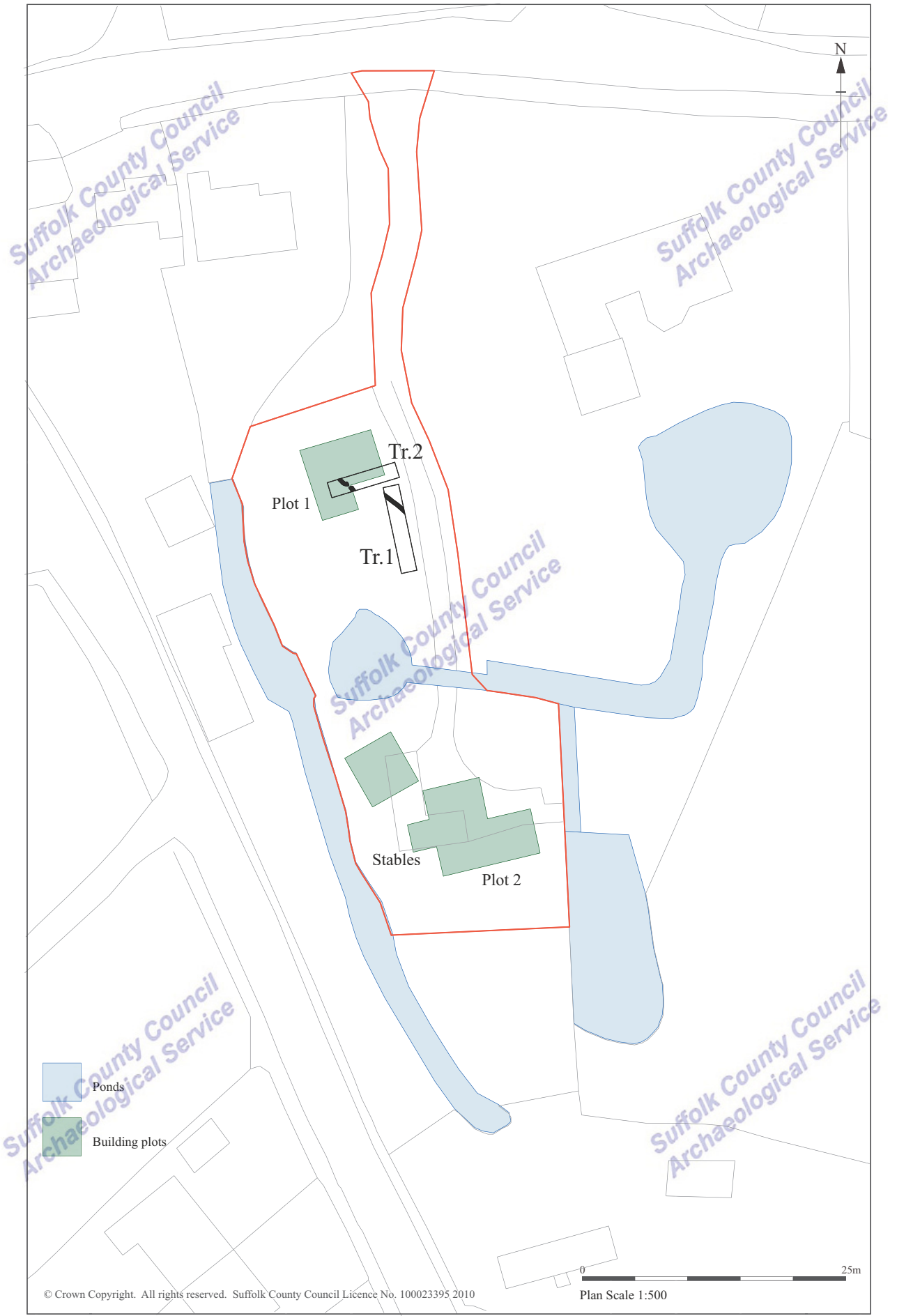


Figure 2. Trench location plan

5. Results

Context 0001 was reserved for unstratified material and three sherds of medieval pottery were collected from the subsoil surface of Trench 02 at the eastern end of the trench.

One feature, a possible linear ditch, 0002, was identified in Trench 01. Aligned east to west it measured 0.6m wide and 0.15m deep and had moderate sloping sides and a concave base. The feature was very indistinct in plan and its fill, 0003, a mid orange/brown stoney clay, was difficult to distinguish from the natural clay subsoil. Nine sherds of medieval pottery were collected.

A modern linear trench was also identified in the middle of Trench 01.

Two indistinct features were identified in Trench 02. 0004 and 0006 were irregular spreads rather than distinct cut features but possibly represented the bases of two heavily truncated pits or a linear feature aligned north-west to south-east.

0004 was 0.5m wide and 0.12m deep and had a fill, 0005, of mid/dark grey/brown stoney clay with occasional flecks of charcoal. Seven fragments of slag were collected. As the feature became shallower as it met the trench edge only a feature profile was recorded.

0006 was also c.0.5m wide and generally 0.05m deep with an area of deeper tree or animal disturbance. Its fill, 0007, was a mid grey/brown stoney clay with occasional flecks of charcoal. Its section was not recorded due to its shallow nature. Eleven sherds of medieval pottery and an iron object (SF1001) were collected.

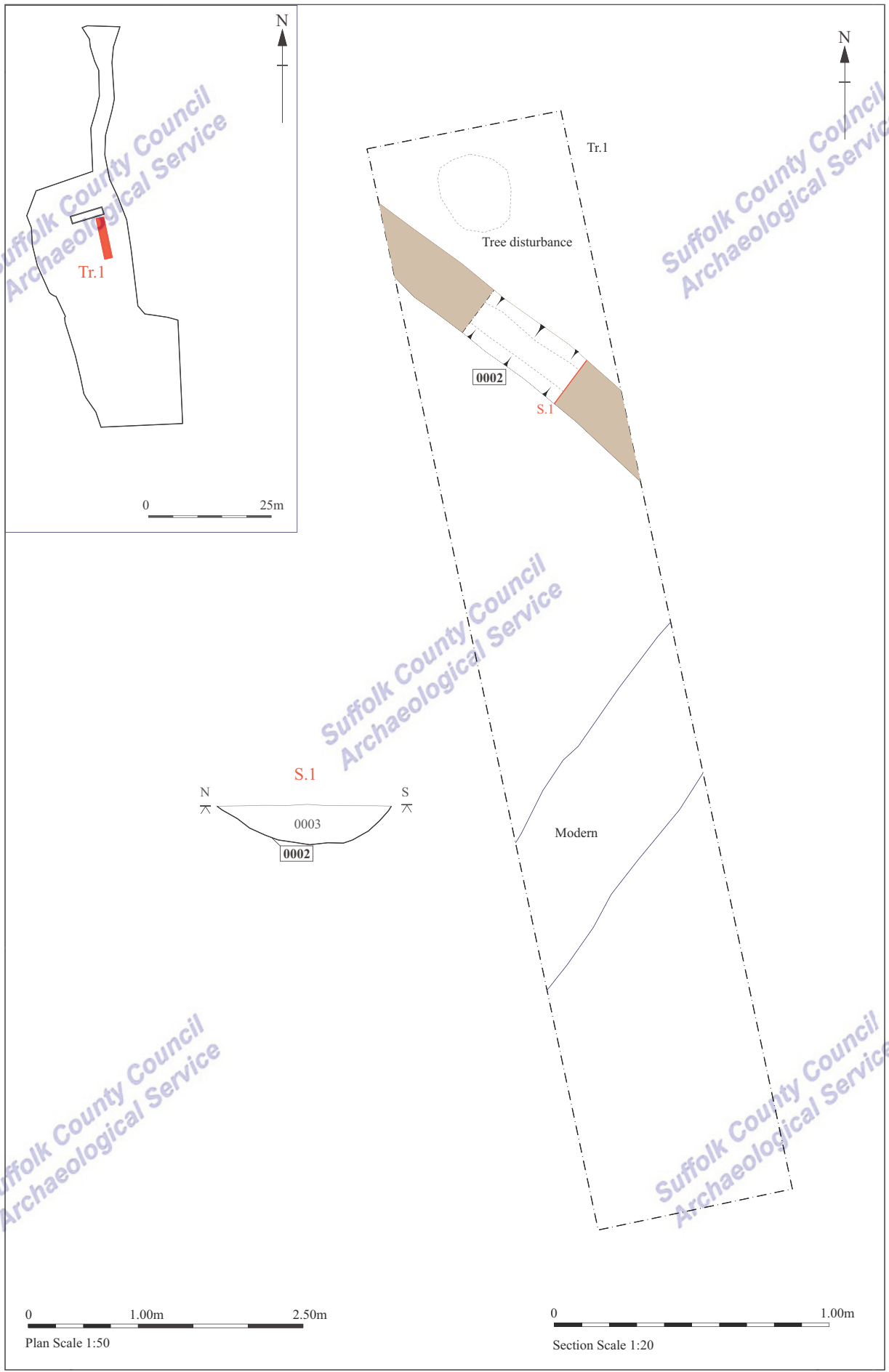


Figure 3. Trench 1, plan and section

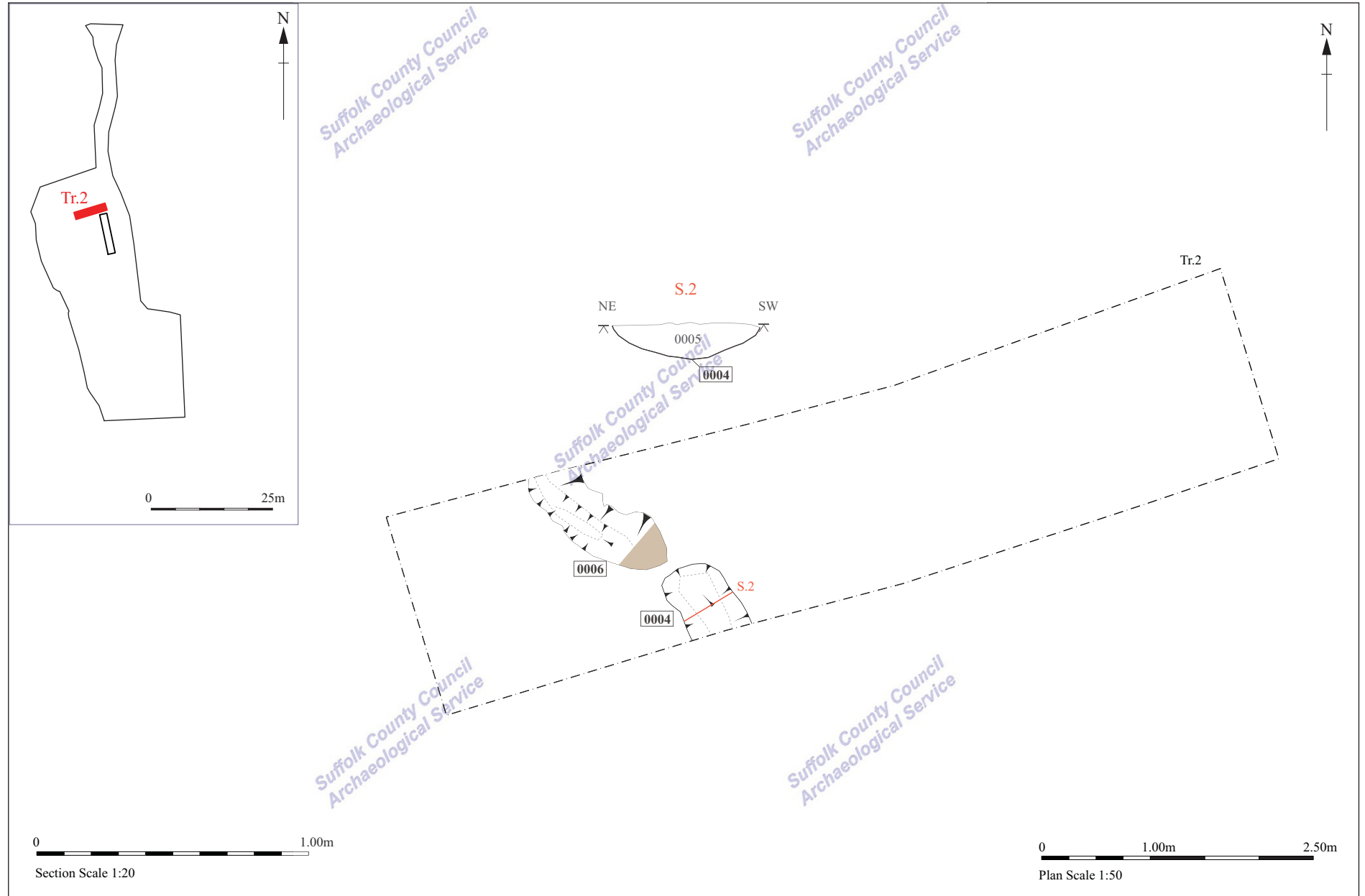


Figure 4. Trench 2, plan and section



Figure 5. Trench 01 facing south



Figure 6. Trench 02 facing east

6. The finds

Richenda Goffin

6.1. Introduction

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

| Context | Pottery | | Miscellaneous | Spotdate |
|---------|---------|------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| | No. | Wt/g | | |
| 0001 | 3 | 48 | | Unstrat, medieval |
| 0003 | 9 | 30 | | 12th-14th C |
| 0005 | | | 7 frags slag @ 1236g | Undated |
| 0007 | 11 | 106 | 1 iron small find SF1001 | 12th-14th C |
| Total | 23 | 184 | | |

Table 1. Finds quantities

6.2. Pottery

Twenty-three sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the evaluation, weighing 184 grammes. The pottery has been fully catalogued (Appendix 1).

Several fragments of a Waveney Valley coarseware sooted jar were recovered as unstratified finds from the subsoil at the eastern end of Trench 2, 0001. The vessel has a plain, slightly thickened everted rim which dates to the 12th-13th century.

Nine sherds of pottery were collected from the ditchfill 0003 in Trench 1 including two sherds of Early medieval wares with small shell inclusions dating to the 11th-12th century. Other body sherds, some of them sooted, of Waveney Valley coarsewares were also present in this context. A wider range of medieval coarseware was present in the fill 0007 of the spread 0006. Two sherds of a thin walled, buff fabric with an orange internal core, and sparse shell inclusions, and more shell visible on the external surfaces, could not be assigned a particular fabric code. They are clearly locally produced and are not dissimilar to Melton shelly wares. Four additional body sherds of another fabric are similar in appearance, but they do not contain the shell inclusions and are more micaceous. The remainder of the pottery from this feature consists of other types of medieval coarseware, some of which are sooted.

6.3. Slag

Seven fragments of slag were collected from the irregular spread 0004. The largest of these is a convex base which is likely to be the remains of a smithing hearth bottom.

6.4. Metalwork

Two joining fragments of an iron object were present in fill 0007 (SF1001). They form part of an iron bar which terminates in a cusp. At the other end it curves inward. It is likely that this is part of a structural fitting such a hinge terminal (Margeson 152, No 1188). Dimensions: Length 134mm, width 21mm (max).

6.5. Discussion

A small but significant group of pottery was recovered from the evaluation. The range of medieval coarseware includes a small quantity of early medieval wares. In this respect it is similar to the much larger group from Cross Street (HXN044) (Anderson, 2009). The finds confirm that the site is within the location of the area around the medieval green. In addition to evidence of domestic activity such as cooking, the presence of the slag suggests that smithing is likely to have taken place in the vicinity.

7. Discussion

The shallow depth of the trenching combined with the presence of a mixed deposit of topsoil and subsoil in Trench 01 and indistinct shallow features in Trench 02, indicates that the site has seen some truncation, with possible archaeological evidence being removed by previous garden landscaping.

Despite this the evaluation has shown some evidence of early medieval activity on the site, probably domestic in nature but with some evidence for metalworking. The small ditch and two possible feature bases are of uncertain function but support the idea that the site was an area of medieval occupation fronting onto the medieval green. The presence of cut features and a medieval finds assemblage contrasts with the negative results seen in the evaluation trench at HXN 043 (Sommers 2008), c.20m to the west, supporting the suggestion that this site lay within the undeveloped medieval green.

Seen together with the contemporary evidence of settlement to the north of Heckfield Green at HXN 044 (Crawley 2010), these results suggest that Heckfield Green dates to at least the early medieval period, and was surrounded by a series of plots or tenements. It seems likely that the various listed buildings bordering the former green, which generally date from the 16th/17th centuries, may each be sited on earlier medieval sites.

8. Conclusions and recommendations for further work

The evaluation has identified evidence of 11th-14th century medieval activity on the site, which appears to have been truncated. This evidence is of significant interest relating to both the early occupation of the site and history of the medieval green and, being at a shallow depth, means that other deposits will be disturbed or removed by the site's development. The archaeological deposits do not, however, warrant preservation *in situ*, and can be adequately recorded by further fieldwork. As the apparent truncation of the site means that much of the evidence may have been already lost it is recommended that any further fieldwork could consist of archaeological monitoring of groundworks as opposed to open area excavation.

The presence of medieval material demonstrates that the evaluation of the second, southern plot could also yield positive results and is still necessary. A condition requiring this work should be placed on the planning application when approved.

The proposed works will also involve the infilling of, or construction of a new bridge across, the east to west aligned ditch, replacing the existing structure of timber railway sleepers. While details of these works are not known by SCCAS it is probable that it will involve some disturbance to the ditch. SCCAS would also advise that archaeological investigation, consisting of the excavation and recording of a section of the ditch profile, should be undertaken in advance of or during any groundworks, which could be undertaken by a condition attached to any planning permission. This could be of particular importance as it will offer a potential opportunity to establish the date of the ditch and pond network itself, perhaps seeing if it is contemporary with the medieval activity already identified.

It is likely that this work and the construction of a new bridge will have to be carried out prior to demolition of the stable block and the archaeological evaluation of Plot 2 to enable access.

9. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

Digital archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds T:arc\archive field proj\Hoxne\HXN 050

Finds and environmental archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds.

10. List of contributors and acknowledgements

The project was directed and managed by John Craven who also carried out the evaluation fieldwork.

The post-excavation was managed by Richenda Goffin. The production of digital site plans and sections was carried out by Eleanor Hillen and managed by Crane Begg. The specialist finds report was written by Richenda Goffin.

11. Bibliography

Anderson, S., 2009, 'The pottery' in Crawley, P., 2010, *An archaeological excavation at Cross Street, Hoxne, Suffolk (draft)*. NAU Archaeology Report No. 2110a.

Craven, J. A., 2010, *Three Ponds, Chickering Road, Hoxne, HXN 050, Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. SCCAS Report No. 2010/149.

Ordnance Survey, 1983, 'Soils of England and Wales': Soil survey of England and Wales, sheet 4 Eastern England 1:250,000. Harpenden.

Margeson, S., 1993, *Norwich Households*. EAA 58, Norwich Survey.

Sommers, M., 2008, *Land To The Rear Of Larch House, Heckfield Green, Hoxne*. SCCAS Report No. 2008/235.

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.

Appendix 1. Pottery

| Context No | Ceramic Period | Fabric | Form | Sherd No | Weight (g) | State | Comments | Fabric date range | Context date |
|------------|----------------|--------|--------|----------|------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 0001 | MED | WVCW | CP/JAR | 3 | 48 | S | Plain thickened everted rim | 12th-13th C | 12th-14th C |
| 0003 | MED | EMWS | BODY | 2 | 6 | | | 11th-12th C | |
| 0003 | MED | WVCW | BODY | 7 | 24 | B | | L12th-14th C | 12th-14th C |
| 0006 | MED | MCW | BODY | 1 | 5 | | Reduced | L12th-14th C | |
| 0006 | MED | MSHW | BODY | 2 | 19 | S | Fine grey & orange fab w mica and different types of shell | 12th-14th C | |
| 0006 | MED | WVCW? | BODY | 4 | 24 | | Similar to MSHW but no shell, more micaceous | 12th-14th C | |
| 0006 | MED | MCW | BODY | 4 | 58 | S | Body sherds | L12th-14th C | 12th-14th C |