

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/161

**129-131, High Street, Bildeston
BIL 024**

HER Information

Planning Application No: B/09/00935
Date of Fieldwork: 19th August 2010
Grid Reference: TL 9918 4957
Funding Body: Mr. R. Gomersall
Curatorial Officer: Keith Wade
Project Officer: Linzi Everett
OASIS ID: suffolkc1- 81628

Summary

Monitoring of ground works for an extension to 129-131, High Street, Bildeston, was carried out as a condition of the planning consent in order to record any archaeological evidence revealed by the groundworks. Strip foundations revealed made-up ground to a depth of 1m close to the house which may be the fill of a large pit. A north-south aligned linear feature was seen cutting the natural subsoil at the base of the footings, the relationship between this and the pit is unclear. No artefactual evidence was recovered from the upcast spoil or seen in the trench sections.

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1. Introduction and methodology

Planning permission for the construction of a conservatory at 129-131, High Street, Bildeston, required a programme of archaeological works as a condition of the consent. The site lies at TL 9918 4957 (Figure 1), at a height of approximately 42m OD. The house is a Grade II listed building of 15th century origin, situated within the area of the medieval town of Bildeston as defined in the County Historic Environment Record (HER).



Figure 1. Site location

One visit was made to the site by the Field Projects Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (SCCAS) in order to inspect the excavated ground works. A Brief and Specification for the archaeological work was produced by Keith Wade of the SCCAS Conservation Team (Appendix I). The fieldwork was commissioned by Mr. R. Gomersall. The monitoring archive is held in the County HER in Bury St. Edmunds.

2. Results

The footing trenches measured 0.5m wide and 1m deep, and were excavated through c.0.3m of concrete and associated rubble sub-base (Figure 2). In the north west-south east footing, existing brick foundations were left in tact. A large pit, 0002, was observed in the north east of the trenches. This feature was steep sided where it could be seen to cut the natural

subsoil, was over a metre deep and extended beyond the base and the sides of the excavated trench. It was filled by a single discernable matrix, 0003, a dark greyish brown clay with frequent chalk flecks, regular flecks and fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), as well as occasional oyster shells and animal bones. No datable artefacts were observed in the trench sections. A second cut feature was visible in the base of the trench. 0004 appeared in plan to represent a linear feature aligned approximately north-south but its fill was exactly the same as the fill of pit 0002, and the relationship with this pit was unclear. A drawn section of the north east-south west footing is shown as Figure 3.

South of pit 0002, the concrete layer sealed the natural subsoil, which was a pale yellow/brown chalky clay mottled with pale grey clay. This was friable and contained regular chalk lumps, flint pebbles and fine flint gravel evenly dispersed throughout the deposit. Several modern services had caused disturbance to the upper 0.4m of the trenches and remains of what appeared to be a cobbled surface were noted below the sub-base (Figure 3).

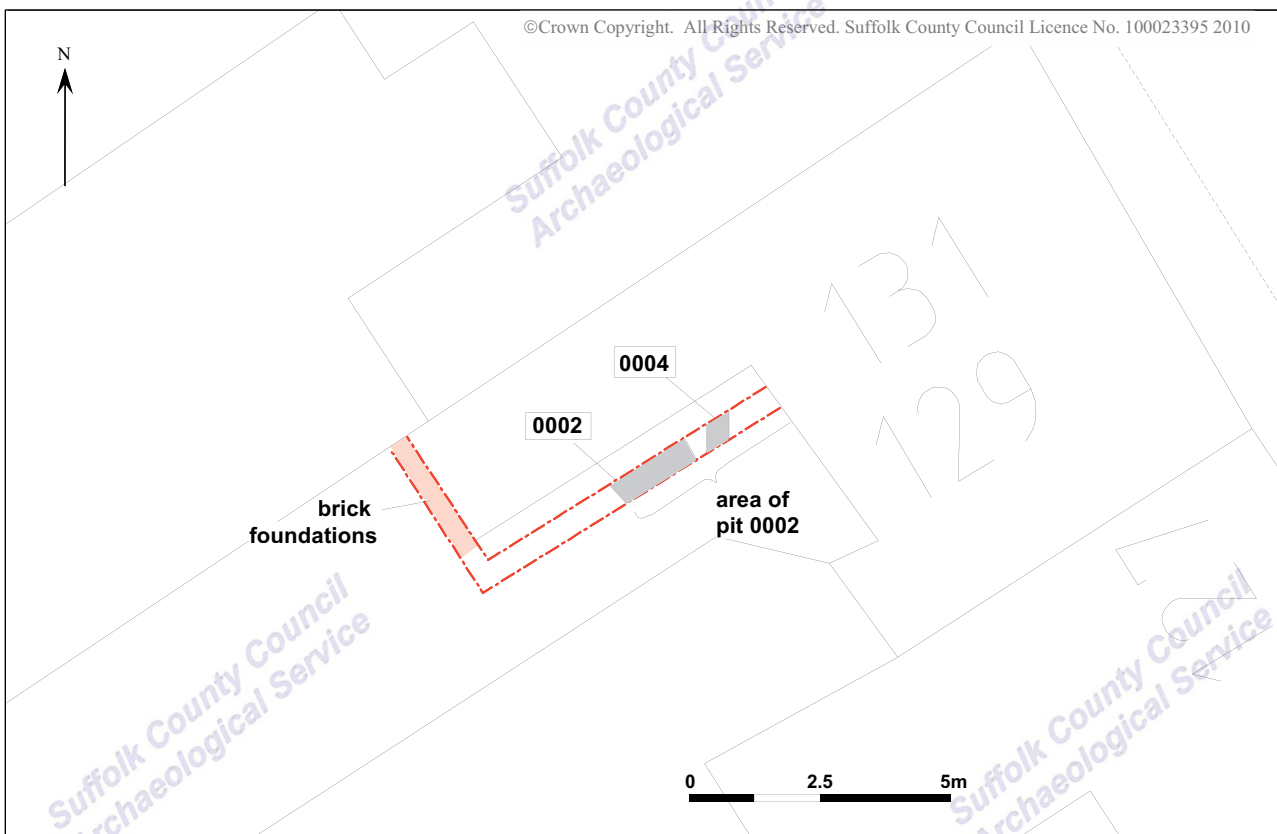


Figure 2. Location of monitored footings

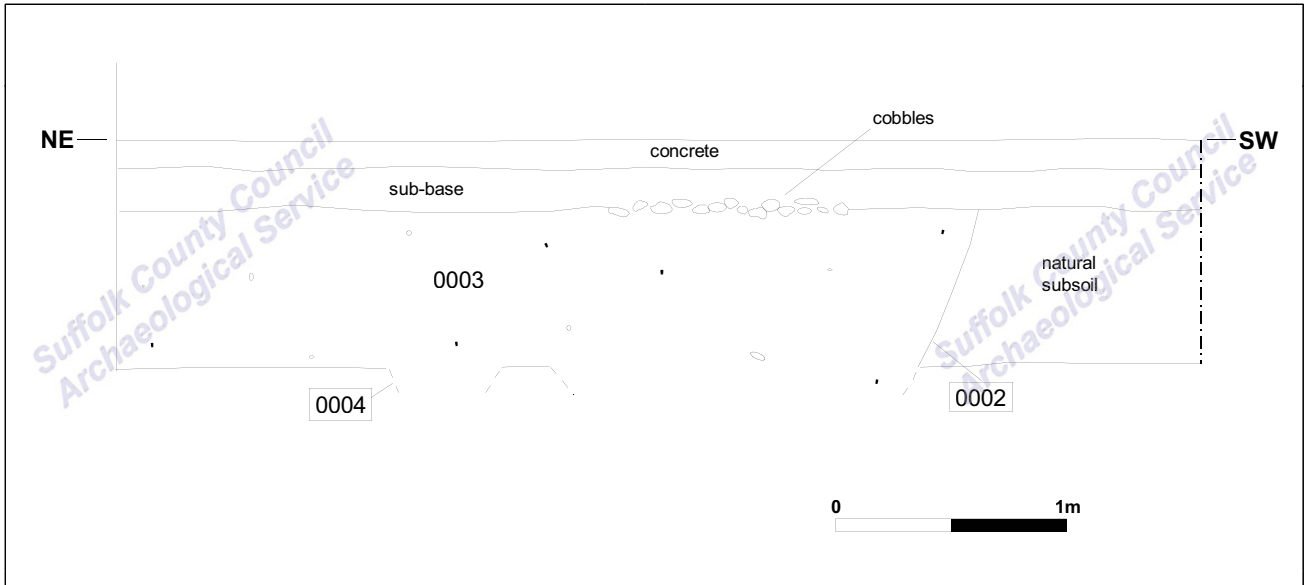


Figure 3. Section through NE-SW footing



Plate 1. NE-SW footing, looking SE. The northern edge of 0004 is just visible cutting the natural in the base of the trench

3. Discussion

Although the footings exposed archaeological features immediately behind the existing house, the limited nature of the excavations made interpretation of their form and function difficult. In plan at the base of the trench, it appeared that two distinct features were present but in section, there was no indication of a relationship between 0002 and 0004. Furthermore, there appeared to be no difference in the fill of the two possible features, which was a homogenous matrix throughout the trench, and from which no stratified datable evidence was recovered.

Linzi Everett
August 2010

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring

129-131 HIGH STREET, BILDESTON

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission to extend 129-131 High Street, Bildeston has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (B/09/00935). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence and the proposed foundation methods indicates that the area affected by new building can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The proposal lies within the area defined for the medieval small town of Bildeston in the County Historic Environment Record and will involve significant ground disturbance.
- 1.3 As strip foundations are proposed there will only be limited damage to any archaeological deposits, which can be recorded by a trained archaeologist during excavation of the trenches by the building contractor.
- 1.4 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 would be 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 the medieval occupation of the site.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the excavation of building footing trenches. These, and the up-cast soil, are to be observed during and after they have been excavated by the building contractor.

3. Arrangements for Monitoring

- 3.1 The developer or his archaeologist will give the County Archaeologist (Keith Wade, Archaeological Service, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR. Telephone: 01284 352440; Fax: 01284 352443) 48 hours notice of the commencement of site works.
- 3.2 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the observing archaeologist) who must be approved by the Planning Authority's archaeological adviser (the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service).
- 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 timetable.

3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered, the County Archaeologist should be immediately informed so that any amendments deemed necessary to this specification to ensure adequate provision for recording, can be made without delay. This could include the need for archaeological excavation of parts of the site which would otherwise be damaged or destroyed.

4. **Specification**

4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Archaeologist and the 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.

4.2 Opportunity should 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 case of footing trenches unimpeded access at the rate of one and half hours per 10 metres of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.

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

4.5 All contexts should be numbered and finds recorded by context as far as possible.

4.6 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Historic Environment Record.

4.7 Archaeological contexts should, where possible, be sampled for palaeoenvironmental remains. Best practice should allow for sampling of interpretable and datable archaeological deposits and provision should be made for this. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from the English Heritage Regional Adviser for Archaeological Science (East of England). A guide to sampling archaeological deposits (Murphy, P L and Wiltshire, P E J, 1994, *A guide to sampling archaeological deposits for environmental analysis*) is available for viewing from SCCAS.

4.8 Developers should be aware of the possibility of human burials being found. If this eventuality occurs they must comply with the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857; and the archaeologist should be informed by '*Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England*' (English Heritage & the Church of England 2005) which includes sensible baseline standards which are likely to apply whatever the location, age or denomination of a burial.

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 Historic Environment 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 HER 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.

- 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*, should be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 County Historic Environment Record sheets should be completed, as per the county manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 5.6 If archaeological features or finds are found 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 HER. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Keith Wade

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

Date: 14th April 2010

Reference:/129-131 High Street

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.