

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

**Cockfield Hall, Station Road, Yoxford, Suffolk
 YOX 019**

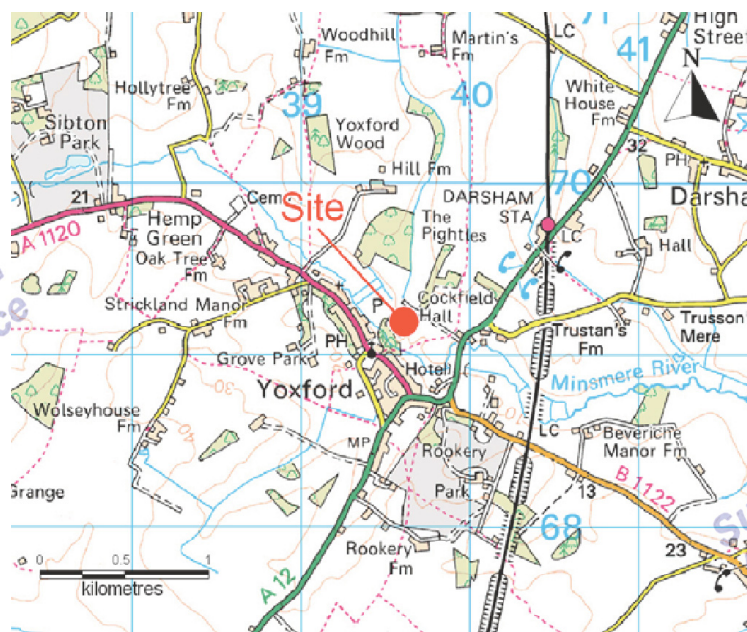
A report on the archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the replacement of a septic tank with pumping stations, new foul drains and the installation of underground electricity cables at Cockfield Hall, Yoxford, Suffolk.

**NGR: TM 3960 6917
 Plan app: C/08/0613/FUL
 Funded by Mr T Templer**

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Summary

An archaeological monitoring was carried out on groundworks during the installation of pumping stations and new foul drains at Cockfield Hall, Yoxford, Suffolk. This application also covered groundworks associated with the burying of overhead electricity cables across Lock Meadow, a water meadow to the northwest of the hall complex. Site visits were made by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, to examine the trenches and excavated pumping stations, between August and November 2008. The walls of the trenches and pits were examined in order to observe any archaeological layers or features exposed during these groundworks. Cockfield Hall is a Grade I Listed Building of special architectural and historic interest, with an associated complex of buildings containing eight Grade II listed structures. The hall also lies within the Area of Archaeological Importance recorded in the County Historic Environment Record, on the northern side of the Yox Valley. During these groundworks, two possible archaeological features were identified and a small quantity of medieval pottery was recovered.



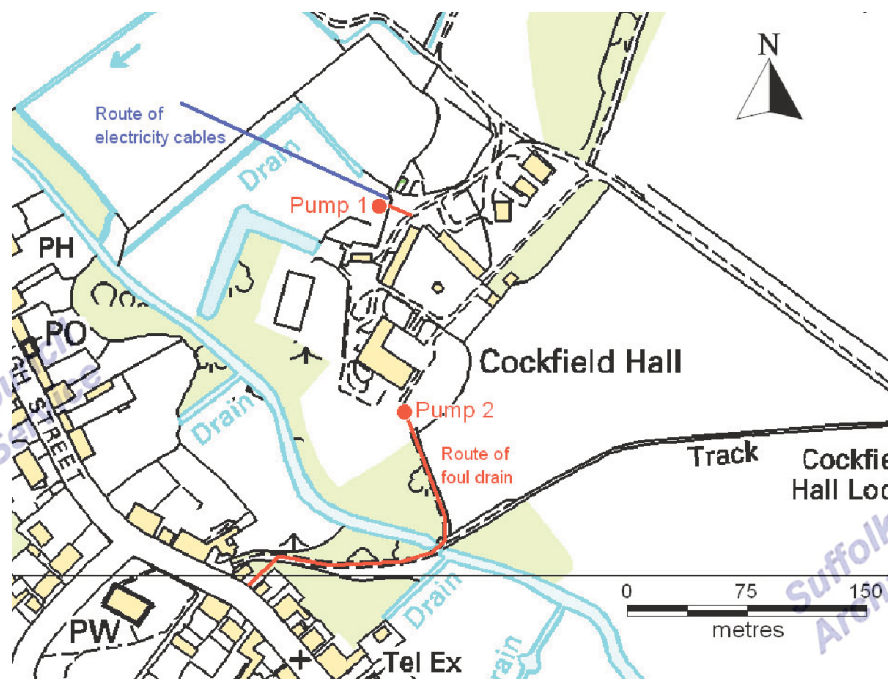
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Figure 1. Location of site

Introduction

Archaeological monitoring of groundworks was undertaken during the replacement of the existing septic tank with pumping stations and a new foul drainage system, at Cockfield Hall, Station Road, Yoxford, Suffolk. Cockfield Hall is a Grade I listed building of special architectural and historic interest, including eight other listed buildings and structures within its curtilage. The development site lies within the Area of Archaeological Importance as recorded in The Historic Environment Records. Situated on the eastern edge of the Suffolk claylands within the Yox Valley, the estate comprises an area of floodplain and lower valley at c5-25m OD. The majority of the land within the development area has historically been meadow pasture, a valuable commodity in medieval England. There is therefore high potential for any underlying archaeology to be well preserved, as it has been spared the destructive processes of the plough that surrounding arable lands have been subjected to. The north wing and the gate house of Cockfield Hall date from the mid 16th Century, with the remainder of the house being rebuilt in the early 17th century. The main range was redeveloped and altered in the late 18th and early-mid 19th centuries. A single find of an Iron Age antler weaving comb is recorded in the HER under YOX 002, found during sewage works on the bank of the River Yox within the estate. Although exact details of its location are unclear this find suggests that these groundworks could expose evidence of earlier settlement within the river valley.

A brief and specification detailing the work to be carried out was produced by Robert Carr of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team. Mr T Templer funded the work and the monitoring was carried out by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team.



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Figure 2. Location of ground works within the development

Methodology

Site visits were made by SCC Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, to examine groundworks at Cockfield Hall, Yoxford, Suffolk. The trenches were machine excavated, according to their requirements and the exposed trench walls were examined for archaeological features and layers and the excavated spoil was examined for dateable archaeological finds. Digital photographs were taken as an archive record. The unstratified finds recovered from these groundworks are retained, as part of the archive record, at SCCAS stores in bury St Edmunds.

Results

Rising Main / Foul Drain works:

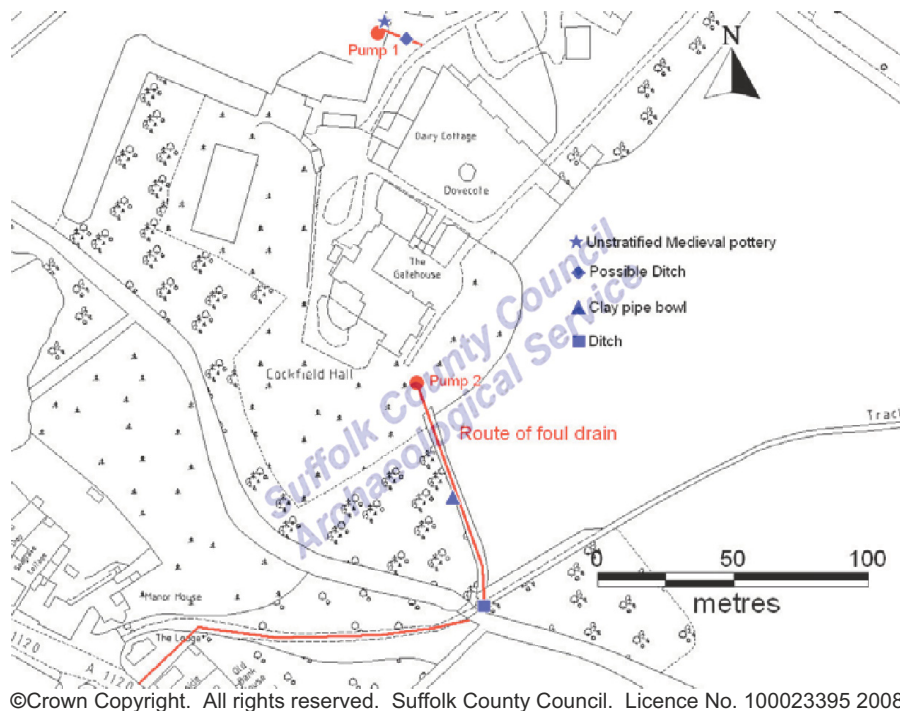


Figure 3. Location of features and finds along the route of the groundworks

Pump Station 1: A trench was dug from the track directly northwest of the northern end of the dairy range, into the southeast edge of Lock Meadow. The trench was 0.55m wide and machine excavated to a depth of 1.1m. The upper layer visible consisted of 0.2m of topsoil overburden, a mid brown silty sand below grass. To the east end of the trench, below the topsoil and extending to a depth of 0.4m was a mixed layer of crushed ceramic building materials, clinker, ash, stones and gravel. This disturbed layer lay directly over loose orangey yellow sand. As the trench extended towards the west, the topsoil overburden became 0.7m thick and lay directly over the natural yellow sand.

As observed during the monitoring of the construction of a field shelter, this area has previously been subjected to a high level of disturbance (see SCCAS Report 2009/033). The profile revealed to the eastern extent of the trench, being closer to the Hall, is within an area that has been a focus of activity over a long period of time. Various outbuildings were either added for military use or destroyed through WWII bombing within the curtilage of the

hall, followed by further development once the Hall returned to private ownership. Within the limited dimensions of these footings it was impossible to date any of this activity or disturbance; however it is fair to say that the limited depth of the deposit in this trench represents demolition debris or former surface treatments in this area.



Figure 4. Possible truncated Ditch (0004)



Figure 5. Profile of trench

Approximately 8m from the eastern end of the trench a single archaeological feature was identified, a possible ditch running north south, parallel with the existing field boundary. This feature appeared to be highly truncated and its edges were poorly defined. The topsoil overburden (0002) was 0.3m thick at this point, below which a layer of mottled yellow brown silty sand extended to a depth of 0.6m (0003). This layer lay over the truncated feature [0004] which was 0.8m wide and extended to a depth of 0.9m. The fill was mid brown silty sand (0005). The feature was cut into the natural under laying yellow sand (0006). No dateable finds were recovered from the feature but it probably represents a former field boundary.

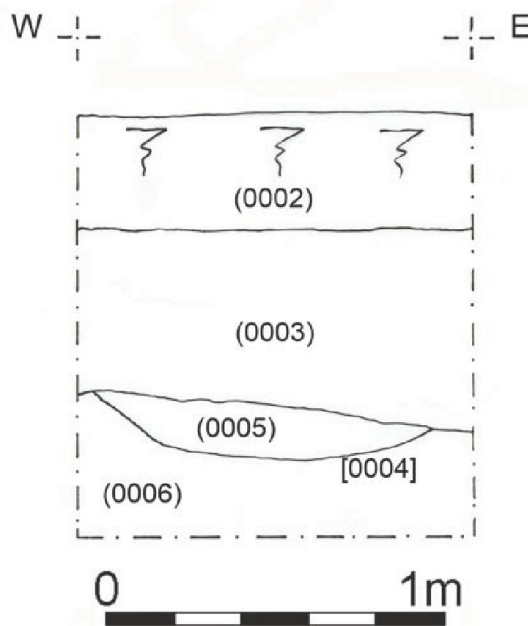


Figure 6. Profile of Ditch 0004

The pit excavated to house Pumping Station 1 was examined and was c.2m by 2m wide by c.1.5m deep. Unfortunately due to poor weather conditions and very friable ground the sides of this pit were eroded and collapsed to such an extent that it made the identification of the presence of any archaeological features impossible.

Directly north of this pump housing pit a small quantity of unstratified medieval pottery sherds was recovered from the upcast spoil, (location marked with a star on Figure 3.) No archaeological feature associated with this pottery could be identified. This small quantity of medieval pottery may be associated with the previous medieval settlement nearby, or may represent casual loss.

Finds (*Richenda Goffin*)

A total of five fragments of pottery were collected from the monitoring, weighing 68g. The fragments form part of a single wheelthrown coarseware vessel, of medieval date. One of the sherds may be from the rim, but it is very abraded and the form of the vessel cannot be established conclusively. The fine soft fabric is light to mid grey, with darker exterior surfaces which are a brown buff colour. The fabric contains occasional quartz inclusions and moderate clay lenses up to 3mm in length. It is not dissimilar to Hollesley ware but it is not the same, and may be earlier in date.

OP	Pottery		Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	
0001	5	68	L12th-14th C
Total	5	68	

Table 1. Finds from Pump Station 1 area

Pump Station 2: Documentary evidence had come to light during the completion of the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, suggesting that the ponds to the northwest of the Hall may not actually, as previously believed, represent the original moat associated with the medieval hall, but in fact be the remains of stew ponds. It was suggested that the original moat may actually have been much closer to the earliest parts of the hall, as it had 'formerly flowed by the gatehouse, under the walls of the house, but has been stopped and diverted'. In the light of this Pump Station 2 was situated in potentially a very sensitive area as there was a small chance that it might reveal the remains of the original moat. It was agreed with the contractor therefore that an archaeologist should be present during the excavation of this pit.

The pit was machine excavated to a depth of 2m and was c.2m by 2m wide. The turf and c.0.15m of topsoil were removed. To the south side of the pit a salt glazed ceramic drain pipe was discovered just below the turf, which was removed and discarded. Below the topsoil was a layer of orange sand and gravel 0.2m thick, that probably represents an old path surface in this area. Below the gravel was a substantial deposit of grey brown sandy clay containing frequent fragments of ceramic building materials, mortar and chalk flecks, as well as a small quantity of domestic animal bones and oyster shell,

which were not retained (0013). The deposit extended to a depth of 0.9m in this manner after which it became yellow and cleaner with fewer inclusions apart from the occasional oyster shell. By 1.4m down it became wetter, yellow grey, clean, natural clay. At c.1.6m there was a band of orange yellow clay marking the interface between a lower wet blue grey (gleyed) stiff clay and the overlying yellow clay. Extending to a depth of 1.9m this blue grey clay lay directly on to a layer of brown peat deposits containing blue clay lenses. This lower layer extended to the base of the excavated pit at 2m. The spoil was examined during excavation but no dateable archaeological finds were recovered.

This clay rich deposit, visible in the upper extent of this excavation, contained un-dateable finds, small fragments of ceramic building material and domestic animal bones, it clearly represents the deposition of material. It extends to such a depth that it can be assumed that any cut feature it may filled would be quite extensive. No cut edges could be seen within the limited dimensions of the pit, but when the trench for the rising main was excavated from the pit towards the Lodge, this deposit could be seen to extend south east for 4.1m. In the walls of the trench the grey brown clay was below 0.2m of topsoil and 0.2m of orangey sand and gravel, which again may represent an old path surface or be associated with the old drain that runs along this route.



Figure 7. Location of Pump 2, near east range of house



Figure 8. Profile of Pump 2 pit

Within the limited extent of these excavations it is impossible to define the size or shape of this thick deposit (0013). The deposit was first observed c.10m from the south east corner of the eastern range of the current building, and extended c.4m south east beyond this point, it was not visible, however, in the shallow trench dug northwest towards the hall from the pumping station. If the Hall was originally H-shaped in plan this deposit would be over 10m away from the walls of the building. It is likely that this deposit represents the infill of a large feature such as a ditch, pond or moat, but within the limited extent of these excavations it was impossible to see a full profile, therefore it is very difficult to say with any conviction what this material truly represents.

The rising main trench continued from the pump pit in the north towards the bridge in the south. The trench was 0.8m deep and 0.5m wide along this extent. The topsoil was 0.15m thick, directly below which was bright orange silty sand with frequent stones. This may represent material associated with a former path or an earlier service drain running along this route. At a depth of 0.6m there was a band of yellow orange sandy clay sitting lying over yellow grey clay that extends to the base of the trench. No archaeological features were observed along this stretch of trench. The spoil was examined and a single find of a clay pipe bowl dating from the late 17th century was recovered, (see location of blue triangle in Figure 3). This single find was unstratified and probably represents a casual loss.

As the drainage trench progressed southeast towards the River Yox it bisected the former driveway to the Hall. Running roughly east-west through screening woods from The Lodge on the High Street at Yoxford, the driveway is shown on maps dating from 1839 to sweep north in a large arc, meeting the Hall complex east of the gatehouse. The drive shares its route across the river with an old established footpath, visible on maps dating from the early 1790's.

The trench cut the drive north-south just east of the bridge. Visible in the walls of this trench was a fairly substantial feature, possibly a large ditch [0009], cut into the surrounding natural yellow sand (0012). Measuring 2.9m across and 0.78m deep, the sides were moderately sloped and concave and the base was flat. The fill of this feature (0010) was stiff grey brown sandy clay with frequent CBM, mortar and chalk flecks which seems to suggest backfilling of the feature rather than slow or natural silting up. Overlying the feature were layers of sand and gravel (0011) and (0008) which contained some crushed hardcore, these layers most likely represent former drive or path surfaces. This ditch could represent a former field boundary from a period when the land around the hall was made up of smaller parcels of land or it could represent earlier water and land management due to its proximity to the river. The feature may have been backfilled at an early date or could be associated with landscaping carried out within the estate or gentrification of the parkland immediately around the hall. No dateable finds were recovered from the fill of this feature.

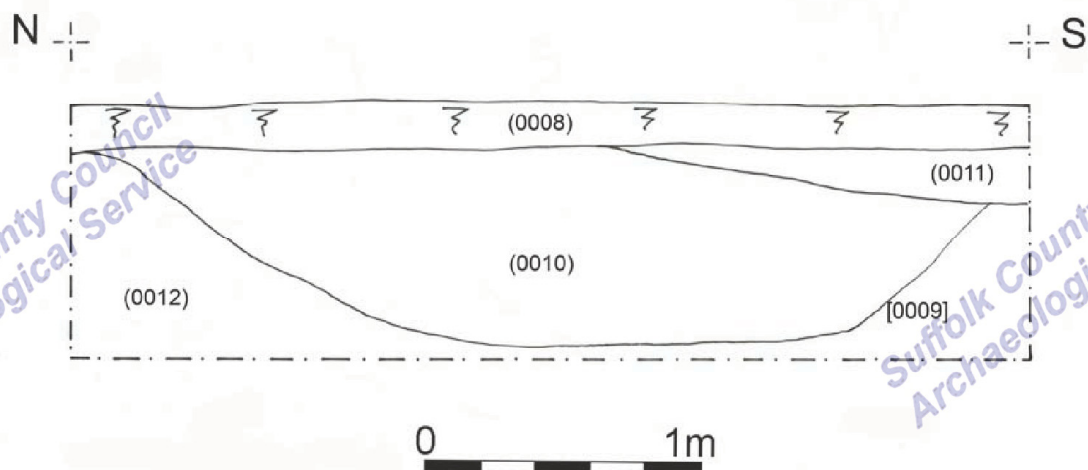


Figure 9. Profile of Ditch 0009



Figure 10. Northern edge of ditch



Figure 11. Southern edge of ditch

The rising main trenches continued west from the bridge, through the screening wood and the garden of The Lodge to join the main sewers in High Street, Yoxford. These trenches only revealed a shallow topsoil of pale brown silty sand c.0.3m deep straight on to pure, clean orange sand. In the land adjacent to The Lodge, the topsoil garden loam was 0.4m deep and contained fragments of post-medieval domestic refuse, roof tile and floor pammets, animal bone and modern glass. All this material can be associated with the occupation of the current property rather than providing evidence for any earlier settlement on this plot. No archaeological features were observed within this stretch of trench, the spoil was examined and no dateable archaeological finds were recovered.

OPNo	Feature	Identifier	Description
0001	-	Unstratified finds	Unstratified finds from spoil from Pump 1.
0002	-	Topsoil	Topsoil in trench for Pump 1 mid-dark brown loamy silty sand
0003	-	Subsoil	Subsoil in trench for Pump 1 mottled yellow and grey brown silty sand
0004	0004	Cut of possible ditch	Cut of possible truncated ditch in trench to Pump 1
0005	0004	Fill of possible ditch 0004	Fill of possible ditch 0004, mid brown silty sand
0006	-	Underlying natural	Underlying natural loose yellow sand in trench to Pump 1
0007	-	Unstratified finds	Unstratified finds from trench from Pump 2
0008	-	Topsoil	Topsoil in trench from pump 2 as it crosses the driveway/footpath by the bridge. Mid brown silty sand containing frequent fragments of crushed CBM and gravel
0009	0009	Cut of possible ditch	Cut of possible ditch as trench crosses driveway/footpath.
0010	0009	Fill of possible ditch	Fill of possible ditch grey brown clay with fragments of CBM, and mortar and chalk flecks
0011	-	Layer	Layer of orange sand and gravel hogging, over southern extent of ditch 0009, possible former drive surface
0012	-	Underlying natural	Natural clean yellow sand below ditch 0009
0013		Layer	Layer of grey brown sandy clay containing frequent small fragments of ceramic building material and mortar flecks, and occasional animal bones and oyster shells

Table 2. Context information

Electricity Cables: During September 2008 a scheme was carried out to re-route the overhead electricity cables crossing Lock Meadow, to the northwest of the Hall complex, under ground. To this purpose a trench 0.6m wide by 1m deep and approximately 140m in length was excavated across this meadow (Fig. 12).

The recording of an Iron Age weaving comb, found on the estate in the area of the river, suggests that there may be early settlement along the banks of the River Yox. There was a possibility that the groundworks associated with the re-routing of these cables could disturb any archaeological occupation deposits that may be present. A site visit was carried out to examine the trench walls for archaeological features and to record any evidence of the historic environment that could be revealed.

The profiles within the trench revealed 0.4m thick deposits of mid brown loamy topsoil, typical of a meadow pasture soil, over yellow brown clays. These clays extended to a depth of 0.8m and showed evidence of gleying and the leaching of minerals representative of the long term exposure to waterlogged conditions. The clay soils all overlay peat deposits, exposed at a depth of 0.8m. The peat was rich in organic materials and remains of bulrushes could still be identified.



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Figure 12. Location of profiles along route of the groundworks

It is likely that these profiles represent a wet environment on the edge of the river with thick deposits of peat suggesting an area rich in water plants and possibly too wet for early settlement. Later water management within the area, with the introduction of drains and ditches would have allowed this landscape to be used as wet pasture, a valuable resource during the medieval period.



Figure 13. Profile 1



Figure 14. Profile 2



Figure 15. Profile 3

No archaeological features were revealed within the extent of this trench, the spoil was examined and no dateable finds were recovered.

Discussion and Conclusion

Within the limited dimensions of these ground works a total of three archaeological features were identified. Two ditches were identified, the first of which appeared to be of an earlier date and although no dateable finds were recovered from its fill. Some unstratified pottery dating from the 12th - 14th centuries was however discovered immediately to the west. The recovery of the pottery suggests activity within this area and it is possible that the ditch dates from around this period representing early land use or settlement within this area. The second ditch was a substantial size and had been purposely backfilled, possibly during landscaping or gentrification of the plateau around the Hall.

The deposit identified within the pit excavated for Pump 1 represents a substantial feature, which was observed to be between 1.4m and 1.9m deep and extend for c.4m to the northeast. It is however impossible within the restricted dimensions of this excavation to positively identify the purpose of this feature. Evidence within the documentary report suggests that the original moat for the hall may have surrounded the building close to its walls. Although there is a chance that this deposit could represent such a feature, without being able to determine its dimensions and date it is difficult to identify whether it is an early moat or pond, or a large field ditch or boundary.

The material deposited within the pit for Pump Station 2 was very similar in composition to the fill of ditch 0009, and it is possible that these two features were backfilled during the same period of landscaping or gentrification of the estate around the Hall possible during the mid 19th century.