

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/192

Grove Cottage, Mellis Road, Yaxley YAX 020

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HER Information

Planning Application No: 1379/05
Date of Fieldwork: 6-7th October 2010
Grid Reference: TM 1201 2743
Funding Body: Mr. Nick Roach
Curatorial Officer: Edward Martin
Project Officer: Duncan Stirk
Oasis Reference: suffolkc1-84828

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





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Summary

An archaeological monitoring was carried out on land at Grove Cottage, Mellis Road, Yaxley. (TM 1201 2743), YAX 020.

Foundation trenching for a double garage was monitored on the 6th and 7th October 2010. A number of archaeological features were recorded. These included a number of ditches, a structural slot and two pits. Some of these features are probably medieval in date and relate to the structures present on the platform of the moated site. Some are probably post-medieval and may have been contemporaneous with the adjacent barn.



1. Introduction

Archaeological monitoring of building work was carried out at Grove Cottage, Mellis Road, Yaxley as part of an archaeological condition in relation to a planning permission for a garage and barn conversion. (Application number: 1379/05).

The site lies within the medieval core of the village of Yaxley, and adjacent to the probable village green. More importantly, it lies within a moated enclosure (Historic environment Number (HER) No. YAX 01). It was felt therefore that the development work would cause ground disturbance with the potential to destroy archaeological deposits were they present. As such, there was requirement for archaeological monitoring of the groundworks as outlined in a Brief & Specification produced by Edward Martin of the SCCAS Conservation Team. The SCCAS Field Team was subsequently commissioned to carry out the work by the client Mr. Nick Roach. This took place during two visits on the 6th and 7th October 2010.

2. Geology and topography

The site is located within the village of Yaxley (Fig. 1). The ground prior to the building work was part of the gardens of Grove Cottage, and was occupied by fruit trees and other shrubs. The ground was flat and was situated between the 60m and 65m AOD contour lines. The site is located on chalky till deposited by the Anglian glaciation. The site is bounded to the north by Mellis Road, to the west and south by similar gardens, and to the east by a modern housing estate.

3. Archaeological and historical background

The development site lies on the edge of the medieval settlement of Yaxley. The settlement is listed in the Domesday survey of 1086 as being in the hands of Bishop Aelmer in 1066 and William, Bishop of Thetford in 1086. By the 16th century the parish manor belonged to the Yaxley family from which the village takes its name. (Goult, 1990). The medieval village would have probably been located between the church of St. Mary (HER No. YAX 010), at the southern end, and the crossroads and possible village green at the northern end. The remnants of a moated enclosure (HER No. YAX

001) are adjacent to the crossroads and possible village green; and the development site is positioned within a possible western extension of the moated enclosure.

A limited number of archaeological interventions and finds are listed in the Historic Environment Record (HER) in the vicinity of the site:

- YAX 019 – An archaeological evaluation to the north of Mellis Road opposite the site revealed a post-medieval ditch.
- YAX 005 – A Roman bronze Sestertius coin was found in a garden less than 150m to the SE of the development site.
- YAX 002 – A Roman coin, a brooch, and a lead weight were recovered as metal detector finds from a field just over 300m to the SE of the development site.

The development site is therefore within the medieval settlement and adjacent to or within a medieval moated site, and groundworks related to the development are likely to reveal archaeological remains of this period.

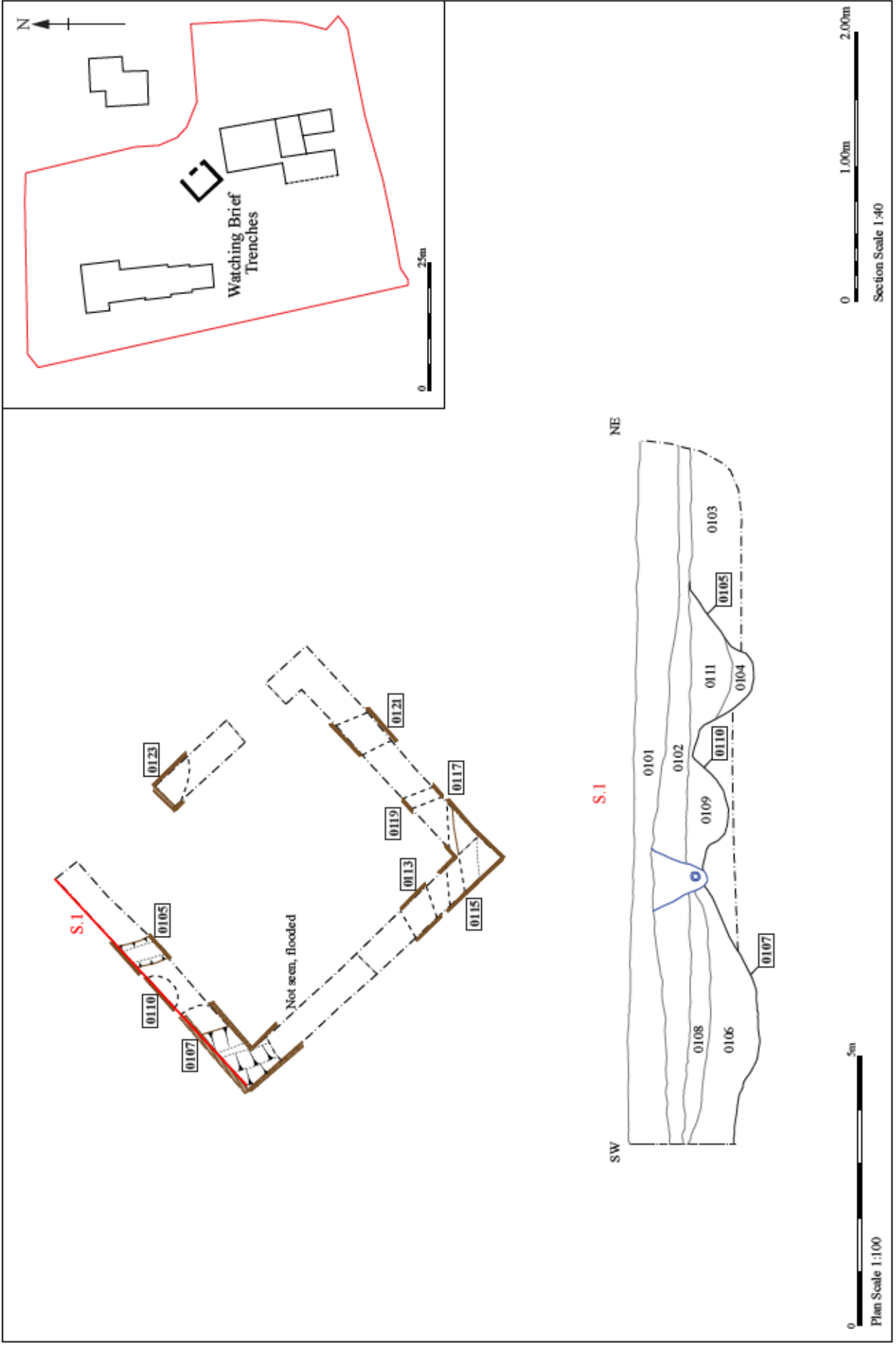


Figure 2. Trench plan and section

4. Methodology

The groundworks for a detached garage were the subject of this monitoring work; which was allocated the HER number YAX 020. It should be noted that other groundworks and building recording associated with the redevelopment of a barn are also part of the archaeological condition attached to planning application number 1379/05. These other works are not scheduled to be undertaken in the near future, and will therefore be reported upon in separate publications.

The archaeological work was conducted in accordance with a Brief and Specification written by Edward Martin of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Conservation Team (Martin, 2010).

Monitoring of the excavation of foundations was carried out over two visits on the 6th and 7th October 2010. The work involved the monitoring of the excavation of foundation trenches to determine the presence of archaeological features. The foundation trenches were excavated with a 360° mechanical excavator using a 0.4m wide toothless bucket. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand to better reveal changes in colour and composition that would indicate the presence of archaeological deposits and features. All observed deposits were allocated unique context numbers and recorded on *pro-forma* recording forms, following guidelines set out by SCC Archaeological Service. Archaeological features were then partly excavated in plan where possible, or in section if not, for the recovery of datable finds. All archaeological deposits were drawn in a series of 1:20 scale sections and 1:50 scale plans, and photographed in digital format. The graphics in this report have been produced using Adobe illustrator software.

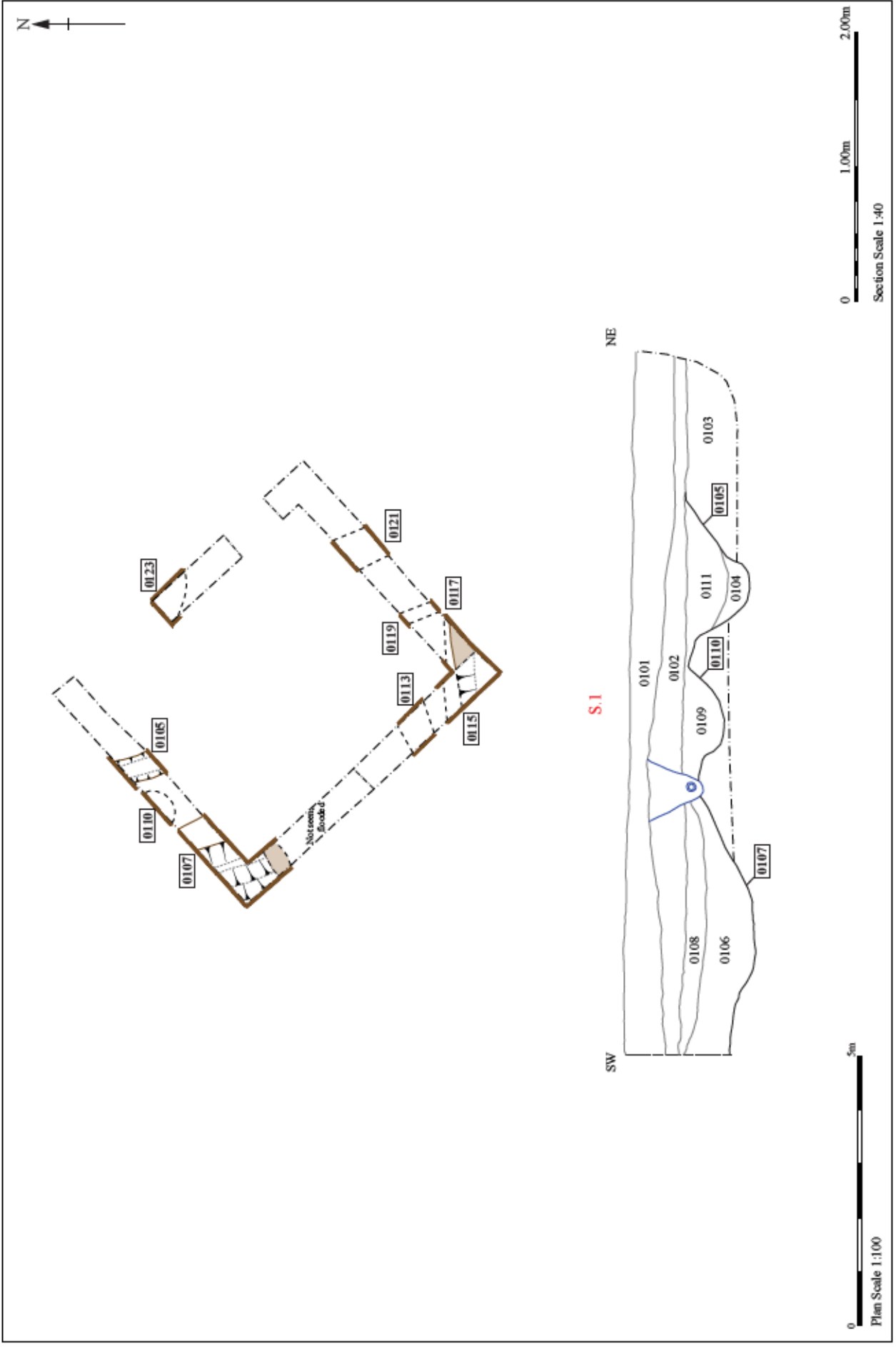


Figure 2. Trench plan and section

5. Results

The geological natural was seen at a depth of 0.42m below ground level (BGL). The natural was seen across the footprint of the garage as a deposit of very light grey and light reddish brown silty clay, 0103. The natural was cut by a number of archaeological features, which were present in all of the foundation trenches. The first feature revealed was in the centre of the NW foundation trench. It was a NNW-SSE aligned ditch, 0105, that had moderate convex sides and a flat base, and was 0.9m wide by over 0.55m long, and 0.5m deep. This ditch held a mixed grey brown clay silt and light orange brown clay primary fill, 0104, that was 0.16m thick. Over fill 0104 was a mottled light grey and light reddish brown clay silt secondary fill, 0111, that was 0.3m thick.



Plate 1. Ditch 0105 facing
NW (0.5m scale)

Beside ditch 0105, to the SW, was a feature, 0110, that appeared in only one side of the trench, so is more likely to be a pit than a ditch. This feature had steep concave and convex sides and a concave base, and was 0.8m wide and 0.42m deep. It held a mid grey clay silt fill 0109.

To the SW of this, in the corner of the garage footprint, was a NNW-SSE aligned linear feature 0107. This feature had shallow convex sides and a flat base, which was over 1.5m wide by 0.4m deep. It was not seen in plan over its entire line within the trench due to flooding, but could be seen in the trench edge circa 4.5m to the SSE. The

feature held a mid grey sandy clay silt primary fill with light yellow mottles, 0106, that was 0.4m thick. Over this was a mixed light yellow brown clay secondary fill, 0108, which was 0.13m thick.



Plate 2. Linear 0107 facing NW (1m scale)

In the SW foundation trench a WSW-ENE aligned ditch was seen in section. This ditch, 0113, had steep straight sides and a concave base, that was 0.62m wide and 0.3m deep. It held a mid grey and orange brown clay sand fill, 0112.



Plate 3. Ditch 0113 facing NE (1m & 0.5m scales)

Beside ditch 0113, in the south corner of the foundation trenches, was an E-W aligned linear feature 0115. It had shallow straight sides and a flat base that was over 1.2m wide by over 1.5m long and 0.23m deep. It was filled by a mottled mid grey and light orange brown clay silt fill, 0114.



Plate 4. Linear 0115 facing SW (1m & 0.5m scales)

Beside linear feature 0115, and visible in both edges of the trench was a probable structural slot, that was aligned SSE-NNW. It was initially recorded as two discrete features. In the NW trench edge the slot, 0119, had steep straight and convex sides and a flat base which was 0.25m wide and 0.4m deep. It held a mid grey brown sandy clay silt fill, 0118. In the other trench edge the slot, 0117, had steep straight and convex sides and a flat base, that was 0.3m wide, over 0.6m long, and 0.4m deep. It held a mixed mid grey and light yellow brown clay silt fill, 0116. Upon excavation it became clear that rather than two post-holes these were parts of a single structural slot.



Plate 5. Slot 0117 facing SW
(0.5m scale)

Parallel to the structural slot, to the NE, was a ditch, 0121, with moderate concave sides and a concave base. It was 0.75m wide by over 0.6m long and 0.23m deep, and held a single mid to dark grey clay sand silt fill, 0120.



Plate 6. Ditch 0121 facing
NW (1m & 0.5m scale)

Although the relationship was not always clear, the cut features appeared to be sealed by a mid brown grey clayey silt subsoil, which was 0.26m thick, 0102. Deposit 0102 was present across the footprint of the garage. In the NE foundation trench the edge of a feature was seen that appeared to cut deposit 0102. This feature, 0123, had moderate straight sides and a concave base, which measured over 0.8m by over 0.55m by 0.4m deep. It held a mid to dark grey clay silt fill 0122.



Plate 7. Feature 0123 facing
NE (0.5m scale)

The subsoil deposit 0102 was cut by a modern service trench containing a lead water pipe, and this was sealed by a deposit of dark grey sandy loam topsoil, 0101, that was 0.32m thick.

6 Finds and environmental evidence

6.1 Introduction

A total of twenty finds with a weight of 159g was recovered from six contexts as demonstrated in Table 1 below.

Context	Pottery		CBM		Fired clay		Flint		Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	
0100	1	3					1	5	16th to 18thC
0104	1	1					1	4	11th to 12th C
0106					4	1			
0114							1	12	
0118			1	3	1	3	1	1	Post-medieval
0122	2	7	5	105			1	14	Late 12th to 14thC
Total	4	11	6	108	5	4	5	36	

Table 1. Finds quantities

6.2 Pottery

Pottery was recorded in three contexts (4 fragments @ 11g). The first sherd (3g) is abraded and was noted in the unstratified context 0001. It is a glazed red earthenware body sherd (GRE) dated from the 16th to 18th century. Ditch fill 0104 contained a slightly abraded early medieval sandy ware body sherd (EMW). It has a silty black fabric and is dated from the 11th to 12th century. Finally two sherds of abraded general medieval coarseware were retrieved from pit fill 0122 (MCW). The sherds are part of the same rim but do not join and are possibly part of a cooking pot rim, and they are dated from the late 12th to 14th century.

6.3 Ceramic building material

Two contexts contained abraded post-medieval roof tile, slot fill 0118 and possible pit fill 0122. Fill 0118 contains a single fragment (3g) in a medium sandy fabric (ms) and context 0122 has five pieces weighing 105g. The fabrics in this latter fill are mainly medium sandy with ferrous inclusions (msfe); one larger fragment has a small amount of mortar attached.

6.4 Fired clay

Ditch fill 0106 and slot fill 0118 both contained fired clay (5 fragments @ 4g). None of the pieces display impressions, they are small and heavily abraded in a medium sandy fabric with abundant ill-sorted chalk.

6.5 Struck flint

Identifications by Colin Pendleton

A total of five unpatinated flint fragments weighing 36g have been recorded, all dated to the later prehistoric period. The first was recovered from the unstratified context 0100 (5g). It is a possible small flake with steep edge retouch, which also displays some potential plough damage. A small thick flake was noted in ditch fill 0104 (4g), and ditch fill 0114 contained a snapped flake (12g). This has pronounced ripples, and exhibits the remains of steep edge retouch which adjoins the snapped area, it was possibly a scraper. A single, small thin primary flake (1g) was noted in slot fill 0118, and in pit fill 0122, an irregular flake with a retouched notch was noted (14g). All of the flint occurs alongside later dated pottery and CBM.

6.6 Conclusion

This is a small collection of generally abraded finds, dated from the medieval to post-medieval period. Of interest is the early medieval sherd which only displays slight abrasion. However, the only other medieval pottery sherds listed on the HER, recorded within a kilometre of the current site, are dated from the 13th to 14th century (YAX 003). Nevertheless these are roughly comparable in date to those identified at this site in pit fill 0122. The site is within the area of the old medieval village, therefore the presence of medieval pottery is not unexpected.

7. Discussion

The features revealed during the monitoring work appear to represent different phases of activity on the site. Although there were no stratigraphic relationships evident between features, it seems likely that the features could not have been contemporaneous, as they are too close together. Linear features 0107 and 0115 were similar enough in form and size that they were probably contemporaneous. It seems likely that they are shallow ditches forming two sides of an enclosure. These must be part of a different phase of activity to ditches 0105, 0113, and 0121, which are of different form and size, and therefore probably belong to a different phase of activity. Unfortunately the relationships between these features lay outside the foundation trenches, and it is not clear how they relate chronologically to ditches 0107, and 0115. The pottery recovered from the fill of ditch 0105 potentially dates the ditches to the 11th or 12th century; while the fills of ditch 0107 and 0115 produced no datable finds.

The structural slot may represent a third phase of activity. Slot 0117/0119 produced post-medieval CBM which is more likely to indicate when the building went out of use rather than when it was built. The building probably extended to the east of the slot because the slot matches the line of the western wall of the adjacent historic barn. The building may therefore be part of a range of buildings, of which the historic barn is the sole survivor. This barn has yet to be archaeologically recorded and is as yet of unknown date. The building may conceivably have been contemporary with one of the ditches, but even so, it seems that there are at least three phases of activity represented.

Also potentially part of this third phase of activity is pit 0123, from which pottery of late 12th to 14th century date as well as post-medieval roof tile was recovered. On balance, the roof tile is much more abraded than the pottery, so may be intrusive, in which case the pit may be medieval.

8. Conclusions and significance of the fieldwork

The archaeological monitoring of the groundworks at Grove Cottage, Yaxley has produced evidence for medieval and post-medieval activity within what may have been the platform for a second moated enclosure beside YAX 001. This is particularly useful as the majority of the moated enclosure to the east seems to have been built over without archaeological work being conducted. The work has produced evidence for a medieval or post-medieval structure and medieval ditches and pits on the same alignment as the adjacent historic barn and the moat remnants. (It is currently unclear how old this barn is, but it will be recorded prior to its conversion.) The monitoring work has confirmed therefore that medieval archaeological remains survive on the site, and that they may be part of the moated site which is now largely built over.

9. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds.

Finds archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

10. List of contributors and acknowledgements

The monitoring was carried out by Duncan Stirk from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team. The project was managed by Dave Gill.

Production of site plans and sections was carried out by Ellie Hillen, and the report was checked by Richenda Goffin.

11. Bibliography

Goult, B., 1990, Suffolk Parish History. East Suffolk Volume 2. SCC, Ipswich

Martin, E., 2010, Brief and Specification for Historic Building Recording and Archaeological Monitoring Barn at Grove Cottage, Mellis Road, Yaxley. SCCAS Conservation Team. (Unpubl.)

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. Context List

Context	Type	Description
0100	Finds	U/S Finds
0101	Dep	Dark grey sandy loam topsoil. Trench-wide x 0.32m thick.
0102	Dep	Mid brown grey clay silt subsoil. Trench-wide x 0.26m thick
0103	Dep.	Very light grey and light reddish brown silty clay natural geology.
0104	Fill	Mixed grey brown clay silt & light orange brown clay. Primary fill of ditch [0105]. >0.9m x 0.62m x 0.16m thick.
0105	Cut	NNW-SSE aligned linear. Moderate convex sides & flat base. 0.9m x >0.55m x 0.5m deep. Ditch.
0106	Fill	Mid grey & light yellow mottles sandy clay silt. >1.5m x 0.4m thick. Primary fill of ditch [0107].
0107	Cut	NNW-SSE aligned linear. Shallow convex sides and flat base. >1.5m x >4.5m x 0.4m. Ditch?
0108	Fill	Mixed light yellow brown clay. 0.13m thick. Top fill of ditch [0107].
0109	Fill	Mid grey clay silt. 0.8m x 0.42m thick. Fill of pit? [0110].
0110	Cut	Steep concave and convex sides and concave base 0.8m x 0.42m deep. Pit?
0111	Fill	Mottled light grey and light reddish brown clay silt. >0.9m x 1.25m x 0.3m thick. Secondary fill of ditch [0105].
0112	Fill	Mid grey and orange brown clay sand. 0.62m x 0.3m thick. Fill of ditch [0113].
0113	Cut	WSW-ENE aligned linear. Steep straight sides and concave base. 0.62m x 0.3m deep. Ditch.
0114	Fill	Mottled mid grey and light orange brown clay silt. >1.2m x >1.5m x >0.23m thick. Fill of possible ditch [0115].
0115	Cut	E-W aligned shallow straight sides and flat base. >1.2m x >1.5m x >0.23m deep. Ditch?
0116	Fill	Mixed mid grey and light yellow brown clay silt. 0.3m x >0.6m x 0.4m thick. Fill of structural slot [0117].
0117	Cut	NNW-SSE aligned linear. Steep straight and convex sides and flat base. 0.3m x >0.6m x 0.4m deep. Structural slot. Same as [0119].
0118	Fill	Mid grey brown sandy clay silt. 0.25m x 0.4m thick. Fill of structural slot [0119].
0119	Cut	NNW-SSE aligned linear. Steep straight and convex sides and flat base 0.25m x 0.4m deep. Structural slot. Same as [0117].
0120	Fill	Mid to dark grey clay sand silt. 0.75m x >0.6m x 0.23m thick
0121	Cut	NNW-SSE aligned linear. Moderate concave sides and concave base. 0.75m x >0.6m x 0.23m deep.
0122	Fill	Mid to dark grey clay silt. >0.8m x >0.55m x 0.4m thick. Fill of pit? [0123].
0123	Cut	Moderate straight sides and concave base. >0.8m x >0.55m x 0.4m. Pit.