

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-TOP ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING REPORT

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## **The Priory Little Waldingfield, WFL 018**

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING, 2005  
(Planning app. no. B/04/1662/FHA)

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# Contents

List of Figures  
List of Tables  
List of Contributors  
Acknowledgements  
Summary  
SMR information

1. Introduction
2. Desk-top Assessment
3. Monitoring of Groundworks
4. Conclusion

References

Appendix 1: Brief and specification  
Appendix 2: Pottery  
Appendix 3: CBM

## List of Figures

1. Site location
2. Sites recorded on the Suffolk SMR
3. 1886 Ordnance Survey Map
4. 1841 Tithe Map
5. Photograph of vaulted roof
6. Site plan
7. Plan of feature location
8. Feature sections

## List of Tables

1. Summary of context information
2. Finds quantities

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## Acknowledgements

This project was funded by Mr J. and Lady Laura Paul and commissioned by the architects Geary and Black. The archaeological work was specified by Mr R.D. Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team); the documentary study was undertaken by Mr A.M Breen (Freelance) and the fieldwork carried out by Andrew Tester and Jo Caruth (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team).

Finds processing was carried out by Anna West and Gemma Adams and the specialist finds report produced by Richenda Goffin with contributions from Cathy Tester and Anna West.

## Summary

Archaeological monitoring and documentary survey was carried out in advance of the construction of a new pool room at The Priory, Little Waldingfield. The site is recorded on the SMR as a possible monastic site, however the documentary study established that the name 'The Priory' had only been assigned to the property in the late 19th century and a site visit established that the supposedly medieval vaulted roof of the cellar was probably no earlier than 16th century. The documentary study identified that the property was owned by a wealthy merchant in the early 16th century, and that he may have been responsible for the fine building work. The field work covered a very small area c.25m square, at least half of which was truncated. However Early Medieval features were found surviving in undisturbed areas, indicating occupation of the site pre-dating any of the documentary or physical evidence.

## SMR information

Planning application no.	B/04/01662/FHA
Date of fieldwork:	7th-16th June 2005
Grid Reference:	TL 9237 4501
Funding body:	Mr Jonathan and Lady Laura Paul
Oasis reference.	Suffolkc1-8578

# 1. Introduction

An archaeological desk-top assessment followed by archaeological monitoring was carried out before and during building works at 'The Priory', Church Road, Little Waldingfield. The desk-top evaluation was the first stage of works required to satisfy the planning condition (App. No. B/04/01662/FHA) attached to the application to improve the swimming pool accommodation. This was followed by archaeological monitoring of groundworks.

The site is recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record as a vaulted 14th century crypt under an 18th or 19th century house. It is alleged that this is the site of a monastery, and the building is Grade 2 Listed. The site lies at TL 9237 4501, opposite the medieval Church along an early roadway.

A misunderstanding of the detail of the planning condition meant that groundworks started before a second stage of work was agreed, but the co-operation of the contractors and a rapid agreement for archaeological monitoring allowed works to continue.

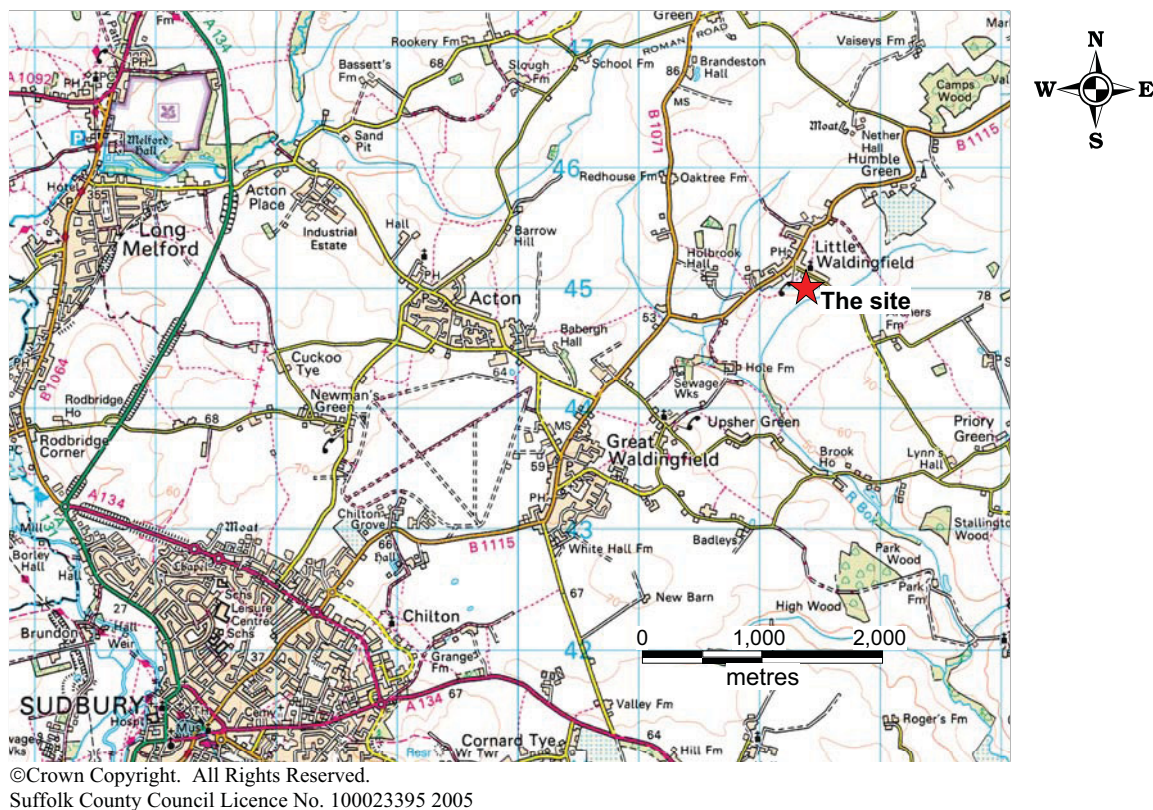


Figure 1. Site location

## 2. Desk-top Assessment

### 2.1. Methodology

The initial desk-top assessment took three forms; examination of the Suffolk Sites and Monuments Record (SMR); a study of early cartographic sources, map regression and examination of readily available documentary sources; and finally a site visit to examine the vaulted 'crypt' to assess the evidence for its date. The object of the desk-top survey was to establish whether there was any evidence for the assertion that the site represented the site of a medieval priory. The documentary study was carried out by A.M Breen, Freelance Local History Researcher and the site visit was made by Andrew Tester of SCCAS.

## 2.2. SMR search

A rapid examination of the Suffolk Sites and Monuments Records revealed four entries within the immediate vicinity of site – one of which is The Priory itself and another the Church- and a further entry to the south of the site (Figure 2). The three sites that were not the Priory and Church were WFL 008, Early Medieval, medieval and post-medieval finds scatters c.600m south of the site, WFL 009, Roman coins found in the field immediately south of the Priory and WFL010, Saxon metalwork found in the field north of the Church.

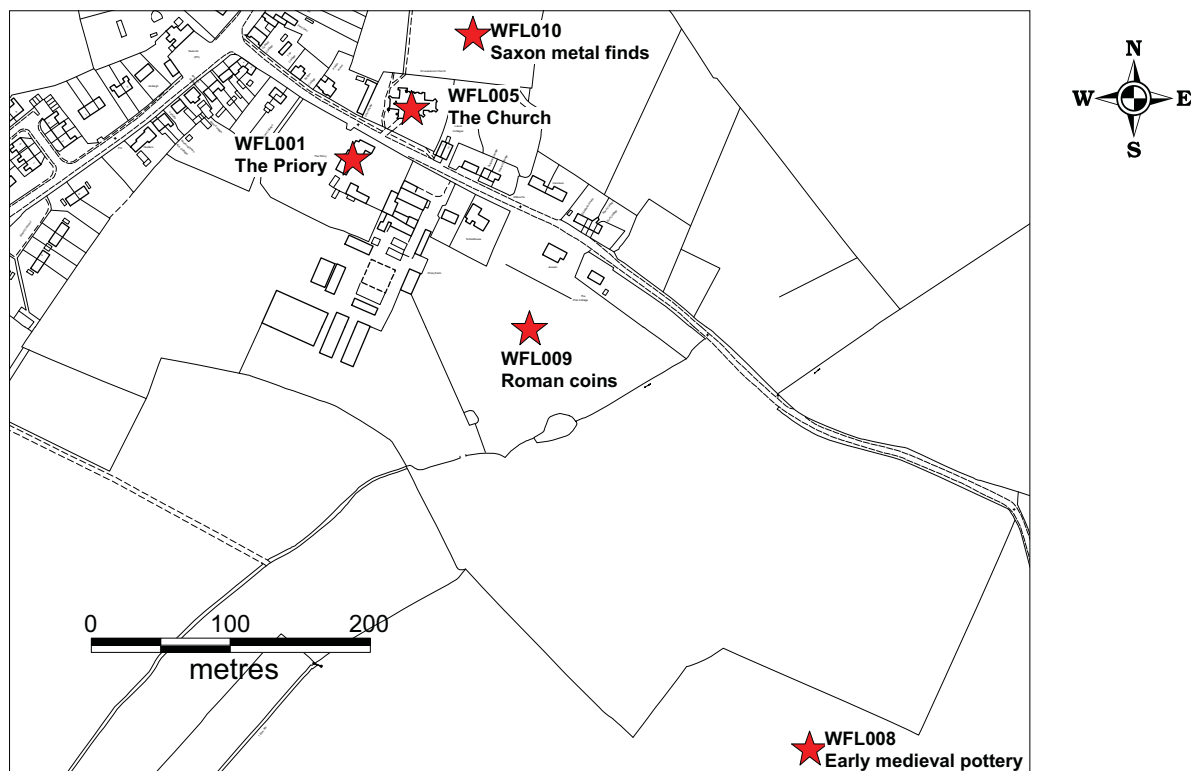


Figure 2. Sites recorded in the Suffolk SMR

## 2.3. Documentary Study by A.M. Breen

### *Summary*

Examination of documents and maps has established that there is no evidence to support the claim that this site was that of a priory or monastic building. The name The Priory only came into use between 1874 and 1883, prior to which it was called Brickhouse Farm. That tithes were payable on the property supports the assertion that it was not a religious house. However 16th century documents show that the property was owned by a wealthy merchant, possibly with links to the wool trade, during this time, and that he may have had the vaulted undercroft built. The potential of the site therefore is to reveal evidence relating to the life of a prosperous late medieval merchant rather than a monastic order.

### *Introduction*

The research for this report has been carried out at the Suffolk Record Offices in Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich. The only additional document used in the research is the will of Richard Rysyng proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in 1505. The original registers for this court are held at the National Archives and its records are available on-line. Instructions and other details given in this document link the will to a deed dated 1539 held at Bury. Other deeds

and property records have been used to trace the history of the site through to 1874. In 1874 the then owner Miss Hanmer leased the lands attached to the site of what was then known as 'Brick House Farm'. The house was restored in about 1881 and various features of the building were examined. The quality of the roof timbers and the vaulted crypt or undercroft suggested to antiquarians that the house had been built for some monastic purpose. Subsequently antiquarians searched for possible links between the building and the Colne Priory or Holy Cross Abbey Waltham both in Essex. Their suggestions are at best speculative if not erroneous. Before its restoration no antiquarian had taken any interest in the building nor had they uncovered any suggestion that there had been a priory on this site.

It is a necessary part of this report to discuss the development of the antiquarian interest and to exclude any link with Colne Priory before discussing the evidence linking the site to Richard Rysyng.

### *Antiquarian Papers*

This site is described in the archaeological unit's sites and monuments records as an alleged site of a monastery.

*The 'Old house known as "The Priory"' has a vaulted crypt of 14th century date but has been enlarged in modern times. Little appears to be known about its origin or history and although it is reputed to be part of a monastery there does not seem to be anything to substantiate this. Probably the house takes its name from once having formed part of the possessions of the monks of Colne Priory, in whose hands was the presentation of the benefice from 1299-1555.*

*Before the restoration there was an ambry in the refectory which suggested that it may have belonged to the Dominican Order. Known as Brick House Farm at the time of the 1841 tithe survey renamed 'The Priory' late in the 19th century confused on some OS maps with the site of Edwardstone Priory'.*

An ambry or aumbry is a 'recess for church vessels', it can also be simply a cupboard or safe. The presentation is the right to appoint an incumbent to a parish. During the middle ages these rights were often granted to religious institutions, they received the revenues due to the rector and appoint a vicar or parochial chaplain (curate) to serve 'cure of souls'.

The SMR entry has been gathered from a number of printed sources. In H.R. Barker's 'West Suffolk Illustrated' published in 1908, it states that the house 'has been restored and much enlarged by Miss Hanmer and now is used as the vicarage house'. This is the restoration mentioned in the SMR entry. Barker adds, 'It appears that formerly the vicars were non resident for lack of a suitable house'. The Hanmer family are mentioned as the owners of Holbrook Hall, another building that had been restored and rebuilt in 1883.

Barker took his information from published sources such as commercial directories. Kelly's 1879 'Post Office Directory of Suffolk' makes no mention of the Priory, though it does note, 'Holbrook Hall is the property of the Hanmer family, and is pleasantly situated: it is an old plain brick building, with portico, and is surrounded by a park: the Rev David Hughes now resides here until a vicarage house is built'. When White's 'Directory of Suffolk' was again published in 1883, Holbrook Hall still the property of the Hanmer family was 'an entirely new mansion, built in the Tudor Style in 1883, at a cost of £16,000 and is in the occupation of James Mitchell esq. ... by whom it was erected'. The entry continues 'The Priory, a very ancient building and under which is a crypt, with carved stone roof, has been greatly added to and restored by Miss Hanmer, for the use of the vicar'. White's 1892 'Directory of Suffolk' records that 'An ancient priory opposite the Church has been considerably added to and put in thorough order by Miss Hanmer, at a large cost, for the use of the vicar, as a residence'.



A description of the church was published in the Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute in 1897 and its author Rev Haslewood does mention 'The Priory' and adds a few additional details, 'It would appear that the Vicars in former times were not resident from lack of a suitable Parsonage House. The Vicarage known as the Priory is an ancient building with a stone vaulted crypt and good timber roof. It may formerly have been a Clergy House of some sort or other, for there was an "Ambry" in the refectory before the restoration. It has been suggested that by its extreme simplicity it belonged to Dominicans'. Haslewood's article does include a full list of the incumbents of the parish from 1299 onwards. The list is based on Tanner's index of the Norwich Bishops registers, compiled by Thomas Tanner (1674 – 1735). Haslewood also quotes from the notes of David Davy who had visited the church in 1827. Davy's notes include extracts from the works of earlier antiquarians and again he does not mention 'The Priory'.

The members of the Suffolk Institute visited 'The Priory' in 1908. The party, having visited Mildenhall, travelled to 'Little Waldingfield Priory, where the Vicar and Mrs A. F. Brown kindly invited members to tea'. 'A close inspection was made of the house known as the Priory and its fine timbered roofs and vaulted cellars were much admired. It is probable that the house takes its name from having once formed part of the possession of the monks of Colne Priory'. W.A. Copinger the author of "The Manors of Suffolk" and other works was amongst this party.

The house was visited again on 20th June 1928 by another antiquarian Claude Morley. In his unpublished manuscript 'History of Medieval Suffolk' (ref. HD 603/2/13), he first considered the references in the directories and in the proceedings before suggesting an alternative history, 'Actually I consider little doubt can persist that in the earlier parts of this structure we see the identical "messuage and sixty acres of land in Waldingfield" royal licence for whose alienation in mortmain by Sir Andrew de Bures to the priory of "Weltham", Waltham Holy Cross abbey of Augustine canons in Essex, for the purpose of endowing chaplains to celebrate, was accorded in 1331 (Pat. Rolls, 5 Edw III, pt ii, I). Such a College of Priests would, as a matter of course, continue silently; and one with so small an endowment, if indeed sixty acres were its sum, is likely to have petered out long before the general Dissolution, especially as the price of money increased'. He suggested that the founder of the supposed chaplaincy was Sir Andrew de Bures, a member of the family who owned the manor of Moreves in Acton. He continues, 'Most likely it was for those of his father Sir Robert de Bures, whose brass remains at Acton, and his mother Hilaria, who died the same year (IPM.5, Edw III, 55). This is the present vicarage house of Little Waldingfield not that described by Tanner'.

The statute of Mortmain was passed in 1279 to prevent land being granted to the church without a licence and the subsequent loss of revenue to the crown. Morley mentions an entry in the patent rolls in 1337. This document is now at the National Archives (ref. C143/215/22) though the on-line catalogue description is somewhat different to that given by Morley; '5 Edw. III Robert de Bures of Acton messuages and land in Acton and Waldingfield to the prior and friars of the order of the Holy Cross at Whelmetham, Suffolk'.

Morley described the building. 'None of the above work is now apparent; but below the east end of this new house is a rectangular cellar or crypt of nine paces north and south by seven east and west, and nicely vaulted with narrow Tudor or rather earlier brick. Lateral recessed seats are stopped below with moulded brick in their outer jambs: on the west is a new passage to the upper floors, and on north an old one (in the direction of the church, across the highway) blocked. In the west wall, further northward, is a blocked hole, possibly an ambry: but no piscina or other sacred indication is now traceable'. He does include a newspaper cutting showing a photograph of 'part of the remarkable timber work in the Priory attic'.



The photograph was taken by Edmund Lovell (died 1972). He had taken photographs of various villages 'between 1914 and 1929 while preparing articles on Suffolk Parishes for the East Anglian Daily Times in conjunction with Yeoman (R.T. Cooper of Ipswich)'. The original photographs are in Ipswich (ref. J11/1/1) and appear on page 53 of this album. They are dated November and December 1929 and depict four views of the house; 'The Old Portion of the "Priory" a building about which very little is known', 'Fine timber work in the attic' which was published, 'The vaulted crypt' and 'A Splendid fireplace in one of the bedrooms'.

### Maps

On copies of 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map sheet number LXXII.5 supplied by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit, the site is shown within the parcel numbered 69 on the map (Fig. 3). It faces the parish church of St Lawrence, across the road to the north. On the first edition the site is measured at 1.570 acres. By the time of the next edition a small row of buildings to the west of the main house had demolished and the parcel acreage increased to 1.790 acres. From the projecting window shown in the 1929 photograph, the position of the adjoining structures, the 'old portion' appears to be behind the block fronting the street. In the photograph at each end of this section of the building there are two large chimneys. The house is not named 'The Priory' on the 1903 and 1926 editions of this map, though the word priory appears in Gothic script indicating that it was considered to be an antiquity by the Ordnance Survey Department.

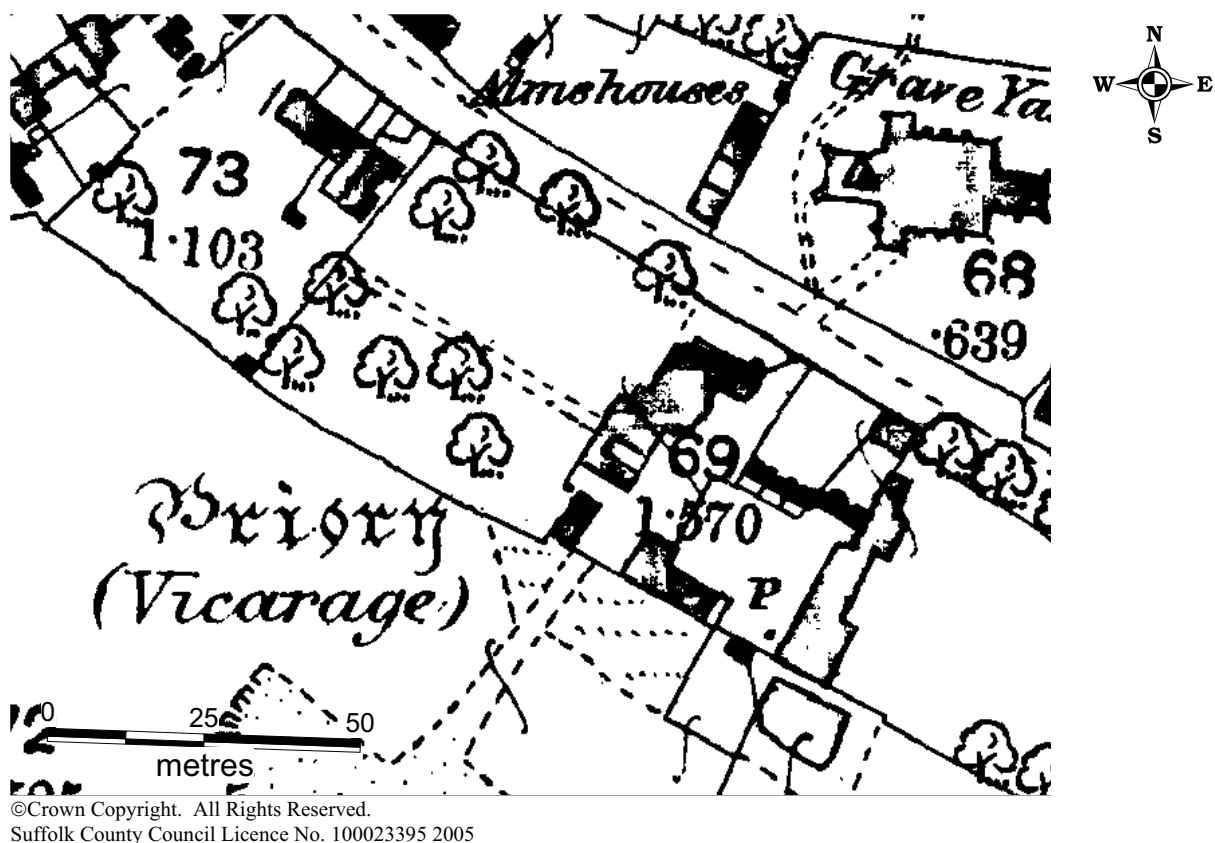


Figure 3. 1886 Ordnance Survey Map

The only earlier map of the site is the Tithe Map of 1841 (ref. T131/2). The house is shown within the plot marked 247 on the map (Fig. 4). It is important to note that the site of the house now known as 'The Priory' was subject to the payment of tithes. It is listed under lands owned and occupied by Shepherd Sandford. His farm covered 115 acres 3 roods and 8 perches. Unlike most other farms, the name of this farm is not given described in the apportionment. The site of

the house, now known as 'The Priory', was given the apportionment number 247 and is simply described as a 'Homestead' and measured at 2 acres 25 perches.

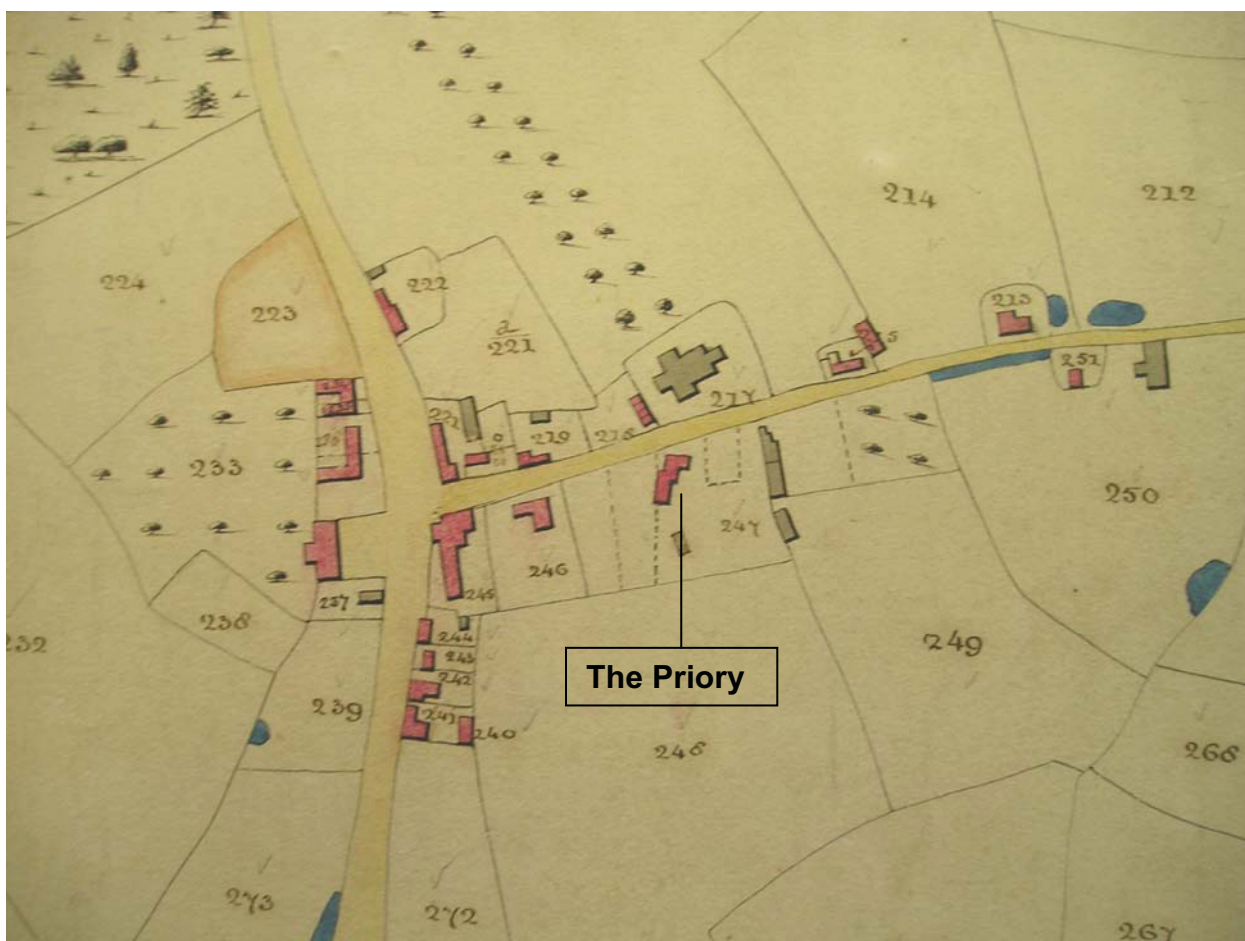


Figure 4. 1841 Tithe Map

### *Edwardstone Priory*

The SMR entry has noted that 'The Priory' has been confused with Edwardstone Priory. There is a link between Edwardstone Priory and Little Waldingfield, other than the fact already noted that the priory held the presentations to this parish.

The tithe apportionment for Little Waldingfield is an interesting document. On page 2 there is a schedule of the lands within the parish with a total acreage of 1574 acres 3 roods and 14 perches. Of these only 1470 acres 3 roods and 18 perches were subject to tithes. A total of 83 acres and 32 perches were exempt and the names of each field and its acreage is listed in the schedule. These lands were 'parcel of the ancient Priory of Colne'. On page 11, under 'cottages exempt' the lands, described in the schedule, are again listed under the ownership of Charles Dawson. One field 54 'part of Wranglings' was in the occupation of James Keeble. The other fields totalling 73 acres and 15 perches and numbered 129 – 133, 194 – 198 and 259 – 261 were in the occupation of Samuel Hills and are listed under 'Priory Farm'. These lands are all on the eastern side of the parish of Little Waldingfield and border on to the parish of Edwardstone. There are also 'Tithe Free Lands' listed in the apportionment for Edwardstone (ref. T133/1) with a total acreage of 69 acres 3 roods and 8 perches. These were again owned by Charles Dawson and in the occupation of two of his tenants Henry Emerson and Samuel Hills. Samuel Hills occupied the farm called 'Priory Farm House' in Edwardstone and a small area of woodland called 'Priory Down Wood'. The Edwardstone apportionment does not mention 'the ancient priory of Colne',

though it is safe to assume that the land had also belonged to the priory. Charles Dawson was lord of the manor of Edwardstone. His father also Charles Dawson had bought the manor in 1794. Most of his lands in the parish were titheable. Members of the Waldegrave family had been lords of the manor of Edwardstone until 1598 when it was sold to John Brand of Boxford.

Shepherd Sandford's 'Homestead' now known as 'The Priory' was titheable. His farm covered 115 acres 3 roods and 8 perches and included the 'Homestead' measured at 2 acres 25 perches. The other lands belonging to this farm were not in a single block and included a small area of wood 34, arable lands and pasture listed as 67, 139, 141, 187 – 189, 203 – 204, 207 – 209, 247 – 250, 254 – 55, 258, 264 – 66 and 268. Of these lands only one arable field 258 known as 'On Common' and measured at 1 acre 3 roods and 34 perches adjoins on to the land of Priory Farm. The adjoining field amongst the Priory Farm lands is known as a 'Parcel in Common Field'.

In an '*Abstract of the Title of Richard Waring esq to an Estate called The Priory Farm in the parish of Edwardstone and Little Waldingfield*' (ref. 391/34) a number of the fields are named and these can be compared with the names given in the tithe apportionment. The abstract begins with a recital of the main details from deeds dated 1713. Under the terms of the will of William Chaplin of Bury St Edmunds dated 10th November 1713, his wife was given the power to sell the '*messuage farm and lands called Edwardstone Priory and all his lands in Edwardstone, Great Waldingfield, Little Waldingfield and Milden*'. These were sold to Joseph Alston in the following January when the property is described as

*'All that part the parlour end and lean-to to the same adjoining being part of the messuage called Edwardstone Priory with such outhouses belonging to the same as do not belong to the bishop of Ely situate lying and being in Little Waldingfield in the said county of Suffolk as are encompassed about with a drift way called Dead Lane on the south part and the croft called Birch Croft hereafter mentioned on the east and the close or pightle called Stable Piece on the north part*'.

The document continues by mentioning other fields beginning with 'Birch Croft' containing 17 acres, 'Great Moon Field' 7 acres, 'Moonfield Lay' 4 acres, a close called 'Stebbing's' 4 acres, 'Great Mill Field' 12 acres, 'Brownings Grove' 1 acre, 'Little Millfield' 8 acres, 'Little Oatley' 8 acres, 'Millmarsh' 18 acres, 'Grimstead' 4 acres, 'Debdins' 1 acre and 'Sheep Pightle' 3 roods etc other pieces were within or adjoined 'Great Oatley'. The document continues

*'all which said premises (except the said 2 closes called Debdins & Sheep Pightle) are parcel of the Glebe lands of the rectory or parsonage of Little Waldingfield aforesaid & are situated lying & being in Little Waldingfield*'.

These fields were not part of the farm owned by Shepherd Sandford in 1841. The fields 195 'Great Mill Field' measured at 13 acres 1 rood 10 perches, 196 'Stubbins' 4 acres 1 rood 38 perches, 197 'Great Otley' 8 acres 2 roods, 198 'Little Mill Field' 8 acres 1 rood 24 perches, 259 'Little Marsh' 8 acres 1 rood 4 perches and 260 'Great Marsh' 11 acres 2 roods are all listed under Priory Farm the property of Charles Dawson.

These same fields are mentioned elsewhere in the abstract of title under details of a document dated 30<sup>th</sup> August 1678. In 1826 this farm is described as '*The Priory Farm & containing 98 acres or thereabouts in the occupation of Richard Waring*'. The abstract does mention that, '*An authentic copy of the original grant from the Crown by which the rectory of Little Waldingfield became a lay fee should be furnished by the vendor*'. This copy is included amongst these documents (ref. 391/33b). This is a translation of the original grant, a lengthy document written in Latin and concerning numerous rectories in other parts of the country.

Though Edwardstone Priory is referred to as being in Little Waldingfield, it is clear from these papers that the land was in the parish and not the site of the farmhouse. This site, now known as

'The Priory' is not part of these lands. The Priory Farm lands, formerly the property of Colne Priory, had retained their exemption from the payment of tithes. If the house, now known as 'The Priory' had been part of the land of Colne Priory its owners too would have been maintained the same exemption.

### *The Sandford Family Papers*

Amongst this estate collection there is another bundle of documents relating to the property of the Sandford family (ref. 391/30). The bundle includes *'An abstract of a mortgage of an estate situate at Great and Little Waldingfield in Suffolk from Mr Sheppard Sandford & Mr Sheppard William Sandford'* The document begins with a description of deeds dated June 1815. In 1815 the farm was described as *'All that capital messuage or tenement with the appurtenances then sometime called by the name of Turpies and then or then late called or known by the name of Brickhouse or by whatsoever other name or names the same be called or known'*. The house and buildings included a croft were estimated to have contained 2 acres. The document then lists the lands as a *'close of pasture called Barn Field containing 7 acres'* 'Woolclose Field' and a piece of meadow 5 ½ acres, a meadow called 'The Lay' 6 acres, a parcel of crofts called 'Prentis Croft & Priests Lay' 12 acres, *'all of which said premises are situate lying and being in Little Waldingfield & Great Waldingfield ... formerly in the occupation of John Wright, clerk & afterwards George Pippen & John Sheercroft'*. These field names do not appear in the tithe apportionment. The names of George Pippen and John Sheercroft do appear in an earlier document.

The description in the abstract continues with another *'messuage ... lying in Little Waldingfield ... and one croft of land & pasture adjoining with a pond in it near unto which pond was sometime a Dye House erected which had then long since been pulled down containing ... two acres'*. The Dye House had been built on land *'called Flower Lane and afterwards Dye House Yard ... the whole by estimation 3 acres'*. On the tithe map the field 250 is called Dyer's and is measured at 3 acres 3 roods and 16 perches. Another piece *'sometime since divided into three parts called or known by the name of Old Lands ... containing 18 acres'* can be matched with field 264 on the tithe map 'Part of Old Lands' 6 acres 3 roods 28 perches. Later in the description there are details of

*'All that said messuage ... and several pieces and parcels of land, meadow, pasture and fieldings ... in the occupation of John Patrick the elder and John Patrick the younger, John Sandford & William Sandford deceased and Susannah Sandford also deceased & since of William Sandford their son deceased ... in the tenure or occupation of the said Sheppard William Sandford'*.

The fields are briefly described *'House, orchard & garden 1 acre, Huggins 7 acres, Home Pasture 6 acres, Dyers Pasture 4 acres, Five acres 5 acres 2 roods, Nine Acres 9 acres, Seven Acres 7 acres Old Land 11 acres and Sharps Field 14 acres'*. Some of these can be matched with the tithe apportionment fields 248 Huggin's Field 7 acres 6 perches, 254 Lower Sharp 8 acres 13 perches, 255 Upper Sharp 8 acres 1 rood 27 perches. Dyer's and Old Land have been already mentioned.

In the same bundle there are some original deeds for *'A Messuage called the Dyehouse and of a close of land called Nether Harpe'*. In the tithe apportionment 209 is described as 'Part of Lower Harp' and measured at 3 acres 1 rood and 14 perches. This property was sold to William Sandford, a grocer from Coggeshall, Essex in 1761. The deeds list previous transfers beginning with the will of William Scuttle of Little Waldingfield dated 1730.

In Crossfield's index of the wills proved at the Archdeaconry of Sudbury there are wills for two John Patricks of Little Waldingfield dated 1748 and 1754 (ref. J510/5).



At a later date this property known as 'Brickhouse Farm' was acquired by the Hanmer family (ref. 993/5/52). Amongst documents relating to the Holbrooke Estate there is a lease from Emily Hanmer to Frederick Godden dated 22nd October 1874 of a 'Farm known as the Brick House Farm ... containing seventy one acres' The lease of land is for a year and does not record previous transactions. Other papers in the same bundle concern a bond and do not relate to this farm.

### *Earlier Deeds*

There is a deed at Bury dated 15th March 1626 (ref. E3/10/27.1). It was between Peter Allen of Oundle, Northamptonshire, clothier and George Jenney of Groton, Suffolk gent. The property is described, '*All his capital messuage ... called Turpyes and now commonly called or known by the name of Brickhouse with all barns, stable*' etc. The fields are named as '*one close called Barnfield*' 7 acres, '*Woolclose with a piece of meadow*' 5 ½ acres, then 'The Laye', 'Prentis Croft', etc. These were '*in the occupation of George Pippen and John Sheerecrofte*' the same names used in the 1815 property description. In the same bundle of documents there is the lease from Susan Sandford to her son William Sandford dated 1710 (ref. E3/10/27.3). Unfortunately these documents are in a rather poor condition and the 1710 lease is badly damaged (ref. E3/10/27.1-7).

In 1626 the farm was known as 'Turpyes' or 'Brickhouse', there is an earlier deed at Bury dated 15 November 1539 (ref. EXY4/S15) for a messuage called Tuppies. It is described in the index as a deed of bargain and sale was between Richard Rysyng of London, gentleman and John Wyncoll and Roger Wyncoll of Little Waldingfield, clothiers. The property is described as

*'A messuage called Tuppies, 2 crofts one called Tuppies Croft, the other Floreland, a close sometime of Thomas Apilton, a croft called Pirye Croft, 3 pieces of land in Doldefelde, two tenements late Walshman's and formerly of Richard Rysyng of Little Waldingfield esq. the grandfather to the said Richard at his death'.*

### *The Will of Richard Rysyng of Waldingfield 1505*

Until 1858 church courts had jurisdiction over probate. This will and testament was proved at the Perogative Court of Canterbury on 15th November 1505. Before the Reformation the testament dealt with matters relating to the soul of the deceased, their burial and various bequests to the church, whilst the will dealt with the temporal estate. Though Richard Rysyng's testament includes a number of interesting details relating to the church, his will is of interest for this report. It was written in Latin on 20th May 1504 and includes the phrase 'I will that my messuage built and situated in Waldingfeld aforesaid near the aforesaid church with all the tenements, lands and appurtenances of the same lying in the aforesaid town shall be sold and the money from the same received I will that my executors pay my debts'. Further on in the will there is the sentence 'I leave to Katerine Rysyng formerly the wife of Richard Rysyng my son 13s 4d', these were probably the parents of the Richard Rysyng of London.

There appears to have been problems with the settlement of this estate. Amongst the on-line indexes of the National Archives, there is an action held at the court of Chancery 'William Clopton knight v. Edward Walgrave feoffee to uses refusal to complete a sale of lands in Dolefeld and Waldyngfeld under the will of Richard Rysyng' (ref. C1/293/9). There are a number of references to Richard in the indexes relating to his property and commercial interests. One of these documents is indexed as 'Richard Rysyng v. Thomas Webbe land in Waldingfield the More to be exchanged for land in Waldingfield the Less' (ref. C1/57/28). This document might provide a further reference to this site.

W. A. Copinger who visited 'The Priory' in 1908 records in his 'Manors of Suffolk' a 'Quit claim by Richard Rysyng sen, and others to John Baker of all his rights in lands in Little Waldingfield 15 Edw IV Bodl. Suff. Ch 467' and 'a grant by Richard Rysyng to Thomas Apppulton and others of land in Little Waldingfield 14 Hen VI. Bodl Suff Ch 435'. Both these documents are held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford and are dated respectively 1475 and 1435. Copinger also describes the connections between Edwardstone and Colne Priory suggesting a date for the grant of the rectory to the priory as around 1160.

### *Conclusion*

Colne Priory held the rectory of the church of Little Waldingfield from as early as 1160. The priory farmhouse was in Edwardstone and the lands stretched into the parish of Little Waldingfield. They are distinguished from other lands in the parish by the fact that they were not subject to the payment of tithes. This valuable right was retained by subsequent owners and was restated in the 19th century deeds and in the tithe apportionments. This site, 'The Priory' was not part of their lands.

Morley suggests another priory Waltham Holy Cross, Essex or as the National Archives index would have it 'the prior and friars of the order of the Holy Cross at Whelmetham, Suffolk', both are dated 1331. He does not provide any further link to this site and his suggestion is inspired by the idea that the house was a priory.

In this report, a house known as 'Brickhouse Farm' as late as 1874 had become known as 'The Priory' by 1883. Before the house was restored and was used as a vicarage, no antiquarian had identified it as a priory nor had they suggested that a priory had formerly stood in the parish.

The house was known as Brickhouse Farm as early as 1626. In a deed of that year it is also known as Turpyes an alternative name also found in 1815 and in the form Tuppis in 1539. In 1539 the house was sold by Richard Rysyng, the grandson of Richard Rysyng to John and Roger Wyncoll clothiers. Later deeds mention a Dye House having formerly stood next to the pond, probably that shown in field 250 on the tithe map. Another field in the area is known as 'Woolclose'. Further research might offer additional details relating to the wool trade in this area.

The will of Richard Rysyng proved in 1505 and numerous additional documents held in London and Oxford testifies to the fact that he was a merchant of some considerable wealth. The style of the undercroft and the use of bricks suggests that the house might have been built by him. There is however the name Turpyes of Tuppies possibly an earlier owner of the site. The additional sources held at Oxford and London offer the possibility of tracing the history of the site back to an earlier date. It is the conclusion of this report that this is not an ecclesiastical building, but a domestic structure built for a wealthy merchant.

### **2.4. Site visit**

A single visit to examine the undercroft was made by Andrew Tester on 7th June 2005. This visual inspection revealed that the vaulted roof (Fig. 5) was probably early post-medieval, and that the bricks used within the construction appeared to be 16th century. This ruled out the possibility of it being a medieval ecclesiastical building.





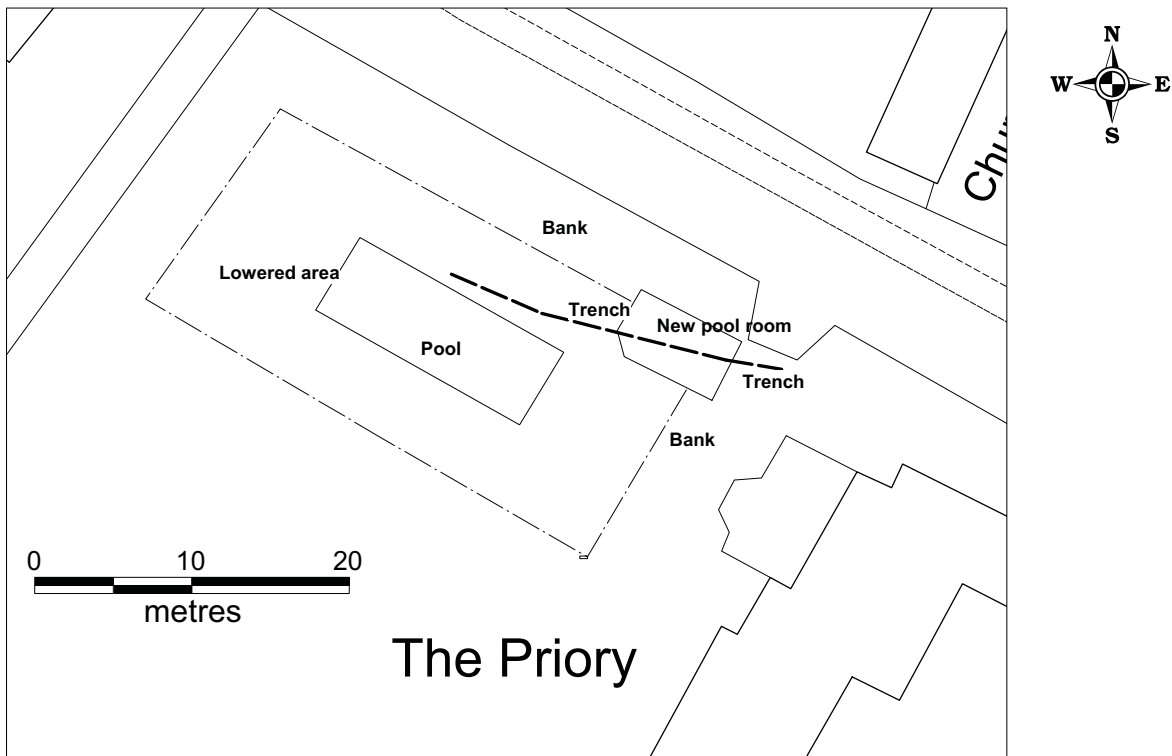
Figure 5. Photograph of vaulted roof

### **3. Monitoring of groundworks**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The centre of this site has a swimming pool in it which stands in a sunken hollow which extends to within c. 2m of the boundary with the road and covers an area of c.400 sq.m (Fig. 6). Beyond the swimming pool area the existing ground level may have been made up to higher than original topsoil levels. This indicated that truncation of the subsoil over much of the area was likely.

The new pool room covered an area of c.6m x 4.2m NE of the swimming pool and cut into intact soil profiles. In addition to the new pool room trenches for services were seen.



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Figure 6. Site plan

### 3.2. Methodology

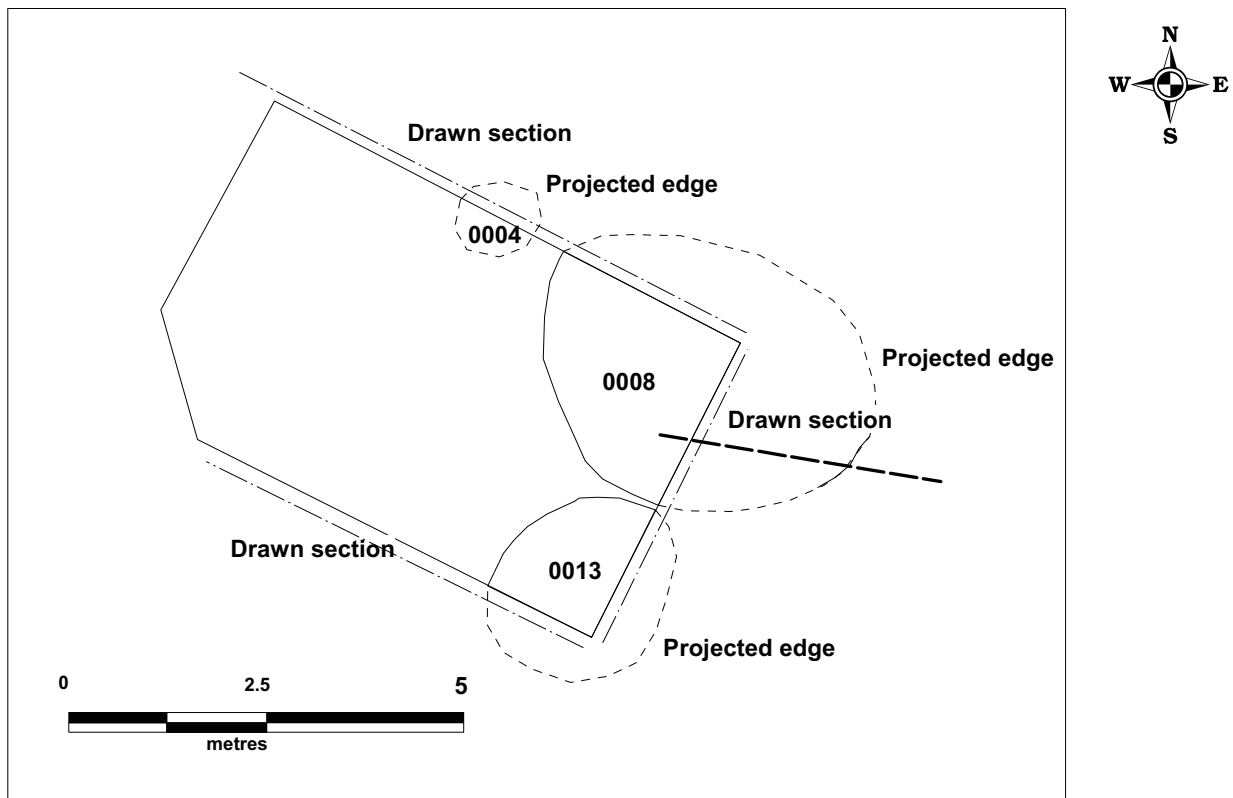
On notification of the start of groundworks and the agreement of a monitoring strategy between the Development Control Archaeologist, Robert Carr, the architects, Geary and Black and Suffolk County Council Field Team visits were made to the site between 8th and 16th June 2005. The most potentially damaging work was the construction of a new pool room to the E of the existing swimming pool which involved cutting back into undisturbed soil at the deeply truncated level of the swimming pool and associated service trenches. Visits were a combination of continuous observation, when digging was destroying medieval deposits, although some of pit 0008 was dug away before the first visit, and short inspections for less damaging works. The upcast soil was being stored in a spoil heap on site and this was examined for finds. All finds were collected, sections were drawn at 1:20 and a site plan at 1:50. Context numbers 0001 to 0021 were issued and the site recorded under the new SMR code WFL018. Natural subsoil was orange silt. The site archive is stored at the SCCAS store in Bury St Edmunds.

### 3.3. Description of Principal Features

The main area monitored was a c.6m x 4.2m site strip for the new pool room (Fig. 7). The formation level for this was approximately 10cm lower than the existing ground level around the swimming pool. This cut into banks on the N and E sides and undisturbed soil levels could be seen in these sections, demonstrating that subsoil had been truncated by up to 0.4m around the swimming pool. Footing trenches for the walls for the new room were c. 0.4m lower than the pool ground level.

The sections through the undisturbed banks on the N and E edges of the site showed c. 0.3m of topsoil, **0006**, overlying c.0.3m of grey-brown silt, **0007**, which probably represented a buried former topsoil. This overlay some features and feature fills, and underlay later slumps into the top of the larger features. It appeared to be cut by upper layer, **0011**, but this may also be slump with layer 0007 simply not detectable within it. It may also have been cut by upper fill, **0012**, but the sections showed some ambiguity in this (Fig. 8). Where the intact soil profiles were cut away down to the existing pool levels a thin, c. 10cm thick layer of redeposited material, **0002**, could be seen, forming the topsoil base for the grass around the pool.

Three features were identified, two of which, **0008** and **0013** were large pits and a third smaller possible pit, **0004**. A summary of the context information can be found in Table 1.



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Figure 7. Plan of feature location

### *0008*

A large pit at the NE corner of the pool room > 2.8m x > 3.2m across and 1.5m deep (from current, untruncated, ground level). This had steeply sloped sides with a shallow vertical cut at the bottom and a flat base. The main fill of the lower cut, **0020**, was orange-brown silty sand with some flints (Fig. 8). No finds were recovered from this deposit. The main fills over this were, **0012**, a dark, friable loam containing 12th-13th century pottery, animal bone, CBM and other finds, and towards the outer edge of the pits **0009** and **0010** which were cleaner, siltier deposits also containing some 12th-13th century pottery. Over 0012 was **0011**, a brown loam with chalk and flints (but not brick rubble) which contained medieval pottery and which may be a slumped deposit rather than a fill.

Part of this pit was dug by machine before the archaeological monitoring began, part was dug by machine under archaeological supervision and c. 50% of the lower fills, 0010 and 0012 were excavated archaeologically.

### *0013*

This pit lay adjacent and S of 0008. It measured >1.6m x >1.6m across and 1.04m deep (below untruncated ground level). This had a more sloped profile than 0008 with a concave base (Fig. 8). The basal fill, **0017**, of 0013 was almost indistinguishable from layer 0007 and contained 11th-12th century pottery. Over this was a thin dark organic rich band, **0016**, containing L12th-14th century pottery, which lay under a silty layer, **0018**, similar to 0017 and with a main slumped upper fill **0015** of brown loam with chalk fragments, similar to 0011. 0015 contained

11th-12th century pottery. A loamy layer, **0014**, which seemed to be topsoil was slumped into the top of 0015.

**0004**

This was a smaller feature, 1m wide x 0.5m deep, seen at the N edge of the site and filled with grey chalky silt, **0005**, and mixed orange and grey silt.

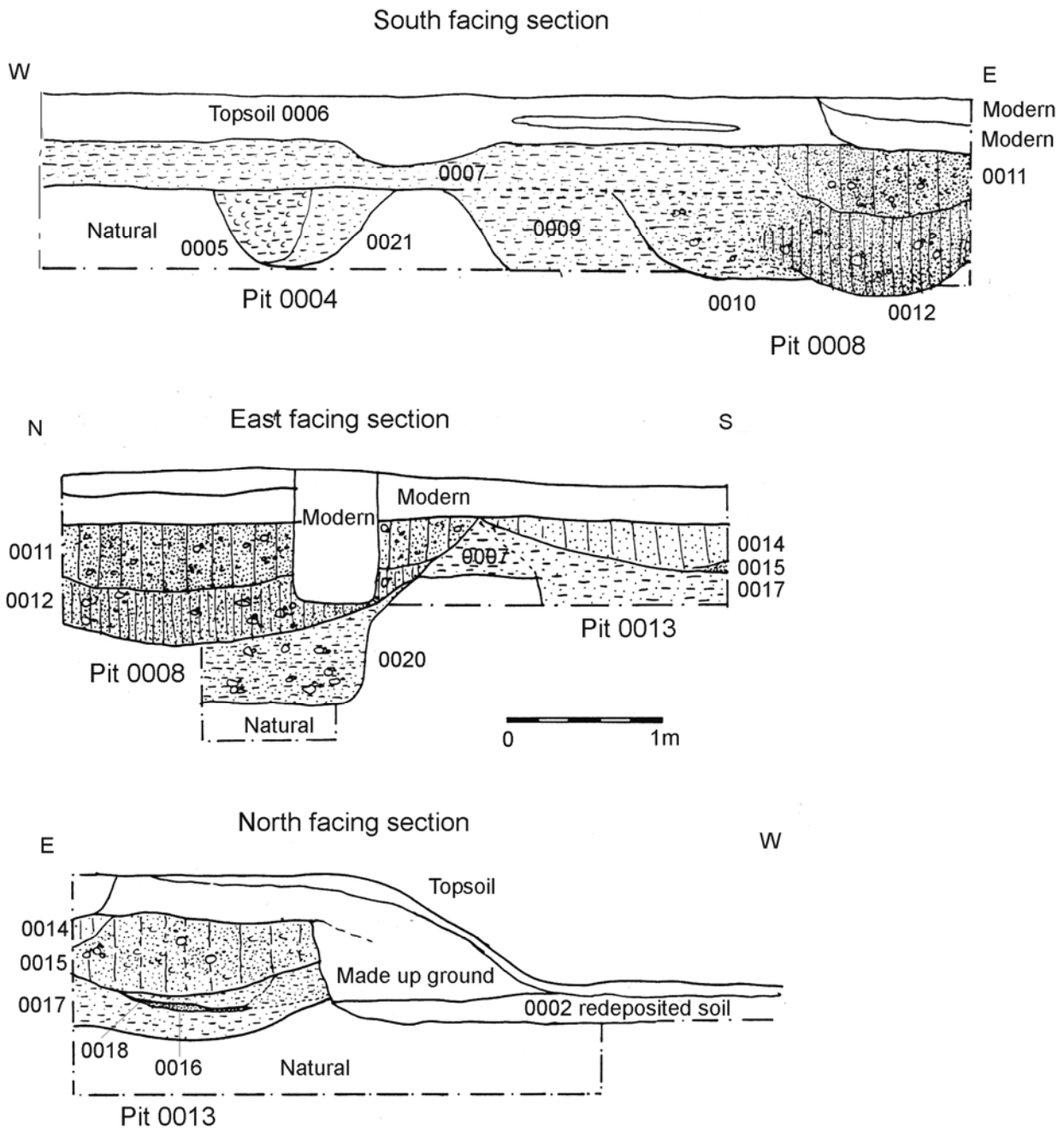


Figure 8. Feature sections

Context	Feature	Identifier	Description	Spotdate
0001		Finds	Unstratified finds from the whole area.	
0002	0002	Layer	Layer of redeposited soil seen overlying truncated subsoil.	L12th-14th C
0003	0002?	Finds	Unstratified finds from the NE corner of the site, probably from the redeposited soil 0002. This is close to pit 0013.	L12th-14thC
0004	0004	Pit?	Feature cut, sloped sides and concave base, two fills 0005 and 0021. It was not possible to be certain that this was a pit as it was only seen in section.	
0005	0004	Pit? Fill	Grey silty sand fill of 0004. This was the later fill and seemed to cut 0021 to the east.	
0006	0006	Layer	Topsoil – probably a relatively modern deposit.	
0007	0007	Layer	Grey-brown silty sand deposit. Homogeneous layer which is possibly a previous topsoil layer, although it was quite leached.	
0008	0008	Pit	Large pit at the east end of the site. This was probably c.4-5m in diameter. The fills were 0020, 0012, 0010 and 0009. 0011 was slumped into the top.	
0009	0008	Fill	Outer fill of 0008, possibly the same as 0020. This was a grey-orange silty sand, similar to 0005 and 0007.	
0010	0008	Fill	Fill overlying 0009 and under 0012. A darker, denser silty sand than 0009 with a slightly higher organic content. Some of this was excavated by hand.	12th-13thC
0011	0008	Layer	Upper fill of 0008, looks in section to be a later deposit slumped into the top. Dense, dark, mixed brown loam with frequent chalk lumps. Removed by machine but examined for finds.	Med
0012	0008	Fill	Dark, almost black sandy loam – but not charcoal rich. This contained a lot of finds and had a soft friable texture and a high organic content – very compost like! Much of this fill was excavated by hand.	12th-13thC
0013	0013	Pit	Pit seen in the north-facing section – probably about 2.5-3m in diameter. Fills are 0016, 0017 and 0018, with possible slumped deposits 0014 and 0015 in the top.	
0014	0013	Layer	Upper slumped layer over pit 0013. Even dark brown loam, like the topsoil 0006.	
0015	0013	Layer	Slumped layer in top of 0013, under 0014. Dense, dark, mixed brown loam with frequent chalk lumps, the same as 0011. Removed by machine but examined for finds.	11th-12thC
0016	0013	Fill	Dense, dark finds rich band of sandy silt lying between 0017 and 0018.	L12th-14thC
0017	0013	Fill	Orange-grey silty sand, may be the same as layer 0007 filling the base of pit 0013.	11th-12thC
0018	0013	Fill	Orange-grey silty sand similar to 0017 but separated from it by 0016.	
0019		Finds	Unstratified finds recovered from the spoil heap at the end of the excavations.	Early post-med
0020	0008	Fill	Basal fill of 0008. Orange-brown silty sand filling the steep sided cut in the base of 0008. Lies under 0012. The interface with the natural is ill-defined.	
0021	0004	Fill	Outer fill of 0004, lies under 0005. Mixed grey-orange silt.	

Table 1. Summary of context information



### 3.4. Finds and environmental evidence

by Richenda Goffin

#### 3.4.1. Introduction

Finds were collected from 10 contexts, as shown in the table below.

Context	Pottery		CBM		Animal Bone		Fired Clay		Oyster	Spotdate	
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g			
0002	1	11								L12th-14th C	
0003	13	167	3	795						L12th-14th C	
0009	2	29								12th-13th C	
0010	1	5	1	12			1	102		12th-13th C	
0011			4	341						Med	
0012	31	630	2	190	3	143	1	24	3	39	12th-13th C
0015	3	49									11th-12th C
0016	2	30									L12th-14th C
0017	8	103									11th-12th C
0019	16	238									Early post-med
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>1263</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1338</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>39</b>	

Table 2. Finds quantities

#### 3.4.2. Pottery

A total of 77 fragments of pottery weighing 1.263kg was recovered from the monitoring. The majority of the assemblage is medieval in date, but fragments of Roman and post-medieval ceramics were also identified. A complete catalogue of pottery of all types is included in Appendix 2.

Most of the pottery was found in the fills of two pits which were located near each other in one corner of the pool room. Pottery from fill 0012 of the large pit 0008 comprised a Roman jar base and several medieval vessels which included a spouted bowl with combed linear decoration and a cooking jar with a perforation for suspension. Both vessels were made in a medium coarse sandy fabric, which is similar or the same as the Early Medieval Sandy fabric which is found in Colchester during the 11th and 12th century (Cotter 40). In addition a considerable quantity of medieval coarsewares including some Bury variants were identified from this pitfill. Fragments of shell-dusted wares were also identified, which are likely to be the same as fabric 13S found in Colchester, dating from the late 11th to the 12th century (Cotter 40). Further fragments of medieval pottery, including a shell-dusted sherd which is more similar to Bury Medieval Shelly ware, were recovered from fills 0009 and 0010, as well as an Early Roman jar rim.

A smaller quantity of ceramics was found in pit 0013. Seven fragments of probable Colchester shell-dusted early medieval sandy ware were present in the basal fill 0017, with a small sherd of Bury Coarse Sandy ware, dating to the Late 12th to 14th century. The fill 0016 contained two further medieval coarsewares, one of which is burnt and abraded. A sherd of a small sooted jar present in fill 0015 has a thickened flat-topped rim, and has many of the classic features of a Colchester Early medieval sandy ware vessel (Cotter 42). It is accompanied by two fragments of Roman pottery.

Thirteen fragments of medieval pottery were recovered as unstratified finds in 0003, together with an Early Roman reed-rimmed carinated bowl. A sherd of a medieval coarseware jug was present, with fragments of a Bury Medieval Coarseware Gritty bowl. A small and abraded fragment of Mill Green ware was recovered, and a fragment of a hard sandy oxidised sagging base which has small splashes of glaze, provisionally identified as a product from Essex.



Further unstratified sherds present in 0019 are mixed in date and range from the medieval through to the early post-medieval period.

### *3.4.3. Ceramic building material and fired clay*

A total of 10 fragments of ceramic building material were recovered overall, weighing 1.338kg. The fragments have been catalogued in Appendix 3. In addition to fragments of medieval rooftile and brick, a number of Roman fragments were identified.

Medieval sandy rooftile and brick fragments were present in pitfill 0010 and 0011. This fill also contained several pieces of Roman brick and tile, including a small fragment of a possible imbrex. A substantial piece of a tegula was identified in fill 0012. It has a sloping flange and has been scored with a criss-cross pattern for keying-in on the reverse. There is also evidence of a pink Roman mortar on the reverse and on the side.

Further fragments of medieval rooftile and brick were also recorded in the unstratified finds.

Two fragments of fired clay were recovered, weighing 0.126kg. Both were found in the fills of pit 0008. They are made in a soft silty fabric with frequent chalk inclusions up to 10mm in width and with occasional flint inclusions. Both fragments have a buff outer margin which is shaped, but it seems unlikely that they are pieces of brick. However they do not appear to be fragments of clay lining or daub.

### *3.4.4. Miscellaneous*

Three oyster shell fragments were present in pitfill 0012.

### *3.4.5. Animal bone*

Three fragments of animal bone were present in pitfill 0012. A large part of the pelvis of a pig was identified, together with a very worn mandible fragment, probably from a sheep or goat. The metacarpal bone of a ruminant, possibly an ox was also identified.

### *3.4.6. Discussion of the finds evidence*

A considerable quantity of medieval pottery and other finds was recovered from two pits 0008 and 0013 located in the untruncated area of ground. Both were probably rubbish pits, which may have been recut and cleaned out over a period of time. A number of fills were recorded in each of the pits, and these contained artefacts of mixed date. In addition to medieval finds, fragments of Roman pottery and ceramic building material were identified. This shows that some of the finds have been redeposited, and supports the theory that the pits had been emptied out and backfilled with a mixture of material. The medieval pottery from both pits is consistently of a twelfth century date, or perhaps slightly later. There is little chronological difference in the medieval pottery from the fills of both pits.

The medieval ceramics are of interest, as stratified groups from this particular part of the county are rare. The group contains a significant number of vessels made in similar, if not the same fabrics, as two of the main early medieval fabric types identified in Colchester, described in the typology established by Cotter (Cotter 2000). Some of the vessels present at the Priory may have been made in one particular production centre excavated just outside Colchester, or at least in a similar style. The spouted bowl in pitfill 0012 has a combed decoration which is a feature of the Middleborough kiln. Combing and comb-stabbing are decorative treatments which are particularly prevalent after c1150 (Cotter 70). In addition to the early medieval sandy wares

mentioned above, several sherds show evidence of superficial shell-dusting. This is a known variant in Colchester assemblages (Cotter 70).

As well as pottery from Colchester, a number of Bury medieval coarsewares were identified in the assemblage. These include Bury Coarse Ware Gritty, and a sherd of Bury Medieval Shelly ware, a shell-dusted ware considered to date to the late 11th to 13th century.

No Heddingham ware was identified from the pitfills, or any glazed wares, which perhaps confirms a twelfth century date for the two groups. The presence of this material does suggest that there was a nearby settlement in the area during this period.

The unstratified pottery from 0019 includes some later glazed wares dating to the 15th-16th century. These may be evidence of when the site was developed during the sixteenth century.

The presence of pottery and CBM dating to the Early Roman and Roman period is also of interest, as they must indicate settlement in the near vicinity.

### **3.5. Discussion**

The sections through the intact soil profiles showed a worked loam topsoil, overlying what appeared to be an earlier worked soil layer, suggesting that the topsoil had been built-up. However no dating evidence was recovered from this to establish when this might have happened, although the slightly leached, silty nature of the lower layers suggests that they may have been covered for some time. That layer 0007 may be early is supported by the presence of similar material in the lower fills of pits 0008 and 0013. 0007 seals feature 0004 and the outer fills on the west side of pit 0008, but appears to be cut by the upper fills and slumped layers, 0011, 0012 etc.

Levels were taken from the topsoil limits across to the base of the door sill on the standing building. This showed that the base of the door sill was 23cm lower than the base of the topsoil in the section, suggesting that the topsoil level at the time of the building's construction (possibly) in the 15th-16th centuries was more likely to be within the level of layer 0007 than the current topsoil.

Over the south-west part of the pool room the natural was covered by a thin layer of loam, from which finds were recovered. This was all redeposited during the swimming pool excavation and extends under the E edge of the banked soil (Fig. 8), indicating the extent of the truncation of the natural subsoil during this work. The base of the deepest pit, 0008, only extended c. 36cm below this level and the bases of the other features, 0004 and 0013, were above the level of truncation. It is therefore unlikely that many archaeological features have survived within the truncated area, however the presence of archaeological finds within the redeposited material indicates the likelihood that archaeological deposits have been disturbed.

The only untruncated ground was found in an area approximately 1-1.5m from the N and E edges of the site, but within this were seen three features, two of which contained considerable quantities of medieval pottery dating from the 11th to 14th centuries. These features comprised two large pits, both of which appeared to contain some relatively lean silt at the base with more organic rubbish deposits towards the top. It is possible that these represent medieval rubbish pits which have been emptied more than once for the retrieval of useable compost allowing cleaner soil to fill the bottom and earlier fills to be sealed by overlying layer 0007. The change in profile of pit 0008 would support some recutting and the fills 0012 in 0008 and 0016 in pit 0013, were characteristic of rubbish deposits with a high organic content and may represent final fills which

were not retrieved. Fills above these also contained finds but may be naturally accumulated or slumped rather than deliberate deposits.

Small feature 0004 did not offer enough evidence for interpretation. The truncation of the ground around and the fact that this was not seen during excavation meant that it is not even possible to say whether this was a pit or a ditch.

## 4. Conclusion

Much of the area of this development had been already truncated by the previous works when the swimming pool was constructed, however the feature density and quantity of finds recovered from the very small area that did survive suggests that this site has been subject to domestic occupation since the c.12th century.

The documentary study has established that the name The Priory was only attached to this building in the late 19th century and that there is no other evidence to suggest that it is the site of an ecclesiastical building. Examination of the structure of the building and further evidence from the documentary seems to indicate that the site was owned by a wealthy merchant in the 16th century and that he may have had the building constructed. This is at the time of the peak of the wool trade and the affluence of Little Waldingfield at this time also led to the extensive rebuilding of the church. This flurry of building work may have obscured evidence of earlier structures, both on this site, within the church and along the street in general, however the evidence from the fieldwork suggests intensive domestic occupation of the early medieval period, implying that there must have been Early medieval buildings here once.

Jo Caruth  
September 2005

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