

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT**

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**SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/175**

**23 Duke Street, Bildeston  
BIL 026**

### **HER Information**

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**Planning Application No: B/10/00311**

**Date of Fieldwork: 7th and 9th September 2010**

**Grid Reference: TL 9915 4945**

**Funding Body: Wincer Kievenaar (on behalf of their client)**

**Curatorial Officer: Keith Wade**

**Project Officer: M. Sommers**

**Oasis Reference: suffolkc1-86233**



## Summary

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Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with the construction of an extension to the rear of 23 Duke Street, Bildeston, was undertaken during September 2010. A series of footing trenches were examined. These revealed a natural subsoil of yellow clay beneath c. 0.3m of topsoil. A large pit with a single fill of dark grey silt was noted adjacent the rear of the building. No datable finds were recovered from the fill although occasional oyster shells were present. A similar pit has been recorded in the vicinity. Bildeston is known for its medieval cloth industry and it is possibly these pits are related to production processes.

### 1. Introduction and methodology

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Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with the construction of an extension to the rear of 23 Duke Street, Bildeston, was undertaken on the 7th and 9th September 2010. No. 23 is believed to be of 15th century date but has been significantly altered and rebuilt over a long period of time.

Duke Street and Chapel Street are the main roadways that run from the site of the present market place to the parish church, located c. 700m to the west. No. 23 is situated on the northern side of Duke Street some 90m west of the market place, which in the medieval period extended much further to the southwest. Figure 1 shows a location plan of the site.

Archaeological interest is due to the site's location within the area defined for the medieval small town of Bildeston on the County Historic Environment Record (HER); ref. BIL 022. It also lies 90m to the north-west of the find-spot of two Roman coins (BIL 003) and 60m from the site of the medieval chapel of St Leonard (BIL 005). The site of a possible Roman villa lies 320m to the south-west (BIL 004). Duke Street and Chapel Street are in an area historically associated with the medieval cloth industry (Bildeston was apparently famous for its blue broadcloth) housing dyers, weavers, shearmen, spinners and clothiers. Consequently the site has a good potential for the discovery of important medieval and possibly Roman occupation remains.

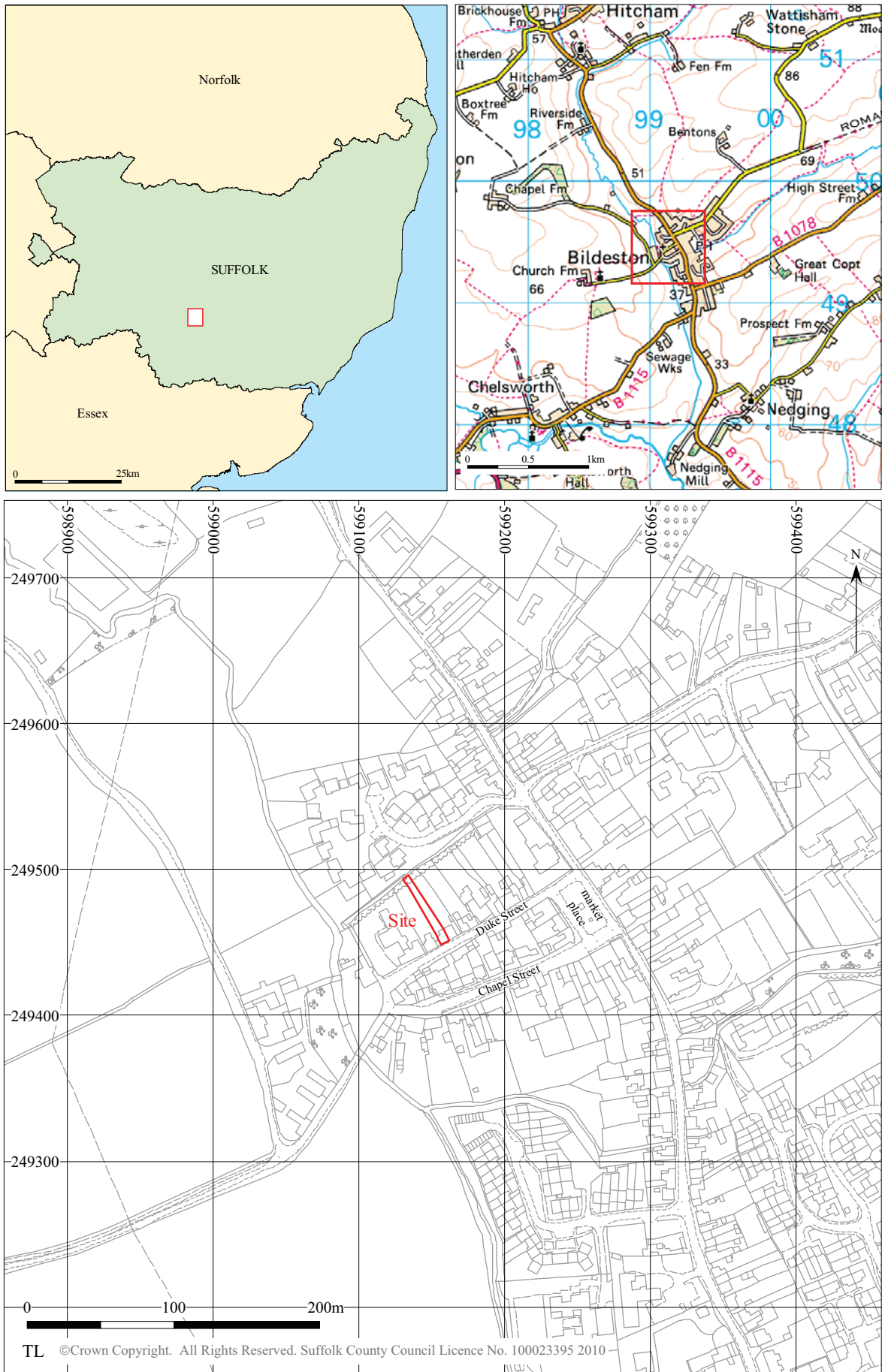


Figure 1. Site location plan

To mitigate against the potential loss or damage to any archaeological remains that may be threatened by the proposed development, a condition was attached to the planning consent calling for archaeological monitoring of the groundwork associated with construction. To detail the work required a Brief and Specification was prepared by Keith Wade of the County Council Conservation Team (Appendix 1).

The monitoring was achieved through the visual examination of any open excavations in an attempt to identify archaeological features and/or deposits. The resultant spoil was also briefly examined in order to recover datable artefacts. A small number of digital photographs were taken as part of the record.

## 2. Results

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Two visits were made to the site, on the 7th and 9th September 2010, to inspect the excavated footing trenches. See Figure 2 for a plan of the site.

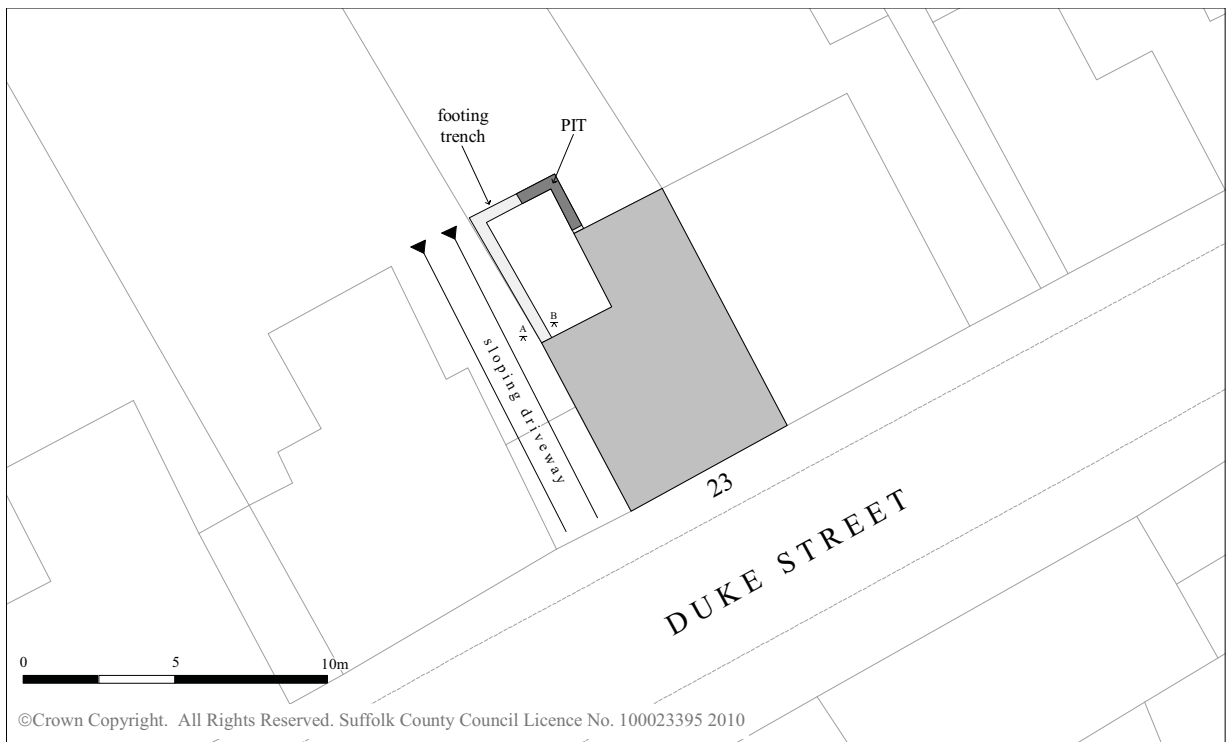


Figure 2. Site plan

The footing trench was excavated to a depth of c. 1.3m and was c. 0.6m wide. It was cut through a loamy topsoil and into the underlying natural subsoil which consisted of yellow silty clay. Cutting into the natural subsoil a large feature measuring at least

1.8m by 1.4m was noted in the northeast corner of the footing trench (Plate I). Only the southern and western edges of this feature were visible. These appeared to be perpendicular to the footing trench, suggesting the feature was rectangular in shape, and were very steep but not vertical. It continued to the base of the trench at 1.3m. The fill consisted of a homogenous mass of dark grey silt, which was relatively clean with only occasional fragments of oyster shell present. No other finds were identified.

The interface between the topsoil and the natural subsoil was relatively blurred suggesting there had been no deliberate truncation of the natural subsoil in the area of the extension. The subsoil had probably been truncated in the area of the driveway immediately to the west, which clearly slopes down from north to south. The driveway has been forced through the existing structure and some reduction in ground height had occurred requiring the former internal wall of the main house to be extended downwards with later brickwork. The back wall also appears to have been underpinned with concrete containing red-brick fragments (Plate II). At a point adjacent the existing rear wall of the main house the surface of the driveway was 0.6m lower than the area of the extension (marked A and B in Fig. 2).

### **3. Conclusion**

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The large pit was the only feature recorded during the monitoring but unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered due to the unusually clean nature of the fill. The pit is quite large and would have required a considerable expense of energy to create and was therefore presumably required for a specific purpose. Duke Street is historically recorded as an area of dyers, weavers, shearmen, spinners and clothiers associated with the late medieval cloth industry and this pit may have been used for washing or dyeing of the wool or the finished cloth or possibly some other unrelated process (a steeping or a retting tank?). The lack of finds and the homogenous fill suggest it was filled in a single event. A similar pit was noted during monitoring of groundwork to the rear of 129-131, High Street, situated c. 120m to the northeast.

M. Sommers

September 2010

## 4. Plates

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Plate I: view of pit in northeast corner of footing (camera facing east)



Plate II: western footing trench showing earlier underpinning of the main house  
(camera facing southeast)





## SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

#### Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring

#### 23 DUKE STREET, BILDESTON

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission to extend 23 Duke Street, Bildeston has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (B/10/00311). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence and the proposed foundation methods indicates that the area affected by new building can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The proposal lies within the area defined for the medieval small town of Bildeston in the County Historic Environment Record and will involve significant ground disturbance.
- 1.3 As strip foundations are proposed there will only be limited damage to any archaeological deposits, which can be recorded by a trained archaeologist during excavation of the trenches by the building contractor.
- 1.4 Before any archaeological site work can commence it is the responsibility of the developer to provide the archaeological contractor with either the contaminated land report for the site or a written statement that there is no contamination. The developer should be aware that investigative sampling to test for contamination is likely to have an impact on any archaeological deposit which exists; proposals for sampling should be discussed with this office before execution.

#### 2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which would be damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for the medieval occupation of the site.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the excavation of building footing trenches. These, and the up-cast soil, are to be observed during and after they have been excavated by the building contractor.

#### 3. Arrangements for Monitoring

- 3.1 The developer or his archaeologist will give the County Archaeologist (Keith Wade, Archaeological Service, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR. Telephone: 01284 352440; Fax: 01284 352443) 48 hours notice of the commencement of site works.
- 3.2 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the observing archaeologist) who must be approved by the Planning Authority's archaeological adviser (the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service).
- 3.3 Allowance must be made to cover archaeological costs incurred in monitoring the development works by the contract archaeologist. The size of the contingency should be estimated by the approved archaeological contractor, based upon the outline works in paragraph 2.3 of the Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and timetable.

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

#### 4. **Specification**

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

4.2 Opportunity should be given to the 'observing archaeologist' to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 5. **Report Requirements**

5.1 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*, particularly Appendix 3. This must be deposited with the County Historic Environment Record within 3 months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.

5.2 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*. The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County HER if the landowner can be persuaded to agree to this. If this is not possible for all or any part of the finds archive, then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, analysis) as appropriate.

5.3 A report on the fieldwork and archive, consistent with the principles of *MAP2*, particularly Appendix 4, must be provided. The report must summarise the methodology employed, the stratigraphic sequence, and give a period by period description of the contexts recorded, and an inventory of finds. The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its interpretation. The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the

archaeological value of the results, and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).

- 5.4 A summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, should be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 County Historic Environment Record sheets should be completed, as per the county manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 5.6 If archaeological features or finds are found an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.7 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the HER. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Keith Wade

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

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2010

Reference:/23 Duke Street

**This brief and specification remains valid for 12 months from the above date. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the authority should be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued.**

**If the work defined by this brief forms a part of a programme of archaeological work required by a Planning Condition, the results must be considered by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council, who have the responsibility for advising the appropriate Planning Authority.**