

1 The Limes, Long Melford

LMD 158

Application No. B/04/1949

TL 8651 4545

Oasis No. suffolkc1-9026

Report No. 2005/68/

Summary

An archaeological monitoring of the excavation of footing trenches revealed two pits excavated into clay subsoil. The fill of one of these was dated to the 19th century.

Introduction

Archaeological monitoring was carried out during the excavation of footing trenches during the construction of a house at The Limes, Long Melford. The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by Judith Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) to fulfil a planning condition on application B/04/1949. The work was funded by the developer, Mr & Mrs Laws.

Interest in the site was based upon its proximity to a large Roman and Late Iron Age settlement, and to the medieval town which lies to the east of the present development.

Methodology

Two visits were made to the site on the 10 and 11 May 2005. During the initial visit 8m of trench were recorded and the spoil heap was examined, no finds were recovered. On the second visit, 11th May the fully excavated footing was visible. The spoil heap was examined and notes and measurements were taken of the exposed features. Where appropriate the section was scraped back and finds were recovered from the fill. The trenches were unsuitable for photography and features were measured from the current ground surface.

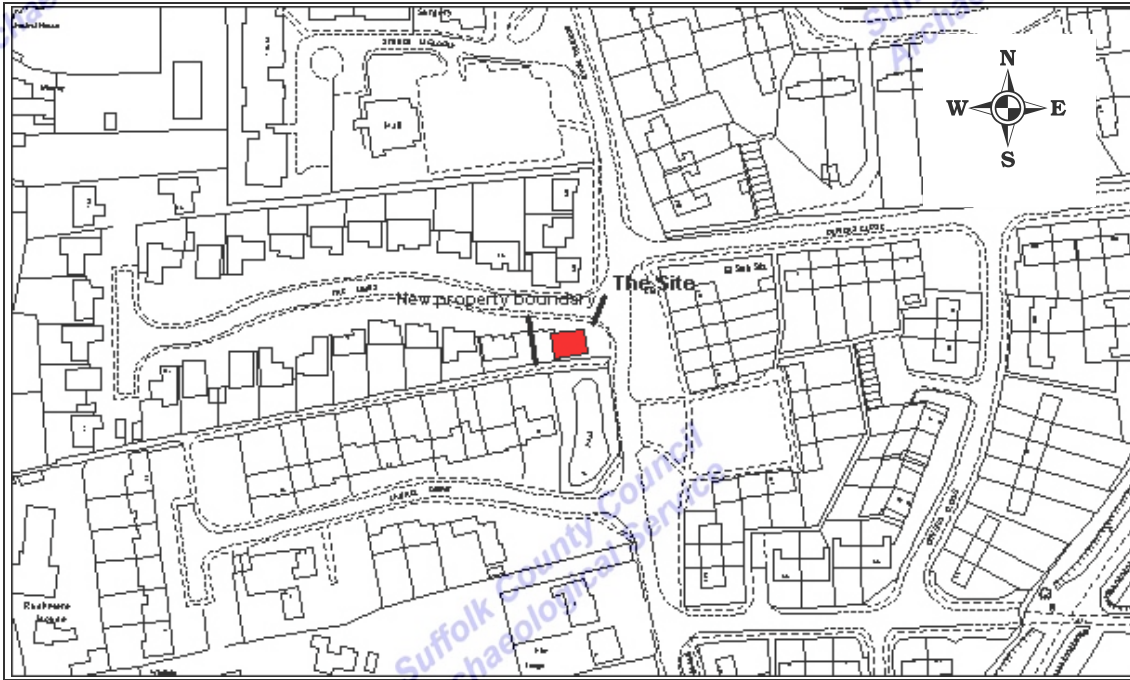
Results

(Figure 2)

The general depth of the footing trenches was c. 1.1m-1.2m. The natural comprised glacial till which was mostly brown and yellow clay with flint inclusions although the western footing trench was dug into gravel. Two features were exposed in the trenching.

0002-This was a pit in the western footing trench c. 3m wide where excavated (the centre of the pit lay beyond the eastern side of the trench) and 2m deep. The base was fairly level and close to the present water table. The pit was filled with homogeneous fine clay silt with iron panning. A single cow metatarsal was recovered from the side of the pit at approximately 1m from the surface.

0003-This pit was 8m wide within the excavated area but extended further. Within the pit the footings were deepened to 1.7m although the pit was sloping away at the southwest corner of the site. The lower fill of the pit was similar to Pit 0002 with a fine clay/silt; the upper 1m consisted of a silt loam. Pottery and tile fragments were recovered from scraping the sides and are dated 19th century or later. A single clay pipe fragment was recovered from the spoil heap.



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Figure 1. Site location plan

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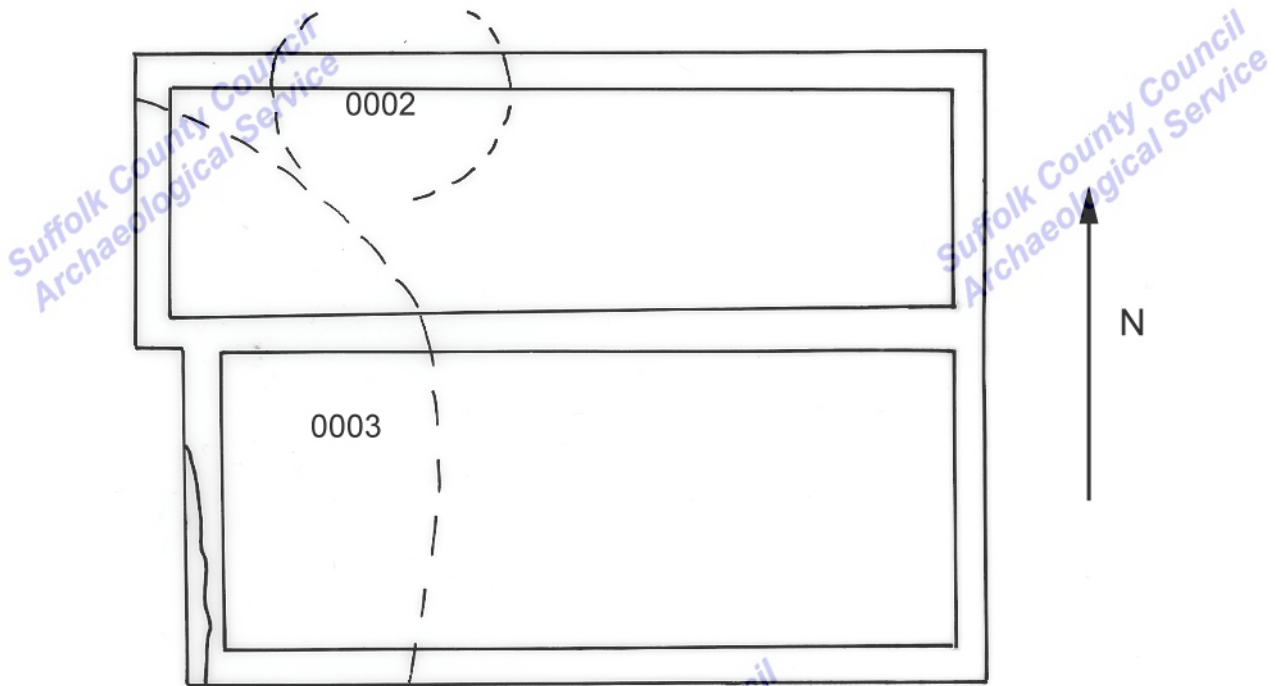


Figure 2 Site plan Scale 1:100

Discussion

Both pits were dug into clay but did not extend more than a few centimetres beneath the water table. Pit 0002 had clearly infilled naturally whereas pit 0003 had been deliberately backfilled beyond a primary natural infill of c.0.4m. Finds were scarce which suggests that there was no settlement in the immediate vicinity. The pits may have been clay extraction pits, which would have been in use from the Late Iron Age onwards as clay was required for floors, fireplaces and brick making. A pond is recorded close by on recent maps which may have been created in the same way.

Andrew Tester May 2005

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