

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2011/018

**Wenhaston Primary School, Hall Road
Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet
WMH 035**

HER Information

Planning Application No: C/10/1821

Date of Fieldwork: 25th January to 1st February 2011

Grid Reference: TM 4258 7225

Funding Body: Suffolk County Council Resource Management

Curatorial Officer: Dr J. Tipper

Project Officer: Mr M. Sommers

Summary

Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with the construction of an extension to the rear of Wenhaston Primary School was undertaken in January and February 2011 when the excavation of a series of foundation trenches was continuously monitored. A large linear feature with a homogenous fill of dark loam was noted running perpendicular to the present roadway. No dating evidence was recovered although its appearance suggested it was backfilled during the post-medieval period. It was aligned with a field boundary to the south-east of which it may have been a continuation. Three red-brick soakaways associated with the Victorian school building were also noted.

1. Introduction and methodology

Planning permission (ref. C/10/1821) has been granted for the construction of an extension to Wenhaston Primary School, Hall Road, Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet. The consent included a condition requiring an agreed programme of archaeological work being in place prior to the commencement of any groundwork in accordance with PPS5 *Planning for the Historic Environment* (Policy HE12.3).

Interest in the site is due to its location within an area of high archaeological potential with numerous findspots and sites recorded on the County Historic Environment Record (HER).

These include (locations indicated in Fig. 1):

- WMH 004:** cropmarks of an undated enclosure and rectilinear field system, situated 350m to the north-east, from which Iron Age coins and a brooch have been recovered.
- WMH 005:** located 250m to the south-east is a large area of cropmarks relating to a Roman settlement from which Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval finds have been recovered. A Neolithic flint axe was also recovered from this field.
- WMH 010:** The medieval St Peter's Church and churchyard. Situated 220m to the north-west.
- WMH 015:** a series of undated cropmarks noted in a small field 170m to the north-west.
- WMH 024:** a number of Anglo-Saxon and medieval finds discovered by metal detectorists on the playing field immediately to the west of the school grounds.

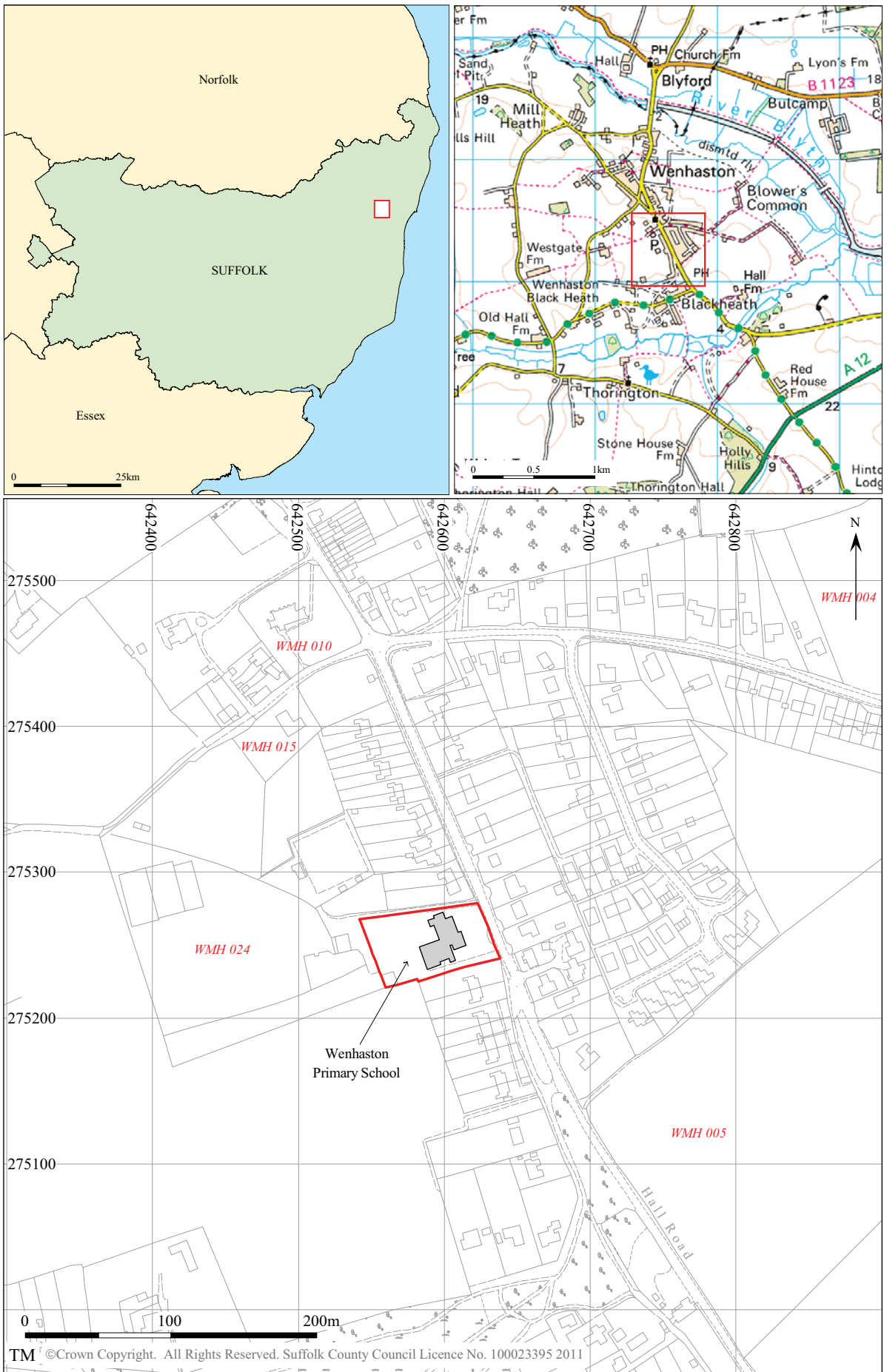


Figure 1. Site location plan (HER locations in red)

Given the high potential for early remains to be present an archaeological condition was attached to the planning consent to mitigate against the potential loss or damage to any archaeological remains that may be affected by the proposed works. To detail the work required, a Brief and Specification was prepared by Dr J. Tipper of the County Council Conservation Team which called for continuous monitoring of all groundwork associated with the development. (Appendix 1).

The monitoring was achieved by maintaining a presence on site and observing the excavation of the foundations for the new extension in an attempt to identify archaeological features and/or deposits. The resultant spoil was also examined in order to recover datable artefacts. A number of digital photographs were taken as part of the record.

2. Results

A presence was maintained at the site on the 27th & 28th January and the 1st February 2011 to monitor the excavation of a series of foundation trenches. A preliminary site visit was also made on the 25th January 2011 to liaise with the on-site contractors and to examine a well or soakaway that had been discovered.

The foundation trenches were mechanically excavated using a tracked excavator fitted with a narrow bucket. The trenches were at least 0.5m in width and were generally cut to a depth of 0.8m although a maximum depth of 1.7m was reached in some areas due to existing disturbances.

The revealed stratigraphy generally consisted of a 0.2m thick layer grey/brown topsoil (this would originally been c. 0.3m thick but the area had been reduced by c. 0.10 to 0.15m prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches), over a 0.10m thick layer of pale grey sand, a 0.10m thick layer of dark brown sand, which was slightly cemented and overlay a yellow/orange sand (Plate I). The three sand layers are all natural deposits (although this may arguably be the result of land management), the banding being a related to leeching of the upper layer resulting in the creation of the dark brown podzol and is related to the heathland origin of the site.

Figure 2 shows a plan of the monitored foundation trenches and the locations of the recorded features.

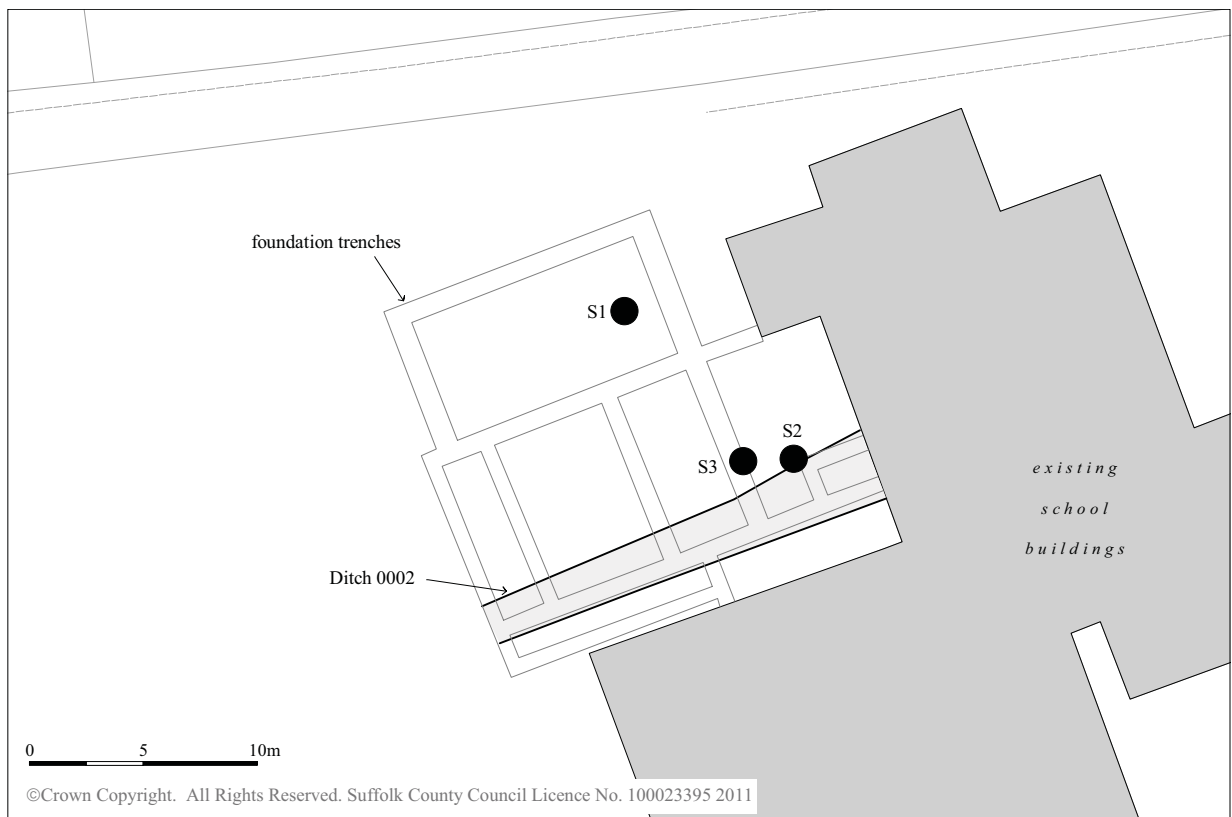


Figure 2. the monitored foundation trenches

A linear feature interpreted as a ditch was noted running south-west to north-east close the southern edge of the extension (marked as Ditch 0002 in Figure 2). At the north-east end it had a width of approximately 3m and was cut to a depth of c. 1.4m. Although only partially within the foundation trenches it could be seen to have sloping sides down to a flattish base c. 0.5m wide (Plate II). Its presence resulted in the ground being relatively unstable leading to the partial collapse of the foundation trench sides, usually a result of the feature's fill falling away from the undisturbed natural ground. As this feature progressed to the south-west it became narrower and slightly shallower so that by the south-western edge of the extension it was 1.8m in width and cut to a depth of 1.1m (Plate III). The fill consisted of a homogenous mass of dark topsoil from which no artefacts of any period were recovered.

Within the development area three brick-lined shafts, each capped with a brick built dome, were noted. These are marked as S1, S2 and S3 in Figure 2. Each was circular with an internal diameter of c. 1.2m and they were approximately 1.6m deep.

S1 and S2 had square manholes set into the top and were built of red bricks and mortar (Plates IV & V). Both had been partially backfilled with rubble. S3 was also built of red brick but only the dome was constructed with mortar as the bricks in the circular shaft had been laid dry. The dome was intact and there was no evidence for a manhole. This shaft had not been backfilled but was open and filled with water to within c. 0.4m of the top. All three had ceramic drainage pipes running in close to the top of the shaft.

Two of these shafts occurred partially within the foundation trenches (S2 and S3). These were entirely emptied, the brickwork within the trench was cut away and the foundation trench then cut to just below their base. They were filled with concrete when the foundations were poured.

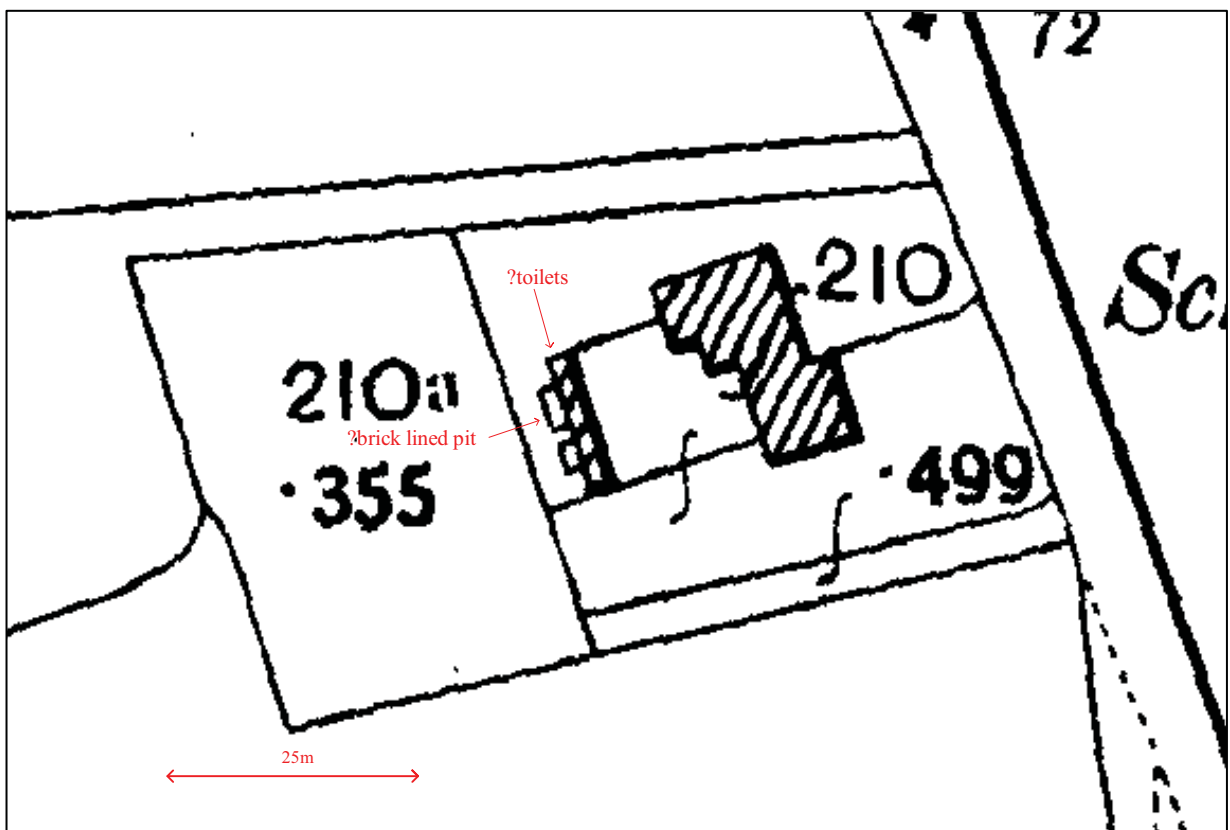


Figure 3. 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 (rescaled extract)

These shafts were interpreted as soakaways associated with the school and were presumably for the drainage of surface water or from the roof via downpipes, although it is possible that the two with manholes (S1 and S2) may have been associated with what appear to be toilet blocks marked on the early Ordnance Survey maps of the area (Fig. 3), but this seems unlikely. The interpretation as

soakaways rather than wells is based on their relatively shallow depth, the presence of drain pipes and the lack of any indication of wells or pumps on the early maps.

A shallow brick lined pit and what was the rear wall of the toilet block was noted crossing one of the trenches (Plate VI). This is coincidental with the one of the open structures noted adjacent the toilet blocks (Fig. 3) and is probably related to the disposal of waste.

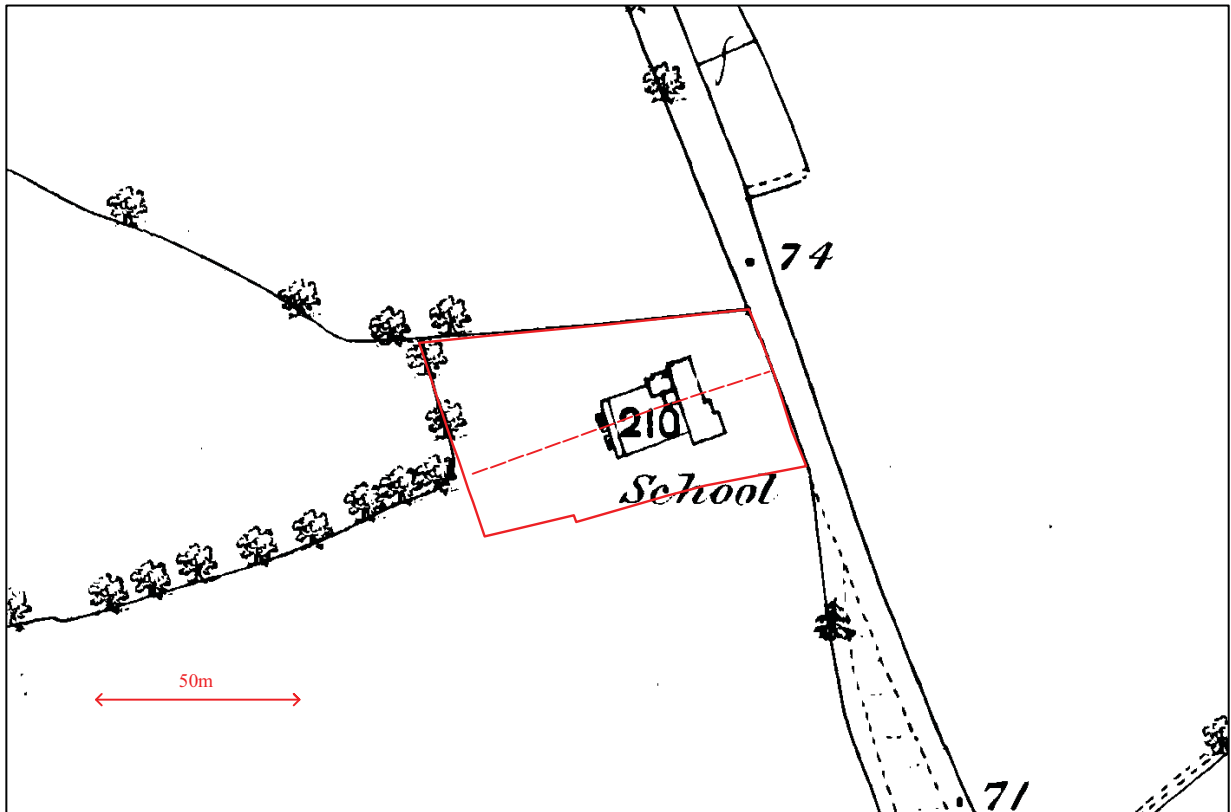


Figure 4. 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of c. 1880 (rescaled extract)

The present school boundary is marked in red
a possible extension to a field boundary is marked with a dashed red line

3. Conclusion

The only feature of note was the south-west to north-east ditch (0002). Although no dating evidence was recovered from the fill the clearness of the cut and the unleached and relatively organic rich nature of the fill suggest a late date. The lack of layering in the fill indicates that the backfilling was undertaken in one swift and deliberate event.

This feature is on the same alignment as a field boundary marked on the early Ordnance Survey maps (Fig. 4). On the early map the field the school lies in is very large and has irregular sides suggesting it was once subdivided. It is probable that the ditch noted in the foundation trenches is related to this boundary and that it was filled as part of a reorganisation of the fields in this area. It may even be that it was filled in relation to the construction of the school.

M. Sommers

February 2011

4. Plates (scales are divided into 0.5m sections)



Plate I. Typical stratigraphy revealed in the foundation trenches



Plate II. foundation trenches with soakaway S2 in the background. Ditch 0002 runs from left to right.
(camera facing north-west)



Plate III. Ditch 0002 towards south-western edge of extension (camera facing south-west)



Plate IV. soakaway (S1) in the foreground, camera facing east



Plate V. soakaway S3 (camera facing north-east)



Plate VI. brick-lined pit and rear wall of the former toilets
(camera facing south-east)

Brief and Specification for Continuous Archaeological Recording

WENHASTON PRIMARY SCHOOL, WENHASTON WITH MELLS HAMLET, HALESWORTH, SUFFOLK

Although this document is fundamental to the work of the specialist archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that certain of its requirements are likely to impinge upon the working practices of a general building contractor and may have financial implications

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission is to be sought from Suffolk County Council for the construction of a new extension (and associated works) at Wenhaston Primary School, Wenhaston with Mells, Halesworth, Suffolk (TM 426 752). **Please contact the applicant for an accurate plan of the site.**
- 1.2 The Planning Authority will be advised that any consent should be conditional upon an agreed programme of work taking place before development begins in accordance with PPS5 *Planning for the Historic Environment* (Policy HE12.3) to record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset before it is damaged or destroyed.
- 1.3 The proposal lies in an area of archaeological importance, recorded in the County Historic Environment Record, to the west of an area of enclosures and field systems recorded as crop marks by aerial photography (HER no. WMH 004). In addition, Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval finds scatters, indicative of further occupation deposits, are recorded from the same area. Any groundworks associated with the proposed development has the potential to cause significant damage or destruction to any underlying heritage assets.
- 1.4 Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by continuous archaeological recording during all groundworks.
- 1.5 In accordance with the condition on the planning consent, and following the standards and guidance produced by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based upon this brief and specification must be produced by the developers, their agents or archaeological contractors. This must be submitted for scrutiny by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (SCCAS/CT) at 9-10 The Churchyard, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443. The WSI will provide the basis for measurable standards and will be used to establish whether the requirements of the planning condition will be adequately met. The WSI should be compiled with a knowledge of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 3, 1997, 'Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties, 1. resource assessment'; Occasional Paper 8, 2000, 'Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy'; and Revised Research Framework for the Eastern Region, 2008, available online at <http://www.eaareports.org.uk/>*).
- 1.6 Following receipt of the WSI, SCCAS/CT will advise the Local Planning Authority (LPA) if it is an acceptable scheme of work. Work must not commence until the LPA has approved the WSI. Neither this specification nor the WSI is, however, a sufficient basis for the discharge of the planning condition relating to the archaeological works. Only the full implementation of the approved scheme – that is the completion of the fieldwork, a post-excavation assessment and final reporting – will enable SCCAS/CT to advise the LPA that the condition has been adequately fulfilled and can be discharged.
- 1.7 Before commencing work the project manager must carry out a risk assessment and liaise with the site owner, client and the Conservation Team of SCCAS (SCCAS/CT) in ensuring that all potential risks are minimised.

- 1.8 All arrangements for the excavation of the site, the timing of the work, access to the site, the definition of the precise area of landholding and area for proposed development are to be defined and negotiated by the archaeological contractor with the commissioning body.
- 1.9 The responsibility for identifying any constraints on field-work (e.g. Scheduled Monument status, Listed Building status, public utilities or other services, tree preservation orders, SSSIs, wildlife sites &c., ecological considerations rests with the commissioning body and its archaeological contractor. The existence and content of the archaeological brief does not over-ride such constraints or imply that the target area is freely available.
- 1.10 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, 2003.
- 1.11 The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (revised 2001) should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which are damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the ground works associated with the new extension. Any ground works, and also the upcast soil, are to be closely monitored during and after stripping by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation.

3. Arrangements for Monitoring

- 3.1 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the archaeological contractor) who must be approved by SCCAS/CT.
- 3.2 The developer or his contracted archaeologist will give SCCAS/CT five working days notice of the commencement of ground works on the site, in order that the work of the archaeological contractor may be monitored. The method and form of development will also be monitored to ensure that it conforms to previously agreed locations and techniques upon which this brief is based.
- 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 this Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and time-table.
- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered SCCAS/CT must be informed immediately. Amendments to this specification may be made to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

4. Specification

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to SCCAS/CT and the contracted archaeologist to allow archaeological monitoring of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity must be given to the contracted archaeologist to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.

- 4.3 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development, depending on the complexity of the data to be recorded. Sections should be drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 again depending on the complexity to be recorded.
- 4.4 A photographic record of the work is to be made of any archaeological features, consisting of both monochrome photographs and colour transparencies/high resolution digital images.
- 4.5 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum.
- 4.6 Archaeological contexts should, where possible, be sampled for palaeo-environmental 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 Helen Chappell, 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.
- 4.7 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with SCCAS/CT during the course of the monitoring).
- 4.8 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Historic Environment Record.

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 three months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible. It must be adequate to perform the function of a final archive for deposition in the County Historic Environment Record (The County Store) or museum in Suffolk.
- 5.2 The project manager must consult the County Historic Environment Record Officer to obtain an event number for the work. This number will be unique for each project or site and must be clearly marked on any documentation relating to the work.
- 5.3 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*.
- 5.4 Every effort must be made to get the agreement of the landowner/developer to the deposition of the full site archive, and transfer of title, with the intended archive repository before the fieldwork commences. If this is not achievable for all or parts of the finds archive then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, scientific analysis) as appropriate.
- 5.5 The project manager should consult the intended archive repository before the archive is prepared regarding the specific requirements for the archive deposition and curation, and regarding any specific cost implications of deposition.
- 5.6 If the County Store is the intended location of the archive, the project manager should consult the SCCAS Archive Guidelines 2010 and also the County Historic Environment Record Officer regarding the requirements for the deposition of the archive (conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage) of excavated material and the archive. A clear statement of the form, intended content, and standards of the archive is to be submitted for approval as an essential requirement of the WSI.
- 5.7 The WSI should state proposals for the deposition of the digital archive relating to this project with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), and allowance should be made for costs incurred to ensure proper deposition (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>).

- 5.8 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, including palaeoenvironmental remains recovered from palaeosols and cut features. 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).
- 5.9 An unbound copy of the assessment report, clearly marked DRAFT, must be presented to both SCCAS/CT for approval within six months of the completion of fieldwork unless other arrangements are negotiated with the project sponsor and SCCAS/CT.
- 5.10 Following acceptance, two copies of the assessment report should be submitted to SCCAS/CT. A single hard copy should be presented to the County Historic Environment Record as well as a digital copy of the approved report.
- 5.11 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*, must be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.12 Where appropriate, a digital vector trench plan should be included with the report, which must be compatible with MapInfo GIS software, for integration in the County Historic Environment Record. AutoCAD files should be also exported and saved into a format that can be imported into MapInfo (for example, as a Drawing Interchange File or .dxf) or already transferred to .TAB files.
- 5.13 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.14 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to County Historic Environment Record. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Dr Jess Tipper

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Date: 1 April 2010

Reference: / WenhastonSchool2010

This brief and specification remains valid for six 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.