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**CRANBROOKE HOUSE,
Church Street, Somersham, Cambs.**

HN1284

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING REPORT***

[Revision A]

HERITAGE NETWORK

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Managing Director: David Hillelson, BA MCIFA

CRANBROOKE HOUSE Church Street, Somersham, Cambridgeshire

Project ref.: HN1284
Planning ref.: 16/00793/HHFUL
Event no.: ECB 4777

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Jess Ison

by

Greg Jones, BA (Hons) MA ACIfA

Report no. 1016

October 2016

[Revision A – 22/11/2016: Figures 1-3 amended]

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The cover photograph shows the site looking north-east

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Greg Jones. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Greg Jones, and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Jess Ison, and to Gemma Stewart of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Cranbrooke House, Church Street, Somersham, PE28 3EG		
County:	Cambridgeshire	District:	Huntingdonshire
Village/town:	Somersham	Parish:	Somersham
Planning reference:	16/00793/HHFUL	NGR:	TL 3612 7758
Client name and address:	Jess Ison, Cranbrooke House, Church Street, Somersham, PE28 3EG		
Nature of work:	House extension	Former land use:	Garden
Site status:	Conservation Area	Reason for investigation:	Planning Condition (NPPF)
Position in planning process:	Post-determination (as a condition)	Project brief originator:	Local authority
Size of affected area:	c.700m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.45m ²
Site Code:	HN1284	Museum Accession No:	-
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Monitoring	Archive recipient:	Cambridge County Archaeology Store
Start of work	22/08/2016	Finish of work	22/08/2016
Related HER Nos:	SM 20145	Periods represented:	Modern
Oasis UID	heritage1- 256997	Significant finds:	n/a
Monument types:	n/a		
Physical archive:	n/a		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In response to a condition on planning consent for the construction of a rear extension at Cranbrooke House, Church Street, Somersham, Cambridgeshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks.

The site lies adjacent to the area covering the Bishop of Ely's medieval palace, which is a designated Scheduled Monument. The line of the palace moat runs through the gardens of the property, to the south-west of the house, and the site of a medieval fishpond lies on the opposite side of Church Street, to the north.

Monitoring of the development groundworks revealed a garden soil overlying a mixed subsoil layer, which sat directly on the natural sandy clay. The extension groundworks lay approximately 2.50m to the north-east of the suggested line of the moat, which was observed as a visible dip in the ground level of the gardens, but no evidence for activity associated with the palace or with the Saxon or medieval settlement at Somersham was encountered during the course of the groundworks.

No buried archaeological features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were observed during the course of this project.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of Jess Ison, to cover a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording carried out on the groundworks for an extension at Cranbrooke House, Church Street, Somersham, Cambridgeshire.

1.2 The planning permission for the development (ref: 16/00793/HHFUL) has been granted by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), subject to an archaeological condition issued under the Department of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF). The full specification for the investigation is contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated July 2016 (Turner 2016).

1.3 The proposed development site is situated on the southern side of the eastern arm of Church Street, centred on NGR TL 3612 7758. It lies within the Somersham Conservation Area and immediately adjacent to the boundary of the designated Scheduled Monument covering the Bishop of Ely's medieval palace, which extends to the south and west of the present site. The study area consists of a private dwelling on the street frontage, and associated gardens.

1.4 The aim of the present project has been to monitor all groundworks for the proposed extension in order to identify archaeological remains that might be damaged, destroyed or otherwise affected by those works; to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of such remains; and, to establish a local and regional archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Medlycott 2011).

1.5 It was considered that the investigation had the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of the development of Somersham from the prehistoric period onwards, in particular the extent and nature of the medieval landscape associated with the Bishop's palace, including the associated medieval moat, fish ponds and water courses.

1.6 The development has involved the construction of a two storey extension on the south-western corner of the existing property and associated services (Figure 2).

1.7 This report presents the data collected in the course of the archaeological fieldwork, and the conclusions that can be drawn from it. Together with the deposition of the project archive with Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Store, it completes the process described in the approved Project Design and will allow the archaeological condition on the planning consent to be discharged, on the advice of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team, acting as archaeological adviser to HDC.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The study area lies to the north and east of the Scheduled Monument (SM 1010475) which covers the site of the Bishop of Ely's palace at Somersham. This is known to have been provided with fishponds and a moat by the 12th century. The present site lies across the line of the medieval moat that encircles the Bishop's Palace. Part of the moat, now represented by a drainage ditch, runs across the site.

2.2 LiDAR data and historic mapping shows that the site lies in a shallow valley following the route of a former watercourse flowing from west to east, now represented by a series of leats that ultimately join the Cranbrook Drain, which flows to the south through Somersham Park. One of these leats runs from the east side of the eastern moat, along the northern boundaries of Cranbrook Cottage and Cranbrook View, and meets the Cranbrook Drain close to the junction of the High Street with Colne Road to the east.

2.3 Locally the soils belong to the Evesham 3 Association (411c), described as:

Slowly permeable calcareous clayey, and fine loamy over clayey soils. Some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged non-calcareous clayey soils. (SSEW 1983).

2.4 The underlying solid geology consists of West Walton Formation & Ampthill Clay Formation (undifferentiated) – Mudstone. The superficial deposits consist of Alluvium - Clay, Silt, Sand & Gravel. (British Geological Survey).

METHODOLOGY

2.5 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's work schedule. A single site visit was made to monitor the development groundworks.

2.6 Both the ground reduction and the excavation of footings for the new extension were undertaken using a 5-tonne 360° tracked mini-digger, fitted with 0.6m wide toothless ditching bucket.

2.7 All potential archaeological features and deposits were investigated to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.

2.8 All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate pro-forma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on pro-forma sheets, at scales of 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10. Soil colours are expressed using the Munsell colour system of *hue*, *value*, and *chroma*.

2.9 Spoil from the various stages of the groundworks was inspected for archaeological artefacts both visually and using a metal-detector.

2.10 All recording work was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and in accordance with CIfA and ALGAO standards.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

2.11 The fieldwork for the present project involved a single visit to monitor the excavation of footings trenches for the new extension, excavation for a new drainage access point and a topsoil strip to the west of the house for the creation of a new driveway (Figure 2).

Groundworks

Footings trenches

2.12 The new rear extension is located on the south-western corner of the existing dwelling and covers an area measuring 6.4m in length by 3.8m in width (Figure 2, Plate 1). The footings trenches measured approximately 1.10m in width and were excavated to a depth of between 1m and 1.30m.

2.13 The trench sections revealed a heavily rooted grey (10YR 5/1) soft silty sandy clay garden soil between 0.30m and 0.40m in depth, which sealed a mixed layer of yellowish brown (10YR 5/4 & 5/6) silty sandy silt subsoil, between 0.20m and 0.50m in depth. This overlay the natural brownish yellow (10YR 6/8) sandy clay substrate, which was encountered at depths of between 0.50m and 0.90m below the present ground surface (Figure 3, Plate 2).

2.14 Modern drainage, running north-east to south-west, was encountered in the south-eastern corner of the new extension at a depth of approximately 0.60m below the present ground level. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered within the footings trenches.

2.15 The area between the footings trenches was reduced by approximately 0.10m below the existing flagstones, but did not breach the topsoil. The line of a modern service trench was exposed crossing the area on a north-west to south-east alignment. No evidence for archaeological features, deposits or finds was encountered in this area.

New drainage access point

2.16 A small irregular area, with a maximum length of 2.85m and a maximum width of 2.75m, was excavated immediately to the west of the existing house to allow the insertion of a new drainage access point adjacent to an existing brick-built access point (Plate 3). The area was reduced in depth by approximately 1m and the sections revealed an identical stratigraphy to that exposed in the footings trenches.

2.17 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered in this area.

New driveway

2.18 The new driveway was located approximately 4m to the west of the existing house, extending south from Church Street (Figure 2). It measured 7m in length by 3m in width and was reduced in depth by approximately 0.30m, but did not breach the topsoil (Plate 4).

2.19 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered in this area.

Palace moat

2.20 The southern limit of the present works was located approximately 2.50m to the north of the northern arm of the Bishop's palace moat.

2.21 The suggested line of the moat was observed as a dip in the ground within the garden to the south-west of the existing house (Plate 5). At this point the dip follows a north-west to south-east alignment and measures approximately 9.60m in width. The southern embankment is marked by a line of mature trees.

2.22 Cranbrooke House itself, sits on a natural spur which appears to form the northern embankment of the now infilled moat, which remained undisturbed by the groundworks programme.

3. Discussion

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING

3.1 The study area is situated in the south of the village, in an area of known archaeological significance. The known grounds of the former medieval palace of the Bishop of Ely, which is a Scheduled Monument (SM 20145), borders the present site to the south and west. Fishponds and a moat had been established on that site by the 12th century.

3.2 The general archaeological and historical context for the site has been established through consultation of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER), and other readily accessible sources.

- The northern half of the parish of Somersham was considered in the Fenland Project (Hall 1992), and an Extensive Urban Survey has also been carried out (Cambs.C.C. 2003). The earliest evidence for prehistoric activity comes from north of the village: Neolithic flint axes (HER 1750) have been recovered 600m to the north of the site and 300m to the north-west (HER 1848); a Bronze Age flint axe (HER 3605) was also found, 600m to the north of the site; Iron Age settlement activity (HER 14790) has been investigated on the west side of Parkhall Road, 500m to the north.
- There is evidence of Roman activity to the north, south and east of the site. Excavations in the early 20th century revealed Roman remains at the eastern edge of Somersham (HER 3720). There have been numerous Roman finds around the village, including coins (HER 1552 & 3574), Roman metalwork 370m to the north-west (HER 10322), a pot and bowl, 569m to the north-west (HER 1453), and a Bronze sacrificial cup, 880m to the south-west (HER 1492).
- Little is known about the village during the Anglo-Saxon period, although an urn found close to Roman finds, 650m to the south, has been tentatively dated to the Anglo-Saxon period (HER 3651). A series of property boundaries and pits were revealed during an evaluation 350m to the north-west (HER 11909), these features were late Saxon to medieval in date.
- The village is recorded in the Domesday survey as *Summersham*, and was in the ownership of the Abbey of Ely. By the 12th century, the Bishop of Ely had established a palace with fishponds and an associated moat. A deer park was added in the 14th century.
- The field to the northwest of the site, on the opposite side of Church Street, is named *Ponds Close*, and fieldwork at 26 Church Street, immediately to the north of the present site revealed evidence of a backfilled medieval pond (HER 15284). Another large pond was encountered during an evaluation for a proposed new burial ground 250m to the north-west of the site (HER 16838). Fish ponds were well maintained during the medieval period and required a system of water courses to service them. Cranbrook, to the south of the site, may form part of such a water management system.
- It has been suggested that the village migrated to the north of its original location during the medieval period, to accommodate the Bishop's palace (Taylor 1989). This would place the earlier east-west axis of the settlement to the south of the Church and present High Street, closer to the present site. In the 12th century, the village was granted a market, located 280m to the north of the site, in the present core of the village.

- There are 55 listed structures within 500m of the site, all being Grade II and post-medieval in date, with the exception of the church of St John the Baptist (HER 609), 220m to the north-west, which is Grade I. The church itself has its origins in the 13th - 14th centuries, and was restored in the late 19th century.
- The site lies on the opposite side of Church Street from a rectangular earthwork that appears on 19th century mapping and was backfilled in the late 20th century during the construction of the Hammond Way estate. This is believed to have formed one of the medieval fishponds associated with the Bishop's palace. Immediately to the west of Hammond Way lies another similar rectangular earthwork, known to represent fishponds, in a field called 'Ponds Close'.
- The site straddles the line of a watercourse, marked as a drain on the Ordnance Survey, which marks the line of the moat that surrounded the Bishop's palace.

RESEARCH AIMS

3.3 The aims of the investigation were:

- to identify any remains that might be threatened by the development and establish their location, depth, extent, date, character and condition; and,
- to ensure that an appropriate strategy for the mitigation of damage or destruction of such remains by the development was adopted.

3.4 It was considered that such an investigation had the potential to contribute to an understanding of the landscape of Somersham and its environs from the prehistoric period onwards, and to contribute to a number of research topics highlighted in the published local research agenda, including:

- the origins and development of Somersham from the prehistoric period onwards;
- the layout of fields around the settlement in the Anglo-Saxon to medieval periods;
- the possible earlier axis of the settlement;
- the extent and nature of the medieval landscape and moat associated with the Bishop's palace;
- the extent and nature of the medieval fish ponds and water courses.

DISCUSSION

3.5 Although the site lies across the line of the moat that surrounds the site of the Bishop's palace, founded in the 12th century, no evidence for activity associated with the palace was observed during the present project.

3.6 The line of the palace moat was observed as a dip in the ground within the gardens to the south-west of the existing house, but was not encroached upon by the present groundworks.

CONCLUSIONS

3.7 It was considered that the investigation on the present site had the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of the origins and development of Somersham and, in particular, of the Bishop's palace moat, founded in the 12th century.

3.8 The line of the moat was identified as a visible dip in the gardens to the south-west of the house and new extension, but it was not affected by the present groundworks.

3.9 No other features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were observed during the course of this work.

Confidence Rating

3.10 Conditions on site were generally acceptable for the identification and recording of any potential archaeological remains, and as such there are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than *High*.

4. Schedule of site visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
22/08/2016	GAJ	8	Monitoring excavation of extension footings.

5. Bibliography

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Websites

Archaeology Data Service: www.ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue

British Geological Survey (BGS): mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html

Heritage Gateway: www.heritagegateway.org.uk

Old Maps: www.old-maps.co.uk

6. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Site layout showing line of the moat

Figure 3 North-west facing section and profile of foundation trench

Plate 1 General shot of extension, looking W

Plate 2 Footings trench stratigraphy, looking S

Plate 3 Excavation for new drainage access, looking NE

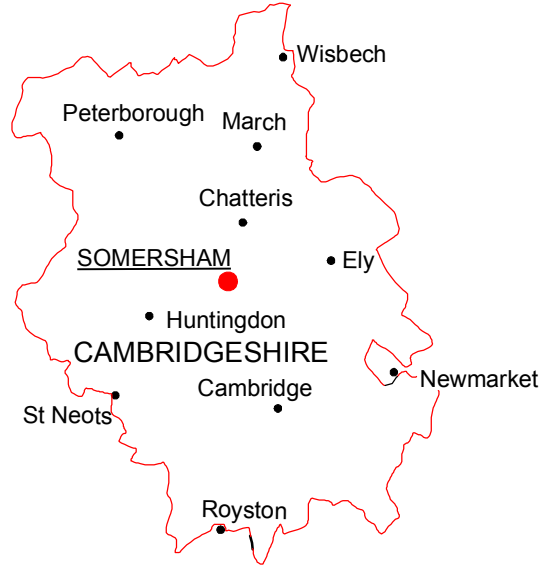
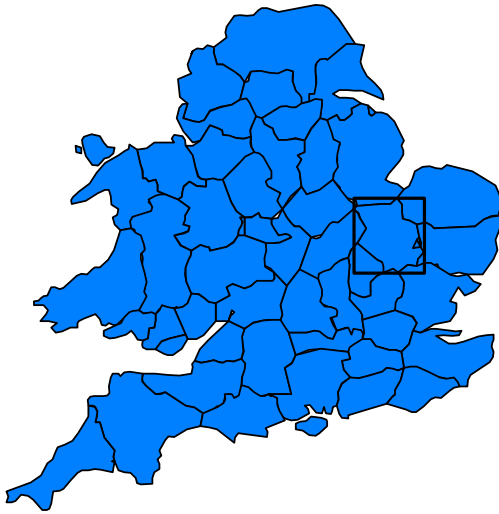
Plate 4 Ground reduction for new driveway, looking SW

Plate 5 Profile of the moat looking W

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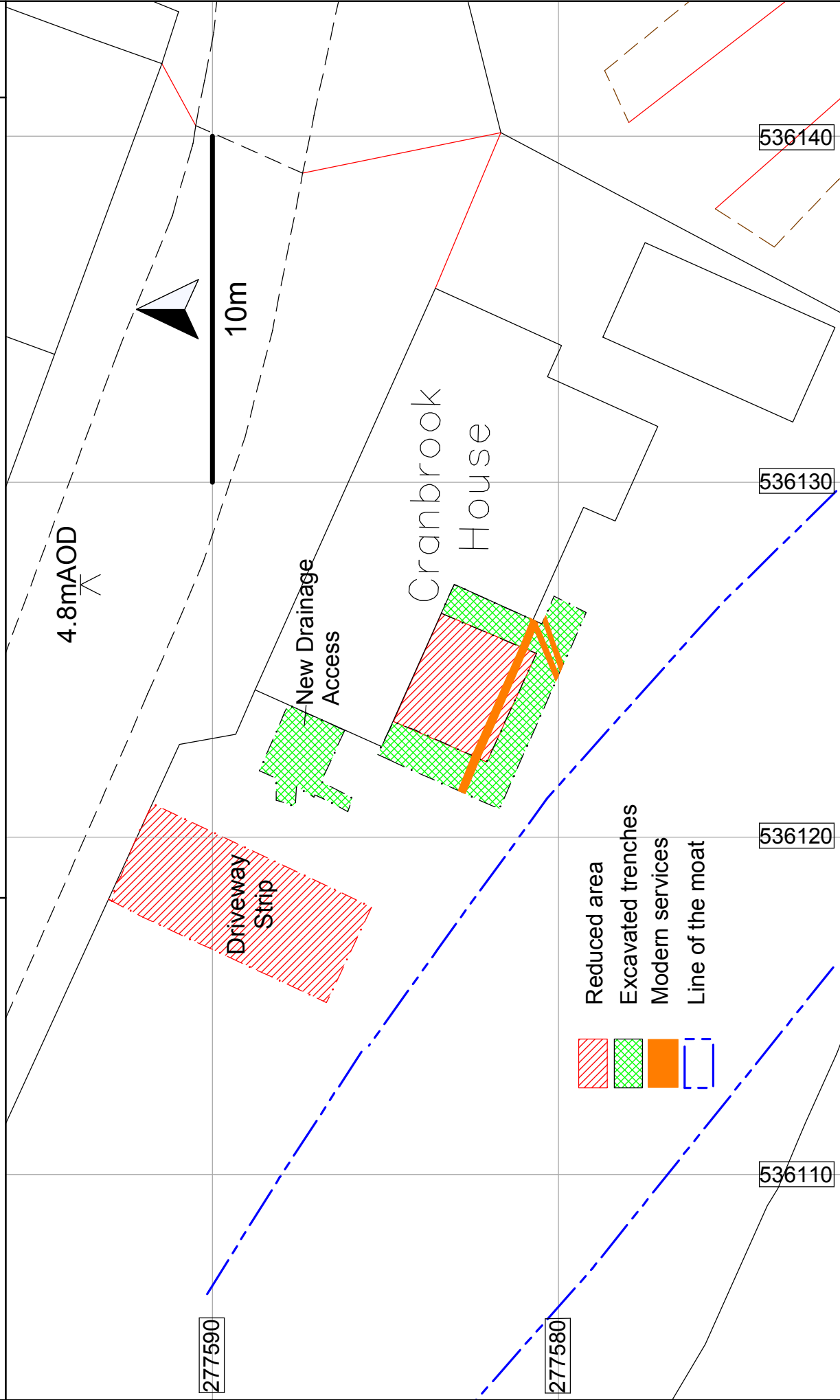


Site Location

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Scale 1:5000

Figure 1

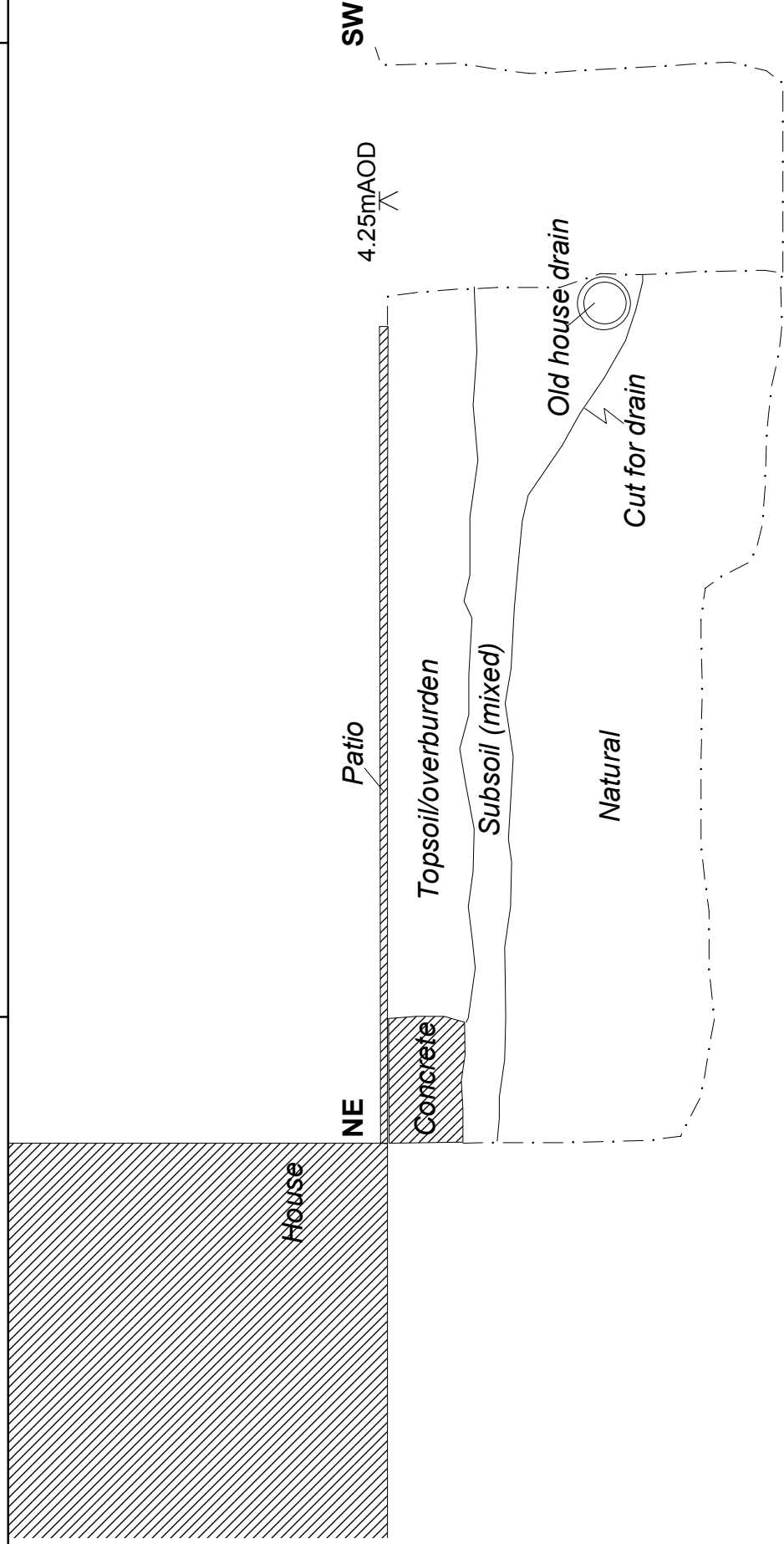


Site Layout

Scale 1:150

Figure 2

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North-west facing section and profile of foundation trench



Plate 1: General shot of extension, looking W



Plate 2: Footings trench stratigraphy, looking S



Plate 3: Excavation for new drainage access, looking NE



Plate 4: Ground reduction for new driveway, looking SW



Plate 5: Profile of the moat looking W

Appendix 1

OASIS Data form

<i>OASIS ID: heritage1-256997</i>	
Project details	
Project name	Cranbrooke House, Church Street, Somersham, Cambridgeshire, PE28 3EG
Short description of the project	<p>In response to a condition on planning consent for the construction of a rear extension at Cranbrooke House, Church Street, Somersham, Cambridgeshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks.</p> <p>The site lies adjacent to the area covering the Bishop of Ely's medieval palace, which is a designated Scheduled Monument. The line of the palace moat runs through the gardens of the property, to the south-west of the house, and the site of a medieval fishpond lies on the opposite side of Church Street, to the north.</p> <p>Monitoring of the development groundworks revealed a garden soil overlying a mixed subsoil layer, which sat directly on the natural sandy clay. The extension groundworks lay approximately 2.50m to the north-east of the suggested line of the moat, which was observed as a visible dip in the ground level of the gardens, but no evidence for activity associated with the palace or with the Saxon or medieval settlement at Somersham was encountered during the course of the groundworks.</p> <p>No buried archaeological features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were observed during the course of this project.</p>
Project dates	Start: 22-08-2016 End: 22-08-2016
Previous/future work	No
Associated project reference codes	HN1284 - Contracting Unit No.
Associated project reference codes	ECB 4777 – HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	n/a
Significant Finds	n/a
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE HUNTINDON SOMERSHAM Cranbrooke House, Church Street
Postcode	PE28 3EG
Study area	45 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 3612 7758 (point)
Lat/Long Datum	LL – 52.378917858388 0.0000206457 16 (decimal) LL – 52 22 44 N 000 00 00 E (degrees)

Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Chris Turner
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	Greg Jones
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Store
Digital Archive ID	ECB 4777
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Store
Paper Archive ID	ECB 4777
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Diary","Drawing","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Cranbrooke House, Somersham, Cambridgeshire: archaeological monitoring report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Jones, G.
Other bibliographic details	Report number 1016
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth, Herts.
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 10 text pages, 3 figures, 5 plates