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SHIRE HALL, BURY ST EDMUNDS, SUFFOLK

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Authors: Adam Dyson BA and Gareth Barlow MSc (Fieldwork) Matthew Adams BA (Report) Antony Mustchin MSc (Editor)	
NGR: TL 858 639	Report No. 3778
District: Bury St Edmunds	Site Code: BSE 365
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. P4241
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD
98-100 Fore Street, Hertford, SG14 1AB
Unit 6, Brunel Business Court, Eastern Way, Bury St Edmunds IP32 7AJ
Tel: 01992 558170
Fax: 01992 553359
E-mail: info@ascontracts.co.uk
Web: www.archaeologicalsolutions.co.uk
Registered Number: 4702122

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. An Archaeological Evaluation.		
Project description (250 words)			
<p><i>In March and April 2011, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS), conducted an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) at Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk (NGR TL 858 639). The evaluation was required to comply with the need for a Heritage Statement to accompany a planning application for development of a new wing to the former Shire Hall building (St Edmundsbury Ref. SE/11/0098).</i></p> <p><i>The proposed development area is in an area of Archaeological Importance within the Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement core of Bury (BSE 242), and adjacent to the precinct of the Abbey of St Edmund (BSE 010, SAM SF2). Documentary work showed that, although outside the precinct, the site is likely to lie within the area of the Sacrist's yard. This would have included the hall, domestic buildings, offices, stables and workshops of his household. Test pitting also suggests that the area was generally within the early settlement core.</i></p> <p><i>The evaluation revealed 12th – 14th century features (predominantly pits and postholes), post-medieval deposits and associated pits (including a possible cess pit). Finds from the post-Dissolution layers/ features included residual medieval pottery, clay pipe and 18th – 20th century CBM. A possible structure was partially revealed at the northern end of the trench (comprising F1008, F1010, F1012, F1014, F1016, F1018, F1046, F1048 and F1050). The medieval features contained small quantities of pottery (between one and two sherds) and animal bone. Three features (1008, 1010 and 1018) contained struck flint suggestive of prehistoric activity.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)			
Previous work (Y/N/?)	Y	Future work (Y/N/?)	TBC
P. number	P4241	Site code	BSE 365
Type of project	Archaeological Evaluation		
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance		
Current land use	Grassed courtyard		
Planned development	New wing to Shire Hall		
Main features (+dates)	Pits and postholes (possible structure; likely 12 – 14 th C)		
Significant finds (+dates)	12 th – 14 th C pottery, animal bone		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	Suffolk	Bury St Edmunds	Bury St Edmunds
HER/ SMR for area	Suffolk SMR		
Post code (if known)	-		
Area of site	1080m ²		
NGR	TL 858 639		
Height AOD (max/ min)	c.354m AOD		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	Suffolk County Council, Archaeological Service – Conservation Team		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Adam Dyson and Gareth Barlow		
Funded by	M & D Developments		
Full title	Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. An Archaeological Evaluation		
Authors	Adams, M. (Editor: Mustchin, A.)		
Report no.	3778		
Date (of report)	April 2011 (Revised August 2012)		

SHIRE HALL, BURY ST EDMUNDS, SUFFOLK

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In March and April 2011, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS), conducted an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) at Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk (NGR TL 858 639). The evaluation was required to comply with the need for a Heritage Statement to accompany a planning application for development of a new wing to the former Shire Hall building (St Edmundsbury Ref. SE/11/0098).

The proposed development area is in an area of Archaeological Importance within the Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement core of Bury (BSE 242), and adjacent to the precinct of the Abbey of St Edmund (BSE 010, SAM SF2). Documentary work showed that, although outside the precinct, the site is likely to lie within the area of the Sacrist's yard. This would have included the hall, domestic buildings, offices, stables and workshops of his household. Test pitting also suggests that the area was generally within the early settlement core.

The evaluation revealed 12th – 14th century features (predominantly pits and postholes), post-medieval deposits and associated pits (including a possible cess pit). Finds from the post-Dissolution layers/ features included residual medieval pottery, clay pipe and 18th – 20th century CBM. The remains of a possible structure were partially revealed at the northern end of the trench (comprising F1008, F1010, F1012, F1014, F1016, F1018, F1046, F1048 and F1050). The medieval features contained small quantities of pottery (between one and two sherds) and animal bone. Three features (1008, 1010 and 1018) contained struck flint suggestive of prehistoric activity.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March and April 2011, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS), conducted an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) at Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk (NGR TL 858 639; Figs.1-2). The evaluation was required to comply with the need for a Heritage Statement to accompany a planning application for development of a new wing to the former Shire Hall building (St Edmundsbury Ref. SE/11/0098).

1.2 The archaeological evaluation was conducted in accordance with a brief issued by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team (SCC AS-CT) (17/03/2011), and a specification prepared by AS (dated 21/01/2011), and approved by SCC AS-CT. The project followed the procedures outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct, Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008). It also adhered to the relevant sections of *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The principal objectives for the evaluation included (Brief. 2):

- Establish whether any archaeological deposit exists in the area, with particular regard to any which are of sufficient importance to merit preservation *in situ*
- Identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit within the application area, together with its likely extent, localised depth and quality of preservation.
- Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking colluvial/alluvial deposits
- Establish the potential for the survival of environmental evidence
- Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.

1.4 An archaeological assessment of the Shire Hall complex has been previously completed (Carr and Gill 2007). The proposed development area is in an area of Archaeological Importance within the Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement core of Bury (BSE 242), and adjacent to the precinct of the Abbey of St Edmund (BSE 010, SAM SF2). Documentary work showed that, although outside the precinct, the site is likely to lie within the area of the Sacrist's yard. This would have included the hall, domestic buildings, offices, stables and workshops of his household. Test pitting also suggests that the area was generally within the early settlement core. The principal research issues for the site will be to identify and characterise any evidence of medieval or earlier occupation principally associated with the Abbey and the Sacrist's yard.

Planning Policy Context

1.5 PPS5 (2010) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The Planning Policy Statement aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. It aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. It states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past, and to make this publicly available, should be taken, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

Archaeological Background

2.1 An archaeological assessment of the Shire Hall complex has been completed (Carr and Gill 2007). In summary:

2.2 The monastic complex of Bury St Edmunds grew following the 10th century enshrinement of the remains of Saint Edmund at a small monastery at *Beodricsworth* which took the name of St Edmund's Bury. In 1020 the surrounding lands were granted to the monks who tended the shrine; the abbey was built during the 11th and 12th centuries. The abbey became a site of pilgrimage and grew to become the greatest Benedictine abbey in England and one of the wealthiest monastic sites in the country. The town was developed alongside the abbey, and there were episodes of conflict in the medieval period fuelled by the townsmen's resentment of the abbey's control over them.

2.3 Existing remains of Bury St Edmunds Abbey (BSE 010) include the 12th century Norman Tower and the 14th century Great Gate along with most of the precinct wall, whilst the plan of the abbey church survives inside along with the West front. The whole monastic complex is a Scheduled Monument (SAM SF2). The abbey was dissolved in 1539 and the interior has been a registered park since the 19th century (see below). St James Cathedral was founded in the early 11th century and stands on the site of the earlier Church of St Denise. The cathedral was rebuilt in 1503 and was not finished until 2005 with the building of the tower. St Mary's Church is within 300m of the site and stands on the site of a 12th century church. It was rebuilt in the late medieval period and houses the burial of Mary Tudor, sister of Henry VIII. Between the two churches is the Great Churchyard dating from the medieval period which contains a 13th century charnel house, and burials reached at least as far south as the modern Suffolk County Council archaeology buildings.

2.4 The site is within the urban core of the town and approximately 10-12m of the southern boundary of the mortared flint abbey precinct wall which includes a 12th century turret. Research carried out by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service suggests that there may be extensive archaeological deposits buried within the area of the site.

2.5 An abbey school, perhaps a music school, occupied the site of the former Shire Hall, from which the name of Schoolhall Lane originates. The area to the rear of the Shire Hall, south of the precinct wall, is the location of the Sacrist yard. This area has potential to include the offices and homes of the Sacrist's staff and a possible gatehouse. It is also possible that further abbey buildings occupied this area, whilst pottery finds suggest that the site lies within the vicinity of the Middle to Late Saxon settlement.

2.6 Ryland's *East View of the Town* (published 1791) depicts a return to the precinct wall running parallel to the river Lark; a tower was also shown at the junction with the extant wall. Ryland's engraving is also notable for the absence of a dividing wall between the churchyard and the area of the modern county council car park.

Another early cartographic source, Warren's 1741 Map, depicts this area as gardens with a boundary marking the postulated line of the north-south wall.

2.7 The Great Churchyard, occupying the area immediately to the south of the Abbey church was documented in post-medieval period (16th/17th century). Likewise, the *Monk's Cemetery* is marked on the 1880 Ordnance Survey map. A botanical garden, the precursor of today's Abbey Gardens, occupied the area of the modern car park from 1820, and was relocated to its current site, under the patronage of the Marquis of Bristol, in 1831.

3 METHOD OF WORK

3.1 A trial trench (1.80m x 22.30m) was excavated covering the area of proposed development.

3.2 Undifferentiated overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision using a wheeled mechanical 180° excavator fitted with a 1.80m toothless ditching bucket. Subsequent investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the trenches were scanned by metal detector.

4 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

4.1 Individual trench descriptions are presented below.

Trench 1 (Figs. 2 and 3)

Long Section: North End - West Facing 0.00m = 31.05m AOD		
0.00m – 0.26m	L1000	Topsoil. Light orange brown, friable, sandy silt with occasional medium stones
0.26m – 0.56m	L1001	Made Ground. Dark grey brown, compact, sandy silt with moderate charcoal flecks and frequent small chalk and stones
0.56 – 0.86m	L1002	Levelling Layer. Mid grey brown, compact, silty clay with moderate medium flint and occasional small chalk
0.86 – 1.26m	L1003	Subsoil. Dark grey brown, friable, sandy silt with moderate medium flint
1.26m+	L1004	Natural. Light yellow orange, loose, sand and flint gravel with frequent medium to large flint nodules

Long Section: Centre - West Facing 0.00m = 31.12m AOD		
0.00m – 0.35m	L1000	Topsoil. As Above
0.35m – 0.48m	L1005	Hardcore Layer. Mid orange grey compact mixed CBM, asphalt and sand
0.48 – 0.56m	L1001	Mage Ground. As Above
0.56 – 1.12m	L1002	Levelling Layer. As Above
1.12 – 1.47	L1003	Subsoil. As Above
1.47m+	L1004	Natural. As Above

Long Section: South End - West Facing 0.00m = 31.24m AOD		
0.00m – 0.32m	-	Modern path and foundation
0.32m – 0.60m	L1001	Made Ground. As Above
0.60 – 0.80m	L1002	Levelling Layer. As Above
0.80 – 1.00m	L1003	Subsoil. As Above
1.00m+	L1004	Natural. As Above

Description: Trench 1 contained 25 features comprising 12 pits (F1018, F1022, F1026, F1028, F1030, F1032, F1038, F1040, F1042, F1052, F1054 and F1056), 10 postholes (F1008, F1010, F1012, F1014, F1016, F1034, F1044, F1046, F1048 and F1050), a gully (F1024), a ditch (F1020) and a single cess pit (F1006). The feature descriptions are tabulated below.

Feature	Context	Plan/ profile (dimensions)	Fill	Spot Date	Comments
PITS					
F1018	L1019	Circular in plan, steep near vertical sides, slightly concave base (0.70 x 0.60 x 0.42m)	Dark grey brown, loose, silty sand with frequent small flint	12 th – 14 th C	
F1022	L1023	Sub-circular in plan, moderately steep sides, flattish base (0.31+ x 0.49 x 0.12m)	Mottled dark grey brown and red brown, friable, sand	-	
F1026	L1027	Sub-circular in plan, steep sides, flattish base (0.30+ x 0.48 x 0.16m)	Mottled light yellow with light grey brown, loose, sandy silt	-	Cut by Pit F1028
F1028	L1029	Oval in plan, steep sides, concave base (0.72+ x 0.60+ x 0.18m)	Dark brown, loose, sandy silt with moderate rounded flint	-	Cut Pit F1026
F1030	L1031	Oval in plan, steep sides, irregular concave base (0.48+ x 0.44 x 0.18m)	Mid to dark yellow brown, Loose, sandy silt	-	Cut by Pit F1032
F1032	L1033	Oval in plan, moderately steep sides, irregular convex base (1.10m x 0.79 x 0.18m)	Dark grey brown, loose, sandy silt with moderate rounded flint	-	Cut Pit F1030
F1038	L1039	Irregular oval in plan, moderately steep sides, concave base (1.10+ x 0.89 x 0.20m)	Mid grey brown, loose, silty sand with frequent small and medium flint	-	
F1040	L1041	Oval in plan, shallow sides, concave base (0.75 x 0.75 x 0.14m)	Mid grey brown, loose, silty sand with frequent small and medium flint		Possible linear terminus
F1042	L1043	Sub-circular in plan, moderately steep sides, concave base (0.80 x 0.40+ x 0.26m)	Dark greenish brown, loose silty sand with frequent large flint	12 th – 14 th C	Cut Ditch F1020
F1052	L1053	Oval in plan, moderately steep sides, irregular base (2.90 x 1.00+ x 1.00m)	Mid to light brown grey, compact, silty sand with frequent medium flint and occasional chalk flecks	Post medieval	Cut L1002 and L1003. Sealed by L1001.
F1054	L1055	Irregular square in plan, steep sides, flattish base (1.25 x 0.90 x 0.46m)	Dark grey brown, compact, silty sand with frequent flint	12 th – 14 th C	
F1056	L1057	Linear in plan, steep sides, irregular base (2.00+ x 2.00 x 0.60m)	Light yellow brown, friable, mixed sandy silt and mortar	-	Cut Cess Pit F1006
POSTHOLES					
F1008	L1009	Sub-circular in plan, steep sides, concave base (0.45 x 0.45 x 0.20m)	Mid grey brown, loose, silty sand with frequent small and medium flint		
F1010	L1011	Sub-circular in plan, steep sides, concave base (0.60 x 0.55 x 0.22m)	Mid to dark grey brown loose, silty sand with frequent small and medium flint	12 th – 14 th C	
F1012	L1013	Sub-circular in plan, steep sides, concave base (0.45 x 0.45 x 0.18m)	Ditto	-	
F1014	L1015	Sub-circular in plan, steep sides, concave base (0.35 x 0.35 x 0.29m)	Ditto	12 th – 14 th C	

F1016	L 1017	Sub-circular in plan, steep sides, concave base (0.50 x 0.20+ x 0.40m)	Ditto	-	
F1034	L 1035	Sub-circular in plan, steep sides, concave base (0.45 x 0.30 x 0.14m)	Ditto	-	
F1044	L 1045	Sub-circular in plan, steep sides, concave base (0.36 x 0.34 x 0.13m)	Ditto	-	
F1046	L 1047	Sub-circular in plan, steep sides, concave base (0.50 x 0.25+ x 0.26m)	Ditto	12 th – 14 th C	
F1048	L 1049	Sub-circular in plan, steep sides, concave base (0.39 x 0.15+ x 0.15m)	Ditto	-	
F1050	L 1051	Sub-circular in plan, steep sides, concave base (0.30 x 0.33+ x 0.18m)	Ditto	-	
CESS PIT					
F1006	L 1058	Linear in plan, moderately steep sides, concave base (2.00+ x 3.40 x 0.80m)	Mid red brown, compact, sandy silt	Post medieval	
	L 1007		Mid brown green, compact, silty sand	-	
DITCH					
F1020	L 1021	Linear in plan, steep sides, concave base (2.00+ x 0.70 x 0.26m)	Mid brown grey, loose, silty sand with frequent flint		Cut by Pit F1016
Gully					
F1024	L 1025	Curvi-linear in plan, steep sides, flattish base (0.70 x 0.30 x 0.23m)	Mottled light yellow red and dark grey brown, friable, sandy silt	-	

5 CONFIDENCE RATING

5.1 It is not felt that any factors restricted the identification of archaeological features or the recovery of finds during the evaluation.

6 DEPOSIT MODEL

6.1 Topsoil L1000, was a light orange brown, friable sandy silt with occasional medium angular flint (0.26 – 0.35m). It overlay Hardcore L1005 in the centre on the trench and Made Ground L1001 at either end. L1005 was a mid orange grey, compact, modern CBM, asphalt and sand. It overlay the Made Ground L1001, a dark grey brown, compact, sandy silt. L1000 sealed archaeological features F1006, F1052 and F1056.

6.2 Levelling Layer L1002 was below Made Ground L1001 and was a mid grey brown, compact, silty sand with moderate flint and occasional small chalk. It contained a residual sherd of medieval pottery (13g; 12th – 14th century), and a clay pipe stem fragment (2g). Subsoil L1003 overlay the natural drift geology (L1004). L1003 was a dark grey brown, friable, sandy silt with moderate flint, and L1004, was a light yellow orange, firm sand and flint gravel.

7 DISCUSSION

Summary of the archaeology

7.1 Numerous archaeological features were recorded in the trench:

Trench	Feature	Description	Spot Date
1	F1006	Cess Pit	Post medieval
	F1008	Posthole	Undated
	F1010	Posthole	12 th – 14 th C
	F1012	Posthole	Undated
	F1014	Posthole	12 th – 14 th C
	F1016	Posthole	Undated
	F1018	Pit	12 th – 14 th C
	F1020	Ditch	Undated
	F1022	Pit	Undated
	F1024	Gully	Undated
	F1026	Pit	Undated
	F1028	Pit	Undated
	F1030	Pit	Undated
	F1032	Pit	Undated
	F1034	Posthole	Undated
	F1038	Pit	Undated
	F1040	Pit	Undated
	F1042	Pit	12 th – 14 th C
	F1044	Posthole	Undated
	F1046	Posthole	12 th – 14 th C
	F1048	Posthole	Undated
	F1050	Posthole	Undated
	F1052	Pit	Post-medieval
	F1054	Pit	12 th – 14 th C
	F1056	Pit	Post-medieval

7.2 Topsoil L1000 and Made Ground L1001 ‘sandwiched’ modern Hardcore L1005 (Fig. 3) and sealed post-medieval features and deposits (see below). Of these layers, only L1001 yielded finds, comprising three fragments (118g) of unidentifiable post-medieval brick. Layers L1000 and L1001 likely represented imported topsoil associated with the overlying modern pathways and lawned area. Similar material was reported from *Test Hole 4*, excavated by SCCAS (Carr and Gill 2007, 8), c. 20m to the ENE.

7.3 Encountered archaeological features divide into two stratigraphic phases: those which cut Levelling Layer L1002 (F1006, F1052 and F1056), and those which cut Natural L1004 and were overlain by Subsoil L1003 (the remaining features). The features which cut L1002 were post-medieval, and the features overlain by Subsoil L1003 were medieval (12th to 14th century) or earlier.

7.4 L1002 may have represented a levelling layer dating to the post-Dissolution period, or possibly a garden soil or similar associated with the later use of the site. Finds from this material comprise a single sherd (13g) of medieval coarseware, 29g of medieval peg tile (of probable 13th century or later manufacture) and a single fragment (2g) of clay pipe stem. A similar assemblage was noted from *Test Hole 5*, excavated by SCCAS (Carr and Gill 2007, 8), c. 15m to the WNW. Disturbance and possible “planting holes” recorded in this test hole were tentatively associated with the 18th century use of this area as formal private gardens (*ibid.*). One of the three features cutting L1002 (Pit F1052) yielded three comparable medieval coarseware sherds and 33g of oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) shell, while the upper fill of (possibly) stratigraphically contemporary Cess Pit F1006 (L1058) contained 135g of 18th to 20th century CBM; Pit F1056 truncated the northern edge of F1006 and was devoid of finds. Further interpretation of L1002 and related features is difficult due to the small size of the associated finds assemblage; it is likely given the mixing of medieval and later material that the recovered coarseware sherds and medieval CMB is residual.

7.5 As Pits F1052 and F1056 (cutting L1002) were both sealed by Made Ground L1002, it is possible that post-medieval ‘terracing’ of the site had obscured the relative stratigraphic positions of these features; further post-Dissolution phases may have been represented.

7.6 The medieval features were predominantly pits and postholes sealed by L1003, a buried soil containing moderate medium-sized flints. Medieval building flints were noted by Carr and Gill (2007) from SCCAS *Test Hole 5* (see above). L1003 was devoid of finds and appeared to represent a buried late-medieval or post-medieval soil; the flint content may however indicate a post-Dissolution levelling event though this is inconclusive owing to the lack of diagnostic material.

7.7 At the northern end of the trench the remains of a (likely) medieval post-built structure may have been partially revealed, comprising features F1010, F1012, F1014, F1016, F1044, F1046, F1048 and F1050, and possible outliers F1008 and F1018. The form and fills of these pits/ postholes were directly comparable. No evidence of post pipes or packing material was present however and it is likely that any building they represented was minor/ ephemeral, e.g. a small outbuilding. It is equally possible that these features marked the outline of an animal pen or similar;

either interpretation would complement the probable location of the site within the confines of the Sacrist's yard. That part exposed within the trench measured approximately 5m² (internally) and was not associated with any form of 'floor' or 'occupation' layer. Environmental samples from Postholes F1018 and F1046 yielded a small number of cereal grains, indicative of scattered debris from daily processing and use, as well as small mammal bones and indeterminate mollusca; a full environmental report is presented in Appendix 2. The quantity and quality of the environmental remains are too low to inform regarding the nature/ use of the possible structure.

7.8 It is possible that the rectilinear arrangement of pits and postholes in the northern half of the trench represented a post-built structure of Anglo-Saxon date. This would be consistent with the location of the site within the Anglo-Saxon settlement core of Bury (see section 1.4). Anglo Saxon structural evidence has been previously reported from the north side of the cathedral (SMR No. BSE052). Although not revealed in its entirety, the internal width of this possible structure (c. 3m) was comparable to Hut (Grubenhäuser) 12 from West Stow Anglo Saxon Village, c. 8.5km north-west of the site (West 1971, 4, 6). However, there was no evidence to suggest that the possible structure represented a comparable style of 'sunken hut'. If the features forming this structure were Anglo Saxon, then the pottery from their fills would comprise intrusive material.

7.9 The medieval features contained small quantities of pottery (between one and two sherds) and animal bone (see Appendix 2). Three features (F1008, F1010 and F1018) also contained (likely) residual struck flint suggestive of prehistoric activity. Redeposited tools and flakes constitute much of the early prehistoric evidence from the region and river valleys, such as the Lea and Colne are recognised as being of considerable importance for the preservation of Mesolithic material (Austin 1997, 5, 9). Gibson (1993) has also stressed the importance of East Anglian river valleys for the preservation of late Neolithic and early Bronze Age sites (after Brown and Murphy 1997, 14).

7.10 Prehistoric artefacts from the area of Bury St Edmunds include Palaeolithic flint tools in the Acheulean and Levallois traditions. Examples include a Mesolithic plano-convex flint axe head recorded c.1.3km to the east of the assessment site (HER RGH056). A possible Neolithic flint "chisel" was also reported from the garden of Orchard House, Cotton Lane, c. 500m west-north-west of Shire Hall (HER BSE054). Excavations within 'The Queen's House', Bury Abbey also reported an unspecified Iron Age artefact scatter (HER BSE010). However, despite its location on the edge of the floodplain of the river Lark, the assessment site has little future potential for prehistoric remains. The earliest features encountered were Medieval in date and the (possible residual) lithics recovered showed little evidence of being redeposited may not in fact be the products of human action (see Peachey, *this report – The Struck Flint*; Appendix 2).

Research Potential

7.11 It was judged that the site is likely to lie within the area of the Sacrist's yard of the Abbey of St Edmund. The latter would have included the hall, domestic buildings, offices, stables and workshops. The site also lies within the general area

of the early settlement core. The recorded archaeological features conform to the anticipated remains, comprising a possible structure and domestic-type features, principally dating to the medieval period (12th to 14th centuries). Also, post-medieval artefacts including the clay pipe stem from L1002 clearly attest to later activity on the site, complementing historical records of post-dissolution and later land use in the vicinity. As such, the site has good future potential for medieval remains, such as those described above, and for post-medieval/ early modern material.

7.12 Regarding the medieval period, the recorded archaeological remains help to further characterise the Abbey complex and add to the overall corpus of information regarding its form and layout. The further study of medieval cathedral, monastic and church complexes is identified as an important research aim for the eastern region (Medlycott and Brown 2008, 97) and the results of this archaeological evaluation make a contribution to this. The results of this work, in conjunction with the results of previous work, have the potential to address questions beyond the form, layout and functioning of the Abbey complex, such as the role of the Abbey in society and its economic importance to the surrounding medieval town (see Ayers 2000, 31).

8 DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE

8.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with the finds from the site, at the Suffolk County Archaeological Store. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX 1

BSE365: Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

Concordance of finds by feature

Feature	Context	Description	Spot Date	Pottery	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other
	1001	Made Ground			118		
1006	1002 1058	Made Ground Pit	12th - 14th C	(1) 13g	29 135		C.Pipe stem (1) 2g
1008	1009	Post Hole				6	S.Flint (1) 22g
1010	1011	Pit	12th - 14th C	(1) 7g			S.Flint (1) 6g
1014	1015	Post Hole	12th - 14th C	(1) 11g			Shell 26g
1018	1019	Pit	12th - 14th C	(1) 5g			Shell 36g S.Flint (1) 2g
1020	1021	Ditch				7	
1040	1041	Pit				3	
1042	1043	Pit	12th - 14th C	(4) 19g		55	
1046	1047	Post Hole	12th - 14th C	(1) 10g			
1052	1053	Pit			195		Shell 33g
1054	1055	Pit	12th - 14th C	(2) 10g		2	

BSE 365: Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds

Concordance of Samples

Sample	Size (l)	Feature	Context	Description	Spot Date	Flot (ml)	Pot (g)	A. Bone (g)
1	10	1010	1011	Pit	12th - 14th C	5		
2	10	1012	1013	Pit		3		1
3	10	1016	1017	Pit		1		2
4	20	1018	1019	Pit	12th - 14th C	15		
5	40	1020	1021	Ditch		10		
6	10	1046	1047	Post hole	12th - 14th C	5	3	
7	10	1040	1041	Pit		2		
8	20	1052	1053	Pit		10		
9	10	1034	1035	Pit		3		
10	20	1054	1055	Pit	12th - 14th C	3		

APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORTS

The Pottery

Peter Thompson

The evaluation recovered 9 moderately abraded sherds weighing 66g recovered from six features and a layer. The sherds are all medieval coarse wares, with no diagnostic profiles, and date between the 12th and 14th centuries. The sherds are described by context below and quantified in Table 1.

Made ground L1002 contained a grey quartz sand tempered sherd in a fabric that matches Grimston coarse ware (GRCW). A similar fabric however, was identified at Cedar's Park, Stowmarket in a 13th/14th century Suffolk form suggesting that it could be from a local source (Anderson 2006). Pit F1018 (L1019) also contained a sandy grey ware GRCW type sherd.

Pit F1010 (L1011) contained a body sherd from a cooking pot, with pale brown inner surface and a grey outer surface with slight sooting. The fabric includes occasional clay lenses and ferrous fragments, and is consistent with Hollesely2-type fabrics dated to the 13th-14th centuries.

Post-hole F1014 (L1015) contained a dark grey, thin walled, wheel-made body sherd with scoring on the outside surface, and a fine sandy and micaceous fabric. It has been classed as a miscellaneous medieval shelly ware (MSHW) having platy shell on the outside surface and small voids within the core, possibly deriving from dissolved shell. A 12th-13th century date is probable.

Pit F1042 (L1043) yielded four sherds. Two conjoining moderately micaceous thin walled sherds (MCW2/3), with grey surfaces and red-brown cores contained wavy line decoration on the outer surface. A small grey sherd is another in Grimston-type (GRCW) fabric, while the fourth sherd (MSHW), is a fine sandy fabric containing shell on the outer surfaces. A mid-12th to 13th centuries date is suggested for this group.

A single medieval coarse gritty ware (MCWG) sherd came from post-hole F1046 (L1047). The sherd is a body/base angle leading to a sagging base. It contains coarse sub-angular to rounded grey and milky quartz with sparse small rounded orange clay pellets or grog. The core is red-brown and the surfaces pale grey to buff with a pimply texture similar to Essex wares, but the sherd may be a local product from around Bury St Edmunds. A 12th-13th centuries date is suggested.

Pit F1054 (L1055) contained a cooking pot body/base angle leading to a sagging base. The internal surface is oxidised pale orange brown, and the core and external surface is grey with sooting. The fabric comprises poorly sorted quartz sand with sparse white calcareous inclusions and rare very

coarse flint and has been classed as an Early Medieval sparse shelly ware (EMWSS) datable to the 12th-13th centuries.

References

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Web Site

www.spoilheap.co.uk

Key:

- GRCW: Grimston type coarse ware. The fabric is similar to Grimston-Thetford ware but the forms are more developed. As described by Little 1994 12th-13th
- EMWSS: Early medieval coarse shelly ware (as described by Anderson 2006) 12th-13th century
- MCW2/3: medieval coarseware (as described in Anderson 2006) 13th-14th centuries
- MSHW: wheel-made medieval shelly ware. Sparse medium, sub-rounded to rounded grey and clear quartz, and common very fine quartz and mica. Small elongated voids possibly from dissolved shell. External surface contains platy shell. 12th-13th century
- HOLL2: Hollesley (medium) coarseware (as described by Anderson 2006) (13th-14th century)
- MCWG: medieval gritty coarseware (as described by Anderson 2006) 12th-13th

Feature	Context	Desc.	Quantity	Date	Comment
1002		Made Ground	1x13g GRCW	12 th -13 th	
1010	1011	Pit	1x6g HOLL2	13 th -14 th	Wheel-made
1014	1015	Post-hole	1x11g MSHW	12 th -13 th	Wheel-made
1018	1019	Pit	1x5g GRCW	12 th -13 th	
1042	1043	Pit	1x1g GRCW 1x4g EMWSS 1x8g MCW2/3	Mid 12 th -13/14 th	F3: conjoining sherds with wavy line decoration
1046	1047	Post-hole	1x9g MCWG	12 th -13 th	Base angle
1054	1055	Pit	1x9g EMWSS	12 th -14 th	<1x daub

Table 1: Quantification of sherds by context

The Ceramic Building Materials and Fired Clay

Andrew Peachey

The trial trench excavation recovered a total of nine fragments (477g) of CBM, of which five fragments (224g) were comprised of medieval peg tile, while the remainder was comprised of post-medieval brick and tile. The CBM was recovered in a fragmentary and moderately abraded condition.

Methodology

The CBM was quantified by fragment count and weight with fabrics examined at x20 magnification and all data entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that will be deposited as part of the archive

The Medieval CBM

Sparse fragments of medieval peg tile (12mm thick flat tile) were contained in Pit F1052 (L1053) (3 fragment 195g) and Made Ground L1002. The fabric of the medieval peg tile has red-brown surfaces that fade to a mid to dark grey core with inclusions comprising a poorly sorted mix of quartz (0.1-0.5mm), chalk and red/black iron ore and iron rich grains (both generally 0.1-1mm, occasionally to 5mm). The fabric is hard with a hackly fracture and abrasive feel. The peg tile, while flat, generally has irregular, uneven upper and lower surfaces, and does not exhibit a sandy base that would indicate the use of a mould during manufacture. Peg tile of this type began to be produced in eastern England by the mid-13th century (Drury 1981, 131), and was probably produced locally for the demand of the abbey and associated religious buildings.

The Post-Medieval CBM

A single fragment (135g) of post-medieval peg tile, probably produced in the 18th to early 20th centuries was contained in Pit F1006 (L1058), while a further three fragments (118g) of unidentifiable post-medieval brick were contained in Made Ground L1001.

References

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The Struck Flint

Andrew Peachey

The trial trench evaluation recovered a total of three flakes (30g) of struck flint, entirely comprised of debitage waste flakes. The flint occurs in an un-patinated, fresh condition, suggesting that although it is residual it has not been re-deposited a significant distance from its primary context.

A tertiary flake (22g) contained in Posthole F1008 (L1009) was struck from a discoidal or keeled core and is characteristic of the flint reduction technology utilised in the later Neolithic/early Bronze Age. The remaining flakes contained in Pits F1010 (L1011) and F1018 (L1019) comprise small primary flakes that may represent core trimming, but equally may have been accidentally struck from flint nodules during ground disturbance and may not represent human action.

The Shell

Dr Julia Cussans

A total of 12 pieces of marine shell were recovered from three contexts, L1015 (Posthole F1014), L1019 (Pit F1018) and L1053 (Posthole F1052). The shells were quite flaky and preservation was rated as ok¹. All of the shells were identified as native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) and consisted of seven valves (4 upper and 3 lower) with the remainder being just fragments. The oysters varied in size with those from L1053 being noted as quite small, those from the other contexts were of a good edible size. One upper valve from L1019 had a possible notch in its ventral edge that may have resulted from shucking (opening).

The Environmental Samples

Dr John Summers

Introduction

During trial excavations at Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds, a total of ten bulk soil samples for environmental archaeological assessment were taken. The samples ranged from 10 to 40 litres and were taken from a representative sample of pit, posthole and ditch features. All of the sampled deposits are thought to be medieval in date (c. 12th-14th century). This report presents the results from the assessment of the bulk sample light fractions and discusses the potential of the material recovered.

Methods

The bulk samples were processed by water flotation using a Siraf-type flotation tank at the Archaeological Solutions Ltd facilities in Bury St. Edmunds. The light fractions were captured on a 250µm mesh, while the heavy fractions were retained in a 500µm mesh. Once dry, the light fractions were scanned under a low power stereomicroscope and any carbonised plant macrofossils, charcoal and mollusca were recorded. No plant remains preserved by other means (e.g. waterlogging or mineralisation) were present in the samples. Where necessary, reference literature (Cappers *et al.* 2006;

¹ Shell preservation is rated on the following scale: very poor, poor, ok, good, excellent, variable, depending on fragmentation, abrasion and flakiness

Jacomet 2006; Kerney and Cameron 1979) and a reference collection of modern plant tissues were consulted to refine identifications. Modern contaminants, such as rootlets, seeds and invertebrate fauna were recorded using a semi-quantitative scale in order to assess the potential biological disturbance of the deposits.

Results

The data from the assessment of the bulk sample light fractions are presented in Table 1.

Charred plant macrofossils

The bulk of the material recovered was in the form of carbonised cereal grains. These were present in seven of the ten samples, although in generally low concentrations. In most instances the grains appeared abraded, being identifiable only by their gross morphology. Three main cereal taxa were recognised in the deposits: free-threshing-type wheat (*Triticum aestivum/compactum* type), hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) and oat (*Avena* sp.). Wheat and barley grains were slightly more common than oat grains, although the assemblage is too small to consider this trend in more detail. Carbonised cereal assemblages from medieval sites are frequently dominated by wheat and barley (e.g. Ballantyne 2005; Fryer and Summers forthcoming; Straker *et al.* 2007), although this may be a reflection of differential use (i.e. use of oats as fodder) rather than levels of production (cf. Carruthers 2008, 34.10).

Non-cereal taxa were present in sample 10 of Pit Fill L1055 (F1054). These were goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.) and a large wild grass (Poaceae indet.). It is most likely that these were present as weeds associated with the cereals in the sample. However, the number of specimens is too low for any detailed interpretations to be drawn.

Charcoal

A small number of charcoal fragments were present in the samples. These included oak (*Quercus* sp.) in L1019 and L1053 and a diffuse-porous type in L1047. Most of these are likely to represent fuel debris. The oak in posthole F1052 (L1053) could be the remains of an oak post if the end had been scorched to aid preservation. The assemblage of charcoal is too small to merit further identification.

Terrestrial molluscs

A few snail shells were present. The only identified taxon was *Helicella itala*, which is common to dry, open habitats.

Small mammal bone

Bones from a small mammal species, most likely mouse (*Mus* sp.), were present in L1019 and L1055. Such animals could have been pests within buildings and in stored grain. Both features containing the bones were pits and there is no clear association with any of the proposed structural remains on the site.

Contaminants

Biological disturbance of the deposits appears to have been very limited. Modern rootlets and burrowing molluscs (*Cecilioides acicula*) were recognised but only in very small numbers.

Discussion

The low density of remains means that it is only possible to state that free-threshing-type wheat, hulled barley and oats are likely to have been in use within the vicinity of the sampled features during the medieval period. These are common components of cereal assemblages from other medieval settlements in the region (e.g. Ballantyne 2005; Fryer and Summers forthcoming). It is not possible to determine whether such crops were cultivated and processed by those using the site or represent an imported grain product. Based on the archaeobotanical assemblage, it appears unlikely that intensive cereal processing was being undertaken on this part of the site during the 12th-14th centuries, with the carbonised remains probably representing a background signature of scattered debris from daily processing and use.

Statement of potential

The presence of carbonised cereal grain in over half of the sampled features indicates that there was some use of cereals in the vicinity of the site. However, there were no instances of discrete deposition within the features in the evaluation trench, suggesting that intensive use and processing of cereals was not a function of this particular location. Although it is possible that more concentrated dumps of carbonised remains are present within the un-excavated areas, the probability of this would appear relatively low and must remain speculative. The abraded nature of many of the cereal grains, along with the low density of material is suggestive of a background signature of carbonised plant remains across the site, which were incorporated into the features by incidental means, such as wind-blown debris. This area may have been peripheral to the main areas of cereal processing and use during the medieval period and does not appear to have been a major location for refuse disposal.

The low density of carbonised plant remains means that the samples from the evaluation trench have no further value for environmental archaeological analysis.

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The Animal Bone

Julie Curl

Method

The animal bone assessment was carried out following a modified version of guidelines by English Heritage (Davis, 1992). All of the bone was scanned to determine range of species and elements present. A note was also made of butchering and any indications of skinning, horn working and other modifications. When possible a record was made of ages and any other relevant information, such as pathologies. Counts and weights were noted for each context with additional counts for each species identified, counts were also taken of bone classed as 'countable' (Davis, 1992) and measureable bone. All information was recorded directly into Excel for quantification and assessment. A basic catalogue is included in the written report and the full assessment database is available in the digital archive.

The faunal assemblage

Quantification, provenance and preservation

A total of 73g of faunal remains, consisting of seventeen pieces, was recovered from five features. The remains were produced from three medieval pit fills (with ceramics of a 12th to 14th century date), small quantities were yielded from a ditch fill and a post hole of uncertain date. Quantification of the faunal assemblage by feature number and date is presented in Table 1.

Feature	Date		Feature Total
	12th - 14th	Undated	
1008		6	6
1020		7	7
1040		3	3
1042	55		55
1054	2		2
Grand Total	57	16	73

Table 1. Quantification (weight) of the faunal assemblage by feature number and date.

The bone is generally in good sound condition, although highly fragmented as a result of butchering, with only one bone suitable for measurement (following Von Den Driesch, 1976). No gnawing or weathering was seen, which would suggest the remains were buried quickly.

Species range and modifications and other observations

Only one species could be positively identified due to the high level of fragmentation and loss of diagnostic zones, with over half of the fragments only being identified as 'mammal'. Sheep/goat remains were seen in two features. F1020 L1021 produced a single butchered sheep/goat radius and several butchered elements (including pelvis, humeri and scapula) were seen in Pit F1042 L1043. Quantification of the species by feature number can be seen in Table 2.

Species	Feature					Species Total
	1008	1020	1040	1042	1054	
Mammal	1		1	6	1	9
Sheep/goat		1		7		8
Feature Total	1	1	1	13	1	17

Table 2. Quantification (NISP) of species by feature number.

Conclusions

This is a small assemblage, with the remains in this assemblage are derived from butchering and food waste. Although this assemblage is highly fragmented, the bone is in sound condition and demonstrates good preservation of faunal remains at this site.

References

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Animal Bone Data

Catalogue of the faunal remains recovered from BSE365, The Shirehall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.
Listed in context order.
A full catalogue (with additional counts) is available as an Excel file.

Key:

NISP = Number of Identified Specimens

Age – a = adult, j = juvenile (older than 1 month)

Element range – ul = upper limb, pel = pelvis, scap = scapula, sac = sacrum, r = rib

Butchering = c = cut, ch = chopped

Context	Feature	Type	Date	Context Quantity	Weight (g)	Species	NISP	Age	Element range	Butchery
1009	1008	Post hole	Undated	1	6	Mammal	1			
1021	1020	Ditch	Undated	1	7	Sheep/goat	1		ul	ch
1041	1040	Pit	Undated	1	3	Mammal	1			
1043	1042	Pit	12th - 14th	13	55	Sheep/goat	7	a	pel, ul, scap, sac	c, ch
1043	1042	Pit	12th - 14th			Mammal	6			
1055	1054	Pit	12th - 14th	1	2	Mammal	1		r	ch



1
Ditch F1020, Pits F1042 & F1018 and Postholes F1014 & F1016. Looking west.



2
Postholes F1010, F1012, F1044 & F1046 and Pit F1008. Looking south.



3
Pit Cluster at southern end. Looking south.



4
Sample Section 1. N End, W facing. Trench 1. Looking east.



5
Pits F1006 & F1052. Sample Section 1. Looking east.

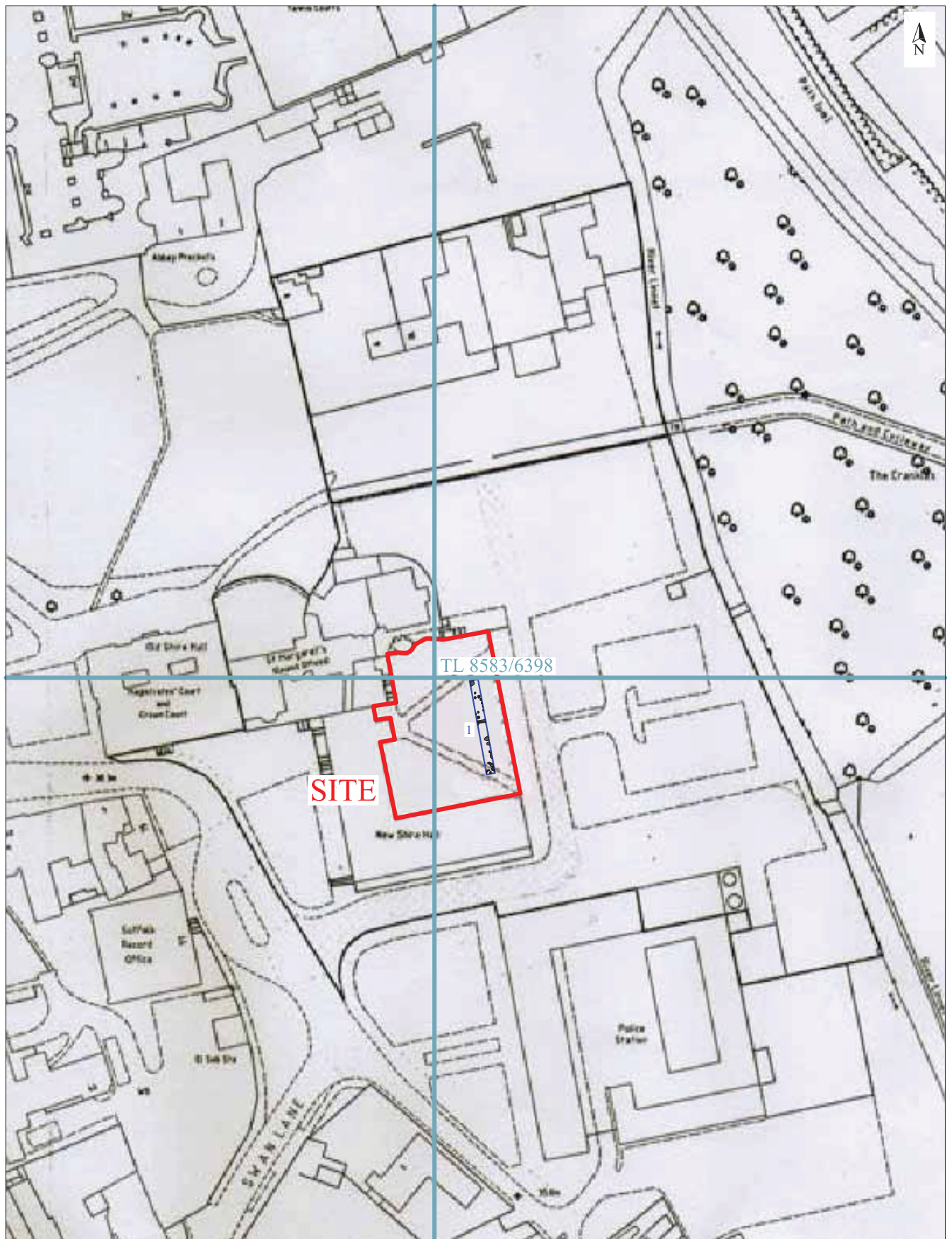


6
Trench 1. Post excavation. Looking south.



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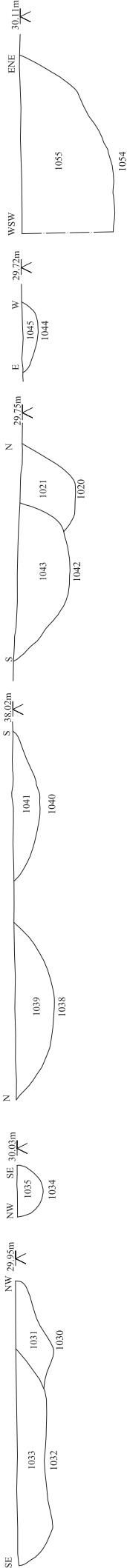
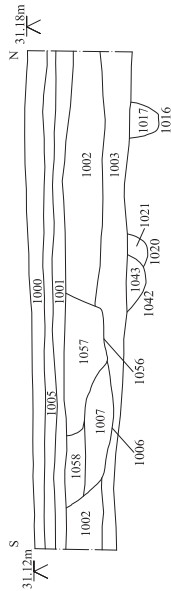
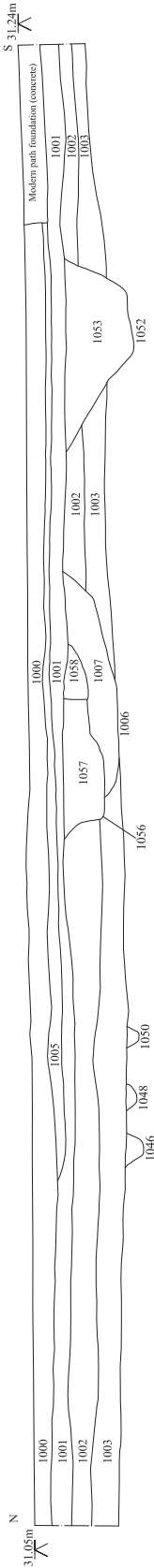
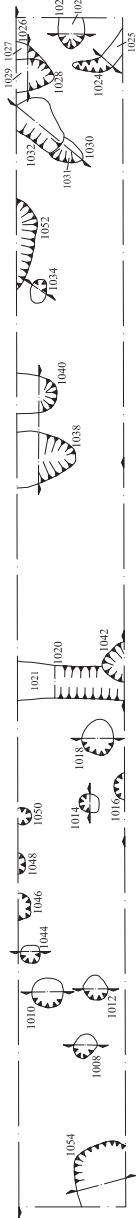
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



0 100m

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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale 1:1250 at A4

Trench 1



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Fig. 3 Trench plans and sections
Scale - plans 1:100 at A3; sections 1:75 and 1:20 at A3