

**Aldridges Farm, Fressingfield Road,
Laxfield, Suffolk**

Planning application: DC/23/01114

HER Ref: LXD 126

Archaeological Monitoring Report

(Continuous observation of ground works)

(© John Newman BA MCIFA, 10 Fitzgerald Road, Bramford, Ipswich, IP8 4AA)

(January 2024)

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Site details for HER

Name: Aldridges Farm, Fressingfield Road, Laxfield, IP13 8EN

Client: Ms L Dawson

Local planning authority: Mid Suffolk DC

Planning application ref: DC/23/01114

Development: Erection of rear extension and internal renovations

Date of fieldwork: 5 December, 2023

HER Ref: LXD 126 (also LXD 004- moat))

LBS: 1180914 (Grade II*)

Grid ref: TM 2737 7346

OASIS ref: johnnewm1-516390

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Summary: Laxfield, Aldridges Farm, Fressingfield Road (LXD 126, TM 2737 7346) monitoring of groundworks for a rear extension at a listed building set within a moat of medieval date did not reveal any archaeological features or finds and ground lowering in the internal areas was too shallow to reveal anything of interest (John Newman Archaeological Services for Ms L Dawson).

1. Introduction & background

1.1 Ms L Dawson commissioned John Newman Archaeological Services (JNAS) to undertake the archaeological monitoring of ground works required under a condition for a programme of archaeological works of the planning decision notice for application DC/23/01114. The monitoring requirements were set out following planning advice in a Brief issued by Ms L Cunningham of the Suffolk CC Archaeological Service (SCCAS) to satisfy this condition and JNAS produced the relevant written scheme (Appendix II) to gain the conditional discharge allowing works to start on site. This development concerns the erection of a rear extension and internal renovations at Aldridges Farm, Fressingfield Road, Laxfield.

1.2 Laxfield is a large village some 7 miles north of Framlingham and 8 miles south-west of Halesworth in central Suffolk in a landscape historically characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern partly focused within parishes on the respective churches and main village street but also scattered round the numerous greens and along roads and lanes. Historically Laxfield was a local centre of some importance with a market from at least 1226. Aldridges Farm is c2,200m west of the historic village core in an isolated location on the parish boundary, therefore a historic farm site, and is a historic structure listed grade II* with origins in the 14th century and set within a triangular moat (LXD 004) with a grade II listed 16th century barn immediately to the north (LBS 1352231). Proposed works entailed the removal of a modern extension and open bay lean-to and the planned rear extension area is in part already disturbed by an old swimming pool plus some shallow internal floor lowering.

1.3 The British Geological Survey describes the site as being on the margin between Lowestoft Formation diamicton so chalky till with outwash sands, gravels and clays at c60m OD.

1.4 The relevant SCCAS brief notes the potential for the site to contain archaeological deposits in particular of medieval to earlier Post medieval date. Therefore any ground works might reveal evidence for activity from these periods within the moated enclosure though a programme of archaeological monitoring, recording and reporting was seen as a way to mitigate these works which were on a small scale and might be in part on previously disturbed ground.

2. Monitoring methodology

2.1 Initial works at the site entailed the excavation of foundation trenches for the new extension. These groundworks were closely monitored and the upcast spoil was examined visually, and the overall project was photographed (see Appendix I). Shallow ground lowering works within the building were also recorded with a number of photographs being taken.

3.1 In total 800mm wide and 1800mm deep foundation trenches were mechanically excavated for the planned extension (see Appendix I). These trenches revealed 350mm of top soil above 250mm of mid brown clay subsoil with the underlying natural glaciofluvial deposit being light grey/brown chalky clay. No archaeological features were revealed and the few stray finds in the upcast spoil comprised only small fragments of brick and peg tile of Post medieval date.

3.2 The internal lowering of floor levels was superficial at 200-250mm and this did not reveal any evidence for earlier floor levels or any archaeological features.

4. Conclusion

4.1 While this site is a recorded moat of medieval date containing a house of late medieval date the monitored extension works did not reveal any features or finds, save a few brick/tile fragments of more recent date, so it can be confirmed that the relevant building works have not disturbed anything of archaeological interest. In addition the shallow internal floor lowering did not reveal anything of interest.

(Acknowledgements: JNAS is grateful to Lucy Dawson and everyone on site for their close cooperation with regard to this site monitoring).

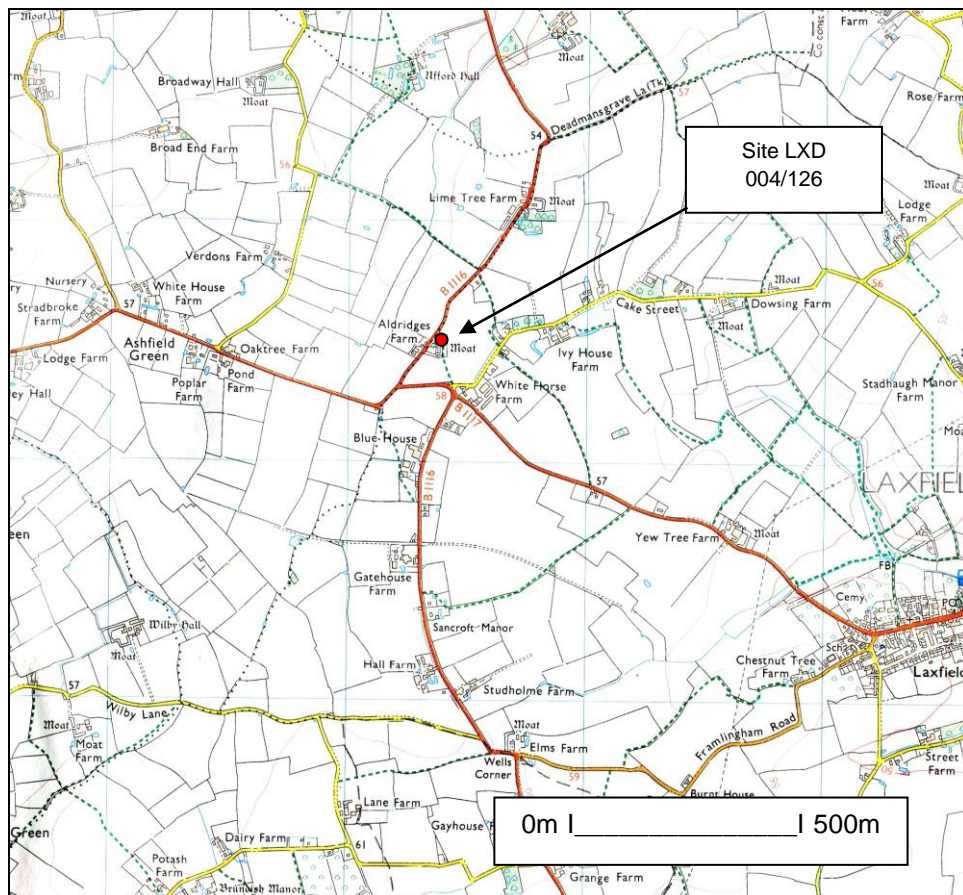
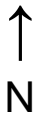


Fig. 1: Site location (Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2006
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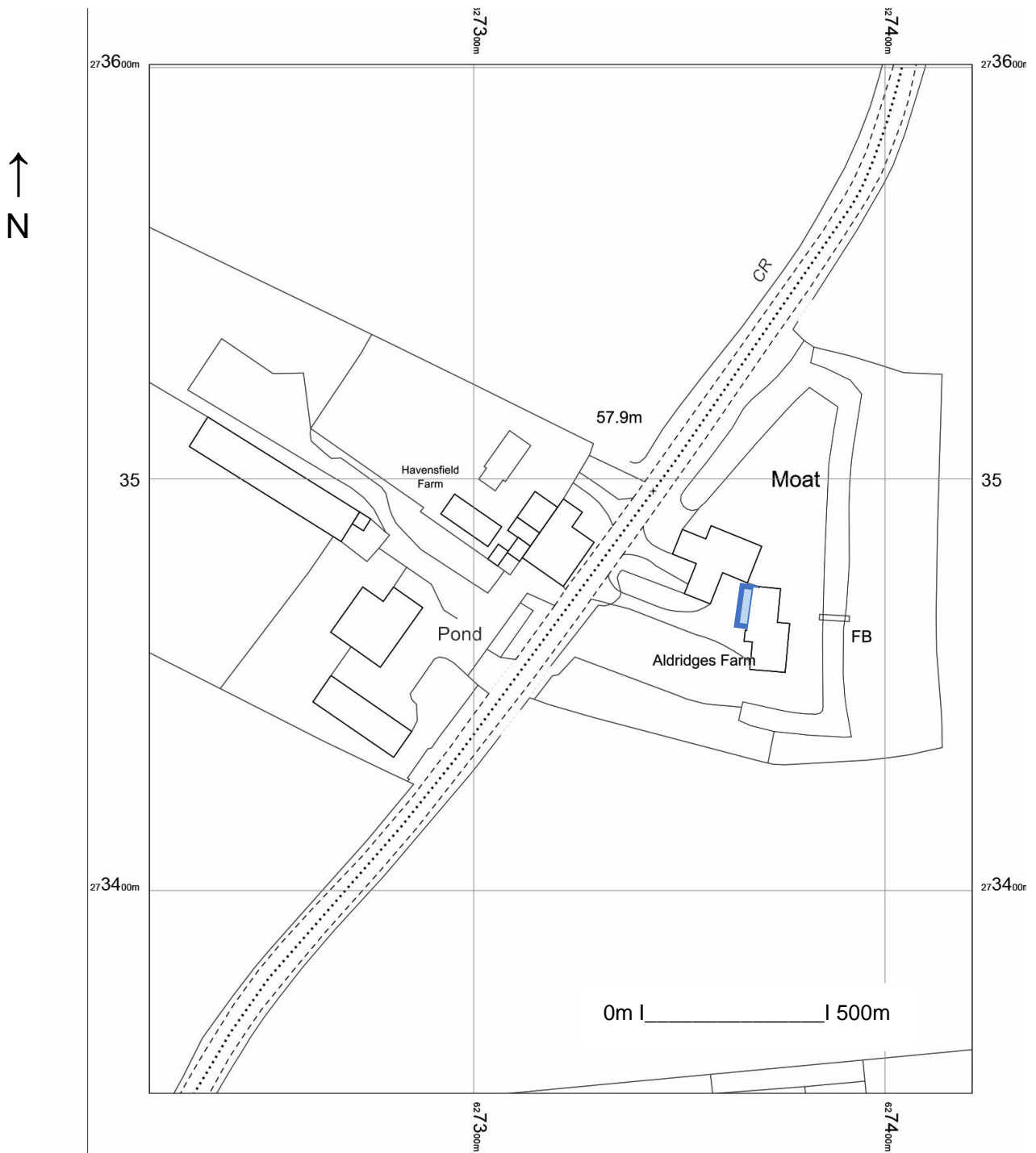


Fig. 2: Location of monitored area

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Appendix I- Images



General view of site



Trench at west end



Excavation of foundation trench



Foundation trench at eastern end



Internal shallow floor lowering



Internal floor lowering

**Aldridges Farm, Fressingfield Road,
Laxfield, Suffolk**

Planning application: DC/23/01114

**Written Scheme of Investigation for
Continuous Archaeological Monitoring and Recording**

Site details

Name: Aldridges Farm, Fressingfield Road, Laxfield, Suffolk, IP13 8EN

Client: Ms L Dawson

Local planning authority: Mid Suffolk DC

Planning application ref: DC/23/01114

Proposed development: Erection of rear extension and internal renovations

Brief ref: SCCAS_2023_01114_Brief for archaeological monitoring and recording at Aldridges Farm Fressingfield Road Laxfield

Proposed date for ground works: tbc

HER ref: LXD 004

LBS: 1180914 (Grade II*)

OASIS ref: johnnewm1-2737 7346

Grid ref: TM 2737 7346

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2. Location, Topography & Geology
3. Archaeological & Historical Background
4. Aims of the Site Monitoring
5. Methodology
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1. Introduction

1.1 Ms L Dawson has commissioned John Newman Archaeological Services (JNAS) to undertake the archaeological monitoring of ground works that are required under a condition for a programme of archaeological works for the planning decision notice for application DC/23/01114. This written scheme of investigation (WSI) details the background to the archaeological condition and how JNAS will implement the requirements set in a Brief from Ms L Cunningham of the Suffolk CC Archaeological Service (SCCAS) under SCCAS excavation requirements satisfy the condition. The WSI will also set out how potential risks will be mitigated. This proposed development concerns renovations including floor lowering and the erection of a rear extension at Aldridges Farm, Fressingfield Road, Laxfield.

1.2 The monitoring will be carried out to the standards set regionally in the *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (EAA Occ. Papers 14, 2003)* and nationally in *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 1994, revised 2001 & reissued 2014)* and SCCAS excavation requirements from 2023.

2. Location, Topography & Geology

2.1 Laxfield is a large village some 7 miles north of Framlingham and 8 miles south-west of Halesworth in central Suffolk in a landscape historically characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern partly focused within parishes on the respective churches and main village street but also scattered round the numerous greens and along roads and lanes. Historically Laxfield was a local centre of some importance with a market from at least 1226. Aldridges Farm is c2,200m west of the historic village core in an isolated location on the parish boundary and is a historic structure listed grade II* with origins in the 14th century and set within a triangular moat with a grade II listed 16th century barn immediately to the north (LBS 1352231). Proposed works will entail the removal of a modern extension and open bay lean-to and the planned rear extension area is in part already disturbed by an old swimming pool.

2.2 The British Geological Survey describes the site as being on the margin between Lowestoft Formation diamicton so chalky till with outwash sands, gravels and clays at c60m OD.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 The relevant SCCAS brief notes the potential for the site to contain archaeological deposits of medieval and earlier Post medieval date. Therefore any ground works may reveal evidence for activity from these periods within the moated enclosure though a programme of archaeological monitoring, recording and reporting can mitigate these works which are on a small scale.

3.2 The archaeological advice then confirms that while this development may reveal deposits of archaeological significance this potential disturbance to local heritage assets can be mitigated by their investigation and recording as the ground works progress through a programme of continuous monitoring by an archaeologist.

4. Aims of the Site Monitoring

4.1 As outlined above the planned renovation and extension works may reveal deposits of archaeological importance with regard to the site. This monitoring will aim to record all possible details relating to the depth of overburden and evidence, character and date of any past activity that is revealed with the primary aim of gaining more information relating to any past activity.

5. Methodology

5.1 The erection of the planned extension and renovation works will be closely monitored as soon as site works commence with trench fill foundations being anticipated for the extension though existing above ground structures can be removed beforehand. Notice of ground works starting, with a ten day notice period, and then any unexpected findings will be reported back to the relevant Suffolk CC Archaeological Office. Time will be available to investigate any possible archaeological deposits and scan the upcast spoil with a metal detector. Care will also be taken to avoid machine activity during inclement weather conditions as this might cause excessive disturbance. To inform the reporting on any positive archaeological results from the monitoring a search will be commissioned from the County HER for the area within 500m of this site.

5.2 Site records will be made under a continuous and unique numbering system of archaeological contexts under a HER numbers supplied by Suffolk CC beforehand. All contexts will be numbered and finds recorded by context. Conventions compatible with the county HER will be used throughout the monitoring. Site plans will be drawn at 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate and sections at 1:10 or 1:20 (all on plastic drawing film) and related to OS map cover with the monitored areas shown. Sections will be levelled to a datum OD. A photographic record of high resolution digital images will be made of the site and exposed features (using a Lumix DMC-FZ5 camera).

5.3 As necessary and to define archaeological deposits exposed surfaces will be trowelled clean before recording. Archaeological deposits will be fully hand investigated and recorded within the constraints of the relevant trenched ground works and associated works that may include narrower service trenches and any soakaway or sewage treatment plants with any features hand excavated. Even if no archaeological deposits are revealed every effort will be made to gain a record of the natural occurring deposits and overburden that could help in the understanding of the general history of land use and topography in the area. Where appropriate palaeoenvironmental samples (40 litres if possible) will be taken for processing and assessment by a specialist conversant with regional archaeological standards and

John Newman Archaeological Services

research agendas if relevant archaeological deposits are revealed. If human burial evidence is revealed the SCC Archaeological Officer will be informed and a Ministry of Justice licence obtained before excavation, recording and removal of the remains. The possibility of modifying the ground work design to leave any such remains in situ will also be examined (the potential of this site to contain burials is assessed as being low).

5.4 All finds will be collected and processed unless any variation is agreed with the relevant SCC Archaeological Officer. Finds will be assessed by recognised period specialists and their interpretation will form an integral part of the overall report. Finds will be stored according to ICON guidelines with specialist advice/treatment sought for fragile ones. Every effort will be made to gain the deposit of the site finds to the SCC Archaeological Store under their relevant HER code and site numbering for future reference. If this is not possible then the SCC Archaeological Officer will be consulted over any requirements for additional recording. Any discard policy will be discussed and agreed with the relevant Archaeological Officer at Suffolk CC.

5.6 An archive of all records and finds will be prepared consistent with the principles in *MoRPHE* and this will be deposited with the Suffolk CC HER within 4 months of working finishing on site under the relevant HER number. As necessary the site digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) within the agreed allowance for the monitoring and reporting works in accordance with SCCAS guidelines for archive deposition from 2022.

5.7 The monitoring report will be consistent with the principles of *MoRPHE* and this report will summarise the methodology employed and relate the archaeological record directly to the level of visibility allowed by the operation of plant given the nature of the underlying natural deposits. The report will also give an objective account of the deposits and stratigraphy recorded and finds recovered with an inventory of the latter and will include the results of monitored test pits in work carried out in 2019. Any interpretation of the monitoring results will be clearly separated from the objective account of the monitoring and its results and will be related to the HBR record. The report will give a clear statement regarding the results of the site monitoring in relation to both the more detailed aims in section 4 above and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (EAA Occ. Papers 3, 8 & 24 1997, 2000 & 2011). A pdf version draft copy of the report will be presented to the Archaeological Service at Suffolk CC within 3 months of the completion of the site works. Once accepted a bound hard copy will be provided for the County HER, a pdf copy will also be sent to the client so they can gain discharge of the relevant condition. The project will be registered on the OASIS online archaeological record before site works start followed by submission of the final draft in .pdf format. A summary prepared of any positive results will be sent for the annual PSIAH round-up.

6. Risk Assessment

6.1 Protective clothing will be worn on site (hard hat, high visibility vest/coat, steel-toe cap boots & ear muffs if required). A safe working method will be agreed with the contractors on site in order to maximise access to disturbed ground and up cast spoil while at the same time allowing efficient use of plant; foundation trenches will be entered for a close examination where depths are under 1.30m. Suitable clothing will be available to mitigate against extremes of weather.

6.2 Vehicles will be safely parked away from work areas and lines of access.

6.3 Before work on site starts any special requirements regarding potential site contamination will be discussed with the client and any ground test reports examined. Gloves and hand wash/wipes be available and any information on possible ground contamination will be passed to finds and environmental specialists. The potential for services in the area will be discussed with the client and their contractor.

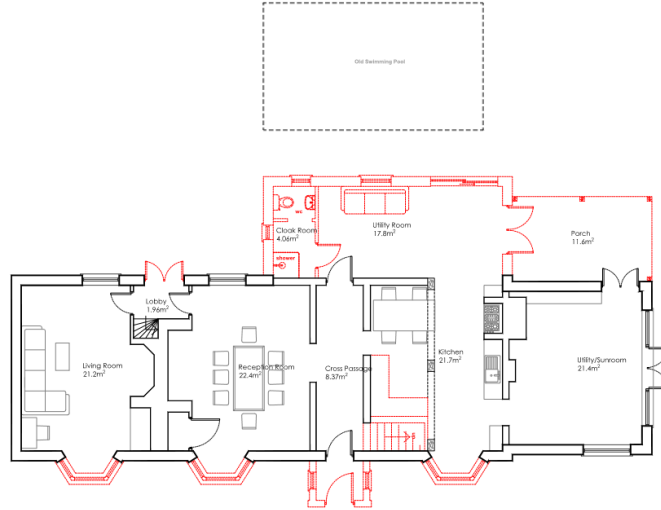
6.4 A fully charged mobile phone will be carried and a first aid kit will be taken to site.

6.5 Deep holes/trenches will only be entered if assessed to be safe and after consultation with the contractor on site, they will not be entered if no-one else is in the vicinity.

6.6 JNAS holds full insurance cover for archaeological site works from the specialist provider Towergate Risk Solutions covering Public & Products Liability, details can be supplied on request.

7. Specialists

Conservation:	Conservation Services
Faunal remains:	J Curl (Sylvanus Archaeology)
Human remains:	S Anderson (Freelance)
Metal detector search	James Armes
Palaeoenvironmental samples:	V Fryer (Freelance)
Pre-historic flint:	S Bates (Freelance)
Pre-historic pottery:	S Percival (Freelance)
Post Roman ceramics & CBM:	S Anderson (Freelance)
Roman period ceramics	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Roman period small finds	N Crummy
Post Roman small finds:	JNAS



Ground Floor Demolition Plan
1:100

0 1 2 3 4 5
Metres

Proposed extension



Aldridges Farm
Plot 10, Church Street, Church St, Church St, Church St
Church St, Church St, Church St

Project No. 1884

19/10/22

Revisions	
A	Preliminary Issue
B	Extension Revised

Notes
This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all other relevant drawings, specifications and calculations etc.
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Checked By: TMK
Scale: 1:100

Ground Floor
Demolition Plan

A1.301
Sheet No. 6/2022

OASIS Summary for johnnewm1-516390

OASIS ID (UID)	johnnewm1-516390
Project Name	Field Observation (Monitoring) at Aldridges Farm Fressingfield Road Laxfield
Sitename	Aldridges Farm Fressingfield Road Laxfield
Sitecode	
Project Identifier(s)	
Activity type	Field Observation (Monitoring)
Planning Id	DC/23/01114, DC/23/01114
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	John Newman Archaeological Services
Project Dates	05-Dec-2023 - 05-Dec-2023
Location	Aldridges Farm Fressingfield Road Laxfield NGR : TM 27370 73460 LL : 52.312137161515395, 1.334191676363471 12 Fig : 627370,273460
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Suffolk Local Authority District : Mid Suffolk Parish : Laxfield
Project Methodology	Watching brief
Project Results	Laxfield, Aldridges Farm, Fressingfield Road (LXD 126, TM 2737 7346) monitoring of groundworks for a rear extension at a listed building set within a moat of medieval date did not reveal any archaeological features or finds and ground lowering in the internal areas was too shallow to reveal anything of interest.
Keywords	
Funder	Private individual
HER	Suffolk HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	John Newman
HER Identifiers	HER Monument No - LXD 126
Archives	