

Irrigation Reservoirs at Old Hall Farm, South Elmham St Nicholas, Suffolk

Planning application: DC/11/1389/AGO

HER Ref: SEN 064

Archaeological Evaluation Report

(© John Newman BA MIFA, 2 Pearsons Place, Henley, Ipswich, IP6 0RA)

(January 2012)

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Site details for HER

Name: Land to the north of Old Hall Farm, South Elmham St Nicholas, Suffolk IP20 0PS

Client: Mr J Walpole

Local planning authority: Waveney DC

Planning application ref: DC/11/1389/AGO

Development: Construction of two irrigation reservoirs

Date of fieldwork: 11 January 2012

HER Ref: SEN 064

OASIS ref: johnnewm1-117395

Grid ref: TM 3171 8325

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Summary: All Saints & St Nicholas South Elmham, land north of Old Hall Farm (SEN 064, TM3171 8325) evaluation trenching of a low lying, formerly seasonally waterlogged, area for a proposed agricultural reservoir development revealed one field ditch containing a fill with Post medieval material and evidence for a stream course known to have been in filled and diverted in the 1960s (John Newman Archaeological Services for Mr J Walpole).

1. Introduction & background

1.1 Mr J Walpole commissioned John Newman Archaeological Services (JNAS) to undertake the archaeological evaluation works on an area of land to the north of Old Hall Farm, South Elmham St Nicholas (see Fig. 1) where an agricultural notification, DC/11/1389/AGO, has been submitted to create two irrigation reservoirs. The evaluation requirements were set out in a Brief (see Appendix II) set by Dr J Tipper of the Suffolk CC Archaeological Service with the aim of gaining a representative sample by trial trenching of the 1.3ha area concerned before the notification is considered by the local planning authority.

1.2 All Saints and St Nicholas South Elmham forms part of the group of parishes in north-east Suffolk collectively known as the Elmhams and which are considered to have formed a large estate under probable ecclesiastical control in the mid-late Saxon period. The settlement pattern in the area is characterised by dispersed farms and cottages along the numerous small roads and lanes and around the various former greens with isolated churches being characteristic of the area and the local drift geology being dominated by boulder clay Till deposits giving rise to generally heavy soils. The area for the proposed reservoirs is adjacent to a small watercourse which was re-aligned in the 1960s (pers. comm. landowner) at c35m OD with the land rising gently to the south to Old Hall Farm, a listed structure of 15th century and later date, some 250m away (see Fig. 2) and gently to the north towards Greenside Farm. The farm has been with the same family for some four generations so recent land use is well known with the area for the proposed reservoirs recalled as seasonally wet meadow pasture until the diversion of the adjacent stream some 50 years ago (see Fig. 5) when it was taken into a large arable field following the removal of various field boundaries. More recently the reservoir area has been left to set aside type grass cover on the northern edge of an arable field.

1.3 The relevant Brief gives the archaeological potential for the proposed reservoir area as follows- 'The site of the proposed reservoirs has high potential for the discovery of important hitherto unknown heritage assets of archaeological interest in view of its location to the south of a finds scatter of Roman, Middle Saxon and Medieval pottery, indicative of further occupation, recorded in the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (HER no. SEN 013). However, the site has not been the subject of previous systematic investigation.'

2. Evaluation methodology

2.1 The area of the proposed reservoirs, some 1.30ha, was trenched to a previously agreed plan (see Fig. 2) laid out on a grid basis to sample all parts of the site using a large 360 machine which was under archaeological supervision at all times. The seven trenches were all 50m long and 2.2m wide giving a sample area examined of 770m² across the site which is in excess of the 5%, or 650m², by area required.

2.2 The glaciofluvial deposits exposed in the base of the trenches, which varied mainly between a very pale brown largely stone less clay and a stiff grey/blue clay with flints and chalk fragments, was closely examined for archaeological features and any indistinct areas were hand cleaned. One shallow linear feature was half sectioned while two other areas of disturbance were only shovel tested as they lay in

the area of the stream diverted in the 1960s. The upcast spoil from the trenches was examined visually for any finds as the work progressed. Site visibility for features and finds is considered to have been good throughout the evaluation which was undertaken under dry and sunny conditions. At the end of the evaluation the location of the trenches were accurately recorded using a GPS system by kind cooperation of the drainage and ground works contractors, Collyer Drainage, and as the evaluation progressed a full photographic record in digital format (see Appendix I) was taken of the trenching works.

3. Results

3.1 In this case the results are best summarised as in the table below as the majority of the trenches were of a uniform length, width and geological background with very few features of any date being revealed in the evaluation.

Trench	Orientation	Length (m)	Topsoil depth (mm)	Subsoil depth (mm)	Drift geology	Archaeological /natural features
1	NE/SW	50	300	300/200	Very pale brown largely stone less clay	-
2	NW/SE	50	300	100	Stiff grey/blue clay with bands of large & medium flints in pale brown iron stained silt	-
3	NW/SE	50	300	250	Stiff grey/blue clay with chalk frags & iron stained silty band with large flints	Small NW/SE aligned ditch 0002/0003
4	NE/SW	50	250	50	Stiff grey/blue clay with bands of pale brown silty with small & medium flints	-
5	NW/SE	50	240	50	Very pale light grey/brown largely stone less clay	Part of in filled stream bed revealed in eastern 4m, loose silty fill with occasional small 19/20C cbm frags
6	NW/SE	50	250	50	Pale yellowish brown iron stained clay with occasional flints	-
7	NE/SW	50	300	100	Same as T6 at southern end, stiff pale grey/blue clay with small & medium flints in northern third	Part of in filled stream revealed crossing trench on a NW/SE alignment at southern end, loose silty fill with barbed wire frags

Table 1: Trench details (see also Fig. 2)

3.2 As indicated in Table 1 only one archaeological feature was revealed during the evaluation. This was a shallow ditch (0002- see Fig. 3) in Trench 3 in the south western part of the site (Fig. 2) which contained a mid brown silty fill (0003) with occasional small flints and one fragment (10g) of Post medieval peg tile. The ditch was 600mm wide and 200mm deep with a gentle, rounded profile. The only other

disturbance seen in the base of the trenches were occasional recent field drains containing shingle above pipes and there was very little evidence for any lengthy period of arable use with few plough scars supporting the information that this area has been uncultivated, seasonally waterlogged, meadow for much of the past.

3.3 Also as indicated in Table 1 the only other features revealed during the evaluation were parts of the stream that was diverted to the north in the 1960s. Parts of this in filled stream were found at the eastern end of Trench 5 and the southern part of Trench 7 (see Fig. 2). In both cases the fill was a loose mid to dark brown silt and shovel testing was employed to confirm their character and recent date. In the former case small fragments of recent brick and tile were recovered while in the latter case part of an old field fence with rotten posts and barbed wire confirmed the interpretation that had been made.

3.4 Throughout the evaluation very few stray finds were noted in the upcast spoil with the few seen being largely occasional small Post medieval brick/tile fragments plus one rim sherd of brown glazed 18th century red earthenware and an iron horseshoe of relatively recent date.

4. Conclusion

4.1 As indicated in section 3.2 above the general lack of archaeological features or finds points to the area for the proposed irrigation reservoirs having been marginal to more intense areas of past activity as evidenced by the multi-period finds scatter to the north (HER- SEN 013) and Old Hall Farm to the south. This marginal use as low lying meadow until the 1960s has clearly been influenced by the seasonally wet nature of the area concerned. However the evaluation has confirmed that waterlogged deposits of potential archaeological interest do not exist at the site with the wet character of the area being due to poor drainage on impervious clay glaciofluvial deposits.

4.2 To help illustrate the pre 1960s landscape and field pattern a brief study has been made of historic cartographic sources at the County Record Office. Extracts of two of these maps are included below as Figs. 4 & 5 and a common point, A, is shown on Figs. 2, 4 & 5 for ease of reference. The extract from the parish tithe map of 1839 (Fig. 4) and extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1957 (Fig. 5) depict similar landscapes with little loss of field boundaries between these dates. However only the later map shows watercourses and by comparing Fig. 2, the modern landscape, with Fig. 5, the pre 1960s one, it can be seen how the stream that flows in a north westerly direction has been diverted to the north at point A. In addition the ditch (0002) identified in Trench 3 is likely to be one of the field boundaries to the west of point A removed during the operations to enlarge the arable field lying between Old Hall Farm and the stream area where the reservoirs are planned.

4.3 With such a low level of evidence for past activity and lack of waterlogged deposits it is recommended that the archaeological programme of works for this proposed reservoir development stops at this point.

Archive- to be deposited with the Suffolk CC Archaeological Service under the HER ref. SEN 064.

Disclaimer- any opinions regarding the need for further archaeological work in relation to this proposed development are those of the author's alone. Formal comment regarding the need for further work must be sought from the official Archaeological Advisors to the relevant Planning Authority.

(Acknowledgements: JNAS is grateful to Jack Walpole for his close cooperation, to Andrew form Collyer Drainage for his skilful machine operation, to Colin Collyer for plotting the trenches and to Sue Holden for preparing figures 2-3)

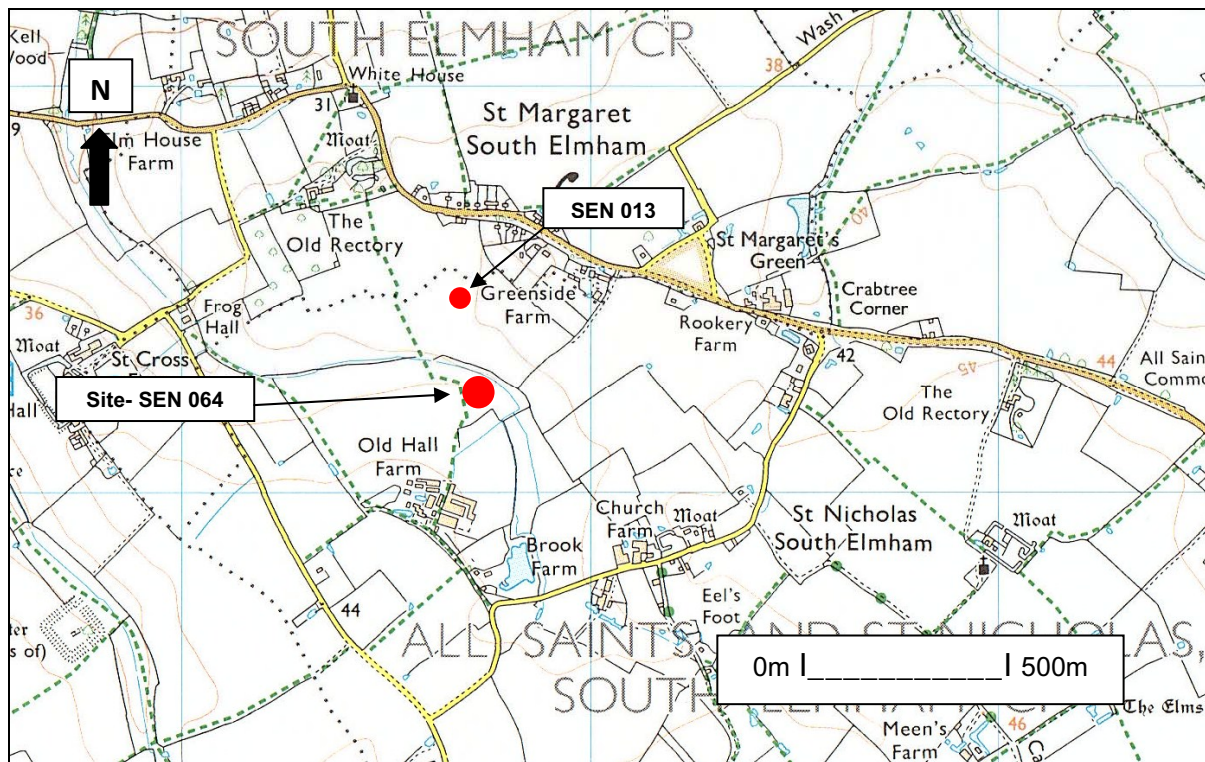


Fig. 1: Site location (Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2008
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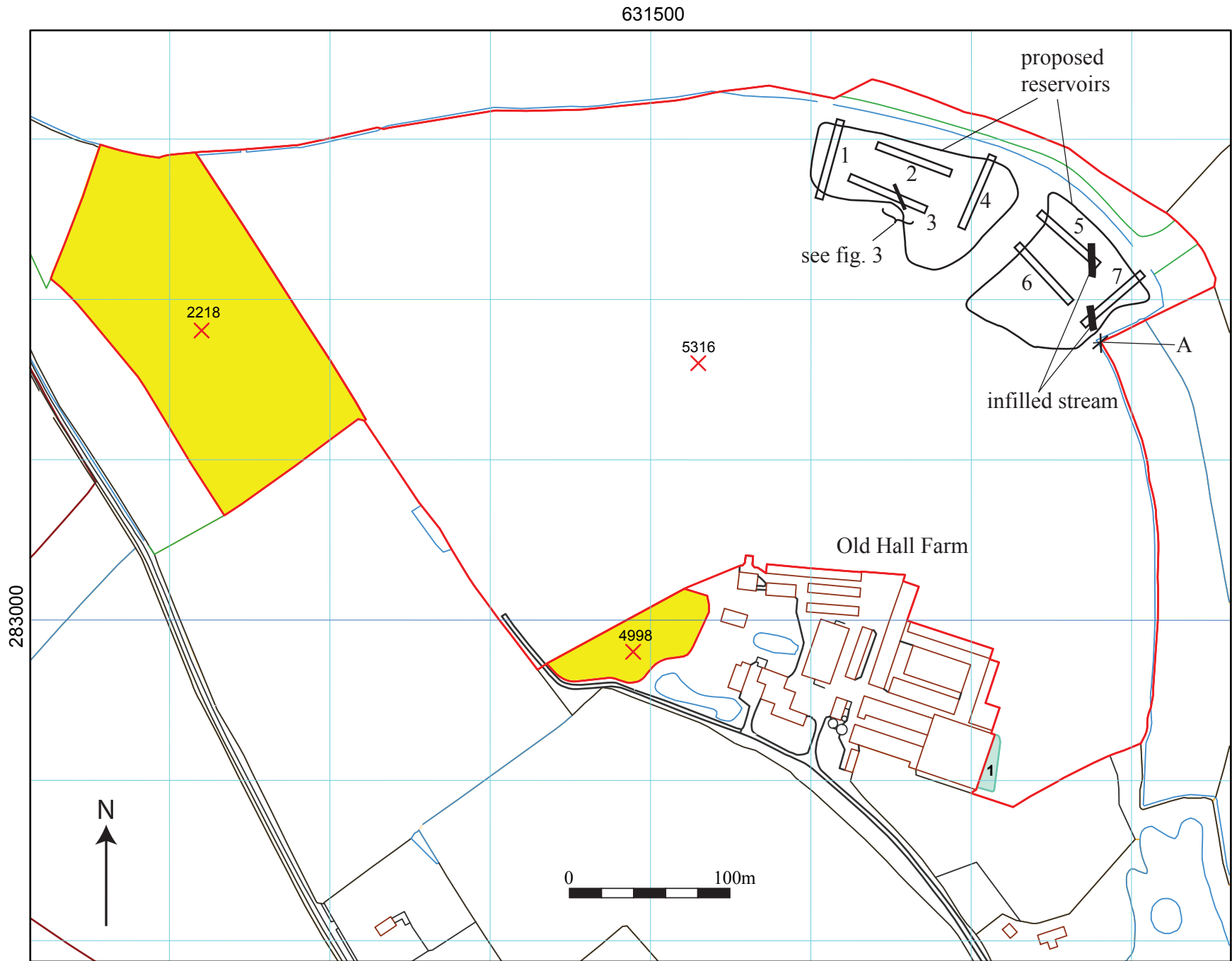


Fig. 2: Trench location in relation to proposed reservoirs (Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2008 All rights reserved LN100049722).

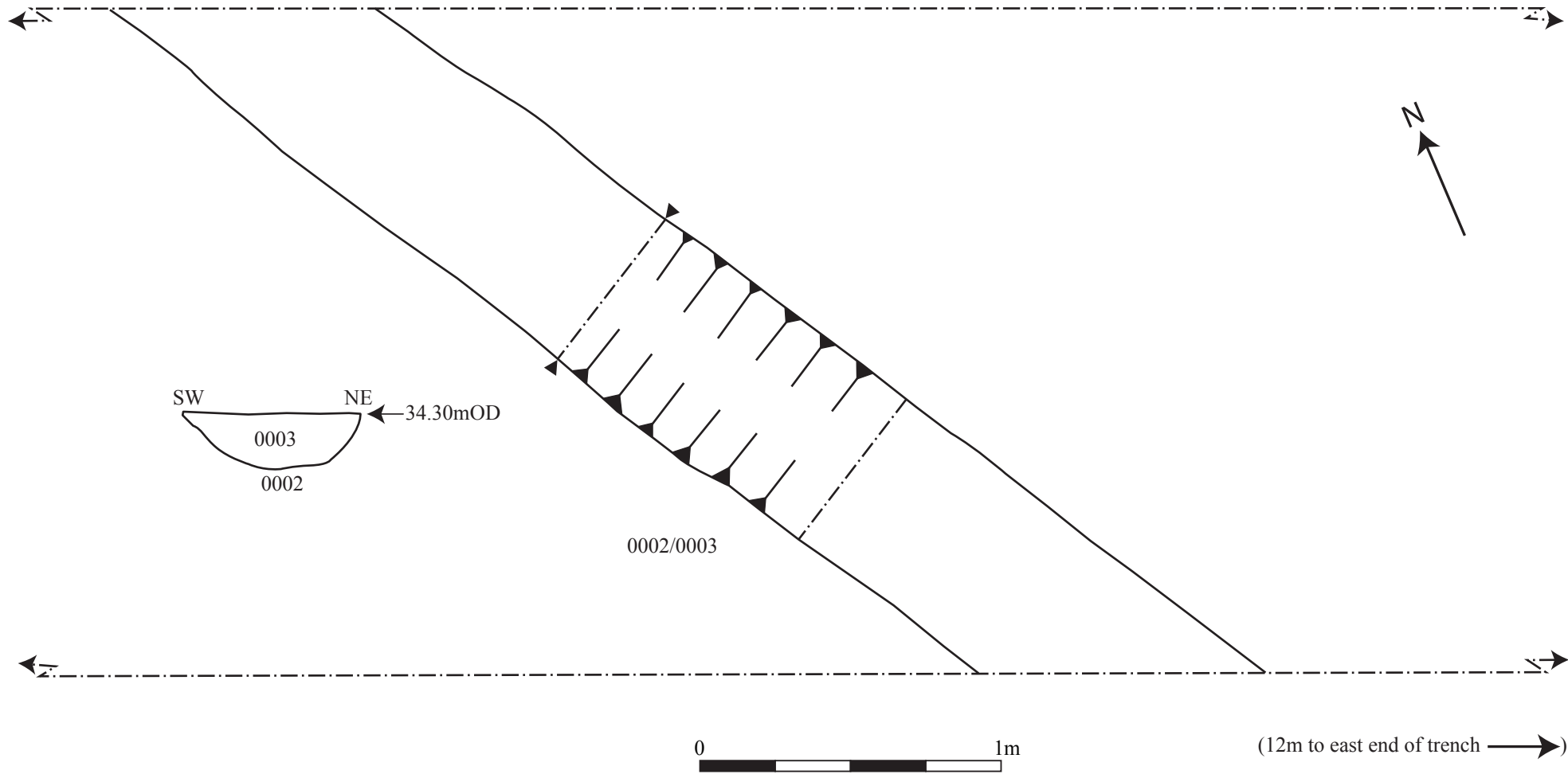


Fig. 3. Plan and section - trench 3.

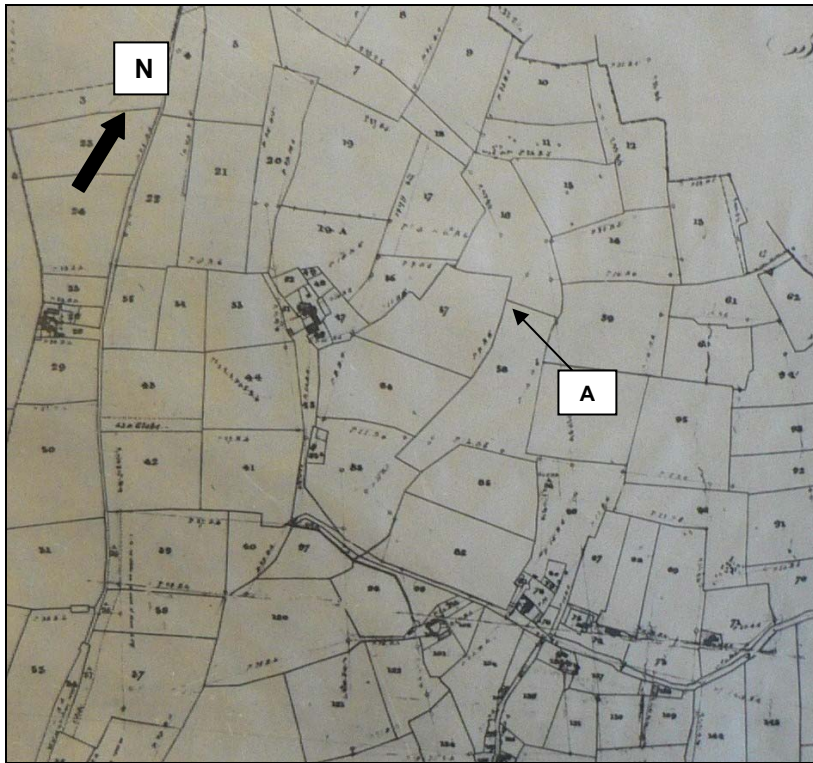


Fig. 4 Extract from parish tithe map of 1839 (Suffolk RO ref. P641/226)

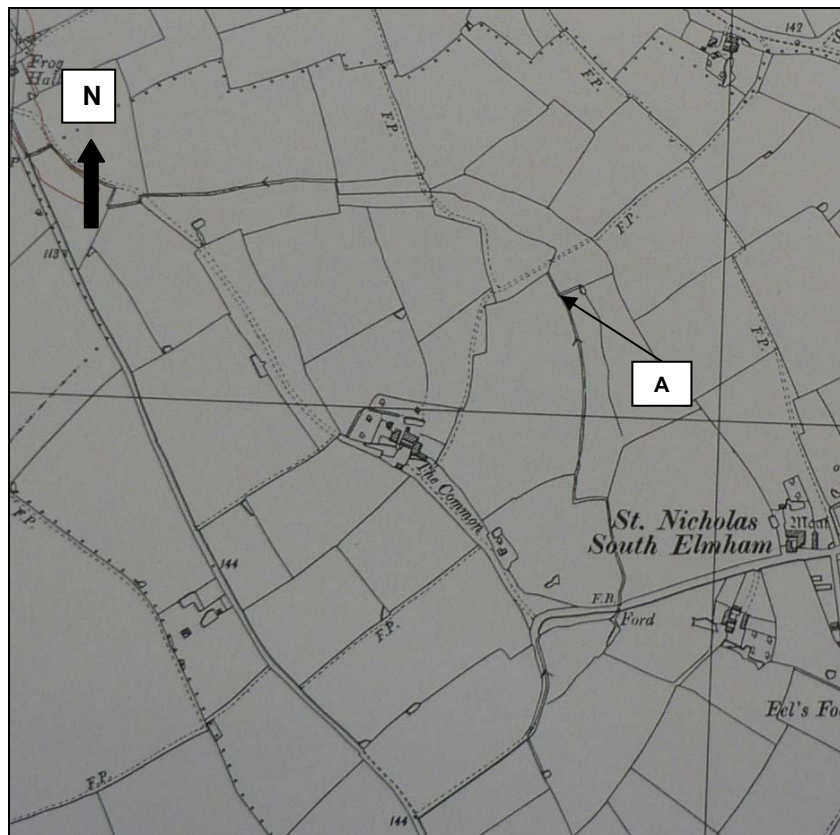


Fig. 5 Extract from Ordnance Survey map of 1953 (Suffolk RO ref. TM 38 SW)

Appendix I- Images



General view from south east



Trench 1 from south



Trench 2 from west with field drains



Trench 3 from east



Ditch 0002 in Trench 3 from east



Trench 5 from west



Trench 7 from south with in filled stream

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Brief for a Trenched Archaeological Evaluation

AT

Irrigation reservoir, Old Hall Farm, St Nicholas,
South Elmham St Nicholas

PLANNING AUTHORITY:	Waveney District Council
PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER:	DC/11/1389/AGO
HER NO. FOR THIS PROJECT:	To be arranged
GRID REFERENCE:	TM 3171 8325
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL:	Two irrigation reservoirs
AREA:	1.30ha.
CURRENT LAND USE:	Greenfield
THIS BRIEF ISSUED BY:	Jess Tipper Archaeological Officer Conservation Team Tel. : 01284 741225 E-mail: jess.tipper@suffolk.gov.uk
Date:	10 January 2012

Summary

- 1.1 The Local Planning Authority (LPA) has been advised that the location of the proposed development could affect important below-ground heritage assets of archaeological importance.
- 1.2 The applicant is required to undertake an archaeological evaluation prior to consideration of the proposal, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation. This information should be incorporated in the design and access statement, in accordance with policies HE6.1, HE6.2, HE6.3 and HE7.1 of PPS 5 *Planning for the Historic Environment*, in order for the LPA to be able to take into account the particular nature and the significance of any below-ground heritage assets at this location.
- 1.3 The archaeological contractor must submit a copy of their Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) or Method Statement, based upon this brief of minimum requirements (and in conjunction with our standard Requirements for Trenched

Archaeological Evaluation 2011 Ver 1.2), to the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (SCCAS/CT) for scrutiny; SCCAS/CT is the advisory body to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on archaeological issues.

- 1.4 The WSI should be approved before costs are agreed with the commissioning client, in line with Institute for Archaeologists' guidance. Failure to do so could result in additional and unanticipated costs.
- 1.5 The WSI will *provide the basis for measurable standards* and will be used to establish whether the requirements of the brief will be adequately met. If the approved WSI is not carried through in its entirety (particularly in the instance of trenching being incomplete) the evaluation report may be rejected.

Archaeological Background

- 2.1 The site of the proposed reservoirs has high potential for the discovery of important hitherto unknown heritage assets of archaeological interest in view of its location to the south of a finds scatter of Roman, Middle Saxon and Medieval pottery, indicative of further occupation, recorded in the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (HER no. SEN 013). However, the site has not been the subject of previous systematic investigation.

Fieldwork Requirements for Archaeological Investigation

- 3.1 A linear trenched evaluation is required of the development area to enable the archaeological resource, both in quality and extent, to be accurately quantified.
- 3.2 Trial Trenching is required to:
 - Identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit, 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.
- 3.3 Further evaluation could be required if unusual deposits or other archaeological finds of significance are recovered; if so, this would be the subject of an additional brief.
- 3.4 Trial trenches are to be excavated to cover 5% by area of the development site (1.30ha. in area), which is c.650.00m². These shall be positioned to sample all parts of the site. Linear trenches are thought to be the most appropriate sampling method, in a systematic grid array. Trenches are to be a minimum of 1.80m wide unless special circumstances can be demonstrated; this will result in c.361.00m of trenching at 1.80m in width.
- 3.5 A scale plan showing the proposed location of the trial trenches should be included in the WSI and the detailed trench design must be approved by SCCAS/CT before fieldwork begins.

Arrangements for Archaeological Investigation

- 4.1 The composition of the archaeological contractor's staff must be detailed and agreed by SCCAS/CT, including any subcontractors/specialists. Ceramic specialists, in particular, must have relevant experience from this region, including knowledge of local ceramic sequences.
- 4.2 All arrangements for the evaluation of the site, the timing of the work and access to the site, are to be defined and negotiated by the archaeological contractor with the commissioning body.
- 4.3 The project manager must also carry out a risk assessment and ensure that all potential risks are minimised, before commencing the fieldwork. The responsibility for identifying any constraints on fieldwork (e.g. designated status, public utilities or other services, tree preservation orders, SSSIs, wildlife sites and other ecological considerations rests with the commissioning body and its archaeological contractor.

Reporting and Archival Requirements

- 5.1 The project manager must consult the Suffolk HER Officer to obtain an event number for the work. This number will be unique for each project or site and must be clearly marked on all documentation relating to the work.
- 5.2 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared and must be adequate to perform the function of a final archive for deposition in the Archaeological Service's Store or in a suitable museum in Suffolk.
- 5.3 It is expected that the landowner will deposit the full site archive, and transfer title to, the Archaeological Service or the designated Suffolk museum, and this should be agreed before the fieldwork commences. The intended depository should be stated in the WSI, for approval.
- 5.4 The project manager should consult the intended archive depository before the archive is prepared regarding the specific requirements for the archive deposition and curation (including the digital archive), and regarding any specific cost implications of deposition.
- 5.5 A report on the fieldwork and archive must be provided. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological value of the results, and their significance. The results should be related to the relevant known archaeological information held in the Suffolk HER.
- 5.6 An opinion as to the necessity for further evaluation and its scope may be given, although the final decision lies with SCCAS/CT. No further site work should be embarked upon until the evaluation results are assessed and the need for further work is established.
- 5.7 Following approval of the report by SCCAS/CT, a single copy of the report should be presented to the Suffolk HER as well as a digital copy of the approved report.
- 5.8 All parts of the OASIS online form <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be completed and a copy must be included in the final report and also with the site archive. A digital copy of the report should be uploaded to the OASIS website.

- 5.9 Where positive results are drawn from a project, a summary report must be prepared for the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*.
- 5.10 This brief remains valid for 12 months. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the brief may need to be revised and re-issued to take account of new discoveries, changes in policy and techniques.

Standards and Guidance

Further detailed requirements are to be found in our Requirements for Trenched Archaeological Evaluation 2011 Ver 1.2.

Standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, 2003.

The Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (revised 2001) should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

Notes

The Institute for Archaeologists maintains a list of registered archaeological contractors (www.archaeologists.net or 0118 378 6446). There are a number of archaeological contractors that regularly undertake work in the County and SCCAS will provide advice on request. SCCAS/CT does not give advice on the costs of archaeological projects.