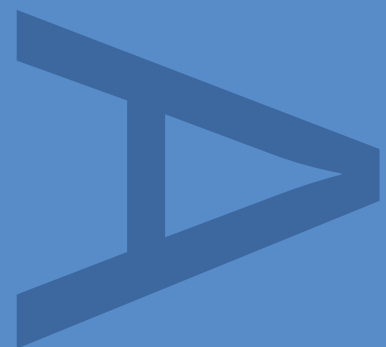


**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION AND
GEOTECHNICAL WATCHING
BRIEF - A11 FIVEWAYS TO
THETFORD IMPROVEMENT**



Site Code: ELV078

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND GEOTECHNICAL
WATCHING BRIEF - A11 FIVEWAYS TO THETFORD
IMPROVEMENT**

Site Code: ELV078

National Grid Reference: TL 727741 – TL 850818

**Written and Researched by Alexander Pullen
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September 2011

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1 ABSTRACT

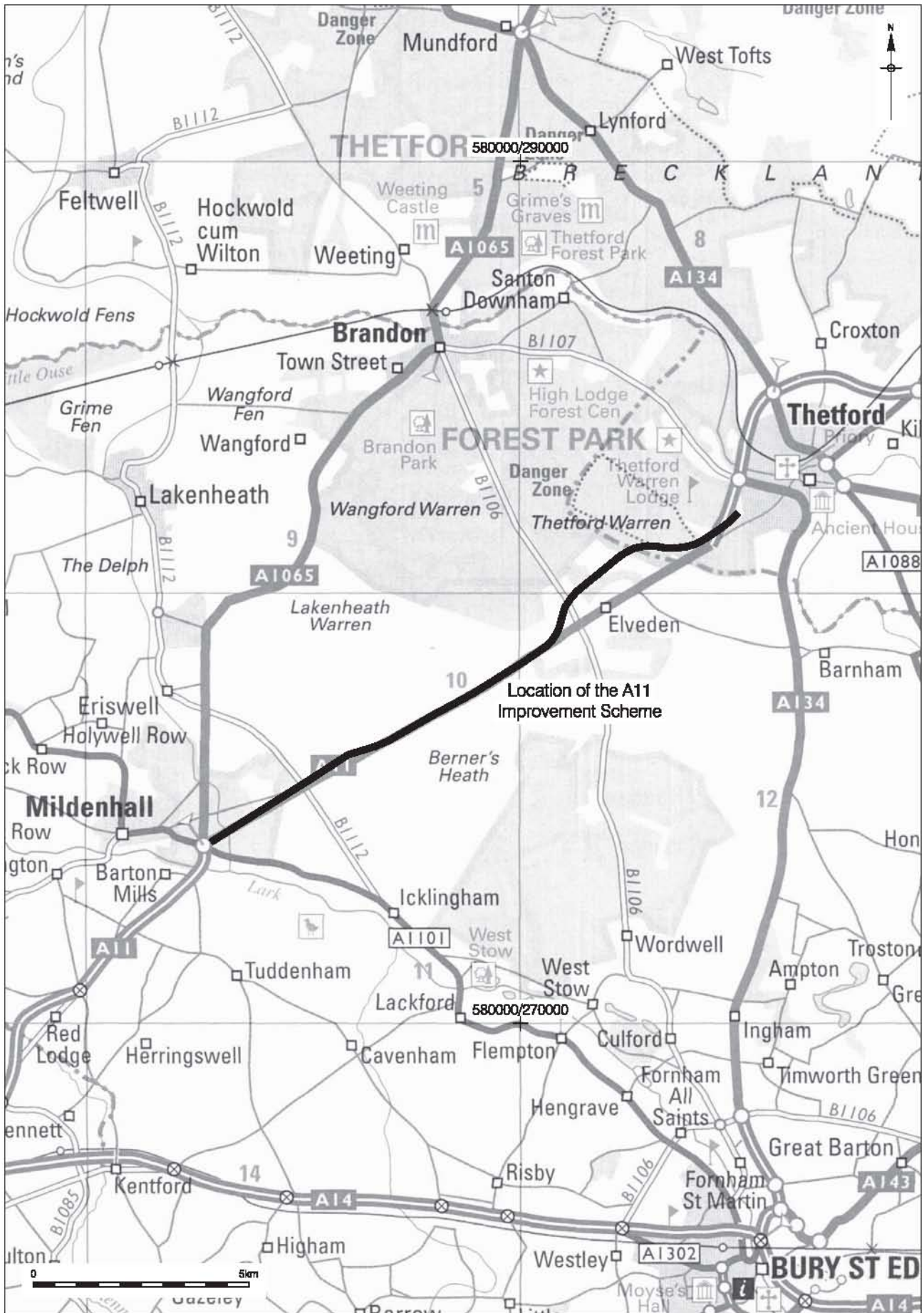
- 1.1 This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation and geotechnical watching brief commissioned by Mouchel along the proposed route of the A11 Fiveways to Thetford Improvement works.
- 1.2 The geotechnical watching brief involved the monitoring of 15 machine excavated geotechnical test pits between 6th July and 12th August 2011. No archaeological finds or features were observed in any of these test pits.
- 1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation was prepared by Sally Randell of Mouchel (Randell 2011). A total of 13 evaluation trenches (six 30m trenches, five 20m trenches and two 10m trenches) were excavated. The evaluation was carried out between the 15th and 22nd August 2011.
- 1.4 The evaluation targeted 7 areas along the route of the A11 Fiveways to Thetford Improvement works. These areas include Mildenhall Wood, grassland north of the War Memorial, woodland south of Larling Heath, land east of Parsons Slip at Elveden and wooded verges along the A11.
- 1.5 No archaeological features were present in any of the evaluation trenches. A single piece of Roman pottery was present in the subsoil [5] at Trench 2. Two flint scrapers were recovered from the plough soil [30] at Trench 11. These date from the Neolithic period (Bishop, B. pers. com).

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation along the proposed route of the A11 Fiveways to Thetford Improvement works (NGR TL 727 741 to TL 850818).
- 2.2 The geotechnical watching brief involved the monitoring of 15 machine excavated geotechnical test pits between 6th July and 12th August 2011 (Fig. 2). No archaeological finds or features were observed in any of these test pits. Given the near proximity of geotechnical test pits to subsequent evaluation trenches, stratigraphic information (e.g. regarding the relative height of natural deposits) is best derived from the subsequent archaeological evaluation (see Appendix 1). The geotechnical pits monitored by PCA were TP1, TP3, TP4, TP5, TP16, TP19, TP25, TP26, TP27, TP28, TP29, TP31, TP 35 A&B and TP36 (see Fig 2). The pits measured 2.0m x 0.63m x 2.0m depth. The pits were excavated with a JCB mechanical excavator under the supervision of representatives from Mouchel and the geotechnical contractor LINCS. Permits to dig were issued to the geotechnical contractors by Birse Civils. Mark Hinman PCA prepared a risk assessment for the watching brief.
- 2.3 The evaluation was commissioned by Mouchel on behalf of the Highways Agency. A Written Scheme of Investigation for this work was prepared by Sally Randell of Mouchel (Randell 2011). The evaluation was carried out between the 15th and 22nd August 2011.
- 2.4 The evaluation targeted a number of areas along the route of the A11 to Thetford Improvement works. These areas include Mildenhall Wood, grassland north of the War Memorial, woodland south of Larling Heath, land east of Parsons Slip at Elveden and wooded verges along the A11 (see Figs 1 - 6).
- 2.5 The principal aim of the archaeological evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains. The archaeological and historical background to the study corridor is detailed in an Environmental Statement produced by the Highways Agency (2008). This Environmental Statement is summarised in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Randell 2011).
- 2.6 The geology and topography of the study corridor is detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Randell 2011). At the southwest end of the scheme the land lies at a height of approximately 10m OD, rising to approximately 40m OD at its northeast extent. Approximately two-thirds of the scheme, the western and eastern sections of

the route, crosses Cretaceous Chalk with a subsoil of sandy soil and thin sand. The central section, between Weather Heath and the point at which the new road connects with the existing road to Elveden crosses glacial boulder clay. East of Elveden at approximately TL 840 810, the route crosses a thin island of glacial loam. At the western end of the route in the area of the Fiveways Junction, the geology is alluvium associated with the floodplain of the River Lark (Randell 2011).

- 2.7 A risk assessment for the evaluation was prepared by Helen Hawkins, Pre-Construct Archaeology and supplied to the principal contractor (Birse). Relevant health and safety regulations as defined by Birse were adhered to throughout the work. Each evaluation trench required a Permit to Dig, issued by Birse Civils Ltd, as Principal Contractor. An ecologist was in attendance when necessary.
- 2.8 The evaluation involved the mechanical excavation of 13 evaluation trenches (six 30m trenches, five 20m trenches and two 10m trenches). The trenches were excavated with a JCB excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. After the trenches were inspected for archaeological remains, they were recorded and immediately backfilled.



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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:125,000 at A4

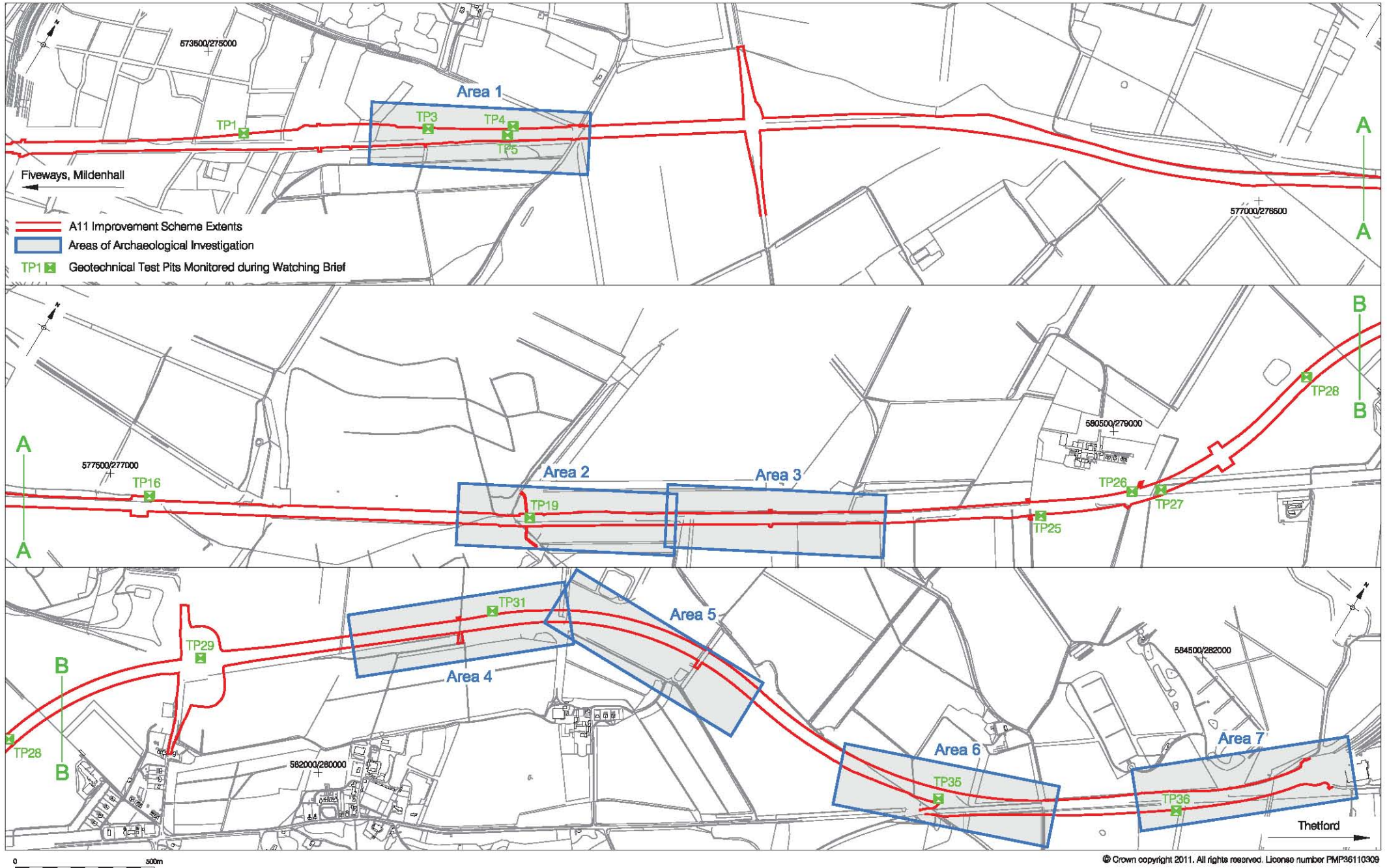


Figure 2
Detailed Area Locations and Location of Geotechnical Test Pits
1:12,500 at A3

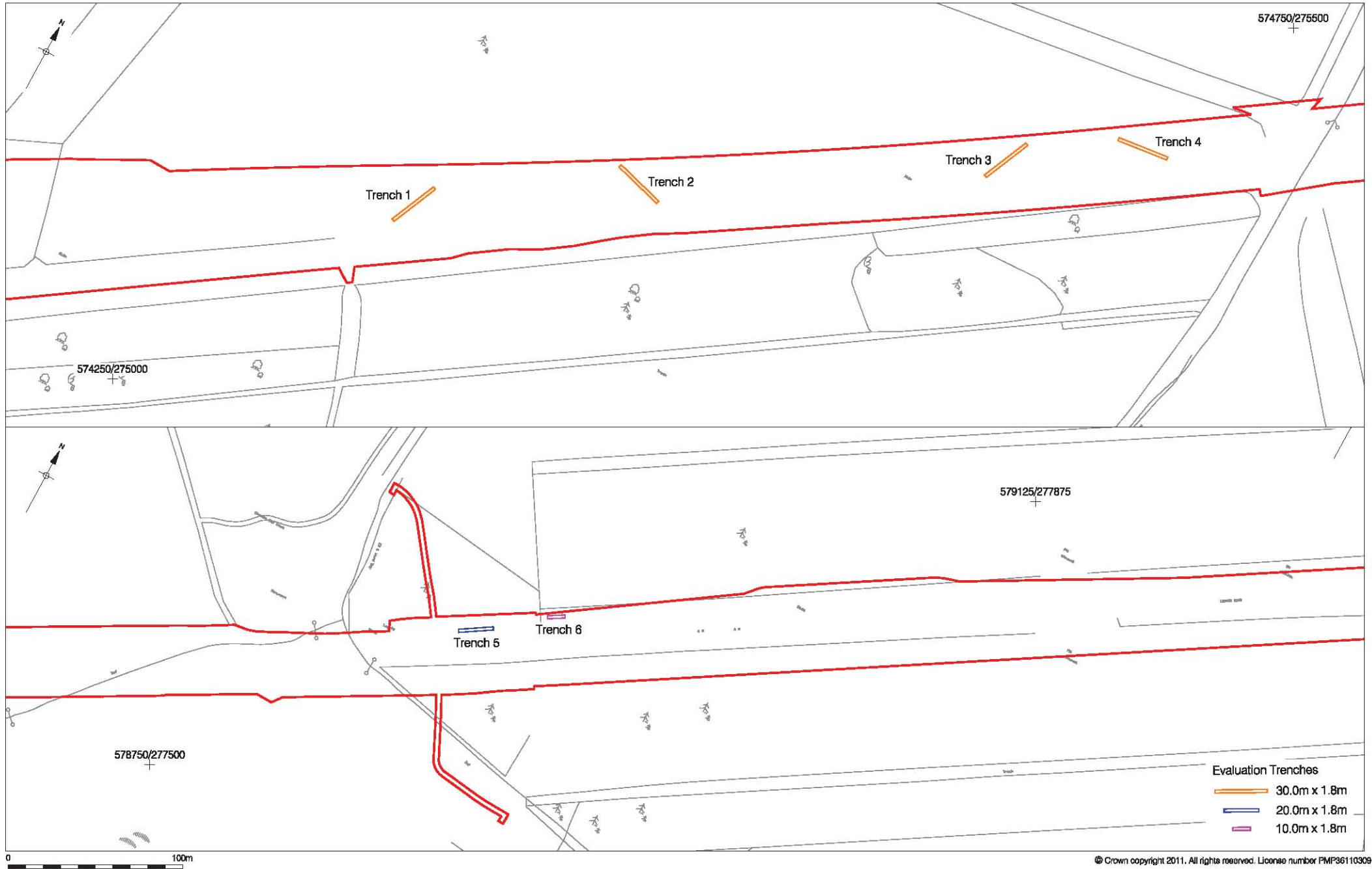


Figure 3
Detailed Trench Locations, Areas 1-2
1:2,000 at A3



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Figure 4
Detailed Trench Locations, Areas 3-4
1:2,000 at A3



Figure 5
Detailed Trench Locations, Areas 5-6
1:2,000 at A3

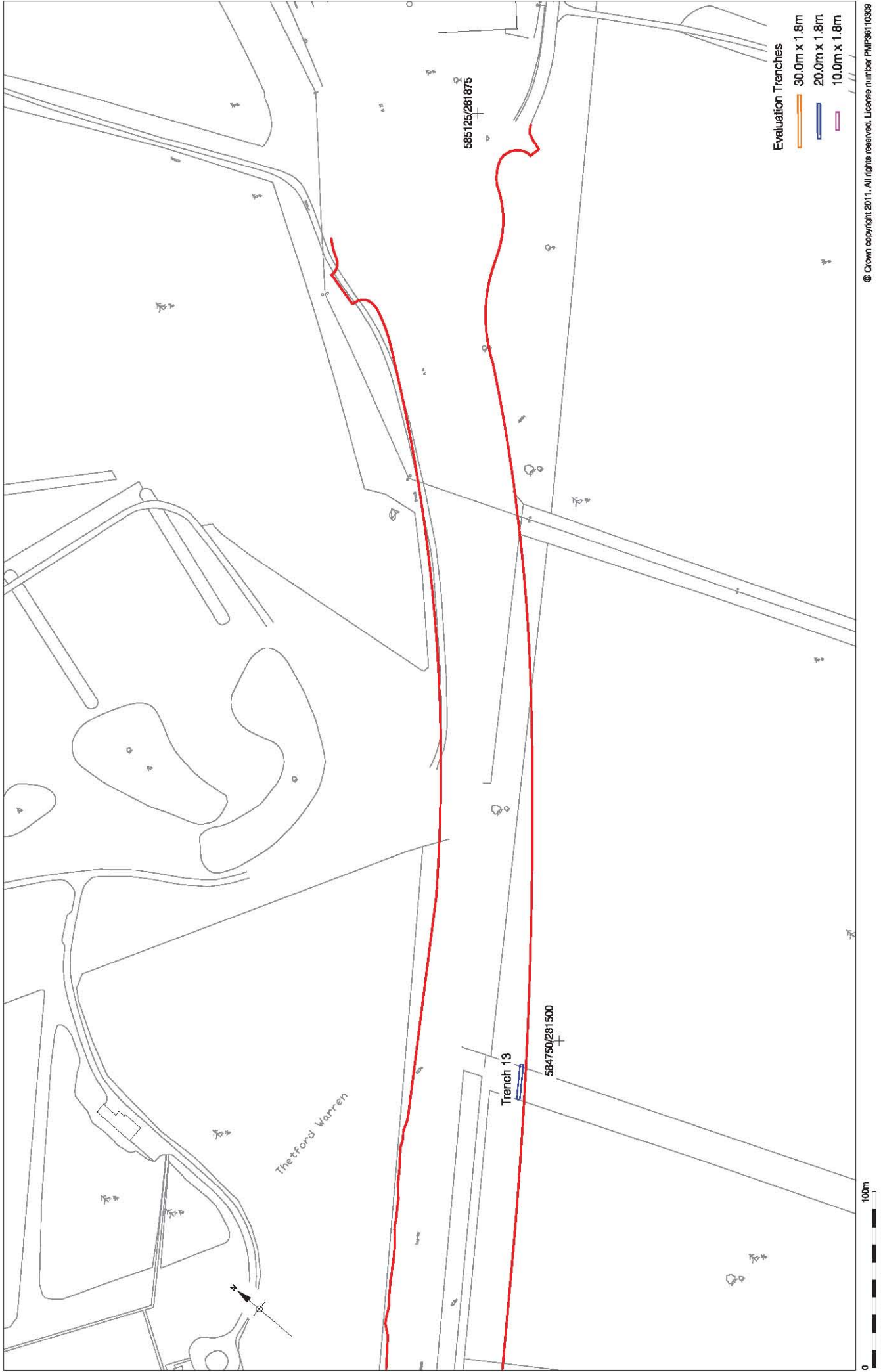


Figure 6
 Detailed Trench Locations, Area 7
 1:2,000 at A3

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The geotechnical pits were excavated by a JCB with a small toothed bucket (Fig. 2). The stratigraphy of the each geotechnical test pit was recorded on PCA pro-forma test pit sheets. The excavations were photographed. Depths of deposits were recorded below ground level.
- 3.2 The methodology followed during the evaluation was outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Randell 2011). Sally Randell of Mouchel marked out the positions of the thirteen trenches with canes. The trenches were CAT scanned prior to excavation by Birse, who issued Permits to Dig.
- 3.3 The ground reduction was carried out by a JCB mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. 13 trenches (six 30m, five 20m and two 10m) trenches were excavated. The trenches were 1.8m wide. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the clean natural at which any potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded. Levels of deposits (m OD) were recorded. The trenches were photographed (see Appendix 2) and then backfilled.
- 3.4 OD heights of deposits in each of the trenches were recorded by the author using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 4.1 No archaeological finds or features were present in any of the 15 geotechnical pits monitored by PCA.
- 4.2 No archaeological features were present in any of the thirteen evaluation trenches. A single piece of early Romano-British pottery of 1st or 2nd century date was present in the subsoil [5] at Trench 2. Two flint artefacts (both scrapers) were recovered from the plough soil [30] at Trench 11. These are not diagnostic pieces but probably date from the Neolithic (Bishop, B. pers. com).
- 4.3 The topsoil, subsoil (if present) and natural were assigned context numbers in each evaluation trench. These contexts are tabulated below with relevant OD heights and brief deposit descriptions (see Appendix 1).
- 4.4 Significant disturbance to subsurface deposits was encountered in Trench 12, where mechanical grubbing out of tree stumps prior to replanting was observed. Evidence of deep modern ploughing ('subsoiling') was observed in Trenches 1-4 and in 10 and 11 (an area formerly supporting an irrigated conifer plantation). A lot of root activity (including old tree stumps) was present in trenches 8 and 9.
- 4.5 Trench 5 contained a modern linear feature (containing wire, bottle glass, crisp packets etc) running parallel with the A11. This was probably a ditch to prevent unwanted access to the grass area around the war memorial.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The lack of archaeological features found within these 15 geotechnical pits and 13 evaluation trenches would seem to indicate that proposed road improvement would have limited archaeological impact in these areas. Given the somewhat limited scope of this phase of evaluation (in terms of number and density of trenching), some caution needs to be applied to this conclusion.
- 5.2 The presence of two probable Neolithic flint artefacts from the plough soil in trench 11 [30] clearly indicates some level of prehistoric activity at or near this location. Earlier evaluations of the study corridor demonstrate a significant potential for archaeological remains dating to the Neolithic period to be present elsewhere along the route both in the form of stray artefacts and sub-surface remains (see Highways Agency 2008).
- 5.3 In Trench 12 disturbance due to forestry activity was severe. In all other trenches, the impact of forestry activity was limited to the occasional presence of modern plough marks (which did not extend significantly below the level of the base of the subsoil) and occasional locally severe tree rooting (e.g. Trenches 8 and 9).

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 PCA would like to thank Sally Randell of Mouchel Consulting for commissioning this watching brief. The author would like to thank Birse Civils for their helpful cooperation during this watching brief evaluation.

- 6.2 In addition, the author would like to thank Mark Hinman for his project management and editing, and Josephine Brown and Mark Roughley for producing the illustrations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Highways Agency 2008. *A11 Fiveways to Thetford Improvement, DMRB Stage 3 Environmental Statement volume 2 report, part 2 Cultural Heritage.*

Randell, S. 2011. *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation. A11 Fiveways to Thetford Improvement.*

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context	Tr.	mOD	Description	Type
1	1	24.50	Grey-brown silty sand	Topsoil
2	1	24.30	Orange-brown sand	Subsoil
3	1	24.00	Orange sand with weathered chalk inclusions	Natural
4	2	22.40	Grey-brown silty sand	Topsoil
5	2	22.10	Orange-brown sand	Subsoil
6	2	21.80	Orange-brown sand	Natural
7	3	18.00	Grey-brown silty sand	Topsoil
8	3	17.70	Orange-brown sand	Subsoil
9	3	17.40	Orange gravelly sand	Natural
10	4	17.50	Brown sandy silt	Topsoil
11	4	17.20	Orange brown sand	Subsoil
12	4	16.90	Orange sand	Natural
13	5	54.20	Brown silty sand	Topsoil
14	5	53.97	Brown sand	Subsoil
15	5	53.75	Fine sand with gravel and silty chalk patches	Natural
16	6	54.15	Grey-brown sandy silt	Topsoil
17	6	53.95	Orange-brown sand	Subsoil
18	6	53.75	Orange sand	Natural
19	7	51.43	Grey-brown sandy silt	Topsoil
20	7	51.18	Brown sand	Subsoil
21	7	50.85	Yellow-brown sand with chalky patches	Natural
22	8	43.08	Grey-brown sandy silt	Topsoil
23	8	42.83	Orange-brown sand	Subsoil
24	8	42.68	Orange sand	Natural
25	9	41.90	Brown organic sand (decaying leaf litter)	Topsoil
26	9	41.80	Orange-brown sand	Subsoil
27	9	41.60	Orange sand	Natural
28	10	36.04	Grey-brown sandy silt	Topsoil
29	10	35.64	Orange gravelly sand	Natural
30	11	35.80	Grey-brown sandy-silt	Topsoil
31	11	35.40	Orange gravelly sand	Natural
32	12	40.79	Grey-brown sandy silt	Topsoil
33	12	40.59	Orange-brown silty sand	Subsoil
34	12	40.29	Yellow-orange gravelly sand	Natural
35	13	43.88	Grey-brown sandy silt	Topsoil
36	13	43.78	Orange-brown silty sand	Subsoil
37	13	43.63	Orange sand with chalky gravel patches	Natural

APPENDIX 2: DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Trench 1 with modern plough scars.



Trench 2.



Trench 3 – rooting in foreground.



Trench 4



Trench 5 showing modern feature to left of trench.



Trench 6.



Trench 7



Trench 8



Trench 9.



Trench 10.



Trench 11.



Trench 12.



Trench 13



APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-110292

Project details

Project name	ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION A11 FIVEWAYS TO THETFORD
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation and geotechnical watching brief commissioned by Mouchel along the proposed route of the A11 Fiveways to Thetford Improvement works.
Project dates	Start: 06-07-2011 End: 22-08-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ELV078 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation and geotechnical watching brief
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Monument type	NONE None
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	SCRAPER Late Neolithic
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK BRECKLAND THETFORD A11 Fiveways to Thetford
Study area	560.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 727 741 52.3373175429 0.535191984302 52 20 14 N 000 32 06 E Point
Site coordinates	TL 850 818 52.4024453013 0.719787330934 52 24 08 N 000 43 11 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 16.90m Max: 53.93m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	PCA
Project brief originator	Mouchel
Project design originator	Mouchel
Project director/manager	Mark Hinman
Project supervisor	Alexander Pullen
Type of sponsor/funding body	Highways Agency
Name of sponsor/funding body	Highways Agency
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council
Physical Contents	'Ceramics', 'Worked stone/lithics'

Digital Archive recipient Suffolk County Council
Digital Contents 'other'
Digital Media available 'Images raster / digital photography','Survey'
Paper Archive recipient Suffolk County Council
Paper Contents 'other'
Paper Media available 'Miscellaneous Material','Notebook - Excavation','
Research',' General Notes'
Project bibliography 1
Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title An archaeological evaluation and geotechnical watching
brief - A11 Fiveways to Thetford
Author(s)/Editor(s) Pullen, A
Date 2011
Issuer or publisher PCA
Place of issue or
publication Brockley
Description Grey literature report
Entered by Alexander Pullen (agp27@hotmail.com)
Entered on 19 September 2011

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