

**Land South of Mildenhall Road
and North-East of Worlington
Golf Club, Worlington, Suffolk:**

**Archaeological Trial Trench
Evaluation**

September 2014



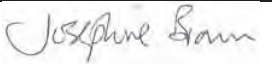
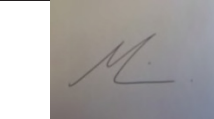
**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY
R11844**

LAND SOUTH OF MILDENHALL ROAD
AND NORTH-EAST OF WORLINGTON
GOLF CLUB, WORLINGTON, SUFFOLK

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH
EVALUATION

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
Project Number	K3689
Report Number	R11844

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Land South of Mildenhall Road and North-East of Worlington Golf Club, Worlington, Suffolk: Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

Local Planning Authority: Forest Heath District Council

Planning Reference: DC/14/1076/FUL

Central National Grid Reference: TL 70358 73622

Site Code: WGN 055

Report No. R11844

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September 2014**

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land south of Mildenhall Road and north-east of Worlington golf club, Worlington, Suffolk. The archaeological work was commissioned by A.J. & R. Scamblers & Sons Ltd in response to a planning condition attached to development of the site. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the site.

The evaluation identified thick deposits of peat across much of the site, overlying the natural sand drift geology. Narrow swathes of higher ground forming linear sand ridges were encountered in several trenches, suggesting that the underlying topography has been sculpted by glacial or palaeochannel activity. There were no surviving buried soils on the site and only a single ditch was revealed, cut through one of the sand ridges. A residual Late Mesolithic/ Early Neolithic flint was found within the ditch fill but no further finds were recovered from either the peat or the surfaces of the sand ridges.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land south of Mildenhall Road and north-east of Worlington golf club, Worlington, Suffolk (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 70358 73622) on 26th and 27th August 2014 (Figure 1; Plate 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by A.J. & R. Scamblers & Sons Ltd in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to the extension of an existing lake and associated landscaping (Planning Reference DC/14/1076/FUL).
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Mark Hinman of PCA (Hinman 2014) in response to a Brief for archaeological evaluation from Dr Matthew Brudenell of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service's Conservation Team (SCCAS/CT).
- 1.4 The aim of the evaluation was to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition and quality of any archaeological remains on the site, to assess the significance of any such remains in a local, regional or national context, as appropriate, and to assess the potential impact of the development proposals on the site's archaeology.
- 1.5 A further aim of the works was to evaluate the presence and survival of well-preserved organic remains, buried land surfaces or other significant archaeological deposits sealed by the peat. This report includes palaeoenvironmental analysis in response to the brief (Brudenell 2014), which states a number of objectives:

-The characterisation of the sequence and patterns of the accumulation of palaeoenvironmental/ geoarchaeological deposits across the development area, including the depth and lateral extent of major stratigraphic units, and the character of any potential land surfaces/ buried soils within or pre-dating

these sediments.

-Identify significant variations in the deposition sequences indicative of localised features, particularly in relation to topographic variation and the presence of features such as palaeochannels.

-Identify the location and extent of any waterlogged organic deposits and retrieve suitable samples to assess environmental remains and material for scientific dating.

-Clarify the relationship between sediment sequences and other deposit types, including periods of 'soil', peat growth and archaeological remains.

-The absolute dating of critical contacts.

-To focus academically upon the high potential for this site to produce palaeoenvironmental evidence, with the potential to inform on our understanding of past environments, palaeoclimates, sea-level changes and human interaction.

1.6 A series of linear trenches were excavated and recorded on 26th and 27th August 2014. A thick deposit of peat was encountered across much of the area and a single ditch was revealed toward the south-west corner of the site.

1.7 This report describes the results of the evaluation and aims to inform the design of an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy. The site archive will be deposited at Suffolk County Council Archaeology Store.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1 The geology of the proposed development site and surrounding area belongs to the Zig Zag Chalk Formation, consisting of sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 100 to 94 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. The local environment was then dominated by warm chalk seas.
- 2.2 The solid geology is overlain by river terrace deposits of sand. In places, this sand forms raised ridges with hollows in between within which peat has developed during periods of waterlogged ground conditions in the past.
- 2.3 The River Lark flows east to west c. 700m north of the site. British Geological Survey maps suggest that a palaeochannel associated with the river may extend across the current site on a broadly east to west alignment (Website 1).
- 2.4 The proposed development area is currently scrub and woodland, bordered by fields in all directions. The central area of the site is located at approximately 5.8m OD, while to the north and south, the field rises slightly to 6.6m and 7.9m OD, respectively.
- 2.5 The elevation of the area suggests the presence of a large hollow or channel (possibly a periglacial 'pingo', see Section 7) occupying the evaluation field and the field immediately to the east. This hollow is located at between 5m and 7m OD, with the surrounding land rising gently to 11-13m OD, where the surrounding villages and settlements have developed.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The archaeological background detailed below has been taken from the archaeological brief (Brudenell 2014).
- 3.2 This proposed lake enlargement lies within an area of archaeological potential, as defined by information held by the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (SHER). The site lies in the Lark Valley, in a location that was topographically favourable for occupation during the prehistoric and later periods. A prehistoric settlement occupying a similar topographic position was excavated in 2008, c. 500m to the north-east (HER no. BTM 040; Archaeological Solutions Report no. 3569). Human remains have also been recovered c. 250m to the north-west (HER BTM 11) and metal-detector finds dating from the Bronze Age to medieval periods have been found in surrounding fields. Peat deposits and organic silts survive at the site below the topsoil, and there is high potential to produce important palaeoenvironmental evidence.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The archaeological evaluation comprised a total of 227.8m of linear trenching measuring 1.8m wide (Figure 2). A number of trenches were widened, or excavated as box trenches to achieve greater depths and to safely access deeper deposits.
- 4.2 Ground reduction was carried out under archaeological supervision using a 7-tonne tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m-wide toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed natural geological deposits where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools. Trenches which required deeper excavation were stepped at arbitrary levels and widened to expose natural geological deposits.
- 4.3 The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.
- 4.4 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a unique record number (often referred to within British archaeology as 'context numbers') and recorded on individual pre-printed forms (Taylor and Brown 29). Archaeological processes recognised by the deposition of material are signified in this report by round brackets (thus), while events constituting the removal of deposits are referred to here as 'cuts' and signified by square brackets [thus]. The record numbers assigned to cuts and deposits are entirely arbitrary and in no way reflect the chronological order in which events took place. All features and deposits recorded during the evaluation are listed in Appendix 2. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.
- 4.5 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping and

throughout the excavation process. Archaeological features and spoil heaps were scanned by metal-detector. Only objects of modern date were found and were not retained for accession.

- 4.6 High-resolution digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits, and were used to keep a record of the excavation process.
- 4.7 Following discussions with the SCCAS Archaeological Advisor, Dr Brudenell, a pollen sample tin was taken through the peat where the sequence was considered to be complete. This sample will be assessed for pollen remains by Dr Steve Boreham of the University of Cambridge. This assessment will determine the nature of the peat formation and available datable material will be extracted to submit for radiocarbon dating. This in turn will provide valuable information regarding the palaeoenvironment of the area for which very little is currently known. The results of this work will be included as an appendix within a revised copy of this report as and when the work is completed (within approximately 4-12 weeks).

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 The trenching revealed a sequence of peat and alluvial silt and clay deposits across the site, with narrow ridges of sand surviving beneath these in the central and southern areas. These sand ridges were relatively narrow and are likely to have been formed through ancient palaeochannel or glacial activity. An ancient deep buried channel is known to exist beneath the Lark Valley (Steve Boreham pers. comm.); however, the impact or effect of this channel upon the more superficial micro-topography recorded here is uncertain. Later palaeochannel deposits were identified in Trench 2. Here the sand could be the result of a sand bar, created and sculpted by this former channel.
- 5.1.2 The thick deposits of peat and alluvial material occupied the 'deeper' areas of the site and were not present above the higher ridges of sand, which were overlain by topsoil and subsoil deposits only. Sections showing the sequence of peat and alluvial deposits in each trench, in addition to profiles showing the undulating surface of the natural sand in the centre of the site (Trenches 3 and 4) can be seen in Figure 4.
- 5.1.3 Toward the south-west corner of the site, a single east- to west-aligned ditch [19], measuring 0.75m wide and 0.35m deep (Figure 4 Section 8), was revealed in Trench 5. This ditch was cut along a sand ridge and was sealed by the topsoil and subsoil deposits. The lack of peat and alluvial material over the sand ridges meant that no stratigraphic sequence between the ditch and the peat was available to sample. A single residual Late Mesolithic/ Early Neolithic struck flint was recovered from the ditch and is the only find from the evaluation. This single flint suggests some transient human activity in the landscape, likely predating the formation of the peat.

5.2 Trench Descriptions

TRENCH 1	Figure 3		Plate 1
Trench Alignment: E-W	Trench Length: 6.6m	Level of Natural (m OD): 3.91m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
Topsoil	(1)	0.32	
Subsoil	(2)	0.11	
Clay	(3)	0.14	
Peat	(4)	0.16	
Alluvial silty sand	(5)	0.06	
Peat	(6)	0.81	
Natural (sand)		1.6+	
Summary			
Trench 1 was located in the north of the site.			
No archaeological features or deposits were encountered beneath the peat.			
The trench was shortened due to significant depth and unstable trench sides.			

TRENCH 2	Figure 3		Plate 2	
Trench Alignment: N-S	Trench Length: 7.6m	Level of Natural (m OD): 2.98-3.24m		
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)		
		N End	S End	
Topsoil	(1)	0.32	0.3	
Channel silts?	(7)	0.98	-	
Alluvial silt	(8)	0.46	0.48	
Silty clay	(9)	0.26	0.36	
Peat	(11)	-	0.42	
Natural (sand)		2.02+	1.56+	
Summary				
Trench 2 was located towards the centre of the site.				
No archaeological features or deposits were encountered, although deposits filling a probable palaeochannel were present.				
The trench was shortened due to depth and unstable trench sides.				

TRENCH 3	Figure 3		Plates: N/A	
Trench Alignment: E-W	Trench Length: 25.1m	Level of Natural (m OD): 4.56m		
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)		
		W End	E End	
Topsoil	(1)	0.32	0.34	
Subsoil	(2)	0.22	-	
Peat	(11)	-	0.22	
Natural (sand)		0.54+	0.56+	
Summary				
<p>Trench 1 was located towards the centre of the site, immediately south of Trenches 2 and 4.</p> <p>No archaeological features or deposits were encountered. A higher sand ridge was revealed in the centre and west of the trench (see Figure 3).</p>				

TRENCH 4	Figure 3		Plate 3	
Trench Alignment: N-S	Trench Length: 38.9m	Level of Natural (m OD): 4.02-4.78m		
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)		
		N End	S End	
Topsoil	(1)	0.34	0.3	
Subsoil	(2)	0.38	0.16	
Clay	(3)	-	0.14	
Peat	(12)	-	0.34	
Alluvial silts	(13)	-	0.34+	
Natural (sand)		0.72+	Unknown	
Summary				
<p>Trench 4 was located toward the centre of the site, immediately west of Trench 2.</p> <p>No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.</p> <p>This trench was extended to the west to explore the higher sand level within the trench.</p>				

TRENCH 5	Figure 3		Plate 4	
Trench Alignment: N-S	Trench Length: 50m	Level of Natural (m OD): 4.06-4.70m		
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)		
		N End	S End	
Topsoil	(1)	0.36	0.34	
Subsoil	(2)	0.22	-	
Peat	(14)	-	0.28	
Alluvial silts	(15)	0.12	0.18	
Peat	(16)	-	0.6	
Alluvial silts	(17)	-	0.3	
Natural (sand)		0.7+	1.74+	
Summary				
<p>Trench 5 was located in the south-west of the site.</p> <p>A single ditch [19] (measuring 0.75m wide by 0.35m deep) was revealed cutting through a higher sand ridge towards the centre of the trench. Where this higher sand ridge was located, there were no deposits of peat and thus it was not possible to determine the stratigraphic relationship between the ditch and the peat. A single residual Late Mesolithic/ Early Neolithic struck flint was recovered from the fill of the ditch.</p>				

TRENCH 6	Figure 3		Plate 5	
Trench Alignment: NW-SE	Trench Length: 38.8m	Level of Natural (m OD): 4.22-4.72m		
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)		
		NW End	SE End	
Topsoil	(1)	0.26	0.24	
Subsoil	(2)	0.24	0.18	
Peat	(24)	0.44	0.18	
Alluvial silts	(25)	0.14	0.08	
Natural (sand)		1.08+	0.68+	
Summary				
<p>Trench 6 was located in the central southern area of the site.</p> <p>No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.</p>				

TRENCH 7	Figure 3		Plates: N/A	
Trench Alignment: NE-SW	Trench Length: 48.1m	Level of Natural (m OD): 3.94-5.45m		
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)		
		NE End	SW End	
Topsoil	(1)	0.28	0.2	
Subsoil	(2)	0.22	-	
Peaty subsoil	(21)	-	0.44	
Modern disturbance (dark brown mixed sands)	(22)	-	0.36	
Modern disturbance (red-brown silty clay)	(23)	-	0.46	
Natural (sand)		0.60+	1.46+	
Summary				
<p>Trench 7 was located in the south-east corner of the site.</p> <p>No archaeological features or deposits were present, although modern disturbance was noted at the south-west end of the trench where the ground had seemingly been dug-out and reinstated fairly recently. The peat at this end of the trench was re-deposited, along with the topsoil.</p>				

TRENCH 8	Figure 3		Plates N/A	
Trench Alignment: N-S	Trench Length: 12.7m	Level of Natural (m OD): 4.28-5.03m		
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)		
		S End	N End	
Topsoil	(1)	0.24	0.18	
Subsoil	(2)	0.12	0.24	
Peat	(26)	0.58	-	
Alluvial silts	(27)	0.08	-	
Natural (sand)		1.02+	0.42+	
Summary				
<p>Trench 8 was located in the centre of the site, immediately south of Trench 3.</p> <p>No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.</p> <p>The trench was cut to test the likely existence/ continuation of a higher sand ridge.</p>				

6 THE FINDS

- 6.1 A single residual struck flint of Late Mesolithic/ Early Neolithic date was recovered from Ditch [19] in Trench 5.

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The evaluation at Worlington revealed a fen-/ river-edge environment, characterised by the deposition of alluvial silts and clays and the formation of deep peat. These deposits have the potential to preserve archaeological remains but, within the evaluation area, only a single east to west ditch was revealed. This occupied an area of higher ground, where the peat and fen deposits had not encroached.
- 7.2 The alluvial material and peat appear to have formed in a large hollow or channel (at a height of between 5m and 7m OD) which occupies much of the evaluation field and the field immediately to the east. The landscape rises in all directions and the surrounding villages and settlements are generally located at between 11m and 13m OD. It is possible that the hollow is in fact a 'pingo' – a depression caused by periglacial ground-ice erosion. However, without further geological investigations, this is merely speculative at this stage.
- 7.3 The single residual Late Mesolithic/ Early Neolithic flint recovered from Ditch [19] indicates some prehistoric human activity in the local landscape, presumably at a time when it was dry and accessible (i.e. prior to the flooding of the area and subsequent deposition of alluvial material and the development of the peat). The sand ridges identified in the evaluation were relatively narrow and are unlikely to have provided ample space for occupation or activity once the fen began to encroach but may have been used for passage across an increasingly wet landscape. Metal-detector finds of Bronze Age date from the surrounding fields imply that the peats may have formed immediately prior to or during this era, with material lost or deposited in a wetland environment as people traversed the landscape.
- 7.4 The lack of preserved buried land surfaces or soil horizons associated with these sand ridges suggests the area may not have been stable for long periods. Within the wider vicinity, larger areas of high ground buried by the peat and alluvial material are more likely to have been the focus of activity either pre-dating or during the encroachment of the fen.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The evaluation has provided some new information regarding the extent of the fen edge in this part of Suffolk. The narrow nature of the sand ridges suggests that the site would not have been suitable for direct habitation during the period when wet ground conditions were prevalent and peat deposits were forming. Archaeological activity would likely have been confined to larger areas of higher ground, as indicated by the prehistoric occupation identified some 500m to the north-east at the former Bridge House Dairies (HER BTM 040).
- 8.2 The residual struck flint suggests some transient activity in the area during the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, likely occurring prior to the inundation of the valley floor and development of the peat. Although speculative at this stage, the Bronze Age metal-detector finds from the surrounding fields suggest accidental or possibly even depositional activities in a wetland environment as people crossed the landscape.
- 8.3 The separate environmental work requested by the SCCAS Archaeological Advisor, Dr Matthew Brudenell, may shed some light on the nature and development of the peat within this part of the Suffolk fen edge and also provide associated dates for this sequence.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Ed Scambler for commissioning the work. PCA are also grateful to Dr Matthew Brudenell of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team for monitoring the work. Figures accompanying this report were prepared by Mark Roughley of PCA's CAD Department.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

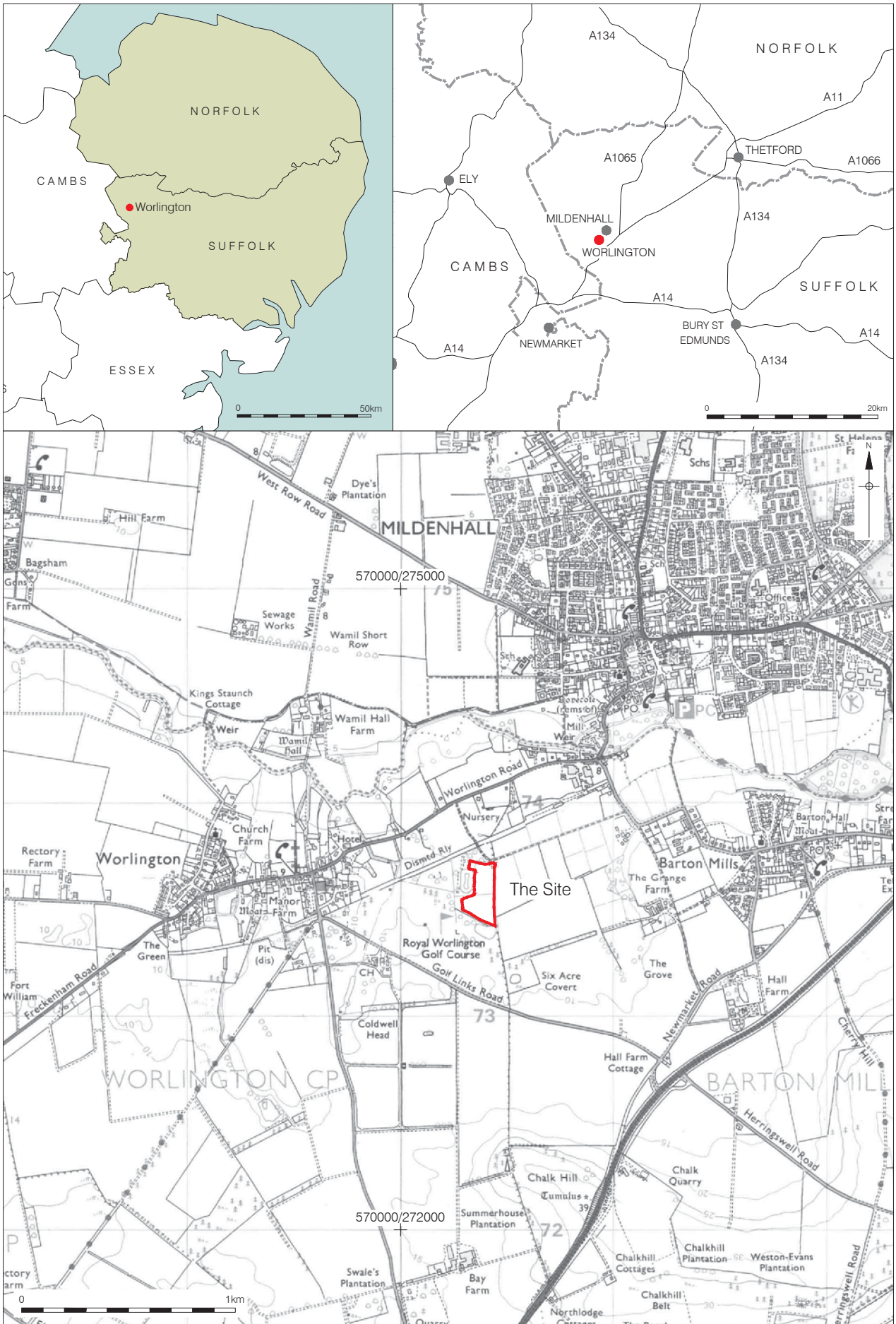
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Brudenell, M. 2014 Brief for a Trenched Archaeological Evaluation and Palaeoenvironmental Assessment at Land South of Mildenhall Road and Northeast of Worlington Golf Club, Worlington, Suffolk. Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team (unpublished)

10.2 Websites

1) British Geological Survey 2014 Geology of Britain Viewer <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain>. Accessed 11/09/2014

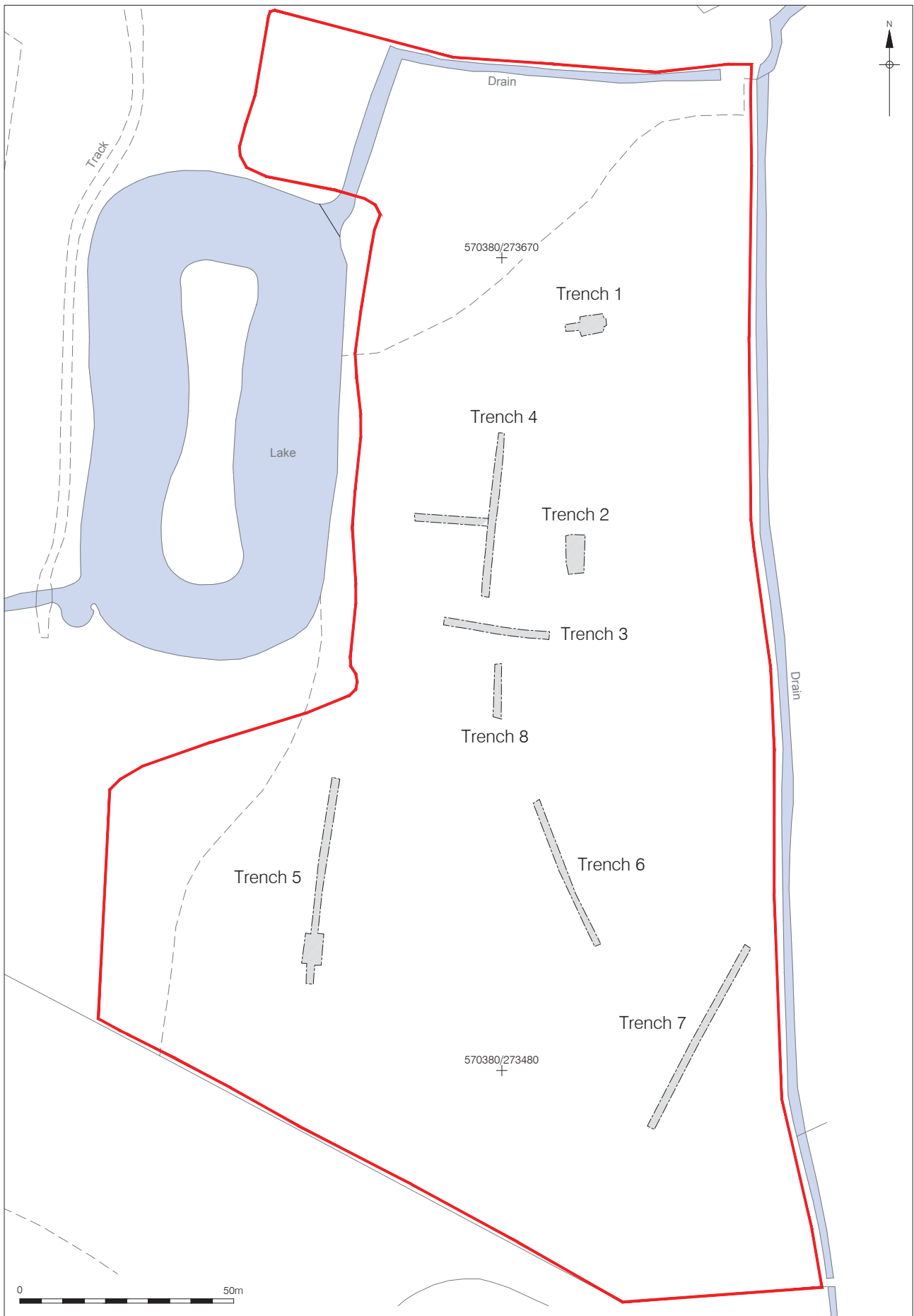


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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:2,000,000; 625,000 & 25,000 at A4



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Figure 2
 Detailed Site and Trench Location
 1:1,250 at A4

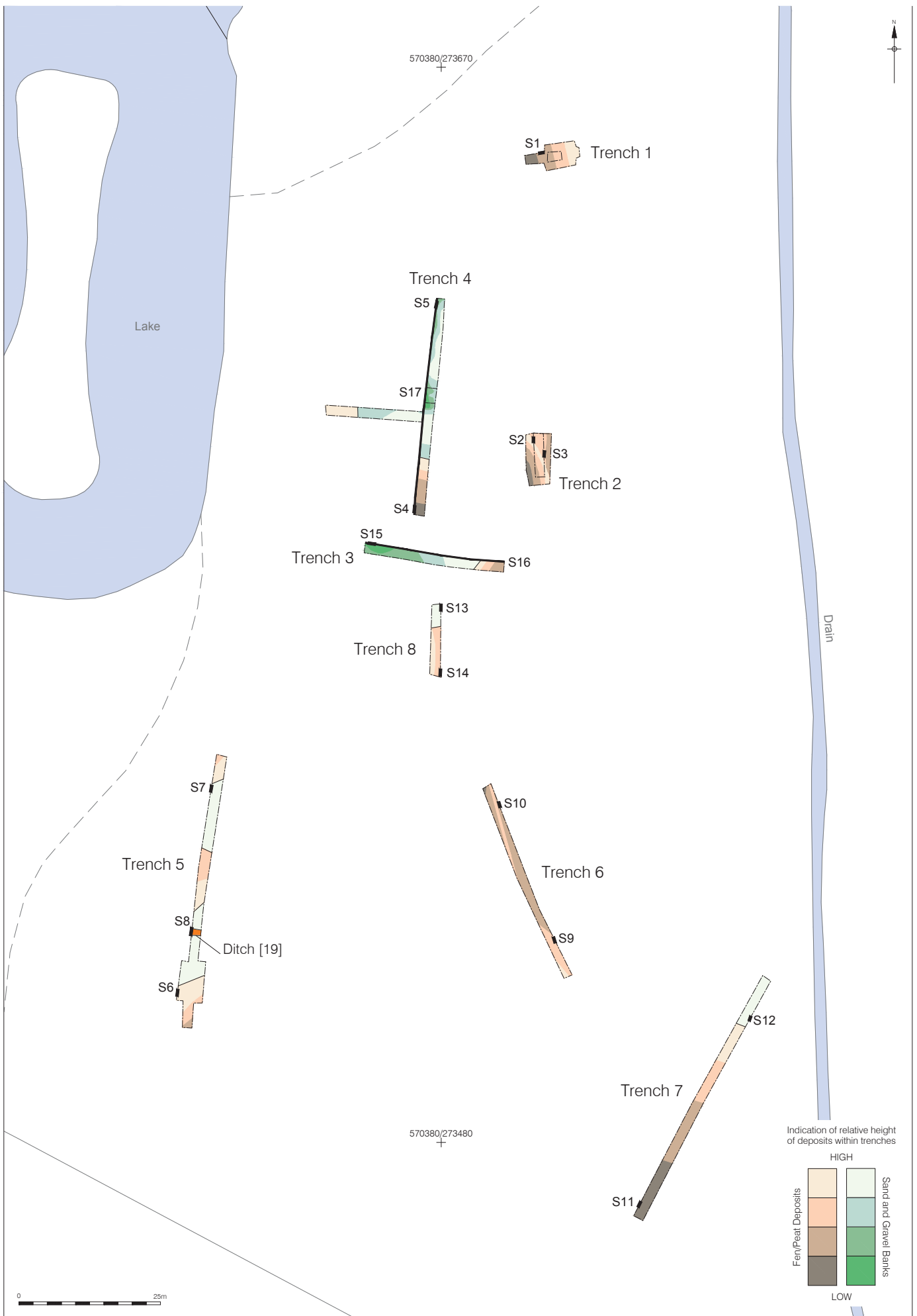


Figure 3
 Trench plans showing feature, section location and fen deposits
 1:625 at A3

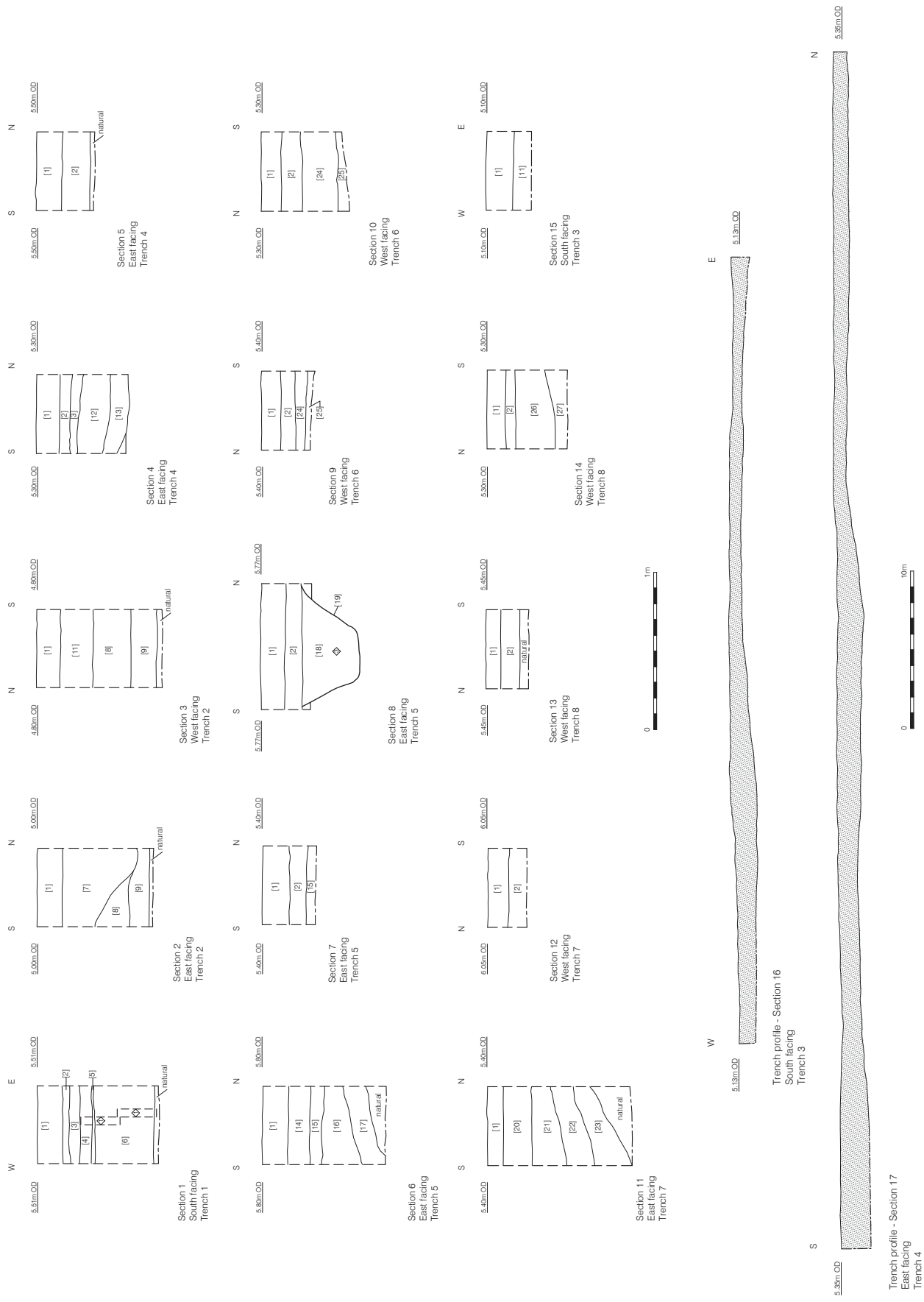


Figure 4
Sections and Trench profiles
1:25 and 1:250 at A3

11 APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: Trench 1, view west



Plate 2: Trench 2, showing probable palaeochannel deposits



Plate 3: Trench 4, view south



Plate 4: Ditch [19] in Trench 5, view west



Plate 5: Trench 6, view south-east

12 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Cut	Type	Category	Period	Interpretation	Trench Number
1	-		Layer	Modern	Topsoil	1-8
2	-		Layer	Modern	Subsoil	1-8
3	-		Layer	?	Alluvial clays	1
4	-		Layer	?	Peat	1
5	-		Layer	?	Alluvial silt-clay	1
6	-		Layer	?	Peat	2
7	-		Layer	?	Channel silts	2
8	-		Layer	?	Alluvial silts (associated with channel?)	2
9	-		Layer	?	Alluvial silt-clay	2
10	-		Layer	?	Gravel/sand bar associated with palaeochannel?	3
11	-		Layer	?	Peat	2,3
12	-		Layer	?	Peat	4
13	-		Layer	?	Alluvial silt-clay	4
14	-		Layer	?	Peat	5
15	-		Layer	?	Alluvial silt-clay	5
16	-		Layer	?	Peat	5
17	-		Layer	?	Alluvial silt-clay	5
18	19	Ditch fill	Fill	?	Fill of ditch	5
19	-	Ditch	Cut	?	Cut of ditch	5
20	-		Layer	?	Silty peat	7
21	-		Layer	?	Peat	7
22	-		Layer	Modern	Make-up layer/disturbed ground	7
23	-		Layer	Modern	Make-up layer/disturbed ground	7
24	-		Layer	?	Peat	6
25	-		Layer	?	Alluvial silt-clay	6
26	-		Layer	?	Peat	8
27	-		Layer	?	Alluvial silt-clay	8

13 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-187663

Project details

Project name	Land NE of Worlington Gold Club, Worlington, Suffolk: An Archaeological Evaluation
Short description of the project	This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land south of Mildenhall Road and North East of Worlington golf club, Worlington, Suffolk. The archaeological work was commissioned by A.J. and R. Scamblers and Sons Ltd in response to a planning condition attached to development of the site. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the site. The evaluation identified thick deposits (in places up to 2m in depth) of peat across the area overlying a natural geology of sand. Narrow swathes of higher ground forming linear sand ridges were encountered in several trenches, suggesting the underlying topography may have been sculpted by glacial or palaeochannel activity. There were no surviving buried soils encountered on site and only a single ditch was revealed cut through one of these sand ridges. A residual late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic flint was found within the ditch fill but no further finds were recovered from either the peat or the surface of the sand ridges.
Project dates	Start: 26-08-2014 End: 27-08-2014
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	WGN055 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 1 - Heathland
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Significant Finds	FLINT Late Mesolithic
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches", "Test Pits"
Development type	Aquaculture
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK FOREST HEATH WORLINGTON Worlington
Study area	1.60 Hectares

Site coordinates	TL 7035 7362 52.3337434017 0.500487107829 52 20 01 N 000 30 01 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 5.80m Max: 7.90m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Officer
Project design originator	Mark Hinman
Project director/manager	Mark Hinman
Project supervisor	Jonathan House

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council
Physical Archive ID	WGN055
Physical Contents	"Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council
Digital Archive ID	WGN055
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Survey", "Text"
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Paper Archive ID	WGN055
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Survey", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

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