

**Elveden Forest Centre Parcs
New Car Park, Elveden, Suffolk:
Archaeological Monitoring**

October 2016



**PRE-CONSTRUT ARCHAEOLOGY
R12684**

ELVEDEN FOREST CENTRE PARCS NEW CAR PARK, ELVEDEN, SUFFOLK

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

Quality Control

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Elveden Forest Centre Parcs New Car Park, Elveden, Suffolk: Archaeological Monitoring

Local Planning Authority: Forest Heath District Council

Planning Reference: DC/16/1833/FUL

Central National Grid Reference: TL 8095 8047

Site Code: ELV 136

Event Number: ESF24762

Report No. R12684

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of a programme of archaeological monitoring carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA) at Elveden Forest Centre Parcs new car park (NGR TL 8095 8047) on the 10th to the 17th October 2016. The archaeological work was commissioned by Edmond Shipway LLP in response to a Brief issued by James Rolfe, Archaeological Officer of Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service (SCCAS) (Rolfe 2016) attached to the construction of a customer car park and staff pick up point including shelter/waiting area and landscaping bunds. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.

No archaeological features or finds were identified during the monitoring programme.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) at Elveden Forest Centre Parcs new car park (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 8095 8047) on the 10th to the 17th of October 2016 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Edmond Shipway LLP in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to the construction of a customer car park and staff pick up point including shelter/waiting area and landscaping bunds (Planning Ref. DC/16/1833/FUL).
- 1.3 The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Taleyna Fletcher, Project Manager of PCA Central (Fletcher 2016) in response to a Brief for archaeological monitoring issued by James Rolfe, Archaeological Officer of Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service (SCCAS) (Rolfe 2016).
- 1.4 The aim of the archaeological work 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 This report describes the results of the monitoring and aims to inform the design of an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy. The site archive will be deposited at the SCCAS/CT archaeological stores.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

2.1.1 The underlying geology of the site is that of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation (BGS; Website 1). This is sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 86 to 94 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period when the local environment was dominated by warm chalk seas.

2.1.2 The superficial geological deposits are that of Cover Sand - Sand (BGS; Website 1). Superficial deposits formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period when the local environment was dominated by windblown deposits.

2.2 Topography

2.2.1 The localised topography is generally flat and sited at approximately 45m above the OD.

2.2.2 The site lies at TL 8095 8047 within the Center Parcs Forest Holiday Village in Elveden Forest to the west of the village of Elveden. The site sits within the landscaped grounds of Elveden Forest Holiday Village, part of Thetford Forest. The forest was established in the 1920's and is the largest lowland pine forest in Britain. This landscape also encompasses a patchwork of heathland and broadleaf trees.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential, containing numerous prehistoric and Romano-British sites/ findspots. Investigations between 1897 and 1914 at Elveden Brickyard, c. 400m northeast of the site, recovered several hundred Lower Palaeolithic flint handaxes, cores and flakes (SHER ELV 006). Another 50 stone tools, attributable to this local flint industry were found in 1967 (ibid.).
- 3.1.2 The archaeological background below is based on a search of the Suffolk HER which was undertaken in August 2016 (SHER Invoice No. 9191195). The search returned records mostly relating to archaeological investigations which have which have been undertaken within the Centre Parcs site.

3.2 Prehistoric

- 3.2.1 Archaeological evaluation, excavation and monitoring was undertaken 350m northeast of the site prior to the construction of new holiday accommodation between 2007 and 2010 (ELV 067). Investigations identified limited early activity in the Mesolithic/Neolithic and Bronze/Iron Age periods.
- 3.2.2 During investigations undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology during 2011-2012 between Fiveways and Thetford on the A11, limited evidence of transient settlement and occasional activity during the prehistoric period was noted along the entire route.

3.3 Iron Age and Roman

- 3.3.1 Approximately 900m to the east of the proposed development area, evaluation and subsequent targeted excavation at the New Arrivals Lane in the holiday village revealed evidence of two phases of archaeological activity dating to the early Iron Age and early Romano-British period (ELV 135 and ELV 093). Features were recorded across the excavated areas of the site and included evidence of enclosure in both phases. Of particular note was the early Iron Age burial of a juvenile/ young adult present in Area 2. Several Phase 1 pits also yielded notable pottery groups, including eight individual

vessels. This pottery group displays traits consistent with the 'late' decorated Post Deverel-Rimbury ceramic style.

3.3.2 Archaeological evaluation, excavation and monitoring was undertaken 350m northeast of the site prior to the construction of new holiday accommodation between 2007 and 2010 (ELV 067). Investigations identified widespread archaeological deposits despite the shallow depth of archaeological levels and disturbance from the site's former land use as a pine plantation. Limited early activity in the Mesolithic/Neolithic and Bronze/Iron Age periods was identified, but the bulk of the evidence related to a widespread phase of Late Iron Age/Early Roman activity in the 1st century B.C to 1st century A.D. This activity appears to have consisted of a ditched enclosure system associated with a probable agricultural farmstead, with a range of linear ditches and isolated or loose scatters of pits indicating a broad spread of agricultural fields, enclosures and trackways. Although there were no clear indication of structures upon the site, perhaps due to truncation and tree disturbance, the finds and environmental assemblage suggests the presence of domestic occupation, butchery and cereal processing in the immediate vicinity. The settlement focus with which the site is associated appears to have ceased or shifted after the Late Iron Age/Early Roman transition period, perhaps to an area of 2nd-4th century occupation in the fields to the south, and it seems that the site became marginal or rarely used land beyond the periphery of this later settlement.

3.3.3 The route of the A11 runs approximately 1600m southeast of the site from Thetford to Mildenhall. Investigations undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology during 2011-2012 between Fiveways and Thetford have helped to provide important new evidence about the earliest inhabitants of the area and revealed the remains of settlement and associated activities from the Mesolithic era to the end of the Romano-British period. The primary focus of archaeological activity was at Chalk Hall farm on the Elveden Estate. Excavation has shown that this site was occupied intermittently at times throughout the Earlier and Later Iron Age. A planned layout of fields and trackways was imposed on the existing landscape in the early Romano-

British period and although the main farmhouse of the 'villa' estate was not encountered within the route of the new road corridor considerable evidence of barns, driers, working hollows and quarrying were recorded. The farmstead continued to develop throughout the Roman period. It would appear that the farmstead went out of use or ceased to be occupied in the later 4th to early 5th century AD.

- 3.3.4 Information collected from the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) has recorded three findspot from within the search radius including a lead Roman weight, a small Roman copper alloy ring and a small undated copper alloy object.
- 3.3.5 The site of the Outdoor Activity Centre at Centre Parcs located less than 820m to the east of the site was subject to an evaluation in 2006 (ESF19354). No evidence of surviving archaeological deposits was recorded in this location.
- 3.3.6 The site of new Warren Wood Prototype Lodges was evaluated in 2011 (ESF21104) approximately 300m southeast of the proposed site. No evidence of surviving archaeological deposits was recorded in this location.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Excavation and Sampling

- 4.1.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation for the archaeological works proposed the recording of all groundworks relating to the new car park (Figures 2 and 3).
- 4.1.2 Surfaces exposed by machine at depths of 200mm to 300mm were cleaned by trowel and hoe as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools. Overburden deposits were set aside beside each trench and examined visually and with a metal-detector for finds retrieval.
- 4.1.3 Field excavation techniques and recording methods are detailed in the PCA Fieldwork Induction Manual (Operations Manual I) by Joanna Taylor and Gary Brown (2009).
- 4.1.4 All features were investigated and recorded in order to properly understand the date and nature of the archaeological remains on the site and to recover sufficient finds assemblages to assess the chronological development and socio-economic character of the site over time.

4.2 Recording Methodology

- 4.2.1 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.
- 4.2.2 Manual plans and section drawings were not required.
- 4.2.3 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 2009). 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. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were recorded or recovered during the monitoring.

- 4.2.4 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the monitoring process. Black and white film photographs were taken when considered appropriate by the excavator and supervisor.

5 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

5.1.1 Monitoring of the groundworks at of the new car park site suggests previous large scale movement of soil across the area. Buried topsoil was identified along the southeast limit of the area, covered by a landscaping bund resulting from previous stripping of the site. This was likely related to the construction of the firing range shed to the immediate west of the site. No finds were recovered from it. Also exposed were the edges of what were assumed to be large pits filled with sandy material against the southern edge. Late 19th Century maps of the area (First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1882) allow them to be identified as clay pits which were likely already out of use but still visible at that time. These were exposed and no finds were recovered from them.

5.1.2 Metal detecting over the site yielded no finds.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 The monitoring work was undertaken by PCA supervisors Stephen Porter and Jon House. Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Edmond Shipway LLP for commissioning the work. PCA are also grateful to James Rolfe, Archaeological Officer of Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service for monitoring the work. The author would like to thank Taleyna Fletcher for managing the project and PCA's CAD department for preparing the figures.

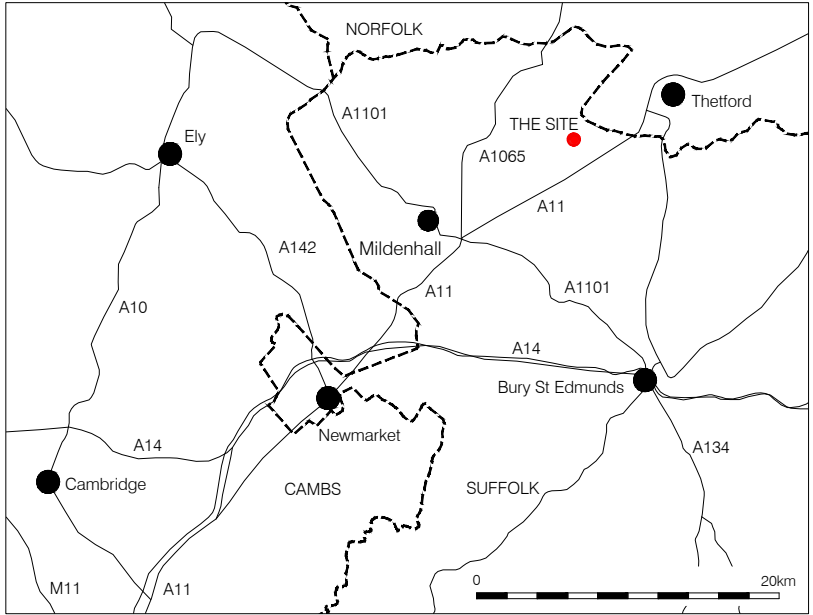
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

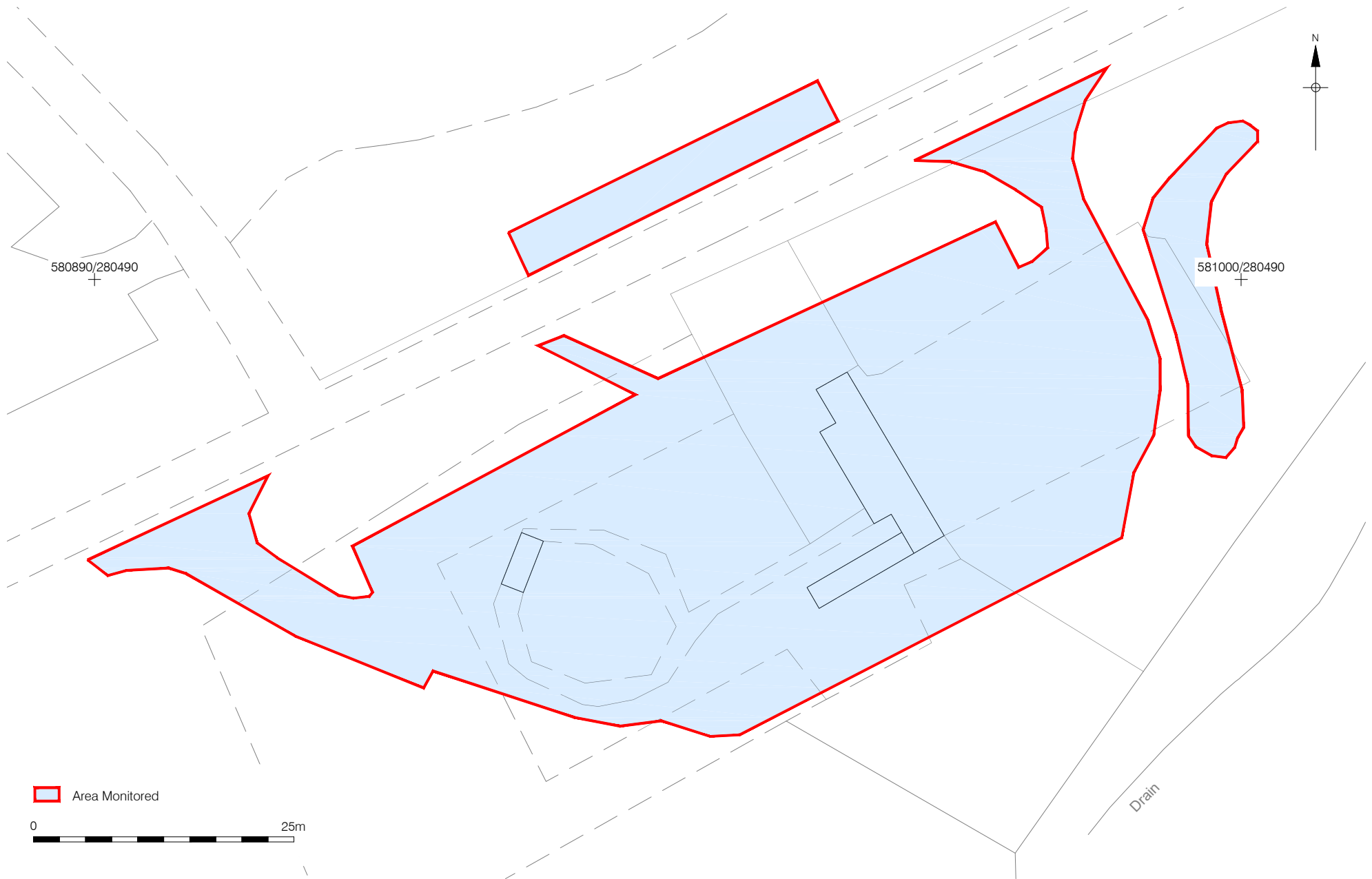
7.1 Printed Sources

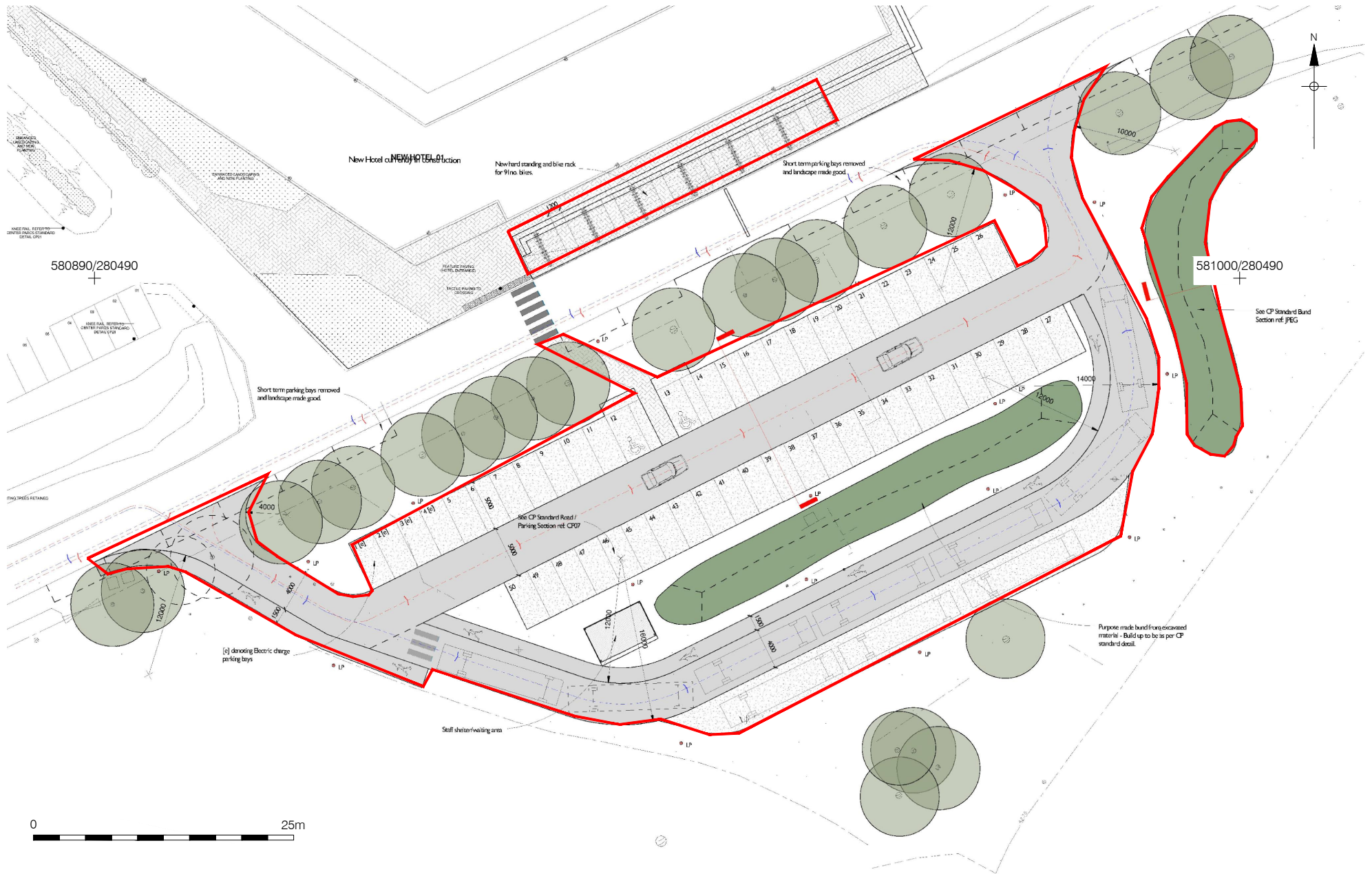
Fletcher, T. 2016 Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation at Elveden Forest Centre Parcs New Car Park, Elveden, Suffolk. Pre-Construct Archaeology (unpublished)

Rolfe, J. 2016 Brief for Archaeological Evaluation at Elveden Forest Centre Parcs New Car Park, Elveden. SCCAS (unpublished)

Ordnance Survey 1882 Suffolk, County series, 1:2,500, Southampton: Ordnance Survey







Plan supplied by client
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Figure 3
 Proposed Site Plan
 1:500 at A4

8 APPENDIX 1: PLATES

Plate 1: The site, view northeast



Plate 2: The site, view northeast



Plate 3: The site, view northwest



Plate 4: The site, view northeast



9 APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-266168

Project details

Project name Elveden Forest Centre Parcs New Car Park, Elveden, Suffolk:
Archaeological Monitoring

Short description of the project This report describes the results of a programme archaeological monitoring carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology at Elveden Forest Centre Parcs new car park (NGR TL 8095 8047) on the 10th to the 17th October 2016. The archaeological work was commissioned by Edmond Shipway LLP in response to a Brief issued by James Rolfe, Archaeological Officer of Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service (SCCAS) (Rolfe 2016) attached to the construction of a customer car park and staff pick up point including shelter/waiting area and landscaping bunds. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area. No archaeological features or finds were identified during the monitoring programme.

Project dates Start: 10-10-2016 End: 17-10-2016

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated ELV 136 - Sitecode
project reference
codes

Any associated ESF24762 - HER event no.
project reference
codes

Type of project Recording project

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country England

Site location SUFFOLK FOREST HEATH ELVEDEN Elveden Forest Centre
Parcs New Car Park, Elveden, Suffolk: Archaeological Monitoring

Study area 0.5 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 8095 8047 52.391859798413 0.659597649771 52 23 30 N 000
39 34 E Point

Project creators

Name of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Organisation

Project brief James Rolfe
originator

Project design Taleyna Fletcher
originator

Project Taleyna Fletcher
director/manager

Project supervisor Jon House and Stephen Porter

Project archives

Physical Archive No
Exists?

Paper Archive Suffolk County Council
recipient

Paper Media "Photograph","Report"
available

Project bibliography

1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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