ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

FOR HEARTS SERVICES LTD

AT TM 144 784 (JUNCTION OF THE A140,143) STUSTON SYS 005

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Report 93/50



Suffolk County Council

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION FOR HEARTS SERVICES LTD AT TM 144 784 (JUNCTION OF THE A140, A143) STUSTON

Site SUSOOS

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at the junction of the A140/A143, Stuston, to establish the archaeological potential of the site. The work was carried out by the Field Projects section of Suffolk County Council for Hearts Services Ltd.

The trial trenching and metal detecting surveys produced surprisingly little archaeological evidence given the proximity of the field to the large Roman settlement adjoining the site.

2. CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

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The work was carried out according to an archaeological brief prepared by the curatorial section of Suffolk County Council (Appendix 1) prior to a planning application for a petrol filling station and restaurant facility. The evaluation covers area `A' only of the proposed development site (see plan in Appendix 1).

The survey area covers approximately 1.2 hectares on an even slope running down to the floodplain of the River Waveney. The subsoil is a mixture of riverine and glacial deposits mostly of sand and gravel but with some clay.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The A140 was a major Roman road linking the large Roman towns of Caistor by Norwich and Colchester and Scole was a formerly a substantial Roman settlement situated at the crossing of the River Waveney. Extensive excavations were undertaken on this site during 1993 and 1994, in advance of the A140-A143 road improvement (the Suffolk excavations are shown in Figure 2). The excavations identified Roman properties along the A140 (Area 7) including the likely southern boundary to the settlement. The excavations closer to the river (Area 6) uncovered a Roman industrial complex probably a malting with a brewery next to an artificial water channel. Also shown is a complex of Roman ditches including evidence of secondary Roman roads in both Areas 6 and 7.

Aerial photographic evidence of the site has been transcribed onto the field plan(Figure 3). This reveals a network of ditches many of which were probably Roman in origin including the course of the Roman road found during the excavations in Area 6. Of particular interest is a rectilinear ditch with a curving corner that may be evidence for an early Roman marching camp. Supporting evidence for this interpretation comes from the metal detected finds which were unearthed during the excavation. Several copies of `Claudius' coins 43-60 AD, which are often associated with military sites, were found under the roadline immediately adjoining the proposed development area.

The area of the evaluation had been fieldwalked for surface finds during 1992. Broadly this produced low concentrations of prehistoric and Roman finds.

4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

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Metal Detecting

A metal detector survey was carried out over the field based on 20m north to south transects. The spoil heaps and basal layers of the trial trenches were also investigated. The find spots are shown in figure 5.

The vegetation cover was very low and fairly thin. The land had not been ploughed but conditions were reasonable for metal detecting.

Trial Trenching

A series of three trial trenches were excavated by machine using a ditching bucket. Following the excavations of these, two more supplementary trenches were dug to clarify the initial results (Figure 4).

Sample sections were drawn from each trench to record the soil profile and sections were also drawn of the possible features. Possible features were investigated by hand on the site (Figures 6-8). The weather conditions under which the survey took place were difficult with high winds, low temperatures and driving rain, this undoubtedly affected the recovery of casual finds but did not hinder either the metal detecting survey or the trial trenching.

5. **RESULTS**

Trench 1 (Figure 6)

Four sections were drawn. These show a ploughsoil depth of between 0.3m and 0.4m Beneath this in sections 1 and 4 were natural deposits of respectively sand and gravel and brown sand. Trenches 2 and 3 contained a well-mixed layer of red brown sand between the ploughsoil and the natural. That this layer was not natural was shown by the discovery of a Claudius coin in section 3.

Trench 2 (Figure 6)

Trench 2 was excavated to investigate the homogeneous `reddy' sand that contained the early Roman coin, shown in section 3, from Trench 1. The trench showed a change in the natural subsoil between flinty gravel and sand down the slope with the reddy sand directly below the ploughsoil at irregular interevals. The drawn section (1) shows a representative upper soil profile with an anomalous (?) layer of purple sand which was directly above the natural (see also the plan next to the section). It was not clear whether this was a panning layer or the remains of an ancient soil preserved in a buried hollow. No archaeological features were seen.

Trench 3 (Figure 7)

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This trench was excavated to verify findings made in trench 4. The section shows an homogeneous grey brown silty sand beneath the ploughsoil over a gleyed grey sand. At least some of the homogeneous sand was thought to be natural. The trench was undoubtedly subject to periodic waterlogging.

Trench 4 (Figure 7)

Sections 1 and 2 show plough soil over reddy sand above natural orange sand. The red sand was more structured with large flints and shallower in section 2.

Section 3 shows a small ditch profile, 'A', beneath the ploughsoil. It was unclear at what height it had been cut from but iron panning was visible in the adjacent soil and did not extend over the ditch. This was also true in the case of ditch 'B' shown in section 5 that ran parallel to ditch 'A'(see Figure 4). Both ditches contained some charcoal, in ditch 'B' it appeared to extend beyond the ditch cut. These parallel ditches were apparently 6m apart. Section 4 records a feature located between the ditches 'C'. It consisted of a shallow hollow filled with coarse charcoal. The surrounding sand had been burnt in situ. A second centre of charcoal beneath the ploughsoil lay just beyond the hollow and was mixed with burnt flint.

Trench 5 (Figure 8)

This section contained a very stony reddy brown layer between the ploughsoil and the natural. In trenches 2 and 4 the natural, respectively, coarse gravel and sand lay immediately below the ploughsoil. In section 3 an homogeneous reddy sand separated the two. Within it was a band of grey sand. It was unclear whether this was a stratified soil or formed in situ by a natural process perhaps associated with fluctuations in the water table which was high in this area.

6. THE FINDS

No finds were recovered from the site apart from those made by metal detecting. No finds were seen in context although odd struck and burnt flints and pottery fragments were observed casually across the surface of the field.

7. METAL DETECTED FINDS

90001

Bronze coin, antoninianus, irregular. Worn and corroded. <u>Obv.</u> radiate; <u>rev.</u> sacrificial implements. Late C3,

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90002

Bronze coin, very corroded, diameter 25.5mm. Probably <u>as</u>. <u>Obv</u>. head (Claudius I?) to left; <u>rev</u>. unclear, probably Minerva, c.43-60.

90003

Iron nail head, diameter 15mm, undatable.

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90004

Bronze mount fragment. Single integral rivet. ?Slot along one edge. ?Post Medieval.

90005

Bronze cylindrical object with grooves around exterior. Length 17.3mm, diameter 11.5mm, internal diameter 8.5mm. Similar objects in HCH 001 and PKM 005 collections, possibly Roman.

90006

Sheet bronze fragment, ?buckle plate, rectangular corner and part of a rivet hole. 1mm thick. Undatable.

90007

Bronze fragment with attached iron, two pierced lugs similar to rowel spurs. Post Medieval.

90008

Silver coin, cut half penny, worn. Medieval.

7. INTERPRETATION OF THE TRENCHING

The trenches were generally very similar in appearance, they revealed natural sand and gravel in patches beneath the ploughsoil toward the top of the slope with sand towards the bottom. In places on the slope were pockets of homogeneous sand. This is likely to be a `colluvial' deposit. A layer of mixed soil that has moved, or being moved, perhaps by pre modern ploughing to infill uneven hollows across the field and to regularise the slope down towards the floodplain. A possible break of slope that has been levelled out by the ploughing is shown on the plan. This would explain the locating of the Claudius coin within this type of deposit below the break of slope in Trench 1.

The two ditches 'A' and 'B' discovered in trench 4 were parallel to the adjoining 'hedge boundary' and neither ditch was seen in trenches 3 and 5. These features seem to cut the homogeneous sand with panning and it was not possible to date either feature but it was certainly possible that they were both modern. However they align with a Roman road discovered during the recent excavations (Figure 2) from which they could easily be a continuation. The failure to find further evidence in the adjoining trenches does not disprove this hypothesis. It may offer an explanation for the discovery of the early Roman coin made in Trench 1. Feature C and D despite their proximity to the ditches were different. Both were sealed by some of the homogeneous red sand layer and represented areas of burning on the site. This can be caused by the burning of tree stumps but the regularity of the shape of feature C and the presence of burnt flints suggests these features were both prehistoric in origin.

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8. CONCLUSIONS

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The principle aim of the evaluation was to establish the extent of Roman activity in the area with particular emphasis on the early (possibly military) occupation of the site.

The aerial photographic evidence of cropmarks was entirely negative for the southern field, which was in contrast to the northern field. This evidence was largely consistent with the findings from the trial trenching with the exception of the parallel ditches. This could either mean features have eroded away or that there were few to begin with. Although soil movement and erosion had occurred in the southern field, the second argument would seem the most likely.

Of the features discovered the despite the lack of dating evidence the two ditches are of interest given their significant alignment with the 1993-1994 excavations. The burnt features were probably prehistoric, the presence of such features at a background level is to be expected along the valley floor of the Waveney.

The metal detected small finds are of some interesting, in particular the Claudius coin found in trench 1, which was probably a military issue belonging to the Roman army. However it was found in a disturbed soil and seems to have been an isolated find although if it were to be established that the ditches were associated with a Roman road this would be significant.

The other Roman finds are consistent with the location of a major Roman site close by.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The general lack of archaeological features on the site and low density of general finds does not justify preservation of the site on archaeological grounds. However, the potential identification of a Roman road existing beyond the confines of the original Roman settlement is of interest and any development of the site should take this into consideration. More generally the proximity of the site to a major Roman settlement would justify archaeological monitoring of any development.

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10. ARCHIVE

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The records and finds from the site are currently held at the Archaeological Unit, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds. Small finds 90002 and 90005, which are of particular interest are being despatched to Norwich Museum for cleaning.

A Tester atheart.doc

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The site showing boundaries visible until recent times





Figure 2

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Location of Suffolk County Council Excavations on the Roman Settlement at Scole 1993-1994













Pattern of metal detector survey and small find locations.

<u>100</u> 50 metres





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TRENCH 4



TRENCH 5



1







Natural Orange sand



BRIEF AND SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

PROPOSED FILLING STATION AT A140/A143 JUNCTION, STUSTON

1. <u>Background</u>

- 1.1 An application is being prepared by Hearts Services Ltd for a petrol filling station and restaurant facility at TM 144 784 (area A on plan) with services and drainage laying over a strip to the north (area B).
- 1.2 The archaeological section has advised Hearts Services that an archaeological evaluation of the area will be needed in order to establish the full archaeological implications of the application.
- 1.3 The site lies on the terrace to the south of the River Waveney. It is immediately west of the area evaluated and excavated in advance of construction of the A140 Scole-Dickleburgh Improvement in 1993, County SMR No. SUS 005. Sufficient information can be collected from the existing records to comment on area B, which includes cropmark features, mainly of Roman date, a burnt flint scatter and a likelihood of other prehistoric features.

Area A, however, has been less well studied, though fieldwalking has produced prehistoric flintwork and a couple of Roman brooches were found here previously. It is important to establish whether there is Roman activity in this area, particularly whether there is early (possibly military) occupation which has been suggested as an interpretation of the cropmarks here.

1.4 All arrangements for the field evaluation of the site, the timing of the work, and access to the site, are to be negotiated with the commissioning body.

2. Brief for Archaeological Evaluation

The object of the evaluation is to:

- 2.1 Establish whether any archaeological deposits exist on the area which are of sufficient importance to require conservation in situ.
- 2.2 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. <u>Specification</u>

- 3.1 Transcription of archaeological features from all available air photographs held by Suffolk County Council and from excavation records of the immediately adjacent area, also held by Suffolk County Council, at a scale of 1:2500.
- 3.2 Metal detector survey of Area A based on a 20 metre grid. This will only be feasible if the field is bare or has a <u>low</u> vegetation cover.
- 3.3 Excavation of archaeological trial trenches in Area A.



4. Trial Trenching Method

- 4.1 Excavated trial trenches should cover 2% of the site area and be positioned to sample all areas of the site. Linear trenches are thought to be the most appropriate sampling method.
- 4.2 The topsoil may be mechanically removed using a appropriate machine (fitted with a toothless bucket) and other equipment. All machine excavation is to be under the direct control and supervision of an archaeologist. The topsoil should be examined for archaeological material.
- 4.3 The top of the first archaeological deposit may be cleared by machine, but must then be cleaned off by hand. The decision as to the proper method of further excavation will be made by the senior project archaeologist with regard to the nature of the deposit; there is a presumption that excavation of archaeological deposits will be done by hand unless it can be shown that there will not be a loss of evidence by using a machine.
- 4.4 In all evaluation excavation there is a presumption of the need to cause the minimum disturbance to the site consistent with adequate evaluation; that significant archaeological features, e.g. solid or bonded structural remains, building slots or post-holes, should be preserved intact even if fills are sampled.
- 4.5 It may not be necessary to reduce all trenches to subsoil level, but there must be sufficient excavation to give clear evidence for the depth and nature of archaeological deposits across the site.
- 4.6 Any natural subsoil surface revealed should be hand cleaned and examined for archaeological deposits and artefacts. Sample excavation of any archaeological features revealed may be necessary in order to gauge their date and character. Metal detector searches should take place at all stages of the excavation.
- 4.7 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with the County Planning Officer during the course of evaluation).
- 4.8 Human remains should be left in situ except in those cases where damage or desecration are to be expected, or in the event that analysis of the remains is shown to be a requirement of satisfactory evaluation of the site.
- 4.9 Topsoil, subsoil and archaeological deposit to be kept separate during excavation to allow sequential backfilling of excavations.



