

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Cable Trench Monitoring RAF Lakenheath ERL 086

Two and a half days during July 1997 were spent at RAF Lakenheath recording archaeological material within a trench dug to lay underground cables. The trench was 86m long and dug to a depth of 0.70m below the present surface. The trench ran between buildings 864 and 880 crossing archaeological site ERL 086; part of the extensive settlement which surrounded the natural spring of Caudle Head Mere. The settlement flourished during the Roman period but evidence has indicated that activity occurred around the mere from the Mesolithic to Early-Saxon period. The trench was situated at TL7282 8070 about 250m south-west of the mere where work done previously on the site showed a substantial and well preserved archaeological deposits survived. The ground here has largely been undisturbed since the early Saxon period and the archaeological material exists close to the surface at 15-20cms below the present ground level and as a consequence, vulnerable to any ground works.

The side of the trench were drawn at 1:20 with cut features and well stratified finds being recorded along all of its length. The trench began at building 880 and the density of features over the first 45m of its length was quite intense. It is difficult to interpret the evidence within such a limited space, but the features are probably ditches. Inter-cutting between the features demonstrated that a sequence of phases were represented here which suggests a prolonged occupation of the site.

An extensive but apparently localised spread of a black soil overlay and slumped into the top of some of the features. This layer numbered 0200 and 0201, extended for c. 28m starting at around 26m from the beginning of the trench. The layer was up to 40cms deep, included charcoal, clay and chalk fragments and was rich in pottery and other finds associated with domestic occupation. It is characteristic on late Roman sites and possibly represents a great midden where household refuse was deposited on the surface in open heaps. The date of the pottery spanned all of the Roman period and also included some Early Saxon wares, an analysis and full catalogue of the pottery are recorded elsewhere in the report.

The spread of features continued right across the trench length beyond the spread of black sand. The main concentration occurring from the edge of the dark soil to a point 50m from the beginning of the trench and was so dense as to make it difficult to distinguish individual cuts. Some of the features here extended below the floor of the trench so the base of these features will remain intact below the cable. Finds from the cut features were less common than from the dark earth but some pottery was collected and numbered 0202-0204 (see finds report for details).

It is clear from all of the invasive work done here that a significant and well preserved archaeological deposits lies in this area which is part of the extensive and long running settlement around Caudle Head. The monitoring has shown that the occupation extended at least as far as the road east of building 864 and the feature density suggest that this was a vibrant part of the settlement. The presence of the dark earth overlying some features demonstrates that the upper parts of the Roman/ Early Saxon soil profile are undisturbed.

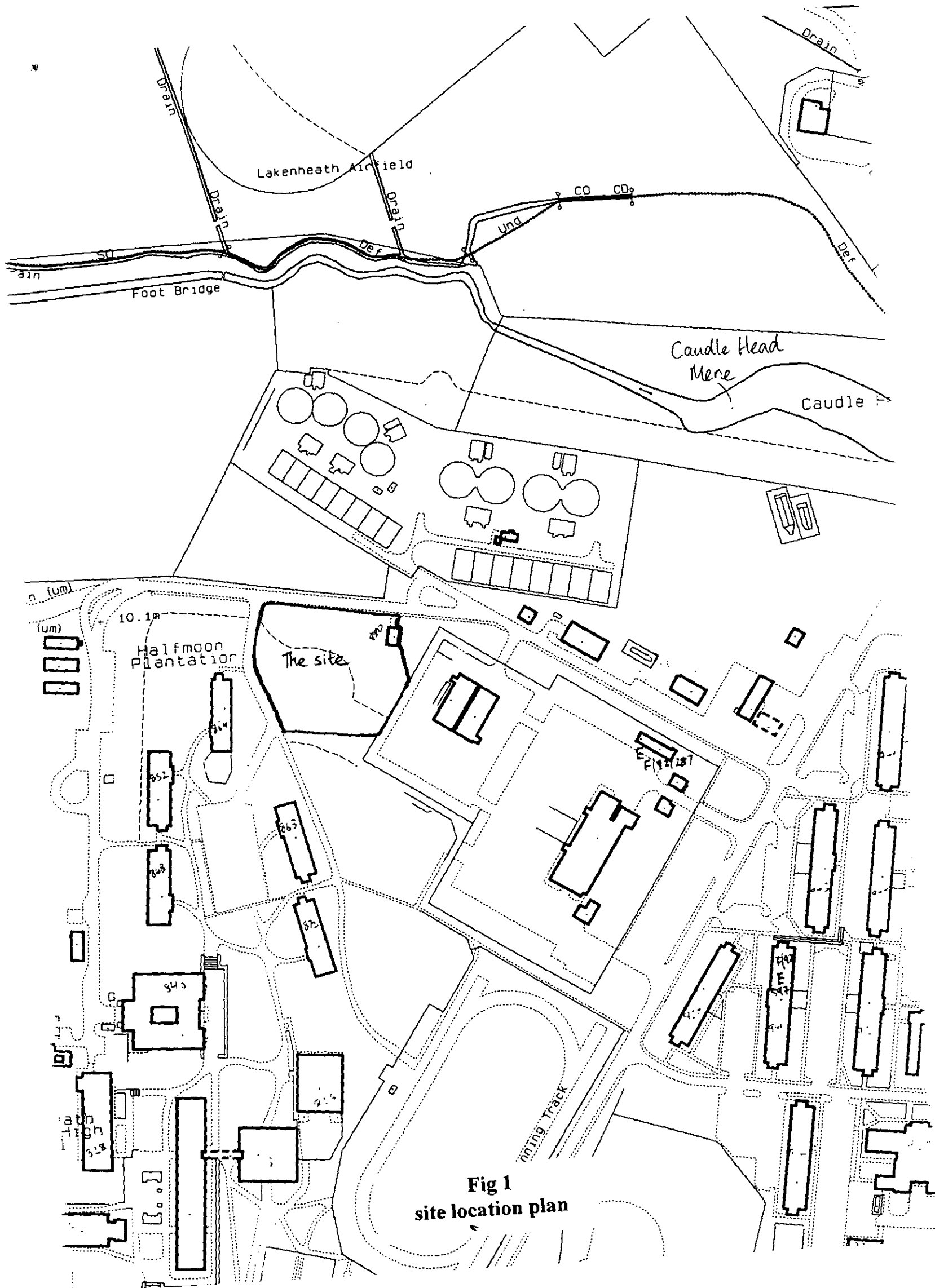


Fig 1
site location plan

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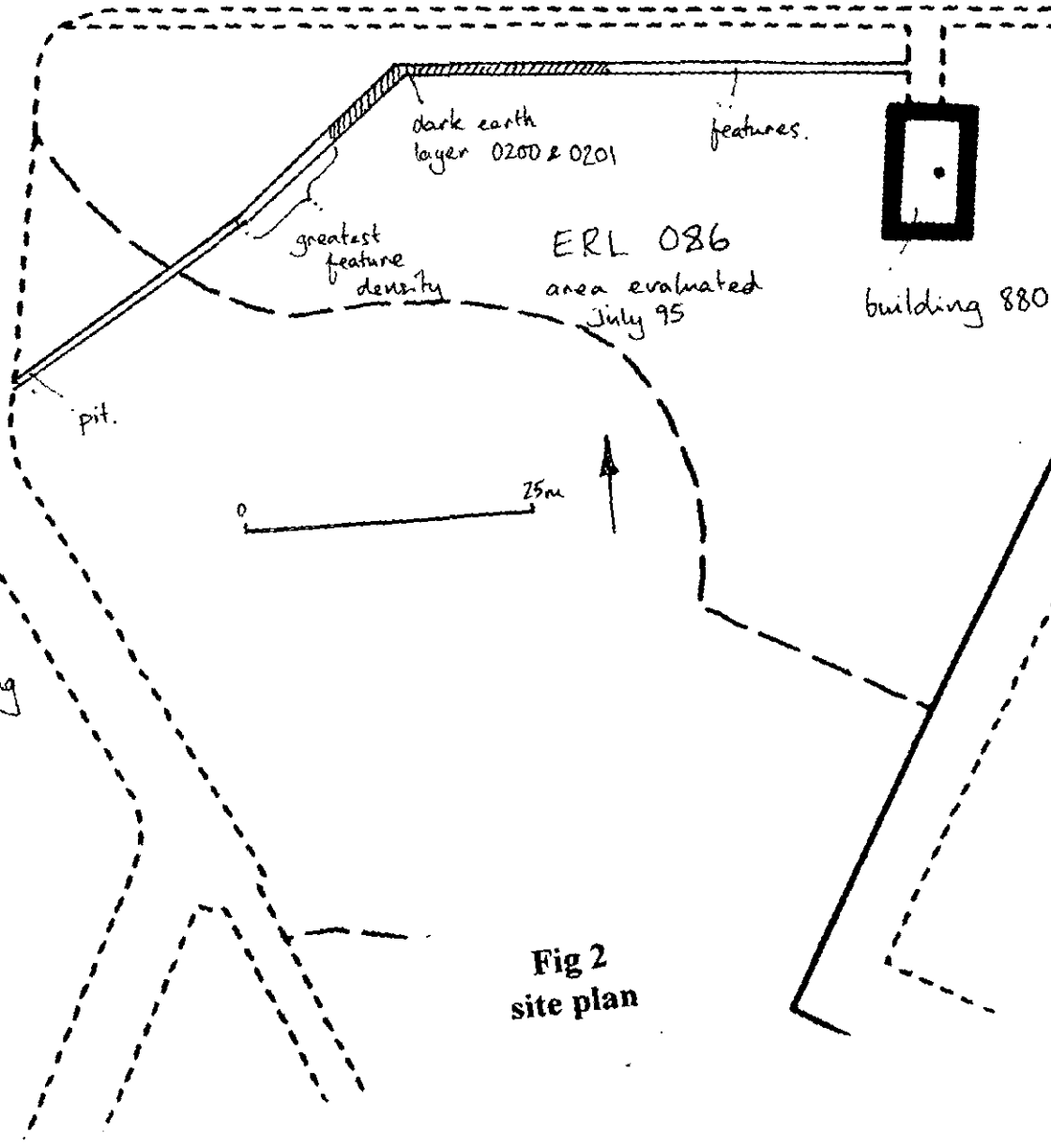
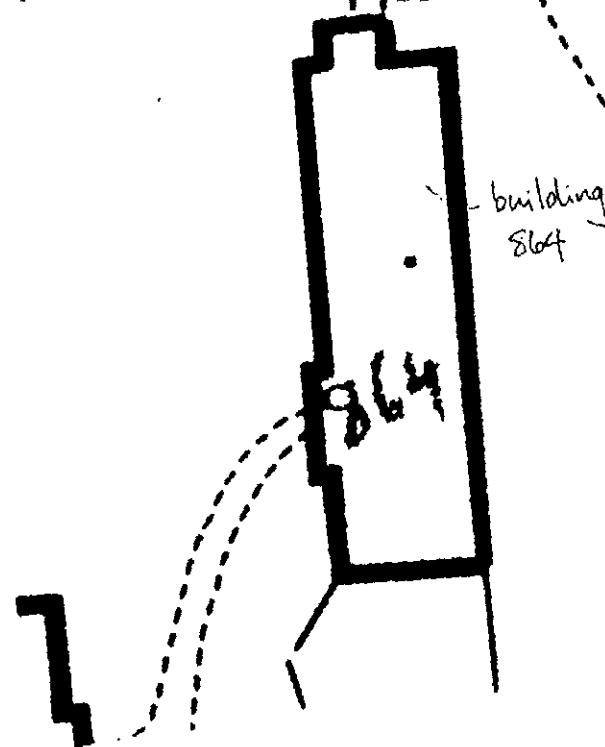


Fig 2
site plan

RAF LAKENHEATH (ERL 086) CABLE MONITORING FINDS
Cathy Tester November 1997,

The following table summarises the finds quantities from the cable trench monitoring.

<u>find type</u>	<u>qty</u>	<u>wt(kg)</u>
pottery	37	0.566
animal bone	71	1.242
tile	5	0.220
fired clay	1	0.005
flint	1	0.002
puddingstone quern	1	1.102
stone	4	1.652

Almost all of the finds came from two contexts (0200 and 0201).

Pottery

The 37 sherds of pottery recovered from the cable trench monitoring included three sherds of early Saxon handmade pottery but the majority was Roman and spanned the entire Roman period.

Roman

Roman pottery included sherds of beakers, jars, bowls and dishes. Eleven Roman pottery fabrics or fabric groups were identified and included:

Local and regionally traded coarse wares - used mainly for food preparation cooking and storage, among them were grey wares from the Nar Valley in Norfolk (NA), Horningsea in Cambs. (HOG), Wattisfield in Suffolk (GM), and from undetermined but presumed local sources (GX). Shell-tempered wares (SG) were from possible sources in the south midlands or from the kilns at Lakenheath. Coarse white wares (WX) came from indeterminate sources.

Provincially traded fine colour-coated wares were from the Nene Valley (NV), Much Hadham in Herts (MH), Oxfordshire (OX), and from undetermined sources (RC).

Imported fine ware came from Rheinzabern in East Gaul. The decorated samian bowl Dr form 37 was the only imported fineware found.

Saxon

Three sherds of handmade early Saxon sand and vegetal tempered pottery were found

Summary

This is a small sample from a restricted area but the pottery evidence suggests initial activity in the late 1st or early 2nd century AD that continued throughout the Roman period and (with or without a gap) into the 5th century early Saxon period. The two main contexts (0200 and 0201) contained pottery from the late 1st or early 2nd century, the mid and late 2nd and a particular concentration of 3rd, late 3rd and 4th century wares. The presence of early Saxon handmade pottery dates the deposits to no earlier than the 5th century.

The pottery evidence adds to a larger body of information that is accumulating about activity in the area which may help to interpret the late Roman /early Saxon interface. It can be seen as a reflection of the major economic changes which occurred at the end of the Roman period and the change from the material culture that was characteristic of late Roman Britain to that of Anglo-Saxon England.

OP	FABRIC	SHERD	FORM	NUM	COMMENT	DATE
0001	MH	body		1		LC3-C4
				1		
0200	NA	rim	4	1		LC2-C3
0200	NA	rim	6.19.4	1		LC2-LC3
0200	NA	base	jar	1		LC2-LC3
0200	SG	body	jar	1	rilled	LC3-C4
0200	OX	base	bowl	1	trimmed around base for re-use	C4
0200	OX	base		1		C4
0200	NV	rim	6.15?	2	parchment ware (like NV98 may re-classify)	C4
0200	WX	body		1		
0200	RC	body	3	1	dark brown slip	C3
0200	GX	body		3	burnished	
0200	GM	body	5.4	1	one groove	LC1-EC2
0200	ESax	rim	jar	1		C5-MC7
				15		
0201	SA	rim	Dr 37	1	rim and plain zone only, Rheinzabern fabric	LC2-MC3
0201	GX	rim	3.10	7	3.10 variant with vertical neck and out-turned rim	MC2+
0201	GX	body	3.10.1	1		MC2+
0201	GX	body	jar	1	incised horizontal lines	
0201	GX	body		1		
0201	GM	body	jar	2	burnished	
0201	GM	base		1		
0201	HOG	base	jar	1	oxidised	C3
0201	ESax	rim	jar	1		C5-MC7
0201	ESax	body		1		C5-MC7
				17		
0202	NV	rim	6.7	1	dark brown slip	LC3-C4
				1		
0203	MH	body		1		LC3-C4
				1		
0204	SG	body	4.	1	rilled	LC3-C4
0204	GX	body		1		
				2		

RAF Lakenheath Cable Monitoring ERL 086

OPNO	potno	potkg	bonekg	tileno	tilek	clayno	clayk	flintnos	flintkg	quernkg	stonenos	stonekg	misc
0001	1	.000											
0200	15	.260	1.080	3	.160					1.100	3	.870	Tile RB, Stone 1 frag granite, 2 frags burnt? Sandstone. Lava = Puddingstone.
0201	17	.230	.160	1	.030	1	.010	1	.000		1	.790	Tile Shelly Type. Stone Burnt ? Sandstone.
0202	1	.050											Colour coat rim.
0203	1	.010											
0204	2	.010		1	.030								At least 1 thumb impression in tile.
	37	.570	1.240	5	.220	1	.010	1	.000	1.100	4	1.650	