



WSOH, Land at Hollow Road Farm Fornham St Martin, Suffolk

Client

West Suffolk Councils

Date

October 2018

FSM024

Post-excavation Assessment Report

SACIC Report No.: 2018/031

Author: Catherine Douglas & Timothy Schofield

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WSOH, Land at Hollow Road Fornham St Martin, Suffolk

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Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of Suffolk Archaeology CIC. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk Archaeology CIC cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

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Summary

Suffolk Archaeology CIC (SACIC) undertook an excavation between the 12th February and 29th March 2018, on the proposed site of the West Suffolk Operations Hub at Hollow Road Farm, Fornham St Martin, Suffolk.










The work followed on from a geophysical survey undertaken by Britannia Archaeology in 2014, which resulted in several potential archaeological anomalies being detected. Anomalies included two large linear ditches in the eastern part of the site, that were subsequently trial trenched by Suffolk Archaeology, confirming the presence of ditched enclosures and identifying thirteen features indicative of site occupation, spanning from the Middle Iron Age through to the Roman period. These features were focussed in the eastern third of the field and therefore a programme of archaeological mitigation was required for an archaeological excavation area covering an area of two hectares.

Archaeological features exposed in the excavation area included ditches, pits and post holes, containing artefacts indicative of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman settlement activity. The most prominent features were a series of parallel ditches dating to the Middle to Late Iron Age and part of a small Roman enclosure identified in previous works to the south.









This report comprises an assessment and quantification of the site archive and considers its significance and potential in addressing regional research objectives. The site is of local significance, with further analysis having the potential for increasing our understanding of local settlement and agricultural activity spanning from the Bronze Age to Middle to Late Iron Age and into the Roman periods. It includes an updated project design for the completion of an analytical report, publication summary and archive deposition.

Drawing Conventions

Plans

- Limit of Excavation 
- Features 
- Break of Slope 
- Features - Conjectured 
- Natural Features 
- Sondages/Machine Strip 
- Intrusion/Truncation 
- Illustrated Section  S.14
- Cut Number **0008**
- Archaeological Feature 

Sections

- Limit of Excavation 
- Cut 
- Modern Cut 
- Cut - Uncertain 
- Deposit Horizon 
- Deposit Horizon - Uncertain 
- Intrusion/Truncation 
- Break in Section 
- Cut Number **0088**
- Deposit Number 0089
- Ordnance Datum

S	N
55.27	
⋈	⋈

1. Introduction

1.1. Project background

An excavation to record archaeological deposits, was undertaken on the proposed site of the West Suffolk Operations Hub at Hollow Road Farm, Fornham St Martin, Suffolk (Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Currie and Brown Ltd on behalf of the funding client, West Suffolk Councils.

Following initial stages of geophysical survey (Schofield 2014) and archaeological trial trench evaluation (Schofield 2016) Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS), the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) recommended that a programme of archaeological mitigation be secured by condition on any planning consent in accordance with paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework and policies DM2 and DM20, of the Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015. The following conditions were subsequently imposed:

(1). No development shall take place within the area indicated [the whole site] until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The scheme of investigation shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- a. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording;
- b. The programme for post investigation assessment;
- c. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording;
- d. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation;
- e. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation;
- f. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation;
- g. The site investigation shall be completed prior to development, or in such other phased arrangement, as agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

(2). No building shall be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed, submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Part 1 and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition.

The required programme of archaeological work, a c.2ha open area excavation covering the central and western parts of the full development site, was then described in an

SCCAS Brief. The requirements of the Brief were addressed in a Suffolk Archaeology CIC Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, Appendix 15) which was approved by SCCAS prior to the start of fieldwork.

1.2 The scope of the project

The scope of the project is to 'provide a record of archaeological deposits which are damaged or removed by any development permitted by the current planning consent' with a view to recording and advancing understanding of the significance of any heritage assets. Following the excavation fieldwork the principal aims of this post-excavation assessment report are as follows:

- Summarise the results of the archaeological fieldwork.
- Quantify the site archive and review the post-excavation work undertaken to date.
- Assess the significance of the data in relation to the Regional Research Framework for the East of England (Brown and Glazebrook, 2000, Medlycott 2011) and the potential of the site archive to answer the research aims.
- Detail further analysis that will be necessary to produce a full archive report and enable the site archive to be deposited with the county Historic Environment Record (HER).
- Make recommendations for publication of the project in a suitable format.

1.3. Location, geology and topography

The site is located approximately 0.5km northeast of Bury St Edmunds, in a single arable field at NGR TL 86353 66410. The site lies to the east of the A134, to the south of Hollow Road and is bounded to the east by a field and to the south by farm buildings. It is located on a south facing slope, at a height ranging from 50 to 56m above Ordnance Datum.

Underlying bedrock geology consists of Newhaven Chalk Formation and Culver Chalk Formation (undifferentiated), formed in the Cretaceous Period in warm chalk seas. Superficial deposits are described as Lowestoft Formation; an extensive sheet of chalky till, together with outwash sands and gravels, silts and clays. The till is characterised by its chalk and flint content (British Geological Survey website, 2018).

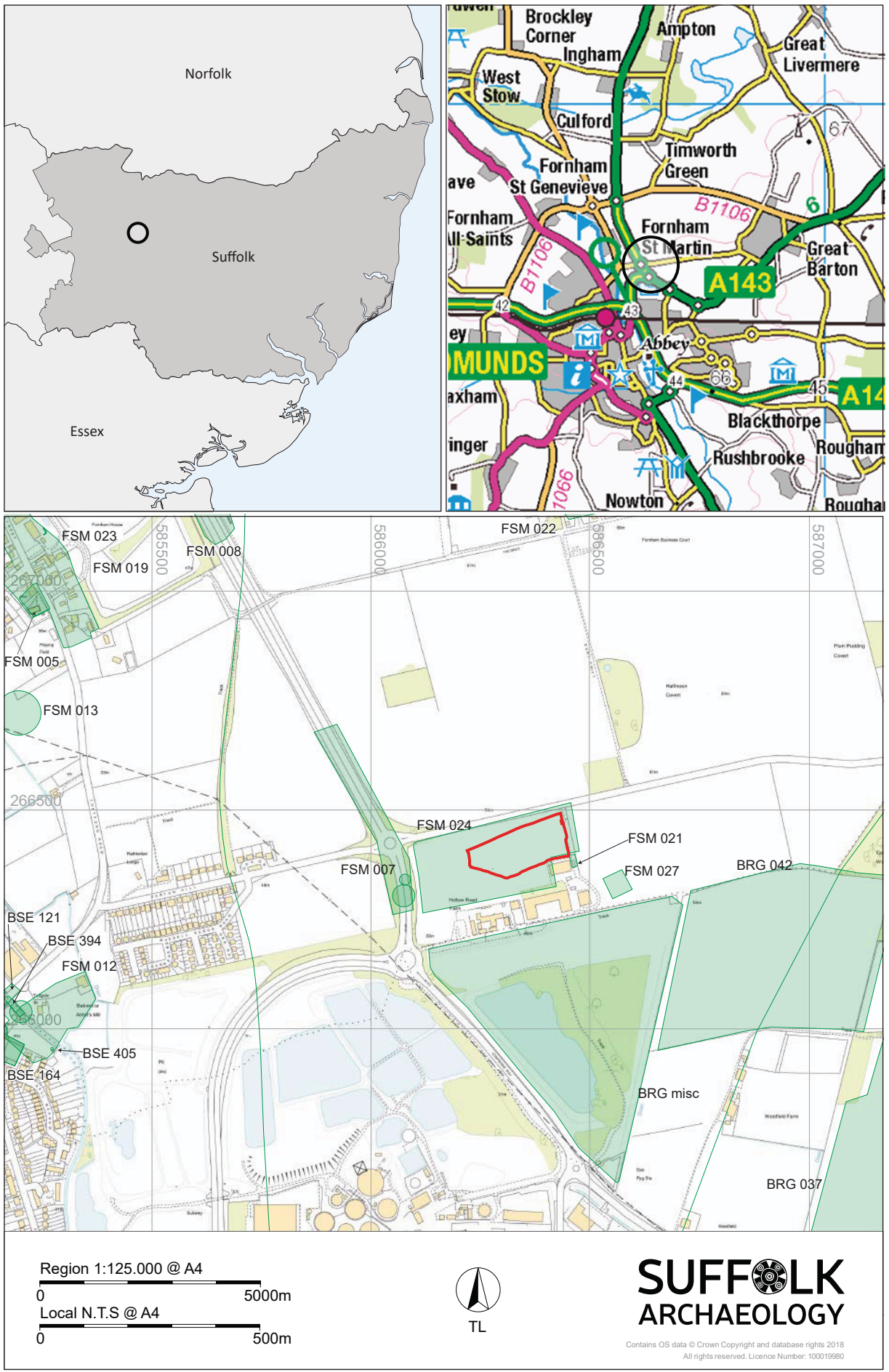


Figure 1. Site location plan

1.4. Archaeological and historical background

1.4.1. Historic Environment Record (HER)

The site was initially deemed of interest by SCCAS as it *'lies in an area of archaeological potential for Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval occupation, recorded on the County Historic Environment Record'* that had not previously been subject to systematic archaeological investigations.

A new search of the Suffolk HER, for a 1km radius centred on the site, has been commissioned as part of the excavation project (HER search no. 9212727). It identified forty-five 'monuments', including the previous geophysical survey and evaluation trial trenching (see below). Some of the entries were duplications of the same site and one was an outline record for the current site, FSM 024. The full results of the search are held in the digital project archive and a summary of all entries is provided in Appendix 1.

Prehistoric

A Bronze Age awl was found (probably during metal detecting) on the current site (FSM Misc). A scatter of worked flints from the field surface, probably mainly Middle Bronze Age in date were identified 250m southeast of the site (BRG 042) and 800m to the southeast (BRG 037).

A fieldwalking survey at Fornham by-pass located a concentration of 19 worked flints (FSM 008), worked flints were also identified at 28 Friday Meadow, 1km southwest of the site (BSE 413).

Roman

Several metal-detected Roman finds have been recorded within 1km of the site, including four coins (FSM 007), a disc brooch (BSE Misc) and a seal and coins (BRG Misc).

Roman pits and ditches were recorded during the excavation immediately southeast of the current site (FSM 021). A Roman pottery sherd find spot and post-medieval brick and tile was identified during evaluation trenching at Hollow Road Farm, immediately to the southeast (FSM 027).

The line of a former road of possible Roman or medieval date, between Bury St Edmunds Eastgate Street and Great Livermere, marking the parish boundaries (BRG 052) is

located 700m to the east, running on a northeast to southwest alignment.

Anglo-Saxon

The historic settlement core of Fornham Saint Martin has been defined using a combination of sources, that include historic mapping, listed building locations and artefact scatter coordinates; its origins can be traced to 850 AD (FSM 023). Metal detected finds include a small brooch (FSM 013) and a bronze saucer brooch (BSE Misc.)

Early Saxon features and pottery were found sealed by suspected medieval deposits during an evaluation at Tollgate Public House (BSE 164), 950m to the southwest of the current excavation.

Medieval

An archaeological evaluation on land around the Tollgate Public House, near the medieval Babwell Mill, revealed evidence of a water management system serving the mill (BSE 164), the mill is shown on the 1886 OS map (FSM 012). Other nearby medieval buildings include Babwell Friary, a Franciscan order founded in 1263 and dissolved in 1538 (BSE 014) and the Church of St Martin (FSM 005). An 18th - 19th century bridge crossing of the River Lark (BSE 121) 1000m to the southwest is thought to have a medieval derivation.

A fieldwalking and metal detector survey (FSM 007) located immediately to the west, recovered a scatter of artefacts across a c.400m stretch, which included a 'small-long' brooch fragment dating to the early medieval period.

An excavation and an assessment of the medieval precinct wall was undertaken at The Priory Hotel in Tollgate Lane (BSE 509), uncovering graves containing human burials and pits with disarticulated bones.

A range of metal-detected finds have been recovered from within the 1km search radius, that include a Medieval Boy Bishop token, a lead seal, a knife and a horse pendant that was trefoil shaped with the three crowns of St Edmund in gilt on a blue enamel background (BSE Misc.).

An area of ancient woodland defined by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust that includes oak trees and an Ash belt is located 1km northeast of the site (FSM 011).

Post-medieval

Two WW2 pillboxes are located 1km west (BSE 399) and 0.9km southwest of the site (BSE 405).

The site is near the Ipswich to Bury St Edmunds railway line, which opened in November 1846 (SUF 069) and the Thetford to Bury St Edmunds railway line, which opened in 1876 (SUF 073).

Tollgate Lock, located on the River Lark was constructed in 1890 as Lock number 1 on the Lark Navigation. It collapsed in 1892 and remained derelict for many years (BSE 394).

Unknown

Several features of unknown date have been identified as crop marks within the wider vicinity, including a double ditched track/road that lies 1km north of the site and was aerial photographed by Suffolk Archaeological Service (FSM 002). Potential ring ditches have further been recorded to the north and northwest (FSM 003, FSM 009, BRG 022, BRG 023).

A second ancient woodland at Farm Covert (FSM 010) has been defined 0.71km north of the site.

1.4.2.Historic mapping

Agricultural practices associated with Fornham Farm have dominated the recent cartographic history of the site from at least as far back as 1886, as depicted on the Ordnance Survey County Series map of Suffolk. The field in which the site is located is broadly unchanged since its depiction on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey of 1886, apart from the expansion of buildings at Hollow Road Farm along its southern edge, and the creation of the modern A134 which encroached upon its western side.

1.4.3.Previous fieldwork

The first stage of investigative works to inform the planning application was a geophysical survey of the site in November 2014 by Britannia Archaeology (Schofield 2014). This

identified a series of anomalies of possible archaeological interest, including two large linear ditches in the eastern part of the site suggesting that the archaeological evidence seen at FSM 021 could extend across the wider field.

The geophysical survey was followed by a trial trench evaluation, carried out by SACIC in August 2016 (Schofield 2016). The evaluation identified a total of thirteen features in the twenty-four trenches, all overlain by varying depths of subsoil and/or ploughsoil deposits and cut into the superficial geology. The archaeological features were indicative of site occupation from at least the Middle Iron Age through to the Roman period, with features focussed in the eastern third of the field. Ditched enclosures on a variety of alignments indicates that the site has been continually subdivided from at least the Middle Iron Age while rubbish pits and material evidence suggested the presence of domestic habitation, animal husbandry and cereal crop production. The evaluation evidence was broadly contemporary with that seen at the small excavation site (FSM 021) immediately adjacent to the southeast corner (Beverton 2011).

1.5. Original research aims

The primary objective of the excavation, as outlined in the SCCAS Brief was to preserve the archaeological deposits likely to be damaged or removed during the development, by record.

As indicated in the evaluation report and SCCAS excavation Brief, the project was likely to have the potential to address research aims concerning Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British rural occupation and agriculture activity, as defined in the Regional Research Framework for the Eastern Counties (Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott 2011 pp15-21 and pp47-48). Analysis of the site archive was thought to have potential to contribute towards to an increase our understanding of rural settlement and landscapes, the agrarian economy and the Iron Age/Roman transition.

2. Methodology

2.1. Fieldwork

As set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Craven, 2018), a single area measuring c.2ha was set out using a real time kinematic global positioning system (RTK GPS).

The excavation area was stripped using two tracked mechanical 360° excavators. All mechanical excavation was undertaken using toothless ditching buckets, under the direct supervision of suitably qualified and experienced archaeologists. Overburden deposits (e.g. topsoil and subsoil) were removed first. Machine excavation was continued until the first archaeological horizon or the surface of the natural geology was encountered. Care was taken to retain the seemingly homogenous layers that may have made up the upper limit of archaeological features. The resultant surfaces were cleaned as necessary and a pre-excavation plan prepared using an RTK GPS.

All excavation work was carried out in line with SCCAS guidelines (SCCAS, 2017) and the Standards and Guidance of the Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014).

Topsoil and subsoil layers were visually scanned for finds during the excavation, spoil generated from the excavation of each archaeological feature was also closely inspected. All spoil removed during the mechanical excavation and by hand from individual features was prospected by an experienced detectorist.

All relationships between the ditches and gullies were investigated, defined and recorded, with all terminals excavated. Sufficient segments were excavated along a feature's length to determine its character across its entire course; the possibility of recuts of parts, and not the whole feature was considered. Post and stake holes were fully excavated, ensuring that all relationships were investigated.

All excavated deposits and features were recorded according to current professional standards, employing standard pro-forma SACIC registers, context sheets and numbering systems which followed on from the previous evaluation. Individual features were recorded by hand at 1:10 or 1:20 in plan and in section.

A full digital photographic record of all features was maintained, portraying the principal features and finds both in detail and in a general context. The photographic record also includes working shots to represent more generally the nature of the fieldwork.

All finds recovered from excavated deposits were collected and retained in line with the Suffolk Archaeology artefacts collection policy.

2.2. Environmental strategy

Samples were taken from suitable contexts; predominantly those that were well-sealed slowly silted features. The sampling strategy aimed to recover spatial and temporal information concerning the occupation of the site, best achieved by sampling a range of feature types (pits, ditches, post-holes) from across the area enabling the fills to be compared. Where clearly defined fills were present within features, or the features were large with superficially homogenous fills, stratified data was obtained by taking multiple samples spread throughout the deposits.

A standard bulk sample size of 40litres (or 100% of small features) was taken from dated/datable sealed contexts, to enable the recovery of small mammals, molluscs and botanical environmental remains.

2.3. Post-excavation

All site data has been input onto a SACIC project database using Microsoft Access. All bulk finds have been washed, marked quantified and all bulk samples have been processed.

All raw data from the GPS survey has been downloaded into the digital project archive and suitably labelled. All drawing sheets have been scanned into the digital project archive. Outline site and phase plans were created as appropriate using Autocad software and a contour plan was derived from the survey data. Selected sections were digitised for inclusion in report figures.

This post-excavation assessment (PXA) and updated project design (UPD) has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)

The report seeks to quantify and summarise the fieldwork results and to assess the significance of archaeological deposits and their potential and capacity to address aims in the in the Regional Research Framework for the Eastern Counties (Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott 2011). Where possible, the results from the evaluation have been integrated and assessed with the results from the main excavation.

An Updated Project Design lay outs the further analysis required to complete a full archive and publication text.

2.4. Project archive

On approval of this report, a printed and bound hard copy will be lodged with SCCAS and the Suffolk HER. An OASIS form has been completed (reference no. Suffolka1-306282 and a digital copy of this assessment report has been submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>). A copy of the form is included as Appendix 16.

The project archive, consisting of the complete artefactual assemblage and all paper and digital records will in due course, following completion of the archive report, be deposited with SCCAS and will meet their requirements as detailed in 'Archaeological Archives in Suffolk, Guidelines for preparation and deposition' (SCCAS 2017). Ownership of the archive will be transferred to SCCAS.

SACIC will retain copyright of all documentation and records but a form granting SCCAS a perpetual, royalty free, licence will be included in the archive.

3. Results

3.1. Introduction

Ditches, pits and post holes containing artefacts indicative of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman settlement activity were exposed during the excavation, the most prominent being a series of parallel ditches dating from the Middle to Late Iron Age across the site centre.

All features were excavated and recorded and are discussed below by phase. An outline site plan is shown in Figure 2, and detailed numbered sub-plans are shown in Figures 3, 4 and 5. Figure 6 shows the excavation plan in relation to the previous geophysical survey and Figure 7 to the evaluation trenching. Figures 8 to 11 show phase plans and include selected section drawings. The full context list from both evaluation and excavation phases can be found in Appendix 2 (evaluation contexts have been renumbered from 0001-0035 to 1001-1035).

3.2. Site formation and natural features

Lowestoft Formation superficial geology was encountered across the site, comprising outwash deposits that included both yellow sands and gravels and pale greyish brown silts and clays. Natural geology levels ranged in height from 56m in the northeast to 49.6m AOD in the southwest.

The stratigraphic sequence was fairly uniform across the site, revealing 0.32m of subsoil (0002) and 0.20-0.37m of topsoil (0001) overlying the natural drift geology (0003). In the central northernmost sector around ditch slot 0191, the subsoil was much thicker at approximately 1m. Small find 01, a complete elongated flint flake/possible blade was recovered from the subsoil layer here. In central and southern sectors of the site there were several areas where no subsoil was present, here the features were sealed by 0.30m of topsoil. Features 0021 and 0051 are thought to be natural in origin (animal/tree disturbance).

It was thought during the evaluation that a possible linear feature passed through Trenches 1, 5, 11 and 13 (contexts 1007 and 1019), however the open-area excavation revealed that this was not of archaeological origin but was a series of large variable silty patches within the natural geology (Fig. 7).

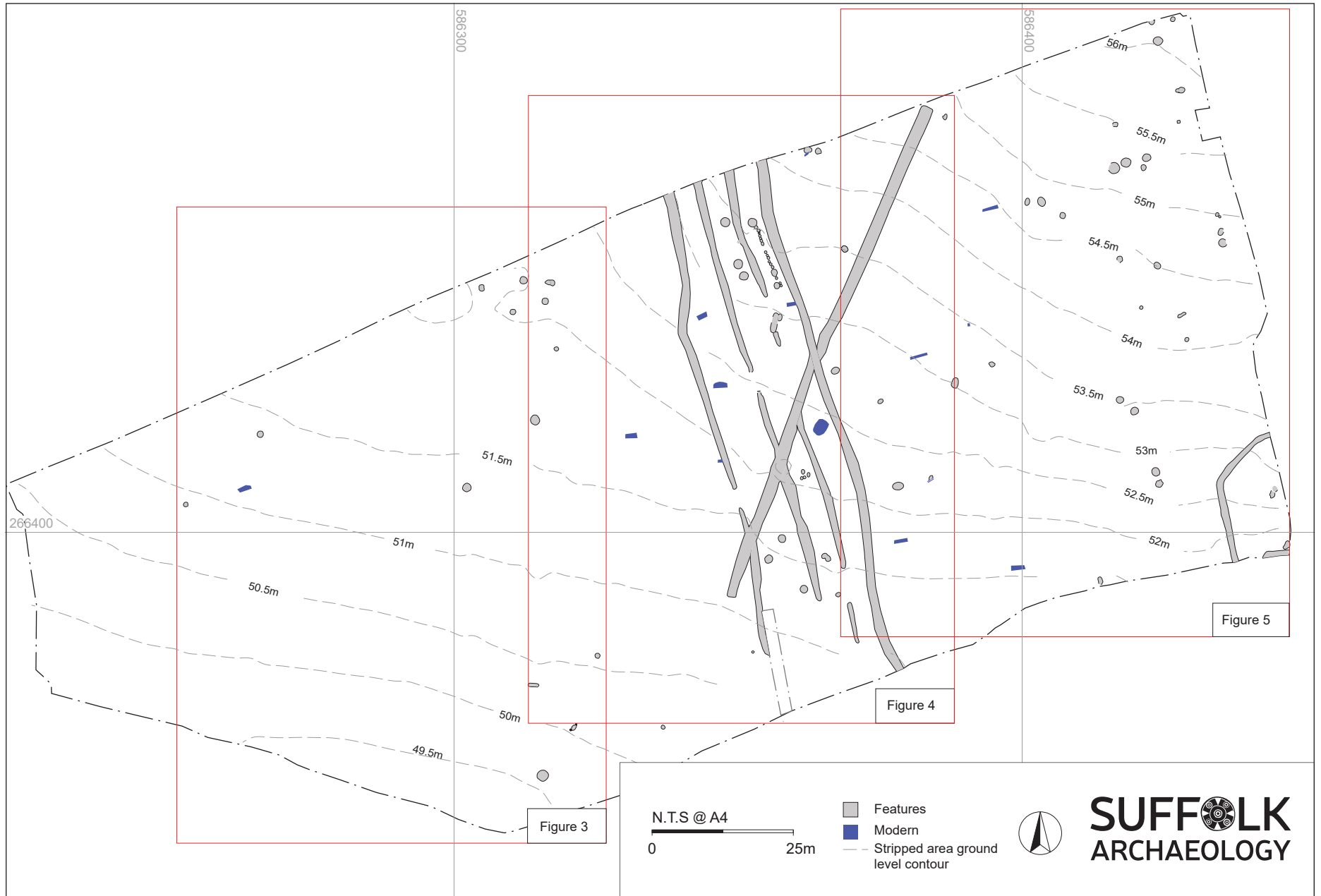


Figure 2. Outline Site Plan