

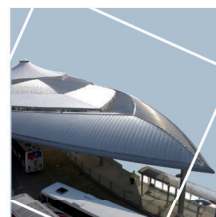
Report 2092



nau archaeology

An Archaeological Watching Brief at 8 Worlington Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk

SHER BTM 044, BTM 045



John W. Percival

March 2009



www.nps.co.uk

Project checklist		Date
Project overseen by	David Whitmore	
Draft complete	John W. Percival	03/03/2009
Graphics complete	Michael Faether	09/03/2009
Edit complete	Jayne Bown	13./03/2009
Signed off	Jayne Bown	13/03/2009

NAU Archaeology

Scandic House
85 Mountergate
Norwich
NR1 1PY

T 01603 756150

F 01603 756190

E Jayne.Bown@nps.co.uk

www.nau.org.uk

BAU2092

© NAU Archaeology

Contents

Summary

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Archaeological and Historical Background
- 3.0 Methodology
- 4.0 Results
- 5.0 Conclusions

Acknowledgements

Bibliography

Appendix 1: OASIS feature summary table

Figures

- Fig.1 Location of pillbox base and other pillboxes within c. 300m
- Fig.2 Plan of Pillbox base also shows location of possible anti-tank block

Plates

- Plate1 Type 22 pillbox DOB 6304, east of Mill Street, Mildenhall
- Plate 2 Type 24 pillbox SHER BTM 043, DOB 6386 adjacent River Lark in Garden of 10 Worlington Road
- Plate 3 Type 28 pillbox DOB 6440 east of road leading south from Jude's Ferry Bridge, West Row
- Plate 4 Type 24 pillbox DOB 6389 west of road leading south from Jude's Ferry Bridge, West Row
- Plate 5 Looking northeast at pillbox base
- Plate 6 Looking south across the River Lark at pillbox base
- Plate 7 Looking west at east corner of pillbox base with reinforcing showing

Location: 8 Worlington Road, (former Dairy, Bridge Farm),
Mildenhall, (Parish of Barton Mills), Suffolk
District: Forest Heath
Grid Ref: TL 7085 7424
HER No: BTM 044, BTM 045
Date of fieldwork: 9th and 11th February, 3rd March 2009

Summary

A concrete pad was encountered by contractors during works associated with the relocation of a foul sewer pumping station adjacent the River Lark at 8 Worlington Road, Mildenhall. During an initial site visit the concrete pad was identified as a World War II pillbox base, photographed and summarily recorded. A mitigation strategy of preservation in situ was then carried out. The new foul sewer pipe chamber was relocated just outside the footprint of the pillbox base. Further detailed recording was undertaken during a second site visit.

1.0 Introduction

During works to renew a foul sewer and relocate a foul sewer pumping station operatives from Barconn Ltd. encountered a concrete pad adjacent the River Lark, in the garden of 8 Worlington Road, Mildenhall (Fig. 1), also known as Dairy, Bridge Farm. As the site is south of the River Lark it actually lies within the parish of Barton Mills. An initial site visit quickly identified the concrete pad as a pillbox base of WWII date.

This report was commissioned by Anglian Water Services Ltd.

Following an initial query from a member of the public this archaeological watching brief was initiated to fulfil a planning condition set by Forest Heath District Council and in accordance with a Brief and Specification issued by Will Fletcher of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team (Reference foul-drainageworks-BartonMills2009).

The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The Mildenhall area was important in the anti-invasion defences of East Anglia, which were mostly constructed in 1940-41 (Osborne & Kerr 2008). Concentric lines of defences, ('stop lines') consisting of anti-tank blocks, pillboxes and gun emplacements were put in place behind coastal defences to slow the advancing mechanised invaders with whatever resources were available, including the Home Guard. This would allow regular army reserve troops stationed in Newmarket, Northampton and Hertfordshire to manoeuvre to where they were most needed. The eastern arm of the Eastern Command Stop Line ran from Colchester along the rivers Colne, Stour and Lark to the Little Ouse at Littleport where it joined the GHQ line, the last line of defences. The Eastern Command Line at Mildenhall was, in effect, the fifth of six lines of defences.

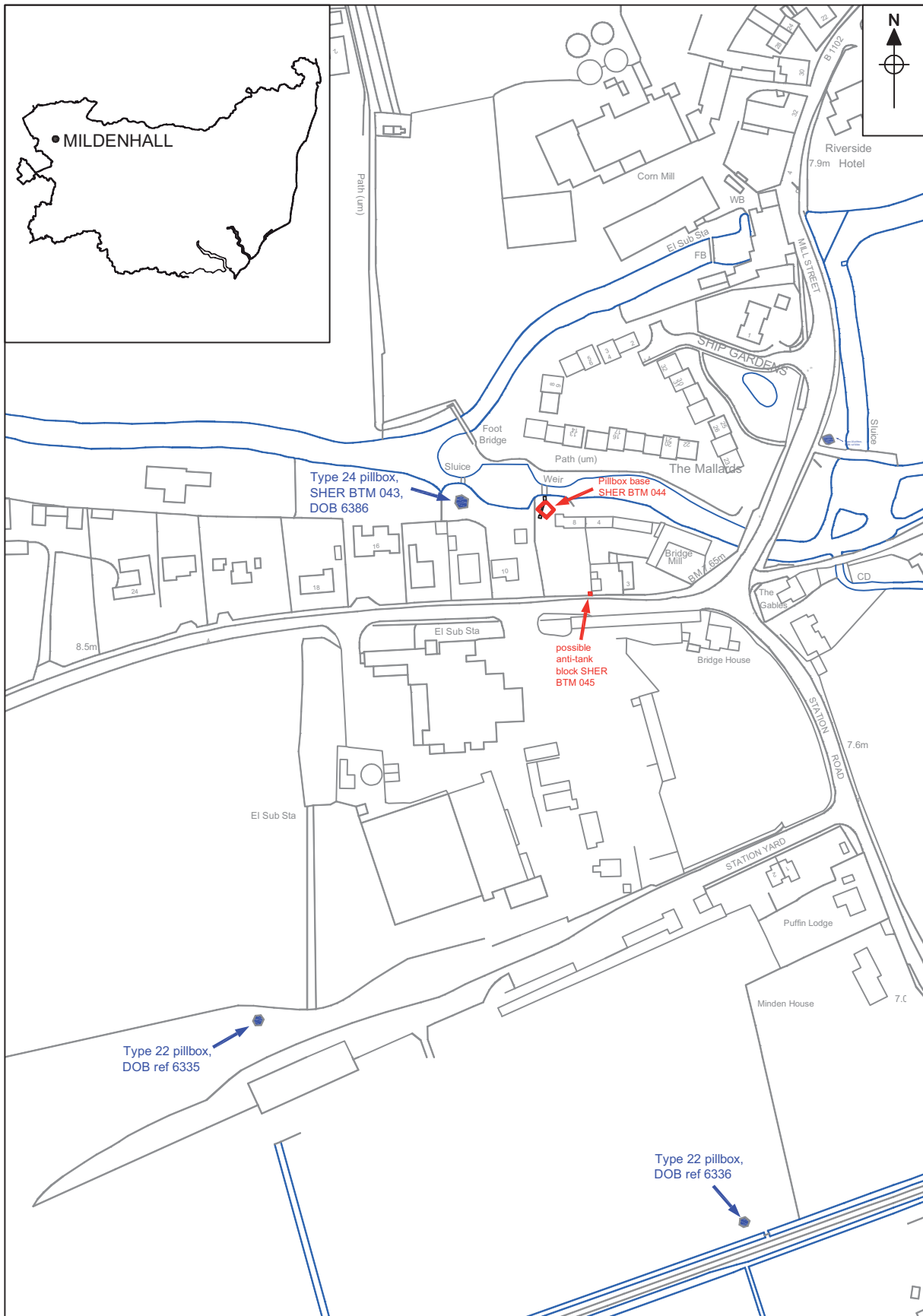


Figure 1. Location of pillbox base and other pillboxes within c. 300m. Scale 1:2500.

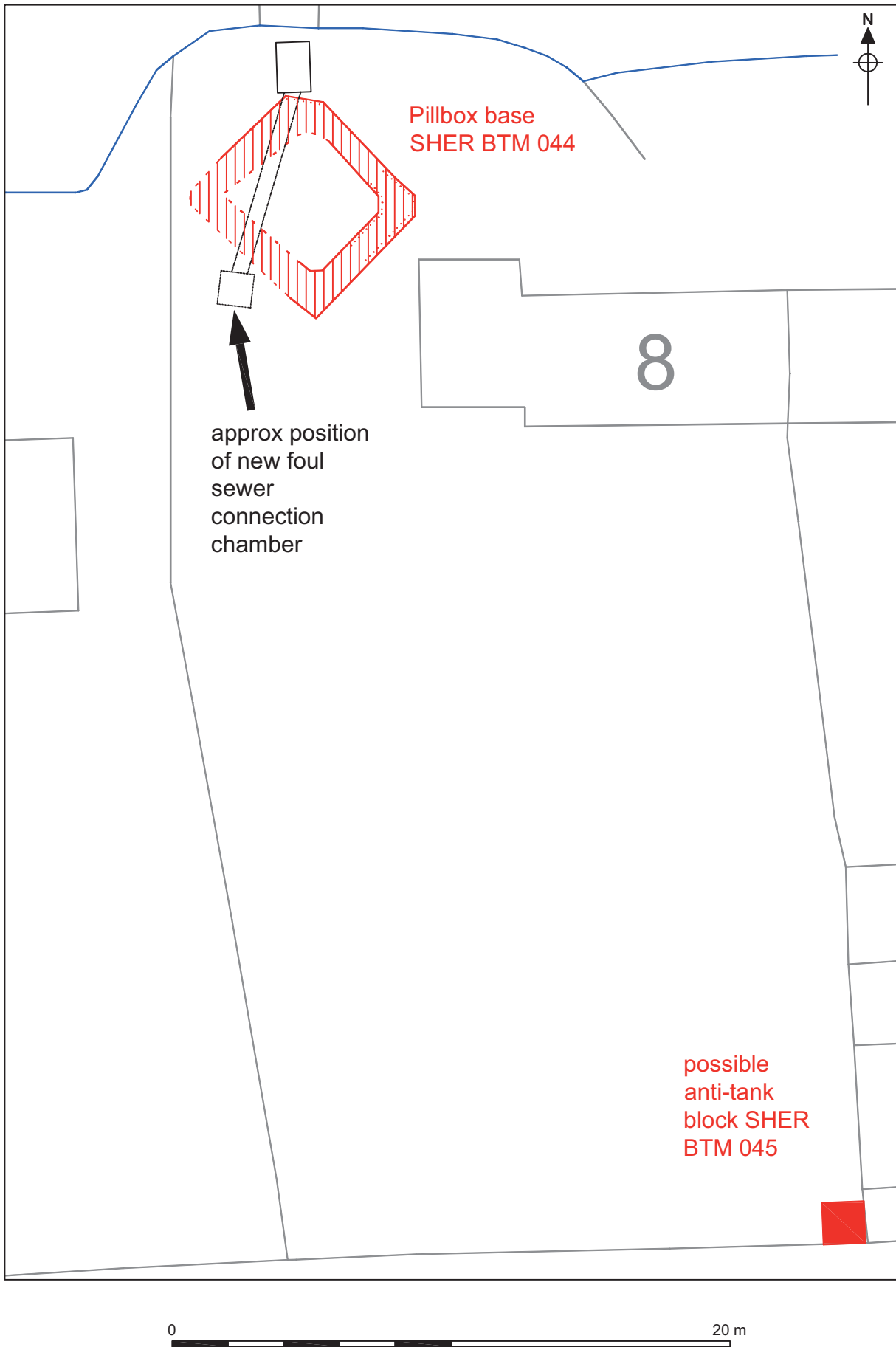


Figure 2. Plan of Pillbox base also shows location of possible anti-tank block. Scale 1:200.

Significant remains of the Eastern Command Line survive in the Mildenhall area. Within c. 300m of 8 Worlington Road, four other Pillboxes survive (Fig. 1). Less than 5m east of Mill Street on the island formed by the two arms of the Lark a Type 22 (regular hexagonal, bullet proof box for riflemen (Plate 1)) guards the approach to the bridge on the northern arm of the Lark (Defence of Britain project ref. 6304, hereafter DOB, <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/specColl/dob>). Approximately 37m west of the pillbox base that forms the subject of this report a Type 24 pillbox survives intact (SHER BTM 043, DOB 6386, Plate 2). Type 24 pillboxes were also hexagonal in plan, though with a longer side containing the entrance. They were often shellproof with thicker walls than the Type 22 and were designed to house infantrymen armed with light machine guns and light anti-tank weapons as well as rifles. Two further Type 22 pillboxes (DOB 6335 and DOB 6336) lie south of Worlington Road defending the now-disused railway line and backing up the defences close to the bridges. Slightly further afield, 3km east of Worlington Road, south of the Lark near Jude's ferry Bridge at West Row a group of three pillboxes survives. A Type 28 pillbox is located 100m east of the road (DOB 6440, Plate 3). These large rectangular pillboxes were built to house 6 pounder anti-tank guns. A Type 24 pillbox stands 140m west of the road (DOB 6389, Plate 4) on a bend in the river and a very overgrown Type 22 pillbox (DOB 6334) is situated 30m east of Jude's Ferry Bridge.

3.0 Methodology

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during works associated with the renewal of the existing foul sewer and relocation of the pumping station.

The Brief required the creation of a photographic, written and drawn record.

Written records were made using the NAU *pro forma* sheets. Location and detail plans were recorded at appropriate scales and colour, monochrome and digital photograph were taken.

On the first site visit a photographic and summary drawn records were made and on the second visit a slightly more detailed plan was made. By this time it was clear that the remains were to be preserved *in situ* and would not be affected by works related to the foul sewer hence no attempt was made to clean the moss from the clearly-visible northeast and southeast side of the base. For the same reason no attempt was made to uncover or further define the north-western and south-western sides of the base which had been landscaped and partly covered over with soil, as well as being cut by the trench containing the extant sewer pipe.

4.0 Results

The base (SHER BTM 044) consists of a flat slab of concrete measuring 4.0m northeast-to-southwest and c. 4.3m southwest to northeast with the clear remains of side walls between 0.7m and 1.0m thick outside this. Although the base appears to be roughly square in plan with irregularly chamfered northern and eastern corners (Fig. 2, Plates 5, 6 and 7) the wall remains and edges of the slab are obscured by moss and turf. It is most likely it is a base from a Type 24 pillbox and formed a pair with the pillbox that can be found in the garden of 10 Worlington Road 37m to the west (SHER BTM 043, DOB 6386). Both pillboxes lie on small

promontories that form the sides of a weir. Their purpose was to deny access across the river via the narrow points (less than 4m wide) of the weir and provide a field of fire on the bridges and their approaches to the west.

There are no indications of any mountings or ricochet protection walls in the centre of the slab. The cut stubs of thick reinforcing rods can clearly be seen with the north-eastern and south-eastern walls (Fig. 2). The placement of the reinforcing and the nature of the adjacent pillbox indicate that the concrete walls were poured between inner and outer 'single skin' brick retaining walls.

The base had already been cut through by a north-to-south aligned trench containing a foul sewer pipe (Fig. 2).

Some 40m south-east of the pillbox base in the south-east corner of the garden of 8 Worlington Road is a cube of concrete formed in the south by the garden wall and on the other sides by single-skin brick walls. This is possibly a concealed anti-tank cube (SHER BTM 045) that may have formed part of a road block.

5.0 Conclusions

The remains of the recorded pillbox base appeared to be well-built using high quality materials and formed part of an extensive and well-planned system of defences.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Jo Everitt and Steve Raven of Anglian Water for commissioning this report and all personnel of Barconn Ltd. and Bellway Homes for their co-operation. Fieldwork was carried out by the author and the project was overseen by David Whitmore of NAU Archaeology. This report was edited by Jayne Bown, illustrations are by the author and Michael Feather. The report was produced by Michael Feather.

Bibliography

Osborne, M & Kerr, A. G. 2008 20th-Century Defences in Britain, Suffolk Concrete Publications

Appendix 1: OASIS feature summary table

Period	Feature type	Quantity
World War Two (1939-1945)	Pillbox	1
World War Two (1939-1945)	Tank trap	1



Plate 1 Type 22 pillbox DOB 6304, east of Mill Street, Mildenhall



Plate 2 Type 24 pillbox SHER BTM 032, DOB 6386, adjacent to the River Lark in the garden of 10 Worlington Road



Plate 3 Type 28 pillbox DOB 6440, east of the road leading south from Jude's Ferry Bridge, West Row



Plate 4 Type 24 pillbox DOB 6389, west of the road leading south from Jude's Ferry Bridge, West Row



Plate 5 Looking north-east at the pillbox base



Plate 6 Looking south across the River Lark at the pillbox base



Plate 7 Looking west at the east corner of the pillbox base with reinforcement showing