

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/208

**Geotechnical Site Investigation: EDF Access, Sizewell
Power Station, Leiston
LCS 158; LCS 159; LCS 160**

HER Information

Date of Fieldwork:	September- October 2010
Grid Reference:	TM 469 638
Funding Body:	NNB GenCo
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OASIS ID:	suffolkc1- 81628

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Summary

Monitoring of test pits at Sizewell Power Station, Leiston was carried out in order to record any archaeological evidence revealed by the groundworks. Three areas were targeted and a total of 36 pits observed. These revealed significant modern disturbance in Zone Central (LCS 159), to a depth of over 4m in places, but little archaeological interest, with only three other pits containing anything other than undisturbed ground. These were a single pit with modern disturbance in Zone North (LCS 158), a pit with evidence of waterlogged deposits in the north of Zone South (LCS 160) and evidence of a channel, pond or wet hollow in the south of LCS 160. This latter feature contained a sherd of medieval pottery and lies just north of known medieval settlement evidence. A small quantity of unstratified medieval pottery was also collected from the plough soil in LCS 160.

1. Introduction and methodology

The Field Projects Team of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS) were commissioned by EDF (NNB GenCo) to carry out archaeological monitoring of trial pits to be excavated by Soil Mechanics on land around Sizewell Power Station, Leiston (Figure 1). The site was divided into three zones, Zone North, Zone Central and Zone South, each of which was allocated an individual Historic Environment Record (HER) code by SCCAS for recording purposes.

The trial pits were excavated in locations shown in the WSI produced by AMEC, report ref 15930/TR/00020, which is reproduced as Figure 2. The archaeological investigations covered by the WSI were agreed following consultation with Suffolk County Council Planning Archaeologist Jude Plouviez.

The site lies in an area of high archaeological importance, recorded in the County HER, within a known area of extensive archaeological activity:

In Zone North (LCS 158), a number of ring ditch cropmarks visible on aerial photographs are recorded, as well as the findspots of medieval pottery and worked flints. HER refs. LCS 041, 042, 046, 047, 074, 075, 077.

In Zone Central (LCS 159), buried peats have the potential for the survival of waterlogged deposits. The cropmark of a ring ditch is known from aerial photographs but is likely to have been destroyed by works associated with the existing power station. HER ref. LCS 081.

In Zone South (LCS 160), various undated cropmarks visible on aerial photographs are recorded, as well as findspots of prehistoric, Roman and medieval date. In addition, a geophysical survey was undertaken in 2008 by GSB Prospection in the field to the west of Sandy Lane, prior to onshore construction activities associated with the Greater Gabbard Windfarm (GSB, 2008). Archaeological evaluation and excavation was undertaken along the southern edge of Archaeological Zone South and in the adjacent fields to the west, in advance of the Greater Gabbard on-shore development. These works found significant evidence for occupation and activity of 12th to 14th century date. Further evidence relating to these features could extend into the investigation area. HER refs. LCS 049, 050, 073.

Modern features associated with World War Two defences are also known in all three investigation areas. Groundworks causing significant ground disturbance have the potential to damage any archaeological deposits that exist.

Eight visits were made to the site by SCCAS Field Projects Team of in order to observe the test pits as they were machine excavated. A photographic record was made of the exposed soil sequences and descriptions recorded. The monitoring archive is held in the County HER in Bury St. Edmunds.



Figure 1. Site location

2. Results

A total of 37 pits were monitored throughout their excavation. Summarised observations are provided in the table and map below:

TP no.	Zone	Description	Total excavated depth
13	ZC	Made ground to full depth, pit abandoned due to water strike	0.65m
14	ZC	700mm of mixed orange sand with blackish brown patches and lumps of concrete sealing a peat layer with rhizomes and large wood fragments (unworked) over clean orange sand natural subsoil	2.4m
30	ZC	Made ground to full depth	1.5m
34	ZC	Made ground to full depth, pit abandoned due to water strike and collapse	2.6m
35	ZC	Made ground to full depth	2m
38	ZC	Made ground, to full depth, large block of concrete at base of pit	3.6m
39	ZC	Made ground to full depth	1.5m
40	ZC	Made ground to full depth, pit abandoned due to collapse	3.2m
41	ZC	Made ground to full depth, pit abandoned due to water strike	1.3m
42	ZC	Made ground to full depth, black plant material at base- former turf line?	4m
43	ZC	Made ground to full depth, pit abandoned due to collapse	2.6m
46	ZC	Made ground to full depth	4m
47	ZC	Made ground to full depth	4.2m
48	ZC	Made ground to full depth	3.5m
52	ZC	Made ground to full depth	4.2m
53	ZC	Made ground to full depth	3.6m
57	ZC	Made ground to full depth	3.6m
58	ZC	Made ground to full depth	3.3m
65	ZS	Thin layer of humic topsoil over 350mm orangey brown reworked sand, over a blackish grey wet sand c. 1m thick, over reddish brown fibrous peat gradually becoming a fine, black slightly sandy peat to a depth of 2.8m, sealing fine pale grey sand.	3.6m
66	ZS	350mm mid brown sandy topsoil over 400mm pale yellow sand with slight clay content, a likely reworked natural subsoil (context 0002) over clean orange clay sand natural subsoil	1.7m

TP no.	Zone	Description	Total excavated depth
67	ZS	400mm mid brown sandy topsoil over clean orange clay sand natural subsoil	2m
68	ZS	300mm mid brown sandy topsoil over 150mm mid reddish brown sandy subsoil (context 0005) over clean orangey yellow sand natural subsoil	2.2m
69	ZS	300mm mid brown sandy topsoil over 250mm mid reddish brown sandy subsoil (context 0005) over clean orangey yellow sand natural subsoil	2.6m
70	ZS	300mm mid brown sandy topsoil over clean orange clay sand natural subsoil	2.1m
71	ZS	300mm mid brown sandy topsoil over 150mm reddened heat altered sand (result of modern burning) over clean orangey yellow sand natural subsoil	2.5m
72	ZS	400mm mid orange brown sand topsoil over clean orangey yellow sand natural subsoil	4.3m
73	ZS	400mm mid orange brown sand topsoil over clean orangey yellow sand natural subsoil	3.6m
74	ZS	300mm mid brown sandy topsoil over 300mm pale yellow sand with slight clay content, a likely reworked natural subsoil (context 0002) over clean orange clay sand natural subsoil	2.6m
75	ZS	350mm mid brown sandy topsoil over 250mm pale yellow silty sand, a likely reworked natural subsoil (context 0002) over clean yellow silty sand natural subsoil	2.6m
76	ZS	300mm mid brown sandy loam topsoil over a mid-dark brown silty sand subsoil with charcoal flecks, occasional fired clay fragments and pottery (context 0003). Layer measures c.350mm thick, deeper towards the south where it appears to fill a hollow or channel. Over a thin layer of dark blackish brown humic silt (context 0004) which seals c.200mm wet grey gravelly sand grading into the clean orangey brown silty sand natural subsoil	2m
N1	ZN	200mm humic mid brown sandy topsoil/leaf litter over 400mm mid brown loose sand subsoil with modern iron inclusions over clean orange gravelly sand natural subsoil	2.5m
N2	ZN	200mm humic mid brown sandy topsoil/leaf litter over clean yellow sand natural subsoil	1.5m
N3	ZN	200mm mid brown sandy topsoil over clean yellow sand natural subsoil	2.4m
N4	ZN	200mm mid brown sandy topsoil over clean yellow sand natural subsoil	2.6m
2009/15	ZN	300mm mid grey brown loose sand topsoil over 200mm pale-mid reddish brown loose sand subsoil over clean yellow sand natural subsoil	4.5m

TP no.	Zone	Description	Total excavated depth
2009/16	ZN	200mm humic leaf litter/topsoil over 200mm mid brown loose sand subsoil over clean orange gravelly sand natural subsoil	2.6m
2009/17	ZN	150mm humic mid brown sandy topsoil over 400mm pale-mid orangey brown silty sand subsoil over clean orange sand natural subsoil	2.5m

Table 1: Test pit descriptions

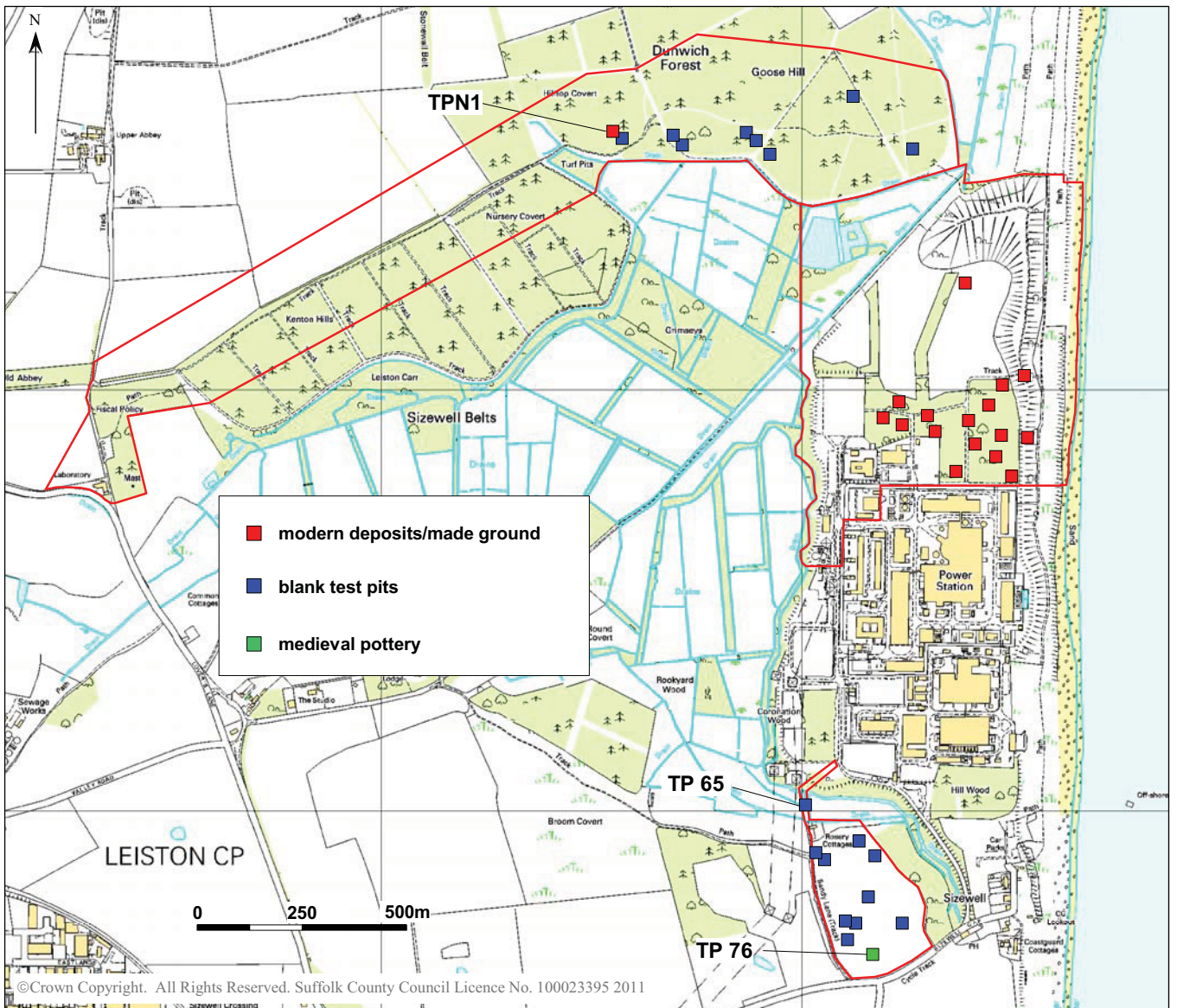


Figure 2. Test pit locations

All of the pits excavated in Zone Central (LCS 159) encountered significant depths of modern disturbance except the most northerly, TP 14, where only the upper 700mm

was disturbed, beneath which a peaty deposit was present. This was not considered to have particular archaeological significance.

In Zone North (LCS 158) TPN1 contained modern disturbance, almost certainly related to quarrying believed to have taken place in this location. The remaining pits all contained an undisturbed soil sequence.

The test pits in Zone South (LCS 160) all contained an undisturbed soil sequence with the exception of TP 76 where a significant depth of subsoil had accumulated (Plates 1 and 2). It was not clear from the small test pit alone whether this represented a cut archaeological feature such as a pit or pond or a natural hollow or channel. The base of the feature was lined by a thin dark blackish brown layer of humic silty sand sealed by a mid-dark brown silty sand subsoil (0003) with charcoal flecks and occasional fired clay fragments, from which four sherds of medieval pottery were recovered. A small number of abraded pottery sherds were also recovered from the cultivated surface of the southern part of LCS 160. These were also of medieval date (12th-14th century).



Plate 1. TP 76, N-S section



Plate 2. TP 76, N-S section

In TP 65, various humic, peaty layers were observed to a depth of 2.8m. The pit is located at the base of a shallow valley within drained water meadow



Plate 3. TP 75, showing peat layers, looking S

3. Finds evidence

Introduction

Finds were collected from two contexts, as shown in the table below.

Context	Pottery		Flint		Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	
0001	7	19	1	10	Unstrat, medieval 12th-14th C
0003	4	94			
Total	11	113	1	10	

Pottery

Eleven fragments of medieval pottery were recovered from two contexts (113g).

Seven fragments of Hollesley type ware and a miscellaneous sherd of medieval coarseware were collected as unstratified finds. A sherd of Hedingham fineware and an abraded fragment of a large strap handle from a medieval coarseware jug (or possibly a curfew) were recovered from deposit 0003. The handle has shallow thumbing marks at the base, where it was attached to the body of the vessel. Overall the pottery dates from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.

Flint

(Identification by Colin Pendleton)

A single unstratified flint was retained. It is an unpatinated squat flake with limited edge retouch/use wear, and dates to the later prehistoric period, possibly the Bronze Age.

4. Discussion

The majority of test pits revealed no evidence of archaeological significance and in the case of LCS 159, they showed such extensive modern disturbance that no archaeological deposits are likely to survive in the area immediately north of the Sizewell B Power Station.

The small ceramic assemblage recovered from LCS 160 is similar in character to two much larger groups identified from excavations nearby at the Greater Gabbard Windfarm (LCS 148) and Leiston Substation 132kv Cable Route, Sizewell (LCS 150) (both Craven 2009). Both the stratified and unstratified pottery is almost certainly associated with the occupation recorded in these excavations. It is not clear whether deposit 0003 is the fill of a cut feature which could be contemporary with the medieval activity nearby, or if it is the accumulation of material within a natural channel or hollow.

Linzi Everett
June 2011

References

Craven, J., forthcoming, Greater Gabbard Wind Farm Onshore Works, Sizewell Wents, Leiston LCS 148, archaeological assessment report (SCCAS)

Craven J., forthcoming, Leiston Substation 132kv Cable Route Sizewell, Archaeological assessment report LCS 150 (SCCAS)

Appendix I. LCS 160 context list

Context	Identifier	Description	Finds?
0001	Topsoil	mid brown sandy loam with regular small-medium angular flints and pebbles. Average 300mm thick over entire pillbox field	Y
0002	Subsoil	pale yellow silty sand, a likely reworked natural subsoil, present below topsoil in places in pillbox field	N
0003	?Deposit	mid-dark brown silty sand subsoil with charcoal flecks, occasional fired clay fragments and pottery, over 0004	Y
0004	?Deposit	thin layer of dark blackish brown humic silt below 0003	N
0005	Subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy subsoil, present below topsoil in places in pillbox field	N