

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT**

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**SCCAS REPORT No. 2011/158**  
**OASIS reference: suffolkc1-112121**

# **Windsor Circle, RAF Lakenheath, Eriswell ERL 213**

**J. A. Craven**  
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

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**Lucy Robinson, County Director of Economy, Skills and Environment**  
Endeavour House, Russel Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX.




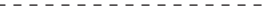









# Drawing Conventions

## Plans

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

## Sections

- Limit of Excavation 
- Cut 
- Modern Cut 
- Cut - Conjectured 
- Deposit Horizon 
- Deposit Horizon - Conjectured 
- Intrusion/Truncation 
- Top of Natural 
- Top Surface 
- Break in Section 
- Cut Number 
- Deposit Number 0007
- Ordnance Datum  $\frac{18.45\text{m OD}}{\times}$



# 1. Introduction

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This report is to be read as an appendix to SCCAS Report 2011/001 which describes the results of an archaeological evaluation at Windsor Circle, RAF Lakenheath in November 2010. Several areas of the site were unavailable for trial trenching at that time and so the report stated that additional trenching was still required in certain areas prior to re-development of the housing estate. SCCAS Report No. 2011/060 detailed the results of a 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of evaluation carried out in March 2011 in the centre of the site following the final vacation of houses and closure of a childrens playground. This report covers the southern part of the site where houses had been demolished to groundlevel before the area was used as the Mansells compound.

With the demolition of the estate largely complete Mansells were able to allow trenching within their compound and an additional nine trenches were excavated on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2011 by John Craven, Rob Brooks and Adam Yates from SCCAS Field Team.

## 2. Results

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The nine trenches (Fig. 1, No's 67-75) had a combined length of 263.5m. Measuring 1.8m wide this gave a total area of 475sqm. This means that a total of 3388sqm, or 4.45% of the c7.6ha available site to date, has been evaluated. The work was carried out to the same methodology detailed in the main report.

Trenches 67 and 68 were placed through a formerly open area, recently used as a spoilheap during demolition of the housing estate so the original groundlevel had been removed. Similarly Trenches 70, 71, 74 and 75 were placed through a temporary carpark created by replacing topsoil with hardcore so again the original groundlevel had been lost.

Basic trench descriptions are given in Table 01 below. The natural geology consisted of chalk in the eastern trenches or mid yellow/orange sands with occasional outcrops from the underlying chalk in the remainder. The natural surface was generally sealed below a layer of mid orange/brown silt/sands with chalk fragments, 0901, or dark brown

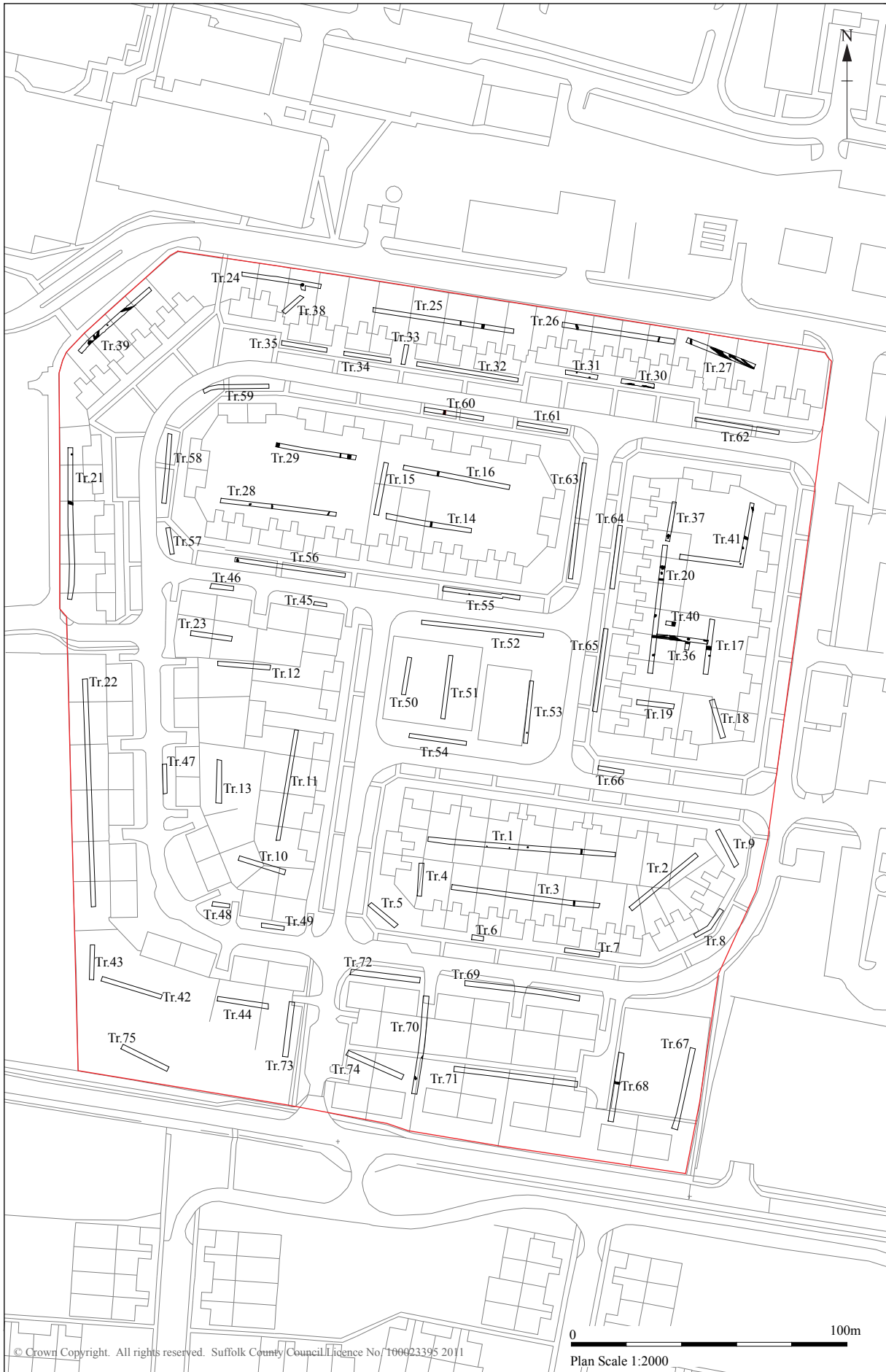


Figure 1. Trench location plan

silt/sands, 0907. Only minimal archaeological evidence was identified in the trenching and consisted of two pits and a single ditch.

Ditch 0901 was seen in Trench 68. Aligned south-east to north-west it was 1.06m wide and 0.2m deep and had a fill, 0902, of mid/dark orange sand with frequent chalk.

0903 was a sub-circular pit in Trench 70 measuring 1.2m wide and 0.3m deep with a fill, 0904, of very dark grey/brown silty sand with flecks of chalk and charcoal.

0905 was an oval pit, measuring 1.2m wide and 0.4m deep. Its fill, 0906, was a dark grey/brown sand with occasional chalk flecks containing sherds of Early Neolithic pottery and a small assemblage of worked flint.

Trench No	Length	Orientation	Depth	Description
67	30m	N-S	0.2m-0.7m	Modern deposits and topsoil, 0.1m-0.5m thick, overlying layer 0900. Deeper at south end due to modern deposits.
68	25m	N-S	0.4m-0.7m	Modern deposits and topsoil, 0.1m-0.5m thick, overlying layer 0900. Deeper at south end due to modern deposits and buried services. T
69	42m	E-W	0.3m-0.5m	0.2m topsoil over layer 0900. Frequent modern services.
70	36m	N-S	0.3m-0.85m	Natural subsoil slopes gently down to north. At north end 0.3m modern deposits overlaid natural subsoil. 10m north layer 0900 appears and increases to 0.4m thick at south end under 0.45m of modern material. Heavy modern disturbance at south end although feature 0905 sealed intact below service trench.
71	45m	E-W	0.8m	0.3m topsoil over 0.5m layer 0900. Heavy modern disturbance at each end.
72	25m	E-W	0.3m-0.4m	Topsoil over 0.1m-0.2m thick layer 0900.
73	20m	N-S	0.8m	0.2m topsoil over layer 0907. Heavy root disturbance.
74	22m	W-E	1m-1.2m	0.3m modern deposits over up to 0.6m of layer 0900. Frequent services. Slight natural hollow at eastern end, infilled with layer 0907.
75	18.5m	NW-SE	0.6m-0.9m	0.25m topsoil over layer 0907. Heavy root disturbance. Deepens slightly to north-west.

Table 1. Trench list

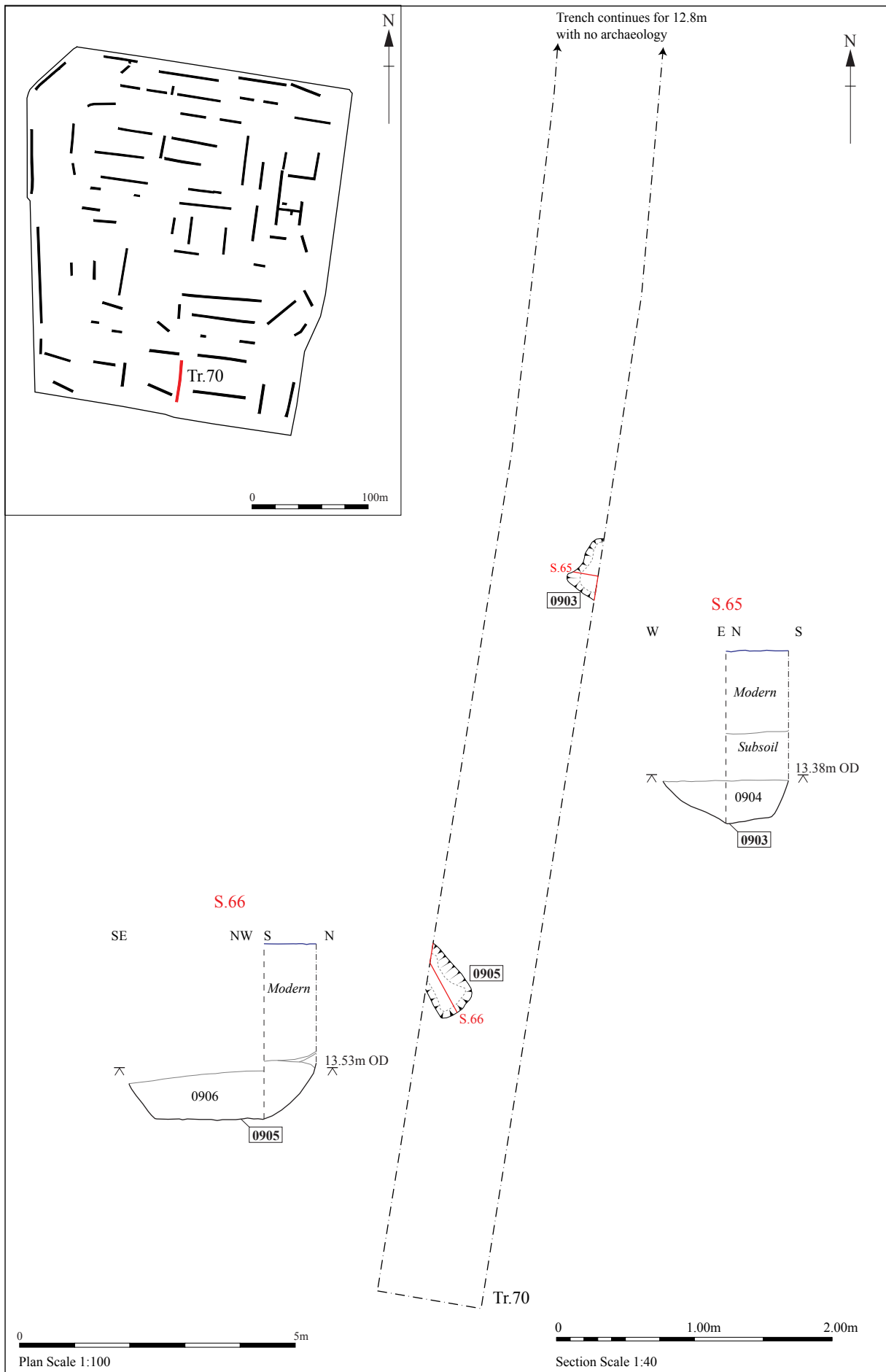


Figure 2. Trench 70, plan and sections



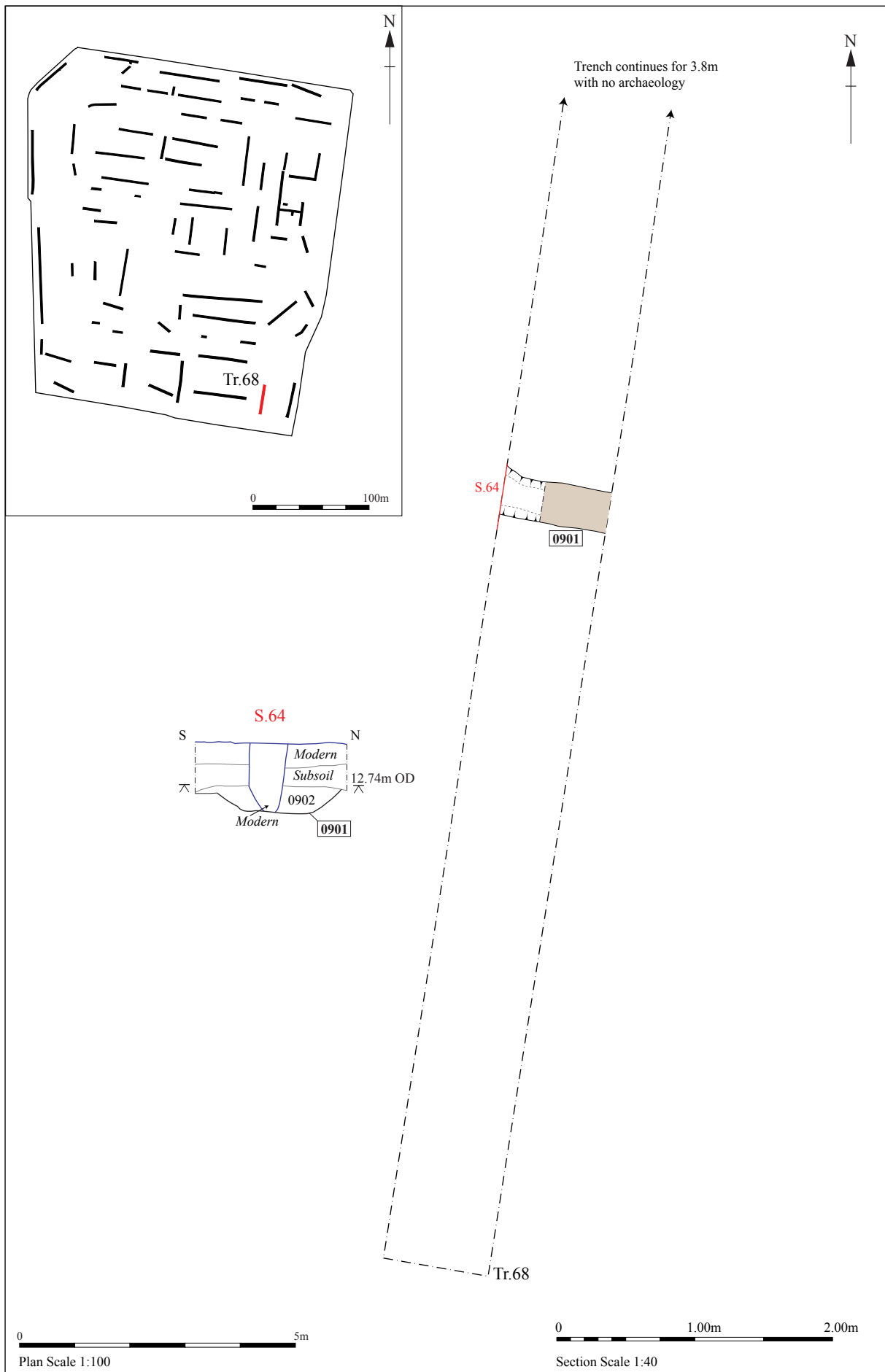


Figure 3. Trench 68, plan and section

### 3. The finds

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Cathy Tester

#### 3.1 Introduction

Finds which included prehistoric pottery and struck flint were recovered from a single context, the fill of pit 0905 (0906) in Trench 70 during the final phase of the Windsor Circle evaluation.

#### 3.2 Prehistoric Pottery

Sarah Percival

Two sherds of prehistoric pottery weighing 36g were recovered from the fill of pit 0905, both are almost certainly of Earlier Neolithic date. The first is an undecorated body sherd in medium to coarse flint-tempered fabric. The sherd has a finely burnished interior suggesting that it is from an open bowl. The second sherd, which has coarse flint-tempering, is a rounded, externally-thickened rim and is similar to examples from Earlier Neolithic Bowl found at Hurst Fen, Mildenhall (Clark 1960, fig.21, P18).

#### 3.3 Struck Flint

Sarah Bates

##### ***The assemblage***

Eleven pieces of struck flint were found in the fill of pit 0905 (0906). The flint all has some degree of patination with most pieces being a mid to dark grey with mottled white patchy patina. One small flake is a mottled light grey. The flint types present are summarised in Table 2.

Type	No
flake	7
chip	1
spall	1
retouched flake	1
utilised blade	1
Total	11

Table 2. Flint from pit 0905

There are seven flakes; two of which are small and squat. Two small quite neat, thin tapering flakes, one with cortex on its platform, are present as well as a cortical blade-type flake and an irregular flake from a multi-platform core which has a battered or crushed platform edge. Part of another small flake is also present as well as a spall and a small chip or fragment.

A small blade, with its distal end missing, has slight utilisation of each lateral edge. An irregular piece which appears to be the distal part of a flake has blade-type scars from a former platform on its right side. Its obliquely sloping left side has semi-abrupt retouch along its length and was probably used as a knife.

### ***Discussion***

There are no diagnostic or datable tools in the pit assemblage and some small squat flakes are present that on their own, could suggest a later prehistoric (LNEBA or later) date. The presence of some neat and quite thin tapering flakes as well as part of a utilised blade suggests however, that an earlier Neolithic date is likely for the flint. A flake fragment (retouched along one edge) which has had long blade-type pieces struck from a former platform is characteristic of earlier Neolithic multi-platform cores from which both flakes and blades were produced (Beadsmoore 2006, 55-58). The patinated nature of the flint may also support this relatively early date although it is noted that other flint with a similar or stronger white colouration from the near vicinity (ERL 148 and ERL 203) is of probable Bronze Age date and its colour is thought to be due to the chalky subsoil at that site.

## **3.4 Plant macrofossils and other remains**

(Val Fryer)

### ***Introduction and method statement***

Two samples for the evaluation of the content and preservation of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken, one from pit 0905 which contained pottery of Early Neolithic date (Sample 9) and one from undated pit 0903 (Sample 10).

The samples were bulk floated by SCCAS staff and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at

magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed below in Table 3. All plant remains were charred. Modern seeds and fibrous/woody roots were also recorded.

### **Results**

The assemblages are broadly similar in composition, with both being largely composed of black porous and tarry residues, which although very comminuted, are all probably derived from the combustion of organic remains at very high temperatures. However, it is currently unclear why such fierce burning was occurring on or near the site during the earlier prehistoric period. Charcoal/charred wood fragments are also present with both assemblages, but with the exception of a small number of pieces of charred root/stem within Sample 9, they are the only plant remains recorded. A single fish vertebra from Sample 9 is almost certainly a later contaminant.

<b>Sample No.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Context.</b>	<b>0906</b>	<b>0904</b>
<b>Feature No.</b>	<b>0905</b>	<b>0903</b>
<b>Plant macrofossils</b>		
Charcoal <2mm	xxxx	xxx
Charcoal >2mm	xx	x
Charred root/stem	x	
<b>Other remains</b>		
Black porous 'cokey' material	xx	xxxx
Black tarry material	xx	xxxx
Fish bone	x	
<b>Sample volume (litres)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Volume of flot (litres)</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>% flot sorted</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50%</b>

Table 3. Charred plant macrofossils and other remains

Key: x = 1-10 specimens, xx = 11-50 specimens, xxx = 1-100 specimens, xxxx = 100+ specimens

### ***Conclusions and recommendations for further work***

In summary, these assemblages are very different to those from the earlier phases of work at Windsor Circle (see Fosberry 2011 and Fryer 2011) and, at the time of writing, the reason for this is unclear. Both contain residues derived from very high temperatures of combustion, and although such material is often considered to be a later contaminant, it does not appear to be so in this case. Similar assemblages have been recorded from a number of prehistoric burnt flint mounds from both the British mainland and from the Republic of Ireland, and also from cremation deposits and pyre sites, but as bone fragments are entirely absent, the latter interpretation is probably not applicable in this instance.

As plant remains are so scarce within these assemblages, no further analysis is recommended. However, the findings from this excavation should be amalgamated with data from the other RAF Lakenheath Liberty Village investigations and included within the excavation synthesis.

### **3.5 Discussion of finds and environmental evidence**

A small quantity of finds which included Early Neolithic pottery and struck flint as well as macrofossil assemblages containing residues derived from high combustion temperatures were recovered from two pits in Trench 70 during the final evaluation phase of Windsor Circle.

## **4. Discussion**

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This latest phase of trenching has shown that the natural subsoil surface and potential archaeological levels generally lie well-preserved but often at a shallow depth, although there are frequent areas of modern disturbance.

Although only isolated archaeological deposits were identified, the Early Neolithic pit, 0905, is of particular importance. Evidence of activity in the area during this period is rare, and the feature may be part of a small group of features, possibly of a funerary nature. Pit 0903 may be contemporary while ditch 0901 is undated but could relate to the rectilinear field system seen in the main phase of evaluation.

## **5. Conclusions and recommendations for further work**

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The results of the trenching demonstrate that development will have an impact upon evidence of past occupation due to the shallow depth of potential archaeological deposits and so some further work is thought necessary.

Excavation of a small area targeted on pit 0905 is recommended in advance of any development to establish whether the feature is isolated or part of a wider group. Consideration should be given to obtaining C14 radiocarbon dates of any further deposits.

Further monitoring of any future development in the south-west corner of the site is also recommended, although no deposits were seen in Trench 75, to see if there is any further evidence of prehistoric activity, bearing in mind the proximity of the Early Bronze Age ring ditches at ERL 148 and ERL 203, and in particular any further Middle Anglo-Saxon burials extending north from ERL 203.

## Acknowledgements

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The evaluation was carried out by a number of archaeological staff (Rob Brooks, John Craven and Adam Yates) all from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

The post-excavation was managed by Richenda Goffin. Finds processing was carried out by Jonathan Van Jennians and the processing of environmental samples by Anna West. The production of digital site plans and sections was managed by Crane Begg and carried out by Ellie Hillen. The specialist finds report was produced by Cathy Tester with specialist identification and advice being provided by Sarah Bates, Val Fryer and Sarah Percival (all freelance).

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### Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. 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 County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.