

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2011/060
OASIS reference: suffolkc1-112127

Windsor Circle, RAF Lakenheath, Eriswell ERL 213

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1. Introduction

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, due to the presence of live services, trees, occupied houses and a childrens playground, and so the report stated that additional trenching was still required in certain areas prior to re-development of the housing estate.

With the commencement of the demolition of the estate most of these areas became available and an additional 17 trenches were excavated from 7th-8th March 2011 by John Craven and Andrew Beverton from SCCAS Field Team.

These trenches were placed to investigate the central area of the site, which was formerly a grassed area with childrens play equipment and along house frontages. Trenches were placed to infill gaps in the original trench plan and further define the extent of two areas of archaeological interest previously identified to the north and east.

2. Results

The 17 trenches (Fig. 1, No's 50-66) had a combined length of 416m. Measuring 1.8m wide this gave a total area of 749sqm. This means that a total of 2913sqm, or 4.5% of the c6.5ha available site to date, has been evaluated. The work was carried out to the same methodology detailed in the main report.

Basic trench descriptions are given in Table 01 below. The natural geology was of mid yellow/orange sands with occasional outcrops from the underlying chalk. Only minimal archaeological evidence was identified in the trenching and consisted of three possible pits and a single ditch.

A possible small pit or posthole, 0144, was seen in Trench 53. This measured 0.35m in diameter, 0.18m deep, and had a basal fill of light/mid yellow/brown/grey silty sand, 0145, underlying a mid grey/brown silty sand. The feature cut was indistinct, with both fills having very diffuse edges, meaning that it may be a natural feature.



Figure 1. Trench location

A similar pit or posthole, 0147, was recorded in Trench 55. Measuring 0.3m in diameter and 0.24m deep it had a single fill, 0148, of mid grey/brown silty sand. Again the edges of the feature were diffuse and uncertain meaning it may be a natural feature.

A third possible pit, 0149, was identified in Trench 56. Oval in plan it measured 1.2m by 0.8m and 0.3m deep and was cut by two modern service trenches. Its basal fill, 0150, was a pale brown/yellow/grey silty sand. Above this was 0151, a layer of mid grey/brown sandy silt. It also had diffuse and uncertain edges of the feature meaning it may be a natural feature.

Only one feature of definite man-made origin was seen in the trenching. Ditch 0152 in Trench 60 was aligned north to south and measured c.0.8m wide. Heavily cut by east-west aligned modern service trenches it was not excavated but had a fill, 0153, of mid brown sands.

No dating evidence was recovered from any of the features.

3. Discussion

The additional trenching has shown that potential archaeological levels lie at a shallow depth and that there is heavy modern disturbance along all house frontages. No significant archaeological deposits were identified other than ditch 0152 which is clearly part of the same ditch as 0012, 0015 and 0067, seen previously in Trenches 14, 16 and 25 respectively. This feature could therefore be of Mid Anglo-Saxon date, or belong to the Late Iron Age/Roman activity known to the west. The diffuse nature of the three pits may mean that they are older prehistoric features, heavily affected by natural processes such as leaching, but could also simply be due to natural disturbance.

Trench No	Length	Orientation	Depth	Description
50	14m	N-S	0.3m	Modern deposits overlying patchy 0.1m thick layer of mid brown sands.
51	24m	N-S	0.3m	Modern deposits overlying patchy 0.1m thick layer of mid brown sands. Small areas of modern disturbance.
52	45m	W-E	0.3m-0.4m	Modern deposits directly overlying natural subsoil. Large areas of disturbance throughout.
53	23m	N-S	0.2m-0.3m	Modern deposits directly overlying truncated natural subsoil.
54	23m	W-E	0.3m	Modern deposits directly overlying truncated natural subsoil. Modern soakaway at eastern end.
55	29m	W-E	0.3m-0.4m	Modern deposits directly overlying truncated natural subsoil. Remnants of a 0.1m thick intermediate layer of mid brown sand survived in places. Modern services running down centre of trench.
56	41m	W-E	0.4m	0.3m of modern deposits overlying 0.1m of mid grey/brown sands. Modern services running down centre of trench.
57	10m	N-S	0.3m-0.4m	Thin topsoil over 0.2m of mid brown sands. Heavily disturbed by frequent services and tree roots.
58	26m	N-S	0.2m	Modern deposits directly overlying truncated natural subsoil. Frequent tree root disturbance.
59	25m	W-E	0.4m	0.1m thick topsoil overlying 0.3m of mid brown sands. Several areas of disturbance from drainage soakaways. Eastern 5m of trench totally disturbed.
60	22m	W-E	0.4m	0.1m thick topsoil overlying 0.3m of mid brown sands. Two service trenches running down centre and north side for whole length of trench. Eastern 8m of trench totally disturbed.
61	18m	W-E	0.4m-0.5m	0.25m thick topsoil overlying mid brown sands. Modern service trench running down centre.
62	31m	W-E	0.4m	0.1m topsoil overlying mid brown sands. Heavy disturbance throughout with only a 0.5m wide strip of natural subsoil being seen.
63	43m	N-S	0.4m	0.1m topsoil overlying mid brown sands. Relatively undisturbed by modern activity or tree damage.
64	23m	N-S	0.2m-0.3m	0.1m topsoil overlying mid brown sands. Relatively undisturbed by modern activity or tree damage.
65	31m	N-S	0.2m-0.3m	0.1m topsoil overlying mid brown sands. Relatively undisturbed by modern activity or tree damage.
66	10m	W-E	0.2m	Modern deposits directly overlying truncated natural subsoil.

Table 1. Trench list

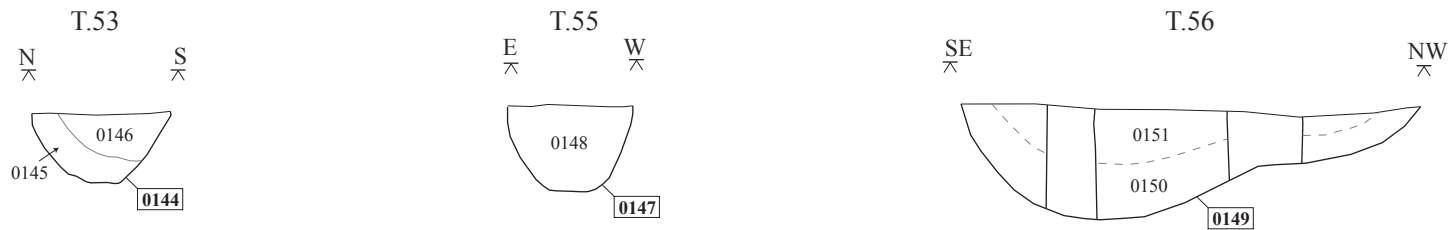


Figure 2. Sections

4. Conclusions and recommendations for further work

Trenching in the playground area did not identify any archaeological deposits and so no further work is recommended, other than including it within any monitoring of the re-development to the south and west.

The results of the trenching along the various house frontages, which demonstrated the shallow depth and vulnerability of potential archaeological deposits, the presence of heavy levels of disturbance caused by buried services and soakaways, and a general absence of archaeological deposits has meant that the areas requiring further work, as detailed in the previous report, have been reduced (Fig. 3).

The archaeological deposits seen in Trenches 17, 20, 36 etc, on the eastern side of the site, do not appear to extend westwards. The proposed eastern excavation area has therefore been reduced to 0.59ha, removing the disturbed peripheral areas of house frontage from the excavation footprint. The northern excavation area of 0.55ha remains unchanged.

Similarly the areas of house frontage and roads can be removed from the main area of 'strip and map', leaving the 0.67ha open area of gardens within the housing block, as a combination of disturbance and absence of archaeological deposits means that further work will be of little benefit. The western 'strip and map' area of 0.27ha remains unchanged.

Further evaluation of 1.1ha is still required in the southern part of the development which is currently occupied by the Mansells compound and offices.

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.



Figure 3. Recommended further stages of work