

# Air raid shelters, Windsor Circle, Eriswell ERL 213

## **Archaeological Building Recording Report**

SCCAS Report No. 2011/185

**Client: Defence Infrastructure Organisation**

Author: Rob Brooks

November/2011



# Air raid shelters, Windsor Circle, Eriswell ERL 213

Archaeological Monitoring Report

SCCAS Report No. 2011/185

Author: Rob Brooks

Illustrator: Rob Brooks

Editor: Richenda Goffin

Report Date: November/2011

© SCCAS



## HER Information

---

**Report Number:** 2011/185

**Site Name:** Air raid shelters, Windsor Circle

**Planning Application No:** F/2005/0857

**Date of Fieldwork:** 31/10/2011

**Grid Reference:** Air raid shelter 1 – TL 72928 80084  
Air raid shelter 2 – TL 72928 80172

**Client/Funding Body:** Mansells

**Client Reference:** N/A

**Curatorial Officer:** Judith Plouviez

**Project Officer:** Rob Brooks

**Oasis Reference:** suffolkc1-112947

**Site Code:** ERL 213

Digital report submitted to Archaeological Data Service:  
<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

### 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.

Prepared By: Rob Brooks  
Date: 30/11/2011

Approved By: Judith Plouviez  
Position: Conservation Officer  
Date: 01/12/2011  
Signed:



# Contents

---

Summary

<b>1. Introduction and methodology</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Results</b>	<b>3</b>
Shelter 1	3
Shelter 2	3
<b>3. Archive deposition</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Acknowledgements</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Bibliography</b>	<b>5</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Site location, showing air raid shelter positions	2
Figure 2. Plans of the air raid shelters	4

## List of Appendices

Appendix 1. Photographic record	
---------------------------------	--





## Summary

Two WWII, or late pre-war air raid shelters were recorded within the Windsor Circle development area on RAF Lakenheath, Eriswell, Suffolk. The shelters shared the same ground plan and are thought to be of the Stanton type. They were constructed of reinforced concrete that was laid in pre-cast slabs, rather than poured into trenches *in-situ*. The tops of both shelters had been removed during earlier groundworks.



# 1. Introduction and methodology

---

A building recording to English Heritage Level 1 was carried out on two air raid shelters at Windsor Circle, RAF Lakenheath, Eriswell, Suffolk (Fig. 1) after the site's evaluation through trial trenching (Craven, 2011) and during work by the building contractors. The developers uncovered both structures during groundworks, but the roofs of both had clearly been damaged prior to this. The archaeological investigations on this site are required as part of a planning condition on Planning Application F/2005/0857. The work was carried out on 31st October 2011 and was undertaken in accordance with guidance from Judith Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service, Conservation Team).

RAF Lakenheath covers some 760ha across the parishes of Lakenheath, Eriswell and Wangford. Following its initial development during World War II it has been occupied and developed by the United States Air Force since 1948.

The shelters were cleaned out using a mechanical digger equipped with a toothless bucket. A photographic record which was made of both structures using a digital SLR camera, is included as Appendix 1. Further records were made, including 1:50 plans and site records, and the locations of each were recorded using a Leica GPS, working to within error tolerances of below 0.1m. Shelter 1 was located to the south at grid reference TL 72928 80084, whilst Shelter 2 was at grid reference TL 72928 80172.

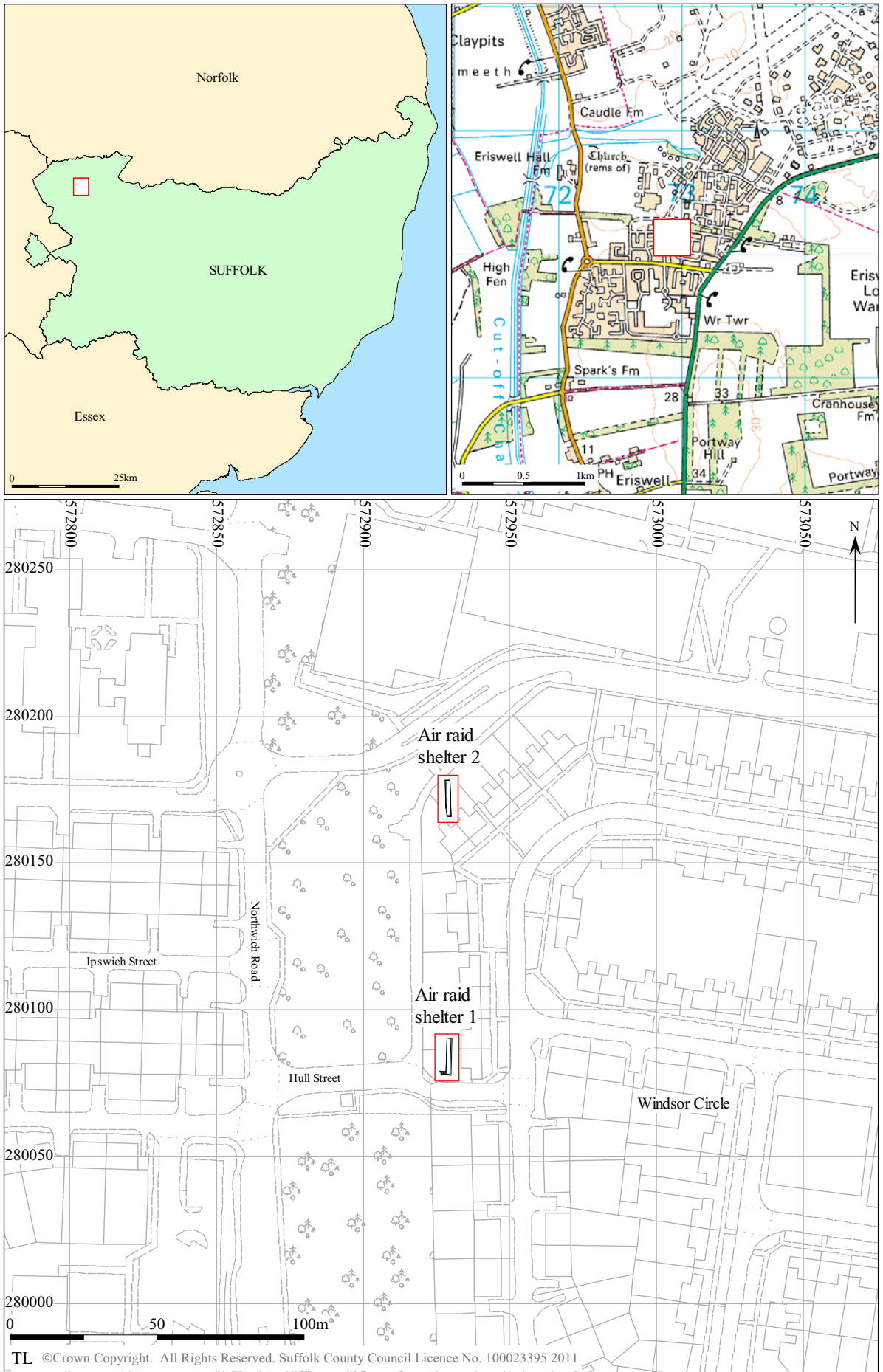


Figure 1. Site location, showing air raid shelter positions (red)

## 2. Results

---

### Shelter 1

Shelter 1 was the more complete of the two structures, with its entrance/stairwell still partially intact (Fig. 2). It measured 12.45m (N-S) x 1.75m (E-W). Internally the structure was 12.15m (N-S) x 1.4m (E-W). The walls were made up of concrete which was c0.13m thick at the top and at least 0.18m thick near the base of the structure. The floor was also 0.13m thick.

The roof had been removed prior to the site's redevelopment and as a result the internal height was not available. The maximum floor to top of wall height was measured at 1.8m. It was not clear whether the roof of the structure was originally domed, as is sometimes the case, although there was no evidence to suggest that it was.

The entrance to the structure was via seven steps, the tread depth of which was 0.25m whilst the rise height was 0.17m. These steps ran at right angles to the structure at its south-west corner. Originally an above ground concrete structure led to the steps, but this was no longer present.

All of the shelter was reinforced with steel rods. The walls appeared to have been made of pre-cast concrete slabs, rather than poured *in-situ* as has been recorded on bases such as RAF Feltwell in Norfolk. In places the structure had been further reinforced with shoring of compacted orange sand and chalk fragments, which is also typical of air raid shelters and WWII structures generally. The design layout is similar to those generally recognised as being of the Stanton variety.

### Shelter 2

Shelter 2 appears to have been identical to Shelter 1 judging by its surviving dimensions. However in this case the southern end of the structure had been highly damaged by earlier groundworks, which had removed the stairwell and some of the walls (Fig. 2).

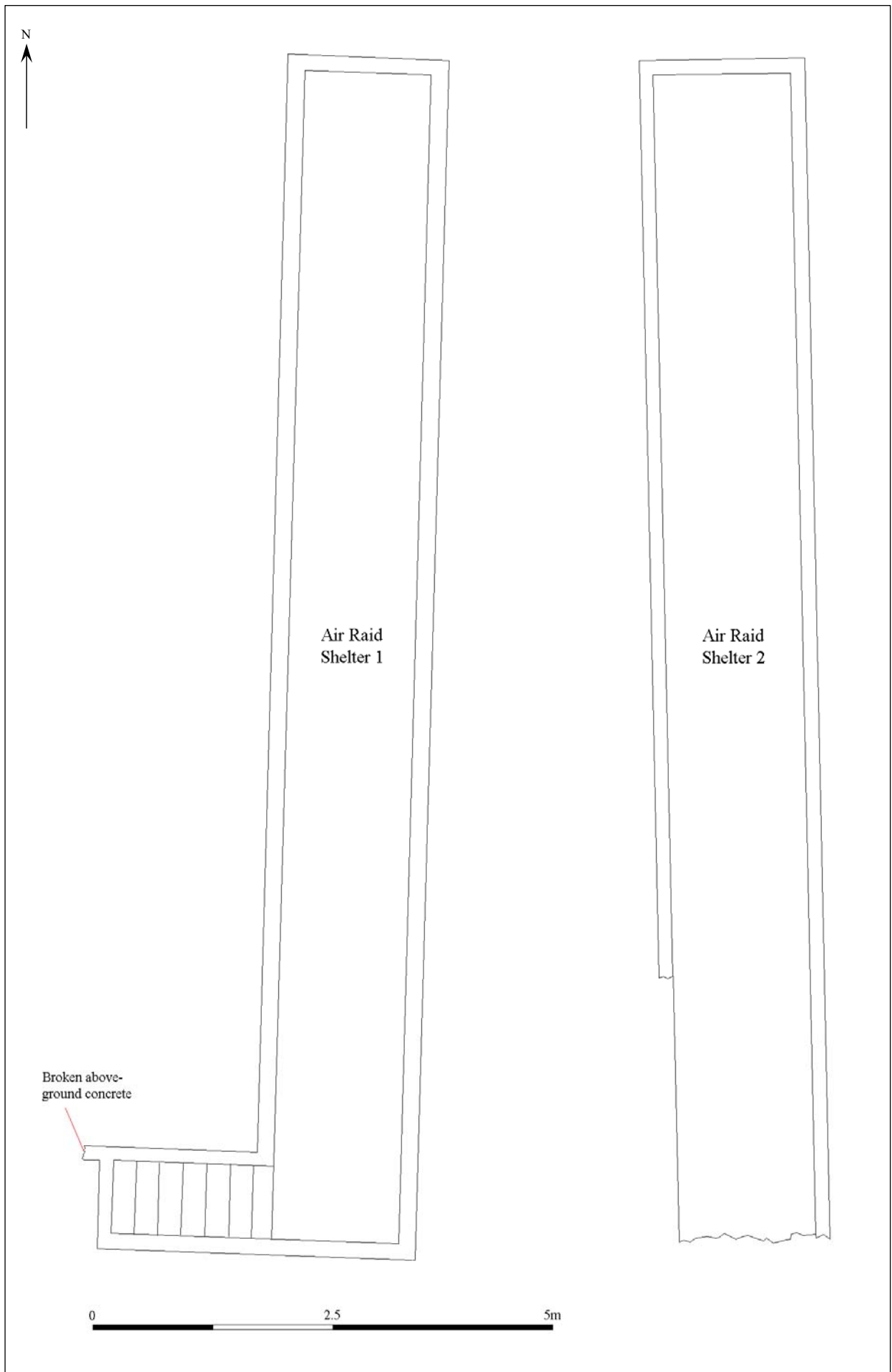


Figure 2. Plans of the air raid shelters

### **3. Archive deposition**

---

Paper and site record archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

Digital archive: SCCAS

### **4. Acknowledgements**

---

The evaluation was carried out by Rob Brooks from the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team. The project was directed by Rob Brooks, and managed by Joanna Caruth, who also provided advice during the production of the report. The production of digital site plans and sections was carried out by Rob Brooks. The report was checked by Richenda Goffin.

### **5. Bibliography**

---

BGS, 2011, Information obtained from *[http://www.bgs.ac.uk/products/digital/maps/data\\_625k.html](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/products/digital/maps/data_625k.html)* and reproduced with the permission of the British Geological Survey ©NERC. All rights Reserved

Craven, J., 2011, *Archaeological Evaluation Report, Windsor Circle, RAF Lakenheath, Eriswell, ERL 213*, SCCAS REPORT No. 2011/001, SCCAS: Bury St Edmunds





# Appendix 1. Photographic record



Plates 1 and 2. Left - Air Raid Shelter 1 facing north, Right - Air Raid Shelter 2 facing north (with 2 x 2m scale)



Plate 3. Air Raid Shelter 1 steps facing north (with 2 x 2m scale)



Plate 4. Air Raid Shelter 1, facing north-east (with 2 x 2m scale)



Plate 5. Internal shot of Air Raid Shelter wall, showing construction methods



# Archaeological services Field Projects Team

**Delivering a full range of archaeological services**

- Desk-based assessments and advice
- Site investigation
- Outreach and educational resources
- Historic Building Recording
- Environmental processing
- Finds analysis and photography
- Graphics design and illustration

**Contact:**

**Rhodri Gardner**

**Tel: 01473 581743 Fax: 01473 288221**

**[rhodri.gardner@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:rhodri.gardner@suffolk.gov.uk)**

**[www.suffolk.gov.uk/Environment/Archaeology/](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/Environment/Archaeology/)**