

Lincoln Road East, RAF Mildenhall MNL 672

Archaeological Monitoring Report

SCCAS Report No. 2011/199

Client: MoD Defence Infrastructures Organisation

Author: Rob Brooks

December/2011

Lincoln Road East, RAF Mildenhall

MNL 672

Archaeological Monitoring Report

SCCAS Report No. 2011/199

Author: Rob Brooks

Illustrator: Crane Begg

Editor: Richenda Goffin

Report Date: December/2011

© SCCAS

HER Information

Report Number: 2011/199
Site Name: Lincoln Road East, RAF Mildenhall
Planning Application No: N/A
Date of Fieldwork: 09 – 10/08/2011
Grid Reference: TL 686 777
Client/Funding Body: MoD Defence Infrastructures Organisation
Client Reference: QB11-041
Curatorial Officer: Judith Plouviez
Project Officer: Andrew Tester and Rob Brooks
Oasis Reference: suffolkc1-114767
Site Code: MNL 672

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: 02/12/2011

Approved By: Judith Plouviez
Position: Conservation Officer
Date:
Signed:

Contents

Summary

Drawing Conventions

1. Introduction	1
2. Geology and topography	1
3. Archaeology and historical background	1
4. Methodology	3
5. Results	5
5.1 Test Pit 1	5
5.2 Test Pit 2	5
6. Conclusions and recommendations for further work	6
7. Archive deposition	7
8. Acknowledgements	7
9. Bibliography	7

List of Figures

Figure 1. Site location, showing development area (red) and selected HER entries (green)	2
Figure 2. Test Pit locations, with Test Pit 1 plan and section (inset)	4

List of Tables











Table 1. Context descriptions	5
-------------------------------	---

Summary













Archaeological monitoring during stripping for a new road surface revealed evidence of one cut feature well below the depth of the road formation levels. This feature is believed to be a post-medieval chalk quarry pit. Due to the depth of the archaeological levels being well below the formation levels it has not been fully established to what degree archaeological deposits may or may not exist in the area. No finds were recovered.

Drawing Conventions

Plans

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

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
Ordinance Datum	18.45m OD 

1. Introduction

An archaeological monitoring was carried out during the machine stripping for the layout of a replacement road surface at Lincoln Road, RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk. The work was carried out under instruction from Judith Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team), and was funded by the MoD Defence Infrastructures Organisation. The site was located along the eastern end of Lincoln Road leading up to the base exit by the Bird In Hand pub at grid reference TL 686 777 (Fig. 1).

2. Geology and topography

The geology of the area consists of superficial river terrace deposits of sand and gravel, overlying bedrock formations of West Melbury Marly Chalk (BGS, 2011). On site, the geology presented itself as chalk, with any superficial deposits either not being present in the area, or having been previously truncated.

The site is relatively level and located at around 5m above the Ordnance Datum. The general area slightly overlooks the fenlands to the north and north-west.

3. Archaeology and historical background

The site lies in an area of known archaeological importance with features and findspots suggestive of Early Bronze Age to Iron Age activity (MNL 564), and Roman activity (MNL 094, 466, 505, 610 – all shown on Figure 1). Particularly dense Roman remains have been found to the west of the site at Washington Square, which uncovered multiple ditches, pits and one Roman burial, as well as prehistoric burials (MNL 639). As well as these sites, excavations on Mildenhall airbase and the surrounding area as a whole have revealed a complex and extensive network of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon archaeological remains. A recent evaluation immediately to the west on Lincoln Road revealed occasional Roman features with a post-medieval ploughsoil overlying them and the area as a whole (Tester, 2011).

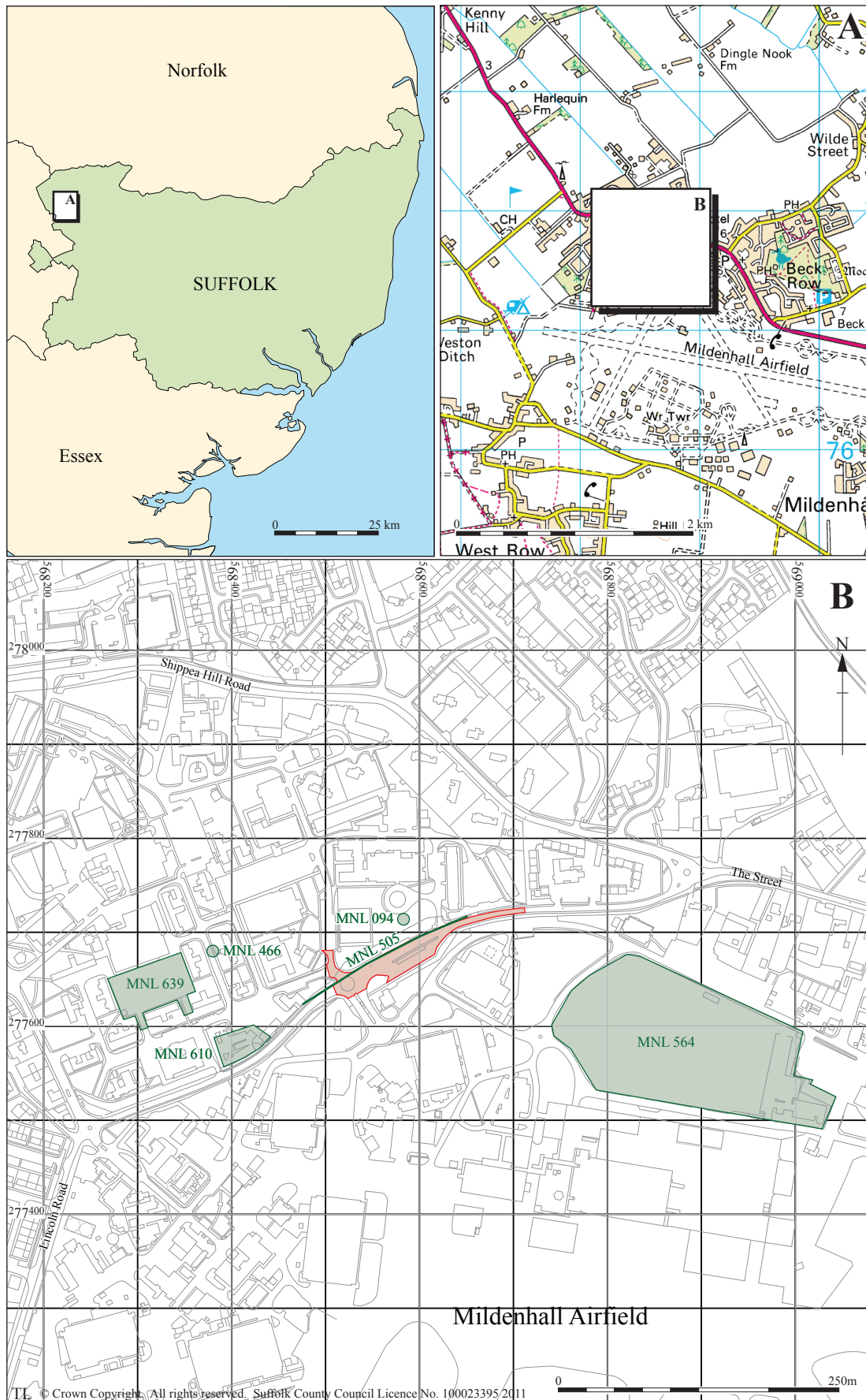


Figure 1. Site location, showing development area (red) and selected HER entries (green)

4. Methodology

The road strip was up to 24m wide, but was generally around 7m wide x approximately 260m long. The area was stripped with a mechanical digger equipped with a toothless bucket. The total area encompassed by the groundworks covered approximately 3611sqm. The groundworks were initially continuously monitored until it became clear that there was limited risk to the archaeological levels.

During the stripping it became apparent that the archaeological levels were located significantly below the formation level of the new road surface. This was confirmed by the excavation by machine and by hand of two test pits to establish the depths of archaeological deposits/undisturbed subsoil. One feature was exposed which had a slot hand-excavated through it. A section of the feature was cleaned in order to reveal soil profiles and drawn at 1:20, with a plan being drawn of the first test pit at 1:50 from known OS points. Depths were recorded from the existing ground level. Archaeological contexts were recorded using a single continuous numbering system starting at 0001. No finds were recovered from either the feature or any other excavated deposits.

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-114767) and a digital copy of the report submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>). The site archive is stored in the SCCAS main store at Bury St Edmunds under HER no. MNL 672.

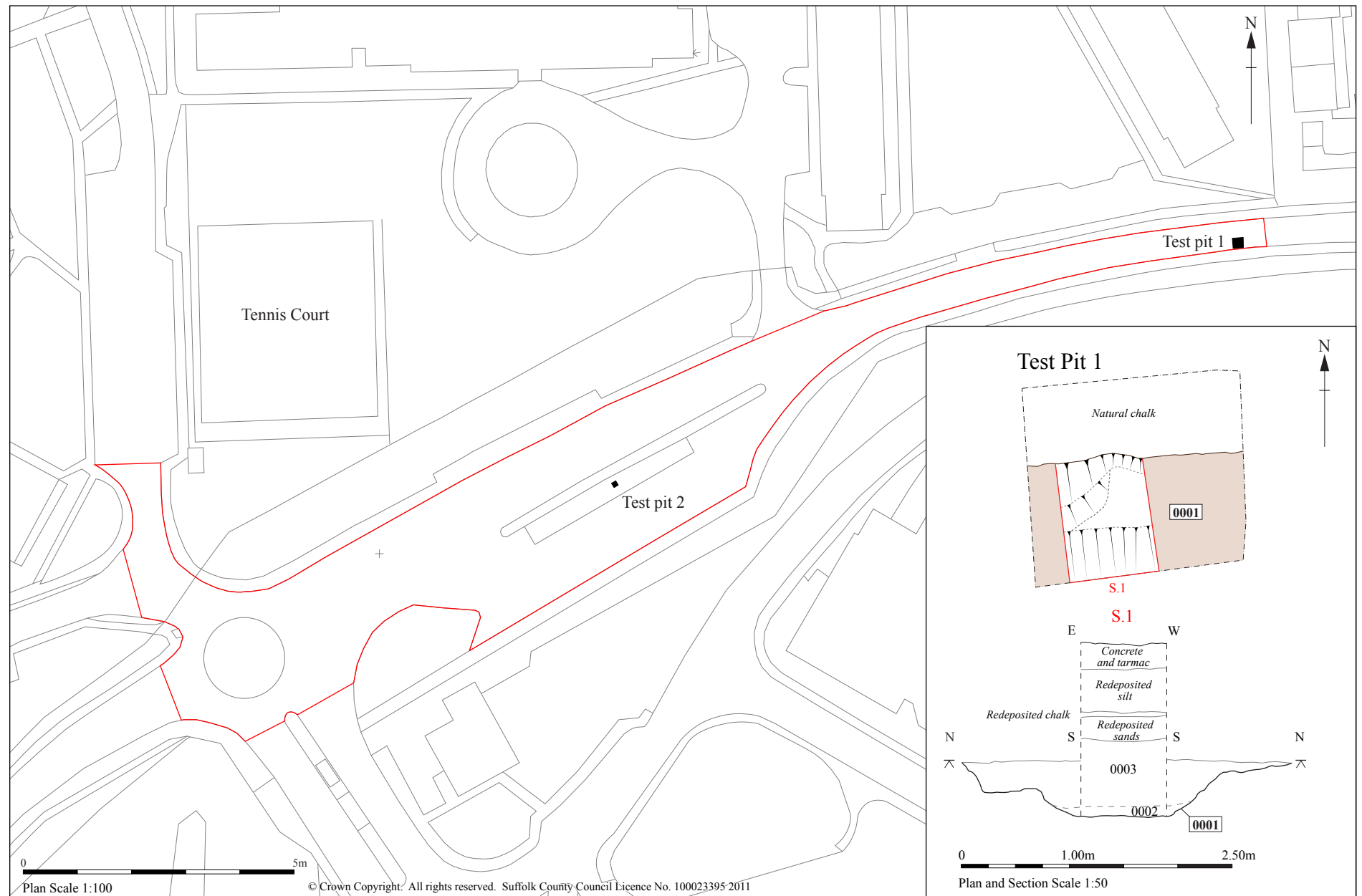


Figure 2. Test Pit locations, with Test Pit 1 plan and section (Inset)

5. Results

5.1 Test Pit 1

Test Pit 1 was machine-excavated to 1.1m below the existing ground level through various modern and redeposited layers before encountering the top fill of pit 0001 (Fig. 2). The formation level for the new road surface was only 0.6-0.7m below the ground surface, leaving a substantial barrier between the new groundworks and the archaeological deposits. The test pit measured 1.85m (N-S) x 1.9m (E-W).

One cut feature was excavated and recorded as pit 0001. This was a linear feature in plan with fairly steep, straight-slightly concave sides and a somewhat uneven base. It contained two sterile fills, 0002 and 0003, which were grey to brownish-grey silt/sand mixtures with varying degrees of chalk in them and appeared to be largely naturally derived. The feature was recorded as a pit, rather than as a ditch as its shape in plan and section were very similar to features interpreted as post-medieval chalk quarry pits on MNL 610 (Brooks, 2010).

5.2 Test Pit 2

A second test pit, c.0.4 x 0.4m was excavated to the west of Test Pit 1. This was entirely hand excavated through a mid brown sandy-silt subsoil similar to a ploughsoil recently uncovered in an adjoining evaluation immediately to the west (Tester, 2011). Below this was undisturbed natural subsoil, c.0.15m below the road formation level.

Context	Description
0001	Linear in plan, aligned E-W. North side = 45-55° straight-convex sides, with rapidly curving break of slope to the base. The base is irregular and steps down towards the southern side of the sondage. Possibly a ditch cut, but thought to be a pit as very similar oblong chalk quarry pits, thought to be post-medieval, were found nearby at site MNL 610. Also, most ditches are not dug so deeply into chalk because of the difficulty in excavating the material. >1.95m E-W x >1.15m N-S x 0.7m deep.
0002	Pale grey sandy-silt with frequent chalk nodules. Friable compaction. Diffuse-clear horizon clarity. Basal fill of 0001. Mixture of naturally derived chalk and feature fill. 0.1m deep.
0003	Mid-dark brownish-grey silty-sand with common small-large chalk nodules. Friable compaction. Clear horizon clarity. Top fill of feature. Possibly truncated at top by other layers that are not related to pit 0001. 0.6m deep.

Table 1. Context descriptions

6. Conclusions and recommendations for further work

The monitoring revealed that the archaeological levels survived well below the new road formation levels and as such the area was not stripped to the natural subsoil. The result of this is that it is uncertain whether the dense Iron Age-Roman occupation is continuing into this area. However the lack of any finds evidence, as well as the low density of features on MNL 564 (to the east) and on MNL 666 (immediately to the west) would suggest that the occupation levels may not be as intense as at Washington Square/MNL 639 to the west (Tester, 2011 and forthcoming). The presence of chalk bedrock subsoil in Test Pit 1 also indicates that there is a lower likelihood of later Iron Age-Roman archaeological features here because digging features such as ditches or pits through chalk was often avoided. However, the true extent of the archaeological deposits in the area has not been fully explored by this monitoring and any further groundwork in the area should not be excluded from archaeological investigation.

Although the feature in Test Pit 1 was not positively dated, it is likely that it was a post-medieval quarry pit similar to those seen in MNL 610 (Brooks, 2010). However, there is no definitive evidence for this and as such this area may also have further archaeological potential for earlier deposits.

7. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Archive\Mildenhall\MNL 672 Lincoln Road East Monitoring

8. Acknowledgements

The excavation was carried out by Rob Brooks and Andrew Tester from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team. The project was directed by Rob Brooks and managed by Andrew Tester, who also provided advice during the production of the report.

The post-excavation was managed by Richenda Goffin. Graphics were produced by Crane Begg. The report was checked by Andrew Tester and Richenda Goffin.

9. Bibliography

BGS, 2011 Information obtained from 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

Brooks, R., 2010, *Archaeological Excavation Report, Former CES Building, RAF Mildenhall, MNL 610*, SCCAS Report 2010/048, SCCAS: Bury St Edmunds

Tester, A., forthcoming, *Archaeological Excavation Report, Washington Square, RAF Mildenhall, MNL 639*, SCCAS Report, SCCAS: Bury St Edmunds

Tester, A., 2011, *Archaeological Evaluation Report, Lincoln Road/Sewage Works Road, RAF Mildenhall, MNL 666*, SCCAS Report, SCCAS: Bury St Edmunds

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

www.suffolk.gov.uk/Environment/Archaeology/