

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

RAF Lakenheath, Waste Dump LKH 257

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF MAINTENANCE WORKS AT THE WASTE DUMP (AREA 205), RAF LAKENHEATH

Planning Application No.:F/2003/156

NGR: TL 7314 8288

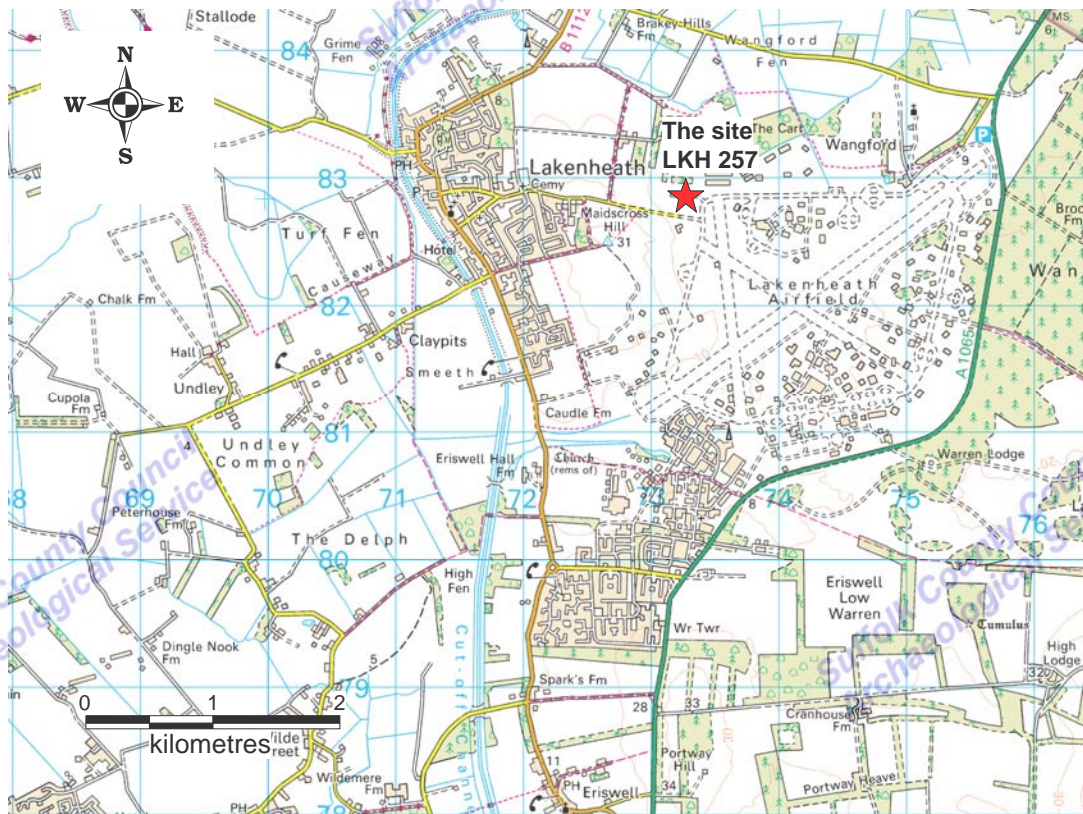
Oasis Ref. Suffolkc1-12473

Funded by: MOD Defence Estates USF

SCCAS Report no. 2006/30

Summary

Archaeological monitoring during some clean-up work and maintenance of the old Waste Dump at RAF Lakenheath exposed only small areas of undisturbed ground. No archaeological features were seen and no finds recovered.

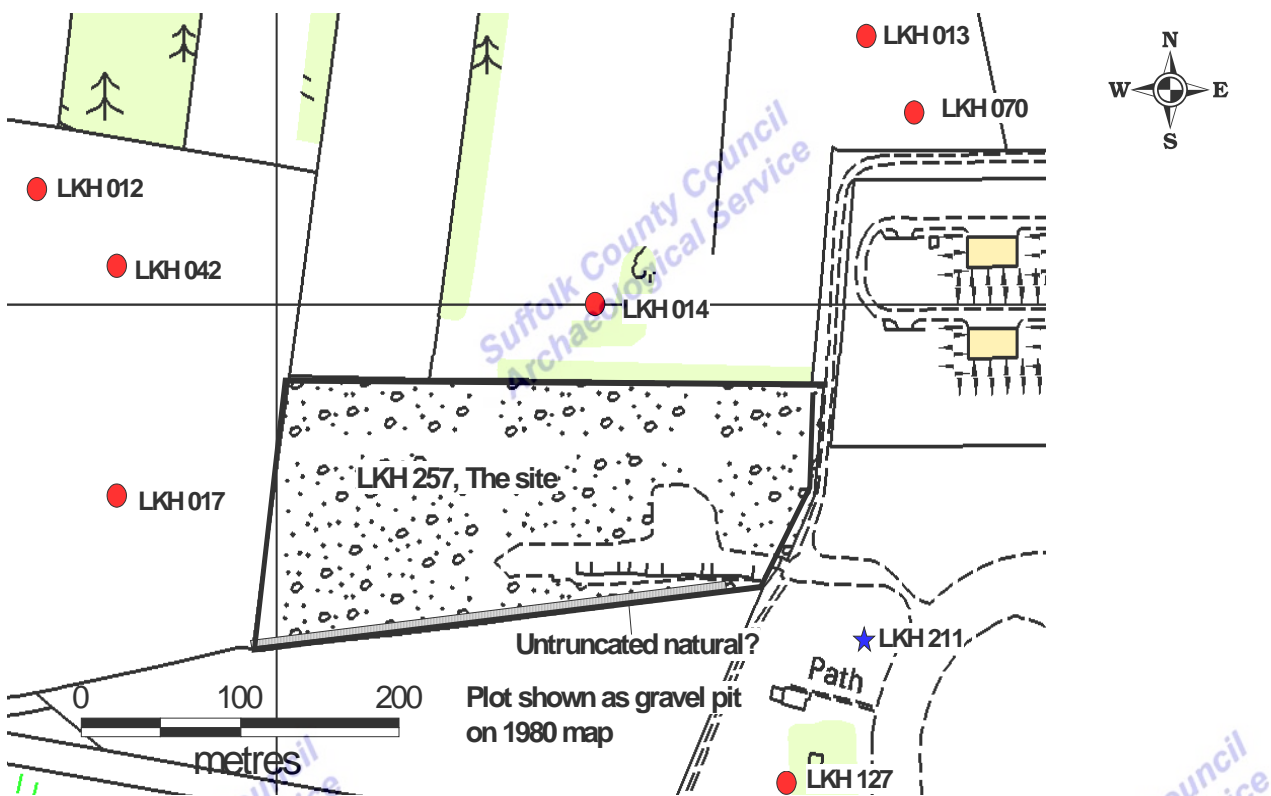


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Figure 1. Site location

Introduction

Archaeological monitoring was carried out during works to remove contaminated ground and to lay concrete slabs in the former waste dump at RAF Lakenheath. The work was required as a condition on planning application F/2003/156 and was specified by R.D. Carr, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team (Appendix 1) and carried out by Jo Caruth, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team. The project was managed for MOD DE (USF) by Kevin Calvert and James Dean. The site lies at TL7314 8288 (Figure 1) in the north-western corner of the airfield in an area near multi-period occupation identified by Lady Briscoe in the 1930's. Archaeological monitoring of a new perimeter road around the northern and western sides of the airfield in 2000 found pits and ditches dated to the Middle Iron Age (400-100BC, LKH211, Caruth 2001) 120m to the south-west of the site (Figure 2). All of the site is shown as a sand/gravel pit on the modern (c.2000) 1:10,000 map (Figure 2), and an earlier version (c.1980) also shows a sand/gravel pit in the adjacent plot to the south. A site visit established the likelihood that the only untruncated natural was to be found along the southern boundary of the site, where an apparently intact verge could be seen (Figure 2), although the extent of the actual excavations for mineral extraction was not clear. Following the sand/gravel extraction it was used by USAF for the disposal of contaminated (often medical) waste.



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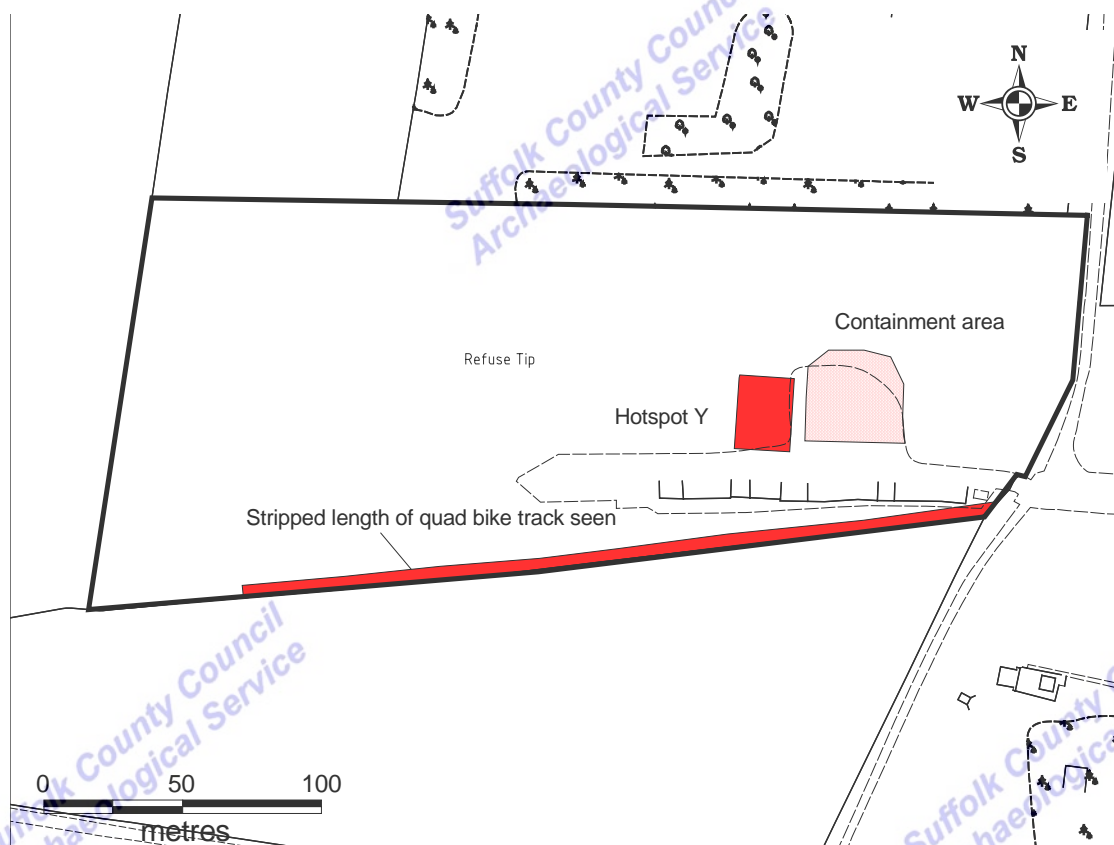
Figure 2. Site location and location of nearby sites from the Suffolk County Sites and Monuments Record

The scope of the project was reduced from that envisaged when it was first presented for planning permission and the archaeological work required was correspondingly less than that originally specified (Appendix 1). A trial trench originally planned for the eastern end of the site was not carried out because plans to provide a hardstanding here were abandoned. The reductions in the archaeological work were agreed with the Conservation Team Officer, R.D. Carr. The aim of the project was to remove areas of seriously contaminated soil and to backfill with clean material to enable the land to be managed. The works potentially damaging to the

archaeology involved topsoil stripping over an uncontaminated area (and therefore possibly not pitted) in order to allow the laying down of a protective membrane to provide a depot for the excavated material and the construction of a quad bike track around the edge of the site. Topsoil stripping was to be carried out over the identified contaminated 'hotspots' but these were all mapped and the intention was that this work would not expose undisturbed ground. The contamination within the hotspots was potentially very dangerous and health and safety considerations meant that archaeological monitoring during the soil removal work was to be kept to a minimum.

Results

Two visits were made during the works. The first of these was on 28th September 2005 to examine the preliminary soil stripping over the central contaminated area, Hotspot Y prior to the soil extraction. This visit observed an area of c. 500sqm from which 0.4m had been removed, exposing disturbed soil over all but the eastern 5m. The contractors aim had been to only remove soil from over disturbed ground and the identification of the edges of the disturbance allowed them to adjust their maps to ensure that the other areas were accurately machined – however the areas of the smaller hotspots were not seen, so this cannot be confirmed. In addition the area of the containment depot was seen after stripping. Some of this already had a protective membrane over it but it was clear that the soil strip had been minimal and had not exposed undisturbed ground.



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Figure 3. Plot of areas monitored.

The second visit was made on 25th October 2005. This visit saw the excavated pit of hotspot Y and the soil strip for the length of quad bike track along the southern edge of the site. The sections of the excavated pit showed accumulated (top) soil, c.0.6m deep overlying a red silt,

0.3m deep over natural chalk. Some orange sand patches were visible. The quad bike track was c. 1.5m wide and ran along the perimeter of the site. On the southern edge this involved a shallow topsoil strip from what appeared to be the only intact soil profile on the site. Approximately 0.3m had been removed but only at the eastern 40m did this reveal undisturbed natural sand. West of this the reduced level was still within made-up ground. No archaeological features were identified in either the length of quad bike track or the pit sections.

The final regrading of the site only involved the disturbance of already disturbed soil and did not impinge on the margins of the site as this was where the quad bike track ran.

Conclusion

The degree of disturbance in the working areas of the site, the reduction in the scope of the project and the only minimal amount of undisturbed ground seen in the length stripped on the southern side of the site mean that no firm conclusions about the extent of the archaeological activity in this general area can be arrived at. However no finds or features were recorded and although much of the length of the quad bike track did not reach archaeological levels, the 40m that did was nearest to the known site LKH 211.

Jo Caruth
January 2006

Reference

Caruth, J., 2001 *Archaeological monitoring report, RAF Lakenheath, new perimeter road, LKH 211*. SCCAS report no. 2001/71. Unpublished

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

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Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development

WASTE DUMP, RAF LAKENHEATH

*Although this document is fundamental to the work of the specialist archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that certain of its requirements are likely to impinge upon the working practices of a **general building contractor** and may have financial implications, for example see paragraphs 1.2 & 2.3.*

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission to develop on this site has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application F/2003/156). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The dump lies within the area of a gravel pit believed to have been extracted in the 1930s. The pit itself is within a landscape known as 'Sahara' (LKH 070), which has produced evidence of extensive multi-period occupation, and embraces a group of separate find spots and period concentrations (LKH 003, 010, 013, 014, 046). Some semi-formal excavation in the 1930s (Briscoe) identified extensive Iron Age settlement with pit groups immediately east of the Dump site; these finds were confirmed during monitoring on the perimeter track in c.1999 (Caruth).

The proposal is to decontaminate, backfill and regrade the main site, with the construction of a concrete hardstanding on the eastern side (c.100 x 50m). The actual impact on potential archaeological deposits cannot be adequately assessed at this stage as the regrading proposals and hardstanding formation level are not defined precisely. However, the entire area for development is shown as gravel pit on the OS 1:10,000 mapping of 1980, so the principal archaeological potential is likely to be in the pit margins and slopes up to surrounding ground level. Following discussion with Defence Estates, it is believed that archaeological monitoring coupled with flexibility in regrading and construction to preserve archaeological deposits *in situ* will be a practical approach.

- 1.3 In accordance with the standards and guidance produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists this brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. A Project Design or Written Scheme of Investigation (PD/WSI) based upon this brief and the accompanying outline specification of minimum requirements, is an essential requirement. This must be submitted by the developers, or their agent, to the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443) for approval. The work must not commence until this office has approved both the archaeological contractor as suitable to undertake the work, and the PD/WSI as satisfactory. The PD/WSI will *provide the basis for measurable standards* and will be used to establish whether the requirements of the planning condition will be adequately met.
- 1.4 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in "Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England" Occasional Papers 14, East Anglian Archaeology, 2003.

2. **Brief for Archaeological Monitoring**

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which are damaged or removed by any development permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for earlier occupation of the site.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the regrading of the dump margins and the formation of the new concrete hardstanding. The regrading is to be observed as required whilst the main contractor is carrying out works. The formation of the hardstanding is to be initially observed as the contractor cleans to the formation level. There must be a contingency for either raising formation levels or working under archaeological supervision if archaeological levels are found to be in danger of disturbance. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation.

3. **Arrangements for Monitoring**

- 3.1 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the archaeological contractor) who must be approved by the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (SCCAS) - see 1.3 above.
- 3.2 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of SCCAS five working days notice of the commencement of ground works on the site, in order that the work of the archaeological contractor may be monitored. The method and form of development will also be monitored to ensure that it conforms to previously agreed locations and techniques upon which this brief is based.

- 3.3 Allowance must be made to cover archaeological costs incurred in monitoring the development works by the contract archaeologist. The size of the contingency should be estimated by the approved archaeological contractor, based upon the outline works in paragraph 2.3 of the Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and time-table.
- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered the Conservation Team of SCCAS must be informed immediately. Amendments to this specification may be made to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

4. **Specification**

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Council Conservation Team archaeologist and the contracted 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity must be given to the 'observing archaeologist' to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.
- 4.3 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.4 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context.
- 4.5 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.

5. **Report Requirements**

- 5.1 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*, particularly Appendix 3. This must be deposited with the County Sites and Monuments Record within 3 months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.2 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*. The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County SMR if the landowner can be persuaded to agree to this. If this is not possible for all or any part of the finds archive, then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, analysis) as appropriate.

- 5.3 A report on the fieldwork and archive, consistent with the principles of MAP2, particularly Appendix 4, must be provided. The report must summarise the methodology employed, the stratigraphic sequence, and give a period by period description of the contexts recorded, and an inventory of finds. The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its interpretation. The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological value of the results, and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).
- 5.4 A summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, must be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 County Sites and Monuments Record sheets must be completed, as per the county SMR manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.

Specification by: R D Carr

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service Conservation Team
Environment and Transport Department
Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Date: 6 January 2004

Reference: /RAFLaken-Dump01

This brief and specification remains valid for 12 months from the above date. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the authority should be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued.

If the work defined by this brief forms a part of a programme of archaeological work required by a Planning Condition, the results must be considered by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council, who have the responsibility for advising the appropriate Planning Authority.