

Hotel Taxiway, RAF Lakenheath, LKH 342

Archaeological Monitoring Report

SCCAS Report No. 2012/113

Client: Defence Infrastructure Organisation

Author: Andrew Vaughan Beverton

August 2012

© Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Hotel Taxiway, RAF Lakenheath LKH 342

Archaeological Monitoring Report

SCCAS Report No. 2012/113

Author: Andrew Vaughan Beverton

Contributions By: Andy Fawcett and Anna West

Illustrator: Crane Begg

Editor: Richenda Goffin

Report Date: August 2012

HER Information

Site Code: LKH 342
Site Name: Hotel Taxiway
Report Number 2012/113
Date of Fieldwork: 14th and 16th of May 2012
Grid Reference: TL 735 827
Oasis Reference: suffolkc1-131926
Curatorial Officer: Judith Plouviez
Project Officer: Andrew Vaughan Beverton
Client/Funding Body: Defence Infrastructure

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: Andrew Vaughan Beverton
Date: July 2012

Approved By: Jo Caruth
Position: Senior Project Officer
Date:
Signed:

Contents

Summary

Drawing Conventions

1. Introduction	1
2. Geology and topography	1
3. Archaeology and historical background	1
4. Methodology	2
5. Results	5
6. Finds and environmental evidence	6
6.1 Introduction	6
6.2 The Pottery	6
6.3 Burnt flint	6
6.4 Faunal Remains	6
6.5 Macrofossils and other remains	7
Introduction and Methods	7
Quantification	7
Results	7
Conclusions and recommendations for further work	8
7. Discussion	9
Ditch 0003.	9
Layer 0002	11
8. Conclusions and recommendations for further work	11
9. Archive deposition	12
10. Acknowledgements	13
11. Bibliography	14

List of Figures

Figure 1. Location map	3
Figure 2. Trench and section details	4
Figure 3. Projected course of ditch 0005 (LKH 342) and ditch 0055 (LKH 211) and alignment with Lakenheath Warren (LKH 174)	10

List of Tables

Table 1. Finds quantities	6
Table 2. Results	7

List of Appendices

Appendix 1. OASIS form	
------------------------	--

Summary

The mechanical excavation of a 100m long trench at Hotel Taxiway, RAF Lakenheath, was monitored for the presence of an archaeological horizon. Upon excavation the northern portion of the development area was found to have been severely truncated down to the undisturbed natural. When plotted against the HER it becomes clear that the site lay partly inside the extents of a large multi-phased site (LKH 070) identified by Lady Briscoe between the 1930's and 1960's. The trench uncovered a single square profiled ditch (0003) and a large, dark Iron Age spread (0002) at its southern end. A small group of handmade pottery of uncertain Iron Age or early Anglo-Saxon date was recovered from the layer. The ditch was undated, but may relate to nearby Iron Age features.

1. Introduction

The groundworks for a trench measuring 100m by 5m alongside Hotel taxiway (Fig. 1), RAF Lakenheath were archaeologically monitored. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 2m with 1m steps either side in order to lay two 675mm diameter drainage pipes. The monitoring took place over two visits on the 14th and 16th of May and was carried out according to a verbal brief supplied by Jude Plouviez.

2. Geology and topography

The geology within the development area comprised loose, fine sands over a solid chalk base. This profile is commonly associated with glacio-fluvial action and occurs frequently across the parish and RAF Lakenheath itself. Notably, no podsoles were identified within the area.

3. Archaeology and historical background

The parish of Lakenheath contains a rich archaeological landscape that is particularly well preserved within the bounds of the airbase. The Suffolk SMR contains several entries of relevance to the site ranging from the Mesolithic through to medieval period (Fig. 1).

Large quantities of Mesolithic flints were discovered throughout the 1930's by J. G. D Clark at LKH 075 and WNG 017 after wind erosion revealed Mesolithic floor/occupation layers.

To the north-west edge of the site 'The Sahara' field No. 1 (LKH 070) is a combination of several earlier sites that identified evidence of activity occurring across the Neolithic (LKH 003 and 013), Bronze age (LKH 013), Iron Age (LKH 014) and Anglo-Saxon (LKH 010 and 016). The area of known activity extends into the northern portion of the development area (Fig. 1).

Dense concentrations of Iron Age pits and ditches were found a little way west of the development area at LKH 127 suggesting a continuation of the occupation identified in LKH 070.

Lakenheath warren (LKH 174) is plotted running along a west-north-west to east-south-east alignment approximately 100m south of the development area (Fig. 1).

A small excavation during the construction of the perimeter road (LKH 211) at RAF Lakenheath identified Iron Age pits and ditches.

4. Methodology

The trench was excavated using a 360 degree machine fitted with a 2m wide ditching bucket. The machining was closely monitored and spoil from the groundwork was investigated for archaeological evidence. Archaeological features were cleaned by hand in order to accurately measure their extents. Archaeological deposits were assigned a unique context number and recorded according to guidelines set out in Gurney's 'Archaeology in the East of England' (2003). No unlicensed photography or transmitting devices were permitted inside the development area due to the close proximity of an active military runway. As a result archaeological features were recorded by hand and their locations recorded in relation to the cut of the drainage ditch itself.

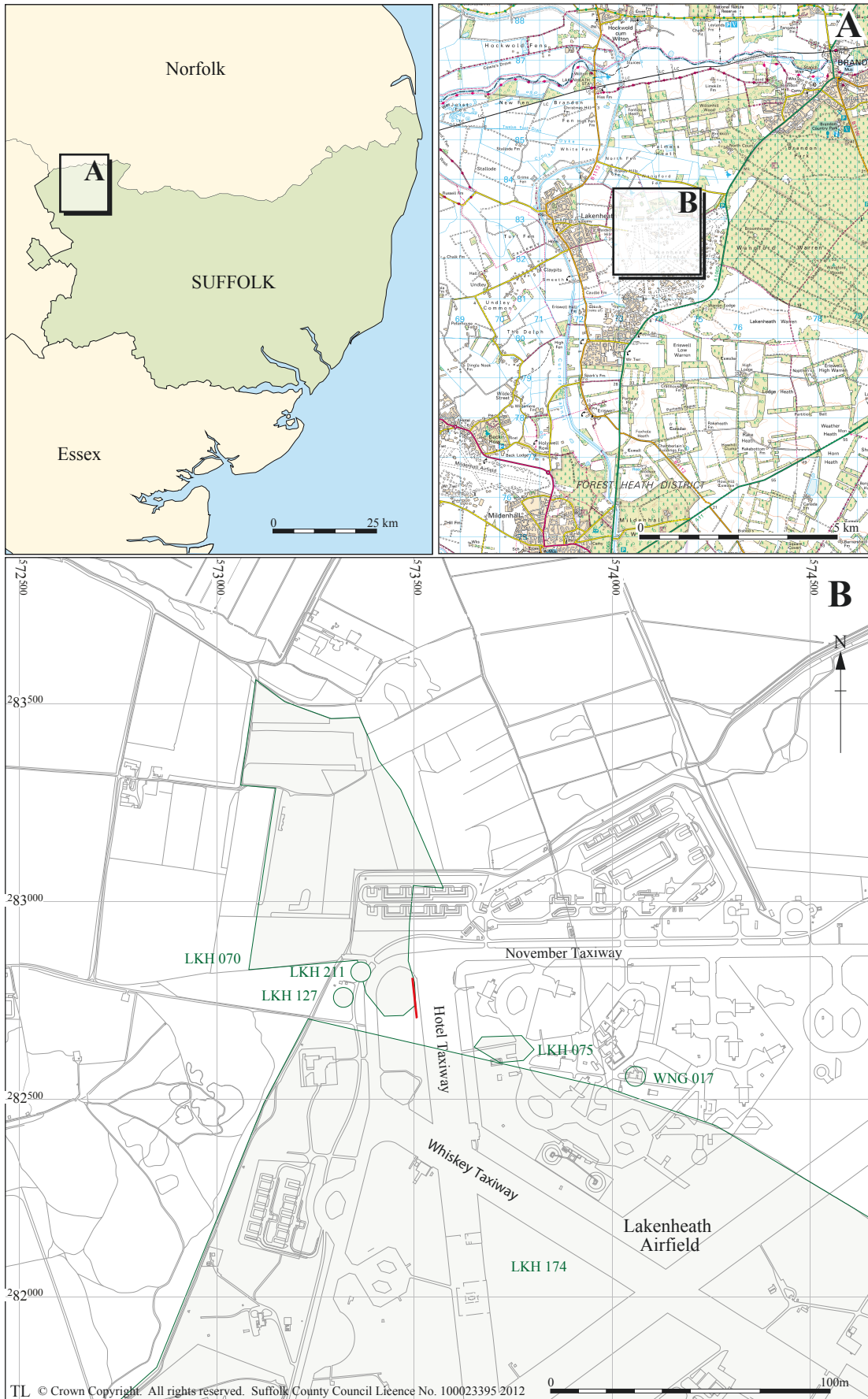


Figure 1. Location map

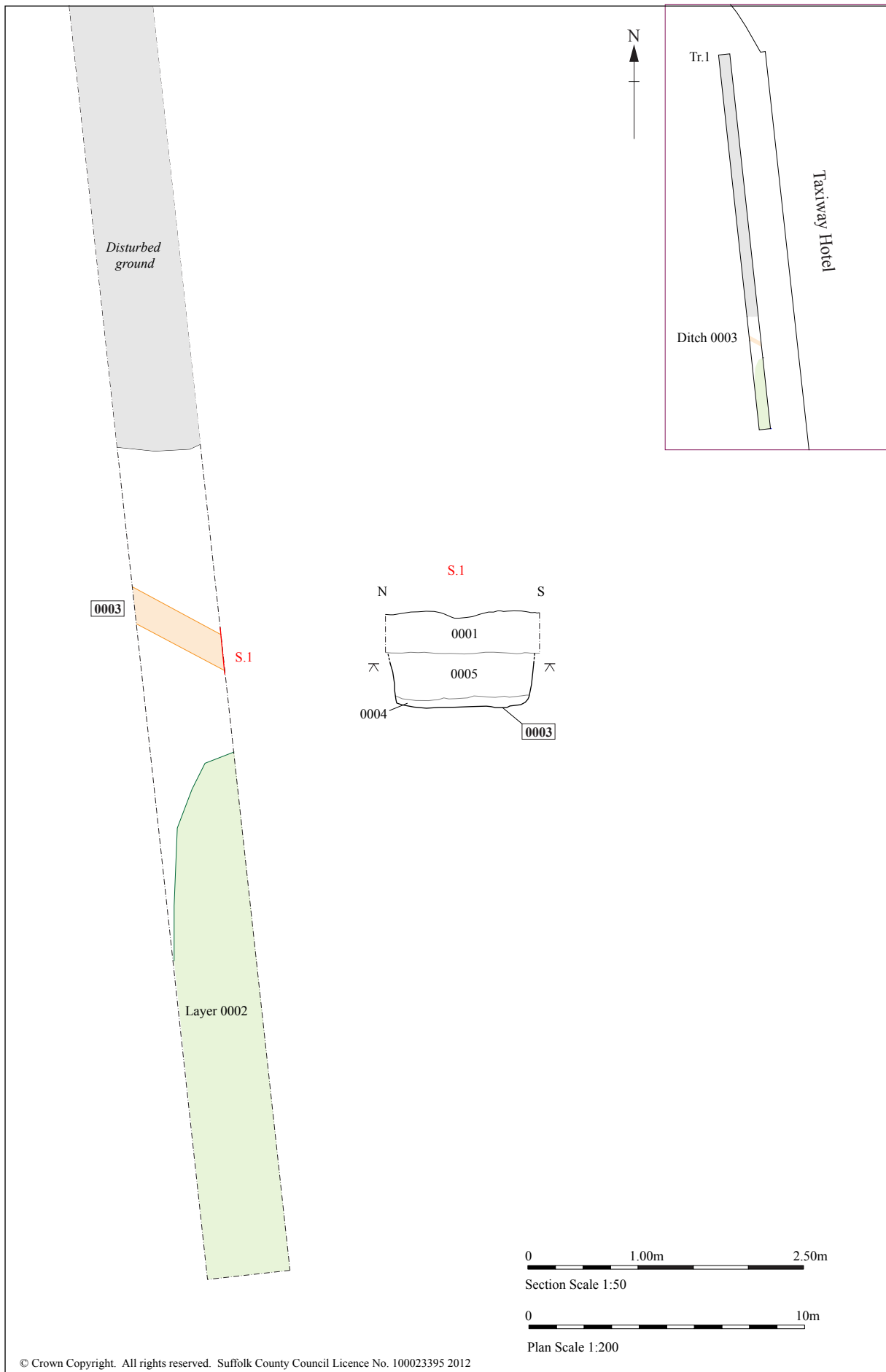


Figure 2. Trench and section details

5. Results

The monitoring identified a soil profile consisting of shallow (no greater than 0.1m) topsoil overlying a mid-greyish brown silty-sand subsoil approximately 0.34m in depth. The subsoil layer sealed the archaeological horizon which, in turn, lay stratigraphically above the brownish-grey-yellow fine natural loose sand.

Ditch 0003

Located 20m from the southern end of the trench (Fig. 2) this ditch measured 1.3m wide and 0.48m deep and ran west-north-west to east-south-east across the width of the development area. The ditch had a square profile with an angular, steep break of slope, straight sides and an abrupt break of base that lead to a flat base (Fig. 2).

The ditch contained a pale brownish-grey silty-sand (0004) basal fill and a mid greyish-brown silty-sand second fill (0003).

No finds were recovered from the ditch.

Layer 0002

A dark greyish-brown sandy-silt layer was identified at the southern end of the trench (Fig. 2). The layer had a maximum depth of 0.3m and sat in a natural hollow with an imperceptible break of slope and shallow straight sides.

A single sherd of pottery, identified as potentially Iron Age or Anglo-Saxon, was recovered from the layer during excavation and a 40l sample was processed for environmental remains. Further fragments of pottery were recovered from the environmental sample.

6. Finds and environmental evidence

Andy Fawcett

6.1 Introduction

Table 1 shows the quantities of finds collected from layer 0002.

Context	Pottery		Burnt flint		Animal bone		Spot date
	No	Wgt/g	No	Wgt/g	No	Wgt/g	
0002	20	19	24	34	35	2	?Early Saxon
Totals	20	19	24	34	35	2	

Table 1. Finds quantities

6.2 The Pottery

The pottery assemblage consists of small, slightly abraded hand-made body sherds. With the exception of one slightly larger sherd, the remainder were all recovered as part of the sampling strategy.

The sherds are mostly reduced in a dense black sandy fabric (HMS), and the largest piece exhibits some burnishing. Some of the smaller sherds also contain sparse organics (HMSO). In general the overall feel, arrangement of the quartz and presence of mica suggests that the sherds are dated to the Early Saxon period. However fabrics of a similar nature are also a feature of Iron Age pottery and the lack of rim or base sherds, as well as the fragmentary nature of the assemblage, means that an Iron Age date for the pottery cannot be ruled out entirely.

6.3 Burnt flint

All of the burnt flint was recovered as part of the sampling strategy. The pieces are small and variably coloured.

6.4 Faunal Remains

The animal bone was all retrieved from context 0002 as part of the sampling strategy. However, all of the pieces are extremely small, abraded and not identifiable to species.

6.5 Macrofossils and other remains

Anna West

Introduction and Methods

A single bulk sample was taken from a deposit during a monitoring of the Hotel Taxiway, RAF Lakenheath. The whole sample was processed in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.

The sample was processed using manual water flotation/washover and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned using a binocular microscope at x16 magnification and the presence of any plant remains or artefacts are noted in Table *2. Identification of plant remains is with reference to the Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands (Capper, Bekker and Jans 2006).

The non-floating residues were collected in a 1mm mesh and sorted when dry. All artefacts/ecofacts were retained for inclusion in the finds total.

Quantification

For the purpose of this initial assessment, items such as seeds, cereal grains and small animal bones have been scanned and recorded qualitatively according to the following categories

= 1-10, ## = 11-50, ### = 51+ specimens

Items that cannot be easily quantified such as charcoal, magnetic residues and fragmented bone have been scored for abundance.

+ = rare, ++ = moderate, +++ = abundant

Results

SS No	Context No	Feature/cut no	Feature type	Approximate date of deposit	Flot Contents
SS 1	0004	0001	Deposit	?Early Saxon	Charcoal ++, charred abraded grain ### and weed seeds ++, fragmented insect remains +, un-charred seeds + Pottery frags # Bone frags #

Table 2. Results

The preservation of the grain and a portion of the weed seeds is by charring and these are generally fair to poor. The charred grains are fragmented and/or abraded making identification difficult to impossible. Charred weed seeds were rare but consist of *Polygonaceae achenes*, including possible *Fallopia sp* (Bind weed.sp). and *Rumex sp* (dock). along with a number of charred weed seeds that were too distorted and abraded for identification at this stage. The species identified represent agricultural weeds, some of which may have been tolerated within the crop. It is possible that the charred remains represent processed material with the inclusion of some tolerable edible wild seeds or they may represent a stage of processing where the weed seeds are removed by hand from the processed cereal. However the assemblage recovered from this single sample is too small to allow any conclusions to be drawn at this stage.

Un-charred weed seeds of *Fabaceae* species were present in Sample 1, and consist of possible *Trifolium sp* (Clover). and *Ornithopus sp* (birds foot). both of which prefer dry sands and gravels, and therefore may represent intrusive material from the surrounding area.

Ten possible *Triticum sp* (wheat). caryopsis were recovered along with four caryopsis tentatively identified as *Hordeum sp* (barley). along with a number of fragmented caryopsis which were too abraded and fragmented to identify at this stage. No chaff or processing materials, that would have aided the identification of the cereal remains, were present within the flot. A small number of fragmented insect remains were also observed within this material most of which may be intrusive. Modern contaminants in the form of rootlets were common within the sample.

The charred plant remains in this assemblage are dominated by charcoal in the form of wood charcoal present in moderate quantities.

Conclusions and recommendations for further work

In general the sample was fair in terms of identifiable material. Charcoal was common within the sample. It may be possible in the future to obtain radiocarbon dates from charcoal or charred grain for the deposit if the dating remains uncertain. A few of the cereal grains recovered were reasonably well preserved and identifiable to an Archaeobotanist.

If further excavation is planned, it is recommended that further sampling should be carried out with a view to the investigation of the nature of the cereal waste. The accompanying weed assemblage is likely to provide an insight into the utilisation of local plant resources as well as agricultural and other economic activity on the site. It is recommended that any further samples taken along with the flot material from this sample are submitted to an Archaeobotanist for full species identification and interpretation.

7. Discussion

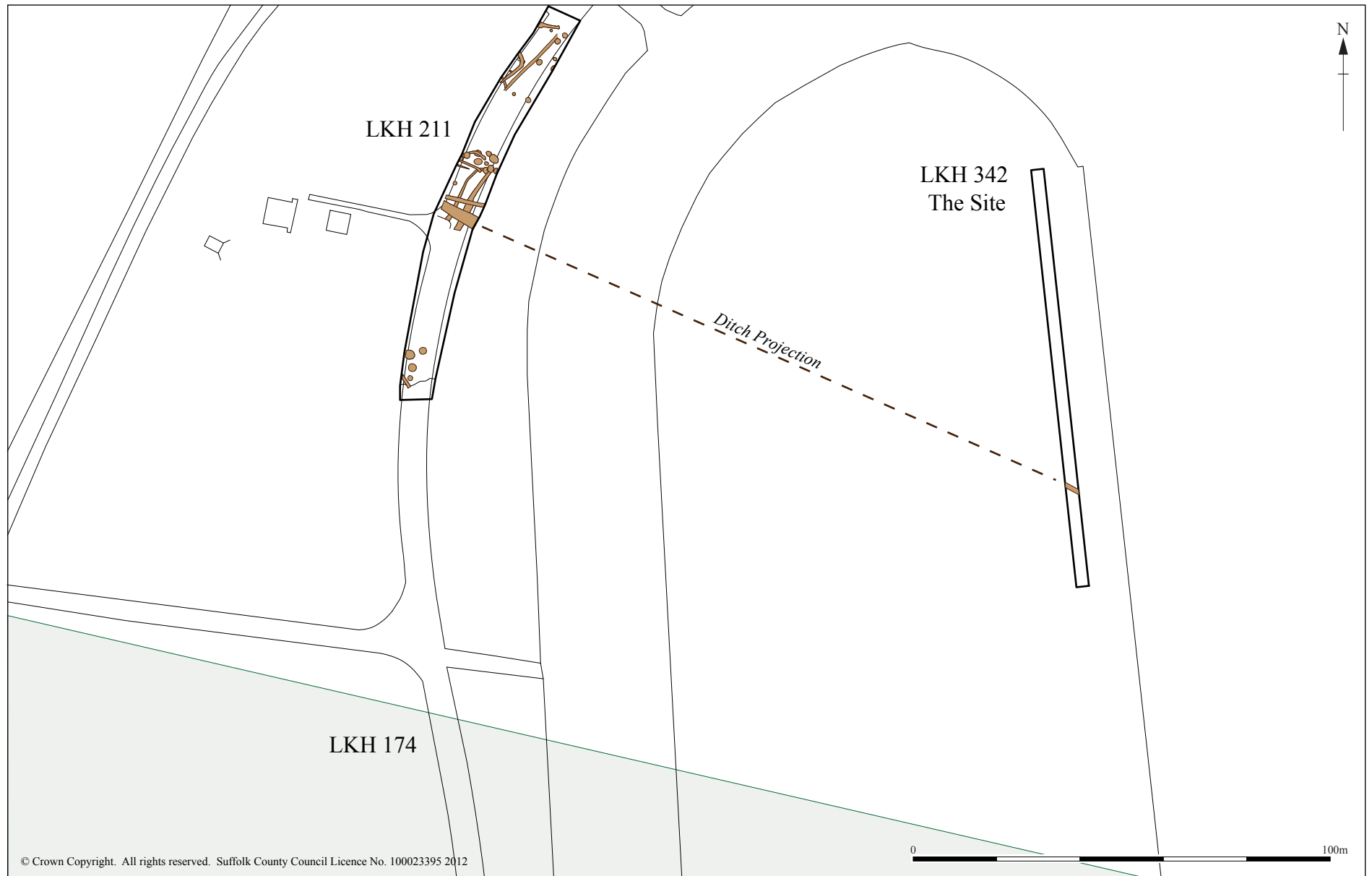
The small area observed during the monitoring forbids detailed interpretation beyond presence/absence of an archaeological activity and a possible date of that activity. The multi-phased site to the north-west of the development area identified fairly consistent activity in the area from the Neolithic (LKH 003 and 0013), Bronze Age (LKH 013) through the Iron Age (LKH 014) as well as Anglo-Saxon (LKH 010 and 046). These sites are combined under the HER number LKH 070 whose extents are recorded inside the development area as the truncation observed across the northern majority of the area (Fig. 2). The nearest known cut features are iron age (LKH 211).

Medieval activity is also accounted for with the projected course of Lakenheath Warren (LKH 174) running east-west approximately 60m to the south of the development area (Fig. 1).

Ditch 0003.

The square profiled ditch was filled with a clean silty-sand and ran across the trench on a north-west to south-east alignment. Although the ditch is undated the alignment of the ditch is similar to that of the warren bank to the south and suggests a spatial relationship (Fig. 3).

Excavations at the perimeter road (LKH 211) identified a series of re-cut ditches (0098, 0100 and 0102) on the same projected alignment as ditch 0003 (Fig. 3). Ditch re-cut 0098 contained Iron Age pottery.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Suffolk County Council Licence No. 100023395 2012

Figure 3. Projected course of ditch 0005 (LKH 342) and ditch 0055 (LKH 211) and alignment with Lakenheath Warren (LKH 174)

Layer 0002

The dark, burnt layer present at the southern end of the development area produce pottery that is identifiable as either Iron Age or Saxon in date. Both periods are represented in nearby sites (Fig. 1) but given the proliferation of Iron Age activity in the immediate area it seems likely that the sherds are of this date.

Environmental evidence from this layer identified a large proportion of wood charcoal with the presence of charred cereal grain also being noted. The absence of chaff or processing materials within the environmental sample is unusual and suggests that if this layer derives from occupation then processed grains were being brought onto the site rather than being prepared nearby.

8. Conclusions and recommendations for further work

The project has established the presence of an archaeological horizon present towards the southern end of the site with heavy truncation, likely from earlier excavations (LKH 070, Fig. 1), across the majority of the northern end of the trench.

Although undated ditch 0003 potentially belongs to a medieval field system related to the warren banks to the south of the development area. However, excavations to the west of the site (LKH 211) identified a re-cut Iron Age ditch (0055) coinciding with the projected course of ditch 0003 (Fig. 3) suggesting that it may represent a much older boundary.

Burnt layer 0002 is not precisely dated due to similarities between Saxon and Iron Age pottery. However, the presence of an archaeological layer within the development area indicates a continuation of the archaeological landscape originally identified by lady Briscoe at LKH 070 (Sahara field No. 1). In particular it may show an extension of the activity recorded at site LKH 211 spreading eastwards across the airfield.

No further work is recommended for this project.

9. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

Digital archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Archive\Bury\LKH 342

Digital photographic archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Catalogues\Photos\HPA-HPZ\HPR 05

Finds and environmental archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds: H/82/3 Parish Box

10. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by Andy Beverton and directed by Jo Caruth.

Project management was undertaken by Jo caruth who also provided advice during the production of the report.

Post-excavation management was provided by Richenda Goffin. Finds processing and analysis was undertaken by Andy Fawcett

The report illustrations were created by Crane Begg and the report was edited by Jo Caruth.

11. Bibliography

Capper, R. T. J, Bekker, R. M. B and Jans, J. E. A., 2006, *Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands*. Scottish Crop Research Institute (<http://asis.scri.ac.uk/>)

Caruth, J., 2001. Archaeological monitoring report, RAF Lakenheath, New Perimeter road, LKH 211. SCCAS Report No. 2001/71. Unpub.

Gurney, D., 2003, Standards of Field Archaeology In the East of England. EAA occasional paper 14. ALGAO

Appendix 1. OASIS form

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/