

# RAF Lakenheath Munitions Area 5 LKH 354

## **Archaeological Monitoring Report**

**SCCAS Report No. 2013/095**

**Client: DIO/Vinci Facilities**

Author: Simon Cass

July 2013

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Archaeological Monitoring Report

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Author: Simon Cass

Illustrator: Ellie Hillen

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Report Date: July 2013



## HER Information

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**Site Code:** LKH 354  
**Site Name:** RAF Lakenheath Munitions Area 5  
**Report Number** 2013/095  
**Planning Application No:** N/A  
**Date of Fieldwork:** May-July 2013  
**Grid Reference:** TL 7414 8326  
**Oasis Reference:** Suffolkc1-154317  
**Curatorial Officer:** N/A  
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### **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: Simon Cass

Date: 05/07/2013

Approved By: John Craven

Position: Project Officer

Date:

Signed:



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



## **Summary**

Archaeological monitoring was carried out during excavation of new service trenches along the northern edge of Munitions Area 5, RAF Lakenheath, during May-July 2013 in order to record any surviving archaeological deposits and to examine the extent of airfield disturbance in this area. Due to the shallow nature of the services only limited information could be recovered, although dried peat deposits were identified in several areas and it seems likely that previous landscaping and preparatory ground works for the airfield munitions store have significantly affected the higher soil levels across much of the area examined.

# Drawing Conventions

## Plans

- Limit of Excavation 
- Features 
- Break of Slope 
- Features - Conjectured 
- Natural Features 
- Sondages/Machine Strip 
- Intrusion/Truncation 
- Illustrated Section  S.14
- 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
- Ordnance Datum  $\frac{18.45\text{m OD}}{\times}$

## **1. Introduction**

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Archaeological monitoring was carried out during excavation of new service trenches along the northern edge of Munitions Area 5, RAF Lakenheath during May-July 2013 in order to record any surviving archaeological deposits and to examine the extent of airfield disturbance in this area. The primary archaeological interest was in the new service runs along the northern and north-eastern edges of the site as there was less expectation of prior modern disturbance than across the centre of the area which is crossed by a number of existing cables, ducts and pipes.

## **2. Geology and topography**

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The site lies on the northern boundary of RAF Lakenheath, immediately to the south of Wangford Fen, at a height of c.5m above OD. The bedrock geology consists of chalk of the Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and New Pit Chalk Formation above which are glaciofluvial drift and peat deposits (British Geological Survey 2013), usually deep permeable sandy and peaty soils affected by groundwater (Ordnance Survey 1983).

## **3. Archaeology and historical background**

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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 airbase lies within the dense band of prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon activity that is recorded along the margins of the fens in the County Historic Environment Record, and SCCAS/FT have previously carried out some 175+ projects across the base, ranging from small-scale monitoring to large-scale excavation, although a majority of this work has occurred c.2km to the south in the main built-up area of the base.

Preservation of sites on the airbase has often been good. In particular this is probably due to low levels of agricultural erosion since the airbase was enclosed in the 1940's and to the fact that many of the original airbase structures were built on shallow foundations or above ground concrete pads.

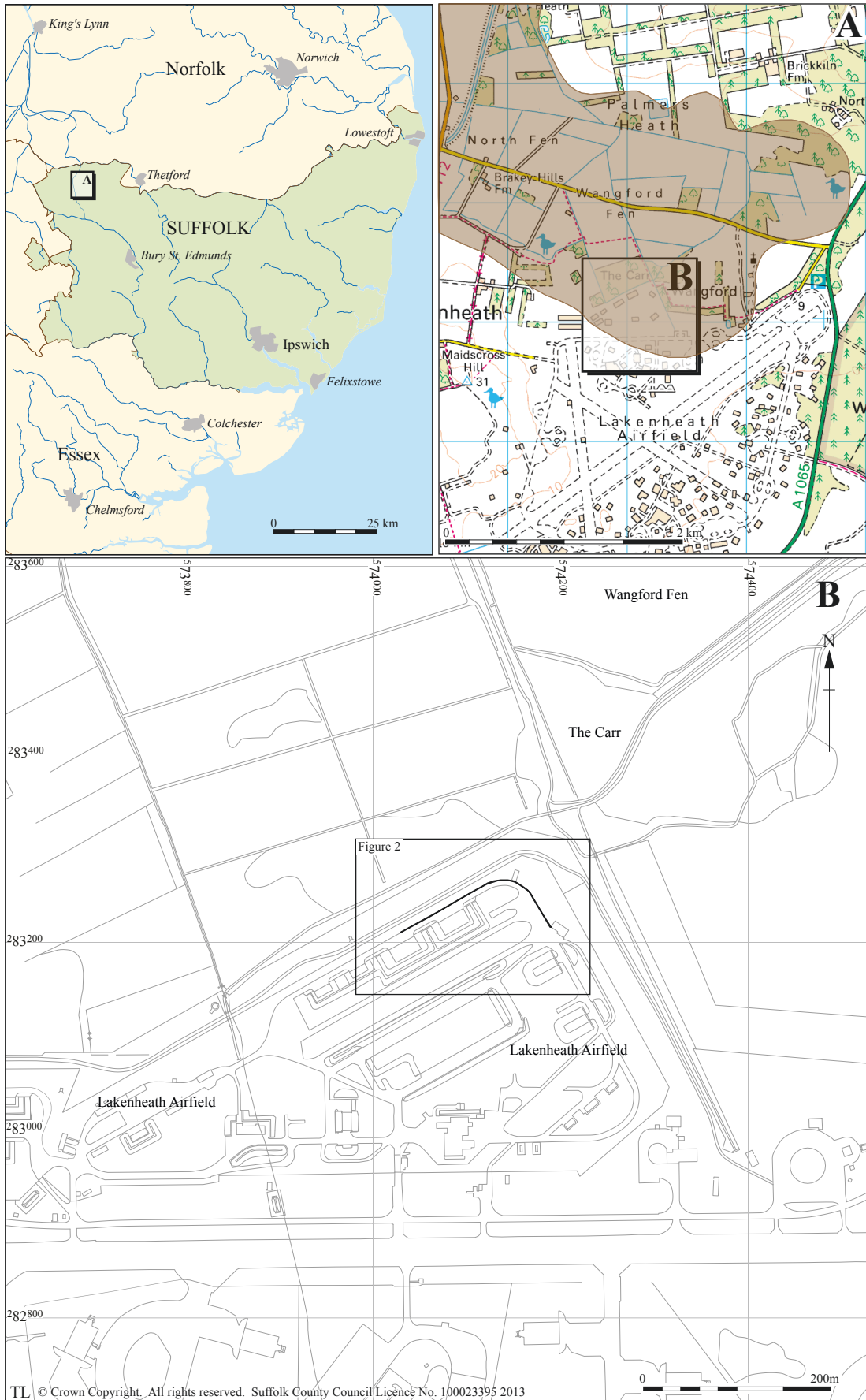


Figure 1. Location map, showing approximate extent of peaty deposits (according to BGS) in brown and observed service runs (black).

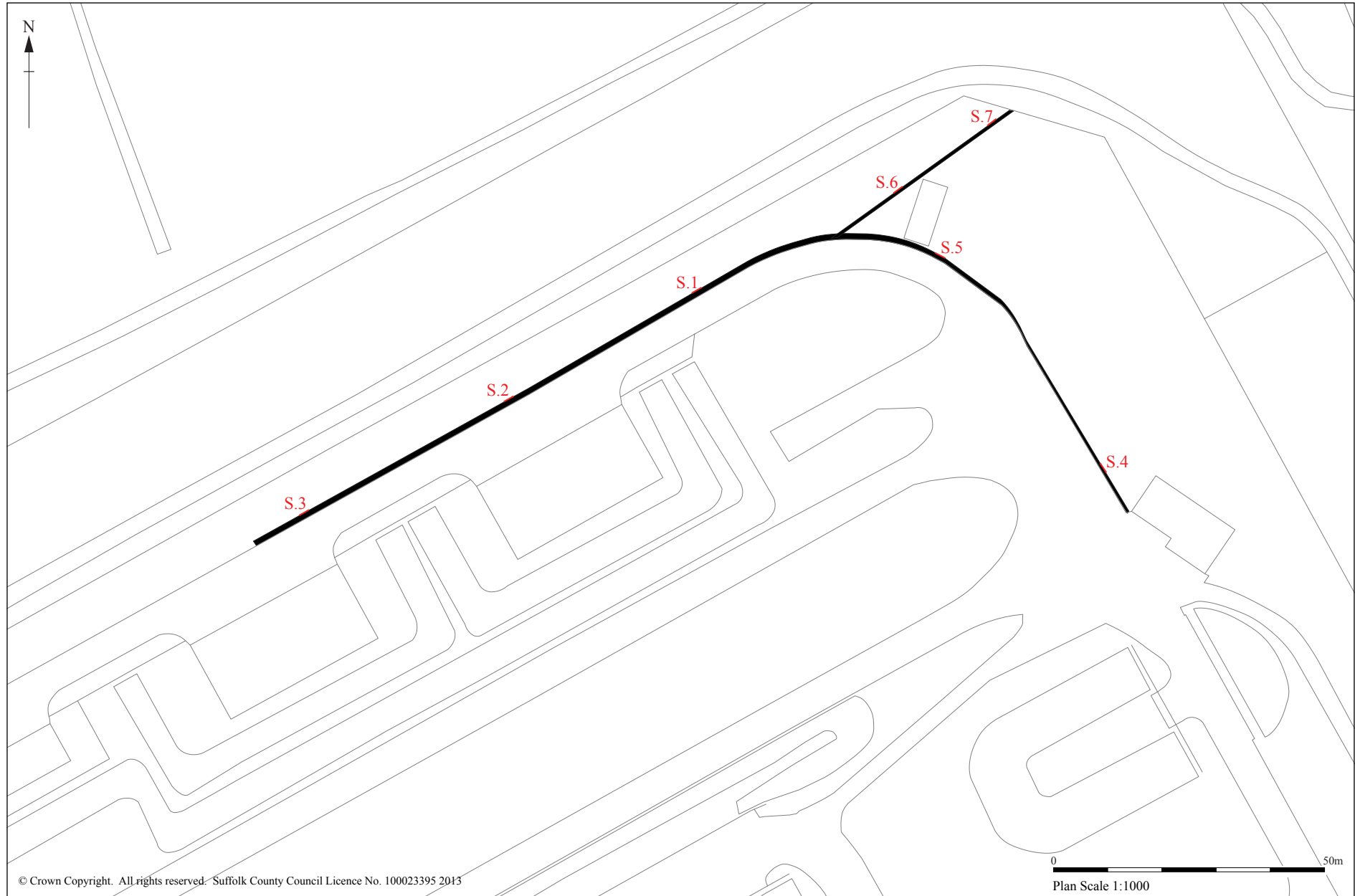


Figure 2. Detailed service run plan, showing representative section locations (red)

## **4. Methodology**

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The footings were excavated in segments, with segments generally backfilled and closed prior to digging the next stretch, across much of the Munitions Store site.

The service trenches were excavated using a small (7-8 tonne) tracked excavator fitted with a narrow bladed bucket, with a width of 0.5m, and generally to a depth of 0.5-0.6m. Approximately 250m of service run was observed, with several representative sections drawn at intervals to illustrate the visible stratigraphy. No GPS surveying or photographic equipment was permitted in the Munitions Area.

Deposits were recorded using SCCAS pro forma sheets and plans and sections were hand-drawn at 1:50 and 1:20 where necessary.

A digital copy of the report will be submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>) upon completion of the project.

The site archives are kept in the store of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service in Bury St Edmunds under HER No. LKH 354.

## **5. Results**

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### **5.1 Service trench results**

The service trench along the northern/north-eastern perimeter road of the munitions store was 0.5m wide and approximately 0.5-0.7m deep (primarily varying slightly with the undulations in the surface level).

Several representative sections have been illustrated (Fig. 3), generally showing a layer of topsoil 0.1m thick overlying up to c.0.4m of either windblown sands or disturbed soils (again primarily windblown sands but appearing to have been churned/moved) that are probably linked to construction of the airfield and/or munitions store. In some areas, the service trench did penetrate through these deposits to reveal dried peat layers at the very base of the trench, and it is assumed that the peat continues under the areas where it was not directly observed. One section (S.7) showed no sign of disturbed soils or windblown sands, instead showing topsoil directly over peaty soils.

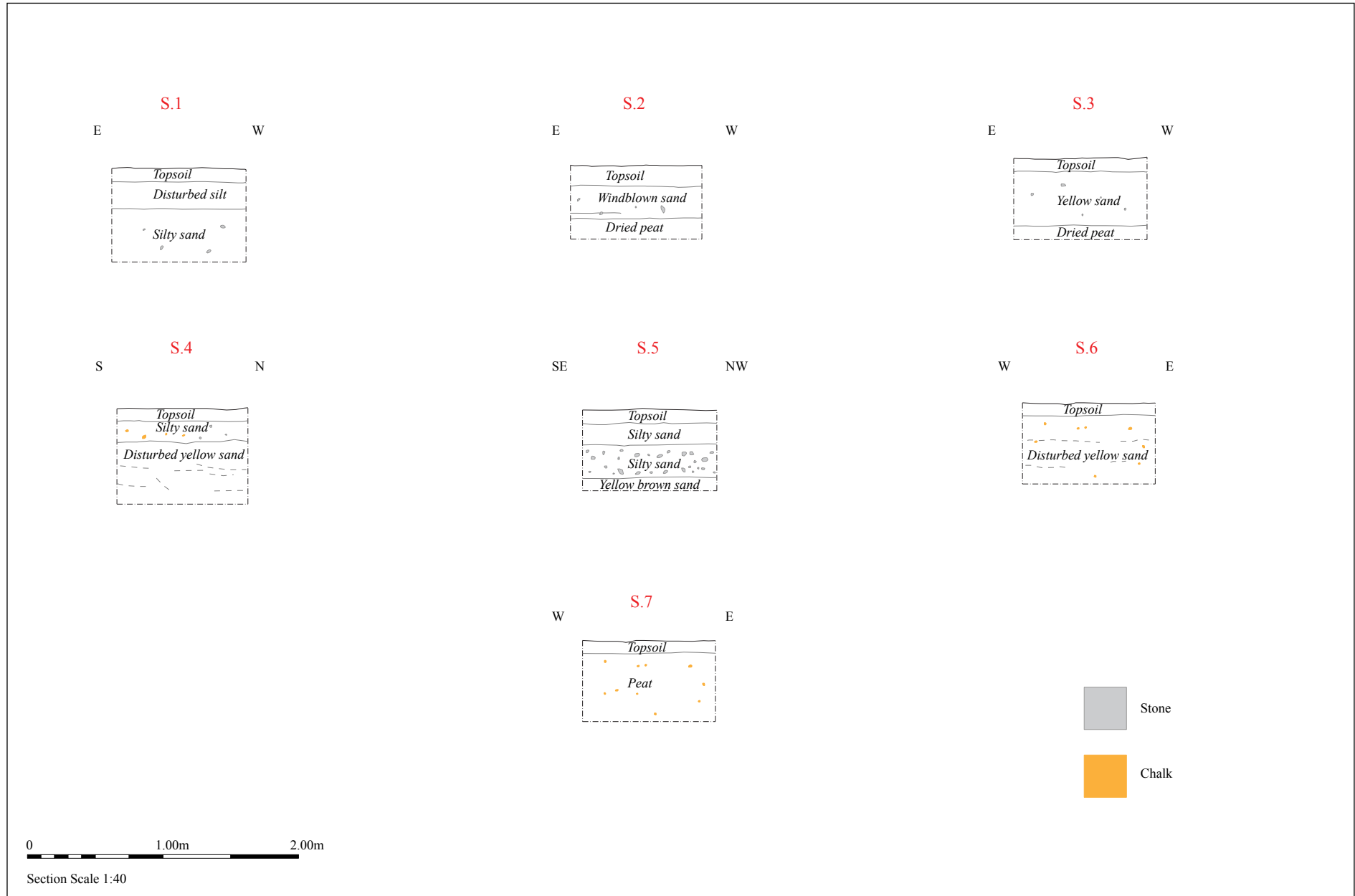


Figure 3. Representative sections 1-7



## **6. Finds and environmental evidence**

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No finds of archaeological relevance were observed during the course of this monitoring, the cultural material noted was entirely modern in nature (the majority was small fragments of concrete and tarmac/old road surfacing material). No soil samples were taken of the dried peat deposits where it was observed.

## **7. Discussion**

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While dried peat deposits were not observed at all points along the service runs, it appears that this is more to do with the level of modern disturbance and the depth of made ground/ consolidation layers in relation to the shallow depth of the excavated trenches than a genuine absence of peaty deposits in those areas. It should be noted that the peat deposits have previously been observed past the approximate extent defined by the Ordnance Survey.

## **8. Conclusions and recommendations for further work**

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In conclusion the monitoring has confirmed that peat deposits extend throughout this area southwards from Wangford Fen, sealed beneath windblown sands or modern deposits. This implies that although no archaeological deposits were identified any such could be preserved relatively intact across this part of the airbase.

## **9. Archive deposition**

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Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

Digital archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\  
Archive\Lakenheath\LKH 354 Monitoring

## **10. Acknowledgements**

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The fieldwork was carried out by Andy Beverton and Simon Cass. Project management was undertaken by Jo Caruth who also provided advice during the production of the report. The report illustrations were created by Ellie Hillen and the report was edited by Richenda Goffin.

## **11. Bibliography**

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<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>



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