

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

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## West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village Perimeter Fence

### WSW 068

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING, 2006  
(Planning app. no. SE/05/02381/P)

David Gill  
Field Team  
Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service

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Lucy Robinson, County Director of Environment and Transport  
Endeavour House, Russel Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX

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## Summary

Monitoring of the construction of the new perimeter fence around the Anglo-Saxon Village at West Stow examined the excavation of c.190 postholes around the circumference of the village. Each hole was small diameter and c.0.8m deep but the frequency of them provided a useful plot of the soil profile and indicator of preservation. A deep layer of dark soil, interpreted as an occupation soil was recorded on the north-west side of the village which had not been sampled by the earlier excavation.

## SMR information

Planning application no.	SE/05/02381
Date of fieldwork:	June 2006
Grid Reference:	TL 7977 7135
Funding body:	St Edmundsbury Borough Council (West Stow Anglo-Saxon Trust).
Oasis ref	Suffolkc1-15638

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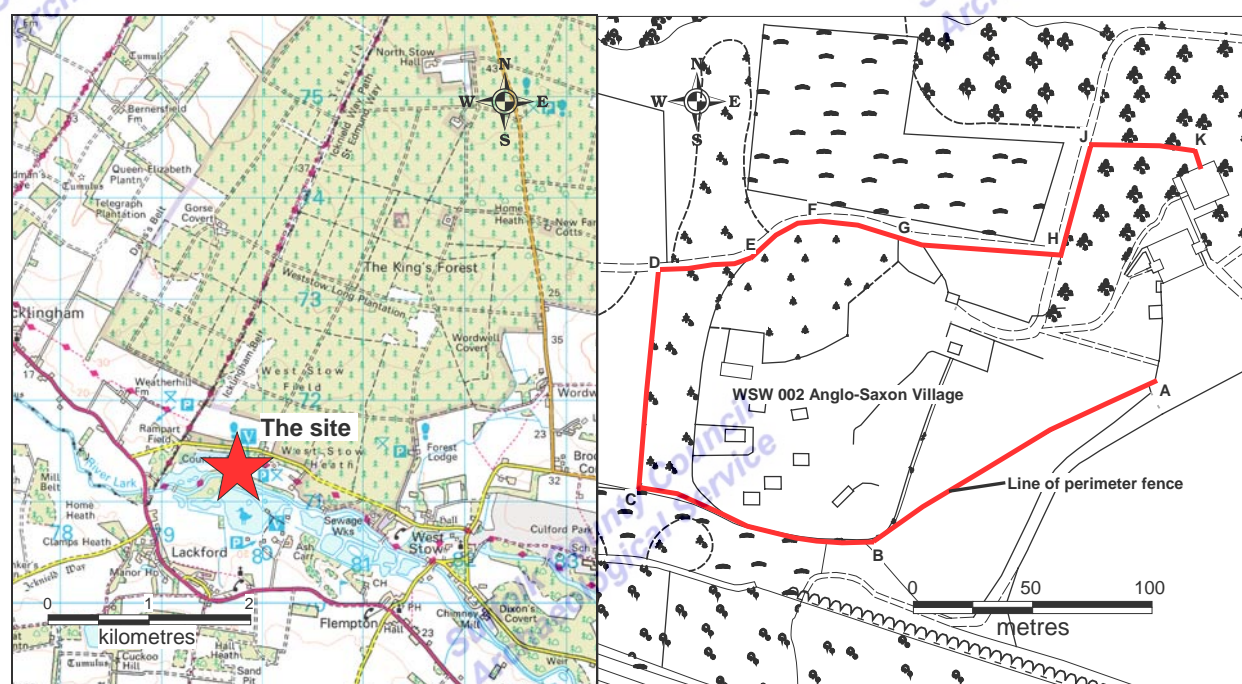
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## Introduction

A series of visits were made to monitor the excavation of the postholes for the new perimeter fence around the reconstructed Anglo Saxon village at West Stow. The route of the fence was to pass close to the area of the known settlement, excavated in the 1960's, and through a belt of trees that had bisected the main excavation (WSW002) and which had not been sampled previously. The monitoring was a condition on the planning application SE/05/02381 and a brief and specification for the work was prepared by Dr Jess Tipper of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service.



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Figure 1 Site location plan

## Methodology

The holes for an extensive length of the fence were excavated in advance of raising the posts, so that up to 40 holes could be recorded in a single visit. Approximately 190 holes were excavated and all were seen. The holes were up to 0.8m deep and 0.3-0.4m in diameter, and excavated at intervals of about 3m. Each hole and the upcast spoil were examined and where evidence of an ancient soil horizon was present a representative sample of the holes recorded by drawn section. Where there was no archaeology the soil profile was summarised by area in a written description.

The site records have been archived with the County Sites and Monuments Record at Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds, under the site number WSW 068 and posted onto the OASIS on line data-base under the ref Suffolkc1-15638

## Results

Five visits were made during the fencing work, a diary of the visits and results are presented below and in Figures 2 and 3.

### 8/06/06

Forty holes seen starting from the SE corner of the site (A-B on Fig. 2).

Holes 1-5 0.4m of topsoil over 0.4m of mottled orange brown sand; re-deposited or windblown to the full depth of the hole.

Holes 8-40 Disturbed to the full depth of the excavated holes - part of a modern rubbish pit.

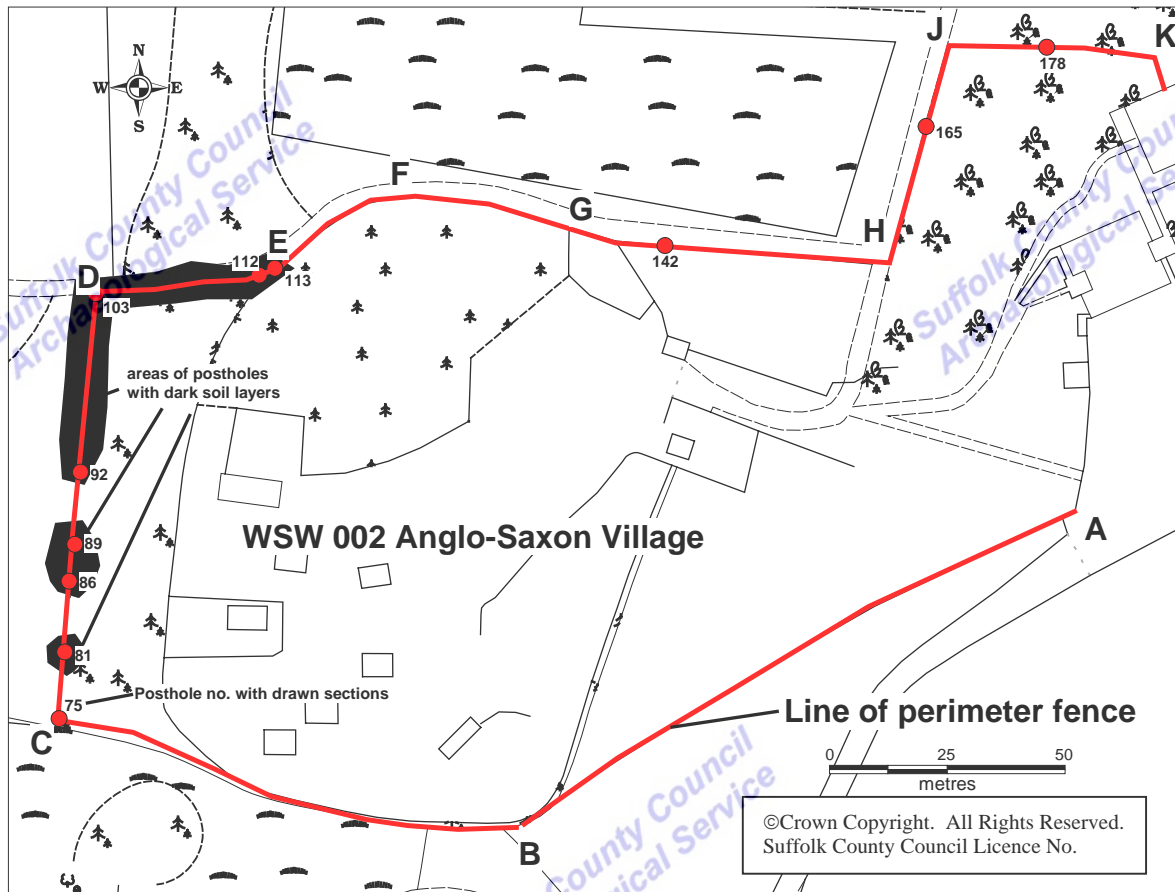


Figure 2. Plan showing position of drawn holes and area where dark earth was observed

### 9/06/06

Thirty-five holes seen across the south side of the site to the SW corner. (B-C on Fig. 2). These generally show a fine stoneless brown sand (blown?) to full depth of hole.

*Hole 42-47* The natural seen at 0.75m below possible blown/redeposited sand.

*Hole 47-49* Ground sloping natural sand seen at 0.5m.

*Hole 49-54* Ground sloping natural at 0.6m, tree roots throughout.

*Hole 54* Possible natural orange sand at 0.6m, a metal bucket was dragged up from close to the bottom of the holes.

*Holes 55-57* Dark sand to the full depth of the hole c.0.7m

*Holes 58-67* Soft pale fine sand, possibly wind blown to full depth of the holes.

*Holes 73-75* As above natural yellow sand at 0.65m

### 12/06/06

Thirty-eight holes seen from the SW corner of the site and follows a belt of trees on the west edge of the village (C-D-E on Fig 2). The tree belt pre-dates the main excavation and divides the excavation area in two. The surface profile rises to a ridge between holes 86-89 before dropping to the corner, and the ground surface is higher than that within the village. The topsoil here was pale sand heavily disturbed by burrowing animals and was recorded as being up to 0.6m deep. In *Hole 81*, *Holes 86-89* and from *Hole 92* through to *113* the thickness of 'topsoil' could be identified as two distinct soil horizons; the topsoil over a darker and more organic sandy loam, interpreted as an occupation layer (Fig. 3). This increases in thickness where the ground was formed into a ridge.



The darker sub-horizon of soil was recorded in increasing in depth from *D* to *E*. Close to *E* the soil was particularly charcoal rich and the change in thickness of the layer between holes 112 and 113 where it was the full depth of the hole suggests that this was a feature fill (Fig. 3).

The subsoil in this area was a mix of yellow sand and orange iron enriched sand, and is stonier than the subsoil seen on the south and north sides of the site. The only piece of cultural material was a fragment of brick/tile, not modern, but probably post medieval in date from where the soil was undifferentiated and probably disturbed (*Hole 86*).

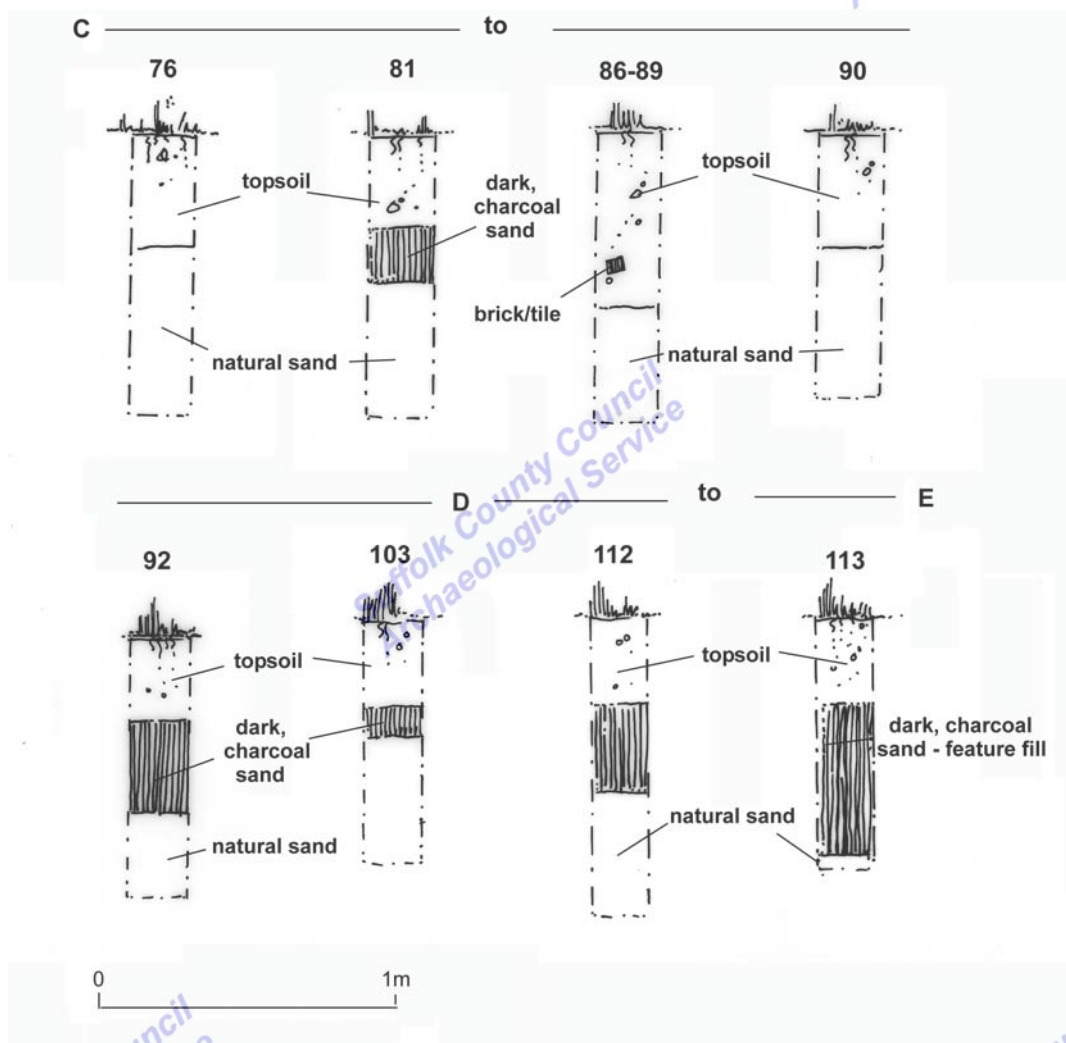


Figure 3. Posthole sections through tree belt C- D-E

13/06/06

The fence line in this section followed the verge of an existing path (E-F-G-H on Fig. 2). The soil profile within the holes suggested that the ground had been completely disturbed and truncation of the subsoil surface may have occurred. Where the 'topsoil' existed it was a re-deposited sand.

*E-F* Topsoil of 0.35m of pale brown sand over yellow sand subsoil.

*F-G* Thin sandy topsoil, just a turf-line 0.2m thick over sand ground levels probably truncated.

*G-H* Re-deposited sand over buried turf-line, turf-line directly over natural sand (Fig. 4).

14/06/06

H-J In this section the holes were excavated in an area of mature trees( 30yrs+). The topsoil was 0.3m deep the directly over the natural sand (Fig. 4)

J-K Similar to the above with a thin, 0.2m deep, very pale sandy topsoil that had been (?)reworked during tree planting.

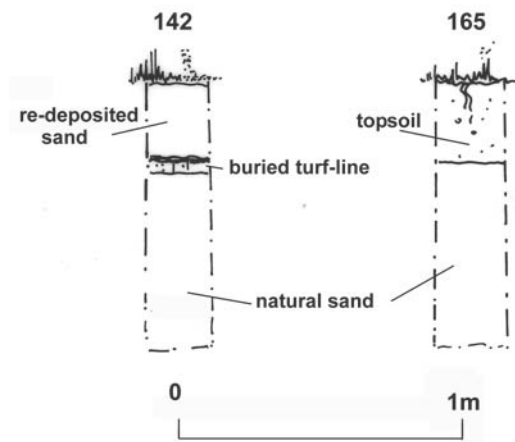


Figure 4. Sample of postholes from monitored lengths G-H and J-K

## Discussion

Most of the perimeter fence traverses are that have been disturbed or truncated by archaeological excavation undertaken in the 1960's. Through the tree belt between C and E the postholes showed a greater depth of soil and a distinct and separate dark soil horizon below the topsoil. The dark soil contains charcoal, particularly noticeable at E and has been interpreted as occupation debris and an archaeological soil. This occurred in three places suggesting discrete spreads and adjacent to 'E' the soil depth suggests that this material could be the fill of cut features (Fig 2). Each of the sample holes was too small to determine further information about the fills and none of the disturbed soil produced any artefacts. Whilst the current invasions have been too small to contribute to our knowledge of the site they have demonstrated the depth at which the archaeological layers occur through the tree belt and shown that they are well preserved.

David Gill  
August 2006



## SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

***Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development*****WEST STOW ANGLO-SAXON VILLAGE AND COUNTRY PARK, ICKLINGHAM ROAD, WEST STOW,  
IP28 6HG**

***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 2.3 & 4.3.***

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Planning permission to erect a security perimeter fence around West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village, Icklingham Road, West Stow, IP28 6HG (TL 7976 7134) has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application SE/05/02381). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The development is situated within an area of high archaeological interest, which is the site of an Anglo-Saxon settlement (WSW 002) of national importance.
- 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 Before commencing work the project manager must carry out a risk assessment and liaise with the site owner, client and the Conservation Team of SCCAS in ensuring that all potential risks are minimised.

**2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring**

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which are damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent (see attached aerial photograph showing route of fence).
- 2.2 The main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for Anglo-Saxon and earlier occupation of the site. In addition, it will provide valuable evidence for the depth of the natural below the modern surface and this should indicate the level of preservation of any archaeological deposits in areas that were not subject to investigation by the major excavations between 1965 and 72.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the excavation of pits for the provision of fence posts and also a trench for the base of the fence. These, and the upcast soil, are to be observed after they have been excavated by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation (see 4.3).

### 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 In the case of footing and main service trenches unimpeded access at the rate of **two hours per 10 metres** of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.
- 4.4 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.5 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum.
- 4.6 Archaeological contexts should, where possible, be sampled for palaeoenvironmental remains. Best practice should allow for sampling of interpretable and datable archaeological deposits and provision should be made for this. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from J. Heathcote, English Heritage Regional Adviser for Archaeological Science (East of England). A guide to sampling archaeological deposits (Murphy, P.L. and Wiltshire, P.E.J., 1994, *A guide to sampling archaeological deposits for environmental analysis*) is available for viewing from SCCAS.
- 4.7 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, including palaeoenvironmental remains recovered from palaeosols and cut features. 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 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.6 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the SMR. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Dr Jess Tipper

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

Tel. : 01284 352197

Date: 4 January 2006

Reference: /WestStowAngloSaxonVillage2006

**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.**