

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

Refueler Facility, RAF Lakenheath, Lakenheath LKH 267

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF GROUNDWORKS ASSOCIATED WITH
A NEW ROAD AT THE REFUELER FACILITY, RAF LAKENEHEATH

Planning Application No. F/2006/0081/GOV
NGR: TL 7410 8086
OASIS Ref. Suffolkc1-15640

Funded by: MoD Defence Estates USF

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2006/74

Summary

An archaeological monitoring of soil stripping for the construction of a new road at the Refueler Facility, RAF Lakenheath, located dispersed evidence of prehistoric occupation, consisting of two small pits, one containing Iron Age material, and one larger, disturbed, undated pit.

Introduction

A series of visits were made to the site from 6th to 16th June 2006 to monitor the groundworks for the construction of new roads at the Refueler Facility, RAF Lakenheath. The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by Judith Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team, Appendix 1) to fulfil a planning condition on application F/2006/0081/GOV. The work was funded by the developer, MoD Defence Estates USF.

The site was situated on open, flat, grassland, at a height of c.10m OD. Prior to the creation of the airbase, it had been part of Lakenheath Warren and modern disturbance was thought likely to be limited to the existing series of roads crossing the site. Interest in the site was based upon its general location in an area with potential for scattered prehistoric features (Fig. 1). 150m to the west, at LKH 214, scattered features including an un-urned cremation have previously been identified and this evidence potentially extended into the Refueler facility. With the development measuring c.2200sqm there was a high chance that scattered deposits would be affected.

Methodology and Results

The site consisted of two areas, each stripped by a mechanical excavator with a ditching bucket down to the developers formation level, a depth of c.0.5m. This involved the removal of 0.2m-0.3m of topsoil, and then up to 0.3m of the natural subsoil of yellow sands which it directly overlaid. Modern disturbance consisted of occasional service trenches and the series of roads that crossed the site. These roads, the bases of which were at a depth of 0.5m, were also removed.

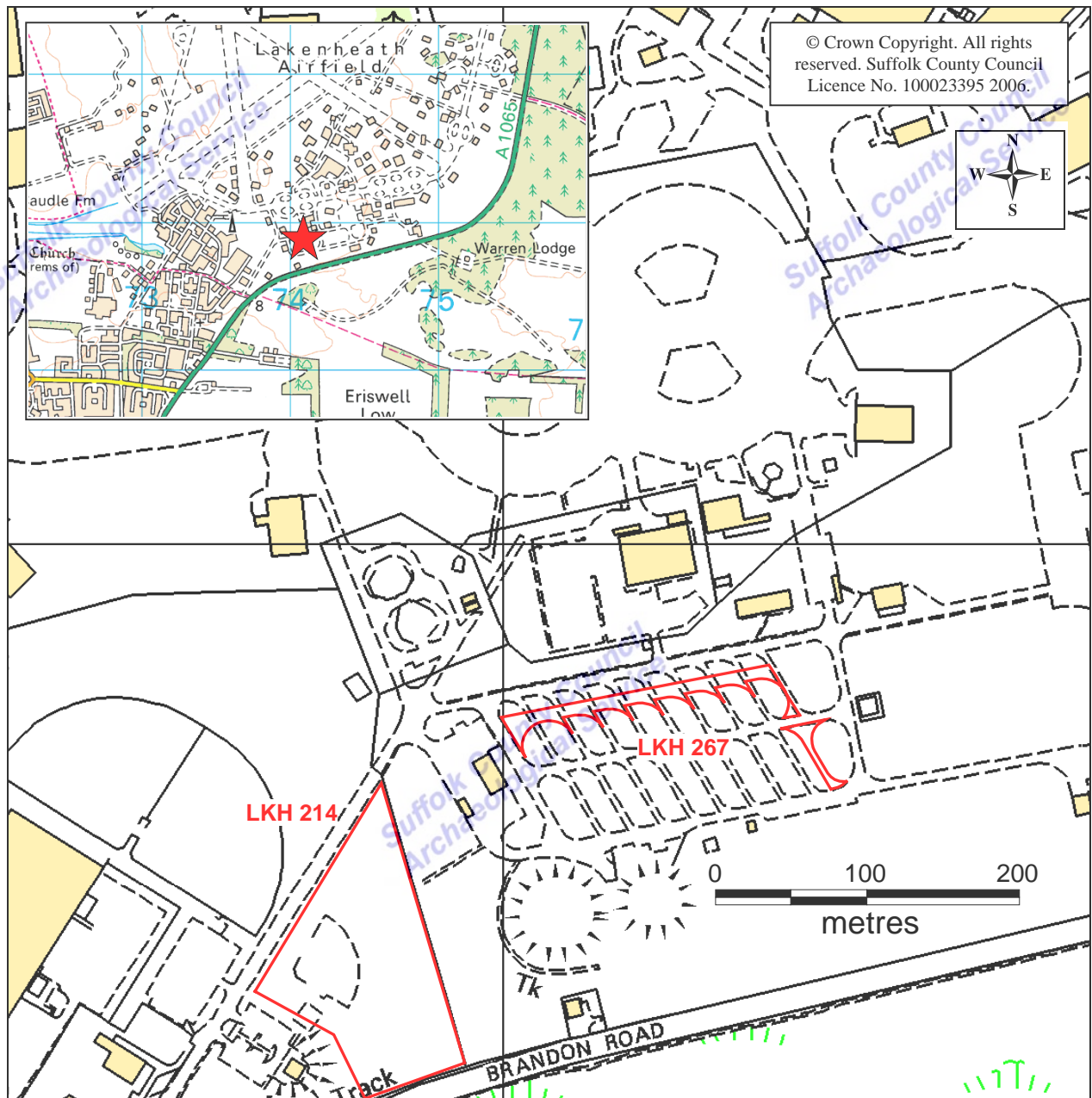


Figure 1. Site location plan

Site visits were made at periodic intervals during the machining and the entire site strip was seen whilst fully open. This meant that while some areas were seen after the initial removal of topsoil, others were only observed after the full excavation and 0.3m truncation of the subsoil horizon. This, combined with the site being stripped with a toothed bucket and then compacted by a roller, meant that observation was at times difficult and smaller, indistinct features may have been missed.

Three features were observed on the site (Fig. 2), one being of an Iron Age date, indicating the presence of a widely dispersed scatter of features relating to a low level of prehistoric occupation.

0001 was a small, circular pit, measuring 0.5m in diameter and 0.3m deep, with moderate sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, 0002, was a dark grey sand. No finds were recovered.

0003 was a large oval pit, heavily truncated by a modern service trench. Limited excavation showed it to measure 1.6m by 1m and c.0.25m deep. Its fill, 0004, was a dark grey/brown sand with flecks of charcoal. No finds were recovered.

0005 was a small, circular pit, seen after the top 0.2m had been removed. Measuring 0.5m in diameter it was a further 0.2m deep and had moderate sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, 0006, was a dark brown/black sand. This was 100% removed and contained one sherd of Iron Age pottery.

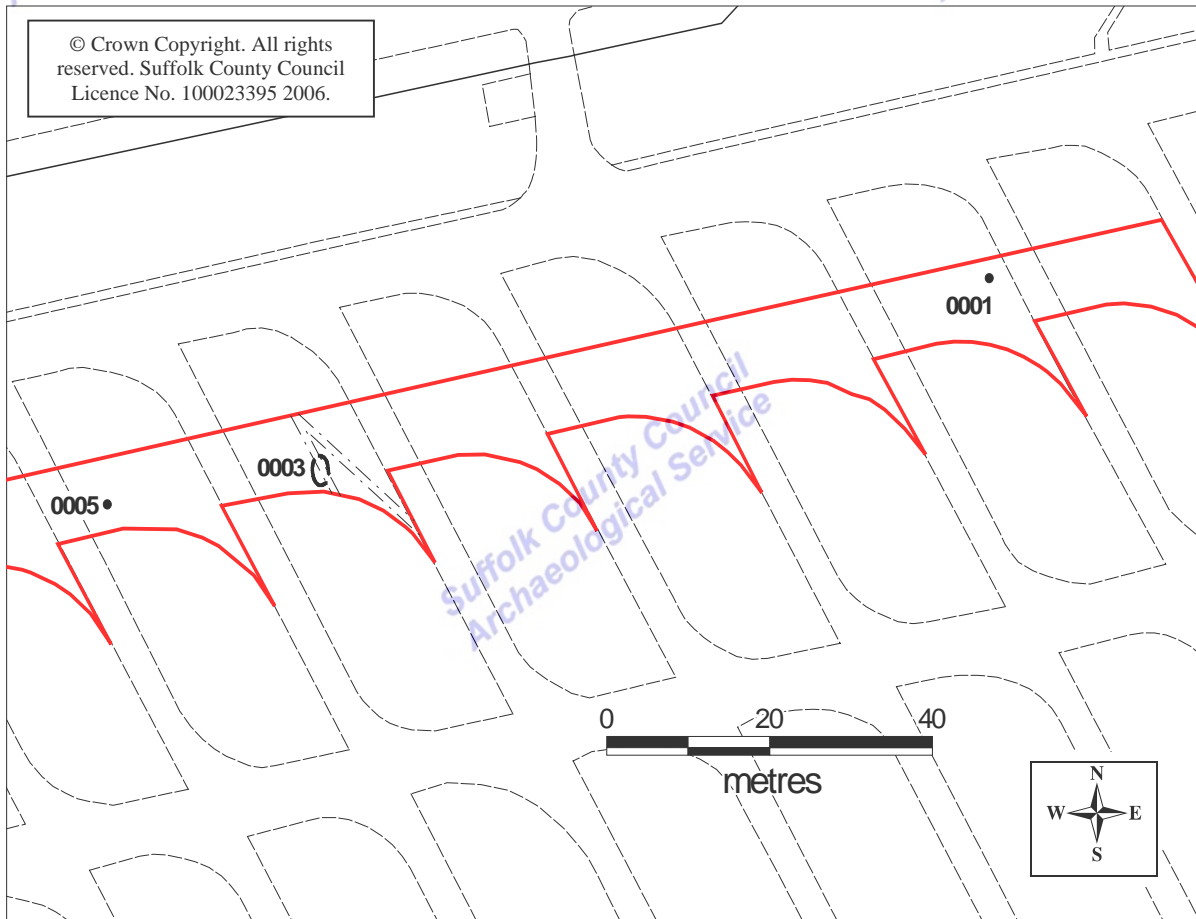


Figure 2. Site plan

The Finds

Cathy Tester

A single fragment (36g) of Iron Age pottery was collected from pit 0005 (fill 0006). The piece is undecorated and comes from a slack-shouldered jar with an upright neck broken below the rim. It has an orange-brown untreated exterior surface, a light grey core and dark grey interior surface. The fabric is hard-fired and contains common angular burnt flint and moderate quartz sand.

Discussion

Only three features were identified in the site, although due to the method of the site strip it is possible that the occasional feature may have been missed. Of these only one pit, 0005, contained any dating evidence, with that being just a single pottery sherd. It seems likely however that the other two features are of a broadly similar date, and together demonstrate the existence of a phase of very dispersed, low-level, prehistoric activity. This corresponds with archaeological evidence seen at other nearby sites, such as LKH 214, which show a broad area of low level prehistoric activity on the fen edge heathlands.

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September 2006

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Appendix 1

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM



Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development

REFUELER FACILITY, 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 2.3 & 4.3. The commissioning body should also be aware that it may have Health & Safety responsibilities, see paragraph 1.5.

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission to construct a new access road (c.180m long) and fencing on this site has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application F/2006/0081/GOV). 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 at TL 740 808 in the southern part of the airfield just below 10m OD. Prehistoric activity has been recorded to the west (LKH 214) with scattered features including an un-urned cremation burial. There is a strong possibility that these deposits extend into the development area and will be damaged by the new road construction.
- 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.

- 1.5 Before any archaeological site work can commence it is the responsibility of the developer to provide the archaeological contractor with either the contaminated land report for the site or a written statement that there is no contamination. . The developer should be aware that investigative sampling to test for contamination is likely to have an impact on any archaeological deposit which exists; proposals for sampling should be discussed with this office before execution.

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.
- 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 activities in this proposal are likely to be the site preparation works involving topsoil stripping (i.e. the construction of access road).

If site preparation works involve topsoil stripping the stripping process and the upcast soil are to be observed whilst they are excavated by the building contractor.

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 topsoil stripping for site preparation , access roads, hard standings and landscaping unimpeded access to the stripped area at the rate of **one hour per 100 square metres** must be allowed for archaeological recording at the interface between topsoil and clean sub-soil surface before the area is further deepened, traversed by machinery or sub-base deposited.
- 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. The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.
- 4.6 Developers should be aware of the possibility of human burials being found. If this eventuality occurs they must comply with the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857; and the .archaeologist should be informed by '*Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England*' (English Heritage & the Church of England 2005) which includes sensible baseline standards which are likely to apply whatever the location, age or denomination of a burial.

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.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 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: Judith Plouviez

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

Date: 21 February 2006

Reference: /RAFLak-Refueler02-0081

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.