

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

Gate 1, RAF Lakenheath, Lakenheath LKH 268

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF GROUNDWORKS ASSOCIATED WITH UPGRADING OF THE GATE 1 ACCESS AT RAF LAKENHEATH

Planning Application No. F/2006/0327/GOV

NGR: TL 73698055

OASIS Ref. Suffolkc1-16747

Funded by: MoD Defence Estates USF

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2006/73

Summary

An archaeological monitoring of soil stripping for the widening of the access road at Gate 1, RAF Lakenheath, did not locate any archaeological or environmental deposits except for a single undated ditch.

Introduction

A series of visits was made to the site from 7th to 11th July 2006 to monitor the site strip for the widening of the access road at Gate 1, 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/2006/0327/GOV. The work was funded by the developer, MoD Defence Estates USF.

Interest in the site was based upon its general location within the airbase (Fig. 1). Caudle Head mere, which lies 600m to the west, was once fed by a channel from the east which has been identified only 150m from the site at TL 735 806, ERL 116. Scattered prehistoric activity has also been seen in the vicinity of this channel, and to the south of Gate 1 at ERL 127. The site therefore was possibly situated on, or near, the course of this peat filled water channel and the development had the potential to disturb environmental or prehistoric archaeological deposits.

Methodology and Results

The main site to the north was stripped by a mechanical excavator, equipped with a ditching bucket, to the developers formation level, under the continuous observation of an archaeologist. This involved the removal of 0.2m-0.3m of modern topsoil and, in scattered areas in the west half of the site, a thin layer, 0.1m thick, of grey/brown sands. Beneath either the topsoil or this sand layer was the natural subsoil of yellow/orange sands of which up to 0.3m was removed.

0001 was a curvilinear feature, indistinctly visible for approximately 15m on an east-west alignment along the north edge of the site. It measured 0.5m wide and 0.15m deep and had steep

sides and a flat base. Its fill, 0002, was a mix of dark grey/brown/yellow sands. No finds were recovered.

The eastern half of the site gradually rose up a slight west facing slope and a series of east-west ploughlines were visible cutting 0.2m into the subsoil, interspersed with frequent areas of modern disturbance from buried services.

The smaller southern area was excavated to a depth of 0.4m, which showed the natural subsoil of chalk and sand.

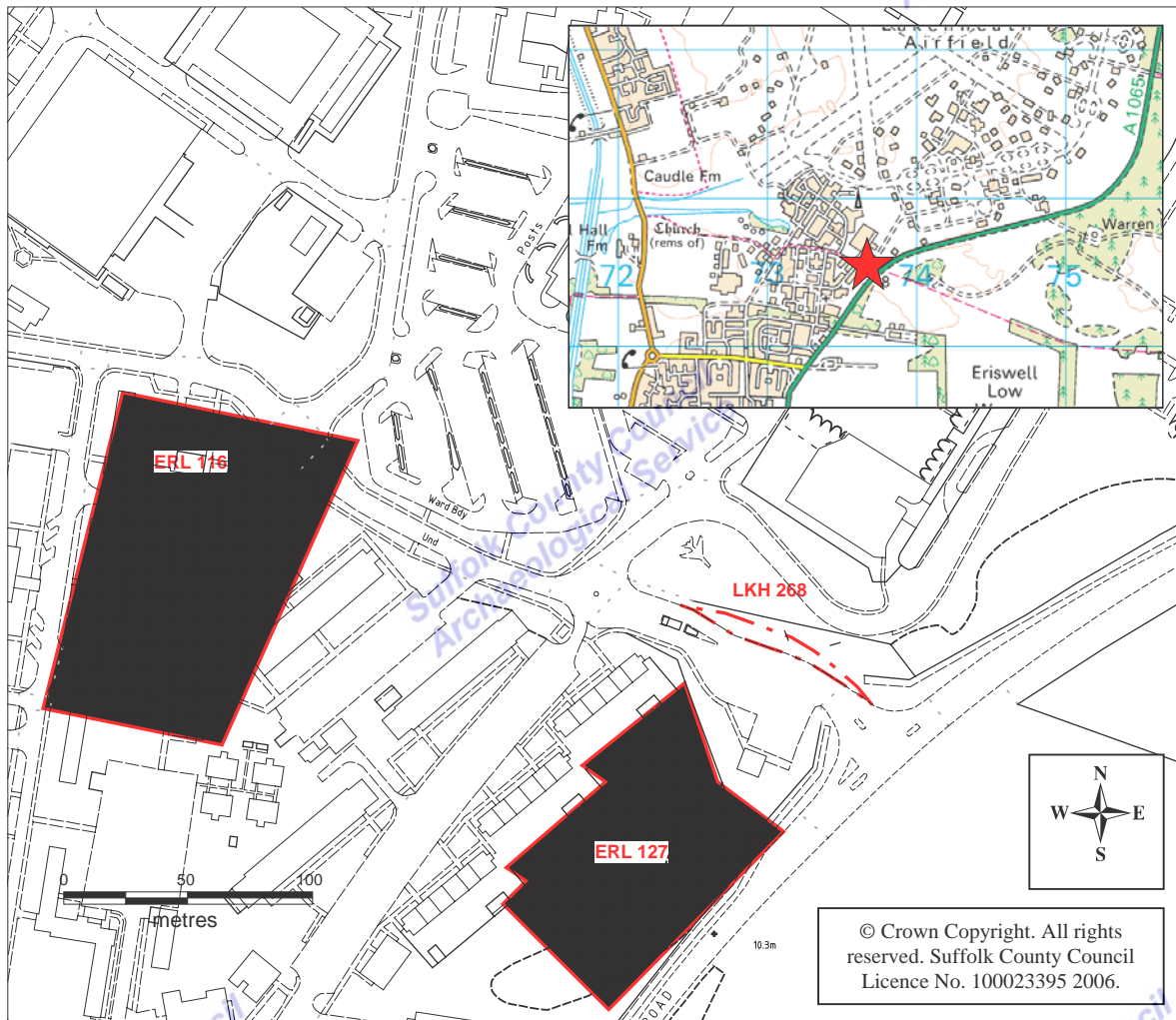


Figure 1. Site location plan

Discussion

The site strip generally revealed a natural sand subsoil, which in the western part of the main site lay under a patchy buried soil horizon of grey/brown sands, indicating a reasonable level of preservation. To the east this layer was lost to ploughing and modern disturbance and the subsoil was frequently truncated.

Despite the disturbance it was clearly apparent that there was no evidence of any infilled watercourse or associated deposits on the site. There was also a distinct lack of archaeological features with only one undated, small, ditch being identified. This feature, which wasn't clearly

defined on the surface, may be of a prehistoric date like other scattered features seen in the general vicinity.

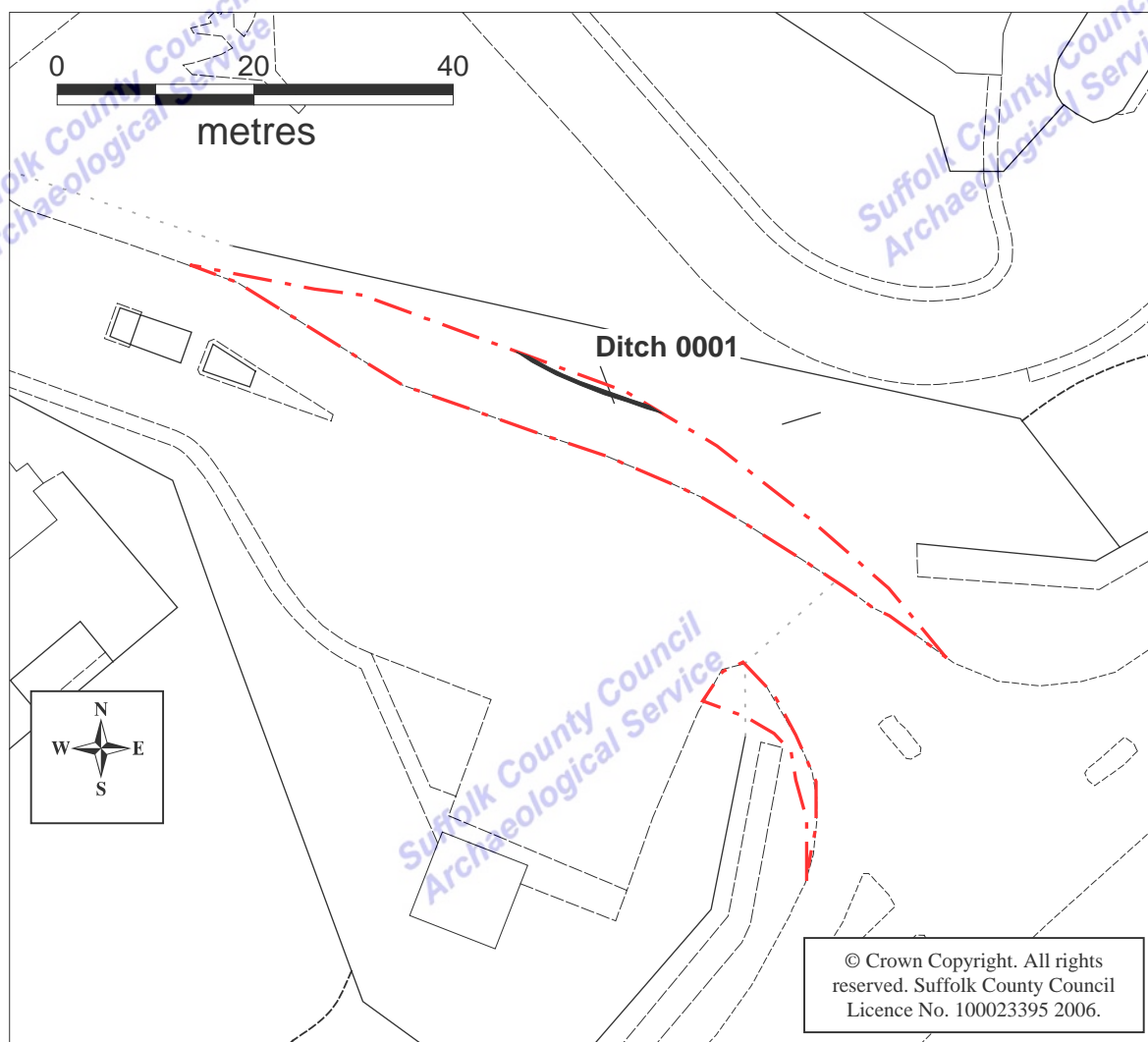


Figure 2. Site plan

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July 2006

Appendix 1

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM



Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development

ENTRY FACILITIES, GATE 1, 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 A planning application (F/2006/0327/GOV) has been made to upgrade base entry facilities. The local planning authority have been advised that the site has high archaeological potential and that any consent should be conditional on a PPG 16, paragraph 30 condition. Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by new construction can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The development area lies at TL 736 805 below 10m OD. This area is east of Caudle Head mere, which was in the past fed by a channel from the east. The precise location of this peat-filled former water course has not been identified east of TL 735 806 but is likely to be on the north side of the Gate 1 access area. There is evidence of scattered prehistoric activity around the channel and to the south of Gate 1. The potential is, therefore, for impact on prehistoric deposits during groundworks.
- 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 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, particularly prehistoric and palaeoenvironmental deposits.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activities in this proposal are likely to be preparation for the works involving new road construction and new search waiting area and the excavation of trenches particularly drainage systems.

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

In the case of soakaway trenches etc., the excavation and the upcast soil, are to be observed after they have been excavated by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for the 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 archaeologist to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity must be given to the contracted 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 soil stripping unimpeded access to the stripped area at the rate of **two hours 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.

In the case of trenches unimpeded access at the rate of **one and a half hours per 10 metres** of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before any infill begins. 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. 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

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Archaeological Service Conservation Team
Environment and Transport Department
Shire Hall
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Date: 8 May 2006

Reference: /2006_RAFLaken_Gate1

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.