

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Land at Wyken Hall, Wyken Road, Stanton SNT 046

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF GROUNDWORKS ASSOCIATED WITH
THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RESERVOIR AT WYKEN HALL, STANTON

Planning Application No. SE/05/02694

NGR: TL 967 719

OASIS Ref. Suffolke1-16795

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief of the construction of a reservoir at Wyken Hall, Stanton, located a single ditch containing sherds of Roman pottery and an undated pit.

Introduction

Two visits were made to the site on the 4th and 11th July 2006 to monitor the excavation of a new reservoir. The work was carried out to meet a Watching Brief condition issued by Judith Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) on planning application SE/05/02694. The work was funded by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service.

The site was located in an open arable field and was thought to have only low archaeological potential, having been previously subject to a thorough program of fieldwalking which had not yielded any results. A Watching Brief was requested however as the large size of the development meant that scattered archaeological deposits could be encountered, which would be totally destroyed by the creation of the reservoir.

Methodology

The first stage in the works was the removal of the ploughsoil, across an area measuring c.100m by 150m, by a boxscraper. This was then used to create a surrounding bund. Directly under the ploughsoil, at a depth of c.0.3-4m, lay the subsoil surface of heavy yellow/orange clays with occasional patches of gravel. The two site visits were made when the subsoil surface was generally clearly exposed, although in places it was lightly truncated or still covered with traces of topsoil. The site was fieldwalked in transects c.10m apart and the located features planned using a handheld GPS.

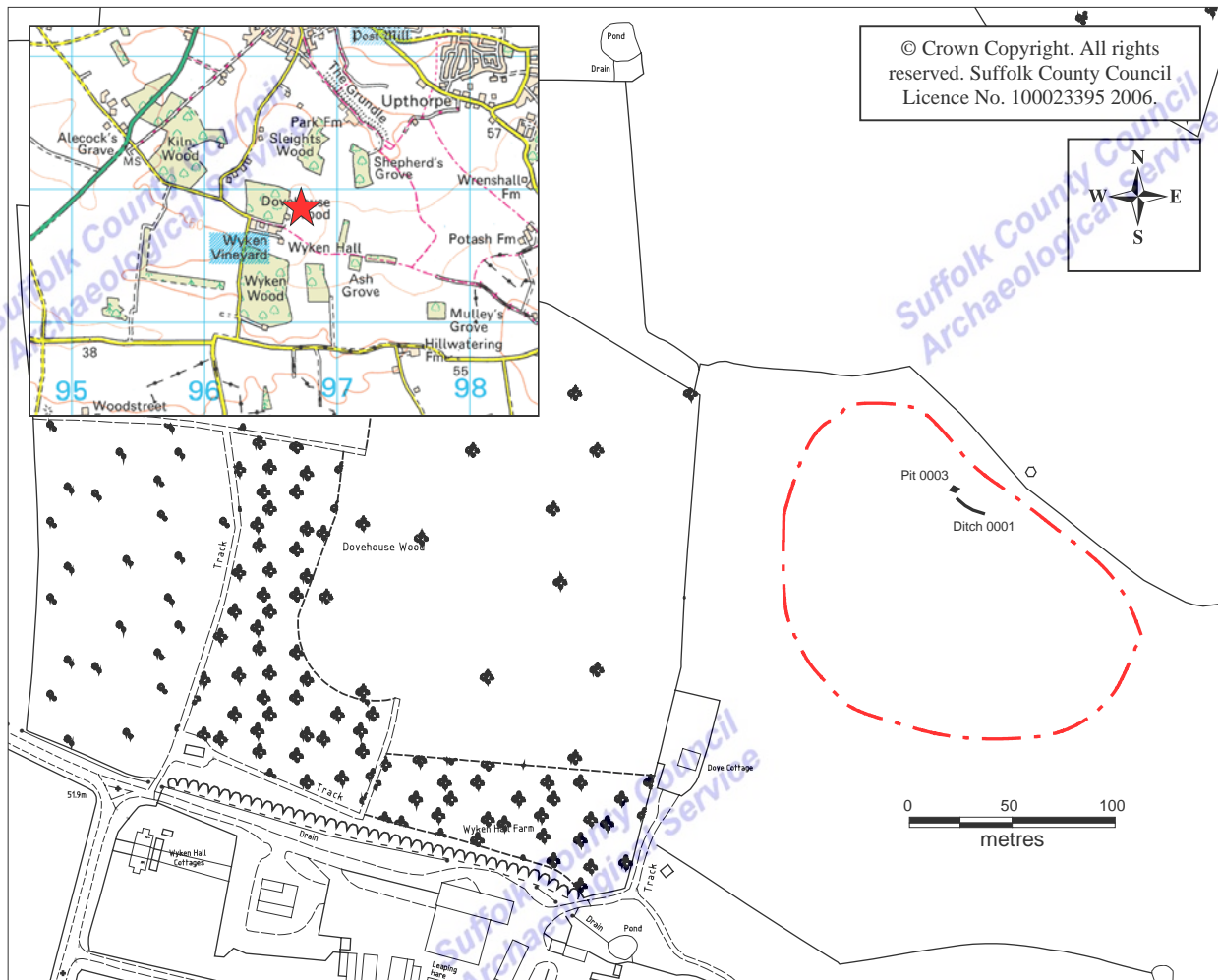


Figure 1. Site location plan

Results

Two features, some 5m apart, were observed during the monitoring. The first was a single length of curvilinear ditch, 0001, measuring c.14m in length, 0.3m wide and only 0.05m-0.15m deep, with a fill, 0002, of dark grey/brown clay with charcoal flecks. Six sherds of pottery were recovered from a 1m wide excavated section.

The second feature was a possible oval pit, 0003, measuring 1.2m by 1.5m and 0.2m deep. Its fill, 0004, was a dark grey/brown silt/gravel with charcoal flecks.

The Finds

Cathy Tester

Pottery and fired clay finds were recovered from context 0002.

Six sherds of Roman pottery (59g) representing the bases of two separate jars were collected. Both jars are in the black-surfaced grey micaceous coarseware fabric (GMB), have oxidised red cores and are probably Early Roman.

Two fragments of fired clay (48g) were collected. One has a sandy orange fabric with cream streaks and occasional chalk inclusions. The other has a sandy buff exterior and grey interior with occasional chalk, natural flint and organic inclusions. Both are abraded and non-diagnostic.

Discussion

Although the nature of the topsoil strip meant that the subsoil surface was not always in an ideal condition for observation it was apparent that there were no substantial archaeological features on the site. It is possible that small, insubstantial features may have been missed.

The pit is of uncertain date or function but the nearby length of ditch appeared to be of an Early Roman date and is probably part of a former system of field boundaries or drainage ditches. As it was an isolated section, fading away in both directions, it seems likely that ploughing or the actual topsoil strip has removed the remainder of this potential ditch system.

J. A. Craven
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