

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Mercedes Garage Site, Ransomes Europark, Ipswich IPS 508

OASIS ID: Suffolkc1 – 19451

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2006
(Planning app. no. IP/06/00615/FUL)



Figure 1: Location of site in south-east Ipswich

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Summary

As part of a 5% sample of the site, over 200m of trial trenches were laid out across the area. Despite known prehistoric pits and burials in the vicinity, no features or finds of archaeological interest were recognised. The soil profile of the trenches indicated that some areas of the site had been truncated and topsoil stripped.

SMR information

Planning application no.	IP/06/00615/FUL
Date of fieldwork:	17 th October 2006
Grid Reference:	TM 2074 4130
Funding body:	The Land Group, Woodbridge

Introduction

The site of the proposed Mercedes garage is within an area of new development in Ransomes Europark, towards the south-east of Ipswich and adjacent to the A14 road (figure 1).

The Planning Authority (Ipswich Borough Council) has been advised by the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service that an archaeological evaluation be conducted as a condition of planning consent. An evaluation was therefore proposed to determine the archaeological potential of the area and a 5% sample by trial trenching was required (Appendix 1).

The site is within an area of dispersed prehistoric settlement and burial (figure 2), these being the surviving relics of an established, probably Bronze Age, landscape (2,300 – 700 BC). Prehistoric pits have been recognised c.200m to the north and east (IPS 252 and 253). At a slightly greater distance are the remains of a barrow cemetery, the closest of which is 350m to the south-west (IPS 417). Surviving as ring-ditches and recognised from aerial photographs, these would have once stood as mounds over a burial of probable Early Bronze Age date (2,300 – 1,500 BC). Some still standing as mounds today within Nacton and Foxhall parishes, a large group of round barrows survive 1.4km to the east (the ‘Seven Hills’ group – NAC 4, 6, 9 –12, FXL 011 etc). The closest of which - known from aerial photographs - is c.1km to the south-east (NAC 035).

The archaeological evaluation was proposed to see if any evidence for prehistoric activity extended into the site area.

The site is situated just above the 30m contour and has a very slight south-facing slope, leading towards a more pronounced dip or hollow within the south-west corner of the area. This hollow is, in the extreme south-western corner, in excess of c.1m lower than the rest of the surrounding site.

The natural drift geology of this area is glacial laid sand with occasional gravel and silty pockets.

The site archive will be deposited with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service in Ipswich. The site code IPS 508 will be used to identify all elements of the archive associated with this project.

Results

No features or finds of archaeological interest were revealed. Potential features sampled proved to be either root-holes or changes in the underlying natural. The locations of trenches are shown in figure 3.

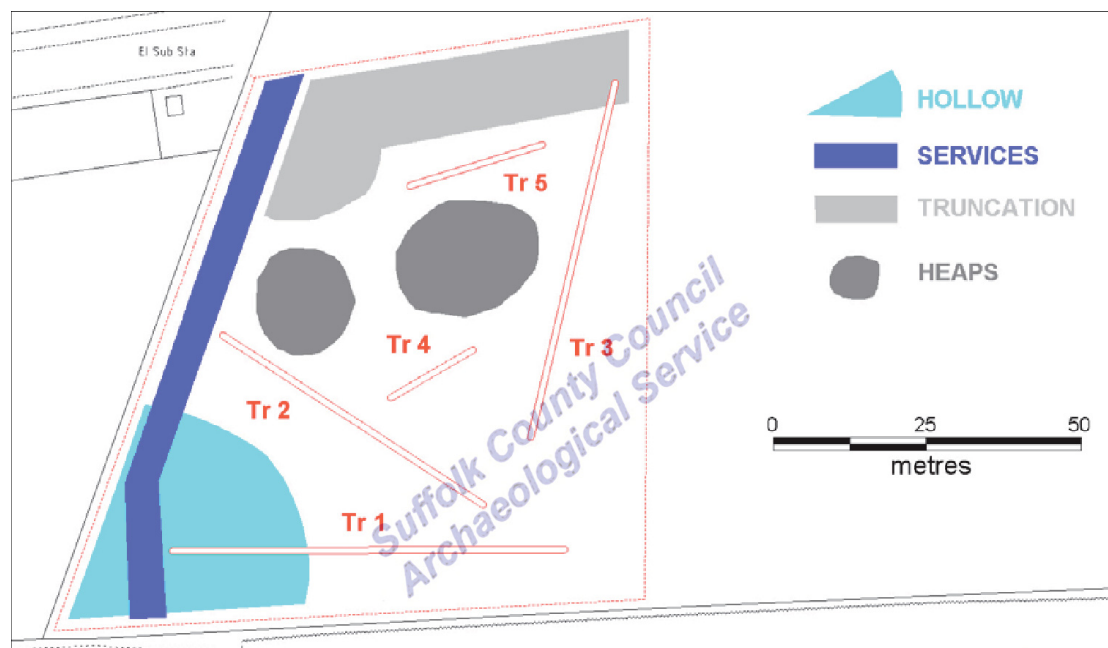


Figure 3: Position of trenches across site and location of obstacles

Trench 1

This trench was positioned across the southern part of the site, orientated east to west and was of 64.5m length. The first 2m of its western end encountered modern backfill and this was likely to be part of the sewer pipe - located by manholes - running along the western edge of the site.

The western end of this trench was within a hollow or dip and here natural sand was encountered at a depth of 1m. A thick topsoil, consisting of dark brown humic loam, of 500mm had a sharp contact with an underlying layer of banded topsoil and yellow sand of 200mm. Under this was 300mm of mid to pale brown silty sand, probably representing a hillwash layer. This hollow was therefore likely to be of natural origin.

As the trench continued eastwards it became shallower, with the eastern 50m of c.500mm depth. The topsoil of 300mm thickness had a sharp contact with the underlying subsoil of 200mm, consisting of mid to pale yellow brown silty sand.

Trench 2

This trench was orientated north-west to south-east and was 46.5m in length. Modern backfill was again encountered at the north-western end and this was probably part of the sewer trench to the west.

At the north-western end of the trench, topsoil was of 400mm depth and had a sharp contact with the underlying subsoil of 200mm. At its south-eastern end 300mm of topsoil was over 150mm of dumped banded and mixed topsoil and yellow sand. This was over a pale subsoil of 150mm depth.

Trench 3

This trench, aligned north-north-east to south-south-west was positioned along the eastern edge of the site and was 56m in length.

The northern 10m encountered severe truncation with natural sand cut to a depth of 850mm, over which had been laid new sand, plastic membrane and hardcore. A thin layer of mixed topsoil of 200mm was spread over this.

Over the rest of the trench a very compacted topsoil was encountered varying in depth from 350 to 400mm. Probably due to compaction by plant, frequent lenses of sand and paler material within the topsoil suggest that much of this deposit had been moved or dumped from elsewhere. The subsoil was of 150mm at the north and 250mm at the south of the trench.

Trench 4

This short trench was positioned within the centre of the site, avoiding spoil heaps, was orientated north-east to south-west and was of 16m length.

Topsoil was of 300mm depth and a thick subsoil was of 250mm depth.

Trench 5

Positioned near to the northern boundary of the site, this trench was 24m long and was orientated east-north-east to west-south-west.

Adjacent to an area of obvious truncation and soil strip next to the road, this trench revealed 350mm of compacted and mixed topsoil directly over truncated natural sand.

Conclusions and Recommendations

No archaeological features or finds were encountered despite a low concentration of prehistoric pits known from the surrounding area.

Modern truncation was encountered across much of the northern end of the site.

Across the southern half of the area, the sharp contact between topsoil and subsoil and the presence of dumps of mixed topsoil and sand under the topsoil suggest that some truncation has occurred. Probably topsoil has been stripped off and relaid at some point. Despite this, over much of the site pale, leached subsoil and hillwash layers remain intact and if archaeological deposits or artefacts were present then they could have been recognised within the trenches.

In view of the absence of evidence for past activity it is recommended that no further archaeological work be undertaken on this site.

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Division alone. 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 service cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

APPENDIX 1

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for a Trenched Evaluation

LAND BETWEEN A14 & RAILWAY LINE, ADJACENT RANSOMES, NACTON ROAD, IPSWICH

The commissioning body should be aware that it may have Health & Safety responsibilities, see paragraph 1.7.

1. Background

- 1.1 A planning application (IP/06/00615/FUL) has been approved by Ipswich Borough Council for the construction of a car showroom including offices and repair workshop on Land Between A14 and Railway Line, adjacent Ransomes, Ipswich (TM 2073 4131).
- 1.2 The Planning Authority has been advised that any consent should be conditional upon an agreed programme of work taking place before development begins (PPG 16, paragraph 30 condition). A trenched evaluation of the application area will be required as the first part of a programme of archaeological mitigation; decisions on the need for, and scope of, any further work will be based upon this stage of the work.
- 1.3 This application lies within close proximity of known archaeological activity, recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record. In particular, prehistoric features have been recorded immediately to the north-west of the site (IPS 252) during the construction of Ransomes Europark. There is high potential for archaeological deposits to be disturbed by development. The proposed works will cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.
- 1.4 All arrangements for the field evaluation of the site, the timing of the work, access to the site, the definition of the precise area of landholding and area for proposed development are to be defined and negotiated with the commissioning body.
- 1.5 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, 2003.
- 1.6 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.

- 1.7 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.

2 Brief for the Archaeological Evaluation

- 2.1 Establish whether any archaeological deposit exists in the area, with particular regard to any which are of sufficient importance to merit preservation *in situ* [at the discretion of the developer].
- 2.2 Identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit within the application area, together with its likely extent, localised depth and quality of preservation.
- 2.3 Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking colluvial/alluvial deposits.
- 2.4 Establish the potential for the survival of environmental evidence.
- 2.5 Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.
- 2.6 This project will be carried through in a manner broadly consistent with English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (MAP2), all stages will follow a process of assessment and justification before proceeding to the next phase of the project. Field evaluation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive, and an assessment of potential. Any further excavation required as mitigation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive, and an assessment of potential, analysis and final report preparation may follow. Each stage will be the subject of a further brief and updated project design; this document covers only the evaluation stage.
- 2.7 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (address as above) 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.
- 2.8 If the approved evaluation design is not carried through in its entirety (particularly in the instance of trenching being incomplete) the evaluation report may be rejected. Alternatively the presence of an archaeological deposit may be presumed, and untested areas included on this basis when defining the final mitigation strategy.
- 2.9 An outline specification, which defines certain minimum criteria, is set out below.

3. Specification: Field Evaluation

- 3.1 Trial trenches are to be excavated to cover a minimum 5% by area (c. 0.768ha; Figure 1). Trenches are to be a minimum of 1.8m wide unless special circumstances can be demonstrated; this will result in a minimum of c. 213m of trenching at 1.8m in width. A toothless 'ditching bucket' at least 1.2m wide must be used. Linear trenches are thought to be the most appropriate sampling method. An off-site surface water drain has been laid across the site while there are two high pressure water mains extending c. 12m into the site from the western boundary. These need to be avoided and the position of these needs to be obtained from the developer before the trench plan is designed. A scale plan showing the proposed location of the trial trenches should be included in the Project Design, which must be approved by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service before field work begins.

- 3.2 The topsoil may be mechanically removed using an appropriate machine with a back-acting arm and fitted with a toothless bucket. All machine excavation is to be under the direct control and supervision of an archaeologist. The topsoil should be examined for archaeological material.
- 3.3 The top of the first archaeological deposit may be cleared by machine, but must then be cleaned off by hand. There is a presumption that excavation of all archaeological deposits will be done by hand unless it can be shown there will not be a loss of evidence by using a machine. The decision as to the proper method of further excavation will be made by the senior project archaeologist with regard to the nature of the deposit.
- 3.4 In all evaluation excavation there is a presumption of the need to cause the minimum disturbance to the site consistent with adequate evaluation; that significant archaeological features, e.g. solid or bonded structural remains, building slots or post-holes, should be preserved intact even if fills are sampled.
- 3.5 There must be sufficient excavation to give clear evidence for the period, depth and nature of any archaeological deposit. The depth and nature of colluvial or other masking deposits must be established across the site.
- 3.6 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. The contractor shall show what provision has been made for environmental assessment of the site and must provide details of the sampling strategies for retrieving artefacts, biological remains (for palaeoenvironmental and palaeoeconomic investigations), and samples of sediments and/or soils (for micromorphological and other pedological/sedimentological analyses. 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.
- 3.7 Any natural subsoil surface revealed should be hand cleaned and examined for archaeological deposits and artefacts. Sample excavation of any archaeological features revealed may be necessary in order to gauge their date and character.
- 3.8 Metal detector searches must take place at all stages of the excavation by an experienced metal detector user.
- 3.9 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with the Conservation Team of SCC Archaeological Service during the course of the evaluation).
- 3.10 Human remains must be left *in situ* except in those cases where damage or desecration are to be expected, or in the event that analysis of the remains is shown to be a requirement of satisfactory evaluation of the site. However, the excavator should be aware of, and comply with, the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857.
- 3.11 Plans of any archaeological features on the site are to be drawn at 1:20 or 1:50, depending on the complexity of the data to be recorded. Sections should be drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 again depending on the complexity to be recorded. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum. Any variations from this must be agreed with the Conservation Team.
- 3.12 A photographic record of the work is to be made, consisting of both monochrome photographs and colour transparencies.

- 3.13 Topsoil, subsoil and archaeological deposit to be kept separate during excavation to allow sequential backfilling of excavations.

4. General Management

- 4.1 A timetable for all stages of the project must be agreed before the first stage of work commences, including monitoring by the Conservation Team of SCC Archaeological Service. The archaeological contractor will give not less than ten days written notice of the commencement of the work so that arrangements for monitoring the project can be made.
- 4.2 The composition of the project staff must be detailed and agreed by this office, including any subcontractors/specialists. For the site director and other staff likely to have a major responsibility for the post-excavation processing of this evaluation there must also be a statement of their responsibilities or a CV for post-excavation work on other archaeological sites and publication record.
- 4.3 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to fulfill the Brief.
- 4.3 A general Health and Safety Policy must be provided, with detailed risk assessment and management strategy for this particular site.
- 4.4 No initial survey to detect public utility or other services has taken place. The responsibility for this rests with the archaeological contractor.
- 4.5 The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments* and for *Field Evaluations* should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

5. Report Requirements

- 5.1 An archive of all records and finds must be prepared consistent with the principles of English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (particularly Appendix 3.1 and Appendix 4.1).
- 5.2 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.
- 5.3 The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its archaeological interpretation.
- 6.4 An opinion as to the necessity for further evaluation and its scope may be given. No further site work should be embarked upon until the primary fieldwork results are assessed and the need for further work is established
- 5.5 Reports on specific areas of specialist study must include sufficient detail to permit assessment of potential for analysis, including tabulation of data by context, and must include non-technical summaries.
- 5.6 The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence, including an assessment of palaeoenvironmental remains recovered from palaeosols and cut features. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological potential of the site, and the significance of that potential in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).
- 5.7 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. Account must be taken of any requirements the County SMR may have regarding the conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage of excavated material and the archive.

- 5.8 The site archive is to be deposited with the County SMR within three months of the completion of fieldwork. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.9 Where positive conclusions are drawn from a project (whether it be evaluation or excavation) a summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology*, must be prepared. It should be included in the project report, or submitted to the Conservation Team, by the end of the calendar year in which the evaluation work takes place, whichever is the sooner.
- 5.10 County SMR sheets must be completed, as per the county SMR manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 5.11 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.
- 5.12 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).

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Date: 11 October 2006
Ransomes2006

Reference: / LandbetweenA14andRailwayLine-

This brief and specification remains valid for six 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.

Archaeological contractors are strongly advised to forward a detailed Project Design or Written Scheme of Investigation to the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council for approval before any proposals are submitted to potential clients.

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.