

# LAND ADJACENT TO LONGRIDGE, CREETING ROAD, STOWMARKET

## SKT 047

### Archaeological Evaluation Report

Planning Application No: 1974/06

Date of Fieldwork: 15/03/07

Grid reference: TM 0635 5869

Funding Body: Mixbrow Construction

### Introduction

A Planning Application (1974/06) has been granted for the construction of seven dwellings and associated services/access on land immediately to the east of Longridge, Creeting Road, Stowmarket. The proposed Development Area is centred on NGR TM 0635 5869 and comprises c. 2000m<sup>2</sup>. The site slopes fairly gradually from c. 48m AOD in the north-western corner to c. 45m AOD in the south-eastern corner. The site is bounded to the north by open land; and to the east, south and west by extant boundary ditches (all shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of the 1880s).



Figure 1. Site location

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The proposed development lies in an area of archaeological importance within a historic settlement core and within c. 300m of a substantial Roman and Romano-British settlement to the west and south-west. There was therefore considered to be significant potential for the preservation of archaeological deposits of medieval or earlier date. As the proposed development is intrusive enough to cause significant ground disturbance that might destroy such deposits the Planning Application included a condition requiring a programme of archaeological works prior to commencement of the development. A Brief and Specification (dated 15/01/07) for these works was produced by Dr Jess Tipper of the SCCAS Conservation Team; which required an

evaluation by trial trench in the first instance. The SCCAS Field Team were subsequently commissioned to carry out the work by the client Mixbrow Construction.

## Methodology

Trial trenching was carried out on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2007. The trenches were excavated using a 360<sup>o</sup> tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 2.2m wide flat-bladed ditching bucket. All mechanical excavation was carried out under close archaeological supervision until the top of the first undisturbed archaeological deposit or natural subsoil was revealed. Some hand cleaning of the upstanding sections and trench base was then carried out to further clarify the nature of the deposits and locate incised features. The trench was located by triangulation from existing boundaries and landscape features within the site.

The site covers approximately 2000m<sup>2</sup>, which required c. 100m<sup>2</sup> of trenching as outlined in the Brief and Specification. The site boundary is shown below, along with the location of the excavated trenches (which encompassed an area of c. 115m<sup>2</sup>). Following a telephone conversation with Jess Tipper it was decided that the street frontage and eastern boundary were the principal areas of interest, so the trench locations were placed accordingly. The street frontage had to be examined by means of two separate trenches, as an existing access road prohibited the use of a single linear trench. It was only possible to get within 4m of the actual street frontage, due to the proximity of overhead power cables that ran parallel to the inner edge of the footpath. In addition it was not possible to access the far south-eastern corner of the site due to the presence of a dried-up pond/hollow (not marked on OS maps) which was in excess of 1m deep. It had also been partially excavated/cleared to facilitate the insertion of services (British Telecom ducting).

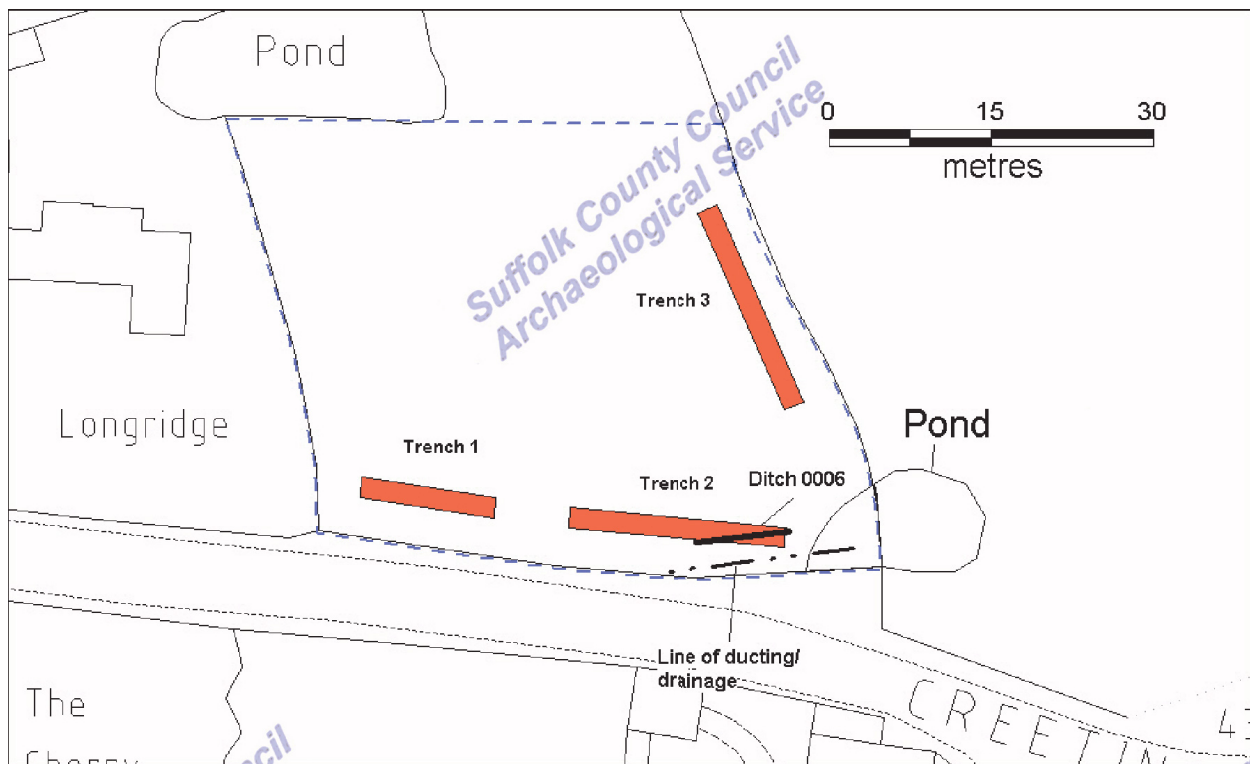


Figure 2. Site detail and trench locations

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The site was allocated the SMR number SKT 047 and observed archaeological features and deposits were allocated OP (observable phenomena) numbers and recorded on *pro forma* context sheets. This context information is shown in Appendix 1. All features were excavated and recorded in a series of 1:50 scale plans and 1:20 scale section drawings. Context records were entered onto an Access97 database, and inked copies of the drawings were prepared on archive quality drafting film.

## Results

On arrival at the site it was noticeable that a partial strip had been carried out. It turned out that this was little more than vegetation removal and had not been particularly aggressive.

Consequently the full depth of topsoil was not recorded, but it is unlikely that more than *c.* 0.2m had been stripped prior to trenching.

It was also noticeable that some disturbance had taken place in the far south-eastern corner of the site. A former pond had been scoured to facilitate the insertion of services. It did not appear that significant disturbance had been caused and that a substantial 'hollow' had already existed which was simply cleared.

### Trench 1

The following common stratigraphy was observed throughout:

Context	Depth	Description
0002	0.00 – 0.2m	<b>Remnant Topsoil.</b> Very soft mid brownish grey clayey loam with rare chalk flecks, moderate small to medium sub-rounded to sub-angular flint pebbles and occasional CBM frags. Moderate to root disturbance.
0003	0.2 – 0.5m	<b>Weathered clay subsoil.</b> Soft light orangey brown slightly silty sandy clay with rare small to medium sub-angular flints and very rare chalk flecks.
0004	0.5m+	<b>Natural drift.</b> Firm slightly brownish mid grey Boulder Till with occasional small to medium angular/sub-angular flint pebbles, rare larger angular/sub-angular flints, and moderate to frequent chalk flecks/small nodules.

No incised features were visible in this trench and no unstratified finds were encountered.

### Trench 2

The following stratigraphy was recorded.

Context	Depth	Description
0002	0.00 – 0.2m	<b>Remnant Topsoil.</b> Very soft mid brownish grey clayey loam with rare chalk flecks, moderate small to medium sub-rounded to sub-angular flint pebbles and occasional CBM frags. Moderate to root disturbance.
0003	0.2 – 0.75m	<b>Weathered clay subsoil.</b> Soft light orangey brown slightly silty sandy clay with rare small to medium sub-angular flints and very rare chalk flecks.
0004	0.75m+	<b>Natural drift.</b> Firm slightly brownish mid grey Boulder Till with occasional small to medium angular/sub-angular flint pebbles, rare larger angular/sub-angular flints, and moderate to frequent chalk flecks/small nodules.

A single incised feature was recorded at the eastern end of the trench.

This was ditch [0006], which was aligned broadly east-north-east to west-south-west. It was straight and parallel-sided and could be traced for at least 3.5m before it extended beyond the confines of the trench. It had steeply sloping slightly stepped concave sides and a gently rounded base. It contained a single fill (0005) of firm brownish grey slightly silty clay with rare small to medium sub-angular flint pebbles and very rare chalk flecks. A 1m long segment was fully excavated and this yielded a single struck flint and one potsherd of flint-gritted material, suggestive of a later prehistoric date. However these were recovered from the upper surface of the fill at its approximate point of contact with the overlying subsoil and may therefore be residually derived. The most likely interpretation of the feature is that of a field boundary ditch which, at least on the evidence of the excavated segment, silted up naturally.

### Trench 3

The following stratigraphy was recorded.

Context	Depth	Description
0002	0.00 – 0.35m	<b>Remnant Topsoil.</b> Very soft mid brownish grey clayey loam with rare chalk flecks, moderate small to medium sub-rounded to sub-angular flint pebbles and occasional CBM frags. Moderate to root disturbance.

- 0003 0.35 – 0.7m **Weathered clay subsoil.** Soft light orangey brown slightly silty sandy clay with rare small to medium sub-angular flints and very rare chalk flecks.
- 0004 0.7m+ **Natural drift.** Firm slightly brownish mid grey Boulder Till with occasional small to medium angular/sub-angular flint pebbles, rare larger angular/sub-angular flints, and moderate to frequent chalk flecks/small nodules.

No incised features or unstratified finds were encountered in Trench 3.

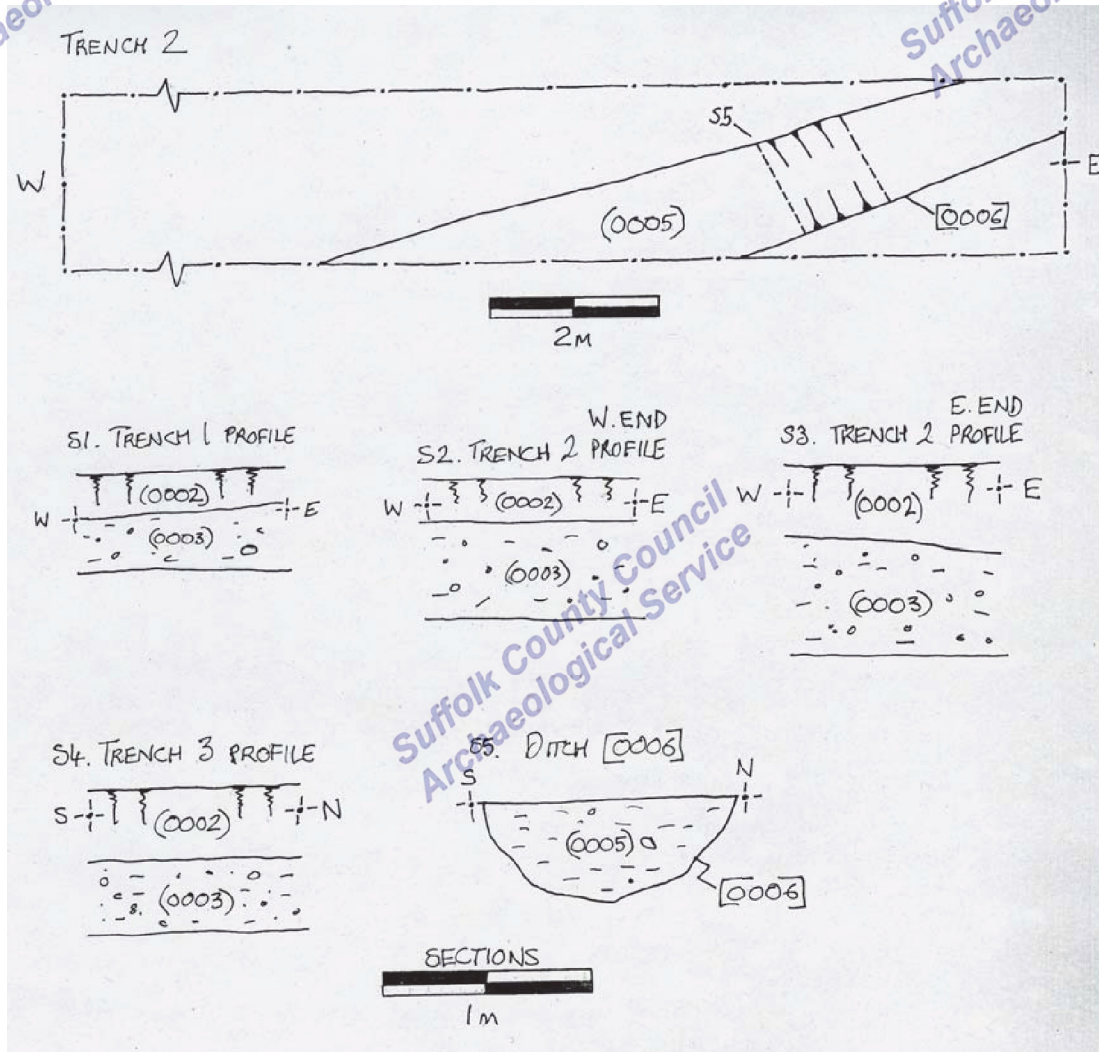


Figure 3. Plans and sections.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Despite its sensitive street-front location no evidence of medieval occupation was encountered. However, the recording of a single ditch of possible prehistoric date suggests that the site lies within an area of outlying activity associated with the nearby Iron Age/Romano-British settlement.

It is therefore recommended that a programme of Archaeological Monitoring be carried out during the excavation of strip foundations.

Report No. 2007/50

OASIS ID No. suffolkc1-25777

Rhodri Gardner, for SCCAS, March 2007

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM**

*Brief and Specification for a Trenched Evaluation*

## **LAND ADJACENT TO LONGRIDGE, CREETING ROAD, STOWMARKET**

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

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Planning consent (application 1974/06) has been granted for the construction of seven dwellings and associated access on land adjacent to Longridge, Creeting Road, Stowmarket (TM 0635 5869), with a PPG 16, paragraph 30 condition requiring an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out.
- 1.2 The Planning Authority (Mid Suffolk District Council) 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 in an area of archaeological importance, within an historic settlement core recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record. There is high potential for encountering medieval, and possibly earlier, occupation deposits at this location. The proposed works would 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, which is c. 100m<sup>2</sup> of the total area for evaluation that measures 0.20ha. (see accompanying plan). These shall be positioned to sample all parts of the site. Linear trenches are thought to be the most appropriate sampling method. Trenches are to be a minimum of 1.8m wide unless special circumstances can be demonstrated; this will result in a minimum of c. 56m of trenching at 1.8m in width. If excavation is mechanised a toothless 'ditching bucket' at least 1.2m wide must be used. A scale plan showing the proposed locations of the trial trenches should be included in the Project Design and the detailed trench design 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.
- 5.4 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: 15 January 2007

Reference: / LongridgeCreetingRoad-Stowmarket2007

**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.**