

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

PERCOLATION TEST PITS, THUNDERBIRD WAY, KENNEDY STREET AND NATO PLACE, RAF LAKENHEATH ERL 199

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING, 2007
(Planning app. no. Pre Thunderbird 2007)

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Acknowledgements

This project was funded by MOD Defence Estates (USF) and the archaeological work carried out to an outline brief from Jude Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team). The fieldwork was carried out by Jo Caruth and John Craven from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

Summary

A single north-south aligned undated ditch was seen during archaeological monitoring carried out during the excavation of five 2m x 2m pits for soil testing. These all lay within an area that had previously had early Roman features and finds recorded.

SMR information

Planning application no.	Pre-Thunderbird 2007
Date of fieldwork:	April 2007
Grid Reference:	Centred on TL7256 8006
Funding body:	MOD defence Estates (USF)
Oasis reference.	Suffolkc1-26713

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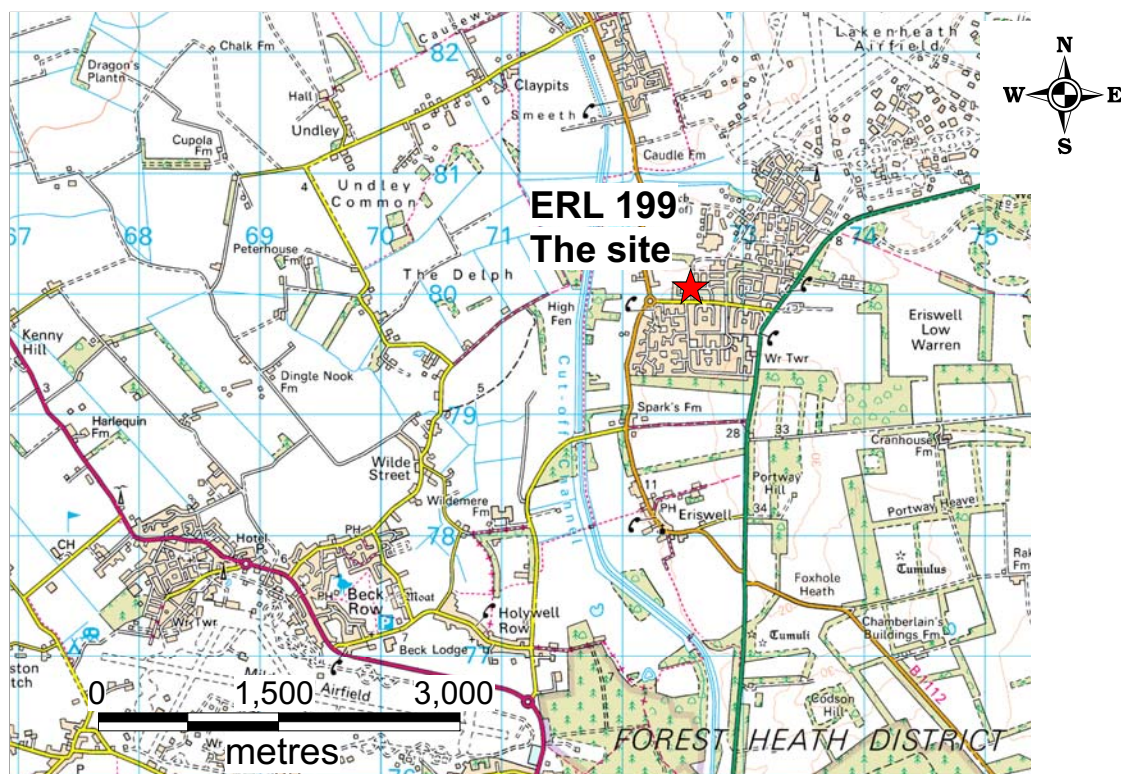
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Introduction

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the excavation of five 2m x 2m pits in advance of compaction and percolation soil tests. Soil cores were also taken through the roads as part of this work, but these were not monitored as the archaeological impact was deemed negligible. The five pits lay on Thunderbird Way, Kennedy Street and Nato Place on the north side of Lord's Walk at RAF Lakenheath centred on grid reference TL 7256 8006 (Figs. 1 and 2). The topography is a north and north-west facing slope between 15m and 10m OD. Early Roman finds including an inhumation have been found within the immediate areas of the Test Pits, ERL 111, ERL 112 and ERL 142 (SCCAS reports 2002/68, 2003/8 and 2005/86). Larger scale excavation work to the south of the site, ERL 089 (SCCAS report no. 2003/100), identified an Early Roman droveway and field system and work to the north of the site, at the base of the opposing south facing slope, ERL 118 (SCCAS report no. 2001/77), also identified early Roman occupation. The aim of the monitoring was to record any evidence of archaeological deposits, with the particular hope of recovering further evidence to enhance the interpretation of the early Roman activity, much of which has been seen in small trenches.

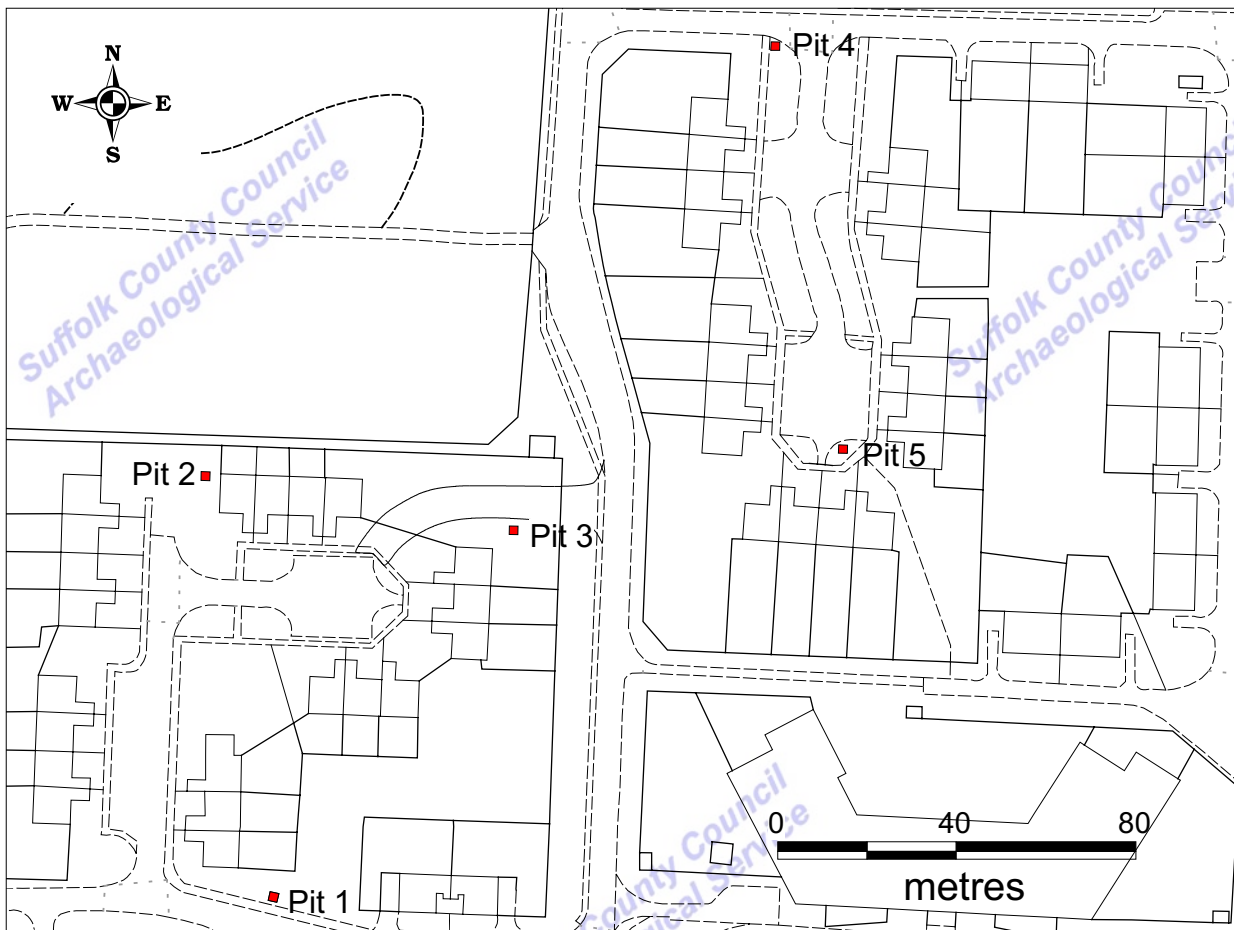


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Figure 1. Site location

Methodology

The five 2m x 2m square pits were monitored as they were excavated using a JCB equipped with a 1.5m wide ditching bucket. Initial excavation for the first phase of soil testing was to a depth of between 0.6m and 0.75m from ground level. In three of these, natural sand was reached and no further monitoring required. The remaining two were monitored again as they were deepened to 2m for the second stage of testing. Archaeology was only seen in one of the pits where a north-south ditch was found. This was excavated by hand and sections and a plan drawn at 1:20. Notes were made of the soil profiles of the other four pits and digital photographs taken. A single worked flint was recovered from Pit 2.



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Figure 2. Location of Test Pits

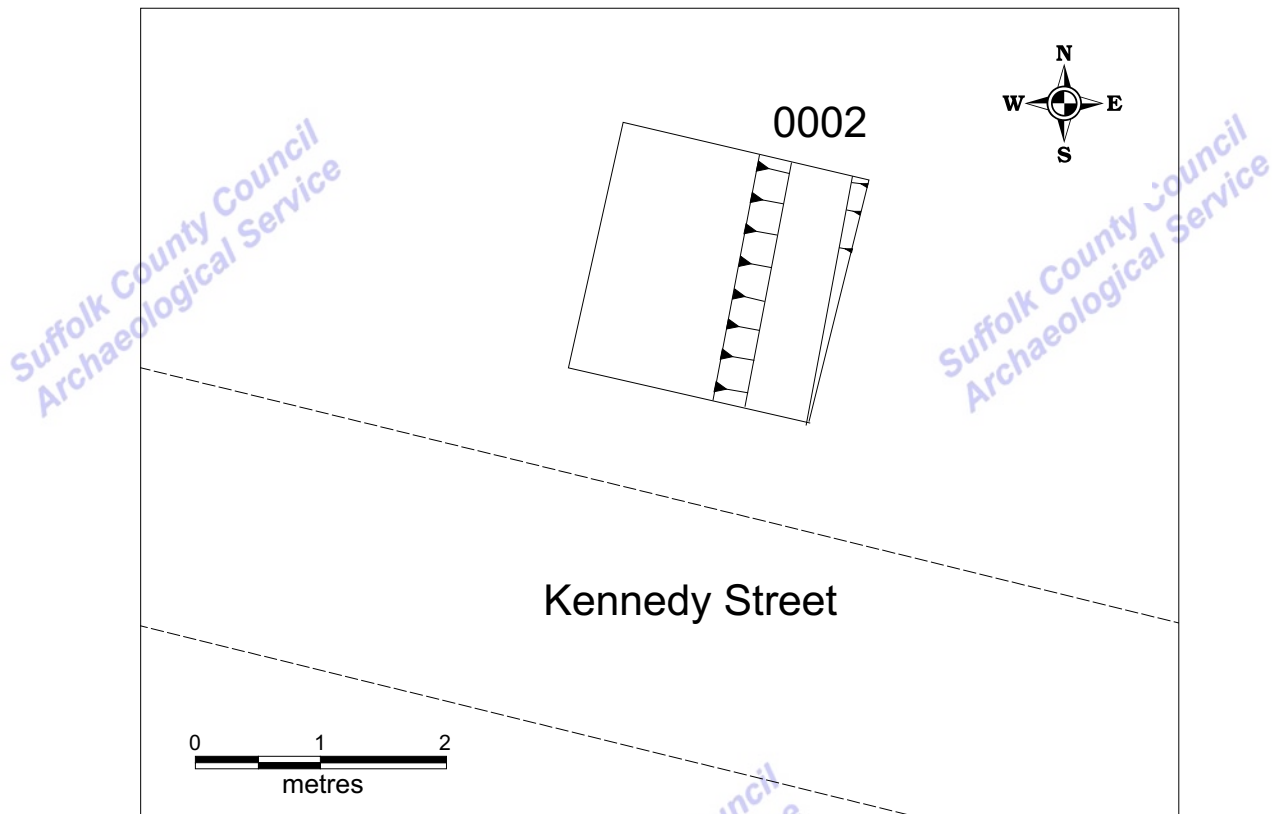
Results

Pit 1 (Grid ref: TL 7252 7998)

This was the only pit to contain an archaeological feature, a north-south aligned ditch, 0002 (Figs. 3 and 4). Only the west side was contained within the trench, although at the north end the edge of the base could be determined, suggesting an approximate width of 1.2m and maximum depth of 0.67m below ground level. The base was flat and the ditch filled with mottled dark and mid brown sand, 0003, with some occasional small stones. Overlying the ditch was a layer of brown-red stony sand 0.1m deep which lay under 0.28m of modern mixed soils. There were no finds to date either the ditch or the overlying layer, but it is likely that this relates to early Roman occupation seen elsewhere on Kennedy Street, ERL 112.

Pit 2 (Grid ref: TL 72502 8008)

A first attempt at this pit came down onto the top of an existing soakaway so the location was moved c.15m to the north-east. The soil profile in the completed pit showed natural yellow sand at 0.8m below ground level under 0.46m of coarse brown sand under 0.44m of modern deposits. A single, late prehistoric, flint flake with a hinge fracture and some cortex still present (James Rolfe pers. comm.) was recovered from the brown sand layer.



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Figure 3. Plan of Hole 1

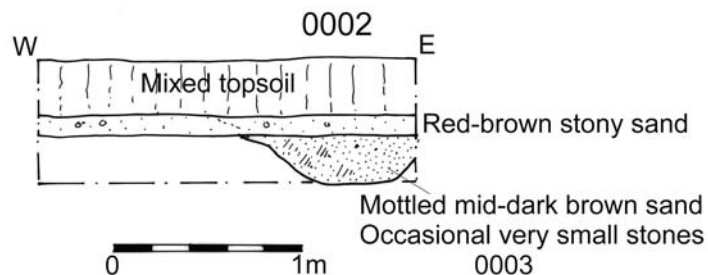


Figure 4. Section of ditch 0002

Pit 3 (Grid ref: TL 7259 8006)

This had natural sand at 0.6m under 0.16m of stony yellow-brown sand, under 0.1m of brown sand under 0.34m of modern rubble deposited onto a sheet of terram.

Pit 4 (Grid ref: TL 7264 8017)

Buried topsoil could be seen in this pit under 0.4m of modern deposits. The buried soil was a mid brown sand c. 0.08m deep and overlay a coarse red-brown sand, 0.32m deep, into which E-W brown sand filled ploughlines were cut. These were narrow (<12cm across) and may therefore have been ancient as they are more likely to have been made with an ard-type plough rather than a mould-board. The red-brown sand was similar in appearance to deposits seen elsewhere in the south-east of RAF Lakenheath, and which have been seen occasionally to seal Saxon deposits. Yellow sand natural was seen at 0.8m below ground level.

Pit 5 (Grid ref: TL 7265 8008)

This lay at the south end of Thunderbird Way near the top of the north facing slope. Natural was chalk and was found immediately below topsoil c.0.12m deep. This demonstrates that the natural here has been truncated although visually the slope is regular with no obvious signs of terracing. Early Roman features have previously been found in Thunderbird Way between Pits 4 and 5 (ERL 111 and ERL 142).

Conclusion

These were very small works and absence of archaeological deposits in four of the five Pits cannot be seen as being in any way indicative of the surrounding area, particularly as archaeological features have been found from near to Pits 1, 3, 4 and 5. The presence of a ditch, although undated, in Pit 1 is probably a continuation of the Early Roman features found during improvement works to buildings 405 and 412, Kennedy Street, (ERL 112, SCCAS report no.2002/68) to the east of this Pit.

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May 2007

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