

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

RISBY BUSINESS PARK, BURY ST EDMUNDS RBY 034

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2007
(Pre- planning application)

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Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service

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Contents

List of Figures
Summary
SMR information

Introduction
Methodology
Results
Discussion and Conclusion

Appendix 1: Brief and specification

List of Figures

1. Site location plan
2. The site and trench plan
3. Ditch sections
4. First edition OS map (1880) showing the ponds in blue and possible pond from the evaluation in brown

Summary

An evaluation at Risby Business Park was carried out in advance of the redevelopment of the site. A small quantity of unstratified Iron Age and medieval pottery was found but an extensive area within the centre of the site had been severely truncated by the previous development and any potential archaeological deposit was already lost.

An infilled pond and two post-medieval field boundary ditches were also found.

SMR information

Planning application no.	Pre-Business Park 2006
Date of fieldwork:	13th June 2007
Grid Reference:	TL 7940 6625
Funding body:	J&R Builders (Norwich) Limited
OASIS REF	suffolk c1 28532

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Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at Risby Business Park, which is to be redeveloped following a fire that destroyed the previous factory complex. A Masterplan for the redevelopment has been drawn up which acknowledges the advice from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS) that an evaluation of the site would be a requirement of any future planning consent and the evaluation should be undertaken prior to the formal application being made.

The work was completed in accordance with the Brief and Specification (Appendix 1) set by R.D.Carr (SCCAS) Conservation Team and was undertaken by members of the Field Team on 13th June 2007. The work was commissioned by consultant John Popham and funded by the developers J&R Builders (Norwich) Limited.

The development site covers 3.4ha centred on TL 7940 6625 on the west edge of the medieval village (Fig. 1). The area has not previously been the subject of archaeological study but is part of a broader landscape of prehistoric occupation. The County Sites and Monument Record lists the finds spot of a Roman brooch RBY 018 nearby. The majority of the sample area was formally a factory site, which had been demolished just prior to the evaluation. The site is relatively flat and lies above the 60m contour; the surface geology is sand.

The aim of the evaluation was determine whether any archaeological deposits existed on the site and provide sufficient information to construct the appropriate conservation strategy.

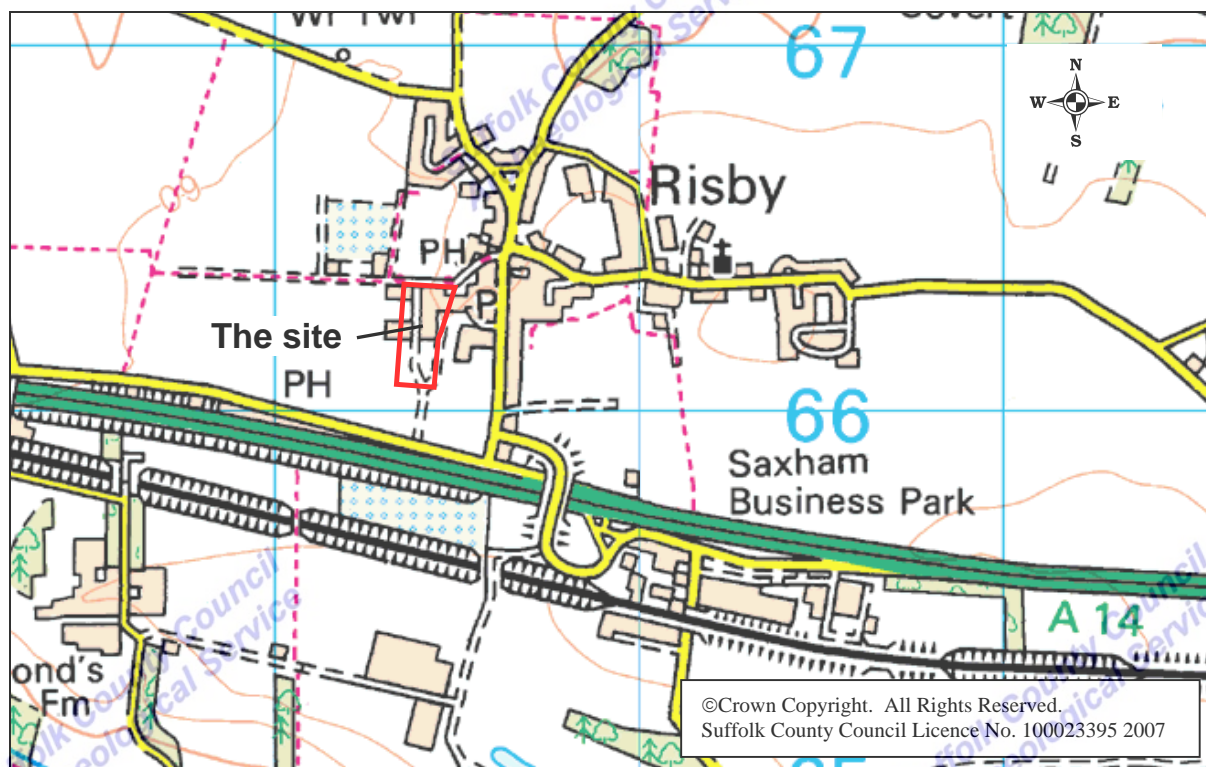


Figure 1. Site location plan

Methodology

Eight linear trenches were excavated by 360 tracked machine fitted with a 2.3m toothless bucket and under the constant supervision of an archaeologist. 548sq metres were excavated, 1.6% of the application area, this was below the percentage specified in the brief but it was immediately apparent that the potential archaeological level had been lost through by previous ground level reduction and not worth evaluating. The trenching did however sample each of the sites of the proposed blocks of business units as shown on the Master Plan.

The machine removed the topsoil to expose the surface of the subsoil. All possible archaeological features were sampled by hand excavation to at least the minimum requirements of the specification (Appendix 1). Plans and sections were recorded at 1:20 and the positions of the trenches and features were plotted on to an Ordnance Survey plan. Digital and film photographs were routinely taken.

All pre-modern finds were retained for analysis and the site data has been input onto an MS Access database. The finds and site records have been archived in the small and main stores of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Bury St Edmunds and with the County Sites and Monuments Record under the parish code RBY 034. A copy of the report has also been lodged with the OASIS on-line database (ref: suffolk128532).

Results

The evaluation followed on from the demolition of the existing fire damaged factory complex and the area of concrete, hard standing and floors had been lifted prior to the start of the work. It was clear that the ground level in the central part of the site had been reduced in the past, creating a level area in what was a sloping site. Soil from the landscaping had been banked up into a series of bunds and planted to create a series of screened bays. The growth of the planting suggested that this had occurred probably more than 20 years ago.

Eight trenches were excavated across the site targeting the position of the proposed buildings as shown on the redevelopment Master Plan. The positions of the trenches are shown in Figure 2 and each are described below.

Trench 1 (Figs. 2 and 3)

Trenches 1 and 2 were excavated into an area of rough grassland in the north west corner of the site; an open area of ground that had not been covered by the buildings of the previous factory complex. Trench 1 was 32m long. The machine removed a thin layer of topsoil, 25cms deep, to expose the surface of a mixed subsoil of gravel/sand with areas of natural chalk and pockets of clay. Two shallow, brown silt filled linear features were recorded running north south across the trench, each was 1.3m wide and 10-12cm deep. These were sampled by hand excavation, but were thought to be natural features; topsoil slumped into pockets of soft silt between the harder areas of natural.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was 36m long south of and parallel to Trench 1. A thin topsoil was removed revealing natural clay and gravel, the ground rises to the west where the subsoil becomes chalk and gravel. An extensive irregularly shaped area of dark silt covered the east end of the trench which produced a sherd of early Roman, and two sherds of handmade probably Iron Age pottery. The silt was up to 80cms deep and, similarly to the features in Trench 1, lay within a soft pocket within the natural geology. Plough marks were recorded at the west end of the trench.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was excavated in the centre of the site in the area of one of the previous factory buildings and where a concrete surface had been lifted. The ground level here had been truncated and was stepped lower by 0.7m than the area sampled by Trenches 1 and 2. The whole length of the trench (17m) was within a deep silt filled hollow, possibly a continuation of the hollow encountered at the east end of Trench 1. The silt was a homogenous, pale brown, fine textured soil flecked throughout its depth with charcoal. The machine excavated to its full depth, 0.75-0.8m from the already truncated ground surface, to the underlying gravel.

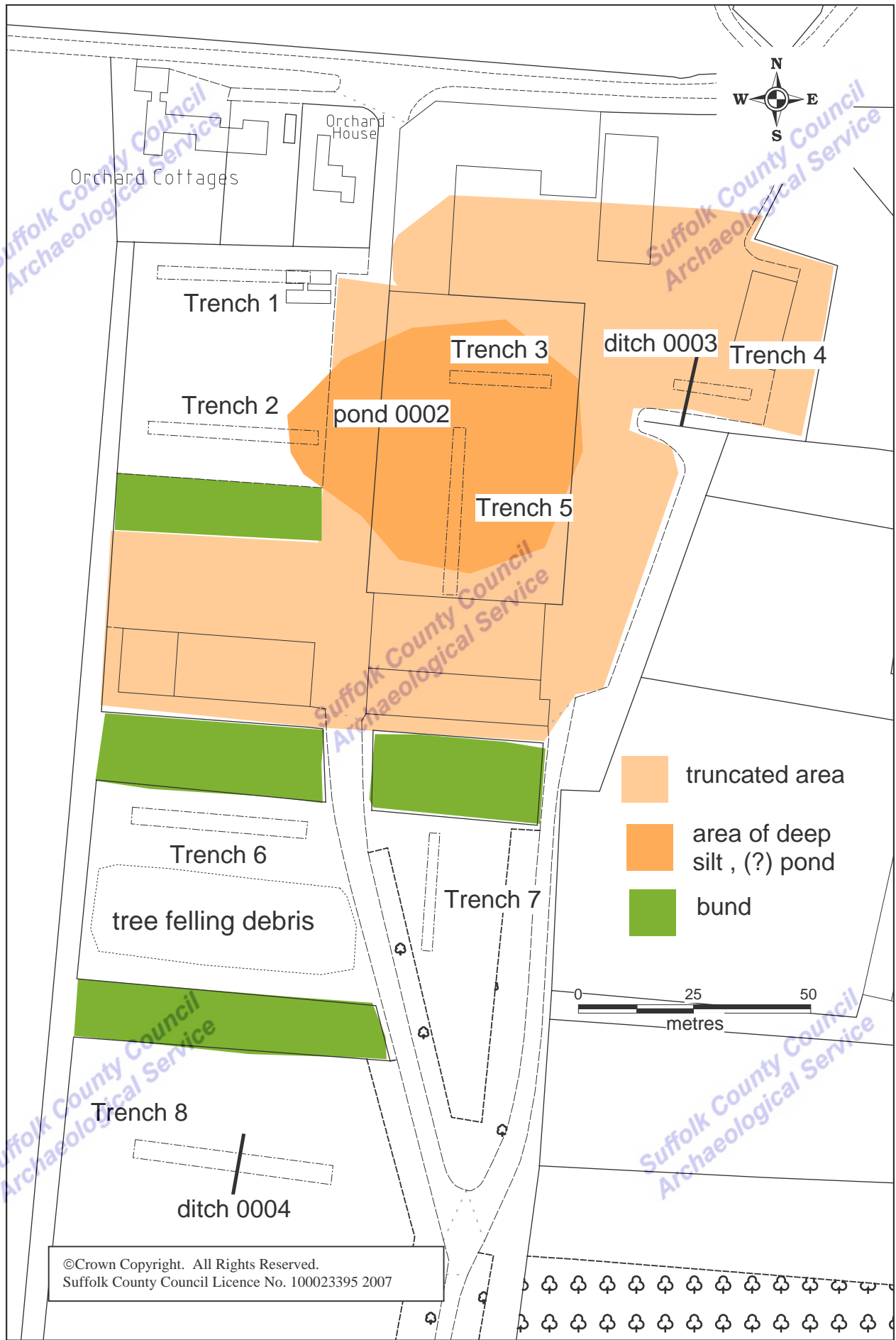


Figure 2. Site plan

Trench 4

The ground sampled by Trench 4 had been completely truncated and was c.0.5m below the ground level of the neighbouring property. The machine removed a thin layer of rubble to expose an orange clay and gravel subsoil. A narrow silt filled ditch, 0003, crossed at mid trench, this was a former field boundary and lay on the projected line of the site edge further to the south.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was situated in the central area of the site where the ground level was already reduced and the subsoil surface truncated. The trench was excavated to locate the southern edge of the large silt hollow identified in Trench 3 and is shown on Fig 2.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was excavated to the south of the site of the former factory, the area was laid to grass and ground level was above that of the area sampled by Trenches 3-5, suggesting that truncation had not occurred. The debris of tree felling that had been stockpiled in the area restricted the location of the trench. The machine removed a thin topsoil exposing the gravel/sand subsoil with pockets of silt 25cm below the ground surface. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 7

Trench 7 was adjacent to Trench 6 and shared a similar soil profile. No archaeological features were seen.

Trench 8

The section of Trench 8 shows 40cms of topsoil over an orange silt/clay and gravel. A narrow silt filled ditch, 0004, running north-south, crossed the trench 38m from the west edge of the site. The ditch was 1.2m wide, had a steep sided V-shaped profile and was filled with a single silt layer. The ditch was sectioned by hand and produced a single abraded fragment of post-medieval tile from the bottom of the ditch. The ditch did not extend into Trench 6 that lay across its projected line suggesting that the ditch stopped or change course before this point.

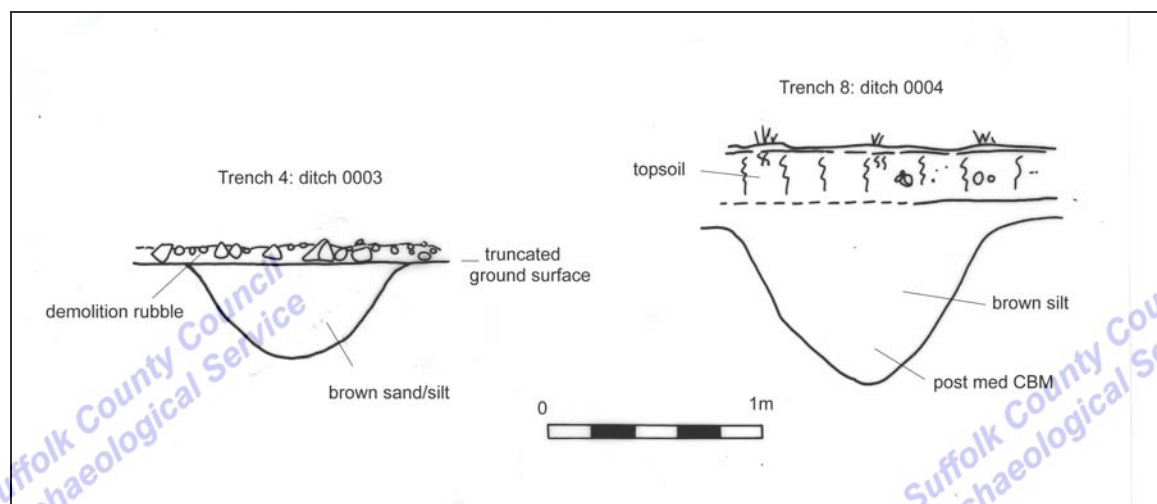


Figure 3. Ditch sections

Discussion and Conclusion

The presence of a small quantity of Iron Age and medieval pottery is an indicator of previous activity on the site, but there were no cut features to suggest what the nature of this activity was or where it was focused. The central area of the site has been severely truncated with the ground level reduced by between 0.5m and 1m over an extensive area and any archaeological

deposits within this area would have already been lost. Intact ground levels were only seen in the north west corner of the site (sampled by Trenches 1 and 2) and the south end of the site (sampled by Trenches 6, 7 and 8).

Within the centre of the truncated area was a large silt filled feature and this is probably an infilled pond. Ponds are a feature of this landscape and the first edition Ordnance Survey map (1880) shows several within the village and at close proximity to the site, most are now filled in and the map evidence indicates that the one on the site had gone before 1880. The ditch in Trench 4 is on the line of the original field boundary as shown on the early OS map and demonstrates that the site edge has moved slightly. The ditch in Trench 8 is not on the earlier map but the presence of tile within its fill indicates that it was still an open feature in the post-medieval period.

The evaluation has shown that whilst there may have been an archaeological deposit in the past the site has been so badly damaged this is now lost. The area where the ground profile is intact has been adequately sampled and has produced no evidence for early settlement and no further work is recommended.

David Gill July 2007

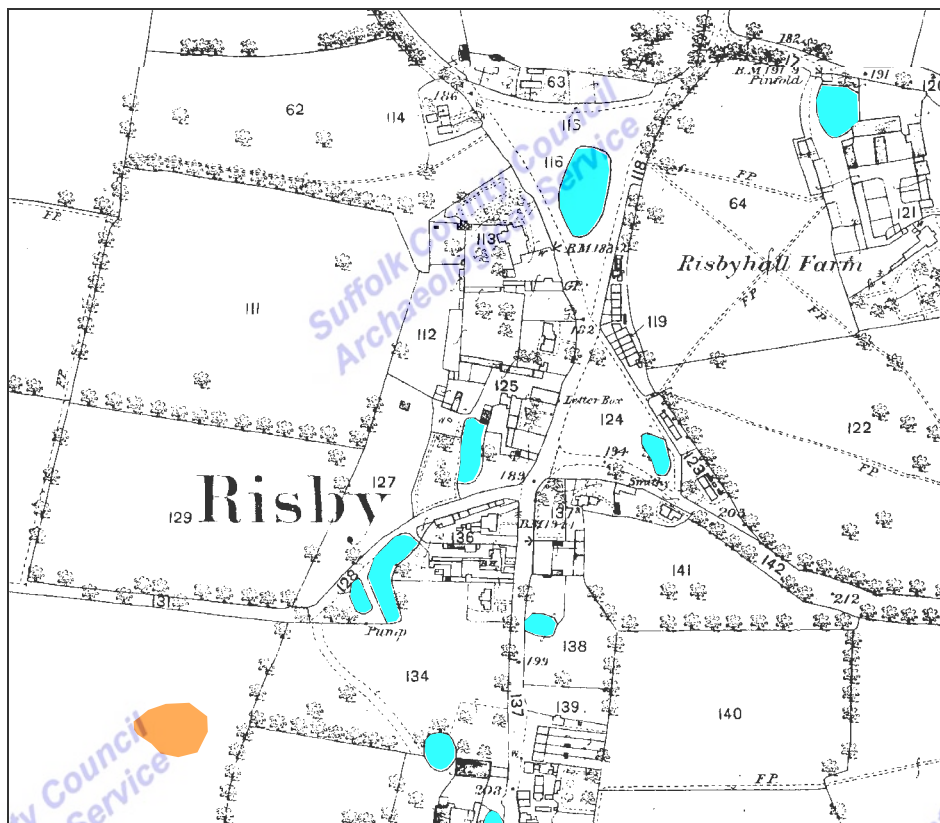


Figure 4. First edition OS map (1880) showing the ponds in blue and possible pond from the evaluation in brown.

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 an Archaeological Evaluation

BUSINESS PARK, RISBY

The commissioning body should be aware that it may have Health & Safety and other responsibilities, see paragraphs 1.7 & 1.8.

This is the brief for the first part of a programme of archaeological work. There is likely to be a requirement for additional work, this will be the subject of another brief.

1. Background

- 1.1 A Masterplan for the development of a Business Park has been prepared and approved. The Plan makes provision for evaluation of the site and subsequent mitigation.
- 1.2 In the event of an application the Planning Authority will be advised that any consent should be conditional upon an agreed programme of work taking place before development begins (PPG 16, paragraph 30 condition). **An archaeological evaluation of the application area will be required as the first part of such a programme of archaeological work; decisions on the need for, and scope of, any further work will be based upon the results of the evaluation and will be the subject of additional briefs.**

The applicant has requested a brief for evaluation prior to application.

- 1.3 The development area is extensive (c.3.4 ha) and lies close to the find spot of a Roman brooch recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record (RBY 018). It lies in an landscape zone which has demonstrated extensive prehistoric occupation, including burial sites. There is potential for archaeological occupation.
- 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. 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.
- 1.8 The responsibility for identifying any restraints on field-work (e.g. Scheduled Monument status, Listed Building status, public utilities or other services, tree preservation orders, SSSIs, wildlife sites &c.) rests with the commissioning body and its archaeological contractor. The existence and content of the archaeological brief does not over-ride such restraints or imply that the target area is freely available.

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 natural soil processes. Define the potential for existing damage to archaeological deposits. Define the potential for colluvial/alluvial deposits, their impact and potential to mask any archaeological deposit. Define the potential for artificial soil deposits and their impact on any archaeological deposit.
- 2.4 Establish the potential for waterlogged organic deposits in the proposal area. Define the location and level of such deposits and their vulnerability to damage by development where this is defined.
- 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 Evaluation is to proceed sequentially: the desk-based evaluation will precede the field evaluation. If field-walking is proposed it will precede trenching. The results of the desk-based work and any field-walking are to be used to inform the trenching design. This sequence will only be varied if benefit to the evaluation can be demonstrated.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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 of the **development area** and 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. If excavation is mechanised a toothless 'ditching bucket' must be used. The 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 fitted with toothless bucket and other equipment. 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 The contractor shall 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 and Wiltshire 1994) is available.
- 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. *“Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England” English Heritage and the Church of England 2005* provides advice and defines a level of practice which should be followed whatever the likely belief of the buried individuals.
- 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. 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.
- 4.2 The composition of the project staff must be detailed and agreed (this is to include any subcontractors).

- 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. 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.
- 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.
- 6.12 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).

Specification by: R D Carr

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service Conservation Team
Environment and Transport Department
Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Tel: 01284 352441

Date: 21 May 2007

Reference: /Business Park, Risby

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.