

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

INCLUDING DETAILS OF SUBSEQUENT MONITORING OF LIMITED GROUNDWORK

LAND OFF CUTLERS CHASE, LOWGATE, EYE

SMR Ref. EYE Misc.; OASIS ref. suffolkc1-30009

SCCAS Report No. 2007/158

Summary: An archaeological evaluation was undertaken during August 2007 to investigate the potential for buried archaeology within an area of land off Cutlers Chase, Lowgate, Eye (NGR ref. TM 1449 7367), in advance of a housing development. Two linear trenches were machine excavated to the depth of the undisturbed natural subsoil but no archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered. The natural subsoil lay at a depth of c.1.5m beneath floodplain deposits of silt and peat. The northern edge of the site consisted of a steep slope which was cut back and revetted. This work was subject to archaeological monitoring which revealed the slope to be formed of late post-medieval debris. This evaluation and subsequent monitoring is recorded on the County SMR, reference no. EYE Misc.. The evaluation and monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service who were commissioned and funded by the developer, Arc Developments (UK) Limited.

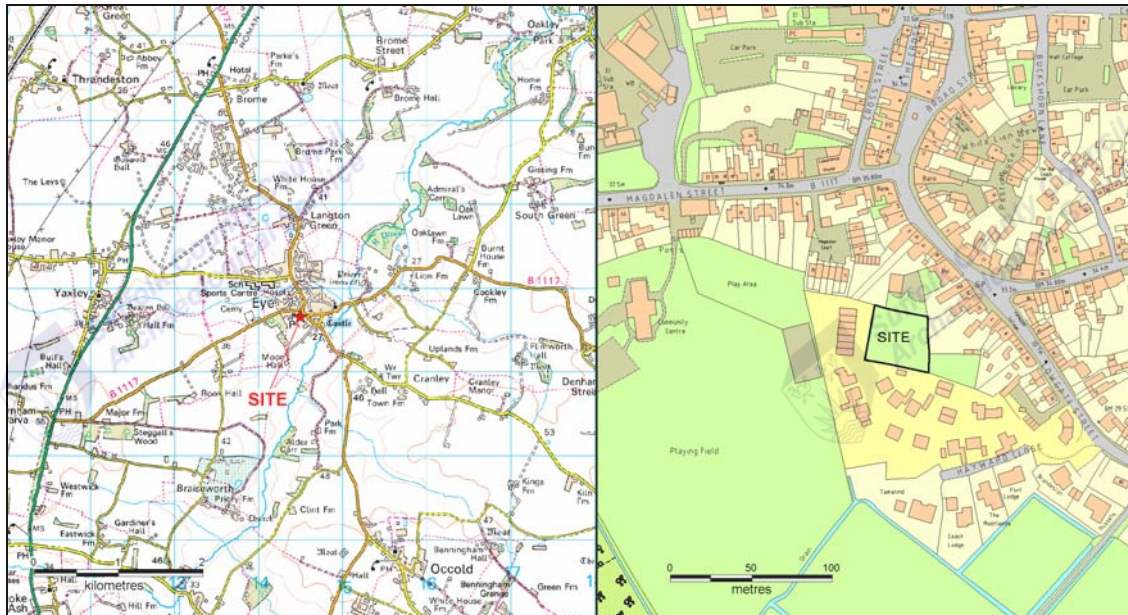


Figure 1: Location Plan

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1. Introduction

A small residential development is proposed for a plot of land off Cutlers Chase, Lowgate, Eye (application no. 0572/07). The site lies c. 100m to the south of Eye town centre on land that forms part of the flood plain of the River Dove, which lies some 350m to the southeast. The town is situated on an area of high ground which overlooks the river valley and a steep slope between the two levels forms the northern

boundary of the site. The river is now controlled and the area of flood plain is well drained by a system of ditches. The total area of the site equates to approximately 1275 square metres and the National Grid Reference for its approximate centre is TM 1449 7367.

There are no known archaeological sites recorded within the proposed development area although it lies close to a known medieval settlement of Eye. The area to the south and west was trial trenched in April 2004 (EYE 069, SCCAS Report No. 2004/049) which revealed an undated ?channel and a small number of features from which worked flint of a probable Bronze Age date was recovered. A number of 4th century Roman coins have also been recovered in the vicinity. Taken together this evidence suggests that there is a high potential for this development to affect archaeological deposits.

In order to establish the full archaeological implications of the proposed development the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team has requested an archaeological evaluation comprising trial trenching of the site be undertaken. This will form the initial stage of a programme of archaeological works with the evaluation results being used to assess the need for any further work. To detail the work required a Brief and Specification has been produced by Jude Plouviez of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team (See Appendix).

The archaeological evaluation and subsequent monitoring was commissioned and funded by the developer, Arc Developments (UK) Limited. The evaluation was undertaken by the Field Projects Team of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service on the 8th August 2007. The evaluation and monitoring archive is lodged with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at its Bury St. Edmunds office under the Sites and Monuments Record reference, EYE Misc.. A summary of this project has also been entered onto OASIS, the online archaeological database, under the reference suffolkc1-30009.

2. Methodology

Trial trenches were machine excavated down to the level of the natural subsoil (or the top of any significant archaeological deposits had they been encountered) using the back acting hoe of a wheeled excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket.

The machining of the trenches was closely observed throughout in order to identify archaeological features and deposits and to recover any artefacts that may be revealed. Excavation continued until the undisturbed natural subsoil was encountered, the exposed surface of which was then examined for cut features or deposits. Had any features/deposits been noted they were to be sampled through the hand excavation in order to determine their depth and shape and to recover datable artefacts. In the event this was not necessary.

Following excavation the revealed stratigraphy was recorded, the trench locations were plotted and their depths were noted. Upon completion of the fieldwork the trenches were backfilled. A photographic record was also compiled.

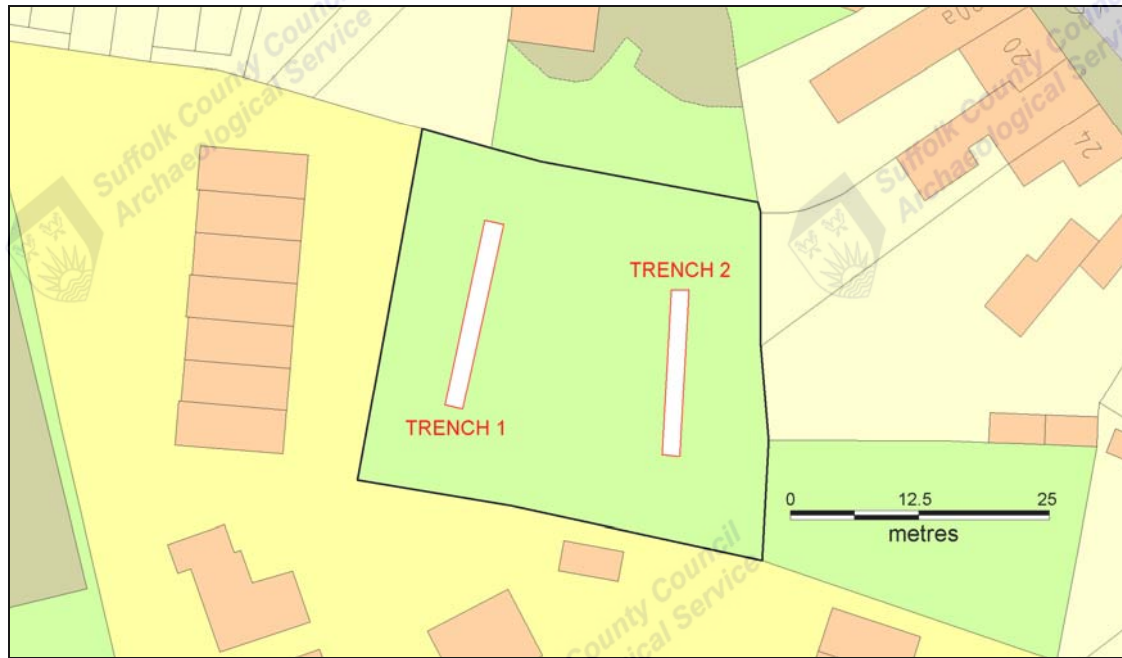


Figure 2: Trench Locations

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3. Results

Two trenches totalling c. 37m in length were excavated across the area liable to be affected by the development. See figure 2 for a plan of their locations. The results from both trenches were broadly similar with a stratigraphy comprising 0.35m of dark topsoil over a 1.1m thick deposit of grey clayey silt. This in turn overlay a 0.2m thick layer of pale yellow sand. At the base of the trench a thin layer of dark brown peat overlay a dark orange sand heavily stained and cemented with iron panning, which was interpreted as the natural subsoil (see figure 3 and Plate I).

The peat and pale sands at the base of the trench were saturated with water, which slowly seeped into and collected in the trench. The ground was relatively unstable, probably due to its water-logged nature, and frequent collapses of the trench sides occurred. Consequently it was not possible to safely enter the trenches although the machine bucket left the base of the trench clean enough to ascertain that no archaeological features were present within either trench.

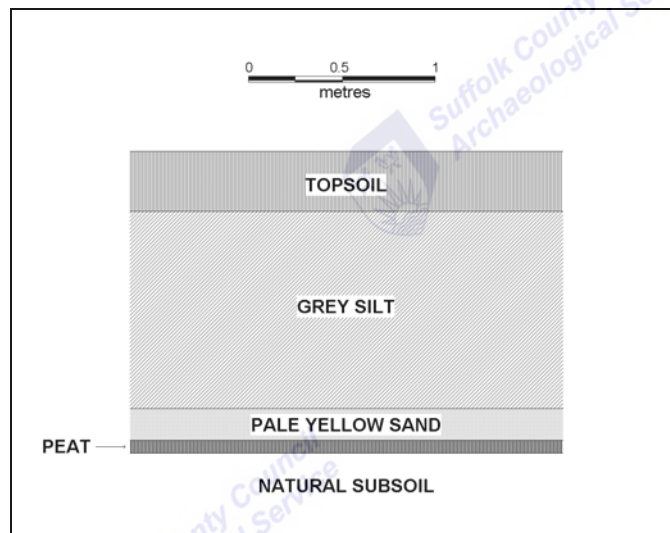


Figure 3: Sample Section

The machining was closely observed throughout in order to recover finds but, other than occasional fragments of mid to late 20th century debris in the upper layers, no archaeological artefacts were identified.

During a later visit to the site an excavation into the slope on the north edge of the site for the installation/diversion of an electrical supply was inspected. The excavation comprised a vertical cut from close to the northern site boundary down to below the existing ground level at the base of the slope. Within this it could be seen that the area of the slope comprised entirely of made ground consisting primarily of mid to late 20th century debris (Plate II).

4. The Finds

No significant finds were recovered during the evaluation or the monitoring phases of work at this site.

5. Discussion

The peat layer suggests the area was once marshy although this would have slowly disappeared and been replaced by swampy meadows subjected to regular flooding as indicated by the thick deposit of grey silt which has presumably been deposited during periods of flood. No evidence for early settlement or any other activity was noted during the evaluation and this is likely to be due to the low lying nature of the site.

From observation of the electrical supply excavations it could be seen that the area of high ground to the north had been extended southwards through the dumping of a vast amounts of imported material during the last half of the 20th century.

6. Recommendations for Future Work

Based on the results of the evaluation it is unlikely that any significant archaeological deposits are under threat from the proposed development. Following the initial evaluation it was agreed with the County Conservation Team that excavations into the slope should be monitored in order to investigate the make up of the slope. This has been undertaken satisfactorily and no further works are now recommended.

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. The need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its archaeological advisors. 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.

PLATES



Plate I: Stratigraphy as seen in the east face of Trench 2



Plate II: Excavation into the slope on northern edge of the site revealing the extensive deposits of made ground

APPENDIX

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation

Cutlers Chase, Lowgate, Eye

Evaluation by Trial Trench

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 An application, 0572/07, has been made to build four houses on land off Cutlers Chase, Lowgate, Eye.
- 1.2 In order to establish the full archaeological implications of this application the planning authority has been advised that an archaeological evaluation of the application area should be required of the applicant

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). **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.**

- 1.3 The development area lies at TM 14497367 at 30m OD on the south edge of the Eye "island". It lies 30m SW of the medieval Lowgate Street frontage on the north edge of the low-lying Town Moor area; a steep bank forms the northern boundary of the plot. Several 4th century Roman coins are recorded from Lowgate, around 100m to the east (SMR reference EYE 008). Prior to housing development to the south and west trial trenching exposed linear features including a large ?channel of uncertain date and worked flints of probably early Bronze Age date in some of the features close to the current application (EYE 069, SCCAS report 2004/049). There is thus potential for deposits relating to a range of periods of activity and a high probability that the development will affect archaeological deposits.
- 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 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 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 entire site 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 is likely to 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 digital colour photographs.
- 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). Guidance on best practice (Brown 2007 for AAF) should also be followed.
- 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.
- 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).

Specification by: Judith Plouviez

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Tel: 01284 352448

Date: 24th July 2007

Reference:\2007_0572\CutlersChase_Lowgate_SpecEval.doc

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.