

Vault Maintenance Facility, RAF Lakenheath LKH 234

Application No. F/2003/0435/GOV

TL 742 817

Report No. 2004/114

Summary

An archaeological monitoring of the reduction of ground levels for the construction of the Vault Maintenance Facility, RAF Lakenheath, located parts of a buried soil horizon, a peat filled hollow, and one possible, undated pit.

Introduction

A series of visits was made to the site from 6th July to 2nd August 2004 to monitor the reduction of ground levels for the construction of the building and its associated access road and car parks. The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by Judith Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) to fulfil a planning condition on application F/2003/0435/GOV. The work was funded by the developer, MoD Defence Estates (USF).

This part of the airbase has seen relatively little archaeological investigation in the past. A scatter of occasional prehistoric finds from the general vicinity however indicated that there was some potential for further prehistoric or later evidence to be found.

Methodology and Results

The entire development area (Fig. 1), consisting of the building footprint, access roads and carpark was reduced in level by 0.4 - 0.6m.

The topsoil was fairly thin, measuring 0.1-0.2m deep. In most places it overlaid a layer of mid-dark grey/brown sands (0001), measuring 0.1-0.5m deep. The natural subsoil of yellow sands lay beneath either the topsoil or layer 0001. Across most of the site the natural subsoil was cleanly exposed or partially removed, in the remaining areas the base of layer 0001 remained in situ.

In the southern corner of the site, at a depth of 0.5m, part of a large, peat-filled, hollow (0002) was observed, measuring at least 25m in length.

To the east of the hollow a possible circular pit (0003) was observed. It measured 1.3m in diameter and was 0.4m deep, its fill was a mid brown sand. No finds were recovered from the feature and so it is undated. In section it had irregular gentle sloping sides and a concave base.

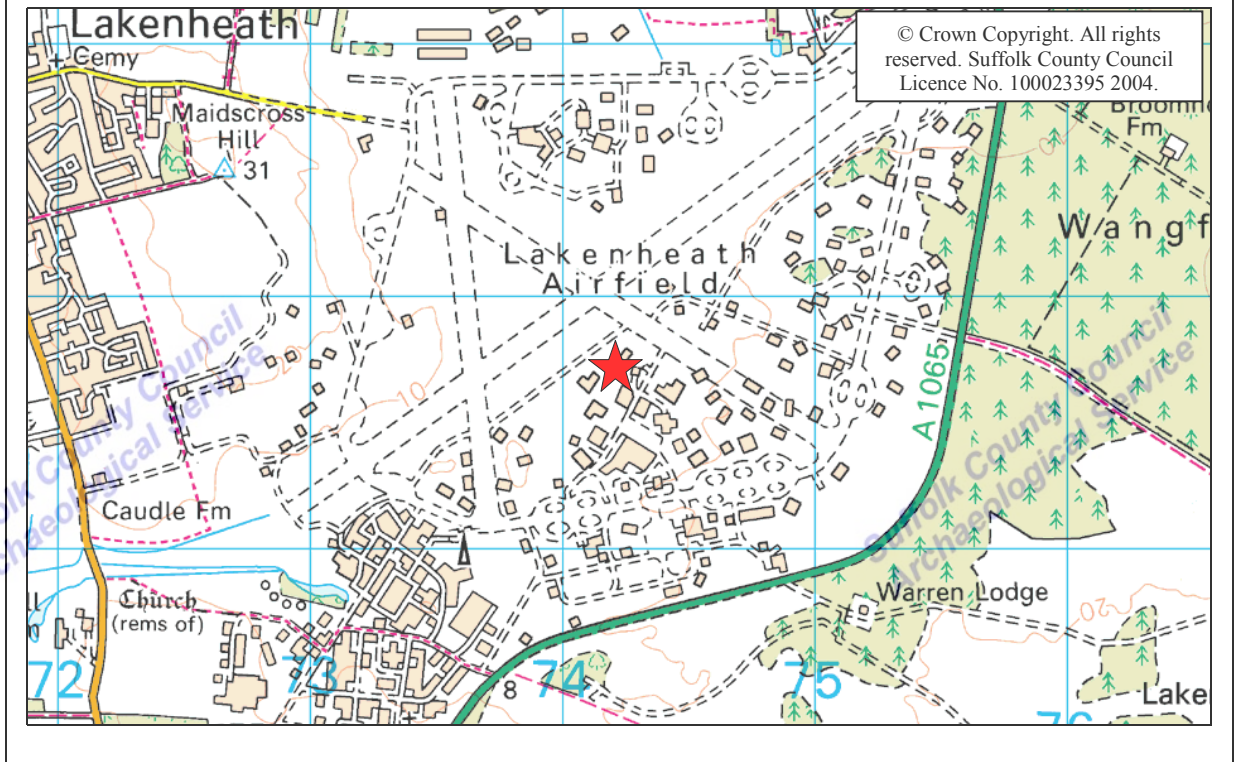
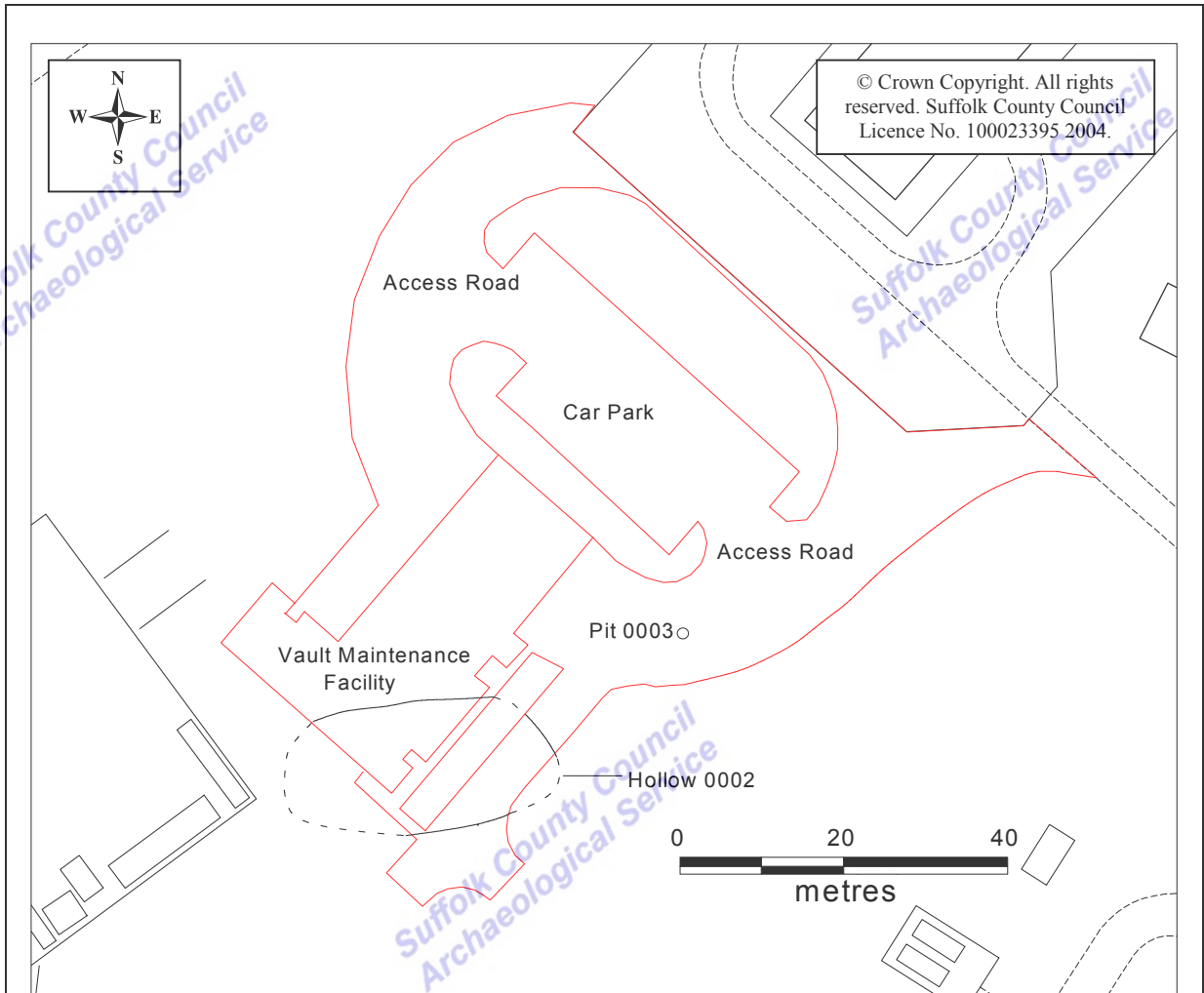


Figure 1. Site plan and location

Discussion

The development area showed little modern disturbance and a high level of preservation of the former natural landscape. The layer of grey/brown sands (0001), which appears to be a buried former soil horizon or a sequence of windblown sand deposits, and the peat filled hollow (0002) are both elements of this natural landscape. The single, undated, possible pit (0003) is an inconclusive feature, perhaps also being natural, and does not indicate any significant level of activity on the site.

John Craven, July 2004

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