ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING REPORT

Rushbrooke Water Treatment Works, Rushbrooke Lane, Rushbrooke
RBK019

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING, 2007
(Planning app. no. SE/05/02718)

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Acknowledgements

This project was funded by Anglian Water and was monitored by Robert Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team).

The evaluation was carried out by Andrew Tester and the monitoring by Michael Green, both from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team. The project was directed and managed by Andrew Tester, who also provided advice during the production of the report.

The post-excavation was managed Andrew Tester and Richenda Goffin. Finds processing and the production of site plans and sections was carried out Gemma Adams, and the specialist finds and environmental reports by Richenda Goffin and Cathy Tester.

Summary

Evaluation and monitoring work identified a ditch which contained Roman pottery with a sherd of Early Saxon material. Other finds from the site include a concentration of struck flint of which the largest group is thought to be Neolithic.

SMR information

Planning application no.	No.SE/05/02718
Date of fieldwork:	07-09/03/2007
Grid Reference:	TL 8734 6231
Funding body:	Anglian Water
Oasis reference	Suffolkc1-35133

1. Introduction

A programme of archaeological evaluation and monitoring was undertaken ahead of the development of additions to the Rushbrooke Water Treatment Works. The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by Robert Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) to fulfil a planning condition on application F/2006/0653/FUL. The development consisted of a sunken square reservoir and associated piping. Archaeological interest in the site was generated from previous finds of Roman pottery made during the construction of the works. In the evaluation stage two trial trenches were excavated by machine followed by hand excavation. The results were then assessed and it was agreed with the curator that a programme of close monitoring would provide an adequate mitigation strategy and that the results of both the evaluation and monitoring could be combined within a single report. The developer, Anglia Water, funded the work.

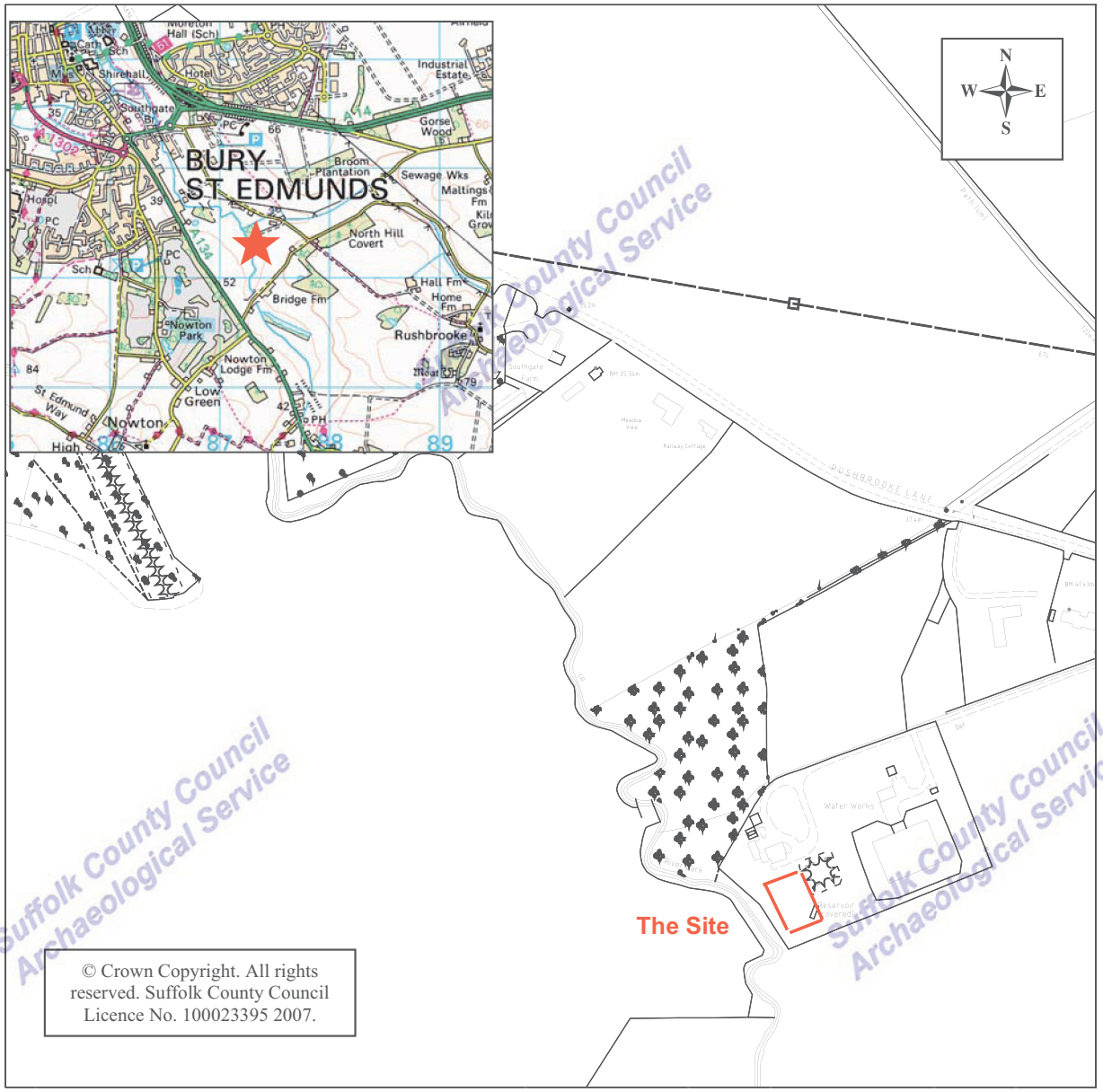

Figure 1. Site location plan

2. Methodology

In the first stage of works two trenches c. 24m in length were excavated by a 3-tonne 360-degree tracked machine fitted with a 1.4m wide toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist. Much of the ground was disturbed by service trenches associated with the existing works and natural subsoil was located at between 1 and 1.3m below the existing ground surface. A single feature was identified and excavated.

Following a verbal report of the evaluation with plans a constant monitoring of the groundworks was agreed with the curator. In practice this was restricted to the southern half of the development as most of the new build was in previously disturbed ground. The site was recorded using a continuous numbering system although a gap was left to distinguish the evaluation, Nos. 0001-0004, from the monitoring, 0010- 0019.

In both the evaluation and monitoring archaeological features were cleaned and excavated by hand. The site was recorded using continuous numbering system starting from 0001. Site data was written straight into the report due to the small amount of features and recorded under the County Sites and Monuments code RBK019. The site archive is stored at Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Bury St Edmunds. An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-35133) and a digital copy of the report submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit).

3. Results

The Evaluation

Trench 1 was excavated on an east-west orientation (Fig.2). Two representative profiles were recorded, A and B (Fig. 3). These sections show between 0.6 and 0.8m of made ground with a layer of clay over the buried soil. The buried soil was a dark grey over a mid grey silt that was 0.8m deep. The natural subsoil consisted of a pale silt/sand with stones. The soil profile was deeper towards the western end of the trench. Trench 2 was positioned to avoid service pipes at

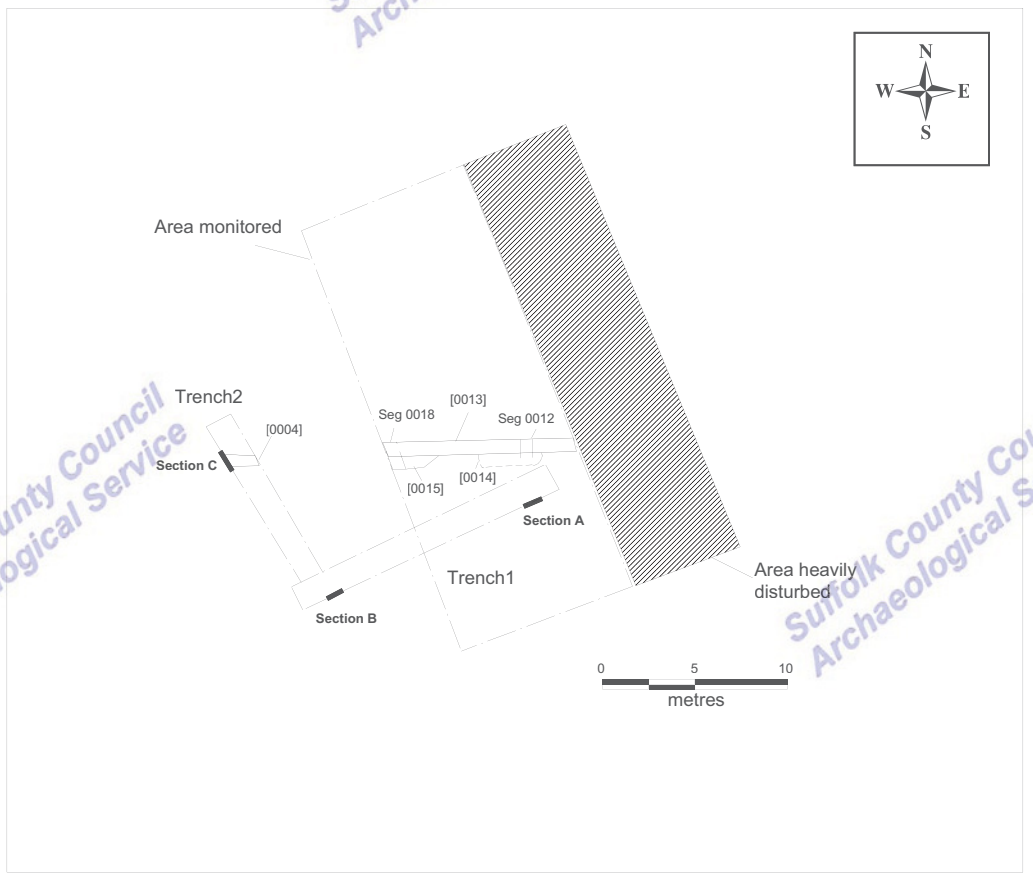

Figure 2. Trenched and Monitored area

the eastern end of the trench. The profile was similar to that in trench 1although the silt was a little deeper and there was less made ground (Section C). Finds recovered towards the base of the trench close to the interface with the natural subsoil were recorded under context 0002. A single ditch, 0004, was identified in Trench 2 and is recorded in the base of the section. It contained a small amount of charcoal. Finds were recorded under context 0003. The ditch was truncated above the level of the natural subsoil.

The Monitoring

Following on from the evaluation the area of the new build was monitored. Only the western side of the rectangular strip was relatively undisturbed. Ditch 0004 was re-excavated under context 0013 in segments 0012 and 0018. The fill was recorded respectively under contexts 0013 and 0019 and was of mid dark-grey sand with occasional charcoal flecks. A pit, 0015, was identified on the south side of segment 0012. An irregular feature within segment 0018 was suggested to be a natural feature. A finds rich soil layer 0017 was identified above the features, which was similar to 0002 from the evaluation trench.

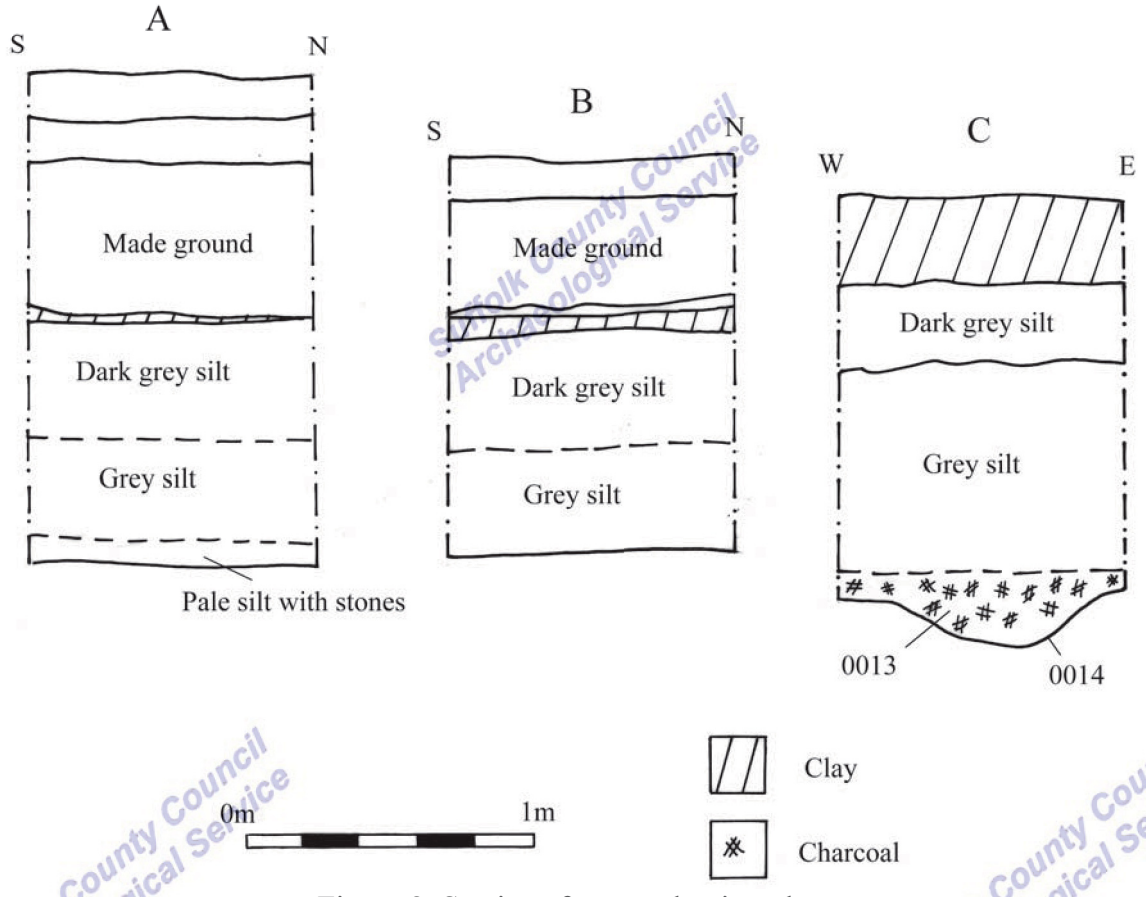

Figure 3. Sections from evaluation phase

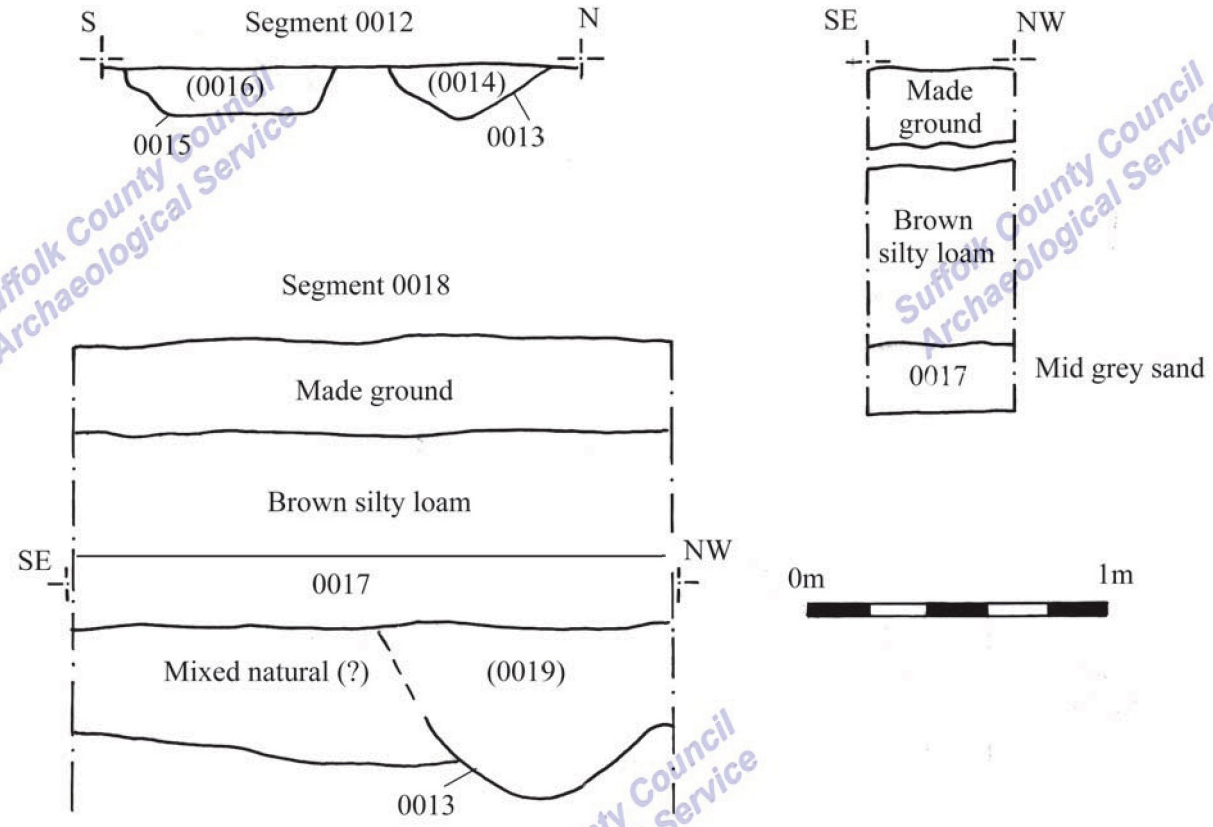

Figure 4. Sections from monitoring phase

4.0 Finds and environmental evidence

Richenda Goffin, Cathy Tester and Colin Pendleton

Introduction

Finds were collected from seven contexts, as shown in the table below.

OP	Pottery		Flint		Burnt flint		Animal bone		Miscellaneous	Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g		
0001			6	312	3	111	3	41		Unstratified
0002			10	200	1	33				Later prehistoric
0003	2	91	2	65	3	64				Roman /Saxon
0014			6	238	3	71				Prehistoric
0016	1	3								Roman
0017	2	23			2	104	5	73	1 frag slag @ 107g	Mixed, pre + Saxon
0019			1	11	1	21				?Prehistoric
Total	5	117	25	826	13	404	8	114		

Table 1. Finds Quantities

Pottery

A total of five sherds of stratified pottery was recovered in total (0.117kg). A large fragment of a Roman storage vessel made in a fabric with grog inclusions was present in ditch fill 0003, with a small burnt and laminated hand-made sherd which probably dates to the Early Saxon period (ESO2). The Roman sherd cannot be closely dated. A second sherd from 0015, a feature recorded alongside the ditch is a slipped oxidised ware (WSO), which is also Roman, possibly

dating to the 2nd century. Two Early Saxon sherds were recovered from the buried soil layer 0017, both of which are abraded. One of these is small and burnt, and contains moderate rounded quartz (ESCQ), and a second, slightly larger fragment from nearer the base of the vessel is thicker and is made from a sandier fabric with mica (ESSM).

Burnt Flint

Thirteen fragments of burnt flint were collected from five contexts as well as being recovered as unstratified finds.

Flint (identifications by Colin Pendleton)

Twenty-five flints were recovered from the evaluation and monitoring, weighing 0.826kg. These have been individually catalogued below:

1. Irregular simple core with flakes struck on two faces from 1 edge only. ?Late prehistoric to post-medieval. From 0001.
2. Large long flake core made from a quartered flint. ?Later prehistoric. From 0001.
3. Small blade core, probably Neolithic. From 0001.
4. Thick snapped flake, probably part of a core, remnants of long flake scars, possibly Neolithic. From 0001.
5. Long flake with pronounced ripples, hinge fractured flake on dorsal face, probably Neolithic or Bronze Age. From 0001.
6. Snapped flake, Later prehistoric. From 0001.
7. Regular unpatinated flake core, with at least 1 scar from hinge fractured flake. From 0002.
8. Fragment of irregular unpatinated flake core. From 0002.
9. Thick snapped unpatinated flake. From 0002.
10. Five unpatinated flakes, two with slight edge retouch, 2 irregular and 1 with hinge fracture. From 0002.
11. 2 squat flakes, one with hinge fracture and slight edge retouch/use wear. From 0002.
12. An irregular multi-platformed flake core with numerous (20+) cones of percussion. Possibly Mid Bronze Age to Iron Age. From 0003.
13. A small irregular flake, possibly partially patinated. From 0003.
14. Small patinated blade or bladelet with cortex down 1 edge- probably Mesolithic or Neolithic From 0014.
15. Natural flint, heavily bashed around the edges, possibly a core or tool. Very irregular and poor quality. From 0014.
16. Large irregular flake used as a core, producing long flakes. From 0014.
17. Irregular core producing largish flakes with some incipient cones of percussion. From 0014.
18. Small flake with hinge fracture, and limited edge retouch. Natural striking platform. From 0014.
19. Oval end-scraper. From 0014.
20. Flake with some cortex at distal end. Later Prehistoric. From 0019.

Overall summary

The flint assemblage consists mainly of two distinct groups of different date. The unstratified flints catalogued under 0001 are likely to be Neolithic. The bladelet from 0014 is also earlier, perhaps Mesolithic or Neolithic. The flints from 0002 are generally late prehistoric, and their irregularity and thickness suggests a Middle Bronze Age or Iron Age date.

Slag

A single fragment of slag collected from 0017 is likely to be fuel ash slag.

Animal bone

A small quantity of animal bone was collected, including three unstratified pieces. The bone was fragmentary and stained, with few identifiable features. Three rib fragments were present, two of which came from 0017.

Finds Discussion

The small quantity of finds recovered from the evaluation and monitoring are wide-ranging in date, from the prehistoric through to the Early Saxon period. The range of flints recovered is similar in date to the other prehistoric flint tools and metalwork found in sites in the vicinity. The finds from the ditch 0003/0014 are prehistoric, Roman and Early Saxon, and further finds of similar periods were present in the buried soil layer 0017. The presence of relatively unworn fragments of Early Saxon pottery is of interest, as evidence of an Early Saxon structure has been found on the other side of the river (RBK 020, forthcoming).

5. General Discussion

From the flint evidence it can be suggested that Mesolithic hunter-gatherers visited the area but that significant exploitation occurred during the Neolithic period, which is evidenced by the collection of struck flint towards the base of the trenches. The evidence for truncation suggests that there has been some soil movement down the slope although the great depth of fairly homogenous soil layers above the ditches was probably caused, at least in part, by ploughing. This could explain some mixing at the base of the soil layer with a prehistoric soil horizon having been incorporated into the ploughsoil. It is suggested that much of the flint may be of Bronze Age or Iron Age date. The veracity of pit 0015 is uncertain and the first clear structural evidence was the ditch. There is some uncertainty from the spot dating about whether it was Roman or Anglo-Saxon in origin. It is possible that the later material was collected in the top of an abandoned open ditch. Roman finds have previously been found within the treatment plant complex (Robert Carr pers. com.). Roman finds may find their way into ditches as manuring waste but the quantity of finds recovered from such a small length of excavated ditch would tend to indicate settlement close by. A probable, Roman ditched enclosure has been identified on the north side of the river by excavation and aerial photography alongside an Early Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured building on the opposite side of the valley, RBK 020, (author in prep.). This provides more solid evidence for settlement of the valley.

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