

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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## **‘Suncrest’ Creting Road, Stowmarket SKT 049**

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2008  
(Planning app. no. 1073/07)  
Oasis No. suffolkc1-36749



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## Acknowledgements and List of Contributors

This project was funded by Cameron Hamilton Homes Ltd. and was monitored by Judith Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team).

The fieldwork was carried out by Robert Atfield from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

The project was managed by John Newman, who also provided advice during the production of the report.

## Summary

*An archaeological evaluation was carried out within the former garden of Suncrest Creeping Road, Stowmarket, as a condition of planning consent. The development will include the demolition of the existing bungalow in order to accommodate the construction of eleven new dwellings. The site lies within an area of dispersed archaeology, including evidence of activity associated with the Iron Age and Roman periods. These locations are defined in the County Historic Environment Record (HER) (formerly the Sites and Monuments Record).*

*The evaluation entailed the excavation of a series of four trial trenches, in order to assess the archaeological potential of the site. A total length of 84.50m of trenching was excavated in all available areas of the development site. However, none of the trenches revealed any archaeological features or deposits. A thorough visual and metal detector search, carried out over all of the trench surfaces and upcast soil, failed to locate any archaeological finds material other than nineteenth and twentieth century garden debris.*

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## HER information

Planning application	1073/07
HER number	SKT 049
Oasis reference	Suffolkc1-36749
Date of fieldwork:	25-01-08
Grid Reference:	TM 062 587
Funding body:	Cameron Hamilton Homes Ltd.

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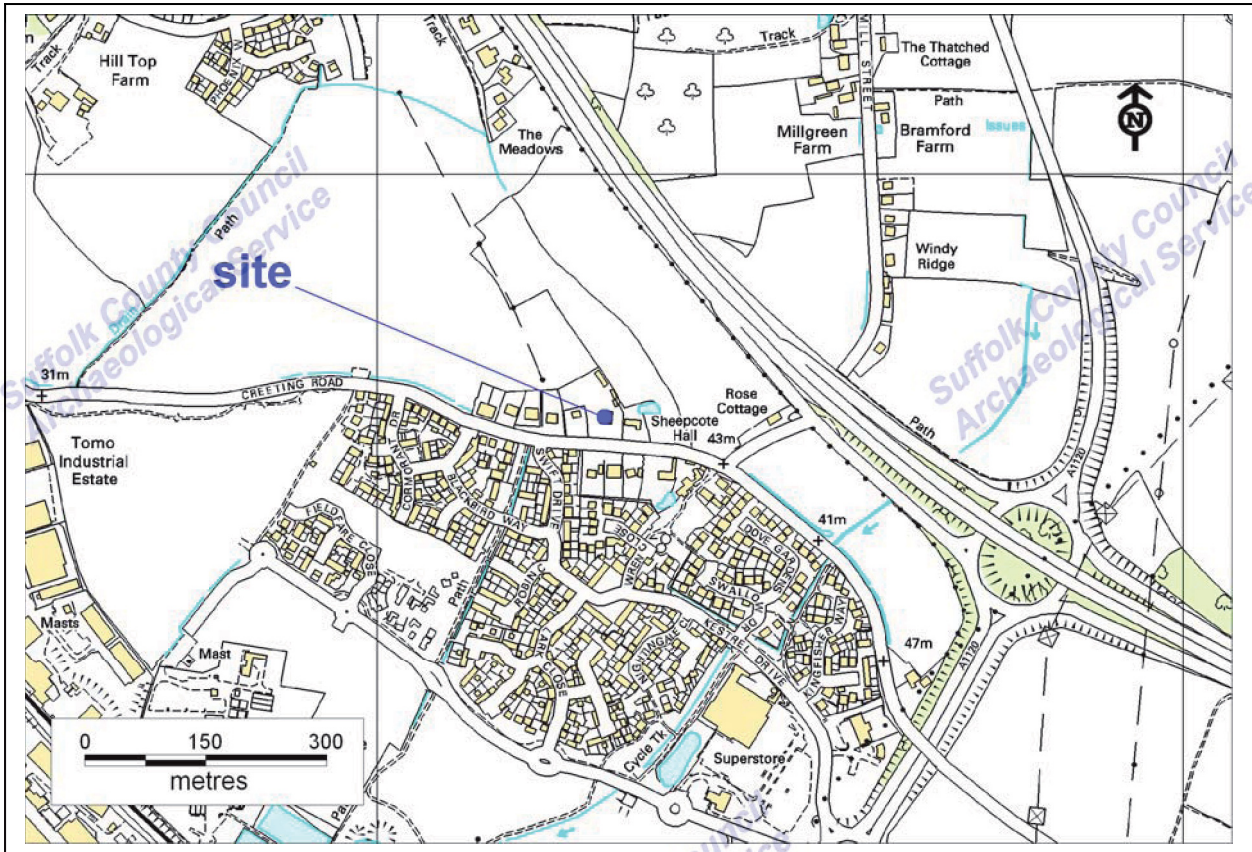


Figure 1. Site location

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## Introduction

The development lies at TM 062 587 at around 50m OD overlooking the Gipping Valley to the south. An application has been made to build eleven bungalows within an area of around 3500m<sup>2</sup>, after the demolition of an existing bungalow and associated outbuildings. The soil is generally heavy, with a loamy clay topsoil and chalky clay subsoil. Evaluation and excavation on other developments in the area have shown a pattern of discontinuous later Iron Age activity occurring in similar locations. An enclosure and scattered structures are located around 250m to the north-west (SKT 036) and a linear feature and some 4-post structures have been recorded around 150m to the south (see Figure 2). Roman activity appears to be mainly focussed slightly further into the valley along the 45m contour (SKT 018). Medieval activity is mainly small in scale, but occurs widely along the trackways and roads, including some stretches of the Creeting Road. The Brief and Specification for the evaluation programme was produced by Judith Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) (see Appendix 1).



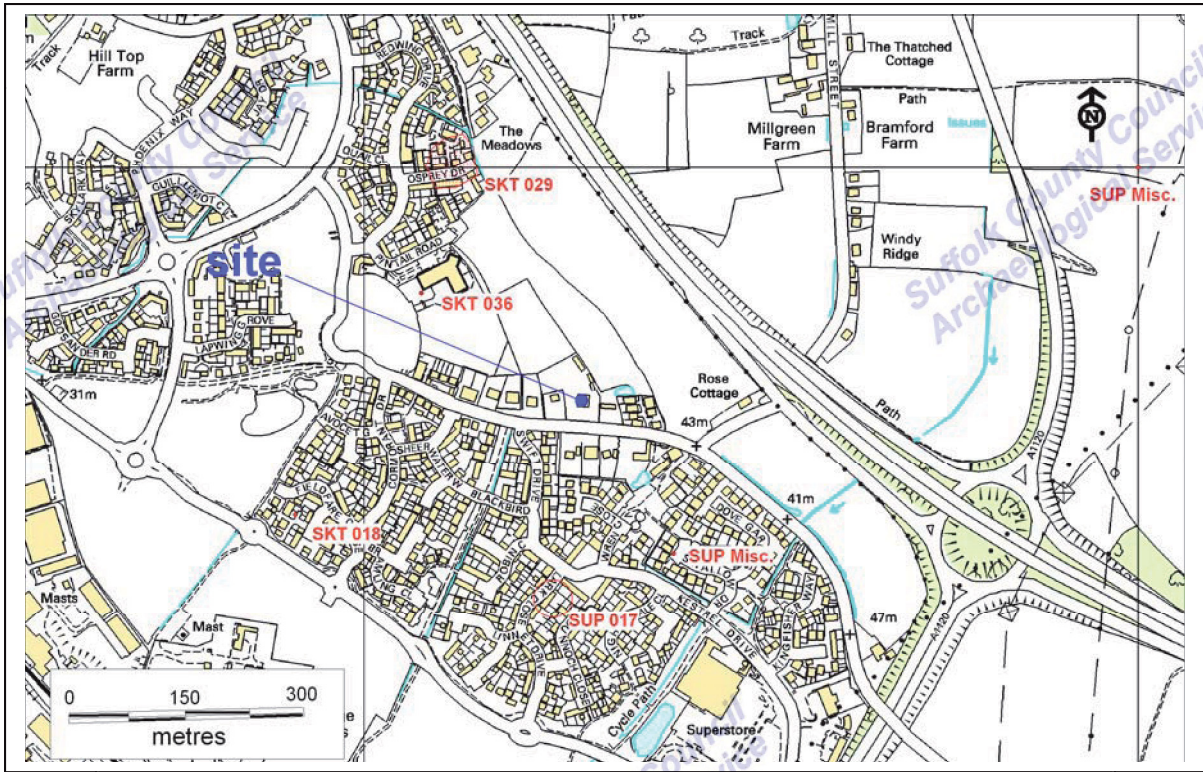


Figure 2. Site in the context of The County Heritage Environment Record

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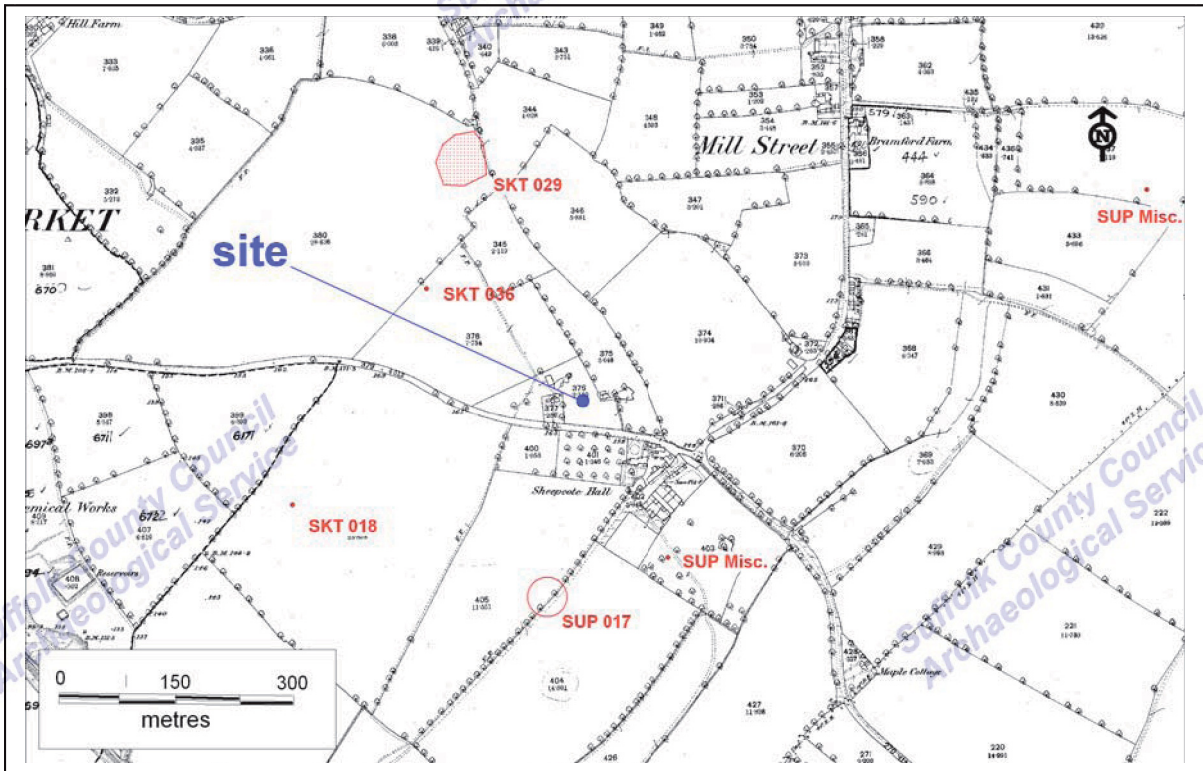


Figure 3. First Edition of the Ordnance Survey Map c.1880

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## Methodology

The archaeological evaluation was completed during a single day of field-work. Four evaluation trenches were excavated within the site area, two were positioned towards the rear of the development area (north), one to the east, and another along the road frontage at the southern edge of the plot (see Figure 4), the trenches were excavated in sequence (from one to four). All of the trenches were mechanically excavated to the optimum depth for revealing potential archaeological features which, if present, would be seen contrasting with the underlying natural geological deposits. Excavation was carried out using a tracked 360° mini-digger equipped with a toothless 1.50m wide bucket; additional hand cleaning was carried out in order to clarify the soil profiles. The trenches had an average width of 1.60m and had a combined total length of 84.50m.

The mechanical soil stripping was constantly monitored by an archaeologist. The spoil was searched for any unstratified finds and also thoroughly metal-detected. All of the trenches were recorded in terms of dimensions, location and soil profiles and photographed using a 7.1mp digital camera. Details of the deposits were recorded on *pro forma* 'Trench Record' sheets. Conditions allowed good visibility with dry bright weather, moist soil deposits and minimal standing water. The site was allocated a County Historic Environment Record code (SKT 049) and an oasis record has been created for the evaluation (Suffolkc1-36749).

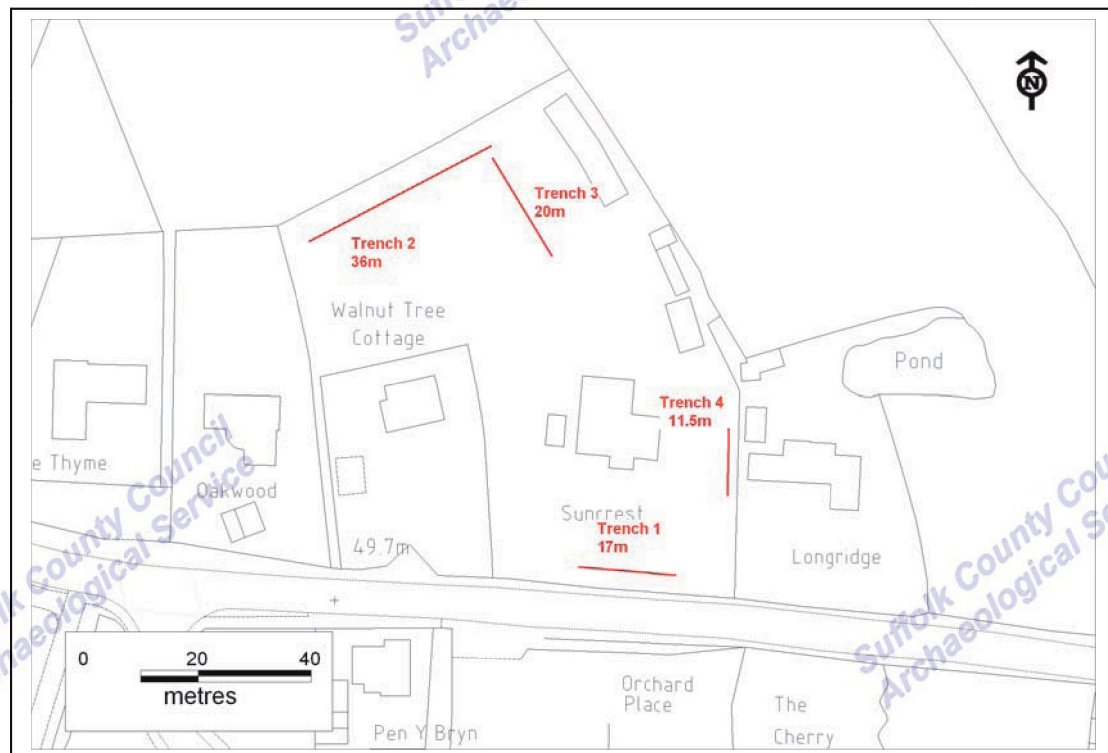


Figure 4. Plan showing location of evaluation trenches

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## Results

### Trench 1

This trench was shortened from the original trench scheme in order to avoid cutting the access for ongoing demolition work. The trench was orientated from east to west along the road frontage of the property (see Figure 4) and measured 17.00m long, by 1.60m wide and 0.50m deep. The topsoil consisted of mid-brown loamy clay (typical heavy garden soil) reaching depths of 0.50m. An intermediate subsoil of pale brown clay with some loam content lay below the topsoil to a depth of 0.20m. The underlying drift deposits were of pale brown chalky clay. No archaeological features or artefactual material was observed in this trench.

### Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated near to the rear (north) of the plot, running parallel to the property boundary. The trench measured 36.00m long by 1.60m wide and excavated to a depth of 0.40m. The mid-brown loamy clay topsoil was slightly shallower than Trench 1 at 0.40m, as was the subsoil, measuring only 0.15m deep and showing more signs of amalgamation with the topsoil. The underlying natural drift geology displayed more complexity, with bands of alternate chalky pale brown clay and orange-brown chalk free clay. No archaeological features or finds were present.

### Trench 3

Trench 3 ran parallel to the eastern site boundary, at a right angle to Trench 2. The trench measured 20.00m long by 1.60m wide by 0.40m deep. The topsoil remained consistent in character with that seen in the previously described trenches, but reached only 0.20m in depth. The subsoil continued to consist of pale brown loamy clay. The underlying natural deposits remained variable with pale reddish-brown clay in most of this trench with larger chalk nodules. The edge of a small backfilled pond was partially revealed in the central area of the trench. The fill contained modern (twentieth century) refuse including, bottles, metal debris (including aluminium) and ceramic building material. The pond is clearly marked on the earlier Ordnance Survey maps and may be associated with the construction (clay extraction) of the adjacent cottage (Walnut Tree Cottage) or the building shown immediately to the west (see Figure 5).

### Trench 4

This trench was an addition to the original trench scheme due to the shortening of the other trenches in order to maintain access. The trench was excavated along the eastern boundary for a distance of 11.50m and was 1.60m wide, reaching a depth of 0.50m. The topsoil was consistent with the previous trenches at 0.25m deep; while the subsoil showed a slight increase in loam content and less clay with an average depth of 0.25m. The natural subsoil continued as pale reddish-brown clay, with occasional fine chalk nodules. No archaeological features or artefactual material was found.

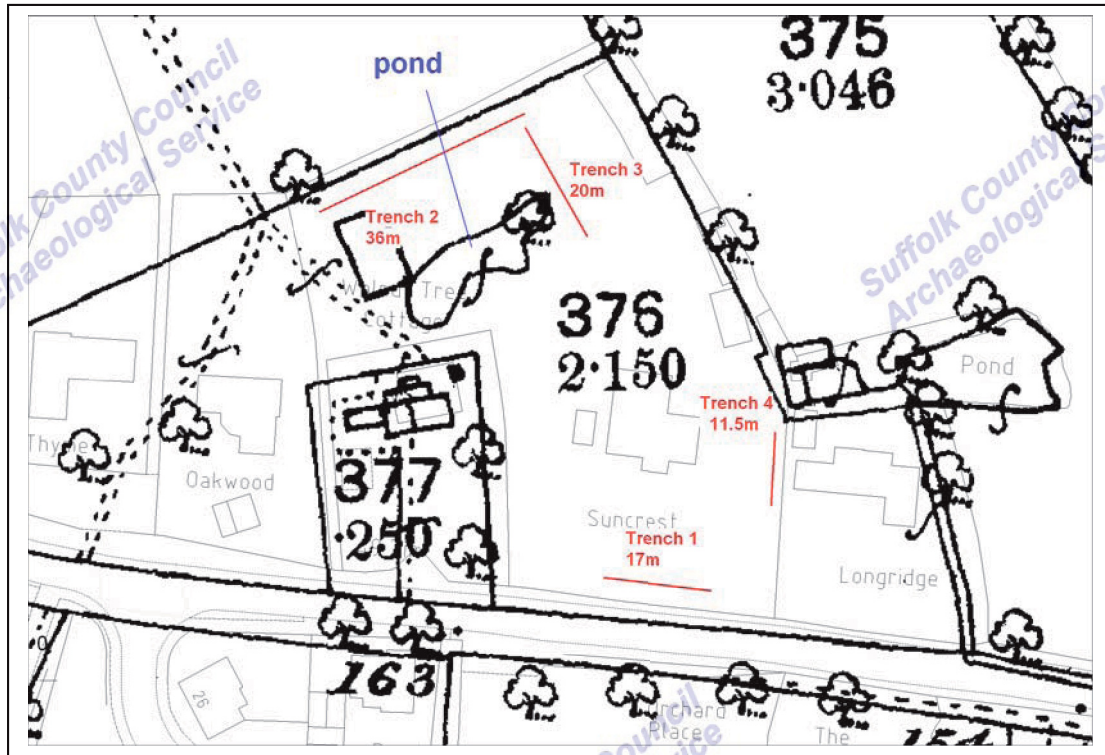


Figure 5. 1880 OS map showing pond seen in Trench 3

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## Conclusion

The site revealed evidence of exclusively post-medieval activity, mainly in the form of garden or agricultural debris. The only feature, a small irregularly shaped pond to the rear of the plot, is likely to be associated with Walnut Tree Cottage along with the building shown immediately to the west of the pond on the 1880 O.S. map. (see Figure 5) This small group of buildings may have existed as a small farm, probably dating to the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, but possibly earlier. A spur off the main foot path heads south-east towards the rear of the cottage but is absent from the 1890 map. The lack of any earlier features or artefactual material may help to confirm that settlement was scattered in this area and less concentrated than those recorded locations lying below the 45m contour.

As the evaluation did not reveal any evidence for significant earlier activity on the site, no further archaeological input is recommended in relation to this development.



## **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.

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*Brief and Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation*

Evaluation by Trial Trench at Suncrest, Creeting Road, Stowmarket

**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 [1073/07] has been made to build 11 bungalows at site of Suncrest, Creeting Road, Stowmarket

1.2 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 lies at TM 062587 at around 50m OD overlooking the Gipping valley to the south. Evaluation and excavation on other developments in the area has shown a pattern of discontinuous later Iron Age activity in similar locations (SKT 036 enclosure and scattered structures c.250m to north-west, SUP 017 linear feature and 4-post structures c.150m to south), with Roman activity mainly focussed downslope around the 45m contour. Small scale medieval activity including traces of structures occurs widely, particularly along trackways and roads including the Creeting Road. There is therefore a strong possibility that there may be medieval roadside activity and some possibility of earlier evidence, particularly Iron Age.

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 Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.
- 2.5 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.

2.6 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.

2.7 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.

2.8 An outline specification, which defines certain minimum criteria, is set out below.

### 3. Specification

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 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 either digital photographs (using a minimum 5 megapixel camera) or 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 archaeological work 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

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

Tel: 01284 35244

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> November 2007  
*Creting Rd.doc*

Reference: *Spec\_eval (JP) Suncrest*

**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.**