

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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Farm Reservoir, Manor Farm, Battisford BAT 012

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2008



Robert Atfield
Field Team
Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service

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Lucy Robinson, County Director of Environment and Transport
Endeavour House, Russel Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX

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List of Contributors

All Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service unless otherwise stated.

Robert Atfield Assistant Project Officer (fieldwork and report)

Acknowledgements

This project was funded by J.E. Knock and Partners and was monitored by Robert Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Division).

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

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land at Manor Farm, Battisford ahead of the construction of a farm reservoir. The site is centred on TM 0515 5492 and covers an area of approximately 7000m². Two evaluation trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed reservoir, providing a total sample length of 120m. Only a single feature was located as a result of the evaluation, a small ditch at the Northeast end of Trench 1. No associated artefactual material was located within the fill of the ditch and the feature therefore remains undated. The ditch is most likely to represent an earlier field boundary and appears to run virtually parallel to the existing edge of the field 25m further to the Northeast.

SMR information

Planning application no.	—
HER number	BAT 012
Oasis reference	Suffolkc1-36977
Date of fieldwork:	31-08-2007
Grid Reference:	TM 0515 5492
Funding body:	J.E. Knock and Partners

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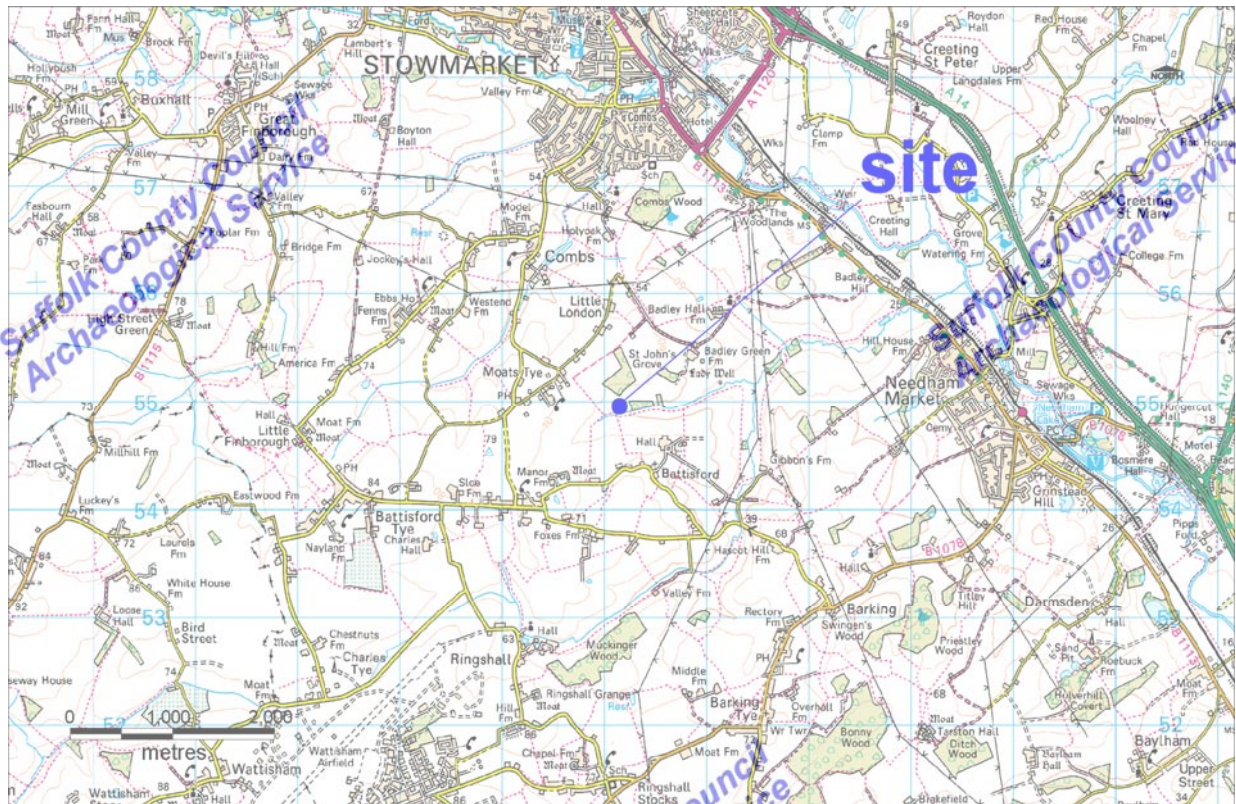


Figure 1 Site location

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Introduction

The site lies within the farmland of Manor Farm, Battsford, in the southeast corner of an arable field known as Grove. The area which will contain the proposed farm reservoir lies just below the 55m O.D. contour and slopes gently down to the southeast to meet a stream marking the farm and parish boundary. The stream flows east for around a kilometre before joining up with a spring at Lady Well that feeds into the Bat. The County Historic Environment Record contains relatively few entries for the farmland of this area (see Figure 2.). However, Manor Farm House (St John's Manor House)(BAT 001) lies within the moated site once the Suffolk command post of the Knights Hospitallers (founded c.1154). This was a military order devoted to tending sick and weary pilgrims (Birch 2004:33). Battsford Hall (BAT 002), less than half a kilometre to the southwest of the evaluation, is also on the site of a substantial medieval manor house (English Heritage 2008). The remnants of ancient woodland just to the north of the site (BAT 013 & BAD 014) are perhaps further surviving indications of medieval occupation. The nearest artefactual find-spots recorded in the immediate area include a Flemish medieval silver penny and various other medieval metal detector finds from an area to the east of the Battsford Hall site (BAT Misc.). The basic field structure and the location of areas of woodland has changed little during the time since the early editions of the Ordnance Survey maps were issued (see Figure 4.).

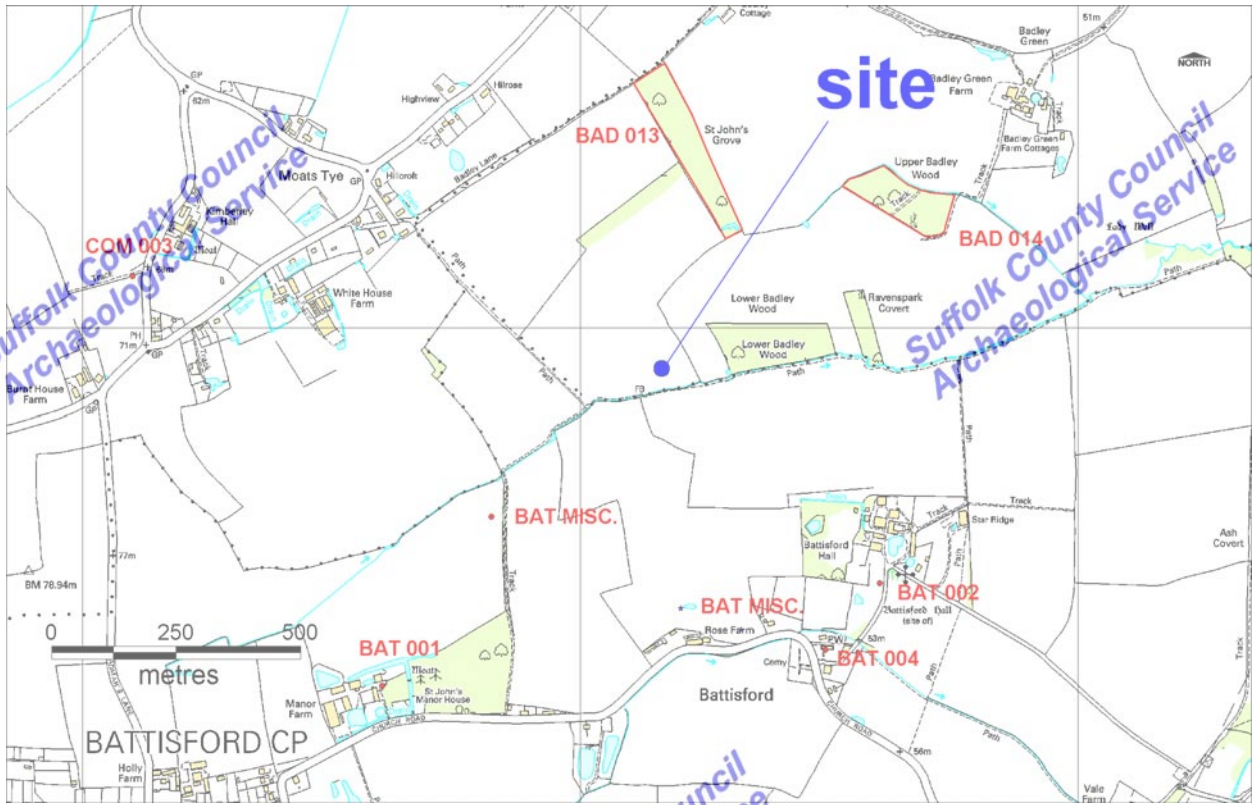


Figure 2. The County Historic Environment Record
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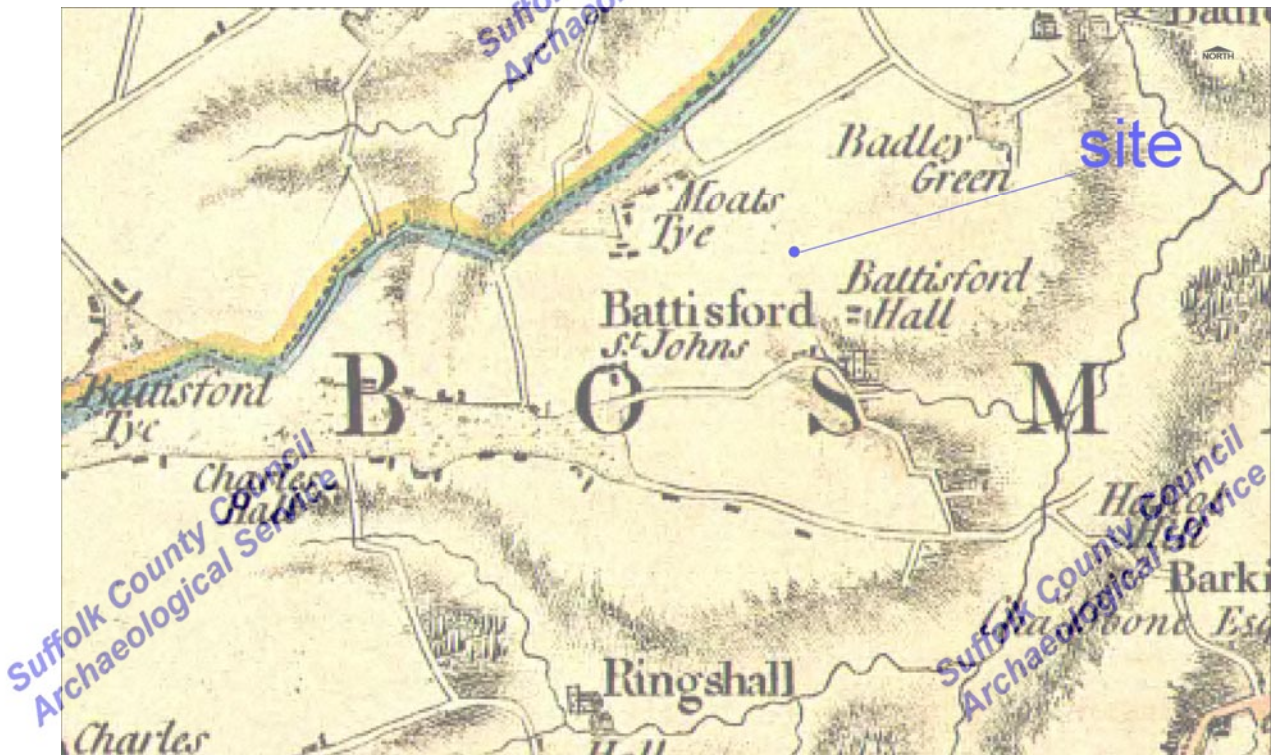


Figure 3. Hodkinson's Map 1783

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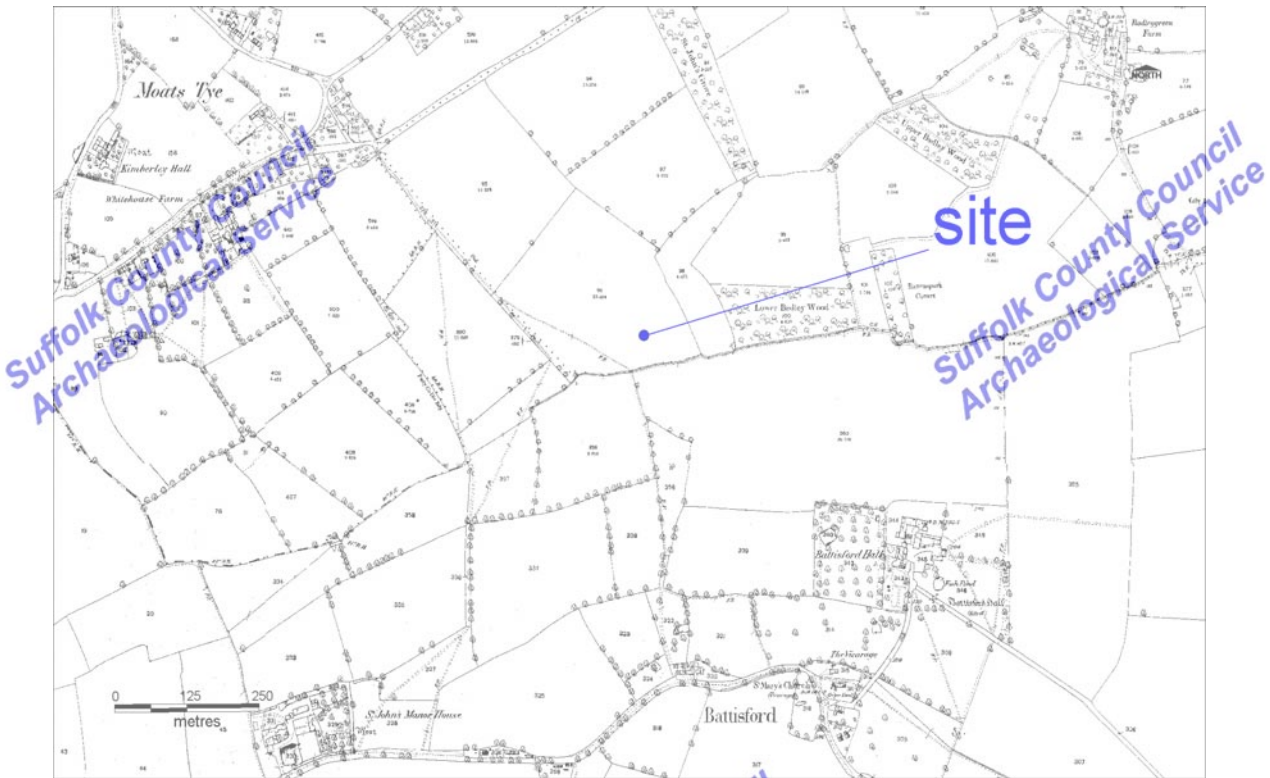


Figure 4. First Edition of the Ordnance Survey Map c1880

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Methodology

The evaluation trenches were excavated using a tracked 360° mini-digger fitted with a 1.50m toothless ditching bucket. Two trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed reservoir. Trench 1 measured 80m in length by 1.50m wide and was orientated from Northeast to Southwest. Trench 2 measured 40m long by 1.50m wide and ran at a right angle from Trench 1 towards the Southeast. 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. Additional hand cleaning was carried out in order to clarify the soil profiles and feature 0006. The mechanical soil stripping was constantly monitored by an archaeologist in order to cease ground reduction at the optimum archaeological level. The spoil was also 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* 'observable phenomena' context sheets, which run from numbers 0001 to 0007. Weather conditions and ground moisture levels allowed good visibility. The site was allocated a County Historic Environment Record code (BAT 012) and an oasis record has been created for the evaluation (Suffolkc1-36977). Robert Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team) specified and monitored the evaluation.

Results

O.P. No.	Trench No.	Feature	Component	Identifier	Description
0001	All trenches			Unstratified finds	Surface and displaced finds
0002	All trenches			Topsoil	Pale-mid brown loamy clay
0003	All trenches			Subsoil	Soft Pale brown silty clay
0004	1	Trench		Trench	Trench 1. (80m length) orientated NE-SW
0005	2	Trench		Trench	Trench 2. (40m length) orientated NW-SE
0006	1	0006	0006	Cut of ditch 0006 (Trench 1)	Probable field boundary ditch-date uncertain
0007	1	0006	0006	Fill of ditch 0006 (Trench 1)	Mid-reddish brown clayey silt with darker iron flecks (no finds)

Table 1. Summary of Contexts

Trench 1. Orientated Northeast to Southwest, Trench 1 was excavated to a depth of 0.38m at the Northeast end, deepening to 0.40m at the Southwest end. The topsoil (0002) was of pale-mid brown loamy clay (plough-soil), 0.32-0.35m deep, containing regular small flints and pebbles (10-30mm) and occasional large flint nodules (50-300mm). The subsoil (0003) was a shallow layer of soft pale brown silty clay with few stones other than occasional small flints and chalk lumps, depths ranged from 0.05-0.06m. The underlying natural deposits were of pale brown chalky clay with geological bands of silty and sandy orange clay, mainly arranged in a north to south orientation.

Ditch 0006 Ditch 0006 was located crossing the extreme Northeast end of Trench 1. The ditch appears to run parallel to the present field edge 25m further to the Northeast. The feature had a maximum depth of 0.85m from the existing surface level of the field, with a 'u' shaped profile and gently dished base. The sides had an approximate 45° slope and were generally slightly concave; the ditch clearly cut the subsoil layer (0003). The fill of the ditch (0007) was mid-reddish brown clayey silt with dark reddish brown flecks (probably iron concentrations) and virtually no stones. Very rare charcoal flecks were also observed and the consistency was firm; a single piece of heat altered sandstone was also seen (not retained), no other finds were located.

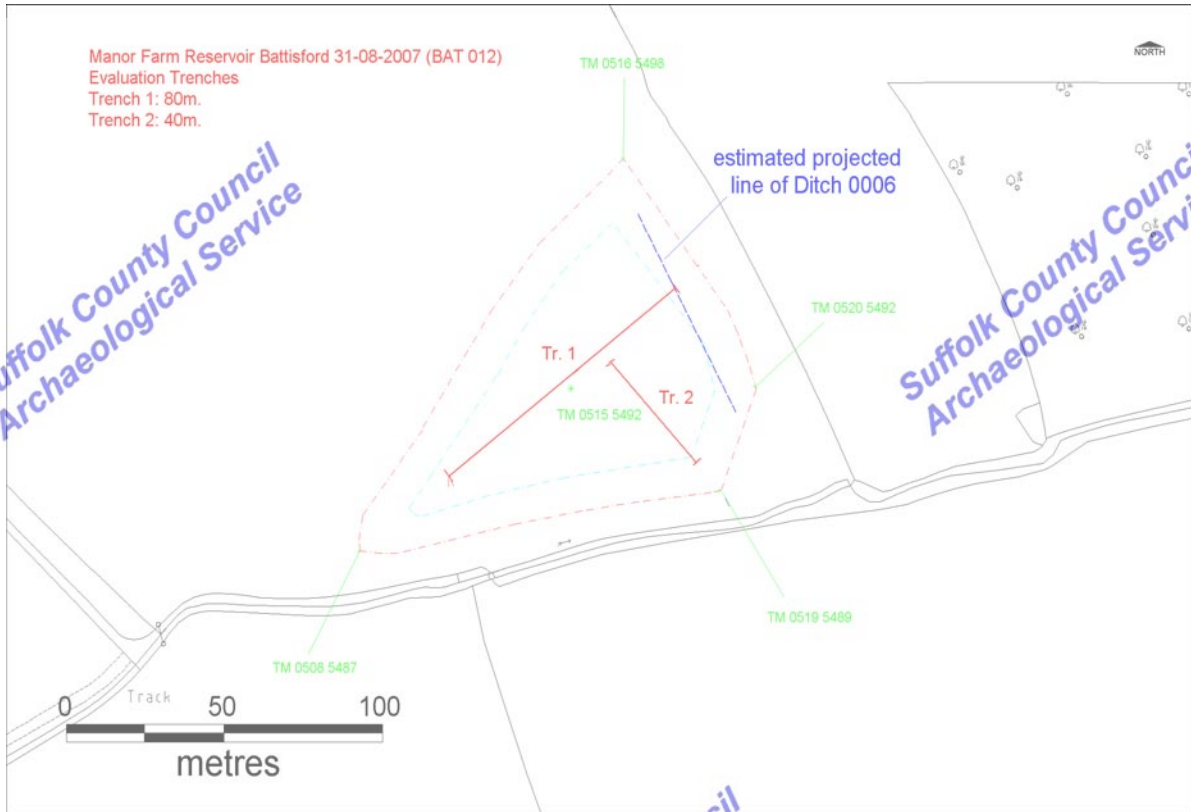


Figure 5. Location of evaluation trenches

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Figure 6. Ditch 0006 (looking southeast)

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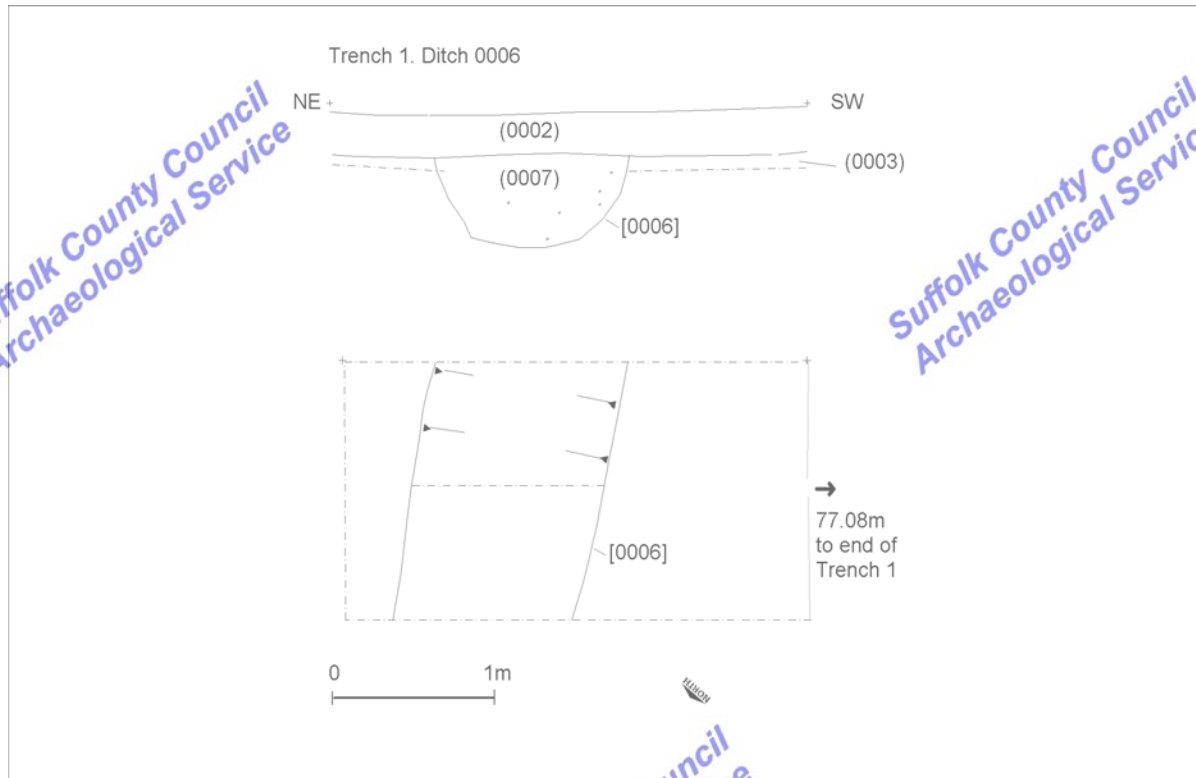


Figure 7. Ditch 0006 section and plan

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Trench 2. This trench ran at a right angle to Trench 1, in a Southeast direction. The topsoil characteristics were the same as Trench 1, but slightly shallower (0.25m at Northwest end to 0.30m at Southeast end). The subsoil was also consistent with that seen in Trench 1, but was generally deeper at 0.10m. The subsoil became increasingly silty downslope at the Southeast end of the trench and may represent ancient hillwash accumulation. The natural underlying deposits continued to be pale brown chalky clay with north to south bands of sandy and silty orange clay. No archaeological features or finds were located in Trench 2.

Conclusions

The absence of any concentrations of archaeological features or artefactual material suggests that this location has long been predominantly agricultural in character.

However, as the sample trenches covered a relatively small and specific area it is not possible to be conclusive in this respect in relation to the surrounding areas of land.

The only feature that was located (Ditch 0006) failed to produce any datable material in the form of finds and therefore cannot be positively associated with any particular period. It is only possible to say that the ditch is unlikely to be particularly modern, due to the absence of any such feature on earlier maps or aerial photographs. The fill of the ditch was compact, moderately pale in shade and homogeneous in character, all of

which suggests a long established and undisturbed feature. Therefore, it is possible that the ditch may represent a medieval land boundary, once enclosing one of possibly many subdivided plots within this particular field. As a result of the limited amounts of archaeological evidence revealed during this evaluation, after consultation with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team, it was recommended that no further investigation be carried out during this development project.

References

Birch, M. 2004 *Suffolk's Ancient Sites and Historic Places, Castell, Mendlesham, Suffolk*

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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.