

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

Project SLAM, RAF Honington HNN 015

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF THE SINGLE LIVING ACCOMMODATION MODERNISATION

Planning Application No. SE/03/2203/P and SE/04/1471

NGR: TL 889 749

Oasis Ref. Suffolkc1-38156

Funded by: Ministry of Defence

SCCAS Report no. 2008/009

Summary

Flint flakes and a thumbnail scraper were collected from a buried soil layer during monitoring of the construction of accommodation blocks at RAF Honington. No cut features were found but the flints are further evidence of the dispersed Bronze Age occupation that is known to have occurred on the south side of the airfield.

Introduction

A series of visits were made during September and October 2005 to monitor the groundworks during the construction of the new accommodation blocks at RAF Honington. The buildings were sited on the south edge of the airfield in an area of landscaped and managed grassland adjacent to the existing hard taxiway and hangars. The monitoring was a condition of the consent of planning applications SE/03/2203/P and SE/04/1471 and were undertaken in accordance with a brief and specification prepared by Bob Carr of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Conservation Team. The work commissioned by Debut Service Limited on behalf of Defence Estates East who funded the project.

The proposal was for five buildings (Fig. 2) and accompanying earthworks, which consisted of a bund and balancing ponds. The work was undertaken in three phases of which Phases 1 and 2 (the bund, balancing pond and the construction of a hostel) had been completed before an archaeological programme of work was put in place.

The potential for archaeology lay in the development areas, proximity to several known prehistoric sites as recorded on the county's Historic Environment Record (HER). Bronze-Age Beaker pottery was found at two spots (FKM 008 and HNN 003) during construction of the airfield and there is a suggestion of a pillow mound within a rabbit warren marked as Coney Hill Break on the tithe map (FKM Misc). The site of a gibbet and skeleton were also found on the boundary, which separates the parishes of Honington and Fakenham Magna and which crosses the airfield just north of the site (Fig. 1).

Results

Monitoring visits were made during the soil strip of the footprint of Buildings 1 and 2 (Fig. 2) in Phase three of the development and the excavation of stanchion bases were observed. The surface geology was mottled sand with the underlying chalk of the solid geology outcropping in

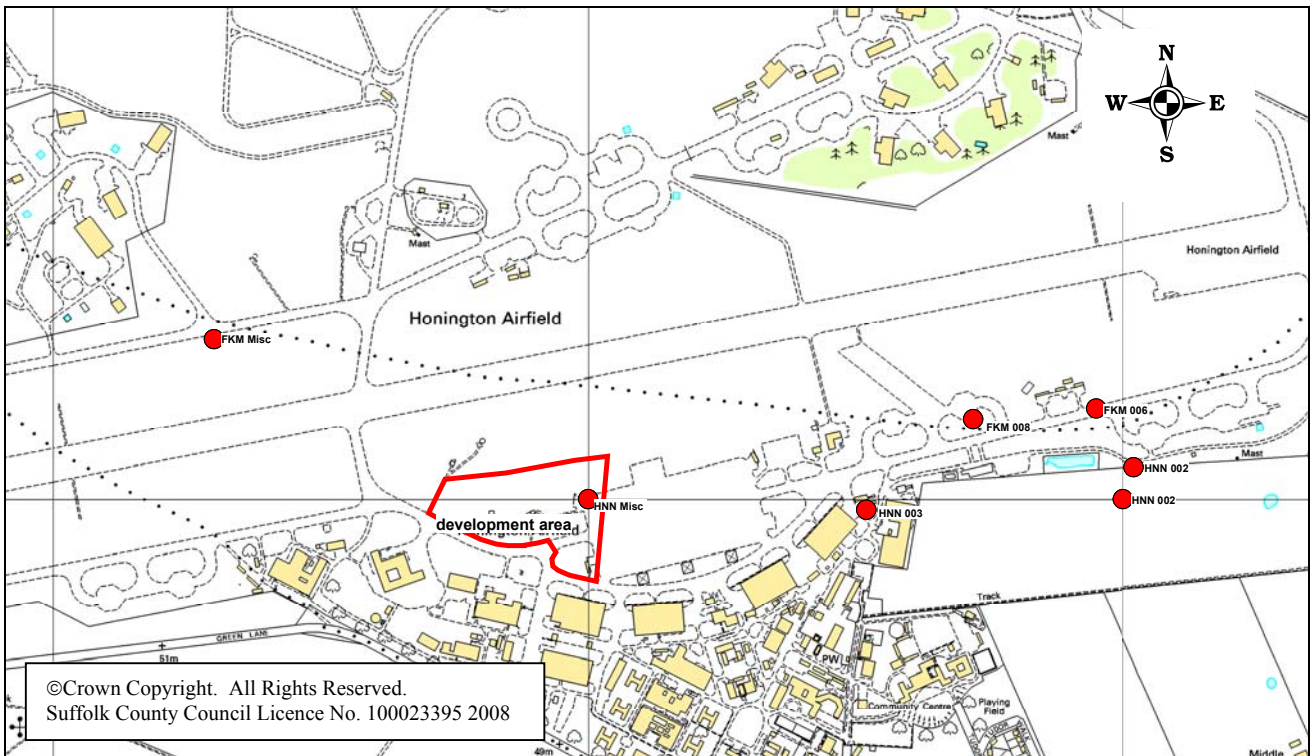


Figure 1. Site location

places. Sections recorded at the edge of the excavation suggested that a partial truncation of the soil profile had occurred at the north end of the site. Here the top of the surface geology was recorded 400mm below the ground surface with the soil profile consisting of a thin topsoil over a pale grey/brown sand *b-horizon*. At the southern end of Buildings 1 and 2 the soil depth was 650mm with the topsoil overlying 500mm of pale brown sand. This was interpreted as an ancient buried soil and two struck flint flakes and a thumbnail scraper dating to the Bronze Age were collected from this deposit. No archaeological cut features were observed in either of the stripped areas.

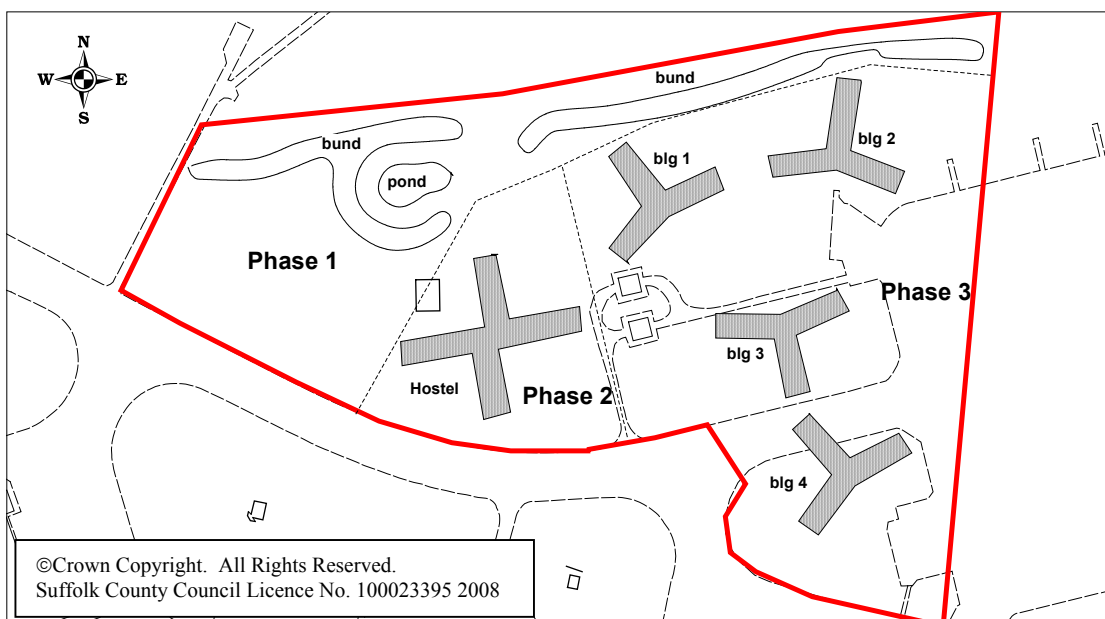


Figure 2. Site plan

The Archaeological Service was not notified of the soil strip for Buildings 3 and 4 and as a consequence these were not monitored

Conclusion

The recovery of struck flints furthers the evidence of prehistoric activity on the site and together with the previous findings suggests that a dispersed Bronze Age occupation occurred within this area. Some levelling for the airfield has occurred at the north end of the site but this has been insignificant and has not thought to have impacted on the archaeological level. So although the absence of features within the monitored areas suggests that this area was away from any settlement focus, the potential for cut features associated with the Bronze Age occupation still exists within the neighbouring areas.

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January 2008