

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

Construct New Crewshacks LKH 312

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF THE GROUNDWORKS FOR NEW CREWSHACKS AT RAF LAKENHEATH

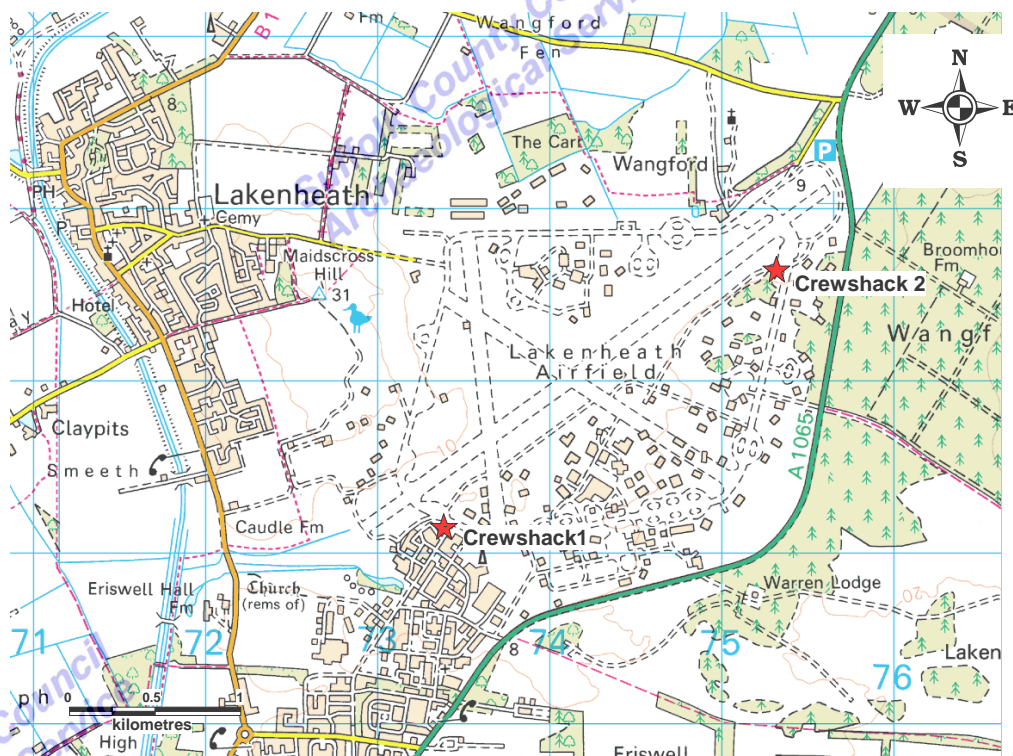
Planning Application No.: Pre end of runway
NGR: TL7339 8115 and TL7533 8264
Oasis Ref. Suffolk1-38565

Funded by: MoD Defence Estates USF

SCCAS Report no. 2008/020

Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out during the construction of two small buildings, one at either end of the runway at RAF Lakenheath. The southern building lay close to an area of known Roman settlement, but whilst the soil profile was intact, no evidence of archaeological activity was found. Monitoring of the second building demonstrated that the area was probably truncated by modern disturbance.



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Figure 1. Site location

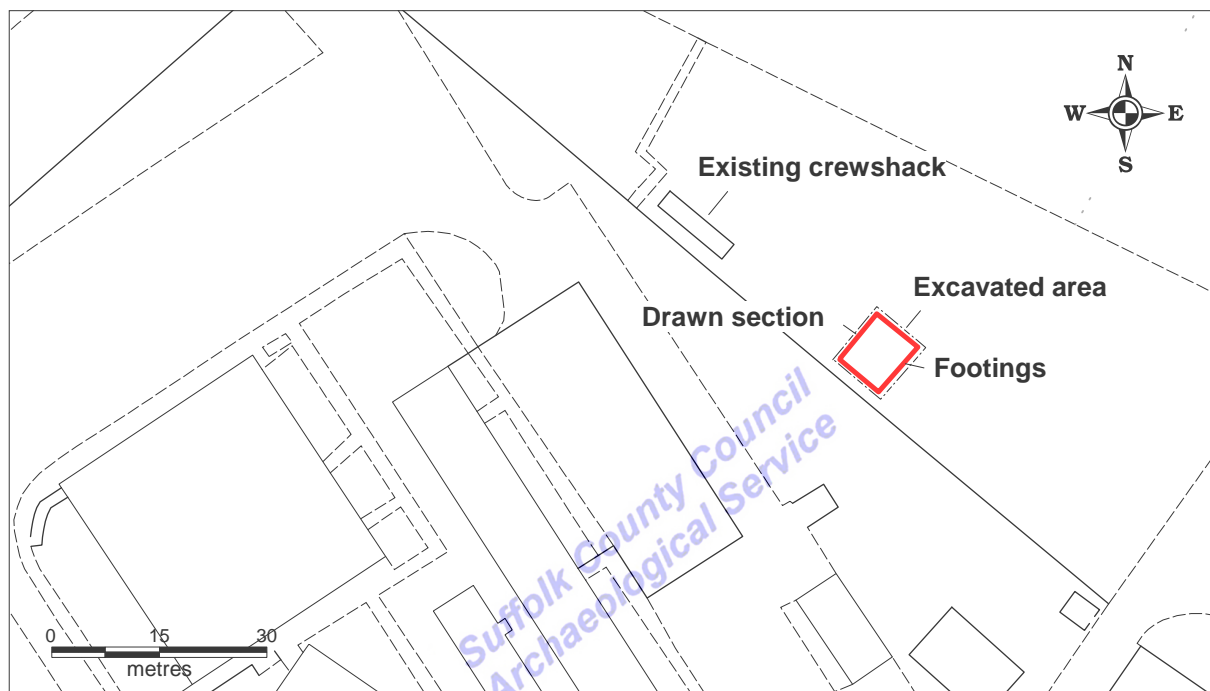
Introduction

Archaeological monitoring was carried out during the groundworks for the construction of new Crewshacks at either end of the runway at RAF Lakenheath. The two areas were each c.11m x 9m. (Fig. 1). Crewshack 1 lay at grid ref: TL 7339 8115 at the southern end of the runway, close to an area where Iron Age and Roman settlement has been identified. Crewshack 2 lay at grid ref: TL 7533 8264 at the northern end of the runway in an area where little archaeological work has been carried out, but where the evidence that there is, suggests low density activity.

Results

Crewshack 1

The excavations for this were continuously observed as they were carried out. Initially an area 11m x 9m was excavated using a mini-digger equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, and c.0.6m of soil was removed. Following this the footing trenches were inserted into the excavated area using a smaller toothed bucket (Fig. 2). These were 0.6m wide and a further 0.5m deep. A sketch plan was recorded and a complete section of the east facing soil profile recorded at 1:20. The existing ground surface was flat and level with grass cover.



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Figure 2. Crewshack 1 plan

The footprint strip for the building showed that the upper 30cm of the soil profile was a modern redeposited brown loam. This overlay further modern deposits at the north end of the section, which filled a slightly dished hollow, deeper than the 0.6m stripped depth. At the extreme north end of the section was a modern service trench. Underlying the modern deposits was a 0.08-0.1m deep band of dark brown sand, indicating the buried turf line (Fig. 4). The level of this dropped from half way along the trench towards the north end, mirroring the dished hollow in the modern deposits above, and rising slightly at the extreme north end. At the south end of the section the buried turf overlay bands of grey, orange and pinky sands, which varied in shade across the length of the section. These all had occasional stones within the matrix, suggesting that these may not be windblown, but possibly a former topsoil. No natural sand or chalk was seen during this stage of works.

The excavation for the footing was a further 0.5m deep with natural sand and/or chalk at 0.7m below ground level at the south end of the section which had dropped to 1.1m by the north end (Fig. 4). Below the bands of sand seen during the site strip were also a layer of orange sand with iron panning with a pale brown fine sand under that. The natural was sand and chalk with patches and lenses of dense brown silty sand.

Crewshack 1 Discussion

No finds or archaeological features or deposits were identified during this work. The soil profile seen during the groundworks for crewshack 1 shows an undulating natural surface typical of the

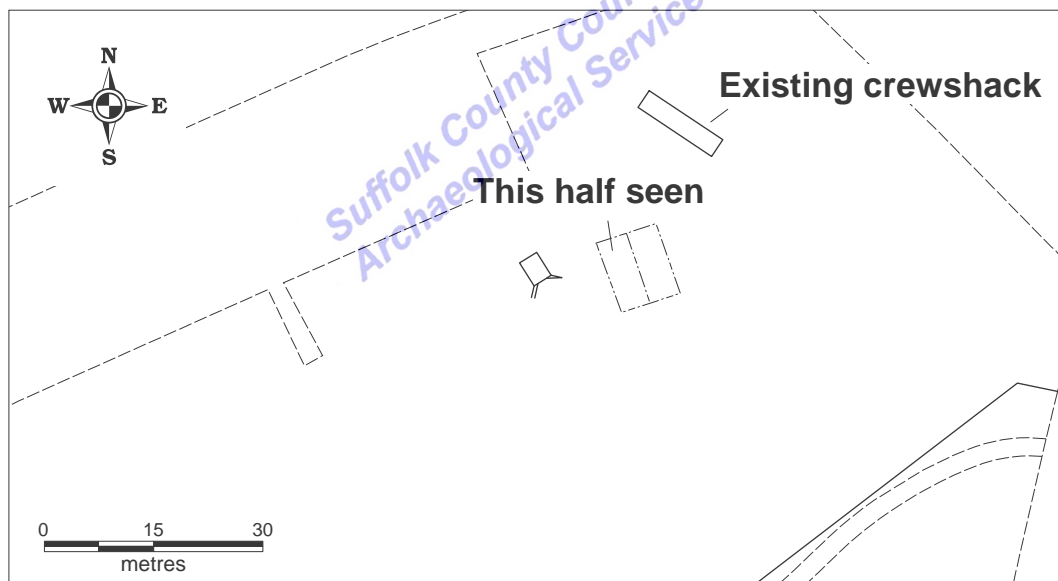
chalk and sand geology. This is mirrored in the soil layers above which seem to represent patches of blown sand and former weak topsoils. The modern deposits are certainly associated with levelling for the construction and/or alterations to the airfield in the 20th century. The undulating turf line records the natural heath topography prior to those levelling works.

Crewshack 2

This was sited on an area of uneven rough and poor grassland with lumps of concrete visible within the surface and adjacent to a concrete pill box. Only half of the strip for the footprint was observed and footing trenches were not seen as natural sand was visible across the area seen during the footprint strip. This initial strip showed 0.6m of modern deposits, including metal, brick lumps of concrete and general rubbish directly overlying natural sand. The natural was a coarse orange sand mottled with small spots of coarse black mineralised sand.

Crewshack 2 discussion

This area has been subject to a lot of activity during the 20th century. During the monitoring for the new Cargo Bay Deployment Facility in 2005, LKH 246, (Caruth 2006) the natural soil profile on the airfield was recorded, comprising mineralised sand at the top penetrating into the underlying orange sand in dark extended fingers. The mottled appearance of the natural sand here could be the result of truncation of the natural heath profile by c.0.2m. It is therefore probable that this entire area has been truncated by airfield activities. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified.



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Figure 4. Crewshack 2 plan

Conclusion

The results from Crewshack 1 shows an intact soil profile, but no archaeological evidence. This suggests that the nearby Late Iron Age and Roman settlement does not extend into this part of RAF Lakenheath. The area of Crewshack 2 appears to have been previously disturbed and no conclusions about the archaeological potential of this area can be drawn from it.

Jo Caruth
February 2008

Reference

Caruth, J., 2006 *Archaeological Monitoring Report, RAF Lakenheath Cargo Bay Deployment Facility, LKH 246*. SCCAS report no. 2006/038

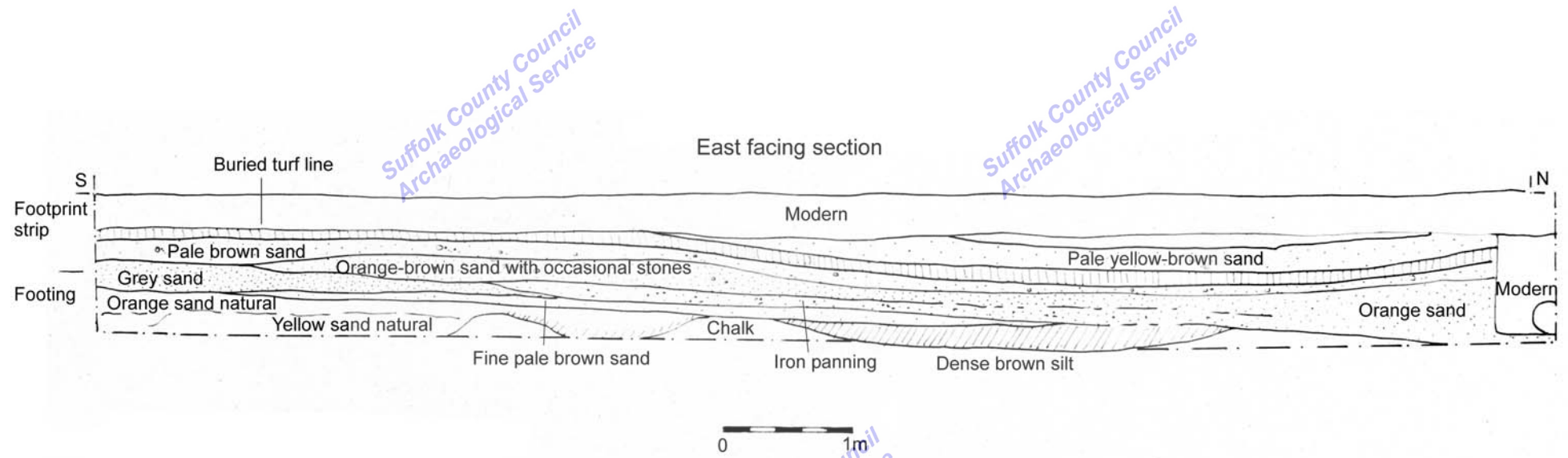


Figure 4. East Facing section of Crewshack 1