

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Part of Phase 3, Worlington Quarry, Bay Farm, Worlington WGN 032

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2008
(Planning app. no. F/2004/0227/CCA)

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Acknowledgements

This project was funded by M Dickerson Ltd and was monitored by Edward Martin (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team).

The excavation was carried out by John Craven and Jonathan Van Jennians from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

The project was directed by John Craven, and managed by John Newman, who also provided advice during the production of the report. The production of digital site plans was carried out by John Duffy.

Summary

An archaeological evaluation for part of the Phase 3 area at Worlington Quarry did not identify any archaeological deposits.

HER information

Planning application no.	F/2004/0227/CCA
Date of fieldwork:	12th March 2008
Grid Reference:	TL 6939 7156
Funding body:	M Dickerson Ltd
Oasis reference	Suffolkc1-39031

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1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of an expansion of works at Worlington Quarry. The work was carried out to the standards specified in an earlier Brief and Specification for Phases 1 and 2, issued by Edward Martin (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) in 2004, to fulfil a planning condition on application F/2004/0227/CCA. The work was funded by the developer, M Dickerson Ltd.

The site, an area of c.1.06ha, lies at TL 6939 7156 in an open arable field to the south of the current quarry works. The site was of interest as a desk-based archaeological assessment of the entire quarry development area (Bales 2003) had previously identified potential for widespread Bronze Age occupation. A Bronze Age barrow, Swale's Tumulus (WGN 003), lies 550m to the east and a further series of tumuli (BTM 012, BTM 013, BTM 027 and BTM 028) are recorded at Chalk Hill, c.1.5km to the east, together with possible Saxon burials at WGN 013 and a rumoured Roman villa at BTM 026.

The assessment recommended that a programme of archaeological evaluation be carried out in advance of each phase of the quarry's development, to assess the potential of each area and to establish whether further archaeological fieldwork would be required. Phases 1 and 2 of the quarry (WGN 028) were evaluated in 2004 (Everett 2004). The trenching identified a scatter of pits with Bronze and Iron Age material and so further archaeological monitoring in the north and west parts of this area was carried out prior to quarrying. The post-excavation work for this last stage of fieldwork is still ongoing.

The current site, which lies in the north-west corner of the proposed Phase 3, at a height of c.15m OD, on a very slight east facing slope, is therefore a part of the ongoing archaeological evaluation of the entire quarry and had potential for Bronze and Iron Age occupation deposits.

2. Methodology

Eight trenches, measuring 304m in total length, were excavated by a mechanical 360° excavator equipped with a 2.3m ditching bucket under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist (Fig. 2). The 700 sqm thus evaluated was equivalent to c.7% of the 1.06ha site, more than the required 5% due to the width of the trenching.

The trenches were excavated to the top of the natural subsoil surface, a mix of mid orange/yellow sands and gravels. This generally involved the removal of 0.4m of topsoil and, in some trenches, an underlying layer of mid brown/yellow sands which lay above the subsoil. Excavated soil was examined for unstratified finds. Cleaning by hand was then carried out where required to clarify the presence or absence of archaeological deposits. The site was planned using a Total Station Theodolite. Digital colour photographs were taken of all stages of the fieldwork, and are included in the archive.

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-39031) and a digital copy of the report submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>).

The site archive is kept in the main store of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Bury St Edmunds under HER No. WGN 032.

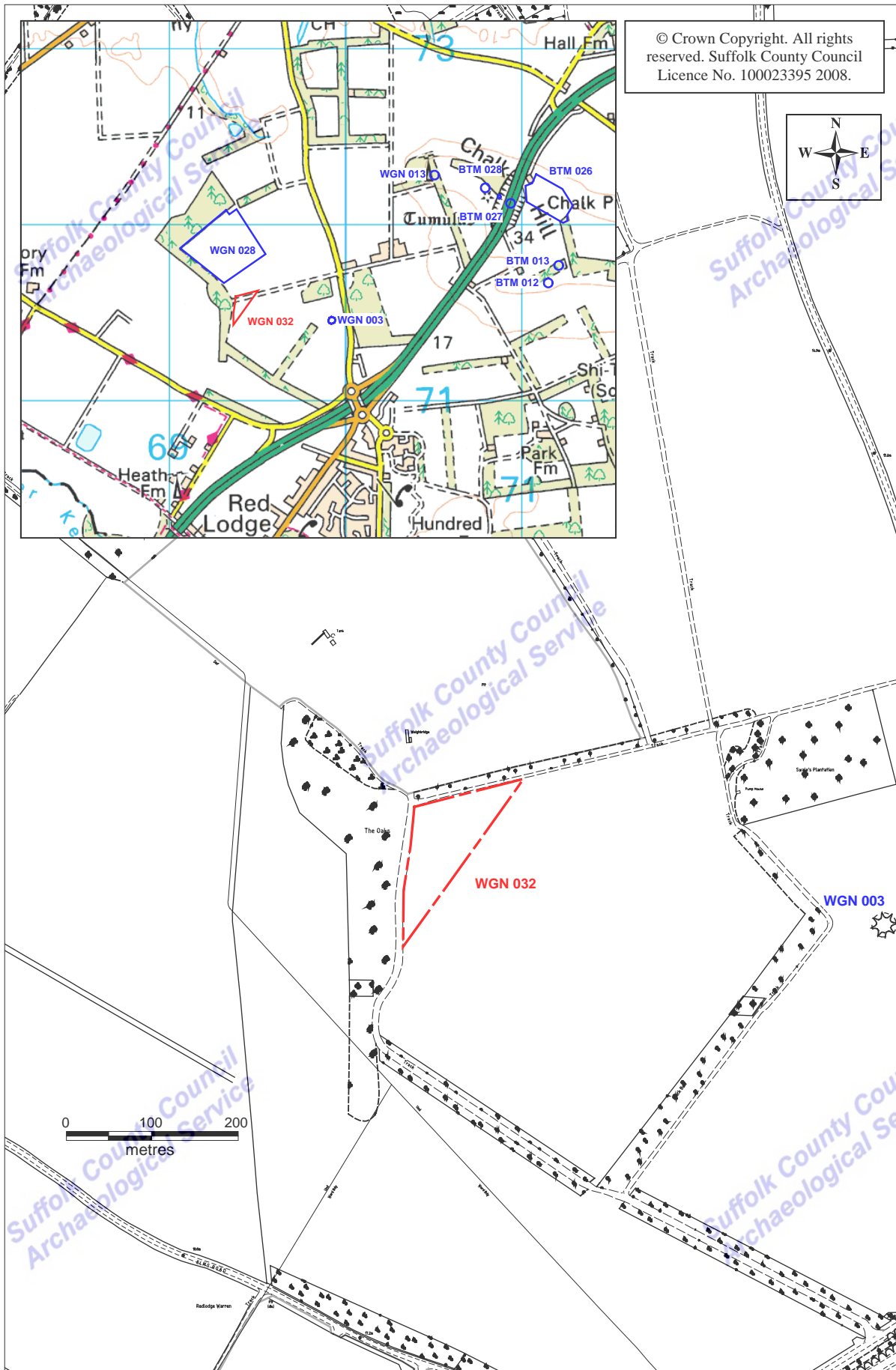


Figure 1. Site location plan

3. Results

Excavation of the eight trenches did not identify any archaeological features. A brief description of each trench is listed in Table 1 below.

Trench No	Length	Alignment	Description
01	38m	N-S	0.4m ploughsoil over natural subsoil. Flat.
02	39m	NW-SE	0.4m ploughsoil over natural subsoil (SE). 0.4m ploughsoil over 0.2m mid brown/orange sands, then natural subsoil (NW). Flat.
03	41m	NE-SW	0.4m ploughsoil over natural subsoil (SW). 0.4m ploughsoil over 0.2m mid brown/yellow sands, then natural subsoil (NE). Slopes down slightly to NE.
04	43m	W-E	0.4m ploughsoil over natural subsoil (W). 0.4m ploughsoil over 0.1m mid brown/yellow sands, then natural subsoil (Centre). 0.4m ploughsoil over 0.2m mid brown/yellow sands, then natural subsoil (E). Slopes down slightly to E.
05	35m	NE-SW	0.4m ploughsoil over natural subsoil. Flat.
06	43m	NW-SE	0.4m ploughsoil over natural subsoil. Slopes down slightly to SE.
07	28m	W-E	0.4m ploughsoil over 0.1m mid brown/yellow sands, then natural subsoil. Slopes down slightly to E.
08	37m	NE-SW	0.5m ploughsoil natural subsoil (SW). Shallow hollow in natural subsoil through centre of trench, infilled with 0.5m of mixed mid brown/grey sands, under 0.4m ploughsoil. 0.4m ploughsoil over 0.3m mixed mid brown/grey sands, then natural subsoil (NE). Slopes down to NE.

Table 1. Trench list

4. Discussion

The absence of any archaeological deposits in any of the trenches indicates that the site has not been the focus of activity at any period, probably having been open heathland prior to its agricultural use in the post-medieval and modern periods.

However the trenches showed, on the slightly higher ground to the west, that the natural subsoil lay directly under the modern ploughsoil, meaning that in these areas it is possible that truncation may have removed the archaeological levels. The remaining trenches though, which were laid on a very slight, generally east facing slope, showed a varying layer of mixed brown/yellow sands underlying the ploughsoil. This layer protected the subsoil from truncation and in these trenches, the natural, gently undulating topography, as visible in the main area of the field to the east, was evident, particularly in the slight natural hollow in Trench 08. As it is likely that any archaeological deposits, particularly of prehistoric date, would also have been preserved this means that the absence of archaeological deposits is most likely due to a genuine lack of past activity.

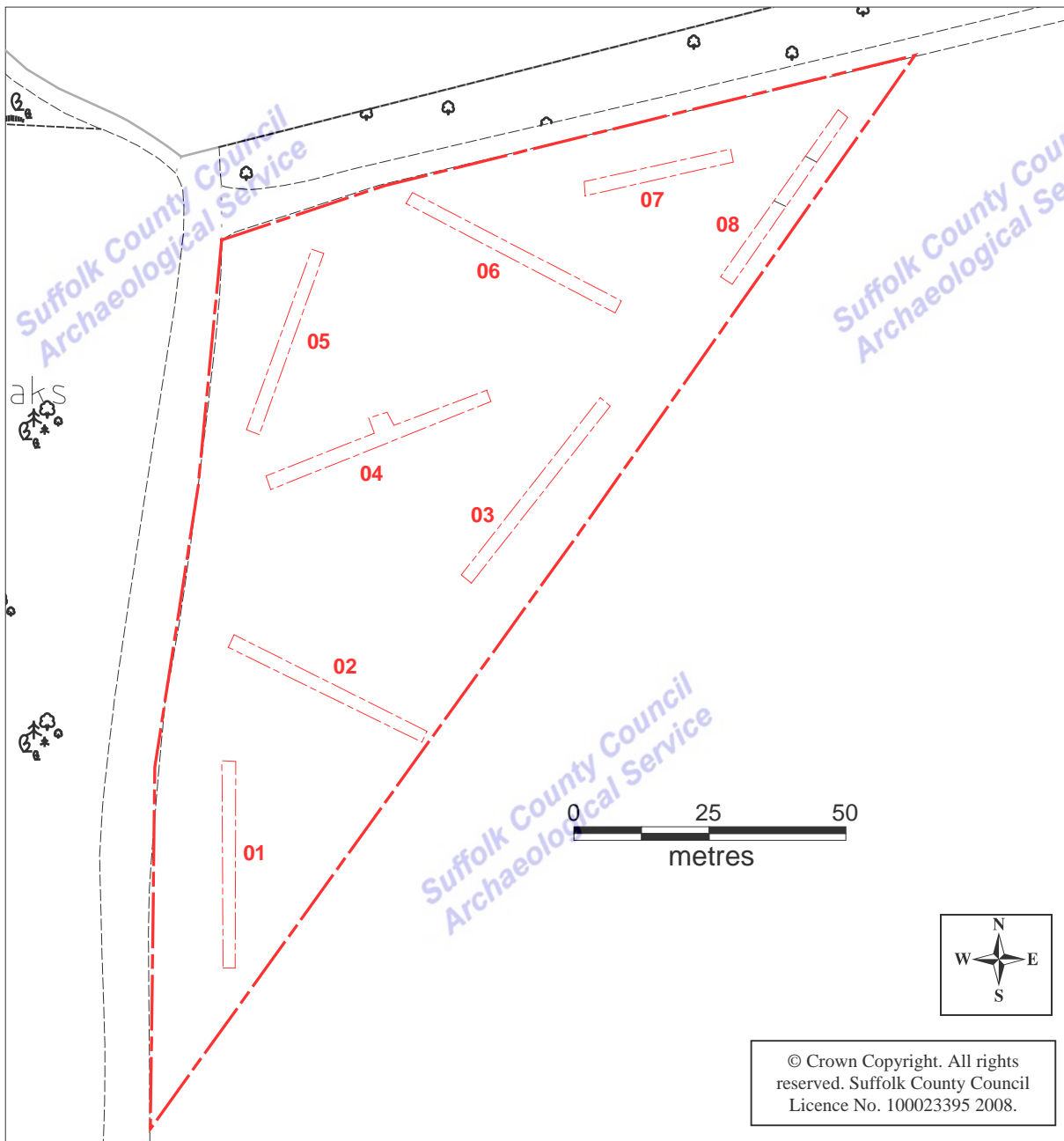


Figure 2. Trench plan

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The evaluation has shown the natural subsoil as being well preserved across the central and eastern parts of the site, with elements of the natural topography surviving below a layer of colluvial or windblown sands. The site was totally devoid of any archaeological deposits and so is of minimal or no archaeological interest. Accordingly no further program of work is required in this part of the quarry, prior to its development.

J.A.Craven
March 2008

References

Bales, E., 2003, P48: Proposed Mineral Extracton Site, Bay Farm, Worlington. SCCAS Report No. 2003/73.

Everett, L., 2004, Phases 1 & 2, Bay Farm, Worlington, WGN 028. SCCAS Report No. 2004/147.

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.