

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Phase 4, Liberty Village, RAF Lakenheath ERL 202

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2008
(Planning app. no. F/2004/0092/GOV)

Rob Brooks and Jo Caruth
Field Team
Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service

© April 2008

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

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Contents

List of Figures
List of Tables
List of Contributors
Acknowledgements
Summary
HER information

1. Introduction
2. Methodology
3. Results
4. Finds and environmental evidence
5. Discussion
6. Conclusion and Recommendations

List of Figures

1. Site location plan
2. Plan of Phases 1-4
3. Results of aerial photographic search for Phase 4
4. Proposed trench plan
5. Actual trench locations
6. Trench sections
7. Feature location
8. Feature sections

List of Tables

1. Trench descriptions

List of Contributors

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

Jo Caruth	Senior Project Officer
Rob Brooks	Excavation Supervisor
Cathy Tester	Finds Officer
Gemma Adams	Project Assistant

Acknowledgements

This project was funded by MOD Defence Estates (USF) and commissioned for them by David Chambers of Mansells Construction Services Ltd.

The excavation was carried out by members of Suffolk County Council, Field Team (Rob Brooks, Fiona Gamble, Jonathan Van Jennians and John Sims) under the direction of Jo Caruth.

Finds processing and the producing of site plans and sections was carried out Gemma Adams, and the specialist finds report by Cathy Tester. The production of digital site plans was carried out by John Duffy and Fiona Gamble.

Summary

Evaluation in advance of the development of Phase 4 Liberty Village demonstrated the continuation of the open, previously unoccupied heathland landscape seen in the Phases 2 and 3 evaluations.

SMR information

Planning application no.	F/2004/0092/GOV
Date of fieldwork:	March 17th-19th 2008
Grid Reference:	TL 7301 7941
Funding body:	MOD Defence Estates (USF)
Oasis reference	Suffolkc1-39345

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in the area of the proposed Phase 4 development at Liberty Village, RAF Lakenheath. The evaluation was required as a condition on planning application no. F/2004/0092/GOV and was carried out to a Brief and Specification set by Jude Plouviez, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation team. The site covers an area of c.4.1 hectares, centred at grid ref: TL 7301 7941, on a slight north facing slope between c. 20 and 16m above OD (Fig. 1). Evaluation of the Phase 2 and Phase 3 areas in 2006 and 2007 (Fig. 2), SCCAS report nos. 2006/089 and 2007/019 and subsequent monitoring of groundworks have demonstrated that those areas were devoid of archaeological activity. Phase 4 lies in the SW corner of the Liberty Village development, c.350m east of where a hoard of Iron Age coins was found in 1972 (Suffolk HER no. ERL 048).

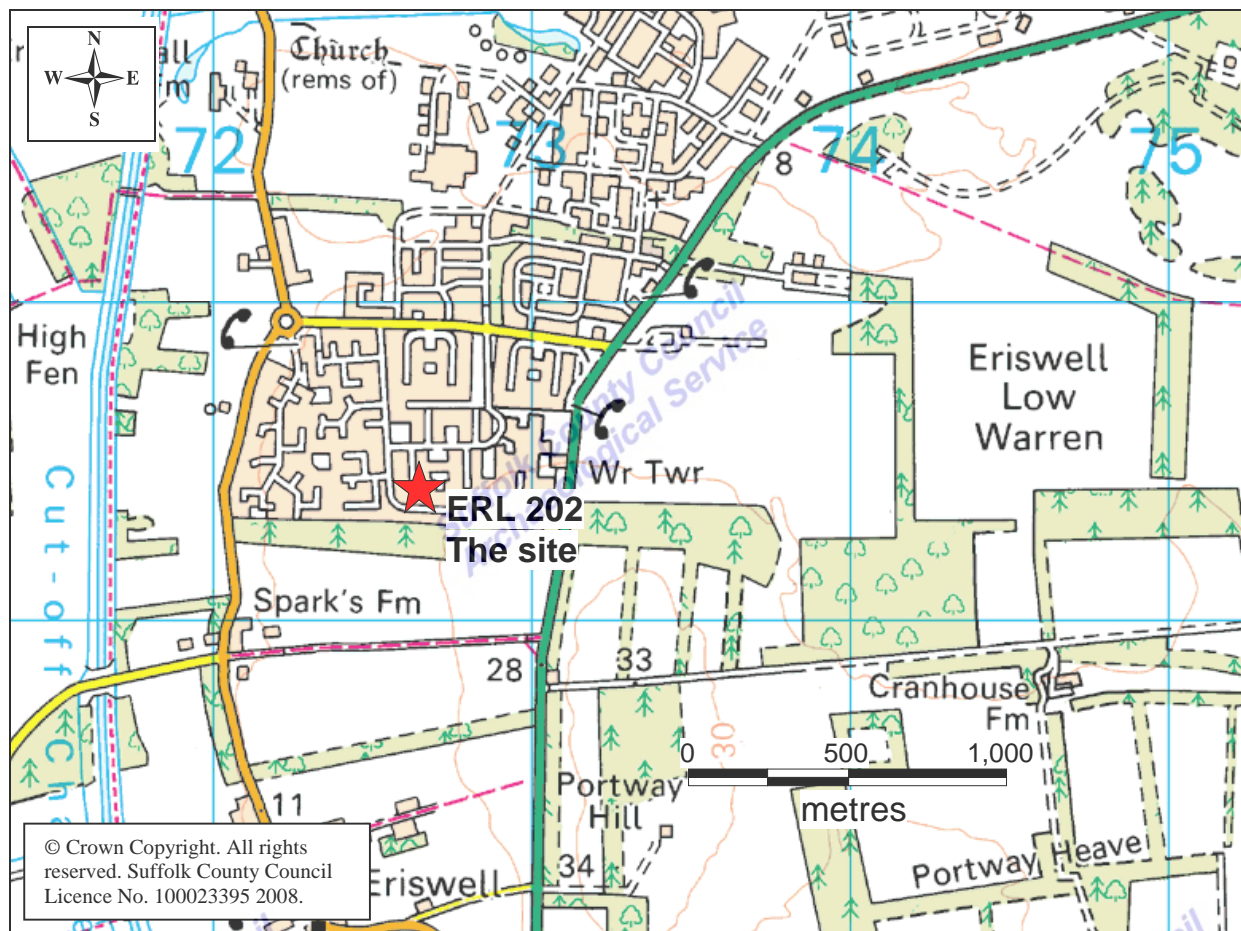


Figure 1. Site location

A search of the aerial photographic archive for the whole Liberty Village area was carried out for the Phase 2 evaluation (SCCAS report no. 2006/089) and this showed that in the middle of the 20th century most of the land was being ploughed, but that there were scattered military buildings across the site, some of which encroached on the south-eastern corner of Phase 4 (Fig. 3). A slightly curving bank was also identified on the aerial photographs but this is now under the east-west length of Radcliffe Road (Fig. 3) in the southern end of Phase 4 and therefore not surviving.

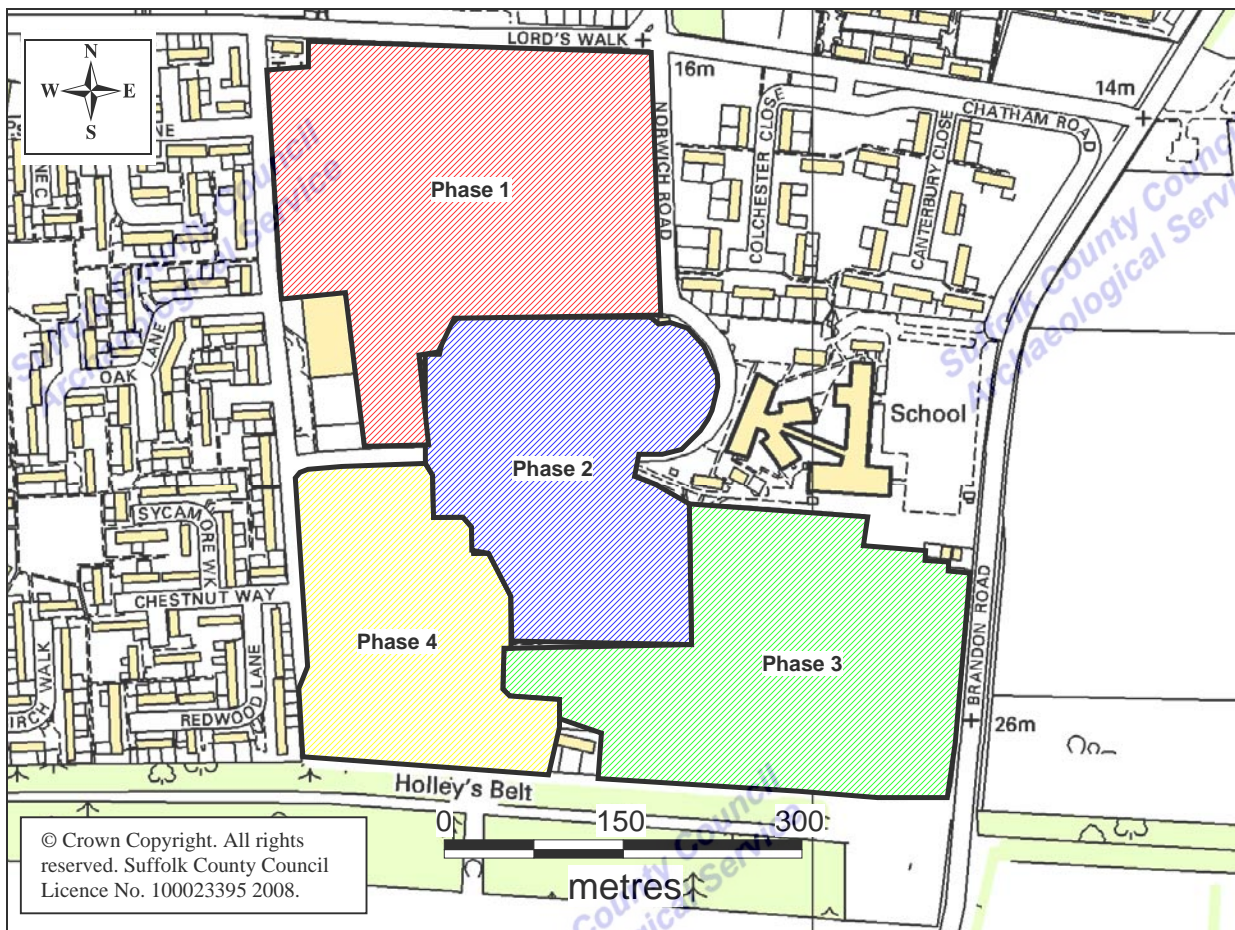


Figure 2. Plan of Phases 1-4

2. Methodology

Thirty three trenches 2.1m wide were inserted into available areas of the proposed development (Fig. 4) using a wheeled 360° excavator and ditching bucket. These totalled 679m in length, 3.48% of the total area (41,000m²), which was less than originally intended, but sampled 5.5% of the soft areas (25,772m²). Proposed trench locations were set out prior to the evaluation (Fig. 4) but it was expected that some of these would have to be altered to avoid services and other hazards. Many of the houses in this area were still occupied at the time of the evaluation and trench locations were modified to take account of this. Other trenches were relocated to take account of a children's play area that was still in use and a contractor's car park laid down over the north-west corner of the development area. Additional trenches, 31, 32 and 33 were inserted to compensate for some of these changes.

The trenches were excavated to the top of the natural chalk, sand or gravel, removing in places a clean red-orange silty, chalky sand that lay above the chalk although this may have been natural. This ensured that no features could be obscured by overlying deposits. A minimum of one sample section, was drawn at 1:20 scale of one of each trench, with additional sections as required. Digital photographs were taken of these sections. All possible features were sampled and plans and sections drawn at 1:20. Trench locations were plotted using a combination of a Leica GPS 1200 RTK Smart Rover and Total Station Theodolite (TST). Upcast soil was scanned for finds and all pre-modern finds kept (a single piece of animal bone).

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-39345) 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 SMR No. ERL 202.

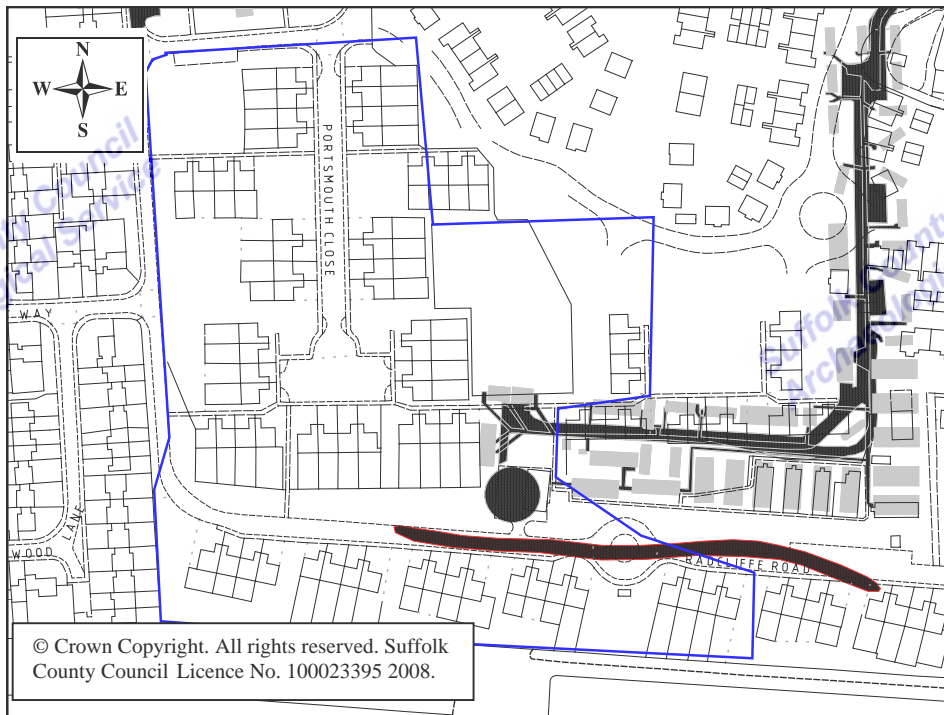


Figure 3. Results of aerial photographic search for Phase 4 area with buildings showing in grey and the bank in red.

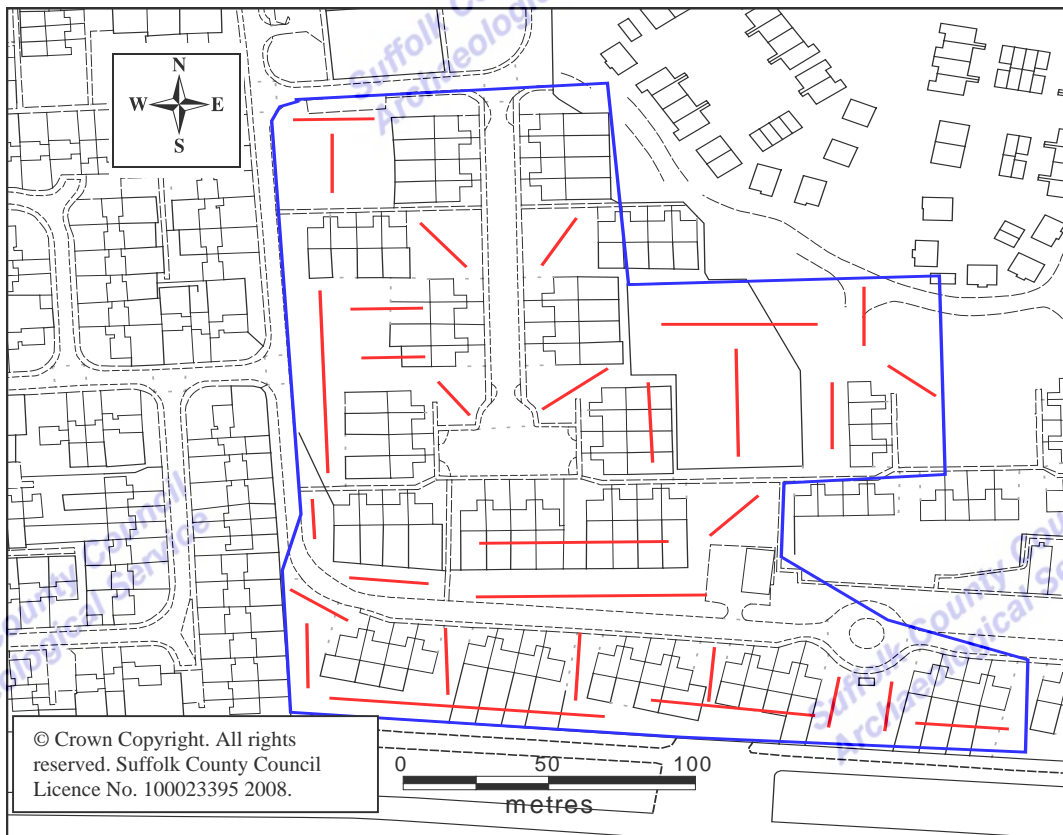


Figure 4. Proposed trench plan

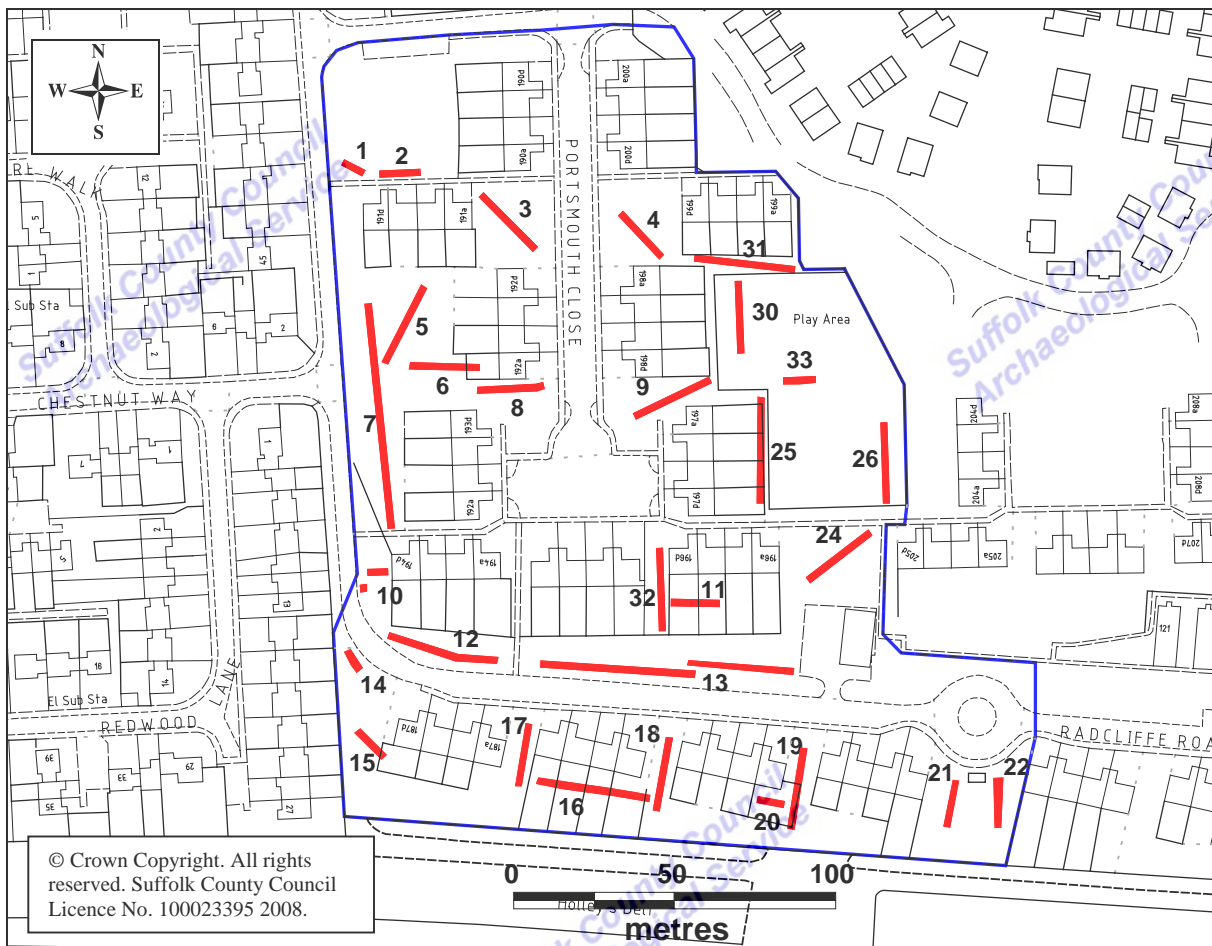


Figure 5. Actual trench locations

3. Results

The results from each trench are detailed in Table 1 below.

Trench no.	Length in m.	Depth to natural in m.	Orientation	Approx grass level in m. OD	Description	Features	Context nos.
1	7	0.31	NW-SE	16.58	Realigned from E-W. Natural subsoil - orange-brown sand above chalk. Sharp interface between topsoil and natural subsoil, suggesting recent ground works/interference in the area.		
2	12	0.26	E-W	16.6	Realigned from N-S. Natural subsoil - orange-brown above chalk. North-south aligned plough lines visible.		
3	23	0.28	NW-SE	16.86	Natural subsoil - approximately 95% chalk with 5% made up of patches of orange-brown sand.		
4	19	0.3	NE-SW	17.28	Natural subsoil - approximately 95% chalk with 5% made up of patches of orange-brown sand.		
5	26	0.23-0.35	NE-SW	17.01	Realigned from E-W. Natural subsoil – mainly chalk, but also some patches of orange-brown sand. Shallowest at south-west end. North-south aligned plough lines visible.		
6	21	0.3	E-W	17.17	Natural subsoil – mainly chalk, but also some orange-brown sand. Plough lines visible running north-south for 11 metres from the west end of the trench, the extent of which was surveyed by the GPS EDM.		

Trench no.	Length in m.	Depth to natural in m.	Orientation	Approx grass level in m. OD	Description	Features	Context nos.
7	70	0.25-0.33	N-S	17.08	Natural subsoil – mainly chalk, but also many patches of - orange-brown sand. Plough lines visible running north-south – see notes for trench 6. Shallowest at north end.	Posthole	0006 0007
8	20	0.35	E-W	17.3	Realigned from NW-SE. Natural subsoil – c. 90% chalk, c. 10% orange-brown sand. Cable trench near east end surveyed by GPS EDM.		
9	25	0.4-0.54	E-W	18.1	Natural subsoil – c. 95% chalk, c. 5% orange-brown sand. Plough lines visible running north-south.		
10	6.5	0.5	N-S & E-W	17.9	Split into 2 stretches, with one excavated N-S (c.1.5m long) and the other excavated E-W (c. 5m long). The east-west trench came down to made-up/disturbed ground of chalk, sand and stone (redeposited natural). The shorter trench hit natural subsoil.		
11	15	0.2	E-W	18.72	Natural subsoil – c. 50% orange-brown sand, c. 50% chalk. Plough lines visible running north-south in middle and eastern thirds of trench and ones running east-west in western third.		
12	35	0.25-0.3	E-W	17.85	Natural subsoil – a mix of degraded chalk and orange, stony sand. Shallowest at east end.		
13	78	0.35	E-W	18.96	Natural subsoil – a mix of degraded chalk and orange, stony sand. Trench layout was stepped across to the road at 30m from east end because of fibre-optic cable trench. Topsoil was a brown silty sand mix with chalk.	Pit	0002 0003
14	6	0.5	NW-SE	18.08	Natural subsoil – orange-brown sand with some chalk patches. Heavy root disturbance in this area.	Pit	0008 0009
15	10.5	0.22	NW-SE	18.11	Realigned from N-S. Natural subsoil – c. 90% chalk, c. 10% orange-brown sand. Heavy root disturbance throughout.	Pit	0010 0011
16	35	0.33	E-W	18.41	Natural subsoil – mainly orange stony sand, but also some chalk patches, as well as patches of chalk mixed with light yellow sand. Lots of tree root disturbance. Trench shortened and moved due to existing structures.		
17	19	0.3	N-S	18.61	Orange sand, stones and chalk mixed together. This was probably a made-up layer built up during previous house construction.		
18	23	0.3-0.5	N-S	18.9	Natural subsoil – mainly a chalk and light yellow sand mixture, but also some patches of orange sand. Built up layers visible between the houses. Shallowest at south end.		
19	25	0.28-0.38	N-S	19.45	Natural subsoil – orange sand and a small quantity of stone and chalk patches. Shallowest at south end.		
20	8	0.38	E-W	19.61	Natural subsoil – orange sand and chalk patches.		
21	14	0.33	N-S	19.74	Natural subsoil – mainly chalk, but also some orange-brown sand.		
22	15	0.33	N-S	19.95	Natural subsoil – chalk, orange-brown sand and creamy yellow sand patches. Possible small pit coming out of baulk on west side of trench. Modern disturbance in northern 1.5m of trench.	Pit	0004 0005
24	24	0.3	NE-SW	18.74	Natural subsoil – mainly chalk, occasional orange-brown sand patches. Sporadic patches of modern disturbance, brick rubble and brick structure, and including an E-W trench in the north-east end of the trench.		
25	32	0.48	N-S	18.09	Natural subsoil – c. 90% chalk, c. 10% orange-brown sand. Plough lines visible running N-S. Trench shortened and moved due to existing structures.		

Trench no.	Length in m.	Depth to natural in m.	Orientation	Approx grass level in m. OD	Description	Features	Context nos.
26	24	0.38	N-S	18.17	Natural subsoil – c. 80% chalk, c. 20% orange-brown sand. Modern disturbance coming out of west baulk. Trench shortened and moved due to existing structures.		
30	22	0.53	N-S	18.01	Realigned from E-W. Natural subsoil – c. 70% chalk, c. 30% orange-brown sand. Plough lines visible running N-S. Trench shortened and moved due to existing structures.		
31	30	0.3	WNW-ESE	17.46	New trench added to original trench plan. Natural subsoil – c. 95% chalk, c. 5% orange-brown sand. Plough lines visible running N-S.		
32	25	0.25-0.55	N-S	18.75	New trench added to original trench plan. Natural subsoil – c. 95% chalk, c. 5% orange-brown sand. Areas of made-up ground in between housing in northern half of trench. Plough lines visible running E-W. Shallowest at south end.		
33	9	0.54	E-W	17.99	New trench added to original trench plan. Natural subsoil – c. 70% chalk, c. 30% orange-brown sand.		

Table 1. Trench descriptions

Five small pits were identified within the trenches, 0002, 0004, 0006, 0008 and 0010. These were between 0.4m and 1.32m across and 0.15m and 0.28m deep. All were filled with orange-brown silty sand and none contained finds, or could be dated. 0008 and 0010 contained extensive root disturbance and were interpreted as tree boles.

4. Finds and environmental evidence

A limited number of prehistoric and Roman finds, all from machined spoil (0001), were collected during the evaluation.

Prehistoric

A retouched, slightly notched flint flake (4g) with a hinge fracture is unpatinated and belongs to the later prehistoric period, probably Bronze Age or later. This was found in the spoil from Trench 24. A fragment (91g) of burnt flint ‘potboiler’ found in the spoil from Trench 2 is undatable but probably prehistoric as well.

Roman coins (by Jude Plouviez)

The most datable finds are two Roman coins recovered from spoil in Trenches 13 and 18:

1. SF 1001 (0001, Tr.13) Radiate, extremely corroded especially on obverse. Rev Pax standing left, [pax av]G. c. 268 to 286. Diameter 16.5mm.
2. SF1002 (0001, Tr.18) Nummus, contemporary copy. House of Constantine, reverse Fallen horseman. 348-360. Diameter 14mm. Weight 1.39?

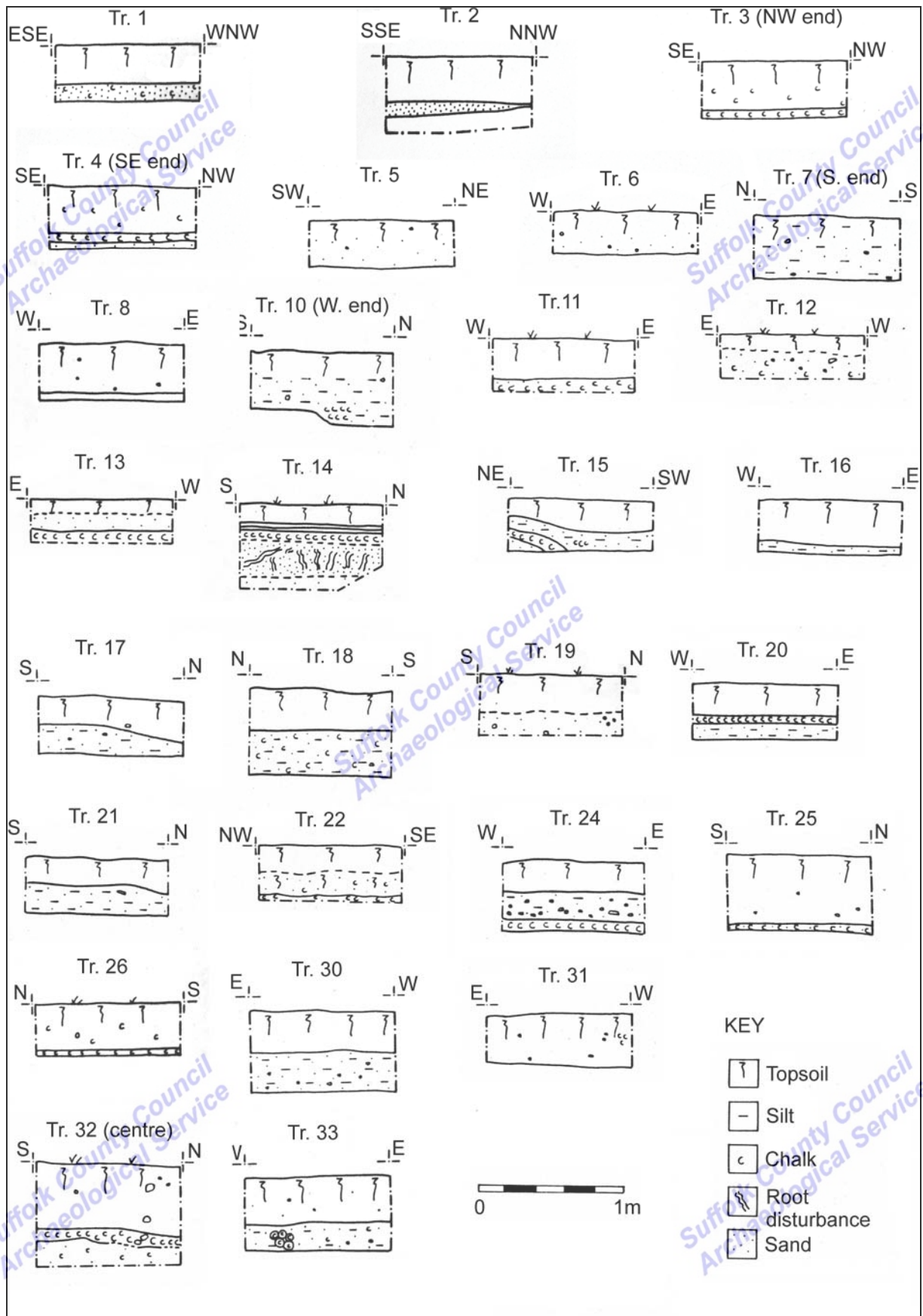


Figure 6. Trench sections

5. Discussion

Topsoil depth across this area was fairly consistent with only small areas of apparent redeposition of later material. Evidence of the military buildings, consisting of brick rubble and footings, shown on the aerial photographs was found in Trench 24. N-S and E-W ploughlines were identified cutting the natural subsoil and these indicate a period of agriculture on the site, as shown in the 1959 aerial photographs.

The small pits were undated and devoid of cultural material. Two of these were heavily root disturbed and interpreted as tree boles and it is possible that this interpretation can also be attributed to the others. The absence of ditches on the site, consistent with the previous archaeological work in Phases 2 and 3 implies that this area was probably open heathland rather than enclosed farmland throughout most of its history.

The natural geological soil was a combination of chalk and gravelly sand, and the topography a slight north facing slope. No evidence of natural ponds or other natural landscape variations was identified.

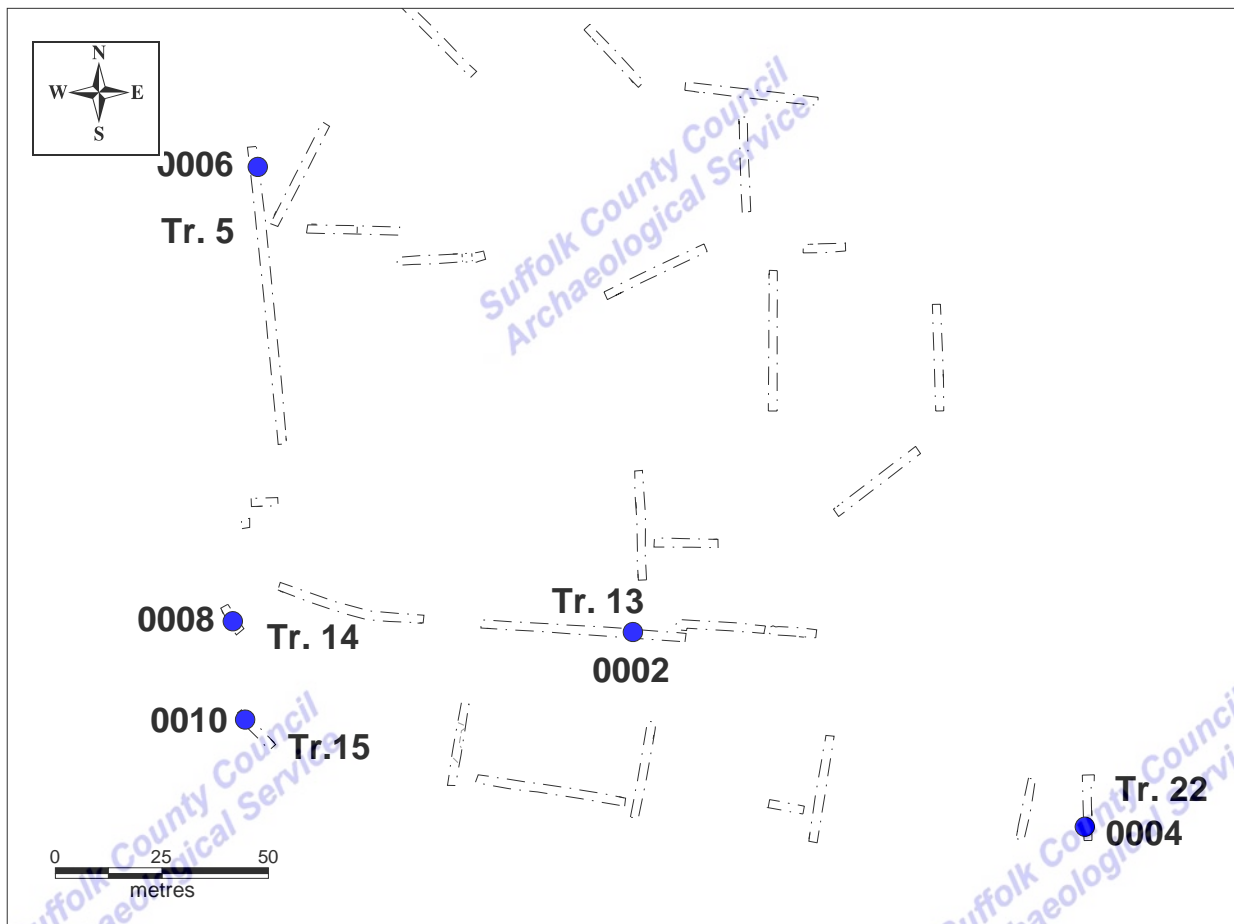


Figure 7. Feature location

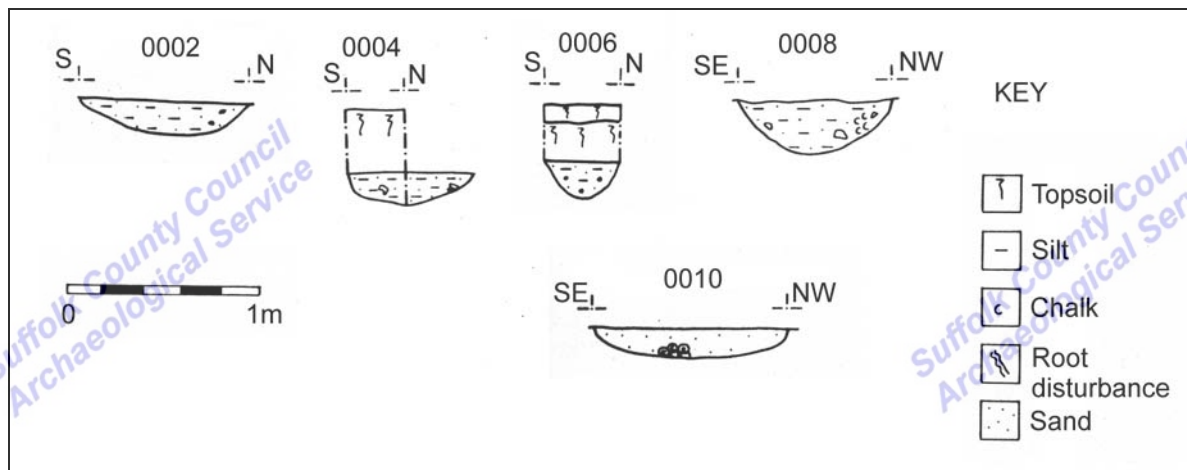


Figure 8. Feature sections

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This evaluation seems to show a continuation of the open, uninhabited landscape identified in Phases 2 and 3. Although a hoard of Iron Age coins was found in the 1970's to the west of the development area there was no evidence of Iron Age occupation on this site. The five small pits identified were undated and contained no occupation evidence. At least two appeared to be tree boles and this may provide an explanation for the remainder. The two Roman coins found indicate passing activity, but with no other supporting evidence for occupation they must be interpreted as stray losses. It is likely that this area represents a continuation of the high chalk heathland identified in Phases 2 and 3. There are areas of the site that could not be fully evaluated but these lie close to other areas apparently devoid of archaeological activity and it is recommended that the appropriate mitigation in this case is monitoring during groundworks for construction; additional trenching is not felt necessary as the evidence from Phases 2, 3 and 4 is consistent across the entire area.

Rob Brooks and Jo Caruth
April 2008

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.