

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

De-Icer Facility, RAF Lakenheath LKH 242

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING, 2004
(Planning app. no. F/2004/125/GOV)

Jo Caruth
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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Acknowledgements

This work was funded by MOD Defence Estates (USF) and managed for DE by Mark Harris. The archaeological work was specified by Jude Plouviez, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team.

Summary

Monitoring of a small concrete base (8x8m) for a new De-Icer facility at RAF Lakenheath identified a number of ditches relating to the nearby Roman settlement. The shallow depth of the soil strip for this development meant that the ditch lines were only just visible and no lengths were excavated, however a plan of their location adds to the knowledge of the overall plan of the settlement.

SMR information

Planning application no.	F/2004/125/GOV
Date of fieldwork:	October 2004
Grid Reference:	TL7313 8103
Funding body:	MOD Defence Estates (USF)
Oasis reference.	Suffolkc1-4241

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Introduction

Archaeological monitoring was carried out in advance of the construction of a De-Icer Facility at RAF Lakenheath (Planning Application no F/2004/125/GOV). The archaeological work was specified by Jude Plouviez, Suffolk County Council, Archaeological Service, Conservation Team and funded by MOD Defence Estates (USF). The construction work involved the digging of a deep hole c. 3m x 3m for an underground storage tank and the stripping of an area 8m x 8m for a concrete base.

The site lies at TL 7313 8103, on the north side of Caudle Head Mere within the area of the known Roman settlement (Figs. 1 and 2).

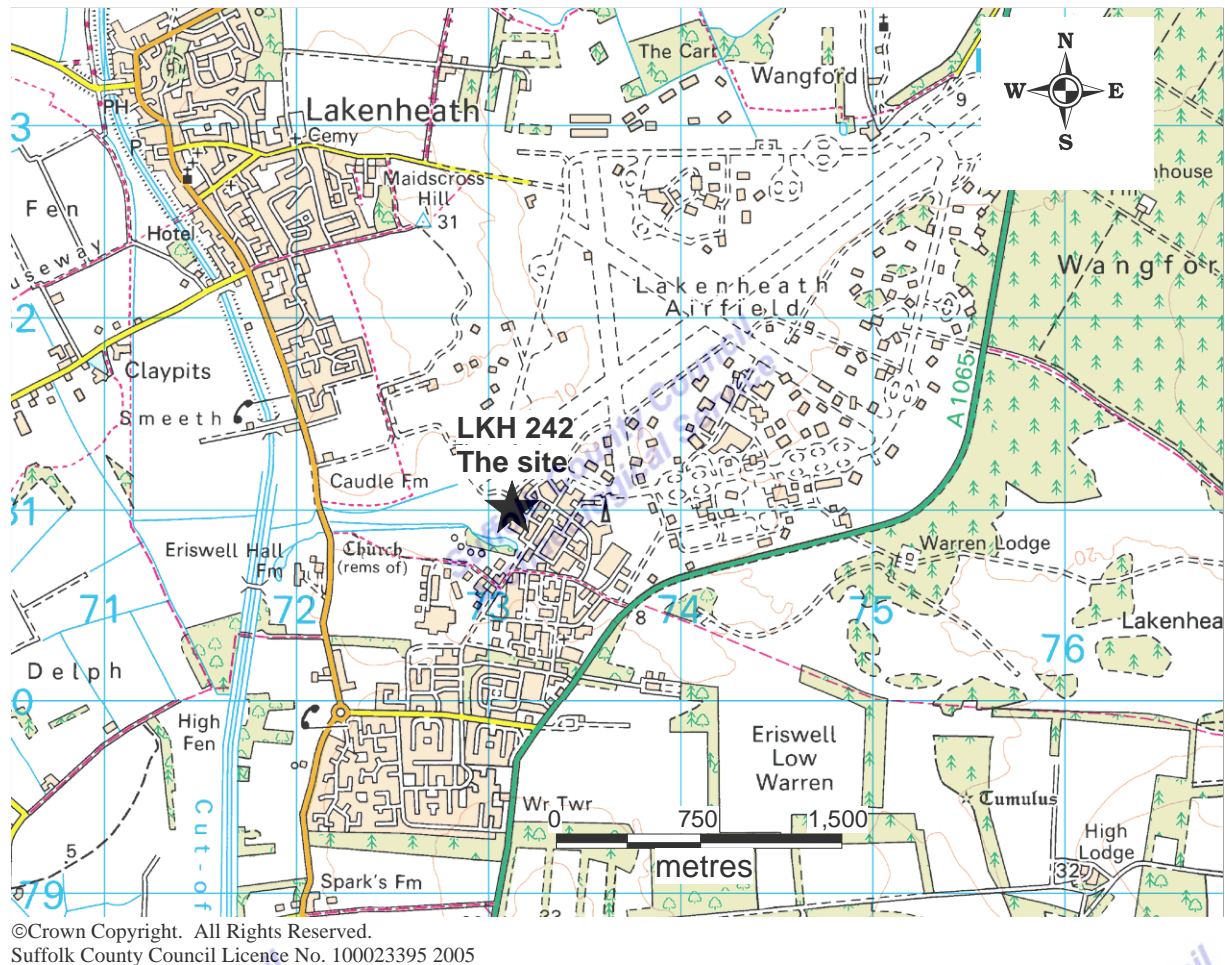


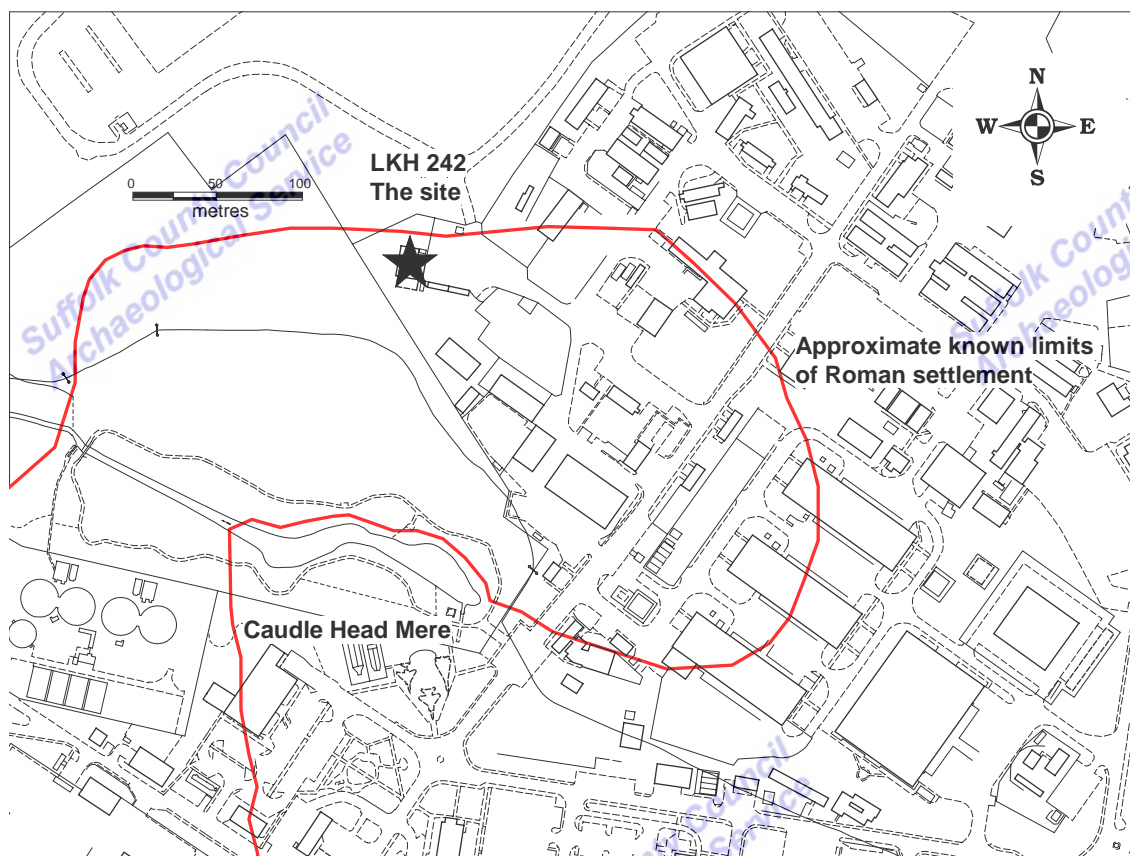
Figure 1 Site location

Methodology

The monitoring methodology was specified by Jude Plouviez of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team and required the continuous monitoring of all ground disturbance during excavation.

Unfortunately the 3m x 3m tank hole was excavated without archaeological presence although its sections were recorded, however continuous monitoring was carried out on the 8m x 8m concrete base excavations. The site was stripped using a JCB equipped with a ditching bucket and after the removal of the tarmac surface and stone sub-base a plan of the excavated area was drawn at 1:50, sections drawn at 1:20 and photographs taken. There were no finds.

The site was recorded under the SMR site number LKH 242, and on the Internet Oasis database reference suffolkc1-4241.



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Figure 2 Site in relation to known limits of Roman settlement

Results

Sections through the tank hole showed 0.15m of concrete and 0.15m of sub-base (hogging) overlying a pair of dark grey-brown sand filled, roughly east-west aligned ditches which were 40cm deep (section 0005, Fig. 3). A basin profiled, grey sand filled feature, 0004, c.1.4m wide and 0.2m deep was seen in the north-west corner face (Fig. 3). An irregular thin layer of brown sand was seen between the sub-base and natural sand. No finds were recovered; upcast soil was visible but much of the archaeological deposit lay on the bottom of the heap and was not accessible, however further examination after backfilling around the tank did not produce any finds.

The 8m x 8m area for a concrete base was monitored as it was stripped. The area was lowered to c.0.35m below the original concrete surface, just reaching archaeological levels, with the exception of the north-west corner where surface sub-base was not entirely removed. Most of the area was made up of brown sand, 0002 (Fig. 3). An east-west edge to this could be seen in the northern half of the site and other feature edges were just discernible implying that the brown sand represented a broad band of multi-cut ditches. A single north-south ditch, 0003, could be seen in the north-east corner of the site. This was probably the same as 0004 seen in the tank hole.

No finds were recovered from the surface and none of these features were sampled because the knowledge of the immediate area makes it certain that these are Roman or Early Saxon. Even if datable finds were recovered from the features this would be unlikely, without examination of the wider context, to add anything to the interpretation. As the development offered no further

threat to the archaeological deposits and these had only just been skimmed by the stripping, it was considered that, given the low probability of recovering any very useful data from further intervention, preservation *in situ* of the features was the preferable option.

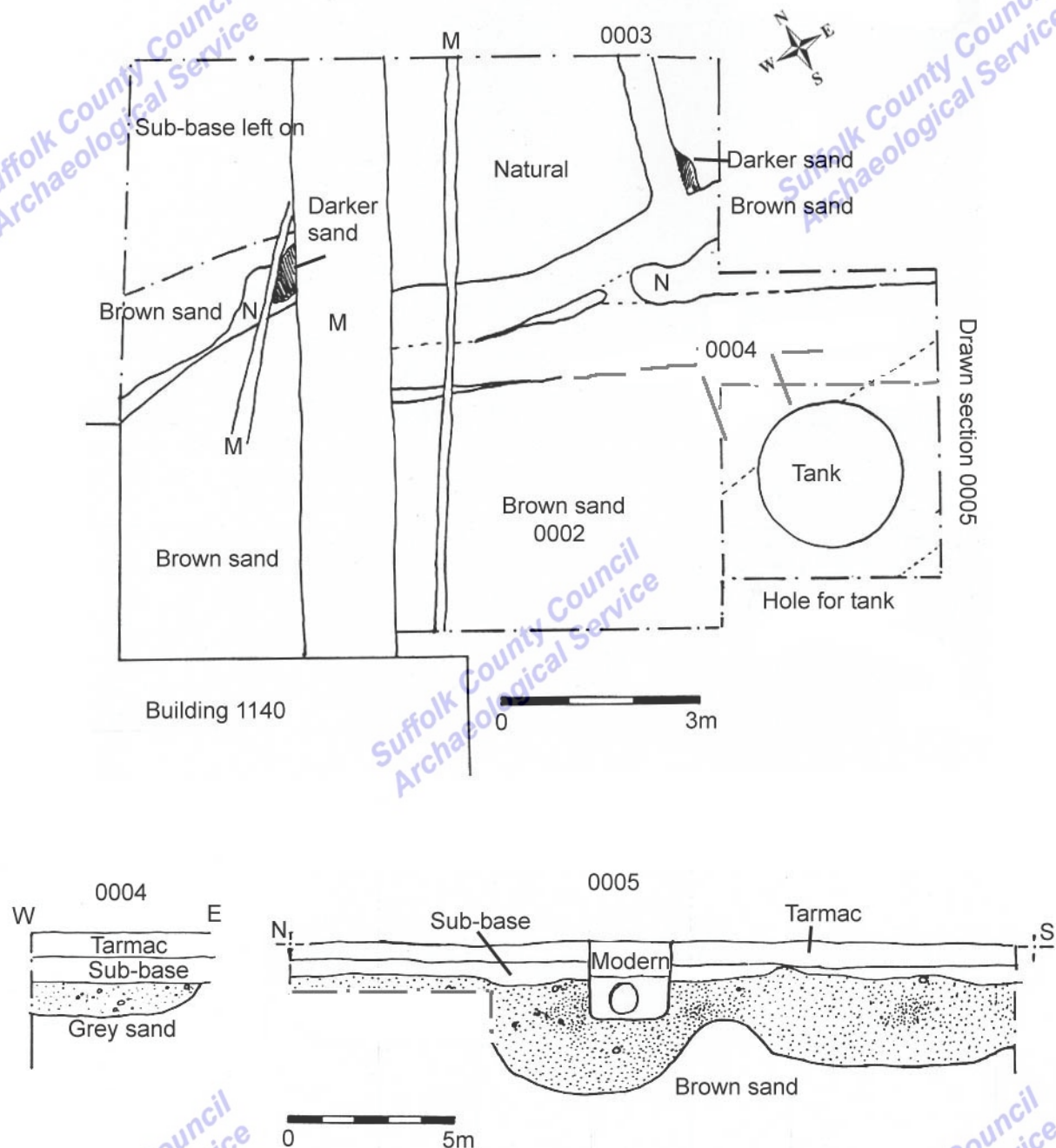
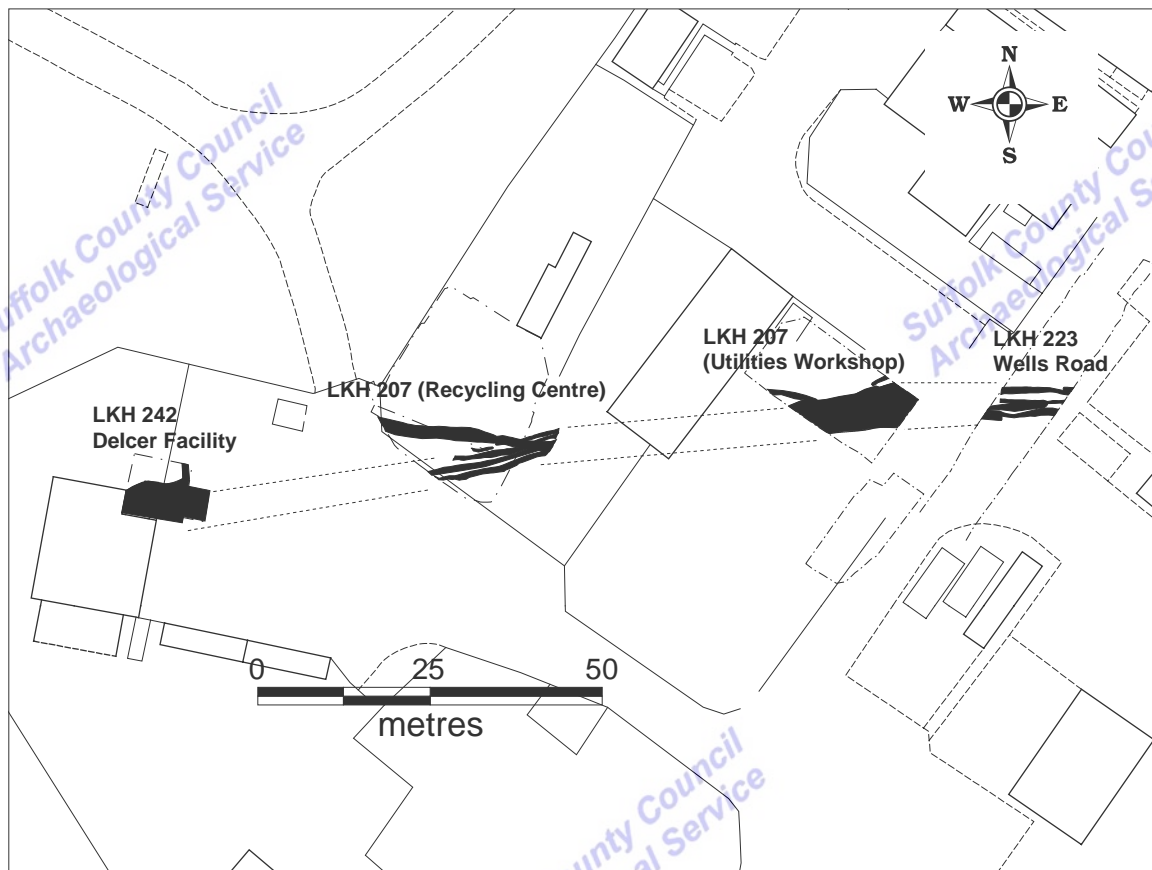


Figure 3 Plan and sections

When these east-west ditches are put onto an overall plan of the nearby Roman sites (Fig. 4), they can be seen to align with a broad multi-cut line of features interpreted as late Roman boundary ditches along the northern edge of the settlement. This is a complicated group of ditches with some appearing to be filled in the Early Saxon period. Whilst these features cannot add much to the overall interpretation of the Roman and Early Saxon settlement on this part of the Base they do confirm that activity continues into this area and extends the known line of the multi-cut ditches. The absence of surface finds indicates a probable lessening of intensity of occupation in this area, something that has been generally observed near the northern boundary in most (with the notable exception of LKH 207, Recycling Centre) nearby sites (Caruth 2005).



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Figure 4 Late Roman boundary ditches

List of contexts

Context number	Identifier	Description
0001	Unstratified finds	No finds recovered
0002	Ditch	Broad band of dark brown sand, upper fill of several east-west aligned ditches.
0003	Ditch	Grey sand filled, basin profiled, north-south aligned ditch.
0004	Ditch	Seen in section of tank hole, grey sand, probably the same as 0003.
0005	Section	North-south, west facing section along the east side of the site.

Conclusion

The archaeological monitoring here has demonstrated the continuance of Roman and/or Saxon activity into this area and the presence of the broad band of multi-cut ditches extends the known line of this boundary to 135m. No finds were recovered to refine the dating and this absence of surface finds suggests that this site lies towards the margins of the main intensity of occupation.

Jo Caruth
June 2005

Reference

Caruth, J., 2005 *RAF Lakenheath, Combined Report on Adjacent Sites, LKH191, LKH194, LKH207 and LKH223.* SCCAS unpublished report. 2005/54