

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Land to the North of George Lambton Avenue, Newmarket.

NKT 018

OASIS ID: Suffolkc1 – 4521

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2004
(Planning app. no. F/2004/0027/FUL)

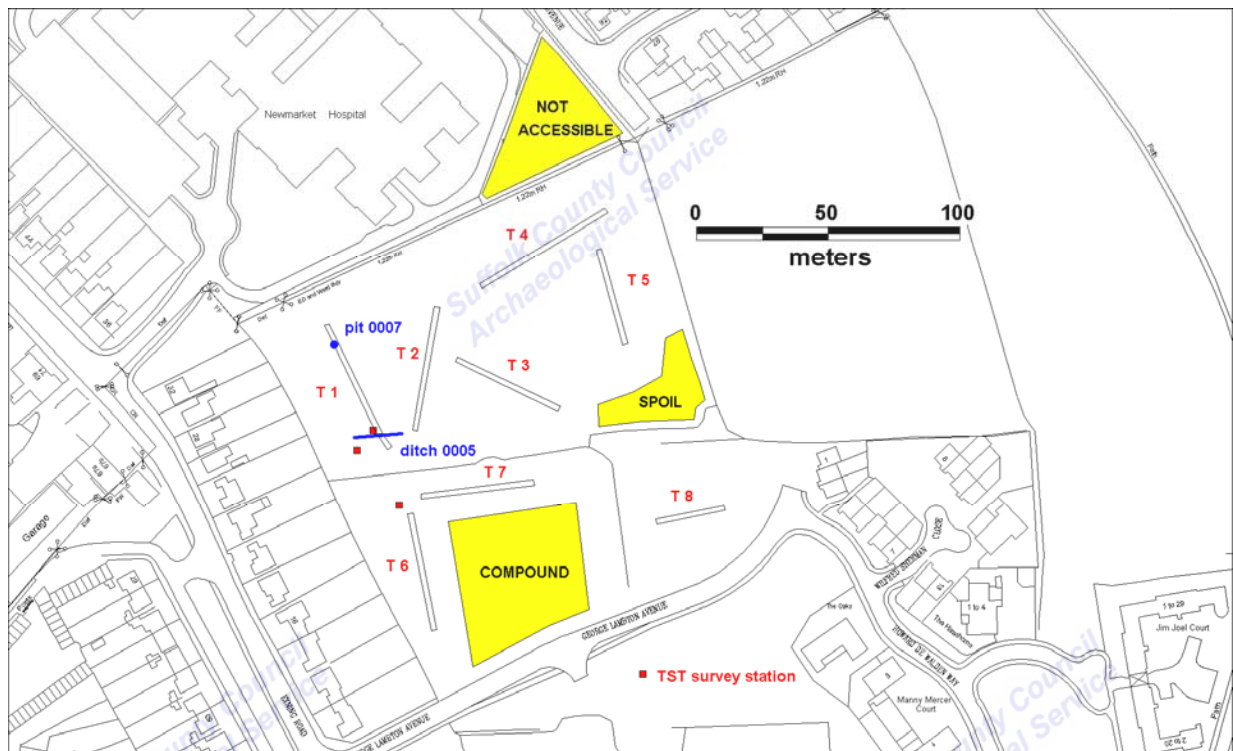


Figure 1: Location of Trenches

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Acknowledgements

This project was funded by Suffolk Heritage Housing Association and was monitored by Robert Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Division).

The hand excavation of features was carried out by Jonathan Van Jennians, who also conducted the Total Station Theodolite (TST) survey. The project was directed by Jezz Meredith and managed by John Newman, who also provided advice during the production of the report.

John Duffy produced the location plan from the TST survey. Finds processing was carried out by Cathy Tester and Gemma Adams. Cathy Tester produced the finds report.

Summary

Evaluation of land to the north of George Lambton Avenue, Newmarket, revealed a ditch of post-medieval date and a small pit of probable prehistoric origin. This site forms part of a larger development area, the land to the south had previously been evaluated as site NKT 011.

SMR information

Planning application no. F/2004/0027/FUL
Date of fieldwork: 5th – 6th October 2004
Grid Reference: TL 640 639
Funding body: Suffolk Heritage Housing Association

Introduction

The Planning Authority (Forest Heath District Council) has been advised by the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service that an archaeological evaluation be conducted as a condition of planning consent being given. An evaluation was therefore proposed to determine the archaeological potential of the area.

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Persimmon Homes on behalf of Suffolk Heritage Housing Association. The Field Team of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service conducted the fieldwork on the 5th and 6th of October 2004.

The site is situated to the north of George Lambton Avenue. No archaeological sites or remains have been recorded from this area. An evaluation conducted to the immediate south revealed the remains of a Nineteenth century structure, presumed to be a stud, and shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map. A single pit containing burnt flint, of probable prehistoric date, was also identified.

The site under present consideration consists of two small fields / parcels of land adjacent to the road and a larger field to the north of these. Another small piece of land adjacent to the hospital could not be reached through a planted screen of trees (figure 1, coloured yellow). The contractor's compound and a large area of dumped spoil restricted the available spaces where trial trenching could be carried out (figure 1, also coloured yellow). The fields were overgrown and left in a very uneven state, large quantities of nettles across all fields indicate recent ground disturbance and / or dumping of soil on the field.

The site is located within an area of potential Roman and prehistoric settlement, field systems and burials. The earlier evaluation to the south of George Lampton Avenue suggested that ancient settlement was unlikely, but the east-facing gentle valley side location might reveal prehistoric burial mounds surviving as ring-ditches.

Methodology

Trial trenching was conducted using a 360° machine equipped with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket. All machining was observed by an archaeologist standing within the trench. The topsoil and subsoil were removed separately by the digger to reveal the undisturbed natural deposits and archaeological features in the base of the trench. The upcast soil was checked visually for any archaeological finds.

Any archaeological features observed in the base of the trench were cleaned and then hand excavated. Ditches, pits and potential features were investigated and recorded if proved to be real.

A Total Station Theodolite (TST) plan was made of the trench locations and of features within them. Observed archaeological features were recorded on plan at a scale of 1:50 and in section at a scale of 1:20. Different deposits encountered, archaeological or otherwise, were described and given separate 'observable phenomena' (O.P.) numbers (0001 - 0008).

Finds recovered from the excavation were assigned to their archaeological context and recorded using the appropriate O.P. number. All finds were inspected, cleaned and analysed at our Bury St Edmunds office.

The site archive will be deposited with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds. The Sites and Monuments Record code NKT 018 has been assigned to this site

Results

Archaeological features were only revealed in Trench 1, a ditch and a small pit. All other trenches were devoid of interest. Topsoil tended to be thick (up to 400mm depth) as did the mid brown sandy subsoil (up to 350mm), indicating a long and probably largely undisturbed soil development. The abundant nettle growth across the site might indicate imported soil had been spread on the fields. The underlying natural deposits consist of a mixture of sand and chalk.

A summary of the results from each trench is recorded in Table 1:

Trench no.	Description	Depth to natural
1	NW-SE orientation; length 52m; topsoil 400mm (max, NW end); subsoil 300mm. Features: E-W running ditch [0005] cutting natural (width 350mm, depth 50mm) containing C18th tile; small pit [0007] (diam. 350mm, depth 120mm) containing burnt flints. Unstratified finds = 0002	700mm max
2	NE-SW orientation; length 46m; topsoil 400mm; subsoil 300mm (max, NE end). No features or finds.	700mm max
3	NW-SE orientation; length 44m; topsoil 400mm; subsoil 350mm (max, SE end). No features, unstratified finds = 0004	750mm max
4	NE-SW orientation; length 55m; topsoil 400mm (max, SW end); subsoil 350mm (max, W end). No features or finds.	750mm max
5	N-S orientation; length 37m; topsoil 400mm (max, N end); subsoil 300mm (max, S end). No features or finds.	650mm max
6	N-S orientation; length 44m; topsoil 300mm; subsoil 400mm (max, S end). No features or finds.	700mm max
7	E-W orientation; length 44m; topsoil 300mm; subsoil 300mm. No features, unstratified finds = 0003.	600mm
8	E-W orientation; length 26m; topsoil 350mm; subsoil 400mm (max, W end). No features or finds.	750mm max

Table 1: Trench descriptions

Only two archaeological features were recognised, both of which were in Trench 1. The small east to west running ditch 0005 crossed the trench at its southern end. Probably severely machine truncated, this feature only survived marginally below trench base level. Cut into natural with a shallow, flat-bottomed profile of 350mm width and 50mm depth. The fill of this ditch, 0006, consisted of a dark brown silty sand. The fill contained a piece of post-medieval (18th century?) floor tile.

The second feature, 0007, was a small circular pit of 350mm diameter and 120mm depth. The fill, 0008, contained a mottled mid to dark grey silty sand with moderate to frequent charcoal. Fire-cracked flint was recovered from the fill of this feature and is probably of prehistoric date.

The contexts are listed in table 2:

Context	Feature	Identifier	Location	Description	Finds
0001		Finds		Unstratified finds from the whole site	
0002		Finds	T. 1	Unstratified finds from Trench 1	1 pot sherd 1 flint
0003		Finds	T. 7	Unstratified finds from Trench 7	1 pot sherd
0004		Finds	T. 3	Unstratified finds from Trench 3	1 clay pipe frag.
0005	0005	Ditch cut	T. 1	E-W running ditch, width 350mm, depth 50mm	
0006	0005	Ditch fill	T. 1	Dark brown silty sand	1 tile frag
0007	0007	Pit cut	T. 1	Circular cut with diameter of 350mm, depth 120mm	
0008	0008	Pit fill	T. 1	Mottled mid to dark grey silty sand, with moderate to frequent charcoal	10 burnt flint

Table 2: Context descriptions

The Finds

Introduction

Finds were collected from five contexts in three of the evaluation trenches, as shown in the table below.

OP No	Tr No	Pottery		CBM		Clay pipe		Burnt flint		Misc.	Spotdate
		No	Wt/g	No	Wt/g	No	Wt/g	No	Wt/g		
0002	1	1	7							1 Flint (1g)	16-18th c.
0003	7	1	4								Rom
0004	3					1	8				PMed
0006	1			1	530						18th c.
0008	1							10	65		
Total		2	11	1	530	1	8	10	65		

Table 3. Finds quantities.

Pottery

Pottery was found in two contexts. An abraded black-surfaced ware jar rim was found in Trench 7 (0003) and was probably Roman. A single sherd of post-medieval pottery was also found. A glazed red earthenware bodysherd of 16-18th century date was unstratified in Trench 1 (0002).

Ceramic building material

A fragment of (unglazed) floor tile with a full thickness of 26mm was recovered from ditch 0005 in Trench 1 (0006). It is hard fired with an orange-red sandy fabric that has few other inclusions and probably belongs to the 18th century (RD Carr, pers. comm.).

Miscellaneous

A clay pipe stem fragment was collected from Trench 3 (0004).

A struck flint flake was unstratified in Trench 1 (0002).

Ten fragments of burnt flint were collected from Pit 0007 in Trench 1 (0008). The fragments come from two or more fire-cracked pebbles.

Discussion of the finds evidence

Finds from three Evaluation trenches suggest only very modest activity on this site and the majority of finds (pottery, CBM and clay pipe) are post-medieval in date although some may be earlier — Roman or prehistoric.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Evaluation of the site revealed only a small archaeological presence on site with a post-medieval ditch and a possible prehistoric pit discovered in trench 1, to the West of the site. A single unstratified sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from trench 7 towards the centre of the evaluation area.

Such sparse archaeological finds suggest only very limited returns for further work in areas evaluated by trenching. However, significantly large areas could not be trenched (see areas coloured yellow, figure 1). It is suggested therefore that any major groundworks within the yellow areas should be monitored.

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.