

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Proposed New Fire Station, Stradbroke Road, Lowestoft LWT 164

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2008
(Planning app. no. W/06/1233/CCC)



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HER information

Planning application no. W/06/1233/CCC
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Oasis reference: suffolkc1-45506

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Farrans (Construction) Limited for the Suffolk County Council Fire Service. The excavation team consisted of Roy Damant, Sabra Hennessy and Jezz Meredith. The project was managed by John Newman. William Fletcher was the monitoring archaeologist from the Conservation Team of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service.

Summary

A trial trenched evaluation conducted on the site of the proposed new Lowestoft Fire Station off Stradbroke Road revealed no significant finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance. Severe truncation and modern disturbance was witnessed across much of the site.

1. Introduction

The Planning Authority (Waveney District Council) was advised by the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service that an archaeological evaluation be conducted as a condition of planning consent for the erection of a new fire station off Stradbroke Road, Lowestoft. An evaluation was therefore proposed to determine the archaeological potential of the area and a 5% sample by trial trenching was required in the Brief and Specification issued by William Fletcher of the Conservation Team (Appendix 1). Prior to the evaluation being carried out a Method Statement had been produced (Somers 2008) which proposed the location of four trenches, totalling c.170m of linear trenching.

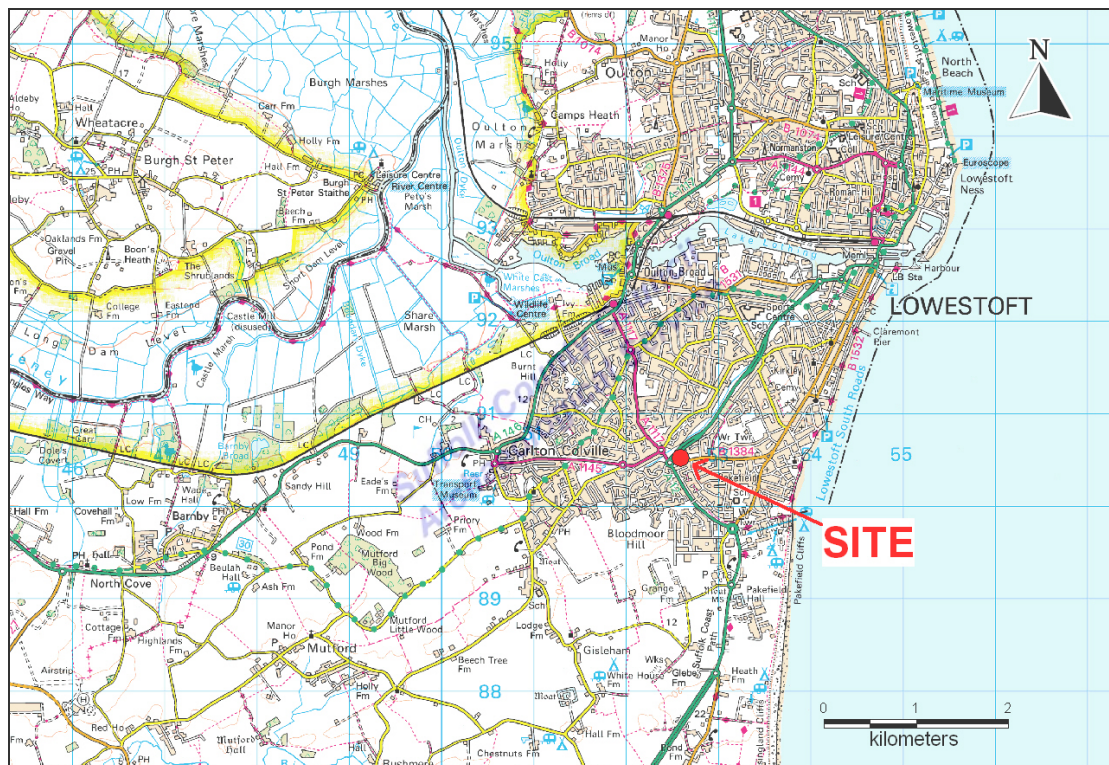


Figure 1. Location of site

The site consists of a former contractor's compound, used during the construction of the new relief road to the north-west. Prior to that the site was used for allotments (according to local residents) and allotments are still tended to the north and north-east of the site.

Topographically the site is located just above the 10m contour, with a slightly north-facing slope above the new relief road which lies in a slight dip. This hollow probably represents a filled-in stream or river channel, the water now channelled in a drain along the edge of the new road. In the past the site probably occupied a raised terrace above marsh containing a freshwater stream and would have therefore been a good location for past settlement and activity.

The site is close to several sites of archaeological interest as recorded in the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (Fig. 2). These include the discovery of a polished Neolithic axe head (LWT 023) c.220m to the north-east. Undated ditches (CAC 023) were revealed c.200m to the east-south-east and a Roman brooch (CAC misc) was found c.210m to the south-south-east. Although archaeological features and finds are not particularly close, the site's proximity to a water channel and its slightly elevated position might make it a potentially archaeologically sensitive area.

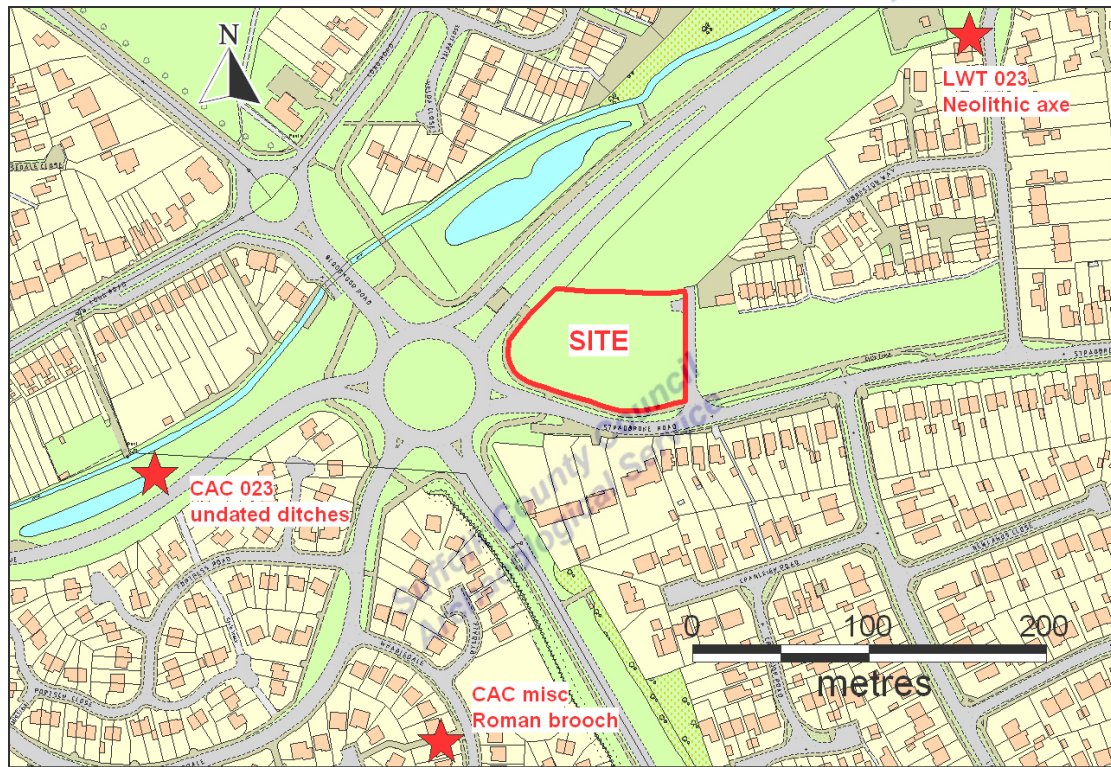


Figure 2. The site in relation to nearby locations of archaeological interest

2. Method

Trenching was conducted using a 360° mechanical digger equipped with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket. To remove the top 200mm of tarmac surface and rolled crushed stone a 1m toothed bucket had to be used to break through these hard layers.

Trenches had to avoid a number of obstructions, including trees, a spoil heap and services. This resulted in 140.5m of trench being dug, a shortfall of 29.5m from the anticipated c.170m. The trench layout was designed to avoid a disconnected water main running east to west across the centre of the site and likely to be an area of heavy disturbance. A number of other services were, however, encountered. A section of Trench 4 had to be left unexcavated as it contained a modern waste drain and a live water pipe. Trench 2 had to be abandoned after hitting a live water pipe and encountering another water pipe running in the same direction as the trench (heading towards the allotments). An extra trench, Trench 5, was excavated to sample the north-east corner of the site after Trench 2 was abandoned.

During the evaluation, all machining was observed by an archaeologist standing adjacent to or within the trench. The upcast soil was checked visually for any archaeological finds. Potential features of archaeological interest were sampled but all were discounted as either of natural origin or were associated with modern services. A metal detector search was conducted across the base of all trenches, but only modern material was found

Records were made of the position, length and depth of each of the five trenches. Within each trench, each deposit encountered was described, measured, recorded and given a separate O.P. ('observable phenomena') number (see Results, Table 1).

The site archive will be deposited with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service in Ipswich. The site code LWT 164 will be used to identify all elements of the archive associated with this project, and records have been logged with the Archaeology Data Service using the Oasis reference suffolkc1-45506.

3. Results

No archaeologically significant features or deposits were observed and no finds were recovered.

The following context numbers were used for deposits encountered across the site. Number 0001 was reserved for unstratified finds but none were found:

OP No.	Identifier	Trench	Description
0001	Finds		Unstratified finds – none found
0002	Layer	1-5	Hard surfaces; general description for tarmac or rolled crushed concrete over membrane – c.200mm thickness
0003	Layer	1	Re-deposited natural sand and clay mixed with topsoil: modern backfill
0004	Layer	3-5	Topsoil: mid to dark brown loam, very compact. Mainly truncated but survives to 400mm thickness in some places (eg Trench 4)
0005	Layer	2-5	Subsoil: mid to pale orange brown clay sand
0006	Layer	1-5	Natural: mixed yellow / orange clay, clay-sand and sand

Table 1. Context numbers

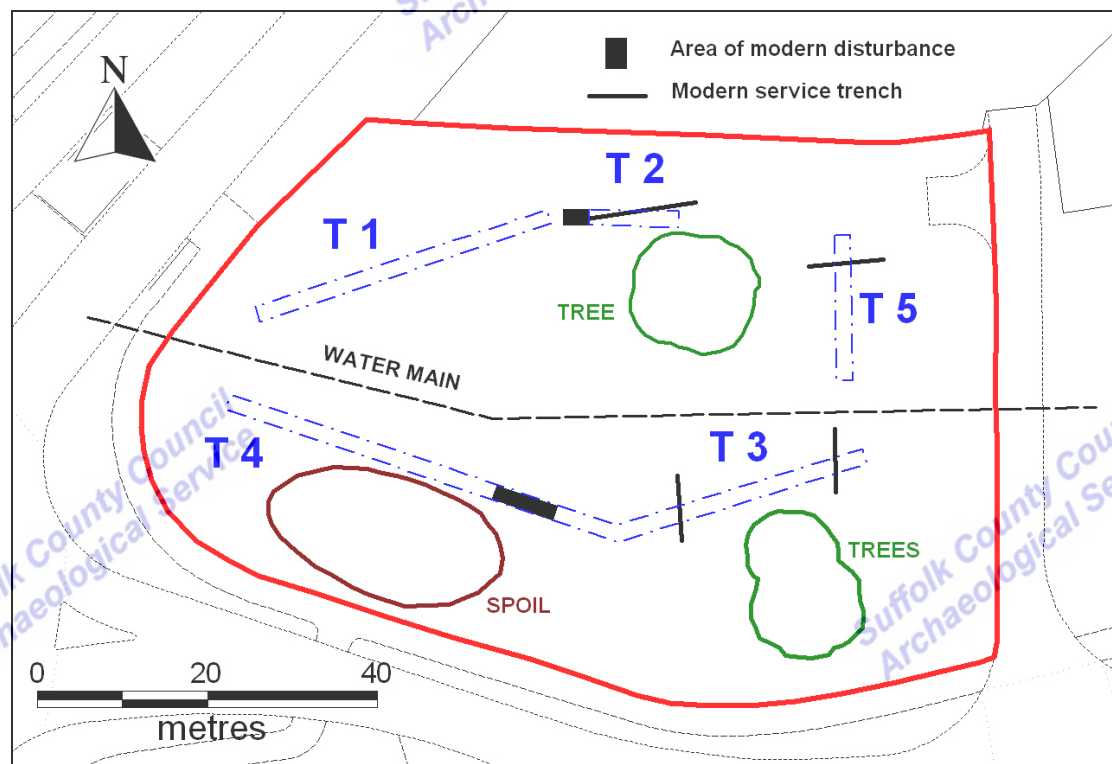


Figure 3. Position of trenches (T1 – 5), modern services and other impediments to trenching

The trench locations are shown in Figure 3. This shows their orientation and position. A brief description of the five trenches is given in the following table:

Trench No	Length	Depth	Description
1	36m	900mm (SW) – 600mm (NW)	No topsoil; 0002 surfaces (200mm) over 0003, of up to 700mm thickness at SW end becoming 400mm at NE. Natural 0006 truncated with sharp contact with 0003 above. No features or finds
2	10.5m	550mm	No topsoil; 0002 surface (250mm) over subsoil 0005 (300mm). Severely disturbed by services, e.g. water pipes running N-S across trench (burst) and E-W with trench. Trench abandoned at 10.5m
3	30m	650mm	Tarmac surface 0002 (200mm) over truncated topsoil 0004 (150mm). Under this subsoil 0005 (300mm). Potential features shown to be modern service trenches
4	47m	600mm	Same as T3 at SE end; at NW end topsoil 0004 (400mm) very compact over subsoil 0005 (200mm). Several potential features sampled, proven to be of natural origin. Severe modern disturbances towards SE end
5	17m	650mm	Tarmac surface 0002 (200mm) over truncated topsoil 0004 (150mm), over subsoil 0005 (300mm). Modern service trench only feature

Table 2. Description of Trenches 1 to 5

Severe truncation of the natural geology was witnessed in Trench 1 and modern services had disturbed an area of Trench 2, discounting much of the north and north-west of the site as having very little archaeological potential. Part of the profile of top and subsoils survived in Trenches 3 to 5, but possible features encountered in these trenches proved to be either of natural or modern origin.

4. Conclusions

Despite the site occupying a potentially archaeologically interesting area on a raised terrace above a previous water course, no features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were observed. The site had been highly disturbed in a number of places, including severe truncation in the north-west corner of the site and modern services were encountered in the other four trenches. No unstratified finds were found in the topsoil either, suggesting that little past activity had taken place in the immediate vicinity.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that no further archaeological investigations be conducted at this site.

6. 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.

7. References

Sommers, M, 2008, *Method Statement and Safety Risk Assessment: Archaeological Trial Trenching at Land off Stradbroke Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk in advance of Proposed New Fire Station*. SCC Archaeological Service, Ipswich

APPENDIX 1

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for a Trenched Evaluation

CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW FIRE STATION, ON STRADBROKE ROAD, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK

The commissioning body should be aware that it may have Health & Safety responsibilities, see paragraphs 1.7 and 1.8.

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission for the development of a site on Stradbroke Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk (TM 526905) for a new Fire Station, has been granted by Waveney District Council. This work is conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out, before development begins (PPG 16, paragraph 30 condition; planning reference W/06/1233/CCC). A trenched evaluation of the application area will be required as the first part of a programme of archaeological mitigation; decisions on the need for, and scope of, any further work will be based upon the results of the evaluation and will be the subject of additional briefs.
- 1.3 This site is in an area of high archaeological potential, with a number of known archaeological sites close to the development. This includes finds evidence relating to probable prehistoric and Roman settlement from within 200 to 500 m from the development boundary. These sites could extend over a wide area, therefore the proposed development would cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposits that may survive here.
- 1.4 All arrangements for the field evaluation of the site, the timing of the work, access to the site, the definition of the precise area of landholding and area for proposed development are to be defined and negotiated with the commissioning body.
- 1.5 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, 2003.
- 1.6 In accordance with the standards and guidance produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists this brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. A Project Design or Written Scheme of Investigation (PD/WSI) based upon this brief and the accompanying outline specification of minimum requirements, is an essential requirement. This must be submitted by the developers, or their agent, to the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443) for approval. The work must not commence until this office has approved both the archaeological contractors as suitable to undertake the work, and the PD/WSI as satisfactory. The PD/WSI will *provide the basis for measurable standards* and will be used to establish whether the requirements of the planning condition will be adequately met.
- 1.7 Before any archaeological site work can commence it is the responsibility of the developer to provide the archaeological contractor with either the contaminated land report for the site or a written statement that there is no contamination. The developer should be aware that investigative sampling to test for contamination is likely to have an impact on any archaeological deposit which exists; proposals for

sampling should be discussed with the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of SCC (SCCAS/CT) before execution.

- 1.8 The responsibility for identifying any restraints on field-work (e.g. Scheduled Monument status, Listed Building status, public utilities or other services, tree preservation orders, SSSIs, wildlife sites etc.) rests with the commissioning body and its archaeological contractor. The existence and content of the archaeological brief does not over-ride such restraints or imply that the target area is freely available.
- 1.9 Any changes to the specifications that the project manager may wish to make after approval by this office should be communicated directly to SCCAS/CT for approval.

2. Brief for the Archaeological Evaluation

- 2.1 Establish whether any archaeological deposit exists in the area, with particular regard to any which are of sufficient importance to merit preservation *in situ* [at the discretion of the developer].
- 2.2 Identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit within the application area, together with its likely extent, localised depth and quality of preservation.
- 2.3 Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking colluvial/alluvial deposits.
- 2.4 Establish the potential for the survival of environmental evidence.
- 2.5 Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.
- 2.6 This project will be carried through in a manner broadly consistent with English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (MAP2), all stages will follow a process of assessment and justification before proceeding to the next phase of the project. Field evaluation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive, and an assessment of potential. Any further excavation required as mitigation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive and an assessment of potential, analysis and final report preparation may follow. Each stage will be the subject of a further brief and updated project design; this document covers only the evaluation stage.
- 2.7 The developer or his archaeologist will give SCCAS/CT (address as above) five working days notice of the commencement of ground works on the site, in order that the work of the archaeological contractor may be monitored.
- 2.8 If the approved evaluation design is not carried through in its entirety (particularly in the instance of trenching being incomplete) the evaluation report may be rejected. Alternatively the presence of an archaeological deposit may be presumed, and untested areas included on this basis when defining the final mitigation strategy.
- 2.9 An outline specification, which defines certain minimum criteria, is set out below.

3. Specification: Field Evaluation

- 3.1 Trial trenches are to be excavated to cover a minimum 5 % by area. These shall be positioned to sample all parts of the site. Linear trenches are thought to be the most appropriate sampling method. Trenches are to be a minimum of 1.8m wide unless special circumstances can be demonstrated; this will result in a minimum of c. 15m of

trenching at 1.8m in width. If excavation is mechanised a toothless 'ditching bucket' at least 1.2m wide must be used. A scale plan showing the proposed locations of the trial trenches should be included in the Project Design and the detailed trench design must be approved by SCCAS/CT before fieldwork begins.

- 3.2 The topsoil may be mechanically removed using an appropriate machine with a back-acting arm and fitted with a toothless bucket. All machine excavation is to be under the direct control and supervision of an archaeologist. The topsoil should be examined for archaeological material.
- 3.3 The top of the first archaeological deposit may be cleared by machine, but must then be cleaned off by hand. There is a presumption that excavation of all archaeological deposits will be done by hand unless it can be shown there will not be a loss of evidence by using a machine. The decision as to the proper method of further excavation will be made by the senior project archaeologist with regard to the nature of the deposit.
- 3.4 In all evaluation excavation there is a presumption of the need to cause the minimum disturbance to the site consistent with adequate evaluation; that significant archaeological features, e.g. solid or bonded structural remains, building slots or post-holes, should be preserved intact even if fills are sampled.
- 3.5 There must be sufficient excavation to give clear evidence for the period, depth and nature of any archaeological deposit. The depth and nature of colluvial or other masking deposits must be established across the site.
- 3.6 Archaeological contexts should, where possible, be sampled for palaeoenvironmental remains. Best practice should allow for sampling of interpretable and datable archaeological deposits and provision should be made for this. The contractor shall show what provision has been made for environmental assessment of the site and must provide details of the sampling strategies for retrieving artefacts, biological remains (for palaeoenvironmental and palaeoeconomic investigations), and samples of sediments and/or soils (for micromorphological and other pedological/sedimentological analyses. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from J. Heathcote, English Heritage Regional Adviser for Archaeological Science (East of England). A guide to sampling archaeological deposits (Murphy, P.L. and Wiltshire, P.E.J., 1994, *A guide to sampling archaeological deposits for environmental analysis*) is available for viewing from SCCAS.
- 3.7 Any natural subsoil surface revealed should be hand cleaned and examined for archaeological deposits and artefacts. Sample excavation of any archaeological features revealed might be necessary in order to gauge their date and character.
- 3.8 Metal detector searches must take place at all stages of the excavation by an experienced metal detector user.
- 3.9 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with SCCAS/CT during the course of the evaluation).
- 3.10 Human remains must be left *in situ* except in those cases where damage or desecration are to be expected, or in the event that analysis of the remains is shown to be a requirement of satisfactory evaluation of the site. However, the excavator should be aware of, and comply with, the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857.
- 3.11 Plans of any archaeological features on the site are to be drawn at 1:20 or 1:50, depending on the complexity of the data to be recorded. Sections should be drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 again depending on the complexity to be recorded. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum. Any variations from this must be agreed with SCCAS/CT.

- 3.12 A photographic record of the work is to be made, consisting of monochrome photographs and colour transparencies and/or high-resolution digital images.
- 3.13 Topsoil, subsoil and archaeological deposit are to be kept separate during excavation to allow sequential backfilling of excavations.

4. **General Management**

- 4.1 A timetable for all stages of the project must be agreed before the first stage of work commences, including monitoring by SCCAS/CT. The archaeological contractor will give not less than ten days written notice of the commencement of the work so that arrangements for monitoring the project can be made.
- 4.2 The composition of the project staff must be detailed and agreed by this office, including any subcontractors/specialists. For the site director and other staff likely to have a major responsibility for the post-excavation processing of this evaluation there must also be a statement of their responsibilities or a CV for post-excavation work on other archaeological sites and publication record.
- 4.3 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to fulfil the Brief.
- 4.4 A general Health and Safety Policy must be provided, with detailed risk assessment and management strategy for this particular site.
- 4.5 No initial survey to detect public utility or other services has taken place. The responsibility for this rests with the archaeological contractor.
- 4.6 The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments* and for *Field Evaluations* should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

5. **Report Requirements**

- 5.1 An archive of all records and finds must be prepared consistent with the principles of English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (particularly Appendix 3.1 and Appendix 4.1).
- 5.2 The report should reflect the aims of the Project Design.
- 5.3 The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its archaeological interpretation.
- 5.4 An opinion as to the necessity for further evaluation and its scope may be given. No further site work should be embarked upon until the primary fieldwork results are assessed and the need for further work is established.
- 5.5 Reports on specific areas of specialist study must include sufficient detail to permit assessment of potential for analysis, including tabulation of data by context, and must include non-technical summaries.
- 5.6 The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence, including an assessment of palaeoenvironmental remains recovered from palaeosols and cut features. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological potential of the site, and the significance of that potential in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).

- 5.7 The results of the surveys should be related to the relevant known archaeological information held in the county SMR.
- 5.8 The project manager must consult the SMR Officer to obtain an event number for the work. This number will be unique for each project or site and must be clearly marked on any documentation relating to the work.
- 5.9 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*. The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County SMR if the landowner can be persuaded to agree to this. If this is not possible for all or any part of the finds archive, then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, analysis) as appropriate.
- 5.10 The project manager should consult the County SMR officer regarding the requirements for the deposition of the archive (conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage) of excavated material and the archive.
- 5.11 The site archive is to be deposited with the County SMR within three months of the completion of fieldwork. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.12 Where positive conclusions are drawn from a project (whether it be evaluation or excavation) a summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology*, must be prepared. It should be included in the project report, or submitted to the Conservation Team, by the end of the calendar year in which the evaluation work takes place, whichever is the sooner.
- 5.13 County SMR sheets must be completed, as per the county SMR manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 5.14 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.15 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the SMR. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: William Fletcher

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Tel: 01284 352199
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Date: 15th August 2007

Reference: /Fire Station, Stradbroke Rd

This brief and specification remains valid for six months from the above date. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the authority should be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued.

Archaeological contractors are strongly advised to forward a detailed Project Design or Written Scheme of Investigation to the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council for approval before any proposals are submitted to potential clients.

If the work defined by this brief forms a part of a programme of archaeological work required by a Planning Condition, the results must be considered by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council, who have the responsibility for advising the appropriate Planning Authority.