

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

JRM RAF Honington HNN 016

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2008
(Planning app. no. SE/06/1645)



R. Brooks
Field Team
Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service

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

SCCAS Report No. 2008/228



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List of Contributors

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

Rob Brooks	Excavation Supervisor
Gemma Adams	Senior Finds Assistant



Acknowledgements

The project was funded by MOD Defence Estates and was monitored by Jess Tipper (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Division).

The evaluation was carried out by a number of archaeological staff (David Gill, Rob Brooks, Jonathan Van Jennians and Nick Taylor), all from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

The project was managed by David Gill and directed by Rob Brooks, who also wrote the report. Production of sections was carried out by Gemma Adams.

Summary

An archaeological evaluation at RAF Honington identified one post-medieval field boundary. The ground level had been built up with a deep deposit of concrete, but the soil profile below this is largely intact.

HER information

Planning application no.	SE/06/1645
Date of fieldwork:	14th and 15th October, 2008
Grid Reference:	TL 8905 7491
Funding body:	MOD Defence Estates
Oasis Reference:	suffolkc1-50430



Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out prior to construction of the Junior Ranks Mess at RAF Honington. The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by Jess Tipper, (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team – Appendix 1) to fulfil a planning condition on application SE/06/1645. The developer, MOD Defence Estates, funded the work that was carried out on 14th and 15th October, 2008.

The proposed development area lies at grid reference TL 8905 7491 (Fig. 1) and at c.51m above the OD. The geology of the site was orange silty clay, grey/brown silty clay, and light grey/brown silty sand.

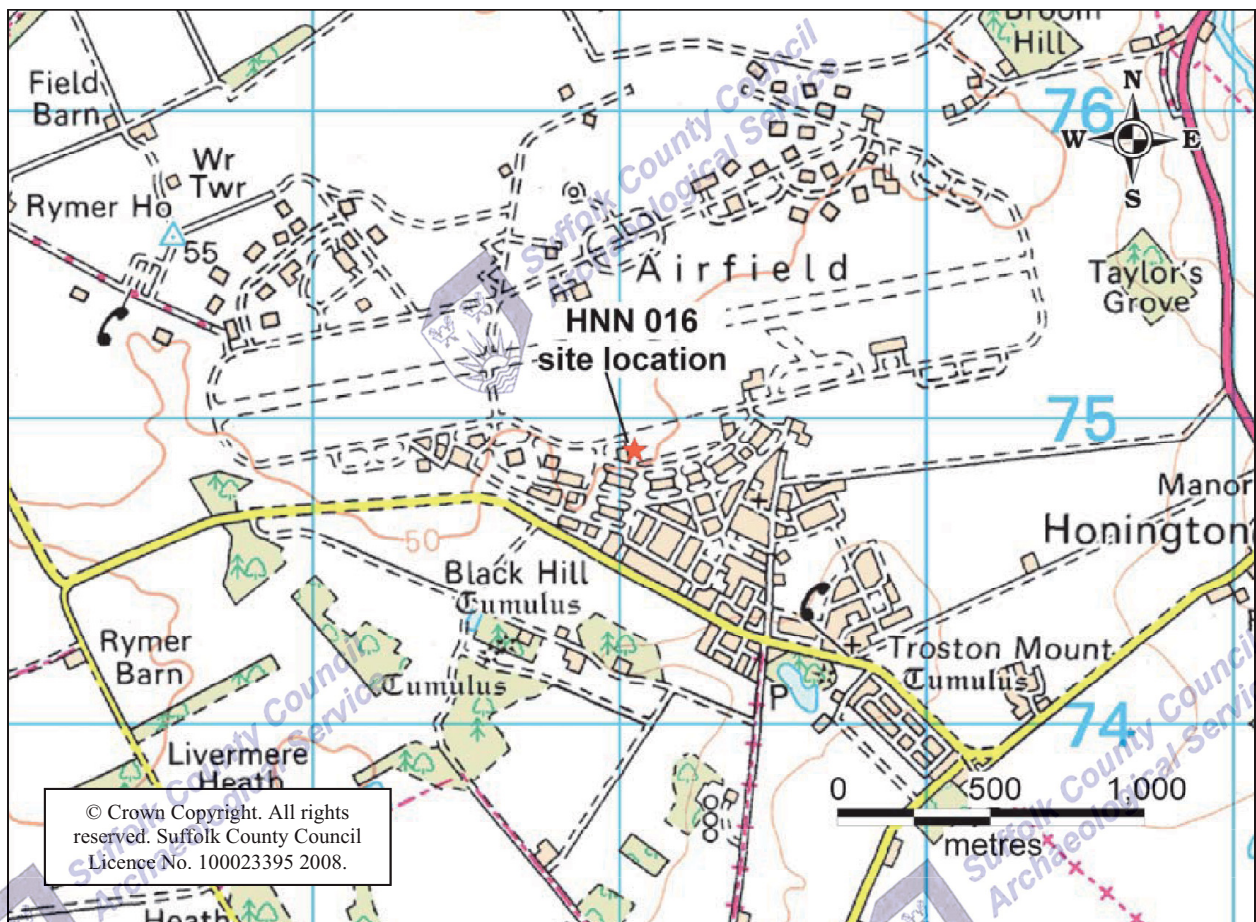


Figure 1. Site location map

The site was of potential interest as it lay close to round barrows (TRS 003 and TRS 004), tumuli (FKM 006 and HNN 002), Bronze Age finds (FKM 008, HNN 002 and HNN 003) and an undated flint axe (HNN 001), as shown on Figure 2. The development therefore had the potential to disturb archaeological deposits, particularly prehistoric remains. As such, a programme of archaeological evaluation was required to assess this risk and thus to establish any archaeological implications for the development of the site.



Figure 2. Map showing listings from the Historic Environment Record in relation to HNN 016

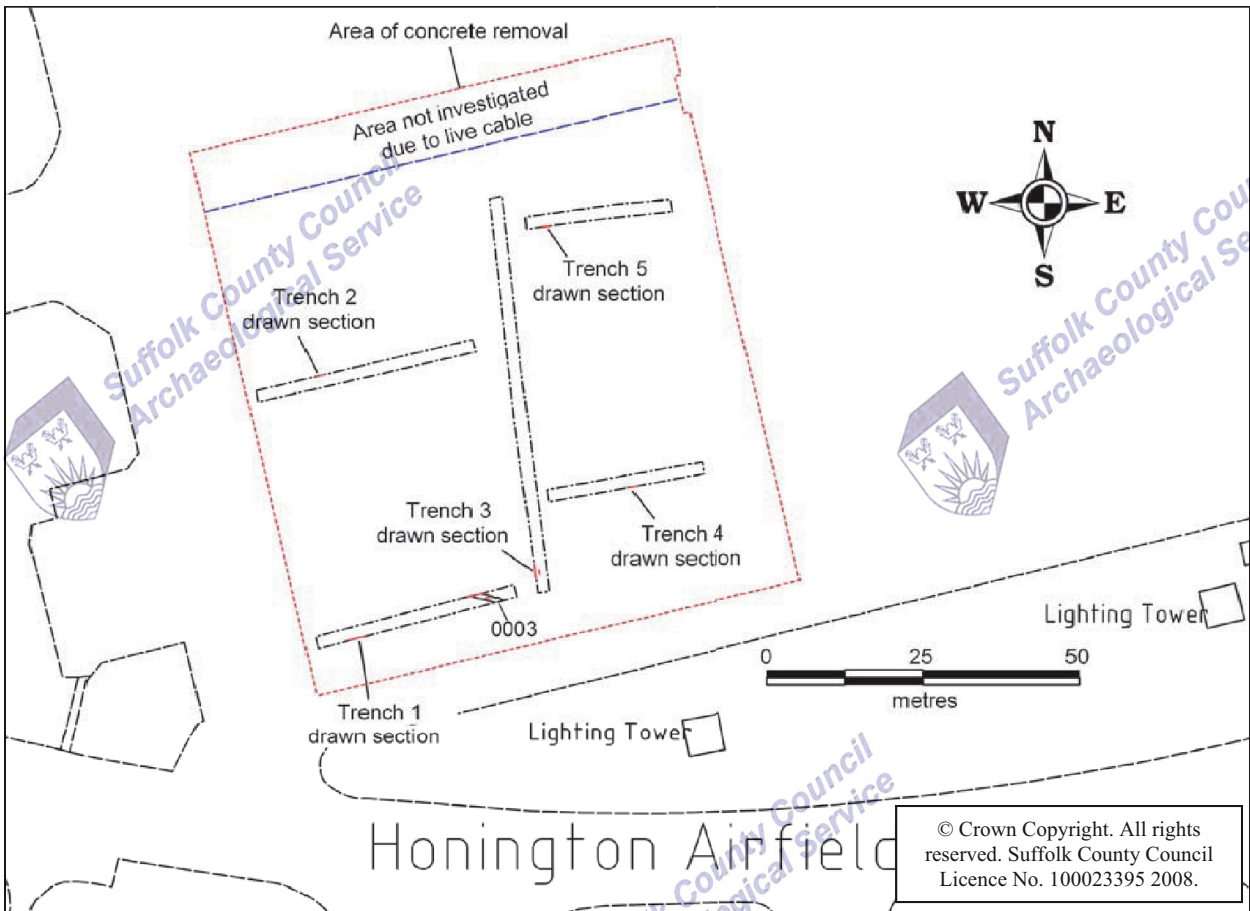


Figure 3. Site plan



Methodology

Five linear trenches were excavated using a mechanical digger fitted with a 2m wide toothless bucket under the constant supervision of an archaeologist. 356sq metres of trenching were excavated at 2m wide (Fig. 3). This amounted to >5% of the total area of 6672.5sq metres.

Each trench was excavated as closely as possible to the top of the natural subsoil, although in the cases of Trenches 4 and 5 this was often truncated by the layers of tarmac and concrete layers that had recently been removed from the site. In order to reach the natural subsoil, removal of c.0.2-0.65m of topsoil and modern aggregate was required. The subsoil consisted of orange silty clay, grey/brown silty clay, and light grey/brown silty sand. Upcast soil was regularly examined for finds.

All possible archaeological features were sampled by hand excavation to at least the minimum requirements of the specification (Appendix 1). Sections were recorded of the trench stratigraphy and of any features at a scale of 1:20 (Fig. 4) and the trench locations and features were plotted against the national grid using a Total Station Theodolite (Fig. 3). Digital colour JPEG format photographs at 72 x 72 dpi resolution, and monochrome film photographs, were taken of trench profiles and features. The site was recorded using a single continuous numbering system under the HER code HNN 016 (Appendix 2). Inked copies of section drawings have been made. No finds were recovered from this evaluation.

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-50430) and a digital copy of the report has been 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 Historic Environment Record code HNN 016.

Results

The evaluation trenches were completely devoid of any archaeological deposits, except for feature 0003 in Trench 1 (Figs. 3 and 5). This was a linear cut and was aligned north-west to south-east. A similar feature was visible on the First to Third Editions of the Ordnance Survey maps (from the late 19th to early 20th centuries, Fig. 5). Feature 0003 may even be earlier than this, though there were no finds from fill 0004 to suggest this. The historical maps suggest that 0003 is a field boundary that extended well beyond the evaluation area, and they show no other occupation on the site.

Various channels filled with very light grey/brown sandy silt were also seen in all the trenches. Trial excavation of these features revealed homogenous, well-sorted fills, which were interpreted as natural, glacial features (Trench 3, Fig. 4). These deposits were in places excavated, and included a very pale brown sand layer, 0005, and mid to dark brown clay lens 0006. Lens 0006 was immediately below 0005 whenever it was recorded, and seems to have formed in conjunction with the associated geological processes that created 0005. It is believed that these are natural deposits due to their colouration and homogeneity, and because they were found sporadically throughout all of the trenches.

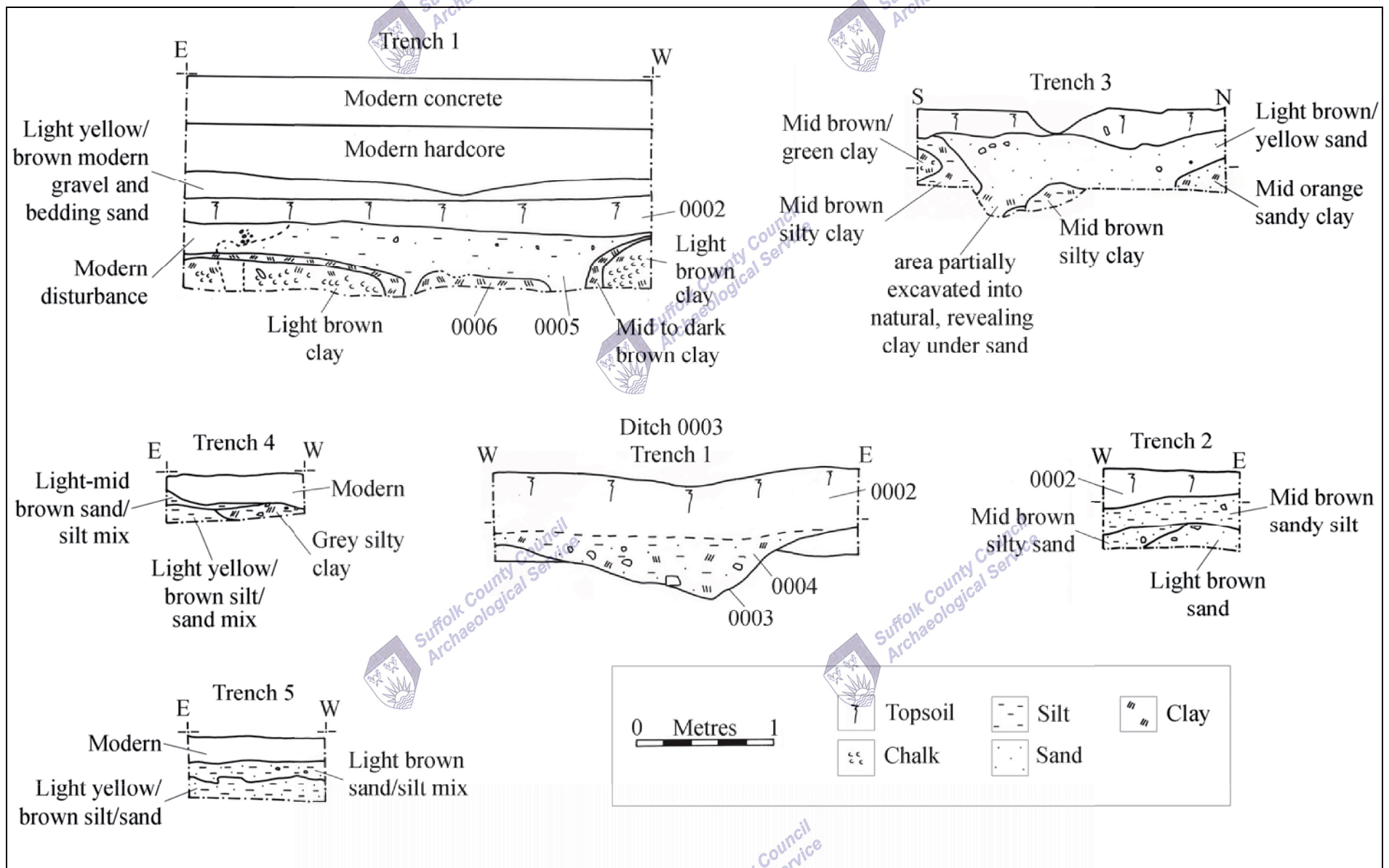


Figure 4. Trench and feature sections

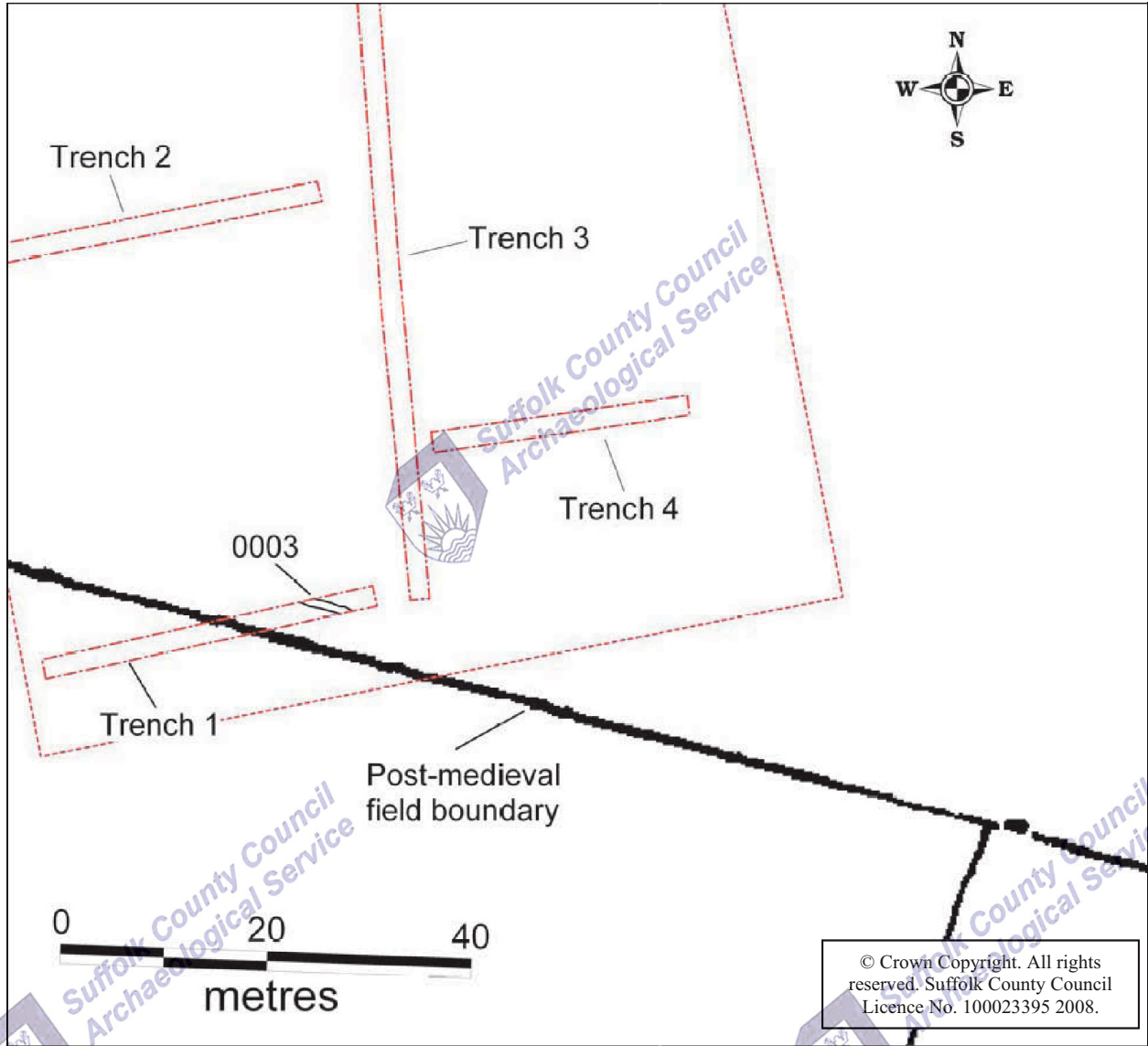


Figure 5. Second Edition Ordnance Survey map showing the post-medieval field boundary in relation to 0003

Trench	Length	Description	Contexts
1	31.5m	West-east aligned trench, south of Trench 2 and west of Trench 3. The natural subsoil was a mixture of periglacial orange/grey silty clay with chalk flecks, and light grey silty sand. Frequent flints were also seen throughout. At the east end of the trench and extending 5m into it was a deposit of mid grey sand, interpreted as a wind blown deposit into which ditch 0003 had been dug. Natural subsoil was found at depths of c.0.5-0.65m and appeared to be a mixture of glacial deposits.	Ditch 0003, fill 0004 Layers 0002, 0005 & 0006
2	35.5m	West-east aligned trench, north of Trench 1 and west of Trench 3. The natural subsoil was an orange silty clay and grey/light brown sandy silt. Frequent sub-angular flints were seen throughout the subsoil (20-200mm diameter). A modern service trench ran south-west to north-east through the trench, c.14.5m from the east end. No other features were seen. Natural subsoil was found at depths of c.0.5-0.65m and appeared to be a mixture of glacial deposits.	Layers 0002, 0005 & 0006
3	60m	North-south aligned trench. The natural subsoil was an orange silty clay and grey/light brown sandy silt. Grey clay natural with chalk flecks was also seen in patches and flints were seen throughout. No features were present. Natural subsoil was found at depths of c.0.3-0.4m and appeared to be a mixture of glacial deposits.	Layers 0002, 0005 & 0006
4	26m	East-west aligned trench, south of Trench 5 and east of Trench 3. The natural subsoil was mainly yellow clay with chalk flecks, orange silty clay, and light brown sand/silt. Frequent flints seen throughout. C.0.2-0.3m of modern aggregate lay above the remnants of dark topsoil, although it was largely truncated in this trench. No features were present, though a modern service trench was present c.5m from the west end of the trench. Natural subsoil was found at depths of c.0.2-0.3m and appeared to be a mixture of glacial deposits.	Layers 0002, 0005 & 0006
5	25m	East-west aligned trench, north of Trench 4 and east of Trench 3. The natural subsoil was made up of patches of light grey/light brown sandy silt, orange silty clay with frequent flints, and yellow clay with chalk flecks. The topsoil was truncated over the majority of the trench and had been replaced with modern aggregate. No features were present and modern disturbance had truncated the eastern 15m of the trench. Natural subsoil was found at a depth of c.0.2-0.4m and appeared to be a mixture of glacial deposits.	Layers 0002, 0005 & 0006

Table 1. Trench descriptions

Discussion

The evaluation trenches have shown that, where they survived below the modern sand, hardcore and concrete, the natural subsoil and any potential archaeological levels lay at a depth of c.0.2-0.65m. Existing ground levels have been raised by a succession of concrete surfaces. At the western end of the site this was laid over the topsoil and the soil profile is intact. At the eastern end of the site the topsoil horizon was not present, suggesting that the ground had been levelled in preparation for the airfield and some truncation may have occurred. It is felt however, that the truncation was not extensive and that the evaluation results accurately reflect a low level of archaeology. Generally only geological features and deposits were recognised, including the highly homogenous layers 0005 and 0006. These were all thought to be the result of glacial activity and later fluvial action.

There were no features on the site that were prehistoric. The single archaeological cut feature was a ditch, that was most likely a post-medieval, though possibly earlier, field boundary. This matches clearly with the First to Third Edition Ordnance Survey maps (Fig. 5) and suggests that the evaluation area was used as a series of fields at that time. No finds were recovered during this evaluation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Evidence from the evaluation and the First to Third Edition Ordnance survey maps suggests that there is little surviving archaeology on the site and that within the post-medieval period it was used for agriculture. The trenches already excavated have effectively sampled the area, suggesting that only sparse post-medieval features and finds would survive. As such, it is not recognised that further archaeological works are required.

Rob Brooks
Excavation Supervisor
Field Team, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
October 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.



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Appendix 1 – Brief and specification

Brief and Specification for Trenched Evaluation

ERECTION OF JUNIOR RANKS MESS, RAF HONINGTON

The commissioning body should be aware that it may have Health & Safety responsibilities.

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning consent (application SE/06/1645) has been granted for the erection of a junior ranks mess on land at RAF Honington (TL 8905 7491), with a PPG 16, paragraph 30 condition requiring an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out.
- 1.2 The Planning Authority (St Edmundsbury Borough Council) has been advised that any consent should be conditional upon an agreed programme of work taking place before development begins (PPG 16, paragraph 30 condition). An archaeological evaluation of the application area will be required as the first part of such a programme of archaeological work; decisions on the need for, and scope of, any further work will be based upon the evaluation.
- 1.3 This proposal lies in an area of archaeological importance recorded in the County Historic Environment Record (HER). The proposal area is situated to the west of the find spot of Bronze Age beaker pottery (HNN 003). There is high potential for encountering prehistoric occupation deposits at this location. The proposed works would cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.
- 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 Written Scheme of Investigation (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 contractor as suitable to undertake the work, and the WSI as satisfactory. The 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.


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 whether waterlogged organic deposits are likely to be present in the proposal area.
- 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 the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (SCCAS/CT) 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, which is c. 500m² of the total area for evaluation that measures c. 1.00ha (Figure 1). Trenches are to be a minimum of 1.80m wide unless special circumstances can be demonstrated; this will result in a minimum of c. 278m of trenching at 1.80m in width. If excavation is mechanised a toothless 'ditching bucket' at least 1.20m wide must be used. Linear trenches are thought to be the most appropriate sampling method. The detailed trench design must be approved by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service before field work begins.
- 3.2 The existing aircraft hardstanding may be mechanically removed using an appropriate machine, under archaeological supervision (archaeological watching brief to ensure that no archaeological deposits area disturbed). Material sealed below the slab should be removed by 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. All material below the modern disturbance 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.

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- 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 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. Sidell, 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 may 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 SCCAS/CT during the course of the evaluation). The WSI should show what provision has been made for the identification and conservation of artefacts, including specialist reports if appropriate.
- 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 both monochrome photographs and colour transparencies and/or high resolution digital images.
- 3.13 Topsoil, subsoil and archaeological deposit to be kept separate during excavation to allow sequential backfilling of excavations.
- 3.14 Trenches should not be backfilled without the approval of SCCAS/CT.

4. **General Management**

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- 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 two week's written notice of the commencement of the work so that arrangements for monitoring the project can be made.
- 4.2 The composition of the archaeology contractor 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 fulfill 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 field evaluation* (revised 2001) 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 data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County HER.

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 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 evaluation should be related to the relevant known archaeological information held in the County HER.

5.8 A copy of the Specification should be included as an appendix to the report.

5.9 The project manager must consult the County HER Officer (Dr Colin Pendleton) 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.

5.10 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*.

5.11 The project manager should consult the SCC Archive Guidelines 2008 and also the County HER Officer regarding the requirements for the deposition of the archive (conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage) of excavated material and the archive.

5.12 The WSI should state proposals for the deposition of the digital archive relating to this project with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), and allowance should be made for costs incurred to ensure the proper deposition (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>).

5.13 The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County HER 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.

5.14 The site archive is to be deposited with the County HER within three months of the completion of fieldwork. It will then become publicly accessible.

5.15 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 SCCAS/CT, by the end of the calendar year in which the evaluation work takes place, whichever is the sooner.

5.16 County HER sheets must be completed, as per the County HER manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.

5.17 Where appropriate, a digital vector trench plan should be included with the report, which must be compatible with MapInfo GIS software, for integration in the County HER. AutoCAD files should be also exported and saved into a format that can be imported into MapInfo (for example, as a Drawing Interchange File or .dxf) or already transferred to .TAB files.

5.18 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.

5.19 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the County HER. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Dr Jess Tipper

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service Conservation Team
Environment and Transport Department
Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 2AR
Email: jess.tipper@et.suffolccc.gov.uk

Tel: 01284 352197

Date: 27 February 2008

Reference: / JuniorMessRAFHonington2008

This brief and specification remains valid for 12 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.

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.

Appendix 2 – Site context list

Context	Feature	Identifier	Type	Description
0001		Finds		Unstratified finds. None collected.
0002		Topsoil		Topsoil. Truncated on the eastern half of the site. Often this was a dark grey/brown/black soil that appeared very well mixed and perhaps to be quite modern.
0003	0003	Ditch	Cut	North-west to south-east aligned ditch cut in Trench 2. Approximately 45° concave sides and a small concave base. Interpretation - field boundary as seen on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map. C.0.78m wide north-east to south-west, and c.0.48m deep.
0004	0003	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch 0003. Mid-light brown clayey/silty sand. No finds. Excavated using trowel and shovel.
0005		Layer	Deposit	Buried, very pale sand layer first recorded in Trench 1 at western end below topsoil. Visible in all of the trenches. Interpretation - glacial deposit.
0006		Layer	Deposit	Mid to dark grey/brown clay layer, often found immediately below pale sand 0005. Smooth and with no inclusions. Heavily compacted. Interpretation - probably natural glacial deposit.