

# **Child Development Centre Annexe, RAF Mildenhall MNL 551**

**Application No. F/2003/066**

**TL 6821 7800**

**Oasis No. suffolkc1-5667**

**Report No. 2005/35**

## **Summary**

A limited archaeological monitoring of a site strip and footing trenches at the Child Development Centre, RAF Mildenhall, located a former soil horizon but no archaeological deposits.

## **Introduction**

A series of visits was made to the site from 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2004 to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2005 to monitor the site strip for a new building and associated roads. Excavation of the footing trenches was not observed. The work was carried out to fulfil a planning condition on application F/2003/066. The work was funded by the developer, MoD Defence Estates (USF).

Interest in the site was based upon its general location, at a height of 4m OD, within the band of multi-period occupation that occurs along the fen edge. In particular recent excavations 600m to the east at MNL 536, and 750m to the south at MNL 532, have identified prehistoric, Roman and Early Anglo-Saxon settlement (Fig. 1). Therefore there was potential for the development to disturb archaeological evidence from a range of periods. However as the site had previously been occupied by a substantial building there was a considerable amount of modern disturbance and so a program of archaeological monitoring was thought sufficient to record any surviving deposits.

## **Methodology and Results**

(Fig. 2)

An initial site visit was made to monitor the stripping of the footprint of a new access road. The area was seen when fully excavated to the developers formation level. The next stage of development was the stripping of the building footprint, which was seen both during and after excavation. An intended final phase, the monitoring of the excavation of footing trenches, was not carried out.

The eastern half of the stripping of the access road footprint was observed and consisted of the removal of 0.2m of topsoil and up to 0.2m of a dark grey/brown sand, 0002. This showed, in many areas, that there was frequent disturbance from buried services and the former building. For instance one third of the total area, the southern 3m of the road, simply exposed the hardcore foundations of a previous road.

In undisturbed areas the site strip was generally not deep enough to expose the natural subsoil. The natural yellow sand was only seen in isolated patches, and was otherwise

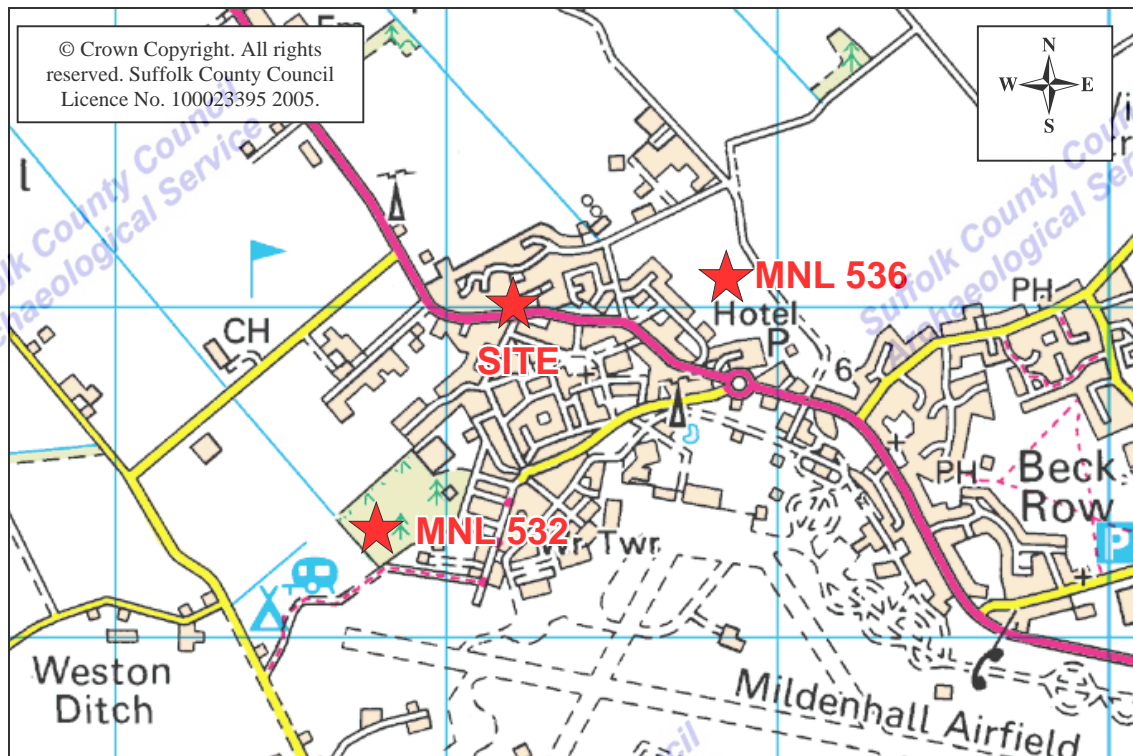


Figure 1. Site location

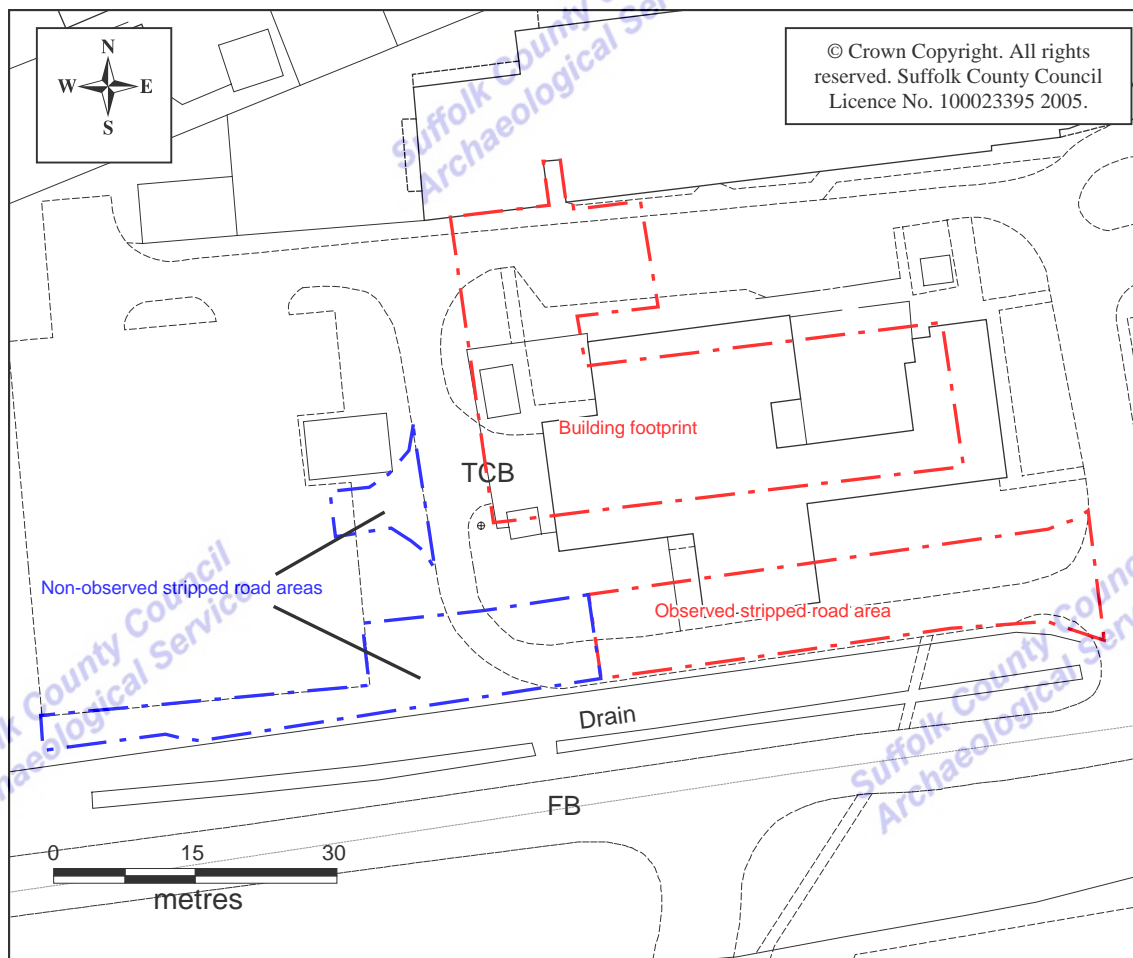


Figure 2. Site plan

sealed beneath layer 0002 which is probably a former soil horizon. Where 0002 survives *in situ* it is possible that it may seal archaeological deposits.

Similarly the stripping of the building footprint was only 0.3m in depth and consisted of the removal of modern deposits associated with the former building. The natural subsoil was not exposed.

As the building site strip had not exposed the natural subsoil or archaeological levels the footing trenches were to be observed during excavation to record any archaeological deposits. However, due to a failure of communication, the trenches were excavated and backfilled without any archaeological observation.

## **Discussion**

The monitoring of the building works was quite limited and this, together with areas of modern disturbance, meant that no archaeological deposits were seen. However this does not mean that no archaeological deposits were, or are still, present.

A surviving soil layer, 0002, was observed in the area of the access road, which indicates that original ground levels exist in undisturbed areas and it is possible that archaeological deposits may remain *in situ* beneath the new road and layer 0002.

Similarly the stripping of the building footprint did not reach the subsoil levels and it is possible that archaeological deposits may still survive, albeit now heavily affected by the foundations of both the new and old structures.

J.A.Craven, June 2005