

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

RAF Mildenhall, Refurbish Military Housing MNL 540

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING, 2004
(Planning app. no. F/2001/699)

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Field Team

Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service

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Acknowledgements

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Summary

Archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the refurbishment of military housing revealed a single ditch of uncertain date. The soil profiles indicated an undulating subsoil of wind blown sand with truncated hollows containing a grey buried soil in places and dried peat. This landscape is typical of the fen edge.

SMR information

Planning application no. **F/2001/699**
Date of fieldwork: June 2002-Autumn 2003
Grid Reference: TL 6860 7804
Funding body: Defence Estates (USF)

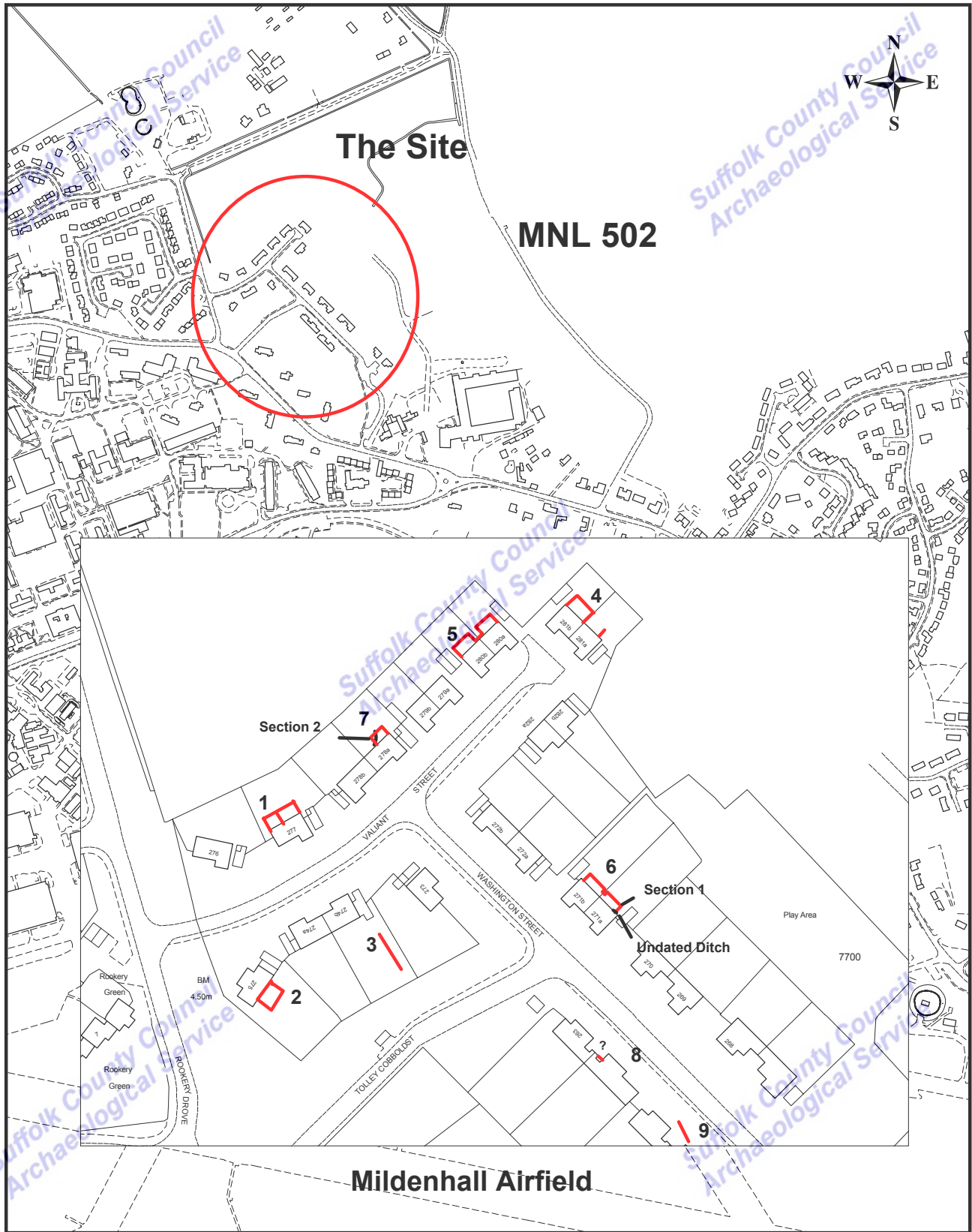


Figure 1 Trench, and Site Location Plan

Introduction

This project involved the demolition and refurbishment of housing along, Washington Street, Valiant Street, and Shippea Hill Road. Monitoring of groundworks was a condition attached to planning application F/2001/699 by Judith Plouviez acting for the local planning authority. Interest in the site is centred upon the high incidence of sites dating from prehistoric to Roman times, which have been identified in this area of the fen edge. Of particular significance is site MNL502 located to the north of Washington Street which was excavated in 1999 producing evidence of extensive Iron Age field and Roman field systems including a large aisled building (Beales 2004). The principal groundworks comprised the excavation of new footings for replacement extensions between a number of the houses. There were also a number of extra service trenches excavated thought to have some archaeological potential. The principal contractor on the site was Mansells

Methodology

Monitoring visits were made in liaison with the main contractors for the groundworks, Mansells. The site was visited following the excavation of footings or service trenches. The sections were examined and where appropriate drawn. Spoil was also examined for finds.

Results

1. During the first visit footings were seen in an extension to 277 Valiant road. Much of the trenching was disturbed but natural yellow sand was visible at c. 0.35m. No archaeological features were seen.
2. During the second visit footings were seen in the garden of 275 Valiant Street. A typical soil profile consisted of 0.2m of topsoil, 0.7m of dark grey sand. The bottom 0.1m of trench was natural yellow sand.
3. November 18, 2002. At 274/5 Washington Street a 10m length of service trench was open for inspection. Yellow sand was revealed close to the surface dipping with into dried peat hollow. This was almost certainly a truncated sand dune which was dipping towards a (?)shallow peat hollow.
4. March 6, 2003. A visit was made to 281 A+B Valiant Street. Most of the footings were exposed. These revealed undulating natural sand at a depth of between 0.25 and 0.4m. in the deepest hollows some grey sand survived, probably a buried soil. The upper 0.25m consisted of either recent topsoil or modern disturbance.
5. May 19, 2003. A visit was made to 280A +B Valiant Street. Substantial footings c. 1m wide were dug into natural sand. The footings were 1.1m deep and a typical section consisted of: 0.2m of made-up ground, 0.1m of dried peaty soil, 0.1m of grey sand(probably a buried soil?) and 0.7m of yellow sand. There were no features visible. The soil profile is consistent with a dune landscape.
6. May 28, 2003. A visit was made to 271 A+B Washington Street. A shallow ditch 0002 was exposed in the south west corner of the footing which was of indeterminate date (Section 2). The northern half of the trench was very disturbed.

7. July 2/3 2003. An extension was seen at 278 A Valiant Street. The footing were 1m wide and 1.2m deep. The ground was disturbed to a depth of 0.5m. No archaeological features visible although there was a thin layer of dried peat at the south west end of the footings (Fig 2).
8. September 9,2003. A small extension to 262 Washington Drive observed (the location plan is approximate). The soil profile was 1.1m deep and consisted of: 0.3m of topsoil, 0.1m of fine yellow sand, 0.25m of brown sand, 0.1m of leached pale grey sand which overlay yellow sand.
9. December 5, 2003. A short length of a service trench was seen in the garden of 260 Washington Street. Which showed the top of natural sand c. 0.4m from the present ground surface.

Other visits were made to the site where no open footings could be observed, the last being in January 2004.

Discussion

The soil profiles showed the site to be typical of the fen edge with undulating levels of orange/yellow windblown sand, with shallow grey soils and occasionally dried peat

There is insufficient evidence to draw positive conclusions from this project. The evidence from the sections suggests that if archaeological features did exist in this area they would survive beneath a layer of grey brown sand.

References

Beales, E., 2004 *A Roman Maltings at Beck Row, Mildenhall, Suffolk*. East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional PaperNo. 20, Archaeological Service Suffolk County Council

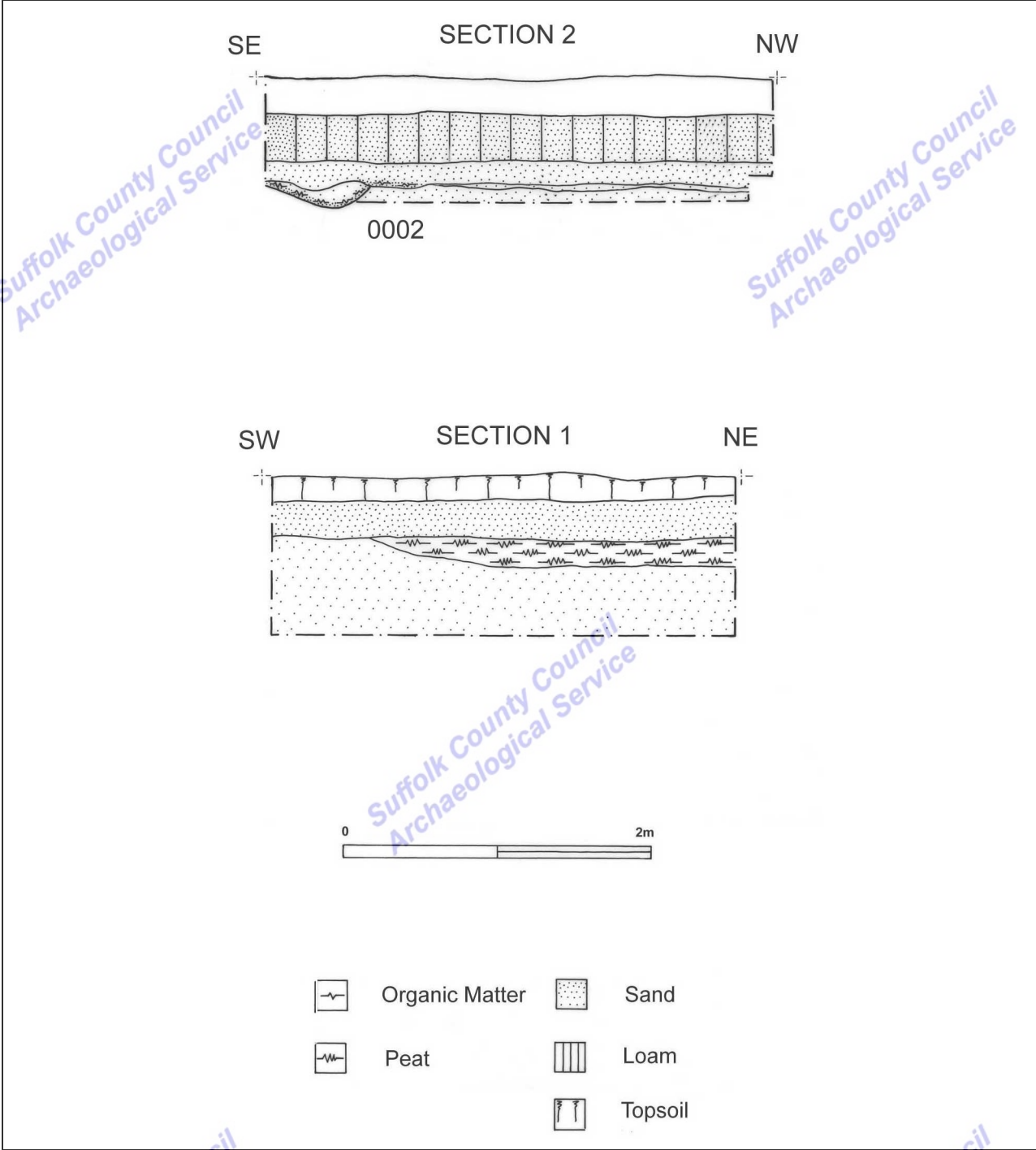


Figure 2 Sections