ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

‘The Island’, Marston’s Pit, Cavenham Heath Quarry CAM 043

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING, 2005
(Planning app. no. F/2003/726/CR3)

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Acknowledgements

This project was funded by Allen Newport Ltd and was monitored by Edward Martin (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team). The fieldwork was carried out by Jo Caruth and John Craven from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team. The project was managed by John Newman, who also provided advice during the production of the report.

The post-excavation was managed by Cathy Tester. Finds processing and the production of plans and sections was carried out by Gemma Adams, and the specialist finds report by Cathy Tester with further identification by Colin Pendleton.

Summary

An archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping was carried out on an area within Marston's Pit, Cavenham Heath Quarry, Cavenham, following an evaluation which indicated the presence of prehistoric features. Two more pits were identified, with fills indicating a low level of domestic occupation and containing Iron Age pottery.

Together with the features seen in the evaluation, they are a further indication of a low level of activity on the site in the Iron Age period, dispersed over a broad area.

SMR information

Planning application no.	F/2003/726/CR3
Date of fieldwork:	20th January – 2nd February 2005
Grid Reference:	TL 7634 7157
Funding body:	Allen Newport Ltd
Oasis reference.	Suffolkc1-6226

1. Introduction

An archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping was carried out on an area within Marston's Pit, Cavenham Heath Quarry, Cavenham. The work was specified by Edward Martin (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team), following an evaluation of the site, to fulfill a planning condition on application F/2003/726/CR3. The work was funded by the developer Allen Newport Ltd.

The site (Fig. 1) is located at TL 7634 7157 and lies 350m to the west of a linear earthwork called The Black Ditches, a scheduled ancient monument (Suffolk 18) recorded on the County SMR as CAM 001. Previous archaeological work within the quarry had also located further evidence of prehistoric activity at CAM 040 (Gill 1998), 600m to the north. Because of this an archaeological evaluation of the site was carried out in November 2004 (Craven 2004), which located scattered evidence of possible prehistoric activity. A programme of archaeological monitoring of the initial topsoil stripping was subsequently specified by Edward Martin.

The site consisted of an 'island', approximately 1.1ha in size, a remnant of the original landscape standing above the surrounding reduced quarry ground levels and modern lake. The evaluation indicated that the natural subsoil of sands and gravel was well preserved at a depth of 0.6-1m.This depth was mainly due to modern activity which had levelled the site and built up ground levels before the creation of a plantation, c.20-40 years ago, of deciduous and coniferous trees.

2. Methodology

The monitored groundworks consisted of the removal of modern and topsoil layers down to the level of the natural subsoil. This required the removal of 0.5-1m of material, which was done by a tracked bulldozer, until the subsoil of mixed yellow and orange sands and gravels was exposed. Monitoring visits were carried out on a daily basis.

Identified features were then cleaned and excavated by hand. A single context continuous numbering system was used, carrying on from contexts recorded in the evaluation. Feature plans and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and features were plotted using a handheld GPS. Digital photographs are included in the digital archive.

Site data has been input onto an MS Access database and recorded using the County Sites and Monuments Record code CAM 043, and inked copies of section drawings and plans have been made. Bulk finds were washed, marked and quantified, and the resultant data was also entered onto a database.

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-6226).

The site archive is kept in the small and main stores of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Bury St Edmunds under SMR No. CAM 043.

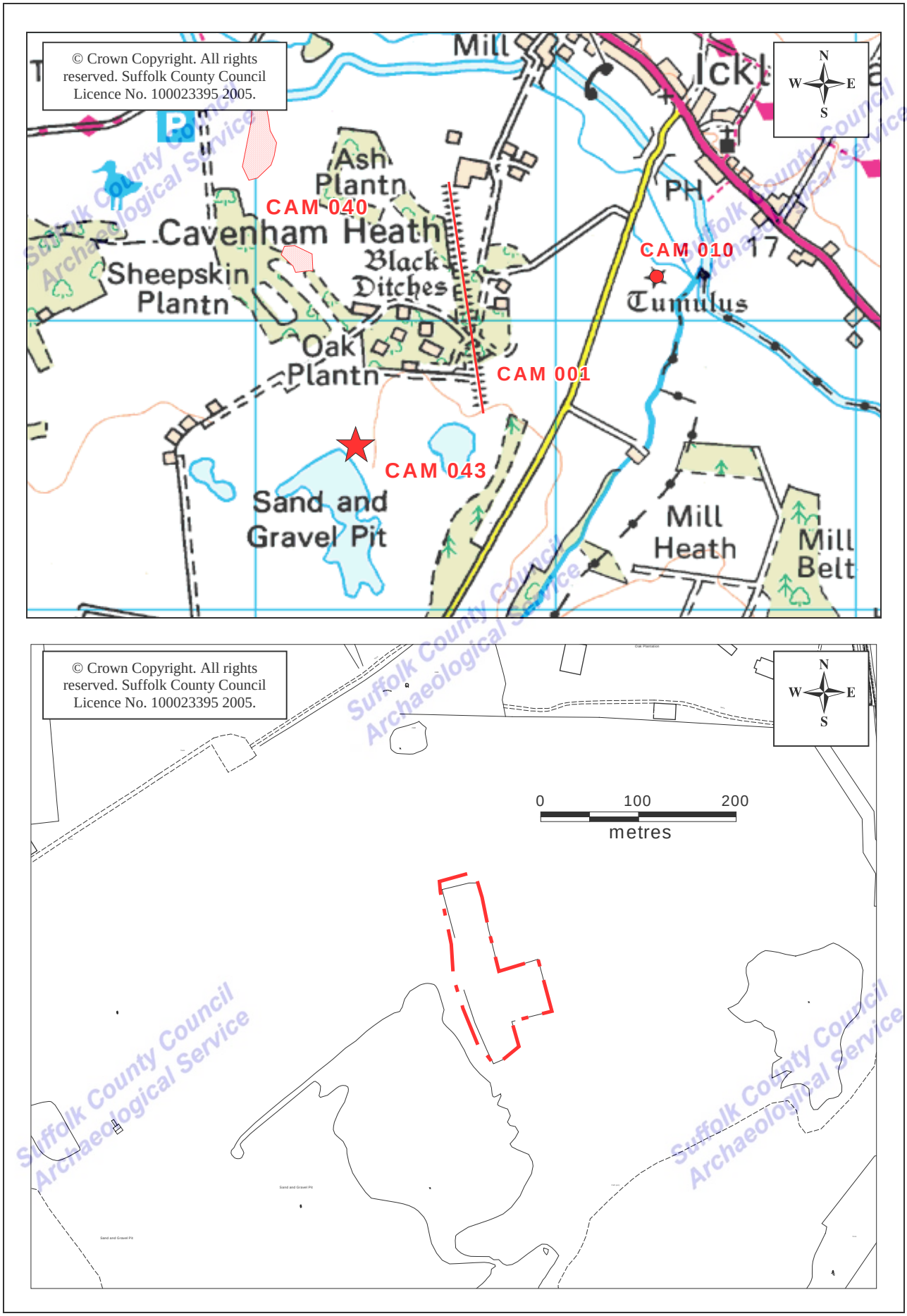

Figure 1. Site location plan

3. Results

The method of soil removal, using a tracked bulldozer to expose the natural subsoil, meant that the site was repeatedly driven over and the subsoil surface was never properly cleaned. This made identification of features difficult and only two very obvious features were located. Smaller, indistinct features were probably missed, for instance the possible ditch or ditches 0015/0017 that were identified in the evaluation could not be traced any further during the monitoring and the majority of the actual evaluation trenches themselves could not be located.

Two features were identified, pits 0039 and 0046 (Figs. 2 and 3), and both were 100% excavated. 0039 was a circular pit with steep sides and a flat base measuring 1.1m in diameter and 0.8m deep. It contained a series of fills, the upper fill, 0040, being a dark, coarse grey/brown sand with charcoal flecks and containing two sherds of Iron Age pottery and fragments of fired clay. Under 0040 was a thin lense, 0041, of dense, charcoal rich, sand which also contained fragments of fired clay. Beneath this was 0042, a mid grey/brown sand, then 0043, a mid yellow/brown sand and 0044, a dark grey/brown sand. Under 0044 was the basal fill, 0045, a gleyed orange/brown sand.

0046 was an oval pit, 1.8m long, 1.1m wide and 0.5m deep with sloping sides and a flat base. It also contained a series of fills, the upper fill, 0047, being a grey/brown sand containing a single sherd of Iron Age pottery. Underneath 0047 was a mottled orange sand, 0048, which lay above 0049, a grey/brown sand. Beneath 0049 was 0050, a mid brown sand containing five sherds of Iron Age pottery, and this overlaid the basal fill, an orange sand with a lens of black sand, 0051, from which an iron object was recovered.

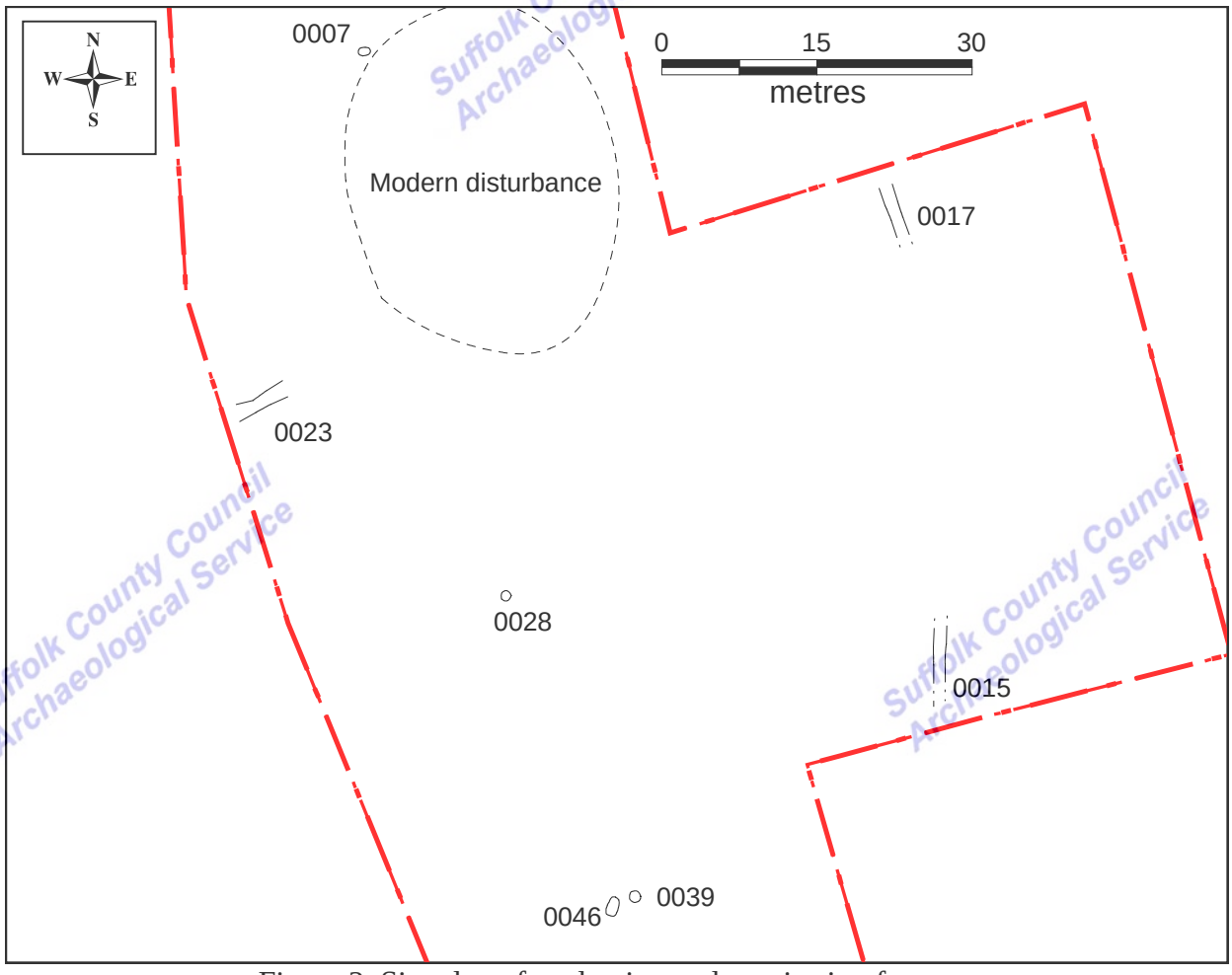

Figure 2. Site plan of evaluation and monitoring features

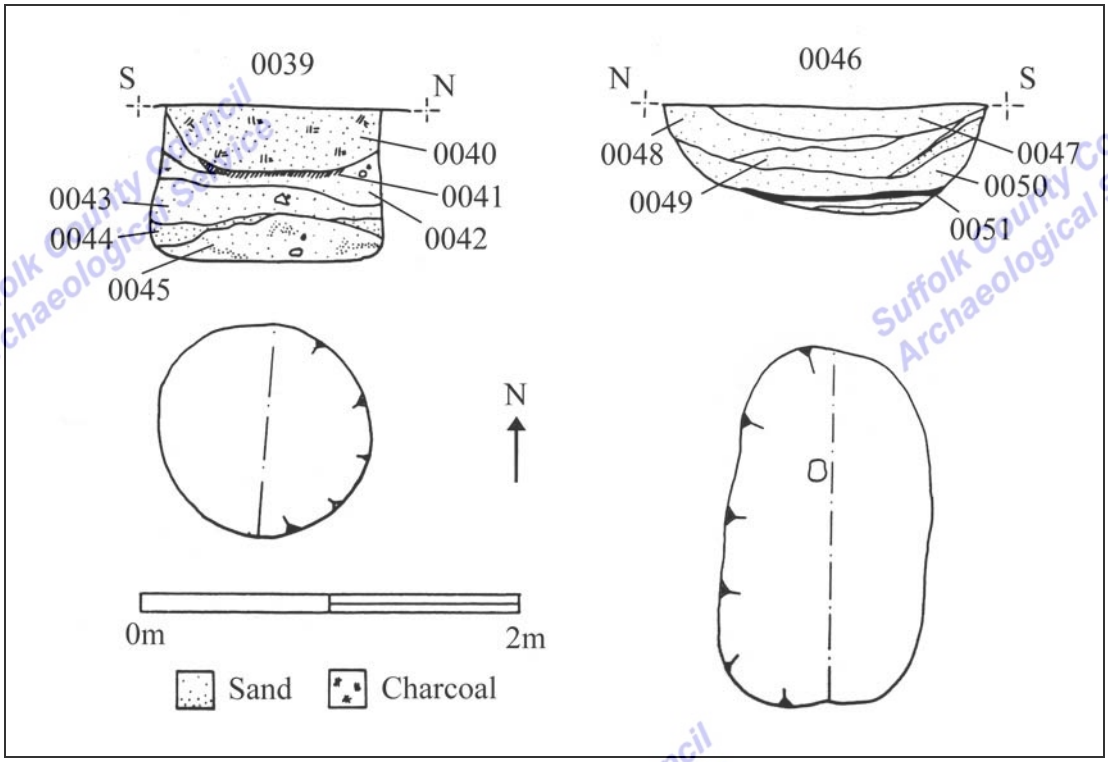

Figure 3. Feature plans and sections

4. Finds and environmental evidence

Cathy Tester.

4.1. Introduction

Finds were collected from six contexts during monitoring and the quantities by context are shown in the table below.

Context	Pottery		Fired clay		Flint		Charcoal		Miscellaneous	Spotdate
	No	Wt/g	No	Wt/g	No	Wt/g	No	Wt/g		
0040	2	60	13	12	1	1	1	1		IA
0041			5	31						Mesolithic
0044					1	4				LBA or IA
0047	1	5			1	34				IA
0050	5	402					1	1		IA
0051									Fe: 1 (43g)	
Total	**8**	**467**	**18**	**43**	**3**	**39**	**2**	**2**		

Table 1. Finds quantities.

4.2. Pottery

Eight sherds of hand-made Iron Age pottery were collected from three contexts in two features, both of them pits.

Pit 0039 (fill 0040) contained two undecorated bodysherds. The first is large (53g) and sand-tempered with sparser large chunks (up to 6mm) of subangular opaque white quartz. The sherd is undecorated with smoothed brown surfaces and a dark grey core. The second is small (7g), quartz sand and organic tempered, with a patchy brown-red external surface and dark grey core and internal surface.

The top fill of Pit 0046 (0047) contained a medium quartz sand and organic tempered body sherd (5g) with occasional larger (2mm) angular chunks of opaque white quartz. The sherd is undecorated with dark grey brown surfaces, brown margins and core. The lower fill (0050) contained a large base and bodysherds (402g) from a single large vessel, a jar. The base diameter is 150mm and 35% of its circumference is present. The fabric has medium quartz sand tempering with occasional larger pieces of angular opaque white quartz (up to 2mm) and other rounded larger grains of translucent brown quartz. The basal exterior is brown and the external walls of the vessel are dark grey/black. The external surface is burnished and there is a group of five incised lines on a sherd from higher up the vessel wall.

4.3. Fired clay

Eighteen fragments of fired clay (43g) were collected from the upper layers of pit 0039 (0040 and 0041). Small fragments of buff and orange-coloured fired clay were collected from layer 0040. One piece has a smoothed surface and may be the remains of daub. Fragments of a larger unabraded piece of buff-coloured daub were collected from lower layer 0041. The piece has a roughly-smoothed surface and a round-sectioned wattle impression on the other side. It has a fine matrix and the fabric is light and 'corky' with many voids.

4.4. Metalwork

A flat fragment of iron was collected from pit 0046 (0051). The piece is 25mm wide, 100mm long and *c.* 2-3mm thick and its function is unknown.

4.5. Flint

by Colin Pendleton

Two flint flakes were collected from pit 0039. The first is a small blade or long flake from the top fill of 0039 (0040). The piece is snapped and patinated and is probably Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age. The second is a squat flake with an obtuse striking platform from the lower fill (0044). A second flake has been removed from its dorsal face which is also squat, with a hinge fracture. The flake may be partially patinated on the dorsal face but not where the second flake was removed which suggests possible re-use of the earlier flake, probably during the later Bronze Age or Iron Age.

A partially-patinated end scraper on a broad flake was collected from the upper fill of pit 0046 (0047) and is probably Neolithic or Early Bronze Age.

4.6. Burnt stone

A flat fragment of fire-blackened sandstone was collected from pit 0039 (fill 0040).

4.7. Charcoal

Two small fragments of charcoal were collected from pit 0039 (fill 0040) and pit 46 (fill 0050).

4.8. Discussion of the finds evidence

Although limited, the finds assemblage indicates activity on this site during the early and later prehistoric periods. The worked flint includes patinated flakes which could be Mesolithic and an

unpatinated flake and the re-use of an earlier flake in the later period may be Bronze Age or Iron Age. The pottery is not particularly diagnostic, but the sand-tempered fabrics and limited decoration suggest a later Iron Age date for the assemblage and dates the infilling of the two features

5. Discussion

The previous evaluation of the site indicated that any archaeology on the site would probably be widely dispersed and of prehistoric date. The nature of the soil stripping meant that monitoring was difficult and some features may have been missed but it appears to confirm that only an isolated scatter of features existed on the site, with two more pits being identified in addition to those features seen in the evaluation.

The three flint flakes are slight evidence of a low level of early prehistoric activity from the Mesolithic to Bronze Age periods, with two flakes being residual deposits within the fills. The third flakes reworking may be broadly contemporary with the period of the pits.

These two pits, which appear to be contemporary and of an Iron Age date, show evidence of being open over a period of time as they have been gradually infilled with a sequence of probably natural and occupation deposits. Together with the features seen in the evaluation, they are a further indication of a low level of domestic occupation activity on the site in the Iron Age period, dispersed over a broad area.

References

Craven, J,. 2004. *'The Island', Marston's Pit, Cavenham Heath Quarry. CAM 043.* SCCAS Report No. 2004/171.

Gill, D,. 1998. *Cavenham Quarry Extension, Area P46 and C2 North. CAM 040.* SCCAS Report No. 98/17.