

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/144

58 Little Eriswell, Eriswell ERL 208

A. Tester
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HER Information

Planning Application No: F/2006/0642/Ful

Date of Fieldwork: May 2009

Grid Reference: TL 7205 7966

Funding Body: Mr Taylor

Curatorial Officer: Jess Tipper

Project Officer: Andrew Tester

Oasis Reference: 1-64813

Digital report submitted to Archaeological Data Service:
<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

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Summary

The excavation of footing trenches for a single storey extension to 58 Little Eriswell exposed a range of features including an Iron Age ditch, and a ditch, three shallow pits and two postholes that are all thought to be Early Roman. Three further ditches, dated to the post-medieval period probably relate to the drainage of the fens for agriculture.

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1. Introduction

Archaeological monitoring was carried out during the excavation of footing trenches for a single storey extension to 58 Little Eriswell, Mildenhall. The monitoring was a condition relating to application F/2006/0642/FUL in a Brief and Specification for the work by Jess Tipper of the Conservation Team at Suffolk County Council. The work was commissioned by Mr Taylor, the occupier.

2. Geology and topography

The site lies at c. 5.5m AOD on land dropping away to the west towards the fen. The surface soils are peaty over sand with underlying geology of fen peats with glacio-fluvial drift. The Cut off Channel lies 350m to the west, which provides enhanced drainage through the Fens.

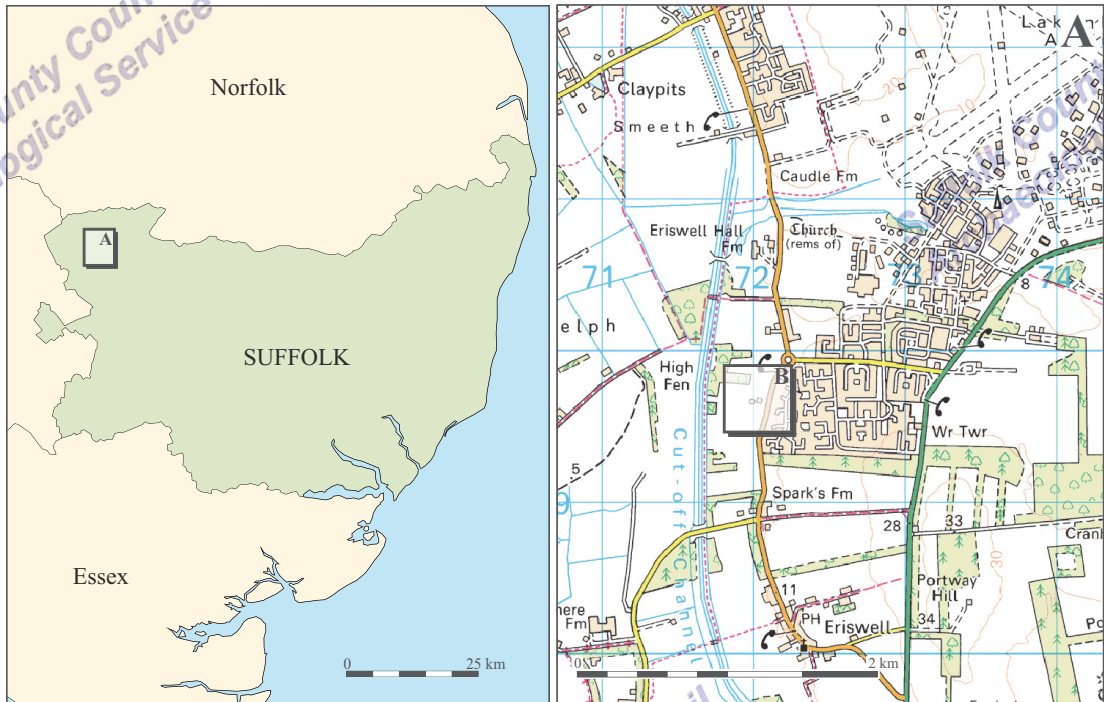
3. Archaeological and historical background

Interest in the site is generated by the wealth of prehistoric activity recorded from the fen edge and particularly the number of Late Iron Age and Roman sites recorded close by. The most significant of these are the excavations that took place on RAF Lakenheath, including Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon settlement sites and the large Anglo-Saxon cemetery (Caruth and Anderson, 2006)

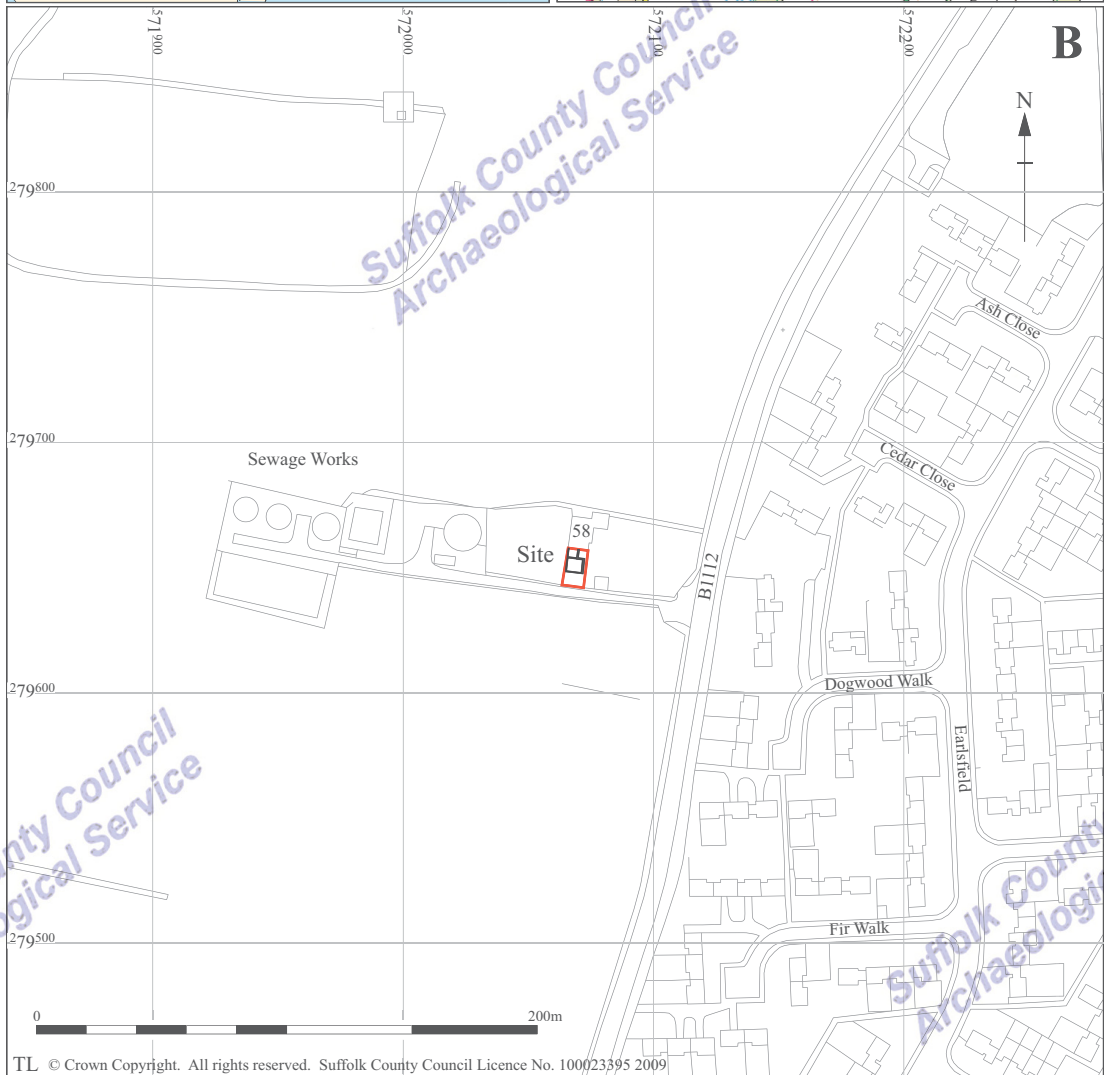
4. Methodology

Following a preliminary visit to the site to monitor the surface topsoil strip and demolition of the existing building, the excavation of the footing trenches was monitored and recorded over a single day. Attendance was continuous over a single day in May 2009 and sections were recorded and hand excavation carried out where features were identified. The trench was planned using tapes offset from the standing building and a single sequence continuous numbering system was used for recording. Digital photographs were taken and are included in the site archive. An Oasis online database form has been completed for this site. Suffolk c1-64813.

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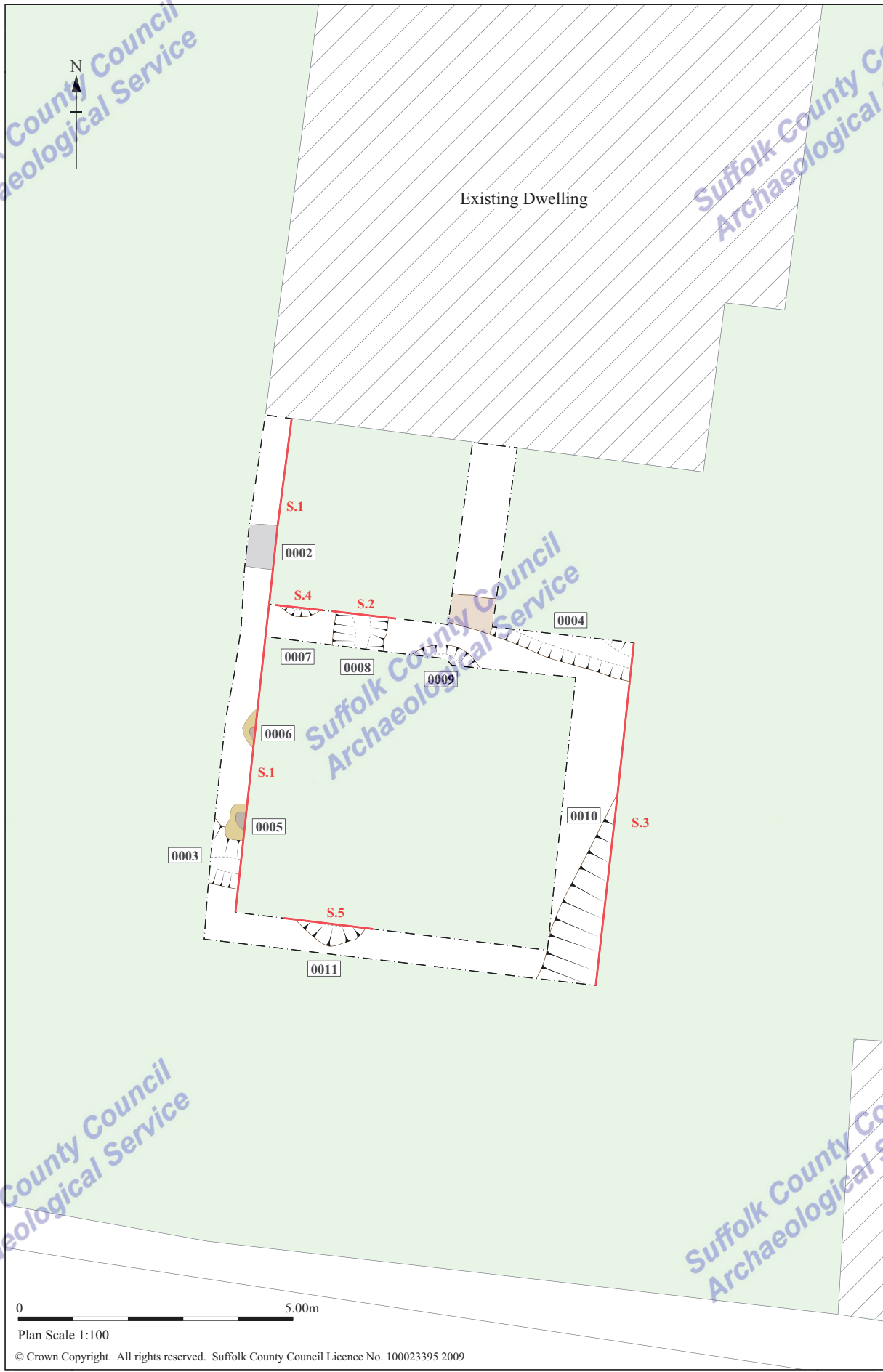
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Figure 1. Site location

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0 5.00m

Plan Scale 1:100

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Figure 2. Trench plan

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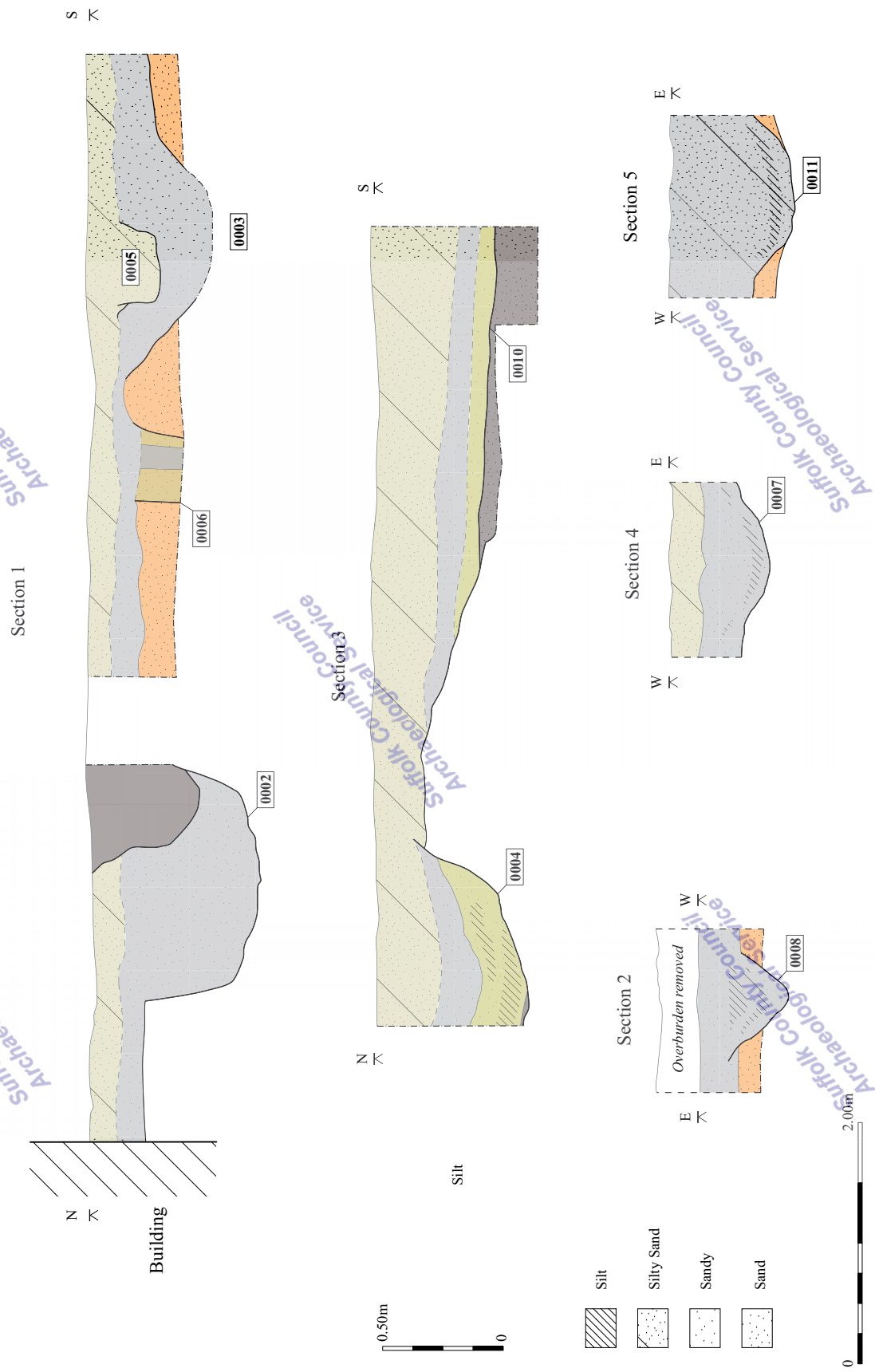


Figure 3. Sections
4

5. Results

A plan of the excavations is shown in figure 2 and the sections in figure 3. The features have been separated into three phases.

5.1 Iron Age

Linear feature 0003 has been placed in this phase and shallow scoop 0011, which may have been part of the same feature. 0003 was c.1.2m wide and c.0.75m deep. It was filled with mid grey sand. It is dated from the pottery but was also cut by posthole 0005. Scoop 0011 was also filled with pale grey sand and may have been the butt end of 0003.

5.2 Roman

Two postholes were identified in the eastern footing 0005 and 0006, the former cut into linear feature 0003, described above. 0005 was c.0.75m wide and 0.5m deep; it contained a dark stain, either from a post, or a post removal pit as did 0006. No finds were recovered and they are tentatively dated on their general appearance. A linear feature, 0008 was aligned north-south and was 1m wide and c.0.5m deep. It contained various lenses of sorted sand within the fill indicating that it had been an open ditch. Adjoining this ditch was a shallow scoop, the edge of which appeared in the side of the trench. An insufficient area of this feature was exposed to draw conclusions about its form and general shape but on general appearance it is suggested that it was Roman in date.

5.3 Post-medieval

A square-sided ditch 0002, which was aligned east-west, was identified in the north-west trench and was traced eastward being renumbered as 0004. It was filled with dark brown, peaty sand. It was cut by a modern pipe trench. It produced post-medieval finds (context 0002). Similar features to this have been excavated on RAF Mildenhall and are interpreted as part of a drainage scheme dating from the c.18th century to reclaim the land for agriculture following the rise in the water table after the end of the Roman period that submerged much of the fen edge.

6. Finds

Cathy Tester.

Introduction

Finds were collected from five contexts, as shown in the table below.

Ctxt	Pottery		Flint		Burnt flint		Animal bone		Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	
0002	1	103			2	12	2	30	PMed
0003	1	21	2	33					E/M IA
0004	13	112					35	842	M/LC1
0008	1	7							Med
0010							13	96	
Total	16	243	2	33	2	12	50	968	

Table 1. Finds quantities

Pottery

Sixteen sherds of pottery weighing 243g were recovered from four contexts. The assemblage includes prehistoric, Roman and post-Roman pieces but the majority of it is Roman. The pottery was quantified by count and weight and catalogued with details of fabric and form. Each sherd family was given a separate record in the database table and details by context are shown in the table below.

Ctxt	Fabric	Sherd	No	Wt/g	Notes	Spotdate
0002	GRE	r	1	103	Pancheon rim (c.440mm,7%)	16-18th C
0003	F1	ba	1	21	Jar base	E-Mid IA
0004	BSW	b	1	4	Abraded. horiz groove	M/LC1
	BSW	b	1	10	Abraded pocked surface	Rom
	BSW	r	3	30	Cam 218 jar rim 11 (180mm, 11%) 'romanising' fabric	MC1
	BUF	r	5	30	Ring-necked flagon rim and neck (55mm,100%)	Rom
	GMG	r	1	24	Jar, rim 5 (220mm,10%) cordoned	M/LC1-
	GX	b	2	14	From 2 separate vessels	Rom
0008	MCW	b	1	7	Soot/res on exterior surf.	12-14th C
Total			16	243		

Table 2. Pottery catalogue by context

Prehistoric pottery

A single flat jar base sherd in a hand-made flint and sand tempered fabric (F1) from ditch 0003 is most likely early to mid Iron Age in date.

Late Iron Age/Roman pottery

Thirteen sherds of wheel-made Late-Iron Age/Roman pottery weighing 112g and representing seven vessels were collected from ditch 0004. Four local or regional coarseware fabrics were identified and all appear to be early. Black-surfaced wares (BSW) include a *Cam* 218 cordoned carinated and jar or bowl made in a 'romanising'

fabric which probably dates to the decades either side of the Conquest. Two other BSW sherds are less diagnostic but probably of similar date. A rim sherd from a grey micaceous ware (GMG) jar with a cordoned shoulder is probably early as well (mid or late 1st century). A ring-necked flagon rim and neck in a miscellaneous buff ware fabric (BUF) is also early. Two non-diagnostic miscellaneous sandy greyware (GX) bodysherds are also present.

Post-Roman pottery

The Post-Roman pottery includes a medieval coarseware (MCW) bodysherd (late 12th to 14th C.) which was a single find from ditch 0008 and a large glazed red earthenware (GRE) bowl or pancheon rim which is post-medieval (16th to 18th century) from ditch 0002.

Flint

Colin Pendleton

Two unpatinated struck flint flakes were collected from ditch 0003. The first is a squat hinge-fractured flake, with a natural striking platform and 50% cortex. The second is a long flake with a sub-triangular cross-section and parallel flake scars on the dorsal face. Both can only be broadly dated as later prehistoric, Bronze Age or Iron Age and were found in association with an early or mid Iron Age flint-tempered jar base.

Burnt flint

Two small fragments (12g) of burnt flint were collected from ditch 0002.

Animal bone

Fifty fragments of animal bone weighing 968g were collected from three contexts. Overall, the bone is in good condition but the group is too small for any conclusions regarding its composition to be made. Two meat-producing species were identified, cow and sheep. The largest group by weight (842g) came from ditch 0004 and consists of a substantial proportion of a single cow skull and mandible found in association with a group of earlier Roman pottery. The group of bone from ditch 0010 includes ten complete elements, scapula, humerus, metacarpals and ribs from a single very young (less than a month?) sheep. An adult sheep scapula and a cow mandible and long bone

fragment were also found in ditch 0010 but there were no associated datable finds. Two cow teeth were found in ditch 0002 with associated post-medieval pottery.

Discussion of the finds

The monitoring produced a small assemblage of finds from four features, all ditches, which indicate activity on this site during the prehistoric, Roman and post-Roman periods. Prehistoric finds include struck flint flakes which belong to the later prehistoric period (Bronze Age or Iron Age) and a single sherd of early or mid Iron Age flint-tempered pottery which were found together in ditch 0003. A small late Iron Age/Roman pottery assemblage from ditch 0004 consists of wheel-made coarsewares which appear to be early, none of them have to be later than mid or late 1st century AD.

Later finds include single sherds of medieval coarseware pottery from ditch 0008 and post-medieval earthenware from ditch 0002.

8. General Discussion

Despite the small scale of the monitoring there is clear evidence that there was both prehistoric and Romano-British occupation. This is typical of a number of such sites along the river valleys leading into the fens and along the fen edge itself. The remains are especially dense on this site, however, and include postholes which are likely to be evidence for habitation on the site. The finds suggest these features were early in the Roman occupation, dating from the 1st century AD, although it is uncertain how representative the finds are of the area as a whole.

Andrew Tester

September 2009

9. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds archive store

Digital archive: T:\arc\archive field projects\Eriswell\ ERL 208

The finds are located in the Bury St Edmunds Store in the parish box at H / 80 / 2

10. List of contributors and acknowledgements

The project was funded by Mr Taylor and the work was carried out in accordance with a brief and specification by Dr Jess Tipper (SCCAS Conservation team). The fieldwork was carried out and the project managed by Andrew Tester. Graphics were prepared by Crane Begg and finds processing carried out by Rebekah Pressler and the specialist finds report compiled by Cathy Tester. Other specialist advice was provided by Colin Pendleton and Richenda Goffin.

11. Bibliography

Caruth, J., Anderson S., 2005, Archaeological assessment report. 'RAF Lakenheath, Anglo-Saxon cemeteries ERL 104, ERL046 and ERL114. A Report on the Archaeological Excavations, 1997-2002. (unpublished assessment report).

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Appendix 1 Brief and Specification

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development

58 LITTLE ERISWELL, ERISWELL, MILDENHALL, IP27 9AY

Although this document is fundamental to the work of the specialist archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that certain of its requirements are likely to impinge upon the working practices of a [general building contractor](#) and may have financial implications.

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission to erect a single storey extension at 58 Little Eriswell, Eriswell (TL 7205 7966), has been granted by Forest Heath District Council conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application F/2006/0642/FUL). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 This application lies in an area of archaeological importance recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record. There are prehistoric find spots and find scatters to the south and west (ERL 052, ERL 066, ERL 067 and ERL 068), including a possible Bronze Age hoard (ERL 076), that are indicative of further occupation deposits. There is high potential for encountering prehistoric occupation deposits at this location. In addition, the new extension is located on the site of an earlier building, apparently dating from the early seventeenth century, which was destroyed by fire several years ago. The proposed works would cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.
- 1.3 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 contractor 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.
- 1.4 Before commencing work the project manager must carry out a risk assessment and liaise with the site owner, client and the Conservation Team of SCCAS in ensuring that all potential risks are minimised.

2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which are damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for prehistoric occupation of the site.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the excavation of building footing trenches and the provision of services for the extension, which measures 9.30 x 7.00m in area. These, and the upcast soil, are to be observed after they have been excavated by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation (see 4.3).

3. Arrangements for Monitoring

- 3.1 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the archaeological contractor) who must be approved by the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (SCCAS) - see 1.3 above.
- 3.2 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of SCCAS 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. The method and form of development will also be monitored to ensure that it conforms to previously agreed locations and techniques upon which this brief is based.
- 3.3 Allowance must be made to cover archaeological costs incurred in monitoring the development works by the contract archaeologist. The size of the contingency should be estimated by the approved archaeological contractor, based upon the outline works in paragraph 2.3 of the Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and time-table.
- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered the Conservation Team of SCCAS must be informed immediately. Amendments to this specification may be made to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

4. Specification

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Council Conservation Team archaeologist and the contracted 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity must be given to the 'observing archaeologist' to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.
- 4.3 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.4 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum.
- 4.5 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. 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.
- 4.6 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with the Conservation Team of SCC Archaeological Service during the course of the evaluation).
- 4.7 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.

5. Report Requirements

- 5.1 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*, particularly Appendix 3. This must be deposited with the County Sites and Monuments Record within 3 months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.

- 5.2 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. Account must be taken of any requirements the County SMR may have regarding the conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage of excavated material and the archive.
- 5.3 A report on the fieldwork and archive, consistent with the principles of *MAP2*, particularly Appendix 4, must be provided. The report must summarise the methodology employed, the stratigraphic sequence, and give a period by period description of the contexts recorded, and an inventory of finds. The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its interpretation. 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 value of the results, and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).
- 5.4 A summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, must be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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: Dr Jess Tipper

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E-mail: jess.tipper@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk

Date: 2 October 2006

Reference: /58LittleEriswell-Eriswell2006

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.

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.

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Appendix 2 Context List

Context	Identifier	Description
0001	Unstratified	Unstratified finds
0002	Ditch	Cut and fill. Steep sided with flat bottom. Brown peaty sand fill, cut by modern drain (continues as 0004).
0003	Ditch	Cut and fill. Shallow profile with a grey sand fill. Fill looks to be early?
0004	Ditch	Cut and fill. Probably continuation of 0002
0005	Posthole	Cut and fill. Grey sand with post pipe, similar to 0006.
0006	Posthole	Cut and fill. Grey sand with post pipe, similar to 0005
0007	Pit	Cut and fill. Shallow cut dipping beyond section. The tip lines suggest this was an open feature that infilled naturally.
0008	Ditch	Cut and fill. Small steep sided. Cut by 0002.
0009	Pit?	Cut and fill. Shallow sloping sides running beneath baulk
0010	Ditch	Cut and fill. Oblique section across ditch. Similar fill to 0002 and 0004, probably part of same ditch system.
0011	Pit?	Cut and fill. Shallow sloping sides only c.0.1m deep. Could be the butt end of Ditch 0003 as the fill was very similar but uncertain.