

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/283

Suffolk Water Park, Little Blakenham BLL 012

HER Information

Planning Application No: MS/3400/08

Date of Fieldwork: 12th – 15th October

Grid Reference: TM 1230 4879

Funding Body: Quiet Sports

Curatorial Officer: Edward Martin

Project Officer: Stuart Boulter

Oasis Reference: suffolkc1- 66549

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

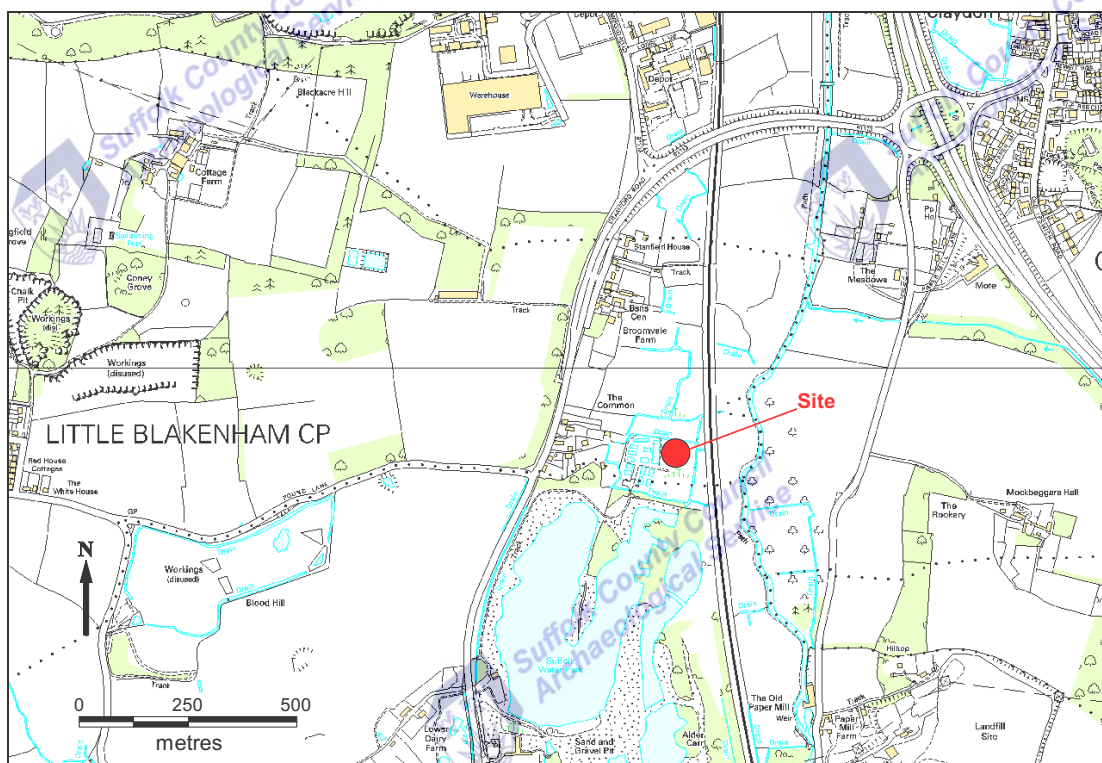


Summary

Little Blakenham, Suffolk Water Park (TM 1230 4879; BLL 012) Archaeological monitoring was carried out during the excavation of the first of four proposed new fish ponds at Suffolk Water Park, Little Blakenham. One incised feature was recorded, a large very recent pit at the northern end of the pond. Otherwise, the horizontal stratigraphy encountered was laterally consistent throughout the excavated area comprising of c.0.8m of heavy clay soil over c.0.2m of brown humic material, over c.0.4m of homogenous dark grey clay/silt, with some inclusions of vegetation, which in turn overlay the naturally occurring sand subsoil. The water table was encountered approximately 0.3m above the level of the sandy subsoil. No artefactual evidence was recovered from any of the layers. (Stuart Boulter for Suffolk County Council and Quiet Sports)

1. Introduction and methodology

The consent for Planning Application MS/3400/08, covering the excavation of four new fish ponds at Suffolk Water Park, Little Blakenham (Figures 1 & 2) (TM 1230 4879), was conditional on the applicant providing for a programme of archaeological works. In the first instance, these were to involve the continuous monitoring of the excavation of the ponds.



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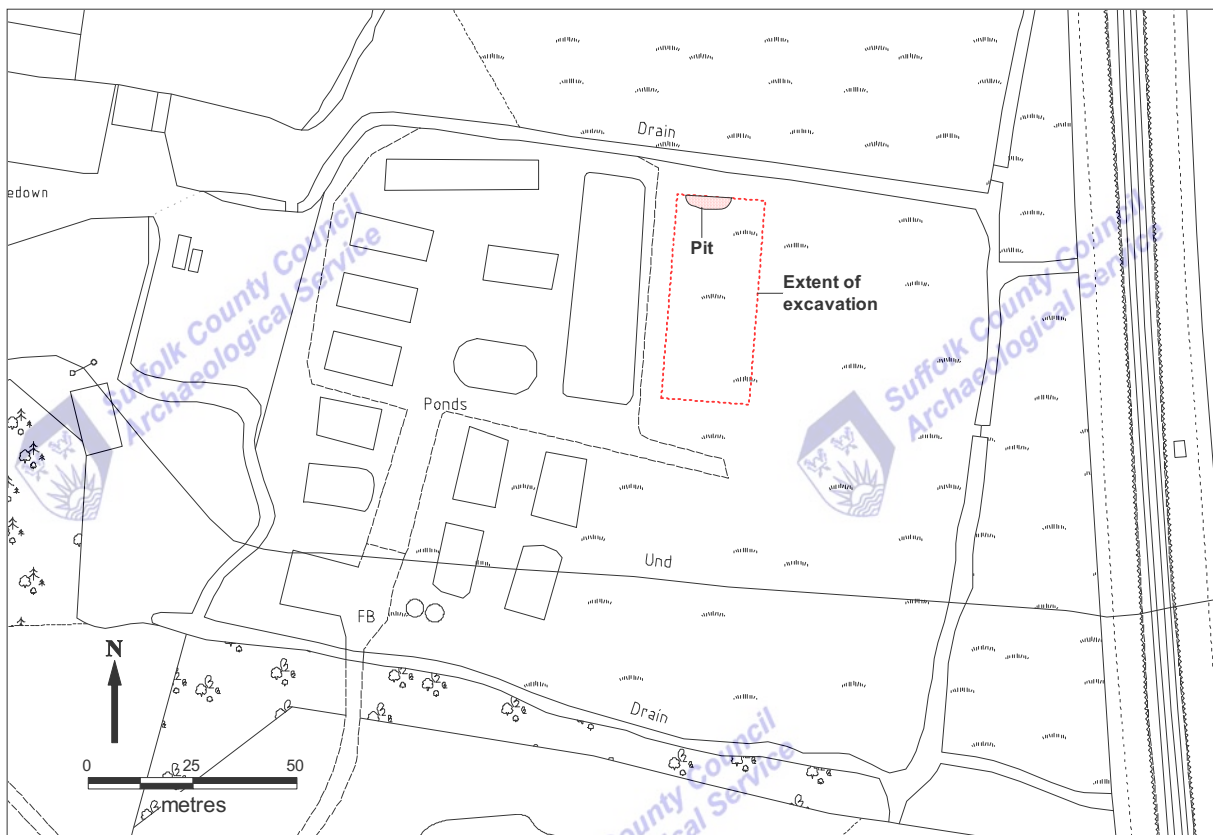
Figure 1. Site location

Edward Martin of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Conservation Team, in his role as Archaeological Advisor to the Local Planning Authority, wrote a Brief and Specification document detailing the scope of the required archaeological works (Appendix 1). Subsequently, Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Field Team was commissioned by the applicant (Quiet Sports) to undertake the monitoring, the fieldwork for which was carried out between 12th and 15th October 2009.

As the excavation of the four ponds would be undertaken as a staged process over some considerable time, it was agreed that the results of the first pond would be presented in a stand-alone report (this document) with a view to reassessing the level of the monitoring requirement for the remaining ponds.

2. Results

Figure 2 shows the extent of the excavated area.



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Figure 2. Location of the excavated pond

By the time of the first monitoring visit made on Monday 12th of October, c.0.8m of overburden had already been removed over an area of 21m by 49m. Comprising a heavy clay soil (0002), this layer was clearly a relatively recent import with common inclusions of brick and tile fragments, glass, plastic and asbestos sheet.

At this juncture, one incised feature was visible, a large pit (0003) at the northern end of the pond (Figure 2 & Plate 1) which could clearly be seen to cut through layer 0002 up to the surface of the site. The fill (0004) comprised stiff yellow clay with inclusions of brick and plastic.

All of the following sequence of layers recorded were found to be laterally persistent throughout the area of the excavation. With the exception of the imported layer (0002), these were considered to be consistent with what would be expected to occur on a low lying water meadow site.

Layer 0002 overlay c.0.3m of brown humic material (0005) mixed with brown silty clay with a mat of vegetation at the interface between the two layers. The latter was interpreted as the vegetation, primarily grasses and sedge that were growing on the site immediately prior to the introduction of layer 0002.

Layer 0005 was found to overlay c.0.5m of homogenous dark grey clay/silt (0006), with some included vegetation, which, in turn, gave way to the naturally occurring sand subsoil (0007). The water table was encountered within layer 0005, approximately 0.3m up from the base of the excavation.

Other than the modern material seen in pit fill 0004 and layer 0002, which was not retained, no artefactual evidence was found during the monitoring.



Plate 1. Pit 0003



Plate 2. The excavated sequence

3. Conclusions and recommendations for further work

The monitoring works on the first of the four ponds have facilitated the characterisation of the type of deposits that are likely to occur throughout the wider area of the site. However, while no features of archaeological interest were revealed during the soil-strip, their presence elsewhere on the site cannot entirely be ruled out. On that basis, it is recommended that while the continuous monitoring specified may not be necessary for the remaining three ponds, that periodic site visits are made while the excavation work is in progress, with an agreed contingency budget in place should archaeology be uncovered.

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Environment & Transport Dpt.
Suffolk County Council
November 2009



Appendix 1 Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring

SUFFOLK WATER PARK, BRAMFORD ROAD, LITTLE BLAKENHAM (3400/08) TM 123 487

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 for the excavation of 4 fish stock ponds at the Suffolk Water Park has been granted by mid Suffolk District Council conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (planning application 3400/08).
- 1.2 Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by continuous archaeological monitoring .
- 1.3 This site is located in the floodplain of the River Gipping and riverside locations such as this have considerable potential for the retention of archaeological remains preserved through waterlogging and through incorporation in peat deposits. There are also a number of previously recorded archaeological sites and finds of prehistoric and medieval date in the areas to the south and west (Suffolk Historic Environment Record nos. BLL 001, BRF 016, BRF 020, and BRF 022). The proposed works would cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.
- 1.4 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 (9-10 The Churchyard, 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.
- 1.5 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 (SCCAS/CT) in ensuring that all potential risks are minimised.
- 1.6 All arrangements for the excavation 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 by the archaeological contractor with the commissioning body.

- 1.7 The responsibility for identifying any constraints on field-work (e.g. Scheduled Monument status, Listed Building status, public utilities or other services, tree preservation orders, SSSIs, wildlife sites &c., ecological considerations rests with the commissioning body and its archaeological contractor. The existence and content of the archaeological brief does not over-ride such constraints or imply that the target area is freely available.
- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (revised 2001) should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

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 significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the excavation of the fish ponds. Any ground works, and also the upcast soil, are to be closely monitored during and after stripping by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation.

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 SCCAS/CT.
- 3.2 The developer or his contracted archaeologist will give 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. 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 this Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and time-table.
- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered SCCAS/CT 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 SCCAS/CT and the contracted archaeologist to allow archaeological monitoring of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity must be given to the contracted 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 scale of 1:20 or 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development, 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.
- 4.4 A photographic record of the work is to be made of any archaeological features, consisting of both monochrome photographs and colour transparencies/high resolution digital images.

- 4.5 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum.
- 4.6 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. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from Rachel Ballantyne, 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.
- 4.7 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with SCCAS/CT during the course of the monitoring).
- 4.8 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Historic Environment 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 Historic Environment Record within three months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.2 The project manager must consult the County Historic Environment Record Officer 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.
- 5.3 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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 proper deposition (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>).
- 5.6 The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County Historic Environment Record 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.
- 5.7 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).
- 5.8 An unbound copy of the assessment report, clearly marked DRAFT, must be presented to both SCCAS/CT and English Heritage (John Ette) for approval within six months of the completion of fieldwork unless other arrangements are negotiated with the project sponsor and SCCAS/CT.
- 5.9 Following acceptance, two copies of the assessment report should be submitted to SCCAS/CT and English Heritage. A single hard copy should be presented to the County Historic Environment Record as well as a digital copy of the approved report.

- 5.10 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.
- 5.11 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 Historic Environment Record. 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.
- 5.12 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.
- 5.13 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to County Historic Environment Record. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).



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Reference: SpecMon_SuffolkWaterPark_LBlakenham_09

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.