

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/042

Mildenhall Woods BMX Track MNL 626

HER Information

Planning Application No: F/2009/0559/FUL

Date of Fieldwork: 2nd, 3rd and 26th March 2010

Grid Reference: TL 719 764

Funding Body: Forest Heath District Council

Curatorial Officer: Dr. Jess Tipper

Project Officer: Mo Muldowney

Oasis Reference: Suffolkc1_75344

Summary

An archaeological monitoring was carried out in Mildenhall Woods, Mildenhall and identified a single narrow, irregular linear feature of unknown function and origin.

1. Introduction and methodology

Two stages of monitoring were carried out in Mildenhall Woods, Mildenhall (Fig. 1) during groundworks associated with the construction of a BMX track (Planning Application F/2009/0559FUL). The work was carried out on 2nd, 3rd and 26th March 2010 and was undertaken in accordance with a Brief and Specification produced by Dr. Jess Tipper of the Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service, Conservation Team (SCCAS/CT).

The land lies at a height of approximately 9m OD and is locally very undulating. It is largely covered by a plantation of pine trees, with birch, scrub and reed grass in the lower lying marshy areas.

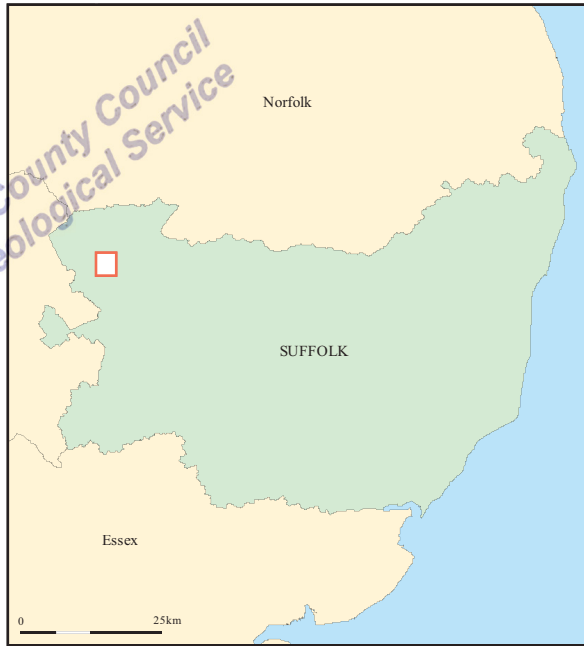
Previous work in the area consisted of an evaluation carried out by SCCAS (Caruth 1994) ahead of a proposed relief road through Mildenhall Woods, which ran less than 20m to the south-west of the subject site. The closest trench to the monitoring (12) did not contain any archaeological features.

Observations were made of the mechanical stripping of the main BMX Track area, the Dirt Jump Area, the Pump Track Loop and the MTB Trial (Fig. 2). On average, these areas were reduced by between 0.1m and 0.3m.

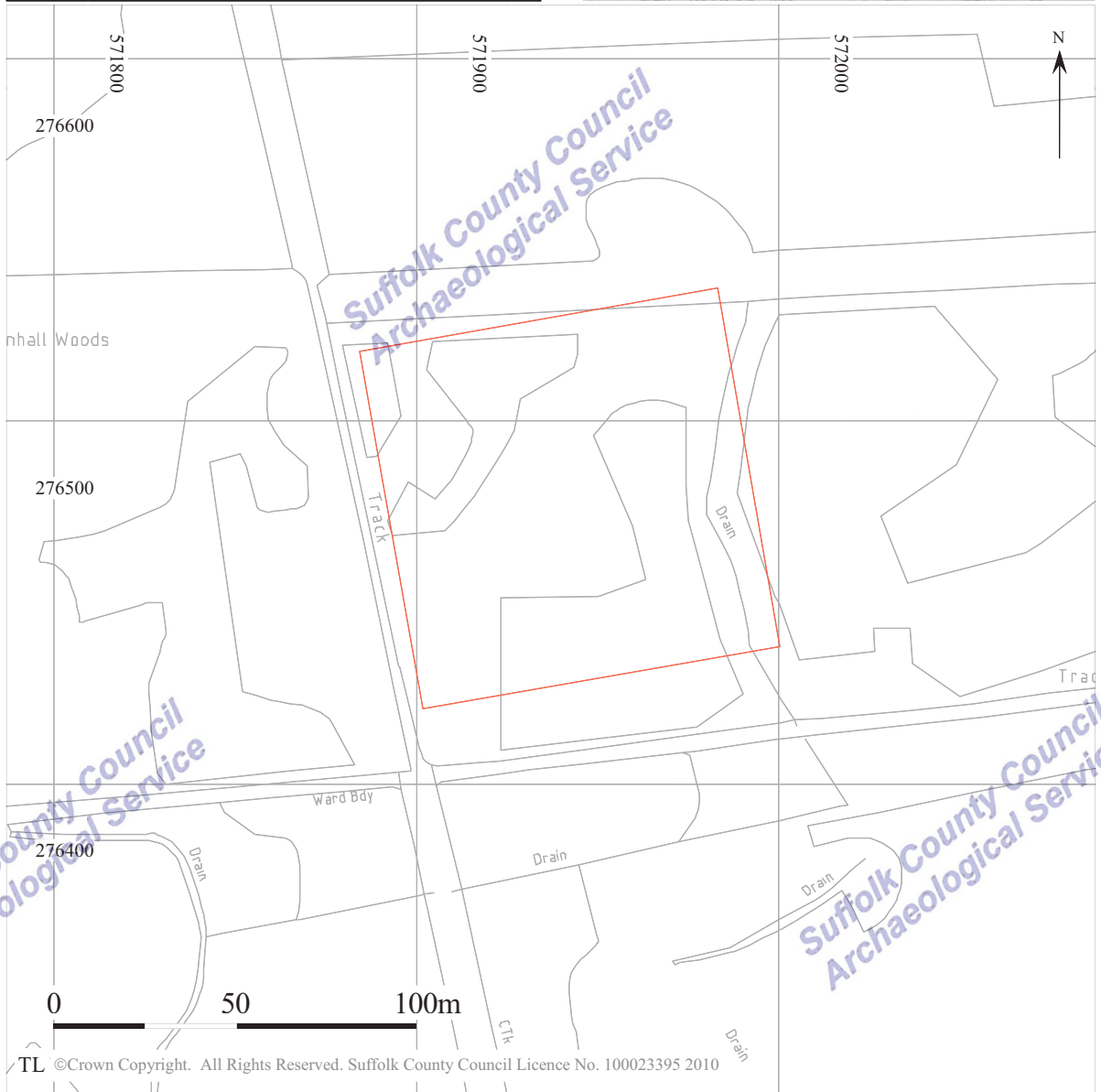
A drawn record of exposed deposits was created at a scale of 1:50 and all records were written on SCCAS *pro forma* sheets. A plan of the stripped areas was produced using the main contractor's technical plans. A colour photographic record was taken using a high-resolution (12 megapixel) digital camera.

Metal-detection was not carried out and no environmental samples were taken.

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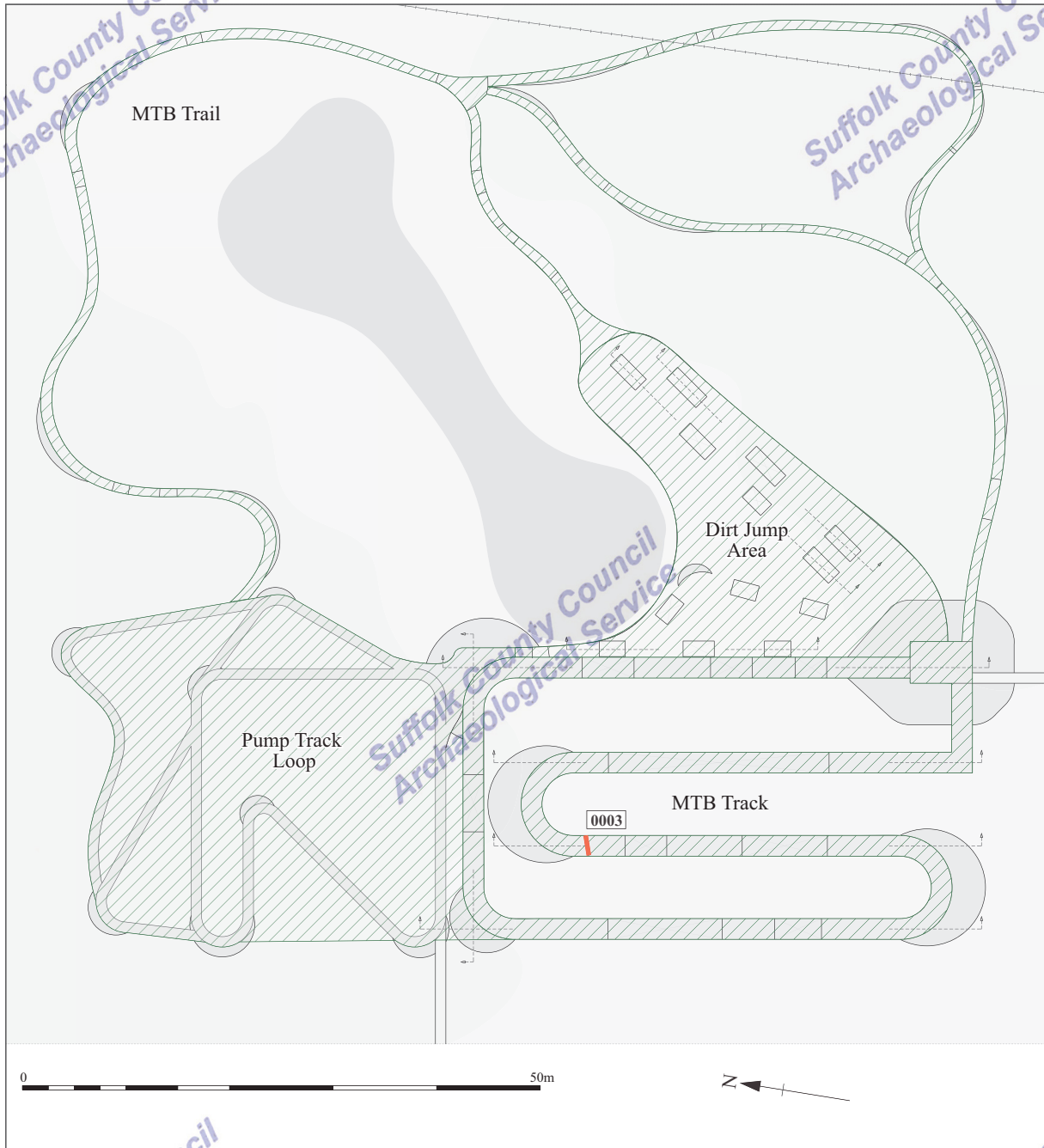
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Figure 1. Site location

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Figure 2. Plan of the stripped and monitored areas of the BMX Facility, showing the location of linear feature 0003

The site archive is kept in the SCCAS main store at Bury St Edmunds under HER no. MNL 626 and a digital copy of the report has been submitted online to the Archaeological Data Service at: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

2. Results

No definite archaeological features were identified during the monitoring, although a single narrow, shallow linear feature was observed along the route of the BMX Track.

The underlying geology (0004) was mid yellow/grey sand and was only exposed in the internal north-west corner of the BMX Track, where the linear feature was identified.

Linear feature 0003 was oriented north-east to south-west. It was 3.5m long and was narrow (0.15m wide) and shallow (0.07m deep), with an irregular profile. The single fill 0002 was mid orange brown speckled sand. No finds were recovered. The linear feature was not visible to either the north-east or south-west, although the track was stripped to a similar level.

Topsoil 0001 was mottled mid and pale brownish grey sand, with occasional small patches of yellow sand where root disturbance had pushed the natural upwards. It overlay all other deposits and linear feature 0003.

3. Conclusion

The monitoring identified a single small, shallow and irregular linear feature of non-archaeological origin. It may have been caused by the action of large roots within the soft sandy soil. It lacked the humic material and charcoal which is so often present within archaeological features and also contained no finds. No burials were identified. The site is too far distant from the main focus of the known Anglo-Saxon cemetery (MNL 084), which lies approximately 300m to the north-west.

Mo Muldowney

April 2010

4. Bibliography

Caruth, J., 1994 *Mildenhall Relief Road, Holywell Row Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, MNL 084* SCCAS Unpublished client report

Appendix 1. Brief and Specification

Brief and Specification for Continuous Archaeological Recording

MILDENHALL WOODS, MILDENHALL (F/2009/0559/FUL)

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 construction of a BMX cycling facility within Mildenhall Woods, Suffolk (TL 719 764), has been granted by Forest Heath District Council conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (F/2009/0559/FUL).

1.2 Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by continuous archaeological recording during all groundworks (**Please contact the developer for an accurate plan of the development**).

1.3 This application lies within an area of archaeological potential recorded in the County Historic Environment Record. There is a known early Anglo-Saxon cemetery c. 300m to the west and a large Roman site c. 300m to the south. Other sites are also known to be scattered across the forest, but the area has not been the subject of previous systematic investigation. There is high potential for encountering early occupation deposits at this location. The proposed works will 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 (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 Following approval of the WSI, our office will advise the Local Planning Authority that an acceptable scheme of work is in place, and therefore we (will) have no objection to the work commencing. Neither this specification nor the WSI, however, is a sufficient basis for the discharge of the planning condition relating to archaeological investigation. Only the full implementation of the scheme, both completion of fieldwork and reporting based on the approved WSI, will enable SCCAS/CT to advise Forest Heath District Council that the condition has been adequately fulfilled and can be discharged.

1.6 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.

1.7 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.

1.8 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.

1.9 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.

1.10 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 Any ground works, and also the upcast soil, are to be closely monitored during and after stripping or excavation. 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 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.

4.7 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 SCCAS/CT 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. 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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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