

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/076

The Packing Shed, Weston Ditch, West Row, Mildenhall MNL 627

M. Muldowney
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HER Information

Planning Application No: Pre-determination (F/2009/0758/FUL)

Date of Fieldwork: 20th April 2010

Grid Reference: TL 665 760

Funding Body: Mrs Claire Norman

Curatorial Officer: Sarah Poppy

Project Officer: Mo Muldowney

Oasis Reference: Suffolkc1_76063

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation carried out at The Packing Shed, Weston Ditch, West Row, Mildenhall identified a possible ditch and pit (both undated, but probably modern) and a large solution hollow. No finds were recovered.

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1. Introduction

An evaluation was carried out at The Packing Shed, Weston Ditch, West Row, Mildenhall ahead of a proposed redevelopment of the current site (Pre-determination Planning application number (F/2009/0758/FUL)). The work was carried out on 20th April 2010 and undertaken in accordance with a Brief and Specification produced by Sarah Poppy of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team (SCCAS/CT).

The Packing Shed, Weston Ditch is located at the north-east edge of West Row, 200m north-west of the corner of The Green and Cow and Sheep Drove, north of Greenleas Farm (Fig. 1).

2. Geology and topography

The development area overlies chalky drift and chalk and lies on flat Fen Edge land at approximately 4m OD.

At the time of the evaluation, the land was grassed, bounded on the west and east sides by beech hedging and on the north side by trees. There was no physical south boundary to the site. The old Packing Shed stood on concrete and gravelled land to the immediate west of the development area and was not obviously in use.

3. Archaeological and historical background

The HER contained eleven entries (Table 1) that are located within a 0.5km radius of the development area. These are predominantly prehistoric in date, reflecting the sites' location on the Fen edge. Although it lies without the search limits, the additional entry relating to the Roman villa site to the west at Thistley Green has been included as it is an important element of the historic landscape here. Roman activity has been identified and recorded further to the east in West Row (for example, MNL 514 and MNL 612) and there is a fair possibility that it may extend westwards towards the Fen edge.

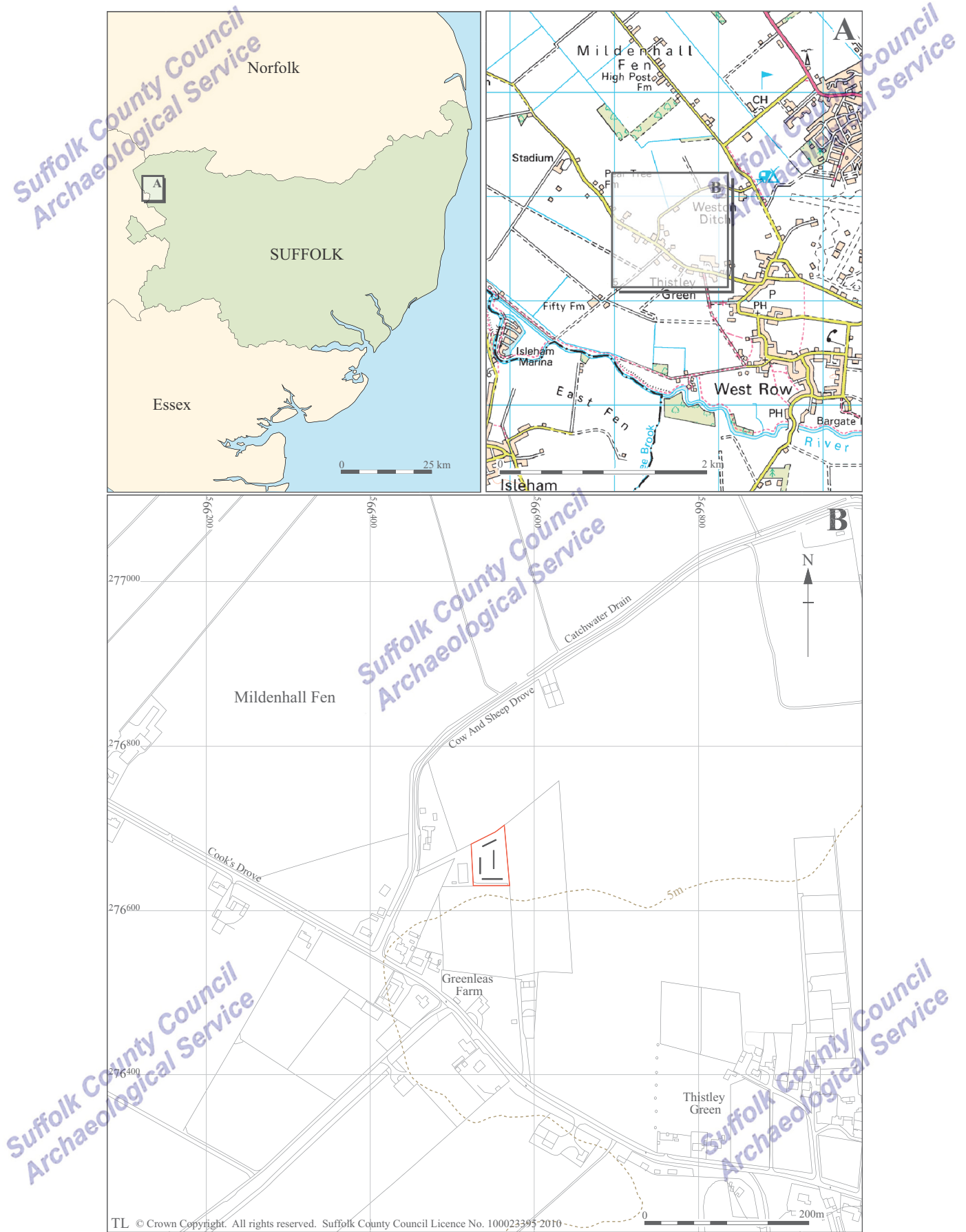


Figure 1. Site location, with the development area (red) and trenches (black)

HER Code	Description	Location	Date
MNL 028	Perforated red deer antler tool Bronze spearhead and flint and pot scatter Leaf-shaped arrowhead	480m NW	Meso BA Neo
MNL 064	Villa site	<1km E	Rom
MNL 285	Sherds of Beaker pottery and occasional worked flints	430m NW	BA
MNL 307	Probable flint dagger handle	440m N	BA
MNL 377	Worked flint scatter	440m W	Preh
MNL 378	Patch of burnt flint	430m W	Preh
MNL 379	Flint scatter	490m N	Preh
MNL 381	Worked flint scatter	260m W	Preh
MNL 385	Two sherds of pottery and a concentration of worked flint	400m NE	BA
MNL 453	Two small gullies identified during a Watching Brief	480m W	Preh
MNL 506	Complete flint axe	190m NE	Neo
MNL 529	Silver coin and bronze pin Bronze brooch found through metal detection	70m E	Rom Sax

Table 1. Summary of HER entries

4. Methodology

The Brief and Specification (Appendix 1) required that 5% of the development area should be subject to trial trenching. This equated to four trenches, each 1.6m wide, with a total length of 85m. The trenches were excavated by a JCB 3CX mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. All machining was constantly supervised by an experienced archaeologist.

All deposits were recorded using SCCAS *pro forma* sheets and plans and sections were hand-drawn at 1:50 and 1:20. A photographic record was kept of all features and deposits on both black and white film and a high resolution digital camera (314 dpi).

Levels were established using a dumpy level and metal-detecting was carried out over the trenches, spoil and unexcavated areas of the development area. No environmental samples were taken.

A digital copy of the report has been submitted to the Archaeological Data Service:

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

5. Results

The evaluation identified a possible ditch and pit in Trench 3 and a large solution hollow in the north-west corner of the development area.

Full context descriptions are presented in Appendix 2, and details of each trench are presented in Table 1, below.

The natural chalk 0007 was white to greyish white in colour and encountered at a minimum depth of 0.35m below the ground surface. It was truncated by all features.

Possible pit 0006 was truncated by possible ditch 0004 (see below). It was sub-circular in plan and had a 1.10m visible diameter and was 0.24m deep. It had an irregular profile, with steep, near vertical sides. One fill was observed from which no finds were recovered.



Plate 1. Trench 3: ditch 0004 and pit 0006 in background, facing north

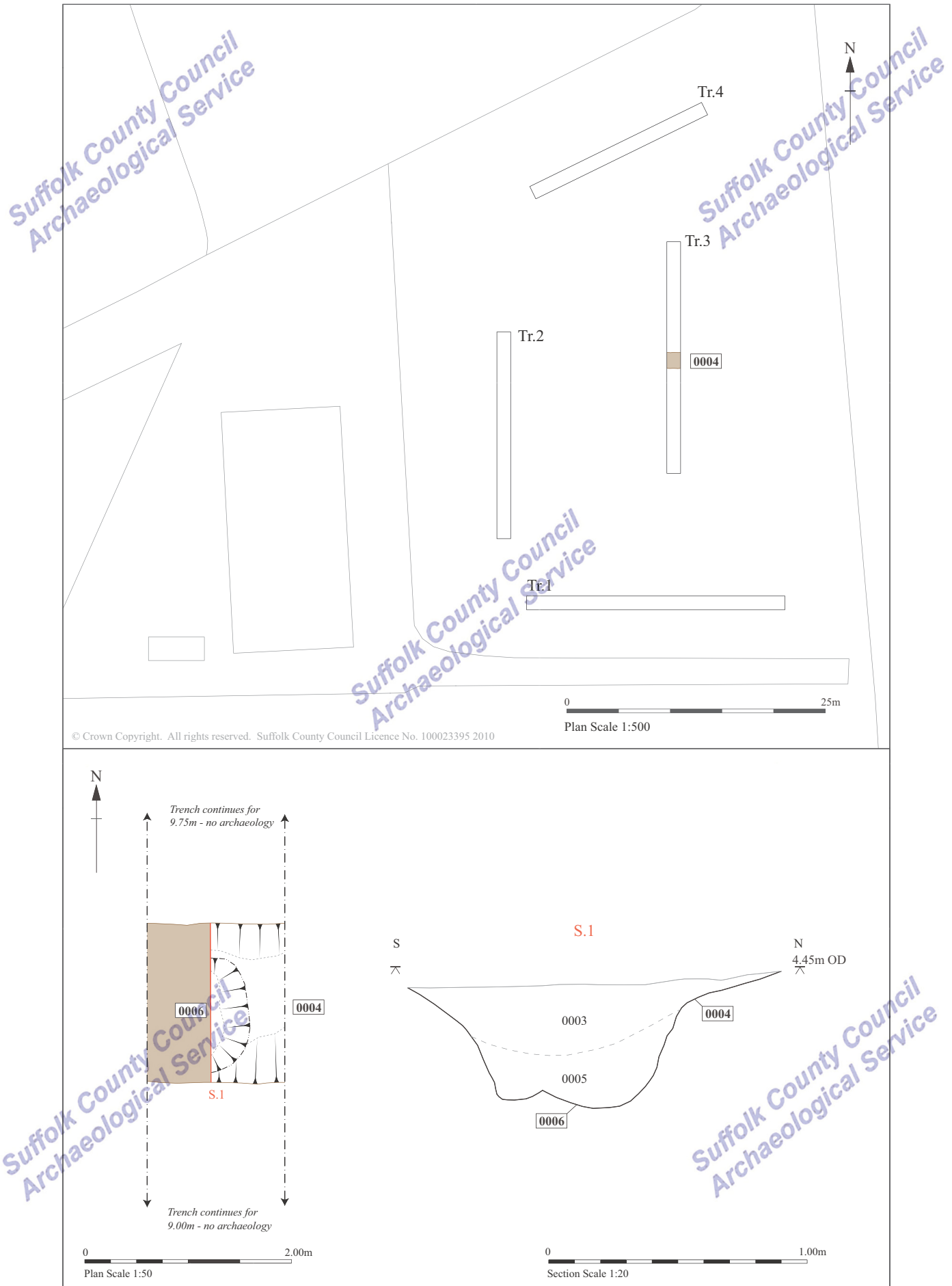


Figure 2. Trench locations and detailed plan and section of Trench 3

Possible ditch 0004 was oriented east to west and was 1.50m wide by 0.32m deep. It had a shallow, u-shaped, slightly asymmetrical profile. One fill was observed from which no finds were recovered, although it was noted that a moderate number of snail shells were present. The interface between ditch 0004 and pit 0006 was very indistinct to the point that it was not possible to clearly define the limits of each feature.

The solution hollow in the north-west corner of site (observed in Trenches 2, 3 and 4), was filled by 0002, mid orange brown silty clay. It was recorded at the north end of Trench 2 as having a depth of up to 0.72m. No finds were recovered.

Topsoil 0001 overlay all other deposits and was observed across the entire development area. It was mid brown silty sandy clay and had a maximum recorded depth of 0.45m.

Trench number	Feature number	Length (m)	Total depth (m)	Height top (m OD)	Height base (m OD)
1	-	25.00	0.36	5.08	4.73
2	-	21.00	0.38	5.09	4.70
3	0004; 0006	22.40	0.35	4.95	4.29
4	-	18.50	0.36	4.86	4.40

Table 2. Trench data

6. Discussion and conclusion

Two possible archaeological features were identified at The Packing Shed, a ditch and a pit, as well as a large solution hollow. The fills in both ditch 0004 and pit 0006 were similar and contained little organic material, except notably, a moderate amount of land snails that were not observed in any other deposit. The snails are more likely to indicate that the soil here was slightly wetter than in the surrounding area, rather than denoting any particular archaeological activity. Indeed, this is supported by the absence of any material that denotes such activity, for example, charcoal flecks, fragments of CBM or an increased humic content. Additionally, the linear feature did not continue or turn into any of the other trenches, which it might be expected to do were it a valid archaeological ditch. The most likely explanation is that these features were naturally derived or that they were short-lived, very recent disturbances, perhaps associated with a former use of the land.

Solution hollows are a frequent occurrence in chalky areas and it was not surprising to identify one at this location. Small, hand-dug interventions and a machine-sondage were excavated into the solution hollow and determined that it contained no finds or organic material and observed that the 'fill' looked naturally formed.

The evaluation has shown that no demonstrable archaeological remains are located in this area, and in particular that no Roman activity was identified, suggesting that the western limit of such activity does not extend this close to the Fen edge. Instead, possible modern interventions and a solution hollow were identified. This is perhaps surprising, given the site's location on the Fen edge, an area known to contain prehistoric and later remains, and because a small number of metal objects were found nearby. Despite the lack of archaeological features at the subject site, there is still a good possibility that there are other remains nearby.

7. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds. T:\Arc\ALL_site\Mildenhall, West Row\MNL 627 The Packing Shed, Weston Ditch

8. List of contributors and acknowledgements

The evaluation was carried out by Mo Muldowney and John Sims from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

The project was directed by Mo Muldowney and managed by Jo Caruth.

Illustrations and graphics were produced by Crane Begg. Richenda Goffin edited the report.

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

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Appendix 1. Brief and Specification

Brief and Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation

THE PACKING SHED, WEST ROW, MILDENHALL, SUFFOLK (F/2009/0758/FUL)

This is the brief for the first part of a programme of archaeological work. There is likely to be a requirement for additional work, this will be the subject of another brief.

The commissioning body should be aware that it may have Health & Safety and other responsibilities.

1. Background

- 1.1 A planning application (F/2009/0758/FUL) has been made for development at The Packing Shed, Weston Ditch, West Row (TL 665 760). **Please contact the applicant for an accurate plan of the site.**
- 1.2 The Planning Authority (Forest Heath District Council) has been advised by Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service that this proposal lies in an area of high archaeological importance. In order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required, prior to consideration of the application, to provide an archaeological impact assessment of the proposed site as suggested in DoE Planning Policy Guidance 16 (November 1990), para 21.
- 1.3 The proposed development area, which measures 0.27ha in area, is located to the north of The Green. It is situated on the fen margin, with soils of chalky drift and chalk (shallow loam over chalk) at an elevation of c. 5.00m AOD.
- 1.4 The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential, recorded in the County Historic Environment Record. Given the fen edge setting of the proposed development, the site has very high potential for the discovery of unknown but important archaeological remains. Finds already recovered from the site through metal detecting include an Anglo-Saxon brooch (indicative of burial remains) as well as Roman artefacts (PAS records SF8873, SF8864 and SF9155), indicating potential settlement activity. However this location has not been the subject of previous systematic investigation. The proposed works would cause significant ground disturbance with the potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.
- 1.5 The following archaeological evaluation work is required across the application area:
 - Linear trenched evaluation (5% sample of the proposed development area).
- 1.6 The results of this evaluation will enable the archaeological resource, both in quality and extent, to be accurately quantified. Decisions on the suitability of the area for development, and also the need for and scope of any mitigation measures, should there be any archaeological finds of significance, will be based upon the results of the evaluation and will be the subject of an additional specification.
- 1.7 All arrangements for the field evaluation 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 with the commissioning body.

- 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 Paper 14; 2003.
- 1.9 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 satisfy the requirements of the planning condition.
- 1.10 Before any archaeological site work can commence it is the responsibility of the developer to provide the archaeological contractor with either the contaminated land report for the site or a written statement that there is no contamination. The developer should be aware that investigative sampling to test for contamination is likely to have an impact on any archaeological deposit which exists; proposals for sampling should be discussed with the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of SCC (SCCAS/CT) before execution.
- 1.11 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.
- 1.12 Any changes to the specifications that the project archaeologist may wish to make after approval by this office should be communicated directly to SCCAS/CT and the client for approval.

2. Brief for the Archaeological Evaluation

- 2.1 Establish whether any archaeological deposit exists in the area, with particular regard to any which are of sufficient importance to merit preservation *in situ*.
- 2.2 Identify the nature, date and significance of any archaeological deposit (with reference to adjacent and regional sequences, and to national frameworks) within the application area, together with its likely extent, localised depth and quality of preservation.
- 2.3 Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking colluvial/alluvial deposits.
- 2.4 Establish the potential for the survival and significance of geoarchaeological and palaeoenvironmental evidence (with reference to adjacent and regional sequences, and to national frameworks).
- 2.5 Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological, geoarchaeological and palaeoenvironmental deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.
- 2.6 Evaluation is to proceed sequentially, with the results of each stage used to inform the project design for the further stages of evaluation.

- 2.7 This project will be carried through in a manner broadly consistent with English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (MAP2), all stages will follow a process of assessment and justification before proceeding to the next phase of the project. Field evaluation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive, and an assessment of potential. Any further excavation required as mitigation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive, and an assessment of potential, analysis and final report preparation may follow. Each stage will be the subject of a further brief and updated project design; this document covers only the evaluation stage.

- 2.8 The developer or his archaeologist will give SCCAS/CT (address as above) five working days notice of the commencement of fieldwork on the site, in order that the work of the archaeological contractor may be monitored.
- 2.9 If the approved evaluation design is not carried through in its entirety (particularly in the instance of trenching being incomplete) the evaluation report may be rejected. Alternatively the presence of an archaeological deposit may be presumed, and untested areas included on this basis when defining the final mitigation strategy.
- 2.10 Outline specifications for each element of the evaluation, which define certain minimum criteria, are set out below.

3. Specification: Trenched Evaluation

- 3.1 Trial trenches are to be excavated to cover 5% by area, which is c. 135m². These shall be positioned to sample all parts of the site. Linear trenches are thought to be the most appropriate sampling method. Trenches are to be a minimum of 1.80m wide unless special circumstances can be demonstrated; this will result in a minimum of 75m of trenching at 1.80m in width.
- 3.2 For mechanised excavation a toothless 'ditching bucket' at least 1.80m wide must be used. A scale plan showing the proposed locations of the trial trenches should be included in the WSI and the detailed trench design must be approved by SCCAS/CT before field work begins.
- 3.3 The topsoil may be mechanically removed using an appropriate machine with a back-acting arm and fitted with a toothless bucket, down to the interface layer between topsoil and subsoil or other visible archaeological surface. All machine excavation is to be under the direct control and supervision of an archaeologist. The topsoil should be examined for archaeological material.
- 3.4 The top of the first archaeological deposit may be cleared by machine, but must then be cleaned off by hand. There is a presumption that excavation of all archaeological deposits will be done by hand unless it can be shown there will not be a loss of evidence by using a machine. The decision as to the proper method of excavation will be made by the senior project archaeologist with regard to the nature of the deposit.
- 3.5 In all evaluation excavation there is a presumption of the need to cause the minimum disturbance to the site consistent with adequate evaluation; that significant archaeological features, e.g. solid or bonded structural remains, building slots or post-holes, should be preserved intact even if fills are sampled. For guidance:

For linear features, 1.00m wide slots (min.) should be excavated across their width;

For discrete features, such as pits, 50% of their fills should be sampled (in some instances 100% may be requested).

- 3.6 There must be sufficient excavation to give clear evidence for the period, depth and nature of any archaeological deposit. The depth and nature of colluvial or other masking deposits must be established across the site.
- 3.7 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. The contractor shall show what provision has been made for environmental assessment of the site and must provide details of the sampling strategies for retrieving artefacts, biological remains (for palaeoenvironmental and palaeoeconomic investigations), and samples of sediments and/or soils (for micromorphological and other pedological/sedimentological analyses. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from Dr Helen Chappell, 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.

- 3.8 Any natural subsoil surface revealed should be hand cleaned and examined for archaeological deposits and artefacts. Sample excavation of any archaeological features revealed may be necessary in order to gauge their date and character.
- 3.9 Metal detector searches must take place at all stages of the excavation by an experienced metal detector user.
- 3.10 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed SCCAS/CT during the course of the evaluation).
- 3.11 Human remains must be left *in situ* except in those cases where damage or desecration are to be expected, or in the event that analysis of the remains is shown to be a requirement of satisfactory evaluation of the site. However, the excavator should be aware of, and comply with, the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857.
- 3.12 Plans of any archaeological features on the site are to be drawn at 1:20 or 1:50, 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. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum. Any variations from this must be agreed with SCCAS/CT.
- 3.13 A photographic record of the work is to be made, consisting of both monochrome photographs and colour transparencies and/or high resolution digital images.
- 3.14 Topsoil, subsoil and archaeological deposit to be kept separate during excavation to allow sequential backfilling of excavations.
- 3.15 Trenches should not be backfilled without the approval of SCCAS/CT.

4 General Management

- 4.1 A timetable for all stages of the project must be agreed before the first stage of work commences, including monitoring by SCCAS/CT. The archaeological contractor will give not less than five days written notice of the commencement of the work so that arrangements for monitoring the project can be made.
- 4.2 The composition of the archaeology contractor staff must be detailed and agreed by this office, including any subcontractors/specialists. For the site director and other staff likely to have a major responsibility for the post-excavation processing of this evaluation there must also be a statement of their responsibilities or a CV for post-excavation work on other archaeological sites and publication record. Ceramic specialists, in particular, must have relevant experience from this region, including knowledge of local ceramic sequences. The geoarchaeological and palaeoenvironmental assessments must be undertaken by specialists of recognised competence, and in consultation with a recognised Palaeolithic specialist, fully experienced in work of this character and formally acknowledged by the SCCAS/CT.
- 4.3 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to fulfil the Brief.
- 4.4 A detailed risk assessment must be provided for this particular site.
- 4.5 No initial survey to detect public utility or other services has taken place. The responsibility for this rests with the archaeological contractor.
- 4.6 The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (revised 2001) should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

5. Report Requirements

- 5.1 An archive of all records and finds must be prepared consistent with the principles of English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (particularly Appendix 3.1 and Appendix 4.1).
- 5.2 The report should reflect the aims of the WSI.
- 5.3 The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its archaeological interpretation.
- 5.4 An opinion as to the necessity for further evaluation and its scope may be given. No further site work should be embarked upon until the primary fieldwork results are assessed and the need for further work is established.
- 5.5 Reports on specific areas of specialist study must include sufficient detail to permit assessment of potential for analysis, including tabulation of data by context, and must include non-technical summaries.
- 5.6 The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence, including an assessment of palaeoenvironmental remains recovered from palaeosols and cut features. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological potential of the site, and the significance of that potential in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).
- 5.7 The results of the surveys should be related to the relevant known archaeological information held in the County Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 5.8 A copy of the Specification and WSI should be included as an appendix to the report.
- 5.9 The project manager must consult the County HER Officer (Dr Colin Pendleton) to obtain an HER 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.
- 5.10 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*.
- 5.11 Every effort must be made to get the agreement of the landowner/developer to the deposition of the full site archive, and transfer of title, with the intended archive repository before the fieldwork commences. If this is not achievable for all or parts of the finds archive then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, scientific analysis) as appropriate.
- 5.12 The project manager should consult the intended archive repository before the archive is prepared regarding the specific requirements for the archive deposition and curation, and regarding any specific cost implications of deposition.
- 5.13 If the County Store is the intended location of the archive, the project manager should consult the SCCAS Archive Guidelines 2010 and also the County Historic Environment Record Officer regarding the requirements for the deposition of the archive (conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage) of excavated material and the archive. A clear statement of the form, intended content, and standards of the archive is to be submitted for approval as an essential requirement of the WSI.
- 5.14 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 the proper deposition (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>).
- 5.15 Where positive conclusions are drawn from a project (whether it be evaluation or excavation) a summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology*, must be prepared. It should be included in the project report, or submitted to SCCAS/CT, by the end of the calendar year in which the evaluation work takes place, whichever is the sooner.

- 5.17 County HER sheets must be completed, as per the County HER manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 5.18 An unbound copy of the evaluation 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.
- Following acceptance, two copies of the report should be submitted to SCCAS/CT together with a digital .pdf version.
- 5.19 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 HER. 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.
- 5.20 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.
- 5.21 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the County HER. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Sarah Poppy

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9-10 The Churchyard, Shire Hall
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Tel: 01284 352199
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Date: 23 April 2010

Reference: ArchSpecEval_ThePackingShedWestRow2010

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.

Appendix 2. Context summary

Context	Fill of	Filled by	Trench	Category	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Interpretation	
0001			All	Deposit	Topsoil	Mid brown Silty sandy clay	Compact		0.45	Topsoil	
0002			All	Deposit	Subsoil	Mid orange brown Silty clay	Compact		0.72	Subsoil	
0003	0004		3	Fill	Ditch	Mid orange brown Silty clay	Friable		0.32	Single fill of ditch	
0004		0003	3	Cut	Ditch	Linear E-W	Break of slope 45 degrees, gently sloping sides. Break to base gradual.		1.50	0.32	E-W aligned possible ditch
0005	0006		3	Fill	Pit	Mid orange brown Silty clay	Friable		0.24	Single fill of possible pit. Indistinct from fill of 0004	
0006	0006		3	Cut	Pit	Sub-circular -	Steep sides		1.10	0.24	Cut of possible pit
0007			All	Deposit	Natural	White to greyish white	Compact		0.08+	Natural chalk geology	

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