

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

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## **Land to rear of The Homestead, The Street, Rickinghall Superior RKS 030**

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING, 2003/2004  
(Planning app. no. 753/03)

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## Summary

An archaeological monitoring of footing trenches for new residential development to the rear of The Homestead, Rickingham Superior, located a group of post medieval pits close to the road frontage and a series of large pits set back from the road. The large pits were undated and thought to be for chalk extraction.

## SMR information

|                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Planning application no. | 753/03                            |
| Date of fieldwork:       | 3rd July 2003 – 12th January 2004 |
| Grid Reference:          | TM 047 756                        |
| Funding body:            | Plan 4 Developments               |
| Oasis reference.         | Suffolkc1-7658                    |

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## Introduction

A programme of archaeological work including evaluation trenching and the monitoring of groundworks was undertaken on land to the rear of The Homestead, The Street, Rickingham Superior. The work was a condition on planning consent [753/03] to construct seven dwellings and was completed in accordance with a brief and specification written by Judith Plouviez of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service. The initial brief required that each of the plots be sampled by trial trench. A lack of positive results from the first two plots and the monitoring of the development's infrastructure however suggested that any archaeological deposit could be adequately recorded by monitoring the remaining footings; the change to the specification was made with the agreement of the archaeological officer. The work was funded by the developer, Plan 4 Developments and undertaken between 3rd July 2003 – 12th January 2004

The site lay at a height of 40m OD, on the south-east side of a tributary valley of the Waveney and consisted of open, undeveloped ground with mature trees. The surface geology was a chalky clay silt till with pockets of clay and gravel. It was of archaeological interest as an inhumation burial (RKS 011, Fig.1), associated with a third or fourth century pottery vessel, had previously been recorded from the area behind The Homestead. Scattered Roman industrial activity had also been recorded elsewhere along this valley and therefore there was high potential for Roman deposits, including further burials. (Fig 1).

There was also potential for the development to affect medieval deposits, particularly fronting The Street. The Homestead is a Grade II listed building with its origins in the mid-late 17th century and 16th century pottery was recovered from the adjacent area (to the north west) after three cottages burnt down in 1936.

## Methodology

Plots 1 and 7 were evaluated by trenching. The trenches were excavated along the centre-line of the proposed building plot by a wheeled digger fitted with a toothless bucket and under the constant supervision of an archaeologist. The machine removed soil to the level of underlying glacial subsoil. All possible archaeological features were sampled by hand excavation and were recorded in plan at 1:50 and section at 1:20. The positions of the trenches and features were recorded onto a plan of the plots supplied by the developer and based on the OS. A written description of each trench was made, recording the depth to the archaeological horizon, the nature of the subsoil and the overlying soil profile. Black and white print and colour transparency photographs were also taken. All finds were collected and retained for analysis by specialists.

The developer gave notice of the excavation of the groundworks for each stage of the plots and the monitoring visits were timetabled accordingly. No notice was given on Plot 6 and the trenches were not seen (the developer offered to open a trench alongside the building but in the light of the lack of evidence from the surrounding plots this was considered unnecessary). The trenches were either open at the time of each visit or were observed being excavated and the spoil was retained on site for inspection. Any possible features were recorded following the same methodology as the evaluation.

The finds and the site records have been archived at the County Council Archaeological Store at Shire Hall, and with the county Sites and Monuments Record, under the site code RKN 030.

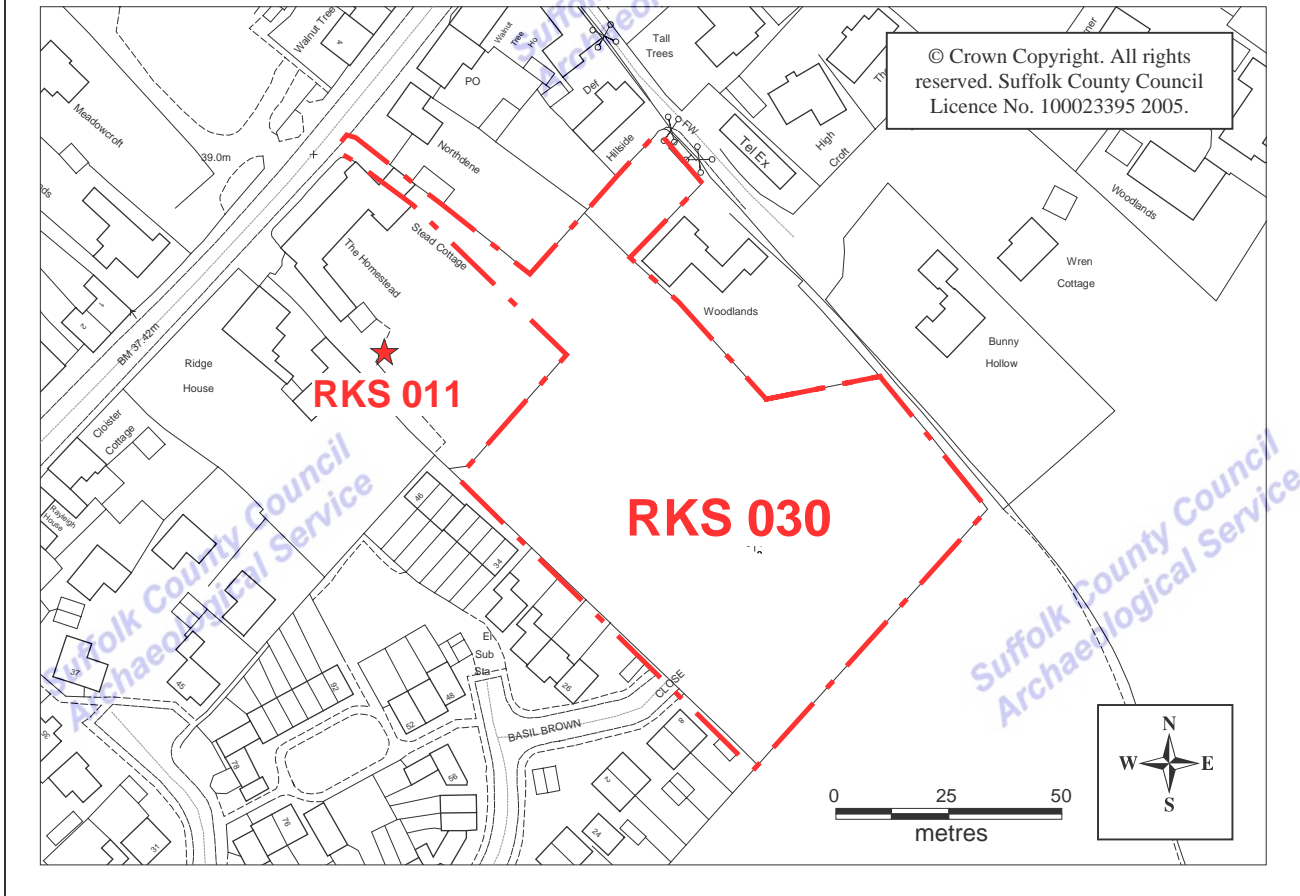
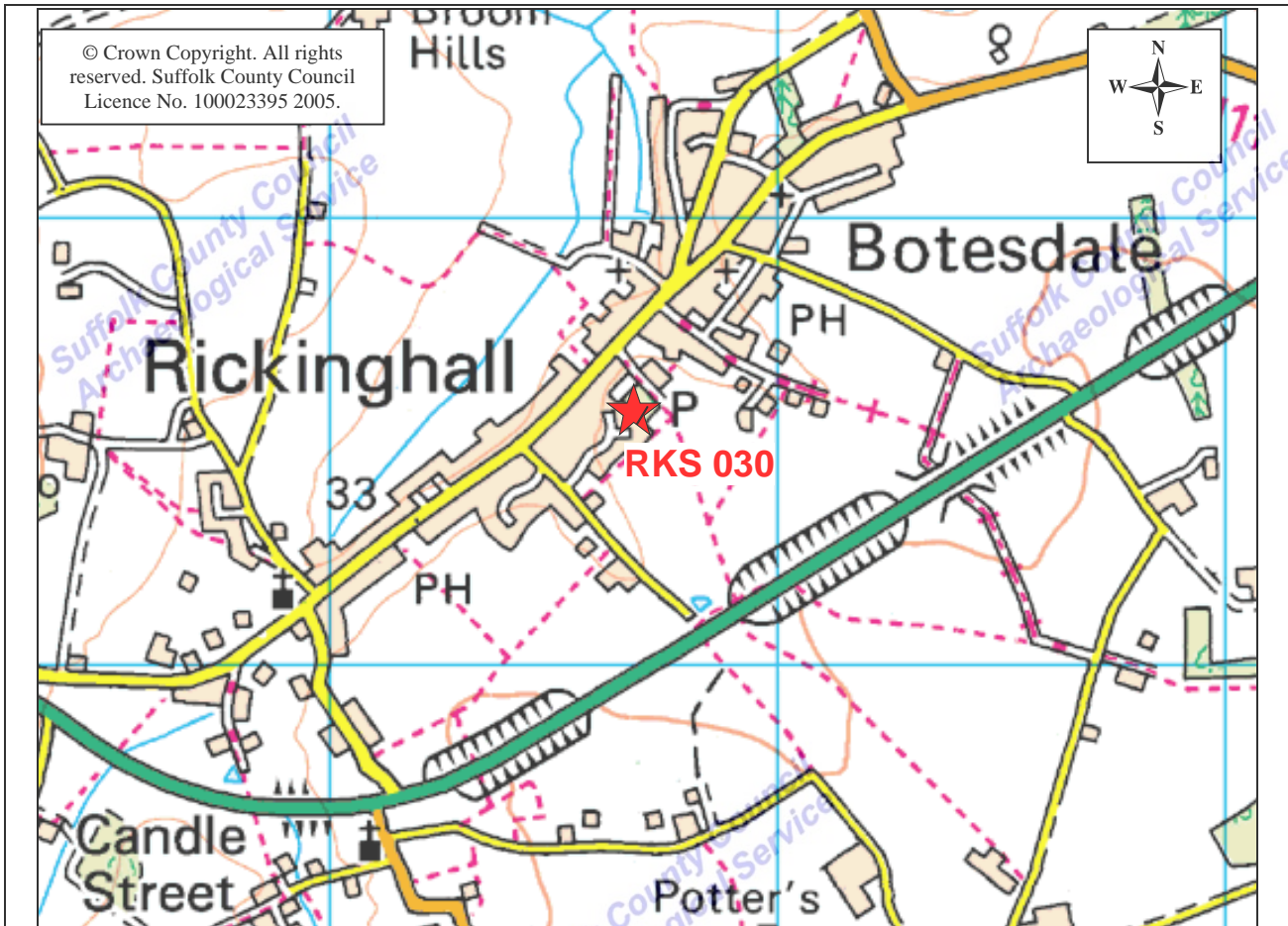


Figure 1. Site location plan



## Results

(Fig. 2)

### Service Trench:

The stripping of the access road and excavation of the service trench was completed in advance of the excavation of all of the footings except those in Plot 1 and 7. The service trench ran from the street to the centre of the development area previewing the soil profile and archaeological potential of the site. The trench was excavated in the presence of the monitoring archaeologist. A number of disturbances were recorded, which were largely post medieval or undated and occurred immediately behind the street frontage. These are listed below and plotted on Figure 3 with selected sections illustrated in Figure 4. The soil profile in the rear garden of The Homestead illustrated a buried soil layer of pale silt below the topsoil horizon and this is typified by the section 0010 (Fig. 2).

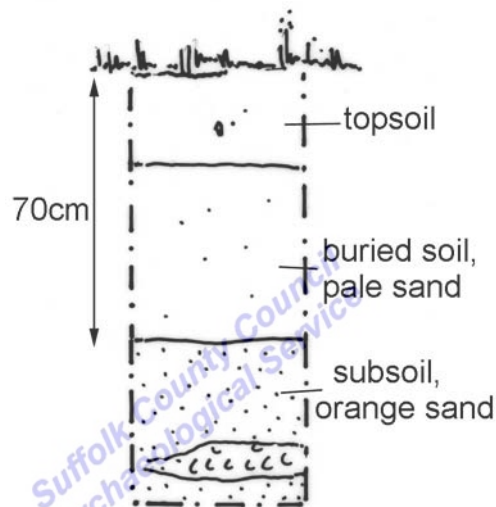


Figure 2. Section 0010.

### Feature descriptions

- 0004 Area of disturbance filled with clean mid brown sandy loam. 3m wide and deeper than 1m cut from immediately below the turf. No finds.
- 0005 Deep pit/trench 1.2m wide, filled with a sooty loam and containing post medieval CBM.
- 0006 Shallow pit 60cm deep, 1.8m wide, contemporary with the buried soil horizon
- 0007 Occupation layer, dark loam laying directly over the subsoil.
- 0008 Well shaft. The cut from the start of the chalk sub-soil and the top is truncated at the base of the topsoil horizon. No construction pit. Internal diameter 1m, lined for 80cm below the surface with well bonded rounded flint nodules and rendered over. No bricks or datable material with the build, the mortar is a sandy lime mortar, which could be medieval. The well is infilled with 19th/20th building debris.
- 0009 Group of four inter-cutting pits between 1-1.2m deep. The pits were infilled with dark charcoal loam and ash. The pits produced fragments of early post medieval bricks (?16th century) but no other artefacts were observed.
- 0010 Location of drawn section, typical of the soil profile.
- 0011 Shallow pit infilled with pale silt, no finds and undated but the topsoil immediately above the feature and within a localised spread contains a lot of modern debris.
- 0012 Horizon of redeposited chalk on the subsoil surface directly below the topsoil. Spread extends for 1.8m.
- 0013 Large pit infilled with homogenous pale silt flecked with charcoal. Location of the pit seems to coincide with a chalk out crop. No finds. The subsoil generally gravel/sand.

**Plot 1:**

Plot 1 was sampled with a single machine excavated evaluation trench 1.6m wide and 11.5m long running NW-SE along the centre-line of the proposed building footprint. The topsoil in this area had been augmented; it was 60cm deep and included recent building rubble within its make-up. Evidence of possibly three pits was identified in the base of the trench and two of these were sampled by hand excavation. Pit 0002 was 3.25m wide and, from the base of the topsoil, 0.8m deep, 0003 was 2.20m wide and 0.8m deep. Each of the pits was filled with a single backfill layer of pale silt, which was flecked with charcoal and chalk but produced no artefactual material. The location of the pits seemed to target the chalk areas of the mixed subsoil and may have been dug for its extraction.

**Plot 2:**

The footing trenches of Plot 2 were excavated in the presence of the monitoring archaeologist. The trenches showed a variable subsoil, consisting of clay silts with areas of chalk and gravel beneath 30cm of topsoil. No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

**Plot 3:**

A broad ditch, 0014, approximately 2.5m wide and 1m deep was seen crossing the plot, aligned south-west to north-east. It had a single fill, 0015, of mid-pale brown silt with occasional fragments of tile, coal and brick. The ditch continued into Plot 4. The subsoil was sand and gravels and lacked the chalk seen in Plot 2.

**Plot 4:**

The ditch recorded in Plot 3 continued into Plot 4. This demonstrated the straight run of the ditch and suggests that it was a precursor of the exiting field boundary. This was the only recorded feature.

**Plot 5:**

Seen when trenches were fully open. No archaeological features were observed and the topsoil lay above the natural subsoil of orange gravels and sands.

**Plot 6:** Not observed.

**Plot 7:**

Plot 7 was sampled by trial trenches in advance of the rest of the development. A pair of trenches, L-shaped in plan, was excavated by machine through the centre-line of the proposed building. Imported soil had raised the depth of topsoil to 1.2m and bricks, plastic and metalwork with the topsoil indicated that this deposition had occurred in the recent past. Two pits 0016 and 0017 were recorded. These were circular in plan with broad flat-based profiles. Pit 0016 was 1.2m wide and 30cm deep, pit 0017 1m was wide by 40cm deep. They were each filled with pale sand and neither produced finds. The subsoil here was pale sand and contrasted with the mixed silt/clay, chalk and gravel soils seen over the rest of the development area.



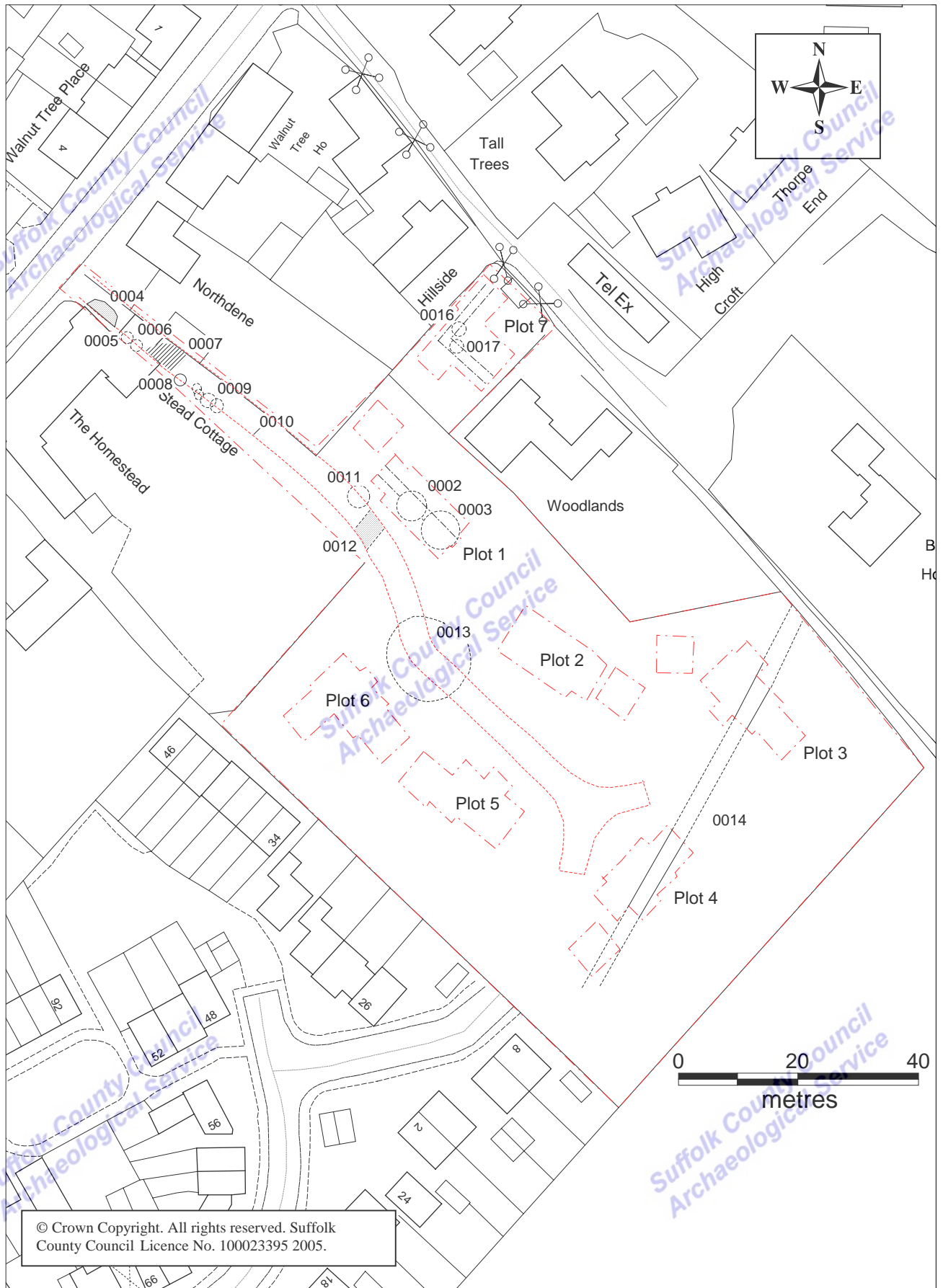


Figure 3. Site plan

## Conclusion

The features recorded on the site fall broadly into two areas. The dateable features immediately behind The Homestead were all post medieval. They are likely to have been domestic pitting and associated with the occupation of the street frontage. The house itself has its origins in the mid to late 17th century and the features are likely to be associated with the occupation of this or the neighbouring building. The SMR entry (RKS 011) records C16-17th pottery from the infilled cellars of cottages (burnt down in 1936) that occupied the site of The Homestead garage and the features found during the excavation are a continuation of this spread of habitation.

The large pits in the middle of the site appear to exist within a narrow spread and seem to occupy the part of the site where the surface geology contains most chalk, suggesting that they may have been dug to extract this material. The complete lack of occupation material within the pit fills suggests that they are not in the immediate vicinity of a dwelling and were infilled in a single backfilling event, perhaps with the spoil from the extraction workings. The subsoil to the south-east of the pits was largely a gravel sand which, contained little chalk and no pits were observed in this area. The pits and the ditch, which is probably a field boundary are undated but pre-date the 1st edition OS maps of the 1880's.

There was no indication of Roman material, further to the burial recorded on the SMR (RKS 011). Evidence from excavation at Lakenheath (Tester 1993) suggests that Roman burial practice included inhumation on the edge of properties within the settlement area but there appears to be no indication of this here, and this may have been an isolated interment.

David Gill

## References

Tester, A. 1993, 'RAF Lakenheath , Zonal Workshop; Excavation report', SCCAS Report

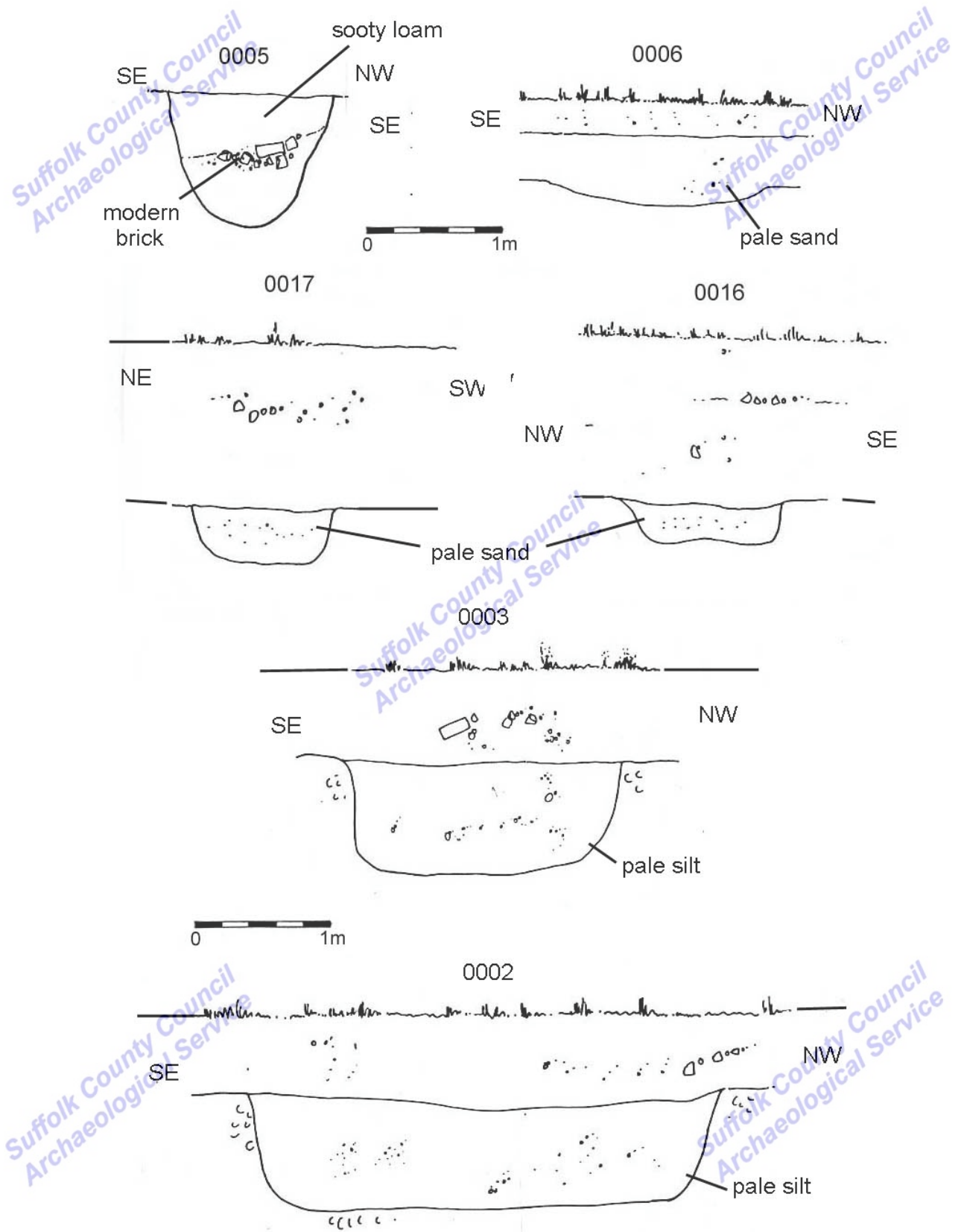


Figure 4. Sections.

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# Appendix 1:

## SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

### *Brief and Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation*

#### REAR OF HOMESTEAD, RICKINGHALL SUPERIOR

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 Planning consent [OL/82/00] has been given for construction of 7 dwellings and new access to rear of The Homestead, The Street, Rickingham Superior.
- 1.2 The Planning Authority *has been* advised that any consent should be conditional upon an agreed programme of work taking place before development begins (PPG 16, paragraph 30 condition). An archaeological evaluation of the application area will be required as the first part of such a programme of archaeological work; decisions on the need for, and scope of, any further work will be based upon the evaluation.
- 1.3 The development area lies at TM 046 755 on the 40m contour on a spur on the south-east side of a tributary valley of the Waveney. An inhumation burial, perhaps associated with a probably third or fourth century pottery vessel, is recorded pre 1950 from the area behind The Homestead (RKS 011). Whether this represents a Roman cemetery or an aspect of activity within a Roman settlement is unclear; there is also intermittent Roman industrial activity recorded along this valley. There is also some potential for medieval activity, particularly fronting The Street. Sixteenth century pottery was recorded as found in cottages on the south-west edge of the Homestead plot (RKS 011). There is, therefore, high potential for Roman deposits, perhaps including burials, and possibly also medieval activity within the area affected by the development.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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

#### 2. Brief for the Archaeological Evaluation



- 2.1 Establish whether any archaeological deposit exists in the area.
- 2.2 Identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit 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 whether waterlogged organic deposits are likely to be present in the proposal area.
- 2.5 Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (address as above) 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.
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 An outline specification, which defines certain minimum criteria, is set out below.

### 3. **Specification: Field Evaluation**

- 3.1 Trial trenches are to be excavated to cover a minimum 5% by area of the entire site and shall be positioned to sample all parts of the site. Trenches are to be a minimum of 1.8m wide unless special circumstances can be demonstrated. If excavation is mechanised a toothless 'ditching bucket' at least 1.2m wide must be used. The trench design must be approved by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service before field work begins.



- 3.2 The topsoil may be mechanically removed using an appropriate machine fitted with toothless bucket and other equipment. All machine excavation is to be under the direct control and supervision of an archaeologist. The topsoil should be examined for archaeological material.
- 3.3 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 further excavation will be made by the senior project archaeologist with regard to the nature of the deposit.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 The contractor shall 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 P. Murphy, English Heritage Regional Adviser for Archaeological Science (East of England). A guide to sampling archaeological deposits (Murphy and Wiltshire 1994) is available.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 Metal detector searches must take place at all stages of the excavation by an experienced metal detector user.
- 3.9 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).
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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. Any variations from this must be agreed with the Conservation Team.
- 3.12 A photographic record of the work is to be made, consisting of both monochrome photographs and colour transparencies.

3.13 Topsoil, subsoil and archaeological deposit to be kept separate during excavation to allow sequential backfilling of excavations.

#### 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 the Conservation Team of SCC Archaeological Service.

4.2 The composition of the project staff must be detailed and agreed (this is to include any subcontractors).

4.3 A general Health and Safety Policy must be provided, with detailed risk assessment and management strategy for this particular site.

4.4 No initial survey to detect public utility or other services has taken place. The responsibility for this rests with the archaeological contractor.

4.5 The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments* and for *Field Evaluations* 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 data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.

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 archaeological work 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. 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 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.

- 5.8 The site archive is to be deposited with the County SMR within three months of the completion of fieldwork. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.9 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 the Conservation Team, by the end of the calendar year in which the evaluation work takes place, whichever is the sooner.
- 5.10 County SMR sheets must be completed, as per the county SMR manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.

Specification by: Judith Plouviez

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Environment and Transport Department  
Shire Hall  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Tel: 01284 352448

Date: 18 June 2003

Reference: /Rickinghall200306

**This brief and specification remains valid for 12 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.**