

HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/165

Pontin's Holiday Centre, Pakefield Gisleham GSE 067

M. Sommers
© September 2010
www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/e-and-t/archaeology

Lucy Robinson, County Director of Economy, Skills and Environment
Endeavour House, Russel Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX.

HER Information

Planning Application No: DC/10/0515/OUT

Date of Fieldwork: 23rd – 24th August 2010

Grid Reference: TM 5335 8854

Funding Body: CgMs Consulting (on behalf of Pontins Ltd.)

Curatorial Officer: Jude Plouviez

Project Officer: Mark Sommers

Oasis Reference: suffolkc1-81838

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

Contents

Summary	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. The holiday centre – historical background and development	1
Early history	3
Layout of the early camp	4
Acquisition by Pontins	5
Later reorganisation	7
3. Other buildings	
Pakefield lighthouse	9
World War Two Structures	10
Miscellaneous	11
4. Photographic catalogue - the holiday centre buildings	11
5. Photographic catalogue – the other buildings	33
6. Conclusions and recommendations	
The holiday centre	40
The lighthouse	41
The Second World War structures	41
7. Archive deposition	42
8. Contributors and acknowledgements	42
9. Bibliography	42

List of Figures

1. Site location plan	2
2. Ordnance Survey 1:2500 sheet of 1927	3
3. Aerial photograph of the site from 1945	5
4. Ordnance Survey 1:1000 sheet of 1965	6
5. Ordnance Survey 1:1000 sheet of 1974	8
6. Pakefield Holiday Centre with building ID numbers	11
7. Plan showing the building ID numbers for non-camp structures	33

List of Plates

Plate I. Image of Pakefield reproduced from the 1972 Pontins Catalogue	7
Plate II. Postcard from Pakefield camp, postmarked 1966	7

Summary

A holiday centre was initially established at Pakefield in the 1920's/1930's. It has since been refurbished and expanded many times. This area of the Suffolk coast also played a significant role during the defence of the country during the Second World War.

A further wave of expansion is planned at the leisure site which may result in the loss of some structures and compromise the setting of others. In order to identify any significant structures that may exist within the holiday complex and the area of proposed expansion an assessment of all structures liable to be affected was undertaken.

Numerous buildings exist within the holiday complex but the greater majority relate to developments from the early 1970's onwards. Although there exist some earlier service buildings that possibly date back to the 1930's, these have been extensively altered and comprise steel framed sheds that are not of great historical or architectural significance, although they are probably worthy of recording if their existence is threatened. A small complex of buildings dating to the Second World War is located in the southeastern corner of the proposed development area along with a later, subterranean, observation post relating to the Cold War. Aside from the potential threat from the proposed development, this site is under threat from coastal erosion and although it does not merit preservation *in-situ* it is worthy of further investigation and recording (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service for CgMs Consulting).

1. Introduction

It has been proposed to greatly extend the existing facilities at Pontin's Pakefield Holiday Centre, Gisleham. The development plan also entails alterations to parts of the existing holiday centre along with a general refurbishment of the site.

Outline planning permission has been sought (DC/10/0515/OUT). To aid determination of the application an assessment of the existing structures within the development area was commissioned to supplement an existing Desk-Based Assessment (Darton 2010). The aims of this assessment were to identify any standing structures that may be potential heritage assets and to provide a brief history of the development of the holiday centre. This was achieved through a site visit to briefly examine and photographically record all structures present within the development area in order to create a catalogue of the potential resource and to pin-point any significant structures.

The entire development site covers an area of 42.5 hectares and comprises the existing holiday centre (c. 18 hectares) and a large tract of open farmland to the south. The site lies on the Suffolk coast on a relatively level plateau at a height of c. 15m OD. The eastern boundary is defined by a line of cliffs overlooking a beach and the North Sea. The National Grid Reference for the centre of the development site is TM 5335 8854. Figure 1 shows a location plan.

The survey and assessment was undertaken by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service's Field Team who were commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of their client, Pontins Ltd.

2. The holiday centre - historical background and development

The holiday centre, which occupies the northern half of the development area, lies within the former estate of Pakefield Hall. The hall itself is located to the north west of the site. The present hall is post-medieval in date but is situated within what is possibly a medieval moated enclosure.

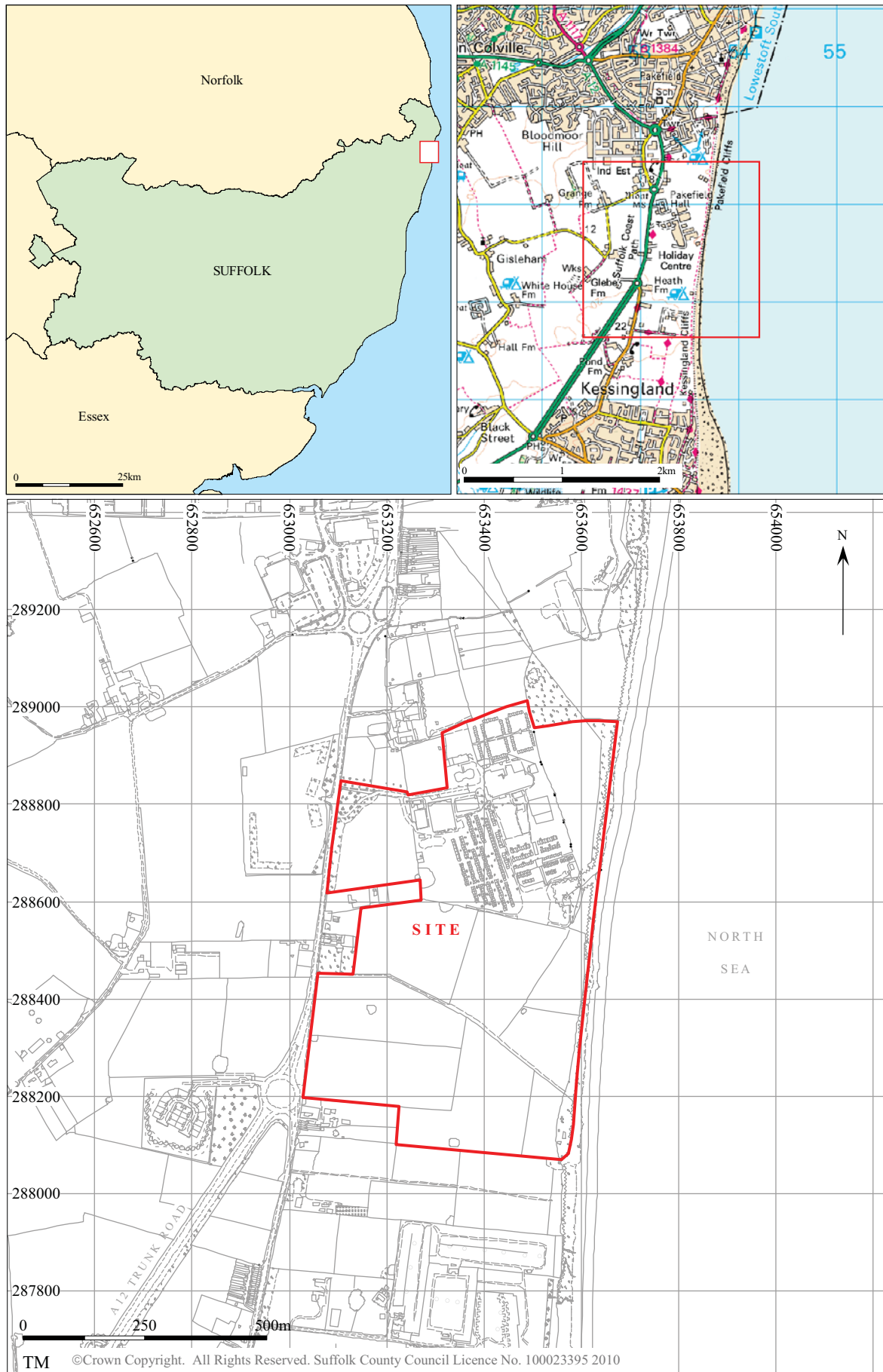


Figure 1. Site location plan

Early history

The early history of the holiday centre has been hard to locate but it appears to have been established in the late 1920's or early 1930's by Howard Barrett of Pakefield Hall as a commercial venture to provide family holidays. It initially comprised rows of bell tents located within the existing farmland and did not include any fixed structures.

The 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1927 (Fig. 2) does not show any evidence for the holiday camp which could suggest it was established after this date, although it is unlikely that temporary structures, such as tents, would have been marked.

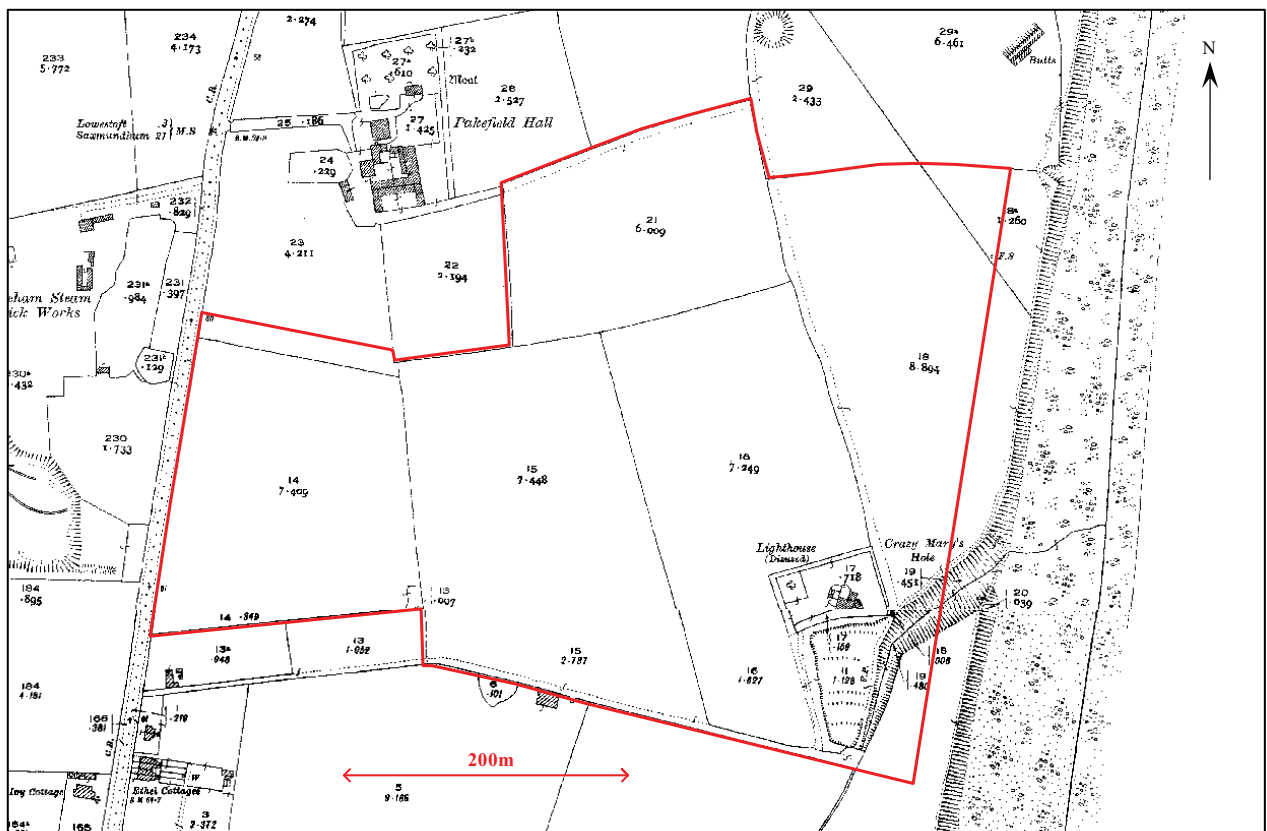


Figure 2. Ordnance Survey 1:2500 sheet of 1927 (rescaled extract)
present area of holiday centre outlined in red

During the 1930's the tents were replaced with timber chalets and it became known as 'The Pakefield Holiday Camp' and offered '150 acres that include Bowling Greens, Putting Greens, Tennis Courts and Dancing Free. Sun and Sea Bathing on a fine smooth sandy beach which extends for three miles'. From a poor quality, contemporary photograph the chalets appear to consist of a single roomed timber shed type structure with a single apex roof and a veranda running across the front.

The 1920s and 30s were a boom time for holiday camps with large numbers being set up around the shores of the UK, primarily on the south and east coasts as well as in Devon and Cornwall. Some of the earliest camps had been set up in the late 19th century as philanthropic and/or politically motivated camps to provide holidays for deprived inner-city children or as centres for communal activities with political lectures and debates included as part of the entertainment. These early camps tended to be staffed by the campers themselves and generally had very strict rules and regulations to which the campers would pledge to abide by.

In the early 20th century a small number of commercial camps were set up and run as businesses providing family holidays with more relaxed rules and enhanced entertainment facilities. East Anglia, already home to some of the 'socialist worker' camps, attracted a number of commercial camps from 1920 onwards with centres being set up at Hemsby (1920), Caister (1920), Hopton-on-Sea (1925), Corton Beach (1933) and Hopton Beach (1933). It is the success of these early commercial camps that is likely to have led to Barrett starting the camp at Pakefield. These inter-war camps were generally small, family run concerns, built in the grounds of an existing house. Holiday camps took off in this region to such an extent that by the summer of 1938 there were fourteen holiday camps, including Pakefield, along a 10-mile stretch of coastline either side of the Norfolk-Suffolk border and critics feared the coastline was in danger of becoming disfigured by the unrelenting spread of chalets.

Layout of the early camp

Pakefield Holiday Camp had clearly become well established in the period before the war as in December 1938 it was one of the camps used as a temporary shelter for children from Nazi Germany rescued as part of the Kindertransport mission. It has also been suggested to the author that the site was also used during the war as an internment camp for foreign nationals although this has not been confirmed.

There are no readily available plans of the pre-war camp at Pakefield but its arrangement immediately after the war can be seen in aerial photographs taken by the RAF in late 1945 (Fig. 3). Although the resolution of the image is low, lines of individual chalets on perpendicular alignments can be discerned. There is a group of slightly larger buildings amongst the rows of chalets to the south, which are possibly washhouses and laundries. A large building with other nearby buildings, that are clearly

not chalets, are located just north of the centre of the camp which are likely to be for food preparation, dining and entertainment. North of this area lines of what appear to be larger huts are visible. These are probably chalets but of a slightly larger design (either with two rooms or as semi-detached pairs) although it is possible they are further washhouses and laundries or even staff accommodation.



Figure 3. An aerial photograph of the site from 1945

Acquisition by Pontins

In 1958 the camp, which at that time was known as 'Pakefield Hall Holiday Camp', was bought by Pontins and added to their portfolio of existing camps. Pontins had started in 1946 when the founder, Fred Pontin, opened his first camp at Brean Sands. It was an old disused camp from the 1930s which had become severely run down, although after a revamp it became a great success and led to Fred Pontin opening further camps. Many of Pontin's camps were existing establishments that when acquired were given 'a Pontin's makeover', with hardly any being built from scratch. Butlins was the industry leader with massive camps holding thousands of holiday makers and with an emphasis on bigger and better entertainments. Pontins, on the other hand, went for smaller more

manageable camps with lower overheads and consequently they were significantly cheaper to stay at. The 1960's was a further boom for the holiday camp industry and both Butlins and Pontins expanded their empires with Pontins eventually running sixteen camps throughout the British Isles, a number which increased to twenty-four camps by the mid 1970's. To compete with Butlins Pontins focussed on improved accommodation and carried out a major revamps in catering and chalet facilities at all sites. They introduced en-suite bathrooms and televisions, improvements which usually would require the timber chalets to be replaced with more substantial structures.

Many camps, including Pakefield, were extensively rebuilt and modernised throughout the 1960's and 1970's although due to a downturn in the industry they saw little investment during the 1980's and 1990's. Pontins, the company, has been since passed through the hands of a number of larger leisure companies and has seen the closure of many of its camps. At present, a core of only five camps remain open under the Pontins name.

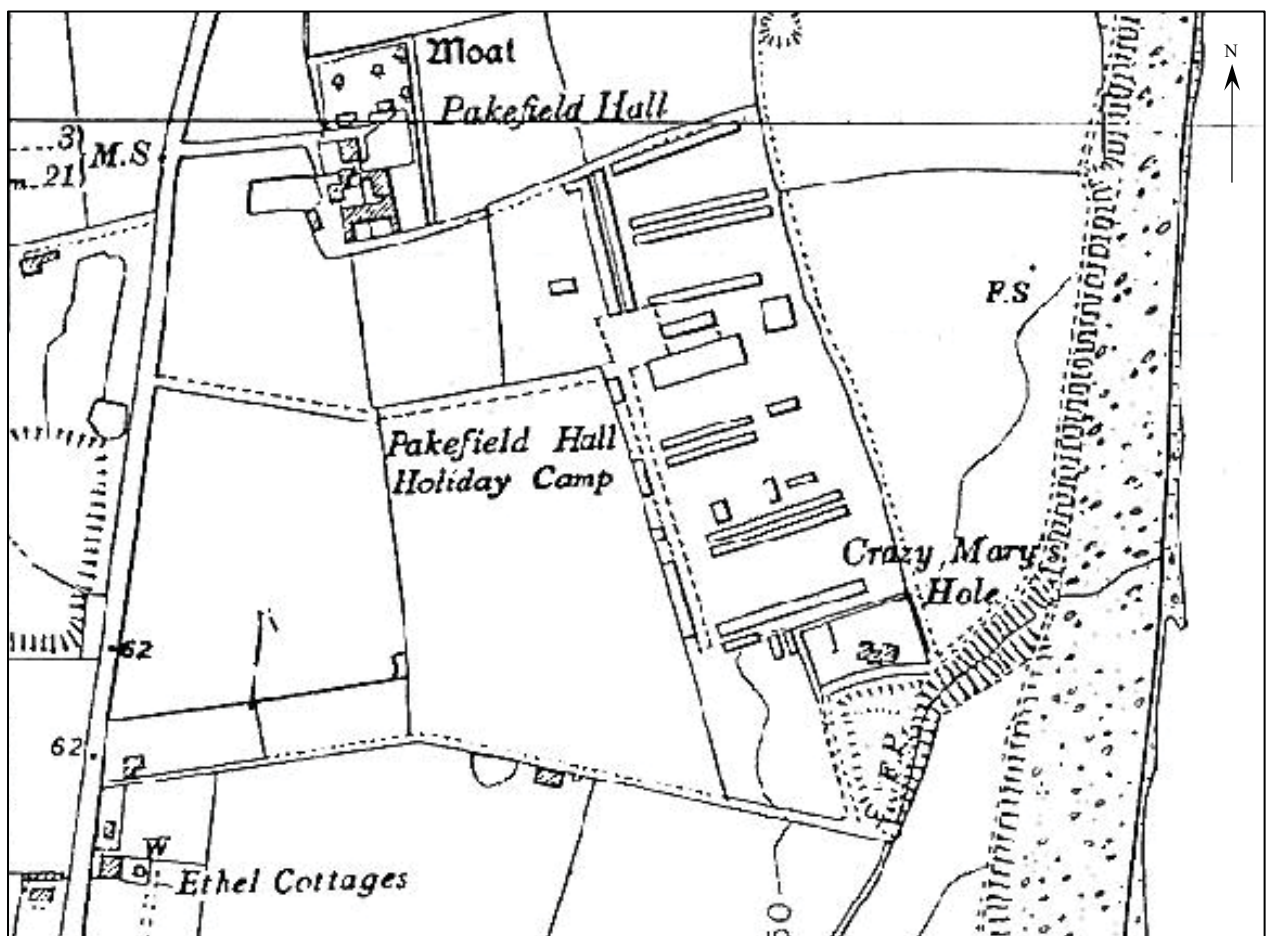


Figure 4. Ordnance Survey 1:10000 sheet of 1965 (un-scaled extract)



Plate I. Image of Pakefield reproduced from the 1972 Pontins Catalogue

Later reorganisation

Ordnance Survey 1:10000 scale sheet maps from 1957 and 1965 (Fig. 4) indicate that the layout of the camp altered very little when first taken over by Pontins. These maps do not show individual buildings but rather areas of buildings, therefore, what appear to be long thin structures on the 1965 map are undoubtedly the rows of separate chalet buildings, as seen in the 1945 aerial photograph. Assuming this interpretation of the 1965 map to be correct, it would appear that the camp had not changed to any great degree since the 1945 photograph with neither the chalets nor the entertainment/service buildings seeing much alteration. These chalets, which presumably are those originally built in the 1930s, can be seen in a small image from the 1972 Pontins Catalogue (Plate I) and on a postcard from the camp, postmarked 1966 (Plate II).



Plate II. Postcard from Pakefield camp, postmarked 1966



Figure 5. Ordnance Survey 1:10000 sheet of 1974 (un-scaled extract)

By the 1974 map (Fig. 5), however, it can be seen that the camp has changed considerably. All the original rows of chalets have disappeared and have been replaced with continuous blocks of chalets running on similar alignments as the original rows. A large group of chalets have been built to the southwest of the main entertainment/service buildings and three new, large entertainment buildings have been built immediately to the north of this new area of chalets, with a pond to the south. The original entertainment/service buildings have been extended (although due to the mapping convention it is possible that this actually represents a larger group of buildings rather than one large structure). The service building noted to the northwest also remains but appears to have been extended.

The layout of the camp as depicted on the 1974 map is virtually identical to the present layout of the holiday centre (Fig. 6), except the pond to the rear of the new entertainment buildings has been filled and further blocks of chalets have been added close to the southern boundary, west of the extant lighthouse. All extant buildings indicated in Figure 6 are recorded in photographic catalogue (see Section 4).

3. Other buildings

A number of other buildings stand within the proposed development site.

Pakefield lighthouse

An extant lighthouse stands in the southeast corner of the holiday centre and is in use as a coastal surveillance station. It is manned daily and is occasionally open to members of the public. It lies wholly within the holiday centre and is owned by Pontins. It was formerly attached to a keeper's cottage but this is no longer standing.

The continually shifting sandbanks of this part of the coast make navigation very difficult between the Barnard and Newcome sand banks. In July 1831 the committee of Trinity House Elder Brethren contracted Richard Suter to design a lighthouse to assist ships through this narrow seaway and Messrs James Taylor of Great Yarmouth were engaged to build it. The decision may have been encouraged by the creation of a new harbour at Lowestoft, which was to be opened on the 10th August 1831.

The lighthouse and keepers' cottages were erected on top of the cliff some thirty-four feet above sea level. The lighthouse consisted of a brick built circular tower 30 feet high and placed on top was a lantern containing two Argand lamps which exhibited a fixed red light visible for 9 miles. The total cost of construction was £821 9s 4d and the light was first lit on May Day, 1st May 1832.

It remained in use for thirty-two years although shifting sandbanks had rendered it ineffective by about 1850 and a new light was built three miles to the south at Kessingland. The light at Pakefield continued to be used for a number of years after the Kessingland light was built but it was not lit after December 1864.

Other than being recorded as in use as an occasional summer house in 1891 there are no records regarding the lighthouse until it was eventually sold back to the owners of Pakefield Hall in 1929 for £150 after which part of the lighthouse and its attached keeper's cottage were used as a bar for the campers.

In April 1938 the Royal Observer Corps were stationed in the lighthouse and the roof and lantern were removed in order that they could observe more easily sea movements and overhead approaching aircraft with the impending threat of war.

The lighthouse was hit by machine gun fire during a German air raid on Lowestoft on 12th May 1943 and in October 1944 a V1 flying bomb travelling at 100 feet above the waves and with a faulty gyroscope fell short of any target and ditched into the sea at the foot of the lighthouse cliff. The lookout was finally closed in 1945 and returned to the holiday camp. The roof and lantern were replaced and in the 1960s the lighthouse was apparently used as a darkroom for the resident camp photographer. The lighthouse keeper's cottage has since been demolished.

The existing lighthouse is made up of a circular tower, rendered and painted white, with a single doorway at the base facing northwest (and so was entered from the now demolished cottage?). There are narrow slits for windows on the ground floor with small square windows higher up. It has a conical, slate roof covering the glazed lantern where the light was once situated (see Building 10 in Section 4). It is not on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest.

The lighthouse and the now demolished cottage were situated within a roughly rectangular area enclosed by a brick wall of which a large proportion still stands.

World War Two structures

The County Historic Environment Record (HER) lists a number of sites related to defences built during the Second World War. These include an anti-tank trap (HER ref. GSE 045; see Figure 3), a possible anti-aircraft battery and a possible spigot mortar emplacement. These sites have been added to the HER after being observed on post-war aerial photographs and it is probable that many are no longer extant.

The development site was subjected to a brief walk-over but only one defensive site was noted, situated in the southeast corner (HER ref. KSS 043; see Buildings 62 to 65 in Section 5). It comprises a series of four buildings which appear to have been part of a Chain Defence/Chain Home Low radar station and includes a main receiver block, two buildings to house generators and a fourth structure of unknown purpose.

Within the complex a subterranean Royal Observer Corps (ROC) station has been constructed (Building 66). ROC stations were built countrywide during the late 1950s and early 1960s to provide shelter for monitoring the fallout after a nuclear attack.

At this site it would appear that the main block of the radar station was initially used by the ROC prior to the construction of the underground shelter. The floor has received a screed of concrete and in the surface of this 'ROC 1952' has been crudely marked.

Miscellaneous

An Anglian Water site is situated to the south of the lighthouse. It is marked in Figure 6 as Building 67 but has not been assessed as part of this survey.

4. Photographic catalogue – the holiday centre buildings

To facilitate development of the photographic catalogue each structure identified within the development site was arbitrarily allocated an identity number. These ranged from 1 to 66 with 1 to 61 being structures within the holiday centre and 62-66 being the group of defence structures in the southeast corner. Figure 6 is a plan of the holiday centre showing the allocated identity numbers. All buildings were photographed but as many of the chalets blocks are identical not all are featured. The catalogue follows below.

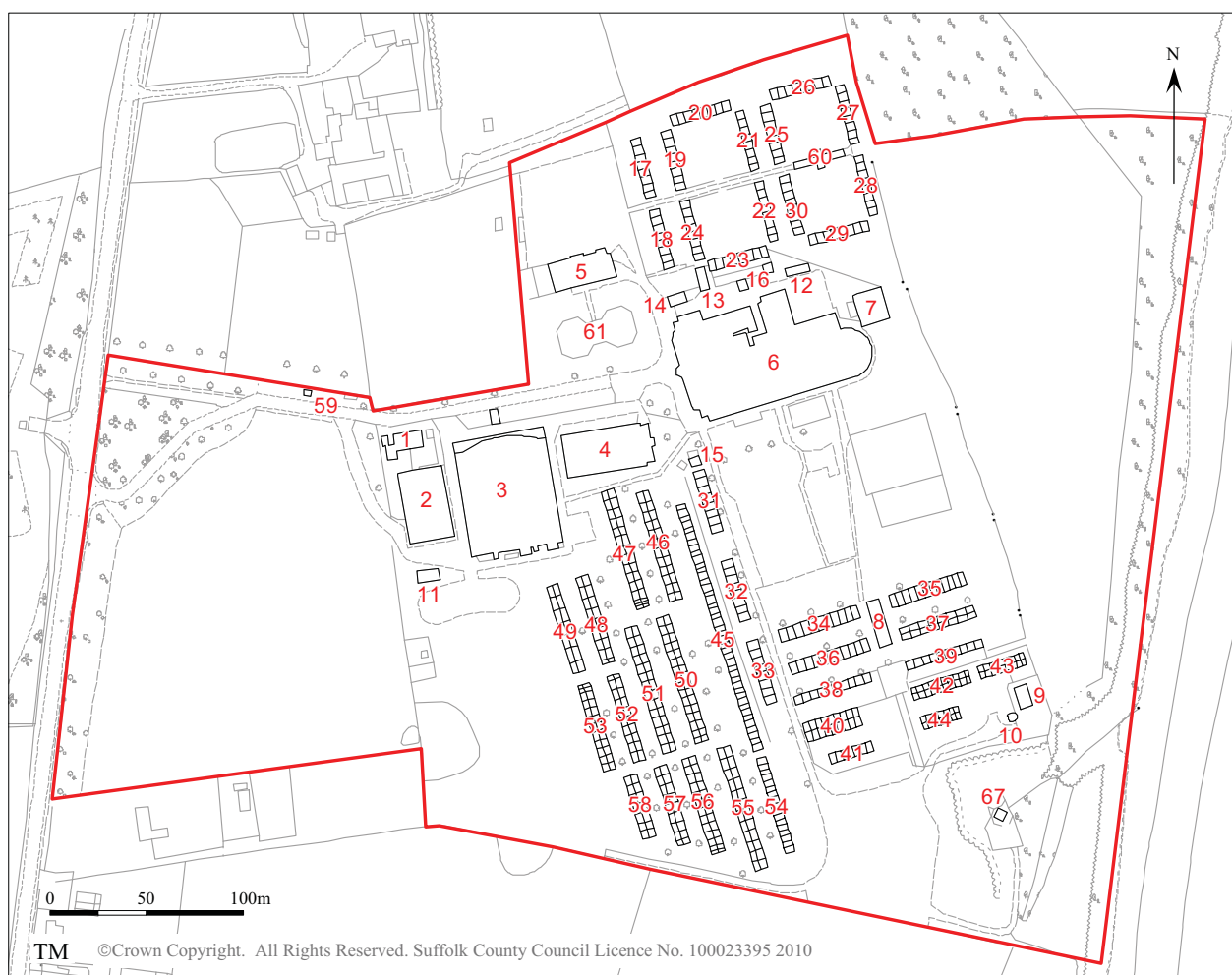


Figure 6. Pakefield Holiday Centre with building ID numbers

Building 1: A pair of semi-detached bungalows with garages built for staff accommodation. Rendered brick with tiled roof. Constructed as part of the major rebuild in the early 1970s.



Building 1

Buildings 2, 3 and 4: Entertainment buildings constructed as part of the major rebuild in the early 1970s. Steel framed structures with brick and breeze block walls rendered and painted cream with blue detail. Building 2 houses the games rooms, Building 3 houses the main reception, amusement arcade, a café and the ballroom. Building 4 houses a large indoor swimming pool (this structure maybe a later rebuild or has been extensively refurbished since its original construction).



Building 2 (camera facing north)



Building 3 (front – camera facing southeast)



Building 3 (side and rear – camera facing northwest)



Building 4 (camera facing southeast)

Building 5: The hire centre and children's crèche. A steel framed shed with corrugated sheet cladding surrounded by brick and breeze block extensions rendered and painted cream with blue detail. Possibly one of the earliest structures on the site as it is coincidental with a building visible on the 1945 aerial photograph but has clearly been extensively rebuilt and refurbished.



Building 5 (camera facing northwest)

Building 6: An entertainment building housing the Prince's Bar, The Queen Vic public house and the SS Victoria Restaurant. Also incorporates the main kitchens and other service buildings (laundry etc.). Comprises a series of connected, presumably steel framed, sheds with brick and breeze block walls rendered and painted cream with blue detail. The southern side has been styled to suggest an ocean liner. The eastern end has three stepped gables although these are partially hidden behind later extensions.

This building is coincidental with the large building visible on the 1945 aerial photograph and therefore potentially early but has clearly been greatly enlarged. The earlier structures may be extant within and on the north side of this large block but this was not clear (some steel framed 'Crittall' type windows present). This was the focal building of the camp until the major rebuild of the early 1970's.



Building 6 (front – camera facing southeast)



Building 6 (south side – camera facing northeast)



Building 6 (north side showing part of the service area – camera facing southwest)



Building 6, eastern end with the stepped gables visible (camera facing west). Building 7 to the right

Building 7: Maintenance building. Brick and breeze block construction painted cream with white detail and blue and brown doors. Timber roof structure covered in roofing felt. Probably an early structure as it is coincidental with building on the 1945 photograph. Does not appear to have been extensively altered structurally but was clearly once an entertainment building housing a children's play area (painted design featuring animals on the interior). Possibly the best preserved of the early camp buildings but is of little architectural merit.



Building 7 (camera facing northwest)

Building 8: A rectangular structure of brick and breeze block construction with a raised central section. Rendered and painted cream with white detail. Probably built as a washhouse and laundry for the campers, a service which it still performs. Steel framed 'Crittall' type windows and doors. First appears on the 1974 map therefore probably part of the major rebuild in the early 1970's.



Building 9 (camera facing north)

Building 9: A prefabricated hut painted cream with white detail. Situated within the walled enclosure around the lighthouse. Appeared to be a private dwelling associated with the coast surveillance station.

Building 10: The lighthouse (see description in Section 3 Other Buildings)



Buildings 9 and 10, the lighthouse (camera facing northeast)

Building 11: A storage shed to the rear of Building 2. Brick and breeze block construction with a flat roof. Rendered and painted cream with blue doors. Post 1970's, appears on a map of 1992.



Building 11 (camera facing southwest)

Building 12: Timber framed shed clad in plywood, painted cream, with a flat roof covered in roofing felt. Of unknown age but probably relatively modern.



Building 12 (camera facing northeast)

Building 13: Rectangular brick and breeze block storage shed with a flat roof. Rendered and painted cream with white detail. Probably constructed as part of the major rebuild in the early 1970s.



Building 13 (camera facing southeast)

Building 14: Rectangular brick and breeze block structure with a flat roof. Rendered and painted cream with white detail. Probably constructed as part of the major rebuild in the early 1970's.



Building 14 (camera facing northeast)

Building 15: Rectangular brick and breeze block structure with attached open yard. Rendered and painted cream with white and blue detail. Houses a small electric substation. Probably constructed as part of the major rebuild in the early 1970's.



Building 15 (camera facing southwest)

Building 16: Service building. Brick and breeze block construction with flat roof. Walls are rendered and painted cream. Probably constructed as part of the major rebuild in the early 1970's.



Building 16 (camera facing northwest)

Buildings 17 to 24: A series of eight identical blocks, each containing eight chalets. As a group they are named by Pontins as 'Surf City'. Buildings 17 and 18 front onto a car park to the west whilst Buildings 19 to 24 are arranged around a rectangular area of grass with flower beds and a main pathway running approximately east to west across the centre. They are constructed of brick and breeze blocks, which are rendered and painted cream with white detail. They are situated in an area of former individual chalets and run on similar alignments to the former rows. Constructed as part of the major rebuild in the early 1970's.



Building 18 with Building 17 beyond. The back of Building 24 is visible to the right (camera facing north)



Buildings 24 (left), 20 21 and 22 (camera facing north)

Buildings 25 to 30: A series of six identical blocks each containing eight chalets which as a group are named 'Club Savannah Land' by Pontins. They are arranged around a rectangular area of grass with flower beds and a main pathway running approximately east to west across the centre which incorporates a pergola (Building 60). They are constructed of brick and breeze blocks, which are rendered and painted cream with white detail. In basic appearance they are virtually identical to Buildings 17 to 24 but with full height windows that also allow for access. Constructed as part of the major rebuild in the early 1970's.



Building 28 (camera northeast)



Building 25 (camera looking northwest)

Buildings 31, 32 and 33: These comprise three similar blocks, each containing eight chalets running along the west side of the main north-south route through the camp. They form part of a group of chalets named by Pontins as the 'Hero Zone'. They are constructed of brick and breeze blocks which are rendered and painted cream with white detail. They run along the line of a former row of individual chalets but they are not on the 1974 map and are therefore later additions to the major rebuild in the early 1970s.



Building 31 (camera facing northwest)



Building 32 (camera facing northwest)



Building 33 (camera facing northwest)

Buildings 34 to 37: Comprise a further four blocks of the 'Hero Zone'. Buildings 32, 35 and 36 each contain eight chalets whilst Building 37 contains sixteen, smaller chalets in a back-to-back arrangement. All four blocks are of identical proportions and it seems likely that all four blocks originally contained sixteen chalets but alterations have been undertaken to create the larger chalets. All four blocks are constructed of brick and breeze blocks which are rendered and painted cream with white detail and were constructed as part of the major rebuild in the early 1970s. They are arranged symmetrically either side of Building 8



Building 34 showing what is now the 'back' of the row (camera facing southwest)



Building 34 showing the 'front' of the row (camera facing northeast)



Building 37 (camera facing northeast)

Buildings 38 and 39: Two identical blocks adjacent to Buildings 36 and 37 but which are of a slightly different design. Each building comprises a single row of eight chalets but they have a much smaller overhanging roof than all previously described chalets. Building 38 is part of the 'Hero Zone' whereas Building 39 is for staff accommodation. All the chalets that are for public use have uPVC windows and doors which have been fitted as part of a modernisation scheme within the camp. The staff accommodation on the other hand does not appear to have been modernised to such an extent and Building 39 retains wooden window frames and doors. These buildings do not appear on the 1974 map indicating they are slightly later despite their simpler appearance.



Building 38 (camera facing northeast)



Building 39 (camera facing northeast)



Building 39 showing the wooden doors and window frames (camera facing north)

Building 40: This is situated in the southwest corner of the 'Hero Zone'. It is not shown on the 1974 map indicating that it is later in date. It comprises eighteen chalets in a back-to-back arrangement with those facing north being for public use whilst those facing south are for staff accommodation. It is built of brick and breeze blocks which are rendered and painted cream with white detail. It also has uPVC fascias. The chalets for public use have uPVC doors and window frames whilst the staff row retains the wooden doors and frames.



Building 40 (camera facing southwest)

Building 41: This is situated southwest of the 'Hero Zone'. It is not shown on the 1974 map indicating it is later in date. It comprises seven chalets facing south which are for staff accommodation. It is built of brick and breeze blocks which are rendered and painted cream with white detail. It also has uPVC fascias but wooden doors and frames.



Building 41 with Building 40 to the right (camera facing northwest)

Buildings 42 to 44: Comprise three blocks of varying lengths containing back-to-back chalets. Building 42 contains twenty chalets, Building 43 has sixteen and Building 44 has fourteen. All are constructed of brick and breeze blocks which are rendered and painted cream with white detail and were built as part of the major rebuild in the early 1970s. They are situated within the walled enclosure around the lighthouse. They are used for staff accommodation and consequently have not been modernised. They have metal doors and window frames of the 'Crittall' type and bear numbers that presumably relate to an earlier numbering scheme for the chalets.



Building 42 (camera facing northwest)



Building 41 (camera facing northwest)



Building 41 showing the metal doors and window frames (camera facing north)

Building 45: This building comprises a long unbroken row of twenty chalets facing west. It is built of brick and breeze blocks which are rendered and painted cream with white detail. It forms part of a group of chalets named by Pontins as 'Pirouette Park' and was constructed as part of the major rebuild in the early 1970s. There is clear evidence for a number of doors having been sealed up and their associated concrete steps having been removed suggesting that originally this row was divided into a larger number of chalets. The ground on which this row is built rises slightly to the north and has resulted in the structure stepping up twice along its length.



Building 45, the southern end (camera facing north)



Building 45 (camera facing southwest)

Buildings 46 to 58: These comprise a group of thirteen separate blocks of chalets of varying lengths that make up a group named by Pontins as 'Pirouette Park'. All chalets, except those in Building 54, are arranged back-to-back and are of a very similar design to each other and those elsewhere in the camp. Building 54 is similar to Building 45 and acts as southern extension of that building. Buildings 46 to 53 are built on slightly sloping ground and utilise steps in the structure similar to Building 45. All blocks in 'Pirouette Park' are built of brick and breeze block which has been rendered and painted cream with white detail. All were constructed as part of the major rebuild in the early 1970's.



Building 47 (camera facing north)



Building 48 (camera facing north)



Buildings 48, 49 and 50 (camera facing southeast)



Building 54 (camera facing north)



Building 58 (camera facing north)

Building 59: A wooden shed at the entrance to the camp to house the camp gatekeeper. Not dissimilar to one of the early chalets but is of modern construction.



Building 59 (camera facing northeast)

Building 60: A timber pergola running across the area of 'Club Savannah Land'. Modern construction.



Building 60 (camera facing north)

Building 61: The crazy golf course featuring a number of small structures of timber, concrete and brick construction with a nautical theme. Date unknown.



Building 61 (camera facing east)



Building 61 (camera facing southeast)



Building 61 (camera facing east)

5. Photographic catalogue – the other buildings

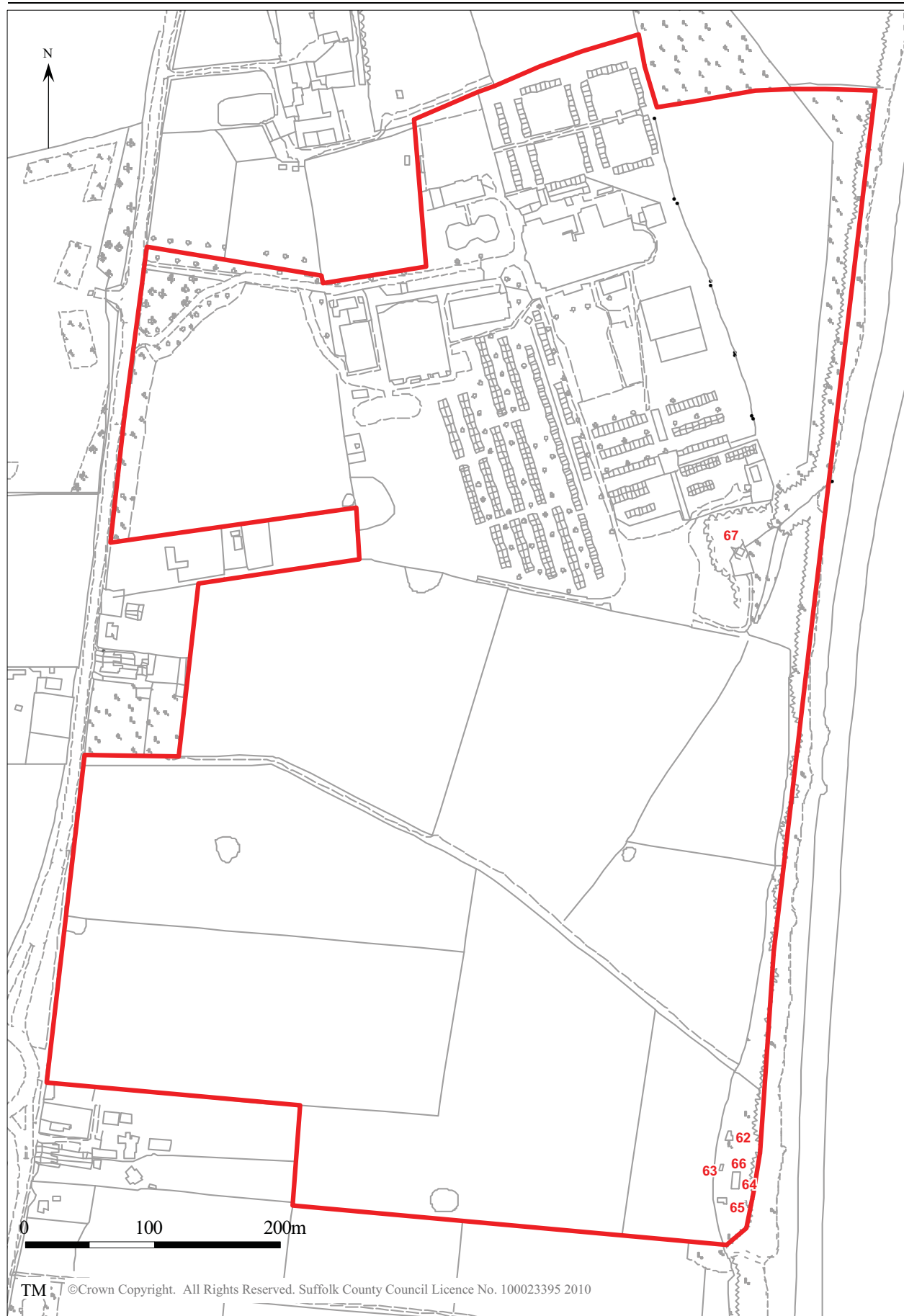


Figure 7. Plan showing the building ID numbers for the non-camp structures

Building 62 (and Building 65): These two buildings are generator houses, both of which are built to an identical design. They comprise a rectangular chamber, in which the generator would have been housed, and an enclosed corridor at one end. The corridor runs across the end of the building and a little way along each side before exiting alongside the structure. There is also an opening across the corridor to allow the generator itself to be installed or removed. Both are partially sunken into the ground so slightly less than half of the structure is visible. A concrete bed on which the generator sat is present within both structures. Both structures date from the Second World War and are associated with Building 64.



Building 62 (camera facing northeast)



Building 62, interior showing machine bed for the generator (camera facing north)



Building 65 (camera facing east)

Building 63: A small rectangular, brick built structure with a cast *in situ* concrete slab roof. It is aligned north-south with an entrance on the east side and openings in the northern and southern end walls which are adjacent to the west wall. A series of brick and concrete piers are present inside and outside the structure. These are in line with the end wall openings and slots in the top surfaces suggest they may have supported rails, an arrangement that would allow something (a pair of searchlights?) to be moved in and out of the building.



Building 63 (camera facing northeast)



Building 63, interior (camera facing north)

Building 64: This comprises a rectangular concrete structure, single storey, with three chambers. There are windows on all four walls (although some now blocked) with steel shutters mounted on the inside of the building. One entrance with steel doors (one *in-situ*) is located in the western wall and opens into the northern chamber. A further entrance was situated on the southern wall but this is now blocked. The interior is bare but there are marks on the walls where electrical cables once ran and slots in the floor for further cabling. The floor is concrete with evidence for wooden battens which presumably supported

timber flooring. There are what appears to be metal hand rails on the roof but it was not possible to gain access to investigate further. The building was presumably built set back a safe distance from the cliff edge but the cliff has clearly eroded since the initial construction and the structure is close to being undermined in the southeast corner. Further erosion will lead to this structure collapsing and falling onto the beach.

The building dates from the Second World War. It is identical to an illustration in the Defence of Britain project handbook (Lowry, 1996, 44) which is described as a 'Coast Defence/ Chain Low Home Transmitter/Receiver Block', a building associated with the radar plotting of ship and aircraft movements.

The building appears to have later been used by the Royal Observer Corps (ROC) as suggested by a rough inscription in the floor, made before the concrete hardened, which reads 'ROC 1952'. The resurfacing of the floor (which probably includes the battens and timber flooring), the blocking of some windows and a doorway and the mounting of railings on the roof is probably associated with this later reuse.



Building 64 showing the blocked southern door and the erosion undermining the southeast corner (camera facing northwest)



Building 64 (camera facing east)



Building 64, window with steel shutters and metal frame (camera facing west)

Building 65: see Building 62

Building 66: A subterranean ROC monitoring post lies immediately to the north of Building 64. The structure appears as a low, flat topped rectangular earthwork. Visible on top of this earthwork is a raised square concrete structure with a square manhole in the top. This is the entrance to the monitoring post. There is no cover and the steel ladder is *in-situ* enabling access. South of the entrance is a smaller concrete structure which forms the air vent for the monitoring post. The monitoring post was not entered but looking down the entrance shaft it could be seen that it was partially filled with water. They generally comprise a rectangular chamber (4.6 by 2.3m), which is the monitoring room, and a smaller chamber housing a chemical toilet. They are a standard design with little or no variation.



Building 66, the entrance (camera looking southeast)



Building 66, the air vent (camera facing southeast)

Building 67: An Anglia Water fenced compound with concrete structure.



Building 67 (camera facing northwest)

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The holiday centre

As the holiday centre at Pakefield is a relatively early establishment it was hoped that some significant and now rare structures may have survived. Considering the number of holiday camps built during the 1930's there are virtually no known architectural elements preserved anywhere in the country. Only one chalet survives from this period, an Elizabethan style building from Butlin's Skegness site, which is now a Grade II listed building (Ferry 2010).

Unfortunately, there do not appear to be any early survivors from the Pakefield site as all the chalets now present date from the major rebuild of the early 1970's onwards. The modern chalets are a standard design that can be seen at many other Pontins sites.

From photographic evidence it would appear that many of the 1930's chalets survived until the 1970's but all were replaced during the major rebuild. It is possible that some may have seen reuse as sheds but the site was fairly well covered and none were seen. It is just possible that some may have been taken from the site in the 1970's for private reuse as beach huts, summerhouses or just plain garden sheds and that one may

eventually come to light in a nearby back garden but this is unlikely. They would have probably been past their best after 40 plus years of occupation and it is likely that all were destroyed on site.

Buildings 5, 6 and 7 are all coincidental with structures visible in the 1945 aerial photograph and may be early. Building 5, if it is the same structure visible in 1945, has clearly been extensively rebuilt, re-clad and extended. The same goes for Building 6, which may contain within its fabric parts of early camp buildings but they are greatly altered. Building 7 appears to be relatively original and as such maybe considered the best preserved of all the potentially early camp buildings. Unfortunately, even if Buildings 5, 6 and 7 are early structures they are simple buildings that are not of a specific holiday camp design and as such cannot be considered as potential heritage assets. They are not subject to the current development plan but if Buildings 5, 6 and 7 were threatened with significant alteration or destruction in future proposals they would warrant further investigation and recording. They have the potential to be of interest to the study of the history of holiday camps and the seaside in general, a field which would appear to be growing, judging by the recent publication of a number of books on the subject.

The lighthouse

The lighthouse is a simple structure that is now shorn of its attached cottages but it is relatively early and is a key part of the local maritime history in an area where there are few visible remains. The role it played in the last World War (and possibly it had a role in the First World War) also adds to its interest. Consequently it should be considered a potential heritage asset.

The Second World War structures

Buildings 62, 63, 64 and 65 are clearly part of an early radar station and consequently are of relative importance and they should be considered as heritage assets. Although Buildings 62, 64 and 65 are not unique and appear to be of standard design, the structures, their locations and relative positions should be adequately surveyed and photographically recorded. They are not worthy of *in situ* preservation, and indeed this may prove to be problematic as their greatest threat would appear to be from the eroding cliffs rather than the proposed development. The purpose of Building 63 is at

present unknown but it is unlikely to be a unique structure. The building's style suggests it too dates from the Second World War.

7. Archive deposition

Paper archive: T:\ENV\ARC\MSWORKS3\PARISH\Gisleham\Pakefield Holiday Centre
Historic Environment Record reference under which archive is held: GSE 067.

A summary has also been entered into OASIS, the online database, ref:suffolkc1-81838

8. List of contributors and acknowledgements

The survey was carried out by Mark Sommers from Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service, Field Team.

The project was directed by Mark Sommers, and managed by Jo Caruth, who also
provided advice during the production of the report.

9. Bibliography

Brodie, A. and Winter, G. 2007, *England's Seaside Resorts*, English Heritage

Darton, L. 2010, *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment – Land at Pontins Lowestoft Holiday Centre, Pakefield, Suffolk*, CgMs Consulting

Ferry, K. 2010 *Holiday Camps*, Shire Books

Hardy, D. and Ward, C. 1986, *Goodnight Campers!: The History of the British Holiday Camp*, Five Leaves

Lowery, B. (ed.) 1996, *20th Century Defences in Britain: An Introductory Guide*, CBA

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.