

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING REPORT

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SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/197

## **New Boiler House, Hartismere High School, Eye EYE 099**

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## HER Information

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**Planning Application No:** 2040/10

**Date of Fieldwork:** 15/10/2010

**Grid Reference:** TM 1400 7400

**Funding Body:** Suffolk County Council

**Curatorial Officer:** Dr Abby Antrobus

**Project Officer:** J. A. Craven

**Oasis Reference:** Suffolkc1-83985

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



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## Summary

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A program of archaeological evaluation and monitoring, carried out on land at Hartismere High School, Eye, Suffolk in advance of and during development works, did not identify archaeological deposits although it demonstrated that the natural subsoil slope and potential archaeological levels in the area had survived modern landscaping.





# 1. Introduction

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A program of archaeological evaluation and monitoring was carried out within the grounds of Hartismere High School, Eye in advance of development (Fig. 1). The evaluation of a new boiler room footprint, and monitoring of the site strip for a new playground replacing an existing tennis court, was required to assess the impact of planning application 2040/10 on potential archaeological deposits and was subject to a Brief and Specification written by Dr Abby Antrobus, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team, dated 30th September 2010. The project was funded by the developer, Suffolk County Council.

## 2. Geology and topography

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The site lies in the grounds of Hartismere High School on the western outskirts of the modern town at TM 1400 7400. The site lies on a heavily landscaped south-facing slope, at a height of c.35m AOD. The site geology is of deep clay/loam soils overlying chalky till (Ordnance Survey 1983).

## 3. Archaeological and historical background

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The site lies in an area of high archaeological importance, as recorded in the County Historic Environment Record. Major excavations undertaken in 2007 immediately to the south-west, in advance of a new sports field, defined an Early Anglo-Saxon settlement of national importance (HER no. EYE 083) while archaeological works on the old playing field, 150m to the west, have identified prehistoric, Roman and Early Anglo-Saxon deposits (EYE 084 and EYE 094). The site therefore lay in the midst of an area of known multi-period settlement and had high potential for further archaeological deposits to exist.

In the medieval period the site was likely to have been open farmland, lying c.200m-300m west of the edge of the town (EYE 091). In the late 19th century the site is shown as open farmland, with the Mellis & Eye Railway line, which formed the southern field boundary, running west to east immediately adjacent to the site.

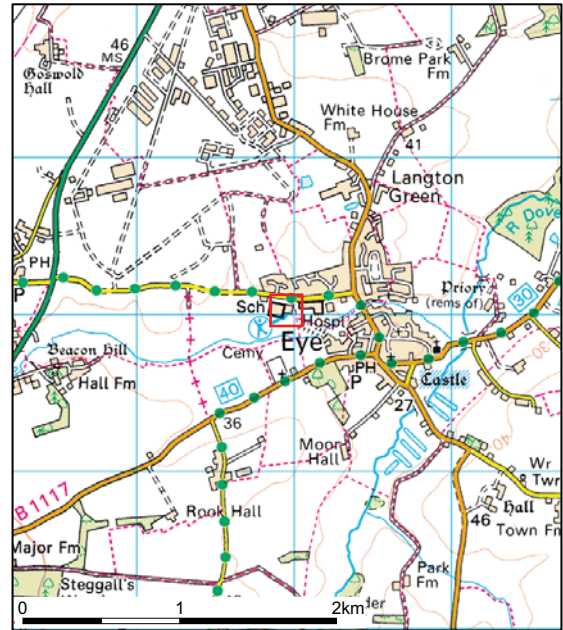


Figure 1. Site location plan

During the 20th century the development of the school and adjacent Poor Law Institution (later Hartismere hospital), together with the closure of the railway line, has caused heavy landscaping works to the general area.

## 4. Methodology

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Two evaluation trenches within the proposed boiler room footprint (Fig. 2) were marked out by hand following a layout detailed in the project WSI. They were excavated by a mechanical digger, equipped with a ditching bucket, to the top of the subsoil surface or archaeological levels, under the supervision of an archaeologist. The two trenches totalled 22m in length and were 1.8m wide.

The depth of the trenching varied from 0.5m to 1.2m, depending upon the level of modern landscaping. Trenches and spoilheaps were thoroughly examined for archaeological material and cleaned as required to clarify the absence of archaeological features.

The site strip for the new tennis court was also carried out under the observation of an archaeologist.

The site was recorded using a single context continuous numbering system. Trench positions were recorded by hand and the monitored areas and site levels by an RTK GPS. Digital colour and black and white print photographs were taken of all stages of the fieldwork, and are included in the digital and physical archives respectively.

An OASIS form has been initiated for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-83985) and a digital copy of the report will be submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>) upon completion of the project.

The site archives are kept in the main store of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Bury St Edmunds under HER Nos. EYE 099.

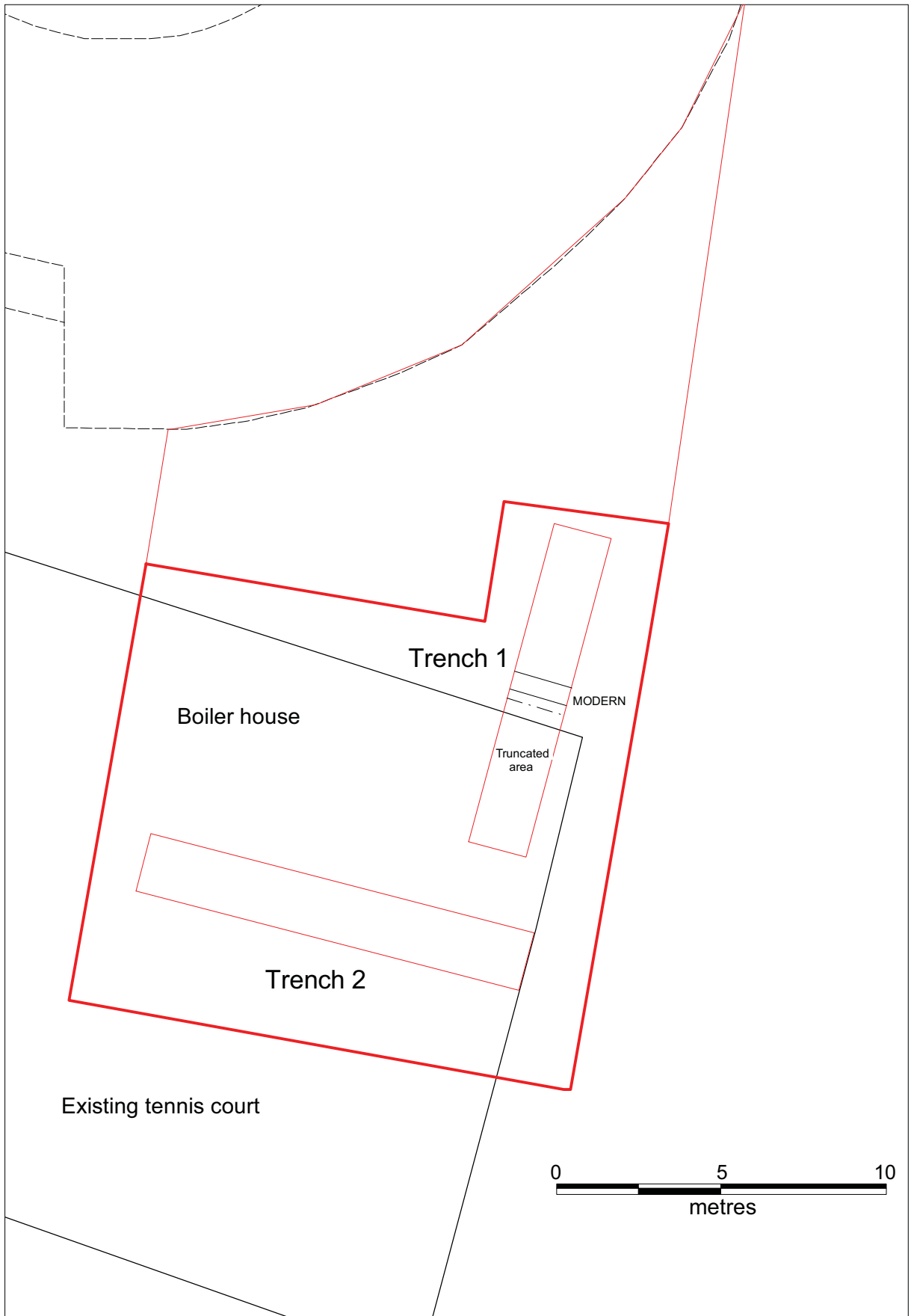


Figure 2. Evaluation trench plan

## 5. Results

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### 5.1. Evaluation

#### Trench 1

This trench measured 10m long, 1.8m wide, and was aligned north to south. The northern 6m was placed across an area of grass forming an artificially steep slope from the existing carpark down to the hardcourt playground. The southern c.4m of the trench was placed through this playground.

At the northern end the trench profile showed 0.75m of modern deposits overlying the former topsoil which was 0.25m thick. This is turn overlaid a 0.2m thick layer of mid brown silt, 0001, which sealed the natural subsoil of mid orange clay/silt and gravel. To the south the drop of the modern slope was seen to be caused by a rapid thinning of the modern deposits, with the topsoil and 0001 layer descending by only c.0.1m over the first 5m.

In the centre of the trench these layers were cut by a modern service trench and did not reappear to the south as the modern ground surface continued to descend until it met the existing hardcourt playground at a height of c.0.1m above the natural subsoil level, thereby removing the topsoil and majority of 0001.

The southern 4.5m of the trench, within the playground, saw the removal of 0.3m of modern tarmac and hardcore expose a truncated and disturbed subsoil surface at c.35m AOD. This was lowered by a further 0.2m until a clean undisturbed subsoil was exposed. The truncation had removed any evidence of the natural slope.

No archaeological features or deposits were seen at any point within the trench.



Plate 1. Trench 1 facing north



Plate 2. Trench 1 north end profile facing east

## Trench 2

This trench measured 12m long and 1.8m wide and was aligned east to west within the hardcourt playground. The removal of 0.35m of tarmac and hardcore exposed a trace of the original topsoil, particularly along the southern side of the trench indicating the drop of the natural slope, and then 0.25m-0.4m of layer 0001, here a compacted brown silt/sand with fragments of chalk, gravel and scattered modern debris. This overlaid the undulating natural subsoil of mid yellow/brown chalky clay and gravel. Pockets of layer 0001, which infilled natural hollows in the subsoil surface, were removed by hand.

No archaeological features or deposits were seen at any point within the trench.



Plate 3. Trench 2 facing west

## 5.2. Monitoring

Three visits were made during the groundworks for a new playground and an access track. The site, an existing grass tennis court, was reduced to a level of 37m AOD to the north and 36.5m AOD to the south. This meant that up to 0.35m of modern topsoils, but generally less than 0.2m, was removed across the site. Across the majority of the site this meant that the topsoil was not fully removed. In the small areas where the topsoil was wholly removed a mid brown/orange silt/sand was exposed, presumably being a similar deposit to 0001.

The groundworks therefore were not deep enough to expose either the natural subsoil or potential archaeological horizon. It is possible that archaeological deposits remain *in situ* beneath the new playground although it is also unclear how much disturbance has been caused by landscaping of the natural slope.

The route of the access track to the site, which was reduced to 35m-36m AOD, rising to the west, was seen to be heavily disturbed by service trenches and the former railway track and existing services.



Plate 4. Tennis court site strip, facing north-east



## 6. Discussion

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The evaluation trenches showed that, despite the significant levels of modern landscaping and disturbance, the subsoil surface and potential archaeological horizon was generally well-preserved below an intact buried soil layer and the original topsoil. Only in the northern part of the hardcourt playground, which was terraced slightly into the original natural slope, was the subsoil truncated by up to 0.1m.

The absence of any archaeological evidence within the trenches therefore indicates a genuine absence of past activity in the immediate area and no further work is thought necessary.

Monitoring of groundworks for the new playground were not deep enough to expose either the natural subsoil or potential archaeological horizon.

## 7. Archive deposition

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Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds.

Digital archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds T:arc\archive field proj\Eye\EYE 099

## 8. List of contributors and acknowledgements

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The project was managed by John Craven, and carried out by John Craven and Robert Brooks, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

## 9. Bibliography

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Ordnance Survey, 1983, 'Soils of England and Wales': *Soil survey of England and Wales, sheet 4 Eastern England 1:250,000*. Harpenden.

### **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.