

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

## BRIGHTWELL CORNER, BRIGHTWELL

(SMR ref. BGL 036)

### A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF GROUNDWORK ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS

(Application No. C/04/2379)

**Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2005/107**

(OASIS Ref. suffolkc1-8853)

**Summary:** Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with the construction of a group of agricultural buildings at Brightwell Corner, Brightwell (NGR TM 2483 4374), was undertaken during June 2005. A large area was stripped of topsoil revealing two undated ditches. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference BGL 036. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, who were commissioned and funded by W.O. & P.O. Jolly Holdings Limited.

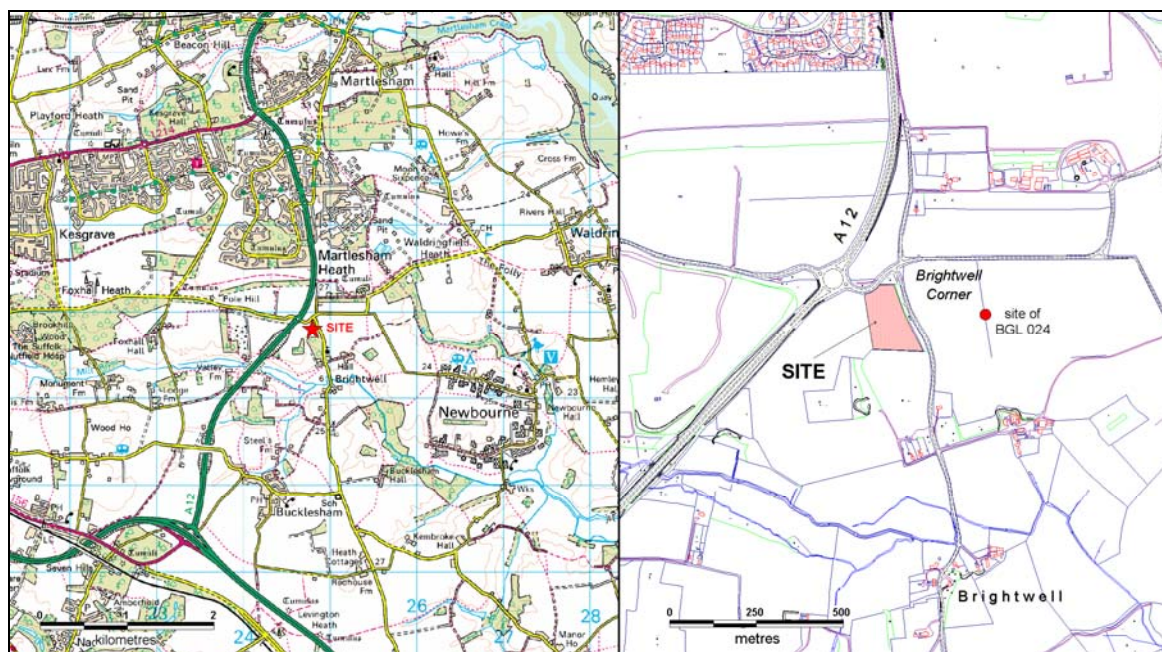


Figure 1: Location Plan

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## Introduction

An application for the construction of a series of agricultural buildings at Brightwell Corner, Brightwell (application no. C/04/2379), was approved but with an attached condition requiring a programme of archaeological works to be put in place prior to any construction work.

The archaeological interest in the site was due to its location within an area that has produced low levels of prehistoric, Roman and medieval artefacts. It is also close to an extensive area of cropmarks suggestive of a pre-modern field system and enclosures (SMR ref. BGL 024). The site is located on the northern slope of a low hilltop within an area of former heathland.

As only a low-level of archaeological remains were expected the area affected by the application could be adequately recorded under a monitoring condition and for this a Brief and Specification was produced by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team (Appendix 1).

The National Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is TM 2483 4374; for a location plan see figure 1 above. This monitoring event is recorded on the County Sites and Monuments Record under the reference BGL 036. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, who were commissioned and funded by W.O. & P.O. Jolly Holdings Limited.

## **Methodology**

The first task undertaken by the developers was to landscape the area to create a flat terrace for the construction of the proposed structures. This entailed the mechanical stripping of the topsoil from the entire development area. This was carried out with a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, which left a relatively clean and smooth surface to the underlying natural subsoil. Once the topsoil had been stripped the second phase of construction would be to cut away the natural subsoil until the correct levels had been achieved. This would undoubtedly destroy any archaeological features that may be present. Consequently, the most opportune time to monitor this development was during the initial stripping phase.

The spoil from landscaping the site was to be used to fill a low area to the west. The topsoil from this area was also stripped but this was done using a bulldozer which then tracked over the freshly stripped area. The spoil was transferred from one area to the other using six-wheeled dump trucks, two of which were in operation.

The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by walking regular transects, c.8 to 10m apart, across the main development area after it had been stripped and observing for any irregularities in colour or consistency of the subsoil which could indicate the presence of archaeological features. The second area was also walked but with less regular transects.

Any features that were noted had a sample removed in order to ascertain their depth, investigate the nature of the fill and to recover any datable artefacts. These aspects were then recorded as well as the feature's location within the development area.

## **Results**

*See Figure 2 for details of the areas stripped and any features noted.*

The site was visited on four occasions during the initial phases of work. The first visit was made on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2005 in order view the area prior to landscaping in order to assess for earthworks but none were identified.

The final three visits were made on the 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> June 2005 during which time the topsoil stripping was completed. The topsoil was c.0.35m thick and immediately overlay a natural subsoil comprising pale yellow sand. Within the actual development area (Area A in figure 2) two linear features interpreted as ditches were noted (numbered 2 and 3). Each was c.0.40m wide with a depth of c.0.15m. The fills were homogenous and consisted of a pale brown sand. A 1m length of each was quickly shovelled out but no artefacts were identified.

Within the spoil dumping area (Area B in figure 2) no features or deposits were identified but due to the methods employed in its stripping and the fact dumper trucks had since driven over much of it, this was not surprising.

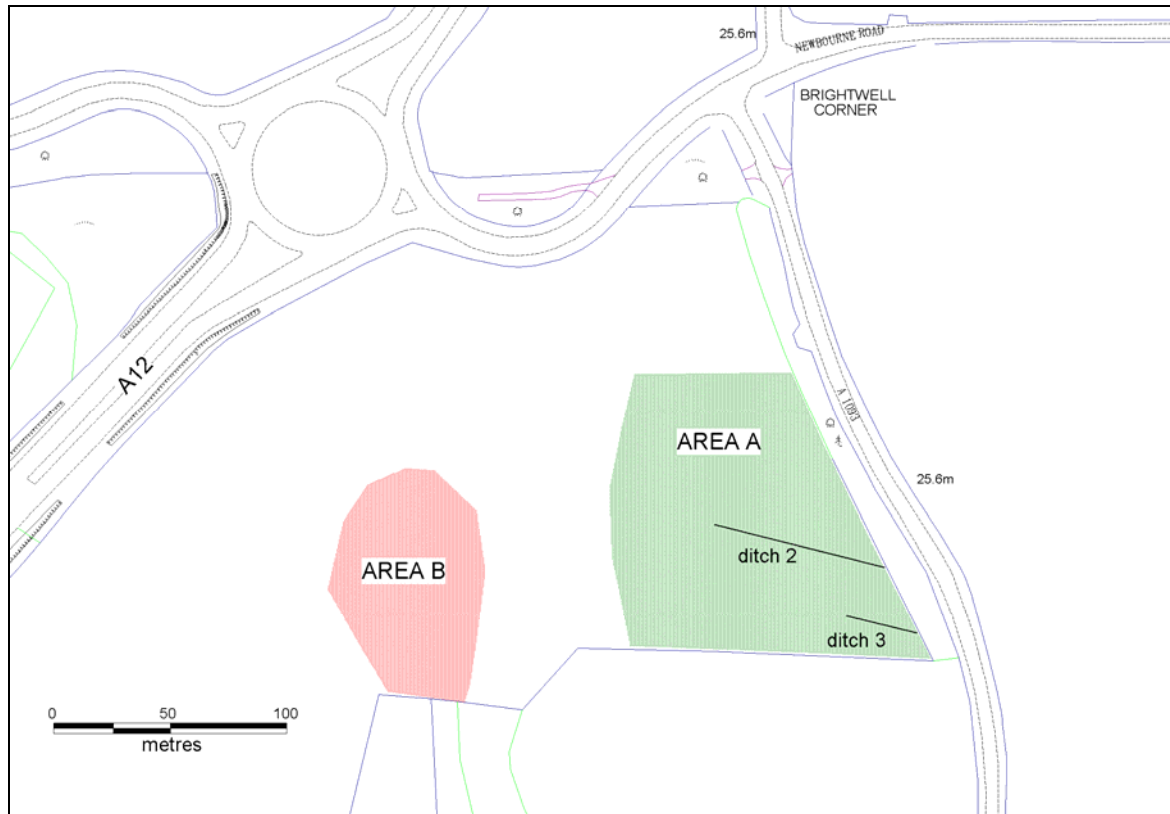


Figure 2: Areas Stripped and Features Noted

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No stray finds were recovered from either of the stripped areas although it was not possible to thoroughly examine the spoil tips due to the proximity of fast moving plant machinery.

The monitoring archive from this project will be deposited at the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service offices in Bury St Edmunds under the reference BGL 036, it is also recorded on the OASIS, online database, reference: suffolkc1-8853.

## Conclusion

The two ditches identified during this monitoring work are presumably related to a now lost field system. No ditches or boundaries are marked in the area on early Ordnance Survey maps, which indicate this area to have been completely open. This therefore suggests that these features are probably of some antiquity and possibly relate to prehistoric settlement and farming which is known to have occurred in these former heathland areas from previous archaeological work in this part of the county. However the lack of stray finds indicates little evidence for past activity of any intensity close to or on the site.

The topsoil stripping on the main area was undertaken in a controlled manner and gave a good opportunity to observe for archaeological deposits and features and the author is confident that any features present would have been identified. However this is not the case for the area where spoil was dumped, but as only topsoil was stripped and the area was then immediately buried it is possible that archaeological deposits and features could have survived.

# APPENDIX I

## SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM



#### *Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development*

##### **Erection of agricultural buildings Part OS 6458 and part of field opposite A1093, Brightwell**

*Although this document is fundamental to the work of the specialist archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that certain of its requirements are likely to impinge upon the working practices of a general building contractor and may have financial implications, for example see paragraphs 2.3 & 4.3. The commissioning body should also be aware that it may have Health & Safety responsibilities, see paragraph 1.5.*

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Planning permission to develop on this site has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application C/04/2379). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The development area lies within an area that has produced low levels of prehistoric, Roman and medieval artefacts (Suffolk Sites and Monuments Record no. BGL Misc, sf20235). It also lies to the west of an extensive area of cropmarks suggestive of a pre-modern field system and enclosures (site no BGL 024).
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in “Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England” Occasional Papers 14, East Anglian Archaeology, 2003.
- 1.5 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 this office before execution.

#### **2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring**

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which are damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for earlier occupation on the site.

- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activities in this proposal are likely to be the site preparation works involving topsoil stripping (e.g. the construction of access roads, hard standing construction, and landscaping) and the excavation of building footings or ground-beam trenches.

If site preparation works involve topsoil stripping the stripping process and the upcast soil are to be observed whilst they are being excavated by the building contractor.

In the case of footing trenches the excavation and the upcast soil, are to be observed during and/or after their excavation by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for the recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation (see 4.3).

### 3. **Arrangements for Monitoring**

- 3.1 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the archaeological contractor) who must be approved by the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (SCCAS) - see 1.3 above.
- 3.2 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of SCCAS five working days notice of the commencement of ground works on the site, in order that the work of the archaeological contractor may be monitored. The method and form of development will also be monitored to ensure that it conforms to previously agreed locations and techniques upon which this brief is based.
- 3.3 Allowance must be made to cover archaeological costs incurred in monitoring the development works by the contract archaeologist. The size of the contingency should be estimated by the approved archaeological contractor, based upon the outline works in paragraph 2.3 of the Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and time-table.
- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered the Conservation Team of SCCAS must be informed immediately. Amendments to this specification may be made to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

### 4. **Specification**

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Council Conservation Team archaeologist and the contracted 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity must be given to the 'observing archaeologist' to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.
- 4.3 In the case of topsoil stripping for site preparation, access roads, hard standings and landscaping unimpeded access to the stripped area at the rate of one hour per 100 square metres must be allowed for archaeological recording at the interface between topsoil and clean sub-soil surface before the area is further deepened, traversed by machinery or sub-base deposited.

In the case of footing trenches unimpeded access at the rate of one and a half hours per 10 metres of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.

- 4.4 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.5 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context.
- 4.6 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.

## 5. Report Requirements

- 5.1 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*, particularly Appendix 3. This must be deposited with the County Sites and Monuments Record within 3 months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 A report on the fieldwork and archive, consistent with the principles of *MAP2*, particularly Appendix 4, must be provided. The report must summarise the methodology employed, the stratigraphic sequence, and give a period by period description of the contexts recorded, and an inventory of finds. The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its interpretation. The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological value of the results, and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).
- 5.4 A summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, must be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 County Sites and Monuments Record sheets must be completed, as per the county SMR manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the SMR. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Edward Martin

Suffolk County Council  
Archaeological Service Conservation Team  
Environment and Transport Department  
Shire Hall  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Date: 3 March 2005

Reference: Brightwell05.doc

**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.**