

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT**

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**SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/227**

# **Land off Brickfields Way, Thetford ENF 125575**

**J. A. Craven**  
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## HER Information

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**Planning Application No:** 3PL/2010/0836/F

**Date of Fieldwork:** 13th-14th December 2010

**Grid Reference:** TL 8669 8419

**Funding Body:** Baker Pettit Pension Fund

**Curatorial Officer:** Ken Hamilton (Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service)

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

**Oasis Reference:** Suffolkc1-89283

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



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## Summary

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An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land off Brickfields Way, Thetford, Norfolk, identified a near total absence of archaeological deposits despite an undisturbed soil profile of ploughsoil sealing thick colluvial deposits. No evidence was seen for any activity relating to the nearby prehistoric and Roman occupation, or to the adjacent post-medieval brickworks. Three isolated finds dating to the prehistoric/Roman periods probably arrived on the site via casual loss, or agricultural and natural processes.

Apart from a further phase of evaluation which is still required for the eastern part of the development, no further work is thought necessary to mitigate the impact of the site's development on archaeological heritage assets.





# 1. Introduction

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An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of proposed industrial development on a 0.97ha site at Brickfields Way, Thetford, Norfolk (Fig. 1). The site, an area of semi-derelict scrubland, lies within a modern industrial estate to the north of the town centre. The evaluation was required to assess the site's potential for archaeological heritage assets, prior to consideration of the planning application 3PL/2010/0836/F, by Ken Hamilton (Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service) in an archaeological Brief dated 26th October 2010 (Appendix 1). The work, which was carried out as detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation for the project prepared by SCCAS/FT, was funded by the developer, Baker Pettit Pension Fund.

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the full archaeological implications for the site's development by assessing whether archaeological deposits existed, determining their date, form and purpose, and their extent, depth and quality of preservation. This would allow an informed decision to be made as to the need for, and scope of, any archaeological mitigation strategy for the site's development.

## 2. Geology and topography

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The site lies at a height of c.41m-46m above OD, on a south-west facing slope overlooking the valley of the Little Ouse river, which lies c.1km to the south. To the north ground levels continue to rise to a height of c.50m above OD.

The site drift geology consists of chalky till, together with outwash sands and gravels, silts and clays (Lowestoft Formation) overlying chalk bedrock (British Geological Survey DiGMapGB-50 dataset, 2010).



Figure 1. Location of site, showing development area (red) and trenches (black)

### 3. Archaeological and historical background

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The site lies in an area of known archaeological interest, with several nearby sites being recorded on the Norfolk Historic Environment Record.

To the north are several prehistoric sites, including two possible Bronze Age barrows (NHER 5744 and 5745), the former also being the site of a post-medieval gallows (Gallows Hill). These are spread over the 700m between the site and the Scheduled Monument of Fison Way, an Iron Age and Roman religious site (NHER 5853).

The medieval town of Thetford lies c.900m to the south while a post-medieval brickworks (NHER 5944) lies 150m to the north-west, and a brick kiln (NHER 16861) 300m to the east. These, combined with the name of the road, implied that the site had potential for evidence of post-medieval industrial activity. An 18th century windmill (NHER 15250) is also recorded 150m to the south-west.

Maps and photographic survey data available on the Norfolk County Council E-Map Explorer (<http://www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk>) show the recent history of the site, which appears to have been open farmland to the north of the town during the post-medieval period, with the surrounding industrial estate having developed since the mid 20th century (as shown on the 1946 and 1988 aerial photographs). The mid 19th century tithe map shows the site as a linear field, with the same boundaries as the present day layout, lying to the south of a field clearly marked as Thetford St Peter. The development of the industrial estate itself appears to have followed the 19th/20th field layout quite closely, with Brickfields Way corresponding to a 19th century trackway and Howlett Way to a field boundary.

## 4. Methodology

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Ten trenches, measuring 229m in total length, were excavated by a mechanical excavator, equipped with a ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist, to the top of the undisturbed natural geology or archaeological levels (Fig. 2). At 1.6m wide this amounted to 366.4sqm of trenching, or 5.4% of the available 0.67ha area. The eastern part of the site, an area of 0.3ha, could not be investigated as it is currently occupied by a vehicle rental business. Minor changes were made to the position of trenches proposed in the Written Scheme of Investigation to avoid existing spoil or rubbish heaps, several derelict portacabins and small areas of hardstanding.

Unstratified finds were collected during the machining and recorded under individual contexts dependent upon their location. Sites and spoilheaps were thoroughly surveyed by an experienced metal-detectorist during the evaluation.

Although no archaeological deposits were identified, several areas within the trenching were cleaned, and potential features subsequently excavated, by hand. Trench outlines and elevations were recorded using an RTK GPS and Total Station Theodolite. 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.

An OASIS form has been initiated for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-89283) 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 archive is kept in the main store of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Bury St Edmunds under the Norfolk HER No. ENF 125575.

## 5. Results

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The ten trenches showed a similar profile, with a modern ploughsoil overlying a sealed subsoil layer of colluvial mid brown silt/clay (0001) which was up to 0.5m thick. The upper surface of 0001 was clearly affected by plough damage, aligned north-west to south-east. Sealed under layer 0001 was the natural drift geology of mid yellow/grey clay/silt with areas of mid orange/brown clay/silt or gravel. Full trench descriptions are given in Table 1 below.

No archaeological layers or cut features were identified in the trenching, with only one area of modern disturbance (an electric cable aligned north to south seen in the western end of Trenches 1 and 3) affecting layer 0001 and the underlying natural geology. Some minor landscaping, leading to a slight flattening of the natural slope through the dumping of modern deposits, was seen along the southern boundary.

Several possible features, infilled with mid brown/orange clay/silt, were investigated but all proved to be irregular in shape and were probably created by natural processes such as water erosion.

Three isolated pieces of artefactual material were recovered from unstratified contexts, a single prehistoric pottery sherd in Trench 7 (0020), a Roman sesterce (SF 1001) in Trench 1 and a copper alloy fragment (SF1002) in Trench 8.

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Height of subsoil</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Description</b>
01	25m	42.5m (NE), 41.7m (SW)	0.5m (NE), 0.7m (SW)	0.3m-0.4m of ploughsoil, sealing layer 0001 which was 0.2m-0.3m thick, thinning as the natural slope rose to the north-east. SF1001 recovered from spoilheap.
02	30m	41.9 (NW), 41.1m (SE)	0.6m-0.7m	0.4m ploughsoil sealing layer 0001 which was 0.2m-0.3m thick.
03	26m	41.2m (NE), 40.4m (SW)	0.8m-1m	0.2m of modern deposits in western half of trench overlying ploughsoil. The 0.3m thick ploughsoil sealed layer 0001 which was 0.4m-0.5m thick.
04	20m	43.5m (NW), 43m (SE)	0.4m-0.5m	At the north-west end of the trench the ploughsoil directly sealed the natural drift geology. As the natural slope descended to the south-west a thin intermediate deposit of layer 0001 developed, up to 0.1m thick.
05	30m	43.1m (NE), 42.3m (SW)	0.6m	0.3m ploughsoil sealing layer 0001 which was 0.3m thick.
06	13m	42.3m (NW), 42m (SE)	0.7m	0.4m ploughsoil sealing layer 0001 which was 0.3m thick.
07	23m	43m (SW), 43.6m (NE)	0.4m-0.5m	The ploughsoil directly sealed the natural drift geology along the length of trench and so may have been truncated. 0.2m of modern dumped material overlaid the ploughsoil in the south-west end of the trench.
08	19m	44m (NW), 43.5m (SE)	0.6m	0.4m ploughsoil sealing layer 0001 which was 0.2m thick.
09	33m	44.8m (NE), 44m (SW)	0.6m	0.3m-0.4m of ploughsoil sealing layer 0001 which was 0.2m-0.3m thick.
10	10m	44.45m (N), 44.1m (S)	0.7m	0.3m ploughsoil sealing layer 0001 which was 0.4m thick.

Table 1. Trench list

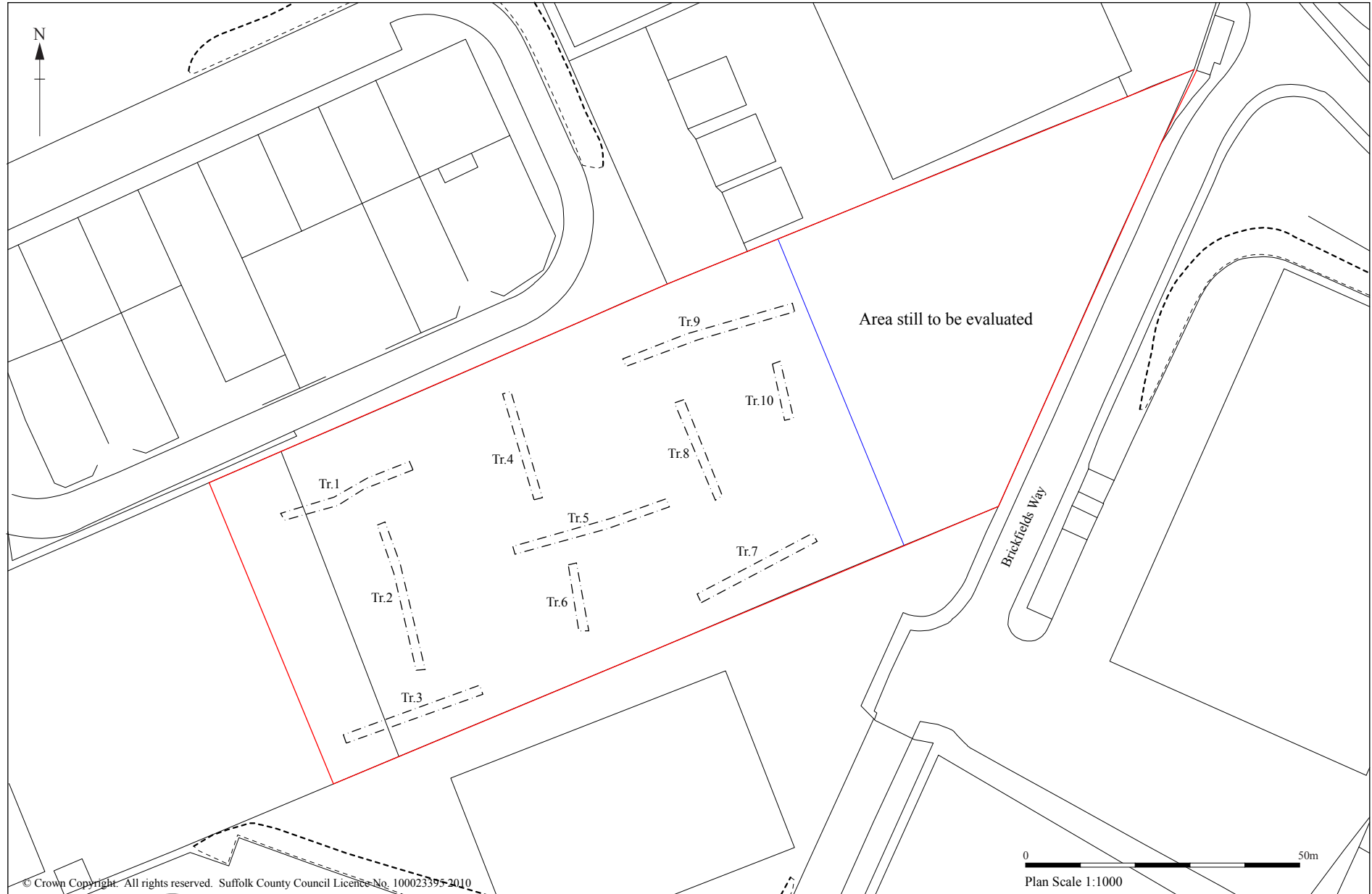


Figure 2. Trench Plan

## 6. Finds and environmental evidence

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Andy Fawcett

Three finds (31g) were noted during the archaeological evaluation on the land off Brickfields Way. The finds are all unstratified and retrieved from three different trenches. They consist of one pottery sherd and two copper-alloy small finds.

A single abraded body sherd of flint-tempered pottery (HMF) was recorded in the unstratified context 0002 in Trench 7 (9g). These fabrics have a fairly long life-span within the prehistoric period. In this example, the flint is abundant and ill-sorted and it is likely to be dated from the Mid/Late Bronze to Early Iron Age.

A very worn Roman sesterce (19g) was noted in the unstratified context 0003 in Trench 1 (SF1001). Only a vague outline of a figure can be seen on the obverse and the general style indicates a date from AD69 to 138 (Andrew Brown *pers.comm*). The reverse is completely worn.

Finally, a copper-alloy fragment (3g) was retrieved from the unstratified context 0004 in Trench 8 (SF1002). The piece is flat and snapped at one end and a single rivet is present. It appears to be a strap or mount but is too robust to have belonged to a dress accessory and was perhaps part of a padlock or a wooden box fitting (Andrew Brown *pers.comm*). The item is not closely datable, but a Roman date cannot be ruled out entirely.



## 7. Discussion

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The evaluation has shown that, underneath the modern ploughsoil, the natural stratigraphy of colluvial deposits overlying the drift geology lies intact and undisturbed. Any potential archaeological horizon, likely to be sealed below layer 0001, could therefore be expected to exist in a state of good preservation.

However despite this high level of preservation and lack of modern disturbance there was no evidence of any former human activity on the site, other than three isolated finds dating to the prehistoric/Roman periods. The absence of any archaeological deposits or cut features demonstrates that the widespread prehistoric and Roman activity, which is known to lie further uphill to the north, does not extend across the area of the site. This suggests that the site lay on the periphery of this multi-period area of occupation and religious practice. The finds material, which probably derives from this nearby activity, could have arrived on the site via casual loss, via agricultural practices such as manuring, or via natural processes such as soil creep.

There was no indication on the site for any evidence relating to the nearby post-medieval brick kilns, or of any other activity in the period. As there was no evidence of any land sub-division it seems that the site was in use as a single open field, as shown on the mid 19th century tithe map, throughout the post-medieval period and perhaps earlier.

## **8. Conclusions and recommendations for further work**

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The evaluation has identified a near total absence of archaeological deposits on the site. The planned development therefore is unlikely to have any impact upon archaeological heritage assets and so no further work is thought necessary to mitigate the impact of the site's development.

The eastern 0.3ha of the site still requires evaluation, which can only take place once the site is vacated by the vehicle rental business.

## 9. Archive deposition

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Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS, 9/10 Churchyard, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 2AR.

Digital archive: SCCAS, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.

Finds and environmental archive: SCCAS, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.

## 10. List of contributors and acknowledgements

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The project was managed by Joanna Caruth. The evaluation was directed by John Craven and carried out by a number of archaeological staff, (Phil Camps, Tony Fisher, David Gill and Alan Smith) all from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

The post-excavation was managed by Richenda Goffin. The production of digital site plans was carried out by David Gill and Gemma Adams, and the specialist finds report by Andy Fawcett. Other specialist identification and advice was provided by Andrew Brown (Portable Antiquities Scheme). The report was checked by Richenda Goffin.

## 11. Bibliography

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*British Geological Survey DiGMapGB-50 dataset [Online]*, 2010, Available:

[http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html) [20 December 2010].

### **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.

*Brief for Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching at Brickfield Way, Thetford*



**BRIEF FOR  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING  
AT**

**Brickfield Way  
Thetford  
NORFOLK**

<b>PLANNING AUTHORITY:</b>	Breckland District Council
<b>PLANNING APPLICATION NO.:</b>	3PL/2010/0836/F
<b>HES REFERENCE ASSOCIATED.</b>	CNF43129 Y/N
<b>NHER NO. FOR THIS PROJECT:</b>	To be arranged
<b>GRID REFERENCE:</b>	TL 8669 8419
<b>MAP EXTRACT ATTACHED:</b>	No
<b>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL:</b>	Unit factory development
<b>AREA:</b>	9700m <sup>2</sup>
<b>CURRENT LAND USE:</b>	Vacant
<b>ISSUED BY:</b>	Ken Hamilton Senior Archaeologist (Planning) Historic Environment Service Environment, Transport and Development Union House, Gressenhall Dereham, Norfolk NR20 4DR Tel: 01362 869275 (direct) ken.hamilton@norfolk.gov.uk
<b>DATE:</b>	26/10/2010



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Ken Hamilton on 01362 869275 and we will do our best to help.

## **Summary**

The proposed development lies within a heritage asset with archaeological interest.

Planning Permission has been or may be granted subject to a condition for a Programme of Archaeological Work (hereafter PoAW). Trial trenching is required to determine the presence/absence, date, extent, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological layers or subsoll archaeological features. This Evaluation may indicate a need for a further phase of Archaeological Excavation or an Archaeological Watching Brief during the development if features of importance are found and these cannot be preserved *in situ*.

Archaeological Contractors are reminded that they should submit a copy of their Method Statement or Specification to the Historic Environment Service for approval, *before* costs are prepared for commissioning clients, in line with the Institute for Archaeologists' guidance.

### **1. Policy Background.**

The relevant planning policies can be found in :-

Breckland Council's *Breckland District Local Plan Adopted Version* (September 1999), policies ENV 15-18,

and

The Department of Communities and Local Government *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (March 2010).

### **2. Archaeological Background.**

The proposed development lies in among a number of known heritage assets: the site lies between a post-medieval brickworks and a brick kiln (the historic land use of the area is evidenced by the address of Brickfields Way), and adjacent to a post medieval windmill. Slightly further to the north are several prehistoric sites, and two possible burial mounds. One of these mounds was the site of a gallows, giving rise to the name Gallows Hill. On the crest of the hill is the Fison Way Iron Age religious site (a scheduled monument).

To the south of the site lies the early medieval town centre of Thetford, together with the Iron Age hill fort at Thetford Castle (indeed, the hill fort and religious enclosure, while not contemporary in their main periods of occupation, are intervisible and one may have had a bearing on the site of the other).

### **3. Planning Background.**

Planning Permission has been or may be granted, subject to a condition for a PoAW. This Brief provides an outline of the first phase of the PoAW, the results of which will be assessed by the Historic Environment Service to determine whether further investigations (excavation) are necessary should archaeological remains be found to exist on the site and these cannot be preserved *in situ*.

### **4. Requirement for Work.**

Trial trenching is required to recover as much information as possible on the extent, date, phasing, character, function, status and significance of the site. The states of preservation of archaeological features or deposits within the area indicated should be determined. A 5% sample of the development area is required.

Contractors should note that no element of this brief should be treated as a contingency unless agreed in advance with the Historic Environment Service.

Project Designs must confirm that relevant health and safety considerations have been built in. The potential of the area being contaminated by toxins must have been adequately investigated or plans for a pre-project investigation of ground conditions outlined. Appropriate tools for the job must be utilised and consideration for this shown in the Project Design.

The relevant experience of the project team must be articulated within the Project Design. In particular the person leading the project in the field must have significant experience of urban archaeological methods, theory and safe practice.

The Archaeological Contractor will prepare a Method Statement or Specification for this phase of the PoAW and submit this to the Historic Environment Service for approval *before* costs are prepared for the commissioning client. The PoAW will include, as appropriate, background research, fieldwork, assessment, analysis, preparation of report, publication and deposition of the project archive.

The Archaeological Contractor will contact the HER Officer of the Historic Environment Service in advance of work starting to obtain a HER number for the site or, if a number is already given on the Brief, to ensure that it is still applicable.

The archaeological research aims and objectives of the project will be clearly stated, and the Method Statement or Specification will demonstrate how these will be met. Appropriate reference will be made to the following documents:-

Glazebrook, J. (ed) 1997. *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the*

*Eastern Counties, 1. Resource assessment* (E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. 3).

Brown, N. and Glazebrook, J. (eds), 2000, *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. Research agenda and strategy* (E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. 8).

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.

When the project is completed, all parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the Norfolk Historic Environment Record. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report.

A copy of the OASIS form must be included in the final report.

Hard copies of the report must also be provided, as specified below.

## **5. Standards.**

Method Statements or Specifications prepared by Archaeological Consultants or Contractors should state that all works will be carried out in full accordance with the appropriate sections of Gurney, D., 2003, 'Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England', as adopted by the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers for the East of England Region and published as *East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14*. This is available as a PDF file on the web at [www.eaareports.org.uk](http://www.eaareports.org.uk)

Archaeological Contractors should note that the Standards document stipulates basic *methodological* standards. It is considered axiomatic that all contractors will strive to achieve the highest possible *qualitative* standards, with the application of the most advanced and appropriate techniques possible within a context of continuous improvement aimed at maximising the recovery of archaeological data and contributing to the development of a greater understanding of Norfolk's historic environment. Monitoring officers will seek and expect clear evidence of commitment to the historic resource of Norfolk, with specifications being drawn up within a context of added value.

## **6. Other matters**

Archaeological Contractors are reminded that they should submit a copy of their Method Statement or Specification to the Historic Environment Service for approval, *before* costs are prepared for commissioning clients, in line with the Institute for Archaeologists' guidance.

*Brief for Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching at Brickfield Way, Thetford*

The Method Statement or Specification should indicate the number of person days allocated to the fieldwork stage of the project

The Historic Environment Service will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project. The Archaeological Contractor will give the Historic Environment Service not less than two weeks' written notice of the commencement of the work, so that arrangements for monitoring the project can be made.

Any subsequent variation to a Detailed Project Specification or Method Statement must be agreed with the Historic Environment Service prior to its implementation.

This brief is valid for a period of one year from the date of issue. After that time, it may need to be revised to take account of new discoveries, changes in policy or the introduction of new working practices or techniques.

Three hard copies and a PDF copy on CD of the Report should be supplied to the Historic Environment Service for the attention of the Senior Archaeologist (Planning) within eight weeks of the completion of the fieldwork on the understanding that this will become a public document after an appropriate period of time (generally not exceeding six months). Two hard copies and the PDF file will be deposited with the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, and the third hard copy will be forwarded to the Local Planning Authority.

A fourth copy of the report should be sent directly to the Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science, English Heritage, Brooklands House, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 2BU.

## **7. Notes for Applicants/developers**

The Historic Environment Service is responsible for safeguarding the County's archaeological heritage. The Historic Environment Service is consulted by Local Planning Authorities and provides specialist information and advice on the archaeological implications of development proposals.

An Archaeological Project will usually consist of one or more of the following:-

**Desk-based assessment:** a report drawing together existing information about a site from a wide range of sources.

**Survey:** usually fieldwalking and metal-detecting, sometimes non-intrusive geophysical surveys (e.g. magnetometer survey)

**Evaluation:** survey and/or trial-trenching or test-pitting.



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**Excavation:** larger-scale excavation

**Watching brief or monitoring:** the presence of an archaeologist during the development to record any features exposed

**Post-excavation:** analysis, and the preparation of a report and archive of records and finds at the end of any archaeological project

A phased approach to fieldwork is frequently adopted, with one stage leading on to another (if necessary) after each phase is reported upon and reviewed.

If an evaluation is required before an application is determined or if Planning Permission is granted subject to a condition for a programme of archaeological work, the Historic Environment Service will provide a Brief for the archaeological project. This outline of the project is forwarded to you by the Historic Environment Service or the Planning Authority.

You should then ask one or more Archaeological Contractors to prepare a **Method Statement** or **Specification** which will detail how the project is to be undertaken, and how the brief will be fulfilled. This will be sent to the Historic Environment Service for approval on behalf of the Planning Authority, after which the Contractor will give you details of costs.

Details of archaeological contractors based in Norfolk and beyond may be found in the Institute for Archaeologists Yearbook & Directory, available from the I.F.A., University of Reading, 2 Earley Gate, PO Box 239, Reading RG6 6AU. Tel: 0118 931 6446. Fax: 0118 931 6448. Email: [admin@archaeologists.net](mailto:admin@archaeologists.net). Website: [www.archaeologists.net](http://www.archaeologists.net).

The Historic Environment Service does not see Contractors' costings, nor do we give advice on the costs of archaeological projects. This is between you and the archaeological contractor(s). You may wish to obtain a number of quotations or to employ the services of an archaeological consultant.

For further information or advice on any archaeological matters please contact the person issuing this report whose details are on Page 1.