

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Land at Rendham Road, Saxmundham
Suffolk, IP17 1EJ**

**NGR: 637674, 263169
(TM 37674 63169)**

Planning Ref: C/12/2289/

**ASE Project No: 8202
Site Code: RRS 14**

**ASE Report No: 2014284
OASIS id: archaeol6-187419**



By Dylan Hopkinson

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August 2014

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the development of land at Rendham Road, Saxmundham, Suffolk. The work comprised the monitoring of topsoil stripping across areas of the site. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were encountered.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of The Centre for Applied Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, was commissioned by CgMS Consulting on behalf of their client to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the development of land at Rendham Road, Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 1EJ (centred NGR 637674, 263169; Figure 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The underlying geology of the site is comprised of the Lowestoft Formation, a deposit consisting of chalky till, together with outwash sands and gravels, silts, and clays. This overlies bedrock sand of the Crag Group formed in Quaternary and Neogene Periods (BGS 1996).

1.2.2 The site comprises a small plot of previously undeveloped land to the south east of Saxmundham located to the south-east of the junction of Rendham Road and the A12

1.2.3 To the north and south of the site lie residential properties with those to the north fronting onto Rendham Road and to the south focused around Lincoln Avenue and Mayflower Avenue, to the east is Saxmundham War Memorial playing fields and to the west open farmland.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Outline Planning permission (Planning ref: C/12/2289/) has been granted for the redevelopment of the site for residential use, comprising 57 residential units.

1.3.2 A desk-based assessment had previously been prepared for the site in preparation for the submission of the outline planning application which summarised the archaeological potential of the site (MoLA 2007). In part due to the potential outlined in this document The Suffolk Coastal District Council recommended that two conditions be attached to the planning consent for a programme of archaeological work. Accordingly Condition 3 states:

“No development shall take place on the site until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme of investigation shall include an assessment of significance and research questions, and:

- a) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording.
- b) The programme for post investigation assessment.
- c) Provision for analysis of site investigation and recording.
- d) Provision for publication and dissemination of the analysis and

records of the site investigation.

e) Provision for archive deposition of analysis and records of site investigation.

f) Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation.

The site investigation shall be completed prior to the commencement of the development herein approved or in such other phased arrangement as agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.”

Reason: To ensure the proper recording of archaeological artefacts.

1.3.3 And Condition 4 follows:

“No building herein approved shall be occupied until the archaeological site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed, submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition 3 and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition.”

Reason: To ensure the proper recording of archaeological artefacts.

1.3.4 In March, April and September 2013 an evaluation was undertaken by Archaeological Solutions as Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the programme of archaeological works required by the planning conditions (AS 2013); this covered the eastern and southern part of the land covered by this planning application and also involved three trenches in the north of the site along Rendham Road that lie within the current watching brief area. A small number of modern features and five struck flints of possible early Neolithic date were identified.

1.3.5 The remaining plot was evaluated in April 2014 by Archaeology South-East (ASE 2014a), however the Phase 1 plot was under construction at this time and a number of spoil heaps had been deposited on site from the stripping of overburden in this area. Due to the presence of these obstacles only six of the twelve intended trenches could be excavated. The remains of a probable Early/Middle Saxon ditch were identified aligned north-south down the west side of the site, as well as a post-medieval pit in the south.

1.3.6 Due to the fact that not all the trenches could be excavated during this phase of evaluation, and the presence of previously undocumented Saxon activity in the vicinity, it was decided that a final program of archaeological monitoring should be undertaken during the initial stages of the construction phase of the development, this was fulfilled by Archaeology South-East and forms the basis of this report. The work involved the attendance of an archaeologist during the stripping of the overburden from the site under watching brief conditions.

1.3.7 A written scheme of investigation (WSI, ASE 2014b) was agreed in advance of this work which was completed in July and August 2014.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The broad aims of the watching brief are:

- To record the character, extent, preservation, significance, date and quality of any archaeological remains and deposits on site
- To establish the extent to which previous groundworks and/or other processes have affected archaeological deposits at the site

1.4.2 Specific research aims with regard to the known archaeological background to the site are:

- To define and record the nature, date and extent of the Saxon ditch identified during the evaluation of the site by Archaeology South-East
- To identify and record any palaeoenvironmental deposits that may survive on the site
- To identify and characterise archaeological remains from other, as yet unidentified, periods of activity as necessary
- To enable the archaeology advisor at Suffolk County Council to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further archaeological work at the site in order to fulfil the archaeology planning condition.

1.4.3 To final aim is to make public the results of the work, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological watching brief which was undertaken by Andrew Letch (senior archaeologist) from 29th July 2014 to 7th August 2014. The project was managed by Andy Leonard (project manager, fieldwork) and by Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift (project managers, post-excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The following information is paraphrased from the WSI (ASE 2013).

2.2 Period Summaries

2.2.1 Neolithic or Bronze Age

2.2.2 Little prehistoric evidence has been recovered from the Saxmundham area. Scatters of Prehistoric struck and worked flint were recovered during field walkovers c 400m north and c 850m south-west of the site, and during an archaeological watching brief on the housing development north of Rendham Road. Although not precisely dated, the worked flint from these locations is likely Neolithic or Bronze Age in date. Other Bronze Age findspots in the vicinity include a greywacke stone adze recovered c. 250m to the east, and a barbed and tanged arrowhead from c. 150m east of the site.

2.2.3 Iron Age

2.2.4 Prior to the Roman Conquest in AD 43, most of the settlement within Iron Age Suffolk is believed to have been in the form of isolated farmsteads, consisting of circular post-built timber buildings with associated fields and low density mixed agriculture. The area of Saxmundham is believed to have fallen within the tribal territory of the Icenii. An archaeological watching brief c. 300m north of the site recorded scatters of Iron Age pottery and flint, suggesting a possible Iron Age settlement within the vicinity of the site.

2.2.5 Further Iron Age finds were recovered from the garden of Park House, c. 780m south-east of the site, and undated linear and rectilinear cropmarks were recorded by aerial photography c. 300m west of the site.

2.2.6 Roman

2.2.7 Evidence of Roman activity within Saxmundham is limited to isolated find scatters, including thin scatters of pot sherds c. 450m and c. 330m north of the site.

2.2.8 Saxon and Medieval

2.2.9 The town name of Saxmundham is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *Seismundsham*, the farmstead of Seismund. Little else is known of the Saxon origins of the settlement, with only two finds of Saxon date from within the area. Further evidence of a Saxon ditch has recently been identified during archaeological evaluation works associated with this project (see 2.2.16 below).

- 2.2.10 The Domesday Book records Saxmundham as being held in 1066 as two manors, one held by Northmann measuring 140 acres, and another held by Algar, thegn of King Edward. By 1086 both were owned by a Roger Bigot. Saxmundham remained a rural market town, holding a market and fair from as early as 1272, throughout the later medieval period, with the town likely centred on the church and north-south road (the present day high street).
- 2.2.11 Several medieval findspots are located within the vicinity of the site. A copper alloy spur was found during metal detecting within the site in 2001, and medieval pottery sherds have been recorded from various sites to the south-east and west of the site, towards the centre of Saxmundham. It is likely that the site lay on the western periphery of the town, possibly consisting of pasture or cultivated fields.
- 2.2.11 Post Medieval
- 2.2.12 Saxmundham remained a rural market town throughout the post-medieval period, with agriculture being the main source of the town's economy. Kirby's Survey of Suffolk in 1766 shows the site as open land to the south of Rendham Road. The site and surrounding area continued to be open land, the 1840 tithe map detailing the site as being made up various fields, of which two in the south of the site were being used for arable crops, two in the centre of the site were pasture meadows, and the northern tip was occupied by a pond. The OS maps show little change to the site, which remains open land until the present day.
- 2.2.13 Previous Evaluation
- 2.2.14 An archaeological evaluation undertaken immediately adjacent to the site encountered three ditches, a gully and two pits (AS 2013). The report concluded that these features were of post-medieval or early modern date, with the ditches aligned with boundaries depicted on the early cartographic sources for this area.
- 2.2.15 Although no earlier features were identified, five struck flints of possibly early Neolithic date were recovered from the topsoil.
- 2.2.16 In April 2014 Archaeology South-East undertook a programme of evaluation trenching at the site. Only six of the twelve trenches could be excavated. The trenches revealed a post-medieval pit, probably contemporary with the field boundaries found during the 2013 evaluation to the east (ASE 2014a). An Early / Middle Saxon ditch running north to south was also recorded close to the western boundary of the site.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 The site was excavated and recorded in accordance with the methodology set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2014b) and in line with the professional guidelines of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).
- 3.1.2 All areas monitored (Figure 2) had the topsoil mechanically reduced under archaeological supervision, to a depth of approximately 0.30m but not exceeding 0.40m, and were monitored during stripping for archaeological finds and features.

3.2 Fieldwork Constraints

- 3.2.1 The area to the north of the site compound and ASE evaluation Trench 4 where the Saxon ditch was identified was observed to be covered by up to 1m of friable made ground directly overlying the natural clay. No open area stripping was conducted in this vicinity. The excavation of service trenches was required in this area, however, the methodology for this involved shuttered box excavation due to the unstable nature of the ground, and it was agreed that archaeological monitoring would be hindered by this and so the watching brief was ended.

3.3 The Site Archive

- 3.3.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited with the Suffolk County Archaeological Stores in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	3
No. of files/paper record	1 file
Photographs	6 digital images

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Topsoil Reduction

4.1.1 Two areas of ground reduction were monitored across the site which involved topsoil [001] removal to a depth of approximately 0.30m - 0.40m. In some areas along the west and north of the site this topsoil had been mixed with rubble and re-deposited as modern made ground [002]. In all monitored areas mid-yellowish brown clay [003] was exposed.

4.1.2 No archaeological deposits or features or finds were encountered.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness
001	Layer	Topsoil	Site	Site	0.37m (averaged in monitored areas)
002	Layer	Made Ground	Site	Site	<1m
003	Layer	Natural geology	Site	Site	-

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Geology and stratigraphic sequence

5.1.1 Across the site natural geology was overlain by topsoil which averaged between 0.37m to 0.40m thick.

5.1.2 There was an observed slope to the natural strata from the south down to the north, and it appeared that there had been some degree of levelling to the site with the deposition of up to 1m of modern made ground in some areas, particularly observed towards the northern half of the site.

5.1.3 Where there was no made ground the natural was directly overlain by the topsoil, which also sealed these levelling deposits.

5.2 Archaeological features and consideration of research aims

5.2.1 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were observed during the watching brief.

5.2.2 The basic aims of the watching brief were achieved in that the character and quality of all deposits were analysed and recorded.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AS 2013: *Land off Rendham Road, Saxmundham, Suffolk, An Archaeological Evaluation: Phases 1 and 2*. Archaeological Solutions (unpublished report – Report No:4410)

ASE 2014a: *Archaeological Evaluation Land at Rendham Road, Saxmundham, Suffolk. Archaeology South-East* (unpublished report – Report No: 2014156)

ASE 2014b: Land at Rendham Road, Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 1EJ Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample, and Watching Brief: Written Scheme of Investigation (unpublished document)

BGS 1996: British Geological Survey map sheet 191 Saxmundham (1996)

IfA 2008: Standard and guidance for archaeological watching brief. Published online by the Institute for Archaeologists

IfA 2008: Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials. Published online by the Institute for Archaeologists

MoLA 2007: *Land between Rendham Road and A12, Saxmundham Suffolk - Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. Museum of London Archaeology Service (unpublished report – Report No: 2014156)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank CgMs for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, Graham Adams the site foreman of Howard Construction, and Jess Tipper and Matthew Brudenell of Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service, for their guidance and monitoring at various stages of the project. The watching brief was directed by Andy Letch. The author would like to thank all archaeologists who worked on the excavations. Andy Leonard project managed the excavations and Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift project managed the post-excavation process.

HER Summary

Site Code	RRS 14					
Identification Name and Address	Land at Rendham Road, Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 1EJ					
County, District &/or Borough	Suffolk Coastal District, Suffolk					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 637674, 263169					
Geology	Bedrock sand of the Crag Group formed in Quaternary and Neogene Periods overlain by Lowestoft Formation of chalky till, together with outwash sands, gravels, silts, and clays. This overlies					
Arch. South-East Project Number	8202					
Type of Fieldwork			Watching Brief			
Type of Site	Green Field					
Dates of Fieldwork			WB. 29/07/2014 to 7/08/2014			
Sponsor/Client	CgMs Consulting Ltd					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Andy Letch					
Period Summary						
<p>Summary</p> <p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the development of land at Rendham Road, Saxmundham, Suffolk.</p> <p>The work comprised the monitoring of topsoil stripping across areas of the site, no archaeological finds, features or deposits were encountered.</p>						

OASIS Form**OASIS ID: archaeo16-187419****Project details**

Project name	Land at Rendham Road, Saxmundham, Suffolk
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the development of land at Rendham Road, Saxmundham, Suffolk. The work comprised the monitoring of topsoil stripping across areas of the site, no archaeological finds, features or deposits were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 29-07-2014 End: 07-08-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	RRS 14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure","Visual Inspection"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK SUFFOLK COASTAL SAXMUNDHAM Land at Rendham Road, Saxmundham, Suffolk
Postcode	IP17 1EJ
Study area	1.80 Hectares
Site coordinates	637674 263169 637674 00 00 N 263169 00 00 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	WGS 84 Datum

Height OD / Depth Min: 30.00m Max: 31.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Project design originator	ASE
Project director/manager	Andrew Leonard
Project supervisor	Andy Letch
Type of sponsor/funding body	Consultant
Name of sponsor/funding body	CgMs

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief Report: Land at Rendham Road, Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 1EJ
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Hopkinson, D.
Other bibliographic details	ASE Report No: 2014284
Date	2014

Issuer or publisher Archaeology South-East

Place of issue or
publication Portslade, East Sussex

Description A4 bound report 17 pages plus two colour figures

Entered by Dylan Hopkinson (dylan.hopkinson@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 13 August 2014



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© Archaeology South-East		Saxmundham	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8202	August 2014	Site location	
Report Ref: 2014284	Drawn by: JLR		



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© Archaeology South-East		Land at Rendham Road, Saxmundham, Suffolk	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 8202	August 2014	Site plan showing monitored areas	
Report Ref: 2014284	Drawn by: DJH		

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