ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

TNT THETFORD DEPOT, FISON'S WAY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, NORFOLK

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF WORKS UNDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUPERVISION

HES Ref.CNF 43253

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NGR: TL 8671 8474	Report No: 3751
District: Breckland	Site Code:
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: P4255
Signed:	Date: August 2011

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details	
Project name	TNT Thetford Depot, Fison's Way Industrial Estate, Norfolk

In February 2011, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring of the groundworks associated with alterations to the TNT Thetford Depot, Fison's Way Industrial Estate, Norfolk (TL 8671 8474). The monitoring was required in compliance with a planning condtion (Breckland Council Planning Ref. 3PL/2010/1319F; HES Ref.CNF 43253).

The monitoring of the groundworks revealed modern features associated with the industrial estate. In the post medieval/early modern period an enclosure or field system was delineated by two perpendicular ditches. This enclosure superseded an undated, but earlier field system on a different alignment. One of the latter ditches contained a residual struck flint, a Mousterian point (spearhead) that probably dates to the middle Palaeolithic.

Project dates (fieldwork)	17 – 22 Feb	ruary & May 20	011			
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work		Ν		
P. number	4255	Site code		-		
Type of project	Monitoring of	of Works under	Archaeo	logical S	Supervision	
Site status	Area of arch	aeological imp	ortance			
Current land use	Warehouse					
Planned development	Extension					
Main features (dates)	Undated dite	ches and pit				
Significant finds (dates)	Mousterian _I	point (spearhe	ad)			
Project location						
County/ District/ Parish	Norfolk	Breckl	and		Thetford	
HER/ SMR for area	Norfolk HER	R (NHER)				
Post code (if known)	-					
Area of site	c.50m2					
NGR	TL 8671 847	74				
Height AOD (max/ min)	c.50m AOD)				
Project creators						
Brief issued by	Norfolk Histo	oric Environme	nt Servic	е		
Project supervisor (PO)	Adam Dysoi	า				
Funded by	TNT Expres	ss Services				
Full title					ustrial Estate,	Norfolk.
		of Works under	Archaeo	logical S	Supervision	
Authors		Thompson P.				
Report no.	3751					
Date (of report)	February 20	011				

TNT THETFORD DEPOT, FISON'S WAY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, NORFOLK

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF WORKS UNDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUPERVISION

SUMMARY

In February 2011, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring of the groundworks associated with alterations to the TNT Thetford Depot, Fison's Way Industrial Estate, Norfolk (TL 8671 8474). The monitoring was required in compliance with a planning condtion (Breckland Council Planning Ref. 3PL/2010/1319F; HES Ref. CNF 43253).

The prehistoric Icknield Way passes approximately 300-350m north of the site (NHER 1398). Iron Age pits were excavated at Fisson's Way and Howlett Way within approximately 100m of the site (TL 86712 84910), and prehistoric flints and undated linear features were also found (NHER 32116 & 36794). A Romano-British temple complex was excavated on Gallows Hill some 250m to the north (TL 8665 8498: NHER 5853,) and the 4th century Thetford Treasure also came from this location. Romano-British field systems were identified at Alpha Business Park to the west of the site (NHER 30258). The site of a post-medieval brickworks is shown south of the site on an 18th century map (NHER 8655 8431).

The monitoring of the groundworks revealed modern features associated with the industrial estate. In the post medieval/early modern period an enclosure or field system was delineated by two perpendicular ditches. This enclosure superseded an undated, but earlier field system on a different alignment. One of the latter ditches contained a residual struck flint, a Mousterian point (spearhead) that probably dates to the middle Palaeolithic.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In February 2011, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring of the groundworks associated with alterations to the TNT Thetford Depot, Fison's Way Industrial Estate, Norfolk (TL 8671 8474; Figs. 1-2). The monitoring was required in compliance with a planning condtion (Breckland Council Planning Ref. 3PL/2010/1319F; HES Ref.CNF 43253).
- 1.2 The monitoring was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (dated 25/01/2011), and a specification prepared by Archaeological Solutions (dated 26/01/2011).

1.3 The project aimed to:

- Ensure the archaeological excavation and monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect buried archaeological remains;
- Secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme;
- Secure the full analysis and interpretation of the site archive and the appropriate publication of the project results, if required;
- Secure the analysis, long-term conservation and storage of the project archive

Planning policy context

1.4 PPS5 states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The Planning Policy Statement aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. It aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. It states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past, and to make this publicly available, should be taken, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE (Figs. 1 - 2)

- 2.1 Thetford is located in south Norfolk, close to the Suffolk border, on the A11 between London and Norwich, and is 18km north of Bury St Edmunds. The site is located at the north end of an industrial estate 1km north of Thetford railway station. The A1066 (Mundford Road) is to the west of the site which connects with the A11(T).
- 2.2 The site comprises the TNT delivery/logistics depot. It was proposed to extend the facilities on the site.

3 METHODOLOGY (Background Research)

3.1 Archaeological databases

The Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) was consulted in order to identify any local archaeological finds or remains in the area that might be affected by the development. Those archaeological sites of relevance are described below (4.2)

4 THE EVIDENCE

4.1 Topography, geology and soils

4.1.1 The site is at approximately 50m AOD on Gallows Hill overlooking Thetford to the south. The local soil is unsurveyed but the underlying solid geology is Cretaceous chalk.

4.2 Archaeological and historical background (Fig. 3)

Palaeolithic to Bronze Age

4.2.1 Palaeolithic tools have been found on the river terraces and later Bronze Age and Neolithic finds have also been recovered in the area (NHER 5940). Thetford is located on the north-south running prehistoric Icknield Way and the town probably originated owing to the presence of three fords crossed by the route. The Icknield Way passes approximately 300-350m north of the site (NHER 1398). The nationally important Neolithic flint mine of Grimes Graves is located approximately 7km to the north-west.

Iron Age and Roman

- 4.2.2 In the early Iron Age a double ditched enclosure was built at the site of Thetford Castle between two fords, and formed the outer bailey of the medieval fortification (NHER 5747). At Gallows Hill, a Romano-British temple complex was excavated approximately 250m to the north (NHER 5853) and the 4th century Thetford Treasure also came from this location either representing a votive deposit or a hoard concealed in a time of crisis. Iron Age pits were excavated at Fisson's Way and Howlett Way within approximately 100m of the site (TL 86712 84910), and prehistoric flints and undated linear features were also excavated at Howlett Way (NHER 32116 & 36794).
- 4.2.3 A Romano-British settlement and late Roman cemetery were excavated south-east of Thetford across the River Little Ouse (NHER 17269). Romano-British field systems were identified at Alpha Business Park to the west of the site (NHER 30258).

Anglo-Saxon

4.2.4 Early and Medieval Anglo-Saxon settlement has been found in the vicinity of Red Castle in an area that was known as *Inselford*, and 7th-8th century occupation has been found on the south side of town close to St Margaret's cemetery, and beside Brandon Road. Saxon grubenhauser have been excavated in the area of the late Roman cemetery (NHR 17264). The earliest mention of Thetford (*Theoford*) is in the late 9th century and means 'public or peoples ford'. At this time the town was developing fast, and in the 10th and 11th centuries was the sixth largest town in England with its own mint and pottery kilns, and was seat of the Bishop of East Anglia. It was a prime target during the Danish invasions and two battles were fought outside the town in the 11th century.

Medieval & Post-medieval

4.2.5 A scheduled medieval motte and bailey castle was built on the site of the Iron Age fort (NHER 5747). Thetford fell into decline during the later medieval period. The site of a post-medieval brickworks is shown south of the site on an 18th century map (NHER 8655 8431). A WWII army camp and airfield was located to the east of the site (NHER 872 847).

5 METHODOLOGY (MONITORING OF WORKS)

- 5.1 The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of all ground works, inspection of subsoil, make-up layers, and natural deposits for archaeological features, the examination of spoil heaps for archaeological finds and the recording of soil profiles. Deposits were recorded by means of *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate.
- 5.2 The monitoring encompassed the groundworks associated with ground reduction for the new concrete circulation yard to the southwest of the depot and the excavation of a foundation trench for a new yard retaining wall along the southern boundary.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Site visit 17th & 18th February 2011

The groundworks observed comprised ground reduction to the level of the natural deposits in the southwest corner of the site, using a tracked 360° mechanical excavator.

A sample section was recorded:

Sample section	1.	
North facing		
0.00 = 50.46m A	AOD	
0.00 - 0.22m	L1000	Topsoil. Friable, mid grey brown silty sand with occasional
		medium and large angular flints.
0.22 - 0.68m	L1001	Made Ground. Compact, pale yellow brown mixed sand,
		gravel and rubble.
0.68 – 1.03m	L1002	Buried Topsoil. Friable, dark grey brown silty sand with
		occasional medium angular flints.
1.03m+	L1003	Natural Deposits. Friable, pale orange yellow sand with
		patches of orange sand and gravel.

Description: Three ditches (F1004, F1006 & F1008), three pits (F1010 & two modern), two post holes (F1013 & F1015), and a land drain were revealed.

F1004 was a ditch (7.00+ \times 1.20 \times 0.33m), orientated northeast/southwest and located in the north-western corner of the site. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1005, was a friable, mid grey brown silty sand with occasional medium angular flints. It contained post-medieval CBM (1319g) and frequent large chalk lumps or building rubble.

F1006 was a ditch (18.00+ x 0.58 x 0.16m), orientated north/south. It had moderately steep sides and a concave base. It cut Ditch F1008. Its fill, L1007, was a friable, mid grey brown silty sand with occasional small and medium angular flints. It contained a residual struck flint (SF1), remarkably a Mousterian point (spearhead) that probably dates to the middle Palaeolithic (c. 245, 000-40, 000BP) (Struck Flint Report below).

F1008 was a ditch (18.20+ \times 0.96 \times 0.19m), located immediately to the east of Ditch F1006, and orientated NNW/SSW). It was cut by Ditch F1006. It had moderately sloping sides and a flat base. Its fill, L1009, was a friable, pale orange grey silty sand with moderate small and medium angular flints. It contained no finds.

F1010 was a pit (1.15 x 0.90 x 0.22m) located between Ditches F1006 and F1008 and between modern pits immediately to its north and south. It was oval in plan with shallow sides and a concave base. Its basal fill, L1011, was a friable, pale grey silty sand with occasional medium sub-rounded flints. Its principal fill, L1012, was a friable, pale-mid grey silty sand with occasional medium sub-rounded flints. It contained post-medieval CBM (1857g) and burnt flint (9g).

F1013 was a rectangular post hole $(0.35 \times 0.25 \times 0.20m)$ located immediately to the east of Ditch F1008. It had vertical sides and a flat base. Its fill, L1014, was a firm, mid brownish grey sandy silt with occasional small and medium angular flints. It contained no finds but its form suggests a modern date.

F1015 was a rectangular post hole $(0.35 \times 0.25 \times 0.36m)$ located to the southeast of Post Hole F1013. It also had vertical sides and a flat base. Its fill, L1016, was also a firm, mid brownish grey sandy silt with occasional small and medium angular flints. It contained no finds but its form suggests a modern date.

6.2 Site visit 21st February 2011

The ground works observed comprised further ground reduction to the level of the natural deposits in the area of the new concrete circulation yard and excavation of the foundation trench for the southern boundary retaining wall.

Sample section 2.		
South facing.		
0.00m = 50.73m A	4 <i>OD</i>	
0.00 - 0.10m	L1017	Concrete yard surface. Pale grey reinforced concrete.
0.10 - 0.48m	L1001	Made ground. As above.
0.48 - 0.85m	L1002	Buried soil. As above.
0.85 – 1.80m+	L1003	Natural deposits. As above.

Description: No further archaeological finds or features were revealed during this period of observation.

6.3 Site visit 22nd February 2011

The groundworks observed comprised further ground reduction to the level of the natural deposits in the area of the new concrete circulation yard and further excavation of the foundation trench for the southern boundary retaining wall.

Description: Two ditches (F1018 & F1020) were revealed.

F1018 was a ditch $(9.00+ x\ 0.65\ x\ 0.11m)$, orientated north/south. It had shallow sides and a flat base. It was cut by Ditch F1020). Its fill, L1019, was a pale grey sandy silt with occasional-moderate medium angular flints and sparse large angular flints. It contained no finds.

F1020 was a ditch (15.00+ x 1.20 x 0.45m), orientated northwest/southeast. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It cut Ditch F1018. Its fill, L1021, was a firm, mid orange brown sandy silt with frequent large flint and chalk nodules. Some of the flint nodules had traces of mortar attached indicative of building rubble. The ditch contained animal bone (129g).

6.4 Further works during May 2011

During May 2011 further works took place to the south of the existing warehouse. A drainage trench was excavated running east-west across the southern end of the site (DP 15 & 16), and footings were excavated for the southern extension of the warehouse (DP 17 & 18).

No further archaeological features were revealed during these works.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features and finds during the archaeological investigation.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 Topsoil L1000 was a friable, mid grey brown silty sand with occasional medium and large angular flints (0.22m thick). It was largely present across the site excepting along the northern edge of the wall foundation trench. Here was was a layer, L1017, of pale grey reinforced concrete (0.10m thick). Beneath L1000 and L1017 was Made Ground L1001, a compact, pale yellow brown mixed sand, gravel, and rubble (0.38m - 0.46m thick). L1001 over lay a buried topsoil, L1002, a friable, dark grey brown silty sand with occasional medium angular flints (0.37m thick). At the base of the sequence was the natural deposits, L1003, a friable, pale orange sand with patches of orange sand and gravel (0.85m (east) and 1.03m (west) below the present day ground surface).

9 DISCUSSION

- 9.1 During the groundworks five ditches (F1004, F1006, F1008, F1018 & F1020), three pits (F1010 & two modern), two post holes (F1013 & F1015), two land drains, and a cable trench were recorded. Of these, two of the pits, the land drains, and the cable trench were modern. Post Holes F1013 and F1015 although without finds had the appearance of being modern.
- 9.2 Ditches F1006, F1008, and F1018 were similar in alignment, size and appearance. The absence of finds, except for a residual flint projectile point from Ditch F1006, means these ditches are undated, however, the pale, leached, appearance of their fills suggests they may be of some antiquity. The lack of finds suggests that they may be field boundaries rather than associated with settlement.

- 9.3 Ditches F1004 and F1020 were perpendicular to each other and on a different alignment to Ditches F1006, F1008, and F1018. The size and shape of these two ditches were similar, and both had similar fills with large quantities of large stones or building rubble. CBM recovered from these ditches date them to the $16^{th} 18^{th}$ century.
- 9.4 Located between Ditches F1006 and F1008 were three pits. Two were rectangular and modern containing plastic etc. The central pit, F1010, was oval and although undated was probably of much older; it contained burnt flint and its fill was leached like Ditches F1006, F1008 and F1018.
- 9.5 Three phases of activity were identified. The monitoring of the groundworks revealed modern features associated with the industrial estate. In the post medieval/early modern period an enclosure or field system was delineated by perpendicular ditches. This enclosure superseded an undated, but earlier field system on a different alignment. Ditch F1006 contained a residual struck flint, a Mousterian point (spearhead) that probably dates to the middle Palaeolithic.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site with Norwich Castle Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Ltd would like to thank TNT Express Services for their co-operation and funding of the monitoring, and for their assistance.

AS is pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Dr Ken Hamilton of Norfolk Historic Environment Service.

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WEB SITES

Norfolk Heritage Explorer

P4255: TNT Thetford Depot, Fison's Way, Thetford, Norfolk Concordance of finds by feature

						A.Bone	
Feature	Context	Segment	Description	Spot Date	CBM (g)	(g)	Other
1004	1005		Ditch	16 ^{th -} early 18 th centuries	1310		
1006	1001	А	Ditch	middle Palaeolithic			SF1: S.Flint (96g)
1006	1007	В	Ditch				Mortar 79g
1010	1012		Pit	16 ^{th -} early 18 th centuries	1857		Burnt Flint 9g
1020	1021		Ditch			129	

APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORTS

The Flint

Andrew Peachey

The monitoring recovered a single struck flint implement (96g) contained in Ditch F1006 (L1007 Seg.A): a Mousterian point (spearhead) that probably dates to the middle Palaeolithic (c. 245, 000-40, 000BP).

The implement was manufactured on a large, hard-hammer struck Levallois flake struck (maximum dimensions: 90x60x20mm). The raw flint used to manufacture the implement is very dark brown with occasional large crystalline inclusions (<20mm). In order to create the Mousterian point, the Levallois flake was modified by the application of abrupt re-touch to both lateral edges approaching the distal end. One lateral edge was re-touched on the dorsal face, while the opposing lateral edge was re-touched on the ventral face.

Mousterian lithic technology is characteristic of the middle Palaeolithic period, and sites of national importance from this period have been recorded at Barnham (Ashton et al 2000) and Elveden (Ashton et al 2005), while the gravels and sands of the pre-Anglian Bytham River which ran close to the west of modern Thetford have provided a rich source of Palaeolithic flint work (Wymer 1999, 130).

Acknowledgements

Andrew Peachey would like to gratefully acknowledge the input of Dr Nick Ashton (Curator Palaeolithic Collections, British Museum)

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The Ceramic Building Materials

Andrew Peachey

The monitoring recovered six fragments (3167g) of post-medieval brick contained in Ditch F1004 (L1005) and Pit F1010 (L1012). The post-medieval brick is entirely of one type, with partial dimensions of ?x110x50mm, a smooth base, slightly irregular arrises and creased faces. It occurs in a locally produced fabric with oxidised red-orange surface fading to a red core, and inclusions of common well-sorted quartz (0.1-0.25mm), sparse red iron rich grains (0.5-2mm), occasional chalk and flint fragments (<10mm). Bricks of this type were produced between the 16th and early 18th centuries. A single fragment (79g) of lime mortar was also contained in Ditch F1006 (L1007 Seg.B), and based on the traces adhering to the post-medieval bricks, is probably contemporary with the CBM.

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP1
General view of the site, pre excavation. Looking northeast.



General view of the site. Looking east.



DP3
Ditch F1004 (part excavated). Looking south.



Ditch F10042. Looking southwest.



Sample Section 1. Looking south.



Pit F1010 flanked by modern pits between Ditches F1006 and F1008. Looking north.



DP7 Ditches F1006 and F1008. Looking north.



DP9 Pit F1010. Looking south.



DP11 Excavating wall foundation trench. Looking west.



DP8
Ditch F1006. Looking south.



DP10 Ditch F1018. Looking south.



DP12 Sample section 2. Looking north.



DP13 SF1 mousterian point, dorsal side



DP15
East/west drainage trench, looking east



DP17 Extension footings, looking west



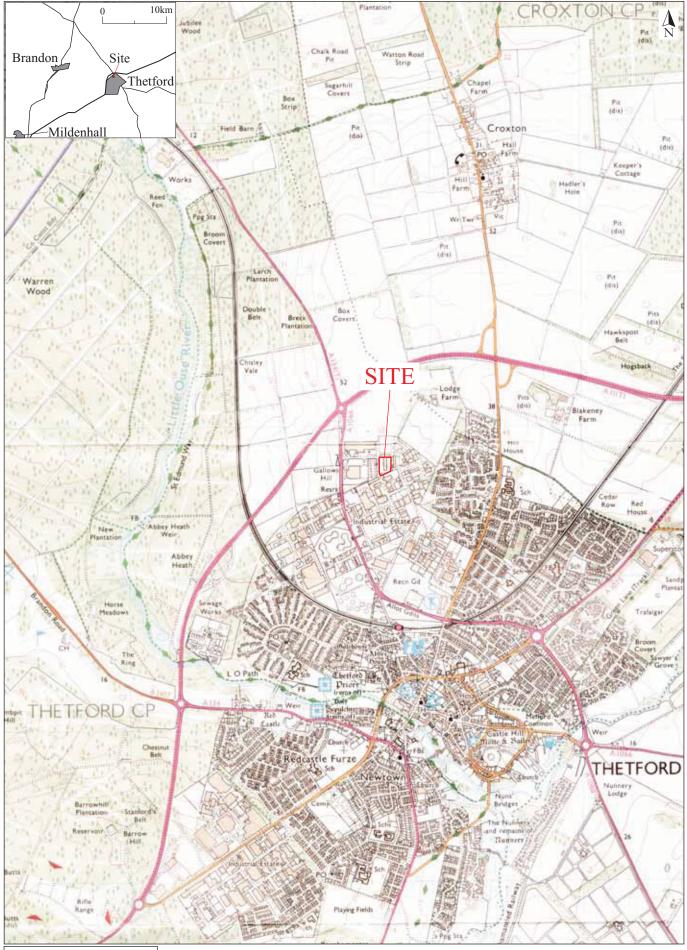
DP14 SF1 mousterian point, ventral side



DP16
East/west drainage trench, looking west



DP18 Extension footings, looking north



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Site location plan Fig. 1 Site

50m

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Fig. 3 Plans and sections
Scale 1:250 and 1:20 at A3