
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
ON LAND OFF CUCUMBER LANE,
BECCLES, SUFFOLK
(BCC 086)**

Work Undertaken For
Castle Well Developments Ltd

November 2014

Report Compiled by
Andrew Failes BA (Hons) MA

Planning Application No: DC/13/0820/OUT
National Grid Reference: TM 43031 88818
OASIS Record No: archaeo11-195556

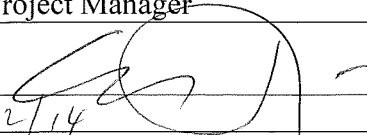
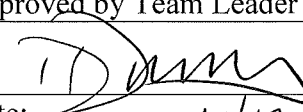
A.P.S. Report No. **127/14**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



**Quality Control
Cucumber Lane,
Beccles, Suffolk,
(BCC 086)**

Project Coordinator	Neil Jefferson
Supervisor	Andrew Failes
Illustration	Andrew Failes
Photographic Reproduction	Sue Unsworth
Post-excavation Analyst	Andrew Failes

Checked by Project Manager	Approved by Team Leader
Gary Taylor 	 Denise Drury
Date: 4/12/14	Date: 4/12/14

CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Plates

1. SUMMARY..... 1

2. INTRODUCTION..... 1

2.1 DEFINITION OF AN EVALUATION..... 1

2.2 PLANNING BACKGROUND..... 1

2.3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY..... 1

2.4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING..... 1

3. AIMS2

4. METHODS2

5. RESULTS.....2

6. DISCUSSION3

7. CONCLUSIONS.....3

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....3

9. PERSONNEL3

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY3

11. ABBREVIATIONS3

Appendices

1 Context Descriptions

2 Glossary

3 The Archive

List of Figures

- Figure 1 General location plan
- Figure 2 Site location plan
- Figure 3 Trench location plan
- Figure 4 Trench plans
- Figure 5 Sections 1-5

List of Plates

- Plate 1 View showing wet site conditions and vegetation, looking south
- Plate 2 Trench 1 plan, looking east
- Plate 3 Section 1
- Plate 4 Trench 3 plan, looking north
- Plate 5 Trench 5 plan, looking southeast
- Plate 6 Section 5

1. SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land off Cucumber Lane, Beccles Suffolk. This was in order to determine the archaeological implications of proposed development at the site.

The site lies in an area of known archaeological remains. Prehistoric finds, including a partly polished Neolithic flint axe and scatter of seven worked flints have been recorded within 500 metres of the site. Suffolk HER records a possible castle or manor house, now built over, in the vicinity.

A sequence of topsoil overlying clay natural and a single undated ditch/gully were recorded during the investigation.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of an Evaluation

An archaeological evaluation is defined as *'a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site. If such archaeological remains are present Field Evaluation defines their character and extent, quality and preservation, and it enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate'* (IfA 2008).

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Richard Smith of Castle Well Developments Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological investigation in advance of proposed development on land off Cucumber Lane, Beccles, Suffolk, as detailed in Planning Application

DC/13/0820/OUT. The evaluation was carried out between 24th and 26th November 2014, in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services and approved by the Senior Archaeological Officer of the Suffolk Conservation Team.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Beccles is located 13km west of Lowestoft and 58km northeast of Bury St Edmunds (Fig. 1).

The site comprises a parcel of land, now overgrown with vegetation, approximately 0.5ha in size and located 1km southeast of the centre of Beccles, off Cucumber Lane at National Grid Reference TM 43031 88818 (Fig 2). The site lies at a height of c. 30m OD sloping gently down to the north.

Local soils are of the Lowestoft Formation, chalky till, together with outwash sands and gravels, silts and clays formed in the Quaternary Period. The underlying solid geology is sedimentary bedrock of the Crag Group (BGS 1984).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

The site lies in an area of known archaeological remains of the Neolithic and Medieval period.

Neolithic remains include two find spots within 500m of the site; a scatter of seven worked flints and a partly polished Neolithic flint axe.

Medieval remains in the vicinity comprise a possible manor house or castle, now built over, referred to variously as Pismere or Piswell Castle in historical documents.

Beccles, referred to as *Beccles* in the Domesday Survey (c. 1086), probably comes from the Old English *bec – lās*, meaning 'pasture on the stream' (Ekwall

1989).

At the time of Domesday, the King had 82 acres of land in Beccles, with 5 villeins and 1 plough. Of Beccles Market, the king had a fourth part of every customary due. There were 12 freemen with 48 acres and one plough. The Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds held 2 carucates of land as a manor, with 2 villains, 26 borders, 2 slaves, one plough in demense, one plough belonging to the men, acres of meadow and woodland for 8 pigs (Williams & Martin 1992).

3. AIMS

The aim of the evaluation was to gather information to establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits in order to enable the Suffolk Conservation Team to formulate a policy for the management of archaeological resources present on the site.

4. METHODS

Five trenches, each measuring approximately 30m by 1.5m were excavated to the surface of the underlying natural geology (Fig. 3).

Removal of topsoil and other overburden was undertaken by mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. The exposed surfaces of the trenches were then cleaned by hand and inspected for archaeological remains.

Each deposit exposed during the evaluation was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their interpretations appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was also compiled and sections and

plans were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20 respectively. Recording of deposits encountered was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

The location of the excavated trenches was plotted using a survey grade differential GPS.

Following excavation, the records were checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

5. RESULTS

The results of the archaeological evaluation are discussed in trench order. Archaeological contexts are described below. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Trenches 1-4

The earliest deposit encountered at the base of Trenches 1 – 4 comprised firm to plastic, light to mid yellowish brown clay, with occasional sandy patches and frequent medium sized flint pebbles (Fig 4, Plates 2, 4 & 5).

This deposit was observed throughout the whole of the site (including Trench 5) and was ascribed context numbers (101), (201), (301), (401) and (501) respectively.

The natural clay was overlain by soft greyish brown clayey silt topsoil, ranging in thickness from 0.46m to 0.33m. This deposit also extended across the whole of the site and assigned context numbers (100), (200), (300), (400) and (500) (Fig 5, Section 1-5) (Plates 2, 4 & 5).

Trench 5

The natural deposit (501) in Trench 5 was cut by a linear feature [503] oriented on a

northwest to southeast alignment, measuring approximately 0.50m in width (Fig 4). This feature remained unexcavated due to wet conditions (Plate 5) which meant that it lay beneath c. 0.15m of standing water.

The fill of this feature was recorded before it was fully submerged and consisted of a mixture of light to mid yellowish redeposited natural clay and mid greyish brown clayey silt (502).

The feature was overlain by topsoil deposit (500) (Fig 5, Section 5) (Plate 6).

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits at the site comprised sandy clays representative of glacial till formed in the Quaternary Period.

In Trench 5 a linear feature was recorded cut through the natural. Aligned parallel to adjacent Oak Lane, this probably represents a gully or ditch and remained unexcavated due to wet conditions. Although no dating evidence could be retrieved through excavation, the fill of the gully/ditch was examined and appeared to comprise a mixture of redeposited natural clay and greyish brown topsoil, which suggests a recent date for the feature.

The whole of the site was sealed by a layer of clayey silt topsoil.

7. CONCLUSIONS

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land off Cucumber Lane, Beccles, Suffolk, as the site lay in an area of known archaeological remains of Neolithic and Medieval date.

However, no Neolithic or medieval remains were encountered during the

evaluation. Instead, a single undated, but probably modern, ditch was revealed along with a sequence of topsoil overlying clay natural, which was recorded across the whole of the site.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Richard Smith of Castle Well Developments for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Neil Jefferson. Gary Taylor edited this report along with Denise Drury. Liz Bates allowed access to the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Neil Jefferson
 Site Staff: Andrew Failes
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
 Illustration: Andrew Failes
 Post-excavation Analyst: Andrew Failes

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS. Geology of Britain Viewer, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Ekwall, E. 1989 *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (4th edition)

IfA, 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*

Williams, A. & Martin, G. H. (eds) 1992 *Domesday Book* Penguin: New York

11. ABBREVIATIONS

BGS British Geological Survey

IfA Institute of Field Archaeologists

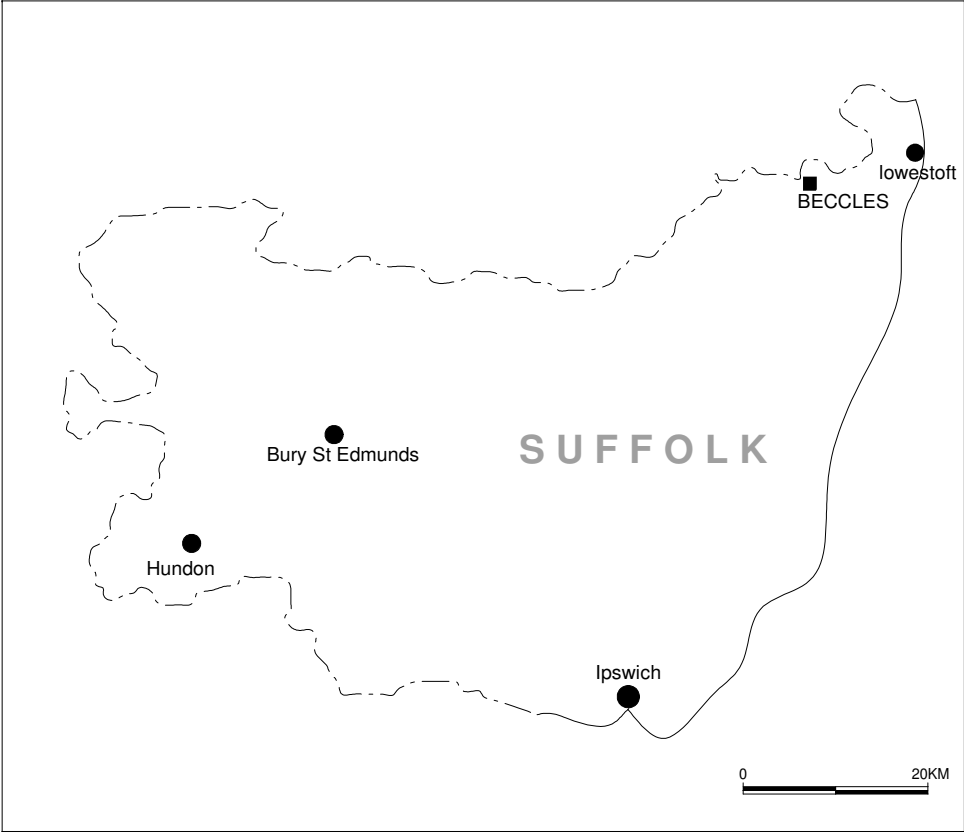
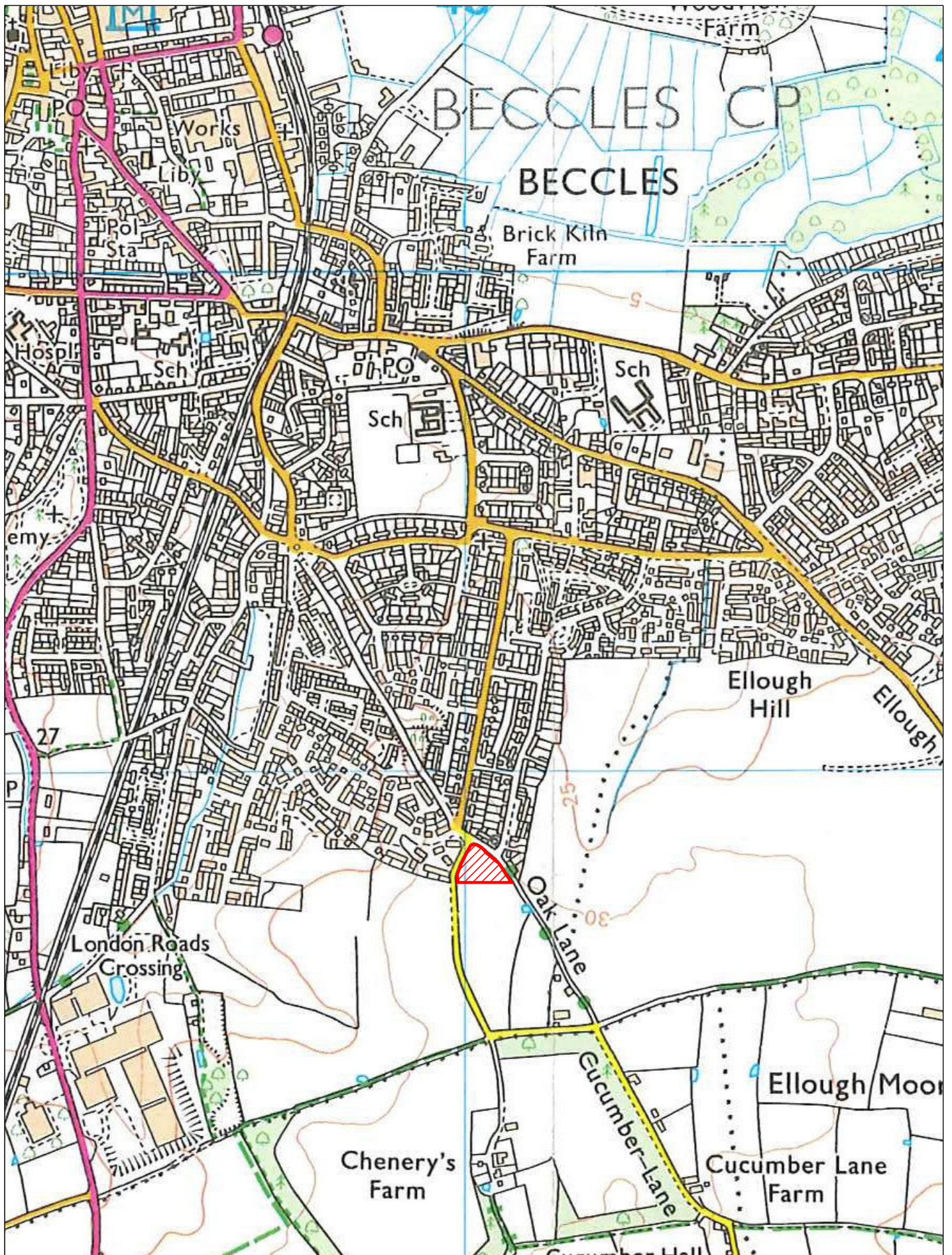


Figure 1 - General Location Plan



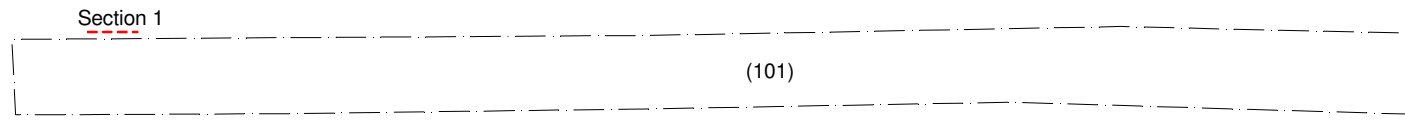
	- Site		Archaeological Project Services		
			Project Name: Beccles Cucumber Lane (BCC 086)		
			Scale 1:10000	Drawn by: AF	Report No: 127/14

Figure 2 - Site location



Figure 3 - Trench locations

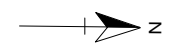
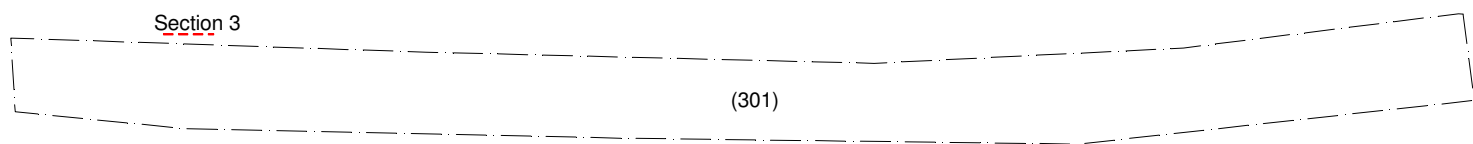
Trench 1



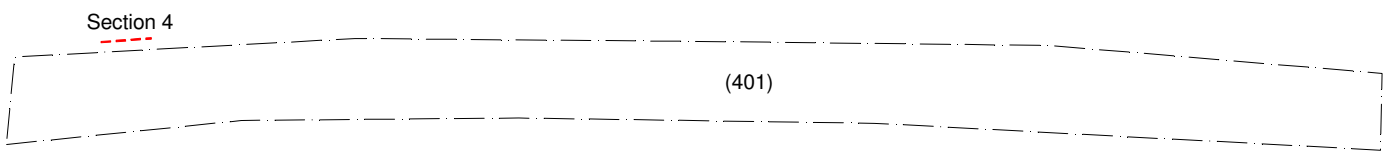
Trench 2



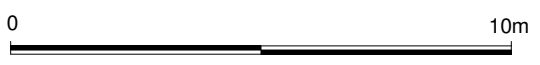
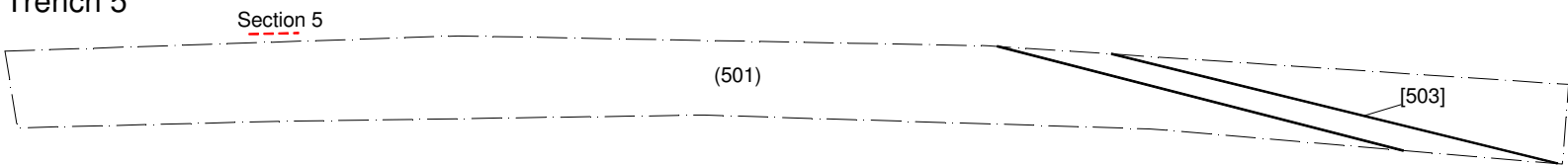
Trench 3



Trench 4



Trench 5




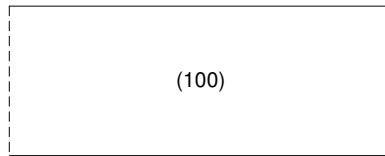
	Archaeological Project Services	
Project Name: Beccles Cucumber Lane (BCC 086)		
Scale 1:150	Drawn by: AF	Report No: 127/14

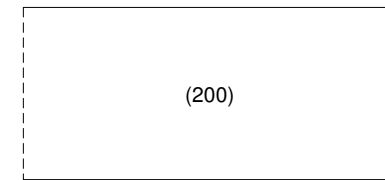
Figure 4 - Trench plans

Section 1



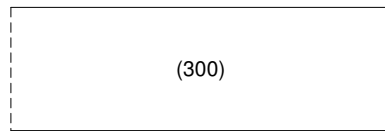
31.29m OD
^

Section 2



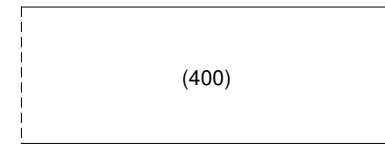
31.29m OD
^

Section 3



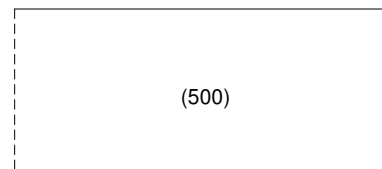
31.01m OD
^

Section 4



30.83m OD
^

Section 5



30.98m OD
^



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Beccles Cucumber Lane (BCC 086)

Scale 1:20

Drawn by: AF

Report No: 127/14

Figure 5 - Sections 1-5



Plate 1 – View showing wet site conditions and vegetation, looking south



Plate 2 – Trench 1 plan, looking east



Plate 3 – Section 1



Plate 4 – Trench 3 plan, looking north



Plate 5 – Trench 5 plan, looking southeast



Plate 6 – Section 5

APPENDIX 1

Context Summary

No.	Trench	Description	Interpretation
100	1	Soft dark greyish brown clayey silt containing occasional charcoal flecks and rare small pebbles	Topsoil
101	1	Firm to plastic, light to mid yellowish brown clay with occasional sandy patches and patches of flint pebbles	Natural Clay
200	2	Soft dark greyish brown clayey silt containing occasional charcoal flecks and rare small pebbles	Topsoil
201	2	Firm to plastic, light to mid yellowish brown clay with occasional sandy patches and patches of flint pebbles	Natural Clay
300	3	Soft dark greyish brown clayey silt containing occasional charcoal flecks and rare small pebbles	Topsoil
301	3	Firm to plastic, light to mid yellowish brown clay with occasional sandy patches and patches of flint pebbles	Natural Clay
400	4	Soft dark greyish brown clayey silt containing occasional charcoal flecks and rare small pebbles	Topsoil
401	4	Firm to plastic, light to mid yellowish brown clay with occasional sandy patches and patches of flint pebbles	Natural Clay
500	5	Soft dark greyish brown clayey silt containing occasional charcoal flecks and rare small pebbles	Topsoil
501	5	Firm to plastic, light to mid yellowish brown clay with occasional sandy patches and patches of flint pebbles	Natural Clay
502	5	Firm mix of redeposited light yellowish brown clay natural and dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional charcoal flecks	Fill of [503]
503	5	Linear cut oriented on a northwest-southeast alignment, extending diagonally through the width of the trench x 0.50m wide	Gully/Ditch

Appendix 2

GLOSSARY

Border	Villager holding less land than a villain.
Carucate	A unit of land, originally based on the amount that could be ploughed annually by a team of eight oxen. Generally taken to be about 120 acres.
Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, e.g. [004].
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, etc. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
Demesne	That part of a manor not held by tenants but kept for use and profit of the lord of the manor.
Domesday Survey	A survey of property ownership in England compiled on the instruction of William I for taxation purposes in 1086 AD.
Fill	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) that become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Layer	A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
Neolithic	The 'New Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 4500 - 2250 BC.
Old English	The language used by the Saxon (q.v.) occupants of Britain.
Prehistoric	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.
Till	A deposit formed after the retreat of a glacier. Also known as boulder clay, this material is generally unsorted and can comprise of rock flour to boulders to rocks of quite substantial size.
Villein	Unfree but land holding countryman of early Feudal times.

Appendix 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

2	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
1	Section record sheet
3	Daily record sheet
5	Trench Sheet

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Suffolk County Council
County Archaeology Store
9-10 The Churchyard, Shire Hall
Bury St. Edmunds,
Suffolk
IP33 2AR

Accession Number:	ESF22527
Archaeological Project Services Site Code:	BECL14
Suffolk Site Code	BCC086
Oasis ID	archaeo11-195556

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Printable version

OASIS ID: archaeol1-195556

Project details

Project name	Cucumber Lane, Beccles, Suffolk
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land off Cucumber Lane, Beccles Suffolk. This was in order to determine the archaeological implications of proposed development at the site. The site lies in an area of known archaeological remains. Prehistoric finds, including a partly polished Neolithic flint axe and scatter of seven worked flints have been recorded within 500 metres of the site. Suffolk HER records a possible castle or manor house, now built over, in the vicinity. A sequence of topsoil overlying clay natural and a single undated ditch/gully were recorded during the investigation.
Project dates	Start: 24-11-2014 End: 28-11-2014
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	BCC 086 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	ESF22527 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	BECL14 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	DC/13/0820/OUT - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Woodland 5 - Undetermined
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition

Position in the planning process Between deposition of an application and determination

Project location

Country England
 Site location SUFFOLK WAVENEY BECCLES Cucumber Lane, Beccles
 Study area 5221.00 Square metres
 Site coordinates TM 43031 88818 52.4426076297 1.5764471104 52 26 33 N 001 34 35 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeological Project Services
 Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
 Project design originator Neil Jefferson
 Project director/manager Neil Jefferson
 Project supervisor Andrew Failes
 Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
 Digital Archive recipient Suffolk County Museums
 Digital Archive ID ESF22527
 Digital Contents "other"
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
 Paper Archive recipient Suffolk County Museums
 Paper Archive ID ESF22527
 Paper Contents "other"
 Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Photograph","Report","Section","Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
 Title Beccles Cucumber Lane
 Author(s)/Editor(s) Failes, A
 127/14

Other
bibliographic
details

Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	APS
Place of issue or publication	Heckington
Description	A4, Comb bound
Entered by	Mark Peachey (info@apsarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	9 June 2015