



Mildenhall Hub, West Row Road, Mildenhall

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

April 2020

Client: Anglian Water

Issue No: 1

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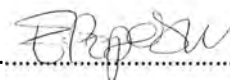


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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Summary

On the 23rd March 2020, OA East conducted a watching brief for an Anglian Water pipeline on the land south of West Row Road, Mildenhall. The work involved monitoring the stripping of topsoil along the western part of the pipeline route. No archaeological features or deposits were uncovered during the watching brief and only a small number of modern finds were recovered.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Anglian Water for commissioning this project. The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Patrick Moan. The fieldwork was directed by Hannah Blannin. Figures were produced by Dave Brown. Thanks are also extended to the OA staff who prepared the archive under the supervision of Katherine Hamilton.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Anglian Water to undertake a watching brief at the site of Mildenhall Hub, West Row Road, Mildenhall (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 A brief was set by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by OA detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to inform the planning process (Lewis 2020). This document outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site is situated on generally flat former fenland along the southern edge of West Row Road 1203m. The area monitored was in the western field of the proposed pipeline route, and covered 380m of the pipeline route, which extended for a total of 1200m. The land is currently under cultivation with open farmland to the south, west and east.
- 1.2.2 The bedrock geology is mapped as Zig Zag Chalk Formation, and no superficial deposits have been mapped in this area/ (British Geological Survey 2014, (British Geological Survey [online map viewer](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html) <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>) (February 2020).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological context for this site is extensive, as it lies in a very area with a very rich record of activity. The following, therefore, is a very brief summary of known information gathered from the Suffolk Historic Environment Record. The locations of selected HER records are shown on Fig. 2.

Prehistoric

- 1.3.2 A previous excavation conducted by Suffolk Archaeology on fields immediately south-east of the monitored area found evidence for occupation spanning the Neolithic to Bronze Age (MNL 778; Brooks 2017).
- 1.3.3 In a wider context, there is abundant evidence of activity from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age along the Lark valley, whilst to the west a very large number of prehistoric sites are known from fieldwalking and excavation.
- 1.3.4 Individual finds have also been made of a Bronze Age flint knife (MNL 744) found 600m west of the site and a polished stone axe (MNL 310) 100m north of the site.

Roman

- 1.3.5 Roman activity within the search area is known primarily from artefact scatters (MNL 421, 300m to the west, not mapped on Fig. 2) and metal detected finds, including coins, found within 500m to the north-east of the monitored area (MNL 167). Two adjacent areas of land, approximately 550m south-east of the site on the southern

bank of the Lark, are both reported to have produced numerous Roman metal finds (MNL 4999 and BTM 039; not mapped on Fig. 2) and similar finds have been made north of the river (MNL 141 and MNL 135).

Saxon and medieval

- 1.3.6 A sunken featured building and a 7th century burial with grave goods of a bowl, spear, small blade and a shield were found during the Suffolk Archaeology excavation to the south-east (MNL 778; Brooks 2017).
- 1.3.7 A second Saxon burial (BTM 009; not mapped on Fig. 2) is also recorded around 1km south-east of the site.
- 1.3.8 A Saxon iron spearhead was recorded from the north bank of the Lark, around 100m north of the current site. Saxo-Norman and medieval remains have been recorded during an evaluation approximately 300m to the north of the site (MNL 590; not mapped on Fig. 2)
- 1.3.9 Aside from this, reported evidence for medieval activity in the search area comprises metal detector find spots such as medieval silver coins (MNL 141) and a medieval seal matrix (MNL 944), as well as and the remains of a dovecot (MNL 181).

2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 This watching brief aimed to identify, investigate and record any archaeological features or deposits encountered during ground works.
- 2.1.2 Metal detecting was also be undertaken of both the excavated areas and spoil heaps to aid recovery of metal objects.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 In accordance with the WSI, the topsoil strip along a 380m wide length of the pipeline easement, measuring up to 6m wide, was monitored, covering a total area of around 2280m².
- 2.2.2 Machine stripping was carried out by the client using a 360° 13-tonne tracked mechanical excavator with a 1.2m toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The excavation took place under the supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.
- 2.2.4 The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector by the on-site archaeologist and an experienced metal detectorist, Trevor Sinclair. The metal detector was not set to discriminate against iron.
- 2.2.5 Any possible archaeological features identified were investigated. All appeared to be variations in the natural deposits, and therefore, were not recorded.
- 2.2.6 The natural deposits were recorded and photographed using general working shots. Finds recovered from these were recorded and discarded.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the watching brief are presented below. The full details of all deposits can be found in Appendix A.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The western part of the monitored length of the easement was orientated north to south, and then turned to run north-east to south-west, parallel to West Row Road. The soil sequence was fairly uniform along its length (Plates 1-4). The natural geology of light yellow sand, with patches of white chalk, was overlain by a light greyish brown, silty sand subsoil. This in turn was overlain by a dark brown, silty sand topsoil.

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the watching brief were generally good, and the site remained dry throughout.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 No archaeological features were present.

3.3.2 A slightly darker patch of subsoil was test excavated by a 1m x 1m test pit/sondage but this deposit was very thin and directly overlay the natural sand (Plate 5), with no indication that this was an archaeologically significant deposit.

3.4 Finds summary

3.4.1 A small amount of modern finds/material were recovered. These were not retained.

3.4.2 Two sherds of white and blue patterned ceramics and occasional, small pieces ceramic building material were found in the subsoil. Metal detecting produced four iron objects, a shot cap, a metal ring and an aluminum drinks can.

3.4.3 Most of these finds were located on the north to south orientated part of the strip, adjacent to farm buildings.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The results of this investigation can be regarded as reliable as the conditions were good and monitoring of the works was constant.

4.2 Watching Brief objectives and results

4.2.1 The works were closely monitored, and possible features/deposits were investigated as appropriate and a full programme of finds collection and metal detecting was undertaken. Given the results of this work are considered to be reliable, the aims of the WSI were fulfilled.

4.3 Interpretation

4.3.1 The lack of archaeological remains may at least partly reflect the nature of the ground works, which were limited to the removal of topsoil, and some archaeological features or deposits may have been sealed by the underlying subsoil. The few finds recovered, however, reflect only the recent agricultural history of the site and do not have any archaeological significance.

APPENDIX A DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

General description					Orientation	N-S to NW-SE
Area monitored was devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of sand.					Length (m)	380
					Width (m)	6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.36
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
100	Layer	-	0.18	Topsoil – dark brown silty sand	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.36	Subsoil – light greyish brown silty sand, only present in the south-eastern half of the strip	-	-
102	Layer	-	-	Natural – light reddish yellow sand, with patches of white chalk	-	-

APPENDIX B BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brooks, R. 2017, *Mildenhall Hub, Mildenhall*. Suffolk Archaeology Report No. 2017/008 (unpublished)

Lewis, T. 2020, *Mildenhall Hub, West Row Road, Mildenhall. Written Scheme of Investigation*. OA East, dated 4th February 2020 (unpublished)

APPENDIX C OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-383698		
Project Name	Mildenhall Hub, West Row Road, Mildenhall		
Start of Fieldwork	23/03/2020	End of Fieldwork	23/03/2020
Previous Work	no	Future Work	no

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	XSFWRR20	Planning App. No.	N/A
HER Number	MNL 1162	Related Numbers	N/A

Prompt	Water Act 1989 and subsequent code of practice
Development Type	Pipeline
Place in Planning Process	Not known/Not recorded

Techniques used (tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography – interpretation | <input type="checkbox"/> Grab-sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new | <input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-core | <input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch | <input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording of Fabric/Structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Augering | <input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors | <input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search | <input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief |

Monument	Period	Object	Period
none	None	Ceramic	Uncertain
	Choose an item.	CBM	Uncertain
	Choose an item.	Iron object	Modern (1901 to present)

Insert more lines as appropriate.

Project Location

County	Suffolk	Address (including Postcode) West Row Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk, IP28 7
District	West Suffolk	
Parish	Mildenhall	
HER office	Suffolk	
Size of Study Area	2280m ²	
National Grid Ref	TL 70033 75141	

Project Originators

Organisation	Oxford Archaeology East
Project Brief Originator	SCCAS
Project Design Originator	Oxford Archaeology

Project Manager
Project Supervisor

Patrick Moan
Hannah Blannin

Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	SCCAS	MNL 1162
Digital Archive	SCCAS	MNL 1162
Paper Archive	SCCAS	MNL 1162

Physical Contents

Present?

Digital files associated with Finds

Paperwork associated with Finds

Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Remains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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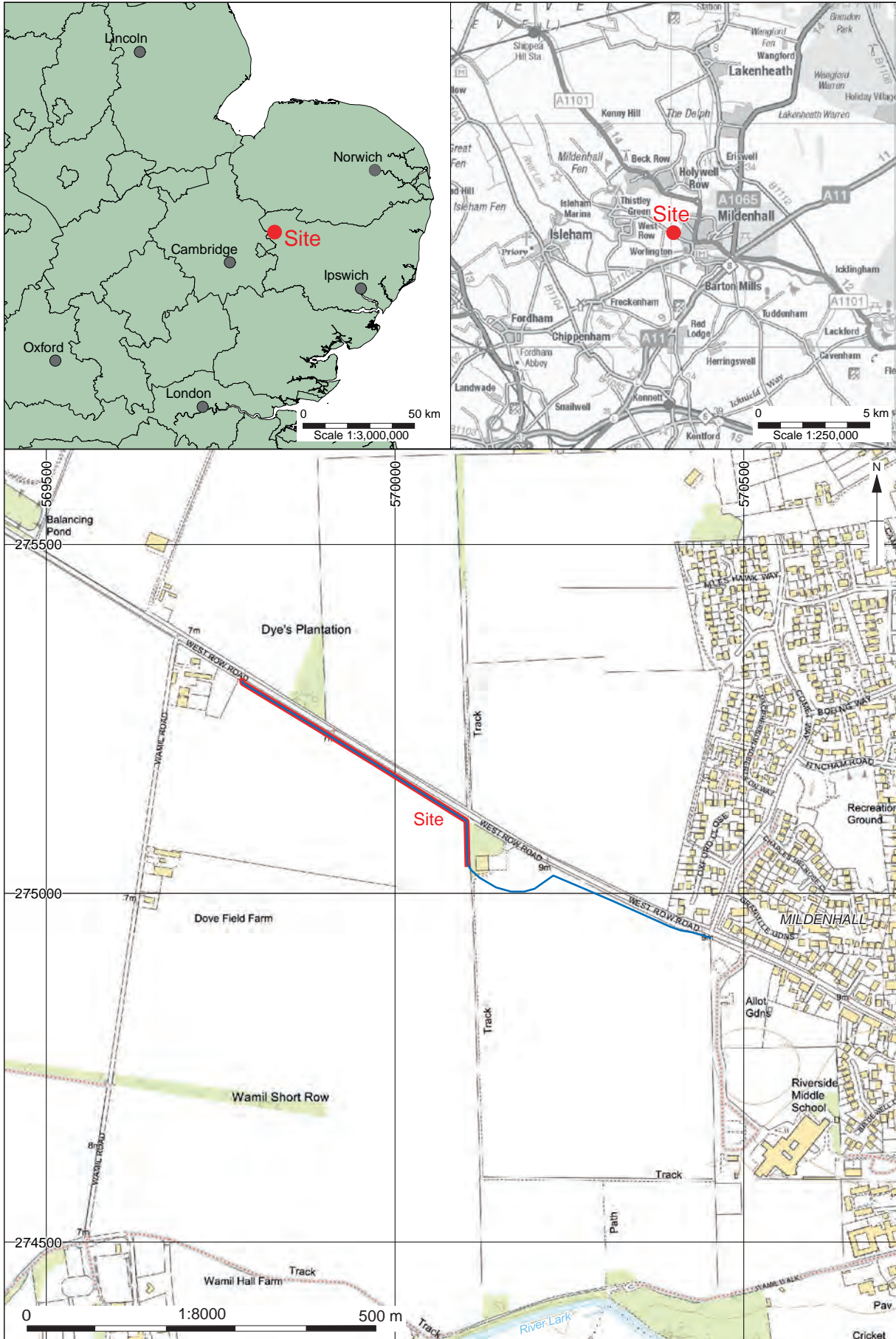
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Illustrations (Figures/Plates)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>
Text	<input type="checkbox"/>
Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/>

Paper Media

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Context Sheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Manuscript	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Matrices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Microfiche	<input type="checkbox"/>
Miscellaneous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research/Notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photos (negatives/prints/slides)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sections	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>

Further Comments



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Figure 1: Site location showing easement (blue) with monitored area (highlighted red)

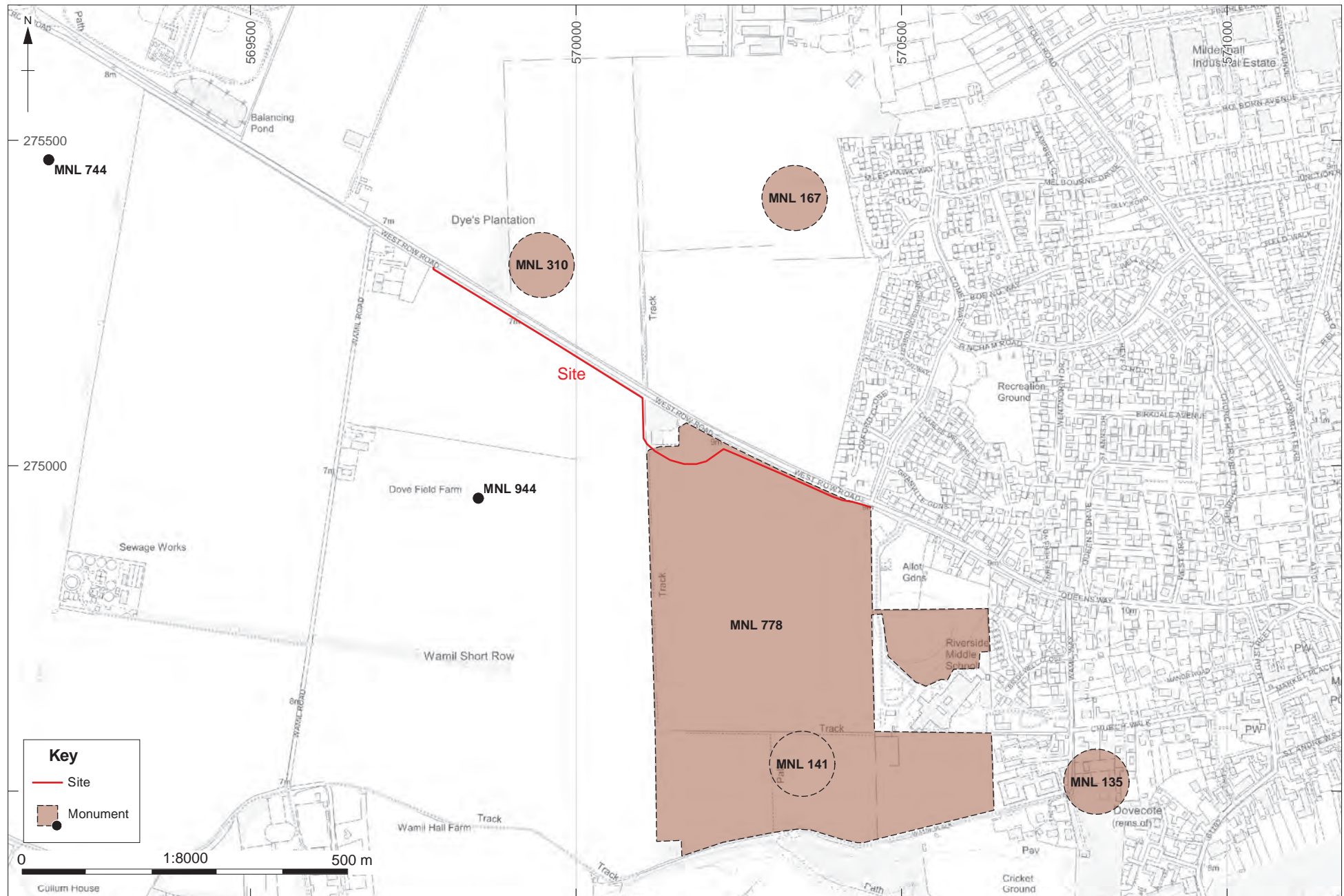


Figure 2: Site location with selected Suffolk HER entries



Plate 1: North to south part of strip, looking south



Plate 2: North-west to south-east part of strip, south-east end, looking south



Plate 3: North-west to south-east part of strip, middle portion, looking south-east



Plate 4: North-west to south-east part of strip, north-west end, looking west



Plate 5: Sondage through natural geology, looking north-west



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