

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/217

Fencing realignment, Peacekeeper Park, RAF Lakenheath, Lakenheath LKH 328

HER Information

Planning Application No: N/A

Date of Fieldwork: 19/10/2010

Grid Reference: TL 7304 8102

Funding Body: MoD Defence Estates USF

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Summary

An archaeological monitoring of postholes for a new fenceline on land to the north of Caudle Head, RAF Lakenheath, identified a probable build up of preserved occupation soils relating to Roman occupation.

1. Introduction and methodology

A single visit was made to the site during the auguring of holes for a realignment of the fenceline at the southern end of the RAF Lakenheath runway. The work was funded by MoD Defence Estates.

A series of holes, c.2m apart, were seen along a 65m length, aligned north-west to south-east (Fig. 1). The site lies on the fen-edge, immediately to the north of Caudle Head, a natural spring, which is the focus of a widespread known area of Roman settlement activity.

Each hole was seen once fully excavated and measured 0.35m wide and c.0.8m deep. Individual spoilheaps lay adjacent to each hole and were examined for archaeological material. Ground levels rose to the south-east by 0.3m, the slope beginning 15m from the north-west end of the trench, and there appears to have been a modern build up of deposits in the area between the fence and Caudle Head.

2. Results

The size of each hole made examination difficult and only basic information relating to soil profiles was apparent. It was unclear whether any archaeological cut features were present.

In the north-western six holes, a c.0.5m thick dark topsoil was seen to overlie 0.3m of very dark brown/black silty loam, 0002, which in turn overlaid pale yellow/grey sands.

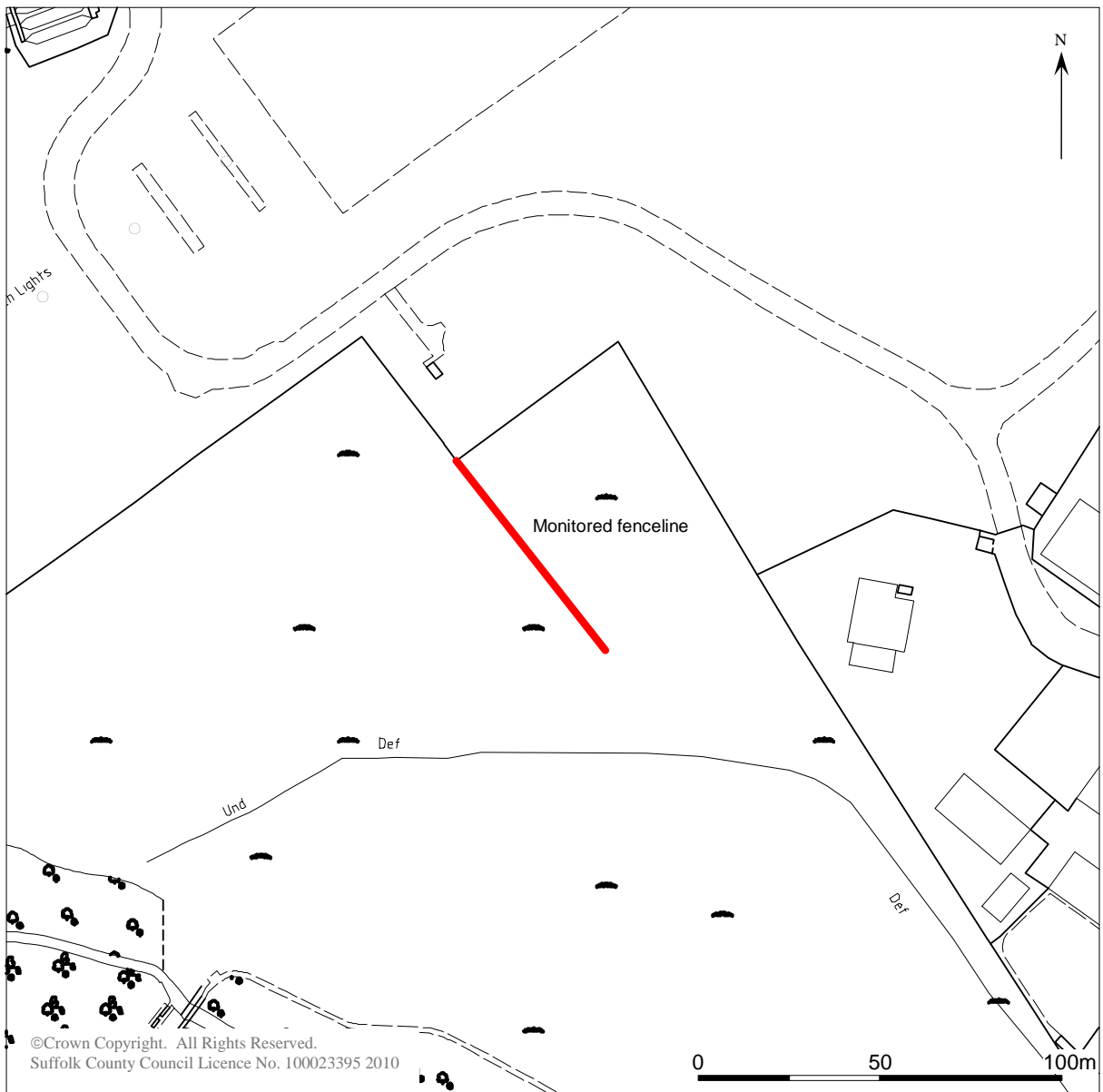
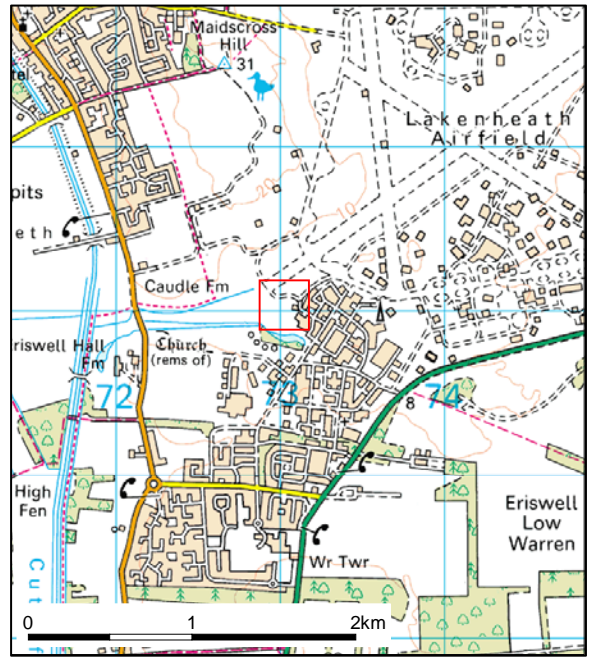
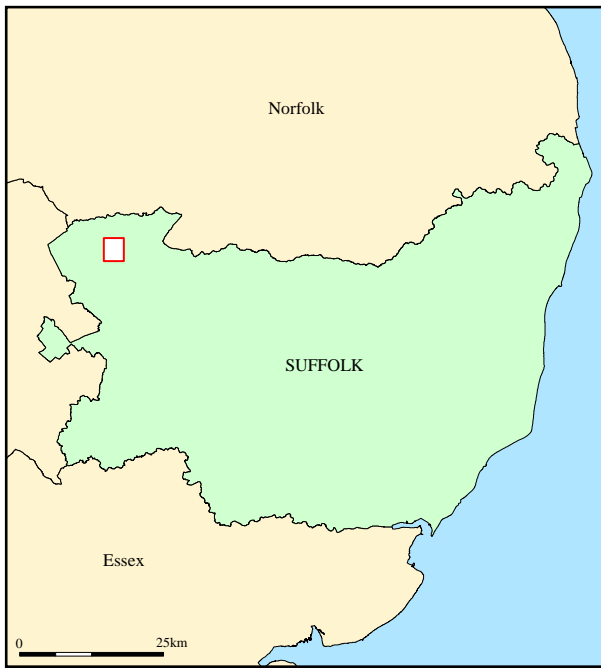


Figure 1. Site location plan

It was unclear whether these sands were windblown deposits or the natural subsoil surface.

A single sherd (9g) of Roman pottery, 0001, probably from a globular vessel, was recovered from the spoilheap of the 6th hole from the north-west end, possibly deriving from layer 0002. The fabric is grey micaceous ware in the black surfaced variant (GMB) and is not closely datable (identified by Cathy Tester, SCCAS/FT).

Over the next 20m the topsoil and layer 0002 thinned and the natural subsoil of mid orange sands was seen rising to a depth of 0.4m-0.5m below ground-level. With the rise in ground levels also occurring at this point this indicates a relatively steep natural slope descending north-west towards the fens.

Further south, although the subsoil descended again, layer 0001 disappeared. In the final 20m the holes showed a consistent profile of mid/dark grey sands underlying the turf and extending to the base of the trench.

3. Conclusion

The limited monitoring of fence postholes has established that a probable Roman occupation soil exists beneath modern topsoil deposits and that the Roman occupation seen to the south-east is likely to extend in this direction. The depth of the natural subsoil and potential archaeological features indicates that evidence of past activity is likely to be well-preserved throughout the vicinity of the runway.

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