

**Interim Visitor Centre  
Landguard Viewing Area, Felixstowe  
FEX 310**

**Archaeological Monitoring Report**

**SCCAS Report No. 2013/010**

**Client: Port of Felixstowe**

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January 2013

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Landguard Viewing Area, Felixstowe  
FEX 310

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SCCAS Report No. 2013/010

Author: M. Sommers

Editor: Dr R. Gardner

Report Date: January 2013



## HER Information

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**Site Code:** FEX 310

**Site Name:** Interim Visitor Centre, Landguard Viewing Area, Felixstowe

**Report Number** 2013/010

**Planning Application No:** C/11/2171

**Date of Fieldwork:** 10th January 2013 to 18th January 2013

**Grid Reference:** TM 2832 3209

**Oasis Reference:** suffolkc1-141647

**Curatorial Officer:** Dr J. Tipper

**Project Officer:** M. Sommers

**Client/Funding Body:** Port of Felixstowe

**Client Reference:** n/a

Digital report submitted to Archaeological Data Service:

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

### Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

Prepared By: M. Sommers  
Date: 23rd January 2013

Approved By: Dr R. Gardner  
Position: Contracts Manager  
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Signed:



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## **Summary**

Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with the creation of an Interim Visitor Centre at the Landguard Viewing Area, Felixstowe, was undertaken during January 2013. During this work a concrete slab and brick wall stubs were recorded at a depth of 1m below the present ground level. The location corresponds with a structure marked on an Ordnance Survey map dated to the late 1950s. The building's purpose is unknown but it lay within part of the militarised area of Landguard Common, amongst a complex of buildings related the Submarine Mining Establishment.

## **1. Introduction**

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Planning consent for the construction of an interim visitor centre at the Landguard Viewing Area, Felixstowe (C/11/2171), was granted but with an attached condition requiring an agreed programme of archaeological works be in place prior to the commencement of the development, as detailed in a Brief produced by Dr. Jess Tipper of the SCCAS Conservation Team (Appendix 1).

The site is situated at TM 2832 3209 within the Port of Felixstowe which is situated to the south of the Suffolk town of Felixstowe (see figure 1 for a location plan). It is located close to Landguard Fort, an 18th century defensive structure that guards the entrance to Harwich Harbour. The fort, which is the third on this site, and a large area of land to the north-east is a designated Scheduled Monument.

The main structure of the visitor centre was to be built resting in pads laid onto an existing area of concrete hardstanding that lies immediately below the present tarmac surface. This aspect of the construction would not damage or disturb any archaeological deposits or features that may be present. However, in order to provide services for the new structure a series of trenches would need to be excavated. These could be cut to a depths of up to 1.5m and consequently could encounter buried archaeological evidence. In order to mitigate against the loss of any such evidence this aspect of the groundwork was archaeological monitored.

The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team who were commissioned and funded by The Port of Felixstowe.

## **2. Methodology**

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The monitoring was achieved through the visual examination of the open service trenches during and after their excavation by machine in order to identify any significant archaeological features and/or deposits. The location of any features identified was then plotted and the stratigraphy recorded. The spoil was also examined in an attempt to recover datable finds. Digital photographs were also taken as part of the record.

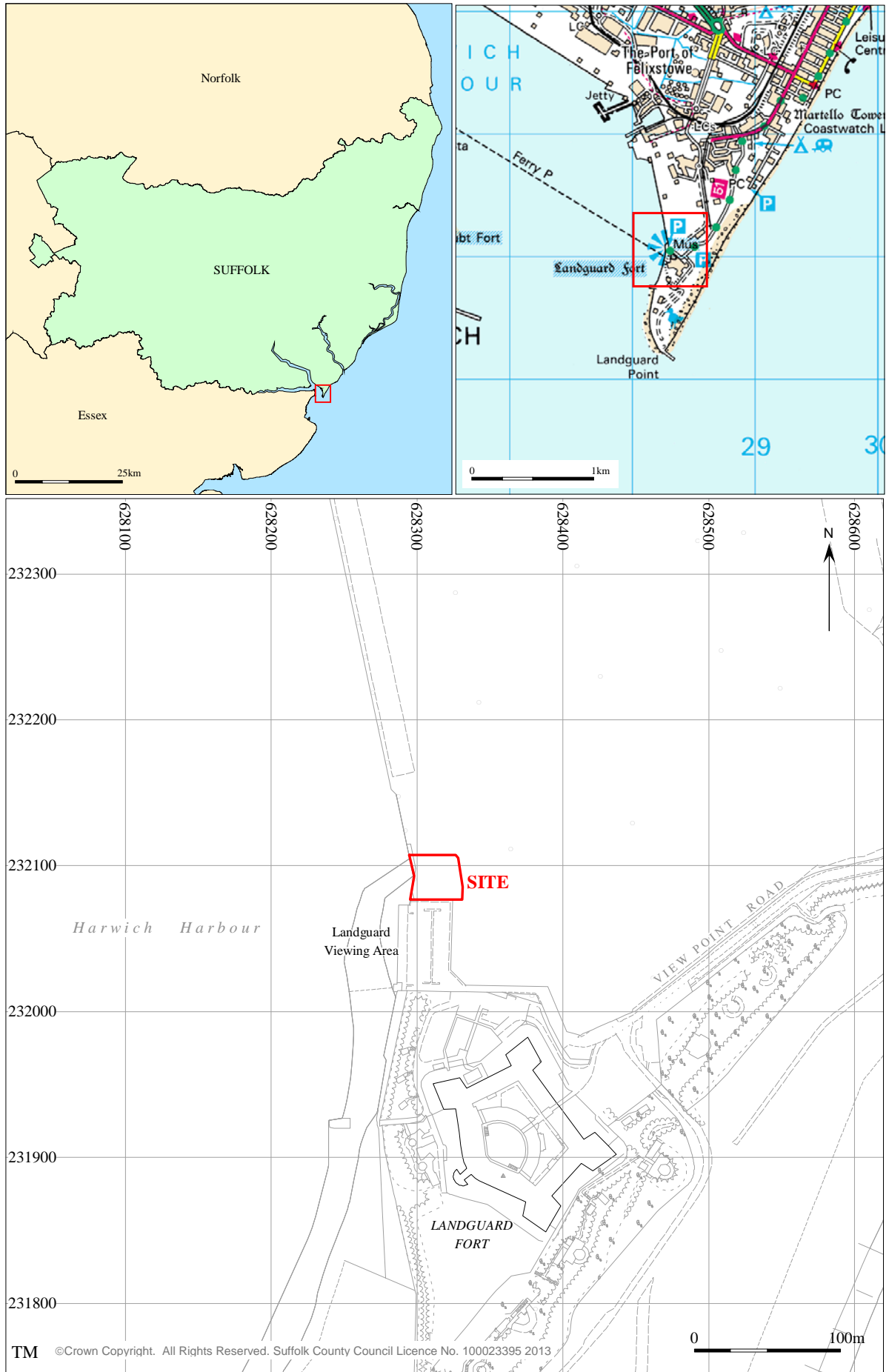


Figure 1. Location map

### 3. Results

The site was visited on four occasions during the excavation of the service trenches (11th, 14th, 15th and 18th January 2013). A series of trenches were examined (Fig. 2), the majority of which revealed only made ground deposits of sand and shingle to a depth of at least 1m and lying directly below the present ground surface of tarmac and concrete (plate 1).

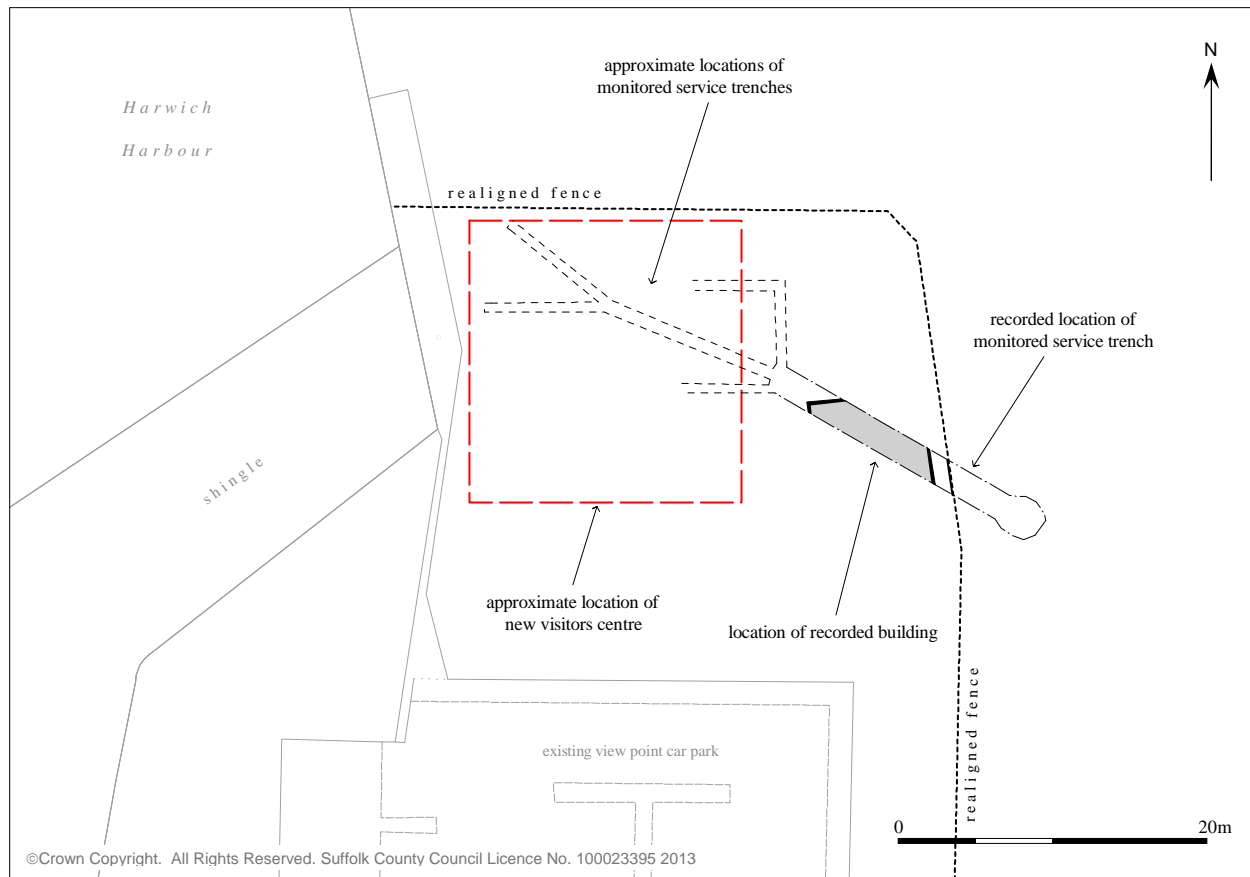


Figure 2. Trench locations

The only archaeological evidence of any significance was noted in a north-east to south-west trench located outside the footprint of the proposed centre. It comprised a large concrete slab bounded by brick walls and was interpreted as the remains of a building (Fig. 3). The concrete slab, which lay a depth of 1m below the present ground level, was 0.13m thick with a smooth upper surface and was interpreted as the building's floor (plate 1). No evidence for any other flooring overlying the concrete was noted.

A brick wall ran along the slab's eastern edge (plate 2). It was 0.22m thick and built of hard pink bricks (22cm x 6.5cm x 10cm) with a hard cement. A layer of slate was visible

on the upper face of the brick wall, level with the floor, to provide a barrier to reduce damp (visible in plate 1). A similar wall was identified further to the north-west where it clearly formed a corner to the building (plate 3). The height of the walls had been reduced to the level of the concrete floor.

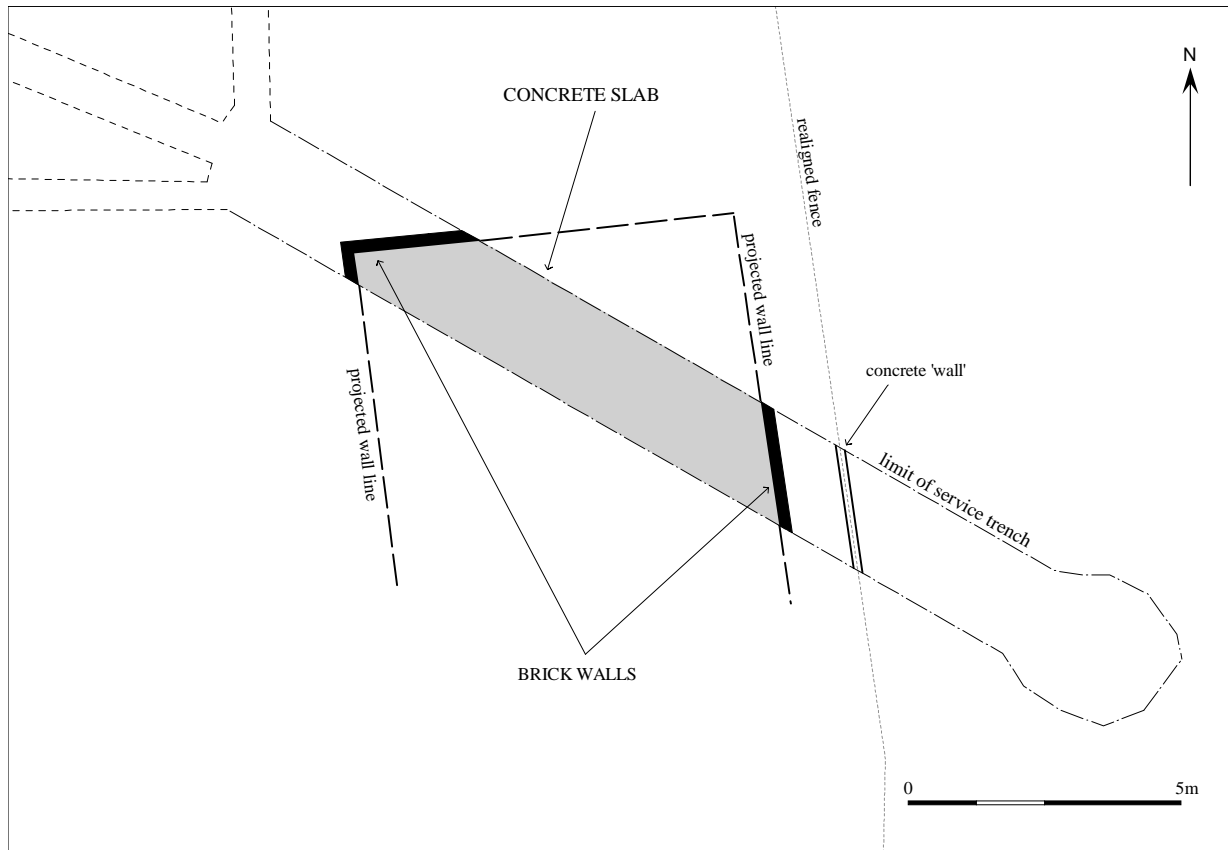


Figure 3. Plan of the building

Situated 1m to the east of the building a narrow strip of concrete ran parallel with the edge of the building at the same level as the concrete floor. This feature appeared to be a wall although only the upper surface was exposed and it was not possible to fully determine its depth.

To get the correct fall on a waste pipe it was necessary to break out a roughly 1.5m wide strip of the concrete floor and parts of the walls. This resulted in the destruction of the remains within the trench but left the rest of the building's remains *in-situ*.

## 4. Discussion

The building noted in the trench appears to comprise a rectangular structure with a width of 7.4m and an unknown length. It was built of brick with a concrete floor with no evidence of an internal or external finishes, suggesting it is a store or workshop. Its date is unknown but the bricks would suggest a 20th century date, probably post World War 1. Unfortunately, the early Ordnance Survey maps of the area are censored and do not show the fort or any of the adjacent military structures. An Ordnance Survey map of the late 1950s does indicate a structure in the corresponding location (marked as Building 1 in Fig. 4), lying within a complex of structures that were part of the Submarine Mining Establishment (SME). The SME was involved in the provision of a defence across the harbour mouth consisting of tethered explosive mines detonated by remote control.

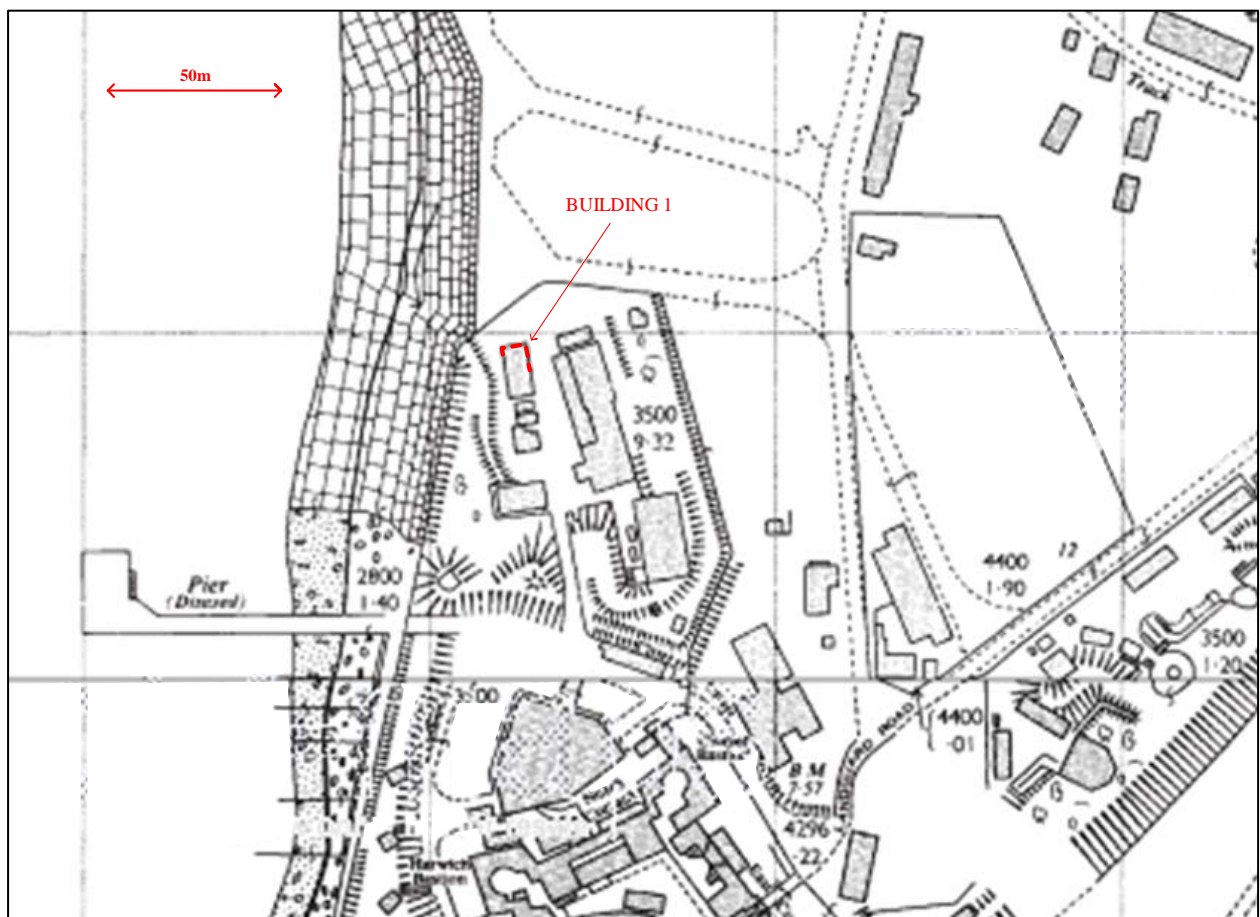


Figure 4. Ordnance Survey map of the late 1950s (rescaled extract)

A photograph, showing this area prior to its final clearance in advance of the construction the port facilities, partially shows what may be this building (plate 4). It appears as a single storey structure with windows and an apex roof running

longitudinally. There are few obvious clues as to its purpose although documentary research should be able identify its use.

The parallel concrete 'wall' noted in the trench to the east is not marked on the map or visible in the photograph suggesting the interpretation is incorrect. An alternative explanation is that it may be part of a drain or a cable duct.

As the port facilities at Felixstowe expanded beyond the original dock area the entire complex was demolished and the area levelled. The remains were then buried beneath made ground deposits to a depth of 1m. These deposits lie on the floor surface, which would have been the ground level in the vicinity of this building during its use.

The remainder of the monitored services did not cut through this made ground deposit.

## **5. Conclusions**

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The walls and concrete slab noted are part of a building as depicted in the 1950s Ordnance Survey map. Its location indicates it was associated with the Submarine Mining Establishment attached to the fort, although its precise purpose is unknown at present.

The building remained standing until the 1970s when it was reduced to the ground level and buried to a depth c. 1m beneath imported sand and shingle, a layer of concrete and a layer of tarmac as part of the development of the Port of Felixstowe.

## **6. Archive deposition**

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Historic Environment Record reference under which the archive is held: FEX 310.

The digital archive will be stored on the SCC secure servers at the location:

*R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Archive\Felixstowe\FEX310 Monitoring*

Digital photographs are held under the references: HSS 7 to HSS 19

A summary of this project has been entered into OASIS, the online database, under the reference: suffolkc1-141647



## 7. Plates

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Plate 1. Concrete floor at west end of the building, camera facing north-east (ref. HSS 03)



Plate 2. Eastern wall of the building, camera facing north east (ref. HSS 07)





Plate 3. West end of the building, camera facing south east (ref. HSS 04)



Plate 4. 1972 photograph of the Submarine Mining Establishment, camera facing north. Building identified in trench marked with a red arrow (source unknown)

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