

R.S.P. B. Reserve Aveley Marshes Essex



Archaeological Watching Briefs and Recording Actions



Oxford Archaeology

13th March 2002

Client Name:
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 826

NGR: TQ 540 970

Client Name:
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Client Ref No:

Document Title: Aveley Marshes Essex.
Archaeological Watching Brief and Recording Actions
2001-2002

Document Type: Watching Brief

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: TQ 540970
Planning Reference:

OA Job Number: 826
Site Code: RWAM01
Invoice Code: RWAMWB1
Museum Accession No:

Prepared by: E C Stafford

Position: Site Supervisor
Date: 13th March 2002

Checked by: Ianto Wain
Position: Project Manager
Date: 13th March 2002

Approved by: R J Williams
Position: Director: Business Development and Operations
Date: 14th March 2002

Signed.....

Document File Location X:\Rainham Marshes RSPB RWAM--\Rwamwb1 - 1st
watching brief, ditches and cattle pen\RWAM01
interim.doc

Graphics File Location oaupubs1/alldrawings/rwamwb/rainham
Illustrated by Roz Smith

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology
© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2002

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES
t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

AVELEY MARSHES ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AND RECORDING ACTIONS 2001-2 REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary	2
1 Introduction.....	2
1.1 Location and scope of work.....	2
1.2 Geology and topography.....	2
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	3
2 Project Aims and Methodology	3
2.1 Aims.....	3
2.2 Methodology.....	4
3 Results.....	5
3.1 Description of deposits	5
3.2 Distribution of Archaeological Deposits	5
3.3 Finds.....	5
3.4 Palaeo-environmental remains.....	5
4 Discussion And Conclusions	6
4.1 Reliability.....	6
4.2 Summary of results	6
Appendix 1 Bibliography and references	8
Appendix 2 Summary of Site Details	8

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 OS Site location map
 Fig. 2 Site plan of area of watching brief
 Fig. 3 Plan of early 20th century tramway

SUMMARY

Between August 2001 and February 2002, OA carried out an archaeological watching brief within the disused MOD rifle range on Aveley Marshes. The work was commissioned by The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) during the ongoing development of the marsh as a nature reserve. The work involved monitoring topsoil stripping, excavation of new and existing drainage ditches, and a boundary ditch along the eastern and southern extents of the reserve. Late Holocene estuarine silt-clay alluvium, and to a limited extent underlying peat deposits were exposed. No significant archaeological remains were identified during the ditching works. An Early 20th Century tramline associated with the disused rifle range was identified during topsoil stripping. Although of low intrinsic value the feature is considered an interesting feature in terms of the range's group value

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Between August 2001 and February 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on Aveley Marsh. The work was commissioned by The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) during the ongoing development of the marsh as a nature reserve

1.1.2 The reserve is located in the boroughs of Havering in Greater London (the northern part of the site) and in Thurrock in the County of Essex (the southern third of the site). Figure 1 shows the location of the site. The current investigation was carried out entirely on Aveley Marsh, within the disused MOD rifle range, in the eastern part of the reserve. The site is bounded by the London, Southend and Tilbury and CTRL (Channel Tunnel Rail Link) railway corridors to the north, a disused Army camp and range munitions magazines to the east, the River Thames to the South, and Wennington Marsh to the west. The site is accessed via Tankhill Road to the east.

1.1.3 Part of the programme of works for the development of the nature reserve consisted of small scale topsoil stripping in areas adjacent to the rifle butts, excavation of existing, and additional, drainage ditches, and the excavation of a large boundary ditch along the southern and eastern edge of the site (Figure 2).

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies at c. 1.00m above OD. It is situated on a low-lying alluvial floodplain in a meander of the River Thames. Immediately to the northeast of the reserve lies the higher ground of the gravel terrace at 5-10m OD.

1.2.2 Modern landuse is characterized by the disused rifle range structures (built brick firing butts and firing points comprising low earthworks) and low intensity cattle grazing. The marsh is covered by rough grass, reed beds and shallow areas of open