



Archaeological Field Unit

**Archaeological Work on Land off Howlett Way, Thetford
37306 THD**

Mark Hinman

August 2002

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. B107

Commissioned by Chris Riches Transport Ltd.

**Archaeological Work on Land off Howlett Way, Thetford
37306 THD**

Mark Hinman

2002

*Editor: Aileen Connor
Illustrator: Emily Oakes*



Report No. B107

*©Archaeological Field Unit
Cambridgeshire County Council
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap, Fulbourn
Cambridgeshire CB1 5HD
Tel (01223) 881614
Fax (01223) 880946*

*Arch.Field.Unit@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
<http://edweb.camcnty.gov.uk/afu>*

SUMMARY

During the construction of hardstanding on land adjacent to Howlett Way, Thetford, topsoil was removed from the site and stored in two separate locations. Due to the sensitive location of the site in relation to previously known archaeological remains a condition requiring archaeological investigation was placed on the planning consent for the development.

The main aim of the project was to maximise the recovery of artefactual materials contained within the excavated spoil heaps and to attempt a reconstruction of the history and use of the site with reference to these materials. During August 2002 Mark Hinman and Chris Montague conducted an intensive scan of the spoil by hand and with metal detectors, aided by mechanical excavator.

No significant artefactual materials were recovered.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	1
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	1
METHODOLOGY	3
RESULTS	3
DISCUSSION	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
BIBLIOGRAPHY	5
LIST OF FIGURES	
Figure 1	2

**Archaeological Work on Land off Howlett Way, Thetford, Norfolk
(Grid Ref TL 8662 8476)**

1 INTRODUCTION

The site (SMR 37306 THD) was located on the north side of Thetford near to the important Iron Age and early Romano-British site at Fison Way (Gregory, 1992) and the late Roman Thetford hoard.

During the construction of hardstanding topsoil was removed from the site and stored in two separate locations. Features of possible archaeological significance were reported but not excavated prior to the laying of the hardstanding.

Due to the sensitive location of the site a condition requiring archaeological investigation was placed on the planning consent for the development.

The main aim of the project was to maximise the recovery of artefactual materials contained within the excavated spoil heaps and to attempt a reconstruction of the history and use of the site with reference to these materials.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Thetford is located at the confluence of the rivers Thet and Little Ouse, and the ancient route of the Icknield Way also passes through the town. The geology of the area is wind blown sand and river gravels overlying chalk.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Known finds spots and previous archaeological works within the immediate vicinity are illustrated on figure 1.

Prehistoric

Neolithic and/or Bronze Age remains have been found in the vicinity. A small quantity of Bronze Age pottery and a lithic assemblage was recovered c 200m west of the subject site from fieldwalking and subsequent evaluation at Alpha Business Park, Bates, 1994, (SMR 30258). Further evidence of earlier prehistoric activity

was recorded immediately to the north of the subject site at Fison Way (SMR 5853). A possible barrow, Neolithic worked flint and beaker pottery were recorded c 200m to the south west of the subject site (SMR 5744).

Iron Age and Romano-British

The subject site was in close proximity to the Fison Way religious site (Gregory, 1992), the Thetford Hoard and Romano-British field systems at Alpha Business Park (Bates, 1994).

Anglo-Saxon

No evidence for activity during this period was recovered from the adjacent excavations at Fison Way. A group of 10 pagan Saxon burials were recorded c 500m to the south west of the subject site (SMR 25154).

4 METHODOLOGY

Prior to the involvement of the AFU the spoil removed from the subject site had been partially scanned by the client using a metal detector. No artefactual material was recovered at this time.

The main aim of the project was to maximise the recovery of artefactual materials contained within the excavated spoil heaps and to attempt a reconstruction of the history and use of the site with reference to these materials.

The field team were assisted during the manual recovery process by a mechanical excavator which was used to move and level spoil as directed. The spoil was spread evenly to a depth of no more than 0.40m in depth.

5 RESULTS

The only artefactual materials of any antiquity were two flint flakes of late Neolithic date and two fragments of burnt flint. Such a low density of lithic material was not considered to be archaeologically significant given the context from which it had been recovered.

Despite careful scanning of the spoil no ceramics or metal finds other than modern material were recovered.

The spoil was perhaps most notable for the frequent inclusions of crisp packets and soft drinks cans which may indicate that the topsoil had been previously disturbed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Chris Riches Transport Ltd who commissioned and funded the archaeological work, David Gurney of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology who produced the Brief and monitored the fieldwork element of the project and Jan Allen for her advice and information relating to previous archaeological work in the immediate area of the subject site.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bates, S. 1994. Report on Field Survey, Mundford Road, Thetford, Norfolk. (SMR 30258).

Gregory, T. 1992. Excavations in Thetford, 1980-1982, Fison Way, Volumes One – Two. East Anglian Archaeology 53, Field Archaeology Division, Norfolk Museum Service.

Trimble, G. 2001. Report on an Archaeological Evaluation at Alpha Business Park, Mundford Road, Thetford, Norfolk. Norfolk Archaeological Unit Report no. 636.



Cambridgeshire
County Council

Education, Libraries
and Heritage

*The Archaeological Field Unit
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap
Fulbourn
Cambridge CB1 5HD
Tel (01223) 881614
Fax (01223) 880946*