



**Archaeological Watching Brief**  
**River Wensum Restoration Strategy**  
**at**  
**Great Ryburgh**

**Heather Wallis**  
**December 2010**

**HW Report No. 109**



<b>Project name</b>	<b>Great Ryburgh, River Wensum Restoration Strategy</b>
<b>Client</b>	<b>Environment Agency</b>
<b>NHER Event No</b>	<b>ENF125333</b>
<b>Grid reference</b>	<b>TF 9386 2921</b>
<b>Date of fieldwork</b>	<b>11th and 19th October and 9th November 2010</b>

## **Introduction**

The River Wensum flows eastwards across Norfolk rising to the west of Fakenham and flowing through Norwich where it converges with the River Yare. For most of its course the river is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation, however it has been identified as being in an unfavourable and declining ecological state (<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/wildlife/114676.aspx/>). In order to improve its condition several sections of the river will be modified, one of these being located to the south-east of Fakenham in the parish of Great Ryburgh (Fig. 1 Reach 24).

The works undertaken here included the creation of berms in the present river channel and the re-excavation of a now silted meander (Fig. 2). The meander loop lay on the north bank of the river, the silting having largely occurred since the 1950s. An archaeological watching brief was required to be undertaken during these works in order to identify and record any revealed archaeological deposits and finds.

The restoration work was undertaken by the Environment Agency who commissioned the archaeological works.

## **Archaeological Background**

Prior to work commencing the Norfolk HER was searched in order to identify sites which lay close to the site of the works. This illustrated that little is known from the area of works. Within a 1.5km radius of the site finds of both Roman and prehistoric date have been found. This includes a number of Neolithic flint axes and other worked flints.

## **Methods**

Three visits were made to the site during the programme of works. This monitored the creation of the berm on the north bank of the river (Plate 1) and the excavation of part of the meander loop (Plate 2). The first of these impacted on previously undisturbed ground, while the latter comprised the

removal of recent silting. On each visit a visual inspection of the works was made and disturbed soils were metal detected.

All work was carried out in full accordance with national and regional guidelines for the treatment of archaeological remains, and in particular the guidance set out in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2001).

Records of the watching brief consist of a site diary and digital photographs.

## **Results**

No finds or deposits of archaeological importance were revealed.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks are expressed to the Environment Agency for sponsoring these works, to Graham Breeze the site manager and to my colleague Mick Boyle who undertook some of the monitoring work.

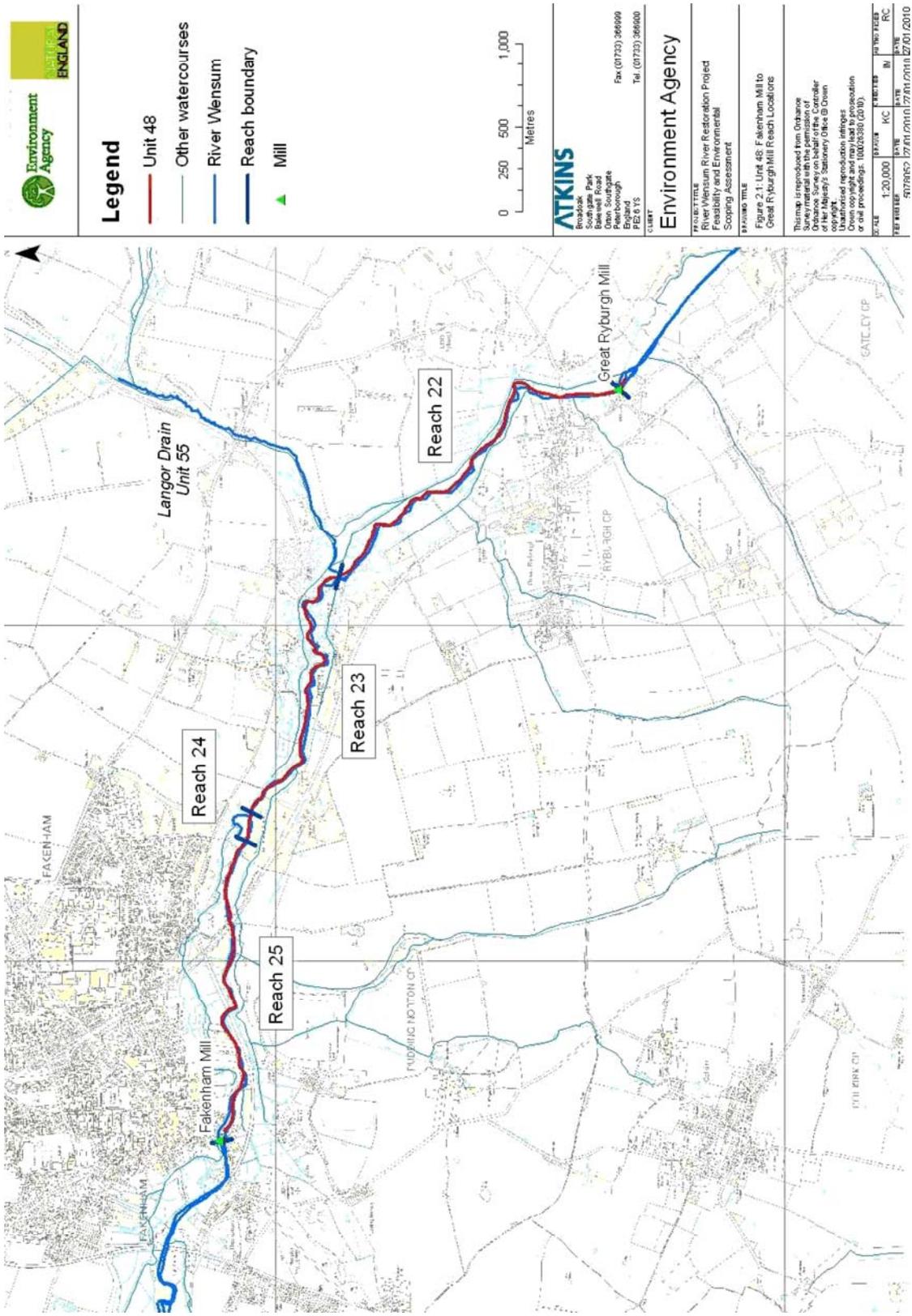


Fig. 1 Site Location (Reach 24)

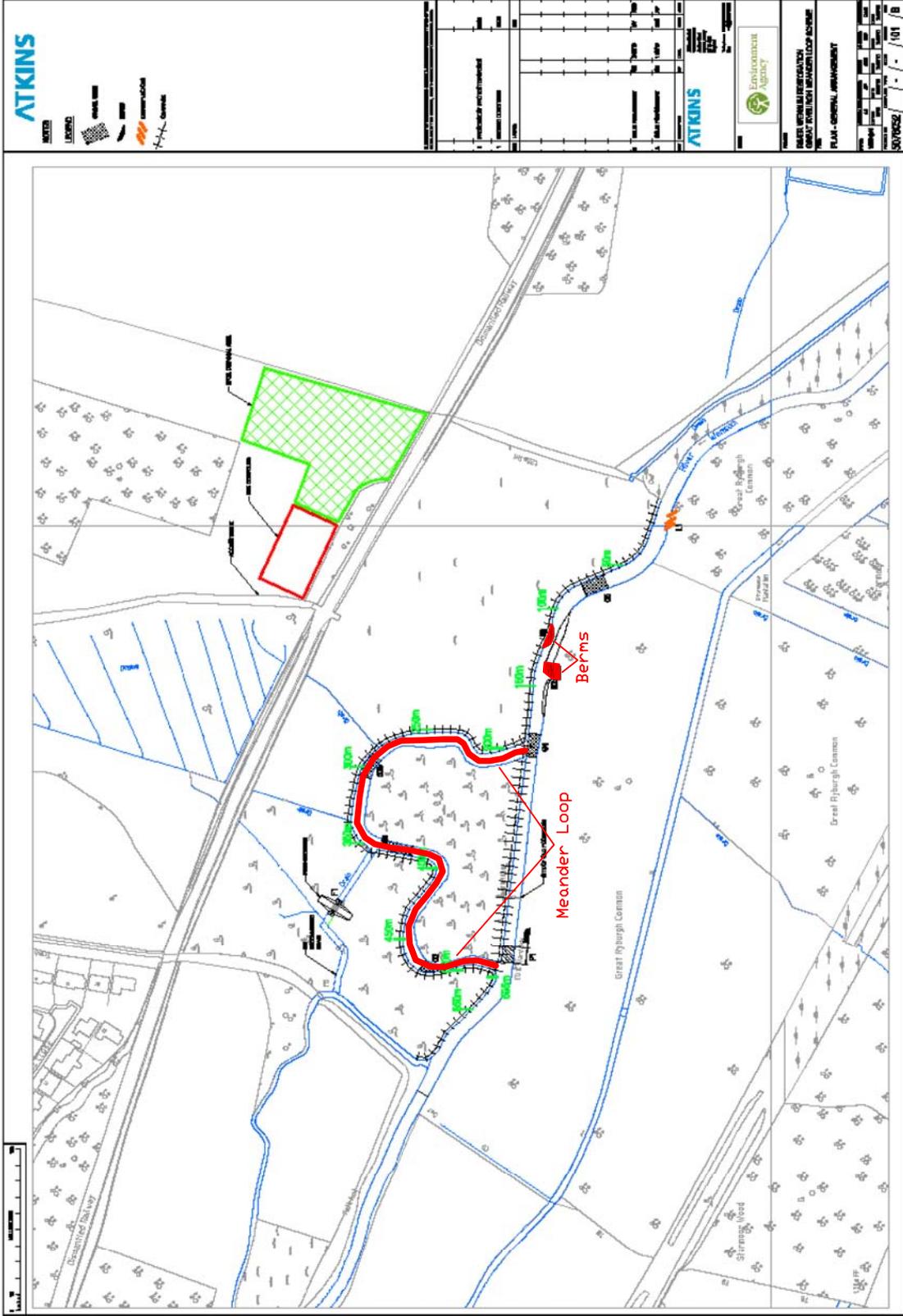


Fig. 2 Showing location of meander loop and berms



Plate 1 Excavation during of creation of berm



Plate 2 Restoration of meander loop