

**Investigations into the Swaffham Union Workhouse  
Burial Ground, Oaks Drive, Swaffham**

**NGR TF8248 0815**

**By**

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8 Oaks Drive, Swaffham. The Infirmary.

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## **1.0 Non-Technical Summary**

*Between the 24th August and 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2007 Archaeological Excavation & Surveys (AES) completed a survey of Swaffham Union Workhouse Burial Ground to assess the density of burials, the degree of preservation and the risk of contamination from diseases and viruses from the burials and coffins.*

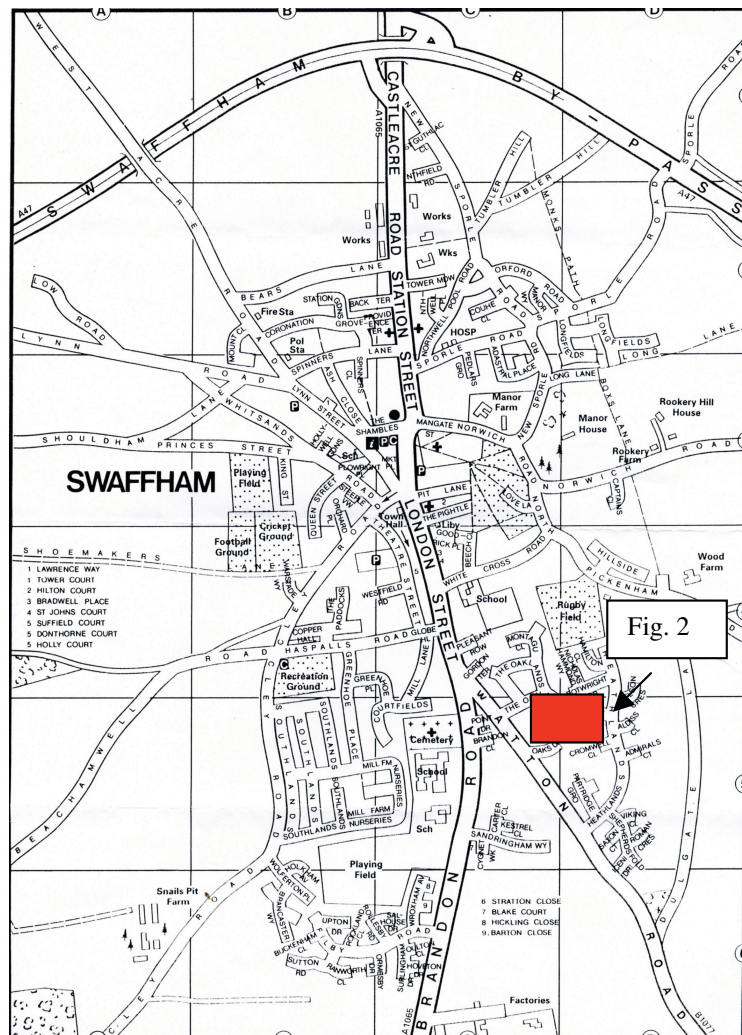
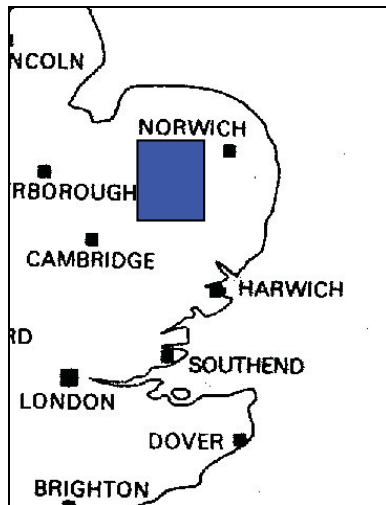
*The work comprised a desktop survey examining original records located in the Norfolk Record Office, the Farm and Workhouse Museum at Gressenhall and Norfolk Heritage Environment Records database. This was supplemented by a field assessment in which 12 test pits were excavated in the gardens of houses 6, 7, and 8.*

*The desktop survey has shown that the properties of number's 5, 6, 7 and 8 lie within the grounds of the Swaffham Union Workhouse. An original plan of the site shows the cemetery (1838) and its extension (1869) with elements in the gardens of all four properties.*

*The fieldwork involved the machine excavation of 12 test pits in the gardens of 6, 7 and 8. Evidence of graves was found in all but four of the pits. In test pit 1 two substantial burial pits were located and excavated until human remains were identified. These were two infant burials, originally placed in wooden coffins (since deteriorated), and the individuals surviving in skeletal form only.*

*This survey has demonstrated that although the cemetery does in fact extend into four gardens and was extensively used during the life of the workhouse the remains pose a minimal contamination risk having deteriorated to bone with no soft tissue, whole coffins or vaults surviving.*

*The contamination risk of a burial ground arrives from the degree of preservation of lead or wooden coffins and burial vaults that would aid the preservation of soft tissue and hence potential diseases and viruses. Surviving coffins also pose a possible contamination hazard. Human Remains in their skeletal form are inert and pose no contamination risk.*



**Figure 1: Site Location Plan. Area of Investigation.**  
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## 2.0 Background to the Project

Archaeological Excavation & Surveys (AES) was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Jones of number 7 Oaks Drive to complete a survey of the gardens of 6, 7 and 8 Oaks Drive, Swaffham to assess the risk of contamination posed by the presence of a disused burial ground (*Figure 1*). The work was completed to conform to the guidelines as laid out in '*The Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11, Contaminated Land Report*' by the Environment Agency.

The work was completed between the 24<sup>th</sup> August and 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2007. Initially a desktop survey was completed utilising the Norfolk Record Office, the Farm and Workhouse Museum at Gressenhall and Norfolk Heritage Environment Records. This was followed by a fieldwork survey involving the excavation of twelve test pits.

## 3.0 Project Objectives

The project was implemented with the following research objectives:

- Determine the extent and location of the Swaffham Union Workhouse burial ground.
- Assess the degree of preservation of any inhumations and the risk of contamination posed by them.

## 4.0 Methodology

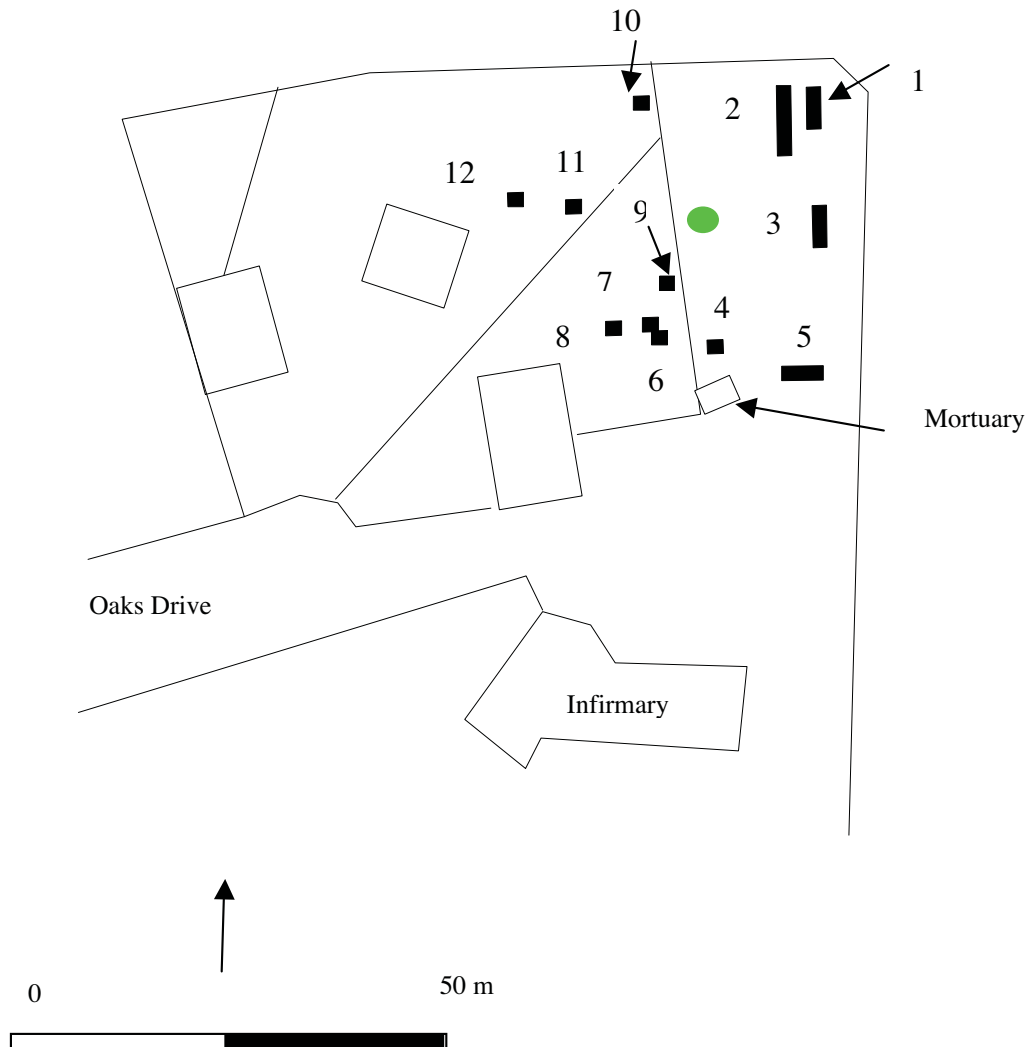
A search was made of all records relating to the Swaffham Union Workhouse located at the Norfolk Record Office, the Farm and Workhouse Museum at Gressenhall and the Norfolk Heritage Environment Records Database, and in particular any which concerned the Burial Ground.

The desktop survey was supplemented by a fieldwork survey involving the excavation of 12 test pits representing a 3.28% sample of the cemetery site (*Figure 2*). A tracked mini excavator excavated the test pits with a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. The test pits were excavated by machine and hand until undisturbed natural soils or evidence of graves were encountered. A tree which retained a tree preservation order (TPO; *Figure 2*) in the garden of number 8 restricted any work within a six metre radius.

The excavated test pits were then cleaned by hand, photographed and representative scale sections drawn by hand. Soils and features were recorded using AES's standard recording system, with plans and sections at scales of 1:20 and 1:10 respectively. The testpits were accurately located using a plane table.

In the event of any surviving lead or wooden coffins, or soft tissue being uncovered these were to be disinfected and backfilled immediately.





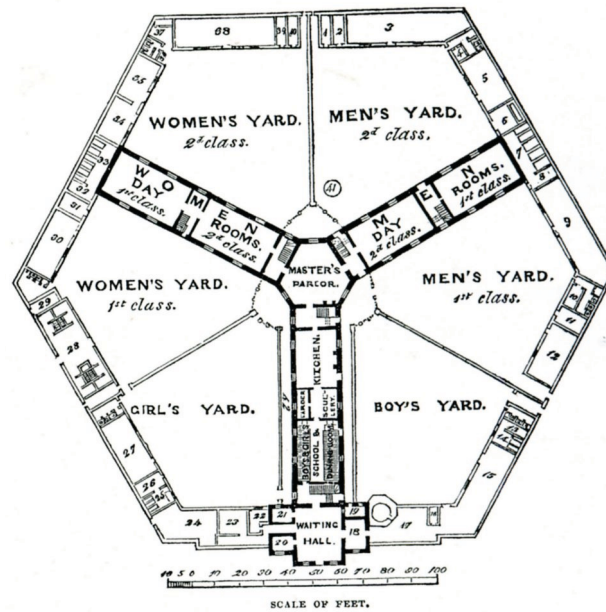
**Figure 2:** Map 1 Location of Testpits in relation to modern boundaries (Green circle represents a tree with a TPO).

## 5.0 A Brief Historical Background of Swaffham Union Workhouse

The Swaffham Union Workhouse remains lie on the outskirts of Swaffham, now forming part of a residential property. It was at the time one of numerous workhouses situated throughout England during the nineteenth century. In 1834 the government passed the Poor Law Amendment Act as a means of attempting to deal with the problem of poverty rife at the time. A Royal Commission appointed by the Prime Minister Earl Grey issued a report recommending that parishes should be joined together to form Unions with a large Workhouse catering for all categories of pauper (May, p8). Boards of Guardians were convened with elected representatives for each Union. On 1 August 1835 the Swaffham Poor Law Union was officially formed combining 35 parishes (see *Appendix A*).

The Swaffham Union Workhouse was built in 1836 at the cost of £7,125 to accommodate 405 inmates. The Workhouse was designed by a local Swaffham architect William J Donthorn (1799-1859).

His design was based upon Sampson Kempthorne's (1809-1873) Y or hexagonal plan otherwise known as the Kempthorne Star, published by the Poor Law Commissioners in 1835 (May, p9). The model consisting of an entrance range at the West contained a porter's lodge, board-room and offices. At the rear radiating from the central supervisory hub were three accommodation wings for the various classes of inmates. The areas between the wings were divided into segregated exercise yards. The service, workshop buildings, the Infirmary, Mortuary and burial ground formed part of the hexagonal perimeter of the workhouse (*Figure 3*).



**Figure 3:** Plan of a Y or Hexagonal Workhouse Design

Adjoining the Workhouse at Swaffham are the burial grounds. The first was proposed in 1836, consecrated in 1838 and is located to the north of the mortuary ('Petition for Consecration, Burial Ground', Swaffham, 1836. Donthorn W.J. 'Conveyance of a piece of land as a site for an intended workhouse, to The Guardians of the poor of the Swaffham Union, Sewell, R, and Wright, C. 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1836. Day, H., 1838, Deed of Appropriation, of 1838).

In 1869, a second burial ground was proposed and consecrated (Petition for Consecration, Additional Burial Ground, Swaffham, 1869, Deed of Appropriation of 1869). The consecration stones still exist. The present residents of Number 8 discovered both stones in the part of their garden under which the original burial ground lies. They are both now located in the Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse Museum.

From surviving records it is possible to ascertain some idea of the number of paupers who lie in the burial ground. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1868 was to introduce *Creed Registers* in which the details of the inmates of Workhouses for the Swaffham Union Workhouse survive. One, for the years 1896-1902 recorded the deaths of 31 paupers, the other for the years 1906-1919 recorded the deaths of 75 paupers (see *Appendices B and C*). Upon death a pauper would be buried in their own parish unless they had no financial source or family to bury them.



In the absence of finance or family, individuals from any parish within the Union would be interned in the Workhouse burial ground. It is likely however that the majority of paupers buried in the burial ground came from the parish of Swaffham, as it appears that the number of deaths were much higher than any other (see *Appendix B and C*).

Although Swaffham Union Workhouse was built for 405 inmates, records show that it was not always full. In 1881, the census totalled the number of residents for the Workhouse as being 56. Various meeting minutes recorded for 1838 total the number of inmates as between 87 and 168. (see *Appendix D*).

During the 1860s the inadequacies of the medical profession in the workhouses came under close scrutiny and in 1867 the Metropolitan Poor Act enabled Poor Law Unions to establish infirmaries separate from their workhouses. The infirmary building of the Swaffham Union is still standing and now forms the private residence of Number 8, Oaks Drive (Pope, S., 2005). The report also notes that the nurses quarters are still standing and were built between 1905 and 1926. A single story private house, which was originally part of the main building and is possibly the stable was referred to in the 1926 newspaper report. The mortuary is still standing and also the outside wall of the Workhouse site.

In 1847 the Poor Law Commissioners were replaced by the Poor Law Board, which in turn was developed into the Local Government Board of 1871. In 1905 a Royal Commission on the Poor Law was set up and a report issued favouring reform. But it was not until 1929 that a Local Government Act was passed to abolish the Workhouses, the Board of Guardians dissolved and the responsibilities they held were passed to the County Boroughs and County Councils. The Swaffham Union Workhouse was however largely demolished by 1926, leaving one substantial building, that of the Infirmary (now number 8 Oaks Drive) and the Mortuary situated on the edge of the original burial ground (in the garden of number 8) (see *Plate 1*). An advert placed in the Eastern Daily Press of 4 April 1926, is evident to this effect, for bricks and timbers from the Workhouse were advertised for sale (EDP 1926 in Pope, 2005, [www.users.ox.ac.uk](http://www.users.ox.ac.uk)).



**Plate 1:** The Mortuary (foreground) and Infirmary (background)

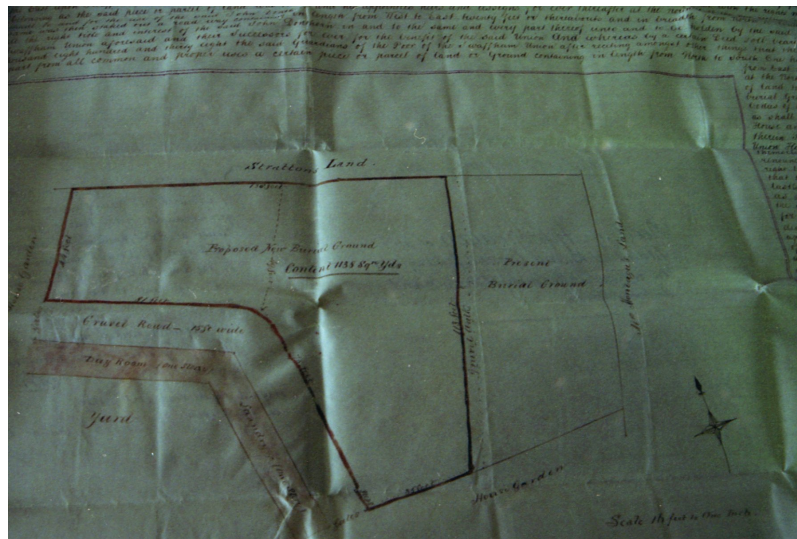
## 6.0 Results

### 6.1. Desktop Survey

#### 6.1.1 Burial Ground Boundaries

- **Maps**

The results from the desktop and fieldwork survey have demonstrated the plan and location of the 1838 Cemetery and it's 1869 Extension (*Figure 4*). Map regression shows the history and establishment of the burial grounds, which can be seen in relation to the boundaries and layout of the present properties (*Figures 2, 4-8*). It shows the burial ground to cover the gardens of 6, 7 and 8 with a small proportion extending into the garden of number 5 (*Figure 4*).



**Plate 2:** 1838 Burial Ground with 1869 Extension

The current boundaries of the original burial ground and much of the additional burial ground have remained relatively unchanged since 1838. The burial grounds lie under grass, gardens and mature trees in the gardens for numbers 5, 6, and 8 Oaks Drive, and under the grass and garden of number 7 Oaks Drive.

- **Deeds**

The Deed of appropriation of 1869 shows the original measurements of the burial ground and reflect the dimensions of the northern garden of number 8. The accuracy of these measurements was reinforced when comparing the dimensions of the gardens of numbers 5, 6 and 7.

- **Consecration Stones**

The two stones set the dates of the consecration of the burial grounds. One is inscribed B. G. Consecrated, 1838 and the other B.G. Consecrated 1869 (Pope, 2005). Their original position appears to have been in the burial ground of 1838 in the garden of No 8 Oaks Drive. They are now on display in the Farm and Workhouse Museum at Gressenhall.

### **6.1.2. Burial Ground Numbers**

- **Petitions, Deeds and Letters**

The original petition for the 1836 burial ground gives an expectation of a high numbers of deaths. I quote *“That the number of persons residing in the House belonging to the said Unions is very considerable and that the Burials from the said Union House are likely to be so many, that there will not be sufficient room in the Churchyard belonging to the said parish of Swaffham for the interring of the bodies of the parishioners dying in the said parish, and of the bodies of the persons dying within the said Union House”* (Petition, 1836).

Early discussions in 1836, however, on the area of the workhouse burial ground indicate that initially the whole area which is now the original and additional burial ground was to be proposed *‘This piece at the North-East corner, is the proposed burial ground, whether the tinted part of it is enough or whether the whole bleaching ground included between the two walls should be included seems doubtful’* (Plan of Workhouse, 1836). Comments were also made in Henry Day’s letter to John Kitson, April 1838 ...*‘John sent a sketch of the enclosed piece of ground, which it is proposed to consecrate - whether it should all have the Bishop’s benediction, or only a part of it, may perhaps be left to his Lordship to determine. As it will never be appropriated to any other purpose than a drying ground or ornamental garden, I do not see why it should not be all consecrated’*. Consecration of the whole ground for burial purposes was not therefore due in this case to burial numbers but land use.

- **Creed Registers**

The total number of deaths recorded in the Creed Registers of 1896-1902 and 1906-1919 was 105 (see *Appendix B and C*).

- **Minute Books**

The Minute Books of the Board of Guardians also give an idea of the number dying in the workhouse for example, the Minute Book of the Proceedings of the Swaffham Union commencing October 1839 – July 1841 records the number of deaths during those years as 22 (see *Appendix D*).

### 6.1.2. Burial numbers *(continued)*

- **Number of Deaths**

It is possible to estimate the total number of deaths at the workhouse using the information from the Creed Registers and the Minutes, which occurred during time the burial ground was in use (1838-1926, 88 years). The deaths during the years 1839-1841, 1896-1902 and 1906-1919 totalled 126, an average of 6 per year. Over the 88 years therefore an estimated figure of 528 deaths occurred.

Figures for paupers from the parish of Swaffham buried in the workhouse burial ground are also possible to estimate. Given that during the years of 1896-1902 and 1906-1919, (19 years) 43 deaths are recorded as coming from the parish of Swaffham. On average therefore 2 deaths occurred per year, and over 88 years, the number of paupers from the Swaffham parish buried in burial ground is estimated as 176.

## **6.2 Fieldwork**

The twelve test pits showed evidence of graves in all but four. In test pit number 1 two large pits were located and were excavated until human remains were identified. These were in the form of two infants in skeletal condition. In all of the testpits a high level of root disturbance was noted making identification of grave cuts at upper levels difficult, only becoming apparent once through the subsoil.

**Test pit 1** (*Plates 3, 4 and 5*) This was located in the northern end of the garden of house number 8 and measured 2.6m x 1.50m and 1.24m deep (*Figures 2, 9, 21*).

The topsoil was found to be 0.2m deep and consisted of a light-mid grey sandy silt (1) with occasional small angular stones and a high level of root disturbance. The subsoil (2) was found to be 0.5m deep and consisted of a light mid orange brown sandy silt with occasional small angular stone.

Two substantial pits were identified (*Figures 9, 21*) [6 & 10] in which the skeletal remains of two infants were found in the upper fills (*Plates 3, 4 and 5*).

Pit [6] was > 0.90m x > 0.94m x >1.24m deep, and was filled by a mid orange grey sandy silt with occasional small angular stones and frequent small-medium roots. The feature was steep sided. The skeletal remains of an infant was recorded (*Plate 3*). This had originally been placed in a wooden coffin, since deteriorated away leaving only a stain and coffin nails.

Pit [10] was > 0.90m x 0.90m x >1.06m deep. This was filled by a mid orange brown sandy silt with occasional small stones and frequent small-medium roots. The feature was steep sided. The skeletal remains of an infant was found (*Figures 10, 21; Plate 4*). Originally placed in wooden coffin all that survives was wood stain in the soil and iron coffin nails.

**Test pit 2** This was located in the garden of number 8 and measured 5.8m x 0.8m x 1.1m deep (*Figures 2, 10*).

The topsoil (1) was 0.30m deep and consisted of a light-mid grey silty sand with occasional small angular stones and frequent small-medium roots. This sealed the subsoil (2), a light-mid orange-brown sandy silt with occasional small angular stones, and 0.30m in depth.

The subsoil (2) sealed a substantial feature [13], 0.6m x >0.8m wide and 0.5m deep, with vertical sides. It was filled by a light-mid orange brown sandy silt (12) with occasional small-medium angular stones and a few medium roots. Because of the limited nature of the work the base of the feature was not identified, however it is on an alignment with pit [10] in trench 1 and it is possible that the two are connected, forming a mass grave.

A second feature [15] was recorded 0.5m to the south of [13], >0.25m x 0.3m x >0.4m deep, filled by a light-mid orange brown sandy silt with occasional angular stones and a few small-medium roots. The function of this feature remains unclear, but in consideration of its dimensions it is possible that is a posthole, maybe formed from a grave marker.

**Test pit 3** This was located in the garden of number 8 and measured 4.50m x 0.80m x 0.50m deep (*Figures 2, 11*).

The topsoil (1) was 0.25m deep and consisted of a light-mid grey silty sand with occasional small angular stones and frequent small-large roots. This sealed the subsoil (2), >0.25m in depth, a light-mid orange-brown sandy silt with occasional small angular stones, and frequent small-large roots.

No burial graves/pits were identified, but in consideration that in Testpit 1 burials were not identified until a depth of 0.7m in depth and the density of the roots a high probability exists that the survey did not reach the level that burials could be detected.

**Test pit 4** This was located in the garden of number 8 to the immediate north of the workhouse infirmary and measured 1.30m x 0.80m x 0.50m deep (*Figures 2, 12*).

The top soil (1) of 0.30m in depth is a light-mid grey silty sand with occasional small angular stones and frequent small-large roots. This sealed the subsoil (2), a light-mid orange-brown sandy silt with occasional small angular stones, frequent small-medium roots, and was >0.2m in depth.

No burial activity or archaeological features were identified. But in consideration of the depth of burials in testpit 1 and the high level of root disturbance it is highly probable that we had not reached the level at which burials would have been identifiable.



**Test pit 5** This was located in the garden of number 8 to the immediate east of the workhouse infirmary, aligned east to west it and 4.70m x 0.80m. x 0.70m deep (*Figures 2, 13*).

The top soil (1) was 0.30m in depth and consisted of a light-mid sandy silt with occasional angular stones and frequent small- large roots. This sealed the sub-soil (2) a light-mid orange-brown sandy silt with occasional small angular stones and frequent small-medium roots and was > 0. 30m in depth.

No evidence of burials or archaeological features were identified, although this may have been attributed to the density of roots and animal disturbance which has disguised any evidence of burials.

**Test pit 6** This was located in the garden of number 7 and measured 1.4m x 1.0m and measured 0.6m deep (*Figures 2, 14*).

The top soil (1) was 0.30m in depth and consisted of a light mid brown loose sandy silt with a high level of root disturbance. This sealed the sub-soil (2), a light mid brown loose silty sand, 0.3m in depth.

The subsoil (2) sealed an east-west aligned feature [23] an linear, east-west aligned feature, >1m x 0.6m x >0.1m in depth filled by a light-mid orange brown sandy silt with occasional stones and a few small-medium roots (22). Excavation did not proceed any deeper due to the close proximity of a garden wall and a desire not to undermine the foundations.

However, in consideration of the dimensions and orientation it is possible that the feature represents a grave.

**Test pit 7** This was located in the garden of number 7 and measured 0.9m x 0.80m and 0.5m deep (*Figures 2, 15*).

The top soil (1) was 0.30m in depth and consisted of a light-mid brown loose silty sand and has a high level of root disturbance. This sealed the sub-soil (2), a light-mid brown loose silty sand, 0.3m in depth.

The subsoil (2) sealed an east-west aligned feature [25], >0.6 x >0.4m x >0.1m filled by a light-mid orange brown sandy silt with occasional stones and a few small-medium roots (24). Excavation did not proceed any deeper due to the close proximity of a garden wall and a desire not to undermine the foundations.

However, in consideration of the dimensions and orientation it is possible that the feature represents a grave.



**Test pit 8** This was located in the garden of number 7 and measured 1m x 1m x 0.50m deep (*Figures 2, 16; Plate 6*).

The top soil (1) was 0.30m in depth and consisted of a light grey sandy silt with occasional small-medium angular stones and frequent small-medium roots. This sealed the subsoil (2) a light-mid brown loose silty sand with occasional small angular stones and frequent small-medium roots, >0.2m in depth. Cutting through the subsoil was a rectangular feature [27], aligned east to west, >0.6 x 0.5m x 0.10m and filled by an orange brown sandy silt with occasional stones and a few small-medium roots (26).

Excavation did not proceed any deeper due to the close proximity of a garden wall and a desire not to undermine the foundations.

However, in consideration of the dimensions and orientation it is possible that the feature represents a grave.

**Test pit 9** This was located in the garden of number 7 and measured 1.20m x 10m x 0.35m deep (*Figures 2, 17*).

The top soil (1) was 0.32m in depth is a light grey sandy silt with a occasional small medium angular stones and frequent small-medium roots. This sealed the subsoil (2), a light-mid brown loose silty sand with occasional small angular stones and frequent small-large roots. The high density of roots made deeper excavation impracticable.

**Test pit 10** This was located in the garden of number 6 and measured 1.70m x 1.23m x 0.90m deep (*Figures 2, 18*).

The topsoil (1) was 0.30m deep and consisted of a light-grey sandy silt with occasional small-medium angular stones and frequent small-medium roots. This sealed the subsoil (2), a light-mid brown loose silty sand with occasional small angular stones and frequent small-medium roots. The subsoil overlay the undisturbed natural, a compact mid orange sandy clay (31).

**Test pit 11** This was located in the garden of number 6 and measured 1m x 1m x 1.23 m deep (*Figures 2, 19; Plate 7*).

The top soil (1) was 0.30m in depth and consisted of a light grey brown sandy silt with occasional small-medium angular stones and frequent small-medium roots. This sealed the subsoil (2), a light-mid brown firm silty sand, 0.42m deep, with occasional small angular stones and frequent small-medium roots. Truncating the sub-soil was a linear feature [33], aligned east to west, >1m x >0.5m x >0.51m, with vertical sides and filled by a orange brown sandy silt with occasional stones and a few small-medium roots (32).

The limited dimensions of the testpit prevented deeper excavation. However, in consideration of the alignment and profile it is likely that the feature [33] represents a grave.

**Test pit 12** This was located in the garden of number 6 and measured 1m x 1.26m x 0.80m deep (*Figures 2, 20; Plate 8*).

The top soil (1) is 0.25m in depth and consisted a light grey brown sandy silt with occasional small-medium angular stones and frequent small-medium roots. This sealed the subsoil (2), a light-mid brown firm silty sand, 0.55m deep, with occasional small angular stones and frequent small-medium roots. Truncating the sub-soil was a linear feature [36], aligned east to west , >1m x >0.45m x >0.55m. This was filled by a orange brown sandy silt with occasional stones and a few small-medium roots (35).

The limited dimensions of the testpit prevented deeper excavation. However, in consideration of the alignment, and profile it is likely that the feature [33] represents a grave.

## **7.0 Discussion of Results**

The project has successfully fulfilled its objectives. The desktop survey succeeded in identifying the boundaries of the cemetery and it's extension (*Figures 2, 4-8*). It showed that the original cemetery is located in the northern garden of number 8, with the gardens of 5, 6 and 7 containing the cemetery extension.

The fieldwork also succeeded in realising the second objective, that of identifying the presence of graves in all of the gardens. In Test pit 1 two burial pits were located, with the skeletal remains of two infants. These had originally been placed in wooden coffins, which had rotten away leaving only a stain in the soil. The natural soil makeup is of a sandy clay which is acidic in nature which in turn would accelerate the decomposition of the remains.

The survey showed that the site was extensively used during the lifetime of the workhouse suggesting that the deceased of other parishes were buried there.

The potential for contamination arrives from the following causes:

- Infectious diseases such as Anthrax and Smallpox
- Survival of coffins, in particular those made of lead, which could contaminate the surrounding soil.
- Presence of Burial vaults aiding the preservation of soft tissue

### **Contamination from Viruses**

Viruses cannot survive in soil, requiring the preservation of the cadaver (Healing T, 1995). Bodies are only likely to be preserved in exceptional circumstances such as crypts, vaults or waterlogged conditions. A body exhumed at Spitalfields in 1985 contained intact smallpox spores. However, the virus could not be grown and was not thought to be infective. Anthrax survives in preserved remains and in items such as pillows and linings stuffed with horsehair. Anthrax spore formation only occurs

under aerobic conditions and positive spores could only be formed in association with a human cadaver if blood containing the infection had been spilt at the time of death.

In the event of only skeletal remains being recovered, there is no risk of contamination from ancient diseases and viruses.

### **Contamination from Coffins:**

Preserved coffins potentially present a twofold contamination hazard. Firstly, an intact coffin significantly increases the chance of the preservation of the cadaver and body fluids, which could then provide a host for ancient viruses.

Secondly, the material used for the construction of the coffins could present a risk. If lead coffins were used this would present a hazard in that as it disintegrates lead would be released into the soil and groundwater. The material used to decorate the coffins, i.e. brass handles, plaques etc could also present a similar hazard.

### **Burial Vaults/Crypts**

Vaults and Crypts present a potential hazard as they provide an airtight environment, which enables the preservation of the bodies. In the event of such structures being identified there may be a hazard risk from viruses and coffins.

## **8.0 Confidence Rating**

The work identified only skeletal remains, originally in wooden coffins. These in themselves do not present a contamination hazard.

In the 3.28% sample of the site no vaults or tombs were identified. Whilst it is possible that the trenching missed such structures, it is extremely unlikely considering it was a burial ground for a Workhouse and burial expenses would have been kept to a minimum.

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*Minute Book of the Proceedings of the Swaffham Union commencing 11 January 1926 – March 1930*, Shaw & Sons, London 137 & 138, Fetter Lane, Fleet Street, Law Publishers. N.R.O. C/GP 16/38a

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### 9.1.1 Plans

Plan of the Swaffham Union Workhouse, 1836. N.R.O. DN/CSP 2/19/5

### 9.1.2 Maps

OS 2006 1:125,000

OS 1938 1:10,560

OS 1929 1:10,560

OS 1906 1:10,560

OS 1889 1:10,560

OS 1884 1:10,560

Deed of Appropriation map 1869

Tithe map 1840. N.R.O DN/TA 681

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## **10.0 Acknowledgements**

*AES would like to thank Mr & Mrs Jones, Mr A. Boyce and Robert & Jane Young for commissioning us to complete this survey and for their wonderful hospitality. Thanks also to Kay Wilcock and Jo Sheppard of Breckland District Council for all their assistance to this project. Thanks must also go to Stephen Randall (Randall Plant Hire) for arranging plant hire, the archivists of the Norfolk Record Office and Mr Stephen Pope of Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse Museum.*

*Thanks also to Professor Graeme Barker of Cambridge University for commenting on a draft of this report.*

*Finally thanks to Gary for his valiant efforts on site.*



## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### List of Parishes forming the Swaffham Union Workhouse

Ashill, Beechamwell, Bodney, East Bradenham, West Bradenham, Buckenham Tofts, Caldecote, Cockley Cley, Colveston, Great Cressingham, Little Cressingham, Didlington, Foulton, Gooderstone, Hilborough, Houghton-on-the-Hill, Holme Hale, Ickburgh, Langford, Narburgh, Narford, Necton, Newton by Castle Acre, Oxborough, North Pickenham, South Pickenham, Saham Toney, Shingham, South Acre, Sporle with Palgrave, Stanford, Swaffham and Threpton.

## Appendix B

### Deaths recorded in the Register of Religious Creed, June 1896 – May 1902

Parish	Number of deaths
Ashill	2
Beechamwell	1
Bradenham East	1
Bradenham West	2
Bro in Home	1
Foulton	1
Gooderston	1
Holme Hale	1
Hilborough	2
Narborough	2
Necton	3
Saham Toney	2
Swaffham	13
Total	31

**Appendix C****Deaths recorded in the Register of Religious Creed, July 1906 – November 1919**

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Number of deaths</b>
Alburgh	1
Ashill	3
Beechamwell	3
Casson	1
Cockley Cley	1
Foulton	6
Gooderston	1
Holme Hale	1
Necton	9
North Pickenham	2
Oxburgh	1
Saham Toney	5
South Pickenham	1
Swaffham	30
Sporle with Palgrave	5
Stanford	1
Wallon / Wayland Union	1
Wayland	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

## Appendix D

**Deaths recorded in the *Minute Book of the Proceedings of the Swaffham Union* commencing October 1839 – July 1841.**

Date	Number of deaths
1839	
7 October	1
14 October	2
28 October	1
Subtotal	4
1840	
30 March	
29 June	3
6 July	1
13 July	1
27 July	1
17 August	1
14 September	1
5 October	1
21 December	1
Subtotal	10
1841	
18 January	1
21 January	1
25 January	1
22 February	1
15 March	1
19 April	1
21 June	1
5 July	1
Subtotal	8
Total	22

Note: It is only in the early Minute books that deaths in the workhouse were recorded. Minute books from c1868 onwards did not detail deaths. The “Weekly Return of Paupers in the Workhouse” is documented within the early Minute books.

**Appendix E**

**The “Weekly Return of Paupers in the Workhouse” as seen in the *Minute Book of the Proceedings of the Swaffham Union commencing 11 September 1837 – September 1839*. A template of the table in the Minutes of the Meeting dated 22 January 1838.**

		<b>Admitted</b>	<b>Discharged</b>	<b>Dead</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
Men	Able bodied				
	Temporarily disabled				
	Old and infirm				
Youths	From 9 to 16 years				
Boys	From 2 to 9 years				
Women	Able bodied				
	Temporarily disabled				
	Old and infirm				
Girls	From 9 to 16 years				
	From 2 to 9 years				
Infants					
Born					
Total					

<b>Minute of Meeting dated</b>			<b>Remaining numbers in workhouse</b>
22 January 1838			107
19 February 1838			168
4 June 1838			108
22 July 1838			87

## **Appendix F**

### **Entries in Minute Books specifically referring to the Burial Ground**

#### ***Minute Book of the Proceedings of the Swaffham Union commencing 11 September 1837 – September 1839.***

##### **Entry for 4 June 1838**

“Agreed that one of the seals of this Union be destroyed and that the other be used as the common seal of the Union.”

“Agreed that the common seal of this Union be used the same as now is affixed a petition to the Right Reverend Father in God Edward by divine permission Lord Bishop of Norwich to consecrate the piece of land intended as the Burial Ground of the Union and also that the same seal be and the same now is affixed to the deceased appropriating the said piece of land as a Burial Ground.”

#### ***Minute Book of the Proceedings of the Swaffham Union commencing January 1868 – January 1870***

##### **Entry for 12 July 1879**

“The clerk kind before the Guardians of the Petition for consecration of Additional Burial Ground and Deed of Appropriation of same which were signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Guardians and the Common Seal affixed thereto. The clerk was directed to return same to the Bishop”.



## **Appendix G                      Map Regression Analysis**

**Figure 2:** Map 1. Current Boundaries of No's 5, 6, 7 & 8 Oaks Drive - showing location of test pits 1-12. OS 2006 1:1000

Aerial view of the area surrounding Oaks Drive showing the OS 2006 boundaries of the properties No's 5, 6, 7 and 8 as they stand today. The map shows the location of the testpits dug to ascertain the whereabouts of the burial ground belonging to the Swaffham Union Workhouse.

**Figure 4:** Map 2. The Position of No's 5, 6, 7 and 8 Oaks Drive in relation to the 1838 and 1869 Burial Ground Boundaries. OS 2006 & 1869 1:1000

This map shows the position of the 1838 and 1869 boundaries of the burial ground and the area covered. The 2006 OS map boundaries have been overlain onto the old burial ground boundaries to show the extent to which the burial ground falls into the properties of No's 5, 6, 7 and 8 Oaks Drive.

**Figure 5:** Map 3. Swaffham Union Workhouse and Burial Ground Boundaries. OS 1938 1:1000

The OS map of 1938 of the burial ground shows very clearly the boundaries of the ground unchanged since its consecration in 1838 and 1869. The majority of the workhouse was demolished in 1926 leaving the building of No. 8 Oaks Drive (the infirmary and nurses quarters) and two sections of the main building. Similar to the map of 1928, but with a different route for the access road.

**Figure 6:** Map 4. Swaffham Union Workhouse and Burial Ground Boundaries. OS 1928 1:1000

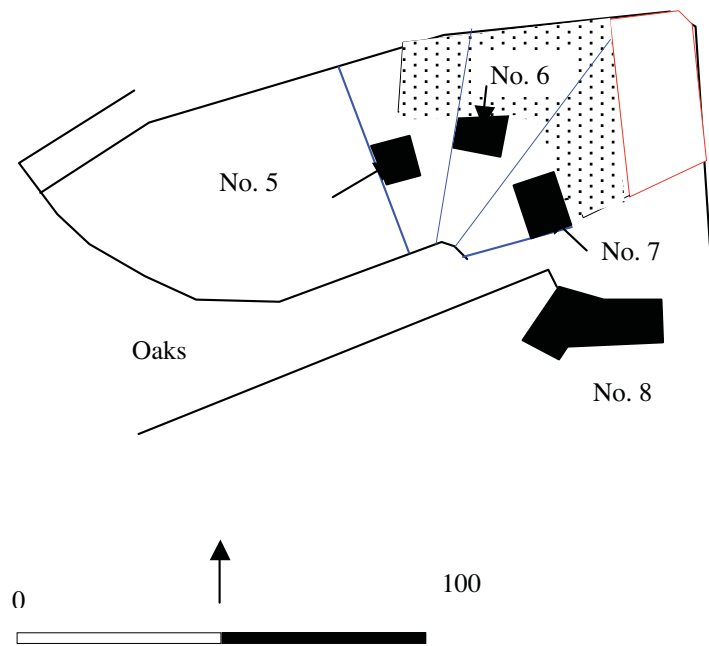
The burial ground shows very clearly on the OS map of 1928, the boundaries of the ground have remained unchanged since its consecration in 1838 and 1869. The majority of the workhouse had been demolished in 1926 leaving the building of No. 8 Oaks Drive (the infirmary and nurses quarters) and two sections of the main building standing. The map also shows the access road as leading straight on to the Watton Road.

**Figure 7:** Map 5. Swaffham Union Workhouse and Burial Ground Boundaries. OS 1905 1:1000

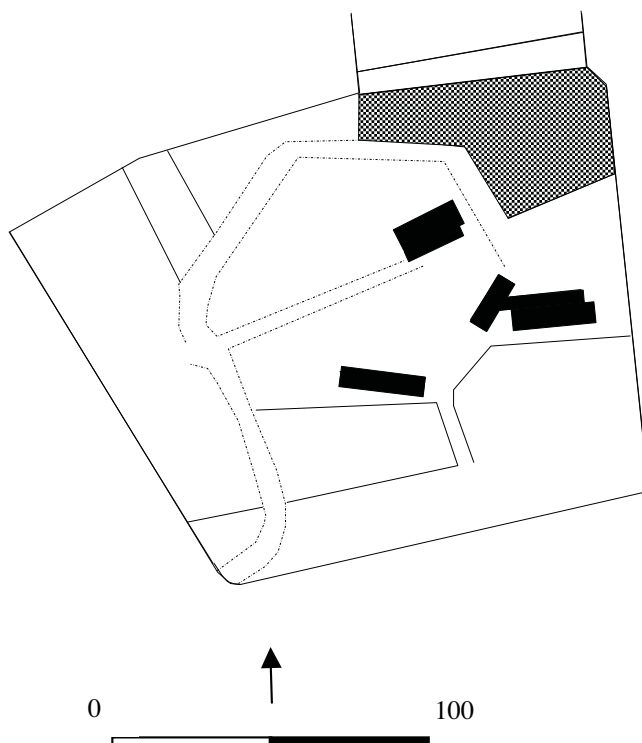
The map of 1905 shows the burial ground boundaries without a dividing line / hedge. The workhouse appears to be intact showing its Y or hexagonal design. The map also shows the mortuary, small outbuildings, the infirmary and nurses quarters.

**Figure 8:** Map 7. Swaffham Union Workhouse and Burial Ground Boundaries. Deed of Appropriation Map 1869. 1:500

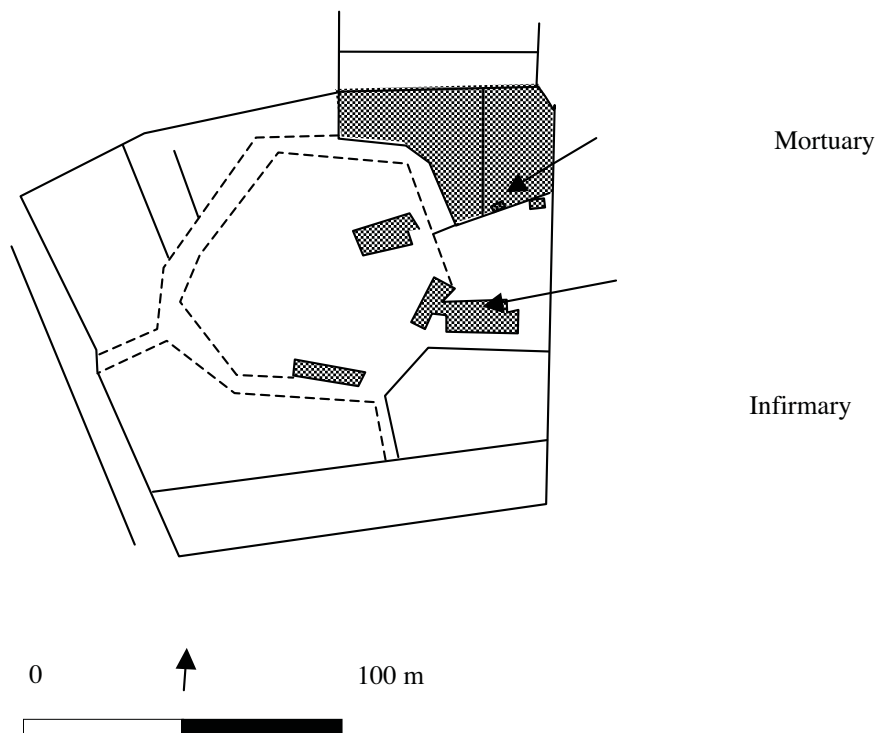
The Deed of Appropriation drawn up on 12 July 1869 contained a map and measurements of the original and additional burial ground boundaries. As can be seen from the map only a limited amount of the workhouse area itself has been drawn. It is this on which the map regression is based and the boundary lines tested against current boundaries to ascertain the extent of the burial grounds in the properties of No's 5, 6, 7 and 8 Oaks Drive.



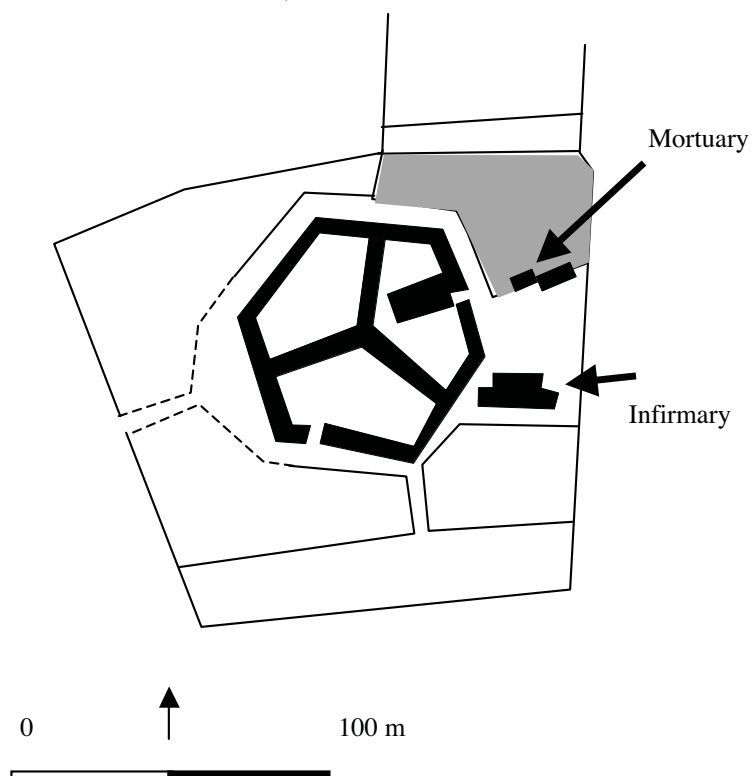
**Figure 4:** Map 2. The Position of No's 5, 6, 7 and 8 Oaks Drive in relation to the 1838 and 1869 Burial Ground Boundaries. OS 2006 & 1869 1:1000. Original 1838 Burial ground outlined in red. 1869 extension stippled.



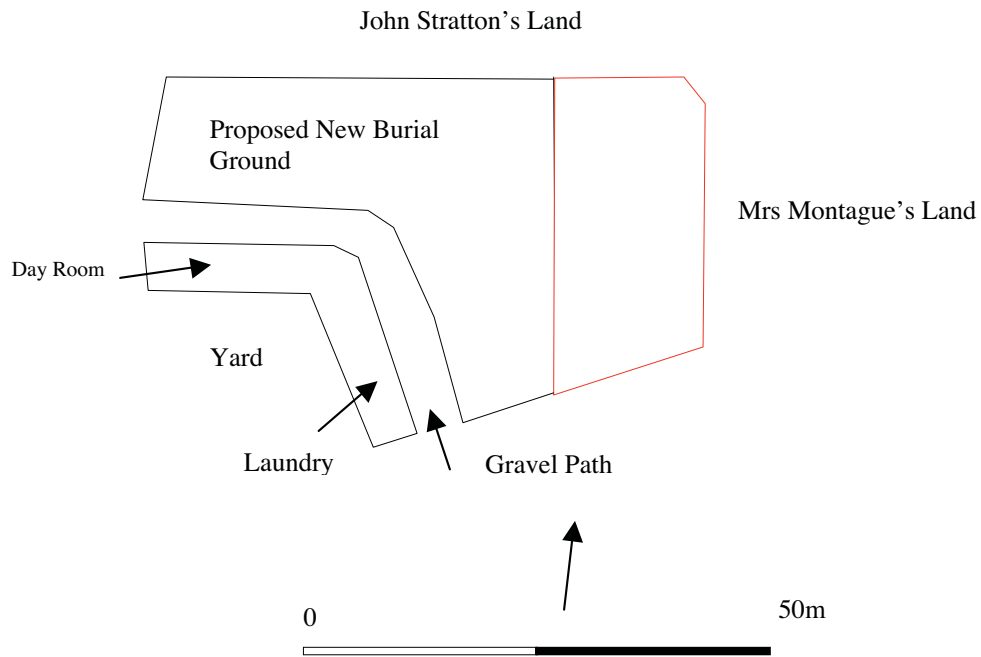
**Figure 5:** Map 3. Swaffham Union Workhouse and Burial Ground Boundaries (area shaded). OS 1938 1:1000.



**Figure 6:** Map 4. Swaffham Union Workhouse and Burial Ground Boundaries (area shaded). OS 1928 1:1000



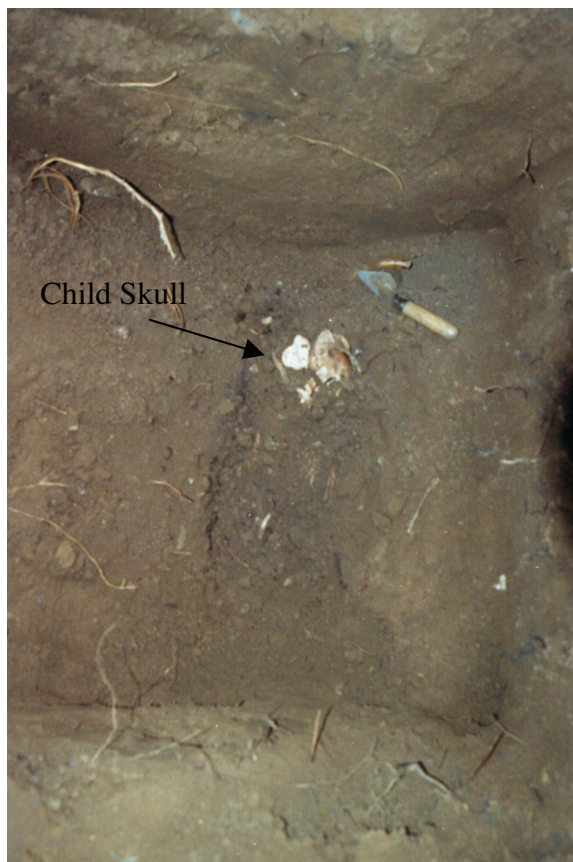
**Figure 7:** Map 5. Swaffham Union Workhouse and Burial Ground Boundaries (area shaded). OS 1905 1:1000



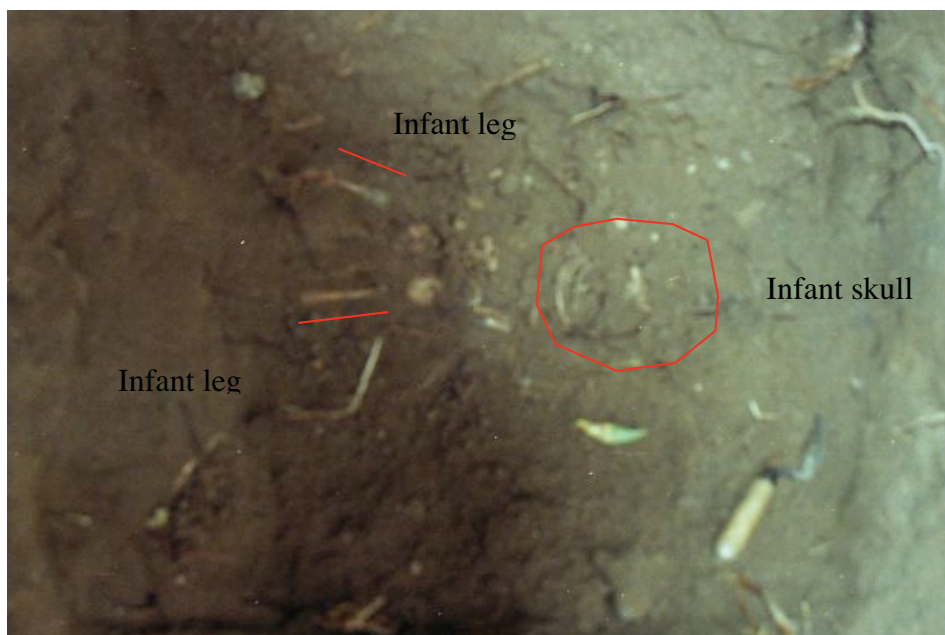
**Figure 8:** Map 8. Swaffham Union Workhouse and Burial Ground Boundaries. Deed of Appropriation Map 1869. 1:500. Original burial ground outlined in red.

## Appendix H

## Fieldwork Photographs



**Plate 3:** Test Pit No 1 Plan View showing the bones of Skeleton No 1 (No 8 Oaks Drive)



**Plate 4** Test Pit No 1 Plan View showing the bones of Skeleton No 2 (No 8 Oaks Drive)





**Plate 5:** Test Pit No 1 Photo showing tops of two burial pits (No 8 Oaks Drive)



**Plate 6:** Test Pit No 8 Plan view showing outline of grave (No 7 Oaks Drive)



**Plate 7:** Test Pit No 11 West facing section showing outline of grave in red (No 6 Oaks Drive)



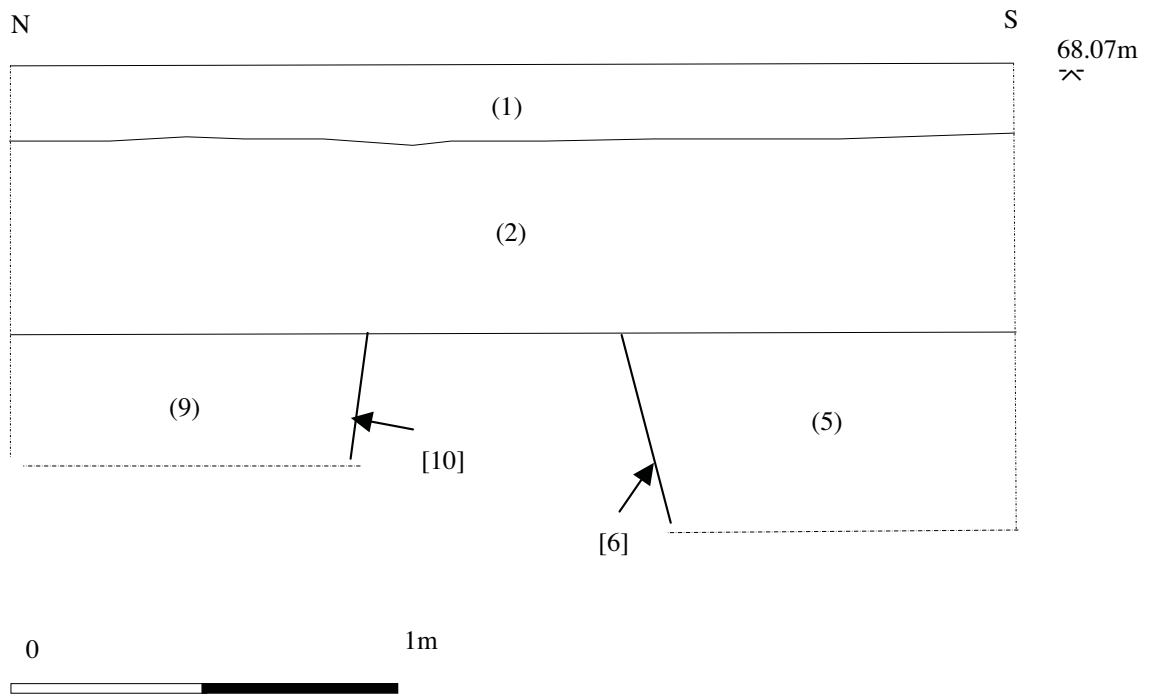
**Plate 8:** Test Pit 12 West facing section showing outline of grave in red (No 6 Oaks Drive)



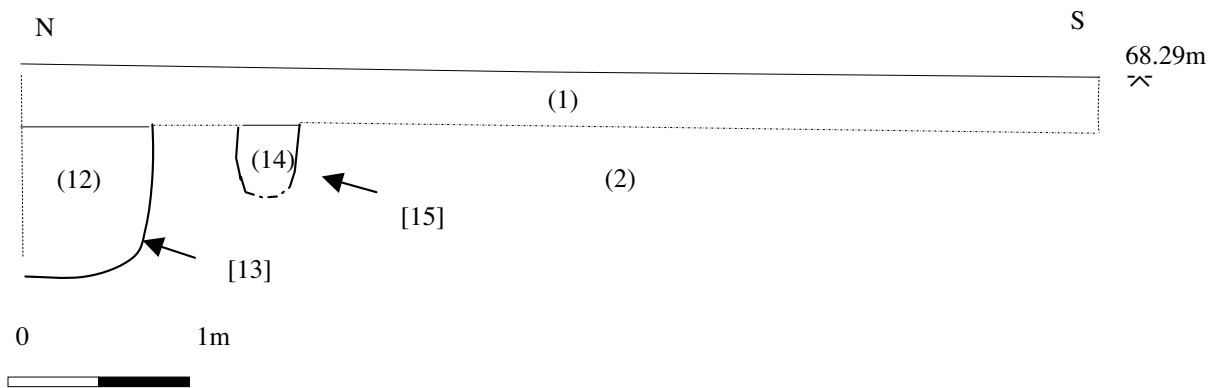
## Appendix I

## Fieldwork Illustrations

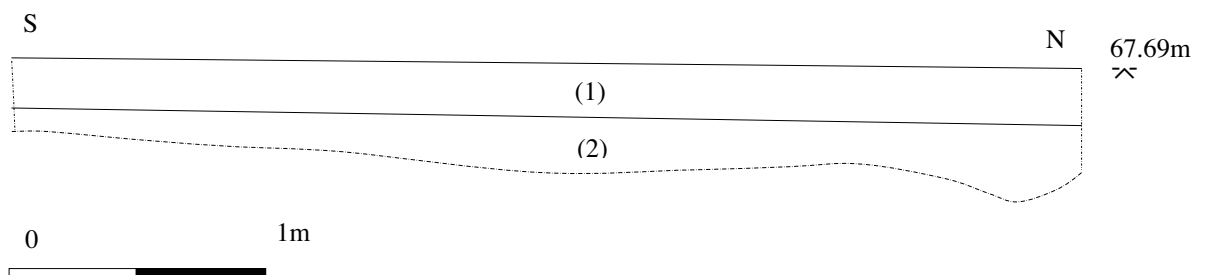
### Sections



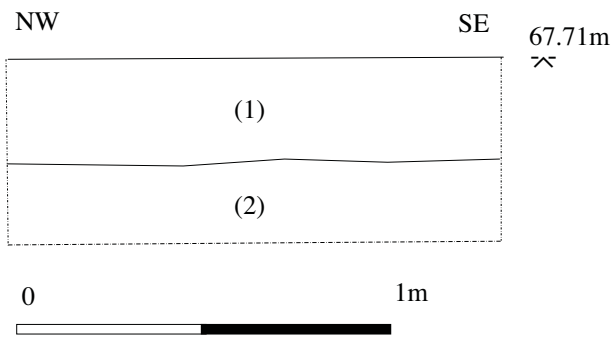
**Figure No 9: West facing section of Test Pit No 1 showing Burial Pits [10] & [6]**



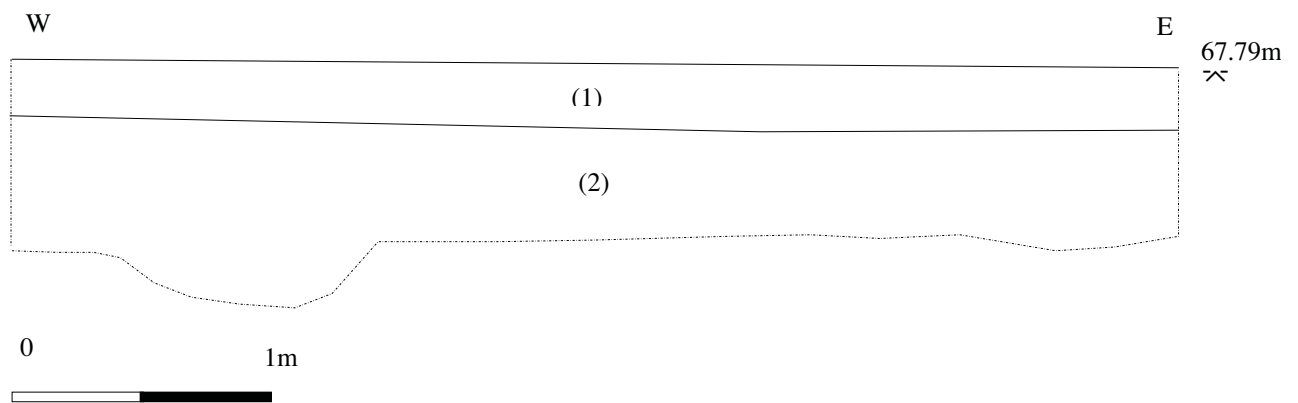
**Figure No 10: West facing section of Test Pit No 2 showing Possible Burial Pit [13] and posthole [15]**



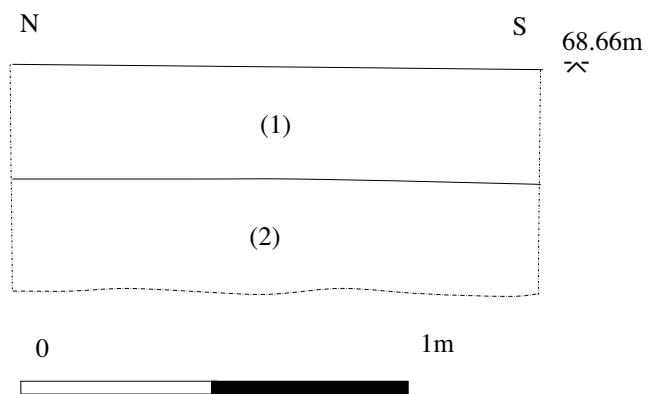
**Figure No 11: East facing section of Test Pit No 3**



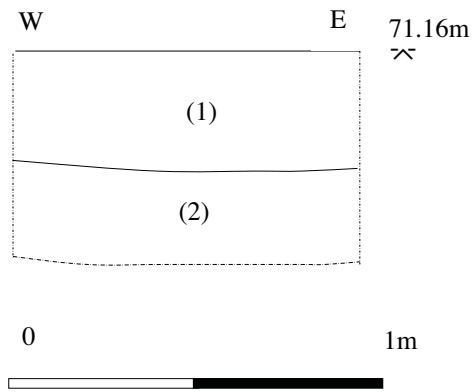
**Figure No 12: South West facing section of Test Pit No 4**



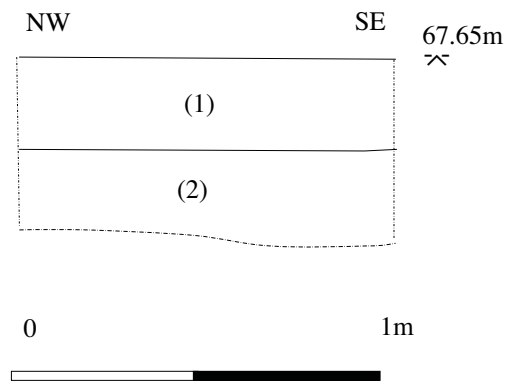
**Figure No 13: South facing section of Test Pit No 5**



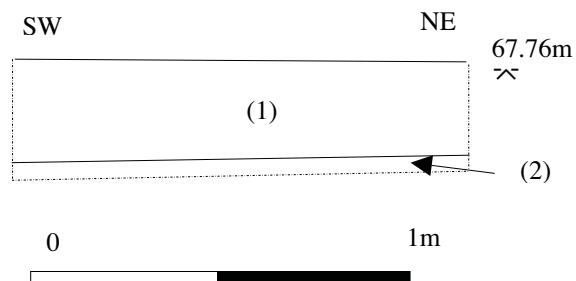
**Figure No 14: West facing section of Test Pit No 6**



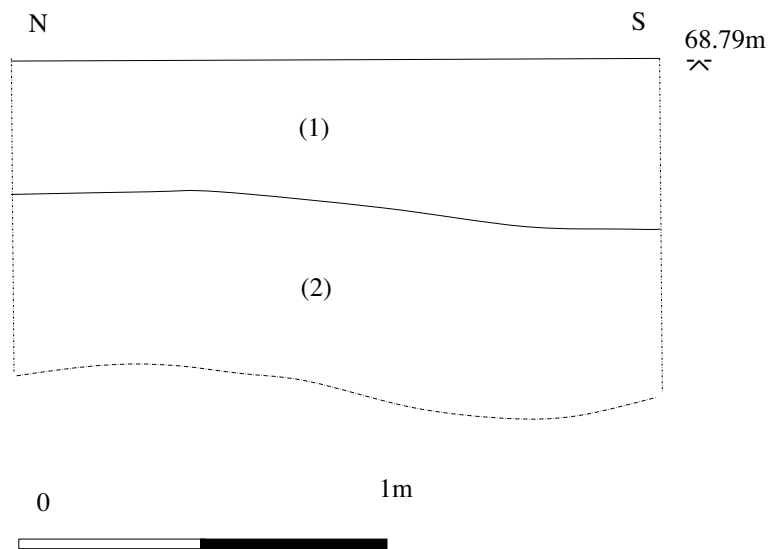
**Figure No 15: South facing section of Test Pit No 7**



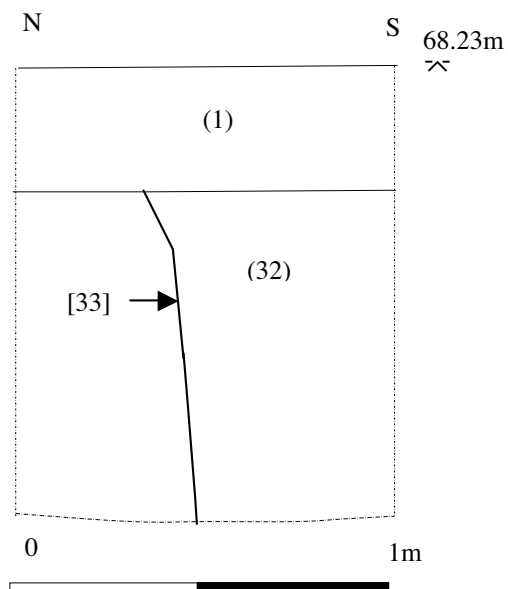
**Figure No 16: South West facing section of Test Pit No 8**



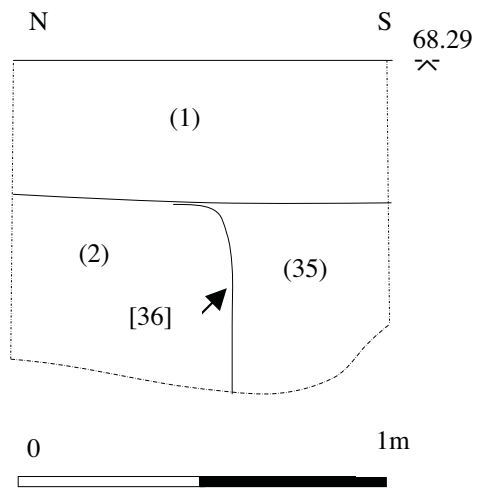
**Figure No 17: South East facing section of Test Pit No 9**



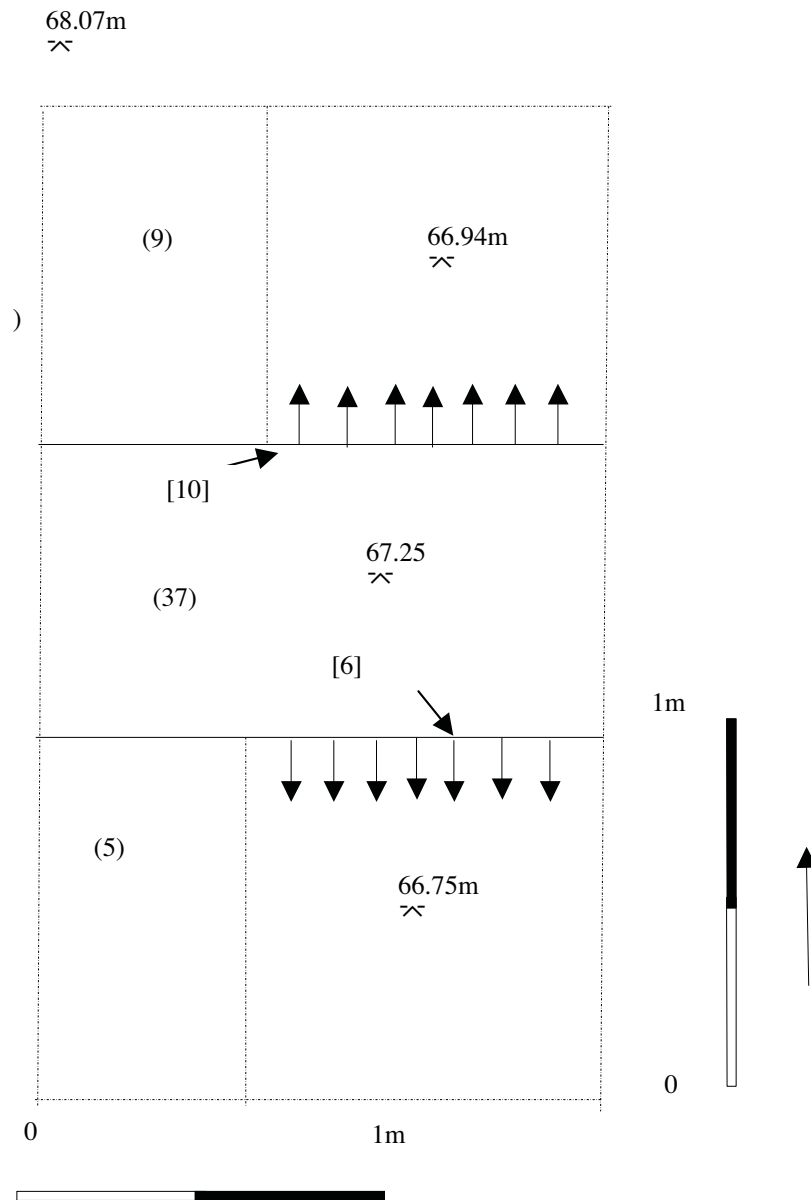
**Figure No 18: West facing section of Test Pit No 10**



**Figure No 19: West facing section of Test Pit No 11 showing cut of grave cut [33]**



**Figure No 20: West facing section of Test Pit No 12 showing cut of grave cut [36]**



**Figure No 21: Plan View of Test Pit No 1 showing burial pits [6 and 10]**

**Appendix J****List of Contexts****Key**

# Fill or Layer

[#] Cut

Cxt No.	Nature	Tr. #	Description	Above	Below	Plan #	Sec. #	Initials
1	Topsoil	All	Mid grey sandy silt (topsoil)					DEK
2	Subsoil	All	Light mid orange brown sandy silt					DEK
3	Burial	1	Skeletal remains of infant in rotten wooden coffin	4	5			DEK
4	Stain	1	Soil stain of wooden coffin	5	3			DEK
5	Fill	1	Fill of burial pit [6]		4		1	DEK
[6]	Cut		Cut of burial pit	31		1	1	DEK
7	Burial	1	Skeletal remains of infant in rotten wooden coffin	8	9	14		DEK
8	Stain	1	Coffin stain	9	7	14		DEK
9	Fill	1	Fill of burial pit [10]		8		1	DEK
[10]	Cut	1	Cut of burial pit	31		1	1	DEK
11			<i>Number not used</i>					
12	Fill	2	Fill of ?burial [13]		2	14	1	
[13]	Cut	2	Cut of ?burial	31		14	1	DEK
14	Fill	2	Fill of ?posthole [15]				2	DEK
[15]	Cut	2	Cut of posthole	31			2	DEK
16			<i>Void number</i>					
17			<i>Void number</i>					
18			<i>Void number</i>					
19			<i>Void number</i>					
20			<i>Void number</i>					
21			<i>Void number</i>					
22	Fill	6	Fill of [23]				6	GS
[23]	Cut	6	Grave Cut?	31			6	GS
24	Fill	7	Light mid orange-brown loose sandy silt				7	GS
[25]	Cut	7	Grave Cut?	31			7	GS
26	Fill	8	Fill of [27]				8	DEK
[27]	Cut	8	Grave Cut?	31			8	DEK
28			<i>Void number</i>					
29			<i>Void number</i>					
30			<i>Void number</i>					
31		10	Natural					
32	Fill	11	Fill of [33]				12	
[33]	Cut		Grave Cut?	31				GS
34			<i>Void number</i>					
35	Fill	12	Fill of [36]					GS
[36]	Cut	12	Grave Cut?	31				GS



## **Appendix K**

## **Project Archive**

**Site Name:** Swaffham Union Workhouse, Oaks Drive

**Site Code:** ODS07

### **1.0 Context Sheets**

ODS07/1/1: x 36 context sheets (1-36)

### **2.0 Site Drawings:**

#### **Sections**

ODS07/2/1:	West facing section of Testpit 1
ODS07/2/2:	West facing section of Testpit 2
ODS07/2/3:	East facing section of Testpit 3
ODS07/2/4:	South West facing section of Testpit 4
ODS07/2/5:	South facing section of Testpit 5
ODS07/2/6:	West facing section of Testpit 6
ODS07/2/7:	South facing section of Testpit 7
ODS07/2/8:	South West facing section of Testpit 8
ODS07/2/9:	South-East facing section of Testpit 9
ODS07/2/10:	West facing section of Testpit 10
ODS07/2/11:	South facing section of Testpit 11
ODS07/2/12:	West facing section of Testpit 11
ODS07/2/13:	Testpit location plan
ODS07/2/14:	1:20 Plan of Testpit 1 showing burial pits [6 & 10]

### **3.0 Level Books**

All levels are shown on individual drawings.

### **4.0 Black & White Prints**

N/A

## 5.0 Colour Prints

### ODS07/1

ODS07/1/24	Test Pit No 12 West Facing section
ODS07/1/23	Test Pit No 12 West Facing section
ODS07/1/22	Test Pit No 12 West Facing section
ODS07/1/21	Test Pit No 12 West Facing section
ODS07/1/20	Test Pit No 12 North Facing section
ODS07/1/19	Test Pit No 12 North Facing section
ODS07/1/18	Test Pit No 11 North Facing section
ODS07/1/17	Test Pit No 11 North Facing section
ODS07/1/16	Test Pit No 11 West Facing section
ODS07/1/15	Test Pit No 11 West Facing section
ODS07/1/14	Test Pit No 10 North Facing section
ODS07/1/13	Test Pit No 10 North Facing section
ODS07/1/12	Test Pit No 10 West Facing section
ODS07/1/11	Test Pit No 10 West Facing section
ODS07/1/10	Test Pit No 8 South West Facing section
ODS07/1/09	Test Pit No 8 South West Facing section
ODS07/1/08	Test Pit No 9 South East Facing section
ODS07/1/07	Test Pit No 9 South East Facing section
ODS07/1/06	The Mortuary (foreground) and the Infirmary (Background)
ODS07/1/05	The Mortuary on the edge of the burial ground.
ODS07/1/04	The Infirmary, now No 8 Oaks Drive.
ODS07/1/03	The Mortuary
ODS07/1/02	Test Pit No 5 North West Facing section
ODS07/1/01	Test Pit No 5 North West Facing section

### ODS07/2

ODS07/02/24	Test Pit No 5 South Facing section
ODS07/02/23	Test Pit No 5 South Facing section
ODS07/02/22	Test Pit No 5 South Facing section
ODS07/02/21	Test Pit No 3 East Facing section
ODS07/02/20	Test Pit No 3 East Facing section
ODS07/02/19	Test Pit No 3 East Facing section
ODS07/02/18	Test Pit No 3 Plan view
ODS07/02/17	Test Pit No 3 Plan view
ODS07/02/16	General shot of Original Burial Ground (No. 8 Oaks Drive)
ODS07/02/15	General shot of Original Burial Ground (No. 8 Oaks Drive)
ODS07/02/14	Test Pit No 4 South West Facing section
ODS07/02/13	Test Pit No 4 South West Facing section
ODS07/02/12	Cross found in garden of No 7 Oaks Drive
ODS07/02/11	Cross found in garden of No 7 Oaks Drive
ODS07/02/10	Deed of Appropriation 1869 with plan of Burial Grounds
ODS07/02/09	Deed of Appropriation 1869 with plan of Burial Grounds
ODS07/02/08	Seal on Deed of Appropriation 1869
ODS07/02/07	Seal on Deed of Appropriation 1869
ODS07/02/06	Deed of Appropriation 1869
ODS07/02/05	Deed of Appropriation 1869 with plan of Burial Grounds
ODS07/02/04	Deed of Appropriation 1869
ODS07/02/03	Deed of Appropriation 1869
ODS07/02/02	Deed of Appropriation 1869
ODS07/02/01	Deed of Appropriation 1869

### **ODS07/03**

ODS07/03/24	Deed of Appropriation 1838
ODS07/03/23	Register of Religious Creed
ODS07/03/22	Register of Religious Creed
ODS07/03/21	Contract to build the Workhouse
ODS07/03/20	Contract to build the Workhouse
ODS07/03/19	Contract to build the Workhouse
ODS07/03/18	Tithe Map of 1840
ODS07/03/17	Tithe Map of 1840
ODS07/03/16	Tithe Map of 1840
ODS07/03/15	Tithe Map of 1840
ODS07/03/14	Tithe Map of 1840
ODS07/03/13	Tithe Map of 1840
ODS07/03/12	Minute Book of the Guardians of the Poor
ODS07/03/11	Test Pit No's 6 and 7 Plan view
ODS07/03/10	Test Pit No's 6 and 7 Plan view
ODS07/03/09	Test Pit No's 6 and 7 Plan view
ODS07/03/08	Test Pit No's 6 and 7 Plan view
ODS07/03/07	Test Pit No's 6 and 7 Plan view
ODS07/03/06	Test Pit No's 6 and 7 Plan view
ODS07/03/05	Test Pit No 2 West facing section
ODS07/03/04	Test Pit No 2 West facing section
ODS07/03/03	Test Pit No 2 West facing section
ODS07/03/02	Test Pit No 2 West facing section
ODS07/03/01	General Shot of Original Burial Ground (No. 8 Oaks Drive)

### **ODS07/04**

ODS07/04/24	Test Pit 1 Plan View
ODS07/04/23	Test Pit 1 Plan View
ODS07/04/22	Test Pit 1 Plan View
ODS07/04/21	Test Pit 1 Plan View
ODS07/04/20	Test Pit 1 Plan View
ODS07/04/19	Test Pit 1 Skeleton and Coffin Outline
ODS07/04/18	Test Pit 1 Skeleton and Coffin Outline
ODS07/04/17	Test Pit 1 Plan View of two Skeletons
ODS07/04/16	Test Pit 1 Plan View of two Skeletons
ODS07/04/15	Test Pit 1 Plan View of two Skeletons
ODS07/04/14	Test Pit 1 Plan View of two Skeletons
ODS07/04/13	Test Pit 1 Plan View of two Skeletons
ODS07/04/12	Test Pit 1 Plan View of two Skeletons
ODS07/04/11	Test Pit 1 Plan View of two Skeletons
ODS07/04/10	Test Pit 1 Plan View of two Skeletons

### **ODS07/05**

ODS07/05/06	Burial Consecration Stone 1869
ODS07/05/05	Burial Consecration Stone 1869
ODS07/05/04	Burial Consecration Stone 1869
ODS07/05/03	Burial Consecration Stone 1838
ODS07/05/02	Burial Consecration Stone 1838
ODS07/05/01	Burial Consecration Stone 1869