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**Report on an Archaeological Evaluation
by Trial Trenching at 'Land to rear of 12-14
Raymond Street, Thetford, Norfolk'**

ENF134941

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**Report on an Archaeological Evaluation
by Trial Trenching at 'Land to rear of 12-14 Raymond Street,
Thetford, Norfolk'**

ENF134941

Prepared for:
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Contents

<i>Section</i>	<i>Page</i>
<i>Summary</i>	<i>1</i>
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Project Background	2
3.0 Archaeological & Historical Background	2, 3
4.0 Aims and Objectives	3
5.0 Method Statement	3 - 5
5.1 Introduction	
5.2 Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching	
5.3 Post-excavation Analysis and Report	
6.0 Geology and Topography	5
7.0 Results	5, 6
7.1 Introduction	
7.2 Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching	
8.0 Conclusions	7
 <i>Acknowledgements</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	
 <i>Appendix 1</i> OASIS Record	
 <i>Figure 1</i> Site location	
<i>Figure 2</i> Site plan	
<i>Figure 3</i> Section drawing	
 <i>Plate 1</i> The trench, looking northeast	

Summary

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out at 'Land to the rear of 12-14 Raymond Street, Thetford, Norfolk' (NHER ENF134941) in August 2014 prior to the proposed construction of a new residential building. Three finds were recovered from subsoil deposits and include 2 sherds of 10th/11th century pottery and a fragment of animal bone. No significant archaeological remains were present.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A programme of Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching resulting from development proposals at 'Land to the rear of 12-14 Raymond Street, Thetford, Norfolk' (Grid refs. TL 87115 82927, Fig. 1) has been requested by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.
- 1.2 Project Design, CB389, details how Chris Birks (hereafter 'the Contractor') would undertake these works and was prepared for Clayland Architects on behalf of Pearsons Capital Projects Ltd (hereafter 'the Client') to provide a quotation and Project Design for undertaking the works. A *draft* copy was submitted to and approved by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' guidance.

Fig. 1. Site Location



2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 The proposed development site lies within a landscape of significant heritage assets with archaeological interest (buried archaeological remains). The site lies within the core of the Late Saxon and medieval town of Thetford. Previous excavations at 22 Raymond Street revealed activities during the Saxon and medieval periods and at the library site to the north/northwest, a defensive ditch enclosing a suburb of the Late Saxon town to the north of the River Thet was recorded. The area became incorporated into the medieval town as this expanded further north following the construction of Thetford Castle to the east. Consequently there is a high potential that important heritage assets with archaeological interest will be present at the proposed development site. Historic maps indicate that there have been no buildings on the site since at least 1840. It is likely, therefore, that any buried archaeological remains at the proposed development site may be comparatively well preserved.
- 2.2 An Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching is required to determine the presence/absence, date, extent, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological layers or subsoil archaeological features and the results will be submitted as an addendum to the planning application in accordance with *National Planning Policy Framework (2012)*, (paras 128 and 141). The evaluation may indicate a need for a further phase of Archaeological Excavation or an Archaeological Watching Brief during the development if features of importance are found and these cannot be preserved *in-situ*.
- 2.3 This report summarises the results of the archaeological evaluation by trial trenching. Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) ENF134941 and Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) id chrisbir1-188679 apply.

3.0 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 A great many entries exist in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) for Thetford and the surrounding area. One hundred and fifteen records were identified within a radius of 250m of the site. Commensurate with the findings of the current excavations, only those records in closest proximity to the site are summarised in this report. Full details of these and all other entries can be seen in the NHER office based at Gressenhall near Dereham by prior appointment.
- 3.2 Excavations in 1997 in advance of a proposed extension to Thetford Library (NHER 32339) to the north/northwest of the proposed development site recorded evidence for occupation from the Late Saxon to Post-medieval periods. The most significant feature was a ditch believed to form part of a 12th century defensive structure that ringed the northern part of the town during the Late Saxon period. Medieval activity was represented by several pits that contained bone and horn-working debris and the cellars of a 17th century building were encountered. The cellars are believed to have been associated with a building known as Manor House, a dwelling of medieval origins that stood at this location until the 1960's, when the current library was built.
- 3.3 An archaeological evaluation was carried out to the rear of 22 Raymond Street, south of the proposed development site in January 2011 (NHER 56055, Thompson & Barlow 2011). The excavations revealed pits containing medieval pottery and a pit cut by the medieval pits, possibly of Saxon date.
- 3.4 Present-day numbers 6, 6A to 6D and 8 Raymond Street (NHER 46492) were built in the late 18th century from flint and red brick with pantiled roofs. The colour-washed brick façade comprises numbers 6 and 8. Number 6 has a door hood on iron brackets and number 8 has a flat door hood. A two-storey wing to the main buildings extends southwest down Nether Row and comprises numbers 6A to 6D, modernised in the late 1980s when the houses were divided into a number of offices and shops.

- 3.5 A range of three late-18th century houses to the immediate northwest of the proposed development site (NHER 46394) was converted to commercial premises in the 20th century and the first floor was opened into one unit in 1987. The houses themselves are made from flint with gault brick dressings and are partly rendered and whitewashed. Old Mill public house formed the northeast section with three irregular-shaped bays and a gabled roof featuring a dentil eaves cornice. Rudolph's Nite Spot occupied the centre building with two bays and a roof with a saw-toothed eaves cornice. Old Mill Pizza House occupied the southwest unit with three irregular-shaped bays that feature renewed sash windows at ground floor level.
- 3.6 Number 4 Raymond Street to the north of the proposed development site (NHER 46356) is a flint, brick and clunch house dating to the late-18th century. It stands three storeys high and is laid out in three bays. The two-storey rear wing of the building extends southwest down Nether Row and a single-storey hipped outbuilding with re-used coursed clunch lies beyond.
- 3.7 Number 10 Raymond Street (NHER 46357) to the north of the proposed development site is a house and shop dating to around 1820. It is constructed from flint with a whitewashed brick front and rear walls. The shop front lies to the south and features thick glazing bars and a side entry. A single-storey 20th century extension is situated at the rear of the property.
- 3.8 There is potential, therefore, that significant heritage assets with archaeological interest (buried archaeological remains) may be present at the site and that their significance may be affected by the proposed development. The recovery of such information would contribute greatly to Research Topics for the Eastern Counties.

4.0 Aims and Objectives

- 4.1 Specific aims are to establish the states of preservation of archaeological features and/or deposits within the area indicated. These form part of the research agenda for the eastern counties of England in *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011).
- 4.2 Contributions may also be made to environmental archaeology research aims (Murphy 2000).
- 4.3 Generic Aims of the project are to;
- 4.3.1 Determine the presence of archaeological remains during investigation of the site through archaeological trial trenching within the proposed development area.
- 4.3.2 Establish the extent, condition, nature and date of any such archaeological remains.
- 4.3.3 Create datasets relating to the stratigraphic, artefactual and environmental information recovered during excavations for analysis.

5.0 Method Statement

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The primary purpose of the evaluation is to excavate an archaeological trench within the proposed development area in order to recover as much information as possible on the extent, date, phasing, character, function, status and significance of the site. The states of preservation of archaeological features or deposits within the area indicated will be determined. This will be achieved through the following methodology.

5.2 Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching

- 5.2.1 An OASIS online record was initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.

- 5.2.2 The Historic Environment Record (HER) Officer was contacted in advance of work starting to obtain a HER number for the site.
- 5.2.3 One trench was excavated to investigate a sample of the proposed development site (*Fig. 2*). The trench extended from as close as is safe and practical to the street frontage with Nether Row towards the rear (northeast) of the plot where the proposed dwelling will be built. The precise trench location was established on site.
- 5.2.4 A 360° hydraulic-type excavator with toothless ditching bucket was used for the mechanical excavation of modern overburden deposits only. Deposits did not extend below 1.2m beneath present ground level so shoring or stepping of the trench edges was not necessary.
- 5.2.5 Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits of no more than 0.1m under constant archaeological supervision and direction until archaeological remains or undisturbed 'natural' deposits were encountered. Spoil arisings were stored at a safe distance of c.1m from the trench.
- 5.2.6 In the event of encountering archaeological remains, no further machine excavation was carried out and archaeological features were sample excavated by hand, using appropriate tools, as follows;
- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Linear features | 10% |
| Pits, post-holes | 50% |
| Structural remains | 50% (depending upon extent of remains) |
| Burials | <i>None were encountered</i> |
- 5.2.7 Archaeological features and deposits were recorded on Chris Birks *pro-forma* context sheets. Section and plan drawings were recorded at an appropriate scale (1:50;1:20;1:10) depending upon the level of detail required.
- 5.2.8 A photographic record was made using digital and 35mm black & white film. Appropriate registers for contexts, drawings, photographs and environmental samples were made. No finds of archaeological significance were recovered and no environmental samples were taken due to the lack of suitably well-sealed and dated archaeological features/deposits. A single-context planning methodology was employed and a matrix of the sequence of deposits was made on-site.
- 5.2.9 The Historic Environment Service was invited to monitor the project during fieldwork and a site monitoring visit was carried out by Kelly Powell on 23 January 2014.
- 5.2.10 The trenches were backfilled without compaction or reinstatement.

5.3 Post-excavation Analysis and Report

- 5.3.1 Any artefactual remains recovered during excavations were cleaned, catalogued and analysed following fieldwork, in accordance with *Standards and Guidelines for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001).
- 5.3.2 An assessment of the recorded evidence was made in accordance with *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)* (English Heritage 1991). The analysis of stratigraphical/structural records, Artefactual and environmental materials was made for inclusion in a final site report.
- 5.3.3 A *draft* copy of the report has been submitted for consideration by the Historic Environment Service. Any required amendments will be considered and made prior to submission of a *final* report. A *draft* copy has been provided to the Client as proof of production. The Contractor is not responsible for any delays to the developer's work programme.

- 5.3.4 Three copies of the *final* report will be submitted to the Historic Environment Service; two copies to the Norfolk Historic and Environment Record, one copy to the Local Planning Authority; one copy to the Client, one copy to archive and one copy to the Regional Science Advisor for English Heritage. These copies will not be issued until all payments have been received in full.
- 5.3.5 Decisions will be made by the Historic Environment Service regarding any further works that may be required should remains of importance be found that cannot be preserved *in-situ*. This may involve further evaluation or excavation and recording. A further brief would be provided by the Historic Environment Service and a Design Brief would be required from an archaeological contractor. Costs & timescale for additional work would need to be agreed with the Client.
- 5.3.6 The OASIS online form will be completed and submitted to the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, including an uploaded .pdf version of the report. The archive will be prepared in a form suitable for microfilming, if required. It will be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects* ('MAP2', English Heritage 1991) and submitted to the Norfolk Museums Service for long-term storage.

6.0 Geology and Topography

- 6.1 Thetford lies upon a solid Lower, Middle and Upper Chalk geology containing characteristic flint nodules (Funnell 2005) with an approximately southeast-to-northwest meandering band of blown sand, shingle and river gravels extending through the parish (Funnell 1994). Thetford lies within the Breckland soil landscape typified by soils developed in coversand over a chalk-sand drift (Corbett and Dent 1994). Periglacial (frozen ground) conditions were also widespread in Norfolk during the Last Glaciation forming patterned ground and soil disturbance in many places, but particularly in Breckland and adjacent areas on thin Chalk soils (Funnell 2005).
- 6.2 Breckland is a low plateau with gentle slopes to the lower lying areas. The dominant soil on the plateau is a brown sand with a thin red line of clay enrichment at the boundary with the underlying chalky-drift (Corbett & Dent 1994). A sandy colluvium that can develop a distinctive podzol can be seen in the low lying areas and the overlying coversand is mostly acidic and easily leached. In addition, the tendency for these soils to maintain water has made farming practices much more difficult.
- 6.3 The site lies towards the southeast side of Thetford town centre at an elevation of c. 14m OD and the land falls slightly (less than 1m) from northeast to southwest. It is currently used as a garden to 12-14 Raymond Street and has a large garage within the northern part of the garden, to be demolished as part of the proposed development.

7.0 Results

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Fieldwork was carried out on 18 and 19 August 2014 and access was gained from Nether Row to the west of the site. The weather remained dry and sunny. No context numbers were allocated during fieldwork due to the lack of significant archaeological features or deposits.

7.2 Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching

- 7.2.1 The trench was approximately northeast-to-southwest orientated and extended from as close as was safe and practical to the street frontage with Nether Row from the rear (northeast) of the plot where the proposed dwelling will be built and measured approximately 14m by 1.8m (*Figs. 2 and 3, Plate 1*). The site was relatively small and space was also limited due to the location of a large garage building on the north side of the garden area, spoil was stored on the southeast side of the trench, beyond a garden path.

7.2.2 The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.04m beneath present ground level and the trench edges were stepped where possible for safety reasons (*Fig. 3, Plate 1*). Initially, c. 0.54m of partly grass-covered, rooted dark brown grey silty sand topsoil with occasional small-sized sub-angular flints, moderate amounts of small to medium-sized brick fragments, moderate amounts of small-sized sub-angular mortar/cement fragments and moderate amounts of small-sized chalk pieces was removed that overlay c. 1.5m of mid to dark grey silty sand subsoil deposits with moderate amounts of small-to-medium sized sub-angular flints and moderate amounts of small-sized sub-angular and rounded chalk pieces. Two small body sherds of 10th/11th century Thetford-type ware and a small fragment of animal bone (species not identifiable) were recovered from subsoil deposits. Subsoil overlay undisturbed 'natural' deposits that comprised white chalk and fine to medium-grained light to mid orange brown sand with rare sub-rounded flints. These areas of sand were manually sample excavated to investigate whether they were archaeological in origin. The sand extended beyond 0.5m beneath the base of the trench and was not further excavated. The irregular-shaped sides, nature of the deposits and lack of finds indicate that they were formed through natural processes. No archaeological features were present.

Plate 1. The trench, looking northeast



Scale is 2m in 0.5m increments

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 Despite the proximity of the proposed development site to the centre of present-day Thetford town within the boundaries of the Saxon borough and the identification of archaeological finds and features through previous archaeological investigations in the area, no significant archaeological remains were encountered during the present scope of work. The small quantity of finds recovered from subsoil deposits is not unusual in such a setting and indicate that activities during the Late Saxon period occurred in this area. The brick and mortar fragments in topsoil indicate a brick structure may have existed on or close to the site, since demolished.
- 8.2 The undisturbed 'natural' deposits are typical of patterned ground features formed during the last glaciation in Breckland.

Acknowledgments

The project was undertaken by Chris Birks for Pearsons Capital Projects Ltd who funded the work. Many thanks to Jo Pearson at Pearsons Capital Projects Ltd and Ollie Hacon at Clayland Architects.

Fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Birks and John Simmons. Many thanks to Tim Ollett at Fieldline Limited who provided and operated the plant.

Drawings were prepared by Chris Birks and the report was written by Chris Birks.

Many thanks to Anj Beckham at the Norfolk Historic and Environment Record office based at Gressenhall. Thanks also to James Albone, David Gurney, Ken Hamilton, Kelly Powell, David Robertson and Andrew Rogerson at the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.

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- SCAUM 1997 *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992 and Health and Safety in Field Archaeology*

Appendix 1. OASIS Record

OASIS ID: [chrisbir1-188679](#)

Project details

Project name	Eval by TT, 12-14 Raymond Street, Thetford
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out prior to proposed construction of a residential building. Three finds were recovered from subsoil deposits including 2 body sherds of 10th/11th century pottery and a fragment of animal bone. No archaeological features were present.
Project dates	Start: 18-08-2014 End: 19-08-2014
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ENF134941 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	GARDEN Modern
Significant Finds	BODY SHERD Early Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL REMAINS Uncertain
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK BRECKLAND THETFORD Rear of 12-14 Raymond Street, Thetford, Norfolk
Study area	25.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 87115 82927 52.4118444154 0.75147260953 52 24 42 N 000 45 05 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 12.00m Max: 12.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Chris Birks
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Chris Birks
Project director/manager	Chris Birks

Project supervisor Chris Birks
Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Project archives

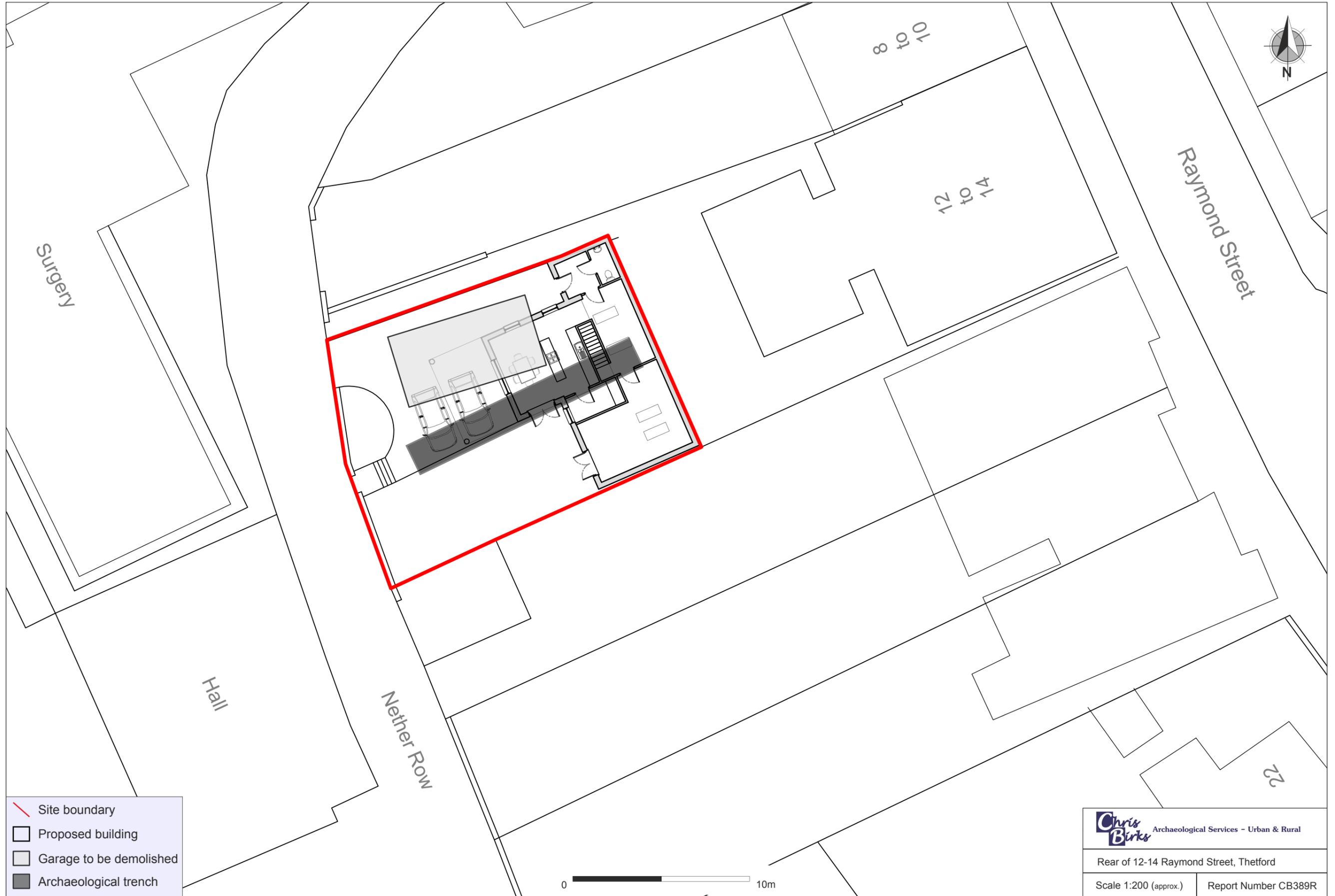
Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive Exists? No
Paper Archive recipient Norfolk Museums Service
Paper Archive ID ENF134941
Paper Contents "none"
Paper Media available "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Unpublished Text"
Paper Archive notes Report includes one colour digital image

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title Report on an Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching at '12-14 Raymond Street, Thetford, Norfolk'
Author(s)/Editor(s) Birks, C.
Other bibliographic details Report Number CB389R
Date 2014
Issuer or publisher Chris Birks
Place of issue or publication Contractor's Report
Description Bound A4 single-side printed report with text, site location plan, colour digital image, site plan and sample section drawing.
Entered by Chris Birks (chris@chrisbirksarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on 29 August 2014

OASIS:

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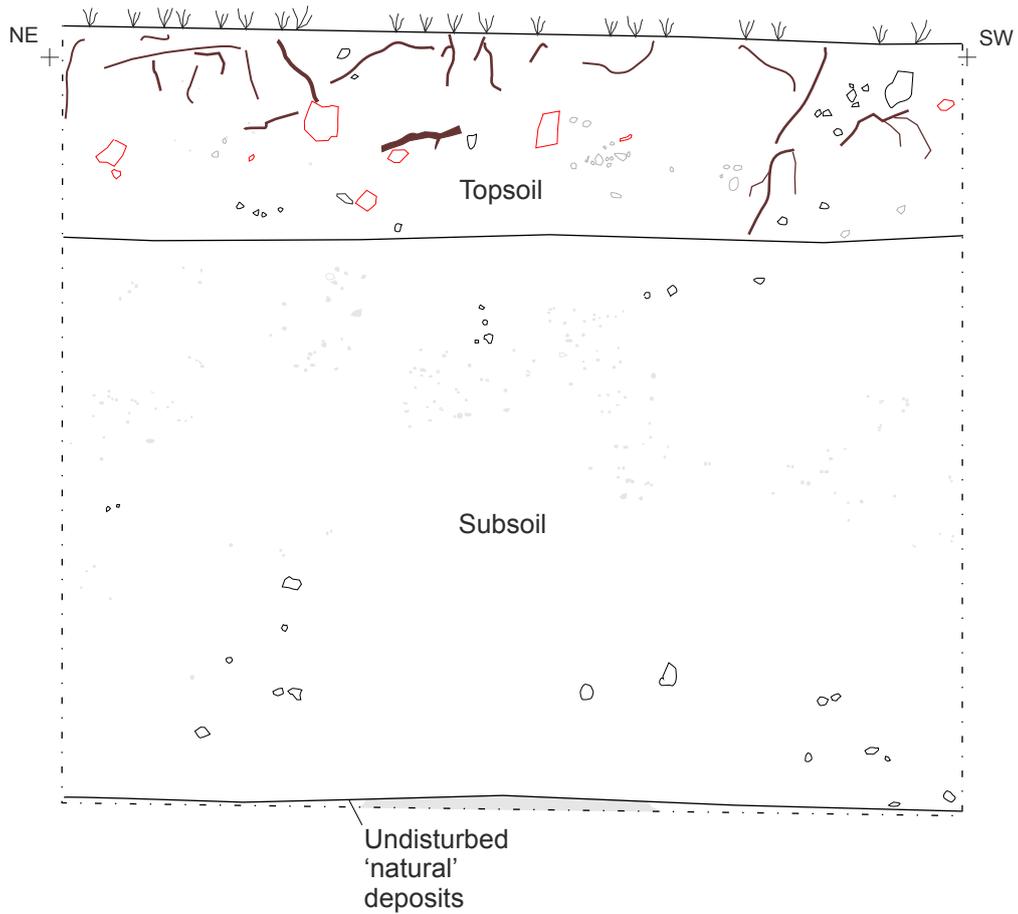
- Site boundary
- Proposed building
- Garage to be demolished
- Archaeological trench

	
Rear of 12-14 Raymond Street, Thetford	
Scale 1:200 (approx.)	Report Number CB389R

Figure 2. Site plan



Sample section drawing



0 1m

-  Mortar
-  Chalk
-  Flint
-  Brick
-  Roots



Archaeological Services - Urban & Rural

Rear of 12-14 Raymond Street, Thetford

Scale 1:20

Report Number CB389R

Figure 3. Section Drawing