

Witham Archaeology

A Report to Mr John Hardy

October 2013



**LAND ADJACENT TO 'KESWICK',
CASTLEACRE ROAD GREAT DUNHAM,
NORFOLK**

Archaeological Watching Brief

G Trimble

LAND ADJACENT TO ‘KESWICK’, CASTLEACRE ROAD, GREAT DUNHAM, NORFOLK

Norfolk HER Event No.: ENF 131743

Planning Application No.: 3PL/2012/1349/F

NGR: TF 87036 14446

Archaeological Watching Brief

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LAND ADJACENT TO 'KESWICK', CASTLEACRE ROAD, GREAT DUNHAM, NORFOLK

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Witham Archaeology during groundworks relating to the construction of a new dwelling on land adjacent to 'Keswick', Castleacre Road, Great Dunham, Norfolk. The project originated from a condition of planning permission imposed by Breckland District Council.

The site lies close to the line of a Roman road extending between North Pickenham and a Roman settlement at Tofirees, and to artefact scatters south of Palgrave road, where fieldwalking resulted in the recovery of prehistoric worked flint and large quantities of medieval pottery.

No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest were identified as a result of the watching brief. In general, the recorded soil profile exhibited natural sand overlain by subsoil and deep topsoil. Towards the southern end of the site, mixed deposits of sand and topsoil occurring at relatively deep levels, immediately above the natural sand, were probably derived from horticultural activity.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Witham Archaeology during groundworks relating to the construction of a new dwelling on land adjacent to 'Keswick', Castleacre Road, Great Dunham, Norfolk. The work was commissioned by Mr John Hardy to comply with the requirements of a condition of planning permission imposed by Breckland District Council. The requirements of the local planning authority were set out by the Planning Archaeologist, Norfolk County Council, in a generic brief issued on 24th September 2012. Fieldwork was carried out on Thursday 25th July 2013.

The information in this document is presented with the proviso that further data may yet emerge. Witham Archaeology cannot, therefore, be held responsible for any loss, delay or damage, material or otherwise, arising out of this report. The document has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

2.0 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY (see Figs. 1 and 2)

The village of Great Dunham is situated c. 25km east of King's Lynn and 7.5km northeast of Swaffham in the administrative district of Breckland.

The site, at NGR TF 87036 14446, comprises a triangular plot of land located to the north of the residential property known as 'Keswick'. It is relatively level and is bordered to the east by Castleacre Road and to the west by the gardens and outhouses of neighbouring properties

The geology of the area comprises superficial deposits of Quaternary Period Diamicton of the Lowestoft Formation, over solid geology of Cretaceous Period chalk formations (British Geological Survey 1:50 000 Solid and Drift, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The place-name Dunham derives from Old English and means 'hill farmstead'. Great Dunham is situated in the Hundred of Launditch and was an outlying estate of the important royal manor of Mileham. Before the Norman conquest the parish was held by of Stigand, Saxon bishop of Elmham in East Anglia (1043) and Archbishop of Canterbury (1052). At the time of the Domesday Survey there seems to have been no distinction between Great and Little Dunham, although the settlements are now separate parishes.

Although there is no clear evidence for prehistoric settlement in the parish, a number of isolated findspots in and around the village testify to activity at this time. Two Neolithic axeheads (NHER 4170 and 4171) and a Neolithic flint arrowhead (NHER 4167) are recorded as being found in the village but their exact location remains unknown. A stone macehead (NHER 14987) also found in the village may date to the Neolithic or the Early Bronze Age period whilst a copper alloy palstave has been identified as Bronze Age (NHER 4173).

The projected line of a Roman Road (NHER 3697) from the Peddars Way (NHER 1289) to Toftrees Roman settlement (NHER 7112) follows a general north to south alignment, passing the site approximately 200m to the west. A later road (NHER 13735), following the approximate line of the Roman road but on a slightly different alignment, was closed in 1839.

Several areas of Roman settlement (NHER 4188, 21441 and 36994), possibly with late Iron Age origins, have been identified in the parish. The proximity of the Fen Causeway (NHER 2796), an important Roman road, which runs through the neighbouring parish of Lexham, may explain the presence of these settlements. Geophysical survey at one of the sites identified a corridor building interpreted as a possible villa. Further settlement is indicated by scatters of Roman pottery (NHER 4176, 12068 and 31201). In Great Dunham village itself, many Roman bricks were incorporated into the fabric of the 11th century parish church of St Andrew (NHER 4178) and a scatter of Roman pottery and coins was found 350m to the northeast (NHER 4177), close to the site of the demolished Norman church of St Mary's (NHER 4200).

There is scant evidence for Early Saxon settlement in the parish apart from occasional finds of metalwork including a brooch and girdle hanger (NHER 36994), and a pendant and bridle cheek piece (NHER 4188). Evidence for Middle Saxon activity is also scarce but pottery dating to this period was found close to St Andrew's church (NHER 4196).

The 11th century church of St Andrew's (NHER 4178) appears to have been relatively unchanged since its construction. Although the church retains many original features, including the three storey central tower, the chancel was virtually rebuilt in the 19th century. The church, which contains the altar stone from the site of St Mary's Church (see below), was among the possessions of nearby Castle Acre Priory.

In the medieval period there was a second church in the village - the Norman church of St Mary (NHER 4200), which stood 100m southwest of St Andrew's. There is no certain record of when the building was demolished and there are no physical remains to indicate the location of the site.

Fieldwalking on the south side of Palgrave yard 150m to the southwest of the site recovered 90 sherds of medieval and five sherds of post medieval pottery, as well as prehistoric worked flint.

4.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of the project were to:

- *allow the preservation by record of any surviving archaeological deposits and artefacts exposed by the development groundwork within the constraints imposed by the contractor's working methods, programme and development design.*
- *produce a project archive for deposition with the appropriate museum together with a client report.*
- *provide information for accession to the County Historic Environment Record.*

5.0 METHODOLOGY

Excavation of the house foundations by a tracked 360° excavator was closely monitored for archaeological features, deposits and artefacts. One site visit was made, coinciding with the works.

A series of colour and black and white photographs details the subsurface geological horizons as well as the progress of groundwork operations. Section drawings were produced at scale 1:10, while written context descriptions were made for each unit of stratigraphy.

6.0 RESULTS (see Figs 2 and 3)

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were recorded during the watching brief.

Geological deposits, comprising mid brown and orange gravelly sand (01), occurred at around 0.75m below the present ground surface and were present throughout the area covered by the watching brief (Fig. 3, *Plates 3 & 4*).

In the northern part of the area, (01) was sealed by light brown sand subsoil (02), which varied in thickness, between 0.30m and 0.40m (see *Plate 3*). Subsoil recorded in the southern part of the area (03) was different in composition, consisting of equal proportions of light brown sand and mid grey sand in alternate striations (see Fig. 3, *Plate 4*); it measured an average of 0.35m in depth. The inclusion in deposit (03) of material similar to the underlying sand and material similar to the overlying topsoil (04), suggests a considerable level of disturbance, possibly arising from horticultural activity.

The topsoil (04) was a mid grey sand averaging between 0.30m and 0.40m in depth. It was present throughout the area.

7.0 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were recorded during the watching brief.

While the recorded soil profiles indicate little or no disturbance to deposits across the northern part of the site, further to the south there was evidence for disturbance arising from probable horticultural activity.

Although the projected line of the Roman Road linking the Peddars Way to Toftrees Roman settlement is located 200m to the west of the site, the absence of any Roman artefacts or features in the excavations suggests that no roadside Roman settlement or activity was present at this location. Similarly, the absence of medieval features, deposits and artefacts suggests the site lies outside the main focus of medieval settlement at Great Dunham.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author of this report would like to thank the owner of the property Mr John Hardy for his interest and support in ensuring the successful completion of this project.

9.0 PROJECT/ ARCHIVE DETAILS

9.1 Project Details

SITE CODE: ENF131743

PLANNING APPLICATION No.: 3PL/2012/1349/F

FIELD OFFICER: Gary Trimble

NGR: TF 87036 14446

CIVIL PARISH: Great Dunham

DATE OF INTERVENTION: 25th July 2013

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: Watching Brief

UNDERTAKEN FOR: Mr Charles Hardy

9.2 Archive Details

PRESENT LOCATION: Witham Archaeology, Unit 6, Sleaford Station Business Centre, Station Road, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7RG

FINAL LOCATION: Norfolk Museums Service

MUSEUM ACCESSION No.: TBC

ACCESSION DATE: TBC

The Site Archive Comprises:

Context Records	4
Section Drawings at Scale 1:10	4
Site Report	1
Day sheet	1

It is intended that transfer of the archive in accordance with current published requirements will be undertaken following completion of this project.

COLOUR PLATES



Plate 1: View of the site during excavation of foundations. Facing southwest



Plate 2: View of the site during excavation of foundations. Facing northwest.



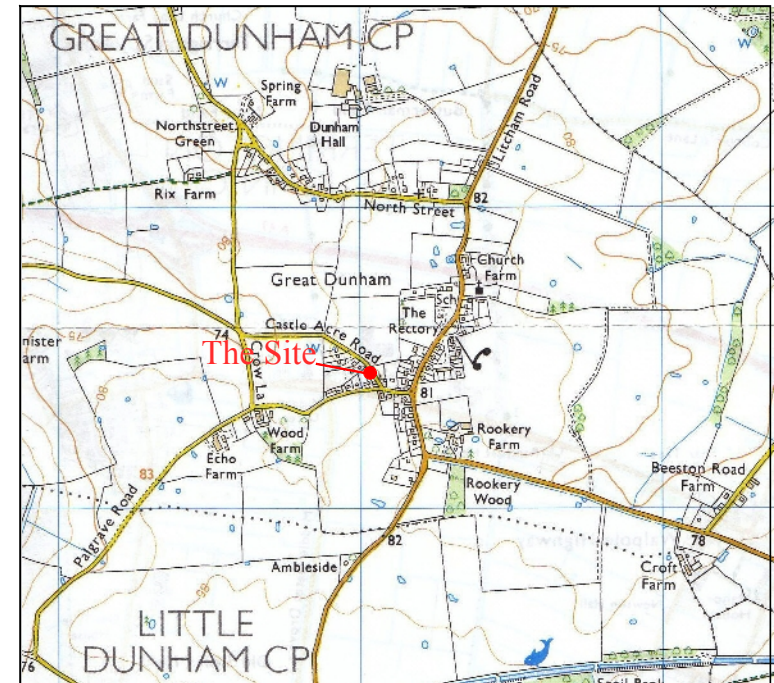
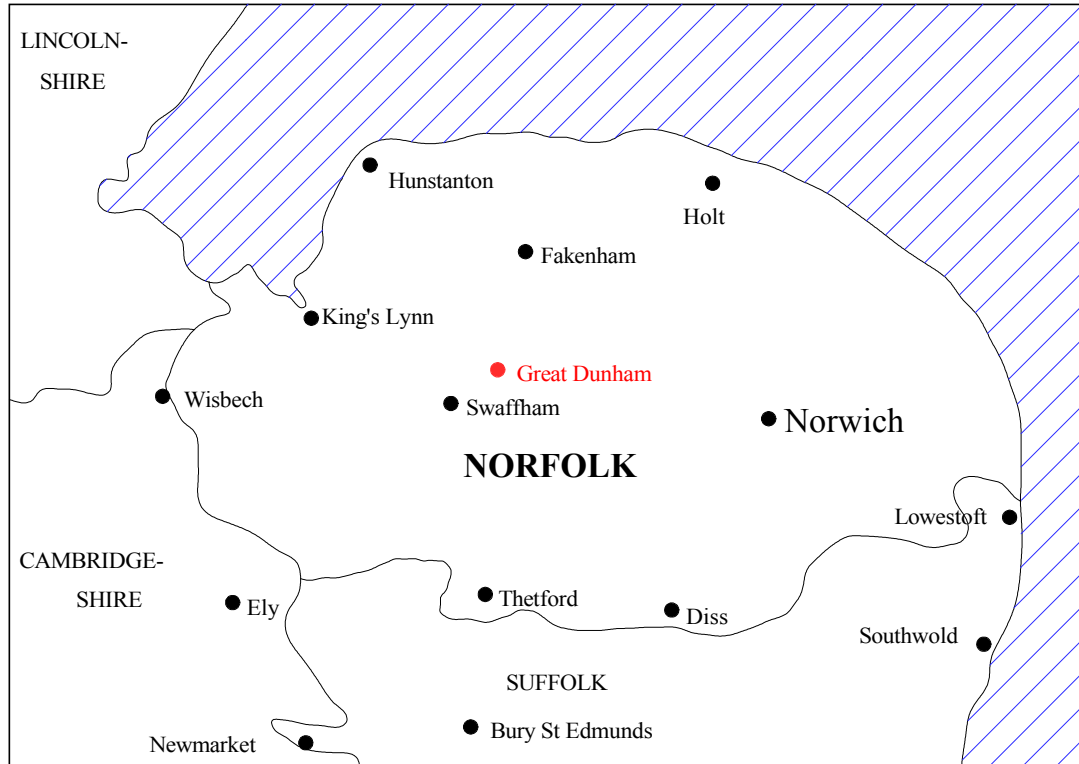
Plate 3: View of Section 1, facing north. Scales 2 x 1m



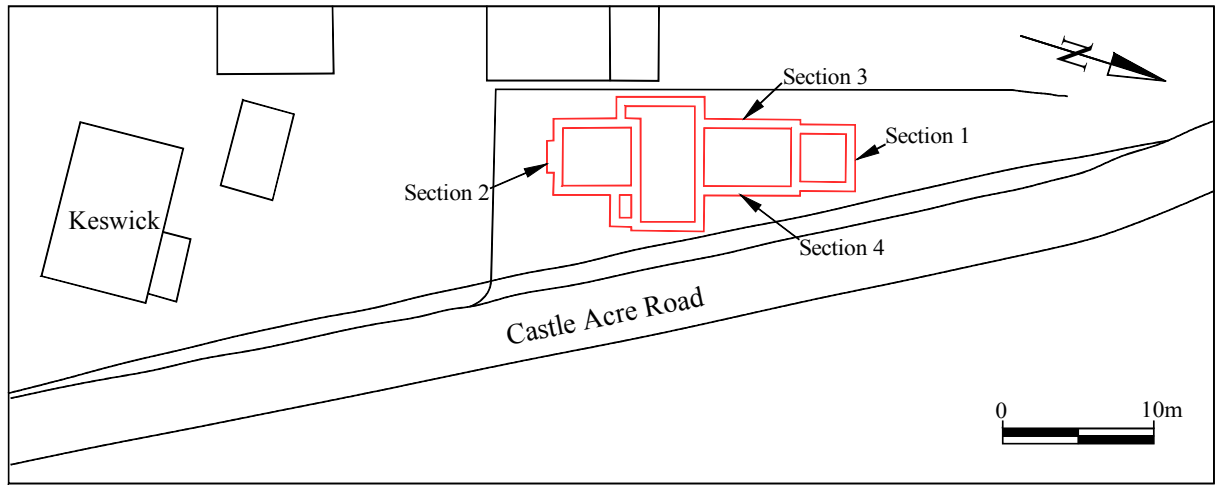
Plate 4: View of Section 2, facing south. Scales 2 x 1m



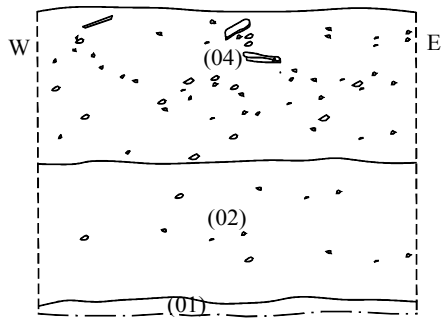
Plate 5: View of fully excavated foundations. Facing north.



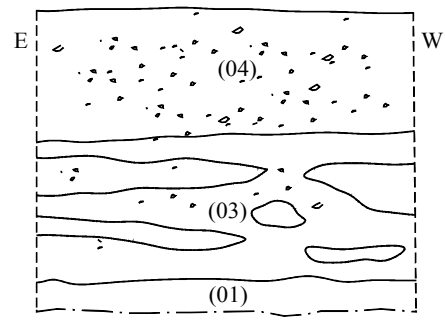
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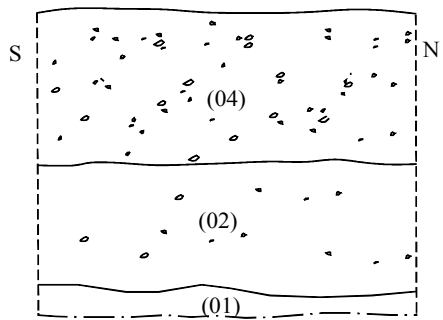
Site Plan at Scale 1:500



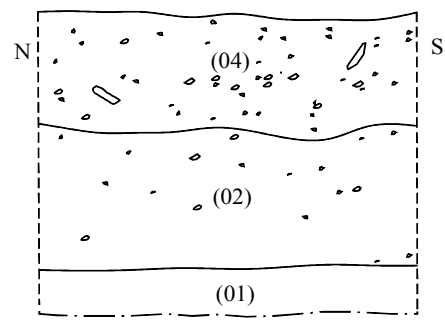
Sample Section 1



Sample Section 2



Sample Section 3



Sample Section 4



APPENDIX A - CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

<i>Context</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Description</i>
01	Natural deposits	mid brown and orange gravelly sand
02	Subsoil	light brown sand
03	Subsoil	light brown sand and mid grey sand
04	Topsoil	mid grey sand

APPENDIX B
OASIS FORM

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM:

England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

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OASIS ID: withamar1-160246

Project details

Project name	Land adjacent to 'Keswick', Castleacre Road, Great Dunham
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Witham Archaeology during groundworks relating to the construction of a new dwelling on land adjacent to Keswick, Castleacre Road, Great Dunham, Norfolk. The watching brief did not identify any features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest. The recorded soil profile exhibited a deep topsoil and subsoil profile located over natural sand. To the southern end of the site, mixed deposits of sand and topsoil lying at relatively deep levels and immediately above the natural sand probably derives from horticultural activity.
Project dates	Start: 25-07-2013 End: 25-07-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	ENF131743 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK BRECKLAND GREAT DUNHAM Land adjacent to 'Keswick', Castleacre Road, Great Dunham
Postcode	PE32 2LJ
Study area	325.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TF 87036 14446 52 0 52 41 41 N 000 46 05 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Witham Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Russell Trimble
Project director/manager	Gary Trimble
Project supervisor	Gary Trimble
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr Charles Hardy

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Photograph", "Plan", "Section", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land adjacent to 'Keswick', Castleacre Road, Great Dunham, Norfolk. Archaeological Watching Brief
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Trimble, G.
Other bibliographic details	Witham Archaeology Report No.50
Date	2013
Issuer or publisher	Witham Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Sleaford
Description	A4, comb-bound

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