Monitoring of Works under Archaeological Supervision and Control

2 Black Horse Lane Ditchingham

on behalf of

Sprake and Tyrrell Ltd

Heather Wallis

April 2012

HW Report No. 115

Project name Black Horse Lane, Ditchingham

Client Sprake and Tyrrell Ltd

NHER Event No ENF 128600

Grid reference TM 3415 9112

Date of fieldwork 13th- 16th March 2012

Introduction

Planning permission has been sought to build a new bungalow and garage at Black Horse lane, Ditchingham (Fig. 1). A Brief requesting the Archaeological Monitoring of any below ground disturbance occurring during the construction works was issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Services. The aim of the monitoring was to identify and record any revealed archaeological deposits and recover any disturbed artefacts.

The development work was undertaken by Sprake and Tyrrell Ltd who commissioned the archaeological works.

Archaeological Background

Black Horse Lane is situated in the heart of the village of Ditchingham, South Norfolk, in an area known for its significant prehistoric monuments. The majority of these are sited on Broome Heath to the north-east of the present development site. On the Heath a Neolithic long barrow and Bronze Age barrows have been recorded along with a Neolithic enclosure and settlement site (Scheduled Monument 282). This type of Neolithic site has rarely been found in Norfolk and as such is of great significance.

A search of the Norfolk Historic Environment Record revealed only a few other sites located close to the development site. Nothing of Iron Age date is recorded. The main road through Ditchingham, which runs on a north-west to south-east alignment some 0.2km to the west of the site, broadly follows the line of a Roman Road known as Stone Street. Only a single find spot for Early Saxon pottery is noted. Evidence of medieval and post-medieval archaeology is scarce, though the presence of a number of significant buildings (17th to 19th century in date) are recorded.

Methods

Three visits were made to the site during the programme of works to monitor the excavation of the footings for the bungalow and a replacement sewer trench. Spoil was visually checked and metal-detected in order to maximise any finds retrieval.

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).

Observations

The footings trenches (Fig. 2, Plates 1 and 2) were c.0.8m wide and c.0.65m deep. The drainage trench was narrower, deepening to c.1m deep towards the eastern site boundary. The deposits revealed across all of the trenches were fairly consistent. Topsoil was a mid brown grey sandy loam with frequent small flints, c.0.3m deep. Below the topsoil was a thin band of mixed browny loam and orange gravel; a merging horizon between the topsoil and underlying natural. The lower parts of the trenches were made up of natural gravel. This was bright orange in colour, stained browny red in places through iron leaching. The gravel varied in size; in some areas it was very fine, while in others it was courser. Occasional larger nodules were noted particularly towards the north of the site.

In two places in the north-east footing trench localised variation to this pattern of deposits was noted. These were initially thought to be possible archaeological features however further examination and consideration of these, and in particular the sterile and highly compacted nature of their fills, led to the conclusion that they were of geological origin.

The site had previously been used a garden and much root disturbance was present across the whole area. This type of disturbance was greatest around the perimeter of the site, close to the property boundaries.

Spoil from the excavations was visually scanned and metal detected before being removed from site. No artefacts were recovered.

Conclusion

Considering the close proximity of significant prehistoric sites it is perhaps surprising that no archaeological features or finds were uncovered. However other recent works in the area (NHER 39447 and 55096) have also had negative archaeological results suggesting that the Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement and barrows did not extend as far beyond the known site.

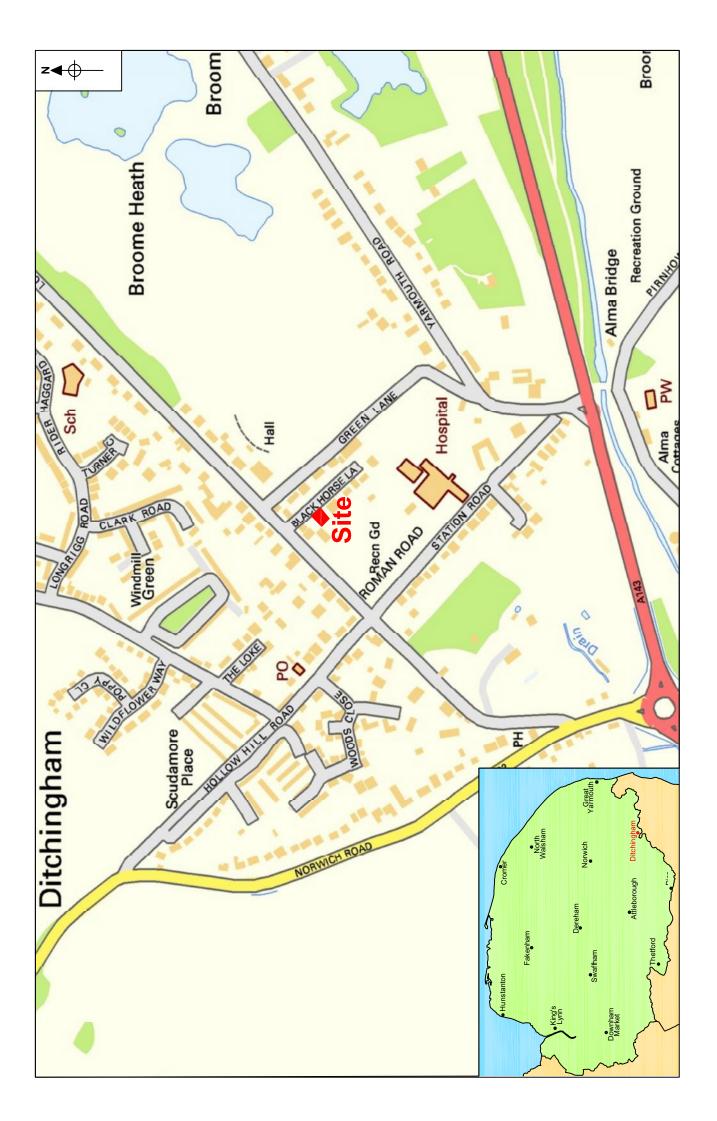


Figure 1. Site location plan. Scale 1:5000

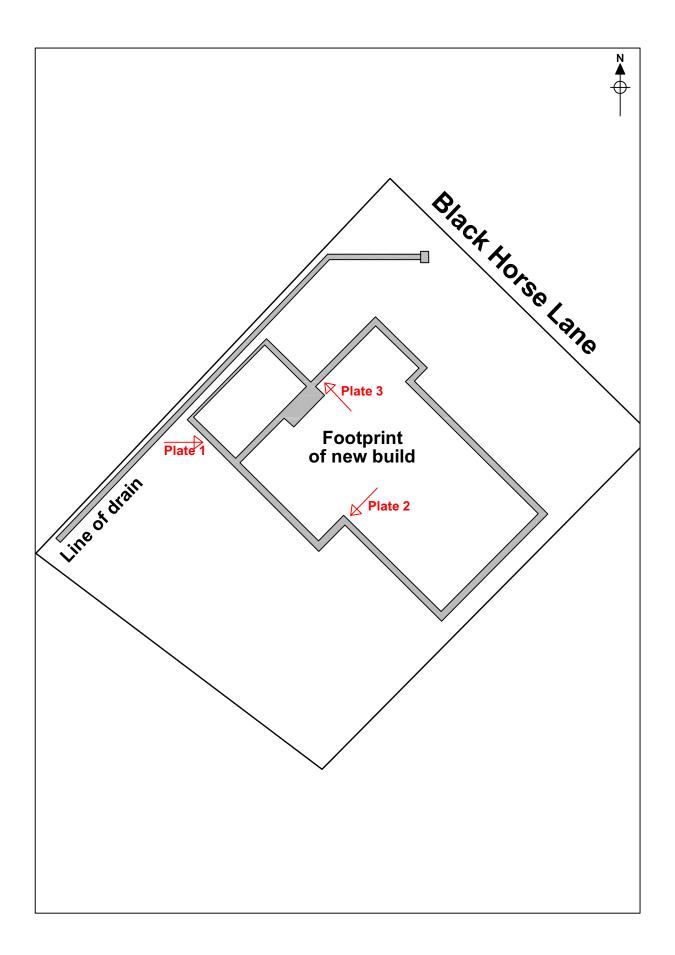


Figure 2. Site plan. Scale 1:200



Plate 1. General view



Plate 2. Typical trench and section



Plate 3. Geological feature