

**Brook House, 32 Beach Road,  
Holme-next-the-Sea,  
Norfolk**

**Monitoring of Works under Archaeological  
Supervision and Control**

**ENF 140683**

**John W. Percival  
November 2016**

**HW Report No. 203**



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|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Project name</b>      | <b>Brook House</b>                       |
| <b>Parish</b>            | <b>Holme-next-the-Sea</b>                |
| <b>NHER Event No</b>     | <b>ENF 140683</b>                        |
| <b>Grid reference</b>    | <b>TF 69932 43608</b>                    |
| <b>Date of fieldwork</b> | <b>10th October to 1st November 2016</b> |

## **Introduction**

Planning permission was sought to remodel, renovate and extend an existing two-storey house at Brook House, 32 Beach Road, Holme-next-the-Sea (Figs 1 and 2). These works included the construction of a stand-alone studio/workshop. Planning permission was granted on condition that archaeological monitoring of any below ground disturbances caused by construction works be undertaken. A brief for archaeological monitoring was issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service, on behalf of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk District Council. The aim of the monitoring was to identify and record any revealed archaeological deposits and recover any artefacts disturbed by the process of construction.

The main body of Brook House was built in c.1939 and was of unusual construction being a soft-wood timber framed building with cedar and beech tile cladding. The eastern wing of Brook House is an extension constructed of similar materials to the original fabric and dates to the 1990s (Plate 1).

The development work was undertaken by R.M Smith (Builders) Ltd overseen by Dave Smith on behalf of Mr. Adam Pllant.

## **Geology and Topography**

Holme-next-the-Sea is located on the coast of northeast Norfolk approximately 25km north of Kings Lynn and 4km northeast of Hunstanton. The village lies on a flat or very gently sloping shelf of land overlooking the coastline c.1km to north.

Brook House lies on northwest margins of the historic centre of the village, on the south bank of the River Hun, at elevation of between 3 and 4m OD. In general terms ground levels within the plot in which Brook House is situated slopes very gently from an elevation c.3.8m northwards to an elevation of c.3.0m on the banks of the river Hun. The northern side of Brook House lies around 5.5m south of the River. Although at 6km long the river Hun is one of

the shortest of the north Norfolk rivers, in the area of Brook House it is c.4m wide with a surprisingly swift flow.

The bedrock geology is chalk while the surface geology of in the immediate environs of Brook House made up of either Holkham Till diamicton or Holocene tidal flat deposits. Holkham Till a glacial deposit made up of varying amounts of dull reddish brown sands and clays with significant chalk and flint inclusions as well as igneous and metamorphic erratics. The tidal flat deposits often consist of a consolidated soft silty clay, with layers of sand, gravel and peat. (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>)

In practice within the construction footprint at Brook House undisturbed 'natural' geological deposits encountered consisted of an extremely dense slightly brown or orange-brown boulder clay flecked with chalk containing occasional lenses of grey clay

## **Archaeological Background**

Prior to works commencing a search of Norfolk Historic Environment Record was made. This returned 56 records within a 0.5km radius of the site a summary of which is included here.

Within the parish of Holme next the Sea occasional finds of prehistoric artefacts have been made. These include worked flints as well as metalwork dating to the Bronze Age. There is also evidence for Roman activity in the area with Peddars Way Roman road running just 400m to the east of the development site and possible Roman settlement, identified by artefact retrieval, to the south of the site.

Holme is mentioned in the Domesday Book where it appears to be only a small settlement. The settlement developed and grew during the medieval period the core of the settlement being located around the St Marys church c.800m to the south-east. Thirteenth century elements survive in the fabric of the church although it was largely rebuilt about 1400 and then partially rebuilt in the late 18th century.

The study of aerial photographs has identified cropmarks and earthworks of banks, ditches and ridge and furrow surrounding the development site on all sides. These are thought to be medieval to post-medieval in date.

Evidence for WWII activity has also been recorded from aerial photographs and includes pillboxes, gun emplacements and tank trap.

A review accessible on-line map and aerial photographic resources (<http://www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk/mapimageviewer/>) and Google Earth, has been made. The Holme-next-the-Sea enclosure map of 1859-1860, the near contemporary tithe map and the first edition Ordnance Survey Map dated to 1880s show the area occupied by Brook House as an undeveloped agricultural plot. An Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1928 shows a small T-shaped building in the approximately on the site of bungalow south of Brook House. RAF aerial photographs dated to 1946 show Brook House and the bungalow south of it.

## Methods

Three site visits were made to site in order to monitor the excavations of the footing trenches for the studio/workshop and the extension on the eastern side of Brook house. Both areas and the risings from the footing trenches were visually checked in order to maximise any finds retrieval. Some metal-detecting was attempted, but recent metal debris was abundant. Two smaller areas were excavated without monitoring (Hatched on Fig. 3). The westernmost side of Brook House was underpinned and footing for a small extension to eastern 1990s wing of the house.

All work was carried out in full accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Wallis 2015) and with national and regional standards for the treatment of archaeological remains. 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) were adhered to.

## Observations

The footings trenches (Fig. 3) were excavated by machine, using a 5 tonne 360 degree tracked excavator fitted with toothless bucket 0.6m wide. The footing trenches were 0.7m wide and between 1.3m and 2.0m deep. Undisturbed 'natural' geological deposits consisting of very dense boulder clay was seen in the sides and base across all of the footing trenches.

The footing trenches for the studio/workshop were between 1.3 and 1.5m deep. Dense orange boulder clay 'natural' was overlain by 0.4m of mottled grey slightly silty-clay containing occasional small fragments of chalk and soft red brick (Plate 2). This material was water lain or heavily water affected flood deposit disturbed or reworked to some extent during the construction of Brook House. The grey slity-clay was in turn overlain a 0.4m thick layer of mid orange-brown clay containing frequent flecks of chalk and occasional small fragments of Fletton type bricks of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century date and fragments of

soft, red post-medieval type bricks. This deposit was essentially redeposited clay 'natural', probably excavated during the construction of Brook House in c.1939 and dumped to form the outer parts of an artificial mound on which Brook House sits. A 0.5m thickness of dark brown silty-loam topsoil occupied the upper part of the studio/workshop footing trenches. This material was either redeposited or imported and the result of landscaping within the last 20 years of so.

The footing trenches for the extension east of Brook House were either 1.9m deep or between 1.6 and 1.7m deep. Brown or orange-brown chalk-flecked boulder clay 'natural' was seen at a depth of 0.9m. The boulder clay was overlain by 0.70m of grey slightly silty water deposited or affected clay (Plate 3). This material contained occasional fragments of unfrosted sandy soft red bricks of post-medieval appearance ill-sorted towards its upper horizon. There was something of a concentration of this brick rubble towards the north-western part of the footing trenches (Plate 4). The upper parts of grey silty-clay flood/marsh deposits were heavily disturbed and reworked during the construction of Brook House in c.1939.

No archaeological features, structures or finds were revealed.

## Conclusions

At Brook House the boulder clay undisturbed 'natural' geological material was overlain more recent riverine water-lain grey silty-clay. Brook House sits on an artificial mound made up of reworked and redeposited versions of these two deposits mixed with brick rubble, largely from a demolished post-medieval building with some Fletton type brick fragments. The wooden superstructure of Brook House is built on a brick plinth made of these bricks.

There is little doubt that a settlement of some sort existed at Holme-next-the-Sea in the Roman period. There is possibly something of a concentration of Roman finds northwest of the medieval and later village. Although within this area Brook House, however, lies in a relatively low-lying area immediately adjacent to the River Hun. This site was potentially too wet and low-lying to be an area favoured for occupation during the Roman period.

## Bibliography

- Wallis, H      2015    *Written Scheme of Investigation for Monitoring of Works under Archaeological Supervision and Control, Brook House Beach Road, Holme-next-the-Sea*



Figure 1. Site location.

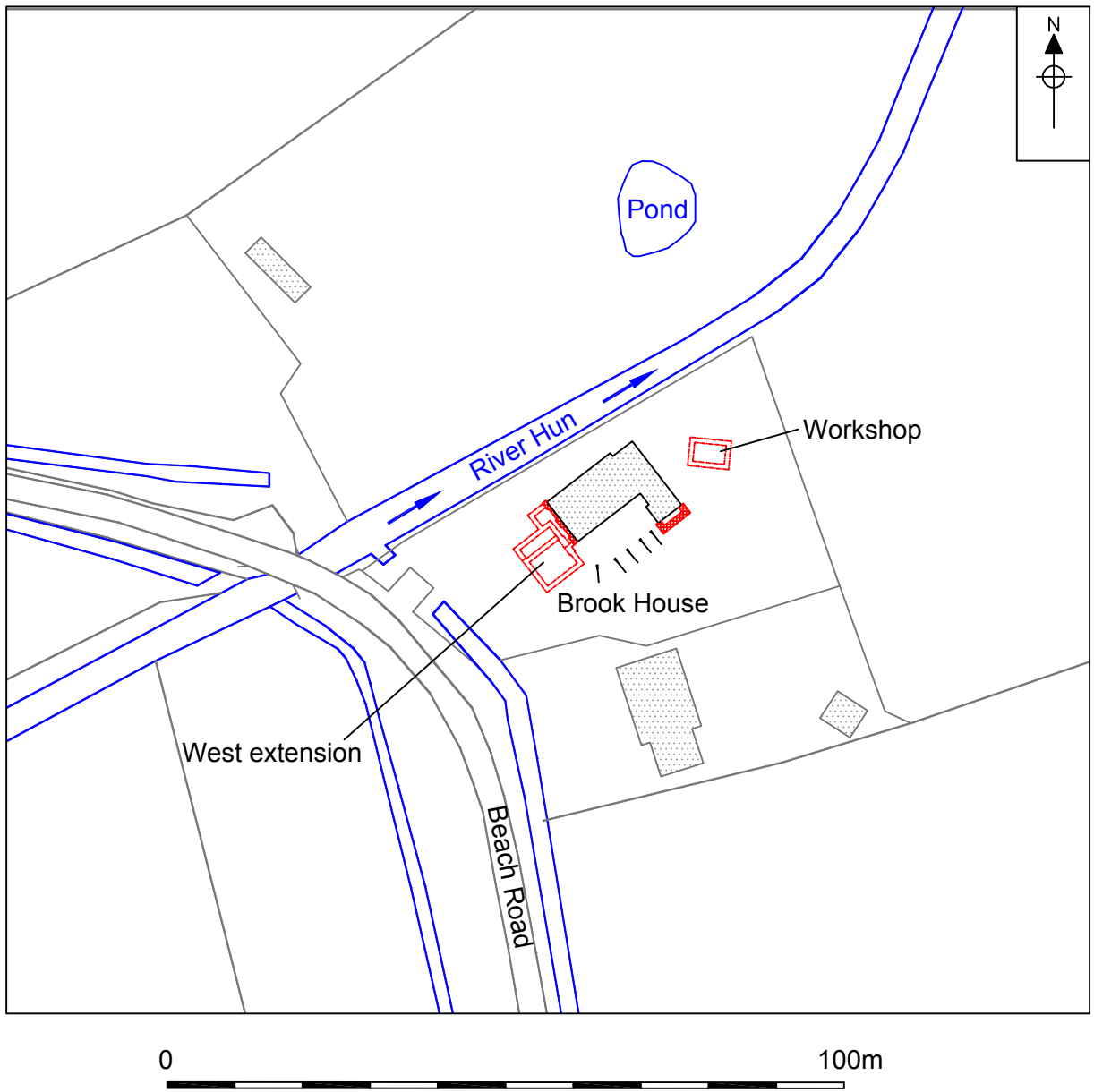


Figure 2. Detailed site location. Scale 1:1000

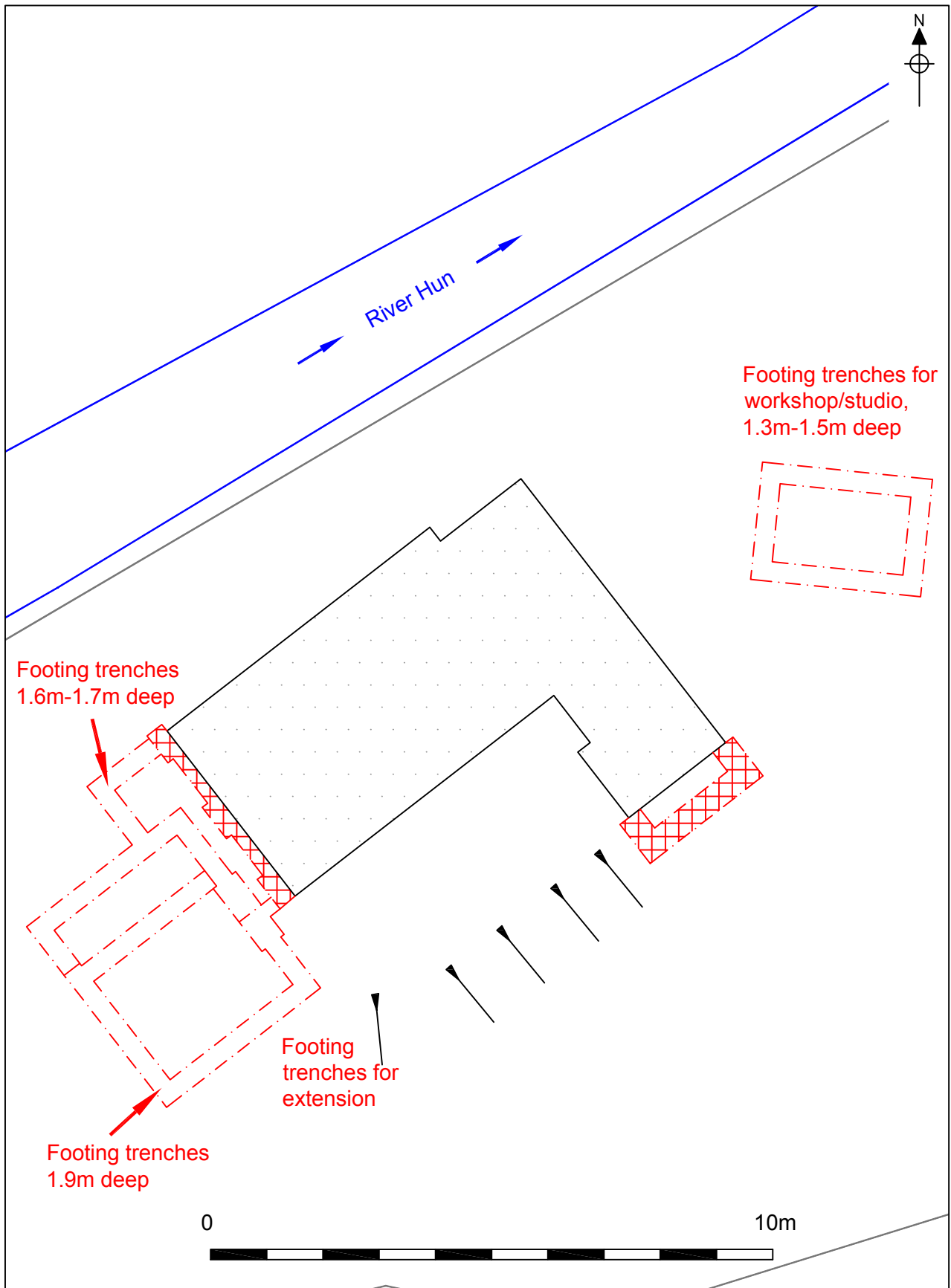


Figure 3. Footing trenches, hatched areas not monitored. Scale 1:200





Plate 1. Brook House at start of works.



Plate 2. Footings of Workshop.



Plate 3. Footing of west extension.



Plate 4. Footing of west extension.

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### Project details

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Project name                           | Brook House, Holme-next-the-Sea  |
| Short description of the project       | Monitoring works were undertaken during the construction of an extension and detached workshop at Brook House, Holme. The plot is adjacent to the River Hun and the present 1930s house stands on a man-made platform to raise it above the flood plain. Despite being in an area of known Roman activity no archaeological features or finds were revealed, other than those associated with 20th-century landscaping activity. |
| Project dates                          | Start: 10-10-2016 End: 01-11-2016  |
| Previous/future work                   | No / No  |
| Any associated project reference codes | ENF 140683 - HER event no.   |
| Type of project                        | Recording project  |
| Monument type                          | NONE None  |
| Significant Finds                      | NONE None  |
| Investigation type                     | ""Watching Brief""   |
| Prompt                                 | Planning condition   |

### Project location

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Country          | England  |
| Site location    | NORFOLK KINGS LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK HOLME NEXT THE SEA Brook House       |
| Study area       | 0 Square metres  |
| Site coordinates | TF 6993 4361 52.962528176014 0.530380674944 52 57 45 N 000 31 49 E Point |

### Project creators

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Name of Organisation      | Heather Wallis  |
| Project brief originator  | Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body |
| Project design originator | Heather Wallis  |
| Project director/manager  | Heather Wallis  |

Project supervisor John Percival

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Norfolk Museums Service

Digital Contents "Stratigraphic","other"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Text"

Paper Archive recipient Norfolk Museums Service

Paper Contents "other"

Paper Media available "Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes',"Report"

### Project bibliography 1

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