Archaeological Monitoring at The Red Lion, Attleborough Road, Caston, Norfolk.



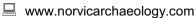
Prepared for Paul Lynch

Giles Emery December 2013

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Archaeological Monitoring of land at The Red Lion Public House, Attleborough Road, Caston, Norfolk. NR17 1DB.

Location: Caston

Grid Ref: TL 9595 9760 **NHES Event No**: ENF 132501

Date of fieldwork: 1st and 8th of October 2013

1.0 Introduction

Norvic Archaeology was commissioned by Paul Lynch, to undertake archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of a house within a plot (c. $500m^2$) formed from the former beer garden of The Red Lion public house at Caston (Planning Ref. 3PL/2010/0108/F). The site is located within the historic core of Caston, close to the Holy Cross Church and the site of a medieval cross.

The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Service (HES Ref: CNF42751_1) on behalf of Breckland District Council. The aim of the monitoring work was to record the presence/absence, date, nature, and extent of any buried archaeological remains and features identified during groundworks. This report presents a brief description of the methodology followed and an archaeological interpretation of the results.

On completion of the project, the site archive will be offered for long term deposition with Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Summary of Results

Groundworks for the new house and garage revealed medieval features in the form of three shallow remnants of ditches and a pit. The ditches appear to be part of a medieval ditch system, either acting as field boundaries or plot boundaries defining occupation within the historic core of the medieval settlement. Medieval pottery sherds collected from these features include fragments from storage or cooking vessels of common use in domestic kitchens and households from the 12th to 14th century.

A fairly deep subsoil build-up sealed the medieval features, which may also include some levelling activity at the northern half of the site. Several modern rubbish pits associated with the Red Lion were recorded, along with a single posthole of post-medieval or later date.

A thin lower subsoil of some antiquity was recorded above the natural sandy-clay in the southern area of the site. A single prehistoric flint tool (thought to be a modified Early Neolithic end-scraper) and a single fragment of burnt flint were the only artefacts collected from this horizon, which otherwise appeared to be sterile of cultural material.

Three fragments of metalworking debris were recovered from the site. These include a fragment of iron working slag from a medieval ditch and two pieces of bronze casting waste of uncertain date collected from machine spoil.

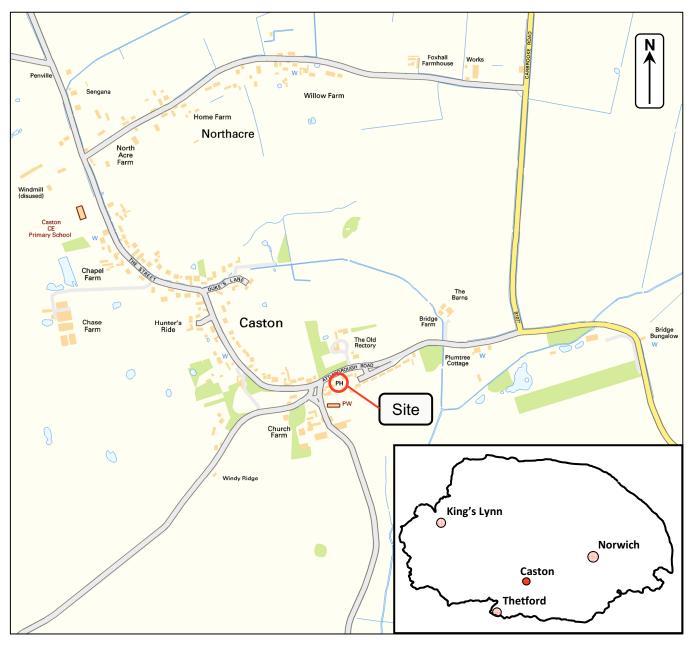
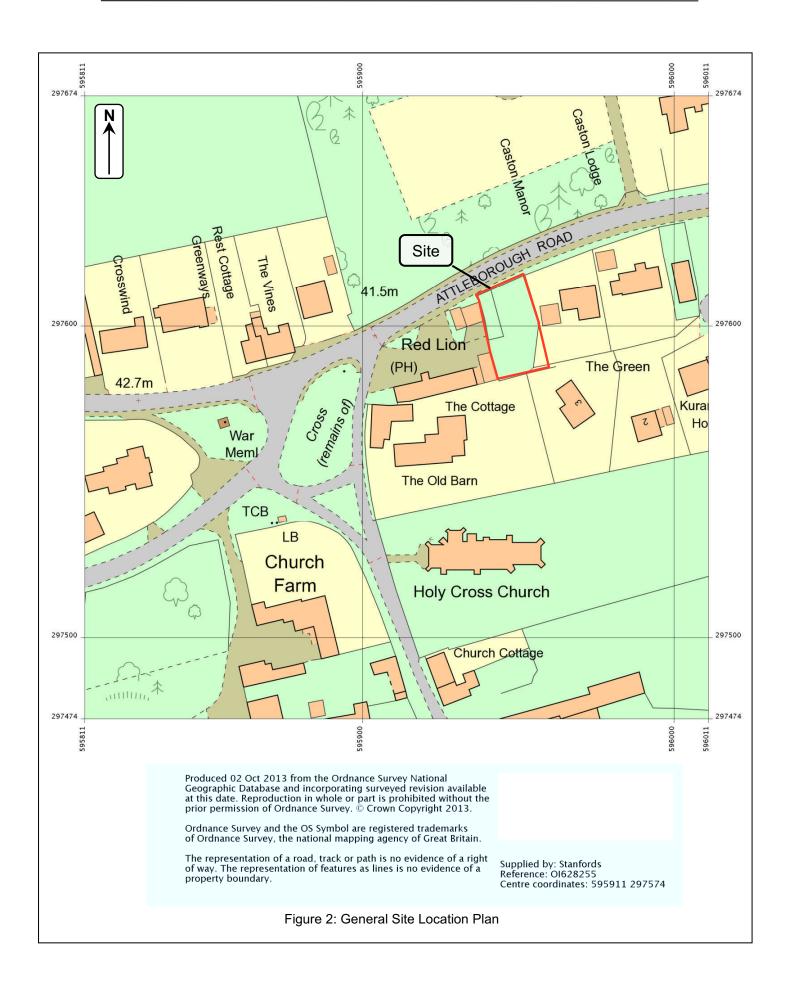


Figure 1: General Location Plan





3.0 Geology and Topography

The site is located in Caston c.18 miles south-west of Norwich, c.7 miles east of Attleborough and 4 miles south of Watton. Caston is a small village and civil parish which covers an area of 6 km² within the district of Breckland. The development plot is located off Attleborough Road within the historic core of the village at c. 41.5m OD.

Underlying geology is of Upper Chalk (Cretaceous period), overlain by chalky tills with flints, together with outwash deposits of sands and gravels, silts and clays (Lowestoft Formation) - Geology of Britain Viewer at a scale of 1:50 000 (http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html). The sub-surface geology of the site encountered during the fieldwork can be characterised as sandy-clays with occasional pockets of sands.

4.0 Brief Archaeological and Historical Background

The parish of Caston is situated in southern central Norfolk, between Watton and Attleborough. The parish is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, having been long established prior to the Norman Conquest. Evidence for Saxon settlement is currently limited to a small number of Late Saxon pottery sherds (NHER 33773) collected during an excavation on the western side of the village Green. The oldest part of the Holy Cross church is the 13th century Chancel, the remainder being late medieval subject to 19th century restoration (NHER 5772). The remains of a medieval cross (NHER 5775) is said to have served as a stopping point for pilgrims on their way to Walsingham Priory. The shaft of the cross was taken down in the 19th century, but the three tiered circular base remains.

Earlier evidence of human activity in the parish is recorded in the form of a small number of Neolithic polished axeheads. Nineteenth century discoveries include a hoard of Roman coins and finds from a possible burial site, more recent metal detecting within the parish has reported brooches, coins and pottery.

The Red Lion is a largely flint and brick building with a partial timber frame. It is one of several listed post-medieval buildings set around the village Green. The earliest OS plan of 1883 that depicts the site shows the same arrangement of buildings that form the Red Lion pub today, whilst the development plot was formerly part of a larger rectangular field or paddock running alongside Attleborough Road. By 1906, the plans show that the development plot had been demarcated as a separate small field adjacent to the 'Red Lion Inn'. Aside from the appearance of a small outbuilding in the 1980s, the area remained open and became a beer garden until the Red Lion fell into disrepair. By the late 1980s modern housing had encroached upon the open field to the east of the site, with more recent developments adjacent to the site.

Sites in the immediate proximity or of particular relevance or interest which fall in close proximity to the site include:

The following information has been sourced from the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER)

NHER 5774: The Red Lion and adjacent cottage. (Grade II Listed). An 18th century public house possibly with a 17th century timber framed core, encased with flint and brick in the 19th century. The building is two storeys high with a pantiled roof. There is a 20th century porch in the centre. The adjacent Old House is a timber framed thatched building from the mid-17th century, with a brick infill and later alterations.

NHER 46125: The Old Cottage. This Grade II Listed Building is a mid-17th century and later two storey timber framed house with rendered brick infill and a thatched roof (the rear crosswing is pantiled). [c. 30m SW]

NHER 5775: Village Cross. The remains of a medieval standing stone cross, with a round stone base. The shaft of the cross was taken down in the 19th century, but the three-tiered base remains (Grade II Listed). [c. 40m W]

NHER 8976: Human Remains. In December 1956, road men digging a narrow trench at the edge of Caston Green uncovered human remains described as of a man and child. They were reinterred at the same spot. Pot sherds of unknown date were also found during the works. [c. 75m W]



NHER 5772: Holy Cross Church. The church consists of a west tower, nave and chancel. Construction is of flint and limestone with a re-thatched roof. There is a two storey north porch, converted to a vestry. The chancel dates from about 1300. The rest dates from the 14th and 15th centuries, and there was a general restoration in the 19th century. Inside there is a large brass chandelier that is said to have been given to a Hertfordshire church by Charles I, and originally to have come from Hampton Court Palace. It came to this church in 1870. [c. 40m S of the site]

NHER 33773: Saxon Pottery. An archaeological evaluation trench dug in 1998 adjacent to the site of Caston's 19th century School (NHER 55564) recovered Late Saxon pottery fragments. Part of a ditch was also discovered, which may have been the edge of the old village green. [c. 200m WSW]

NHER 46126: The Laurels. This Grade II Listed Building is a late 18th century and later two storey brick and flint house with a pantiled roof. [c. 145m W]

NHER 55564: Site of Caston School. The school was built in 1839 and was scheduled to close between 1954 and 1956. The modern dwelling School Lodge is now located on the site of the old school. [c. 200m WSW]

NHER 5776: Old Rectory Cottage. A Grade II Listed 16th century timber framed house, originally two cottages. It is one storey high with a dormered attic and a pantiled roof. The wing to the south was added in the 17th century. The building was entirely encased in brick in the 19th century. Inside, the drawing room has a plaster ceiling decorated with angels and Tudor roses. [c. 75m NE]

NHER 5777: Old Rectory. A Grade II Listed rectory, now a private house, dating from about 1720 to 1730. The building is two storeys high with five window bays, and is of colour washed brick with a slate roof. It has a central doorway, over which is a fanlight window. [c. 75m N]

NHER 5773: Church Farm. A Grade II Listed late 16th or early 17th century house with elaborate blank arcading on its north gable. It has massive stone fireplaces and stone quoins of medieval date, reused from an earlier building. A west wing was added in the 17th century, and the façade in the 19th. The whole building was renovated in 1985. Local legend says that the house was a hostel for pilgrims, but it seems more likely that the medieval stone was reused from a pre-Dissolution building, possibly such a hostel. [c. 100m SW]

NHER 11741: Cropmarks. Aerial photography in 1979 of fields to the west of Church Farm revealed the cropmarks of trackways and probable old field boundaries of uncertain date. [c. 180m SW]

NHER 51256: Multi-period Finds Scatter. Metal-detecting of fields SW of Church Farm between 2004 and 2012 recovered prehistoric worked flints, inc. two possible Mesolithic blades; Late Saxon to medieval pottery sherds; Roman and medieval coins; post-medieval tokens and Middle Saxon to post-medieval metal objects. The metal finds include a Middle/Late Saxon ansate brooch; a Late Saxon buckle; medieval dress accessories, a padlock in the form of a horse, a candle-holder and a mount; a medieval/post-medieval iron buckle frame, candle stick, ring, weight and copper alloy vessel fragments and post-medieval dress accessories, a mount, pipe tamper and a sword belt mount. [c. 400m SW]

NHER 52640: Multi-period Finds Scatter Metal-detecting and fieldwalking NE of 'The Barns' between 2007

and 2012 recovered late prehistoric and Neolithic worked flints; Roman pottery; Late Iron Age and Roman coins; medieval/post-medieval coins & tokens and Roman to post-medieval metal objects (including a Roman steelyard weight and a possible harness fitting; a medieval spindle whorl, purse bar, casket mount, folding strapclasp, pot mends and a padlock end-plate). [c. 460m NE]

5.0 Methodology (Figure 2)

The objective of the archaeological monitoring was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during machine excavation associated with the development.



Plate 2: House footings (looking S) [2x2m Scale]

This included footings for the house and garage, along with a soakaway and service run.

The trenching was carried out by a small 'JCB'-type machine fitted with a ditching bucket, with spoil stockpiled on site during the course of the works via a 3-ton dumper.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector (Minelab XTerra 705). All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than



those which were obviously modern. The work was carried out in mixed weather with occasional showers on the first day of work

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using Norvic Archaeology pro forma sheets. The trench location, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

All levels were tied to an OS Spot Height of 41.5m OD located on Attleborough Road, opposite the location of the village cross.

6.0 Results (Appendix 1a) (Figures 4 to 6)

'Natural deposits'

Natural firm sand-clay with pockets of softer sand (21) was revealed at a depth of between 0.95m and 1.2m, observed to slope gently from south to north.

• Lower Subsoil

Above the natural in the southern area of the site, was a mottled lower subsoil which may have been subject to some form of archaic bioturbation (22). This deposit was c.0.2m deep and shared a diffuse horizon with the natural geology below. A prehistoric flint tool and a single fragment of burnt flint were the only artefacts collected from this horizon, which otherwise appeared to be sterile of cultural material.

Upper subsoil

Above the lower subsoil (22) was a midyellowish-brown silty-sand soil build-up (23) of between 0.4m to 0.9m in depth, which was deeper in the northern half of the site, possibly



Plate 3: Medieval Ditch [13] (looking SW) [1x2m Scale]

as the result of some form of late post-medieval levelling activity. Fragments of 19th to 20th century brick and tile, bottle glass and ferrous waste were present within this soil layer.

• Topsoil/Make-up

The uppermost deposit across the area of the former beer garden was a layer of 'garden-soil' (c. 0.4m in depth) with frequent roots and occasional inclusions of modern ceramic building materials, along with modern glass and ferrous waste (24).

Medieval features

Three linear features were recorded which can be attributed to medieval activity at the site [01], [13] & [19]). All three were sealed below later subsoil build up and were notably shallow; the result of later ploughing or bioturbation activity rather than a true representation of their original depth. These features appear to be the remnants of a medieval ditch system, either acting as field boundaries or plot boundaries defining occupation within the historic core of the medieval settlement. A very small number of medieval pottery sherds were collected from two of the ditch fills and a single fragment of slag was collected from ditch [13].



A larger assemblage of medieval pottery sherds were retrieved from a shallow feature located within the SW corner of the house footprint ([03]), interpreted as the base of a pit. The sherds show little sign of abrasion and are from storage or cooking vessels of common use in domestic kitchens and households from the 12th to 14th century.

Modern Pits

Five deep pits with near vertical sides were encountered during the monitoring work, some of which can be described as square in plan ([05], [07], [09], [11] & [15]). These pits had all been dug through the post-medieval subsoil and contained dark silty-sands with inclusions of 19th to 20th century brick and tile. Several of the pits also contained large quantities of bottle glass of early 20th to mid-20th century date, along with ferrous rubbish. These pits can all be interpreted as late 19th to 20th century rubbish pits serving the adjacent Red Lion pub.

Posthole

A single posthole ([17]) was recorded in the area of the garage footprint, which contained similar fills to that of the modern pits and which was dug through the post-medieval soils. A single abraded sherd of post-medieval glazed red earthenware was collected from the fill (18). This feature is therefore of post-medieval or later date.

• Late Post-medieval deposits along the street frontage

The new pipe trench excavated along the edge of Attleborough Road was excavated to a depth of c. 0.5m. It revealed only late 20th century rubbish pits along with early 20th century make-up rich in brick rubble, with intermittent spreads of redeposited sandy-clay.

7.0 Finds Analysis (Appendix 2a)

Pottery

Introduction

Twelve sherds of pottery weighing a total of 68g were collected from four contexts. Aside from a single base sherd of LMU from context (04) all of the medieval wares are body sherds with little abrasion. Table 1 shows the quantification by fabric:

Context	Description	Fabric	No	Wt/g	Eve	MNV	Date Range	Comments
02	Local medieval unglazed	LMU	1	3	0.05	1	11-14 th	
04	Local medieval unglazed	LMU	6	32	0.28	3	11-14 th	Slight sooting
04	Medieval coarseware	MCW	2	17	0.10	1	L.12-14 th	
14	Medieval coarseware	MCW	2	11	0.04	2	L.12-14 th	
18	Glazed Red Earthenware	GRE	1	5	0.05	1	16 th -18th	Abraded
	Grand Total	-	11	68	0.52	8		

Table 1. Pottery quantification by fabric

Methodology

Basic quantification was carried out using sherd count and weight. All fabric types follow the post-Roman fabric series after Sue Anderson with form terminology following MPRG (1998). A catalogue with quantification by sherd and context is presented as Appendix 3.

Conclusions



The medieval sherds were collected from a small number of shallow features, including two shallow ditches ([01] & [13]), with the majority collected from the fill of a ?shallow pit ([04]). No sherds indicative of high status were found, with the sherds representing storage or cooking vessels of common use in domestic kitchens and households from the 12th to 14th century.

A single sherd of post-medieval pottery was collected from a posthole recorded in the area of the garage footings.

Metal Working Debris

A single fragment of vesicular slag was collected from context (14), the fill of ditch [13]. The piece weighs 36g and has the dark colour of an iron rich slag produced through smelting or smithing.

Two fragments of copper-alloy ('bronze') casting waste were collected from machine spoil, weighing a total of 83g. Both have a smooth underside and a rougher, flatter upper-side defining the pouring channel for their respective moulds. The larger of the two weighs 70g and appears to be of high quality metal used to cast a large metal object, such as that used to manufacture a vessel or church bell and would most likely have been retained as scrap for reuse rather than simply discarded.

Flint

A single struck flint was collected from the lower subsoil recorded in the area of the garage footings (22). The piece is in fine condition with a glossy appearance. The fabric is pale greyish-yellow honey coloured when viewed through a strong white light, with only a small number of interclasts. This is a broad flake (43mm by 30mm) struck from a well prepared core using a well-defined platform (non-abraded) with a relatively hard hammer blow.

Scars from previous strikes are finely struck, using a soft hammer from the same platform. The dorsal surface is ridged and despite the loss of the distal end it appears to have been retained for ad-hoc use, with minor signs of edge-wear. This flake appears to have originally been produced to perform as an end-scraper, with evidence for a re-sharpening strike or break and subsequent invasive wear.

Overall the methods of manufacture, along with the use of this broad flake as a probable end-scraper appear to identify this as an Early Neolithic tool.

A single fragment of burnt flint (weighing 31g) was collected from the same lower subsoil as the worked flint (22). The piece is heavily calcined and cracked.

Button

A single copper-alloy button was collected from the machine spoil. This is the back half of a discoidal shaped, later post-medieval button, with a soldered loop and silver tinning.



8.0 Conclusions

Groundworks for the new house and garage revealed a small number of medieval features in the form of the shallow remnants of three ditches and a pit. The ditches appear to be part of a medieval ditch system, either acting as field boundaries or plot boundaries defining occupation within the historic core of the medieval settlement. The shallow nature of these features may be attributable to later plough activity or soil mixing through bioturbation.

Medieval pottery sherds collected represent fragments from storage or cooking vessels of common use in domestic kitchens and households from the 12th to 14th century.

A fairly deep subsoil build-up sealed the medieval features, which may also include some levelling activity at the northern half of the site. Several modern rubbish pits associated with the Red Lion were recorded, along with a single posthole of post-medieval or later date.

A thin lower subsoil of some antiquity was recorded above the natural sandy-clay in the southern area of the site. A single prehistoric flint tool (thought to be a modified Early Neolithic end-scraper) and a single fragment of burnt flint were the only artefacts collected from this horizon, which otherwise appeared to be sterile of cultural material.

Three fragments of metalworking debris were recovered from the site. These include a fragment of iron working slag from a medieval ditch and two pieces of bronze casting waste collected from machine spoil.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Paul Lynch who commissioned Norvic Archaeology to carry out this work. All stages of the monitoring and post-excavation analysis work were carried out by the author. NHER data was obtained directly from the Historic Environment Service archive at Gressenhall.

10.0 Bibliography

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Fill of	Brief Physical Description	Interpretation	Period
01	Cut		A very shallow, fairly ephemeral linear feature running c. E-W, c. 1.2m side, 0.3m deep	Ditch	Medieval
02	Deposit	[01]	Soft, mid-yellowish-grey silty-sand, occ. large stones		
03	Cut		Eastern edge of a shallow pit/ditch like feature > 0.6m wide, c. 0.2m deep	?Pit	Medieval
04	Deposit	[04]	Friable, mid-brownish-grey silty-sand, v.rare charcoal flecks, occ. stones		
05	Cut		Eastern end of a ?square pit c. 1.4m wide with near vertical sides, > 0.9m	Pit	Modern (L19th-20 th)
06	Deposit	[05]	Friable, dark grey silty-loam, occ. patches of mid- yellowish-grey clay-sand, occ. modern tile fragments		
07	Cut		Eastern end of a large ?square pit, c. 2.3m wide >0.9m deep	Pit	Modern (L19th-20 th)
08	Deposit	[07]	Friable, dark grey silty-loam, occ. patches of mid- yellowish-grey clay-sand, occ. modern tile fragments		
09	Cut		NW corner of a pit, >0.5m deep	Pit	Modern (E20th+)
10	Deposit	[09]	Soft, dark grey silty-loam, occ. orange clay patches, occ. bottle glass		
11	Cut		?NE corner of a pit, >0.5m deep	Pit	Modern (E20th+)
12	Deposit	[11]	Soft, dark grey sandy-loam, occ. orange clay patches, freq. pantile,		
13	Cut		Shallow c. NE-SW linear feature, well-sloping profile, 0.16m deep	Ditch	Medieval
14	Deposit	[13]	Soft, mid-yellowish-brown silty-sand, freq. mottling, occ. stones, rare chalk/charcoal flecks		
15	Cut		Steep sided pit, 1.2m wide, >0.5m deep	Pit	Modern (E20th+)
16	Deposit	[15]	Soft, dark grey silty-loam, occ. Ferrous rubbish/pantile/bottle glass		
17	Cut		Sub-rounded, concave base of a posthole c. 0.2m deep	Posthole	Post-medieval+
18	Deposit	[17]	Friable, dark-grey silty-clay, occ. stones/chalk flecks		
19	Cut		c. NW-SE linear, U-shaped profile, c.0.5m wide, c. 0.25m deep	Ditch	?Medieval
20	Deposit	[19]	Friable, mid-brownish-grey silty-sand, occ. stones, rare chalk flecks		
21	Deposit		Mid greyish-yellow to pale yellow/orange firm sandy- clay patches within softer sands	Natural Geology	
22	Deposit		Soft, mottled mid-grey to pale yellow silty-sand, occ. stones, c. 0.2m deep	Lower subsoil	Prehistoric+
23	Deposit		V.friable, mid-yellowish-brown silty-sand, occ. stones/brick pieces/chalk flecks, occ. bottle glass c. 0.4 to 0.9m deep	Subsoil	Late Post-medieval +
24	Deposit		Soft, mid-yellowish-brown silty-sand, freq. roots, occ. stones/brick pieces/chalk flecks, occ. bottle glass, occ. modern rubbish c. 0.4m deep	'Garden soil'	Modern
25	Unstratified		Finds collected from machine spoil		



Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table

Period	Feature type	Quantity
Modiaval (1066 to 1520AD)	Ditch	3
Medieval (1066 to 1539AD)	Pit	1
Post-medieval (1540 to 1900AD)	Posthole	1
Modern (1900 to 2050 AD)	Pits	5

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (g)	Comment
02	Pottery	1	3	
04	Pottery	8	49	
14	Pottery	2	11	
14	Metal Working Debris – Slag	1	14	Iron working
18	Pottery	1	5	
22	Flint – worked	1	9	
22	Burnt flint	1	36	
25	Button	1	1.22	
25	Metal Working Debris – Casting	2	83	Copper-alloy

Appendix 2b: Finds summary table

Period	Material	Quantity
Unknown	Metal working debris – casting waste (copper-alloy)	2
Prehistoric (500000BC to 42AD)	Burnt Flint	1
Early Neolithic (4000 to 3001BC)	Flint	1
Madiaval (1066 to 1520AD)	Pottery	11
Medieval (1066 to 1539AD)	Metal working debris – slag	1
Post-medieval (1540 to 1900AD)	Button	1
FOSt-Illedieval (1540 to 1900AD)	Pottery	1

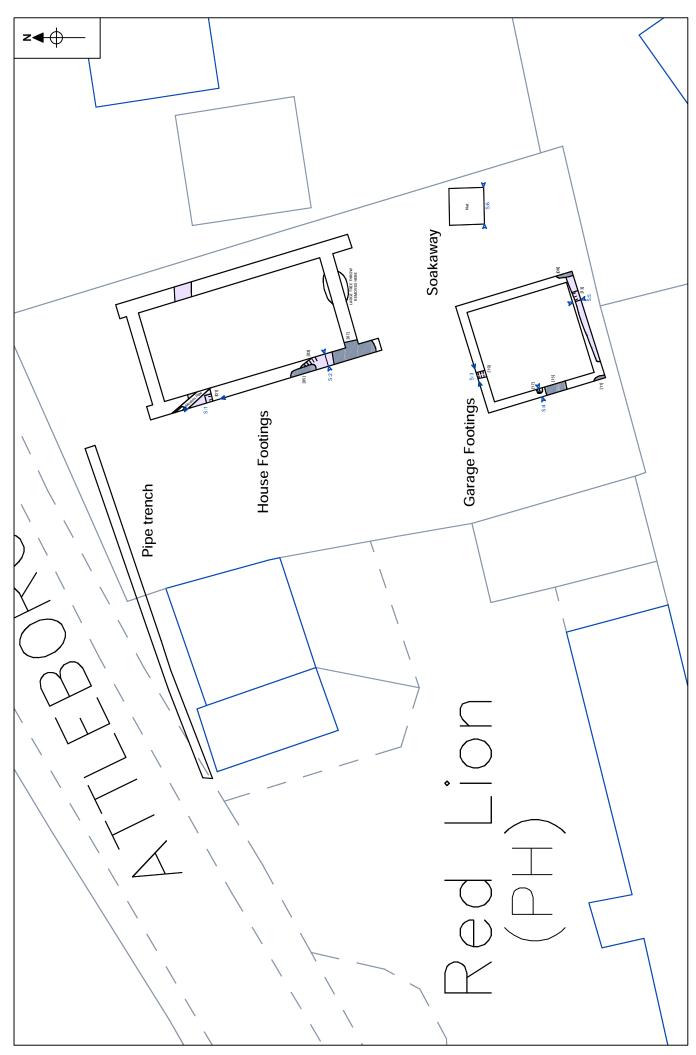


Figure 3. Site plan. Scale 1:200

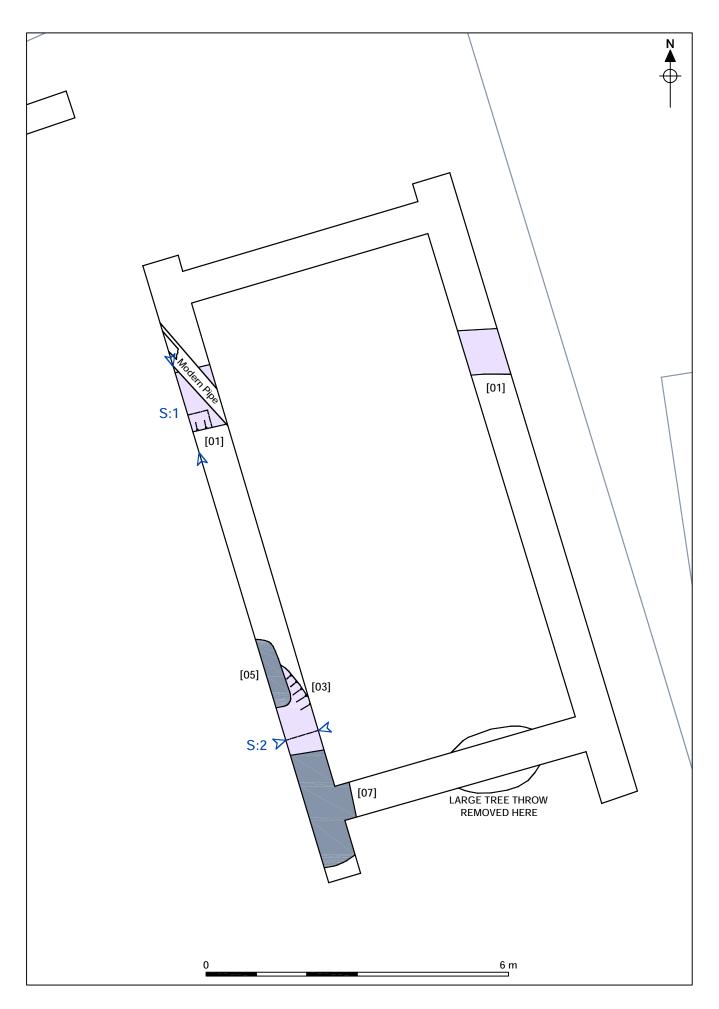


Figure 4. Groundworks plan - House. Scale 1:75

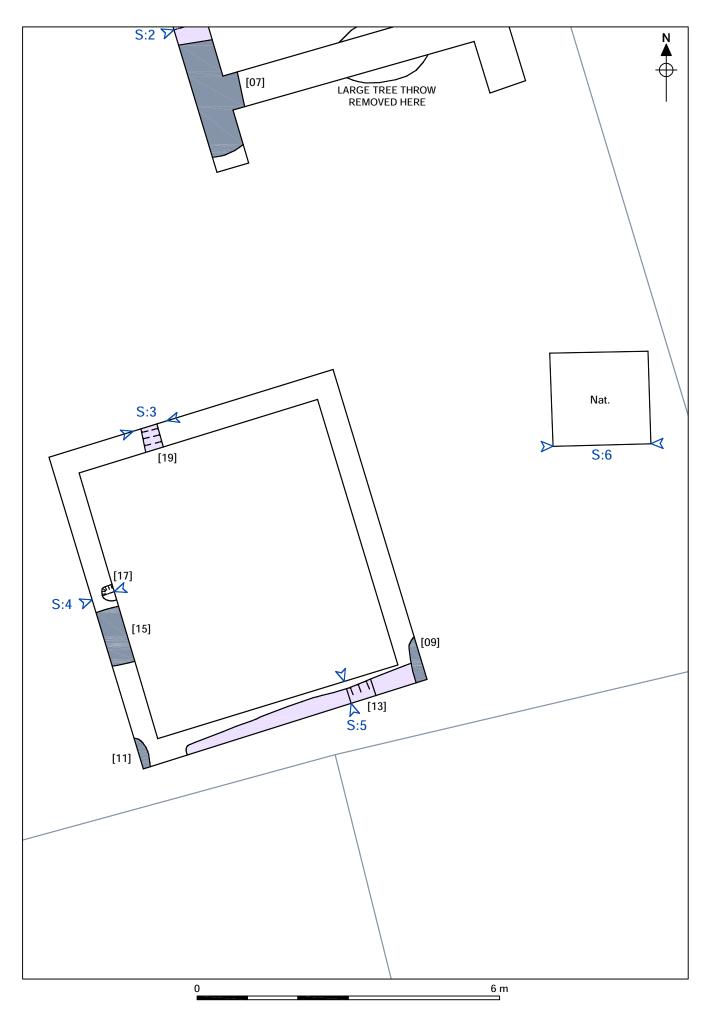
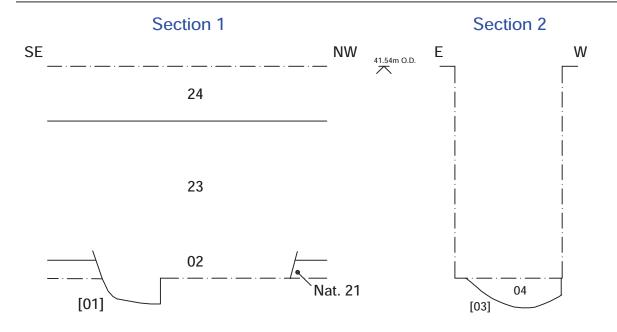
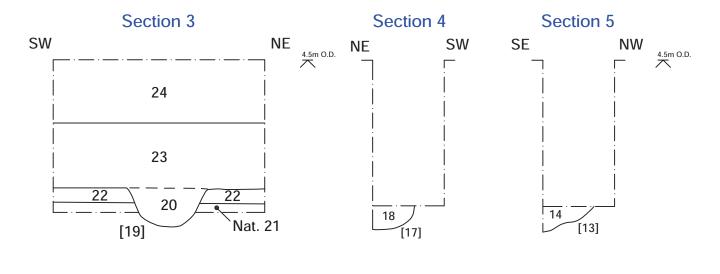


Figure 5. Groundworks plan - Garage. Scale 1:75







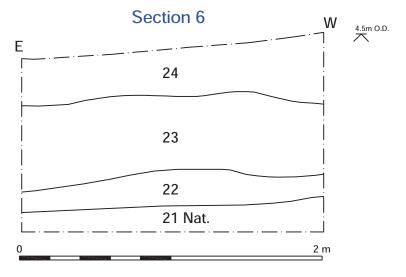


Figure 6. Recorded Sections. Scale 1:25