

# An Archaeological Evaluation at No.18 Church Road, Blofield, Norfolk.



Prepared for Mr.K.B.Horner

Giles Emery  
April 2014


Report No: 45


NHES Event No: ENF 133877

Job Ref: NVC/2013/GE198

OASIS ID: norvicar1-177409

**NORVIC** archaeology

 [www.norvicarchaeology.com](http://www.norvicarchaeology.com)

 07759016372

 [giles.emery@norvicarchaeology.com](mailto:giles.emery@norvicarchaeology.com)

**Contents**

1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Summary of Results	2
3.0	Geology and Topography	4
4.0	Brief Archaeological and Historical Background	4
5.0	Methodology	6
6.0	Results	6
7.0	Finds Analysis	7
8.0	Conclusions	8
9.0	Acknowledgements	8
10.0	Bibliography	8
	Appendix 1a: Context Summary	9
	Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table	9
	Appendix 2: Finds by Context	9
	Appendix 3: OASIS Form	12

**Figures**

Figure 1	General site location plan	3
Figure 2	Trench location plan	10
Figure 3	Trench 1 & 2 (plans & recorded sections)	11

**Plates**

Plate 1	General shot of Trench 1 looking west*	Cover
Plate 2	General location shot of Trench 2	6
Plate 3	Trench 2	7

\*2m scale

## Archaeological Evaluation at No.18 Church Road, Blofield, Norfolk. NR13 4NA

<b>Location:</b>	Blofield
<b>Grid Ref:</b>	TG 3371 0926
<b>NHES Event No:</b>	ENF 133877
<b>Date of fieldwork:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2014

### 1.0 Introduction

Norvic Archaeology was commissioned by Mr K.B.Horner to undertake an evaluation by trial trenching at No.18 Church Road, Blofield. The plot has been cleared of a former dwelling and a proposed planning application has been submitted for the construction of two semi-detached homes with a separate garage (Ref: 200140064). The overall plot size measures c.1460m<sup>2</sup>.

Roman pottery has been found in the vicinity and the parish church, likely to represent a medieval settlement focus, lies a short distance to the west. Cropmarks within fields to the south-east may relate to Roman and medieval activity, while four ring ditches there, overlooking the River Yare floodplain, are thought to represent a Bronze Age cemetery.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Service (HES Ref: CNF45490\_1) on behalf of Broadland District Council. The aim of the evaluation work was to assess the presence/absence, date, nature, and extent of any buried archaeological remains and features. This report presents a brief description of the methodology followed, the results and the archaeological interpretation of the evaluation.

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

The evaluation encountered natural sand geology directly below a shallow garden soil. No subsoils were present, which suggests that the area has been scraped down and landscaped in modern times. Two modern sand extraction pits were revealed in the central area of the site along with the corner of a modern in-filled septic tank pit.

A single artefact of archaeological interest was encountered during the works, in the form a handle fragment from a medieval jug of 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century date. This was retrieved from the infill of one of the modern sand extraction pits and represents the only evidence for medieval activity at or near the site; which lies within close proximity to St Peter and St Andrews' Church where evidence for medieval settlement has been previously recorded.

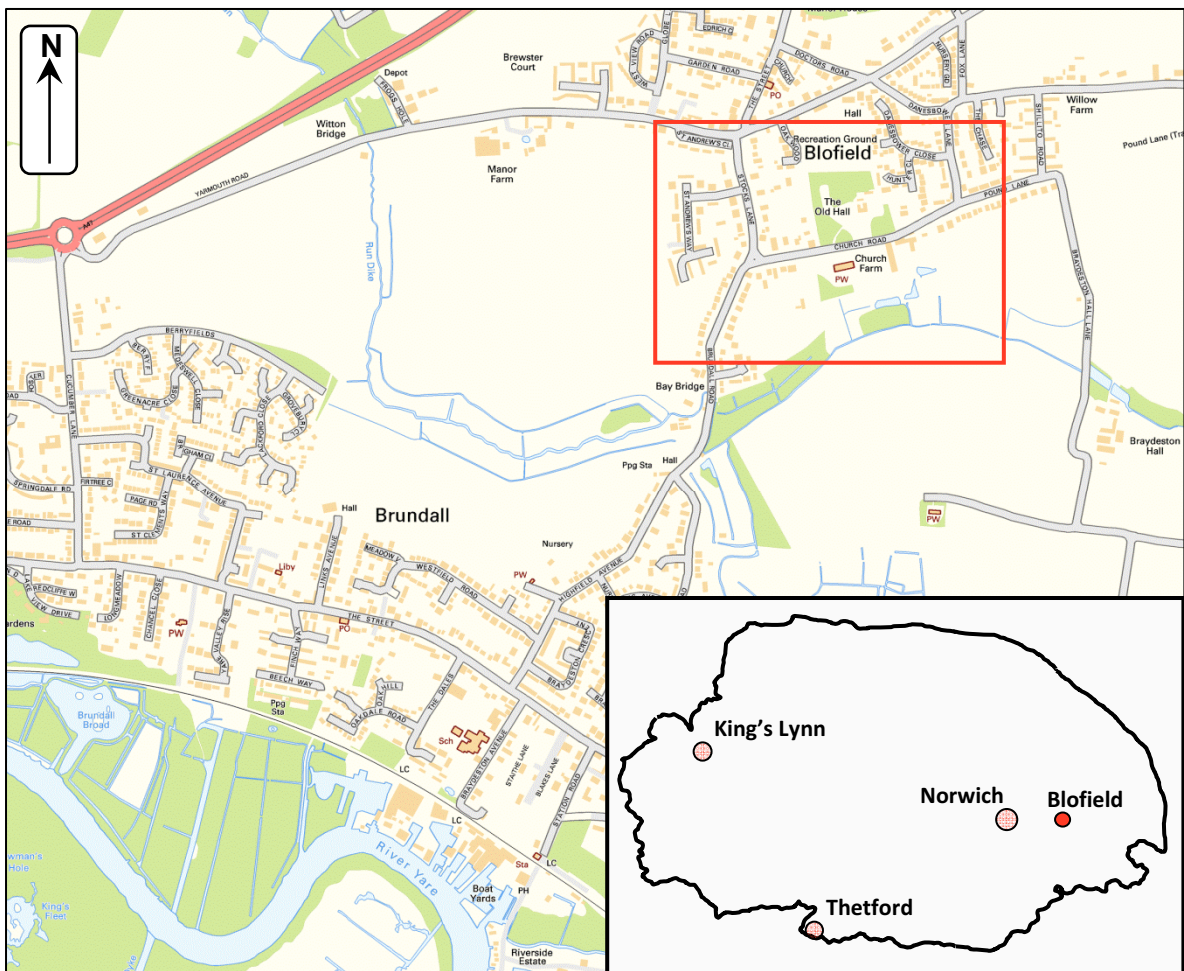
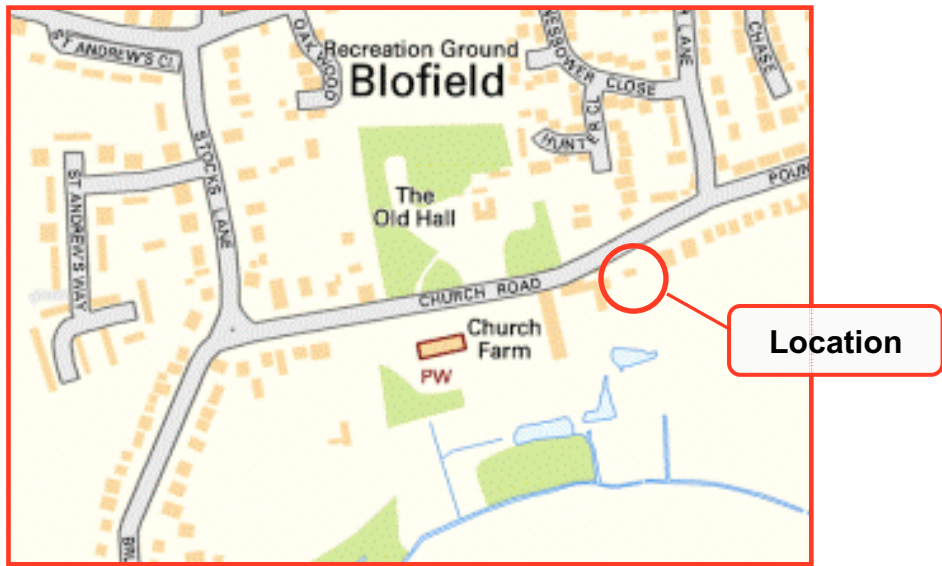


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

### 3.0 Geology and Topography

The site is located in the village of Blofield on the northern slopes of the River Yare valley; c. 1km north-east of the flood plain at c.11m OD. The site slopes from north to south with a fall of c. 1.7m over a distance of c. 50m. Blofield is located c. 6km east of Norwich.

The underlying geology is Norwich Crag overlain by additional deposits of Quaternary and Neogene sands and gravels – 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 medium grained pale to mid yellow soft sands.

### 4.0 Brief Archaeological and Historical Background

The village of Blofield is located east of Norfolk, in the Broadland district, situated between the Rivers Bure to the north, and Yare to the south. The parish includes Blofield and the hamlets of Blofield Heath and Blofield Corner. Blofield lies amongst a relatively rich historic landscape which has provided evidence of human occupation from all historic periods.

Several cropmarks of possible Bronze Age ring ditches, indicating a barrow cemetery overlooking the Yare, are located c. 365m to the east of the site (NHER 49688). Cropmark evidence has been recorded across the parish that may be attributable to activity from prehistoric to Roman times, although a relatively limited number of Roman surface finds have so far been recorded. These include a very few fragments of Roman pottery within the village, discovered during groundworks at Recreation Ground, No.30 Church Road and off Shilton Road. Saxon evidence for occupation is also very limited, although it is recorded that a Late Saxon settlement was given over to the Bishops of Norwich, with Bishop Aelmer recorded as the landowner in Domesday. The bishop's medieval moated manor (NHER 12445) is believed to have been sited in fields c. 400m to the west of the village church. Trench work for a pipeline in 1995, southeast of the church, also revealed areas of medieval occupation (NHER 31642) in the form of pits and ditches less than 50m from the site of the churchyard.

The site is located c. 140m east of the medieval church of St Peters & St Andrew, dating primarily from the later 14<sup>th</sup>-century which is constructed on the site of the Norman structure. The church's impressive size is a reflection of both the importance of the parish as host to the bishop's residence, but also the wealth of its patrons.

A review of the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1882 OS plan for the village shows the site in detail, defined by an access track on its west side (still present) and the corner of a large open field to the east. The site is depicted as a tree-covered strip of land adjacent to the Church Farm complex. By 1907, plans show that the trees had been cleared and a large 'barn' and additional small outbuildings occupied the front half of the site right up to the street frontage. These buildings remained in place until their clearance and the construction of the former dwelling and garage in the 1960s.

A parish summary of the large amount of information held for Blofield can be viewed on the Norfolk Heritage Explorer website. The parish has generated over 100 records which give evidence of human occupation and activity of most periods in the form of find scatters, cropmarks, listed buildings and excavated sites.

**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 45950: A Grade II Listed early 18<sup>th</sup> century barn at Church Farm**, dated to 1716 from a wall plaque. Of red brick with a thatched roof. [c. 15m W]

**NHER 10221: Roman Pottery.** In 1963 Roman pottery sherds were found during building work at No.30 Church Road. [c. 75m ENE]

**NHER 10221: Roman Pottery.** A base fragment of a Roman greyware beaker dating to the 2nd or 3rd century AD was found at during groundworks on a sports field in 2005. [c. 220m NW]

**NHER 10255: Neolithic Axe.** A Neolithic flaked flint axehead was found during building work for bungalows at Shilton Road in 1975. [c. 260m NE]

**NHER 49568: Multi-period Cropmarks** The cropmarks of a group of undated ditches and field boundaries are visible on aerial photographs to the southeast of Blofield village. It seems likely that these cropmarks represent several phases of activity, some of which may be late prehistoric to Roman in date, whilst others may represent medieval to post medieval boundaries and drains. [c. 125m E]

**NHER 49567: Earthworks (?Post-medieval).** The earthworks of linear bank and a circular embankment are visible on aerial photographs to the south of the drainage ditch that runs east to Braydeston Hall, Brundall. Both of these features would appear to be built over a drainage ditch, marked on the 1845 Tithe map (S2), indicating that they must be late nineteenth to early twentieth century in date. It is possible that they relate to a military site of World War Two date, however there is no evidence visible on the aerial photographs. [c. 180m S]

**NHER 31642: Medieval occupation evidence.** Archaeological observations in 1995, made along the line of a pipeline, found evidence for the manufacture of brick and roof tile in the 19th century east of Brundall Road, evidence for medieval occupation to the southeast of the church and evidence for church renovation and graveyard tidying including the reburial of disarticulated human bones in the post medieval or early modern period to the east of the church. [c. 180m SE]

**NHER 10265: SS Andrew's and Peter's Church, Blofield.** A very large church dedicated in 1427. Restorations in 1880 are reported as finding Norman work. The style is generally early Perpendicular although the clerestory is decorated. Inside is a 15th century font that depicts scenes from the Life of Christ and a monument dated 1630 to the Paston family. The helmet that hung above this monument is now in the NCM. Whilst moving headstones in the churchyard a Late Saxon knife was found. Excavations to put in a pipe recovered a piece of Roman pottery. [c. 140m W]

**NHER 49688: Bronze Age Barrow Cemetery.** The cropmarks of a Bronze Age barrow cemetery overlooking a minor valley and watercourse are visible on aerial photographs to the south of Blofield village. One ring ditch is recorded under NHER 12782 and another under NHER 12781 [c. 365m ESE]

**NHER 49575: Cropmarks of possible Saxon grubenhauser or extraction pits.** The cropmarks of a cluster of sub-rectangular pits, possibly Saxon grubenhauser or later extraction pits, are visible on aerial photographs to the east of Braydeston Hall Lane. The site consists of a series of oblong and sub-rectangular pit-like features, ranging in length from 4.5-7m and 2.5-6m across. Some of the pits are obviously cut into one another, indicating more than one phase of excavation or extraction. No Saxon date finds have been recorded for the immediate vicinity. [c. 460m E]

**NHER 22230: Medieval Pottery.** Fieldwalking in 1985 recovered 12th to 13th century pottery fragments close to Brundall Road. [c. 550m SW]

**NHER 12445: Moat and manor site of the Bishops of Norwich.** Documentary sources and earthworks survey have identified a medieval moat and manor site in fields west of Brundall Road, probably belonging to the Bishops of Norwich. Excavations at the site revealed no features and few finds dating to the medieval and post medieval periods and this suggests that the site may have been levelled off at some stage, probably whilst the land was being ploughed for agriculture. Cropmarks and earthworks are visible on aerial photographs.[c. 600m WSW]

**NHER 15581: Site of former Brick Kilns.** Brick kilns are marked on Faden's map of 1797 at this site off Brundall Road and the Blofield enclosure map calls this area Brick Kiln Close. [c. 480m SW]

**NHER 16450: Medieval Pottery.** Two sherds of medieval pottery were found on the surface of a beet field in 1980 adjacent to a footpath. [c. 425m SSW]

**NHER 11728: Site of Braydeston deserted medieval village.** A medieval village, mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) and the Nomina Villarum (1316). It was listed as having ten households in 1428, but was later deserted. No visible signs of the village remain today. The medieval Village is believed to have been situated close to the church of St. Michael's Braydeston. [c. 365m SE]

**NHER 149570: Ring ditch.** The cropmarks of a ring ditch, probably the remains of a Bronze Age round barrow, are visible on aerial photographs to the south of Blofield village. This barrow forms part of a small cemetery, see NHER 49688 for details. [c. 600m SE]

**NHER 49571: Cropmarks of enclosures and field boundaries (?late prehistoric to Roman date).** Various aerial photographs show the cropmarks of a group of enclosures and field boundaries of unknown, but possibly late prehistoric to Roman date, to the east of Braydeston Hall and Highnoon Farm on the border of Brundall and Strumpshaw. [c. 1km SE]

## 5.0 Methodology (Figure 2)

The objective of the archaeological evaluation was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during the evaluation.

To meet the requirements of the Brief, two evaluation trenches were excavated using a wheeled 'JCB'-type machine, under the supervision and control of an experienced archaeologist. Trench 1 measured c. 3.5m by 1.8m and was located closest to the street frontage, within the proposed footprint of a new garage. Trench 2



Plate 2: General location shot of Trench 2 (looking SW)

measured 10m by 1.8m and was located within the footprint of the proposed new dwellings. The position of Trench 2 was partly dictated by the need to avoid disturbed ground and in-situ brick footings from the previously demolished house.

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.

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 digital images were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

All levels were taken using a temporary benchmark of 10.72m OD located on Church Road, tied to an OS Benchmark of 13.12m OD located on the tower of St Andrew & Peters' Church to the west of the site.

## 6.0 Results (Appendix 1a)

- **'Natural deposits'**

Natural sands (06) were revealed at a depth of between 0.2m and 0.4m. The upper 200mm of this deposit was highly root mottled in the area of Trench 1. No subsoil was identified and it is believed that the area has been subjected to modern landscaping activity.

- **Garden soil**

Above the natural was thin garden soil which contained pieces of modern brick and coal. Part of the site served as a coal yard within living memory and a surface scatter of coal fragments were noted across the front of the site.

- **Modern sand extraction pits**

Two large sand extraction pits ([03] & [05]) were revealed below the garden soil within Trench 2, which contained a mixed sand and clay-silt infill with occasional pieces of late 19th to 20th century brick and tile. They were most likely excavated to the rear of former barns/buildings which occupied the front part of the site until the 1960s.

- **Other modern features**

The corner of a former septic tank pit ([08]) was encountered at the south-west end of Trench 2. This served the former dwelling until the plot was connected to the main sewers in the 1980s.

Two backfilled postholes of modern date were recorded in Trench 1 which contained residual pieces of coal and therefore most likely date to the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the area was utilised as part of a coal yard run by the current landowners Grandfather.



Plate 3: Trench 2 (looking SW)  
[2x1m + 2x2m Scales]

## 7.0 Finds Analysis *(Appendix 2a)*

- **Pottery** *(Appendix 3)*

A single large fragment of medieval pottery (weighing 214g) was collected as a residual find from the backfill (02) of the modern sand extraction pit [03]. This was the only pre-modern artefact encountered during the evaluation.

The piece is part of a handle/rim from a locally manufactured unglazed medieval jug of 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century date. The handle exhibits a 'wide braided cord' style of construction and the rim is flat and undeveloped. The fabric is a sandy, greyish-brown with patchy dark grey smoke patches, typical of such vessels, which is a deliberate semi-smoking effect caused by manipulating kiln conditions. In size and form the vessel bears similarities to the Type 324 Norwich variant (Jennings 19, 1981). The fragment shows moderate abrasion.



## 8.0 Conclusions

The evaluation encountered natural sand geology at a depth of just 0.2m at the front of the site and c. 0.3m in the centre of the site. No subsoils were present, which suggests that the area has been scraped down and landscaped in modern times. The central area of the site has also been subjected to modern sand extraction. Disturbance associated with the former dwelling was also noted in the form of an in-filled septic tank pit.

A single artefact of archaeological interest was encountered during the works in the form a handle fragment from a medieval jug of 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century date. This was retrieved from the infill of a modern sand extraction pit and was the only evidence for medieval activity at or near the site; which lies within close proximity to St Peter and St Andrews' Church where evidence for medieval settlement has been previously recorded.

Any recommendations for archaeological mitigation ahead of the proposed development will be made by the Norfolk Historic Environment Service.

## 9.0 Acknowledgements

Thanks are due Roger of Matthew Williams Digger Hire for his assistance on site. The fieldwork was carried out by John Percival and the author. All stages of the post-excavation analysis were carried out by the author. NHER data was supplied by Anj Beckham of the Historic Environment Service.

## 10.0 Bibliography

- |                                |      |  |
|--------------------------------|------|--|
| Adkins, L & R.                 | 1998 | <i>The Handbook of British Archaeology</i> . London.   |
| Ashwin, T. & Davidson, A.(ed.) | 2005 | <i>An historical atlas of Norfolk</i> . (3rd edition). Phillimore press  |
| Jennings, S.                   | 1981 | <i>Eighteen centuries of pottery from Norwich</i> . East Anglian Archaeology 13.                                     |
| MPRG                           | 1998 | <i>A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms</i> . Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 1. |

**Appendix 1a: Context Summary**

Context	Category	Fill of	Brief Physical Description	Interpretation	Period
01	Deposit	-	V.Friable, dark yellowish-brown sandy-loam, occ. coal, occ. brick frags, occ. chalk flecks. C. 0.2 to 0.4m deep	Garden soil	Modern
02	Deposit	[03]	Soft, mid yellowish-brown slightly clay laden sand, occ. stones and cbm flecks/frags	Pit fill	E-M 20 <sup>th</sup> century
03	Cut	-	Steep sided, broad pit/trench with a fairly flat base, c. 0.5m deep and >2m wide	Extraction pit	E-M 20 <sup>th</sup> century
04	Deposit	[05]	Soft, mid yellowish-brown slightly clay laden sand, occ. stones and cbm flecks/frags	Pit fill	E-M 20 <sup>th</sup> century
05	Cut		Steep sided, broad pit/trench with a fairly flat base, c. 0.5m deep and c.5m wide	Extraction pit	E-M 20 <sup>th</sup> century
06	Deposit	-	V.soft, pale to mid yellow medium grained sand with occasional mineralised banding, rare flints	Natural Geology	
07	Deposit	[08]	Friable, dark brownish-grey sandy-loam, occ. modern window glass plastic	Pit fill	M-L 20 <sup>th</sup> century
08	Cut	-	V.Steep sided, with undercut, sq. corner of a pit believed to be infilled septic tank pit (main sewer connection made in 1980s/1990s)	Former septic tank pit	M-L 20 <sup>th</sup> century
09	Cut	-	Sub rect. With near vertical sides and flat base 0.25m+ in depth	Posthole	M-L 20 <sup>th</sup> century
10	Deposit	[09]	Soft, mid yellowish brown silty-loam, occ. coal and cbm pieces (modern)	Posthole fill	M-L 20 <sup>th</sup> century
11	Cut	-	Sub rect. With near vertical sides and flat base 0.15m+ in depth	Posthole	M-L 20 <sup>th</sup> century
12	Deposit	[09]	Soft, mid yellowish brown silty-loam, occ. coal and cbm pieces (modern)	Posthole fill	M-L 20 <sup>th</sup> century

**Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table**

Period	Feature type	Quantity
Modern (1900 to 2050 AD)	Extraction pit	2
	Pit	1
	Posthole	2

**Appendix 2: Finds by Context**

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (g)	Comment
02	Pottery	1	214	Medieval (13-14thC)

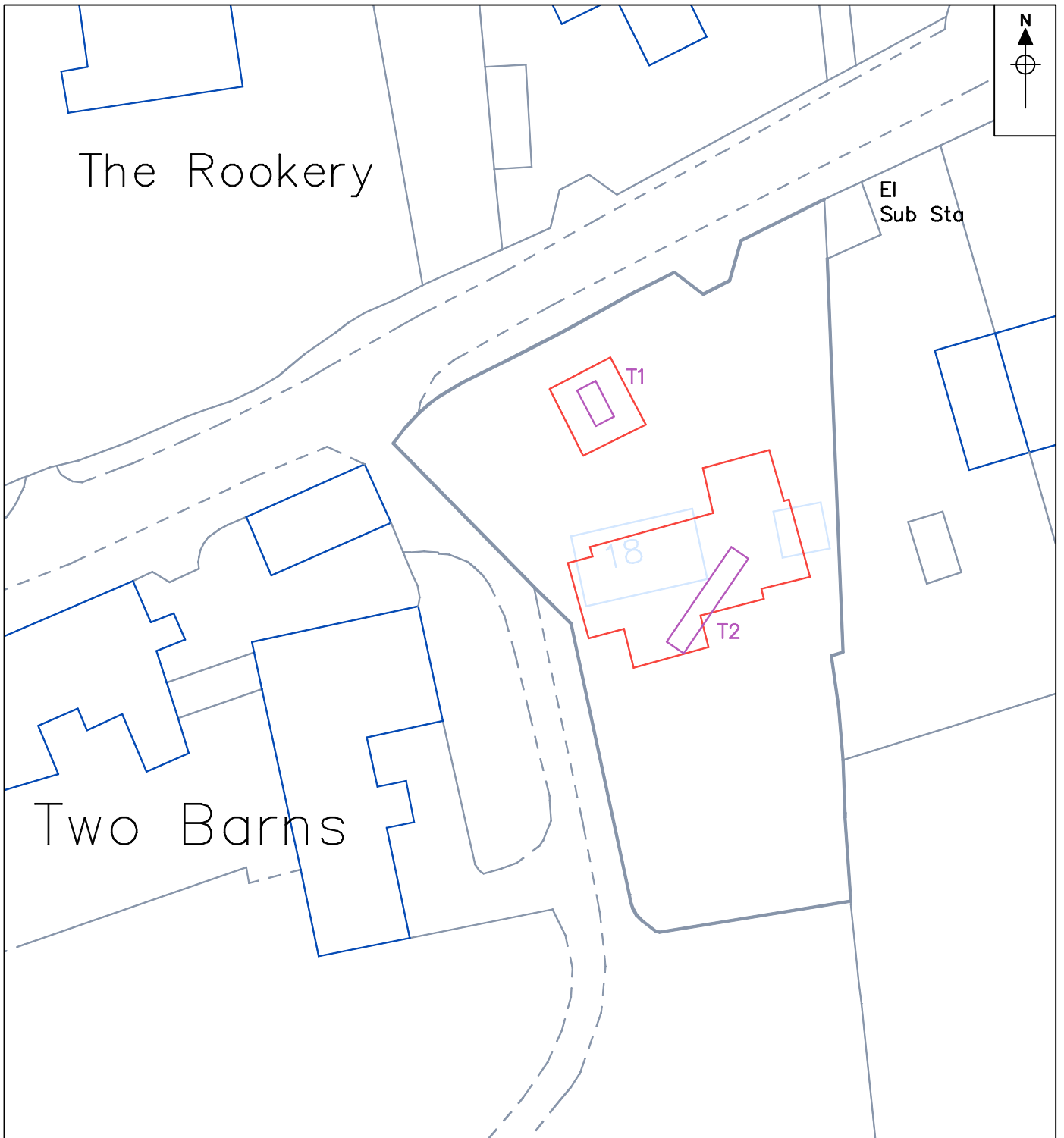


Figure 2. Trench location plan. Scale 1:500

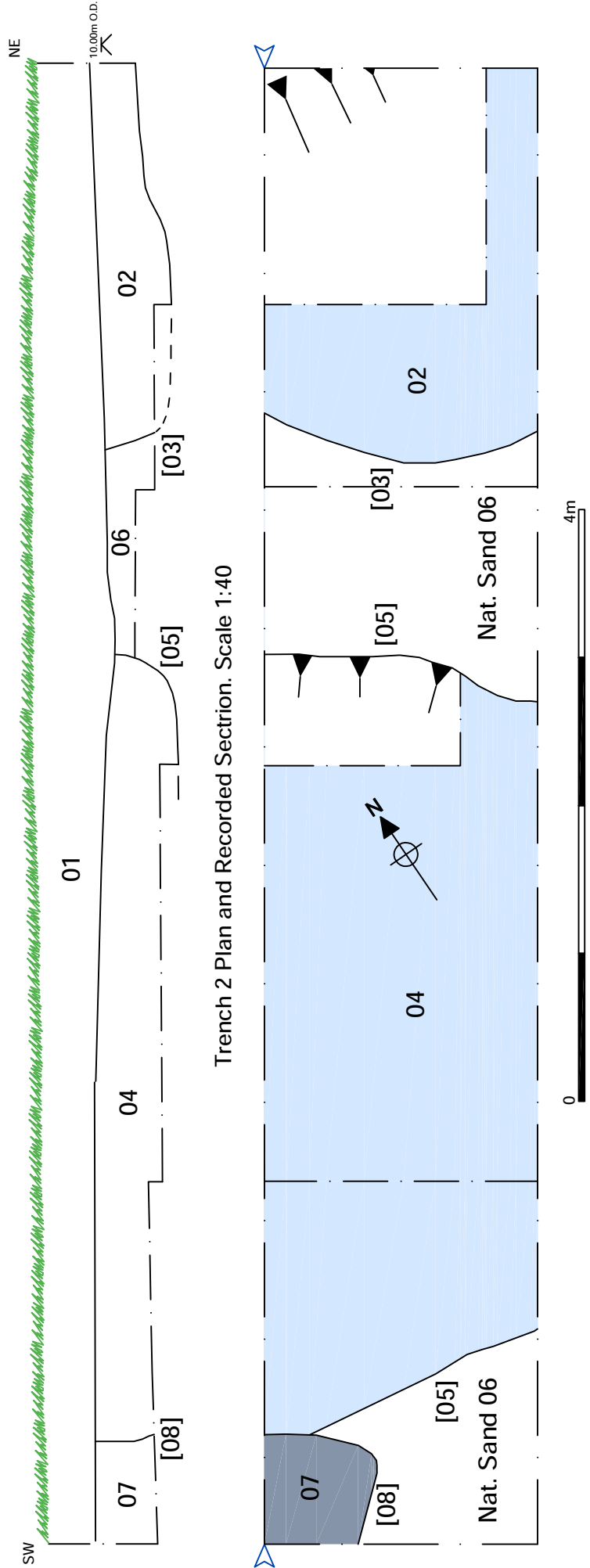
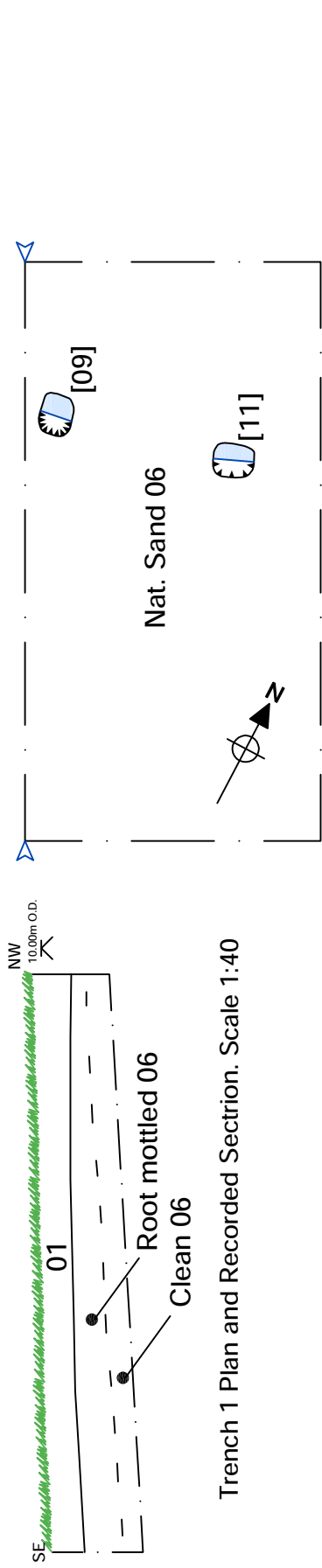


Figure 3. Trench 1 & 2. Scale 1:40



# OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM:

## England

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

[Printable version](#)

**OASIS ID: norvicar1-177409**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological Evaluation at No.18 Church Road, Blofield, Norfolk. NR13 4NA
Short description of the project	<p>The results of an evaluation by trial trenching at No.18 Church Road, Blofield. The plot has been cleared of a former dwelling and a proposed planning application has been submitted for the construction of two semi-detached homes with a separate garage (Ref: 200140064). The overall plot size measures c.1460m2. Roman pottery has been found in the vicinity and the parish church, likely to represent a medieval settlement focus, lies a short distance to the west. Cropmarks within fields to the south-east may relate to Roman and medieval activity, while four ring ditches there overlooking the River Yare floodplain are thought to represent a Bronze Age cemetery. The evaluation encountered natural sand geology directly below a shallow garden soil. No subsoils were present, which suggests that the area has been scraped down and landscaped in modern times. Two modern sand extraction pits were revealed in the central area of the site along with the corner of a modern infilled septic tank pit. A single artefact of archaeological interest was encountered during the works in the form a handle fragment from a medieval jug of 13th to 14th century date. This was retrieved from the infill of one of the modern sand extraction pits and represents the only evidence for medieval activity at or near the site; which lies within close proximity to St Peter and St Andrews' Church where evidence for medieval settlement has been previously recorded.</p>
Project dates	Start: 02-04-2014 End: 02-04-2014
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	ENF 133877 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	200140064 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	NVC/2013/GE198 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	EXTRACTION PIT Modern

Monument type	PIT Modern
Monument type	POSTHOLE Modern
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Investigation type	"Part Excavation"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK BROADLAND BLOFIELD No.18 Church Road, Blofield, Norfolk
Postcode	NR13 4NA
Study area	1460.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TG 3371 0926 52.6301578849 1.45393737928 52 37 48 N 001 27 14 E Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Norvic Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Norvic Archaeology
Project director/manager	Giles Emery
Project supervisor	Giles Emery
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr K B Horner

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service
Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service
Paper Contents	"Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Map","Plan","Report","Section"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
------------------	---

Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at No.18 Church Road, Blofield, Norfolk.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Emery, G.
Other bibliographic details	Norvic Archaeology Report No. 45
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	Norvic Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Norwich
Description	Spiral bound
Entered by	Giles Emery (giles.emery@norvicarchaeology.com)
Entered on	19 April 2014

## OASIS:

Please e-mail [English Heritage](#) for OASIS help and advice

© ADS 1996-2012 Created by [Jo Gilham and Jen Mitcham](#), [email](#) Last modified Wednesday 9 May 2012

Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page