

Archaeological Monitoring and the discovery of a WWII Norcon Pillbox at The Old Rectory, Docking, Norfolk.



Prepared on behalf of Graeme Ellison

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November 2015

Report No: 68


NHES Event No: ENF138339

Job Ref: NVC/2015/GE259

OASIS ID: norvicar1-231181

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*NB: Norcon Pillbox at SE corner of the footings footprint

Archaeological Monitoring at The Old Rectory, Sedgeford Road, Docking, Norfolk. PE31 8LJ.

Location:	Docking
Grid Ref:	TF 7645 3710
NHES Event No:	ENF 138339
Date of fieldwork:	20 th July 2015

1.0 Introduction

Norvic Archaeology was commissioned by Graeme Ellisdon, to undertake archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of a large timber framed outbuilding (Planning Ref. 15/00386/F). The general footprint occupies an area of c.300m², situated just to the north-east of the Old Rectory house and its later extensions.

The site is located adjacent to an area of previous archaeological work for a housing estate, which recorded Late Saxon and Medieval pits and ditches to the north of the medieval church of St Marys. A community test pitting project by the Docking Heritage also recovered sherds of Late Saxon and medieval pottery in the immediate area.

The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Service (HES Ref: CNF46151_1) on behalf of King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough 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 Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

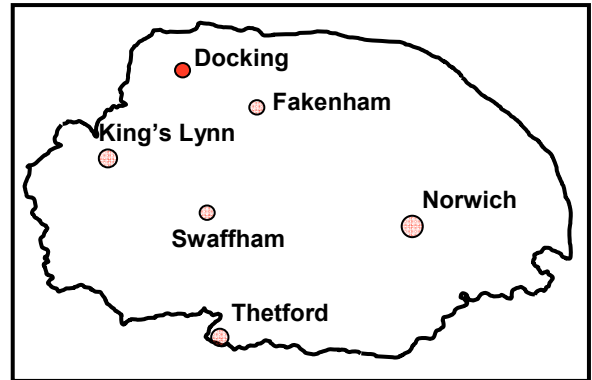
2.0 Summary of Results

Where natural sands were partly exposed below masking subsoils in the western area of the trenching footprint, the monitoring work recorded what appears to be an agglomeration of Late Saxon to early Medieval features. The base of a Thetford Ware vessel was collected from one of the pits, which was in a relatively fresh condition. The clay lined base of a possible oven was also identified.

The subsoil contained no obviously modern intrusions and was sealed below a late post-medieval layer of soil build-up or levelling material, which contained evidence for localised rubbish burning.

A previously unrecorded circular concrete WWII pillbox was located within a metre of the south-east corner of the outbuilding's footprint, partly buried by earth, mounded rubble, soil and vegetation. This is a rare Norcon Pillbox (Type CP/6/40/111) which has survived in good condition. Docking has an unusually high number of these rare Norcon pillboxes, with four other surviving examples recorded, along with a rare twin set of Tett turrets linked by a tunnel, spigot mortar positions and anti-tank gun emplacements. A Home Guard brick munitions store also survives at Hall Farm. These defensive positions were probably hastily constructed by the Home Guard to bolster the defences around a brigade HQ located at Docking Hall.

Figure 1. General Site Location



3.0 Geology and Topography

The site is located in the village and parish of Docking in North West Norfolk, c. 22km north-east of Kings Lynn. The coast lies c. 8km to the north and 10km to the west of Docking.

The underlying geology is Upper Chalk (cretaceous), overlain by superficial glacial outwash deposits (quaternary) of poorly sorted sands, gravels, silts and clays - Geology of Britain Viewer at a scale of 1:50 000 (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

Docking is situated at the highest topographical point in north-west Norfolk, at c. 83m OD, located at the western margins of the Upper Chalk, with Lower Chalk deposits immediately west which together form a geological escarpment facing westward over the Fenland and the Wash. The Peddars Way follows the crest of this high ground from south-south-east to north-north-west (Ashwin & Davidson 4, 2005)

Docking is in an area that is often referred to as a 'Good Sand' landscape, with thin calcareous soils (rendzinas) on the high grounds and deeper loams in the lower slopes. Historically, this landscape was kept reasonably fertile through the close-folding of livestock and the use of marl spreading.

The sub-surface geology of the site encountered during the fieldwork can be characterised as medium grained mid-orange sands with occasional frost-fractured flints overlain by sandy soils.

4.0 Brief Archaeological and Historical Background *(Figures 1 & 2)*

The village of Docking is located in north-west Norfolk in the parish of Docking which lies amongst a relatively rich historic landscape that has provided evidence of human occupation from all historic periods. A parish summary of the large amount of information held for Docking's Historic Environment can be viewed on the Norfolk Heritage Explorer website. The parish has generated over 130 records which give evidence of human occupation and activity of most periods in the form of find scatters, cropmarks, listed buildings and excavated sites.

Docking, can be translated as meaning 'place where docks, or water lilies grow' and is a large parish in the northwest of the county (Mills 1998). Docking was often referred to as 'Dry Docking' due to the lack of a stream or spring in the village, and in the 1760s a well was dug to provide water for the inhabitants of the village (NHER 1655). The use of this well continued until 1936 when water was eventually piped into the village. Early 20th century photographs show a wooden hut over the well (NHER 1655).

Prehistoric activity within the parish is represented by various surface finds of worked flint of Mesolithic to Bronze Age date, Bronze Age metalwork and the sites of two ring ditches; thought to be ploughed out Bronze Age burial barrows recognised as cropmarks on aerial photographs within fields in the west of the parish (NHER 11902 & 35558). Small numbers of Iron Age pottery sherds have been found within the parish, primarily within fields to the north-west of the village (NHER 60407 & 41771) and a few sherds within gardens off Station Road (a small number of iron age coins have been reported for the parish).

A focus to Roman settlement is suggested by a fair quantity of surface finds to the north-east of the village, where a Roman ditch system has also been confirmed through excavation (NHER 3827). Roman pottery, coins and metalwork have been found in smaller numbers within field surrounding the village and Roman ditches have been identified through excavation off Station Road (NHER 36223).

The historic core of the village is sited around a crossroad, leading to King's Lynn, Fakenham and the coast. Saxon finds have been collected as pottery sherds and a small number of metalwork finds, within fields close to the village, and a few Middle to Late Saxon sherds have been recovered within the area of the village close to the site; some from probable Late Saxon to medieval ditches recorded during archaeological work at the Bell Meadows housing estate in 2001 and others recovered by the Docking Heritage Group during recent test-pitting in 2012.

In Domesday, Docking is listed as a relatively small settlement, although during the medieval period the village may have extended further south than the present village, where the tofts for former buildings, hollow ways and roads (NHER 15003) survive as earthworks within Docking Park (NHER 30502) surrounding Docking Hall, an early 17th century country house, partially rebuilt by Ewan Christian in the mid-19th century (NHER 1656).

The cemetery of St Mary's Church (NHER 1657) is partly contiguous with the eastern boundary of the site. The church dates mainly to the 14th and 15th centuries, and contains an elaborate 14th or 15th century octagonal font. The church was restored by Ewan Christian in the 19th century.

The Rectory is a large late 19th century brick house with 20th century additions. The house and its grounds are shown on the 1st Edition OS plan of c. 1888. Several Grade II Listed post-medieval buildings are located to the north and east of the village church, which include an 18th century house (Manor House) at Church Place (NHER 44007), two mid to late 18th century house on Chequers Street (Holland House; NHER 44005 & Horseshoe Cottage) and a late 18th century house at the junction of High Street and Wells Street (The Chronicle & The Lodge; NHER 44008). Docking also has a village stocks (relocated from its original site on Station Road) and a 19th century lock-up (NHER 15012).

Manor Farm House (NHER 20956) is a 17th century house, with 19th century farm buildings, one of which contains gun loopholes from World War Two. The village has a particularly high number of surviving WWII monuments with at least four rare and well-preserved circular Norcon pillboxes (NHER 30778, 30779, 57853 & 589229). The site of two Spigot mortar emplacements is known, along with an anti-tank gun emplacement, loopholed walls (NHER 58185) road blocks (NHER 58187) and a pair of rare Tett Turrets south of Manor farm (NHER 60105). Together these sites appear to form part of a defensive ring around the village, covering all major routes and approaches. Two rare Home Guard stores for explosives and inflammables are located at Hall Farm and Docking Hall served as a Home Guard brigade HQ. By 1943, Norfolk had 17 battalions of Home Guard totalling 32,000 men and women and their HQs occupied a variety of buildings (Osborne & Kerr 71, 2008).

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)

Listed Buildings

NHER 1657: St Mary's Church, Docking. A medieval parish church, dating mainly to the 14th and 15th centuries, and which was restored by Ewan Christian in the mid-19th century. The church contains an elaborate 14th or 15th century font, which has been much defaced. [c. 140m SE]

NHER 15012: Post-medieval Cage & Pound. On the west side of the village along Sedgeford Road is an early 19th century cage, or lock up, and pound, built in flint and brick, with an original door and locking bar. NB: The village stocks located by the village sign (NHER 51643) were originally located at a former pub on Station Road (NHER 15011). [c.160m SW]

NHER 20956: Manor Farm House. A 17th century Grade II Listed flint and brick house, which was remodelled in the 17th century and in the late 19th century. The house has late 17th century cross windows. The farm buildings date to the early 19th century, and one building, now known as the dovecote, has gun loopholes from World War Two. [c. 200m E]

Finds Scatters

NHER 58580: Late Saxon & Medieval pottery from Test-pit. A 1m by 1m test pit excavated by the Docking Heritage Group within the grounds of Manor Cottage on Church Place in October 2012 revealed Thetford ware, and medieval pottery. [c. 85m SE]

NHER 58581: Late Saxon to Post-medieval pottery from Test-pit. A 1m by 1m test pit excavated by the Docking Heritage Group within a green to the north of the school in October 2012 revealed Thetford ware, and medieval pottery post-medieval pottery. [c. 85m SE]

NHER 58579: Medieval pottery from Test-pit. A 1m by 1m test pit excavated by the Docking Heritage Group within the grounds of The Rectory, off the driveway close to the boundary with the cemetery in October 2012 revealed medieval pottery. [c. 100m SSE]

NHER 13723: Medieval statue. A carved stone head, dating from the medieval period was found along Chequers Street in 1932 while pulling down part of an old house when rebuilding the public house for Bullard's Brewery at a depth of 1.83m. It was described as a grotesque head, carved on square block (apparently of stone) with pillar box mouth and pupils carved in relief. [c. 260m SE]

NHER 1645: Roman Coin. A single Roman coin of Emperor Magnetius (r. 350-353) was reported in 1954 from a corner of land between the junction of Chequers Street and Well Street. [c. 265m SE]

NHER 60407 & 41771: Iron Age to post-medieval pottery sherd. In 2014 an assemblage of Iron Age to post-medieval pottery sherds was recovered during metal-detecting fields to the immediate north-west of the village. The assemblage includes small numbers of Iron Age, Roman, Early/Middle/Late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval sherds along with a Middle/Late Saxon brooch and medieval to post-medieval dress accessories [c. 300m NW]

NHER 60278: Roman Coin. A Roman coin, dating from the 3rd century was found in 1985 in fields to the east of North Farm. [c. 300m N]

NHER 33909 & 59978: Multi-period finds. Roman tile & coins, a medieval buckle and spindle whorl, along with Middle Saxon to post-medieval pottery have been found within the garden at Seefeld bungalow along Station Road. A flint flake, possibly from the Early Neolithic was found in gardens just to the north (NHER 57930) and a 1m by 1m test-pit within the garden by the Docking Heritage Group recovered Saxon to post-medieval pottery (NHER 59980). NB: Roman ditches/gullies found next-door see NHER 36223. [c.440m NNE]

NHER 35086 & 58582: Medieval finds. A post medieval Nuremburg jetton, found close to the Old Police Station along Station Road in 1986. A test pit excavated by the Docking Heritage Group in October 2012 revealed medieval pottery. [475m NNE]

NHER 41772: Roman coins. Roman coins, found by metal detecting in fields to the south of West Hall Farm. An iron age coin is reported to have been found by metal detector to the west of the farm (NHER 59639). [c. 485m WSW]

Historic Sites & Monuments

NHER 36960. Late Saxon and medieval pits and ditches. An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching ahead of the Bell Meadows housing estate carried out by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit in 2002 revealed Late Saxon and medieval pits and ditches, along with a residual fragment of Middle Saxon pottery. [c. 50m E]

NHER 15005: Post-medieval Windmill. This is the site of a post medieval windmill, marked on Faden's map of 1797. The mill was last used in 1890 and the area now forms part of an industrial unit. [c. 120m NNW]

NHER 1655: Post-medieval Village Well. A well was located at the junction of Church Place and Well Street in about 1760, and was in use until 1936. In the early 20th century a wooden hut was built over the well. The well was sunk because of the scarcity of water in Docking, which was known locally as Dry Docking. [c.120m ESE]

NHER 30502. Docking Park. An 18th century landscape park around Docking Hall, NHER 1656. The park included an avenue, focused on a temple, NHER 15013, and an ornamental viewing mound, NHER 1643, as well as terraced formal gardens and a kitchen garden. Medieval and post medieval tofts and enclosures are visible as earthworks within the park, as well as a number of medieval and post medieval roads, NHER 15003, which were closed in the 19th century. Fragments of pottery dating from the Roman, Saxon, medieval and post medieval periods have been found in the park. [c. 250m SE]

NHER 15003: Medieval & Post.med. Roads. The courses of several medieval and post medieval roads are visible as earthworks within Docking Park, NHER 20502, and are also visible on aerial photographs. Some of the roads are shown on 18th century estate maps, and they were closed to the public in the 19th century. [c. 400m SE]

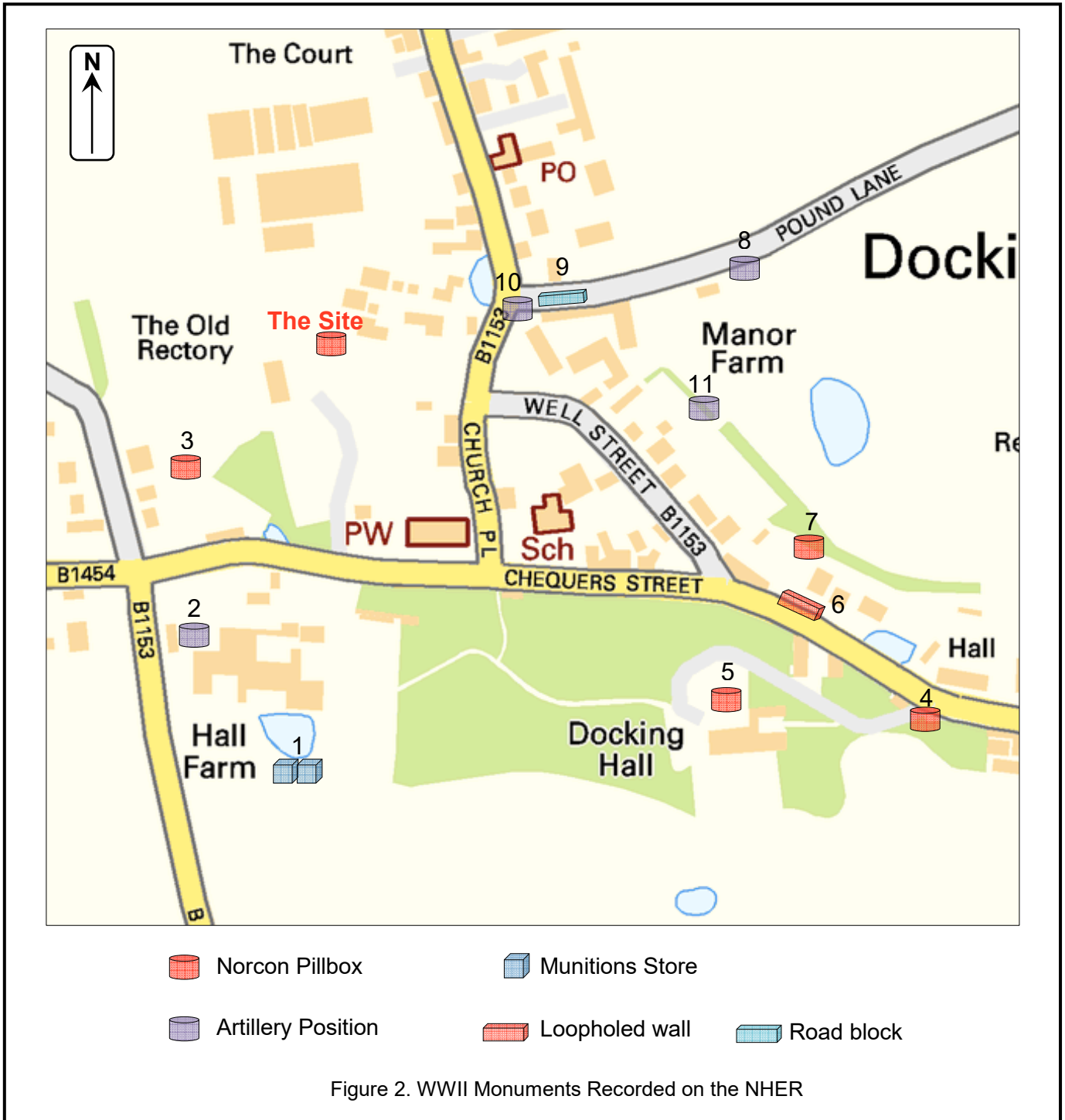
NHER 36223. Roman ditches/gullies. An archaeological evaluation of land at The Paddocks on Station Road carried out by RPS Consultants in 2001 revealed two Roman ditches or gullies, which were probably part of an agricultural field during the Roman period. Roman pottery was also found on the site. [c. 425m NNE]

NHER 34174: Multi-period pottery & P.med. ditch. This is the site of a post medieval earthwork ditch, marking a woodland boundary. Roman, Early Saxon and medieval pottery have been found by fieldwalking. [c. 450m SW]

NHER 1643: The Mount. The Mount has been thought to be a Bronze Age round barrow, a medieval beacon and a spoil heap, but it is most likely to be an 18th century garden feature associated with Docking Hall, NHER 1656, and it is shown on a mid 18th century map of the estate. An excavation carried out in 1971 revealed post medieval building material, which suggests there may have been a building on the mound, perhaps a memorial to the Countess of Leicester, who died in 1775. Before March 2009 fragments of Middle and Late Saxon pottery were recovered from a rabbit scrape on top of the mound. [c. 490m SW]

WWII monuments & records (Nos. refer to Figure 2)

1. **NHER 30780. Two Home Guard stores from World War Two.** A pair of rare Home Guard stores at the rear of Home Farm for the storage of explosives and inflammables which survive in an excellent state of preservation. [c. 270m S]
2. **NHER 58230. WWII Spigot Mortar Site.** A spigot mortar emplacement was originally sited here to cover the road junction to the north-west. [c. 200m SSW]
3. **NHER 58229. A WWII Norcon pillbox.** A rare example of a WWII Norcon pillbox has been used as the foundation for a summer house in the rear garden of Holme Lodge on Ringstead Road. The loopholes of the Norcon were visible at ground level before being rendered over. Probably sited to cover the junction to the south and the road to the west. [c. 120m SW]
4. **NHER 30778. A WWII Norcon pillbox.** A rare example of a 'Norcon' circular pillbox, from World War Two located east of Docking Hall. The Pillbox is aligned east to west with the entrance facing west. This would have allowed the pillbox to cover both the entrance to the hall and the field to the east. A number of original wooden brackets for shelves survive internally. These were affixed to the structure by a series of bolts which have been simply punched through the pillbox's 15cm thick walls. [c. 440m SE]
5. **NHER 30779. A WWII Norcon pillbox.** A rare example of a 'Norcon' circular pillbox, located on the northern side of Docking Hall but faces to the south. [c. 360m SE]
6. **NHER 58185. A WWII loopholed wall.** A loopholed wall along the High Street close to Docking Hall, constructed during WWII. Originally used by the local Home Guard to pull a string of 'Daisy chained' Hawkins mines across the street. Local residents remember the Home Guard using the loophole during training on Sundays. [c. 360m SE]
7. **NHER 57853. A WWII Norcon pillbox.** A rare example of a 'Norcon' circular pillbox, located in the rear garden of Garford on the High Street, aligned north-east to south-west with the entrance facing south-west. This pillbox would have covered the field to the north and the road leading into the village further north. [c. 360m ESE]
8. **NHER 30781. WWII Spigot Mortar Emplacement.** A spigot mortar emplacement along Pound Lane, which former Home Guard members describe as actually a support for an anti-tank rocket launcher, not a mortar, in case German tanks landed at Brancaster. [288m E]
9. **NHER 58187. Site of WWII Road Block.** A series of filled in holes on the road's surface along Pound Lane suggest the presence of a removed WW2 roadblock. Originally consisting of seven concrete sockets for vertical RSJs. [c. 170m E]
10. **NHER 58231. World War Two Anti-tank gun emplacement.** An anti-tank gun emplacement was originally built into the wall at the junction of Pound lane and Station road. Sited to cover Station road to the north. Evidence for this structure includes a replaced section of wall and a concrete plinth. [c. 130m E]
11. **NHER 60105. Pair of World War Two Tett turrets.** A pair of rare World War Two Tett turrets south of Manor Farm, linked by a system of concrete tunnels. Only 31 of these turrets were ever manufactured and this pair are two of only eight surviving examples recorded across the country. [c. 240m ESE]



5.0 Methodology (Figure 3)

The objective of the archaeological monitoring was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during machine excavation of the footing trenches for the outbuilding. The building will serve as garages and a storage shed for gardening and boating equipment.

The trenching was carried out by a 5-ton 360° machine fitted with a 0.6m wide ditching bucket, with spoil relocated on site during the course of the works via a dumper. In addition to the footing trenches, vegetation and rubble laden soils were cleared from a WWII pillbox, sited immediately adjacent to the footprint of the new outbuilding.

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 photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

All levels were tied to an OS benchmark of 84.62m, located on a buttress on the south-west corner of St Mary's Church. The outbuilding footprint was located on level ground for a former parking area at c. 85.35m OD.

Site conditions were fine during the works, with warm sunny weather in the morning and overcast conditions in the afternoon.

6.0 Results (Appendix 1a, Figs 4 & 5)

- **'Natural deposits'**

All trenches were excavated to a depth of between 0.7m to 0.8m in depth. A root-mottled mid-orange natural sand (10) was revealed at a depth of c. 0.7m within the western area of the footings trenching. This was masked by lower subsoils (03) in the remainder of the trenches, which showed that the natural may slope slightly to the east.

- **Lower Subsoil**

Above the natural was a brownish-orange subsoil (03). It varied in depth from c. 0.4m to 0.6m in depth and shared a diffuse horizon with the natural sands below. No clear relationship could be discerned between this soil horizon and the features revealed in the western area of the site, although on balance, they appear to have been partly masked by a build-up of this material. If this is the case, then it is feasible that other features were left undisturbed below the level of the necessary trenching. No modern materials were present in this lower-subsoil, within which a few flecks of decayed shell and burnt clay were noted.



Plate 2: Saxo-Norman Features (looking W) [1x2m & 1x0.5m scales]

- **Upper subsoil and modern surface**

Above the lower subsoil (03) was a mid-grey silty-sand flecked by coal, chalk and charcoal and rare flecks of brick. This soil layer measured c. 0.3m deep and may be either a levelling material of late post-medieval date or a build-up of soils which include evidence of localised rubbish burning. Directly overlaying the upper subsoil was a modern layer of compacted carrstone of c. 100mm, with a surface spread of gravel (01).

- **Saxo-Norman Features** (Plate 2)

A minimum of three intercutting features were recorded in the western area of the footings at a depth of c. 0.8m, where masking soils were slightly shallower. A possible pit agglomeration ([08]) and an adjacent oval pit ([07]) contained very similar mottled orangey-brown to mid-grey silty-sand fills. Their fills were flecked by occasional traces of decayed oyster shell and burnt clay flecks. These features were encountered at the formation depth of the footings trench, where any significant sample excavation would have destabilised the trench. Depths were tested by trowel and shown to exceed 300mm. A single fragment of sheep/goat maxilla and an oyster shell were collected from the pit fill (06) along with a large base sherd from a Thetford Ware pot of 10th to 11th century date.

A small oval of redeposited pale-orange clay with a thickness of c. 200mm (04) was identified which lined the base of a shallow cut ([05]). This feature post-dated the infill of pit [07] and may be interpreted as the base of a small oven or similarly clay lined feature of c. 0.85m width and c. 0.55m wide.

- **WWII Norcon Pillbox (Type CP/6/40/111)** (Figures 4 & 5, Plates 3 to 5)

Within a metre of the south-east corner of the outbuilding's footprint was a circular concrete pillbox, partly buried by earth, mounded rubble, soil and vegetation. A call was made during the on-site works to the Historic Environment Record, which showed that this particular pillbox had not been previously logged or recorded. Upon clearing the modern soils and vegetation, the full extent of the pillbox was able to be defined and recorded externally.

The Old Rectory Norcon pillbox is a well preserved example of its type, with a concrete roof and low entrance (which may have once sat within a slit trench). The apex of the concrete roof is noticeably 'off-centre'.



Plate 3: Norcon Pillbox. (looking S) [1x1m & 1x0.3m scales]

The interior was void to a depth of c. 0.5m below the loopholes where soil and rubble infill began. Interior metal fittings were still in place below several of the loopholes.

Timber shuttering scars were clearly visible on the inside face of the short concrete access tunnel. The pillbox was half buried within an earthen mound, with a wide shelf of concrete at its front sloping gently up around its western side. This concrete was poured directly onto the earthen mound and may be the remains of the pillbox's original setting, meant to act a base for the sandbag wall surrounding the pillbox.

Six loopholes were present, of which two were of a slightly larger height and width to serve as embrasures to accommodate a machine gun (the 3rd and 5th clockwise). This would suggest the main arc of fire was positioned to cover the approach into Docking from the north alongside Station Road.



Plate 4: Norcon Pillbox. (looking N) [1x1m scale]

The Norcon Pillbox (Type CP/6/40/111) is a rare form of circular pillbox, usually surrounded and covered by earth and sandbags. They began to be built in Britain during the invasion crisis of 1940 to 1941, to a commercial design by Norcon Ltd, a company specialising in concrete pipes. It was essentially made from a concrete pipe c. 1.8m in diameter and 1.2m high with walls of c. 100mm of non-reinforced concrete with several cut loopholes. The precast pipe would normally be sunk into the ground into a pit to provide c. 6ft (1.8m) of headroom. Standard models had a timber roof covered by corrugated iron and earth, some a concrete roof and others no roof at all. The walls were intended to be sandbagged as part of their kinetic defence.

Although built in relatively small numbers, they have been recorded all over the United Kingdom, with 27 Norcon pillbox sites recorded in the Defence of Britain database (compiled in 2002). These pillboxes prioritised speed of construction over strength and, although concerns were raised over their resistance to heavy and concentrated fire, they were an improvement over sandbagging alone, and were originally intended to be installed alongside heavier defensive pillboxes.



Plate 5: Norcon Pillbox. (looking E) [2x1m scales]

7.0 Finds Analysis *(Appendix 2)*

- **Pottery**

The base of an unabrased Thetford Ware vessel of 10th to 11th century date with a flat base and clear wire marks was collected from the fill (06) of a pit ([07]). The base measures 120mm in diameter and weighs 128g in total but was clipped by the machine bucket upon discovery and was broken into three conjoining pieces. Flat based vessels of similar form are usually classed as cooking pots, although no signs of sooting or internal residue are present on this example. This type of well-fired, wheel-thrown grey pottery was produced in large quantities at several urban sites in East Anglia during the late Saxo-Norman period (Jennings 14, 1981).

A single small rim sherd of Early Medieval Ware (11th-12th century) with an everted rim was collected from the lower subsoil (03). The sherd weighs 6g, shows moderate abrasion and is of a well-reduced, fairly sandy/gritty fabric.

These sherds indicate Saxo-Norman to early medieval activity at the site. The large base sherd is in fresh condition and may have been deposited as midden waste within a pit in close proximity to a domestic site.

- **Fired Clay**

Two pieces of fired clay weighing a total of 51g were collected from the lower subsoil (03) in close proximity to an area where pits of probable Saxo-Norman date were recorded. They are both of the same fabric – a dark pinkish buff, fairly dense, no inclusions.

The large piece weighs 39g and exhibits a fairly smooth convex surface while the small piece (weighing 12g) has a very smooth surface. Although the function of these pieces remains uncertain, their form and fabric suggest that they are likely to be from a small structure, such as a clay oven or heath lining.

- **Faunal remains**

Two fragments of animal bone were collected, with a combined weight of 76g. A fragment of bovine scapula with a finely sawn end was collected from the lower subsoil (03) and a fragment of sheep/goat maxilla with two unworn teeth from the pit-fill (06).

Three examples of complete common oyster shell (*Ostrea edulis*) of moderate preservation were collected, two from the lower subsoil (03) and two from the pit-fill (06), weighing a total of 73g.

Overall, this very small assemblage represents residual food waste of a Late Saxon through to late-post-medieval date range.

8.0 Conclusions

Where natural sands were partly exposed below masking subsoils in the western area of the trenching footprint, the monitoring work recorded what appears to be an agglomeration of Late Saxon to early Medieval features. The base of a Thetford Ware vessel was collected from one of the pits, which was in a relatively fresh condition. The clay lined base of a possible oven was also identified and two sherds of fired clay were collected from the subsoil. This discovery points to some form of Saxo-Norman settlement at the site, most likely an extension of the Late Saxon to medieval activity identified in the form of several ditches and pits within the area of Bell Meadows just 50m to the east.

The subsoil contained no obviously modern intrusions and was sealed below a late post-medieval layer of soil build-up or levelling material, which contained evidence for localised rubbish burning.

A previously unrecorded circular concrete WWII pillbox was located within a metre of the south-east corner of the outbuilding's footprint, partly buried by earth, mounded rubble, soil and vegetation. This is a rare Norcon Pillbox (Type CP/6/40/111) which has survived in good condition. Docking has an unusually high number of these rare Norcon pillboxes, with four other surviving examples recorded, along with a rare twin set of Tett turrets linked by a tunnel, spigot mortar positions and anti-tank gun emplacements. A Home Guard brick munitions store also survives at Hall Farm. These defensive positions were probably hastily constructed by the Home Guard to bolster the defences around a brigade HQ located at Docking Hall.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Graeme Ellisdon who commissioned Norvic Archaeology to carry out this work. Thanks are also due David Atterbury and his team from Elite Property Improvements for their assistance and cooperation on site. All stages of the monitoring and post-excavation analysis work were carried out by the author. NHER data was supplied by Heather Hamilton of the Historic Environment Service

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Fill of	Brief Physical Description	Interpretation	Period
01	Deposit		V.firm/compacted carrstone make-up below gravel	Hardstanding	Modern
02	Deposit		Friable, mid grey silty-sand, dry, mod. roots, rare brick flecks, mod. coal/chalk/charcoal pieces/flecks c. 0.3m deep	Subsoil	Late Post-medieval
03	Deposit		Soft/dense, mid-brownish-orange silty-sand, dry, rare decayed oyster shell flecks and burnt clay flecks. c. 0.4m to 0.6m deep	Lower Subsoil	Late Saxon-Medieval
04	Deposit	[05]	V.firm, clean pale-orange clay >0.3m	Fill	
05	Cut		Oval clay filled feature	Pit/oven base	Saxo-Norman
06	Deposit	[07]	Friable, mid-orangey-brown mottled with mid-grey silty-sand, occ. degraded oyster shell+ burnt clay flecks	Fill	
07	Cut		?Oval pit	Pit	Saxo-Norman
08	Cut		Large pit agglomeration	Pitting	Saxo-Norman
09	Deposit	[09]	Friable, mid-orangey-brown mottled with mid-grey silty-sand, occ. degraded oyster shell+ burnt clay flecks	Fill	
10	Deposit		Soft, mid-orange medium grained sand, occ. frost-fractured flints, occ. root mottled	Natural Geology	Quaternary
11	Masonry		A well-preserved concrete, circular WWII Norcon Pill box (Type CP/6/40/111)	Norcon Pillbox	WWII
12	Deposit		Modern rubble and garden soil	Make-up	Modern

Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table

Period	Feature type	Quantity
Late Saxon (851 to 1065AD)	Oven	1
	Pit	2
World War Two (1939-1945)	Norcon Pillbox (Type CP/6/40/111)	1

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (g)
03	Animal bone	1	59
03	Fired clay	2	51
03	Pottery	1	6
03	Shell – oyster	2	53
06	Animal bone	1	17
06	Pottery	1	128
06	Shell – oyster	1	20

Appendix 2b: Finds summary table

Period	Material	Quantity
Late Saxon (851 to 1065AD)	Pottery	1
Medieval (1066 to 1539AD)	Animal bone	1
	Fired Clay	2
	Pottery	1
	Shell	2
Uncertain	Animal bone	1
	Pottery	1
	Shell	1

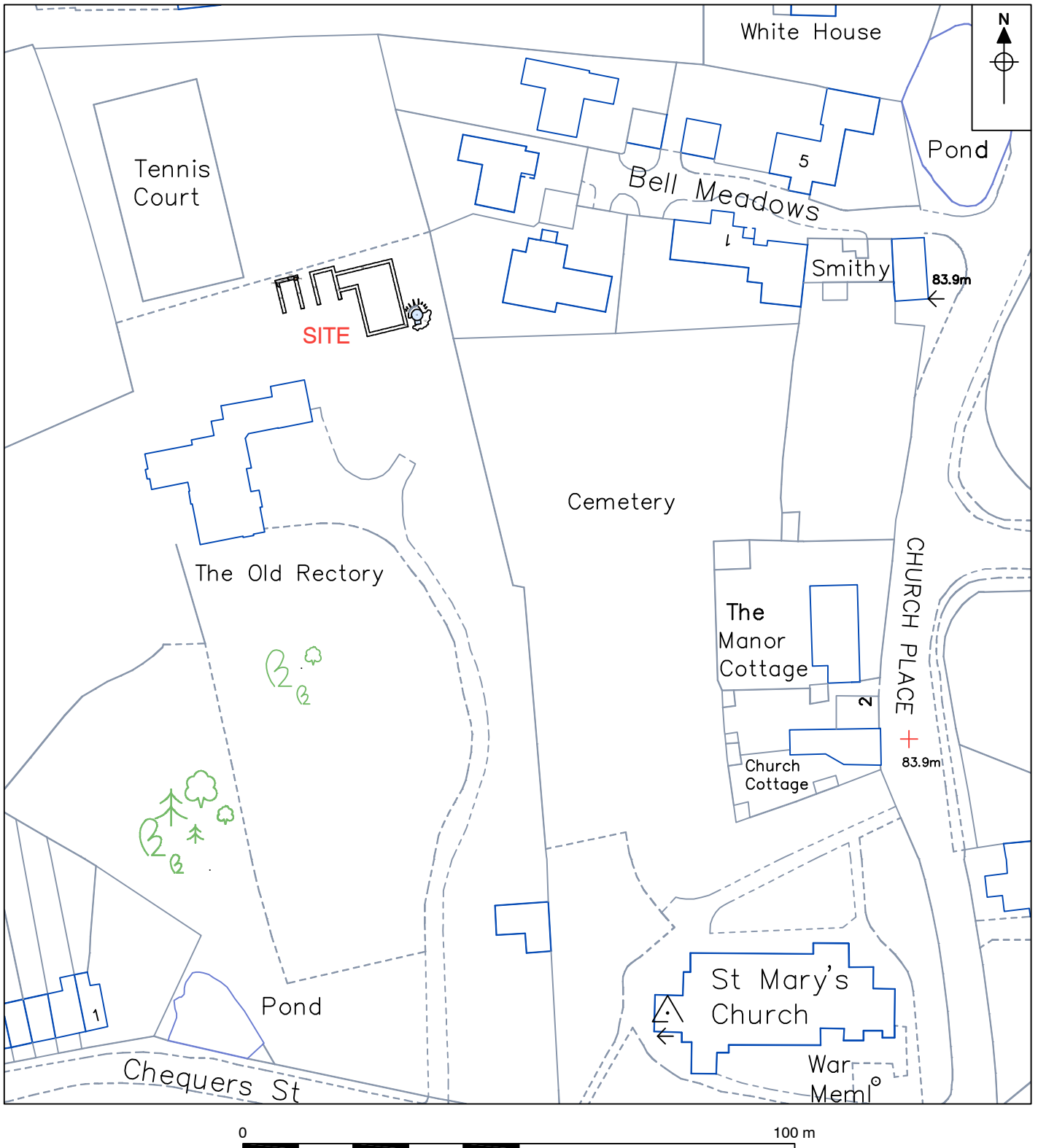


Figure 3. Site location plan. Scale 1:1000

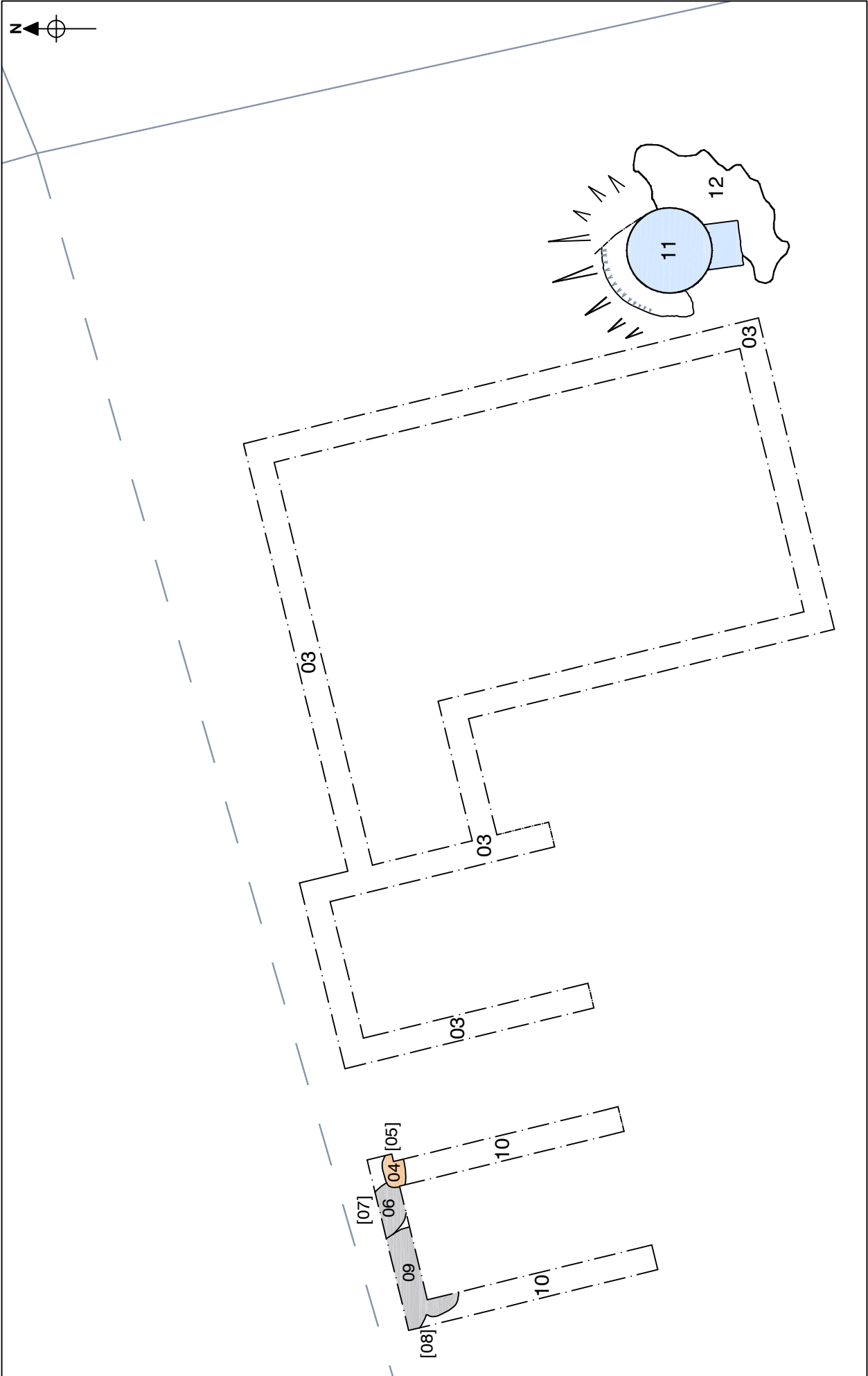


Figure 4. Groundworks plan. Scale 1:125

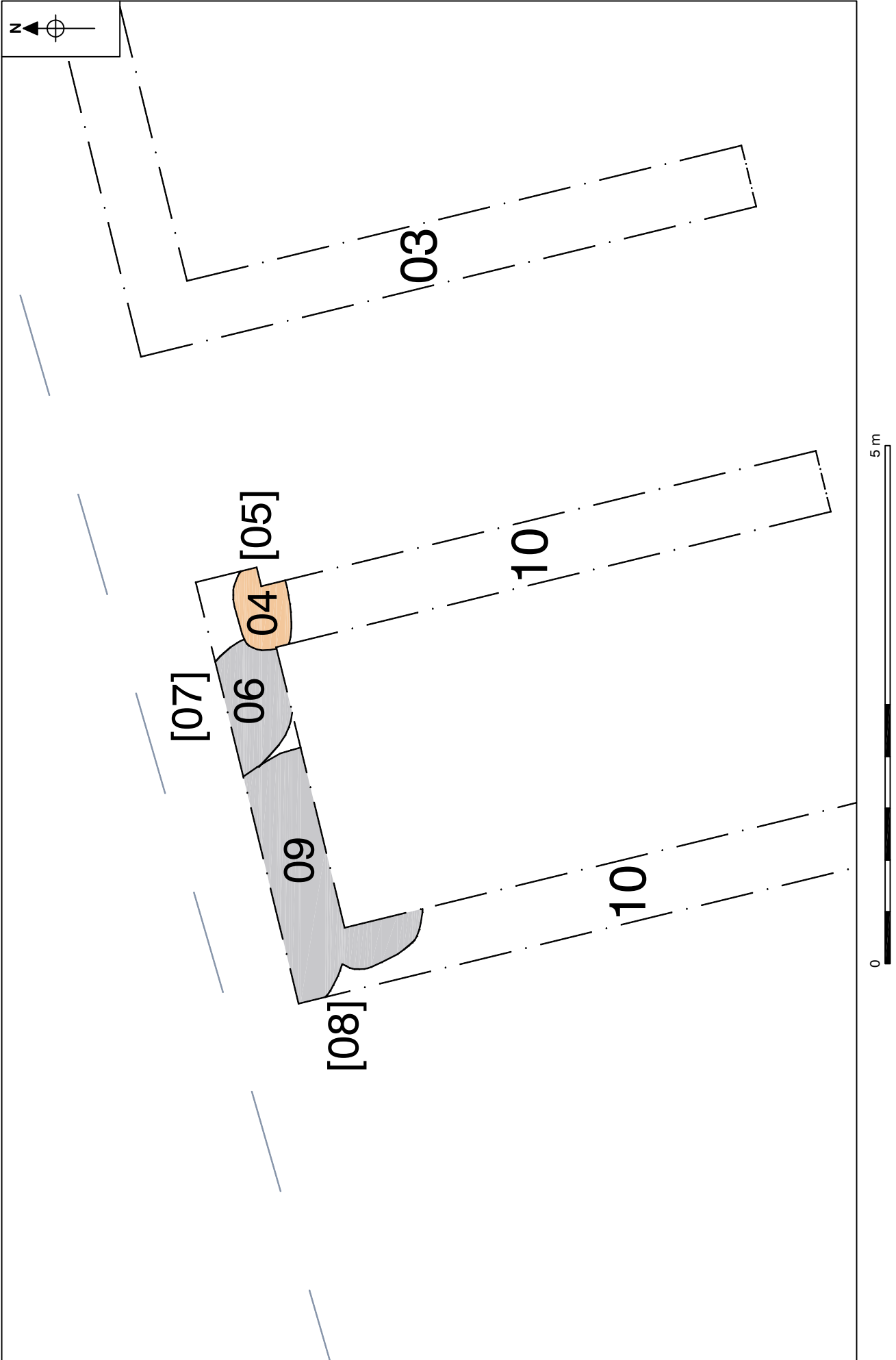


Figure 5. Groundworks plan. Scale 1:50

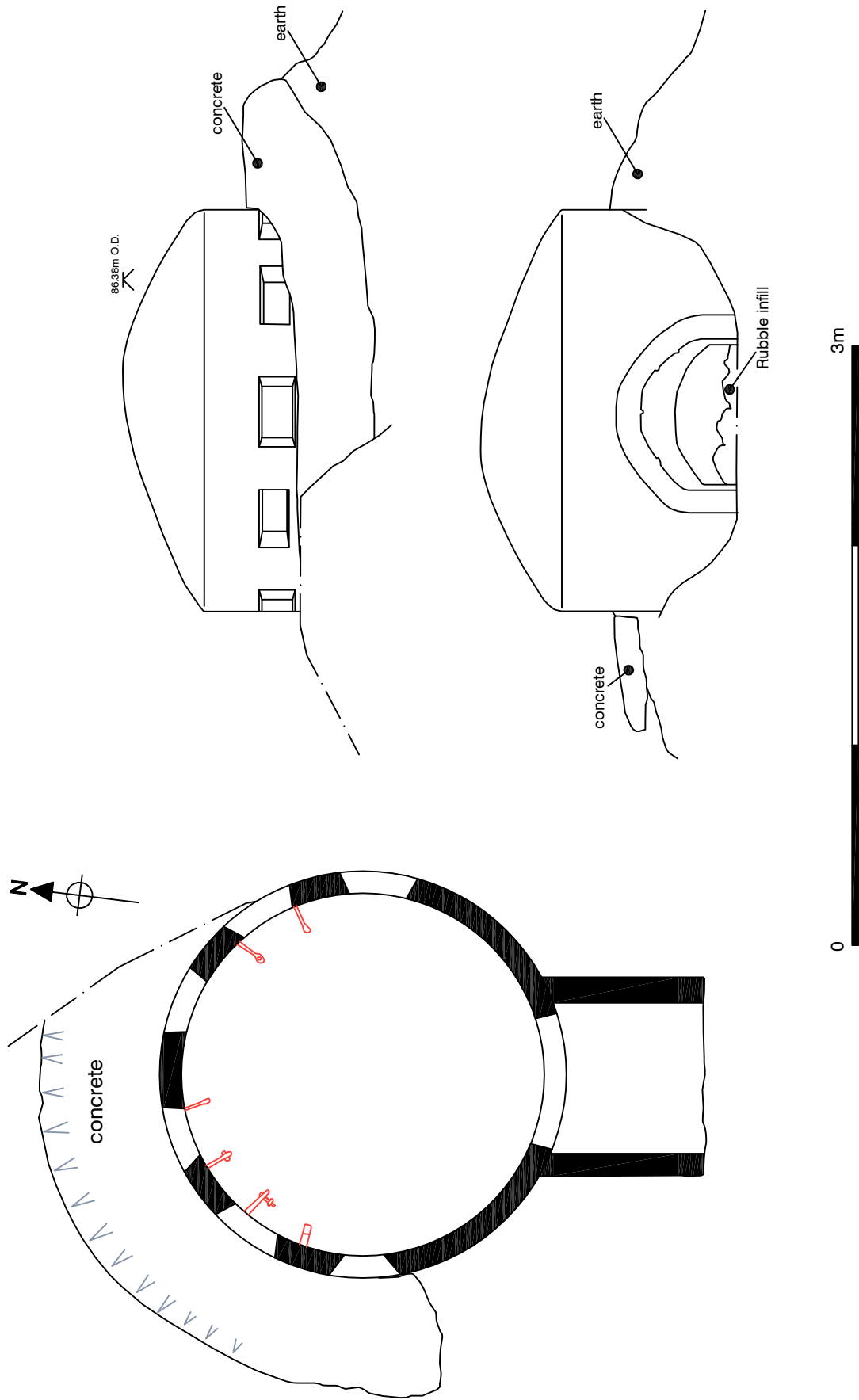


Figure 5. Norcon Pillbox. Scale 1:30

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OASIS ID: **norvicar1-231181**

Project details

Project name Archaeological Monitoring and the discovery of a WWII Norcon Pillbox at The Old Rectory, Docking, Norfolk.

Short description of the project The results of archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of a large timber framed outbuilding (Planning Ref. 15/00386/F). The general footprint occupies an area of c.300m², situated just to the north-east of the Old Rectory house and its later extensions. The site is located adjacent to an area of previous archaeological work for a housing estate, which recorded Late Saxon and Medieval pits and ditches to the north of the medieval church of St Marys. A community test pitting project by the Docking Heritage also recovered sherds of Late Saxon and medieval pottery in the immediate area. Where natural sands were partly exposed below masking subsoils in the western area of the trenching footprint, the monitoring work recorded what appears to be an agglomeration of Late Saxon to early Medieval features. The base of a Thetford Ware vessel was collected from one of the pits, which was in a relatively fresh condition. The clay lined base of a possible oven was also identified. The subsoil contained no obviously modern intrusions and was sealed below a late post-medieval layer of soil build-up or levelling material, which contained evidence for localised rubbish burning. A previously unrecorded circular concrete WWII pillbox was located within a metre of the south-east corner of the outbuilding's footprint, partly buried by earth, mounded rubble, soil and vegetation. This is a rare Norcon Pillbox (Type CP/6/40/111) which has survived in good condition.

Project dates Start: 20-07-2015 End: 20-07-2015

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes ENF138339 - HER event no.

Any associated project reference codes NVC/2015/GE259 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes 15/00386/F - Planning Application No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Other 5 - Garden

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Monument type OVEN Early Medieval
Monument type NORCON PILLBOX Modern
Significant Finds FIRED CLAY Medieval
Significant Finds POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds SHELL Medieval
Significant Finds ANIMAL BONE Uncertain
Significant Finds POTTERY Uncertain
Significant Finds SHELL Uncertain
Significant Finds POTTERY Early Medieval
Significant Finds ANIMAL BONE Medieval
Investigation type "Watching Brief"
Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location NORFOLK KINGS LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK DOCKING The Old Rectory, Sedgford Road, Docking, Norfolk

Postcode PE31 8LJ

Study area 300 Square metres

Site coordinates TF 7645 3710 52.901949602457 0.623818498954 52 54 07 N 000 37 25 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 Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body Mr Graham Ellisden

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient NMAS and Norvic Archaeology

Physical Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics","Environmental","Industrial"

Digital Archive recipient NMAS

Digital Contents "Survey"

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

<https://oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm>

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available
Paper Archive recipient NMAS
Paper Contents "Survey"
Paper Media available "Context sheet","Diary","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Archaeological Monitoring and the discovery of a WWII Norcon Pillbox at The Old Rectory, Docking, Norfolk.

Author(s)/Editor(s) Emery, G.

Other bibliographic details Norvic Archaeology Report No. 68

Date 2015

Issuer or publisher Norvic Archaeology

Place of issue or publication Norwich

Description Spiral Bound

Entered by Giles Emery (giles.emery@norvicarchaeology.com)

Entered on 22 November 2015

OASIS:

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