

Report BAU2700



nps archaeology

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
The Former Cap and Gown Public House,
Gorleston-on-Sea, Norfolk**

ENF126346



Prepared for
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|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Location: | Former Cap and Gown Public House |
| District: | Gorleston-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth |
| Grid Ref.: | TG 5180 0372 |
| HER No.: | ENF126346 |
| OASIS Ref.: | 103168 |
| Client: | Wellington Construction Ltd |
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Summary

Watching Brief monitoring in three areas of the mechanical excavation of the footings of new buildings on the site of the former Cap and Gown Public House in Gorleston, Norfolk exposed evidence of two linear ditches. One aligned west-east was tentatively dated to the medieval period (based on evidence from the earlier archaeological evaluation) and the other was aligned roughly north-south and remains undated. No finds were recovered.

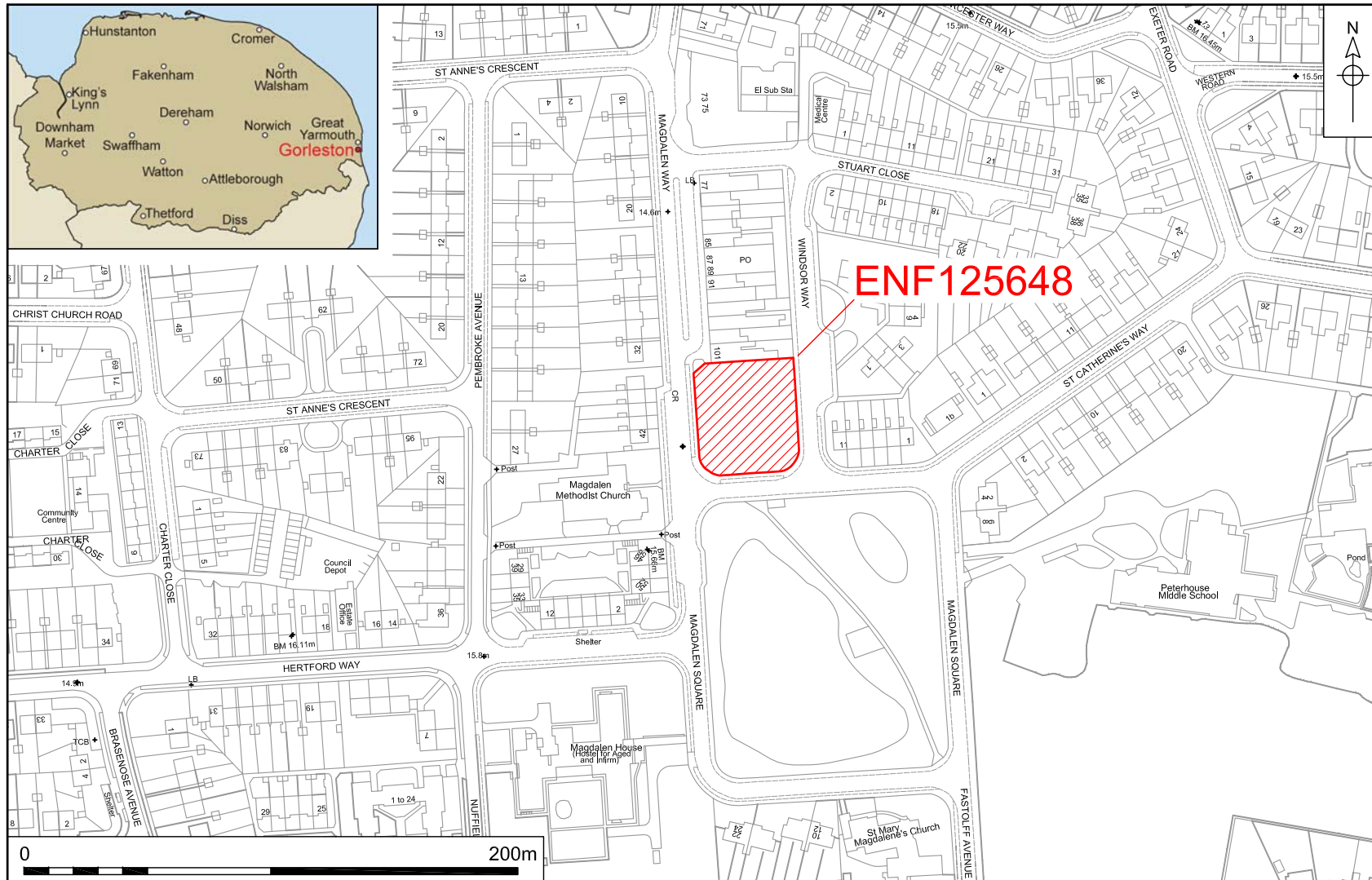
1.0 INTRODUCTION

The site covered the land formerly occupied by the Cap and Gown Public House, now demolished, and its curtilage. The whole plot was around 1800m² situated on Magdalen Square between Magdalen Way and Windsor Way in the south of Gorleston. Three discrete areas of foundation trenches were mechanically excavated at the west, south and east of the site covering the following areas respectively; 22m x 9m (198m²); 37m x 9m (333m²) and 15m x 10m (150m²). The site has previously been evaluated and archaeological features (eight pits and two ditches) several of which were possibly of prehistoric date, had been found along with areas of modern disturbance (Crawley 2011).

The results of the evaluation were considered significant enough for Norfolk Historic Environment Service (formerly Norfolk Landscape Archaeology) to recommend that parts of the site at least be excavated. However, work on the site began before this was established and incorporated into the construction programme and NPS Archaeology was asked by the developer to undertake a watching brief on construction and a project design (Ref: NAU/BAU2700/NP) was submitted for approval.

The project design was initially rejected by Norfolk Historic Environment Service as the planning condition was for excavation, however, as work on site had started a pragmatic approach was adopted which was to undertake a watching brief to try to record as much of the archaeological remains as possible before they were affected by the groundworks.

Due to the potential for known and previously unidentified archaeological remains to exist almost anywhere within the site, all ground disturbance works were monitored by an archaeologist. The works were undertaken following the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Communities and Local Government 2010).



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500

The site archive is currently held by NPS Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS), following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The underlying solid geology is described as Crag Group (also known as Norfolk Crag) surmounted by Happisburgh Glacianic formation Sand. The soils are described as loamy brown earths (British Geological Survey).

The topsoil ([28]) was a light grey sandy silt, on average 0.30m thick, and which had a diffuse boundary with subsoil ([29]). The subsoil was a light orange brown silty sand ranging in thickness between 0.30m and 0.40m. The natural substratum beneath this was a loose pale yellow sand with occasional flint nodules and gravel.

The deposits were relatively free of truncation around the edges of the site whereas within the footprint of the demolished public house there had been considerable truncation due to the presence of cellars and buried service pipes and cables.

The site lay in a flat suburban location at a height of about 16m OD (Crawley 2011).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A search of the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) was made during the evaluation stage of the project in January 2011 and the most relevant entries that appeared in Crawley (2011) are replicated here. A separate search was not undertaken for this Watching Brief phase of the project.

Prehistoric to Roman

A Bronze Age hoard (NHER 10556) comprising 118 copper alloy objects and fragments, including axes and swords, was found in a sewer trench during the construction of Peterhouse School to the east of the current site. The hoard is one of the largest to come from East Anglia and is one of two Bronze Age hoards to come from Gorleston.

A Bronze Age copper alloy axehead was recovered approximately 100m to the north of the present site (NHER 28721).

Further to the south of the current site NHER 43551 records a small Bronze Age barrow group.

Roman activity in the area is hinted at by finds of a Roman brooch and a few coins.

NHER 43466 comprises multi-phase cropmarks. A fragmentary field system and ditched boundaries are thought to be predominantly of Iron Age and Roman date. One of these boundaries runs in a north-west to south-east direction 50m north and east of the current site.

Saxon to Medieval

In the reign of Edward the Confessor, Earl Gurth held the manor of Gorleston. The land supported twenty villeins. By the time of Domesday, however, the manor had become part of the royal estates, and was in decline, supporting only twelve

villeins. No medieval find spots recorded by the NHER are close enough to the current site to be relevant.

Post Medieval to Modern

Some post medieval structures in the Gorleston area are recorded on the NHER, but they lie further towards the seafront and are linked with fishing and maritime activities.

Post war aerial photographs record air-raid shelters in gardens immediately to the south-west of the current site.

Archaeological Evaluation of the site in 2011

Two trenches were excavated across the plot within which several archaeological features (eight pits and two ditches) were found along with areas of modern disturbance (Crawley 2011). Although it was not possible to date the pits, their position below a thick layer of subsoil and the generally leached appearance of their fills suggested that they were possibly of prehistoric date. One of the pits (in evaluation Trench 1) contained a charcoal-rich fill (which appears to have been created through burning at high temperatures) and well-preserved plant macrofossils.

The ditch in evaluation Trench 2 appeared to be sealed by subsoil and is possibly (like the pits) of prehistoric date whereas the second ditch (evaluation in Trench 1) was observed to cut the subsoil and although it contained a fragment of Roman pottery is considered to be of post-Roman date.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during the mechanical excavation of foundation trenches for housing in three separate areas (to the west, east and south of the site) The trenches were either 0.45m or 0.65m wide and 0.80m-1.00m deep, except where cellars or buried services were encountered, where the depth was up to 2.00m below current ground surface.

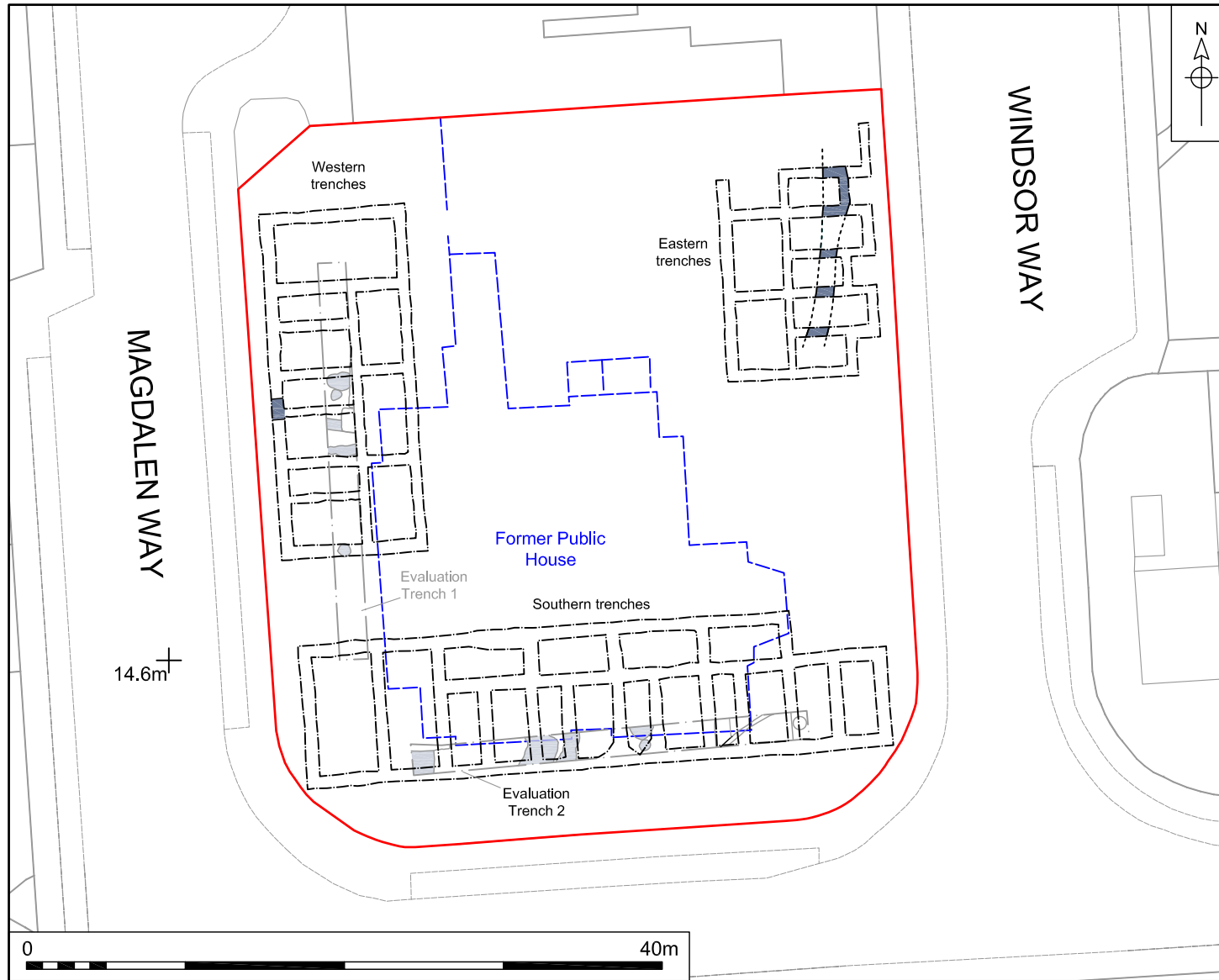
The footprint of the western building covered an area measuring approximately 22m x 9m (198m²). The footprint of the southern building covered an area of approximately 37m x 9m (333m²). The footprint of the eastern building covered an area which measured approximately 15m x 10m (150m²).

Exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. 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 the NPS *pro forma* sheets. Plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

Due to the lack of suitable deposits, no environmental samples were taken.

Site conditions were dry and cold.



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Figure 2. Trenches location. Scale 1:400

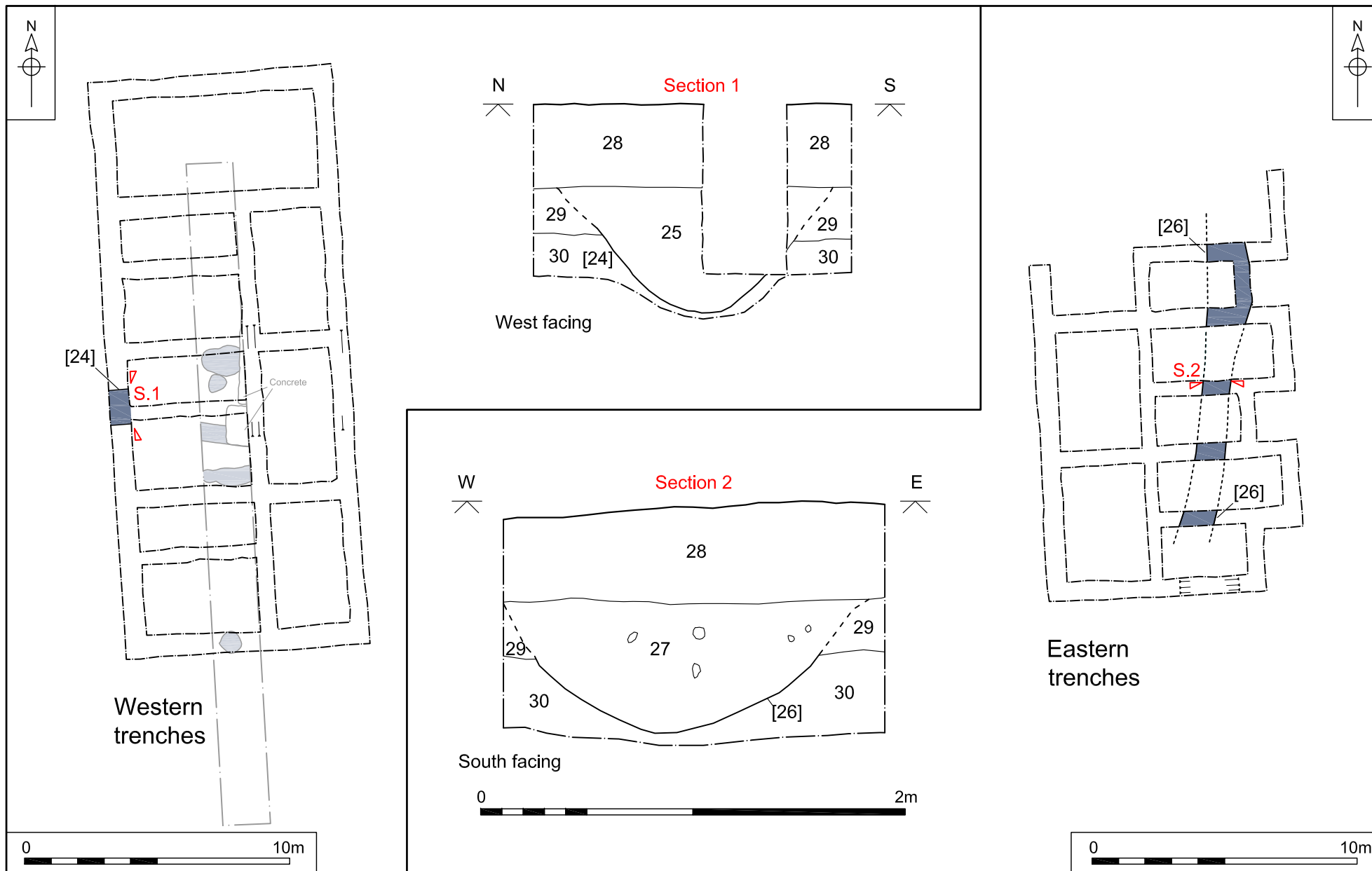


Figure 3. Trench plans and sections. Scale 1:200 and 1:25

5.0 RESULTS

Western block of trenches

(Figures 2 and 3)

A ditch ([24]) with an east-west orientation was observed in section in the westernmost north-south aligned foundation trench (Fig. 3, Section 1). The top of the ditch appeared to have been truncated by disturbance associated with layer [28] which consisted of a 0.50m thick mixed topsoil and demolition rubble deposit. Ditch fill [25] was a mid brown silty sand similar to layer [29] (a 0.20m thick subsoil) but was slightly darker. It was 1.30m wide at the base of the topsoil and the depth from the surface was 1.10m. Ditch [24] was not observed in the other foundation trenches in this block as the area to the east was where the cellars of the public house had been located.

Ditch [24] is likely to be the same ditch recorded as ([15]) in Trench 1 during archaeological evaluation of the site earlier in the year (Crawley 2011, 8-11).

None of the pits recorded in the evaluation trench (Trench 1) were observed in the foundation trenches, but this may be because their position was within the blocks left between the foundation trenches and hence they were left undisturbed.

Southern block of trenches

(Figure 2)

No archaeological features were observed, even though evaluation Trench 2, which ran east-west through this area contained two pits ([5] and [7]) and a ditch ([3]) as well as a number of modern features.

Why these features were not apparent in the watching brief is unclear, although, it is very possible that the two pits were inside one of the blocks defined by the new foundation trenches and, therefore, were undisturbed. Why ditch [3], which was aligned north-south and should have appeared in at least one of the east-west aligned foundation trenches, was not observed is less certain, although the narrowness of the foundation trench may have been a factor.

Eastern block of trenches

(Figures 2 and 3)

Ditch [26] had a roughly north-south orientation and was observed in section in five out of six of the east-west foundation trenches (Fig. 2) (material in the sixth (southernmost) trench had been disturbed by previous building activity at the site). Mixed topsoil/demolition layer [28] was 0.40m thick and, just as observed in the westernmost trenches, this churned deposit appeared to have disturbed the top of the ditch cut. Ditch fill [27] was slightly darker than the 0.20m thick mid brown subsoil [29]. The ditch at the base of the subsoil was 1.60m-1.80m wide and its total depth below the ground surface was 1.10m. There were no finds and the ditch remains undated.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The only archaeological remains exposed during the watching brief were two ditches neither of which contained any dating evidence, which along with the results of the earlier evaluation show that undisturbed archaeological deposits survived around the edges of the development plot.

Ditch [24] was observed in only one of the foundation trenches in the westernmost block and given its position and east-west alignment it is likely that it equates to ditch [15] observed in Trench 1 during the evaluation and hence has been tentatively assigned a medieval date. Ditch [26] in the easternmost block was observed to run roughly north-south and was visible in most of the east-west foundation trenches. Its darkish fill, similar to that in ditch [24]/[15], may suggest a medieval or later date for the ditch as the possible prehistoric features recorded in the evaluation were identified by the 'pale colour' of their fills.

No finds were recovered during the watching brief and very few were recovered during the earlier evaluation. However, the presence of a late prehistoric flint core recovered from the subsoil during the evaluation hints at a general 'background noise' of prehistoric activity in the area. Furthermore, a complex of crop marks (NHER 43466) nearby are thought to represent elements of field systems of prehistoric to Roman date and a late Bronze Age hoard (NHER 10556) comprising 118 copper-alloy objects and fragments, including axes, swords and a looped guide ring was recovered a few metres to the east.

The eight small pits excavated in the evaluation may also be prehistoric in date, although, they were undated. One of the pits had a charcoal-rich fill, which appears to represent the residues of a high temperature fire, but a lack of pottery or other material, such as animal bone within the fills of the pits suggest that they may have been some distance from any settlement.

Ditches [15] and [3] recorded in the evaluation appeared to represent two different periods of activity; ditch [15] truncated the subsoil [2] and is tentatively ascribed a medieval date, whereas ditch [3], like the pits, was sealed by it and is thought to have been prehistoric. Neither ditch shared the general north-west to south-east alignment of the cropmark complex recorded just to the north and east of the site which forms part of site NHER 43466, but it is possible that evaluation ditch [3] may be part of the wider cropmark system.

Apart from ditch [26]/[15] there was a general lack of agreement between the type and number of features recorded in the evaluation and in the watching brief, although there are a number of reasons why this may have been the case. The biggest discrepancy was the lack of any pits recorded in the watching brief, but as discrete features it may be that they were contained within the blocks left by the foundation trenches and, therefore, were left undisturbed by the works. Another explanation may be that as these features had been half-sectioned and backfilled in the evaluation they would have been difficult to distinguish from other modern features given the narrowness of the foundation trenches.

Acknowledgements

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Bibliography and Sources

- Communities and Local Government 2010 *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*
- Crawley, P.E. 2011 *An Archaeological Evaluation at the Former Cap and Gown Public House, Gorleston, Norfolk* NAU Archaeology Report 2623 (unpublished)

British Geological Survey <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience> Accessed 23/05/11

Appendix 1a: Context Summary

| Context | Category | Fill Of | Description | Period |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|---|---------------|
| 24 | Cut | | East-west ditch | ?Medieval |
| 25 | Deposit | 24 | Mid brown silty sand | ?Medieval |
| 26 | Cut | | North-south ditch | Uncertain |
| 27 | Deposit | | Brown silty sand | Uncertain |
| 28 | Deposit | 27 | disturbed topsoil (light grey sandy silt) and demolition rubble | Modern |
| 29 | Deposit | | Light orange brown silty sand | Uncertain |
| 30 | Deposit | | Pale Yellow sand with occasional flint nodules and gravel | - |

Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

| Period | Feature Type | Quantity |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| ?Medieval | Ditch | 1 |
| Uncertain | Ditch | 1 |