Report 2740

nps archaeology

An Archaeological Watching Brief at St Peter & St Paul's CEVC School, Church Street, Carbrooke, Norfolk.

ENF126527

Prepared for
NPS Property Consultants Ltd

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Location:	St Peter and St Paul's CEVC School, Carbrooke
District:	Breckland
Grid Ref.:	TF 9496 0211
HER No.:	ENF126527
SM No.:	NF387
OASIS Ref.:	104120
Client:	Imtech Aqua Maintenance Ltd
Dates of Fieldwork:	4–5 May and 9 May 2011

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for NPS Property Consultants Ltd ahead of the redirecting of a gas main to the school's new extension. The pipeline was positioned using a 'mole' which necessitated twenty-one small pits to be hand dug. The pits were dug under archaeological supervision.

Remains of one possible flint wall (or foundations) were encountered in pit 14 at the northern limit of the pipeline. A possible modern feature was exposed in pit 16 and all other pits were archaeologically sterile.

No finds were recovered.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A new extension at St Peter and St Paul's CEVC Primary School required a new gas supply from tanks situated to the north of the school buildings. The school is located in an archaeologically sensitive area on Church Street in the village of Carbrooke, Norfolk, to the west of scheduled monument 387, the Preceptory of the Order of St John of Jerusalem (SM NF387 / NHER 8814). The enclosure where the gas tanks are positioned is located some 25m north of the nearest classroom school buildings, east of the staff car-park, and just to the south of St Peter and St Pauls Church (NHER 8794) (Fig. 1). The new supply is directed from these tanks, across the east side of the school's playing field, across the front of the main school building and into the new plant room located to the south-west of the property (Fig. 2). This was achieved using a mechanical 'mole', which required a series of small inspection pits to be dug along the route of the pipeline to ensure the correct location of the new supply. The opportunity to link the mobile classrooms and rooms to the north of the main school buildings was taken and additional pits along the route were dug to aid this.

This work was undertaken to fulfil a Brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Ref. CNF43444). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NPS/BAU2740/DW). This work was commissioned and funded by Imtech Aqua Maintenance Ltd.

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment,* (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2010).

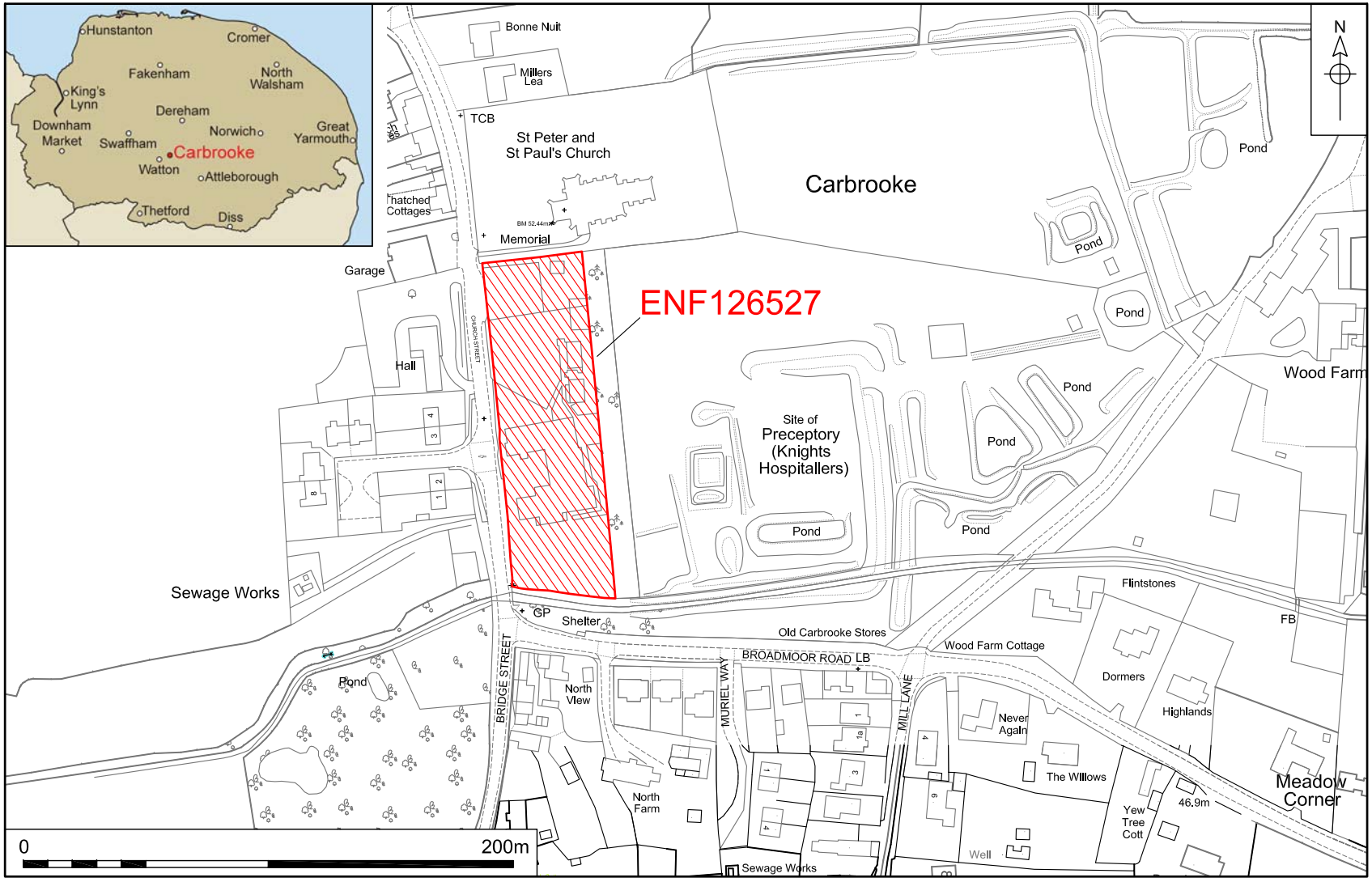

Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500

The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority about the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

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 solid geology of the area is chalk and the site is located at the junction of two types of superficial deposit;(he chalky till of the Lowestoft Formation to the north and a narrow band of sands and gravels described as undifferentiated river terrace deposits (www.bgs.ac.uk/).

The natural deposit, found at a depth of around 0.6m from the surface in the test pits consisted of a very firm bright orange-yellow gravelly sand (3), with a slight variation towards the southern end of the playing-field where a small clay content was present.

The subsoil is a mid to dark firm silty-sand (2) which contained a small amount of flint, chalk and red-brick inclusions and was *c*.0.40m deep. In some areas this layer had been heavily disturbed by the routes of services and root activity.

The topsoil (1) at the site is generally a quite firm mid to pale-grey sandy-silt with occasional small flint nodules and tiny pieces of chalk and red-brick pieces. It varied in depth, averaging around 0.23m deep.

The site itself is well-drained and lies around 52m OD. A small unnamed stream lies to the south of the school.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A search of the Norfolk Historic Environment Records (NHER) database has revealed seventy-nine records for the parish of Carbrooke including sites with no archaeological features or finds, undated field systems, several individual finds spots, listed buildings and the scheduled monument of the Preceptory of the Order of St John of Jerusalem (SM NF387 / NHER 8814).

Neolithic finds (flint axe and arrowheads) have been recorded nearby as well as a few Iron Age pottery sherds, one gold Iron Age coin and several Roman coins. The archaeological background of this area is covered in the recent archaeological report on a watching brief associated with sewage works to the west (Sillllwood 2010). The main focus for this project was the potential for medieval finds and features associated with the Preceptory to be present.

The Historic Environment Record states that the Preceptory of the Order of St John of Jerusalem (SM NF387 / NHER 8814) is also known as the Knights Hospitallers (a military monastic order similar to the Knights Templar) and was established in Carbrooke in 1193 after the land and associated buildings was donated to the Order by Matilda, Countess of Clare. Its purpose was the gathering of funds, through rents, tithes and donations that allowed the Order to fund their military activities in the Holy Land. The Order was eventually suppressed by Henry VIII in 1540.

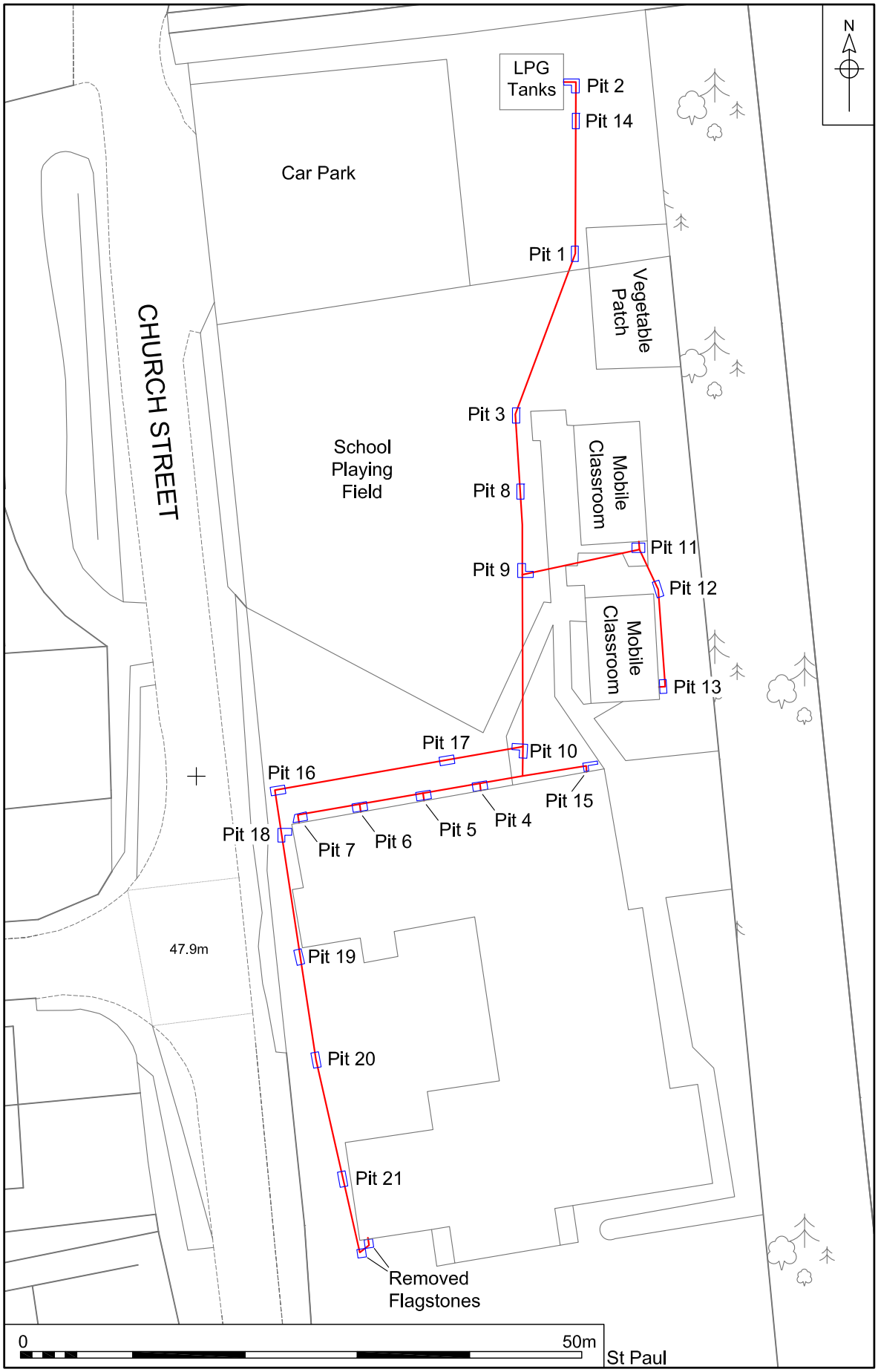

Figure 2. Site plan, showing route of new gas main and inspection pits. Scale 1:500

Today the site is visible only as a series of well-preserved earthworks and parchmarks. From aerial photographs of the area it is possible to see the moat which forms a horseshoe around the east part of the site, at least three fishponds and three or more buildings. One of the buildings in the western side of the site was excavated in 1998 (Hutcheson and Noble 2006) ahead of the construction of an extension to St Peter and St Paul's CEVC Primary School. The excavation revealed flint, brick and mortar foundations (possibly for a timber superstructure) and walls surviving above foundation level. A fourth fishpond had been backfilled with kitchen waste of 15th-century date. A prehistoric ditch and a timber-framed Late Saxon building were also recorded.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief was to mitigate the impacts of the proposed works in line with the archaeological Brief. Where archaeological remains were identified, and could not be preserved *in situ*, the potential impact of the scheme is to be minimised by appropriate levels of archaeological excavation and recording.

The Brief required that excavation of all arisings for the new gas pipeline to be monitored, in addition to any other groundworks associated with this project, including intermediate inspection pits and the removal of any blockages.

Twenty-one inspection pits were hand dug (Fig. 2) and two flagstones removed along the route of the new gas pipeline Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

No environmental samples were taken as no suitable deposits were encountered.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NPS Archaeology pro forma. Pit locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits where appropriate.

Site conditions were good, with the work taking place in fine weather.

5.0 RESULTS

Twenty-one inspection pits were excavated of which only five (14, 16, 19-21) contained archaeological remains. No archaeological evidence was encountered in the remaining 16 pits (1-13, 15, 17, 18) for which the typical deposit sequence (topsoil (1), subsoil (2) natural (3)) is described above in Section 2.0 Geology and Topography and shown in Figure 3, pit 17).

No finds were recovered.

Pit 14

Pit 14 was an additionn inspection pit, necessitated because the mechanical mole became stuck at this point. Once the pit was dug it was clear that the obstruction had been caused by large sub-rounded flint nodules surrounded by mortar (4) (Plates 1 and 2, Figs 2 and 3 section of pit 14).

Plate 1. Inspection pit [14]

Plate 2. Close up section of Inspection pit 14

It is difficult to be certain what this masonry represents – the flint was not well bonded in the mortar so the feature may even represent compacted rubble. Dating is also problematic; the material could well be of medieval date however the red-brick inclusions may suggest that it is of later origin.

This masonry could represent either the remains of a flint wall or the foundations for a wall that doesn't survived any higher and if so, this may have been a wall associated with Preceptory structures to the east, or with the church of St Peter and St Paul which lies to the north of the site. It is quite possible that the brick observed in pit 14 is a later introduction to the build. Masonry remains of a similar nature, interpreted as foundations for timber structures associated with the Preceptory were uncovered during the 1998 excavation of the site on which the school's extension stands (Hutcheson and Noble 2006) and it is quite possible that this is part of one of those features.

Pit 16

Inspection pit 16 (Fig. 2) contained a layer of very fine, clean, pale yellow sand (5) lying directly underneath the topsoil (Plate 3). The sand appears to have been contained by a thin wooden structure with flint nodules at the base (Fig. 3 section of pit 16). It is possible that this represents a backfilling of a previously excavated feature, or perhaps a sand pit that has been covered with topsoil and turf.

Plate 3. Inspection pit 16

Pits 19-21

Pits 19 to 21 were excavated in the school yard (Fig. 2), where a layer of concrete seals make-up layer (6) which consists of gravelly sand, flint nodules and brick rubble (Plate 4). No topsoil was present.

Plate 4. Inspection pit 19

Plate 5. Inspection pit 20

Heavy disturbance from service pipes was observed in pit 20 (Plate 5). However below this the same subsoil layer (2) described above could be seen (no natural deposit was observed as this lay below the limit of excavation in this pit.

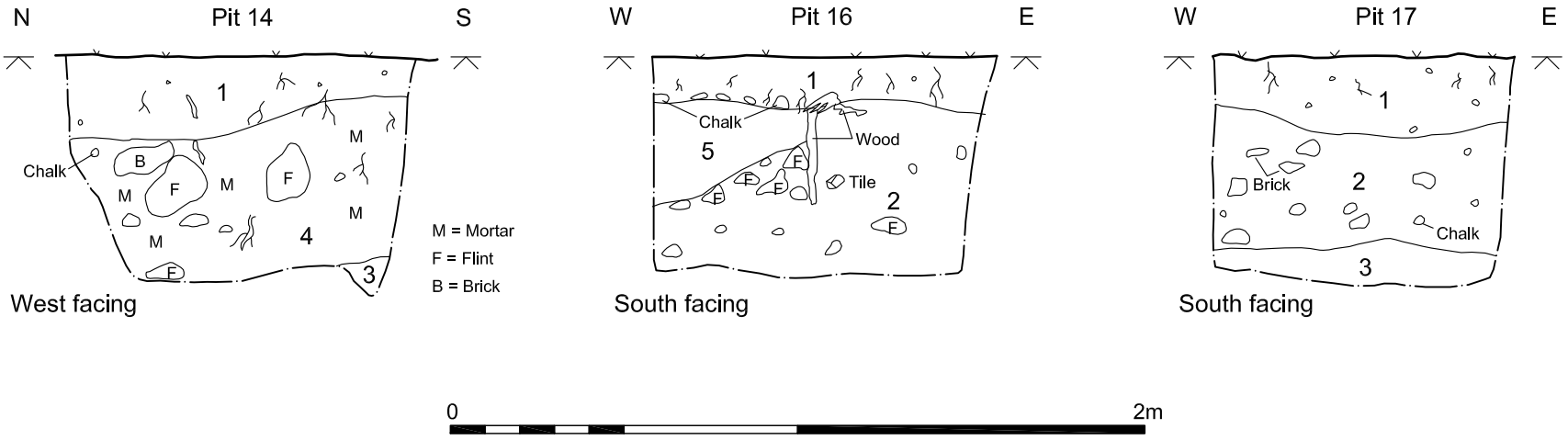

Figure 3. Sections of Pits 14, 16 and 17. Scale 1:20

Paving Slabs

In addition to the 21 pits, two paving slabs were removed in front of the school's plant room (Fig. 2) on the south side of the school buildings to in order to connect the new gas supply to the new extension. The resulting two inspection holes created were only 0.40m deep and no archaeological evidence was encountered (Plate 6).

Plate 6. Connection to plant room

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Despite the route of the new gas supply being located so close to the remains of the Preceptory of the Order of St John of Jerusalem and St Peter and St Paul's church to the north, very few archaeological remains (masonry remains and a possible sandpit) were encountered during excavation of 21 inspection pits and two shallow exploratory holes below slabs. No artefacts or ecofacts were present in any of the excavated pits or soil arisings.

The masonry remains consisted of layer (4) believed to be part of a flint wall or the footings for a wall similar to those observed in 1998 excavation (which were interpreted as possibly having a timber superstructure).

Recommendations for future work based upon this report will be made by Norfolk Historic Environments Service.

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The author would also like to thank David Whitmore for the project design, Rebecca Sillwood for her earlier work in Carbrooke and her help with this report, Roger Bunton for his help with the plans, David Dobson for his work with the graphics and Jayne Bown for editing the report.

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period
1	Deposit			Topsoil	Modern
2	Deposit			Sub-soil	Modern
3	Deposit			Natural	Unknown
4	Masonry			Flint/brick/mortar remains of footings?	Med./Post-Med.
5	Deposit			Sand - sand play pit or backfilled feature?	Unknown
6	Deposit			Modern makeup layer underneath playground	Modern