

Report 2554



NPS archaeology

Archaeological Evaluation (during Japanese Knotweed Removal) at Earlsmead, The Street Mileham, Norfolk

ENF126458

Prepared for
Orchard Developments East Anglia Ltd
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draft

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draft

Location: Earlsmead, The Street, Mileham, Norfolk
District: Breckland
Grid Ref.: TF 9204 1966
HER No.: ENF126458
OASIS Ref.: 104329
Client: Orchard Developments East Anglia Limited
Dates of Fieldwork: 21 March 2011 – 25 March 2011

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Orchard Developments East Anglia Ltd ahead of the proposed development of a site north of The Street, Mileham for four houses. The work was conducted during a process of Japanese Knotweed removal and the watching brief monitoring revealed drainage systems and a range of unstratified artefacts mainly of pottery of post-medieval and modern date.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by Breckland District Council (Ref. 3PL/2009/0759/O) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (NHES)(Ref. CVF4284_EV_brief_v2). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NPS/PAU/554/JW). This work was commissioned by and funded by Orchard Developments East Anglia Ltd.

The site was located on the north side of the B1145 (The Street) within the grounds of what had been Mileham Hall (Fig. 1). Two areas were examined during the evaluation; one large area on the western boundary and a smaller trench (in two parts) along the eastern boundary (Fig.2).

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). 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 in this area is chalk, described as Lewes nodular / Seaford / Newhaven / Culver chalk formations. The drift deposit here is Lowestoft formation diamicton (www.bgs.ac.uk)

The topsoil for the site consisted of a soft mid brown sandy slightly clayey silt. This contained a large amount of stones, flint, brick rubble and occasional oyster shells.

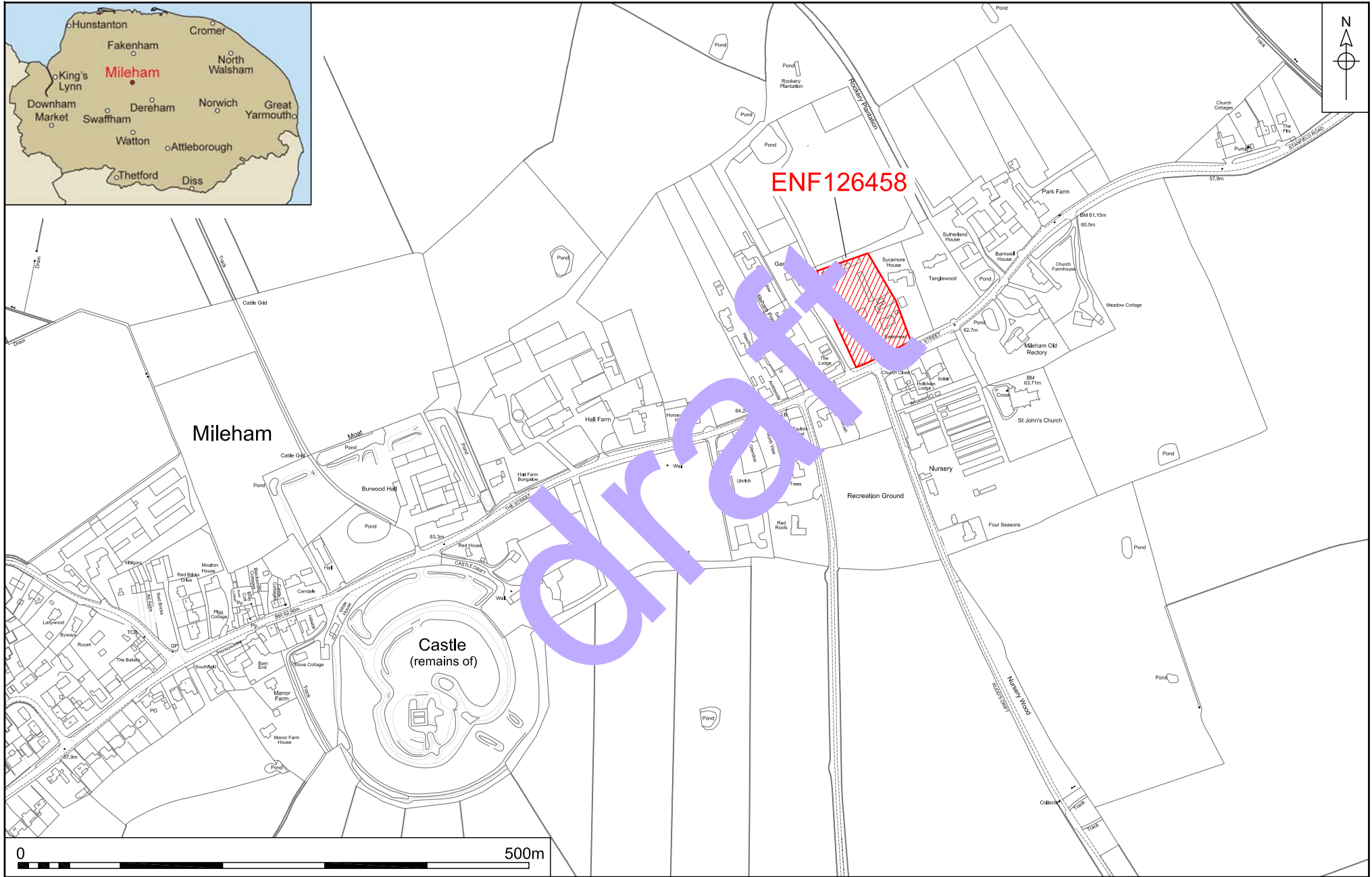


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

The depth of the topsoil was c.0.80m deep. The natural deposits appear as yellowish sandy clay with moderate amounts of flint.

The nearest OD spot height to the site is 62.7m O.D located on the B1140 (The Street) just east of the site outside the entrance to the church.

Mileham is located to the north-west of Dereham and is a linear village in mid Norfolk that straddles the B1140.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A search of the Historic Environment Record for Norfolk (NHER) of a area with a 1km radius centred on the development site at Mileham produced results for a wide range of archaeological periods.

Prehistoric

A Bronze Age palstave and a flat axe head both of copper alloy were recovered during metal detecting from a field to the north-east of the site on the outskirts of the village.

Roman

Throughout the village and surrounding area several finds from the Roman period have been recorded on the NHER. A Roman *sestertius* was recovered from the development site in 1933, the location being recorded then as Hall garden. In a field to the north of the site and Mileham on the NHER records finds of Roman pottery including Nar Valley ware and suggests that there is potential for a Roman settlement in the vicinity. Throughout the village, including behind and to the west of the development site, several sherds of Roman pottery have been recorded including samian ware. Roman metal work including tweezers, a brooch and coins are recorded from a field to the north-east of the site on the outskirts of the village.

Saxon

The Late Saxon village of Gramston or Grenstein lies to the north-west of Mileham and despite being abandoned in the 16th century, evidence of a linear settlement with small farmsteads is recorded on aerial photographs and by excavation.

Saxon evidence in the form of pottery is scattered throughout Mileham with fragments of Middle Saxon pottery recovered from behind the site and Middle and Late Saxon pottery from across the road. Middle and Late Saxon finds from a field to the north-east of the site on the outskirts of the village consist of strap ends, a whetstone and a linen smoother.

The Launditch is a linear earthwork of possible Saxon date comprising a bank and ditch c.6km long which runs north-south to the east of Mileham.

Medieval

Mileham Castle is situated to the south-west of the site on the opposite side of the road. The castle was constructed around 1100 and went out of use c.1300. The castle grounds are on both sides of the B1145, once a main route through Norfolk, suggesting that possibly a toll could be charged to pass through.

The development site is located within the grounds of what was once Mileham Hall (Plate 1). It was built in the 1700s and was described as 'a convenient dwelling-house, built of red brick'. The hall was demolished sometime between 1959 and

1976 (it ceases to appear on maps of the village at this time). The Hall seemed to have extensive grounds populated with several trees and a tree-enclosed field behind with a dovecote. During the watching brief the author was informed that the cellar for the hall is still intact however the entrance has been blocked.

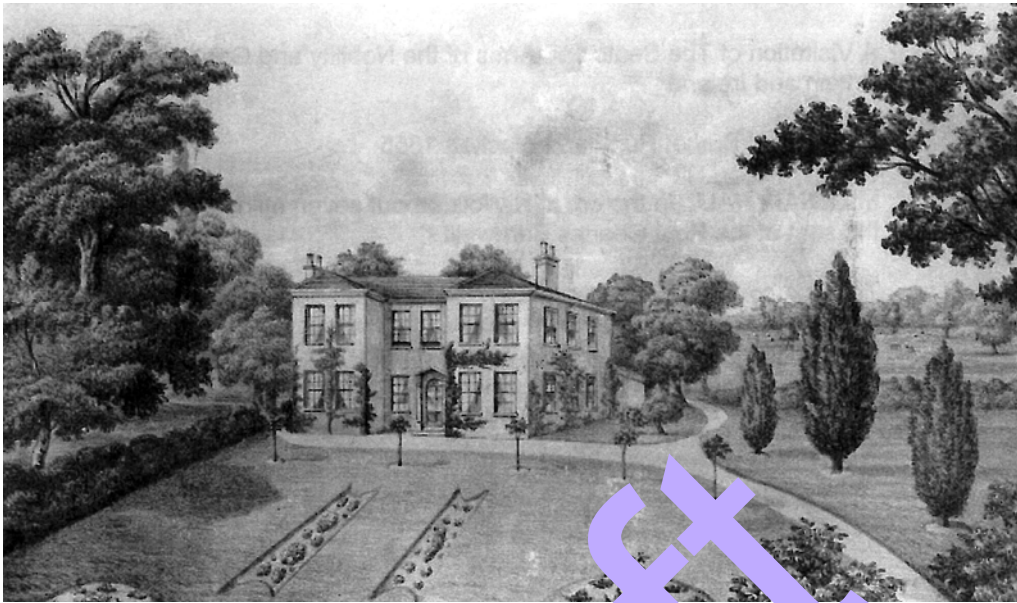


Plate 1. Mileham Hall

Based upon the HER evidence for surrounding area of the site and the location of the now demolished hall building on the site the potential for archaeological evidence from a wide range of periods is high.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

This archaeological response to development at the site was originally designed as trial trench evaluation however due to the presence of Japanese Knotweed in two areas, the methodology was changed. Following consultation between David Whitmore of NPS Archaeology, James Albone of Norfolk Historical Environment Service and Peter Doove from Environmental Solutions it was decided that it was appropriate for the archaeological evaluation methodology to be amended to a process whereby the ‘...visual observation of the excavation process [is] carried out and the location of any archaeological features recorded as accurately as the excavation methodology and access restrictions will permit. All sieved soil [to] be visually screened and all archaeological artefacts collected for analysis and dating’. This revised approach was defined in version 2 of the Archaeological Brief (CNF42584_EVALbrf_v2) issued by James Albone for NHES.

The objective of the monitoring was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence or absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that the two areas being machined for knotweed extraction be monitored by an archaeologist during machining to allow observation of features and collection of artefacts. Machine excavation was carried out with a hydraulic 360° excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket and operated under constant archaeological supervision. Once the soil had been extracted from the areas, the spoil heap was then sifted through Environet’s Xtract machine (Plate 2)

which used vibrating plant with two Environet employees monitoring and removing knotweed rhizomes to allow separation of the knotweed rhizomes and soil (Plate 3). The soil was then returned from the machine to the excavated area of the site via two conveyer belts one of which produced a finer sifted spoil. Artefacts could then be removed from these spoil heaps by the archaeologist (Plate 4). Inevitably, due to the nature of this methodology it was not possible to ascribe artefacts to specific features or contexts and hence they were all recorded as unstratified. It is possible that some artefacts were missed due both to the speed and nature in which the soil was transferred back to site via two conveyer belts.



Figure 2. Environet's Xtract machine



Plate 3. Knotweed removal using the Xtract Machine



Plate 4. Spoil heap created by the return of screened soil to site (from which the finds were recovered)



Plate 5. Smaller area along the eastern boundary facing south

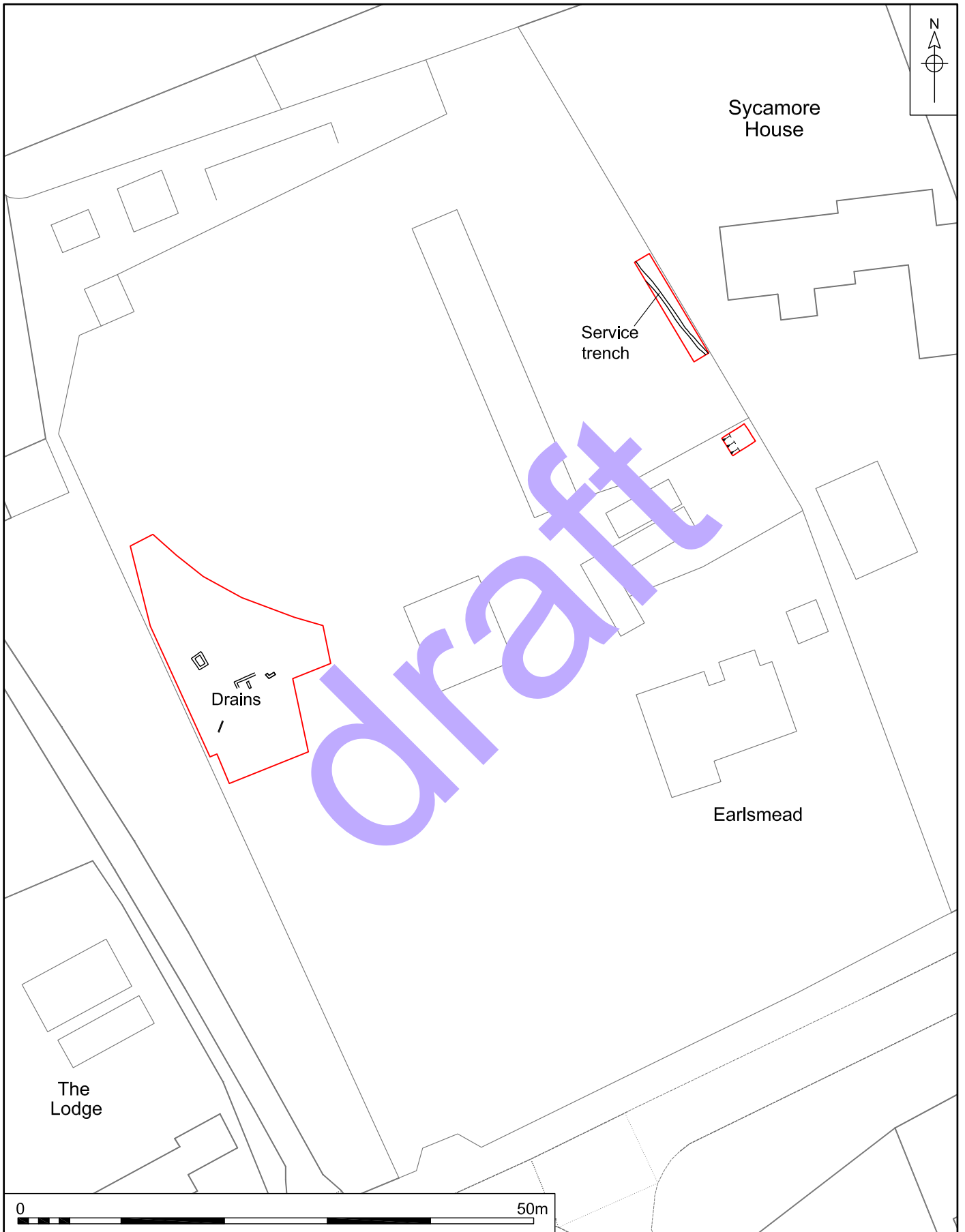


Figure 2. Location of Excavation areas. Scale 1:500

The easternmost area measured c.13.5 by c.2m (Fig. 2) and was excavated with a ditching bucket to a depth of c.0.80–1.00m deep (Plate 5). The spoil was placed to the side of the trench and once the trench had been excavated and root barrier placed along the eastern boundary edge the spoil was sifted through the digger bucket into the trench. This method left very little opportunity to locate any artefacts although a small fragment of post-medieval china was observed.

A smaller area was excavated to the south (Fig. 2) measuring c.3.15m by 2.40m and was c.0.80m deep (Plate 6). No features or artefacts were present in this area.



Plate 5. Trench along the eastern boundary

A trench was excavated along the eastern boundary of the site in the larger area. At c.0.80m wide this cut into the previously-exposed natural and was dug for the purpose of placing a root barrier between site and the neighbouring land which also has Japanese Knotweed on it.

Once all the spoil was returned to site it was scanned with a metal-detector and by eye. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

No environmental samples were taken.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NPS Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations and plans 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

The only features exposed during the knotweed extraction excavation were elements of a possible post-medieval drainage system within the larger area to the

west of the site (Fig. 2, Plate 7). The remains of a modern fence line and a modern service trench in the smaller area to the east of the site were also observed.

Artefacts were gathered from the spoil heaps created by the knotweed soil screening process. These were generally of post-medieval date and are likely to relate to the occupation of the Hall and its grounds that previously occupied the site. A mid 19th-century horseshoe and leather punch found in the western area possibly date from when the stables for the Hall, which now form the neighbouring property, were in use.



Plate 7. Large Area showing the remains of drainage systems

6.0 THE FINDS

6.1 The Pottery

by Sue Anderson

6.1.1 Introduction

Ninety-seven sherds of pottery weighing 1,689g were collected from topsoil (1). Table 1 shows the quantification by fabric; a summary catalogue is included as Appendix 3.

Description	Fabric	Code	No	Wt(g)	Eve	MNV
Glazed red earthenware	GRE	6.12	7	348	0.14	7
Tin glazed earthenwares	TGE	6.30	10	34		8
German stoneware	GSW	7.01	1	44		1
Cologne/Frechen Stoneware	GSW4	7.14	1	118		1
<i>Total post-medieval</i>			19	544	0.14	17
Late post-medieval unglazed earthenwares	LPME	8.01	2	96		2
Refined white earthenwares	REFW	8.03	36	691	0.36	22

Description	Fabric	Code	No	Wt(g)	Eve	MNV
Creamwares	CRW	8.10	3	18		2
English Stoneware	ESW	8.20	8	104	0.27	7
English Stoneware Nottingham-type	ESWN	8.22	1	18		1
Porcelain	PORC	8.30	6	55	0.23	5
Staffordshire white salt-glazed stonewares	SWS W	8.41	16	87		16
Late glazed red earthenware	LGRE	8.50	1	17	0.11	1
Late slipped redware	LSRW	8.51	1	37		1
Westerwald Stoneware	GSW5	7.15	4	22		4
<i>Total modern</i>			78	1145	0.97	61
Totals			97	1689	1.11	78

Table 1. Pottery quantification by fabric

6.1.2 Methodology

Quantification was carried out using sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalent (eve). A full quantification by fabric, context and feature is available in the archive. All fabric codes were assigned from the Suffolk post-Roman fabric series, which includes Norfolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Midlands fabrics, as well as imported wares. Imports were identified from Jennings (1981). Form terminology follows MPRG (1998). Recording uses a system of letters for fabric codes together with number codes for ease of reporting in database format. The results were input directly onto an Access 97 database.

6.1.3 Pottery by period

6.1.3.1 Post-medieval

Nineteen sherds were of uncertain 18th-century date. Sherds of local glazed red earthenwares included a small fragment of everted rim, possibly from a dish or pipkin, and a large piece of a handle jar with applied thumbled strip decoration at the neck and a lug handle. A base fragment of a Frechen stoneware bottle was collected, and another German stoneware base, possibly also from Frechen but with an unusual footring form, was also found. Small fragments of several tin glazed earthenware plates and other vessels were identified, most with blue hand-painted decoration, although designs were not identifiable due to the high degree of abrasion.

6.1.3.2 Modern

The majority of pottery in this group comprised factory-made wares of 18th– to 20th-century date. One sherd of a ‘country pottery’ slipped redware bowl and two sherds of redware plant pots were also present.

The earliest modern wares were two creamware plate rims and several vessels of Staffordshire-type white salt-glazed stoneware. Sherds of Westerwald stoneware included two with blue line decoration and one with an applied pad containing a ?lion. English stonewares comprised a handle in brown-glazed Nottingham-type stoneware, a teapot lid with a trailed white clay decoration, two preserve jars (one with signs of burning) and body sherds of uncertain form.

Fragments of porcelain included two pieces of a small Spode willow pattern vessel (perhaps a salt/pepper pot), a bowl with flaring sides and one gold line internally, a saucer with a lilac floral print, and a plate with overglaze enamel decoration.

Refined factory-made whitewares dominated the group and included plates, dishes, bowls, a preserve jar and an electrical fitting. A few vessels were decorated with blue transfer printing, including willow pattern and floral designs, and there was one example of blue spongeware.

Two vessels were of uncertain form. One was glazed with a mottled cobalt blue glaze which appeared similar to the 'tiger ware' of Bellarmine bottles, but which was in a fine earthenware rather than stoneware. It had traces of burning inside and outside, possibly related to its function. It was a globular vessel with a plain inturned rim and there was evidence of a hole at the broken edge close to the base. The other was a fragment with manganese purple glaze inside and out and was slip-moulded, perhaps part of a figurine or similar.

6.1.4 Discussion

The assemblage has a broad date range spanning the 16th-20th centuries, although the post-medieval wares are not precisely datable and it is possible that some or all could be contemporary with the earliest modern wares. The group may therefore comprise largely 18th/19th-century domestic waste, perhaps with some residual material. The wide range of fabric types and presence of unusual non-utilitarian forms, alongside the more typical range of kitchen and tea wares, suggests that this group came from a household of moderate to high status, which is in keeping with the findspot. As the group is effectively unstratified it has little further potential for interpretation.

6.2 The Ceramic Building Materials

by Sue Anderson

Fifteen fragments of BM weighing 648g was collected from topsoil (1). A full catalogue is available in the Appendix 4.

The assemblage was quantified (count and weight) by fabric and form. Fabrics were identified on the basis of macroscopic appearance and main inclusions. The width, length and thickness of bricks and floor tiles were measured, but roof tile thicknesses were only measured when another dimension was available. Forms were identified from work in Norwich (Drury 1993), based on measurements. Other form terminology follows Brunskill's glossary (1990).

Eight fragments of pantiles in fine sandy (fs) and medium sandy flint-tempered (msf) fabrics were recovered, including one with a black slipped surface and three with black glazed surfaces. Three fragments were fully reduced to grey. Two fragments of plain roof tile in 'msf' fabrics were also found. All roof tile was post-medieval.

Four fragments of tin-glazed earthenware wall tiles of mid 17th- to 18th-century date were recovered. All four fragments were corner pieces, two of which were plain and two had 'spider's head' corner motifs. Another tin-glazed tile was press-moulded and likely to be of 19th- to 20th-century date.

6.3 Glass

by Rebecca Sillwood

Three glass wine bottle fragments and one complete poison bottle were recovered from the site. All of these pieces are unstratified from deposit (1). The wine bottle fragments comprise of two bases and part of the neck of one, although without the rim. These are likely to be 18th-century in date, although are too fragmentary to assign form or closer dating.

The small octagonal bottle is cobalt blue in colour, a clear pointer to it being a poison bottle, and is plain, with a tapering neck and everted rim. The base has the letter 'JT' impressed into it. This bottle could be of any date between the late Victorian period and the 1930s.

6.4 Iron

by Rebecca Sillwood

A large horseshoe was recovered from the site, although it was unstratified (1). The piece is a toe-clip shoe, with no calkins, and has only one of its nail-holes visible, which is unfullered and rectangular in shape. The piece measures 185mm by 180mm, and is likely to be mid 19th-century in date.

6.5 Animal Bone

by Rebecca Sillwood

Two pieces of animal bone were recovered from the site, and are unstratified (1). The pieces are part of a rib and long bone from a large mammal, possibly cattle. The pieces are not butchered or cooked and weigh 269g in total.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Monitoring at the site revealed post-medieval drainage systems constructed in red brick within the stripped western area and which possibly relate to the Hall which occupied this site until some time between 1959 and 1976 when it was demolished.

The finds mostly comprised pottery sherds of post-medieval and modern pottery of differing types including kitchen wares which appear to have come from a household of moderate to high status indicating that this may have been part of an area in which kitchen waste was dumped during the Hall's occupation.

The removal process for the Japanese Knotweed inevitably compromised the detail of archaeological information, however it is unlikely that much material evidence was lost. The age and type of both the materials recovered and the drainage features revealed on site appear to relate to the occupation and use of Mileham Hall and its grounds.

It was suggested that the remains of a cellar which was part of the Hall are still present on this site and may require investigation due to the need to provide new service runs across the site.

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

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the Environet team for their cooperation during the investigation. The finds were processed and recorded by Lucy Talbot. The pottery and ceramic building material were reported on by Sue Anderson. The glass, iron and animal bone was reported on by Rebecca Sillwood.

This report was edited by Jayne Bown and the graphics were undertaken by David Dobson.

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<http://www.maps.bgs.ac.uk/> accessed 05/06/2011

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	Type	Fill Of	Description	Period
1	Deposit	Topsoil		Spoil	Unknown

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period
1	Animal Bone	2	269g	Unknown
1	Ceramic Building Material	15	648g	Post-medieval
1	Glass	4	375g	Post-medieval
1	Iron	1	648g	Post-medieval
1	Pottery	97	1,689g	Post-medieval

Appendix 2b: OASIS Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Post-medieval	Ceramic Building Material	15
Post-medieval	Glass	4
Post-medieval	Iron	1
Post-medieval	Pottery	97
Unknown	Animal Bone	2

Appendix 3: Pottery

Context	Fabric	Form	Rim	No	Wt/g	Fabric date range
1	GRE			5	131	16th-18th c.
1	GRE	dish?	?	1	3	16th-18th c.
1	GRE	handled jar	FLAN	1	214	16th-18th c.
1	GSW4			1	118	16th-17th c.
1	GSW			1	44	
1	TGE			10	34	16th-18th c.
1	GSW5			4	22	E.17th-19th c.
1	LSRW			1	37	18th-19th c.
1	CRW	plate?	EV	1	5	1730-1760
1	CRW	plate	EV	2	13	1730-1760
1	SWSW			15	86	18th c.
1	SWSW	?	CAV	1	1	18th c.
1	ESW			4	38	17th-19th c.
1	ESWN			1	18	L.17th-L.18th c.
1	ESW	lid	FLAN	1	4	17th-19th c.

Context	Fabric	Form	Rim	No	Wt/g	Fabric date range
1	ESW	jar	BD	1	30	17th-19th c.
1	ESW	jar	BD	2	32	17th-19th c.
1	LGRE	mug?	INT	1	17	18th-19th c.
1	LPME	plant pot		2	96	18th-20th c.
1	REFW	dish	EV	6	294	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW			4	35	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW			2	70	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW	dish	EV	5	98	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW			6	20	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW	jar		1	41	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW	?	INT	1	15	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW	plate	EV	1	8	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW			1	16	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW			1	7	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW			1	6	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW	bowl?	UPPL	1	3	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW			1	6	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW			1	3	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW	electrical		2	2	L.18th-20th c.
1	REFW			1	7	L.18th-20th c.
1	PORC			2	5	18th-20th c.
1	PORC	pl		1	27	18th-20th c.
1	PORC	bowl?	FLAR	1	9	18th-20th c.
1	PORC			1	1	18th-20th c.
1	PORC	saucer		1	13	18th-20th c.
1	REFW	?		2	38	L.18th-20th c.

Notes: Rim: EV–everted; FLAR–flaring; CAV–cavetto; BD–beaded; INT–inturned; UPP–upright plain; FLAR–flaring; PL–plain

Appendix 4: Ceramic Building Material

Context	Fabric	Form	No	Wt(g)	Height	Glaze	Comments	Date
1	msf	PAN	1	127			black slip surface	pmed
1	fs	PAN	3	37		DBG	black glazed surface	pmed
1	fs	PAN	3	181			reduced, includes nib	pmed
1	msf	PAN	1	87				pmed
1	msf	RT	2	49				pmed
1	tge	WT	4	107	8	W	2 with spider's head corner motifs, 2 plain corners	M17-18
1	refw	WT	1	60		W	tin-glazed but press-moulded	19-20