

Report 2675



nps archaeology

Archaeological Watching Brief at a water main repair at Norwich School, Norwich

ENF126403



Prepared for
Norwich School
69-71a The Close
Norwich
NR1 4DD



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<i>Issue 1</i>		

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Location:	Norwich School Water Main
District:	Norwich
Grid Ref.:	TG2345 0901
HER No.:	ENF 126403
OASIS Ref.:	106090
Client:	Norwich School
Dates of Fieldwork:	23 February 2011

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for the Norwich School ahead of repairs to a burst water main. One small trench was dug for access to the broken pipe.

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered; all of the ground had been disturbed previously and there were no archaeological finds.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

One small trench measuring approximately 1.5m x 0.7m was excavated by mini-digger to the depth of 0.9m so that contractors could gain emergency access to a water main that was in need of repair within the grounds of Norwich School (Fig. 1).

This work was undertaken to fulfil a Brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Ref. CNF43326). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NPS/BAU2675/NP). The work was commissioned and funded by Norwich School.

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains that may be disturbed during the remedial works, following the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for 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

Norwich School campus lies within the precinct of Norwich Cathedral (the Cathedral of the Holy and Undivided Trinity) approximately 85m north of the body of the cathedral and 160m south of the River Wensum. Land slopes gently downwards from the site northwards towards the River Wensum.

The underlying geology of the area is chalk lain down during the cretaceous period with first terrace sands and river gravels above (BGS 1974).

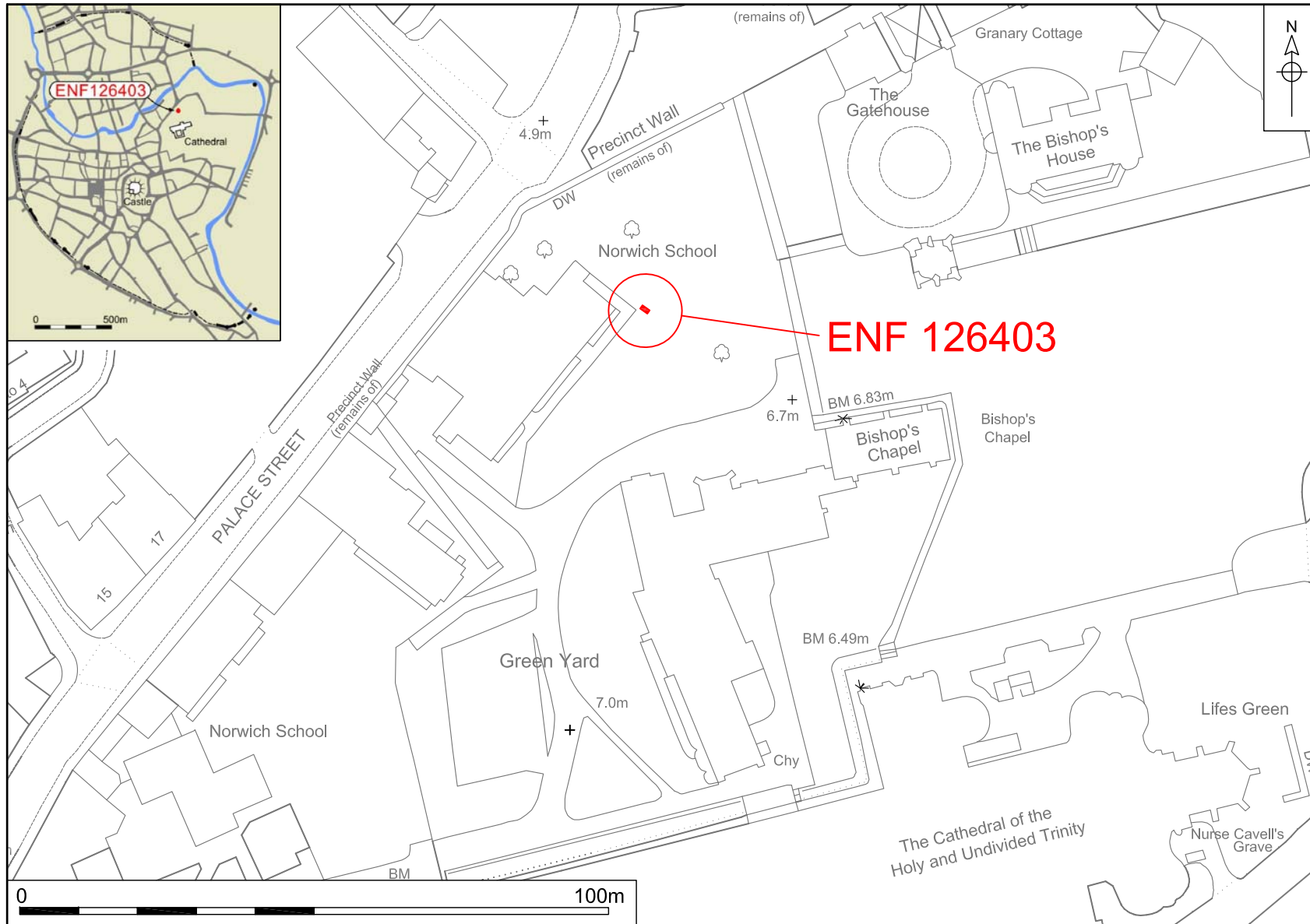


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:1000

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

With the construction of a royal castle, new market and cathedral all taking place by the end of the 11th century, Norwich was among the foremost towns of Norman England (Penn 1999).

It has been postulated that a Roman road ran west across what was to become the medieval cathedral precinct from a ford at Bishops Bridge, however there is little evidence for significant prehistoric, Roman or Early Saxon activity within the bounds of the cathedral precinct (Ayers 1996).

Ayers has argued that when combined with an analysis of topography and parochial development the archaeological evidence suggests 'an urban community of some size and importance developed [in the area] during the eleventh century' (Ayers 1996, 64).

Recent archaeological work appears to have confirmed the presence of an urbanised landscape prior to the founding of the cathedral priory. Excavations on the site of the cathedral refectory have revealed extensive Late Saxon remains that included a gravel-surfaced road, with adjacent buildings and pits for the disposal of domestic refuse (Wallis 2006). Recent work by NPS Archaeology to the north of the cathedral precinct has also revealed considerable evidence for Saxon settlement, with sites off Fishergate and Palace Street demonstrating ribbon development along both banks of the River Wensum (Adams 2006, 2007, 2008, in prep).

In 2007 a single trench excavated just to the north of the Norwich School refectory uncovered evidence of a collapsed flint wall on a north-west to south-east alignment that is posited to be that visible as a boundary on Cleer's 1696 map of Norwich (Watkins 2007).

Archaeological evaluation has recently taken place close to the north-east corner of the Norwich School refectory building, the results of which indicated post-medieval deposits overlay and to some extent helped preserve remains of possible Middle and Late Saxon date (Phelps 2010).

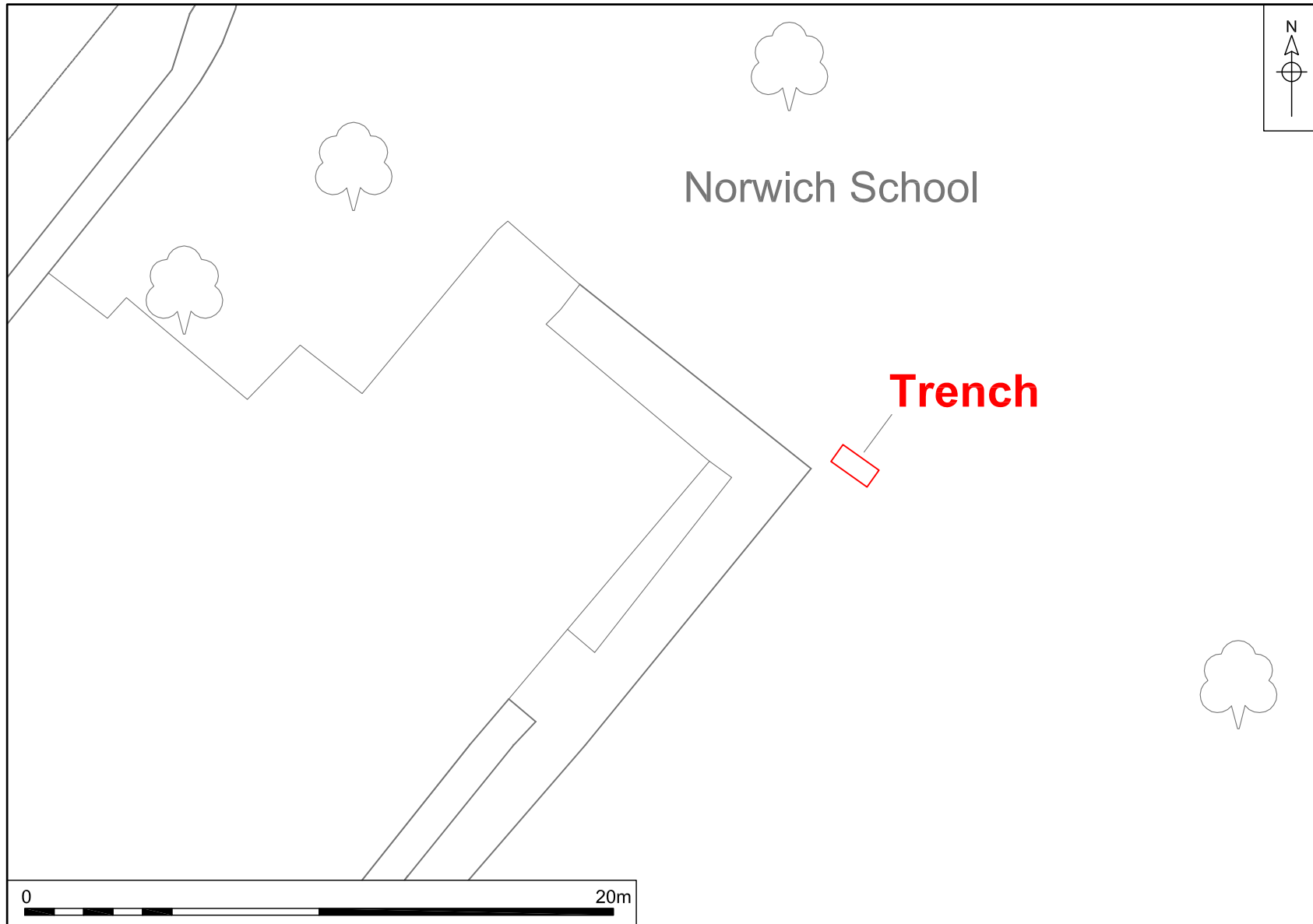
4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief was to minimise the potential impact of the remedial works by appropriate levels of archaeological excavation and recording where archaeological remains are identified and cannot be preserved *in situ*.

The Brief required that constant attendance was maintained by an archaeologist during the mechanical excavation of the trench needed to access the broken water main.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NPS Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Monochrome and digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits where appropriate. Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector.

No environmental samples were taken due to the lack of suitable deposits.



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Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:200

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

5.0 RESULTS

A small trench measuring approximately 1.5m x 0.7m was excavated using a mechanical digger to the depth of approximately 0.9m in order to expose the pipe which needed repair (Fig. 2, Plate 1).



Plate 1. Excavation of the trench, looking south-west

At the base of the trench was layer [5], a very mixed grey-brown sandy-silt full of flint, brick and mortar rubble and chalk pieces. This layer was highly disturbed by roots and represents some kind of make-up layer.

Above this was a probable 'garden soil' [4], which was dark black-brown sandy-silt and also heavily disturbed by tree roots (Plate 2).

The upper layers were all related to the floor surface between two nearby school buildings, and included a bright yellow-orange sandy layer [3] which had been laid down as a base for the hard surface, the bricks [1] themselves and a soil which had washed in between the bricks.



Plate 2. The trench, looking west

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that sub-surface deposits in this area in front of the school building and bicycle sheds has been highly disturbed by previous works to a depth of at least 0.9m which probably occurred when this water main was originally laid. Initial construction of the school building and surfaces may also have contributed to disturbance of upper deposits.

No archaeological deposits or features were encountered and no finds were present.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Norwich School who commissioned and funded the work and the contractors on site who made access available. Fieldwork was undertaken by the author.

David Dobson prepared the figures and produced the report which was edited by Jayne Bown.

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Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Description	Period
1	Masonry	Floor surface	Brick surface	Modern
2	Deposit	Layer	Silty layer	Modern
3	Deposit	Layer	Sand layer for bricks	Modern
4	Deposit	Layer	Garden soil layer	Modern
5	Deposit	Layer	Disturbed 'make-up' layer	Modern