

Report 2661



nps archaeology

## Archaeological Watching Brief at Brandon Road/Canterbury Way, Thetford, Norfolk

ENF127238



**Prepared for**  
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Location: Brandon Road/Canterbury Way, Thetford, Norfolk  
District: Breckland  
Planning Ref.: N/A  
Grid Ref.: TL 8610 8310  
HER No.: ENF 127328  
Scheduled Monument No.: NF 333  
OASIS Ref.: 110460  
Client: Breckland District Council  
Dates of Fieldwork: 1, 3, 4, 7-9, 11 and 16 March 2011

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Breckland District Council during the excavation of small holes of c.0.3m diameter and c.0.6m deep for installation of wooden bollards*

*No archaeological finds or features were recorded.*

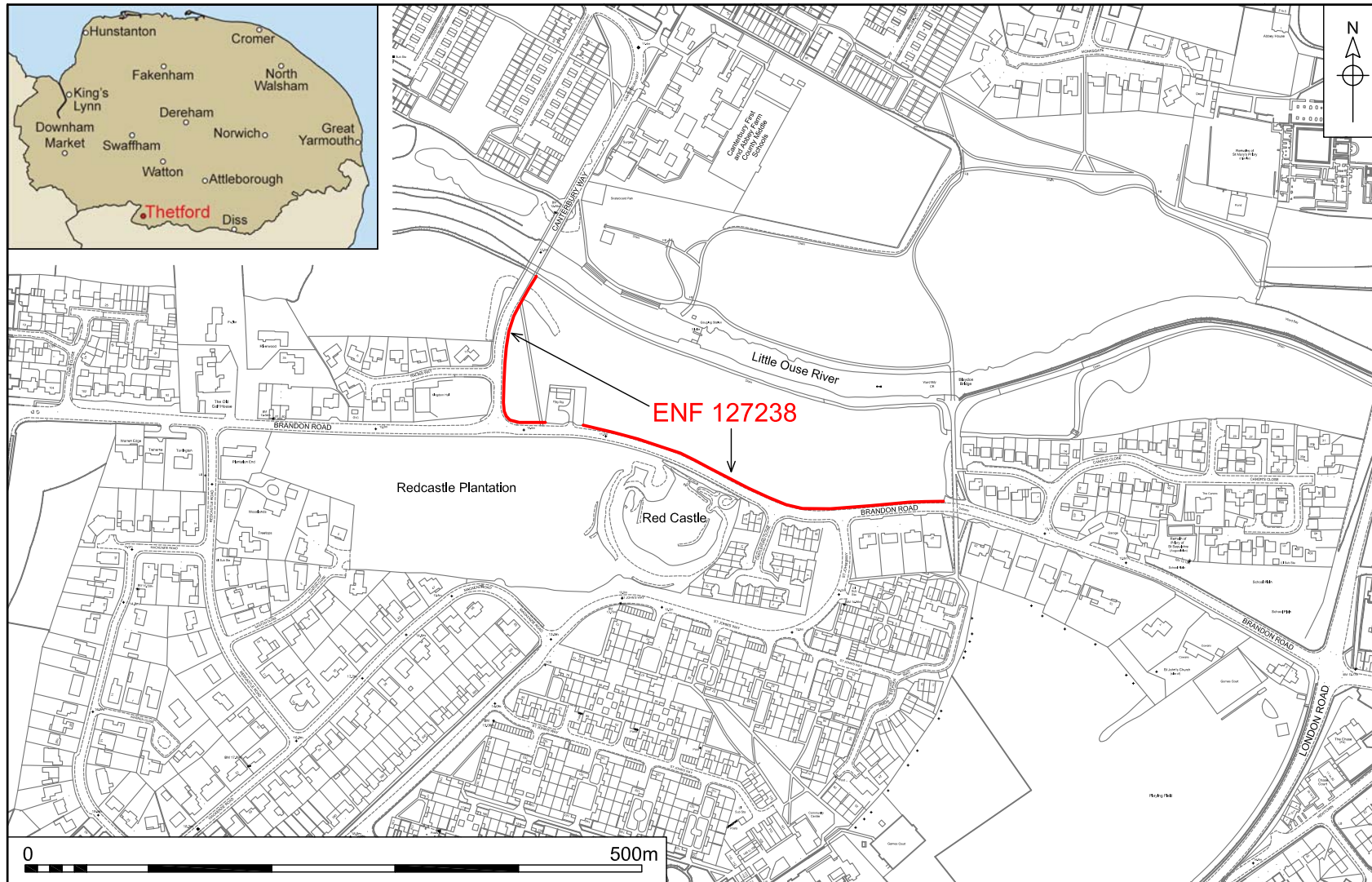
## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A series of timber bollards to a depth of 0.6m were erected along the edge of the Water Meadows adjacent to Brandon Road and Canterbury Way, Thetford (Fig. 1) to prevent vehicular access.



Plate 1. General working shot

This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by Breckland District Council and a Brief prepared by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Ref. CNF43185). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU2661/NP). This work was commissioned and funded by Breckland District Council.

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 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**

The topsoil at the site is a mid brown sandy-silt and below this is made-ground.

The bedrock geology is chalk, with a superficial geology of river terrace deposits, sand and gravel<sup>1</sup>

The Little Ouse River runs east-west close to the site - in fact, Canterbury Way bridges the river here and Brandon Road lies around 100m to the south of the river. The site is at roughly 10m OD, and slopes downwards towards the river to the north.

## **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) was consulted to provide archaeological and historical information about the area and the most significant entries are summarised below.

The site lies within a Scheduled Monument (NF 333) which is defined as an area of the Saxon town of Thetford north of Redcastle (NHER 5895).

Just on the south side of Brandon Road is Redcastle itself (SM No. 21442) a 12th-century (1135-54) ringwork castle which lies on part of the Late Saxon town ditch and an earlier Saxon settlement (NHER 5746). In 1961 excavations for a new sewer revealed part of the curtain wall of the bailey relating to the castle.

In 1969 skeletons were found on the water meadows. Redcastle Furze was subject to archaeological excavations in 1988-9 (NHER 24822) which revealed Mesolithic finds, some Roman settlement, an Early Saxon riverside settlement and some Middle Saxon ditches. The bailey ditch of the Redcastle was also discovered here, disrupting the earlier features. The castle is thought to have become redundant around 1200 and later features including a malthouse were built on the site which possibly represents a farm belonging to the nearby Priory of the Holy Sepulchre.

Roman activity has also been recorded to the west of Canterbury Way, at the site of the The Warrener public house (NHER 31897).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience/>

Thetford is rich in archaeological and historical evidence, with evidence of every period from the Palaeolithic through to the post-medieval. The area of the current site is within a Scheduled Monument, and in an area containing prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval remains.

#### **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

The objective of this watching brief was to mitigate the impact of the introduction of an extensive line of bollards by recording any archaeological features and deposits and by collecting any finds that may be disturbed within the development area.

The Brief required that the regular attendance of an archaeologist was maintained throughout the below-ground excavations.

Excavation was carried out by hand by the contractors, Roots 4 Routes (Plate 1).

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 due to the lack of suitable deposits.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NPS Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Colour, monochrome and 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**

Around 280 post-holes for timber bollards were monitored during the course of the watching brief.



Plate 2. Example post-hole



All of these holes appeared to show a made-ground and possibly imported soil. The material from the post-holes was a mid brown sandy-silt topsoil, which overlay a stony layer containing lots of rubble, such as large flints and building material (Plate 2). This was clearly a dumped layer, used for making up the ground level here close to the road.

No finds or features of an archaeological nature were recorded and no context numbers were issued.

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The site lies within a rich area of archaeological evidence, close to the western edge of Thetford. The site is located within a Scheduled Monument, which includes part of the Late Saxon town of Thetford.

The limited scope of the excavations for erection of the line of bollards, and the nature of the sub-surface deposits encountered meant that no archaeological features were recovered. There appears to have been only made ground within the 0.6m depth of the holes excavated in this phase of works.



Plate 3. Line of bollards along Brandon Road, after erection

## ***Acknowledgements***

The author would like to thank Breckland Council for funding the work and the contractors on site for their assistance. The excavation of the post-holes was monitored by the author, Suzie Westall, Andrew Barnett and Steve Hickling.

Thanks go to Sarah Howard of Norfolk Historic Environment Record for providing the HER number.

## ***Bibliography***

Department for Communities and Local Government    2010    *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*