

Report 2739



nps archaeology

## Archaeological Watching Brief at Wells Wondy Lane, Gayton, Norfolk

ENF126675

**Prepared for**  
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Location:	Wells Wondy Lane, Gayton, Norfolk
District:	King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Planning ref.:	-
Grid Ref.:	TF 7342 1949
HER No.:	ENF126675
OASIS Ref.:	1104611
Client:	Trundley Design Services
Dates of Fieldwork:	3 June – 2 September 2011

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Trundley Design Services during groundworks associated with the construction of agricultural and office buildings at Wells Wondy Lane, Gayton, Norfolk.*

*This watching brief added little to our understanding of the archaeology of the area, beyond information gathered during the earlier evaluation of the site (Crawley 2011). No archaeological features, apart from the subsoil layer, were visible and few artefacts were recovered.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A constant attendance watching brief took place during groundworks associated with the construction of agricultural and office buildings at Wells Wondy Lane, Gayton, Norfolk (Fig. 1).

This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (Ref. CNF43225). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU2739/DW). This work was commissioned and funded by Trundley Design Services.

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 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 natural geology consisted of Upper Cretaceous Middle Chalk (BGS 1985).

The land rises gradually to the north and the development site is located within a landscape of low rolling hills at a height of around 25m OD to the east of Gayton,

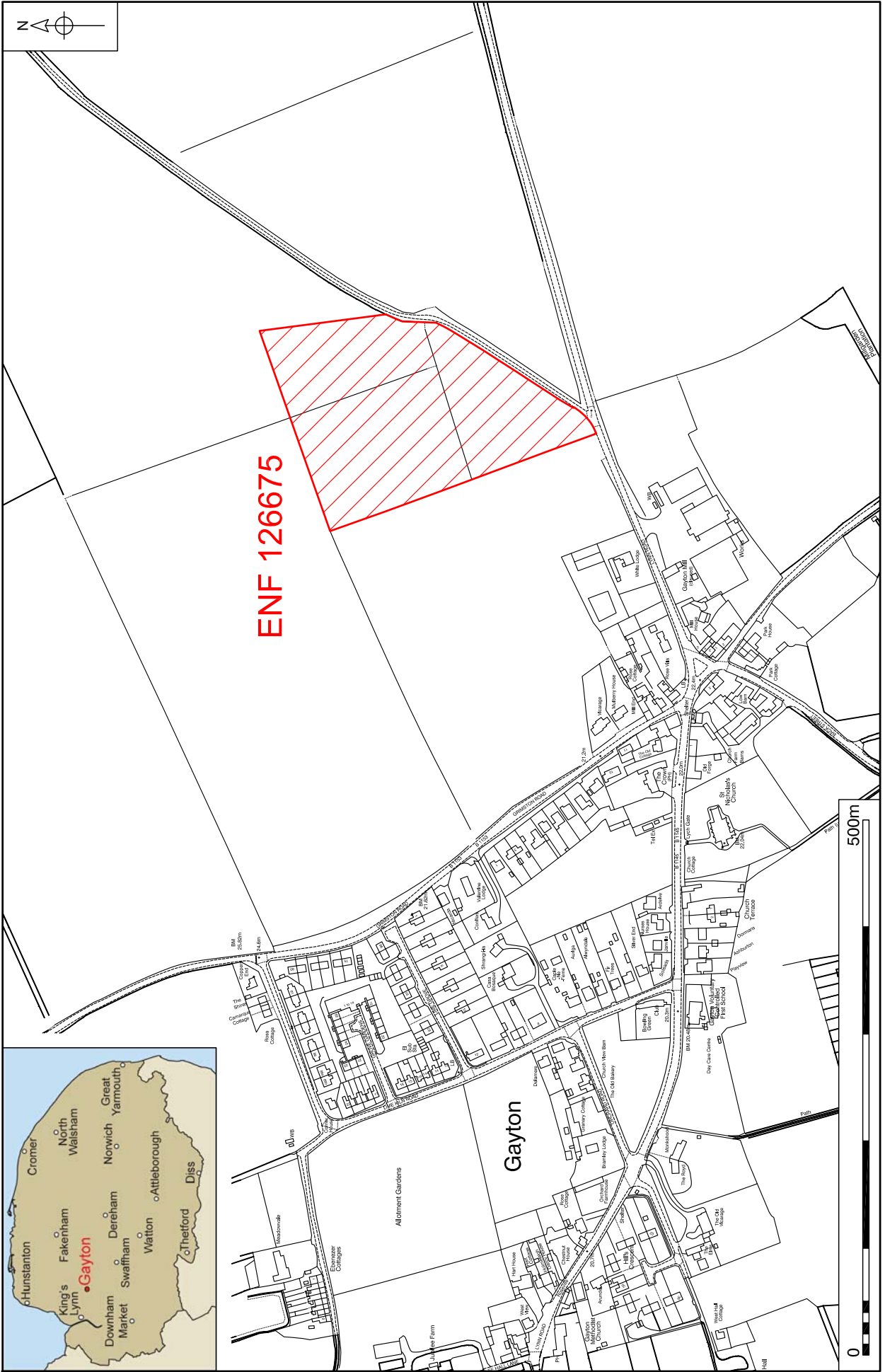


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

south-east of King's Lynn. The River Gaywood is situated less than a mile to the north-west.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) and historic mapping have been consulted to prepare this section and the results summarised below.

#### **Prehistoric**

This area is rich in cropmarks of possible Bronze Age round barrows:

There are cropmarks of ten possible Bronze Age ring ditches 300m south-east of the site. These have not previously been excavated, but metal detecting on the site has produced no prehistoric finds (NHER 11294).

There is the cropmark of a possible Bronze Age ring ditch visible 600m north-west of the site (NHER 15402).

300m north-west of the current development are the cropmarks of a triple concentric ring ditch (NHER 17470) possibly dating to the Bronze Age.

There are the cropmarks of a possible Bronze Age ring ditch 300m north of the present development (NHER 29465).

There is a cropmark of a possible Bronze Age ring ditch 250m to the east of the present development (NHER 32058).

The B1135 follows the line of the probably prehistoric Icknield Way northwards to Holme-next-Sea. The adjacent field system is parallel to this road.

#### **Roman**

A Roman coin and pot sherd have been found at the western boundary of the development area (NHER 3744).

Another Roman coin has been found 50m west of the site (NHER 17579).

Roman, Saxon and medieval material has been found by metal detecting 500m west of the development (NHER 30034).

Eleven roman coins and two medieval coins have been found by metal detecting in the field bordering the western boundary of the development site (NHER 4259).

Roman and medieval finds have been discovered by metal detecting 500m east of the present development (NHER 51165).

#### **Saxon**

Metal detecting in a small field 400m south-west of the current development produced Middle Saxon and medieval finds (NHER 30881).

#### **Medieval**

The parish church of St.Nicholas is of mostly 14th-century date, but the presence of re-used stone suggests that there was probably an earlier church here. Early, Middle and Late Saxon pottery along with medieval pottery has been found in the churchyard (NHER 3770).

A medieval moat and associated fishponds survive in the grounds of Gayton Hall 700m to the south-west (NHER 3771).

## **Post-Medieval**

Gayton Windmill, 150m to the south-west, dates to 1824 (NHER 5271).

Hall Farm, 500m south-west of the present development has been dated to the late 17th to early 18th century, however it has a date stone dating it to 1587 (NHER 11786).

Gayton Hall park, 600m south-west of the present development was landscaped in 1810 (NHER 31970).

The Crown public house, 300m west of the development is an 18th-century brick and flint building (NHER 33844).

The parish Tithe Map (c.1840) shows the field boundaries to be the same as in modern times and the pattern suggests they are the result of piecemeal enclosure of openfields. Wells Wondy Road runs diagonally across the fields, suggesting it is of medieval or later date.

## **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

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

The Brief required that all groundworks be constantly monitored and monitoring took place on all groundworks apart from drain runs and the yard surface (no notification of works was made).

Machine excavation was carried out with a tracked 360° excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

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.

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**

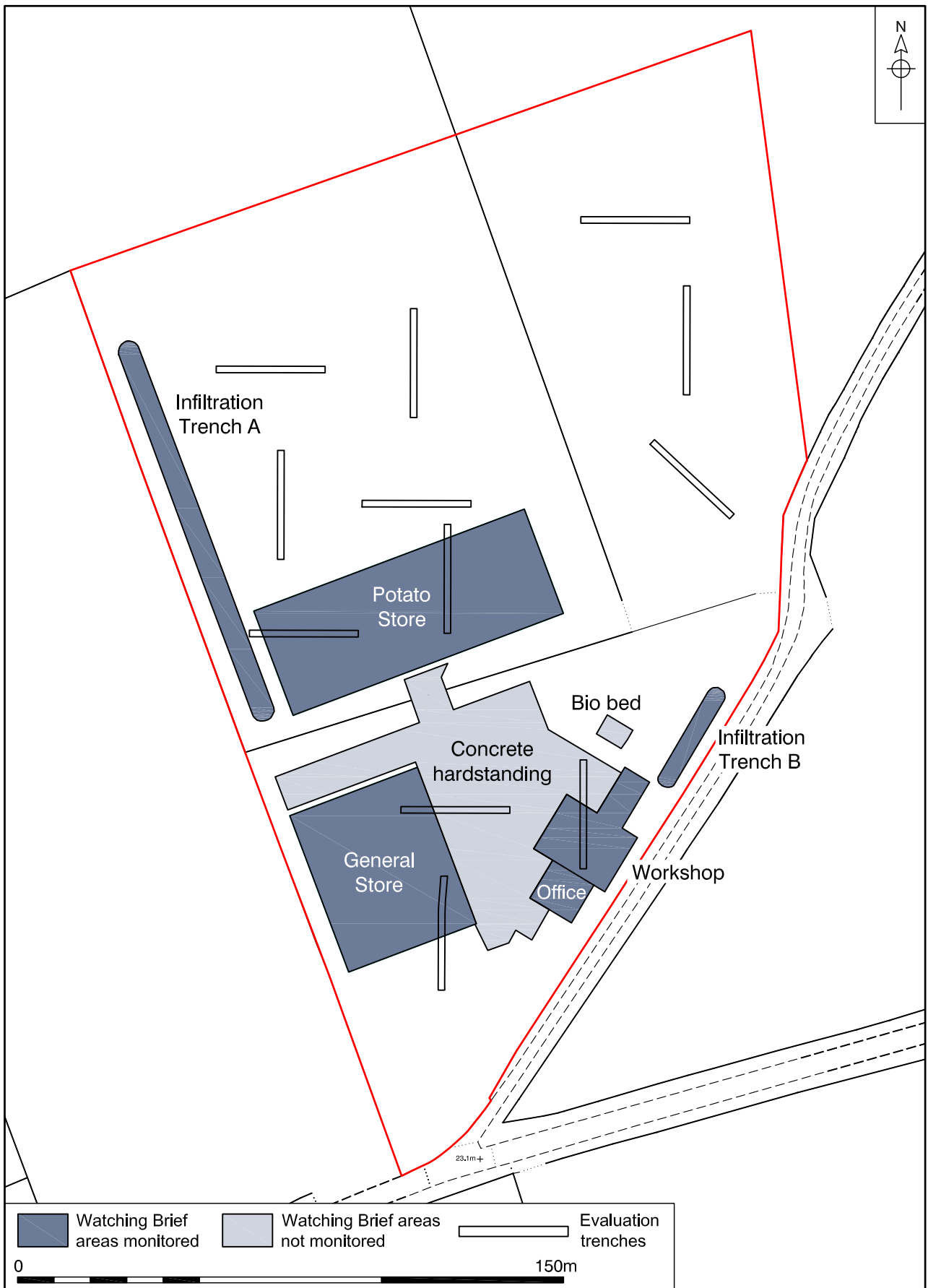
The results of the watching brief are described below, ordered into five distinct sections (Potato Store, General Store, Workshop/Office, Infiltration Trench, Drains and service runs) the locations of which are shown on Figure 2.

### **5.1 Potato Store**

The stripping of the whole footprint of the building and of the holes for the concrete pads supporting the frame of the building was monitored.

No archaeological finds or features were visible, but subsoil layer [2], an orangey brown silty sand up to 0.6m in depth with occasional flint rubble, was visible over





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Figure 2. Plan showing Watching Brief areas monitored and location of previous Evaluation trenches. Scale 1:1500

most of the area. Above this was topsoil [1], a layer of dark greyish brown silty sand c.0.3m thick with frequent pieces of flint gravel.



Plate 1. Initial strip of the Potato Store, facing south-east

**5.2 General Store**

Topsoil had already been stripped from this area before site attendance. The stripping of the subsoil was monitored (Plate 2) and no archaeological features or artefacts were visible however subsoil [2] was present.



Plate 2. Initial strip of the General Store, facing north

### 5.3 Workshop/Office

The area of the workshop was stripped to formation level (c.0.7m below present ground level). Because of the slope of the ground, natural chalk and sand was visible at the western end of the stripped area, while subsoil [2] and topsoil [1] were still present to the east (Plate 3).

No archaeological features were visible, but subsoil [2] yielded one sherd of 10th- to 11th-century pottery.



Plate 3. Initial strip of the Workshop area, facing south-east showing subsoil and topsoil layers

## 5.4 Infiltration Trenches

Infiltration Trenches A and B had been excavated prior to notification of works starting in these area. Trench A was approximately 110m long and Trench B measured roughly 30m long (Fig. 2, Plates 4 and 5); they were both 1.7m deep.

Exposed surfaces of Trenches A and B were accessible and were examined. Subsoil layer [2] was visible in Trench B and the southern half of Trench A.

No archaeological features or artefacts were noted.



Plate 4: Infiltration Trench B, facing east



Plate 5. Infiltration Trench A, facing north

## **5.5 Drains and service runs**

No monitoring of drains and service trenches took place, however it is understood that these groundworks were of limited depth and it is unlikely that natural was reached.

## **6.0 THE FINDS**

by Lucy Talbot

All finds were processed and recorded by count and weight, and an Excel spreadsheet was produced outlining broad dating. Each material type has been considered separately and is described below in date order. A list of all finds in context order can be found in Appendix 2a.

### **6.1 Pottery**

Three sherds of pottery weighing 50g were collected from three contexts. The assemblage was recorded by count and weight and fabrics and forms identified based on Jennings (1981)

### **6.1.1 Late Saxon**

A single rim sherd of 10th- to 11th-century Grimston–Thetford type ware (THETG), weighing 17g was recovered from subsoil [2] in the area of the workshop. The form is probably that of a storage jar or cooking pot.

### **6.1.2 Post medieval**

Topsoil [1] produced two sherds of highly abraded 16th- to 18th-century Glazed Red Earthenware (GRE), together weighing 33g. Both were of medium sandy, orange fabrics; one, a strap handle fragment has clear lead glaze in patches on the upper and undersides, whilst the second, a body sherd of undiagnostic form has traces of brownish-green glaze remaining.

### **6.1.3 Pottery Conclusions**

All of these finds were derived from upper-level contexts and are typical sherds from the west of the county.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

This watching brief was required based on the results of the evaluation trial trenching undertaken earlier in 2011 (Crawley 2011). However the generally negative results from the watching brief add little to what is already known about the archaeology of the site but do add some context to the findings from the evaluation.

Crawley recorded three prehistoric features (a posthole and two pits/tree throws) which, given the observations made during the watching brief, appear to be probably isolated features, rather than being associated with any occupation.

The three medieval ditches in the southern portion of the site noted in the evaluation trench report (Crawley 2011) were probably associated with fields or crofts fronting onto the B1145 on the eastern side of Gayton.

The subsoil observed during the watching brief was concentrated in the southern part of the site and the 'natural hollow' containing Early Saxon material identified in the evaluation (Crawley 2011) was found during the watching brief (once a bigger area was opened up) to be the edge of an area of subsoil of medieval date. This misidentification was probably due to the nature of the natural at the site here where large areas of the weathered surface of the natural chalk had been covered with natural sand. As the subsoil layer was formed by ploughing and manuring, the plough would erode the areas of soft sand more easily than the harder chalkier areas and eventually, when viewed in plan, the apparent edges of the subsoil can be defined by areas of harder chalk.

No archaeological features, apart from the subsoil layer, were visible and few artefacts (three sherds of pottery) were recovered.

## **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank Michelle Bull for assisting with the fieldwork and Lucy Talbot for process and reporting on the finds.

David Dobson completed the drawings and Jayne Bown edited this report.

Thanks must also be given to Trundley Design Services for commissioning and funding this project.

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## Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	Type	Description	Period
1	Deposit	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown silty sand	Modern
2	Deposit	Subsoil	Orangey brown silty sand	Post-medieval

## Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
1	Pottery	2	33g	Post-medieval	Glazed Red Earthenware
2	Pottery	1	17g	Late Saxon	Grimston - Thetford ware

## Appendix 2b: Oasis finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Late Saxon	Pottery	1
Post-medieval	Pottery	2