

Report 2860



nps archaeology

## Archaeological Watching Brief at Red Lodge Garage, Lodge Road, Feltwell

ENF127637

**Prepared for**  
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November 2011



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<i>Issue 1</i>		

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Plate 1 General view north across the watching brief area showing the chalk natural and the modern features cutting through it

Location:	Red Lodge Garage, Lodge Road, Feltwell
District:	Kings Lynn and West Norfolk
Planning Ref.:	1/00205/F
Grid Ref.:	TL 7208 9100
HER No.:	ENF 127637
OASIS Ref.:	113309
Client:	Sandy Inglis
Dates of Fieldwork:	13 September 2011

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the demolition and removal of a modern garage building prior to the construction of new houses on the site of the former Red Lodge Garage, Lodge Road, Feltwell. The watching brief was required because part of a human skull had been recovered from an adjacent plot and it was considered possible that the skull may have been from a previously unknown burial ground.*

*No archaeological features were present in the area and no further human remains were recovered. It is feasible that the skull fragment from the next door plot had been part of a medical collection and not from a burial.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk (Ref. 11/00205/F) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Ref. CNF43451). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU2860/NP). This work was commissioned by Sandy Inglis of CADarchitecture.

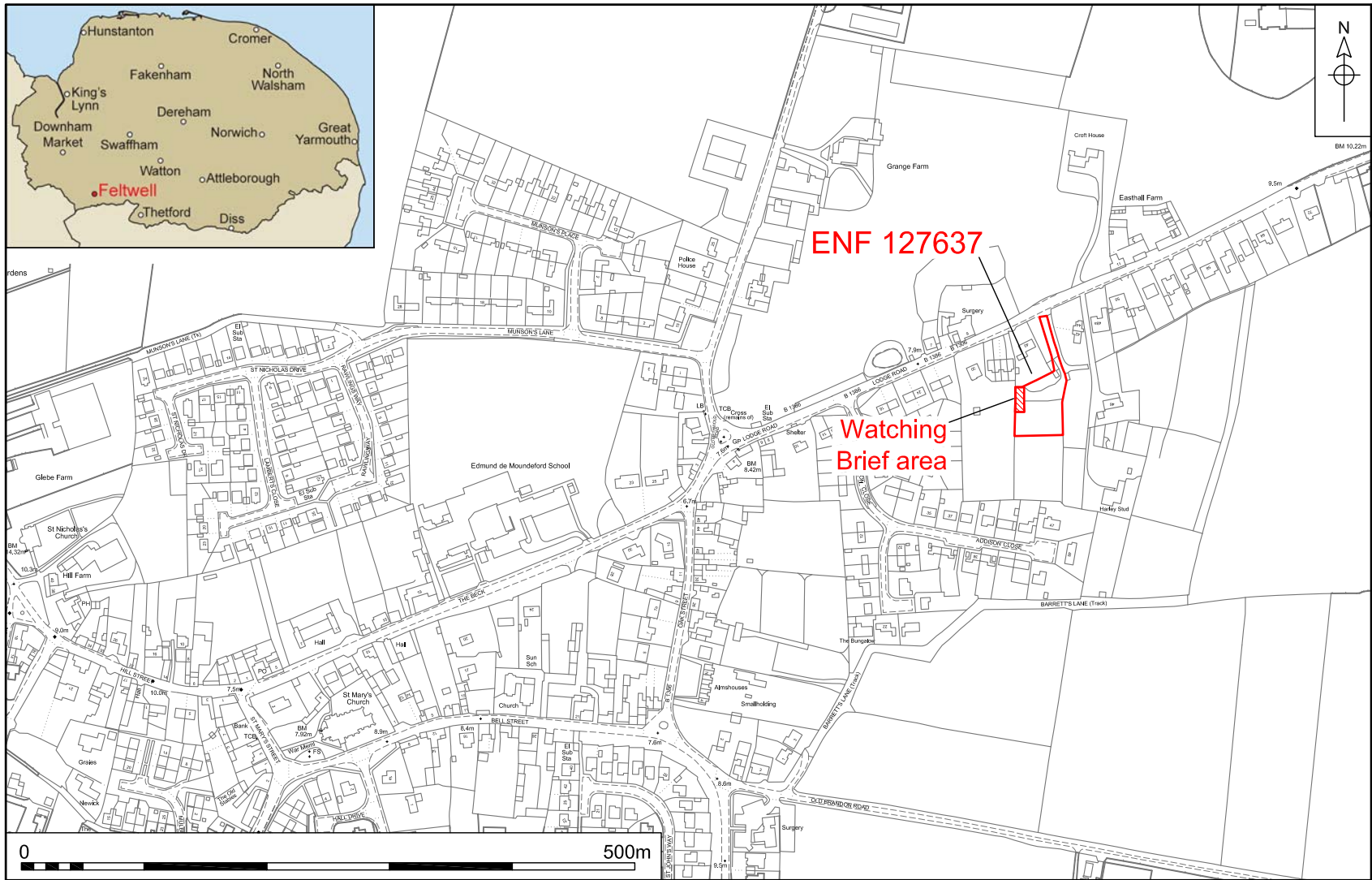
This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results 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 site occupies a flat area, which was formerly used for a garage workshop, car parking, an access road and a grassed area. Any topography there may have been on the site had been removed by landscaping in preparation for the construction of the garage.

The underlying geology was soft white chalk overlain by a brown loamy topsoil.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

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

As part of this project a search was undertaken of the Norfolk Historic Environment record (NHER) to identify any known archaeological or historical remains in order to assess the potential for them to influence the nature and extent of any remains present within the site. A total of four records were identified within the search area, with another two sites outside of the search area, but of interest and considered here.

The reason for the watching brief was the findspot of part of a human skull (NHER 6416) recovered from somewhere within the area now occupied by gardens of the cottages to the west. It was thought possible that the skull may have been a disarticulated bone from a former burial, which may have been part of a previously unknown cemetery. Other burials have been recorded within the village (NHER 4930 and 4931), which are some distance away to the west of the site, c.870m and c.970m respectively. These burials are undated, but it is possible that the remains from NHER 4930 were formerly in the burial ground of nearby St. Nicholas' Church, which may subsequently have been reduced in size.

The other sites returned by the HER search were the remains of a medieval cross (NHER 4938), the findspot of a Roman finger ring (NHER 37480) and the nearby early 17th-century Grange Farm (NHER 16603), which is a Listed Building. None of these have any direct relationship with the site, nor are they likely to have had any influence on any remains that may have been present on the site.

### **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

The objective of this watching brief was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence or absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving human remains within the development area.

The Brief required that the removal of the concrete base and foundations of the former garage building be monitored in order to determine the presence or absence of any human remains and an assessment of the potential for the rest of the site to contain a previously unknown cemetery.

Machine excavation was carried out with a tracked excavator using a toothed bucket.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector. No archaeological features were present and all artefacts noted were clearly modern and were not retained for inspection.

No environmental samples were taken.

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

### **5.0 RESULTS**

The watching brief was concentrated on the demolition and removal of the foundations of a former garage building in the north-west corner of the site adjacent to the boundary with the neighbouring properties.

This phase of works included the lifting of a large concrete slab and the removal of a former inspection pit. The concrete base measured 20m x 7.5m and was 0.25m

thick. It was laid on a thin sub-base of sand and gravel and had a sheet of polythene laid as a damp proof course. This gave a total depth of c.0.3m, which had been dug into the topsoil, which averaged c.0.5m across this area of the site.

Removal of the sub-base and remaining topsoil across part of the southern section of the garage building footprint revealed the surface of the loose chalk natural. There were two modern features cutting into the chalk, both of which contained a small amount of modern brick, tiles and pottery fragments, including a fragment of a toilet or sink. Given the modern date of these features they were not recorded in detail.

There was no evidence for human remains in any of the deposits exposed across the area, nor was there any evidence for burials in the surface of the chalk natural.



Plate 1. General view north across the watching brief area showing the chalk natural and the modern features cutting through it

## **6.0 THE FINDS**

A number of modern artefacts were present including brick, tile and pottery fragments and a fragment of a toilet or sink. The presence of these artefacts was noted but they were not retained.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The original aim of the watching brief was to establish the presence or absence of any human remains and an assessment of the likelihood of the skull recorded nearby (NHER 6416) being from a disturbed burial and part of a previously unknown cemetery.

The garage building that was removed was in the part of the site closest to the recorded find location of the skull fragment (back gardens of the adjacent row of cottages) and therefore would be expected to contain evidence of any further human remains.



No human remains were noted in any of the deposits or surfaces exposed by the works, nor were any graves or other burial features present.

The circumstances of the recovery of the skull found in the nearby plot are a bit uncertain, but the fact that the skull had been sawn off just above the brows may suggest that it was part of a medical collection rather than part of a burial. Cutting the top off of a skull is common practice during autopsies and for medical specimens and it seems likely that the Feltwell skull was from a medical collection and had been buried after it was no longer required. Why it was buried in this location is unclear, although the land was formerly owned by a doctor, so there is a medical link.

## ***Acknowledgements***

The author would like to thank Sandy Inglis for commissioning the work and the contractors on site for their assistance during the fieldwork.

David Dobson prepared the figure and the report itself which was edited by Jayne Bown.