

Report 2751



nps archaeology

**Archaeological Watching Brief at
St James' Church, Great Ellingham, Norfolk**

ENF128170



Prepared for
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Location:	St James' Church, Great Ellingham, Norfolk
District:	Breckland
Grid Ref.:	TM 0202 9714
HER No.:	ENF128170
OASIS Ref.:	115634
Client:	Great Ellingham PCC
Dates of Fieldwork:	16 August 2011

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Great Ellingham PCC during works to upgrade the drainage system at St James' Church, Great Ellingham, Norfolk.

Three small pits were dug alongside the south wall and no archaeological features or deposits were disturbed during these works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Parish Church at Great Ellingham required an upgraded drainage system that required the excavation of three small pits along the south wall of the church (Fig. 1).

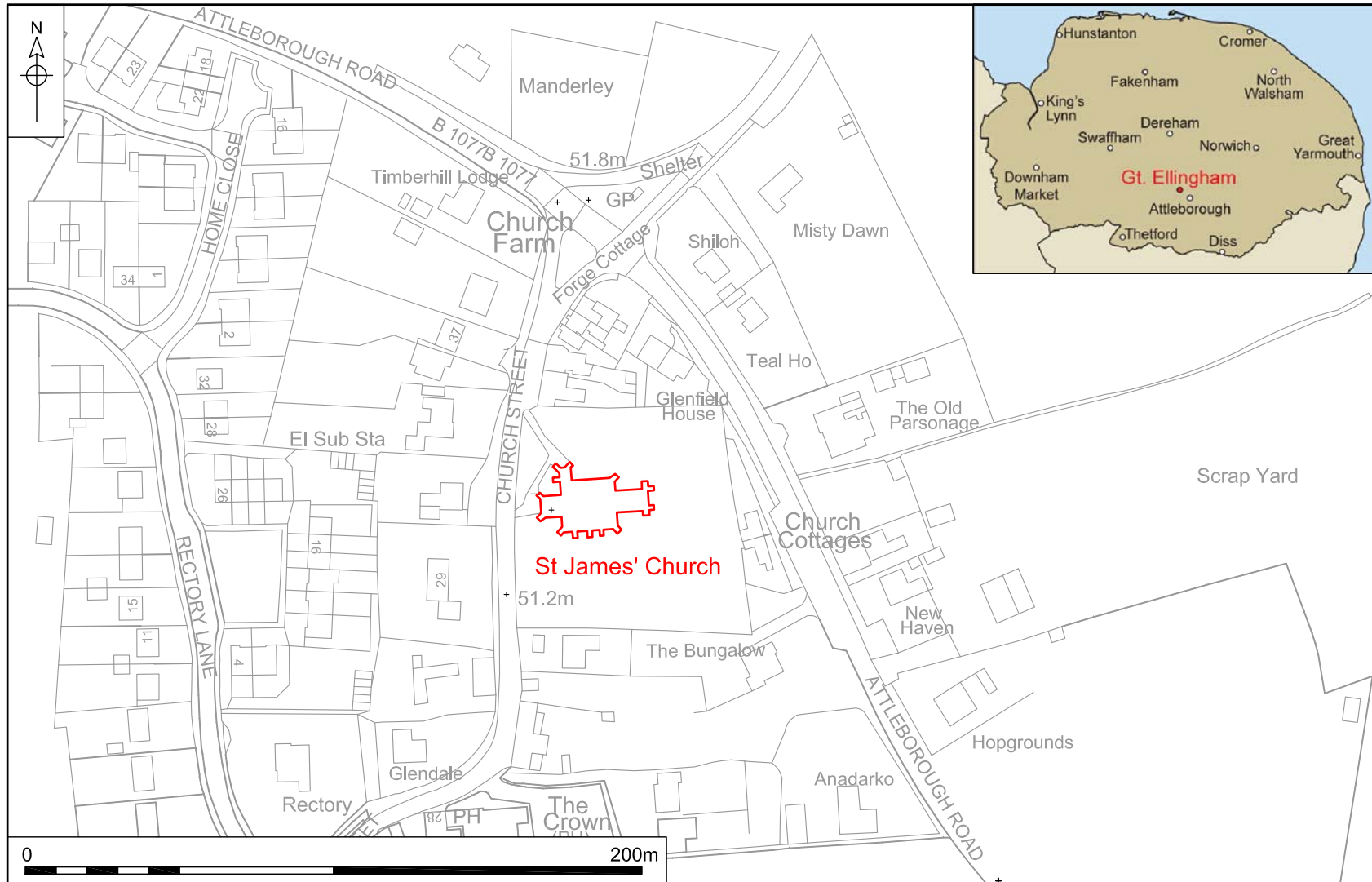
This work was undertaken to fulfil a Brief issued by Norfolk Historical Environment Services (Ref. CNF43353) following advice from DAC. The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU2751/DW). This work was commissioned by Birdsall, Swash and Blackman LLP and funded by the Parochial Church 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 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

Great Ellingham is a small village located some 3km north-west of Attleborough in the Breckland district of Norfolk. The underlying geology is chalk overlain by typical argillic brown earths. St James church sits on the east edge of the village at a height of 51-52m above Ordnance Datum. It is enclosed by a square churchyard.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2000

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A search of the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) centred on the church was made and most relevant results are presented below.

The main entry on the HER of relevance to this site is that of the church itself, St James the Great (NHER 4259), which is mostly of 14th-century date, restored between 1900 and 1920.

Another major site in the area is that of a Roman inhumation cemetery (NHER 4257), which lies just to the west of the site. The site was discovered during road widening in 1957 when five or six skeletons were found, one with a coin of the late 3rd-century inside the skull. Later work uncovered more skeletons, and archaeological excavations were undertaken in the area.

In January 2011 archaeological work just to the east of the church, at The Bungalow on Church Street (NHER 55312) revealed no archaeological features at all.

Almost all of the remainder of the records on the NHER in the vicinity of St James are of listed buildings.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological remains exposed by the works.

The Brief required that all groundworks for the new drain be monitored by an archaeologist. Excavation of the test pits was carried out by hand and under constant archaeological supervision.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector.

No environmental samples were taken as no suitable deposits were encountered.

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.

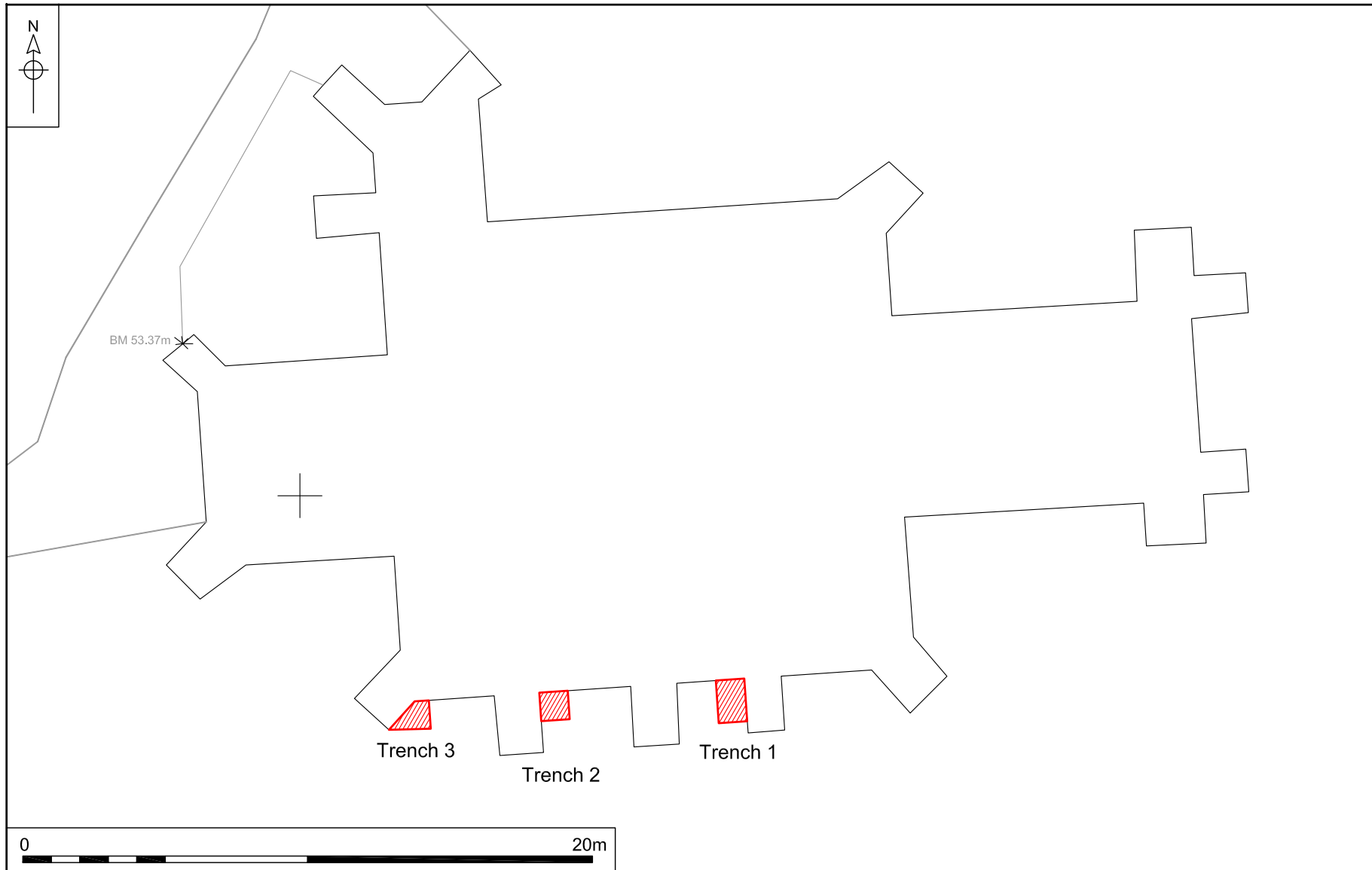
Site conditions were good, with the work taking place in fine weather.

5.0 RESULTS

Three pits were located along the exterior of the south wall of the church (Fig. 2, Plates 1-4), all of a similar size i.e. between 0.5m and 1m long by 0.5m wide by c.0.6m deep.

Pit 1 and Pit 3 were excavated through the turf and loose brown silty topsoil into the underlying orange brown sand natural. Pit 2 was dug in a small area of planting so no turf was present; this pit extended into the underlying sand.

The flint cobble foundation for the church was exposed in all three pits. The foundation projected c.0.15m from the external face of the wall, but was unremarkable in its construction.



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Figure 2. Trenches location. Scale 1:200



Plate 1. General view of the south wall showing the positions of the three pits, looking north



Plate 2. Pit 1, looking north



Plate 3. Pit 2, looking north



Plate 4. Pit 3, looking north

No other features or deposits of archaeological interest were present. One fragment of animal bone (not retained) was recovered from the topsoil in Pit 3.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The flint cobble foundation of the church wall was exposed in the trenches, but no other archaeological deposits or features were encountered during these works.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to Great Ellingham PCC who funded the work.

Bibliography and sources

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