

Report 2832



nps archaeology

**Archaeological Watching Brief on a
Leaking Fire Hydrant Repair at
Norwich Cathedral, Norfolk**

ENF128484

Prepared for
Norwich Cathedral Estates
The Cathedral Office
12 The Close
Norwich
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<i>Issue 1</i>		

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Location:	Upper Close, Norwich Cathedral
District:	Norwich
Grid Ref.:	TG 3400-8892
Planning Ref.:	N/A
HER No.:	128484
OASIS Ref.:	119166
Client:	Dean and Chapter, Norwich Cathedral
Dates of Fieldwork:	28-29 July 2011

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by NPS Archaeology during repairs by contractors to a water main near to the west entrance of the Cathedral of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, Norwich.

The watching brief monitoring recorded modern deposits thought to be associated with previous activity relating to the water main. No remains or finds of archaeological significance were encountered.

INTRODUCTION

A programme of archaeological work resulting from the proposed repair of a leaking fire hydrant in the Norwich Cathedral Close was requested by the Norwich Cathedral Archaeologist, Dr Roland Harris. This programme encompasses an archaeological watching brief and subsequent assessment, analysis and report production. The work was carried out in line with a project design (NAU/BAU2832/NP) produced in response to a request by Phil Thomas Norwich Cathedral Estates

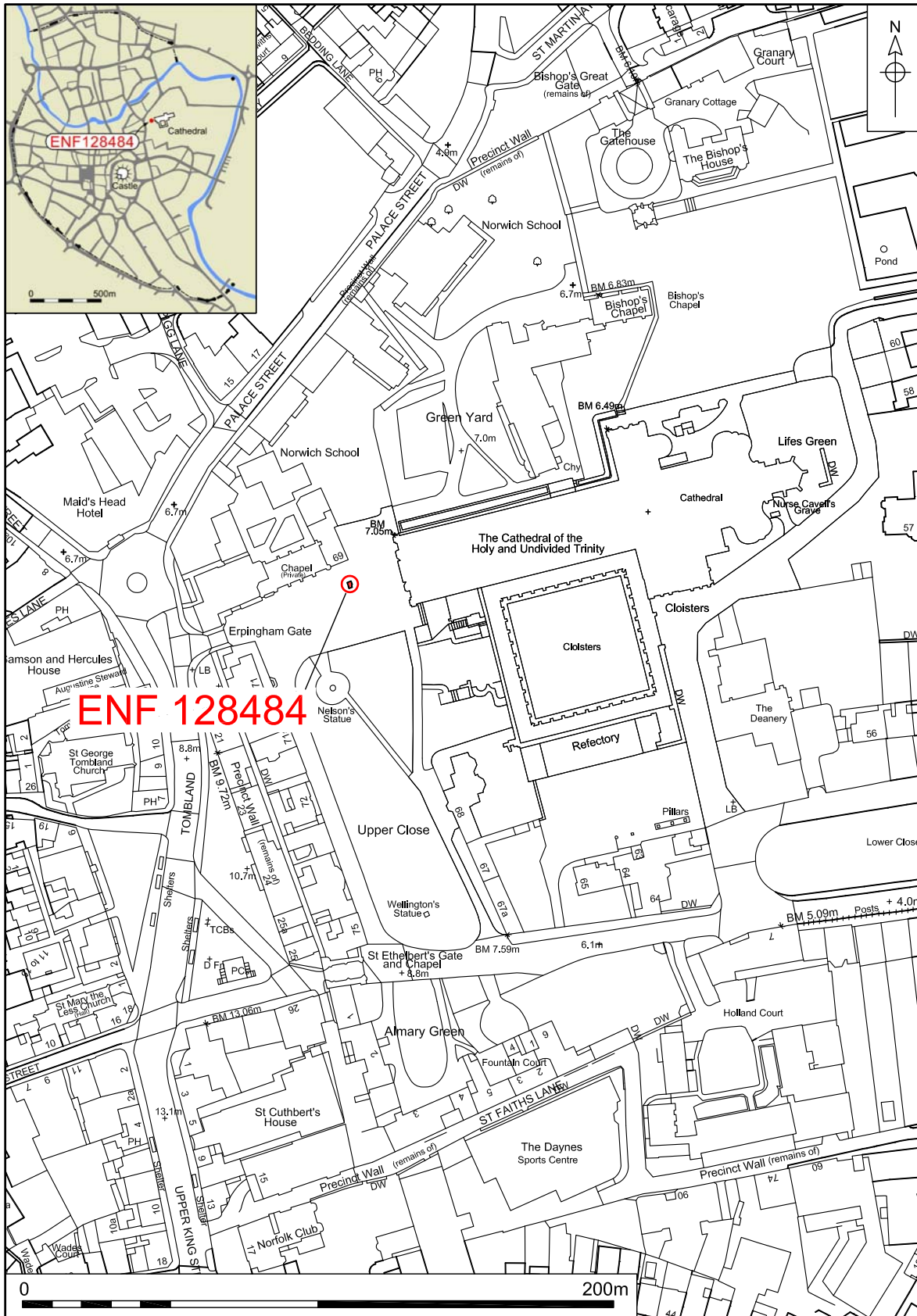
The site archive is currently held by NPS Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS), following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The underlying geology in this part of Norwich comprises Upper Chalk overlain by alluvium derived from the River Wensum (BGS 1991, BGS 1985). The site occupies a broadly level area at c.7.0m OD within the precinct of the Cathedral close to the west entrance to the Cathedral Church.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies close to the Late Saxon market of Tombland within the grounds of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity which was constructed from the late 11th century. A previous watching brief to the south of this current work revealed the remains of several inhumations which were scientifically dated to the medieval period and would seem to indicate the location of a lay cemetery across the western front of



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2000

the Cathedral Church. Though the extent of this cemetery is not known, it is likely the current water main repair lies within its boundary.

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 archaeological deposits within the development area.

The trench was initially excavated mechanically with hand held breakers to break out the tarmac, cobble and granite of the surface. Once this material was removed excavation proceeded manually to clear an area around the broken main and provide sufficient working area for the repair. Once repaired, the trench was backfilled and the surface reinstated as before.

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.

Environmental samples were not taken. All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NPS Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits where appropriate.

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

RESULTS

The final extents of the contractor's trench were a north-south length of 2.10m and east-west width of 1.40m. The trench was a maximum of 1.20m in depth. The earliest deposit revealed during the course of these works was towards the base of the trench and consisted of a dirty orange sand c.0.40m in depth that is thought to be a backfill for a service run.

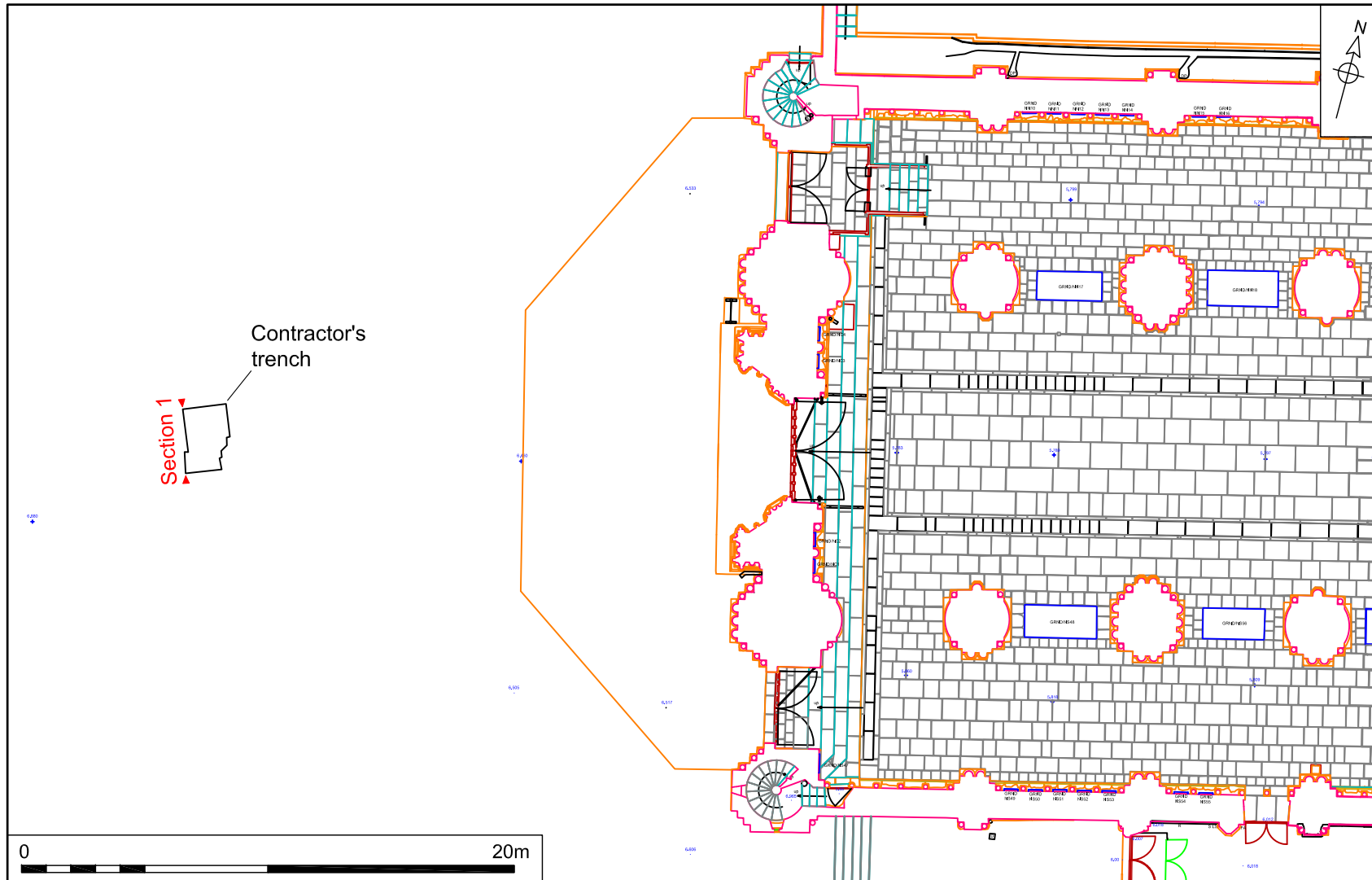
This was overlain by a c.0.60m deep, dark brown gritty soil that contained moderate amounts of brick fragments, flints and mortar lumps.

Above this lay the modern surface of granite sets and tarmac. A short length of red brick wall was also present in the south side of the trench; this wall was built of red brick and aligned approximately east to west.

There were other modern service runs present within the trench.

None of the deposits seen in the trench appeared to be of any great antiquity and are interpreted as soils redeposit during the course of constructing the original service point at this location and subsequent works associated with its repair and maintenance.

The trench is located in the HBU network.



Basemap courtesy of Dr Roland Harris

Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:250

CONCLUSIONS

Though thought likely to be located within a medieval cemetery no evidence for this was seen during the course of the watching brief, particularly the recovery of any human remains. It is thought all the deposits seen in the trench were of comparatively modern date and resulted from the laying down of the water mains and other service runs and any subsequent works to them.



Plate 1. Looking east at Watching Brief location with west door of Cathedral behind

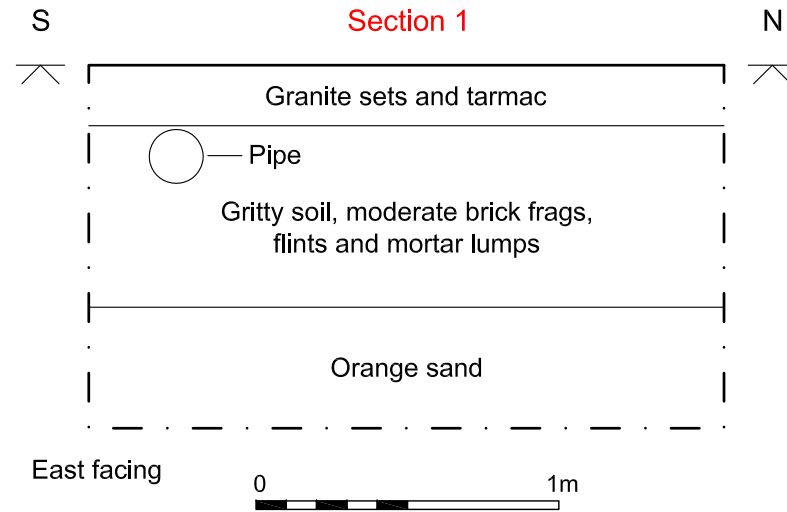


Figure 3. Sketch profile of Contractor's trench . Scale 1:25



Plate 2. Looking south at fully excavated Contractor's trench, 0.50m scale

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Phil Thomas.

The watching brief was carried out by the author and Lilly Hodges

This report was illustrated and produced by David Dobson and edited by Jayne Bown.

Bibliography and Sources

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