

Report 2898



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Archaeological Watching Brief at Colney Park Woodland Burial Park

ENF127897



Prepared for
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Location:	Colney Woodland Burial Park
District:	South Norfolk Council
Grid Ref.:	TG 1691 0838
Planning Ref.:	2009/0589/F
HER No.:	ENF127897
OASIS Ref.:	119304
Client:	Mr James Boddy, Colney Hall
Dates of Fieldwork:	November 2011

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted on preliminary works for the creation of a new pond at Colney Woodland Burial Park, Colney, Norwich. The works involved a shallow scrape, no more than 200mm deep to create the footprint of the new pond.

Stripping the pond area revealed no deposits or features of archaeological interest as the excavation was largely confined to the removal of the turf and vegetation in the very upper deposits. Some drainage works that had already taken place were inspected, but the drains were water-filled by the time of the site visit, therefore it was not possible to record the deposits that the drains had been cut through.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Proposals to create an extension to the Colney Woodland Burial Park require a supporting programme of archaeological works. The first stage of which was the monitoring of the stripping of a new pond area

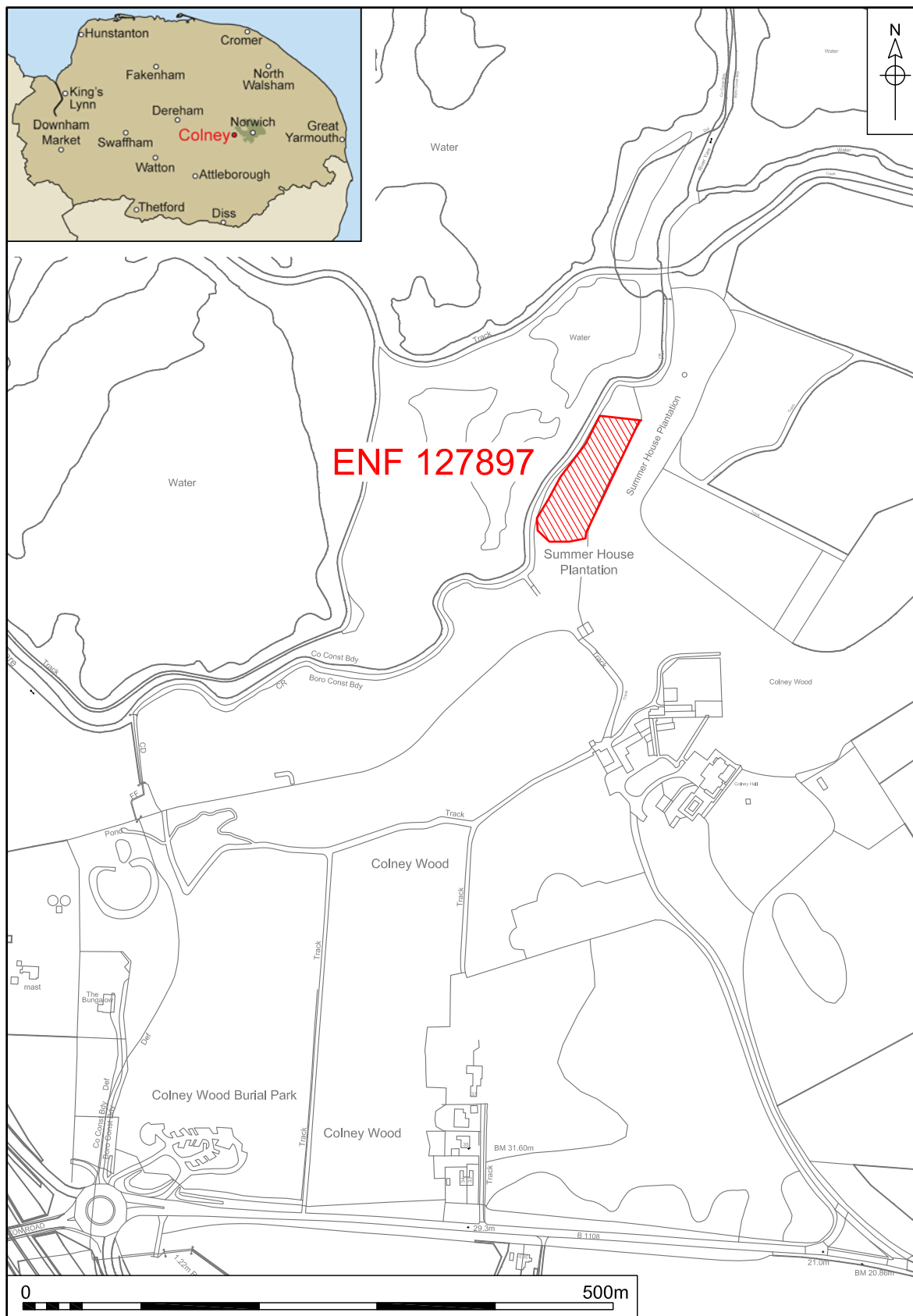
This work was undertaken to fulfil planning requirements set by name of planning authority (Ref. planning ref) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Ken Hamilton 26 August 2011 – ref: CNF42261). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (NAU/BAU2898/NP). This work was commissioned and funded by Mr James Boddy of Colney Hall.

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 Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS), following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The pond site is located on an area of alluvial deposits on the southern edge of the floodplain of the River Yare at the base of the north-west slope below Colney Hall



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

(Fig. 1, Plate 1). The site was a narrow grassland strip that was prone to regular flooding, which led to the development of the humic organic rich silt visible in the stripped area.



Plate 1. View north-east along the new pond



Plate 2. View south-west along the Yare Valley from the new pond

To the north-east and south-west there are views along the side of the Yare Valley (Plate 2), while to the south the site is backed by the wooded slope of Summer House Plantation, part of the Colney Hall Estate.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The park surrounding Colney Hall is known to have been in existence by 1794 and is assumed to have been created at the same time as the hall itself. The park was dramatically altered in 1834 when conifers were introduced to the park and its woodlands, which included the planting of the Summer House Plantation.

One of the attractions of the Summer House would have been its location on the slope overlooking the River Yare. The new pond is located on the floodplain of the river in an area that was unlikely to have ever seen settlement, but which would have been fairly extensively exploited in the past. There are very few records of archaeological structures or artefacts from this part of the Yare Valley, but one in particular is of interest as it shows the archaeological potential of these types of wetland environments. A Late Saxon or Viking wooden spade (NHER 24060) was recovered from peat deposits during gravel extraction c.150m to the north-west of the new pond.

While the spade was probably a chance loss, its survival is significant because it highlights the potential of the anaerobic conditions present in wetland deposits to preserve a range of organic materials (for example wood, leather, fabrics, plant and insect remains) not usually found on archaeological sites. Therefore, the excavation of the new pond has the potential to encounter deposits that may contain significant archaeological information.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of 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.

Machine excavation was carried out with a wheeled JCB-type excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket.

No artefacts were recovered during the monitoring visit.

Environmental samples were not taken as no suitable deposits were encountered.

Colour, monochrome and digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits where appropriate.

5.0 RESULTS

Stripping of the footprint of the new pond was confined to the upper 200mm and removed the turf and surface vegetation, but did not remove all of the topsoil. The remaining soil was a brown to dark brown very humic silt, typical of its floodplain location (Plate 3).



Plate 3. The area of the new pond after stripping

No significant deposits were encountered at this depth and no archaeological features or artefacts were present.

6.0 FINDS

No finds were recovered.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

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

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

The stripping works for the new pond that have been carried out so far have revealed no deposits or features of archaeological interest, but the floodplain location suggests that deeper excavation may encounter deposits with significant archaeological potential.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to James Boddy for funding the work and sharing his knowledge of the Colney Hall Estate.

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

Bibliography and Sources

Department for Communities and Local Government	2010	<i>Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment</i> TSO, Norwich
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