

Report 2864



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Archaeological Watching Brief at Manor Farm, Morley St Botolph, Norfolk

ENF128146



Prepared for
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Location:	Manor Farm, Morley St Botolph
District:	South Norfolk
Planning Ref.:	2011/0936/F
Grid Ref.:	TM 0564 9959
HER No.:	ENF128146
OASIS Ref.:	120585
Client:	Ben Burgess and Company
Dates of Fieldwork:	26 and 28 October and 3 November 2011

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Ben Burgess ahead of the construction of a new barn, at Manor Farm, Morley St Botolph, Norfolk.

The topsoil and part of the subsoil was removed from the corner of a field and 25 pits for foundation pads were excavated. No archaeological remains were encountered during these works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A new barn for the purposes of drying and storing grain was required at Manor Farm in the village of Morley St Botolph. This new barn is located adjacent to a similar building, standing in the corner of a field behind farm buildings to the rear of the Morley Research Centre (Fig. 1).

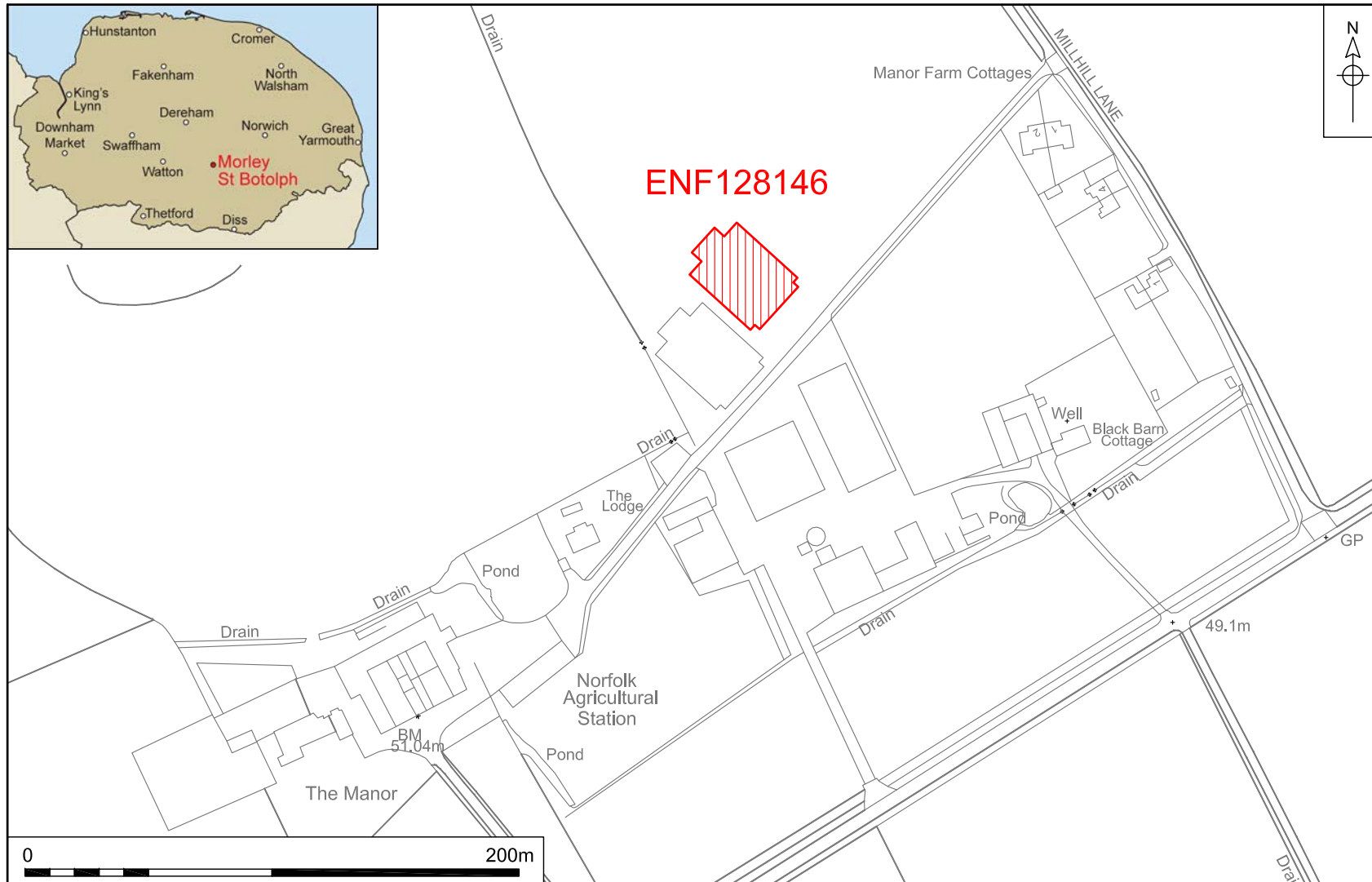
This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by South Norfolk District Council (Ref. 2011/0936/F) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Ref. CNF43599). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU2864/DW). This work was commissioned and funded by Ben Burgess and Company.

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 bedrock in the area of Morley St Botolph is recorded as being one of several undifferentiated chalk formations with a superficial deposit consisting of the Lowestoft Formation of chalky till, together with outwashed sands and gravels, silts and clays. This formation is characterised by its chalk and flint content. This



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500

description accurately describes the natural deposits encountered on this site (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk>).

The topsoil on the site is approximately 0.40m in depth, and consists of a soft mid-brown silty-sand containing occasional flint nodules, rare occurrences of chalk flecks and is topped with rough weeds. The subsoil on the site is approximately 0.60m deep and consists of a fairly firm mid-brown silty-sand that is also slightly plastic in nature indicating that it contains a small amount of clay. It contains frequent pieces of sub-angular flint, chalk and flecks of manganese.

The site lies at around 51.05m OD, is fairly flat and appears to be fairly well drained.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Records held in the Norfolk Historic Environment Records (NHER) for the area of the site were consulted. As the name 'Manor Farm' suggests the site lies in the vicinity of Morley Manor, a Grade II listed, timber-framed building dating from the sixteenth century (Fig. 1).

Fieldwalking and metal detecting in the same field as the new building had indicated that it may be the location of the Middle to Late Saxon settlement that is suspected to have been present in the area. In 2002, NPS Archaeology (then NAU Archaeology) undertook a strip, map and sample excavation (NHER 29937) on the location of a storage facility standing to the west of the current works (Fig. 1). No features were encountered during this excavation and there were no pottery finds. Two lead weights and one Early Saxon brooch were recovered during metal detecting; however no evidence of any settlement was found.

There has been extensive field walking and metal detecting of the fields surrounding Manor Farm. Several finds from various fieldwalking episodes have suggested that in the past there were a number of small medieval settlements on the edge of a small green. This green is marked on Faden's 1797 Map of Norfolk (Barringer 1989), with the location of 'Morley N. Hall' above the green. This is presumably the Manor as understood today; it is possible that the 'N' stands for New to differentiate it from Morley Old Hall which is located further to the south (Penn 2002).

Fieldwalking in Brockholes field (NHER 29929) located to the south-east of the current site has produced an 'artefact scatter' of multi period finds consisting of prehistoric worked flint, medieval pottery fragments, Roman and post-medieval coins and other metal objects such as harness fittings and a Romano-British Dolphin brooch. Similarly, in the adjacent field, to the east of the current site known as 'Home Close field' (NHER 30533) prehistoric flints and fragments of pottery dating from the Iron Age to the post-medieval periods were found during fieldwalking. Metal-detecting in October 2010 recovered Roman coins, a medieval copper alloy annular brooch, medieval/post-medieval lead spindle whorl/weight, post-medieval crotal bells and a copper alloy clapper bell. Metal-detecting in 2011 also recovered prehistoric worked flint, an Early Neolithic blade, Romano-British and medieval pottery, Roman and medieval coins, a post-medieval token, a Late Saxon bird brooch, medieval horse harness pendants, buckles and lead weight.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The groundworks on this site were undertaken in two distinct phases. The first phase was the removal of the topsoil and up to 0.15m of the subsoil from the site with a mechanical excavator (Plates 1 and 2).

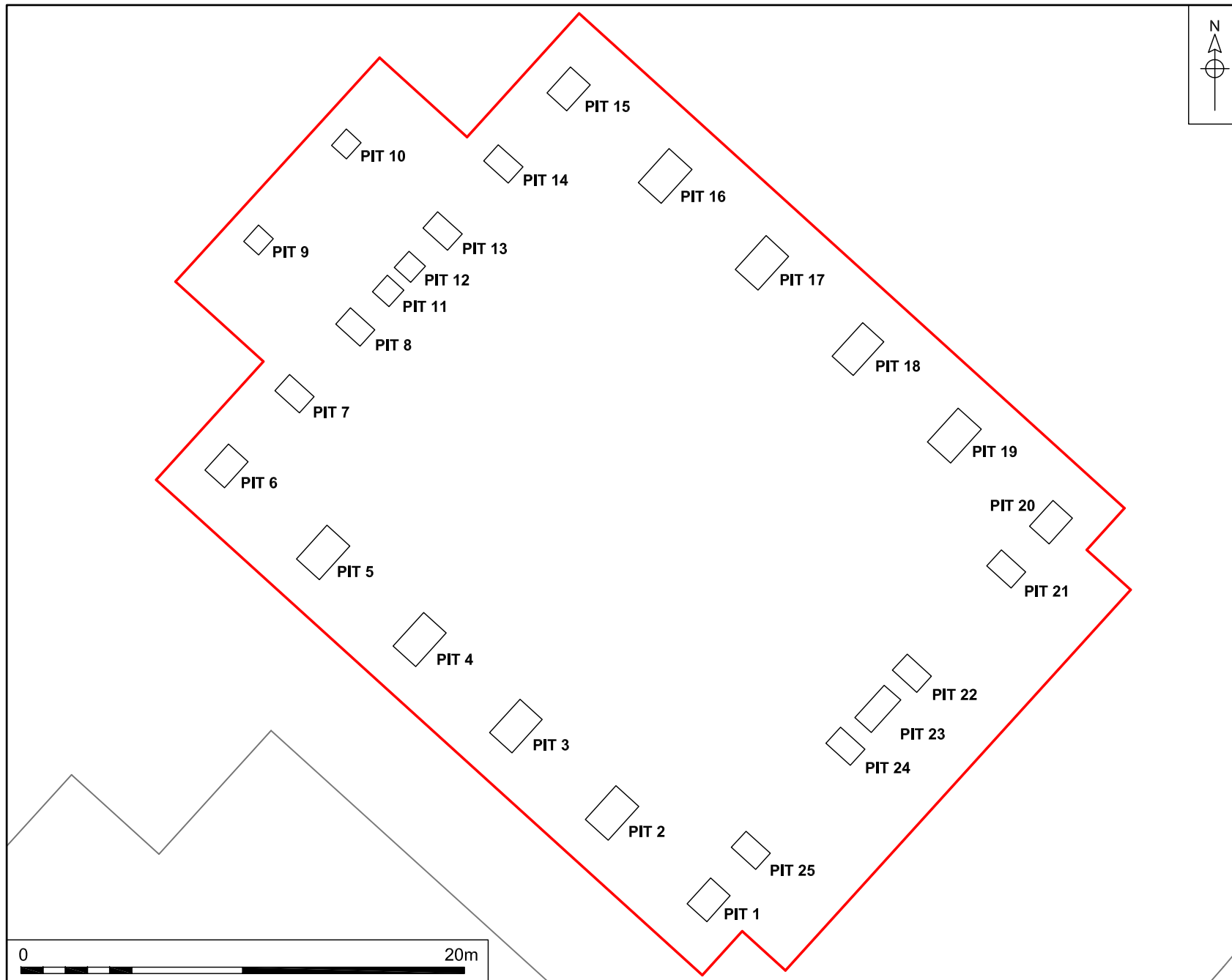
No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during this phase of work.



Plate 1. Stripping the topsoil from the site



Plate 2. Levelling for groundworks looking south-west



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Figure 2. Plan of foundation pits. Scale 1:250

The contractors advised that a layer of hardcore was to be introduced to the site to prevent the ground being churned up by plant and cement lorries during the next phase of construction.

Groundworks re-commenced a few days later when twenty-five square and sub-square pits were excavated for the foundation pads for the storage facility across the area that had been stripped. These pits ranged in size from 0.96m x 1.65m to the 1.50m x 2.20m (Fig. 2). No pit was deeper than 1.10m - where natural layers were exposed at the bottom (Plates 3-6).

The Brief required that all the groundworks were monitored by an experienced archaeologist in constant attendance whilst the works were being carried out.

Machine excavation was undertaken with a tracked hydraulic 360° excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket and operated 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 because 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 slightly damp weather.



Plate 3. Pit [4]

5.0 RESULTS

The dimensions and any observations pertinent to each of the twenty-five stanchion pits are presented in tabular form below. Typical examples of the pits are depicted in Plates 3-6.

Pit	Dimensions in metres (width x length x depth)	Results/comments
1	1.20 x 1.75 x 0.90	No archaeological remains
2	1.37 x 2.40 x 1.00	No archaeological remains. Subsoil layers appear to be a bit more mixed with orange sand - maybe disturbance from the previous development?
3	1.37 x 1.97 x 0.80	No archaeological remains
4	1.45 x 2.15 x 0.80	No archaeological remains (Plate 3)
5	1.20 x 1.80 x 0.67	No archaeological remains
6	0.98 x 1.22 x 0.75	No archaeological remains
7	0.90 x 1.78 x 0.78	No archaeological remains
8	1.00 x 1.40 x 0.75	No archaeological remains
9	0.95 x 1.08 x 0.70	No archaeological remains (Plate 4)
10	0.95 x 1.10 x 0.70	No archaeological remains
11	1.00 x 1.20 x 0.50	No archaeological remains (Plate 5)
12	1.00 x 1.20 x 0.67	No archaeological remains (Plate 5)
13	0.96 x 1.65 x 0.70	No archaeological remains
14	0.92 x 1.55 x 0.75	No archaeological remains
15	1.40 x 1.65 x 0.97	No archaeological remains
16	1.40 x 2.30 x 1.10	No archaeological remains
17	1.45 x 2.07 x 0.95	No archaeological remains
18	1.44 x 1.95 x 1.10	No archaeological remains
19	1.47 x 2.20 x 1.06	No archaeological remains
20	1.20 x 1.90 x 1.70	No archaeological remains
21	0.98 x 1.75 x 0.70	No archaeological remains. Modern land drain encountered (Plate 6)
22	0.95 x 1.70 x 0.65	No archaeological remains
23	1.06 x 2.06 x 0.54	No archaeological remains
24	0.90 x 1.80 x 0.60	No archaeological remains
25	0.95 x 1.80 x 0.66	No archaeological remains



Plate 4. Pit [9]



Plate 5. Pits [11] and [12]



Plate 6. Pit [21] (showing modern land drain at base)

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The results from this watching brief are similar to those from the excavation prior to the erection of the adjacent storage unit at Manor Farm in 2002 i.e. no archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered during the works and there is no evidence of former settlement in this location.

It would appear that most of the finds recorded from fieldwalking and metal detecting in this field were concentrated towards the north-eastern end of the field, and so if any evidence of a previous settlement does exist, it is possible that it may be found there.

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The fieldwork was undertaken by Michelle Bull

The report was edited by Jayne Bown and produced by David Dobson who also prepared the figures.

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