

Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

Local Authority No.100019340

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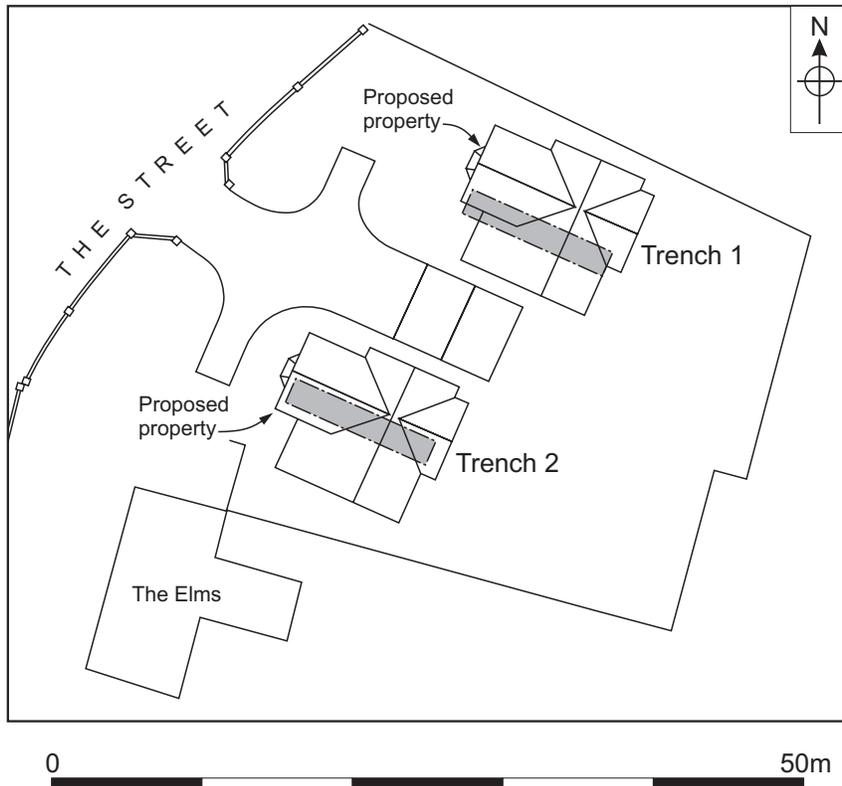


Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:500

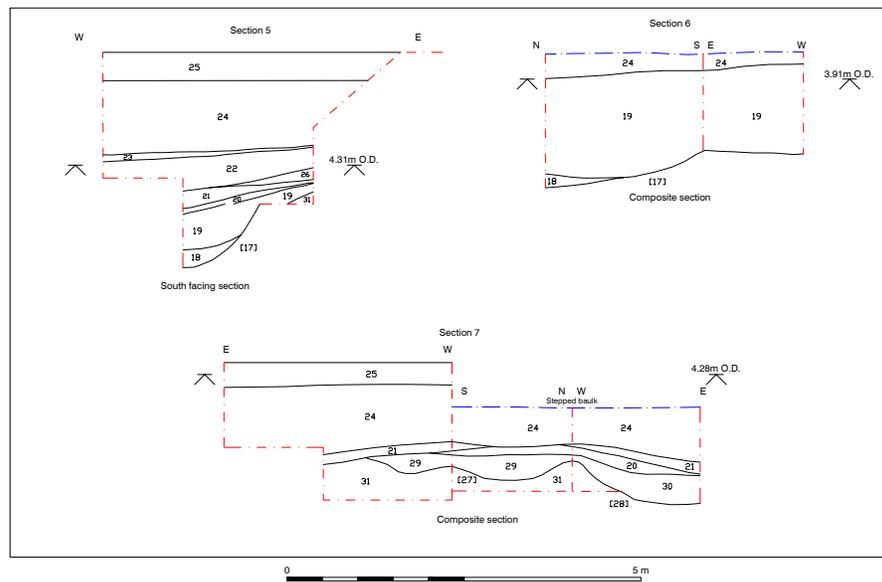


Figure 6. Trench 2, sections. Scale 1:50



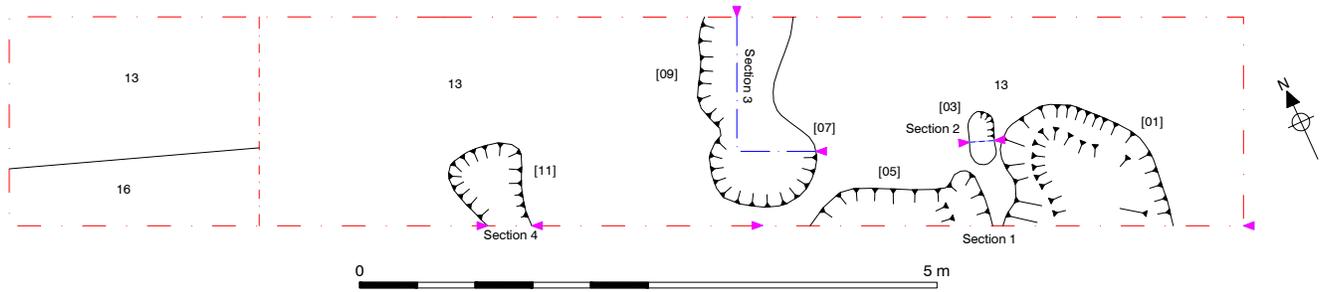


Figure 3. Trench 1, plan. Scale 1:50

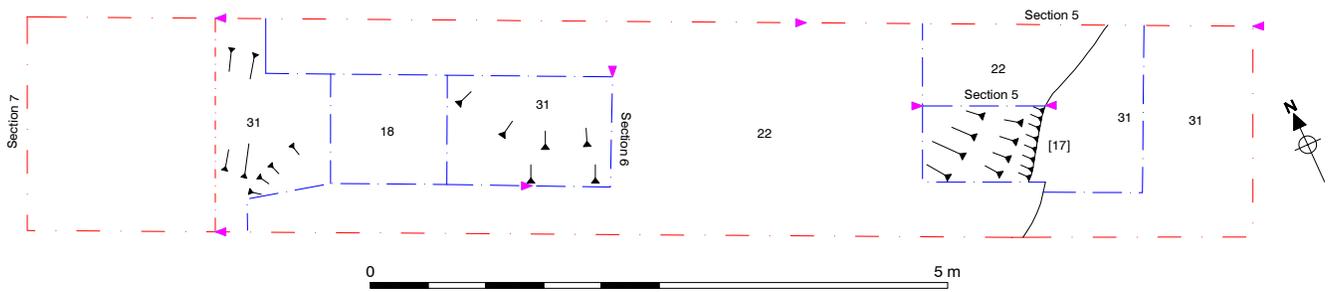


Figure 4. Trench 2, plan. Scale 1:50



NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 1079

**An Archaeological Evaluation at the former site of the
Village Stores, Land off The Street, Hemsby**

HER 41649HMY

Giles Emery

June 2005

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Location: The former Village Stores, Land off The Street, Hemsby
District: Great Yarmouth
Grid Ref: TG 4892 1706
HER No.: 41649 HMY
Date of fieldwork: 2nd to 3rd May 2005

Summary

During May 2005 Norfolk Archaeological Unit undertook an archaeological evaluation at the former site of the Village Stores, Hemsby. Two trial trenches were excavated to investigate the area in advance of the proposed development of two residential homes.

A few small pits of an uncertain date were discovered in the northern part of the site, whilst to the south was a large clay extraction pit. The earliest fills of this feature contained several sherds of medieval pottery and some fragments of glazed floor tile.

Both trenches exhibited a fairly continuous build-up of soil from the late medieval period onwards.

1.0 Introduction

(Fig. 1)

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in advance of proposed redevelopment of land off The Street, Hemsby. The site was formerly occupied by the Village Stores and measured c. 200 sq. m.

The archaeological work carried out by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU) was commissioned by Mr Alan Wright of Wright Properties East Anglia Ltd who proposes to develop two residential homes with associated parking and landscaping.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU Ref: 1330/DW) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: AH 27/9/01).

The 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 16 — Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Geology and Topography

The site consisted of a sandy topsoil up to 0.4m in depth above a silty sub-soil up to 0.9m in depth. A natural slightly sandy silty clay up to 0.6m deep overlies marine sands and gravels (Norwich Crag formation). The site slopes gently from north (5.53m OD) to south (4.47m OD).

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site is situated within the historic core of Hemsby. The northern and eastern boundaries of the site are contiguous with the cemetery of St. Mary's Church.

Some hint of an Early Saxon origin for the settlement comes from scatters of potsherds indicative of Early Saxon occupation (Wade-Martins 1994). Documentary evidence indicates that Hemsby has its origins prior to the 11th century, as it was already a significant settlement when mentioned in the Domesday book. Hemsby is described as a manor from 1066 belonging to the Bishopric, which also included the outlier of Martham.

St. Mary's church is also recorded in the Domesday book, indicating a Late Saxon origin, although no evidence survives of the earliest church on the site. St Mary's exhibits a 14th-century chancel, a two-storied mid 14th-century porch and the nave has 15th-century windows each side with earlier doorways. The church font is a 15th-century octagonal example with lions and buttresses on its stem (Pevsner and Wilson 2002).

Hemsby was part of a Cathedral Manor by the 13th-century and prior to the Reformation Hemsby was an estate of the cathedral peculiar (exempt from ordinary ecclesiastical jurisdiction) along with Hindringham, Scratby, Taverham and Winterton.

Hemsby has developed since the 1950s, to accommodate the seasonal holiday market, with a whole new town extending out to the seafront. The earlier settlement is shown on Faden's plan of 1797 as 'Hemesby' at the confluence of several roads. This original street plan at the core of the village appears to have changed little since the 18th century.

NHER Review

The site of the proposed development lies within an area of archaeological interest and potential, close to a number of find spots and archaeological sites. A review of the Norfolk Historical and Environmental Record (NHER) surrounding the proposed development area revealed fourteen entries within a c. 200m radius of the site. The most relevant are discussed below in broad chronological order.

- NHER 37458: [north west of the site]. A late Palaeolithic hand axe was found in the garden of 34 Martham Road in 1992.
- NHER 11883: [to the south-east of the site, now developed as the Florida Estate]. A ring ditch (now destroyed) c. 70ft in diameter on a south facing slope which may correspond with the placename 'Sepgrave'. The ring ditch remains undated but has also been interpreted as a possible gun emplacement or searchlight position.
- NHER 13073: [to the north of the site]. Square enclosure with possible road line of unknown date.
- NHER 8565: [to the south of the site]. A number of annular Early Saxon clay loom weights recovered from the garden of The Gables Guest House in c.1960. In 1963 a trial hole recovered some Early Saxon pottery and Mayen lava stone.
- NHER 8577: [to the north of the site]. St. Mary's Church, although this number also includes the remains of possible sanctuary markers and 13th-century crossed coffin slabs recognised in the churchyard. Two bells of 1660 were noted sitting inside the church and some of the tracery is a copy of the north cloister walk at Norwich Cathedral.

- NHER 16555: [to the north-west of the site]. In 1980 a medieval horse pendant bearing the arms of Sir Robert de Wateville of Essex 1312, three lead weights or spindle whorls and half a 13th- to 14th-century lead seal were recovered from Fifty Acre Field at Martham Road Farm.
- NHER 24916: [to the west of the site]. Shamrock Cottage, Pit Street; a small house of c. 1700 with one wall perhaps slightly older.
- NHER 22901: [to the west at Home Farm]. A 17th-century aisled barn of brick and thatch. The farmhouse is also listed as early 18th-century with 19th-century brick façade (Grade II listed building).

4.0 Methodology

(Fig. 2)

The objective of this evaluation 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 Brief required that two investigative trenches be excavated to provide an appropriate sample of the proposed development area. Each trench was to be located so as to run the length of the long axis of each of the respective new houses and was to measure 1.8m wide.

Initial machine excavation was carried out with a 7 ton hydraulic 360° excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Modern overburden was removed in spits of no more than 100mm. When excavation depths exceeded 1.2m the trench edges were locally stepped. Archaeological deposits were further investigated by hand excavation.

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.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU *pro forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

A level was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark of 7.65m on the north-western corner of St Mary's church. A non-permanent peg placed in the approximate centre of the site was used as a temporary benchmark (5.60m OD).

Due to the lack of suitable deposits, no environmental samples were taken.

Access to the site was gained from off The Street. The weather was changeable with occasional showers and occasional sunny intervals.

5.0 Results

Trench 1

(Figs 2, 3 and 5)

This trench was investigated to a depth of c. 1m where the natural yellow sand and slightly sandy clays ([13]) were encountered (4.47m OD).

The natural was truncated by several features. At the eastern end of the trench was a shallow concave feature with a fairly irregular form which may represent a tree bole rather than a pit ([01]). The feature measured 1.06m wide and 0.2m in depth and contained a mid greyish brown clay silt with occasional small stone inclusions ([02]). This cut was partially truncated by a fairly flat based irregular shaped pit, which again may represent tree throw activity ([05]). This shallow concave feature was 0.33m deep and measured up to 2.6m in width and also contained a mid greyish brown clay silt with occasional small stone inclusions ([06]). Between these features was a lozenge shaped pit or post-hole ([03]) which measured 0.46m by 0.22m and survived to a depth of 0.12m. This feature contained a sterile leached yellowish grey clay silt ([04]).

In the central area of the trench was another fairly irregularly shaped shallow feature which again probably represents an ancient tree bole ([09]). This feature contained a mottled light grey clay silt ([10]), from which a single small and abraded fragment of ceramic building material was recovered. This feature was truncated by an oval pit ([07]) with a length of 1m and a depth of 0.22m. The pit had concave sides of 45° and a concave base. It contained a sterile mottled light grey clay silt ([08]).

Approximately 1.6m to the west of this pit was a smaller pit of a fairly irregular form ([11]). This pit measured 0.6m in width and 0.3m in depth with near vertical sides and a flat base. It contained a light greyish brown soft clay silt ([12]) from which a single fragment of burnt flint was recovered.

Sealing all of these features was a mid brown silty loam sub-soil up to 0.52m deep ([15]). Above this material was 0.35m of active topsoil, a dark grey sandy loam containing frequent inclusions of small stones and occasional roots and evidence of worm activity ([14]).

At the western end of the trench were the extant foundations of a modern building consisting of concrete and modern brick ([16]). This structure had only recently been demolished and represents the remnants of the former Village Stores.

Trench 2

(Figs 2, 4 and 6)

This trench was investigated to a maximum depth of 3m. The natural sand and sandy clays ([31]) were encountered at a minimum depth of 1.35m (3.11m OD).

An investigative sondage was excavated by machine to a depth of 1.94m (2.51m OD) at the western end of the trench to further characterise the natural deposits ([31]). The deepest natural encountered consisted of very fine-banded yellow sterile sands sealed by a thin horizon of bright orange ferrous stained sand up to 0.06m thick. These sands were overlain by a firm, slightly sandy, mid orange silty clay c.0.6m in depth which was fairly plastic in nature.

The linear edge of a large feature ([17]) truncating the natural was encountered at the eastern end of the trench. This edge was aligned c. north-east-to-south-west and was investigated by a hand-excavated sondage. The feature had steep, smooth sides that graduated to a fairly flat base. This large feature was encountered throughout the base of the trench and was further examined with another sondage in the western half of the trench. The slightly undulating base of this large pit or trench appeared to have been excavated to the horizon of the natural clays and the sands below and probably represented a backfilled clay extraction pit.

The basal fill ([18]) of the pit consisted of a 0.22m thick deposit of a soft mid bluish grey mix of sand and sticky silty clay, with occasional sub-rounded flints up to 120mm in diameter. Two fragments of floor tile and two sherds of later medieval pottery and one sherd of a ?16th-century vessel were recovered from this initial deposit. Sealing this material was a 0.5m thick deposit of mid grey slightly sandy silty clay ([19]). The material was friable and contained frequent mottling from ferrous mineralised rootlets, rare charcoal flecks and very few sub-rounded stones. From this fill a further two fragments of floor tile were recovered along with eight sherds of later medieval pottery.

Sealing the main fill of the extraction pit was a pale brownish grey thin layer of medium grained sand ([20]) which measured 0.08m thick. Above the sand was a layer of mid grey clay ([21]) which was firm and dense and exhibited rare charcoal flecking. This gleyed clay layer measured up to 0.28m in depth and may represent a period of water-logging of a hollow left by the infilled extraction pit. Localised to the eastern end of the trench was mid orangey brown and grey mottled silty clay layer or shallow tip only 0.12m thick ([26]), which overlaid the clay.

Above both the clay and this localised deposit was a thick deposit of mid orangey brown very silty loam ([22]). This highly friable material measured up to 0.42m deep and contained occasional mineralised rootlets and worm channels with rare inclusions of very small lumps and flecks of abraded ceramic building material and charcoal. Sealing this material was a thin layer of medium grained sand ([23]). This sterile sand was a dark greyish yellow and measured up to 0.07m in depth.

Above this sandy layer was a mid brown silty loam ([24]) up to 0.9m in depth. This material was friable and contained occasional small stones, occasional small rootlets and evidence of worm action. This sub-soil only rarely exhibited flecks of ceramic building material. Above this material was 0.40m of active topsoil ([25]), a dark grey sandy loam containing frequent inclusions of small stones and occasional roots and evidence of worm activity.

Two pit-like features ([27] and [28]) were recorded in the section at the western end of the trench (Fig. 6; Section 7). These pits probably represented further extraction pits associated with the main pit ([17]). Both contained very silty mixed deposits ([29] and [30]) similar to the basal fill of the main pit.

6.0 The Finds

Introduction

The finds material from the site is presented in tabular form with basic quantitative information in Appendix 2: Finds by Context.

In addition to this summary, more detailed information on specific finds is included in separate reports below. Supporting tables for these contributions are included in the Appendices.

Pottery (Appendix 3)

by Sue Anderson

Introduction

A total of eleven sherds of pottery, weighing 0.093kg, were collected from two fills ([18] and [19]) of clay extraction pit [17].

Methodology

Quantification was carried out using sherd count and weight. A full quantification by fabric, context and feature is available in the archive. All fabric codes were assigned from the Suffolk post-Roman fabric series, which includes Norfolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Midlands fabrics, as well as imported wares. Form terminology follows MPRG (1998). Recording uses a system of letters for fabric codes. Standard pottery quantification forms were used.

Discussion

This small assemblage is clearly dominated by Hollesley-type wares from Suffolk; at least six vessels are represented by the sherds. This is the first time that this ware has been identified in any quantity on a Norfolk site. A production site has been identified at Hollesley, on the Suffolk coast to the east of Ipswich and south of Orford, and the pottery is dated between the late 13th to 14th centuries on stylistic grounds (West forthcoming). It was thought to have been traded largely within east Suffolk, but this find is significant in showing that the wares are likely to occur at east coast sites outside the county. The medieval coarseware base would also fit in with the general range of products being made in east Suffolk at this period. Context [18] appears to contain intrusive material of post-medieval date. Context [19] is likely to be of high medieval date.

Flint

By Sarah Bates

Four small pieces of flint were recovered from the site. Two of them were burnt fragments (total weight 0.019kg) and have been recorded and subsequently discarded.

A quite thick blade-like piece ([19]) has apparent retouch along one edge and its distal point appears to have been utilised. Its proximal end is missing. The 'retouch' scars are less glossy, ie. 'fresher' looking than the other surfaces of the flint and may represent re-use of an existing piece. A very small flake from the same context may also be deliberately struck. The struck or worked flints represent activity in the vicinity of the site during the prehistoric period but are not closely datable, they were recovered as residual finds from a medieval extraction pit.

Faunal Remains

By Julie Curl

A single tibia fragment of an adult cattle, weighing 0.08kg, was recovered from the fill ([19]) of extraction pit [17].

Ceramic Building Material

By Lucy Talbot

The site produced four examples of late medieval to early post-medieval ceramic building material, weighing 0.234kg. The material was quantified (counted and weighed) by form and fabric. The assemblage consists of four fragments of glazed and unglazed floor tile of a sandy fabric. Although in very poor condition and badly abraded traces of green and clear glaze remain on two of the pieces.

7.0 Conclusions

Several sterile features probably representative of ancient tree boles were discovered in Trench 1 along with three archaeological features in the form of two pits and a possible post-hole. These features are of an uncertain date and all contained fairly sterile fills. A single burnt flint fragment was recovered from the smaller pit, perhaps indicating a prehistoric date for this feature.

The area investigated by Trench 2 appears to have been subject to clay extraction on a fairly large scale. It is interesting to note that the street opposite the site leading away to the north-west is named Pit Road. The pitting and stripping of the clay was probably conducted in a series of contemporary stops and starts represented by undulations observed in the western section of the trench and its uneven base. The open extraction pit initially received a mix of natural wash and trample followed by a main deposit with no obvious tip lines, which may indicate a more natural build-up of the material. The deep hollow appears to have become waterlogged for a time before a second period of soil accumulation. The two thin layers of sand observed in the stratigraphy may represent flooding episodes across this area of the site. The few sherds of pottery recovered from this feature suggest a late 13th- to 14th-century date for the activity. The abraded floor tiles show traces of glaze suggesting that they came from a high status building or ecclesiastical site, St Mary's church is the most obvious source. A small quantity of worked flint was recovered residually from the main fill of the extraction pit.

Both trenches exhibit a fairly sterile build-up of soil from the late medieval period onwards.

Recommendations for future work based upon this report will be made by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

Acknowledgements

The work was commissioned by Alan Wright of Wright Properties East Anglia Ltd. who also supplied and operated the machine excavator.

The project was designed and overseen by David Whitmore on behalf of NAU. The excavation was undertaken by the author and Pete Crawley.

The finds processing and analysis was undertaken by Lucy Talbot, Sarah Bates (flint), Julie Curl (faunal remains) and Sue Anderson (pottery).

HER data was supplied by Jan Allen of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

The plans and sections were digitised by the author and the report was illustrated by David Dobson. Alice Lyons edited the report, which was produced by David Dobson.

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Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Trench	Category	Description	Period
01	1	Cut	Pit/Tree bole	
02	1	Deposit	Fill of [01]	
03	1	Cut	Poss. posthole	
04	1	Deposit	Fill of [03]	
05	1	Cut	Pit/Tree bole	
06	1	Deposit	Fill of [05]	
07	1	Cut	Pit	
08	1	Deposit	Fill of [07]	
09	1	Cut	Pit/Tree bole	
10	1	Deposit	Fill of [09]	
11	1	Cut	Pit	?Prehistoric
12	1	Deposit	Fill of [11]	?Prehistoric
13	1	Natural	Clays and sands	
14	1	Deposit	Topsoil	Modern
15	1	Deposit	Sub-soil	Post-medieval
16	1	Masonry	Brick foundations	Modern
17	2	Cut	Pit/Linear trenching	Medieval
18	2	Deposit	Basal fill of [17]	Medieval
19	2	Deposit	Secondary fill of [17]	Medieval
20	2	Deposit	Sand layer	Medieval
21	2	Deposit	Clay layer	Medieval
22	2	Deposit	Subsoil	Post-medieval
23	2	Deposit	Sand layer	Post-medieval
24	2	Deposit	Subsoil	Post-medieval
25	2	Deposit	Topsoil	Modern
26	2	Deposit	Layer	Post-medieval
27	2	Cut	Pitting: same as [17]	Medieval
28	2	Cut	Pitting: same as [17]	Medieval
29	2	Deposit	Fill of [27]	Medieval
30	2	Deposit	Fill of [28]	Medieval
31	2	Natural	Clays and sands	

Appendix 2: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Period
10	Ceramic building material	1	0.018	Post-medieval
12	Flint - burnt	1	0.015	Prehistoric
18	Pottery	3	0.006	Post-medieval
18	Ceramic building material	2	0.122	Late medieval/ early post-medieval
19	Pottery	8	0.087	Medieval/ post-medieval
19	Ceramic building material	2	0.112	Late medieval/ early post-medieval
19	Flint – worked	2	-	Prehistoric
19	Flint - burnt	1	0.004	Prehistoric
19	Animal bone	1	0.080	-
22	Ceramic building material	1	0.016	Post-medieval

Appendix 3: Pottery

Context	Fabric	Description	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Spot date
18	Hollesley glazed ware	body sherd, partial green glaze, sooted.	1	0.003	Late 13th to 14th century
18	Glazed red earthenware	body sherds, 1 vessel, brown glaze internally.	2	0.003	16th to 18th century
19	Early medieval ware	1 micaceous, possibly wheelmade?	2	0.006	11th to 12th century
19	Medieval coarseware	?base with applied thumbled strip at angle, sooted.	1	0.027	13th to 14th century
19	Hollesley-type ware	body sherd.	1	0.002	Late 13th to 14th century
19	Hollesley glazed ware?	abraded, fairly coarse, oxidised, possible traces of glaze.	1	0.023	Late 13th to 14th century
19	Hollesley glazed ware?	body sherd, oxidised externally, unglazed.	1	0.020	Late 13th to 14th century
19	Hollesley glazed ware	body sherds, 2 vessels, green glazed externally.	2	0.009	Late 13th to 14th century