

Report 3018



nps archaeology

**Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation
at Railway Pightle, Marsham Lane, Brampton, Norfolk**

ENF128804



Prepared for
Mr. and Mrs. Spinks



NPS Archaeology

April 2012



www.nps.co.uk

PROJECT CHECKLIST		
Project Manager	Nigel Page	
Draft Completed	Nigel Page	12/04/2012
Graphics Completed	David Dobson	17/04/2012
Edit Completed	Jayne Bown	17/04/2012
Signed Off	Nigel Page	17/04/2012
<i>Issue 1</i>		

NPS Archaeology

Scandic House
85 Mountergate
Norwich
NR1 1PY

T 01603 756150

F 01603 756190

E jayne.bown@nps.co.uk

www.nau.org.uk

BAU 3018

© NPS Archaeology

Contents

<i>Summary</i>	1
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Geology and Topography	1
3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background.....	3
4.0 Methodology	4
5.0 Results.....	5
6.0 Finds	9
6.1 Pottery	9
6.2 Ceramic Building Material.....	9
6.3 Flint.....	9
6.4 Faunal Remains	9
7.0 Conclusions	10
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	11
<i>Bibliography and Sources</i>	11
Appendix 1a: Context Summary	12
Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary	12
Appendix 2a: Finds by Context	12
Appendix 2b: Oasis Finds Summary.....	12

Figures

- Figure 1 Site Location
- Figure 2 Trench location
- Figure 3 Trench plan and section

Plates

- Plate 1 General view north-east along trench
- Plate 2 Ditch [1] and feature [5] after excavation

Tables

- Table 1 NHER sites within 1km of the site

Location:	Railway Pightle, Marsham Lane, Brampton, Norfolk
District:	Broadland
Grid Ref.:	TG 2216 2390
Planning Ref.:	20011023
HER No.:	ENF128804
OASIS Ref.:	123520
Client:	Mr. and Mrs. Spinks
Dates of Fieldwork:	16 March 2012

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was conducted for Mr and Mrs J Spinks ahead of construction of a new house at Railway Pightle, Marsham Lane, Brampton.

The site lies close to the northern boundary of the Roman town at Brampton and a small ditch of probable Roman date was recorded along with a later, possibly medieval, pit or ditch.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Proposals to construct a new house on a small plot of land at Railway Pightle, Brampton (Fig. 1) required an archaeological evaluation because of its location close to the site of the former Roman town.

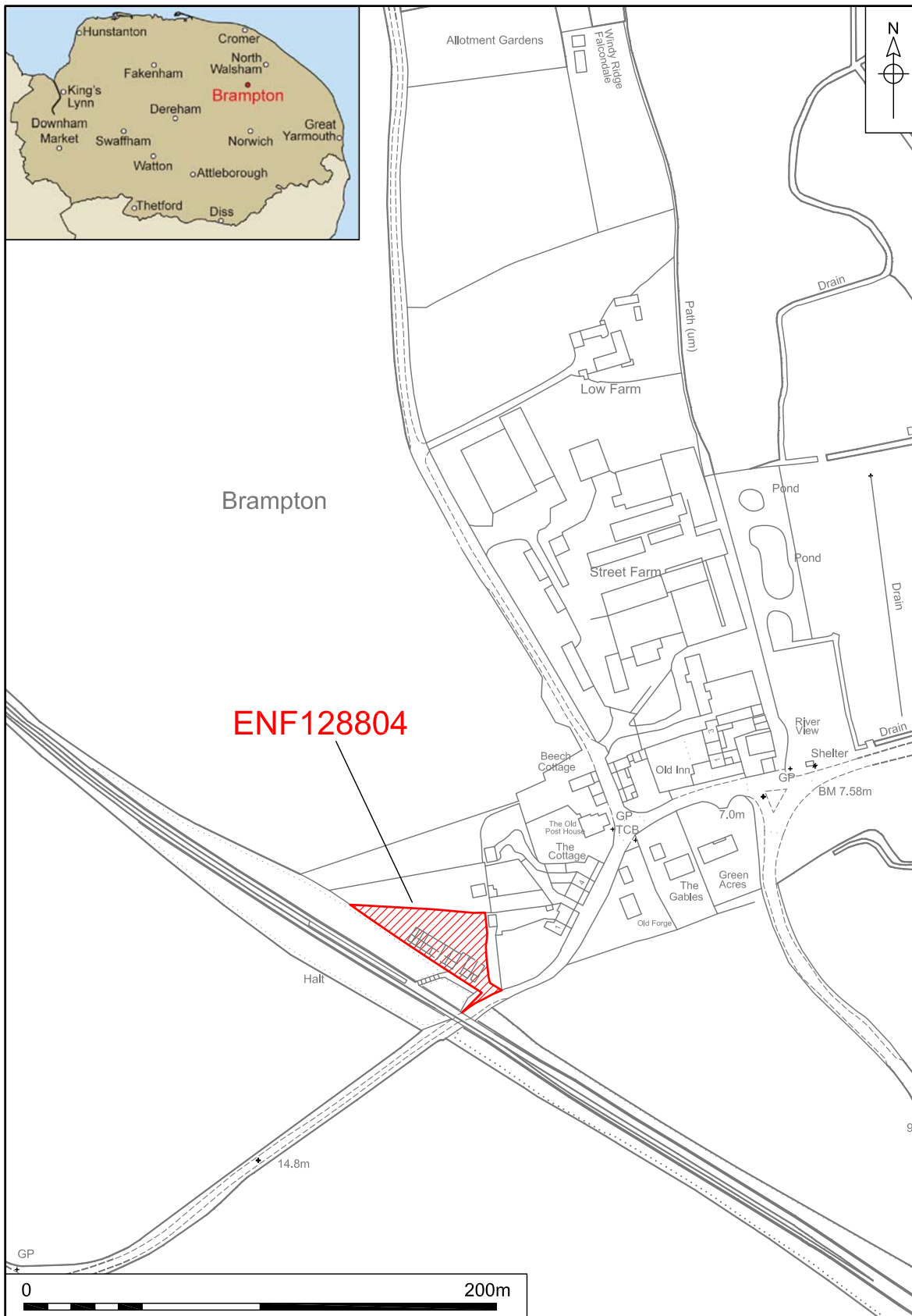
This work was undertaken to fulfil planning requirements set by Broadland District Council (Planning reference: 20011023) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (James Albone 21 February 2012 – ref: CNF42275). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NAU /BAU3018/NP). This work was commissioned by and funded by Mr and Mrs J Spinks.

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) and the *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012). 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 site lies in a small plot of land on the west edge of Brampton at a height of between 10m and 11m OD (Fig. 1). Brampton is located on a plateau just above the River Bure in an area of sand and gravel bedrock geology of the Wroxham Crag Series overlain by silt, clay and sand brickearth deposits (BGS online).



© Crown copyright and database rights 2011 Ordnance Survey 100019340

Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500

The evaluation area was the southern (front) half of a plot that is bounded on its west side by the large embankment and bridge that carried the East Norfolk Railway (NHER 13587) over the small unclassified road that forms the south boundary and on its east and north sides by neighbouring properties. The ground in the field to the north rises in a short, but reasonably steep slope to the north-east and the wider area has a general slope down to the east towards the River Bure.

Archaeological features were identified at a depth of c.0.95m below current ground level

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A search of the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) recorded thirty known archaeological sites within 500m of the site. These are listed in Table 1 below, with those mentioned in the following text shaded green.

NHER no.	Period	Description
1006	Roman	Industrial suburb on the west edge of the Roman town.
1124	Roman	Brampton Roman town.
7592	Prehistoric	Neolithic axehead.
7594	Prehistoric Roman	Pit or shaft containing Bronze Age beaker pottery and Roman Grey ware sherds.
7598	Roman	Possible line of Roman road from Brampton to Thorpe St. Andrew.
7604	Roman	Possible site of Roman building.
7605	Roman	Roman pottery sherds found in a pit.
11585	Multi- period	Prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval metal objects recovered during metal detecting.
12542	Prehistoric	Palaeolithic handaxe.
12764	Post-medieval	Brickworks and kiln.
13587	Modern	Route of the East Norfolk Railway
13661	Modern	WWII pillbox.
13662	Modern	WWII tank trap – anti-tank blocks.
15869	--	Negative watching brief.
16143	Prehistoric Roman?	Large collection of Neolithic flint, some iron age finds and a possible Roman pottery kiln.
18515	Multi-period	Roman, medieval and post-medieval metal objects recovered during metal detecting.
21491	Roman	Roman metal objects, pottery and a leather sandal recovered during dredging.
21492	Roman	Fragments of metal objects and the base of a pot filled with molten lead suggest a small metalworking site.
21493	Roman	Findspot of Roman pottery and metalwork.
21494	Roman	Findspot of Roman pottery.
21595	Unknown	Remains of a wooden bridge.
28311	Multi-period	Roman, medieval and post-medieval finds recovered during fieldwalking and metal detecting.
34283	Bronze Age Saxon	Bronze Age socketed axehead and a Late Saxon stirrup recovered during metal detecting.
34284	Multi-period	Prehistoric, Saxon and medieval finds recovered during metal detecting.
35814	Multi-period	Iron Age, Roman and post-medieval finds recovered during metal detecting.
42586	Roman Post-medieval	Roman and post-medieval metal objects recovered during metal detecting.
52912	Roman	Large collection of Roman coins and some post-medieval metal

	Post-medieval	objects recovered from spoil from dyke dredge during metal detecting.
56646	Post-medieval	Milestone alongside the Norwich to Aylsham Road.
56647	Post-medieval	Milestone alongside the Norwich to Aylsham Road.
57581	Unknown Multi-period	A series of cropmarks, including several ring ditches and linear features.

Table 1. NHER sites within 1km of the site.

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of the records are of sites or finds of Roman date and associated with the former town of Brampton (NHER 1124), which lies on the opposite side of the road from the evaluation site.

The town occupies a hexagonal area of approximately 6ha, centred on the point where the road south from the village crosses below the Bure Valley Railway line, c.350m to the south of the evaluation site. There is also a large industrial suburb that extends for about 600m to the west from the edge of the town (NHER 1006) and a timber structure recorded on the east side between the town and the River Bure may have been part of a wharf (Knowles 1977, 211). Taking these areas into account the town covers approximately 23ha.

The industrial suburb to the west of the town consists of at least 140 pottery kilns and it appears to have developed alongside a road, which is shown from cropmarks to have been flanked by ditches as it approached the gate in the west side of the town. The road has been traced for about 450m and it was thought that it may be a service road (Knowles 1975, 211), although, it is also possible that it may have been the main route west (Green 1977, 92).

Excavations of part of the industrial area in the 1970s suggested that pottery production had started to develop outside the west gate of the town by the late 1st century (Green 1977, 92).

It is clear that the main focus of the town was to the south of the evaluation site, although, fragments of building material and pottery recovered from the field to the north-west of the site may represent the site of a Roman building (NHER 7604) and Roman pottery (NHER 7605) was recovered from a pit in the same field.

A series of cropmarks of a possible Bronze Age barrow cemetery (NHER 57581) and a deep shaft or pit containing Bronze Age and Roman pottery (NHER 7594) were also recorded in this field. A series of pits, including one vertical sided deep shaft, that contained a large collection of Neolithic and later pottery were recorded at Street Farm (NHER 16143), a short distance to the north-east (Healy 1983, 363-374). All of these sites were located on the ridge to the north and north-east of the site and they indicate that even though the evaluation site was outside the Roman town it was within an area of very high archaeological potential.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

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 a single trench 12m x 1.8m was excavated within the footprint of the new building.

Machine excavation was carried out with a 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.

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

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.

The temporary benchmark used during the course of this work was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark with a value of 7.58m OD, located on the bus shelter in the village, c.170m to the east of the site.

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

5.0 RESULTS

The single trench was aligned north-east to south-west and measured 12m x 1.8m. The westernmost 1m was not fully excavated because of a concrete pad that was part of the pigsties that formerly occupied the west side of the site (Fig. 1, Plate 1).



Plate 1. General view north-east along trench

Two archaeological features were recorded, a north-south ditch [1] and a large ditch or pit [5] that appeared to extend beyond the excavated west end of the trench. A modern post-hole associated with the former pigsties was also recorded, but is not mentioned below (Fig. 2).

Ditch [1] was up to c.1m wide and extended beyond both sides of the trench, so its full length is unknown. It was 0.4m deep and slightly irregular in profile, which

changed from a slightly rounded v-shaped base and steep sides at the south side of the trench to a rounded base and more gently sloping sides at the north side of the trench. The lower part of the ditch was filled by a layer of pink/brown slightly clayey silt ([2]), which contained occasional angular flint fragments along with a small quantity of flint, Roman pottery and a bone fragment.

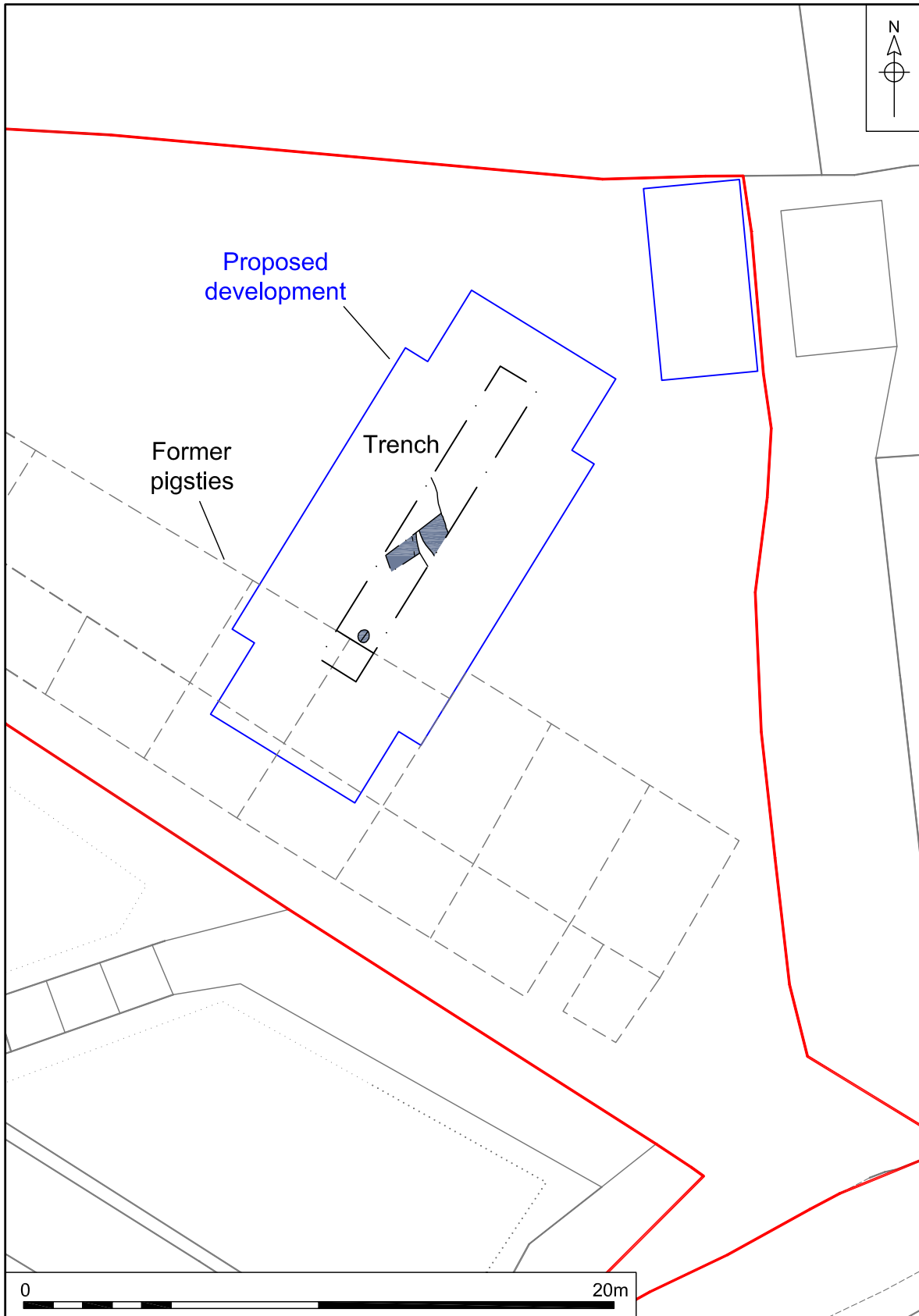
The slightly irregular profile to ditch [1] may have been because its east side had been disturbed by a large ditch or pit [5] that extended beyond the west end of the trench. Feature [5] was at least 0.7m deep and appeared to have a flattish base. It was filled by what appeared to be a single homogenous deposit of pink/brown slightly clayey silt ([6]), which contained occasional flint fragments and angular flint stones. One possible flint flake and a piece of brick/tile of probable medieval date were recovered from this fill.

Deposit [6] appeared to extend over and partially fill the upper portion of ditch [1], supporting the idea that ditch/pit [5] was later, or at least infilled later, than ditch [1], although, the similarities between fills [2] and [6] made it difficult to be certain about the sequence (Fig. 3, Plate 2).



Plate 2. Ditch [1] and feature [5] after excavation

The features were identified cut into the natural at a depth of c.9.75m OD, approximately 0.95m below current ground level.



© Crown copyright and database rights 2011 Ordnance Survey 100019340

Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:200

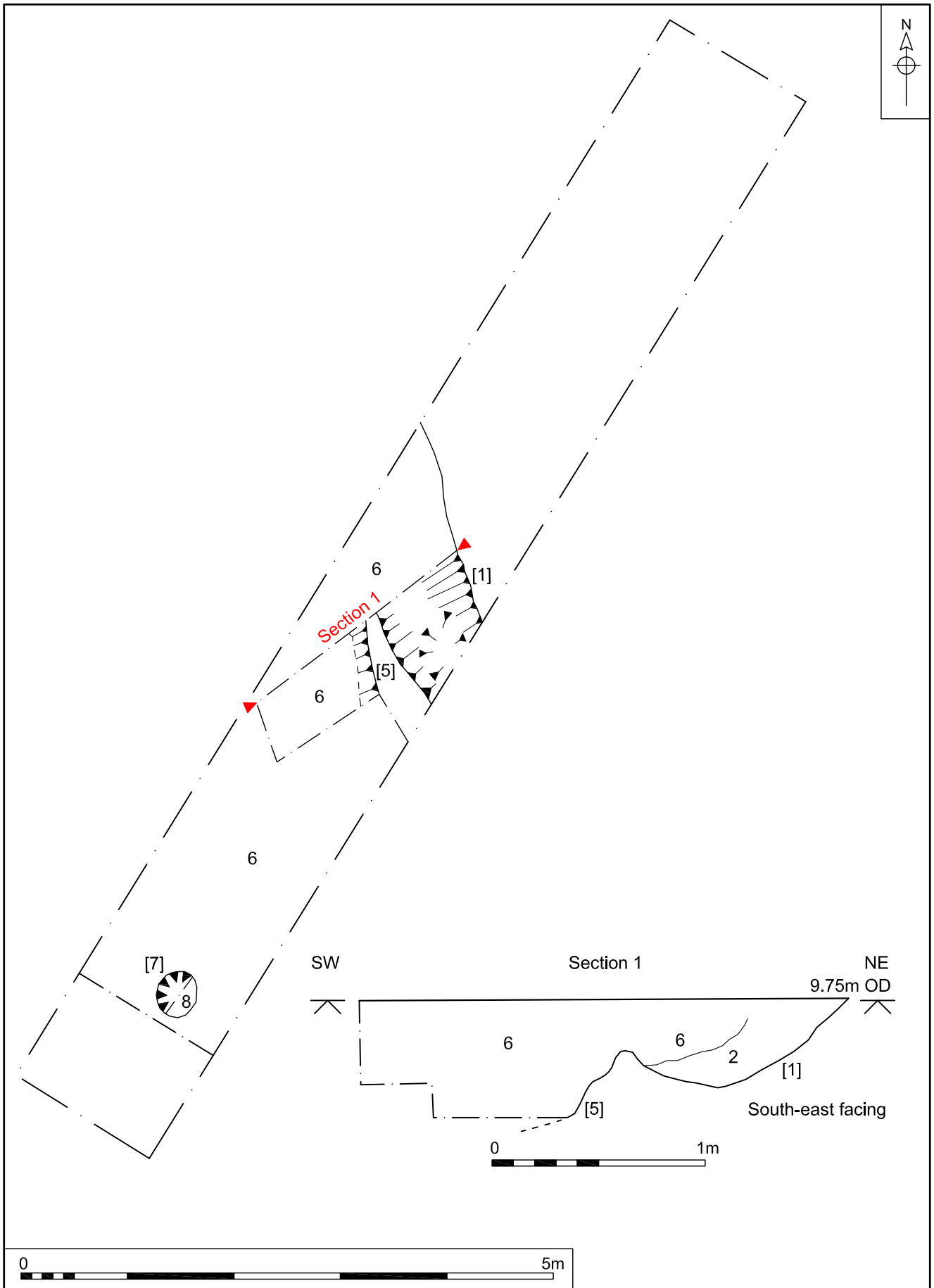


Figure 3. Trench plan and section. Scale 1:50 and 1:25

6.0 FINDS

by Rebecca Sillwood

All finds were processed and recorded by count and weight, and an Excel spreadsheet was produced outlining broad dating. Each material has been considered separately and is included below organised by material. A full list of all finds by context can be found in Appendix 2a.

6.1 Pottery

A total of three sherds of pottery, weighing 20g, was recovered from ditch fill [2]. All of the pieces are abraded and soft, possibly the result of movement in the soil. Two of the pieces are rim sherds, one of light bluish-grey colour with flint and mica inclusions; the second is dark grey on the outer edge and lip of the rim, and lighter grey internally, with quartz and mica inclusions. These two pieces are likely to be sandy greywares (defined by Peachey (forthcoming) as GRS 1), which are a ubiquitous type in Norfolk, produced at Snettisham, Spong Hill and Brampton.

A single worn body sherd of light orange sandy fabric with quartz, grog and ferrous inclusions is possibly a sandy oxidised ware (OXS 1 – defined by Peachey (*ibid*)).

These pieces are no great surprise, coming from the vicinity of Brampton Roman town, and the prolific kiln fields nearby. The pieces are, however, very worn, and appear to have moved around in the soil to some extent.

6.2 Ceramic Building Material

A single piece of flat roof tile was recovered from the site, weighing 56g, and came from ditch fill [6]. The piece is variegated in colour, pinkish-orange on one side and mid grey on the other. The fabric contains coarse inclusions of grog, flint, ferrous and quartz. This piece is likely to be medieval in date, and is similar to Drury's fabric RT1 (1993, 166).

6.3 Flint

Three flint flakes were recovered from two contexts, with two coming from ditch fill [2], and one piece from ditch fill [6]. All of the pieces are of a similar pale blue-grey colour, with traces of cortex also on all of the pieces.

6.4 Faunal Remains

Four fragments of animal bone weighing 42g were recovered from ditch fill [2], and consist of fragments of one incomplete rib, probably from a medium-sized mammal, such as a sheep or pig. The piece is missing the diagnostic end of the bone, and is very worn and abraded.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation revealed two archaeological features, a probable Roman ditch [1] and a later, possibly medieval, ditch or pit [5]. These lay c.350m outside of the northern extent of the Roman town, but in an area that has produced evidence of Roman activity, with a possible building (NHER 9604) recorded just to the north of the site and close to the southern edge of a Bronze Age barrow cemetery (NHER 57581) and a number of pits that contained pottery from the Neolithic to the Roman periods (NHER 7604, NHER 7605 and NHER 16143).

Both of the recorded features extended beyond the limits of the trench, so their full extents are not known, nor was it possible to determine a likely function for either feature. The large size of possible medieval feature [5] suggests it may have been an extraction pit, which may also have been the original functions of pits NHER 7604 and NHER 7605 just to the north of the site. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of the area shows a large sand pit in the field to the north of the site.

The relative lack of finds from the two features is noteworthy as there have been finds of Roman pottery recovered from across the field to the north, of which the site used to be a part. However, this may reflect the location of the site at the base of the slope of the ridge of higher ground to the north and the fact that the prehistoric activity was taking place on higher ground and the Roman activity was centred in the town to the south.

Given the fairly small-scale of the proposed development and the depths at which the archaeological features were encountered suggests that the impacts of the development are likely to be low.

Recommendations for further mitigation work (if required based on the evidence presented in this report) will be made by Norfolk Historic Environment Service.

Acknowledgements

NPS Archaeology would like to thank Mr and Mrs Spinks for commissioning the evaluation.

This report was illustrated and produced by David Dobson and edited by Jayne Bown. The finds were processed, recorded and reported on by Rebecca Sillwood

Bibliography and Sources

- | | | |
|---|-------------|--|
| Department for Communities and Local Government | 2012 | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> |
| Department for Communities and Local Government | 2010 | <i>Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment</i> TSO, Norwich |
| Drury, P. | 1993 | 'Ceramic Building Materials' in Margeson, S. <i>Norwich Households: The Medieval and Post-Medieval Finds from Norwich Survey Excavations 1971-1978</i> . East Anglian Archaeology No. 58 |
| Green, C. | 1977 | 'Excavations in the Roman kiln field at Brampton, 1973-4'. <i>East Anglian Archaeology</i> 5, pp 31-95 |
| Healy, F. | 1983 | 'Neolithic and later material from a shaft at Brampton'. <i>Norfolk Archaeology XXXVIII</i> , Part III, pp363-374 |
| Knowles, A. | 1975 | 'The Roman Settlement at Brampton, Norfolk: Interim Report'. <i>Britannia</i> Vol. 8 (1977), pp. 209-221 |
| Peachey, A. | forthcoming | 'The Roman Pottery' in Crawley, P. <i>An Archaeological Excavation at Sundowner House, Brancaster</i> . NPS Archaeology Report 2925 |

BGS online - http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 26.03.12

Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period
1	Cut	Ditch		N-S ditch	Roman
2	Deposit		1	Silty lower fill of Ditch 1	Roman
3	Deposit			Topsoil	
4	Deposit			Subsoil	
5	Cut	Ditch/pit		Large ditch or pit	Medieval?
6	Deposit		5	Silty fill of ditch 5 and it may also partially fill ditch 1	Medieval?
7	Cut	Pit/posthole		Small pit or posthole probably associated with former pigsties	Modern
8	Deposit		7	Fill of modern pit/posthole 7	Modern

Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

Period	Category	Total
Roman	Ditch	1
medieval	Ditch/pit	1
Modern	posthole	1

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period
2	Animal Bone	4	42g	Unknown
2	Flint – Struck	2	18g	Prehistoric
2	Pottery	3	20g	Roman
6	Flint – Struck	1	9g	Prehistoric
6	Ceramic Building Material	1	56g	Medieval

Appendix 2b: Oasis Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Prehistoric	Flint – Struck	3
Roman	Pottery	3
Medieval	Ceramic Building Material	1
Unknown	Animal Bone	4