

Report 3054



nps archaeology

**Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation of  
Land at the Junction of Whiteway Road and Main Road,  
Burnham Deepdale, Norfolk**

ENF129500



**Prepared for  
Fleur Developments Ltd  
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Location:	Land at the Junction of Whiteway Road and Main Road, Burnham Deepdale, Brancaster, Norfolk
District:	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Grid Ref.:	TF 8061 4422
Planning Ref.:	11/01372/F
HER No.:	ENF129500
OASIS Ref.:	133709
Client:	Fleur Developments Ltd
Dates of Fieldwork:	3 August 2012

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was conducted for Fleur Developments Ltd ahead of a residential development on Land at the Junction of Whiteway Road and Main Road, Burnham Deepdale, Norfolk. An east to west aligned ditch was recorded within the single trial trench. Four conjoining pieces of Late Medieval and Transitional (LMT) pottery were recovered from ditch fill, and are likely to come from a bowl. It is likely that the ditch itself is part of a complex of field boundaries identified as cropmarks through aerial photography to the east of the site. If this is the case the date of the field system would appear to have its origin at least as far back as the late medieval to early post-medieval period.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Proposals for a new residential development on the junction of Whiteway Road and Main Road in Burnham Deepdale, Norfolk (TF 8061 4422) (Fig. 1) required a programme of archaeological works to support it up to and through the planning process.

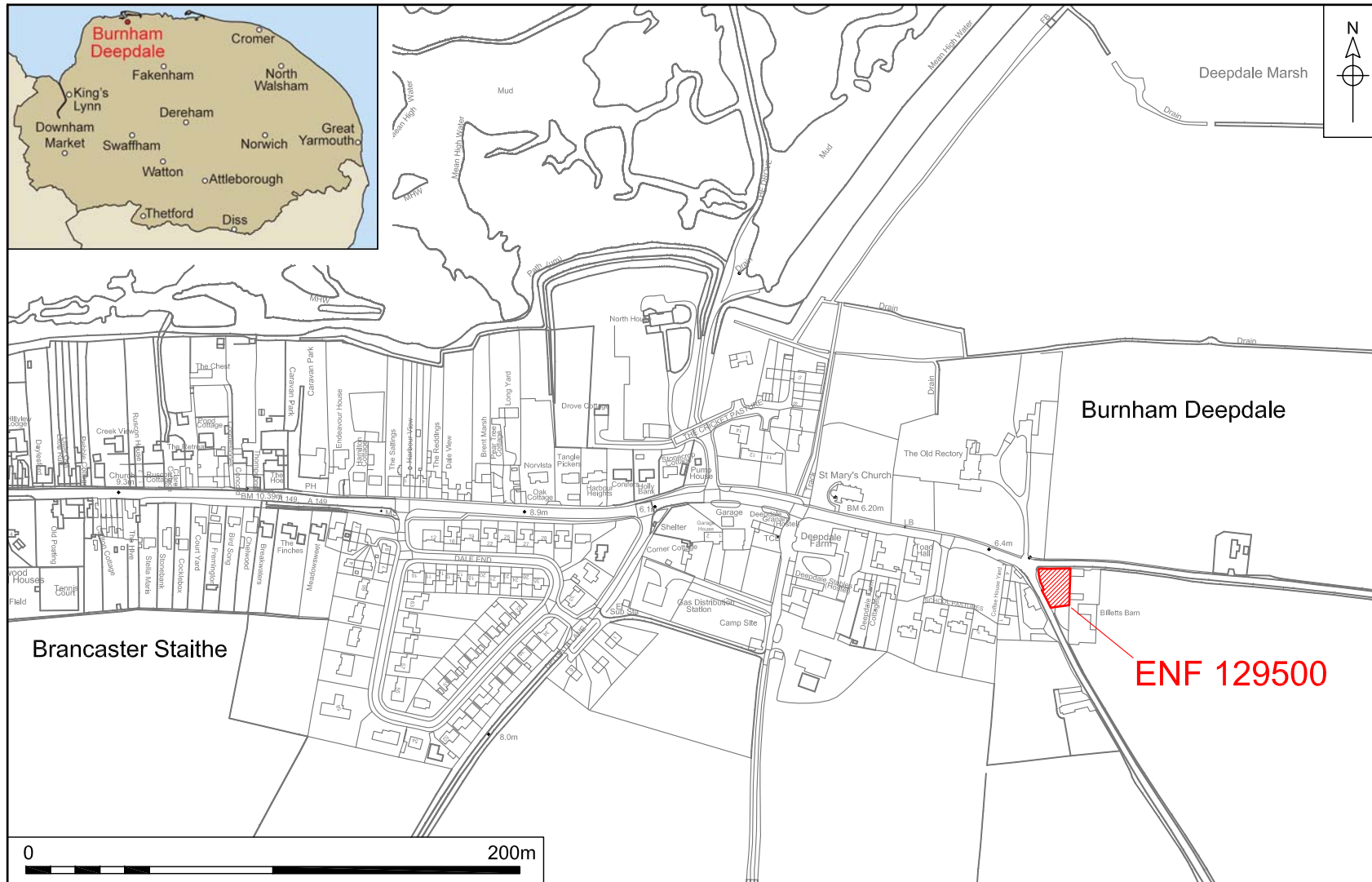
In order to comply with the planning condition Fleur Developments Ltd. requested that NPS Archaeology carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation by trial trench.

A 15m by 1.8m trench was excavated to provide a 5% sample of the area of the site.

The proposed development site is located adjacent to an area of cropmarks relating to a possible Roman settlement. Further cropmarks relating to possible enclosures of unknown date are also recorded in the vicinity of the site. Consequently it was considered that there was a potential for heritage assets with archaeological interest to be present at the site.

This work was undertaken to fulfil planning requirements set by Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (Ref. 11/01372/F) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Ref. CNF 43696). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU3054/NP). This work was commissioned and funded by name Fleur Developments Ltd.

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area,



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500

following the guidelines set out in *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 solid underlying geology at the site is chalk, a sedimentary bedrock which was formed in the Upper Cretaceous Period approximately 65 to 99 million years ago.

The chalk is overlain by Ringstead sand and gravel. This superficial deposit formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period when the local environment was dominated by ice age conditions ([http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html)).

The sand and gravel was overlain by a deep sub-soil [02] consisting of a pale greyish brown silt sand. This deposit was in turn overlain by a mid to dark grey sand silt topsoil [01].

The site lay at an elevation of c.7.50m OD and appeared to be well drained.

The proposed development is situated on reasonably level ground with views over the marshes to the sea some 1km to the north.

The vacant plot has most recently been used as a garden and prior to that as a car park to the near by (now closed) Old Plough public house.

## **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

A search of entries in the Historic Environment Record returned a total of 22 entries within a 500m radius of the site. The more relevant entries are summarised below.

### **Previous work in the vicinity**

No archaeological features or finds were reported during an archaeological watching brief at Deepdale Farm when a shower block was built. (37165 - MNF41398). The location of the watching brief was a short distance to the west of the proposed development site,

### **Prehistoric**

Finds of prehistoric date made in the vicinity of the site include a Neolithic chipped flint chisel (17790 - MNF17790) and a Middle Bronze Age tubular shafted spear head made around 1400-1200 BC found during metal detecting (30123 - MNF30123).

### **Roman**

Branodunum 'Saxon Shore' fort is situated a short distance to the west of the site. The following information has been obtained from the Norfolk Heritage Explorer (<http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/>).

This Roman 'Saxon Shore' fort was probably constructed between 225 and 250 AD, replacing an earlier fort on the same site. It was one of a chain of eleven forts between Brancaster on The Wash and Portchester in Hampshire which were under the command of the 'Count of the Saxon Shore', a military commander whose forts and units are listed in the 'Notitia Dignitatum', a document compiled around AD 395. These forts were built at different times, and the earliest forts (Brancaster and Caister-on-Sea in Norfolk and Reculver in Kent) may have been more to do with trade than defence. In the late 200s AD, further forts were built (e.g. Burgh Castle in Norfolk) and these probably had a more defensive role, protecting the coastline against barbarian raiders. The garrison at Brancaster included units from Gaul (France) and Dalmatia (Croatia/Bosnia). The fort originally had stone walls which were demolished in the 18th century. Cropmarks indicate the locations of internal buildings, whilst finds indicate occupation during the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. These finds include a finger ring featuring early Christian symbols. Excavations were carried out here in 1846, 1935 and 1985. The name 'Branodunum' may mean 'Fort of the crow'.

Peddars Way (1289 - MNF1289) is a Roman Road visible as an earthwork and cropmark on aerial photographs to the north of the site. It is likely to be early Roman in date, and was probably of military origin.

Situated immediately to the north of the site are cropmarks of probable Roman date which are visible on aerial photographs of this area (27066 - MNF418680). The site consists of rectilinear enclosures, trackways and pits. Roman finds from nearby (see NHER 11317) suggest that these enclosures and associated features are Roman in date, possibly with Late Iron Age origins.

Whilst knocking a hole for a new door at Rectory Cottage a fragment of Roman amphora pottery was found. Reports suggest parts of Roman millstones were also used in the construction of the building (11317 - MNF11317). This might be reused material from Branodunum fort (NHER 1001).

A metal detecting rally held on land to the south-west of the site in September 2005 produced four Roman coins (49996 - MNF54885).

### **Medieval to post-medieval**

St Mary's Church in Burnham Deepdale is situated a short distance to the north-west of the site (1733 – MNF). Its Late Saxon round tower is dated between 1050 and 1100. The north aisle was demolished in 1776 but was rebuilt in the 19th century, preserving the 14th-century arcade and resetting the north door which dates to around 1190. The chancel arch is of 14th-century date. The south porch contains 18th-century floor tombs and medieval stained glass. Inside the church is a very rare Norman font with stone panels depicting the twelve months of the year.

To the east of the development site a group of cropmark post-medieval field boundaries are visible on aerial photographs (27052 – MNF41859). The features form part of the field systems dating to the post-medieval period - the fields defined are approximately areas 200m by 100m (S. Massey (NMP), 15 July 2002).

Situated immediately to the south-west of the site are cropmarks of a group of ditches visible on aerial photographs taken in 1974 (27065 - MNF41867). At least



one of the ditches, which runs roughly east to west, appears to be a continuation of a field boundary and is therefore probably post-medieval in date. Three other ditches run north to south, the longest of which is 35m long. These may also represent boundaries of divisions of a similar date (Norfolk NMP, July 2002).

Situated on land to the south of the site are three ditched linear features visible on slide aerial photography. Two of these are parallel linear features, the longest of which is 45m long and it is possible that they form part of trackway - although the fact they are 15m apart may suggest that this interpretation is unlikely (27067 - MNF41869).

A short distance to the south-west of the proposed development is an area of parchmarks defining an undated oblong enclosure with associated banks and ditches, visible on RAF aerial photographs from 1945 and 1946 of this area (27064 - MNF41866).

In November 1999 a large, 16th- to 17th-century gilded copper alloy signet ring was found during metal-detecting. It probably originally belonged to a man and has a circular bezel engraved with the initials RH and a tiny heart after each letter. Above and below are two elaborate fleurs de lis and a beaded border runs around the edge (HER 35231).

#### **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 trial trench measuring 15m by 1.80m be excavated to provide a 5% sample of the total area. It was stipulated that the trench must characterise the full archaeological sequence down to the natural deposits. Machine excavation was carried out with a hydraulic 360° excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket and operated under constant archaeological supervision. The trench was positioned on a north to south alignment as trees and foliage precluded a full 15m on any other orientation (Fig. 2).

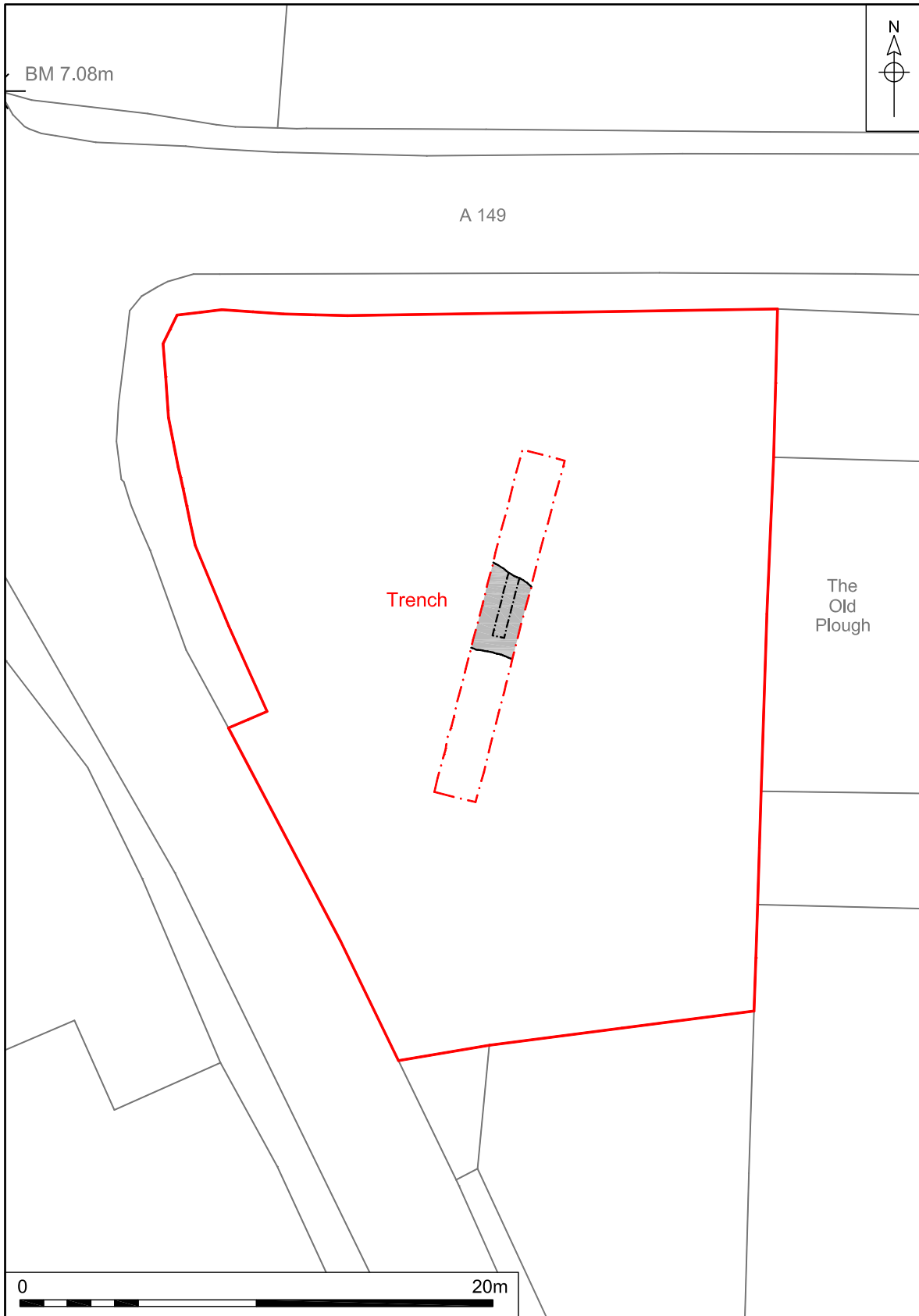
Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

An environmental sample (Sample <1>) was taken from fill [04] in probable ditch [03].

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 a known height (7.43mOD) located on the adjacent A149.

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



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Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:250

## 5.0 RESULTS

On machine excavation of the trench a natural deposit consisting of flint gravel with orange brown sand was encountered at a depth of 1.13m below ground level at the northern end of the trench and at 0.89m at the southern end, the natural geology sloping slightly from south to north (Plate 1).



Plate 1. Trial trench, post-excavation, looking south

A single archaeological feature, probable ditch [03], was seen to be truncating the natural geology in the base of the trench (Fig. 3, Plate 2). The feature was c.3.70m wide adjacent to the eastern edge of the trench and 3.25m at the western edge - it extended beyond the trench edges to both the east and west. This width discrepancy raises the slight possibility of the feature being an elongated pit as opposed to a ditch but the profile of the feature suggested it was more likely to be a ditch (Fig. 3 Section 1).

A sondage measuring 0.50m wide was hand dug across the width of the probable ditch. This revealed the feature to have a central maximum depth of 0.65m and to have gently sloping sides and a concave base. The putative ditch was filled with dry, compact, very fine, pale brown sand silt [04] containing a moderate quantity of flint gravel and some chalk fragments.

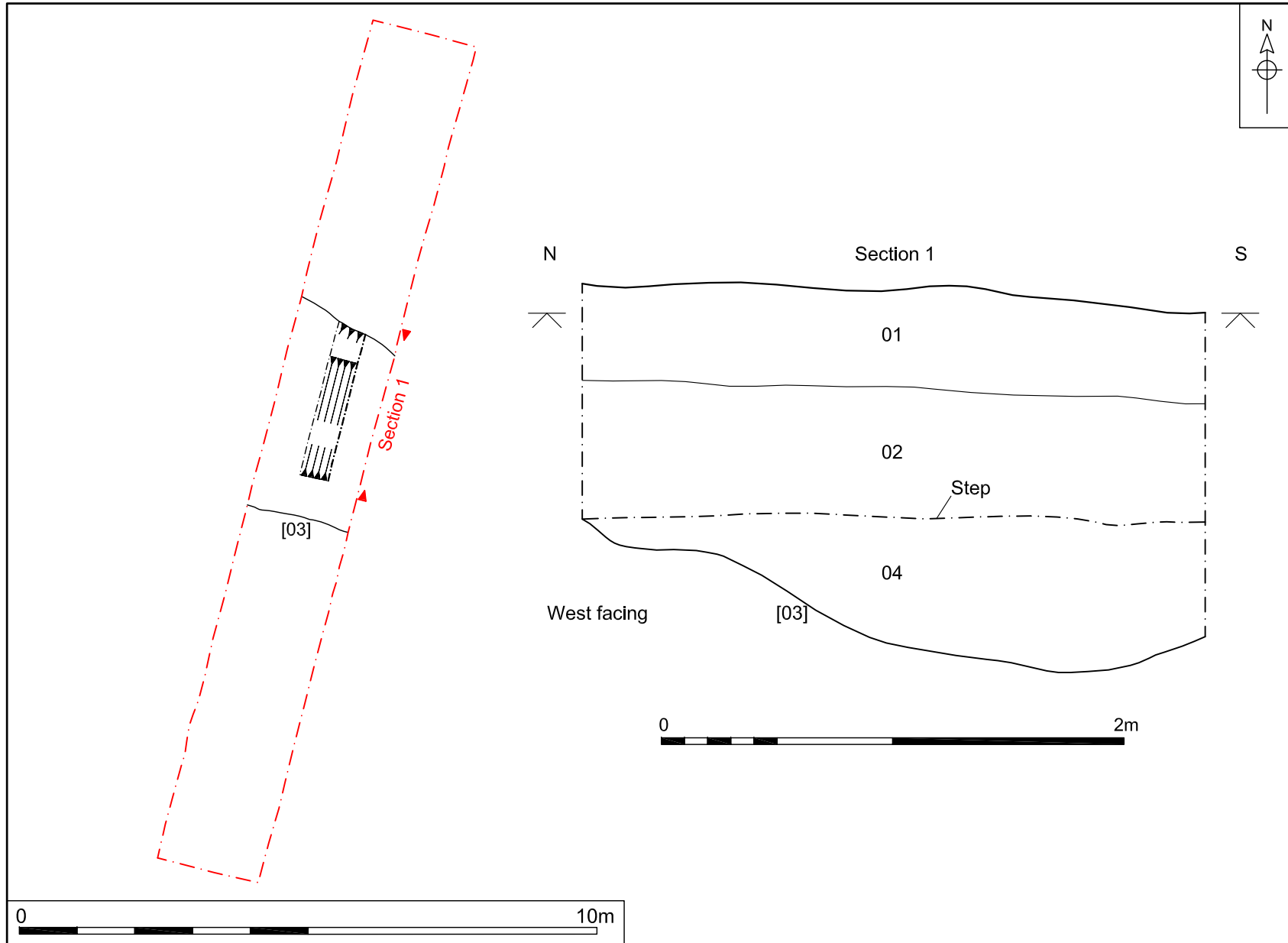


Figure 3. Trench plan and section. Scale 1:100 and 1:25



Plate 2. Ditch [03], looking east

Finds recovered from fill deposit [04] comprised four sherds of pottery from a probable bowl of mid 15th-century to late 16th-century date, a fragment of post-medieval brick and tile, an iron hinge fitting of medieval or post-medieval date, five fragments of marine shell and twelve fragments of animal bone. The finds assemblage probably represents domestic food and general waste that had been dumped into the ditch. The relatively large and unabraded sherds of pottery suggest that there was habitation in the immediate vicinity.

Probable ditch [03] was sealed by pale, greyish brown, silt sand subsoil [02] with an average depth of c.0.60m. Four fragments of post-medieval pottery, a piece of post-medieval pan tile and a single piece of clay tobacco pipe were recovered from this deposit. The subsoil was sealed by a mid to dark grey, sand silt topsoil [01] with an average depth of 0.40m.

## 6.0 FINDS

by Rebecca Sillwood

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

### 6.1 Pottery

A total of eight fragments of pottery were recovered from two contexts; subsoil [02] and ditch fill [04]. Modern and post-medieval pieces were retrieved from the subsoil however the fill of ditch [03] ([04]) contained some slightly earlier pieces.



Four conjoining pieces of Late Medieval and Transitional (LMT) pottery were recovered from ditch fill [04], and are likely to come from a bowl. Three of the sherds are rim fragments, most closely identified with numbers 413 and 414 in Jennings (1981, 63, fig. 24) Norwich type series. The pieces are of pale orange fabric, with a grey reduced core, and have a coppery green glaze on the interior surface. There are no traces of sooting on the piece, implying that this was tableware, rather than a cooking pot. This type of pottery formed the bridge between medieval and full-blown post-medieval wares, and according to Jennings dates from the mid 15th century through to the late 16th century.

A single piece of post-medieval pottery was recovered from subsoil [02], and is a small body sherd of glazed red earthenware (GRE), which has a thick speckled brown glaze on both surfaces. This type of pottery tends to date between the 16th and 18th centuries.

Three pieces of modern pottery were also recovered from subsoil [02], two of which are conjoining, and form part of the base of a white-glazed vessel and one sherd of tableware.

The white-glazed vessel may be a beer bottle or similar and has the remains of lettering on the base that reads ‘.ling.’ which may refer to John Codling of Overstrand (<http://www.norfolkbottles.com/everythingelse.htm>). Codling, of the White Horse Inn, Overstrand, was in operation from 1884–1914.

The third fragment of glazed white pottery is decorated with moulded foliage on its exterior surface, in a similar fashion to the later styles of Belleek pottery (from Northern Ireland) in the 20th-century. However this piece is not as fine as Belleek and is a much more common variety of tableware.

## **6.2 Ceramic Building Material**

Three fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered from two contexts, a piece of post-medieval pan tile from subsoil [02] and a fragment of post-medieval brick and tile from ditch fill [04].

## **6.3 Clay Pipe**

A single piece of clay tobacco pipe was recovered from subsoil [02]. The piece is a fragment of stem measuring 86mm in length, decorated with sinuous foliage along opposing lengths. A similar pattern can be found on several pipes of late 18th- to 19th-century date (Atkin 1985, 136, fig. 7), and this example is likely to be of a similar date.

## **6.4 Iron**

A single iron object was recovered from ditch fill [04], and is likely to be a hinge fitting of medieval or post-medieval date. The piece is a slightly tapering strip of iron, with at least three visible nail holes, and a (much encrusted) possible attachment fitting at one end and a rounded opposite end. The piece measures 144mm in length, 37mm across at its widest end and 26mm across at its narrower end. Examples of similar pieces have been recovered from both medieval and post-medieval contexts, including from London (Egan 1998, 47-50) and Norwich (Margeson 1993, 151, fig. 111).

## **6.5 Animal Bone**

Twelve fragments of animal bone were recovered from ditch fill [04], all of which are likely to be the remains of food waste, although no deliberate butchering marks were apparent. The bones were fragmentary and are from medium-sized animals, such as sheep or pig.

## **6.6 Shell**

Five fragments of marine shell (oyster and cockle) were recovered from ditch fill [04] including species common on the north coast of Norfolk. These fragments are likely to represent the remains of food waste. The shell fragments have subsequently been discarded.

## **6.7 Finds Conclusions**

The finds from the evaluation trench at Burnham Deepdale include several modern pieces but also present evidence of earlier activity in the area in the form of medieval and post-medieval artefacts.

The pottery and iron hinge fitting - likely to be from a late medieval/transitional period - are evidence of occupation in the vicinity of the site at this time. It is possible that the pottery was deposited after having been broken as it does not appear to have moved very far, being in relatively sharp, clean condition.

This relatively limited finds assemblage points to small-scale activity and occupation in the area. The evidence was recovered from a ditch that appears to have been peripheral to this activity, otherwise a larger assemblage might have been anticipated.

## **7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

### **7.1 Plant Macrofossils**

#### ***7.1.1 Introduction and method statement***

Evaluation excavations at Burnham Deepdale, undertaken by NPS Archaeology, recorded a single feature of possible medieval to post-medieval date sealed by subsoil. A single sample (Sample <1>) for the evaluation of the content and preservation of the plant macrofossil assemblage was taken from ditch fill [04].

The sample was processed by manual water flotation/washover and the flot was collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flot was scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed below in Appendix 3 (nomenclature follows Stace (1997)). All plant remains were charred. Modern roots and seeds were also recorded.

The non-floating residue was collected in a 1mm mesh sieve to be sorted when dry. Any artefacts/ecofacts have been retained for further specialist analysis.

#### ***7.1.2 Results***

Although relatively large (0.3 litres in volume), the flot was largely composed of small coal fragments and pieces of black porous and tarry residue, with the latter almost certainly being derived from the combustion of coal.

Plant macrofossils were scarce, but a possible barley (*Hordeum* sp.) grain was recorded along with a cereal which was too poorly preserved for close identification.

Charcoal/charred wood fragments were also present along with small pieces of charred root or stem. Other remains included fragments of bone, fish bone and marine mollusc shell, and a small piece of glass. Shells of common terrestrial, freshwater and estuarine molluscs were also present, but at the time of writing, it was not possible to establish whether these shells were contemporary with the feature from which the sample was taken, or later contaminants.

### **7.1.3 Environmental Sample Conclusions**

Plant remains are scarce in the assemblage and the preservation of the few macrofossils which are present is generally poor.

In summary, it would appear most likely that the assemblage is partly or wholly derived from a deposit of domestic hearth and/or kitchen waste, which had been deliberately placed within the ditch fill.

## **8.0 CONCLUSIONS**

As discussed in the results section above, the finds from probable ditch [03] strongly suggest the presence of domestic habitation in the vicinity of the site in the 15th-16th centuries; a suggestion supported by the environmental evidence.

Two extant farmhouses in the area, Deepdale (built around 1700) and Whitehills (of 17th-century date) are located in reasonably close proximity to the site but it seems likely that they both post-date the material recovered from the ditch. The 16th- to 17th-century signet ring found in close proximity to the site however may be contemporary with the implied occupation nearby.

It would seem likely that the ditch itself forms part of the complex of field boundaries identified as cropmarks at HER 27065, and possibly at HER 27052. If this is the case the date of the field system would appear to have its origin at least as far back as the late medieval/early post-medieval period.

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



## **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank Fleur Developments Ltd who commissioned and funded the project. The brief was prepared by James Albone who monitored the project on behalf of the LPA.

The fieldwork was carried out by Rebecca Sillwood along with the author.

Data from the Norfolk Historic Environment Record was supplied by Norfolk Historic Environment Service

The finds were processed and reported on by Rebecca Sillwood and the environmental evidence by Val Fryer.

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

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### Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period	Trench
1	Deposit			Grey sand silt topsoil		1
2	Deposit			Grey brown silt sand sub-soil		1
3	Cut	Ditch		Ditch	Late medieval/ early post-medieval	1
4	Deposit		3	Ditch fill - brown sand silt	Late medieval/ early post-medieval	1

### Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

Period	Category	Total
Late medieval/ early post-medieval	Ditch	1

### Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
2	Ceramic Building Material	1	44g	Post-medieval	Pan tile fragment
2	Clay Pipe	1	7g	Post-medieval	Stem; decorated
2	Pottery	3	108g	Modern	19th-20th century
2	Pottery	1	8g	Post-medieval	16th-18th century
4	Animal Bone	12	132g	Unknown	
4	Ceramic Building Material	1	176g	Post-medieval	Brick fragment
4	Ceramic Building Material	1	188g	Post-medieval	Tile
4	Iron	1	104g	Med./Post-Med.	Hinge fitting
4	Pottery	4	154g	Med./Post-Med.	15th-16th-century
4	Shell	5	42g	Unknown	Oyster/Cockle - DISCARDED

### Appendix 2b: Oasis Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Medieval/post-medieval	Iron	1
	Pottery	4
Post-medieval	Ceramic Building Material	3
	Clay Pipe	1
	Pottery	1
Modern	Pottery	3
Uncertain	Animal Bone	12
	Shell	5

### Appendix 3: Charred Plant Macrofossils

<b>Sample No.</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Plant macrofossils</b>	
<i>Hordeum</i> sp. (grain)	xcf
Cereal indet. (grain)	x
Charcoal <2mm	xx
Charcoal >2mm	xx
Charred root/stem	x
<b>Other remains</b>	
Black porous 'cokey' residues	xxxx
Black tarry residues	xxx
Bone	x
Fish bone	x
Glass frag.	x
Marine mollusc shell frags.	x
Small coal frags.	xxxx
Small mammal/amphibian bone	xpmc
<b>Mollusc shells</b>	
<b>Terrestrial species</b>	
<i>Aegopinella</i> sp.	x
<i>Pupilla muscorum</i>	x
<i>Trichia hispida</i> group	x
<i>Vallonia</i> sp.	x
<b>Freshwater species</b>	
<i>Anisus leucostoma</i>	x
<b>Estuarine species</b>	
<i>Hydrobia ulvae</i>	x
<b>Sample volume (litres)</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Volume of flot (litres)</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>% flot sorted</b>	<b>50%</b>

**Key.** x=1–10 specimens xx=11–50 specimens xxx= 51–100 specimens xxxx = 100+ specimens  
cf = compare pmc = possible modern contaminant