

Report 3094



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Archaeological Watching Brief at Cobham House, North Street, Burnham Market, Norfolk

ENF129344



Prepared for
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Location:	Cobham House, North Street, Burnham Market, Norfolk
District:	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Grid Ref.:	TF 8354 4231
Planning Ref.:	12/00298/F, 12/00302/f and 12/00304/F
HER No.:	ENF129344
OASIS Ref.:	136622
Client:	Mr and Mrs W Adderley
Dates of Fieldwork:	7 June – 9 August 2012

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Mr and Mrs Adderley during groundworks associated with the construction of an orangery, garage and cottage at Cobham House, Burnham Market.

The artefacts recovered, especially at the southern end of the plot in the area of the Orangery, suggest that this development area is close to areas of Roman and medieval activity.

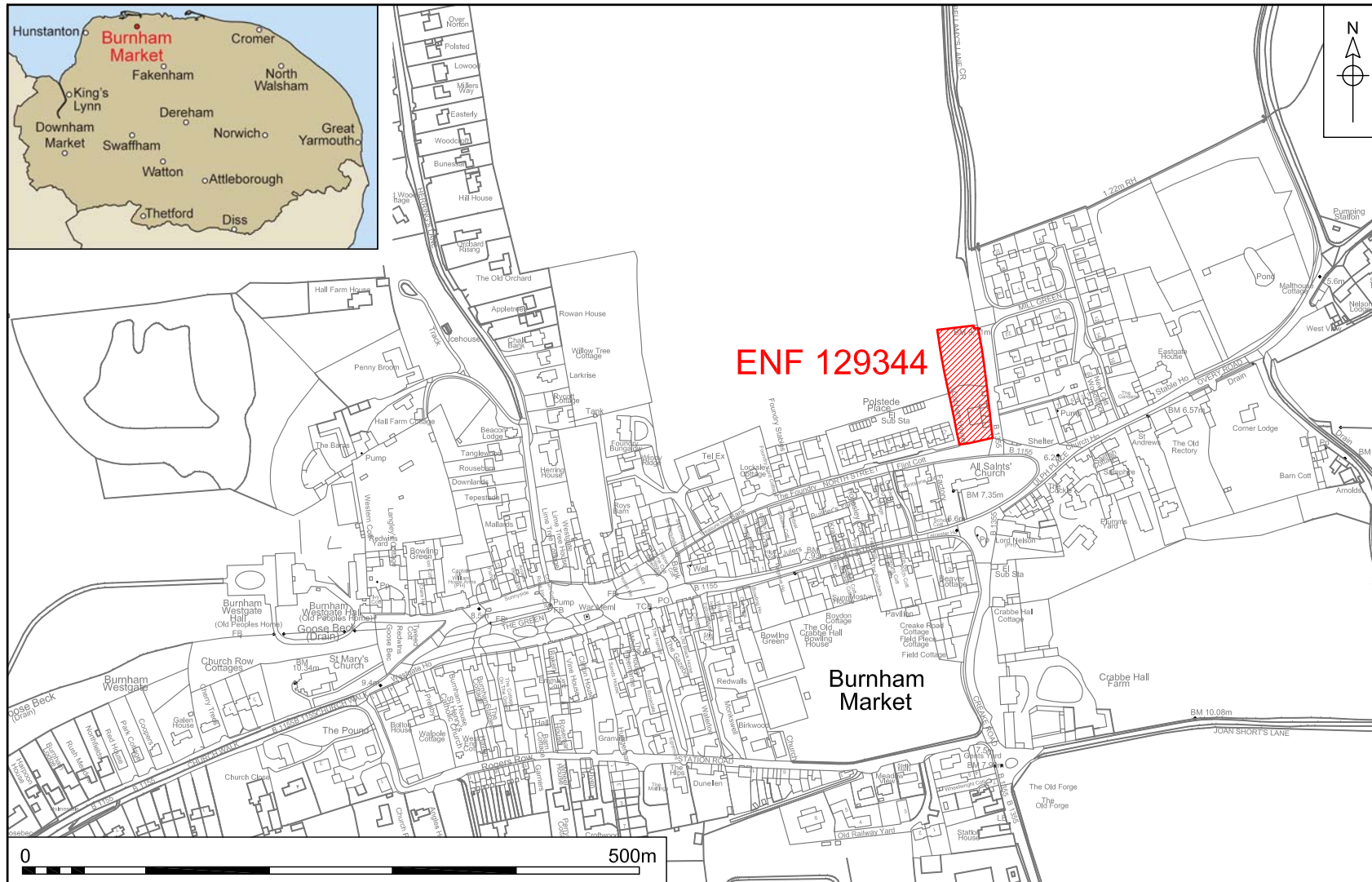
The modern pond in the cottage area, and a large pit (thought to be a natural feature) spotted during the excavation of the foundation trenches may in fact be the remains of quarry pits, perhaps similar to Saxo-Norman examples recorded in the adjacent part of the field to the north and north-west of the development plot during recent archaeological evaluation there (Lilly Hodges and Rachel Cruse pers comm). Despite evidence of an important Early Anglo-Saxon settlement and cemetery being discovered during that evaluation, no evidence of occupation of that date was encountered during the monitoring undertaken at Cobham House.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Redevelopment work at Cobham House, Burnham Market involved an extension (the Orangery) at the front of the house, a new house to the rear of the plot (the Cottage) and a new garage. This work required an archaeological watching brief on the groundworks due to its location within the medieval core of Burnham Market.

This work was undertaken to fulfil planning requirements set by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (Ref. 12/00298/F, 12/00302/F and 12/00304/F) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Ref. CNF44157-9). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU3094/NP). This work was commissioned and funded by Richard C F Waite, Chartered Architect.

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 *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.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

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 underlying geology consists of Cretaceous Upper Chalk (BGS 1985) overlain at the front (south end) of the plot by Pleistocene river terrace gravels (BGS 1991).

The development site lies at the western end of North Street in the centre of the village, opposite All Saints' church (Fig. 1). The village lies in a valley bottom and is grouped around a large, long market place, now partially filled in, with churches at both its eastern and western ends. The front of the development plot lies at a height of 6.90m OD and the rear is at an elevation of 10.50m OD.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The information for the following section has been derived from historic mapping sources and the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER). It is presented in broadly chronological order.

Prehistoric

Pottery dating from the Iron Age (NHER MNF25918) has been found some 200m north-east of Cobham House, during metal detecting.

Iron Age pottery (NHER MNF29624) has been found during metal detecting 30m north of Cobham House.

Part of large circular enclosure (NHER MNF41823) is visible on aerial photographs 170m north-east of Cobham House. This may relate to late prehistoric settlement activity.

Archaeological evaluation by Norfolk Archaeological Unit in 2004, 195m north-east of Cobham House revealed a prehistoric pit and pottery, as well as features and finds of later periods (NHER MNF44619).

Roman

Roman coins, brooches a bracelet and pottery have been found by metal detectorists 200m north-east (NHER MNF25918) and 30m north (NHER MNF29624) of Cobham House.

Anglo-Saxon

A series of ditches has been excavated at Ulph Place (NHER MNF38684) 90m south-east of Cobham House, dating from the Middle Saxon to the medieval period. Middle and Late Saxon pottery was found during the excavation, as well as a hearth and a part of a Late Saxon wall, indicating that the site was occupied during the Late Saxon and early medieval period.

Early Saxon brooches, Late Saxon coins and strap fittings and Saxon pottery (NHER MNF25918) has been found during metal detecting, 200m north-east of Cobham House.

A Late Saxon harness fitting has been found by metal detecting in the field to the north of Cobham House (NHER MNF29624).

Medieval

The church on the opposite side of the road, 60m south of Cobham House, is a Late Norman church, which was extensively remodelled in the 14th century (NHER MNF1759).

Part of a glazed jug dating from the 13th or 14th centuries (NHER MNF1751) was found 160m east of Cobham House.

A series of ditches has been excavated at Ulph Place (NHER MNF38684), 90m south-east of Cobham House, dating from the Middle Saxon to the medieval period. Middle, Late Saxon and medieval pottery was found during the excavation, as well as a hearth and a part of a Late Saxon wall, indicating that the site was occupied during the Late Saxon and early medieval period.

Medieval pottery, coins and a ring have been recovered during metal detecting 200m north-east (NHER MNF25918) of Cobham House and in the field to the north (NHER MNF29624).

Post-medieval

Cobham House itself (NHER MNF52064) is a brick and pebble-dashed house of about 1830. The 1837 Tithe Map (NRO DN/TA 386) and the Ordnance Survey maps from 1886 to 1983 (<http://www.old-maps.co.uk>) all show that the plot attached to Cobham House was considerably smaller than it is now and did not extend nearly as far to the north as it does today.

Burnham Market contains a large number of interesting post-medieval buildings. The 17th-century ones include Old Victoria/Stylman House/Church House (NHER MNF13311) 75m east of Cobham House, St Andrew's and Ulph Drapers (NHER MNF47132) 130m east and Old Crabbe Hall/Middle Cottage/Hamilton Cottage (NHER MNF20874) 210 south-west of Cobham House.

Interesting 18th-century buildings include Sunnyside (NHER MNF52008), 170m south-west; Mostyn (NHER MNF52009) 160m south-west; the cottages attached to the west of Archway House (NHER MNF52010) 135m south-west; the house attached to the west of 2 High House (NHER MNF52011) 225m south-west; The Poachers/The Other House/Skeet Cottage (NHER MNF43456) 150m south-west and Bowling House and Old Tiles (NHER MNF52005) 230m south-west of Cobham House.

Significant 19th-century buildings include the former Burnham Market School, Westgate (NHER MNF63295) 60m south-west, built in 1837 and closed in 1949/50; Satchell's Foundry House (NHER MNF20873), 220m west; Old Rectory, Overy Road (NHER MNF43458), 170m east; Ivy House/Winearls/Wittons/19 Front Street (NHER MNF47547), 250m southwest; Honeysuckle Cottage (NHER MNF52007), 185m south-west; National Westminster Bank (NHER MNF52012), 210m south-west, which is a former chapel built in about 1840; Arch House (NHER MNF52013), 125m south-west; Northfields and Northgate House (NHER MNF52062), 210m southwest; High House (NHER MNF52063), 210m south-west and the Burnham Market Foundry (NHER MNF61664) built in 1868, 150m west of Cobham House. This firm supplied ironworking services to Burnham Market.

The West Norfolk Junction Railway (NHER MNF13590) ran from Heacham Junction to Wells, with a station at Burnham Market. It was opened on 17 August

1866, and passenger services ended on 2 June 1952. It passed 350m south of Cobham House.

A post-medieval windmill, or post-mill (NHER MNF15151), is marked on Faden's map of 1797, 130m north of Cobham House and which was in use until the late 19th century. In 2000 the Norfolk Archaeological Unit undertook a watching brief on the site, and a ditch and chalk deposit of unknown date were revealed.

Unknown

Human remains of unknown date (NHER MNF1758) have been found 170m south-west of Cobham House.

190m south-east of Cobham House are a group of cropmarks of unknown date, although some may represent medieval/post-medieval field boundaries, visible on aerial photographs. The site consists of a possible enclosure or ring ditch, the date of which is uncertain and several groups of pits and parallel linear features (NHER MNF41827).

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief was to monitor the development, including all areas of below-ground disturbance and report on any remains and artefacts encountered

The Brief required that all groundworks be archaeologically monitored.

Machine excavation was carried out with a hydraulic 360° excavator 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.

Due to the absence of suitable deposits environmental samples were not taken.

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.

Weather conditions during the monitoring were variable.

5.0 RESULTS

The results obtained during archaeological monitoring of the site are presented below under three headings; 5.1 The Orangery, 5.2 The Cottage and 5.3 The Garage.

5.1 The Orangery

Groundworks in this area involved the excavation of foundation trenches at the front of the house (Fig. 2, Plate 1).

Despite difficult working conditions (the soft ground necessitated having to excavate whilst pouring concrete in order to minimise collapses) it was possible to record the stratigraphy.



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Figure 2. Site plan. Scale 1:500

No archaeological features were visible.

The earliest deposit seen (3) was a dark brown gravelly sand, 0.30-0.40m deep, resting on natural deposits of sands, gravels and soliflucted chalk.

Above deposit (3) was layer (2), a 0.30m thick layer of mid brown gravelly sand.

The most recent deposit was the modern topsoil (1), a 0.30m thick layer of organic dark brown sand with occasional flint gravel.

Four sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the spoil, but it is unknown from which layer they originated.



Plate 1. Orangery foundations under excavation, facing west

5.2 The Cottage

Both the reduction of the surface to formation level and the digging of the strip foundations for the cottage were monitored (Fig. 2, Plate 2).

The ground reduction revealed natural chalk at a depth of 0.70m below modern ground level (bgl). The sequence was as follows - beneath 0.40m of topsoil (5) and 0.30m of subsoil (6) - a very dark brown sandy clay with occasional flint gravel and chalk flecks - was intermittent layer (7) comprising mid reddish brown sandy clay with frequent chalk flecks, moderate flint gravel, occasional ceramic building material (CBM) fragments and rare fragments of coal and pan tile along with iron nails. The southern part of the area (approximately two thirds) was not reduced to the level of the natural chalk.

The finds retrieved from this area dated from the prehistoric, Roman, medieval, post-medieval and modern periods.

The foundations at their western end cut into the area occupied by a pond.

A large filled hollow was noted within the footprint of the foundations, and was thought to have been a natural feature due to the absence of finds within its fill. It is interesting to note that recent evaluation of the field to the north and west of this plot (fieldwork was completed in the middle of October 2012) produced quarry pits situated close to this garden which yielded Saxo-Norman pottery (Lilly Hodges and Rachel Cruse pers comm).



Plate 2. Cottage foundations, facing south-west

5.3 The Garage

This area for the new garage had previously been disturbed and contained a large concrete raft which was the footings of a previous modern building on the site.

6.0 FINDS

by Rebecca Sillwood

Finds 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 ordered by context can be found in Appendix 2a.

6.1 Pottery

A total of eight fragments of pottery were recovered from the site; four are of Roman date, two medieval and two are modern. The pottery was unstratified or from topsoil and came from two separate areas of the site; the Orangery (4) (2 Roman and 2 medieval sherds) and the cottage area (5) (1 Roman sherd) and (8) (1 Roman and 2 modern sherds).

The Roman pottery is reasonably well preserved, and may not have moved far from its original place of deposition, although it is likely to be residual in the current contexts. The four pieces consist of one sherd (4) of buff fabric (showing the complete profile of a shallow bowl), a rim sherd (5) from an oxidised coarseware vessel, one hard-fired orange body sherd (4) and a small sooted body sherd (8).

The two medieval sherds (4) are both rim sherds of sandy greyware (one quite large).

The two modern pieces both came from topsoil (8). They consist of a complete vessel of white glazed fabric (probably a small ointment pot or similar) and a small base fragment of blue and white pottery.

6.2 Ceramic Building Material

A single fragment of probable medieval roof tile (66g) was recovered unstratified (8) from the site.

6.3 Clay Tobacco Pipe

A single fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem (2g) was recovered unstratified from the site (8). This piece is not more closely dateable than post-medieval, and has subsequently been discarded.

6.4 Flint

Two flint flakes were recovered unstratified from the site (5). One piece is a secondary flake, and one is a tertiary, completed uncorticated flake. These pieces are likely to be prehistoric in date.

6.5 Animal Bone

A single fragment of mammal rib was recovered unstratified from the site (5).

6.6 Finds Conclusions

The site produced material that was unstratified or from topsoil. There is clearly evidence for Roman and medieval presence here, along with limited amounts of evidence of prehistoric, medieval, and later activity.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The artefacts recovered during the monitoring, especially in the area of the new Orangery, suggest that this site occupies an area close to Roman and medieval activity.

It is likely that in the Roman period that this site would have been located on the bank of an inlet from the sea to the north, an inlet which may have given rise to the shape of the modern village, as the market place appears to occupy the lowest ground and may represent the former location of the inlet. The Norman church to the south of the development plot occupies part of this possible inlet, and so must have been reclaimed by the 12th century at the latest. Alternatively, due to the depth of material encountered under the Orangery, it is possible that this material was imported from elsewhere as part of the reclamation of this area of the village.

The modern pond in the cottage area, and the large pit spotted during the excavation of the foundation trenches may actually be remains of Saxo-Norman quarry pits similar to those recorded in the adjacent part of the field to the north and north-west of the development plot during recent archaeological evaluation (Lilly Hodges and Rachel Cruse pers comm). However it should be noted that no evidence of this date was encountered during this project.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mr and Mrs Adderley for funding the project and RCF Waite Ltd who commissioned it on their behalf.

The staff of Walker Construction Services Limited, especially the on-site foreman Steve Reeve, are thanked for their cooperation.

James Albone of Historic Environment Service supplied the brief and liaison with the LPA.

The author and Mick Boyle carried out the fieldwork.

The finds were processed, recorded and reported on by Rebecca Sillwood.

Thanks must also be given to Lilly Hodges and Rachel Cruse for the information they supplied about the evaluation in Foundary Field, to the north and north-west of this development site. This evaluation was undertaken after the fieldwork element of this project and the report is in preparation.

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

Bibliography and Sources

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Norfolk Records Office DN/TA 386

<http://www.old-maps.co.uk> Accessed 07/09/2012

Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period
1	Deposit			Topsoil Orangery area	Modern
2	Deposit			Subsoil Orangery area	Uncertain
3	Deposit			Subsoil Orangery area	Uncertain
4	U/S Finds			Unstratified finds from Orangery area	-
5	Deposit			Topsoil cottage area	Modern
6	Deposit			Subsoil cottage area	Uncertain
7	Deposit			Subsoil cottage area	Uncertain
8	U/S Finds			Unstratified finds from cottage area	-
-	Cut	Pit		Thought to have been a natural feature during fieldwork, but similar features were recently discovered relatively close by in the adjacent field	Uncertain

Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

Period	Category	Total
Uncertain	Pit	1

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
4	Pottery	2	44g	Roman	
4	Pottery	2	126g	Medieval	
5	Animal Bone	1	9g	Unknown	
5	Flint – Struck	2	6g	Prehistoric	
5	Pottery	1	29g	Roman	
8	Ceramic Building Material	1	66g	Medieval	
8	Clay Pipe	1	2g	Post-medieval	Stem; DISCARDED
8	Pottery	2	36g	Modern	
8	Pottery	1	3g	Roman	

Appendix 2b: Oasis Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Prehistoric	Flint – Struck	2
Roman	Pottery	4
Medieval	Pottery	2
	Ceramic Building Material	1
Post-medieval	Clay Pipe	1
Modern	Pottery	2
Uncertain	Animal Bone	1