

Report 2013/1316



nps archaeology

**Archaeological Watching Brief at
Merchant's House, Gapton Hall,
Great Yarmouth, Norfolk**

ENF130617

Prepared for
Oaasis Group Limited
Merchants House
Gapton Hall Road
Great Yarmouth
Norfolk
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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	3
5.0 Results.....	7
6.0 Conclusions	10
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	13
<i>Bibliography and Sources</i>	13
Appendix 1a: Context Summary	14
Appendix 1b: OASIS Context Summary	14
Appendix 3: OASIS Report Summary	15

Figures

- Figure 1 Site location
- Figure 2 Trench location
- Figure 3 Plan of Trenches 1-3 and section 1
- Figure 4 Modern Ordnance Survey mapping superimposed over the 1946 aerial photograph showing Gapton Hall

Plates

- Plate 1 Trench 1
- Plate 2 Trench 2
- Plate 3 Trench 3
- Plate 4 'Cap' stone removed from the top of the wall recorded in Trench 3

Location:	Merchants House, Gapton Hall Road, Bradwell, Norfolk
District:	Great Yarmouth
Planning Ref.:	06/12/0660/F
Grid Ref.:	TG 5111 0579
HER No.:	ENF130617
OASIS Ref.:	145370
Client:	Oaasis Group Limited
Dates of Fieldwork:	11–14 January 2013

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Oaasis Group Limited to monitor groundworks for the proposed construction of an extension to a warehouse at Gapton Hall Road, Bradwell, Great Yarmouth in Norfolk.

One 19th-century wall was recorded, which may be archaeological evidence for the location of Gapton Hall itself.

Despite the foundation trenches for the new build being quite deep, no other archaeological features or artefacts were encountered during these works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The development site is located adjacent to the northern part of the existing warehouse of Merchant's House at Gapton Hall Road, Bradwell Great Yarmouth, Norfolk.

Foundation trenches and square foundation pads for the proposed warehouse extension were excavated by a tracked 360° excavator.

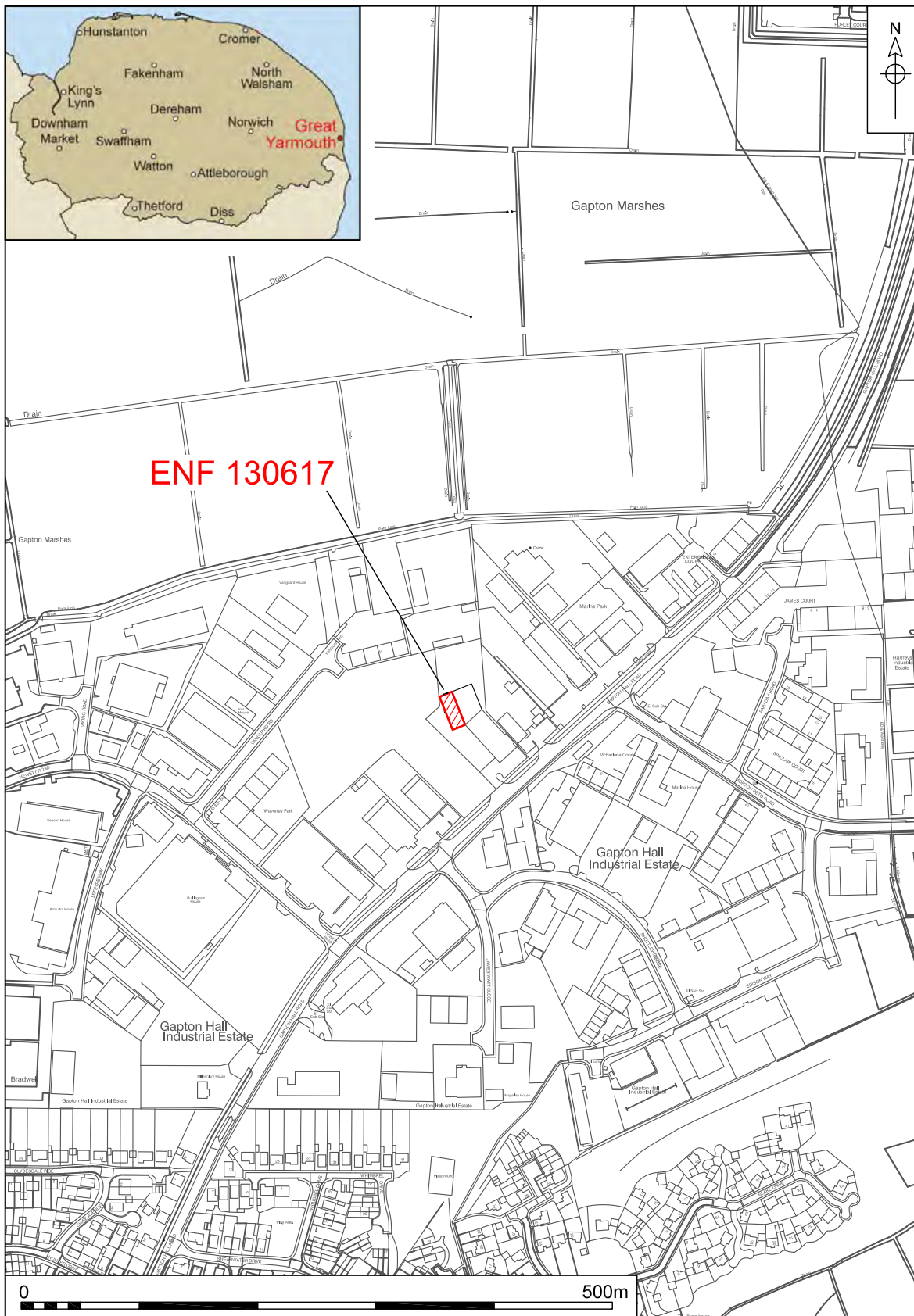
This work was undertaken to fulfil planning requirements set by Great Yarmouth Borough Council (06/12/0660/F). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (01-04-13-2-1316/DW). This work was commissioned by and funded by Oaasis Group Limited.

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.

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

Gapton Hall Industrial Estate is located in an area where the bedrock is Crag (sand and gravel) with superficial deposits of sand forming the Happisburgh Glacigenic Formation (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

The site is located on the south-eastern side of Gapton Marshes, west of the River Yare and south of Breydon Water (Fig. 1). The site lies at an elevation of approximately 10m OD.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A search of data held by Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) for a 1k radius around the development site was made and the results are summarised below.

The area around Gapton Hall in Great Yarmouth is one with a rich archaeological and historic background however the NHER has no record for Gapton Hall itself. It may have been a large farmhouse with associated buildings – aerial photography provides a little information about the site (www.historic-maps.norfolk.co.uk). A 1946 aerial photograph shows this building and it appears that the development site lies directly on the site of the former Gapton Hall. This building does not appear on later aerial photographs taken in 1988 indicating that Gapton Hall was demolished sometime between these two dates.

Other relevant entries in the NHER include records of metal-detected finds in the immediate area. An Iron Age coin hoard (NHER 29277) was recovered the south of the current site, towards the Bradwell end of Gapton Hall Road. Further metal detected finds have been recorded to the north-east and the south-west of the current site, a late Saxon openwork strap end showing a standing human figure with breasts and wings (NHER 18861) and a medieval buckle (NHER 25006). Perhaps the most interesting metal object is a medieval pendant that was found during metal detecting in 1984 (NHER 20599). It is described as a ‘crescentic pendant with lys between the arms’. It was found on a disused piece of land adjacent to the current site on the north-western side.

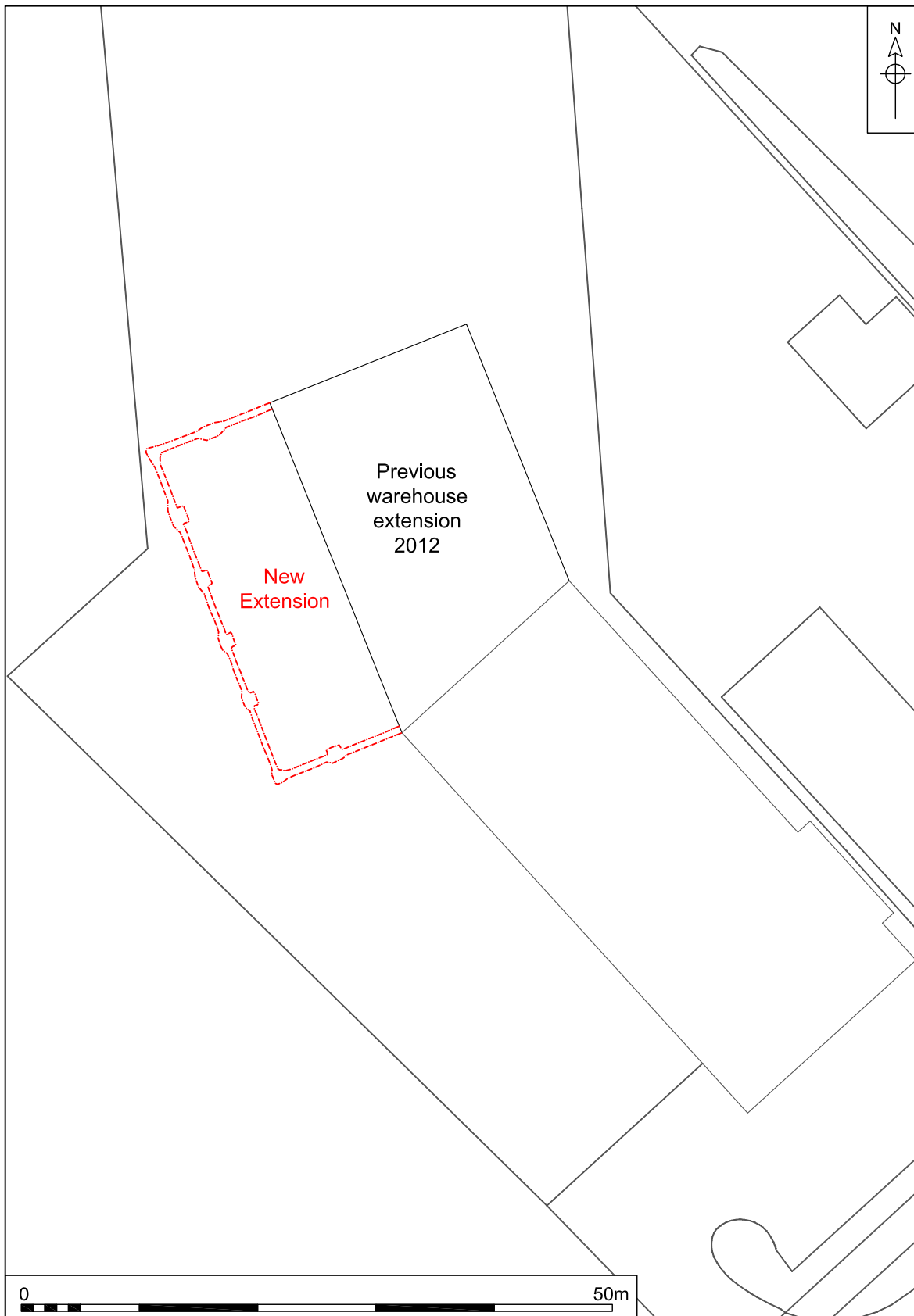
Linear and curvilinear cropmarks (NHER42363) that are still visible today, can be seen on aerial photographs of the same plot of land as the site of NHER 20599. These features could represent drains of probable post-medieval date, but they could equally be a product of modern agricultural activity.

A watching brief was carried out by NPS Archaeology on a site a little further along Gapton Hall Road (NHER55057) to the south of the current site in 2010. The results were negative, no archaeological features or finds encountered. (Ames 2010).

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief 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.

Foundation trenches for the proposed warehouse extension were excavated by a tracked 360° excavator. The foundation trenches measured 11.40m (Trenches 1 and 3, orientated north-east to south-west) and 31.60m (Trench 2 orientated north-west to south-east) and were 0.70m wide, apart from where there is to be square foundation pads where the trenches increased to approximately 1.25m wide (Fig. 2).



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Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:500

The Project Design required that all groundworks at the site be monitored by an archaeologist.

Machine excavation was carried out with a tracked hydraulic 360° excavator equipped with a toothed 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 encountered.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NPS Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Colour digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits where appropriate.

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

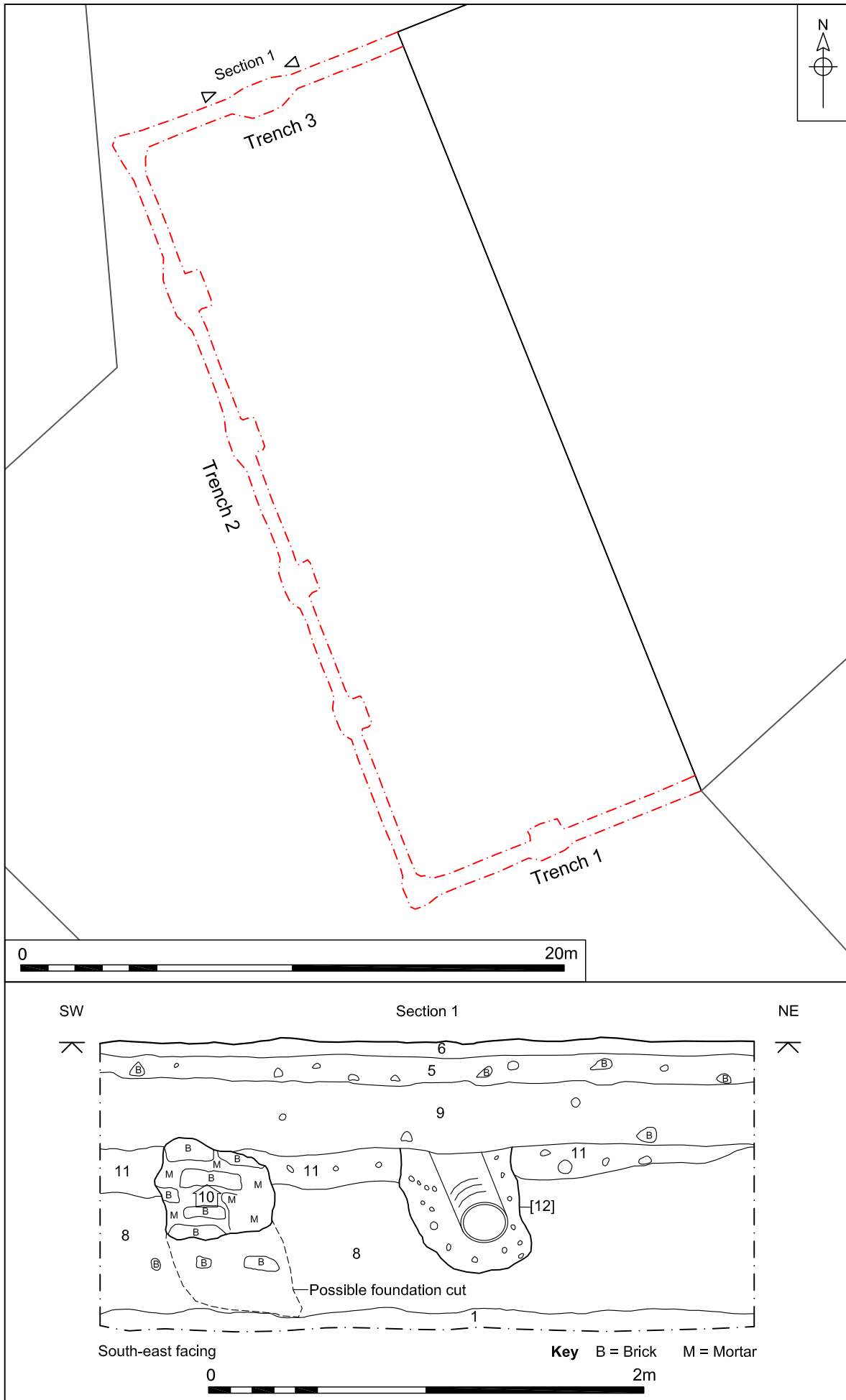



Figure 3. Plan of Trenches 1 - 3 and section 1. Scale 1:200 and 1:25

5.0 RESULTS

Trench 1				
 <p>Plate 1. Trench 1</p>		Fig. 3; Plate 1		
		Location		
		Orientation	North-east to south-west	
		Dimensions		
		Length	11.4m	
		Width	0.70m	
	Depth	2.05m		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
(01)	Deposit	Pale yellow sand, clean with no variations - natural	--	2.05m+
(02)	Deposit	Layer of mid-dark brown silty sand, fine homogeneous particles with no variations and occasional small flint nodules.	0.45m	1.60-2.05m
(03)	Deposit	Bright orange sand, coarse	0.85m	0.75-1.60m
(04)	Deposit	Layer of light-brown silty-sand with at least one large concrete inclusion, smears of red-brick and occasional flint nodules	0.33m	0.42-0.75m
(05)	Deposit	Pink-orange layer of brick dust, red brick rubble and mortar pieces	0.32m	0.10-0.42m
(06)	Deposit	Layer of concrete - existing yard surface	0.10m	0.00-0.10m
Discussion				
Deposit (02) may represent a buried topsoil/subsoil layer that has been buried by various demolition and construction phases resulting in several modern make-up layers.				
No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were encountered.				

Trench 2



Plate 2. Trench 2

Fig. 3; Plate 2

Location

Orientation North-west to south-east

Dimensions

Length 31.60m

Width 0.70m


Depth 1.48m

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
(01)	Deposit	Pale yellow sand, clean with no variations - natural	--	1.35m+
(05)	Deposit	Pink-orange layer of brick-dust, red-brick rubble and mortar pieces	0.21m	0.07-0.28m
(06)	Deposit	Layer of concrete - existing yard surface	0.07m	0.00-0.0.07m
(07)	Deposit	Layer of blackish-grey, ashy burnt material. Large mixed particles including small stones, burnt pieces of wood and pieces of red brick.	0.14m	1.21-1.35m
(08)	Deposit	Layer of mid-dark brown silty sand, fine, homogeneous with occasional small flint nodules.	0.39m	0.82-1.21m
(09)	Deposit	Pale yellow-orange sand with frequent pieces of red brick, small stones and occasional pale yellow sandy patches.	0.54m	0.28-0.82m

Discussion

Deposit (08), while seemingly similar to layer (02) in Trenches 1 and 3, cannot represent a buried topsoil/subsoil due to the layer of burnt material (07) underneath it. It is unclear whether layer (07) represents the burning of a structure (which is probable because of the wood and brick inclusions) or the burning of field stubble (common practice in this area until recent times). Furthermore it is unclear whether this burning is *in situ* or a dump of material from elsewhere. The latter is the most likely explanation as there is no evidence of heat transfer to the deposit (natural) below. Deposit (07) like the other deposits appears to be modern because of the red-brick inclusions.

No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were encountered.

Trench 3				
 <p>Plate 3. Trench 3</p>			Fig. 3, section 1; Plates 3 and 4	
			Location	
			Orientation	North-east to south-west
			Dimensions	
			Length	11.40m
Width	0.70m			
Depth	1.30m			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
(01)	Deposit	Pale yellow sand, clean with no variations - natural	--	2.27m+
(02)	Deposit	Layer of mid-dark brown silty sand, fine, homogenous with occasional small flint nodules.	0.60m	1.67-2.27m
(05)	Deposit	Pink-orange layer of brick-dust, red brick rubble and mortar pieces	0.12m	0.07-0.19m
(06)	Deposit	Layer of concrete - existing yard surface	0.07m	0.00-0.07m
(09)	Deposit	Pale yellow-orange sand, frequent pieces of red brick, small stones and occasional pale yellow sandy patches.	0.34m	0.19-0.53m
[10]	Masonry	Small red brick and mortar wall with cap.	0.48m	0.69-1.17m
(11)	Deposit	Layer of dark greyish-brown sandy-silt, firm compaction, frequent small flint and red-brick pieces.	0.16m	0.53-0.69m
[12]	Cut	Cut of modern drain	0.50m	1.17-1.67m
Discussion				
<p>Small wall [10] is visible in section (Fig. 3, Section 1). It runs on a north-west to south-east alignment but its length is unknown. It does not appear in Trench 1, parallel to Trench 3 some 30m away to the south-east. A thin, rounded 'cap' stone was seen in the spoil from the excavated trench (Plate 4), so it could be argued that this small wall represents perhaps a yard or garden boundary, rather than the remains of a building. A possible (unclear) foundation cut could be seen in section (Section 1). The appearance of the bricks suggests the wall is certainly post-medieval in date and possibly early 19th century.</p> <p>One modern drain [12] was also seen in section.</p> <p>No archaeological artefacts were encountered.</p>				

Trench 3



Plate 4. 'Cap' stone removed from the top of the wall recorded in Trench 3

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The results from the fieldwork monitoring undertaken during groundworks at Gapton Hall produced evidence of one small 'garden-like' wall in Trench 3 and burnt deposits in Trench 2.

Trenches 1 and 2 were archaeologically sterile, the foundation trenches only disturbing what appear to have been numerous make-up layers on the site from earlier phases of construction in recent times. However the evidence uncovered from some further research has shed some light on the possible identification of the small wall and the possible location of Gapton Hall itself.

None of the structure of Gapton Hall (the building from which the Industrial and Retail Park takes its name) has survived, and no mention seems to appear in the historical records reviewed to produce this report. Furthermore no evidence of it has appeared in previous excavations in the area. However, the structure itself is clearly visible on early maps dating from 1886 and aerial photography taken in 1946. Gapton Hall from the air appears to have comprised of a large house and associated out-buildings, enclosing a central yard. When the aerial photography is superimposed onto modern Ordnance Survey maps it becomes clear that these buildings were located either on or immediately to the north of the current development site (Fig. 4). There is a strong possibility that the small wall recorded in Trench 3 actually formed part of this building complex, and if this is so, it forms the first physical archaeological evidence recorded of Gapton Hall.



Figure 4. Modern Ordnance Survey mapping superimposed over the 1946 aerial photograph showing Gapton Hall

Metal-detected finds that have been recorded in the immediate vicinity of the current site suggest that the original settlement around Gapton Hall is at least of medieval date (James Albone pers. comm.). It is clear from the aerial photographic record that Gapton Hall was demolished sometime between 1946 and 1988.

The shape and size of the bricks forming wall [10] in Trench 3 appear to be of early 19th-century date (at the earliest) indicating that at least some of the structures surrounding the old hall were later additions.

Acknowledgements

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

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www.historic-maps.norfolk.co.uk Accessed 17.01.2013

Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period	Trench
01	Deposit			Natural sand	--	1 2 3
02	Deposit			Silty sand	Modern	1 3
03	Deposit			Sand	Modern	1
04	Deposit			Silty sand with brick and concrete	Modern	1
05	Deposit			Brick dust and rubble	Modern	1 2 3
06	Deposit			Concrete	Modern	1 2 3
07	Deposit			Burnt material	Modern	2
08	Deposit			Silty sand	Modern	2
09	Deposit			Sand with brick	Modern	2 3
10	Masonry			Wall – red brick with stone capping	Post-medieval	3
11	Deposit			Sandy silt	Modern	3
12	Cut	Drain		Drain trench	Modern	3

Appendix 1b: OASIS Context Summary

Period	Category	Number
Post-medieval	Wall	
Modern	Drain	1

Appendix 3: OASIS Report Summary

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Project details

Project name	Archaeological Watching Brief at Merchant's House, Gapton Hall, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Oaasis Group Limited to monitor groundworks for the proposed construction of an extension to a warehouse at Gapton Hall Road, Bradwell, Great Yarmouth in Norfolk. One 19th-century wall was recorded, which may be archaeological evidence for the location of Gapton Hall itself. Despite the foundation trenches for the new build being quite deep, no other archaeological features or artefacts were encountered during these works.
Project dates	Start: 11-01-2013 End: 14-01-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	ENF130617 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK GREAT YARMOUTH BRADWELL Merchants House, Gapton Hall
Study area	360.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TG 5111 0579 52 1 52 35 28 N 001 42 28 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	NPS Archaeology
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Project brief originator	NPS Archaeology
Project design originator	NPS Archaeology
Project director/manager	David Whitmore
Project supervisor	Michelle Bull
Type of sponsor/funding body	Distribution
Name of sponsor/funding body	Oaasis Group Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	NPS Archaeology
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Images vector","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

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OASIS:

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