

Report 2013/1208



nps archaeology

**Archaeological Watching Brief at  
Sussex House, Sussex Street, Norwich**

ENF130892



**Prepared for**  
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Location:	Sussex House, Sussex Street, Norwich
District:	Norwich
Grid Ref.:	TG 2274 0955
HER No.:	ENF130892
OASIS Ref.:	149417
Client:	Cripps Developments Ltd.
Dates of Fieldwork:	26-28 September 2012

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Cripps Developments Ltd. during groundworks associated with the construction of a residential development on the site of the former Sussex House in Norwich.*

*No archaeological features or artefacts were present. It seems likely that the construction of Sussex House has heavily truncated the land surface in this area.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Archaeological monitoring was required on groundworks associated with the construction of an estate of small houses on the site of the former Sussex House, due to its location just within the medieval city walls of Norwich (Fig. 1).

This work was undertaken to fulfil planning requirements set by Norwich City Council advised by the Norfolk Historic Environment Service. The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (01-04-13-2-1208). This work was commissioned and funded by Cripps Developments Ltd.

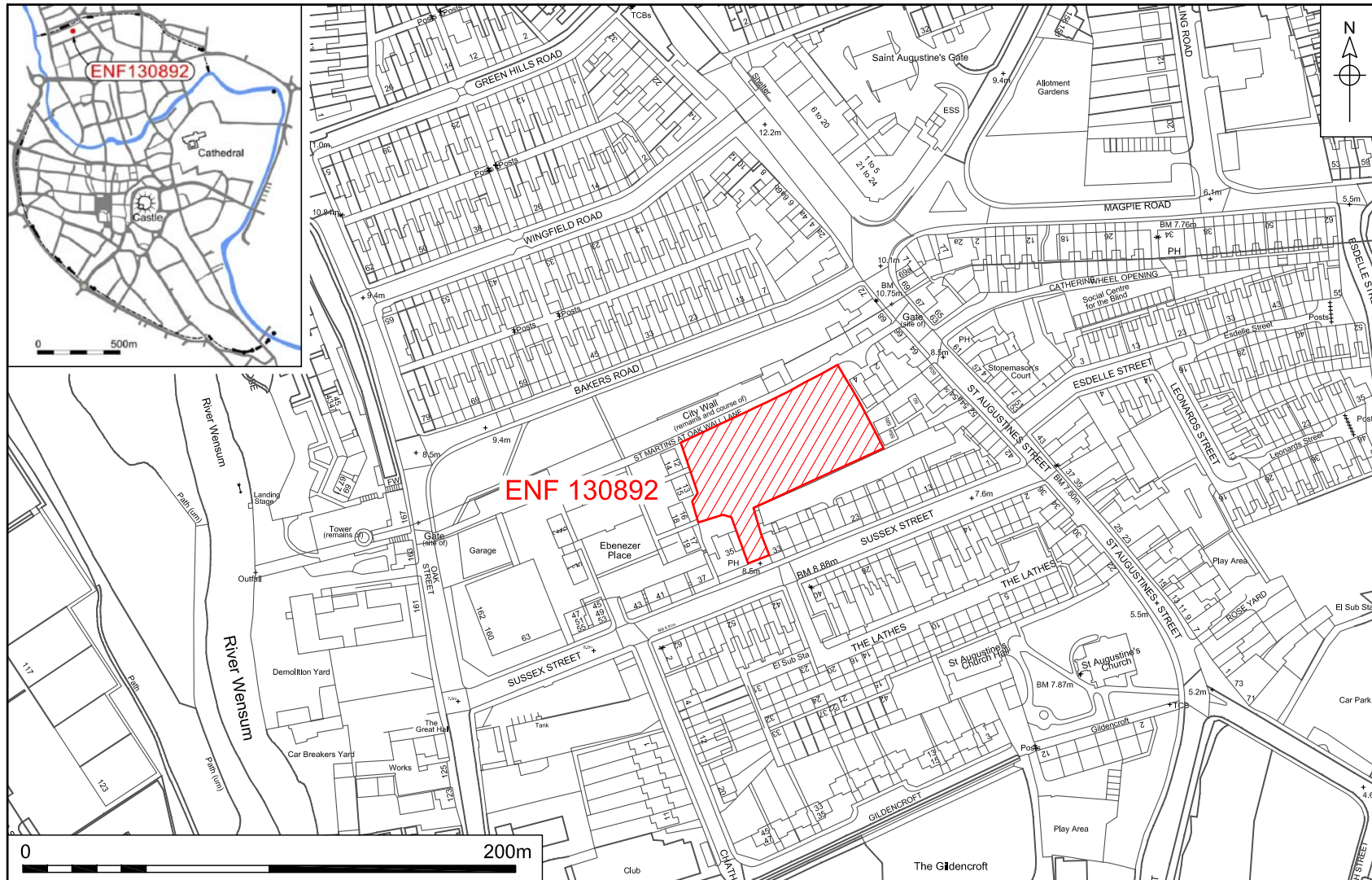
This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012). The results will enable 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 site lies on sands and gravels which are Quaternary river terrace deposits above Cretaceous Chalk formations (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>) at a height of c.9m OD.

The site lies within the northern part of the medieval core of Norwich, on ground which slopes gently to the south and west down towards the River Wensum. There is an artificial terrace between the site and the houses fronting onto Sussex Street.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

A desk-based assessment for this site was produced in 2008 (Hickling 2008) and the information gathered at that time is still relevant. The conclusion from that report is replicated below:

There is no evidence for activity in this area of Norwich until the Roman period; chance finds of pottery, a coin and a lamp in the area of St Augustine's Street and Botolph Street suggest some form of Roman settlement close-by. The presence of the Eade Road Early Saxon cemetery suggests that this settlement continued into the Anglo-Saxon period. Norwich developed into a major town during the Late Saxon period, but the study area lies outside the defended area of the town. Activity here in the Late Saxon period probably remained agricultural.

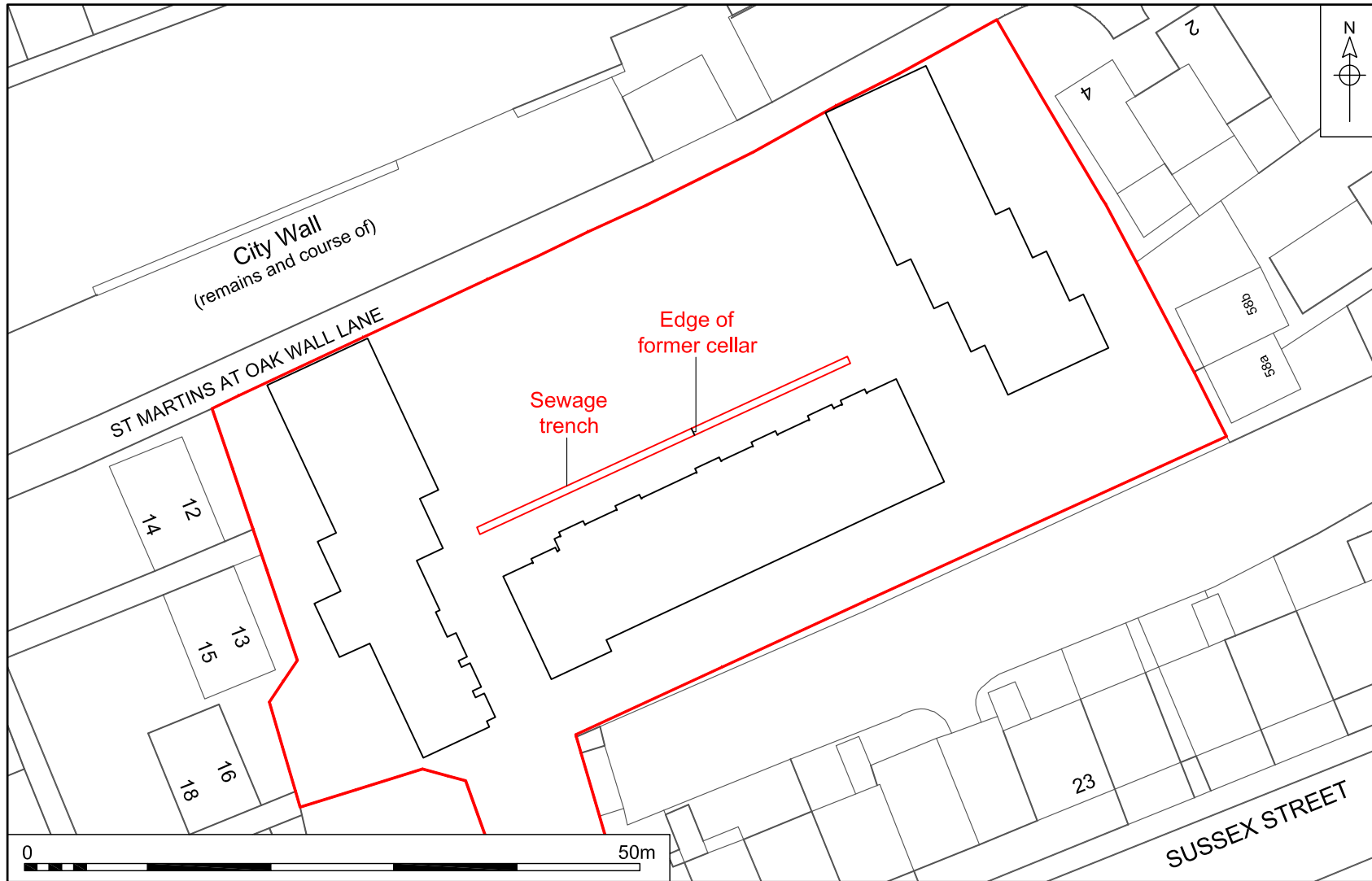
The proposed development area was enclosed within the new city walls during the late 13th to early 14th centuries, but remained part of an intra-mural open-space known as the Gildencroft. Place-name evidence suggests that this was open land belonging to one of the city guilds. Further place-name and cartographic evidence suggests that this area may have been used for military exercises and entertainment. This part of the Gildencroft was developed in the 1820s, with Sussex Street being laid out and the red-brick terraces built at its eastern end. During this period the proposed development area became a yard with sheds, possibly workshops. By the early 20th century a shoe factory had been constructed within the same footprint as the present Sussex House.

Previous archaeological work in the vicinity of the study area suggests that any archaeological remains present within the study area will be sealed beneath a layer of agricultural/horticultural soils 0.8–0.9m deep. Further archaeological investigations in this area could cast important light upon the pre-urban development of this area, especially with regard to the Roman and Early Saxon periods, where we only have tantalising glimpses of activity. The Roman finds must be the result of some kind of Roman settlement in the locality and the Eade Road Saxon cemetery must have served a local settlement yet to be found.

There is a possibility that two interesting medieval or post-medieval features may be present within the proposed development area: the Poor House and the mound labelled 'Tut Hill' shown on Blomefield's map of 1746. Any further information as to their form, function and date would be a valuable addition to our knowledge of the historical development and land-use of this part of Norwich.

### **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

The objective of this watching brief was to record remains that may be encountered during groundworks associated with the development scheme (Fig. 2).



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Figure 2. Location of sewer trench. Scale 1:500



The Project Design required that 'Any ground disturbance related to the construction of new drainage trenches will be monitored by an experienced archaeologist'.

Machine excavation was carried out with a hydraulic 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.

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.

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

## **5.0 RESULTS**

Only the main east-west sewage trench across the site was monitored; there was at least 1.5m of overburden over the whole site, originating from the demolition of Sussex House.

The east-west sewage trench measured 1.9m deep and 0.5m wide at the base. Due to the loose nature of the overburden, the trench was considerably wide at the surface.

These deposits observed in this trench consisted of natural sands and gravels at a depth of 1.5m below ground level (bgl) and above that, loose layers of soil, sand, gravel and particularly rubble were apparent (Plate 1). All of this material had been dumped after the demolition of Sussex House and the site appeared to have been levelled. The significant depth of these extremely modern deposits (1.5m) meant that all other groundworks would not penetrate below them and so would not require monitoring.

At a point 15m from the east end of the trench, the natural sands and gravels disappeared to be replaced by mixed rubble deposits similar to those already encountered, and including large lumps of concrete rubble. Information from the contractors on site would suggest that this was where there a cellar for the former Sussex House was located.



Plate 1. The sewage trench facing east (the machine bucket is at the western end of the cellar)

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Sussex Street was laid out in the 1820s and Sussex House was located on the footprint of a former shoe factory in the 20th century.

No archaeological features or artefacts were present in the sewage trench monitored at the site.

It seems likely that construction of Sussex House had heavily truncated the land surface here - it was notable that the level at which the natural sands and gravels appeared was below the level that it ought to have been, when compared with other fieldwork in this area.



**Appendix 1: OASIS Report Summary**

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**OASIS ID: norfolka1-149417**

### Project details

Project name	Sussex House, Sussex Street, Norwich
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Cripps Developments Ltd. during groundworks associated with the construction of a residential development on the site of the former Sussex House n Norwich. No archaeological features or artefacts were present. It seems likely that the construction of Sussex House has heavily truncated the land surface in this area.
Project dates	Start: 26-08-2012 End: 28-08-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	ENF130892 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK NORWICH NORWICH Sussex House, Sussex Street
Study area	30.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TG 2274 0955 52 1 52 38 14 N 001 17 32 E Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	NPS Archaeology
Project brief originator	Norfolk Historic Environment Service

Project design originator	NPS Archaeology
Project director/manager	David Whitmore
Project supervisor	Steve Hickling
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Cripps Developments 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 Exists?	No

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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## OASIS:

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