

Report 2013/1158



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## Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation at Grange Farm, Filby, Norfolk

ENF 132084



Prepared for  
Alan Irvine



Peter Eric Crawley BA, AIfA

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Location:	Grange Farm, Main Road, Filby, Norfolk
District:	Great Yarmouth
Grid Ref.:	TG 4757 1329
Planning Ref.:	Pre-planning
HER No.:	ENF 132084
OASIS Ref.:	153337
Client:	Alan Irvine
Dates of Fieldwork:	10-11 July 2013

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological trial trench evaluation was conducted for Alan Irvine ahead of submission of a planning application for proposed new housing at Grange Farm, Filby in Norfolk.*

*Three 30m-long trenches were successfully opened to sample the archaeological potential of part of the site in order to characterise the extent and type of archaeology present.*

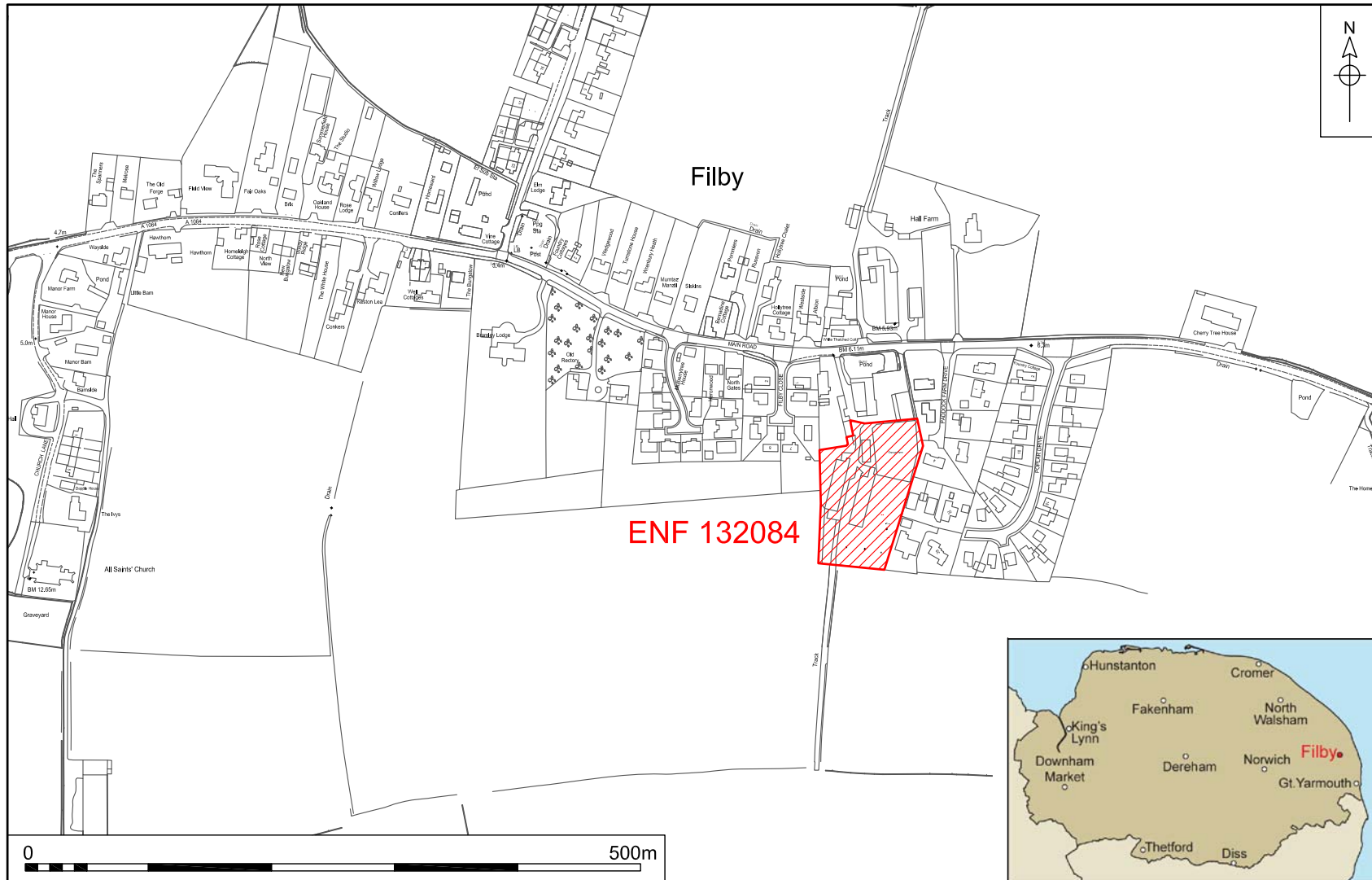
*A single shallow and slightly irregular ditch was observed within Trench 2. As it was orientated on a different alignment to the modern landscape features, was sealed by subsoil and contained a fragment of burnt flint, it was interpreted as a feature of probable prehistoric or Roman date and as such could have been associated with cropmarks observed further to the south of the development site.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The evaluation was initially designed to consist of four trial trenches, to be undertaken in advance of proposed new housing at Grange Farm, towards the centre of the village of Filby (Fig. 1). The four trenches were reduced to three (with the agreement of NHES) as the northern part of the field is currently leased to a tenant who is grazing horses there. The development land was situated adjacent to Grange Farm and is known to lie in an area of plentiful cropmarks, thought to represent Roman and/or prehistoric field systems with other cropmarks of note, such as Bronze Age barrows, located around the area.

This work was undertaken prior to submission of a planning application to Great Yarmouth District Council. The work was undertaken in line with NHES guidance and conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (01-04-14-02-1158/DW). It was commissioned and funded by Alan Irvine.

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 County Council, following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

## **2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site of the proposed new dwellings is in a small field situated to the south and east of farm buildings belonging to Grange Farm. Immediately to the east are houses and gardens. The small field appeared to have been scrub or pasture. The area was reasonably flat and located around 16m above sea level. The Filby and Ormesby Broads lie around 1km to the west of the village of Filby and the River Bure runs from west to east around 3km to the south.

The deeper, underlying solid geology consists of Cretaceous Upper Chalk (BGS 1985) which is surmounted by Anglian Till deposits extending westwards from the coast to the flood plain of the River Bure (Watkins 2010). Specifically for the area of the development they consist of the Lowestoft Till Formation and sandy clay Till of the Corton Formation (BGS 1992)

Where the natural substratum was observed it consisted of a mix of chalky sandy clays. The site appeared to be well drained in spite of its clayey nature, due to the efforts made locally to drain the land and treat it with field drains. The site specific topsoil was very compact dark brown clayey silt and the subsoil was a mid orangey brown clayey silt.

## **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

An HER search was requested from Norfolk Historic Environment Service prior to the start of the project and that information forms the basis of this historical background.

There are several areas of archaeologically significant cropmarks recorded in the vicinity of the site, which generally lie to the south. National Mapping Project (NMP) work by NHES has further characterised these cropmarks which notably includes a ring-ditch of probable Bronze Age date (NHER 27684), lying approximately 500m to the south-west of the site, a trapezoidal enclosure of possible Roman date (NHER 27689) and an incomplete rectangular enclosure of probable medieval or post-medieval date (NHER 27683) also to the south. There are also entries which refer to multi-period enclosures and field boundaries to the south of the site (NHER 27683, 27686, 27688, 27689, 27702, 27685 and 27648). At the present time many of these boundaries are impossible to date with any accuracy, although as many of them do not follow the same pattern as present day landscape features they are likely to be pre-medieval in date.

Fieldwalking and metal-detecting in the vicinity of the above-mentioned cropmarks has indicated that many of them may signal the presence of prehistoric or Roman features. A large proportion of the finds found to the south of the present site have been quantities of struck flint (NHER 16336 and 37425), although it is thought that Iron Age coins (NHER 31050) have also been found in the vicinity. Roman artefacts have been found during fieldwalking and metal detecting, including a coin (NHER 37425) plus further coins with a gold ring (NHER 16336 and 33348). One kilometre south of the present site an Early Saxon brooch (NHER3 1050) was

found and reasonably close to it a Middle Saxon hooked tag and Late Saxon pottery (NHER 16336 and 33348).

Previous evaluations by NAU Archaeology (now NPS Archaeology) in the vicinity by Watkins (2010) and the current author (2009) respectively revealed a largely empty area and several features of possible prehistoric date. Evidence from the latter site also suggested that many of the extensive cropmarks in the area were the result of sub-surface archaeological features.

The early modern cartographic sources for the area indicate that there are few other features of note, although a WWII-era hide (NHER 28935) is known to have existed in a copse to the south of the site.

## **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.

Around 5% of the area was to be sample excavated with the use of four 30m by 1.80m sized trenches. The fourth trench was located at the northern end of the area and at the time of the trenching was leased to an individual who was keeping horses on it. It was therefore not possible to open Trench 4 and permission was sought and gained from NHES to remove this trench from the project.

Machine excavation was carried out with a 13 tonne tracked 360° excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket and operated under constant archaeological supervision. The machine was supplied by the landowners Wharton Farms.

Environmental samples were not taken, due to the shallow nature of the only feature (ditch [3]) and the absence of suitable deposits.

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

The trenches were positioned by Adam Harper of the NPS Land Survey team using a GPS Rover device. Accurate heights above sea level were provided at either end of the evaluation trenches through the use of the GPS Rover device and these were used as temporary benchmarks during the course of the fieldwork.

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



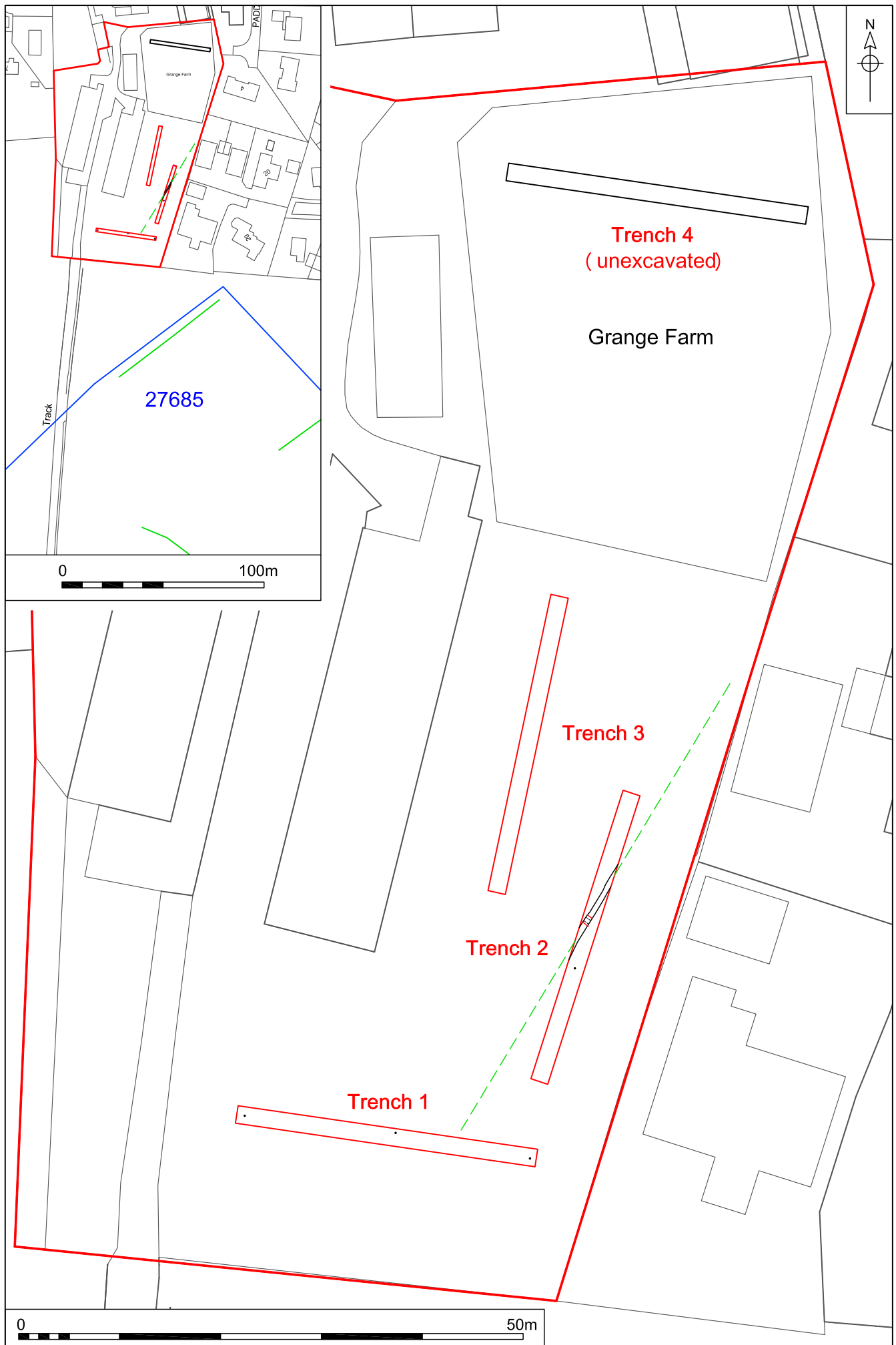



Figure 2. Location of trenches, scale 1:500. Inset showing location of NMP cropland 27685, scale 1:2500

## 5.0 RESULTS

Trench 1				
 <p>Plate 1. Trench 1, looking east</p>		<b>Fig. 2 (location); Plate 1</b>		
		<b>Location</b>		
		Orientation	East to west	
		East end	647546 313244	
		West end	647576 313240	
		<b>Dimensions</b>		
		Length	30.00m	
		Width	1.80m	
		Depth	0.60m	
		<b>Levels</b>		
East top	08.00m OD			
West top	07.90mOD			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>	<b>Thickness</b>	<b>Depth BGL</b>
1	Deposit	Topsoil. Very Compact dark brown clayey silt	0.15m	0.00-0.15m
2	Deposit	Subsoil. Mid orangey brown clayey silt	0.45m	0.15-0.60m
5	Deposit	Natural Substratum. Orange brown sandy clay	--	0.60m+
<b>Discussion</b>				
There were no archaeological features observed or finds recovered from Trench 1.				

## Trench 2



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking north

### Figs 2 (location) and 3; Plates 2, 3 and 4

#### Location

Orientation	North to south
North end	647585 313276
South end	647576 313248

#### Dimensions

Length	30.00m
Width	1.80m
Depth	0.45m

#### Levels

North top	07.33m OD
South top	07.55mOD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
1	Deposit	Topsoil. Very compact dark brown clayey silt	0.30m	0.00-0.30m
2	Deposit	Subsoil. Mid orangey brown clayey silt	0.15m	0.30-0.45m
3	Cut	Ditch	0.15m	0.45-0.60m
4	Deposit	Fill of [03]	0.15m	0.45-0.60m
5	Deposit	Natural Substratum. Orange brown sandy clay	--	0.45m+

#### Discussion

A single ditch ([3]) was located within Trench 2.

Ditch [3] was orientated on a north-east to south-west axis and extended beyond the limits of the evaluation trench. It was at least 10.50m long and had a maximum width of 0.65m with a slightly irregular shape (Plate 4). The depth was 0.15m and the feature was sealed by subsoil [2]. The sides and base were rounded and there was a single fill ([4]) present which consisted of mid orangey grey sandy clay which had probably built up slowly through natural accumulation.

Just below the turf a very recently laid surface of concrete and paving on a layer of Terram sheeting was present. No context number was allocated to this layer.



## Trench 2



Plate 3. Trench 2, sample section through layers [1] and [2], looking east



Plate 4. Trench 2, ditch [3], looking south west

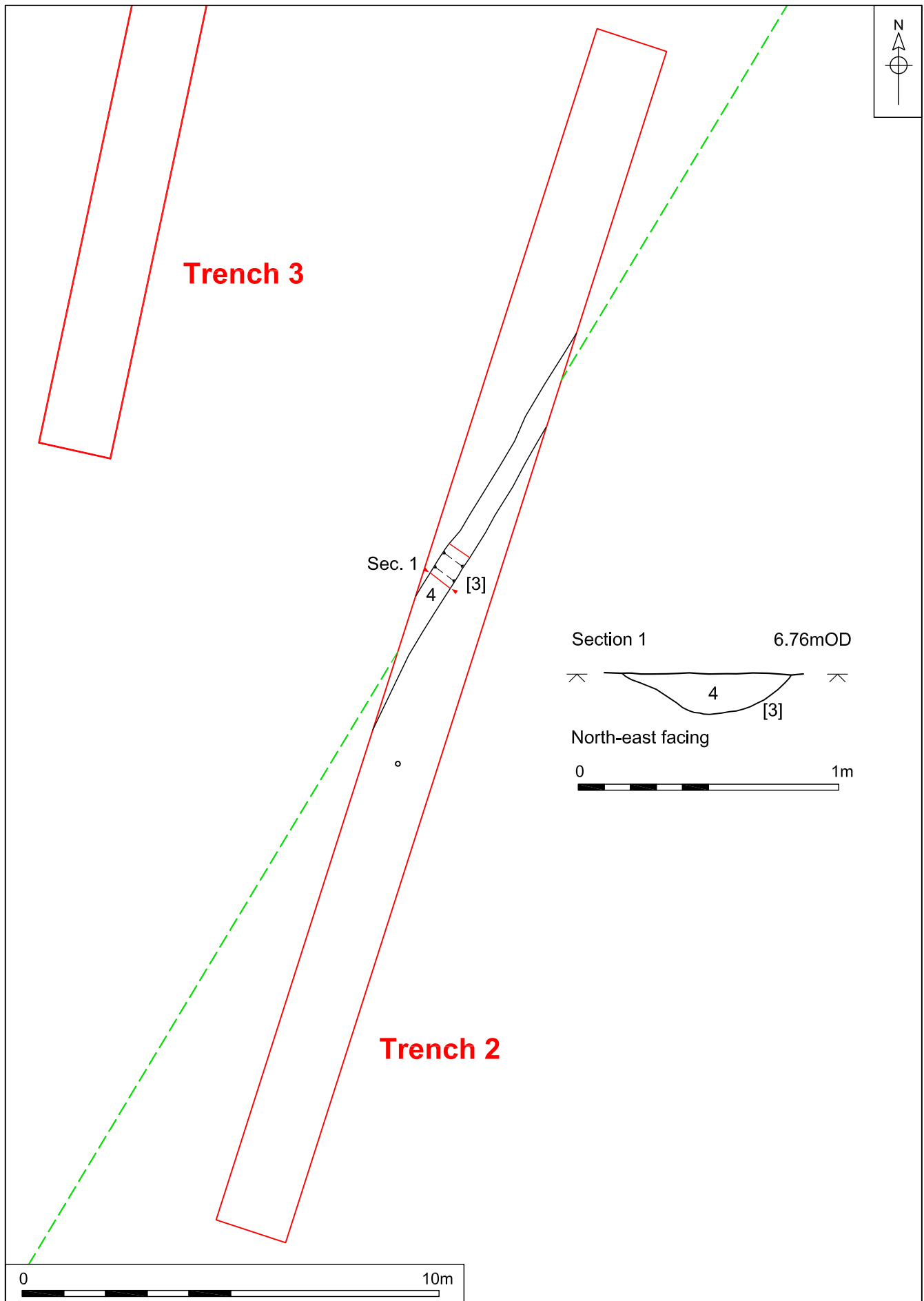


Figure 3. Trench 2, plan and section. Scale 1:125 and 1:20

## Trench 3



Plate 5. Trench 3, looking north

### Fig 2 (location); Plate 5

#### Location

Orientation	North to south
North end	647578 313296
South end	647572 313267

#### Dimensions

Length	30.00m
Width	1.80m
Depth	0.60m

#### Levels

North top	07.40m OD
South top	07.42mOD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
1	Deposit	Topsoil. Very Compact dark brown clayey silt	0.26m	0.00-0.26m
2	Deposit	Subsoil. Mid orangey brown clayey silt	0.34m	0.26-0.60m
5	Deposit	Natural Substratum. Orange brown sandy clay	--	0.60m+

#### Discussion

There were no archaeological features observed or finds recovered from Trench 3.

## **6.0 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL**

by Rebecca Sillwood

Only one find was recovered from the site, a single piece of burnt flint (8g), which was recovered from ditch [3] (fill [4]) in Trench 2.

Flint was sometimes heated to enable the fast boiling of liquids, in the prehistoric period but also later. This process caused the characteristic cracked effect visible on this piece.

No further evidence can be gleaned from this piece, and it has been discarded.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The site was located reasonably close to the centre of the village of Filby, and as such presented an opportunity to investigate an area that may contain evidence pertinent to the historical development of the village.

The results obtained during this trial trench evaluation were sparse and only a single irregular shallow ditch ([3]) was located (within Trench 2) although this feature is itself of interest. The orientation of the ditch (north-east to south-west) suggested that it was of a reasonably early date as modern land-use patterns generally describe a different alignment i.e. a more east-west and north-south orientation. The ditch was sealed by a layer of subsoil and the recovery of a small fragment of burnt flint, though it could be residual, is more likely to point to a prehistoric date for the feature. Burnt flint typically occurs in large amounts in later Bronze Age and Iron Age contexts, and it can be dispersed from pot-boiler mounds and other such features. One small fragment should be treated with caution, but could hint at a prehistoric date for the feature.

The angle of the ditch is similar to the northernmost cropmark recorded by the Norfolk Mapping Programme (NMP) as part of cropmark complex NHER 27685 (Fig. 2). This ditch therefore may represent the northernmost part of a relict field system. It is likely that these are field boundaries that may be associated with an Iron Age to Roman enclosure further to the west (NHER 27689) and the proposed prehistoric date for ditch [3] may help give supporting evidence to this suggestion.

Although the position of the site was close to the centre of Filby, it was situated behind and south of the main road through the village. It is often sites located adjacent to main roads through a settlement where there is more likely to be a high density of medieval and post-medieval activity and the paucity of archaeological features here may be as a result of this factor.

Recommendations for mitigation work if required as a result of the evidence contained in this report will be made by Norfolk Historic Environment Service.

## **Acknowledgements**

The project was undertaken by Lilly Hodges who was assisted by Rob Brown.

The author and Lilly Hodges would like to thank Alan Irvine for commissioning and funding the fieldwork and this report. Thanks also to Wharton Farms for supplying the mechanical excavator.

Thanks also to Adam Harper of NPS Land Survey for surveying the trenches.

The single fragment of burnt flint was reported on by Becky Sillwood.

The Norfolk National Mapping Programme cropmark plots were provided by Norfolk Historic Environment Service, who share the copyright of these plots with English Heritage. (The plot was originally supplied in 2010 for Report 2313.)

This report was illustrated by David Dobson, after initial digitising by the author, and edited by Jayne Bown.

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## Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period	Trench
1	Deposit			Topsoil	Unknown	1, 2, 3
2	Deposit			Subsoil	Unknown	1, 2, 3
3	Cut			Ditch	Prehistoric?	2
4	Deposit		3	Fill of ditch	Prehistoric?	2
5	Deposit			Natural Substratum	Unknown	1, 2, 3

## Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

Period	Category	Total
Prehistoric	Ditch	1

## Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
4	Flint – Burnt	1	8g	Prehistoric?	DISCARDED

## Appendix 2b: OASIS Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Prehistoric?	Flint – Burnt	1

## **Appendix 3: OASIS Report Summary**