

Report 2871



nps archaeology

## Archaeological Watching Brief at the former Beach Coach Station, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk

ENF129668



**Prepared for**  
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Location:	Beach Coach Station, Nelson Road North, Great Yarmouth
District:	Great Yarmouth Borough
Grid Ref.:	652894, 308201
Planning Ref.:	06/11/0681/F
HER No.:	ENF129668
OASIS Ref.:	156702
Client:	NPS Property Consultants Limited
Dates of Fieldwork:	27 September 2012 – 19 February 2013

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was conducted for NPS Property Consultants Limited during groundworks associated with the construction of a new housing development on the site of the former Beach Coach Park.*

*The former Beach Coach station was located on the site of the terminus of the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway between Great Yarmouth and Sutton Bridge. However the only significant railway-related remains to survive the closure of the line and station in 1959 and the clearance of the site to allow its use as a coach park was part of an early 20th-century turntable pit. Historic mapping shows an earlier turntable which should have been present towards the southern edge of the development site, but despite groundworks in that area this feature was not identified.*

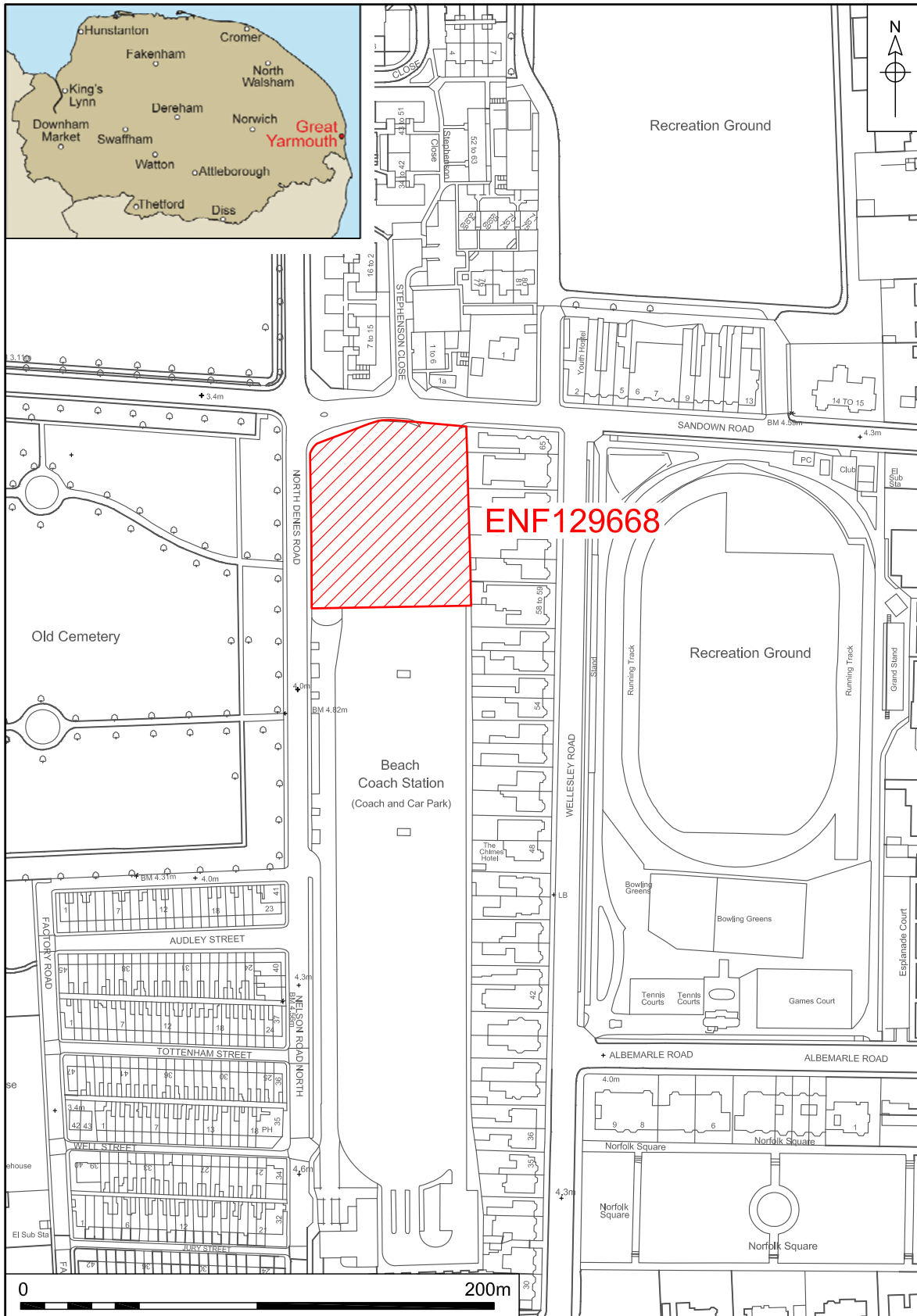
*The turntable that was exposed had a diameter of c.19.2m and a depth of c.1.5m. It was built out of sandstone blocks with details (perhaps later additions) in brick and concrete. The turntable itself (the rotating portion which carries the rolling stock) would have originally had a length of c.17.25m.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This programme of archaeological monitoring was required as part of the Beach Coach and Car Park is to be redeveloped for residential purposes. The development area comprised 4280m<sup>2</sup>.

This work was undertaken to fulfil planning requirements set by Great Yarmouth Borough Council (06/11/0681/F) and scoped by Norfolk Historic Environment Service. The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (NAU/BAU2871/DW). This work was commissioned and funded by NPS Property Services 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.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2,500

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.

A geophysical survey of the development site was undertaken in 2006 (Terradat 2006) to attempt to locate and identify elements of the railway terminus

## **2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The underlying geology consists of Quaternary Blown sand above Quaternary and Neogene sands and gravels of the Crag Group (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

The development site is situated within the modern town of Great Yarmouth, to the northeast of the medieval walled town in an area created by sand dunes. This area was developed for the seaside tourist trade in the 19th century. The topography is relatively flat and the site lies at a height of c.4.0m OD.

## **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

During the preparation of this section, the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) and historic mapping sources were consulted.

### **The 18th-century Evidence**

The site of a post-medieval windmill, built in 1800, lies 60m northwest of the present development (NHER 15671). The mill had become disused by 1808.

The site of North Denes Mill (NHER 15672) lies just to the south of the present development. It is the site of a post-medieval post mill, which was built in the late 18th century. The post mill was replaced by a smock mill, which was itself destroyed by fire in the mid 19th century.

### **The 19th-century Evidence**

The development site is located at the terminus of the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway link (NHER 13581) between Great Yarmouth and Sutton Bridge. The section between King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth had 22 intermediate stations and opened under the Yarmouth and North Norfolk Railway (from 1877 to 1881), the Lynn and Fakenham Railway (between 1879 and 1882) and the Eastern and Midlands (in 1883). The whole system was closed on 2 March 1959 although some sections of the route survive today as paths. A number of station buildings, signal boxes, goods sheds and concrete mileposts survive.

Norfolk Square (NHER 1515), some 340m southeast of the development site, is a Victorian development probably laid out in the later 19th century as a speculative building project. The private garden enclosed by the square was a communal space provided for the residents of the surrounding houses.

The site of North Denes Mill (NHER 15673) - a post-medieval smock mill - lies 240m south of the present development. It was built in 1807 and was rebuilt as a tower mill in 1841.

The Old Cemetery (NHER 33471) is located 120m west of the present development and was laid out in 1855 after Market Gates Cemetery was closed.

The New Cemetery (NHER 33472) is 250m northwest of the present development and was laid out in 1855 at the same time as the Old Cemetery (NHER 33471). However it was not opened until 1875 (and 1896).

Wellesley Road Grandstand (NHER 38224) is a football grandstand sited 220m east of the development site. It was built in the late 19th century in the Wellesley Recreation Ground by J. W. Cockrill and is one of the oldest surviving examples of such a structure in the country.

A tennis pavilion (NHER 48162) designed in 1890 by J.W. Cockrill stands within the Wellesley Recreation Ground. It is located 260m southeast of the development site. The pavilion is built of red brick with an open veranda. Also present at the recreation ground is a ticket office designed at the same time (in 1890) by J.W. Cockrill (NHER 48163).

### **The 20th-century Evidence**

An archaeological watching brief (NHER 33943) along the sea front, 260 east of the development site, in advance of construction of a gas pipeline recorded a spread of burnt modern rubbish and concrete and 20th-century brick structures perhaps related to previous sea wall defences and former sea front tramway installations.

A World War Two barrage balloon site (NHER 46568) located 190m northwest of the present development is visible as a group of various kinds structures on aerial photographs.

A World War Two road block (NHER 46569) was positioned 235m east of the development site; it is visible as a structure on aerial photographs taken in 1940 and 1941.

World War Two air raid shelters are known at a number of locations in the area the southwest of the present development. The shelters were at 9 Well Street (NHER 49900), 4 Tottenham Street (NHER 49901), 11 and 12 Audley Street (NHER 49902) and at 46 and 52 Wellesley Road (NHER 49903).

A well containing tailor's dummies (NHER 57310) was discovered in 1990 at 42-43 Well Street, 300m southwest of the development site. The stables for Grout's Silk Factory stood here and the factory was located on the opposite side of the road. The well was located beneath the stables and could have been the origin of the name 'Well Street'.

### **Cartographic Evidence**

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map (c.1885) of the area shows the railway station to the south of the development area. Within the development area were north-south aligned tracks and a possible turntable at the southern edge (<http://historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk/mapexplorer>).

The 1832 Ordnance Survey map of Great Yarmouth (<http://historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk/mapexplorer>) shows an enclosure around a building in the approximate area of the development site and an artillery battery on the seafront to the southeast. Faden's map (1797) also shows a battery in this position).



## 4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief was to record archaeological remains affected by the development, specifically to record elements of the railway turntable located here.

The archaeological specification stipulated that all groundworks be archaeologically monitored (Fig. 2).

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.

No environmental samples were 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, monochrome and digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits where appropriate.

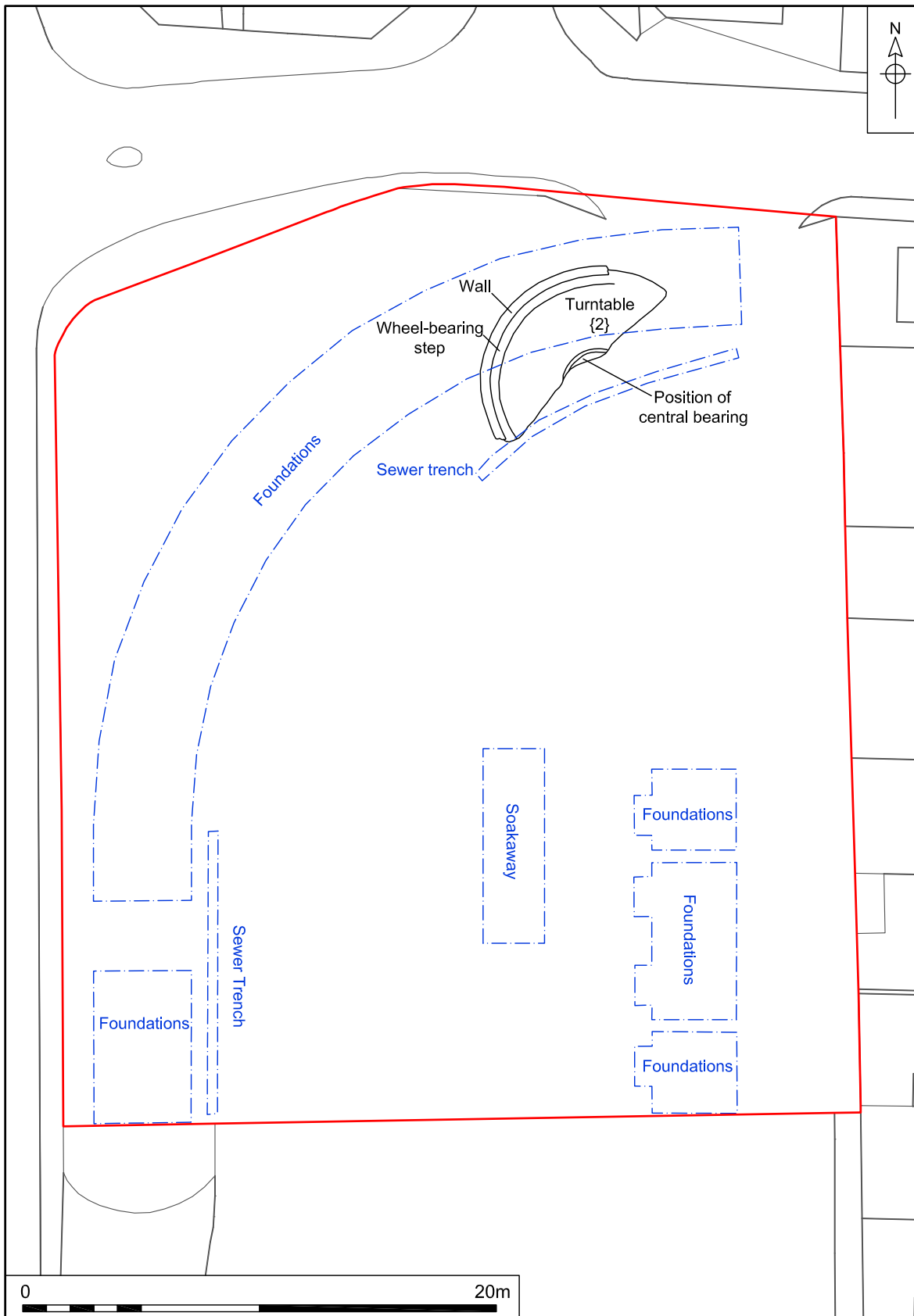
Site conditions were good, with the work taking place in variable weather.

## 5.0 RESULTS

Initial groundworks consisted of the removal of sheds, lock-up garages and surfaces and the stripping of the overburden down to formation level within the development area (Fig. 2).



Plate 1. Rails and sleepers found during the initial groundworks



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Figure 2. Site plan. Scale 1:250

This operation revealed mixed deposits of brick and concrete demolition rubble and hoggin (perhaps originally the bedding for railway tracks). Parts of the old railway track and wooden sleepers were exposed (Plate 1). There was some evidence of petrochemical contamination however no discrete features were identified at this stage.

The excavation of house foundations commenced in October 2012 and revealed c.0.6m of overburden above natural yellow sand.

A sewer trench was dug in the northern part of the site (Fig. 2, Plate 2) which coincided with the site of the former railway turntable as identified in the geophysical survey by Terradat (2006).



Plate 2. Sewer trench through the site of the turntable pit, facing east

The area of the turntable was found to be packed full of broken lumps of concrete and sandstone ashlar to a depth of at least 1.50m below ground level (bgl).

On 26 October 2012 the contractors found substantial and intact remains of the turntable pit (2). These remains comprised a 60°-90° arc of the circular turntable, showing that it was constructed of sandstone blocks bonded with hard cement (Fig. 2, Plate 3). The outer wall was 0.96m wide and 1.00m high. Inside that was a 0.73m-wide step with scars evident of the fittings to take a rail on which the outer

bearing wheels of the turntable itself would rotate. A couple of the large square nails that would have secured the track were recovered.



Plate 3. Turntable pit, facing west



Plate 4. Opposite side of the turntable pit, facing north

The central part of the pit was dished. And the centre bearing plate would have been located in the recessed centre of the turntable pit and was not exposed –

indeed it may not have survived. The whole pit was heavily contaminated with oil, presumably originally applied to lubricate the moving parts of the table.

The turntable pit had been backfilled with large lumps of brickwork, concrete and sandstone ([3]).

In mid December 2012 the opposing side of the turntable pit was exposed (Plate 4) revealing the back of the retaining wall, which appeared to be built of hard engineering brick and concrete (perhaps a repair?).



Plate 5. Soakaway with the displaced concrete block, facing west

Monitoring of the excavation of the house foundations (Fig. 2) revealed nothing of significance.

Excavation of the large central soakaway (Fig. 2), monitored on 19 February 2013, exposed a large, displaced concrete block in its western face (Plate 5).

## **6.0 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL**

By Rebecca Sillwood

Finds were processed and recorded by count and weight and information entered onto an Excel spreadsheet including broad dating evidence. Each material type has been considered separately and is presented below by material. A list of finds in context number order can be found in Appendix 2a.

All of the finds that were collected have been discarded after recording, as they are all unstratified and modern.

### **6.1 Metal Finds**

Three objects of iron were recovered from the site.

A large, heavy-duty shovel was recovered unstratified from the site ([1]).

The piece is almost complete, although rusted and corroded, with a couple of splits, and with a socket to the upper edge. The blade measures 37cm in length by 33cm in width. This is obviously modern and is possibly associated with the nearby railway, maybe used in the shovelling of coal or ballast.

Two large nails were found in the vicinity of the turntable ([3]).

The nails are very similar, with square sectioned bodies, tapering to a point, and with lipped heads. Both are slightly curved, and so the measurement of length (17cm) is approximate for these objects. These nails clearly had some industrial purpose and are of modern date.

## **6.2 Other Finds**

A fragment of what appears to be cement with mortar adhering to it was collected from turntable area [3].

This fragment was possibly part of a kerb stone or similar.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The only significant railway-related remains to survive the closure of the line and station in 1959 and the clearance of the site to be used as a surface car park was a turntable pit.

Historic mapping (Harrison 2006) suggests that the turntable pit was constructed between 1905 and 1928. The turntable had a diameter of c.19.20m and a depth of c.1.50m. It was built between 1905 and 1928 out of sandstone blocks, with details, perhaps later additions, in brick and concrete. The turntable itself (the rotating portion which carries the rolling stock) would have had a length of c.17.25m. Available images of early 20th-century turntables demonstrate that the Beach Coach Station example was fairly typical.

Earlier maps show a turntable located towards the southern edge of the development site that was present before the one exposed during works at the site. However despite groundworks taking place in this area no evidence of this earlier turntable was identified.

## **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank NPS Property consultants for funding this work.

Richard Reeve, Shane Last and the other staff of R.G.Carter are thanked for their much appreciated help and consideration during the fieldwork stage of this project.

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

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

## **Bibliography and Sources**

- |                                                 |      |                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Barringer, J. C.                                | 1989 | <i>Faden's Map of Norfolk: First Printed in 1797</i>                                       |
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| Harrison Environmental Consulting               | 2006 | <i>Preliminary Site Investigation: Great Yarmouth Coach Station (unpublished)</i>          |
| Terradat                                        | 2006 | <i>Draft Geophysical Survey Report: Beach Coach Car Park, Great Yarmouth (unpublished)</i> |

[http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html) Accessed 29.05.2013

<http://historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk/mapexplorer> Accessed 31.08.2012

### Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description
1	U/S Finds			From whole site
2	Masonry			Turntable
3	Deposit		2	Large lumps of brickwork, concrete and sandstone

### Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

Period	Category	Total
Modern	Turntable pit	1

### Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
1	Iron	1	1,738g	Modern	Shovel; socketed
3	Iron	2	804g	Modern	Nails; large, heavy duty
3	Cement	1	870g	Modern	?Part of kerb stone

### Appendix 2b: OASIS Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Modern	Cement	1
	Iron	3



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

# OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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**OASIS ID: norfolka1-156702**

### Project details

Project name	Former Beach Coach Station, Great Yarmouth - watching brief
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was conducted for NPS Property Consultants Limited during groundworks associated with the construction of a new housing development on the site of the former Beach Coach Park. The former Beach Coach station was located on the site of the terminus of the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway between Great Yarmouth and Sutton Bridge. However the only significant railway-related remains to survive the closure of the line and station in 1959 and the clearance of the site to allow its use as a coach park was part of an early 20th-century turntable pit. Historic mapping shows an earlier turntable which should have been present towards the southern edge of the development site, but despite groundworks in that area this feature was not identified. The turntable that was exposed had a diameter of c.19.2m and a depth of c.1.5m. It was built out of sandstone blocks with details (perhaps later additions) in brick and concrete. The turntable itself (the rotating portion which carries the rolling stock) would have originally had a length of c.17.25m.
Project dates	Start: 27-09-2012 End: 19-02-2013
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	ENF129668 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	RAILWAY TURNTABLE Modern
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK GREAT YARMOUTH GREAT YARMOUTH Former Beach coach Station, Nelson Road
Study area	4280.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	652894 308201 652894 00 00 N 308201 00 00 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	Property Consultant
Name of sponsor/funding body	NPS Group

**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive notes	Iron nails and concrete collected but discarded after recording
Digital Archive recipient	NPS Archaeology
Digital Contents	"Metal","other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Images vector","Spreadsheets","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service
Paper Contents	"Metal","other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Report"

**Project bibliography 1**

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