

**NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT**

Report No. 900

**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
Forncett St Peter CE VA Primary School**

39857 FRN

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Local Authority No.076759

Fig.1 is based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office © Crown Copyright 'Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings' Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Norwich (08/01/2004). **Reference copy: no further copies to be made.**



Location: Forncett St Peter CE VA Primary School, Forncett St Peter  
Grid Ref: TM 164 927  
HER No.: 39857 FRN  
Date of fieldwork: 19th December 2003

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## **Summary**

*This evaluation was located in an area of archaeological interest close to the parish church of St Peter, which is of possible Saxon origin. There was potential for human remains and other archaeological deposits to be disturbed by the proposed development.*

*The excavation of the two evaluation trenches, however, revealed no archaeological deposits or finds.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

(Fig. 1)

A programme of archaeological work resulting from development proposal within the grounds of St Peter's Primary School was undertaken by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU). Two 4m x 4m trenches were examined, a total area of 32m<sup>2</sup>.

Forncett St Peter is situated in south Norfolk where the school, and therefore the area under evaluation, lies immediately adjacent to the parish church of St Peter. This church has a round tower that indicates construction in the later 11th century and is possibly the church recorded as standing in Forncett by Domesday Book (1086).

The work and this report were commissioned by RG Carter and funded by Jarvis Projects.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design prepared by the NAU (Ref: 1699/JB) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: ARJH 25.11.03).

The 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 *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 — Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

## **2.0 Geology and Topography**

(Fig. 1)

The school lies on a low bluff overlooking the watermeadows of the River Tas at about 33m OD. The local geology is glacial drift, at this site a variable yellow gravel.

### **3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

(Fig. 1)

Several sites of archaeological and historical interest are recorded on the Norfolk Historic and Environmental Record (NHER) in the vicinity of the area under evaluation. Close by is the parish church (NHER 10048), which dates to the later 11th century but which may have an earlier (possibly Saxon) foundation, while making use of older Roman tile in the tower. Next to the church is an 18th century rectory (NHER 10076). While more material of Romano-British date had been found a little way to the north (NHER 35660). There was therefore a strong likelihood that the site stood close to, or within, an early centre of occupation and activity.

### **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.

The Brief required that 5% of the development area be examined. Two trenches were excavated, each 4m x 4m within the footprint of proposed new buildings and archaeological deposits and finds recorded. The two trenches both lay under grass, within the school grounds.

Machine excavation was carried out with a tracked excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU *pro forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

Conditions were good, with bright weather and no wind.

### **5.0 Results**

(Fig. 2)

#### **Trench 1**

Trench 1 was laid out with dimensions 4m x 4m. The topsoil was a dark moist loam, containing much modern debris and between 0.40m-0.45m deep. This rested on the natural gravel subsoil. At the south end of the trench, the subsoil was disturbed by a feature, containing further modern debris (bottles glass, bicycle).

There were no finds other than the modern debris.

#### **Trench 2**

Trench 2 was also laid out measuring 4m x 4m. As in Trench 1, the topsoil was a dark moist loam, again containing much recent debris. Below this lay the natural subsoil, a bright yellow sandy gravel.

There were no archaeological features or finds.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

No archaeological features or finds were recorded and the evidence points to a fairly intensive level of dumping here in the recent past.

Recommendations for future work based upon this report will be made by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology

### ***Acknowledgements***

We are grateful to RG Carter for commissioning this work and to Jarvis Projects for funding it. Thanks to Jill Otterwell for her interest and help during this work. The report was illustrated and produced by Maggie Foottit and edited by Alice Lyons.





## ***Appendix 1 Context Summary***

<b>Context</b>	<b>Trench</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	1	dark black loam, topsoil	modern
2	1	modern disturbance at s end of trench	modern
3	2	dark black loam, topsoil	modern



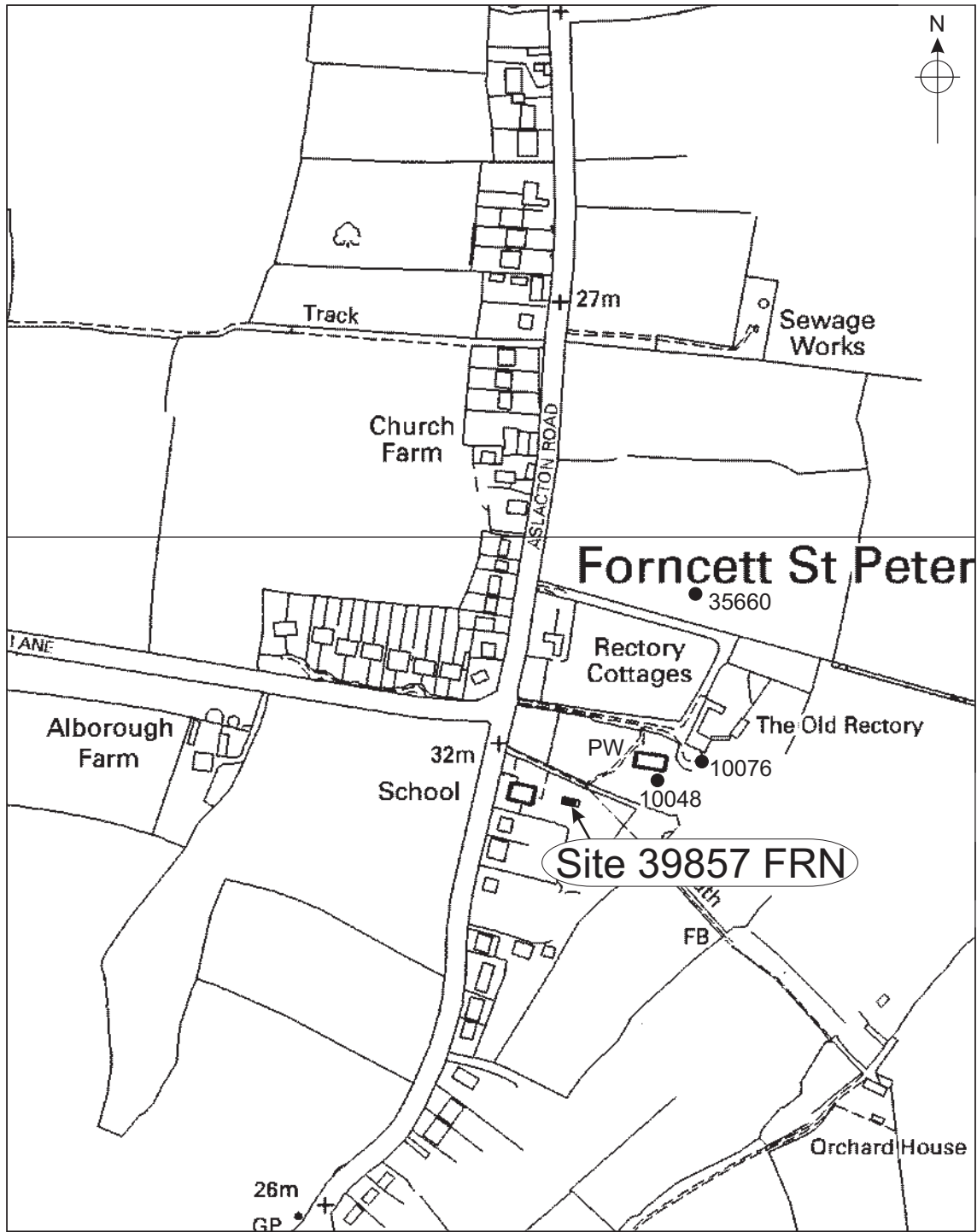


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

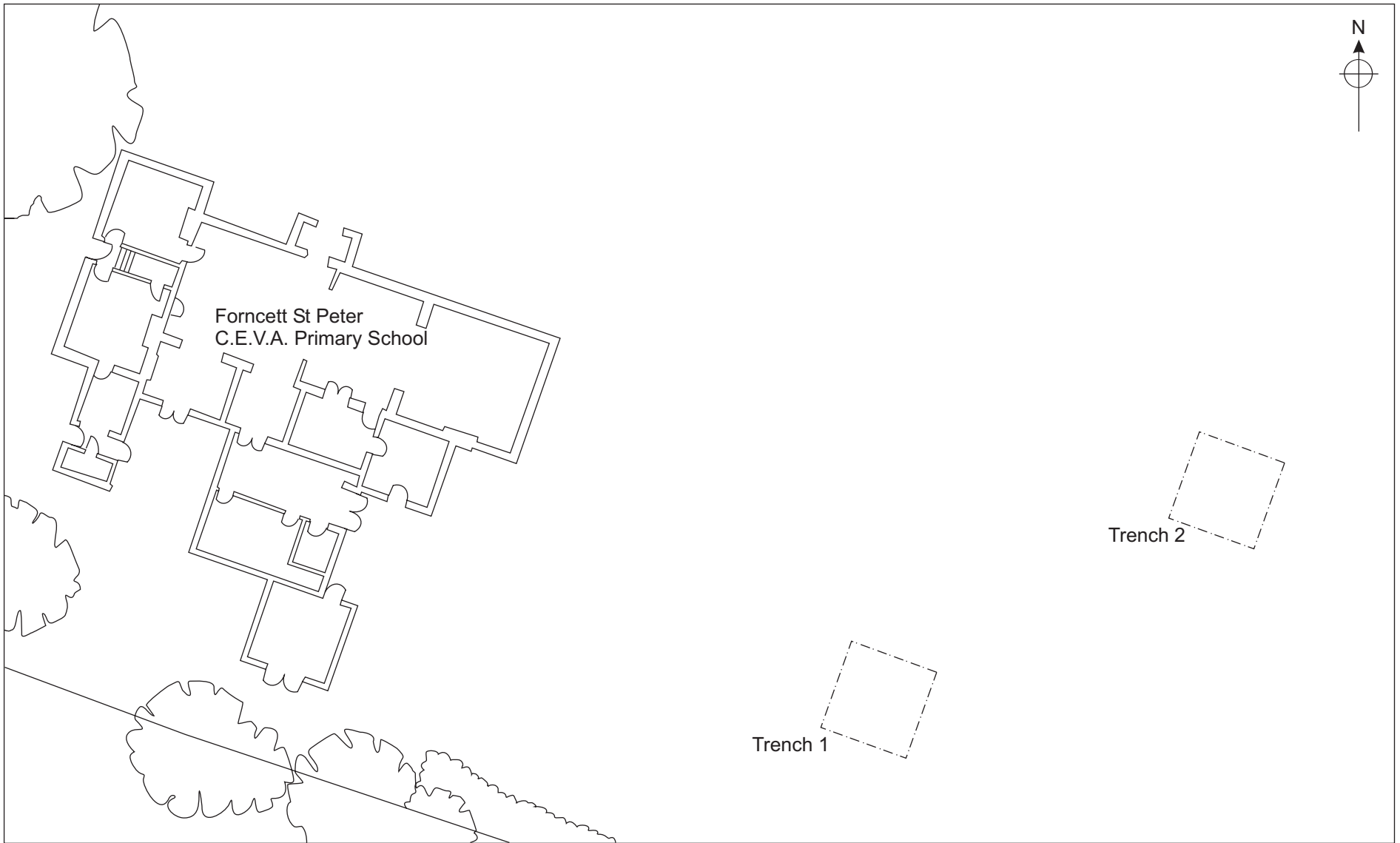


Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:250