

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 896

**Interim Report on an Archaeological Evaluation
to the south-east of Dereham town centre**

39688

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Location: Land to the south-east of Dereham town centre
Grid Ref: TF 5990 3131 (centre)
HER No.: 39688
Date of fieldwork: 29 September 2003 to 23 October 2003

Summary

Fourteen evaluation trenches were excavated during October 2003 in a car-park and adjoining garden immediately to the south-east of Dereham town centre. This work, commissioned by Dencora Construction Ltd, was designed to evaluate a c.2 hectare site in advance of redevelopment. There was generally very little evidence for activity on the site before the 20th century, with the exception of post-medieval field boundary ditches and the remains of post-medieval houses on the High Street frontage. The Norwich Street frontage, however, was of slightly more interest and here there was some evidence of activity from the medieval period onwards. The overall conclusions from the evaluation work thus far are that any medieval core to Dereham lay outside of this development area.

1.0 Introduction

(Fig. 1)

During October 2003 Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU) undertook an evaluation of a c.2 ha area to the immediate south of Dereham town centre. This was at the request of Dencora Construction Ltd who are developing the site. The scope of the archaeological work was set by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology in *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching* (NLA ref: AH 26/06/03) and the terms of the work were set in a NAU Project Design (ref: AS/1625).

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 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.

A total of eighteen evaluation trenches were suggested by NAU, the locations of which are shown on the illustration (Fig. 1). At the time of writing fourteen of these had been completed and the remaining four (Trenches 1 to 4) will be excavated in January 2004. This report provides an interim statement on the results of work in the first fourteen trenches. It includes some basic pottery dating information, and the presence or absence of worked flints. All other specialist reports will be presented and discussed in the final evaluation report, as will the archaeological and historical background.

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

1.0 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.

Machine excavation of the trenches was carried out with a hydraulic 360° excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Approximately half of the trenches had tarmac and underlying concrete surfaces broken out before archaeological excavation could commence. These trenches had their surfaces reinstated after backfilling had been completed. The other trenches were either covered with gravel surfaces or were within gardens. The gravel-covered trenches had their gravel replaced once backfilling was complete.

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.

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.

The weather throughout the site work was warm and dry, with the exception of several rainy days towards late October. The work was conducted within an operational car-park, and this in some cases restricted or dictated the location of trenches. Live services were avoided and marked (Fig. 1) for future reference.

2.0 Results

For convenience the trenches are described in numerical order. Their locations within the site fall into six geographical areas;

- High Street (east)
- High Street (west)
- Norwich Street
- Banyard Place (north)
- Commercial Road
- Centre of site

Trench 1

Location: High Street (west)

Plan dimensions: To be determined

Depth to natural: To be determined

This trench will be evaluated in January 2004.

Trench 2

Location: High Street (west)

Plan dimensions: To be determined

Depth to natural: To be determined

This trench will be evaluated in January 2004.

Trench 3

Location: High Street (west)

Plan dimensions: To be determined

Depth to natural: To be determined

This trench will be evaluated in January 2004.

Trench 4

Location: High Street (west)

Plan dimensions: To be determined

Depth to natural: To be determined

This trench will be evaluated in January 2004.

Trench 5

Location: High Street (east)

Plan dimensions: 5.9m x 3.5m

Depth to natural: 0.55m

Excavation of Trench 5 commenced with the removal of the tarmacadamed car-park surface. This was reinstated after completion.

Naturally formed soils lay approximately 0.55m below the level of the car park. These represented clay, with patches of silt, and of a mid orange colour. A small stakehole [218] was cut through this material and was sealed by a mid brown sandy clay [214] which contained frequent ceramic building material fragments and some shell and charcoal. This is interpreted as a levelling layer which built up after the immediate area has been stripped of its sub-soil.

A post-medieval building had significantly altered the landscape apparent in this trench. This was formed from an east-to-west aligned wall of flint and mortar [204] which was 2.6m long. Its line was continued eastwards by a brick wall [208] which extended beyond the eastern bounds of the trench. To the south of this line the remnants of a room were represented by a north-to-south aligned

brick wall [201] which bounded a floor of quarry tiles [200]. The floor was bedded on sand [221] which sealed natural. The tiled floor had later had a concrete screed [220] applied.

The remainder of the trench was occupied by a cellar which had been backfilled with rubble. There were various architectural elements and features visible. These included at least two blind arches set into the southern wall of the cellar, both with shallow arched heads, and a lightbox which intruded into the yard seen in the south-eastern part of the trench. This had later been narrowed by the construction of a brick-built blocking [206], presumably when the bay had been converted into a coal-shute. The cellar had been vaulted at both its western and southern ends, and these vaults showed that the cellar extends to the foot of the building adjoining the trench (Bond's toyshop). The eastern wall of the cellar incorporated a similar blind arch. Both vaults employed shallow brick arches. A quarry tiled-floor over the eastern bay vault demonstrated that the building at ground-floor level extended beyond the bounds of the trench.

The building had been trimmed to close to its foundation level and sealed by a layer of rubble and hoggin [215]. This was topped with a very thin layer of tarmac.

Discussion

It seems that the area had been stripped of its sub- and topsoil prior to the construction of a cellared building. With little dating evidence recovered it is not clear when this building was constructed, but the visible nature of its remains suggests an 18th-century date (it is certainly shown on the Enclosure map of 1815). This building fronted High Street and its cellar would have removed any earlier archaeological evidence relating to that frontage.

Trench 6

Location: Norwich Street

Plan dimensions: 3.1m x 3.1m

Depth to natural: 0.75m

Excavation of Trench 6 commenced with the removal of the tarmacadamed car-park surface. This was reinstated after completion.

Naturally-formed soils were formed from a light yellow sand with occasional stones. This was sealed by a mid brown sandy silt sub-soil [239/254] of 0.30m depth. The earliest archaeological feature to have been cut through this material was a north-to-south aligned feature [227], only the eastern part of which was revealed in the trench. This contained a brown sandy silt without finds and may have represented an early boundary ditch or gully.

The top of the sub-soil represented an horizon through which several archaeological events had occurred. Against the northern edge of the trench a small pit [249] of 0.20m depth, seen only in section, had been backfilled with clay and sand [250] over which a mid brown sand had been deposited. At the opposite (southern) end of the trench an east-to-west aligned flint and mortar wall [233], at least 2.1m long and 0.45m high, had been built into a vertically-edged cut. The western end showed evidence of fire damage. A slightly burnt-looking sand [248] sealed the wall and extended northward.

The burnt-looking sand was in-turn sealed by a 0.15m depth of compact mid grey brown clay and sand [242], with frequent flecks and lumps of chalk. This extended to the northern edge of the trench, where it was sealed by a light pinky brown sandy silt [232] with some clay surviving. This probably represented a clay floor to a building and a post-hole [252] cut through it, which contained silty mortar may have formed part of the superstructure to this building.

It appears that this building may have survived until fairly recently. It had been refloored with red quarry tiles and a brick sump inserted at floor level. The floor had later been covered with linoleum. When the building was demolished much of the tiled floor had been dug out, and mortar and brick rubble deposited in the sump and over the linoleum. The robber cut had been filled with clay and sand, containing frequent ceramic building material, which had in turn been sealed by a mid grey sandy silt [240] and the present-day tarmacadamed surface. Prior to the tarmac being laid, however, a 0.35m deep cut with 45° battered edges had been cut through [240]. This contained loam-rich make-up sealed by hoggin.

Discussion

Several phases of archaeological activity were apparent in this trench. The earliest feature was the north-to-south aligned cut which may have represented an early boundary. The fill of this had been cut by the east-to-west aligned flint and mortar wall which may have represented the rear wall to an early street-fronting building. This had already been demolished when a spread of burning developed over it, and the level to which it had been trimmed also displayed burning. Dereham experienced two major fires – one in 1581 and a second in 1679. A clay-floored building was constructed above this level, and this building, in a later guise appears to have survived into the linoleum age. This building had been demolished in the recent past.

Trench 7

Location: Norwich Street

Plan dimensions: 4.7m x 5.2m

Depth to natural: 0.95m

Excavation of Trench 7 commenced with the removal of the tarmacadamed car-park surface and a thick layer of underlying concrete. Both were reinstated after completion.

The natural exposed in this trench was formed from patches of sandy orange silt and darker patches of pale brown silty clay. The earliest feature encountered was a vertically-sided cut [113/118] which lay in the eastern third of the trench. This had been cut through the naturally-formed soils and its fill, of light grey silty sand [114/117], was apparently sealed by a light grey brown silty sand sub-soil [107] of 0.25m depth. The fill of the large feature contained one sherd of late 12th- to 14th-century Grimston ware pottery, four further sherds of medieval pottery and seven worked flints. The cut was machined to a depth of 1.50m without the base having been reached and the feature is interpreted as a quarry.

The quarry fill appeared to have been cut by an east-to-west aligned ditch of 1m width [116/103], which had butt-ended towards the western edge of the trench.

This boundary feature had filled with a yellow brown silty sand [104/115] and contained eight worked flints, including flakes and blade-like flakes. It also contained two sherds of 11th- to 14th-century Local medieval unglazed ware pottery.

The sub-soil had also been cut by four equally-spaced square post-holes which formed a north-to-south boundary marker. Five large pieces of stone, one shaped, and several bricks had formed the post-packing within one of these features [119]. These had been sealed by a 0.20m thick layer of top soil which was in turn sealed by between 0.35m and 0.60m of hoggin, concrete and tarmacadam.

Discussion

The period within which the quarry has been opened is a matter of some conjecture since it appeared to have been cut by a boundary ditch which contained a single sherd of medieval pottery. It is likely, however, that the quarry was of fairly recent origin, perhaps cut during the post-medieval period, and that the medieval pottery was residual within the ditch fill. It is to be noted that the apparent remains of an extensive quarry lie immediately to the east of Trench 7, these being visible on the 1885 Ordnance Survey plan. It is entirely possible, therefore, that the quarry edge seen in this trench formed the edge to the sunken feature now occupied by The Orchard surgery and its car-park.

Trench 8

Location: Centre of site

Plan dimensions: 3.8m x 4.2m

Depth to natural: 0.90m

Excavation of Trench 8 commenced with the removal of the tarmacadamed car-park surface. This was reinstated after completion.

Naturally-formed soils were comprised of a silty orange clay with common flints, some of them large. This was cut by a large amorphous feature [226] present in the western half of the trench which was 0.40m deep and contained a sandy silt with some flint pebbles. It seems possible that this feature, which did not contain any finds, was of geological origin.

The sub-soil [223] was formed from mid grey-coloured silty sand and this was covered by up to 0.16m of dark grey-coloured sandy silt [222], with occasional brick fragments. This buried topsoil was sealed by up to 0.20m of black clinker, ash and ironworking residue [225], with occasional brick and tile fragments. This was in turn sealed by another layer, 0.20m depth, of a very compact nature similar to [225], although in the upper layer there were several discarded iron objects present. This material was, to judge by smell and appearance, contaminated with hydrocarbons. This ironworking waste was sealed by 0.15m of sand, hoggin and gravel and this was covered by 0.07m of tarmacadam.

Discussion

There was nothing of archaeological interest within this trench, with the exception of the waste products from an ironworking concern, probably that shown to have been situated in this location on the 1885 Ordnance Survey 1st edition plan. These sealed the topsoil of the area and had had the effect of building up the level of the ground surface by up to 0.40m. This waste had been contaminated by hydrocarbon-based materials.

Trench 9

Location: Centre of site

Plan dimensions: 3.8m x 4.2m

Depth to natural: 1.05m

Excavation of Trench 9 commenced with the removal of the gravel car-park surface. This was reinstated after completion.

The naturally-formed soils exposed in this trench were formed from stiff orange sandy clay with flints. This was sealed by 0.30m of stained orange sand sub-soil [39] which was in turn sealed by a 0.20m depth of mid brown sandy silt and loam [38] which contained three sherds of pottery dating to between 1740 and 1880 and occasional flints and some brick and tile fragments. A stained dark brown silty sand and loam [37] overlaid the older topsoil and formed a layer of 0.15m thickness. This had been buried when a 0.30m depth of hoggin, flint, tarmac and sand was put down to act as the base for a 0.07m depth of gravel and crushed concrete.

There were no archaeological features present within this trench. There were, however, three service pipes. A high voltage cable passed through the south-eastern corner, an alkathene water pipe traversed the trench in a north-west to south-east direction and a concrete encased storm drain ran along the western edge.

Discussion

There were no archaeological features present within this trench. However, there was an element of staining to the topsoil which, when coupled with a smell of hydrocarbons, suggests that an industrial process had taken place over this area of the site. Until 1928 at least this part of the site was open ground but by 1967 a large building is shown in the position of the now closed Bowling Centre. It is possible that the hydrocarbon contamination came from work associated with this building.

Trench 10

Location: Commercial Road

Plan dimensions: 4.07m x 5.2m

Depth to natural: 1.10m

Excavation of Trench 10 commenced with the removal of the gravel car-park surface. This was reinstated after completion.

The naturally-formed soils exposed in this trench were of a compact orange silty clay with occasional very large flints. This was cut by a circular feature [067] which lay in the north-eastern corner of the trench and was filled with a brownish clayey sand without finds. This was sealed by 0.75m of light orange brown silty sand [064] which formed the sub-soil. There were no traces of a topsoil, which must have been stripped off prior to the car-park surface [063] having been laid. This comprised a very hard rolled ash and flint covered with 0.05m of hoggin which was in turn sealed by 0.02m of gravel.

Discussion

With the exception of one non-descript feature this trench was devoid of archaeological features. On the 1967 Ordnance Survey plan this area was being used as a road, and this was probably the origin of the rolled ash surfaces. On the 1928 Ordnance Survey plan it is marked as an open area.

Trench 11

Location: North of Banyard Place

Plan dimensions: 5.7m x 5.1m

Depth to natural: 0.75m

The naturally-formed soils exposed in this trench were formed from orange-coloured sandy silts with plenty of flint. A large east-to-west aligned ditch traversed the trench [043/056]. This was up to 1.75m wide with sides battered at 45° and a flat base of 0.35m width. It was up to 0.75m deep. It was filled with a light orange/grey silty sand [044/055] which contained occasional ceramic building material, charcoal flecks, bone and four sherds of 16th- to 18th-century pottery. It also contained three flints – a burnt fragment, a flake and a scraper, and one sherd of pottery dating to between 1480 and 1550. This was apparently overlaid by a deep sub-soil [052/059], although in reality the ditch must surely have cut through this deposit. A dump of silty greyish brown sand [054] overlaid the sub-soil and this was sealed by more material of similar composition, but with a light orange/brown hue [052]. Layer [054] contained a sherd of 17th- to 19th-century pottery. This was finally overlaid by a 0.35m depth of mid grey topsoil [051]. A land drain [061] cut the topsoil and had been filled with gravel, flints and bricks.

Various other features were apparent in this trench. These took the form of small gullies ([045], [049], [022]), post-holes ([011]) or vaguely defined shallow pits ([020]). These were probably all related to activities within a garden. Gully [22] contained one worked flint.

Discussion

All available historical maps and plans show that this area of the proposed development has been fields or gardens for many centuries. The drainage ditch discovered in this trench apparently pre-dates the boundaries and gardens shown on the 1885 1st Edition Ordnance Survey plan and probably, therefore, relates to a field system which was removed when the houses on Commercial Road were built from 1838. The remainder of the features discovered in this trench relate to the garden to the rear of 8 Commercial Road.

Trench 12

Location: North of Banyard Place

Plan dimensions: 5.10m x 5.10m

Depth to natural: 0.50m

Natural soils in this trench were formed from a light brown orange silt, with common large flints. A rectangular pit [004] was present in the south-western corner of the trench, which measured 1.2m by 1.8m, with a depth of 0.60m. It was filled with grey/brown silty sand [005] containing animal bone, building material and six 19th-century pottery sherds. This was sealed by a mixed brown and orange silty sand [002] with many ceramic building material fragments. This material was the result of the area having been double-dug in the past. A sherd of post-medieval pottery was present in this material, created by an action which had destroyed the sub-soil. The soil produced by this double digging action was sealed a thin layer of dark-toned topsoil.

Discussion

This trench was placed immediately to the east of several ranges of buildings which front High Street and are of an 18th-century date. The activities seen in the trench relate to use of this land as back gardens to these buildings. No features of great antiquity were observed.

Trench 13

Location: Centre of site

Plan dimensions: 4.40m x 4.50m

Depth to natural: 0.40m

Natural soils were formed from yellow brown sandy clay with plenty of large flints. These were sealed by 0.18m of light brown-coloured silty sand [122] which formed the sub-soil on the site. A north-to-south aligned ditch or gully [129] had been cut through the sub-soil and was present across the length of the trench. This small, 'v'-shaped feature contained a discoloured sandy silt without any finds. This fill had been cut by a small pit [132] which contained a similar fill to that of the ditch and one blade-like worked flint. This fill had in turn been cut by a rectangular soakaway containing building materials. The only other feature in this trench was a small post-hole [126] which lay to the east of the ditch/gully.

The topsoil had been buried when 0.15m of crushed concrete was laid down. This was sealed by a thin layer of tarmac which was reinstated over a layer of concrete once the trench had been backfilled.

Discussion

The area within which this trench was placed was, on historic maps and plans, given over first to fields and then to gardens. It is likely that the features seen in this trench relate to post-medieval horticultural activity, with the exception of the soakaway which probably related to the works shown on the 1967 Ordnance Survey plan.

Trench 14

Location: High Street (east)

Plan dimensions: 5.60m x 2.80m

Depth to natural: 0.85m

Naturally-formed soils were formed from mid orange-coloured silty clay with flints. This was cut by a large, circular pit [177] with nearly vertical sides which was not bottomed. This was filled with a light orange brown silty sand [180] which contained a small quantity of animal bone. The silty sand was sealed by a lighter version of the same [179] and this was sealed by a layer of flint [156] which had acted as a capping to the pit. This flint contained a sherd of 16th- to 18th-century pottery. The flints were overlain by a light yellow brown clay [155] which was 0.40m thick. This capping spread beyond the edges of the feature and sealed natural soils to the west of the pit.

The clay had been cut by eight post- and stakeholes. Post-hole [142] contained two sherds of 16th- to 18th-century pottery and post-hole [146] one sherd of 13th- to 14th-century pottery. Post-hole [148] contained a sherd of pottery dating to the period between 1720 and 1780. The clay was then sealed by up to 0.30m of dark grey/brown silty sand [154/162] which contained a further three sherds of pottery dating to between 1720 and 1780.

The silty sand was cut by a wall footing [181] which contained a north-to-south aligned brick wall [140]. This acted as the eastern elevation to a room which was floored with red 9" quarry tiles [157]. This floor was covered with debris from the demolition of this building [172] and [173], and this was sealed by 0.25m of crushed concrete acting as a base for a thin layer of tarmac. The concrete and tarmac were reinstated after the excavation trench was backfilled. A small brick outbuilding to the east of wall [140] was represented by brick walls [163] and [171].

Discussion

It appears that this area of the site was first occupied in the late 17th or early 18th centuries by a building (also seen in Trench 5) which extended eastwards for some distance. Prior to the construction of this building the plot appears to have been stripped of its top and sub-soils, and a pit dug to extract building materials. Two phases of building were apparent, the earlier being formed by a clay floor and post-holes. Evidence for activity pre-dating the post-medieval period was limited to one residual pottery sherd of medieval date.

Trench 15

Location: Centre of the site

Plan dimensions: 4.40m x 4.50m

Depth to natural: 1.10m

Naturally-formed soils comprised mid orange-coloured sands, with patches of clay. This was sealed by a 0.20m depth of mid orange brown silty sand which formed the sub-soil in the area [184]. This was sealed by an exceptionally deep (0.70m) dark grey/brown silty sand [183] which formed the topsoil. A feature in the north-eastern corner of the trench [194] was filled with charcoal and ash [193] sealed by two layers of sandy silt. The fill of this feature had been cut by a north-east to south-west aligned cut [190] with vertical edges which contained a cast iron service pipe at its base. The fill of the service pipe was sealed by a 0.30m deep layer of brown silty sand which contained occasional brick and tile fragments. This make-up layer was sealed by a layer of black ash and clinker [187] of varying thickness. This material smelt strongly of hydrocarbons. This waste material had been sealed by a 0.30m depth of flints, hoggin, crushed concrete with a thin gravel covering. A live electricity cable traversed the trench in a north-east to south-west direction. This lay 0.80m below the surface surrounding the trench.

Discussion

No archaeological features were observed in this trench. The depth of the topsoil suggests that this area had been given over to horticultural use until fairly recently, when the land was used to deposit the waste from an industrial process (perhaps ironworking). In 1967 this area was in use as a road to the south of the bowling centre, which was then in use as a works.

Trench 16

Location: North of Banyard Place

Plan dimensions: 4.70m x 5.30m

Depth to natural: 1.10m

Natural soils were formed from mid orange-coloured sandy silt, with patches of clay and common flints. This was overlain by a silty sand sub-soil [8] of 0.20m depth. This appeared to overlie a number of features cut into the natural soils. These comprised two north-to-south aligned slots [17, 25], which gave the appearance of beam slots, with a post-hole [028] heading the northern slot and a second post-hole [030] lying to the immediate west of the southern end of the same slot. All features contained building material and glass, and the southern beamslot contained a utilised flint blade. Two additional features, a small soakaway pit [013] and a post-hole [015], lay against the eastern edge of the trench. A rectangular soakaway also lay in the middle of the trench. This had been filled with brick rubble.

The topsoil in this trench was formed from a mid grey brown silty sand [007] and was 0.40m thick. The soil was sealed by a 0.40m thick layer of flint rubble which had formed the base to a yard. A 0.30m thick layer of concrete lay immediately to the east of the trench and had formed a hard standing until relatively recently.

Discussion

A number of features in this trench gave the appearance of being quite early in date, perhaps originating in the medieval period. However their fills belied this impression, and these must have been quite recent features. Otherwise all the features and deposits within this trench appear to relate to modern use of this part of the site for ancillary buildings related to the garage shown on the 1967 Ordnance Survey plan. The quantity of discarded parts from cars and lorries which lay within the undergrowth would seem to confirm this interpretation.

Trench 17

Location: Centre of the site

Plan dimensions: 4.90m x 5.00m

Depth to natural: 1.05m

Naturally-formed soils were formed from mid orange-coloured clay and silt, with patches of sand and common flints. This was sealed by a 0.25m thick layer of sub-soil formed from sandy silt [086]. This was in turn sealed by a further layer of darker sub-soil [094] of 0.20m depth. This upper layer had apparently sealed a small pit or large post-hole [099] seen in the north-western corner of the trench and filled with sandy silt overlain by a darker soil [086] which contained a sherd of 15th- to 16th-century pottery. The fill of the pit or post-hole had been cut by a rectangular feature [101], possibly a ditch remnant, two sides of which lay outside the excavation limits. This had been filled with a mid grey brown silty sand [102] which contained a flint flake and flint piercer. Two flint blades were also recovered from soil derived during the machining.

A small double pig burial [098] lay to the south-east of these features and similarly cut the lower sub-soil. The pigs were neo-natal.

The topsoil [091] in this trench was 0.50m thick and was formed of a dark brown silty sand. This had been sealed by layers of make-up comprising tarmac, ash and silty soils [090] which were covered by a compact layer of hoggin [089]. This was reinstated after backfilling had been undertaken.

Discussion

The 1885 Ordnance Survey plan shows this to have been a garden to a range of buildings fronting High Street and the features encountered in this trench surely related to this usage. No features of any antiquity were discovered. It is probable that some of the make-up layers for the present-day surface were derived from the iron works which lay to the north of this trench location during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Trench 18

Location: Commercial Road

Plan dimensions: 4.90m x 5.00m

Depth to natural: 1.15m

Natural soils comprised mid orange-coloured clay and silt, with patches of sand and common flints. This was sealed by a 0.25m thick layer of pale grey brown silty sand sub-soil [069]. The sub-soil apparently sealed a shallow east-to-west aligned ditch [071] which ran the length of the trench and was up to 0.80m wide. This contained a single flint flake. The silty sand fill was truncated by a re-cut of the ditch [073] immediately to the south. This later trench was itself cut by an east-to-west aligned foundation trench [079] which contained a brick wall [085]. The fill of the foundation trench contained silty sand with much building rubble and forty-seven sherds of 19th-century pottery.

The wall formed the northern elevation of a range of buildings and ended where it butted against another brick wall [086] on the same alignment. This second wall returned to the south to form a partition between the two rooms. The eastern room was additionally partitioned with thin brick walls.

A great depth (0.90m) of extremely compact make-up [068] sealed the ditch fills. This was formed from 0.05m thick alternating layers of rolled clinker, hoggin, loam and ash, iron waste and flint. This was sealed by a gravel layer which formed the present car-park surface. These surfaces were also present within the western room of the building, indicating that the material was used as an internal surface.

Discussion

The ditches almost certainly formed the field boundary to be seen on the 1815 Enclosure map. The buildings are shown on the 1885 Ordnance Survey plan and were still standing when the site was resurveyed in 1967. These may have formed ancillary buildings to the iron works which lay to the north-west, and the rolled surfaces to the north of the buildings were almost certainly formed with waste materials from this works, since the map evidence shows this to have been the sole access into the iron works.

3.0 Conclusions

The site evaluated thus far will be discussed by general area:

- High Street (east)
- Norwich Street
- Banyard Place (north)
- Commercial Road
- Centre of site

High Street (east)

There was no evidence for any occupation or use of the site prior to the construction of a range of buildings in the late 17th or early 18th centuries. These fronted High Street and in their construction had stripped the plot of its sub- and topsoils.

Norwich Street

There was evidence for division of the southern side of the street prior to the construction of a flint and mortar building. The date of construction for this building is unclear, but evident fire damage to its already demolished rear wall suggests it pre-dated either 1581 or 1679. Thereafter the plot was occupied by a building, or succession of buildings, until demolition in the 20th century.

Activities behind this street frontage appear to have commenced in the medieval period, when a large quarry was opened and backfilled. A property boundary in the form of a ditch had cut the quarry fill. The evidence from the two trenches opened in this area imply that occupation *may* have commenced during the later medieval period.

Banyard Place (north)

Activities in this area appear to have been restricted to the division of land with field boundary ditches from the 16th or 17th centuries, and subsequent use as back gardens and orchards. Some commercial activity occurred in the northern part of this area during the 20th century.

Commercial Road

The two trenches in this area showed that this land was not utilised in any apparent sense until a field boundary was dug. The age of this ditch was not ascertained but it was not likely to have been of great antiquity. From the 19th century the frontage (and a side road) were used for buildings, which have since been demolished.

Centre of site

The five trenches in this area (T8, T9, T13, T15 and T17) showed that the central part of the site was not occupied or used (except for minor field boundaries) until the 19th century, when an iron works was established in the present-day location of 'Thing-me-Bobs'). This industrial activity had resulted in a large amount of waste materials being spread across much of this area. Some of these may contain contaminants.

Archaeological potential

From the results of evaluation Trenches 5 to 18 it is possible to suggest that;

- Evidence for prehistoric activity on the site was minimal (amounting to a few dozen well dispersed worked flints) and the potential for prehistoric features or artefacts being located on the site must be viewed as low.
- There was no evidence for Romano-British activity on the site and the potential for Romano-British features or artefacts being located on the site must be viewed as low.
- There was no evidence for Saxon activity on the site and the potential for Saxon features or artefacts being located on the site must be viewed as low.
- There was no evidence for early medieval activity on the site and the potential for early medieval features or artefacts being located on the site must be viewed as low.
- Evidence for medieval activity on the site was minimal and the potential for medieval features or artefacts being located on the site must be viewed as low to middling.
- Evidence for late medieval activity on the site was minimal and the potential for late medieval features or artefacts being located on the site must be viewed as low to middling.
- Evidence for post-medieval activity on the site was minimal and the potential for medieval features or artefacts being located on the site must be viewed as low to middling.
- Evidence for early modern activity on the site was minimal and the potential for early modern features or artefacts being located on the site must be viewed as low to middling.

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

