

**NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT**

Report No. 903

**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
Hopton-on-Sea CE First School**

39861 HPT

Kenneth Penn

January 2004

© Norfolk Archaeological Unit



## Contents

---

### ***Summary***

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Geology and Topography
- 3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background
- 4.0 Methodology
- 5.0 Results
- 6.0 Conclusions

### ***Acknowledgements***

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

### **Figures**

- Fig.1 Site location
- Fig.2 Trench location
- Fig.3 Trench 2, plan
- Fig.4 Trench 2, sections

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 (14/01/2004). **Reference copy: no further copies to be made.**



Location: Hopton CE First School, Hopton-on-Sea  
Grid Ref: TM 5303 9993  
HER No.: 39861 HPT  
Date of fieldwork: 12th January 2004

---

## **Summary**

*This evaluation was located in an area of archaeological interest at Hopton-on-Sea, in east Norfolk, close to the medieval parish church of St Margaret. There was, therefore, potential for human remains and other archaeological deposits to be disturbed.*

*Trench 1 was devoid of archaeological deposits or finds, while Trench 2 (the more northerly) revealed two postholes and two or more linear features, of unknown but possibly post-medieval date. These results demonstrate that the area of proposed development lies beyond the graveyard of St. Margaret's church.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

(Fig. 1)

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

Hopton-on-Sea is situated on the coast, between Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, where the school, and therefore the area under evaluation, lies immediately adjacent to the ruined parish church of St Margaret. This church has possible origins in the early medieval period (although Domesday Book makes no mention of any church here). The school lies immediately adjacent to the church, on its south side.

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

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design prepared by the NAU (Ref: 1708/JB) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: ARJH 29.12.03).

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 within the present village centre, next to the ruins of St Margaret's church on a virtually level sandy plateau at about 10m OD. The site lies 0.5km from the coastal cliffs, although the coast lay further to the east in medieval times.

The local geology is glacial drift, locally seen to be a pale stony sand or sandy clays.

## **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. To the immediate north is the parish church (NHER 10760), which dates to the 14th century, but which may have earlier fabric in the chancel. Within the wider area there is much evidence of prehistoric activity, with the closest find of this date located 250m from the present site (NHER10759). From within the school grounds, however, comes the find of a Roman coin (NHER 22928), suggesting activity of this period close by.

The location of the site close to the parish church suggests that it was situated close to the centre of the village. There was, therefore, a strong likelihood that the site stood close (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 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.

Surveying was carried out using the OS benchmark on Station Road, with a value of 7.14 m OD, transferred to a TBM at the school gate of 9.83m OD.

Conditions were generally good, with some rainy weather but no wind.

## 5.0 Results

(Fig. 2)

Both trenches lay in the grassy play area and each measured 4m x 4m.

### Trench 1

Trench 1 was laid out and the topsoil removed by machine in spits. This was a dark red-brown sandy loam, almost stone-free, about 0.85m deep. This rested directly on the natural subsoil, a pale yellow-orange sandy clay, fairly mottled. No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

### Trench 2

(Figs 2, 3 and 4)

Trench 2 was laid out to the north, closer to the ruined church. As in Trench 1, the same sequence of topsoil [1] and subsoil was recorded, the topsoil being some 0.85m deep.

Towards the south-west corner, the topsoil contained patches of soft orange-red brick, probably associated with a patch of this material [2] cut into the natural subsoil. This appeared to be the remains of post-medieval bricks, possibly associated also with a piece of modern concrete drain found just below the surface (in an upright position).

The natural subsoil was cut by two postholes ([4] and [6]) and by three linear features ([8], [10], [12]), all possibly associated. Postholes [4] and [6] were both circular, fairly shallow as recorded and contained dark grey sandy loams ([5] and [7]).

The main linear feature was a ditch [8] that was joined, or cut, by [12] (their junction was indistinct) and was probably also cut by a slot [10]. These all contained the same mid-dark grey/brown sandy loam, virtually stone-free. Ditch [12] cut the patch of soft brick material [2] and is therefore likely to have been of relatively late date.

Sections were cut across each feature, recorded (Fig. 4) and then further material removed in an attempt to find dating material.

The sole find was a copper alloy object, possibly a button, found unstratified from the topsoil [1]. This was of relatively modern date.

## 6.0 Conclusions

Although no direct dating evidence was found for the postholes and ditches, their moist loamy fills and the fact that 'ditch' [12] cut the patch of brick point to a later date.

The almost total lack of finds suggests that this was open land until recent times, with the ditches being for drainage, without the debris that one might anticipate from an occupied site.

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 Jarvis Projects who funded it. Thanks to Mrs Thompson and her staff for her interest and help during this work. The work was carried out by the writer and Chris Birks, with Barrie Sharrock undertaking the metal detector survey. 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	2	Dark red-brown sandy loam topsoil.	Post-medieval?
2	2	Patch of brick, in cut 3	Post-medieval?
3	2	Cut for 2	Post-medieval?
4	2	Cut for posthole. Fill 5.	Post-medieval?
5	2	Fill of 4. Dark grey sandy loam.	Post-medieval?
6	2	Cut for posthole. Fill 7.	Post-medieval?
7	2	Fill of 6. Dark grey sandy loam.	Post-medieval?
8	2	Cut for ditch. Fill 9.	Post-medieval?
9	2	Fill of 8. Mid-dark grey brown sandy loam.	Post-medieval?
10	2	Cut for ditch. Fill 11.	Post-medieval?
11	2	Fill of 10. Mid-dark grey brown sandy loam.	Post-medieval?
12	2	Cut for ditch. Fill 13.	Post-medieval?
13	2	Fill of 12. Mid-dark grey brown sandy loam.	Post-medieval?





Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:10,000

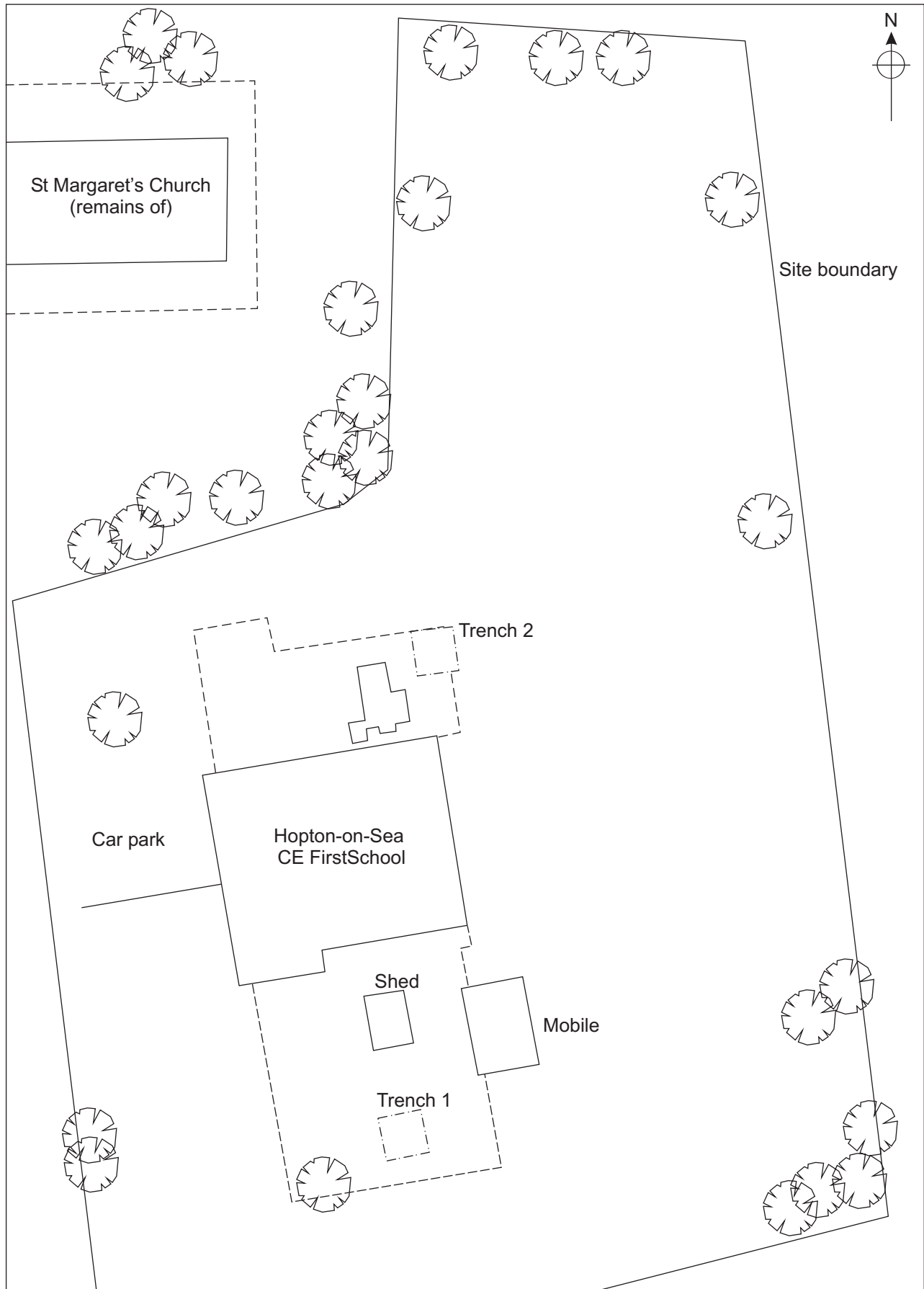


Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:500

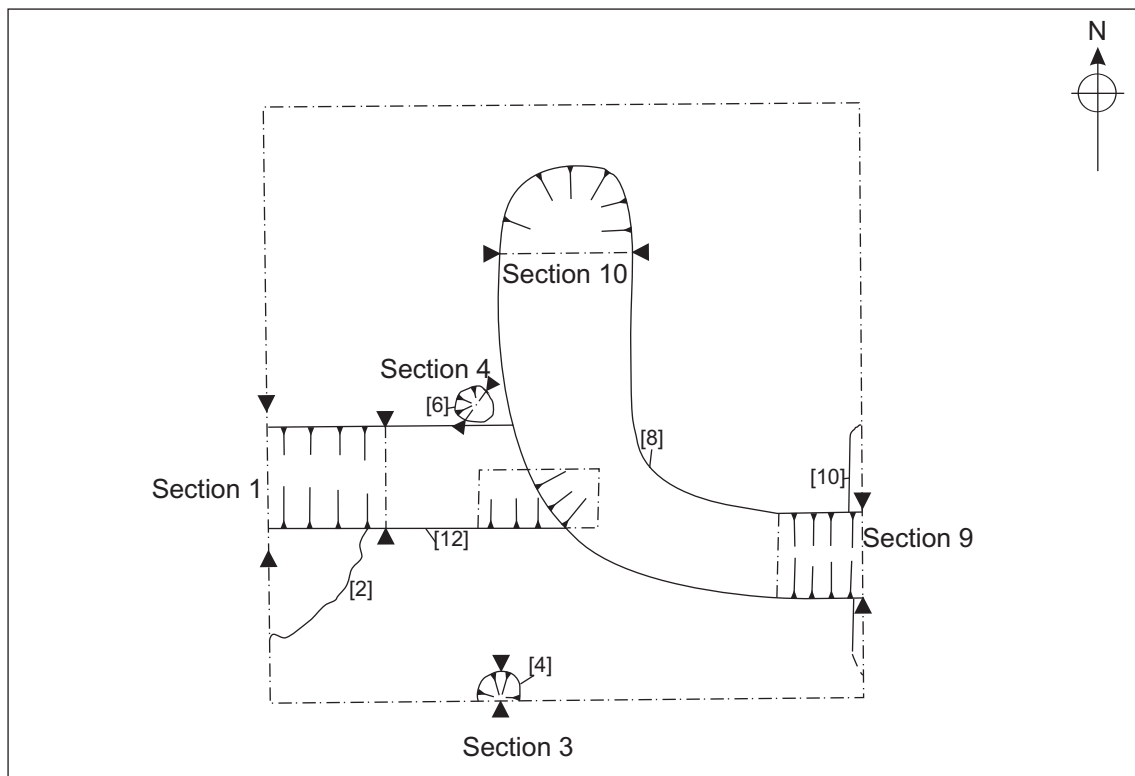
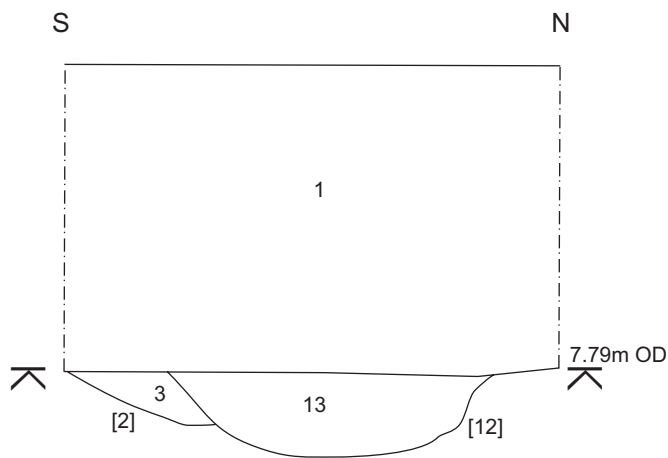
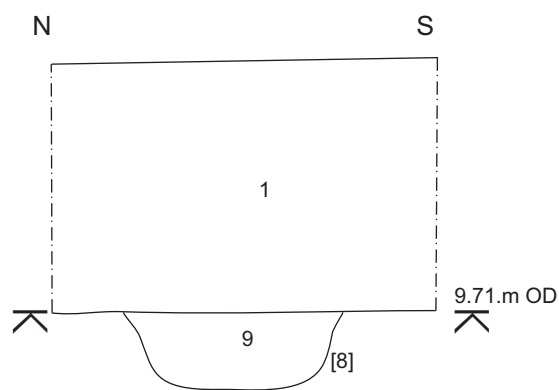


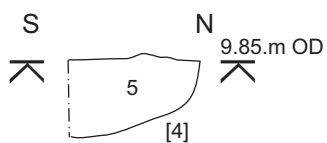
Figure 3. Trench 2, plan. Scale 1:50



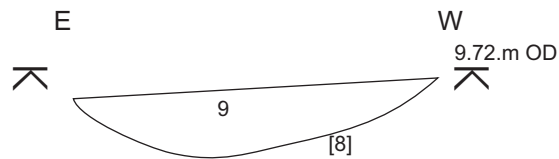
East facing section 1



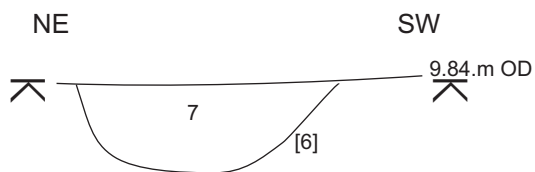
West facing section 9



East facing section 3



North facing section 10



North-west facing section 4



Figure 4. Trench 2, sections. Scale 1:20