

Report № 1158

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Keeling Hall, Foulsham, Norfolk

NHER 51305 FLS



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May 2008

BAU 1172

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| NAU ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT CHECKLIST | | |
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Location: Keeling Hall Lane, Foulsham
District: North Norfolk
Grid Ref: TG 0474 2517
HER No: 51305 FLS
Date of fieldwork: 27 February to 14 March 2008

Summary

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief which took place during late February and March 2008 at Keeling Hall Farm, Foulsham, Norfolk. The work was carried out in order to monitor the archaeological impact of groundworks being excavated to provide foundations for the construction of a modern home. The construction site was situated directly adjacent to the medieval moated site of Keeling Hall (NHER 3102) and therefore had the potential to disturb medieval remains. The watching brief recorded no archaeological features or finds.

1.0 Introduction

The archaeological watching brief was commissioned by Mr Ken Bowden of The Blue Door Development Company Ltd. This was in response to a brief written by Norfolk Landscape archaeology, stipulating archaeological monitoring during groundworks for the construction of a residential home (NLA Ref. AH 20/05/2005). The construction site was situated directly adjacent to the medieval moated site of Keeling Hall (NHER 3102; Fig. 1) and therefore had the potential to disturb medieval remains.

Works were observed when required between 27 February and 14 March 2008. The sub-contractors used a 360° tracked mechanical excavator for the digging of the footing trenches, and a wheeled JCB digger for the digging of trenches that were to provide services to the property.

Spoil and exposed surfaces were scanned with a metal-detector, but only finds of modern iron objects were made.

Conditions were generally good for the duration of the work.

The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service.

2.0 Observations

On 27 and 28 February the contractor excavated what is to become the cellar of the new building. This was a hole 9m long by 6m wide and 2.7m deep (Plate 1). A ledge approximately 1m wide and 0.8m deep was then created around the edge of this hole to create a step in the section face for safety purposes. An access path was also excavated in the eastern side of the trench. This was steep, at an angle of about 60°.

The ground excavated for the cellar was composed of an initial layer of grassed topsoil, approx. 0.05m deep, overlying a layer of dark brown topsoil and rubble. The rubble largely comprised flint (a mix of large lumps approx. 0.1m in diameter,

and coarse gravel) and brick fragments, with occasional tiles. This rubble layer was only 0.2m deep on the western side of the trench, but sloped down toward the east (where the deposit contained a lot more soil and the rubble contained more brick) to reach a maximum depth of about 1.2m. On the eastern side of the trench, the rubble layer lay over a rust-red layer of sand containing flint lumps. The base of this layer appeared to be quite level and was only present where the overlying rubble deposit was less deep.

The main deposit was a solid layer of hard, marbled clay, light tan-brown and pale grey in colour, mixed with very frequent flecks of chalk (approximately 10% of the whole). This clay lay beneath the rubble and red sand. Its full depth was not identified.

An old ceramic drain ran NE–SW across the north-western corner of the trench. This was set into a cut filled with dark, topsoil-like soil. The pipe was of a dark red earthenware-type fabric. A second ceramic drainpipe was visible at a slightly higher level in the upper part of the south-facing section once it had been stepped back. This pipe ran roughly E–W and had a metallic-looking glaze.

On 6 March the excavation of several pile pits was observed (Plates 2 and 3). The pits ranged from 1.5m to 2.3m in depth. Each pit displayed a sequence of disturbed topsoil over backfilled brown silt and rubble. The natural was a light yellow-brown, sometimes grey, clay with frequent large chalk inclusions. Deposits became deeper where an old pond had existed towards the north of the plot.

On 7 March a topsoil strip of an area at north of site was observed. Foundations 0.6m in depth were then excavated in this area on 13–14 March (Plate 4) revealing no features or finds of archaeological significance.

Finally, the excavation of a long service trench, running from the modern road to the site revealed no archaeological features (Plate 3).

3.0 Conclusions

No significant archaeological features were noted during any of the observed groundworks.

Acknowledgements

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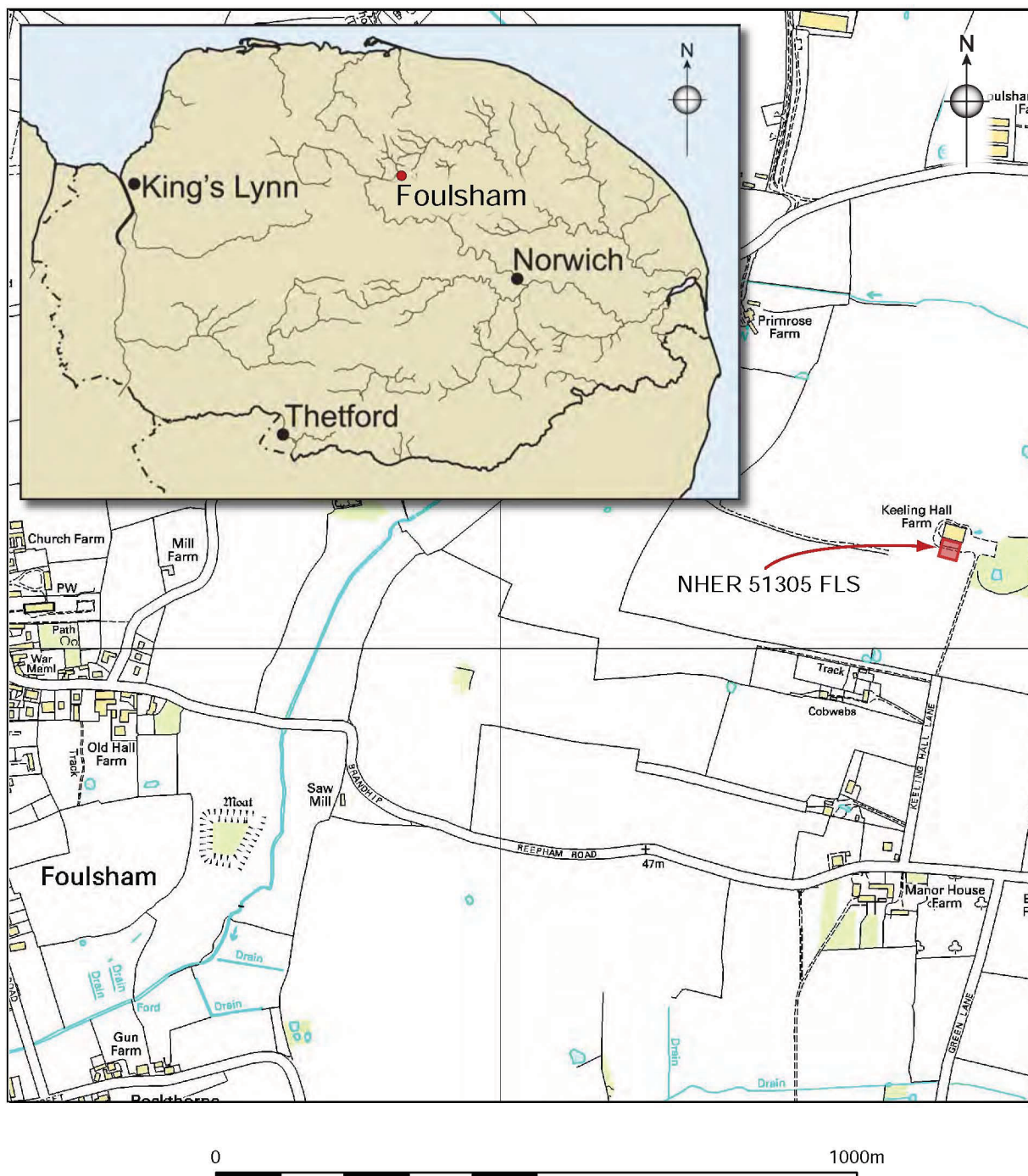


Figure 1. Site location

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Plate 1 Excavated cellar, looking north-west



Plate 2 The deepest of the pilepits



Plate 3 Excavation of pile pit



Plate 4 Foundations being dug in stripped area at far north of site



Plate 5 Excavated service trench, looking north towards the construction site