

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 828

Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at
St. Anne's Wharf, Mountergate, Norwich

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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 (10/06/2003). **Reference copy: no further copies to be made.**

Location: St. Anne's Wharf, Mountergate, Norwich
Grid Ref.: TG 623513 308287
HER No.: 374N
Date of work: 30th April to 2nd May 2003

Summary

Three pile proving test pits were excavated by contractors on behalf of Wilson Bowden Developments in order to determine the condition of existing piles and pile-caps within a former brewery building. An archaeological watching brief was maintained during these operations.

1.0 Introduction and Methodology

The excavation of three pits to test the integrity of existing pile caps was required prior to proposed re-development of the former Watney Mann brewery distribution depot on Mountergate in Norwich (Fig. 1). Norfolk Archaeological Unit was asked by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants to monitor the excavation of the test pits, and excavate and record any surviving archaeological deposits and/or features uncovered. The test pits were machined by contractors working for Wilson Bowden Developments. The archaeological monitoring was conducted to a specification set out in a letter to Ian Hooke of Wilson Bowden Developments from Norfolk Archaeological Unit (dated 29/1/03).

The test pits were located within a large, derelict warehouse and observations were made under artificial lighting. Access to the site was good. Trench locations and sections were recorded at appropriate scales, and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

The concrete slab within the warehouse has a datum value of 4.25m OD which was used for the survey work.

The site archive, which follows the record sequences set up for previous excavations on the site, is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service.

2.0 Geology and Topography

The site of these works lies between King Street and the River Wensum, towards the bottom of an east-facing slope. The underlying geology of the area is Norwich Crag, a mixture of glacially deposited sands with pockets of gravel and clay, overlying chalk bedrock.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site of the proposed development is situated within a part of Norwich which is Late Saxon in origin and which was later enclosed by the medieval city walls. It lies adjacent to King Street, or 'Cunesford' - literally the King's ford. This was one of the major routes of the Pre-conquest and medieval town. It seems likely from recent archaeological work in the vicinity that a Late Saxon defensive boundary crossed King Street on or about the line of Mountergate and Stepping Lane (Shelley forthcoming) and, if this is the case, the site therefore lies close to one of the most important entry points into the early town.

During the medieval period the area was occupied by an Augustinian friary, founded in 1272. The Friary was dissolved in the 16th century and the site eventually passed into the possession of the Dukes of Norfolk, who built a grand dwelling (Howard House) on the corner of King Street and Mountergate. Thereafter the friary precinct was landscaped and a large formal garden created.

The brewery shed formed one part of a redevelopment of the former Watney Mann brewery site in 1969/1970. The resultant shed was used as a distribution depot, a function it performed until closure in the mid 1990s.

4.0 Results

4.1 Test Pits 1 and 2 (Fig. 2)

Both these pits were aligned in a north-west to south-east direction, and measured approximately 2m by 1m. Test Pit 1 was excavated to a depth of 1.8m and Test Pit 2 to a depth of 2.0m. No archaeological deposits or features were observed during the excavation of either test pit, although a block of heavily abraded limestone ashlar was recovered from the rubble fill of Test Pit 1. This was later discarded.

4.2 Test Pit 3 (Figs 2 and 3)

Test Pit 3 measured approximately 2m by 1m and was excavated to a depth of 2.0m.

The earliest archaeological evidence from this test pit was a deposit of fragmented and crushed lime mortar [837]. This deposit sloped down from 2.35m OD in the north-west to 2.05m OD in the south-east.

An orange-brown sandy make-up deposit [838] overlaid [837]. This also sloped downwards from 2.70m OD in the north-west to 2.40m OD in the south-east. A layer of crushed and fragmented lime-mortar [839] sealed [838]. This layer was only 0.05m thick and conformed to the profile of the underlying deposits.

Above [839] was another orange-brown sandy make-up [840]. This deposit sloped downwards from 2.90m OD in the north-west to 2.70m OD in the south-east. A final layer of crushed and fragmented lime-mortar [841] varied in thickness from 0.05m in the north-west to 0.25m thick in the south-east and formed a level surface at 2.95m OD.

Deposit [841] was overlaid by is a substantial humic, garden-soil deposit [842]. This was 0.65m thick and contained many small fragments of lime-mortar, red brick and tile and charcoal flecks.

No finds were recovered from any of these deposits.

5.0 Conclusions

All that could be seen in Test Pit 1 and 2 was 20th-century rubble. It is likely that both test pits were excavated exclusively within the fills of the construction trenches for the pile caps. All deposits recorded in Test Pit 3 were of post-medieval date. The series of mortary dumps and sandy make-up deposits [837] - [841] may represent activity immediately after the Dissolution although it is also possible that these were landscaping deposits generated by the preparation of the site for the formal gardens associated with Howard House.

The garden soil deposit was almost certainly contemporary with the formal gardens created by the Dukes of Norfolk.

Bibliography

Shelley, A. forthcoming *Dragon Hall, Norwich: Excavation and survey of a late medieval merchant's trading complex, E. Anglian Archaeol.*

Acknowledgements

Site work was undertaken by Andrea Cox and Neil Moss and the project was managed and the report edited by Andy Shelley. The report was illustrated and produced by Maggie Foottit and formatted by Maggie Foottit and David Dobson. Thanks are due to Ian Hooke and Nik Codd of Wilson Bowden Developments for their contribution

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context numbers follow on from previous work in 1998-1999.

Context No.	Category	Description/interpretation
837	Deposit	Lime-mortar, demolition debris
838	Deposit	Sandy make-up
839	Deposit	Lime-mortar, demolition debris
840	Deposit	Sandy make-up
841	Deposit	Lime-mortar, demolition debris
842	Deposit	Garden soil



Figure 1. Site Location. Scale 1:5000



Figure 2. Trench Location. Scale 1:1000

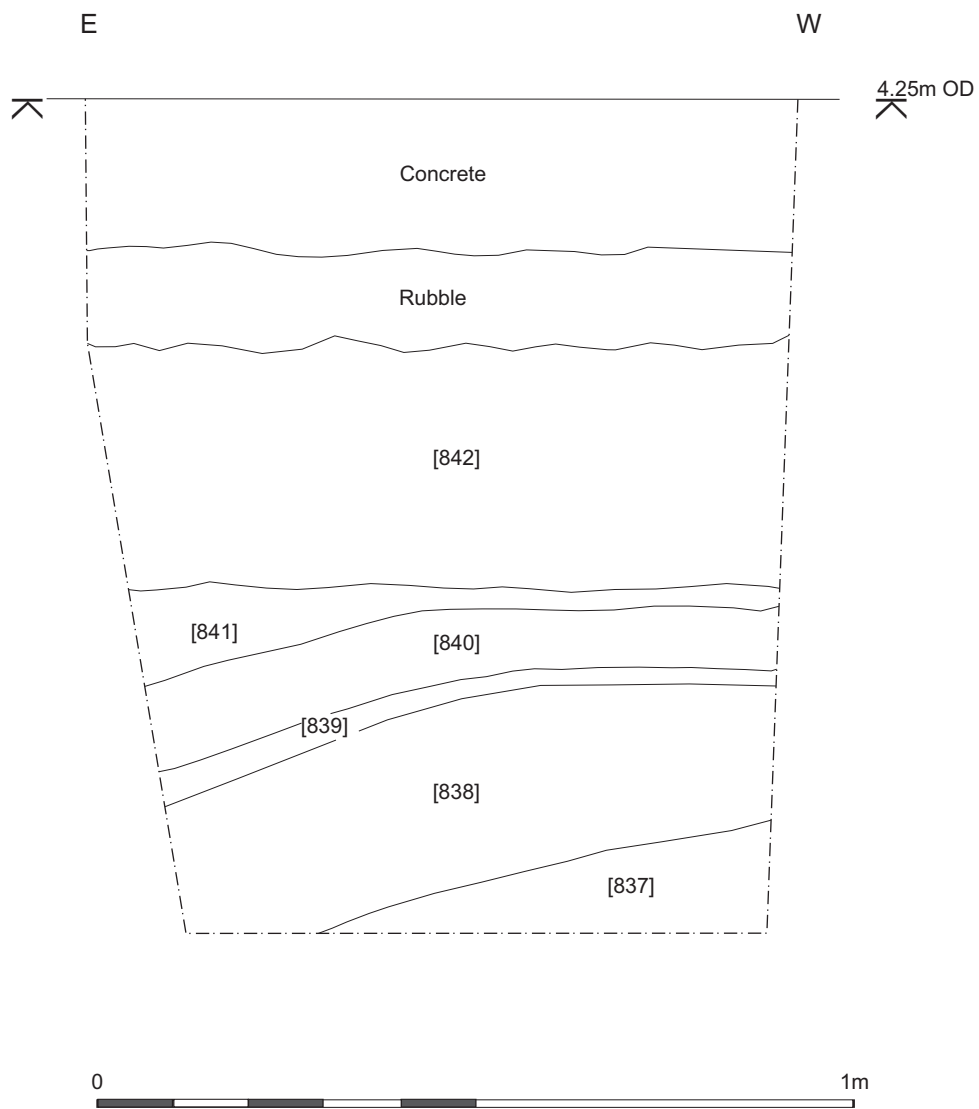


Figure 3. Trench 3. North-facing elevation. Scale 1:10