

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 894

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
the Canoe Club, the Riverside Centre,
The Staithe, Bungay, Suffolk**

BUN 049

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Location: Canoe Club, Riverside Centre, The Staithe, Bungay
Grid Ref: TM 3409 8980
SMR No.: BUN 049
Date of fieldwork: 21st to 28th October 2003

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Norfolk Archaeological Unit at the Riverside Centre, The Staithe, Bungay in October 2003. A series of post-medieval brick and mortar walls which formed part of a rectangular building were observed.

As Faden's map of 1797 does not show any buildings in the vicinity of the site, the building was probably built during the 19th century. A sherd of pottery recovered from a deposit later in date than the building, along with evidence from 19th- and 20th-century maps, suggests that demolition took place during the 20th century. No information was collected to indicate what the building was used for, although its closeness to a drain accessible from the River Waveney suggests that it may have had an use associated with the river.

1.0 Introduction

(Figs 1 and 2)

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU) at the Riverside Centre, The Staithe, Bungay, in October 2003. The work was commissioned by Mr Howard Birch of Howard Birch Associates in advance of the construction of a new Canoe Club building. A proposal for the construction work on the 0.075ha site has been submitted to the local Planning Authority (W/1162/7BA).

The archaeological work was undertaken to the specifications set out in a Project Design prepared by the NAU (Ref: WB/07/03) and in accordance with a Brief issued by Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service (Ref: Bungay-Canoe200307).

The watching brief was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 — Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results enabled decisions to be made by the Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of the archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, although it will be permanently curated by the Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Geology and Topography

(Figs 1 and 2)

The site is situated on the north-eastern edge of Bungay, to the south-east of Falcon Bridge. It is situated on a small triangular shaped island which is bordered on the north by the River Waveney, on the south-west by a subsidiary channel of the river and on the west by a drain (The Staithe) that connects the river and the subsidiary channel.

At the time of the watching brief the site was open ground with areas of rough grass. The topsoil was up to 0.2m thick and overlay at least 0.8m of make-up and dumped deposits. These deposits overlay at least 3m of black peat of the Mendham Association. This is above Pleistocene Norwich Crag sands that overlie Cretaceous chalk (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 6-19, 247-249).

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

Searches of the Suffolk Sites and Monuments Record and the Norfolk Historic Environment Record revealed that prior to the watching brief no previous archaeological work had taken place on the site. They also showed that a number of investigations and observations have been recorded in the vicinity (within a 1km radius). These provide evidence for activity from the Mesolithic through to the post-medieval period and are discussed by broad chronological period below.

Mesolithic and Neolithic

Mesolithic flint artefacts have been recovered from two sites located about 0.8km to the north-east of the new Canoe Club (Norfolk HER 10613 and 29125). One of these has also produced Neolithic artefacts (HER 10613). Objects of Neolithic date have also been collected from two sites situated between 0.5km and 0.7km north-east of the development area, a place located about 0.6km to the south-west and from a location approximately 1km to the south-east (HER 22253 and 29713; Suffolk SMR BUN 040 and BUN MISC 14977). In 1970-1 excavations at Broome Heath, Ditchingham (1.5km to the north-east) revealed Neolithic post-holes, pits and hearths below and within a 'C'-shaped enclosure (NHER 10602; Wainwright 1972, 1-4). To the east of the enclosure a long barrow (HER 10597) survives and a possible long barrow or mortuary enclosure has been excavated (HER 36289; Robertson forthcoming).

A site about 0.5km to the east and one located about the same distance to the north-east have yielded Neolithic/Bronze Age artefacts (HER 22253 and SMR BUN MISC 1005). Evidence of Bronze Age metalworking and a socketed axe head have been collected from a field located about 0.8km to the north-east (HER 10613). Several barrows of a similar date stand on Broome Heath (HER 10611 and 10624), whilst Neolithic/Bronze Age features have been excavated further east (HER 36289; Robertson forthcoming). An evaluation at Nethergate Street (SMR BUN 045), c. 0.6km to the east of the development site, revealed a peat layer which has the potential to contain further evidence of prehistoric activity in the area.

Iron Age

A group of fields to the north of the River Waveney, sited between Chainbridge Beck and Wainford Road to the north-east of the site, have yielded a reasonable collection of Iron Age finds (HER 10613, 22253, 22254, 22255, 22256, 29125 and 29173). The artefacts include brooches, a linchpin and at least twelve coins and may suggest the presence of an Iron Age settlement.

Romano-British

Roman pottery, metalwork and coins have also been collected from this group of fields, from a field to the south-west of them (HER 22258) and from a site to the south of the Waveney, close to Wainford Bridge (SMR MTT 010). Pottery, burnt daub, pits, post-holes and possible property boundaries have been excavated at a location to the north-east of the field group (HER 20444 and 36221), alongside a Roman road (on the line of Wainford Road; HER 10636 and SMR MTT 014).

A village of Roman date is known to have existed at Ditchingham beside the same road (Gurney 1994) and these finds may suggest that it continued southwards to a crossing of the Waveney. Field boundaries, possibly ones associated with the settlement, have been excavated to the north (HER 36829 and 36938; Robertson forthcoming). At least ten coins have been found at six locations within the present area of settlement in Bungay (SMR BUN 002, BUN 014; BUN 015; BUN MISC 1009, BUN MISC 1010, BUN MISC 1011 and BUN MISC 1015). These may represent the further Roman settlement or activity within fields or open land.

Early Saxon

About 1km to the south-east of the site two Early Saxon furnished graves have been excavated and may form part of an inhumation cemetery (SMR BUN 003). A glass cup (BUN MISC 1017) found at an uncertain location in Bungay could have come from this possible cemetery. Early Saxon brooches, a strap fitting and girdle hangers have been collected from three fields approximately 0.5km to the north-east of the development site (HER 10613, 22255 and 29173). These may indicate the presence of another inhumation cemetery, one that may have been associated with a possible cremation cemetery on Broome Heath (HER 10628) and a settlement excavated to the east of it (HER 36829; Robertson forthcoming).

Middle Saxon

Middle Saxon activity is attested by a pit and Ipswich-ware pottery discovered about 0.7km to the east of the site and a coin found approximately 0.4km to the north-east (SMR BUN 040 and HER 22253).

Late Saxon

The origins of the modern town of Bungay lie in the Late Saxon period. A settlement was established to the west of the development site with a planned grid of streets prior to the Norman Conquest (Penn 1998; Wade and Dymond 1999) and although it was not classified as a borough by the time of the Domesday Book, the presence of three churches suggests that it was urban in status. The surviving Church of the Holy Trinity (SMR BUN 020) has long and short work that may be Late Saxon in date. Further evidence for Late Saxon activity is provided by Thetford-type ware pottery

which has been collected from four sites to the west of the site (SMR BUN 011, BUN 023, BUN 040 and BUN MISC 1021).

Medieval

Bungay was a successful market town during the medieval period. The southern, western and eastern parts of the town not protected by the River Waveney were surrounded by a ditch and a bank (SMR BUN 007, BUN 018, BUN 025 and BUN 040); the watching brief site lies about 0.2km to the east of this defended area. During the 12th century a motte and bailey castle was constructed by the Bigod family on the western side of the defended area (SMR BUN 004 and BUN 012).

A medieval chapel and leper hospital (SMR BUN 005) stood beside the road leading south from the defended town. This, along with medieval finds (BUN 023) which have been collected close to the road, suggest the existence of suburbs.

Post-medieval

During the post-medieval area the suburbs of Bungay grew in size and, probably as part of this spread, buildings were constructed in the immediate vicinity of the site for the first time. By the 1730s, at the latest, a watermill (SMR BUN 037) stood approximately 100m to the south.

4.0 Methodology

(Figs 2 and 3)

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during the excavation of foundation trenches and foul and surface water drains by the building contractor. The Brief required the archaeological work to be carried out by a trained archaeologist prior to the construction of the new Canoe Club.

The building contractors excavated the foundation trenches for ground beams to a depth of 0.4m, whilst foul and surface water drains were excavated to a depth of 0.8m. Although the majority of the excavation took place without an archaeologist present, all the trenches were made available for archaeological observation and recording.

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

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector, although no metal objects were found. All hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

5.0 Results

(Fig. 3; Appendix 1)

A series of walls were discovered in the southern part of the watching brief area and represent the earliest archaeology encountered. The foundation and the drainage trenches were not excavated deep enough to reveal Mendham Association peat nor Pleistocene Norwich Crag sands.

Wall [6] and [7] was constructed of bricks and a white lime mortar, was 0.34m wide and orientated roughly north-to-south. It was part of the same construction as east to west aligned wall [5], with which it formed an 'L'-shaped structure. The bricks in both walls measured 0.22m long, 0.11m wide by 0.055m thick and were post-medieval in date.

About 0.10m to the north and 0.23m to the east of wall [6] and [7] was another roughly north to south aligned wall [24]. This wall was about 0.45m wide and contained bricks that measured 0.22m long, 0.11m wide by 0.055m thick and were post-medieval in date. They were held together with a white lime mortar.

Wall [24] was abutted on its eastern side by a roughly east to west orientated wall ([25]). Wall [25] was constructed of bricks of similar proportions and a similar mortar to those in wall [24] and measured 0.23m wide. Attached to its eastern end was wall [26]. Constructed from similar bricks and a similar mortar, it was distinguished by the fact it was wide 0.34m wide. It could not be ascertained which of wall [25] and [26] was the earliest in date.

To the south of wall [26] was north to south aligned wall [27], the full width of which was not revealed within the foundation trenches. It was made from post-medieval bricks which were 0.22m long, 0.11m wide and 0.055m thick and a white lime mortar. The constructional relationship between walls [26] and [27] was unclear.

Eleven brick and lime mortar piers were observed ([10], [11], [14], [15], [16], [17], [18], [19], [20], [21] and [22]) all of which appeared to be made from the same bricks (which measured 0.22m long, 0.11m wide by 0.055m thick) and mortar. Three were bonded to walls.

Masonry section [8] was observed abutting the eastern side of wall [6] and [7] and maybe an additional pier. While masonry section [23] was located to the south, within the right angle formed by walls [24] and [25], and may also constitute another pier.

Approximately 0.63m to the east of pier [21] was pier [20] and to the south of pier [21], and each about 0.2m to the west of wall [27], were two piers ([14] and [15]). Two piers ([16] and [17]) 2.6m apart were observed to the north of wall [25], these were on the same north to south alignment as piers [14] and [15]. To the east of the area of walls were two further piers ([10] and [11]). Pier [11] was seen about 0.85m to the east of the eastern end of wall [5] and pier [10] was situated c. 2m to the north of pier [11].

Between wall [5] and pier [14] were two large upright oak stakes ([28] and [29]). These were lifted by the building contractors and examined beside the foundation trenches. The tops of both were rough and ragged, suggesting that their upper parts had been broken off whilst they were in the ground. Both were c. 1m long (the surviving part) and were 0.15m in diameter. Neither retained any bark nor branches; these appeared to have been roughly removed using an axe and/or saw. The lower

0.3m or so of each was shaped into a point. The southernmost stake ([29]) was located 0.63m to the north of wall [5]. About 0.44m to the north, and approximately 2.2m to the south of pier [14], was the northernmost stake [28].

Two dumps of broken tiles were found. One ([12]) was laid against a wall ([6]) and pier ([8]); this stratigraphic relationship suggested that the deposition of the dump post-dated the construction, and possibly the demolition/disuse, of the wall and pier. The second dump ([9]) was found between piers [10] and [11], but no stratigraphic relationship survived to establish its dating in relation to them.

Above the tile dumps were a number of mixed make-up deposits of brown silty sand ([2], [3] and [4]) which contained occasional fragments of ceramic building material and a piece of 19th-century stoneware. With the exception of where the tile dumps were, these deposits continued beneath the level of the base of both the foundation and drainage trenches.

To the north of wall [25] the make-up deposits were sealed by demolition rubble ([13]) made-up of frequent pieces of brick, tile and mortar. Above the rubble (and above the make-up deposits to the south of wall [25]) was a dark brown sandy loam topsoil [1], from which a sherd of 18th- to 19th-century slipped redware was collected.

6.0 The Finds

The finds retrieved during this project are listed in Appendix 2.

6.1 *The post-medieval pottery*

A total of two fragments of post-medieval pottery were recovered, weighing 0.061kg.

The ceramics were quantified by recording the number of sherds present in each context, the estimated number of vessels represented and the weight of each fabric. Other characteristics such as condition and decoration were noted, and an overall date range for the pottery in each context was established. The pottery was recorded on *pro forma* sheets by context using letter codes based on fabric and form. The fabric codes used are based mainly on those identified in *Eighteen centuries of pottery from Norwich* (Jennings 1981), and supplemented by additional ones compiled by the Suffolk Unit (Anderson nd).

A single large fragment of a Late slipped redware vessel was present in a modern deposit of topsoil ([1]). Such pottery has been given an overall date of 18th to 19th century, although it continued to be made into the 20th century. A fragment of white stoneware which has a shallow moulded decoration was identified in make-up deposit [4]. The sherd dates from between the second quarter of the 19th century to the end of that century.

6.2 *Ceramic Building Material*

A single fragment of post medieval pan tile was recovered from make-up deposit [4] (weighing 0.055kg).

7.0 Conclusions

The bricks in all the walls and all the piers shared the same dimensions and were post-medieval in date which suggests that they are all contemporary, perhaps even part of a single building. As Faden's map of 1797 (Barringer 1989) does not show any buildings in the vicinity of the site, this building was probably built during the 19th century.

The building appears to have been rectangular. Walls [6], [7] and [24] formed the western wall (with the gap between the two wall suggesting a peculiar dog-leg along its length), the northern extent of which probably did not survive to be observed. Wall [5] formed the southern wall, and may have originally continued eastwards, incorporating pier [11]. Walls [25] and [27] were probably internal walls. The fact that wall [25] was narrower than the western and southern walls suggests that it may have been added once the outer walls had been constructed; wall [26] was the same width as the eastern and southern walls and may have been an original feature.

The six brick piers enclosed by the external walls ([5], [6], [7], [24], [25] and [27]) are likely to have served a structural purpose within the building, perhaps as buttresses or roof supports. The timber stakes ([28] and [29]) may have served a similar purpose, although it was unclear why timber should have been used in the south-east and not elsewhere. It is plausible that they represent an early phase in construction and were later replaced by brick piers that did not survive.

The location of piers [10] and [11] to the east of wall [27] hints at the former presence of an outer wall just to the east of them, or to a eastern wall surviving just beyond the edge of the watching brief area. The two piers [16] and [17] to the north of wall [25] suggest that the building once continued northwards and that a number of walls that once existed that did not survive to be seen.

As the walls continued below the level of the base of the foundation trenches, no floor or foundation levels were encountered. As a result, it seems likely that the tile dumps ([9] and [12]) were deposited after the disuse of the building (it is possible that the tiles came from the roof of the building). The make-up levels stratigraphically above the tile dumps were probably deposited in an attempt to level up the ground once the building had been demolished. The piece of 19th-century stoneware collected from one of the make-up deposits suggests that the building was demolished either in the 19th or 20th century.

The 1st edition and 2nd Ordnance Survey maps both show a long narrow building on the site (measuring 75m north to south by 23m east to west; OS 1884 Six Inch Suffolk Sheet XVII.NE; OS 1905 1:2500 Suffolk Sheet VIII.II). The southern part of this building is the one that was found during the watching brief. A late 20th-century map (OS 1996 Outdoor Leisure 40 The Broads; the only post 1905 map available for consultation) does not show it which suggests that it was demolished during 20th century.

No information was collected during the watching brief to indicate what the building was used for. Its location close to a drain, however, accessible from the River Waveney suggests that it may have had an use associated with the river. It could possibly have been a warehouse that was used to store materials delivered and collected by boat, while it is also possible it could have been used in association with the watermill (SMR BUN 037) located to the south. In 1850 David Walker was

operating wherries from The Staithe (Hunt & Co. 1850) and another possibility is that the building was used by his work.

Although numerous standing buildings built in the 19th and 20th centuries have been studied, the excavation of such buildings are rare. Buildings of the period are also poorly represented on the Suffolk SMR (Gould 1997, 78). This means that at present there is a general lack of comparative structural data (Gould 2000, 40). As a result, despite the fact that its use remains uncertain, the discovery of a building built in the 19th century and demolished in the 20th century is a useful addition to the archaeological and historical background of the area.

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Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	Description	Period
1	Deposit	Topsoil	Modern
2	Deposit	Make-up and dumped material	Modern?
3	Deposit	Make-up and dumped material	Modern?
4	Deposit	Make-up	Modern?
5	Masonry	North-to-south aligned brick wall	Post-medieval
6	Masonry	East-to-west aligned brick wall	Post-medieval
7	Masonry	East-to-west aligned brick wall	Post-medieval
8	Masonry	North-to-south aligned brick wall	Post-medieval
9	Deposit	Make-up and dumped material	Modern?
10	Masonry	Brick pier	Post-medieval
11	Masonry	Brick pier	Post-medieval
12	Deposit	Make-up and dumped material	Modern?
13	Deposit	Make-up and dumped material	Modern?
14	Masonry	Brick pier	Post-medieval
15	Masonry	Brick pier	Post-medieval
16	Masonry	Brick pier	Post-medieval
17	Masonry	Brick pier	Post-medieval
18	Masonry	Brick pier	Post-medieval
19	Masonry	Brick pier	Post-medieval
20	Masonry	Brick pier	Post-medieval
21	Masonry	Brick pier	Post-medieval
22	Masonry	Brick pier	Post-medieval
23	Masonry	North-to-south aligned brick wall	Post-medieval
24	Masonry	East-to-west aligned brick wall	Post-medieval
25	Masonry	North-to-south aligned brick wall	Post-medieval
26	Masonry	North-to-south aligned brick wall	Post-medieval
27	Masonry	East-to-west aligned brick wall	Post-medieval
28	Timber	Upright timber	Post-medieval
29	Timber	Upright timber	Post-medieval

Appendix 2: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Date
1	Late slipped redware pottery	1	0.049	18th to 19th century
4	Relief moulded white stoneware pottery	1	0.013	1820-1900
4	Post-medieval ceramic building material	1	0.055	



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

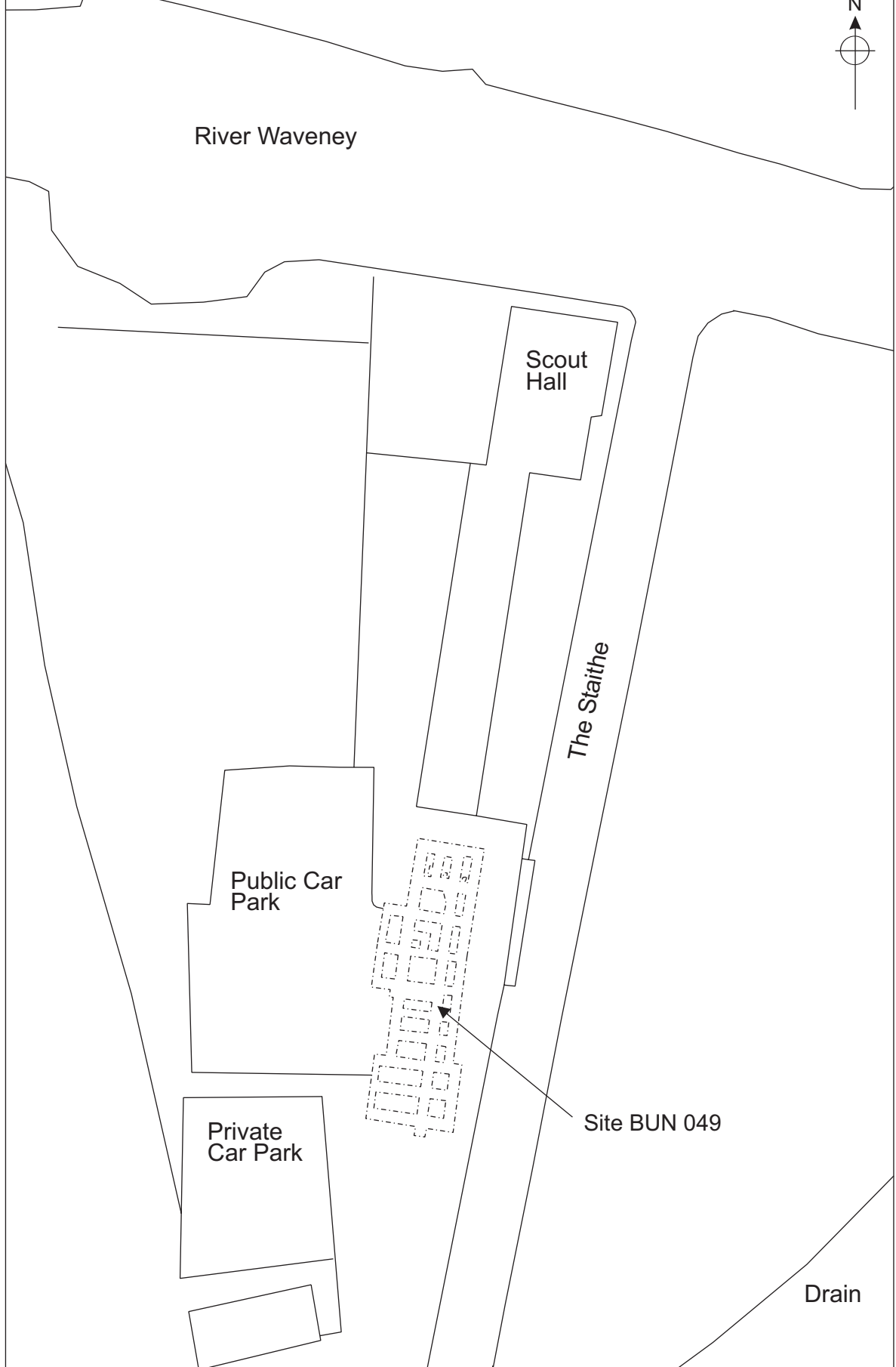
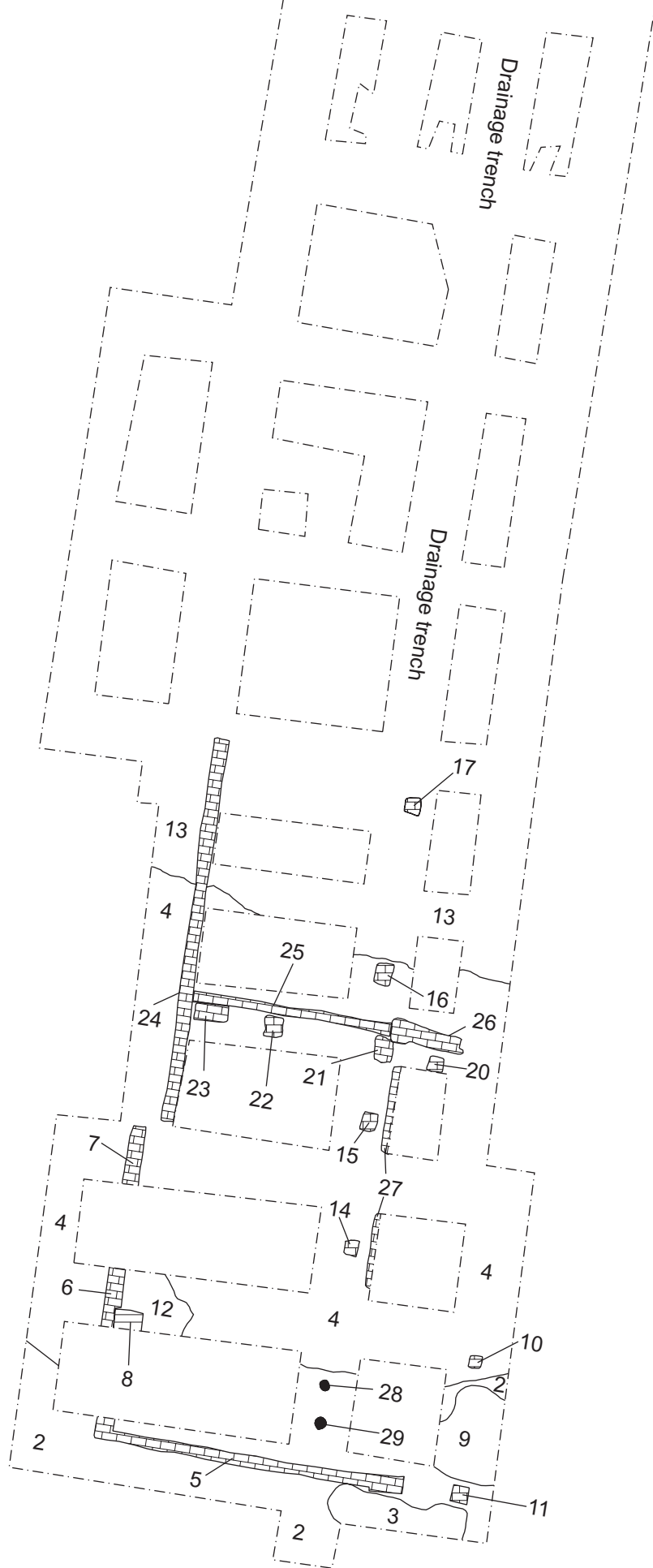


Figure 2 . Trench location. Scale 1:500



NOTE: All the trenches are foundation trenches unless noted on the plan