

**NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT**

Report No.975

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
The Priory Restaurant,  
Fritton and St. Olaves,  
Norfolk.**

40561 FSZ

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Location: The Priory Restaurant, Fritton and St. Olaves  
District: Great Yarmouth  
Grid Ref: TM 4589 9956  
HER No.: 40561 FSZ  
SAM No.: 10715  
Date of fieldwork: 6th and 8th July, 2004

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out adjacent to The Priory Restaurant, Fritton and St. Olaves, Norfolk. A single foundation trench was excavated for a new refrigeration building.*

*No features or deposits of archaeological interest were found.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

(Fig. 1)

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Norfolk Archaeological unit (NAU) at a site adjacent to The Priory Restaurant in a patio area immediately to the south of the kitchens where a new refrigeration building was to be constructed. The foundations covered an area of 6.4m by 6.8m.

This report was commissioned and funded by Andrews and Squires, 25 Elm Avenue, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth.

This archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: 03.0510).

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**

The underlying geology of the area consists of the shelly sands and gravels of the Norwich Crag formation overlying Cretaceous chalk.

The site lies on level ground approximately 200m to the east of the River Waveney.

## **3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

(Fig. 1)

The site lies to the east of the remains of The Augustinian Priory of Black Canons founded near the ancient ferry of St. Olaves in 1216 AD. At the dissolution it was purchased by Sir Henry Jerningham and a house built re-using material from the priory. The barn containing the restaurant is associated with the house, the south wall possibly forming the east end of the house and has been thought to be on the site of the original *Infirmarium* of the priory.

## **4.0 Methodology**

(Fig. 2)

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during the excavation of foundation trenches for a new refrigeration building adjacent to The Priory Restaurant.

A single foundation trench, 6.8m by 6.4m and 0.6m wide was excavated, manually, by the contractor to a depth of 1.05m.

The Brief required that an archaeologist be in constant attendance during the excavation of all foundation trenches.

Due to the lack of suitable deposits, no environmental samples were taken.

## **5.0 Results**

(Appendix 1)

The deposits observed were the same throughout the trench. The overlying deposit ([01]) consisted of a bedding layer for the patio overlying a mixed dump of material containing garden soil, building rubble, plastic, wire, and a metal bedstead. Beneath this was a yellowish brown sandy silt garden soil ([02]) with gravel and brick pieces and patches of yellow sand. At the base of the trench was a patchy yellow and brown sand ([03]) probably the natural river valley deposit.

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered from the deposits excavated.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

Although the site lies within the precinct of the Augustinian Priory of St. Olaves no deposits or features of archaeological interest were found. The deposit encountered at the base of the trench is considered to be natural although a slight argument for this material being re-deposited could be made. If it was re-deposited, the sand might have masked archaeological remains and thus the negative result would have been due to the shallow nature of the foundation trench rather than the absence of archaeological remains. However the most likely explanation for the lack of archaeological features is simply that the location of the trenches did not coincide with archaeological remains.

### ***Acknowledgements***

Thanks to Andrews and Squires, 25 Elm Avenue, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, who commissioned and funded this work.

The watching brief was carried out by the author. The report was illustrated, formatted and produced by Maggie Foottit and edited by Alice Lyons.

### ***Bibliography***

English Heritage 2004 The Manor of the Priory of St. Olaves. History of Herringfleet and St. Olaves – part 5: The Medieval manors.  
<http://www.lothingland.page.co.uk/hso5.htm>

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

<b>Context</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Period</b>
01	Deposit	Mixed deposit containing bedding layer for patio, building rubble, garden soil, wire, plastic and a metal bedstead.	Dump of material from the building of the extension to the barn.	Modern
02	Deposit	Yellowish brown sandy silt with occasional flint gravel and brick pieces (<30mm) and patches of yellow sand.	Buried garden soil.	Post-medieval
03	Deposit	Patchy yellow and brown sand.	Natural.	-





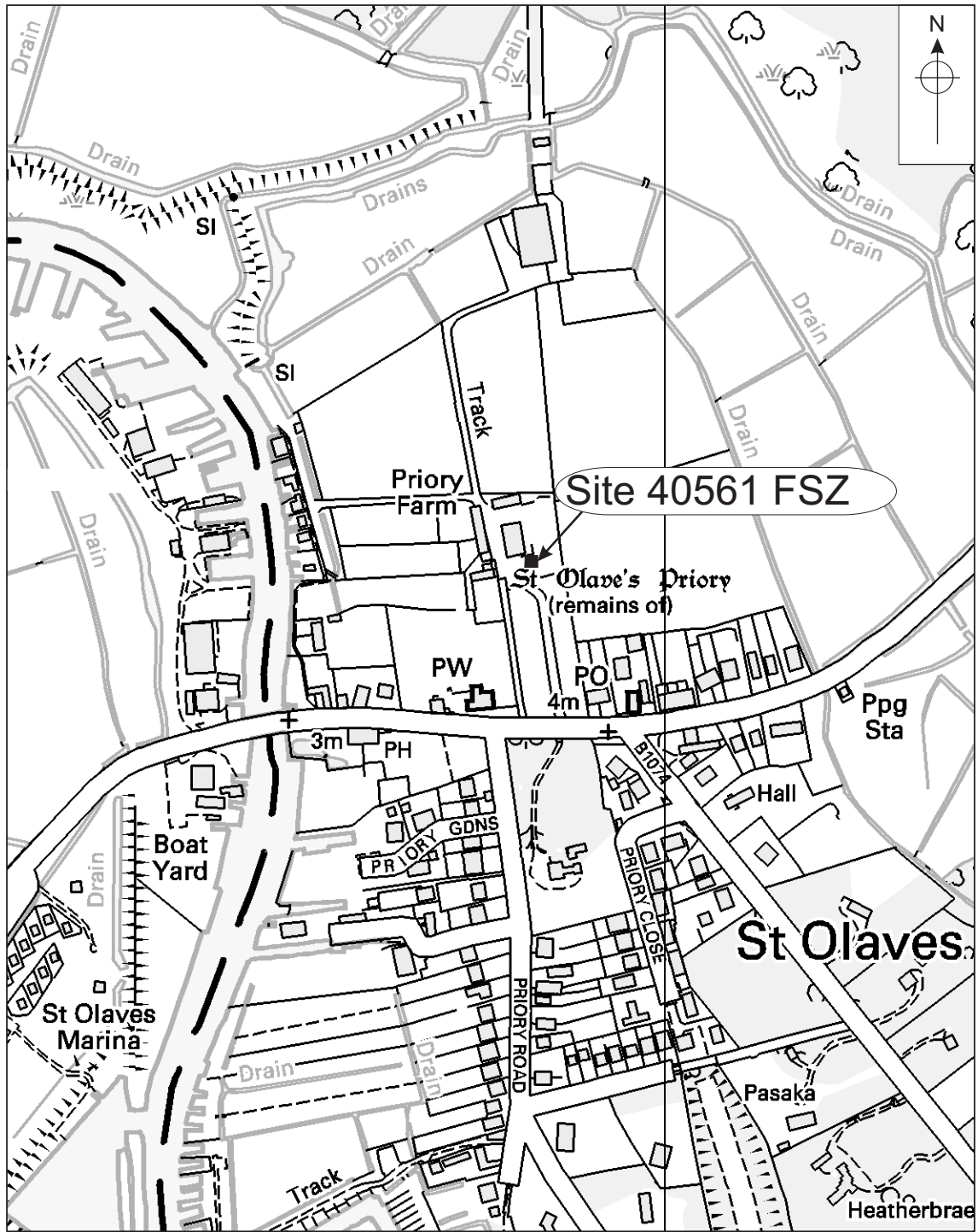


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

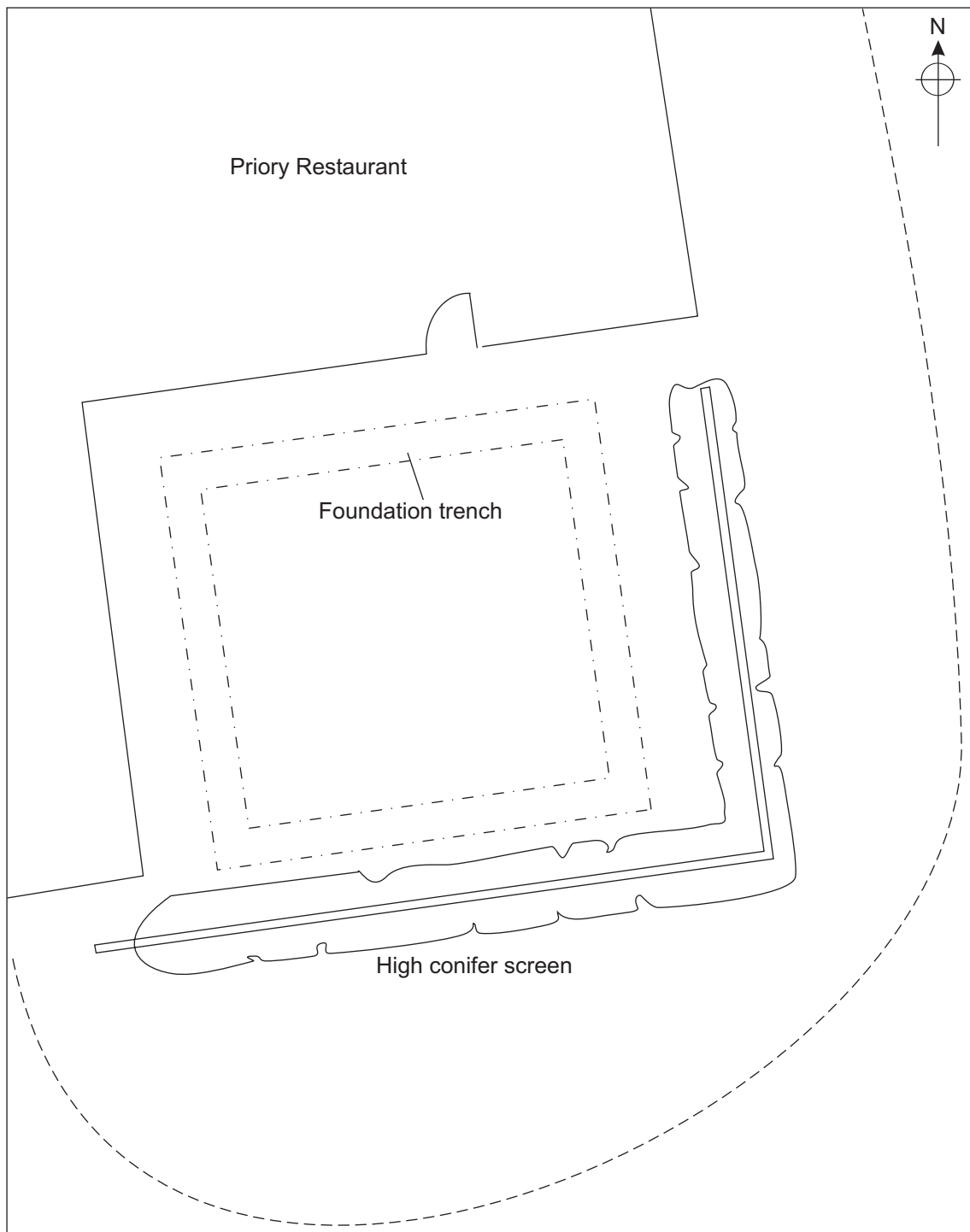


Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:100