

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 976

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
The Street, Sporle,
Norfolk**

39677 SWP

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Location:	The Street, Sporle, Norfolk
District:	Breckland
Grid Ref:	TF 8484 1122
HER No.:	39677 SWP
Date of fieldwork:	25th March and 18th June 2004

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the machine excavation of footing trenches on the site of a building development at The Street, Sporle.

No features or finds of archaeological interest were observed.

1.0 Introduction

(Figs 1 and 2)

This archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU) at The Street, Sporle, Norfolk (Fig. 1) during groundworks on a site located between 'Chapel View' and 'Thatched Cottage' (Fig. 2). This work was intended to determine the extent of surviving archaeological deposits within the area of development. The area under investigation measured approximately 205 sq. m and consisted of footing trenches for a residential development.

The programme of archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Aldhun Levitt of Development Insight Ltd, London.

This archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: AJRH-19/11/03). The brief required constant attendance by an archaeologist to monitor the excavations.

The watching brief was carried out as part of a phase of archaeological work during the development of the site. The first phase of this programme had been an evaluation trench in the centre of the site which had revealed early medieval rubbish pits containing pottery sherds dating between the 11th to 14th centuries (Hobbs 2003).

The second phase of work was intended to look for evidence from the undeveloped street frontage in the village during the lowering of the ground surface adjoining The Street.

The footings were excavated by a JCB machine excavator using a 0.70m wide bucket. Spoil from the footings was retained on site during the excavation and relocated according to the area being excavated.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector.

Site conditions were fair with a moderate and intermittent rainfall.

The site archive is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, in accordance with the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Observations

(Fig. 2)

The footing trenches were excavated to a width of 0.70m and to an average depth of 0.40m with a maximum depth of 0.90m through natural sandy clay.

At the frontage of the site, the original ground surface had been lowered by c. 1.8m to the level of the pavement for the footings. The rear half of the site remained overgrown and unexcavated.

The discrepancy in soil levels between the front and rear of the site provided a section of approximately 2.3m in height at the rear of the trenched area, facing east. The upper part of this section consisted of dark organic topsoil with frequent tree roots, which measured c. 1.4m. The subsequent deposits to the base of this section consisted of 0.30m of mid orange-brown silt sand subsoil and 0.60m of natural sandy clay, the bottom 0.10m of which contained a dark brown stippling of sand.

Another upstanding section, facing north, contained modern foundation and building material.

No features of archaeological interest were observed within the deposit in the sections of the trenches. Similarly, no finds were recovered from the spoil of the trenches either by direct observation or by metal detector.

3.0 Conclusions

The extent of removal of the ground in the east half of the site had exposed the underlying natural clay into which the footing trenches were subsequently cut. The lack of any features of archaeological interest within this layer and in the sections immediately to the west and south indicates that there was no further disturbance of archaeological deposits on this occasion.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by Jerry O'Dwyer and the author. The report was illustrated, formatted and produced by Maggie Footitt and edited by Alice Lyons.

Bibliography

Hobbs, B. P., 2003 *An Archaeological Evaluation at The Street, Sporle, Norfolk*, NAU Report 869 ([http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/oasis/1995\(1\)](http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/oasis/1995(1)))

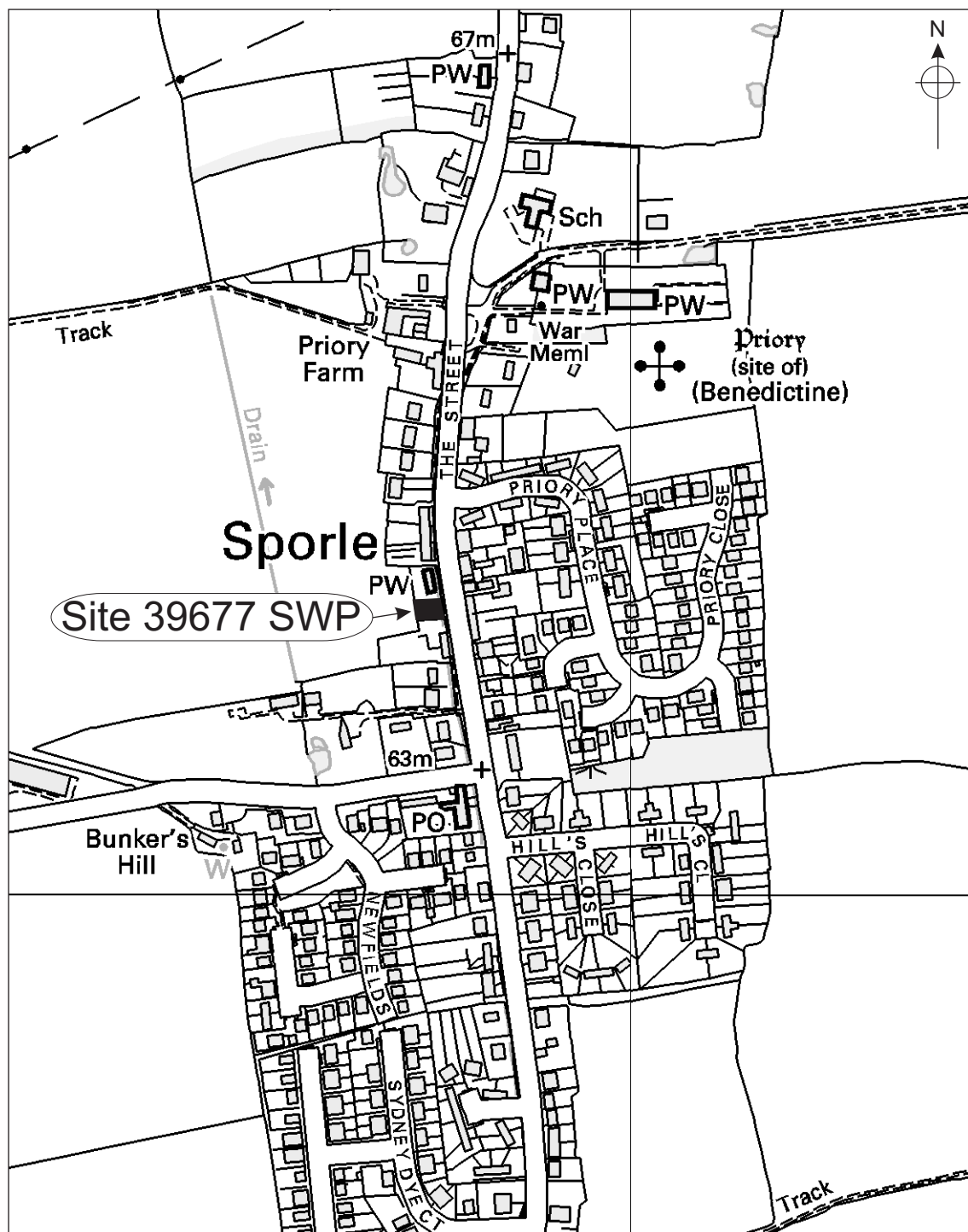


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000



0 30m

Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:500