

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 990

Building Survey and Photographic Record of Sandpit Farmhouse, Deopham, Norfolk

37369 DEP

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with

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September 2004

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Contents

Summary

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Historical Background
- 3.0 Methodology
- 4.0 Building Survey
- 5.0 Conclusions

Acknowledgements

Bibliography

Appendix 1: Index to Photographic Archive

Figures

Fig.1 Site location

Fig.2 Plans of ground and first floors with the position and direction from which the photographs were taken

Plates

- Plate 1. South elevation looking north-east
- Plate 2. South elevation looking north-west
- Plate 3. The east end of the north elevation
- Plate 4. The outbuilding to the west of the main block
- Plate 5. Shelving in the south service room
- Plate 6. Fireplace in the west room
- Plate 7. Fireplace in the central room
- Plate 8. Blocked doorway in the south wall of the central room
- Plate 9. Eighteenth century corner cupboard
- Plate 10. Stairs up to first floor level
- Plate 11. Junction the brick wall of the south service room and the south wall showing the apparent anomaly of the plastered surface extending beyond the face of the outside wall
- Plate 12. Chamfer stop partly within wall
- Plate 13. Chamfer stop on re-used beam. A = extent of stop and B = end on beam
- Plate 14. The west and part of the north elevation
- Plate 15. The baluster associated with the ?replacement stair

Local Authority No. 100019340

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 (08/09/2004). **Reference copy: no further copies to be made.**

Location: Sandpit Farmhouse, Deopham
District: South Norfolk
Grid Ref: TG 0528 0093
HER No.: 37369 DEP
Date of fieldwork: 19th June 2004

Summary

A photographic and drawn record was made of Sandpit Farmhouse in advance of demolition. The style of the building suggests it was constructed c. 1700. It conforms to a 'Type J' plan although several anomalies have been identified.

1.0 Introduction

(Fig. 1)

Sandpit Farmhouse is located at Deopham, central Norfolk, within a landscape of scattered farms and houses, often in former common edge-locations. For some time the building was used as offices for the adjacent coalyard but in more recent years has lain empty and become increasingly derelict. The roof tiles have been removed.

This building survey was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: ER 27.06.03) and Norfolk Archaeological Unit Project Design (NAU Ref: 1801/KJP/07/04).

The work was originally designed to create a written, drawn and photographic record to RCHME Level 3 (RCHME 1996) in advance of demolition; when it was seen that the structure was clay lump, this was changed to Level 2. This work was carried out for Mr John Farley, NFM Properties Ltd, 1 St Swithin's Terrace, Norwich.

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

2.0 Historical Background

(Figs 2 and 3)

The building stands within a small cluster of relatively closely spaced houses on what was the edge, as seen on Faden's 1797 map, of Deopham Low Common. The farmyard to the south was until relatively recently used as a coal depot and is now a general store for builders materials plus various vehicle maintenance sheds.

Sandpit Farmhouse is listed on the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER 37369) which states that, what little was visible of, the structure was described in September 2002. The building runs east-to-west, on a plinth of flint and brick, with an offset stack. The architectural style of the building suggests a date of c. 1700 for construction.

The maps

Faden's map of 1797 shows Deopham Low Common and houses, including Sandpit Farm, scattered around its southern (Deopham) edge.

Methodology

The objective of this survey was to create a record of the building to RCHM Level 3 (changed to Level 2) (RCHM 1996). This required:

- Written record (this report)
- Drawing:
 - Sketch plan.
 - Plans of floors to show form and location of structural features of historical significance.
- Photographs:
 - General views of the exterior.
 - Overall appearance of the interior.
 - Detailed coverage of the exterior.

Building Survey

(Fig 2 and Plates 1 to 15)

At the time of inspection the building was empty and had been subjected to minor vandalism such as the removal of part of a door frame; the roof tiles have been systematically removed and some internal plaster has recently been taken off to ascertain the construction of the building.

The three-cell building is aligned east-to-west (Fig. 2), it is two storeys high and constructed with rendered clay lump external walls above a brick and flint plinth. There is also a one-and-a-half storeys high, two-roomed extension on the north side of the western room (Plate 14) and a flint and brick outbuilding to the west of the main block (Plate 4).

In the principal range within the house there are two heated rooms that are served by relatively large back-to-back fireplaces and the third room is divided into two by an axial partition. At ground floor level the fireplaces have undecorated timber lintels (Plate 7) and are constructed with brick, replaced by clay lump at first floor level, where it appears there were never any fireplaces, and above the level of the ridge the stack was rebuilt in the 19th century using red brick.

When the building was constructed both of the end service rooms were accessible from inside the building, although now the doorway to the room on the north side is blocked. Both rooms have slightly later (to judge by the one remaining complete frame) external doorways (Plate 2).

There are two doorways opposite each other in the north and south walls at the east end of the central room, although the opening on the south side has been blocked with a mixture of brick and flint (Plate 8).

There is a second external doorway in the south wall adjacent to the west gable (Plate 1) and this gives access to a lobby that is now partly closed off by a 20th-century timber partition (see Fig. 2) and was probably associated with the use of the building as an office for the coal depot.

The lobby is formed with clay lump walls in a reversed 'L'-shape configuration extending away from the gable wall; the reason for this configuration, in addition to creating a lobby, is to provide support for the end of the reused axial beam. The size of the room took precedence over the length of the reused beam as this ends some 0.85m away from the gable wall and is, as said earlier, supported on the return wall of the lobby. Reuse of the beam is suggested by the fact that the chamfer stops do not relate to the wall (Plate 13) and above the fireplace the face of the stack mostly hides the stops.

The same reasoning for reuse applies to the beam at ground floor level in the central room where some of the 19th-century casing has been removed at the south end of the beam to reveal that the stops are within the wall face (Plate 12). This beam is large, measuring 0.31m across, and has a larger version of the same straight-cut chamfer and simple concave and stepped stop as seen on the axial beam in the west room.

As stated earlier the internal doorway to the north service room has been blocked and the room last functioned as a store with external access only. A late 18th-century corner cupboard has been inserted quite incongruously into the lateral wall to the side of the blocked door (Plate 9) and in the south service room against the dividing partition there are two shelves that (Plate 5) could conceivably, due to the size of the shelves and the design of the central and end supports, be contemporary with the construction of the building. The shelves have been removed on the other side of the room although the end supports survive.

The stairs to the first floor level are on the north side of the chimney stack (Plate 7) and consist of a straight flight with an open fret baluster (Plate 15) at first floor level that suggests a 19th-century date for the stairs, unless of course the baluster is a later replacement. That the stairs were always in this position is suggested by the fact that the chimney stack is off-centre to the south although in all probability the present flight replaced a winder type of stair, although this is purely conjectural and is based on common comparative examples.

At first floor level the principal divisions in the plan forms follows those at ground floor level albeit with a corridor parallel with the stairs that gives access to the middle and east room. Above the service rooms there is one room and above the west room there are two rooms divided by an axial partition. There is a curious anomaly in the plan against this axial partition in the south room where there is a small, square boxed-off area in the angle between the partition and the gable wall. A small area of the straw and daub wall has been removed and it appears that there may have been a doorway, now blocked with what appears to be relatively modern sheeting, from the adjoining room to the north. Was the apparent anomaly a walk-in wardrobe accessed from the north room?

The roof of the principal range has a low pitch with a single purlin on each side that is given support by a short raking strut that spans from relatively large tie beams that are completely above the ceiling. There are no principal trusses and the common rafters have a small scantling and are roughly squared and there is a rectangular-section ridge piece. Visual access to the roof was limited.

The two-roomed extension against the north side of the west room has a basic lean-to roof and the structure is completely utilitarian in character and on both floors each room has direct access from the principal range.

There is very little positive dating criteria in the three-cell principal range and, as said before, the two beams in the ground floor rooms and the door frames, where they survive are reused (apart from the two in the east gable which date from the 19th century). The simple wrought 'L'-shape pintels in the frame associated with the external door on the north side could conceivably date from the early 18th century. The observation that these two door openings are later – again suggested by comparative plan forms – could suggest that they were created quite soon after the construction of the block and therefore the building itself dates from c.1700. This can be somewhat justified by the type of roof construction and the characteristics of the bricks used in the construction of the chimney stack at ground floor level and those seen in the short stretch of wall that divides the central room from the south service room.

Conclusions

The building confirms to the 'Type J' plan (as identified by the R.C.H.M.) and was probably constructed in the early 18th century. It has an additional door opening against the west gable that gives access to the lobby. The configuration of the internal walls in this part of the building, and the structural responsibility of the wall parallel to the gable, i.e. supporting the reused axial beam, is strong evidence to suggest that the door and the lobby are part of the initial design.

There are two anomalies in the fabric of the building which raise questions about its original layout. The first is the fact that the plaster on the wall dividing the south service room from the central room is plastered beyond the face of the external wall (Plate 11) and the second concerns the position of the lateral beam that spans across the service rooms. This beam 'should' be above the wall between the service rooms and the central room, unless that wall is a later insertion, and the plaster 'should' end on the line of the face of the external wall unless the external wall has been rebuilt.

Acknowledgements

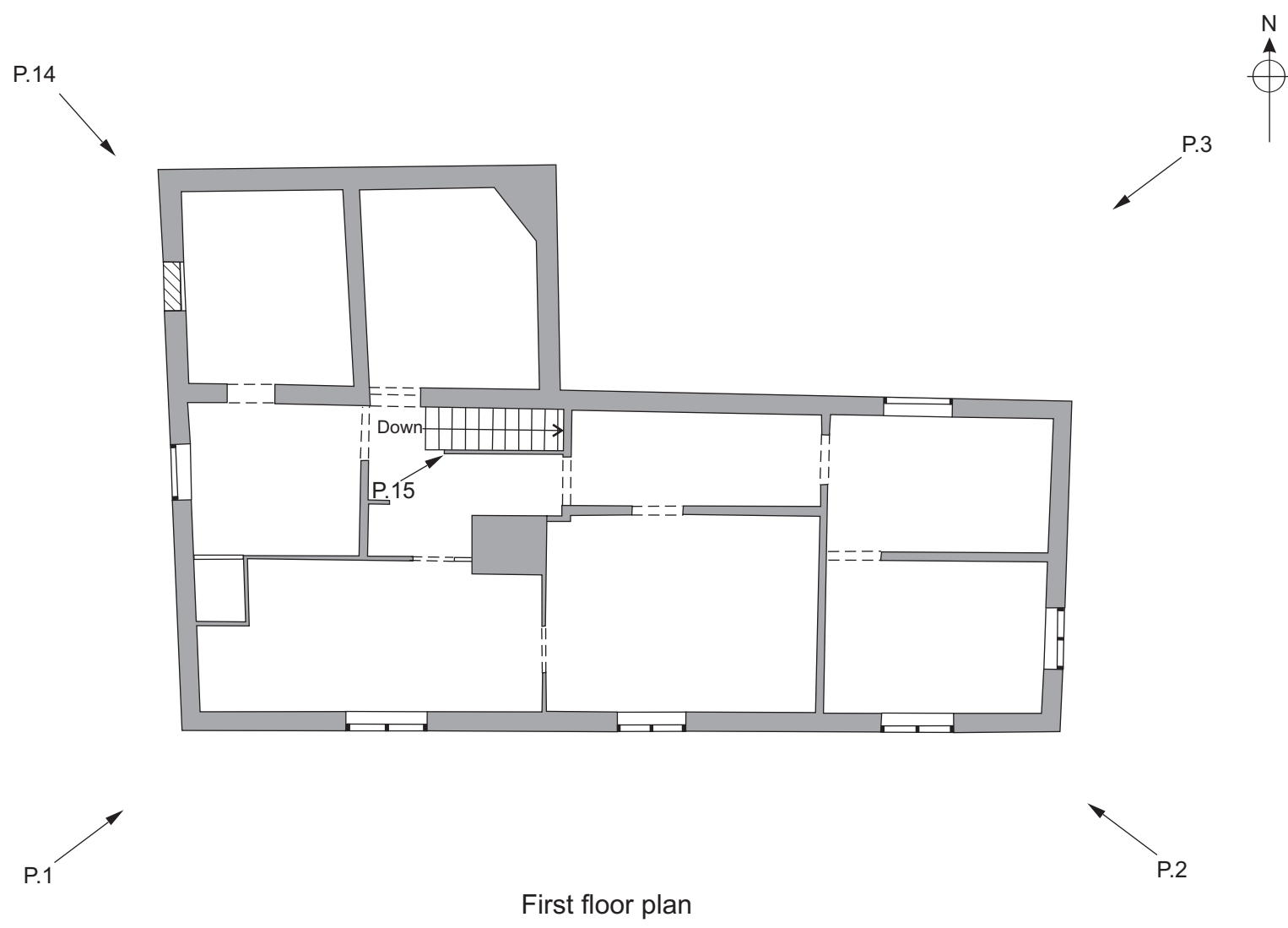
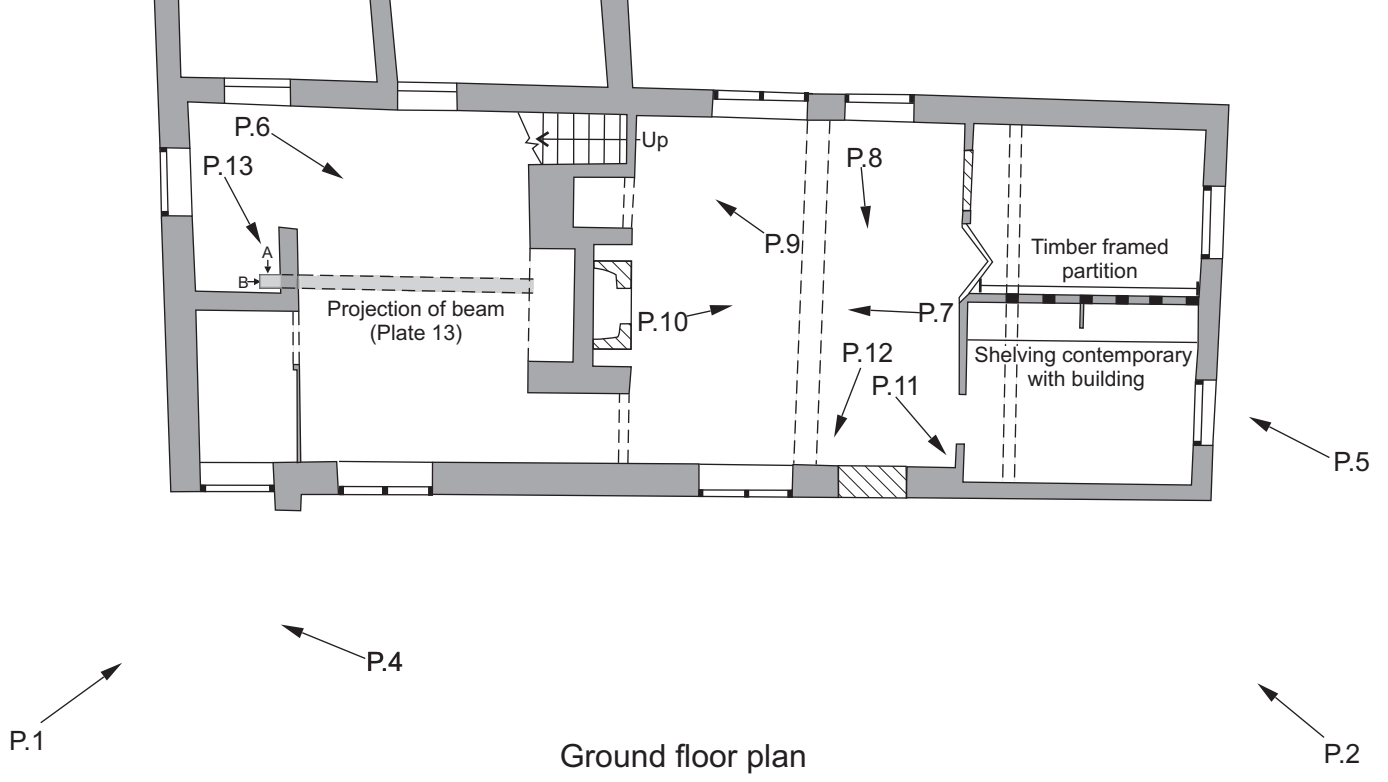
The fieldwork was carried out by Robert Smith, with the assistance of Steve Tatler. This report was compiled from Robert Smith's description by Kenneth Penn, who is grateful to Edwin Rose (NLA) and Mr John Farley for their advice. The report was illustrated, formatted and produced by Maggie Footit and edited by Alice Lyons.

Bibliography

RCHME, 1996 Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification, Third Edition. Swindon: RCHME.

Appendix 1: Index to photographic archive

Norfolk Archaeological Unit –Photographic Archive			
Site: Sandpit Farm, Deopham, Norfolk			
HER Number: 37369			
Frame No.	Description	Photographer	Date
1	House from south-west	K PENN	June 04
2	House from south-west	K PENN	June 04
3	House from south-east	K PENN	June 04
4	House from south-east	K PENN	June 04
5	House from east	K PENN	June 04
6	House from east	K PENN	June 04
7	House from east	K PENN	June 04
8	House from south	K PENN	June 04
9	Outhouse from east	K PENN	June 04
10	Outhouse from east	K PENN	June 04
11	Fireplace in west room, from west	K PENN	June 04
12	Fireplace in west room, from west	K PENN	June 04
13	Removing plaster from west room	K PENN	June 04
14	Removing plaster from west room	K PENN	June 04
15	Fireplace in east room, from east	K PENN	June 04
16	East room blocked doorway, from north	K PENN	June 04
17	Cupboard	K PENN	June 04
18	Cupboard	K PENN	June 04
19	Shelves in south-east room	K PENN	June 04
20	North elevation	K PENN	June 04
21	East elevation	K PENN	June 04



Key



Plate 11. Junction of the brick wall of the south service room and the south wall showing the apparent anomaly of the plastered surface extending beyond the face of the outside wall



Plate 12. Chamfer stop partly within wall

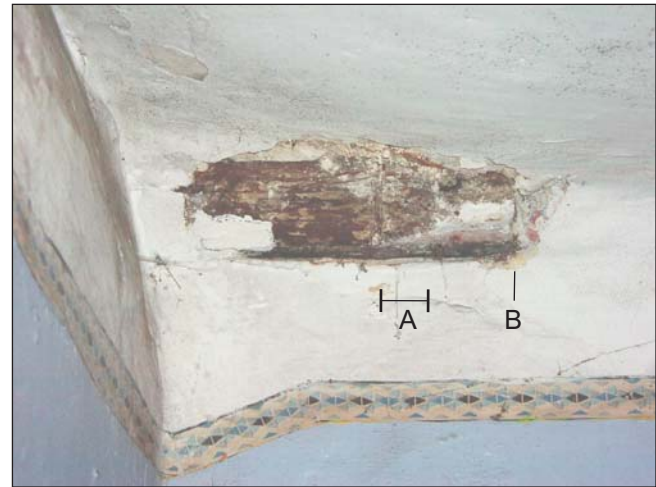


Plate 13. Chamfer stop on re-used beam.
A = extent of stop
B = end on beam



Plate 9. Eighteenth-century corner cupboard



Plate 10. Stairs up to first floor level



Plates 1. South elevation looking north-east



Plates 2. South elevation looking north-west



Plate 3. The east end of the north elevation



Plate 4. The outbuilding to the west of the main block



Plate 5. Shelving in the south service room



Plate 6. Fireplace in the west room



Plate 7. Fireplace in the central room



Plate 8. Blocked doorway in the south wall of the central room



Plate 14. The west end and part of the north elevation



Plate 15. The baluster associated with the ?replacement stair

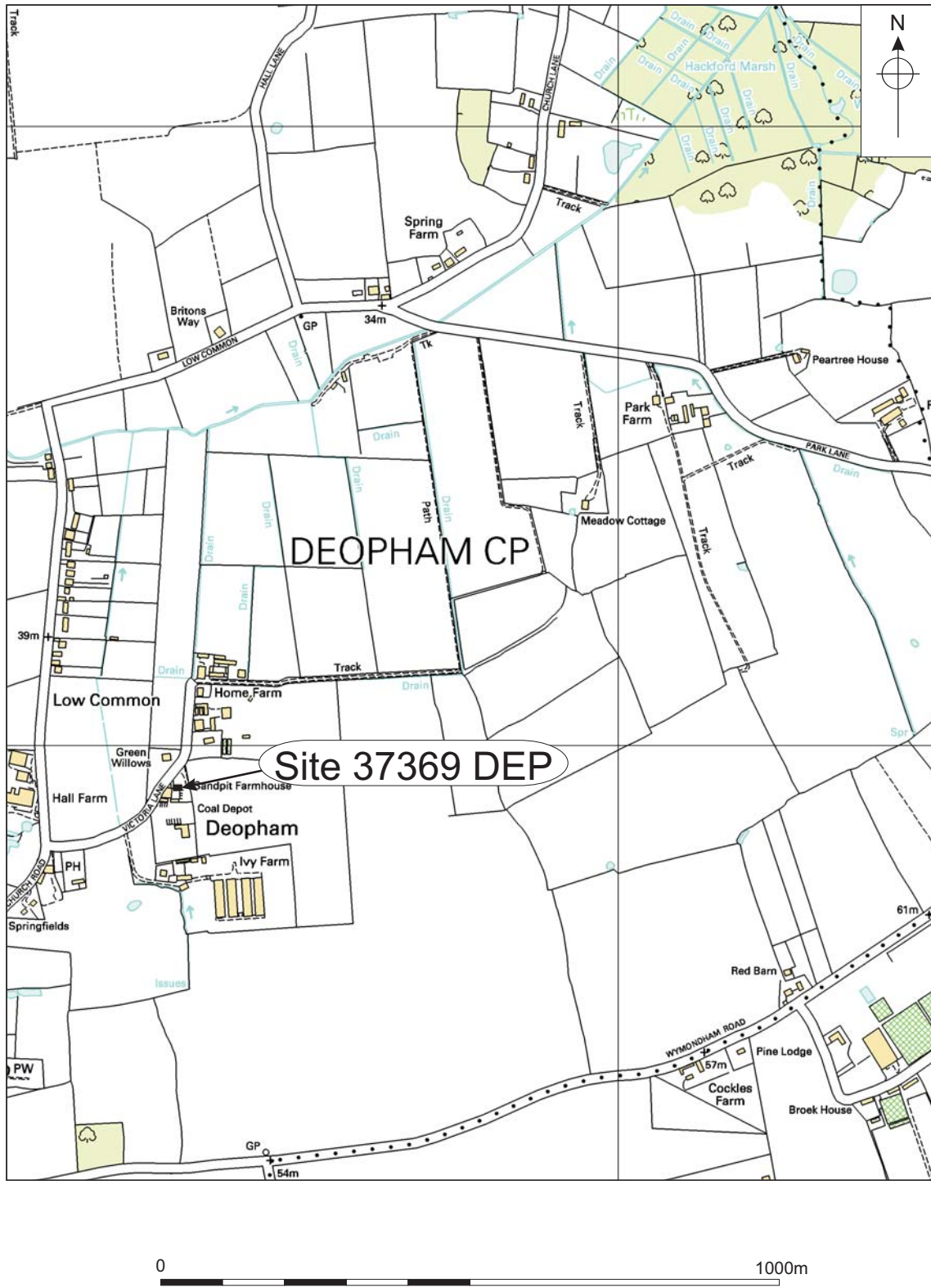


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:10,000