

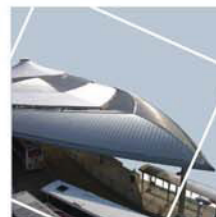
Report 2421



nau archaeology

**An Archaeological Evaluation at White Barn,
Hackford Road, Hardingham, Norfolk**

ENF 124506



Prepared for
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Location:	White Barn, Hackford Road, Hardingham
District:	Breckland
Grid Ref.:	TG 0473 0340
HER No.:	ENF 124506
Client:	Hardingham Farms Limited
Dates of Fieldwork:	26/04/10

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Alan Irvine on behalf of his client Hardingham Farms Limited ahead of the construction of a new grain storage building with associated hard standing on land adjacent to White Barn, Hackford Road, Hardingham.

Two trenches were mechanically excavated across the footprint of the development. No archaeological features were observed within the evaluation trenches.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

(Fig. 1)

The site is located on farmland to the west of a complex of grain silos adjacent to White Barn Cottage. The field has until recently been used for arable cultivation and is 0.5ha in area. On the north side of the plot a new grain storage facility is planned and to the south an associated area of hard standing.

This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by Breckland District Council (Ref.3PL/2010/0104) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (Ref. CNF 42745). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. BAU2421/DW). This work was commissioned by Alan Irvine and funded by his client Hardingham Farms Limited.

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority about the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

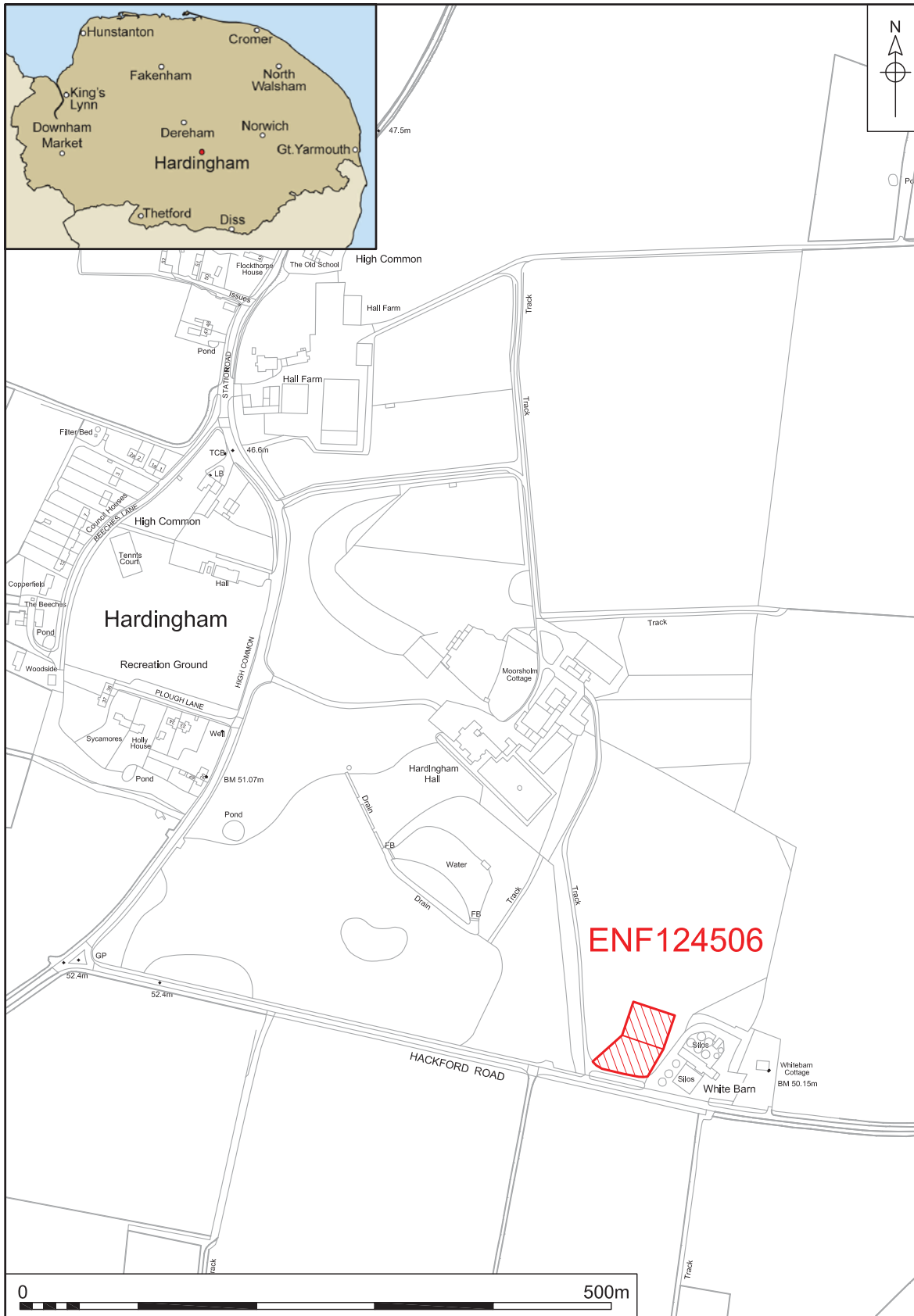
The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS), following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The superficial soil deposits are considered to be part of the Lowestoft Formation which overlays the boulder clay of the Central Norfolk Boulder Clay Plateau. The underlying geological bedrock consists of Upper Chalk. (British Geological Survey)

The topsoil in the area consists of a friable, fairly humic and rooty, mid greyish brown clayey silt. On average it was 0.35m thick across the site. A subsoil was present which consisted of a crumbly light brown silty clay which varied in depth between 0.15m and 0.25m. The natural substratum was a light orange brown slightly sandy and silty clay which included moderate amounts of flint on average 20–60mm in size. It also contained siltier and sandier patches.

The land is reasonably flat and positioned at around 50m OD. The River Yare runs through the area one and a half kilometres to the north.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

An HER search was undertaken and the most relevant entries, recorded below.

The heavy clay land around Hardingham seems to have been little utilised through most of prehistory (Ashwin and Davison, 2005), and the lack of HER find spots in the vicinity seems to bear this out. A Roman Road from Caistor St Edmund, through Crownthorpe and ultimately towards Threxton is thought to have run through from east to west, close to the site (Gurney 2005, 35), though a look on the distribution map also shows that this area was little exploited in the Roman period.

The settlement of Hardingham is not mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086, as at that time it had been a smaller hamlet within the settlement of Flockthorp (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>).

At the time of Domesday the lands were administered by Godric on behalf of William 1st. The last owner had been Hacon, son of Swain, the eldest son of Godwin, Earl of Kent, and nephew to King Harold. The land holding is recorded as containing *2 carucates of land, held by 12 villeins; with 6 servi, and 12 borderers, and paunage for 60 swine, 10 acres of meadow, a mill 3 carucates in demean, 4 among the tenants or men, etc. and 26 sheep, with 80 goats; and a beruite belonged to it called Mantateston, with one carucate, and 30 acres of land, and another beruite with 30 acres and a carucate of land, and 22 socmen held a carucate of land and 6 acres of meadow; and then there were also 5 carucates.* (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>).

There is more activity recorded for the area in the medieval period and two HER entries relate to this.

Immediately to the west of the site, NHER 32391 records the position of a series of subrectangular enclosures which are thought to be medieval Tofts. These were observed as cropmarks on RAF air photographs taken in January 1946.

NHER 2966 records the possible site of the deserted medieval settlement of Flockthorp. There were originally some earthworks visible but these have since been destroyed. An enamelled copper alloy lid and a glass bottle have been found on the site.

There are several HER entries for the post-medieval period:

NHER 2972. refers to the earthwork of a moat. Originally there was a possible 17th-century timber framed house situated at the centre of the moat, but all trace of this has since been removed.

NHER 43879. Cutbush Farmhouse is a 17th-century timber-framed building situated to the south; it was modified with brick in the 19th century.

NHER 19726. Situated to the east of the site was a white line soil mark outlined by two ditches which were seen as cropmarks. The feature probably represented the road which ran from the parish boundary. It was observed on the 29 March 1965 through photography by the RAF.

To the west of the site there was an 18th-century circular dovecote (NHER 2970). The dovecote was built in brick and had a tiled roof, with wooden lantern, entrance holes round the base and a wind-vane formed in the shape of a peacock.

A large watermill was situated at Hardingham (Scott, 1994 p 158) in a wooded area away from the village in the parish of Runhall. It consisted of two adjoining buildings of different sizes. The mill was rebuilt c.1820, ceased production around 1935 and finally burnt down in 1966 (<http://www.norfolk Mills.co.uk>).



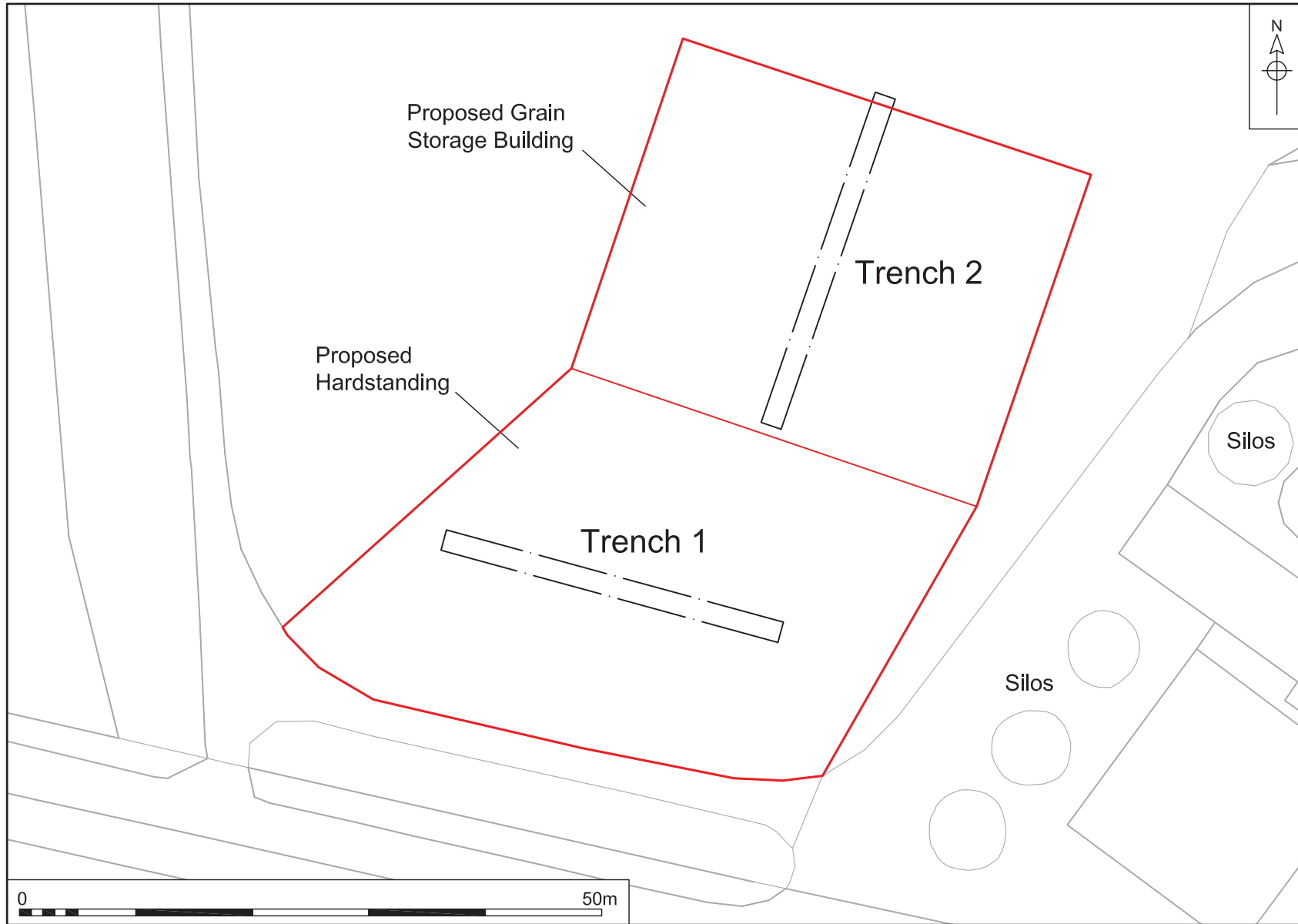
Plate 1. Machining looking north

4.0 METHODOLOGY

(Fig 2 and Plates 1-3)

The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence or absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that two 30m by 1.80m sized trenches be excavated in the footprint of the development, to achieve a 5% sample of the plot. One trench was placed within the footprint the grain storage building and one was placed in the area of the adjacent hard standing. The average depth of the trench to the top of the natural substratum was 0.50m.



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Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:500

Machine excavation was carried out with a wheeled JCB-type excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket and operated under constant archaeological supervision. The JCB was provided by the farm estate and driven by David the farm manager.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector. There were no finds of archaeological or historical value.

No environmental samples were taken.

Colour, monochrome and digital photographs were taken of the empty trenches and a record made of the topsoil, subsoil and natural substratum.

Site conditions were good, with the work taking place in fine and warm weather.



Plate 2. Trench 1 looking west

5.0 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

There were no archaeological remains present in either of the trenches and no finds from the soil arisings. The site is situated upon very heavy clayey ground, and it appears that this has made it unsuitable for settlement and activity through much of its history. The heavy ground and flat topography probably has meant that the survey area was prone to flooding and there are several deep field drains present on the site today which suggest this. Indeed it is likely that it is only with

the advances in farming technology in the 18th to 19th centuries that the land became suitable for farming.

The survey area is situated away from Hardingham village centre and the hall to the north-west and this probably accounts for the relative paucity of medieval activity. The possible medieval tofts (for example NHER 32931) are situated closer to the village itself.



Plate 3. Trench 2 looking north

Recommendations for future work based upon this report will be made by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken by the author with Lilly Hodges to whom thanks are expressed. The report was edited by Jayne Bown and the illustrations prepared by David Dobson after initial digitising by the author. Thanks to Alan Irvine for setting up the project, and Henry and David of the estate for their help and interest on the day.

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