

Report 2328



nau archaeology

**An Archaeological Evaluation at
the former Red Cross Hall, Swan Entry, Little
Walsingham, Norfolk**

HER ENF 124412



Prepared for
British Red Cross



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Location:	Swan Entry, Little Walsingham, Norfolk
District:	North Norfolk
Grid Ref.:	TF 9334 3605
HER No.:	ENF 124412
Client:	British Red Cross
Dates of Fieldwork:	25-26 March 2010

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was conducted for the British Red Cross ahead of the redevelopment of the site of their former meeting hall for housing.

Although there was an absence of medieval finds and therefore an absence of firmly dated medieval features, the form and construction of a well, wall foundation and a possible oven base strongly suggests a medieval date for these features. Their function is consistent with the type of features typically to be found towards the rear of urban burgage plots in the medieval period.

A demolition layer sealing these features appears to represent a hiatus in the development of this site, with earlier structures being demolished and levelled and a large amount of topsoil imported to create a garden space, possibly in the 18th century.

It appears that Little Walsingham may be a planned town centred on a broad market place, now mostly infilled, running the length of the high street, with the abbey precinct to the east and a series of regular burgage plots on its west side. The development site lies within one of these possible burgage plots.

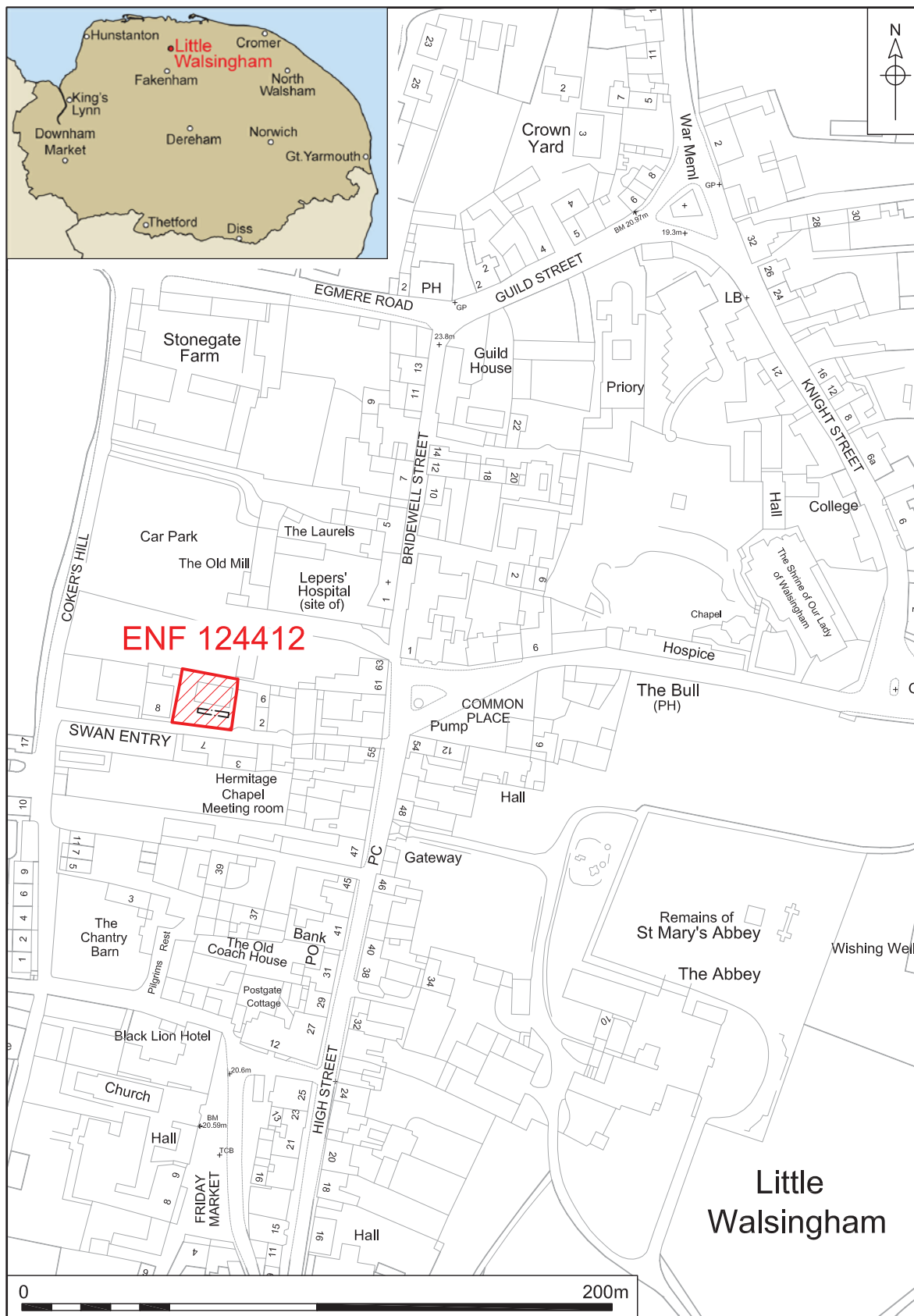
1.0 INTRODUCTION

One trench measuring 10m by 1.8m was dug in order to evaluate an area of 350m² (giving a c.5% sample) which was to be redeveloped for housing adjacent to the former Red Cross Hall on Swan Entry in Little Walsingham (Fig. 1).

This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by North Norfolk District Council (Ref. 20080419) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (Ref. Ken Hamilton, 19 June 2008). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. BAU2328/DW). This work was commissioned and funded by the British Red Cross.

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 and Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). 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.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2000

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The natural subsoil consisted of glacial fluvial silts, clays and gravels of the Anglian Glaciation (BGS 1991) above Cretaceous Upper chalk (BGS 1985).

The development site lies 65m to the west of the High Street in the centre of Little Walsingham, on a slope gently sloping down eastwards to the valley bottom. It lies at a height of 25.6m OD.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Norfolk Historic Environment Record has been consulted in the preparation of this section. Very little archaeological work has previously been conducted within the town. NAU Archaeology has previously carried out two small watching briefs on sites around the Friday Market, to the south of the present development. Neither found anything of immediate relevance to this project or the historical development of the town (Shelley 1995 and Phillips 1999)

3.1 Roman

To the North of Great Walsingham a very large amount of Roman material (including building materials and high status objects) are suggestive of the location of a town (NHER 42850) and a temple, possibly dedicated to Mercury (NHER 2024).

3.2 Anglo-Saxon

Little Walsingham started its life as a pilgrimage centre in 1061 when Richeldisde Favarches built a copy of the Virgin Mary's house following a vision.

Before then, the focus of activity was at nearby Great Walsingham, evidenced by the remains of a large Early Anglo-Saxon Cemetery (NHER 2024 or 2030) and a Roman Temple, investigated in 1658; it is postulated that the two sites are associated.

3.3 Medieval

The shrine at Little Walsingham was developed throughout the medieval period, with a religious order founded at the shrine in 1153, to be joined later by St Mary's Augustinian Priory and later a Franciscan Friary. Many buildings in the town became pilgrim hostels and accommodation.

It is possible, considering cartographic evidence, that the larger part of the present town began as a medieval planned town. The High Street may originally have been in the region of 40m (2 chains) wide and served as a market place extending from the present Friday Market in the south to the leper Hospital in the north, and from the Abbey precinct in the east to a line of regularly laid out burghage plots (each 1 chain wide and 3-4 chains long) to the west.

There has been considerable infilling of this possible market place since the medieval period, leaving the High Street just 10m wide at present. This infilling includes a significant number of medieval buildings, such as NHER 22806, 42909 and 2039. The Black Lion Hotel (NHER 13287) on the western side of the Friday

Market dates from the 14th century and may have been built for Edward III. The front of this building may respect the line of the original market place which can be traced northwards as property boundaries.

The development site lies within one of these burgage plots to the west of the possible original market place.

3.4 Post-medieval

Although the religious houses and shrine were destroyed at the Reformation, the town continued to thrive as a market town.

The infilling of the possible original market place also contains a large number of early post-medieval buildings, including the 16th-century NHER 47696, 17758 and 16065 and the 16th- to- 17th-century NHER 47585, 47471 and 38142.

Walsingham Jail (NHER 15128) lies 50m north of the development site. It was built in 1787 on the site of the medieval Lepers' Hospital, and closed in 1861.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map (c.1880), show the development site as undeveloped, as does the 1946 aerial photograph (<http://www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk>).

4.0 METHODOLOGY

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 a 5% sample (18m²) of the development area (350m²) be evaluated.

Machine excavation was carried out with a hydraulic 360° excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

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

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Colour, monochrome and digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits where appropriate.

The temporary benchmark used during the course of this work was transferred from an Ordnance Survey spot height with a value of 20.60m OD, located on the west side of the Friday Market. It was intended to use a benchmark on the Friday Market, but this had been destroyed.

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



Figure 2. Plan of Trench. Scale 1:50

5.0 RESULTS

(Figs 2 and 3)

The earliest deposit encountered was layer (4), a deposit of possible early topsoil or subsoil 0.4m deep and covering the whole trench.

Lying above this was layer (25) which likewise covered the whole trench, was 0.2m deep and consisted of a large proportion of demolition debris in the form of chalk, mortar, flint and occasional brick fragments. The archaeological features encountered can be split between those that were sealed by this layer and those that were cut through this layer.

Those features sealed by layer (25) and therefore predating it were quarry pit [1], well [29], wall foundation [28] and a possible oven base [30].

Quarry pit [1] was observed at the western end of the trench and only a small part of it was visible, including part of its eastern edge which was straight and perpendicular to the plot boundary. Its base was not reached because of safety concerns but it was at least 0.8m deep with steep sides. Its fills ((2) and (3)) were sterile of finds. Layer (2) contained a few flecks of charcoal, while layer (2) beneath it consisted of redeposited natural silts, chalk and gravel.

Well [29] had a circular masonry lining consisting of flint and chalk rubble in a matrix of cream coloured lime mortar. The lack of brick in its construction suggests a medieval rather than post-medieval date. Its fill (21) was very similar to topsoil (26) and contained ceramics of 15th- to 18th-century date, suggesting that the well fell out of use and was backfilled in the 18th century. The top of the masonry had been truncated to the same level as layer (25).



Plate 1: Well [29] facing south

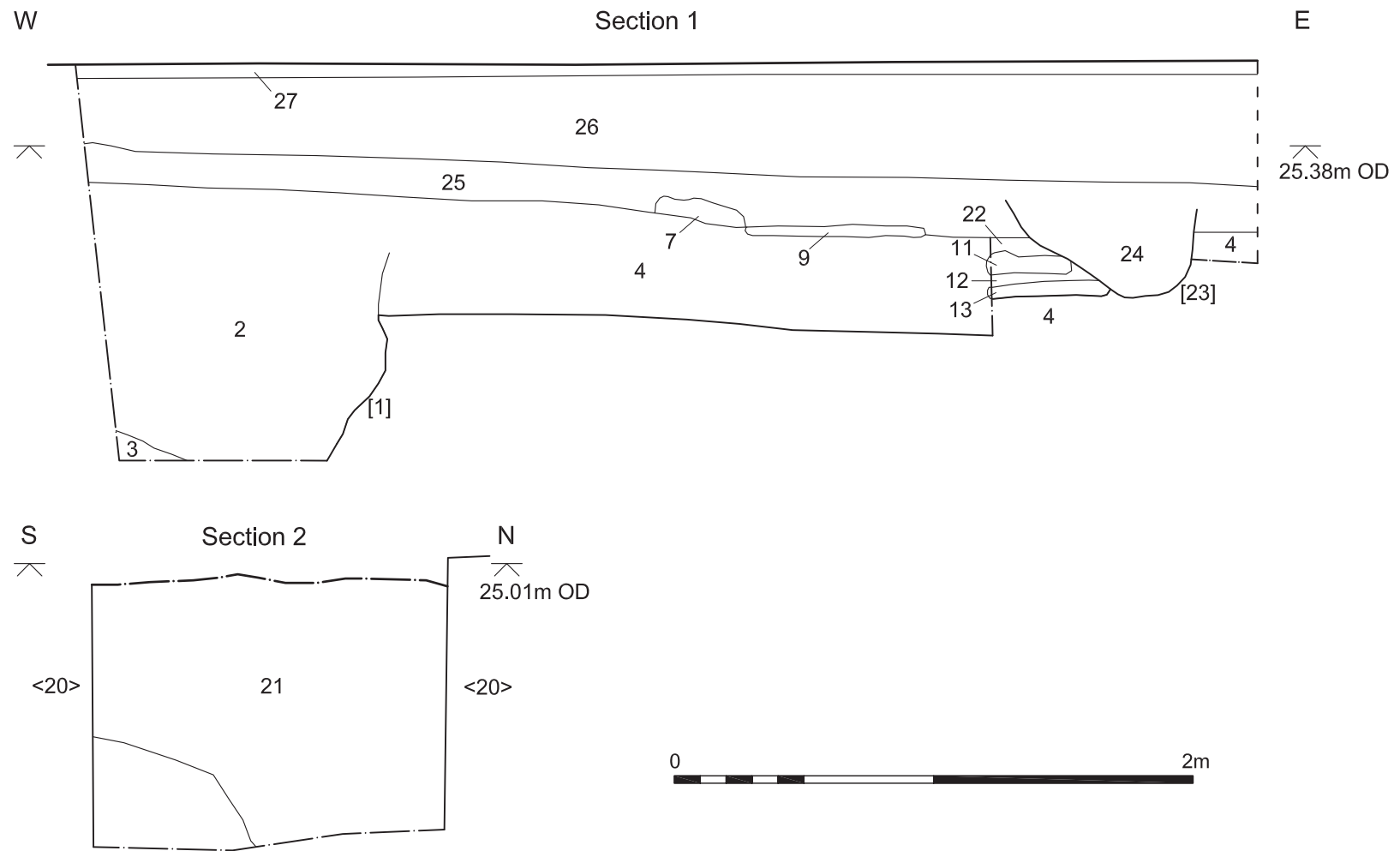


Figure 3. Sections. Scale 1:25

Wall foundation [28] was aligned north to south, parallel to the High Street. It was 0.7m wide and 0.23m deep and was composed of alternate layers of chalk lumps ((11) and (13)) and clean orange sand ((12) and (22)). This type of 'banded' foundation is typically medieval in date; however this feature remains undated by artefacts.

Lying against the western edge of the wall was a sequence of mortary deposits which may be the very base of an oven or kiln [30]. The upper-most deposit was a layer of burnt mortar (8), laying on top of a more extensive layer of the same material which was unburnt (7). These mortar layers were laying on top of a bedding layer (9) of clean cream coloured silt. Along the western edge of these deposits was a strip (0.2m wide) of mortar and lumps of chalk and flint {5} which may represent the outer wall of the oven/kiln structure.



Plate 2: Foundation [28] and possible oven base [30] facing south

Four features cut through layer (25), possible postholes [14], [16], [18] and [23] which are all located between the well [29] and the wall foundation [28].

Posthole [14] was oval in shape, 0.46m long, 0.33m wide and 0.05m deep. Its fill (15) contained pottery of 18th- to 20th-century date.

Posthole [16] was also oval in shape, 0.3m long, 0.24m wide and 0.14m deep. Its fill (17) contained no datable material; however it was cutting posthole [18].

Posthole [18] was oval in shape, 0.4m long, 0.28m wide and 0.16m deep. Its fill (19) contained no datable material.

Posthole [23] was truncated by the edge of the trench and cut through part of the wall foundation [28], exposing its structure. It was irregular in shape, and the observable dimensions were 0.6m wide by 0.4m deep. Its fill (24) contained a fragment of clay tobacco pipe, dating it to the post-medieval period.

Above layer (25) was the modern topsoil (26), 0.4m deep, a dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel, occasional chalk and charcoal flecks and rare fragments of ceramic building material (CBM).

Above this was the modern gravel yard surface (27).

6.0 THE FINDS

6.1 Pottery

A total of eleven sherds of pottery weighing 173g were collected from two contexts. Nine post-medieval sherds were found in the fill of well [29] and two modern sherds came from the fill of posthole [14] (Appendix 3).

6.1.1 Post medieval

The post-medieval assemblage includes sherds from six vessels. All are tableware with the exception of a base from a large stoneware storage jar. No vessels associated with cooking were recovered.

Two sherds of 16th-century late Grimston-type Ware with thick, dark-green glaze is the earliest pottery found. The assemblage also includes a sherd of 16th- to 17th-century Cologne Frechen stoneware Bellarmine jug with a small fragment of a face mask, a late 17th- to 18th-century Staffordshire slipware press-moulded flatware dish with piecrust rim and cream and brown combed and feathered trailed slip decoration plus rim and body sherds for two Glazed Red Earthenware vessels. A large sherd from the base of a 17th- to 19th-century English Stoneware storage jar was also found.

6.1.2 Modern

Two sherds recovered from the fill of posthole [14] comprise a fragment of industrial slipware with cream and brown trailed decoration and a rim sherd from a refined white earthenware teacup. Both date to the late 18th- to 20th-centuries.

6.2 Ceramic Building Material

6.2.1 Brick

A total of five fragments of brick were recovered, all from deposit (21) the fill of well [29]. All are made of medium sandy fabric with medium to large grog inclusions. The bricks are long and narrow and have been made on a sanded form suggesting a late medieval to post-medieval date for the assemblage (Appendix 4).

6.2.2 Floor tile

A fragment of 15th-century Flemish floor tile with cream and brown glaze and chamfered edges was also found in well fill (21).

6.2.3 Roof tile

A total of 33 roof tile fragments weighing 2,994g were recovered, principally from context (21) though a single fragment weighing 28g was found in the fill of posthole [24]. The assemblage is mostly composed of pieces of medieval or post-medieval plain tile, from peg or nibbed tiles, in medium red sandy fabric (29 pieces 1.978g) with a small number being made of medium sandy cream coloured fabric.

Three pieces of plain tile in red sandy fabric have been discoloured due to burning. Three tiles have surviving peg holes. One example has a round peg hole situated towards the edge of the tile indicating that the tile had originally had two such holes. Two tiles have square peg holes. A single fragment of post-medieval pan tile was also found in context (21).

6.3 Clay Tobacco Pipe

A single fragment from the stem of a clay tobacco pipe was found in the fill of post hole [23]. The fragment is not closely datable.

6.4 Vessel Glass

A heavily patinated fragment from a post-medieval globular bottle was found in the fill of well [29].

6.5 Iron

Two square-shanked iron nails, both heavily encrusted, were also found in the fill of well [29]. The nails are not closely datable.

6.6 Animal Bone

6.6.1 Methodology

The assessment was carried out following a modified version of guidelines by English Heritage (Davis, 1992). All of the bone was examined to determine range of species and elements present. A note was also made of butchering and any indications of skinning, hornworking and other modifications. When possible a record was made of ages and any other relevant information, such as pathologies. Counts and weights were noted for each context. As this is a small assemblage, the data was directly input into the table in this report.

6.6.2 The assemblage

A total of 0.185kg of faunal remains, consisting of sixteen pieces was recovered from two contexts. The remains are in good condition, although fragmentary from butchering. No animal gnawing or burning was evident on any of the remains.

The remains in the medieval topsoil, context (4), produced a chopped cattle humerus and chopped and cut limb bones from a sheep/goat.

The fill of well [29], context (21), produced thirteen fragments of sheep/goat bone, including several ribs, humerus, tibia and ulna fragments, a chopped/cut pelvic bone and a fragment of skull. Most of the bones showed chop or cut marks from processing the individual sections of meat, the ribs showed saw marks which would have occurred when the animal was initially divided into cuts.

6.6.3 Conclusions

Both fills produced the butchered bones of domestic animals along with the remains of marine molluscs. A variety of cuts of meat, including prime meat-bearing bones are represented and these, along with the marine mollusc shell indicate the disposal of domestic butchering and food waste.

All of the remains were from adult animals which might indicate that they had been kept for other uses (such as breeding, milk and wool) prior to their culling for meat.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Although there was an absence of medieval artefacts and therefore an absence of firmly-dated medieval features from this site, the form and construction of the well and wall foundation (and by inference the possible oven base) strongly suggests a medieval date for these features. Their function is consistent with the type of features typically to be found towards the rear of urban burgage plots in the medieval period.

A demolition layer sealing these features appears to represent a hiatus in the development of this site, with earlier structures being demolished and levelled and a large amount of topsoil imported, possibly to create a garden space, in the 18th century.

In the context of the state of archaeological knowledge of Little Walsingham, this evaluation strongly suggests that the development site is likely to contain a large amount of well preserved medieval and early post-medieval archaeological remains.

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

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The illustrations for the report were prepared by David Dobson and the report was edited by Jayne Bown.

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period	Notes
1 Cut		Pit		Large quarry pit. One edge found, perpendicular to side of plot.	Unknown	Medieval?
2 Deposit			1	Mid brown silty sand, occasional flint gravel and chalk fleck, rare charcoal flecks	Unknown	Medieval?
3 Deposit			1	Mixed redeposited natural silts, chalk and gravel	Unknown	Medieval?
4 Deposit				Mid brown silty sand with occasional flint gravel and rare chalk and charcoal flecks	Medieval	Medieval topsoil
5 Deposit			30	Pale cream mortar with frequent sand and occasional chalk flecks. Contains moderate small chalk blocks and occasional flints.	Unknown	Medieval?
6				Not allocated		
7 Deposit			30	Pale cream sandy mortar with frequent chalk flecks and occasional flint gravel	Unknown	Medieval?
8 Deposit			30	Orange sandy mortar with frequent chalk flecks and occasional flint gravel	Unknown	Burnt (7)
9 Deposit			30	Pale cream clayey silt	Unknown	
10 Deposit			28	chalk lumps. Part of banded foundation	Unknown	Medieval?
11 Deposit			28	chalk lumps. Part of banded foundation	Unknown	Medieval?
12 Deposit			28	Orange sand. Part of banded foundation	Unknown	Medieval?
13 Deposit			28	chalk lumps. Part of banded foundation	Unknown	Medieval?
14 Cut		posthole		Oval posthole	Post-medieval	
15 Deposit			14	Dark brown silty sand with occasional chalk and flint gravel and occasional charcoal flecks	Post-medieval	
16 Cut		posthole		Oval posthole	Post-medieval	
17 Deposit			16	Dark brown silty sand with occasional chalk and flint gravel and occasional charcoal flecks	Post-medieval	
18 Cut		posthole		Oval posthole	Post-medieval	
19 Deposit			18	Mid to dark brown silty sand with occasional flint and chalk gravel and rare charcoal	Post-medieval	
20 Masonry			29	Well lining of flint and chalk blocks in lime mortar	Unknown	Medieval?

21 Deposit		29 pale greyish brown slightly sandy clayey silt with moderate chalk flecks and occasional flint and mussel and oyster shell	Post-medieval	
22		28 Orange sand. Part of banded foundation	Unknown	Medieval?
23 Cut	posthole	posthole truncated by edge of trench	Post-medieval	
24 Deposit		23 Dark brown silty sand with occasional chalk and flint gravel and rare charcoal flecks	Post-medieval	
25 Deposit		dark brown silty sand with frequent chalk fragments, moderate mortar fragments, occasional flint gravel and rare CBM frags	Post-medieval	
Deposit		Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel, occasional chalk and charcoal flecks and rare CBM	Modern	
26		Modern gravel surface	Modern	Topsoil
27 Deposit		Not seen		
28 Cut	foundation	Not seen due to (20)		
29 Cut	well	Master number for oven deposits		
30	Oven			

Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

Period	Cut Type	Total
Post-medieval	posthole	4
Unknown	Pit	1

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
4	Animal Bone	3	98g	Unknown	
4	Shell	1	6g	Unknown	Oyster (discarded)
15	Pottery	2	2g	Modern	
21	Animal Bone	13	87g	Unknown	
21	Shell	3	171g	Unknown	Oyster (discarded)
21	Pottery	9	171g	Post-medieval	
21	Ceramic Building Material	5	542g	Med./Post-Med.	Brick
21	Ceramic Building Material	1	179g	Medieval	Floor tile
21	Ceramic Building Material	32	2,245g	Med./Post-Med.	Roof tile
21	Glass	1	3g	Modern	Vessel glass
21	Iron	2	34g	Unknown	Nails
24	Ceramic Building Material	1	28g	Medieval	

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
24	Shell	1	61g	Unknown	Oyster (discarded)
24	Clay Pipe	1	3g	Unknown	Stem

Appendix 2b: OASIS Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Medieval	Ceramic Building Material	2
Post-Med.	Ceramic Building Material	37
	Pottery	9
Modern	Glass	1
	Pottery	2
Unknown	Animal Bone	16
	Clay Pipe	1
	Iron	2
	Shell	5

Appendix 3: Pottery

Context	Fabric	Form	Decoration	Qty	Wt (g)	Period	Spotdate
15	Industrial Slipware	Flatware	Cream and brown trailed slipware	1	1	Modern	LC18th - C20th
15	Refined White Earthenware	Teacup		1	1	Modern	LC18th - C20th
21	Cologne Frechen Stoneware	Jug	Bellarmino with fragment of mask	1	10	Post medieval	C16th -C17th
21	Late Grimston	Body sherds	Dark green reduced glaze	2	12	Post medieval	C16th
21	English Stoneware Storage Jar	Storage jar	Wired base	1	71	Post medieval	C17th -C19th
21	Staffordshire Slipware	Dish	Press moulded flatware dish with piecrust rim cream and brown combed and feathered trailed slip decoration	1	7	Post medieval	LC17th C18th
21	Glazed Red Earthenware	Dish	Yellow glaze on interior.	2	51	Post medieval	C16th - C18th
21	Glazed Red Earthenware	Hollow ware	Brown orange glaze on interior and exterior	2	20	Post medieval	C16th - C18th

Appendix 4: Ceramic Building Material

Context	Fabric	Type	Form	Qty	Wt (g)	Spotdate
21	Medium sandy red	Roof Tile	Peg	1	64	Medieval/ post medieval
21	Medium sandy red	Roof tile	Peg	1	60	Medieval/ post medieval
21	Medium sandy cream	Roof tile	Peg	1	35	Medieval/ post medieval
21	Medium sandy cream	Roof tile	Plain	2	75	Medieval/ post medieval
21	Medium sandy red	Roof tile	Plain	2	126	Medieval/ post medieval
21	Medium sandy red	Roof tile	Plain	1	38	Medieval/ post medieval
21	Medium sandy red	Roof tile	Plain	23	1786	Medieval/ post medieval
21	Medium sandy ferrous and chalk	Roof tile	Pan tile	1	61	Post medieval
21	Medium sandy red with grog	Brick	Late Brick	5	542g	Medieval/ post medieval
21	Medium sandy red	Floor tile	Flemish	1	179g	C15th
24	Medium sandy red	Roof tile	Plain	1	28g	Medieval

Appendix 5: Animal Bone

Context	Context Quantity	Context Weight (kg)	Species	NISP	Comments
4	3	0.098	Cattle	1	Chopped humerus shaft. Adult
			Sheep/goat	2	Chopped and cut radius and tibia. Adult.
21	13	0.087	Sheep/goat	13	Heavily butchered fragments of skull, limb, pelvis and ribs. Adult.

Key: NISP = Number of Individual Species elements Present.