

Report 2120



nau archaeology

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Aisle Valley Farm, Great Witchingham, Norfolk

ENF 124471



Prepared for
Plandescil Ltd



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<i>Issue 1</i>		

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Location:	Aisle Valley Farm, Great Witchingham, Norfolk
District:	Broadland District Council
Grid Ref.:	TG 09758 21363
HER No.:	ENF 124471
OASIS Ref.:	79305
Client:	William Moorfoot
Dates of Fieldwork:	14 April to 10 June 2010

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was commissioned by Plandescil Ltd on behalf of their client William Moorfoot to monitor groundworks during the construction of an ornamental lake at Aisle Valley Farm, Great Witchingham, Norfolk.

The stratigraphy encountered suggests that this area has been waterlogged pasture for a significant period. No features or finds of archaeological significance were encountered.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by Broadland District Council (Ref. 20071775) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (Ref. CNF42203_3). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. BAU2120/DW). This work was commissioned by Plandescil Ltd on behalf of their client William Moorfoot who funded the work.

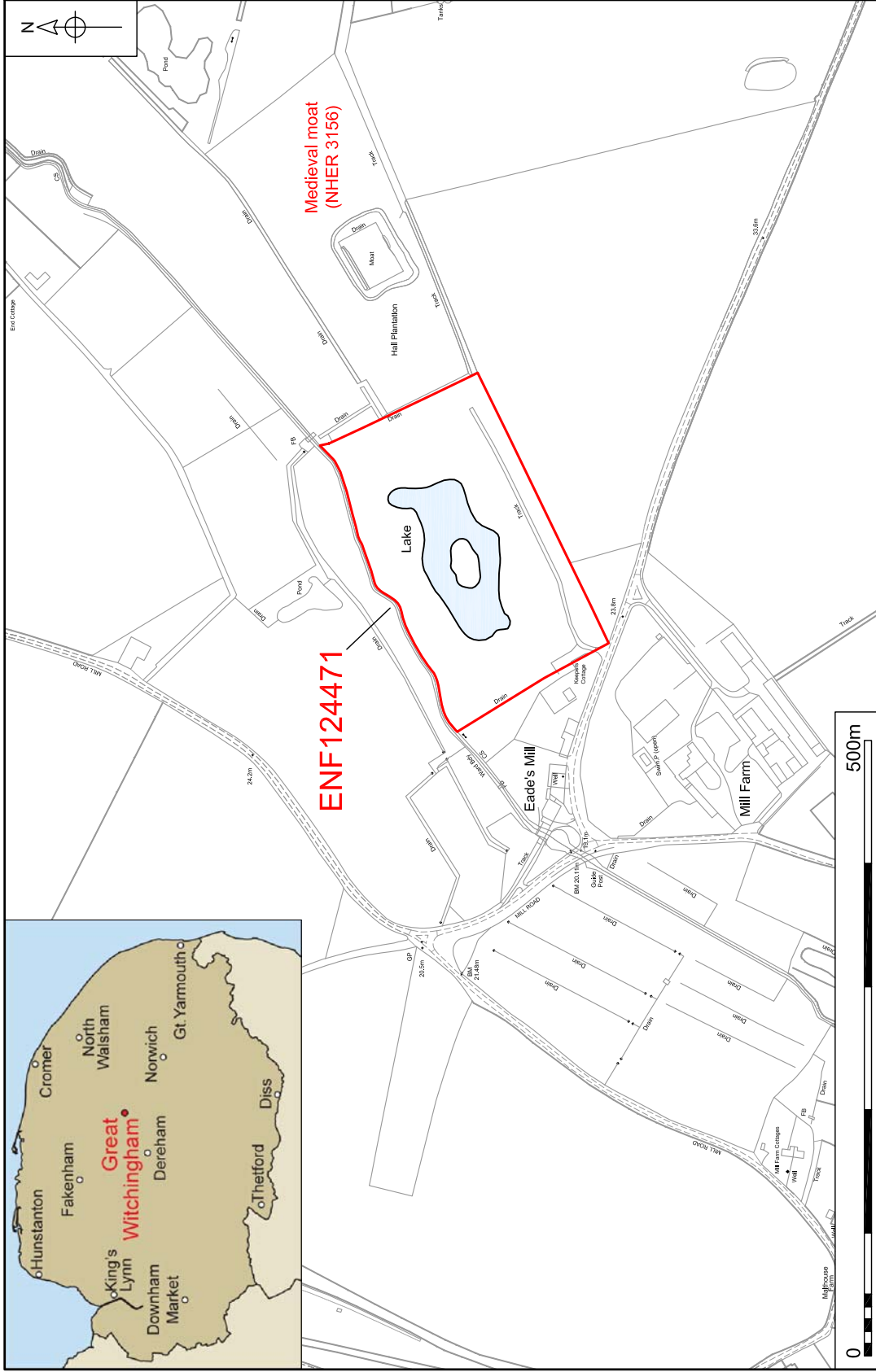
This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990).

The 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 geology underlying the site is Cretaceous chalk (BGS 1985) overlain by Glacial silts, clays and riverine alluvium (BGS 1991).

The site lies within the floodplain of a tributary of the River Wensum at a height of approximately 19m OD.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) and cartographic sources have been consulted during the preparation of this section of the report.

3.1 Prehistoric

In 1988 a Neolithic polished flint axehead (NHER 24788) was found 1km north of the present development site.

The cropmarks of a possible prehistoric ring-ditch (NHER 3138) have been observed 500m to the southwest of the present development.

In 1976 a Neolithic chipped and polished flint axehead was found, together with some bones (NHER 11931), during ditch digging 800m to the south of the site of the lake.

3.2 Roman

The Fen Causeway Roman road (NHER 2796) crosses from east to west 430m north of the site.

3.3 Anglo-Saxon

Metal detecting in a field 400m north of the site has uncovered evidence of an Early Saxon inhumation cemetery (NHER 38557) in the form of brooches and pottery.

3.4 Medieval

A medieval moated enclosure (NHER 3156) with visible masonry revetting lies 230m to the east site and with the site of Thurton (or Middleton-in-Witchingham) deserted medieval village (NHER 11525) located immediately to the east of the moat.

A medieval copper alloy pendant (NHER 19237) was ploughed up in about 1940, 800m northeast of the development site.

The deserted medieval village of Whitwell (NHER 3152) lies 780m to the west of the development area. Excavations in 1954 in the northern part of the deserted village (NHER 3147) revealed the remains of flint walls, medieval brick and pottery, possibly from a maltings or granary.

3.5 Post-Medieval

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map (c.1885) shows the site as a field, containing a large number of what appear to be drainage ditches (<http://www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk/Emap/EMapExplorer>).

Manor House Farm (NHER 21061), 550m to the east of the development site is a 17th-century brick built house.

Mill Farmhouse (NHER 51098), lies 250m to the southwest of the development site and is an early 18th-century brick built farmhouse.

Eade's Watermill (NHER 3160), lies 230m to the west of the present development and is an 18th-century watermill, thought locally to date to 1666.

Approximately 550m to the west of the lake lies the site of an 18th-century windmill (NHER 15233).

Malthouse Farm (NHER 21062), 700m southwest of the development site dates back to the 16th-century and is a 17th- and 18th-century timber and brick built house.

In October 1944, a German V2 rocket landed 470m southwest of the present development, leaving a large crater which is now a pond (NHER 31019).

3.6 Metal Detecting

An intensive campaign of metal detecting since 2000 in a large number of fields to the north, east and south of the development area has produced a huge amount of material, most notable of these finds are Bronze Age casting waste, an axe and a spear, Roman coins, brooches and a military horse fitting, Early, Middle and Late Saxon objects and a medieval Papal Bulla.

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 occasional monitoring visits were made during below-ground disturbance related to the excavation of the lake.

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.

No environmental samples were taken due to a lack of datable deposits.

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.

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



Figure 2. Plan of lake. Scale 1:2000

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5.0 RESULTS

The digging of the lake was intermittently monitored on a weekly basis. No features of archaeological significance were identified and no archaeological finds were recovered.

The stratigraphy consisted of turf above black peat preserved to a variable depth of 0.5-1.5m which in turn overlay natural degraded chalk.



Plate 1: The lake during excavation, facing southwest

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The stratigraphy encountered suggests that this area has always been pasture susceptible to waterlogging. No features of archaeological significance or finds were encountered.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank William Moorfoot who funded the project and Plandescil Ltd who commissioned it. The project was overseen by David Whitmore. The illustrations were completed by David Dobson and the report was edited by Jayne Bown.

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