

Report 2349



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**An Archaeological Watching Brief on
New Reed Beds at the Sewage Treatment Works,
Church Street, Carbrooke, Norfolk**

ENF 125050



Prepared for
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August 2010



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<i>Issue 1</i>		

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Location: Sewage Treatment Works, Church Street, Carbrooke
District: Breckland
Grid Ref.: TF 9487 0205
HER No.: ENF 125050
OASIS Ref.: 80838
Client: Anglian Water Services Ltd.
Dates of Fieldwork: 21 July 2010

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Anglian Water Services Ltd. ahead of the construction of new reed beds adjacent to the existing Carbrooke Sewage Treatment Works.

Due to the proximity of the development to the known site of a Knights Hospitaller Preceptory (NHER 8814), a watching brief was required to monitor all groundworks. This watching brief did not locate any archaeological features or deposits, and the natural soil horizon was not seen in the course of the excavations. The depth of the overburden, or made-ground, in the area has probably masked any archaeology that may have been present on the site, and also protected it from disturbance.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

An area measuring 230m² was to be excavated to allow for the construction of a new reed bed, adjacent to the existing sewage works at Church Street, Carbrooke, Norfolk. In the event, two strips were excavated (Figs. 1 and 2), one measuring 1.5m wide by 10m in length (Area 1) and the other, perpendicular to Area 1, measured 1.5m by c.16m in length (Area 2). This gave a total area of 51m². It was also planned to excavate 1.9m below a man-hole cover near to the Sewage Works, although due to the build up of a bank at the site, only 0.2m of stripping was required at some points.

This work was undertaken to fulfil a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (Ref. CNF42555) and was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU2349/DW). This project was commissioned and funded by Anglian Water Services Ltd.

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.

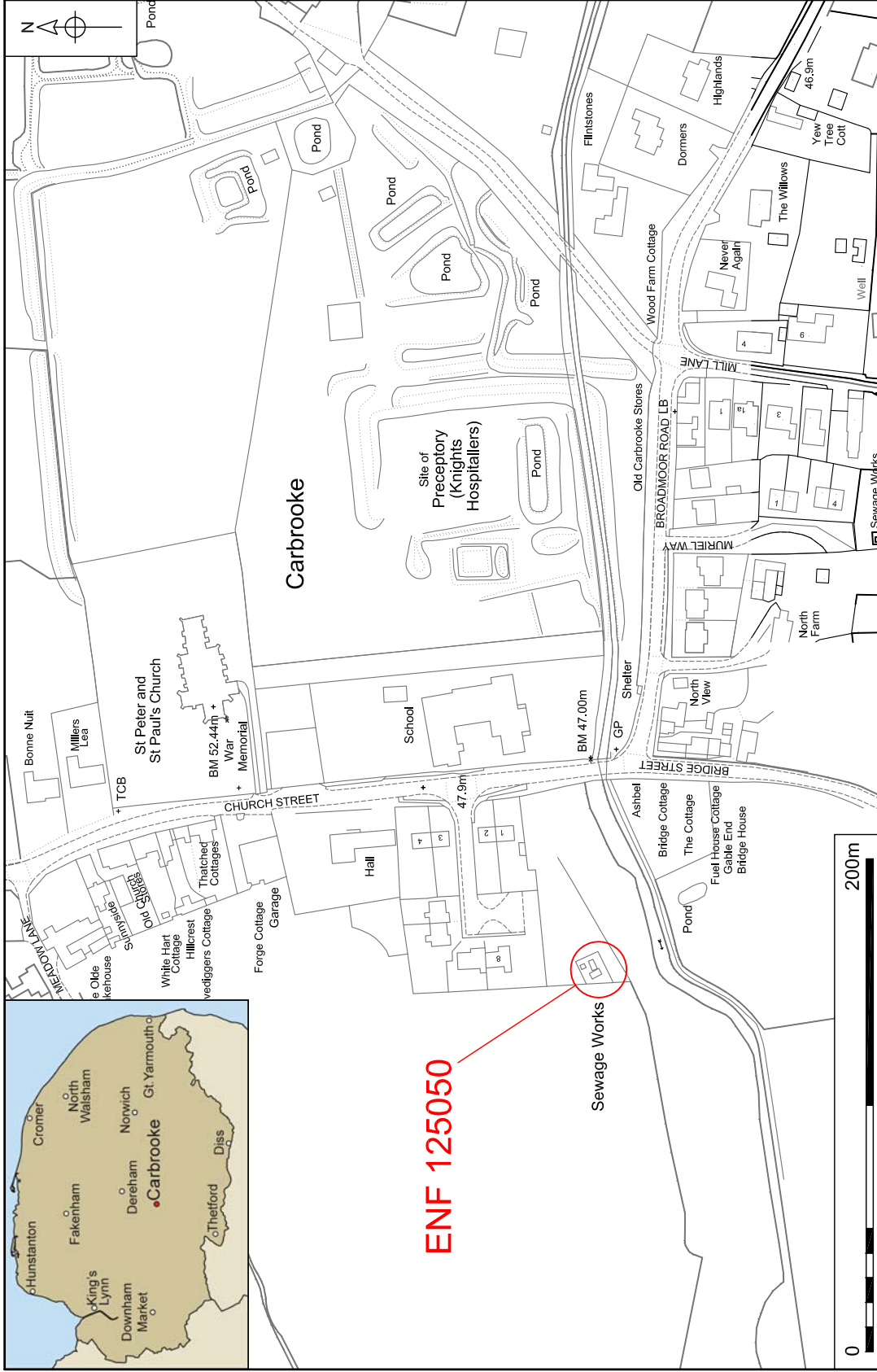


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500



Plate 1. General view, looking north

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Carbrooke Sewage Treatment Works is located just to the west of the village of Carbrooke in central Breckland, Norfolk, and lies on Boulder Clay. It is situated in a shallow valley north of a watercourse. The site sits at around 52m OD. The site of the new reed beds sloped rather steeply from a high point near to the Treatment Works, down to the unnamed watercourse to the south.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The main source for archaeological information pertaining to Norfolk is the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER), a database maintained by Norfolk County Council's Museums and Archaeology Service. A search of this database conducted on 20 July 2010 revealed that the mapped extents of 36 Historic Environment Records fell within a 1km radius of the Carbrooke Sewage Works. That information is presented below in chronological order.

3.1 Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon

The prehistoric period in the vicinity Carbrooke has meagre representation, notwithstanding the presence of a small watercourse in the area (just to the south of the development area), which can be a favoured area for settlement and activity during this period.

Evidence from the period comes in the form of chance finds, such as worked flint and Iron Age pottery, found during fieldwalking in the field immediately west of the development area (NHER 33323). An Early Bronze Age flat axehead was found

whilst metal detecting in a field to the south of the site (NHER 39360). A gold coin of Iron Age date was also found to the south of the site (NHER 25084), in a field behind the White House. The only other prehistoric evidence in the area is to be found to the north of the village. During excavations for a pond in the back garden of the house 'Bonne Nuit', the Young Archaeologists Club sieved three wheelbarrows of spoil, and recovered finds including possible Bronze Age worked flint and Iron Age pottery (NHER 39928).

The Roman period is even less well represented than the prehistoric, with just four chance finds being recorded. Only one of the finds lay close to the current development, that of two sherds of pottery (NHER 33323); all others lay to the south of the village. A Roman harness mount (NHER 39702) was recovered from a field to the south-east of the site and two Roman coins were found in the garden of 34 Mill Lane (NHER 8811). Another Roman coin was found to the west of this (NHER 40120).

The only evidence for the Saxon period in the area is Middle and Late Saxon pottery sherds, recovered from a multi-period site to the south of the development area (NHER 40120). The Domesday Book of 1087 records that prior to the Norman Conquest, Carbrooke was the property of King Harold (Hutcheson and Noble, 2006, 5).

3.2 Medieval

It was after the advent of the Normans that Carbrooke truly became a village, with a church (NHER 8794) and evidence for tofts (house sites). The most important medieval remnant in the village is the site of the preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers (NHER 8814).

The Hospitallers, or the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, were founded primarily as an aid organisation, after the First Crusade in around 1099. It was after the recognition of the Knights Templar as a monastic/military order in around 1120 that the Hospitallers took on a more military role in the Holy Land. Not unlike the Templars, the Hospitallers had houses all over the world, with many methods of making money and attracting donations to enable their brothers in the east to continue their work.

The Preceptory at Carbrooke (NHER 8814) was founded in 1173 by Matilda, Countess of Clare, and eventually 18 manors were administered from Carbrooke. It was dissolved in 1540. The site has been investigated archaeologically by NAU Archaeology in 1997 and 1998 in advance of extension of the adjacent school. The excavations uncovered evidence for prehistoric and Late Saxon activity, and also for the early preceptory buildings, there were also fish ponds and a dovecote. Other earthworks, probably associated with the preceptory have been seen to the north-east of the centre of the preceptory site (NHER 31424), and are believed to be a series of enclosures which are smaller, and lie within, later existing fields (pre-dating the Enclosures). Some finds mapped as lying to the west of the village and noted as coming from 'The Battlefield' (NHER 8764) are likely to be actually from the preceptory.

The church of St. Peter and Paul (NHER 8794) to the north of the preceptory site, was administered by the Hospitallers, and is a 13th-century foundation, with later 14th- and 15th- century alterations. The most important feature of the church is

that it contains one of the oldest identifiable tombs in Norfolk, that of the founder of the preceptory, Matilda de Clare and her son.

More medieval evidence in the village comes in the form of cropmarks (NHER 20838), which could possibly be the remnants of tofts or house platforms, although they could equally be drainage ditches. A watching brief in this area in 2006 (NHER 43191) was negative, with no archaeological features or finds noted.

A late medieval hall house, The Striped Cottage, on Broadmoor Road (NHER 21919) is the earliest listed building in Carbrooke. The house is a timber-framed and thatched hall house, with later additions and alterations.

Medieval finds have also been recovered from around the village, including a 15th-century iron spur (NHER 8815), found to the south-east of the preceptory and a Muslim coin inscribed Mahmood Salman (NHER 25067) found along with other medieval and post-medieval finds; pottery sherds (NHER 33323); and other finds (NHER 39360 and 39928).

3.3 Post-Medieval

The post-medieval period in Carbrooke is mostly made up of listed buildings (13 in total) which are listed below, by HER:

- NHER 12354: Crown House, late 16th- or early 17th- century
- NHER 21920: Thatched Cottage, The Street, early 18th-century pair of clay lump cottages
- NHER 39338: The Old Vicarage, early 19th-century
- NHER 46143: Cottage at junction of Bridge Street and Broadmoor Road, mid 19th-century clay lump building
- NHER 46145: Wood Farm House, timber-framed, 17th-century
- NHER 46146: Caudle Green Farmhouse, Caudlesprings, c.1800
- NHER 46147: Pendle Cottage and West Cottage, Caudlesprings, a pair of mid 19th-century clay lump cottages
- NHER 46148: Honley House, former pub, late 18th-century
- NHER 46149: Manor Farm House, mid 17th-century
- NHER 46291: Hillcrest, dated 1867
- NHER 46292: The White House, early 19th-century, clay lump house
- NHER 46295: Manor Farm Barn, early 19th-century
- NHER 46748: Broadmoor Farmhouse, late 18th-century

Carbrooke also has evidence for a post-medieval saw pit, present on early Ordnance Survey maps (NHER 12151), although no trace of it can be seen on the ground.

Unsurprisingly, post-medieval finds have also been recovered from the area. A Victorian cross, inlaid with blue, yellow, black and white was found (NHER 25067) along with an 18th-century mount, and other multi-period finds. Post-medieval coins and pottery were found to the south of the village (NHER 40120 and 39360).

Pottery of this date was also found in a field to the west of the site (NHER 33323). The Young Archaeologists Club also found post-medieval finds whilst sieving spoil in the garden of 'Bonne Nuit', these included a bell and a rowel spur (NHER 39928).

Two excavations in advance of a housing development at North Farm (NHER 36326) in 2001 and 2002 found post-medieval and undated pits and ditches.

3.4 Negative, Undated and Modern

A single modern monument is recorded in Carbrooke, and this is a telephone box (NHER 46411), a K6 type, designed in 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.

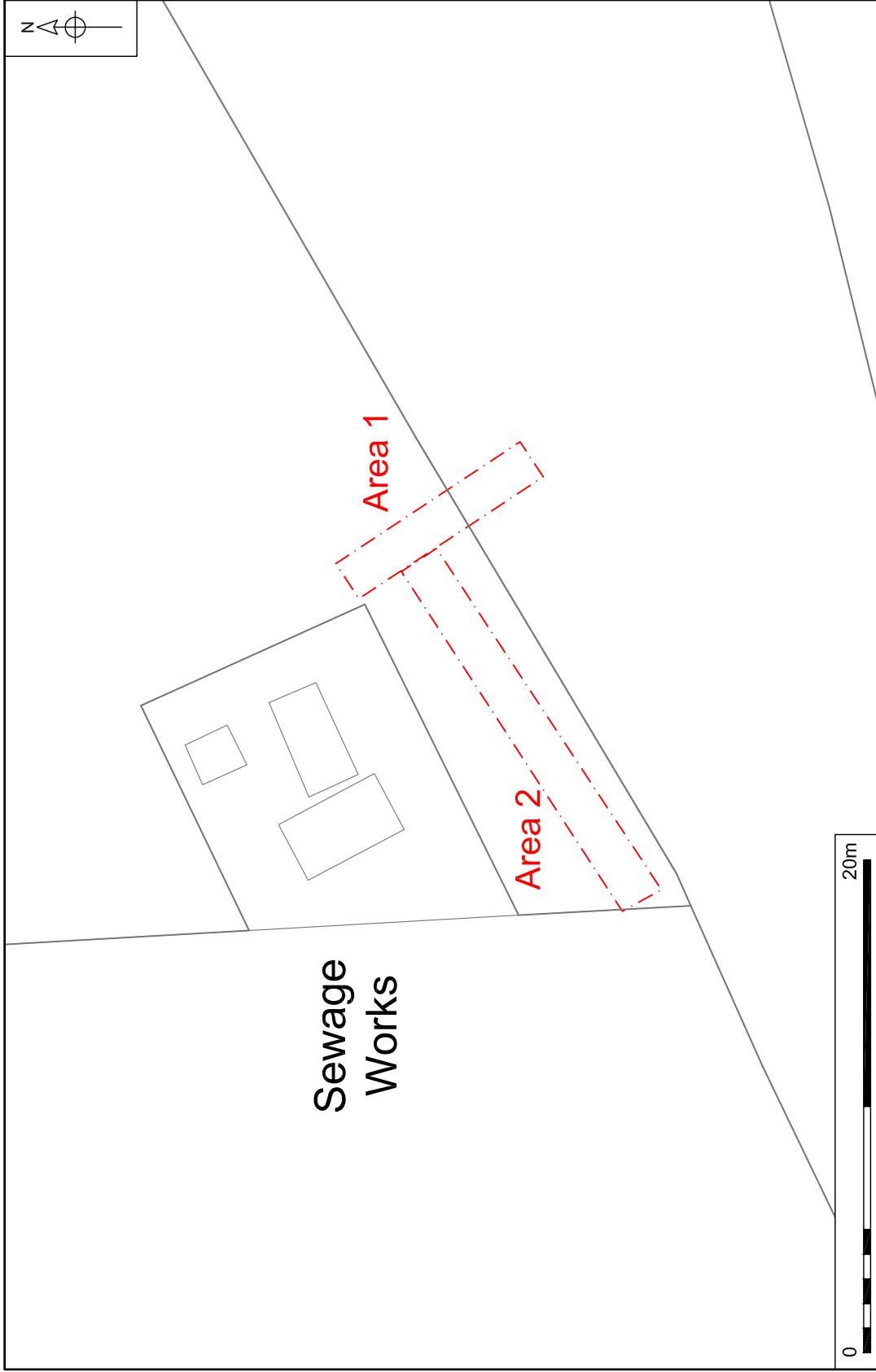
A watching brief with negative results was maintained on a linear drainage trench, which ran north to south along Shipdham Road, Church Street and Broadmoor Road in 2001 (NHER 36797).

Another watching brief, at the Old Mill Stores, prior to development, recorded an infilled pond and a ditch, both undated (NHER 40156).

Two areas of undated field systems have been recorded by aerial photograph interpretation, one area lies to the east of the village (NHER 36144), and may be related to current boundaries. The other field system (NHER 13003) lies to the west of the village, and consists of field boundaries, and what was once thought to be an anti-tank ditch, although is now thought to pre-date all of the current boundaries, and may in fact be prehistoric.



Plate 2. General view, looking south



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Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:250

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief 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 constant archaeological supervision was maintained, by a suitably qualified and experienced practitioner. An area of 51m² was excavated, in two strips, the first aligned north-west to south-east (Area 1), and the second, perpendicular to Area 1, was aligned north-east to south-west (Area 2).

Machine excavation was carried out with a tracked hydraulic 360° excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket and operated 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.

No environmental samples were taken, due to the lack of suitable 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.

5.0 RESULTS

5.1 Area 1

This area was aligned north-west to south-east, and measured 1.5m wide and 10m long. The depth of the trench varied as the contractors had to maintain a depth of 1.9m below a known man-hole, which lay on the top of the bank on which the sewage treatment works was situated, leading to a deeper trench (c.1m) at the north-western end than at the south-eastern end (c.0.2m).



Plate 3. Area 1, looking north-west

No natural deposits were seen within this area, and only a single, mid brown silty-sand (1) was seen to cover the trench. This was likely to be a topsoil deposit. There is a fairly steep drop from the track and platform where the sewage works is located down to the stream to the south.

No archaeological features or finds were present.

5.2 Area 2

This area was aligned north-east to south-west, and measured 1.5m wide, with a length of 16m. The depth of the trench remained fairly constant throughout, being roughly c.0.2m. This trench was nearer to the stream, and was therefore slightly damper towards the south-western end.



Plate 4. Area 2, looking south-west

No natural deposits were seen in this area, only topsoil or made-ground (1). The deposit was much wetter towards the south-western end, nearer to the stream.

No archaeological features or finds were present.



Plate 5. Area 2, looking north-east

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The site at Carbrooke had a high potential for archaeological remains being present, as it was located in the valley of a small watercourse, and in close proximity to a preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers.

The area has probably been built up in the recent past, possibly during the construction of the sewage treatment works, as there was much barbed wire and concrete post and wire fences across the site. The banked area was used as a barrier to keep the horses pastured on the meadow below from finding their way into the sewage works. Any archaeological remains that may have been present in the area may have been destroyed by construction works for the Sewage plant itself. Alternatively, remains may possibly be present, protected by the depth of overburden on the site.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Darren Smith of Anglian Water, along with Claret Engineering who undertook the site works. The HER search was carried out by Sarah Howard. All figures were created by the author and finalised by David Dobson. The report was edited by Jayne Bown.

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Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Description	Period
1	Deposit	Topsoil	Topsoil	Modern