

Report 2481



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An Archaeological Watching Brief to the rear of 20 Bishopgate, Norwich

NHER 51771 (ENF125411)



Prepared for

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Location:	Land to rear of 20 Bishopgate, Norwich, Norfolk
District:	Norwich
Grid Ref.:	TG 2376 0895
NHER No.:	51771 (ENF 125411)
OASIS Ref.:	85572
Client:	Norwich School
Dates of Fieldwork:	26-27 October 2010

Summary

An archaeological Watching Brief was conducted for Norwich School during groundworks associated with the construction of new garages to the rear of 20 Bishopgate Norwich. The site is situated close to Norwich Cathedral, lying within what would have been the outer court of the medieval cathedral-priory.

Ground disturbance was limited, with the footprint of the new garages being reduced by a depth approximately 0.40m in order to accommodate a reinforced concrete slab over piled foundations (there was no requirement to monitor these piles).

No archaeologically significant features or deposits were exposed by these works, which did not penetrate beneath the dark, silty garden soil which lay beneath the modern gravel surface.

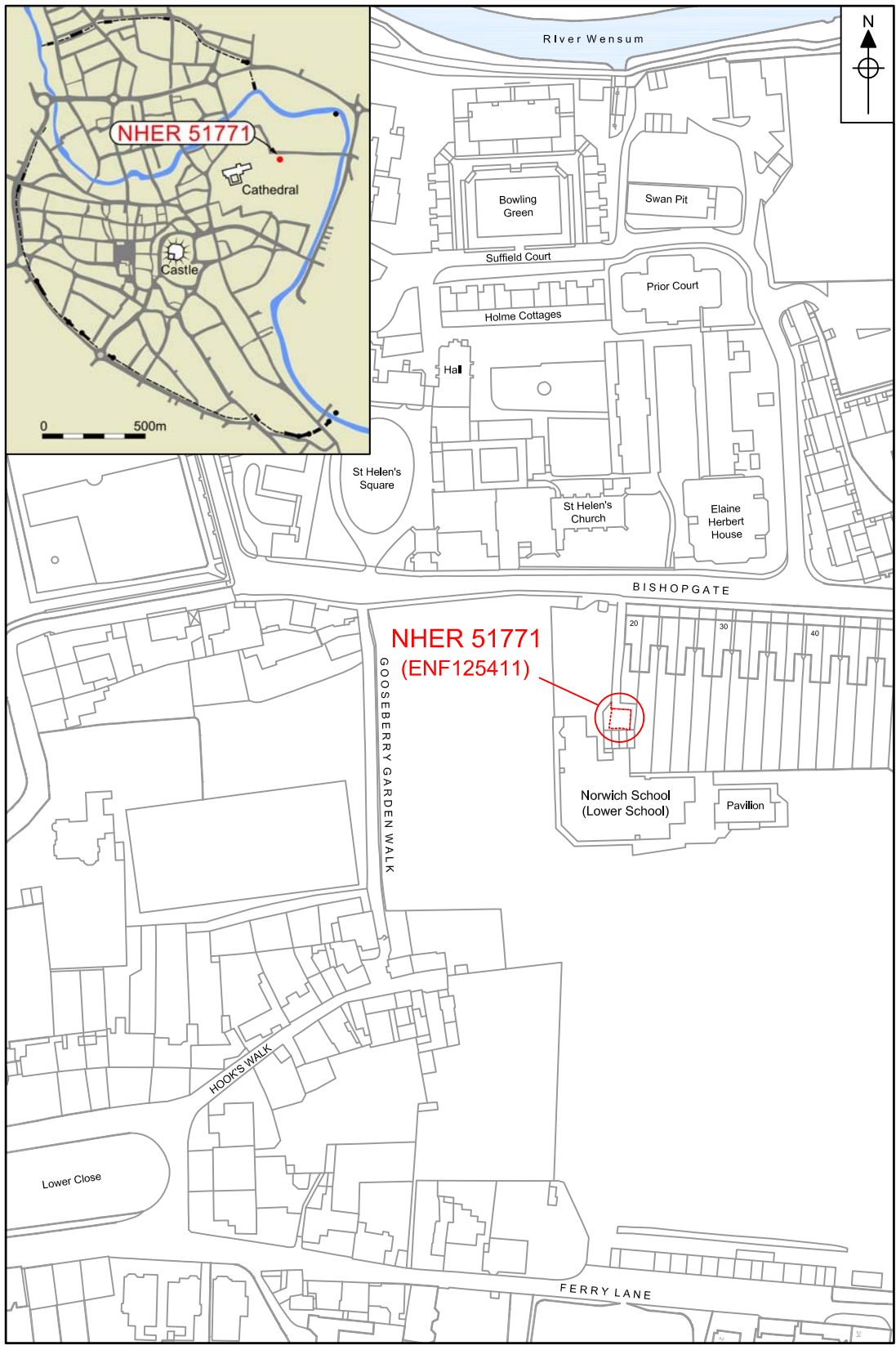
1.0 INTRODUCTION

In October 2010 NAU Archaeology carried out an archaeological Watching Brief within a small block of land to the rear of 20 Bishopgate, Norwich. This work took place during groundworks associated with the construction of a single storey extension to several existing modern garages. The site comprises a small area of open ground immediately to the south of the small yard at the rear of 20 Bishopgate, much of which will be covered by the footprint of new structure (c. 43m²).

The watching brief monitored the excavation of foundations for the new structure, with the entire footprint being reduced by a depth of approximately 0.40m in order to accommodate a reinforced concrete slab. Piled foundations - driven steel displacement piles at 2–3m centres below the slab were not monitored.

This work was undertaken to fulfil a condition set by the Cathedrals Fabric Commission (CFCE) in its approval of the works and a Brief jointly issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology and the Cathedral Archaeological (Harris and Hamilton 2010). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. BAU2481/DW). This work was commissioned by Gary Pearce of Owen Bond Partnership on behalf of Norwich School.

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 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site is situated to the south of Bishopgate (medieval Holme Street) and would have lain within the outer court of the medieval cathedral-priory (Harris and Hamilton 2010). There are no recorded medieval features within this part of the precinct and by the late Middle Ages it appears that the site lay within an extensive garden. Subsequent post-medieval use of this area also appears to have been largely horticultural, with cartographic sources revealing no evidence for significant development on the site itself.

Various archaeological investigations have taken place within the vicinity of the Norwich Lower School in recent years, the majority of which have been Watching Briefs undertaken during construction work. The site itself was subject to archaeological evaluation in 2008, with a single, small trench being excavated prior to the construction of new drains. Due to the presence of ground contamination this trench could only be excavated to a depth of 0.67m, with the lowest deposit revealed being a silty former garden soil (Morgan 2008). A Watching Brief undertaken during construction of an extension to the nearby Lower School buildings also suggested that recent soils and made-ground deposits are at least 0.65m deep in this area (Ames 2006).



Plate 1. General view of site, looking south-west

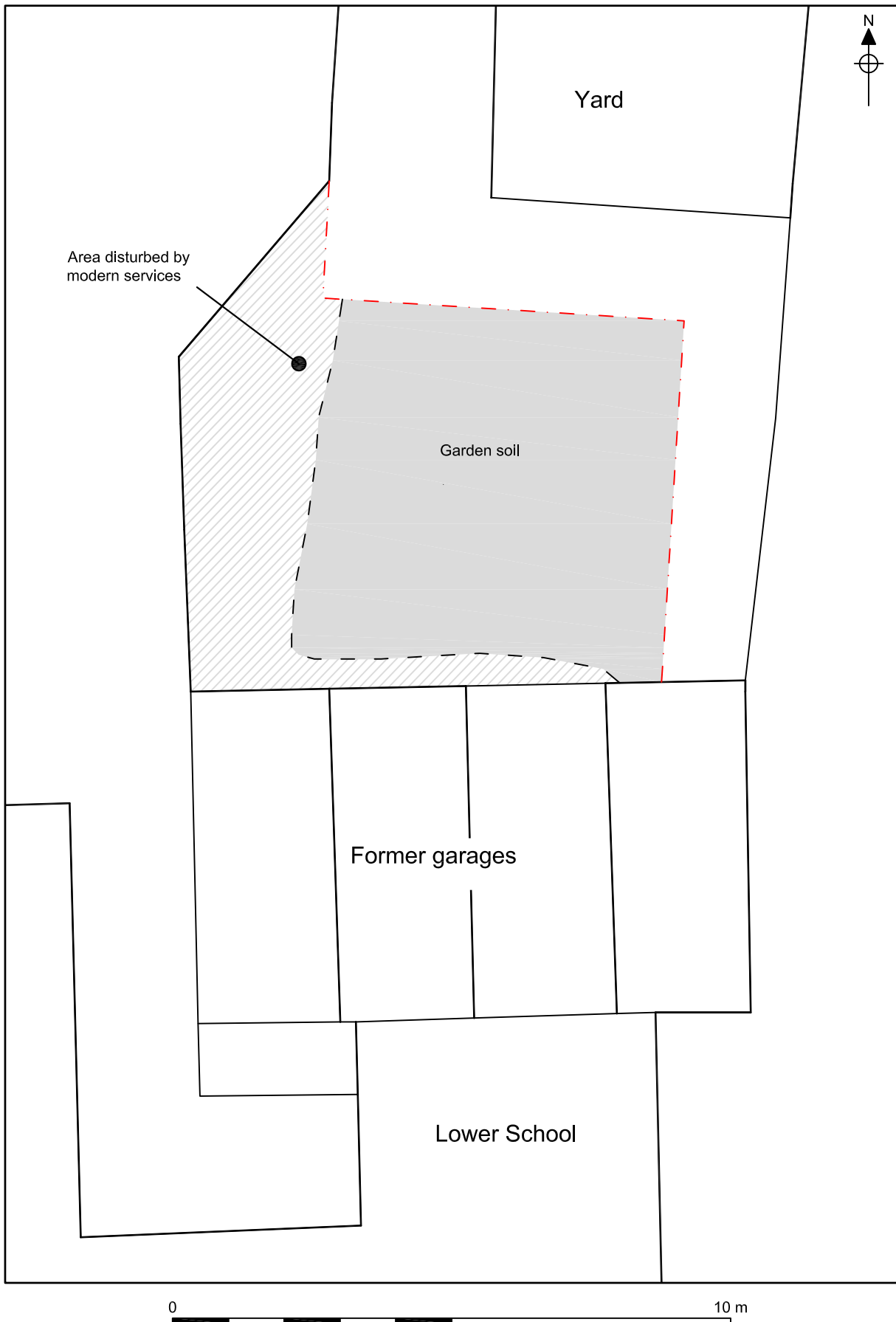


Figure 2. Monitored groundworks. Scale 1:100

3.0 OBSERVATIONS

Excavation of the footings for the new structure took two days and was undertaken using a mini-digger. As anticipated the footprint was reduced to a maximum depth of 0.40m below the present ground level.

Removal of the gravel surface exposed a dark, silty soil, the base of which was not reached. This homogenous deposit was almost certainly a former garden soil and appeared largely undisturbed (although a number of modern surface trenches were visible at the western and southern edges of the site).

No finds were recovered during this work.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological features or deposits were observed during this work.

The footings for the new structure did not penetrate beneath the dark garden soil identified during the earlier evaluation, this deposit being shown to cover the entire site. There was no requirement to monitor the piled foundations.

Acknowledgements

Fieldwork was carried out by David Whitmore, Becky Sillwood and the author. The report was edited by Jayne Bown and produced by David Dobson. The figures were created by David Dobson and the author.

This work was funded by Norwich School and commissioned by Owen Bond Partnership on their behalf.

Bibliography

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