

Report BAU2517



nau archaeology

An Archaeological Evaluation at Jolly Sailor Yard, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk

HER: ENF 125355



Prepared for
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Location:	Jolly Sailor Yard, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk
District:	North Norfolk District Council
Grid Ref.:	TG 9194 4371
HER No.:	ENF 125355
OASIS Ref.:	88860
Client:	Mr and Mrs J Needham
Dates of Fieldwork:	26 October 2010

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was conducted by NAU Archaeology for Mr and Mrs J Needham ahead of proposed redevelopment at the east end of Jolly Sailor Yard, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk. The evaluation examined a trench measuring 3m by 3m in plan located within the proposed footprint of a new building.

The evaluation indicated that undisturbed sand and chalk deposits were present 0.35m below the current ground level. The only significant archaeological remains revealed by the evaluation were of a building, constructed of chalk and flint and bonded with lime mortar. The building had a pavement tile floor. Reference to maps of the area indicate the plot occupied by this building was open in the early 20th century, suggesting the building dates to before then. The broad date assigned to brick and tile recovered from the floor supports an early 20th- to late 19th-century date for its construction. This building might have fronted Jolly Sailors Yard and it is likely more of it survives on the plot.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

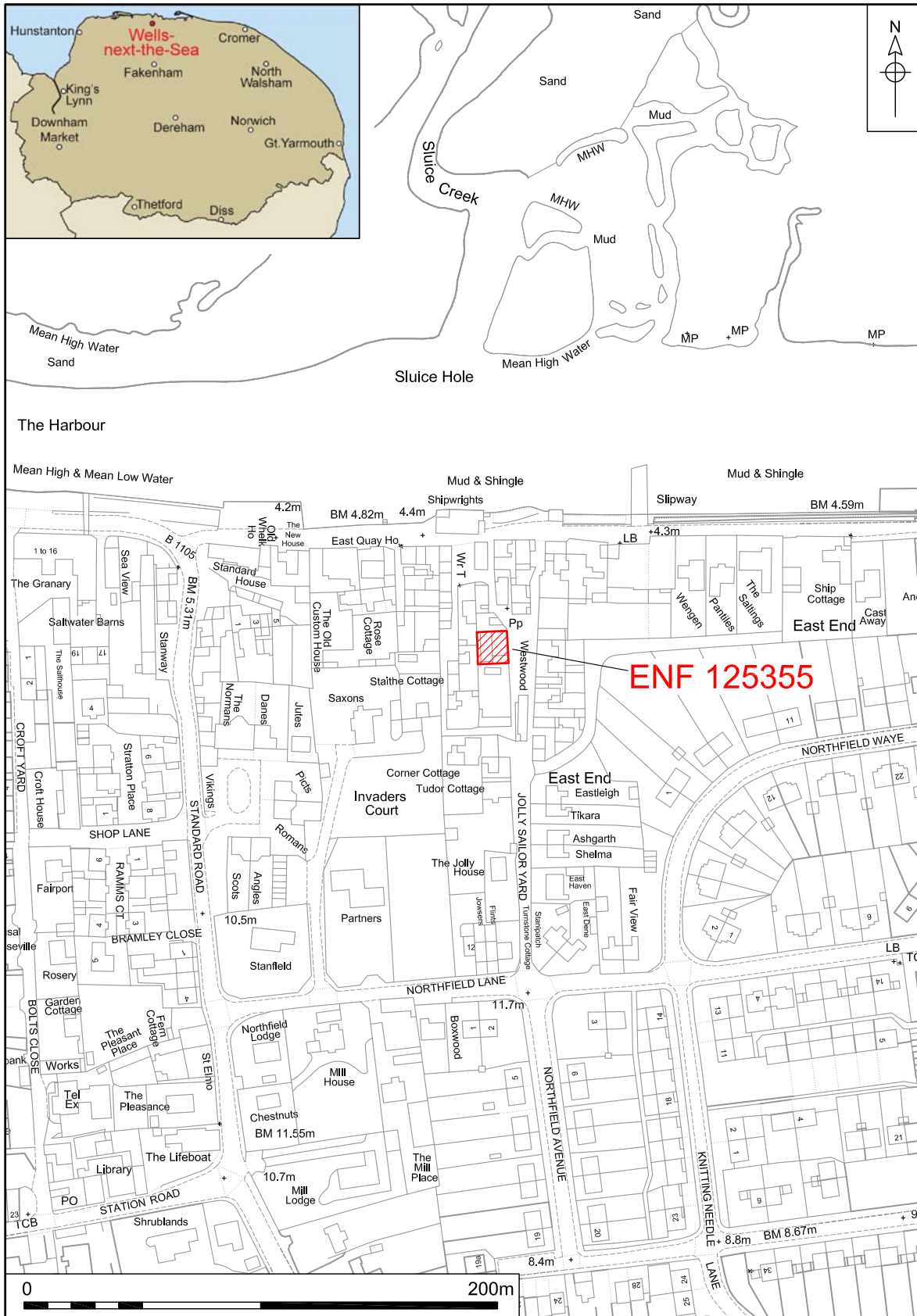
This evaluation was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by North Norfolk District Council (Ref. 09/1107) and a brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (formerly Norfolk Landscape Archaeology; Ref. Ken Hamilton 2 August 2010 CNF 42965). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU2517/NP). The fieldwork and report were commissioned and funded by Mr and Mrs J Needham.

The archaeological evaluation examined a sample area of a 170m² plot of land (Fig. 1).

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with principles 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.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site lies on a gentle slope from south to north between the 10m and 5m contours. The solid geology in this part of Norfolk comprises Upper Chalk (British Geological Survey 1985) overlain by sandy fluvio-glacial drift (Lawes Agricultural Trust 1973). Undisturbed deposits at the site consisted of chalk overlain by a medium-grained sand.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Comparatively little archaeological work has been undertaken within Wells-next-the-Sea. Archaeological evaluations have taken place on Church Street (Wallis 1999) where nothing of interest was found and at Standard Road (Trimble 2002) where an undated ditch was revealed. More significantly though, evaluation and subsequent excavation at Staithe Street (Robertson 2005, Watkins 2005), 330m to the south-west of the current site recorded a pit of Iron Age date and two Roman ditches; the first identified features of these periods known from the town. Of particular interest was the identification of briquetage (fired clay) from the Iron Age pit, suggesting salt production might have taken place in the vicinity. Other finds of Roman material have been recovered from uncontrolled works and chance finds in Wells, including grey ware pottery (NHER sites 1849 and 18177).

Wells-next-the-Sea was probably well-established by the Late Saxon period, with Domesday (Brown 1984) recording it as being divided into six manors. The settlement of the town has been inextricably linked to its coastal location, probably developing initially as a small fishing village. From the late medieval period the town developed northwards from an earlier focus around the church of St Nicholas, with a formal gridded street pattern being set out in an area north of the Buttlands.

The granting of a charter to the wealthy fenland abbey of Ramsey to expand the port for grain export in the early 13th century probably underpinned the development of the planned town, and the establishment of a market as early as 1202 (Dymond 2005) must also have been significant in the town's early growth.

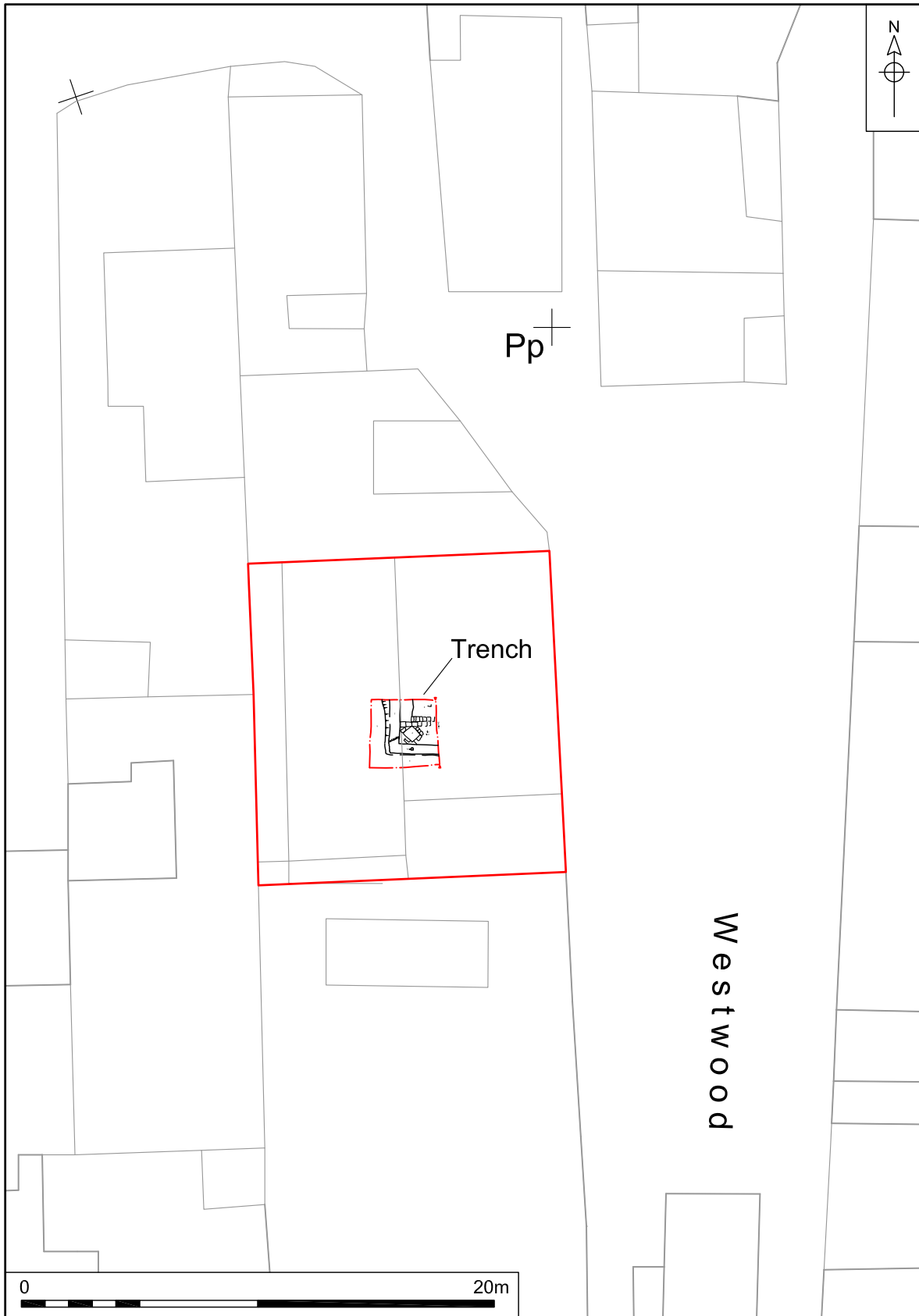
The evaluation site is located within the planned medieval street pattern at the east end of the town and within 50m of the waterfront.

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 of the proposed development (170m²) was examined by the evaluation. This required a single trench of 3m by 3m in plan (9m²).

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



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Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:250

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.

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 average, the work taking place in inclement weather.



Plate 1. Wall [3] with tile floor [4] and chalk visible behind, looking west, 2m scale

5.0 RESULTS

(Figs 2 and 3; Plates 1 and 2)

The evaluation trench measured 3m by 3m in plan. Undisturbed deposits of chalk [5] were not deep, being present at only 0.35m below the current ground surface. Overlying this chalk was a mid brown to yellow brown sand also considered to be an undisturbed deposit, though root disturbance and trampling of its upper horizon had introduced small fragments of coal and mortar.

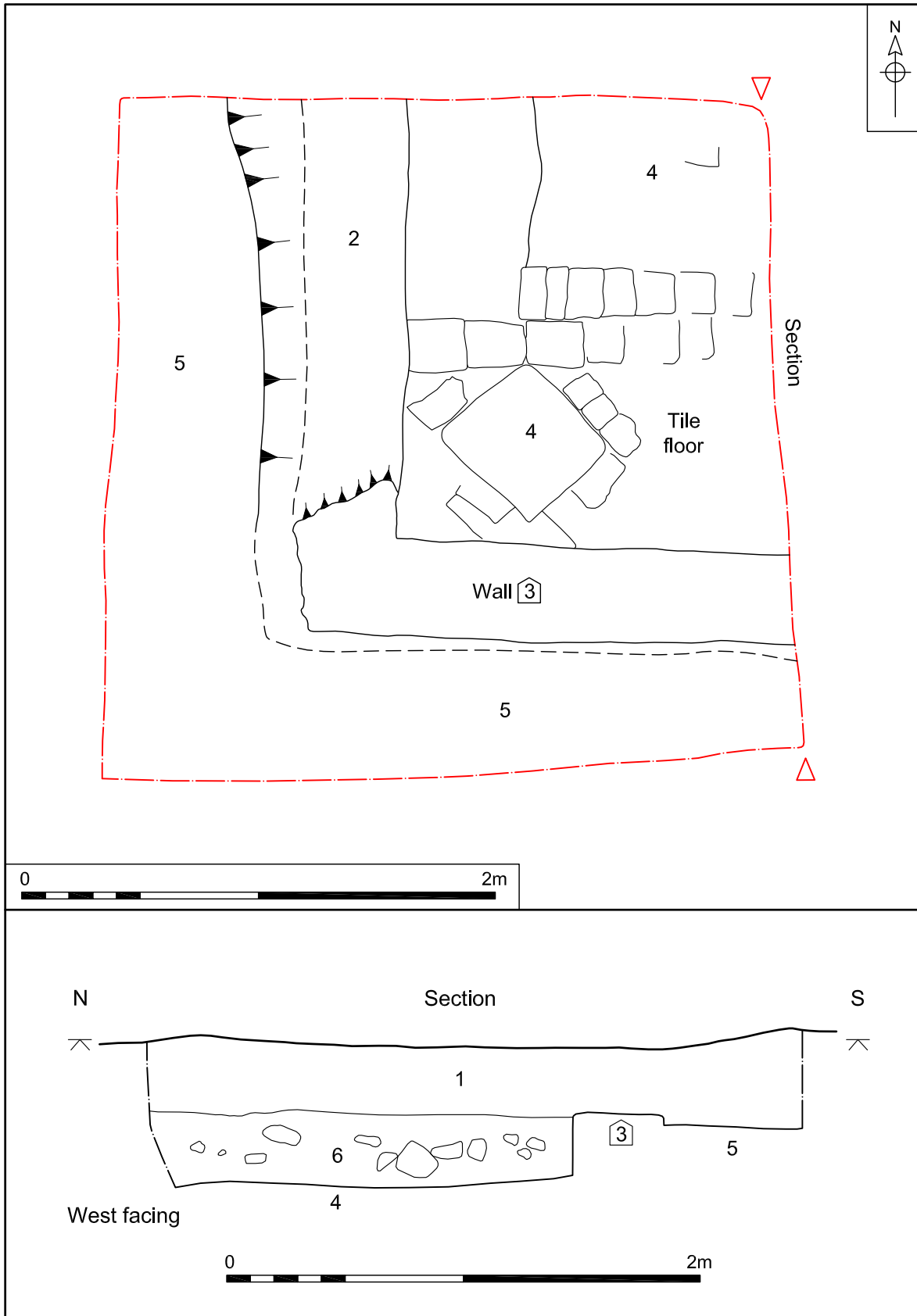
The only significant archaeological feature revealed just below the surface in the evaluation trench was the corner of a building. Though the western wall [3] of this building had been robbed out, what remained of the two walls were clear and formed a corner within the evaluation area (Fig. 3). The east-west aligned wall of the building measured 2.10m in length and 0.45m in width, with a surviving depth of 0.30m. Constructed from chalk lump with occasional flints, it was bonded together with a lime mortar. A pavement tile and brick floor [4] was present at the base of the building, some of this surface having been robbed out. A representative single tile and a brick were collected from this feature. The whole of

this structure including the floor appeared to have been set within a cut [2] that had truncated undisturbed chalk deposits. Once this structure had been characterised and recorded Ken Hamilton of NHES was contacted and he advised that the remains should be left *in situ*.

Overlying the structure was layer [6], consisting of building debris, presumably generated from the destruction and removal of this building. This rubble was overlaid by a dark brown humic soil [1] recently cleared of overgrowth.



Plate 2. Post-excavation showing building with Jolly Sailors Yard beyond, looking east, 1m scale



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Figure 3. Trench Plan of Excavated Features and South facing section. Scale 1:25

6.0 THE FINDS

by Sarah Percival

Finds recovered from the site are listed in context order in Appendix 2a and described in more detail (ordered by material) below.

6.1 Pottery

A single sherd from a refined white earthenware jar or jug weighing 14g was found in fill [6] of the structure. The pottery is of early 20th century date.

6.2 Ceramic Building Material

A large late 19th- to early 20th-century pavement in fine orange/red sandy fabric was sampled from floor [4] of the structure. The pavement measures 230mm by 230mm and is 40mm thick.

A brick in dense red sandy fabric with large red grog inclusions was also sampled from the structure. The brick measures 240mm x 110mm x 55mm and is similar to examples found in 17th-century contexts in Norwich (LB3, Drury 1993, 165) suggesting a 17th-century or later date for its construction.

6.3 Iron

A pair of highly corroded iron scissors was found in layer [6], the backfill of the structure.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The key finding of the evaluation was the presence of a masonry structure on the site. Aligned on a north-south axis, this building had perhaps fronted onto Jolly Sailors Yard. Though it is difficult to assign a date to the remains of this building, reference to the 1905 OS map (Fig 4) shows the current plot to be open and without buildings, suggesting that the building revealed by the evaluation predates this at least.

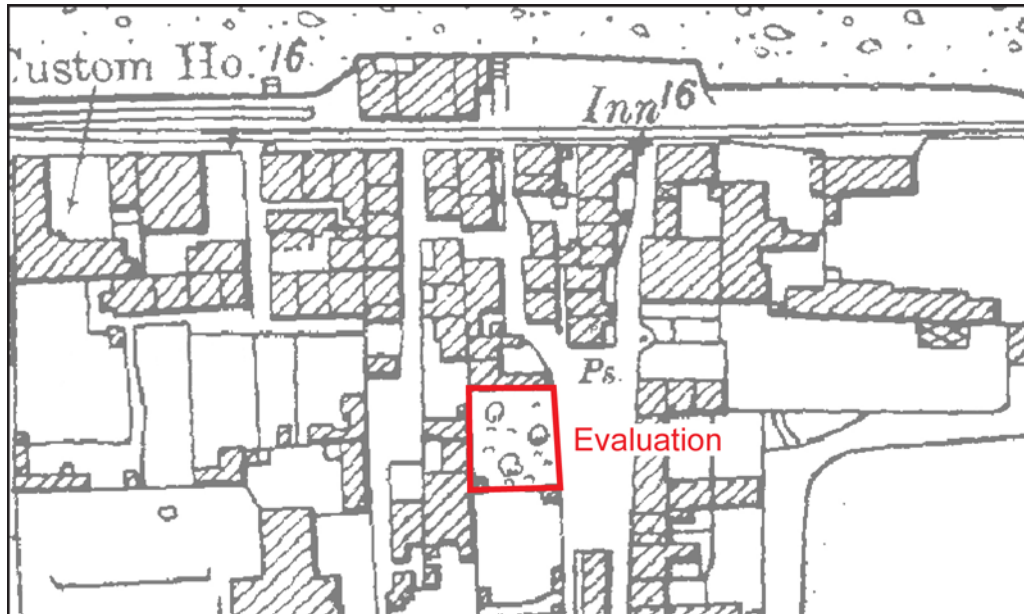


Figure 4. Detail of 1905 Ordnance Survey map

The limited dating evidence provided by the tile and brick recovered supports a post-17th century to early 20th century date. The preservation of this building can be considered good, despite no upstanding remains (above the surface) being identified, the lowering of the footings and floor below the level of surrounding undisturbed deposits at an indeterminate date aiding its preservation.

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

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mr and Mrs Needham who commissioned and funded the project.

The finds were washed by Rob Brown and were processed and analysed by Sarah Percival.

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period
1	Deposit			Topsoil	Modern
2	Cut	Foundation		Contains structural elements	Modern (19th-20th century)
3	Masonry	wall	2	Chalk lump with occasional flint	Modern (19th-20th century)
4	Masonry	Floor	2	Pamment and brick	Modern (19th-20th century)
5	Deposit			Chalk - natural	-
6	Deposit			Building debris	20th century

Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

Period	Type	Total
Modern	Foundation cut	1
	Wall	1
	Floor	1

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
4	Ceramic Building Material	1	3,500g	Modern	Floor tile
4	Ceramic Building Material	1	3,450g	Modern	Brick
6	Pottery	1	14g	Modern	Refined white earthenware
6	Iron	1	69g	Modern	Scissors

It is not proposed to deposit any of the finds in the county archive store

Appendix 2b: OASIS Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Modern	Ceramic Building Material	2
	Iron	1
	Pottery	1