

Report 2210



nps archaeology

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Bacton Wood Mill, North Walsham, Norfolk

ENF125268



Prepared for
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Location:	Bacton Wood Mill, North Walsham, Norfolk
District:	North Norfolk
Grid Ref.:	TG 3000 3065
HER No.:	ENF125268
OASIS Ref.:	93432
Client:	EDF Energy
Dates of Fieldwork:	10 September 2010

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for EDF Energy during groundworks associated with the erection of a pole for an overhead cable at Bacton Mill Wood, North Walsham.

The hole dug for the pole was 1.3m long, 0.5m wide and 1.5m deep, located at a bend in the road, in the valley bottom close to the disused North Walsham and Dilham Canal and adjacent to a First World War pillbox. A sequence of six undated deposits were encountered, some possibly associated with activity at the site and some possibly colluvial. No archaeological artefacts were present.

At the time of writing it is not clear when the works associated with laying a buried cable - which will require archaeological monitoring – will take place.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This project involved the archaeological monitoring of the erection of an overhead cable pole and the route of a buried cable. To date the underground cable routing has not taken place.

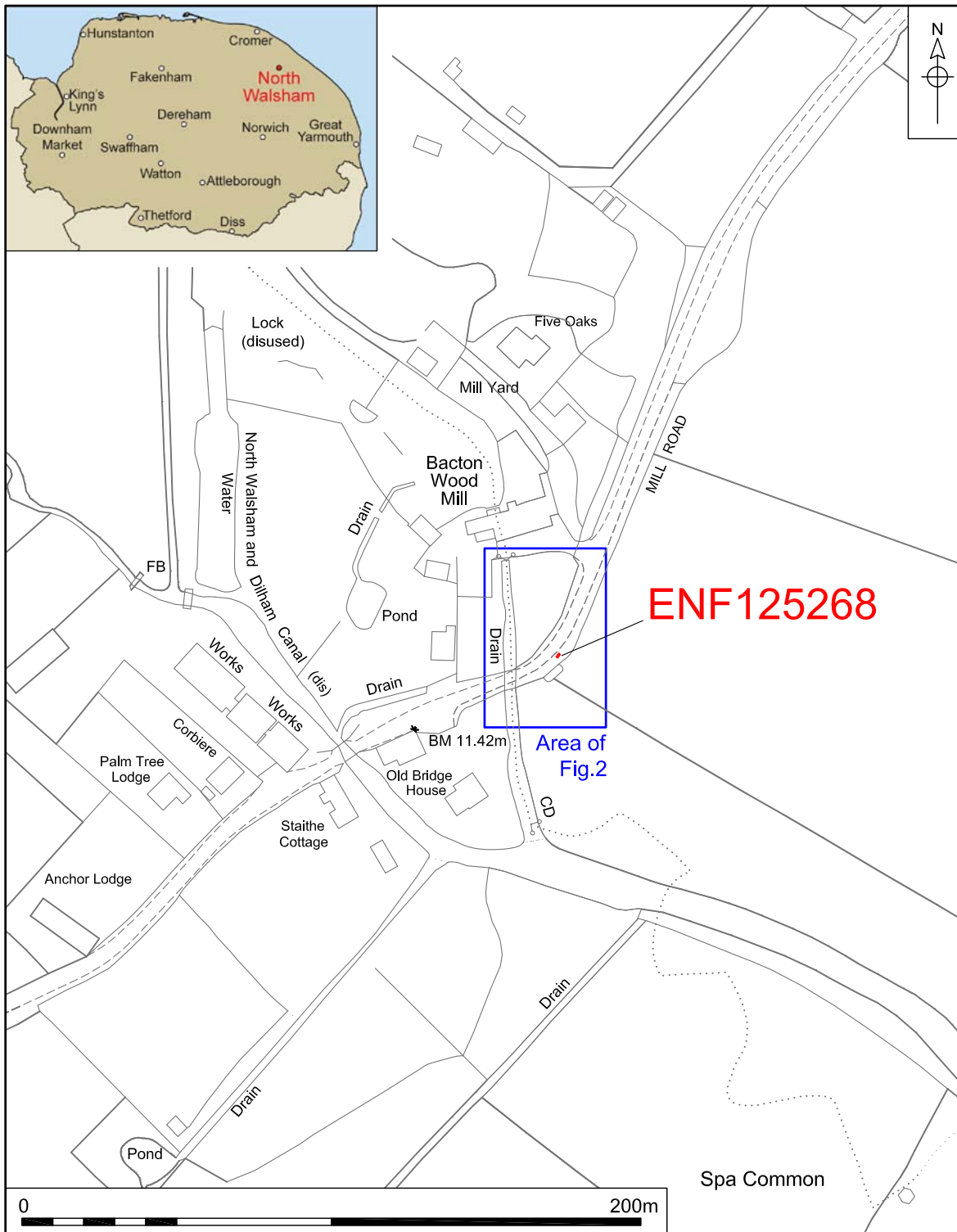
This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by EDF Energy and North Norfolk District Council (Ref. 20090363) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Ref. CNF42380). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. BAU2210). This work was commissioned and funded by EDF Energy.

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 Policy Statement 5: Planning For The Historic Environment* (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.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site is located on Mill Road in a rural setting in the valley of the River Ant, adjacent to Bacton Wood Mill. It lies one mile to the east of the centre of North



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2000

Walsham, at a height of c.11m OD and close to the (disused) North Walsham and Dilham Canal (Fig. 1).

The site was situated upon Anglian glacial sands and gravels (BGS 1991), overlaying Cretaceous chalk (BGS 1985).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) has been consulted during the preparation of this section.

In 1964 a Neolithic flint axe head (NHER6836) was found 300m south-west of the survey area.

In 1826 two Roman cremation urns (NHER6907) were found 90m north of the survey area.

In 1964 medieval pottery (NHER6843) were found during building works 280m west of the survey area.

Metal detecting in 2005 of a field 550m north found a sherd of medieval pottery (NHER41707).

Metal detecting in 2005 of a field 550m to the north-west found a medieval coin (NHER41834).

A 17th- to 18th-century brick kiln (NHER52899) was present 320m south of the survey area.

The earthworks of a possible post-medieval water meadow (NHER38793) survive 100m to the south-east.

The road bridge 75m to the south-west of the survey area is probably 18th-century in date (NHER47198).

Muckle Hill Farm, 260m to the south of the survey area, has an 18th-century brick built barn (NHER50333).

A post-medieval windmill stood 130m north of the survey area at the end of the 18th century (NHER15433).

Bacton Wood Mill, 50m north of the survey area, is a wooden water mill dating to 1780 (NHER11572).

The North Walsham and Dilham Canal, running south-east to north-west 75m south-west of the present development, was opened in 1826 to provide a water link to North Walsham. However, mainly due to its narrow width and lack of a water supply it was never profitable and closed in the 1920s (NHER13543).

The pillbox which stands adjacent to the development is a half-oval late First World War construction of concrete blocks (NHER17017).

A Second World War Home Guard shelter (NHER32622) survives 200m south-west of the survey area.

Across the road from the survey area, a metal detector survey in 2009 found medieval material, as well as two Roman coins and an Early Saxon brooch (NHER53105).

Fieldwalking in fields to the north and east of the survey area has found large quantities of flint tools dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age, suggesting an important occupation site. An excavation in 2007 found evidence of Mesolithic and Neolithic activity (NHER6899).

Metal detecting of a field 140m to the north has found a large amount of medieval and post-medieval material with a smaller amount of Roman and Prehistoric material (NHER51284).

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological remains that may be exposed during groundworks within the survey area.

The Brief required that groundworks associated with a new overhead electricity cable pole and a buried electricity cable be constantly monitored. This report only covers the works associated with the cable pole trench.

Machine excavation was carried out with a small 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.

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 good, with the work taking place in fine weather.

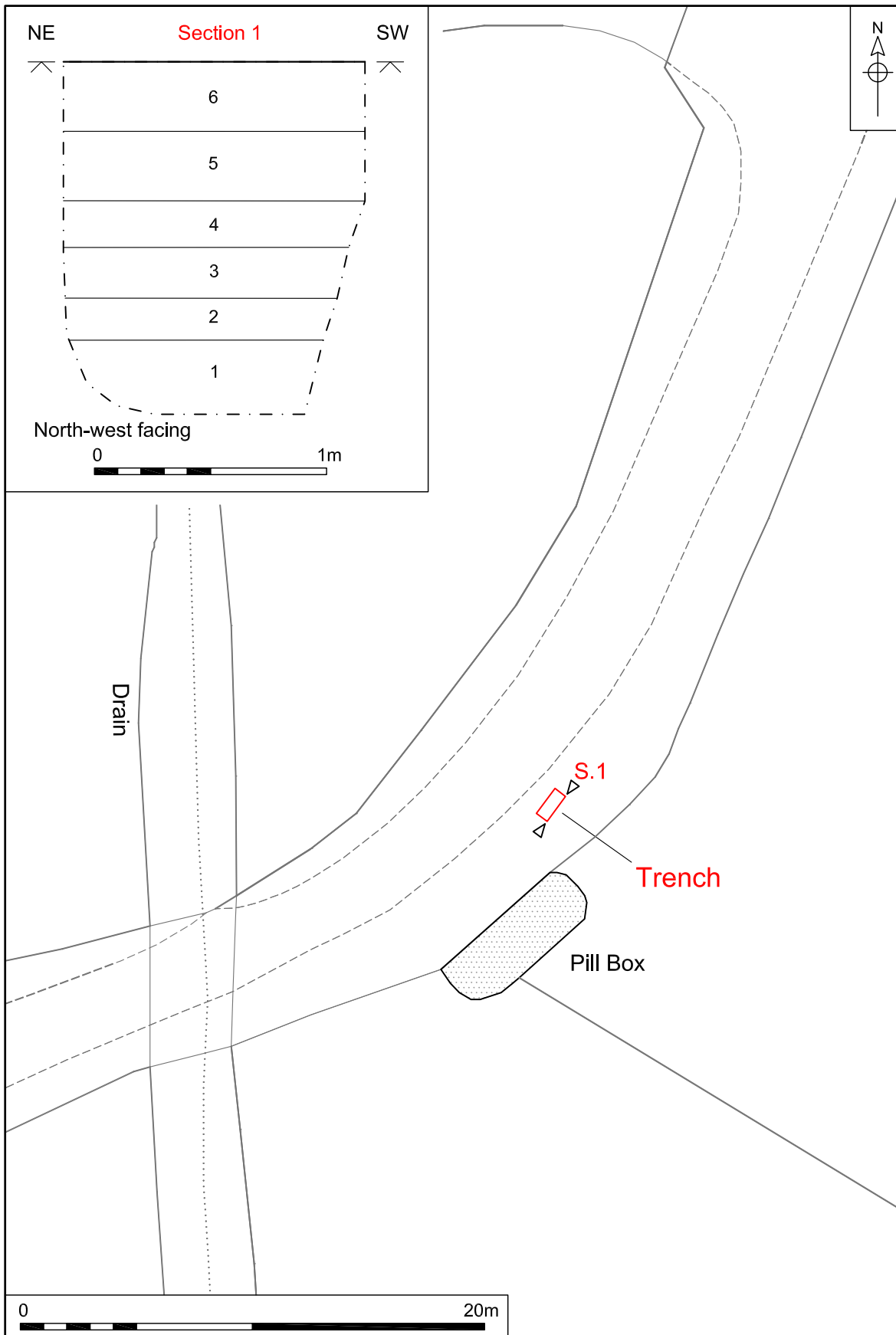
5.0 RESULTS

The pole to carry an overhead power cable was erected 3m to the north of the First World War pillbox (NHER17017), on the south side of Mill Road (Fig. 2).

The pit dug to receive the pole measured 1.3m long, 0.5m wide and 1.5m deep and revealed a sequence of layers (Fig. 2 Section 1).

The earliest layer (6) was a pale grey silt with no inclusions. Above this was layer (5), a 0.18m thick, dark brown silt with occasional flint gravel which may have been a buried topsoil. Layer (4), located above this was 0.2m thick and consisted of mixed pale grey, dark orange and dark brown silts with no inclusions whose purpose remains uncertain. Sealing layer (4) was layer (3), a pure yellow sand 0.2m thick which must have been deliberately deposited. Layer (2), above this, was 0.3m thick and was a mid brown sandy silt with occasional flint gravel. The uppermost layer was deposit (1), a 0.3m deep layer of dark brown sandy silt with occasional flint gravel which was the modern topsoil.

None of the deposits that were excavated contained any artefacts and remain undated.



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Figure 2. Trench location (scale 1:250),
inset Section 1(scale 1:25)



Plate 1: Excavated trench, facing south-east

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

A sequence of six deposits was encountered within a small hole dug to house an overhead power cable. No archaeological features or artefacts were present.

Although some of the layers appear to have been deposited by human activity and some possibly may have derived from colluvial action, they all remain undated and their purpose unknown.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank EDF Energy for commissioning and funding this project.

This report was edited by Jayne Bown and the illustrations completed by David Dobson.

Bibliography

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Description	Period
1	Deposit	Topsoil	Modern
2	Deposit	?Subsoil	Unknown
3	Deposit	Layer	Unknown
4	Deposit	Layer	Unknown
5	Deposit	?buried topsoil	Unknown
6	Deposit	Layer	Unknown