

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 901

**An Archaeological Evaluation at
Breydon Middle School, Belton**

39854 BEN

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January 2004

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Local Authority No.076759

Fig.1 is based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office © Crown Copyright 'Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings' Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Norwich (08/01/2004). **Reference copy: no further copies to be made.**

Location: Breydon Middle School, Belton
Grid Ref: TG 485 028
HER No.: 39854 BEN
Date of fieldwork: 2nd January 2004

Summary

Excavation of two trenches at Breydon Middle School recorded a gully of recent date, plus two probable prehistoric sherds of pottery and three flints. There were no other archaeological features or finds.

1.0 Introduction

(Fig. 1)

An archaeological programme of works was undertaken by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU) in response to proposed development in the grounds of Breydon Middle School, Belton, east Norfolk. The evaluation site lay within the footprint of proposed extensions to Breydon Middle School, and was comprised two evaluation trenches (a total of 32m²).

This work and subsequent report were commissioned by RG Carter and funded by Jarvis Projects.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design compiled by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU Ref: 1700/JB) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: ARJH 25.11.03).

The 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 16 — Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Geology and Topography

(Fig. 1)

The site lay in the grounds of Breydon Middle School, which stands close to the parish church of All Saints'. The ground is fairly level and lies at about 13m OD. The natural geology here is of glacial deposits, at this site a pale yellow sand, with further darker sands above.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

(Fig. 1)

Belton was recorded in Domesday Book (1086) and may be presumed to have origins in the mid to late Saxon period. The site lies closely adjacent to the parish church of All Saints' (NHER 10502). The church has a round tower and may date to the early medieval period, possibly the 11th century, although an earlier foundation date is likely. There is possible evidence (a kink in the property boundary) that the churchyard has been reduced on the west side and therefore human burials may exist beyond the present limits. A short distance to the east of the church a medieval bronze buckle was found (NHER 23295).

4.0 Methodology

(Fig. 2)

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.

Two trenches were excavated, Trench 1 was 4m x 4m and Trench 2 3m x 5.5m, within the footprint of the proposed buildings.

Machine excavation was carried out with a 3 ton tracked hydraulic 360° excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU *pro forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

A level was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark of 13.07m OD on the north-east corner of All Saints' church. Site conditions were good with bright conditions generally and no rain.

5.0 Results (Appendix 1)

Trench 1

(Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 1, measured 4m x 4m and was laid out on the grass playing field. Removal of the topsoil ([1]) to a depth of 0.35m exposed a red-brown hard sand subsoil ([3]). This was cut by a north-to-south gully ([7]) with a dark brown sandy fill ([2]). The subsoil was removed to reveal the natural subsoil at a depth of 0.60m. This was a yellow stony sand. No features were recorded at this level.

The fill of gully [7] ([2]) produced three fragments of ceramic building material of post-medieval, probably modern, date.

Trench 2

(Fig. 3)

Trench 2 measured 3m x 5.5m and was laid out close to the fence 13m to the south of Trench 1, on a landscaped slope. Removal of the topsoil ([4]) revealed the same red-brown sandy subsoil ([6]). This was cut by the continuation of the gully [7], here recorded as [8] (fill [5]). The subsoil was removed to a full depth of about 0.80m to expose the natural subsoil. No archaeological features were observed.

Several artefacts were retrieved. The fill ([5]) of the gully [8], produced a fragment of modern flowerpot. The topsoil ([4]) produced a number of fragments, of various dates; these included three prehistoric struck flints, two abraded sherds of probable prehistoric pottery, animal tooth (cattle), two fragments of modern glass bottle, one green-glazed red earthen ware sherd (strap-handle), one sherd of stoneware and two pieces of modern 'china'.

6.0 The Finds (Appendix 2)

Finds came from three contexts from the fill of the north-to-south gully ([2] and [5]) in Trench 1 and the topsoil [4] in Trench 2.

As noted above, in Trench 1 the fill [2] of gully [7] produced three fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material.

In Trench 2 the topsoil [4] produced a number of artefacts; these included three prehistoric struck flints, two abraded sherds of probable prehistoric pottery, animal tooth (cattle), two fragments of modern glass bottle and four sherds of post-medieval pottery.

7.0 Conclusions

Although the flints and two sherds of prehistoric pottery attest to activity of that date in the vicinity, the other evidence constituting the recent gully and the topsoil finds, pointed to a modern use of the landscape.

No features associated with the church, or other possible Saxon settlement activity, were identified.

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

Acknowledgements

The writer was assisted by Peter Watkins on site. Machining was provided by Bryn Williams. Thanks are due to RG Carter who commissioned this work and to Jarvis Projects who funded it.

The identification of finds was made by the writer, Julie Curl and Sarah Bates. The report was illustrated and produced by Maggie Footitt and edited by Alice Lyons.

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Trench	Description	Period
1	1	Dark sandy loam, topsoil	Modern
2	1	Dark sandy loam, fill of gully [7]	Modern
3	1	Red-brown sandy loam, subsoil	?
4	2	Dark sandy loam, topsoil	modern
5	2	Dark sandy loam, fill of gully [8]	
6	2	Dark red-brown sandy subsoil	?
7	1	Gully (fill is [2])	?
8	2	Gully (fill is [5])	?

Appendix 2: Finds by Context

Context	Trench	Material	Date
2	1	three fragments of brick/tile	post-medieval, modern?
4	2	three struck flint flakes two sherds pottery (one flint-gritted). animal tooth (cattle) one glazed red earthen ware strap-handle, green-glazed. one stoneware sherd two pieces modern 'china' two fragments bottle glass	prehistoric prehistoric post-medieval post-medieval modern modern
5	2	one flowerpot fragment	modern

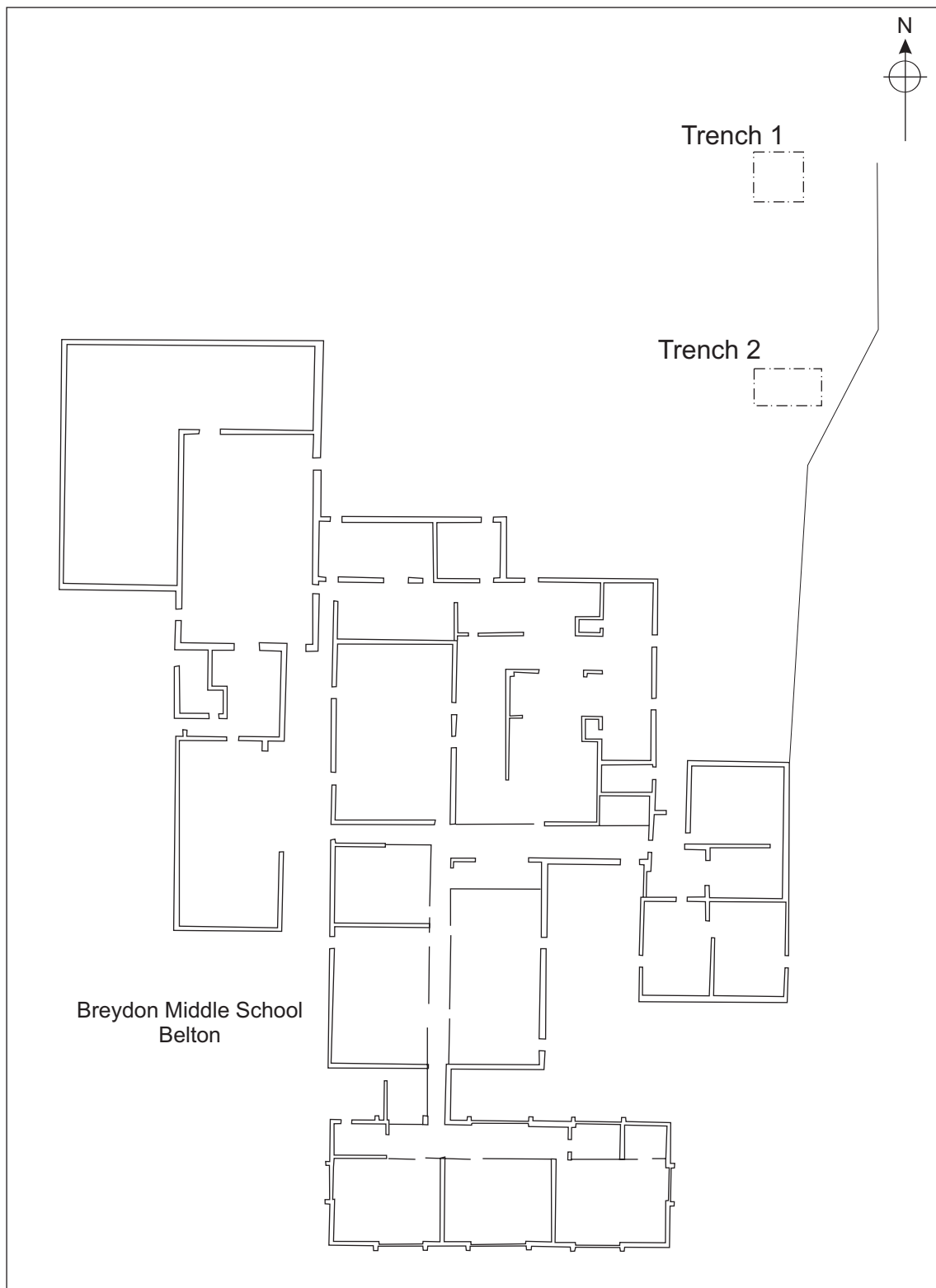


Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:500

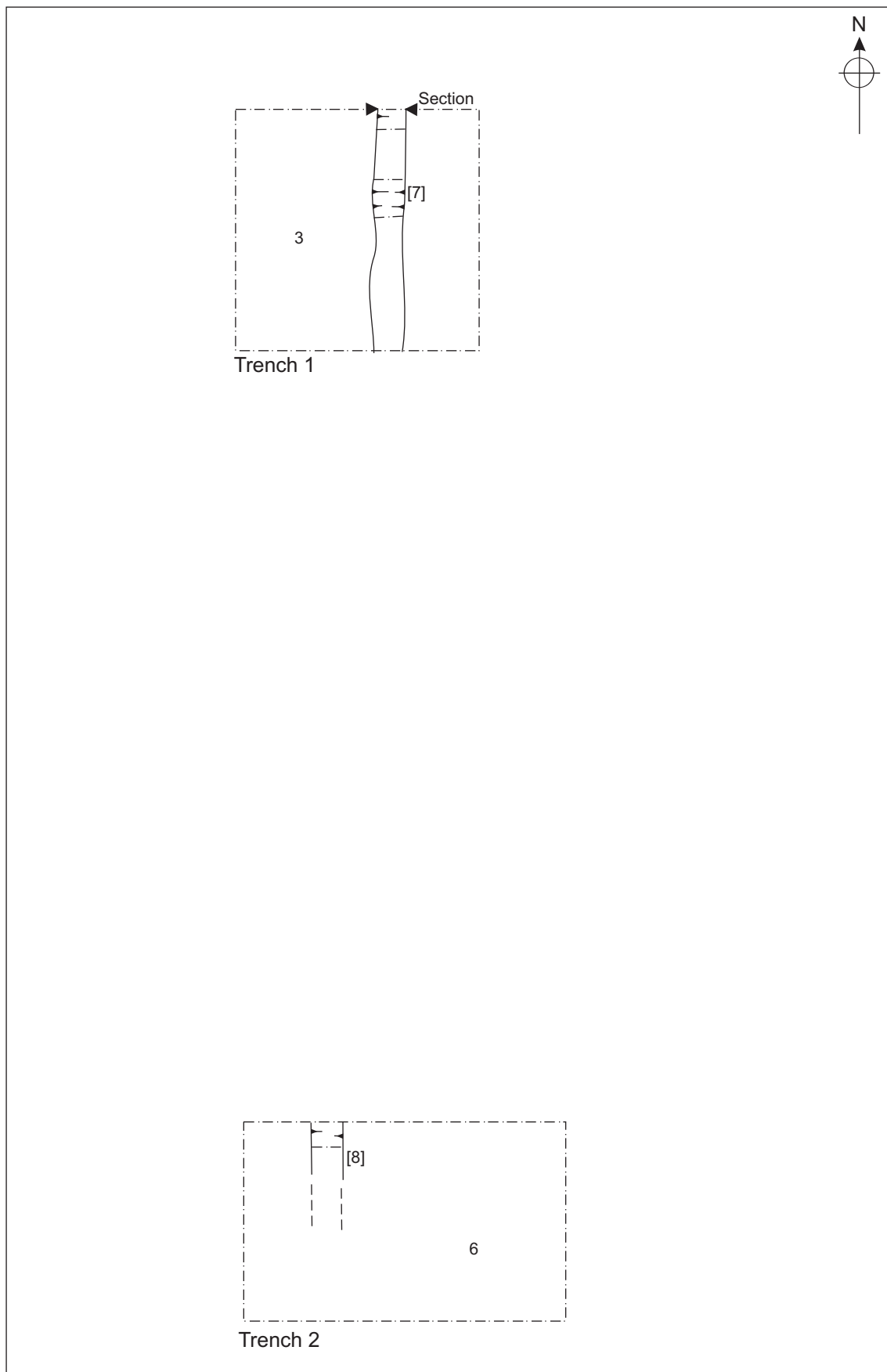
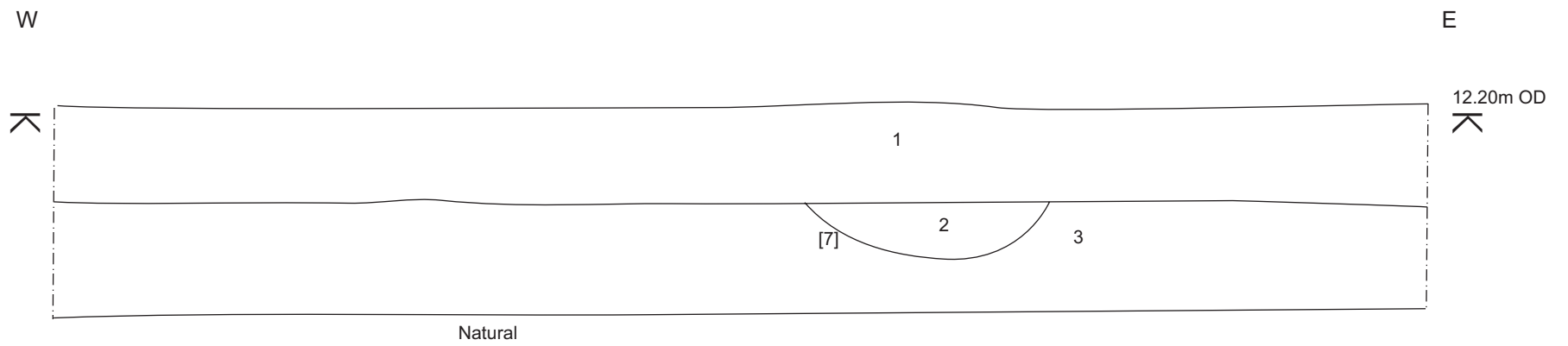


Figure 3. Plan of Trenches 1 and 2, showing gully [7]/[8]. Scale 1:100



South facing section



Figure 4. Trench 1, showing gully [7]. Scale 1:20