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LAND REAR OF 27 KIRKGATE STREET, WISBECH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

CHER No. ECB 4246

Authors: Kamil Orzechowski (Fieldwork and report)				
NGR: TL 4750 1041	Report No: 4652			
District: Fenland	Site Code: ECB 4246			
Approved: C Halpin	Project No: P5865			
MIfA	Date: 12 August 2014			
Signed:				

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET Project name Land rear of 27 Kirkgate Street, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 3GR

In August 2014 Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land to the rear of 27 Kirkgate Street, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 3GR (NGR TL 4750 1041). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a single 2-storey 3-bed dwelling (Planning Reference Fenland Council Ref. F/YR14/0348/F), based on advice from Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET).

The site lies within an area of archaeological potential, within an area of medieval settlement activity which is recorded locally, and in proximity to a Saxon/medieval sea defence work (recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record). The site lies on the line of the Sea Bank, which is a flood defence earthwork of probable medieval date (Cambridgeshire HER 19097), the further extent of which is recorded on the Norfolk Historic Environment Record beyond the Cambridgeshire border. Archaeological investigations at the Bell PH to the immediate north identified deposits of medieval and post-medieval date (HER ECB3711). Investigations by AS at the former Ebenezer Methodist Chapel in 2013 revealed a number of modern features and sparse sherds of medieval pottery only (Thompson & Gorniak 2013).

The site thus had a potential for remains of medieval and post-medieval occupation, and for evidence associated with the construction/date of the Sea Bank earthwork.

The evaluation trench contained no features, other than a modern pit. Two medieval $(13^{th} - 15^{th}$ century) sherds were found in L1003 and L1004. The trench was some distance from the road frontage and this, in part, may explain the absence of features.

Project dates (fieldwork)	August 2014				
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work (Y/N/?)			
P. number	5865 Site code <i>ECB</i> 4246				
Type of project	Archaeological Ev	<i>r</i> aluation			
Site status	None				
Current land use	Vacant				
Planned development	Residential	Residential			
Main features (+dates)	None				
Significant finds (+dates)	es) None				
Project location Project location					
County/ District/ Parish	Cambridgeshire	Fenland	Walksoken		
HER for area	Cambridge Histor	ic Environment Record (C	CHER)		
Post code (if known)	PE13 3GR				
Area of site	200m2				
NGR	TL 4750 1041				
Height AOD (min/max)	c.4m AOD	c.4m AOD			
Project creators					
Brief issued by	Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team				
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Archaeological Solutions Ltd				
Funded by	Fountain Construction (Anglia) Ltd				
Full title	Land rear of 27 Kirkgate Street, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 3GR.				
	*	An Archaeological Evaluation.			
Authors	Kamil Orzechowski				
Report no.	4652				
Date (of report)	August 2014				

LAND REAR OF 27 KIRKGATE STREET, WISBECH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE PE13 3GR

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2014 Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land to the rear of 27 Kirkgate Street, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 3GR (NGR TL 4750 1041). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a single 2-storey 3-bed dwelling (Planning Reference Fenland Council

Ref. F/YR14/0348/F), based on advice from Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET).

- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by CCC HET (Dan McConnell dated 29/07/14) and a specification prepared by AS (dated 29/07/14), approved by CCC HET. The project adhered to appropriate sections of Gurney (2003) 'Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England', East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14, and the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (revised 2008).
- 1.3 The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to determine, as far as was possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. In addition it was hoped to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of survival of buried deposits and surviving structures of archaeological significance.

Planning policy context

- 1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.
- The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, with substantial harm to heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings, monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage

asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 Wisbech is situated in the Cambridgeshire fens, but on the county border with Norfolk, and is 28km northeast of Peterborough and 20km south-west of Kings Lynn. The development site is actually within Walsoken which is a village and parish that has merged with the east side of Wisbech, and is approximately 100m south-west of the Norfolk border. The site is on a patch of largely undeveloped land to the rear (west) of 27 Kirkgate Street.

3 TOPOGRAPHY

3.1 The site is located at 4m AOD 1.4km west of the River Nene on tidal flat deposits. The local soils are of the Blacktoft Association described as deep stoneless permeable calcareous fine and coarse silty soils, with some calcareous clayey soils. The soils just to the west of the site comprise those of the Wisbech Association, which are described as deep, stoneless calcareous coarse silty soils. The above soils are characteristic of flat land where groundwater is controlled by ditches and pumps. Beneath the underlying drift geology of marine alluvium is the solid geology of Kimmeridge Clay

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Evidence for prehistoric activity in the area is sparse due to periods of marine inundation. In the Romano-British period settlement in the fen was predominantly rural and most frequently connected with salt-making often found in association with 'roddons'. A number of chance finds of pottery and coins recorded in the surrounding area point to a fair level of Romano-British activity (CHER 03889, 03891 & 03910). A Roman defensive sea bank plotted from the terrain model map and the first edition OS map, runs from approximately 50m south of the site running in a north-easterly direction towards Walton Highway to the north-east (CHER MCB 19097).
- 4.2 Wisbech emerges into the documentary record in a charter of 1013 and takes its name from 'the valley of the River Wissey'. The historic core of the early medieval town was focused around the 'Old Market' referred to as early as 1221, on the west bank of the river. The construction of a castle (CHER 01926) by William the Conqueror led to the town centre shifting further eastwards, and the New Market by the castle had already outstripped the old one as a centre of trade by the early 12th century. A survey of 1251 records four fisheries, a watermill, a horse mill and a newly constructed watermill (Higgs 2009).

- 4.3 A Trial Trench evaluation at The Bell, 35 Kirkgate Street centred on 70-80m north-west of the site identified a sequence of natural, undated, medieval and post-medieval deposits (CHER MCB19599). A probable late Saxon sea-bank was uncovered which comprised a single mound showing evidence of subsequent re-modelling. On the landward side deliberate dumping had occurred through which a late medieval channel and pit had been cut. Post-medieval pits and a ditch were also recorded close to the street frontage. Post-medieval pottery was the largest category of finds, other finds include undated animal remains, brick and a nail, and early modern to modern clay pipe and a fragment of wine glass. Another Trial Trench evaluation centre on 50m north-east of the site revealed several undated pits and post-holes (CHER MCB 19841). The only pottery recovered was two sherds from the subsoil dated between the 13th-15th centuries.
- 4.4 The 1797 Faden map shows the general layout of Walsoken including Kirkgate Street with buildings in the vicinity of the site (Fig. 3). The subsequent c.1843 tithe map, and range of OS maps (Figs 4-8) show that the site has remained undeveloped, although the access crosses the former location of Ebenezer Methodist church hall.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The brief required a trench, 10m+ long and 1.80m wide, within the footprint of the new dwelling (Fig.2).
- 5.2 Undifferentiated overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Thereafter, all further investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the trenches were scanned by metal detector.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Individual trench descriptions are presented below:

Trench 1 (Figs. 2 & 3)

Sample Sectio		
0.00 = 4.00m	אַטט	
0.00 – 0.45m	L1000	Topsoil. Friable, very dark grey brown silty sand with occasional - moderate brick, glass, and plastic fragments.
0.45 – 0.75m	L1001	Layer. Friable, dark grey silty sand with moderate
		brick fragments and small rounded stones, and
		occasional shells.
0.75 – 1.14m	L1002	Layer. Friable, pale yellow brown silt with occasional very small shell fragments.
1.14 – 1.30m	L1003	Buried soil. Friable, dark grey brown silty sand with
		occasional charcoal flecks and shell fragments.
1.30 – 1.65m	L1004	Layer. Friable, pale yellow brown silt with occasional
		charcoal flecks and shell fragments.
1.65m+	L1005	Natural deposits. Firm, pale yellow brown sandy silt

Sample section	n 2	
0.00 = 4.00 m	AOD	
0.00 - 0.70m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.70 – 1.80m	L1007	Fill of Pit F1006. Friable, very dark brownish grey
		silty sand.
1.80m+	L1005	Natural deposits. As above.

Description: A modern pit, F1006, was present within the trench

L1003 was a buried soil layer consisting of a friable, dark grey brown silty sand with occasional charcoal flecks and shell fragments. It contained a sherd of medieval (13th – 14th century) pottery (1/9g).

Subsoil L1004 was a friable, pale yellow brown silt with occasional charcoal flecks and shell fragments. It contained a sherd of medieval (12th – 15th century) pottery (2/130g) and animal bone (87g).

F1006 was a deep (1.48m) pit of unknown plan or dimensions as it was not exposed within the trench. It had near vertical sides and a concave base. Its fill (L1007) was a friable, very dark brownish grey silty sand. It contained demolition rubble and plastic-coated cables. The land owner reports that this pit was dug by himself 20 years ago.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds during the evaluation.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

- 8.1 Uppermost Topsoil L1000 was a 0.45 0.75m thick layer of friable, very dark grey brown silty sand with occasional-moderate brick, glass, and plastic fragments. This overlay L1001, a friable, dark grey silty sand with moderate brick fragments and small rounded stones, and occasional shells. Below L1001 was a 0.39m thick layer (L1002) of friable, pale yellow brown silt with occasional very small shell fragments. Below this was a buried soil (L1003), 0.16m thick, consisting of a friable, dark grey brown silty sand with occasional charcoal flecks and shell fragments. L1003 overlay Subsoil L1004, 0.35m thick, of friable, pale yellow brown silt with occasional charcoal flecks and shell fragments.
- 8.2 At the base of the sequence, at a depth of 1.65m below the current ground surface were the natural deposits (L1005) of firm, pale yellow brown sandy silt.

9 DISCUSSION

- 9.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential within an area of medieval settlement activity which is recorded locally, and is close to the line of the Sea Bank, a medieval flood defence earthwork (Cambridgeshire HER 19097). A trial trench evaluation 70-80m northwest of the site revealed a possible section of the Sea Bank, a medieval channel and pit, and post medieval pits and a ditch. Whilst another trial trench evaluation 50 northeast of the site revealed several undated pits and post-holes (CHER MCB 19841). The only pottery recovered was two sherds from the subsoil dated between the 13th-15th centuries.
- 9.2 The evaluation trench contained no features, other than a modern pit. Two medieval $(13^{th} 15^{th}$ century) sherds were found in L1003 and L1004. The trench was some distance from the road frontage and this, in part, may explain the absence of features.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at the Cambridgeshire County Store. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank Mr James Lawrence of Fountain Construction (Anglia) Ltd for funding the works and for this assistance. AS would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr Nick Seaton of Anglia Building Consultants and Mr Grahame Seaton of Grahame Seaton Design.

AS is pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Mr Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team, and the staff of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record.

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Gurney, D. (2003). 'Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England', East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.

Institute for Archaeologists' (2008). Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation. IfA, Reading.

Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983 Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales. Harpenden

Thompson, P & Gorniak, M, 2013, Ebenezer Methodist Chapel, Kirkgate Street, Walsoken, Cambridgeshire PE13 3QR; An Archaeological Evaluation, AS Report 4246.

APPENDIX 1 CARTOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Fig.	Мар	Date	Scale
1	Site location	Modern	
2	Detailed site location	Modern	1:1,250
3	Faden's map of Norfolk	1797	-
4	Wisbech tithe map	1843	-
5	1 st edition OS	1888	1:2,500
6	OS	1927	1:2,500
7	OS	1953	1:10,560
8	OS	1967	1:2,500

ECB4246, Kirkgate Street, Wisbech
Concordance of finds by feature

							CBM	CBM A.Bone	
Feature	Feature Context Segmen	Segment	Trench	Trench Description Spot Date	Spot Date	Pottery	(g)	(g)	Other
					19th-early 20th	(7)			Glass Vessel (1) -
1000			_	Topsoil	O	148g			67g
					Late 18th-19th	(1)			Clay Pipe Stem (4) -
1001			1	Layer	C	247g	90		8g
1003			1	Buried Soil	Buried Soil 13th-14th C	(1) 9g			
						(2)			
1004			_	Layer	13th-15th C	130g		87	

APPENDIX 3 SPECIALIST REPORTS

The Pottery

Peter Thompson

The evaluation recovered 11 sherds of pottery weighing 475g from three layers and the topsoil (Table 1). Buried soil L1003 contained a moderately abraded sherd of 'highly decorated' glazed Grimston ware of 13th-14th centuries date. Layer L1004 also contained two quite heavily abraded sherds of medieval glazed Grimston ware. Layer 1001 contained a large fragment of highly fired, glossy black glazed red earthenware jar with lug handle, which is in good condition and probably of 19th century date. The remaining sherds from the Topsoil are all early modern to modern in date, and include fragments of mocha decorated jug and mug and willow pattern plate.

Key:

GRIML Grimston ware 12th-early 16th

PMRE: Post-medieval red earthenware late 16th+

PMBL: Post-medieval black glazed earthenware late 16th+ LSKW: Late slipped kitchen ware late 18th to early 20th

YELL: Yellow ware late 18th+

TPW: Transfer Printed ware late 18th+ RWE: Refined white earthenware late 18th+

Feature	Layer	Quantity	Date	Comment
Topsoil	1000	1x43g LSKW	19 th -early 20 th	YELL: includes
		3x52g YELL		mocha ware
		1x26g PMRE		TPW: willow pattern
		1x11g RWE		plate
		1x10g TPW		
Layer	1001	1x241g PMBL	Late 18 th -19 th	PMBL: upper profile
				of ?storage jar
				with lug handles
Buried soil	1003	1x9g GRIM	13 th -14 th	GRIM: highly
				decorated
				glazed jug body
				sherd
Layer	1004	2x126g GRIM	13 ^{th-} 15 th	GRIM: x1 glazed
				body sherd, x1
				jug strap handle

Table 1: Quantification of sherds by context

The Ceramic Building Materials

Andrew Peachey MIfA

Layer L1001 contained a single fragment (90g) of Victorian terracotta tile that would have been used to furnish a stove, fire place, or fire place insert. The tile is 5mm thick and decorated with a pipe-clay tree design in a medallion of dots, largely brushed over with a dark green lead glaze. The level of craftsmanship is relatively crude suggesting a mundane residence or low status room, rather than the finer finish of more elegant and affluent society residences of the period.

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



General shot of site before excavation



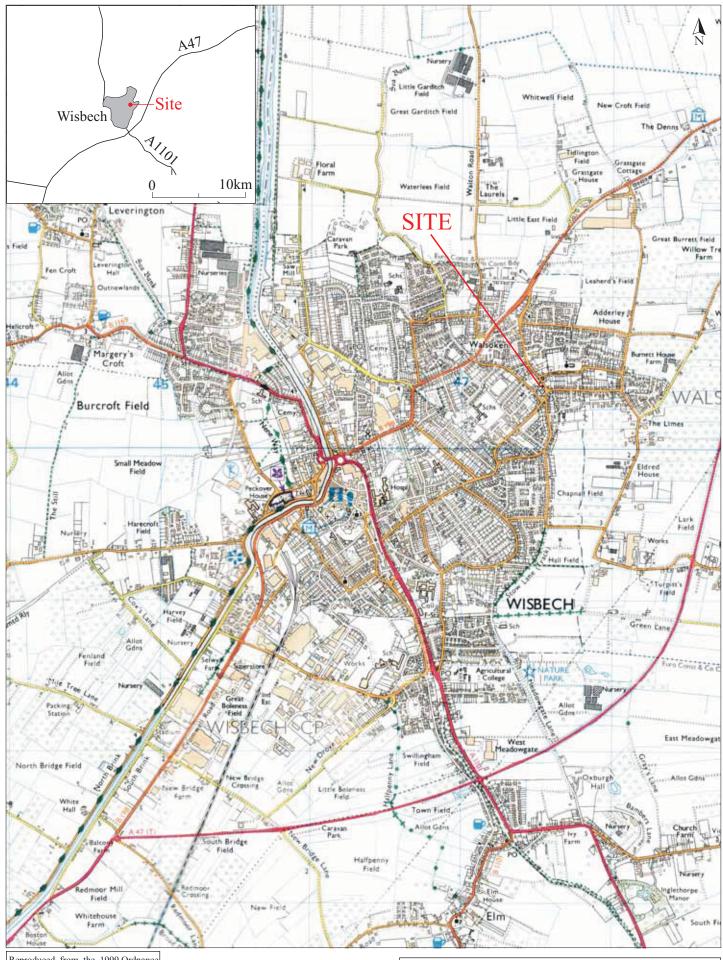
2 Sample section 1



Trench being excavated

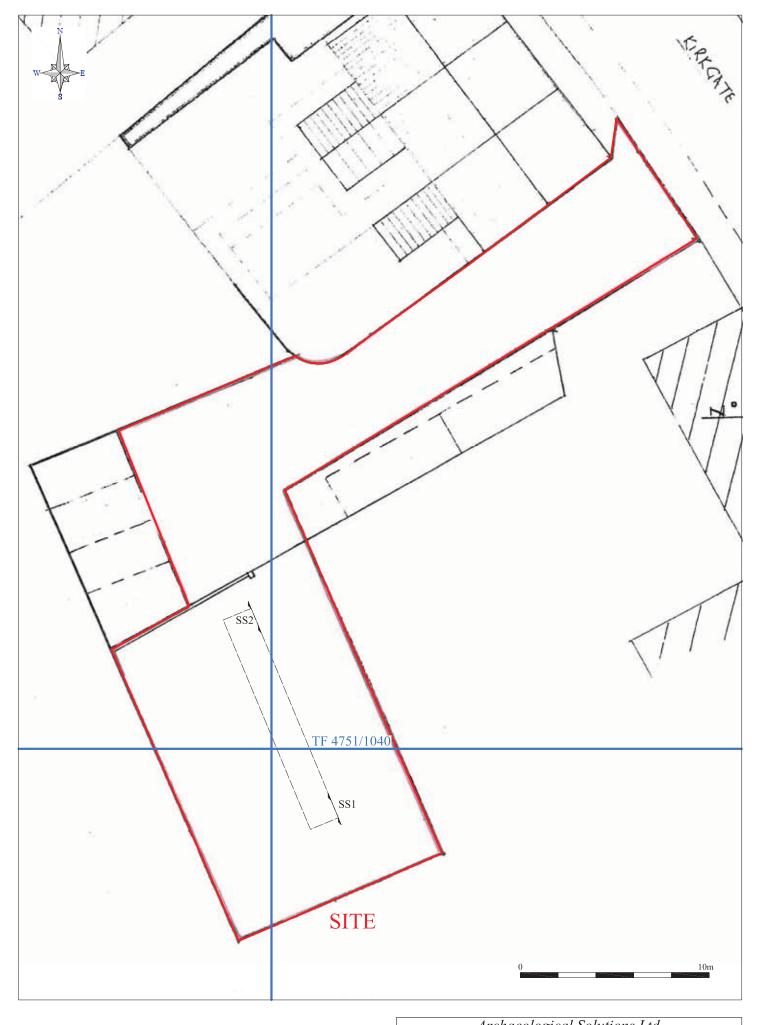


Trench post-excavation

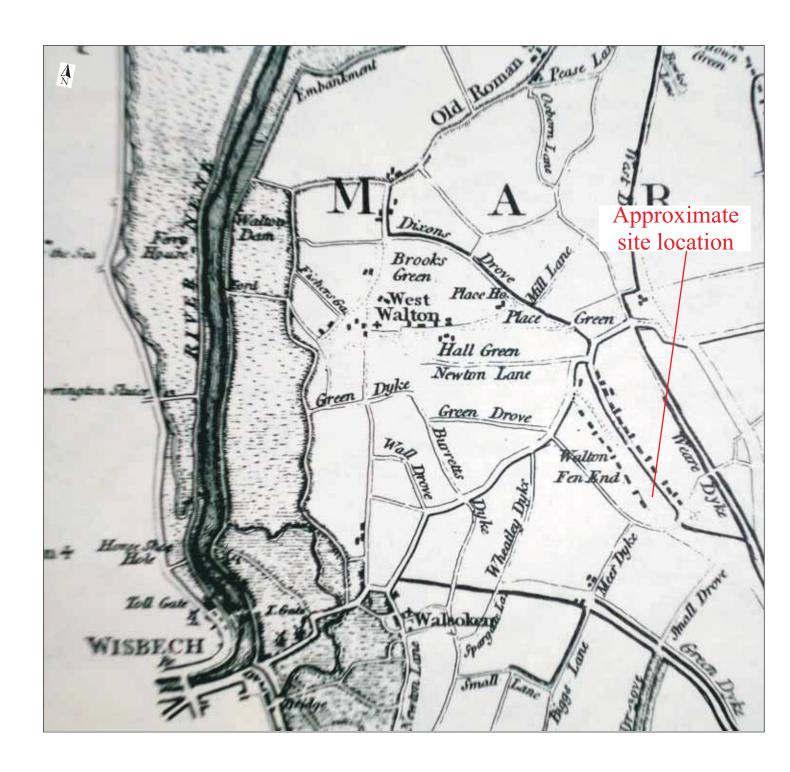


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Fig. 1 Site location plan
Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
Scale 1:200 at A4



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Fig. 3
Not to scale Faden's map, 1797

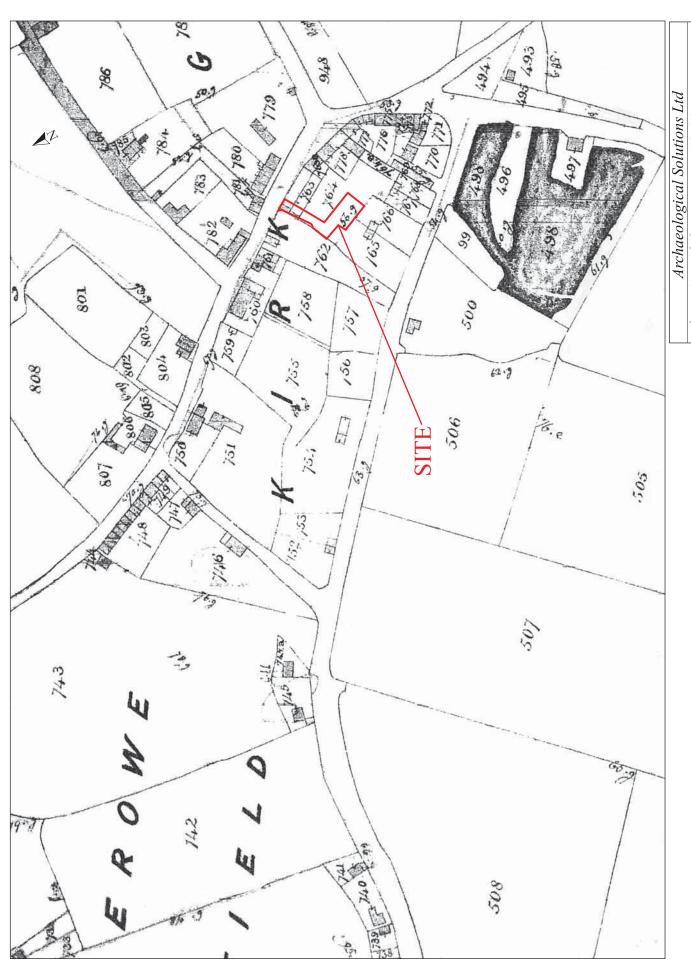
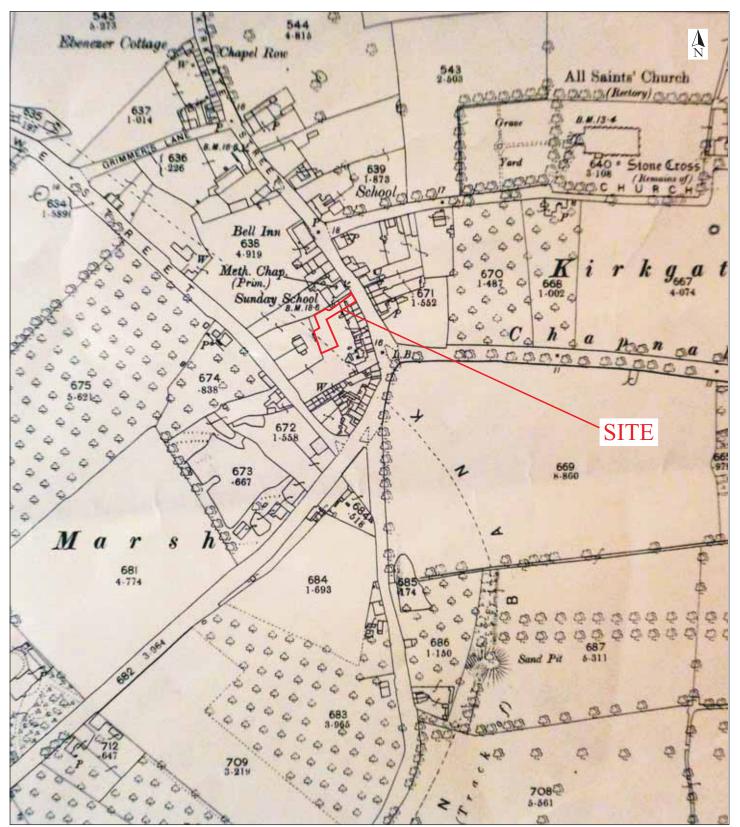


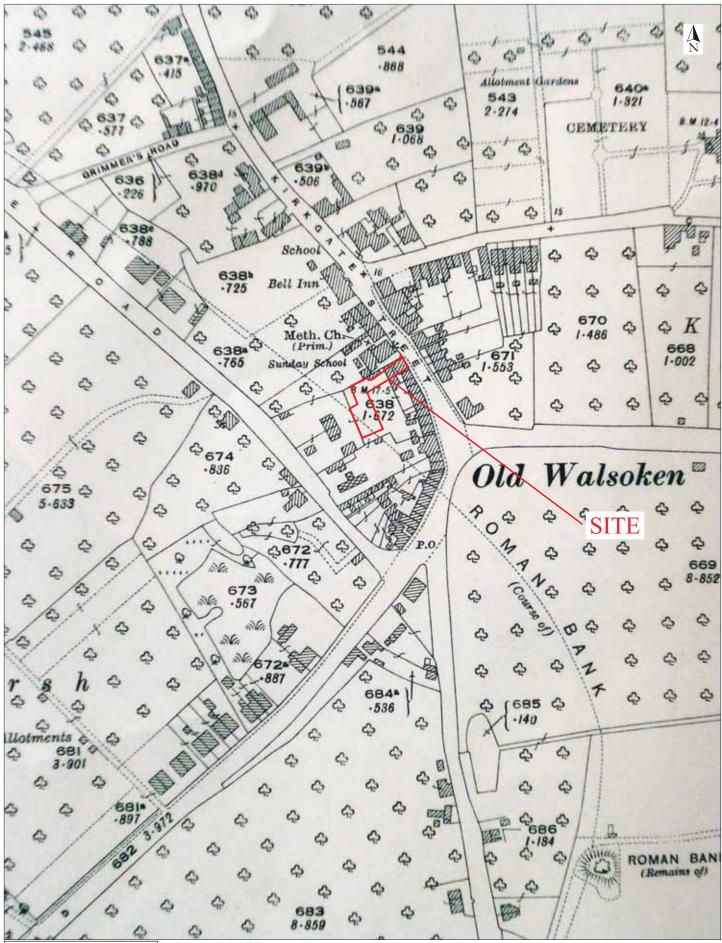
Fig. 4 Tithe map, 1843

Not to scale



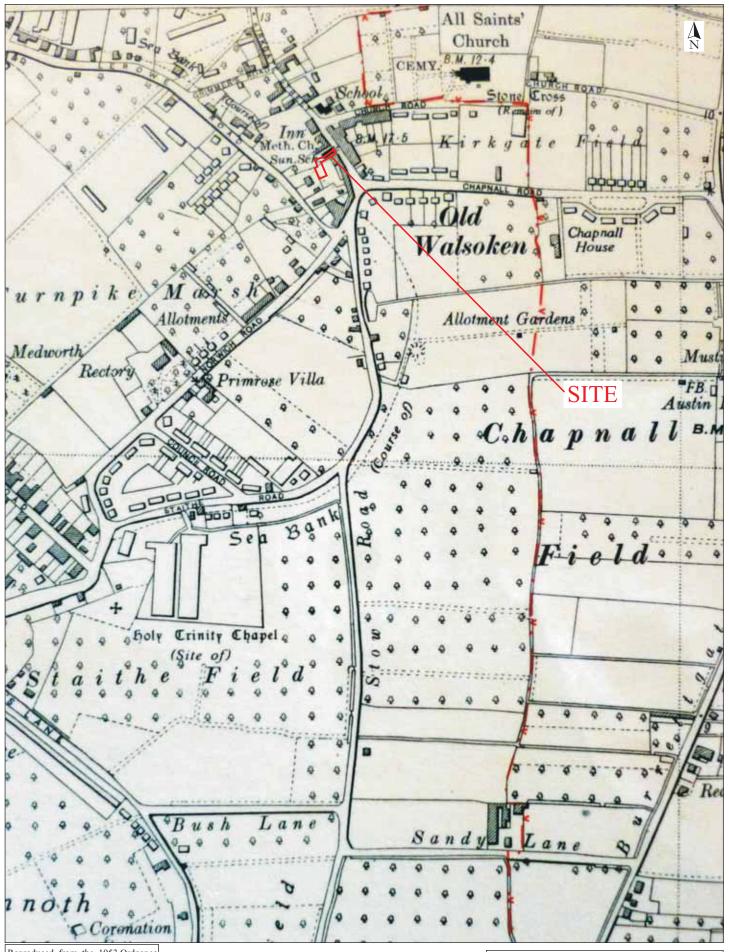
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Fig. 5 OS map, 1888
Not to scale



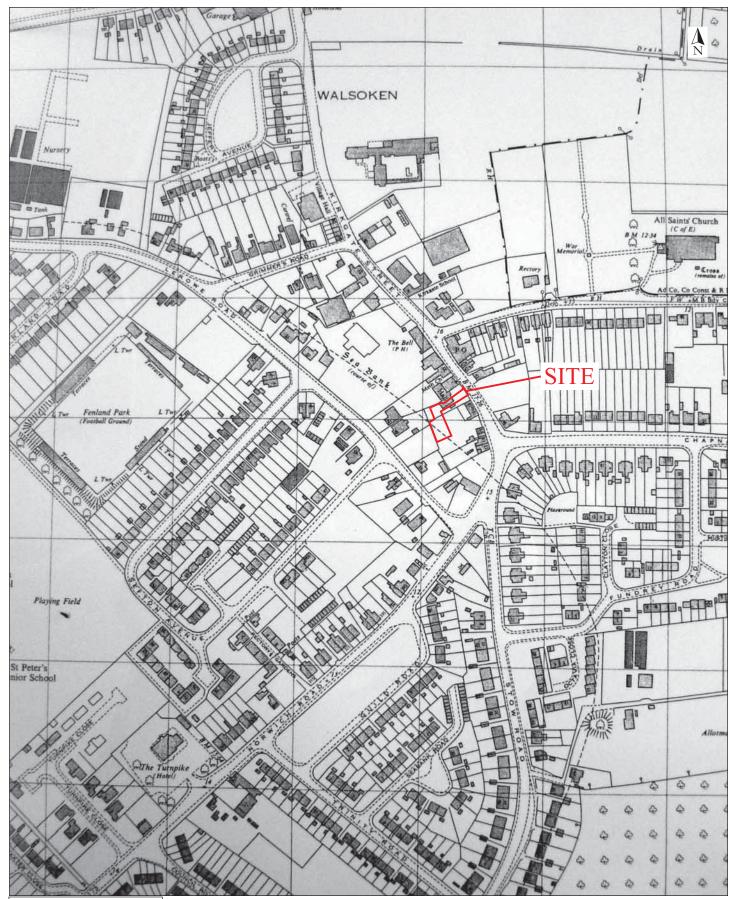
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Fig. 6 OS map, 1927
Not to scale



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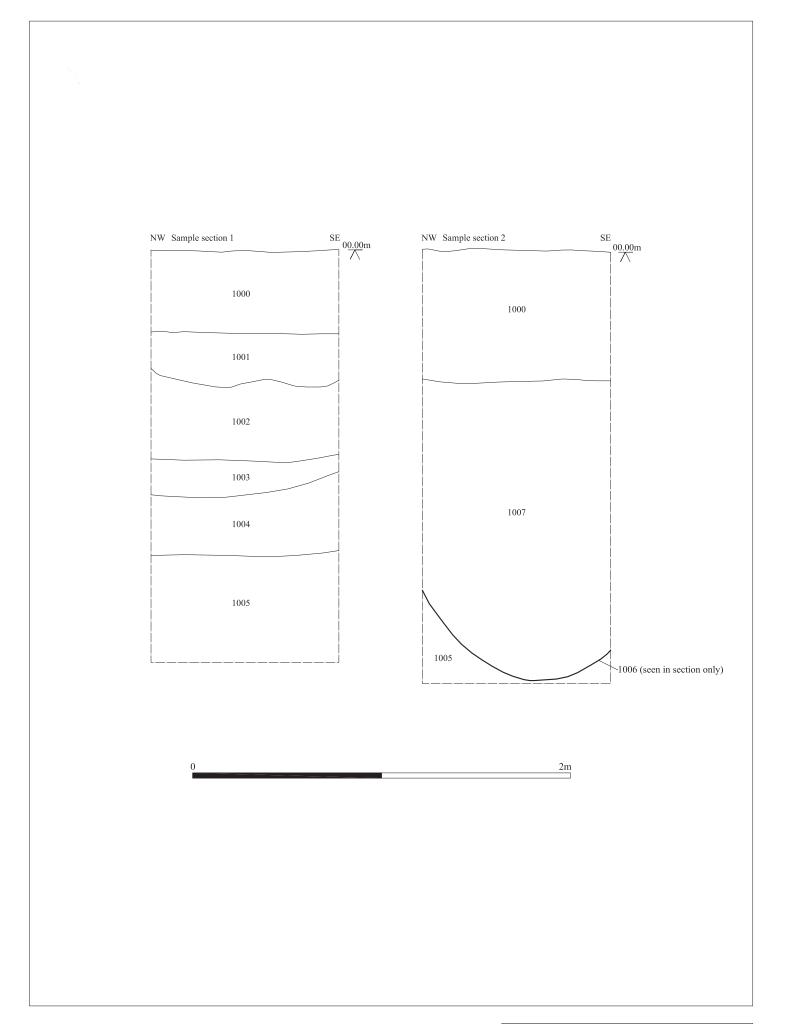
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Fig. 7 OS map, 1953
Not to scale



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Fig. 8 OS map, 1967



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Fig. 9 Sample sections
Scale 1:20 at A4