

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An Archaeological Watching Brief
at Norton Subcourse Quarry

Norfolk

Interim report on work undertaken
September 2005 – December 2006

Extraction Phases 1 and 2



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April 2007

Report 07/039

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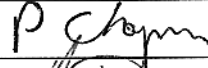
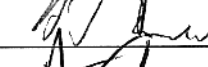

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QUALITY CONTROL

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Checked by	P Chapman		12/10/07
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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An archaeological watching brief at Norton Subcourse Quarry, Norton Subcourse, Norfolk	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief during Phases 1 and 2 of soil removal and on-going mineral extraction at Norton Subcourse Quarry, Norfolk revealed a single undated rectilinear ditch. Work is continuing into subsequent extraction phases.	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Site status	None	
Previous work	Field-walking and metal detector survey undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Current Land use	Agricultural prior to acquisition by RMC Aggregates Eastern Limited (now Cemex Materials UK Ltd)	
Future work	On-going watching brief	
Monument type/ period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Norfolk	
Site address	Fields west of Norton Subcourse Quarry and south of Nogdam End, nr Great Yarmouth, Norfolk	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	17 ha	
OS Easting & Northing	TG 398 996	
Height OD	16 – 22m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Norfolk Landscape Archaeology	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	David J. Leigh	
Project Manager	Andy Mudd	
Sponsor or funding body	Cemex UK Materials Limited	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	September 2005	
End date	On-going	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Site Code 40918 HEC		
Finds		None
Paper		Watching brief forms; colour slides; black and white contact prints; plan; sections
Digital		Report text and figures, photos

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
NORTON SUBCOURSE QUARRY
NORFOLK**

**INTERIM REPORT ON WORK UNDERTAKEN SEPTEMBER 2005 – DECEMBER 2006
EXTRACTION PHASES 1 AND 2**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief during Phases 1 and 2 of soil removal and on-going mineral extraction at Norton Subcourse Quarry, Norfolk revealed a single undated rectilinear ditch. Work is continuing into subsequent extraction phases.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief is currently in progress during soil removal and mineral extraction at Norton Subcourse Quarry, Norfolk (NGR TG 398 996: Fig 1; Plate 1). The work undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by The Guildhouse Consultancy on behalf of the quarry company Cemex UK Materials Limited.

This report is an interim statement of results on work which is continuing over a number of seasons.

2 BACKGROUND

The area of mineral extraction to which this report relates covers about 17 ha approximately 1.5 kilometres north-west of the village of Norton Subcourse, Norfolk (Fig 2). It is situated on an outcrop of glacial sand and gravel on sloping land at 16-22 m OD which was formerly in agricultural use.

A desk-based study and an assessment of the aerial photographic evidence by The Guildhouse Consultancy identified a number of areas of archaeological interest within and around the development area (Havercroft 2001). These include light surface scatters of prehistoric flintwork, and Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery recovered during field-walking.

Fieldwork in relation to the present planning application comprised field-walking and trial trench evaluations. The field-walking survey over the 17 ha site recorded a very light scatter of prehistoric flintwork and post-medieval pottery, together with a slightly denser scatter of tile, most of it post-medieval in date (NA 2004). These scatters did not appear to form significant concentrations, and can probably be attributed to manuring practices and casual losses.

Trial trenching was undertaken in two phases, relating to the proposed phases of extraction (NA 2005a; NA 2006a). The trenching indicated a lack of substantial remains, but there were isolated features relating principally to sparse Iron Age and medieval activity. Only three trenches yielded finds. The only identified concentration lay on the lower western side of the side where possible Iron Age and late Saxon/early medieval pottery were found.

The archaeological potential of the site is regarded as low overall. There is some potential for ditches and other features of Iron Age and late Saxon/early medieval date beneath the subsoil. There is also a slight potential for Pleistocene remains within or under the mineral, but again the potential can be regarded as very low.

3 AIMS AND METHODS

The aim of the watching brief was to make a record of any archaeological features and deposits of significance present on the site ahead of their destruction.

The watching brief for these phases of extraction was undertaken on an intermittent basis. Site monitoring visits were made on six occasions after overburden (top- and sub-soil) removal (Plate 1), and subsequently following extraction of mineral to the level of potential Pleistocene deposits.

The watching brief was undertaken in accordance a Project Design approved by the Principal Landscape Archaeologist for Norfolk County Council on behalf of the Minerals Planning Authority (NA 2005b). This included provision for contingency excavation which, in the event, was not needed.

The soil stripping was carried out using a variety of tracked mechanical excavators fitted with a combination of toothless buckets for the removal of topsoil and subsoil and both toothed and toothless buckets for the remaining mineral extraction.

The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma sheets. Photographic records in monochrome negative and in colour slide format were kept with supplementary photographs in digital format. The stripped surface was scanned by metal detector.

4 RECORDED EVIDENCE

To date (March 2007) two areas (Areas 1 and 2; Fig 2) have been stripped of topsoil and subsoil and deep excavations have begun in order to reach the mineral deposits.

The stratigraphic sequence remained consistent across the stripped area and comprised topsoil (300 mm) over subsoil of varied thickness (200-370 mm). The subsoil overlay red/orange sand with occasional pockets of gravel. Under the subsoil, in the south-western corner of the site was a V-shaped ditch (Fig 2; Plates 2 & 3). The ditch was 1.30m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.90m. It was aligned at an angle to the modern boundaries extending for 97m. No finds were recovered from the four excavated sections.

Around ten animal burials were found scattered in the north-west corner of the stripped area. These were only partly skeletalised and in machine-cut pits, and were clearly modern. At least some were pigs but none were examined in detail.

Following soil stripping mineral was extracted in this area to a depth of *c* 21 m (Plate 4). No evidence of archaeological deposits was seen.

5 SITE ARCHIVE

The site archive (Site Code 40918 HEC) comprises:

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	6
Plans	1
Sections	1

Colour slides	23
Black and white contacts and negatives	17
Digital photographs	34

6 CONCLUSIONS

Little of archaeological significance was revealed after soil stripping. The single ditch is undated and on its own is of minor interest.

The observations were made in reasonably good conditions. The site had been left clean before any plant had crossed it, although differential drying, along with wind-blown sand had obscured the visibility of the stripped surface in parts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

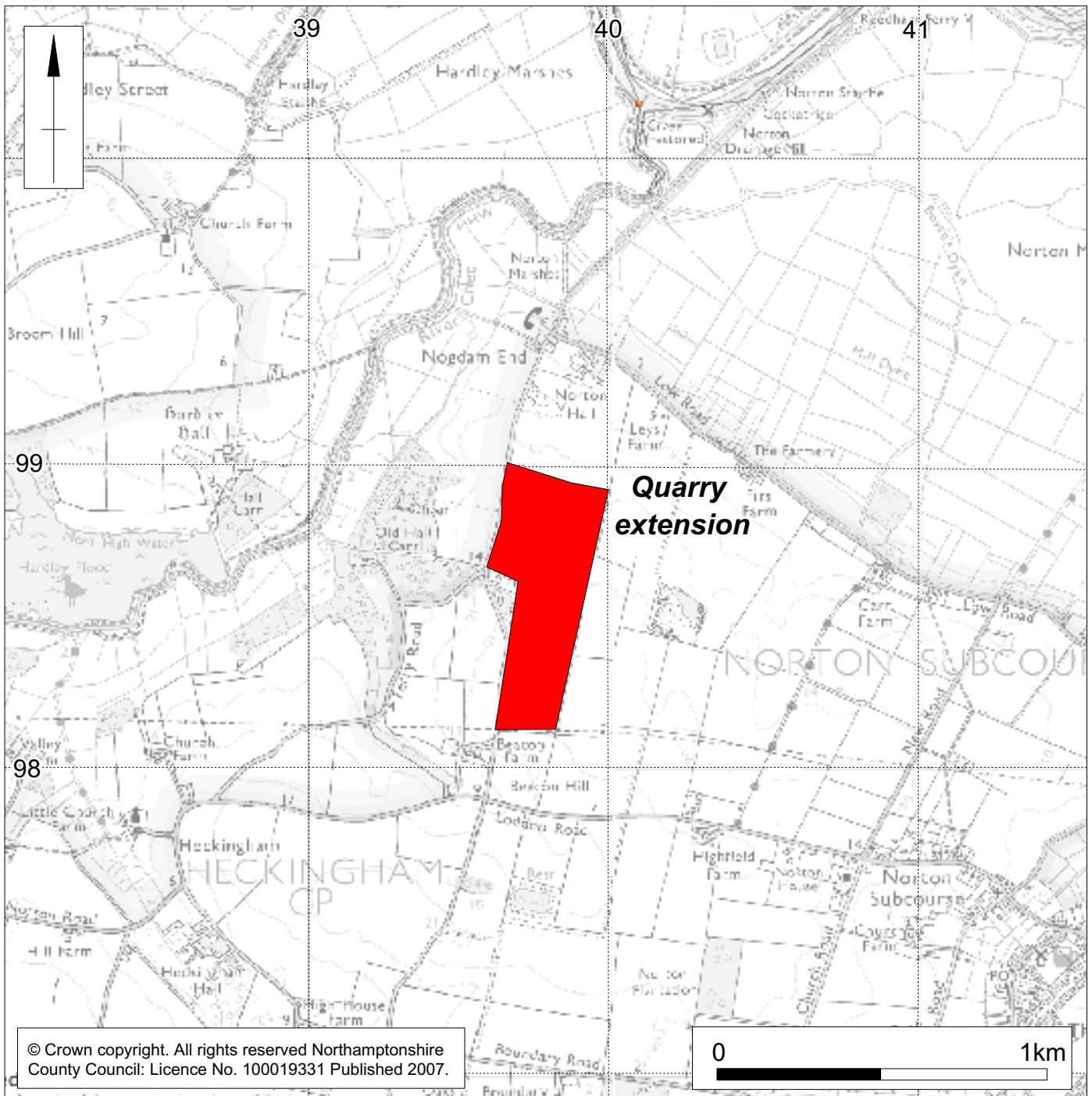
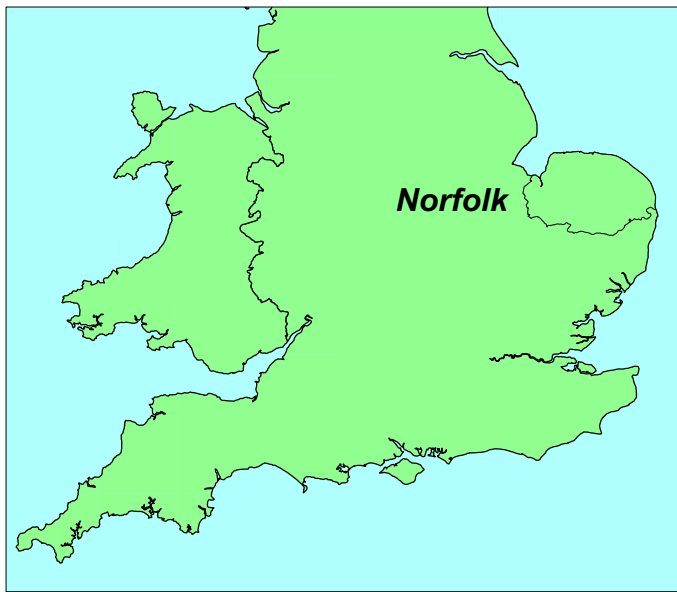
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Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:2000

Watching brief area and undated ditch Fig 2



Plate 1: General view of stripped area looking south, September 2005



Plate 2: Undated ditch, looking north-west



Plate 3: Ditch section



Plate 4: General view of mineral extraction in Phase 1 looking east, January 2006