
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
ON LAND AT THE FORMER ALBERT VICTOR,
PUBLIC HOUSE, CASTLE ACRE,
NORFOLK
(ENF129203)**

Work Undertaken For
Gary Bolton
of the
Oppenlander Partnership

February 2012

Report Compiled by
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



Quality Control

Archaeological Watching Brief on Land at the Former Albert Victor, Public House, Castle Acre, Norfolk (ENF129203)

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief (monitoring of Works under archaeological supervision and control) was undertaken during the excavation of footing trenches and other ground-works associated with the construction of a single new-build dwelling to the rear of the former Albert Victor public house, Castle Acre, Norfolk. Archaeological evaluation of the site through a programme of trial trenching was undertaken in 2011.

The evaluation had identified evidence of quarrying and low level occupation of the site during the medieval period. The results of the watching brief were broadly in line with those of the evaluation.

Monitoring of the groundworks during the watching brief identified a probable quarry pit of late 19th or early 20th century date which had truncated the entire eastern part of the footing. Two pits of medieval date, probably dug to extract chalk and flint, were recorded in the remaining undisturbed area.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services (APS) was commissioned Gary Bolton of the Oppenlander Partnership to undertake an archaeological watching brief (monitoring of works under archaeological supervision and control) during the initial stages of construction of a single dwelling located to the rear of the former Albert Victor public House, Stocks Green, Castle Acre as detailed in Planning Application 12/01629/F submitted to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.

Following an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching (Failes 2011) Norfolk Historic Environment Service stipulated

that an archaeological watching brief was required.

The watching brief took place on the 17th and 19th December 2012.

2.2 Topography and Geology

The former Albert Victor public house is located near the centre of Castle Acre, west of the eponymous motte and bailey castle, at the junction of High Street and Drury Lane, opposite Bailey Gate (NGR TF 8167 1520).

Castle Acre is located approximately 17km north of Swaffham and 19km east of King's Lynn (Fig 1) and lies on the northern slopes of the shallow valley of the River Nar.

The development area itself was relatively flat and level with an elevation of c.47.0m OD to 47.5m OD.

The geology of Castle Acre village consisted of Lowestoft Formation Diamicton, formerly known locally as marly drift (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). On the ground this manifested as an ill sorted mixture of weathered redeposited chalk, and light yellow-brown sandy clays with inclusions of gravel and larger flints.

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Castle Acre is known for two major archaeological monuments, the motte and bailey castle and the Cluniac priory, both built by William de Warrene, a close associate of William the Conqueror, during the latter stages of the 11th century.

The motte and bailey castle originated in the 1080s as a substantial stone-built defended country house located close to the site of a pre-existing hall of late Saxon

date. In c. 1140 the country house was converted to a keep and impressive earthwork defences began to be put in place (Wade Martins 1987). Later in the 12th century the keep was converted to a shell keep and defences for a planned town were laid out to the east. The planned 'town' only ever had one street (Garry 2009) and the relative irregularity of its layout has been noted (Liddiard 2000). The northern entrance of the town was defended by the Bailey Gate which is of early 13th century date.

The second well known monument in Castle Acre is the Cluniac priory founded in 1089, also by William de Warrene, and dissolved in 1537.

Castle Acre is located where the Peddars Way crossed the River Nar. The Peddars Way is of probable early Roman military origin running from Ixworth in Suffolk to Holme-next-the-Sea on the northwest coast of Norfolk. In around AD1200 the Peddars Way south of Castle Acre was rerouted to loop westwards and approach the southern entrance of the town from the west, possibly to provide a 'structured' approach to the town and to maximise the visual impact of the priory, town defences and castle (Liddiard 2000). The approach from the north also passed features designed to impress such as a deer park, rabbit warren and dovecote.

The Albert Victor site lay outside the planned town. In the medieval period Castle Acre was divided into three manors called Priors, Arundel and Foxes. The Albert Victor site lay within the manor of Foxes, named after John Fox, Lord of the Manor in the late 15th century (Garry 2009). The manor name survives in the street name Fox's Meadow, c. 100m north of the Albert Victor site.

In 1582 the Albert Victor site was occupied by a residential dwelling (Garry

2009). The majority of the fabric of the main extant former pub building probably dates to the second half of the 18th century. The building has been used as a public house since at least 1839. In the early and mid-19th century it was known as the Dun Cow and was renamed the Albert Victor in c. 1885, and was sometimes known as the Prince Albert Victor (www.norfolkpubs.co.uk). It ceased trading as a pub in c. 2010.

3. METHODS

The footing trenches were excavated using a small 306° tracked excavator fitted with toothed buckets under constant archaeological supervision and observation. Buckets of differing widths were used on different parts of the footings; they were approximately 0.6m, 0.7m and 0.9m wide. Topsoil was removed separately within the reach of the excavator arm; the trenches were then dug to their final depth of between 0.9 and 1.1m (Plate 1).

The side and base of the footing trenches were then inspected for the presence of archaeological remains before being selectively hand cleaned.

Following concreting the islands of remaining topsoil within the building footprint were partially stripped using small 360° tracked excavator fitted with toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil was stripped to just above its somewhat diffuse lower horizon, meaning that any structures or features in these areas were effectively masked by remaining topsoil (Plates 2 and 3).

Each element of the archaeological features found during the watching brief was allocated a unique reference number or context number. Written, drawn and photographic records relating to each feature and/or context were made. A brief

description and interpretation of each context appears in Appendix 1

Appropriate scales were used for plans and sections drawings were. Recording was undertaken according to standard APS practice.

Following excavation, finds were examined and a period date assigned where possible (Appendix 2).

4. RESULTS

A large feature of relatively late date [229] (Fig. 3) extended across the entire eastern part of the building footprint. The western and a small part of the southern edge of this feature were present within the building footing. Where identifiable in section the edge of feature [229] was steeply sloping and irregular.

The fill of feature (228) consisted of an ill sorted mixture of bands of redeposited weathered chalk interleaved with very large lenses of mid brown sandy clay. Inclusions of brick and tile were visible though not abundant. A complete ink bottle bearing the inscription 'STAFFORD'S INK, MADE IN USA' was recovered from the upper parts of (228) (Plate 4). Manufacturing of ink under the name Stafford began in New York in 1869 (www.bottlebooks.com/inkcompany/history/staffordink_company.htm). The bottle form (228) is probably of very late 19th or very early 20th century date.

Across most of the eastern part of the building footprint feature [229] was deeper than the footing trenches. In places where the base of feature [229] was identified a clean compact white chalk was exposed. This deposit was either solid chalk bedrock or a patch of relatively pure, chalk-rich marly drift. The presence of this deposit and general nature of feature [229] suggest

that the feature was a large quarry pit, dug to extract chalk and flint for use as building materials.

The relationship between quarry pit [229] and the features recorded in evaluation Trench 1 (Failes 2011) will be discussed below.

In the remaining western c. 30% of the building footprint two pits [225] and [227] were recorded (Fig. 3).

Only one corner of pit [225] was exposed in the northwest corner of the building footprint (Plate 3). It was more than 1.0m deep and had vertical or slightly undercut sides (Fig. 4, Plate 5). Its upper fill (223) was a mid-brown clayey sand flecked with chalk and charcoal. Below this a light brown clayey sand (224) containing frequent small flints and small fragments of chalk was recorded.

On the southern edge of the building footprint a second pit [227] was identified. It was probably sub-square or sub-rectangular in plan and measured 2.2m across. It was more than 1.1m deep and was filled with a mixed mid-brown sandy-clay (226) containing frequent flecks of chalk and occasional large lenses of yellow-brown sandy clay (Fig. 4, Plate 6). A single sherd of Early Medieval Handmade pottery (EMHM), dating to the later 11th to 13th centuries was recovered from this fill.

5. DISCUSSION

The large quarry pit [229] is probably the same feature as [118] recorded during the evaluation. The full size and extent of the large quarry pit was not apparent in evaluation Trench 1 and real edge of [118] was probably between 1.2m and 1.5m further west than the uncertain line marked on Section 3 (Failes 2011, fig. 5) of the evaluation report. This means that pits

[115] and [116] in Trench 1 were probably part of the large quarry pit as was the 'double' ditch [106]. No convincing evidence of this feature was seen during the watching brief. Well [111] cut the quarry pit fill and was therefore of early 20th century date.

The two pits recorded in the western part of the building footprint are almost certainly chalk and flint extraction pits of early medieval date. These are probably related to the pits which contained burnt clay material recorded at the northern end of Trench 2 (Failes 2011) during the evaluation. It is possible that all the features found in the western part of the site relate to the building of a large flint and mortar structure, possibly the Bailey Gate and town walls. The burnt clay in the pits in evaluation Trench 2 pits may represent debris from lime burning activities during construction of these structures.

The stark difference between western and the eastern parts of the site can be explained by the fact that the building footprint straddled the boundary between two burgage plot-like property strips. At some point, probably in the mid-20th century, the owners of the Albert Victor must have purchased the rear of the plot to the west for use as a beer garden.

According to Liddiard (2000) the landscape around Castle Acre in c. AD1200 was highly 'structured', designed to show the major monuments created by the de Warrene family to best advantage. This being the case it seems likely that the burgage plots or property strips within the manor of Foxes were probably in place by that date.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief identified pits of probable early medieval date and a quarry

pit likely to date to the late 19th to early 20th century. The disposition of these features on opposite sides of the plot hint at the antiquity of the property strips running northwards from High Street/Stocks Green.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Gary Bolton of the Oppenlander Partnership who commissioned the fieldwork and Report. The work was coordinated by Dale Trimble who edited this report.

8. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinators:	Dale Trimble
Project Officer:	John Percival
Site Staff:	John Percival
Finds Processing:	Denise Buckley
Photographic reproduction:	John Percival
Illustrations:	John Percival

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Failes, A. 2011 *Archaeological Evaluation on Land at The Albert Victor, Stocks Green, Castle Acre* Archaeological Project Services Report 09/11

Garry, M. 2009 *Castle Acre A Social History* Lark Press

Liddiard, R. 2000 *Landscapes of Lordship, Norman Castles and the Countryside of Medieval Norfolk* British Archaeological Reports (British series) 309

Wade-Martins, P (ed.) 1987 *Norfolk from the Air* Norfolk Museums Service

10. ABBREVIATIONS

- APS Archaeological Project Services
- OD Ordnance Datum (height above sea level)

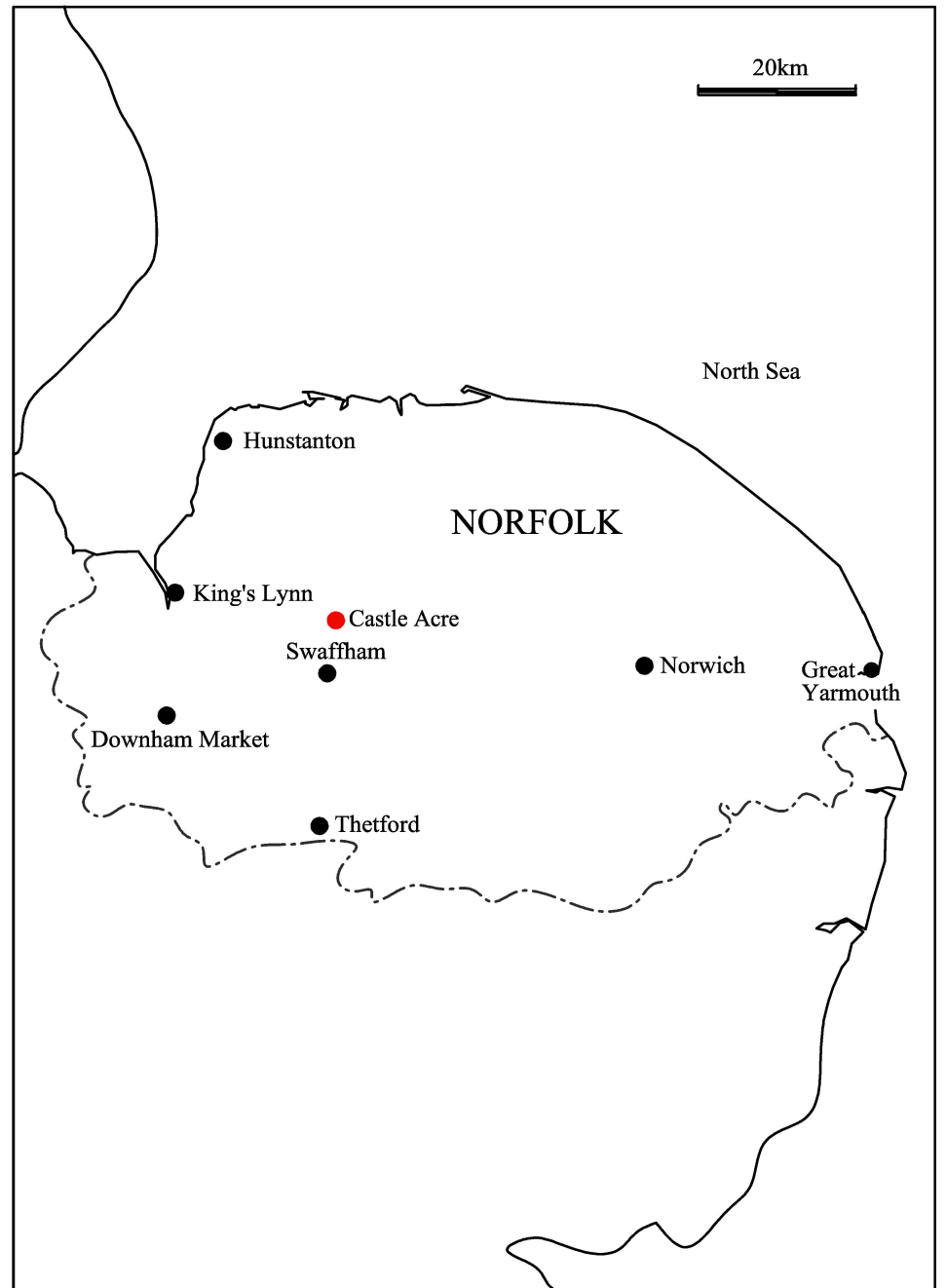


Figure 1. General location plan

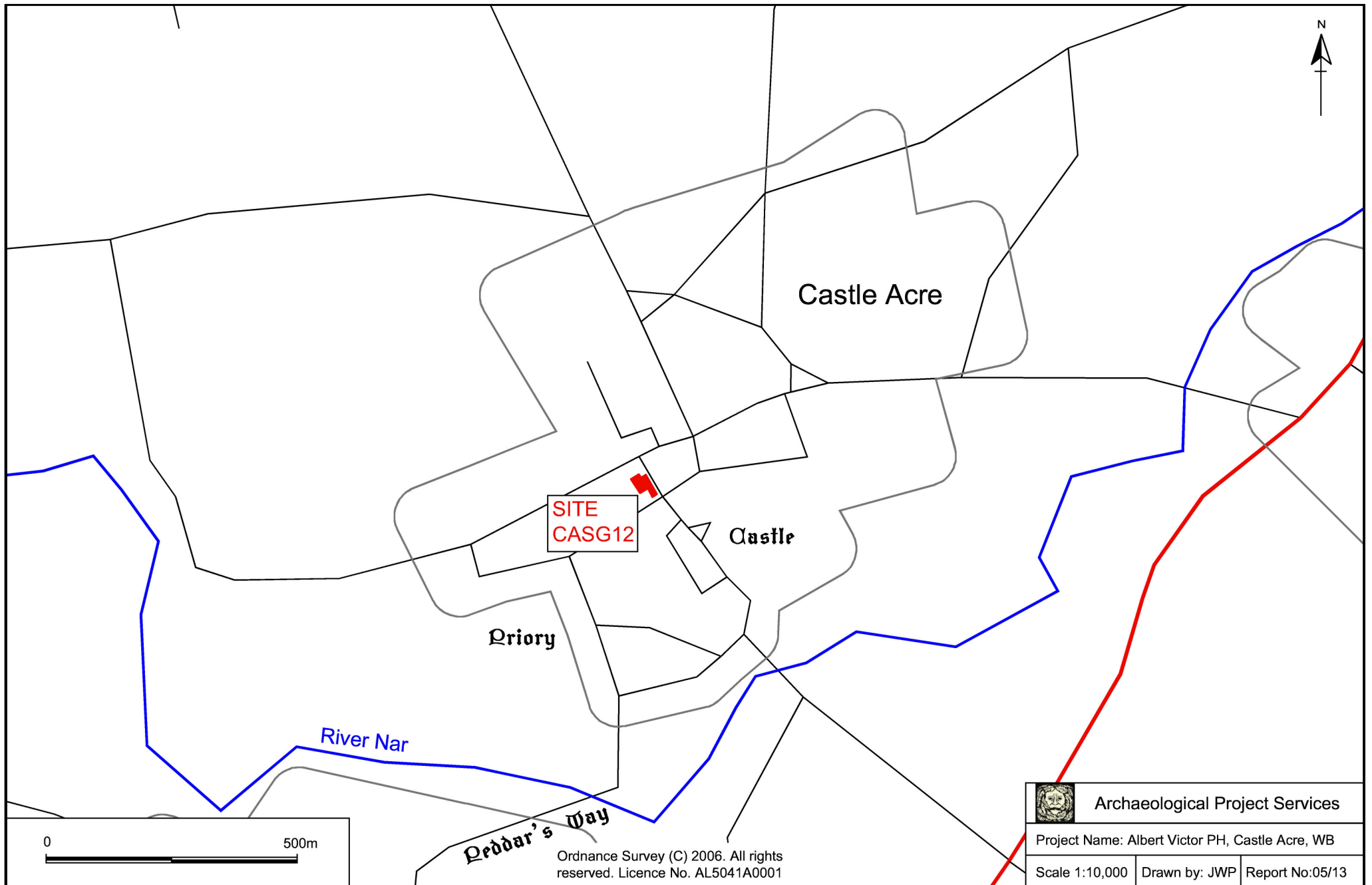


Figure 2. Site location plan

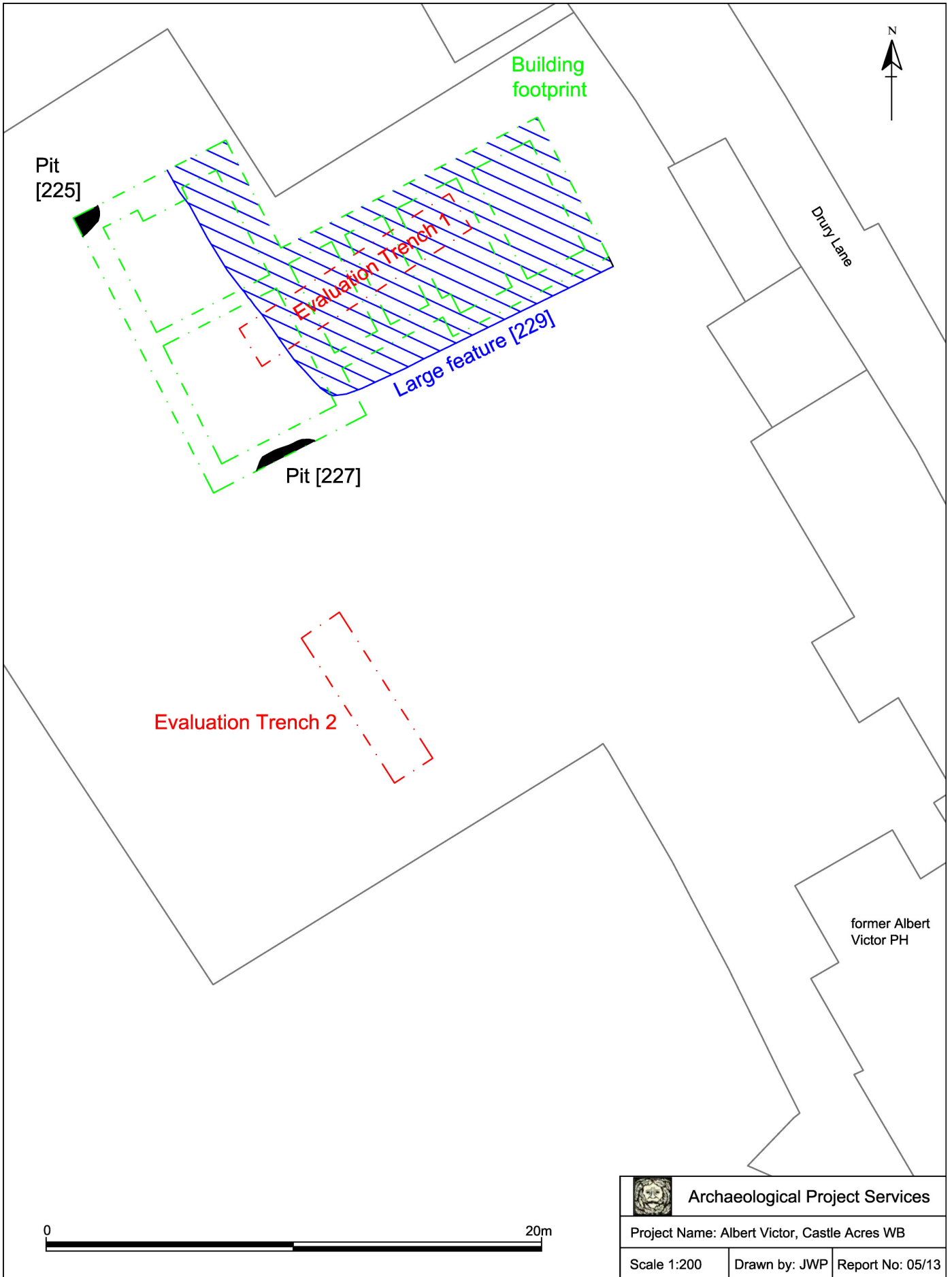
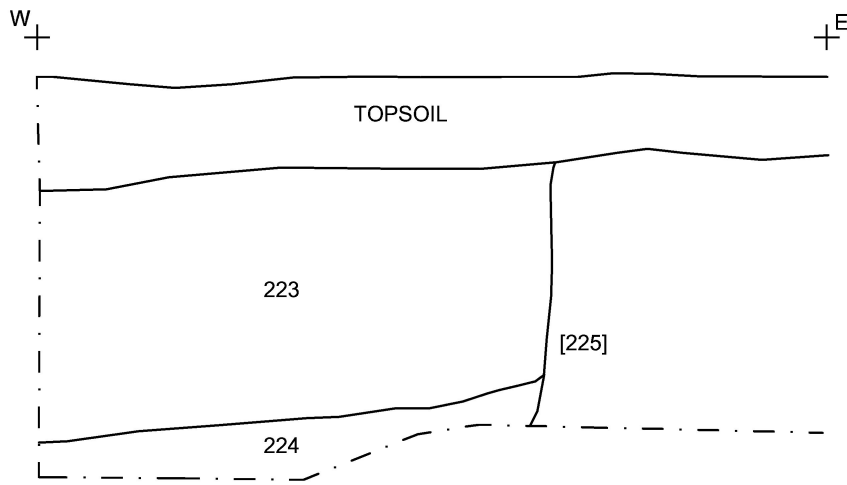
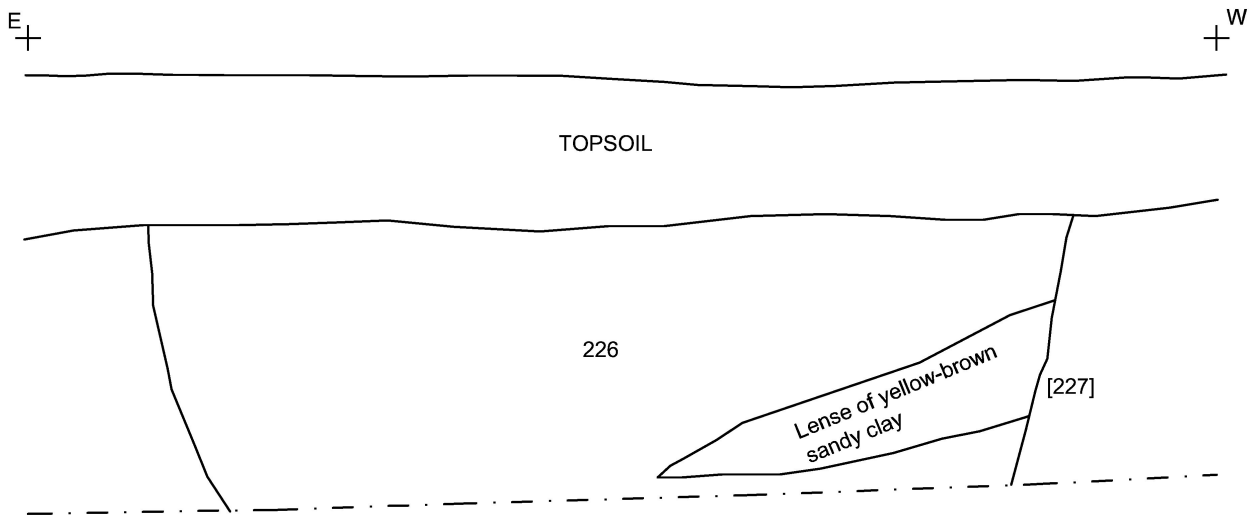


Figure 3. Plan of footing trenches

South facing section pit [225]



North facing section pit [227]




	Archaeological Project Services	
Project Name: Albert Victor, Castle Acres WB		
Scale 1:20	Drawn by: JWP	Report No: 05/13

Figure 4. Sections



Plate 1. Looking east at excavated footing trenches.



Plate 2. Looking southeast at pit at removal of topsoil within western sections of building footprint.



Plate 3. Looking southwest at the eastern part of the building footprint with topsoil removed



Plate 4. Bottle found in large feature [229]. Total height of bottle 17cm.



Plate 5. Looking northwest at pit [225]. Two 1m scales.



Plate 6. Looking southeast at pit [227]. Two 1m scales

APPENDIX 1

Context Summary

Context	Description	Interpretation	Date
223	mid-brown clayey sand, chalk and charcoal flecks	Upper fill of pit [225]	? medieval
224	light brown clayey sand	Lower fill of pit [225]	? medieval
225	Steep sided discrete feature	Quarry pit	? medieval
226	mixed mid-brown sandy-clay, chalk flecks	Fill of pit [227]	medieval
227	Steep sided discrete feature	Quarry pit	medieval
228	Redeposited chalk and large lenses of mid brown sandy clay	Fill of feature [229]	Very late 19 th or early 20 th century
229	Very large feature	Large quarry pit	Very late 19 th or early 20 th century

Appendix 2

THE FINDS

POST ROMAN POTTERY

By Alex Beeby

Introduction

The material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Slowikowski *et al.* (2001). The pottery codename used (Cname) is in accordance with the Post Roman pottery type series for Lincolnshire, as published in Young *et al.* (2005), which also covers surrounding counties. A single sherd from one vessels, weighing seven grams was recovered from the site.

Methodology

The material viewed and weighed and then examined visually and using x20 magnification. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the pottery is included in Table 1 below. The pottery dates to the Medieval period

Condition

The sherd is fragmentary but not overly abraded.

Results

Table #, Post Roman Pottery Archive

Cxt	Cname	Full Name	Fabric	Form	NoS	NoV	W (g)	Decoration	Part	Comment	Date
226	EMHM	Early Medieval Handmade ware		Jar	1	1	7		BS	EMW	L11th-13th

Provenance

The pottery was recovered from pit [227].

Range

There is a single sherd of Early Medieval Handmade ware (EMHM) dating to the later 11th to 13th century. This is a common type in this area.

Potential

There is limited potential for further work. The pottery should be retained as part of the site archive and should pose no problems for long term storage.

Summary

A single sherd of medieval pottery as recovered during the investigation. This came from pit [227].

SPOT DATING

The dating in Table [#] is based on the evidence provided by the finds detailed above.

Table 1

Spot dates

Cxt	Date	Comments
226	L11th-13th	Fill of quarry pit [227]

ABBREVIATIONS

BS	Body sherd
CXT	Context
NoF	Number of Fragments
NoS	Number of sherds
NoV	Number of vessels
W (g)	Weight (grams)

REFERENCES

- Slowikowski, A. M., Nenk, B., and Pearce, J., 2001, *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics*, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 2
- Young, J., Vince, A.G. and Nailor, V., 2005, *A Corpus of Saxon and Medieval Pottery from Lincoln* (Oxford)

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, e.g. [004].
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, etc. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
Fill	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) that become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Layer	A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity

Appendix 4

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

1	Context register sheets
7	Context record sheets
1	Photographic record sheets
1	Plan record sheet
1	Section record sheet
2	Daily record sheets
3	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Bag of finds

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Norwich Castle Museum
Castle Meadow
Norwich
Norfolk
NR13JU

Norfolk Historic Environment Record Number:
Norfolk Museums Accession Number

ENF129203
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OASIS Record No:

archaeo11-142066

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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