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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
ON LAND AT AYLSHAM,  
OLD HALL  
(50580)**

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**Work Undertaken For  
Mrs. Kimber**

June 2009

Report Compiled by  
Andrew Failes BA (Hons) MA

National Grid Reference: TG 1887 2739  
Norfolk Museums Service Site Code: 50580  
Planning Application No: 20081729  
Oasis ID No: archaeo11-60471

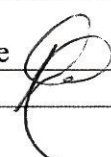
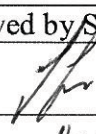
Report No: **50/09**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES**



**Quality Control  
Aylsham Old Hall,  
Aylsham, Norfolk  
(AYOH 09)**

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Post-excavation Analyst	Andrew Failes

Checked by Project Manager	Approved by Senior Archaeologist
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Date: 05/06/09	Date: 11-06-09

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## 1. SUMMARY

*A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks at Aylsham Old Hall, Aylsham, Norfolk.*

*The watching brief monitored the removal of turf and reduction of ground associated with the construction of a swimming pool and pavilion.*

*Aylsham Old Hall is a late 17<sup>th</sup> century property which may have included a brick built pavilion. The pavilion is shown in a painting dating to c. 1720. A previous geophysical investigation (Cook 2007) of the area identified the potential for structural remains to be present. However, no structural remains relating to the former pavilion or otherwise were revealed during the investigation.*

*The watching brief identified a sequence of deposits consisting of natural silty clay overlain by a subsoil and topsoil deposit. The only features revealed during the investigation were two dog burials of recent date.*

*No finds were retrieved during the investigation; however, large fragments of 20<sup>th</sup> century tile, CBM, pottery and glass were noted in the topsoil.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as “a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.” (IFA 1999).

### 2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Mrs. Kimber to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a swimming pool and pavilion at Aylsham Old Hall, Aylsham, Norfolk. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application 20081729. The watching brief was carried out between the 8<sup>th</sup> of April and the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2009.

### 2.3 Topography and Geology

Aylsham is situated 15km north of Norwich and 6.5km southwest of North Walsham in the county of Norfolk (Fig. 1). The site lies within the grounds of Aylsham Old Hall on level ground at National Grid Reference TG 1887 2739

The underlying geology is Norwich Crag, Red Crag and Chillesford Clay (British Geographical Survey South Sheet, Fourth Edition Solid, 2001), overlain by Wick 3 typical brown earths. These consist of deep well drained coarse loamy often stone less soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales, Sheet 4 Eastern England).

### 2.4 Archaeological Setting

Aylsham Old Hall is a 17th century property, altered around 1820 and 1850 (Rose 2003), possibly built as a Dower House for Blickling Hall (Pevsner & Wilson 1998, 365), or later incorporated into the Blickling estate. The building itself is red brick, and dated 1686 (Pevsner & Wilson 1998, 365) on the east face of its central chimney stack. It is suggested the present gardens are a 19th century attempt to recreate the original, using some surviving fragments with a pond representing the original canal (Rose 2003). A painting (Fig 6) of the property c. 1720 located on the overmantle of the first floor principal front room (Pevsner &

Wilson 1998, 366) shows a brick built pavilion located within the garden at the eastern end of a short canal. A previous geophysical survey (Cook 2007) of the garden area behind the house and ‘canal’ identified the potential for structural remains to be present. However, the spread of results from the survey made the interpretation of a location for the pavilion problematic.

Also of note is a range of outbuildings immediately to the north of the Hall including two barns dating to 1689 and around 1800 (Rose 2003). The 1689 barn is contemporary with the Old Hall and has Dutch gables with proper pediments on top, a rare feature for agricultural buildings and likely influenced by Blickling Hall (Pevsner & Wilson 1998, 366). There is a courtyard of farm buildings to the north and in the north east wall of a cart shed is a row of Second World War loopholes noted to be rare survivals (Rose 2003).

### 3. AIMS

The aim of the archaeological investigation was to ensure that any archaeological features exposed during the groundworks were recorded and, if present, their date, function and origin determined.

### 4. METHODS

Removal of turf over the area depicted in Fig. 3, followed by further reduction of ground level in the southern end of the site was undertaken by machine. Further ground reduction took place in the pool area. Where possible, the edges of the excavation were cleaned and rendered vertical. Selected deposits were excavated further to retrieve artefactual material and to determine their function. Each deposit was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their descriptions appears as Appendix

2. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services’ practice.

Following excavation the records were checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them and supplemented by artefact dating.

## 5. RESULTS

Following post-excavation analysis three phases were identified;

Phase 1	Natural Deposits
Phase 2	Undated Deposits
Phase 3	Recent Deposits

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

### 5.1 Natural deposits

The earliest layer identified on site was a firm, light to mid orangey brown silty clay (004), containing a moderate amount of flint cobbles (Figs. 3-5, Section 1) (Plates 2-7).

### 5.2 Undated Deposits

Overlying natural deposit (004) was a 0.37m thick firm mid greyish yellowish brown silty clay (003) subsoil, with a moderate amount of flints and charcoal flecks (Fig 5, Section 1) (Plate 4).

### 5.3 Recent Deposits

An ovoid cut [008] measuring 0.76m long by 0.60m wide with a depth of 0.15m was observed cut through natural layer (004) in the pool area (Figs 3-5, Section 3) (Plate 7). The cut had shallow concave sides

breaking gradually to a concave base and contained the articulated skeleton of a dog within a firm mid greyish brown silty clay (007) matrix. Deposit (007) also contained frequent charcoal, CBM and chalk flecks.

A second dog burial [006] with a rectangular shape measuring 0.90m in length x 0.46m wide with a depth of 0.20m was also recorded in the pool area (Figs 3-5, Section 2) (Plate 6) cut through deposit (004). This cut had nearly vertical sides, breaking sharply to a flat base and also contained an articulated dog skeleton within a firm mid greyish brown silty clay (005) matrix.

A 0.29m thick layer of soft dark greyish brown sandy clay topsoil (002) containing frequent charcoal flecks and a moderate amount of small flints and CBM fragments overlay the subsoil at the southern end of the site (Figs 3.& 5, Section 1) (Plate 4). Further to the north the topsoil contained more inclusions, consisting of frequent charcoal flecks, CBM, pottery, tile and glass. The context number (001) was assigned to this deposit

## 6. DISCUSSION

The earliest silty clay deposit identified on site represents the underlying natural geology of the area.

Two articulated dog burials of recent date were revealed during the excavation of the pool area. Although these features were observed cutting into the natural, their shallow depth suggests they were probably cut through the subsoil layer, although not identified during machining due to the similarity of colour between the fills and the subsoil.

The subsoil was overlain by a topsoil layer that contained a number of inclusions. Large fragments of 20<sup>th</sup> century tile, pottery, brick and glass were noted in the topsoil but not retrieved. The density of

these inclusions, especially in the northern part of the stripped area, suggests that much of this ground has been recently made up.

## 7. CONCLUSION

A watching brief was required during ground reduction at Aylsham Old Hall, Aylsham, Norfolk, in order to monitor ground reduction associated with the construction of a swimming pool and pavilion.

Aylsham Old Hall was built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and the property possibly included a brick built pavilion which is shown on a c. 1720 painting. A previous geophysical investigation (Cook 2007) of the area identified the potential for structural remains to be present, although the position of the pavilion itself was unclear.

However, no structural remains belonging to the former pavilion, or indeed any other structures, were identified during the investigation. The only features revealed during the investigation consisted of two articulated dog burials of recent date.

Large fragments of 20<sup>th</sup> century tile, CBM, pottery and glass were noted in the topsoil, but not retrieved.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mrs. Kimber for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Dale Trimble who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Dave Start kindly allowed access to the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Dale Trimble  
Site Supervisors: Andrew Failes  
Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth  
Illustration: Andrew Failes  
Post-excavation analysis: Andrew Failes

## 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

British Geographical Survey, South Sheet,  
Fourth Edition Solid, 2001

Cook, J, 2007 *Aylsham Old Hall, Norfolk*,  
Unpublished Geophysical Survey Report,  
APS Report No: 147/07

IFA, 1999, Standard and Guidance for  
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Pevsner, N. and Wilson, B., 1998, *Norfolk  
I: Norwich and North-East*, The  
Buildings of England (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)

Rose, E. 2003 Building Report.  
Unpublished document

Soil Survey of England and Wales, Sheet 4  
Eastern England

## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

GSGB Geological Survey of Great Britain

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists



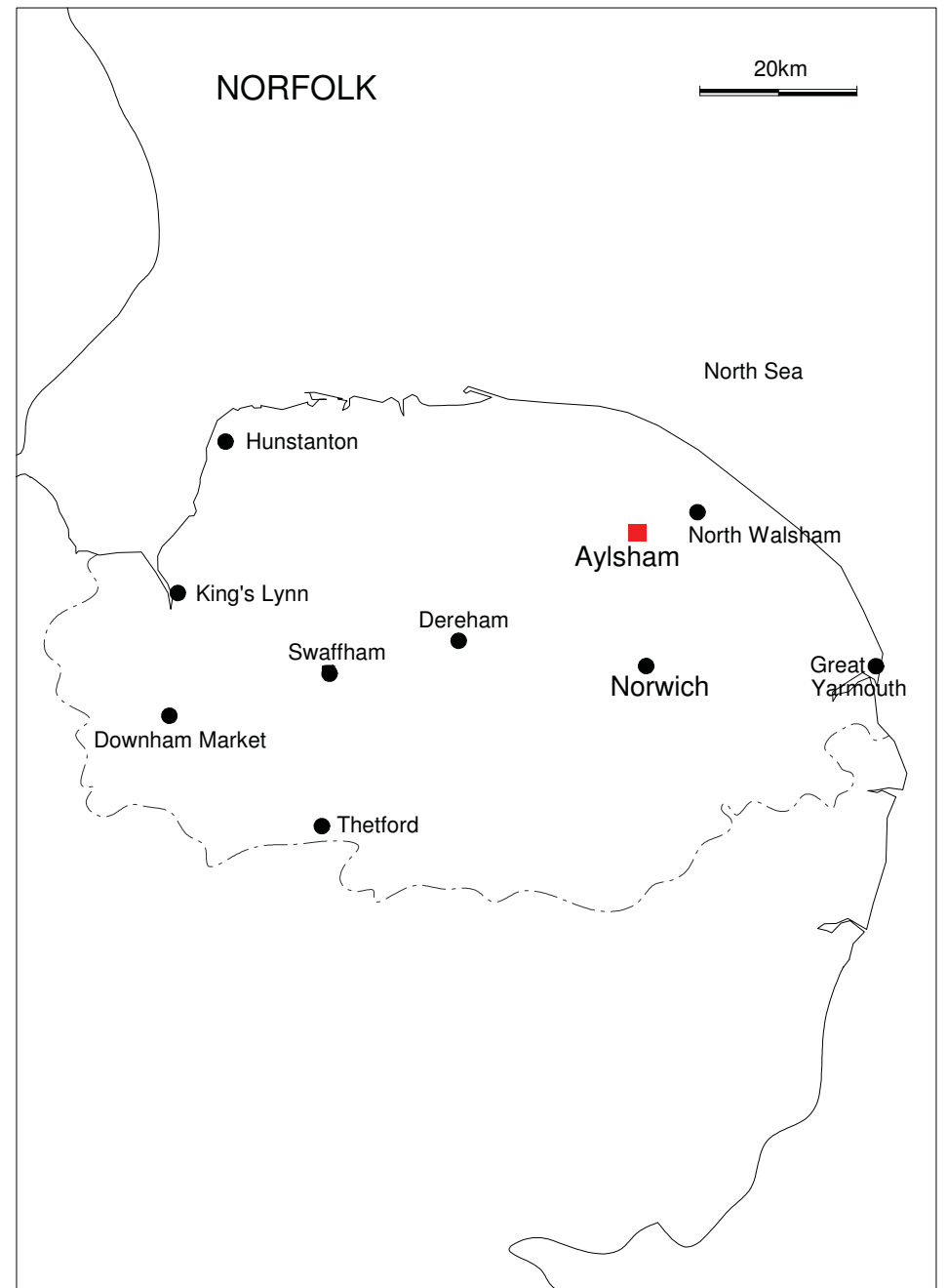


Figure 1 General Location Plan

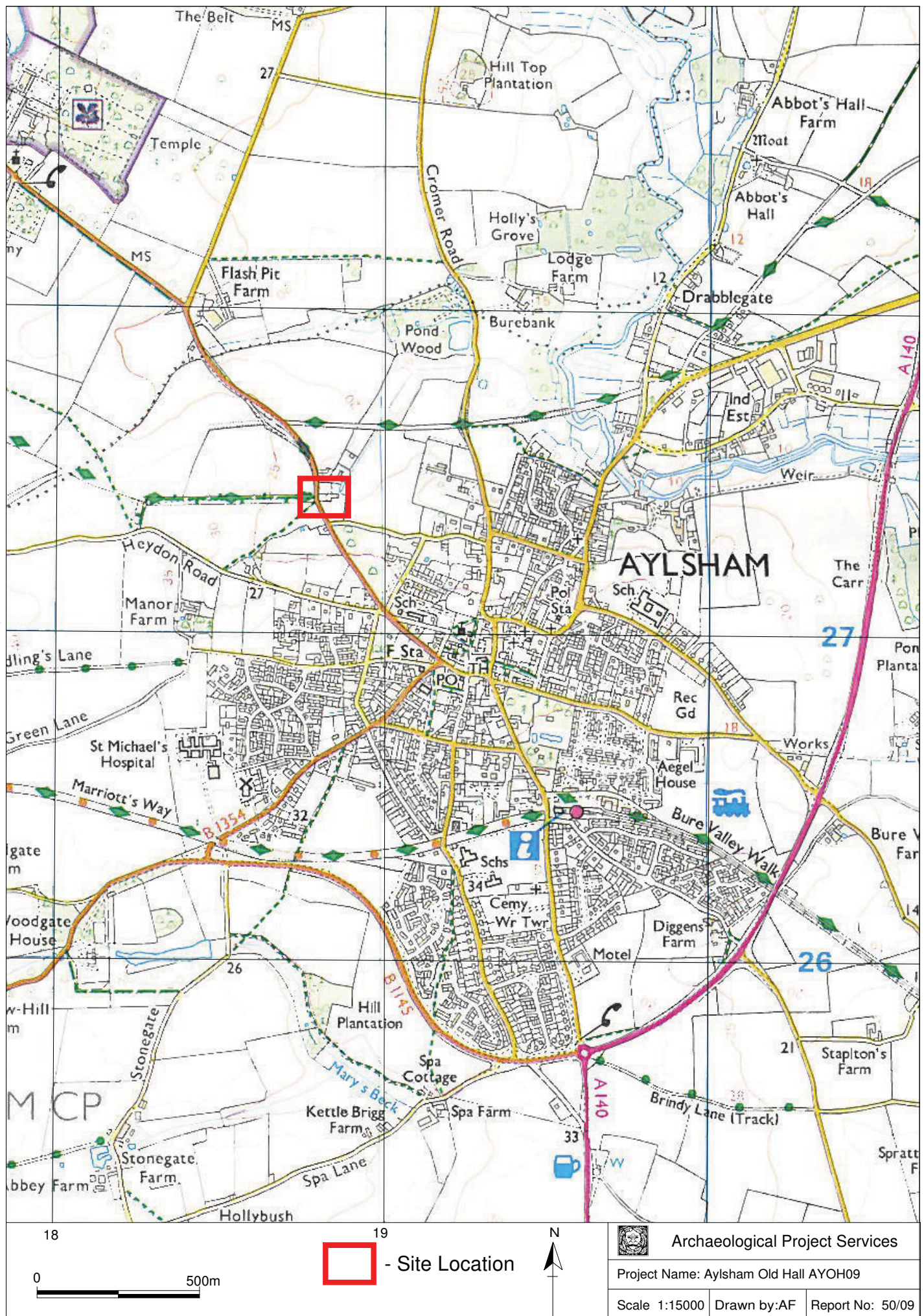
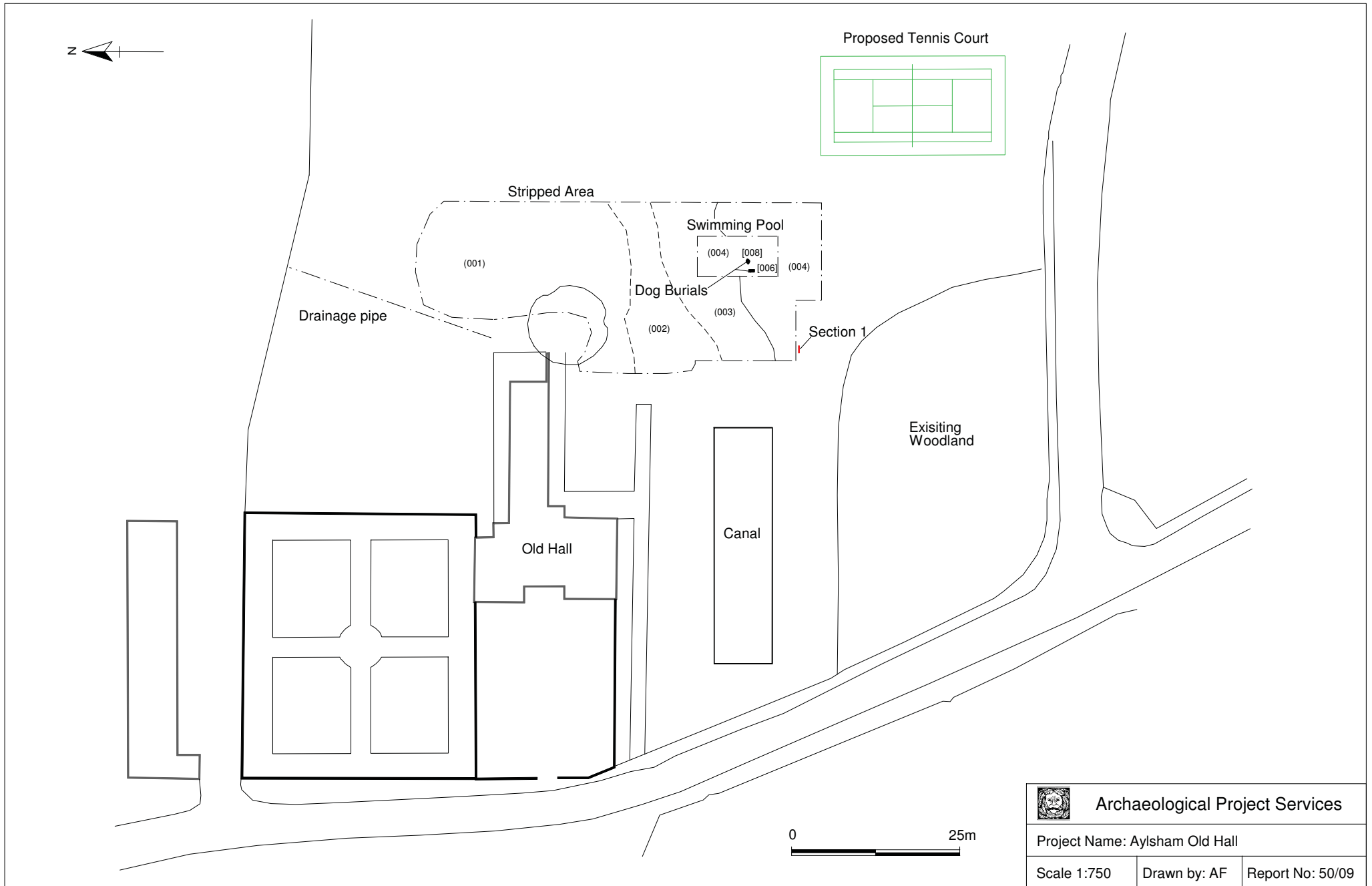


Figure 2 - Site Location




	Archaeological Project Services	
Project Name: Aylsham Old Hall		
Scale 1:750	Drawn by: AF	Report No: 50/09

Figure 3 - Site Plan

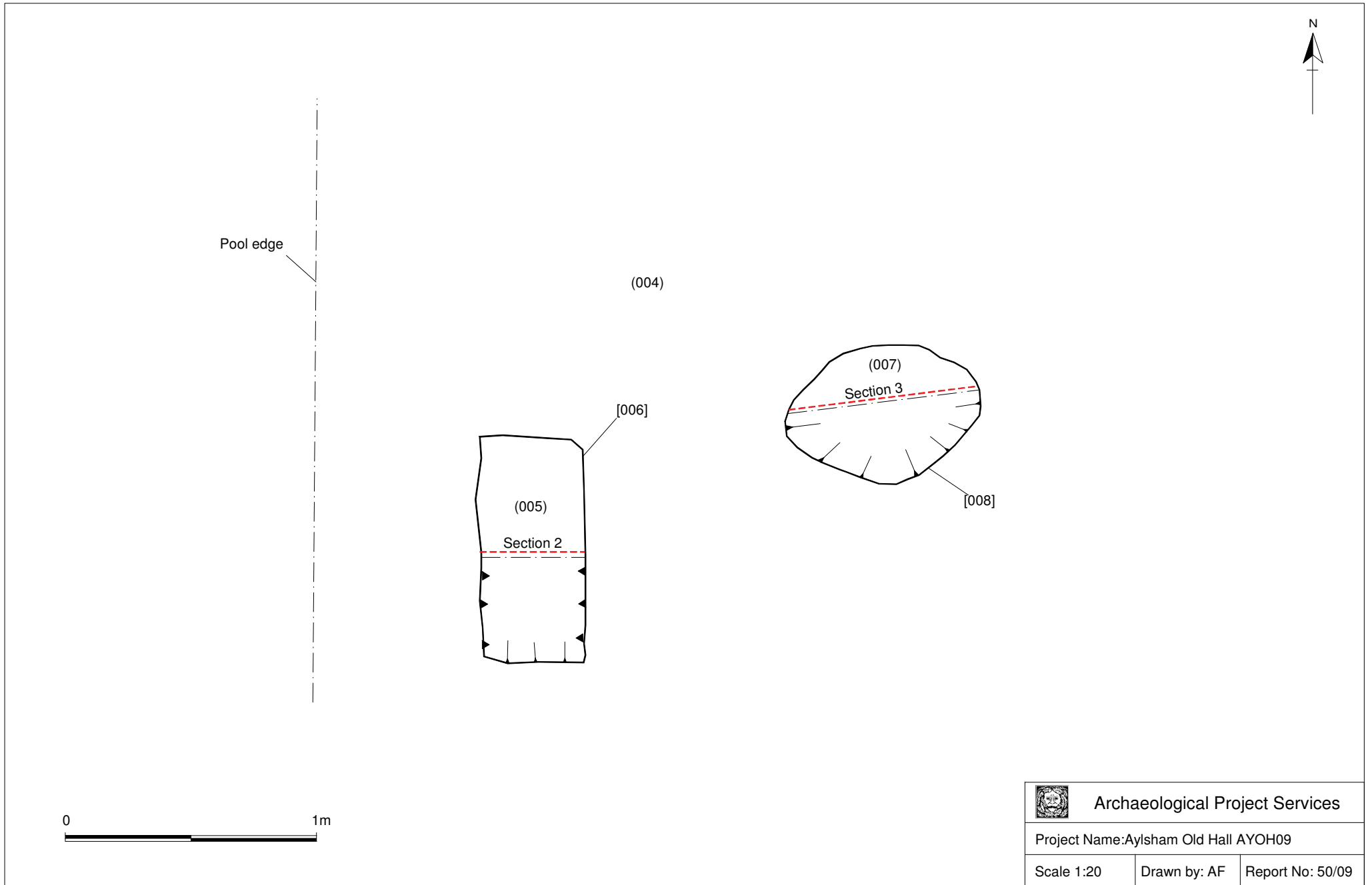
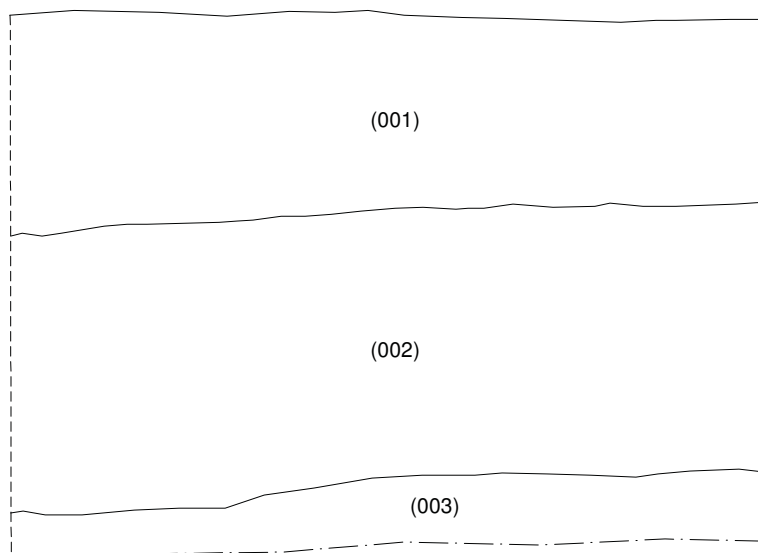
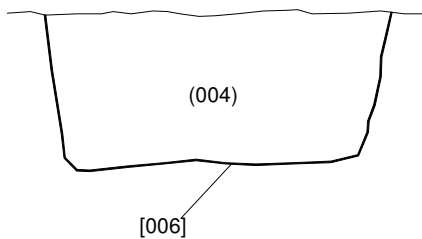


Figure 4 - Dog burials [006] and [008]

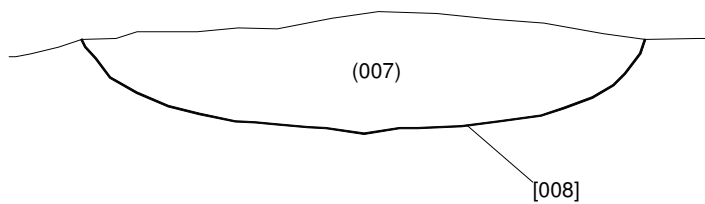
Section 1



Section 2



Section 3




	Archaeological Project Services	
Project Name: Aylsham Old Hall AYOH09		
Scale 1:10	Drawn by:AF	Report No: 50/09

Figure 5 - Sections 1 -3



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Aylsham Old Hall AYOH09

Report No: 50/09

Figure 6 - Painting of Aylsham Old Hall c. 1720 showing brick built pavilion



Plate 1 – General view of site



Plate 2 - Stripping of earth in south-eastern area of site



Plate 3 – General view of stripping in southern area of site



Plate 4 – Section 1





Plate 5 – Excavation of pool area



Plate 6 - Dog burial [006]



Plate 7 – Dog burial [008]

## **Appendix 1**

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL BRIEF**

**BRIEF  
FOR THE MONITORING OF WORKS  
UNDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUPERVISION AND CONTROL**

Site or Project Name: Aylsham Old Hall  
Parish: Aylsham  
Grid reference: TG 1887 2739  
Norfolk HER No.: To be arranged  
Site type(s) : Pavilion  
Planning Authority: Broadland District Council  
Application or Reference No.: 20071661  
Level Required: Constant Attendance  
Issued by: Ken Hamilton  
Head of Archaeological Planning  
Norfolk Landscape Archaeology  
Union House, Gressenhall  
Dereham, Norfolk NR20 4DR  
Tel: 01362 869275 (direct)  
Fax: 01362 860951  
ken.hamilton@norfolk.gov.uk  
Date: 10 April 2008  
Notes: Monitoring is only required on the site of the  
original pavilion



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Ken Hamilton on 01362 869275 and we will do our best to help.

## THE BRIEF

The Archaeological Contractor should confirm that the Monitoring of Works Under Archaeological Supervision and Control will be undertaken in accordance with the following:

1. Provision will be made for monitoring the development, including, where appropriate, the following:-
  - all areas of below-ground disturbance, including excavations, foundation trenches, service trenches, drains and soakaways.
  - above-ground remains when the development affects a building of historic importance
  - pipeline and cable trenches.
2. Monitoring will be undertaken at the level indicated i.e. occasional visit, regular visit or constant attendance.
3. Where appropriate, topsoil or spoil will be scanned by metal-detector before and during its removal.
4. All archaeological contexts and artefacts exposed, examined or excavated will be fully recorded on appropriate context, finds and sample sheets, on plans and sections and by photographic record.
5. Provision will be made for an appropriate level of analysis, including identification of artefacts, specialist reports if appropriate, production of archive and report, donation of finds to an appropriate museum, transfer and storage of artefacts and archive in an acceptable form to an appropriate museum, conservation and inclusion of the results of the project in the County Historic Environment Record.
6. Indicate that any areas of environmental potential will be sampled, as advised by the environmental specialist.
7. The results will be presented in a report, the nature of which should be commensurate with the findings.
8. The report should include appropriate scale plans showing the locations of all features and finds, and detailed plans and sections where necessary.
9. The report should include comprehensive details of all finds.
10. Three hard copies and a PDF copy on CD of the Report should be supplied to NLA for the attention of the Head of Archaeological Planning within eight weeks of the completion of the fieldwork on the understanding that this will become a public document after an appropriate period of time (generally not exceeding six months). Two hard copies and the PDF file will be deposited with the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, and the third hard copy will be forwarded to the Local Planning Authority.
11. At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. When the project is completed, all parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the Norfolk Historic Environment Record. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report. Hard copies of the report must still be provided as specified.
12. Hard copies of the report must also be provided, as specified below.
13. All works will be carried out in full accordance with the appropriate sections of Gurney, D., 2003, '**Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England**', as adopted by the Association of Local Government

Archaeological Officers for the East of England Region and published as *East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14*. This is available as a PDF file on the web at [www.eaareports.org.uk](http://www.eaareports.org.uk). Archaeological Contractors should note that the **Standards** document stipulates basic *methodological* standards. It is considered axiomatic that all contractors will strive to achieve the highest possible *qualitative* standards, with the application of the most advanced and appropriate techniques possible within a context of continuous improvement aimed at maximising the recovery of archaeological data and contributing to the development of a greater understanding of Norfolk's historic environment. Monitoring officers will seek and expect clear evidence of commitment to the historic resource of Norfolk, with specifications being drawn up within a context of added value.

14. The Archaeological Contractor will contact the HER Officer of NLA in advance of work starting to obtain a HER number for the site or, if a number is already given on the Brief, to ensure that it is still applicable.

### **THE MONITORING OF WORKS UNDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUPERVISION AND CONTROL**

This means that you will need to commission an archaeological contractor to ensure that an archaeologist is present during certain phases of the development to record any features exposed or any archaeological finds.

This does not mean that the development programme will be stopped or delayed by the archaeologist, who will work alongside other contractors on site to ensure that any necessary archaeological records are made.

In the unlikely event of the discovery of unanticipated remains of very great importance, discussions will take place on how these might be preserved or recorded.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO DO**

You should forward a copy of this Brief to one or more Archaeological Contractors, and discuss with them the timing and costs. Your appointed contractor should be asked to confirm in writing to Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA) that this brief will be adhered to.

NLA does not see Contractors' costings, nor do we give advice on costs. You may wish to obtain a number of quotations or to employ the services of an archaeological consultant.

Details of archaeological contractors based in Norfolk and beyond may be found in the Institute of Field Archaeologists Yearbook & Directory, available from the I.F.A., University of Reading, 2 Earley Gate, PO Box 239, Reading RG6 6AU. Tel: 0118 931 6446. Fax: 0118 931 6448. Email: [admin@archaeologists.net](mailto:admin@archaeologists.net). Website: [www.archaeologists.net](http://www.archaeologists.net).

**FOR FURTHER HELP, INFORMATION AND ADVICE CONTACT**

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Norfolk Landscape Archaeology is responsible for safeguarding the County's archaeological heritage. NLA is consulted by Planning Authorities and provides advice on archaeological work that may be required as a result of development proposals.

## Appendix 2

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Soft dark greyish brown sandy clay with frequent charcoal flecks, CBM, brick, pottery, tile and glass fragments	Topsoil
002	Soft dark greyish brown sandy clay with frequent charcoal flecks, moderate small flints and occasional CBM fragments, 0.29m thick	Topsoil
003	Firm mid greyish yellowish brown silty clay with moderate flints and charcoal flecks, 0.37m thick	Subsoil
004	Firm light to mid orangey brown silty clay with moderate flint cobbles	Natural
005	Firm mid greyish brown sandy clay with orange mottle and frequent chalk, CBM, and charcoal flecks	Fill of [006]
006	Rectangular shaped cut with rounded corners, 0.90m L x 0.46m W x 0.20m D with near vertical sides breaking sharply to a flat base and oriented north-west	Dog burial
007	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay with orange mottle, frequent charcoal, CBM and chalk flecks	Fill of [008]
008	Ovoid cut, 0.76m L x 0.60m W x 0.15m D, with shallow concave sides breaking gradually to a concave base and oriented east-west	Dog burial



## Appendix 3

### GLOSSARY

<b>Anglo-Saxon</b>	Pertaining to the period when Britain was occupied by peoples from northern Germany, Denmark and adjacent areas. The period dates from approximately AD 450-1066.
<b>Context</b>	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].
<b>Cut</b>	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.
<b>Fill</b>	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).
<b>Geophysical Survey</b>	Essentially non-invasive methods of examining below the ground surface by measuring deviations in the physical properties and characteristics of the earth. Techniques include magnetometry and resistivity survey.
<b>Layer</b>	A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
<b>Natural</b>	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity
<b>Pediment</b>	Low pitched gable over a portico or façade. An <i>open-bed pediment</i> has the horizontal base lacking its middle section

## Appendix 4

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

8	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
1	Section record sheet
1	Plan record sheet
4	Daily record sheet
4	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Stratigraphic matrix

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:

Norfolk Museums Service  
Union House  
Gressenhall  
Dereham  
Norfolk  
NR20 4DR

Norfolk Museums Service Site Code: 50580

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: AYOH09

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.

Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.