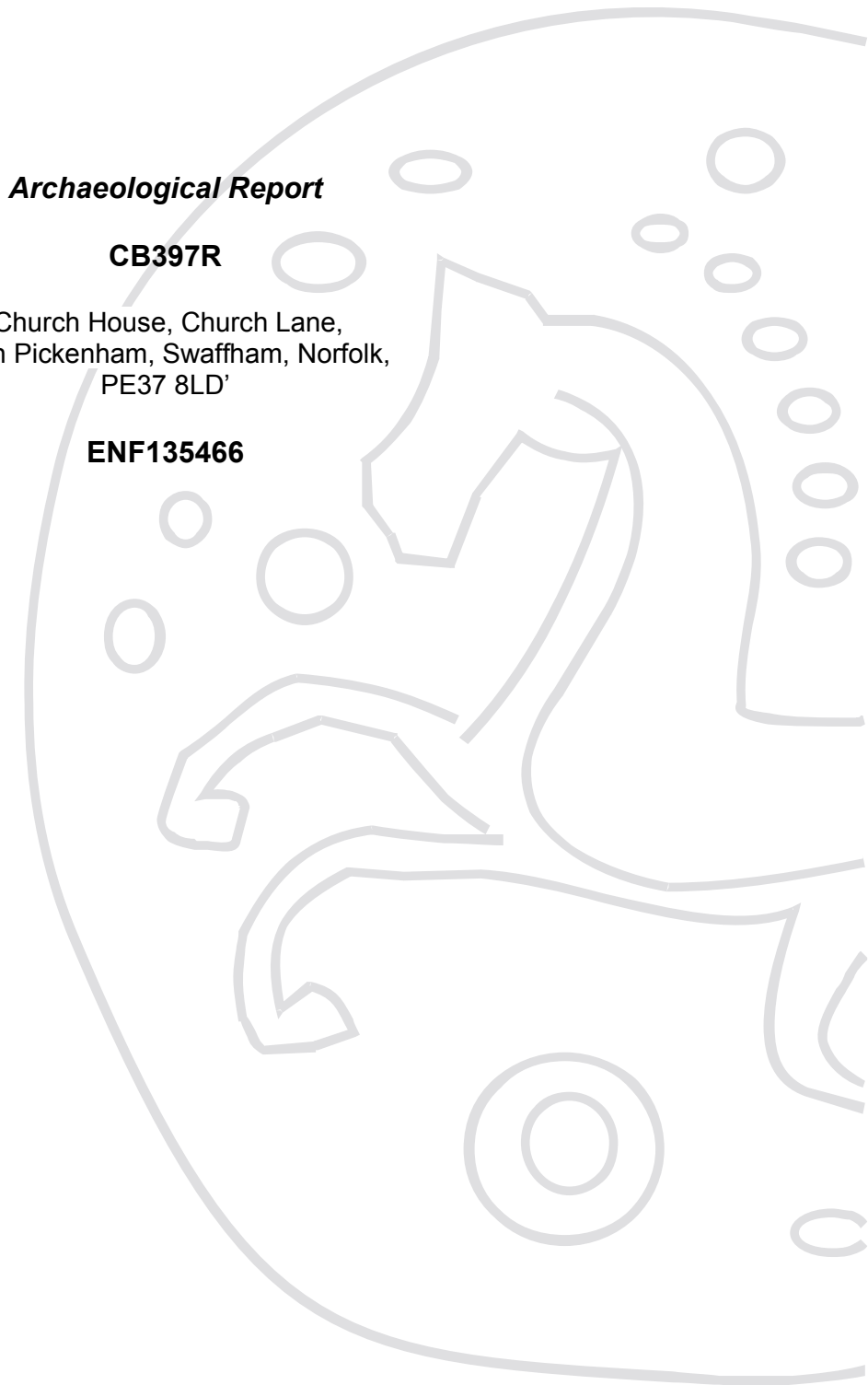


Archaeological Report

CB397R

'Church House, Church Lane,
North Pickenham, Swaffham, Norfolk,
PE37 8LD'

ENF135466



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**Report on an Archaeological Watching
Brief at 'Church House, Church Lane,
North Pickenham, Swaffham, Norfolk'**

ENF135466

Prepared for:
Mr and Mrs Torode
Church House
Church Lane
North Pickenham
Swaffham,
Norfolk
PE37 8LD

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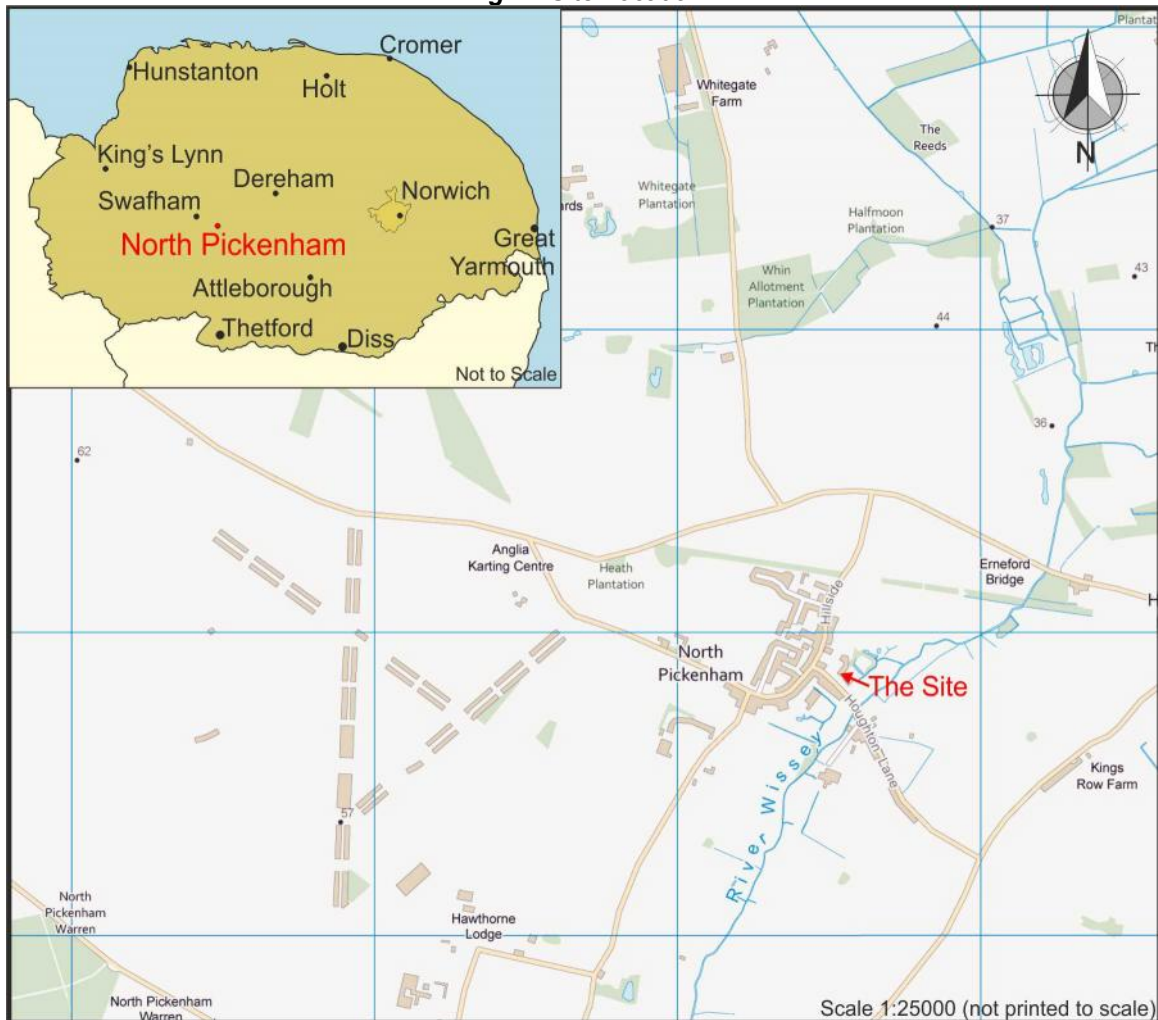
Summary

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken at 'Church House, Church Lane, North Pickenham, Swaffham, Norfolk' (ENF135466) during groundworks associated with the construction of a new dwelling in November 2014. A small quantity of Late Saxon and medieval pottery fragments and undated canine bone fragments were recovered during the excavations. No significant archaeological remains were encountered.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeological Monitoring ("Watching Brief") was carried out during excavations associated with the construction of a new dwelling at 'Church House, Church Lane, North Pickenham, Swaffham, Norfolk' (grid reference TF 8653 0686)
- 1.2 Breckland Council planning reference 3PL/2014/0838/F, Norfolk Historic Environment Record ENF135466 and Online Access to the Index and Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) ID: chrisbir1-196731 apply.
- 1.3 This report, CB397R, details how Chris Birks undertook these works and summarises the results. A copy of the report has been submitted to the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.

Fig. 1. Site Location



2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 A proposal for the construction of a new dwelling was approved subject to a Programme of Archaeological Work requested by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.

Archaeological monitoring ('Watching Brief') at a level of constant attendance was required to determine the presence/absence, date, and extent, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological deposits or features.

- 2.2 The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a generic Brief for Monitoring under Archaeological Supervision and Control issued by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service and a generic Project Design for Archaeological Monitoring ("Watching Briefs") by Chris Birks (Birks 2004). This forms part of the research agenda for the eastern counties of England in *Research and Archaeology; a Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (Brown, N., and Glazebrook, J. (eds) 2000) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011). It is hoped that information resulting from this project would contribute to some or all of these research aims. Full details of research aims, methodology and standards are provided in the Project Design.
- 2.3 Norfolk Historic Environment Record ENF135466 and Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) id chrisbir1-196731 apply. The site archive will be held by the Norfolk Museums Service, in accordance with the relevant policy on archiving standards.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 A number of entries exist in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) for North Pickenham and a search of those within a 1km radius of the site was carried out and summarised in this report. Full details of these and all other entries can be seen at the NHER office based at Gressenhall, near Dereham, by prior appointment. The accuracy of these records is presumed correct.
- 3.2 One of the earliest finds in the parish is a perforated quartz pebble dating from between the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods found in a garden close to St. Andrew's Church in 1973 (NHER 4621). These objects are not closely dateable though simple pebble-forms such as this have been found in both Mesolithic and later prehistoric contexts. A prehistoric pot boiler site (NHER 20161) was revealed during ploughing of a former permanent pasture to the north/northwest of the village in 1984.
- 3.3 Hilly Plantation (NHER 4623) lies to the north of North Pickenham and was the site of three Bronze Age round barrows that have since been destroyed and the site ploughed. One barrow was still in existence as an earthwork in 1935 and prehistoric flint flakes were found on the mound. This was also the meeting place of Greenhoe Hundred until the 17th century.
- 3.4 Archaeological excavation during the construction of a mains water supply was carried out to the northwest of the village in 2002 (NHER 37097). Pits, linear features and post-holes with some curvilinear gullies and associated post-holes - possibly forming some kind of entrance-way or enclosure, were identified. One large pit contained quantities of prehistoric flint (probably knapping waste) in its fill and some irregular-shaped pits may have been dug to quarry sand or gravel.
- 3.5 Metal detecting to the southeast of the village in 1992 recovered an Iron Age Bury A-type silver coin (NHER 28874).
- 3.6 A Roman road (*The Peddar's Way*) lies to the west of North Pickenham (NHER 1289), visible as an earthwork and cropmark on aerial photographs. Some sections of the road are open to the public as a long distance footpath. The road enters Norfolk at Brettenham where a possible stretch visible on aerial photographs has been recorded (NHER 54566) and follows a very direct line with only a slight bend at Hockham to the north Norfolk coast at Holme next the Sea where its original destination has probably been lost through erosion. There may have been a ferry crossing to Lincolnshire, near Skegness. It is likely to be early Roman in date and was probably of military origin.

- 3.7 The possible route of a Roman road (NHER 8714) that may be associated with the Panworth Ditch (NHER 1082) and a nearby Roman enclosure (NHER 8712) has been identified, including part of *The Weye called Strete* on a 1581 map, though this diverges southwards. A Watching Brief in 1996 indicated that the road may extend further to the west and connect with another stretch of possible Roman Road (NHER 4595) to the southwest of North Pickenham and south of Cockley Cley.
- 3.8 Fieldwalking on the former airfield at North Pickenham (see later entry for NHER 2697) has revealed that this is the site of a Roman settlement (NHER 13271) and fragments of Roman pottery and ceramic tile have been found. Metal detecting has recovered a Bronze Age flat axehead, Roman coins and other metal finds. This area was part of the deserted medieval settlement known as *Cotes* or *Petygards*. Petygards itself was part of the larger settlement Cotes that developed on the edge of a common and in the mid-14th century, Cotes is referred to in a number of documents. Fieldwalking on this site has recovered several distinct concentrations of medieval material. The settlement survived into the 17th century but by the early 18th century there were few buildings left around the edge of the common which was enclosed in 1806.
- 3.9 Two Roman coins (Follis of Constantine I 307-310 AD) have been found; one on the edge of a ploughed field to the north of St. Andrew's Church in 1977/8 (NHER 17426) and the other on the edge of a ploughed field close to the northeast side of present day North Pickenham in 1977/8 (NHER 17426).
- 3.10 Metal detecting to the northeast of the village in 1987 recovered an Early Saxon wrist clasp and parts of two Early Saxon cruciform brooches (NHER 24213). An Early Saxon wrist clasp was also found during metal detecting to the south/southwest of the village in 1992 (NHER 32317) indicating settlement during the Saxon period already extended across much of the present day village. A fragment of Late Saxon or medieval shaped-limestone has been recorded in a large flint wall near Manor Farm (NHER 37014). The wall itself probably dates no earlier than 1700.
- 3.11 St. Andrew's Church (NHER 4644) is a medieval parish church largely rebuilt in 1863 by D. Male. The west tower and transept are largely original with 14th century fabric observed in the tower. The tower dates mostly to c. 1500 and it is possible that the remains of earlier towers exist beneath it. The remainder of the church is mostly of 19th century date. A programme of archaeological excavation and monitoring was carried out in 2009 associated with the construction of new (disabled) toilet facilities and a store room within the west tower of St. Andrew's Church, a meeting room within the church and associated mains services (NHER event number ENF123197). A Post-medieval feature was present within the base of the tower and a sandstone slab probably sealing a tomb was revealed in the north transept (Birks 2009). The feature within tower may have been used for storing molten lead from a boiling furnace during the Post-medieval period, possibly during the rebuilding of the church in the mid-19th century. There were indications of a fire in the tower though no further information was gained. The sandstone slab may be medieval or may relate to one of the memorials in the transept that date to 1812 and the 1850s.
- 3.12 A will dated to 1428 indicates that a medieval cross once stood in the churchyard of St. Andrew's Church. Several pieces of Late Saxon carved stonework (including 2 fragments of probable grave crosses) have been incorporated into the wall of the churchyard and fragments of Roman and medieval pottery have been found.
- 3.13 The site of a medieval chapel dedicated to St. Paul (mentioned in documents dating from the mid-16th century) and a medieval hermitage (NHER 4639) lie to the immediate north of St. Andrew's Church.
- 3.14 The location of a medieval moated site (NHER 13128) is shown to the south/southwest of North Pickenham on a Tithe Map of 1839; probably the site of the medieval manor known as *Virley's Manor*.

- 3.15 A fragment of medieval Grimston Ware pottery was found on a ploughed field to the south/southwest of the village in 1979 (NHER 14680) and a fragment of a medieval Grimston face jug was found in the garden of Glenbar on Meadow Lane in 1982 (NHER 18257). A medieval ring brooch was found during metal detecting to the southeast of the village in 1992 (NHER 32320). Fragments of medieval and Post-medieval pottery were found in mole-hills on a rough grass and weed covered field to the northwest of the village in 1994 (NHER 31076). Medieval pottery was recovered during works at the Grange in 1994 (NHER 31076).
- 3.16 The Blue Lion (NHER 45350) is a late 17th century brick-built public house with an 18th century rear wing and 20th century alterations. Erneford House (formerly Handford House, NHER 23014) is a colourwashed brick house built around 1700. With extension during the 18th century, the building is in the shape of an L and has two storeys and an attic. There is an almost symmetrical façade of seven bays and inside are some original wooden beams and roof timbers. The Old School House (NHER 57246) lies to the south of the church, built in 1855 with a teacher's house attached and enlarged in 1908. It was closed in 1955/6 and has since been converted into dwellings.
- 3.17 The route of the Thetford, Watton and Swaffham Railway (NHER 13601, later the Great Eastern Railway) extends approximately east-to-west to the north of North Pickenham and ran from the Roudham Junction of the Norfolk Line (NHER 13571). It had stations at Wretham and Hockham, Stow Bedon, Watton, and Holme Hale and sidings at Stow Bedon, Watton and Holme Hale. The route from Thetford to Watton opened in 1869 and the line between Watton and Swaffham opened in 1875. It was closed to passengers on 15 June 1964 and to freight on 19 April 1965. The line was important for coal, poultry, sugar beet and RAF cargo and joined the Lynn and Dereham Line (NHER 13600) at Swaffham.
- 3.18 North Pickenham Airfield (NHER 2697) opened in May 1944 and the USAAF were stationed here throughout the last years of the war. The last group of B-24 Liberators to serve in Norfolk were stationed here. The airfield was converted to a storage airfield in 1945 and there is now a small commemorative stone on the airfield to the memory of those who served here during World War Two. It was converted to a Thor missile site 1958 to 1963 and closed in 1965.
- 3.19 Multi-period finds recovered during metal detecting of an area to the south of the village since 1983 (NHER 19449) include prehistoric flints, a Bronze Age spearhead, Roman coins, brooches and metal finds, Early Saxon brooches, pottery, a wrist clasp, a gold casket mount, an Early or Middle Saxon gold ornament from a buckle or a sword hilt, and medieval and Post-medieval coins, pottery and metal finds. Further multi-period finds were also recovered from the south of the village in 1986 (NHER 24012) and include a Middle or Late Saxon (9th century) strap-end, a 15th century coin of Charles the Bold (1467-1477) - Duke of Burgundy, a Post-medieval buckle and a key found during metal detecting. Metal detecting to the southeast of the village in 1992 recovered part of an Early Saxon brooch, a Middle Saxon strap fitting, medieval metal objects and an undated bead and weight (NHER 28852). Medieval and Post-medieval coins were also found. Fragments of Iron Age and Roman pottery, a Roman coin, a medieval buckle, key and medieval to Post-medieval book clasp were found during metal detecting to the east/northeast of the village in 1996 (NHER 32088). Fieldwalking and metal detecting during a watching brief to the west/northwest of the village in 2002 (NHER 37106) identified prehistoric flint scatters on the lower slopes of the valley towards the River Wissey, Roman material on higher ground and medieval finds concentrated at Bradenham Green along the edge of the common. A metal hoard of Bronze Age date was also discovered.
- 3.20 Cropmarks of unknown date to the southeast of North Pickenham are visible on aerial photographs taken in 1946 (NHER 4627). A well of unknown date (NHER 11970) was identified centrally in the village that was filled in around 1960.

4.0 Geology and Topography

- 4.1 North Pickenham parish lies upon a solid geology of Upper Chalk (Funnell 2005). The soil landscape of North Pickenham is that typical of the Breckland soils which are formed in

coversand, up to 1m in thickness on the low plateau (Corbett & Dent, 1994). Periglacial action produces striped soil patterns of brown sand and rendzinas on the slopes and polygonal patterns on the plateau (Corbett & Dent, 1994). The dominant soil is brown sand with thin red clay at the boundary between the coversand and the chalk-sand drift (Corbett & Dent, 1994).

- 4.2 The site lies to the southeast of the centre of North Pickenham, north of Houghton Road on generally level ground at an elevation of c. 40m OD.

5.0 Observations

- 5.1 Monitoring was carried out on 11 and 12 November 2014 during excavations associated with the construction of a new pre-fabricated dwelling and associated mains services (*Fig. 2*). Deposits were scanned with a metal detector. No context numbers were allocated during fieldwork due to the lack of significant archaeological remains. Site conditions were good and access was gained from Church Lane to the north of Church House. The weather was mostly dry and overcast with some sunny spells.
- 5.2 An area measuring approximately 10m by 10m at the location of the new dwelling was excavated to a depth of between 0.16m and 0.24m from present ground level removing very dark grey brown clayey silt loam topsoil with frequent rooting and rare chalk flecks (*Plate 1*).

Plate 1. General view of the house footprint, looking southwest



- 5.3 Excavations for a mains service trench measured c. 12m in length and 0.3m wide to depths of between 0.36m and 0.48m beneath present ground level (*Fig. 2, Plate 2*). Initially, 0.08m of strongly cemented coarse yellow sand was removed that overlay 0.4m of very dark greyish brown clayey silt loam topsoil with frequent small-sized grey/blue slate fragments and small-sized fragments of ceramic building material.

- 5.4 A modern wall was identified within the mains service trench 6.3m from the east boundary wall, 0.76m from the south boundary wall and at a depth of 0.1m beneath present ground level. The wall measured 0.24m wide and comprised 2 courses of red/pink 3" (75mm) brick orientated north/northeast-to-south/southwest. A modern 0.025m deep concrete floor/yard surface abutted the wall and extended 4.56m towards the west (*Plate 3*) and overlay 0.4m of very dark greyish brown clayey silt loam with frequent small-sized grey/blue slate fragments and small-sized fragments of ceramic building material.

Plate 2. General view of the service trench, looking west



Plate 3. General view of brick wall and concrete floor/yard surface in service trench, looking west



- 5.5 Two modern clay soil/stormwater drainage pipes, a telephone cable and water pipe all orientated north-to-south serving the existing outbuildings were observed in the mains service trench (*Plate 4*).
- 5.6 Excavations for a total of 15 concrete pads to support the new timber building measured 0.8m by 0.8m, numbered 1 to 15 from the northeast corner to the southwest corner in 3 rows of 5.
- 5.7 Pads 1 to 5 were excavated to a depth of between 0.8m and 0.9m beneath the reduced plot level. Initially, 0.28m of very dark greyish brown clayey silt loam topsoil with rare chalk flecks was removed that overlay mid greyish brown clayey silt subsoil with frequent chalk flecks and occasional small- to very small-sized rounded chalk pieces and stiff chalky grey boulder clay undisturbed 'natural'

Plate 4. General view of the mains service trench and existing services, looking west



deposits, the full extent of which was not reached.

- 5.8 A sherd of medieval Grimston-ware pottery was recovered from subsoil in Pad 1, 6 canine bone fragments were recovered from topsoil in Pad 2 and a sherd of Late Saxon Thetford-type pottery was recovered from subsoil in Pad 4.
- 5.9 Pads 6 to 10 were excavated to a depth of 0.8m beneath the reduced plot level. Initially, c. 0.11m of very dark greyish brown clayey silt loam topsoil with rare chalk flecks was removed that overlay c. 0.63m of mid greyish brown clayey silt subsoil with frequent chalk flecks and occasional small- to very small-sized rounded chalk pieces and chalky pale greyish brown clay undisturbed 'natural' deposits, the full extent of which was not reached. A chalk deposit was present within Pads 6 to 8 c. 0.17m beneath the reduced level; 0.34m deep in Pad 6 reducing to 0.1m in Pad 8 towards the west (*Plate 5*). This deposit is most likely 'natural' in origin.
- 5.10 A north-to-south orientated field drain comprising a silted-up terracotta fabric sectional pipe was present in Pad 9.

Plate 5. Chalk deposits in Pad 6 (left) and 8 (right), looking north



Scale is 2m in 0.5m intervals

- 5.11 Pads 11 to 15 were excavated to a depth of 0.84m beneath the reduced plot level. Initially, 0.13m of very dark greyish brown clayey silt loam topsoil with rare chalk flecks was removed that overlay 0.58m of mid greyish brown clayey silt subsoil with frequent chalk flecks and occasional small- to very small-sized rounded chalk pieces and solid chalk undisturbed 'natural' deposits.
- 5.12 Excavations for a surface water drain measured 18m in length and 0.3m wide to a maximum depth of 0.57m beneath present ground level (*Plate 6*). Initially, 0.13m of very dark greyish brown clayey silt loam topsoil with rare chalk flecks was removed that overlay mid greyish brown clayey silt subsoil with frequent chalk flecks and occasional small- to very small-sized rounded chalk pieces, the full extent of which was not reached.

Plate 6. Excavations for the surface water drain, looking west



- 5.13 Excavations for a surface water soakaway measured 2m in length by 1.7m wide to a maximum depth of 0.85m beneath present ground level (*Plate 7*). Initially, 0.18m of very dark greyish brown clayey silt loam topsoil with rare chalk flecks was removed that overlay 0.45m of mid greyish brown clayey silt subsoil with frequent chalk flecks and occasional small- to very small-sized rounded chalk pieces and solid chalk underlying 'natural' deposits.

Plate 7. Excavations for the surface water soakaway, looking east



Scale is 2m in 0.5m intervals

- 5.14 Excavations for a foul water pumping chamber base measured 1.7m in length by 0.9m wide to a maximum depth of 1.3m beneath present ground level (*Plate 8*). Initially, 0.28m of very dark greyish brown clayey silt loam topsoil with rare chalk flecks overlay mid greyish brown

clayey silt subsoil with frequent chalk flecks and occasional small- to very small-sized rounded chalk pieces, the full extent of which was not reached.

Plate 8. Excavations for the foul water pumping chamber, looking north



Scale is 2m in 0.5m increments

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 No remains of archaeological significance were revealed during the excavations for the new residential building and associated mains services. The precise reasons for this are unknown though the limited extents of the excavations may have precluded the identification of archaeological remains had they been present. The small quantities of Late Saxon and medieval pottery recovered during the excavations confirm known activities in North Pickenham during these periods. The canine bone remains, though undated, appeared to be of relatively recent date and probably relate to a family pet.

Acknowledgments

The project was undertaken by Chris Birks for Mr and Mrs Torode who also funded the work. Monitoring was undertaken by John Simmons.

The report was written by Chris Birks and John Simmons.

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Appendix 1. OASIS Record

OASIS ID: [chrisbir1-196731](#)

Project details

Project name	Archaeological monitoring at 'Church House, North Pickenham'
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of a new dwelling in November 2014. A small quantity of Late Saxon and medieval pottery fragments and undated canine bone fragments were recovered during the excavations. No significant archaeological remains were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 11-11-2014 End: 12-11-2014
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ENF135466 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	HOUSE Post Medieval
Monument type	HOUSE Modern
Significant Finds	BODY SHERD Early Medieval
Significant Finds	BODY SHERD Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK BRECKLAND NORTH PICKENHAM Church House, Church Lane, North Pickenham, Swaffham, Norfolk
Postcode	PE37 8LD
Study area	300.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TF 8653 0686 52.6269758171 0.756309689724 52 37 37 N 000 45 22 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 40.00m Max: 40.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Chris Birks
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Chris Birks
Project director/manager	Chris Birks
Project supervisor	John Simmons

Type of sponsor/funding body Landowner

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive Exists? No

Paper Archive recipient Norfolk Museums Service

Paper Archive ID ENF135466

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Plan","Report","Unpublished Text"

Paper Archive notes With colour digital images

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at 'Church House, Church Lane, North Pickenham, Norfolk'

Author(s)/Editor(s) Birks, C.

Other bibliographic details Report Number CB397R

Date 2014

Issuer or publisher Chris Birks

Place of issue or publication Contractor's Report

Description Bound A4 single-side printed report with text, site location plan, site plan drawing and colour digital images

Entered by Chris Birks (chris@chrisbirksarchaeology.co.uk)

Entered on 28 November 2014

OASIS:

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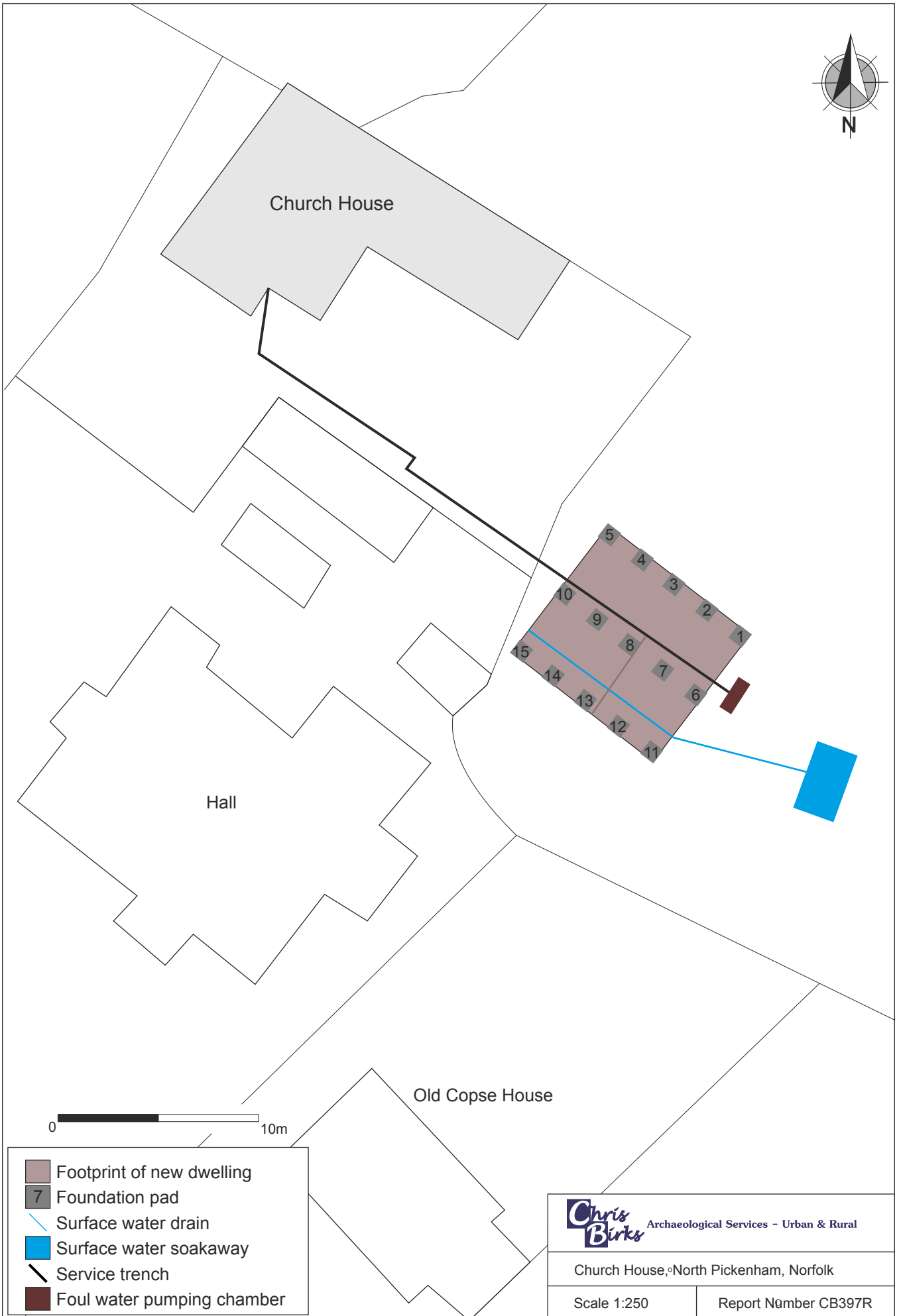


Figure 2. Site plan drawing