

**Report on Works Under Archaeological
Supervision and Control at 'Former Picnic Site,
A149, Dersingham, Norfolk'**

ENF136373

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Archaeological Report

CB401R

**Former Picnic Site, A149,
Dersingham**

ENF136373

Prepared for:

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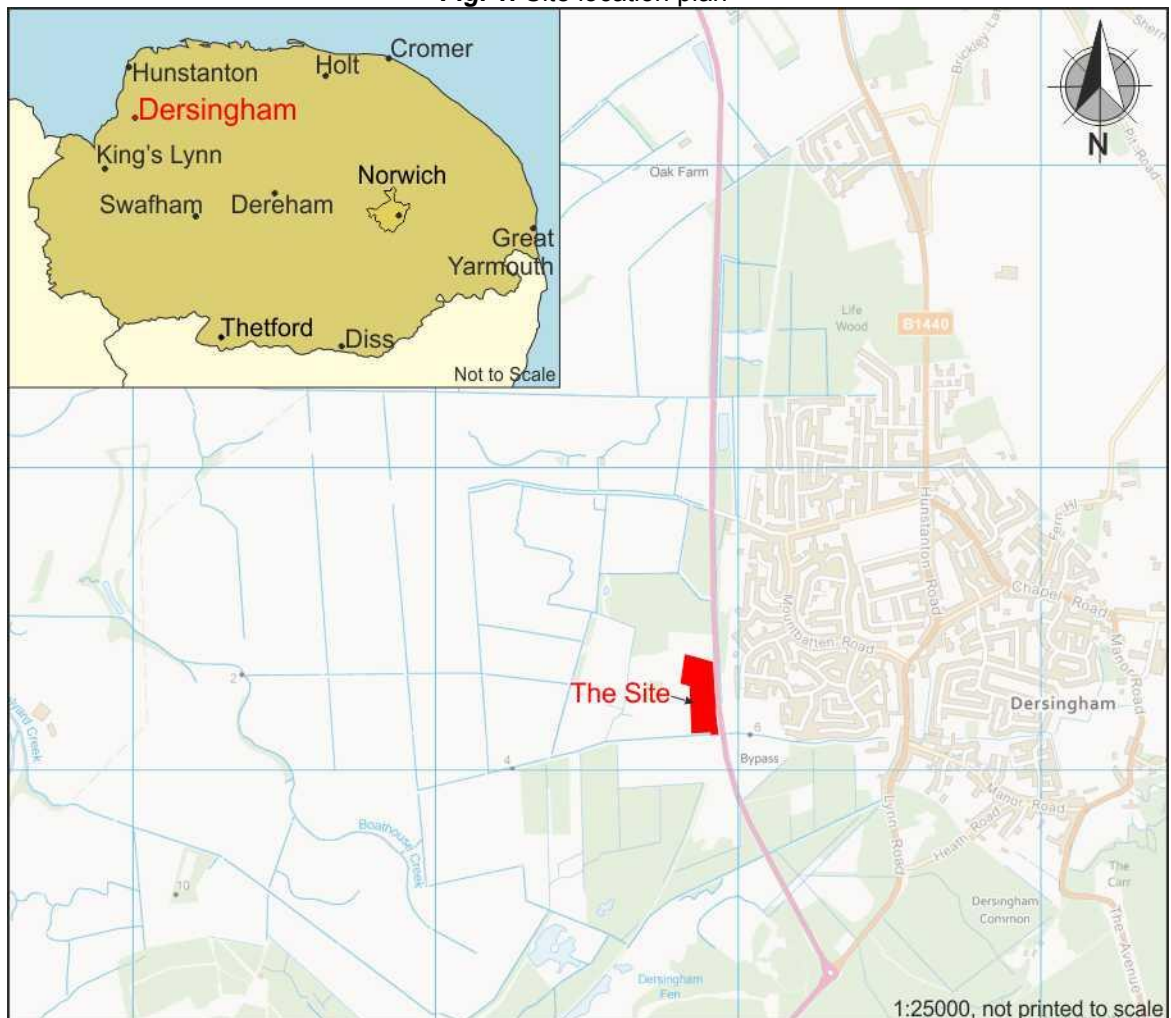
Summary

Groundworks associated with the construction of a caravan and camping site at 'Former Picnic Site, A149, Dersingham, Norfolk' (Norfolk Historic Environment Record ENF136373) were carried out under archaeological supervision and control in 2015. No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were present.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Groundworks associated with the construction of a new caravan and camping site were carried out at 'Former Picnic Site, A149, Dersingham Norfolk' (grid reference TF 67883 30252, centred at) under archaeological supervision and control at the request of the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.
- 1.2 This report, CB401R, details how Chris Birks undertook these works and summarises the results. A draft copy was submitted to and approved by the Norfolk County Council Environment Service.

Fig. 1. Site location plan



2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 A proposal for the construction of a new caravan and camping site at 'Former Picnic Site, A149, Dersingham Norfolk' was approved subject to a condition for a Programme of Archaeological work. Works Under Archaeological Supervision and Control (also referred to as "archaeological monitoring" or "Watching Brief") were required at a level of constant attendance.

- 2.2 Archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a generic Brief issued by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service (reference CNF44342_2, James Albone) and a generic Project Design and Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Monitoring ("Watching Briefs") by Chris Birks (Birks 2004, Apr 2013 revision). Specific aims of the project are to determine the presence/absence, date, extent, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological layers or subsoil archaeological features. This forms part of the research agenda for the eastern counties of England in *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011). Contributions to environmental archaeology research aims may also be made. Full details of research aims, methodology and standards are provided in the Project Design and Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 2.3 The *Code of Conduct* (2014), *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (January 2015 revision) and *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2014) by the Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists (CIFA) were adhered to.
- 2.4 Works were carried out according to guidelines set out in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, 2003), *Management of research projects in the historic environment. The MoRPHE Project Manager's Guide* (Historic England 2015).
- 2.5 Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) number ENF136373; Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) ID: chrisbir-322943.
- 2.6 The archive will be prepared, including a form suitable for microfilming if required, consistent with the principles of *Management of research projects in the historic environment. The MoRPHE Project Manager's Guide* (Historic England 2015) and submitted to the Norfolk Museums Service for long-term storage.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 A search of entries in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) for Dersingham and the surrounding area was carried out on 24 March 2015 and produced 27 records. Due to the lack of archaeological remains encountered during the programme of archaeological work, only those records within the immediate vicinity of the site are described in this report. Further details of these and all other entries can be seen at the Historic Environment Record office at Gressenhall near Dereham by prior appointment.
- 3.2 A complex series of cropmarks including probable Late Iron Age to Roman period linear features, droveways, enclosures and fields and a medieval moated manor thought to be the site of Gelham Manor and possible ridge and furrow are visible on aerial photographs of this area (NHER 1576). Fragments of Roman and medieval pottery have been recovered here as well as a fine silver knife or sword pommel cap decorated with 'HC' in black letters. Excavations at the moated site in advance of water pipe construction found the ditches of the moat and possible internal linear features.
- 3.3 Roman and medieval fragments of pottery and some prehistoric worked flints were found to the northeast of the development site in 1953 (NHER 1567).
- 3.4 A series of probable Roman, but possibly medieval, saltern mounds are visible as linear, rounded and irregular light coloured soilmarks and parchmarks on aerial photographs of an area to the southeast of the development site (NHER 26607).
- 3.5 Three isolated areas of possible ridge and furrow or water meadow are visible on aerial photographs of an area to the northeast of the development site (NHER 26614). They were recorded as part of the Norfolk National Mapping Programme in 2001. Part of this site was previously recorded under NHER 35548 and the features were interpreted as water meadows. However, the earthworks consist of ridges and furrows, which are narrow and closely spaced, aligned in an approximate east to west direction. This area was probably only suitable for

agricultural purposes after the construction of sea defence banks in the 18th century, and the system is likely to be relatively late in date. It is possible, but less likely, that this has been undertaken for forestry planting and is in fact 20th century in date. The earthworks may also represent a form of improvement for pasture and therefore act in a similar manner to water meadows.

- 3.6 A Post-medieval sea defence and land reclamation bank is visible partially as an earthwork and partially as a cropmark on aerial photographs of this area (NHER 26611). The site of a Post-medieval windmill is marked on Faden's map of Norfolk 1797 to the northeast of the site (NHER 58587, previously recorded under NHER 8377).
- 3.7 The route of Lynn and Hunstanton Railway lies to the east of the development site (NHER 13591). The King's Lynn to Hunstanton railway, via Sandringham and Heacham, opened in 1862 and closed in 1969 (although King's Lynn station remained open, NHER 13594). All of the railway track has been removed since 1969, although many buildings survive. These include stations at King's Lynn, Dersingham, Snettisham, North Wootton and Wolferton and several signal boxes. Wolferton Station is of particular interest, being 'Tudor' in style and built between 1876 and 1898, with a Royal waiting room for Sandringham.
- 3.8 A World War Two type-22 Pillbox is visible on aerial photographs of a site to the northeast of the development site (NHER 8377). The pillbox was probably placed to watch the crossing at nearby Dersingham Station.
- 3.9 An undated but possibly modern or World War Two circular ditch with a central mound and a low external bank is visible as an earthwork on aerial photographs of an area to the northwest of the site (NHER 36210).
- 3.10 An undated ditched feature or enclosure is visible as a cropmark on aerial photographs of an area to the west of the development site (NHER 26633). It was recorded as part of the Norfolk National Mapping Programme in 2001 and may be a geological anomaly or more likely be related to the tree planting that has taken place on the site in the past. However, there are elements of the feature that suggest it has an anthropogenic origin and it is within the vicinity of cropmarks believed to be of Late Iron Age or Romano-British date (NHER 1576).
- 3.11 An undated enclosure is visible as a cropmark on aerial photographs of an area to the northeast of the site (NHER 16296, part of NHER 1576).
- 3.12 Some mounds to the southeast of the development site are marked on the first edition 1836 Ordnance Survey maps but can no longer be seen in the field (NHER 3263). They may be undated salt mounds.

4.0 Geology and Topography

- 4.1 Dersingham lies on a solid geology of the Lower Cretaceous series to the west of the parish and Lower and Middle Chalk to the east (Funnell 2005). Areas of overlying Boulder Clay and glacial sands and gravels are present (Funnell 2005) and the Soil Landscape is divided between West Norfolk Lowlands to the west and Good Sands to the east (Williamson 2005).
- 4.2 The development site is situated to the southeast of Dersingham at an elevation of c. 6m OD on land sloping gently downwards from north to south.

5.0 Observations

- 5.1 Monitoring was carried out between 09 March and 09 May 2015 during groundworks associated with the construction of the caravan and camping site (*Fig. 2*). The Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service agreed that only excavations greater than 0.3m beneath present ground level required monitoring (email James Albone 13 March 2015). No context numbers were allocated due to the lack of archaeological remains.

- 5.2 Site conditions were good and access was gained from the A149 carriageway to the east of the site. The weather remained mostly dry and sunny with occasional rain showers.
- 5.3 Piles 1 to 10 at Toilet Block A measured c. 1.5m by 1m and were excavated to a maximum depth of 2.25m beneath present ground level (*Plate 1*). Initially, 0.33m of mid greyish brown silty sand topsoil with frequent rooting was removed that overlay 1.41m of brownish yellow medium fine sand undisturbed 'natural' deposits with a 0.03m deep lens of peat c. 1m beneath present ground level. The sand deposit overlay 0.31m of dark brownish black peat above yellowish grey very fine sand, the full extent of which was not reached.

Plate 1. Example of pile (number 3) excavation, looking south



Scale is 2m in 0.5m intervals

- 5.4 Excavations for Toilet Block A ground beams measured 0.8m wide to a depth of c. 0.8m beneath present ground level (*Plate 2*). Initially, 0.33m of mid greyish brown silty sand topsoil was removed that overlay brownish yellow medium fine sand undisturbed 'natural' deposits, the full extent of which was not reached. Metal detecting recovered an iron nail from topsoil deposits, no other finds and no features of archaeological significance were present within the limits of the excavations.

Plate 2. General view of Toilet Block A ground beam excavations, looking west



Scale is 2m in 0.5m intervals

- 5.5 Piles 1 to 10 at Toilet Block B measured c. 1m by 1.5m and were excavated to a maximum depth of 2m beneath the present ground level (*Plate 3*). Initially, 0.18m of mid greyish brown

silty sand topsoil with frequent rooting was removed that overlay 1.1m of brownish grey medium to fine sand undisturbed 'natural' deposits and 0.14m of dark brownish black peat over yellowish grey sharp sand, the full extent of which was not reached.

Plate 3. General view of pile 1, Toilet Block B, looking east



Scale is 2m in 0.5m intervals

- 5.6 Excavations for Toilet Block B ground beams measured 0.8m wide and extended to a depth of c. 0.8m beneath the present ground level (*Plate 4*). Initially, 0.18m of mid greyish brown silty sand topsoil was removed that overlay brownish grey medium to fine sand undisturbed 'natural' deposits, the full extent of which was not reached. Metal detecting recovered some modern litter (aluminium ring-pull and 'tin' foil fragments) and iron car components. No other finds and no features of archaeological significance were present within the limits of the excavation.

Plate 4. General view of Block B ground beam excavations, looking north



Scale is 2m in 0.5m intervals

- 5.7 The raft foundations for a reception building were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.83m beneath the present ground surface, initially reducing the ground level by a maximum of 0.4m (*Plate 5*). Initially, 0.33m of mid greyish brown silty sand topsoil was removed that overlay

brownish yellow medium fine sand undisturbed 'natural' deposits, the full extent of which was not reached.

Plate 5. General view of raft excavations, looking southeast



Scale is 2m in 0.5m intervals

- 5.8 Excavations for surface water and foul water drains extended between c. 0.45m and c. 1.8m (where connected to existing main) removing c. 0.3m of mid greyish brown silty sand topsoil that overlay brownish yellow medium fine sand undisturbed 'natural' deposits. In the deeper excavations, dark brownish black peat deposits were observed at a depth of c. 1.3m beneath present ground level to a depth of c. 0.15m, above yellowish grey sharp sand. No archaeological remains were encountered.
- 5.9 Excavations for surface water soakaways extended to c. 1.2m beneath present ground level removing mid greyish brown silty sand topsoil that overlay brownish yellow medium fine sand undisturbed 'natural' deposits. No archaeological remains were encountered.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Monitoring during groundworks associated with the construction of the caravan and camping site did not reveal any finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance. The exact reasons for this are unknown, any archaeological remains may be located beyond the relatively minimally excavated areas. Deposits comprised topsoil over a series of undisturbed 'natural' deposits.

Acknowledgments

The project was undertaken by Chris Birks on behalf of Pine Cones Caravan and Camping who also funded the work. Many thanks to Martin Bennett and to Scott Brown at Holt Architectural Limited. Fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Birks and John Simmons and the report was written by Chris Birks with contributions by John Simmons.

Thanks to Anj Beckham, Alice Cattermole and Heather Hamilton at the Norfolk Historic Environment Record office based at Gressenhall. Thanks to James Albone, Zara Dack, Kelly Gibson, David Gurney, Ken Hamilton, Charlotte Jarvis, David Robertson and Andrew Rogerson at the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.

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Appendix 1 OASIS Record

OASIS ID: [chrisbir1-322943](#)

Project details

Project name	WUASC at 'Former Picnic Site, A149, Dersingham Norfolk'
Short description of the project	Groundworks associated with the construction of a caravan and camping site at 'Former Picnic Site, A149, Dersingham, Norfolk' were carried out under archaeological supervision and control in 2015. No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were present.
Project dates	Start: 09-03-2015 End: 09-05-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	ENF136373 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK KINGS LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK DERSINGHAM Former Picnic Site, A149, Dersingham Norfolk
Study area	2000 Square metres
Site coordinates	TF 67883 30252 52.843196627683 0.493030585673 52 50 35 N 000 29 34 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Chris Birks
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Chris Birks
Project director/manager	Chris Birks
Project supervisor	Chris Birks
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
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Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums Service
Paper Archive ID	ENF136373
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Plan", "Report", "Unpublished Text"
Paper Archive notes	Report includes colour digital images

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Report on Works under Archaeological Supervision and Control at 'Former Picnic Site, A149, Dersingham, Norfolk'
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Birks, C.
Other bibliographic details	Report Number CB401R FINAL
Date	2018
Issuer or publisher	Chris Birks
Place of issue or publication	Contractor's Report
Description	Unbound single-side printed report and digital .pdf final copy
Entered by	Chris Birks (chris@chrisbirksarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	23 July 2018

OASIS:

Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

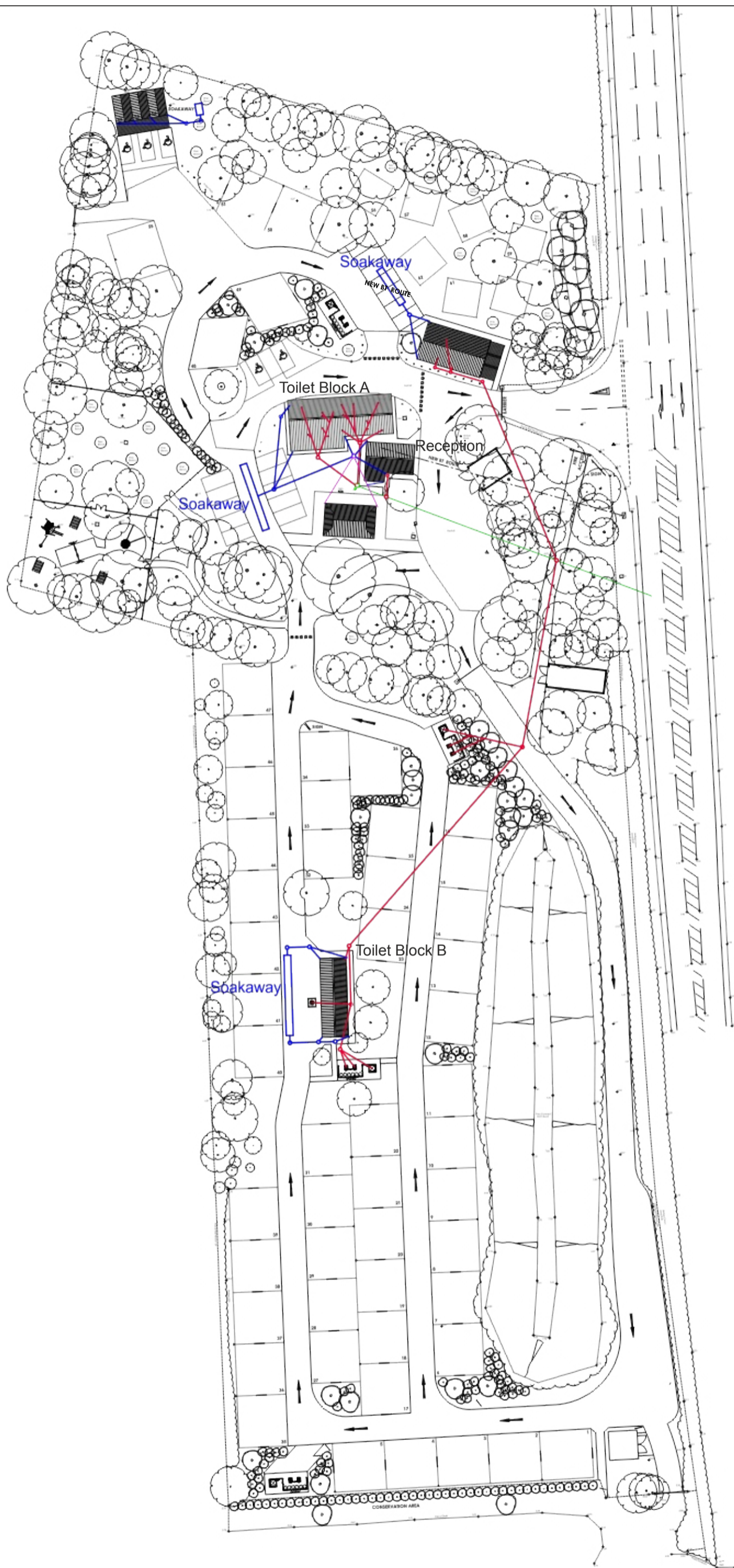
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- Existing foul water drain
- New foul water drain
- New foul water manhole
- Existing surface water drain
- New surface water drain
- New surface water manhole



Based on drawings by Holt Architectural Limited


 Archaeological Services - Urban & Rural	
Former picnic site, A149, Dersingham, Norfolk	
Not to scale	Report Number CB401R

Figure 2. Site Plan