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## **Archaeology Report Number CB539R v.1.1**

### **Moat Farm Caravan and Camp Site, Low Road, Breckles, Stow Bedon Norfolk**

Grid reference TL 9547 9410

Breckland District Council 3PL/2016/0371/F

Norfolk County Council Environment Service reference CNF46687

### **Programme of Archaeological Mitigatory Work – Earthwork Survey and Works Under Archaeological Supervision and Control**

27 March to 14 July 2017

**Norfolk Historic Environment Record event number ENF142184**

**OASIS ID chrisbir1-323255**

**Norfolk Museums Accession Number 2019.68**

### **Prepared for**

Mr and Mrs Mills  
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<b>Project</b>	<b>Programme of Archaeological Mitigatory Work at 'Moat Farm Caravan and Camp Site, Low Road, Breckles, Stow Bedon, Norfolk</b>
Grid reference	TL 9547 9410
Planning reference	Breckland Council 3PL/2016/0371/F
HES reference	CNF46687
NHER event	ENF142184
OASIS ID	chrisbir1-323255
NMS accession	2019.68
Title:	Report on a Programme of Archaeological Mitigatory Work at 'Moat Farm Caravan and Camp Site, Low Road, Breckles, Stow Bedon, Norfolk'
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Derivation:	Initial draft CB539 v.1.0
Origination Date:	28 March 2017
Reviser(s):	Chris Birks
Date of revision:	26 February 2019
Sequence:	Report CB539R v.1.0 Breckles, Report CB539R v.1.1 Breckles
Version:	1.1
Status	Approved final copy
Summary of Changes	Confirmation of approval
Sections revised:	1.3
Circulation:	Norfolk County Council Environment Service, Client
Required Action:	n/a
File Name/Location:	C:\Users\Chris\Desktop\Chris Business\Year 15 Apr2018 to Apr2019\Finished Projects\Breckles\Report CB539R v.1.1 Breckles.docx
Approval:	Required
Comments:	Earthwork survey submitted to NCC HES on 22 March 2017 and approved on 25 April 2017. This report submitted to NCC ES on 06 February 2019. Approval received on 22 February 2019.

NCC HES – Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service

NCC ES - Norfolk County Council Environment Service (formerly Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service)

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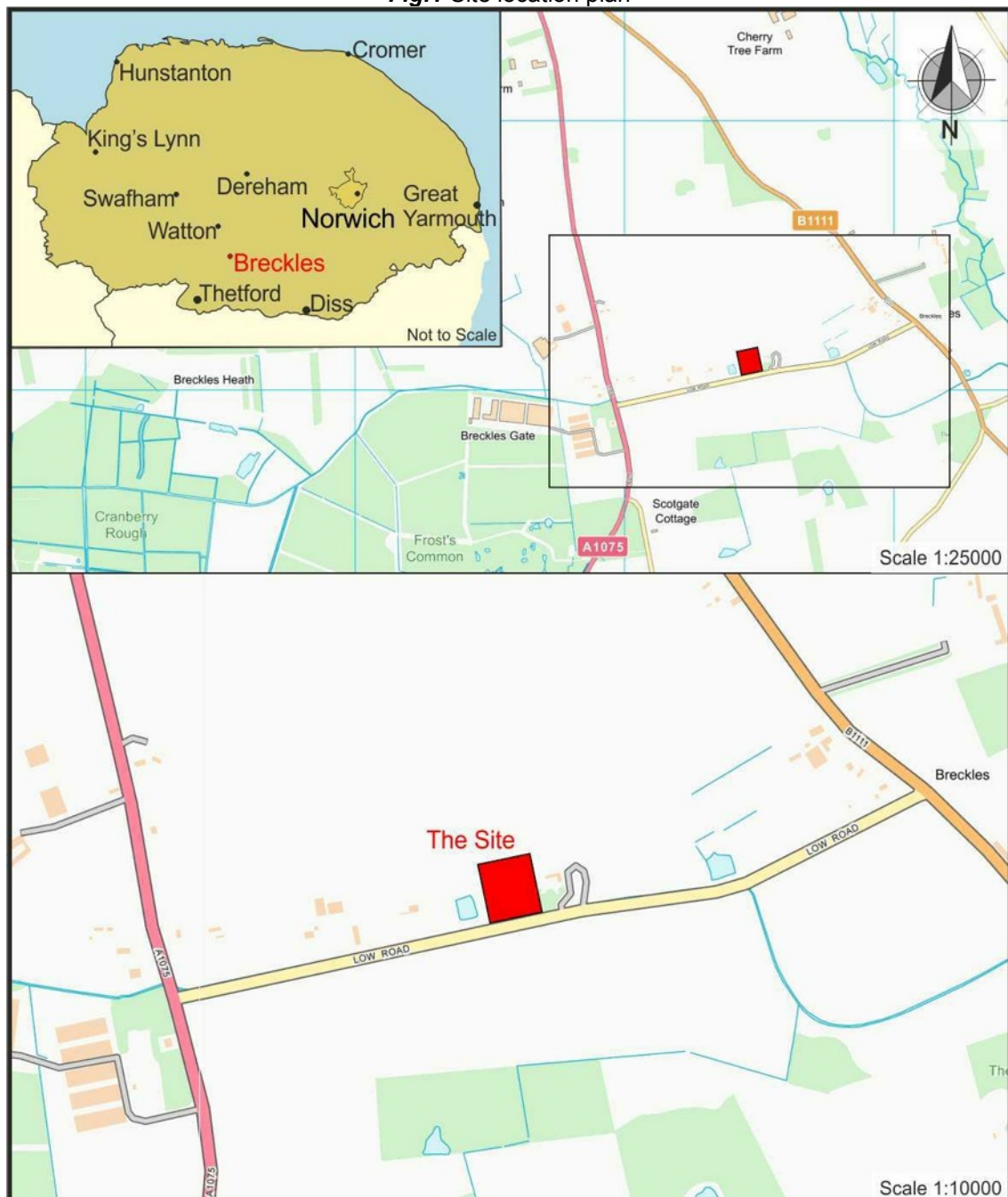
## Summary

A Programme of Archaeological Mitigatory Work was carried out at 'Moat Farm Caravan and Camp Site, Low Road, Breckles, Stow Bedon, Norfolk' (Norfolk Historic Environment Record event number ENF142184) between 27 March and 14 July 2017. A hollow way identified from aerial photographs as part of the National Mapping Programme for Norfolk was recorded during an earthwork survey and a possible easterly spur to the moat was recorded during the monitoring of groundworks. A probable Post-medieval field boundary ditch was also recorded.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A programme of archaeological mitigatory work at 'Moat Farm Caravan and Camp Site, Low Road, Breckles, Stow Bedon, Norfolk' (grid reference TL 95466 94102, centred at) has been requested by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service (reference CNF46687) as a condition on approved planning in accordance with *National Planning Policy Framework (2012, paras 128)*.

**Fig.1** Site location plan



- 1.2 Written Scheme of Investigation, CB539, details how Chris Birks (hereafter 'the Contractor') would undertake these works and bring the programme of archaeological mitigatory work to a successful conclusion and was prepared for Mr and Mrs Mills (hereafter 'the Client'). A *draft* copy of the Written Scheme of Investigation was submitted to and approved by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service in accordance with *Standard and guidance for commissioning work or providing consultancy advice on archaeology and the historic environment* by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).
- 1.3 The results of the earthwork survey were presented to and approved by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service in March 2017. A copy of the report, CB539R v.1.0, including the results of the monitoring during ground works associated with construction of the new house was submitted for consideration on 06 February 2019. Approval was received on 22 February 2019 prior to preparation of this final copy, CB539R v.1.1.

## 2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 The proposed development site lies within a wider area of known heritage assets and comprises a relatively large area with potential for heritage assets with archaeological interest (buried archaeological remains) to be present and that the significance of these may be affected by the proposed development.
- 2.2 The Brief states that a hollow way (sunken road) and an associated ditch survive as very subtle earthworks in the north part of the site and to the west of the site. Historic maps show a medieval moat and associated channels in the west of the area (and to the west of the proposal area). Although the moat has been infilled, much of it is believed to survive below ground (it seems likely part of it was damaged during the construction of the existing pond shown on drawings provided with the planning application). The moat surrounded a platform or island on which, in the medieval period, a manor or farm house is thought to have stood. There were often directly related structures and land-uses (including kitchens, dovecotes, farmyards and gardens, for example) beyond the areas defined by moats and it is possible such features once occupied the development site. As a result, there is considerable potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains associated with a manor/farm house and related structures/land-uses to survive below ground within the development site (e.g. walls, floors, pits, yard surfaces and/or artefacts).
- 2.3 Planning permission has been granted for the construction of one new dwelling, subject to a condition for archaeological mitigation - condition 7 part C of Breckland Council planning reference 3PL/2016/0371/F. The programme of archaeological mitigatory work includes an earthwork survey including transects of spot heights recorded across all earthworks on and to the north of the footprint of the new house and the monitoring of all groundworks for the new house and associated services under archaeological supervision and control.
- 2.4 Works under Archaeological Supervision and Control were required to record the presence/absence, date, extent, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological layers or subsoil archaeological features in accordance with *National Planning Policy Framework (2012)*, (paras 128, 129, 132, 134 and 141). They and the earthwork survey were undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service (reference CNF46687) and the Written Scheme of Investigation, CB539. Specific aims of the project are to record earthworks to the north of the footprint of the new house and 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). Full details of research aims, methodology and standards are provided in the Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 2.5 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. Works were carried out according to guidelines set

out in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003) and *Management of research projects in the historic environment. The MoRPHE Project Manager's Guide* (Historic England 2015).

- 2.6 Norfolk Historic Environment Record event number ENF142184. Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) ID: chrisbir-323255 (*Appendix 2*).
- 2.7 The archive will be prepared 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 under archive accession number 2018.68.

### **3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 3.1 A search of entries in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) within a 1km radius of the site was carried out on 18 April 2017 and produced 36 records. A summary of the archaeological and historical background of the site is provided in this report. Further details of records can be seen at the Historic Environment Record office at Gressenhall near Dereham by prior appointment. A search of records, aerial photographs, maps and records had previously been commissioned by the Client and provided by the Norfolk Historic Environment Record on 18 August 2016.
- 3.2 Evidence of activities during the prehistoric period is provided through the recovery of finds including a broken Palaeolithic flint handaxe (NHER 2911), a possible Mesolithic core (NHER 25772), concentrations of prehistoric burn flints (NHER 9053 and 9054), an Early Neolithic scraper (NHER 40518), a polished flint Neolithic axehead (NHER 2910), struck flint (NHER 18590 and 51259) and a Bronze Age sword haft/blade (NHER 28512).
- 3.3 Roman activities are represented through the recovery of pottery and metal finds (2910, 18590, 39549 and 40518) as are Saxon activities (NHER 2910, 18590, 28512, 39549, 40520 and 51259).
- 3.4 St Margaret's Church, Breckles (NHER 9064, English Heritage list entry number 1248441) is a round tower church of Saxon or Norman date with the tower embellished with 16<sup>th</sup> century chequered brickwork. The rest of the church dates to the medieval period with Perpendicular and Decorated style windows, it has however, been heavily restored in 1862. The church has a Norman font and rood screen dating to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a medieval wayside cross now stands beside the porch, having been moved from elsewhere in the churchyard.
- 3.5 Medieval activities in the area are evidenced through aerial photographic evidence, topographic survey results as well as stray finds and fieldwork. Cropmarks (NHER 57473, 57452, 57453, 57454, 57456, 57457, 57458, 31933, 35453 and 35455) relating to probable medieval or Post-medieval field boundaries or drainage ditches, a possible moat (NHER 57455) and possible enclosures (NHER 31932) are visible on aerial photographs. The site of Great or Little Breckles deserted medieval village (NHER 11929) to the east of the B1111 was a separate town at the time of the Norman conquest but the manor was extinct by 1547, cropmarks, earthworks and enclosures and tofts are evident and medieval pottery has been recovered from the site. Remains of a medieval wall were recorded north of the farmyard at NHER 31965. A medieval moated site east of Moat farm (NHER 14456) where aerial photography showed soilmarks of a moat with causeway, and the enclosure was still visible in 1996. The probable site of a medieval windmill mentioned in documents dating to 1380, 1314 and 1402 was recorded within the area called 'Myllhill Piece' in 1599 (NHER 28835). Medieval finds have also been recovered (2910, 18590, 18834, 28512, 39549, 40518, 40520 and 51259)
- 3.6 Aerial photographs taken in 1946 (RAF 106G/UK/1634 5366 09-JUL-1946 (TL9594A, *Plate 1*), RAF TL99/TL9535/B, RAF 3G/TUD/UK/101 6185-6 30-MAR-1946 and RAF106G/UK/1634 5366-7 09\_JUL-1946) and 1976 (OS 76-018-075 to 078 and OS/76018 076-7 19-APR-1976) show cropmarks of a rectangular moat to the west of and extending into the development site (NHER 9058), and investigations show that the moat appears to be a genuine medieval feature. The remaining ditches to the west still hold water and the internal area was wooded before it was cleared. The area is now managed to allow wildlife to flourish. The moat and the easterly extension

are shown on Ordnance Survey First edition 1884 and Ordnance Survey Second Edition 6 inch (1906-7) maps. An extract from a 1889-95 Ordnance Survey map is provided (Norfolk County Council 2011, *Fig. 2*). A cropmark transcription (9058 TL9594 17/01/95) shows the moated site and enclosure to the south and the line of the hollow way extending north from the moat then east towards the development site can be seen (*Fig. 3*).

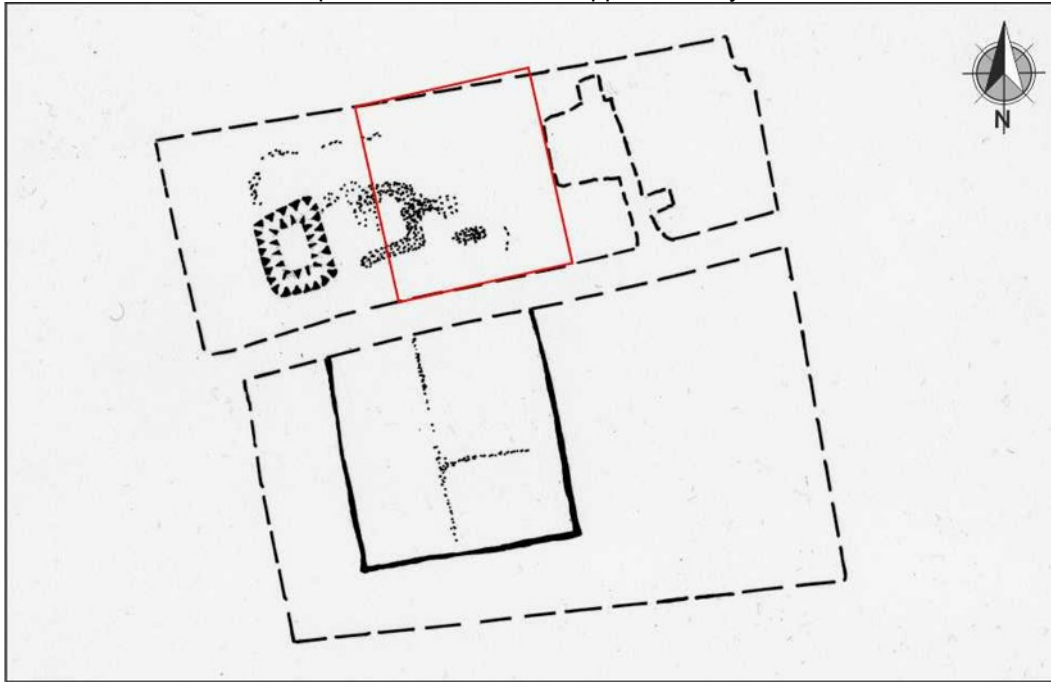
**Plate 1.** Extract from 1946 aerial photograph (RAF106G/UK/1634 5366-7 09\_JUL-1946) used courtesy of the Norfolk County Council



**Fig. 2.** Extract from 1889-95 Ordnance Survey 6-inch map, courtesy of Norfolk County Council. The development site is outlined approximately in red. Not to scale.



**Fig. 3.** Extract from cropmark transcription (9058 TL9594 17/01/95) courtesy of Norfolk County Council. The development site is outlined approximately in red. Not to scale.



- 3.7 Post-medieval buildings include Breckles Hall (NHER 9059), an Elizabethan great house built in 1583. Breckles Hall is a Grade I listed house of national importance (list entry number 1248439), noted for the survival of its wood and ironwork and was repaired in 1900 by Detmar Blow and subsequently extended in 1908 by Lutyens. A priest hole is recorded as early as 1593, though as of 1990 none has been located. Breckles Hall Gardens (NHER 30434) dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and includes a moat and 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century garden wall (NHER 9059). One other Post-medieval building *Homestead* (NHER 32857) to the west of the development site dates to around 1600. Post-medieval finds have also been recovered (NHER 18590, 18834, 40518, 40520 and 51259). World War II remains include a decoy airfield (NHER 17484) and an underground bunker (NHER 18068).

#### 4.0 Geology and Topography

- 4.1 Breckles parish lies upon a solid geology of the Upper Chalk series with areas of overlying boulder clay deposits (Funnell 2005). The soil landscape is typical of *Brecklands* (Williamson 2005). The development site is located within the east side of Breckles and north of Low Road on fairly level ground at an elevation of c. 32m OD, falling gently from north to south.

#### 5.0 Results

##### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Site conditions were generally good, though soil conditions were wet, and access was gained from Low Road to the south of the site. The weather was varied between sunny and overcast with some rain showers. The earthwork survey was carried out on 27 March 2017 and monitoring during groundworks was carried out between 05 and 14 July 2017.

- 5.1.2 Context numbers are summarised in *Appendix 1*. Levels were taken according to a benchmark of 32.68m OD on the north side of the site.

##### 5.2 Earthwork Survey

###### Figures 5 to 9

- 5.2.1 An area to the north and west of the proposed footprint of the new house measured c. 48m by 23m and was surveyed by Plandescil Consulting Engineers under the instruction of Chris Birks at c. 0.2m intervals (*Fig. 6*). There was little variation between spot heights, on average c. 0.1m (at c.



32m OD), with raised elevations to the north at c. 32.5m OD (due to imported material in this part of the survey area during previous works) though a plot of the results appeared to identify an east-west sunken linear feature that aligned with the hollow way marked on the NMP plot (Fig. 7). Two approximately northwest-to-southeast transects were surveyed each side of the survey area. The sunken linear feature was observed in Transect 1 on the west side of the survey area, the central part of which measured c. 0.15m deep, and a downward north-south slope reflecting the topography of the site was recorded in Transect 2 indicating that the feature did not extend this far towards the east, or that it had been infilled (Fig. 8). Three horizontal profiles were surveyed but provided little information (Fig. 9).

### 5.3 Observations

#### Figures 10 and 11

5.3.1 An area including the footprint of the new house was initially stripped to a depth of c. 0.2m beneath present ground level removing topsoil (100).

Context No.	Type	Description	Thickness	Depth	Findings	Spot date
100	D	Dark greyish brown silty sand <b>topsoil</b> with very rare small-sized subrounded flints.	c. 0.17m-0.24m	c. 32 to 31.8m OD	No	-
101	D	Dark yellowish brown silty sand <b>subsoil</b> with occasional small-sized subrounded flints.	c. 0.5m – 0.65m	c. 31.5m OD	No	-
102	D	Yellow sandy gravel <b>undisturbed 'natural' deposits</b>	-	c. 31m OD	No	-
109	D	Pale bluish grey clayey silt with occasional small-sized subangular flints and organic plant matter and decayed wood	0.89m	c. 31m OD	No	-

5.3.2 Excavations for 3 box piles measured 2m by 2m to a depth of c. 1.7m beneath present ground level (to c. 30.2m OD) removed 0.17m of topsoil (100) and 0.64m of subsoil (101) above clayey silt deposit (109) (Plate 2). They were required as historically, woodland to the east had been felled and buried at this location. Deposits were extremely wet and prone to collapse.

**Plate 2.** Example of box pile excavations, looking northeast



Scale is 2m in 0.5m increments

5.3.3 Excavations for foundation trenches measured 0.6m wide to a depth of between c. 0.5m and c. 0.7m beneath present ground level removing c. 0.2m of topsoil (100) and c. 0.3m to 0.5m of subsoil (101) above undisturbed 'natural' deposits (102) (Plates 3 and 4).

**Plate 3.** Example of foundation trenches, looking approximately north



Scale is 2m in 0.5m increments

**Plate 4.** Example of foundation trenches, looking southwest



Scale is 2m in 0.5m increments

Context No.	Type	Description	Thickness	Depth	Finds	Spot date
103	D	Black humic silt fill of [104] with occasional small-sized subangular flints and rare medium-sized subangular flints	0.41m	30.62m OD	No	-
104	C	Feature	-	-	-	-

5.3.4 Feature [104] extended beyond the north, south and west edges of excavations at c. 0.5m beneath present ground level (c. 30.6m OD), overlain by subsoil (101) and contained fill (103) that produced no finds (*Plate 5*). Little of this feature was observed.

**Plate 5.** Linear feature [104] looking northwest



Scale is 2m in 0.2m increments

Context No.	Type	Description	Thickness	Depth	Finds	Spot date
101	D	Dark yellowish brown silty sand <b>subsoil</b> with occasional small-sized subrounded flints	c. 0.5m – 0.65m	c. 31.5m OD	No	-
105	D	Dark blackish brown humic silt <b>fill of [106]</b> with rare small-sized subangular flints	0.92m-c. 1.3m	30.61m OD	Yes	PMed/Mod
106	C	Linear feature approximately north-to-south	-	-	-	-
107	D	Dark blackish brown humic silt <b>fill of [108]</b> with rare small-sized subangular flints	0.82	30.62m OD	No	-
108	C	Linear feature approximately east-to-west	-	-	-	-

5.3.5 Linear feature [106] was recorded within the northeast corner of the house footprint at c. 0.55m beneath present ground level (c. 30.6m OD), sealed by subsoil (101) and contained fill (105) that produced a sherd of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century blue and white transfer ware (*Plate 6*). Water ingress at a c. 0.5m beneath present ground level caused problems with the stability of the edges of excavation. Wooden shuttering was used to stabilise the trench edges but further investigation of feature [106] was unsafe.

5.3.6 Linear feature [108] was partially revealed within the northwest foundation trenches at c. 0.5m beneath present ground level (c. 30.6m OD), sealed by subsoil (101) and contained fill (107) that produced no finds (*Plate 7*). Water ingress again caused the trench sides to collapse and it was unsafe to investigate further.

**Plate 6.** Feature [106], looking southwest



Scale is 2m in 0.5m increments

**Plate 7.** Linear feature [108], looking northwest



Scale is 2m in 0.5m increments

- 5.3.7 Excavations for surface water drainage trenches that extended to the existing pond, a foul water trench that extended to an area for a sewerage treatment plant (c. 2m by 2m) and mains service trenches measured 0.4m wide to a depth of c. 0.9m beneath present ground level removing c. 0.2m of topsoil (100) and c. 0.5m of subsoil (101) above undisturbed 'natural' deposits (102) (*Plates 8 and 9*). No archaeological remains were observed.

**Plate 9.** Example of mains service trench, looking approximately south



**Plate 8.** Example of drainage excavations, looking northwest



Scales are 2m in 0.2m increments

## 6.0 Conclusions and Discussion

- 6.1 The author has a medium to high confidence rating in the results. The high water table caused problems with collapse of edges of excavation to the extent that it was not possible to safely investigate some archaeological remains at depth. This may have precluded the recovery of dating evidence, had it been present, which was mostly lacking from archaeological features. Establishing

extents and relationships of features is difficult when only small sections of features are revealed within minimally-excavated areas.

- 6.2 The variations in spot heights measured during the earthwork survey, whilst minimal, indicated the location of the hollow way and quite closely matched that identified on the NMP plot and associated cropmark transcription (*Fig. 12*). It is understood that material has been spread out across this area almost removing any traces of the earthwork. The ground had also been disturbed through the disposal of felled trees formerly within the east side of the site. Feature [108] was located on the south edge of the hollow way but it is unclear if they are related. Linear feature [104] may relate to an approximately east-west spur shown on maps and plots from aerial photographs that extended from the east side of the moat, although it was not observed in a foul water drainage trench to the west. It appears that the extant pond lies at the easterly extent of the original rectangular moat. No further features associated with the moated site were observed. Linear feature [106] may correspond to a Post-medieval boundary as shown on a first edition Ordnance Survey map.

## **Acknowledgments**

The project was undertaken by Chris Birks on behalf of Mr and Mrs Mills who also funded the work. Thanks also to Mrs Mills for providing additional background research. Many thanks to Jak Warner at Plandescil Consulting Engineers who carried out the earthwork survey.

Fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Birks and John Simmons and the report was written by Chris Birks with contributions by John Simmons.

Thanks to Peter Watkins at the Norfolk Historic Environment Record office based at Gressenhall. Thanks also to Charlotte Jarvis, Kelly Powell and David Robertson at the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service and to James Albone, Steve Hickling, Lorraine Houseago and John Percival at the Norfolk County Council Environment Service. Many thanks to Dr Alban at the Norfolk Record Office for reproduction of the 1889-95 Ordnance Survey map.

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## Appendix 1 Context Summary

Context No.	Type	Description	Thickness	Depth	Finds	Spot date	Date/Initials
100	D	Dark greyish brown silty sand <b>topsoil</b> with very rare small-sized subrounded flints	c. 0.17m-0.24m	c. 32 to 31.8m OD	No	-	JS 10-7-2017
101	D	Dark yellowish brown silty sand <b>subsoil</b> with occasional small-sized subrounded flints	c. 0.5m – 0.65m	c. 31.5m OD	No	-	JS 10-7-2017
102	D	Yellow sandy gravel <b>undisturbed 'natural' deposits</b>	-	c. 31m OD	No	-	JS 10-7-2017
103	D	Black humic silt <b>fill of [104]</b> with occasional small-sized subangular flints and rare medium-sized subangular flints	0.41m	30.62m OD	Yes	-	JS 10-7-2017
104	C	Feature	-	-	-	-	JS 10-7-2017
105	D	Dark blackish brown humic silt <b>fill of [106]</b> with rare small-sized subangular flints	0.92m-c. 1.3m	30.61m OD	Yes	PMed/Mod	JS 10-7-2017
106	C	Linear feature approximately north-to-south	-	-	-	-	JS 10-7-2017
107	D	Dark blackish brown humic silt <b>fill of [108]</b> with rare small-sized subangular flints	0.82	30.62m OD	No	-	JS 10-7-2017
108	C	Linear feature approximately east-to-west	-	-	-	-	JS 10-7-2017
109	D	Pale bluish grey clayey silt with occasional small-sized subangular flints and organic plant matter and decayed wood	0.89m	c. 31m OD	No	-	JS 10-7-2017

### Key

C – cut

D – deposit

PMed/Mod – Post-medieval/modern



## Appendix 2 OASIS Record

### OASIS ID: *chrisbir1-323255*

#### Project details

Project name	Earthwork Survey and WUASC at 'Moat Farm Caravan and Camp Site, Low Road, Breckles, Stow Bedon, Norfolk'
Short description of the project	Earthwork survey and monitoring associated with residential development. The probable remains of a medieval hollow way associated with a moat to the east of the development and a probable Post-medieval land boundary ditch were recorded.
Project dates	Start: 23-03-2017 End: 14-07-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ENF142184 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	HOLLOW WAY Uncertain
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Part Survey","Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK BRECKLAND STOW BEDON Moat Farm Caravan and Camp Site, Low Road, Breckles, Stow Bedon, Norfolk
Study area	5600 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 9546 9410 52.509242807984 0.880565280391 52 30 33 N 000 52 50 E Point

#### 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	Chris Birks
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner

#### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
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Digital Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums Service
Digital Archive ID	2019.68
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums Service
Paper Archive ID	2019.68
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Plan", "Report", "Section", "Unpublished Text"

### **Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Report on a Programme of Archaeological Mitigatory Work at 'Moat Farm Caravan and Camp Site, Low Road, Breckles, Stow Bedon, Norfolk'
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Birks, C.,
Other bibliographic details	Report Number CB539R
Date	2019
Issuer or publisher	Chris Birks
Place of issue or publication	Contractor's Report
Description	Unbound A4 report with text, plates and fold-out A3 drawings
Entered by	Chris Birks (chris.birks@chrisbirksarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	6 February 2019


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 New house

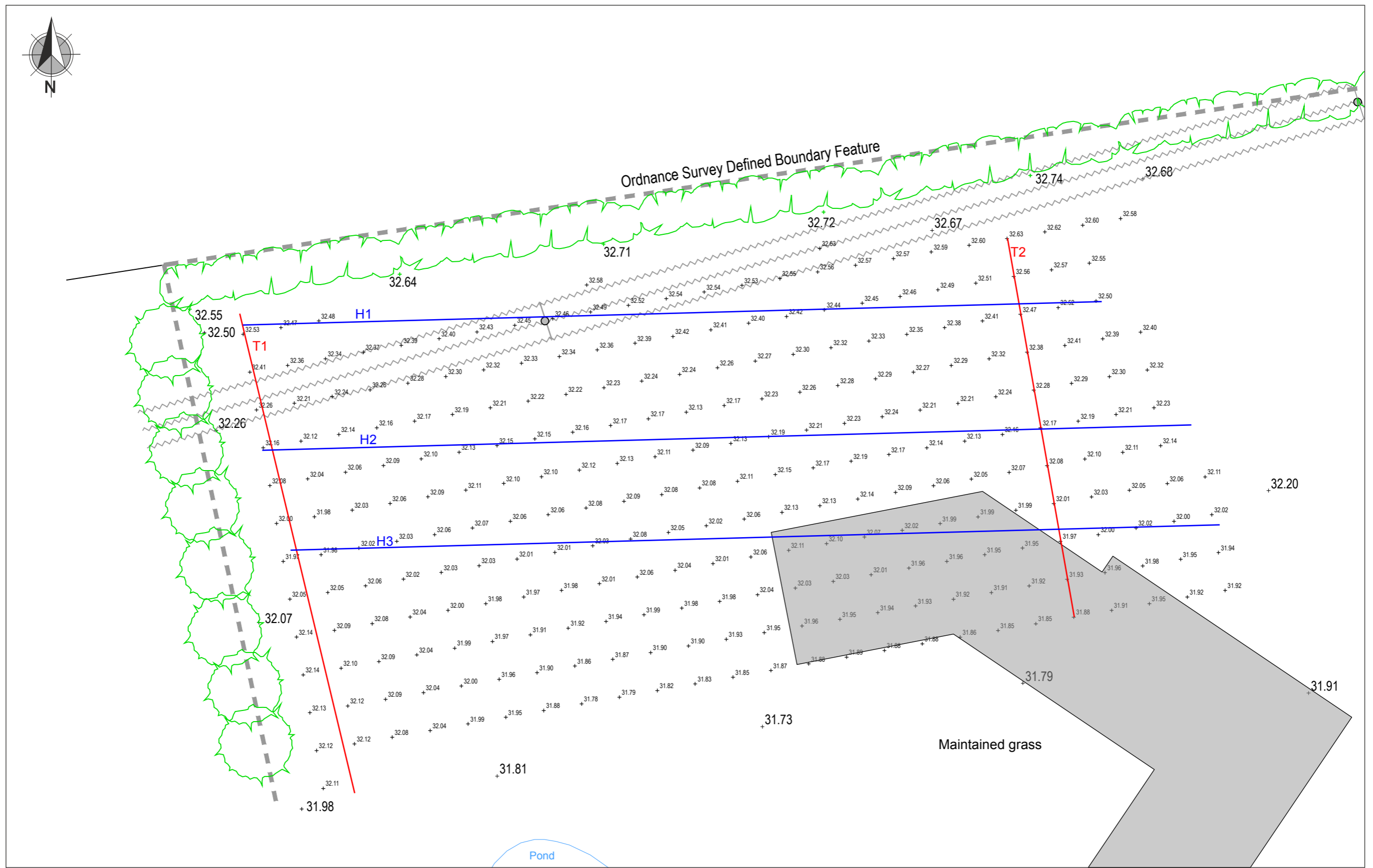


 Archaeological Services - Urban & Rural		
Moat Farm, Low Road, Breckles, Norfolk		
Scale 1:500@A3	CB539R v.1.1	26.02.19

Based on drawings by Cowen Consulting

Figure 4. Site plan





- New house
- Transect
- Horizontal profile

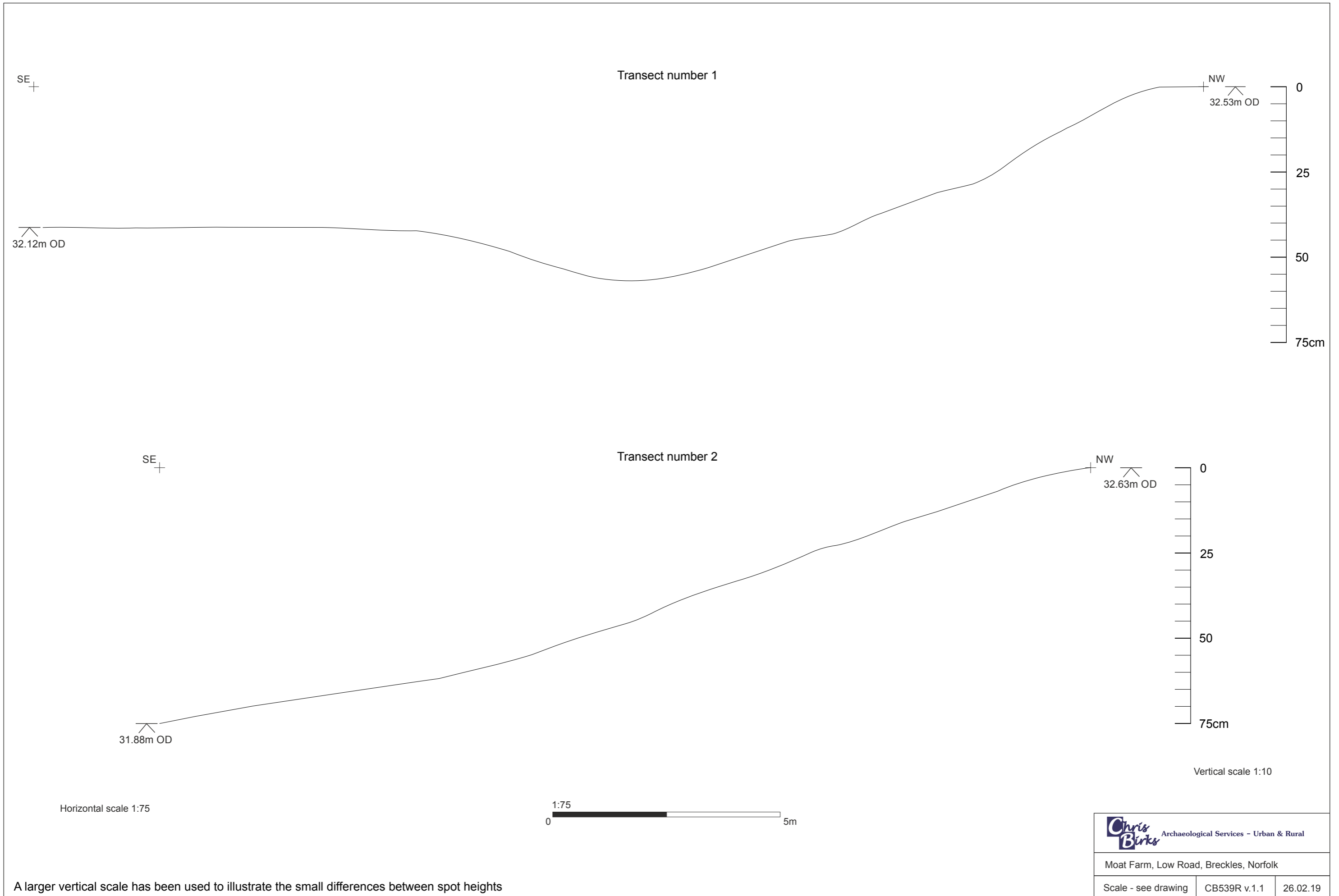
Based on drawings by Plandescil Consulting Engineers

1:200  
0 10m

Moat Farm, Low Road, Breckles, Norfolk		
Scale 1:200@A3	CB539R v.1.1	26.02.19

Figure 6. Survey plan





**Figure 8.** Transect profiles

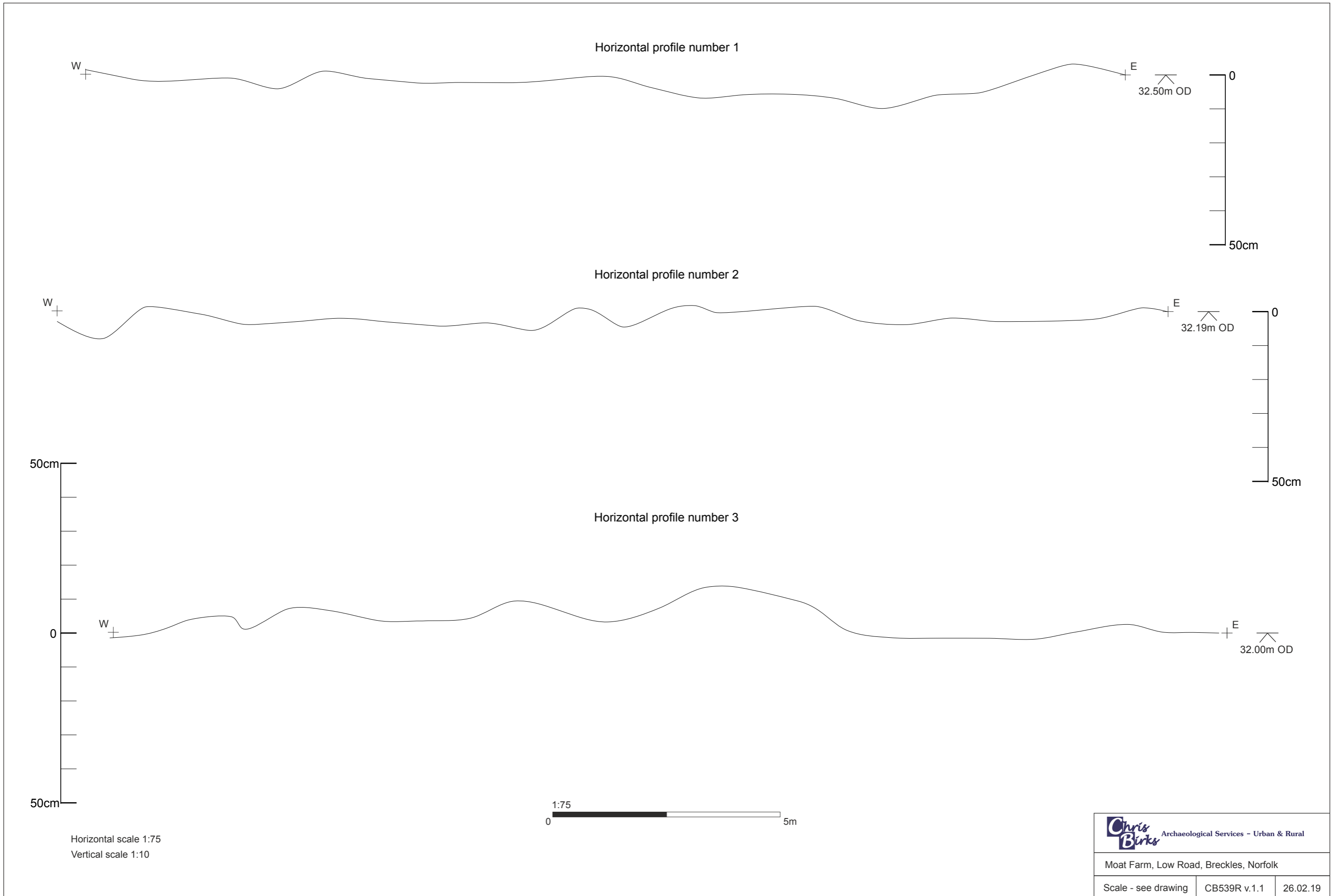


Figure 9. Horizontal profiles

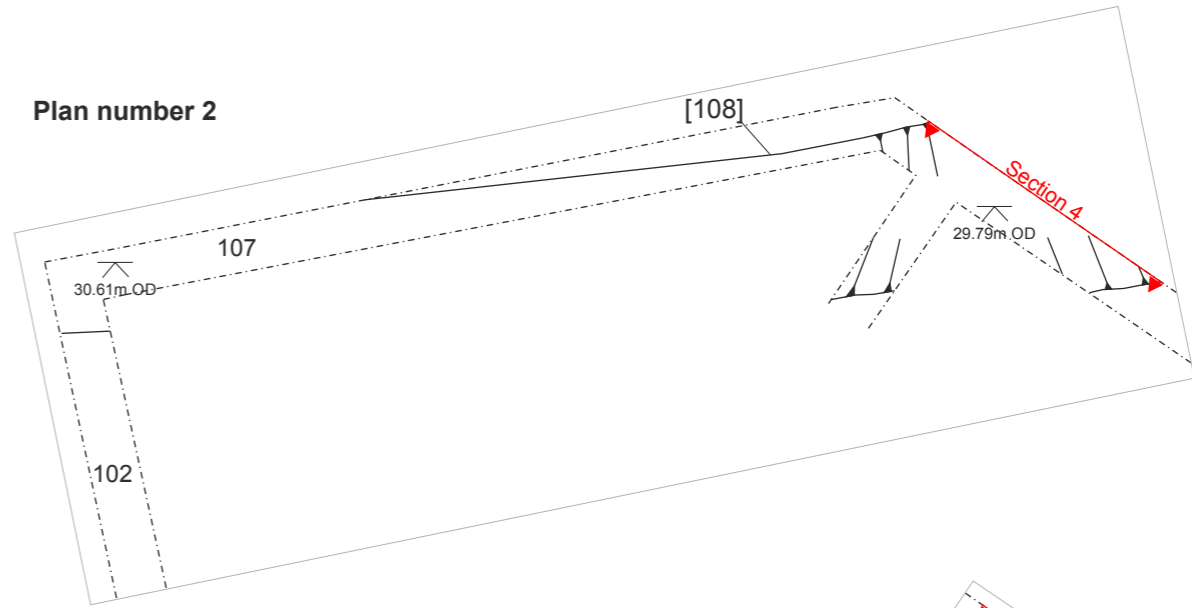




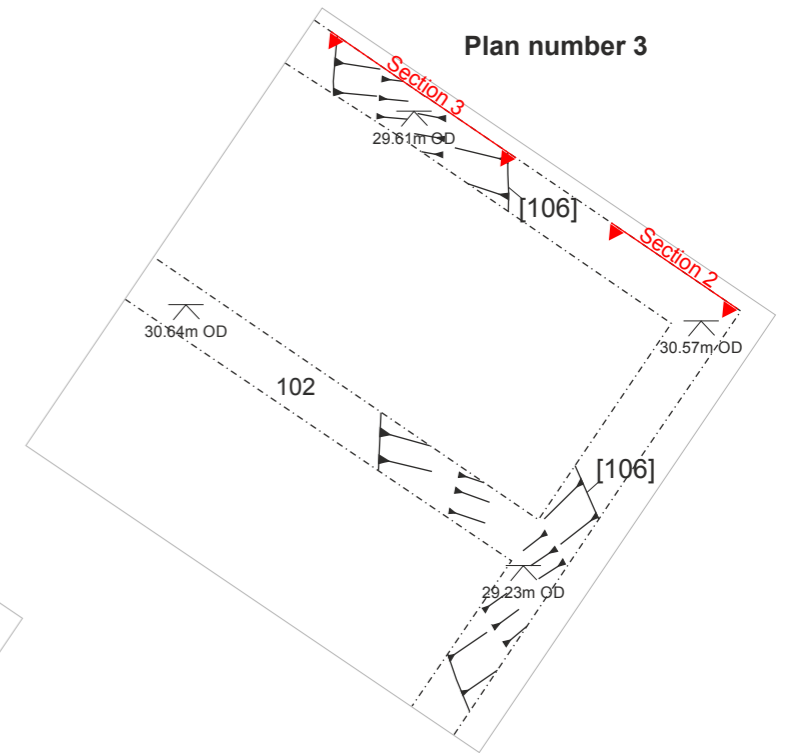
Plan number 1



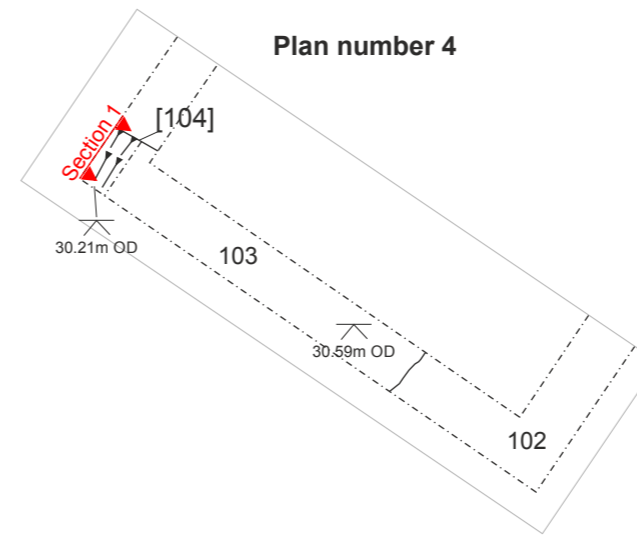
Plan number 2



Plan number 3



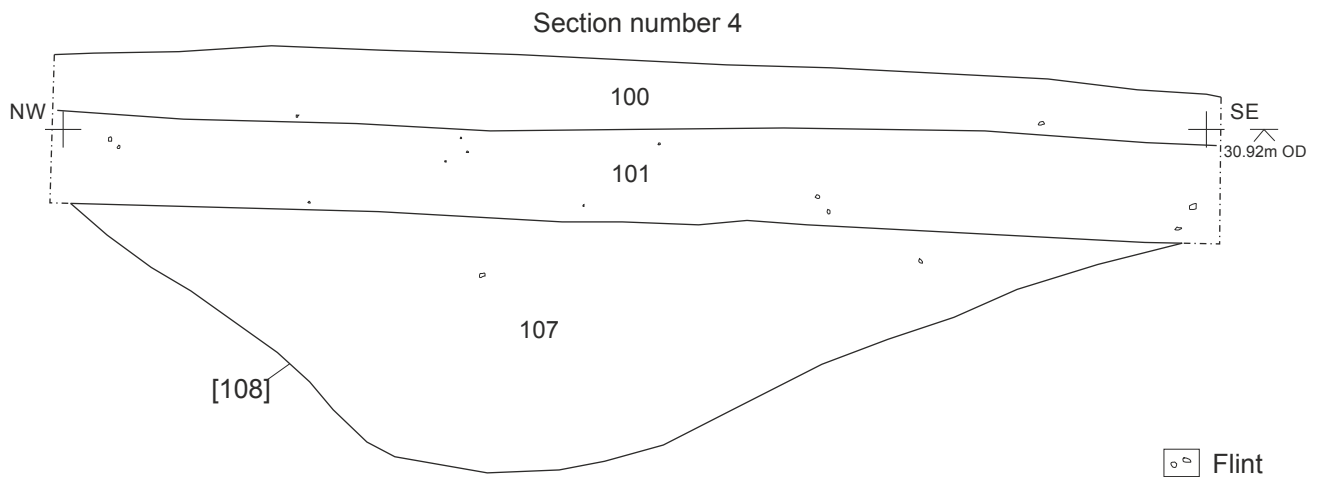
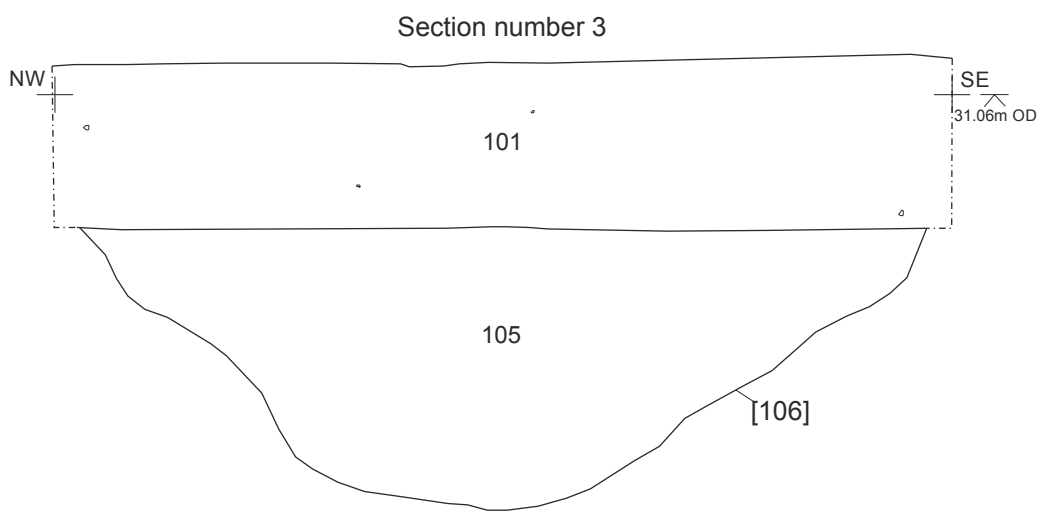
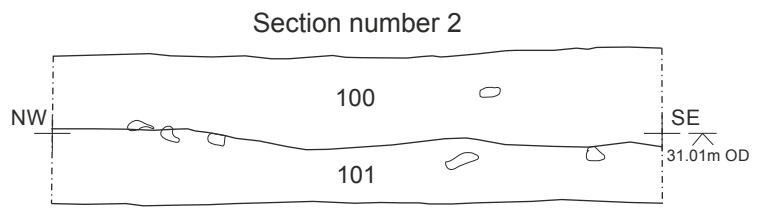
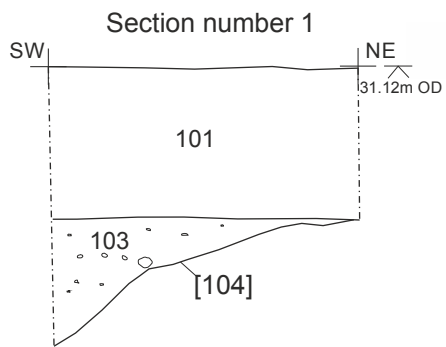
Plan number 4



- Surface water drainage
- Foul water drainage
- Mains services

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Figure 10. Plan drawings



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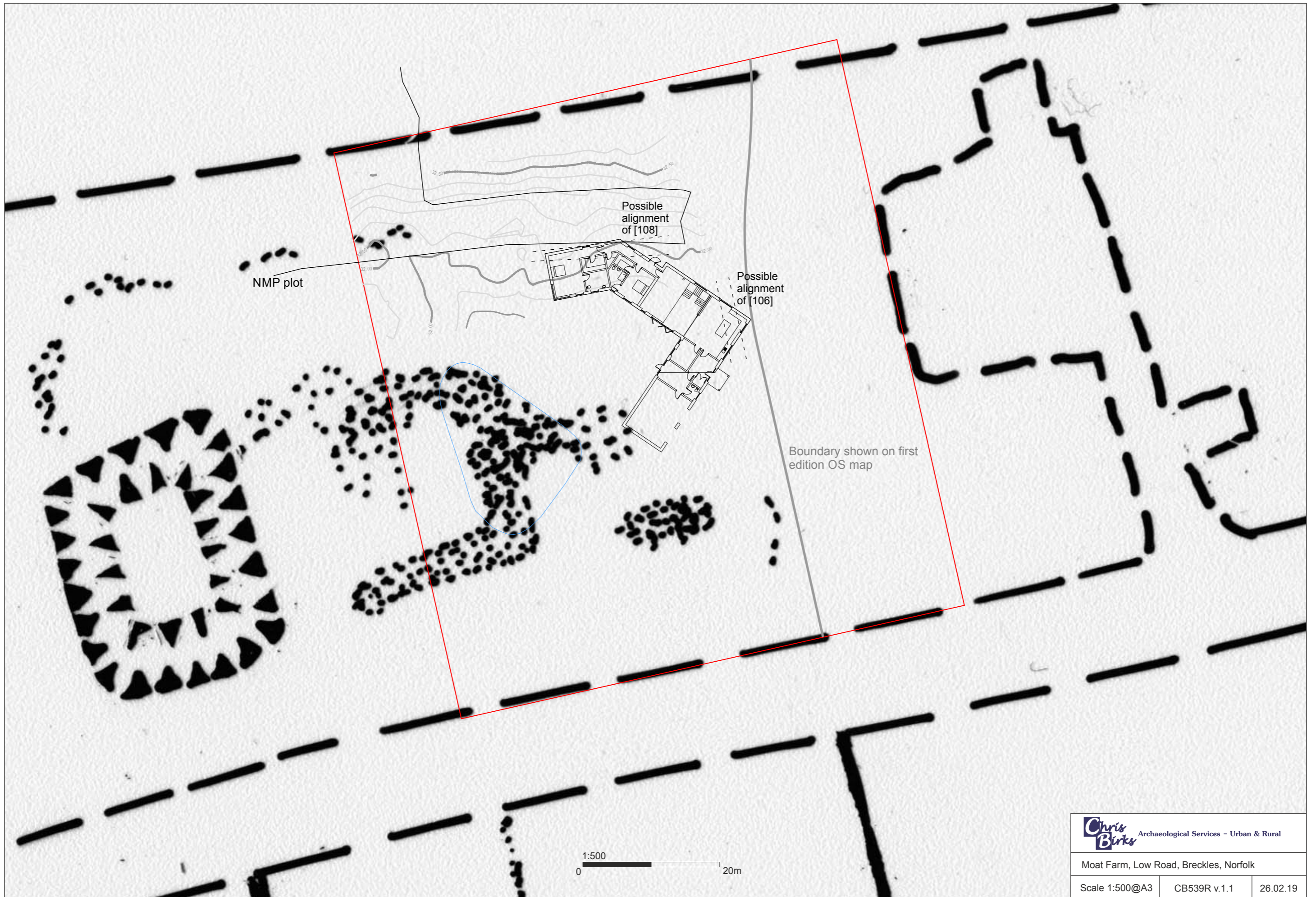
Moat Farm, Low Road, Breckles, Norfolk

Scale 1:25

CB539R v.1.1

26.02.19

Figure 11. Section drawings



Moat Farm, Low Road, Breckles, Norfolk		
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Figure 12. Site plan overlay