



**Report on an Archaeological Watching
Brief at 'Notre Dame High School,
Surrey Street, Norwich, Norfolk'**

NHER ENF129461

Prepared for:
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Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 'Notre Dame High School, Surrey Street, Norwich, Norfolk' (NHER ENF129461) in March 2011 during groundworks associated with the construction of a new school building. No remains of archaeological significance were present.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeological monitoring ('Watching Brief') was carried out during groundworks at Notre Dame High School, Surrey Street, Norwich, Norfolk (Grid refs. TG 2340 0780) and was requested by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service (CNF42987/Ken Hamilton/06 December 2010).
- 1.2 Norfolk Historic & Environment Record ENF129461; OASIS ID: chrisbir1-96288
- 1.3 This report, CB239R, details how Chris Birks undertook these works and summarises the results.

2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 A proposal for the construction of a new school building (adjacent to the present science block – 'St. Peter's Building') was received subject to a condition for a Programme of Archaeological work. An Archaeological Watching Brief (constant attendance) was required to determine the presence/absence, date, extent, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological layers or subsoil archaeological features.
- 2.2 This archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by the Historic Environment Service (CNF42987/Ken Hamilton/06 December 2010) and a generic Project Design for Watching Briefs by Chris Birks (Birks 2004). Full details of research aims, methodology and standards are provided in the Project Design.
- 2.3 The site archive will be held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, in accordance with the relevant policy on archiving standards. An OASIS record has been raised – reference number chrisbir1-96288.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 A great number of entries exist in the Norfolk Historic and Environment Record (NHER) for Norwich and the surrounding area and only those within the immediate vicinity of the site are described 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.
- 3.2 Sites immediately adjacent to Notre Dame High School:
 - ◆ NHER 5: Possible medieval well, medieval to post medieval pottery sherds.
 - ◆ NHER 10: Medieval occupation, Late Saxon to post medieval pottery sherds.
 - ◆ NHER 42819: Early medieval to post medieval occupation.
 - ◆ NHER 26485: 18th century house, now convent and school.
- 3.3 The development site lies at the southern extent of Ber Street (meaning 'Hill Street') adjacent to the existing school science block - 'St. Peter's Building'. Ber Street is likely of Norman origin although an earlier Roman date is possible. Penn (2005) argues that it represents a 'planned element' within the developing French Borough with the church of St. John Sepulchre at the southern end. Penn (2005) suggests that the new Borough expanded as new streets were laid out such as Surrey Street (formerly Great Newgate) having most probably been enclosed land called *Thewardscroft*. Ber Street was probably laid out as a market street with the church of St. John Sepulchre at the southern end.

- 3.4 Work carried out in the early 1960's and finds recovered during development of the site at this time (NHER 5) included medieval and Post-medieval sherds of pottery and evidence for a medieval well. Archaeological trial trenching (NHER 10) undertaken prior to the development of the existing science building revealed some evidence of early medieval occupation with evidence for possible 12th century gravel extraction. However, 'large scale Post-medieval intrusions' was noted on site and, unfortunately, the section drawings made during the trial trenching do not survive. The excavations took place to a depth of 2.4m from present ground level.
- 3.5 A desk-based assessment carried out on behalf of Lind Motor Group (Penn 2005) for the site opposite and immediately to the northwest of the school identified probable evidence for Norman occupation and substantive redevelopment of the street frontage in the 16th to 17th centuries. From plans and maps referenced in the assessment it would appear that the development at the school to the rear of the street frontage lies primarily on the gardens or open land seen to the back of the tenements built onto Ber Street as depicted on Hochstetter's map of Norwich dated 1789.
- 3.6 In summary, there was potential for archaeological finds, features or deposits from the late Saxon, medieval and Post-medieval periods in particular to survive.

4.0 Geology and Topography

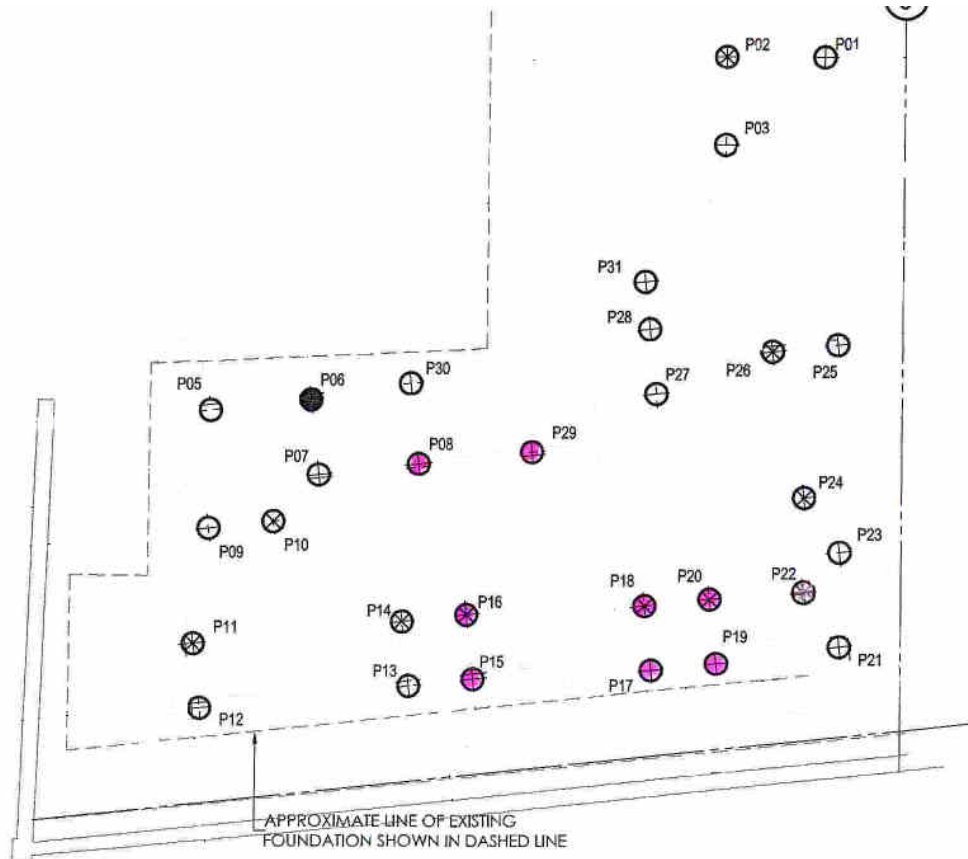
- 4.1 Ber Street lies upon the crest of a hill above the River Wensum to the east, generally level at c. 35m OD, the slope drops off considerably to the east of the Ber Street frontage with Mariners Lane (formerly Holgate, meaning 'hollow gate' or 'way') cut into the escarpment.
- 4.2 The site lies upon a geology of Norwich Crag with an overlying deposit of marine or shelly sands and gravels approximately 10m in depth (Funnell 1994). The Norwich Crag overlies a solid geology of Upper Chalk (Funnell 2005) exposed at the lower reaches of the scarp.

5.0 Observations

- 5.1 Monitoring was carried out between 14 and 15 March 2011 during groundworks for the foundations of the new building (*Fig. 2*).
- 5.2 Site conditions were good and access was gained from Ber Street to the east of the site. The weather was mostly overcast but dry.
- 5.3 Context numbers were not allocated due to the lack of archaeological remains.
- 5.4 Piling was carried out by Ground Mechanical Piling (GMP) - piles were drilled between c. 9m and 18m from present ground level through the existing tarmac surface (*Plate 1*). Spoil arisings from the piles comprised mid brown sand and gravel, brownish yellow sand and mid brown clayey sand with occasional chalk and rare flint inclusions (*Plate 2*). No archaeological features or deposits were present.
- 5.5 Obstructions were noted at the location of 8 piles (numbers 8, 15 to 20 and 29 - marked in purple, *Plate 1*) and required manual excavation, removing compact mid brown sand and gravel with occasional modern brick fragments. A modern brick wall with concrete foundations orientated approximately east-to-west was identified at the location of pile number 18. The foundations and concrete pad of the former boiler house associated with the present school science buildings (now demolished) were also identified. Excavations for the ground beams revealed the same mid brown sand and gravel deposit observed elsewhere on site (*Plate 3*). No archaeological features or deposits were present.
- 5.6 The ground level at the west of the site is approximately 2m lower than the adjoining school grounds to the south and west of the present science block. To the north of the

site, the adjacent plot is elevated above the site by c. 1.8m reducing to the same level at the frontage of Ber Street.

Plate 1. Pile locations



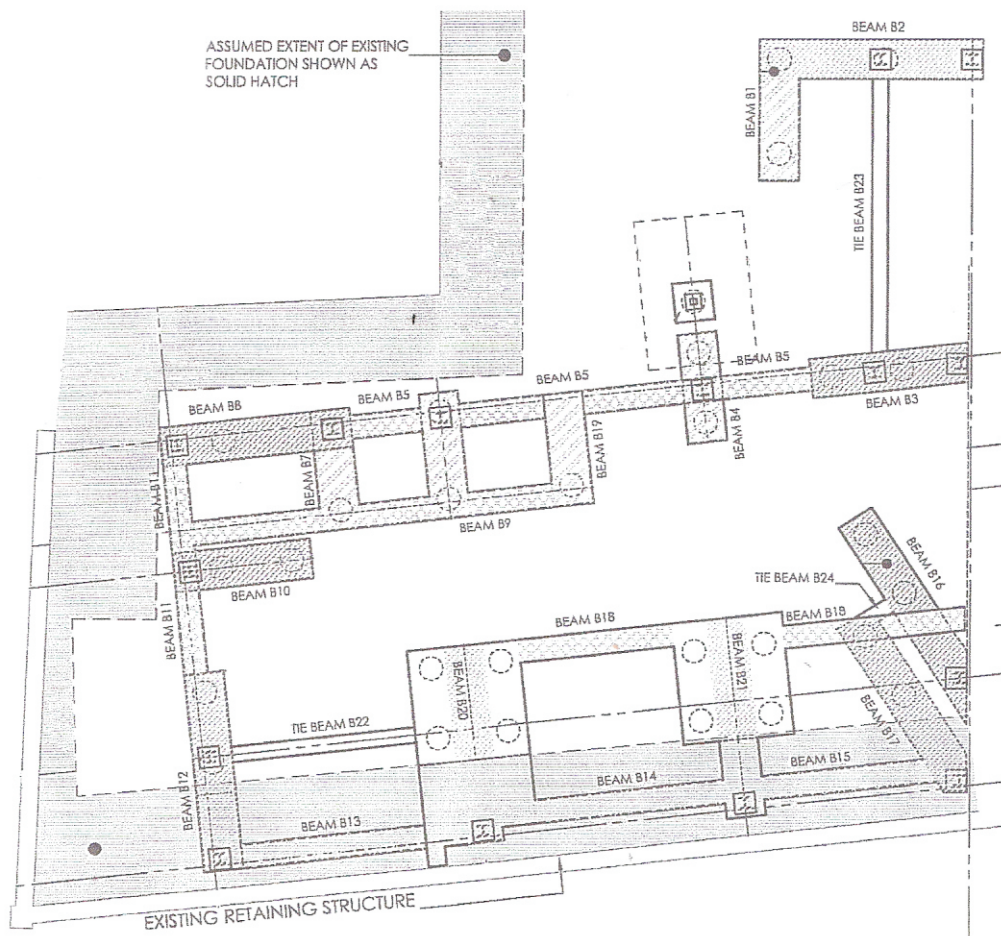
Not to scale

- 5.7 Excavations for mains service (water, gas and foul water drainage) trenches along the eastern boundary of the site revealed a mid to dark brown/grey sand and gravel deposit that formed the bedding deposit for the access road at this location. No archaeological features or deposits were present.

Plate 2. General view during piling operations, looking southwest



Plate 3. Ground beam locations



Not to scale

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Monitoring during groundworks associated with the construction of the new school building did not reveal any finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance. A previous reduction in ground level on the site, probably associated with the construction of the present science block and the former access road, has most likely truncated any archaeological features or deposits that may have been present.
- 6.2 It therefore appears that significant truncation of any archaeological strata has occurred throughout the site although there is potential should any development occur to the west or south of the site for deposits of archaeological potential to remain *in situ*.

Acknowledgments

The project was undertaken by Chris Birks on behalf of John Youngs Limited and Notre Dame High School who also funded the work. Many thanks to Ian Ridgwell at John Youngs Limited. Fieldwork was undertaken by John Simmons. The report was written by John Simmons and edited by Chris Birks.

Many thanks to Andrea Beckham at the Norfolk Historic and Environment Record office based at Gressenhall. Thanks also to James Albone, David Gurney, Ken Hamilton, David Robertson and Andrew Rogerson at the Historic Environment Service.

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Appendix 1 OASIS Record

OASIS ID: chrisbir1-96288

Project details

Project name	Notre Dame School, Norwich
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring was carried out during excavations associated with the construction of a new science block at Notre Dame School. No archaeological remains were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 14-03-2011 End: 15-11-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ENF129461 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK NORWICH NORWICH Notre Dame High School, Surrey Street, Norwich, Norfolk
Study area	100.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TG 2340 0780 52 1 52 37 17 N 001 18 03 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	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	ENF129461
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Plan", "Report", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at 'Notre Dame High School, Surrey Street, Norwich, Norfolk'
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Birks, C.
Other bibliographic details	Report Number CB239R
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	Chris Birks
Place of issue or publication	Contractor's Report
Description	Bound A4 single-side printed report with text, colour photograph, site location plan and plan drawings.
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Entered by	Chris Birks (chris@chrisbirksarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	25 July 2012

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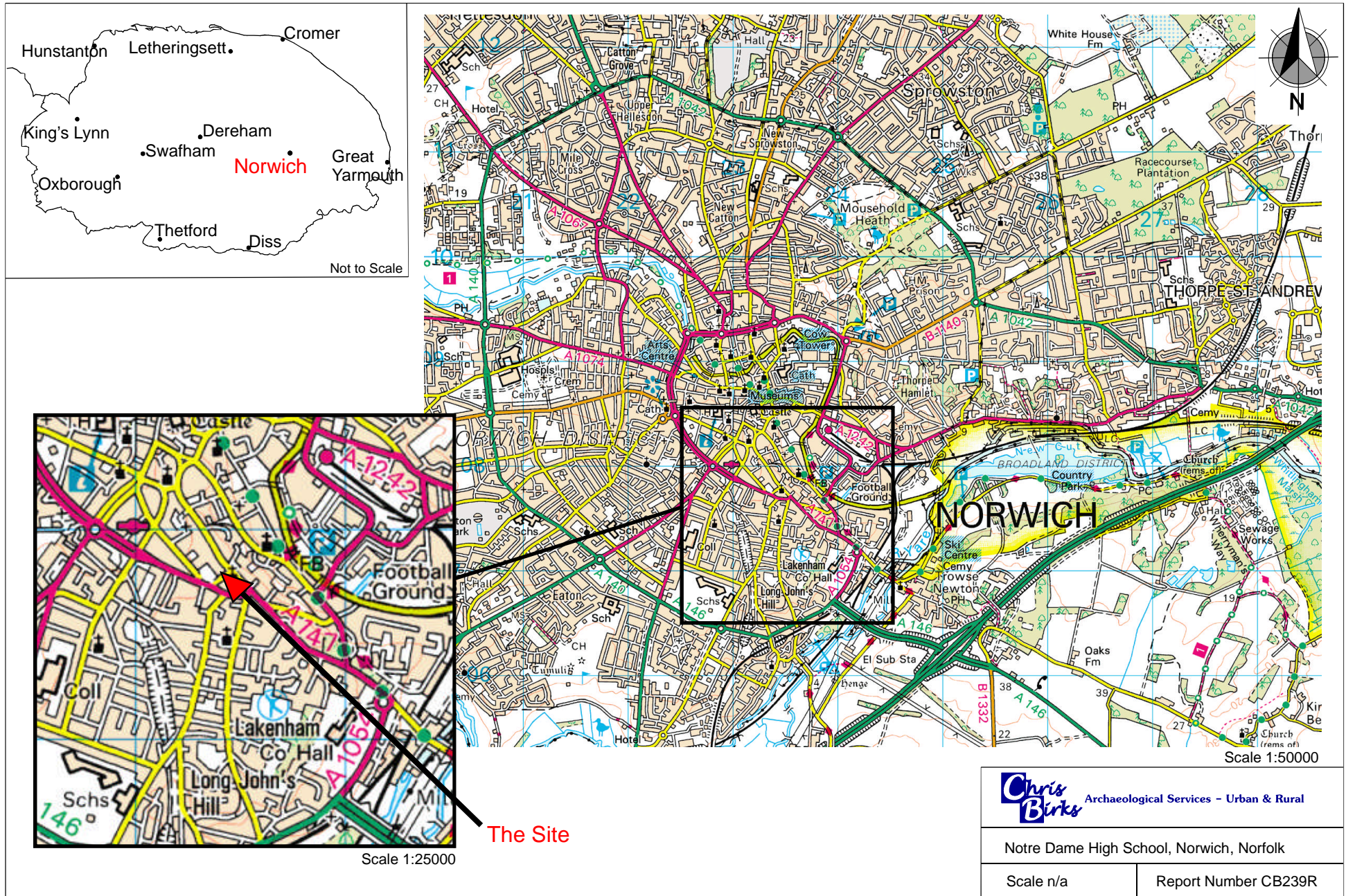


Figure 1. Site location

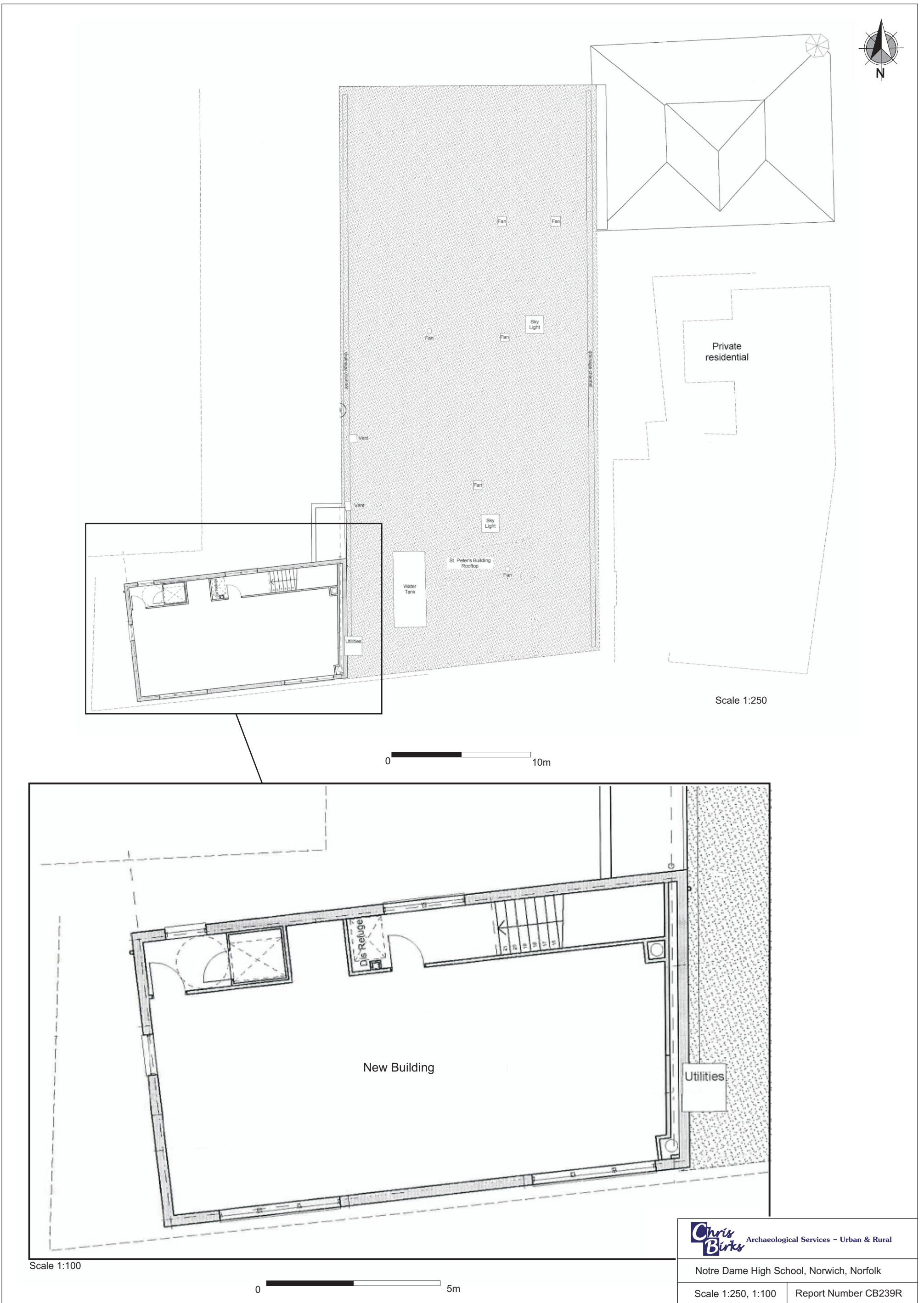


Figure 2. Site plan