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**Report on an Archaeological Evaluation
by Trial Trenching at 'GB Commercials Attleborough
Road, Great Ellingham, Norfolk'**

ENF138145



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Prepared for:

GB Commercials
Attleborough Road
Great Ellingham
Norfolk

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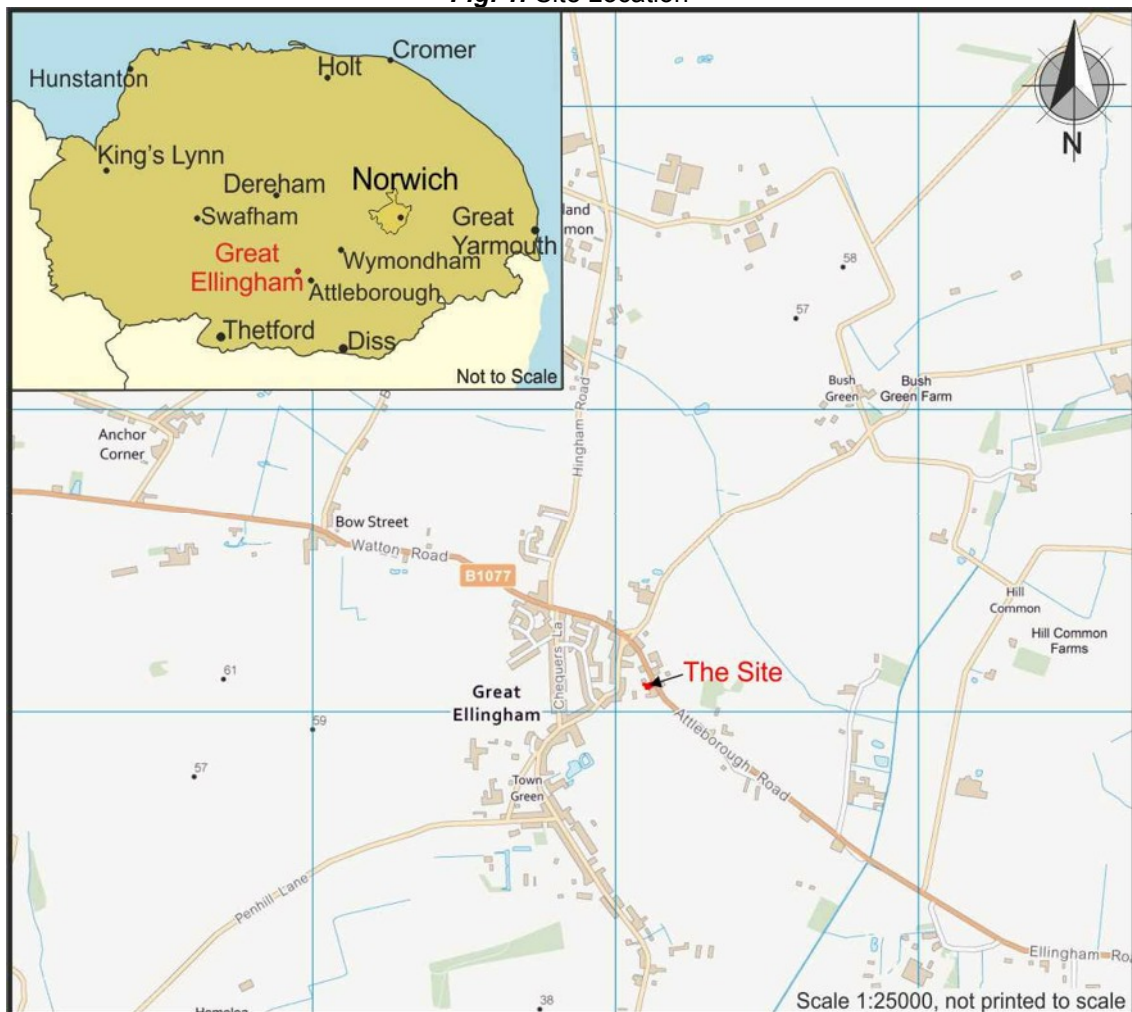
Summary

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out at 'GB Commercials, Attleborough Road, Great Ellingham, Norfolk' (Norfolk Historic Environment Record event number ENF138145) in May 2015 prior to proposed residential development. No archaeological remains were present.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A programme of Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching resulting from development proposals at 'GB Commercials, Attleborough Road, Norfolk' (centred at grid reference TM 02093 97097, *Fig. 1*) was requested by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service (reference CNF46167_1). Breckland Council planning reference 3PL/2015/0415/O applies.
- 1.2 Project Design and Written Scheme of Investigation, CB428, details how Chris Birks (hereafter 'the Contractor') would undertake these works and has been prepared for Lanpro Planning and Development Consultants on behalf of GB Commercials. A *draft* copy of the Project Design and Written Scheme of Investigation was submitted to and approved by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service in accordance with the Historic Environment Service Brief and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' guidance.
- 1.3 This report, CB428R, describes the results and a *draft* copy has been submitted to the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service for consideration.

Fig. 1. Site Location



2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 The proposed development site lies in an area of high archaeological potential with significant Roman remains known in this area including the probable route of a Roman road, buildings and a

major cemetery site. The site is adjacent to the medieval church of St James the Great and settlement activity in the Saxon and medieval periods may be present. Consequently there was potential that significant buried archaeological remains would be present in the area of the proposed development and their significance may be affected by the proposed works.

- 2.2 An Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching is required to determine the presence/absence, date, extent, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological layers or subsoil archaeological features. The evaluation may indicate a need for a further phase of Archaeological Evaluation, Archaeological Excavation or Archaeological Monitoring during the development if features of importance are found and these cannot be preserved *in-situ*.
- 2.3 Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) ENF138145 and Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) id chrisbir1-213344 apply.

3.0 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 Entries exist in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) for Great Ellingham and the surrounding area. Commensurate with the findings of the current excavations, only those records in closest proximity to the site are summarised in this report. Full details of these and all other entries can be seen in the NHER office based at Gressenhall near Dereham by prior appointment.
- 3.2 An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out at 'The Bungalow, Church Street, Great Ellingham, Norfolk' to the immediate north of the proposed development in January 2011 prior to proposed residential development of the site (NHER event number ENF125824, Birks 2011). A small quantity of prehistoric struck and burnt flints was recovered from subsoil deposits indicating prehistoric activities in the area. No remains relating to St James the Great's Church or the churchyard to the west of the site or any associated medieval settlement were present.
- 3.3 The hypothetical route of a Roman road, aligned NW-SE, from Attleborough towards Little Ellingham, runs directly through the site (NHER 58564). The route is an extension of the Attleborough road which would run alongside a Roman cemetery and Roman buildings and contextualise the significant cluster of Roman sites and buildings in Great Ellingham parish.
- 3.4 The cemetery is itself located c. 100m to the northwest of the proposed development site and associated remains have been identified since the 1950s (NHER 4257). An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching prior to residential development was carried out towards the probable easterly extent of the cemetery in November 2011 (NHER event number ENF127902). Five *in situ* human burials dating to the Romano-British period were present within the trench confirming the Roman cemetery site (NHER 4257) extended across this site. A subsequent programme of archaeological excavation and monitoring was carried out in 2012 (NHER event number ENF128797). A programme of post-excavation analysis and preparation of contractor's and publication reports is currently underway.
- 3.5 The proposed development site is adjacent to the medieval church of St James the Great and churchyard (NHER 4259). The church is mainly of 14th century date, restored between 1900 and 1920 with much attractive chequered flintwork on the exterior. There are various interesting features to be seen inside including a mid-14th century octagonal font with its original lead lining, part of a 15th century painted screen and various medieval wall paintings. Settlement activity in the Saxon and medieval periods was often located very close to the church.
- 3.6 Ye Olde Thatche Shoppe (NHER 40344) lies to the west/southwest of the site. It is a much-altered 15th century timber-framed building with a thatched roof. It was originally two cottages, now one dwelling and a shop.
- 3.7 Islay House (NHER 46128) lies to the west of the site. It is a mid-17th century and later timber-framed house with a late 18th century casing.
- 3.8 Glenfield Cottage (NHER 46755) lies to the north of the site, on Attleborough Road. It is an early-18th century partly timber-framed house with clay lump infill and a thatched roof. Modern editions and alterations are evident. Church Farm House (NHER 23620) lies to the northwest of the site and

Glenfield Cottage. It is an early 18th century thatched timber-framed cottage, built with reused 16th and 17th century beams and a 17th century ceiling from another building. A stirrup was once hung in the chimney, possibly to ward off evil spirits.

- 3.9 There was potential, therefore, that heritage assets with archaeological interest (buried archaeological remains) would be present at the site and that their significance may be affected by the proposed development. The recovery of such information would contribute greatly to Research Topics for the Eastern Counties.

4.0 Aims and Objectives

- 4.1 Specific aims are to establish the states of preservation of archaeological features and/or deposits within the area indicated. These form 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).
- 4.2 Contributions may also be made to environmental archaeology research aims (Murphy 2000).
- 4.3 Generic Aims of the project are to;
- 4.3.1 Determine the presence of archaeological remains during investigation of the site through archaeological trial trenching of an approximate 5% sample of the proposed development area.
- 4.3.2 Establish the extent, condition, nature and date of any such archaeological remains.
- 4.3.3 Create datasets relating to the stratigraphic, artefactual and environmental information recovered during excavations for analysis.

5.0 Method Statement

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The primary purpose of the evaluation is to excavate archaeological trenches within the proposed development area in order to recover as much information as possible on the extent, date, phasing, character, function, status and significance of the site. The states of preservation of archaeological features or deposits within the area indicated will be determined. This was achieved through the following methodology.

5.2 Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching

- 5.2.1 An OASIS online record was initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.2.2 The Historic Environment Record (HER) Officer was contacted in advance of work starting to obtain a HER number for the site.
- 5.2.3 The area to be developed with new houses covers an area of approximately 2000m². Three (3) trenches (Trench 1 to 3) were excavated to investigate an approximate 5% sample of the development area (*Fig. 2*). The trenches have been positioned to maximize the potential recovery of information relating to the postulated route of the Roman road crossing the site, settlement evidence possibly located to the south of the church and/or adjacent to Attleborough Road. Precise trench locations were established on site.
- 5.2.4 A 360° hydraulic-type excavator with toothless ditching bucket was used for the mechanical excavation of modern overburden deposits only. Deposits did not extend below 1.2m beneath present ground level so shoring or stepping of the trench edges was not necessary.
- 5.2.5 Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits of no more than 0.1m under constant archaeological supervision and direction until archaeological remains or undisturbed 'natural' deposits were encountered. Spoil arisings were stored at a safe distance of c.1m from the trench.
- 5.2.6 Archaeological features and deposits were recorded on Chris Birks *pro-forma* context sheets. Section and plan drawings were recorded at an appropriate scale (1:50;1:20;1:10) depending upon the level of detail required.

5.2.7 Appropriate registers for contexts, drawings, photographs and environmental samples were made. No finds of archaeological significance were recovered and no environmental samples were taken due to the lack of suitably well-sealed and dated archaeological features/deposits. A single-context planning methodology was employed and a matrix of the sequence of deposits was made on-site.

5.2.8 The trenches were backfilled without compaction or reinstatement.

5.3 Post-excavation Analysis and Report

5.3.1 An assessment of the recorded evidence was made in accordance with *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)* (English Heritage 1991). The analysis of stratigraphical/structural records, Artefactual and environmental materials was made for inclusion in a final site report.

5.3.2 A *draft* copy of the report has been submitted for consideration by the Historic Environment Service. Any required amendments will be considered and made prior to submission of a *final* report. A *draft* copy has been provided to the Client as proof of production. The Contractor is not responsible for any delays to the developer's work programme.

5.3.3 Three copies of the *final* report will be submitted to the Historic Environment Service; two copies to the Norfolk Historic and Environment Record, one copy to the Local Planning Authority; one copy to the Client, one copy to archive and one copy to the Regional Science Advisor for English Heritage. These copies will not be issued until all payments have been received in full.

5.3.4 Decisions will be made by the Historic Environment Service regarding any further works that may be required should remains of importance be found that cannot be preserved *in-situ*. This may involve further evaluation or excavation and recording. A further brief would be provided by the Historic Environment Service and a Design Brief would be required from an archaeological contractor. Costs & timescale for additional work would need to be agreed with the Client.

5.3.5 The OASIS online form will be completed and submitted to the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, including an uploaded .pdf version of the report. The archive will be prepared in a form suitable for microfilming, if required. It will be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects* ('MAP2', English Heritage 1991) and submitted to the Norfolk Museums Service for long-term storage.

6.0 Geology and Topography

6.1 Great Ellingham parish lies upon a solid geology of the Upper Chalk series with overlying boulder clay deposits (Funnell 2005). The soil landscape of the parish is the South Norfolk Claylands (Williamson 2005).

6.2 The site lies on the east side of Great Ellingham and west of Attleborough Road on level ground at an elevation of c. 53m OD.

7.0 Results

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Fieldwork was carried on 26 May 2015 and access was gained from Attleborough Road to the east of the site. The weather remained dry and sunny. Context numbers are summarised in *Appendix 1*. Digital images are included to provide an illustration of the excavated trenches and deposits present.

7.2 Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching

7.2.1 Trench 1

7.2.1.1 Trench 1 lay in the northwest part of the site, in proposed plot 6 (*Fig. 2*). Originally, Trench 1 was to be excavated in an approximate north-to-south orientation though this proved not to be possible due to the location of a building and portable office at this location. It was therefore excavated in an approximate west-to-east orientation and measured c. 12m in length and c. 1m wide. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.13m beneath present ground level removing c. 0.57m of mixed, mostly tarmac modern yard deposit [4] that overlay c. 0.55m of mid- to dark-brown silty sand subsoil [2] with moderate small-sized sub-angular flints and moderate small-

sized chalk pieces (*Plates 1 and 2*). Subsoil overlay light brown/yellow sand undisturbed 'natural' deposit [3] with moderate small- to medium-sized sub-angular flints. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present.

Plate 1. Trench 1 in plan, looking approximately west



Scale is 2m in 0.5m increments

Plate 2. Trench 1 sample section, looking north



Scale is 2m in 0.5m intervals

7.2.2 Trench 2

7.2.2.1 Trench 2 lay in the southwest part of the site, across proposed plots 4 and 5 and measured c. 16m in length and c. 1m wide (*Fig. 2*). It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.07m beneath

present ground level removing c. 0.61m of mixed, mostly tarmac modern yard deposit [4] that overlay c. 0.45m of mid- to dark-brown silty sand subsoil [2] with moderate small-sized sub-angular flints and moderate small-sized chalk pieces (*Plates 3 and 4*). Subsoil overlay light brown/yellow sand undisturbed 'natural' deposit [3] with moderate small- to medium-sized sub-angular flints. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present.

Plate 3. Trench 2 in plan, looking southwest



Scale is 2m in 0.5m increments

Plate 4. Trench 2 sample section, looking north



Scale is 2m in 0.5m intervals

7.2.3 Trench 3

7.2.3.1 Trench 3 lay in the southeast part of the site, across proposed plot 2, adjacent to plot 3 and measured c. 16m in length and 1.2m wide (*Fig. 2*). It was excavated to a maximum depth of

1.18m beneath present ground level removing c. 0.28m of dark grey brown silty sand topsoil [1] with occasional small-sized sub-angular flints and rare small-sized chalk pieces and c. 0.8m of mid- to dark-brown silty sand subsoil [2] with moderate small-sized sub-angular flints and moderate small-sized chalk pieces (*Plates 5 and 6*). Subsoil overlay light brown/yellow sand undisturbed 'natural' deposit [3] with moderate small- to medium-sized sub-angular flints. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present.

Plate 5. Trench 3 in plan, looking northeast



Scale is 2m in 0.5m increments

Plate 6. Trench 3 sample section, looking northwest



Scale is 2m in 0.5m intervals

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 Despite the presence of archaeological remains within the area of the proposed development site, none were present in the excavated trenches. Prehistoric activities indicated by the presence of

struck and burnt flints to the immediate north of the site were identified in 2011 though no similar activities were evidenced during the current programme of work. It is probable that the southern extent of the Roman cemetery site to the northwest lies to the north of the proposed development site. No evidence of activities associated with Saxon or medieval settlement was present.

- 8.2 Topsoil deposits in Trench 1 and Trench 2 were completely absent and subsoil deposits had been truncated through the construction of the yard associated with the scrap metal business currently trading on this part of the site. It is possible this may have truncated any less-deep archaeological features or deposits. No deeper cut features or archaeological deposits were present in the underlying undisturbed 'natural' deposits.
- 8.3 Deposits in Trench 3 appeared to be mostly undisturbed. The current lawned garden topsoil deposits overlies a depth of subsoil deposits, approximately 0.8m, comparable with those observed during the evaluation by trial trenching closeby to the north in 2011 and the excavation of a part of the Roman cemetery site to the northwest. No archaeological cut features or deposits were present.

Acknowledgments

The project was undertaken by Chris Birks for GB Commercials who also provided plant. Many thanks to Gary Brown senior and Gary Brown junior. Thanks also to Jane Hunter at Lanpro Planning and Development Consultants.

Fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Birks and John Simmons.

Drawings were prepared by Chris Birks and the report was written by Chris Birks.

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

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Appendix 1. Context Register

Context No.	Type	Description	Period
1	D	Dark grey brown silty sand topsoil with occasional small-sized sub-angular flints and rare small-sized chalk pieces	-
2	D	Mid- to dark-brown silty sand subsoil with moderate small sub-angular flints and moderate small chalk pieces	-
3	D	Light brown/yellow sand undisturbed 'natural' deposit with moderate small- to medium-sized sub-angular flints	-
4	D	Mixed, mostly tarmac modern yard deposit	Modern

Appendix 2. OASIS Record

OASIS ID: *chrisbir1-213344*

Project details

Project name	GB Commercials, Great Ellingham, evaluation by trial trenching
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out at 'GB Commercials, Attleborough Road, Great Ellingham, Norfolk' prior to proposed residential development. No archaeological remains were present.
Project dates	Start: 26-05-2015 End: 26-05-2015
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ENF138145 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	Pre-application

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK BRECKLAND GREAT ELLINGHAM GB Commercials, Attleborough Road, Great Ellingham, Norfolk
Study area	2000.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TM 02093 97097 52.5337217746 0.979999067095 52 32 01 N 000 58 48 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
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums Service
Paper Archive ID	ENF138145
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Map", "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 an Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching at 'GB Commercials, Attleborough Road, Great Ellingham, Norfolk'
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Birks, C.
Other bibliographic details	Report Number CB428R
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Chris Birks
Place of issue or publication	Contractor's Report
Description	Bound A4 single-side-printed report with text, site location map, site plan drawing, section drawings and colour digital images.
Entered by	Chris Birks (chris@chrisbirksarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	9 June 2015

OASIS:

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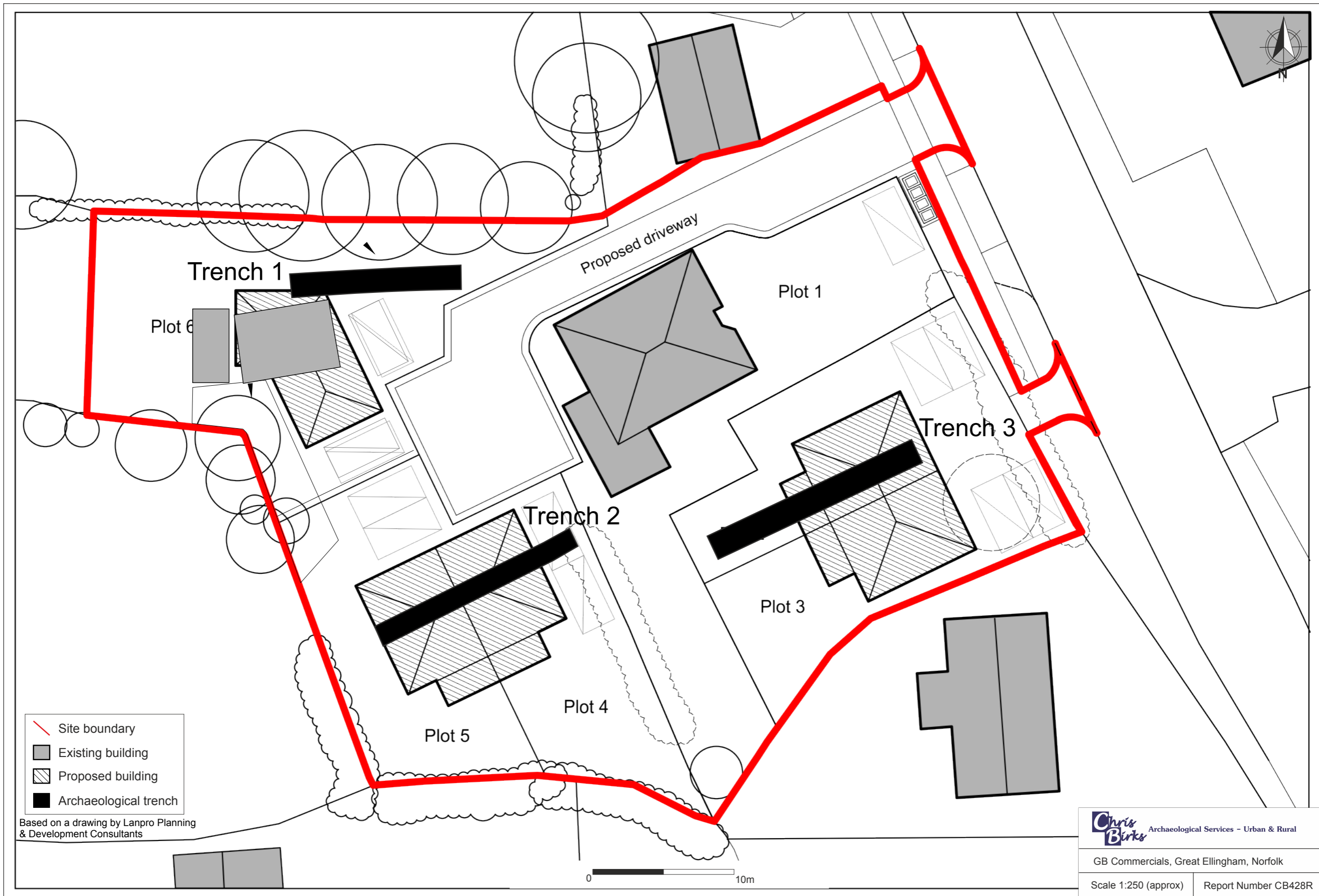
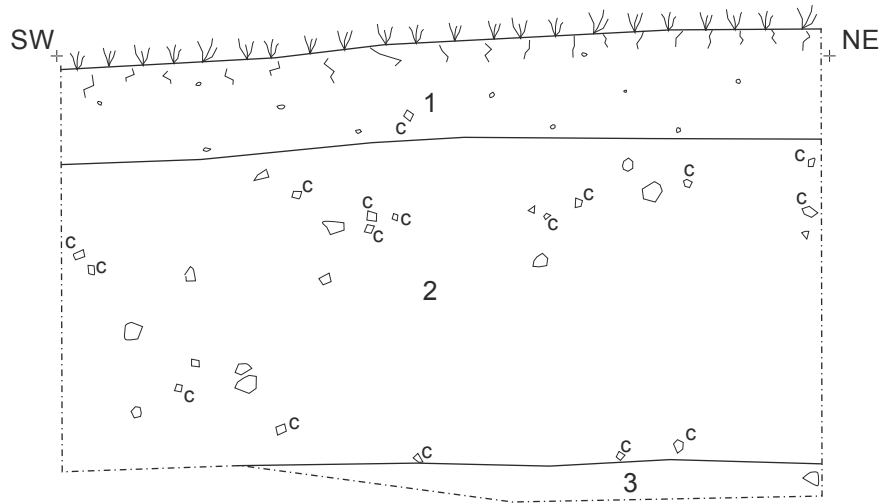
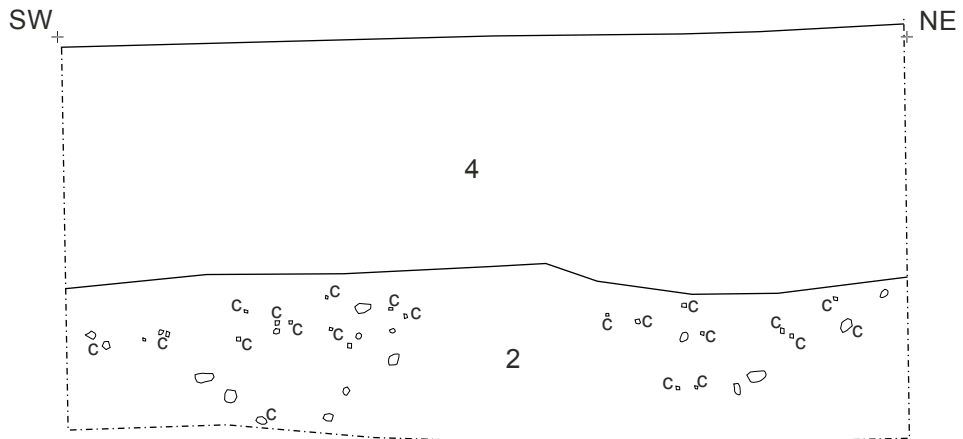


Figure 2. Site plan

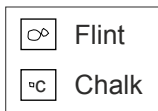
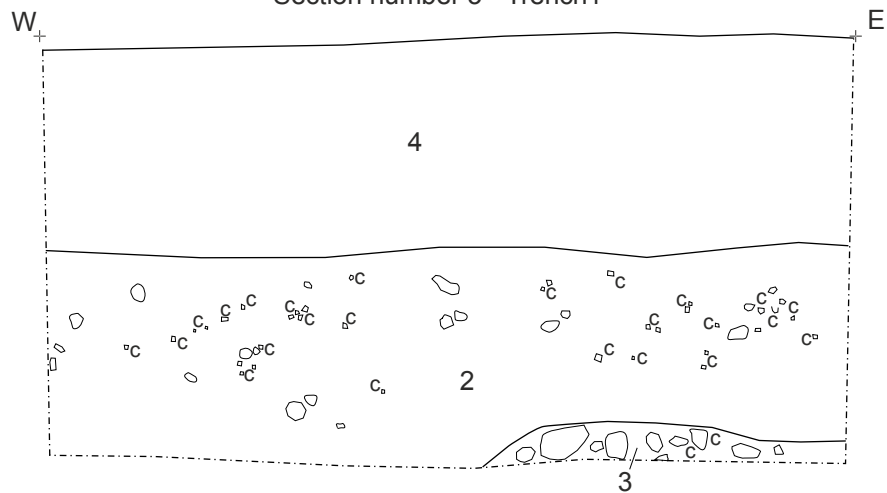
Section number 1 - Trench 3



Section number 2 - Trench 2



Section number 3 - Trench 1



Chris Birks Archaeological Services - Urban & Rural

GB Commercials, Great Ellingham, Norfolk

Scale 1:20

Report Number CB428R

Figure 3. Section drawings