

Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted a watching brief during the construction work at 24 Grove Lane, Holt. Two ditches were found and are the same as those recorded on the Tithe map of 1830. One contained some small brick fragments. There was also a late 19th century rubbish pit. There was no indication of the brick kiln known in the area.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located at 24 Grove Lane, Holt, Norfolk, at grid reference TG 086 389. The site is c. 0.43ha and is bounded by Grove Lane to the north, Meadow Close to the east, properties fronting Meadow Close to the south and properties fronting Grove Lane to the west. The site is flat and lies at c. 66m OD. The topography of the surrounding area is also flat.

1.2 Planning Background

North Norfolk District Council granted planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of a 2 to 3 storey block of sheltered flats, access road, car parking and landscaping. Due to the presence of potential remains of archaeological interest in the proposal area a condition of the planning consent required that an archaeological watching brief be carried out during the course of groundworks.

1.3 Archaeological Background

A desk based assessment of the site (CgMs) has been prepared. This concluded that the potential for prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains to be present on the site was low. A brick kiln is recorded on the Norfolk SMR within the study area (SMR 36187). However, the 1839 Holt Tithe map depicts the site as being within an area of small rectangular fields/allotments with no sign of such a kiln. However, Plot 172 is noted as being Brick Kiln Close on the Tithe award and therefore, it is considered that the kiln was formerly within this plot and not the study site.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as were as follows:

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.
- To make public the results of the investigations.

In particular:

- to record any evidence relating to the brick kiln.

Figure 1. Site plan.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with CgMs and Norfolk Landscape Archaeology. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and those of AoLGAO for the East of England (Gurney 2003).

3.2 Methodology

The soil strip and excavation of the foundation trenches for the new building were monitored. Also inspected were service trenches and a soak-away just outside the boundaries of the site, shown in grey on figure 1.

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4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

The natural (2) was a firm yellow-orange sand with gravel and pebbles. Numerous modern services and concrete foundations were seen cut into this, all associated with the recently demolished buildings.

Directly above the natural was a thin deposit of dark grey mottled with orange-brown clayey sand (3). It was not present across the whole site, but appeared in small patches in less disturbed areas. It was up to 0.3m thick in places. In the centre of the site it was recorded as (4) and was between 0.05m and 0.1m thick where visible.

Above both of these was a compact layer of pale orange-brown clay-sand (1), which contained up to 50% flint pebbles mixed with brick fragments and other modern demolition debris. Sherds of 19th century white mass produced earthenwares were noted in this layer.

On the periphery of the site, where it was less disturbed by modern demolition activities a subsoil (6) was recorded above the natural (2). This subsoil was an orange-brown to light grey sandy clay up to 0.25m thick. Above this was a 0.2m thick layer of dark grey-black sandy loam (5).

On the western side of the site was a ditch [7] that was parallel to the modern hedge. It was cut into layer (6) and was 1.3m wide, 0.6m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile. It was filled with a firm dark grey silty clay-sand (8). This deposit was covered by topsoil (5).

On the eastern side of the site was a second ditch [9], again this was parallel to the modern hedge line. It was also cut into the subsoil (6) and was 1.4m wide and 0.7m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile. It was filled with a pale grey-brown silty-clay (10) with the odd flint pebble and charcoal fleck. Near to the base of the ditch was a small amount of brick fragments.

Partially sealing this fill (10) was a thin layer of compact flint pebbles in a black clay-grit matrix (11). This deposit was up to 0.1m thick. It had been truncated by modern demolition activities. Over lying this was a loose pale grey-brown sandy-silt (12) up to 0.35m thick that formed part of the modern hedge line.

Towards the centre of the site near to the eastern hedge line was a large pit [13]. It was sub-circular in plan and over 2m wide and 0.6m deep, with sides at roughly 45°. It was filled with loose dark ashy loam (14) with large quantities of brick rubble, coal, mortar and sand. Also present were large amounts of glass, pottery sherds and metal; all appeared to be household waste.

The service trenches outside the boundaries of the site to the north and east revealed a section that showed a similar sequence to that of the site. The natural (2) was overlain by subsoil (6) and that was itself overlain by topsoil (5). It would appear that the tarmac surfaces in the area had been laid on a make up layer placed directly onto the old land surface.

The soak-away excavated in the field to the west also showed the same sequence of natural (2), subsoil (6) and topsoil (5).

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery

Sherds of 19th century white mass produced earthenwares were noted in contexts (1) and (14).

5.2 Glass

Numerous glass sherds were recorded from pit [13], including a jar embossed with the word "Bovril". The Bovril Company was founded in 1889.

5.3 Environmental Samples

No environmental evidence was recovered.

Figure 2. Sections

6 DISCUSSION

The site had previously been built on and recently these buildings had been demolished. Buried foundations and services for these modern buildings were in evidence across the site.

The demolition process appeared to have “combed” through the upper layers of the site over almost the entire area. This varied in depth from 0.6m to 0.2m. In places large pits had been dug and remnants of modern walls had been deposited within them.

This activity left a poor chance for the survival of archaeological remains in the area, if any had existed. Those that were recorded were on the periphery of the site.

The two ditches recorded [7] and [9] appear to be those marked on the Tithe map of 1830. The surface (11) that seals ditch [9] is therefore later than this date. It is possibly associated with a modern wall seen in the area.

The rubbish pit is dated to later than 1889 by the “Bovril” bottle it contained.

The majority of the brick rubble recorded within the upper layer (1) was from the modern buildings, however a few small fragments were noted in a soft sandy fabric that were probably earlier in date. These were not seen in enough quantity to suggest that an earlier building had been demolished on the site.

The conclusion of the DBA (CgMs) would appear to be correct and that the location of the kiln is further to the east.

7 THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of the following:

The project brief	The primary site records
Written scheme of investigation	The photographic and drawn records
The project report	

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services. The archive will be transferred to Norwich Castle Museum

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

CgMs undated. Archaeological Desk Based Assessment. 24 Grove Lane, Holt, Norfolk

Gurney, D. 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*