

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

25 QUEENS ROAD, ATTLEBOROUGH,

NORFOLK

TM 0460 9546

On behalf of

CgMS Consulting Ltd

FEBRUARY 2010

REPORT FOR CgMs Consulting Ltd
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation at 25 Queens Road Attleborough. Apart from a single pottery sherd of probable Romano British date the only remains found were associated with the 20th century residential occupation of the site following arable use of the plot of land.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The site is located on the west side of Queens Road, Attleborough (NGR TM 0460 9546) approximately 250m north of the junction with Exchange Street and Church Street. It is bounded to the east by Queens Road, to the north by residential properties, to the south by a commercial property and to the west by Cyprus Farm House and land. The underlying geology is Corton Formation (Undifferentiated) Sand and Gravel. The site is level at c. 40m OD.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission has been granted (Ref: 3PL/2008/1548/F) by Breckland District Council for the construction of 38 sheltered apartments for the elderly. Condition 15 of the permission states:

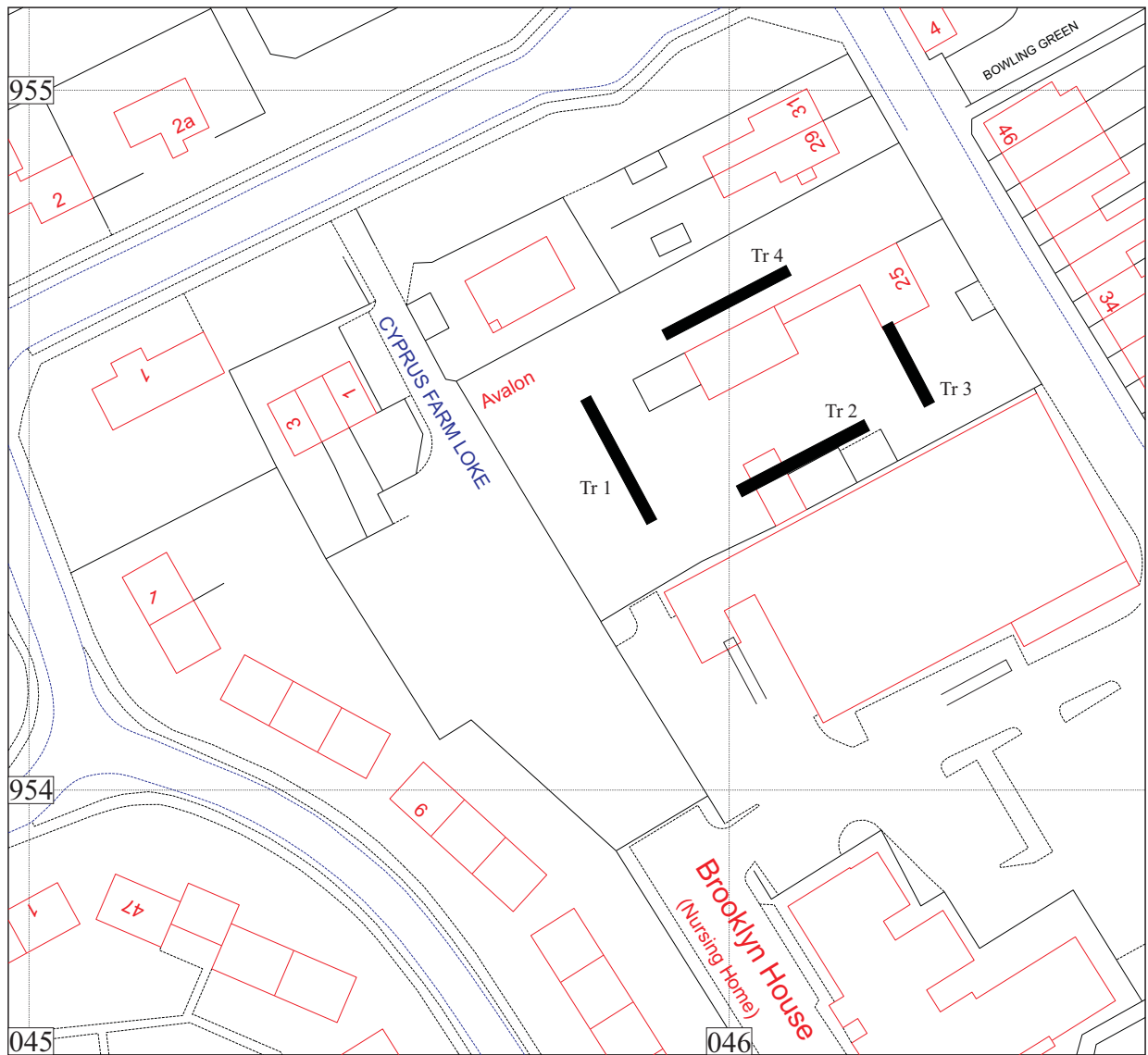
“No development shall take place until the applicant or their agent or their successor in title has:

- a) caused to implement a programme of archaeological evaluation in accordance with first a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; and*
- b) submitted the results of the archaeological evaluation to the Local Planning Authority; and next*
- c) secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological mitigatory work in accordance with a second written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.”*

A *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation* was prepared by Rob Bourne of CgMs Consulting Ltd and agreed with the Head of Archaeological Planning, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology outlining the method by which the archaeological evaluation was to be carried out to satisfy the requirements of the condition. John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to the *Specification*.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site has been considered in detail in an archaeological desk-based assessment by CgMs (2007). In summary, the site was considered to have moderate potential for Saxon and medieval remains and a low potential for remains of all other archaeological periods.



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Figure 1. Site and trench location

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present.
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains.
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains.
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of any artefactual evidence present.
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Specification* designed and issued by CgMs Consulting Ltd and agreed with Ken Hamilton, Head of Archaeological Planning, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, JMHS carried out the work, which comprised the excavation of four trenches across the site (Fig. 1).

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in CgMs's *Specification*.

3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the mechanical excavation of four trenches by a JCB excavator equipped with a ditching bucket, supplemented by hand investigation of archaeological deposits.

The four trenches were to be 20m in length. However, Trench 4 closest to Queens Road was curtailed at its north end due to disturbance from services and demolition activity. The trench was also moved slightly southwards to avoid digging across the access into the site and was only 13.5m long.

The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Field Results

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. All contexts numbers are preceded by trench number and /.

Trench 1 (Figure 2)

The Corton Formation deposit comprised mid grey-brown sand with gravel patches. Seen cut into this were two features although they were probably cut through from the layer above. The fills were similar to the layer above.

Small pit 1/04 was oval 650mm by at least 700mm continuing into the east side of the trench. It was 490mm deep with slightly concave sides at 85⁰ and a flat base. The fill (1/05) was moderately friable dark grey-brown silty sand with some small stone containing a sherd of pottery of 19th century date, a length of blue plastic sticky tape and a piece of animal bone. To the north was a small dog burial 1/06. This was only partly exposed.

Overlying the natural and probably cut by the two features mentioned above was a 160mm thick deposit of loose mid-dark grey-brown silty sand with 3% by content of small gravel (1/02). This is considered to be an agricultural soil. Cut into the last deposit and probably from within the topsoil deposit was a modern pit 1/08 that also partly truncated the dog burial. This was irregular in plan measuring 2.1m N/S by at least 1.35m and continuing into the west side of the trench. This was unexcavated as it obviously was a modern rubbish pit. The uppermost deposit was topsoil composed of loose dark brown-grey clayey sand that was 120mm thick (1/01).

Trench 2 (Figure 2)

This trench contained remains of outbuildings first seen on the 1972 Ordnance Survey edition. They were not present on the 1953 edition.

The lowest deposit exposed was the Corton Formation comprising pale yellow-grey, with red-brown mottling, silty sand with 2% angular gravel (2/04). This was overlaid by a 250mm thick subsoil (2/03) of mid brown sandy silt with 1% gravel. From the interface of the subsoil and natural was a pottery sherd of possible Romano British date and from within the subsoil was a sherd of a post-medieval glass vessel. Overlying the subsoil, except for the western 1m and eastern 4m of the trench, was a 100mm thick layer of hardcore for the outbuildings (2/02) comprising pale grey silty clay with mortar, slate and brick fragments.

The last was cut by a row of postholes with most exhibiting remains of the wooden posts. Only the western one 2/05 was excavated as it clearly showed the relationship in section with the hardcore layer. The posthole was sub-rectangular in plan and measured 430mm + by 590mm E/W at the top (Fig. 2). The sides were at 80⁰ and it had a flat base and a depth of 580mm. Lying on the base was a large stone set to stop the post sinking into the sand. The surviving 180mm high base of the post (2/07) was rectangular measuring 150mm wide N/S. The post hole fill was mid grey-brown sandy silt with 5-10% of layer (2/02) within it.

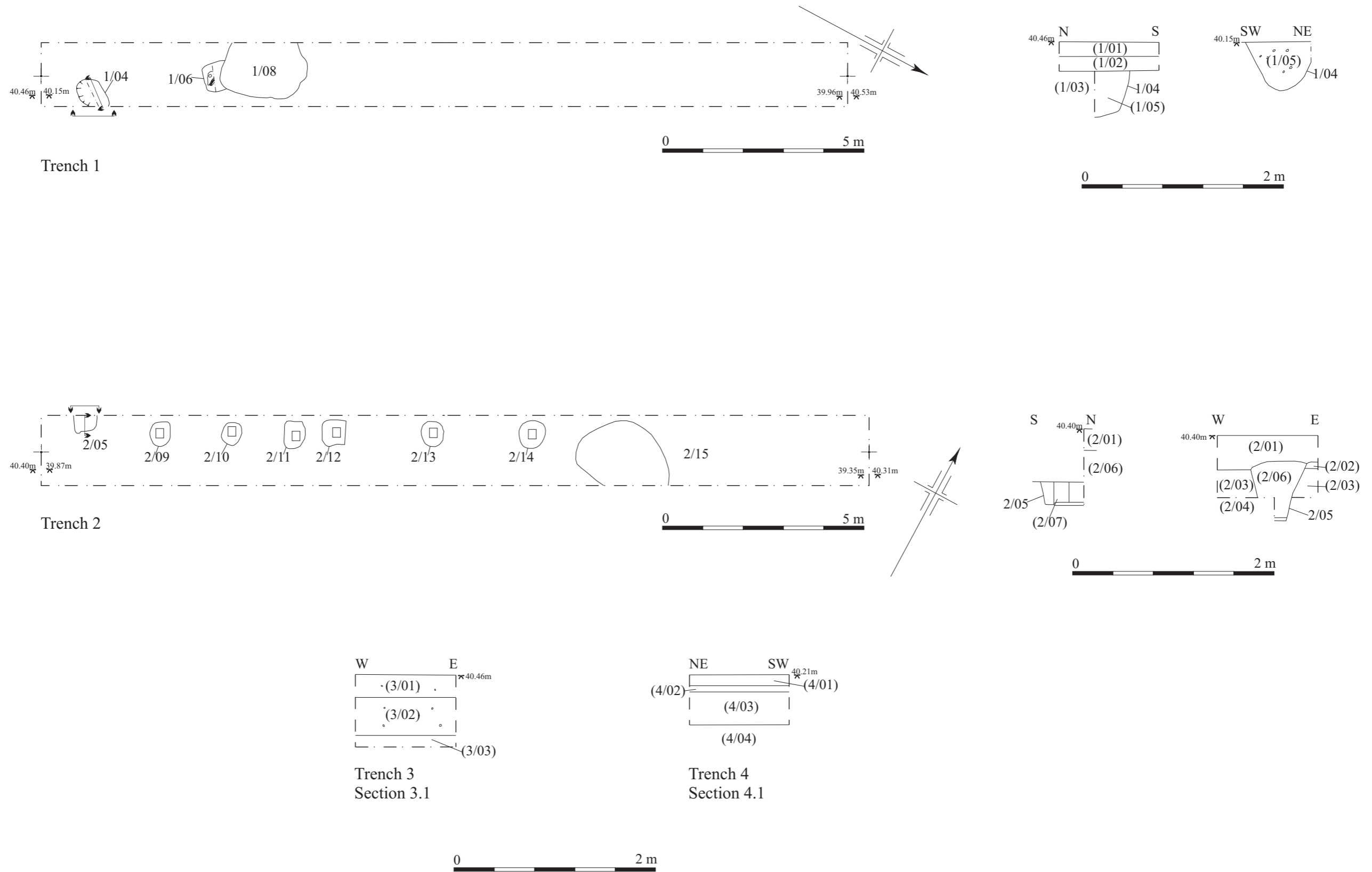


Figure 2. Trenches 1 & 2 Plans and Sections, Trenches 3 & 4 Sections

The other postholes were:

Context	Shape in plan	Dimensions	Fill
2/09	Rectangular with rounded corners	480mm square; post 180mm E/W, 160mm N/S	Mid grey-brown sandy silt with 5-10% of layer (2/02) within it
2/10	Oval	500mm E/W, 400mm N/S; post 140mm x 120mm as surviving	Mid grey-brown sandy silt with 5-10% of layer (2/02) within it
2/11	Sub-circular	500mm E/W, 550mm N/S	Mid grey-brown sandy silt with 60% of layer (2/02) within it
2/12	Sub-circular	600mm E/W, 550mm N/S; post 170mm square	Mid grey-brown sandy silt
2/13	Circular	520-550mm in diameter; post 170mm square	Mid grey-brown sandy silt with a brick fragment
2/14	Sub-circular	520-570mm in diameter; post 170mm square	Mid grey-brown sandy silt with 5-10% of layer (2/02) within it

The spacing of the post holes was uniform in two parts with 2/05, and 209 – 2/11 presumably belonging to one outbuilding and 2/12 – 2/14 belonging to a second outbuilding. A sherd of 19th century pottery was recovered from both the fill (2/06) of posthole 2/05 and from the fill of posthole 2/14.

Towards the east end of the trench was an irregular pit 2/15 dug to bury demolition material. This was under the position of the shed still standing in 2007 (CgMs 2007, Plate 1).

Trenches 3 and 4 (Figure 2 for representative sections)

Both trenches exhibited basically the same soil sequence with Corton Formation comprising loose dark grey-brown sand and gravel mottled orange (3/03 and 4/04). The overlying subsoil was firm mid-dark grey-brown silty sand with brick and tile flecking and 15% gravel content (3/02 and 4/03). This varied in thickness from 350mm in Trench 4 to 420mm in Trench 3. The uppermost topsoil deposit was loose dark red-brown sandy clay (3/01 and 4/01) varying in thickness from 150mm in Trench 4 to 210mm in Trench 3. Within Trench 4 there was a demolition layer of dark brown-grey, mottled white and red, mortar, brick, tile, and sand. This was 140mm thick and lay between the subsoil and topsoil. The northern 5.5m of the 13.5m trench was disturbed by services and demolition activity.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation, which took place during snow, sleet and rain that did not affect the results, was monitored by Ken Hamilton, Head of Archaeological Planning, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 5 sherds with a total weight of 20g. It was all of 19th century date with the exception of a single sherd of ?Romano-British type. The following fabric types were noted:

MS: **Micaceous Sandy ware.** Orange sandy fabric with ironstone and abundant mica. Wheel-thrown. Romano-British? 1 sherd, 6g.

19thC: **Miscellaneous 19th and 20th century wares.** Mass-produced white earthenwares, stonewares etc. 4 sherds, 14g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The micaceous sandy sherd is slightly abraded, and may be residual.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Tr	Cntxt	MS		19thC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	5			1	3	19thC
2	3	1	6			RB?
2	6			2	6	19thC
2	14			1	5	19thC
	Total	1	6	4	14	

5.2 Other finds

A large sherd of a large clear glass ?mineral water bottle was recovered from the fill (2/06) of posthole 2/05. The manufacturer is unidentifiable from the surviving part of the monogram. A sherd of clear, with a subtle blue-green tinge, rectangular glass vessel was recovered from the subsoil (2/03) within Trench 2 .

5.3 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken as the potential of the deposits was not felt to be sufficient to warrant sampling.

6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation found evidence for the outbuildings erected sometime between 1953 and 1972. Other features found are associated with the twentieth century occupation although the pottery found in them is dated to the nineteenth century. Is this a case of long surviving vessels?

Prior to that date the site had been in use as arable land and partly as an orchard. The subsoil relates to this usage. The topsoil appears to have been redistributed across the site post-demolition of the buildings.

A single sherd of probable Romano-British date was recovered from the agricultural soil.

7 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

CgMs 2007 *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: 25 Queens Road, Attleborough, Norfolk*. Unpublished client report

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

English Heritage 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*

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

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
Trench 1								
1/01	Topsoil	Friable, dark grey brown. Clay sand	0.12m	1.60m	20.00m	None	Topsoil	
1/02	Subsoil	Firm, medium dark brown grey sandy clay	0.16m	1.60m	20.00m	None	Subsoil	
1/03	Natural	Loose medium grey brown sand and gravel	0.05m	1.60m	20.00m		Natural	
1/04	Cut	Rounded, with a flat base. Nearly vertical sides with flat base.	0.59m	0.70m	0.65m		Small pit.	Post-Medieval
1/05	Fill	Friable, dark grey brown. Gravel < 0.03m 5%	0.49m	0.70m	0.65m	Pot, Bone, Plastic tape	Small pit.	Post-Medieval
1/06	Cut	Rounded	0.13m	0.70m	0.65m		Dog Burial, not fully excavated	Modern
1/07	Fill	Loose, dark grey brown.	0.13m	0.70m	0.65m	Animal bone	Fill of 1/06	Modern
1/08	Cut	Rounded	Unk	2.00m	1.35m		Modern Rubbish Pit, not excavated	Modern
1/09	Fill	Loose, dark grey brown.	Unk	2.00m	1.35m	Plastic	Fill of 1/08	Modern
ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
Trench 2								
2/01	Topsoil	Dark grey brown, sandy silt. < 1% gravel	0.15m	1.60m	20.00m	None	Topsoil	
2/02	Subsoil	Pale grey silty clay.	0.10m	1.60m	20.00m	None	Hardcore surface	Modern
2/03	Subsoil	Pale-mid brown sandy silt	0.25m	1.60m	20.00m	Roman pottery, post-med glass	Subsoil	Post-medieval
2/04	Natural	Pale yellow grey with red-brown silty sand	0.02m	1.60m	20.00m	None	Natural	
2/05	Cut	Sub rectangular pit	0.58m	0.43m	0.59m	None	Modern post hole. Post still in situ	Modern
2/06	Fill	Mid grey brown sandy silt. 5-10% gravel	0.22m	0.40m	0.55m	Pottery, glass	Fill of 2/05	
2/07	Post	Post		0.15m			Decayed post in 2/05	
2/08								
2/09	Cut	Rounded corners		0.18m	0.16m		Rectangular post hole	
2/10	Cut	Oval		0.14m	0.12m		Post hole	
2/11	Cut	Sub – circular, post pipe 0.25x0.18m		0.50m	0.55m		Post hole	
2/12	Cut	Sub – circular, post 0.17m square		0.60m	0.55m		Post hole	
2/13	Cut	Circular		0.52m	0.55m		Post hole	
2/14	Cut	Sub – circular		0.52m	0.57m		Post hole	
2/15	Cut	Irregular		1.60m	1.70m		Demolition pit. Not bottomed	Recent

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
2/16	Fill	Loose pale grey silty sand with numerous fragments of brick, concrete etc.		1.60m	1.70m	None Kept	Not Bottomed	
Trench 3								
3/01	Topsoil	Loose, dark grey brown sandy clay	0.21m	1.60m	20.00m	None	Topsoil	
3/02	Subsoil	Firm mid grey brown silty sand	0.42m	1.60m	20.00m	None	Subsoil	
3/03	Natural	Loose, dark grey brown with mottled orange. Sandy gravel.	0.10m	1.60m	20.00m	None	Natural	
ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
Trench 4								
4/01	Topsoil	Loose dark grey brown sandy clay	0.15m	1.60m	20.00m	None	Topsoil	
4/02	Deposit	Firm, dark brown grey mottled with grey	0.14m	1.60m	8.50m	None	Demolition Layer	
4/03	Subsoil	Soft medium to dark grey brown silty sand	0.35m	1.60m	8.50m	None	Subsoil	
4/04	Natural	Soft mid brown with red patches. Silty sand.	0.05	1.60m	20.00m	None	Natural	