Holmes Close
Norwich

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

May 2013

Client: Lovell

OA East Report No: 1446
OASIS No: oxfordar3-139139
NGR: TG 2586 0997
Report Number: 1446
Site Name: Holmes Close Norwich
HER Event No: ENF 130409
Date of Works: November 2012 to February 2013
Client Name: Lovell
Client Ref: n/a
Planning Ref: 11/02116/F
Grid Ref: TG 2586 0997
Site Code: XNFHCN12
Finance Code: XNFHCN12
Receiving Body: Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, Norfolk County Council
Accession No: ENF 130409
Prepared by: Anthony Haskins
Position: Supervisor
Date: 13th May 2013
Checked by: Paul Spoor
Position: Regional Manager, OA East
Date: 14th May 2013
Signed: ........................................

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Summary

Between 22/11/2012 and 8/2/2013, OA East carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Former Dairy Crest Ltd site, Holmes Close, Norwich, Norfolk (TG 2586 0997). Planning permission (11/02116/F) was granted for the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of 24 dwellings. The monitoring was carried out during and immediately following demolition, and during the ground works.

No archaeological features were identified or artefacts recovered during the monitoring visits.
1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

1.1.1 The site lies on sands and gravels of the Happisburgh Glacigenic Formation and Lowestoft Formation, formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period when the local environment was dominated by ice age conditions (Geology of Britain viewer, British Geological Survey; http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain). It lies on a plateau at around 30m AOD, around 1.4km north of the river Yare. The location of the site is presented on Figure 1.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1.1 A search of the Norfolk Heritage Environment Record (NHER) was carried out on the 7th December, incorporating a search area of 500m around the watching brief site (the 'Site'). The Site is located in a built up area on the north-eastern side of Norwich, just north of Plumstead Road.

2.1.2 The Site lies to the west of a possible Roman Road (NHER 7598) and approximately 400-500m south-east of an area of undated cropmark features (NHER 51909 and 51910) and a possible Roman kiln (NHER 58194).

2.1.3 Closer to the Site, Roman pottery has been found (NHER 9630) and Post-Medieval or Modern pits recorded (NHER 41906). Additionally, the Site lies within what was formerly Mousehold Heath (NHER 53082).

2.1.4 To the north-west of the Site aerial photography has shown the presence of an aerodrome dating from before World War 2 but still in use into WW2 (NHER 12416). Other WW2 features in this area are a heavy anti-aircraft battery, anti-landing ditches (NHER 51903) and possible training trenches (NHER 51902). It is possible that WW2 ditches or trenches may be extend into the Site. Immediately to the south and west of the Site are WW2 air-raid shelters (NHER 52008 and 52098) and to the east are the site of pillboxes, dug-outs and a gun-pit (NHER 32548) and possible firing ranges and trenches (NHER 51905).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 The objective of this watching brief was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

3.1.2 The Brief (Albone 2012) required that occasional visits be carried out, tied to key stages in the demolition and clearance programme, with more continuous observation where groundworks were deemed to have potential impact on deposits.

3.1.3 The area of investigation is presented on Figure 1.

3.1.4 Site conditions were mostly fine during visits.

4 RESULTS

4.1.1 Six visits were carried out by staff from OA East.
4.1.2 P. Spoerry visited on 22/11/12 to discuss protocols for observation vis a vis slab removal and other impacts below, with C. Cooper.

4.1.3 An open trench, excavated using a narrow machine bucket the previous day, was observed across the former site access on the northwest side (A on Figure 2). This trench revealed c 500mm of the upper sequence. In almost all parts of the trench only natural gravel was revealed below modern overburden of c. 150mm, although at the western end there was light brown layer about 200mm thick above the gravels, that appeared to be a buried topsoil. It seemed that this had been buried by 20th century dumping (related to the previous buildings on the site).

4.1.4 G. Clarke visited the site on 9/1/13. During his visit a service trench was dug across the central part of the site through a layer of made ground to a depth of 0.5m, underlain by natural mid red-brown flint gravels with mid orange-brown sand (B). An area in the north eastern part of the site was also observed where the ground level was being reduced (C). Again only the natural gravel was observed.

4.1.5 P. Spoerry visited on 28/1/13 to assess the impact of slab removal and machine-clearance of slab make-up on the western half of the site. The whole of the western half of the site had been reduced by c 400mm revealing mid brown gravels, within which there were large areas of yellow-brown sand. Study of the sections around three site edges, and in two islands of survival confirmed that in almost all areas the only material removed had been modern make-up for the former hard-standing and buildings. In the extreme western part of the site, however, the section revealed a mid-brown subsoil below a small area of topsoil/rubble mix (D). This deposit sat at around 150mm below the 20th century ground level and was c. 200mm deep, thinning towards the east before being truncated entirely at around 6m along the southern site boundary. This deposit appeared similar to that observed on 22/11/12, and was deemed to be a buried former topsoil, now de-natured. Modern glass and slate roof tile fragments were recovered from this deposit.

4.1.6 A. Haskins visited the site on 31/1/13, 6/2/13 and 8/2/13. Two drainage sumps were observed, during the first visit, on the north eastern edge of the site (C on Fig 2). Both were cut through the natural mid red-brown gravel.

4.1.7 The later visits observed the foundation trenches towards the eastern end of site prior to the pouring of concrete. The trenches again cut through the mid red-brown natural gravel.

4.1.8 No archaeological deposits or artefacts were uncovered during the works.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1.1 Despite the development site lying close to known remains of Roman-British date, no pre-modern activity was identified. This may, however, not be a true indication of potential at this location, as the site had for the most part been formerly cleared of topsoil, and any other deposits, down to a truncated natural gravel subsoil. Thus any former layers and shallow features at the topsoil base, would have been removed.
6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

6.1.1 The author would like to thank Lovell who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Paul Spoerry.

6.1.2 The brief for archaeological works was written by James Albone of Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

## APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

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<tr>
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### Type of Project/Techniques Used

**Prompt**

Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5

**Please select all techniques used:**

- ☑ Field Observation (periodic visits)
- ☑ Full Excavation (100%)
- ☑ Full Survey
- ☑ Geophysical Survey
- ☑ Open-Area Excavation
- ☑ Recorded Observation
- ☑ Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
- ☑ Test Pit Survey
- ☑ Salve Excavation
- ☑ Salvage Record
- ☑ Systematic Field Walking
- ☑ Systematic Metal Detector Survey
- ☑ Watching Brief

### Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the NMR Monument Type Thesaurus and significant finds using the MDA Object type Thesaurus together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

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<td>Project Design Originator</td>
<td>Paul Spoerry (OA East)</td>
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<td>Project Manager</td>
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### Digital Media

- Database
- GIS
- Geophysics
- Images
- Illustrations
- Moving Image
- Spreadsheets
- Survey
- Text
- Virtual Reality

### Paper Media

- Aerial Photos
- Context Sheet
- Correspondence
- Diary
- Drawing
- Manuscript
- Map
- Matrices
- Microfilm
- Misc.
- Research/Notes
- Photos
- Plans
- Report
- Sections
- Survey
All dimensions to be verified on site by Main Contractor before the start of any shop drawings or work whatsoever either on their own behalf or that of sub-contractors.

Report any discrepancies to the Contract Administrator at once.

This drawing is to be read with all relevant Architect's and Engineer's drawings and other relevant information.
Figure 2b:

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