

Binham Gauging Station,
Warham,
Norfolk.



**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



May 2012

**Client: Environment Agency
/Royal Haskoning**

OA East Report No: 1367

OASIS No: Oxfordar3-126956

NGR: TF 96000 41393

Binham Gauging Station,

Warham, Norfolk.

Watching Brief

CHER No. ENF129120

Date of Works: 8/5/2012

Report No: 1367

Excavator: Jonathan House BA

Client: Environment Agency / Royal Haskoning

Report Date: May 2012

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Summary

On the 8th May 2012, OA East carried out an archaeological watching brief at Binham Gauging Station, Warham, Norfolk (TF 96000 41393). The monitoring consisted of the observation of services trenches and the foundations of a kiosk. Much of the groundworks took place within an embankment of material likely formed by the occasional maintenance of the adjoining waterway. The deepest excavations occurred within a trench crossing the river and cutting the river bed. This trench was excavated into the natural gravels, however no significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered.

1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.1.1 The site is located on a tributary of the River Stiffkey, with the Stiffkey running to from south to north to the west of the site. As the site sits at the base of a shallow tributary valley there is a steady rise in the ground to the north-east and south-west.
- 1.1.2 Binham Road runs immediately to the south of the site broadly running north-west, south-east, between Warham to the north-west, and Binham to the south-east.
- 1.1.3 The site lies on Alluvium overlying Head (both of which can be composed of a mix of clay, silt, sand and gravel). The former is formed by riverine deposition, the latter is a quaternary deposit formed from the material accumulated by down slope movements. The bedrock is composed of Chalk (BGS; <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain>).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 This section draws heavily from *Specification for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording, Binham Gauging Station, Warham*. OA East.
- 2.1.2 The site lies in the centre of an area of known and important archaeological remains relating to a number of periods (as identifiable through Norfolk Heritage Explorer <http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk>).
- 2.1.3 Principal amongst these are cropmarks of possible Roman enclosures, field systems and associated linear features (NHER27080 and NHER30410), within which the site lies.
- 2.1.4 Close by and to the east are also prehistoric monuments including a ring ditch or hengiform monument (NHE27074), and a further ring ditch (NHER11326) and to the southwest is a more well-known Bronze Age round barrow, west of Fiddlers Hill (NHER11283).
- 2.1.5 The site is also close to earthworks associated with the medieval Hale's Manor (NHER1886) that itself lies around 300m to the northwest, although earthworks that may relate to former gardens and other enclosures extend towards the subject site.

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 required that all below ground disturbance should be viewed under constant attendance.
- 3.1.3 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Locations of groundworks were recorded at appropriate scales digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

- 3.1.4 The weather did not inhibit the archaeological work, however the trench edges within the watercourse were very unstable and only available for a brief visual inspection, before backfilling took place.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Groundworks

Cross River Trench

- 4.1.1 A bucket width trench was excavated across the river, with the purpose to submerge and bury a ducting pipe below the river bed. The trench was excavated to the top of the bank on both sides of the river (see plate 1). The total depth of the trench from the top of the bank to the its base, was approximately 2m. The conditions did not allow for a measured drawn section, as the trench was in the river, leaving the trench sides very unstable.
- 4.1.2 A visible raised embankment ran alongside the river on the south-west side, the trench formed a section through this material. The upper most layer within the bank consisted of a dark brown, very silty topsoil material, with frequent flint inclusions of varied size, this layer was recorded to a depth of 0.96m from the top of the bank; this deposit overlay the natural gravels. The ground conditions were very unstable, and was prone to collapse, suggesting the bank material was poorly consolidated and relatively uncompacted ground.

Kiosk, and trenches for services

- 4.1.3 A number of small trenches were excavated at the top of the river bank within the raised embankment for the provision of services and footings for a kiosk. All were dug into the topsoil, with the deepest excavation 0.55m partially cutting into a subsoil, a reddish brown, sandy silt. It was apparent however that the embankment may not be consistent in its make up, as an area of turf was removed accidentally by the machine bulldozer blade (see plate 3.), revealing flints likely deposited by water channel maintenance.
- 4.1.4 None of the interventions associated with these groundworks revealed the natural gravels, and no features were identified within the ground disturbance.

Finds

- 4.1.5 No finds were recovered from any of the groundworks.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The river channel here is undoubtedly of man-made construction, and is present on the first edition map (<http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html> accessed: 10/5/12). Any natural precursor channel was not visible during the course of these works. Deposits within the immediate vicinity of the waterway are likely to be quite transient, between the necessary upkeep and maintenance and natural river processes. No indication of bank

construction was observed, and no dating material was recovered from the deposits. It is likely the current embankment material on which the majority of the groundworks impacted is of relatively recent date, and a result of the most recent episode of waterway maintenance. The presence of unsorted gravel and flints immediately below the turf as seen in Plate 3 would also suggest a recent deposition. However, without dating material the age and provenance of the embankment is not certain.

- 5.1.2 The circumstances of the project meant a close inspection of the deep section through the river was not possible, thus contributing very little understanding of the waterway construction and the deposits forming the channel bank.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1.1 The author would like to thank Environment Agency and Royal Haskoning who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Paul Sperry.
- 6.1.2 The brief for archaeological works was written by David Robertson.

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Websites

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Date accessed: 11/5/12

Norfolk Heritage Explorer, (Online) Available at: <http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk> Date
accessed: 11/5/12

Old-Maps.co.uk, (Online), Available at: <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html> Date
accessed: 10/5/12

APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	Oxfordar3-126956			
Project Name	Binham Gauging Station, Warham, Norfolk.			
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	08-05-2012	Finish	08-05-2012
Previous Work (by OA East)	No		Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	ENF129120	Planning App. No.	20090238
HER No.	ENF129120	Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Field Observation (periodic visits)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Record
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Excavation (100%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Field Walking
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Metal Detector Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pit Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Open-Area Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
None	None	None	None
<input type="text"/>	Select period...	<input type="text"/>	Select period...
<input type="text"/>	Select period...	<input type="text"/>	Select period...

Project Location

County	Norfolk	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	North Norfolk	Binham Road Warham Norfolk, NR21 ODQ	
Parish	Warham		
HER	Norfolk Landscape Archaeology		
Study Area	75m2	National Grid Reference	TF 96000 41393

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	David Robertson
Project Design Originator	Paul Spoerry
Project Manager	Paul Speorry
Supervisor	Jonathan House

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Norfolk Museum Service	OA East (Bar Hill)	Norfolk Museum Service
ENF129120	XNFBGW12	ENF129120

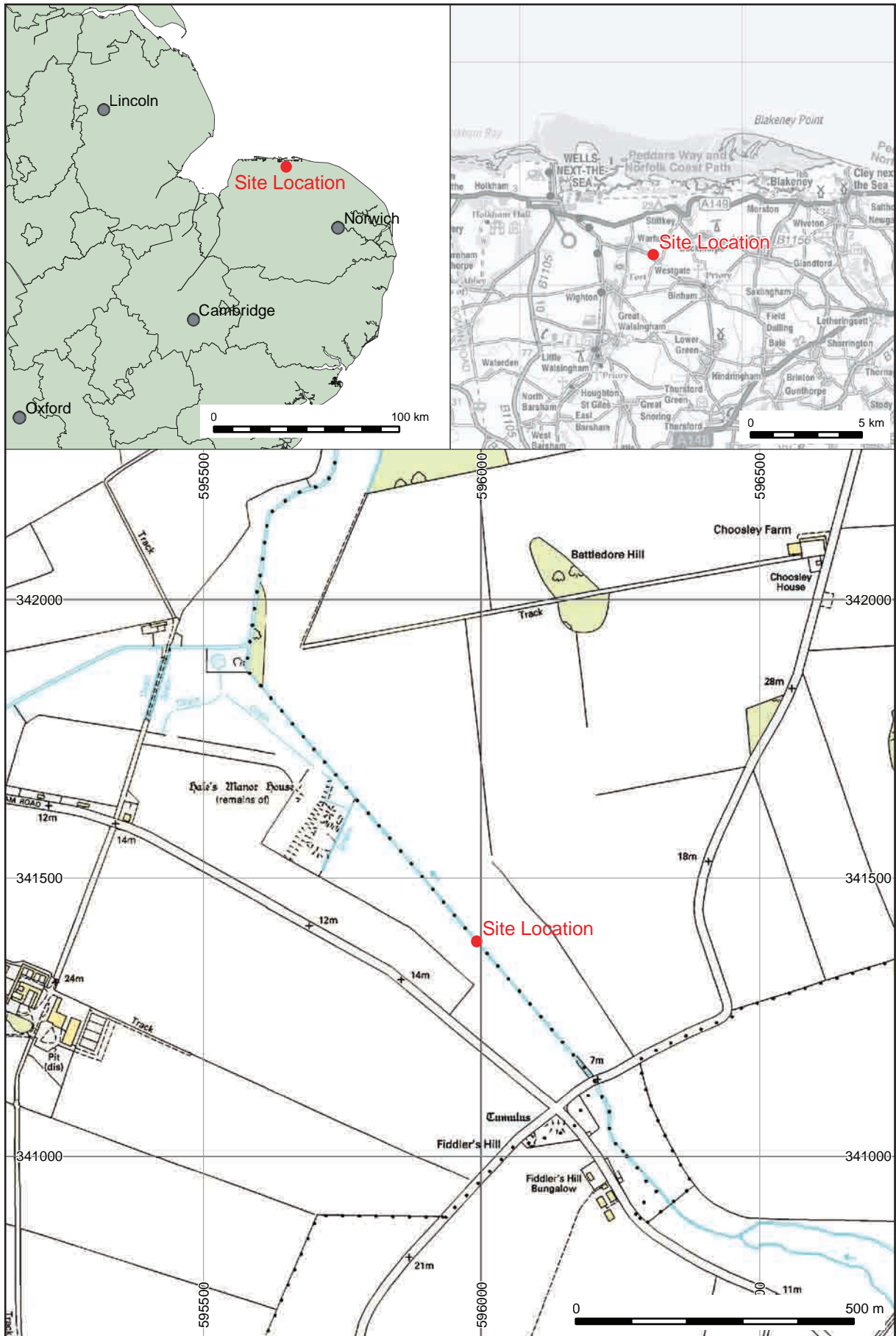
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Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
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<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:

The monitoring consisted of the observation of services trenches and the foundations of a kiosk. Much of the groundworks took place within an embankment of material likely formed by the occasional maintenance of the adjoining waterway. The deepest excavations occurred for a trench crossing the river and cutting the river bed. This trench was excavated into the natural gravels, however no significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered.



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Figure 1: Site location

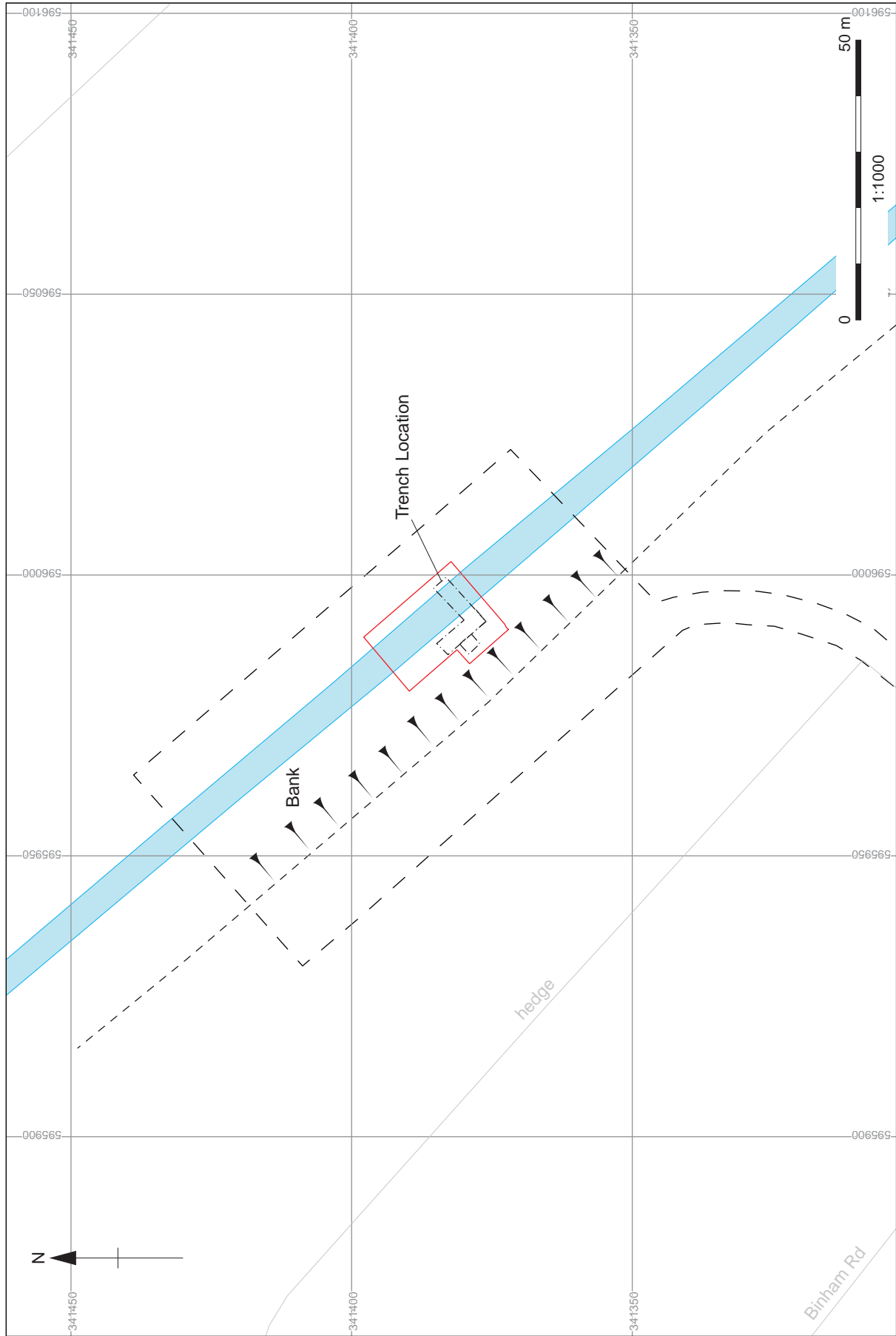


Figure 2: Plan of groundworks



Plate 1 : Excavation of the trench through the river, taken from south-west.



Plate 2: Riverside embankment, looking towards Hale's Manor, taken from south-east.



Plate 3: Turf removed by machine bulldozer blade, taken from south-west.



Plate 4: Embankment groundworks, taken from north-east.



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