

Bronze Age Enclosure  
and field system at  
Ormesby St. Michael,  
Norfolk



**Archaeological  
Evaluation Report**



December 2009

**Client: The broads authority**

OA East Report No: 1152  
OASIS No: oxfordar3-69143  
NGR: TG 4747 1519

## **Bronze Age Enclosure and Field System at Ormesby st. Michael, Norfolk**

*Archaeological Evaluation Interim Report*

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*With contributions by Richard Mortimer*

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*Report Date: December 2009*

**Report Number:** 1152  
**Site Name:** Ormesby St. Michael  
**HER Event No:** ENS 123 602  
**Date of Works:** December 2009  
**Client Name:** The Broads Authority  
**Client Ref:**  
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**Site Code:** ENS123 602  
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**Position:** Project Manager  
**Date:** 10-12-09  
**Signed:** .....

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## **Summary**

*Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009, Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological evaluation on the proposed site of a series of silt lagoons for the Broads Authority at Ormesby St Michael near Gt. Yarmouth. This revealed evidence for a substantial Bronze Age enclosure, together with further prehistoric field system ditches. Few finds were recovered to provide an accurate date for the features and no evidence of contemporary or subsequent settlement activity was recorded.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Ormesby St. Michael, Norfolk.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological Evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by James Albone of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (formerly Cambridgeshire County Council's CAM ARC).
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by NLA, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies by the side of Main Road, Ormesby St. Michael, Norfolk. It sits on a ridge of higher ground, with Ormesby Broad immediately to the north of the site, and Rollesby Broad c.500m to the south.
- 1.2.2 Based on examination of the British Geological Survey map of the area (map sheets 132 and 148 'Mundesley and North Walsham'), drift deposits of the Corton Formation comprising Diamicton and Glaciolacustrine silts were anticipated below the site, with sand and gravel noted adjacent to the northern site boundary. Solid deposits of the Crag Group (sand, gravelly sand/ clay) were anticipated below the drift.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The proposed site is located to the north of Main Road and to the south of an east-west arm of Ormesby Broad and lies at between 3.00m and 1.00m AOD with the slope facing north toward the Broad. The proposed development area overlies the site of a series of cropmarks (until the 1960's they were partial earthworks) of enclosures, ditches, banks, mounds and trackways recorded by the Norfolk National Mapping Programme (NNMP) and on the NHER as MNF30626.
- 1.3.2 The NNMP data was collated in 2005 since when further cropmarks have shown up on the Google Earth site (particularly those of Sept 11, 2006), adding greatly to the understanding of the layout of the site. The cropmark complex is bisected by a north-south field boundary, with the development area to the eastern side. While the NNMP mapping is still the best source for this eastern field - and has been used to locate the evaluation trenches - the western half of the complex is best viewed on the Google Earth site.
- 1.3.3 The date of the features represented by the cropmarks is unknown but it has been suggested that they may be of medieval or post-medieval date, though early Medieval, Romano-British or prehistoric dates are also possible. The cropmarks indicate that the main enclosure comprises of a bank with both internal and external ditches and internal

sub-divisions. It is possible that the enclosure may have served a domestic or other specialised function.

1.3.4 The NNMP entry for 2005 is given verbatim below:

1.3.5 March 2005. Norfolk NMP.

The enclosure or possible moat described above is visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs (S1-6), centred at TG 4743 1521. The ditch defining the enclosure does not appear substantial enough to indicate a moat; instead, the site seems to have been enclosed by a bank with both an external and internal ditch. It does, however, have the appearance of a medieval to post-medieval site, as it survived partially as an earthwork until at least 1964 (S1-2) and it shares its orientation with the post-medieval field boundary which cuts through the site from north to south. The function of the enclosure is not clear. It is not depicted on any of the consulted historic maps, and the area appears to have survived unenclosed as part of Ormesby

Common into the first half of the 19th century (S7-8). Internal divisions within it suggest that it might have been a domestic site such as a farmstead. Alternatively, it might have had some other specialised function, perhaps even associated with peat extraction from Ormesby Broad, which lies immediately to its north. A smaller enclosure (NHER 18153) on the northern bank of the Broad may have been a contemporary site. Many of the linear ditches visible in the area surrounding the site are also likely to be contemporary boundary ditches, perhaps for fields, and drainage features. Parallel ditches leading away from the south-east and south-west corners of the enclosure are likely to define trackways. The eastern trackway may join to another possible trackway mapped further to the east (NHER 27261). The enclosure measures 132m north-to-south by 126m east-to-west. The fact that many of the north-to-south linear features lie parallel to modern tramlines means that they should be treated with caution as their archaeological origin is not certain. Similarly, although a number of pit-like features are visible within the enclosure, generally these have not been mapped as it is not possible to distinguish them from marks of geological origin.

(S1-8) S. Tremlett (NMP), 1 March 2005

1.3.6 The following is an edited note from Sophie Tremlett at the NMP on the later cropmarks viewed on Google Earth:

1.3.7 The GoogleEarth 2006 image is essentially showing the equivalent of the NLA obliques, but for the western half of the enclosure rather than the eastern.

The circular mark (inside the northern enclosure boundary) looks good, although it is best to treat this kind of mark with a degree of caution (it is about the same width as the tramlines, and the background geology is producing a 'mottled' effect which is showing in a not entirely dissimilar way). Assuming it is associated with the enclosure, which looks likely, its interpretation is entirely dependent on that, i.e. if it is medieval or post medieval, it may be a dovecote, mill mound, stack stand or something industrial. It is feasible that the enclosure is actually earlier (Iron Age or Roman?), in which case it would presumably be domestic.

The 'long, thin curvilinear enclosure' at the south seems narrow and may form some sort of entrance passage or drove at its western end. It may be the western continuation of what has been mapped as the southern boundary of the eastern half of the enclosure (around TG 4744 1515) on the NMP, although without rectifying and inserting the Google image into the map it is difficult to say exactly how the features match up. The 'circular' or pit-like marks within it could be archaeological, and given they way they're bounded by the ditches to their north and south I would probably map them, but I would add a considerable 'health warning' to them, as they're not that dissimilar to some of the background geological marks to their south; much the same could be said for the pit-like marks visible on the obliques of the eastern half of the enclosure, which I didn't map, but which are about the same size.

S. Tremlett (NMP), 19/11/09

## **1.4 Acknowledgements**

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank the Broads Authority who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. Particular thanks are due to Beth Williams for her support and organisation of the site.
- 1.4.2 The project was managed by Richard Mortimer. All on-site surveying was carried out by Louise Bush and excavation was undertaken by Nick Gilmour, Louise Bush and Chris Faine. The brief for archaeological works was written by James Albone of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology who visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The objective of this archaeological evaluation 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. Particularly to determine the nature and date of any features that resulted in the formation of cropmarks visible on areal photographs of the site.

### 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a 12 ton tracked excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.

2.2.2 The site survey was carried out by Louise Bush using Leica 1200 GPS rover using smartnet™.

2.2.3 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

2.2.4 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

2.2.5 Bulk Soil samples were taken of deposits that were seen to contain charcoal, as well as from other deposits.

2.2.6 In spite of rain the site remained surprisingly dry, the water table was not encountered even in the deepest excavated slots.

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Recorded archaeological features are summarised briefly below.

#### 3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 This trench revealed a single north-south ditch that was up to 0.80m wide and 0.32m deep. It contained several struck flints. A wide shallow feature ran east-west across the trench, no finds were recovered from this and it may represent a hedge line, narrow trackway or de-turfed area.

#### 3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 This contained three parallel ditches running east-west that had similar pale fills and are likely to be prehistoric in date. The central ditch was larger, being 2.40m wide and 0.84m deep. In addition two large post-medieval features were identified which may represent ditch terminals or sand/gravel pits.

#### 3.4 Trench 3

3.4.1 Trench 3 revealed three parallel ditches running on a north-south alignment. Furthest to the east was a small ditch, 0.70m wide and 0.40m deep. Adjacent to this was a larger ditch, 3.4m wide and 1.2m deep. No clearly datable finds were recovered from the feature but charcoal was recovered from an environmental sample taken from near its base. At the western end of the trench a third ditch, which appeared to represent part of an internal enclosure visible on cropmarks, was 2.0m wide and over 0.70m deep. A single large but relatively abraded sherd of a collared urn was recovered from this feature.

3.4.2 In addition a single ditch running on an east-west alignment was identified. This had a much darker and softer fill which contained post-medieval pottery and oyster shell. This ditch is shown on historic OS maps and can be dated to the 19th century Enclosure.

#### 3.5 Trench 4

3.5.1 This trench revealed a single large ditch, 3.1m wide and 1.0m deep. No finds were recovered but again, charcoal was present in an environmental sample from close to the base of the feature. In addition a small feature was excavated, which likely represents a tree throw.

#### 3.6 Trench 5

3.6.1 Three ditches were recorded in this trench, all running north-south. One was excavated and shown to be 1.40m wide and 0.54m deep. It contained a small assemblage of possibly Bronze Age struck flint.

#### 3.7 Trench 6

3.7.1 A single ditch was identified in this trench, running along the same north-northeast to south-southwest alignment as the trench. The ditch followed an irregular line and no finds were recovered from the single section excavated across it.

### 3.8 Trench 7

3.8.1 A single ditch 2m wide was recorded running east to west across the middle of this trench.

### 3.9 Trench 8

3.9.1 No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

### 3.10 Trench 9

3.10.1 No archaeological features were identified in this trench, although a small sub-circular feature may represent a pit, no finds were recovered from it.

### 3.11 Trench 10

3.11.1 No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

### 3.12 Finds Summary

3.12.1 The finds recovered from the evaluation are summarised in the table below. Within the large enclosure ditch and its internal divisions the only finds were struck and burnt flints and a single large sherd of collared urn.

Context	Trench	No.	Description	Date
1		1	struck flint core	Neolithic
2		4	unglazed red earthenware	19th C
2		4	burnt flints	?BA
2		3	struck flint flakes	Neolithic & EBA
5		1	struck flint flake	?EBA
18		2	fragments fired clay	?BA
20		11	19th C ceramic, glass and Fe	19th C
22		3	brick and tile fragments	19th C
24		5	3 struck flint flakes, 1 long blade, 1 thumbnail scraper	Neolithic & EBA
26		2	struck flint flakes	Neolithic/EBA
34		2	struck flint chunks	?BA
37		1	burnt flint	?BA
41		1	burnt flint	?BA
46		2	struck flint chunks	?BA
48		2	struck flint chunks	Neolithic or BA
53		2	1 struck flint flake, 1 possible core	Neolithic or BA
53		1	burnt flint	?BA
71		5	struck flint chunks and flakes	BA
72		1	struck flint flake	Neolithic or BA
79		1	Collared Urn rim sherd	EBA
79		1	burnt hearth stone	Neolithic or BA

79		1	struck flint flake	Neolithic or BA
81		1	flint blade	Neolithic

### 3.13 Environmental Summary

3.13.1 Three bulk soil samples were processed to assess the potential of the site to produce archaeobotanical remains. These showed that no waterlogged organics were present, and neither were there any plant macrofossils preserved through carbonisation. However, two of the samples (from fill 36 of ditch **39** and fill 46 of ditch **40**) did contain charcoal, which would be of sufficient quantity to obtain a radiocarbon date.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 Bronze Age Enclosure

4.1.1 The large square or rectangular enclosure visible as cropmarks is most likely to be Middle Bronze Age in date. The small number of artefacts recovered and lack of internal features suggest that the enclosure did not have a domestic function. However, it is possible that domestic activity occurred within the sub-enclosure seen as cropmarks in the northwest corner of the enclosure. The majority of this sub-enclosure lies outside of the present development area. It is possible that all the finds recovered from the enclosure ditches are residual, representing scattered Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age activity.

### 4.2 Field system

4.2.1 Several smaller ditches recorded across the site represent a field system also probably Middle Bronze Age in date. This field system is on the same alignment as the large enclosure and may be contemporary with it. It is also possible that the enclosure was a later addition to the landscape. The lack of closely datable finds, or excavated relationships, currently precludes detailed discussion of the landscape history.

### 4.3 Significance

4.3.1 The evaluation has shown that the cropmarks visible on the site represent archaeological remains of Bronze Age date; an earlier date than was expected. Large Bronze Age enclosures of this form are known from cropmarks across Norfolk, but little excavation of them has previously been carried out.

### 4.4 Recommendations

4.4.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

## APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-69143		
Project Name	e.g. Bronze Age Enclosure and Field System at Ormesby st. Michael, Norfolk		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	01-12-2009	Finish	08-12-2009
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	ENS123602	Planning App. No.	N/A
HER No.	ENS123602	Related HER/OASIS No.	N/A

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Development Type	Other

### Please select all techniques used:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch	<input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Augering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	

### 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
enclosure	Bronze Age -2.5k to -700	pottery	Bronze Age -2.5k to -700
	Select period...	flint	Neolithic -4k to -2k
	Select period...	flint	Bronze Age -2.5k to -700

### Project Location

County	Norfolk	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	the broads	field on Main Road Ormesby St. Michael, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk	
Parish	Ormesby St. Michael		
HER	Noflok		
Study Area	3.52ha	National Grid Reference	TG 4747 1519

### Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	James Albone
Project Design Originator	Richard Mortimer
Project Manager	Richard Mortimer
Supervisor	Nick Gilmour

### Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Noflok County Store	Oa East Bar Hill	Norfolk county Store
ENS123602	XNFOSM09	ENS123602

### Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

### Notes:

## Drawing Conventions

### Plans

Limit of Excavation		
Deposit - Conjectured		
Natural Features		
Intrusion/Truncation		
Illustrated Section		S.14
Archaeological Deposit	<div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #f4a460; border: 1px solid black;"></div>	
Excavated Slot	<div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #d3d3d3; border: 1px solid black;"></div>	
Modern Deposit	<div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #add8e6; border: 1px solid black;"></div>	
Cropmark	<div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #808080; border: 1px solid black;"></div>	
Cut Number		<b>118</b>

### Sections

Limit of Excavation		
Cut		
Cut-Conjectured		
Deposit Horizon		
Deposit Horizon - Conjectured		
Intrusion/Truncation		
Top Surface/Top of Natural		
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing		
Cut Number		<b>118</b>
Deposit Number		117
Ordnance Datum		18.45m OD ^
Inclusions		

Convention Key

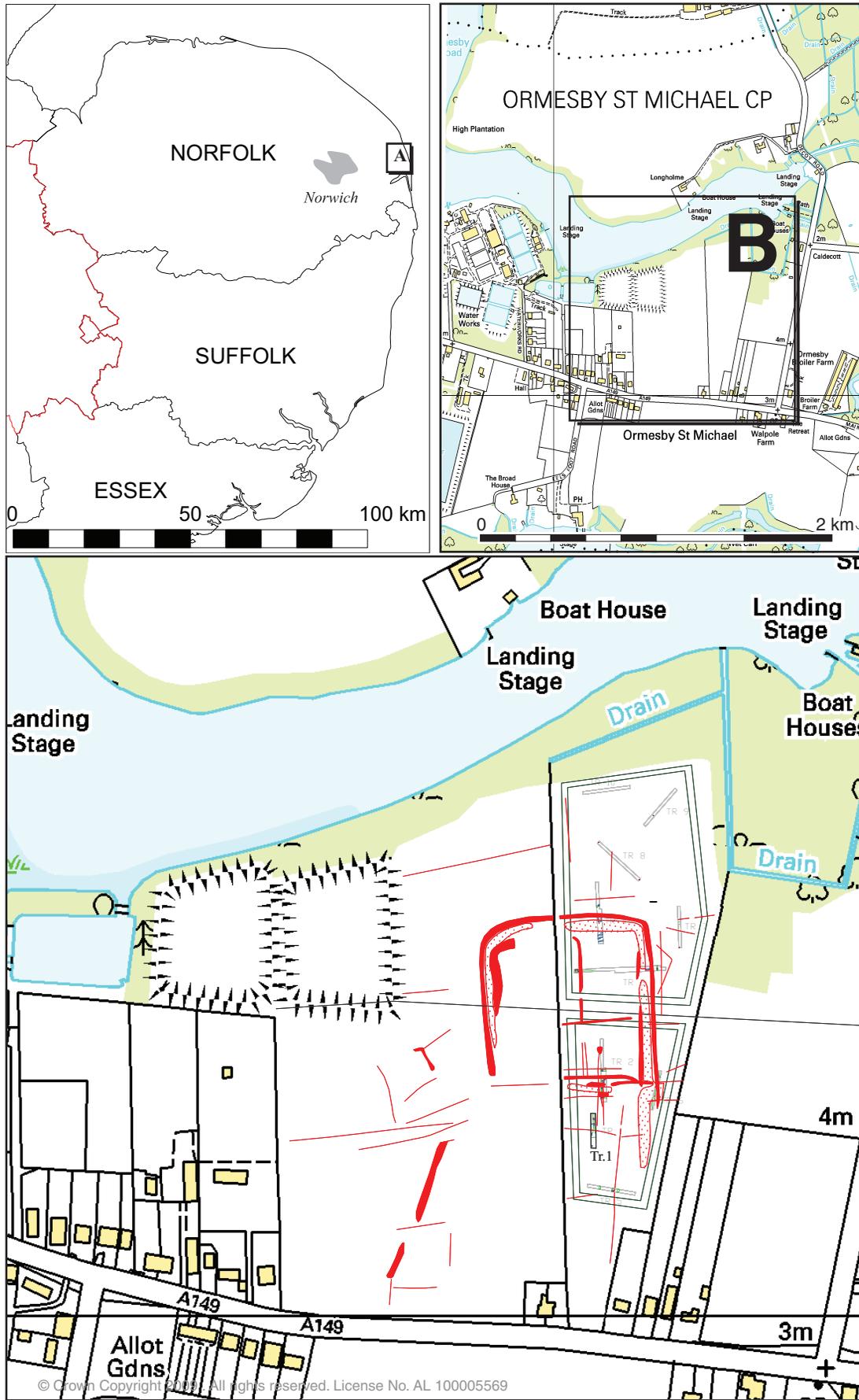


Figure 1: Site Location with croppmarks (in red)

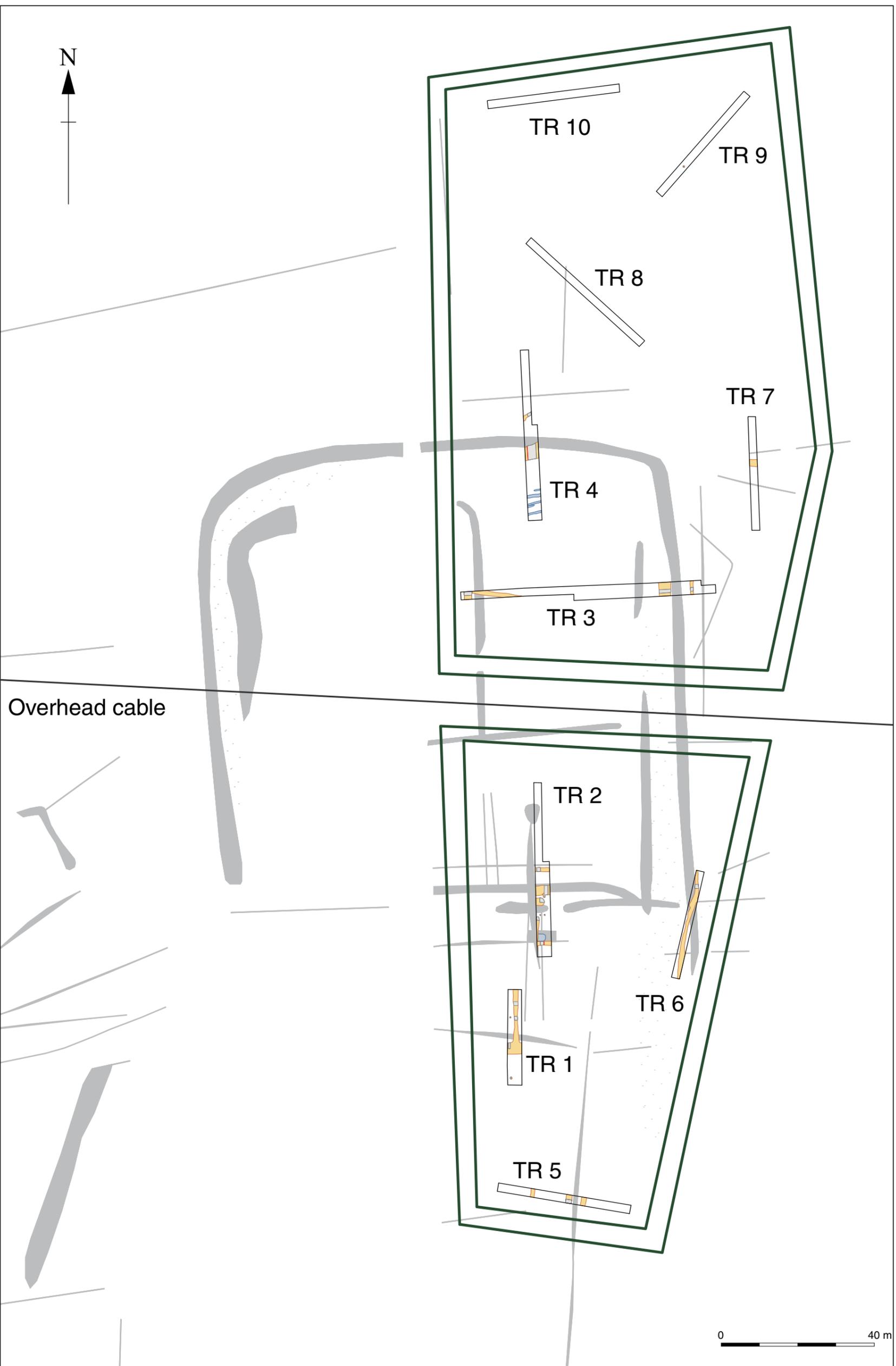


Figure 2: Trench Plan, showing crpomark plot.



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