

Archaeological Test Pit  
Evaluation and Photographic  
Building Survey at Anmer  
Deserted Settlement, Norfolk



**Archaeological Evaluation  
and Building Survey Report**



April 2013

**Client: Sandringham Estate**

OA East Report No: 1439

OASIS No: oxfordar3-139678

NGR: TF 738 294

## **Report Title**

*Archaeological Test pit evaluation and Photographic building survey at*

*Anmer Deserted Settlement Norfolk*

*By James Fairbairn*

*Editor: Aileen Connor BA AIFA*

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*Report Date: April 2013*

**Report Number:** 1439  
**Site Name:** Anmer Deserted Settlement  
**HER Event No:** CNF44549\_2  
**Date of Works:** Dec 2012  
**Client Name:** Sandringham Estate  
**Client Ref:**  
**Planning Ref:**  
**Grid Ref:** TF 738 294  
**Site Code:** XNFANM12  
**Finance Code:** XNFANM12  
**Receiving Body:** \*\*\*\*\*

**Accession No:**

Prepared by: James Fairbairn  
Position: Supervisor  
Date: April 2013

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Position: Manager  
Date: April 2013  
Signed: .....



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**Table of Contents**

**Table of Contents**

**Summary.....6**

**1 Introduction.....7**

    1.1 Location and scope of work.....7

    1.2 Geology and topography.....7

    1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....7

    1.4 Acknowledgements.....8

**2 Aims and Methodology.....9**

    2.1 Aims.....9

    2.2 Methodology.....9

**3 Results.....10**

    3.1 Introduction .....10

    3.2 Test pit evaluation.....10

    3.3 Test pit 1 (see plate 3).....10

    3.4 Test pit 2 (see plate 3).....10

    3.5 Photographic survey.....10

    3.6 Brick structure (see plate 3).....10

    3.7 Doorway (see plate 3).....11

    3.8 Windows (see plate 4).....11

    3.9 Internal features (see plate 7).....11

    3.10 Finds Summary.....11

**4 Discussion and Conclusions.....12**

    4.1 Overview.....12

    4.2 Significance.....12

    4.3 Recommendations.....12

**Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory.....13**

**Appendix B. Bibliography .....13**

    2.1 Websites referenced.....13

**Appendix C. OASIS Report Form .....14**

### List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location map
- Fig. 2 Test Pit locations
- Fig. 3 Section and plan of test pit 1
- Fig. 4 Earth work survey map showing position of test pits

### List of plates

- Plate 1 Test pit 1
- Plate 2 Test pit 2
- Plate 3 South west facing elevation
- Plate 4 North east facing elevation
- Plate 5 North west facing elevation
- Plate 6 South east facing elevation
- Plate 7 Internal view of brick building

## **Summary**

*On the 20th of December 2012 Oxford Archaeology East was commissioned to carry out a photographic survey and a test pit evaluation on the proposed route of a new road on the site of Anmer deserted settlement.*

*A linear feature of dressed flint was recorded in test pit 1 relating to either a building or wall along side of the present road way. A single small building was also recorded as a WW11 Norfolk type Home Guard Store.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation and building survey was conducted at Anmer deserted settlement, The Sandringham Estate, West Norfolk. TF 738 294
- 1.1.2 This photographic survey and test pit evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by David Robertson of the Norfolk Historic Environment Service supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East.
- 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 *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by Norfolk County council, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority along with English Heritage, 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 area under investigation at Amner dessert settlement lie on mainly grass land currently used for grazing cattle. The ground slopes away to the north and west and is bounded by a road known as the square. The Church of St Mary lies immediately to the south west of the test pit location and Amner Hall to the south east. The underlying geology consists of Holywell Nodular Chalk overlain by Lowestoft Formation - Diamicton. The site lies at between 68.4OD and 96.16OD

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 A full HER search was conducted within a one kilometre radius of Amner Hall and relevant numbers appear on fig1. This was supplemented by information found on the Norfolk Explorer Heritage website.
- 1.3.2 Anmer is a small parish in the northwest of Norfolk which was first recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086. Anmer, meaning 'duck pool', was a small settlement, held by a free man named Ordgar before the lands were given to Count Eustace after 1066. The modern settlement is very small and its focus shifted to the east of the site of the medieval village (NHER 3514) in the late 18th century after the creation of the landscape park (NHER 30492) surrounding Anmer Hall (NHER 3512).
- 1.3.3 Evidence for early occupation is concentrated in the east of the parish around the sites of several Bronze Age barrows (NHER 3518, 3519, 12206 and 3476). A field book of about 1600 refers to these barrows as being 'on the common' and names them as Burnt Hill, Ingoe Hill, Rushmere Hill and Threshilles. Axeheads (NHER 1566 and 14527), flakes, scrapers and blades (NHER 11472, 13962, 19503, 30267 and 19504) from the Neolithic period, as well as a Bronze Age adze (NHER 19505) and other prehistoric flints (NHER 19503 and 19504) have been found in this area. This concentration of prehistoric finds and Bronze Age barrows is immediately next to the Peddar's Way, a Roman road that also forms the eastern boundary of the parish. There

is further indication of Bronze Age activity in the adjacent parish of Bircham; two possible Bronze Age barrows (NHER 23976 and 21757) visible as ring ditches on aerial photographs are on the other side of the Roman road, close to the barrows and finds in Anmer.

- 1.3.4 The parish is dominated by Anmer Hall (NHER 3512) and park (NHER 30492), an 18th century house and a landscape park that was laid out in 1793. Further plantations were created around the Hall probably in the 19th century. Anmer Hall was formerly a royal residence, and is linked to the nearby Sandringham estate by a long straight road known as 'The Avenue'. The creation of the park preserved the earthworks of the deserted medieval village (NHER 3514) of Anmer and the agricultural landscape that surrounded the village. The road (NHER 16998) that now leads to Anmer Hall was once the main road through the medieval village; any public roads that crossed the park were closed in 1793 to ensure the privacy of those living in the Hall and these roads now survive as earthworks in the park.

## **1.4 Acknowledgements**

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank. Andrew Holt, building surveyor of the Sandringham Estate and David Robertson the Historic Environment Officer for Norfolk County Council who monitored the evaluation. The project was managed by Aileen Connor who also wrote the specification for the work. The evaluation and photographic survey were undertaken on site by James Fairbairn assisted by Nick Cox.

## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The objective of this test pit evaluation and photographic survey 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.

### 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The Brief required that two x 1m test pits be hand excavated to the top of the undisturbed natural geological deposits. Also that a photographic survey be undertaken to adequately record the brick structure located within the wood.

2.2.2 Test pits were excavated solely by hand

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 Site conditions although wet did not make the evaluation or photographic survey difficult.

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The test pits are described in numerical order followed by a brief description of the brick built structure.

#### 3.2 Test pit evaluation

##### 3.3 Test pit 1 (see plate 3)

3.3.1 Test pit 1 was located on the bank of the lane or hollow way leading to the rear of Anmer Hall and opposite St Mary's Church (see fig 2). It measured 1m x1m and was dug to a maximum depth of 0.80m. The western half of the test pit contained a substantial flint wall (106) (see plate 1). This wall consisted of a rough flint core faced on the eastern edge by carefully sorted and dressed flint. The wall extended beyond the edge of excavation. The depth of the wall was recorded at 0.70m from ground level. A sloping construction cut **104** (see fig 3) for the wall was visible in section and two phases of backfill were evident 103 and 102, both contained ceramic building material and small amounts of chalk or clunch within the grey brown sandy silt back fill. A small piece of Border ware type pottery was also found within fill 103.

3.3.2 A turf line (101) capped the test pit and wall. A parch mark was noted running westwards for approximately 6m and stopped in what appeared to be a turn in the structure or possibly a pier or wall terminus.

3.3.3 Interestingly no parch mark was seen running east of test pit 1. Because of the shallow depth of the wall below the turf line it was decided to insert a thin rod into the ground on the projected line of the wall. At no point was the wall detected using this method.

3.3.4 The earth work survey map seems to show a possible building platform located close to test pit one. It would seem likely that the wall in test pi 1 confirms the interpretation of the building platform.

##### 3.4 Test pit 2 (see plate 3)

3.4.1 Test pit 2 was located to the west of a small brick built structure (see below) and to the north of the current road way leading to Anmer Hall and within a field currently used for grazing. The position of test pit 2 (see fig 2) was re located slightly to the south west due to an area of flooding. This was done after consultation with David Robertson the Historic Environment officer at Norfolk county Council. It measured 1m x 1m and was dug to a maximum depth of 0.40m. No archaeological features were recorded in test pit 2. A mid to light brown silty sand subsoil (201) was overlain by a dark brown topsoil consisting of a sandy silt topsoil (200). The area of the test pit in common with the rest of the field was capped by rough pasture type grass. A small sondage was dug into the south eastern corner of the test pit to ensure that natural geology had been reached. The contents of this were identical to layer 201.

#### 3.5 Photographic survey

##### 3.6 Brick structure (see plate 3)

3.6.1 A small brick built structure was located Within the wooded area to the north and west of the road leading to Anmer Hall. The structure was constructed of twenty eight courses of machine made ridged bricks with a cast concrete roof and measured 4.30m

x 3.10m with a height elevation of 2.30m. The structure was in poor condition with cracks visible on all sides of the walls. The roof was in a poor condition showing signs of decay and damage. Most of this would have been caused by root disturbance from the trees surrounding the building. This design of building is commonly associated with guard room or sentry post positions. Its location in the grounds near Anmer Hall strongly suggest that it would have been utilised by Sandringham and Dersingham Home Guard Unit and would have been positioned to help defend Anmer Hall. Other similar examples exist in Norfolk at Outwell and Thorpe St Andrew (ID: S0007400) and (ID: 50002142)

### **3.7 Doorway** (see plate 3)

3.7.1 A door aperture was located centrally on the south-west facing wall. It measured 1.90m x 0.90m. A wooden door frame was still in situ. The door itself would have been of a simple timber construction held in place by two T shaped hinges one of which remains. Two small ventilation bricks were situated above the door.

### **3.8 Windows** (see plate 4)

3.8.1 Two small windows were located high on the north-east facing elevation directly beneath the concrete roof slab. These were of a relatively small size and measured 0.40m x 0.30m and were probably used for defensive purposes as well as allowing light to enter. The frames were of a simple metal construction and were of a utilitarian design. Some glass was still present in the corners of one of the windows

### **3.9 Internal features** (see plate 7)

3.9.1 There were no internal features other than the window and door apertures. No signs of a power supply were noted and a later use of the building may have been to store garden machinery, parts of an antiquated lawnmower were located close to the doorway.

### **3.10 Finds Summary**

3.10.1 Finds were limited to test pit 1 and consisted of ten pieces of undiagnostic ceramic building material and one piece of pottery.

3.10.2 One constituent part of brick was found in the back fill of the wall (102). This was probably of a late mediaeval date (Rob Atkins pers comm). Within another backfill layer (103) a single piece of pottery most probably a 17th century Border type white ware was also noted (Carole Fletcher pers comm). Although limited, both finds are consistent with the deserted settlement of Anmer which was abandoned in the 18th century.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 The test pit evaluation out at Anmer deserted village has shown that there is still good survival of settlement features remaining immediately below the surface of the field, as might be expected by the quality of the earthworks. Only a one metre section of wall was exposed but this was substantial enough to be the foundations of a building that can be observed on the surface as a building platform (upstanding earthwork on fig. 4). Whilst it is possible that the wall may be a boundary wall along the road, or perhaps relates to the church wall opposite, this seems less likely since the construction of the wall differs from that of the church wall.
- 4.1.2 A small mid 20th century brick structure in the woods opposite Anmer Hall was subject to a comprehensively photographic survey. Comparison with other similar buildings suggests it was as a previously unrecorded second world war home guard store or sentry post. During its use it would have remained hidden within the trees but would have been a good location to keep a look out. It is similar to other examples in Norfolk and other parts of eastern England with examples noted at Loddon and Docking.

### 4.2 Significance

- 4.2.1 The discovery of a flint wall in test pit one clearly demonstrates that archaeological remains do exist on the site and below ground level at Anmer deserted settlement. Also a previously unrecorded example of a small brick store building built as part of the defence of Britain between 1939 and 1945 was also noted and recorded on the site.

### 4.3 Recommendations

- 4.3.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by English Heritage and the Norfolk County Landscape Archaeology Office.

## APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	
Test pit one was located on the bank of the lane or hollow way leading to the rear of Anmer Hall and opposite St Mary's Church. A flint wall was recorded along with backfill relating to the wall. Ten pieces of ceramic building material and one piece of pottery was found within the backfill					Avg. depth (m)	0.8
					Width (m)	1
					Length (m)	1
contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
101	Layer	-	0.12	Topsoil	-	-
102	Layer	-	0.18	Backfill	Brick	16-17thC
103	Layer	-	0.5	Backfill	Pottery	17thC
104	Cut			Construction cut of wall		
105	Nat			Natural geology		
106	Wall			Flint wall		
Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	
Test pit two was located to west of the brick built structure and to the north of the current road way leading to Anmer Hall and within the field currently used as grazing					Avg. depth (m)	0.4
					Width (m)	1
					Length (m)	1
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
200	Layer		0.1	Topsoil/turf	-	-
201	Layer		0.1	Subsoil	-	-
202	Nat			Natural geology	-	-

## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Earthworks of Norfolk*, 2003, East Anglian Archaeology 104

### Websites referenced

<http://www.pillboxstudygroup.freeforums.org>

<http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/>

<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/dob/>



## APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3_139678		
Project Name	Archaeological Evaluation at Anmer Deserted Settlement, Amner , Norfolk		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	20-12-2012	Finish	20-12-2012
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	XNFANM12	Planning App. No.	
HER No.		Related HER/OASIS No.	CNF44549_2

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG15
Development Type	Estate Management

### Please select all techniques used:

<input 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 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 type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input 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
Wall	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	Pottery	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901
	Select period...	CBM	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901
Home Guard shelter	Modern 1901 to Present		Select period...

### Project Location

County	Norfolk	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	West Norfolk	The Sandringham Estate Estate Office Sandringham Norfolk
Parish	Sandringham	
HER	Norfolk	
Study Area	2sqm	National Grid Reference
		TF 378 294

### Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	David Robertson Norfolk HEO
Project Design Originator	Oxford Archaeology East
Project Manager	Aileen Connor
Supervisor	James Fairbairn

### Project Archives

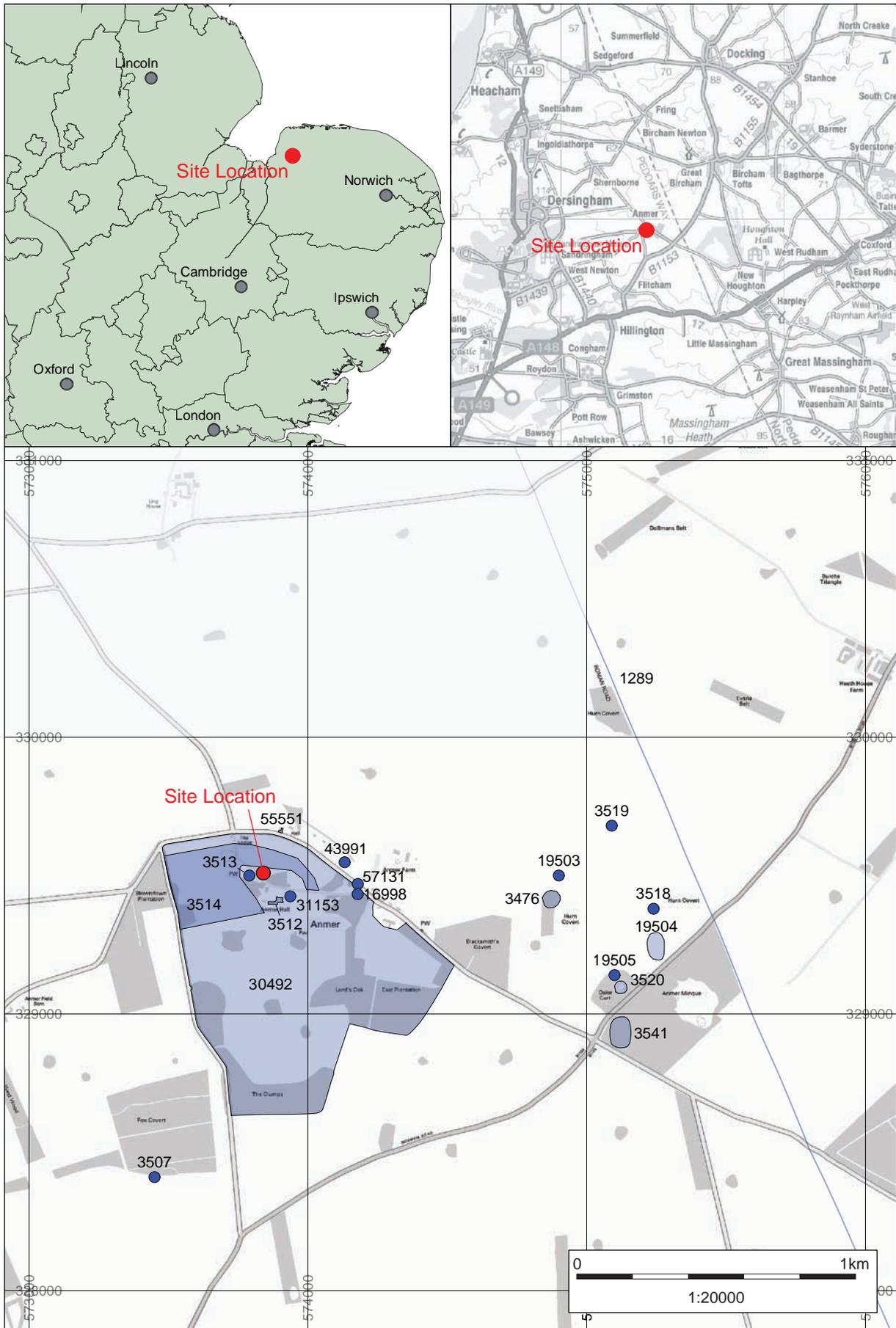
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
OA East	OA EAst	OA East.
XNFANM12	XNFMAR12	XNFMAR12

### 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 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"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

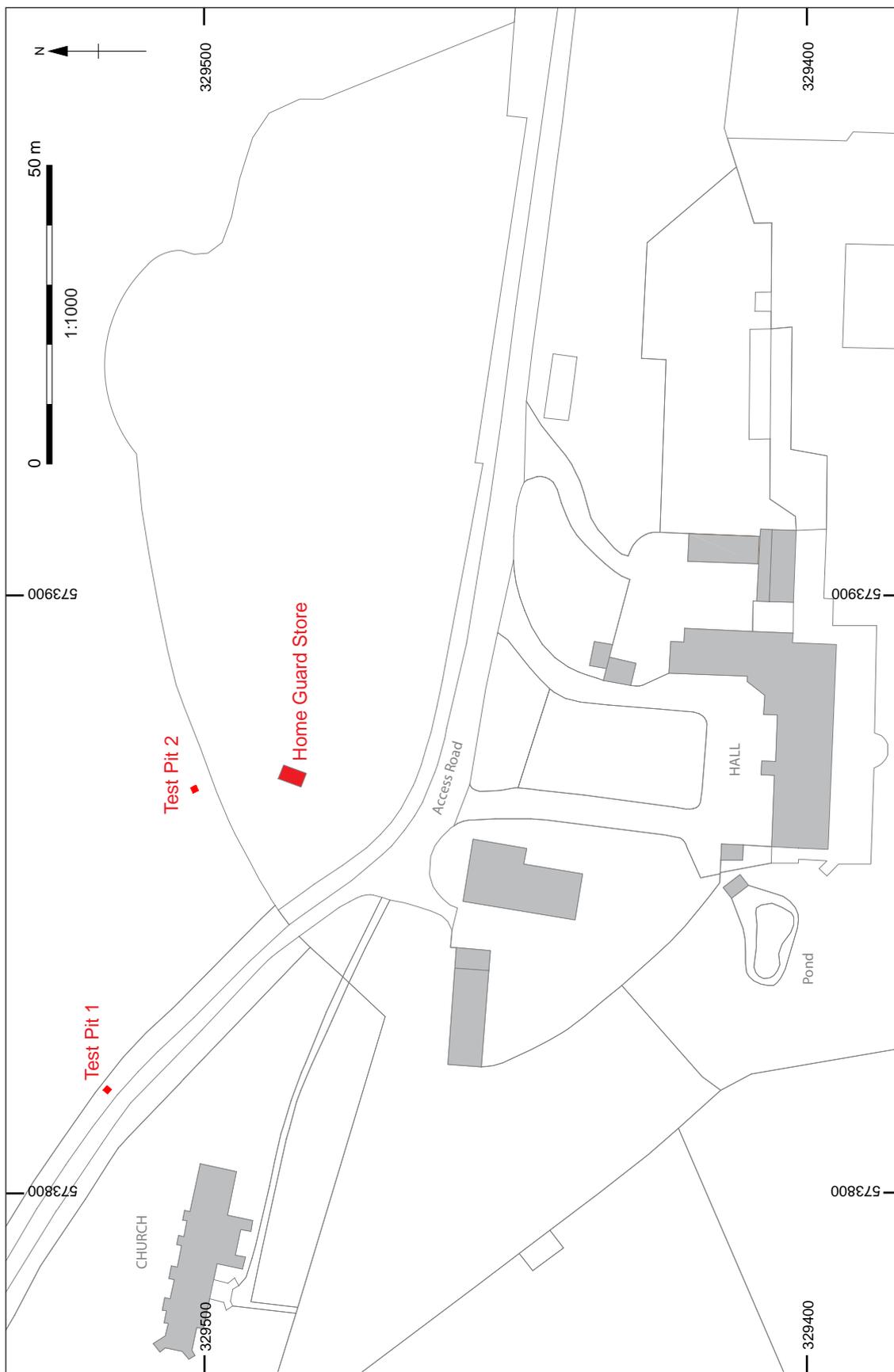
Digital Media	Paper Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> Map
<input 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 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:



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Figure 1: Site location showing Norfolk HER entries



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Figure 2: Location of test pits and home guard store

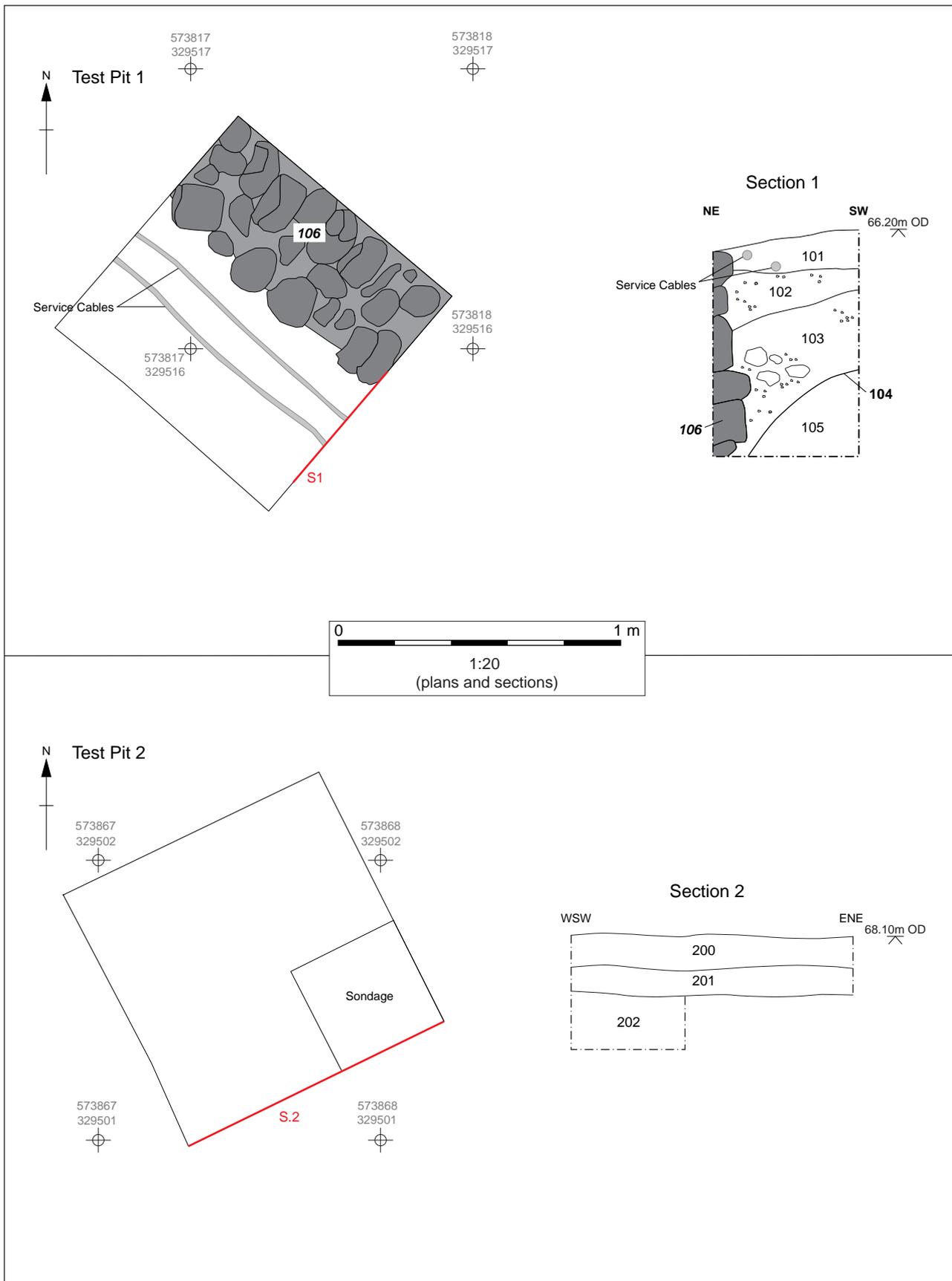


Figure 3: Test pit plans and sections

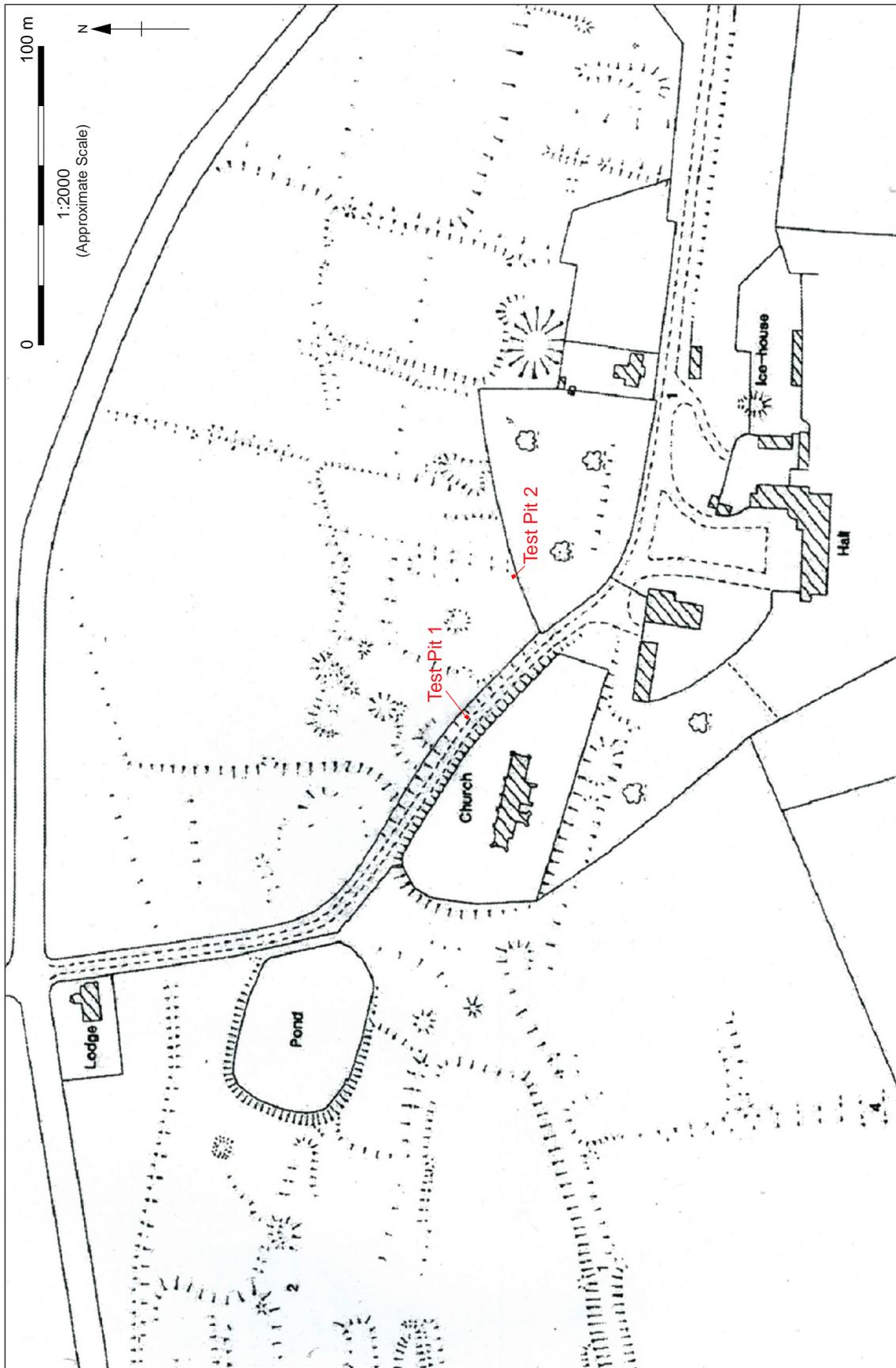


Figure 4: Earthwork survey (East Anglian Archaeology 104) showing position of test pits



Plate 1: Test Pit 1, looking northeast



Plate 2: Test Pit 2, looking south-southeast



Plate 3: South west facing elevation



Plate 4: North east facing elevation



Plate 5: North west facing elevation



Plate 6: South east facing elevation



Plate 7: Internal view of brick building



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