

Archaeological Watching Brief at Brancaster Booster Station



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



March 2016

Client: Anglian Water

OA East Report No: 1904

OASIS No: oxfordar3-245603

NGR: TF77981 43682

Archaeological Watching Brief at Brancaster Booster Station

Watching Brief

Site Code: XNFBBS16

NHER event No. ENF140309

Date of Works: 29th February 2016

Report No: 1904

Excavator: Kathryn Nicholls BA ACIfA

Client: Anglian Water

Report Date: March 2016

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Summary

On the 29th February 2016, Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological watching brief at Brancaster, Norfolk (TF77981 43682), during the construction of the Anglian Water Brancaster Booster Station. The monitoring was focused on three elements, the excavation for a new booster station, a new car parking area and a cable trench. No archaeological features were observed during this excavation.

1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.1.1 The site is located to the south of Brancaster village and the A149 (Fig. 1), approximately 1.6km south of the modern day North Norfolk coast, sitting at approximately 20m OD.
- 1.1.2 The bedrock geology at the site is Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation. This is overlain by superficial deposits of Ringstead Sand and Gravels (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The site is located approximately 100m to the south-west of Brancaster Roman Fort (*Branodunum*), which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The fort (NHER 1001), built c. AD 225 – 250, became part of the Saxon Shore fortification system along the north Norfolk coast. The fort originally had stone walls which were demolished in the 18th century. Cropmarks indicate the locations of internal buildings, whilst finds indicate occupation during the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. These finds include a finger ring featuring early Christian symbols (Hincliffe and Sparey Green 1985).
- 2.1.2 The development site is potentially in the area of the Roman *vicus*, which grew up to the west and south west of the fort (NHER 1002). The *vicus* is represented by cropmarks and finds, and areas now below housing development have been excavated. Excavations revealed that besides Roman occupation, the *vicus* showed evidence of activity during the Neolithic, Beaker, Bronze Age and Iron Age periods.
- 2.1.3 A Late Bronze Age axe and Roman coin were found 250m to the north (NHER 29177) and a possible Roman trackway (surviving as a cropmark) is located c. 300m to the south (NHER 26795).

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 ground penetrating works undertaken by the client will be observed by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist, followed by the investigation and recording of any archaeological features revealed where safe to do so. This included the proposed booster station which measures approximately 2.4m x 0.7m alongside a parking area measuring c. 8m x 3m and a power cable trench to an existing overhead power cable, measuring 20m in length and 1m deep (Fig 2).
- 3.1.3 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 3.1.4 Site conditions were good.

4 RESULTS

- 4.1.1 The excavation for the booster station measured 2.4m x 0.7m and partially overlay an existing water pipe. This was excavated to a depth of 0.75m where topsoil consisting of

a mid grey brown clayey silt measuring 0.3m deep and subsoil consisting of a mid reddish brown silt measuring 0.45m deep were observed (Plate 1). No archaeology was observed.

- 4.1.2 The excavation for the car park area measuring 8m x 3m only reached a depth of 0.1m (Plate 2) therefore no subsoil or archaeological remains were identified.
- 4.1.3 The cable trench ran from an existing power source to the new booster station in a north east to south west direction, measuring 20m in length. The trench was 0.6m wide and 1m deep, here topsoil and subsoil was observed. Topsoil measured 0.32m deep and subsoil measured 0.35m deep. No archaeology was observed.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The excavations at Brancaster were minimal in terms of the size of the area exposed and depths reached. Topsoil and subsoil was seen to survive intact in both the booster station and the cable trench. However no archaeological remains were located in these small areas of excavation. This may indicate that the Roman remains seen to the north do not extend as far south as the booster station location.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1.1 The author would like to thank Anglian Water who commissioned and funded the archaeological work, notably Jo Everitt and Nick Hudson. The project was managed by Matt Brudenell.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hincliffe, J and Sparey Green, C. 1985 Excavations at Brancaster 1974 and 1977. *East Anglian Archaeology*: Report No 23. Norfolk Archaeological Unit

Phillips, T. 2015. Written Scheme of Investigation: Brancaster Hall Booster Station.

Online resources

Geology of Britain: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> (accessed 14/3/16)

Heritage Gateway: <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/> (accessed 14/3/16)

APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-245603		
Project Name	Brancaster Booster Station		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	29-02-2016	Finish	29-02-2016
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	XNFBBS15	Planning App. No.	
HER No.		Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt ²

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
N/A	Select period...	N/A	Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Norfolk	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Kings Lynn + West Norfolk	Brancaster PE31 8DZ
Parish	Brancaster	
HER	Norfolk	
Study Area	26 squared metres	National Grid Reference
		TF 7798143682

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Norfolk County Council
Project Design Originator	
Project Manager	Matt Brudenell
Supervisor	Kathryn Nicholls

Project Archives

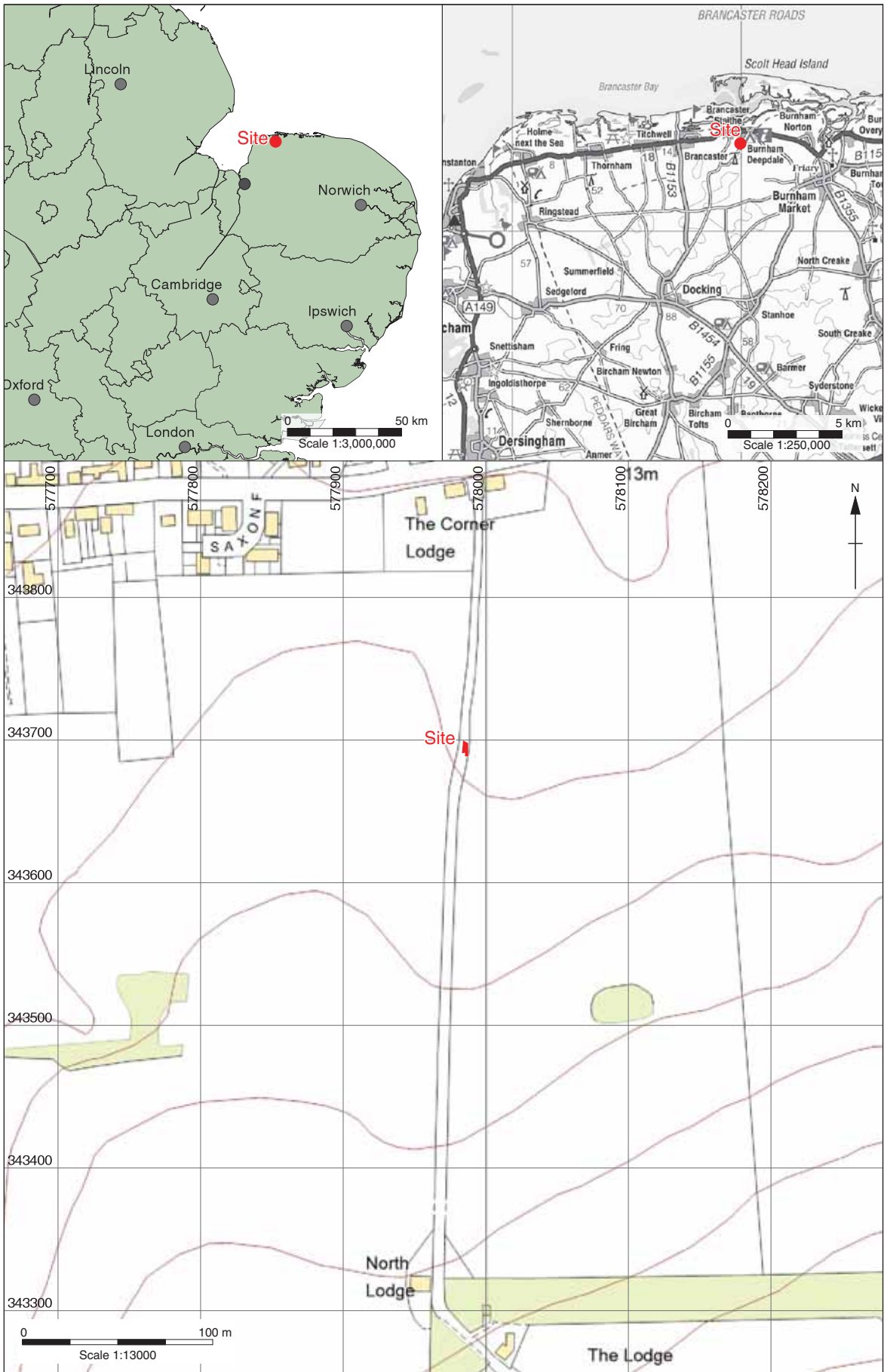
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Norfolk County Stores	OA East	Norfolk County Stores
	XNFBBS15	

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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"/>
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
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<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 type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Proposed Booster station plan (Plan courtesy of Anglian Water)



Plate 1: Excavation for Booster station looking west



Plate 2: Excavation of parking area



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