Granary Lodge, Land Between
Hitches Street and Granary
Lane, Littleport,
Cambridgeshire:
An Archaeological Trial Trench
Evaluation





December 2014



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY R11930

GRANARY LODGE, LAND BETWEEN HITCHES STREET AND GRANARY LANE, LITTLEPORT, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd					
Project Number	K3814				
Report Number	R11930				

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Land at Granary Lodge, Land between Hitches Street and Granary Lane, Littleport, Cambridgeshire, CB6 1PL: Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

Local Planning Authority: East Cambridgeshire District Council

Planning Reference: 09/00554/OUT

Central National Grid Reference: TL 5683 8687

Site Code: CHRL14

Event number: ECB4317

Report No. R11930

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December 2014

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Granary Lodge, land between Hitches Street and Granary Lane, Littleport, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5683 8687) on the 15th December 2014. The archaeological work was commissioned by Stephen Teverson in response to a planning condition attached to the construction of a residential care home with an interconnecting corridor and associated parking bays. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.

The earliest activity was evidenced by a mixed soil deposit, sealed beneath the subsoil in the trench, which contained bone fragments, ceramic building material dating from the Roman and medieval period and pottery dating from 10th-14th century plus some earlier Roman sherds. Based on our understanding of the recent history of the site and the presence of modern materials mixed into the deposit it appears that this context has been redeposited in the modern period but consists of a discrete dump of material that originated from an archaeologically significant site in the local area. The uppermost deposits recovered were clearly related to dumping and ground levelling activity by the current landowner.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land at Granary Lodge, land between Hitches Street and Granary Lane, Littleport, Cambridgeshire, CB6 1PL (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 5683 8687) on the 15th December 2014 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Stephen Teverson on behalf of Fred Brown in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to the construction of a residential care home comprising two blocks with an interconnecting corridor and associated parking bays (Planning Reference 09/00054/OUT).
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Mary-Anne Slater of PCA (Slater 2014) in response to a Brief for archaeological evaluation issued by Kasia Gdaniec (Gdaniec 2014) of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET).
- 1.4 The aim of the evaluation was to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition and quality of any archaeological remains on the site, to assess the significance of any such remains in a local, regional, or national context, as appropriate, and to assess the potential impact of the development proposals on the site's archaeology.
- 1.5 A single 1.8m wide and 15m long trial trench was excavated and recorded.
- 1.6 This report describes the results of the evaluation and aims to inform the design of an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy. The site archive will be deposited at Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store.

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2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

2.1.1 The underlying geology of the site is Kimmeridge Clay Formation; a Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 151 to 156 million years ago in the Jurassic period. The overlying soils are of Oadby Member - Diamicton, which formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period.

2.2 Topography

2.2.1 The site comprises an area of approximately 400 metre square. It is located in the eastern part of the village of Littleport, at the northern end of the Isle of Ely, around 150m south of the former fen edge. The site is situated at an elevation of approximately 5m OD (Over Datum). The surrounding area is generally flat; the River Great Ouse is located c.800m east of the site.

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3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The site is located at the eastern edge of the historic core of Littleport, in the Littleport Conservation Area and approximately 200m east of St George's Church. This archaeological and historical background has been drawn from the WSI prepared by Mary-Anne Slater of PCA (Slater 2014) and from the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER).
- 3.1.2 Previous excavations in Littleport have recorded prehistoric and Roman occupation, notably excavations at the former Burberry factory (MCB16277) approximately 300m to the east of the present development which revealed a multi-phase site; the earliest phase showed Roman activity in the form of a ditch and residual finds, whilst the second phase revealed medieval intercutting pits which spanned four centuries and were used to dispose of domestic waste. A single post-medieval pit containing probable butchery waste represented the latest phase on the site.
- 3.1.3 Evidence of continuous occupation in the area was also revealed during excavations at 17 High Street (Wilson 2007), c.115m south-west of the site. A ditch containing post-medieval material was recorded however it was thought that despite there being no medieval material found, the ditch was likely to have been open during that period due to the large amount of organic vegetation at the base of the ditch.
- 3.1.4 An Anglo Saxon cemetery was discovered on the high ground around Highfield Farm.

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4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Excavation and Sampling

- 4.1.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation proposed the excavation of a single trial trench measuring 1.8m by 15m, across the site whilst avoiding a canopy of trees along the southern edge of site (Figure 2).
- 4.1.2 Ground reduction was carried out under archaeological supervision using a 7-ton wheeled mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m-wide toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed natural geological deposits. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel and hoe as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools. Overburden deposits were set aside beside the trench and examined visually and with a metal-detector for finds retrieval.
- 4.1.3 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping and throughout the excavation process. No archaeological features were present and spoilheaps were scanned by metal-detector as they were encountered/ created.
- 4.1.4 Field excavation techniques and recording methods are detailed in the PCA Fieldwork Induction Manual (Operations Manual I) by Joanna Taylor and Gary Brown (2009).
- 4.1.5 All features were investigated and recorded in order to properly understand the date and nature of the archaeological remains on the site and to recover sufficient finds assemblages to assess the chronological development and socio-economic character of the site over time.

4.2 Recording Methodology

4.2.1 The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.

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- 4.2.2 Manual plans and section drawings of the trench deposits were drawn at an appropriate scale (1:10, 1:20 or 1:50).
- 4.2.3 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a unique record number (often referred to within British archaeology as 'context numbers') and recorded on individual pre-printed forms (Taylor and Brown 2009). All features and deposits recorded during the evaluation are listed in Appendix 2. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.
- 4.2.4 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process. Digital Photographs were taken of all archaeological features and deposits and black and white film photographs were taken when considered appropriate by the excavator and supervisor.
- 4.2.5 Artefacts and ecofacts were collected by hand and assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from the site (IfA 2001; Walker 1990; Watkinson 1981).

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5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The trench is described below, with technical data tabulated. The evaluation identified no surviving archaeological features but did identify three discrete layers. All three deposits are believed to have been deposited onto the site by the previous landowner. The upper deposits are of modern origin while the earlier deposit contains artefactual material of Romano British and Medieval date. On balance, based on the understanding of the recent history of the site this has been deposited during the modern period and consists of a discrete dump of material that originated from an archaeologically significant site that is in close proximity to the evaluated site.

5.2 Trench 1

- 5.2.1 Trench 1 contained no archaeological features; however a redeposited buried soil (1) was recorded.
- 5.2.2 Buried soil (1) was located throughout the trench, with a depth of up to 0.38m, consisting of a dark brown to black clay rich in organic material and shell, with bone fragments, pottery dated to 150-400 AD and 10th-14th Century and one piece of Roman tegula and a piece of medieval tile also present. This was sealed by subsoil (2), a mixed yellow grey and brown grey clay silt with demolition rubble inclusions, remnants of a former brewery in the area that had been dumped on the site. Subsoil (2) was overlain by topsoil (3), a mid-dark black brown sandy silt that had been imported by the landowner when he redeveloped the site. Natural clays (4) were reached at 3.25m OD and were sealed by layer (1); they were slightly mottled light blue grey and light yellow grey clays and gravels.
- 5.2.3 Buried soil (1) is likely to be a deposit of no discernible provenance due to it containing quantities of Roman and Medieval pottery alongside environmental remains of conflicting Roman, medieval and modern date that has been dumped on the site during landscaping and nearby construction. This deposit is likely to be the disturbed remains of excavated from an archaeological site nearby.

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TRENCH 1	Figures 1,2,3		Plate 1,2,3		
Trench Alignment: NE-SW	Length: 15m		Level	Level of Natural (m OD): 3.2	
			2.86m		
Deposit		Contex	Context No. Average Depth (m)		h (m)
				SW End	NE End
Topsoil		(3)		0.0m	0.0m
Subsoil		(2)		0. 54m	0.48m
Organic rich layer		(1)		0.72m	0.96m
Natural		(4)		1.09 m+	1.28m+

Summary

Trench 1 was located diagonally across the length of the site.

The trench contained no cut features but a single layer of organics dating to the medieval period.

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6 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 The Medieval Pottery

Berni Sudds

- 6.1.1 Four sherds of pottery were recovered from layer [001], dating from the 10th to 14th century. The single sherd of possible Thetford-type ware is thick-walled and handbuilt, suggesting it might derive from a large storage vessel or pitcher. The Early medieval coarseware contains abundant fine sand and calcareous inclusions but is not a good match for the nearby Ely Ware tradition and may be of more local origin. More problematic is the unprovenanced glazed sherd which has a sandy, pinkish-buff fabric with sparse iron oxide and calcareous inclusions. No immediate parallel is evident. It is not dissimilar in appearance to coarse Stamford ware products, with a dark yellow iron flecked glaze common on 10th and 11th century products (Kilmurry 1977, 55), but the range of inclusions, particularly the presence of calcareous material is not consistent with this tradition.
- 6.1.2 The material has evidently been re-deposited with material of late Saxon, early medieval and medieval date present in same layer. The presence of the medieval coarseware base sherd would indicate deposition is unlikely to have occurred prior to the late 12th century.

Fabric	Common Name	Description	No	Wg	Date range
code					
THET	Thetford-type ware	Thick-walled body sherd.	1	30	10th – 11th
		Large handbuilt form.			century
EMW	Early medieval sandy	Body sherd, external sooting	1	13	11th – 12th
	coarseware				century
MCW	Medieval coarseware	Sagging base, internal	1	27	L.12th - 14th
		limescale deposit			century
UPG	Uprovenanced glazed	Glazed body sherd (jug form)	1	3	10th – 14th
	ware				century

Table 1: Catalogue of the medieval pottery from layer (001). No = sherd count, Wg = weight in grams, C = century.

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6.2 The Roman Pottery

Katie Anderson

6.2.1 Eight sherds of pottery at 206g was recovered from layer (001), dating from 150 to 400 AD. The pottery was primarily coarse ware with two pieces of Nene Valley colour coated sherds.

6.3 The ceramic building material

Berni Sudds

6.3.1 Two fragments of ceramic building material were recovered from layer (001). The largest is a highly abraded fragment of Roman tegula (232g).in a pinkish buff fabric. The surfaces are almost entirely abraded but the base of the flange is present. The second fragment is from the edge of a peg tile in a distinctive marbled yellow and purple fabric (18g). The rough moulding and appearance would be consistent with a medieval date.

6.4 The Animal Bones

Kevin Reilly

Introduction

6.4.1 The site was situated within the small town of Littleport some 4km north of Ely. It is situated in a back garden near a former brewery, demolition rubble from this building forming the uppermost deposits excavated at this site. A rather rich organic deposit underlay the rubble, which in turn lay over natural clays. A few animal bones were recovered from the organic layer, this also providing pottery dating from the Roman and medieval periods.

Methodology

6.4.2 The bone was recorded to species/taxonomic category where possible and to size class in the case of unidentifiable bones such as ribs, fragments of longbone shaft and the majority of vertebra fragments. Recording follows the established techniques whereby details of the element, species, bone portion, state of fusion, wear of the dentition, anatomical measurements and taphonomic including natural and anthropogenic modifications to the bone were registered.

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Description of faunal assemblage

6.4.3 The single deposit with bones (1) provided just 6 bones, comprising a cattle anterior skull fragment, a radius shaft piece and a distal tibia; a cattle-size rib; a sheep-size tibia and a tibia from a large raptor. This latter bone probably belongs to either a red kite or a buzzard, its identification to be confirmed. In either case, this bird was most likely acting as a scavenger making use of local refuse dumps. The cattle and sheep/goat pieces are all from adult individuals and none appeared to show any signs of butchery. It should be mentioned that both species were represented by relatively small animals.

Conclusions and recommendations for further work

6.4.4 These few bones were well preserved and minimally fragmented. There may be a problem with the date of this deposit, although it is perhaps more likely that the bones date to the medieval rather than the Roman occupation. These few bones can offer very little information concerning animal usage within this area, apart from the fact that cattle and sheep/goat were exploited and, as they are adult, that they most likely derived from animals used for some secondary product, as milk or wool. It can be assumed that further excavation will produce additional bones; however, from the quantity so far recovered, there is perhaps little potential for more than a moderately sized collection. The stated good preservation may suggest a good potential, however, for the survival of smaller bones and thus it is recommended that any further work should be accompanied by a sampling programme.

6.5 Environmental Remains

Val Fryer

Introduction and method statement

6.5.1 The evaluation recorded a buried soil horizon of possible later prehistoric or Roman date. Although this horizon did contain archaeological material, the excavator considered it quite likely that the soil had been re-deposited in modern times. In order to ascertain if this might be the case, it was requested that a two bucket sub-sample of material (approximately 33% of the total sample taken) should undergo initial assessment, with the

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assessment to include recommendations for any further work which may be required.

- 6.5.2 The sub-sample was processed by manual water flotation/washover and the flot was collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flot was scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 1. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (2010). All plant remains were charred. Modern roots, seeds and leaf fragments were also recorded.
- 6.5.3 The non-floating residue was collected in a 1mm mesh sieve and will be sorted when dry. All artefacts/ecofacts will be retained for further specialist analysis.

Results

- 6.5.4 Cereal grains, chaff and seeds are present at a moderate to high density. Preservation is moderately good, although it is noted that some cereals are severely puffed and distorted, probably as a result of combustion at extremely high temperatures. Much of the charcoal/charred wood is also abraded, possibly indicating that it was exposed to the elements for some period prior to incorporation within the soil horizon.
- 6.5.5 Oat (Avena sp.), barley (Hordeum sp.) and wheat (Triticum sp.) grains are recorded along with a number of cereals which are too poorly preserved for close identification. Of the identifiable grains, wheat occurs most frequently, with the majority of the grains being of a rounded, hexaploid type form. However, elongated 'drop' form grains typical of spelt wheat (T. spelta) are also present. Both spelt glume bases and bread wheat (T. aestivum/compactum) type rachis nodes are recorded along with the grains. Oats (including one possible cultivated oat (A. sativa) floret with what appears to be a straight basal abscission scar) are also moderately common, but barley is scarce. Other potential food plant remains comprise large pulse (Fabaceae) cotyledon fragments, including one angular specimen which may be from a field bean (Vicia faba). However, few specimens retain intact testae or hila.

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- 6.5.6 Weed seeds are generally scarce, although a moderate number of small legumes (Fabaceae) are recorded. All seeds are of common segetal weeds namely corn cockle (Agrostemma githago), brome (Bromus sp.), fat hen (Chenopodium album), corn gromwell (Lithospermum arvense), small grasses (Poaceae), wild radish (Raphanus raphanistrum) and dock (Rumex sp.). Rare nutlets of sedge (Carex sp.) and saw-sedge (Cladium mariscus), both common wetland plants, are also recorded along with a single fragment of hazel (Corylus avellana) nutshell. Charcoal/charred wood fragments are abundant, but as noted, many pieces are distinctly rounded and abraded. Other plant macrofossils are scarce, but do include pieces of charred root or stem and indeterminate culm nodes.
- 6.5.7 The fragments of black porous and tarry material are mostly thought to be residues of the high temperature combustion of organic remains including cereal grains. However, some pieces are distinctly hard and brittle, and these may be bi-products of the combustion of coal, small fragments of which are also recorded. At the time of writing, it is unclear whether these may be contemporary with the soil horizon, or later contaminants. The assemblage also contains a high density of fish scales (plus some bones), but other remains are generally scarce.

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7 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Discussion

- 7.1.1 The principal result of the evaluation was the discovery of a buried soil which was revealed across the whole trench. This deposit contained Roman and medieval pottery and produced mixed environmental remains from both the Roman and medieval periods as well as some modern inclusions such as coal. There were no cut features found within this trench.
- 7.1.2 Based on the understanding of the recent history of the site, this layer has been redeposited during the modern period and consists of a discrete dump of material that originated from an archaeologically significant site in the local area and therefore is of limited archaeological significance in its place on this site.
- 7.1.3 Earlier archaeological excavations, along Victoria Street and Main Street, which are located to the south of the evaluated area may be possible candidates for the origin of the buried soil identified within the trench.

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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Stephen Teverson for commissioning the work on behalf of Fred Brown. The author would like to thank Mark Hinman for managing the project. The author would also like to thank the site supervisor Lawrence Morgan-Shelbourne, Aileen Tierney; Katie Anderson, Berni Sudds and Kevin Reilly for their quick turnaround with finds and finally PCA's CAD department for preparing the figures.

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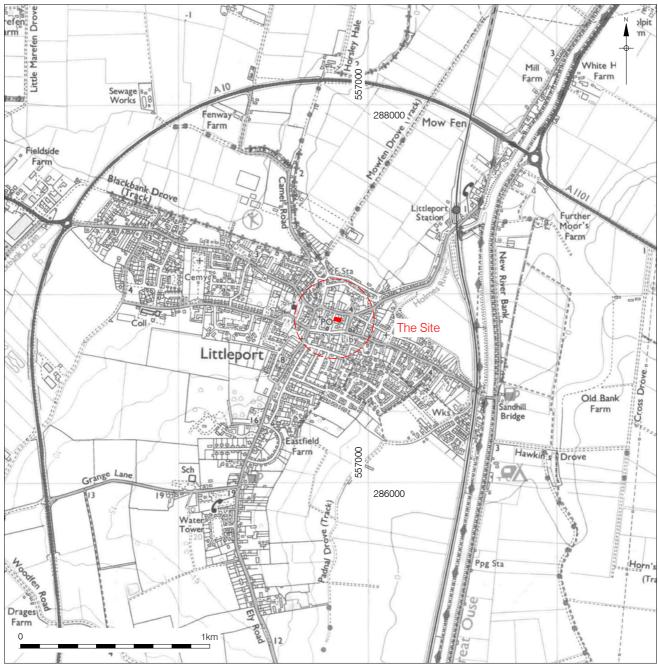
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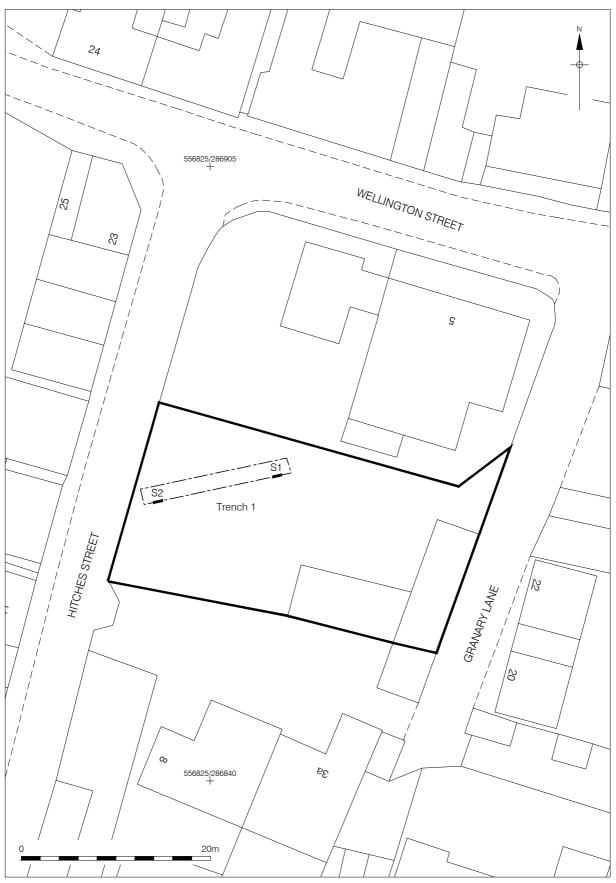
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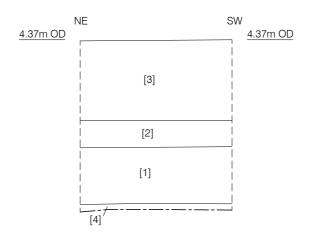
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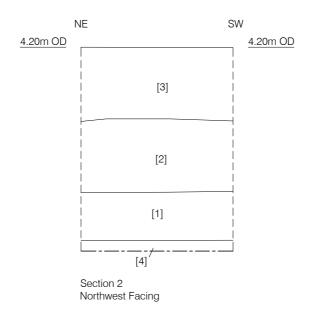


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Section 1 Northwest Facing





APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: Trench 1, view north-east

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Plate 2: Trench 1, view south-west



Plate 3: View south-west showing section 1 and deposit (1)

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Plate 4: View across site

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Sitecode	Context Number	Trench	Туре	Category	Period	Interpretation	Section
CHRL14	1	1	Layer	Buried Soil	medieval	Buried soil	1
CHRL14	2	1	Layer	Subsoil	modern	Overburden	1
CHRL14	3	1	Layer	Topsoil	modern	Overburden	1
CHRL14	4	1	Layer	Natural			1

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APPENDIX 3: ENVIRONMENTAL TABLE

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Sample No.	1
Context No.	001
Cereals andother potential food plants	
Avena sp. (grains)	xx
A. sativa L. (floret base)	xcf
Hordeum sp. (grains)	х
Triticum sp. (grains)	XXX
T. spelta L. (glume bases)	XX
T. aestivum/compactum type (rachis nodes)	х
Cereal indet. (grains)	XX
Vicia faba L.	xcfcotyfg
Large Fabaceae indet.	х
Herbs	
Agrostemma githago L.	xfg
Bromus sp.	х
Chenopodium album L.	xfg
Fabaceae indet.	xxx
Lithospermum arvense L.	х
Small Poaceae indet.	х
Raphanus raphanistrum L. (siliqua frag.)	х
(stem frag.)	х
Rumex sp.	xcf
Wetland plants	
Carex sp.	xcf
Cladium mariscus (L.)Pohl	х
Tree/shrub macrofossils	
Corylus avellana L.	х
Other plant macrofossils	
Charcoal <2mm	xxxx
Charcoal >2mm	XXXX
Charcoal >5mm	XX
Charcoal >10mm	х
Charred root/stem	х
Indet. culm nodes	х
Indet. seeds	х
Indet. tuber	xcf
Other remains	
Black porous 'cokey' material	XX
Black tarry material	х
Bone	x xb
Burnt/fired clay	х
Fish bone	xxx xb
Marine mollusc shell	xfg
Mineralised faecal material	xcf
Small coal frags.	xx
Small mammal/amphibian bones	х
Vitreous material	х
Sample volume (litres)	24ss
Volume of flot (litres)	0.1
% flot sorted	100%

Table 1. Charred plant macrofossils and other remains from a buried soil layer at Littleport, Cambridgeshire.

APPENDIX 4: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-198458

Project details

Project name Land at Granary Lodge, Land between Hitches Street and Granary

Lane, Littleport, Cambridgeshire, CB6 1PL: Archaeological

the project

Short description of This report describes the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Granary Lodge, land between Hitches Street and Granary Lane, Littleport, Cambridgeshire on the 15th December 2014. The earliest activity was evidenced by a buried soil horizon, sealed beneath the subsoil in Trench one, which contained bone fragments, ceramic building material dating from the Roman and medieval period and pottery dating from 10th-14th century plus some earlier Roman sherds. The range and date of finds recovered suggest a medieval buried soil. The uppermost deposits recovered were related to the dumping of demolition rubble from a nearby brewery and the subsequent removal and ground levelling activity by the current landowner.

Project dates Start: 15-12-2014 End: 15-12-2014

Previous/future work No / Not known

associated ECB4317 - HER event no. Any

project reference

codes

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Other 5 - Garden Current Land use

Monument type **NONE None**

Monument type **NONE None**

Significant Finds **NONE None**

Significant Finds **NONE None**

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techniques

Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the After full determination (eg. As a condition)

planning process

Project location

Country England

Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE LITTLEPORT Land

at Granary Lodge, Land between Hitches Street and Granary Lane, Littleport, Cambridgeshire, CB6 1PL: Archaeological Trial Trench

Evaluation

Postcode CB6 1PL

Study area 400.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TL 5683 8687 52.4568242326 0.308421038032 52 27 24 N 000 18

30 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 2.86m Max: 3.25m

Project creators

Name of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Organisation

Project brief Cambridgeshire County Council

originator

Project design Mary-Anne Slater

originator

Project Mark Hinman

director/manager

Project supervisor Lawrence Morgan-Shelbourne

Type of Private Client

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sponsor/funding

body

Name of Mr F Brown

sponsor/funding

body

Project archives

Physical Archive Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store

recipient

Physical Contents "Animal Bones", "Ceramics"

Digital Archive Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store

recipient

Digital Contents "Animal Bones", "Ceramics"

Digital Media "Database", "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"

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recipient

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media "Context sheet","Drawing","Section"

available

Project bibliography

1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

Title Land at Granary Lodge, Land between Hitches Street and Granary

Lane, Littleport, Cambridgeshire, CB6 1PL: Archaeological Trial

Trench Evaluation

Author(s)/Editor(s) Jackson, C.

Date 2015

Issuer or publisher Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

PCA Report Number: 11930 Page 30 of 31

Place of issue or Cambridgeshire

publication

Description A4 Spiral Bound

Entered by Sîan O'Neill (so'neill@pre-construct.com)

Entered on 1 April 2015

PCA Report Number: 11930 Page 31 of 31

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