LAND AT 37-55 MILDENHALL ROAD FORDHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:
EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

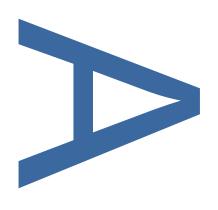
PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER: 16/01321/FUL

PCA REPORT NO: 13265

SITE CODE: ECB5389

MAY 2018





PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

37-55 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Cambridgeshire: Archaeological Evaluation

Local Planning Authority: East Cambridgeshire District Council

Planning Reference: 16/01321/FUL

Central National Grid Reference: TL (5)6364 (2)7082

Event Number: ECB5389

Site Code: ECB5389

OASIS ref: preconst1-319506

Report No. R13265

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ABSTRACT

In April 2018, Pre-Construct Archaeology carried out a trial trench archaeological evaluation of land at 37-55 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Cambridgeshire. The archaeological work was commissioned by Russell Developments to address the requirements of a condition that had been attached to planning consent by East Cambridgeshire District Council for the residential development of the site.

Despite the high archaeological potential of the site, an estimation based on the recorded discovery of three Iron Age burials in the area immediately to the north of the site and other discoveries in the surrounding area, the evaluation found no evidence for archaeological remains within the site that predated a phase of sand extraction in the 18th/19th century. This activity took the form of a large pit (or pits), excavated to depth of up to 1.0m, that covered much of the southern half of the site and was backfilled with soil containing sherds of 18th/19th-century pottery and fragments of brick and tile.

No other features were identified, apart from some shallow linear scrapes in the northeast corner of the site, probably associated with the sand extraction activity, an undated pit or posthole and three features formed by tree roots.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Russell Developments have been granted planning consent by East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) for the residential development of a plot of land between 37 and 55 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Cambridgeshire (NGR: TL (5)6364 (2)7082; Fig. 1).
- 1.2 Due to the high archaeological potential of the site and in accordance with 'National Planning Policy Framework', paragraph 128 and 129 (DCLG 2012), Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team (CCCHET) advised ECDC that a programme of archaeological investigation should be carried out as a condition of consent (planning ref. 16/01321/FUL). Condition 3 reads as follows:

'No development shall take place within the area indicated until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. (Reason: To ensure that any archaeological remains are suitably recorded in accordance with policy ENV14 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015. The condition is pre-commencement as it would be unreasonable to require applicants to undertake this work prior to consent being granted).'

- 1.3 The scope of the programme of archaeological investigation was outlined in a 'Brief for Archaeological Evaluation' issued by CCCHET (CCCHET 2018). Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA) were commissioned by Russell Developments to carry out the evaluation, which consisted of the excavation of 85 linear metres of trial trench, representing a 4% sample of the proposed development area. The results will assist CCCHET in determining if further work (i.e. archaeological mitigation) is required to fulfil the planning condition.
- 1.4 All work relating to this project was carried out in accordance with a 'Written Scheme of Investigation' (WSI) that was prepared by PCA and approved by

CCCHET prior to the commencement of fieldwork (Carlyle 2018). In addition, the project abided by 'Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England' (Gurney 2003) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' 'Code of Conduct' (ClfA 2014a) and 'Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation' (ClfA 2014b).

- 1.5 The project was managed in accordance with the Historic England (formerly English Heritage) procedural document 'Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide' (HE 2015).
- 1.6 The site archive will be deposited at the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store following the gaining of the transfer of title. The report, once approved by CCCHET, will be uploaded onto the 'Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations' (OASIS) database, under reference no. preconst1-319506.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Geology

2.1 The geology within the site consists of Cretaceous rocks of the Zig Zag Chalk Formation, overlain by superficial Quaternary deposits of River Terrace sand and gravel (BGS 2018).

Topography

- 2.2 The site, which covers an area of c. 0.32ha, is located on the eastern edge of Fordham, a village that lies approximately 7km to the north of Newmarket town centre (Fig. 1). It consists of the southern half of a pasture field bounded by Mildenhall Road (B1102) to the south, woodland to the north and residential and commercial properties fronting on to Mildenhall Road to the east and west (Plate 1).
- 2.3 Topographically, the site is situated on relatively flat ground at c. 19m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). To the west the ground descends gradually into the valley of the River Snail, which flows northwards through the centre of the village.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The following archaeological background summarises the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) entries of archaeological sites within a 300m study area around the site, as provided with the Brief (CCCHET 2018)
- 3.2 There are no known designated or undesignated heritage assets within the site, although it was considered to have high archaeological potential, as it lies within an area where archaeological remains of prehistoric and later date could be present (Carlyle 2018).
- 3.3 A sherd of decorated pottery and a socketed looped axe of Bronze Age date have been found in a field c. 90m to the south of the site (07741) and there is a record of three Early Iron Age inhumation burials having been found c. 50m to the north, within the field of which the site forms the southern part (07549; VCH 1938).
- 3.4 There are no known sites dating to the Roman period within the vicinity of the site.
- 3.5 The earliest documented evidence for the village of Fordham is an Anglo-Saxon charter that dates to c. AD 972 (Reaney 1943). Saxon remains have been found to the southwest of the Church of St Peter and St Mary Magdalene and closer to the site, c. 300m to the west, archaeological investigations at the site of Fordham Primary School have revealed Late Saxon boundary ditches, sunken-features buildings and associated pits and postholes (ECB420; CCCAFU 2001; OAE 2017).
- 3.6 The historic core of Fordham village is located approximately 500m to the west of the site, with the Church of St Peter and St Mary Magdalene (07574) lying at the eastern end of the village. The church probably dates from the Norman period although the fabric is predominately 13th-century or later in date. The church was extensively restored in the 19th century and the dedication to St Peter was added c. 1850. The church contains a worn monumental brass to William Cheswryght and his wife Maud, dated 1521.

- 3.7 Evidence for small-scale metalworking, including a small assemblage of knives, has been recovered from the archaeological investigations at the Fordham Primary School site. Other remains included pits and postholes and an annular ditch interpreted as a possible animal pen or hayrick base (ECB420; CCCAFU 2001; OAE 2017).
- 3.8 Reference to late 19th and early 20th-century Ordnance Survey maps of the area show the site lying within the current field boundaries, although the southwest corner of the field has since been developed. Gravel pits are shown approximately 120m to the north of the site (MCB21559) and c. 40m to the southwest, and the site of a corn windmill lies c. 60m to the east (MCB24131).

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 General

4.1.1 The archaeological evaluation consisted of four trial trenches, three 1.6m x 20m trenches and one 1.6m x 25m trench (a total of 85 linear metres), representing a 4% sample of the proposed development area (Fig. 2). These were distributed evenly across the site in order to provide a representative sample of the proposed development area.

4.2 Excavation methodology

- 4.2.1 The trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision using a JCB 3CX backhoe excavator, with the topsoil and subsoil stored separately in temporary bunds on either side of each trench. Topsoil, subsoil and other overburden of low archaeological value was removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed geological substrate where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded.
- 4.2.2 Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel and hoe as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools. With the agreement of CCCHET, a machine-dug sondage was excavated through the backfill deposits of the former sand extraction pit in Trench 3.

4.3 Recording and Finds Recovery

- 4.3.1 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.
- 4.3.2 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). Archaeological processes recognised by the deposition of material are signified in this report by round brackets (thus), while events constituting the removal of deposits are referred to here as 'cuts' and signified by square

brackets [thus]. Where more than one slot was excavated through an individual feature, each intervention was assigned additional numbers for the cutting event and for the deposits it contained (these deposits within cut features being referred to here as 'fills'). The record numbers assigned to cuts, deposits and groups are entirely arbitrary and in no way reflect the chronological order in which events took place. All features and deposits excavated during the evaluation and excavation are listed in Appendix 1. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.

- 4.3.3 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping and throughout the excavation process. Archaeological features and spoil heaps were scanned by metal-detector periodically. Only objects of modern date were found and were not retained for accession.
- 4.3.4 High-resolution digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits, and were used to keep a record of the excavation process.

4.4 Sampling Strategy

- 4.4.1 Discrete features were half-sectioned, photographed and recorded by a cross-section scaled drawing at an appropriate scale (either 1:10 or 1:20).
- 4.4.2 Linear features were investigated by means of regularly-spaced slots amounting to 25% of their lengths. Where stratigraphic relationships between features could not be discerned in plan, relationship slots were also excavated and these were recorded as part of the GPS survey and noted on the relevant context sheets.

4.5 Finds and Environmental Sampling

- 4.5.1 Bucket sampling of the topsoil and subsoil was carried out at the end of each trench (c. 90 litres/sample) to recover artefactual evidence to indicate past land use and activity on the site. No finds were recovered by this process.
- 4.5.2 No deposits suitable for palaeoenvironmental assessment were encountered by the evaluation.

5 QUANTIFICATION OF ARCHIVE

5.1 Paper Archive

| Context register sheets | 2 |
|-------------------------|----|
| Context sheets | 27 |
| Section register sheets | 1 |
| Sections at 1:10 & 1:20 | 8 |
| Trench record sheets | 6 |
| Photo register sheets | 2 |

5.2 Digital Archive

| Digital photos | 48 |
|------------------|----|
| GPS survey files | 1 |
| Digital plans | 1 |
| GIS project | 0 |
| Access database | 1 |

5.3 Physical Archive

| Pottery (sherds) | 4 |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Ceramic building material (fragments) | 6 |

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

6.1 General stratigraphy

6.1.1 In the northern part of the site, outside of the area that had been subject to sand extraction, the geological substrate (102), consisting of loose, soft, light orangey yellow sand with occasional gravel, was encountered at an average depth of c. 0.50m below ground level. The overlying subsoil (101), a mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional small sub-rounded stones, was c. 0.12m thick and the topsoil (100), a similar but darker greyish brown deposit, was c. 0.39m thick.

6.2 Archaeological features

- 6.2.1 An 18th/19th century sand extraction pit, [122] and [126], was identified in Trenches 3 and 4, in the southern part of the proposed development area, adjacent to the road (Fig. 3). It extended over the entire area of Trench 3 and 21m from the west end of Trench 4 and had a depth of up to c. 1.0m (Fig. 4; Plates 2–4). Four sherds of 18th/19th century pottery and six fragments of brick/tile were recovered from fill (120) of extraction pit [122].
- 6.2.2 Very shallow, broad, irregular linear scrapes in the sand, [107], [109] and [111], were recorded at the eastern end of Trench 2, in the northeastern part of the proposed development area (Fig. 3; Plate 5). They had no coherent form or purpose and are probably associated with the sand extraction activity immediately to the south.
- 6.2.3 Several undated features were also identified, consisting of a small pit or posthole [115] in Trench 2 (Plate 6) and vegetation hollows/root disturbance [105], [113] and [118] in Trenches 1 and 2 (Plates 7 and 8).

7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Despite the high archaeological potential of the site, an estimation based on the recorded discovery of three Iron Age burials in the area immediately to the north of the site (VCH 1938) and other discoveries in the surrounding area, the evaluation found no evidence for archaeological remains within the site that predated a phase of sand extraction in the 18th/19th century.
- 7.2 This activity took the form of a large pit (or pits), excavated to depth of up to 1.0m, that covered much of the southern half of the site and was backfilled with soil containing sherds of 18th/19th-century pottery and fragments of brick and tile.
- 7.3 No other features were identified, apart from some shallow linear scrapes in the northeast corner of the site, probably associated with the sand extraction activity, an undated pit or posthole and three features formed by root action.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1 PCA would like to thank Russell Developments for commissioning and funding the work and Kasia Gdaniec, acting on behalf of Gemma Stewart, CCCHET, for monitoring the work on behalf of the Local Planning Authority. The fieldwork was supervised by Thomas Revell, assisted by Cleve Roberts. The report was prepared by Thomas Revell and the illustrations were prepared by Rosie Scales. The project was managed for PCA by Simon Carlyle.

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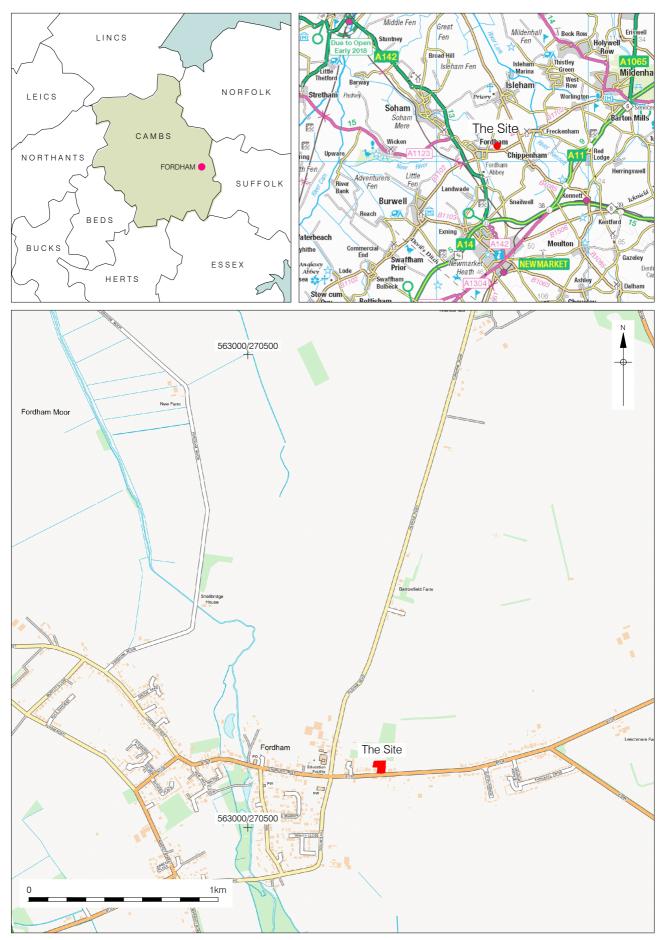
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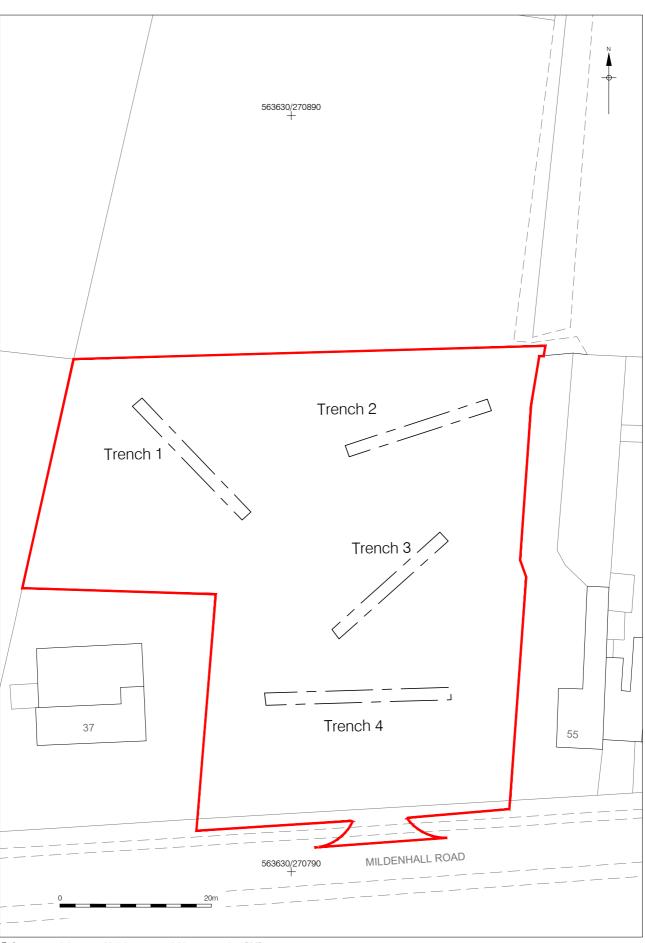
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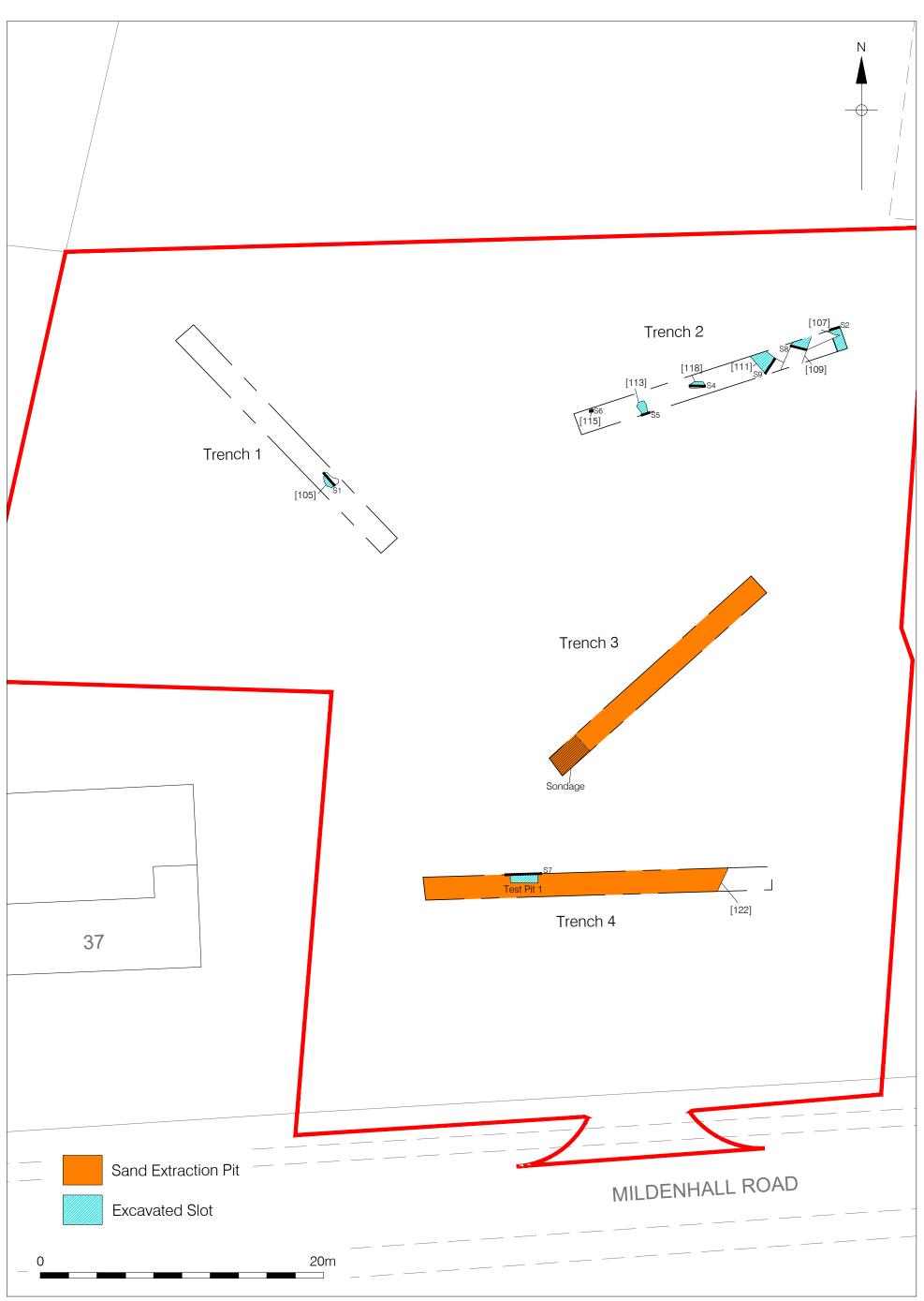
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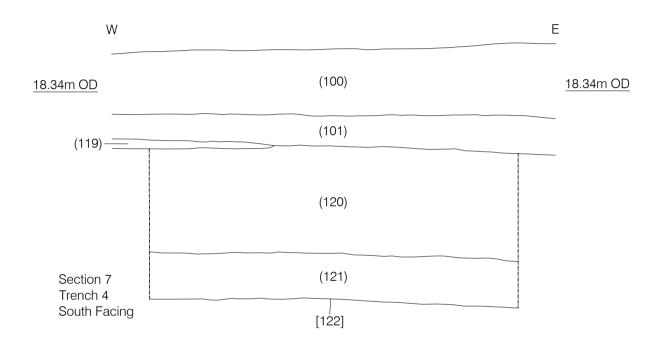
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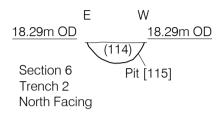


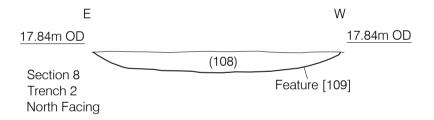
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Plate 1: Proposed development area, looking north



Plate 2: Trench 3, looking northeast



Plate 3: Trench 3, sand extraction pit [126], looking southeast



Plate 4: Trench 4, sand extraction pit [122], looking north



Plate 5: Trench 2, features [109] and [111], looking southeast



Plate 6: Trench 2, pit or posthole [115], looking northwest



Plate 7: Trench 1, looking northeast



Plate 8: Trench 2, looking northeast

APPENDIX 1: CONTENTS INDEX

| Context No | Cut | Trench | Туре | Category | Length (m) | Width (m) Depth (m) Description | | Interpretation | | |
|------------|-----|--------------------------------|-------|------------|---|-------------------------------------|------|---|-------------|--|
| 100 | | | Layer | Topsoil | | | | Firm, dark greyish brown sandy silt, occasional | | |
| 100 | | | Layor | Торооп | | | | small sub-rounded stones | | |
| 101 | | | Layer | Subsoil | | | | Firm, mid greyish brown sandy silt, occasional | | |
| 101 | | | Layer | Gubson | | | | small sub-rounded stones | | |
| 102 | | | Layer | Natural | - | | | Loose, light orange-yellow sand, occasional | | |
| 102 | | | Layei | inaturai | | | | gravel | | |
| 103 | 105 | 1 | Fill | Tree throw | 1.26 | 0.44 | 0.27 | Loose, dark greyish brown, sandy silt, rare small | Infill | |
| 103 | 105 | I | ГШ | TIEE UIIOW | 1.20 | 1.26 0.44 0.27 s | | sub-rounded stone | 1111111 | |
| 104 | 105 | 1 | Fill | Tree throw | 0.57 | 0.44 | 0.22 | Loose, mid greyish brown, sandy silt | Infill | |
| 105 | 105 | 1 | Cut | Tree throw | 1.26 | 0.44 | 0.27 | Sub-circular in plan, moderate sloping sides, | Tree throw | |
| 105 | 105 | I | Cut | TIEE UIIOW | 1.26 0.44 0.27 | | 0.27 | irregular base | rree throw | |
| 106 | 107 | 2 | Fill | Unknown | 0.4 | 0.44 | 0.07 | Loose, mid orange-brown, sandy silt, rare small | Infill | |
| 100 | 107 | | 1 "" | Olikilowii | 0.4 | 0.44 | 0.07 | sub-rounded stones | 1111111 | |
| 107 | 107 | 2 | Cut | Unknown | 0.4 | 0.44 | 0.07 | Linear in plan, gentle sloping sides, concave | Ground | |
| 107 | 107 | 2 | Cut | OTIKTIOWIT | 0.4 | 0.44 | 0.07 | base, NW-SE oriented | disturbance | |
| 108 | 109 | 2 | Fill | Unknown | 1 | 1.31 | 0.12 | Loose, mid greyish brown, sandy silt, rare small | Infill | |
| 100 | 109 | 2 | 1 111 | Olikilowii | 1 | 1.51 | 0.12 | sub-rounded stones. | 1111111 | |
| 109 | 109 | 2 | Cut | Unknown | 1 | 1.31 | 0.12 | Linear in plan, moderate sloping sides, concave | Ground | |
| 108 | 109 | | Out | OTINITOWIT | 1 | 1.01 | 0.12 | base, NW-SE oriented | disturbance | |
| 110 | 111 | 111 2 Fill Unknown 1 0.82 0.12 | | 0.12 | Loose, mid brownish grey, sandy silt, very rare | Infill | | | | |
| 110 | 111 | _ | 1 111 | CHRIOWII | • | 0.02 | 0.12 | small sub-rounded stones. | 1111111 | |

| 111 | 111 | 2 | Cut | Unknown | 1 | 1.3 | 0.19 | Linear in plan, moderate sloping sides, concave base, NW-SE oriented | Ground disturbance |
|-----|-----|---|------|------------------|-----|------|------|---|------------------------|
| 112 | 113 | 2 | Fill | Tree throw | 1 | 0.55 | 0.05 | Loose, mid greyish brown, silty sand, rare small sub-rounded stones. | Infill |
| 113 | 113 | 2 | Cut | Tree throw | 1 | 0.55 | 0.05 | Linear in plan, gentle sloping sides, concave base, N-S oriented | Tree throw |
| 114 | 115 | 2 | Fill | Pit | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.11 | Loose, mid greyish brown, sandy silt, rare small sub-rounded stone inclusions. | Infill |
| 115 | 115 | 2 | Cut | Pit/ posthole | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.11 | Circular in plan, moderate sloping sides, concave base. | Pit/posthole |
| 116 | 111 | 2 | Fill | Unknown | 1 | 0.7 | 0.19 | Loose, light greyish brown, sandy silt, rare small sub-rounded stones. | Infill |
| 117 | 118 | 2 | Fill | Tree throw | 0.5 | 1.05 | 0.1 | Loose, mid greyish brown, sandy silt, rare small sub-rounded stones. | Infill |
| 118 | 118 | 2 | Cut | Tree throw | 0.5 | 1.05 | 0.1 | Sub-oval in plan, moderate sloping sides, flat base. | Tree throw |
| 119 | 122 | 4 | Fill | Pit | 1 | 0.8 | 0.05 | Loose, light orange yellow, silty sand, frequent gravel inclusions. | Backfill |
| 120 | 122 | 4 | Fill | Pit | 1 | 2 | 0.58 | Firm, mid greyish brown, sandy silt, occasional small sub-rounded stone inclusions. | Backfill |
| 121 | 122 | 4 | Fill | Pit | 1 | 2 | 0.25 | 0.25 Firm, dark greyish brown, sandy silt, occasional small sub-rounded stone inclusions. | |
| 122 | 122 | 4 | Cut | Pit | 1 | 2 | 0.85 | Unknown shape in plan, unknown sides, flat base. | Sand Extraction Pit |

| 123 | 126 | 3 | Fill | Pit | 20 | 1.8 | 0.1 | Loose, light orange yellow, silty sand, frequent gravel inclusions. | Backfill |
|-----|-----|---|------|-----|----|-----|------|--|---------------------|
| 124 | 126 | 3 | Fill | Pit | 20 | 1.8 | 0.68 | Firm, mid greyish brown, sandy silt, occasional small sub-rounded stone inclusions. | Backfill |
| 125 | 126 | 3 | Fill | Pit | 20 | 1.8 | 0.35 | Firm, dark greyish brown, sandy silt, occasional small sub-rounded stone inclusions. | Backfill |
| 126 | 126 | 3 | Cut | Pit | 20 | 1.8 | 1.13 | Unknown shape in plan, unknown sides, flat base. | Sand Extraction Pit |

APPENDIX 2: TRENCH TABLE

| Trench Number | Alignment | L (m) | Max Machine depth (m OD) | Level of geology (m OD) | Topsoil thickness End 1 (m) | Subsoil thickness End 1 (m) | Geology depth End 1 (m) | Topsoil thickness End 2 (m) | Subsoil thickness End 2 (m) | Geology depth End 2 (m) | Summary of Archaeological Features |
|------------------|-----------|-------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 | NW-SE | 20 | 18.00 | 18.00 | 0.41 | 0.31 | 0.72 | 0.41 | 0.03 | 0.44 | 1 tree throw |
| 2 | NE-SW | 20 | 17.97 | 17.97 | 0.38 | 0.12 | 0.50 | 0.34 | 0.14 | 0.48 | 4 shallow features, 1 tree throw, 1 undated pit/posthole. |
| 3 | NE-SW | 20 | 16.94 | 17.98 | 0.46 | 0.03 | 0.49 | 0.39 | 0.2 | 1.72 | 1 large post-medieval sand extraction pit |
| 4 | E-W | 25 | 17.67 | 17.67 | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.80 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 1 large post-medieval sand extraction pit. |

APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

List of Projects | Manage Projects | Search Projects | New project | Change your details | HER coverage | Change country | Log out

Printable version

OASIS ID: preconst1-319506

Project details

Project name 37-55 Mildenhall Road, Fordham

Short description of the project 18th/19th-century sand extraction pit

Project dates Start: 23-04-2018 End: 24-04-2018

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project

reference codes

ECB5389 - HER event no.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined

Monument type SAND EXTRACTION PIT Post Medieval

Significant Finds NONE None

Project location

Country England

Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE FORDHAM 37-

55 Mildenhall Road, Fordham

Postcode CB7 5NW Study area 0.32 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 6364 7082 52.310639791746 0.400727372171 52 18 38 N 000

24 02 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 18m Max: 18m

Project creators

Name of OrganisationPre-Construct Archaeology LimitedProject brief originatorCambridgeshire County CouncilProject design originatorPre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Project director/manager Simon Carlyle
Project supervisor Tom Revell

| Entered by | Simon Carlyle (scarlyle@pre-construct.com |
|------------|---|
| | |

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