



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Meagre Farm

Kimbolton Road

Hail Weston

St Neots

Cambridgeshire

CHER No. ECB7034



Quality Check

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Summary

In January 2023, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at Meagre Farm, Kimbolton Road, Hail Weston, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, prior to the construction of a new manège. The evaluation comprised the excavation of 2 x 15m long x 1.80m wide trenches, forming a T-shape, within the footprint of the development. Despite the proximity of late prehistoric (Iron Age) or Roman remains no archaeological features, finds or deposits were revealed by evaluation. As the development is situated outside of any known settlement area it seems likely that it lies between widely dispersed features or it is simply located on the periphery of human activity.

1 Introduction

1.1 In January 2023, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at Land adjacent to Meagre Farm, Kimbolton Road, Hail Weston, St Neots, Cambridgeshire. The project was commissioned by Amanda Pigg, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Watson 2022), and approved by Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET), Archaeological Advisor (AA) to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Huntingdonshire District Council. The relevant planning application reference is 22/01691/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This project has been required under the terms of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Condition 4 of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 *The Site*

Location

Meagre Farm is situated approximately 1.2 km northwest of the village of Hail Weston, within the eponymous civil parish and the administrative district of Huntingdonshire District Council. It is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 1566 6346 (Fig. 1).

Description

Meagre Farm is located on a private drive off the B645 between Hail Weston and Staughton Green. The development site is in a small field to the northeast of Meagre Farm and covers an area of approximately 800m² (Fig. 2). The site is bounded to the north and west by private drives, to the southwest by farm buildings, and to the east by open fields.

Geology & Topography

The bedrock geology is mudstone of the Oxford Clay Formation, formed between 166.1 and 157.3 million years ago during the Jurassic period, with superficial deposits of the Oadby Member, diamicton (deposits formed from dryland erosion) formed between 480 and 423 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period (<https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>). The site lies at an approximate elevation of 26m AOD.

Development

The proposal calls for the construction of a new manège, with the placement of all-weather surfacing over the existing grassed over sand manège; the change of use from paddock to manège extension; and the construction of an extended manège with associated fencing (Fig. 3).

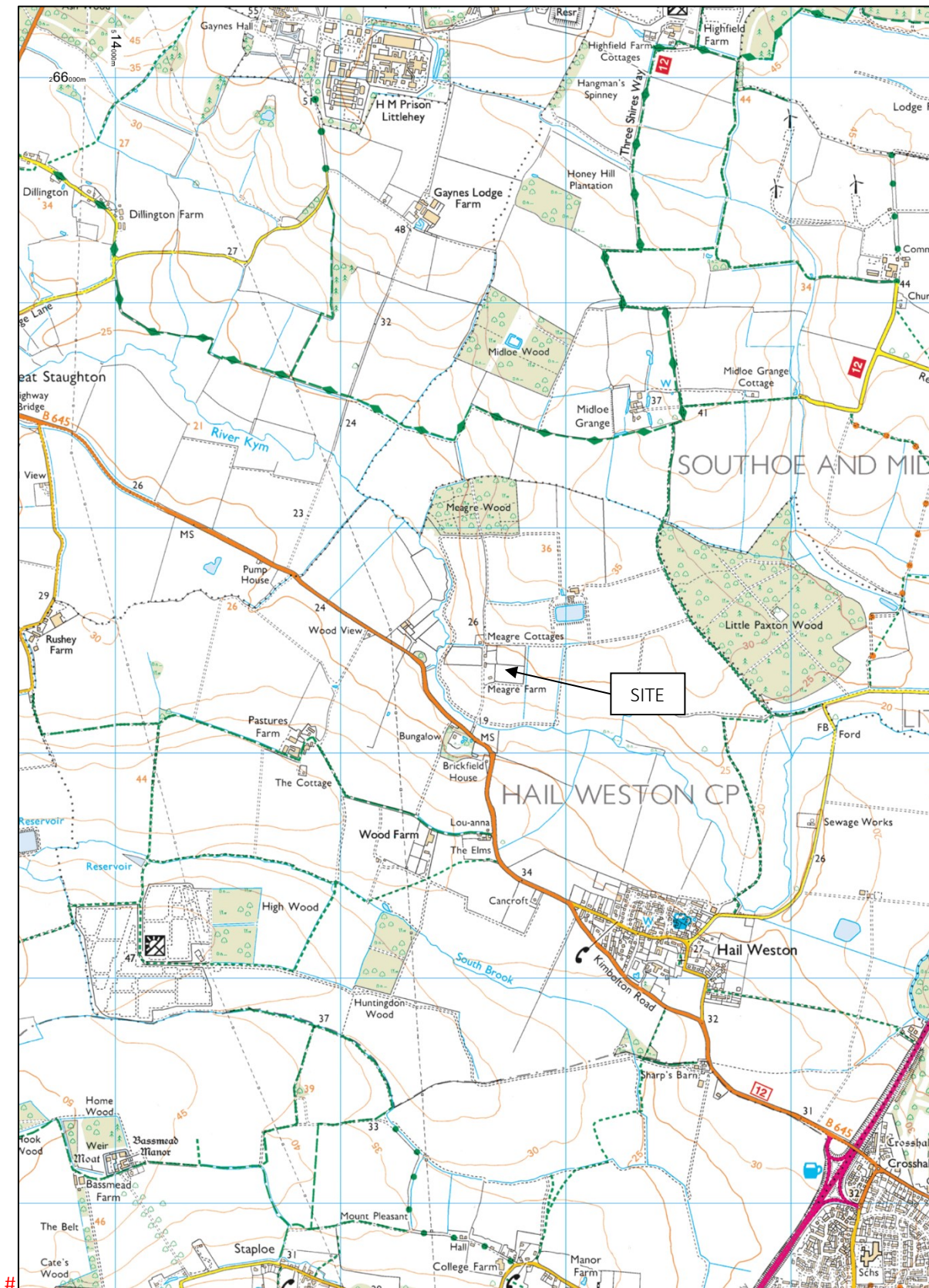


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

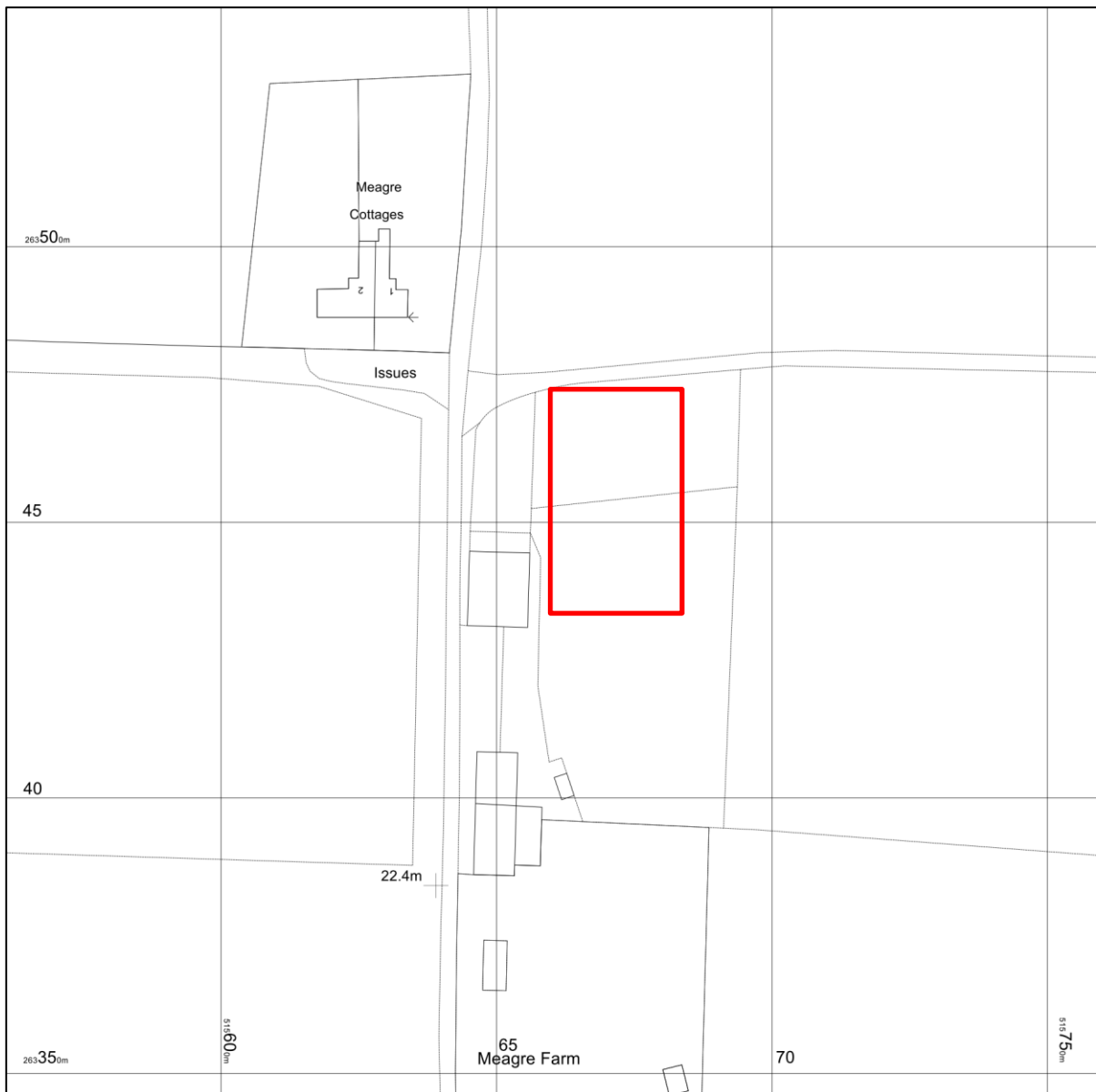


Figure 2: Site layout (scale 1:1,250)

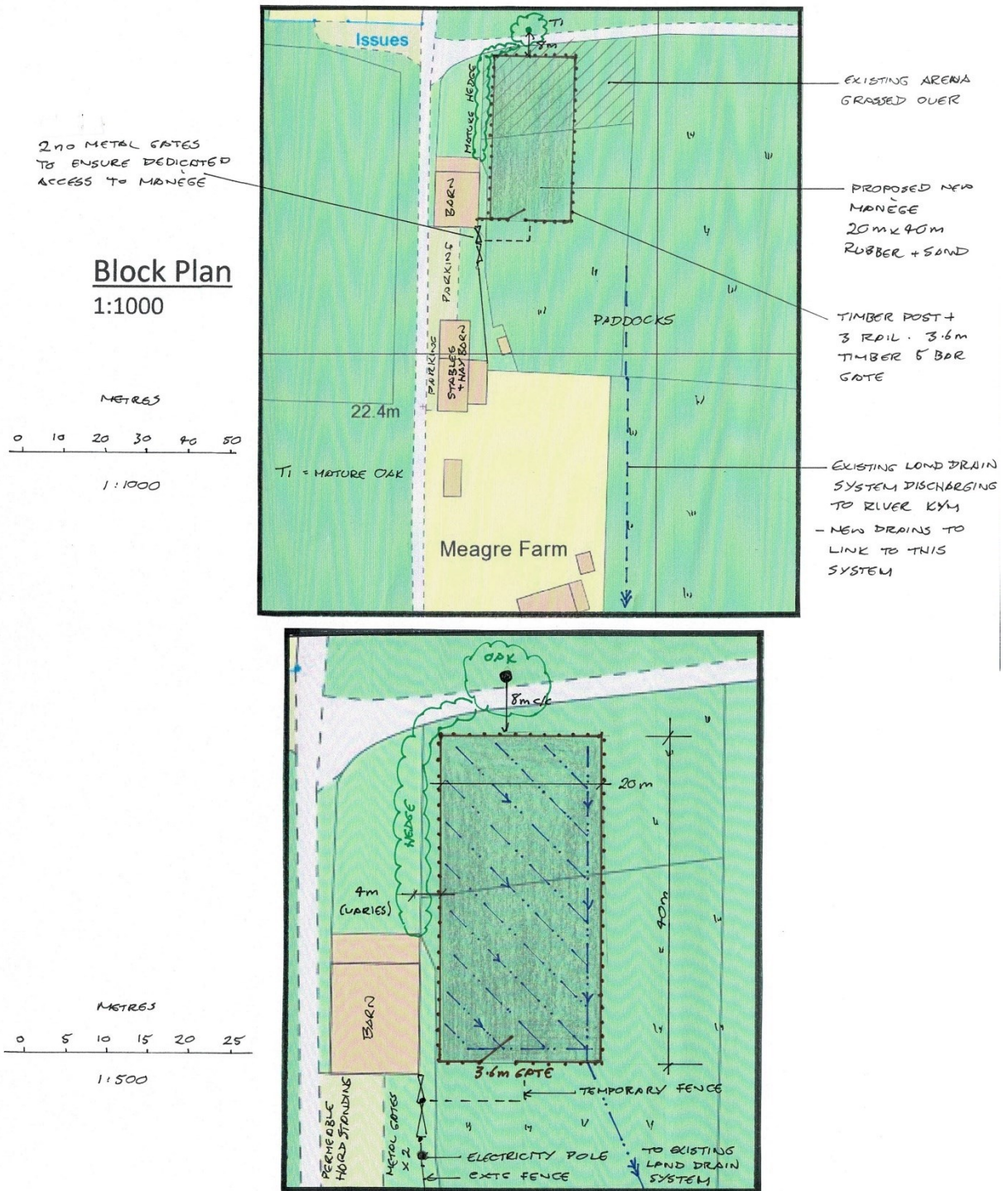


Figure 3: Proposed development plan (scale as shown)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Watson 2022) were:

- Document the character, nature, date, condition and significance of the archaeological resource
- Define the nature and extent of any mitigation works that may be required
- To determine the presence or absence of palaeosols and old land surface soils
- To determine the character of those deposits and their contents
- To determine the presence or absence of palaeochannels
- To study site formation processes generally.

2.2 Methods

In line with the requirements of the brief, the methods used were as follows:

- Stage One: An archaeological field evaluation of the site consisting of 30m of linear trenching arranged in a T-shape, a minimum bucket width of 1.8m, with a total of 54m²; an additional 5m trenching for judgemental use in the field: to extend trenches over whole features, to enable safe excavation where deposits are deep and to check orientations or extents of significant remains should this prove necessary (Fig. 5).

2.3 Standards

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The Design Brief (CHET 2022)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2020a)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2021)
- Current Historic England guidelines (EH 2008, HE 2015b)
- The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003)



3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 The village of Hail Weston is located approximately 11 km southwest of Huntingdon and 1km northwest of St Neots. The general area has been inhabited since prehistory, but the origins of the modern settlement lie in the Saxon period. The toponym derives from compounding the Old English elements *west* (west, western) + *tūn* (an enclosure; a farmstead; a village; an estate) to mean: 'West farm/settlement' on the Hail River (KEPN 2022), now known as the river Kym (HWPC 2022). The development site is not situated within a Conservation Area.

This section has been compiled with information from Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER Ref. 22-5057), and reliable online sources. The HER data, with a search radius of 1km from the development site, is shown in Figure 5.

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

The only listing from this period in the HER search area is a Bronze Age ring ditch at Great Staughton (HER 05737), c.1km northwest of the development. All that remains is a cropmark, identified on aerial photography, that appears to represent a circular enclosure with an entrance. These were generally the site of an earthen or stone burial mound. To the south-east of the ring ditch are further faint cropmarks that may be the remains of ditches and rectilinear enclosures, though the poor condition of the cropmarks makes it difficult to determine if these features are archaeological or geological in origin.

3.3 *Iron Age (600BC - AD43) to Roman (AD43 - c.450)*

The first indications of settlement are provided by cropmarks (HER MCB18756) located c.120m southwest of the development. These cropmarks show the layout of a settlement that probably dates to the late Prehistoric (Iron Age) or Roman period. Roman activity and settlement in the area is evidenced by the presence of a beehive quern situated c.500m to the north of the proposed development site (HER 00486) and a probable Roman inhumation discovered in 1953 c.1km to the southeast (HER 00501). In addition, metal detecting encountered 3 Roman and 3 illegible coins, along with various types of Roman pottery c.800m to the southwest (HER MCB22260).

3.4 *Saxon* (c.450 - 1066)

The Domesday Survey of 1086 records that there were two manors before the Norman Conquest. Algeat held a 1½ hide manor with one plough and 20 acres of woodland pasture (Williams & Martin 2002: 588). A lightly larger estate of 2hides with 6 ploughs and 40acres of pasture woodland was held by Saxi and Wulfwine (*ibid*: 560)

Unfortunately, no remains from this period are listed in the HER search area.

3.5 *Medieval* (1066 - 1500)

After the Norman Conquest, Hail Weston was eventually split into three or more manors, and ownership was contentious (HWPC 2022; Powell-Smith 2022). In the Domesday Book 1086, the settlement is listed as *Westone* and *Westune*, and formed part of the Hundred of Toseland in Huntingdonshire (*ibid.*). In 1086, the manors were held by Eustace of Boulogne, but these were disputed by the Countess Judith of Lens, a niece of William the Conqueror. One of the manors that was claimed by Countess Judith, was also claimed by Robert Fafiton, whose ancestor was Saxi Chit. William de Warenne, who had fought with William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings, disputed a manor already held in the village by Robert Fafiton; other apparent small



manors was similarly contested in the area (HWPC 2022; Page *et al.*, 1932; Powell-Smith 2022; Williams & Martin 2002: 561).

The remains of a medieval settlement (HER 08734) are situated c.350m northeast of the development site, in the form of a hollow way, house platforms, ponds, field boundaries and ridge & furrow. Further indications of the agricultural basis of the local economy are provided by the remains of an enclosure and ditch, c.840m southwest of the proposed development site (HER 11384), medieval to post medieval banks and ditches c.700m to the north (HER MCB30047) and large zones of (extant and former) ridge and furrow that span much of the study area (HER 11599, 11539, 09008, MCB18745, MCB18759, MCB24782).

3.6 **Post-Medieval (1500 - 1900) to Modern (1900 - present)**

The study area and Hail Weston retained their rural character in the post-medieval period, and between the development site and the village is a range of earthworks of probable medieval or possible post medieval date that represent a trackway as well as old enclosures and field systems (MCB28263, MCB30075). Unsurprisingly, most the remains listed in the HER appear to comprise elements of an agricultural landscape: Meagre Farm (HER MCB31699), the location of the development site, is first recorded on an Ordnance Survey map (1st Edition) from 1885, along with Weston Pastures (HER MCB29348) and the remains of a post-medieval brick kiln c.400m to the south (HER 00484). In addition, numerous undated ditches (HER MCB18737-8, MCB18750, MCB18754, MCB18756, MCB18757), enclosures (HER MCB21097, MCB21098-9, MCB21400), earthworks (HER MCB24575), and a mound (HER MCB30050) are noted in the HER.

The Biggleswade to Alconbury Hill Turnpike (HER MCB31381), enacted by Act of Parliament in 1724 and dissolved 1867, runs through the study area and a milestone (HER MCB18309) on the verge opposite the entrance to Meagre Farm reads 58/ MILES/ FROM/ LONDON/ HAIL/WESTON.



4 Results

4.1 Introduction

The excavated trenches were further south than originally proposed as they would have crossed the line of a fence. They were still within the footprint of the proposed development area (Fig. 5). The evaluation comprised two 15m x 1.80m linear trenches, forming a T-shape, excavated using a 4-tonne machine fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless bucket. Trench 1 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.30m - 0.34m deep, and Trench 2 to 0.19m - 0.38m.

4.2 Trenches 1 and 2

The topsoil was removed in spits under continuous archaeological supervision. The natural geology was uncovered at a depth of 0.24m in Trench 1 and at 0.21m in Trench 2.

The stratigraphy was uniform across the excavated area and comprised (Figs 6-7; Plates 1-4):

<i>Context no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dimensions (max)</i>	<i>Description</i>
Trench 1			
(101)	Topsoil	0.12m	Dark grey slightly clayey silt
(102)	Subsoil	0.12m	Mid brownish grey silty clay
(103)	Natural geology	>0.11m	Light greyish, yellowish brown, silty clay with small sized stones (<0.05)
Trench 2			
(201)	Topsoil	0.06m	Dark grey, slightly clayey silt
(202)	Subsoil	0.15m	Mid brownish grey silty clay
(203)	Natural geology	>0.09m	Light greyish, yellowish brown, silty clay with small sized stones (<0.05)

An irregular feature was uncovered at the southern end of Trench 2, but further investigation identified it as an extensive area of rooting. On completion of the fieldwork, no archaeological finds, features or deposits were revealed within either of the evaluation trenches.

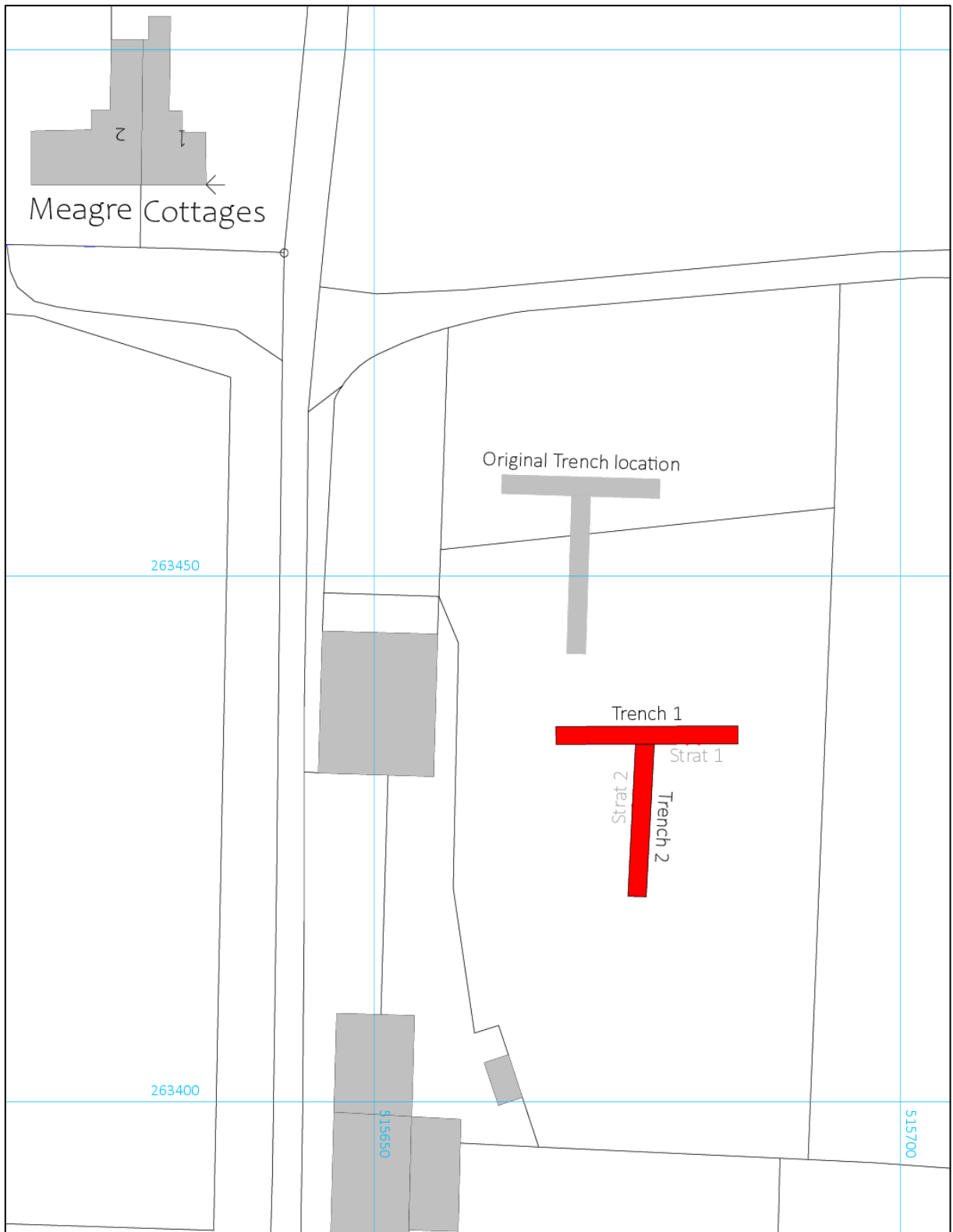


Figure 5: Trench location (red) and original trench location (grey) (scale 1:500)

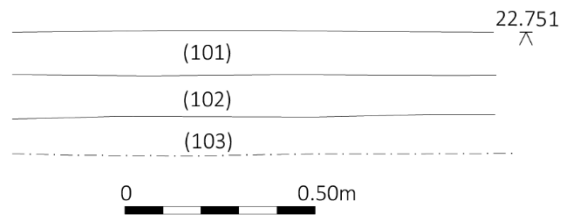


Figure 6: Trench 1 schematic stratigraphy (scale 1:20)

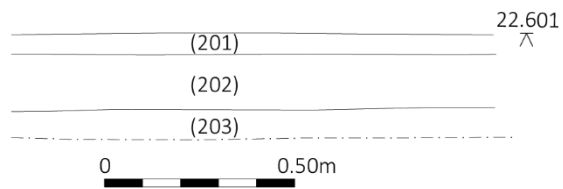


Figure 7: Trench 2 schematic stratigraphy (scale 1:20)



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking east



Plate 2: Trench 1 Stratigraphy, looking south



Plate 3: Trench 2, looking south



Plate 4: Trench 2 Stratigraphy, looking west



5 Conclusions

Archaeological Evaluation comprising two 15m long trenches arranged in a T-shape was undertaken at Meagre Farm, Kimbolton Road, Hail Weston, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, prior to the construction of a new manège.

Despite the proximity of Iron Age and/or Roman remains no archaeological features, finds or deposits were revealed by evaluation. As the development is situated outside of any known settlement area it seems likely that it served as hinterland with possibly widely dispersed features that were not present within the trenches.

The lack of archaeological remains within the trenches as well as the relatively shallow ground reduction required for the construction of a manège would suggest that the potential impact of the proposed development on archaeological remains is low.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Amanda Pigg for commissioning this report. Thanks are also due to Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET) for providing historic environment records and other relevant documents and to Lu Speariett of the Historic Environment Team for monitoring the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by Florian Weber MA ACIfA and Phyllida Broadway MA. The report was written by Florian Weber MA ACIfA, and edited by Derek Watson PhD.



7 Archive

- 7.1 The project archive will comprise a digital version of the Evaluation Report which will contain the following:
1. List of photographs
 2. Site Records
 3. OASIS summary report
- 7.2 The archive will be deposited with OASIS kdkarcha1-511464, The Cambridgeshire HER Event Number is ECB7034.



8 References

Standards and Specifications

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KEPN 2022 Key to English Place-Names: Hail Weston. University of Nottingham. [http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/map/place/Huntingdonshire/Hail Weston](http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/map/place/Huntingdonshire/Hail%20Weston)

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Appendix 1: Photograph List

Shot	Digital	Subject
1	East	Trench 1
2	South	Trench 1, stratigraphy
3	South	Trench 2
4	West	Trench 2, stratigraphy

N.B: All digital photographs taken on site are reproduced within this report



Appendix 2: Site Records

Trench and context details

Trench no	1	Length (m)	15	Width (m)	1.8	Depth (m)	0.35
Co-ordinates	515662.20, 263458.86/515677.15, 515677.15					Area (sq m)	27
Description	15m by 1.8m trench running east-west. No archaeological features present. Trench 1 and 2 form T-shaped trench.						
Context No.	Type	Depth (m)	Description				
101	Topsoil	0.12	Dark grey slightly clayey silt.				
102	Subsoil	0.12	Mid brown grey silty clay				
103	Natural	0.11	Light greyish yellow brown silty clay with small sized stones				

Trench no	2	Length (m)	15	Width (m)	1.8	Depth (m)	0.30
Co-ordinates	515669.27, 263442.52/515669.68, 515669.68					Area (sq m)	27
Description	15m by 1.8m trench running north-south. No archaeological features present. 1m slot cut in possible natural feature caused by rooting in south end of trench. Trench 2 forms T shaped trench with Trench 1.						
Context No.	Type	Depth (m)	Description				
201	Topsoil	0.06	Dark grey slightly clayey silt.				
202	Subsoil	0.15	Mid brown grey silty clay				
203	Natural	0.09	Light greyish yellow brown silty clay with small sized stones				



Appendix 3: Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	Meagre Farm, Kimbolton Road, St Neots, Cambridgeshire	Project Site Code	742/SNM
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-511464	Event/Accession no	ECB7034
OS reference	TL 1566 6346	Study area size	54m ²
Project Type	Evaluation	Height (mAOD)	26m
Short Description	In January 2023, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at Meagre Farm, Kimbolton Road, Hail Weston, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, prior to the construction of a new manège. The evaluation comprised the excavation of 2 x 15m long x 1.80m wide trenches, forming a T-shape, within the footprint of the development. Despite the proximity of late prehistoric (Iron Age) or Roman remains no archaeological features, finds or deposits were revealed by evaluation. As the development is situated outside of any known settlement area it seems likely that it lies between widely dispersed features or it is simply located on the periphery of human activity.		
Previous work	None	Site status	None
Planning proposal	All weather surfacing of existing grassed over sand manège, change of use from paddock to manège extension and construction of extended manège with associated fencing.	Current land use	Paddock
Local Planning Authority	Huntingdonshire District Council	Planning application ref.	22/01691/FUL
Monument type	None	Monument period	Unknown
Significant finds	None	Future work	No
RESEARCH AIMS			
Research framework	Section /Question	Summary of outcome	
Brief (CHET 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document the character, nature, date, condition and significance of the archaeological resource • Define the nature and extent of any mitigation works that may be required • To determine the presence or absence of palaeosols and old land surface soils • To determine the character of those deposits and their contents • To determine the presence or absence of palaeochannels • To study site formation processes generally. 	The aims of the project could not be furthered	
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd



Project Manager	David Kaye	Director/Supervisor	Florian Weber
Sponsor/funding body	Amanda Pigg		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	23.01.2023	End date	23.01.2023
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Museum	None	
Paper	CHER	Evaluation report	
Digital	OASIS/ADS	Evaluation report containing all digital archive	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Evaluation Report: Meagre Farm, Kimbolton Road, St Neots, Cambridgeshire		
Serial title & volume	742/SNM/2.1		
Author(s)	Florian Weber MA ACIfA		
Page no's	22	Date	26.01.2023



Appendix 4: OASIS summary

OASIS ID (UID): kdkarcha1-511464

Project Name: Evaluation at Meagre Farm, Hail Weston, Cambridge, United Kingdom

Sitename: Meagre Farm, Hail Weston, Cambridge, United Kingdom

Activity type: Evaluation

Project Identifier(s): 742SNM, Meagre Farm, Kimbolton Road, St Neots, Cambridgeshire

Planning Id: 22/01691/FUL, 22/01691/FUL

Reason For Investigation: Planning: Post determination

Organisation Responsible for work: KDK Archaeology Ltd

Project Dates: 23-Jan-2023 - 23-Jan-2023

Location: Meagre Farm, Hail Weston, Cambridge, United Kingdom

NGR: TL 15667 63433 LL : 52.256915, -0.306823 12 Fig : 515667,263433

Administrative Areas: Country : England
County : Cambridgeshire
District : Huntingdonshire
Parish : Hail Weston

Project Methodology: Stage One: An archaeological field evaluation of the site consisting of 30m of linear trenching arranged in a T-shape, a minimum bucket width of 1.8m, with a total of 54m²; an additional 5m trenching for judgemental use in the field: to extend trenches over whole features, to enable safe excavation where deposits are deep and to check orientations or extents of significant remains should this prove necessary. Stage Two: An appraisal of the results of the evaluation and their significance with regard to the proposed development. This in turn may lead to the definition of a programme of investigation and recording of archaeological remains which will be destroyed by the development. CHET will in turn prepare a Brief for the next phase of investigation that will also cover a programme of post-excavation, analysis and publication. Stage Three: The implementation of an agreed programme of archaeological investigation and recording based on the Brief.

Project Results: In January 2023, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at Meagre Farm, Kimbolton Road, Hail Weston, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, prior to the construction of a new manège. The archaeological evaluation comprised the excavation of two 15m long trenches arranged in a T-shape within the footprint of the development. Despite the proximity of late prehistoric (Iron Age) or Roman remains no archaeological features, finds or deposits were revealed by evaluation. As the development is situated outside of any known settlement area it seems likely that it lies between widely dispersed features or it was simply located on the periphery of human activity. Consequently, it has not been possible to achieve any of stated the aims of the project.

Keywords:

Funder:

HER Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record - unRev - STANDARD

Person Responsible for work

HER Identifiers HER Event No - ECB7034