Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at The Causeway, Bassingbourn Cambridgeshire July 2018

Report No 18/89

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NGR: TL 3375 4417
Site code: ECB5305

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	**OASIS No: molanort1- 322742**	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at The Causeway, Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire, July 2018	
Short description	MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Cala Homes to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation at Bassingbourn. Of the twelve trenches excavated only a single trench contained two undated archaeological features. Examination of topsoil and subsoil revealed only post-medieval and modern material.	
Project type	Archaeological trial trench evaluation	
Previous work	None	
Current land use	Pasture	
Future work	Not known	
Monument type and period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Cambridgeshire	
Site address	The Causeway, Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire	
Easting Northing	TL 3375 4417	
Area (sq m/ha)	0.94ha	
Height aOD	*c30*m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA	
Project brief originator	Cambridgeshire County Council Senior Archaeological at the Historic Environment Team	
Project Design originator	Paul Thompson (MOLA Northampton)	
Director/Supervisor	Christopher Jones (MOLA Northampton)	
Project Manager	Adam Yates (MOLA Northampton)	
Sponsor or funding body	Cala Homes	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	03. 07. 2018	
End date	05. 07. 2018	
ARCHIVES	**Location (Accession no.)**	**Contents**
Physical	ECB5305	None
Paper		Site documents: Watching brief record forms and context sheets. Registers for plans, sections, samples, contexts and photographs. A3 permatrace plans and sections.
Digital		Dxf data, digital photographs (JPEG), client report (word/PDF)
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Unpublished client report	
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Abstract

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Cala Homes to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation at Bassingbourn. Of the twelve trenches excavated only a single trench contained two undated linear features. Examination of topsoil and subsoil revealed only post-medieval and modern material.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Cala Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at The Causeway, Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 3375 4417, Fig 1). The archaeological evaluation was in response to a proposed development comprising the erection of 26 dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping (Planning Application: S/1566/16/OL). A condition had been placed on planning consent requiring a scheme of archaeological work to be undertaken.

Archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; DCLG 2012) and the Brief issued by the Senior Archaeologist at the Historic Environment Team, Cambridgeshire County Council (Thomas 2017).

MOLA is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) registered organisation, and all works were undertaken according to the CIfA *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a) and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evauluation (CIfA 2014b).

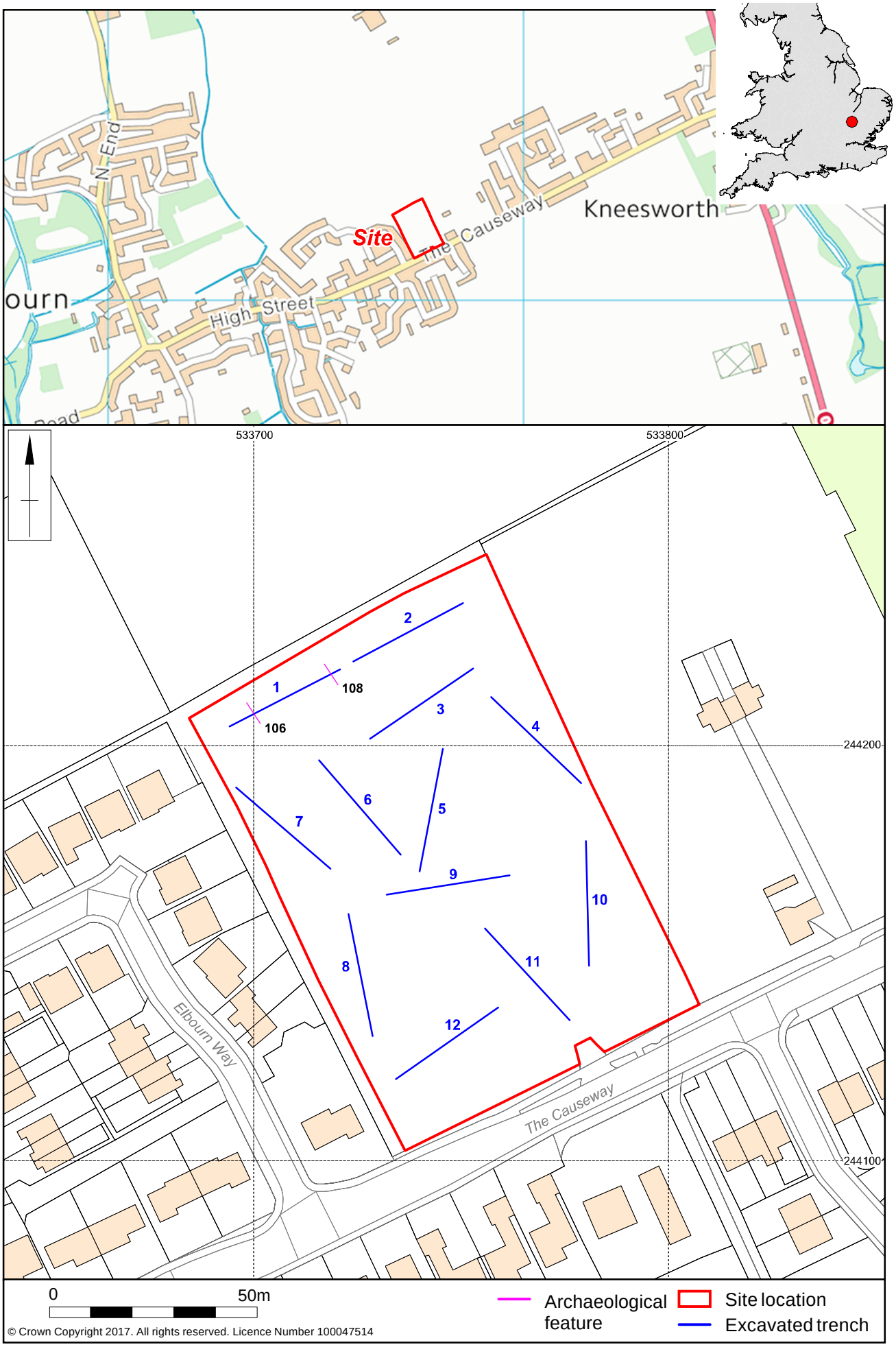
2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the trial trench evaluation was to record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance, and quality of any surviving archaeological remains. The evaluation specifically aims to examine:

- the date, nature, significance and extent of activity or occupation in the development site;
- the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- the potential for the recovery of artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;

- the potential for palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions, including the presence/absence of palaeosols, palaeochannels, and old land surface soils/deposits, the character of deposits and their contents within negative features, and the site formation processes generally;
- the impact of the proposed works upon any surviving archaeological remains;
- and inform any future excavation, mitigation and/or preservation *in-situ* strategy.

Specific research objectives were drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Glazebrook 1997; Medlycott 2011) as relevant depending upon the results of the evaluation.



Scale 1:1250

Site location and excavated trenches Fig 1

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

The proposed development is located at the eastern part of the village of Bassingbourn. The site is currently a pasture field covering an area of *c0*.94 ha in size. The site is bounded by arable farmland to the north, a cemetery to the east and housing to the west and south. The southern boundary of the site is the main road, The Causeway, through Bassingbourn.

The underlying geology is Zig Zag Chalk Formation. No overlying superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2017).

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

The following historic background contains selected summarised data of the Historic Environment Record (HER) for Cambridgeshire. All the monuments within a 1km search radius of the site are summarised in the Appendix. Numbers in brackets refer to the Cambridgeshire HER reference numbers.

There are no designated heritage assets, such as World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Conservation Areas within the area of the development site

Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic

A Palaeolithic worn flint flake was located by metal detection 0.8km from the development site (10319A). There is no current known evidence from the Mesolithic period at or near the site. A Neolithic axe was found at North End (03090).

Bronze Age

A Bronze Age ring ditch or barrow to the south west, indicates the presence of earlier prehistoric activity in the vicinity (MCB21156). A possible prehistoric trackway 0.8km south of the development site observed through aerial photography (MCB21157).

Iron Age and Roman

Activity of this period has been identified all around Bassingbourn. Trackways of probable Iron Age or Roman date are recorded to the north (MCB22229) and south (MCB21157). A bronze Roman statuette of Diana, probably a cult object was found at North End (03123). A Roman coin from 1st or 2nd century AD pierced for wear as a pendant was found 0.9km from the site in Elbourn Way (MCB15964).

In the field immediately north-west of the development site are crop marks comprising two parallel linear ditches on an east-west alignment interpreted as a possible Iron Age or Roman track way (MCB22229) and a rectilinear enclosure (MCB22230). These date from the Early Iron Age to 5th century Roman - 800 BC to 409 AD.

Finds of Roman pottery, possibly indicating occupation) have been identified to the south of the village (03089). The site lies 0.8km west of the Ermine Street.

Saxon and medieval

The site is located on the edge of the medieval settlement with surviving earthworks (HER MCB22225) and a moat (MCB1600) recorded to the west. Medieval features and sites are very abundant within the area around Bassingbourn. The most significant of these is the Bury Yard moated site (01237), which is a Scheduled Monument (NHLE 1019040) (DCB333) and is situated around 650m north-west. The monument includes a roughly D-shaped outer ditched enclosure within which is situated a rectangular moat. Two other possible moated sites were situated 0.65km (01238) and 0.37km west of the site (01239).

To the east of Clear Farm and south of Knutsford Road is the site of Rouses Manor (MCB23333), first mentioned in Domesday as an estate. Land adjacent to Clear Farm identified former medieval field boundary during an excavation in February 2017 (MCB23459) and (ECB4944).

The parish church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul (03191, Grade I Listed Building, NHLE 1330840) built of flint and stone rubble, had an early 13th-century tower that survived until 1897, later rebuilt in 14th-century style. The nave was replaced in late 13th century by nave arcades, north and south aisles and clerestory added in *c*1350. The chancel dates from *c*1330, and the unusual timber porch from the late 14th century. The cemetery (MCB19392) was closed in 1878 due to overcrowding (VCH 1982).

In the field immediately north-west of the development site are former medieval ridge and furrow cultivation earthworks although these were no longer visible by 2013 (MCB222276). Medieval and Furrow recorded south east of the development site and west of the A1198 or Ermine Street (MCB22468).

Earthworks comprising building platforms (MCB22225) recorded in aerial photographs were noted to be levelled in 2013 appear to be associated with the medieval or post-medieval settlement.

Metal detected finds of this period include a silver coin and silver button were found around 0.8km to the east by a metal detectorist (10319).

Post-medieval

The Old Mount at Church Close (03132) is the site of a former ice house belonging to the Pigott family. A now demolished post-medieval folly and site of a windmill lie 0.24km east of the site in Tower Close.

The HER records a number of sites of former buildings and minor industrial and agricultural sites, such as mills (MCB20653, MCB20654, 03084, 03133), farms (MCB20660, MCB20661, MCB20662, MCB20663), public houses (MCB20667, MCB20668), smithies and workshops (MCB20669, MCB20670, MCB20671, MCB16559), gasworks (MCB20677), allotments (MCB20657) and other buildings and structures which probably date from the medieval or post-medieval period.

Immediately east and next to the site is the local cemetery (12023) which dates to the 19th century. After the closure of the churchyard for burial, this new cemetery site was established (12023). The site contains two cemetery chapels (MCB17221), constructed 1879, now Grade II Listed Buildings (NHLE 1389389).

Around 1.6km to the north of the site is situated the site of RAF Bassingbourn (CB15125), a WWII airfield for US8AAF bomber training and army recruit training.

3.3 Previous archaeological work

An evaluation at land immediately south of the development site on The Causeway, Bassingbourn (ECB3238) produced late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age pottery from a tree throw (MCB18554). The site had been used as Allotments in the 18th to 19th century (MCB18555).

Iron Age boundary ditches were identified from archaeological works at Bassingbourn Village College (MCB17408, ECB2321, ECB2553) to the west of the village.

Archaeological investigations to the west of the site have also identified evidence for medieval activity (ECB107). Two medieval silver coins have been found in a garden at 90 North End (MCB 17648).

Earthworks and excavation in Church Close (09912 and CB15039) revealed early/middle Saxon ditches, pottery & possible structures and two phases of Norman domestic occupation with ditches and pits. A Late Saxon origin is suggested for Bassingbourn village and immediate surrounding land divisions. A small number of medieval archaeological features, mostly ditches, were concentrated near the edge of Back Orchard (CB15579).

4 TRIAL TRENCH METHODOLOGY

A 4% sample of the 0.94ha evaluation area was subject to trial trench evaluation. This comprised 12 trenches each 30m long and 1.8m wide (Fig 1). Trenches were positioned to provide a broad sample across the site, avoiding constraints such as services. Two of the proposed trenches 7 and 8 were located to respect a tree preservation order (TPO) to minimise root damage. A contingency of 1% sample of additional trenching, comprising 94 linear metres was identified, although this was not required

The trenches were located in using Leica Viva Survey Grade RTK GPS using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of ± 0.05m to Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum. Machine excavation was undertaken under the direction of a suitably experienced archaeologist. The trenches were excavated by machine fitted with a toothless bucket a minimum of 1.8m wide, to reveal archaeological remains or where these were absent, undisturbed natural horizons. Excavation did not proceed beyond safe working depths.

The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval. The requirements of the Treasure Act (1996) was adhered to. Finds coming under the definition of ‘treasure’ as defined by the Treasure Act 1996 will be reported to the Coroner and dealt with under the procedures of the Treasure Act and Code of Practice. This includes both precious metals and base metals where they are of prehistoric date. Suitable measures will be taken to ensure their security where removal cannot take place (i.e. they are within a human burial). Any finds falling under the provision of the Treasure Act will notified to the Portable Antiquities Scheme and Finds Liaison Officer for the county within 48 hours of discovery.

The artefact content of the plough soil and any lower soil horizons was examined as part of the evaluation; this comprised the hand sorting of 90 litres of spoil for each soil horizon encountered. Bucket sampling points occurred at either end and at the

midpoint of trenches. Unstratified artefacts were sought and recovered from trench spoil heaps. Any artefacts recovered were quantified and spatially illustrated within the evaluation report.

The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features, unless it was certain that there were no archaeological remains present. All archaeological features were investigated unless otherwise agreed. Discrete features were half sectioned and slots excavated through linear features were a minimum of 1m in width. The integrity of the archaeological record was maintained.

All archaeological deposits and artefacts encountered during the course of evaluation were fully recorded, and all paperwork and plans displayed the ECB Event Number for the site. Recording followed standard fieldwork procedures (MOLA 2014). All archaeological features were given a separate context number. Deposits were described on pro-forma context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds.

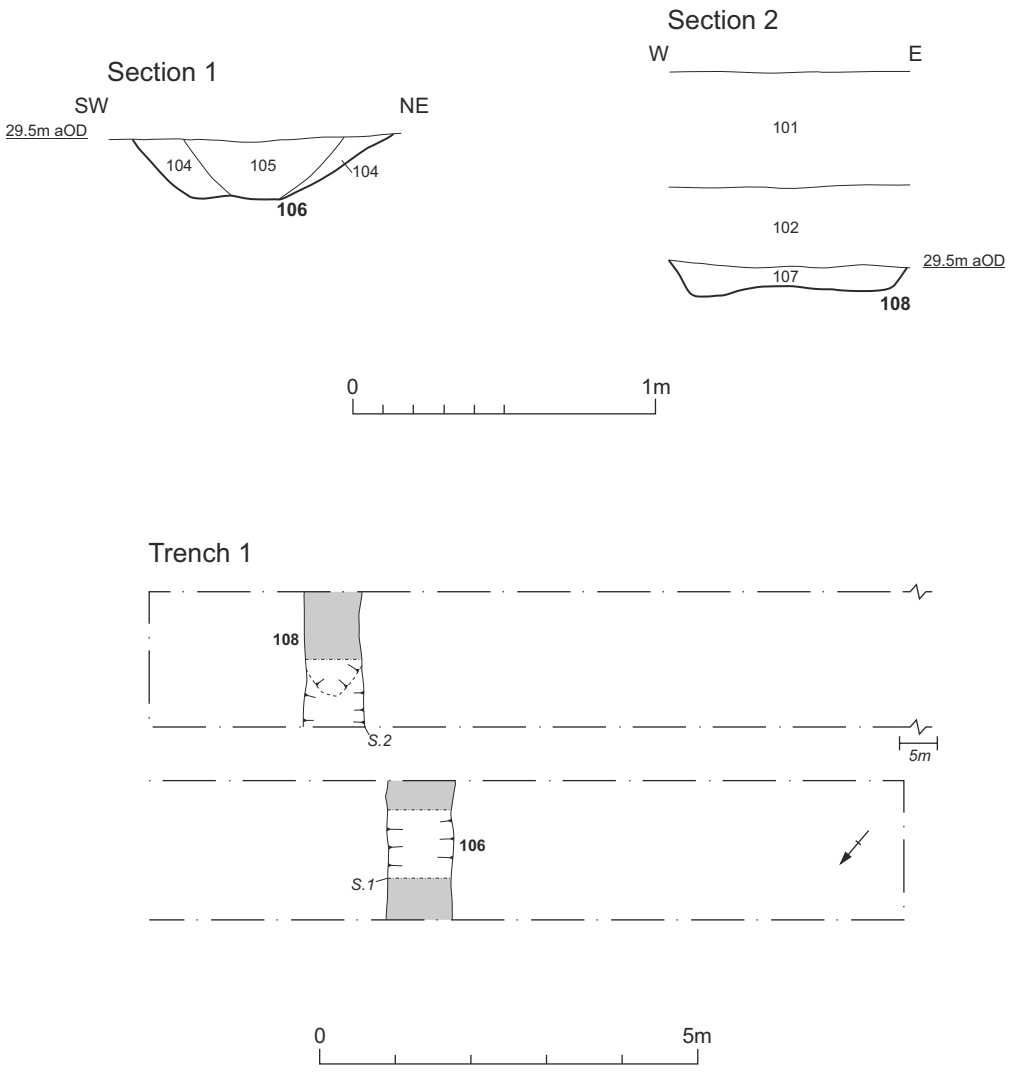
Archaeological features were plotted on trench plans at a scale of 1:50. Buildings, other significant remains or areas of complex stratigraphy would have be planned in greater detail at 1:20 or 1:10 scale as appropriate. Sections or profiles through features and areas of complex stratigraphy were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. All levels will be related to Ordnance Datum.

A photographic record was maintained by high resolution digital photography exceeding 12 megapixels, and monochrome negatives. Overall shots of the site were taken prior to excavation and after backfilling. Overall shots of each trench were taken together with detailed shots of individual features and feature groups as appropriate. All photographs, except general site shots or specific shots for publication included a north arrow and suitable photographic scale.

Finds were collected from the individual deposits and appropriately packed and stored in stable conditions by context. Artefacts were collected by hand and retained, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from site (CIfA 2014c; Watkinson and Neal 1998). Unstratified animal bones and modern material were not collected. Material that comprises a large quantity of a standard product (e.g. brick or tile) retained as a sub-sample representing its typical composition.

The field data was compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

The works were monitored by And Thomas, Senior Archaeologist at Cambridgeshire County Coucil Historic Environment Team.



Scale 1:25 (Sections) & 1:100 (Plan) Sections and plan of trench 1 Fig 2

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 General stratigraphy

The natural sub-strata was Zig Zag Chalk Formation, which was overlaid by a mid-orange sandy clay subsoil with occasional small stones, chalk fragments. The topsoil was a mid-grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones. Only post-medieval material was retrieved from the topsoil.

5.2 The archaeological remains

Twelve trenches were excavated across the proposed development area. Trench one was the only trench containing archaeological features comprising a ditch [106] and gully [108] (Fig 2).

Ditch [106] was aligned north-south and was 0.84m wide by 0.20m deep to a flat base. The primary fill (104) was light orange silt sand and the secondary fill (105) mid-grey sandy clay (Fig 3).

Ditch [106], looking north Fig 3

Gully [108] was aligned north-south and was 0.78m wide by 0.10m deep to an uneven base, with a light orange sandy clay fill (107). The uneven base is the result of root disturbance from the nearby hedge line to the north (Fig 4).

Gully [108], looking north Fig 4

6 THE FINDS Tora Hylton

No datable finds were found in the excavated features and only post-medieval and modern finds in the topsoil and subsoil spoil.

Pottery

In total nine sherds of pottery with a combined weight of 0.082kg were recovered during the evaluation at Bassingbourne. The entire assemblage is post-medieval in date and was recovered from topsoil overlying Trenches 2-5, 10, 12. The majority of sherds are undiagnostic and therefore the fabric type has been used as an indicator of date. The assemblage comprises post-medieval domestic wares spanning the c18th and 19th centuries and includes hollow wares in glazed red earthenwares and a possible bowl in black stoneware (? Basalt ware). Later wares are represented by flatwares in utilitarian whiteware fabrics and an undiagnostic sherd of stoneware.

Fabric	Trenches											
	2		3		4		5		10		12	
	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt
Glazed red earthenware (c18thC)					1	2			1	3		
Black Stoneware (?Basalt Ware (Late 18th C)					1	6						
Glazed earthenwares			1	14								

(c18th/19th C)												
Unglazed red earthenware					1	6						
Misc.English Stonewares (19th/20th C)							1	5				
Utilitarian whitewares (19th C)	1	5									1	3
Misc. Wares			1	38								
Total	1	5	2	52	3	14	1	5	1	3	1	3

Clay tobacco-pipes

Two abraded stem fragments from clay tobacco-pipes were recovered from topsoil overlying Trench 5. The stem fragments measure up to 30mm in length and display signs of abrasion and wear. Changes in manufacturing technique and the use of finer wire to make the bore ensured that there was a regular reduction in bore diameter between c.1620 and 1800. The sizes of the bores are measured by 64's of an inch, two sizes are represented 7/64's and 4/64's suggesting a 17th and 18th century for the stem fragments.

Ceramic tile

Tile Trenches 4, 5 and 10 produced 4 fragments for post-medieval ceramic tile weighing 0.060kg. The fabric is coarse, sandy and fired to a dark orange colour. With the exception of one small fragment from Trench 5, which retains the vestige of a small hole (nail/peg hole), indicating that it is a roof tile, all the fragments are undiagnostic

.

Glass

Two shards of modern glass were recovered from Trenches 2 and 5. The shards are small and weigh no more than 5g in weight, one is a body sherd from a wine bottle in green glass and the other a small fragment of? window glass in colourless glass.

7 DISCUSSION

Only two shallow undated features were recorded in Trench 1, they were not seen continuing in any of the other trenches to the south. The uneven nature of the base of at least one of the features was indicative of root disturbance, and this probably represents a former hedge line. Only post-medieval material was recovered from the topsoil. The site appears to have been used solely for agricultural usages, with no evidence for previous occupation activity.

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MOLA
August 2018

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	**Alignment, Length & width**		**Surface height**	**height of natural**
1	**NE-SW 30mx1.8m**		**aOD**	**aOD**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
101	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones	0.41m deep	-
102	Subsoil	Mid orange sandy clay with occasional small stones, chalk fragments	0.39m deep	-
103	Natural	Compact white chalk with infrequent inclusions	-	-
104	Fill of [106]	Light orange sand silt with sub-angular pebbles, flint andchalk.	0.34m wide 0.20m deep	
105	Fill of [106]	Mid grey sand clay rare pebbles and chalk	0.50m wide 0.20m deep	-
106	Cut of ditch	N-S linear, U-shaped concave base	0.84m wide 0.20m deep	-
107	Fill of [108]	Light orange sand clay, flint chalk fragments	0.78m wide 0.10m deep	-
108	Cut of gully	N-S linear sloping sides to uneven base	0.78m wide 0.10m deep	-

Trench 1, looking south-west Fig 5

Trench No	Alignment, Length & width		Surface height	height of natural
2	**NE-SW 30mx1.8m**		**aOD**	**aOD**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
201	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones	0.65m deep	-
202	Subsoil	Mid orange sandy clay with occasional small stones, chalk fragments	0.79m deep	-
203	Natural	Compact white chalk with infrequent inclusions	-	-

Trench 2, looking, south-west Fig 6

Trench No	Alignment, Length & width		Surface height	height of natural
3	**NE-SW 50mx1.6m**		**aOD**	**aOD**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
301	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones	0.38m deep	-
302	Subsoil	Mid orange sandy clay with occasional small stones, chalk fragments	0.40m deep	-
303	Natural	Compact white chalk with infrequent inclusions	-	-

Trench 3, looking north-east Fig 7

Trench No	Alignment, Length & width		Surface height	height of natural
4	**NW-SE 30mx1.8m**		**aOD**	**aOD**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
401	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones	0.39m deep	-
402	Subsoil	Mid orange sandy clay with occasional small stones, chalk fragments	0.38m deep	-
403	Natural	Compact white chalk with infrequent inclusions	-	-

Trench 4, looking south-east Fig 8

Trench No	**Alignment, Length & width**		**Surface height**	**height of natural**
5	**NE-SW 30mx1.8m**		**aOD**	**aOD**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
501	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones	0.35m deep	-
502	Subsoil	Mid orange sandy clay with occasional small stones, chalk fragments	0.30m deep	-
503	Natural	Compact white chalk with infrequent inclusions	-	-

Trench 5, looking south Fig 9

Trench No	Alignment, Length & width		Surface height	height of natural
6	**NW-SE 30mx1.8m**		**aOD**	**aOD**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
601	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones	0.44m deep	-
602	Subsoil	Mid orange sandy clay with occasional small stones, chalk fragments	0.21m deep	-
603	Natural	Compact white chalk with infrequent inclusions	-	-

Trench 6, looking south Fig 10

Trench No	Alignment, Length & width		Surface height	height of natural
7	**NW-SE 30mx1.8m**		**aOD**	**aOD**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
701	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones	0.40m deep	-
702	Subsoil	Mid orange sandy clay with occasional small stones, chalk fragments	0.21m deep	-
703	Natural	Compact white chalk with infrequent inclusions	-	-

Trench 7, looking north Fig 11

Trench No	**Alignment, Length & width**		**Surface height**	**height of natural**
8	**N-S 30mx1.8m**		**aOD**	**aOD**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
801	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones	0.37m deep	-
802	Subsoil	Mid orange sandy clay with occasional small stones, chalk fragments	0.26m deep	-
803	Natural	Compact white chalk with infrequent inclusions	-	-

Trench 8, looking north Fig 12

Trench No	**Alignment, Length & width**		**Surface height**	**height of natural**
9	**NE-SW 30mx1.8m**		**aOD**	**aOD**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
901	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones	0.44m deep	-
902	Subsoil	Mid orange sandy clay with occasional small stones, chalk fragments	0.28m deep	-
903	Natural	Compact white chalk with infrequent inclusions	-	-

Trench 9, looking north Fig 13

Trench No	Alignment, Length & width		Surface height	height of natural
10	**N-S 30mx1.8m**		**aOD**	**aOD**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
1001	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones	0.41m deep	-
1002	Subsoil	Mid orange sandy clay with occasional small stones, chalk fragments	0.30m deep	-
1003	Natural	Compact white chalk with infrequent inclusions	-	-

Trench 10, looking north Fig 14

Trench No	Alignment, Length & width		Surface height	height of natural
11	**NW-SE 30mx1.8m**		**aOD**	**aOD**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
1101	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones	0.40m deep	-
1102	Subsoil	Mid orange sandy clay with occasional small stones, chalk fragments	0.20m deep	-
1103	Natural	Compact white chalk with infrequent inclusions	-	-

Trench 11, looking north Fig 15

Trench No	Alignment, Length & width		Surface height	height of natural
12	**NE-SW 30mx1.8m**		**aOD**	**aOD**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
1201	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones	0.46m deep	-
1202	Subsoil	Mid orange sandy clay with occasional small stones, chalk fragments	0.20m deep	-
1203	Natural	Compact white chalk with infrequent inclusions	-	-

Trench 12, looking east Fig 16

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