

**LAND ADJACENT TO SEATONHURST,
BLUNTISHAM ROAD,
COLNE,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

NGR REF: TL 3707 7563



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

(OASIS ID: independ1-406858)

(EVENT NR: ECB6306)

OCTOBER 2020

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CONTENTS

- Summary**
- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Project Background**
- 3 Archaeological Background**
- 4 Aims**
- 5 Methodology**
- 6 Results**
- 7 Finds**
- 8 Discussion**
- 9 Archive**
- 10 Bibliography**

Appendices:

Context Descriptions

OASIS-Form

Trench Plans

Sections

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Independent Archaeology Consultants for the construction of four new dwellings on land adjacent to Seatonhurst, Bluntisham Road, Colne, Cambridgeshire. Two undated ditches and a medieval pit were recorded in the three evaluation trenches. The ditches were likely to be former drainage and/or farming ditches and the pit was interpreted as a medieval rubbish pit.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land adjacent to Seatonhurst, Bluntisham Road, Colne, Cambridgeshire (NGR: TL 3707 7563) (Figure 1-4). The investigation was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014), as well as discussions with Andy Thomas, Senior Archaeological Officer at Cambridgeshire County Council.
- 1.2 Independent Archaeology Consultants is an archaeological consultancy company based in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. The company subscribes to the *Code of Conduct, the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (CifA 2014), *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (EAA Occasional Paper 14) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (EAA Occ. Paper No 24, 2011). All relevant CifA Codes of Practice were adhered to throughout the course of the project.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning Permission has been granted (19/02051/FUL) for a new development on land adjacent to Seatonhurst, Bluntisham Road, Colne, Cambridgeshire. The development consisted of four new dwellings.
- 2.2 The site was located at the southern edge of the historic core of Colne on River Terrace Deposits of sand and gravel over Amptill Clay Formations at roughly 17m AOD (British Geological Survey).
- 2.3 The medieval settlement centred on a moated site 90m north-west of Moat House, now designated of national importance as a scheduled monument (National Heritage List for England reference 1019564), and the former site of the 13th century Saint Helen's Church to its west (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record reference 03650).
- 2.4 Due to the high archaeological potential of the site an archaeological evaluation was required prior to any construction on the site. This condition was mentioned in the Planning Permission granted by Huntingdonshire District Council and was in line with standards described in the NPPF. The project was based on an approved WSI and a Brief designed by the CHET.

Land Adjacent to Seatonhurst, Bluntisham Road, Colne, Cambridgeshire: Archaeological Evaluation

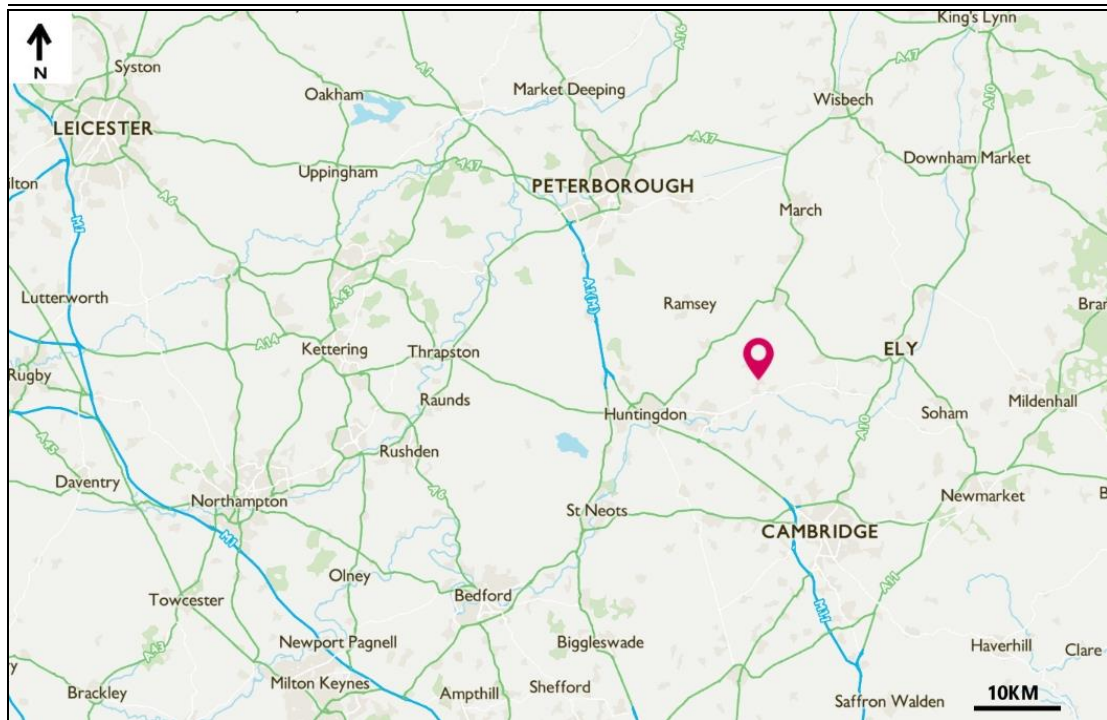


Figure 1. The location of Colne in England (Ordnance Survey maps produced with Licence nr: Ordnance Survey 0100031673).



Figure 2. The site location in Colne. (Ordnance Survey maps produced with Licence nr: Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

Land Adjacent to Seatonhurst, Bluntisham Road, Colne, Cambridgeshire: Archaeological Evaluation



Figure 3. Site outline and trench locations. (Ordnance Survey maps produced with Licence nr: Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

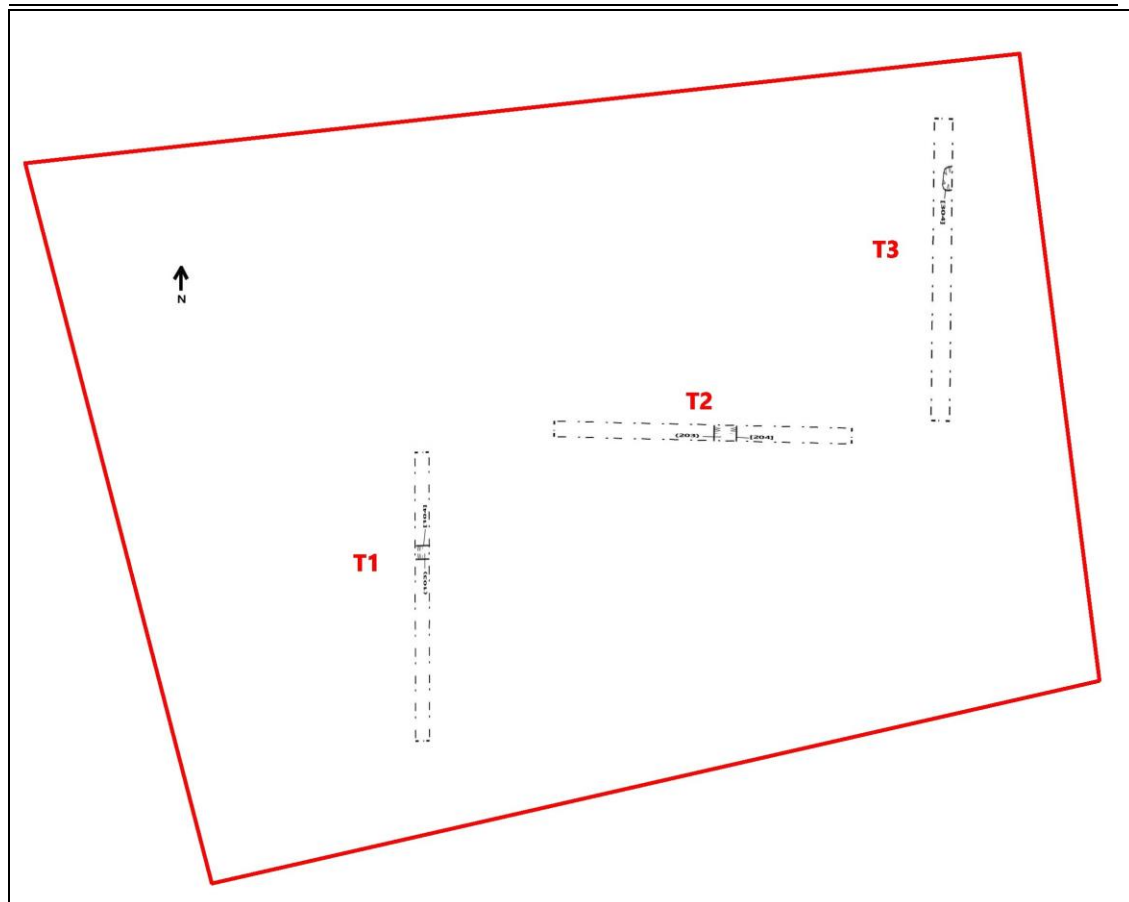


Figure 4. The three trenches with the locations of all features.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Colne was listed in the Domesday Book in the Hundred of Hurstingstone in Huntingdonshire. The village suffered a ruinous fire in 1844, which destroyed many of its historic houses and buildings. Several 17th century half-timbered houses and cottages did survive the fire, as did a late 16th century house near the centre of the village.
- 3.2 Within 1km from the proposed development site there were a number of known archaeological features and listed buildings, as indicated by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record. A number of archaeological investigations have also been carried out in the surrounding landscape in recent years.
- 3.3 Some 700m southeast of the proposed development site were the remains of a Post medieval mill in a field outside Bluntisham (00769). The mill site has never been excavated but the location is known from older maps.
- 3.4 Roman pottery had been found in a field some 230m southeast of the proposed development site (00946).

Land Adjacent to Seatonhurst, Bluntisham Road, Colne, Cambridgeshire: Archaeological Evaluation

- 3.5 Some 650m northwest of the proposed development site were the remains of a moat and medieval church ruins. These remains were possibly associated with the now lost La Leghe Manor (01079). The site has never been more closely investigated.
- 3.6 The remains of a deserted medieval village were located some 600m northwest of the proposed development site (01080). One of the rectangular moats had unfortunately been bulldozed in May 1960. A prior excavation had been planned by the Ministry of Works, but work was suddenly done at 24 hours notice, and it was not possible even to have the levelling watched. At the above deserted village, a 17th century house has also been preserved some 600m northwest of the proposed development site (01080A).
- 3.7 A moated site existed at Moat House, some 500m north of the proposed development site (01082). The site was a Scheduled Monument (1019564) and had never been fully excavated.
- 3.8 Iron Age pottery had been found some 700m south of the proposed development site (01722).
- 3.9 A number of Roman finds had been made some 320m east of the proposed development site (03572). A Roman coin had also been found some 850m southwest of the proposed development site (03578). Another Roman coin had been found some 300m north of the proposed development site (03604).
- 3.10 A range of flint artefacts had been found some 800m southeast of the proposed development site (03617). Further flint artefacts had also been found some 400m southwest of the proposed development site (03618). These finds indicated Stone Age activity in the area.
- 3.11 The remains of a medieval pottery kiln had been uncovered at Old Church Lane, some 300m north of the proposed development site (03629).
- 3.12 The medieval remains of Saint Helen's Church were located some 500m northwest of the proposed development site (03650). The church had consisted of a chancel, nave, north aisle, south aisle, west tower and south porch. The walls were chiefly of stone and rubble, but parts were made of brick and the roof was tiled. The south wall of the chancel and the two eastern responds of the nave arcade were of the 13th century. The rest of the church was mainly of 14th century date but the porch, which still stands, dates from the early 16th century. The east wall of the chancel and large parts of the tower were built of red brick and probably date from the 18th century.
- 3.13 Iron Age pottery had been uncovered some 275m southeast of the proposed development site (03721). Further Iron Age pottery had also been found some 725m south of the proposed development site (03930).

Land Adjacent to Seatonhurst, Bluntisham Road, Colne, Cambridgeshire: Archaeological Evaluation

- 3.14 A smaller medieval ridge and furrow system existed some 350m east of the proposed development site (08898).
- 3.15 Sherds of medieval pottery had been found some 525m northwest of the proposed development site (10865).
- 3.16 A Palaeolithic findspot and associated features had been identified at Colne Road, some 500m south of the proposed development site, during an archaeological watching brief in 1995. Medieval pottery had been identified within the same area (11722).
- 3.17 Medieval and Post medieval remains had been identified during an archaeological investigation at Manor Farm in 2008. The site was located some 200m northeast of the proposed development site (MCB17926).
- 3.18 A Prehistoric pit and Roman ditches had been uncovered at Bluntisham Road, Colne during an archaeological evaluation in 2016. The site was located just some 50m east of the proposed development site (MCB28344).
- 3.19 An undated ring ditch was located some 800m east of the proposed development site (MCB28359). The ditch had been identified from aerial photographs.
- 3.20 A 16th century house existed some 200 north of the proposed development site. The building had crosswings at north and south ends. Inside the building was an early 16th century moulded beam, probably re-used, and original central chimney-stack with three octagonal shafts with moulded bases (02294).
- 3.21 A Post medieval dovecote once existed at Manor Farm in Colne (10392). The structure is now demolished, but was located some 300m north of the proposed development site.
- 3.22 St Helen's Church was located some 300m north of the proposed development site (MCB17086). The church is a modern structure and was finished in the year 1900.
- 3.23 A Victorian summerhouse existed at 38 High Street in Bluntisham, some 400m south of the proposed development site (MCB19474). The house had by the time of the evaluation fallen into disrepair. A Grade II listed building also existed at 27-29 High Street in Bluntisham (MCB19877). In central Bluntisham there was also the so-called Bunyan Lodge from the 19th century (MCB25089).
- 3.24 In Bluntisham there was also the so-called Peartree Cottage, a building dating from the 19th century (MCB25090). In Bluntisham there were also, finally, the site of a former blacksmith workshop (MCB25093) and another former blacksmith workshop existed in Colne (MCB25096).

3.25 When studying the evidence from known archaeological sites in the surrounding landscape the proposed development site seemed to have the potential to contain features and finds from Prehistoric periods as well as the Roman, Medieval and Post medieval periods.

4 AIMS

4.1 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. An adequate representative sample of all areas where archaeological remains were potentially threatened was studied.

4.2 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

- i) to determine the character, date, condition and significance of the archaeological resource;
- ii) to define the nature and extent of any mitigation works that may be required;

4.3 The evaluation also considered the general investigative themes outlined by: Medlycott, M. 2011 (ed.) *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24; *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties* (Glazebrook 1997; Brown & Glazebrook 2000), *English Heritage Archaeology Division Research Agenda* (1997); *Discovering the Past, Shaping the Future: Research Strategy 2005 - 2010* (English Heritage 2005).

4.4 Specifically, the following investigative aims were accommodated in the programme of archaeological work:

- *characterisation of the site in the broader landscape;
- *characterisation of the activities identified on the site;
- *characterisation of changes affecting land-use through time

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Trial Trenching

Based on the site layout it was suggested that three 19m long and 2m wide machine cut trenches were going to be opened up under constant archaeological supervision using a flat bladed ditching bucket. The total length of trenching was therefore 57m, totalling 114m², or 4% of the ca 2800m² large site. The location of the trenches

targeted areas of proposed ground disturbance and focused on areas that were going to be covered by the new dwellings.

The location of the trenches were, however, slightly flexible and took into consideration potential above- and below-ground constraints and/or hazards, such as trees, utility trenches, overhead cables and areas of modern disturbance. The evaluation area was searched for live cables and other potential threats prior to the evaluation, and the management of the spoil heaps was planned carefully.

The evaluation trenches were excavated to the upper interface of secure archaeological deposits or, where these were not present, to the upper interface of natural deposits. Thereafter, hand-excavation was required to sample any features exposed. The trenches were not backfilled without the approval of CHET.

The field evaluation was not carried out at the expenses of the heritage assets within the site and was minimally intrusive to archaeological remains.

5.2 Metal Detecting

Metal detector sweeps of exposed features and spoil heaps were carried out in advance of, and during, the excavation process. The metal detector was not set to discriminate against iron.

5.3 Hand Excavation

All man-made features were investigated. Apparently natural features (such as tree throws) were sampled sufficiently to establish their origin and to characterise any related human activity. Hand excavation and feature sampling was sufficient to establish the date and character, and to allow appropriate levels of recording.

Deposits and layers (including buried horizons of top- and subsoils) were sampled sufficiently to enable a confident interpretation of their character, date and relationships with other features. The characterisation of the artefact contents of the ploughsoil was attempted, to provide an understanding of the presence/absence and condition of underlying archaeological remains: Were the artefacts in the topsoil mixed, and of different periods, (as a result of ploughing or recent ground disturbance) or was the stratigraphy in the ground still intact, with older artefacts in lower deposits?

The artefact content of the ploughsoil and any lower soil horizons was examined as part of the fieldworks. Bucket sampling was conducted, where 90 litres of spoil were hand sorted for each horizon encountered. Bucket sampling points were placed at each end of trenches. Potentially unstratified artefacts were sought from the spoil heaps.

All exposed features were subject to a minimum of 50% excavation. At least 15% (or a percentage sufficient to achieve information on the character, function and dating) of linear features and/or very large and deep features were hand excavated. All slots through linear features were at least 1m wide. Particular attention was given to

terminals and intersections, to ascertain stratigraphic and physical relationships. The evaluation provided a representative sample of the site's archaeology at no significant cost to the value or integrity of archaeological remains therein.

5.4 Recording

A numbered single context-based recording system, written on suitable forms and indexed appropriately, was used for all elements of the archaeological recording programme.

Measured plans were produced, showing all exposed features (including natural features and modern features etc.) and excavated areas. Individual measured plans and sections were produced for all excavated features and deposits. These were accurately tied into trench plans/trench location plans, that in turn were accurately related to the Ordnance Survey grid and to suitably mapped local features (boundaries, buildings, roads etc.). All sections and plans were related accurately to Ordnance Datum.

A photographic record comprising of high-quality digital uninterpolated images of 10 megapixels taken using a camera with an APS-C or larger sensor was produced. Appropriate scales were used in all photos, such as vertical scales against deep sections in combination with horizontal scales. Digital photos intended for archiving have a high quality, such as DNG or TIFF images, in accordance with the CHET brief. A selection of digital photographs was also used in this project report (a maximum of two photographs per A4 sheet).

6 RESULTS

Trench 1

- 6.1 Trench 1 was north-south orientated and 19m long and 2m wide (Figure 5). Cut into the natural deposits of light white-yellow semi compact gravel was the ditch [104].
- 6.2 Ditch [104] was southeast-northwest orientated, 1m wide and 0.15m deep. It had sloping sides and a rounded base and contained a single fill of dark brown, soft silty clay with occasional gravel (103). The ditch contained no finds (Figure 8).
- 6.3 The subsoil in Trench 1 was up to 0.22m thick and consisted of light brown, soft silty clay with occasional gravel inclusions (102). The uppermost deposit in Trench 1 consisted of the up to 0.28m thick topsoil of dark brown, soft silty clay with occasional roots and smaller stones (101).

Trench 2

- 6.4 Trench 2 was east-west orientated and was 19m long and 2m wide (Figure 6). Cut into the natural deposits of light white-yellow semi compact gravel was the ditch [204].
- 6.5 Ditch [204] was slightly northwest-southeast orientated, 1.40m wide and 0.21m deep. It had sloping sides and a flat base and contained the single fill (203) of dark brown, soft silty clay with occasional gravel. The ditch contained no finds (Figure 9).
- 6.6 The subsoil in Trench 2 was up to 0.28m thick and consisted of light brown, soft silty clay with occasional gravel inclusions (202). The uppermost deposit in Trench 2 was the up to 0.32m thick topsoil of dark brown, soft silty clay with occasional roots and smaller stones (201).

Trench 3

- 6.7 Trench 3 was north-south orientated and 19m long and 2m wide (Figure 7). Cut into the natural deposits of light white-yellow semi compact gravel was the pit [304].
- 6.8 The pit [304] was semi-circular, 1.37m wide and 0.41m deep. The pit had sloping sides and a flat base and its single fill (303) consisted of dark brown, soft silty clay with moderate inclusions of gravel. The fill contained one sherd of medieval pottery of Colne-type, which can be dated to the period AD 1200-1350. No environmental sample was collected from the pit fill since it gave the impression it did not contain much charred and/or organic material (Figure 10).
- 6.9 The subsoil in Trench 3 was up to 0.34m thick and consisted of light brown, soft silty clay with occasional gravel inclusions (302). The uppermost deposit in Trench 3 was the up to 0.41m thick topsoil of dark brown, soft silty clay with occasional roots and smaller stones (301).



Figure 5. Trench 1 from south.



Figure 6. Trench 2 from east.



Figure 7. Trench 3 from south.



Figure 8. Ditch [104] post-excavation.



Figure 9. Ditch [204] post-excavation.



Figure 10. Pit [304] post-excavation.

7 FINDS

Pottery (By Paul Blinkhorn)

A single sherd of pottery weighing 135g occurred in context (303). It is in Colne-type Medieval Ware, fabric CONM of Spoerry's (2016) type-series for Cambridgeshire, with a general date of AD1200–1350. It is a bodysherd from a storage vessel or large jug, and the outer surface is covered with incised wavy line decoration.

The sherd is in very good condition, and appears reliably stratified.

Bibliography

Spoerry, P, 2016 *The Production and Distribution of Medieval Pottery in Cambridgeshire*. East Anglian Archaeology **159**

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 The archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Seatonhurst, Bluntisham Road, Colne, Cambridgeshire indicated that a number of archaeological features were present within the proposed development area. The features consisted of two undated ditches and a medieval pit. The pit was interpreted as a medieval rubbish pit.

8.2 The presence of this medieval pit in Trench 3 in the north east parts of the site is interesting, and fits well into the previously known archaeology of the area. The archaeological evaluation was therefore able to show that medieval activity had occurred within the proposed development site. Independent Archaeology Consultants would like to thank Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team for their kind assistance throughout the project.

9 ARCHIVE

The archive consists of the following:

Paper Record

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| The project brief | The project report |
| Written Scheme of Investigation | The primary site records |
| The photographic and drawn records | Finds |

The archive will be deposited following the gaining of the transfer of title, and will be transferred to:

The Archaeological Collections for Cambridgeshire County Council.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDICES

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

| Context Nr | Depth (m) | Description | Younger than | Older than |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---|--------------|------------|
| <u>Trench 1 (19m X 2m)</u> | | | | |
| (101) | 0.28 | Topsoil of dark brown, soft silty clay with occasional roots and small stones | (102) | - |
| (102) | 0.22 | Subsoil of light brown, soft silty clay with occasional gravel | (103) | (101) |
| (103) | 0.15 | Fill of ditch [104]. Dark brown, soft silty clay with moderate gravel | [104] | (102) |
| [104] | 0.15 | Cut of ditch [204]. Sloping sides and a flat base | Natural | (103) |
| Natural | - | Light white-yellow semi compact gravel | - | [104] |
| <u>Trench 2 (19m x 2m)</u> | | | | |
| (201) | 0.32 | Topsoil of dark brown, soft silty clay with occasional roots and small stones | (202) | - |
| (202) | 0.28 | Subsoil of light brown, soft silty clay with occasional gravel | (203) | (201) |
| (203) | 0.21 | Fill of ditch [204]. Dark brown, soft silty clay with moderate gravel | [204] | (202) |
| [204] | 0.21 | Cut of ditch [204]. Sloping sides and a flat base | Natural | (203) |
| Natural | - | Light white-yellow semi compact gravel | - | [204] |
| <u>Trench 3 (19m x 2m)</u> | | | | |
| (301) | 0.41 | Topsoil of dark brown, soft silty clay with occasional roots and small stones | (302) | - |
| (302) | 0.34 | Subsoil of light brown, soft silty clay with occasional gravel | (303) | (301) |
| (303) | 0.41 | Fill of pit [304]. Dark brown, soft silty clay with moderate gravel | [304] | (302) |
| [304] | 0.41 | Cut of pit [304]. Sloping sides and a flat base | Natural | (303) |
| Natural | - | Light white-yellow semi compact gravel | - | [304] |

OASIS ID: independ1-406858

Project details

Project name Land adjacent to Seatonhurst, Bluntisham Road, Colne, Cambridgeshire
Short description of the project A three trench evaluation in advance of a new development.
Project dates Start: 21-10-2020 End: 22-10-2020
Previous/future work No / No
Any associated project reference codes SCC20 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes 19/02051/FUL - Planning Application No.
Type of project Field evaluation
Site status None
Current Land use Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed
Monument type UF SN Medieval
Monument type SN CL Uncertain
Significant Finds SN CL Medieval
Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches"
Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
PromptPlanning condition
Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England
Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE HUNTINGDONSHIRE COLNE Land adjacent to Seatonhurst, Bluntisham Road, Colne, Cambridgeshire
Postcode PE28 3LY
Study area 2800 Square metres
Site coordinates TL 3707 7563 52.361158454956 0.01317266661 52 21 40 N 000 00 47 E Point
Height OD / Depth Min: 16m Max: 18m

Land Adjacent to Seatonhurst, Bluntisham Road, Colne, Cambridgeshire: Archaeological Evaluation

Project creators

Name of Organisation Independent Archaeology Consultants

Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator Independent Archaeology Consultants

Project director/manager Christer Carlsson

Project supervisor Christer Carlsson

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Cambridgeshire HER

Physical Contents "Ceramics"

Digital Archive recipient Cambridgeshire HER

Digital Contents "Ceramics"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Images vector"

Paper Archive recipient Cambridgeshire HER

Paper Contents "Ceramics"

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

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