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Professional Archaeological Services



The Folly, Berkley Street, Eynesbury, St Neots, PE19 2NF

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Client: GPS Estates Ltd

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Non-Technical Summary

This document sets out the results of a programme of archaeological trench evaluation on land belonging to The Folly, Berkley Street, Eynesbury, St Neots, PE19 2NF (hereafter referred to as the Project Site). Permission has been granted for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the construction of 6 new dwellings, services and the re-siting of the existing site access.

Three trenches were mechanically excavated from the 26th-27th April 2016. No significant archaeological deposits were identified and no artefacts were recovered from the spoil, which was monitored throughout.

No further archaeological investigation was recommended in conjunction with the approved programme of development.

Acknowledgements

HPS would like to thank Mr Paul Martin for Absolute Archaeology, Mr Darren Gill, Ms Lorna Heale & Ms Jeanette Robertson (GPS Estates Ltd) for their assistance in arranging the project. We would also like to thank Ms Kasia Gdaniec (Senior Archaeologist, Cambridgeshire County Council) for her help and expertise. Thanks also to Mr Graham Keel (digger driver) for his help, skill and interest in reducing each of the trenches.



1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1. This document sets out the results of a programme of archaeological trench evaluation on land belonging to The Folly, Berkley Street, Eynesbury, St Neots, PE19 2NF (hereafter referred to as the Project Site). Permission has been granted for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the construction of 6 new dwellings, services and the re-siting of the existing site access.
- 1.2. The work was commissioned by Mr Darren Gill for GPS Estates Ltd and was carried from the 26th – 27th April 2016.
- 1.3. The programme of investigation was required in order to satisfy the specific condition of planning (Condition 10) which states that- *"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."*
- 1.4. *Reason: To safeguard archaeological interests in accordance with Policy En12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan, 1995."*
- 1.5. The scheme of work was informed by Ms K Gdaniec, Senior Archaeologist, Cambridgeshire County Council. Details of the programme of investigation are set out in the document entitled *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team*, issued March 2016.
- 1.6. The trench evaluation was carried out in order to inform the project on the significance of any identified archaeological activity and to assess the impact of the proposed development on any surviving heritage assets.
- 1.7. All fieldwork was completed by Absolute Archaeology, under site code AARC212.

The Project Site

- 1.8. The Project Site is located in Eynesbury. Once a village, it now forms part of the southern suburbs of the town of St. Neots. The development area measures approximately 1650 square meters and



is bordered by the River Great Ouse c. 700m to the west and the Hen Brook tributary, 180m to the east.

- 1.9. Geologically the Project Site is defined by Jurassic Oxford Clay Formation (OXC), with superficial Pleistocene Oadby Member deposits. The plot lies on the eastern limit of river terrace deposits defined as River Terrace (1-2) gravels.

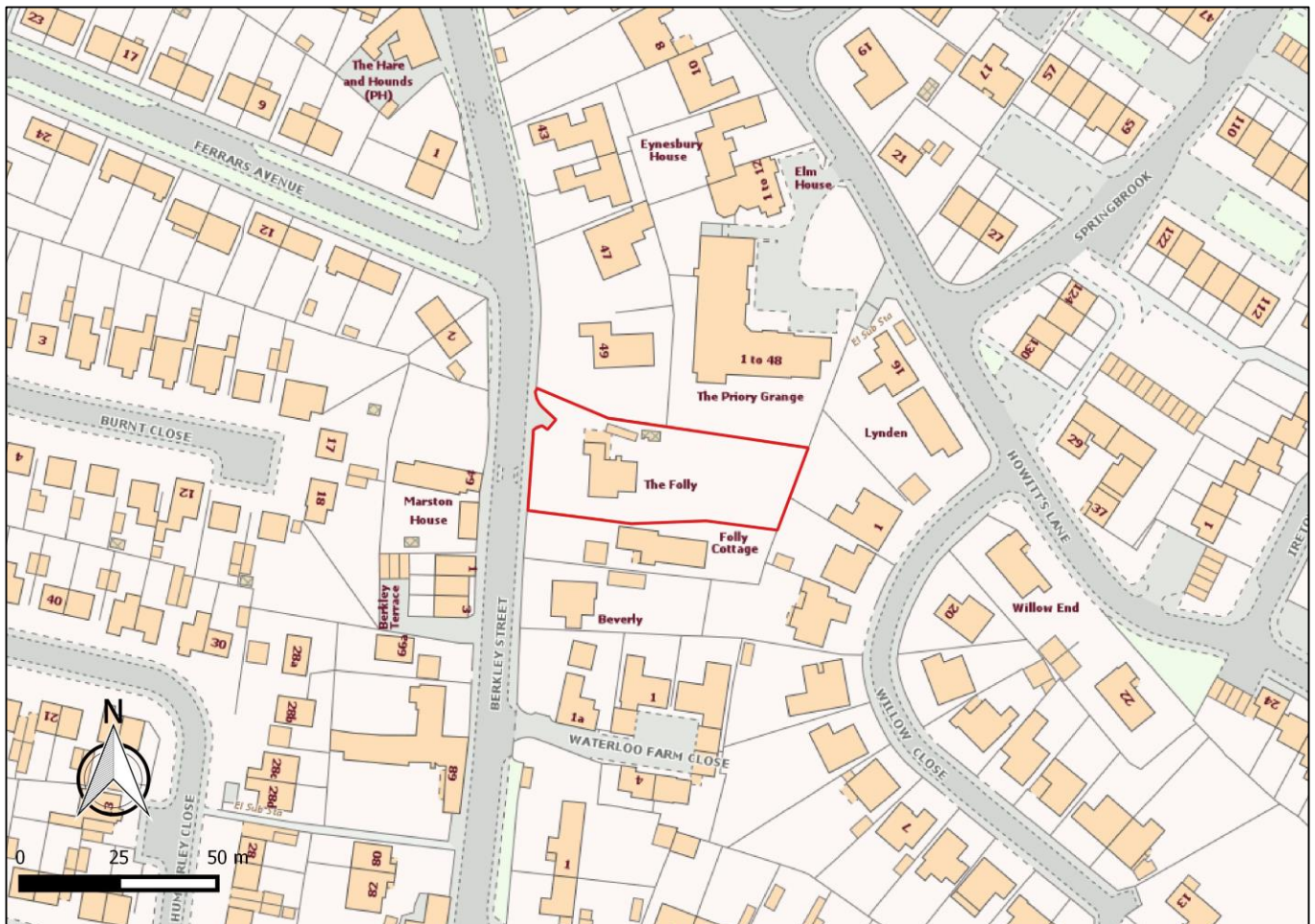


Figure 1 Detailed Location of Project Site (outlined in red).



Figure 2 Location of Project Site (outlined in red).

Archaeological Background

1.10. The Project Site is located within an area of known archaeological activity dating from the Prehistoric to Post Medieval Periods. A summary of the most significant sites, taken from Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Record, is included below for reference.

Prehistoric

- 1.11. ECB2624 St Neots Community College (TL18146 58880). In 2007 Archaeological Solutions excavated three evaluation trenches, 30m to the south of the Project Site. The investigation revealed undated features with a potential Prehistoric date, however the lack of material evidence leaves the date open to interpretation. The form of the features may alternatively indicate a Roman date.
- 1.12. ECB631 (MCB 527 & 528) Brickhills Estate, Enyesbury (TL 1830 5966). In 1966 excavations at Brickhills Estate, just 140m south-east of the Project Site revealed evidence of pits, ditches and potential evidence of hut 'sites' dating from the Late Iron Age – Romano British Period.
- 1.13. ECB3024 Wintringham Park, St Neots (TL 19967 59285). In 2008 a programme of geophysical survey and targeted trench evaluation carried out by Oxford Archaeology East identified Middle Iron Age – Later Iron Age settlement, extending to the Romano-British period, on land 650m east of the Project Site.



- 1.14. ECB1971 St Neots Community College (TL 18146 58880). In 2005 Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit carried out a trench evaluation 700m to the south-west of the Project site. The results revealed undated pits and ditches with a potential Prehistoric date, however the lack of material evidence leaves the date open to interpretation. The form of the features may alternatively indicate a Roman date. The site lies just to the north of a Prehistoric landscape, including funerary monuments, a cursus and associated field systems.
- 1.15. ECB2597 Church Street, St Neots (TL 18562 60145). An evaluation carried out by Archaeological Solutions in 2007 revealed multi period remains dating from the Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age to the Saxon / Saxo Norman Period (700m north of the Project Site).
- 1.16. ECB921 Ernulf school, St Neots (TL 18141 58818). In 1994 Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit carried out a trench evaluation 750m to the south-west of the Project site. Five linear features were identified, including the eastern ditch of a cursus monument recorded during the Barford Road development (ECB1649).

Romano-British (AD 44 – AD410)

- 1.17. ECB483 (HER 11290) Ernulf School Playing Fields (TL 18379 59125). In 1993 a magnetometry survey followed by targeted test pitting revealed pits, ditches and wall footings (south-west of the Project Site) along with extensive field systems (MCB12803). Associated ceramic finds suggest that the features dated to the Romano British period.
- 1.18. ECB631 (MCB 527 & 528) Brickhills Estate, Enyesbury (TL 1830 5966). (Detailed in 1.7.3) Pits, ditches and potential structural remains were identified, dating to the Romano-British Period, along with ceramic finds included Belgic wares, Samian pottery and Castor wares. A 1st century AD cremation was also recovered from the site, contained in a cordoned whiteware pot, similar to examples from Colchester (Rudd et al, 1968: 17).
- 1.19. ECB3024 Wintringham Park, St Neots (TL 19967 59285). (Detailed in 1.7.4). The site appears to have been occupied into the Romano-British period, although settlement was less dense by this time (650m east of the Project Site).



Early Medieval (AD 410 – AD 1066)

- 1.20. Saxon remains have been identified just 50m to the south of the Project Site, on Berkley Road (Gdaniec; 2016: 1).
- 1.21. ECB2597 Church Street, St Neots (TL 18562 60145). Saxo-Norman features including enclosures or paddocks added to the data on the known settlement in this area (700m north of the Project Site). Medieval activity was also recorded and remains were consistent with the location of the site on the periphery of the Medieval town.

Medieval (AD 1066 – AD 1539) / Post-Medieval (AD 1540 – AD 1900)

- 1.22. ECB319 St Mary's Street, St Neots (TL 1836 60069). In 1994 an extensive programme of evaluation, open area investigation and monitoring carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) revealed evidence of Medieval to Post Medieval activity in the vicinity of St Mary's Road, c. 700m to the NNW of the Project Site.
- 1.23. ECB325 43-45 Church Street, St Neots (TL 18507 60064). A trench evaluation carried out in 1996 by BUFAU revealed evidence for a Post Medieval tannery, with potential Medieval Origins, 700m NNW of the Project Site.

2. Research Agenda

- 2.1. Due to the high archaeological potential of the Project Site there were a number of research questions considered in line with the programme of work. These were as follows-
- Neolithic / Bronze Age – Whilst the date and nature of potential Prehistoric features identified in close proximity to the Project Site are unconfirmed, the possibility of early activity cannot be ruled out, due to the occurrence of Neolithic / Bronze Age features within the wider environs, including Church Street. Whilst the study area is relatively small, any activity relating to this period identified within the Project Site may enhance knowledge of settlement distribution, density patterns and land management (Medlycott; 2011: 13).



- Iron Age / Roman Transition – The Project Site is located in an area of known Iron Age to Roman occupation and sites such as Brickhills Estate 140m to the south-east and Wintringham Park 650m east, preserve evidence of the transition from the Late Iron Age to Roman period. In the event that the Project Site preserves evidence of contemporary occupation, the results have the potential to add to the record on topics such as the nature of cultural transition and the impact on land use, settlement type and social structure (Medlycott; 2011: 31).
- Roman Period – It is evident that the Project Site lies within an area of extensive activity in the Roman period. Although a small study area, evidence of contemporary land use in the immediate vicinity raises the potential of the site to preserve archaeology relating to rural settlement and land use. Themes such as continuity versus new settlement structure and evolving land development may be explored (Medlycott: 2011: 47).

3. Methodology

- 3.1. The investigation took the form of an archaeological trench evaluation, covering approximately 3% of the Project Site. Three trenches were excavated, two measuring 10m (l) x 1.8m (w) and one measuring 10m (l) x 1.5m (w). All were reduced to the depth of the natural geology.



Figure 3 Trench Location Plan

- 3.2. Broadly the archaeological investigation sought to-



- Assess the potential for archaeological activity associated with the Project Site;
- Establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation within the development area;
- Record and identify archaeological features and deposits to a level appropriate to their extent and significance;
- Establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- Undertake sufficient post-excavation assessment to interpret archaeological features and phasing identified during the evaluation and to place these within their local regional context;
- Create a site archive for deposition in a suitable repository;
- Inform the implementation of a suitable strategy in order to mitigate the impact of the groundwork on the archaeological resource, in the event of positive results.

3.3. All work was carried out in accordance with the following:

- CI/A Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Field Evaluation (revised 2014);
- CI/A Code of Conduct;
- Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003);
- Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (Medlycott 2011).

3.4. Archaeologists monitored the mechanical excavation of the trenches to the depth of the substrate.

3.5. The trench evaluation was undertaken to ascertain information on the presence/absence, extent, state of preservation, character, quality, integrity, and date or any archaeological deposits on the Project Site.

3.6. All mechanical excavation was carried out with a toothless (ditching) bucket.

3.7. All spoil was monitored for artefacts during the reduction of the trenches.



4. Project Archive

- 4.1. The site archive contains all the data collected during the programme of work. It has been quantified, ordered, indexed and checked for internal consistency.
- 4.2. The final archive has been prepared to the standards outlined in MoRPHE PPN 3 - Archaeological Excavation (Historic England 2015), and in accordance with the guidelines published in *Guidelines for the preparation of Excavation Archives for long-term storage* (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 1990) and *Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission, 1994), MoRPHE (Historic England 2015) and the Cambridgeshire Museum guidelines.

5. Reporting

- 5.1. Once the draft copy has been approved, one hard copy of the report will be submitted to Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET) and a digital copy will be uploaded to OASIS.

6. Results

- 6.1. The investigation was carried out on the 26th – 27th April 2016, by way of mechanical excavation using a toothless, grading bucket.

Trench One

- 6.2. Trench one measured 10m (l) x 1.5m (w) and was located approximately 5m to the south of the original location, in order to prevent access to the site from being blocked. The trench was also re-orientated to WNW - ESE in order to avoid mains services. The width of Trench One was reduced to 1.5m in order to avoid destabilising the wall present to the south.
- 6.3. Excavation revealed <310mm of turfline/topsoil (100) sealing a yellowish-brown sandy clay subsoil (101) to a depth of <210mm. This in turn overlaid natural sandy clay (102).



6.4. No archaeological features or finds were identified in the region of Trench One and no artefacts were recovered from the spoil, which was monitored throughout.



Photo 1 North-west facing view of Trench One (Scales 1 x 1m, 1 x 2m).



Photo 2 South-west facing section Trench One (Scales 1 x 500mm, 1 x 2m).



Trench Two

- 6.5. Trench Two measured 10m (l) x 1.8m (w) and was located approximately 5m to the WSW of the original location, due to the presence of demolition rubble and limited access.
- 6.6. Excavation revealed <320mm of turfline/topsoil (200) sealing <100mm of yellowish-brown subsoil (201). This in turn overlaid natural sandy clay (202).
- 6.7. Two sub-circular features were located within Trench Two. Following investigation these were found to contain large amounts of Modern tile and red brick. They were interpreted as 20th century garden features and not investigated further.
- 6.8. No significant archaeological features or finds were identified in the region of Trench Two and no artefacts were recovered from the spoil, which was monitored throughout.



Photo 3 NNE facing view of Trench Two (Scales 1 x 1m, 1 x 2m).



Photo 4 WSW facing section of Trench Two (Scales 1 x 500mm, 1 x 2m).

Trench Three

- 6.9. Trench Three measured 10m (l) x 1.8m (w) and was located approximately 7m to the west of the original location, due to the presence of a mature oak tree.
- 6.10. The excavation revealed <450mm of turfline/topsoil (300) sealing a dark yellowish-brown subsoil (301) to a depth of <150mm. This in turn overlaid natural sandy clay (302).
- 6.11. A small square feature was investigated at the northern end of the trench. This was seen to produce a large quantity of Modern tile and brick and was concluded to be a Modern post hole, likely belonging to a garden feature.
- 6.12. No archaeological features or finds were identified in the region of Trench Three and no artefacts were recovered from the spoil, which was monitored throughout.



Photo 5 South facing view of Trench Three (Scales 1 x 1m, 1 x 2m).



Photo 6 West facing section of Trench Three (Scales (1 x 500mm, 1 x 2m).



Discussion

- 6.13. No significant archaeological features or deposits were identified and no artefacts were recovered during the course of the monitoring.
- 6.14. Whilst the area of the previous 20th century dwelling (The Folly) may have been significantly reduced to enable foundations to be established, the trench locations demonstrate a natural topsoil layer, raising the potential for archaeological deposits to be preserved where present. Therefore, the absence of significant archaeological deposits, despite the location of the Project Site in an area of high potential is considered to be due to the limited study area.

Conclusion

- 6.15. The results of the archaeological field evaluation were negative with no artefacts or archaeological features being present in any of the trenches.
- 6.16. No further archaeological investigation was recommended in conjunction with this development.



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8. Appendix

Table 1 Context Information Trench One

<i>Context Number</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Depth/Height</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length/Diameter</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Recorded Date</i>
100	Topsoil/Turfline	<310mm	>1.5m	>10m	Dark Greyish-Brown	-	26.04.2016
101	Subsoil	<210mm	>1.5m	>10m	Very Dark Yellowish-Brown Sandy Clay	-	26.04.2016
102	Natural	-	>1.5m	>10m	Yellowish Brown Sandy Clay (high sand content)	-	26.04.2016

Table 2 Context Information Trench Two

<i>Context Number</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Depth/Height</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length/Diameter</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Recorded Date</i>
200	Topsoil/Turfline	<320mm	>2m	>10m	Dark Greyish-Brown	-	26.04.2016
201	Subsoil	<100mm	>2m	>10m	Yellowish-Brown Sandy Clay	-	26.04.2016
202	Natural	-	>2m	>10m	Yellowish Brown Sandy Clay (high sand content)	-	26.04.2016



Table 3 Context Information Trench Three

<i>Context Number</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Depth/Height</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length/Diameter</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Recorded Date</i>
300	Topsoil/Turfline	<450mm	>2m	>10m	Dark Greyish-Brown	-	26.04.2016
301	Subsoil	<150mm	>2m	>10m	Dark Yellowish-Brown Sandy Clay	-	26.04.2016
302	Natural	-	>2m	>10m	Yellowish Brown Sandy Clay (high sand content)	-	26.04.2016



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