

NAU Archaeology

Report № 1763

**An Archaeological Evaluation
at
Dane Hill Road, Kennett, Cambridgeshire**

ECB2844

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BAU 1763

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Location: Dane Hill Road, Kennett, Cambridgeshire
District: Cambridgeshire
Grid Ref.: TL 6979 6822
CHER No.: ECB2844
Date of fieldwork: 5–8 February 2008

Summary

No significant archaeological features were encountered during this evaluation. A small assemblage of prehistoric flint artefacts was recovered from the topsoil, but being redeposited in a modern context their presence can only suggest that there may have been prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site.

1.0 Introduction

The evaluation took place within the area of a proposed development of six houses and two apartment blocks measuring 0.4ha. Four trenches measuring 30m x 1.8m and eight hand-dug 1m square test-pits were excavated, providing an approximate 5% sample of the proposed development area.

This project was commissioned and funded by the Hastoe Housing Association of Saffron Walden.

This archaeological programme was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice (CAPCA) and in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. BAU1302/DW) and a Brief issued by CAPCA (Gore 2007).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited in the Cambridgeshire County Store, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Geology and Topography

This site is located on flat arable land on the northern edge of the village of Kennett in East Cambridgeshire (Fig. 1). The site is situated on River Terrace Deposits comprising sands and gravels, overlying Holywell Nodular Chalk (Gore 2007), at approximately 30m AOD. The River Kennett is located c.700m to the east of the site.

Archaeological and Historical Background

The following background information came from the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER):

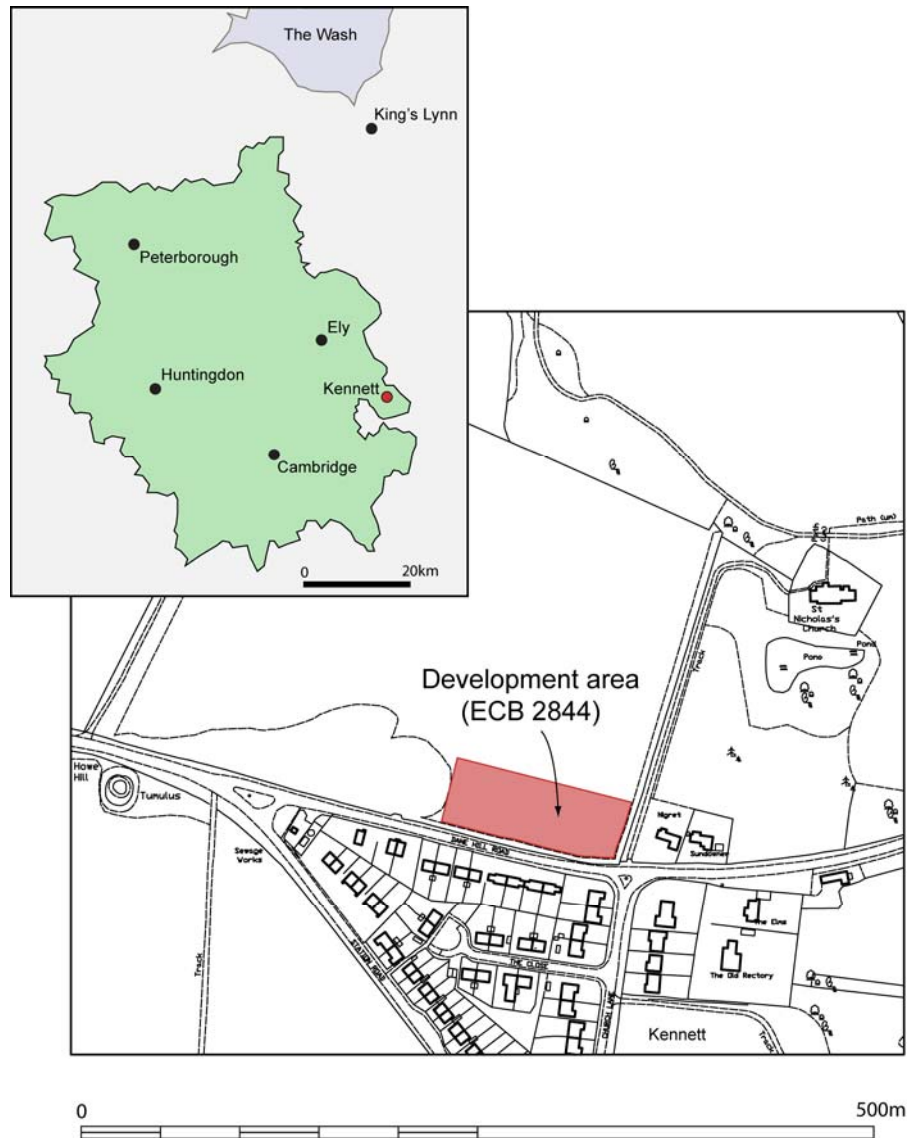


Figure 1. Site location plan.

Map supplied by RH Partnership Architects via Hastoe Housing Association)

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Prehistoric

Three Mesolithic tranchet axes and two flint blades have been found 300m southeast of the development site (CHER 07675). A Neolithic polished axe was found 900m north-east of the present development area in c.1910 (CHER 07679). Unspecified flint implements have been found 300m south-west of the development site (CHER 07572). A well preserved Bronze Age burial mound, Howe Hill Bowl Barrow, lies 200m to the east of the development area (CHER 07447). Aerial photography has suggested that there are two undated ring-ditches 1km south-west of the development area (CHER 09071).

3.2 Roman

There is currently little evidence of Roman activity within 1km of the development area, apart from a small amount of pottery recovered during a fieldwalking survey 600m north-west of the development area (CHER MCB16719).

3.3 Anglo-Saxon

There is currently no evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity within 1km of the development area.

3.4 Medieval

The parish church of St Nicholas, 200m north-east of the present development area, is a 13th-century building including alterations of 14th and 15th century date (CHER 49052). The church is now isolated, but it is thought likely that medieval settlement would have existed in its locality (Gore 2007).

A medieval moated site lies 1km to the east of the development area (CHER 01191). Only three sides of the moat survive and there are no surviving associated buildings.

3.5 Post-medieval

Two Grade 2 Listed Buildings lie 500m to the north-east of the development area in the area of Court Farm. Home Farmhouse is a timber-framed cottage of late 16th- to early 17th-century date (CHER 49053). The Gatehouse is a timber-framed cottage of possible 17th-century date (CHER 49054).

3.6 Recent archaeological work

Fieldwalking conducted in advance of an extension to a landfill site in 2002, 600m north-west of the development area produced material dating from the Mesolithic, Roman and post-medieval periods (CHER MCB16719 and MCB16720). This material included a concentration of burnt flint indicating a small habitation site of prehistoric date.

An archaeological evaluation in 2003 produced evidence of prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval occupation at Kennett Hall Farm, 800m to the north of the present development (CHER CB15728).

4.0 Methodology

The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence or absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that four trenches measuring 30m x 1.8m and eight hand-dug 1m square test-pits be excavated, providing an approximate 5% sample of the proposed 0.4ha development area.

Machine excavation was carried out with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate

scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

The temporary benchmark used during the course of this work was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark with a value of 26.93m OD, located on the side of the St Nicholas' church.

No environmental samples were taken, due to the lack of suitable deposits.

Site conditions were good, with the work taking place in fine, but cold, weather.

5.0 Results

The results of the evaluation are outlined below. Context numbers are shown in square brackets.

5.1 Test-pits

Eight 1m-square test-pits were hand-dug in two transects across the development area (Fig. 2).

In test-pit 1 a dark brown silty-sand topsoil [1], 0.35–0.4m deep, with a moderate amount of flint gravel was encountered. Three prehistoric flint flakes were recovered from this context.

In test-pit 2 a dark brown silty-sand topsoil [2], 0.35–0.4m deep, with a moderate amount of flint gravel was encountered. Two prehistoric flint scrapers were recovered from this context.

In test-pit 3 a dark brown silty-sand topsoil [3], 0.35–0.4m deep, with a moderate amount of flint gravel was encountered.

In test-pit 4 a dark brown silty-sand topsoil [5], 0.35–0.4m deep, with a moderate amount of flint gravel was encountered.

In test-pit 5 a dark brown silty-sand topsoil [6], 0.35–0.4m deep, with a moderate amount of flint gravel was encountered. A prehistoric flint scraper, a piercer and a pot-boiler fragment were recovered from this context.

In test-pit 6 a dark brown silty-sand topsoil [7], 0.35–0.4m deep, with a moderate amount of flint gravel was encountered.

In test-pit 7 a dark brown silty-sand topsoil [10], 0.35–0.4m deep, with a moderate amount of flint gravel was encountered.

In test-pit 8 a dark brown silty-sand topsoil [8], 0.35–0.4m deep, with a moderate amount of flint gravel was encountered.

Beneath this topsoil, a reddish-brown gravelly sand was encountered which was totally devoid of cultural material [4, 9 and 11] (Plate 1). Sondages dug into this revealed it to be the upper levels of the River Terrace Deposits comprising sands and gravels.

5.2 Trenches

Four trenches, measuring 30m x 1.8m were excavated, revealing the same stratigraphic sequence as the test-pits (Fig. 2).

Trench 1 was orientated north to south. The topsoil [12] was 0.35m deep. No finds were recovered.

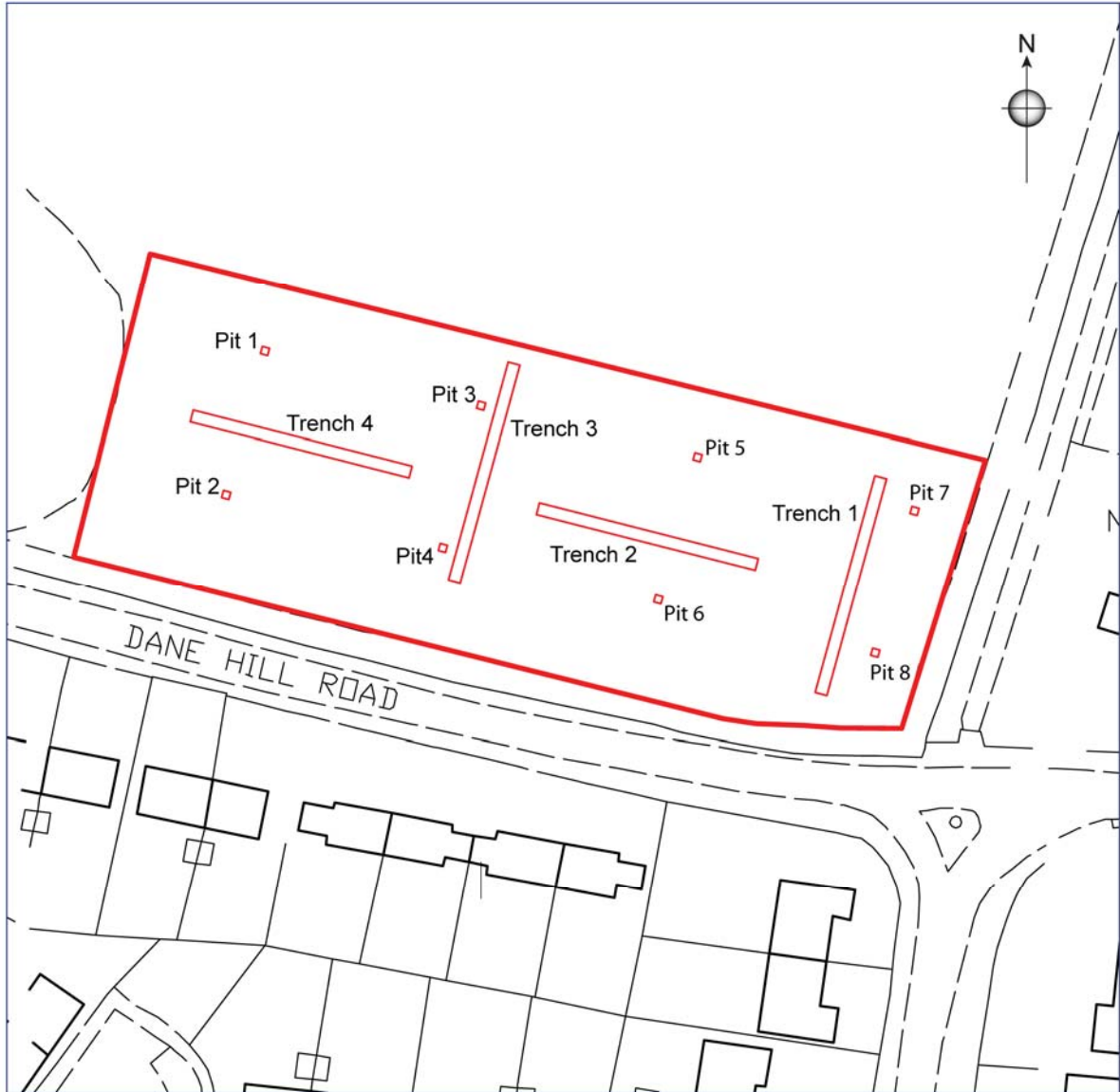


Figure 2. Trench and test-pit locations

Map supplied by RH Partnership Architects via Hastoe Housing Association

Trench 2 was orientated east to west. The topsoil [14] was 0.35m deep. No finds were recovered.

Trench 3 was orientated north to south. The topsoil [16] was 0.35m deep. No finds were recovered.

Trench 4 was orientated east to west. The topsoil [18] was 0.35m deep. No finds were recovered. A large (c.3m wide), modern pit was encountered at the western end of this trench. Due to the presence of modern finds in its fill, it was not excavated.

Beneath this topsoil, a reddish-brown gravelly sand was encountered which was totally devoid of cultural material [13, 15, 17 and 19]. Sondages dug into this revealed it to be the upper levels of the River Terrace Deposits comprising sands and gravels.

Three flint artefacts were recovered from the surface of the field [20] during the fieldwork phase.

6.0 The Finds

The finds and environmental material from the site are presented in tabular form with basic quantitative information in Appendix 2. In addition to this summary, more detailed information on the flint finds is included below. Supporting tables for these contributions are included in the Appendices.

6.1 Flint

By Sarah Bates

A total of eight struck, or possibly struck, flints was recovered from the site. Two pieces of burnt flint weighing a total of 0.017kg were also found. A full catalogue of the flint finds is included in Appendix 3.

A single, unstratified platform flake core was discovered. It is broad and squat with flakes struck from around most of the circumference of its wide subcircular platform. One side is cortical.

A fragment of a possible flake and two spalls came from context [1] (Topsoil, test-pit 1).

Two small neat scrapers came from context [2] (Topsoil, test-pit 2). Both are made on hard-hammer-struck flakes. One is a small horseshoe-shaped end scraper with retouch of its distal edge. The other is squat with retouch around its distal and part of its left edge. Another scraper, which has abrupt retouch of its cortical distal edge, was found in context [6] (Topsoil, test-pit 5).

A possible piercer was also recovered from context [6]. It is on a small, mostly cortical flake, with slight retouch at one side of its distal point.

The flint represents activity in the vicinity of the site during the prehistoric period and is not closely datable, although it is perhaps likely that the small scrapers are of later Neolithic or Bronze Age date. This is a small assemblage and all of the material was recovered from topsoil contexts.

7.0 Conclusions

No significant archaeological features were encountered during this evaluation. A small assemblage of prehistoric flint artefacts was recovered from the topsoil, but being redeposited in a modern context their presence can only suggest that there may have been prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site.

Recommendations for future work based upon this report will be made by Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice (CAPCA).

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to David Whitmore for managing the project, Becky Crawford, Steve Morgan and Pete Watkins for assisting with the fieldwork, John Percival for assisting with the surveying and to Hastoe Housing Association for commissioning the work. The flint finds were examined by Sarah Bates. The evaluation was monitored by Andy Thomas of CAPCA. The report was illustrated by the author with help from David Dobson and edited by Richard Hoggett. Thanks for the CHER data must go to Sarah Poppy of CAPCA.

Bibliography

Gore, E. 2007 *Brief for archaeological evaluation: Land at Dane Hill Road, Kennett.*
Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice.

Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Description	Period
1	Topsoil pit 1	Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel	Modern
2	Topsoil pit 2	Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel	Modern
3	Topsoil pit 3	Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel	Modern
4	Natural pit 3	Reddish-brown gravelly sand	
5	Topsoil pit 4	Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel	Modern
6	Topsoil pit 5	Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel	Modern
7	Topsoil pit 6	Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel	Modern
8	Topsoil pit 8	Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel	Modern
9	Natural pit 8	Reddish-brown gravelly sand	
10	Topsoil pit 7	Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel	Modern
11	Natural pit 7	Reddish-brown gravelly sand	
12	Topsoil Trench 1	Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel	Modern
13	Natural Trench 1	Reddish-brown gravelly sand	
14	Topsoil Trench 2	Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel	Modern
15	Natural Trench 2	Reddish-brown gravelly sand	
16	Topsoil Trench 3	Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel	Modern
17	Natural Trench 3	Reddish-brown gravelly sand	
18	Topsoil Trench 4	Dark brown silty sand with moderate flint gravel	Modern
19	Natural Trench 4	Reddish-brown gravelly sand	
20		Unstratified finds	

Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table

Period	Feature type	Quantity
Modern (1900 to 2050 AD)	Pit	1

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Period
1	Flint	3	-	Prehistoric
2	Flint	2	-	Prehistoric
6	Flint	3	0.004	Prehistoric
20	Flint	3	0.182	Prehistoric

Appendix 2b: Finds summary table

Period	Material	Quantity
Prehistoric (500000BC to 42AD)	Flint	10

Appendix 3: Flint

Context	Type	Quantity
1	flake	1
1	spall	2
2	end scraper	1
2	scraper	1
6	burnt fragment	1
6	piercer	1
6	scraper	1
20	burnt fragment	1
20	single platform flake core	1
20	flake	0



Plate 1. Test-pit 4, facing north.



Plate 2. Trench 4, facing east.