

**LAND ADJACENT TO CASTLE HILL COURT,
CLOPHILL,
CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE.**

NGR: TL 09530 38260

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

July 2012
Report No. 815

Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

On 20th June 2012 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Castle Hill Court, Clophill (NGR: TL 09530 38260). The project was commissioned by Caldecotte Consultants on behalf of Greene King.

The project comprised the excavation and recording of five trenches across a proposed development area.

A small number of features associated with Post-medieval/Modern material represent evidence for later activity within the site area. A single undiagnostic struck flint flake was recovered from the subsoil in Trench 2. No evidence was recovered for the features identified on aerial photographs, although their absence strongly suggests that they may have been present only as superficial or non-physical features in the topsoil and were likely to be of modern origin.

The evaluation has indicated that the site is of negligible archaeological potential.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between AD 1066 and AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site, in this case alluvial sand and gravel.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum).

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-medieval

The period between AD 1500 and AD 1900.

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43, traditionally sub divided into; *Palaeolithic* – c. 500,000 BC to c. 12,000 BC; *Mesolithic* – c. 12,000 BC to c. 4,500 BC; *Neolithic* – c. 4,500 BC to c. 2,000 BC; *Bronze Age* – c. 2,000 BC to c. 800 BC; *Iron Age* – c. 800 BC to AD 43.

Roman

The period traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

Saxon

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

Tegula

Roman roof tile.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in June 2012 on land adjacent to Castle Hill Court, Clophill (NGR: TL 09530 38260). The project was commissioned by Caldecotte Consultants on behalf of Greene King.
- 1.2 The project was conducted in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2012). The fieldwork was undertaken in compliance with IfA *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation* (2008) and MoRPHE, issued by English Heritage (2006).
- 1.3 The report constitutes an assessment of the results of the archaeological works. The code of conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists was adhered to throughout.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 It is proposed to construct a new residential development at the site. In accordance with the principles of *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the archaeological policies of Central Bedfordshire Council, an archaeological desk based assessment and evaluation were required prior to the submission of a planning application.
- 2.2 The site is located to the east of the historic core of the village of Clophill (HER 16998) and within a documented archaeological landscape. The historic core of the village represents a heritage asset with archaeological interest and is a material consideration in planning matters. A Heritage Asset Assessment is a requirement of the Central Bedfordshire Council Local Validation Checklist (Major Developments) and is in line with Policy 128 of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, published 27th March 2012).
- 3.2 The area was the subject of a desk-based assessment (Foundations 2012). This document highlighted that no designated historic environment assets will be directly affected by the development and there is likely to be little impact associated with the setting of Listed buildings or other heritage assets. The location of the site suggests that it contains a generally low potential for archaeological features of all periods and it does not, in itself, represent an historic asset. However, the assessment noted the uncertainty regarding the location of the Saxon and earlier medieval settlement cores and identified a number of features visible within the site on aerial photographs dating to 1943 and 1961, which are of unknown date and function and may have the potential to represent one or more historic assets.
- 3.3 The construction of the new residential development will involve ground disturbance through the excavation of footings, service trenches access roads and landscaping. These activities have the potential to impact on the undefined

features visible on aerial photographs. As a result the Archaeology Team has advised that a programme of intrusive archaeological evaluation should be undertaken within the site area and the results be used to create a Heritage Asset Assessment that will form part of the planning application.

- 2.15 The study area therefore contained the potential for the preservation of features predominately relating to the Saxon, Medieval and Post-medieval periods. This did not prejudice the evaluation against evidence relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the location, date, character, extent, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.

- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i) To define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;

ii) To attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;

iii) To recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;

iv) To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 Two 20m by 1.8m, two 15m by 1.8m and one 10m by 1.8m trenches were excavated across the proposed development area, as shown in Figure 2.

- 4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed, under constant archaeological supervision, to the top of the archaeological deposits or the underlying natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved through the use of a 360° tracked mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Spoil tips were visually scanned for finds.

- 4.3 Two of the trenches contained archaeological features and deposits of Post-medieval date, although the remainder were devoid of archaeological significance.

- 4.4 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 **Trench 1** measured 15m long and was excavated onto natural pale brown/yellow sand at an average depth of 0.28m (52.72m at the northeastern end and 52.24 at the southwestern end). The natural deposits were overlain by a thin sandy interface (103) up to 0.06m thick, beneath a mid grey brown silty sand subsoil (102), up to 0.10m thick. The subsoil was overlain by a dark grey brown silty sand (101), up to 0.10m thick. No archaeological finds or features were present within this trench and no evidence was recovered for either of the features visible on aerial photographs.
- 5.2 **Trench 2** measured 20m long and was excavated onto natural mid yellow sand with gravel inclusions at an average depth of 0.36m (52.94m at the northern end and 52.76m OD at the southern end). The natural deposits were overlain by a thin sandy interface (303) up to 0.18m thick, beneath a mid grey brown silty sand subsoil (302), up to 0.12m thick. The subsoil was overlain by a dark grey brown silty sand (301), up to 0.15m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench and no evidence was recovered for the feature visible on aerial photographs. A single undiagnostic struck flake was recovered from the subsoil in this trench.
- 5.3 **Trench 3** measured 15m long and was excavated onto natural mid yellow sand with gravel inclusions at an average depth of 0.43m (52.99m at the eastern end and 5.18m OD at the western end). The natural deposits were overlain by a thin sandy interface (203) up to 0.15m thick, beneath a mid grey brown silty sand subsoil (202), up to 0.32m thick. The subsoil was overlain by a dark grey brown silty sand (201), up to 0.15m thick. A number of archaeological finds and features were present within this trench, all of which were of post-medieval date and were cut into the top of the natural sand. No evidence was recovered for the feature shown on aerial photographs.
- 5.4 **Feature [304]** comprised a shallow oval cut measuring 0.47m long by 0.29m wide by 0.03m deep (52.78m OD). It contained a light grey brown silty sand (305), from which three small fragments of post-medieval brick/tile were recovered.
- 5.5 **Feature [306]** comprised a small posthole measuring 0.27m long by 0.21m wide by 0.12m deep (52.68m OD). It contained a mottled grey brown/yellow silty sand fill (307) from which a fragment of post-medieval clay smoking pipe stem was recovered.
- 5.6 **Feature [308]** comprised a rectangular, flat bottomed feature measuring 0.60m long by 0.23m wide by 0.16m deep (52.70m OD). It contained a light grey brown silty sand (309), from which a small fragments of post-medieval brick/tile was recovered.

- 5.7 **Feature [310]** comprised a probable rectangular, flat bottomed cut, which extended beyond the confines of the trench and measured 0.54m wide by 0.25m deep (52.59m OD). It contained a mid grey brown silt sand with yellow mottling (311) from which late post-medieval brick and tile and 20th century china ware were recovered. It was cut by feature [312].
- 5.8 **Feature [312]** comprised a sub round or oval feature with an irregular rounded base which only fell partly within the trench and measured 0.65m wide by 0.07m deep (52.80m OD). This latter feature contained a yellow orange silt sand (313).
- 5.9 **Feature [314]** comprised a sub-oval feature with a flat base measuring 0.53m long by 0.35m wide and 0.15m deep (52.70m OD). It contained a mid grey brown silty sand (315) from which 20th century china ware and post-medieval brick and tile were recovered.
- 5.10 **Trench 4** measured 20m long and followed the profile of the hill. It was excavated onto natural mid yellow sand with gravel inclusions at a depth of 0.15m (55.06m) at the eastern end and 0.54m (53.20m OD) at the western end. The natural deposits were directly overlain by topsoil (401) at the western end, with a 0.14m thick interface layer (405) below a 0.22m thick subsoil layer (404) present only at the eastern end; the remainder of the trench showing clear evidence of small scale late post-medieval/modern sand extraction in a large cut [402] which contained a mid yellow brown silt sand (403). The subsoil was overlain by a dark grey brown silty sand (201), up to 0.15m thick.
- 5.11 **Feature [406]** comprised a rectangular cut with a sloping base cut into the natural sand beneath feature [402]. It measured 0.48m long by 0.35m wide by 0.10m deep (53.35m OD) and contained a fill visually indistinguishable from (403). No dating evidence was recovered from the feature, but it is almost certainly related to the sand extraction works.
- 5.12 **Trench 5** measured 10m long and was excavated onto natural sand and sandstone at an average depth of 0.32m (54.87m OD at the eastern end and 54.13m OD at the western end). The natural deposits were overlain by a thin sandy interface (503) up to 0.08m thick, beneath a mid grey brown silty sand subsoil (502), up to 0.14m thick. The subsoil was overlain by a dark grey brown silty sand (501), up to 0.15m thick. No archaeological finds or features were present within this trench
- 5.13 Visibility was good, with features visually distinct from the surrounding natural substrates and there was often very good visual differentiation between fills.
- 5.14 The archaeological deposits were generally well preserved.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The evaluation has identified a degree of post-medieval/modern activity in Trenches 3 and 4.
- 6.2 Features present within the site included a number of small discrete features in Trench 3, which almost certainly represent garden-type features. Trench 4 contained features in the form of sand extraction pit and probably associated feature.
- 6.3 Archaeological artefacts recovered from the trenches included a small ceramic assemblage, which consisted entirely of 19th/20th century transfer printed china wares, along with a small assemblage of brick/tile fragments and a single clay pipe stem. The only archaeologically significant find consisted of a single undiagnostic struck flake, which was recovered from the subsoil in Trench 2.
- 6.4 No evidence was recovered for the features identified on aerial photographs, although their absence strongly suggests that they may have been present only as superficial or non-physical features in the topsoil and were likely to be of modern origin.
- 6.5 The results of the evaluation have indicated that the site is of low-negligible archaeological potential.
- 6.6 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with Bedford Museum. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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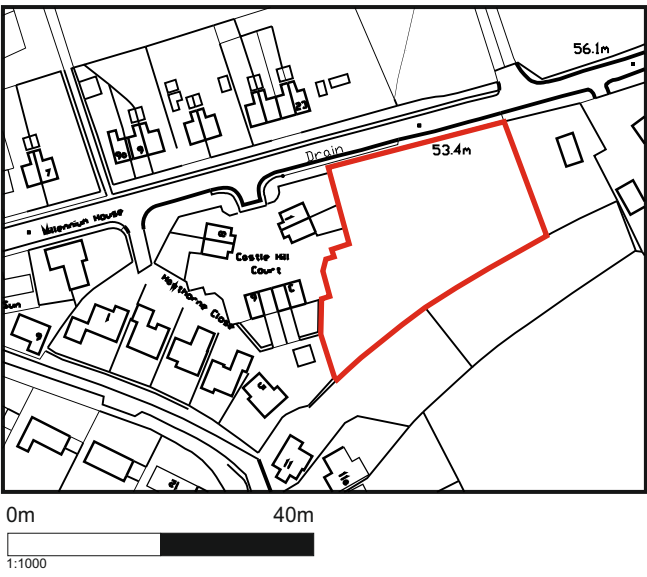
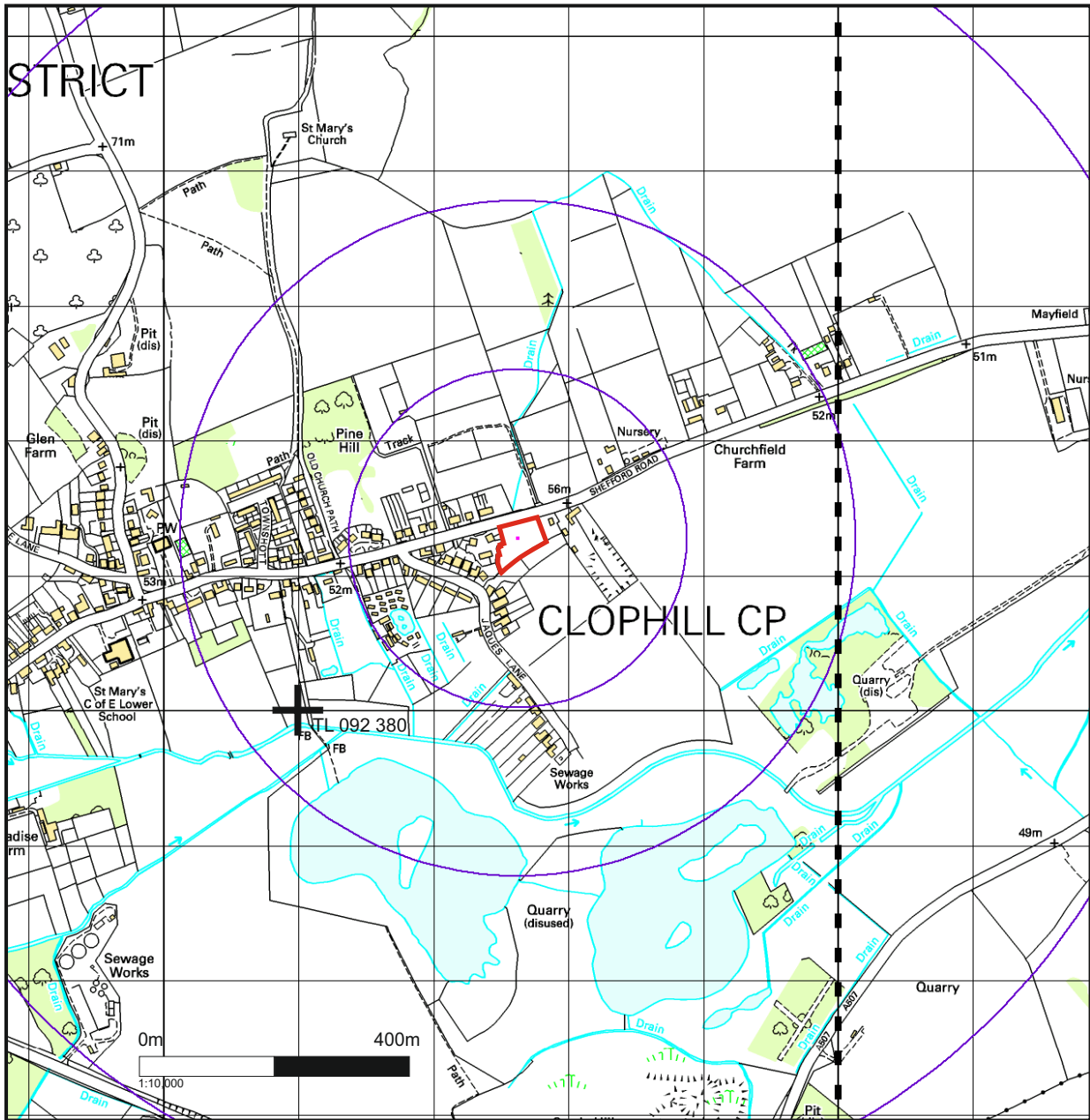
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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Accession Code:


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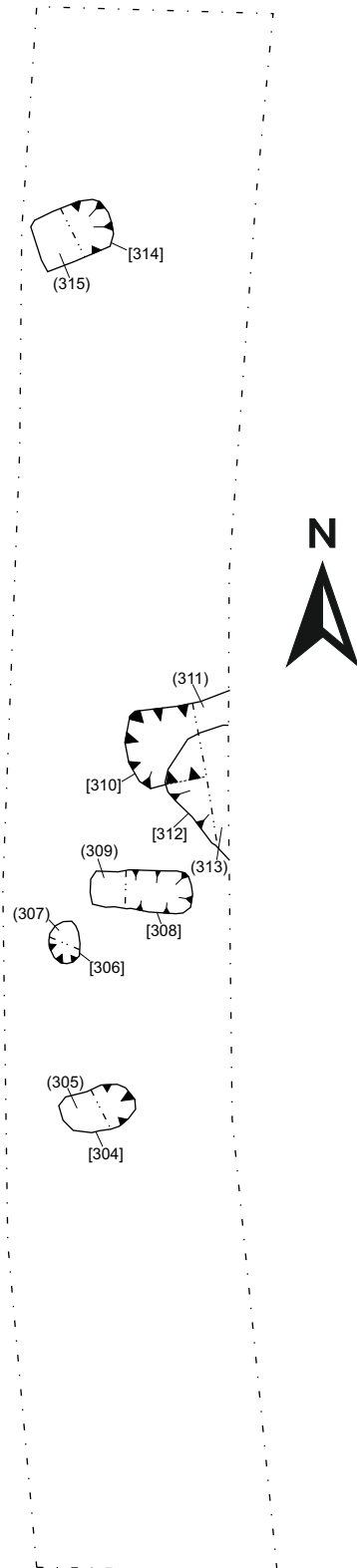

SITE LOCATION

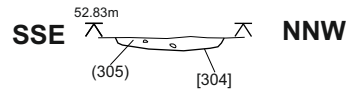
FIGURE 1: Study Area Location



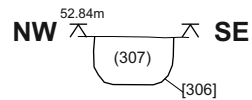
TRENCH 3 PLAN



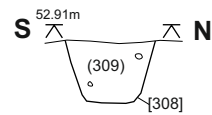
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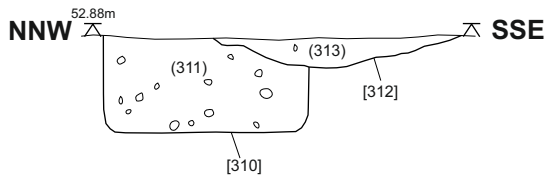
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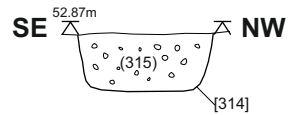
WEST FACING SECTION [308]



WEST NORTHWEST FACING SECTION [310] AND [312]

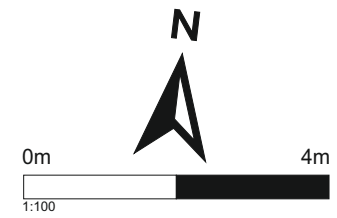


SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [314]

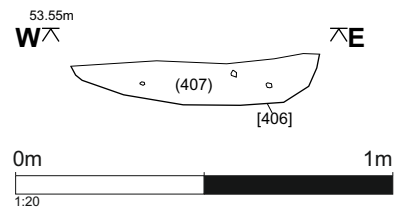


<p>Site Code: CHC12 Accession Code:</p>
<p>FIGURE 3: Trench 3 Plan and Sections</p>

TRENCH 4 PLAN



SOUTH FACING SECTION [406]



Site Code: CHC12
Accession Code:

FIGURE 4: Trench 4 Plan and Section