

**LAND AT THREE CROWNS HOUSE
HILLS ROAD
CAMBRIDGE**

NGR: TL 456 574

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

HER No ECB2497

March 2007

Report No. 532

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SUMMARY

In February 2007 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at Three Crowns House, Hills Road, Cambridge (NGR: TL 456 574). The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting.

The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of four trenches, trench locations were amended slightly from the original proposed locations due to on-site constraints.

A single feature of late Post-medieval date was present within the evaluated area.

The potential for the preservation of significant archaeological features is low.

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 the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

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

Period from *circa* AD 1500 onwards.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in February 2007 on land at Three Crowns House, Hills Road, Cambridge (NGR: TL 456 574). The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting.
- 1.2 The archaeological work was undertaken prior to the determination of planning permission and in accordance with the specification prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2007), the principals of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990) and the archaeological policies of Cambridge County Council.
- 1.3 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is 0.18ha in area and is bounded by Hills Road to the east, Bateman Street to the south, Norwich Street to the north and properties fronted Norwich Street and Bateman Street to the west. It is currently occupied by Three Crowns House, which is a four storey 1970's office block. The building has pad foundations and a thin ground bearing slab. There is a surface tarmac car park to the rear.
- 2.2 The archaeological background of the site was assessed by CgMs Consulting in November 2006. The results of this assessment are summarised below.
- 2.3 The site lies in an area of potential for Roman remains. It is close to a Roman road and a former earthwork of presumed Roman date, which may have been a marching camp or settlement site beside the Roman road. However, the earthwork was described by an antiquarian before the construction of the railway goods yard (which destroyed it) and there is scant modern evidence about this site. Recent archaeological evaluations of the Cattle Market site and the Triangle site to the south of the study area have failed to find any remains associated with the marching camp. However, it is considered possible that associated remains may be present within the study area.
- 2.4 The construction of Three Crowns House will have at least partially damaged, if not destroyed any remains within the footprint of the existing building. The area of existing surface car parking to the rear of Three Crowns House has moderate potential for Roman remains.
- 2.5 The study area therefore contained the potential for the preservation of archaeological features and deposits predominantly associated with the Roman period. This in no way prejudiced the evaluation works against the recovery of finds or features relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits, in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.
- 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.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The project required the excavation of four 5m by 2m trenches. Minor adjustments to the trenches were required due to on-site constraints. The original and revised trench locations are shown on Figure 2.
- 4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed to the top of archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved with the use of a mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket. Thereafter the trenches were cleaned and all additional excavation was conducted by hand.
- 4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the Specification and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 **Trench 1** (5m x 2m, north-south aligned) was excavated onto the natural substrates of yellow sand with chalk patches at an average depth of 1.05m (11.78m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural deposits were overlaid by (108) a mid yellow brown clay sand subsoil, up to 0.47m thick, which contained a few CBM fragments, charcoal flecks and contained one fragment of clay pipe. This was sealed by (107) a mid brown grey clay sand buried topsoil, up to 0.13m thick, which contained frequent CBM fragments, charcoal flecks and sherds of mass-produced chinaware. This was in turn

sealed by (106) a thin layer of possible mortar 0.01m thick. This was in turn sealed by (105), a sand and chalk layer of possible redeposited natural, up to 0.19m thick. This was overlaid by (104), a grey black compacted make-up layer of clay sand, up to 0.10m thick, which contained fragments of wood and modern artefacts. This was in turn sealed by (103), a compact layer of orange sand up to 0.14m thick. This was overlaid by (102) a hardcore layer of flint gravels and sand up to 0.13m thick, which was in turn sealed by a layer of tarmac (101), 0.10m thick. No archaeological finds or features were present within this trench.

- 5.2 **Trench 2** (5m x 2m, east-west aligned) was excavated onto the natural substrates at an average depth of 0.80m (11.95m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural substrates were overlaid by (206), a mid yellow brown clay sand subsoil, up to 0.25m thick, which contained a few CBM fragments, charcoal flecks. This was sealed by (205) a dark grey brown sand clay topsoil, up to 0.35m thick, which contained occasional CBM flecks. This was sealed by (204), a layer of contaminated/waterlogged green and black sand clay, up to 0.10m thick, which contained occasional chalk charcoal and CBM fragments. This was in turn sealed by (203), a compact layer of orange sand up to 0.14m thick, which was equivalent to (103). This was in turn sealed by (202), a hardcore layer of flint gravels and orange sand, up to 0.12m thick, which was equivalent to (102). This was then sealed by a layer of tarmac (201) 0.12m thick. No archaeological finds or features were present within this trench.
- 5.3 **Trench 3** (5m x 2m, north-south aligned) was excavated onto the natural substrates at an average depth of 0.90m (11.63m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural substrates were overlaid by (306), a mid yellow brown clay sand subsoil, up to 0.30m thick, which contained a few CBM fragments and charcoal flecks. This was sealed by (305) a dark grey brown sand clay topsoil, up to 0.35m thick, which contained occasional CBM flecks. This was sealed by (304), a layer of contaminated/waterlogged green and black sand clay, up to 0.15m thick, which contained occasional chalk charcoal and CBM fragments, which was equivalent to (204). This was in turn sealed by (303), a compact layer of orange sand up to 0.12m thick, which was equivalent to (103). This was in turn sealed by (302), a hardcore layer of flint gravels and orange sand, up to 0.13m thick, which was equivalent to (102). This was then sealed by a layer of tarmac (301) 0.10m thick. The southern end of the trench was truncated by a modern cut which contained concrete. A single archaeological feature was present within this trench, which was also truncated by the modern cut.
- 5.4 An east-west aligned linear [307] was partially contained at the southern end of the trench. It was present for the full width of the trench, with a minimum width of 1.10m and depth of 0.46m. The feature cut the natural substrates and possibly (306) and was sealed by (305). The linear had a flat base and a steep sloping side. The feature contained (308), a brown grey clay sand fill with a few flint inclusions and charcoal flecks, which yielded three fragments of late Post-medieval glass.

- 5.5 **Trench 4** (5m x 2m, east-west aligned) was excavated onto the natural substrates at an average depth of 0.98m (11.83m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural substrates were overlaid by (407), a mid yellow brown clay sand subsoil, up to 0.20m thick, which contained a few CBM fragments, charcoal flecks. This was sealed by (406), a dark grey brown sand clay topsoil, up to 0.15m thick, which contained occasional CBM flecks. This was sealed by (405), a light brown sand clay, 0.24m thick, which contained occasional to frequent charcoal and chalk flecks. This was sealed by (404), a layer of contaminated/waterlogged green and black sand clay, up to 0.08m thick, which contained occasional chalk charcoal and CBM fragments, which was equivalent to (204). This was in turn sealed by (403), a compact layer of orange sand up to 0.17m thick, which was equivalent to (103). This was in turn sealed by (402), a hardcore layer of flint gravels and orange sand, up to 0.10m thick, which was equivalent to (102). This was then sealed by a layer of tarmac (401) 0.12m thick. No archaeological finds or features were present within this trench.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The archaeological works revealed a single feature of late Post-medieval date.
- 6.2 Visibility was good across the entire site and intact subsoil horizons were present in all trenches.
- 6.3 All artefactual material present within the evaluated area was of Post-medieval/ modern date.
- 6.4 No archaeological or artefactual evidence of Roman date was present within the evaluated area.
- 6.5 The potential for further archaeological evidence within the study area is considered low.
- 6.6 The archive will be deposited with the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store under HER No.ECB2497.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Foundations Archaeology (2007) *Land at Three Crowns House, Hills Road, Cambridge: Archaeological evaluation*

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 (revised 2001) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation.*

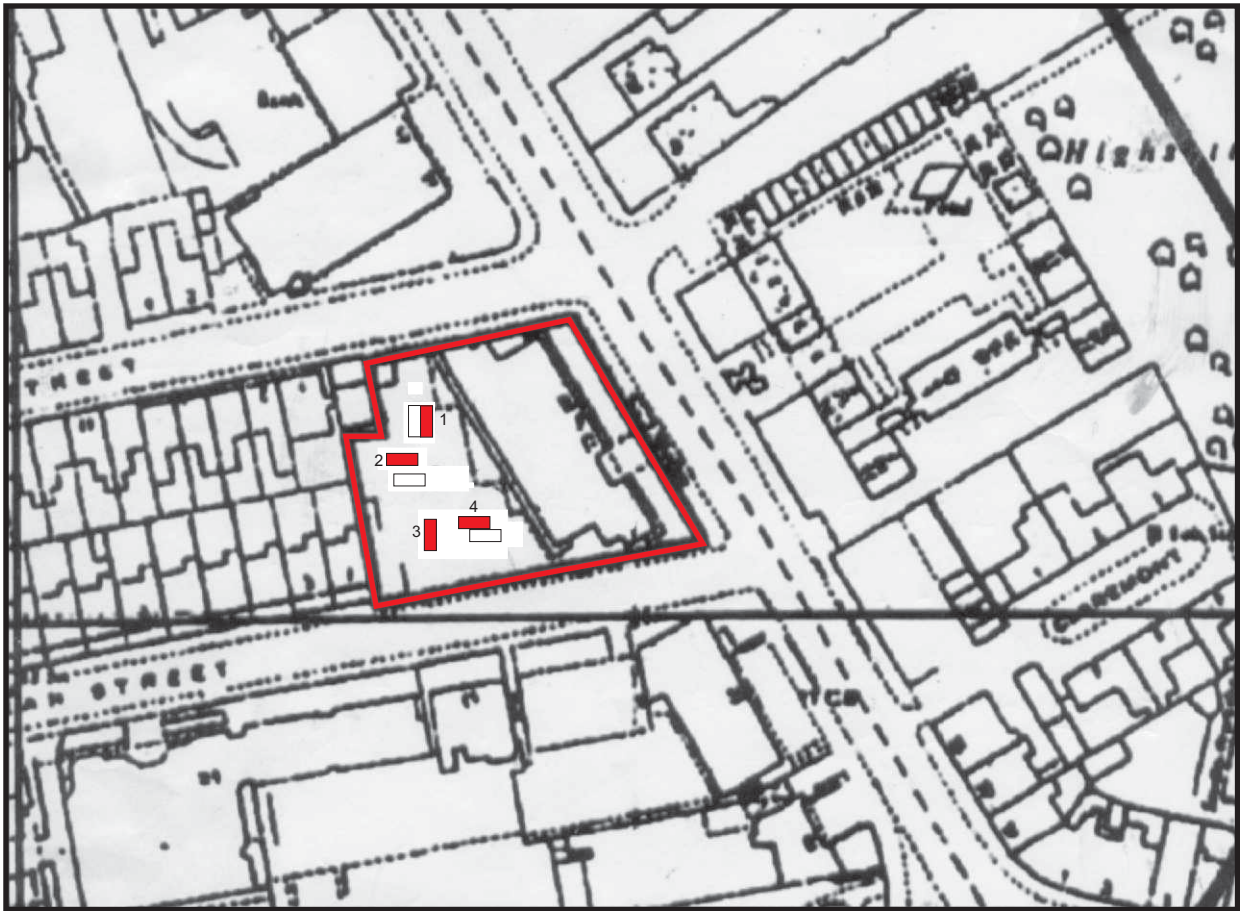
8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIGURE 1: Site Location



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0m 50m



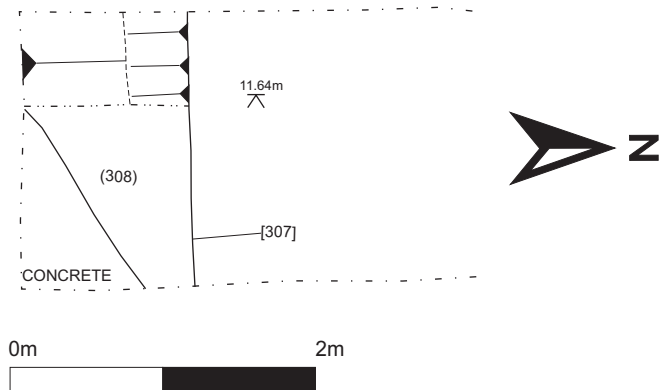
-  TRENCH LOCATIONS
-  ORIGINAL TRENCH LOCATIONS

FIGURE 2: Trench Locations

PLAN OF [307]



EAST FACING SECTION [307]

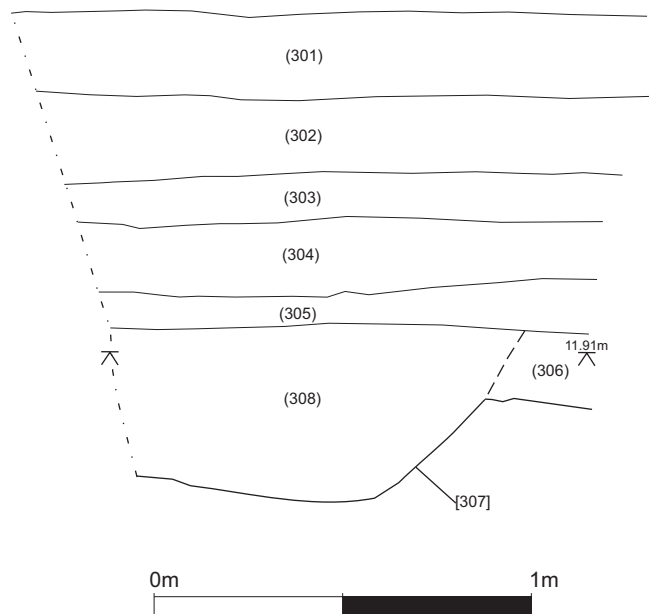


FIGURE 3 : Feature [307], Plan and Section