



HERITAGE NETWORK



Land adjacent to 8 BRIDGE ROAD Mepal, Cambridgeshire

(HN802)

Archaeological Evaluation



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

Land adjacent to
8 BRIDGE ROAD
Mepal, Cambridgeshire

Project ref.: HN802
LPA ref.: 08/00439/FUL
Event no.: ECB3179

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of Sanctuary Group

by

Greg Jones BA (HONS) MA

Report no. 591

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The front cover shows a general shot of the site frontage, looking east north-east

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Greg Jones and James Snee. The report was written by Greg Jones and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Philip Au, MEPK architects, Martin Woodward, Deejak Builders Ltd, and Andy Thomas, Cambridgeshire County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	8 Bridge Road, Mepal, Cambridgeshire, CB6 2AR		
County:	Cambridgeshire	District:	East Cambridgeshire
Village/town:	Mepal	Parish:	Mepal
Planning reference:	08/00439/FUL	NGR:	TL 4435 8106
Client name and address:	The Sanctuary Group, Sanctuary CSC, 160 Francis Street, Kingston Upon Hull HU2 8DT		
Nature of work:	New Housing	Current land use:	Grassland
Site Status:	None	Reason for investigation:	Direction of LPA (PPG16)
Position in planning process:	Pre determination	Project brief originator:	Local Authority
Size of affected area:	c. 1920m ²	Size of area investigated:	96m ²
Site code:	HN802	Other reference:	ECB3179
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc...	Field evaluation	Archive recipient:	Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Store
Start of work:	02/03/10	Finish of work:	02/03/10
Related HER nos:	05831, 14893	Periods represented:	None
OASIS UID:	heritage1-73592	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	n/a		
Physical archive:	n/a		
Previous summaries/reports:	None		

Synopsis:

In order to characterise the archaeological potential of the site of a proposed new development at land adjacent to and to the rear of 8 Bridge Road, Mepal, Cambridgeshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by The Sanctuary Group to undertake a field evaluation of the site.

The site lies within the medieval core of Mepal village, which suggested good potential for encountering remains of medieval date. The present evaluation however revealed no features, deposits or finds.

On the basis of these results, the risk that the development might encounter archaeological remains of significance may be considered to be low for all periods.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of the Sanctuary Group, as part of the archaeological evaluation of an area of land proposed for development at 8 Bridge Road, Mepal, Cambridgeshire.

1.2 The investigation was a requirement of the planning consent for the development (ref.08/00439/FUL) granted by East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC), under the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990). The extent of the present work was originally defined in a Design Brief for Archaeological Evaluation, dated 9 December 2008, prepared by the Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice (CAPCA), acting as archaeological advisers to the local council. However, due to the expiry of the initial 6 month currency of the original Brief, CAPCA insisted upon a new revised Brief to be issued. This updated brief was dated 5 February 2010. The study is located on land adjacent to and rear of 8 Bridge Road, Mepal and is centred at NGR TL 4435 8106.

1.3 The present site lies within the medieval core of Mepal village, a manorial settlement on the Isle of Ely, first noted in documents from the early 13th century (Pugh 2002). Earthwork traces indicating a shrunken settlement (HER 05831) lie 100m to the west. The 13th century parish church of St Mary (HER 14893) is Grade II* listed and lies 100m to the north-west. Although a fire in the latter half of the 19th century is believed to have destroyed much of the village, 9 Grade II listed buildings are recorded in the vicinity, including Wisteria House, a mid to late 18th century building, which lies 400m to the southwest. On the basis of the known archaeology in the vicinity of the present site, CAPCA advised that archaeological evaluation of the development site should be undertaken before the development proceeds.

1.4 The aim of the evaluation has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any remains that are liable to be threatened by the development. It is also intended to provide a local and regional, archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000), should they be discovered. It is considered that the evaluation of the present site has the potential to contribute to an understanding of the origins and development of settlement at Mepal, particularly from the medieval period onwards.

1.5 The present report is intended to provide the planning authority with sufficient data to allow it to consider the archaeological implications of the proposed development, and to determine what further mitigation measures, if any, may be required to allow the development to proceed.

2 Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The study area lies on level ground at approximately 4mAOD and was previously an area of grassland.

2.2 The soils of the area consist of chalky till of the Hanslope Association (Soil Survey of Eastern England, Sheet 4), and the underlying natural geology of the area consists of Amptill Clay mudstone (British Geological Survey).

METHODOLOGY

2.3 All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and the appropriate IFA and ALGAO guidance documents.

2.4 Three trenches were located by triangulation from known points using fibreglass tape measures. The trenches were opened using a JCB digger fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts. The trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon. Topsoil and subsoil were separated.

2.5 The trenches were cleaned by hand, and all potential archaeological features and deposits were sampled to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.

2.6 All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate pro-forma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:10 and 1:50.

RESULTS

2.7 Three evaluation trenches were excavated, two measuring 20m in length, 1.6m in width, and 0.60-0.70m in depth and one measuring 14m in length, 1.6m in width and 0.6m in depth were excavated across the footprints of the proposed new buildings (Figure 2, Plate 1).

2.8 The stratigraphy in the trenches consisted of a layer of dark greyish brown (10 YR 4/2) clayey silt topsoil between 0.70m and 0.60m thick. Beneath this layer was revealed a shallow yellowish brown (10 YR 5/6) silt clay subsoil to a depth of c.0.1m which overlay brownish yellow (10 YR 6/8) clay natural. Some evidence of localised gleying due to fluctuating ground water levels was noted.

2.9 No archaeological features, deposits or layers were encountered during the archaeological evaluation.

Trench 1 data:

Length (m):	20	Width (m):	1.6	Maximum Depth (m):	0.7	Orientation	W-E
Level at E End of Trench (mOD)		Top	4.12	Level at W End of Trench (mOD)		Top	4.07
		Base	3.58			Base	3.46
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
	Layer	Dark greyish brown (10Yr 4/2) clay silt topsoil	20+	1.6+	0.6		
	Layer	Yellowish brown (10Yr 5/6) silt clay	20+	1.6+	0.1		
	Layer	Brownish yellow (10/Yr 6/8) clay natural	-	-	-		

Trench 2 data:

Length (m):	20	Width (m):	1.6	Maximum Depth (m):	0.6	Orientation	N-S
Level at N End of Trench (mOD)		Top	4.16	Level at S End of Trench (mOD)		Top	4.26
		Base	3.67			Base	3.58
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
	Layer	Dark greyish brown (10Yr 4/2) clay silt topsoil	20+	1.6+	0.6		
	Layer	Yellowish brown (10/Yr 5/6) silt clay	20+	1.6+	0.1		
	Layer	Brownish yellow (10/Yr 6/8) clay natural	-	-	-		

Trench 3 data:

Length (m):	14	Width (m):	1.6	Maximum Depth (m):	0.6	Orientation	E-W
Level at E End of Trench (mOD)		Top	4.30	Level at W End of Trench (mOD)		Top	4.18
		Base	3.89			Base	3.62
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
	Layer	Dark greyish brown (10Yr 4/2) topsoil	12+	1.6+	0.35		
	Layer	Yellowish brown (10/Yr 5/6) silt clay	12+	1.6+	1.2+		
	Layer	Brownish yellow (10/Yr 6/8) clay natural	-	-	-		

3. Discussion

3.1 Although this project had the potential to contribute to an understanding of the origins and development of settlement at Mepal, particularly from the medieval period onwards, the archaeological evaluation revealed no archaeological features, deposits, or stratified artefacts. Undisturbed natural clay was observed in all three evaluation trenches.

Confidence Rating

3.2 The archaeological evaluation by trial trenching revealed the natural clay substratum in all three excavated trenches across the footprint of the proposed development. No archaeological features, deposits or stratified artefacts were uncovered during the investigation.

3.3 In the course of machining visibility was hampered by strong sunlight. Following machining the trenches quickly filled with water, which further affected visibility. Despite this, it is considered unlikely that significant features or deposits went unobserved and the confidence rating for this project can be considered to be moderate to high.

4. Bibliography

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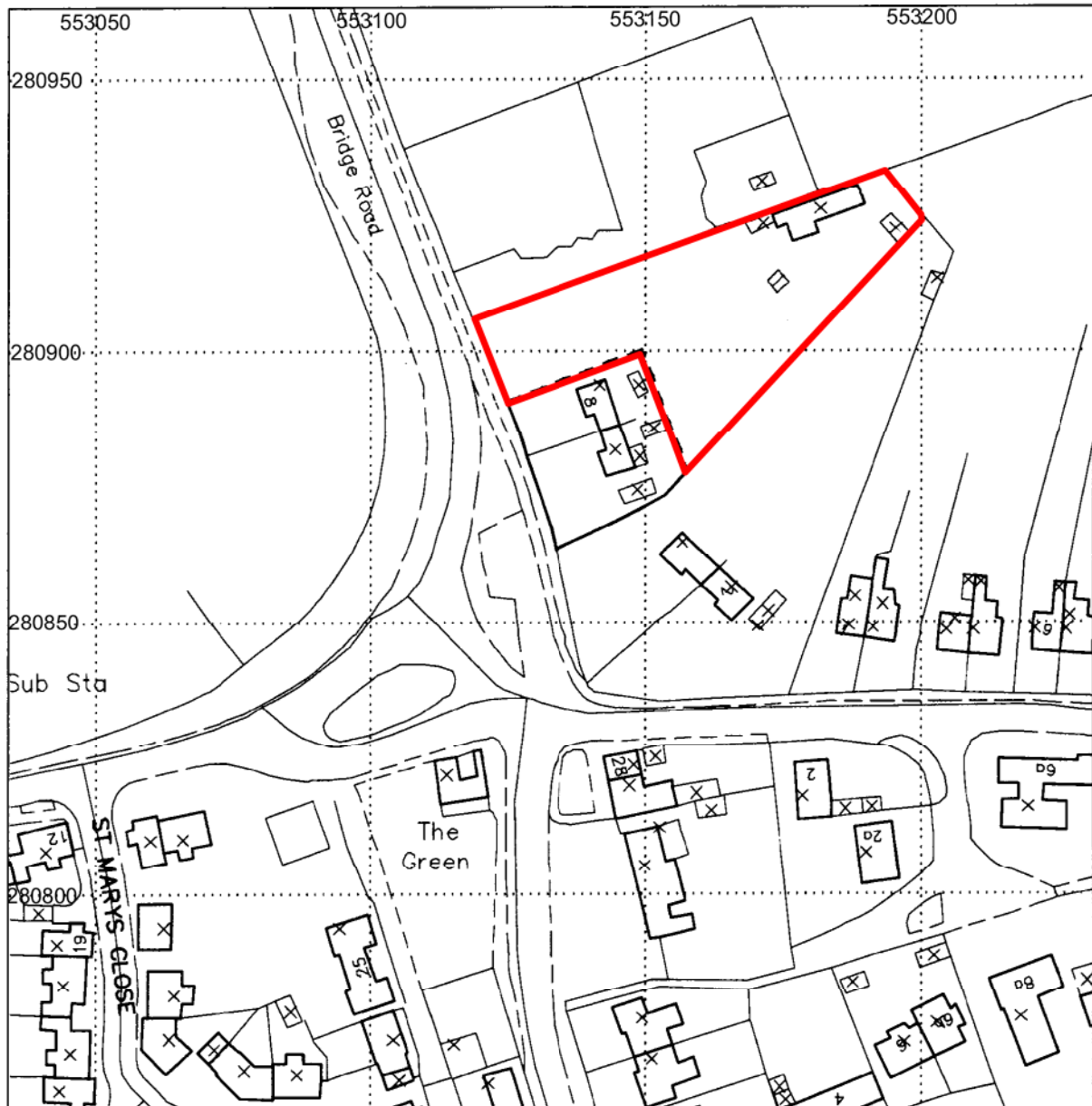
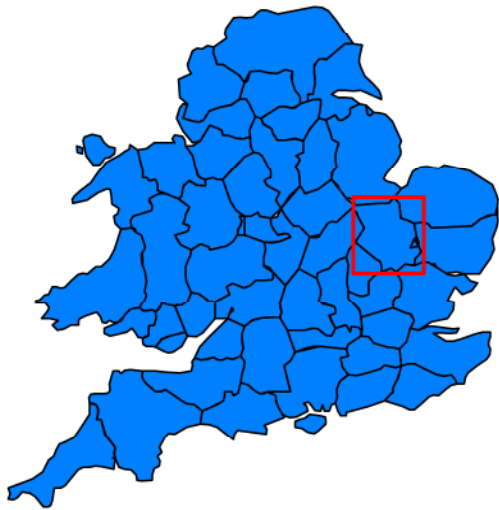
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5. Illustrations

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Site layout
Plate 1	Trench 1, looking east
Plate 2	Trench 2, looking south
Plate 3	Trench 3, looking west



Site location plan

Scale 1:1250

(Reproduced from OS mapping with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence No. AL100014861)

Figure 1



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking east



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking south

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8 Bridge Road, Mepal

HN802



Plate 3: Trench 3 looking west

Appendix

Oasis Summary Sheet

OASIS ID: heritage1-73592	
Project details	
Project name	Land adjacent and to the rear of 8 Bridge Road, Mepal, Cambridgeshire .
Short description of the project	<p>In order to characterise the archaeological potential of the site of a proposed new development at land adjacent to and to the rear of 8 Bridge Road, Mepal, Cambridgeshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by The Sanctuary Group to undertake a field evaluation of the site.</p> <p>The site lies within the medieval core of Mepal village, which suggested good potential for encountering remains of medieval date. The present evaluation however revealed no features, deposits or finds.</p> <p>On the basis of these results, the risk that the development might encounter archaeological remains of significance may be considered to be low for all periods.</p>
Project dates	Start: 02-03-2010 End: 02-03-2010
Previous/future work	No
Any associated project reference codes	HN802 - Contracting Unit No. ECB3179 – Event No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	N/a
Current Land use	Other 3 – grassland area
Monument type	N/a
Significant Finds	N/a
Methods & techniques	'Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Small-scale (rural residential)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	Pre-determination (e.g. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	8 Bridge Road, Mepal, Cambridgeshire.
Postcode	CB6 2AR
Study area	1920.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 4435 8106
Height OD / Depth	Min: 4.07m Max: 3.26m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Heritage Network
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	Greg Jones
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Sanctuary Group
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire Archaeology Store
Physical Contents	None
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire Archaeology Store
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'

Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archive Store
Paper Media available	','Photograph', 'Trench Sheet', 'Attendance Sheet', 'Report', 'Survey'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	8 Bridge Road, Mepal, Cambridgeshire: Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Jones, G
Other bibliographic details	Report No. 591
Date	2010
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth, Herts.
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 8 pages, 2 Figures, 3 Plates