

**An Archaeological Evaluation
of the northern house plot at
40 Fishers Green
Stevenage
Hertfordshire**

NGR: TL 52232 22597

Planning Ref: 10/00321/EOT

**ASE Project No: E2281
Site Code: SVFG 13
HHER Enquiry No. 120/13**

**ASE Report No: 2013204
OASIS id: 157582**

**Lukasz Miciak
Illustrations by Andrew Lewsey**



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With contributions by Elissa Menzel
Illustrations by Andrew Lewsey**

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Russell Linard on behalf of the landowner, Mr Alan Loffler, to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land to the north of 40 Fishers Green, Stevenage, in advance of the construction of a detached house.

The site is located to the northwest of the centre of Stevenage, within a housing estate that is bounded by the M1 motorway to the west and Clovelly Way to the east. The development area, to the rear of 40 Fishers Green, is surrounded by residential dwellings and Fishers Green road, which encircles that part of the housing estate

Number 40 Fishers Green is a late 18th/early 19th century two-storey house, which still retains most of its original garden plot within the modern housing estate. Bricks used for the construction of a later extension and renovation of the house were presumably produced at a nearby brickfield, situated approximately 100m to the southeast of the site. The brickworks were operational between 1857 and 1907 and during the sourcing of brick earth Palaeolithic implements comprising three handaxes, one partly worked flint axe, a scraper and a flake, were discovered. Another Palaeolithic stone implement and a Mesolithic core were found during the construction of the A1 (M1) Stevenage Bypass, within 200m of the site. Land immediately to the south of the house was the subject of an archaeological evaluation in April 2013, which revealed a large quarry or brick earth extraction pit that contained a number of presumably residual, worn and abraded pottery sherds of Medieval and Post-medieval date in the backfill.

Despite the discovery of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic artefacts in the vicinity of the site no archaeological features or finds dating to these periods were present within the evaluation trench.

Only one shallow, linear, feature was revealed, which contained a single sherd of Post-medieval pottery, broadly dating to the 17th to 19th century, and a few fragments of brick and tile that were all post-medieval or modern in date. The feature is likely to be a gully/garden feature or a primitive drain.

The absence of any significant remains suggests that the development will have little impact upon the archaeological record.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Russell Linard on behalf of the landowner, Mr Alan Loffler, to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land to the north of 40 Fishers Green, Stevenage, in advance of the construction a detached house.

1.2 Geology and Topography (Figure 1)

1.2.1 The site is located to the northwest of the centre of Stevenage, within a housing estate that is bounded by the M1 motorway to the west and Clovelly Way to the east. The development area, to the north of Number 40 is surrounded by residential dwellings and Fishers Green road, which encircles that part of the housing estate.

1.2.2 The underlying geology consists of the Lowestoft Formation comprising sheets of chalky till together with outwash sands, gravel, silts and clay that are underlain by the Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and the New Pit Chalk Formation.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 A planning application to build a detached garden cottage on land to the north of Number 40 was submitted to the local planning authority, Stevenage Borough Council, in 2007, with the timeframe for implementation attached to the initial grant of planning consent subsequently extended by a further application. As the site is situated in an area of some archaeological potential, in which important archaeological remains may survive, HCC CHEU recommended that a full archaeological condition be placed on any grant of planning consent, based upon guidance contained in PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning, subsequently replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.3.1 The recommendation states that:

No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work and recording in accordance with the written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the planning authority.

1.3.3 Following on from this, HCC CHEU requested that a trench-based evaluation be undertaken in the first instance, which this report relates to. Further details concerning the aims and objectives and methodology for the investigation follow below.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The initial aim of the archaeological work was to determine the presence or absence, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any surviving remains in order to provide information that would be used by the HCC CHEU monitoring officer to determine the necessity for any further work.

1.4.2 Particular attention was paid to:

- Evidence for any prehistoric activity on the site
- The post-medieval development of land at Fishers Green

1.4.3 In the event that significant archaeological remains were encountered this report would have aimed to place the results in context with the research objectives laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and the more-recent *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2012). As no significant archaeological remains were identified the project has little potential to contribute to any of the research agendas.

1.5 Scope of Report

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation on land to the north of 40 Fishers Green, Stevenage carried out on 22nd of August 2013 in advance of the construction of a detached house.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Number 40 Fishers Green, a late 18th/early 19th century two storey house that still retains most of its original plot within the modern housing estate. For the past two centuries the land had been used as a domestic garden.

2.2 Previous archaeological work

2.2.1 Land to the south of No.40 was the subject of an archaeological evaluation comprising two 10m long trenches, undertaken in April 2013 in advance of residential development. Despite the discovery of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic artefacts in the vicinity of the site no archaeological features and finds dating to these periods were present within the evaluation trenches.

2.2.2 A small undated feature revealed in trench 1 may have been a posthole belonging to a now-demolished fence or similar structure associated with the 18th/ 19th century house, while a large feature discovered at the southeast end of trench 2 was most likely a quarry or brick earth extraction pit dating from the second half of the 17th century or later.

2.2.3 The majority of datable finds appear to have belonged to the second half of

the 17th century, while earlier material including a fragment of Roman CBM and three sherds of medieval pottery are likely to be residual. However, a fragment of late 17th to 19th century brick may suggest that virtually all of the finds are residual, most likely having been discarded in the former quarry or brick earth extraction pit.

2.3 Palaeolithic c 450,000 – 10,000 BC

2.3.1 Six Palaeolithic implements, comprising three handaxes, one partly worked flint axe, a scraper and a flake, were discovered in brickearth pits located approximately 100m to the south of the site (HER 608). One more implement dated to this period was found during works at the A1 (M1) Stevenage bypass, which runs approximately 200m to the east of the site.

2.4 Mesolithic 10,000 – 4000 BC

2.4.1 A Mesolithic flint core was also discovered during works at the A1 (M1) Stevenage bypass (HER 421)

2.5 Post-medieval

No. 40 Fishers Green is a late 18th/early 19th century two-storey house, with later extensions, which retains most of its original plot and now stands within a modern housing estate (HER 13650). Situated approximately 100m to the southeast of the site is a brickfield, where brick-making started in 1857 and continued for a period of approximately 50 years.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY (Figure 1)

3.1 One evaluation trench measuring 10m long by 1.8m wide was excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the constant supervision of an archaeologist. The trench was located in the footprint of the proposed house.

3.2 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Stevenage museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

Number of Contexts	4
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1 drawing sheet (1:10, 1:20)
Bulk Samples	N/A
Photographs	7 colour prints from digital images
Bulk finds	1 small box
Registered finds	N/A
Environmental flots/residue	N/A

4.0 RESULTS (Figure 2)

- 4.0.1 The northwest/southeast aligned trench measured 10m long by 1.8m wide and was excavated to 0.35m below the existing ground surface, where the top of the undisturbed drift geology was encountered (Plate 2).
- 4.0.2 The deposit sequence comprised a mid-yellowish orange soft silt clay natural deposit overlain by 0.35m of dark brownish grey soft clay silt topsoil.
- 4.0.3 One archaeological feature was identified, excavated and recorded.
- 4.0.4 A shallow east/west aligned linear feature ran across the middle of the trench, sealed beneath the topsoil. The single fill consisted of a mid-brown soft sandy silt with rare small stones, which contained a piece of pottery and a few fragments of brick and tile (Plate 1).

Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
[1/001]	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.35m
[1/002]	Layer	Natural	Trench	Trench	-
[1/003]	Cut	Gully	5.4m	0.5m	-
[1/004]	Deposit	Fill of [1/003]	5.4m	0.5m	0.1m

5.0 THE FINDS by Elissa Menzel

5.1 Medieval and/or Post-Medieval Pottery

- 5.1.1 One small sherd of pottery, weighing 4 grams, was recovered from the single fill (4) of gully 3. The sherd is a rim fragment, most likely from a pipkin or saucepan, in a Post-medieval Red Earthenware fabric, with a wide 17th to 19th century date range.

5.2 Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

- 5.2.1 Context 4 also produced four fragments of abraded/ worn brick or tile, weighing 165g. All of the pieces are small and lack sufficient external surfaces to confirm whether they are brick or tile but are all of probable post-medieval or modern origin.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Despite the discovery of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic artefacts in the vicinity of the site no archaeological features or finds dating to these periods were present within the evaluation trench or in the spoil heaps produced during the archaeological works.

- 6.2 The shallow linear feature [1/003] that was revealed is likely to be a gully/

garden feature or a primitive drain.

- 6.3** The absence of any significant remains suggests that the development will have little impact or no impact upon the archaeological record.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Russell Linard for commissioning the work on behalf of the landowner, Mr Alan Loffler, and for his assistance throughout the project, and Andy Instone, Kate Batt and Alison Tinniswood at Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit for their guidance and monitoring the project. The fieldwork was directed by Lukasz Miciak. The author would like to thank to Andrew Lewsey (Illustrator) who produced the figures for this report, Elissa Menzel (Finds Supervisor) who processed and spot-dated the finds, and Adrian Scruby (Project Manager) who managed the project.

HERTFORDSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address: Land to Rear of 40 Fishers Green, Stevenage, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Stevenage	
Village/Town: Stevanage	Parish: Stevenage	
Planning application reference: 10/00321/EOT		
HER Enquiry reference: 120/13		
Funding source: Landowner		
Nature of application: One detached houses		
Present land use: Garden		
Size of application area: 350 sqm	Size of area investigated: 18 sqm	
NGR (to 8 figures minimum): TL 52232 22597		
Site code (if applicable): SVFG 13		
Site director/Organization: L Miciak, Archaeology South-East		
Type of work: Archaeological Evaluation		
Date of work:	Start: 22/08/2013	Finish: 22/08/2013
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Stevenage		
Related HER Nos: N/A	Periods represented: Post-medieval	
Relevant previous summaries/reports: N/A		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Russell Linard on behalf of the landowner, Mr Alan Loffler, to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land to the north of 40 Fishers Green, Stevenage, in advance of the construction of a detached house.</p> <p>The site is located to the northwest of the centre of Stevenage, within a housing estate that is bounded by the M1 motorway to the west and Clovelly Way to the east. The development area, to the rear of 40 Fishers Green, is surrounded by residential dwellings and Fishers Green road, which encircles that part of the housing estate</p> <p>Number 40 Fishers Green is a late 18th/early 19th century two-storey house, which still retains most of its original garden plot within the modern housing estate. Bricks used for the construction of a later extension and renovation of the house were presumably produced at a nearby brickfield, situated approximately 100m to the southeast of the site. The brickworks were operational between 1857 and 1907 and during the sourcing of brick earth Palaeolithic implements comprising three handaxes, one partly worked flint axe, a scraper and a flake, were discovered. Another Palaeolithic stone implement and a Mesolithic core were found during the construction of the A1 (M1) Stevenage Bypass, within 200m of the site. Land immediately to the south of the house was the subject of an archaeological evaluation in April 2013, which revealed a large quarry or brick earth extraction pit that contained a number of presumably residual, worn and abraded pottery sherds of Medieval and Post-medieval date in the backfill.</p>		

Despite the discovery of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic artefacts in the vicinity of the site no archaeological features or finds dating to these periods were present within the evaluation trench.

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The absence of any significant remains suggests that the development will have little impact upon the archaeological record.

Author of summary: L Miciak

Date of summary: August 2013

OASIS Form**OASIS ID: archaeol6-157582****Project details**

Project name	Northern house plot, 40 Fishers Green
Short description of the project	<p>The site is located to the northwest of the centre of Stevenage, within a housing estate that is bounded by the M1 motorway to the west and Clovelly Way to the east. The development area, to the rear of 40 Fishers Green, is surrounded by residential dwellings and Fishers Green, which encircles that part of the housing estate Land immediately to the south of the house was the subject of an archaeological evaluation in April 2013, which revealed a large quarry or brick earth extraction pit that contained a number of presumably residual, worn and abraded pottery sherds of 17th to 19th century date in the backfill. Despite the discovery of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic artefacts in the vicinity of the site no archaeological features and finds dating to these periods were present within the evaluation trench. Only one shallow linear feature was revealed in the evaluation trench. It contained a single sherd of pottery dated to 17th to 19th century and a few fragments of brick and tile that were all post-medieval or modern in date. The feature is likely to be a gully/garden feature or a primitive drain. The absence of any significant remains suggests that the development will have little impact upon the archaeological record.</p>
Project dates	Start: 22-08-2013 End: 22-08-2013
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	E2281 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	VESSEL RIM Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"

Development type Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England

Site location HERTFORDSHIRE STEVENAGE, Northern house plot, 40 Fishers Green

Postcode SG1 2JA

Study area 18.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TL 52232 22597 51 0 51 52 50 N 000 12 43 E Point

Lat/Long Datum Position derived from charts

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator Archaeology South-East

Project design originator Archaeology South-East

Project director/manager Adrian Scruby

Project supervisor Lukasz Miciak

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body Mr Alan Loffler

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Stevenage Museum

Physical Contents "Ceramics"

Digital Archive recipient	Stevenage Museum
Digital Contents	"Ceramics","Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Stevenage Museum
Paper Contents	"Ceramics","Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"
<hr/>	
Entered by	Lukasz Miciak (l.miciak@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	23 August 2013