
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT ELLIOT ROAD,
MARCH,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
(MAEL15)**

Work Undertaken For
Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd

April 2015

Report Compiled by
Andrew Failes BA (Hons) MA

Planning Application No: F/YR13/0943/f
National Grid Reference: TL 40360 97298
OASIS Record No: archaeo11-209015
Cambridgeshire HER Event No: ECB4373

A.P.S. Report No. **41/15**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at Elliot Street, March, Cambridgeshire. This was in order to determine the archaeological implications of proposed development at the site.

The evaluation identified a sequence of natural chalky clay glacial till overlain by topsoil. Two probable clay extraction pits of post-medieval date cut through the natural clay. Finds retrieved from these pits suggests they were reused for casual discard of domestic waste through the post-medieval period.

The largest category of finds retrieved from the evaluation comprise pottery of the post-medieval period. Other finds included a fragment of post-medieval glass, a piece of 17th century pipe stem and two fragments of post-medieval brick.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of an Evaluation

An archaeological evaluation is defined as *'a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site. If such archaeological remains are present Field Evaluation defines their character and extent, quality and preservation, and it enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate'* (CIfA 2014).

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological investigation in advance

of proposed development at Elliot Road, March, Cambridgeshire as detailed in Planning Application F/YR13/0943/f. The evaluation was undertaken on 3rd and 4th March 2014 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services and approved by the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office.

2.3 Topography and Geology

March is located approximately 38km north of Cambridge and 23km east of Peterborough in the Fenland Administrative District of Cambridgeshire (Fig. 1).

The development site is located near the western edge of March, on the west side of Elliot Road (Fig. 2), centred on National Grid Reference TL 40360 97298 at a height of c. 3.5m OD.

The pre-Flandrian bedrock of the area is Kimmeridge Clay, overlain by interglacial gravels (Hoxnian Phase) known as 'March Gravels' (flinty gravels with shelly fauna). As an urban area, soils have not been mapped, though to the south are Peacock Association, clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

The Fenland has long been recognised as an important archaeological landscape, containing superimposed evidence of settlement, ritual and agricultural sites dating from the prehistoric period onwards. March occupies a former island within the Fenland, lying on the northern tip of a large peninsula which has been a focus for prehistoric and later occupation. The surrounding fen landscape underwent a series of complex changes during the prehistoric, Roman and later periods, influenced by the peninsula and the constantly changing courses of the major

rivers on either side of it (Hall 1987).

Cropmarks of enclosures and field systems of probable Iron Age-Roman date are extensive on the northeastern fringe of the island, but the highest parts of the island lie underneath the modern town and have not been extensively investigated.

The place-name March is probably derived from the Old English *merc*, meaning 'boundary' (Ekwall 1989, 314). March is first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, indicating the settlement was in existence in the Late Saxon period. It was later known as *Marchford*, a reflection of the role March played in the transport routes through the Fens. The earliest Saxon and medieval settlement was probably focused in the vicinity of the church of St Wendreda, some 2.4km south-southeast of the site, and south of the later market place at the Nene crossing. This church dates mainly from the 14th century but with some earlier elements (Pevsner 2002, 437).

The earliest evidence for occupation at March takes the form of Mesolithic and Neolithic flint scatters. Concentrations of these have been recorded 350m and 590m to the south of the development site at Gaul Road (Hall 2007).

A single sherd of Romano-British pottery and a potter's stamp of the same date have been found c. 650m northeast of the site.

Post-medieval remains are recorded 265m south of the site, on the northern bank of the River Nene, and comprise two Grade II listed buildings. The eastern of the buildings is believed to date to as early as 1691 with 19th century modifications. The present red brick structure has been divided into two dwellings. Immediately to the west is the second listed building, an early 19th century house (Hall 2007).

3. AIMS

The aim of the evaluation was to gather information to establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits in order to enable the Cambridge Historic Environment Officer to formulate a policy for the management of archaeological resources present on the site.

4. METHODS

Two trenches, each measuring 10m by 1.5m were excavated to the level of archaeological remains or the surface of the underlying natural geology. Trench 1 was located within the proposed footings of one house (Fig. 3), but had to be moved to the south due to a large pile of debris (Plate 1) and wood. Trench 2 was located over the footprint of the other proposed dwelling.

Removal of topsoil and other overburden was undertaken by mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. The exposed surfaces of the trenches were then cleaned by hand and inspected for archaeological remains.

Each deposit exposed during the evaluation was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their interpretations appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was also compiled and sections and plans were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20 respectively. Recording of deposits encountered was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

The location of the excavated trenches was plotted using a survey grade differential GPS.

Following excavation, finds were examined and a period date assigned where possible (Appendix 2). The records were also checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

5. RESULTS

The results of the archaeological evaluation are discussed in trench order. Archaeological contexts are described below. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Trench 1

The natural deposit encountered at the base of this trench consisted of firm light greyish white brown clay with chalk fragments (101) (Fig. 4) (Plate 2).

This was overlain by a 0.25m thick topsoil deposit of firm dark greyish brown silty clay (100) containing frequent chalk flecks, occasional flecks and fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), frequent roots and occasional sub-angular flints (Fig. 5, Section 1) (Plate 3).

Trench 2

The natural deposit in Trench 2 also consisted of light greyish white brown chalky clay (201) (Fig. 4) (Plate 4).

The natural in this trench was truncated by two substantial pit cuts. These were only partially excavated due to waterlogged conditions at the site. However, good dating evidence was retrieved from the fills of both pits.

The southernmost pit [204] was only partially observed in this trench due to its size. As a result its shape in plan was unclear. The pit was steep sided and extended across the width of the trench and 6.6m into the trench from the southern

end (Figs 4 & 5, Section 2) (Plate 6).

Two fills were identified in this feature before excavation was stopped due to conditions. The earliest of which comprised firm light yellowish brown clay (203), at least 0.25m thick, containing chalk fragments. Finds retrieved from this deposit included a fragment of 17th century clay pipe stem, a piece of 16th to 19th century brick and a sherd of Brown Glazed Earthenware pottery dating from the mid 16th to 18th century.

The upper fill of this pit consisted of firm dark brown silty clay (202), 0.34m thick, containing moderate flecks of CBM, sub-angular flint pebbles and occasional charcoal flecks. A single fragment of 16th to 19th century brick was retrieved from this deposit.

Pit [207] was also only partially exposed in plan. It had moderately steep sides and extended through the width of the trench and 3.53m into the trench from the northern end (Figs 4 & 5, Section 3) (Plate 5).

The earliest fill identified in this feature comprised soft mid greyish brown silty clay (206), at least 0.20m thick, with occasional sub-angular flint pebbles. Finds recovered from this deposit included a sherd of mid 16th to 18th century Brown Glazed Earthenware pottery, a single piece of Glazed Red Earthenware dating from the 16th to mid 17th century and a fragment of 18th to 19th century window glass, though this was very small and may be intrusive.

The upper fill consisted of 0.51m thick firm mid brown silty clay (205) with frequent charcoal and CBM flecks. A single fragment of 16th to 17th century Brown Glazed Earthenware pottery was retrieved from this deposit.

The features were overlain by up to 0.37m thick topsoil (200) layer composed of firm dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent chalk flecks, frequent roots, moderate sub-angular flints and occasional flecks of CBM and charcoal (Fig. 5, Section 2 & 3) (Plates 5 & 6).

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits at the site comprise chalky clay glacial till.

The two large pits recorded in Trench 2 date from the post-medieval period and probably represent clay extraction pits associated with local industry. Post-medieval brick fragments recovered from one these pits were of a local 'Fenland' calcareous clay (Beeby, Appendix 2) suggesting the possibility that these bricks may have been made from the clay extracted from these or other pits in the area.

The pottery recovered from the pit fills represent common domestic types of the 16th to 17th century and are indicative of post-medieval domestic waste (Beeby Appendix 2). The fragments of brick, piece of pipe stem, glass and pottery point towards the reuse of these pits as sites for casual discard of domestic rubbish during the post-medieval period.

7. CONCLUSIONS

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at Elliot Street, March, Cambridgeshire, in order to assess the archaeological implications of proposed development at the site.

The investigation revealed two probable clay extraction pits of Post-Medieval date cut through the chalky natural clay.

The finds retrieved from these pits suggests they were reused for casual discard of domestic waste through the Post-Medieval period.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge the assistance of Nigel Lowe of Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Neil Jefferson. Gary Taylor edited this report along with Denise Drury. Liz Bates allowed access to the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Neil Jefferson
 Site Staff: Andrew Failes
 Finds Processing: Denise Buckley
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
 Illustration: Andrew Failes
 Post-excavation Analyst: Andrew Failes

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Unpublished APS report no: **185/06**

Pevsner, N, 2002 *The Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire*

11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

CIfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists



Figure 1 General location map



TL 40

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Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: March, Elliot Road (MAEL15)

Scale 1:10000 Drawn by: AF Report No: 41/15



■ - Site location

Figure 2 - Site Location Plan

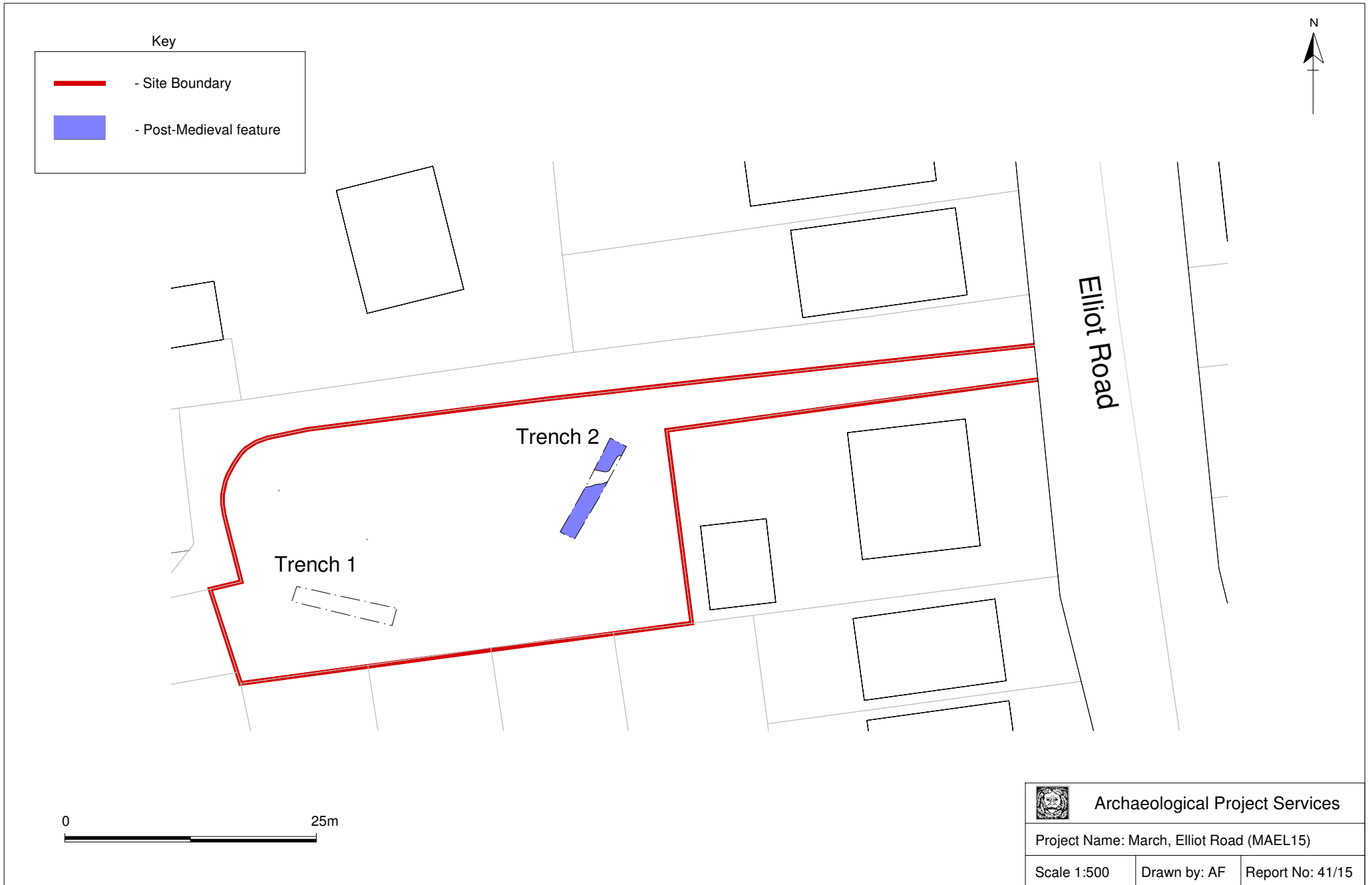
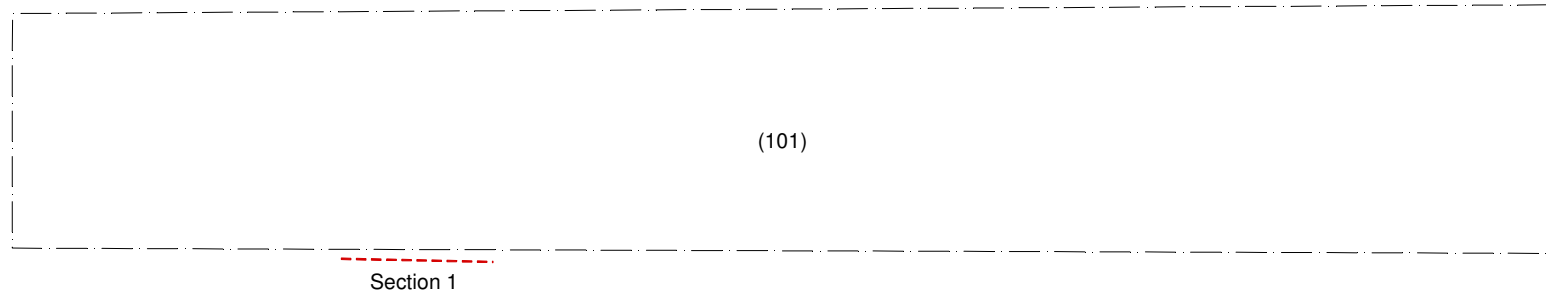
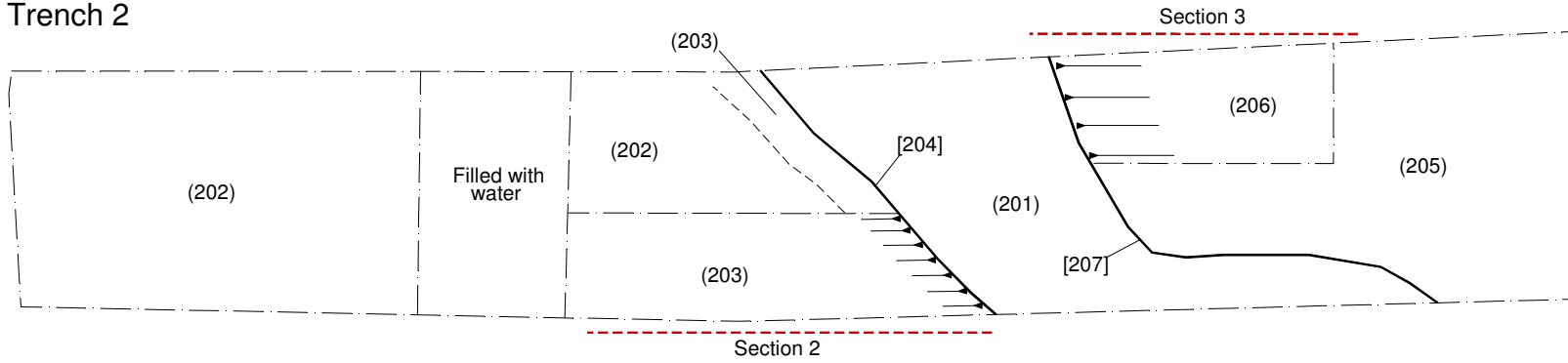


Figure 3 - Trench location plan

Trench 1



Trench 2




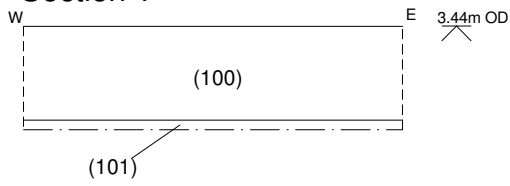
	Archaeological Project Services	
Project Name: March, Elliot Road (MAEL15)		
Scale 1:50	Drawn by: AF	Report No: 41/15

Figure 4 - Trenches 1 & 2: Plan

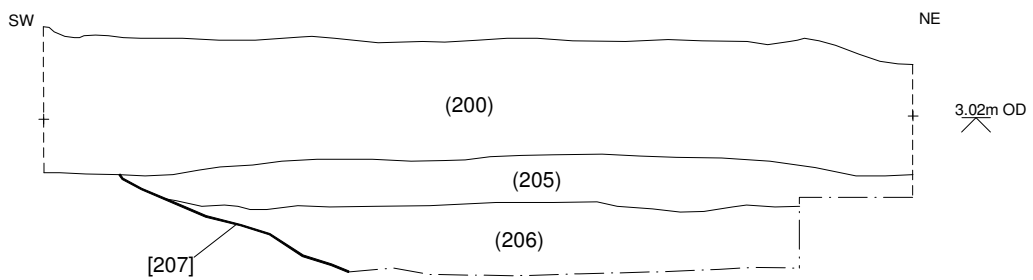
Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: March, Elliot Road (MAEL15)

Scale 1:20

Drawn by: AF

Report No: 41/15

Figure 5 - Sections 1-3



Plate 1 – General view of site looking southeast



Plate 2 – Trench 1: Plan



Plate 3 – Trench 1, Section 1



Plate 4 – Trench 2: Plan



Plate 5 – Pit [207], Section 3



Plate 6 – Pit [204], Section 2

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTION

No.	Trench	Description	Interpretation
100	1	Firm dark greyish brown silty clay, 0.25m thick, containing frequent chalk flecks, roots, occasional CBM flecks and fragments and occasional sub-angular flints	Topsoil
101	1	Firm light whitish brown clay with fragments of chalk	Natural clay
200	2	Firm dark greyish brown silty clay, 0.25m thick, containing frequent chalk flecks, roots, occasional CBM flecks and fragments and occasional sub-angular flints	Topsoil
201	2	Firm light whitish brown clay with fragments of chalk	Natural clay
202	2	Firm dark brown silty clay, at least 0.34m thick, containing moderate CBM flecks, sub-angular flint pebbles and occasional charcoal flecks	Fill of [204]
203	2	Firm light yellowish brown clay with chalk fragments, at least 0.25m thick	Fill of [204]
204	2	Feature of uncertain shape, measuring at least 0.34m deep with steep sides	Pit cut
205	2	Firm mid brown silty clay, 0.15m thick, containing frequent charcoal and CBM flecks	Fill of [207]
206	2	Soft mid greyish brown silty clay, at least 0.20m thick, containing occasional flint pebbles	Fill of [207]
207	2	Feature of uncertain shape, measuring at least 0.32m deep with steep sides	Pit cut

Appendix 2

THE FINDS

POST ROMAN POTTERY

By Alex Beeby

Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Slowikowski *et al.* (2001). The pottery codenames (Cname) are in accordance with the post Roman pottery type series for Lincolnshire, as published in Young *et al.* (2005), which can also be used to record material from surrounding counties. A total of four sherds from four vessels, weighing 199 grams were recovered from the site.

Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed in context order. Sherds were counted and weighed by individual vessel within each context. The pottery was examined visually and using x20 magnification. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the pottery is included in Table 1 below. The pottery dates to the post-medieval period.

Condition

The pottery is fresh and not overly fragmentary. A single sherd has an external soot deposit, which is suggestive of use over a hearth or fire.

Results

Table 1, Post Roman Pottery Archive

Tr	Cxt	Cname	Full Name	Form	Part	Comment	Date	NoS	NoV	W(g)
2	203	BERTH	Brown Glazed Earthenware	Bowl	BS	Dark amber glaze	M16th-18th	1	1	49
2	205	BERTH	Brown Glazed Earthenware	Jug	BS with HJ	Large; rod handle; thumb pressed around HJ; amber glaze	16th-17th	1	1	81
2	206	BERTH	Brown Glazed Earthenware	Jug	Base	Thick dark amber glaze;	M16th-18th	1	1	52
2	206	GRE	Glazed Red Earthenware	?	Base	Sooted externally	16th-M17th	1	1	17
Total								4	4	199

Provenance

All of the pottery was recovered from pit features in Trench 2. Deposits including (202) in [204] as well as (205) and (206) within cut [207] yielded pieces.

Range

There are fragments from two jugs and a bowl, in an amber glazed Brown Glazed Earthenware (BERTH) fabric. A fourth fragment is in a green glazed Glazed Red Earthenware (GRE). These are common domestic types of the 16th and 17th centuries, with BERTH in use from about AD 1550.

Potential

There is limited potential for further work with this material. These pieces are indicative of post-medieval domestic waste. The material should be retained as part of the site archive and should pose no problems for long term storage.

Summary

Four pieces of post-medieval pottery were recovered during the evaluation. All of the pottery came from pit features in Trench 2.

CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

By Alex Beeby

Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group (2002). A total of three fragments of ceramic building material, weighing 505 grams were recovered from the site.

Methodology

The material was viewed and then fragments were counted and weighed. The ceramic building material was examined visually and using x20 magnification. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the ceramic building material is included in Table 2 below.

Condition

The brick fragments are slightly abraded with patches of mortar adhered to two pieces. One piece shows evidence of partial surface vitrification.

Results

Table 2, Ceramic Building Material Archive

Cxt	Cname	Full Name	Fabric	Description	Date	NoF	W(g)
202	BRK	Brick	Oxidised; Calcareous	Fenland type; very crudely formed; partial vitrification; straw impressions; handmade; abraded; mortar	16th- 19th	2	426
203	BRK	Brick	Oxidised; Calcareous	Fenland type; handmade; abraded	16th- 19th	1	79
Total						3	505

Provenance

The pieces of brick came from fills (202) and (203), within pit [204], in Trench 2.

Range

There are three pieces of post-medieval brick, in a local 'Fenland' type calcareous clay.

Potential

There is no potential for further work. The pieces should be retained as part of the site archive and should pose no problems for long term storage.

GLASS

By Gary Taylor

Introduction

One fragment of glass weighing less than 1g was recovered.

Condition

The glass is in fairly good condition, but starting to show some signs of iridescent decay.

Results

Table 3, Glass Archive

Cxt	Description	NoF	W (g)	Date
206	Colourless window.	1	<1	18 th -19 th century

Provenance

The glass was recovered from pit fill (206).

Range

One fragment of late post-medieval window glass was recovered.

Potential

Other than providing dating evidence, the glass is of limited potential and could be discarded.

CLAY PIPE

By Gary Taylor

Introduction

Analysis of the clay pipes followed the guidance published by Davey (1981) and the material is detailed in the accompanying table.

Condition

The clay pipe is in good condition, though abraded.

Results

Table 4, Clay Pipes

Context no.	Bore diameter /64"					NoF	W(g)	Comments	Date
	8	7	6	5	4				
203			1			1	3	Stem only, worn	17 th century

Provenance

The clay pipe was recovered from pit fill (203). It is probably a fairly local product, perhaps manufactured in March itself.

Range

A single stem of probable 17th century date was recovered.

Potential

Other than providing dating evidence the clay pipe is of limited potential.

SPOT DATING

The dating in Table 5 is based on the evidence provided by the finds detailed above.

Table 5, Spot dates

Cxt	Date	Comments
202	16 th -19 th century	based on 1 CBM
203	17 th -19 th century	
205	16 th -17 th century	
206	mid 16 th -19 th century	

ABBREVIATIONS

ACBMG	Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group
BS	Body sherd
CBM	Ceramic Building Material
CXT	Context
LHJ	Lower Handle Join
NoF	Number of Fragments

NoS	Number of sherds
NoV	Number of vessels
TR	Trench
UHJ	Upper Handle Join
W (g)	Weight (grams)

REFERENCES

~ 2002, *Minimum Standards for the Recovery, Analysis and Publication of Ceramic Building Material*, version 3.2
[internet]. Available at <<http://www.tegula.freeseerve.co.uk/acbmg/CBMGDE3.htm> >

Davey, P. J., 1981, Guidelines for the processing and publication of clay pipes from excavations, *Medieval and Later Pottery in Wales* 4, 65-88

Slowikowski, A. M., Nenck, B., and Pearce, J., 2001, *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics*, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 2

Young, J., Vince, A.G. and Nailor, V., 2005, *A Corpus of Saxon and Medieval Pottery from Lincoln* (Oxford)

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, e.g. [004].
Cropmark	A mark that is produced by the effect of underlying archaeological or geological features influencing the growth of a particular crop.
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, etc. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
Domesday Survey	A survey of property ownership in England compiled on the instruction of William I for taxation purposes in 1086 AD.
Fill	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) that become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Iron Age	A period characterised by the introduction of Iron into the country for tools, between 800 BC and AD 50.
Layer	A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity
Old English	The language used by the Saxon (q.v.) occupants of Britain.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Prehistoric	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
Saxon	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany

Appendix 4

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

1	Context register sheet
8	Context record sheets
1	Trench record sheets
1	Photographic record sheet
2	Daily record sheets
1	Section register sheet
1	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Bag of finds

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Cambridgeshire County Council
Castle Court
Shire Hall
Cambridge
CB3 0AP

Archaeological Project Services Site Code:	MAEL 15
Cambridgeshire C.C. HER Event No:	ECB 4373
OASIS Record No:	archaeo11-209015

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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OASIS ID: archaeol1-209015

Project details

Project name	Archaeological Evaluation at Elliot Rd, March, Cambridgeshire
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation undertaken on land at Elliot Street, March, Cambridgeshire, in order to determine the archaeological implications of proposed development at the site. The evaluation identified a sequence of natural chalky clay glacial till overlain by topsoil. Two probable clay extraction pits of Post-Medieval date cut through the natural clay. Finds retrieved from these pits suggests they were reused for casual discard of domestic waste through the Post-Medieval period.
Project dates	Start: 03-04-2015 End: 04-04-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	MAEL 15 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	F/YR13/0943/f - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed
Monument type	QUARRY Post Medieval
Monument type	QUARRY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BRICK Post Medieval
Significant Finds	GLASS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CLAY PIPE Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country England
 Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE FENLAND MARCH March, Elliot Road
 Study area 1057.00 Square metres
 Site coordinates TL 40360 97298 52.5550143965 0.0705763528288 52 33 18 N 000 04 14 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeological Project Services
 Project brief originator Archaeological Project Services
 Project design originator Neil Jefferson
 Project director/manager Gary Taylor
 Project supervisor Andrew Failes
 Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Cambridgeshire County Store
 Physical Archive ID ECB4373
 Physical Contents "Ceramics","Glass"
 Digital Archive recipient Cambridgeshire County Store
 Digital Archive ID ECB4373
 Digital Contents "none"
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
 Paper Archive recipient Cambridgeshire County Store
 Paper Archive ID ECB4373
 Paper Contents "none"
 Paper Media available "Context sheet","Diary","Drawing","Report","Survey ","Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
 Title Archaeological Evaluation at Elliot Road, March, Cambridgeshire
 Author(s)/Editor(s) Failes, A
 Other bibliographic 41/15

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OASIS:

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