ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ON LAND AT BULL'S BARN FARM, KING'S DELPH DROVE, FARCET, CAMBRIDGESHIRE (ECB 4374)

Work Undertaken For
Mr N Hussain

DRAFT

November 2015

Report Compiled by
James Snee BSc (Hons)

Planning Application No: 1307164/PENQ
National Grid Reference: TL 2151 9472
Cambs HER Event No: ECB 4374
OASIS Record No: archaeol1-230378

APS Report No. **103/15**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES

Quality Control

Archaeological Evaluation
on land at Bull's Barn Farm,
King's Delph Drove, Farcet,
Cambridgeshire.

Project Coordinator	Denise Drury
Site Staff	James Snee & Neil Jefferson
Surveying	Neil Jefferson
Finds Processing	Denise Buckley
Illustration	James Snee
Photographic Reproduction	James Snee
Post-excavation Analyst	James Snee

Checked by Senior Manager (Archaeology)	Approved by Team Leader
Gary Taylor	Denise Drury
Date: 16th November 2015	Date: 17th November 2015

CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Plates

1. SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at Bull's Barn Farm, King's Delph Drove, Farcet, Cambridgeshire. The evaluation was undertaken in advance of proposed mixed development at the site.

The evaluation encountered deep deposits of peat overlying humic mud and a river flood deposit. The upper layers of the peat showed signs of drying and degradation caused by fen drainage and agriculture.

No archaeological features or artefacts were revealed during the evaluation.

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 Mr N Hussain to undertake a programme of archaeological investigation as part of planning permission (application 1307164/PENQ) for proposed development of agricultural buildings and associated infrastructure at Bull's Barn Farm, King's Delph Drove, Farcet, Cambridgeshire. An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out between 9th and 11th November 2015 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services and approved by the Senior Archaeologist, Historic Environment Team, Cambridgeshire County Council (HET CCC). The site investigation was monitored by HET CCC on 11th November 2015.

2.3 Location, Topography and Geology

Farcet is situated approximately 4km to the southeast of the Peterborough in the administrative district of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire (Fig. 1). The proposed development lies to the east of Farcet village, on the north side of King's Delph Drove, opposite Bull's Barn Farm, in New Meadow at National Grid Reference TL 2151 9472 (Fig. 2).

The site lies on the fen edge close to the course of the Old River Nene, on generally level land at about 1m OD. Local soils are of the Midelney Association typically pelo-alluvial gley soils developed over clayey river alluvium (Hodge et al. 1984, 253).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

The peat-filled valley of the former course of the River Nene to the southeast of the development site is a noted area for finds of prehistoric flints of which there have been numerous examples (Hall 1992, 19). In addition, several sites of well-preserved prehistoric organic remains have been discovered along the river, including the settlement platform at Must Farm Quarry (MCB16817) and, close by, a group of log boats (ECB3838).

Romano-British activity is known to the southeast of Bulls Barn Farm, and includes skeletal evidence, pottery scatters and cropmarked enclosures (MCB 3505, 3673-

4 & 8208).

The settlement of Farcet is likely to have had Late Anglo-Saxon origins as the earliest documentary references to Farcet date from the mid to late 10th century AD as *Faresheuede, Farraesheafde* (AD963-84) and *Fearresheaford* (AD973). The place-name is derived from the Old English *fearr* or bull and *heaford* or *head* so denoting "bull's head" (Ekwall 1989). Later medieval and post-medieval documentary references variously refer to *Faresheved* (14th century) and *Fasset* (16th century).

The drier and higher land, which is occupied by the ridge on which the village of Farcet stands, is noted for the earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow (Hall 1992, 22).

In the 17th century Farcet Fen was drained and enclosed in its entirety. To the south Whittlesea Mere was drained under an Act of Parliament in 1762 and the modern parish was included in the enclosure of Stanground in 1801.

The modern parish of Farcet was originally a chapelry of Stanground. A separate ecclesiastical parish was established in 1851 and civil parish in 1866.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the work was to gather sufficient information for the archaeological curator to be able to formulate a policy for the management of the archaeological resources present on the site.

The objectives were to:

- Establish the type of archaeological activity that may be present within the site.
- Determine the likely extent of archaeological activity present within the site.
- Determine the date and function of the archaeological features present on the site.
- Determine the state of preservation of the archaeological features present on the site.
- Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features present within the site
- Determine the extent to which the surrounding archaeological features extend into the application area.
- Establish the way in which the archaeological features identified fit into the pattern of occupation and land-use in the surrounding landscape.

4. METHODS

It had been agreed with the HET CCC to excavate six 50m long trial trenches across the site to assess the impact of the proposed development.

However, due to the depth of the peat deposits encountered on the site, and after consultation with the HET CCC, the strategy was modified to the excavation of nine test pits to assess the depth, form and preservation of the peat deposits revealed.

The test pits were excavated by JCB using a toothless ditching bucket to a depth of between 2.7m and 3.3m, to ensure that the base of the peat and the underlying clay were revealed. The section was then photographed and recorded from the top of the test pit. Upon completion of recording, each pit was back filled.

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 test pits was plotted with a survey grade differential GPS (Figure 3).

5. RESULTS

The earliest deposit revealed on the site, was a soft, pale bluish grey sandy clay (006), with moderate unsorted angular gravel inclusions between 2mm and 30mm in size. This layer was revealed in all nine test pits at a depth of between 2.6m and 3.1m below ground level, at approximately -2m OD (Figures 4 to 6, Plates 2 to 9 & 12).

Overlying clay (006) was a band of black humic mud (007), approximately 0.20m thick. Above this was a *c.* 0.40m thick deposit of soft black peat, (005) with frequent fragments of phragmites reed. Occasional large waterlogged wood fragments were observed within this deposit (Plate 11).

Above black peat (005) was approximately 1.1m of soft, reddish brown peat (004). Towards the base of this deposit it was fibrous, with fine twig matter making up the bulk of the waterlogged wood present. Towards the top, the twig litter became coarser, and fragments of roots and branches were observed (Plate 10). At the top of (004) was very dark greyish brown peat (003) with occasional waterlogged roundwood, between 20mm and 200mm thick. It was observed that water began to flow into the pits at the interface between brown peat (004) and dark greyish brown peat (003). Overlying (003) was 0.20m of soft, friable black degraded peat (002) (Plates 2 to 9 & 12).

Covering the entire site was 0.40m of very dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil (001).

6. DISCUSSION

All the test pits revealed the same sequence of deposits. The earliest deposit (006) was alluvium, probably associated with river flooding. Above this formed a layer of humic mud (007), that suggests the area was boggy wetland, probably a floodplain.

Overlaying (007) was a peat layer (005) that contained a high concentration of phragmites reed. This would suggest that the landscape had developed from open boggy ground to reed marsh. Peat development would have continued creating the upper peat deposit (004), which includes root matter and roundwood, suggesting at least some degree of tree cover. The upper portions of the peat would have become degraded by the drainage of the fens and the subsequent agricultural erosion of the soil. This explains the darker, more decayed peat (003), and the friable dried peat layer (002).

Covering the site was 0.40m of topsoil (001).

7. CONCLUSIONS

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at Bull's Barn Farm, King's Delph Drove, Farcet,

Cambridgeshire. The site lies in an archaeologically sensitive area where remains of prehistoric through to Saxon date have been recorded.

The evaluation encountered deep deposits of peat overlying humic mud and a river flood deposit. The upper layers of the peat showed signs of drying and degradation caused by fen drainage and agriculture.

No archaeological features or artefacts were revealed during the evaluation.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of TAC Architects and Mr N Hussain for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation. The work was coordinated by Denise Drury who edited this report together with Gary Taylor.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Denise Drury
Site Staff: James Snee & Neil Jefferson
Surveying: Neil Jefferson
Photographic reproduction: James Snee
CAD Illustration: James Snee
Post-excavation Analysis: James Snee

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ekwall, E, 1989 *The Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names.*

Hall, D, 1992 *The Fenland Project Number 6: The South-western Cambridgeshire Fenlands*, East Anglian Archaeology **56**

Hodge, CAH, Burton, RGO, Corbett, WM, Evans, R, and Seale, RS, 1984 *Soils and their use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales **13**

CIfA, 2014 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations.*

Pevsner, N, 2002 *The Buildings of England: Bedfordshire, Huntingdon and Peterborough.*

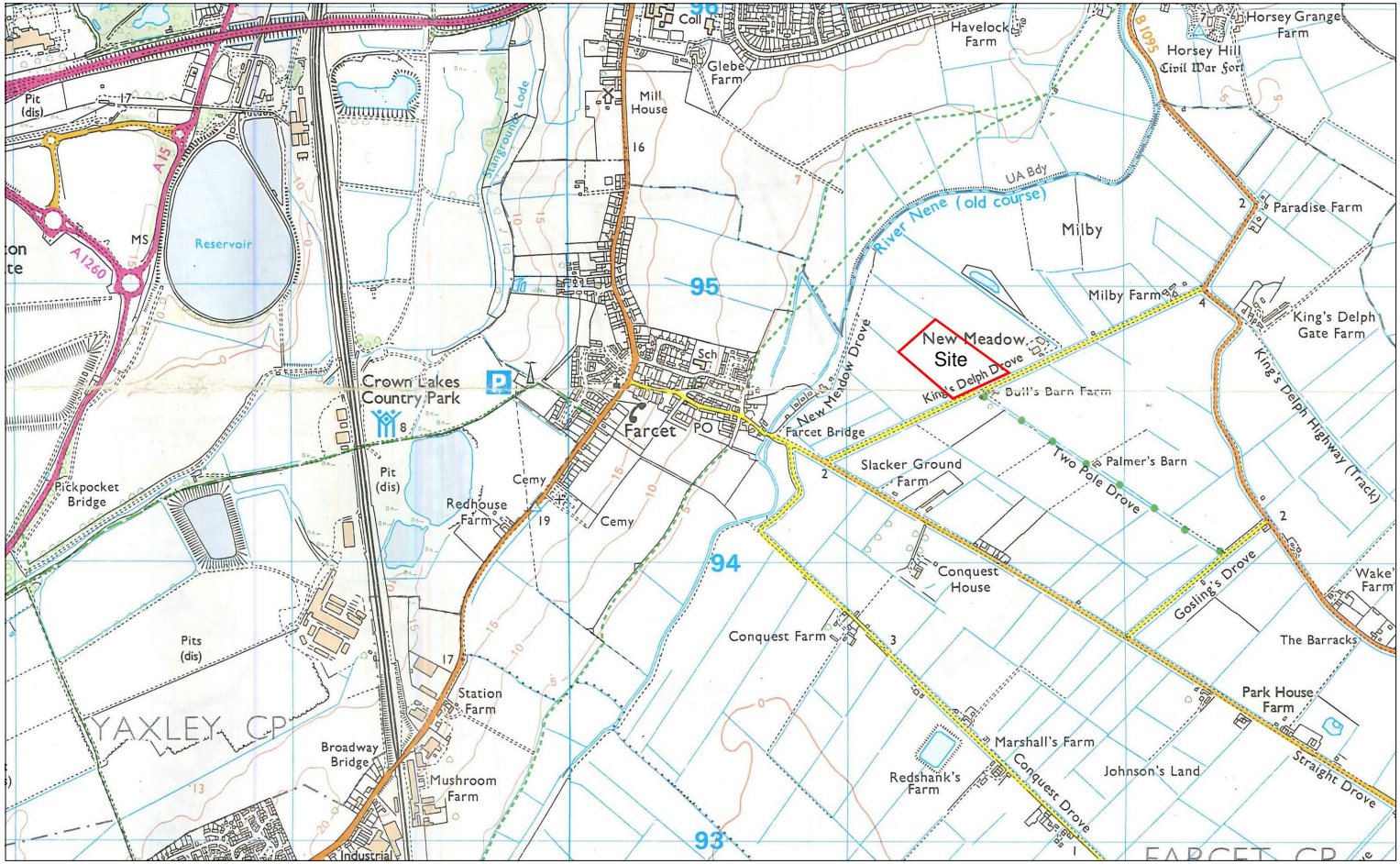
11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

CIfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Figure 1. General location map



0 1km

Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: King's Delph Drove, Farcet		
Scale 1:2500	Drawn by: JGS	Report No: 103/15

Figure 2 Site Location.

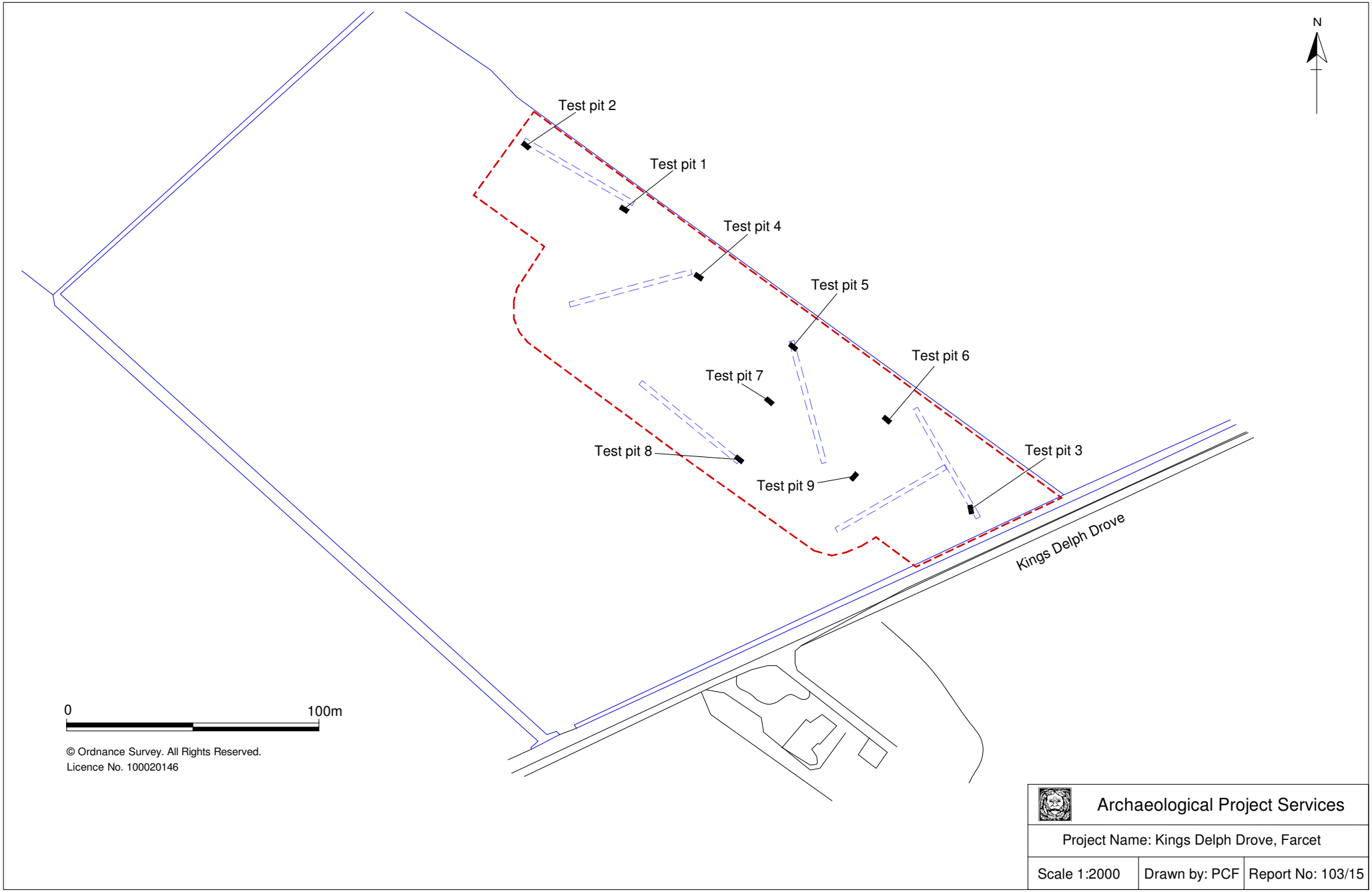
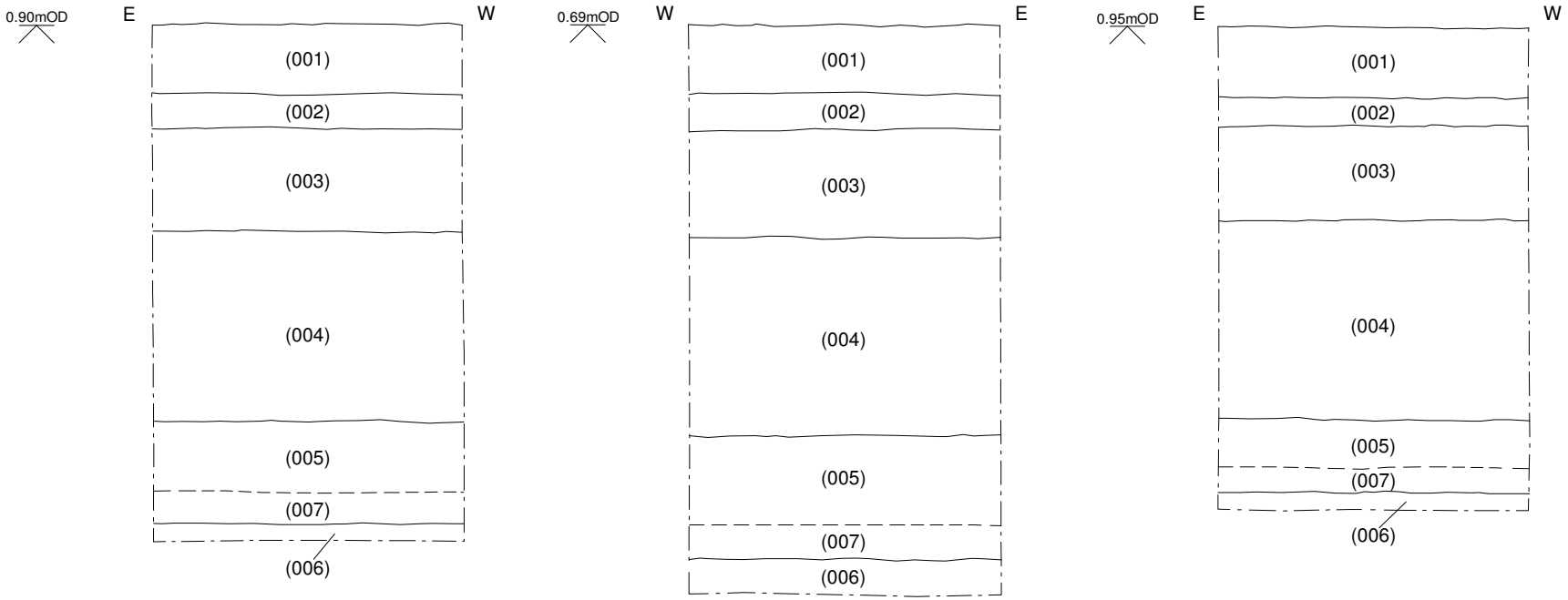


Figure 3 - Proposed trench layout and Test pit location



Section 1 Test pit 1

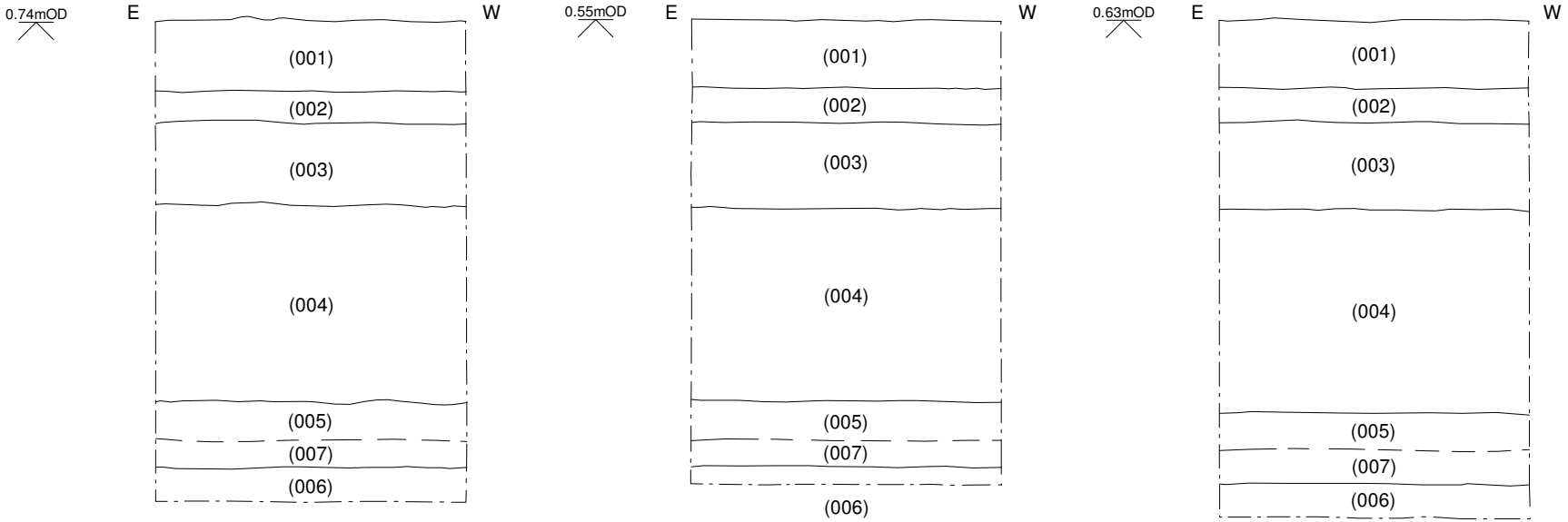
Section 2 Test pit 2

Section 3 Test pit 3

0 2m

Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: King's Delph Drove, Farcet		
Scale 1:40	Drawn by: JGS	Report No: 103 /15

Figure 4 Sections 1 to 3



Section 4 Test pit 4

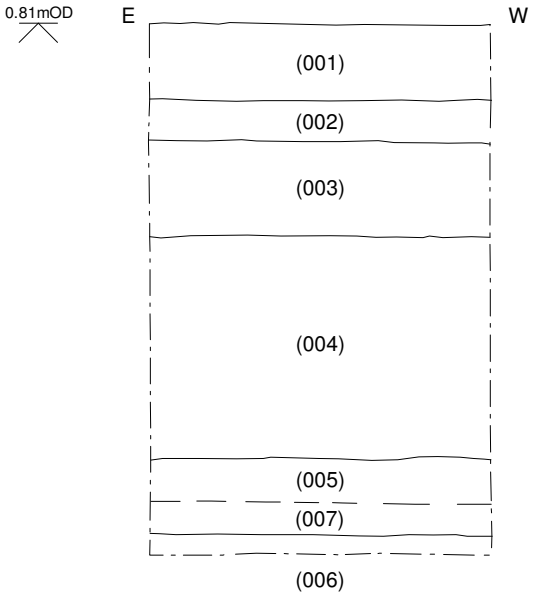
Section 5 Test pit 5

Section 6 Test pit 6

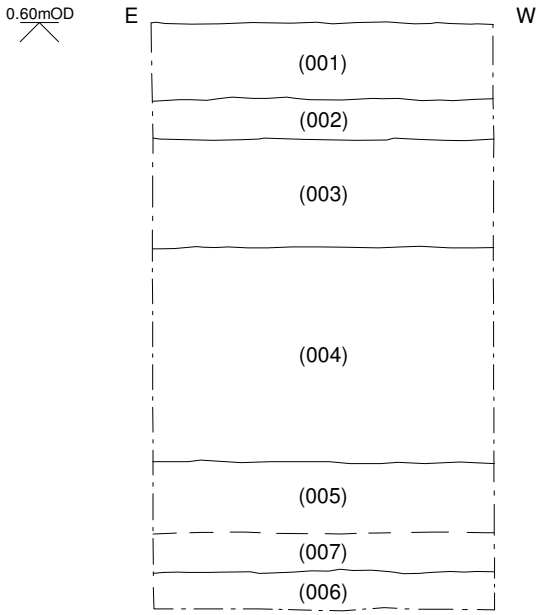
0 2m

Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: King's Delph Drove, Farcet		
Scale 1:40	Drawn by: JGS	Report No: 103 /15

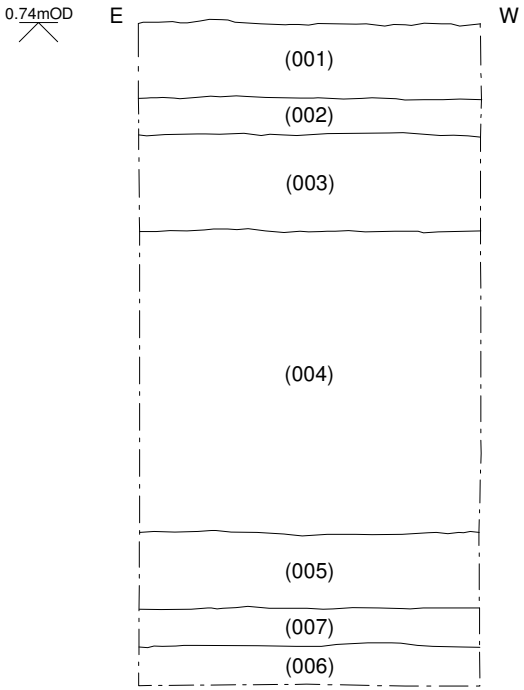
Figure 5 Sections 4 to 6



Section 7 Test pit 7



Section 8 Test pit 8



Section 9 Test pit 9

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Scale 1:40	Drawn by: JGS	Report No: 103 /15

Figure 6 Sections 7 to 9

Plate 1 General view of the site, looking northwest.

Plate 2 Test Pit 1, looking southeast.

Plate 3 Test Pit 2, looking northwest.

Plate 4 Test Pit 3, looking southeast.

Plate 5 Test Pit 4, looking southeast.

Plate 6 Test Pit 5, looking southeast.

Plate 7 Test Pit 6, looking southeast.

Plate 8 Test Pit 7, looking southeast.

Plate 9 Test Pit 8, looking southeast.

Plate 10 Test Pit 9, tree stump removed from peat layer (004).

Plate 11 Test Pit 9, log revealed in peat layer (005).

Plate 12 Test Pit 9, looking southwest.

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Soft, very dark greyish brown silty clay, *c.* 0.40m thick.	Topsoil
002	Soft and friable, black degraded peat, *c.* 0.20m thick.	Degraded Peat
003	Soft and spongy, very dark greyish brown peat, with occasional waterlogged round wood, *c.* 0.60m thick.	Peat Layer
004	Soft and spongy, dark reddish brown peat, with occasional waterlogged root fragments, at depth it becomes more fibrous and twiggy, *c.* 1.10m thick.	Peat Layer
005	Soft and spongy, black peat, with frequent phragmities reed, *c.* 0.60m thick.	Peat Layer
006	Soft, pale bluish grey sandy clay, with moderate poorly sorted angular gravel between 2-30mm, > 0.20m thick.	Clay Layer
007	Soft, black humic mud, *c.* 0.20m thick.	Mud Layer

Appendix 2

GLOSSARY

Alluvium	Deposits laid down by water. Marine alluvium is deposited by the sea, and fresh water alluvium is laid down by rivers and in lakes.
Bronze Age	A period characterised by the introduction of bronze into the country for tools, between 2250 and 800 BC.
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].
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 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.
Palaeolithic	The 'Old Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 500000 - 11000 BC in 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, Denmark and adjacent areas.

Appendix 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

1	Context register sheet
7	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
2	Daily record sheets
1	Section register sheet
4	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Stratigraphic matrix

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

Cambridgeshire C.C. HER Event No: ECB 4374

OASIS Record No: archaeol1-230378

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.

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: archaeol1-230378

Project details

Project name	King's Delph Drove, Farcet
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at Bull's Barn Farm, King's Delph Drove, Farcet, Cambridgeshire. The evaluation was undertaken in advance of proposed mixed development at the site. The evaluation encountered deep deposits of peat overlying humic mud and a river flood deposit. The upper layers of the peat showed signs of drying and degradation caused by fen drainage and agriculture. No archaeological features or artefacts were revealed during the evaluation.
Project dates	Start: 09-11-2015 End: 11-11-2015
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	FKDD15 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ECB4374 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches","Test Pits"
Development type	Rural commercial
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Between deposition of an application and determination

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE HUNTINGDONSHIRE FARCET King's Delph Drove
Postcode	PE7 3

Study area	1.6 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 2151 9472 52.536392587425 -0.208281590382 52 32 11 N 000 12 29 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 2m Max: 2m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeological Project Services
Project brief originator	Cambridge Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice
Project design originator	Denise Drury
Project director/manager	Denise Drury
Project supervisor	Jim Snee
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr N. Hussain.

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	No artefacts retrieved
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Store
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Store
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Map","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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