

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
THE MERRY BOYS PUBLIC HOUSE
19 BERKLEY STREET
EYNESBURY
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

NGR: TL 1854 5972

on behalf of GPS Properties Ltd



Gareth Shane BSc (Hons)

June 2011

ASC: 1424/EBS/2



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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	EBS	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1424
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	Archaeol2-102183	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	ECB3599
<i>County:</i>	Cambridgeshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Eynesbury		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Eynesbury		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 1854 5972		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.1050 sq m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Recently demolished public house and car park		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of five houses		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	11/00270/FUL/		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Huntingdonshire District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	10/06/2011- 13/06/2011		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	GPS Properties Ltd 209 Marsh Road Luton Bedfordshire LU3 2RT		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Darren Gill		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Gareth Shane	<i>Date:</i>	17 June 2011
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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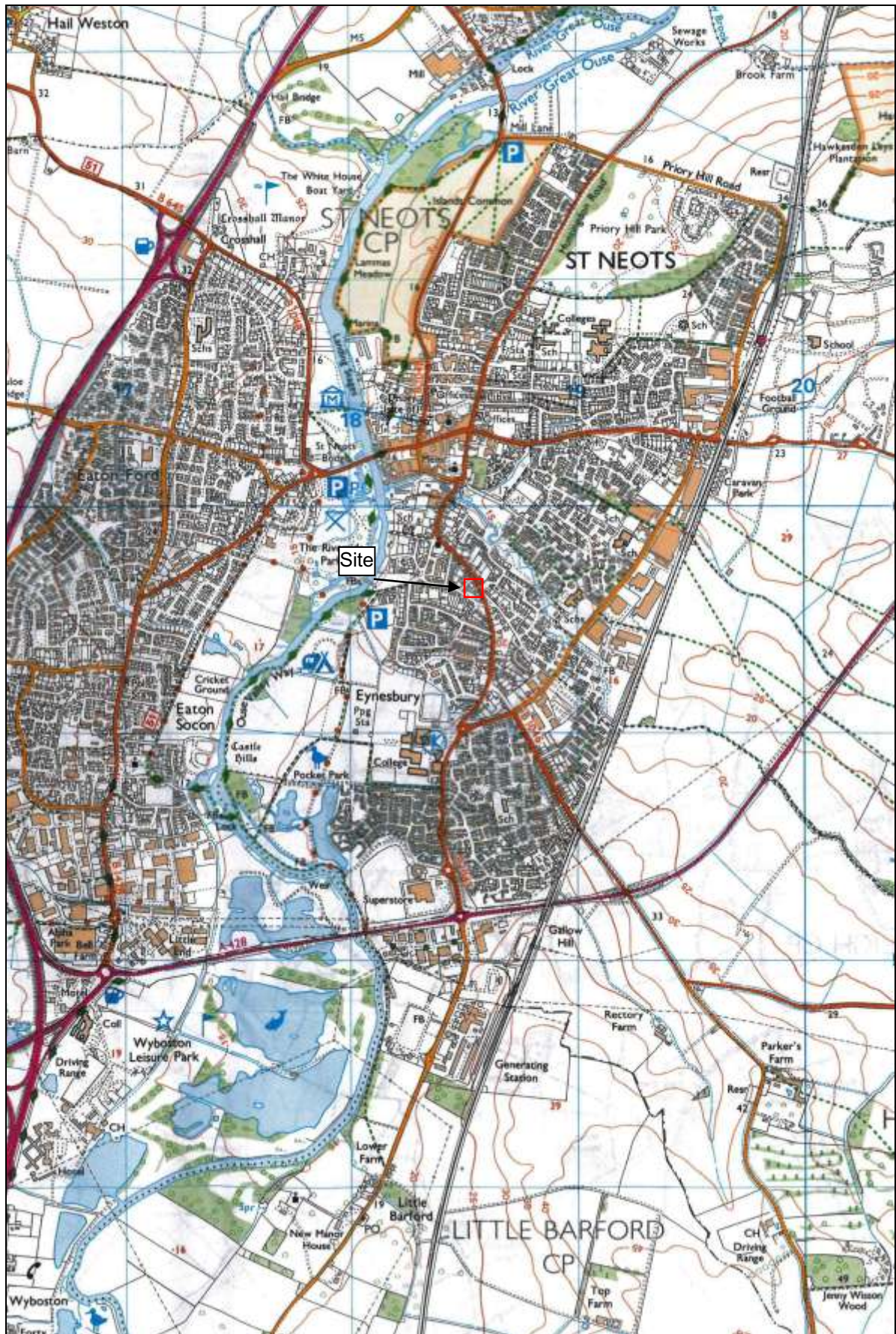


Figure 1: General location (Scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In June 2011 an archaeological evaluation was carried out of the site of former Merry Boys public house, 19 Berkley Street, Eynesbury, Cambridgeshire, in advance of the redevelopment of the site. Two trial trenches were excavated in the footprint of the new building, but no archaeological remains were present. It is unlikely that significant archaeological remains are present on the site and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be low.

1. Introduction

1.1 In June 2011 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at The Merry Boys Public House, Eynesbury, Cambridgeshire. The project was commissioned by GPS properties Ltd, and was carried out according to a brief (McConnell 2011) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Huntingdonshire District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning & Countryside Advice* (CAPCA), and a project design prepared by ASC (Fell & Rouse 2011).

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site. The relevant planning application reference is 11/00270/FUL/.

1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

ASC is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists and is also accredited ISO 9001, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 *The Site*

1.4.1 *Location & Description*

The site is situated in Eynesbury, to the south of St Neots, in the administrative district of Huntingdonshire, which forms part of the modern county of Cambridgeshire (Fig. 1). It lies in the historic core of Eynesbury, on the east side of Berkley Street and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference TL 1854 5972 (Fig. 2).

The site comprises a subrectangular plot of c.0.1ha and until recently contained the Merry Boys public house, which was located at the west end of the plot. The building has been demolished and the remaining area comprises the former pub car park.

1.4.2 *Geology & Topography*

The site is situated in an urban area and the natural soil profile may not survive. Any surviving areas of undisturbed soil are likely to comprise the *Efford I Association*, namely well drained fine loamy soil over the terrace

gravel of the river Great Ouse, which flows *c.*0.5km west of the site (Soil Survey 1983, 571s). The underlying solid geology comprises Oxford Clay (BGS, Sheet 187). The site is flat and lies at an elevation of *c.*18m OD.

1.4.3 *Proposed Development*

The development comprises the construction of five houses, with associated parking and services (Fig. 3).

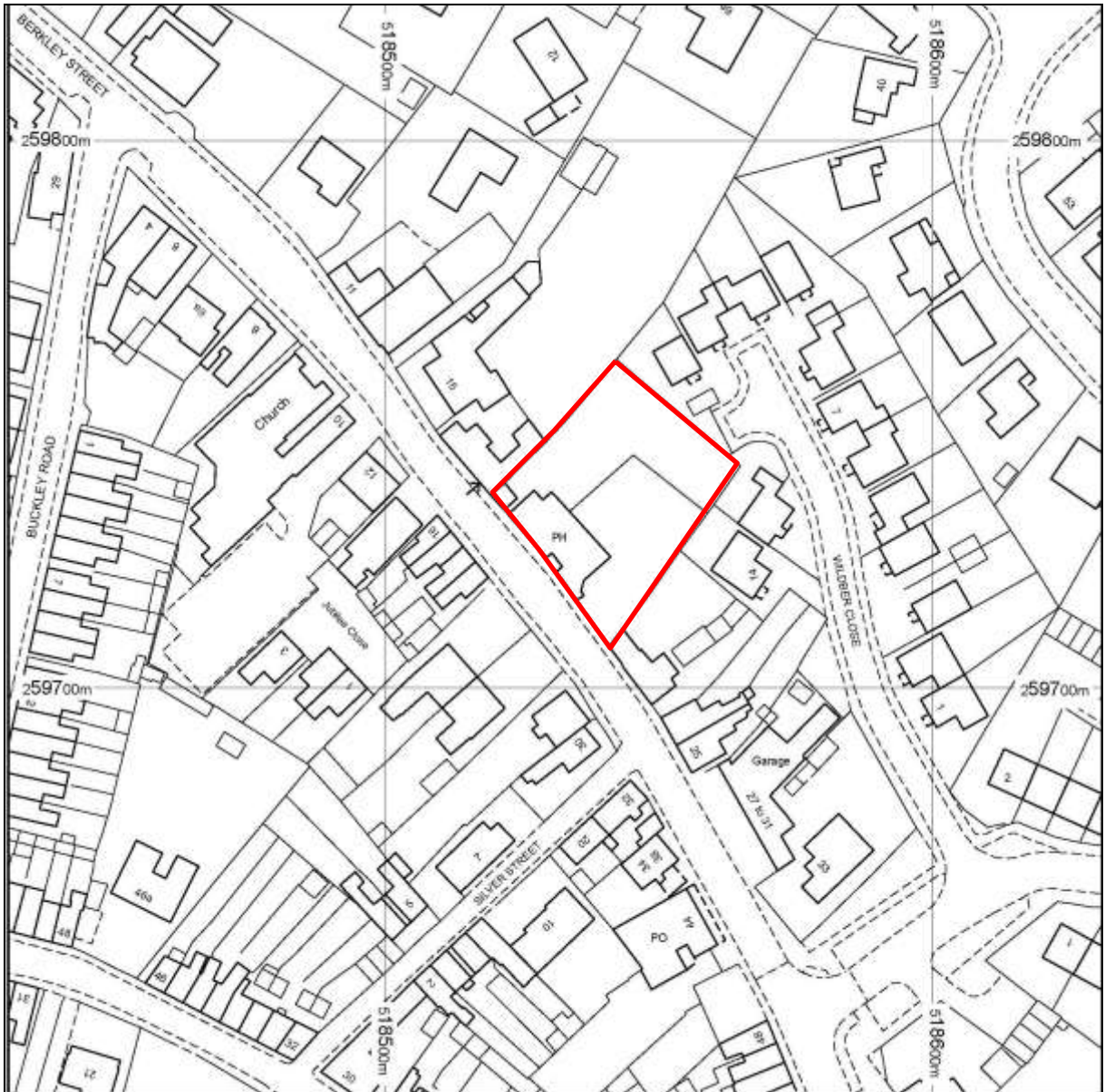


Figure 2: Site plan (Scale 1:1,250)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the project design (Section 3.1) the aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present
- To determine the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the project design (Section 3.3), which required:

- A series of trial trenches, totalling a maximum of *c.*50 sq m (equivalent to a *c.*5% sample), targeted on the areas of proposed development, were excavated. Trench locations are shown on Fig. 3.

2.4 Constraints

At the request of the AA, Trench 1 was rotated through ninety degrees in order to provide a more representative sample of the rear and central parts of the site.

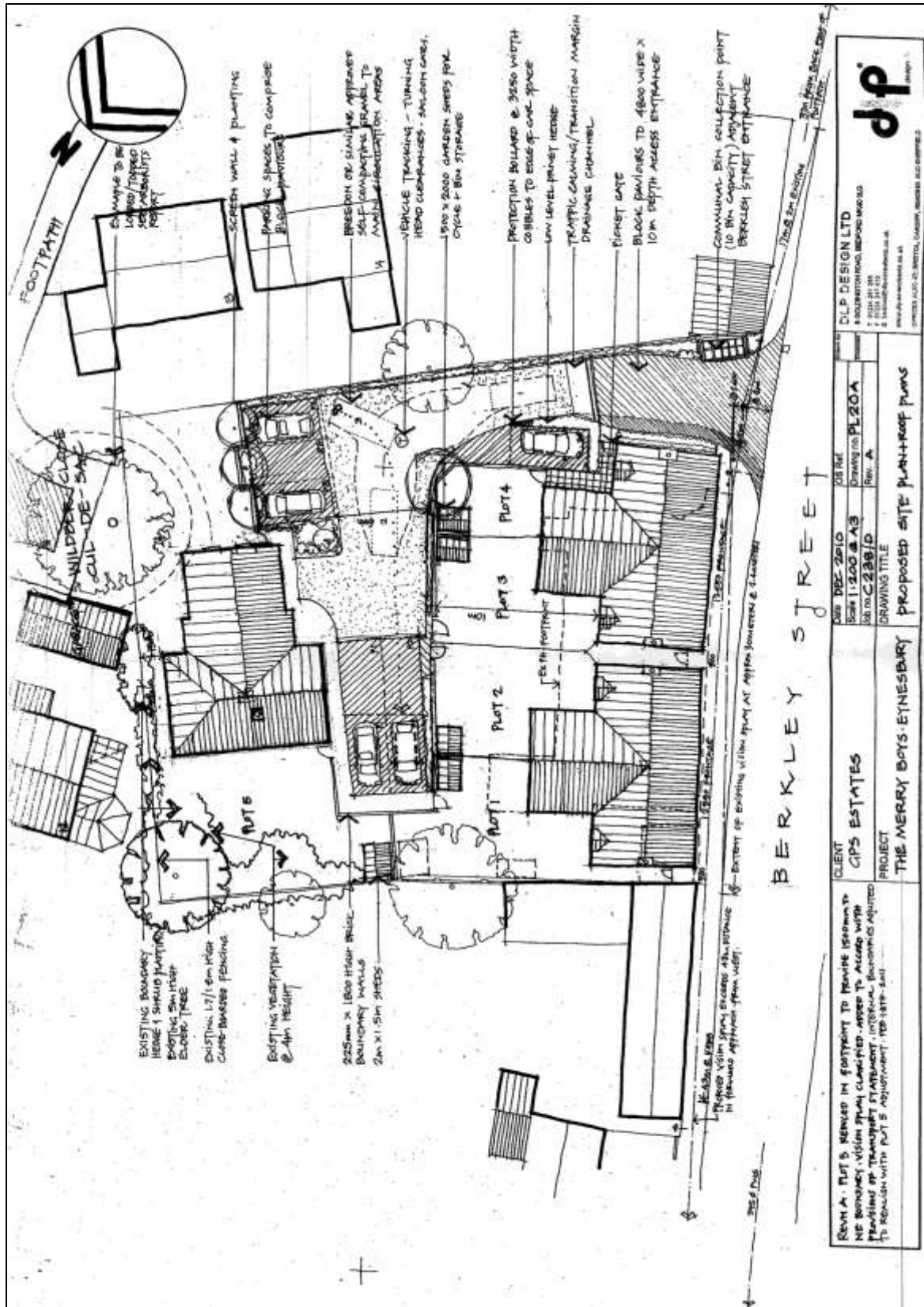


Figure 3: Proposed development (not to scale)

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

This section has been compiled with information from the *Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record* (HER) and ASC's own in-house library.

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

The valley of the river Great Ouse has attracted settlement since the prehistoric periods. The site is situated close to the confluence of the rivers Great Ouse and Kim and the Hen Brook, and a wide variety of archaeological sites are known in this area of the river valley.

Evidence for the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods in the area comprises finds of artefacts and animal bones, notably a possible Palaeolithic handaxe, flint flakes and some faunal remains which were recovered from Hall Place *c.* 0.35km to the north of the site (HER00568). Mesolithic and Neolithic flint working and occupation sites have been identified in this area of the river valley (HER08405 & HER08405A). Two polished Neolithic stone axes, along with fragments of a Bronze Age beaker were found *c.* 0.3km to the south of the site (HER00397).

3.3 *Iron Age* (600BC-AD43)

Evidence for the later prehistoric period comprises a sunken featured building *c.* 0.3km to the north west of the site (HER00395). Originally excavated in the 1960s and considered to be Saxon, it is now thought to date to the Iron Age.

3.4 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

The nature and extent of settlement in the area during the Roman period is not well understood. During this period settlement in the area was dominated by the small towns at Sandy and *Durovigutum* (Godmanchester) and a road linking the two towns passed *c.* 3km east of the site (Browne 1977; OS 1979).

There is a growing body of evidence for Roman period occupation in Eynesbury, notably a building containing a hypocaust and an assemblage of 3rd and 4th century pottery at Conygeare, *c.* 0.4km west of site. A group of late Iron Age/Roman huts, pits and ditches have been uncovered at the Brickhills Estate *c.* 0.5km southeast of the site (HER 00403). A number of Roman coins have also been found in the area (HER00396D) and pottery has been recorded *c.* 0.35km to the north of the site at the Wool Pack public house (HER00560).

An earthwork located *c.* 0.4km to the west of the site has been attributed to the Roman period (HER00391). A trench excavated across the earthwork revealed that the ditch had been 4 feet wide, and 7 feet deep. At its base were two cooking pots and a Castor ware beaker. Further Roman potsherds were recovered from the surviving western

rampart. A further possible Roman earthwork has been revealed as a cropmark *c.*0.25km to the south west of the site (HER00396C).

3.5 **Saxon** (*c.450-1066*)

Little is known in detail of the early history of Eynesbury but a settlement probably developed during the Saxon Period (St Neots 2002, 30). Excavations close to the site of the later parish church, at Hall Place, revealed evidence of a mid to late Saxon settlement (HER00567). The excavations revealed the remains of timber buildings, rubbish pits and a possible kiln and the regular layout of the buildings suggested that they formed part of a planned settlement.

An excavation carried out prior to the redevelopment of the Church Street area of St Neots revealed a Late Saxon inhumation (HER18500).

It is not currently known if a church existed during the Saxon period but a middle Saxon cemetery has been uncovered at Conygeare, *c.*0.4km to the west of the site (HER00392). In addition five pagan Saxon pot-rings, which were probably loomweights, have been recorded at Willowbank House, *c.*0.4km to the west of the site (HER00393).

3.6 **Medieval** (*1066-1500*)

Eynesbury is included in the Domesday Survey (1086), where it is referred to as *Einuluesberie* (Morris 1981). The church of St Mary probably formed an important element of the settlement and is situated *c.*0.15m northwest of the site. The earliest part of the church is the north arcade, which dates to the late Norman period with general rebuilding having taken place from the 15th century onwards (HER00401; Pevsner 1977, 242-3).

A limited amount of archaeological work has been undertaken in the area surrounding the site, notably at Montagu Court, *c.*0.2km to the southwest where the remains of a 12th century building were revealed (HER0398). Work immediately opposite the site at 12/14 Berkley Street revealed only a single undated gully (HER ECB746) but the work at Hall Place (above, 2.5) revealed a medieval fishpond, from which a number of waterlogged organic finds, including several leather shoes, were recovered. The pond had been levelled and mortared over by the end of the 16th century (HER00567B).

Berkley Street is shown on historic mapping from the early 19th century and may have an early origin. A number of listed buildings are situated along Berkley Street, notably the Nag's Head Inn, to the north of the site, which dates from the 15th century.

3.7 **Post-Medieval and Modern** (*After 1500*)

The medieval and later town of St Neots developed on the north side of the Hen Brook and was linked to Eynesbury by a bridge. The present bridge dates from the 17th century but it may have an earlier origin (HER00562). Archaeological work at the Market Square in St Neots revealed evidence for former riverside structures including a set of steps probably associated with a free-standing jetty (HER14644). The remains of the wing wall of a red brick ford over the brook in Eynesbury have been recorded

c.0.25km to the north of the site, along with cobbles that could represent the approach to such a ford (HER00562).

The first edition Ordnance Survey map was published in 1835 and shows that the layout of the principal streets in Eynesbury had been established by the first half of the 19th century. The map shows the course of Berkley Street running north to the river crossing and a number of buildings are shown on the east side of the road, including at the location of the present site. Later 19th century Ordnance Survey maps show a building occupying the footprint of the Merry Boys but the current public house is probably a later building, dating to the 20th century.

4 Results and Conclusions

4.1 General

This section provides a summary of the results of the evaluation. Full descriptions of the trenches, in tabulated form, are provided in Appendix 1.

Two trial trenches were excavated in the footprint of the new houses. The trenches were opened using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket, working under archaeological supervision. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to determine if archaeological remains were present. Basic trench information was recorded on pro-forma sheets and a photographic record was compiled. The spoil heaps were visually scanned looking for the presence of archaeological artefacts, but none were recovered.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 4, Plates 1 and 3)

Trench 1 was situated at the northeast part of the site and was aligned northeast-southwest. It was 15.6m long and 1.8m wide and tested the footprints of the proposed buildings in the rear and central parts of the site. The stratigraphy comprised:

0-1.2m (Below ground level) (100)

Dark grey soft silt clay. Modern made ground.

1.22m+ (101) Mid grey orange clay with fine gravel deposits and occasional chalk flecks. Natural stratum.

No archaeological finds or features were observed within trench 1.

4.2.2 Trench 2 (Fig.4, Plate 2)

Trench 2 was situated at the northern end of the site and was aligned northwest-southeast. It was 15m long and 1.8m wide and tested the footprints of proposed buildings in the east part of the site. The stratigraphy comprised:

0-0.6m (200)

Dark brown silty clay loam. Modern made ground.

0.6m+ (201)

Orange grey clay, with frequent gravel inclusions. Natural stratum.

No archaeological finds or features were observed within trench 2.

4.3 Conclusions

4.3.1 Two trial trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision within the footprint of the new development. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed within the trial trenches. The ground has been subject to a significant amount of modern disturbance and levelling no original soil profiles remained.

4.2.2 While the existence of individual isolated archaeological features away from the trenches cannot be specifically excluded, it is unlikely that large numbers of

archaeological features were present on the site. It is unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant impact on archaeological remains.

4.2.3 Confidence Rating

The evaluation was carried out in overcast and wet weather with good light conditions. Full cooperation was received from the contractors and a high confidence rating is attached to the results of this evaluation.



Plate 1: General view of the site during the fieldwork



Plate 2: Trench 1 soil profile



Plate 3: Trench 2 soil profile

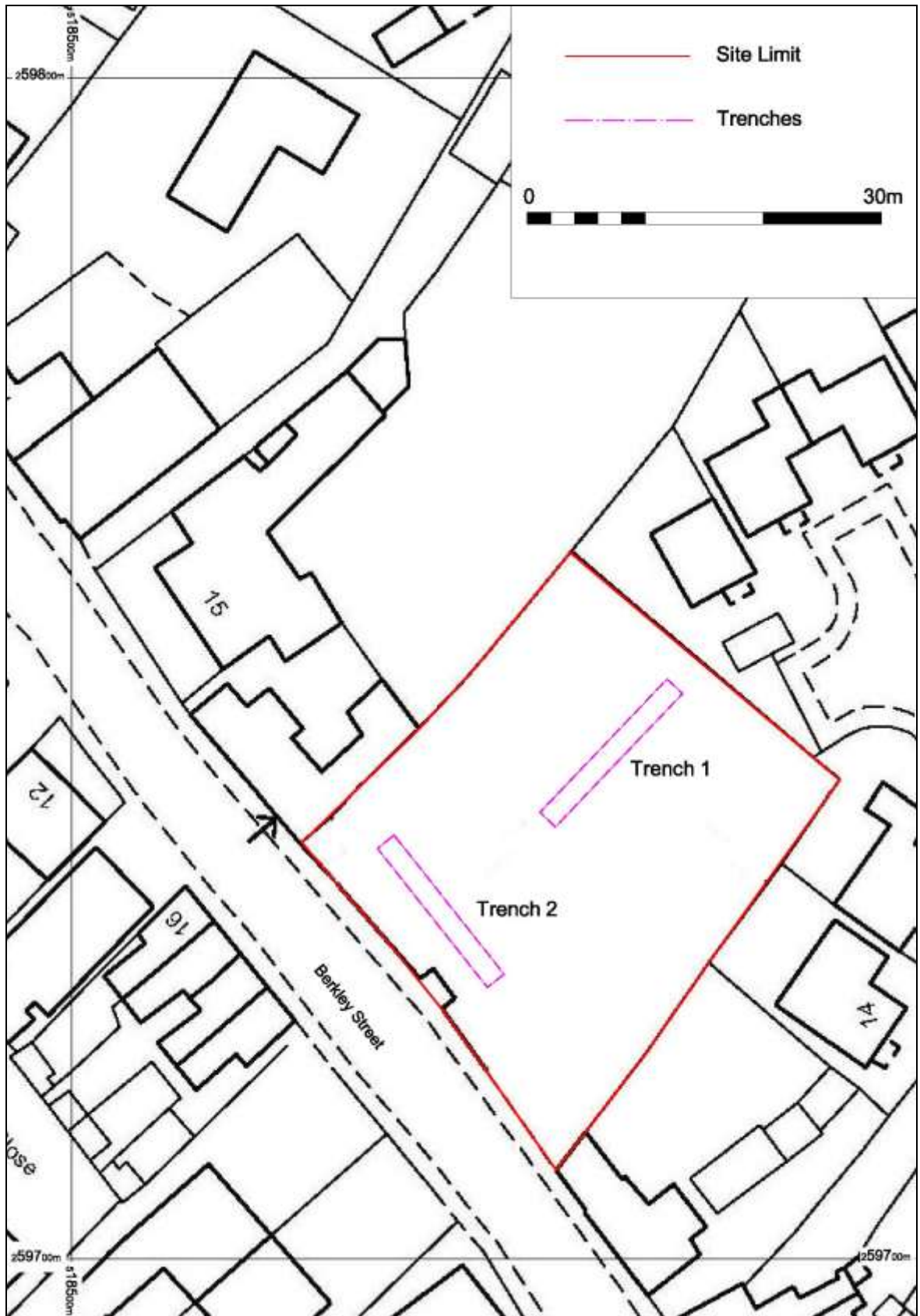


Figure 4: Trench location plan (Scale: 1:500)

5. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Mr Darren Gill for commissioning the evaluation on behalf of *GPS Properties Ltd*. The project was monitored by Dan McConnell of CAPCA on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to the on site machining contractors.

The project was managed for *ASC Ltd* by David Fell MA MifA. Fieldwork was carried out by Martin Cuthbert BA PifA and Gareth Shane BSc (Hons). The report was prepared by Gareth Shane and edited by David Fell.

6. Archive

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

6.2 The archive will be deposited with *Cambridgeshire County Store* (accession no. ECB3500).

7. References


Standards & Specifications


- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
- Fell, D & Rouse, C 2011 *Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation at The Merry Boys Public House, Eynesbury, Cambridgeshire* ASC/1424/EBS/1
- IFA 2000a Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
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- McConnell D, 2011 *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation. The Merry Boys, 19 Berkley Street, Eynesbury*. Cambridgeshire County Council

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- Browne D M, 1977 *Roman Cambridgeshire*. The Oleander Press
- Morris J, 1981 *The Domesday Book. Cambridgeshire*. Phillimore. History from the Sources
- OS, 1979 *Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain*. Ordnance Survey
- Page W, Proby W & Inskip Ladds S (eds), 1974 *The Victoria History of the County of Huntingdon 2*. Dawsons of Pall Mall
- Pevsner N, 1977 *The Buildings of England. Bedfordshire, Huntingdon and Peterborough*. Penguin
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend (Harpenden)*.
- St Neots, 2002 *Cambridgeshire Extensive Urban Survey: St Neots*. Draft Report 12/03/2002

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	15.6m	Width	1.8m	Depth	1.2m
	Trench top NE end			17.74m OD		
	Trench base NE end*			16.48m OD		
	Trench top SW end			17.75m OD		
	Trench base SW end			16.84m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
NE	518551 259749		SW	518540 259737		
Orientation:			NE - SW			
Reason for Trench:			Located within footprint of proposed development			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: M)	Thickness (max: M)	Depth (BGL: M)	
100	Layer	Dark grey soft silt clay. Modern made ground	1.8	1.2	0	
101	Layer	Mid grey orange clay firm, with chalk flecks and gravel deposits. Natural stratum	1.8	N/A	1.2+	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	15m	Width	1.8m	Depth	0.6m
	Levels					
	Trench top NW			17.77m OD		
	Trench base NW			17.12m OD		
	Trench top SE			17.81m OD		
	Trench base SE			17.33m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	518527/259735		SE	518536/259737	
	Orientation			NW-SE		
Reason for Trench			Located within footprint of proposed development			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: M)	Thickness (max: M)	Depth (BGL: M)	
200	Layer	Brown silty clay loam, mixed with modern debris	1.8	0.6	0	
201	Layer	Orange grey clay with fine gravel inclusions Firm. Natural stratum	1.8	N/a	0.6	

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: The Merry Boys Public House		SITE NO/CODE: 1424/EBS		Acc n.o: ECB 3599
Shot	Film/Neg	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	1/21	√	√	Trench 1 general shot 2x1m scale
2	1/20	√	√	Trench 1 stratigraphy 2x1m scale
3	1/19	√	√	Trench 2 general shot 2x1m scale
4	1/18	√	√	Trench 2 Stratigraphy 2x1m scale
5			√	Trench 2 general shot 2x1m scale
6-11			√	General site shots

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	The Merry Boys Public House	OASIS reference:	Archaeol2-102183
Short Description:	In June 2011 an archaeological evaluation was carried out of the site of former Merry Boys public house, 19 Berkley Street, Eynesbury, Cambridgeshire, in advance of the redevelopment of the site. Two trial trenches were excavated in the footprint of the new building, but no archaeological remains were present. It is unlikely that significant archaeological remains are present on the site and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be low.		
Project Type:	Evaluation		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	None
Current land use:	Former Public House	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	Unknown
Monument type:	None	Monument period:	N/a
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Cambridgeshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 1854 5972
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	19 Berkley Street, Eynesbury, Cambridgeshire.		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	1047	Height OD: (metres)	18
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Dan McConnell	Project design originator:	D. Fell & C Rouse
Project Manager:	David Fell MA MfA	Director/Supervisor:	Martin Cuthbert BA PIfA
Sponsor / funding body:	GPS Properties Ltd		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	10/06/2011	End date:	13/06/2011
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Cambridgeshire County Store. (ECB3599)	B&W photographs and negatives	
Paper:		Project Design, Eval Report, Trench sheets, survey register	
Digital:		All digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	The Merry Boys Public House, 19 Berkley, Eynesbury, Cambridgeshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1424/EBS/2		
Author(s):	Gareth Shane BSc (Hons)		
Page nos	20	Date:	17/06/11