

## Summary

*To inform an application for residential development, Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) carried out an archaeological evaluation for C K Homes on land to the north of 29 Church Road, Friday Bridge, Elm, Cambridgeshire (centred on NGR: TF 4683 0485).*

*This work was undertaken to fulfil a condition of a planning permission set by Fenland District Council; namely, to determine the archaeological potential of the site in advance of residential development (Planning ref. F/YR08/0609/F).*

*A total of three evaluation trenches were excavated across the proposed development area.*

*No significant archaeological activity was recorded in any of the three trenches.*



**Fig 1:** Site location map. Scale 1:50 000  
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## **1.0.Introduction**

In November 2008 Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) (PCA Lincoln) was commissioned by C K Homes to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land to the north of 29 Church Road, Friday Bridge, Elm, Cambridgeshire (centred on NGR: TF 4683 0485).

This work was undertaken to fulfil a condition of a planning permission set by Fenland District Council; namely, to determine the archaeological potential of the site in advance of residential development (Planning ref. F/YR08/0609/F).

The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a specification produced by PCA Lincoln (PCA Lincoln 2008) and approved by Mr Andy Thomas on behalf of Fenland District Council.

The scheme of investigation complies with the recommendations of *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (Dept. of Environment 1990) and also follows the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999), *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (EAA Occasional Paper 14) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects II* (English Heritage 1991).

## **2.0. Site location and description (Figs. 1 and 2)**

The site is within the parish of Friday Bridge in the Fenland district of Cambridgeshire, c.24km north of March and c.10km south of Wisbech. It is situated on the northeast edge of Friday Bridge village, to the north of 29 Church Road.

To the north and east of the site is open arable farmland; to the west and south, 20<sup>th</sup> century housing. The site is generally flat, where mean elevation is 1.99m OAD: there is a slight elevation towards the southwest, rising to 2.08m OAD.

The first edition OS map (1888) depicts the site as open arable farmland, with the existing eastern and western field boundaries.

The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Ampthill Clay. This is overlain by a drift of Tidal Flat Deposits (British Geological Survey 1995). Borehole evidence from the site itself indicates that the Tidal Flat Deposits are c.1.8m in depth across the whole site (information supplied by developer).

## **3.0 Archaeological and historical background**

Roman archaeological remains are common throughout the area, with settlement sites and cropmark enclosures lying c.600m to the east and south-east of the proposed development site respectively. Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER)

09706 is a small group of enclosures possibly representing a Roman settlement. Adjacent is CHER 09707, a large enclosure with a smaller internal enclosure, thought to possibly be a Roman camp.

Roman pottery, mostly later material dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD has been recovered from a possible settlement at Rookery Farm, c.700m southwest of the site (CHER 03940).

An archaeological evaluation at Maltmas Drove, Friday Bridge, identified a series of undated parallel ditches. These features are known locally as darlands, being part of a medieval agricultural system that was developed in order to exploit the fenland environment.

Friday Bridge itself is an ecclesiastical parish; formed from the civil parish of Elm in 1860. The Church of St Mark was built in 1864, and is located c.150m to the west of the site.

#### **4.0. Aims and objectives**

The purpose of evaluation is to establish the presence/absence, character and extent of archaeological remains within a proposed development area. The information contained within this report will therefore assist Fenland District Council in making an informed judgment on the impact that the proposed development may have on archaeological remains; it will similarly inform the developer.

#### **5.0. Methodology**

The evaluation methodology required the excavation of three trenches, each 12m long by 1.8m wide. Initial excavation was carried out using a tracked excavator fitted with a 1m wide toothless ditching bucket. All overburden was mechanically removed down to the natural substrate or to the top of the first significant archaeological feature. Where archaeological deposits were encountered, all further excavation was by hand.

Archaeological features were sample excavated to establish depths and profiles and, where possible, date and function. Features were recorded in plan and in section at appropriate scales (1:50 and 1:20), and written accounts were prepared on pro forma context record sheets. A colour and black and white photographic record was maintained throughout the project, and selected prints have been reproduced in this report.

#### **6.0. Results**

##### **6.1. Summary**

Tidal Flat Deposits (101) (201) (301) were identified at a depth of 35cm below current ground level (1.99-2.08 mAOD). Sondages were excavated into this deposit (at the ends of each trench) to a depth of 1.20m (see Plate 2). Borehole evidence from the site records the solid geology (Amphill Clay) at a depth not less than 2m below present ground level, overlain by 1.8m of Tidal Flat deposit (information supplied by the developer).

**6.2. Trenches 1 and 2:** *No archaeological features were recorded within either trench, where the modern top/plough soil horizon directly sealed/truncated the upper sequence of natural Tidal Flat deposits (Figs. 3 and 4; see Plates 1, 2 and 3)*

At the western end of Trench 2, a modern household waste layer containing crisp packets, metal cans and the like (203) was recorded directly below the top/plough soil (200).

**6.3. Trench 3:** *a single post-medieval pit was recorded (Figs. 5 and 6; Plates 4 and 5)*

Towards the south of Trench 3 the partial plan of a (presumed) pit was recorded [303]. The fill of this consisted of re-deposited natural deposits and disarticulated cow bones (302). Due to the superficially fresh condition of these, the absence of any other features, and the use of the area from the 19<sup>th</sup> century as farmland, this pit is probably no earlier than the later post-medieval period, if not the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **7.0. Discussion and conclusion**

No significant archaeology of any period was recorded in the three investigated trenches.

Due to the depth of the solid geology (2m below present ground level), it is unlikely that development of the area will impact upon any significant archaeological remains, should such remains cut into this deposit.

## **8.0. Acknowledgment**

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank C K Homes for the commission

## **9.0. Bibliography**

British Geological Survey 1995 *Ramsey, England and Wales Sheet 159*. Solid and Drift Edition. 1:50,000 Provisional Series. Keyworth, Nottingham.

Hall, D. and Coles, J. 1994 *Fenland Survey*. English Heritage. Archaeological Report 1. London.

*Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) 2008 Archaeological Works Specification: land to the north of 29 Church Road, Friday Bridge, Elm,*