



Rowan Nursery Bell Lane, Birdham West Sussex

Archaeological Evaluation



for Martin Grant Homes

CA Project: 770343 CA Report: 17510

September 2017



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Document Control Grid							
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А	5-9-17	Joe Whelan	Ray Kennedy	Internal Review	General Edit	Ray Kennedy	

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Rowan Nursery

Location: Bell Lane, Birdham, West Sussex

NGR: 81738 99298

Type: Evaluation

Date: 31 August – 1 September 2017

Planning Reference: 13/00284/FUL

Location of Archive: The Novium museum

Site Code: RNB 17

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August/ September 2017. A total of nine of the planned 10 trenches were excavated within the former caravan park off Bell Lane, Birdham.

Despite the projected line of a Roman road crossing the east of the development site no archaeological finds features or deposits were identified during the course of the evaluation, other than modern intrusions. Despite the negative results noted during the evaluation, the results this does not preclude surviving archaeology within the immediate vicinity.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August/September 2017 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Martin Grant Homes at Rowan Nursery, Bell Lane, Birdham, West Sussex (centred at NGR: 481727 099304; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken as a condition of planning permission (Ref: 13/00284/FUL) granted by Chichester District Council, the local planning authority (LPA) for the demolition of 2 existing bungalows and the construction of 27 dwellings (including 10 affordable units), access road and associated landscaping.

Condition 14:

An archaeological investigation of the site shall be carried out in accordance with a specification to be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority in writing before the commencement of any building works. The specification shall include proposals for an initial trial investigation and for mitigation of damage through development to deposits of importance thus identified. The investigation shall be undertaken by an appropriately qualified archaeologist, and shall include the recording of findings and subsequent publication of results

- 1.2 A heritage desk based assessment (CA 2012) was previously prepared for the site in support of the planning application prior to its determination.
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016) and approved by James Kenny. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014).

The site

- 1.4 The proposed development site encloses approximately 1 hectare. It lies within Birdham Civil Parish and Chichester District, on the south-western outskirts of Birdham village.
- 1.5 The site comprises a roughly rectangular plot of land to the rear of residential properties fronting onto Bell Lane (the B2198), with an eastwards extension connecting it to the road. The site is a former caravan park mainly set to grass, with a number of access roads and tarmac / gravel-surfaced caravan bays. Two

detached modern bungalows and a number of wooden outbuildings stand within the north-eastern part of the proposed development site.

- 1.6 The site is bordered on its northern, southern and western sides by trees, with the gardens of the Bell Lane residences to the east. To the north lies the Pipers Mead housing estate. To the west are plots of land attached to further residences and Russell's Garden Centre. Bellfield Nursery lies to the south.
- 1.7 The BGS Geology of Britain Viewer website records the site's bedrock geology as clays, silts and sands of the London Clay Formation. This sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 34 to 55 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period. It was formed in deep seas from infrequent slurries of shallow water sediments which were then redeposited as graded beds.
- 1.8 The site's superficial geology is recorded as sand, silt and clay River Terrace Deposits. These deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. They were formed from rivers depositing mainly sand and gravel detrital material in channels to form river terrace deposits, with fine silt and clay from overbank floods forming floodplain alluvium, and some bogs depositing peat.
- 1.9 The site lies on relatively level land at c.6m AOD

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 A heritgae desk-based assessment (CA 2012) was prepared in support of the planning application. A brief summary of the arcaheological and historical background presented in the DBA is presented below.

Previous Archaeological Works

- 2.2 There are no known previous archaeological investigations within the proposed development site boundary.
- 2.3 An archaeological evaluation was carried out prior to the construction of the Pipers Mead housing estate, which lies immediately to the north of the proposed development site (ASE 1999). No archaeological features or deposits were identified, although two prehistoric struck flint flakes were recovered from the topsoil.

Archaeological and historical background

Prehistoric (pre 43 AD)

- 2.4 The site lies within the West Sussex coastal plain, an area of good quality arable land which was farmed extensively in late prehistory. The prehistoric landscape of the coastal plain was punctuated by isolated rural settlements, cremation cemeteries and small ritual sites.
- 2.5 Archaeological work at Walwyn Close, which lies approximately 970m to the north-east of the site, uncovered the remains of a Bronze Age settlement (ASE 2003). Two struck flint flakes were recovered from the topsoil during an archaeological evaluation at the Pipers Mead housing estate, which lies to the immediate north of the proposed development site (ASE 1999).

Roman (AD 43 – AD 410)

- 2.6 The site lies some 8km to the south-west of Chichester, which was the Roman town of *Noviomagus Reginorum*. The nationally important Fishbourne Roman Palace lies some 6.4km to the north of the site.
- 2.7 A very straight stretch of the B2198 road runs from the southern edge of Birdham to Bracklesham, on the south-coast. Associated place name evidence suggests that this was a Roman road. The projected northward continuation of this road runs through the eastern edge of the site (Done 1953). A second Roman road (2) running to the immediate north of the site and forming a junction with the B2198 has been postulated and would have connected Birdham to West Wittering. To the north of the site, a third Roman road (CDHER ref: CD7808) is postulated to have run north-eastwards from Birdham to Donnington, forming a junction with road 2 in the region of the Birdham Church of England Primary School on Crooked Lane (approximately 865m north-west of the site)
- 2.8 The convergence of possible Roman roads within Birdham might suggest that the settlement was of some importance in the Roman era. However, it is likely that these roads were part of an interconnected network serving the wider area, and that Birdham was neither their true origin nor final destination. This is supported by the fact that the CDHER and NMR list no other Roman heritage assets within the vicinity of the site, although a fieldwalking survey carried out to the south of Westlands Lane (approximately 930m to the north-west of the site) noted a small number of Roman pottery sherds (West Sussex Archaeology 2006). Additionally, the archaeological

investigations at Walwyn Close recorded the remains of a possible Roman cremation burial (ASE 2003).

Early Medieval (AD 410 – AD 1066) to Modern (1801 – present)

- 2.9 Birdham was one of the places given by the Saxon King Caedwalla (reigned c.659–689) for the endowment of a monastery of Selsey. The donated land became known as the Hundred of Manhood.
- 2.10 In the medieval and post-medieval periods, the site lay within common land outside of Birdham, and it is likely that it was similarly removed from the early medieval settlement core.
- 2.11 Birdham was recorded as "Brideham" by the 1086 Domesday survey. The Church of St. James in Birdham (formerly dedicated to St. Leonard) was built in the 14th century. By the 12th century, the Hundred of Manhood was a liberty of the Bishop of Chichester. Within the Hundred, agricultural practices were based on a system of polygonal corn fields manured by sheep, rather than the typical strip field systems recorded elsewhere. Post-medieval cartography depicting the pre-enclosure landscape shows the site within Birdham Common, to the south of the agricultural fields surrounding the village. It is likely that a similar landscape pattern was in place during the medieval period.
- 2.12 Yeakell and Gardner's map of 1778 shows Birdham village surrounded by agricultural fields, with Birdham Common lying beyond these to the south. The proposed development site lay within this common. The modern road network was not yet fully developed, although the future line of Main Road (the A286/B2179) was visible as a trackway running through the common.
- 2.13 Birdham Common was enclosed in 1793 and the site is entirely within the boundaries of one of the post-enclosure fields. Tithe records for Birdham Parish (c.1847) identify this field as "North Common Four," and states that it was arable land. The OS (Ordnance Survey) maps from 1875, 1898 and 1911 are almost exactly the same as the c.1847 tithe map, showing that the post-enclosure landscape of the site and its immediate surroundings remained essentially unchanged into the 20th century.
- 2.14 By the time of the 1966 OS map, the houses fronting onto Bell Lane at the eastern site boundary had been built. A complex consisting of two or three large buildings and a series of smaller structures was also depicted within the north-eastern corner

of the site. The function of these structures is unclear, but they do not appear to relate to the modern house and outbuilding presently standing in this corner of the site.

2.15 The proposed development site is currently occupied by a former caravan park. The northern, western and southern boundaries of the caravan park plot preserve those of the post-enclosure field depicted on the c.1847 tithe map and the subsequent OS mapping

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014). This information will enable Chichester District Council to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 9 of the planned 10 trenches, the trenches each measured 1.9m in width with varying lengths (Trench 1 measured 5m, TR 2 13.5m, , TR 4 17m, Tr5 30m, TR 6 28m, TR 7 27m, TR 8 20m, TR 9 24m & TR 10 22m) in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). TR 3 could not be excavated due to the presence of fencing and services along the footprint of the trench that could not be removed.
- 4.2 The site is a former caravan park which currently comprises a series of small enclosed areas which include a number of water and electricity hook-up points. The positions of trenches 1 and 2 were moved slightly on site to avoid the locations of trees, trench 3 could not be excavated due to the positions of two wire fences and services. Trench 4 had to be divided into two sections with a central portion left unexcavated to allow the machine access out of a restricted area, trench 6 was

moved slightly to avoid services, trench 8 was reduced in length to avoid services and trench 10 was reduced in length to avoid trees. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual*. The final 'as dug' locations are shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2).

- 4.3 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual.
- 4.4 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* and as a consequence no deposits were identified that required sampling. No artefacts were recovered from any of the trenches.
- 4.5 The site archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Andover. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner this will be deposited with The Novium museum. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-4)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts, are to be found in Appendix A. No archaeological features were noted in the evaluation and no artefacts were recovered.
- 5.2 With the exception of trenches 1, 5 and 8 the same sequence was recorded throughout all the trenches. A dark yellow brown clay silt topsoil with an average depth of 0.20m overlay a yellow brown silty clay subsoil up to 0.15m in depth. The natural substrate consisted of a yellow brown silty clay with rare oyster shell inclusions. Within trenches 1 and 8 modern aggregate /gravel surfaces up to 0.15m

in depth directly overlay the natural geology. The sequence in trench 5 consisted of crushed tarmac / aggregates up to 0.15m in depth, over a localised, compacted, possibly redeposited topsoil 0.09m in depth, which in turn sat upon the natural geology. A modern brick built soakaway with ceramic drainage pipes was encountered at the southern end of trench 5. Modern plastic pipes within gravel filled field drains were also recorded in trenches 4, 7 and 8.

5.3 Trench 1 contained a modern rectangular pit filled almost entirely with broken glass shards. This pit [103] which cut the natural geology measured approximately 2m x 1.5m by at least 0.20m in depth and was not further examined.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Place name evidence and the presence of a straight stretch of road running from Bracklesham to Birdham have resulted in a Roman road being postulated as potentially crossing the east of the development site. Due to limited access and the position of the house known as Pippins no trenches were located across the line of the projected road. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were recovered from any of the nine excavated trenches.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Joe Whelan, assisted by Emily Stynes. The report was written by Joe Whelan. The illustrations were prepared by Esther Escudero. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Andy Donald. The project was managed for CA by Ray Kennedy.

8. REFERENCES

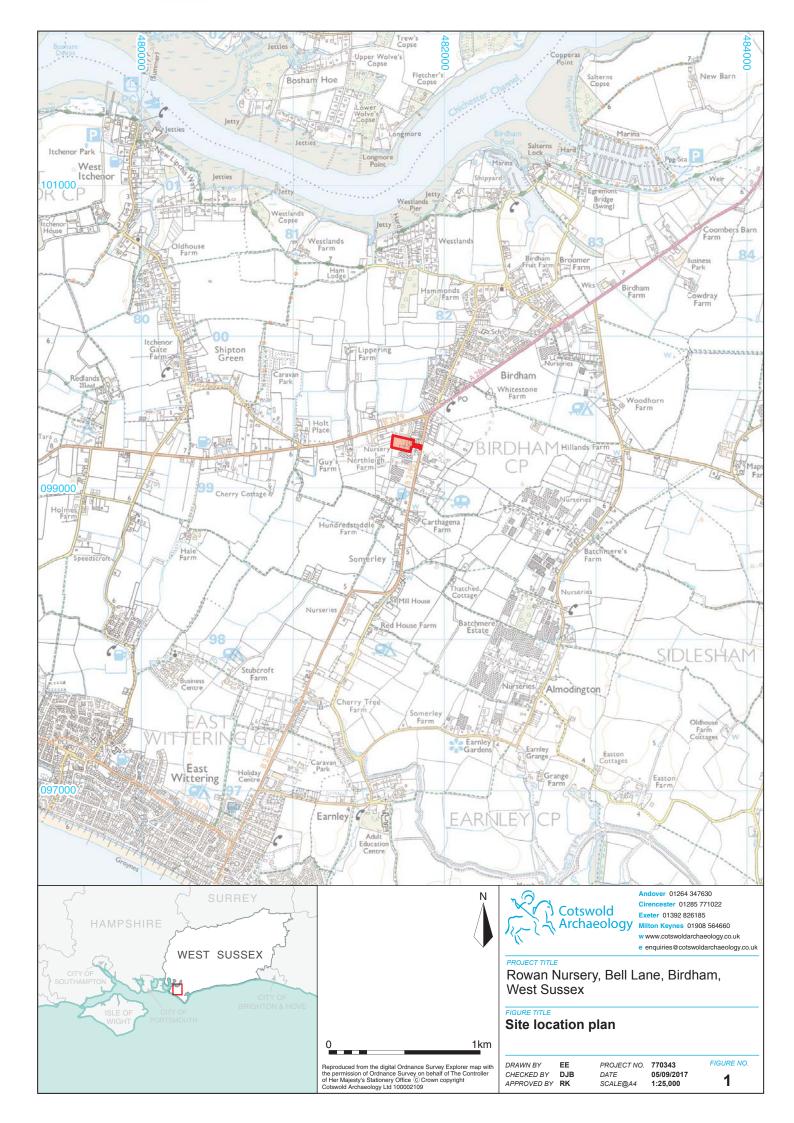
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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Conte xt No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	(m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Surface	Modern gravel car park surface	5	1.9	0.05	Modern
1	101	Layer		Made ground	Modern aggregates / hard core	5	1.9	0.10	Modern
1	102	Nat		Natural	Yellow brown silty clay		1.9		
1	103	cut		Pit	Modern rectangular pit	2	1.5	UX	Modern
1	104	Fill	103	Pit fill	Glass shards with cbm	2	1.5	UX	Modern
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Dark yellow clay silt	13.5	1.9	0.22	
2	201	Layer		Subsoil	Yellow brown silty clay	13.5	1.9	0.17	
2	202	Nat		Natural	Yellow brown silty clay with rare shell fragments	13.5	1.9		
3					Trench not excavated				
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Dark yellow clay silt with gravel patches	17	1.9	0.13	
4	401	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow brown silty clay	17	1.9	0.19	
4	402	Nat		Natural	Yellow brown silty clay with rare shell fragments	17	1.9		
5	500	Layer		Surface	Crushed tarmac and aggregates. Hardstanding area	30	1.9	0.15	Modern
5	501	Layer		Subsoil	Localised buried compacted topsoil, yellow brown clay silt	17	1.9	0.09	
5	502	Nat		Natural	Yellow brown silty clay with rare shell fragments	17	1.9		
6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Dark yellow clay silt with gravel patches	28	1.9	0.14	
6	601	Layer		Subsoil	Yellow brown silty clay, rare flint gravels	28	1.9	0.17	
6	602	Nat		Natural	Yellow brown silty clay with rare shell fragments	28	1.9		
7	700	Layer		Topsoil	Dark yellow clay silt with gravel patches	27	1.9	0.10	
7	701	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow brown silty clay	27	1.9	0.14	
7	702	Nat		Natural	Yellow brown silty clay with rare shell fragments	27	1.9		
8	800	Layer		Surface	Compacted aggregates. Modern trackway	20	1.9	0.08	Modern
8	801	Layer		Subsoil	Yellow brown silty clay	20	1.9	0.10	
8	802	Nat		Natural	Yellow brown silty clay with rare shell fragments	20	1.9		
9	900	Layer		Topsoil	Dark yellow clay silt with gravel patches	24	1.9	0.16	
9	901	Layer		Subsoil	Mid Yellow brown silty clay	24	1.9	0.14	
9	902	Nat		Natural	Yellow brown silty clay	24	1.9		
10	1000	Layer		Topsoil	Dark yellow clay silt with gravel patches	22	1.9	0.09	
10	1001	Layer		Subsoil	Yellow brown silty clay	22	1.9	0.18	
10	1002	Nat		Natural	Yellow brown silty clay with blue grey patches	22	1.9		

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Name	Rowan Nursery, Birdham, West Sussex					
Short description	An archaeological evaluation was u	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold				
P	Archaeology in August / September 2017. A total of nine trenches					
	were excavated within the former car	were excavated within the former caravan park off Bell Lane				
	Birdham. No archaeological features were found and no artefact					
	were recovered.					
Project dates	31 Aug – 1 Sept 2017					
Project type	field evaluation					
Previous work	None					
Future work	Unknown					
PROJECT LOCATION						
Site Location	Rowan Nursery, Bell Lane, Birdham, We	st Sussex				
Study area (M²/ha)	1 ha					
Site co-ordinates	81738 99298					
PROJECT CREATORS						
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	Cotswold Archaeology				
Project Brief originator						
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology					
Project Manager	Ray Kennedy					
Project Supervisor	Joe Whelan					
MONUMENT TYPE	None					
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None					
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery animal bone etc)				
Physical						
Paper	The Novium	Context sheets, register				
Digital	The Novium	Database, digital photos				
BIBLIOGRAPHY		, , ,				
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017 <i>Rov</i> CA typescript report	wan Nursery, Bell Lane, Birdham, West Sussex:	Archaeological Evaluation				







Trench 1, with modern pit 103 in centre, looking south-east



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PROJECT TITLE

Rowan Nursery, Bell Lane, Birdham, West Sussex

FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

DRAWN BY EE
CHECKED BY DJB
APPROVED BY RK

PROJECT NO. 770343

DATE 05/09/2017

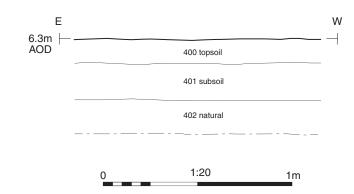
SCALE@A4 NA

FIGURE NO.



Trench 4, looking west

Section AA





Trench 4, representative section looking south



Rowan Nursery, Bell Lane, Birdham, West Sussex

Trench 4: section and photograph

 PROJECT NO.
 770343

 DATE
 05/09/2017

 SCALE@A3
 1:20



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