

# 194 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation



for: Ben Warren Construction Ltd



CA Project: SU0112 CA Report: SU0112\_1

OASIS ID: cotswold2-384272

HER Ref: ECB6184

August 2020

## 194 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Cambridgeshire

## Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: SU0112 CA Report: SU0112\_1 OASIS ID: cotswold2-384272 HER reference: ECB6184

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#### **SUMMARY**

**Project name:** 194 Mildenhall Road

**Location:** Fordham, Cambridgeshire

**NGR**: 564426 270894

**Type:** Evaluation

**Date:** 11th June 2020

Planning reference: 19/00637/FUL

OASIS ID: cotswold2-380931

**Location of Archive:** To be agreed with Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team

Site Code: ECB6184

In June 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation at the site of 194 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Cambridgeshire. Two trenches were positioned around the existing 20th century building and within the footprint of the proposed development. Within the trenches only modern features were revealed. However, sieving of a subsoil layer (between the garden topsoil and the undisturbed geological deposits) revealed worked flints of probable Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date and a sherd of Roman period pottery. The development area is within a known landscape of prehistoric, Roman and later findspots and monuments so finds of these periods are likely to be represented across the site.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. On the 11th June 2020, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation at the site of a proposed development at 194 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Cambridgeshire (centred at NGR: 564426 270894; Fig. 1). This evaluation was undertaken for Ben Warren Construction Ltd.
- 1.2. East Cambridgeshire District Council has granted planning permission for a small housing development to replace the existing 20th century building (planning ref: 19/00637/FUL). A condition of this planning permission required that a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI).
- 1.3. The scope of this evaluation was defined by a Brief issued by Leanne Robinson Zeki of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET), the archaeological advisor to East Cambridgeshire District Council. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a WSI prepared by Stuart Boulter (2020) and approved by CHET.
- 1.4. The evaluation was also in line with Standard and Guidance: archaeological field evaluation (CIfA 2014), the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Planning Note 3 (English Heritage 2008) and the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide (EH 2006).

#### The site

- 1.5. The proposed development site is approximately 0.14 hectares. It lies to the south of Mildenhall Road, next to the junction with Chippenham Road. The site lies at an elevation of approximately 18m AOD within a fairly level landscape.
- 1.6. The site consists of an early 20th century rendered building within an irregularly shaped garden. Scrub and trees screen the house from the road to the north, with the back garden laid to grass.
- 1.7. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as chalk with superficial geology of river terrace deposits of sand and gravel (BGS 2020).

#### 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential with many significant sites in the vicinity (Fig. 2); including findspots, monuments, listed buildings and previous archaeological excavations.
- 2.2. Noted in the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record are a number of findspots and sites. These include Roman brooches, a decorated purse mount and worked flint (Fig. 2: site 07467), Iron Age burials (07549), a Bronze Age axe and pottery (07741), worked and heat-altered flints (10241), a ring-ditch identified through aerial photography (11109), Roman coins and a medieval strap fitting (11516) and Bronze Age flints (11536).
- 2.3. Recorded monuments of predominantly post-medieval and modern date include sand and gravel pits (Fig. 2: site MCB21559, MCB 24128 and MCB26615), clunch pits (MCB21560 and MCB24130), Slate Farm (MCB24129) and the site of a former windmill (MCB24131).
- 2.4. A late 16th/early 17th century timber-framed cottage in the vicinity is a Grade II Listed Building (Fig. 2: building 1126390).
- 2.5. Previous archaeological work in the area includes a geophysical survey with negative results (Fig. 2: site ECB5147), an evaluation with post-medieval features (ECB5389) and another evaluation with Neolithic flints and pottery and ditches of probable medieval to post-medieval date (ECB5919).

#### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the evaluation was to provide information on the likely archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date and state of preservation. This information would enable CHET to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets within the site, consider the impact of the proposed development upon that significance and, if appropriate, develop strategies to avoid or minimise conflict between heritage asset conservation and the development proposals, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2019).

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of two trenches, one of 18m and the other of 22m length (Fig. 3). Both were partly within the footprint of the proposed new building.
- 4.2. Overburden was stripped from the trenches using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision, while topsoil and subsoil layers were removed to the top of the natural sand and gravel substrate.
- 4.3. The excavated trenches were photographed and recorded, specimen sections at the middle of each trench were cleaned, drawn and photographed, deposits encountered were assessed and described, spoil was checked visually for finds and a metal detector search was conducted of spoil heaps and the base of the trenches.
- 4.4. A sample of 90 litres from the topsoil and subsoil from each end of the trenches were sieved through a 10mm sieve and all non-modern finds were retained. Modern finds such as fragments of window glass, slate, wood, plastic, textile etc were not retained.
- 4.5. A GPS survey was conducted to get position and levels of the trenches and to identify locations of sections and modern intrusions.
- 4.6. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix 2, has been entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

#### 5. RESULTS

#### Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4)

- 5.1. Trench 1 was positioned to the south and east of the present property. It was 22m long and was orientated north-north-east to south-south-west. Ground height at the north-north-eastern end was 17.96m AOD and 18.03m AOD at the other end.
- 5.2. The dark grey brown, humic loam garden soil (layer 0101) was of 0.26m thickness and contained frequent shards of broken window glass.
- 5.3. Under layer 0101 was a highly leached and weathered subsoil deposit of pale to mid orange brown silty sand (layer 0103), which was of 0.18m thickness.

- 5.4. Along the base of the trench, the natural (deposit 0102) consisted of orange gravel sand with patches of yellow brown silt.
- 5.5. Modern pits were encountered at each end of the trench; that at the southern end contained carpet while that to the north contained plastic sheeting. No features of archaeological significance were observed or identified.
- 5.6. No finds of archaeological interest were recovered from the 90-litre sieved samples from 0101 and 0103 taken from each end of the trench.

#### Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 5)

- 5.7. This trench was positioned across the front garden, to the north of the present property. It was orientated east-south-east to west-north-west and was of 18m length. Height at the east-south-east end was 18.01m AOD and 18.07m AOD at the other end.
- 5.8. The garden soil 0201 was 0.3m thick and was highly root disturbed from the trees that screened the house from the road.
- 5.9. The 90-litre sieved sample of 0201 from the western end of the trench revealed a sherd of post-medieval pottery and a single piece of worked flint. No finds were recovered from the sieved sample of this deposit from the other end of the trench.
- 5.10. The subsoil layer 0203 was the same as 0103 in Trench 1 but was slightly thicker at 0.22m.
- 5.11. The 90-litre sieved sample of 0203 from the eastern end of the trench revealed a Roman sherd of pottery and two pieces of struck flint of possible Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date. No finds were recovered from the sieved sample of this deposit from the other end of the trench.
- 5.12. The natural (deposit 0202) was the same as 0102 in Trench 1.
- 5.13. A large cement-lined feature containing carpet (backfilled pond?) was encountered at the western end of the trench. No features of archaeological significance were observed or identified.

#### 6. THE FINDS

## Stephen Benfield

#### Introduction

6.1. Only a very few finds, consisting of two sherds of pottery and three struck flint flakes, were recovered during the evaluation. These came from the topsoil 0201 and subsoil 0203 from Trench 2. They are listed by find type and context in Table 1 and are described by find type (below).

Context	Pottery		Worked Flint		Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	
0201	1	20	1	2	Post-medieval
0203	1	6	2	8	Roman
Total	2	26	3	10	

Table 1 Types and quantities of bulk finds by context

6.2. The earliest of the finds are the flints, one of which suggests a relatively early date of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age. The pottery recovered consists of a single sherd of Roman greyware pottery and a sherd of post-medieval pottery.

#### **Pottery**

6.3. Just two small sherds of pottery were recovered. One came from subsoil 0203 and is an abraded greyware sherd (6g) which appears almost certainly to be Roman (Fabric GX) rather than medieval. It can be noted that there are faint traces internally of a pale pinkish-red colouration/deposit and which appears different from soil traces/staining on other areas of the sherd. The other sherd (20g) which came from topsoil 0201 is Glazed red earthenware (Fabric GRE) of post-medieval date, current during the period *c*.16th-18th century. It has an internal glazed surface.

#### **Lithics (struck flint)**

- 6.4. Three struck flints were recovered, one from topsoil 0201 and two from the subsoil 0203.
- 6.5. The flint from 0201 is a small, relatively thin flake from a hard hammer strike and which has parallel previous flaking scars on the dorsal surface; the lower part of the flake has been snapped away.
- 6.6. Of the two flints from 0203, one is a relatively thin blade-like flake probably produced with a soft hammer and possibly with some platform preparation. There are parallel previous flaking scars on the dorsal surface and a small notch in one edge. The edges

exhibit damage or use wear and there is some flaking from use or more probably damaged retouch along the lower length of the notched edge, extending invasively onto the ventral face close to the distal end and extending around it. The other flake is a squat piece with previous flaking on the dorsal face and is the only one to have any cortex. The cortex extends along one edge and over the striking area, so that while the piece lacks a prominent percussion bulb it was probably struck with a hard hammer. There is some limited edge damage.

6.7. The two finer of the flints are certainly prehistoric. While difficult to date, the blade-like flake was certainly produced with some degree of craftsmanship which is more typical of earlier flint working, that is the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, rather than later. The small flake might also be relatively early but could be of any date. The squat flake with cortex is possibly of more dubious origin, but that there is some previous flaking on the dorsal face suggests it is probably a deliberately struck piece. Overall it can be described as generally more typical of later prehistoric flint working; that is Bronze Age/Iron Age.

#### 7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1. Despite the site being located within a rich archaeological and historic landscape, no significant features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed.
- 7.2. The highly leached and weathered subsoil deposit in Trench 2 (layer 0203) revealed a mixed finds assemblage of Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flints and a sherd of Roman pottery. There is a high likelihood of prehistoric and Roman activity within the vicinity as suggested by the finds.
- 7.3. Modern features containing plastic and carpet were found in both trenches showing a high degree of recent disturbance across the site.

#### 8. ARCHIVING

8.1. The archive will be deposited with Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team (CHET). The ownership of the archive will be transferred to CHET and 'Transfer of Title' documentation will be provided. All aspects of the archiving will follow the guidance as outlined in 'Deposition of Archaeological Archives in Cambridgeshire', version 4 (September 2019).

#### 9. CA PROJECT TEAM

9.1. Fieldwork and recording was undertaken by Rui Oliveira and Jezz Meredith. The survey data was processed by Marta Perlinska. Ryan Wilson prepared the figures. The project was managed for CA by Stuart Boulter.

#### 10. REFERENCES

- Boulter, S., 2020, 194 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Cambridgeshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation, CA report
- British Geological Survey (BGS), 2020: *Geology of Britain Viewer*<a href="http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html">http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html</a>
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  Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team
- ClfA, 2014, Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (Reading)
- Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), revised 2019, *National Planning Policy Framework*
- English Heritage, 2006, Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: the MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide
- English Heritage, 2008, Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment Project Planning Note 3: Archaeological Excavation

### **APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**

Trench	Context No.	Туре	Interpretation	Description	Depth/ thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	0100	Finds	Unstrat finds	Tr 1 unstratified finds (none collected)		
1	0101	Layer	Topsoil	Dark grey brown organic sandy loam	0.26	Modern
1	0102	Deposit	Natural	Orange gravel sand with patches of silty sand		
1	0103	Layer	Subsoil	Mottled pale to mid orange brown silty sand	0.18	
2	0200	Finds	Unstrat finds	Tr 2 unstratified finds (none collected)		
2	0201	Layer	Topsoil	Same as 0101	0.3	Modern
2	0202	Deposit	Natural	Same as 0102		
2	0203	Layer	Subsoil	Same as 0103	0.22	Roman?

#### **APPENDIX 2: OASIS SUMMARY**

#### OASIS ID: cotswold2-384272

#### **Project details**

Project name 194 Mildenhall Road, Fordham

Short description of the

project

In June 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation at the site of 194 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Cambridgeshire. Two trenches were positioned around the existing 20th century building and within the footprint of the proposed development. Within the trenches only modern features were revealed. However, sieving of a subsoil layer (between the garden topsoil and the undisturbed geological deposits) revealed flints of probable Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date and a sherd of Roman period pottery. The development area is within a known

landscape of prehistoric, Roman and later findspots and monuments so finds of these periods are likely to be represented

across the site.

Project dates Start: 11-06-2020 End: 11-06-2020

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project

reference codes

ECB6184 - HER event no.

Any associated project

reference codes

19/00637/FUL - Planning Application No.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

**NONE None** Monument type Significant Finds **FLINT Neolithic** Significant Finds **POT Roman** 

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches"

Development type Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)

**Prompt** Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Position in the planning

process

After full determination (eg. As a condition)

#### **Project location**

Country England

CAMBRIDGESHIRE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE FORDHAM 194 Site location

Mildenhall Road

0.14 Hectares Study area

TL 64426 70894 52.311068951964 0.412283718901 52 18 39 N Site coordinates

000 24 44 E Point

**Project creators** 

Name of Organisation Cotswold Archaeology Project brief originator Cambridgeshire CC

Project design originator Cotswold Archaeology (Suffolk)

Project director/manager Stuart Boulter
Project supervisor Jezz Meredith

Type of sponsor/funding

body

Developer

**Project archives** 

Physical Archive recipient 
Cambridgeshire County Archaeological Facility

Physical Contents "Ceramics", "Worked stone/lithics"

Digital Archive recipient Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Facility

Digital Contents "other"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient Cambridgeshire County Archaeological Facility

Paper Contents "other"

Paper Media available "Miscellaneous Material", "Section"

**Project bibliography 1** 

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

Title 194 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Cambridgeshire: archaeological

evaluation

Author(s)/Editor(s) Meredith, J.
Other bibliographic details SU0112\_1

Date 2020

Issuer or publisher Cotswold Archaeology (Suffolk)

Place of issue or

publication

Needham Market

Description A short, sweet and compact little number (A4 booklet)

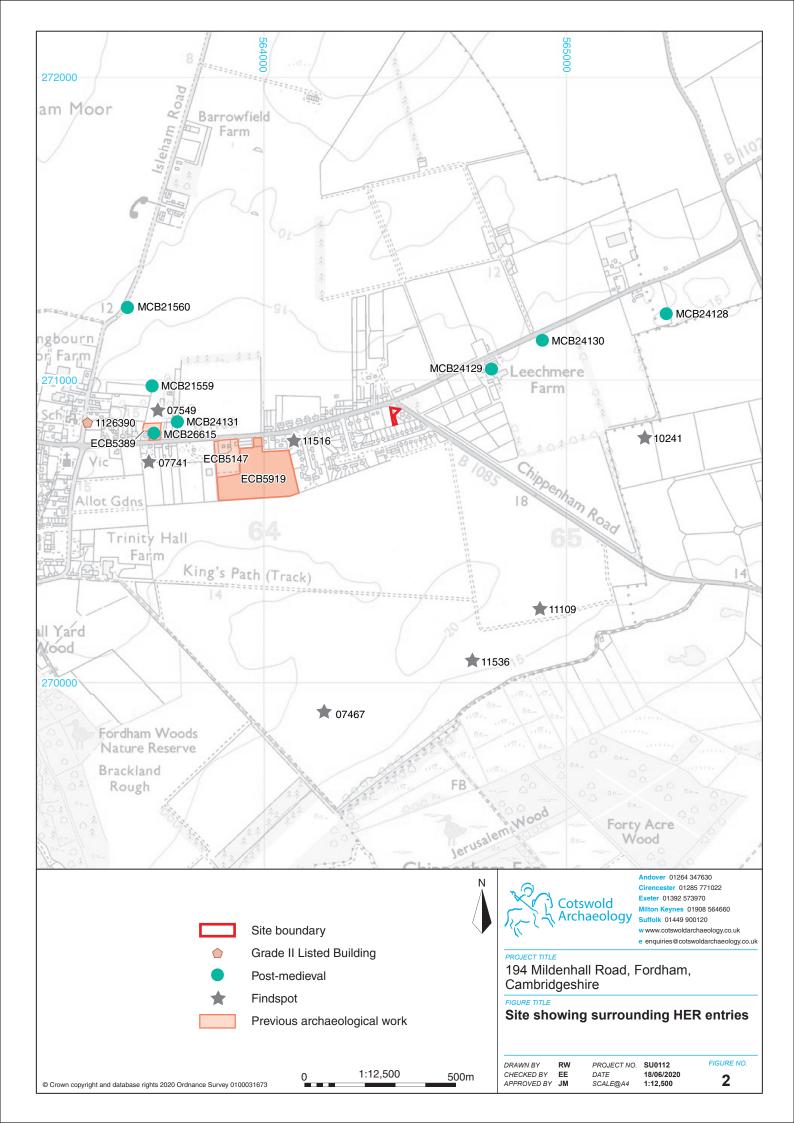
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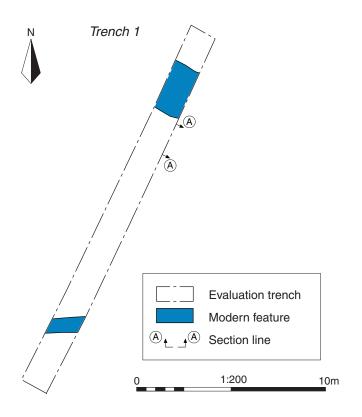
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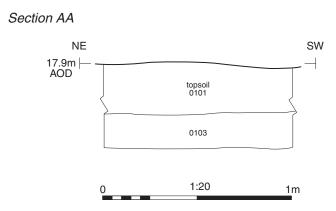








Trench 1, looking north-east (1m scale)





Trench 1 representative section, looking south-east (0.4m and 1m scales)



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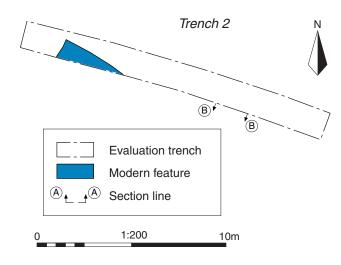
Trench 1: plan, section and photographs

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CHECKED BY EE
APPROVED BY JM

 PROJECT NO.
 SU0112

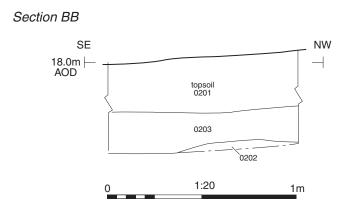
 DATE
 18/06/2020

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Trench 2, looking south-east (1m scale)





Trench 2 representative section, looking south-west (0.4m and 1m scales)



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194 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Cambridgeshire

Trench 2: plan, section and photographs

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 PROJECT NO.
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 DATE
 18/06/2020

 SCALE@A3
 1:200, 1:20

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