

# Hillside Park Caravan Site, Limekiln Lane, Baldock

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording



Simon Timberlake

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Report No.1216

*Between 26<sup>th</sup> February and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014 an archaeological investigation was undertaken at the Hillside Park Caravan Site on Limekiln Lane, Baldock Hertfordshire in advance of the construction of a block of six new garages. Archaeological monitoring here was requested as a 'Strip, Map and Record' exercise. As part of this the 65m<sup>2</sup> footprint for the garage foundations was stripped down to the top of the chalk and the surface of this cleaned, but no archaeology was present. The only feature here was the rooting gully for an old hedge line along its southern edge, parallel to the modern existing hedge line and boundary fence.*

## **Introduction**

This archaeological investigation was commissioned by Richard Wright and requested by the County Historic Environment Unit (CHEU) of Hertfordshire County Council in advance of the construction of six garages at Hillside Park Caravan Site, Limekiln Lane, Baldock. The development area consisted of a plot of c.65 sq m in area at the top of the site along the southern edge of the car park (TL 25290 33075) (Figure 2).

### *Geology and topography*

The underlying geology here consists of the White Chalk (Upper Chalk). The local topography is slightly hilly (chalk downland country), whilst the site itself lies close to the top of the hill at an elevation of approx. 70m AOD. The location of this is on the hillside c.200m beyond the end of Penfold Close and 350m SE of Limekiln Lane. Limekiln Lane is situated on the east side of Baldock to the west of the A505 and south of the A507 (Figure 1).

### *Archaeological background*

#### Neolithic-Bronze Age

Neolithic pits containing aurochs' skulls were exposed during the construction of the Baldock bypass (HER 13257, HER 13256, HER 13258, HER 13254), whilst Bronze Age ring ditches have been identified from cropmarks to the north of the site (HER 7743).

#### Iron Age

Iron Age activity has been identified near to the site. This includes a large Iron Age boundary ditch (HER 17429) found a short distance to the south-east of the site during the diversion of a water main, a number of Iron Age pits to the north of it (HER 2518, HER 13456, HER 13457) alongside a Late Iron Age/ Early Roman quarry pit (HER 17432) and triple ditches (HER 9994), whilst to the north-east of this a Late Iron Age/ Early Roman enclosure was identified. The site is also close to the course of a prehistoric and Roman road (HER 6156), whilst to the west of this was found the site of a Late Iron Age/ Early Roman cemetery. Baldock began as an Iron Age settlement.

#### Roman

Baldock developed as a Roman town (Area of Archaeological Significance no.96 and Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM 27913)). A Romano-British cemetery was found to the west of the site (HER 6082) and an Early Roman cemetery to the north (HER 13191), whilst a Roman road is visible as cropmarks to the east (HER 6156). Roman finds have been uncovered during previous archaeological investigations on the caravan park site.

#### Medieval

Baldock continued to be occupied through the medieval period. Just to the south-east of the caravan site evidence of medieval agricultural activity (HER 17435) was found during the diversion of a water main.

## Postmedieval

The site of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century chalk quarry is located on the caravan park, although not on the site of the proposed garages.

## Methodology

Following CAT scanning for services, the tarmac surface on this edge of the car park was stripped using a toothed bucket. This was cut using a 7-ton 360° excavator. The very thin and only partially surviving topsoil and sub-soil layers were then removed using a 1.5m wide ditching bucket and the surface of the underlying chalk scraped clean to reveal the presence of any archaeological features. A measured sketch plan was then produced, and possible features sampled. Any archaeological layers present were recorded using an amended version of the Museum of London context system.

A scaled photographic (digital colour) record was produced following the cleaning of the exposed natural.

## Results

In total some 65m<sup>2</sup> was stripped down to the top of the chalk, the area being investigated consisting of a 16.4m long by 5.5–6m wide NW-SE oriented rectangular strip adjoining the east side of the existing block of garages (Figure 2). The weathered top of the chalk was encountered at a depth of between 360-500mm below ground level.

On the north (or car park) side of this plot there was evidence for a considerable amount of truncation, with no topsoil or sub-soil present, but with 150mm of tarmac overlying 210mm of crushed red brick as foundations, this lying directly upon the truncated surface of (fresh) chalk. This same level of truncation continued southwards across the plot to a point just 2-3m north of the existing hedge line. Right up against the edge of this the section in the south-east corner of the plot was examined. This revealed 350mm of thin grey humic topsoil overlying 150mm of grey-brown subsoil, 50mm of dirty weathered chalk above the top of the solid chalk (at a depth of 550mm below ground level).

In terms of 'modern' features, a single hedge-rooting gully with sub-parallel sides 300mm apart and an uneven U-shaped base only 50mm deep was identified towards the eastern end (Figure 3). This could be traced eastwards for at least 9m, although its continuation westwards was assumed, parallel to and just 1.5m north of the existing hedge line. A single fragment of Postmedieval tile was encountered within the fill of this examined by means of a 1m long slot (Figure 4); the single fill here consisted of broken-up lumps of chalk (<50mm) detached from the base of this gully mixed with a loose grey-buff coloured chalky soil, small chalk inclusions and many pre-existing roots.

No archaeological features were found.

## **Conclusions**

Up to 200mm from the top of the chalk here may have been removed during the construction of the car park, though it seems unlikely this would have been responsible for the removal of any significant archaeology, had this been present. One might conclude therefore that no archaeology existed in this (small) area, the only feature being the hedge line gully associated with a pre-existing 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century planted hedgerow which must have been removed prior to the construction of the car park.

## **Acknowledgements**

The work was undertaken for Richard Wright (developer), our presence on site being facilitated by Mark Johnson (contractor). The archaeological investigation was requested by Andy Instone the Hertfordshire County Council Planning Archaeologist, who monitored the work. Bryan Crossan (CAU) produced the graphics for this report, whilst John Moller (CAU) geo-located the site. Emma Beadsmoore was CAU Project Manager.

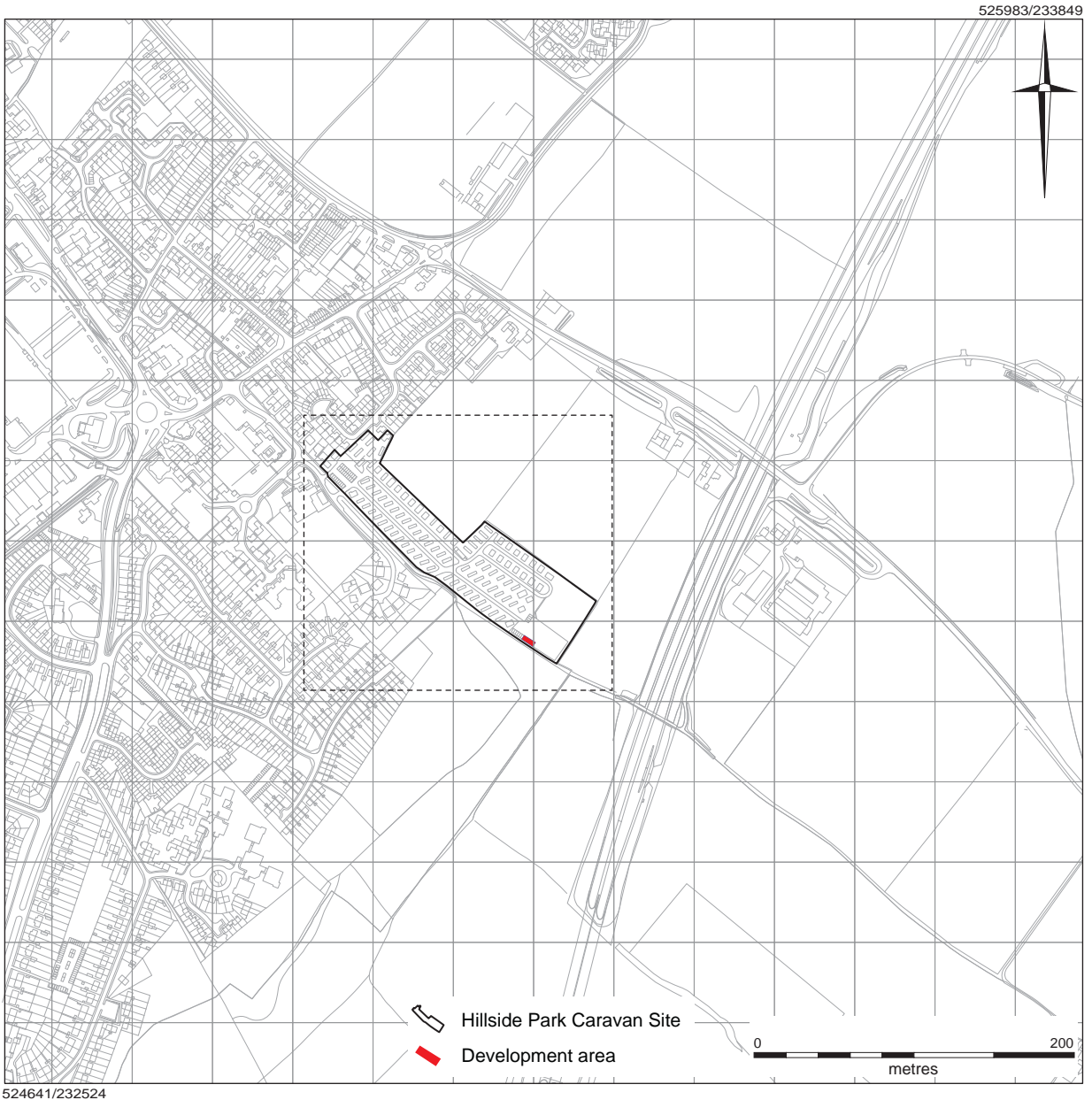
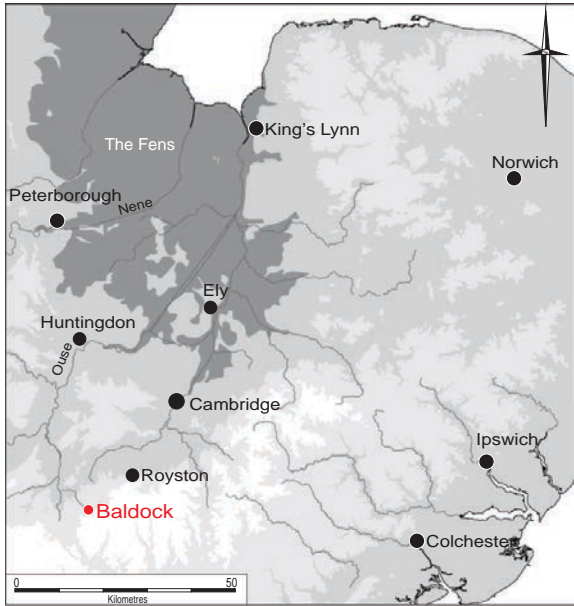


Figure 1. Location Plan.





-  Hillside Park Caravan Site
-  Development area

Figure 2. Trench Plan.





Figure 3. Photograph of modern hedge-rooting gully along RH edge.



Figure 4. Photograph of 1m slot in cut into shallow gully.

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## OASIS ID: cambridg3-174656

### Project details

Project name	Hillside Park Caravan Site, Limekiln Lane, Baldock
Short description of the project	Between 26th February and 3rd March 2014 an archaeological investigation was undertaken at the Hillside Park Caravan Site on Limekiln Lane, Baldock Hertfordshire in advance of the construction of a block of six new garages. Archaeological monitoring here was requested as a 'Strip, Map and Record' exercise. As part of this the 65m2 footprint for the garage foundations was stripped down to the top of the chalk and the surface of this cleaned, but no archaeology was present. The only feature here was the rooting gully for an old hedge line along its southern edge, parallel to the modern existing hedge line and boundary fence.
Project dates	Start: 26-02-2014 End: 03-03-2014
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	HCB14 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	12/02244/1 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	HEDGE-LINE GULLY Modern
Significant Finds	BRICK AND TILE Modern
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Small-scale extensions (e.g. garages, porches, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

## Project location

Country England

Site location HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BALDOCK Hillside Park Caravan Site, Limekiln Lane, Baldock

Postcode SG7 6PQ

Study area 65.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TL 25302 33056 51.9813888889 -0.175277777778 51 58 53 N 000 10 31 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 70.00m Max: 70.00m

## Project creators

Name of Organisation Cambridge Archaeological Unit

Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator Emma Beadsmoore

Project director/manager Emma Beadsmoore

Project supervisor Simon Timberlake

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body Richard Wright

## Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Cambridge Archaeological Unit

Digital Archive ID HCB14

Digital Contents "Survey"

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

Paper Archive recipient Cambridge Archaeological Unit

Paper Archive ID HCB14

Paper Contents "Survey"

Paper Media available "Drawing", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Survey "

## Project bibliography 1

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