

Unit 2, Broad Lane Industrial Estate, Broad Lane, Cottenham

An Archaeological Evaluation



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**LAND AT UNIT 2, BROAD LANE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE,
BROAD LANE, COTTENHAM**

An Archaeological Evaluation

commissioned by SDC

March 2021

Project Team:

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Summary

A trial trench-based evaluation was carried out by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on land at Unit 2, Broad Lane Industrial Estate, Cottenham, Cambridgeshire, between 15th-16th March 2021. A single undated pit was the only archaeological feature encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Circumstances of the project

- 1.1.1 An archaeological trial trench-based evaluation was undertaken by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on land at Unit 2, Broad Lane Industrial Estate, Broad Lane, Cottenham, Cambridgeshire (centered on TL 44976 68170) between the 15th and 16th March 2021. The development area is currently an industrial unit with surrounding car park and green space, covering an area of 0.28ha. The planned development comprises nine dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping (Planning Application S/3703/19/FL).
- 1.1.2 Four trenches totalling 42m in length were excavated (Figure 1) revealing a single undated pit (Figure 2).
- 1.1.3 The project was commissioned by Nick Shinner, of SDC. The work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation set out by the CAU (Beadsmoore 2021), in response to a brief issued by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (Robinson Zeki 2020). The site code for the evaluation was BLC21.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The development area is located within the Broad Lane industrial estate, Cottenham. It is bordered by Broad Lane to the south and west, and the industrial estate to the north and east. The development area is situated at approximately 8m AOD; the underlying geology comprises Kimmeridge clay formation (BGS 2021).

1.3 Archaeological background

- 1.3.1 The development area sits within a landscape of known archaeological activity, with a number of archaeological finds and investigations having taken place around Cottenham.
- 1.3.2 Earlier Prehistoric remains are not particularly well attested to within the village. A Mesolithic flint scatter was recorded during excavations, 200m to the southwest (Mortimer 2000), and a Mesolithic tranchet axe has also been found within the village (CHER 05215). Additional earlier prehistoric remains are limited to Bronze Age pottery recovered during test pitting 500m to the southeast (CHER MCB 19210)
- 1.3.3 Limited Iron Age and Roman remains have been found within Cottenham itself, however a number of recent excavations around the edge of the village have recovered extensive remains from these periods. Evaluations and geophysical surveys at Rampton Road, 1km to the east, identified two settlements dating to the Late Iron Age and Roman periods comprising networks of enclosure ditches with associated watering holes (Atkins 2015, Egen and Cronogue-Freeman 2016). The Roman settlement site at

Bullocks Haste, which still survives as upstanding earthworks and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, lies 2.5km to the northwest (CHER 05495).

- 1.3.4 The Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods are particularly well documented within the landscape. Dense Mid-Late Saxon settlement remains were excavated just 200m to the southwest of the development area, where several field boundaries, paddocks and structures were excavated (Mortimer 2000). Further evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity was also recorded some 750m to the south, where Late Saxon pottery, mainly found residually in later Medieval features, was recovered (Heawood 1997).
- 1.3.5 In the Medieval period Cottenham was recorded as being one of the largest villages in Cambridgeshire, with 60 tenants being present in the 11th century (Lewis 1989). The present village church, located 600m to the northwest of the development area, dates to the 13th century, although there is evidence to suggest an earlier church existed at the site (CHER 10340). Archaeological remains from the Medieval period have been noted immediately to the southwest of the development area where there are the remains of a moated site, that is likely part of the Medieval Crowland Manor and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (CHER 01118, SAM 1013882).

2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1.1 The trial trenching comprised four trenches totaling 42m in length, which were located primarily in order to avoid modern services. Trial trenches were excavated using a 360° mechanical excavator, with a toothless ditching bucket, operating under archaeological supervision at all time. Trenches were located using an advanced Global Positioning System (GPS) with Ordnance Datum (OD) heights obtained.
- 2.1.2 Potential archaeological features were sample excavated with all archaeological finds retained. A written record of archaeological features and soil sequences was created using the CAU recording system (see below). A digital photographic record of the trenches was also maintained.
- 2.1.3 The CAU recording system is an adaptation of the MoLAS system (Spence *et al*) designed to be more appropriate to 'extensive' rural settings and to facilitate effective organisation of stratigraphic data and finds plotting. The system uses the Feature (ditch, pit, posthole etc.) as the main interpreted entity. Each feature is assigned an individual number with a context group number (eg. 100) also being assigned to each individual slot excavated in that feature; context numbers are derived from this context group number (eg. 100.01, 100.02 etc.). The context sheet forms the basis of the written archive but can be supplemented by Feature sheets (for complex features) as well as 'specialist' sheets such as skeleton and timber sheets. All sections are drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Topsoil and subsoil sampling

- 3.1.1 Sampling of the topsoil and subsoil, through hand sorting of 90 liters samples at both ends of each trench, yielded just two sherds of post-medieval pottery and 13 fragments of modern brick and tile.
- 3.1.2 Metal detecting of all features and surviving subsoil layers was undertaken during this evaluation. Metal detecting of topsoil deposits was not undertaken due to very high quantities of modern metal debris across the site. A single metal artefact was recovered, a World War II 'Brodie' Helmet, found during machine stripping of Trench 3 (Figure 3). This object has been recorded, however, due to its poor state of preservation, it will be discarded.

3.2 Trench 1 (Figure 2; Appendix 1)

- 3.2.1 Trench 1 was machined to a depth of between 0.51m and 0.79m. The sequence comprised a dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil, which sealed a thin layer of mid grey silty clay subsoil at the southwestern end of the trench, although over the majority of the trench topsoil directly sealed the underlying natural clay. No archaeological features were encountered within the trench.

3.3 Trench 2 (Figure 2; Appendix 1)

- 3.3.1 Trench 2 was machined to a depth of between 0.76m and 1.04m. The sequence comprised topsoil overlying subsoil, on average 0.34m thick, which in turn sealed the underlying natural clay.
- 3.3.2 A single feature (**F.1**) was recorded, and comprised a sub-oval/sub-circular pit extending beyond the trench to the south (Figure 4). This pit (1.2m in diameter by 0.48m deep) had a very sterile light grey silty clay fill, which produced no finds.

3.4 Trench 3 (Figure 2; Appendix 1)

- 3.4.1 Trench 3 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.93m. The sequence comprised a silty clay topsoil and a homogenous light grey silty clay subsoil. Some areas of made ground were noted truncating the topsoil, which were on average 0.32m thick. A modern brick lined feature at the northwestern end of the trench and a pipe trench located centrally were not excavated, nor was the area around them machined down to the level of the natural, due to the presence of potential asbestos containing material.
- 3.4.2 A single potential feature, **F.2**, was excavated within this trench; an amorphous silty spread 0.2m thick, which is most likely to be natural in origin.

3.5 Trench 4 (Figure 2; Appendix 1)

- 3.5.1 Trench 4 was machined to a depth of 0.92m. The soil sequence comprised a topsoil deposit over a relatively thick light grey silty clay subsoil. No archaeological features were noted within this trench.

4 CONCLUSION

This archaeological evaluation recorded very limited archaeological remains and deposits within the development area, despite being within an area of high archaeological potential. Only a single undated feature with no finds was recorded and was clearly not occupation-related. This would seem to suggest that this area was beyond the boundaries of the known settlement activity and moated site recorded just to the east of the development area (Mortimer 2000), and that here at least there is no associated activity.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 5.1.1 The work was commissioned by Nick Shinner on behalf of SDC. The project was managed for the CAU by Emma Beadsmoore and was monitored by Kasia Gdanic on behalf of the CHET. The author was assisted on site by Charlie Barker. Site Survey was undertaken by Jonathan Moller and the report graphics are by Charlotte Walton.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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7 APPENDIX 1

Trench Descriptions

Trench 1		
	Orientation	NE-SW
	Max. Topsoil Depth (m)	0.48
	Max. Depth of subsoil/ made ground (m)	0.31
	Max. Trench Depth	0.79
	Width (m)	1.8
	Length (m)	7
	<p>General Description:</p> <p>Trench 1 comprised a topsoil overlaying a patchy subsoil layer. No archaeological features were exposed.</p>	

Trench 2		
	Orientation	E-W
	Max. Topsoil Depth (m)	0.42
	Max. Depth of subsoil/ made ground (m)	0.34
	Max. Trench Depth	1.04
	Width (m)	1.8
	Length (m)	8
<p>General Description:</p> <p>Trench 2 comprised deposits of topsoil over a subsoil layer. A single pit F.1 was recorded.</p>		

Trench 3		
	Orientation	NW-SE
	Max. Topsoil Depth (m)	0.49
	Max. Depth of subsoil/ made ground (m)	0.44
	Max. Trench Depth	0.93
	Width (m)	1.8
	Length (m)	18
<p>Description:</p> <p>Trench 3 comprised deposits of topsoil over a thick subsoil layer with areas of made ground also noted. One Feature F.2 was encountered and is likely natural origin.</p>		

Trench 4		
	Orientation	NW-SE
	Max. Topsoil Depth (m)	0.38
	Max. Depth of subsoil/ made ground (m)	0.54
	Max. Trench Depth	0.92
	Width (m)	1.8
	Length (m)	9
<p>General Description:</p> <p>Trench 4 comprised deposits of topsoil over subsoil.</p>		

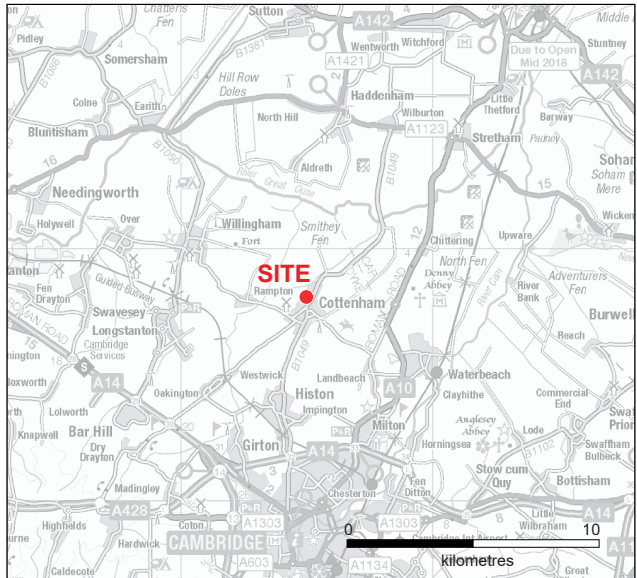
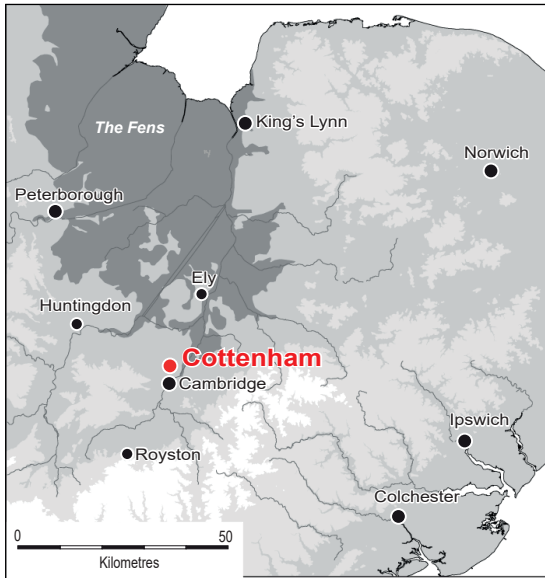


Figure 1 Trench Location plan

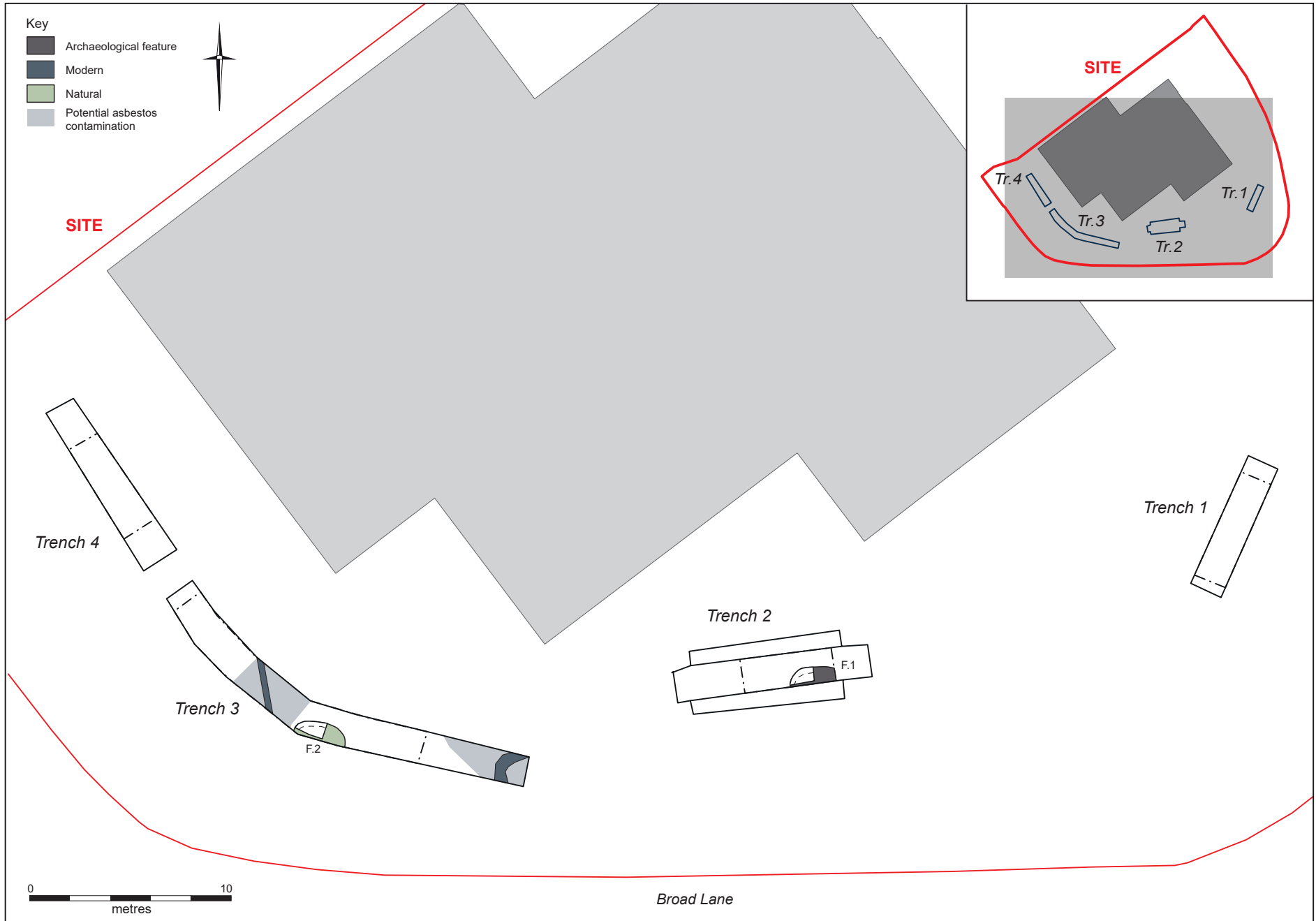


Figure 2 Trench location plan

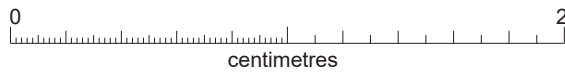


Figure 3 Photo of 'Broadie' helmet found within Trench 3



Figure 4 Photograph of pit F.1 in Trench 2

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Project details

Project name	Unit 2, Broad Lane Industrial Estate, Broad Lane Cottenham
Short description of the project	A trial trench-based evaluation was carried out by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on land at Unit 2, Broad Lane Industrial Estate, Cottenham, Cambridgeshire, between 15th-16th March 2021. A single undated pit was the only archaeological feature encountered.
Project dates	Start: 15-03-2021 End: 16-03-2021
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Significant Finds	POT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	HELMET Modern

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE COTTENHAM Unit 2, Broad Lane Industrial Estate, Broad Lane, Cottenham
Study area	0.3 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 44966 68150 52.291944444444 0.125833333333 52 17 31 N 000 07 33 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project director/manager	Emma Beadsmoore
Project supervisor	Tom Bourne
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Store
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
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