

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

LYNX BUSINESS PARK, SNAILWELL,

NEAR NEWMARKET,

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

NGR TL 63775 68066

On behalf of

Forever Fuels

DECEMBER 2011

REPORT FOR	Forever Fuels c/o Stephen Bowley Planning Consultancy Ferndale Tiddington Thame Oxfordshire OX9 2LQ
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation on land east of Unit 1A, Lynx Business Park, Snailwell, Cambridgeshire. No archaeological remains were identified in the single 20m long machine-dug trench.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The development area (hereafter referred to as 'the Site') is located on land east of Unit 1A on the south-eastern edge of the Lynx Business Park, Snailwell Road, Snailwell, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 63775 68066). It is bordered to the east by a stream (the River Snail) and a field boundary; and to the north and east by car parks and existing business premises of the Lynx Business Park. To the south there is a hedge line, separating the Site from The Pines Industrial Estate. The well-drained loamy soils of the Moulton Association lie above alluvium sand and gravel deposits which themselves lie above Middle Chalk geology (SSEW 1983).

The existing ground level is relatively flat at *circa.* 20.60-20.97 metres above Ordnance Datum and the Site currently consists of waste ground next to a car park, where shrubs were growing until recently.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission was sought in September 2011 by Forever Fuels for the construction of a wood pellet storage and distribution plant on land at the eastern edge of the existing Lynx Business Park, located to the north-west of the village of Snailsea in a triangle of land between Snailwell Road and Fordham Road (11/00788/FUL).

Due to the presence of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Snailwell Roman villa (SAM 80, Cambridgeshire MCB 07483) some 150m to the north-west, and the potential for other archaeological remains to be present on the Site, the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCCHET) recommended that a condition be applied requiring a staged programme of archaeological investigation. The first stage was an archaeological evaluation. CCCHET recommended that the site should be evaluated by the excavation of a single trial trench 20m long and 1.6m in width.

John Moore Heritage Services were commissioned to undertake this work, and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* was prepared by John Moore Heritage Services to satisfy the requirements of CCCHET. This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) proposed the methodology by which the archaeological evaluation was to be carried out. The WSI was accepted by CCCHET, and the evaluation was undertaken by John Moore Heritage Services on Thursday 25th November 2011.

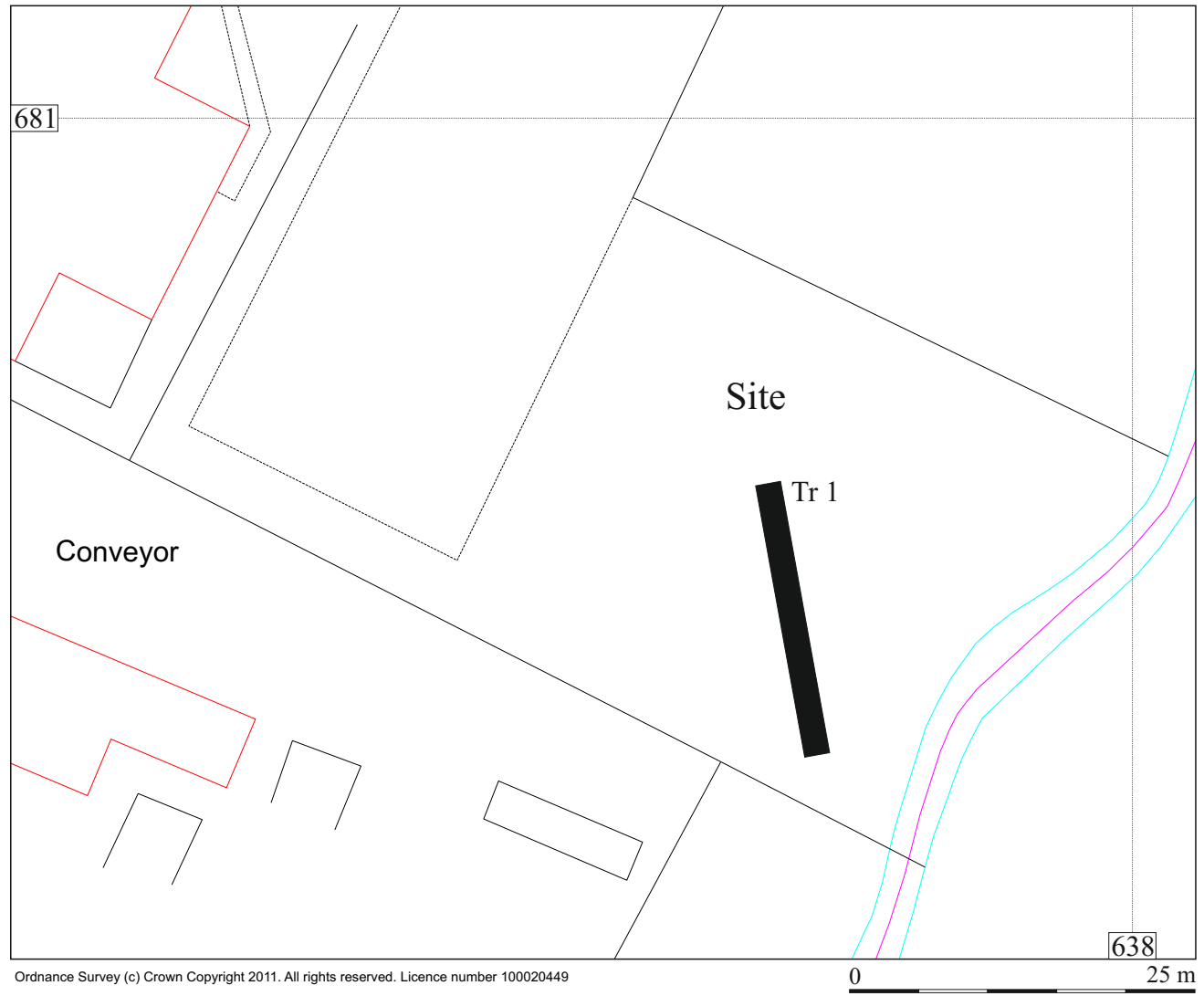
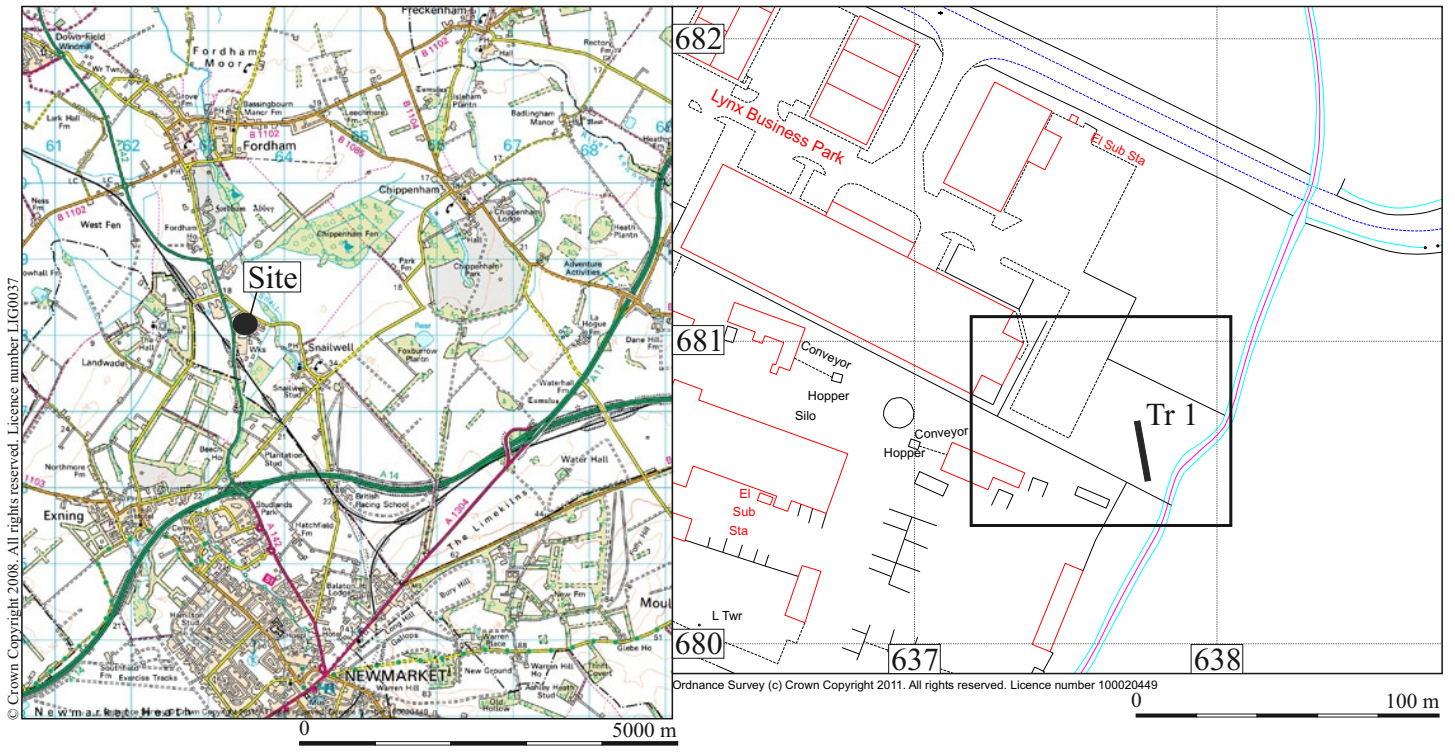


Figure 1. Site location

1.3 Archaeological Background

Evidence for prehistoric inhabitation has been previously found in the area. An archaeological excavation undertaken in 1996 some 500m to the west of the Site recorded a series of early Bronze Age and mid to late Bronze Age boundary ditches (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record MCB 16109), and there were also Iron Age settlement features including storage pits, 4-6 posthole structures (possible granaries) and post-built roundhouses. A possible Bronze Age ring ditch was identified *circa.* 200m to the south of this excavation (11105), and Bronze Age flintwork was found 500m to the north of the Site (07745). Another extended Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation site was investigated *c.* 500m to the southeast in the vicinity of Snailwell village (07742 and 07790), and an Iron Age cremation burial was also found there, with rich grave goods including imported pottery dating around the time of the Claudian conquest in AD 43 (07420). Iron Age artefacts were also recovered 500m to the north of the Site (07745A and 07746).

Within 100m to the north of the site lies the Scheduled Monument (Cambridgeshire SAM 80) of Snailwell Roman Villa (07483). A Roman house with a hypocaust and painted wall plaster was discovered in 1971 beside the River Snail, with large quantities of mainly 3rd century AD pottery. Scatters of Romano-British pottery and other artefacts were identified 700m to the north of the Site (07746, 07435) and 700m to the east (07440). Another second possible Roman settlement is situated near the fen edge 750m to the south of the Site (07743). A Roman cremation was located nearby (07434). Evidence for Saxon settlement was recorded on the outskirts of the modern village (07742A), with later medieval linear earthworks to the north (09069 and 10313) possible field system features. Also near the modern village are the remains of a post-medieval manor house (07439) and medieval or post-medieval fish ponds (01188). Two archaeological evaluations 150m and 300m west of the Site revealed no evidence of human activity (Cambridgeshire HER ECB 391, 2938).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the Site;
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered;
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits;
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present;

And in particular:

- To identify and characterise any evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity;
- To identify and remains associated with the known monuments in the area.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to the advice from CCCHET, JMHS carried out the work, which comprised the excavation of one 20m long trench within the proposal area (Figure 1).

3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the excavation of one trench 20m long and 1.5m wide using a JCB mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.5m wide ditching bucket.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the WSI and agreed with CCCHET. Any archaeological deposits and features revealed would be cleaned by hand and recorded in plan before being excavated and recorded at an appropriate level. Archaeological features or other archaeological remains such as a concentration of artefacts would have written, drawn and photographic records made of them. Site procedures were carried out and the work undertaken in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008a, 2008b) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. All context numbers are preceded by trench number and /. Details of the trench are presented in Appendix 1 at the rear of this report.

4 RESULTS

4.1 The Evaluation

4.1.1 Trench 1 (Figs 1 - 3)

Trench 1 was 20m long and 1.5m wide, and was orientated NNE-SSW (Figs. 1-2). It was machined to a maximum depth of 1.10m. The topsoil (1/1) consisted of mid to dark grey brown sandy loam up to 0.25-0.30m thick with lots of root disturbance, but this had probably been redeposited as it lay above a layer of cream to pale yellow brown friable sand, chippings and flint pebbles 0.50-0.60m thick (1/2). There was also plastic sheeting and pipe within this layer. This was modern made ground, and it also filled a large cut or area of disturbance towards the southern end of the trench which contained modern bricks and concrete rubble too. This feature was not bottomed, but was machined to a maximum depth of 1.10m.

Underneath the made ground was compact reddish brown sand with frequent flint and pebbles (1/3), and this was the natural subsoil. Apart from the modern cut filled with concrete and brick, no features were observed cut into this deposit.



Figure 2. Photograph of west facing section Trench 1, showing a thin deposit of topsoil over a thick layer of made ground



Figure 3. Trench 1 looking south. The large cut filled with concrete rubble and bricks is visible towards the far end of the trench

4.2 The Results of the Evaluation

No archaeological deposits or features were identified within Trench 1, and no artefacts were recorded.

4.3 Reliability of Results and Methodology

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place in clement, dry conditions with good light and visibility.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

No artefacts were recovered and no deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental analysis were present.

6 DISCUSSION

The results of the evaluation were entirely negative. No archaeological deposits or features were recorded.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Appendix 1: Archaeological Context Inventory

Context	Type	Description and finds	L (m)	B (m)	D(m)	Levels	Date	Interpretation	
Trench 1									
	(1/1)	Layer	Friable mid to dark grey brown sandy loam with much root disturbance.	Across trench	Across trench	0.25-0.30m	20.66-20.97m OD	Modern	Topsoil
	(1/2)	Layer	Friable cream to pale yellow sand, chippings and pebbles, with concrete blocks & bricks.	Across trench	Across trench	0.50-0.60m	-	Modern	Made ground
	(1/3)	Layer	Compact reddish brown sand with frequent flint & pebbles.	Across trench	Across trench	-	19.80-20.09m OD		Natural subsoil