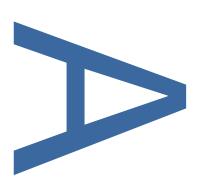


Land at Land at Roundhouse Farm, Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath, Hertfordshire



An Archaeological Evaluation



5/2020/1992 & 5/2020/2464 AND 6/2020/2248/OUTLINE Planning reference

St Albans City & District Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough

Local planning authority

Council

R14349 Site Code HBGL20 PCA report no.

K6884 Date December 20 PCA project no

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

www.pre-construct.com

Project Information						
Site name	Land at Roundhouse Farm, Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath,					
	Hertfordshire					
Project type	An Archaeological Evaluation					
Site address	Roundhouse Farm, Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath, Hertfordshire					
NGR	TL 21189 05928					
Local planning authority	St Albans City & District Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council					
Planning reference	5/2020/1992 & 5/2020/2464 AND 6/2020/2248/OUTLINE					
Commissioning client	The Environmental Dimension Partnership					
Project dates	30/11-03/12/2020					
Archive site code	HBGL20					

PCA Information						
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Reissued report version:	3				
Reason for reissue:	HCC comments				
Project Manager approval:	Z Pozorski				















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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd at land at Roundhouse Farm, Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath, Hertfordshire, AL4. The site is centered at National Grid Reference TL 21189 05928.
- 1.2 The work was carried out to support the planning applications for a residential development on the site comprising up to 100 dwellings with ancillary works.
- 1.3 The archaeological investigation, carried out between 30th November to 3rd December 2020, consisted of eleven evaluation trenches covering a representative 2% sample of the site.
- 1.4 The only deposits and features other than of natural origin recorded during the archaeological investigation were modern in date; being either land drains or ploughsoil that capped natural clay and gravel.
- 1.5 The results of a prior geophysical survey at the site appeared to have been influenced by the iron rich compounds found within natural deposits producing feature-like patterns observed in the eastern part of the site. Additionally, possible enclosure features seen on the survey appear to have been caused by two substantial modern land drain cuts.
- 1.6 No evidence of earthwork associated with a county boundary crossing the site was detected during the evaluation.
- 1.7 The height of natural deposits of clay and gravelly clay varied between 74.38-75.41m OD.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd at land at Roundhouse Farm, Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath, Hertfordshire, AL4 (Figure 1). The site comprises agricultural fields and is centered at National Grid Reference TL 21189 05928.
- 2.2 A planning permission is sought for a residential development on the site comprising up to 100 dwellings with ancillary works (St Albans City & District Council Planning Ref. 5/2020/1992 & 5/2020/2464, and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Planning Ref. 6/2020/2248/OUTLINE).
- 2.3 The Archaeology and Heritage Assessment prepared for the site by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP 2020) and geophysical survey of the site carried out by WYAS Archaeological Services (WYAS 2020) indicated potential for post-medieval agricultural archaeological remains on the site. The northern part of the site may have contained a moat, according to historic maps, although no indication of it was found during the geophysical survey.
- 2.4 Details of the evaluation were agreed between The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd and Simon West, St Albans City & District Council (SACDC) District Archaeologist, and Andy Instone, Senior Historic Environment Advisor for Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), who advise the SACDC and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC), respectively, on archaeological matters, and contained in a relevant Written Scheme of Investigation (PCA 2020).
- 2.5 The work was supervised by James Langthorne and the project was managed by Zbigniew Pozorski, both of PCA. The work was commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd.
- 2.6 All works were undertaken in accordance with the following documents:
 - Roundhouse Farm, Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath, Hertfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for An Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief (PCA 2020)
 - Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Historic England 2015
 - Standard and guidance for an archaeological evaluation (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2020)
 - Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003).
 - Fieldwork Induction Manual: Operations Manual, Taylor, J & Brown, G. 2009, updated
 2018, PCA
- 2.7 The site was given the site code HBGL20. The complete archive comprising written, drawn, and photographic records will be entrusted with an appropriate local depository.

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Planning permission is sought for a residential development on the site comprising up to 100 dwellings with ancillary works (St Albans City & District Council Planning Ref. 5/2020/1992 & 5/2020/2464, and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Planning Ref. 6/2020/2248/OUTLINE).
- 3.2 Archaeological advice was sought from both St Albans City and District Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council on the archaeological potential of the site.
- 3.3 Consultation between EDP and Simon West, St Albans City & District Council (SACDC) District Archaeologist, and Andy Instone, Senior Historic Environment Advisor for Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), who advise the SACDC and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC), respectively, on archaeological matters, confirmed that in addition to the Archaeology and Heritage Assessment compiled by the Environmental Dimension Partnership (2020), and geophysical survey of the site (WYAS 2020), an archaeological evaluation in form of trial trenching should be implemented on the site. Subsequently, the details of the project have been agreed.
- 3.4 Subsequently a relevant Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation was prepared and approved by SACDC District Archaeologist and HCC.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

4.1 Geology

4.1.1 The British Geological Survey showed that the site is situated above a bedrock of chalk from the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and the Seaford Chalk Formation (undifferentiated), with superficial deposits of a Lowestoft Formation diamicton.

4.2 Topography

- 4.2.1 The site gently slopes south to north between 75-78m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 4.2.2 The site boundaries are defined to the west by Roestock Park and an Affinity Water property, to the north by houses and gardens fronting onto Roestock Gardens, to the east by Bullen Green Lane, and to the south by Fellowes Lane (Figure 2). The entire site covers an area of c. 5.1ha.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section is a summary of the information compiled in the Archaeology and Heritage Assessment prepared by the Environmental Dimension Partnership (2020).

5.2 Prehistoric

5.2.1 A single find, a Mesolithic flint axe, has been the only trace of prehistoric activity detected within 1km of the Bullens Green Lane site. Therefore, the area was considered to have a low potential for deposits or features dating to this period.

5.3 Roman

5.3.1 The Roman period was also underrepresented within the archaeological record of the site's environs. A box of seven Roman coins had been found c.730m to the north-east of the site and a cropmark about half a kilometre to the south had been interpreted as the potential remnants of a building.

5.4 Saxon and medieval

- 5.4.1 Sleapshyde, a village just over a kilometre to the north of the site, may have had its origins in the medieval period but the site itself was considered to have been woodland during this period.
- 5.4.2 Despite the northern field being marked as 'Moat Field' on an 1839 tithe map, no supporting evidence of a medieval moated site has been found in the vicinity to date.

5.5 Post-Medieval

- 5.5.1 The site developed into agricultural fields during the post-medieval period and was probably associated with one or more of the four former farmsteads that surrounded it in a 600m radius. Immediately to the north of the site a 17th century Grade II listed timber framed building still stands at 68 Roestock Lane.
- 5.5.2 A boundary between Colney Heath Civil Parish (to the west) and North Mymms CP crosses the site north to south in its centre and along its northern limit. The boundary also marks division between St Albans District to the west and Welwyn Hatfield District to the east. Part of this boundary is present on the site as a low earthwork bank.
- 5.5.3 The only previous archaeological investigations in the area have been fieldwalking and photographic surveys to the north and north-west of the site. Only scattered post-medieval pottery fragments have been recovered during these investigations.
- 5.5.4 The recent geophysical survey of the Bullens Green Lane site (WYAS 2020) suggested potential archaeological features to be present, particularly within the eastern half of the site. Further linear anomalies revealed by the survey were considered to be potential post-medieval agricultural field boundaries not previously recorded on historic maps.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

6.1 11 trenches were excavated on the site (Figure 2). Ten trenches measured 50m x 2m, trench 1 measured 25m x 2m, and all the trenches were c. 0.40m deep (see table below). These were distributed across the site in order to provide a representative 2% sample of the development area.

Trench	Orientation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Maximum Depth (m)
1	WNE-WSW	25	2	0.40
2	NE-SW	50	2	0.40
3	NW-SE	50	2	0.40
4	N-S	50	2	0.32
5	E-W	50	2	0.38
6	E-W	50	2	0.39
7	N-S	50	2	0.45
8	E-W	50	2	0.43
9	N-S	50	2	0.48
10	E-W	50	2	0.48
11	N-S	50	2	0.40

- 6.2 Prior to the excavation each trench location was scanned using a CAT (cable avoidance tool) operated by a trained individual. The trenches were located to avoid known services within the car park areas as well to avoid a gas main crossing the site north to south.
- 6.3 All homogenous deposits were excavated by a 13-tonne mechanical excavator with a flat bladed ditching bucket under constant supervision from an archaeologist, in 100mm spits until the top of the archaeological sequence, possible live services or natural deposits were reached. Where services were encountered, they were avoided and left undisturbed *in situ*. Following the cessation of excavation by machine all deposits were cleaned by hand and recorded by the archaeological team.
- 6.4 All eleven trenches were excavated down to the natural clay and clay and gravel which were generally exposed at 0.40m below ground level (BGL) in their present truncated state. Sondages were made in the trenches to confirm characteristics of the natural deposits.

- 6.5 The recording system adopted during the investigations were fully compatible with those presented within PCA's Site Manual (Taylor & Brown 2009, updated 2018). The site archive was organised to be compatible with other archaeological archives produced within Hertfordshire.
- 6.6 Trenches were hand planned at a scale of 1:50 and sections were recorded at a scale of 1:10 for each trench. Where possible, artefactual objects were recovered for dating. All archaeological deposits were recorded on *pro forma* context sheets and a full photographic record was compiled.
- 6.7 The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Geomax GPS unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.
- 6.8 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping and throughout the excavation process. Archaeological features and spoil heaps were scanned by metal-detector periodically. Only objects of modern date were found and were not retained for accession.
- 6.9 The completed archive produced during the evaluation, comprising written, drawn and photographic records, will eventually be deposited with appropriate local museum/archive depository, identified by site code HBGL20.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 7.1 Phase 1: Natural (Figures 2 & 3 and Plates 1-3)
- 7.1.1 The earliest deposits observed within all eleven trenches were natural deposited layers of clay, or clay and gravel.
- 7.1.2 The natural deposits found with Trenches 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 11 were described as fairly firm, mid-light grey and yellow brown slightly silty clay and gravel with occasional-moderate chalk and manganese flecks, and occasional-moderate naturally occurring iron rich compounds; they were identified as [16], [14], [8], [10], [6], and [2] respectively and found at maximum heights between 74.52m OD in Trench 3 to 75.41m OD in Trench 4.
- 7.1.3 Whereas the natural deposits recorded in Trenches 1, 2, 5, 6, and 10 were firm, light-mid slightly grey reddish brown slightly silty clay with occasional chalk and manganese flecking, and occasional subrounded and rounded pebbles. Natural clay deposits were known as [20] in Trench 1, [4] in Trench 2, [18] in Trench 5, [22] in Trench 6, and [12] in Trench 10. Natural clay was recorded at heights varying between 74.38m OD in Trench 1 and 75.21m OD in Trench 10.
- 7.2 **Phase 2: Modern** (Figures 2 & 3 and Plates 1, 3 & 4)
- 7.2.1 No archaeological features were seen to truncate the natural deposits of clay or clay and gravel in any of the trenches, although numerous land drains were seen to truncate the top of natural deposits within all eleven trenches. While the majority of these modern agricultural features had not typically registered on the geophysical survey two larger cuts, [24] in Trench 7 and [26] in Trenches 6 and 8, containing land drains were substantial enough to have appeared on the survey.
- 7.2.2 Land drains [24] and [26] were initially assumed to be the potential remnants of earlier enclosures from the geophysical survey, until localized excavation within Trenches 6, 7, and 8 revealed their true character. Cut [24] was filled by [23], a fairly firm, mid grey brown silty clay, with occasional gravel, manganese and chalk flecks, and very occasional modern and redeposited post-medieval pottery and brick fragments as well as the ceramic land drain itself. Cut [26] appeared to be more recent as it contained a north-south orientated plastic land drain backfilled by [24], afairly firm, mid grey silty clay with occasional small, sub-rounded and rounded pebbles [25]. The dimensions and heights these features were encountered at are described in the following table:

Cut no.	Fill no.	Orientation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Maximum Depth seen (m)	Maximum height (m OD)
24	23	E-W	2	0.80	0.50	75.19
26	25	N-S	2 (within each trench)	0.50	0.60	74.99

7.2.3 All features and deposits were ultimately capped by the fairly loose, friable, dark brown grey silty clay ploughsoil of the field, identified as [19], [17], [15], [13], [21], [11], [7], [9], [5], [3], and [1] in Trenches 1-11 respectively. The ploughsoil was recorded at a maximum height of 75.65m OD in Trench 4.

8 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The archaeological evaluation at the Bullens Green Lane site aimed to satisfy the following objectives:
 - To determine the presence or absence of surviving deposits and features at the site.
 - To establish the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions, and thus the degree of archaeological survival.
 - Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity at the site, and if so, what is the nature of this activity?
 - Is there any evidence of medieval activity on the site, in particular remains of a possible moat?
 - Can potential features, indicated by geophysical survey of the site, be confirmed as archaeological features and of what character and date?
- 8.2 The only deposits and features recorded during the archaeological investigation dated to the modern period being either the land drains that criss-crossed the site, or the ploughsoil that overlaid the natural clays and gravel.
- 8.3 The results of the geophysical survey appear to have been influenced by the iron rich compounds found within the gravellier natural deposits, producing the patterns observed in the eastern part of the site. Furthermore, the possible enclosure features seen on the survey appear to have been the product of substantial modern land drain cuts [24] and [26].
- 8.4 It was noted that the slight earthwork bank following the boundary between St Albans District and Welwyn Hatfield District runs from roughly north to south before cornering to the east just south of Trench 8. This feature was not measured precisely but is approximately 8 10m in width and evidently represents a former field boundary bank that has been spread through ploughing, leaving only a slight surface expression. The bank was cut by Trenches 6 and 8 with the ground further reduced in its location, within these trenches, at the request of the St Albans District Archaeologist and the Hertfordshire County Council Senior Historic Environment Advisor. The archaeological investigation of this feature found the bank deposit to be indistinguishable from the plough soils, no dating evidence was found associated with the bank and no earlier infilled ditches were identified beneath it.
- 8.5 There was no evidence of prehistoric activity or a medieval moated site, nor any features or deposits attributed to any other pre-modern period, including those related to the parish boundary earthwork crossing the site. Agricultural activity at the site would appear to have entirely truncated any potential archaeological deposits, features, or structures.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

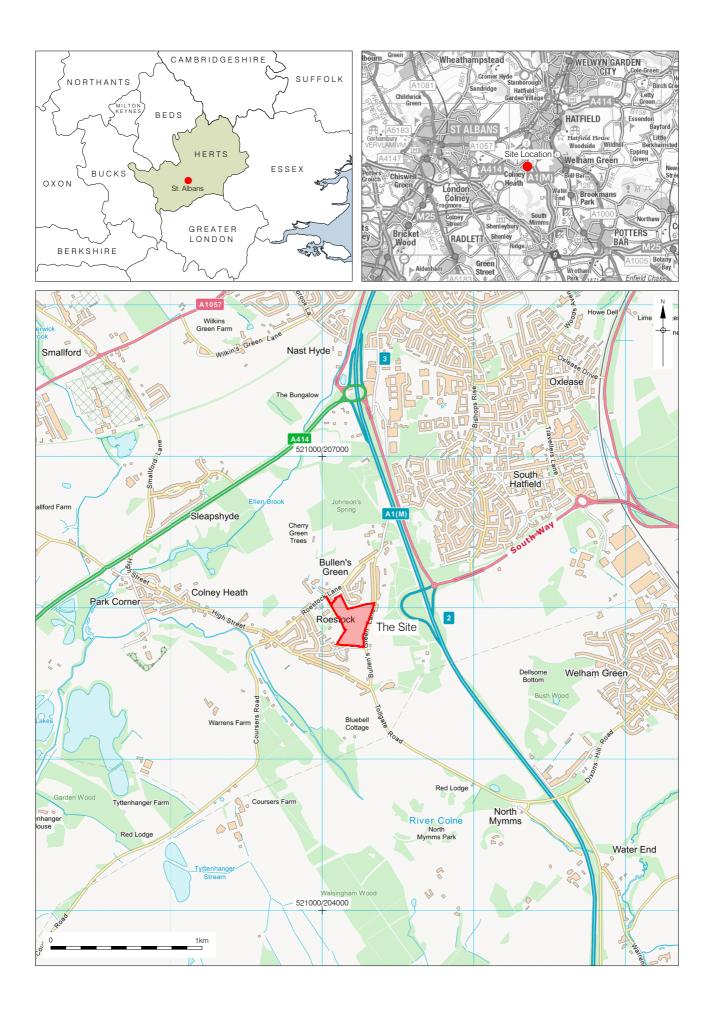
- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank the Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd. for commissioning the archaeological work.
- 9.2 We also thank Simon West, District Archaeologist for St Albans City and District Council, and Andy Instone, Senior Historic Environmental Advisor for Hertfordshire County Council, for monitoring the site and their advice.
- 9.3 The author would like to thank Zbigniew Pozorski for project managing the evaluation and editing this report, Mark Roughley and Diana Valk for CAD illustrations, Pat Cavanagh and Pippa Postgate for their hard work on site, Berni Seddon for assessing the pottery and CBM, Nathalie Barrett for surveying advice, and Jon Joyce for logistical support.

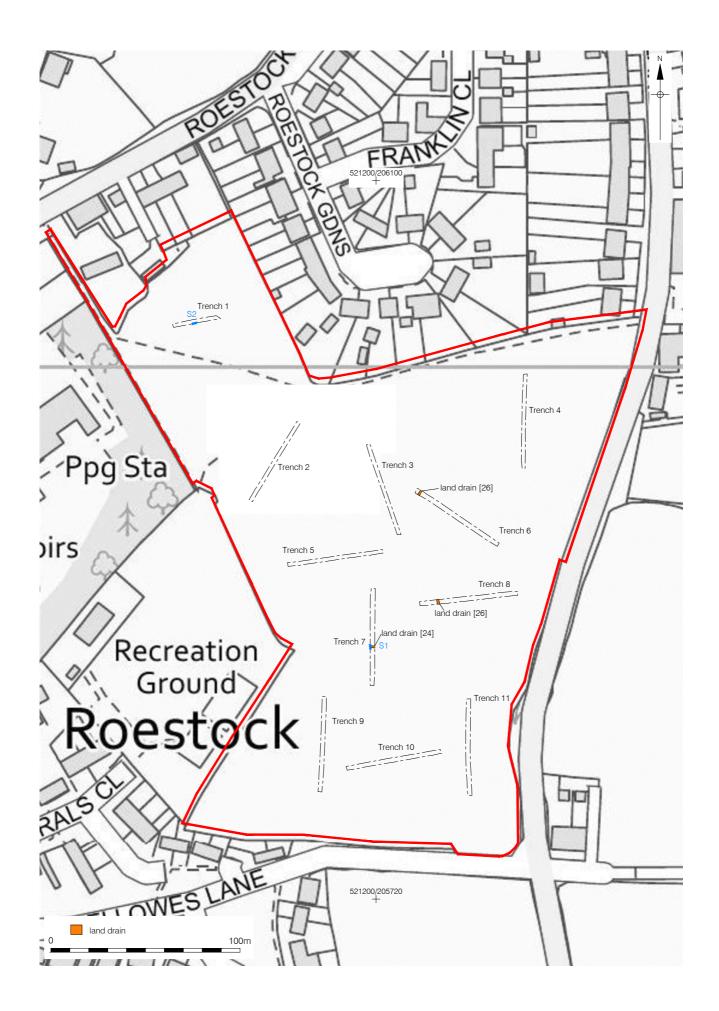
10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

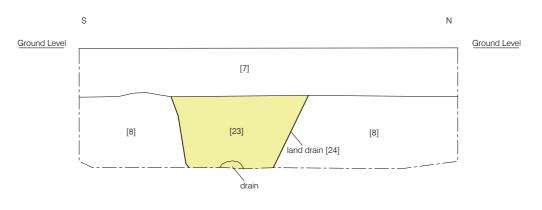
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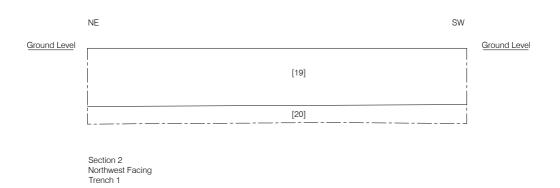
British Geological Survey www.bgs.ac.uk







Section 1 East Facing Trench 7





APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: North-east facing view of Trench 5 (1m scale)



Plate 2: North facing view of Trench 4 (1m scale)



Plate 3: North facing section in Trench 8 (1m scale)



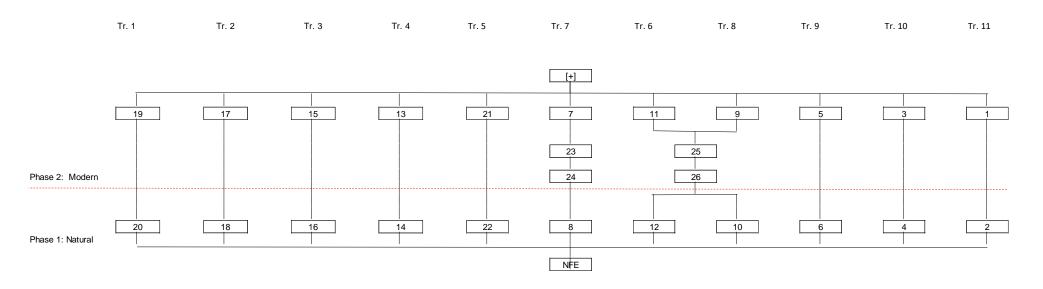
Plate 4: West facing working shot of land drain [24] in Trench 7

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Туре	Trench	Interpretation	Depth seen (m)	Highest Level (m OD)	Phase
1	Layer	Tr. 11	Ploughsoil	0.25	75.38	2
2	Natural	Tr. 11	Gravel and clay natural	0.15	75.23	1
3	Layer	Tr. 10	Ploughsoil	0.30	75.51	2
4	Natural	Tr. 10	Clay natural	0.18	75.21	1
5	Layer	Tr. 9	Ploughsoil	0.30	75.29	2
6	Natural	Tr. 9	Gravel and clay natural	0.18	74.99	1
7	Layer	Tr. 7	Ploughsoil	0.33	75.19	2
8	Natural	Tr. 7	Gravel and clay natural	0.12	74.86	1
9	Layer	Tr. 8	Ploughsoil	0.34	75.55	2
10	Natural	Tr. 8	Gravel and clay natural	0.10	75.21	1
11	Layer	Tr. 6	Ploughsoil	0.33	75.37	2
12	Natural	Tr. 6	Clay natural	0.06	75.04	1
13	Layer	Tr. 4	Ploughsoil	0.24	75.65	2
14	Natural	Tr. 4	Gravel and clay natural	0.04	75.41	1
15	Layer	Tr. 3	Ploughsoil	0.24	74.76	2
16	Natural	Tr. 3	Gravel and clay natural	0.08	74.52	1
17	Layer	Tr. 2	Ploughsoil	0.24	74.94	2
18	Natural	Tr. 2	Clay natural	0.12	74.70	1
19	Layer	Tr. 1	Ploughsoil	0.28	74.66	2
20	Natural	Tr. 1	Clay natural	0.12	74.38	1
21	Layer	Tr. 5	Ploughsoil	0.30	74.97	2
22	Natural	Tr. 5	Clay natural	0.08	74.67	1
23	Fill	Tr. 7	Fill of [24]	0.50	75.19	2
24	Cut	Tr. 7	Large land drain	0.50	75.19	2
25	Fill	Tr. 6 & 8	Fill of [26]	0.60	74.97	2
26	Cut	Tr. 6 & 8	Large land drain	0.60	74.97	2

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APPENDIX 3: SITE MATRIX



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APPENDIX 4: POTTERY ASSESSMENT

By Berni Sudds

A total of 10 sherds of pottery were recovered from the evaluation, weighing 232g. A catalogue of the pottery by context with date ranges is presented in Table 1.

The pottery dates to the post-medieval period, is all from unstratified deposits and in mixed condition. The assemblage is predominantly comprised of local and regional ware types well-paralleled in the locality and broader region, including Glazed red earthenwares, Staffordshire-type combed slipware and mass-produced 19th century refined earthenwares, bone china and stoneware. There is also a single Chinese porcelain dish or plate, dating to the 18th or 19th century.

As unstratified the pottery can only provide evidence for contemporary activity in the broader vicinity of site, and as comprised of well-paralleled types has little intrinsic merit. No further work is recommended, and the small assemblage is deemed suitable for discard.

Context	Comments	Sherd count	Weight (g)	Date range
0	Glazed red earthenware dish or bowl rim, everted, flat-topped. Internal clear glaze. Abraded.	1	21	1550 – 1900
0	Glazed red earthenware dish or bowl rim, everted, thickened. Internal green glaze. Some internal wear.	1	32	1550 – 1900
0	Glazed red earthenware body sherds. Internal clear glaze.	2	17	1550 – 1900
0	Staffordshire-type combed slipware dish rim.	1	16	1660 – 1870
0	Chinese blue and white porcelain. Footing base, open form (bowl or plate) with dragon motifs.	1	28	1700 – 1900
0	Transfer-printed ware scrolled tureen handle.	1	14	1780 – 1900
0	Bone china saucer. Plain, clear glazed.	1	16	1794 – 1900
0	English stoneware bottle base	1	70	1800 – 1900+
0	English stoneware blacking bottle rim	1	18	1800 – 1900+

Table 1: Summarised catalogue and dating of the pottery by context. Weight in grams

APPENDIX 5: CBM ASSESSMENT

Berni Sudds

A total of 4 fragments of ceramic building material were recovered from the evaluation, weighing 441g. A catalogue of the material by context with date ranges is presented in Table 1.

The ceramic building material is comprised of three fragments of peg-type roofing tile and a single fragment of brick. The peg tile has fine moulding sand and is fairly evenly moulded, broadly indicative of a post-medieval date. The fabric and form of the brick suggest it was made during the mid to late 18th century to 19th century.

The primary significance of the building material is in providing dating evidence for the deposits from which it was recovered, in this case context [23]. The types recovered can be well-paralleled in the region, and as fragmentary the assemblage has no intrinsic merit. No further work is recommended, and the material is deemed suitable for discard.

Context	Comments	Sherd count	Weight (g)	Date range
0	Post-medieval peg tile. Fine moulding sand. Small edge fragments.	2	37	1480 – 1900
23	Post-medieval peg tile. Fine moulding sand. Small, abraded edge fragment. Mortar to one surface and broken edge, reused.	1	16	1480 – 1900
23	Post-medieval brick fragment. Purple with rock, clinker and calcareous inclusions. Yellow skin. Shallow frog to sanded side. High-fired, semi-vitrified. 68mm thick.	1	388	1750 – 1900

Table 1: Summarised catalogue and dating of the ceramic building material by context. Weight in grams.

APPENDIX 6: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-410238

Project details

Land at Roundhouse Farm, Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath, Hertfordshire Project name

project

Short description of the An evaluation consisting of eleven trenches. The only deposits and features recorded during the archaeological investigation were modern in date; being

either land drains or ploughsoil that capped natural clay and gravel.

Start: 30-11-2020 End: 03-12-2020 Project dates

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated project HBGL20 - Sitecode

reference codes

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m

PLOUGHSOIL Modern Monument type

LAND DRAIN Modern Monument type

Significant Finds POTTERY Modern

Significant Finds **CBM Modern**

Significant Finds REDEPOSITED STRUCK FLINT Uncertain

Significant Finds **POTTERY Post Medieval**

Significant Finds **CBM Post Medieval**

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches","Targeted Trenches"

Development type Rural residential

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS Position in the planning Between deposition of an application and determination process

Project location

Country England

Site location HERTFORDSHIRE ST ALBANS COLNEY HEATH Roundhouse Farm, Bullens

Green Lane

Study area 5.1 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 21189 05928 51.738471034077 -0.244673212094 51 44 18 N 000 14 40 W

Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 74.67m Max: 75.41m

Project creators

Name of Organisation PCA

Project brief originator Environment Dimension Partnership

Project design originator Zbigniew Pozorski

Project Zbigniew Pozorski

director/manager

Project supervisor James Langthorne

Type of sponsor/funding Environment Dimension Partnerships Ltd

body

Project archives

Physical Archive Local Museum

recipient

Physical Archive ID HBGL20

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

Digital Archive recipient Local Museum

Digital Archive ID HBGL20

Digital Contents "none"

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

Paper Archive recipient Local Museum

Paper Archive ID HBGL20

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

A forthcoming report

Publication type

Title Land at Roundhouse Farm, Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath, Hertfordshire.

Author(s)/Editor(s) Langthorne, J.

Date 2020

Issuer or publisher Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.

Place of issue or London

publication

Description A4 softcover grey literature report.

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