Steeles Road, Woolpit, Suffolk

Archaeological Evaluation Report

March 2014

Client:
OA East Report No: 1602
OASIS No: oxfordar-172441
NGR: TL 976 618
Evaluation at Steeles Road, Woolpit, Suffolk

Archaeological Evaluation

By Nick Gilmour MA Alfa

Editor: Chris Thatcher BA

Illustrator: Séverine Bézie BA MA

Report Date: March 2014
Report Number: 1602
Site Name: Steeles Road, Woolpit, Suffolk
HER Event No: WPT 040
Date of Works: March 2014
Client Name: Lovell
Client Ref: 
Planning Ref: 2228/13
Grid Ref: TL 976 618
Site Code: WPT 040
Finance Code: XSFWOO14
Receiving Body: Suffolk County Stores

Accession No:
Prepared by: Nick Gilmour
Position: Project Officer
Date: March 2014

Checked by: Paul Spoerry
Position: Regional Manager
Date: March 2014
Signed: 

Disclaimer
This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology East,
15 Trafalgar Way,
Bar Hill,
Cambridge,
CB23 8SQ

t: 01223 850500
f: 01223 850599
e: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net
w: http://thehumanjourney.net/oaeast

© Oxford Archaeology East 2014
Oxford Archaeology Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627
## Table of Contents

**Summary**........................................................................................................................................5  
**1 Introduction**................................................................................................................................6  
  1.1 Location and scope of work....................................................................................................... 6  
  1.2 Geology and topography....................................................................................................... 6  
  1.3 Archaeological and historical background............................................................................ 6  
  1.4 Acknowledgements................................................................................................................ 8  
**2 Aims and Methodology**............................................................................................................. 9  
  2.1 Aims....................................................................................................................................... 9  
  2.2 Methodology........................................................................................................................ 9  
**3 Results**...................................................................................................................................... 10  
  3.1 Introduction.......................................................................................................................... 10  
  3.2 Trench 1,.............................................................................................................................. 10  
  3.3 Trenches 2, 3 and 4............................................................................................................. 10  
  3.4 Trench 5............................................................................................................................... 10  
  3.5 Trenches 6, 7, 8 and 9......................................................................................................... 10  
  3.6 Finds Summary.................................................................................................................... 10  
**4 Discussion and Conclusions**.................................................................................................. 12  
  4.1 Significance.......................................................................................................................... 12  
  4.2 Recommendations.............................................................................................................. 12  
**Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory**......................................................... 13  
**Appendix B. Bibliography**....................................................................................................... 16  
**Appendix C. OASIS Report Form**............................................................................................ 17
List of Figures

Fig. 1  Site location map
Fig. 2  Trench plan showing excavated features
Between the 4th and 5th of March 2014, Oxford Archaeology East carried out an evaluation on Land off Steeles Road, Woolpit, Suffolk. This was in advance of the proposed demolition of existing buildings, to be followed by the construction of new housing.

The evaluation revealed few archaeological remains. These comprised a single ditch and a natural hollow. A single sherd of pottery, probably of Iron Age date, was found in the natural hollow. In addition, several stuck flints were also recovered.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 During March 2014 Oxford Archaeology East conducted an archaeological evaluation at land off Steeles Road, Woolpit, Suffolk (centred on TL 976 618). This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Matthew Brudenell of Suffolk County Council (SCC; Planning Application 2228/13), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East.

1.1.2 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by SCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

1.1.3 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site is located on boulder clay (BGS map sheet 189).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The known archaeological activity within 1km of the current site is discussed below by period. The Suffolk Historic Environment Record number for each site is given in brackets.

Prehistoric

1.3.2 Evidence for prehistoric activity within and around Woolpit is limited. A number of stray finds are recorded and these include a polished stone axe found c.1.2km to the east of Steeles Road (WPT014) and two fragments of socketed bronze axes found within Woolpit, one 750m north of the current site (WPT017), the other just over 1km to the north (WPT016). A cropmark of a ring-ditch, which may be a prehistoric feature, has also been recorded c.950m to the east of the current site.

Roman

1.3.3 A scatter of Roman pottery was recovered from a field c.150m to the east of the current proposed development area (WPT 010), with a second scatter of pottery noted c.480m to the south-east (WPT 011). A Sestertius of Hadrian was also found in the garden of a house c.150m to the north-east of the site (WPT 001). In the wider area, Roman brooches were found c.900m to the west (DRK005).

Medieval

1.3.4 The Church of St. Mary is located c.500m to the north-west of the current site (WPT007). The church dates from the Norman period, with much 14th century fabric surviving, including the porch. The medieval centre of the village, including the market place is located just to the east of the church. A scatter of 12th-14th century pottery was recovered from the surface of a field c.360m to the south-east of Steeles Road (WPT012).
Previous archaeological work

1.3.5 Two evaluations have previously taken place, c.150m to the north-west of the current site (WPT 034; WPT 035). Neither recorded any pre-modern features.

1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The author would like to thank Lovell, who commissioned and funded the work. Additional thanks go to Pat Moan, who carried out the survey and Lindsay Kemp who assisted with the fieldwork. The evaluation was monitored by Matthew Brudenell on behalf of Suffolk County Council.
2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims
2.1.1 The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

2.2 Methodology
2.2.1 The Brief required that a total of 210m of evaluation trench be excavated. Due to the presence of standing buildings, overhead and underground services and other obstructions, it was only possible to excavate a total of 175.5m of trenching.

2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 360° excavator, using a toothless ditching bucket.

2.2.3 The site survey was carried out using a Leica 1200 GPS, with Smartnet.

2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

2.2.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

2.2.6 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were present on the site.

2.2.7 Site conditions were good, with bright sunny weather.
3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction
3.1.1 The results are presented below, by trench, with full descriptions given in Appendix A.

3.2 Trench 1
3.2.1 A single large feature (3), which appeared to represent a natural hollow, was present at the northern end of Trench 1. Feature 3 was 3.40m long, 2.04m wide and 0.24m deep, with gently sloping sides and a flat base.
3.2.2 It was filled by a single deposit (4) comprised of a dark brownish grey, silty clay. A single sherd of pottery (20g), of probable Iron Age date, along with two struck flints and 52g of animal bone were recovered from this deposit.

3.3 Trenches 2, 3 and 4
3.3.1 No archaeological features were present within any of these trenches and no finds were retrieved.

3.4 Trench 5
3.4.1 Ditch 1 crossed the northern end of Trench 5 on a south-west to north-east orientation. It was 0.82m wide and 0.10m deep, with gently sloping sides and a flat base.
3.4.2 A single mid brownish grey, silty clay deposit (2) filled this feature. A single struck flint was recovered from the slot excavated across this ditch, although this is likely to be residual.

3.5 Trenches 6, 7, 8 and 9
3.5.1 None of these trenches contained any archaeological features and no finds were recovered from them.

3.6 Finds Summary
3.6.1 Few finds were recovered from this evaluation and these are described below.

Struck Flint
3.6.2 Four fragments of struck flint were found during the evaluation. One (10g) was recovered from the fill of Ditch 1, this flake retains some cortex on its dorsal surface, along with several flake scars. Two small flakes (1g total), one in translucent black flint and the other in opaque grey flint, were recovered from the fill of natural hollow 3.
3.6.3 The final flint (23g) was recovered from the topsoil of a ploughed field at the southern end of the site. This is a thick, short flake manufactured from opaque back/grey flint, which retains some solid orangey brown cortex.
3.6.4 This small assemblage is not typologically closely datable, however, it does demonstrate a background level of prehistoric activity in the area of the site.

Pottery
3.6.5 A single sherd (20g) of handmade pottery was recovered from fill 4 of natural hollow 3. This single body sherd is sand tempered with small quantities of grog and is most likely of Iron Age date. However, a Saxon date cannot be ruled out.
3.6.6 In addition, a single sherd (8g) from the rim of a course-ware vessel was recovered from the topsoil of the ploughed field. This abraded sherd dates from between the 12th
and 14th century AD and was probably deposited as a result of manuring of the fields during this period.

**Animal Bone**

3.6.7 A single fragment of animal bone (52g) was found within feature 3. This is from a large mammal, probably a cow or a horse.
4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Significance

4.1.1 The evaluation produced very little evidence for past activity on the site. The single ditch recorded (1) could not be dated. However, the fact that it was sealed by the subsoil suggests it was likely to have been dug in the medieval period or earlier. Without accurate dating, further discussion of the function and wider context of Ditch 1 is not possible.

4.1.2 The presence of a sherd of probable Iron Age pottery in natural hollow 3 hints at activity during this time within the surrounding area. However, no anthropogenic features of Iron Age date were present in any of the evaluation trenches.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.
## APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

### Trench 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General description</th>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>N-S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trench contained a single feature, sealed by subsoil, overlying a natural of sandy clay.</td>
<td>Max. depth (m)</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Width (m)</td>
<td>1.8m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length (m)</td>
<td>38.8m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>context no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trench 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General description</th>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>E-W</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy clay.</td>
<td>Max. depth (m)</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Width (m)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length (m)</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>context no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trench 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General description</th>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>N-S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy clay.</td>
<td>Max. depth (m)</td>
<td>0.85m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Width (m)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length (m)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>context no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Trench 4

**General description**

Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy clay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Width (m)</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Finds</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>Subsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trench 5

**General description**

A single shallow ditch crossed this trench, which could not be dated. It was sealed by subsoil and topsoil.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Width (m)</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Finds</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Subsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>Subsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>Ditch</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>Fill of Ditch 1</td>
<td>Flint</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trench 6

**General description**

Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy clay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Width (m)</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Finds</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>Subsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context no</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Width (m)</td>
<td>Depth (m)</td>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Finds</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>Subsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context no</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Width (m)</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Finds</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>Subsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context no</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Width (m)</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Finds</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>Subsoil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brudenell, M 2013  Brief for a trenched archaeological evaluation At Land at Steeles Road, Woolpit, Suffolk

Gilmour, N. 2014  Specification for Archaeological Evaluation, Land at Steeles Road, Woolpit, Suffolk
APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM
All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

**Project Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OASIS Number</th>
<th>oxfordar-172441</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Evaluation at land off Steeles Road, Woolpit, Suffolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Dates (fieldwork)</td>
<td>04-03-2014 05-03-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Work (by OA East)</td>
<td>No No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Reference Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Code</th>
<th>WPT 040</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning App. No.</td>
<td>2228/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HER No.</td>
<td>WPT 040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related HER/OASIS No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Type of Project/Techniques Used**

**Prompt**
Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5

**Development Type**
Housing Estate

Please select all techniques used:

- Aerial Photography - interpretation
- Aerial Photography - new
- Annotated Sketch
- Augering
- Dendrochronological Survey
- Documentary Search
- Environmental Sampling
- Fieldwalking
- Geophysical Survey
- Grab-Sampling
- Gravity-Core
- Laser Scanning
- Measured Survey
- Metal Detectors
- Phosphate Survey
- Photogrammetric Survey
- Photographic Survey
- Rectified Photography
- Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
- Sample Trenches
- Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
- Targeted Trenches
- Test Pits
- Topographic Survey
- Vibro-core
- Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)

**Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods**

List feature types using the NMR Monument Type Thesaurus and significant finds using the MDA Object type Thesaurus together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state “none”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monument</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ditch</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>pottery</td>
<td>Iron Age -800 to 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select period...</td>
<td>pottery</td>
<td>Medieval 1066 to 1540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select period...</td>
<td>flint</td>
<td>Late Prehistoric -4k to 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>Site Address (including postcode if possible)</td>
<td>land off steeples Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Mid Suffolk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>Woolpit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HER</td>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Area</td>
<td>0.71ha</td>
<td>National Grid Reference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Originators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>OA EAST</th>
<th>Project Brief Originator</th>
<th>Matthew brudenall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Design Originator</td>
<td>Nick Gilmour</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Paul Sporrey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Nick Gilmour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Archives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Archive</th>
<th>Digital Archive</th>
<th>Paper Archive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk County Stores</td>
<td>OA East Office, bar Hill</td>
<td>Suffolk County Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPT 040</td>
<td>XSFWOO14</td>
<td>WPT 040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Archive Contents/Media**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal Bones</th>
<th>Ceramics</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Glass</th>
<th>Human Bones</th>
<th>Industrial</th>
<th>Leather</th>
<th>Metal</th>
<th>Stratigraphic</th>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Textiles</th>
<th>Wood</th>
<th>Worked Bone</th>
<th>Worked Stone/Lithic</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[x]</td>
<td>[x]</td>
<td>[x]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[x]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Digital Media**

- [ ] Database
- [x] GIS
- [ ] Geophysics
- [x] Images
- [x] Illustrations
- [ ] Moving Image
- [x] Spreadsheets
- [x] Survey
- [x] Text
- [ ] Virtual Reality

**Paper Media**

- [ ] Aerial Photos
- [ ] GIS
- [ ] Context Sheet
- [ ] Correspondence
- [ ] Images
- [ ] Diary
- [ ] Drawing
- [ ] Manuscript
- [ ] Map
- [ ] Matrices
- [ ] Microfilm
- [ ] Misc.
- [ ] Research/Notes
- [x] Photos
- [ ] Plans
- [x] Report
- [x] Sections
- [ ] Survey
Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trenches (black) in development area outlined (red)
Figure 2: Trench plan showing excavated features