Land to the Rear of Orchard Close, Cottenham, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Client: Cocksedge Building Contractors Ltd

OA East Report No: 1077
OASIS No: oxfordar3-51975
NGR: TL 4435 6721

February 2009
Land to the Rear of Orchard Close, Cottenham, Cambridgeshire

By Thomas Lyons BA

Editor: Richard Mortimer MIFA

Illustrator: Lucy Offord BA

Report Date: February 2009
Report Number: 1077
Site Name: Orchard Close, Cottenham
HER Event No: ECB 3087
Date of Works: December 2008
Client Name: Cockedge Building Contractors Ltd
Client Ref: OCT 183/08
Planning Ref: S/0686/08/F
Grid Ref: TL 4435 6721
Site Code: COT ORC 08
Finance Code: COT ORC 08
Receiving Body: CCC Stores, Landbeach

Accession No:
Prepared by: Thomas Lyons
Position: Supervisor
Date: February 2009

Checked by: Richard Mortimer
Position: Project Manager
Date: February 2009
Signed: [Signature]

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Summary

Between the 2nd and 4th of December 2008, Oxford Archaeology East undertook an archaeological evaluation at land to the rear of Orchard Close, Cottenham. No archaeological features or artefacts were found. Prior to the site’s recent use as arable land it had contained an orchard. This resulted in many tree throws being present beneath the subsoil which cut slightly into to the natural geology.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Orchard Close, Cottenham, Cambridgeshire.

1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application S/0686/08/F), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (formerly Cambridgeshire County Council's CAM ARC).

1.1.3 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 Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

1.1.4 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 Cottenham is located at the north east end of a pronounced ridge (BGS Sheet 188). The proposed development area is on Lower Greensand overlying Kimmeridge Clay and is located at 10.7m AOD towards the bottom of the ridge on a southeast facing slope that falls away to the Cottenham Pastures. To the north west of the ridge the land falls away into the valley of the Beck Brook.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The proposed development area lies in an area of archaeological potential between two main, known areas of interest. Some 250m to the south west are extensive cropmark remains of probable Iron Age and/or Roman date, the full extent of which is not known (HER No. 09547). To the north and east is the Saxon and Medieval village core of Cottenham (HER 15525, 15526), again the full extent of which is unknown.

1.3.2 The Lordship Lane excavations in 1996/7 uncovered significant evidence for the development of Early and Middle Saxon Cottenham. Several timber buildings and a sunken feature building were found within an extensive ditch system. By the 11th Century this area had gone out of direct occupation. The medieval core of Cottenham appears to have grown around this Saxon settlement, in the Lamb's Lane/Lordship Lane/High St area some 800m to the northeast of the proposed development area (Mortimer 2000).

1.3.3 The Roman earthwork and cropmark site of Bullocks Haste on the Car Dyke lies some 2km to the north east and the road from Cambridge through Histon and Cottenham is thought to be of at least Roman origin. The road runs approximately 500m south of the proposed development area.
1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The project was commissioned and funded by John Brand of Cocksedge Building Contractors Ltd. Fieldwork was carried out by Tom Lyons and Johnny Lay. Richard Mortimer managed the project and Kasia Gdaniec from Cambridgeshire County Council monitored the evaluation.
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 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
2.2.2 The site survey was carried out by Taleyna Fletcher using a Leica GPS which was orientated to the OS Grid.
2.2.3 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.
2.2.4 Topsoil and subsoils were sorted for artefacts. 45 litres of topsoil and between 60 and 70 litres of subsoil were sorted at the ends of each trench.
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 Site conditions were good.
3 Results

3.1 Introduction
3.1.1 Six trenches were excavated on alternating orientations along the length of the proposed development area. All were 20m in length and excavated to a depth of between 0.8m and 1m. Topsoil was approximately 0.3m thick and subsoil was between 0.45m and 0.5m thick. The subsoil was occasionally composed of two separate but merging soil layers, the lower of which contained more sand. Some of the trenches were over-cut into the natural geology. None of the trenches contained any archaeological features or finds of pre-modern date.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Trench</th>
<th>Topsoil (m)</th>
<th>Subsoil (m)</th>
<th>Total depth (m)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
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Table 1: Topsoil and Subsoil depths

3.2 Finds Summary
3.2.1 No pre-modern artefacts were recovered from any of the trenches or spoil.
4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Until recently the proposed development area was used as arable land. Before then it was part of a series of orchards, some of which is still present in the enclosure immediately to the north. This has resulted in considerable tree root/bole disturbance both within and beneath the subsoil over the whole of the site. These have also disturbed the sandy subsoil, with little visible distinction between it and the natural geology. Edges of possible furrows were visible at the base of the subsoil suggesting that some evidence of earlier, medieval ridge and furrow agriculture survives (Plate x).

4.1 Significance

4.1.1 No archaeological features were present on site with the possible exception of faint furrow remains, and no pre-modern artefacts or ecofacts were recovered. The development site appears to lie within an area not directly occupied by either of the known settlements to the southwest (IA/Roman) or the northeast (Saxon/Medieval).

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

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<th>NW-SE &amp; NE SW</th>
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<td>Trenches devoid of archaeological features. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying a natural of silty sand.</td>
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APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mortimer, M and Hall, D. 2000. Village Development and Ceramic Sequence: The Middle to Late Saxon village at Lordship Lane, Cottenham, Cambridgeshire. PCAS 89: 5-34
Cambridgeshire HER (heritagegateway.org.uk)
# APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

## Project Details

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## Project Reference Codes

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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
- [ ] Photographic Survey
- [ ] Photogrammetric Survey
- [ ] Rectified Photography
- [ ] Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
- [ ] Sample Trenches
- [X] 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”.

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**Site Address (including postcode if possible)**

Orchard Close  
Cottenham  
Cambridgeshire CB24 8TN

**National Grid Reference**

TL 4435 6721
### Project Originators

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<td>Andy Thomas</td>
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<td>Project Design Originar</td>
<td>Richard Mortimer</td>
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### Digital Media

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- [ ] Images
- [ ] Illustrations
- [ ] Moving Image
- [ ] Spreadsheets
- [ ] Survey
- [X] Text
- [ ] Virtual Reality

### Paper Media

- [ ] Aerial Photos
- [ ] Context Sheet
- [ ] Correspondence
- [ ] Diary
- [ ] Drawing
- [ ] Manuscript
- [ ] Map
- [ ] Matrices
- [ ] Microfilm
- [ ] Misc.
- [ ] Research/Notes
- [ ] Photos
- [X] Plans
- [X] Report
- [X] Sections
- [ ] Survey

### Notes:

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## Drawing Conventions

### Plans
- **Limit of Excavation**
- **Deposit - Conjectured**
- **Natural Features**
- **Sondages/Machine Strip**
- **Intrusion/Truncation**
- **Illustrated Section**

### Sections
- **Limit of Excavation**
- **Cut**
- **Cut-Conjectured**
- **Deposit Horizon**
- **Deposit Horizon - Conjectured**
- **Intrusion/Truncation**
- **Top Surface/Top of Natural**
- **Break in Section**
- **Limit of Section Drawing**

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- **Deposit Number**
- **Ordnance Datum**
- **Inclusions**

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Figure 1: Location of development area (red)
Figure 2: Trench plan at 1:2000
Figure 3: Section drawings at 1:20
Plate 1: Trench Section

Plate 2: Possible Furrows