Evidence of Roman Settlement at Over Industrial Estate

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Client: Chancery Resources Limited

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Evidence Of Roman Settlement At Over Industrial Estate

Archaeological Evaluation

By Jonathan House BA

With contributions by Steve Wadeson and Rachel Fosberry HNC AIFA

Editor: Aileen Connor BA AIFA

Illustrator: Lucy Offord BA

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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

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on Plot 5 Norman Way Industrial Estate, Over, Cambridgeshire (TL 3790 6930) between 27th and 31st July 2009. Three trenches were located within the proposed development area. Archaeological features and deposits dating to the Roman period were located across the development area but were concentrated in the northernmost trench where at least two phases of activity were recorded interrupted by an episode of flooding. The pottery assemblage from features in the northern half of the site are of particular interest and indicate settlement in the near vicinity. Deposits of charred seeds and other plant remains were found in abundance and are evidence that arable farming and associated primary crop processing were taking place on the site or very close by.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Location and scope of work

An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Plot 5, Norman Way industrial Estate, Over, Cambridgeshire (TL 3790 6930). This document details the results of the evaluation.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application E/09/00078/FUL), supplemented by a Specification prepared by Aileen Connor (Oxford Archaeology East).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development 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.

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

The subject site lies approximately 1km south-east of the fen edge. Much of the western half of Over comprises fen land lying at about 3m AOD, the eastern half of the parish is on higher ground comprising largely Ampthill Clay overlain by Pleistocene Till. The highest point in the parish of Over lies near Hill Farm which is about 18m AOD. The subject site is located in the eastern half of the parish on the higher ground at approximately 11m AOD. The river Ouse is located approximately 3km to the north of the site and the Swavesey Drain, a meandering waterway that follows the parish boundary between Over and Swavesey, flows approximately 2km to the south of the site.

1.3. Archaeological and historical background

Prehistoric remains are mainly clustered in the north of the parish and none are known from close to the subject site.

The subject site is located along the south-western edge of Roman fen (Hall 1996, 158 Fig.88). This area was densely settled during the Roman period and Hall (1996, 159) remarks that “there were villas and the whole landscape was infilled with small rural settlements”. In the immediate vicinity of the subject site finds of Roman date have been found including pottery and a fragment of tile (CHER 07724). These finds may be associated with a double rectangular enclosure which can be seen as a cropmark (CHER 11133) to the east of the subject site and indicate the site of a Roman settlement. It is thought that the northern part of Over industrial estate has been built on part of this settlement. There are a number of other Roman settlement sites known in the vicinity (e.g. MCB9332, 13733, 13073). Recent archaeological work along the route of the Cambridge Guided Bus way has revealed an Iron Age/Roman settlement to the south of the subject site (MCB18477).

Domesday records Over in 1086 as “Ouere” meaning “the bank of the river” (Reaney 1943, 169) presumably referring to the river Ouse (or Old West River). Over was prosperous during
medieval times and stood at the junction of several major routes, including the road between two important markets (Cambridge and St Ives). Ramsey Abbey built a church here and attempted to organise the village around it (Taylor 1998, 69). Medieval remains are known in the area (e.g. MCB9333 and possibly MCB15759).

1.4. Acknowledgements
The author would like to thank Adair Associates who commissioned the works and Chancery Resources Limited who funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Aileen Connor and the illustrator was Lucy Offord, with Jonathan House, Chris Faine and James Fairbairn as the on site staff.
2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. Aims
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
The Brief required that evaluation should include a programme of linear trial trenching to adequately sample the threatened area and that sufficient archaeological features should be excavated and recorded to meet the project objectives.

Machine excavation of three trenches was carried out under constant archaeological supervision using a tracked 360 excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide flat-bladed ditching bucket. The trenches measured 50m, 35m, and 15m in length, all the trenches were one bucket width.

A Leica 1200GPS was used to locate the site to the Ordnance Survey and to provide a Temporary Bench Mark.

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 digital photographs and Black and white photographs with an SLR were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

Environmental sampling targeted features with good potential for ecofact remains, five samples were taken.

The site was covered in overgrown mixed vegetation, and upon excavation showed signs of modern disturbance, particularly wide spread spoil movement resulting in truncation and displacement of topsoil and subsoil, possibly relating to previous construction work on the site. Several land drains were noted in two of the trenches and evidence of possible ridge and furrow in the most southerly trench.

The weather was changeable, but did not inhibit the excavation and recording of archaeological deposits.
3 RESULTS

3.1. Introduction
Three trenches were excavated, the results are presented and described by trench below.

3.2. Trench 1
Trench 1 was located at the north end of the development area, the trench measured 1.8m wide and 15m in length. Top soil had been partially truncated in some areas leaving it variable in thickness (0.07m to 0.29m). The archaeological features were separated into two distinct phases by a 0.23m thick, possible alluvial layer of mid greenish yellow silty clay (104).

Early Roman (Features sealed by layer 104)
Pit 103 was circular and steep sided and contained no finds, it was cut by a sub-circular shallow pit 101, which contained 10 sherds of a mid 1st to mid 2nd century pottery jar and fragments of animal bone. Both pits were clearly sealed by layer 104.

At the south end of the trench was a series of inter-cutting features (Fig. 3, Section 12). These comprised a pit or ditch terminus (124) that contained one small sherd of Roman pottery. It was truncated by two U-shaped ditches (122 and 126), the former was aligned east to west and appears to have terminated in the trench, the latter (126) was aligned north to south. Both these features were cut by a shallow ditch (120), aligned east to west and filled with black silty clay. The latest feature was a small circular steep sided pit (115) that cut ditch 120. No finds were found in these features which were all clearly sealed by layer 104.

Layer 104/118 was 0.23m thick and comprised a mid-dark greenish yellow clay. The layer was initially identified as a subsoil lying directly below topsoil, however, it both sealed and was cut by features of Roman date. The layer was present along most of the length of the trench although it appears to have suffered recent truncation at the north end. Unfortunately no finds were recovered from the layer itself and its origin is not fully understood but may be the result of one or more episodes of flooding. The layer was present in all three trenches and was recorded as layer 143 in trench 2 and layer 139 in trench 3.

Later Roman Features (cutting layer 104)
Four features (three pits and a ditch) were clearly later than layer 104. Two of the pits (128 and 130) were observed only in section on the east side of the trench. They were filled by a similar very dark brownish grey silt. Pit 128 was cut by a large rectangular pit (105), filled by complex layers of redeposited greysih yellow clays interleaved with lenses of black silt which contained large quantities of burnt seeds, cereal grains (samples 1 and 2). A lower fill contained one sherd of Early Roman pottery and another (110) contained seeds of duckweed which must have derived from a waterlogged context. The uppermost black silt fill (106) contained 53 large unabraded sherds of pottery dating to the mid 2nd to 3rd century AD.

Ditch (117) was located some metres to the south on an east to west alignment. It was a shallow (0.18m deep), flat bottomed ditch (1m wide) filled with dark grey silty clay (116), two small sherds of Roman pottery suggest a Roman date for this feature.

3.3. Trench 2
Trench 2 was aligned north to south and was 1.8m wide and 50m in length. Modern truncation and dumping was evident along much of its length but was more marked towards the south. An
area in the centre of the trench was very disturbed by field drains. The trench was up to 0.82m in depth where it encountered layers of recently dumped materials (gravel, clay and topsoil).

**Features sealed by layer 143**

Most of the archaeological features in trench 2 appeared to have been sealed beneath a layer of mid greenish yellow clay (143) similar to 104 in trench 1. A broad (3m wide) linear feature, possibly a ditch crossed the trench at the northern end on an approximately east to west orientation. The feature was filled with a pale grey slightly silty clay, it was not excavated. Two small pits were located to the south of the ditch, both contained patches of black silt and reddened burnt clay. Both pits were approximately 0.70m wide. Pit 141 was approximately 0.20m deep and contained a single layer (140) of mid yellowish brown silty sandy clay mottled throughout with lenses of burnt clay. The base of the pit was reddened suggesting either in situ burning or deposition of hot ashes.

A third possible pit or post hole was located at the north end of the trench. This was approximately 0.40m in diameter and filled with a very pale greyish brown clay, only slightly different in colour to the natural clay through which it was cut. Feature 149 is likely to be more than one feature; a sub-circular pit filled with a dark grey silt, possibly cutting a ditch terminus filled with a pale grey silty clay. Two sherds of pottery recovered from the surface of the pit (148) were Roman in date.

Pit 145 (Fig. 3, Section 9) was partially obscured beyond the edges of the trench. It was probably rectangular or square in shape and at least 1m by 1m in plan and 0.35m deep. It was filled with dark yellowish brown silty clay (144) mottled throughout with flecks of charcoal and burnt clay, no finds were recovered from it, but a sample (4) produced a good assemblage of charred cereal grains and weed seeds.

Only two features were present at the south end of the trench (a small pit and a ditch). These were both filled with a pale reddish brown clean silty clay that contained only a few unidentifiable fragments of animal bone. The ditch (150) was aligned north-east to south-west, was very shallow (0.24m) and was 0.80m wide.

Layer 143 sealed all except one of the archaeological features in trench 2. Layer 143 was almost certainly the same as layer 104 in trench 1 and was similar in thickness and comprised a mid-dark greenish yellow clay. The layer was present along most of the length of the trench and was sealed beneath several layers of modern dumped material in the southern half of the trench. No finds were recovered from it.

**Features cutting layer 143**

Ditch 146 was orientated north-east to south-west, it was 0.95m wide and 0.43m deep with a broad U-shaped profile. It was filled with a dark grey silt flecked throughout with charcoal. A sample (4) from the fill (147) produced a good assemblage of charred weed seeds and cereal grains including free-threshing wheat. A small shard of Roman pottery and a tiny fragment of animal bone was also recovered.

### 3.4. Trench 3

Trench 3 was located at the southern end of the development area, it was 1.8m wide and 50m long on an east to west alignment. It was heavily disturbed by modern earth moving activity, although this seemed primarily to comprise dumping rather than major truncation (Fig. 3, Section 7) as well as several land drains on the same alignment as those seen in Trench 2. The trench was up to 1.05m in depth where it cut through modern dumps of topsoil, clay and gravel. Two possible archaeological features were located in this trench. Pit 135 was oval in shape (0.6m wide and 1.3m long) and quite shallow (0.20m). It was filled with a dark bluish grey
silty clay but contained no finds. It was probably sealed by layer 139 although this was not confirmed. Layer 139 was observed across most of the trench, it was similar to 104 and 143 in trenches 1 and 2 and may be a continuation of that layer. At the western end of the trench a shallow linear feature (133) 0.10m deep and 2.5m wide cut through layer 139. It had an irregular base and may be the remains of medieval ridge and furrow, it contained no finds.

3.5. Finds and Environmental Summary
A total of 70 sherds, weighing 1.623kg, of Romano-British pottery were recovered from seven contexts. Most of the pottery was recovered from a single mid-late Roman pit (105). The majority of the pottery is relatively fresh with an average sherd weight of 23g. Evidence for use and wear has survived, indicating low levels of post-depositional disturbance (such as might occur from middening, ploughing and water damage). This is a relatively small assemblage providing evidence for continuous settlement from the Mid 1st century AD through to the late 3rd/early 4th century AD. The assemblage is typical of a utilitarian domestic assemblage recovered from low order settlements within this region (Evans 2003, 105).

Tiny amounts of animal bones were found in four contexts. None of the bones were identifiable to species.

Five soil samples were collected and processed in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains, bones and artefacts. All samples contained plant remains preserved by carbonisation. Preservation is good although the plant remains appear to have been subjected to high temperature burning, and one sample contained evidence for waterlogging at some time in the past. The samples contained evidence for arable farming, crop processing and fuel.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

4.1. Prehistoric?
The three archaeological features at the south end of the site may be evidence of a pre-Roman phase of activity. All three features (a ditch and two small pits) were filled by heavily leached clay, and the small amount of animal bone found in the ditch was particularly decayed, possibly implying a greater age. There was, however, no other dating evidence and these features could equally be Early Roman.

4.2. Roman 1st to 2nd Century
The earliest phase of occupation is characterised by a series of pits and ditches sealed by a layer of clay thought to represent one or more possible flooding episodes. Although features belonging to this phase were scattered throughout the trenches, the majority (and all of those that contained meaningful finds) were located in trench 1 at the north end of the subject site. The relatively few finds (13 sherds of pottery) recovered from features belonging to this phase suggest a date in the 1st or 2nd century AD, although most of the pottery (10 sherds) was found in one pit. One soil sample was collected from a phase 1 pit in trench 2 and shows that crop processing and arable farming was taking place during this earliest phase of occupation. A complex of intercutting features (in trench 1) have been assigned to this earliest phase and demonstrate that parts of the site saw heavy use which perhaps belies the lack of cultural material.

The end of this phase was clearly marked by the deposition of a layer of clay across the whole of the site. It has not been possible to date this layer directly, although by inference it might be assumed to date to somewhere around the 2nd century. Assigning a closer date and interpreting the processes by which this layer was deposited would be a clear objective should...
any further archaeological work need to be undertaken on this site. It is possible that the layer was deposited as the result of episodic flooding, and this might help to provide evidence towards improving current understanding of how this part of the fenland landscape changed throughout the Roman period. In the early part of the period the evidence points to a gradual drying out of the landscape due to marine regression and various deliberate attempts at drainage, thus making former wetlands available for settlement and agricultural production (Taylor 2007, 151). Work on pottery assemblages from Cold Harbour Farm excavated by W.G. Simpson (Phillips 1970, 189) in the 1950s led to the conclusion that there had been a period of severe flooding that temporarily took marginal agricultural land out of production, however recent work has questioned this and it is suggested that “the present picture is one of gradual encroachment of the fen upslope throughout the Roman period” (Evans and Hodder 2006, 450). Whatever the case it is clear that on this site there was a clear break in arable farming that led to or was caused by processes resulting in the deposition of an extensive clay layer.

4.3. Roman 2nd to 3rd Century

The features cutting through the putative flood deposit appear to be late 2nd to mid 3rd century in date based on the pottery typology, although some 4th century pieces are also present so a more accurate date may be rather later. It is important to note that as with the earliest phase, the majority of the pottery was collected from a single pit (53 out of a total of 57 sherds), this feature also produced the best environmental results. Clear evidence for primary crop processing indicates that the subject site is on or very near to a focus of activity relating to agricultural production. The pottery assemblage, whilst obviously not suffering from reworking is typical of a relatively low status (farming) settlement. Most of the pottery is utilitarian and would have been used for small scale storage of dry goods, cooking and serving food. The presence of mortaria in this phase is interesting as it is a specialised vessel used in the preparation of foods such as herbs and spices. The lack of animal bones is worth noting, although this may be due to preservation bias and the assemblage is in any case too small to draw any conclusions.

4.4. Post-Roman

Other than several land drains and recent geotechnical test pits only one archaeological feature (a probable furrow in trench 3) may be post Roman in date. Ridge and furrow is a characteristic of medieval and early post-medieval farming practices and is often recognised by distinctive cropmarks or earthworks.

4.5. Significance

The presence of a double rectangular enclosure (CHER 11133) adjacent to the subject site shows that the remains of a Roman settlement/farmstead lie in close proximity. The most significant remains are located at the northern end of the development area and are largely confined to the northern third of the site. This area of the subject site has produced small but significant assemblages of pottery and charred plant remains. The remains are characteristic of a relatively low status arable farm with good evidence for primary crop processing. The subject site appears to be located on the southern edge of this activity, possibly breaking into fields to the south. It is likely that further good assemblages of pottery and charred plant remains are present on the site, particularly in the northern area, the likelihood of recovering similar remains diminishes to the south. The presence of an extensive clay layer (possibly flood related) is significant for its potential to contribute to questions relating to the changing land-use of this
area of the fens. In conclusion part of the development area appears to be located on the southern extremity of a large Roman rural settlement or farmstead and has provided an opportunity to record another instance of a settlement being significantly affected by rising groundwater and overbank flooding. The site has some potential to contribute towards an understanding of Roman settlement and how it was affected by periodic flood episodes, common in fenland locations. East Anglian Research Agendas (Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Medlycott and Brown 2008) identifies a number of broad Research Themes towards which this site has the potential to contribute. These include, but are not limited to:

- Roman Rural Settlements and Landscapes
- Characterisation of the Roman agricultural norm
- Production of Food

4.6. Recommendations

Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office of Cambridgeshire County Council.
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<td>Evans, C., and Hodder, I.,</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Marshland Communities and Cultural Landscapes from the Bronze Age to Present Day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evans, J.,</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>‘The Pottery’ in Hinman, M., A Late Iron Age Farmstead and Romano-British Site at Haddon, Peterborough. British Archaeological Report 358, 105-107</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maria Medlycott and Nigel Brown</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Revised Research Framework for the Eastern Region</td>
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<td>Phillips, C.W.,</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>The Fenland in Roman Times. The Royal Geographic Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaney, P.H.,</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely. Cambridge University Press</td>
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APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

### Trench 1

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| Contexts |
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| context | type | Width (m) | Depth (m) | comment | finds | date |
| no       |     |           |           |         |       |     |
| 100      | Fill | 0.5       | 0.22      | Fill of Pit 101 | Pot, bone | MC1-MC2 |
| 101      | Cut  | 0.5       | 0.22      | Cut of sub circular Pit | - | - |
| 102      | Fill | 0.7       | 0.5       | Fill of Pit 103 | - | - |
| 103      | Cut  | 0.7       | 0.5       | Cut of circular Pit | - | - |
| 104      | Layer| -         | 0.23      | ?Flood deposit | - | - |
| 105      | Cut  | ≥1.8      | ≥1.4      | Cut of rectangular Pit | - | - |
| 106      | Fill | ≥2.62     | 0.9       | Fill of Pit 105 | Pot, bone | MC2-C3 |
| 107      | Fill | ≥1.82     | 0.09      | Fill of Pit 105 | - | - |
| 108      | Fill | ≥0.65     | 0.02      | Fill of Pit 105 Tipping lens | - | - |
| 109      | Fill | ≥0.89     | 0.08      | Fill of Pit 105 | - | - |
| 110      | Fill | ≥1.30     | 0.02      | Fill of Pit 105 Tipping lens | - | - |
| 111      | Fill | ≥2.40     | 0.22      | Fill of Pit 105 | - | - |
| 112      | Fill | ≥0.96     | 0.08      | Fill of Pit 105 | - | - |
| 113      | Fill | 0.6       | 0.3       | Fill of Pit 115 | - | - |
| 114      | Fill | 0.4       | 0.2       | Fill of Pit 115 | - | - |
| 115      | Cut  | 0.6       | 0.5       | Cut of circular Pit | - | - |
| 116      | Fill | 1         | 0.18      | Fill of Ditch 117 | Pot | MC1-C4 |
| 117      | Cut  | 1         | 0.18      | Cut of shallow Ditch | - | - |
| 118      | Layer| 1.6       | 0.2       | Same As 104? | - | - |
| 119      | Fill | 1.6       | 0.2       | Fill of Ditch 120 | - | - |
| 120      | Cut  | 1.6       | 0.4       | Cut of shallow Ditch | - | - |
| 121      | Fill | 1.25      | 0.6       | Fill of Ditch terminus 122 | - | - |
| 122      | Cut  | 1.25      | 0.6       | Cut of Ditch terminus | - | - |
| 123      | Fill | 0.8       | 0.6       | Fill of Pit 124 | Pot | MC1-C4 |
| 124      | Cut  | 0.8       | 0.6       | Cut of truncated Pit | - | - |
| 125      | Fill | 0.5       | 0.2       | Fill of Ditch 126 | - | - |
| 126      | Cut  | 0.5       | 0.2       | Cut of Ditch | - | - |
| 127      | Fill | ≥0.91     | ≥0.12     | Fill of Pit 105 | - | - |
| 128      | Cut  | 1.22      | 0.5       | Cut of truncated Pit | - | - |
Trench 2

**General description**

Trench had a top soil and sub soil, but in the southern half of the trench there was a lot of modern truncation. In the area of the truncation, there was a lot of made ground.

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<td></td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>Fill of Ditch 146</td>
<td>Pot, bone</td>
<td>MC1-C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>≥1.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not Excavated</td>
<td>Pot</td>
<td>MC1-C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>≥1.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not Excavated</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>Cut of Ditch</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>Fill of Ditch 150</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trench 3

**General description**

Trench has high degree of truncation and made ground, top soil within the trench was varied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avg. depth (m)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>40</td>
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**Contexts**

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<tr>
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<th>comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>Fill of Furrow 133</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>Cut of Furrow</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>Fill of Pit 135</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>Cut of circular Pit</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>Made ground</td>
<td></td>
<td>Modern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>Layer</td>
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<td>0.23</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Modern</td>
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<tr>
<td>138</td>
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<td>0.26</td>
<td>Made ground</td>
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<td>Modern</td>
</tr>
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<td>139</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>?Flood deposit</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
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APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

1 Pottery

By Stephen Wadeson

1.1. Introduction
A total of 70 sherds, weighing 1.623kg, of Romano-British pottery were recovered during the evaluation at Plot 5, Over Industrial Estate, Cambridgeshire (OVE INE 09). The majority of the pottery is relatively fresh with an average sherd weight of 23g. Evidence for use and wear has survived, indicating low levels of post-depositional disturbance (such as middening, ploughing and water damage).

1.2. Methodology
The assemblage was examined in accordance with the guidelines set down by the Study Group for Roman Pottery (Webster 1976; Darling 2004; Willis 2004). The total assemblage was studied and a preliminary catalogue was prepared. The sherds were examined using a magnifying lens (x10 magnification) and were divided into fabric groups defined on the basis of inclusion types present. The fabric codes are descriptive and abbreviated by the main letters of the title (Sandy grey ware = SGW) vessel form was also recorded.

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

1.3. Quantification
All sherds have been counted, classified and weighed to the nearest whole gram. Decoration and abrasion were also noted and a spot date has been provided for each individual sherd and context.

1.4. The assemblage
The majority of the pottery recovered is of an utilitarian nature with locally produced domestic coarse wares (reduced and oxidised) and shell tempered wares forming the majority of the assemblage. Used for small scale storage of dry goods, vessels were often used for both cooking and serving food.

Sandy grey wares, c.38% (by weight) form the majority of the Romano-British pottery assemblage. Present in a range of forms including jars and dishes they are typical of locally produced coarse wares. Pottery of this type is commonly found in most domestic assemblages in this region throughout the Roman period.

The partial remains of a single Shell tempered storage jar accounts for a further c.33% (by weight) of the assemblage. Unsourced sherds such as these and can be difficult to date unless rims are present within the assemblage. However it is certain that the forms produced and their place of production changed throughout the Roman period. It is probable that much of early Roman shell tempered wares were produced in the Lower Nene Valley between the 1st and 3rd centuries (Perrin 1996).

Only five sherds of fine wares were identified within the assemblage and include both domestic and continental produced wares. These include four sherds of Nene Valley colour coated wares (Tomber and Dore 1998, 118), produced in the Lower Nene Valley and centred on the Roman town of Durobrivae (Water Newton).
In addition a single sherd from a Drag. 31R samian bowl was recovered. Produced at Lezoux (AD 120-200) in Central Gaul (Tomber and Dore 1998, 32) the bowl can be dated to the mid Antonine period (AD160+).

Specialist wares are limited to just four partially burnt sherds of mortaria from the Lower Nene Valley, Cambridgeshire (Tomber and Dore 1998, 119).

1.5. Discussion
The majority of the assemblage is of an utilitarian nature with locally produced domestic coarse wares (reduced and oxidised) and shell tempered wares forming the bulk of the assemblage. Specialist wares are poorly represented within this assemblage, however the presence of mortaria may indicate that the local population were adopting Romanised methods of food preparation, involving the grinding of herbs and spices and the production of sauces, or were simply becoming more affluent (Lyons 2008).

The limited number of continental imports within the assemblage, a single sherd of Central Gaulish samian, is typical of low order settlements within this region (Evans 2003, 105) while the presence of Nene Valley wares, on this and other sites in the region is due to the proximity of the site to the production centres of the Nene Valley. This often results in the dominance of Nene Valley colour coats over other fine wares, with the result that the presence of Nene Valley colour coats acts as a chronological indicator for the site rather than one of status.

1.6. Conclusion
This is a relatively small assemblage providing evidence for continuous settlement from the Mid 1st century AD through to the late 3rd/early 4th century AD. Consistent with other Roman sites in the surrounding area the assemblage is typical of a utilitarian domestic assemblage recovered from low order settlements within this region (Evans 2003, 105). Although not the focus of a settlement itself the small number of sherds recovered from site and their condition would suggest they are likely to derive from a Romano-British settlement or farmstead nearby, possibly associated with the cropmark site to the north-east of the site (CHER 111333).

1.7. Sampling Bias
The excavation of evaluation trenches was carried out by hand and selection made through standard sampling strategies on a feature by feature basis. There are not expected to be any inherent biases. Where bulk samples have been processed for environmental and artefactual remains, there has also been some recovery of pottery. These are a small quantity of abraded sherds which have been quantified, and added to the catalogue.

1.8. Statement of Potential
This preliminary assessment has shown the assemblage has potential to answer a range of local and regional research aims. A more detailed analysis of this assemblage combined with the results of future excavations would undoubtedly allow us to increase our knowledge of pottery manufacture, use, trade and exchange in this area during the Romano-British period.

Acknowledgements
Special thanks to Alice Lyons, OA East for her time, support and specialist knowledge of Roman pottery and Carole Fletcher, OA East for her time and patience.
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Journal/Publication Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Webster, G. (Ed)</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Romano-British coarse pottery: a student's guide.</td>
<td>CBA Research Report No. 6</td>
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<td>Webster, G.</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Roman Samian Pottery in Britain</td>
<td>Practical handbook in Archaeology 13 Council for British Archaeology</td>
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### The Pottery Catalogue

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ctxt (Cut)</th>
<th>Fabric</th>
<th>Des.</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Qty</th>
<th>Wt (Kg)</th>
<th>Spot date</th>
<th>Context date</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 (101)</td>
<td>SGW U</td>
<td>JAR</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.167</td>
<td>MC1-MC2</td>
<td>MC1-MC2</td>
<td>Oxidised margins and inner surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106 (105)</td>
<td>NVOW UR</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>MORT</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.395</td>
<td>C3-C4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Burnt</td>
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<tr>
<td>106 (105)</td>
<td>CGSAM U</td>
<td>DRAG. 31R BOWL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>MC2</td>
<td>AD160+ M-L Antonine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106 (105)</td>
<td>STW U</td>
<td>S/JAR</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.541</td>
<td>C1-C3</td>
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<td>MC1-MC2</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>SGW UR</td>
<td>DISH</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>MC1-C4</td>
<td>?One vessel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>SGW U</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>MC1-C4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>0.005</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.002</td>
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<td>Sample 2</td>
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<td>JAR</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>MC1-C4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>123 (124)</td>
<td>SGW (mica)</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.011</td>
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<td>MC1-C4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129 (128)</td>
<td>SGW U</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>MC1-MC2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.003</td>
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<td>148 (149)</td>
<td>OW (gritty)</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>?DISH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>MC1-C4</td>
<td>Internal groove Linear combing</td>
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</table>

**Total**: 70 1.623

**Key**:  
C=Century, E=Early, M=Mid, L=Late.  
R=Rim, U=Undecorated body sherd, D=Decorated body sherd, B=Base.
APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

By Rachel Fosberry

1.1. Introduction and Methods

Five bulk samples were taken from features within the evaluated areas of the Norman Way Industrial Estate Site, Over, Cambridgeshire in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains, bones and artefacts and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.

The samples were soaked in a solution of sodium carbonate for five days prior to processing in order to break down the clay component of the sample.

Up to twenty litres of each sample were processed by tank flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 0.5mm sieve. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification and the presence of any plant remains or other artefacts are noted on Table 1.

1.2. Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Code</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Feature Type</th>
<th>Sample Size (L)</th>
<th>Cereals</th>
<th>Flot Volume (ml)</th>
<th>Charcoal &lt;2mm</th>
<th>Charcoal &gt;2mm</th>
<th>Weed Seeds</th>
<th>Snails from flot</th>
<th>Flot Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>pit 20</td>
<td>pit containing nine fills. This fill had lots of finds</td>
<td>250</td>
<td># # #</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Triticum sp. Grains, T. spelta glume bases and spikelet forks, Avena sp. Grains, Avena sterilis floret, Anthemis cotula, Large and small Poaceae, Bromus, Chenopodium, Rumex, Polygonaceae.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>pit 10</td>
<td>Pit containing burning and charcoal</td>
<td>120</td>
<td># # #</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Triticum sp. Grains, T. spelta glume bases and spikelet forks, Avena sp. Grains, Avena sterilis floret, Large and small Poaceae, Bromus, Chenopodium, Rumex, Polygonum, Lemna, un-id seeds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>pit 20</td>
<td>Pit containing burning and charcoal</td>
<td>35</td>
<td># # #</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Triticum sp. Grains, T. spelta glume bases, Chenopodium, Scirpus, un-id seeds, rootlets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>ditch 20</td>
<td>Pit containing some burning</td>
<td>50</td>
<td># # #</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Triticum sp. Grains (mixed), T. spelta glume bases, Urtica.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>ditch 20</td>
<td>Base of ditch, dark fill, no finds</td>
<td>60</td>
<td># # #</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Triticum sp. Grains, T. spelta glume bases, Bromus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Results
1.3. Quantification
Archaeological materials such as seeds, cereal grains and small animal bones have been scanned and recorded according to the following categories

# = 1-10, ## = 11-50, ### = 51+ specimens

Items that cannot be easily quantified such as charcoal, magnetic residues and fragmented bone have been scored as follows

+ = rare, ++ = moderate, +++ = abundant

1.4. Preservation
All samples contain plant remains preserved by carbonisation. Preservation is good although the plant remains appear to have been subjected to high temperature burning.

Sample 2, context 110, pit 105 contains calcined seeds of duckweed (Lemna sp.) suggesting that this feature once contained water.

1.5. Plant Remains

Cereals and chaff
The charred plant remains assemblage is dominated by chaff, predominantly in the form of Spelt glume bases with rachis segments and occasional spikelet forks. Charred cereal grains are present in all of the samples; Spelt wheat (Triticum spelta) predominates although grains of free-threshing wheat are present in Sample 4. Grains of wild oat (Avena sativa/fatua) are abundant in Samples 1 and 2 and have been identified by the distinctive articulation scar on the well-preserved florets.

Weed seeds
Samples contain moderate quantities of seeds preserved by charring including brome (Bromus sp.), stinking mayweed (Anthemis cotula), large and small grass seeds (Poaceae), goosefoot (Chenopodium sp), dock (Rumex sp.), knotweeds (Polygonum sp.) and nettle (Urtica sp.) along with some un-identified seeds.

1.6. Ecofacts and Artefacts
Two of the samples contain occasional sherds of pottery.

A few fragments of animal bone and small bones were recovered from the residues of Samples 3 and 5.

1.7. Contamination
Modern seeds and/or roots were present in Samples 3, 4 and 5. It should be noted that Samples 1 and 2 did not contain any contaminants at all.

1.8. Discussion
The presence of grains, chaff and weed seeds (probably associated with the cereal crops) is an important indication that crop processing was taking place nearby. This crop-processing waste may subsequently have been burnt as fuel before being dumped into nearby pits and ditches.

Cereal grains are present in all of the samples and represent both discrete possibly deliberately burnt deposits and general scattering of grain preserved by accidental burning.
Wheat grains are difficult to identify on the basis of morphology alone. The presence of substantial quantities of the distinctive spelt glume bases indicates that the droplet shaped grains are *Triticum spelta* and the more rounded grains are free-threshing wheats.

The seed assemblage is consistent with arable farming and the presence of stinking mayweed (*A. cotula*) indicates that heavy clay soils were being cultivated.

Although oats are a cultivated crop during the Roman period, the form present in this assemblage are of the smaller, non-cultivated variety that would have been a crop contaminant. These seeds could have been discarded along with the other weed seeds and chaff through the sieving stage of crop processing in which the grains are separated out from the rest of the material.

### 1.9. Statement of Research Potential

This assemblage clearly shows that the site at Norman Way Industrial Estate, Over is likely to provide a well preserved charred plant remains assemblage with excellent potential to provide evidence that would contribute towards current research aims relating to the utilisation of local plant resources, agricultural activity and economy in the Roman period.

### Bibliography

**APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM**

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

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### Type of Project/Techniques Used

- **Prompt**: Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
- **Development Type**: Rural Commercial

#### Please select all techniques used:

- [X] Aerial Photography - interpretation
- [ ] Aerial Photography - new
- [ ] Annotated Sketch
- [ ] Augering
- [ ] Dendrochronological Survey
- [ ] Documentary Search
- [X] Environmental Sampling
- [ ] Fieldwalking
- [ ] Geophysical Survey
- [ ] Grab-Sampling
- [ ] Gravity-Core
- [ ] Laser Scanning
- [ ] Measured Survey
- [ ] Metal Detectors
- [ ] Photographic Survey
- [ ] Photogrammetric Survey
- [ ] Phosphate 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".

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<td>Roman 43 to 410</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>Roman 43 to 410</td>
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### Project Location

- **County**: Cambridgeshire
- **District**: South Cambs
- **Parish**: Over
- **HER**: Cambridgeshire County council
- **Study Area**: 3500m2
- **Site Address (including postcode if possible)**: Plot 5, Over Industrial Estate, Over, Cambs, CB4 5QE
- **National Grid Reference**: TL 3790 6930
## Project Originators

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<th>Organisation</th>
<th>OA EAST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Brief Originator</td>
<td>Andy Thomas Cambridge County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Design Originator</td>
<td>Aileen Connor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Aileen Connor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Jonathan House</td>
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### Archive Contents/Media

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### Digital Media

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

### Paper Media

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

## Notes:

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Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation
Deposit - Conjectured
Natural Features
Sondages/Machine Strip
Intrusion/Truncation
Illustrated Section
S.14
Archaeological Deposit
Excavated Slot
Modern Deposit/Field Drain
Cut Number
ITW

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
Cut Number
ITW
Deposit Number
117
Ordnance Datum
18.45m OD
Clay inclusions
Figure 1: Location of trenches with the development area outlined (red), cropmarks (green) and HER data
Figure 2: Trench plans (1:250)
Figure 3: Section drawings (1:50)
Plate 1: Trench 1 looking North

Plate 2: Ditches 122, 124 and 120 sealed below layer 118 and ditch 117 cutting layer 118
Plate 3: Pit 105 filled with interleaving layers of black ashy silts

Plate 4: Pits 101 and 103
Plate 7: Ditch 150 containing heavily leached fill

Plate 8: Pit 141 containing burnt clay deposits
Plate 9: Trench 3 section edge showing modern made-ground

Plate 10: Pit 133