Undated Drainage Ditches on land at 23 Gains Lane, Great Gidding, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Client: Ashbridge Developments

OA East Report No: 1189
OASIS No: oxfordar3-78103
NGR: TL 1180 8295
Undated Drainage Ditches on land at 23 Gains Lane, Great Gidding, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation

By Taleyna Fletcher BA, Alfa

With contributions by Rachel Fosberry, HNC, AlfA

Editor: James Drummond-Murray

Illustrator: Andrew Corrigan, BA

Report Date: June 2010
Report Number: 1189
Site Name: Gains Lane, Great Gidding, Cambridgeshire
HER Event No: ECB3299
Date of Works: June 2010
Client Name: Ashbridge Developments
Client Ref: Gains Lane, Great Gidding
Planning Ref: 0801956FUL
Grid Ref: TL 1180 8295
Site Code: GID GAL 09
Finance Code: GID GAL 09
Receiving Body: Cambs County Stores, Landbeach, Cambridgeshire

Accession No:
Prepared by: Taleyna Fletcher
Position: Project Officer
Date: June 2010

Checked by: James Drummond-Murray
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: June 2010
Signed:

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Summary

Between 2nd and 3rd June 2010, Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at 23 Gains Lane, Great Gidding. The investigation consisted of two trenches, 30m in total length, within the footprint of two proposed new residential houses.

Both trenches contained ditches on an east-west orientation. No dating evidence was retrieved from any of the ditches, however, they were on the same alignment as modern field drains and gravel filled drain which were also encountered.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land at 23 Gains Lane, Great Gidding in Cambridgeshire.

1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application 0801956FUL), 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 Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). 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

The solid geology underlying the site is Oxford Clay (British Geological Survey sheet 172).

1.2.1 The site lies on a slope, varying from around 48.50m at the eastern end of the site, falling away to 45.50m at the western end.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

A search of the CHER was carried out within a 500m radius of the site. The relevant results are presented below.

1.3.1 Prehistoric remains are present within the area, with Iron Age activity recorded along a pipeline to the west side of the Brook (CHER CB14661) and a findspot of Neolithic material within the village to the east (MCB 1195).

1.3.2 The site is located 180m south east of the medieval parish church (CHER 00932), with remnants of earthwork medieval settlement to its north (MCB 1181) and a medieval moated site lies immediately to the southeast of the development area (CHER 01015, MCB 1282).

1.3.3 A number of sites have been identified surrounding the village which have remnants of surviving ridge and furrow (CHER 11624, 11625 and 11648).

1.3.4 In 2008, Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation at Great Gidding Primary School approximately 350m south west of the site (ECB 2932) (Fairbairn, 2009). This investigation revealed evidence of at least one possible Roman building in the form of a wall footing, building material, wall plaster and box flue tile. Other evidence of domestic activity including pottery dumps, burnt cereal grain and other domestic waste was also recorded. This evaluation followed a geophysical survey of the site by Cranfield University in 2008 (Masters, 2008) (ECB 3033) which indicated the presence of a kiln/industrial activity.
1.4 Acknowledgements
1.4.1 The author would like to thank Julian Meredith of Ashbridge Developments who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray. The author carried out the evaluation and on site survey using a Leica GPS. The brief for the archaeological work was written by Dan McConnell who also 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 The Brief required that 30m of trenching, providing a 5% sample of the site was excavated. A proposed trench location plan was sent to Cambridgeshire Archaeology for approval prior to the start of works.

2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a 1.50m wide toothless ditching bucket.

2.2.3 The site survey was carried out by the author using a Leica 1200 GPS.

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 Two samples (40 litres in total) were taken from two ditches for environmental analysis. For full results, see Appendix B.

2.2.7 Site conditions were good with constant bright, warm sunshine and no rain.
3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction
The results will be presented below, trench by trench. Cut numbers will be displayed in bold text, all other context in normal text. Appendix A provides descriptions of topsoil and subsoil depths. The location of all trenches can be seen in Figure 1.

3.2 Trench 1
3.2.1 Trench 1 measured 15m in length, 1.5m wide and was oriented approximately north-north-east to south-south-west (Figure 1) (plate 1). This trench was excavated to a depth of 0.70m and had approximately 0.36m of dark brown clayey topsoil overlying 0.34m of a mid yellowish brown clayey subsoil (Figure 2, section 2). This trench contained a north-east to south-west orientated ditch described below. In addition, a ceramic field drain, also on a north-east to south-west alignment was recorded. Figure 2 shows this trench in more detail.

Ditch 10 was linear in plan, orientated approximately north-east to south-west. It measured 0.98m wide with a maximum depth of 0.20m. It had moderate sloping edges and a flat base (Figure 2, section 5). This ditch was filled by 09, a reddish, mid grey brown silty clay with occasional stones, charcoal and chalk flecks. No finds were recovered from this fill. The environmental sample (sample number 2) did not contain any ecofacts or artefacts other than sparse fragments of charcoal (Appendix B).

3.3 Trench 2
3.3.1 Trench 2 measured 15m in length, 1.5m wide and was oriented approximately north-west to south-east (Figure 1) (plate 2). This trench was excavated to a depth of 0.70m and had approximately 0.34m of dark brown clayey topsoil overlying 0.36m of a mid yellowish brown clayey subsoil (Figure 3, section 1). This trench contained two north-east to south-west orientated ditches described below. In addition, ceramic field drains and a modern gravel filled service pipe also on a north-east to south-west alignment was also recorded. Figure 3 shows this trench in more detail.

Ditch 06 was linear in plan, orientated approximately north-east to south-west. It measured 0.96m wide with a maximum depth of 0.18m. It had moderate sloping edges and a flat base (Figure 3, section 3). This ditch was filled by 05, a reddish, mid grey brown silty clay with occasional stones, charcoal and chalk flecks. No finds were recovered from this fill. The environmental sample (sample number 1) did not contain any ecofacts or artefacts other than sparse fragments of charcoal (Appendix B).

Ditch 08 was linear in plan, orientated approximately north-east to south-west. It measured 0.80m wide with a maximum depth of 0.14m. It had moderate sloping edges and a flat base (Figure 3, section 4). This ditch was filled by 07, a reddish, mid grey brown silty clay with occasional stones, charcoal and chalk flecks. No finds were recovered from this fill.

3.4 Finds Summary
3.4.1 No datable finds were recovered from any of the features excavated. A small amount of post-medieval/modern fragments of pottery and iron nails were found in the topsoil during machining, however these were not retained. One sherd of St Neots Ware was found in the subsoil in Trench 2, however this could not be confidently assigned to a feature and therefore noted and discarded.
3.5 Environmental Summary

3.5.1 Two samples were taken (a total of 40 litres). Both samples were devoid of any ecofacts or artefacts other than sparse fragments of charcoal. For full report see Appendix B.
4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Discussion

4.1.1 The evaluation at 23 Gains Lane has identified the presence of parallel ditches, on a north-east to south-west alignment (Figure 4). The ditches are on the same alignment as the post-medieval and modern drainage features encountered which implies these ditches may have served the same purpose. Their orientation is likely to have made the most of the topographical layout at the time they were dug in order to most effectively carry water away from fields into larger boundary or drainage ditches.

4.1.2 The alignment of the ditches is the same as the north-east to south-west layout of the medieval ridge and furrow systems recorded by earthworks less than 300m south-west of the site (CHER 11648) and 750m north-west (CHER 11624). It is possible that the ditches recorded in this evaluation may represent drainage as part of a contemporary medieval field system.

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

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<th>Width (m)</th>
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APPENDIX B. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

By Rachel Fosberry

B.1 Introduction and Methods

B.1.1 Two bulk samples were taken from features within the evaluated areas of the site in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.

B.1.2 The samples were soaked in a solution of sodium carbonate for two days prior to processing in order to break down the heavy clay.

B.1.3 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.

B.2 Results

B.2.1 Both samples were devoid of any ecofacts or artefacts other than sparse fragments of charcoal.

B.3 Discussion

B.3.1 The samples were unproductive. No further work is required.
## APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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<td>Fairbairn, J.</td>
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<td>The Proposed Great Gidding Primary School : Archaeological Evaluation Oxford Archaeology report no. 1092</td>
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<td>Geophysical Survey of land off Winwick Road, Great Gidding, Cambridgeshire. Cranfield Forensic Institute report no. 024</td>
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APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM
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- [ ] Aerial Photography - new
- [ ] Annotated Sketch
- [ ] Augering
- [ ] Dendrochronological Survey
- [ ] Documentary Search
- [ ] Environmental Sampling
- [ ] Fieldwalking
- [x] Geophysical Survey
- [ ] Grab-Sampling
- [ ] Gravity-Core
- [ ] Laser Scanning
- [ ] Measured Survey
- [ ] Metal Detectors
- [ ] Photographic Survey
- [ ] Photogrammetric 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)

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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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### 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:**
### 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

**Convention Key**

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Report Number 1189
Figure 1: Location of trenches (black) with the development area outlined (red)
Figure 2: Trench 1, plan and sections
Figure 3: Trench 2, plan and sections
Figure 4: Plan showing orientation and possible continuation of ditches (purple dashed line)