45-86 Eastfield, East Chesterton

Archaeological Evaluation Report

February 2017

Client: Lovell

OA East Report No: 2040
OASIS No: oxfordar3-275177
NGR: TL 4656 6037
45-86 Eastfield, East Chesterton, Cambridge Phase 2

Archaeological Evaluation Interim Report

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Report Date: February 2017
Report Number: 2040
Site Name: 45-86 Eastfield, East Chesterton
HER Event No: ECB 4847
Date of Works: January 2016
Client Name: Lovell
Client Ref: NA
Planning Ref: 15/2321/FUL
Grid Ref: TL 4656 6037
Site Code: CAMEFC16
Finance Code: CAMEFC16
Receiving Body: CCC Stores

Accession No:
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Summary

Between 19th January and 20th January 2016 Oxford Archaeology East conducted a pre-demolition trial trench evaluation at Eastfield, East Chesterton, Cambridge (TL 4656 6037). Two trenches were excavated in the gardens and open spaces behind the existing structures, both of which revealed archaeological features. The trenches contained a series of prehistoric ditches, gullies, pits and postholes relating to settlement activity, with a similar density of features to the excavated settlement to the south. These features likely reflect a continuation of this settlement extending to the south. Finds were scarce, with only one sherd of pottery recovered from the excavated features. The excavation to the north however showed that finds on the site, with the exception of animal bone, are sporadically distributed, with some features containing concentrated dumps of material and others proving quite sterile.

Archaeological preservation across the site was once again higher than anticipated, with a layer of subsoil, up to 0.45m thick, ensuring a high level of feature preservation. Preservation under the 1930s houses is anticipated.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Phase 2 of an archaeological trial trench evaluation was conducted by Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) at 45-86 Eastfield, East Chesterton, Cambridge (TL 4656 6037; Fig. 1).

1.1.2 The evaluation was undertaken post-demolition in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CHET; Planning Application 15/2321/FUL), supplemented by a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by OA East (Brudenell 2016).

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 National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). 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 The site is located in the historic village of Chesterton, which is now part of the administrative district of Cambridge City, and lies c. 2.5km north-east of the city centre. The site lies on either side of Eastfield Road, and covers a combined area of c.1.4ha. The northern part of the development, which covers Phases 1 and 2 of the proposal, encompass the demolition and redevelopment of two 1930s cul-de-sacs, (Phase 1, nos. 45-69 & 68-69; Phase 2, nos. 66-67 & 70-75), whereas the western part of the development includes the demolition and redevelopment of a row of 1930s dwellings fronting Eastfield Road and backing onto Dundee Close (Phase 3, nos. 79-86).

1.2.2 The sites is surrounded by residential development, with Chesterton Primary School located to the north-east. The historic core of Chesterton village lies c.350m to the south, with the River Cam c.480m to the south.

1.2.3 The underlying superficial geology of the site comprises Quaternary sands and gravels of Second River Terrace Deposits, whilst the bedrock geology is Cretaceous mudstone of the Gault Formation. The gradual slope downwards from the excavated phase 1 area continues across this part of the site, however the gradient is far less pronounced at this point varying from 6.8 to 7.3 OD. Interestingly the lowest part of this phase 2 area is three meters lower than the highest part of phase 1 and this was apparent during trenching as the water table was soon encountered whilst excavating features.
1.3 **Archaeological and historical background**

1.3.1 The general archaeological and historical background for the site has been covered elsewhere (Brudenell 2016, Gref 2016). The most relevant archaeology to this evaluation is the excavated area of Phase 1, immediately to the north. The following is a brief summary of that work.

1.3.2 The archaeological excavation carried out immediately prior to this phase of evaluation revealed an area of settlement with evidence of activity throughout the Iron Age. The full analysis of the data generated by this phase of investigation has yet to commence, however, the preliminary interpretation carried out whilst on site shows a complex series of enclosures, with the latter phases orientated mainly north east to south west and north west to south east forming a gridded boundary system. In addition to the enclosures, a large number of pits were recorded across the site which appeared in the most part to pre-date the ditches. The enclosures and the pit clusters seem to follow the contours of the terrain quite precisely. The high ground (over 8 OD) and the low ground (under 7.3 OD) are both largely devoid of features with the main settlement swath extending in a narrow band across the site.

1.3.3 Artefactual recovery from the excavation was high. Pottery recovery was mainly limited to isolated dumps of material, primarily in pits. The faunal assemblage recovered, however, was large, well preserved and varied, with many species represented. One square feature in particular contained an unusual deposit comprising the articulated remains of least seven individual animals.
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 methodology used followed that outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation. The location of some trenches was adjusted in order to avoid restricting access for the demolition crews also operating on site. However, overall the proposed orientation and meterage of the trenches was maintained.

2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out by a tracked 360-type excavator, fitted with a flat bladed 2.1m wide ditching bucket. All trenching was undertaken under constant supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.

2.2.3 The site survey was carried out using Leica GS08 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 Environmental samples were taken from a range of features from the site in order to help formulate an environmental sampling strategy for any future excavation.

2.2.7 The trenches were excavated when conditions were dry and fair, however ground water made the conditions at the lowest part of both trenches quite wet.
3 Results

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 For the purposes of this report the features will be described by trench. A full context inventory can be found in Appendix A.

3.2 Trench 10

3.2.1 Trench 10 was 50m long, 2.10m wide and orientated north east to south west (Fig. 3). The trench was positioned to make best use of the available area. It was densely populated with ditches, gullies, pits and postholes, not all of which were excavated. Only the features which were excavated were assigned context numbers and are described below.

3.2.2 At the north western end of the trench were a series of ditches and gullies, some of which were inter cutting.

3.2.3 Gully 2015 was curvilinear with gently sloping sides and a flat base. It measured 0.56m in width and 0.15m in depth and was filled with a mid brown grey silty sand (2016).

3.2.4 Ditch 2007 was linear with moderately steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It ran north to south, measured 0.7m in width and 0.24m in depth and was filled with a mid grey brown silty sand (2018).

3.2.5 Ditch 2009 truncated 2007 and was linear with gently sloping sides and a concave base. It ran north to south, measured 0.9m in width and 0.28m in depth and was filled with a mid grey brown silty sand (2010).

3.2.6 Towards the south eastern end of the trench was another dense area of ditches, several of which were far more substantial than the others in the trench. These ditches were clearly inter cutting and complex and not all were excavated during the evaluation. It is likely that they represent a series of enclosures similar to those revealed in the excavated area to the north.

3.2.7 Ditch 2023 was linear with gently sloping sides and a flat base. It ran north west to south east, measured 1.3m in width and 0.20m in depth and was filled with a mid brown grey silty sand (2024).

3.2.8 Ditch 2025 was linear with moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It ran north east to south west, measured 1.5m in width and 0.28m in depth and was filled with a mid grey brown silty clay (2026).

3.2.9 Ditch 2027 (Plate3) was linear with gently sloping sides and a flat base. It ran north to south, measured 0.7m in width and 0.28m in depth and was filled with a mid grey brown sandy silt (2028).

3.2.10 Ditch 2029 (Plate3) truncated 2027 and was linear with moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It ran north to south, measured 0.78m in width and 0.30m in depth and was filled with a mid grey brown sandy silt (2030).

3.2.11 Ditch 2031 (Plate3) truncated 2029 and was linear with gently sloping sides and a concave base. It ran north to south, measured 1.82m in width and 0.42m in depth and was filled with a dark grey sandy silt (2032) and a mid grey brown sandy silt (2033).

3.2.12 In the gaps between the ditches and most likely truncated by them where the ditches are present was a spread of pits of similar size and form to some of the ones encountered in the excavation to the north.
3.2.13 Pit 2011 was sub-circular with moderately steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It measured 0.98m in diameter and 0.26m in depth and was filled with a mid grey brown silty sand (2012).

3.2.14 Pit 2013 was sub-circular with moderately steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It measured 0.82m in diameter and 0.22m in depth and was filled with a light brown grey silty clay (2014).

3.2.15 Pit 2017 was sub-circular with moderately steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It measured 1.4m in diameter and 0.38m in depth and was filled with a mid grey brown silty sand (2018).

3.2.16 A group of postholes and pits were recorded halfway along the trench which may form part of an alignment, however the window exposed by this trenched does not provide enough information to confirm this.

3.2.17 Posthole 2019 was circular with vertical sides and a concave base. It measured 0.28m in diameter and 0.36m in depth and was filled with a light grey silty sand (2020).

3.2.18 Posthole 2021 was circular with vertical sides and a concave base. It measured 0.30m in diameter and 0.34m in depth and was filled with a light grey silty sand (2022).

3.2.19 Pit 2034 was circular with moderately steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It measured 0.85m in diameter and 0.30m in depth and was filled with a mid grey brown silty sand (2035).

3.2.20 Given the location of this trench, placed through the gardens of the existing properties, it is unsurprising that there was a considerable amount of soil overlying and preserving the archaeology. At the north eastern end of the trench there was 0.40m of subsoil and 0.40m of topsoil, whilst at the south western end there was 0.45m of subsoil and 0.40m of topsoil. Only one sherd of pottery was recovered from the entire trench, a fragment of an early medieval jar recovered from the fill of pit 2017.

3.3 Trench 11

3.3.1 Trench 11 was T-shaped with the longer stretch orientated north west to south east. It was 18m long and 2.1m wide with an 8m spur (Fig. 3). This trench was also positioned to make best use of the available area and therefore was irregular in shape. Whilst not as densely packed with features as trench 10, the exposed area revealed that the archaeology continues to the north. Only the features which were excavated were assigned context numbers and are described below.

3.3.2 A large pit 2000 was located at the south eastern end of the trench. It was sub-circular with steeply sloping sides. The pit was not bottomed as ground water made it impractical to do so. It measured 1.6m in diameter and was filled with a dark grey clayey silt (2001).

3.3.3 Several smaller pits were located top the north of pit 2000, two of which were excavated.

3.3.4 Pit 2002 was sub-circular with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. It measured 0.87m in diameter and 0.30m in depth and was filled with a mid grey brown sandy silt (2003).

3.3.5 Pit 2004 (Plate 5) was sub-circular with steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It measured 0.97m in diameter and 0.56m in depth and was filled with a mid brown grey clayey silt (2005).
3.3.6 Several small gullies and the edge of a ditch were also recorded in the trench but not excavated. At the north western end of the trench there was 0.14m of subsoil and 0.40m of topsoil, whilst at the south eastern end there was 0.22m of subsoil and 0.48m of topsoil. No finds were recovered from the trench.

3.4 Finds Summary
3.4.1 A single sherd of pottery was recovered from one of the pits in trench 10 (2017). This fragment of pottery was a small body sherd of a storage jar and likely early medieval in origin.

3.5 Environmental Summary
3.5.1 Three bulk samples were taken from features within the evaluated area in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations. Two of the samples did not produce much in the way of environmental material but the fill of pit 2000 produced plant remains preserved by waterlogging.
4 Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Prehistoric activity
4.1.1 The Archaeology uncovered in this second phase of trenching bears many similarities to the remains discovered on the northern part of the site. Trench 10, in particular, displays a similar density of features to that revealed in Trenches 2 and 3 during the Phase 1 evaluation of 2016. The area around these trenches proved to be the busiest area of the subsequent excavation, and therefore a similar density of archaeology may be anticipated in this zone.

4.1.2 The pits uncovered also have parallels with those excavated in the Phase 1 area. Pit 2000 located in Trench 11 is comparable in nature to some of the larger pits distributed across the breadth of the Phase 1 excavation. The smaller pits revealed in this evaluation are also all of a similar form. However, the higher water table across the Phase 2 site, and the waterlogging revealed in pit 2000 suggests this area has higher potential for environmental preservation.

4.1.3 In Trench 10 the majority of the ditches were clustered and inter-cutting in a similar manner to those revealed in Trench 3 of the Phase 1 evaluation. Upon excavation, this area proved to be one of the more complicated zones of the site, with multiple phases of enclosure. The density of features in Trench 10 is likely to reflect a similar scenario.

4.1.4 A notable difference is the nature of the archaeology between Phases 1 and 2 is the greater presence of postholes from the current evaluation, possibly hinting at structural remains. Whilst a few postholes were recorded in the Phase 1 area, no clear structures were revealed. Additionally the lack of finds recovered from the Phase 2 trenches, and in particular, the absence of animal bone is unusual given the quantities recovered from the excavation to the north.

4.2 Medieval activity
4.2.1 The presence of medieval pottery in a feature from this area may suggest that not all of the recorded features are Iron Age. It may be that there is a higher level of medieval activity in this area of the site than there was in the northern part.

4.3 Summary of significance
4.3.1 The evaluation has revealed a higher level of archaeological survival and preservation at the site than might otherwise have been anticipated given previous development.

4.3.2 Similar to the Phase 1 site, it would appear that 1930s development involved only localised landscaping, meaning subsoils to the rear of the properties remained intact, protecting the archaeological remains in these zones. Given the depth of subsoil present, it is reasonable to assume that any archaeological remains present may once again be only partially truncated by the building footings.

4.3.3 Overall, the features uncovered by the Phase 2 evaluation are best interpreted as a continuation of the settlement activity revealed in the Phase 1 site. The ditches, however, appear to be on slightly different alignments to those within the northern excavation, and the archaeology is present at a much lower elevation. This may reflect a different phase of occupation or an alternative use of land on the lower gravel terraces. This may also be reflected in the marked difference in the level of artefactual recovery.
4.4 **Recommendations**

4.4.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.
### Appendix A. Context Inventory

#### 1.1

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<td>fill</td>
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<td>sandy silt</td>
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<td>2029</td>
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<td>mid grey brown</td>
<td>silty sand</td>
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</table>

Table 1: Context Inventory
Appendix B. Environmental Report

B.1 Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction

B.1.1 Three bulk samples were taken from features within the evaluated area at Eastfield, Chesterton (Phase 2) in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.

Methodology

B.1.2 A.1.2 The total volume of each of the samples was processed by tank flotation using modified Siraff-type equipment for the recovery of preserved plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The floating component (flot) of the samples was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through 10mm, 5mm, 2mm and a 0.5mm sieve. The flots were scanned using a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 60 and an abbreviated list of the recorded remains are presented in Table 1.

Quantification

B.1.3 A.1.3 For the purpose of this initial assessment, items such as seeds and cereal grains have been scanned and recorded qualitatively according to the following categories:

# = 1-5, ## = 6-25 specimens

Items that cannot be easily quantified such as charcoal and waterlogged plant matter have been scored for abundance

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

Results

B.1.4 A.1.4 Fill 2001 of pit 2000 contains plant remains preserved by waterlogging, mostly in the form of numerous fine rootlets with occasional nettle (Urtica dioica) seeds. Fill 2012 of pit 2011 did not contain any preserved remains and fill 2026 of ditch 2025 contains an abundance of modern root material with sparse charcoal fragments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample no.</th>
<th>200</th>
<th>201</th>
<th>202</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context no.</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature no</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trench</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volume processed (L)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Urtica dioica</em> L. seed</td>
<td>Common Nettle</td>
<td>##w</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Charcoal &lt;2mm</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterlogged root/stem</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cladoceran ephippa</td>
<td>eg. water flea egg cases</td>
<td>#</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Volume of flot (mls)</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>450</td>
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</table>

*Table 2: Environmental samples from CAMEFC16*
# Appendix C. Bibliography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brudenell, M</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>45-86 Eastfield, East Chesterton, Cambridge: Written Scheme of Investigation OA East Project number 19637</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacomet, S</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Identification of cereal remains from archaeological sites. (2nd edition, 2006) IPNA, Universität Basel / Published by the IPAS, Basel University.</td>
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APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM
All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details
OASIS Number: oxfordar3-275177
Project Name: Eastfield, East Chesterton
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start: 19-01-2017
Finish: 20-01-2017
Previous Work (by OA East): Yes
Future Work: Yes

Project Reference Codes
Site Code: CAMEFC16
HER No.: ECB4847
Planning App. No.: 15/2321/FUL
Related HER/OASIS No.: None

Type of Project/Techniques Used
Prompt: Planning condition
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”.

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<th>Monument</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Period</th>
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<td>Iron Age -800 to 43</td>
<td>ceramic</td>
<td>Early Medieval 410 to 1066</td>
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<td>ditch, pit</td>
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Project Location
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<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
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<tr>
<td>HER</td>
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**Project Originators**

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<tr>
<td>Project Brief Originator</td>
<td>Andy Thomas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Design Originator</td>
<td>Matt Brudenell</td>
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**Project Archives**

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**Archive Contents/Media**

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<th>Stratigraphic</th>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Textiles</th>
<th>Wood</th>
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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
Figure 1: Site location showing Phase 2 evaluation trenches (black) in development area (blue).
Figure 2: Overall site plan. Scale 1:750
Figure 3: Plan of Phase 2 evaluation trenches. Scale 1:250

Key
- Limit of excavation
- Archaeological feature
- Modern
Figure 4: Selected sections. Scale 1:25
Plate 1: View of Trench 10 from north

Plate 2: View of Trench 10 from south