60-68 Victoria Road, Cambridge

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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OASIS No: oxfordar3-248037
NGR: TL 4500 5953

Client: Orion Heritage Limited

April 2016
60-68 Victoria Road, Cambridge

Archaeological Evaluation

By Steven Graham BA

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Summary

From the 7th to the 8th of April 2016, OA East carried out an archaeological trenching evaluation at a land formerly occupied by the houses numbered 60-68 Victoria Road, Cambridge. Three trenches were excavated revealing three large post-medieval pits (one of which substantial in depth) dating to the late 19th or 20th century and one small undated pit. The large pits truncated levelling layers of late 19th or 20th century rubble. Despite the site being located in an area of archaeological potential, there was no evidence on site of any features pre-dating the 19th century.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at 60-68 Victoria Road, Cambridge.

1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application 14/1878/FUL), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East.

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 at around 12.5m OD and the local substrate combines Third Terrace sand and gravel over Gault clay formation (BGS 1981).

1.2.2 The site is in Cambridge, close to the junction of Victoria Road and Green's Road. The River Cam flows, c.200m to the south of the site.

1.2.3 This area has been extensively built up since the 19th century, and the site was occupied by standing buildings. These buildings were demolished prior to the evaluation commencing.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential as recorded by information held by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). It is located in the hinterland of the Roman town of Cambridge, centred on Castle Hill to the west, with evidence for Roman activity recorded from finds to the south of the site (CHER 04547). Roman and Saxon material have been recovered from the back gardens along Victoria Road (MCB5563) and dredged from the River Cam (CHER5598 and CHER5599). To the north-east (c150m) of the proposed development area, burials of Saxon date were recorded in the late 19th/early 20th century from Swan's Gravel Pit (CHER 04551).

1.3.2 More recent investigations have focused on works in advance of redevelopment/infill development in the surrounding area, and have tended to yield features and finds of medieval and post-medieval date. These include a medieval gully, possibly indicative of agricultural activity, in proximity to the site (CHER 15640) and unglazed medieval pottery recovered from an evaluation trench to the south (CHER 19826).

1.3.3 OA East conducted an evaluation at a 21-23 Milton Road, directly east of the proposed development area. The evaluation uncovered six large post-medieval quarry pits dating to the 19th century. The pits were sealed by layers of late 19th or early 20th century rubble, associated with the construction of houses on the plot in the 1920s, and their subsequent demolition in the 1990s (Graham 2015).
1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 OA East would like to thank Orion Heritage Ltd for funding the work. The site was managed by Aileen Connor and surveyed by Gareth Rees. The fieldwork was carried out by Steve Graham. The brief was written by Kasia Gdaniec of CCC HET, who also monitored the work. Thanks are also extended to the various specialists who contributed to the report, the illustrator and the editor.
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.

2.1.2 This was in response to an application to demolish the existing buildings on the proposed development area and construct 10 studio flats in their place.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 A total of three trenches each measuring 10m in length and 1.8m in width were excavated to provide a representative sample of the proposed development area.

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

2.2.3 The site was located to Ordnance Survey co-ordinates using a Lecia GS08 fitted with Smartnet technology.

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-formas. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

2.2.6 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were present.

2.2.7 Site conditions were good, being dry, and the weather bright with occasional cloud.

2.2.8 A live electrical service main running north to south across the western half of the site necessitated a slight repositioning of the trenches towards the east.
3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction
3.1.1 Two of the three trenches excavated (Fig.2) contained archaeological features that contained modern material within their fills. Trench 1 contained a single very shallow pit cutting into the natural. Trench 2 contained a single large pit cutting through all of the layers above the natural geology, whilst Trench 3 contained two pits (one of which was substantial in depth) containing modern brick, tile and rubble in their fills also cutting through all of the layers above the natural geology. The natural geology was overlaid by a series of layers (probably deliberately dumped) containing brick and rubble dating to the 19th or 20th century. The trenches are described below in numerical order, supplemented by further trench/context information in Appendix A.

3.2 Trench 1
3.2.1 This trench (Figure 3, Section 2; Plate 1) was located at the southern end of the proposed development area. It was 9.5m long. The trench had an east to west orientation and an average depth of 0.70m to the underlying geology.

3.2.2 Located at the western end of the trench was a small sub-circular pit 004. This pit (Figure 3, Section 1; Plate 2) was 0.60m in diameter with a depth of 0.11m. Its single fill (003) was a dark red brown silt sand containing no finds.

3.2.3 The pit was overlain by a clean moderately loose dark brown sandy silt containing no finds (2) with an average depth of 0.40m. This soil was found in all three trenches and appeared to have been imported onto the site. It was very similar in character to the fill of pit 004. This was in turn overlaid at the centre of the trench by a layer of light grey brown sand silt (5) containing fragments of modern brick and tile with an average depth of 0.20m. The upper final layer was a band of mid grey brown sand silt (1) containing a high percentage of modern brick, mortar and stone fragments with an average depth of 0.30m.

3.3 Trench 2
3.3.1 This trench (Figure 3, Section 3; Plate 3) was located in the middle of the proposed development area on a north-east to south-west orientation. It was 10m long with an average depth of 0.80m. The natural geology was overlain by a similar sequence of layers to that observed in Trench 1.

3.3.2 The earliest layer was a red brown sand silt (2) the depth of which varied from 0.40m to 0.60m. This was overlain by a dark red brown clay sand (6) containing no finds with an average depth of 0.18m. The depth of the final upper fill (1) varied from 0.20m to 0.40m.

3.3.3 A pit (19) cut through all of the layers but did not penetrate into natural geology. It was located at the south-west end of the trench (Figure 3, Section 3). The pit had a diameter of 1.00m and a depth of 0.65m. Its single fill (7) was a mix of grey brown sand silt containing a high percentage of modern brick, mortar and tile.

3.4 Trench 3
3.4.1 This trench (Figure 3, Section 4; Plate 5) was excavated broadly parallel to the northern limit of the development area. The trench was 9.5m in length with an average depth of 1.00m. The trench had a north-west to south-east orientation and the natural geology here was overlain by layers of dumped soils containing modern brick and rubble. These layers were truncated by two pits. Pit 8 was located at the north-west end of the trench,
whilst pit 13 was located at the south-east end of the trench. At the north-west end of the trench, the trench layers were truncated by an electrical service and a modern drain.

3.4.2 The natural geology was overlain by a moderately loose dark red brown sand silt (2) with an average depth of 0.20m. This was overlain by a light grey brown silt sand (17) containing no finds with an average depth of 0.20m. Above this was a dark grey brown clay silt (16) containing no finds. This layer with an average depth of 0.30m was truncated by a modern drain. The upper and final layer (1) containing modern rubble and brick had an average depth of 0.40m.

3.4.3 Pit 8 (Figure 3, Section 5; Plate 4) cut through layers 1, 16 and 2. Only part of the pit was visible in plan as the feature continued beyond the north-west corner of the trench, but it was at least 3.5m in diameter. The pit was more than 2.6m deep, but its full depth could not be established. The earliest observed fill was a dark grey brown clay silt (12) with a depth of 1.20m containing a small assemblage of 19th or 20th century pottery and a single clay pipe (appendix B.1). This was overlain by a dark red silt sand (11; similar to the deposit observed in Trenches 1 and 2) 0.20m deep containing no finds and sharply sloping down from the north-west. This was in turn overlain by a small lens of coke and ash (10) sharply sloping down from the north-west. Above this was a light grey clay sand (9) 0.60m deep containing no finds. The final layer (18) was a series of lenses (seven in total) containing modern mortar, rubble and sand with a combined depth of 0.90m (Figure 3, Section 4) all sloping down from the north-west.

3.4.4 Cutting through layers 1, 16 and 2 at the opposite end of the trench was an elongated pit (13; Figure 3, Section 6). Only part of the pit was visible in plan as the feature continued beyond the south-east corner of the trench. The visible part of the pit had a length of 1.06m, a width to the trench side of 1.00m and a depth of 0.60m. The pit contained 2 fills, the initial fill (15) was a thin (0.11m) silt sand containing no finds. Above this was a dark red brown clay silt (14). This fill was 0.48m deep and contained modern brick, rubble and plastic.

3.5 Finds Summary

3.5.1 The excavation produced a small pottery assemblage of 11 sherds, from two vessels, weighing 0.798kg, and fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem, recovered from a single feature.

3.6 Environmental Summary

3.6.1 No features were present that were suitable for environmental sampling.
4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 Stratigraphically, the earliest feature was a small shallow pit (4) in Trench 1. However as it contained no finds or any other diagnostic characteristics it is not possible to suggest a date or function. The size and depth of the pits located in Trench 3 (particularly pit 8) suggests that survival of any earlier archaeology is highly unlikely.

4.1.2 The deposits sealing the natural geology and pit 4 are thought to have been imported to the site since even the earliest layer was moderately loose, clean and homogeneous and did not have the appearance of of an in situ sub-soil. They probably represent levelling and consolidation layers. The upper layers of this sequence contained fragments of brick, mortar and rubble from the late 19th to 20th centuries.

4.1.3 Cutting through all of these layers were three pits (in Trenches 2 and 3) all of which contained modern brick, tile, pottery and associated rubble within their fills. One possible interpretation of pits 19 and 13 is that they were gravel quarry pits similar to those found by an evaluation nearby at Milton Road Primary School (CHER 17864; Hogg 2008) and at Milton Road (Graham 2015). This evidence suggests that this area witnessed extensive quarrying and is supported by the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey 1886 six-inch map of the area (www.old-maps.co.uk) which shows a gravel pit to the north of Victoria Road. However, the pits found during the current evaluation seem to be too late to be associated with gravel quarrying since they had cut through even the latest of the levelling layers and their uppermost fills contained conspicuously modern material, perhaps suggesting a 20th century date to be more likely. According to the current owners of the site (pers comm 08/04/2016) a builders yard was at one point situated on the site and these pits may be the results of the builders activities in this yard.

4.2 Significance

4.2.1 Whilst the site adds to the existing knowledge of late Victorian and 20th century activities in the immediate vicinity, there is no indication of earlier deposits surviving here.

4.3 Recommendations

4.3.1 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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<td><strong>E-W</strong></td>
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<td>Trench contains single small pit (4) Natural sand is overlain by subsoil (2) and subsequent levelling layers containing modern brick and rubble.</td>
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<td>Trench has a sandy natural soil, overlain by the subsoil (2) and subsequent levelling layers containing modern brick and rubble. These are truncated by a pit (19) the fill of which (7) contains modern rubble and fill.</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Trench has a sandy natural soil, overlain by subsoil (2) and subsequent levelling layers containing modern brick and rubble. These are truncated by two modern drains, one modern electrical service and two pits (8 and 13), the fills of both these pits containing modern rubble and fill.</td>
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<td>1.22</td>
<td>Fill of 8</td>
<td>Pot, Pipe stem</td>
<td>Modern</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>Pit</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>Fill of 8</td>
<td>Rubble</td>
<td>Modern</td>
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APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Ceramic Finds

By Carole Fletcher

Introduction and methodology

B.1.1 Archaeological works produced a small pottery assemblage of 11 sherds, from two vessels, weighing 0.798kg, and fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem, recovered from a single feature 8.

Results

B.1.2 The pottery recovered consists of 10 sherds from a single Bone China cup, decorated with green annular rings at the rim and a single vertical green line on the upper part of the handle. Although similar in shape to a later 19th century coffee cup illustrated by Berthoud (Berthoud 1990 p219 plate 1314) the size and utilitarian decoration style suggest it is later, possibly 20th century. A sherd from a plant pot was also recovered and although not closely datable is likely to be 19th century or later. The final item is an unmarked and undecorated fragment of white ball clay tobacco pipe stem, which cannot be closely dated.

Conclusion

B.1.3 Overall the small assemblage is a mix of domestic and horticultural vessels of 19th or 20th century date which alongside clay tobacco pipe stem represent low level rubbish disposal. The material has little significance other than to help date the single feature and may be deselected prior to archival deposition.

B.1.4 Pottery Catalogue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Cut</th>
<th>Fabric</th>
<th>Basic Form</th>
<th>Sherd Count</th>
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<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bone China</td>
<td>Complete profile of a cup</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>Late 19th-20th century</td>
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<td>Terracotta</td>
<td>Plant pot</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>19th-20th century</td>
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Table 1: Post-Roman Pottery Dating Summary Catalogue

B.1.5 Clay Tobacco Pipe Catalogue

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<th>No of pipe stem fragments</th>
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<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fragment of pipe stem.</td>
<td>Not closely datable</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 2: Clay Tobacco Pipe
APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Berthoud M 1990 A Compendium of British Cups Micawber Publications Bridgenorth


Graham, S., 2015, Land at Nos 21 to 23 Milton Road, Cambridge, An Archaeological Evaluation OA East Report 1814

Gilmour, N., 2015 60-68 Victoria Road, Cambridge, Written Scheme of Investigation, Archaeological Evaluation. OA East

APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM
All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

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<td>Related HER/OASIS No.</td>
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Type of Project/Techniques Used
Prompt | Direction from Local Planning Authority - Direction 4
Development Type | Housing Estate

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

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods
List feature types using the **NMR Monument Type Thesaurus** and significant finds using the **MDA Object type Thesaurus** together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Monument</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Object</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pits</td>
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Project Location
**County:** Cambridgeshire  
**District:** Cambridge  
**Parish:** Cambs City  
**HER:** CCC HET  
**Study Area:** 603.70m²  
**Site Address (including postcode if possible):** 60-68 Victoria Road, Cambridge CB4 3DN  
**National Grid Reference:** TL 4500 5953

### Project Originators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
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<td>OA EAST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Brief Originator</td>
<td>Kasia Gdaniec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Design Originator</td>
<td>Nick Gilmour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Aileen Connor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Steve Graham</td>
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### Project Archives

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<th>Digital Archive</th>
<th>Paper Archive</th>
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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
Figure 1: Site location showing evaluation trenches (black) and development area outlined (red)
Figure 2: Trench plans
Plate 1: Trench 1 from the east

Plate 2: Pit 4 from the east
Head Office/Registered Office/OA South

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