Land behind the Longbow Public House
Kings Ripton Road
Sapley

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Client: Relmsfield Builders Ltd

OA East Report No: 1363
OASIS No: oxfordar3-124124
NGR: TL 2427 7406

May 2012
An Archaeological Evaluation on Land behind The Longbow Public House, Kings Ripton Road, Sapley

Archaeological Evaluation

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Report Date: May 2012
Report Number: 1363
Site Name: Land behind The Longbow Public House, Kings Ripton Road, Sapley
HER Event No: ECB 3757
Date of Works: April 2012
Client Name: Relmsfield builders Ltd
Client Ref: 14160
Planning Ref: 1100405/FUL
Grid Ref: TL 2427 7406
Site Code: KIN LON 12
Finance Code: KIN LON 12
Receiving Body: CCC Stores, Landbeach

Accession No:
Prepared by: Helen Stocks-Morgan
Position: Archaeological Supervisor
Date: April 2012

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Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: May 2012
Signed:

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Summary

On the 19th and 20th April 2012 OA East conducted an archaeological evaluation at land behind the Longbow Public House, Kings Ripton Road, Sapley, Huntingdonshire (TL 2427 7406). The archaeological work comprised three evaluation trenches targeted within the footprint of the proposed new buildings. Archaeological remains were in all of the trenches; which consisted of ditches orientated north-east to south-west and north-west to south-east. Although undated they are thought to be part of a prehistoric agricultural field system.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land behind the Longbow Public House, on Kings Ripton road in Sapley, Huntingdon.

1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application 1100405FUL, supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (Macaulay, 2012)).

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

1.2.1 The development area is situated on flat ground to the south of Sapley at a height of between 40.1m OD. The site is bounded by housing estates to the north and south.

1.2.2 The underlying bedrock is Oxford clay overlain by superficial deposits of boulder clay (British Geological Survey).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The following section has been taken from Philips 2009 and amended where appropriate.

1.3.2 The site lies approximately 1.5km north of the river Ouse. The results of aerial photographic studies and excavations have shown the Ouse Valley to be particularly rich in prehistoric remains. Palaeolithic artefacts have been found within the terrace gravels of the river system 1.5km to the south-east in Hartford (CHER 01430 and 05774).

1.3.3 A Late Neolithic ceremonial complex has been found in Brampton, 5km to the west (Scheduled Monument 121). Neolithic monuments within this complex included henges, a cursus and a long mortuary enclosure. A Neolithic mortuary enclosure at the end of a cursus, forming part of this complex was investigated in 1990-1991 (Malim 1990).

1.3.4 Bronze Age remains have been found closer to the river. Less than 2km to the south-west at Northbridge a large evaluation uncovered a concentration of pits, gullies and post holes in the centre of the site, some containing quantities of late Bronze Age finds, indicating occupation in the vicinity (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record MCB16363; Cullen 2004) (Figure 4). 4km to the west of the subject site, a Bronze Age triple ring ditch (CHER 02117) was uncovered during excavations immediately west of Thrapston Road, Brampton in 1966, before the construction of the Miller Way housing estate (White 1969). Close by, a small pit containing fragments of Bronze Age Beaker
pottery and fragments of charcoal and burnt bone was uncovered during an archaeological assessment on the area south of Thrapston Road (CHER 11176), 5km west of the site during September 1993 (Welsh 1993).

1.3.5 During the Iron Age parts of the Ouse Valley began to be heavily exploited, including the more labour intensive claylands. 3km to the south-west at Bob's Wood, Hinchinbrooke, a farmstead originating in the Middle Iron Age grew in to a settlement of several hectares by the Roman period (CHER 13033; Hinman 2005). At Alconbury Airfield approximately 2.5km to the north-west of the site, a series of ditches were revealed relating to a Late Iron Age/ early Roman field system (CHER MCB 15840). Two areas of more concentrated archaeology, consisting of postholes and pits, as well as linear ditches, produced pottery dated to the Early/Middle Iron Age (Macaulay 2000). At the site of Ermine Business Park to the west of the site (ECB 3078), an evaluation of two fields comprising 70 trenches was undertaken in 2008 (Philips 2009). Field A, was interpreted as a Middle Iron Age industrial area consisting of one or more large pits which included metal working waste. Also in field A were several ditches representing field boundaries or land divisions, part of a co-axial field system. One of these may have extended, although not continuously, for 200m as it was encountered in three trenches. Field B, consisted of an area of Middle Iron Age settlement. Features included several boundary ditches, some of a considerable size, two possible water holes, a pit and a curvilinear gully which could have been part of a roundhouse. The settlement was restricted to a relatively small area, approximately 1ha. Beyond this no Iron Age activity was encountered.

1.3.6 An Agricultural field system was recorded during an evaluation at Grange Farm, Green End, 1km to the north-west. This consisted of several ditches orientated north-east to south-west and north-west to south-east. (Fletcher, forthcoming)

1.3.7 Local Roman sites include the extensive farmstead already mentioned at Bob's Wood, Hinchinbrooke. Among the findings were houses and associated structures, enclosures and water management features, a smithy, cremations, inhumations and significant assemblages of metalwork, pottery and animal bone (Hinman 2005). To the immediate west of Bob's Wood, at Parkway School, an excavation in 2004 (Fletcher 2004) revealed the presence of a ditch and the remaining half of a pit previously identified in the evaluation both dating to the Later Iron Age. The north-eastern excavation area revealed possible Bronze Age pits, a Later Iron Age roundhouse and a drainage ditch with evidence of maintenance, dating to the Later Iron Age. At Northbridge, 2km to the south-west of the site, a square enclosure was identified through aerial photographs and geophysical survey. Evaluation proved this to be a double ditched enclosure containing quantities of Roman artefacts (CHER 16364). An agricultural function was the most likely interpretation. In addition Roman field systems were identified to the east of the enclosure and a water hole to the south. Directly to the west of the Northbridge evaluation cropmarks and geophysics have revealed further enclosures and field systems on a similar alignment to the square enclosure, suggesting a Roman date (CHER MCB16939). The Northbridge evaluation extended to the Roman Road, Ermine Street, to the west of the subject site. No evidence of the road was encountered, nor was any trace of field systems extending from the route of it (Cullen 2004). Neither was the road found during the installation of a water mains pipeline along a 400m stretch of Ermine Street and a 400m stretch of the adjoining minor road, Green End (CHER CB15034; Gdaniec 1993).

1.3.8 During the evaluation at Ermine Street Business Park discussed previously (Philips 2009), Medieval and post-medieval ridge and furrow was recorded across much of the
site, as well as features interpreted as agricultural strips. These may have aided drainage in some way and on the whole followed no discernible pattern or orientation. Some were truncated by the furrows, others truncated the furrows. They all cut through the sub soil. Further Medieval ridge and furrow was recorded running north-east to south-west during an evaluation at Hinchinbrooke Par Road (Hinman & Cooper, 2001) 2km to the south-west.

1.4 Acknowledgements
The author would like to thank Relmsfield in particular Gavin Nelson, for commissioning the work. Thanks are also extended to Nick Cox who helped with the fieldwork and also to Bob of Relmsfield who carried out the machining. Taleyna Fletcher carried out all on-site survey and David Brown created the graphics. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray and monitored by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council.
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 evaluation consisted of 3 trenches measuring 10m x 1.6m each. The trenches were sited to lie within the footprint of the proposed houses.

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 survey was carried out by Taleyna Fletcher using a Leica GPS 1200 system which located the trench positions on the Ordnance Survey grid. The heights of ground level and base of trenches were also surveyed and noted on site for trench plans and section drawings.

2.2.4 All trench locations were scanned for buried services with a Cable Avoidance Tool prior to machine excavation.

2.2.5 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.

2.2.6 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.

2.2.7 Environmental sampling for flotation and finds retrieval was carried out on relevant contexts.

2.2.8 The general ground conditions were good, with the majority of modern disturbance limited to 0.3m in depth. The weather conditions on the first day of the evaluation was heavy rain, which hampered excavation and recorded, however the second day was carried out in fair conditions.
3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction
3.1.1 The results are presented below by trench.

3.2 Trench 1
3.2.1 Archaeological features were revealed throughout the trench (Fig. 2). The natural deposits were recorded at 0.75m below modern ground level. The subsoil layer comprised a 0.30m thick, dark greyish orange silty clay (15). This was overlain by the topsoil (14), a dark brownish grey silty clay, 0.45m in thickness (see plate 1).
3.2.2 Towards the western end of the trench a north-east to south-east aligned ditch (1) was recorded. It had concave sides and a flat base, measuring 1.2m wide by 0.35m deep. It was filled by a mid brownish grey silty clay (2) (see fig 3 for section).
3.2.3 Immediately to the east lay a ditch terminus (3) running north to south and terminating to the south. It had a concave profile, measuring 0.7m wide and 0.15m deep. Its fill comprised a mid orangey brown silty clay (4) (see fig 3 for section).
3.2.4 A second north-east to south-west aligned ditch (17) was recorded 3m to the east. Ditch 17 was 1.1m wide extending into the trench section. This was unexcavated but seen to be filled by a a dark brownish grey silty clay (16).

3.3 Trench 2
3.3.1 Trench 2 ran north-west to south-east across the eastern part of the proposed development. Archaeological features were present throughout the trench (Fig. 2). The natural geology was revealed at 0.75m below the modern ground surface (see plate 2). The subsoil layer comprised a 0.20m thick, dark greyish orange silty clay (15), overlain by topsoil (14) 0.2m thick. The sequence was sealed by a 0.35m thick make up layer (13) consisting of a dark blackish grey silty clay with frequent brick and plastic fragments.
3.3.2 To the north-west of the trench lay a ditch (8), orientated north-east to south-west, measuring 0.6m wide and 0.3m deep. It had steep sides and a flat base. The fill consisted of a dark orangey grey silty clay (7) (see fig 3 for section).
3.3.3 Four metres to the east lay a parallel ditch (6), which had a similar profile, which measured 0.65m wide and 0.2m deep. This was filled by a comparable dark orangey grey silty clay (5) (see fig 3 for section).

3.4 Trench 3
3.4.1 Trench 3 located to the west of the plot, ran north to south across the site. Archaeological features were present within the trench (see fig 2). The natural was reached at 0.7m below the modern ground surface (plate 3). This was overlain by subsoil (15), consisting of a dark greyish orange silty clay, 0.4m thick. This was overlain by a 0.1m thick layer of topsoil (14). Sealing this was a make up layer, 0.2m thick, consisting of modern debris and a dark greyish black silty clay (13).
3.4.2 Within the trench a ditch (12) was recorded running north-east to south-west. This had concave sides and a flat base, measuring 0.75m wide by 0.25m deep. It was filled by a mid brownish grey silty clay (11) (see fig 3 for section). This ditch is likely to be the continuation of the ditch (1) seen to the north-east in trench 1.

3.4.3 Immediately to the south lay a perpendicular ditch (10), measuring 0.65m wide and 0.15m deep. This had steep sides and a flat base. The fill consisted of a dark orangey grey silty clay (9) (see fig 3 for section).

3.5 Finds Summary
3.5.1 No finds were recovered during the archaeological evaluation.

3.6 Environmental Summary
3.6.1 Two 10 litre bulk samples were taken from ditch fills (2,5) in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains. These samples were devoid of any ecofacts.
4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Agricultural Field System

4.1.1 The ditches that are recorded in all three trenches are likely to be part of a co-axial agricultural field system. Previous evaluations to the north of the site at The Ermine Business Parks, The Stukeleys and Grange Farm, Alconbury have recorded extensive field systems dating to the Middle Iron Age along a north-west to south-east alignment. Although the ditches recorded during the evaluation are undated, given the similar orientation and profile of the ditches found during the previous evaluations, it is likely that these form part of the same agricultural field system.

4.2 Significance

4.2.1 Co-axial field systems have been recorded at several sites along the Ouse valley. The earliest examples date to the Bronze Age, such as the ones found at Huntingdon Racecourse (Hinman, 2001) and Bob's Wood, Hinchingbrooke (Hinman 2005). Evidence for the expansion of settlement and agricultural field systems expanded further out from the river Ouse have been recorded at Grange Farm, Alconbury and at Ermine Business Park, The Stukeleys.

4.2.2 The ditches recorded during the evaluation, if they can be securely dated to the Iron Age, will further reinforce the evidence for the expansion of settlement along the Ouse Valley.

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

## Trench 1

### General Description
Two ditches orientated north-east to south west and one ditch terminus orientated north to south.

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<tr>
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### Trench 2

### General Description
Two ditches orientated north-east to south-west.

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## Trench 3

### General Description
One ditch orientated north-east to south-west and one ditch orientated north-west to south east.

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APPENDIX B. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

B.1 Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction and methodology

B.1.1 Two bulk samples were taken during excavations at Longbow Public House, Kings Ripton Road, Sapley 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. Both samples were taken from undated ditch deposits.

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 Ten 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.

Results

B.1.4 The samples were found to be devoid of any ecofacts or artefacts other than sparse charcoal.

Further Work and Methods statement

B.1.5 The general lack of plant remains suggests that either the heavy clay soil conditions at the site do not favour preservation or that there is no evidence of any nearby settlement or of any agricultural practices such as crop processing.
B.1.6 No further work on these samples is required.
**APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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<th>Author</th>
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<td>Fletcher T</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Prehistoric Occupation at Land Adjacent to Parkway, Hinchingbrooke, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Excavation CCC AFU Report No. 761</td>
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<td>Fletcher T</td>
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<td>Gdaniec K</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Archaeological Observations at Ermine Street, Great Stukeley, Huntingdon. CAU Report 077</td>
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<td>Hinman M &amp; Cooper S</td>
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<td>Iron Age settlement &amp; field systems at Alconbury Airfield, Rail Link: an archaeological evaluation Stage 1. AFU Report No. 174</td>
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**Maps Consulted**

- British Geological Survey, 1993 Sheet 187, England and Wales 1:50,000
### Project Details

- **OASIS Number**: oxfordar3-124124
- **Project Name**: Evaluation on land behind The Longbow Public House, Kings Ripton Road, Sapley
- **Project Dates (fieldwork)**: Start 19-04-2012, Finish 20-04-2012
- **Previous Work (by OA East)**: No
- **Future Work**: Unknown

### Project Reference Codes

- **Site Code**: KINLON12
- **Planning App. No.**: 1100405/FUL
- **HER No.**: ECB 3757
- **Related HER/OASIS No.**: Unknown

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

- **Prompt**: Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5
- **Development Type**: Urban Residential

**Please select all techniques used:**

- Aerial Photography - interpretation
- Aerial Photography - new
- Annotated Sketch
- Augering
- Dendrochronological Survey
- Documentary Search
- Environmental Sampling
- Fieldwalking
- Geophysical Survey
- Grab-Sampling
- Gravity-Core
- Laser Scanning
- Measured Survey
- Metal Detectors
- Photographic Survey
- Phosphate Survey
- Photogrammetric Survey
- 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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### Project Location

- **County**: cambridgeshire
- **District**: huntingdonshire
- **Parish**: kings ripton
- **HER**: ECB 3757
- **Study Area**: 48 sq m
- **Site Address (including postcode if possible)**: Longbow Public House, Kings Ripton Road, Sapley, huntingdon, PE28 2NT
- **National Grid Reference**: TL 2427 7406
## Project Originators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>OA EAST</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Brief Originator</td>
<td>Dan McConnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Design Originator</td>
<td>James Drummond-Murray</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>James Drummond-Murray</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Helen Stocks-Morgan</td>
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## Project Archives

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<th>Digital Archive</th>
<th>Paper Archive</th>
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<tr>
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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
Figure 2: Trench location showing plan of trenches
Figure 3: Sections