# rchaeologica

# 2 Park Close, Yaxley Cambridgeshire



**Evaluation Report** 



**Client: Coombs Direct Ltd** 

OA East Report No: 1495 OASIS No: oxford ar3-154549

NGR: TL 8160 9249



# 2 Park Close, Yaxley, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation

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Report Date: July 2013

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Report Number: 1495

Site Name: 2 Park Close, Yaxley, Cambridgeshire

HER Event No: ECB3999

Date of Works: 2-3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013

Client Name: Coombs Direct Ltd

Client Ref: na

Planning Ref: Planning App. No. 0901684FUL

**Grid Ref:** TL 8160 9249

Site Code: YAXPAC13

Finance Code: YAXPAC13

Receiving Body: CCC Stores, Landbeach

Accession No: ECB3999

Prepared by: Graeme Clarke
Position: Supervisor
Date: July 2013

Checked by: Paul Spoerry
Position: Regional Manager

Date: July 2013

Signed:

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Fig. 2 Plan of trenches 1, 2 and 3

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Plate 1 Pit **7** from north-west

Plate 2 Pit 13 from west

Plate 3 Pit 9 from north

Plate 4 Trench 3 from south-east

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# **Summary**

Between  $2^{nd}$  and  $3^{rd}$  July 2013, Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological evaluation at 2 Park Road, Yaxley, Cambridgeshire. This took the form of two 30m x 2m trenches and one 20m x 2m trench across the proposed development area.

A total of two pits, probably dating to the Iron Age, and one undated pit were revealed across the site. Five flint artefacts were recovered from one of the Iron Age pits.

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### 1 Introduction

# 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at 2 Park Close, Yaxley, Cambridgeshire.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of the Historic Environment Team, Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application 0901684FUL), 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 lies on a former hostel site, now demolished (Fig. 1). It comprises an undeveloped plot of land of approximately 50m x 50m area and 17m above ordnance datum. The site lies in an urban setting with a health centre bounding the east of the site, a school to the north, residential housing on Park Close to the south and a recreation ground to the east.
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology of the proposed development site comprises bedrock of Oxford Clay Formation Mudstone overlain by drift deposits of Glaciolacustrine Deposits, Mid Pleistocene Clay, Silt And Sand: http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html. British Geological Survey; Geology of Britain Viewer at a scale of 1:50000

# 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The site is located within Yaxley Parish in the historical county of Huntingdon. The Victoria County History: A history of the county of Huntingdon: Volume 3 (VCH) accessed on the British History Online website (http://www.british-history.ac.uk) gives an overall description of Yaxley parish. The site lies approximately 700m east of the medieval core of the village. This village lay on the higher ground of the parish to the north-west of the fen centred around a Manor House and St Peter's Church. It has a history dating back to at least the 10<sup>th</sup> century when it was known as 'Geakeslea' or 'laceslea'. Yaxley was one of the earliest and most important possessions of the Benedictine monastery of Thorney who held the whole of Yaxley as one manor. Remains of ditches at the Manor House are described. After the dissolution of the abbey, Yaxley manor passed to the Crown. The church of St Peter is mentioned in the Domesday survey of AD 1086.
- 1.3.2 The following sections summarises the Cambridgeshire County Council Heritage Environment Record Monument Full Report for a 500km radius from the site (requested 2/7/13, supplied 15/7/13).

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- 1.3.3 The CHER search identified twenty three MCB 'monument' locations within the search area, generating 25 separate records in total. These records include thirteen ECB 'Event' records pertaining to previous investigation phases. Many of these records relate to monuments and investigations within the medieval village core, mostly lying 1km southwest of the site. Additionally there are sixteen designated (listed) structures, the majority being medieval and post-medieval buildings within the two phases of historic village core that lie to the southwest of the site.
- 1.3.4 The earliest records of 'chance finds' of some significance include a palaeolithic hand axe found 400m to the southwest (CHER 01419) and, more significantly perhaps, records of Roman pottery (CHER 00996) and Roman pottery kiln debris and building materials (CHER 01628), both found at Cow Bridge 500m to the southeast of the site.
- 1.3.5 Previous archaeological work undertaken in the vicinity if the site include an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeological Solutions LTD approximately 200m to the west of the site encountered ditches and pits dated to the Medieval period and a post-Medieval cobbled surface (Thompson 2010).
- 1.3.6 A Mid/Late Iron Age to Late Roman settlement was identified during excavations carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology and Oxford Archaeology East on adjacent plots, approximately 600m to the east of the present evaluation (CHER 16368; Taylor and Chapman 2005, Brown 2008, Phillips 2011). The settlement was relatively large covering an area in excess of 250m by 125m with limits not found for any period (Phillips 2011, fig. 6). Evidence for late Iron Age occupation was found in both areas and comprised several large sub-rectangular enclosures with single round houses in three of these and other round houses unenclosed. The enclosures were linked by boundary ditches which were aligned roughly NNW to SSE. Roman settlement including an early-mid 2nd century pottery kiln continued into the 4th century.
- 1.3.7 OA East carried out an excavation in Yaxley approximately 1km to the west of the site (Atkins 2012, CHER 19632). This excavation provided evidence of a previously unknown Roman settlement or farmstead dating to the mid to late 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. The most significant finds were the remains of a demolished kiln and a large assemblage of pottery dating to approximately AD 70. The kiln was producing grey ware sand tempered vessels in new forms such as cordoned and carinated jars and bowls as well as platters. A pottery cheese press and samian ware sherds were also recovered. There was also evidence for the cultivation and processing of spelt wheat and primary butchery waste of sheep and cattle.
- 1.3.8 The VCH describes the Parish of Yaxley enclosed by Act of Parliament in AD 1767. The report for the evaluation 200m west of the site (section 1.3.4) reproduces an enclosure map of AD 1821 which shows the site to lie in an undeveloped plot of land (Thompson 2010).
- 1.3.9 A search of past Ordnance Survey maps of the site at <a href="http://old-maps.co.uk">http://old-maps.co.uk</a> was carried out to determine the more recent use of the site. It was determined that the site lay in an undeveloped plot of land to at least AD 1889 to AD 1977. The map of AD 1986 shows the site previous use as a hostel site.

### 1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The Author would also like to thank Steve Morgan who assisted in the excavation of the site. Thanks should also be extended to Paul Spoerry of OA East and Kasia Gdaniec of Cambridgeshire County Council who monitored the works. Gareth Rees carried out the

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survey. Also thanks to Coombs Direct Ltd who funded the work and Lattenbury Services who provided the plant.

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### 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 a programme of linear trial trenching be executed to adequately sample the area to conform with the aims of the investigation. This comprised two 30m x 2m and one 20m x 2m trenches.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked back-hoe type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out using a Leica GPS 1200 fitted with "smartnet" technology.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metaldetected 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 20 litre samples were taken from pits **7** and **13** for analysis. The results are presented in Appendix B.
- 2.2.7 The site conditions were good with fair weather. The trial trenches were located on a gently sloping arable field.

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### 3 Results

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Descriptions of the ground conditions encountered, features identified and artefacts recovered are given in this section. Full descriptions with dimensions, and elevations of features (m OD) are given in appendix A, with locations given in Figure 2.

### 3.2 Trench Descriptions

- 3.2.1 Excavation of the trial trenches revealed differing ground conditions overlying the natural geology in the eastern and western parts of the site.
- 3.2.2 The natural Glaciolacustrine Deposits (5) were encountered in all the trial trenches at a depth of between 0.6m and 1m below ground level. These deposits were variable across the site between: reddish brown gravels in a sandy silt matrix and patches of sand; yellow and orange brown sandy silt with sand patches and; yellowish brown sandy gravel with silt patches.

### Western part of site

3.2.3 The natural deposits are overlain by un-compact orange brown sandy silt with much gravel subsoil (4) between 0.2m and 0.3m thick. This is overlain by topsoil (3), comprising un-compact dark grey sandy silt with occasional gravel between 0.2m and 0.3m thick. These deposits extend across the whole of trench 1 and the western 12m of trench 2.

### Eastern part of site

3.2.4 The soft topsoil and subsoil deposits have been excavated/truncated **10** and a made ground layer (2) comprising dense flint gravel in an orange brown sand and silt matrix has been laid down between 0.3m and 0.5m thick. This is overlain by layer of demolition (1) comprising a mix of earth, limestone rubble, concrete, brick, etc between 0.3m and 0.4m thick. These deposits extend across the whole of trench 3 and the eastern 8m of trench 2.

# 3.3 Features Encountered

### **Pits**

- 3.3.1 Pits cut the natural deposits in trial trenches 1 and 3.
- 3.3.2 Pit **7** in trench 1 comprises a circular feature, 2.25m in diameter and 0.35m deep, with a flat based U-shaped profile. The fill (6) consists of un-compact light olive brown sandy silt with occasional gravel. This is considered to be a backfill deposit after the pits disuse. An assemblage of five flint lithics were recovered from the pit backfill.
- 3.3.3 Pit **9** in trench 3 comprises a sub-rectangular feature, 3.1m wide and 0.2m deep, with a wide flat based U-shaped profile. The fill (8) consists of compact clayey silt with frequent gravel and occasional oyster shell fragments. This fill probably represents a heavily truncated backfill deposit of the pit after its disuse.
- 3.3.4 Pit **13** in trench 3 comprises a circular feature, 1.7m in diameter and 0.3m deep, with a flat based U-shaped profile. The pit contained two fills. The upper fill (11) consists of un-compact mid-brown clayey silt with occasional gravel. The lower fill (12) consists of un-compact mid-grey brown clayey silt with frequent chalk and flint gravel. These are



considered to be the lower and upper backfill deposits afters the pits disuse. No finds were recovered from the pit fills.

# 3.4 Finds Summary

- 3.4.1 An assemblage of five flint lithics were recovered from pit fill deposit (6), as detailed he in Appendix C. These are likely to be of Iron Age date and represent the working nearby of flint from a secondary source.
- 3.4.2 The fill (8) of pit **9** yielded some fragments of oyster shell. These fragments were recorded but not recovered from the site.

# 3.5 Environmental Summary

3.5.1 The environmental report on the samples taken from the pits **7** and **13** is presented in Appendix B. The very low incidence of charred 'spelt' wheat nonetheless indicates a probable prehistoric date for cereal processing here.

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### 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 Ground Conditions

- 4.1.1 The evaluation encountered topsoil and subsoil layers in the western part of the site which indicate the sites previous use as an undeveloped plot of land as far back as at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century as indicated in sections 1.3.6 and 1.3.7.
- 4.1.2 The topsoil and subsoil have been excavated/truncated in the eastern part of the site and replaced with a flint gravel made ground which is probably associated with the development of the pre-existing hostel site. In addition concrete beams associated with the pre-existing hostel are still present extending deep into the underlying natural deposits and posed an obstacle to the archaeological evaluation.

### **4.2** Pits

4.2.1 One pit was encountered in trench 1 and two pits were encountered in trench 3 which demonstrate archaeological features and artefacts are present on the site.

### Iron Age Pits

- 4.2.2 Pit **7** and pit **13** have clear similarities in shape and profile. Both cut the natural deposits to a similar depth, are circular in plan and have wide flat bases. Although these pits would have had a function, this could not be determined due to the absence of primary fills associated their use. The backfill of pit **7** contained an assemblage of Iron Age flint artefacts. Therefore these two pits may be described as features probably dating to the Iron Age period.
- 4.2.3 An Iron Age date is supported by the presence of spelt and/or emmer wheat in pits 7 and 13. Emmer wheat was gradually replaced by spelt wheat during the Late Iron Age/ Early Roman period but neither species were cultivated during the medieval period. Pit X also contained a single spikelet fork of spelt wheat and several glume bases of both spelt and emmer wheat, evidence for crop processing near by.

### Pit 9

4.2.4 Pit **9** is of a different shape and profile than the pits described above. The deposit is also of a more clayey nature with some oyster fragments present. No dating evidence was recovered from this pit and so may only be described as a pit of unknown date and function.

# 4.3 Significance

4.3.1 In recent years excavations to the northeast (CHER 16368) and northwest (CHER 19632) have shown that the modern settlement of Yaxley sits on a dense landscape of Iron Age to Romano-British occupation, adding to previous indications of Roman period settlement and pottery manufacture to the southeast (CHER 00996, 01628). The presence of Iron Age pits, likely to represent activity peripheral to occupation on the basis of the domestic finds/ecofactual content, suggests that settlement history here is even more complex and the presence of these remains offers some potential to further understand spatial and temporal aspects of prehistoric to Roman settlement history at a local level.

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# 4.4 Recommendations

4.4.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

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# APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

	A. IKE	NCH DE	SCRIPTIO	NS AND CONTEXT INVENT	UKI		
Trench 1					1		I
General de	scription		Orientation		NW-SE		
Consists of			Avg. depth	(m)	1		
underlain by 15.67m OD			Width (m)		2		
SE end of t			Length (m)		30		
Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	da	ate
1	Layer	-	0.4	Demolition	-		-
3	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	-		-
4	Layer	-	0.3	Subsoil	-		-
5	Layer	-	-	Natural	-		-
6	Fill	-	-	Pit fill	Flint	Iron	Age
7	Cut	2.25	0.35	Pit cut	-		-
Trench 2							
General de	scription				Orientation	1	SW-NE
				of Demolition layer overlying	Avg. depth	(m)	0.7
topsoil and	subsoil at	the weste	rn end an	d made ground at the do of trench is 16.85m OD, at	Width (m)		2
NE end of t				d of trending 10.03m Ob, at	Length (m)		20
Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	da	ate
1	Layer	-	0.4	Demolition	-		-
2	Layer	-	0.3	Made Ground	-		-
3	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil			-
4	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil	-		
5	Layer	-	-	Natural			-
10	Cut	-	-	Truncation of Topsoil and subsoil	-		-
Trench 3							
General de	scription				Orientation	1	NNW-SSE
				de ground underlain by	Avg. depth (m)		0.7
				r horizon of pit <b>9</b> is 15.73m s 15.96m OD. Surface	Width (m) 2		2
	: NNW end			n OD, at SSE end of trench	Length (m)		30
Contexts		ontext type Width Depth comment				date	
Contexts context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	da	ate

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2	Layer	-	0.5	Made Ground	-	-
5	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
8	Fill	-	-	Pit fill	-	-
9	Cut	3.1	0.2	Pit cut	-	-
10	Cut	-	-	Truncation of Topsoil and subsoil	-	-
11	Fill	-	-	Pit fill	-	-
12	Fill	-	-	Pit fill	-	-
13	Cut	1.75	0.3	Pit cut	-	-

### APPENDIX B. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

### **B.1** Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry

### Introduction and Methods

- B.1.1 Two bulk samples were taken during evaluation of 2 Park Close, Yaxley in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations. The samples were both taken from pits that were tentatively dated to the Iron Age.
- B.1.2 The total volume (seventeen litres) of each sample was processed by tank flotation. 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. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification.

### Results

B.1.3 Both samples; Sample 1, fill 11 of pit **13** and sample 2, fill 6 of pit **7** contain a single charred cereal grain. Preservation is poor and the grains are abraded but have been tentatively identified based on their morphology as a hulled wheat namely spelt (*Triticum spelta*) or emmer (*T. dicoccum*). Also present, were a single spikelet fork of spelt wheat and several glume bases of both spelt and emmer wheat. No finds were recovered from the sample residues.

### Further work and methods statement

B.1.4 The general lack of plant remains suggests that either the soil conditions at the site do not favour preservation or that there is scant evidence of any nearby settlement or of any agricultural practices such as crop processing. The tentative identification of hulled wheat tenuously suggests a prehistoric date for both contexts.

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### APPENDIX C. FINDS REPORTS

### C.1 Flint

By Anthony Haskins

### Introduction

C.1.1 An assemblage of five poorly worked flints were submitted for analysis. This report will discuss typological and chronological indicators of this material.

### Methodology and Quantification

C.1.2 The material was scanned for characteristics and divided into a simple classification system. Of the five fragments submitted two were flakes between 25mm and 50mm in greatest dimension, two were angular shatter fragments and the last piece was a large poorly retouched scraper.

### Assessment

- C.1.3 The raw material is a mid greyish-brown semi-translucent flint with a thin white cortex. The thickness of the cortex it's smooth character and signs of incipient cones would suggest the material was gathered from a secondary source.
- C.1.4 The quality of the working is extremely poor with little or no indication of platform preparation. Crude flint working like this is generally thought to have been carried out in the later prehistoric periods (Butler 2005) and it is most likely to represent Iron Age material.

### Conclusion

C.1.5 The small assemblage is indicative of later prehistoric flint working and is considered to be of Iron Age date.

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http://www.british-history.ac.uk/

http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk

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# APPENDIX E. OASIS REPORT FORM

Project De	etails										
OASIS Number oxford		xford	rd ar3-154549								
Project Name 2 Park			Close, Yaxley, Cambridgeshire. Archaeological Evaluation								
Project Date	es (fieldw	vork)	Start	02-07-2013			Finish 03-07-20			13	
Previous Wo	ork (by C	)A Ea	ast)	No			Future Work Unk			known	
Project Refe	rence C	odes	 S								
Site Code	YAXPAC			Planning App.			App. No. 0901		09016	684FUL	
HER No.	ECB3999	9			Related HER/OASIS No.						
Type of Proj	ect/Tecl	hniaı	ies Use								_
Prompt	000.100.			Local Plannin	g Authorit	y - PPS 5					7
Developmen	t Type	Urb	an Reside	ntial							Ī
Please sele	ect all t	echi	niques	used:							_
Aerial Photo	graphy - ii	nterpre	etation	☐ Grab-Sa	mpling				Remo	ote Operated Vehicle Survey	
☐ Aerial Photo	ography - n	iew		Gravity-0	Core		<u> </u>			mple Trenches	
Annotated S	Sketch			Laser Scanning			 □ Sur			vey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure	
☐ Augering				Measure	☐ Measured Survey				Targeted Trenches		
☐ Dendrochro	nological S	Survey	,	■ Metal Detectors				Test I	Test Pits		
▼ Documentar	ry Search			☐ Phosphate Survey			☐ Topographic Survey				
	ital Sampli	ng		☐ Photogra	mmetric	Survey			Vibro-	ro-core	
☐ Fieldwalking	9			☐ Photogra	vey 🕱 Vis			Visua	I Inspection (Initial Site Visit)		
☐ Geophysica	l Survey			Rectified Photogra							
Monument List feature type together with th	es using th	ne NMI	R Monume	nt Type Thesa	urus and	significant				Object type Thesaurus	•
2 pits			Iron Age -800 to 43			worked flint				Iron Age -800 to 43	
1 pit Un			Uncerta	Jncertain						Select period	
Select			Select	period						Select period	
Project Lo	ocation	7									
County	Cambrid	geshir	е			Site Ad	ldress (in	cludi	ing p	ostcode if possible)	
District	Huntingo	donshi	re				2 Park Close, Yaxley, Camb			idgeshire	
Parish	Yaxley										
HER	Cambrid	geshir	e HER								
Study Area	50m x 50	0m				National Grid Reference			nce	TL 8160 9249	



# **Project Originators**

Organisation	OA EAS	Т								
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Project Manager		Dr P Spo	erry, OA E	ast						
Supervisor		Graeme	Graeme Clarke, OA East							
Project Archiv	/es									
Physical Archive			Digital A	Archive		Paper Arc	hive			
Cambs. County Store	е		OA East			Cambs. Co	unty Store			
YAXPAC13			YAXPAC	C13		YAXPAC13				
Archive Content	s/Media									
	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents		Digital Me	dia	Paper Media			
Animal Bones					☐ Database		Aerial Photos			
Ceramics					☐GIS					
Environmental					☐ Geophysi	cs	Correspondence			
Glass					▼ Images		Diary			
Human Bones					ns	□ Drawing				
Industrial					☐ Moving In	nage	Manuscript			
Leather				☐ Spreadsh		eets	<b>⋉</b> Map			
Metal					■ Survey		Matrices			
Stratigraphic					<b>▼</b> Text		Microfilm			
Survey					☐ Virtual Re	ality	X Misc.			
Textiles							▼ Research/Notes			
Wood							Photos			
Worked Bone							▼ Plans			
	×						<b>⋉</b> Report			
Worked Stone/Lithic		П					★ Sections			
Worked Stone/Lithic None	Ш	_								

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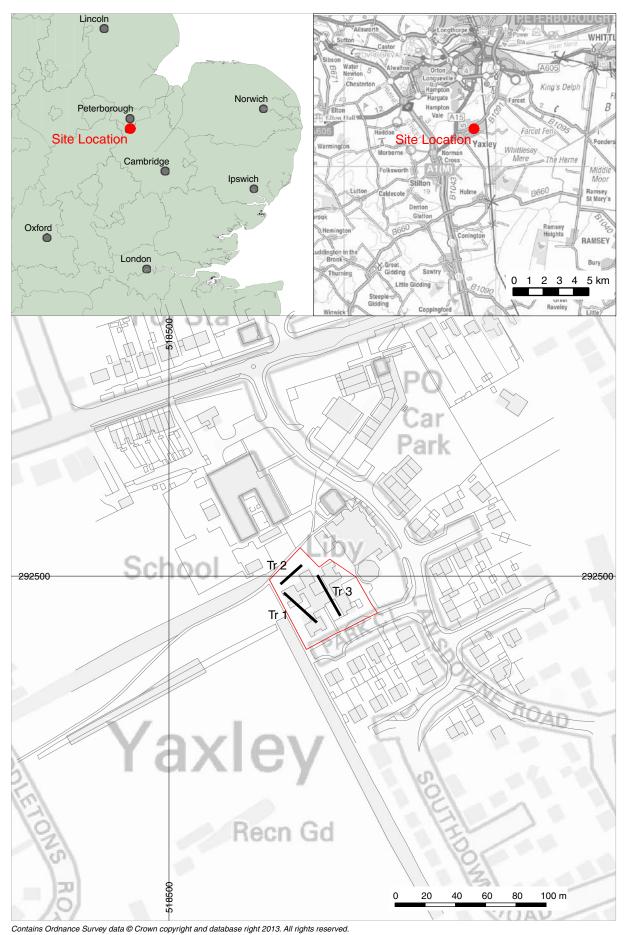


Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trenches (black) development area (red)





Figure 2: Plan of trenches 1, 2 and 3

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Plate 1: Pit 7 from north-west



Plate 2: Pit 13 from west





Plate 3: Pit 9 from north



Plate 4: Trench 3 from south-east



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