

Former Forensic Science Laboratory, Hinchingbrooke, Huntingdon

Archaeological Evaluation Report



August 2014

Client: CgMs consulting

OA East Report No: 1651 OASIS No: oxfordar3-187936 NGR: TL 2219 7210



Former Forensic Science Laboratory, Hinchingbrooke

Archaeological Evaluation

By Pat Moan BA AlfA Editor: Tom Phillips BA AlfA Illustrator: Pat Moan BA AlfA Report Date: August 2014



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Summary

Between 14th – 15th August 2014, OA East carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at the former Forensics Science Laboratory, Hinchingbrooke. In total, 10 trenches were excavated across the site. A single Roman boundary ditch was found, along with two post-medieval ditches and a number of furrows.

In the trenches located in the eastern half of site, the original ground surface was found to have been severely truncated during the construction of the Forensic Science lab, impacting upon any archaeology that may have been present on the site.





1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at the Forensic Science lab (FSL), Hinchingbrooke, to the south-west of Huntingdon (TL 2219 7210; Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council, supplemented by a trench plan prepared by CgMs Consulting and 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 British Geological Survey records the site geology to be Oxford Clay Mudstone overlain by Oadby Member diamicton (BGS: http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/ geologyofbritain/home.html). The site lies between 32 and 37m OD, on a south facing slope of a low ridge running east to west.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 Numerous evaluations and excavations have been undertaken over the Hinchingbrooke landscape during the past 15 years. These include excavations directly to the west and north (Mortimer 2014).

Bronze Age

1.3.2 Bronze Age features were recorded directly to the north of site during excavations for Hinchingbrooke New School (Cambridge Historic Environment Reocrd ECB1235, ECB1481, ECB1852) and immediately south on Christie Drive (ECB3625). Other features dated to the Bronze Age include field systems 1.5km to the north. Other activity in the immediate area is restricted to residual lithic finds.

Iron Age

- 1.3.3 Geophysical survey and evaluation identified a Middle Iron Age settlement site 200 metres north-west of the FSL site (CHER ECB2248, ECB218). Subsequent excavation recorded domestic settlement directly north of the FSL site, and a possible furnace and extensive signs of metalworking further west.
- 1.3.4 During excavations at the adjacent Bob's Wood site, eleven roundhouses were excavated (CHER13033), in addition to extensive boundary ditches marking irregularly-shaped fields, reorganised at least once. Two sword-shaped currency bars were found, along with imported wares from Spain and Italy, as well as gallo-belgic pottery all suggesting a well-off settlement. Cattle were the predominant animal species recovered, particularly in the later Iron Age, with sheep bones also recovered in significant numbers.



1.3.5 Iron Age field systems, droveways and enclosures have also been excavated directly south of the FSL site (CHER ECB2464), and directly to the north (CHER ECB1235, ECB3625).

Roman

1.3.6 After the Roman invasion, the Iron Age field layout on the Bob's Wood site was altered, with a smaller, regular field system established (CHER13033, ECB219). The location of the Romano-British settlement appears to have moved to the south, to overlook Ermine Street. An aisled building was constructed in the 1st century AD, and a high-status timber framed building constructed in the 2nd century AD. Finds included painted wall plaster, tesserae, box flue tiles, and a stone-built entrance-way. A small cremation cemetery was identified, dating to the 1st century, succeeded by a inhumation cemetery dating from the late 2ndto early 3rd centuries AD.

Medieval

1.3.7 Aerial photographs and evaluations (ECB2181, ECB1236, ECB1057, ECB721).have identified areas of medieval ridge-and-furrow ploughing at Bob's Wood site, on the Hinchingbrooke New School site, and at the Hinchingbrooke Hospital. Otherwise, only a handful of late medieval ditches have been recoded in the immediate area (ECB1840).

Post-medieval and Modern

1.3.8 The bulk of post-medieval activity in the area is linked with Hinchingbrooke House, constructed on the site of the Benedictine Abbey. There are no post-medieval remains reported immediately around the FSL site. The latest features on the Bob's Wood site comprised of two shallow shallow subcircular ditches measuring approx. 47m by 28m with postholes located at regular intervals along their circuit. One was located towards the western crest of the hill and a second extended beyond the eastern limit of excavation into the Forensic Laboratory site. A range of modern artefacts including brick, barbed wire and a spanner were recovered from these features. Both appear positioned for maximum line of site along the crest of the hill and are currently interpreted as being some kind of WWII remains.

1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 Thanks are extended to Paul Gajos of CgMs consulting, whom liaised with their client and OA East. The site was managed by Richard Mortimer. Site work was undertaken by the author, Nick Cox and Paddy Lambert. Site survey and illustrations were undertaken by the author.



2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The objective of this excavation 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 a trial trench evaluation of the site be undertaken. It was agreed between CgMs and Cambridgeshire CC that this would be done by excavating trenches totalling 790 sqm.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 360-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out by using a GPS Leica 1200 Smartnet rover.
- 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 Site conditions were generally dry and bright, with occasional rain showers.



3 RESULTS

- 3.1.1 Trenches are discussed below in numerical order. Trenches with no archaeology will not be discussed. For each trench, deposits and features are described in chronological order, starting with the earliest. See Appendix A for full trench descriptions.
- 3.1.2 During excavation of trenches, it was found that implementing the trench design was problematic, due to a large number of underground services being found across site. Trenches were excavated as near to their original layout as possible, but some had to be moved and/or shortened to avoid services. In total, 10 trenches totalling 702 sqm in area were excavated, equating to a 2.6% sample of the area.
- 3.1.3 Trenches excavated through the car parks to the north and south of the FSL building were found to have heavily truncated the geology. It would appear the majority of the eastern half of the site was heavily landscaped during the construction of the building.

Trench 1

3.1.4 Trench 1 was located in the north-west of the site, orientated north-east to south-west and 59m in length (Fig. 2). The trench contained a single furrow (3) that was aligned north to south. The feature was 0.82m wide and 0.16m deep, with an irregular profile. The fill (4) was a mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional chalk inclusions. The two other features seen in the trench were also furrows (1 & 20), 1.15m wide, 0.2 to 0.26m deep, with a bowl profile The fill (2 & 21) was a mid yellowish brown silty clay with occasional chalk inclusions. The feature was sealed by 0.14m to 0.27m of subsoil which was in turn overlain by 0.21m to 0.29m of topsoil.

Trench 2

3.1.5 Trench 2 was located in the north-west of site, orientated north-west to south-east and 40m long. The trench contained a single furrow (**5**), aligned north to south, that was 0.9m wide and 0.16m deep with an irregular profile. Fill 6 was a mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional chalk and clinker fragments. A modern sub rectangular machine dug pit was also in the trench, 1.5m wide and seen for 2m in length. Blue plastic rope was visible within the fill, therefore the feature was not excavated. Features were sealed by between 0.1m to 0.16m of subsoil, in turn overlain by 0.17m to 0.32m of topsoil.

Trench 3

- 3.1.6 Trench 3 was located in the south-west of site, orientated north north-east to south south-west and 61m long. The trench contained 3 ditches, a gully and a posthole.
- 3.1.7 Ditch **7** was aligned north-west to south-east, measuring 0.85m in width and 0.29m deep with a U-shape profile. Fill 8 was a mid greyish brown clay with occasional chalk flecks and post-medieval brick and tile.
- 3.1.8 Ditch **9** terminated in the trench and was aligned north to south. It measured 0.75m wide and 0.26m deep with a U-shape profile. Fill 10 was a mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional stone and chalk inclusions. Fragments of ceramic building material were recovered from the fill.
- 3.1.9 Posthole **11** measured 0.5m in diameter and 0.07m deep, with a U-shaped profile. Fill 12 was a dark greyish brown clay with occasional stone and chalk flecks.
- 3.1.10 Gully **13** was aligned north-west to south-east, measuring 0.37m wide and 0.12m deep. Fill 14 was a mid greyish brown clay with occasional stone inclusions.



- 3.1.11 Ditch **15** (equivalent to **17**) was aligned north to south, measuring 1.2m wide and 0.48m deep. The fill (16 & 18) was a mid greyish brown clay with occasional chalk flecks and stone inclusions. A total of two sherds (55g) of Roman coarse sandy greyware were recovered from the ditch.
- 3.1.12 Ditch **15** was overlain by a spread (19), which was 0.2m thick, comprising of a dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional stone inclusions. This is possibly a furrow overlying the ditch, but the spread was diffuse and unclear in the trench.
- 3.1.13 Feature were sealed with between 0.05m and 0.1m of subsoil overlain in turn by 0.26m to 0.3m of topsoil.

3.2 Finds Summary

3.2.1 A small amount of Roman coarse sandy greyware pottery, dating to the 1st to 3rd century AD, was recovered from a single ditch (17) on site. All other finds were of 18th to 19th century in date.



4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 A single Roman boundary ditch in Trench 3, orientated north to south, was encountered during the evaluation. The location of this ditch could indicate that it formed the easternmost boundary for Roman settlement activity to the west. Similarly, the posthole, also in Trench 3, may be evidence of some activity on the periphery of the settlement.
- 4.1.2 The eastern half of a circular ring ditch was seen within trench 3 (gully **13**). This is the same ring ditch excavated in 2003 by AFU (Hinman 2005). The feature was interpreted as a World War Two bombing decoy site know as a "starfish" (Fig. 4). Finds from the interventions excavated during this evaluation indicate it is of late post-medieval date, but an interpretation of the feature cannot be made.

4.2 Conclusion

4.2.1 Despite the density of archaeology in the surrounding landscape, little of any archaeological interest was identified in the trenching suggesting that the site had been extensively disturbed during the construction of the FSL building.



APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1								
General d	escriptio	n			Orientation		NE-SW	
					Avg. depth ((m)	0.41	
Trench cor (0.29m) ar			Width (m)	2				
(0.2011) ai		(0.1211) 0	veriying a	oldy hataral.	Length (m)	59		
Contexts								
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	d	ate	
1	Cut	1.15	0.26	Furrow	-		-	
2	Fill	1.15	0.26	-	-		-	
3	Cut	0.82	0.16	Ditch	-		-	
4	Fill	0.82	0.16	-	CBM	Post	t-Med.	
20	Cut	1.15	0.2	Furrow	-		-	
21	Fill	1.15	0.2	-	-		-	
Trench 2								
General d	escriptio	n			Orientation		NW-SE	
Trench cor	ntained or	e ditch an	d a modei	rn machine dug pit. Soil	Avg. depth ((m)	0.4	
consists of				0.16m) overlying a clay	Width (m)		2	
natural.					Length (m)		40	
Contexts								
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	d	ate	
5	Cut	0.9	0.16	Ditch	Nail	Pos	t-Med	
6	Fill	0.9	0.16	-	_		-	



Trench 3							
General d	lescriptior	ı			Orientation		NNE-SSW
- .					Avg. depth	(m)	0.35
				ble and a gully. Soil consists erlying a clay natural.	Width (m)		2
				ing a day nataran	Length (m)		61
Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	C	late
7	Cut	0.85	0.29	Ditch	-		-
8	Fill	0.85	0.29	-	-		-
9	Cut	0.75	0.26	Ditch Terminus	-		-
10	Fill	0.75	0.26	-	-		-
11	Cut	0.5	0.07	Posthole	-		-
12	Fill	0.5	0.07	-	-		-
13	Cut	0.37	0.12	Gully	-		-
14	Fill	0.37	0.12	-	-		-
15	Cut	1.2	0.48	Ditch	-		-
16	Fill	1.2	0.48	-	-		-
17	Cut	1.2	0.48	Ditch	-		-
18	Fill	1.2	0.48	-	Pottery	Ro	oman
19	Layer		0.2	Furrow?	CBM	Pos	t-Med.
Trench 4							
General d	lescriptior	ı			Orientation		NNE-SSW
					Avg. depth	(m)	0.32
	void of arc 09m) over			of topsoil (0.21m) and	Width (m)		2
3003011 (0.		lying a cia	iy natarai.		Length (m)		50
Trench 5							
General d	lescriptior	ı			Orientation		NNE-SSW
					Avg. depth	(m)	0.35
	void of arc (0.35m) a c			of tarmac and hardcore	Width (m)		2
overlying (0.0011) a c		л.		Length (m)		15.9
Trench 6							
General d	lescriptior	1			Orientation		WNW-ESE
					Avg. depth	(m)	0.3
	void of arc erlying a cla			of tarmac and hardcore	Width (m)		2
10.011/000	a chi	ay natural	•		Length (m) 31.2		



Trench 7		
General description	Orientation	NNE-SSW
	Avg. depth (m)	0.33
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil (0.27m) and subsoil (0.06m) overlying a clay natural.	Width (m)	2
	Length (m)	29.45
Trench 8		
General description	Orientation	WNW-ESE
	Avg. depth (m)	0.49
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of tarmac and hardcore (0.49m) overlying a clay natural.	Width (m)	2
	Length (m)	37.9
Trench 9		
General description	Orientation	NNE-SSW
	Avg. depth (m)	0.23
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil (0.12m) and subsoil (0.11m) overlying a clay natural.	Width (m)	2
	Length (m)	18.6
Trench 10		
General description	Orientation	NNE-SSW
	Avg. depth (m)	0.41
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil (0.3m) and subsoil (0.11m) overlying a clay natural.	Width (m)	2
	Length (m)	8.3



APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

With Stephen Wadeson

Roman Pottery

B.1.1 During the evaluation at the former Forensic Science Laboratory, Hinchingbrooke, two sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from ditch **17**. The sherds weighed 55g and are from the base of a sandy greyware vessel, dated to the 1st to 3rd centuries AD.

Post-Medieval finds

- B.1.2 A number of post-medieval finds were recovered from furrows and a ditch during the evaluation.
- B.1.3 A single sherd of micaceous courseware with remnants of clear glaze was recovered from the subsoil of trench 3. The pottery weighed 30g and dated to the late 19th century.
- B.1.4 A single sherd of pottery dated to the late 19th century was recovered from ditch **3**. The sherd was a mid reddish orange in colour with a sandy temper. One side had a dark brown glaze surviving.
- B.1.5 Two fragments of building tile and a fragment of brick were recovered from ditch **7**, both tentatively dated to the 17th or 18th century. The building tile fragments had a total weight of 175g. There was abundant sand inclusions and was a light yellowish grey in colour.
- B.1.6 A total of four fragments of ceramic building material were recovered from layer (19), interpreted as being a furrow. The fragments had a total weight of 55g and all had varying fabrics. No date can be inferred due to lack of diagnostics, apart from being post-medieval. A single fragment of clay tobacco pipe was also recovered from the layer and dated to the late 17th century by the bore diameter of the stem.



APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hinman, M. 2005 Bobs Wood Post Excavation Assessment CCC Report no. 772

Mortimer, R & 2014 Written Scheme of Investigation: Archaeological Evaluation at Former Wiseman, R. Forensic Science laboratory Site, Hinchingbrooke, Huntingdoneshire



APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

Project D	etails								
OASIS Num	nber o	xfordar3-187936	1						
Project Nan	ne Ev	valuation at forn	ner Forensics S	cience Lab,	Hinchin	gbrooke, H	lunts		
Project Date	es (fieldw	vork) Start	14-08-2014			Finish	15-0	8-201	15
Previous W	ork (by O	A East)	No			Future	Wor	k Un	known
Project Refe	erence C	odes							
Site Code	STUHIN14	4		Planning	g App.	No.	Γ		
HER No.	ECB4214			Related	HER/0	DASIS N	lo.		
Type of Pro	ject/Tech	nniques Use	d	·					
Prompt	-	_	Local Planning	g Authority -	PPS 5				
Developmen	nt Type	Landfill							
Please sel	ect all t	echniques	used:						
Aerial Photo	ography - in	nterpretation	Grab-Sa	mpling				Rem	ote Operated Vehicle Survey
Aerial Photo	ography - n	ew	Gravity-C	Core			X	Sam	ple Trenches
Annotated S	Sketch		Laser Sc	anning				Surv	ey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
Augering			Measure	d Survey				Targ	eted Trenches
Dendrochro	onological S	Survey	Metal De	etectors				Test	Pits
Documenta	ry Search		Phospha	ite Survey				Торо	ographic Survey
Environmer	ntal Samplir	ng	Photogra	ammetric Su	urvey			Vibro	o-core
Fieldwalking	g		Photogra	aphic Surve	у			Visua	al Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
Geophysica	al Survey		Rectified	Photograp	hy				
List feature typ	es using the	ignificant Fi e NMR Mon ith their respect Period	ument Type	e Thesau o features/fi	Jrus an	-			ng the MDA Object type "none". Period
Ditch		Roman 4	3 to 410		Pottery				Roman 43 to 410
Ring Ditch		Post Med	lieval 1540 to 1	901	CBM				Post Medieval 1540 to 1901
		Select pe	eriod						Select period
Project L	ocation	1							
County	Cambridg	geshire		5	Site Ad	dress (in	cludi	ing p	oostcode if possible)
District	Huntingdo	onshire			Hinching	Forensic S gbrooke, doneshire	Scienc	e lab	oratory Site,

Stukleys

Cambs

0.26ha

Parish

HER

Study Area

National Grid Reference

TL 2219 7210



Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Andy Thomas
Project Design Originator	Richard Mortimer
Project Manager	Richard Mortimer
Supervisor	Pat Moan

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
CCC stores	OA East	CCC Stores
STUHIN14	STUHIN14	STUHIN14

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones			
Ceramics	X		
Environmental			
Glass			
Human Bones			
Industrial			
Leather			
Metal			
Stratigraphic			
Survey			
Textiles			
Wood			
Worked Bone			
Worked Stone/Lithic			
None			
Other			



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2013. All rights reserved. Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trenches (black) in development area (red)





Figure 2: Trench Plan





Figure 3: Plan of trenches 1-3 and Section of Ditch 17