

Evaluation at the former
USAF medical centre,
RAF Upwood,
Cambridgeshire



**Archaeological
Evaluation Report**



August 2015

Client: Campbell Buchanan

OA East Report No: 1826

OASIS No: oxfordar3-221231

NGR: TL 2775 8357

Evaluation at the former USAF medical centre, RAF Upwood, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation

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Summary

Oxford Archaeology East undertook an archaeological evaluation at the former USAF medical centre, RAF Upwood, Cambridgeshire (TL 2775 8357) on the 17th and 18th of August 2015. A total of 7 trenches were excavated varying in length from 5m to 40m. Trenches 1 – 3 and 6 – 7 were located either within the car park area or other areas of hard standing around the existing building. Within these trenches the natural geology had been truncated to varying degrees and all contained make-up layers associated with the construction of roads and car parks. Trenches 4 and 5 were in a grassed area but the presence of services made them difficult to excavate. All of the trenches were devoid of archaeological features. Trench 3 contained what were originally thought to be two linear ditches, although these proved to be natural in origin.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at the former USAF medical centre of RAF Upwood, Cambridgeshire (TL 2775 8357; Fig. 1)
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application 15/00029/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 development area is situated on relatively flat ground at approximately 18.5m OD. 500m to the east the ground drops away to 5m OD. The underlying geology comprises Oxford Clay Formation overlain by superficial deposits of Oadby Member – Diamicton (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> accessed 20/08/15).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

Prehistoric

- 1.3.1 Investigations at Owls End Road in 1994 (ECB 369) recorded a group of Neolithic features. These consisted of natural hollows and tree throws filled by palaeosoil and incorporating background Neolithic material. Some features may have represented temporary shelters or other structures. These have been interpreted as a fairly insignificant phase of activity on the site.
- 1.3.2 A flint scatter was also discovered (HER 02871), although its exact location is unknown, with it being described as located on 'high land adjoining fens'.

Late Iron Age and Roman

- 1.3.3 There is evidence for Late Iron Age and Roman activity within 1km of the site. Earthworks recorded approximately 600m to the east of the site at Owls End Road have been interpreted as comprising a later Iron Age/Early Roman settlement with features identified including a large rectilinear enclosure and a ditch (HER 10115).
- 1.3.4 An archaeological excavation was undertaken on land east of Owls End Road in 1994 (ECB 369). A Late Iron Age/Early Roman settlement and field systems were uncovered. This settlement is thought to have been a fairly isolated hamlet in the later Iron Age, which continued to be occupied in to the Roman period (Begg and Lucas 1997).

- 1.3.5 Further evidence for Roman activity is represented by a number of gullies recorded during an evaluation in 2009 to the north of the site (ECB 3151/MCB 19643) (Jones 2010). These gullies have been interpreted as a Roman agricultural system. Twelve trenches were excavated during this evaluation with only three of these containing archaeology to the north of the investigation area. Trench 7 was only 175m to the north and contained a series of small parallel gullies interpreted as cultivation ditches. The land here has remained undeveloped.
- 1.3.6 Three Roman artefact finds spots have been recorded, including a quernstone (HER 02872), a silver coin from the reign of Tiberius (HER 08669) and a 1st century sestertius coin (HER 02886). However the exact location of these finds is unknown.

Saxon and Early Medieval

- 1.3.7 The excavations at Owls End (ECB 268) uncovered a Saxo-Norman and early medieval phase which included features such as enclosures, boundary ditches, yard surfaces, structural remains, a terraced platform and a malt/corn drying oven. This all lies within a larger landscape which includes Ramsey Abbey and an established Saxo-Norman settlement at Bury, both dating to the 10th century.
- 1.3.8 The evidence for the existence of a Saxon Burgh within the Wistow area was examined in an article by C. Hart in 1994 entitled 'the foundations of Ramsey Abbey'. Writing in the 13th century by the historian John of Wallingford refers to a camp in Wistoche. One possible location of the site occurs at Bury (ECB 11305). The site is marked on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map as the site of a Roman Camp, although no artefacts have been recovered to suggest this is true.

Medieval and post medieval

- 1.3.9 The site of the medieval settlement of Hepmangrove exists in documentary evidence (HER 02885). The location is unknown but it is believed to be originally connected with Ramsey Parish with the brook running through Bury forming the boundary. Earthworks have been interpreted as a deserted medieval settlement approximately 900m to the east of the site (HER 10114/DCB 8969). Evidence comprises a series of house platforms terraced into the hillside adjacent to the medieval church. At the scarp base a trackway leads into adjacent ridge and furrow fields. Other extensive earthworks surviving as a series of medieval fields have been interpreted as a furlong articulated by a scarp base track leading to nearby deserted settlement (HER 10113).
- 1.3.10 A small number of post medieval features were uncovered at Owls End Road, these include field ditches, ponds and a small number of pits which were dated to the 16th/17th century.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank Campbell Buchanan for commissioning the project, and to Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council for monitoring the work. The project was managed by Tom Phillips. The fieldwork was carried out by the author and Helen Stocks-Morgan.

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 approximately 3.5% of the area should be sampled through trial trenching. Due to the significant number of services and areas covered in trees and shrubs it was decided that six linear trenches totalling 170m and a square trench measuring 5m² were to be excavated on areas surrounding the former medical centre (Fig. 2). In reality further services were encountered on site resulting in the linear trenching being reduced to 140m.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 360 excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. The tarmac and underlying areas of concrete were removed using a breaker.
- 2.2.3 The site GPS survey was carried out by Stuart Ladd using a Leica GS08.
- 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 No environmental sampling was undertaken.
- 2.2.7 The evaluation was hampered by unmapped services being encountered on a regular basis. Heavy rain also meant that incoming water was an issue within the trenches.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 A total of seven trenches of varying sizes were excavated around the former medical centre building (Fig. 2). These trenches largely revealed modern make up layers for the construction of roads and car parks. Some of the trenches were moved or shortened to accommodate for this.

3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 Trench 1 was located in the north-west of the site. It was aligned east-south-east to west-north-west and was 40m in length. Natural geology was observed in this trench at a depth of 0.65m. The geology was truncated by a sandy make-up layer (110), which measured 0.2m in depth. Above this was a shingle layer (109), which measured 0.15m in depth. These make-up layers were sealed in turn by (108), a concrete layer, and (107), a layer of tarmac.

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 Trench 2 was located in the north of the site and was aligned north-north-east to south-south-west. This trench measured 28m in length and natural geology was observed at a depth of 0.74m. The geology was truncated by make-up layer (111), which was mid bluey grey in colour and measured 0.2m deep. It was sealed by make-up layer (112), which appeared to be an older layer of tarmac measuring 0.2m deep. Layers (109), (108) and (107) were also seen in this trench (Plate 1).

3.4 Trench 3

3.4.1 Trench 3 was located immediately to the north of the former medical centre and was aligned east-south-east to west-north-west (Plate 3). Measuring 40m in length, natural geology was observed at a depth of 0.7m. Two possible linear features were uncovered with a north-north-west to south-south-east alignment. The western most of these (**119**) appeared to terminate within the trench, while **121** continued beyond the limits of excavation. These linear features were shallow measuring 0.1m in depth and contained a light to mid brown grey clayey fill devoid of finds. These features had unclear edges and were interpreted as natural features. Overlying these linear features was make-up layer (111), which measured 0.2m deep and was overlain by layer (110), which measured 0.1m. Make-up layers (109), (108) and (107) were also present.

3.5 Trench 4

3.5.1 Trench 4 was located to the east of the former medical centre in a grassed area. However, a large number of unexpected services were identified meaning that the original length of 15m was reduced to 8m. Natural geology was observed in this trench at a depth of 0.75m and was truncated by a modern service pipe, which ran along the extent of the trench. In section subsoil layer (106) measured 0.4m thick and was sealed by topsoil layer (105) measuring 0.35m deep. The trench contained no archaeology.

3.6 Trench 5

3.6.1 Trench 5 was also located in the grassed area. This trench measured c. 10m long at the surface but due to the presence of services only 5m were excavated to the level of the natural geology. The geology was observed at a depth of 1.05m. It was sealed by

the subsoil, which measured 0.65m deep, and by topsoil, which measured 0.4m deep (Plate. 2). This trench contained no archaeology

3.7 Trench 6

3.7.1 Trench 6 was located to the south of the former medical centre and measured 5m x 5m. Natural geology was observed at a depth of 1m and was truncated by make-up layer (103), which was a light greenish grey silty clay measuring 0.65m in depth. Overlying this was layer (102), a shingle make-up layer measuring 0.15m deep. Light orangey yellow sand layer (101) measured 0.1m in depth and is a make-up layer for the construction of the brick surface (100).

3.8 Trench 7

3.8.1 Trench 7 was also located to the south of the former medical centre and measured 8m in length, orientated east to west. The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.6m and natural geology was not observed indicating this area is heavily truncated. Layer (117) was a mid orange sandy clay and was observed at 1.6m below ground level. Overlying this was layer (116), a dark blue grey clay which forms part of a series of make-up layers; it measured 0.15m in depth. A large layer of hardcore (115) measured 1m in depth and is overlain by concrete and tarmac layers (114) and (113).

3.9 Finds Summary

3.9.1 No finds were recovered from this evaluation.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Discussion and Conclusion

- 4.1.1 The evaluation trenches have shown that much of the development area surrounding the former medical centre has been heavily truncated, with the natural geology being sealed by a series of make-up layers relating to the construction of roads and car parks. There has also been a lot of disturbance from services such as drains, electric cables and gas pipes. Trenches 4 and 5 were on an area of land which has been least affected, however, the presence of services made it difficult to evaluate the area fully. Trench 3 contained two potential linear features (**119** and **121**) although these proved to be natural in origin. No finds were recovered from either of these features. It is likely that if any archaeology existed in this area it has been truncated by modern activity.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation		ESE-WNW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of tarmac, concrete and make-up layers overlying a natural of blueish clay with chalk.				Avg. depth (m)		0.65
				Width (m)		2.0
				Length (m)		40
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
107	Layer	-	0.1	Tarmac	-	-
108	Layer	-	0.24	Concrete	-	-
109	Layer	-	0.15	Hardcore	-	-
110	Layer	-	0.2	Make-up	-	-
104	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
Trench 2						
General description				Orientation		NNE-SSW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of tarmac, concrete and make-up layers overlying a natural of blueish clay with chalk.				Avg. depth (m)		0.74
				Width (m)		2
				Length (m)		28
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
107	Layer	-	0.1	Tarmac	-	-
108	Layer	-	0.24	Concrete	-	-
109	Layer	-	0.15	Hardcore	-	-
111	Layer	-	0.2	Make-up	-	-
112	Layer	-	0.2	Make-up	-	-
104	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
Trench 3						
General description				Orientation		ESE-WNW
Trench contained two linear features. Consists of tarmac, concrete and make-up layers overlying a natural of blueish clay with chalk.				Avg. depth (m)		0.7
				Width (m)		2
				Length (m)		40
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
107	Layer	-	0.1	Tarmac	-	-
108	Layer	-	0.15	Concrete	-	-
109	Layer	-	0.15	Hardcore	-	-

110	Layer		0.1	Make-up	-	-
111	Layer	-	0.2	Make-up	-	-
118	Fill	0.5	0.1	Linear feature	-	-
119	Cut	0.5	0.1	Linear feature	-	-
120	Fill	0.6	0.1	Linear feature	-	-
121	Cut	0.6	0.1	Linear feature	-	-
104	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 4

General description	Orientation	N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying a natural of blueish clay with chalk.	Avg. depth (m)	0.75
	Width (m)	2
	Length (m)	8

Contexts

context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
105	Layer	-	0.35	Topsoil	-	-
106	Layer	-	0.4	Subsoil	-	-
104	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 5

General description	Orientation	E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying a natural of blueish clay with chalk.	Avg. depth (m)	1.05
	Width (m)	2
	Length (m)	5

Contexts

context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
105	Layer	-	0.4	Topsoil	-	-
106	Layer	-	0.65	Subsoil	-	-
104	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 6

General description	Orientation	-
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of brick surface, sand, hardcore and a make-up layer overlying a natural of blueish clay with chalk.	Avg. depth (m)	1
	Width (m)	5
	Length (m)	5

Contexts

context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.1	Brick surface	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.1	Sand	-	-
102	Layer	-	0.15	Hardcore	-	-

103	Layer	-	0.65	Make-up	-	-
104	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
Trench 7						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Archaeological level / natural not reached. Consists of tarmac, concrete and hardcore overlying make-up layers.					Avg. depth (m)	1.6
					Width (m)	2
					Length (m)	7
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
113	Layer	-	0.15	Tarmac	-	-
114	Layer	-	0.2	Concrete	-	-
115	Layer	-	1	Hardcore	-	-
116	Layer	-	0.15	Make-up	-	-
117	Layer	-	>0.05	Make-up	-	-

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Begg, C. & Lucas, G. 1997. *Archaeological Investigations at Owl's End Road, Bury, Cambridgeshire*. Cambridge Archaeological Unit:241

Jones, C. 2010. *Archaeological Trial Trenching Evaluation at RAF Upwood, Cambridgeshire* (Unpublished report)

Online resources

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> (accessed 20/08/15)

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/> (accessed 20/08/15)

APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-221231		
Project Name	Evaluation at former medical centre, RAF Upwood, Cambridgeshire		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	17-08-2015	Finish	18-08-2015
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	UPRUPR15	Planning App. No.	15/00029/FUL
HER No.	ECB 4523	Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG15
Development Type	Rural Residential

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch	<input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Augering	<input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	

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".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
None	Select period...	None	Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	Huntingdonshire	USAF Medical Centre RAF Upwood Upwood Road	
Parish	Bury		
HER	Cambridgeshire		
Study Area	1.9 hectares	National Grid Reference	TL 2775 8357

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Andy Thomas
Project Design Originator	Tom Phillips
Project Manager	Tom Phillips
Supervisor	Helen Stocks-Morgan

Project Archives

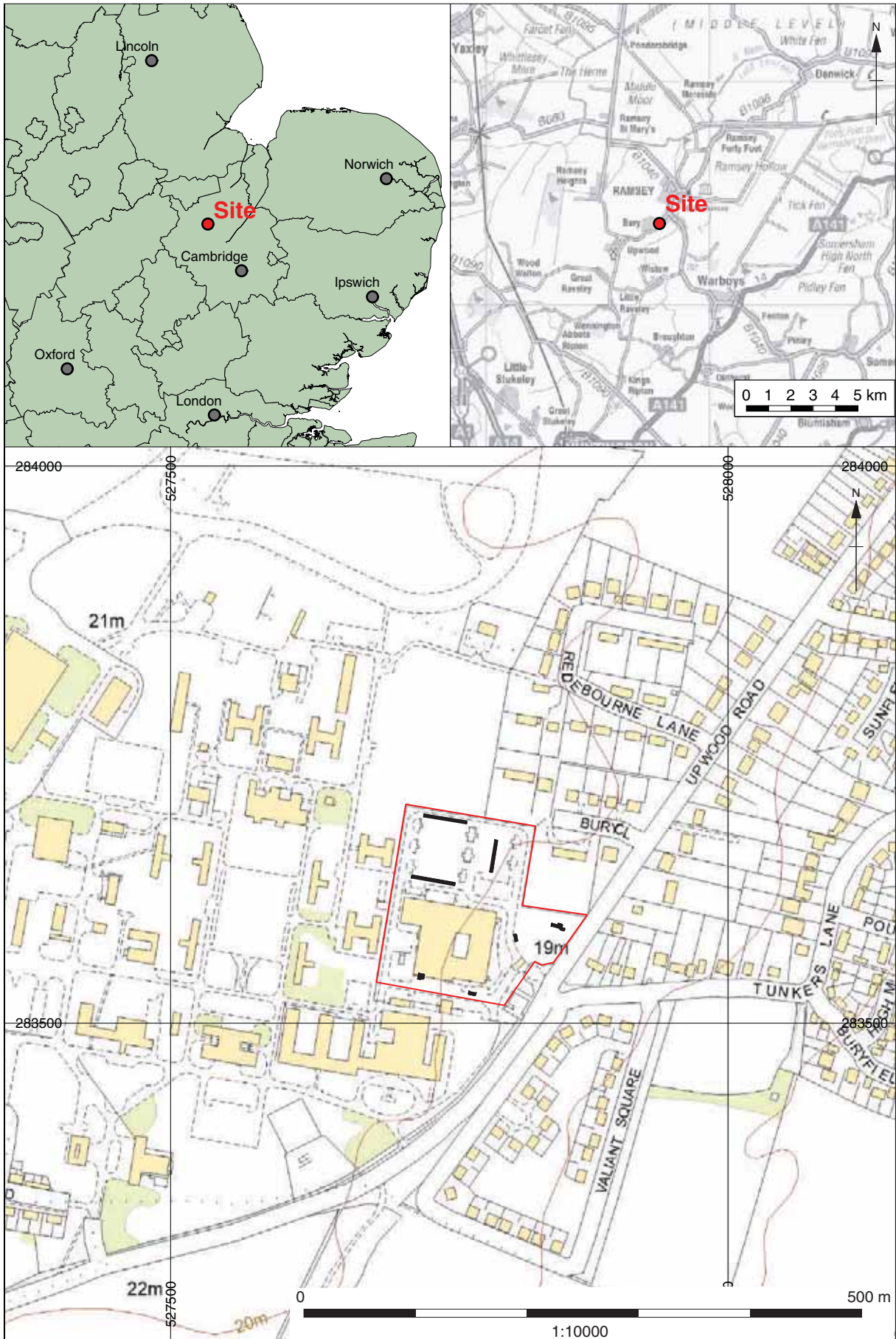
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
CCC Stores	OA East	CCC stores
UPRUPR15	UPRUPR15	UPRUPR15

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location map showing development area (red) and excavation trenches (black)



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Figure 2: Trench plan



Plate 1: Photo of Trench 2 showing modern make-up layers



Plate 2: Photo of Trench 5 showing topsoil and subsoil depths



Plate 3: Photo of Trench 3 looking west-north-west



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