



74 Fen End, Willingham, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

July 2017


Planning application no.	S/2700/16/FL
Site code	WILFEN17
Project number	20556
Project type	Trial Trench evaluation
NGR	TL 4067 7083
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74 Fen End, Willingham, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

On the 12-13th June 2017, Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological evaluation at 74 Fen End, Willingham Cambridgeshire (TL 4422 6419). Two trenches were excavated and no archaeological features were recorded or finds recovered.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Matt Cooksey who commissioned this project. Thanks is also extended to Gemma Stewart who monitored the work on behalf of CCC.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by James Drummond-Murray. The fieldwork was directed by Tom Collie. Survey and digitizing was carried out by David Brown.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Matt Cooksey to undertake a trial trench evaluation at the site of 74 Fen End, Willingham, Cambridgeshire.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref. S/2700/16/FL) to inform the Planning Authority in advance of a submission of a Planning Application. A brief was issued by Gemma Stewart of Cambridgeshire County Council detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to discharge the planning condition. A WSI was written by OAE in response.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The development area is located on the northern edge of the historic village of Willingham at roughly 5m AOD.
- 1.2.2 The area of proposed development consists of a residential lawn with some auxiliary buildings present along the north boundary. No. 74 is situated at the very north end of Fen End road. Residential properties lie to the west south and east with green fields situated immediately to the north.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the site is Mudstone of Ampthill Clay Formation overlain by sand and gravel of river terracing deposits (British Geological Survey, <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html> accessed on 19/05/2017).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site is discussed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Tsybaeva 2017) and a brief summary is given below:
- 1.3.2 There are major Bronze Age barrowfields along the edge of the River Great Ouse, 4 kilometres to the west and northwest of the development site. A ring of postholes excavated on the High Street (CHER 11973), 700m to the southeast, was dated to the LBA/EIA
- 1.3.3 Several Iron Age features appear close to the site. 1.7 kilometres east of the development site is the large circular earthwork of Belsar's Hill (CHER 01770) similar to hillforts at Arbury Banks, north of Cambridge, or the Burough Fen ringwork north of Peterborough. To the north, northeast and northwest of the site are extensive cropmarks of Iron Age field systems and trackways, beginning at a distance of 500 metres from the site (including CHER 01892, 11150, 11151, 11154, 11156).
- 1.3.4 Roman settlement was recorded slightly to the north of the current village core (between Church Street and Fen End), as well as in the cropmark complex 1.3km northeast of the development site. Roman pottery and tile was found at these sites along with the presence of Roman buildings 1km to the north of the development site (CHER 05853). An evaluation 300m to the east identified Roman-era ditches (MCB20975). A hoard of Late Roman pewter bearing early Christian symbols was also recovered 400m to the northwest (CHER 11499).

- 1.3.5 Willingham was the site of Saxon settlement from the Early Saxon period onwards. Over a dozen Early to Middle Saxon buildings (both post-built and earth-fast halls), along with grubenhäuser, pits and ditches have been excavated at Berrycroft in the centre of the current village, east of the High Street (CHER 11973b, MCB17885, 18148), roughly 500 metres southwest of the development site. The Saxon settlement lies several hundred metres south of the Roman settlement in Willingham. The church contains late Saxon late Saxon stonework (DCB6679) and droveways, radiating out from the village centre, also date from the Saxon period, although some may be significantly older.
- 1.3.6 In the medieval period, the focus of the village shifted to the Willingham Lode, 500m to the southwest of the development site. The church and Willingham manor were constructed close to the loading dock and the village then developed between the church and the Green. The Early Saxon settlement at Berrycroft was abandoned and reverted to pasture. By the end of the medieval period, settlement lay on three sides of a rectangle formed by High Street, Church Street and Green Street.
- 1.3.7 Most of the listed buildings in the village lie along Church Street and High Street, 300-400m south of the development site and many were built after major fires in the 19th century prompted a renewal of many of the older constructions. Expansion of the village north of Church Street, towards the development site, is mostly recent.

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The project aims and objectives were as follows:

- i. To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present.
- ii. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
- iii. provide sufficient coverage to establish the character, condition, date and purpose of any archaeological deposits.
- iv. provide sufficient coverage to evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking deposits.
- v. set results in the local, regional, and national archaeological context – and, in particular, its wider cultural landscape and past environmental conditions.
- vi. provide – in the event that archaeological remains are found – sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables, and orders of cost.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 A description of the methodology used is described in the WSI (see Tsybaeva 2017) but a brief summary is provided below:

2.2.2 All fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the OA Field Manual (ed. D Wilkinson 1992), and the revised OA fieldwork manual (publication forthcoming). Further guidance was provided to all excavators in the form of the OA Fieldwork Crib Sheets – a companion guide to the Fieldwork Manual. These have been issued ahead of formal publication of the revised Fieldwork Manual.

2.2.3 Before work on site commenced, service plans were checked to ensure that access and groundworks can be conducted safely. A scan of the trench locations with a CAT scanner was also undertaken to locate and check if any services existed that were not located on the service plans.

2.2.4 A total of 2 trenches were excavated. Trench 1 measured 15m and Trench 2 measured 18.5m (See figure 2). Trench 2 was extended beyond the 15m limit originally specified in the WSI due to the discovery of a modern service located at the northern end. The trenches were then surveyed with a digital GPS system.

2.2.5 Trial trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator to the depth of geological horizons. A toothless ditching bucket with a bucket width of 1.8m was used to excavate the trenches. Overburden was excavated in spits not greater than 0.1m thick.

2.2.6 Spoil was stored alongside trenches. Topsoil and subsoil were kept separate during excavation, to allow for sequential backfilling of excavations. Trenches were not backfilled until approved by Gemma Stewart, member of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below. Since the trenches were devoid of all archaeology, no further discussion is necessary other than to highlight that one land drain was found in Trench 1 which ran into trench 2 and one modern service was also revealed below the top soil at the northern end of Trench 2. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The soil sequence between all trenches was fairly uniform. The natural geology of mid yellow brown firm clay with common small angular flint gravels was overlain by a firm mid grey brown firm silty clay subsoil, which in turn was overlain by topsoil consisting of mid grey brown loose silt.

3.2.2 Overburden from recently demolished buildings was present at the western end of Trench 1 and the northern end of Trench 2. This consisted of loose white grey sandy mortar with abundant fragments of modern brick and tile.

3.2.3 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, and the trenches remained dry throughout. Services were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.1.1 Both trenches were excavated down to the natural geological horizon and no archaeological features or finds were revealed.

APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	WSW/ESE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of clay. Overburden consisting of demolished building material extends 8.5m from the westernmost end. One land drain runs across the middle of the trench aligned NW/SE and appears in the middle of trench 2.					Length (m)	15
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.54
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
101	Layer	-	0.3	Overburden	-	modern
102	Layer	-	0.23	Topsoil	-	-
103	Layer	-	0.23	Subsoil	-	-
104	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	NW/SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of clay. Overburden consisting of demolished building material extends 7.6m from the northernmost end. One field drain (from trench 1) in the middle and one modern service at the northern end of the trench were revealed.					Length (m)	18.5m
					Width (m)	1.8m
					Avg. depth (m)	0.54m
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
101	Layer	-	0.2	Overburden	-	modern
102	Layer	-	0.34	Topsoil	-	-
103	Layer	-	0.36	Subsoil	-	-
104	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Tsybaeva, D.; 2017; 74 Fen End, Willingham, Cambridgeshire – a Written Scheme of Investigation; OA East.

APPENDIX B OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-287466		
Project Name	74 Fen End, Willingham, Cambridgeshire		
Start of Fieldwork	12.06.17	End of Fieldwork	13.06.17
Previous Work	NONE	Future Work	UNKNOWN

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	WILFEN17	Planning App. No.	S/2700/16/FL
HER Number	ECB 5131	Related Numbers	

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority
Development Type	Private buildings
Place in Planning Process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Techniques used (tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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	Period
	None
	None
	None

Object	Period
	None
	None
	None

Insert more lines as appropriate.

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Address (including Postcode) 74 Fen End Willingham Cambridgeshire
District	South Cambridgeshire	
Parish	Willingham	
HER office	Cambridgeshire	
Size of Study Area	420 sqm	
National Grid Ref	TL 4067 7083	

Project Originators

Organisation	Cambridgeshire
Project Brief Originator	CCC – Gemma Stewart
Project Design Originator	James Drummond-Murray

Project Manager	James Drummond-Murray
Project Supervisor	Tom Collie

Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)		
Digital Archive	OA East, Bar Hill, Cambridgeshire	WILFEN17
Paper Archive	Cambridgeshire County Council	ECB 5131

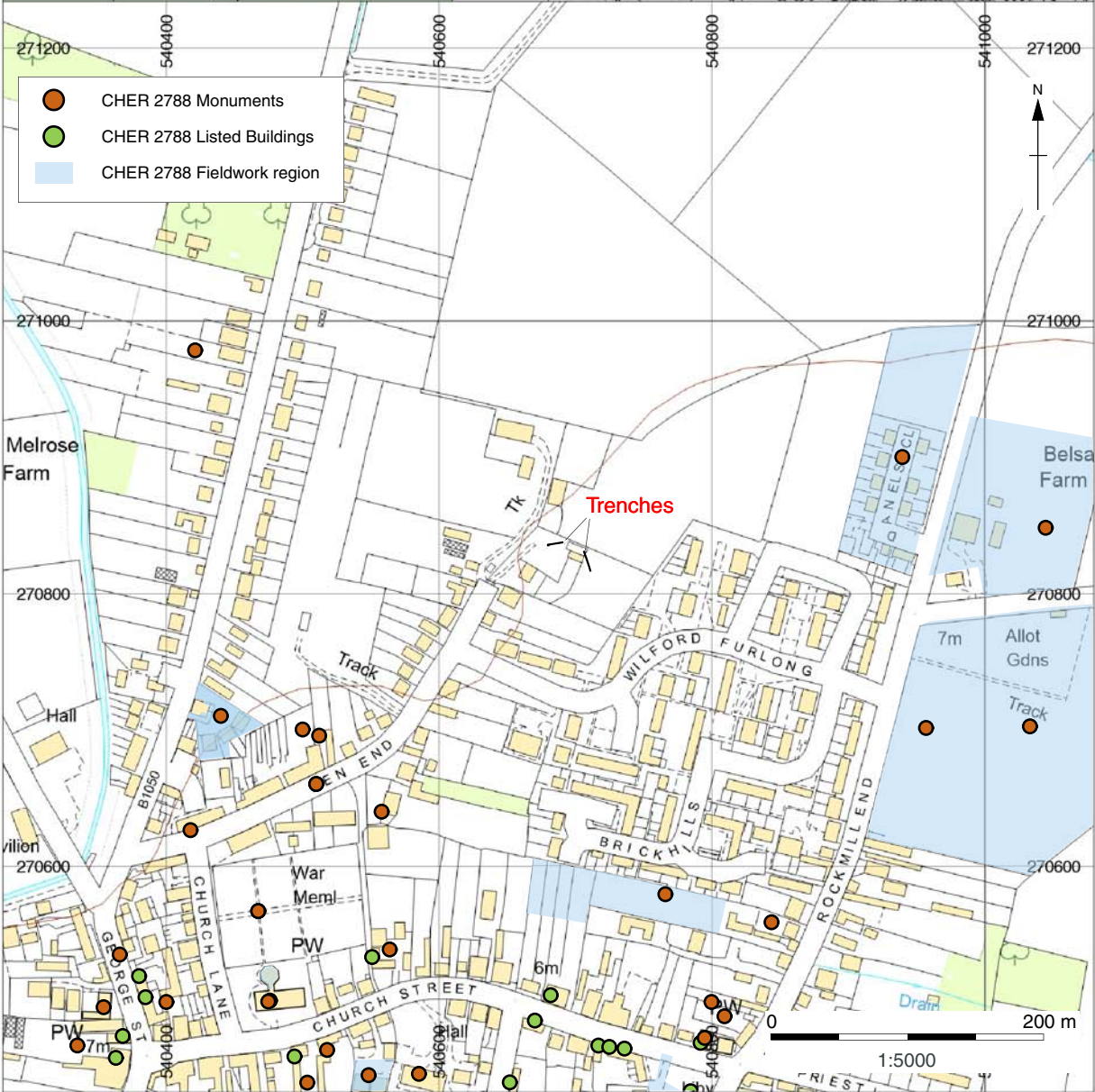
Physical Contents	Present?	Digital files associated with Finds	Paperwork associated with Finds
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Remains	<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

Database	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Images (Digital photos)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illustrations (Figures/Plates)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>
Text	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/>

Paper Media

Aerial Photos	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context Sheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drawing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manuscript	<input type="checkbox"/>
Map	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matrices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Microfiche	<input type="checkbox"/>
Miscellaneous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research/Notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photos (negatives/prints/slides)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sections	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trenches (black)



Figure 2: Trench location map in context of immediate location



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking ENE



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking NW



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