

Library site 266 Broadway Yaxley



Archaeological Evaluation Report



June 2012

Client: CgMs

OA East Report No: 1377
OASIS No: oxfordar3-128418
NGR: TL 1758 9233

Evaluation at the Library site, 266 Broadway, Yaxley

Archaeological Evaluation

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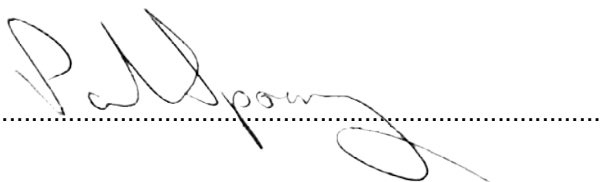
Illustrator: Stuart Ladd MA PIFA

Report Date: June 2012

Report Number: 1377
Site Name: Library Site, 266 Broadway, Yaxley
HER Event No: ECB 3807
Date of Works: June 2012
Client Name: CgMs
Client Ref: n/a
Planning Ref: 0900010FUL
Grid Ref: TL 17589233
Site Code: YAX BRY 12
Finance Code: YAX BRY 12
Receiving Body: CCC Stores, Landbeach
Accession No: n/a

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Date: 19 June 2012

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Date: 20 June 2012
Signed:



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Summary

On the 11th and 13th of June Oxford Archaeology East evaluated the Library site, 266 Broadway, Yaxley by three trial trenches. The trenches revealed three ditches, one of which was dated to the late Iron Age through the presence of pottery in its fill.

The proximity and similarity of two of the ditches would suggest they form the corner of a late Iron Age enclosure orientated on a north-east to south-west alignment. The third ditch may represent an internal feature within this enclosure.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at the Library site, 266 Broadway, Yaxley.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by A Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application 0900010FUL) supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (Spoerry 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 the *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 at 24m aOD on pleistocene till formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Prehistoric material has been recovered from within 1km of the site. A paleolithic handaxe was recovered from Yaxley Yard (CHER 01410). Further prehistoric flint implements of Neolithic date have been located scattered across the high ground in Yaxley (CHER 01428).
- 1.3.2 Iron Age remains were identified at the excavations carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology and Oxford Archaeology East (Phillips forthcoming and Taylor and Chapman 2005) north of Broadway at the eastern edge of Yaxley.
- 1.3.3 These excavations, in recent years, have revealed late Iron Age settlement in adjacent plots around 1600m east of the site. The site excavated in 2005 revealed a farming settlement that continued from the late Iron Age through to late Roman period. The first phase of work was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology whilst the latter investigation was carried out by Oxford Archaeology East. In this area the late Iron Age occupation was restricted to the eastern half of the site and comprised a square enclosure, a roundhouse and parts of a field system. Two phases of a Roman field system were identified on the western half of the site. Originally a system of small fields it was partially abandoned during the second phase to create a more open system.
- 1.3.4 Further Roman remains have been excavated to the South of the site in a series of excavations in and around Manor Farm. These excavations also identified Medieval remains.
- 1.3.5 The site lies 90m north of linear earthworks including banks and ditches, dated to the 10th - 14th centuries (Historic Environment Record NO. ECB84). A moated 16th

century site is located to the south of the proposed development area (HER NO. ECB85).

- 1.3.6 Previous landscape survey has suggested that the Saxon and medieval village was to the south of the site and west of St Peter's church.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank CgMs for commissioning the work to carry out the evaluation. The author would also like to thank James Fairbairn and Julian Newman for their hard work and assistance in carrying out the evaluation in very wet conditions. Finally the author would to thank Stuart Ladd for producing the illustrations.

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 60m of trenching was carried out at the site, originally one 30m and two 15m long trenches, however, due to difficulties on site with occupied buildings and possible live services it was only possible to excavate 3 trenches, which were 25m, 20m and 13m long.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a 22 ton 360 Mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 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.
- 2.2.4 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.
- 2.2.5 Environmental samples were taken from the visible features to test for the presence of potential micro- and macro-botanical environmental indicators.
- 2.2.6 The site was evaluated in good dry weather, however, the archaeological horizon was below the current level of groundwater and as such the site was extremely wet.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The results are presented by trench (see fig 2).

3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 Trench 1 was aligned north to south parallel to the eastern boundary of the site. The trench was 25m long by 1m deep and contained three deposits. The upper deposit was a build-up or levelling layer of modern material, made up of a mix of bricks, concrete and builders sands and gravels. This sealed a buried soil/sub-soil which in turn sealed the natural glacial till and the single archaeological feature (**102**) (plate 1).

3.2.2 Feature **102** was the terminus of a north-east to south-west aligned ditch on the eastern side of the trench 2.30m from the southern edge. The terminus was a steep-sided feature with a concave base 0.55m wide and 0.4m deep. It contained two fills. The lower fill (101) was a primary fill of mid grey-brown sandy clay. The upper fill (100) was a dark grey silty clay secondary silting event. No finds were recovered and as such the feature remains undated (see figure 2)

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 Trench 2 was excavated on an east to west alignment parallel to the garage buildings located along the northern boundary of the site. The trench was 20m by 1.3m deep and had the same depositional sequence as Trench 1. Trench 2 had modern field drains cutting the natural glacial clays. The trench contained two archaeological features, ditches **201** (plate 2) and **203**.

3.3.2 Ditch **201** was not excavated due to the wet soil conditions, although a soil sample was taken from the fill for processing to recover artefacts and ecofacts. The ditch was 1.3m wide and a 3m long length was exposed. The ditch was aligned on a north-west to south east orientation. It had a single visible fill of brown-grey soft silty clay (200). The ditch contained two fragments of pottery dated to the Late Iron Age. A single primary struck flake of flint was also recovered.

3.3.3 Again ditch **203** was not excavated due to the poor ground conditions, but a soil sample was taken. The ditch was aligned along a north-east to south-west direction and contained a single fill of brown-grey soft silty clay (202). The ditch was 1m wide and 3m of it was visible. The ditch contained a large fragment of distal cow femur.

3.4 Trench 3

3.4.1 Trench 3 was a 13m long trench 1.3m deep aligned east to west at the edge of the standing garage on the northern side of the site. No archaeological deposits were exposed in the trench, which had the same depositional sequence as Trenches 1 and 2.

3.5 Finds Summary

3.5.1 A single struck flint flake was recovered from 200, the fill of ditch **201**. The flake was a large hard hammer struck primary flake. No further alterations had been carried out and the working is likely to be from initial core preparation. The flint was a dark greyish brown material of reasonable quality with an even smooth white to cream cortex which was very similar to nodules seen in the natural deposits on the site.

- 3.5.2 Two sherds of a late Iron Age Nene valley shell tempered ware pottery were recovered from 200, the fill of ditch **201**. One of these is a large, unabraded vessel fragment consistent with primary deposition associated with nearby occupation.

3.6 Environmental Summary

- 3.6.1 A single distal fragment of cow femur was recovered from 202, the fill of ditch **203**. The bone was in good condition due to the depositional conditions. It was heavily damaged at the proximal end during excavation but there is some evidence the bone was chopped suggesting some butchery/reduction of the bone had been carried out in the past.
- 3.6.2 Two bulk samples were taken from the upper fill of the ditches in Trench 2 to assess the likelihood of preservation of botanical material.
- 3.6.3 Both of the samples contained charcoal fragments. The sample from 200, the fill of ditch **201**, contained only charcoal derived from wood. The fill of ditch **203** on the other hand contained charcoal in addition to two glume bases of hulled wheat, either spelt or emmer (*Triticum spelta/dicoccum*). This sample also contained numerous calcified seeds of duckweed (*Lemna* sp.).
- 3.6.4 The differences in the samples would suggest that these ditch fills are not necessarily contemporary as the fill of **203** contained material that was likely to have been deposited in standing water, as opposed to the material in **201** which was likely to have formed in dryer conditions.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Trench 1

- 4.1.1 Trench 1 contained a single undated ditch terminus. The terminus might be related to the features in Trench 2, however, no direct link can be made.

4.2 Trench 2

- 4.2.1 Ditches **201** and **203** would have intersected to the north of the trench. The visual similarity of their fills and their physical proximity suggest that they form the corner of an enclosure, however, as there is no direct relationship this interpretation remains supposition.
- 4.2.2 The environmental remains suggest, however, that the ditch fills are from two separate phases; with the recovery of cereals and duckweed seeds from **203** and a lack of material other than charcoal from **201**. As these ditches were not fully excavated due to ground-water ingress, and thus this environmental material comes from the upper fills, it may be that the difference in the botanical assemblages is due to differing use-histories (e.g. re-cutting and/or maintenance of one only). This would match the activity sequence recorded for the ditch systems seen at OA East's site some 1400m to the east, where only some elements in the enclosure system were recut and maintained (Phillips forthcoming).

4.3 Significance

- 4.3.1 The proximity, perpendicular nature and similarity of **201** and **203** would imply that they are both part of a single boundary system, although the different character of the plant remains in the ditch fills suggests variation in their use-histories, something that it was not possible to test fully through excavation owing to water ingress. It is nonetheless likely that they form the corner of an enclosure, but that maintenance of each element was dissimilar, with a possible internal feature represented by **102**. The features revealed are orientated on a different alignment to the modern boundaries.
- 4.3.2 The late Iron Age pottery recovered from ditch **201** would suggest that the field system is similar to that identified to the east of the site (ibid.).
- 4.3.3 The site could therefore contain further evidence for extensive late Iron Age enclosure systems within the region of Yaxley. The possibility of an internal feature and the presence of fresh, unabraded pottery and cereal waste could imply occupation was present close to the area under investigation.

4.4 Recommendations

- 4.4.1 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					Orientation	N-S
Consists of modern levelling/demolition layers and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy clay with a single ditch terminus (102).					Avg. depth (m)	1
					Width (m)	2.1
					Length (m)	25
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Fill	0.55	0.1	Upper fill of Ditch 102	-	-
101	Fill	0.55	0.3	Lower fill of Ditch 102	-	-
102	Cut	0.55	0.4	Cut of ditch	-	-
103	Layer	-	0.4	Modern Levelling	-	Modern
104	Layer	-	0.6	Subsoil	-	-
105	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench consists of modern levelling/demolition layers and subsoil overlying a natural sandy clay with two ditches 201 and 203 .					Avg. depth (m)	1.3
					Width (m)	2.1
					Length (m)	20
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
200	Fill	1.3	-	Fill of Ditch 201	Pottery	Late Iron Age
201	Cut	1.3	-	Cut of ditch	-	Late Iron Age
202	Fill	1	-	Fill of Ditch 203	Bone	-
203	Cut	1	-	Cut of ditch	-	-
204	Layer	-	0.6	Modern Levelling	-	-
205	Layer	-	0.7	Subsoil	-	-
206	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of modern levelling/demolition layers and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy clay.					Avg. depth (m)	1.3
					Width (m)	2.1
					Length (m)	13
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
300	Layer	-	-	Modern Levelling	-	Modern
301	Layer	-	-	Subsoil	-	-
302	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Flint

By Anthony Haskins

B.1.1 Assessment

- B.1.2 A single hard hammer struck primary flake was recovered from Iron Age ditch fill (200). The flint is a translucent mid to dark greyish brown material, with an even smooth creamy white cortex, similar in form to locally available material. The flint is damaged on the distal portion and near the bulb of percussion on the right lateral side.

Due to the limited amount of material it is difficult to date the struck flint, but it's form would not be inconsistent with material struck in the Iron Age.

B.2 Pottery

By Anthony Haskins with Alice Lyons

B.2.1 Assessment

- B.2.2 Two sherds of pottery weighing 0.081kg were recovered from the upper fill of ditch **201**. The two sherds of pottery are likely to be a late Iron Age early Romano-British Nene Valley shell tempered ware (c. 50BC-50AD).
- B.2.3 The sherds are both likely to come from a low fired conservative handmade storage vessel and therefore are not closely datable. Similar material has been recovered at the near by Roman town of Durobrivae (Perrin 1999).

B.3

APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Faunal remains

By Anthony Haskins with Chris Faine

C.1.1 Assessment

- C.1.2 A single fragment of animal bone weighing 0.12kg was recovered from 200, the upper fill of ditch **201**. The fragment has been identified as the distal femur of a cow. The bone has extensive recent damage to the proximal end, due to machining.

Part of a chop mark is present on the proximal end where the bone isn't damaged.

C.2 Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction

- C.2.1 Two bulk samples were taken during the evaluation phase of the Library site, 266 Broadway, Yaxley. Both samples were taken from the top fills of ditches encountered in Trench 2 from which Iron Age pottery had been recovered. It was considered possible that the two ditches are actually one continuous ditch.
- C.2.2 The purpose of this assessment is to determine whether plant remains are present, their mode of preservation and whether they are of interpretable value with regard to domestic, agricultural and industrial activities, diet, economy and rubbish disposal.

Methodology

- C.2.1 Ten litres of each of the samples was 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. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope. Identification of plant remains is with reference to the Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands and the authors' own reference collection.
- C.2.2 The residue was not sorted at this stage although Iron Age pottery was noted in both sample residues.

Results

- C.2.1 Both samples contain plant remains preserved by carbonisation. Sample 200, fill 200 of ditch **201** contains wood charcoal only. Sample 201, fill 202 of ditch **203** contains charcoal in addition to two glume bases of hulled wheat, either spelt or emmer (*Triticum spelta/dicoccum*). This sample also contained numerous calcified seeds of duckweed (*Lemna* sp.).

Discussion

- C.2.1 Environmental samples from a previous excavation at the adjacent site on Broadway, Yaxley produced substantial amounts of crop processing waste (Fosberry, 2009) in the

form of charred cereals, chaff and crop-associated weed seeds. The charred glume bases recovered from Sample 201 are less than 2mm in size and could easily have been blown across the site. The presence of duckweed in the same sample indicates that ditch **203** contained water, possibly stagnant, at some time. Duckweed was not noted in Sample 200 from ditch **201** which may indicate that the ditches are not contemporary.

Further Work and Methods Statement

- C.2.1 The two environmental samples taken have shown that both charred and waterlogged plant remains are preserved on this site. If any further work is planned for this area, it is recommended that a schedule for environmental sampling should be appended to the updated project design.

APPENDIX D. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX E. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-128418		
Project Name	Evaluation of the Library Site, 266 Broadway, Yaxley		
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	11-06-2012	Finish 13-06-2012
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	YAXBRY12	Planning App. No.	0900010FUL
HER No.	ECB 3807	Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Housing Estate

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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" 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
Ditch	Uncertain	POT	Iron Age -800 to 43
Ditch	Iron Age -800 to 43		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Huntingdon	Library Site 266 Broadway Yaxley DE7 3ND
Parish	Yaxley	
HER		
Study Area	2025 sq m	National Grid Reference TL 17589233

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	A Thomas CCC
Project Design Originator	Paul Spoerry Oxford Archaeology East
Project Manager	Paul Spoerry
Supervisor	Anthony Haskins

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Location ...	Location ...	Location ...
Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Trench plan and section drawing



Plate 1: Terminus of linear feature **102**, viewed from the south-west



Plate 2: Ditch **201**, viewed from the east



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