

Land West of Chickney Road Debden, Essex



Archaeological Evaluation Report



October 2016

Client: Affinity Water

OA East Report No: 1990
OASIS No: oxfordar3-264224
NGR: TL 5635 3006

Land West of Chickney Road, Debden, Essex

Archaeological Evaluation

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Report Date: October 2016

Report Number: 1990
Site Name: Land West of Chickney Road, Debden, Essex
EHER Event No: DNCR16
Date of Works: October 2016
Client Name: Affinity Water
Client Ref: n/a
Planning Ref: UTT/16/0672/FUL
Grid Ref: TL 5635 3006
Site Code: DNCR16
Finance Code: XEXHEN16
Receiving Body: Saffron Walden Museum (accession no. TBC)

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Date: October 2016
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Summary

Between 27th and 28th September 2016 Oxford Archaeology East conducted an archaeological evaluation consisting of two trial trenches on land west of Chickney Road, Debden, Essex (centred TL 5635 3006). No archaeological features or deposits were found.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) on land west of Chickney Road, Debden, Essex (centred on TL 5635 3006) ahead of the proposed construction of a new reservoir (Fig. 1). The reservoir footprint covers approximately 2960m², with additional access and pipework. The constructed reservoir is to be 55m long by 32m wide.
- 1.1.2 The trial trenching was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref. UTT/16/0672/FUL), in accordance with a Brief issued by Richard Havis of Essex County Council (ECC; Planning Application) and a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by OA East (Brudenell 2016).
- 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 ECC, 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 of the proposed reservoir lies on agricultural land on the west side of Chickney Road in the parish of Debden, c.1.8km north-east of Henham village. The development area is located in the south-east corner of an existing field, and is bordered by agricultural buildings and a water tower to the south and east, a trackway to the south-west, and agricultural land to the north and north-west.
- 1.2.2 The development area is broadly flat, and lies between c.125-126m OD. The underlying bedrock geology consists of clays, silts and sands of the Thanet Sands Formation and Lambeth Group, whilst the superficial geology comprises chalky tills of the Lowestoft Formation (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following section is drawn from the Written Scheme of Investigation (Brudenell 2016) based on a Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment prepared for this site by Atkins consultancy, and submitted with the planning application (Atkins 2016), along with information obtained from the County Historic Environment Record (HER).

Prehistoric and Romano-British

- 1.3.2 The earliest evidence for activity in the vicinity of the site dates to the Neolithic, and is attested by the find of a shaffthole adze from Lovecott Farm, recovered c.400m to the south-west (EHER no. 4704). Later prehistoric activity is also attested by finds of Iron Age pottery sherds recovered from fieldwalking along the route of the Cambridge to Matching Green Pipeline scheme (Site 51), c.530m to the north-west (EHER 45287). South of this find spot, field investigations as part of the same scheme yielded further Iron Age and Romano-British sherds as part of a low density pottery scatter (Site 19). Subsequent evaluation identified an Iron Age/Romano-British enclosure complex with roundhouses, ditches and pits (EHER 45234). Other linear and discrete geophysical

anomalies and undated ditches are recorded in the vicinity, and may also date to these periods (EHER 45288; 45593).

Medieval

- 1.3.3 The remnants of a medieval moat are present at Lovcott Farm, c.200m south of the site (EHER 4660), whilst cropmarks and field boundaries of possible medieval origin have been recorded at Stains Farm (EHER 46402), around Hand Post Cottage (EHER 46406; 26) and Lovcott Farm (EHER 46538).

Post-medieval and modern

- 1.3.4 Most of the recorded heritage assets within a c.500m radius of the site date to the post-medieval and modern periods, and relate to listed buildings, assets associated with the Elsenham and Thaxted Light Railway, or World War II installations linked to the Defence of Britain.
- 1.3.5 A series of Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings are present to the south of the site, around Lovcott Farm and Sibleys Farm. These include farmhouses, a dovecote and aisled barn dating from the 14th-18th century (EHER 35767; 35768; 35771; 37507; 37508; 37509).
- 1.3.6 In 1913 the line of the Elsenham and Thaxted Light Railways opened, which ran alongside Chickney Road opposite Lovcott Farm (EHER 373). Sibleys Station was located immediately south-east of the site on the opposite side of Chickney Road (EHER 40881), with crossings to the south (EHER 40880; 40883), and an embankment to the north along the former line (EHER 40882). The line was closed in 1953.
- 1.3.7 Local heritage assets linked to the Defence of Britain in World War II include seven pillboxes (EHER 10429; 10432; 10435; 10430; 10336; 10437; 10438) and an anti-tank ditch (EHER 8893). Of particular significance is the now demolished pillbox located within the footprint of the development area (EHER 10429). Later structures of note include the extant Cold War era Microwave Tower located immediately to the west of the site (EHER 46722).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 OA East would like to thank Affinity Water who commissioned the work and, in particular, Steve Lambert of Affinity Water and Toby Feirn of Dalcour Maclaren. The machine was supplied by Orbital Equipment Ltd. Fieldwork was conducted by the author and the site survey by David Brown. The project was managed for OA East by Matt Brudenell. Richard Havis monitored the site on behalf of Essex County Council.

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 trial trenching totalling 88m in length be undertaken on the site. This was carried out in the form of one 55m-long trench spanning the length of the reservoir footprint (Trench 1), and one 33m-long trench spanning the width of the reservoir footprint. The trenches were arranged in a T-shape formation.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a rubber tracked 360-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out using a Leica GS08 with SmartNet live correctional datafeed.
- 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 Site conditions were dry and variable, the field contained stubble from a harvested crop.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Trench 1

3.1.1 Trench 1 was 55m long and aligned north-east to south-west at a height of 123.88m OD. The trench contained no archaeological features. The natural comprised a chalky clay which was overlain by a thin subsoil (0.04m to 0.09m thick) of pale brown silty clay above which was a mid brown silty clay topsoil that varied in thickness from 0.26m to 0.29m (Plate 1).

3.2 Trench 2

3.2.1 Trench 2 was 33m long and aligned north-west to south-east, at a height of 123.81m; it formed a T-shape with Trench 1. The trench contained no archaeological features. The natural comprised a chalky clay which was overlain by a pale brown silty clay subsoil (0.07m to 0.19m thick) above which was a mid brown silty clay topsoil that varied in thickness from 0.25m to 0.27m (Plate 2).

3.3 Finds Summary

3.3.1 No artefactual evidence was recovered.

3.4 Environmental Summary

3.4.1 No environmental evidence was recovered.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Conclusion

- 4.1.1 The evaluation revealed no archaeological features, deposits or finds, suggesting that the proposed reservoir site lies outside of known areas of activity and occupation in the surrounding landscape.

4.2 Recommendations

- 4.2.1 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	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of chalky clay.					Avg. depth (m)	0.35
					Width (m)	1.80
					Length (m)	55.00
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.27	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.07	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of chalky clay.					Avg. depth (m)	0.38
					Width (m)	1.80
					Length (m)	33.00
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.26	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.12	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atkins, 2016, *Sibleys Reservoir: Proposed Second Cell, Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment*, Atkins Ltd

Brudenell, M., 2016, *Written Scheme of Investigation, Archaeological Evaluation, Land west of Chickney Road, Essex, OA East* (unpublished)

Havis, R., 2016, *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation, Sibleys Reservoir*, Essex County Council (unpublished)

APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-264224			
Project Name	Henham Water Reservoir			
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	27-09-2016	Finish	28-09-2016
Previous Work (by OA East)	No		Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	DNCR16	Planning App. No.	UTT/16/0672/FUL
HER No.		Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Aquaculture

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 type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input checked="" 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	None	none	None
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Essex	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	Uttlesford	Chickney Road Debden Essex	
Parish	Debden		
HER	Essex		
Study Area	158.4 sq.m	National Grid Reference	TL 5635 3006

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Richard Havis
Project Design Originator	Matt Brudenell
Project Manager	Matt Brudenell
Supervisor	Nicholas Cox

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
N/A	OA East	Saffron Walden Museum
N/A	DNCR16	TBA

Archive Contents/Media

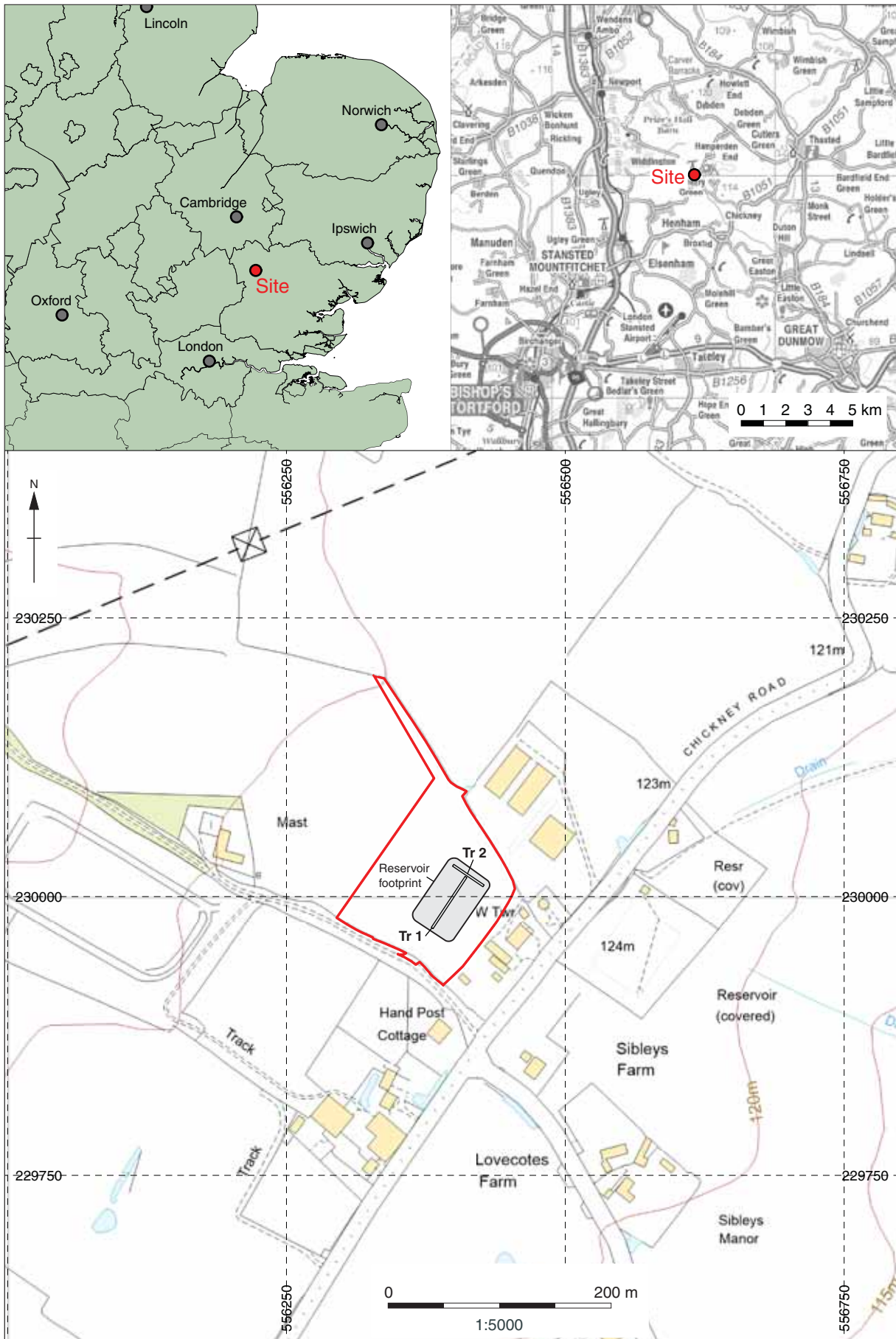
	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 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:

APPENDIX D. COPY OF ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Land West of Chickney Road, Debden, Essex	
Parish: Debden	District: Uttlesford
NGR: TL 5635 3006	Site Code: DNCR16
Type of Work: Trial trench evaluation	Site Director/Group Nick Cox, Oxford Archaeology East
Date of Work: 27 th -28 th September 2016	Size of Area Investigated: 1815m ²
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Saffron Walden	Funding source: Developer funded, Affinity Water
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos: NA
Final Report: Cox, N. 2016. Land West of Chickney Road, Debden, Essex. Archaeological Evaluation. Oxford Archaeology East Report no. 1990.	
Periods Represented: None	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: Between 27th and 28th September 2016 Oxford Archaeology East conducted an archaeological evaluation consisting of two trial trenches on land west of Chickney Road, Debden, Essex (centred TL 5635 3006). No archaeological features or deposits were found.	
Previous Summaries/Reports: NA	
Author of Summary: Matt Brudenell	Date of Summary: 12/10/2106



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



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north-east



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking south-east



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