

# Lot 1, Avenue Farm, Padgetts Lane, Fenton, Cambridgeshire Archaeological Evaluation Report

November 2020

Client: Mr A. Augstein

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# Lot 1, Avenue Farm, Padgetts Lane, Fenton

# **Archaeological Evaluation Report**

# Written by Rona Booth BA PhD PCIfA With illustrations by David Brown BA

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# **Summary**

On 16th November 2020 Oxford Archaeology East undertook a trial trench evaluation on Lot 1, Avenue Farm, Padgetts Lane, Fenton, Cambridgeshire (TL 31830 79595). The work was carried out as a planning condition in advance of a residential development.

A total of three trial trenches totalling 50m in length were excavated. Two of the trenches (Trenches 1 and 2) placed in the north-western and central parts of the site contained no archaeological features. Trench 3, placed in the southeastern part of the site, contained a substantial deposit of modern demolition material and a septic tank.

All three trenches revealed a layer of demolition rubble associated with the removal of a building that was once located in the south-eastern part of the site. This rubble was evidently spread across the field, probably to level the ground which sloped slightly from west to east.

The results of the evaluation demonstrate a lack of activity prior to occupation of the site during the modern period, during which time it was used to grow sugar beet and then turned over to pasture.



# **Acknowledgements**

Oxford Archaeology East would like to thank Mr David Mead of Partners in Planning and Architecture Ltd for commissioning this project on behalf of Mr A. Augstein. Thanks are also extended to Leanne Robinson Zeki who monitored the work on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Patrick Moan. The fieldwork was directed by Rona Booth, who was supported by Phil Hill. Survey was carried out by Thomas Houghton and the illustrations were produced by David Brown. Thanks are also extended to the OA East staff that prepared the archive under the supervision of Katherine Hamilton.



#### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) was commissioned by Mr David Mead of Partners in Planning and Architecture Ltd, on behalf of Mr A. Augstein to undertake a trial trench evaluation at the site of Lot 1, Avenue Farm, Padgetts Lane, Fenton, Cambridgeshire (Fig. 1; TL 31830 79595). The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential, due to its location west of the Grade II listed Fenton House and adjacent to the known location of the shrunken medieval settlement of Fenton.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref. 19/02003/FULTDC) relating to the development of two residential properties on the site. A Brief (Robinson Zeki 2020) was set by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team and supplemented by a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by OA East (Kwiatkowska 2020) detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to inform the planning process/discharge the planning condition. This document outlines how OA East implemented the specified requirements detailed in the WSI.

# 1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies in the historic village of Fenton, which is located south-east of Warboys in the district of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. The area of proposed development consists of a relatively flat field lain to pasture, at a height of 20m OD.
- 1.2.2 The development area is located on the boundary of two bedrock geologies of West Walton Formation and Ampthill Clay Formation Mudstone and Oxford Clay Formation Mudstone with no superficial deposits recorded (British Geological Survey 2014, British Geological Survey Online Viewer, accessed 05/03/2020).

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 A number of archaeological sites are known within the vicinity of the site recorded in the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) which are shown on Figure 1. Aerial photographs taken by English Heritage (now Historic England) in 2011 revealed cropmarks of late prehistoric enclosures and concentric ring ditches c.850m east of the development area (MCB 19526). Cropmarks of a Roman ladder settlement (MCB 27649) were recognised c.900m west of the development area.
- 1.3.2 The site lies in the historic village of Fenton. The proposed development area is located to the west of the Grade II listed Fenton House (formerly "Manor House" CHER 03561) and adjacent to the known location of the shrunken medieval settlement of Fenton (CHER 01634), which has produced pottery sherds ranging from 11th to 17th century. Medieval fishponds (CHER 03591) are located c.400m east of the site.

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#### 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The project aims and objectives defined in the WSI (Kwiatkowska 2020) were as follows:
  - establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains on the site, characterise where they are found (location, depth and extent), and establish the quality of preservation of any archaeology and environmental remains;
  - ii. provide sufficient coverage to establish the character, condition, date and purpose of any archaeological deposits;
  - iii. provide sufficient coverage to evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking deposits; and
  - iv. 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 Service plans were checked before work commenced on site.
- 2.2.2 A total of two trenches (Trenches 1 and 2) measuring 20m by 1.8m and one trench (Trench 3) measuring 10m by 1.8m were excavated, representing a 5% sample of the 0.2ha development area.
- 2.2.3 Machine excavation was carried out under the supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.
- 2.2.4 The trial trenches were excavated by a 360° mechanical excavator to the upper interface of archaeological features/deposits or the uppermost geological horizon. A toothless ditching bucket was used to remove topsoil and subsoil in spits not greater than 0.1m thick. The position of the trenches is shown in Fig. 2.
- 2.2.5 A modern deposit was encountered in Trench 3 which was excavated by machine to establish its depth and check for any earlier deposits that may have been masked by it.
- 2.2.6 Spoil was stored alongside trenches. Topsoil, subsoil, and other deposits were kept separate during excavation, to allow for sequential backfilling of excavations.
- 2.2.7 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector.
- 2.2.8 Bucket samples of excavated soil were taken from the ends of each trench, to characterise artefactual remains in the topsoil above the archaeological level. These samples were hand sorted on site for the purposes of finds retrieval. Only modern artefacts were recovered in this way from the topsoil (bricks, iron, glass and plastic piping) which were not retained.
- 2.2.9 No environmental samples were taken from this site.
- 2.2.10 Site survey was carried out using a survey-grade differential GPS Leica GS08 fitted with smartNET, with an accuracy of 5mm horizontal and 10mm vertical.



- 2.2.11 The site grid was accurately tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and located on the 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area. Elevations are levelled to Ordnance Datum.
- 2.2.12 A paper register of all trenches, features, and photographs was kept.
- 2.2.13 All layers and deposits were issued with unique context numbers. Written descriptions were recorded on pro-forma sheets comprising factual data and interpretative elements.
- 2.2.14 All site drawings include the following information: site name, site code, scale, section number, orientation, date and the name or initials of the archaeologist who prepared the drawing.
- 2.2.15 The photographic record comprises high resolution digital photographs in RAW and JPEG formats.
- 2.2.16 Photographs include both general trench shots and closer views of the trench stratigraphy. Photographs include a scale, north arrow and site code. Photograph details were recorded in a dedicated register, and photograph numbers were listed on corresponding context sheets.



#### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below and include a stratigraphic description of the trenches. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of deposits can be found in Appendix A. Figure 2 provides an overall plan of the results of the evaluation.

# 3.2 General soils and ground conditions

- 3.2.1 The soil sequence in the trenches was fairly uniform. The natural geology of Ampthill clay was overlain by a silty clay subsoil (2), up to 0.66m thick. A demolition deposit (3), which contained brick, tile and associated rubble was present at the interface between the topsoil (1) and the subsoil (2) in some areas of the trenches. This was in turn overlain by a shallow layer of clayey silt topsoil (1), up to 0.36m thick. In places, some of the rubble had made its way down into dips and hollows in the subsoil.
- 3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, although the eastern side of the site remained wet throughout.

#### 3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 No archaeological cut features dating to before the modern period were present in any of the trenches.

#### 3.4 Trench 1

3.4.1 Trench 1 (Plate 1) was orientated east-north-east to west-south-west and lay in the north-western part of the site. It measured 20m by 1.8m and was devoid of archaeology. A modern demolition deposit (3) overlay the subsoil in the central part of the trench. This demolition material was more intermittent towards each end of the trench.

#### 3.5 Trench 2

3.5.1 Trench 2 (Plate 2) was orientated north-north-west to south-south-east and occupied the central area of the site. It measured 20m by 1.8m and was devoid of archaeology. A demolition deposit (3) was present along almost the entirety of its length, although not at a consistent depth (Plate 3).

#### 3.6 Trench 3

3.6.1 Trench 3 (Plate 4) was orientated south-west to north-east and lay towards the south-eastern end of the site. It measured 10m by 1.8m and contained modern rubbish pit (6) which produced brick and tile, rusted iron, and glass from its dark grey silty clay fill (5). None of this material was retained. At the eastern end of the trench, the top of a disused septic tank and an associated waste pipe was revealed during the mechanical stripping of the trench. A post 1960s plastic pipe was revealed at the same level as the disused septic tank.



3.6.2 The demolition deposit (3) observed in Trenches 1 and 2 was also revealed by Trench 3 very close to the surface. It overlay the area occupied by the disused septic tank at the eastern end of the trench and was observed to have been cut by the modern rubbish pit (6) at its western end. This layer was also cut by a modern drain that extended across the trench on a north-east to south-west alignment.

## 3.7 Finds summary

3.7.1 No finds, other than the modern material excavated from Trench 3 was recovered.

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#### 4 DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 Site conditions were good, and the results of the evaluation can be considered reliable.

#### 4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.2.1 The results of the evaluation were successful in meeting the aims and objectives of the work as set out in section 2.1.1.
- 4.2.2 It was established that no archaeological features were present, other than a modern dump of rubbish in Trench 3 and a modern demolition material (3) spread intermittently across the site.
- 4.2.3 The modern features and deposits revealed within Trench 3 were investigated by the mechanical excavator to confirm they did not mask any earlier archaeological features.
- 4.2.4 The depths of all the deposits were fully recorded (Appendix A) to provide sufficient information to construct a mitigation strategy should one be required.

# 4.3 Interpretation

- 4.3.1 The demolition layer (3) is likely to have originated from the pulling down of a building that once stood in the south-eastern part of the site. The disused septic tank was possibly associated with this building.
- 4.3.2 The rubbish dump (6) that cut into the demolition layer in Trench 3 appears to post-date the demolition of the building.

#### 4.4 Significance

4.4.1 The results provide evidence that a building of post-medieval or modern date was pulled down nearby to the site and the demolition material was distributed across it to level out the slight incline, to fill in small hollows and to cover the septic tank. The land was then turned over to pasture, although at some point it was used to grow sugar beet (Mr A. Augstein pers. comm.).



# APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1									
General o	descriptio	Orientation	ENE-WSW						
Trench d	evoid of	archaeo	logy. Cor	nsists of topsoil, overlying a	Length (m) 20				
demolitic	n deposit	Width (m)	1.8						
		Avg. depth (m)	0.71						
Context	Type	Width	Depth	Description	Finds	Date			
No.		(m)	(m)						
1	Layer	-	0.20	Topsoil	-	-			
2	Layer	-	0. 50	Subsoil	-	-			
3	Layer	-	0.12	Demolition layer	-	-			
4	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-			

Trench 2									
General o	description	Orientation NNW-SSE							
Trench d	evoid of	archaeol	ogy. Con	sists of topsoil, overlying a	Length (m) 20				
demolitio	n deposit	Width (m) 1.8							
		Avg. depth (m)	0.84						
Context	Type	Width	Depth	Description	Finds	Date			
No.		(m)	(m)						
1	Layer	-	0.23	Topsoil	-	-			
2	Layer	-	-	-					
3	Layer	-	-	-					
4	-	-	Natural	-	-				

Trench 3									
General o	description	Orientation SW-NE							
Trench c	onsists of	Length (m) 10							
natural cl	ay geology	y. A mode	rn rubbis	sh dump and septic tank were	Width (m) 1.8				
also pres	ent. These	e were o	verlain b	y the topsoil and demolition	Avg. depth (m)	0.62			
layer.									
Context	Туре	Width	Depth	Description	Finds	Date			
No.		(m)	(m)						
1	Layer	-	0.38	Topsoil	-	-			
3	Layer	-	0.19	Demolition layer	-	-			
4	-	-	-	Natural	-	-			
5	Fill		0.72	Modern dump	-	-			
6	Cut		0.72	Modern dump	-	-			

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#### APPENDIX B BIBLIOGRAPHY

Kwiatkowska, M, 2020. *Lot1, Avenue Farm, Padgett's Lane, Fenton, Cambridgeshire,* Written Scheme of Investigation, OA East (unpublished)

Robinson Zeki, L. 2020. *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation: Lot 1, Avenue Farm, Padgetts Lane*. Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team, dated 21st February 2020



# **APPENDIX A**

# **OASIS REPORT FORM**

Project Details										
OASIS Number	oxforda									
Project Name	Lot 1, Avenue Farm, Padgetts Lane, Fenton, Cambridgeshire									
					<b>-</b> .			_		
Start of Fieldwork		ovember 2020			_	of Field		_	6th November 2020	
Previous Work	No				Futur	e Work		No	ot known	
Project Reference	Codes									
Site Code	PIDPAD	20			Planr	ning App	o. No.	19	)/02003/FULTDC	
HER Number	ECB620	8			Relat	ed Nun	nbers			
Prompt		NPPF	<u> </u>							
Development Type		Resid	lential							
Place in Planning Pr	ocess	Betw	een depo	sitic	n of an	applica	ation ar	nd de	etermination	
Techniques used (t	ick all tl	nat apı	ply)							
☐ Aerial Photograph	y —	$\boxtimes$	Grab-sam	pling				Rem	ote Operated Vehicle Survey	
interpretation  ☐ Aerial Photograph	v - new		☐ Gravity-core				П	Sami	ole Trenches	
☐ Annotated Sketch	y new		_ '						ey/Recording of	
								ic/Structure		
☐ Augering	- I. C	☐ Measured Survey			•				eted Trenches	
<ul><li>□ Dendrochonologic</li><li>☑ Documentary Sear</li></ul>		<ul><li>✓ Metal Detectors</li><li>☐ Phosphate Survey</li></ul>						Test	Pits ographic Survey	
☐ Environmental Sar		☐ Photogrammetric Su			•					
☐ Fieldwalking			Photograp	hic S	Survey	,		Visua	al Inspection (Initial Site Visit)	
☐ Geophysical Surve	У		Rectified F	Photo	ography					
Monument	Peri	od			Ohioc				Period	
Septic tank		lern (19	001 to	1 [	none	Object			None	
Septic talk	pres	-	01 10		HOHE	Hone		'	vone	
	pies	CITCJ		] [						
Project Location										
County	Cambrio								ng Postcode)	
District	Hunting					Lot 1, Avenue Farm			rm	
Parish	Pidley-c	:um-Fer	nton			Padgett's Lane				
	HER office CHET					Fenton				
<u>.</u>	Size of Study Area 2038m <sup>2</sup>					Huntingdon				
National Grid Ref	0 79595				PE28	2F1				
Due is at Ouisin at an										
Project Originators										
Organisation			Archaeol	ogy	East					
Project Brief Origina			homas	:	1					
Project Design Origi	nator	Malgorzata Kwiatkowska								
Project Manager	-	Patrick Moan  Rona Booth								
Project Supervisor	KONA P	KOOTH								

Lot 1, Avenue Farm, Padgetts Lane, Fenton

# **Project Archives**

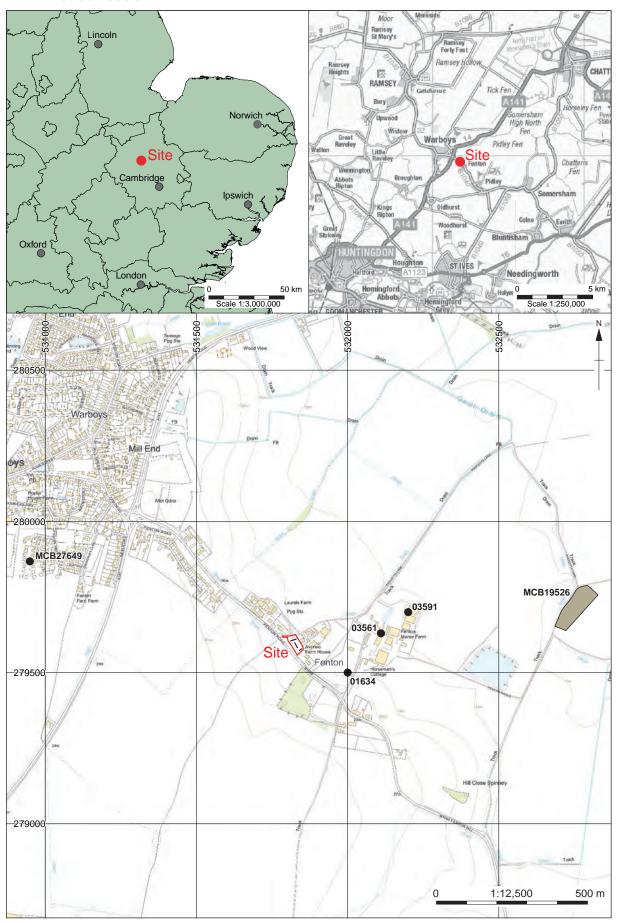
Physical Archive (Finds)
Digital Archive
Paper Archive

Location	ID
n/a	n/a
OA East	PIDPAD20
CCC stores	ECB6208

Physical Contents	Present?	Digital files associated with Finds	Paperwork associated with Finds
Animal Bones Ceramics Environmental Glass Human Remains Industrial Leather Metal Stratigraphic Survey Textiles Wood Worked Bone Worked Stone/Lithic None Other			
Digital Media Database GIS Geophysics Images (Digital photos) Illustrations (Figures/Plat Moving Image Spreadsheets Survey Text Virtual Reality	tes)	Paper Media Aerial Photos Context Sheets Correspondence Diary Drawing Manuscript Map Matrices Microfiche Miscellaneous Research/Notes Photos (negatives/prints) Plans Report Sections Survey	s/slides)

#### **Further Comments**

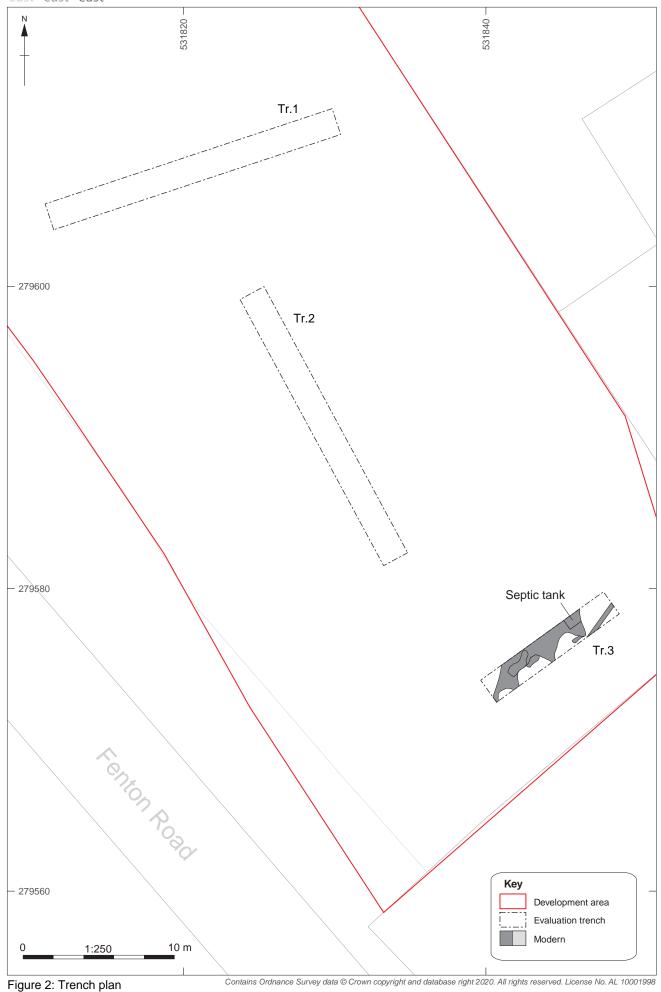




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Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trenches (black) in development area outlined (red) and HER entries mentioned in the text





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Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north-north-east



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking south-east

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Plate 3: Baulk section in Trench 2, looking west-south-west



Plate 4: Trench 3, looking north-east after exposing the septic tank at the eastern-most end of the trench





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