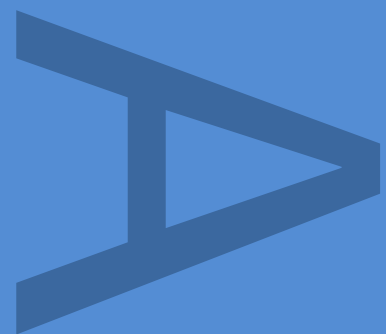


Archaeological Trial Trench
Evaluation at 41 Audley Road,
Saffron Walden, Essex CB11
3HD

September 2015



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY
R12209

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation at 41 Audley Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3HD

Local Planning Authority: Essex County Council

Planning Reference: 15/0573/FUL

Central National Grid Reference: TL 53881 38290

Site Code: SWAR15

Report No. R12209

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of a trial-trench evaluation undertaken at 41 Audley Road, Saffron Walden, Essex (NGR TL 53881 38290) on 24th August 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by Hibbs & Walsh on behalf of Hugh Loader in response to a planning condition attached to the proposed development of the garden into a new dwelling with associated access. The aim of the work was to identify any archaeological remains present within the area and to evaluate the potential for further remains.

The trench revealed a post-medieval pond, likely associated with Elm Grove, a former house which stood to the west of the evaluation area. Evidence for a brick-lined pit or cellar associated with this house was found following the removal of topsoil from the construction site of nos. 40 and 41 Audley Road (EHER 7300).

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) at 41 Audley Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3HD (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 53881 38290) on 24th August 2015 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Hibbs & Walsh on behalf of Hugh Loader in response to a planning condition attached to the construction of a new dwelling with associated access.
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Taleyna Fletcher of PCA (Fletcher 2015) in response to an archaeological brief produced by Richard Havis of Essex County Council's Place Service Team (ECCPST) (Havis 2015).
- 1.4 The aim of the work was to identify any archaeological remains present within the development footprint and to ensure that any archaeological remains exposed during ground works were recorded, recovered and interpreted to an acceptable standard.
- 1.5 Only a post-medieval ornamental pond was revealed in the evaluation trench.
- 1.6 This report describes the results of the archaeological trial trench. The project archive will be deposited with the Essex Archaeological Store.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

2.1.1 The underlying bedrock is comprises the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation formed approximately 84 to 94 million years ago in the Cretaceous period The superficial deposits have not yet been recorded in this location. (mapapps.bgs.ac.uk accessed 04.08.2015)

2.1.2 The proposed development site lies within the grounds of 41 Audley Road. The site is currently mature gardens and lawns with a number of large trees around the eastern and southern perimeter. The site is relatively flat and lies at around 60m AOD, however the garden has been elevated to the west of the house, where the proposed development is to be built.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The following summary has been taken from the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). In light of the limited archaeological remains found at 41 Audley Road, only a summary is provided here and a corresponding figure has not been included.
- 3.2 A significant quantity of flintwork was found at Elm Grove (EHER 428) to the north of the site but was not dateable to any specific prehistoric period. The chalk geology of the region is known for its periglacial cracks, which have been exploited throughout prehistory to extract flint from the lower chalk. Evidence of these exploited natural features has been found at Abbey Lane, close to Elm Grove where Early Neolithic flintwork and pottery sherds were found in association (EHER 430). Two barbed and tanged arrowheads of Bronze Age date were also recovered (EHER 431) and an area of Iron Age settlement was excavated at Abbey Lane (EHER 432). The site also revealed some limited Roman activity in the form of quarry pits (EHER 433) and a few additional sherds of Romano-British pottery were found close by at Cinema Maltings (EHER 444).
- 3.3 The proposed development lies to the south of the historic settlement at Saffron Walden. A castle was built in Saffron Walden in the late 11th century by the de Mandevilles, with an inner bailey containing the keep and some domestic buildings and the outer bailey housing a small town. In the 13th century a large area south of the town bailey was enclosed by a large ditch known as the Battle or Repell Ditches (EHER 443). Part of ditch was at some time infilled to allow for the expansion of the town. By the later medieval period, Saffron Walden was the second richest town in Essex and was the major English centre for the production of the Saffron Crocus used to manufacture dyes. A large market was established here and originally occupied the area east of the High Street, between Church Street and Castle Street (two of the earliest roads established in the town) (see EHER 408).
- 3.4 The earliest reference to a church in Saffron Walden dates to 1139-1143, when a charter refers to the 'parish church of the Blessed Mary of Walden'.

Parts of the present St Mary's Church, which is centrally located within the outer bailey (north of the development area), dates from the 13th century although digging within the graveyard found evidence for earlier foundations. It is not clear if these earlier foundations relate to the church mentioned in the 12th century charter, although it seems plausible (see EHER 408).

- 3.5 There are a number of listed buildings recorded within the historic core of Saffron Walden, most of which are of post-medieval date, although a few of medieval date are also recorded. There are several listed buildings along Audley Road, including Audley Cottage (EHER 26851), No. 55 Audley Road (EHER 26852), Reed Lodge, (No 36) Audley Road (EHER 26849). Reed Lodge, its front wall, wrought iron railings and gate are all listed and date from the early 19th century. No. 55 was built at a similar time whilst Audley Cottage dates to the mid-19th century. A Baptist Meeting House was built on Audley Road in 1774, The Manse was built in 1813 and the church was moved to be adjacent to this in 1879 (EHER 19771).
- 3.6 At the entrance to Audley Road are a set of listed 19th century wrought iron gates (EHER 26850), which originally led to a large house called Elm Grove. This house stood approximately where the present nos. 40/41 Audley Road are located. Removal of topsoil from the site of these modern houses during the 1980s revealed a brick-line pit or cellar (EHER 7300), likely associated with Elm Grove. A small thatched folly, formerly associated with Elm Grove can still be seen in the garden of 41 Audley Road (EHER 26985) and was likely built as part of garden landscaping at some time in the late 19th or early 20th century. It is likely the pond found during the evaluation was also associated with this former house but was infilled as part of this landscaping.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Overview

4.2 Machining and Site Planning

4.3 A 15m trench was stripped under archaeological supervision using an 8 ton wheeled excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket. The trench was positioned within the footings of the proposed new dwelling and in between two large protected trees, avoiding significant roots.

4.4 Recording and Sampling

4.5 Field excavation techniques and recording methods are detailed in the PCA Fieldwork Induction Manual (Operations Manual I) by Joanna Taylor and Gary Brown (2009).

4.6 Individual deposits were recorded as written records on PCA Pro-forma context sheets.

4.7 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process.

4.8 A metal detector was used during excavation to enhance finds recovery.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Overview

Trench 1

- 5.1.1 A single evaluation trench was stripped using an 8 ton wheeled excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket. The trench was aligned north-northwest to south-southeast and located to the east of the present No. 41 Audley Road and within the garden area.
- 5.1.2 The trench contained a single brick-lined, post-medieval pond. The bricks were set in a clay 'foundation' (7) and the base and sides of the pond were lined with a similar clay material (6). The pond was infilled with a dark grey clay-silt (5) containing occasional fragments of small animal bones and clay pipe. A thick layer of compacted chalk (2) had been deposited over the pond.
- 5.1.3 Elsewhere in the trench, a thick deposit of made ground (3) comprising re-deposited chalk mixed with CBM rubble had been deposited to build up the ground level of the garden. Within this deposit were iron nails, coke fragments and modern glass. This was overlain by a thin layer of modern topsoil/turf. At the southern half of the trench, a thin deposit of a mid grey clay-silt subsoil (4) had survived in places beneath the made ground (3).
- 5.1.4 Roots from two of the large protected trees located at the eastern edge of the garden boundary were encountered at the northern and southern ends of the trench and dictated the total length of the trench, which was cut to avoid any damage to significant roots.

TRENCH 1		Figure 2	Plates 1-2
Trench Alignment: NNW-SSE		Length: 15m	Level of Natural (m OD): c.66m
Deposit		Context No.	Average Thickness (m)
Topsoil/turf		(1)	0.2m
Made Ground (over pond)		(2)	0.55m
Made Ground		(3)	0.4m
Subsoil		(4)	0.2m

Pond Fill (silt)	(5)	0.45m (max)
Pond Fill (clay lining)	(6)	0.05m
Pond Fill (clay foundation material)	(7)	n/a
Pond Cut	[8]	n/a
Natural	(9)	n/a
Summary <p>Trench 1 was aligned NNW-SSE, located to the east of No. 41 Audley Road. The natural geology exposed in the trench comprised chalk at the southern end of the trench. At the northern end, the natural geology was a dark orange-brown silt with chalk outcrops.</p> <p>At the southern end of the trench, a thin layer of subsoil (4) survived beneath the made ground and comprised a mid grey clay-silt. Above this, modern made ground (3) comprising redeposited chalk and CBM rubble was recorded beneath a thin layer of topsoil/turf (1).</p>		

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The post-medieval pond revealed in Trench 1 was probably associated with Elm Grove, a former house that was located approximately where the present 40 and 41 Audley Road stand now. This pond was later infilled, likely as part of landscaping and perhaps around the same time the folly was built (which is located on higher ground to the southeast of the pond).

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Hibbs & Walsh on behalf of Hugh Loader for commissioning the work and Richard Havis of Essex County Council. The author would like to thank PCA's CAD Department for preparing the figures.

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- 8.1.3 Glazebrook, J. (ed.) 1997 Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 1. Resource Assessment. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper No. 3
- 8.1.4 Medlycott, M. 2011. (ed.) Research and Archaeology Revisited: A revised framework for the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24

8.2 Web Sources

- 8.2.1 British Geological Survey online viewer.
(<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>)

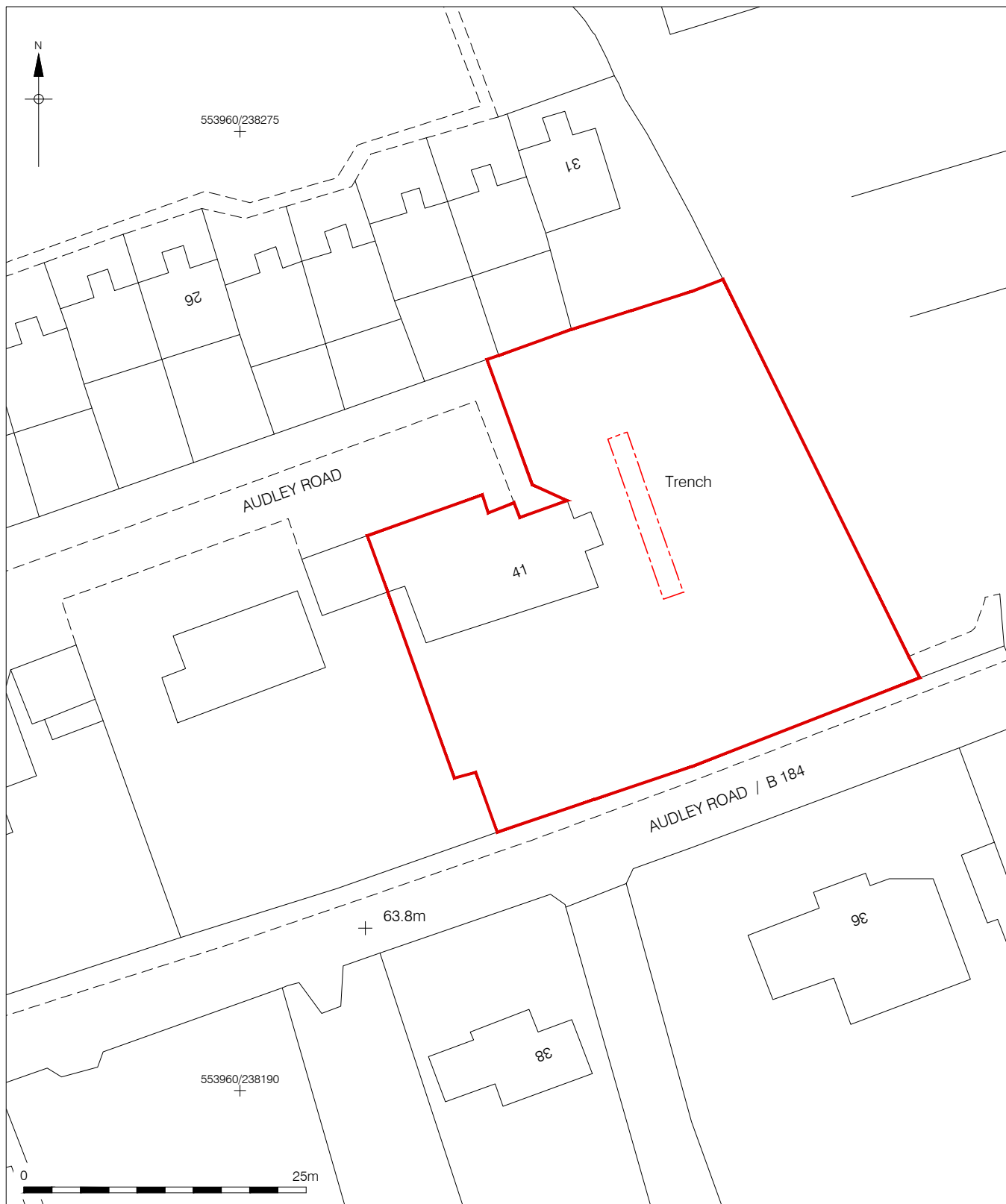


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Figure 1
Site Location
1:2,000,000 & 1:20,000 at A4

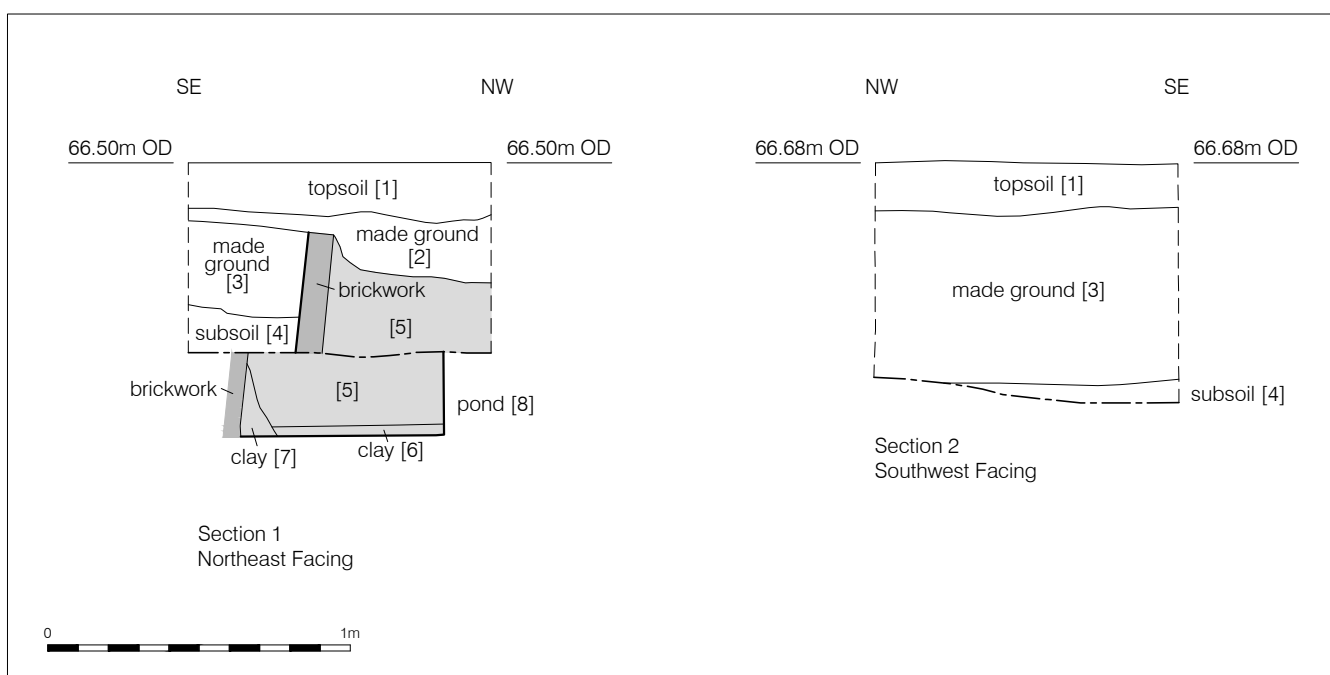


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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:500 at A4



9 APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking northwest showing surviving subsoil in the foreground and post-medieval pond in the middle of the trench.



Plate 2: Trench 1 looking southeast showing made ground above the post-medieval pond.



Plate 3: Post-medieval pond [8] showing brick lining set in clay foundation material, clay lining at the base of the pond and the silt fill and re-deposited chalk above.

10 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Type	Name	Description	Average Thickness (m)
(1)	Layer	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey clay-silt. Moderately loose.	0.2
(2)	Layer	Made Ground	Pale white/cream redeposited chalk. Firm/very compact.	0.25
(3)	Layer	Made Ground	Pale cream chalk with CBM rubble. Inclusions of modern glass, coke and iron fragments. Firm.	0.55
(4)	Layer	Subsoil	Mid grey clay-silt. Moderately firm.	0.2
(5)	Fill	Fill of pond	Dark grey clay-silt. Rare fragments of small animal bones and clay pipe. Firm.	0.4
(6)	Fill	Fill of pond (lining)	Mid brown clay. Firm.	0.05
(7)	Fill	Foundation packing	Mid brown clay. Firm.	0.1
[8]	Cut	Pond	Sub-circular/oval in plan. Pond had vertical sides, lined with clay and brick. Partially exposed in plan. Measured at least 3m wide (in trench).	n/a
(9)	Layer	Natural Geology	Mixed. Chalk or mid orange-brown clayish-silt.	n/a

11 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

11.1 OASIS ID: preconst1-222268

Project details

Project name	Archaeological Trial Trench at 41 Audley Road, Saffron Walden, Essex
Short description of the project	This report describes the results of a trial-trench evaluation undertaken at 41 Audley Road, Saffron Walden, Essex (NGR TL 3993 8237) on 24th August 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by Hibbs and Walsh on behalf of Hugh Loader in response to a planning condition attached to the proposed development of the garden into a new dwelling with associated access. The aim of the work was to identify any archaeological remains present within the area and to evaluate the potential for further remains. A post-medieval ornamental pond was found in the evaluation trench.
Project dates	Start: 24-08-2015 End: 24-08-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	POND Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	""Targeted Trenches""
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
---------	---------

Site location	ESSEX UTTLESFORD SAFFRON WALDEN 41 Audley Road
Postcode	CB11 3HD
Study area	0.02 Kilometres
Site coordinates	TL 3993 8237 52.420995051881 0.057964946294 52 25 15 N 000 03 28 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 60m Max: 60m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	Richard Havis
Project design originator	Mark Hinman
Project director/manager	Shannon Hogan
Project supervisor	Shannon Hogan
Type of sponsor/funding body	Householder

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	County Council Archaeological Store
Physical Archive ID	SWAR15
Physical Contents	"other"
Digital Archive recipient	County Council Archaeology Store
Digital Archive ID	SWAR15

Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Text"
Paper Archive recipient	County Archaeological Store
Paper Archive ID	SWAR15
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Report", "Section", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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