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An Archaeological Evaluation at Papworth Village Centre Papworth Everard, Cambridgeshire

by
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1.0 Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at Papworth Village Centre (NGR TL 28606320), prior to a proposed redevelopment of the site, in the period 11 July to 14 July. A previous evaluation on one part of the proposed re-development site (Phase I site), carried out by Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust (1999), identified no archaeological remains. The excavation of 8 trenches within the Phase II site also identified no archaeological remains.

The recent development of Papworth Everard was greatly influenced by the moving of the Cambridgeshire Tuberculosis Colony to Papworth Hall in 1927. The colony was renamed Papworth Village Settlement, and housing and amenities were erected for the patients and their families. Industries were also established so that patients could go back to work under medical supervision once their TB had been arrested (WS Atkins 1998), and some of these original factories and workshops still stand within the proposed development site. As such, these buildings are significant within a local framework, as an important part of the history of Papworth Everard.

2.0 Introduction

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken at Papworth Village Centre, Papworth Everard, Cambridgeshire. The work was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit for John Samuels Archaeological Consultants on behalf of their client, Davis Langdon Management, to provide archaeological information in advance of proposed development of the site (Planning App. No: S/0474/99/F & S/0936/97/0).

The archaeological evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999), a Brief prepared by the County Archaeology Office of Cambridgeshire County Council (Kaner 1999) and a Specification prepared by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants (JSAC 2000). This evaluation conformed to Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of Environment 1991).

A desk-based assessment was undertaken in 1998 by WS Atkins Heritage and an archaeological evaluation was carried out prior to the first phase of development in 1999 by Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust. The results of the previous work are reported on separately. However, a summary is incorporated into this present report.

3.0 The Site and its Location

The site is located within Papworth Village Centre, immediately east of Ermine Street (A1198), between Wood Lane and Papworth Hospital (NGR TL 2860 6320). The site has recently been characterised by the building and use of workshops and factories.

4.0 Objectives

The objectives of this archaeological evaluation were to determine the presence/absence, extent, date and character of surviving archaeological deposits and to assess their quality and significance. In addition, the evaluation aimed to assess the historic significance of the existing buildings on the site in relation to the development of Papworth Hospital.

5.0 Method (Fig. 1)

Eight trial-trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m-wide toothless ditching bucket, to the top of the natural subsoil. They were each 2m x 10m in size and were located, in accordance with the Brief, to investigate the archaeological potential of the site in general.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Where appropriate, contextual information was supplemented by scale drawings, plans, sections and photographs.

The existing buildings were each recorded separately by a written description, supplemented by extensive photographs which, together with the records obtained from the trial-trenches 1-8 and recovered artefacts, form the site archive. This is presently housed at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.

6.0 Archaeological Results (Fig. 1)

Trench 1
(2m x 10m, aligned north-west-south-east, excavated to 33.87m AOD)

The natural subsoil (1001) was a light brown-orange clay and was exposed directly under 0.3m of dark brown humic topsoil that contained fragments of brick and rubble (1000). Beneath the topsoil was a layer, approximately 5cm deep, of nails and metal fragments, probably associated with the function of building C to the east. No archaeological features were identified, and the subsoil was tested further by a sondage 0.3m deep at one end of the trench.

Trench 2
(2m x 10m, aligned north-east-south-west, excavated to 32.74m AOD)

The natural subsoil (2001) was a light brown compact clay and was exposed directly under 0.3m of dark grey humic topsoil that contained many stones and some fragments of brick (2000). No archaeological features were identified, and the trench flooded shortly after excavation.

Trench 3
(2m x 10m, aligned north-west-south-east, excavated to 35.01m AOD)

The natural subsoil (3001) was a light brown clay with patches of limestone fragments and gravel and was exposed directly under 0.35m of brown humic topsoil (3000). A linear ditch (F300), cutting 3001, was aligned north-west-south-east and ran along the centre of the trench. The ditch (F300) was 0.4m wide and 0.3m deep and filled with a brown silt-clay (3002) that was similar to the topsoil (3000). No other archaeological features were identified.

Two fragments of decorated and glazed post-medieval pottery, and one fragment of clay pipe, were recovered from the fill of F300.

Trench 4
(2m x 10m, aligned east-west, excavated to 32.13m AOD)

The natural subsoil (4002) was a blue-grey clay with areas of sand and pea grit, and small chalk pieces throughout. It was exposed under a 0.35m-deep layer of orange clay-sand (4001), that was in turn directly under 0.3m of dark brown humic topsoil (4000). No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 5
(2m x 10m, aligned north-east-south-west, excavated to 34.59m AOD)

The natural subsoil (5001) was a light brown clay with small chalk pieces throughout, and was exposed directly under 0.4m of brown clay-rich humic topsoil (5000). A small, undated post-hole (F501) was identified in the centre of the trench, and a modern cut was identified at the western end (F502). No other archaeological features were identified.

Trench 6
(2m x 10m, aligned north-west-south-east, excavated to 32.39m AOD)

The natural subsoil (6001) was a light to medium brown clay, and was exposed directly under 0.5m of brown humic topsoil (6000), that increased its clay content with depth. The subsoil (6001) was tested further by a 0.4m-deep sondage at the north-western end of the trench. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 7
(2m x 10m, aligned north-east-south-west, excavated to 31.42m AOD)

The natural subsoil (7001) was a light brown clay-sand and was exposed directly under 0.25m of gravel, stones, tarmac and brick (7000) that comprised a car park surface. The subsoil (7001) was tested further by a 0.3m-deep sondage at the north-western end. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 8
(2m x 10m, aligned east-west, excavated to 32.76m AOD)

The natural subsoil (8001) was a blue-grey clay with areas of sand and pea-grit, and chalk fragments throughout. It was exposed under a 0.3m-deep layer of compact brown clay-silt (8000), that in turn was under modern brick and rubble spoil. No archaeological features were identified.

7.0. Buildings (Figs. 1 & 2)

A brief examination of the buildings on the site was made. This does not constitute a formal survey-which could not be undertaken due to health and safety, and access, constraints-but rather provides a listing of the structures for reference purposes only. The photographs taken of each building were record shots only, and are included as part of the archive. Many of the buildings were unavailable for internal inspection.

Building A

Building A was a tall brick chimney, approximately 2m in diameter. It was attached to a central boiler house by a steel vent system. There was a copper lightning rod on the southern side and three iron bands encircling the top.

Building B

Building B was an iron-girder-framed building, approximately 45m x 10m in size, on a north-west-south-east alignment, parallel to Building I. It was constructed from 26 girders (13 each side) that supported 13 arched girder roof beams. The roof was of corrugated iron. The sides were formed by thin wooden slats that were vertically nailed on to wooden crossbeams on the north, east and south sides. The western side was open, although it may not have been originally. A concrete floor was present in the northern half of the building.

Building C

Building C was a timber-framed structure measuring approximately 38m x 13m, on a north-west-south-east alignment. It was of two storeys constructed mainly from thick timber beams bolted together. The remains of thin wooden planks were present on the northern and southern ends, and chipboard hoarding was present on one internal block. The roof was asymmetrical and covered in corrugated iron.

Building D

Building D was approximately 37m x 22m, with a wooden porch extension on the north-eastern side. The lower third of the walls on the north, east and south sides was built of bricks. Small, square, metal-framed windows were present here. The southern wall was constructed from breeze blocks. The roof was comprised of three, asymmetrical pitcher roofs of equal size, with the apex aligned north-east-south-west. The gentle slope of the roof was constructed from corrugated iron, the steeper side (the south-facing side) was made of safety glass.

Building E

Building E comprised two separate buildings joined together. The two buildings were rectangular and aligned north-south. The building on the west side was built of bricks and had a shallow-sloping, symmetrical roof made of corrugated iron. There was a square, two-storey extension at the southern end which possessed a flat roof. The building on the eastern side was built from breeze blocks and also possessed a shallow-sloping symmetrical roof of corrugated iron. The space between the buildings was blocked off by brick walls and covered over by a flat felt roof.

Building F

Building F was a small, brick-built hut, approximately 9m north of Building G. It comprised two rooms with a wooden roof sloping south to north. Above this building, supported by an iron frame that was attached to the top of the building and to the ground, were three conical funnels and three large tubes made of iron or steel. These tubes came from the roof of Building G and fed into one of the funnels, through the Building F, and then back out through the remaining two cones. Heavy-duty machinery was located within the building.

Building G

This building was a large, open plan building with office annexes at both ends. It was constructed from bricks, with a steel girder internal support structure and a corrugated iron pitched roof with many skylights. The north-facing side possessed 16 large windows with wooden frames and small square panes of glass, and two large wooden sliding doors. The southern side was attached to Building N, and a large annexe block on the south end was set apart from the main building and comprised two storeys.

Building H

This structure was a circular tank, approximately 10m in diameter and made of concrete. It had a thick pitch tar lining.

Building I

Building I was a series of component structures, built at different times. The main part of the building was one of the original structures and fronted onto the road on the west side. The frontage was rectangular and made to look like a flat roof structure. It was covered with white plaster and had brick pillars on the north-west and south-west corners. It was as high as the apex of the roof itself which was asymmetrical and aligned east-west. The middle third of the frontage was set slightly forward and had a ramp leading to the door. The main part of the western side of this building had continuous windows, except immediately to the south of the protruding part of the building, where there were three round windows instead. The rest of the original building had been amalgamated into a larger complex of buildings, comprising mainly brick and corrugated iron structures and metal chimney stacks.

Building J

Building J was a flat-roofed brick building, approximately 21m x 5m. It possessed small high windows on the north and south sides and a large wooden door, also on the

southern side opposite the door in the north side of Building D. There was a covered walkway between Buildings D and J, made from corrugated iron.

Building K

This building was a small brick-built shed immediately to the west of Building J. It had a symmetrical, gently-sloping roof, with the apex aligned east-west.

Building L

Building L was a large rectangular building, approximately 36m x 18m. The walls on the north, east and west sides were built from breeze blocks, while the wall on the south side was built from bricks. The building possessed a gently-sloping, symmetrical roof made out of corrugated iron and corrugated plastic, with skylights in places. Inside the building were large, plate metal partitions and three metal tube vents out through the ceiling.

Building M

This structure was a rectangular, asbestos-clad shed, with a wide door on the south side. It was located to the south of Building G and had a chimney on the south side. To the east of this structure was a small wooden shed with a flat, felt roof.

Building N

Building N was a large corrugated iron structure with internal steel girder supports. It possessed a corrugated iron roof with skylights, and had large open door panels at both ends. There was a brick built extraction unit on the south wall. Immediately to the north of the door to the east side was a small, brick-built structure that contained industrial machinery.

Building O

This was a "Nissen" type structure, rectangular in plan and semi-circular in section. It was 24m x 7m aligned roughly east-west. The walls at both east and west ends were made of brick with large wooden sliding doors that went nearly to the roof of the structure. The roof and walls of the structure were constructed from corrugated iron with a plywood roof lining on the inside. Set into the curved metal walls on both the north and south sides were windows, spaced at regular intervals.

Building P

This was a small, square structure, approximately 8m x 8m, with a brick foundation visible to eight courses. The rest of the walls were constructed from breeze blocks, though it was open at the east end. There was a pair of doors on the north side, with an internal wall that sealed off the open east end. At the west end there was a brick structure that was the base for a metal chimney. The roof was made of corrugated iron, and was gently pitched, rising slightly to the west.

8.0 Discussion

Although the village of Papworth Everard has grown up alongside the Braughing to Godmanchester section of the Roman road Ermine Street, no archaeological remains, Roman or otherwise, were identified in any of the trenches excavated as part of this evaluation exercise. The linear ditch (F300) located in Trench 3 is possibly the field boundary identified on the 1937 OS map (Fig. 2), a boundary that was abandoned when the north-east corner of Papworth Village Settlement was redeveloped as modern housing.

Of the buildings present on site, A, B, D, G, I, K are present on the 1937 OS map, and are likely to be the factories and workshops built specifically for the Tuberculosis Colony. The function of the original buildings has changed since they were built, as many of the additional buildings visible today are attached to the original buildings by way of tubes, flues etc, and so analysis of the internal machinery and fittings may not shed light on the nature of the industry of the Tuberculosis Colony itself. Although most of the structures were in a dilapidated state, some were in use until relatively recently, or are in use, such as Papworth Garage and the Disability Resource Centre, which utilised Building I.

The evaluation suggests that further mitigation archaeological work on the site may not be appropriate, though an RCHME Level 1/2 survey of the buildings, alongside documentary or oral history research, could shed light on an important aspect of social and medical history in the 20th century. Any decision on mitigation will be taken by the curatorial officers of Cambridgeshire County Council.

9.0 References

Atkins, WS 1998 *Cultural Heritage Desk-based Assessment. Papworth Village Centre.*

Kaner, S 1999 *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation. Papworth Village Centre.*

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10.0 Acknowledgements

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