

1EW03 - Enabling Works Central

AWHd -Summary Report for Archaeological Recording at Durdent Court, Buckinghamshire AC100: Site Code 1C20DDCAR

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C01	Michael Smith	Simon Davis	Eleri Newman	13.09.2021	First Issue

Summary

- 1.1.1 An archaeological mitigation excavation was undertaken between 11.09.2020 and 07.10.2020 on two land parcels designated C10058 and C10059, which are situated to the north of Denham Green and to the west of the River Colne (NGR TQ 03464 89994). The excavation followed on from the excavation of 9 trial trenches at the site in August 2020 (1C20DDCTT).
- 1.1.2 The Site (1C20DDCAR) covered a total area of 0.14ha. The topography of the area is gently undulating with a relatively gentle slope into the Colne Valley to the east and the River Colne a tributary of the River Thames to the south. The Site is sloped east to west with the western edge at 55m OD and the eastern edge at 40m OD.
- 1.1.3 The depth at which natural geology or archaeology was encountered varied across the site between 0.1m and 0.4m below ground level. The natural geology comprised of silty sand, clay and gravel with chalk inclusions. Topsoil and subsoil depths varied across the site. Topsoil measured between 0.12m and 0.33m deep and generally comprised grey-brown silty clay. Subsoil measured 0.22m to 0.30m in depth and was similar to the topsoil but more compact.
- 1.1.4 The two excavation areas were based on significant archaeology uncovered in trenches 7 and 10 of the trial trenches. Area C10058 measured 900m² and was centred on a pair of ditches found in the north end of trench 7. The area was extended to the west after the initial stripping by two linear trenches to confirm the orientation of the ditches to the west.
- 1.1.5 Area C10059 measured 400m² and was centred on a pair of pits and a ditch found at the north end of trench 10. This area was also extended slightly to the west and south to further investigate features found in this area.
- 1.1.6 A fragment of a bough from an oak tree was found buried into the natural ground. Its stratigraphic position suggests it may have been of prehistoric date, and perhaps dates before felling of the natural forest. Its condition renders it unsuitable for dendro-chronological dating, but a C14 date would be useful for confirming its date.
- 1.1.7 A small number of features datable to the Late Bronze Age consisted of irregular pits and a ditch. They probably represent agricultural activity. They were overlain by two spreads of burnt flint which probably represent the bases of burnt mounds suggesting a change to a more ritualistic use of the land. The southern spread did not produce any dating evidence, but the northern spread dated to the Iron Age.
- 1.1.8 The two ditches first found in trench 8 dated to the Romano-British period. They probably indicate a reversion to agricultural use and were broadly parallel with the Shires Lane footpath to the north which it is suggested represents the line of a Roman road. The later of the two ditches to the north, turned to the south to the west of C10058 and cut across the earlier ditch which continued to the west. This suggests a dynamic sequence of field boundaries during the Romano-British period.

- 1.1.9 The medieval period was best represented on site with a number of gullies, ditches, pits and postholes indicating an agricultural landscape with some level of water management / irrigation. A fairly large pit in C10059 contained a fair amount of ash in its fill which was in turn cut by three later pits. One of these contained further ashy material, and two abundant flint nodules, some of which were burnt. The close affinity of the pottery from these features indicates a short time frame for the use and backfilling of these features. Their function is obscure, but they do not seem to be of an agricultural nature.
- 1.1.10 A large number of features were undatable, including a number of isolated pits and post holes. A north to south ditch alignment in C10058 cut across a Medieval ditch and may represent a late Medieval or Post-Medieval field arrangement.