

# Land to the rear of the High Street, Offord D'Arcy, Cambridgeshire

An Archaeological Excavation



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**LAND TO THE REAR OF THE HIGH STREET,  
OFFORD D'ARCY,  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**An Archaeological Excavation**

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## *Summary*

*An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) at Offord D'Arcy, Cambridgeshire (T 2205 6660) in January 2011. The work was carried out in advance of a small housing development comprising three houses and a recreation ground located to the rear of the High Street.*

*Excavations over an area measuring 1142 m<sup>2</sup> revealed archaeological features comprising pits, ditches and ponds, the majority of which were concentrated in the north-west corner of the excavation area. The finds assemblage recovered from the features indicates three broad phases of activity; the 13th-14th century, the 14th-15th century and the post-medieval/modern period. A sherd of Roman greyware pottery, thought to be residual, reflects Roman activity in the wider landscape.*

*It is thought that the remains represent activity at the rear of a medieval/post-medieval property extending back from the High Street. To the east, beyond the property boundary, lay a more open landscape of fields and paddocks. This is reflected in the environmental evidence recovered from the site, which indicates damp pasture on the periphery of a settlement. No evidence relating to the 12th-13th century settlement recorded to the north-east during the 2009 evaluation was encountered, however the results still represent an important addition to the local archaeological record and are a useful contribution to our understanding of the medieval village and landscape.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) at Offord D'Arcy, Cambridgeshire (TL 2205 6660) in January 2011. The work was carried out in advance of a small housing development comprising three houses and a recreation ground located to the rear of the High Street. Areas of archaeology impacted upon by the development were limited to the footprints of buildings and a road. As a result, only a small area (0.11 ha) of the development area as a whole was subject to archaeological excavation.

The project was undertaken on behalf of PR Build and Thornhill Estates Ltd. Work was carried out in accordance with a project design specification (Beadsmoore 2011) produced by the CAU and approved by Dan McConnell of Cambridge Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice. The site is identified by the site code ODA 11

### **1.1 Location, geology and topography**

The site was located off the High Street (B1043), to the east of The Horseshoe public house and immediately to the south-east of Holly Corner (Figure 1). The site lies some 4.5km to the south-west of Godmanchester and c. 7km to the north of St. Neots.

The excavation area (0.11 ha), was located on open land to the rear of the street frontage (Figure 2). At the time of excavation the site was rough scrubland bounded to the north, south and west by gardens, with further scrubland/open fields to the east. The remains of a pond marked on Ordnance Survey maps fell within the development area but outside the excavation area.

The underlying geology comprised First Terrace river gravels (BGS 1993). The site was situated at a height of 15m OD and apart from earthworks associated with the pond, was relatively flat.

### **1.2 Archaeological background**

Located on the eastern banks of the River Great Ouse, Offord D'Arcy is situated in a river valley well known for its archaeological remains. Excavations at sites on the Great Ouse flood plain to the west and south-west of Offord D'Arcy have identified extensive remains dating from the prehistoric through to the Anglo Saxon period. While fewer prehistoric sites are recorded on the terrace to the east of the River Great Ouse, Roman and medieval remains are still widespread.

#### *Prehistoric*

Although extensive to the west and south-west, evidence of prehistoric activity within the immediate vicinity of the site is limited to find spots. A number of Palaeolithic struck flints have been found at Grove Farm to the south-west of the site, while sherds

of Beaker pottery as well as more generic Bronze Age pottery and flint have been recovered from gravel pits in the area.

### *Roman*

Godmanchester, to the north-east of Offord D'Arcy was a substantial Roman settlement, while the projected route of the Godmanchester to Sandy Roman road is located c.1km to the east of the site. Roman remains in the immediate area are restricted to find spots of coins and pottery and a possible Roman road to the south of the site at Apple Close (TL 2200 6610). A number of linear and rectilinear cropmarks in the wider area are typical of Iron Age and/or Roman field systems and enclosures.

### *Medieval*

Offord D'Arcy is mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 suggesting the settlement had pre-Conquest origins. Saxon pottery has also been found just to the south of the site.

Located some 300m to the east of the site, the Church of St. Peter dates from the 12th century, while to the south of the site a small moated site survives as earthworks at Grove Farm (TL 2211 6634). The moated site was potentially of manorial status and further undated earthworks are located in the field to the west. A recent archaeological evaluation at Grove Farm identified only one, undated ditch at the site and indicated that much of the site may be truncated as a result of activity related to the farm (Collins 2011). A series of ponds - probably fish ponds - linked by dykes running north to south is located to the north of Grove Farm and potentially 'fed' the moat during the medieval period. One of these possible 'feeder' dykes – marked as a drain on Ordnance Survey maps (see Figure 2) falls within the development area.

### *Post-medieval*

A number of listed buildings are recorded in Offord D'arcy. The majority are located along the High Street and the earliest of these buildings indicate that the thoroughfare dates to at least the 16th century.

The pond which still occupies the site - surviving as a wet hollow which seasonally fills with water – is not depicted on early Ordnance Survey maps and first appears on the 1926 map.

### *Previous archaeological work*

A trial trench evaluation of the site itself was undertaken by the CAU in 2009 (Patten 2009, site code ODA 09). The area evaluated comprised the entire development area including the proposed site of the recreation ground to the east of the excavation area (see Figure 2). Investigations revealed a sequence of boundary ditches, which were recorded across the site, as well as evidence of settlement in the north east of the site.

The settlement remains comprised pits containing animal bone and pottery which has broadly dated activity on the site to the 12th-13th century.

In addition, an evaluation and excavation on land adjacent to 79 High Street, which lies only c.25m to the south of the present site was carried out in 2007 (Birbeck and Reeves 2007). The majority of archaeological features recorded were post-medieval and largely comprised pits which probably resulted from small scale gravel quarrying (*ibid.*). Evidence of earlier activity was limited to a small assemblage of Roman pottery, recovered as residual material in later features, and a curvilinear ditch tentatively dated to the early medieval period.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

Topsoil and subsoil layers were removed using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket and operating under direct archaeological supervision at all times.

The site was located using an advanced Global Positioning System (GPS) with Ordnance Datum (OD) heights obtained. Potential archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50 and subsequently sample excavated. All potential features were hand excavated and archaeological finds were retained. Environmental bulk soil samples were taken from selected features. A written record of archaeological features and *in situ* buried deposits was created using the CAU recording system (a modification of the MoLAS system) and sections were drawn at an appropriate scale.

A metal detector survey of all archaeological features was undertaken using a XP detector.

## **3.0 RESEARCH AIMS**

The aim of the excavation was to define the medieval activity in the development area. Following on from the evaluation undertaken in 2009, the excavation presented an opportunity to contribute to an understanding of the location, character and development of medieval settlement in Offord D'Arcy.

More broadly, the excavation aims were;

- i) to determine the extent, character and date of the archaeological deposits and features revealed throughout the designated area.
- ii) to determine, as far as possible, the origins, development, function, character, economy and status of the site.
- iii) to establish the stratigraphic sequence of the site, the date of the features and the 'occupation' horizons, and the nature of the activities carried out at the site during the phases of its occupation.
- iv) to place the findings of the aims above in both regional and national research contexts.

## 4.0 RESULTS

Excavations over an area measuring 1142 m<sup>2</sup> revealed archaeological features comprising pits, ditches and ponds, the majority of which were concentrated in the north-west corner of the excavation area (Figure 3). The finds assemblage recovered from the features indicate activity on the site during the Roman, medieval and post-medieval/modern periods (Figure 4).

Two features remained unexcavated - the pond which lies largely to the south of the excavation area and the possible 'feeder' dyke for the Grove Farm moat on the eastern edge of the excavation area. Both held standing water and were left undisturbed during the excavation in order to avoid flooding of the site and potential drainage problems. The pond is considered to be a relatively modern and the possible 'feeder' dyke was considered to have been 'cleaned out' recently and thus of little archaeological potential.

### *Roman*

Evidence of Roman activity was limited to a single sherd of 1st-2nd century greyware pottery (see Hall, below) recovered from probable pit **F.127** along with two fragments of animal bone. The pit, which measured 2.05m in diameter by 0.5m in depth, was truncated by post-medieval/modern ditch F.115 and merged with a cluster of inter-cutting features to the north making its true extent difficult to determine. While no finds were recovered from the pit suggesting an alternative date, there must be some doubt as to whether the feature itself is Roman. Given that all of the dated features on the site are 13th century or later, a medieval date for the pit is equally possible, the Roman pottery sherd being residual.

### *Medieval (13th-14th century)*

Three ditches, all following the same north-south/east-west alignment clearly represent contemporary boundaries. In the north-west corner of the excavation area, ditch **F.102** apparently marked the corner of an enclosure, which extended beyond the limit of excavation to the north and west. Approximately 3m to the east a second north-south aligned ditch (**F.116**) was recorded for a length of 10m having been truncated by post-medieval/modern ditch F.115 to the north and pond F.130 to the south. Finally, ditch **F.103** was recorded for a length of 40m on a north-south alignment before it turned at a right angle and extended beyond the limit of excavation to the west. All three of the ditches yielded sherds of Lyvedon ware pottery dated to the 13th or 13th-14th century. Ditches F.103 and F.116 also produced fragments of animal bone.

A group of three undated features in the north-west corner of the excavation area were cut by ditch F.102 which effectively provides a *terminus ante quem* for the features. Consequently the features - a pit (**F.125**), a gully (**F.101**) and a ditch (**F.120**) - can be said to date to the 13th-14th century or earlier. Likewise pit **F.117**, which was cut by ditch F.116, and pit **F.110**, which was cut by ditch F.103, can both be said to belong to the 13th-14th century phase or earlier.

### *Medieval (14th-15th century)*

Two features have been dated to the 14th-15th century based on pottery recovered from their fills. Pit **F.124**, located in the west of the excavation area, was circular in plan and measured 2.7m by 2.8m by 0.48m deep (Figure 5). A single sherd of 14th-15th century Ely Grimston ware pottery was recovered from its fills along with four fragments of animal bone. Pit F.124 was cut by a second pit, **F.123**, which measured 0.95m by 0.94m by 0.5m deep and produced a single sherd of 15th century pottery.

Pit F.124 also cut an undated ditch (**F.118**), which in turn cut an undated gully (**F.121**). As such both F.118 and F.121 can be said to belong to the 14th-15th century phase of activity or earlier.

### *Post-medieval – modern*

The post-medieval/modern remains recorded on the site largely relate to the pond which still occupied the south-western corner of the development area. The northern edge of the pond itself was encountered along the southern edge of the excavation area and although it remained unexcavated, it was recorded as **F.130**. Extending northward from pond F.130, a linear ditch (**F.115**), potentially represented a ‘feeder’ channel for the pond. Although no dateable finds were recovered from this feature, the peaty ditch fill, which was comparable to the fill of the pond, strongly suggests it is contemporary with the pond and also dates to the post-medieval/modern period.

In the far north of the excavation area a second potential pond (**F.126**) was recorded extending beyond the limit of excavation to the north. A one metre slot excavated through the pond fills revealed a sequence of peaty fills, rich in organic remains, overlain by a bluish grey silty clay deposit. The feature measured at least 9.5m in diameter by a minimum of 0.6m deep. Finds recovered from the pond fills comprised brick, animal bone and the sole of a modern shoe - all attest to the relatively modern date of the feature and were discarded on site.

A number of other features were clearly modern and many appear likely to be the result of recent ground disturbance. **Fs. 105, 106, 107 and 108** all contained topsoil-like fills and although F. 108 yielded a sherd of 14th century pot – almost certainly residual material – all are considered the result of modern ground disturbance. Pit **F.128** also contained a topsoil-like fill and produced six spent cartridges from a Winchester rifle confirming its modern origin.

### *Undated features*

Seven further features contained no dating evidence and had no stratigraphic relationship with dated features. Consequently they remain unphased. These features comprised five ditches/gullies (**F.109, F.112, F.113, F.114 and F.119**) and one pit (**F.122**).

### *Natural features*

A number of features appear to be of natural origin. These include two linear spreads of silty gravel (one of which was recorded as **F.104**), which apparently indicate disturbance of the natural gravel and potentially represent former hedge lines. A spread of silty gravel in the north of the excavation area also probably results from ground disturbance, this time associated with the pond in this area. Finally, two features (including **F.111**) are interpreted as tree throws

## **5.0 DISCUSSION**

The excavation at Offord D'Arcy has revealed a series of medieval and post-medieval features to the rear of the High Street. A sherd of Roman greyware - recovered from pit F.127 – provides evidence of earlier activity at the site however this is likely to be residual material and none of the features are thought to significantly pre-date the 13th century.

### *Medieval*

Of the dated features at the site, a series of 13th-14th century boundary ditches (F.103, F.125 and F.116) are the earliest. All follow the same north-south by east-west alignment, and almost certainly represent elements of a contemporary system of fields/paddocks. To these can be added ditch/gully F.109 which appears to be a continuation of the east-west element of ditch F.103 and seems likely to be contemporary.

Two pits (F.123 and F.124) in the north-west of the excavation area have been dated to the 14th-15th century. No contemporary boundaries have been identified, the 13th-14th century ditches having evidently silted up by this point. It can be speculated that undated ditches such as F.100 and F.103 could represent 14th-15th century boundaries however no evidence was recorded to confirm this.

The features belonging to the 13th-14th century and 14th-15th century phases in the north-west of the excavation area generally produced little material culture and little evidence of 'domestic' activity was recorded. It seems likely that this part of the site represents an area located at the rear of a medieval property extending back from the High Street, a thoroughfare which almost certainly retains its medieval route to the present day. The sequence of north-south ditches in this area probably represents successive boundaries marking the rear of the property. Beyond this, to the east, the marked decrease in features undoubtedly reflects a change in land-use to more open fields and paddocks. Environmental evidence (see below, Ballantyne) provides further evidence for land-use and confirms that the surrounding contemporary landscape was damp pasture, almost certainly on the periphery of any settlement.

Economic evidence recovered from the site was limited although the cattle-dominated faunal assemblage suggests the site was not of high status. Evidence of marrow removal from a cattle mandible can also be seen as evidence of the processing of cheaper cuts of meat and therefore the 'low status' of the site (see Rajkovača below).

No evidence relating the 12th-13th century settlement identified to the north-east during the trial trench evaluation (Patten 2009) was encountered in the 2011 excavation area. This suggests that two discrete settlement zones, one probably slightly pre-dating the other, occur within the development area as a whole.

### *Post-medieval*

With the exception of modern disturbance the post-medieval remains were restricted to two ponds and a possible 'feeder'/drainage channel. The features are considered to be relatively modern based on the small finds assemblage recovered and the fact that the main pond (F.130) is first depicted on Ordnance Survey maps in 1926. It is possible that the pond is the result of small scale gravel quarrying to the rear of the High Street in the late 19th/early 20th century.

## **6.0 STATEMENT OF POTENTIAL**

The results of the excavation at Offord D'Arcy represent an important addition to the local archaeological record and are a useful contribution to our understanding of the medieval village and landscape. However, the artefactual assemblages and environmental data retrieved from the site are limited and no further specialist work is recommended (see below, Hall, Rajkovača and Ballantyne). Likewise, given the small artefactual assemblage and limited area of excavation, the site sequence would not benefit further analysis and no further work is required.

Although the results do not merit full publication, the site should be included as a note in Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society.

## **Acknowledgements**

The work was commissioned by PR Build and Thornhill Estates Ltd. The project was monitored by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice. The author was assisted on site by Lawrence Billington and Alisdair Wright. Bryan Crossan was responsible for the field survey and report graphics. The project was managed by Emma Beadsmoore.

## 7.0 SPECIALIST STUDIES

### **Roman and medieval pottery – *David Hall***

A total of 11 sherds (254g) were recovered from excavated features. Lyvedon ware is the most common fabric present within the assemblage with smaller amounts of 14-15th and 15th century material also recorded. A single sherd of 1st-2nd century Roman greyware was recovered from pit F.127.

Feature	Context	No.	Wt(g)	Fabric	Date	Notes
102	106	1	52	Lyvedon	13th c.	Strap handle.
103	190	1	13	Lyvedon	13th c.	
103	109	2	45	Lyvedon	13th c.	1 base.
108	119	2	26	Coarse Pink	14th c.	1 base.
116	143	2	49	Lyvedon	13th-14th c.	1 jug rim, 1 poss. base.
123	161	1	4		15th c.	Dark, coarse ware
124	164	1	24	Ely Grimston	14th-15th c.	
127	176	1	41	Roman	1st-2nd c.	

**Table 1. Roman and medieval pottery assemblage breakdown**

No further work on the pottery assemblage is recommended.

### **Faunal remains – *Vida Rajkovača***

The archaeological features yielded a faunal assemblage totalling 15 assessable specimens, weighing 940g. A further eight bone specimens were recovered from environmental sample heavy residues. Faunal remains were identified using Schmid (1972) and the CAU reference collection.

#### *Hand-recovered faunal remains*

The majority of the hand-recovered material demonstrated moderate to quite good preservation allowing for 12 specimens to be identified to species level (80%). Faunal material came from ditches and pits ranging in date from the 13<sup>th</sup> century through to the post-medieval period.

The medieval sub-set produced ten specimens, of which five were identified as cow and a further three as cattle-sized elements. A butchered horse scapula and fragmented dog mandible were also identified. Post-medieval ditch F.115 produced a large cattle tibia, most likely representing a male specimen, and a sheep/goat radius.

Further material was recovered from three undated features; gully F.101 contained a cow humerus, pit F.122 produced a pig tibia and a near complete horse tibia came from pit F.127.

Butchery was only recorded on the medieval material, mainly implying marrow removal. It was not possible to obtain any ageable or measurable information.

	<i>Medieval</i>			<i>Post-Medieval</i>			<i>Undated</i>			
<b>Taxon</b>	<b>NISP</b>	<b>NISP%</b>	<b>MNI</b>	<b>NISP</b>	<b>NISP%</b>	<b>MNI</b>	<b>NISP</b>	<b>NISP%</b>	<b>MNI</b>	<b>Total NISP</b>
Cow	5	71.4	1	1	50	1	1	33.3	1	7
Sheep/ goat	.	.		1	50	1	.	.	.	1
Pig	.	.		.	.	.	1	33.3	1	1
Horse	1	14.3	1	.	.	.	1	33.3	1	2
Dog	1	14.3	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Cattle- sized	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>15</b>

**Table 2. Number of Identified Specimens (NISP) and Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI) for all species by phase**

### *Faunal material from environmental sample heavy residues*

Two environmental bulk soil samples processed for retrieval of additional faunal material produced a total of eight bone specimens. Sample 1, taken from a 14-15<sup>th</sup> century pit (F.124) contained two rodent-sized mammal bone fragments, two amphibian limb bone fragments and three unidentifiable mammal bone fragments. F.103, a 13<sup>th</sup> century ditch, was also sampled (sample 3) and produced a single dog molar. A fragment of a dog mandible was recovered by hand from the same feature and this specimen is most likely part of the same animal.

### *Conclusions and recommendation for future work*

The faunal record recovered from the 2011 open area excavation amounts to less than half of the material recovered from the 2010 evaluation which yielded 40 fragments weighing 2167g (Rajkovača in Patten 2010). This reflects the fact that the large majority of the 2010 assemblage was recovered from the 12th-13th century settlement 'core' located c.75m to the north-east of the present site. Despite this, the range of species recovered from the 2011 excavation was almost identical to that from the 2010 evaluation, with a similar frequency of species and cattle dominating the assemblage followed by horse. It is no surprise that the assemblages are cattle-dominated, given their economic importance as main providers of meat and milk, as well as beast of burden.

A considerable amount of work has been done on the subject of medieval and post-medieval bone assemblages, especially exploring the maintenance of social boundaries which permeated down to food consumption (Thomas 2006, 131). Medieval society is an ideal context in which to study the phenomenon, given that it was so highly stratified and research has shown that the elite consumed pigs, deer and wild birds, with a significant decrease in the consumption of the staples such as pork, beef and mutton (*ibid.*). The prevalence of cattle in the Offord D'Arcy faunal record could, therefore, suggest a potentially low status for the assemblage. This is also hinted at by the cattle mandible showing signs of marrow removal, which is seen as an indication of poorer trades processing cheaper cuts of meat by some authors (Dobney *et al.* 1996).

No further work is recommended on the faunal assemblage from Offord D'arcy, which on its own is too small to be appropriate for further analysis. However, as part of future studies, the material could potentially be combined with contemporaneous assemblages from the area in order to achieve quantitatively significant numbers appropriate for analysis.

## **Assessment of environmental remains – Rachel Ballantyne**

### *Methodology*

Three bulk samples were submitted for assessment from probable medieval features; pits F.124 and F.127, and ditch F.103.

All samples have been flotation sieved using a modified version of the Sīrāf tank (Williams 1973) at the CAU. Flots ( $> 300\mu\text{m}$ ) and heavy residues ( $> 1\text{mm}$ ) have been dried and then sorted using a Leica MS5 (x6.3 – x50) binocular microscope for flots, and sorting residues greater than 4mm by eye. The 1–4 mm residue has been retained. Full raw data is summarised in Table 3 at the end of this report. Nomenclature follows Stace (1997) for plants.

### *Preservation*

There are a few puffed and fragmented charred plant remains, but the vast majority are waterlogged. The low density of organic seeds/fruits per litre of sediment suggests that all three wet features may have been subject to dry episodes, with associated loss of fragile items; many of the surviving seeds/fruits are robust woody types. The insect exoskeletons in F.124 and F.127 are hard to interpret as they either indicate a circumneutral to acidic burial environment or are intrusive. Since the groundwater in the Ouse Valley is calcareous and alkaline, and the preservation of plant remains is at best 'damp' rather than fully waterlogged, it is likely that at least a proportion of these insects post-date the contexts. Items noted during scanning included elytra and thoraces of Carabidae (ground beetles) and ant heads.

### *Charred plant remains*

Very low quantities of cereal grain and comminuted wood charcoal suggest a low-density of material that could have been relocated by surface water from elsewhere. Pit F.124 includes a single free-threshing wheat grain (*Triticum* sp.) and an indeterminate type. A single seed of dandelion (*Lolium temulentum*) represents a common arable weed in late Roman to post-medieval Britain (Jones 1988). Ditch F.103 includes single grains of hulled, six-rowed barley (*Hordeum vulgare* ssp. *vulgare*) and free-threshing wheat. The charred remains are unfortunately too limited for any further interpretation.

### *Waterlogged plant remains*

Pit F.127 includes the widest range of plant types and so appears to have been the most consistently waterlogged. Two of the most abundant seeds are of semi-aquatics; celery-leaved buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*) and fool's-water-cress (*Apium*

*nodiflorum*), both of which are found in marshy fields, ditches, ponds and streamsides. Other numerous seed types are buttercups (*Ranunculus acris/bulbosus/repens*), black horehound (*Ballota nigra*) and docks (*Rumex* sp.), which are consistent with rough pasture. Indicators of nitrogen-enriched soils include stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*), common/spear-leaved orache (*Atriplex prostrata/patula*) and henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*). These latter plants could indicate grazing livestock, or an indirect source of manure. Human faeces are an unlikely contributor since numerous likely ingested seeds have not been recovered.

The waterlogged seeds from pit F.124 and ditch F.103 are consistent with those in pit F.127, although their ranges of plant taxa are more limited. Pit F.124 appears to have been the driest of the features, with almost no semi-aquatic taxa (single seeds of fool's-water-cress and duckweed – *Lemna* sp.) and poor preservation quality. Conversely, ditch F.103 has the best evidence for a fen-type environment, perhaps because it held a larger water-body than the pits. Plants characteristic of nitrogen-enrichment are rare, and notable abundant types are water plantain fruits (*Alisma plantago-aquaticum*), indicative of standing water, and a wide range of true sedges (*Carex* spp.)

### *Conclusions*

The three features contain a wide variety of waterlogged wild seed/fruits, often in relatively low quantities. Although many of these wild plants have economic uses, they are more likely to represent the local environment. The features would have contained shallow water-bodies set amongst damp, rough pasture with occasional shrubs. There is no direct evidence for human activities, other than the low-density charred plant remains discussed above and the possibility of grazing livestock.

These results compare well to two post-medieval features reported from the nearby High Street (Stevens *et al* in Birbeck and Reeves 2007), which also contained good waterlogged evidence for 'rough wet grassland with patches of overgrown shrubs', albeit with semi-aquatic and marsh plants absent. Such differences are consistent with the current site representing an area of damp pasture on the periphery of the settlement, rather than land adjacent to farm buildings on the High Street.

### *Recommendations*

No further work is required on this assemblage, although the assessment results are a useful contribution on the medieval landscape of Offord D'Arcy. Pollen analysis should be a consideration for any future fieldwork in the area, to address in conjunction with macrofossils the environmental setting of any further wet features.

Feature		F.124	F.127	F.103
Context		[165]	[176]	[109]
Sample Number		<1>	<2>	<3>
Description		2nd fill	2nd fill	basal fill
Feature type		Pit	Pit	Ditch
Estimated date		14/15th C.	?Roman/ Med	13th C.
Sample Volume/ Litres		12	15	18
Fraction of flot (>0.3mm) sorted		1/1	1/1	1/1
Fraction of residue (>4mm) sorted		1/1	1/1	1/1
Taxonomic Name	English Name			
<b>CHARRED PLANTS</b>				
twisted, hulled <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> ssp. <i>vulgare</i> caryopsis	hulled 6-rowed Barley grain			1
free-threshing <i>Triticum</i> sp. caryopsis	free-threshing Wheat grain	1		1
cereal indet. caryopsis	indeterminate cereal grain	1		
<i>Lolium</i> cf. <i>temulentum</i> caryopsis	Darnel	1		
<b>CHARCOAL</b>				
charcoal volume/ millilitres		1 ml.	< 1ml.	< 1ml.
large charcoal (>3mm)		+	+	*
small charcoal (<3mm)		+	+	*
- vitrified charcoal				
<b>WATERLOGGED PLANTS</b>				
<i>Ranunculus</i> cf. <i>acris</i> L./ <i>repens</i> L./ <i>bulbosus</i> L. achene	cf. Meadow/Creeping/Bulbous Buttercup	+	+	++
<i>Ranunculus sceleratus</i> L. achene	Celery-leaved Buttercup	*	++	+
<i>Ranunculus</i> subgen. <i>Batrachium</i> achene	Crowfoots		*	
<i>Urtica dioica</i> L. achene	Stinging Nettle	+	+	
<i>Atriplex prostrata</i> Boucher ex DC./ <i>patula</i> L. seed	Common/Spear-leaved Orache	*	++	*
<i>Stellaria neglecta</i> Weihe seed	Greater Chickweed	+		
cf. <i>Agrostemma githago</i> L. seed	Corncockle	*		
<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i> (L.) Spach achene	Water-pepper		*	
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i> L. achene	Knotgrass	*		
<i>Rumex</i> cf. <i>crispus</i> L. tepal	Curled Dock		*	
<i>Rumex</i> sp. small achene	small-seeded Dock type		++	*
<i>Salix</i> sp. bract	Willow Family flower leaflet		*	
<i>Coronopus squamatus</i> (Forssk.) Asch. achene	Swine-cress	*		
<i>Rubus</i> subgen. <i>Rubus</i> achene	Bramble	+		
<i>Potentilla</i> sp. achene	Cinquefoil		*	
<i>Prunus/Crataegus</i> sp. thorn	Sloe/Hawthorn thorn		*	
<i>Apium nodiflorum</i> (L.) Lag. mericarp	Fool's-water-cress	*	++	+++
<i>Daucus/Torilis</i> sp. mericarp fragment	Hedge-parsley/Carrot			
<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i> L. seed	Henbane		*	
<i>Verbena officinalis</i> L. nutlet	Vervain			+
<i>Ballota nigra</i> L. nut	Black Horehound		++	
<i>Lycopus europaeus</i> L. nut	Gypsywort		*	*
cf. <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L. achene	Ash		*	
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> L. seed	Elder	*	+	
<i>Arctium</i> sp.	Burdock		*	
<i>Carduus/Cirsium</i> sp. achene	Thistles		*	++
<i>Onopordum acanthium</i> L. achene	Cotton Thistle		*	
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i> (L.) Hill achene	Smooth Sow-thistle	*	*	
<i>Sonchus asper</i> (L.) Hill achene	Prickly Sow-thistle	*		
<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i> L. fruit	Water-plantain		*	++
<i>Potamogeton</i> sp. achene	Pondweed		*	
<i>Lemna</i> sp. seed	Duckweed	*		
<i>Carex</i> spp. lenticular nut	True Sedges			+
<i>Carex</i> spp. trigonous nut	True Sedges		+	+++
Twigs		+		
<b>INTRUSIVE PLANTS</b>				
<i>Betula pendula</i> Roth. fruit	Silver birch	* u/w	* u/w	
rootlets		+++ u/w	+++ u/w	+++ u/w
<b>OTHER BIOTA</b>				
Insect exoskeleton		++ u/w	++ u/w	
<i>Daphnia</i> sp. ehippia	Water Flea seasonal eggs		+	

**Table 3: Environmental remains from Offord D'Arcy (ODA11).** Key: \* 1 or 2 items, + <10 items, ++ 10-50 items, +++ >50 items, u untransformed and possibly modern, w waterlogged

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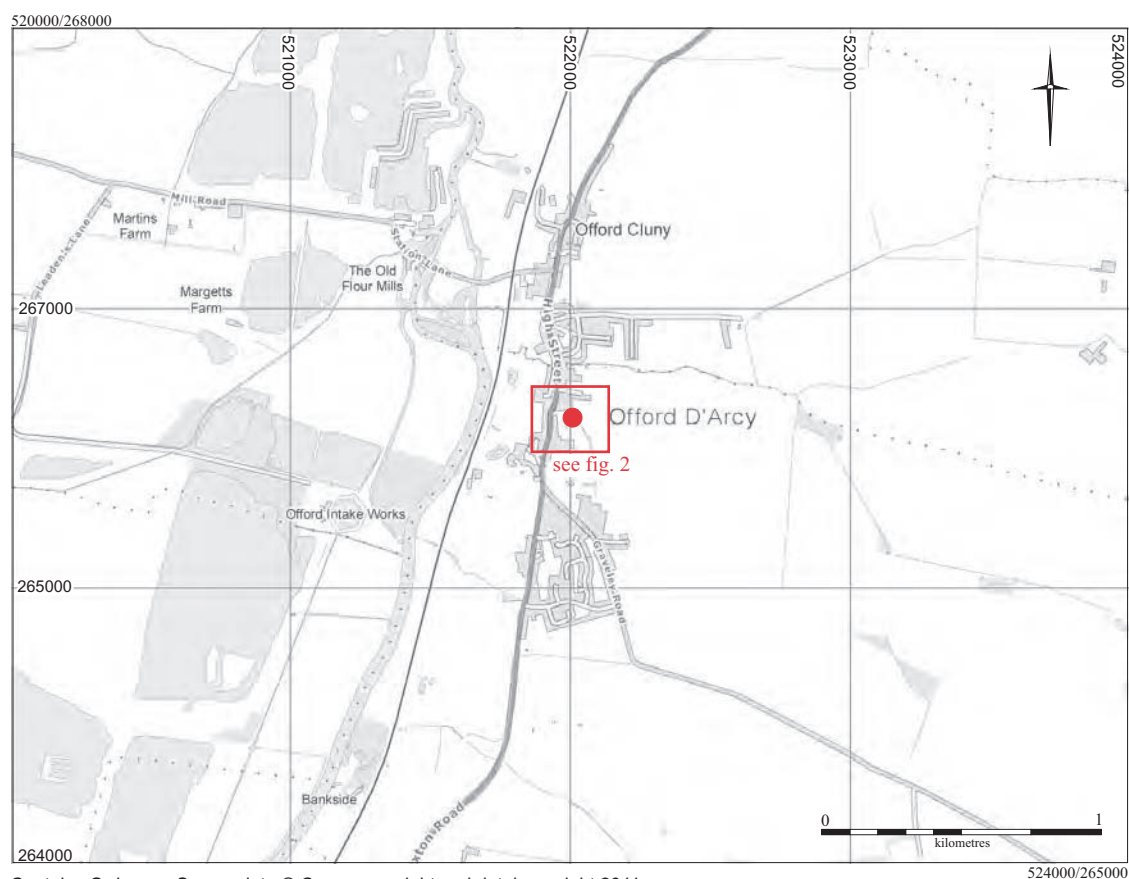
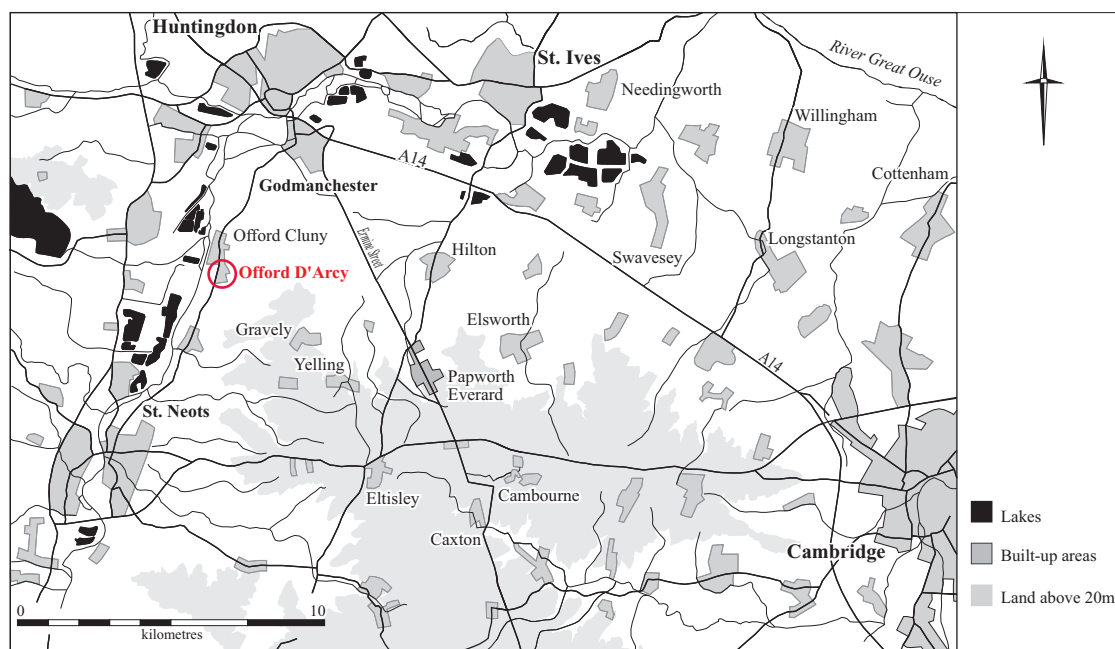
## APPENDIX A

### Feature descriptions

Feature No.	Context No.	Context Type	Feature Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Selected Artefacts	Comments
100	100	Fill	Ditch terminus					
	101	Fill						
	102	Cut		1.5	0.92	0.23		
101	104	Fill						
	105	Cut	N-S linear gully	5.8	0.4	0.12	Animal bone	
102	106	Fill						
	107	Fill						
	108	Cut	E-W linear ditch	11	1	0.4	Pottery	13th c.
	180	Fill						
	181	Cut	N-S linear ditch	11	0.85	0.24		
103	109	Fill						
	110	Cut	NW-SE linear ditch	40	1.2	0.25		
	127	Fill						
	128	Fill						
	129	Cut	E-W linear ditch	40	1.55	0.25	Pottery, animal bone	13th c.
	190	Fill						
	191	Fill						
	192	Cut	E-W linear ditch	40	1.43	0.28		
	193	Fill						
	194	Cut	N-S linear ditch	40	1.3	0.29		
104	111	Fill						
	112	Cut	Linear sub-soil spread	30	1	0.07		
	130	Fill						
	131	Cut	N-S linear ditch	30	1.5	0.08		
105	113	Fill						
	114	Cut	Modern disturbance?	1.9	0.85	0.14		
106	115	Fill						
	116	Cut	Modern disturbance?	1.5	0.85	0.07		
107	117	Fill						
	118	Cut	Modern disturbance?	0.7	0.7	0.05		
108	119	Fill						

Feature No.	Context No.	Context Type	Feature Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Selected Artefacts	Comments
	120	Cut	Disturbance/ truncated pit?	0.65	0.65	0.12	Pottery	13th c. = residual
109	121	Fill						
	122	Cut	E-W linear gully	7	0.3	0.13		
110	123	Fill						
	124	Fill						
	125	Fill						
	126	Cut	Pit		0.79	0.37		
111	132	Fill						
	133	Cut	Possible pit	1	0.6	0.2		
112	134	Fill						
	135	Cut	N-S linear ditch	8.5	0.8	0.28		
113	138	Fill						
	139	Fill						
	140	Cut	N-S linear ditch	9.5	1.05	0.34		
	187	Fill						
	188	Fill						
	189	Cut	N-S linear ditch	9.5	N/A	0.38		
114	136	Fill						
	137	Cut	Truncated N- S linear gully?	1	0.3	0.05		
115	141	Fill						
	142	Cut	N-S linear ditch	14	1.22	0.18	Animal bone	Post- medieval?
	184	Fill						
	185	Cut	N-S linear ditch	14	1.15	0.2		
116	143	Fill						
	144	Cut	N-S linear ditch		0.85	0.21	Pottery, animal bone	13th-14th c.
117	145	Fill						
	146	Cut	Pit	1.3	0.8	0.21		
118	147	Fill						
	148	Cut	E-W linear ditch/gully	8	0.54	0.15		
	168	Fill						
	169	Cut		8	0.7	0.15		
119	149	Fill						
	150	Cut	Ditch terminus?	1.2	0.85	0.28		
120	152	Fill						
	153	Cut	N-S linear ditch	6.5	0.7	0.2		
	182	Fill						

Feature No.	Context No.	Context Type	Feature Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Selected Artefacts	Comments
	183	Cut	N-S linear ditch	6.5	1	0.27		
121	154	Fill						
	155	Cut	N-S linear ditch	1.75	0.35	0.1		
122	156	Fill						
	157	Fill						
	158	Cut	Pit	1.7	1.6	0.48	Animal bone	
123	159	Fill						
	160	Fill						
	161	Fill						
	162	Cut	Pit	0.95	0.94	0.5		
124	163	Fill						
	164	Fill						
	165	Fill						
	166	Fill						
	167	Cut		2.8	2.7	0.48	Pottery, animal bone	14th-15th c.
125	170	Fill						
	171	Cut	Pit	0.6	0.4	0.13		
126	172	Fill						
	173	Fill						
	174	Fill						
	175	Cut	Large pit/pond	10	6.5	0.6		
127	176	Fill						
	177	Fill						
	178	Fill						
	179	Cut	Pit?	3.5	2.05	0.5	Pottery, animal bone	Roman pot = residual?
128	195	Fill						
	196	Cut	Modern pit/disturbance	3.25	2.7	N/A		
129	103	N/A	Decayed wooden post		0.2	0.4		
N/A	151	Layer	Sub-soil	N/A	N/A	N/A		
N/A	186	Layer	Sub-soil	N/A	N/A	N/A		



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524000/265000

Figure 1. Site location

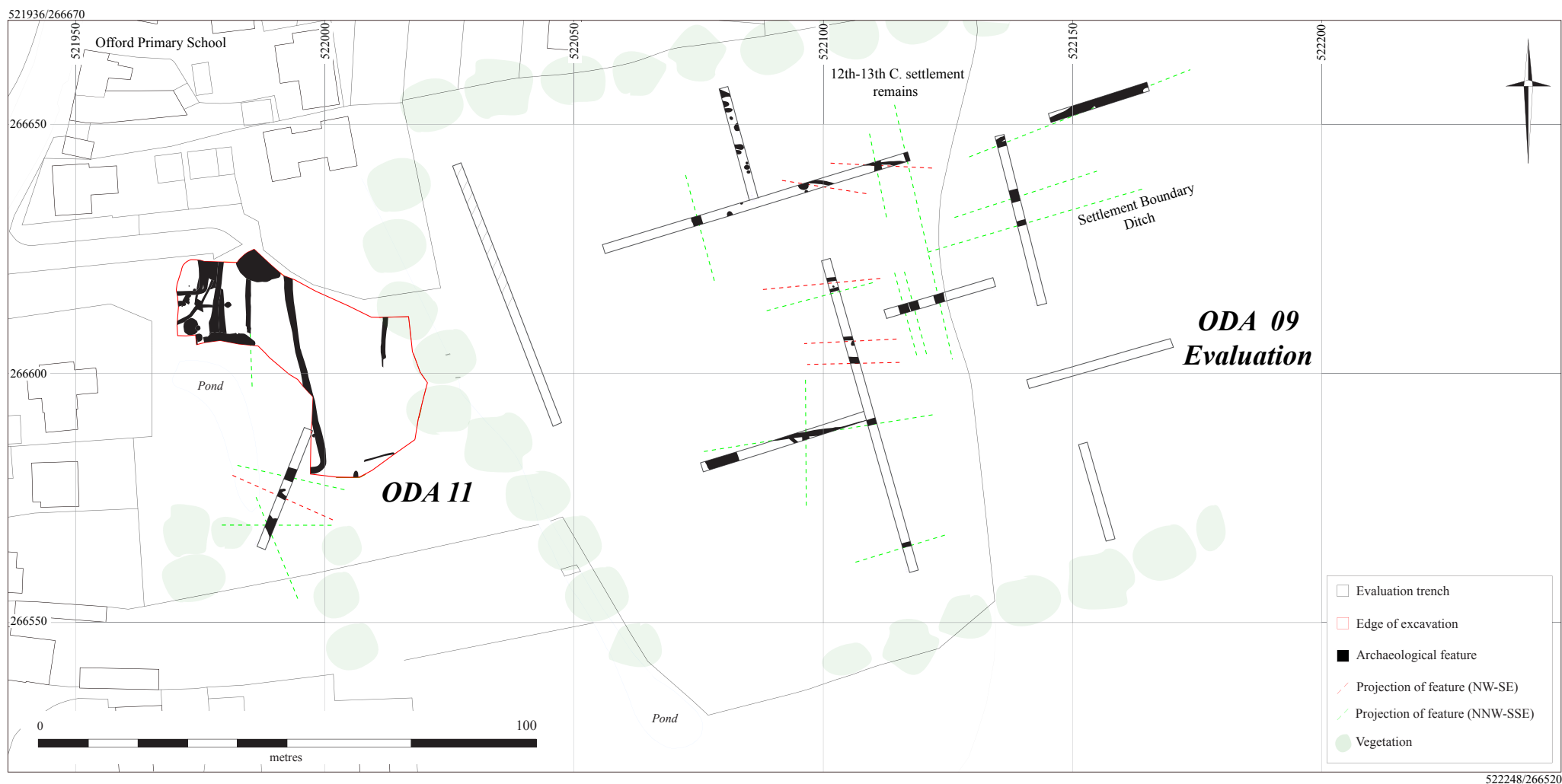


Figure 2. Plan of development area showing 2011 excavation (ODA11) area and 2009 evaluation trenches (ODA09)



Figure 3. Plan of archaeological features

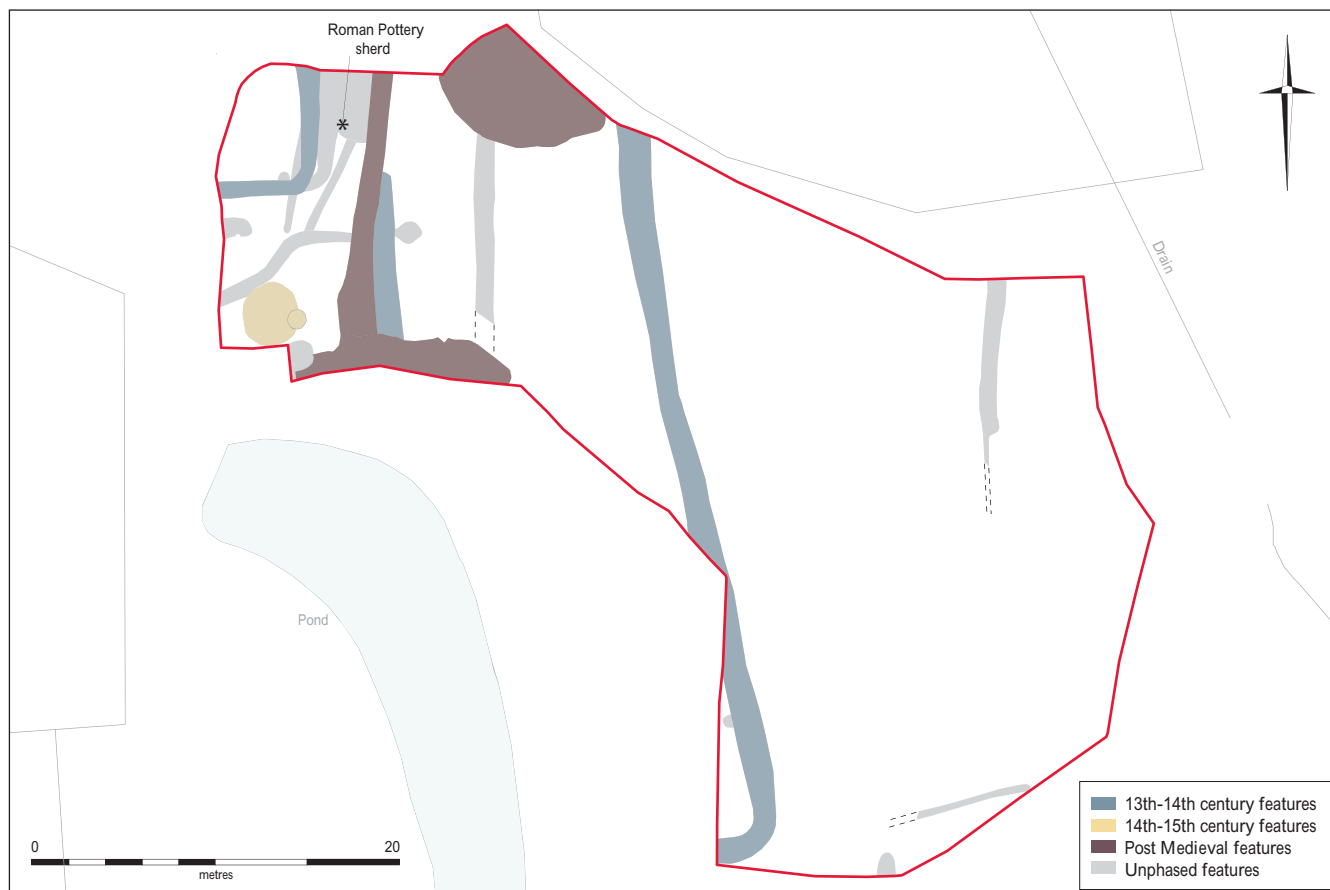


Figure 4. Phased Plan



A.



B.

Figure 5.

A. Pit F. 124

B. Inter-cutting ditches in the north of the site under excavation

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**OASIS ID: cambridg3-96164**

### Project details

Project name	Land to the rear of the High Street, Offord D'Arcy, Cambridgeshire
Short description of the project	An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) at Offord D'Arcy, Cambridgeshire (T 2205 6660) in January 2011. The work was carried out in advance of a small housing development comprising three houses and a recreation ground located to the rear of the High Street. Excavations over an area measuring 1142 metres square revealed archaeological features comprising pits, ditches and ponds, the majority of which were concentrated in the north-west corner of the excavation area. The finds assemblage recovered from the features indicates three broad phases of activity; the 13th-14th century, the 14th-15th century and the post-medieval/modern period. A sherd of Roman greyware pottery, thought to be residual, reflects Roman activity in the wider landscape. It is thought that the remains represent activity at the rear of a medieval/post-medieval property extending back from the High Street. To the east, beyond the property boundary, lay a more open landscape of fields and paddocks. This is reflected in the environmental evidence recovered from the site, which indicates damp pasture on the periphery of a settlement. No evidence relating to the 12th-13th century settlement recorded to the north-east during the 2009 evaluation was encountered, however the results still represent an important addition to the local archaeological record and are a useful contribution to our understanding of the medieval village and landscape.
Project dates	Start: 17-01-2011 End: 25-01-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	ODA11 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ECB 3522 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground

Monument type	DITCH Medieval
Monument type	RUBBISH PIT Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	POND Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Investigation type	'Open-area excavation'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE HUNTINGDONSHIRE OFFORD DARCY Land to the rear of the High Street, Offord D'Arcy
Postcode	PE19 5RH
Study area	1142.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 2205 6660 52.2835659257 -0.210582516182 52 17 00 N 000 12 38 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 15.00m Max: 15.00m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Emma Beadsmoore
Project director/ manager	Emma Beadsmoore
Project supervisor	Jonathan Tabor
Type of sponsor/ funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/ funding body	PR Build and Thornhill Estates Ltd

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Physical Archive ID	ODA11
Physical Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Environmental'

Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	ODA11
Digital Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Environmental','Survey'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets','Survey','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	ODA11
Paper Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Environmental'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Drawing','Map','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Survey','Unpublished Text'

## Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land to the rear of the High Street, Offord D'Arcy, Cambridgeshire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Tabor, J.L.
Other bibliographic details	Report No. 994
Date	2011
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