

Fen End, Over Post-Excavation Statement

January 2020

Client: Archaeology Collective on behalf of the overall client

Issue No: 1 OA Reference No: 2379 NGR: TL 3797 7069



Client Name:	Archaeology Collective on behalf of the overall client
Document Title:	Fen End, Over
Document Type:	Post-Excavation Statement
Report No.:	2379
Grid Reference:	TL 3797 7069
Planning Reference:	S/2577/17/FL
Site Code:	OVEFEN19
Invoice Code:	OVEFEN19
Assession/HER No.:	ECB5964
OA Document File Location:	Y:\Cambridgeshire\OVEFEN19_Fen_End_Over\Project Reports
OA Graphics File Location:	Y:\Cambridgeshire\OVEFEN19_Fen_End_Over\Project Data\Graphics
Issue No:	V1
Date:	Jan 2020
Prepared by:	Kelly Sinclair (Project Officer)
Checked by:	Nick Gilmour (Senior Project Manager)
Edited by:	Lawrence Billington (Post-Excavation Project Officer)
Approved for Issue by:	Elizbeth Popescu (Head of post-excavation and publications)
Signature:	
	EPAPOM
	V

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

OA South Janus House **Osney Mead** Oxford OX2 OES

t. +44 (0)1865 263 800

OA East 15 Trafalgar Way Bar Hill Cambridge CB23 8SQ

t. +44 (0)1223 850 500

e. info@oxfordarch.co.uk w. oxfordarchaeology.com Oxford Archaeology is a registered Charity: No. 285627

OA North Mill 3 Moor Lane Mills Moor Lane Lancaster LA1 1QD t. +44 (0)1524 880 250



Registered Office: Oxford Archaeology Ltd Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0E\$



Fen End, Over

Post-Excavation Statement

Written by Kelly Sinclair MA PCIfA

With contributions from Mary Andrews BA MA PCIfA, Carole Fletcher HND BA (Hons) ACIfA, Rachel Fosberry ACIfA, and Hayley Foster BA MA PhD

Illustrations by Sara Alberigi

Contents

List of Fi	uresvi				
Summai	/1				
1	PROJECT BACKGROUND2				
2	STRATIGRAPHIC SUMMARY				
2.1	General3				
2.2	Phase 1: Early Roman (1st to 2nd century AD)3				
2.3	Phase 2: Medieval (12th to 14th century)3				
3	Undated3				
4	FACTUAL DATA:4				
4.1	General4				
4.2	Summary of artefactual evidence4				
5	Summary of environmental evidence5				
6	RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES7				
7	METHOD STATEMENT7				
8	DISSEMINATION/PUBLICATION8				
9	TASK LIST FOR ANALYSIS				
9.1	1 Project team structure				
9.2	Task list and programme8				
10	BIBLIOGRAPHY				
APPEN	DIX A OASIS REPORT FORM				



List of Figures

Fig.1Site locationFig.2Site plan



Summary

From the 19th August to 9th October 2019 Oxford Archaeology East undertook an archaeological excavation at Fen End, Over, Cambridgeshire (TL 3797 7069). The excavations revealed part of a system of probable Early Roman cultivation beds overlain by more extensive medieval remains. The medieval remains consist of several rectilinear enclosures aligned perpendicular to Fen End Road which probably defined the boundaries of medieval tofts and crofts, and were associated with concentrations of pits. Finds from these features were domestic in character and were dominated by pottery and animal bone, and sampling has produced some relatively rich assemblages of charred plant remains, as well as fish bone. The majority of pottery dated from the 12th to 14th century.

This report provides a brief statement on the character of the archaeological remains, updates the project's research aims and objectives and sets out a programme for further analysis and reporting.



1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 From the 19th August to the 9th October 2019, OA East carried out an open-area excavation on land on at Fen End, Over, Cambridgeshire (TL 3797 7069). This work was commissioned by Archaeology Collective on behalf of the overall client and took place on an area of 0.6ha for the proposed development of 20 residential dwellings. An archaeological trench evaluation had been previously carried out and reported on by Pre-Construct Archaeology PCA (Morgan-Shelbourne 2019). The excavation was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by Kerry Hopper of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by OA East (Gilmour 2019)
- 1.1.2 The site is located on the gravel 'island' of Over at c.6m OD, on the northern edge of the modern village (Fig. 1). The underlying geology across the site is mudstone of the West Walton and Ampthill Clay formations. The site was formerly used as a plant nursery, and although in places this has resulted in some truncation of the deposits, overall it has caused minimal damage to the underlying archaeology.

Archaeological background

- 1.1.3 This section provides a brief summary of relevant archaeological remains in the area of the site. A more detailed archaeological background will be prepared and included in the final report on the works. Where relevant the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) number is given in brackets.
- 1.1.4 Prior to the evaluation of the current site, very little prehistoric archaeology was known in the immediate area (although significant prehistoric archaeology is known from within the parish of Over). A struck flint was found in a garden in Over, along with Roman and medieval material (CHER 11783). A Bronze Age arrowhead has also been recovered (CHER MCB16669). In the wider parish of Over, several cropmarks have been identified to the north and south-west of Over comprised of enclosures, ditches and a trackway (CHER 08334, CHER 08893, CHER 08896) Evidence of Roman activity consists mostly of find spots.
- 1.1.5 There is little evidence for of Saxon settlement in Over, but by the time of the Domesday Book it is recorded as having a population of 35 households in 1086, on land owned by Ramsey Abbey. The Church of St Mary is located c.650m to the west of the current site. This church is of 13th century origin, with much of the structure dating to the 14th century (CHER 03559). The medieval village is believed to have been centered on this church. However, the village layout is likely to be slightly more complex, due to the presence of two significant routes from Cambridge (Taylor 1998, 69). Ramsey Abbey is also likely to have influenced the development of the village, by attempting to lay out a settlement pattern around their church located in the village.



2.1 General

2.1.1 Archaeological features were exposed across the full extent of the excavation area, but were concentrated in the north-western part of the site, close to Fen End Road (Fig. 2). At this stage of the project, pottery dating and the character and alignment of linear features suggest the remains can be separated into main two phases, Early Roman and medieval (alongside a series of demonstrably natural and modern features/deposits). Figure 2 provides a plan of the excavation, with specific features referred to the text labelled with cut/feature numbers (rendered in bold in the text).

2.2 Phase 1: Early Roman (1st to 2nd century AD)

2.2.1 The earliest features appear to have been a series of insubstantial ditches/gullies on a roughly north-south alignment (289, 373, 524, 375, and 410). These were bounded to the northern end by ditch 400 on an east-west alignment. A further ditch slightly north of this (229) follows a similar east-west alignment. The only dateable material recovered from these features was a single sherd of possible Roman pottery but they were stratigraphically earlier than medieval features belonging to Phase 2 and were on a markedly different alignment. Features belonging to this arrangement of ditches/gullies were encountered during the evaluation, where they were thought likely to belong to a later prehistoric field system (Morgan-Shelbourne 2019), but the arrangement of these features - with a series of closely-set parallel ditches/gullies - strongly suggests they relate instead to a system of Early Roman cultivation beds/plots of the kind known very widely from the region (see Research Aims and Objectives, below).

2.3 Phase 2: Medieval (12th to 14th century)

2.3.1 The principal finding of this excavation comprised the probable remains of medieval tofts and crofts laid out perpendicular to the current course of Fen End. A large boundary ditch (89) ran across the southern area of site on a north-west to south-east alignment marking a plot division, with a series of smaller ditches to the east representing further plot boundaries or subdivisions (e.g. 78, 85, 135, 263, 357, 359). The north-western end of the medieval plots contained a large number of intercutting pits, producing some medieval pottery. In the south-west an area of pits (614) show signs of more intensive activity, as they appear to have been used for dumping burnt remains. The number of archaeological remains decreases towards the eastern end of the site, presumably towards the rear of the medieval plots. The pottery from the medieval features points to a date between the 12th and 14th centuries.

3 Undated

3.1.1 Slightly north of the centre of the site, a circular enclosure was identified (**252**). This did not produce any dating evidence but did cut features belonging to the Phase 1 cultivation beds. At this stage of analysis is not clear whether it should be considered contemporary with the medieval remains or instead represents an earlier or later phase of activity.



4 FACTUAL DATA:

4.1 General

4.1.1 The following stratigraphic records were created:

Record type	Number
Context registers	17
Context numbers	683
Section registers	5
Sections	167
Plan registers	1
Plans	4
Sample registers	9
Soil samples	53
Small finds registers	1
Digital photograph registers	14
Digital photographs	499

Table1. Quantification of records

4.2 Summary of artefactual evidence

- 4.2.1 All finds have been washed, quantified and bagged. The catalogue of all finds has been entered onto an MS Access database. Total quantities for each material type are listed below (Table 2).
- 4.2.2 The following finds were recovered:

545 5 27	7.544kg 3.228kg
-	
27	
27	0.321kg
2	0.200kg
44	0.319kg
797	6.504kg
4	0.016kg
3	0.701kg
5	0.072kg
11	1.428kg
_	2 44 797 4 3 5

Table 2. Finds data

The pottery

By Carole Fletcher

4.2.3 An assemblage of 545 sherds, weighing 7.544kg, was recovered. The condition of the overall assemblage is moderately abraded to abraded, while the average sherd weight is low-moderate, at approximately 14g, suggesting much of the assemblage has undergone some reworking. A further 113 sherds (1.410kg) of pottery was recovered by PCA during the evaluation of the site. This was not examined for this assessment, having been reported upon by PCA previously (Sudds, in Morgan-Shelbourne 2019),



however, the pottery recovered should be considered during the next phase of reporting.

- 4.2.4 Fabrics initially identified as present in the assemblage are mainly East Anglian, with a low number of sherds from the industrial Midlands and a single sherd of imported pottery identified. The production centres identified include Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Essex and the industrial Midlands.
- 4.2.5 Vessels present appear to be domestic in nature, with jar, jug and bowl sherds present. The initial overview of the fabrics points to the majority of the assemblage dating between the 12th and 14th centuries. Two sherds could be dated as Roman or prehistoric, and 12 sherds dated from 9th to 12th century.
- 4.2.6 The assemblage should be recorded to a basic level in an Access database, with full recording for any significant features or groups of features. Pottery from the PCA evaluation should be considered when writing the final report and the pottery integrated into the report.

The faunal remains

by Hayley Foster and Mary Andrews

- 4.2.7 The assemblage of faunal remains is of a small size, with 6.5kg of bone from hand collection and is dominated by cattle remains. Other species represented include the main domesticates, sheep/goat, pig and equids. Dog remains are represented by a skeleton (pit **526**) and an additional cranium (ditch **218**) and mandible (pit **617**). Rabbit and bird remains were also present in small numbers. The condition of the assemblage was good, and fragmentation was high. The equid remains that could be differentiated between horse and donkey all appear to belong to horse, with no material comparable to specimens from a single individual recovered during the evaluation which was suggested to possibly represent a donkey or small horse (Reilly, in Morgan-Shelbourne 2019).
- 4.2.8 Twenty-one samples contain occasional to moderate fish bone; considering the proximity of the River Ouse, this probably indicates the exploitation of local freshwater fish and eel stocks. Occasional small mammal bones were also present in the assemblage, mainly comprising of vole with a small number of shrew and possible water vole remains. Occasional instances of amphibian bone correlate with the presence of ponds and water courses within the locale of the site. Very occasional bird bone was present in two samples, probably as a result of discarded food waste or animal scavenging.
- 4.2.9 Other finds recovered from the site require further analysis, weights and amounts are tabulated above.

5 Summary of environmental evidence

By Rachel Fosberry

5.1.1 A total of 53 environmental samples were taken from a representative cross sections of feature types and deposits across the site, as well as contexts which displayed



potential for environmental analysis. Preservation of plant remains is predominantly by carbonisation (charring) although several samples contain untransformed seeds of woody taxa such as bramble and elderberry which may be contemporary; their preservation due to their tough outer seed coat. Charred plant remains are present in most of the samples in the form of cereal grains, legumes, weed seeds and charcoal. All four of the main cereal types are present; free-threshing wheat is most frequent with lesser quantities of barley and oats and rare occurrences of rye. The wheat grains have the morphology of free-threshing bread wheat which is verified by the presence of chaff fragments in a few samples. This wheat variety is most commonly cultivated from the Saxon period onwards and there is no evidence of any hulled wheat varieties that were cultivated prior to this. Legumes include beans, peas and vetches all of which were common cultivars for food as well as for soil enrichment. Weed seeds are mainly of plants that were likely to have been growing amongst the crops and were contaminants of the harvest and there is also evidence of the exploitation of wetland resources such as rushes and sedges that would have been utilised for flooring and thatching materials as well as fuel. Occasional mineralised remains of insects and seeds are indicative of the disposal of cess which would be expected in the back yards of medieval dwellings. Fish bones and the remains of shellfish are further indicators of culinary waste that would have been disposed of in pits in backyard plots.

5.1.2 It is recommended that additional processing of the remaining soil from the most productive samples, particularly those containing cess indicators, with the residues scanned using a microscope for the recovery of mineralised remains (that often do not float) and fish bones.



6 **RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 6.1.1 Following the completion of fieldwork and preliminary assessment of its results, some adjustments can be made to the original research aims in the WSI (Gilmour 2019).
 - To contribute to an understanding of the development and nature of the settlement at Over in the medieval period including the former extent of the village.
 - To aim to identify the presence of prehistoric activity on the site through the recovery of in-situ and residual material culture
 - Features belonging to the putative later prehistoric field system identified during the evaluation can now be shown to be more likely to belong to a system of Early Roman cultivation beds of the kind known widely from Cambridgeshire and the East Midlands (see Smith et al 2016, 183). There remains a need to identify and characterise prehistoric activity on the site, which may include some discrete features as well as residual finds, but an additional research aim can now be highlighted – to characterise the probable cultivation beds in the context both of regional/local comparanda for these agricultural/horticultural features and the evidence for Roman settlement and landuse at Over and adjacent parts of the fen edge.
 - To consider the location of the site with reference to the wider medieval and later-prehistoric landscapes within the region and with reference to cropmark evidence surrounding the site.
 - To examine the evidence of land division in relation to medieval occupation activity, including character, extent morphology, diet, economy and environment and place the results within their local and broader landscape context
 - To examine any evidence for trade, both regionally and further afield, making reference to the presence of marine taxa.
 - To examine the ceramic traditions of the medieval periods and contribute to an understanding of local and regional ceramic developments.
 - To examine the faunal remains and the contributions the assemblage can make to our understanding of animal husbandry practices for this area; with particular reference to the presence of multiple equid species.
 - Initial analysis of the faunal assemblage from the excavation suggests any equid remains that could be differentiated between species all appear to belong to horses.
 - To aim to establish the location of potential kilns or ovens on site and their association with either settlement and/ or industrial activity.
 - Fieldwork did not uncover any ovens or potential kilns on site.

7 METHOD STATEMENT

7.1.1 Methods for post-excavation analysis are outlined in the WSI and remain unchanged.



8 **DISSEMINATION/PUBLICATION**

8.1.1 A post-excavation analysis report will be produced and delivered within 18 months from the completion of fieldwork. The scope, format and venue of any publication will be decided upon after further analysis of the results. This will be, as a minimum, a summary report prepared for the Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society (PCAS), or if relevant, a fuller article in PCAS or another appropriate journal.

9 TASK LIST FOR ANALYSIS

9.1 **Project team structure**

9.1.1 The project team is set out in the table below:

Name	Organisation	Role
Nick Gilmour	OAE	Project management
Kelly Sinclair	OAE	Supervisor/Author
Dave Brown	OAE	Illustrator
Hayley Foster	OAE	Faunal remains
Lawrence Billingoton	OAE	Flint
Rachel Fosberry	OAE	Enviro
Mairhead Rutherford	OAN	Pollen
Mary Andrews	OAE	Enviro Supervisor
Simon Timberlake	External	Stone
Carlotta Marchetto	OAE	Finds Assistant
Ted Levermore	OAE	CBM
Liz Popescu	OAE	Head of Post-Excavation and
		Publication
Katherine Hamilton	OAE	Archiving
Rachel Clarke	OAE	Editor

9.2 Task list and programme

- 9.2.1 The programme of work of will commence after approval of this document and end with the issue of the report.
- 9.2.2 A task list is presented below.

Task no.	Description	Performed by	Days
1	Project Management	NG	2.5
2	Stratigraphic analysis (Phasing /grouping)	KS	4
3	Update database with phasing and group data and produce draft phase plans	KS	1
4	Disseminate updated phasing information to specialists	KS	0.5
5	Phase plans and report figures, plates	ТВС	2
6	Finds booking/preparation/admin	Finds Assistant	1



7	Collate group text/write report including background research	KS	10
8	Select sections for digitizing and plates for inclusion in report. Produce mockup figures	KS	1
9	Pottery analysis and full report	CF	3.5
10	Process remaining soil samples and extract small bones	MA	2
11	Faunal remains report	HF	2
12	Lithic Report	LB	0.5
13	Metalwork report	DS	1
14	CBM/Mortar/fired clay reports	TL	1
15	Stone report	TBC	0.5
16	Shell report	CF	0.5
17	Glass report	CF	1
18	Full assessment, analysis and report on environmental remains	RF	3.5
19	Read, comment and integrate finds reports	KS	1
20	Check and initial edit grey literature report	ТВС	2
21	Write publication text	KS	2
22	Edit publication text	RC	2
23	Prepare archive	КН	2
24	Dispose of samples	ТВС	1

V1



10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, D 2011 *Archaeological archives. A guide to best practice in creation, transfer and curation*, 2nd edition, Archaeological Archives Forum

CIfA, 2014a Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation

CIFA, 2014b Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives

Gilmour, N. 2019. Fen End , Over. Written Scheme of Investiagtion. Oxofrd Archaeology East

Historic England, 2006 Management of research projects in the historic environment. The MoRPHE project manager's guide

Historic England, 2008 Management of research projects in the historic environment. PPN3: Archaeological excavation

Morgan-Shelbourne, L. 2019 Land Off Fen End, Over, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation PCA Report No:13681

Museum of London Archaeology 2014 *Medieval and post-medieval pottery codes* http://www.mola.org.uk/medieval-and-post-medieval-pottery-codes. Accessed 22/07/2019

MPRG, 1998 A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper

PCRG SGRP MPRG, 2016 A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology

Smith, A., Allen, M., Brindle, T. and Fulford, M. 2016. New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain (Vol. 1): The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain. London: The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies. Britannia Monograph Series 29.

Spoerry, P.S. 2016 *The Production and Distribution of Medieval Pottery in Cambridgeshire* East Anglian Archaeology EAA 159

Taylor, A. 1998. *South-East Cambridgeshire and the Fen Edge (Archaeology of Cambridgeshire)*. Cambridgeshire County Council.



APPENDIX A

OASIS REPORT FORM

Proi	ect	Detai	ls

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-381572					
Project Name	Fen End, Over, Cambridgeshir			re		
Start of Fieldwork	16/08/2	019		End of Field	work	9/10/2019
Previous Work	yes			Future Work	< Comparison of the second sec	unknown
Project Reference	Codes					
Site Code	OVEFEN19		Planning App	o. No.	S/2577/17/FL	
HER Number	ECB5964		Related Num	nbers		
Prompt		NPPF				
Development Type		Housing development				
Place in Planning Process		After outline determination (eg. A a reserved matter)				
Techniques used (t	ick all tha	at appl	y)			
Aerial Photograph interpretation		\boxtimes	Open-area exca	vation		Salvage Record
 Aerial Photograph 	iv - new	/ - new 🔲 Part Excavation				Systematic Field Walking

interpretation		
Aerial Photography - new	Part Excavation	Systematic Field Walking
Field Observation	Part Survey	Systematic Metal Detector Survey
Full Excavation	Recorded Observation	Test-pit Survey
Full Survey	Remote Operated Vehicle	Watching Brief
	Survey	
Geophysical Survey	Salvage Excavation	

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Ditch	Medieval (1066 to 1540)	pottery	Medieval (1066 to 1540)
Pit	Medieval (1066 to 1540)	Animal remains	Medieval (1066 to 1540)
Field system	Roman (43 to 410)	pottery	Early Prehistoric (- 500 000 to - 4000)

Project Location

•	
County	Cambridgeshire
District	South Cambridgeshire
Parish	Over
HER office	Cambridgeshire HER
Size of Study Area	0.52 ha
National Grid Ref	TL 3797 7069

Address (including Postcode)

Fen End Over Cambridgeshire

Project Originators

Organisation	Oxford Archaeology East	
Project Brief Originator	Kerry Hopper (CCCHET)	
Project Design Originator	Nick Gilmour	
Project Manager	Nick Gilmour	
Project Supervisor	Kelly Sinclair	

V1



Project Archives

Physical Contents

Present?

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	CCC stores	ECB5964
Digital Archive	OA East	ECB5964
Paper Archive	CCC stores	ECB5964

Animal Bones	\boxtimes
Ceramics	\boxtimes
Environmental	\boxtimes
Glass	
Human Remains	
Industrial	
Leather	
Metal	\boxtimes
Stratigraphic	
Survey	
Textiles	
Wood	
Worked Bone	
Worked Stone/Lithic	
None	
Other	

Digital files associated with Finds	Paperwork associated with Finds
\boxtimes	\boxtimes
\boxtimes	\boxtimes
\boxtimes	\boxtimes
\boxtimes	\boxtimes

Digital Media

Database	\boxtimes
GIS	\boxtimes
Geophysics	
Images (Digital photos)	\boxtimes
Illustrations (Figures/Plates)	\boxtimes
Moving Image	
Spreadsheets	
Survey	\boxtimes
Text	\boxtimes
Virtual Reality	

Paper Media

Aerial Photos	
Context Sheets	\boxtimes
Correspondence	
Diary	
Drawing	
Manuscript	
Мар	
Matrices	
Microfiche	
Miscellaneous	
Research/Notes	
Photos (negatives/prints/slides)	
Plans	
Report	\boxtimes
Sections	\boxtimes
Survey	

Further Comments



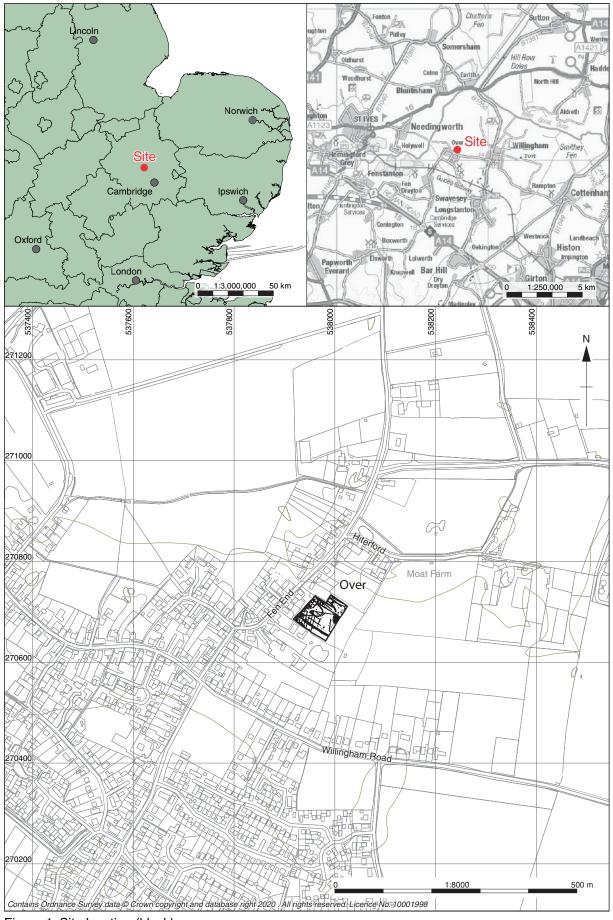


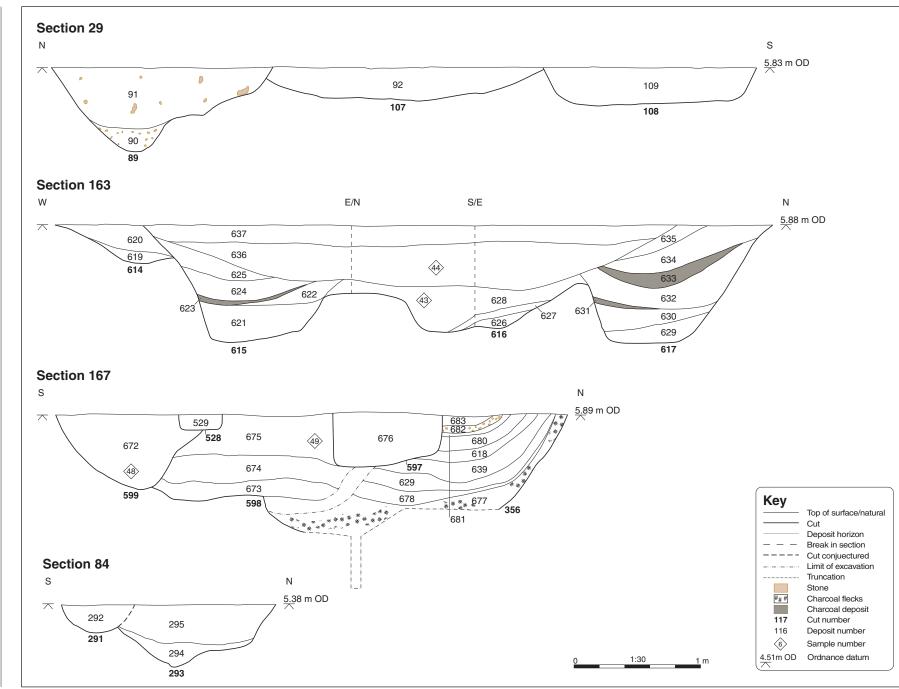
Figure 1: Site location (black)





© Oxford Archaeology East

	53825		N	_
0		1:400	 2	25 m



east

east

i Fig

Figure 4: Selected sections









Head Office/Registered Office/ OA South

Janus House Osney Mead Oxford OX20ES

t:+44(0)1865263800 f:+44(0)1865793496 e:info@oxfordarchaeology.com w:http://oxfordarchaeology.com

OANorth

Mill 3 MoorLane LancasterLA11QD

t:+44(0)1524541000 f:+44(0)1524848606 e:oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com w:http://oxfordarchaeology.com

OAEast

15 Trafalgar Way Bar Hill Cambridgeshire CB238SQ

t:+44(0)1223 850500 e:oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com w:http://oxfordarchaeology.com



Director: Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MCIfA Oxford Archaeology Ltd is a Private Limited Company, N⁰: 1618597 and a Registered Charity, N⁰: 285627