

Marlow Flood Alleviation Scheme, Pound Lane, Marlow, Buckinghamshire: Phase II Archaeological Evaluation Report.

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Abstract

In November 2009, Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook a field evaluation for Halcrow Group Limited, Environment Agency, in Harleyford Field and Yela Bina Field on Lower Pound Lane, immediately to the east of the river in Buckinghamshire. Twenty evaluative trenches were excavated in order to assess the archaeological potential of the site in undertaking flood alleviation works at the Site. The trenches were targeted on geophysical anomalies and the subsurface topography identified from a previous borehole survey. The Site is located on the edge of a gravel island within the Thames floodplain on the south side of the river. Significant early prehistoric archaeological features were previously identified on the island and around its margins, which includes three possible Bronze Age pits and evidence of earlier Neolithic activity. The current phase of work constitutes a second phase of evaluation and was designed to establish whether this activity extended to the southern edges of the island. The evidence from an existing paleotopographic model for two palaeochannels separated by a smaller channel that cross the Site from SW – NE and converge further to the East. Fills of these channels were seen to have significant archaeological and environmental potential. A low density of potential archaeological features were recorded in the northern and western parts of the Site. These included pits, post holes and ditches, most of which contained no finds, but a limited number contained material of Neolithic date. Most of the features were dug through the low-lying areas associated with the palaeochannels. The position, date and form of a Neolithic rectangular enclosure located on the southern edge of the gravel island to the north of the Site was confirmed in Trench 33. Trenches within Harleyford Field demonstrated that modern ploughing had probably significantly truncated archaeological features and abundant struck flint, and a single sherd of Neolithic pottery was observed in the ploughsoil. This level of truncation was not observed in the pasture land of Yela Bina Field. Apart from Trench 33 there appeared to be little correlation between geophysical anomalies and the archaeology. The results suggested that the geophysical responses were probably caused by geological and pedological changes and bore a resemblance to the distribution of archaeological features identified. The most recent phase of work on the Site was the excavation of Trench 33.

identified further evidence for Neolithic monuments and possible settlement activity on the island prior to the construction of the round burrows. This may suggest that rather than the burrows representing the peak of the Site, it appears that they may have been the final stages of a much longer lived phase of earlier activity on the island.

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