

**FORMER JOHN FAULKNER
INFANT SCHOOL,
SAWSTON,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION**

SEPTEMBER 2013



FORMER JOHN FALKNER INFANT SCHOOL, SAWSTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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**JOHN FAULKNER INFANT SCHOOL, THE BAULKS, SAWSTON,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Local Planning Authority: South Cambridgeshire District Council

Central National Grid Reference: Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 4854 4942)

Site Code: CJFS13

Planning Reference: S/1783/12/FL & S/1786/12/FL

Report No. R11489

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ABSTRACT

This report documents the results of an archaeological evaluation at the former John Faulkner Infant School, Sawston, Cambridgeshire. Four 10m long trenches were machine excavated, of which one, Trench 4, contained a northwest to southeast-aligned ditch and two pits, one containing a cattle burial. Both the ditch and one of the pits each contained a single sherd of pottery dating to the 15th or 16th centuries, the late medieval or early post-medieval period. The size and condition of the cattle burial would also fit a later medieval date. The other three trenches contained only natural tree hollows.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document reports the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken at the former John Faulkner Infant School, The Baulks, Sawston (Figure 1). This work was carried out between the 29th and 30th August 2013.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Helen Fani in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the former school into six residential dwellings (Planning References: S/1783/12/FL & S/1786/12/FL). The school site presently comprises a collection of nine school buildings interspersed with playground areas. These areas are located to the east and northwest of the school buildings. A small orchard area is located to the west. On the school site is a 17th-century dovecote, which is Grade II Listed (LCN 1165362). Hammonds Road and private housing forms the northern boundary of the site and 'The Baulks' path and associated green area is located along its southern boundary.
- 1.3 The site is centred on Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 4854 4942 and lies west of the High Street, Sawston.
- 1.4 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation within the proposed development area was prepared by Mark Hinman of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (August 2013), in response to a brief issued by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Service (August 2013).
- 1.5 The brief highlighted that the proposed development was located to the north of the medieval parish church of St Mary (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record 041123), as well as a probable Roman road, and was thus in an area of archaeological interest and potential.
- 1.6 The work reported upon here was designed to contribute to an understanding of the character, condition, date and extent of any archaeological remains within the development area, and to provide a comprehensive appraisal of the significance of any remains within a local, regional and national context as appropriate. This has been achieved through the recording of the archaeological features present, comprising a northwest to southeast-aligned ditch and two pits, one containing an animal burial, all within Trench 4. These features are 15th to 16th century, late medieval to early post-medieval in date. The results are of local interest and significance.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1 The underlying bedrock of the site comprises chalk of the Holywell nodular chalk formation, sedimentary bedrock formed in warm shallow shelf seas with little input from land sediments. No superficial deposits are present within the site (BGS Online Viewer, 2012).
- 2.2 The site of the former infant school buildings is located on the flat, low-lying floodplain of the River Cam. As a result the ground level of the site is relatively uniform, standing at an average of 21.0m OD (above Ordnance Datum), although there is a slight incline of slope down towards the south.
- 2.3 The natural clayey chalk geology was present at depths of between 0.50 and 0.95m below modern ground level. In Trenches 1, 2 and 4, this was sealed by made ground associated with the construction of the school, and hardcore levelling layers/ asphalt playground surfaces. In Trench 3, located at the edge of a garden area in the north-west corner of the site, it was sealed by subsoil and garden soil.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Cambridgeshire County Council (henceforth CCC) maintains a database of known sites of archaeological or historical significance known as the Historic Environment Record (HER). Numerous HER records exist for the area surrounding the current site and the most significant are summarised below.
- 3.2 Evidence of prehistoric activity has been found 300m southeast of the site at Sawston Hall, where ditches and channels were found (HER CB17295 & CB17318). Archaeological evaluation at Sawston Police Station, 400m to the northeast, also produced evidence of Late Bronze Age /Early Iron Age activity (HER CB15777).
- 3.3 Romano-British ditches have been recorded at Sawston Hall (HER CB17295 & CB17318). The Sawston Police Station site also contained two Roman ditched enclosures.
- 3.4 The medieval period is well represented within the HER records. The village of Sawston had its origins as a hamlet in the medieval period, with a gradual intensification of activity leading to the establishment of Sawston Hall in the 16th century, located adjacent to the earlier St Mary's Church.
- 3.5 Taken together, this previous work suggested that the current site had moderate potential to contain medieval archaeological remains and some potential for earlier activity.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 Four 10m long evaluation trenches were excavated. Trenches 1 to 3 were located in the north-western part of the site, on the main playground area adjacent to the dovecote and 'Milner's meadow', a small conservation area. Trenches 2 and 3 were orientated north to south with the remaining trench in this area, Trench 1, being east to west. This slight change from the proposed trench placement was due to protected trees within the conservation area limiting machine access. The remaining Trench 4 was located in the smaller playground area, enclosed by the school buildings and private homes to the east. This trench was orientated north-northwest to south-southeast and was located further north than originally planned due to a congruence of live services making the original placement unfeasible (Figure 2).
- 4.2 The trenching was carried out under archaeological supervision using a 180° mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket and 1m wide toothed bucket. Overlying tarmac and hardcore in some of the trenches was removed with the toothed bucket. Remaining topsoil and made ground deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed natural geological deposits where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded. Spoil was stored on site as per the client's instructions.
- 4.3 Heights above ordnance datum (m OD), and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Leica 1200 Global Positioning System (GPS) rover unit fitted with real time kinematic (RTK) differential correction, giving three dimensional positional accuracy of 2cm or less.
- 4.4 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a context number and recorded on individual pre-printed forms. Archaeological events recognised by the deposition of material are signified in this report by round brackets (thus), whilst events constituting the removal of deposits are referred to here as 'cuts' and signified by square brackets [thus]. The record numbers assigned to cuts and deposits are entirely arbitrary and in no way reflect the chronological order in which events took place. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.
- 4.5 Metal detecting was carried out during the stripping operation and archaeological features and spoil were scanned.

- 4.6 High resolution digital photographs were taken throughout the fieldwork and were used to keep a record of the evaluation.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 5.1 Trench 1 was orientated east to west and contained two small natural features [8] and [10], comprising tree root hollows in the natural chalk (Plate 1). The deposits within the trench comprised tarmac to a depth of 0.14m below existing ground level, hardcore to 0.18m and made ground to 0.60m.
- 5.2 Tree Hollow [8] was roughly linear in plan, extending out of the northern limit of the trench, measuring 0.19m deep, 1.65m+ long and 0.87m wide, with shallow irregular sides and a 'v'-shaped base. It contained a single fill (9): a mid grey-brown silty clay with rare chalk inclusions. No finds were present in this feature.
- 5.3 Tree Hollow [10] was sub-circular in plan, extending out of the northern limit of the trench, and measuring 0.40m deep, 1.47m+ long and 0.87m wide. The hollow had steep sides and a flat base. It contained a single fill (11): a mid grey-brown silty clay with rare chalk inclusions. No finds were present in this feature.
- 5.4 Trench 2 was orientated north to south and did not contain any features (Plate 2). The deposits within the trench comprised tarmac to a depth of 0.10m, hardcore to 0.13m and made ground to 0.70m below existing ground level.
- 5.5 Trench 3 was orientated north to south and contained a single natural feature [6], a tree root hollow in the natural chalk (Plate 3). The deposits within the trench comprised topsoil to a depth of 0.30m and subsoil to 0.50m below existing.
- 5.6 Tree Hollow [6] was linear in plan, extending out of the east and west sides of the trench, measuring 0.23m deep, 1.55m+ long and 0.96m wide. The hollow had steep sides and a 'v'-shaped base. It contained a single fill (7): a mid grey-brown silty clay with rare chalk inclusions which undercut the natural geology in places. No finds were present in this feature.
- 5.7 Trench 4 contained a small northwest to southeast-aligned ditch [18] and two small pits [16] and [21], one of which contained a cattle burial (Figures 3 & 4; Plate 4). The deposits within the trench comprised tarmac to a depth of 0.24m, hardcore to 0.35m and made ground to 0.95m below existing ground level. The made ground sealed the three archaeological features.

- 5.8 Pit [16] was sub-circular in plan, measuring 0.30m deep, 1m long and 0.67m+ wide, with steep sides and a flat base (Plate 5). It contained a single fill (15): a mid grey silty clay with rare chalk inclusions, which contained a sherd of late medieval/ transitional pottery (c. AD 1400-1600). The pit truncates ditch [18] to the north and south.
- 5.9 Ditch [18] was linear in plan, oriented northwest to southeast, extending out of the northern limit of the trench and ending in a rounded terminus towards the southern end of the trench. The ditch was 0.20m deep and 0.40m wide, with steep sides and a flat base (Plate 6). It contained a single fill (17): a mid grey silty clay which contained a large sherd of late medieval/ transitional pottery (c. AD 1400-1600) with splashes of external glaze. The ditch truncates pit [21] to the west and is truncated by pit [16] to the north.
- 5.10 Pit [21] was sub-circular in plan and extended out of the western limit of the trench, measuring 0.52m deep and 0.90m wide, with steep sides and an irregular concave base (Plates 7 and 8). It contained two fills (19) and (20). Fill (19) was a mid grey silty clay with rare chalk inclusions and charcoal flecks. Deposit (20) was an articulated cattle skeleton, orientated east to west, with the head to the east. The burial extended beyond the trench to the west. The pit is truncated by ditch [18] to the east. No other finds were present in this feature.

6 FINDS

6.1 The Pottery

By Berni Sudds

Two sherds of pottery were recovered, both likely to date to the 15th or 16th century. The first, from the fill of Pit [16] (15) is an Orange Sandy Ware (6g), probably of the East Anglian redware tradition, but it is fairly hard and high-fired, indicating a late medieval or transitional date. The second sherd (87g), from Ditch [18] (17), is also a hard and high-fired redware, but has a finer fabric containing sparse calcareous inclusions, probably representing a local late medieval / transitional redware product. The latter is from a closed form with splashes of glaze externally.

6.2 The Animal Bone

By Kevin Rielly

Pit [21] contained a cattle skeleton (20). The skeleton is limited to the anterior and axial parts, missing the bones of the hindlimbs (pelvis to phalanges) as well as the sacral and caudal vertebrae. All of the remaining bones are relatively well preserved although somewhat fragmented, in particular the skull and scapulas. Indeed, the skull is represented solely by the maxillae and occipital condyles, so no comment can be made concerning a possible type, as perhaps could be suggested by the horncores. Judging by the mandibular teeth (2nd adult molar erupting) and the state of fusion of the limb bone epiphyses (distal humerus and proximal radius fusing), this animal was aged about 1.5 years old at death. There is no sign of butchery, which suggests this carcass was not utilised and probably buried/ disposed of complete. It is a reasonably sized individual and it can be tentatively suggested that it is unlikely to date to the Iron Age, late Saxon or medieval periods, when cattle tended to be relatively small. The best guess is that this skeleton is probably later medieval / post-medieval, in which case it may represent the remains of a diseased animal.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The archaeological evaluation identified a ditch [18] and two pits [16] and [21] within Trench 4, all of which can be dated to the 15th or 16th century, spanning the transition between the later medieval and early post-medieval periods. This dating is based on the pottery finds within Pit [16] and Ditch [18], as well as the condition and size of the cattle burial (20) in Pit [21].
- 7.2 Pit [16] is dated as late medieval/ transitional and contained one sherd of pottery. The feature truncates Ditch [18], which has been dated as late medieval/ early post-medieval and contained one sherd of pottery. The feature truncates Pit [21] to the west and is truncated by Pit [16]. Pit [21] has been dated as late medieval/ early post-medieval based on its stratigraphic relationship with Ditch [18] and the condition/ size of cattle burial (20).
- 7.3 Overall, the evaluation has provided some small-scale evidence for later medieval/ early post-medieval activity in this part of Sawston. The small quantities of pottery present in the three features (two sherds) and the presence of a cattle burial, possibly of a diseased animal, suggest that this activity was agricultural in character.
- 7.4 The three trenches in the western part of the site contained only natural features.
- 7.5 The extensive building activity on the remainder of the John Faulkner Infant School site is likely to have had some negative impact on archaeological remains in other parts of the site. The made ground in Trench 4 contained fragments of modern porcelain, indicating these deposits were likely to relate to the construction of the school.
- 7.6 While it was possible that prehistoric and/ or Roman remains would be encountered given the site's proximity to known local sites with activity of these dates, no evidence relating to these periods was identified during the evaluation.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PCA would like to thank Helen Fani for commissioning the work. Lawrence Morgan-Shelbourne supervised and excavated the site with the assistance of Tom Woolhouse and Matthew Lees. Thanks to Josephine Brown and Hayley Baxter of the PCA CAD Department for preparing the figures.



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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:20,000 at A4

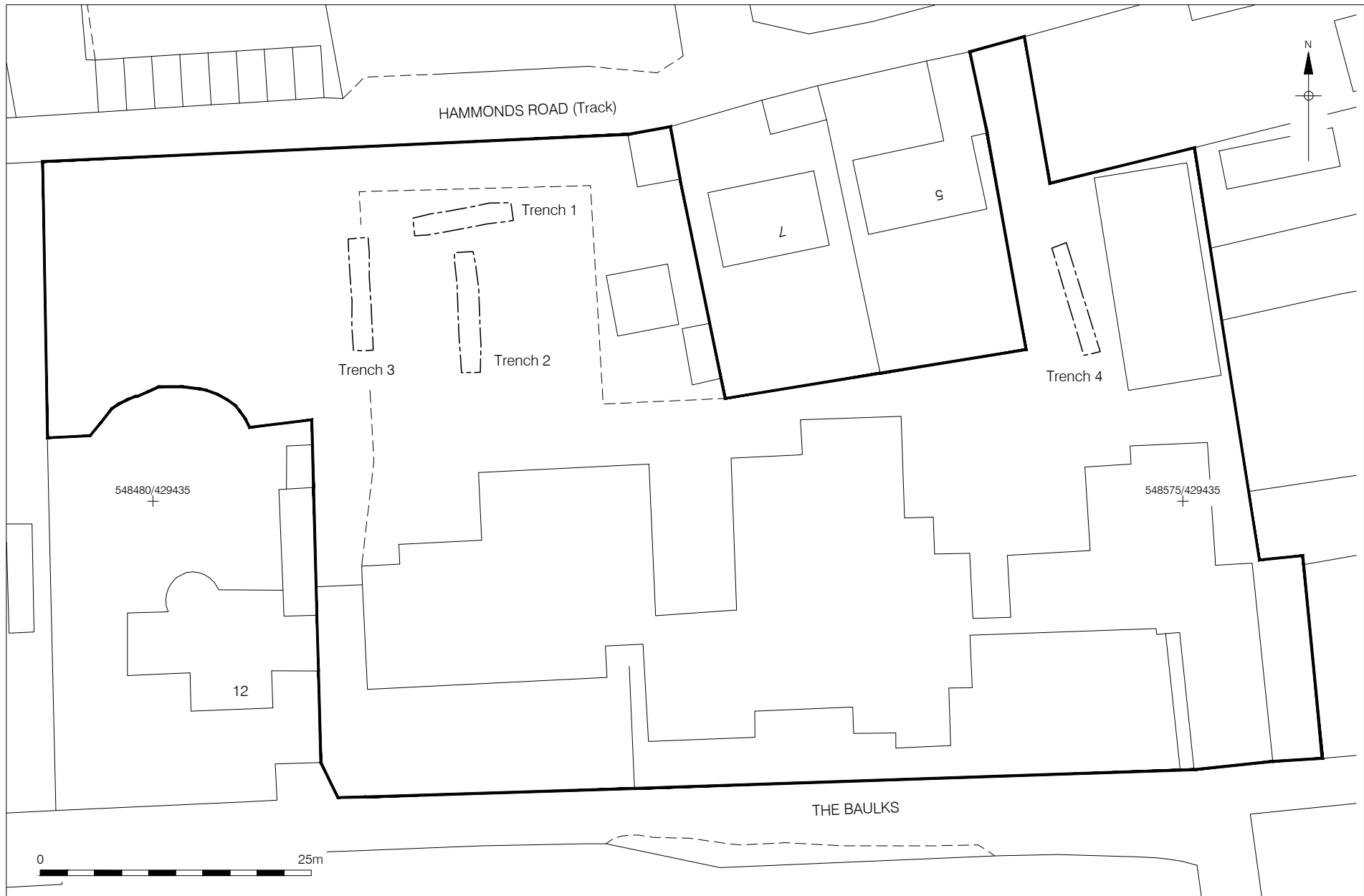
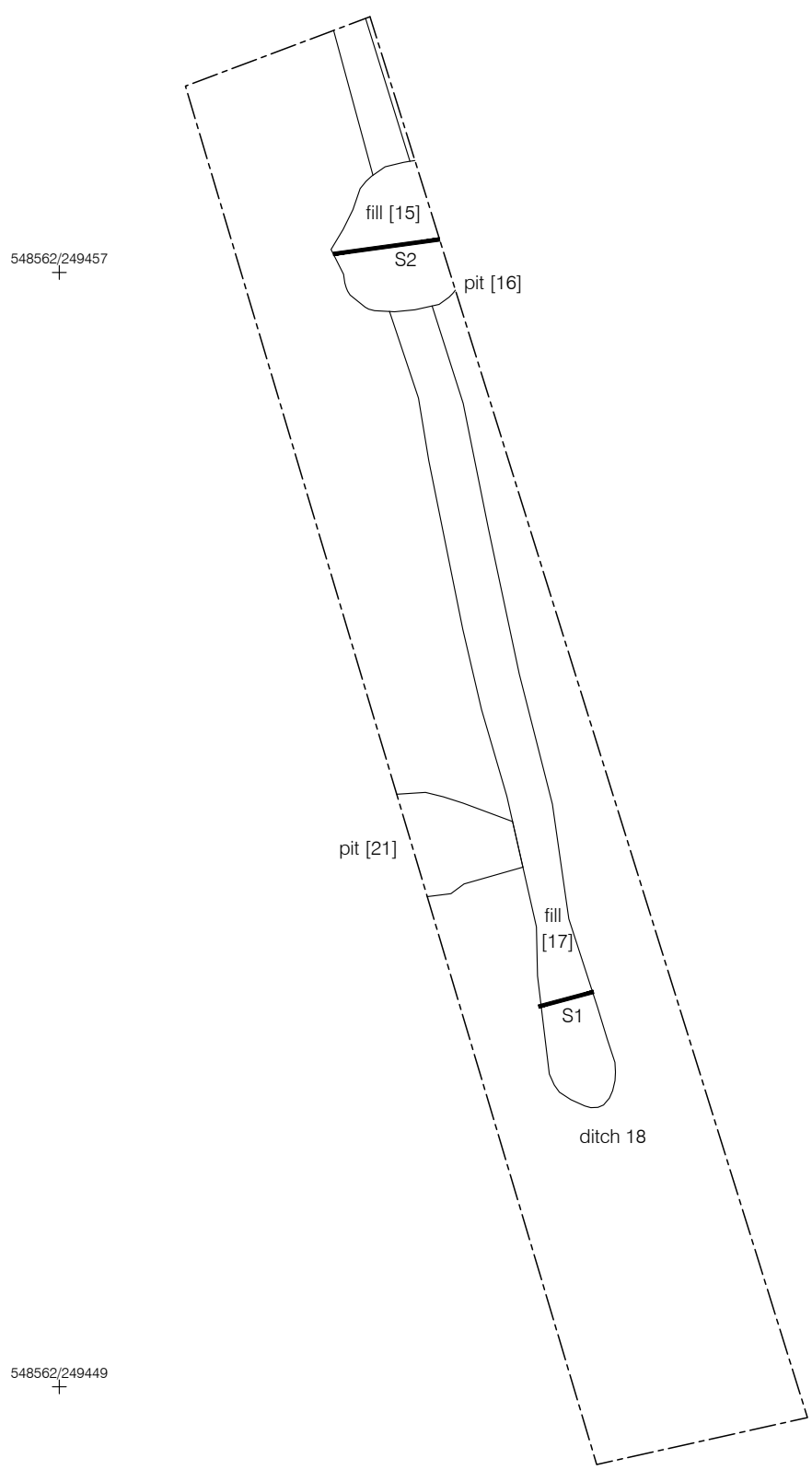
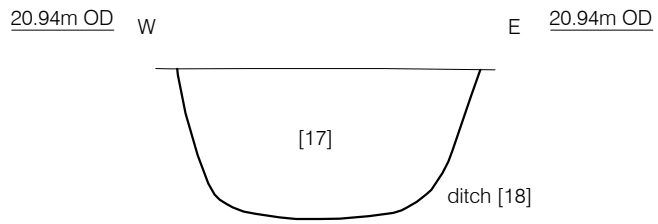


Figure 2
 Trench Location
 1:500 at A4

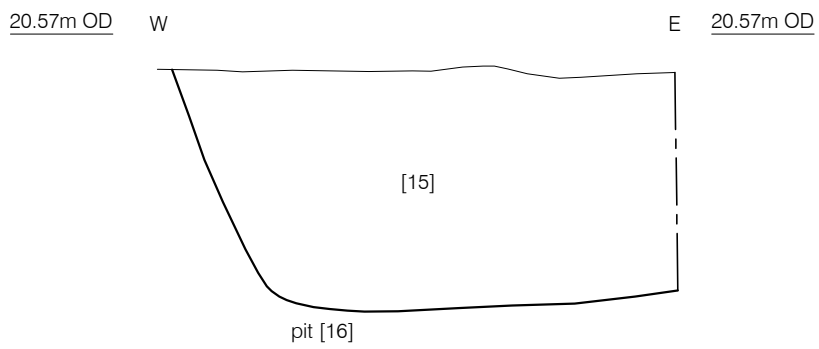


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Figure 3
Trench 4
1:50 at A4



Section 1
Trench 4
South Facing



Section 1
Trench 4
South Facing



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Figure 4
Sections 1 and 2
1:10 at A4

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context No.	Cut	Type	Tr.	Description	Finds?
5	n/a	Geology	All	Natural chalk.	n/a
6	6	Cut of Tree Hollow	3	NE-SW aligned, 0.96m wide and 0.23m deep. Moderately steep sides with a v-shaped base.	n/a
7	6	Fill of Tree Hollow	3	Firm mid grey-brown silt clay with rare chalk inclusions.	x
8	8	Cut of Tree Hollow	1	NE-SW aligned. 0.87m wide by 0.19m deep. Shallow sides with a v-shaped base.	n/a
9	8	Fill of Tree Hollow	1	Firm mid grey-brown silt clay with rare chalk inclusions.	x
10	10	Cut of Tree Hollow	1	Sub-ovoid, 1.47m long by 0.87m wide by 0.40m deep. Steep sides with a flat base.	n/a
11	10	Fill of Tree Hollow	1	Firm mid grey-brown silt clay with rare chalk inclusions.	x
12	n/a	Tarmac	1, 2, 4		n/a
13	n/a	Hardcore	1, 2, 4		n/a
14	n/a	Made Ground	1, 2, 4		n/a
15	16	Fill of Pit	4	Firm mid grey silt clay with rare chalk inclusions.	1x Medieval-transitional pot (6g)
16	16	Cut of Pit	4	Sub-circular, 1.00m long by 0.67m by 0.30m deep. Steep sides with a flat base.	n/a
17	18	Fill of Ditch Terminus	4	Firm mid grey silt clay with rare chalk and charcoal inclusions.	1x Medieval-transitional pot (87g)
18	18	Cut of Ditch Terminus	4	N-S aligned linear, <8m long by 0.40m wide by 0.20m deep. Steep sides with a flat base.	n/a
19	21	Fill of Pit	4	Firm mid grey silt clay with rare chalk and charcoal inclusions.	x
20	21	Skeleton of Cow	4	Articulated skeleton of a cattle.	n/a
21	21	Cut of Pit	4	Sub-ovoid, 0.84m long by 0.80m wide by 0.52 deep. Steep sides with an irregular concave base	n/a
22	n/a	Topsoil	3	Dark brown sand silt.	n/a
23	n/a	Made Ground	3	Light brown clay silt.	n/a

APPENDIX 2: PLATES

Plate 1: Trench 1, looking west (scale 2m)



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking south (scale 2m)



Plate 3: Trench 3, looking north (scale 2m)



Plate 4: Trench 4, looking north-west (scale 2m & 1m)



Plate 5: Pit [16], looking north (scale 0.4m)



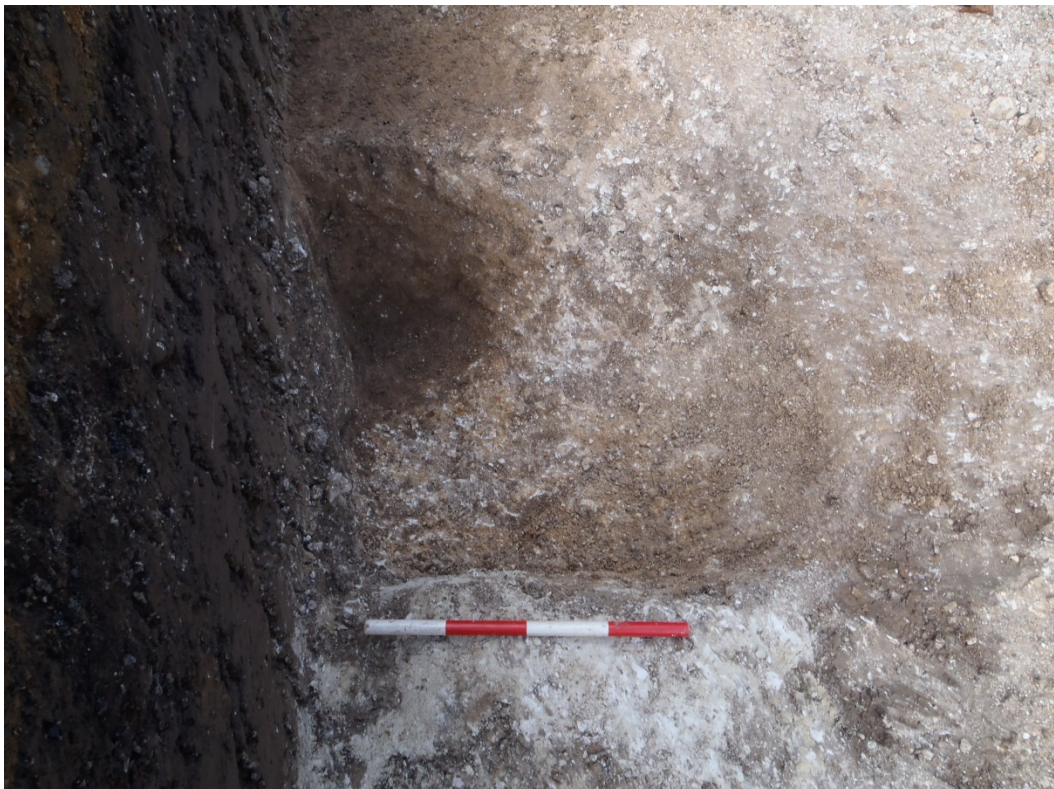
Plate 6: Ditch [18], looking north-west (scale 0.4m)



Plate 7: Pit [21], Cattle Skeleton (20) (scale 0.4m)



Plate 8: Pit [21], fully-excavated (scale 0.4m)



APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-158283

Project details

Project name	JOHN FAULKNER INFANT SCHOOL, THE BAULKS, SAWSTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Short description of the project	This report documents the results of an archaeological evaluation at the former John Faulkner infant school, Sawston, Cambridgeshire. Four 10m long trenches were machine excavated, of which one; trench 4 contained a NW-SE aligned ditch and two pits, one containing a single cattle burial. Pottery and stratigraphic evidence indicates the features are late Medieval/transitional period in date.
Project dates	Start: 29-08-2013 End: 30-08-2013
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	CJFS13 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	DITCH Medieval
Monument type	PIT Medieval
Monument type	ANIMAL BURIAL Medieval
Significant Finds	POT Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE SAWSTON JOHN FAULKNER INFANT SCHOOL, THE BAULKS, SAWSTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Postcode	CB22 3NP
Study area	72.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 4854 4942 52 0 52 07 21 N 000 10 11 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 21.25m Max: 21.25m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	PCA
Project brief originator	Cambridgeshire County Council
Project design originator	Mark Hinman
Project director/manager	Mark Hinman
Project supervisor	Lawrence Morgan-Shelbourne
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Helen Fani

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store
Physical Archive ID	CJFS13
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store
Digital Archive ID	CJFS13
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store
Paper Archive ID	CJFS13
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Map","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey","Unpublished Text"

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