



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching on Land West of
327 Norwood Road,
March,
Cambridgeshire**

NGR: TL 4082 9741

Andrew Hyam



ULAS Report No. 2019-042
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An Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching

**On Land West of
327 Norwood Road,
March,
Cambridgeshire**

NGR: TL 4082 9741

A R Hyam

**For: Creese Homes Ltd
Planning Ref: F/YR18/1146/F**

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Accession Number ECB5821**

Oasis Form

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-347164		
	Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching on Land West of 327 Norwood Road, March, Cambridgeshire.		
	Start/end dates of field work	12th and 13th of March 2019.		
	Previous/Future Work	None/not known		
	Project Type	Field evaluation		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Other 5 - Garden Monument type		
	Monument Type/Period	NONE/ None		
	Significant Finds/Period	NONE/ None		
	Development Type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)		
	Reason for Investigation	Direction from Local Planning Authority		
	Position in the Planning Process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)		
	Planning Ref.			
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	327 Norwood Road, March, Cambridgeshire Postcode PE15 8JN		
	Study Area	0.11 Hectares		
	Site Coordinates	TL 4082 9741 52.555901585725 0.077404936291 52 33 21 N 000 04 38 E Point		
	Height OD	Min: 3.4m Max: 3.5m		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	University of Leicester Archaeological Services		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	John Thomas		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Andrew Hyam		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Creese Homes Ltd		
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CONTENTS

Summary	1
Introduction	1
Location and Geology	2
Historical and Archaeological Background	5
Objectives	6
Research Aims	7
Methodology	7
Results	10
Trench 1	11
Trench 2	13
Discussion	15
Archive	15
Publication	15
Bibliography	15
Appendix 1 Artefacts recovered from topsoil	17
Appendix 2 Trench recording record sheets	19
Appendix 3 Digital photographs taken during the evaluation	21

FIGURES

Figure 1 Site location centred on NGR TL4082 9741	3
Figure 2 Site entrance from Norwood Road	4
Figure 3 Plan of proposed development area	4
Figure 4 Site before excavation of trenches	5
Figure 5 Detail from 1902 Second Edition Ordnance Survey	6
Figure 6 Evaluation trench locations	9
Figure 7 Evaluation trench locations and knotweed exclusion zones	9
Figure 8 Trench 1	12
Figure 9 Trench 1 spur looking north	12
Figure 10 Features identified in both trenches	13
Figure 11 Trench 2 looking west	14
Figure 12 Trench 2 spur looking south	14

**An Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching on Land West of
327 Norwood Road, March, Cambridgeshire.
NGR: TL 4082 9741**

Andrew Hyam

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 327 Norwood Road, March, Cambridgeshire by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on the 12th and 13th of March 2019. Two evaluation trenches with a total length of 50m were excavated in the garden to the west of Number 327.

A number of ceramic land drains and late 20th century disturbance was identified but no archaeological features or deposits were found. 19th and 20th century material was also recovered from the topsoil.

The report and archive will be deposited under Accession Number ECB5821

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 16 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* this document forms the report for an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land to the west of 327 Norwood Road, March, Cambridgeshire, NGR: TL 4082 9741. The work took place in advance of proposed development of the site for housing under planning application F/YR18/1146/F. Permission has been granted for the erection of two new dwellings and associated landscaping within the former rear garden of Number 327 Norwood Road.

The proposed development site lies within the vicinity of a number of archaeological sites dating from the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods as identified in the Cambridge Historic Environment Team *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation, Land West of 327 Norwood Road, March* (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team 2018) and the ULAS Written Scheme of Investigation for *Archaeological Evaluation on Land West of 327 Norwood Road, March, Cambridgeshire* (Hunt, 2019). In view of the archaeological potential of the site the Planning Archaeologist at Cambridgeshire County Council requested that an archaeological field evaluation took place prior to the start of any redevelopment work (CHET, 2018). This would be part of a phased programme of archaeological work commencing with trial trenching to determine the impact of the proposed scheme on any buried archaeology. Should any archaeological deposits be revealed during the evaluation work a mitigation strategy for the site would then be produced.

Location and Geology

March is a Fenland market town and civil parish in the Isle of Ely area of Cambridgeshire and lies around 15 miles to the east of Peterborough. The proposed development site is on the western side of Norwood Road close to its southern end and is around $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the town centre (Fig. 1). The site is accessed from Norwood Road via a drive leading to the rear of the properties which sit along the road frontage (Fig. 2). The proposed development area currently comprises the gardens to the rear of 327 Norwood Road. The area is broadly rectangular, flat, and aligned west-north-west to east-south-east. It is around 0.11ha in size and lies at a height of around 3.5m aOD (Figs. 3 and 4). A timber-built stable separates the proposed development area from the rear garden and parking area of Number 327. The proposed new development will be accessed via Prospect Road which runs along the western edge of the site and joins Wisbech Road.

The site contained stands of Japanese Knotweed which at the time of the evaluation was undergoing long-term treatment for its eventual removal. The knotweed programme of eradication meant that infested areas could not be disturbed either by trenching, deposition of spoil or by tracking over with a machine. Therefore the areas of the site that could be evaluated were extremely limited. In agreement with the planning archaeologist at Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team the trenches were placed outside the Japanese Knotweed risk zones as set out by TPK Solutions Ltd (Payne 2018). Eventually the knotweed affected areas will have the soil removed and replaced with sterile material.

The British Geological Survey identifies the bedrock geology of the area is Ampthill Clay Formation solid geology covered by Tidal Flat deposits of clay and silt.

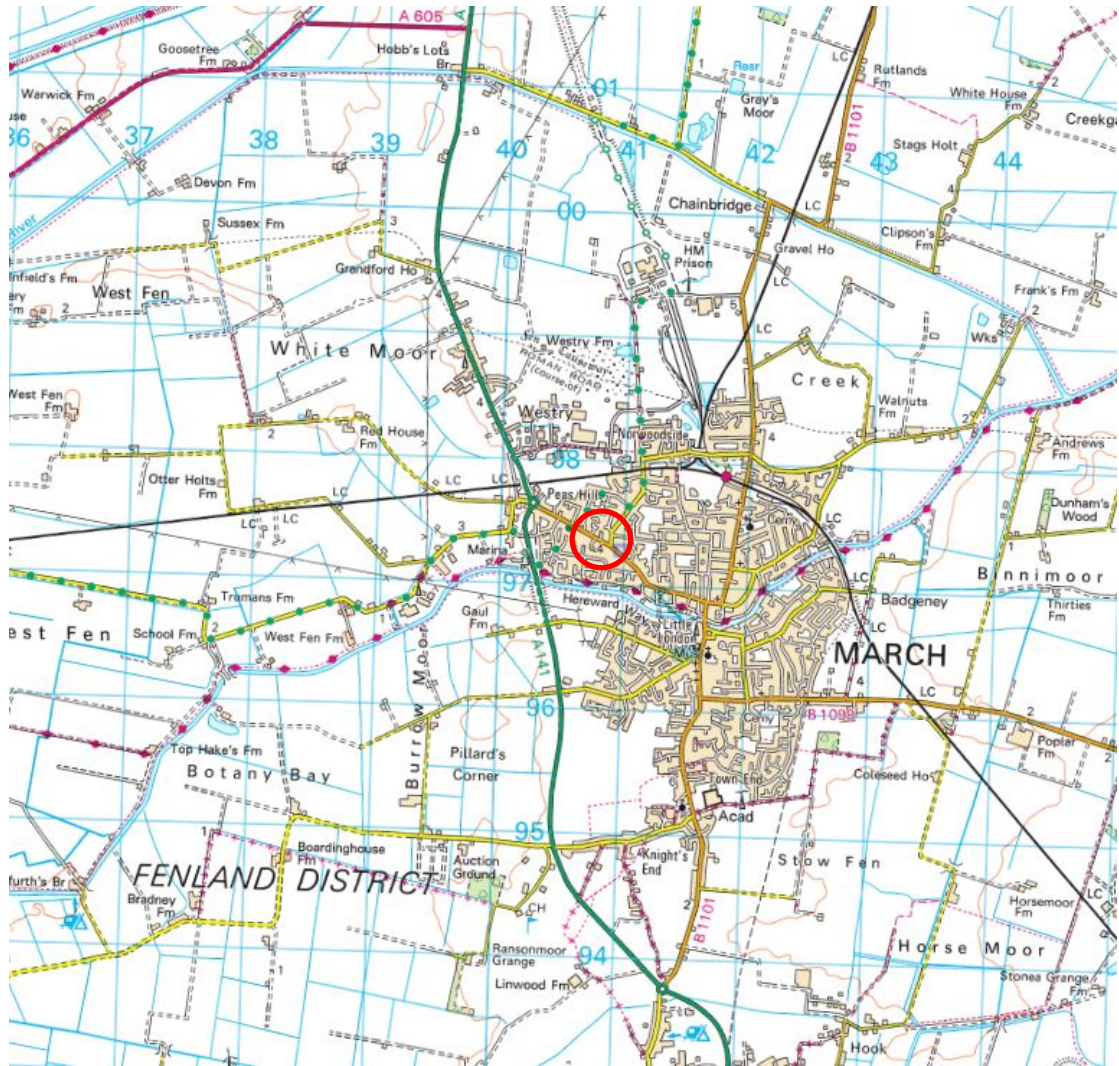


Figure 1 Site location centred on NGR TL4082 9741

Site highlighted in red

Contains Ordnance Survey data

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Figure 2 Site entrance from Norwood Road
Looking north-west. Development area is behind the timber shed between the houses

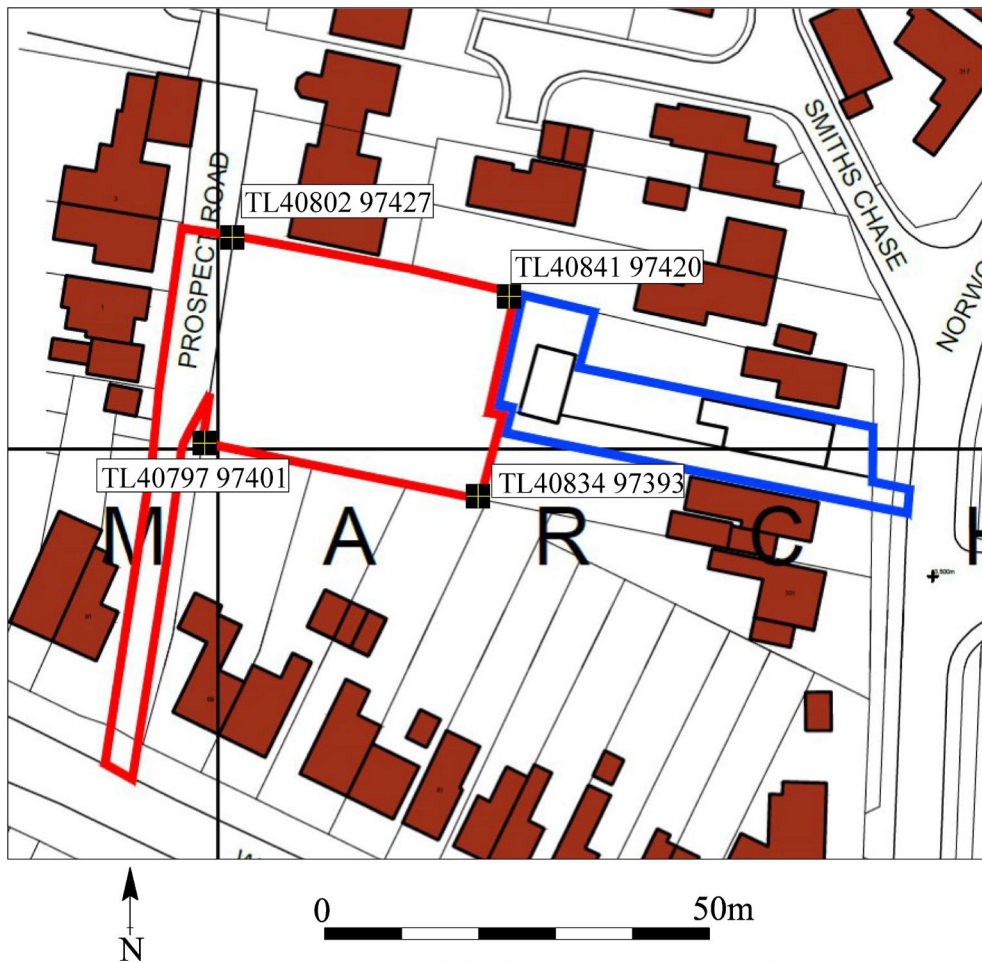


Figure 3 Plan of proposed development area
Garden area is within the red line with Prospect Road forming its western boundary
Blue line shows outline of the rest of the property belonging to 327 Norwood Road.
Plan supplied by client



Figure 4 Site before excavation of trenches
Looking south-east. Blue rope and orange fencing identify Japanese knotweed
exclusion areas

Historical and Archaeological Background

The ULAS WSI for this project included a search of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) (Hunt, 2019). The data used as the basis of this search was provided in the 2018 *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation, Land West of 327 Norwood Road, March* produced by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team. The results of the search showed that there are a large number of archaeological sites within a 1km radius of the site.

The presence of a number of flint scatters, buried soils and earthfast features within the vicinity of the site suggested that there was a good potential for recovering evidence of prehistoric activity. Excavations approximately 600m north-east of the site revealed a multi-phase site which included Late Bronze Age to middle Iron Age features.

Roman activity has also been identified within the vicinity of the site. Closest to the proposed development site was an evaluation conducted by Oxford Archaeology East in 2009 (Thatcher, 2009). The site at Smith's Chase, which was around 75m north-east of 327 Norwood Road, revealed evidence of two possible Roman ditches which may be part of an enclosure.

A number of medieval and post medieval ditches have also been identified close to the development site. The site of a post-medieval windmill lies close to the south-western edge of the proposed site. A modern windmill is also close to the site. The house at Number 327 bears a construction date plaque of 1933 along with the name *Mill Close* which suggests that the mill was still present at this date.

The First and Second edition Ordnance Survey maps published in 1889 and 1902 show the development site as an enclosed field on the corner of Wisbech Road and Norwood Road (Fig. 5). A track, now known as Prospect Road, runs northwards to the mill on subsequent editions which also show a gradual piecemeal infilling of the field by housing. The development site however seems to have remained as an open space.

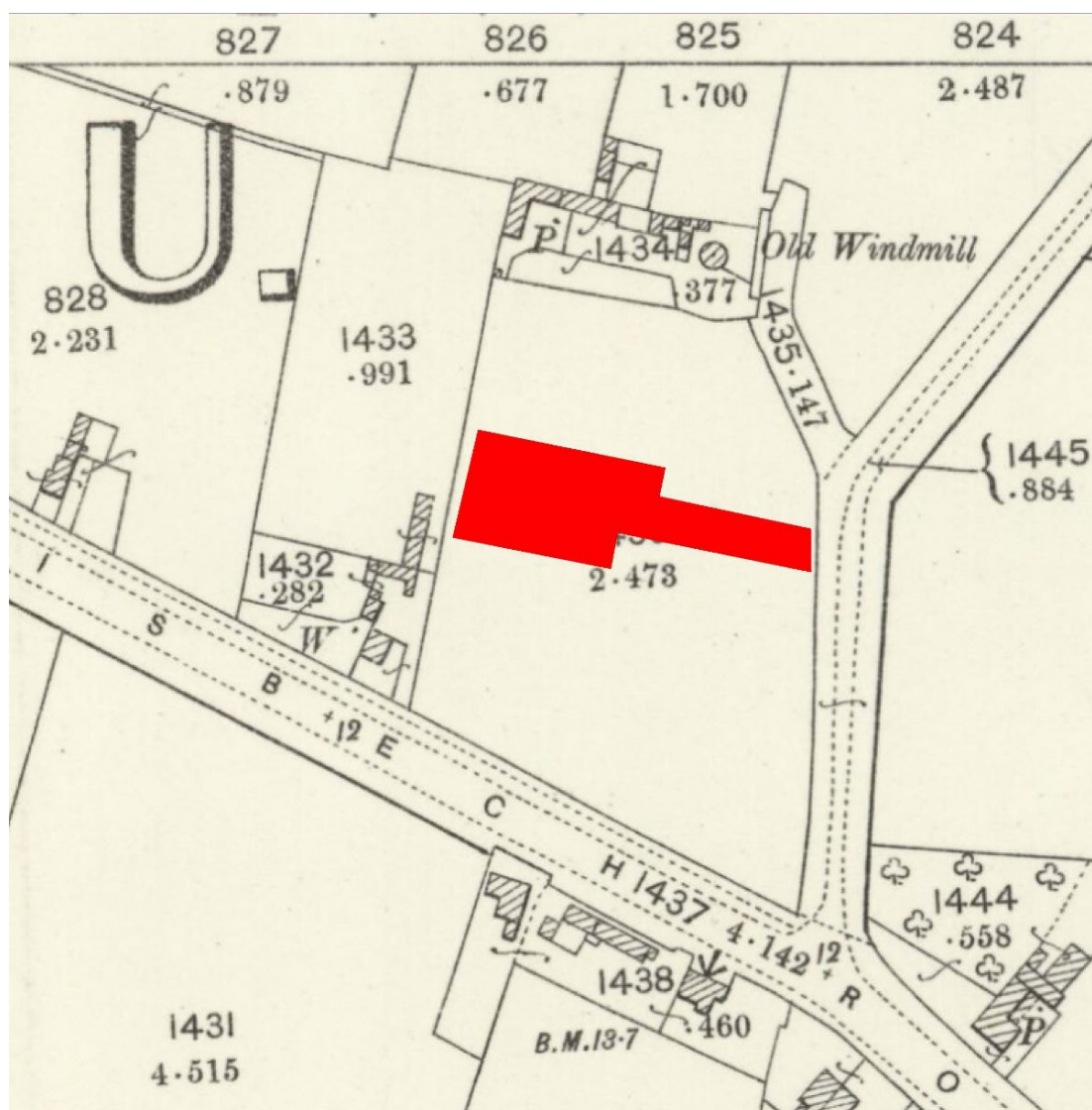


Figure 5 Detail from 1902 Second Edition Ordnance Survey
Approximate location of site highlighted.

Objectives

Within the stated project objectives identified in the ULAS WSI, the principal aim of the survey was:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.

- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

The presence of two areas of Japanese knotweed meant that parts of the site were off-limits to the archaeological work (see figure 4 above and figure 7 below). The results of the evaluation will provide information in order for the local planning authority to make informed recommendations and to identify an appropriate mitigation strategy for the proposed development, should any archaeological deposits or features be found.

Research Aims

While the nature, extent and quality of archaeological remains within the area of investigation for the project remain unknown until archaeological work is undertaken, it is possible to determine some initial objectives derived from Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England (Medlycott 2014).

The site's location close to the site of prehistoric flint scatters, Roman activity and medieval settlement suggested that there was a reasonably high potential for archaeological deposits from these periods. The evaluation therefore had the potential to contribute to a number of research aims.

Bronze Age

Settlement and landscape use, material culture the Bronze Age/Iron Age transition.

Iron Age

Chronology, development of the agrarian economy, settlement development, social organization and settlement form, artefact production and distribution, the Late Iron Age/Roman transition.

Roman

Rural settlements and landscapes, the agrarian economy – consumption and production, manufacturing and industry, the Roman/Anglo-Saxon transition.

Medieval Rural Settlement

Regional or landscape variations in settlement location, density or type.
How far the size and shape of fields can be related to agricultural regimes.
The relationship between rural and urban sites.

Methodology

All work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2014b) and adhered to their Code of Conduct (2014a).

Prior to the start of the work photographs were taken of the site and its location. Two L-shaped trenches, with a total 50m length, were located to target the areas that will be

most disturbed by building works and which covered the available space within the footprint of the proposed buildings. A key priority however was to remain outside the Japanese Knotweed exclusion zones and to ensure that there was enough safe working space and enough space available for spoil (Figs 6 and 7). Trench locations and the site boundaries were recorded using a Topcon RTK-GPS. A metal detector was used to scan the area of the trenches before any machining began.

A tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide flat-bladed ditching bucket was used throughout the evaluation. Topsoil and overburden were removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision. Topsoil and subsoil were stored separately. The trenches were excavated down to the top of archaeological deposits or down to natural undisturbed ground, whichever was reached first. All excavation by machine was undertaken with a view to avoid damage to any archaeological deposits or features which appeared worthy of preservation *in situ* or which deserved more detailed investigation than required for the purposes of evaluation. Digital photographs were taken throughout the course of the evaluation.

A bucket sampling programme was specified in the CHET Brief and the ULAS WSI, whereby 90 litres of spoil was hand sorted for each soil horizon encountered. Bucket sampling points were undertaken at each end of both trenches and at the corner of each spur. Any archaeological artefacts recovered from these sampling points would be retained. The artefact contents of the topsoil and any lower soil horizons along the whole length of each trench were continuously examined during the course of the evaluation. The resulting field data was quantified and is illustrated within the report (Table 1). Following full excavation of each trench a metal detector was used to scan the spoil from each horizon. Finds from the topsoil and subsoil were retained for inspection (Appendix 1). The base of each trench was also scanned with the metal detector as excavation progressed.

The WSI stated that if any archaeological deposits were encountered they would be recorded in plan and excavated using standard ULAS procedures. All exposed features would then be investigated (unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Archaeologist). The WSI also specified that discrete features would be half-sectioned as a minimum where possible. A 1m wide section of each linear feature would be excavated, if any were found.

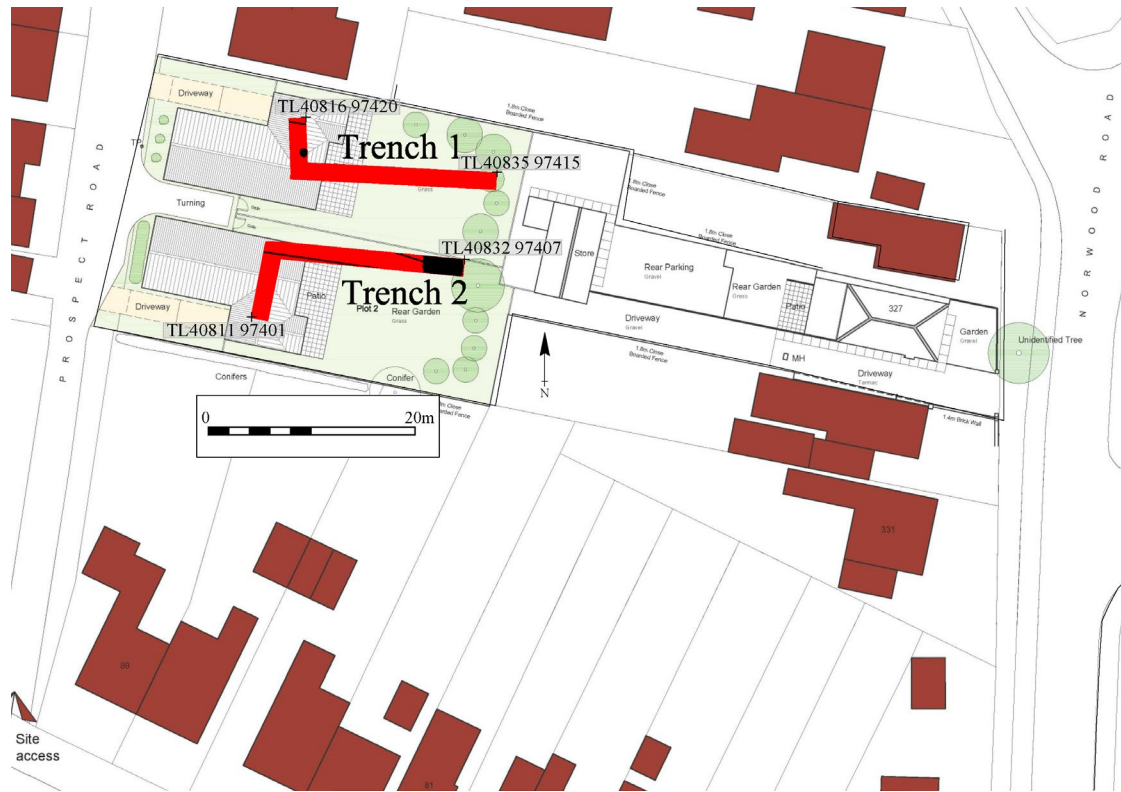


Figure 6 Evaluation trench locations
Trenches shown overlaid on proposed development plan
Original plan supplied by client

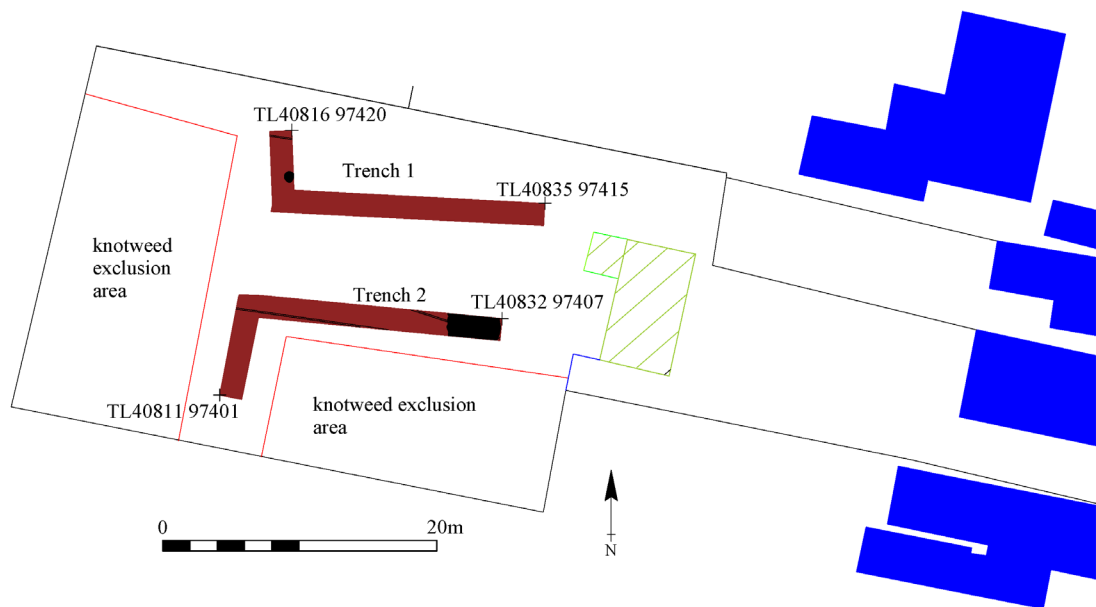


Figure 7 Evaluation trench locations and knotweed exclusion zones

Results

In order to fit the trenches into the rather restricted area two L-shaped trenches were excavated as shown in Figures 6 and 7 above. The main axis of both trenches was aligned on an approximate east to west orientation with a spur to the north or south. The spur of each trench was located in the approximate position of the proposed two dwellings. Topsoil and subsoil were kept separately for both trenches to allow for inspection and appropriate backfilling. The pre-excavation metal detecting of the trenches and the surrounding area failed to produce anything other than modern debris and a large amount of background noise. The metal-detected debris included very modern metal ranging from wire to modern cutlery and electrical components.

The details of all excavated trenches are presented below in Table 1 and the trench record sheets are shown in Appendix 3). The trenches are described individually in this section. In both cases the topsoil consisted of a dark grey brown silty clay. A large amount of modern debris including plastic, metal and modern bricks (most with LBC stamped into the frog) was observed within this layer. The topsoil had a quite consistent thickness of approximately 0.3m across most of the excavated area in both trenches. It also appeared to be quite disturbed by modern activity.

Beneath the topsoil was a mid-brownish yellow silty clay subsoil. This contained a number of slightly sandier areas and appeared to be quite a thin layer with an overall average depth of less than 0.1m giving the impression that it may have been landscaped and/or reduced in thickness.

The natural substratum consisted of a mid-brownish yellow silty clay similar in nature to the subsoil but was much cleaner and had a higher clay content. Within the natural substratum were irregular patches of sandy gravel. This was the same in both trenches.

Heavy rain and a high water table meant that within around 45 minutes of excavation the base of each trench had begun to fill with water.

	Trench 1	Trench 2
Length	24.8m	25.6
Width	1.6m	1.6m
Min depth	0.35m	0.32m
Max depth	0.48m	0.44m
Av. Topsoil depth	0.29m	0.32m
Av. Subsoil depth	0.10m	0.09m

Topsoil description	Dk grey brown friable silty clay. Frequent modern detritus, plastic and building material	Dk grey brown friable silty clay. Frequent modern detritus, plastic and building material
Subsoil description	Mid brownish yellow silty clay. Some sandy patches	Mid brownish yellow silty clay. Some sandy patches
Natural substratum	Bright mid-brownish yellow clay silt	Bright mid-brownish yellow clay silt
Notes	Ceramic E-W land drain at N end. Mod pit cutting through topsoil and subsoil	2 ceramic land drains. Area of modern disturbance at east end

Table 1 Trench depth summary

Trench 1

Trench 1 was the northernmost of the two trenches with a total length of 24.8m (Figs 8 and 9). As the excavation of Trench progressed a number of finds were recovered from the topsoil. Most finds were made of plastic or metal and clearly dated to the late 20th century. However, a small number of finds were of a slightly earlier date and were photographed and retained for inspection and are shown in Appendix 1. These late 19th and early 20th century finds consisted of; two short lengths of sawn animal bone, probably cattle femur; a small sherd of transfer-printed willow pattern type glazed pottery and a fragment of clay pipe stem. The finds shown in Appendix 1 were recovered during machine excavation. No artefacts earlier than the late 20th century were recovered during the bucket sampling exercise. No artefacts from any date were recovered from the subsoil in this trench.

At the northern end of the spur a land drain could be seen cutting into the natural substratum in the base of the trench. It followed an approximate east to west alignment. The drain was ceramic and had a circular cross section. The drain appeared to be blocked by silt and the intense rain on the day of the evaluation caused the base of the trench to fill quite rapidly.

Two metres to the south of the drain was a feature which could be seen cutting through the topsoil and subsoil and down into the natural substratum where it formed a roughly circular feature 0.75m in diameter (Figs 9 and 10). Modern building material had been encountered at this point during the trench excavation. Despite this modern debris there was still a slight possibility that this material could have been introduced from elsewhere within the topsoil during the excavation of the trench. Following full excavation of the trench the undisturbed base of the feature cutting into the natural substratum was half-sectioned. At 0.12m below the top of the natural substratum surface more plastic debris was found within the dark brown silty clay fill of the feature. The plastic was not retained and the feature was not allocated any context numbers. At this point the water was allowed back in to fill up the clearly modern feature.

Metal detecting the spoil and the base and sides of the trench failed to recover anything other than modern material in the form of wire and modern metal fittings. No

archaeological features or deposits were found in this trench, neither were any more drains or modern features found in the remainder of Trench 1.



Figure 8 Trench 1

Looking west towards site boundary with Prospect Road. North to south spur is at the far end of the trench. 1m scale



Figure 9 Trench 1 spur looking north

1m scale. Arrows point to the edges of the modern pit cutting from the turf down through the topsoil, subsoil and into the natural

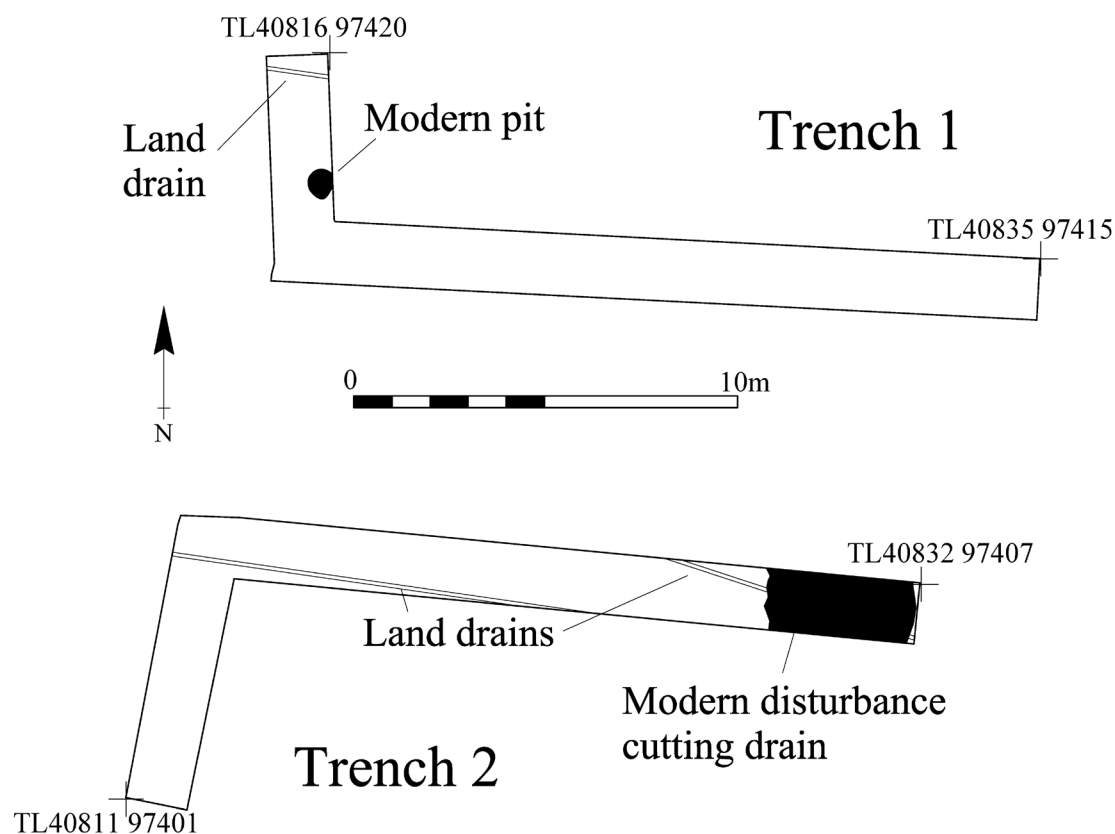


Figure 10 Features identified in both trenches

Trench 2

Trench 2 was the southernmost of the two evaluation trenches and, as with Trench 1, followed an approximate east to west alignment along its longest axis (Figs 10, 11 and 12). The topsoil in this trench appeared to be slightly more disturbed than in Trench 1 especially as it got closer to the gate leading past the wooden stable building towards the house. Two more clay pipe stem fragments were recovered from the topsoil along with two sherds of transfer printed willow pattern and five sherds of 19th century (or later) glazed cooking vessels (Appendix 1). As with Trench 1 no artefacts were recovered from the subsoil.

A ceramic land drain ran from east to west along most of the length of the trench whilst a second drain, on a north-west to south-east alignment, cut across the trench close to its eastern end. An area of modern disturbance covered much of the eastern end of the trench and cut a short way into the natural substratum. The disturbance was extremely modern as one piece of metal still retained its barcode and manufacturer's name of Zanussi.

Metal detecting the spoil heaps and the base and sides of the trench failed to recover anything other than modern material. No archaeological features or deposits were found in this trench, neither were any more drains or modern features found in the remainder of Trench 2



Figure 11 Trench 2 looking west.
Spur at far end of trench. Disturbed area closest to camera. 1m scale



Figure 12 Trench 2 spur looking south
1m scale. Arrow points to course of land drain

Discussion

Despite the reasonable potential for prehistoric and Roman archaeology no archaeological features or deposits were found during the evaluation work. No artefacts earlier than the 19th century were recovered from the topsoil which appeared to have been disturbed within the recent past. The pottery finds may relate to manuring activity prior to the construction of the surrounding properties as the first and second edition OS maps indicate that this area was in use as an agricultural field. It is possible therefore that the finds may have an agricultural origin rather than from occupation within the present site boundary. Alternatively they may have originated from the adjacent property to the west which is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map.

The present owner was told that the timber stable was used at some stage for slaughtering pigs so it is possible that the sawn cattle bones found in Trench1 come from this period. He also said that neighbours have indicated that a number of fridges and appliances may be buried across the site. This may or may not be true and no further research has taken place to verify this. No such objects were found in the evaluation trenches although many of the modern components found may be from such appliances. What is clear is that the site has been heavily disturbed in the recent past.

Archive

The archive consists of:

This report,

2 ULAS pro-forma trench recording sheets,

1 photo recording sheet,

1 contact sheet of digital photographs taken during the evaluation,

1 DVD containing the digital images taken during the evaluation.

Prior to the deposition of the archive at the County Archive Facility transfer of title documentation will be obtained. The transfer of title documentation represents the transfer of ownership of the archive.

Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the appropriate local archaeological and historical society journal in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature. The report will be submitted to the HER via OASIS within two weeks of approval.

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Appendix 1 Artefacts recovered from topsoil



**327 NORWOOD ROAD, MARCH,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE.
ECB5821**

Trench 2 Topsoil finds



Appendix 2 Trench recording record sheets

ULAS Trench Recording Sheet

Acc. No: **ECB5821**
 Site Name: **327 NORWOOD RD MARCH CAMBS.**

Trench No		Field No/Name		OS Grid Square					
Orientation E-W WITH N-SPUR		Slope? NONE							
Length 20 + 5M		Width 1.6M		Depth Min. 0.35M.		Depth Max. 0.48M			
Description		Topsoil			Subsoil				
Colour		DK GREY/BROWN			MID BROWNISH YELLOW.				
Texture		FRAGILE			FIRM.				
Consistence		SILTY CLAY			SILTY CLAY / SOME SANDY GRAVEL AREAS				
Coarse Comps		FRESH MOD BRICKS LOT OF METAL & PLASTIC.			FRESH FLINT - UNWORKED.				
Comments		LOOKS QUITE DISTURBED.							
Natural (1)		BRIGHT MID BROWNISH YELLOW SIMILAR TO SUBSOIL BUT FIRMER &							
Natural (2)		MORE CLAY CONTENT.							
Interval (m) From		WEST						To	
End N		0	5	6	10	15	20	25	End
Ground (OD)									
Topsoil depth		0.30M	0.32	0.28	0.27	0.30	0.36	0.20	
Subsoil depth		0.12M	0.12	0.11	0.07	0.09	0.11	0.10	
Top of Natural		0.42M	0.44	0.39	0.34	0.39	0.47	0.30	
Base of trench		0.42M	0.45	0.40	0.40	0.41	0.48	0.31	
Contexts		NONE							
Evidence for truncation/ploughing?		- LAND DRAWS - CERAMIC & ROUND SECTION.							
Further work required?									
Notes/Sketch									
Plan Nos		Section Nos							
Survey Files MARCH130319		Photo Nos SEE PHOTO RECORD SHEET.							
Recorded by AWL		Date 12.3.19.		Checked					

ULAS Trench Recording Sheet

ECB5821

Acc. No: 327 NORWOOD RD.
Site Name: PLASTER-CASES

Trench No 2		Field No/Name		OS Grid Square					
Orientation E10 + N35W		Slope? NONE							
Length 1.8m + 6.5m	Width 1.6m	Depth Min. 0.34m	Depth Max. 0.44m						
Description	Topsoil	Subsoil							
Colour	AS IN T1	AS IN T1							
Texture									
Consistence									
Coarse Comps									
Comments									
Natural (1)	AS IN T1								
Natural (2)									
Interval (m) From End	5	0	6	7	10	15	20	24	To End
Ground (OD)									EAST
Topsoil depth	0.30m	0.34	0.33	0.31	0.30	0.32	0.34		
Subsoil depth	0.10m	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.10	NONE*	0.02		
Top of Natural	0.40m	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.40	0.52	0.36		
Base of trench	0.40m	0.42	0.44	0.42	0.42	0.54	0.38		
Contexts	NONE - LOTS OF MODERN DETAILS AT EAST END.								
Evidence for truncation/ploughing?	TWO LAND DRAINS.								
Further work required?	NO								
Notes/Sketch	<p>* NO SUBSOIL AT 20M MOD RUBBISH - EVEN WAS A BAKODE.</p>								
Plan Nos					Section Nos				
Survey Files	MARCH 130319				Photo Nos SEE PHOTO RECORD SHEET.				
Recorded by	AMM		Date	12.3.19		Checked			

Appendix 3 Digital photographs taken during the evaluation

Low resolution copies. Original high-resolution images stored on a DVD as part of this archive.



ECB5821_March (1).JPG



ECB5821_March (2).JPG



ECB5821_March (3).JPG



ECB5821_March (4).JPG



ECB5821_March (5).JPG



ECB5821_March (6).JPG



ECB5821_March (7).JPG



ECB5821_March (8).JPG



ECB5821_March (9).JPG



ECB5821_March (10).JPG



ECB5821_March (11).JPG



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