

**English First Language School  
221 Hills Road  
Cambridge**

**Archaeological Evaluation Report**

**NGR TL 46340 56210**

**Prepared for  
EF Language School**

**ASE Report No: 2013169  
OASIS ID: archaeol6-154477**

**Project No. 6123  
July 2013**

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**ASE Project No: 6123  
Site Code: ECB3975**

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**By Adrian Scruby & Lukasz Miciak**

**July 2013**

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**Abstract**

*Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the English First Language School to undertake an archaeological field evaluation at 221 Hills Road, Cambridge, in advance of the construction of an extension to the existing language school. The evaluation consisted of the machine excavation of one 15m long by 1.8m wide trench in an existing courtyard area.*

*The site is located approximately 2.5km south of Cambridge city centre, at the junction of Hills Road and Cavendish Avenue and lies on the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation, which is overlain by River Terrace Deposits 3 – Sand and Gravel immediately to the north. Iron Age, Roman and medieval remains have all been found in the area surrounding the development.*

*The existing block-paved courtyard surface was removed by hand to reveal a layer of bedding sand that had been laid upon a layer of sub-base/ crushed hardcore. Underlying this was the original topsoil that sealed a subsoil layer overlying natural deposits. The natural geology of the site was shown to be a compact silty chalk, indicating that the site sat directly on the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation with no overlying River Terrace deposits.*

*The central part of the trench was crossed by two utility trenches, containing a water pipe and an unidentified cable, but was otherwise devoid of any archaeological features or finds.*

*The presence of the original topsoil horizon beneath the sub-base layer for the block paving suggests that this part of the site has not been extensively disturbed in the past and the absence of remains would therefore appear to be genuine. Whether this is indicative of a paucity of remains in the immediate vicinity or simply a reflection of the relatively small area investigated is unknown. However, given the size of the trench area in relation to the footprint of the proposed extension it would appear that the development will have little or no impact upon the archaeological record.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA) at the Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by the English First Language School to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of the construction of an extension to the existing language school. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 4634 5621 and its location is shown in Figure 1.

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

According to current data from the BGS Geology of Britain Viewer, the site lies on the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation, which is overlain by River Terrace Deposits 3 – Sand and Gravel immediately to the north. The site is located approximately 2.5km south of Cambridge city centre, at the junction of Hills Road and Cavendish Avenue and is occupied by the English First Language School, consisting of an original building with an L-shaped extension surrounding a block-paved courtyard to the south.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

- 1.3.1 Planning permission has been granted by Cambridge City Council for the redevelopment of the site, comprising the partial demolition of the existing language school and replacement with a new side extension with increased social space, subject to conditions (Planning Ref: 13/0409/FUL). Due to the archaeological potential of the site, Condition 24 of the permission stated that:

*No development shall take place within the area indicated until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority.*

- 1.3.2 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* outlining the scope of the archaeological work was produced by Archaeology South-East (ASE 2013) and duly approved by the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET) in their role as advisors to the Local Planning Authority. All work was carried out in accordance with this document and with the the *IfA Code of Conduct (2010)*, the *Standard and Guidance for field evaluation (IfA 2008)* and the *ALGAO Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003)*

### **1.4 Scope of Report**

- 1.4.1 This report details the results of the evaluation works undertaken on the site between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2013 by Lukasz Miciak and Adam Dyson. The fieldwork was managed by Adrian Scruby (Project Manager), who also prepared the report, with illustrations prepared by Andrew Lewsey.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 The following archaeological background utilises the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER), held at Shire Hall, Cambridge and the CCC Historic Environment Team design brief for the site (CCC HET 2013).
- 2.1.2 Iron Age, Roman and medieval remains have all been found in the area surrounding the development. A probable Iron Age pit was recorded to the south in Cavendish Avenue (Historic Environment Record No. MCB 18561) and a possible Middle Iron Age enclosure was discovered further to the south-east (HER No. ECB155). Roman ditches thought to form a small enclosure, possibly on the periphery of a contemporary settlement, have been found at Homerton College to the west of the site (HER No. 11958, ECB 2313). Further Roman earthworks and a possible Roman road were revealed in an antiquarian excavation to the south-west (HER No. ECB611), whilst various finds of Roman date have been discovered in the area of Luard Road and Perse School (HER Nos. 04820, 04824, 04812, 04735). Hills Road itself is believed to reflect the line of a former Roman Road. Medieval and later field boundaries have been found to the west and north of the site (HER No. 11958 & No. MCB 18423 respectively).

## **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Methodology**

- 3.1.1 An area totalling 27 sqm, comprising one 15m long by 1.8m wide trench, was excavated in the first instance, as shown in Figure 1. All machine excavation was undertaken under archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Spoil from the machine excavations was scanned for the presence of any artefacts, both visually and using a metal detector.
- 3.1.2 All encountered archaeological deposits were recorded in accordance with the WSI (ASE 2013) and with the relevant Standards and Guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008) and the *ALGAO Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).
- 3.1.3 A photographic record of the work was kept and forms part of the site archive. The archive (quantified in Table 2) is presently held at Archaeology South-East offices in Essex and will be submitted to the County Archaeological Store in due course.

### **3.2 Aims and Objectives**

- 3.2.1 The aims and objectives of the archaeological work were set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation and are herein reproduced below in full
- The aim of the archaeological evaluation is to determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits and features within the development area and to establish their extent, date, character, condition and significance.
  - Particular attention will be made to the amount of truncation to buried deposits, the presence or absence of a palaeosol or 'B' horizon, the preservation of deposits within negative features and site formation processes generally. If necessary, the advice of a suitably qualified soil scientist will be

sought. The assessment of the environmental potential of the site through examination of suitable deposits will also be arranged with a suitably qualified specialist. Consideration will be given to the survival of faunal evidence and an assessment provided to the viability of further study and the importance of such material in relation to mitigation strategies.

- The evaluation report will provide a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relative importance against known development proposals. An impact assessment will be provided. The evaluation will include a comprehensive, illustrated assessment of the regional context within which the archaeological evidence rests.

3.2.2 In the event that significant discoveries had been made this report would have sought to identify appropriate research objectives for any future work, in line with those laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011). However, as no archaeological features or finds were uncovered the work has no potential to contribute to any of the research framework objectives.

**3.3 Quantification of Archive**

Number of Contexts	None
No. of files/paper record	3 records (evaluation trench record sheet, trench sketch plan, digital photo register).
Plan and sections sheets	None
Bulk Samples	None
Photographs	7 Digital
Bulk finds	none
Registered finds	none
Environmental flots/residue	none

Table 1: Site archive quantification

**4 RESULTS (Figures 1 - 3)**

4.1 The block-paved courtyard surface was removed by hand to reveal a 5cm thick layer of bedding sand that had been laid on a 15cm thick layer of sub-base/ crushed hardcore. Underlying this was the original topsoil, which was a dark brownish-grey soft sandy clay approximately 0.35m thick. This sealed a subsoil layer comprised of a light brownish grey soft sandy clay, 0.25m thick, overlying natural deposits. The underlying natural geology of the site was shown to be a compact mid brownish-white silty chalk, indicating that the site sat directly on the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation, with no overlying River Terrace deposits.

4.2 The central part of the trench was crossed by two utility trenches, containing a water pipe and an unidentified cable, but was otherwise devoid of any archaeological features or finds (see Figs. 2 & 3).

**5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 Although the site is situated in an area of some archaeological potential, with

previous archaeological work in the wider area having produced evidence for Iron Age, Roman and Medieval activity, no archaeological finds or features were detected in the trench.

- 5.2 The presence of the original topsoil horizon beneath the sub-base layer for the block paving suggests that this part of the site has not been extensively disturbed in the past and the absence of remains would therefore appear to be genuine. Whether this is indicative of a paucity of remains in the immediate vicinity or simply a reflection of the relatively small area investigated is unknown. However, given the size of the trench area in relation to the footprint of the proposed extension it would appear that the development will have very little or no impact upon the archaeological record.

### **Acknowledgements**

ASE would like to thank the English First Language School for commissioning the work and Pablo Ferrer, Facilities & Health and Safety Co-Ordinator, for his assistance during the fieldwork, David Valinsky of NRAP Ltd, architects for the project, and Daniel McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team for his advice and guidance throughout the fieldwork. The fieldwork was undertaken by Lukasz Miciak and Adam Dyson, the report was prepared by Lukasz Miciak and Adrian Scruby, who also managed the project. Illustrations are by Andrew Lewsey and plant was provided by Danbury Plant Hire Ltd.



**Bibliography**

- |                                  |      |  |
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**OASIS ID: archaeol6-154477**

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**Project details**

Project name	EF Language School, Cambridge
Short description of the project	<p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the English First Language School to undertake an archaeological field evaluation at 221 Hills Road, Cambridge, in advance of the construction of an extension to the existing language school. The evaluation consisted of the machine excavation of one 15m long by 1.8m wide trench in an existing courtyard area. The site is located approximately 2.5km south of Cambridge city centre, at the junction of Hills Road and Cavendish Avenue and lies on the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation, which is overlain by River Terrace Deposits 3 - Sand and Gravel immediately to the north. Iron Age, Roman and medieval remains have all been found in the area surrounding the development. The existing block-paved courtyard surface was removed by hand to reveal a layer of bedding sand that had been laid upon a layer of sub-base/ crushed hardcore. Underlying this was the original topsoil that sealed a subsoil layer overlying natural deposits. The underlying natural geology of the site was shown to be a compact mid silty chalk, indicating that the site sat directly on the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation, with no overlying River Terrace deposits. The central part of the trench was crossed by two utility trenches, containing a water pipe and an unidentified cable, but was otherwise devoid of any archaeological features or finds.</p>
Project dates	Start: 10-06-2013 End: 11-06-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	6123 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None

Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

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**Project location**

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE English First Language School, 221 Hills Road
Postcode	CB2 8RN
Study area	27.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 4634 5621 52 0 52 11 03 N 000 08 26 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Position derived from charts

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**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice (CAPCA)

Project design  
originator Archaeology South-East

Project  
director/manager Adrian Scruby

Project supervisor Lukasz Miciak

Type of  
sponsor/funding  
body Client

Name of  
sponsor/funding  
body EF Language School

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive  
Exists? No

Digital Archive  
recipient Cambridgeshire County Council Heritage Services

Digital Media  
available "Images raster / digital photography","Text"

Paper Archive  
recipient Cambridgeshire County Council Heritage Services

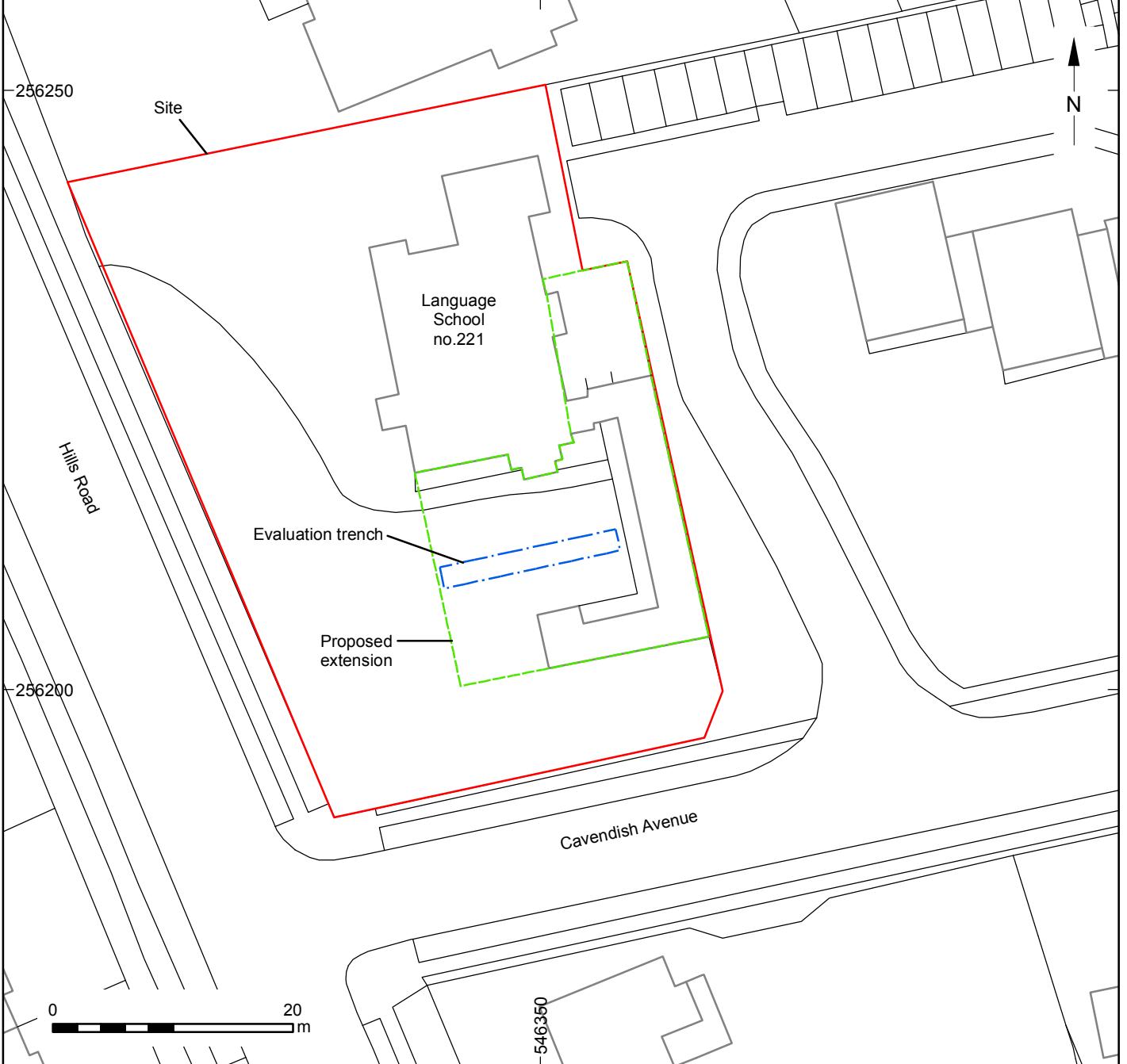
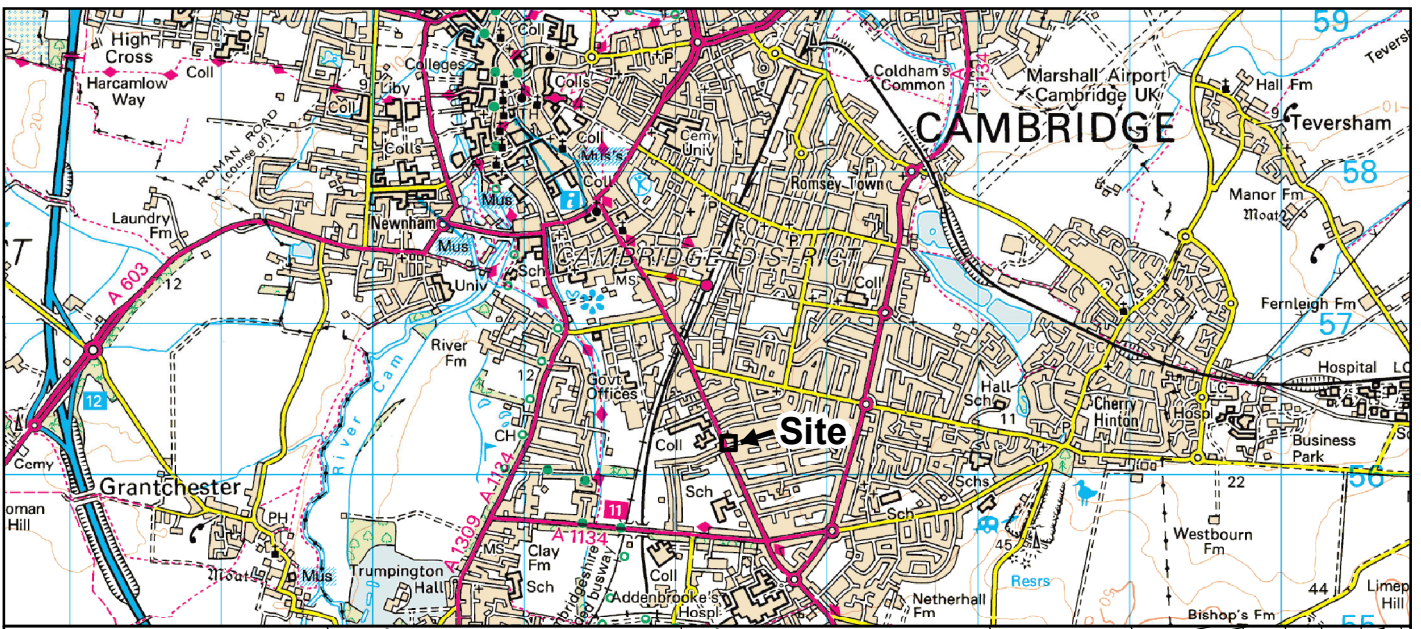
Paper Contents "other"

Paper Media  
available "Photograph","Report"

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Entered by Lukasz Miciak (l.miciak@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 4 July 2013



© Archaeology South-East		221 Hills Road, Cambridge. 1:500 at A4	Fig. 1
Project Ref: E6123	May 2013	Indicative location of evaluation trench	
Report Ref: WSI	Drawn by: APL		



Figure 2. Evaluation trench, looking NE



Figure 3. Evaluation trench, looking SW