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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
OF LAND AT  
IVY NURSERIES,  
CAMBRIDGE ROAD,  
FENSTANTON,  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
(ECB 4393)**

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Work Undertaken For  
**Persimmon Homes**

December 2015

Report Compiled by  
Neil Parker BA (Hons) MA

Planning Application No: 12005900UT  
National Grid Reference: TL 3240 6808  
Cambs HER Event No: ECB 4393  
OASIS Record No: archaeol1-234195

APS Report No. **118/15**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES**


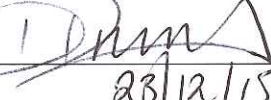




## Quality Control

Archaeological Evaluation  
on land at Cambridge Road,  
Fenstanton,  
Cambridgeshire.

Project Coordinator	Gary Taylor
Site Staff	Neil Parker
Surveying	Neil Parker
Illustration	Neil Parker
Photographic Reproduction	Neil Parker
Post-excavation Analyst	Neil Parker

Checked by Senior Manager (Archaeology)	Approved by Team Leader (Archaeology)
 - Gary Taylor	 Denise Drury
Date: 26/12/15	Date: 23/12/15



## CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Plates

<b>1.</b>	<b>SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>DEFINITION OF AN EVALUATION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>PLANNING BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.4</b>	<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>AIMS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>METHODS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>RESULTS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>PERSONNEL.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b>4</b>

## Appendices

- 1 Context Descriptions
- 2 Glossary
- 3 The Archive

OASIS form

### **List of Figures**

- Figure 1    General location map
- Figure 2    Site location and aerial photographic information
- Figure 3    Trench locations
- Figure 4    Sections

### **List of Plates**

- Plate 1    A general view of the investigation area looking towards the hedgerow at the northern boundary
- Plate 2    Archaeological stand-off area in the northeast corner around the protected trees
- Plate 3    Access to the Site looking towards Cambridge road with the extant buildings to the left of the picture
- Plate 4    Trench 4. An archaeologically blank trench. The natural deposits in the trench were representative of those in all trenches
- Plate 5    A representative section from trench 1 showing the sequence of topsoil over subsoil and natural deposits in the bottom third of the picture

## 1. SUMMARY

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at Ivy Nurseries, Cambridge Road, Fenstanton. The evaluation was undertaken in advance of proposed development at the site.*

*Cropmarks of enclosures and probable Bronze Age barrows have been identified nearby and Cambridge Road follows the route of a Roman highway.*

*The evaluation encountered uniform deposits of topsoil and subsoil overlying a natural substrate of flint gravel and pea gravel within a matrix of silt and patchy clay.*

*No archaeological features or artefacts were revealed during the evaluation.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Definition of an Evaluation

An archaeological evaluation is defined as *'a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site. If such archaeological remains are present Field Evaluation defines their character and extent, quality and preservation, and it enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate'* (CIfA 2014).

### 2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Persimmon Homes to undertake a programme of archaeological investigation as part of planning permission (application 1200590OUT) for residential development.

The brief issued by Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team required a programme of evaluation in advance of the development (Gdaniec 2015).

Following an earlier assessment (Air Photo Services 2015) that revealed cropmarks of enclosures and ring ditches nearby, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services and approved by the Senior Archaeologist, Historic Environment Team, Cambridgeshire County Council (HET CCC).

### 2.3 Location, Topography and Geology

Fenstanton is located 15km northwest of Cambridge (Fig. 1) and approximately 1.5km south of the present course of the River Great Ouse. The site itself lies at the south-eastern edge of the village, just north of Cambridge Road, at National Grid Reference TL 3240 6808 (Fig. 2).

The solid geology consists of mudstone of the Oxford Clay Formation, which formed in the Jurassic Period. This is overlaid by the drift geology of River Terrace Deposits of sand and gravel which formed in the Quaternary Period. These are overlain by soils of the Efford 1 Association argillic brown earths (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 173). The site is at about 10m OD on a gentle slope up to the north and east.

### 2.4 Archaeological Setting

The Great Ouse corridor is known for its archaeological significance. Cambridge Road occupies the course of the Via Devana, which linked the Roman towns at Colchester and Chester, passing through Cambridge and Godmanchester. Within Fenstanton a large number of

archaeological sites and monument are known which include extensive multi-period cropmarked sites in the immediate vicinity of the development area to the northeast. To the southwest, a programme of fieldwalking recovered prehistoric flints and the Portable Antiquities Scheme has recorded a number of Roman and Medieval metal artefacts. Within the wider area, cropmarks indicating extensive archaeological remains have been recorded. These include ditches defining probable field systems and enclosures, to the north of the present site, and ring ditches, probably representing Bronze Age barrows, to the east (Air Photo Services 2015).

### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the work was to gather sufficient information for the archaeological curator to be able to formulate a policy for the management of the archaeological resources present on the site.

The objectives were to:

- Establish the type of archaeological activity that may be present within the site.
- Determine the likely extent of archaeological activity present within the site.
- Determine the date and function of the archaeological features present on the site.
- Determine the state of preservation of the archaeological features present on the site.
- Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features present within the site

- Determine the extent to which the surrounding archaeological features extend into the application area.
- Establish the way in which the archaeological features identified fit into the pattern of occupation and land-use in the surrounding landscape.

### 4. METHODS

It had been agreed with the HET CCC to excavate four 30m long trial trenches across the site to assess the impact of the proposed development. A planned fifth trench of 15m length, was not possible at the present time due the presence of standing buildings at that location (Fig. 3).

The trenches were excavated by JCB 3CX using a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. Removal of topsoil and other overburden was undertaken to the top of archaeological deposits or natural as appropriate. The exposed surfaces of the trenches were then cleaned by hand and inspected for archaeological remains. A 1m deep *sondage* was excavated in Trench 1 in order to examine the consistency of natural deposits.

Each deposit exposed during the evaluation was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their interpretations appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was also compiled and sections and plans were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20 respectively. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

The location of the excavated trenches was



plotted with a survey grade differential GPS (Figure 3).

## 5. RESULTS

The earliest deposit revealed on site was a mid reddish brown mixture of silt and flint gravel (103, 203, 303, and 403). Patches of mid brown clay and areas of lighter pea gravel were also present. This represented the natural deposits in all of the trenches (Figure 4, Plates 4 & 5).

Overlying the natural deposits in each of the trenches was a moderately firm deposit of mid brown sandy, clayey silt with moderate inclusions of small gravel fragments and rounded stones (102, 202, 302 and 402). This subsoil was present in each trench, having an average thickness of 0.2m (Figure 4, Plate 5).

The uppermost deposit (101, 201, 301 and 401) was friable, mid grey brown sandy silt with occasional inclusions of small stones and gravel. This topsoil had an average thickness of 0.3m and was uniform across the site (Figure 4, Plate 5).

## 6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits exposed reflected the underlying drift geology of sand and gravels relating to river terrace deposits. Of the four trenches, Trench 2 contained more clay in the natural deposits suggesting that this area had more of a prevalence of standing water when the deposits were laid down.

Each trench revealed the same sequence of deposits of subsoil overlain by topsoil and their thicknesses were fairly uniform in nature. The general thickness of topsoil and subsoil suggests that the land has lain undisturbed by agricultural processes for some time.

Cropmarks to the north and east of the Site, appear, from on-site observation, to lie on slightly higher ground than the Site itself.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at Ivy Nurseries, Cambridge Road, Fenstanton, Cambridgeshire. The site lies in an archaeologically sensitive area where remains of prehistoric through to medieval date have been recorded in the wider area.

The evaluation encountered uniform deposits of topsoil and subsoil over natural river terrace gravels.

No archaeological features or artefacts were revealed during the evaluation.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Persimmon Homes for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor who edited this report together with Denise Drury.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor  
 Site Staff: Neil Parker  
 Surveying: Neil Parker  
 Photographic reproduction: Neil Parker  
 CAD Illustration: Neil Parker  
 Post-excavation Analysis: Neil Parker

## 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Air Photo Services, 2015 *Ivy Nurseries, Fenstanton, Cambridgeshire. Assessment of Aerial Photographs for Archaeology*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

English Heritage, 2011 *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the Theory and Practice from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)

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Hodge, CAH, Burton, RGO, Corbett, WM, Evans, R and Seale, RS, 1984 *Soils and their use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales

Gdaniec, K, 2015 *Land off Cambridge Road, Fenstanton, Brief for archaeological evaluation.*

## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

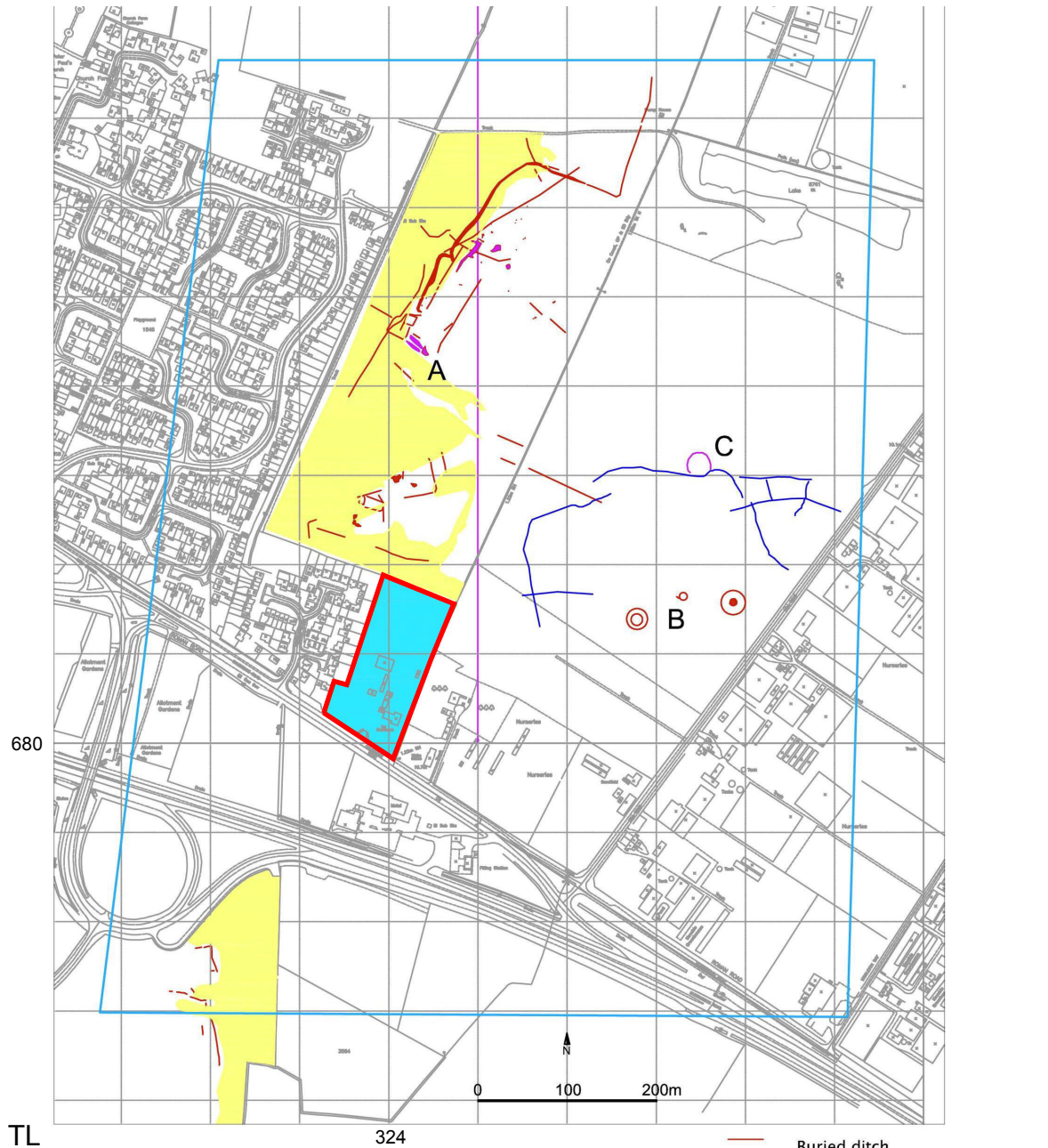
APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

CIfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists



Figure 1. General location map



TL

Drawing Title    PLAN 1  
Archaeological features identified on aerial photographs

Client    Archaeological Project Services

Project    Ivy Nurseries, Fenstanton

Copyright © Air Photo Services 2015.

- Buried ditch
- Possible archaeological features
- Periglacial features
- Area of deeper soil
- Assessment area



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Cambridge Road Fenstanton FECR15

Scale 1:7500

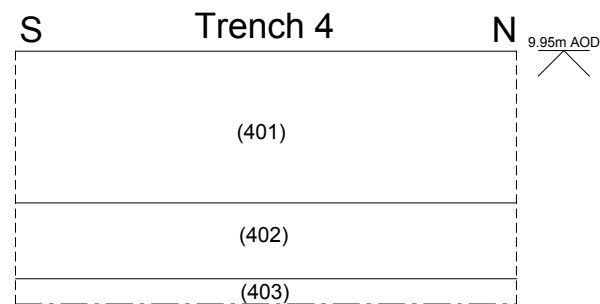
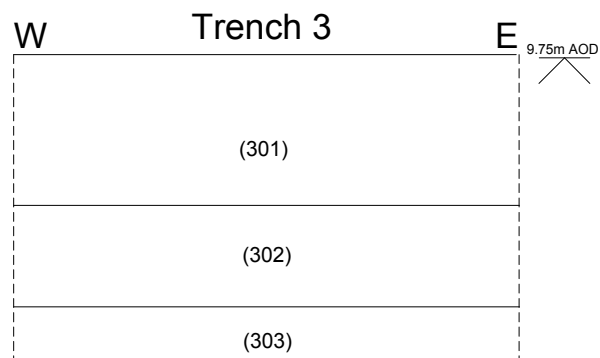
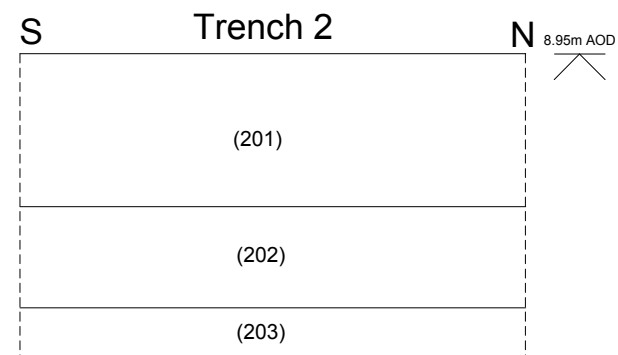
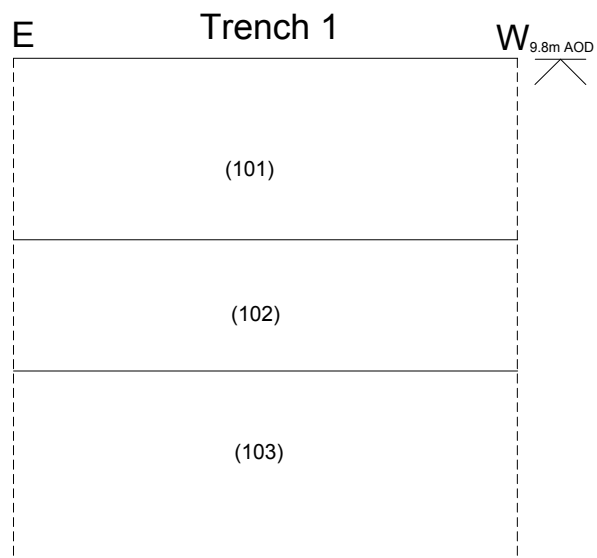
Drawn by: NP

Report No: 118/15

Figure 2 Site Location and aerial photographic information



Figure 3 Trench Locations



0 0.5m



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Cambridge Road Fenstanton FECR15

Scale 1:15

Drawn by: NP

Report No: 118/14

Figure 4 Sections



## The Plates



**Plate 1.** A general view of the investigation area looking towards the hedgerow at the northern boundary



**Plate 2.** Archaeological stand-off area in the northeast corner around the protected trees



**Plate 3.** Access to the Site looking towards Cambridge road with the extant buildings to the left of the picture





**Plate 4** (left). Trench 4. An archaeologically blank trench. The natural deposits in the trench were representative of those in all trenches

**Plate 5** (below). A representative section from Trench 1 showing the sequence of topsoil over subsoil and natural deposits in the bottom third of the picture





## Appendix 1

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Description	Interpretation
101	Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt with occasional small stones	Topsoil
102	Firm, friable, mid brown sandy silt with moderate small stones	Subsoil
103	Mid reddish brown silt and flint gravel	Natural
201	Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt with occasional small stones	Topsoil
202	Firm, friable, mid brown sandy silt with moderate small stones	Subsoil
203	Patchy, mid brown clay and mid reddish brown silt with flint gravel	Natural
301	Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt with occasional small stones	Topsoil
302	Firm, friable, mid brown sandy silt with moderate small stones	Subsoil
303	Patchy, mid brown clay and mid reddish brown silt with flint gravel	Natural
401	Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt with occasional small stones	Topsoil
402	Firm, friable, mid brown sandy silt with moderate small stones	Subsoil
403	Mid reddish brown silt with flint gravel and pale yellow pea gravel	Natural



## Appendix 2

### GLOSSARY

<b>Bronze Age</b>	A period characterised by the introduction of bronze into the country for tools, between 2250 and 800 BC.
<b>Context</b>	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, e.g. [004].
<b>Cropmark</b>	A mark that is produced by the effect of underlying archaeological or geological features influencing the growth of a particular crop.
<b>Medieval</b>	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
<b>Natural</b>	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity
<b>Prehistoric</b>	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.
<b>Romano-British</b>	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.



## Appendix 3

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | Photographic record sheet |
| 2 | Daily record sheets       |
| 4 | Trench recording sheets   |

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services  
The Old School  
Cameron Street  
Heckington  
Sleaford  
Lincolnshire  
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Cambridgeshire County Council  
Castle Court  
Shire Hall  
Cambridge  
CB3 0AP

Cambridgeshire C.C. HER Event No:

ECB 4393

OASIS Record No:

archaeol1-234195

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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**OASIS ID: archaeol1-234195**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Cambridge Road, Fenstanton, Cambridgeshire
Short description of the project	Four trench evaluation in area of cropmarks of field systems and enclosures. Four 30m x 1.6m randomly spaced evaluation trenches over the proposed footprint of access roads and buildings on a roughly level field, sloping slightly upwards to the north and east. There were no archaeological features present in the trenches. Topsoil and subsoil overlay a flint gravel natural deposit in a matrix of clay and silt.
Project dates	Start: 09-12-2015 End: 10-12-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	FECR15 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ECB 4393 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Aerial Photography - interpretation", "Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Between deposition of an application and determination

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE HUNTINGDONSHIRE FENSTANTON Cambridge Road
Postcode	PE28 9HY

Study area	15029 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 3240 6808 52.294464556595 -0.05834666766 52 17 40 N 000 03 30 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 8.9m Max: 9.3m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeological Project Services
Project brief originator	Cambridge Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice
Project design originator	Gary Taylor
Project director/manager	Gary Taylor
Project supervisor	Neil Parker
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Office
Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Office
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic", "Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Diary", "Map", "Matrices", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Entered on 24 March 2016

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