

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
PURBECK HOUSE
PURBECK ROAD
CAMBRIDGE
TL 4593 5652**

on behalf of Camstead Homes



Karin Semmelmann MA AIFA

October 2006

ASC: 826/CPH/2

Letchworth House
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall,
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700
Email: office@archaeological-services.co.uk
Website: www.archaeological-services.co.uk



Site Data

ASC project code:	CPH	ASC Project No:	826
Event No:	ECB 2351	Accession No:	
County:	Cambridgeshire		
Village/Town:	Cambridge		
Civil Parish:	St. John the Evangelist		
NGR (to 8 figs):	TL 4593 5652		
Present use:	Offices		
Planning proposal:	Construction of student flats		
Planning application ref/date:	05/1342/FUL		
Local Planning Authority:	Cambridgeshire County Council		
Date of fieldwork:	17-18 th October 2006		
Client:	Camstead Homes 1 St Mary's Court Main Street Hardwick Cambridge CB3 7QS		
Contact name:	David Middleton		
Telephone		Fax:	

Internal Quality Check

Primary Author:	Karin Semmelmann	Date:	27 th October 2006
Revisions:		Date:	
Edited/Checked By:		Date:	

© Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

No part of this document is to be copied in any way without prior written consent.

Every effort is made to provide detailed and accurate information. However, Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd cannot be held responsible for errors or inaccuracies within this report.

© Ordnance Survey maps reproduced with the sanction of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

ASC Licence No. AL 100015154

CONTENTS

Summary	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Aims & Methods	6
3. Archaeological & Historical Background	7
4. Results	9
5. Conclusions	13
6. Acknowledgements	14
7. Archive	14
8. References	15

Appendices:

1. Trench Summary Tables.....	16
2. List of Photographs.....	20
3. ASC OASIS Form	21

Figures:

1. General location	3
2. Trench location	5
3. Trench 1 plan.....	11
4. Trench 1 representative section	11
5. Trench 2 plan.....	11
6. Trench 2 representative section	11
7. Trench 3 plan.....	12
8. Tr. 2 sample of NE facing section	12
9. Tr. 2 sample of SW facing section	12
10. Trench 4 plan.....	12
11. Trench 4 representative section	12

Plates:

Cover:

1. Pit/soakaway in Trench 2	9
2. Moulded stone from Trench 2	10



Figure 1: General location (*scale 1:25,000*)

Summary

In October 2006 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Purbeck House, Purbeck Road, Cambridge in response to proposals for the demolition of the office building and the construction of student flats. The site is located to the south of the historic core of Cambridge adjacent to the railway line. The stratigraphic evidence suggests that the site was used as a quarry, possibly at the time the railway was constructed. Three pits were revealed containing building debris and worked and unworked stone fragments, which are likely to have come from Rattee & Kett's masons yard that was formerly located on the opposite side of Purbeck Road.

1 Introduction

1.1 In October 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* carried out an evaluation at Purbeck House, Purbeck Road, Cambridge (NGR TL 4593 5652: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Camstead Homes, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse, 2006), and a brief (Thomas, 2006) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Cambridgeshire County Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Cambridgeshire County Council*. The relevant planning application reference is 05/1342/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16)*, in response to proposals for the construction of student flats.

1.3 *Location*

The site is located to the south of the historic core of Cambridge, at NGR TL 4593 5652 (Fig 1), and comprises a linear area measuring c.1568m².

1.4 *Description*

The railway line runs directly to the west of the site, and it is bordered to the east by Hill's Road Sixth Form College. To the south of the site is a local Sports Centre, while the area to the north is occupied by residential housing.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The site lies at c.15mAOD, at the bottom of Purbeck Road, which slopes gently from Hills Road to the east. The natural drift geology comprises sand with very fine gravels.

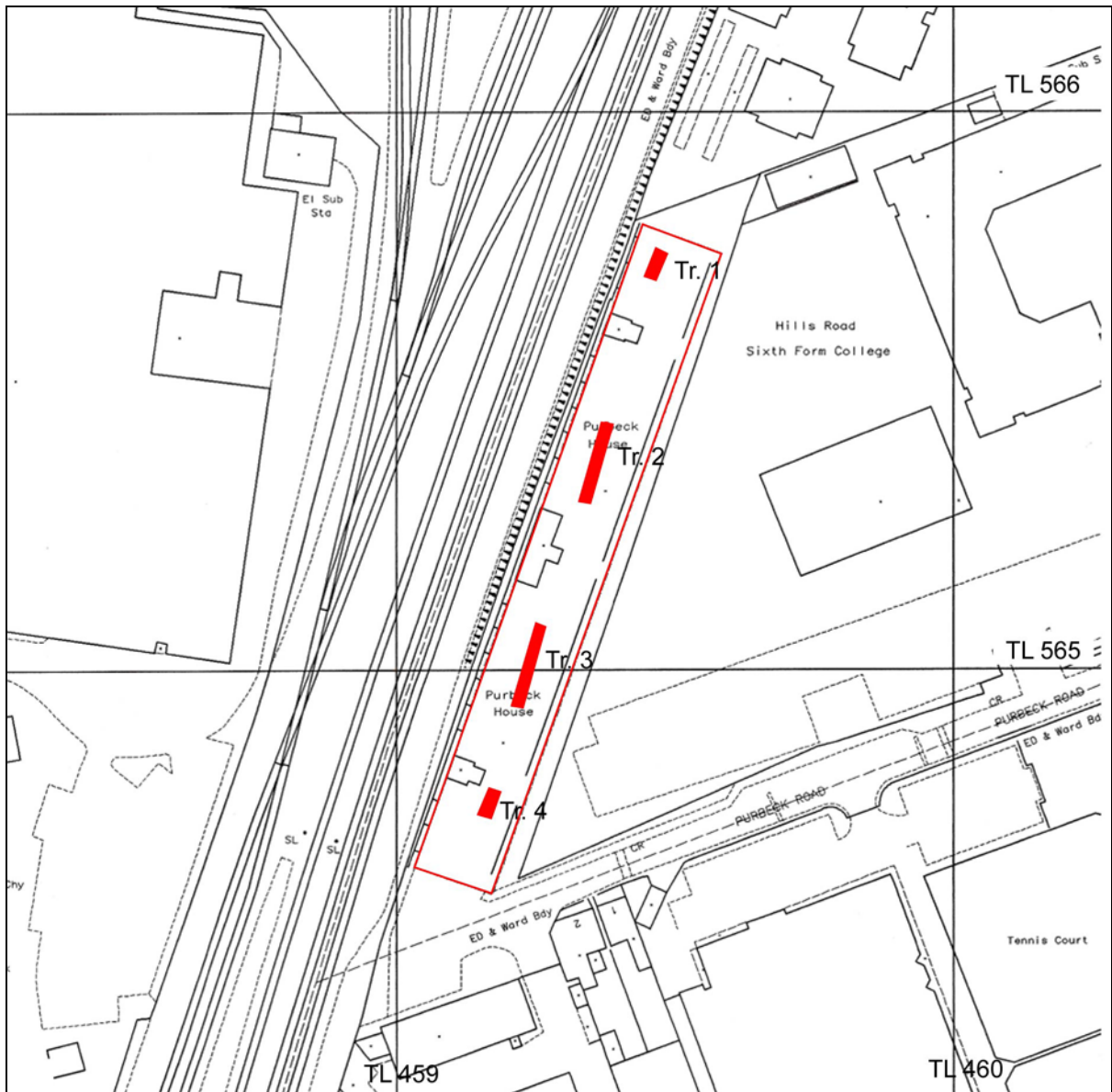


Figure 2: Trench location (*scale 1:1250*)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 3), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development
- To assess the environmental potential of the site through examination of suitable deposits with a suitably qualified specialist.
- To carefully consider any artefactual or economic information, in particular the survival of faunal evidence
- To highlight any relevant research issues within a national and regional research framework.
- To produce a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relative importance against known development proposals will be produced.
- To produce an impact assessment.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 2), which required:

- A programme of linear trial trenching and/or test-pitting to adequately sample the threatened available area and to excavate sufficient archaeological features to conform with the aims of the project (Section 2.1).
- That a minimum of 5% sample of the areas to be affected by the development was subject to trial trenching.
- That all features were investigated and recorded unless otherwise agreed with the AA.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1** No previous archaeological investigation has been carried out within the area to be developed. However, it lies in the vicinity of several sites where archaeological remains have been found, the vast majority of which date to the Romano-British period.
- 3.2** Significant prehistoric activity is known to the south of Cambridge, although not within the vicinity of the subject site itself. This includes the Iron Age settlement at Addenbrookes Hospital (Craster 1969) c1.5km south of the subject site. A recently excavated site at Trumpington Park and Ride, c2km southwest of the subject site, recorded many features dating mainly to the Iron Age and also to the Bronze Age (Hinman 2000). Other archaeological observations have recorded prehistoric field systems in the southern part of the city (Abrams 2000).
- 3.3** Located c.250m to the east of the development site is Hills Road, which according to Walker follows the alignment of the *Via Devana*, the main Roman road connecting Roman Cambridge to the south (Walker 1910). The projected line of the road passes within c.175m of the site, to the east on a NNW-SSE alignment.
- 3.4** The main area of Roman settlement in Cambridge is located c.2.5km to the north west of the site. It began life as a military site, but by the early second century it had become the urban centre of a wide region (Taylor 1999).
- 3.5** Further evidence of Romano-British activity has been recorded c.600m to the north west of the site, at the former government offices on Brooklands Avenue. Evaluations here revealed Roman agricultural/horticultural activity, as well as a Bronze Age pit and evidence of medieval ridge and furrow (Kenny 2000, Cooper 2004). To the south of the site, an evaluation within the grounds of Homerton College found a series of ditches and associated Roman pottery, suggesting a small Roman enclosure system, with the paucity of finds being taken as evidence of the system having been relatively close to a settlement, but not within it (Webb & Dickens 2006).
- 3.6** Perhaps most significantly, an evaluation was carried out in 2000 on the site of the former Charrington Oil Depot, immediately to the west of the development site, across the railway line. Three ditches were identified at the southern end of the site, at least two of which have projected courses that would take them across the current development site (Kenny 2000a). The 2000 evaluation did not find sufficient evidence with which to date the ditches, but their close proximity to the Roman agricultural/horticultural activity by Brooklands Avenue may provide a clue to their origins.
- 3.7** The Cambridge area maintained an important role during the early Saxon period. No early Anglo-Saxon houses or structures have been found within the area of the old Roman town, or its immediate surroundings (Taylor 1999). However, many pagan burials have been found. These were sited near to the river Cam, which may have been a boundary between the emerging rival kingdoms of East Anglia and Mercia. The largest was on St John's cricket field, and contained hundreds of burials, both inhumation and cremation, some of which contained goods of Anglian traditions

(*ibid*). To the south of the river objects from the same Anglian traditions have been found along Newmarket Road and in Barnwell (SMR: GL 777) (*ibid*). There is evidence for proto-urban activity in Cambridge in the later Saxon period. By the eighth century it was under the control of the Mercian king Offa. This town was on the north-western side of the river. During the late 9th century the area was under threat from Scandinavian invaders, and in 886 Cambridge became part of the Danelaw until it was re-conquered by Edward the Elder in 917. It is thought that the Scandinavian settlement lay to the south of the river (*ibid*).

- 3.8** The most immediate impact of the Norman Conquest to the development of Cambridge was the destruction of 27 houses to make way for Sheriff Picot's new castle. This was followed by the foundation of a number of monastic houses and the establishment of the university in the early 13th century.
- 3.9** The post medieval period saw the establishment of the railway line in 1845; the Cattle Market was opened in 1885, no doubt benefiting from the proximity of the railway station.
- 3.10** Ordnance Survey maps show that the site remained undeveloped throughout the modern period until the current office buildings were constructed.

4 Results

- 4.1** Four trenches were excavated along the length of the development area (Fig. 2) revealing a dark brown to black peaty silt over a dark brown sandy silt subsoil, which was in places interwoven with the mid yellow sand with fine gravel that formed the natural drift deposit. The subsoil appeared to have been redeposited material and the fact that it was occasionally seen to lie below the natural gravely sand suggests that the site had been used as a quarry, possibly at the time that the railway was constructed.
- 4.2** A large pit or soakaway, c.2.0 x 1.5 x 1.85m deep, was encountered in Trench 2 (Fig.5, Plate 1). This contained fragments of worked clunch, Ketton and other oolitic limestone including a large piece of moulded architrave, which appears to be of 17th century date, and made from Ancaster Stone (Plate 2). These stone fragments are likely to have come from Rattee & Kett's masons yard that was formerly located on the opposite side of the road.
- 4.3** Two similar pits were discovered in the sides of Trench 3. The one in the western trench edge was 1.30m wide x 0.75m deep and that in the eastern trench edge was 1.90m wide x 0.85m deep. Both contained worked and unworked stone, brick and other material almost certainly from the same masons yard.



Plate 1: Pit/soakaway in Trench 2



Plate 2: Moulded stone from Trench 2

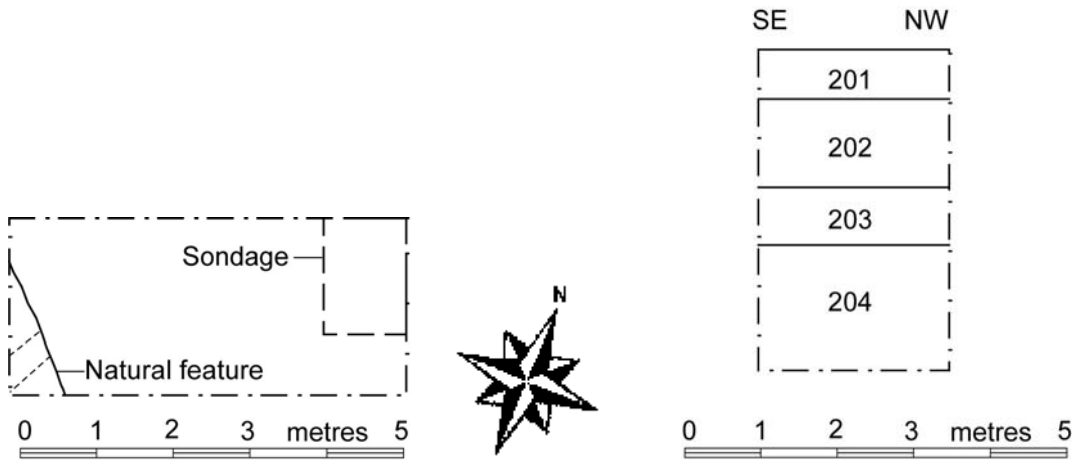


Figure 3: Trench 1 plan (*Scale 1:100*)

Figure 4: Trench 1 representative section (*Scale 1:100*)

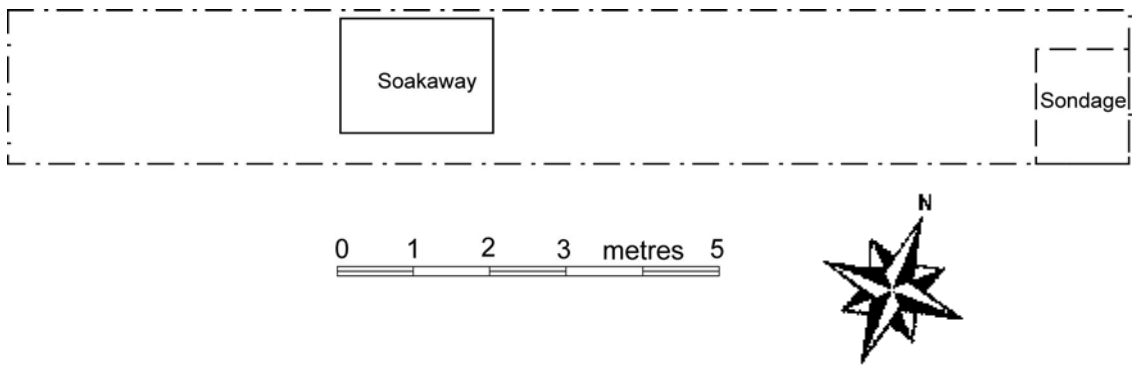


Figure 5: Trench 2 plan (*Scale 1:100*)

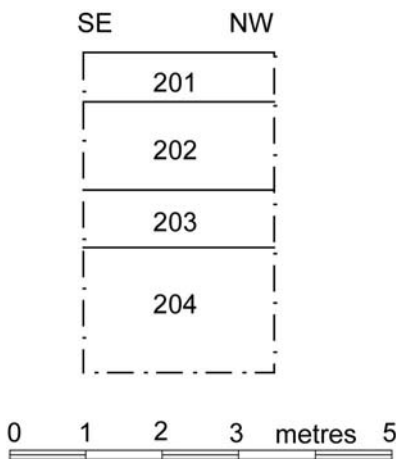


Figure 6: Trench 2 representative section (*Scale 1:100*)

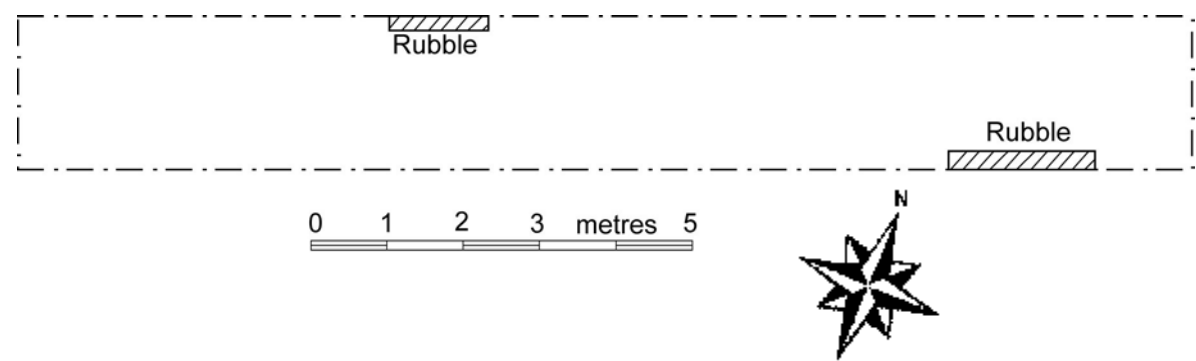


Figure 7: Trench 3 plan (*Scale 1:100*)

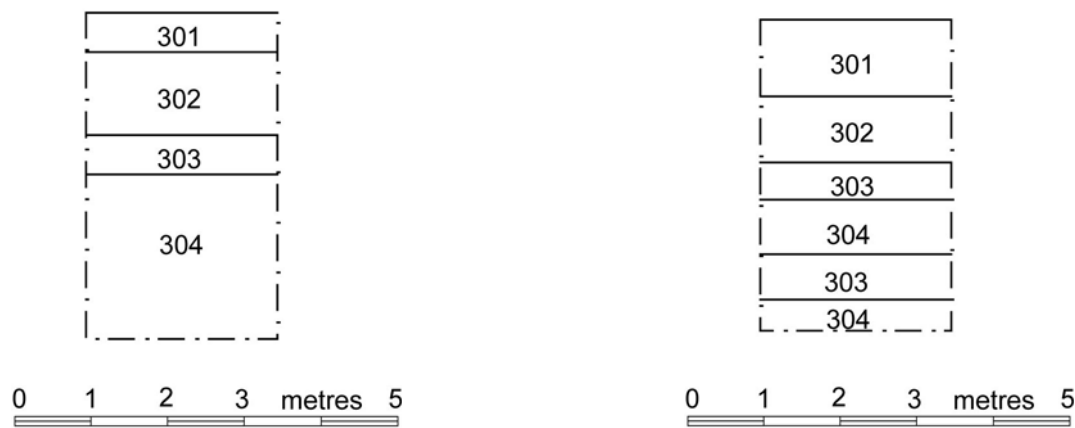


Figure 8: Tr. 3 sample of SE facing section **Figure 9:** Tr. 3 sample of NW facing section
(*Scale 1:100*)

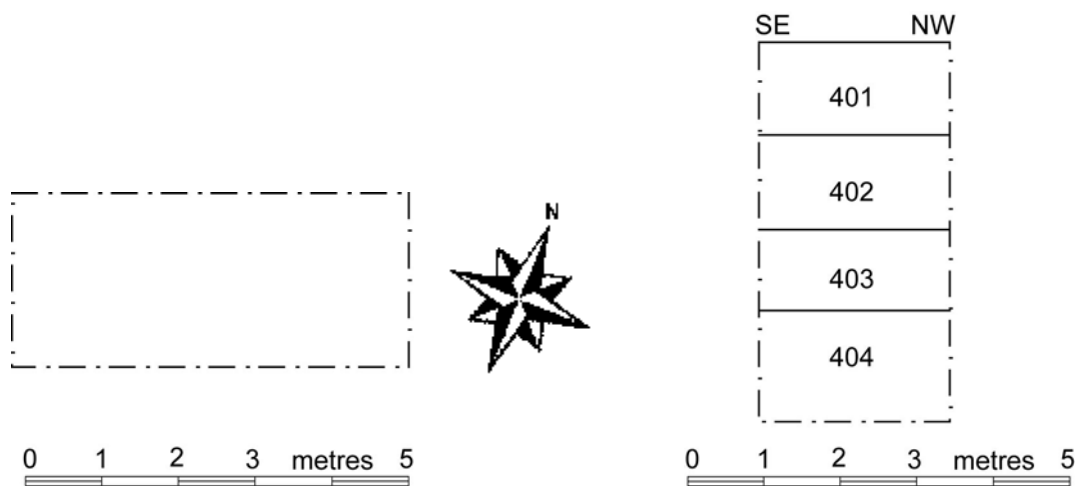


Figure 10: Trench 4 plan (*Scale 1:100*) **Figure 11:** Tr. 4 representative section
(*Scale 1:100*)

5. Conclusions

- 5.1** The stratigraphic evidence suggests that much, if not the entire site has been quarried and backfilled. That there is no indication of quarrying activity on any of the Ordnance Survey maps as well as the proximity of the site to the railway line would suggest that this took place when the railway was being built.
- 5.2** The stratigraphy in the pit/soakaway in Trench 2 indicates that the quarrying activity reached a depth of at least 1m and is likely, therefore, to have destroyed any archaeological remains that may have been on the site. As such, it is impossible to ascertain whether the ditches encountered in the former Charrington Oil Depot in 2000 extended as far as Purbeck House, or indeed, the possible level and nature of archaeological activity prior to the mid 19th century. The possibility of encountering any further archaeological remains pre-dating the construction of Purbeck House is likely to be minimal.
- 5.3** The conditions during the course of the fieldwork were more than acceptable for the identification and investigation of potential features and deposits. There are no circumstances which would result in a confidence rating for the work that is less than high.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to David Middleton of Camstead Homes for commissioning this project; Mark Evitts of Stace Project Management for facilitating the fieldwork; the staff of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record for the assistance in the background research and Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council for monitoring the project.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Calli Rouse BA PIFA and Karin Semmelmann MA AIFA. The report was written by Karin Semmelmann and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. Site record drawings
7. List of photographs
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. Original specialist reports and supporting information
10. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record.

8. References


Standards & Specifications


- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**.
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Rouse, C. 2006 *Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation at Purbeck House, Purbeck Road, Cambridge* (ASC)
- Thomas, A. 2006 *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation at Purbeck House, Purbeck Road, Cambridge* Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice Office


Secondary Sources


- Abrams, J. 2000. *Prehistoric Field Systems at Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge: An Archaeological Evaluation*. Cambridgeshire County Council Report No **176**.
- Craster M. D. 1969. New Addenbrooke's Iron Age Site, Long Road, Cambridge, *Proceedings of the Cambridgeshire Archaeological Society* **62**.
- Cooper, A 2004 *An Archaeological Evaluation at the Former Government Offices, Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge (Part 2)* CAU Rep **608**
- Hinman, M. 2001. *Late Bronze Age and Iron Age Settlement and Earlier Prehistoric Activity at Plant Breeding International, Hauxton Road, Cambridge: An Archaeological Evaluation*. Cambridgeshire County Council Report No **190**.
- Kenny, D A 2000 *An Archaeological Evaluation at the Former Government Offices, Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge* CAU Rep 347
- Kenny, D A 2000a *An Archaeological Evaluation at the Former Carrington Oil Depot, 22-24 Clarendon Road, Cambridge* CAU Rep **360**
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).
- Taylor, A. 1999 *Cambridge: the Hidden History*. Tempus (Stroud).
- Walker, F G 1910 Roman Roads into Cambridge *Proceedings of the Cambridgeshire Archaeological Society* **14** Cambridge Antiquarian Society
- Webb, D & Dickens, A 2006 *Homerton College, Cambridge. Archaeological Evaluation on the Site of New Undergraduate Accommodation* CAU Rep **720**

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1							
		Max Dimensions (m)					
		Length	5.2	Width	2.3	Depth	0.74
		Levels					
		Trench base north		14.35 m OD			
		Trench top north		15.67 m OD			
		Trench base south		14.82 m OD			
		Trench top south		15.65 m OD			
		NGR Co-ordinates					
		**	NW corner 54943 56573		**	SE corner 45947 56570	
		Orientation		NE-SW			
Reason for Trench		Evaluation					
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Max Width (m)	Max Thckn (m)	Depth BGL (m)	
101	Layer	Light brown orange sand with freq. pebbles (small, sub-rounded), flint (small-med., sub-angular), concrete, sandstone and brick (accumulated topsoil)		2.30	0.20	0-0.20	
102	Layer	Dark brown black cay silt with freq. small sub-rounded pebbles, occasional small sub-angular flint, occasional brick		2.30	0.19	0.20-0.39	
103	Layer	Dark reddish-brown clay silt with freq. gravel/pebbles		2.30	0.18	0.39-0.57	
104	Layer	Natural mid-yellow gravelly sand		2.30	0.22	0.57-70.9	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	14.66	Width	2.0	Depth	0.84
	Levels					
	Trench base north			14.14 m OD		
	Trench top north			15.36 m OD		
	Trench base south			13.52 m OD		
	Trench top south			14.56m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	**	NW corner 45938 56545		**	SE corner 45936 56530	
	Orientation			NE-SW		
Reason for Trench			Evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Max Width (m)	Max Thckn (m)	Depth BGL (m)
201	Layer	Light brown orange sand with freq. pebbles (small, sub-rounded), flint (small-med., sub-angular), concrete, sandstone and brick (accumulated topsoil)		2.0	0.13	0-0.13
202	Layer	Dark brown black cay silt with freq. small sub-rounded pebbles, occasional small sub-angular flint, occasional brick		2.0	0.23	0.13-0.36
203	Layer	Dark reddish-brown clay silt with freq. gravel/pebbles		2.0	0.15	0.36-0.51
204	Layer	Natural mid-yellow gravelly sand		2.0	0.33	0.51-0.84

Trench 3						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	15.35	Width	2.0	Depth	0.85
	Levels					
	Trench base north			14.13 m OD		
	Trench top north			15.04 m OD		
	Trench base south			14.26 m OD		
	Trench top south			15.05 m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	**	NW corner 45926 56570		**	SE corner 45923 56493	
	Orientation			NE-SW		
Reason for Trench			Evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Max Width (m)	Max Thckn (m)	Depth BGL (m)
301	Layer	Overburden		2.0	0.10	0-0.10
302	Layer	Black peaty silt		2.0	0.22	0.10-0.32
303	Layer	Dark brown sandy silt		2.0	0.10	0.32-0.42
304	Layer	Sand/gravel natural		2.0	0.43	0.42-0.85

Trench 4						
		Max Dimensions				
		Width	2.26	Length	5.2	
		Depth	0.99	Level (top)	15.03mOD	
		NGR Co-ordinates				
		NW corner 45919 56477		SE corner 45917 56473		
Orientation						
Reason for Trench		Evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (m)	Max Thckn (m)	Depth BGL (m)	
401	Layer	Light brown orange sand with freq. pebbles (small, sub-rounded), flint (small-med., sub-angular), concrete, sandstone and brick (Overburden)	2.26	0.24	0-0.24	
402	Layer	Dark brown black peaty silt with freq. small sub-rounded pebbles, occasional small sub-angular flint, occasional brick (Topsoil)	2.26	0.25	0.24-0.49	
403	Layer	Dark reddish-brown clay silt with freq. gravel/pebbles, occasional metalwork inclusions (Subsoil)	2.26	0.21	0.49-0.70	
404	Layer	Natural mid-yellow gravely sand (Natural)	2.26	0.29	0.70-0.99	

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Purbeck House, Purbeck Road, Cambridge				SITE NO/CODE: 826/CPH
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1				Trench 1
2				Masonry from pit in Trench 2
3				Moulded stone from Trench 2 pit
4				Trench 2
5				Trench 2 soakaway
6				Trench 3
7				Trench 4
8				Section through natural, Trench 1
9				SW corner, Trench 1
10				Trench 1. SE facing section
11				Trench 2, SE facing section
12				Trench 3, NW facing section
13				Trench 4, SE facing section

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	Purbeck House, Purbeck Road, Cambridge					
Short Description:	In October 2006 <i>Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd</i> (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Purbeck House, Purbeck Road, Cambridge in response to proposals for the demolition of the office building and the construction of student flats. The site is located to the south of the historic core of Cambridge adjacent to the railway line. The stratigraphic evidence suggests that the site was used as a quarry, possibly at the time the railway was constructed. Three pits were revealed containing building debris and worked and unworked stone fragments, which are likely to have come from Rattee & Ketts masons yard that was formerly located on the opposite side of Purbeck Road					
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	DBA	FW	Geophys	Survey	Bldg Rec	Post-Exc
	WB	Strip&Rec	Trenching	Test pits	Exc	Other
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None		Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)		None	
Current land use:	Offices		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		Unknown	
Monument type:	Car park		Monument period:		Modern	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Cambridgeshire		OS reference: (to at least 8 figures)		TL 4593 5652	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Purbeck House, Purbeck Road, Cambridge					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	1568 sq. m.		Height OD: (metres)		15m AOD	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	A. Thomas		Project design originator:		C. Rouse	
Project Manager:	B. Zeepvat		Director/Supervisor:		K. Semmelmann	
Sponsor / funding body:	Camstead Homes					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	17 th Oct 2006		End date:		18 th Oct 2006	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:	N/A					
Paper:	CHER		1 box			
Digital:	CHER		1 CD			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						
Title:	ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION: PURBECK HOUSE, PURBECK ROAD, CAMBRIDGE, TL 4593 5652					
Serial title & volume:						

Author(s):	Karin Semmelmann		
Page nos	22	Date:	27 th October 2006