

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:
TRIAL TRENCHING ON LAND OFF COURTNEY WAY, CAMBRIDGE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Planning Reference: 13/0433/FUL
NGR: TL 4521 6019
AAL Site Code: CACO 13
CHER Event Number: ECB1571
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-166051



Report prepared for Hembriar Limited

By
Allen Archaeology Limited
Report Number AAL2013143

December 2013



Allenarchaeology



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Document Control

Element:	Name:	Date:
Report prepared by:	Chris Clay	04/12/2013
Illustrations prepared by:	Chris Clay	04/12/2013
Report edited by:	Mark Allen	04/12/2013
Report produced by:	AAL2013143	04/12/2013

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Executive Summary

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Hembriar Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land off Courtney Way, Cambridge, prior to determination of a planning application for construction of a new sports pavilion.
- Previous archaeological work in the area has identified significant evidence for archaeological activity ranging in date from the prehistoric to medieval periods.
- Two trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development area. Trench 1 exposed three linear features, two of which were undated, and one of which was of a probable early modern date, and appears to be associated with the use of the site as allotment gardens in the early 20th century. Trench 2 was devoid of features or deposits.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) was commissioned by Hembriar Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land off Courtney Way in Cambridge, Faldingworth, Lincolnshire, prior to determination of a planning application for construction of a new sports pavilion.
- 1.2 The excavating, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*' (IfA 1999, revised 2001 and 2008), the English Heritage document '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*' (English Heritage 2006), the regional guidelines in '*Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*' (Gurney 2003), a brief prepared by the Historic Environment Team for Cambridgeshire County Council (McConnell 2013), and a specification prepared by this company (AAL 2013).
- 1.3 The documentary archive will be submitted to the Cambridgeshire Museum Service within six months of the completion of the site report.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site is situated to the northeast of Cambridge city centre, in the suburb of Chesterton. The proposed development area is currently part of the college playing fields, to the northeast of Courtney Way. It comprises a sub-rectangular block of land centred on NGR TL 4521 6019.
- 2.2 The local geology comprises bedrock deposits of Gault Formation mudstone, overlain by superficial deposits of river terrace sand and gravel (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application was submitted to Cambridge City Council for the '*erection of a new sports pavilion with club room and changing facilities*' (Planning Application Reference 13/0433/FUL). Determination of the application is pending, subject to the undertaking of the current programme of archaeological trial trenching in order to determine the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.
- 3.2 The relevant planning policy which applies to the effect of development with regard to cultural heritage is Chapter 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012). This superseded Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) in March 2012.

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 Prehistoric activity is well represented in the vicinity of the site, with numerous finds of scattered lithic material, such as a Neolithic polished axe and two arrowheads found c.500m to the southwest (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (hereafter CHER) Reference 01900). A Bronze Age ditch has been identified c.600m to the northwest off Harris Road (CHER Reference MCB19296). Recent archaeological works immediately to the south of the site identified a ditch containing one flint and a sherd of Bronze Age pottery, two pits recorded as

being of possible prehistoric date and a ditch of later prehistoric or Roman date (CHER Reference CB15631).

- 4.2 Roman activity is also well represented in the study area. Building work on the Kings Hedges Estate in 1970 exposed a number of Roman coffins as well as associated finds and settlement features (CHER Reference 05213), close to the line of the Roman road Akeman Street, which passes to the west of the site on a broadly north-northeast to south-southwest alignment (CHER Reference 05352). Further inhumations and pottery were recovered nearby on the Arbury Road allotments in 1937 (CHER Reference 05288), and a subsequent residential development exposed yet more intercutting burials, including examples within stone tombs and lead lined coffins. Further finds have been made in the area, off Montgomery Road (CHER Reference 05426), Fortescue Road (CHER Reference 05427), and Humphreys Road (CHER Reference 05430), attesting to an extensive area of Roman settlement and burial activity to the north of the site. Slightly further to the south, and c.300m north of the current site a high status cremation burial was found, with four glass bottles, a stack of four samian bowls, an iron lamp and a ceramic flagon (CHER Reference 05429).
- 4.3 Anglo-Saxon inhumations were identified during quarrying early in the 20th century at Swans Gravel Pit, to the south of the site, a pit containing Late Saxon pottery was recorded in an area of Roman activity off Arbury Road (CHER Reference 05424a), and two bronze brooches were found to the east of the site, at the junction of Milton Road and Gilbert Road (CHER Reference 05480). In the Domesday Book of 1086, the settlement of Chesterton, which has now been subsumed into the urban area of Cambridge, was a distinct settlement, and was in the ownership of the king (Williams and Martin 2002).
- 4.4 The site lies well beyond the historic core of the city of Cambridge, and ridge and furrow has been identified in several locations to the north, northwest and northeast of the site (CHER References 05465, 05527a, 10106). Archaeological work at the former Chesterton Workhouse however, located c.1km to the east-southeast, exposed evidence for settlement activity of 12th to 14th century date (CHER Reference CB15564).

5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by a team of experienced field archaeologists over a single day, Monday 25th November 2013. Two trenches were excavated, each measuring 20m long by 1.6m wide, located on site using tapes measuring in from fixed boundaries. Each trench was excavated using a JCB 3CX wheeled excavator fitted with a smooth ditching bucket. In each trench, topsoil, subsoil and underlying non-archaeological deposits were removed in spits no greater than 0.1m in thickness until the natural geology or first archaeological horizon was exposed. All further excavation was then undertaken by hand.
- 5.2 A full written record of the archaeological deposits was made on standard AAL context recording sheets. Archaeological features and deposits were drawn to scale, in plan and section (at scales 1:20 and 1:50). Photography formed an integral part of the recording strategy. All photographs incorporated scales, with an identification board and directional arrow, and a selection of these images has been included in the report.
- 5.3 Each deposit, layer or cut was allocated a three digit unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in Appendix 1.



Plate 1: General view of the site, looking south

6.0 Results

Trench 1

- 6.1 The uppermost deposit was a 0.3m thick topsoil, 100, sealing a subsoil layer 101 towards the south end of the trench, gradually lensing out towards the centre of the trench.
- 6.2 At the south end of the trench, subsoil 101 sealed a linear feature, [102], aligned broadly north-northeast to south-southwest, and containing a single natural silting deposit of brown sandy silt, 103. A single sherd of early modern whiteware was recovered from this deposit (not retained). The ditch was in excess of 1.6m, with the eastern edge beyond the limit of excavation.



Plate 2: Trench 1, pre-excitation looking north-northeast. Scale is 1m

- 6.3 Towards the northern end of the trench were two parallel linear features, [104] and [106], aligned broadly west-northwest to east-southeast. Both had shallow bowl-shaped profiles and contained similar natural silting deposits of grey clayey sand, 105 and 107 respectively, both of which were devoid of finds.
- 6.4 The natural geology, 108 was an orange brown clayey sand.



Plate 3: Section through ditch [102], looking south-southwest. Scales are 0.3m and 0.1m



Plate 4: Gullies [104] and [106], looking northwest. Scales are 1m, 0.3m and 0.1m

Trench 2

- 6.5 The sequence of deposits in this trench comprised topsoil 200, overlying the natural geology 201 of orange brown clayey sand. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

Geotechnical Pits

- 6.6 During the works, two geotechnical pits were excavated, one to the northwest and to the northeast of the trenches. In both pits the sequence comprised a 0.3m deep topsoil directly overlying the natural geology.



Plate 5: Trench 2, looking east-northeast. Scale is 1m

7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

- 7.1 The trial trenching identified three linear features in Trench 1, with Trench 2 being archaeologically sterile. The only find was a sherd of early modern pottery from ditch [102] at the south end of Trench 1. The location and orientation of this feature broadly corresponds with a liner boundary or drain shown on the 1926 Ordnance Survey map of the area, relating to the use of the site as allotment gardens. Although undated, it is possible that the two linear features towards the north end of Trench 1 represent broadly contemporary subdivisions, too small in scale to be shown on the Ordnance Survey mapping. In the absence of further dating evidence, the interpretive potential of these features is limited.
- 7.2 The evidence suggests that the proposed development will have a negligible impact upon the archaeological resource.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 8.1 The trial trenching methodology was appropriate to the nature and extent of the development. It has demonstrated that the site has a negligible archaeological potential.

9.0 Acknowledgements

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology would like to thank Hembriar Limited for this commission. Thanks also go to the staff and students of The Castle School and Chesterton Community College for their cooperation during the fieldwork.

10.0 References

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Appendix 1: Context Summary List

Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	Dark grey brown clayey sand, frequent sub-angular flint gravel. Seals 101	Topsoil
101	Layer	Brown clayey sand, occasional sub-angular flint gravel. Sealed by 100, seals 108	Subsoil
102	Cut	Linear aligned NNE-SSW, moderately steep sides and flat base. Contains 103, cuts 108	Linear boundary feature
103	Fill	Brown sandy silt, frequent flint gravel	Natural silting of [102]
104	Cut	Linear aligned NNW-SSE, moderately shallow sides and concave base. Contains 105, cuts 108	Linear boundary feature parallel to [106]
105	Fill	Mid to dark grey slightly clayey sand, occasional small sub-angular gravel. Sealed by 100	Natural silting of [104]
106	Cut	Linear aligned NNW-SSE, moderately shallow sides and concave base. Contains 107, cuts 108	Linear boundary feature parallel to [104]
107	Fill	Mid to dark grey slightly clayey sand, occasional small sub-angular gravel. Sealed by 100	Natural silting of [106]
108	Layer	Mid orange brown slightly clayey sand, moderate sub-angular flint gravel. Sealed by 2100	Natural geology

Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
200	Layer	Very dark greyish brown clayey sand, occasional sub-angular flint gravel. Seals 201	Topsoil
201	Layer	Mid orange brown slightly clayey sand, moderate sub-angular flint gravel. Sealed by 200	Natural geology

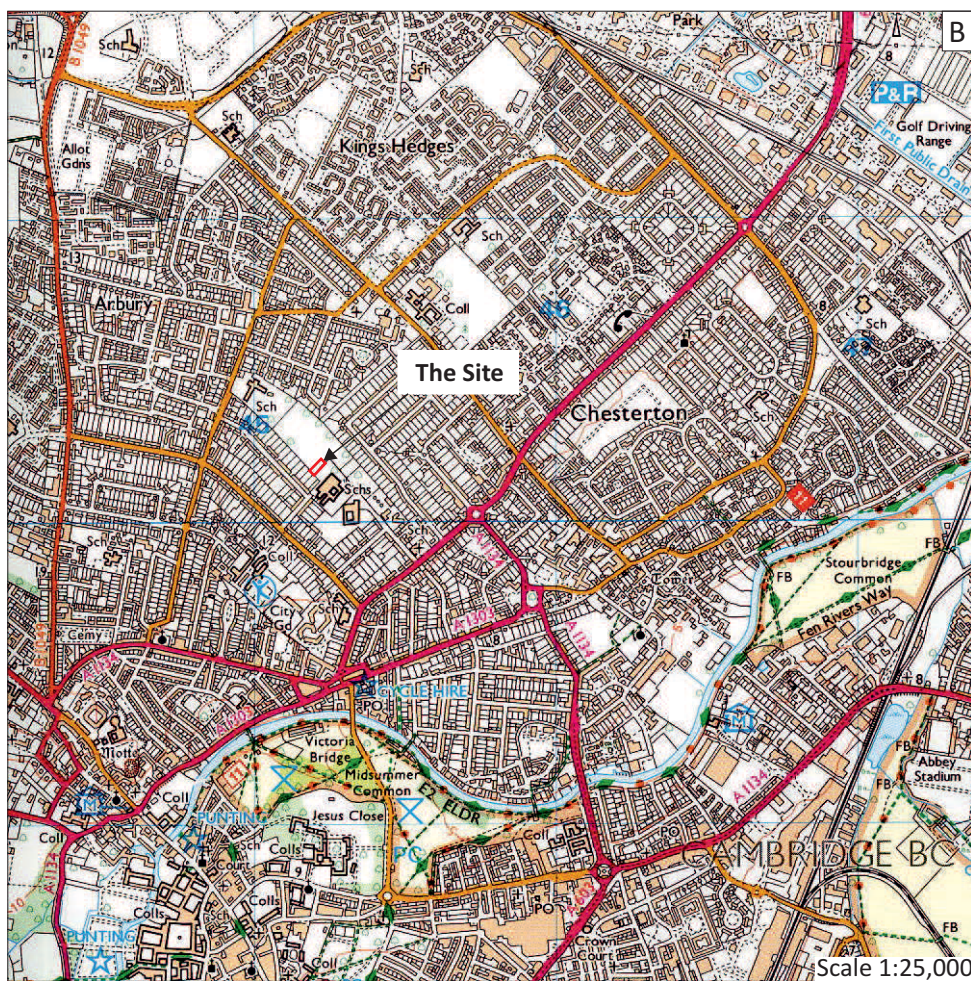
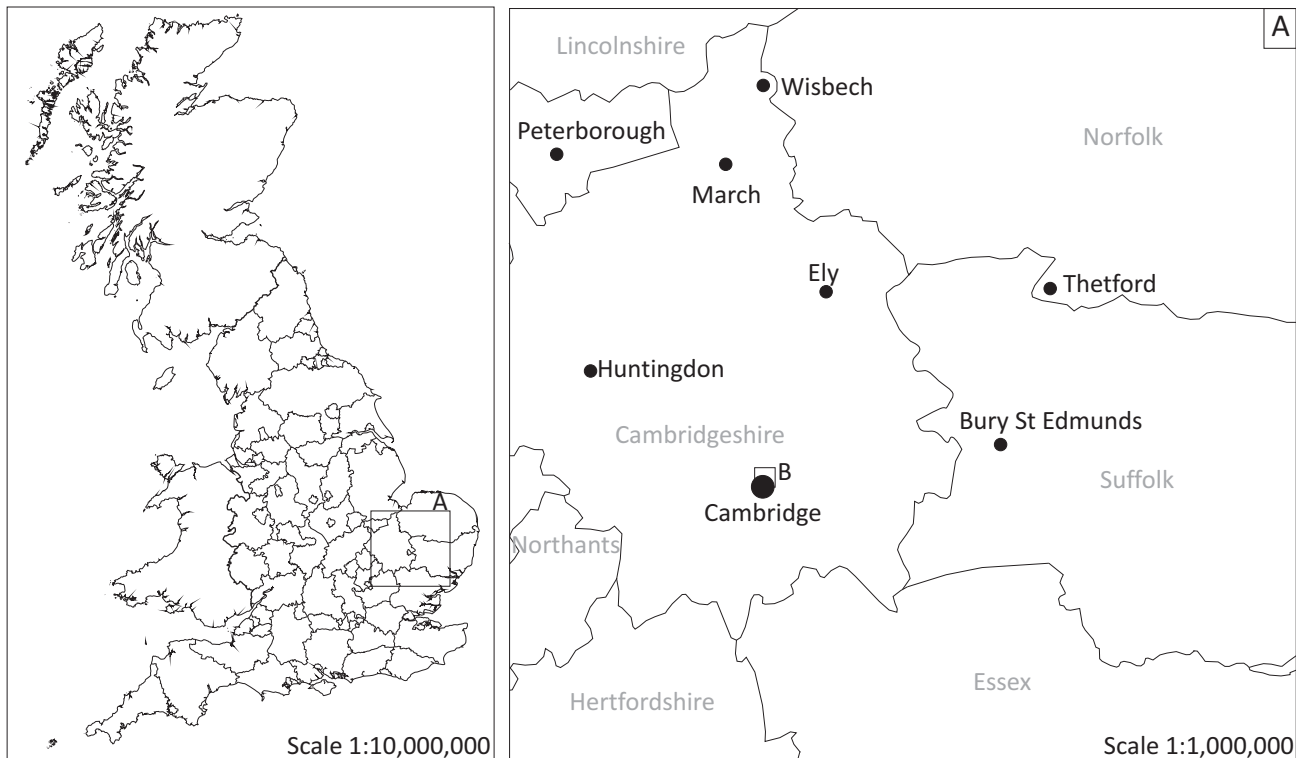


Figure 1: Site location outlined in red

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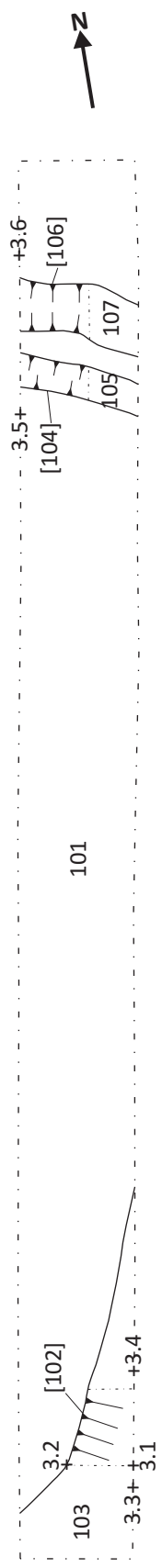
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Scales	1:10,000,000 1:1,000,000 1:25,000 @ A4
Drawn by	C Clay
Date	04/12/2013

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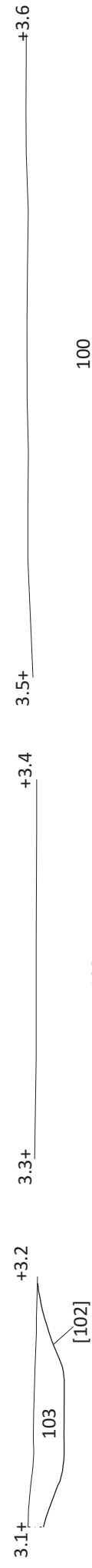


Figure 2: Site location outlined in red, showing trial trenches in green and archaeological features in solid black

Trench 1 Plan



Trench 1 North Facing Section



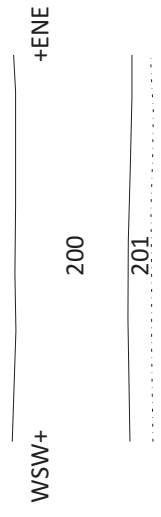
Trench 1 West Facing Section



Trench 1 East Facing Section



Trench 2 South-Southeast Facing Section



Site Code	CACO 13
Scale	1:100 and 1:20 @A4
Drawn by	C Clay
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Figure 3: Trench 1 plan and Trenches 1 and 2 sections



Allen Archaeology Limited
Website: www.allenarchaeology.co.uk

Company Registered in England and Wales No: 6935529

Lincoln
Unit 1C
Branston Business Park
Lincoln Road
Branston
Lincolnshire LN4 1NT

Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1522 794400
Email: info@allenarchaeology.co.uk

Birmingham
Arion Business Centre
Harriet House
118 High Street
Birmingham
B23 6BG

Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 800 610 2545
Email: birmingham@allenarchaeology.co.uk

Cambridge
Wellington House
East Road
Cambridge
CB1 1BH

Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 800 610 2550
Email: cambridge@allenarchaeology.co.uk

Southampton
International House
Southampton International Business Park
George Curl Way
Southampton
SO18 2RZ

Tel: +44 (0) 800 610 2555
Email: southampton@allenarchaeology.co.uk