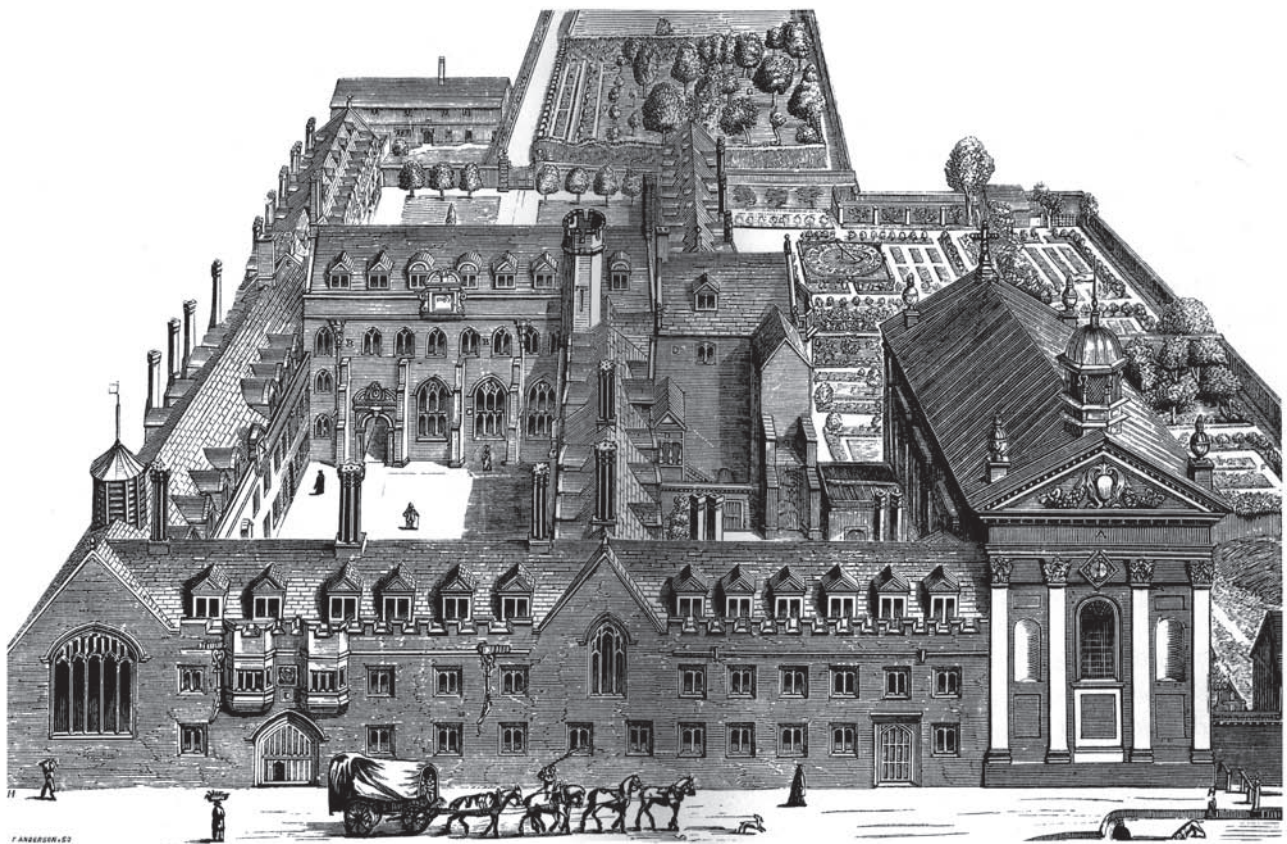


Pembroke College Old Court, Cambridge

Archaeological Monitoring



Richard Newman

CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



Pembroke College Old Court, Cambridge:

Archaeological Monitoring

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University of Cambridge
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Report No. 1028
Event Number: **ECB 3651**

Summary

A lift-pit was excavated within the cellar of the hall of Pembroke College, Cambridge, on the 3rd of August 2011. This measured 1.55m by 0.88m in extent. Within the lift-pit, a series of four 19th to 20th century floor surfaces were identified. The earliest of these surfaces consisted of a layer of large limestone flags, which had subsequently been overlain by two succeeding layers of concrete. The sequence was finally capped by a layer of modern quarry tiles. No evidence of the original, 14th century hall – which was demolished and replaced with the present standing structure in 1875-77 – was uncovered. Neither was any evidence of pre-collegiate, domestic occupation at the site identified. It therefore appears that the entire pre-19th century archaeological sequence was destroyed when the current hall was built.

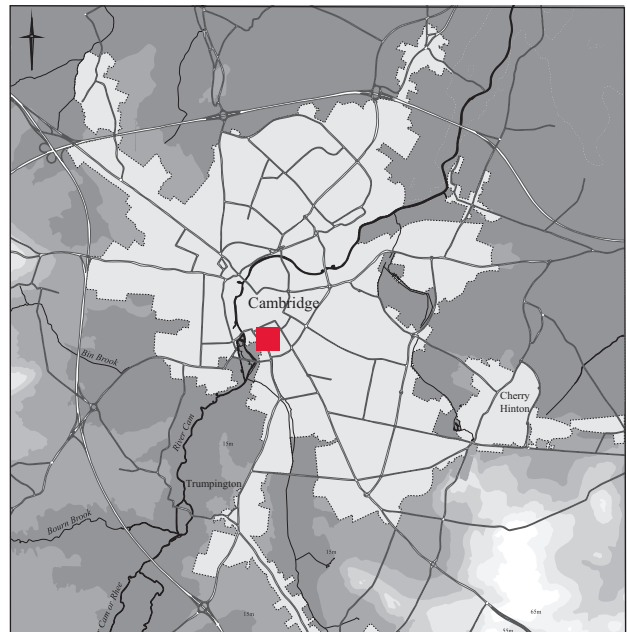
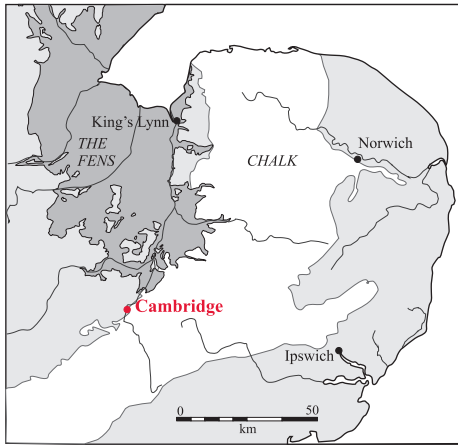
Introduction

A single trench was excavated within the undercroft of the hall of Pembroke College, Cambridge, on the 3rd of August 2011. The site, which is centred on TL 4489 5807, is located in the southern part of the city of Cambridge (see Figure 1). The trench itself measured 1.55m by 0.88m in extent, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.42m. Methodologically, layers of brick, concrete and limestone flagging were broken out and removed by the principal contractor. The trench was then cleaned and recorded using the CAU-modified version of the MoLAS system (Spence 1994). Base plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20, whilst sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. A digital photographic archive was also compiled. Throughout the following text, context numbers are indicated by square brackets (*e.g.* [01]). This project followed the specification issued by the CAU (Evans 2011) and was monitored by Kasia Gdaniec, Development Control Archaeologist at Cambridgeshire's Historic Environment Team (formerly CAPCA). The work was commissioned by Pembroke College, Cambridge, in advance of the insertion of a new lift.

Historically, the present area of investigation was located within the suburban hinterland of Medieval Cambridge. Recent excavations undertaken at the Grand Arcade site have demonstrated that much of this extramural development began during the 11th century, a time when many towns across England underwent a period of rapid expansion and suburbanisation (Cessford & Dickens *in prep.*). Subsequently, however, the suburb became separated from the main urban core by the creation of the King's Ditch in the 12th century (*ibid.*). Previous excavations conducted in the area of Trumpington Street have revealed evidence of relatively intensive Medieval occupation in this area (*e.g.* Dickens 1997; Whittaker 2001; Whittaker 2002). Significantly, the suburb also became the focus of collegiate activity following the establishment of nearby Peterhouse in 1280. Pembroke College itself was founded by Marie de St Pol, the widow of the Earl of Pembroke, in 1347 (see further Attwater & Roberts 1936). Prior to its foundation, the site had been occupied for many generations by a variety of domestic tenants (Willis & Clark 1886 I, 122-28). Two archaeological investigations have previously been conducted within the grounds of Pembroke College. In the first instance, two trenches were excavated in close proximity to the Master's Lodge in 1995. Here, evidence of 19th century quarrying activity was identified, although very little other material was recovered (Robinson & Evans 1995). Subsequently, however, a watching brief conducted during the redevelopment of the College Library in 2001 encountered a series of late 16th century pits that contained a range of well-preserved organic artefacts (Hall 2002).

Results

The archaeological sequence that was revealed within the lift-pit consisted of a series of four successive floor surfaces. At the base was a construction cut, [07], which had truncated the natural river terrace gravels at 6.78m OD.



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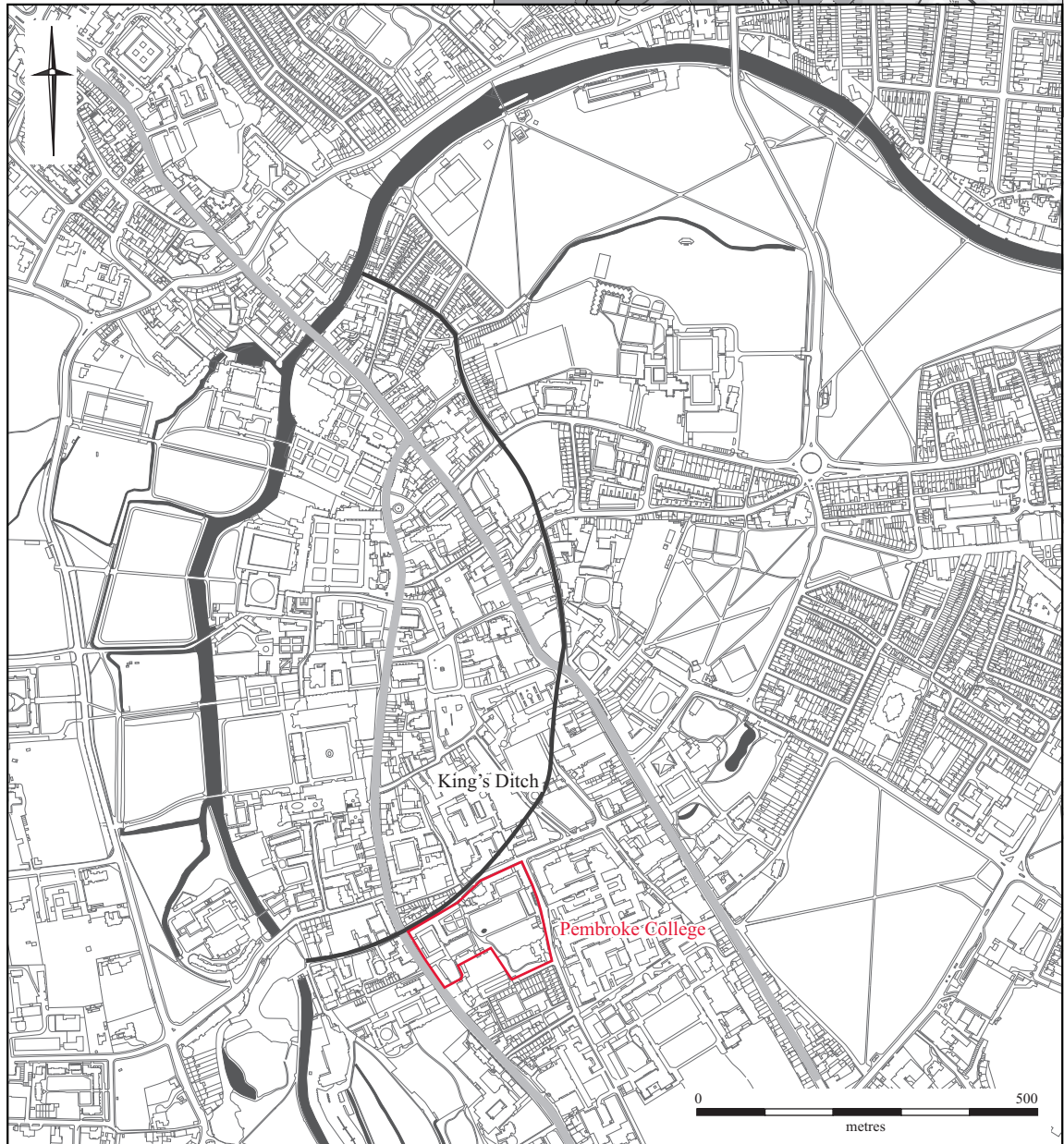


Figure 1. Location map

545810.2/257762.0



Pembroke College, Cambridge
Map

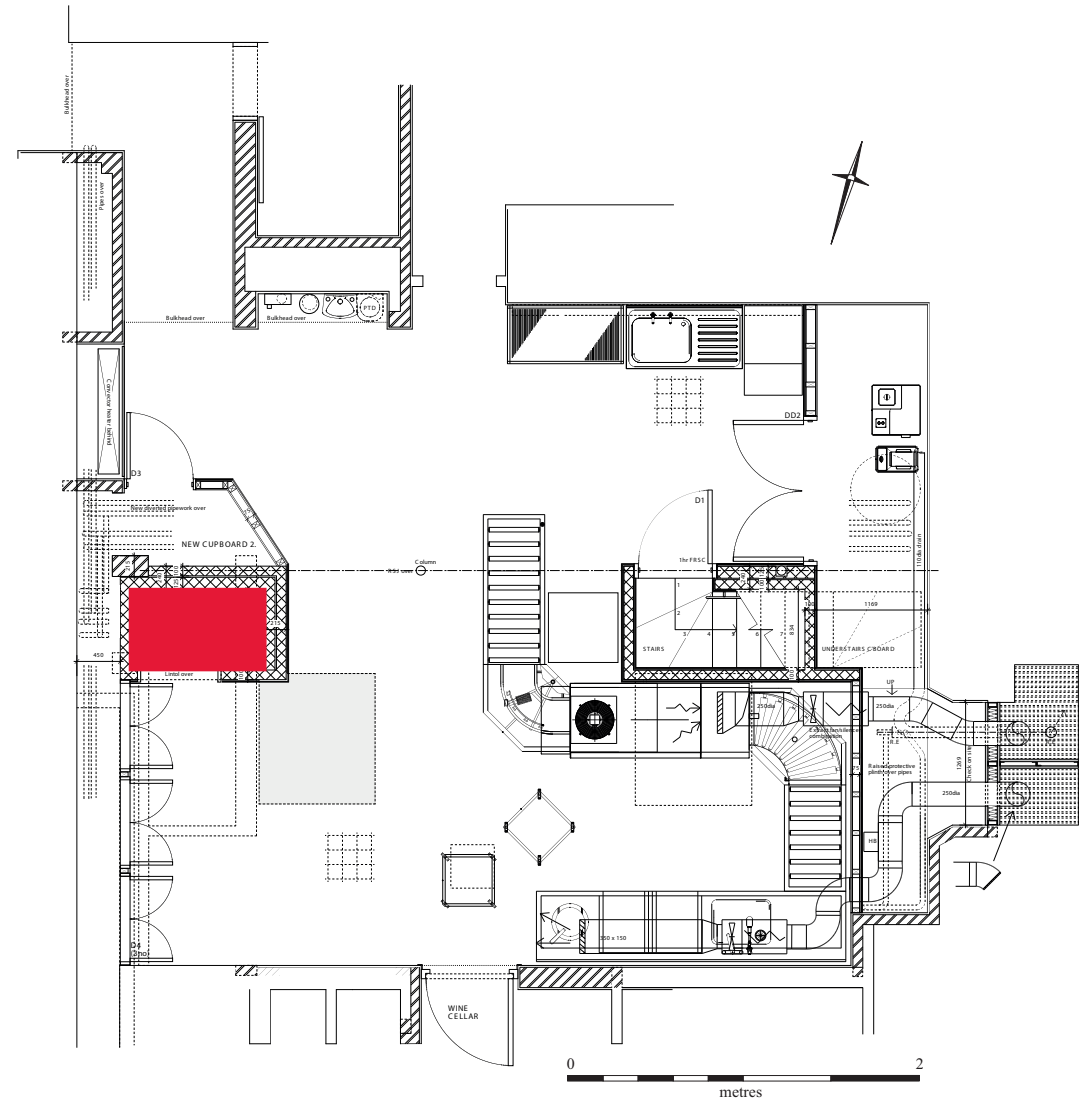
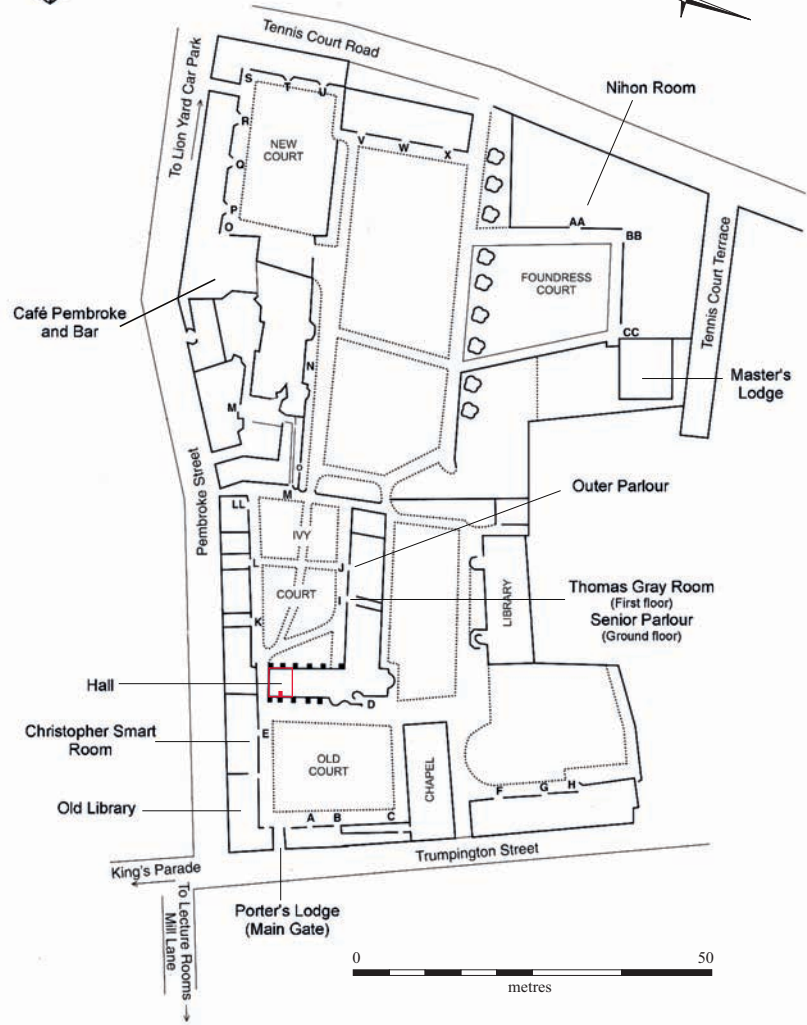


Figure 2. Pembroke College map and re-fashioning proposal plan with archaeological investigation marked in red



Figure 3. Photographs of the lift-pit, looking northwest

Above the construction cut, the earliest surviving surface – [05], which lay at 6.92m OD – comprised a series of large, flat-laid limestone flags (see Figure 2). These measured approximately 0.36m by 0.36m by 0.06m on average, and had rough, uneven bases with more finely (potentially machine-) finished diagonally-tooled surfaces. The flagstones were bedded upon [06], a layer of mixed mid to pale orangey brown silty gravels that measured a maximum of 0.11m thick. Also included within this deposit was a yellow ceramic drainpipe. This did not appear to have been cut in through the flagstoned surface, but instead to have been contemporary with its creation. Although no datable material culture was recovered, the nature of the materials employed indicates that this floor was most probably 19th century in date. Overlying the flagstones were two separate concrete surfaces, [04] and [03], which lay at 6.97m OD and 7.03m OD respectively. These were clearly 20th century in origin, and appear to represent a change in the use of the undercroft. Henceforth, the space appears to have become predominately functional in focus; this may well have been related to its incorporation into the expanded kitchen cellar. The uppermost concrete surface was overlain by [02], a layer of yellow and pink frogged bricks that were bonded with dense pale grey cement. These formed a distinct, cement-lined ‘channel’ – most probably associated with the sinks that were formerly situated immediately to the northwest – and were in turn overlain by a final surface, [01], which consisted of red quarry tiles that measured 0.14m by 0.14m by 0.02m in extent.

Discussion

Following the initial foundation of Pembroke College in the mid 14th century, a quadrangular arrangement of buildings including a hall, a chapel, a library and an accommodation block was constructed in the area now known as Old Court (Willis & Clark 1886 I, 129). The area of the present investigation was located within the footprint of the College hall. This building remained standing until 1875, when it was demolished in order to allow a new and expanded hall to be constructed upon its former site (*ibid.*, 150-53). The replacement hall was completed in 1877. It is clear from the nature of the materials that were encountered that the archaeological remains uncovered during the present investigation were associated with this second, 19th century, phase of the hall. No material predating the 1870s was identified, indicating that the replacement undercroft removed all traces of its predecessor. This is in direct contrast to the recently excavated sequence at Trinity College, where the construction of a replacement hall in 1604-05 preserved – as opposed to destroyed – numerous remnants relating to its predecessor (Newman 2011). Furthermore, the depth of the Pembroke College undercroft also appears to have been sufficient to remove any traces of pre-collegiate, domestic occupation in this location. Unlike at the nearby library site, therefore – where no cellaring had taken place and a high level of organic preservation was encountered (Hall 2002) – the sequence beneath the hall appears to have been entirely truncated during the 19th century.

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Oasis Form

| OASIS ID: cambridg3-107472 | |
|--|--|
| Project details | |
| Project name | Pembroke College Old Court, Cambridge |
| Short description of the project | A lift-pit was excavated within the cellar of the hall of Pembroke College, Cambridge, on the 3rd of August 2011. This measured 1.55m by 0.88m in extent. Within the lift-pit, a series of four 19th to 20th century floor surfaces were identified. The earliest of these surfaces consisted of a layer of large limestone flags, which had subsequently been overlain by two succeeding layers of concrete. The sequence was finally capped by a layer of modern quarry tiles. No evidence of the original, 14th century hall - which was demolished and replaced with the present standing structure in 1875-77 - was uncovered. Neither was any evidence of pre-collegiate, domestic occupation at the site identified. It therefore appears that the entire pre-19th century archaeological sequence was destroyed when the hall was rebuilt. |
| Project dates | Start: 03-08-2011 End: 03-08-2011 |
| Previous/future work | Yes / Not known |
| Any associated project reference codes | PHC11 - Sitecode |
| Any associated project reference codes | ECB 3651 - HER event no. |
| Type of project | Field evaluation |
| Site status | None |
| Current Land use | Other 2 - In use as a building |
| Monument type | STONE FLOOR Post Medieval |
| Significant Finds | FLAGSTONE Modern |
| Methods & techniques | 'Targeted Trenches' |
| Development type | Building refurbishment/repairs/restoration |
| Prompt | Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS |
| Position in the planning process | After full determination (eg. As a condition) |
| Project location | |
| Country | England |
| Site location | CAMBRIDGESHIRE CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE Pembroke College Old Court, Cambridge |
| Postcode | CB2 1RF |
| Study area | 1.36 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | TL 4489 5807 52.2013634616 0.120395461726 52 12 04 N 000 07 13 E Point |
| Height OD / Depth | Min: 6.78m Max: 6.78m |
| Project creators | |
| Name of Organisation | Cambridge Archaeological Unit |
| Project brief originator | Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist) |
| Project design | Christopher Evans |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| originator | |
| Project director/manager | Christopher Evans |
| Project supervisor | Richard Newman |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | Developer |
| Name of sponsor/funding body | Pembroke College, Cambridge |
| Project archives | |
| Physical Archive Exists? | No |
| Physical Archive recipient | Cambridge Archaeological Unit |
| Digital Archive recipient | Cambridge Archaeological Unit |
| Digital Archive ID | PHC11 |
| Digital Contents | 'other' |
| Digital Media available | 'Images raster / digital photography','Text' |
| Paper Archive recipient | Cambridge Archaeological Unit |
| Paper Archive ID | PHC11 |
| Paper Contents | 'other' |
| Paper Media available | 'Context sheet','Plan','Section' |
| Project bibliography | |
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