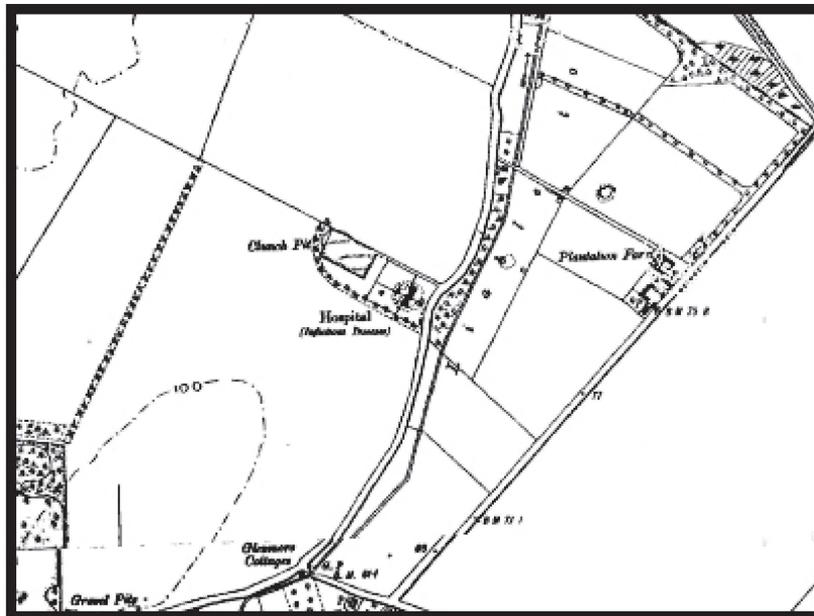


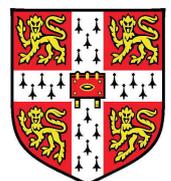
Beech House, Fordham Road, Exning, Suffolk

An Archaeological Monitoring of Works.



Dave Webb

CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



**Archaeological Monitoring of works at Beech House,
Fordham Road, Exning, Suffolk.**

Dave Webb

Cambridge Archaeological Unit
University of Cambridge
Department of Archaeology

September 2011

Report No. 1039

EXG 094

Summary

The Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook the archaeological monitoring of the preparatory works for the installation of a single storage building at Beech House, Fordham Road Exning, Suffolk. During the monitoring no archaeological material was recovered and no archaeological features or structures were encountered. The works involved did not penetrate beyond recent made up ground.

1.1 Introduction

The Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook the archaeological monitoring of the preparatory works for the installation of a single storage building with a ground slab and associated pier footings for steel beams within the grounds of Beech House (former Newmarket Isolation Hospital), Exning (TL 632 665). The monitoring took place between the 13th and 14th December 2010. The work was commissioned by Care Principles Ltd with the aim of establishing and recording the presence, date, condition and significance of any archaeological remains. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by the CAU (Standing 2010). The WSI was approved and work monitored by Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service Conservation Team. Site code is EXG 094.

1.2 Location and Topography

The site of the hospital is adjacent too and on the west side of the A142 road, located to the north-east of Exning, to the north of Newmarket and to the west of Snailwell. The area of works was immediately to the south of the main road entrance to the site and adjacent to the road. The hospital site occupies a position on the east facing lower slope of a broad valley within a gently rolling chalk landscape. The underlying geology is comprised of second and third terrace river gravels overlying middle chalk (British Geological Survey Sheet no.188). The current surrounding land-use is dominated by horse racing, resulting in a small network of paddocks divided up by post and rail fencing and narrow wooded shelterbelts.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The earliest recorded evidence of human activity in the vicinity of the site comes from possible Palaeolithic flints recovered from gravel pits to the south of the A14 (EXG 004). Recent work on the Fordham Bypass to the south of the site has revealed extensive activity from the Neolithic period through to the Romano-British Period (CHER CB14997). Possible Bronze Age ring ditches have been noted to the east of the site (EXG 015, EXG 016). Excavations to the south of the site (EXG 082) have revealed a segment of a large Iron Age ditch believed to be an enclosure ditch surrounding an Iron Age settlement on Windmill Hill. In 1952 a rich Late Iron Age cremation burial was discovered at Snailwell (Lethbridge; CHER 07420). The burial was within a large wooden structure of which only the angle irons remained. The accompanying grave goods included a shield boss, amphorae, imported ceramic vessels and the bowl of a Patera. The imported wares dated the burial to the Conquest period.

In 1904 to the north west of the site (EXG 012) a villa with a mosaic pavement was discovered and further excavations on the site in 1958 suggested occupation of the site from the 1st c. to the middle of the 4th c. Traces of another villa in the form of painted wall plaster and hypocaust tiles revealed by ploughing, is noted in the Cambridgeshire HER (CHER 07483) to the North East. A Roman well was recorded in 1948 (Johnston 1959) reaching a depth of 16m. The course of a Roman road (Ashwell Street or Street Way) is projected as following the present Exning to Chippenham

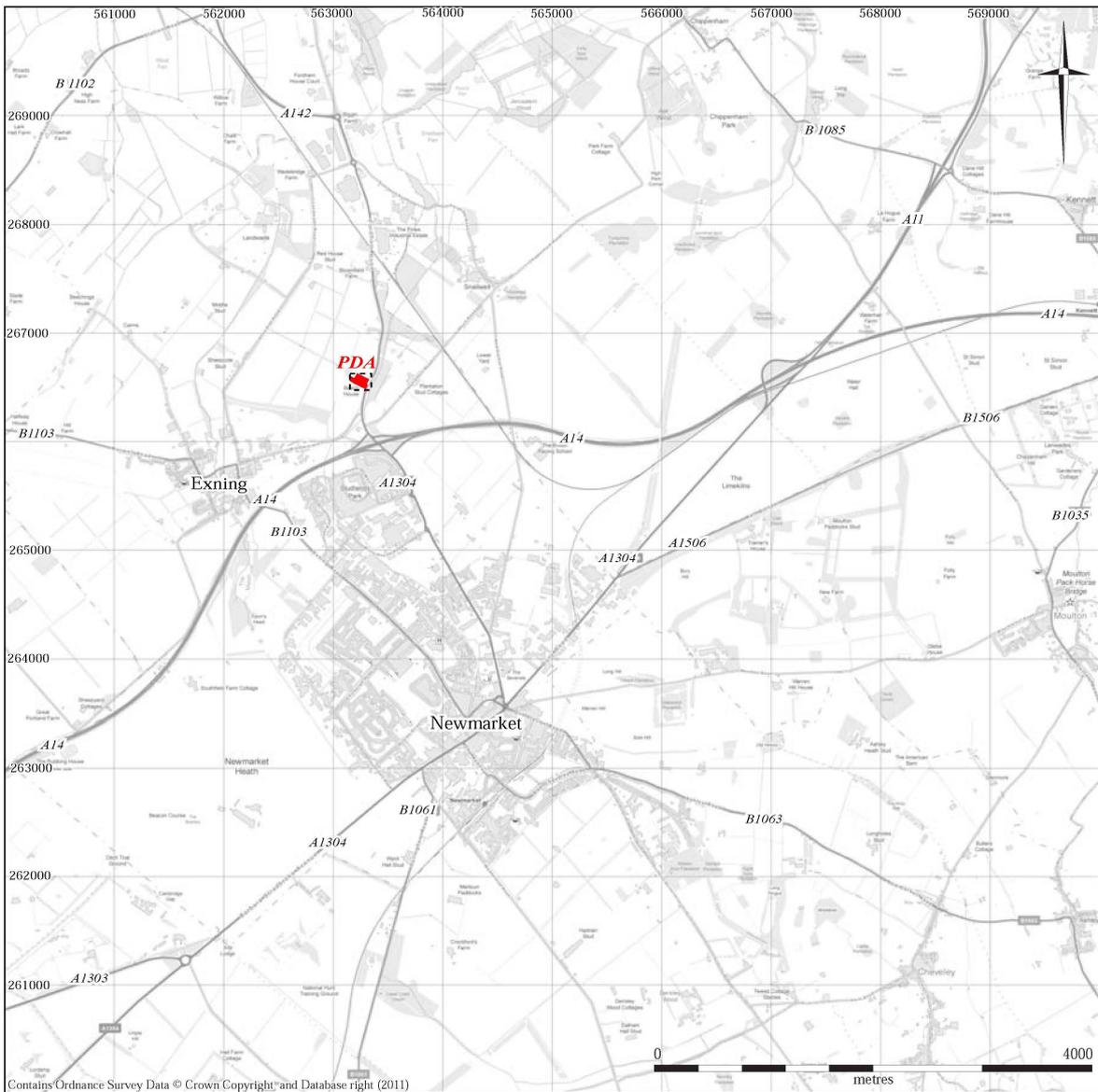
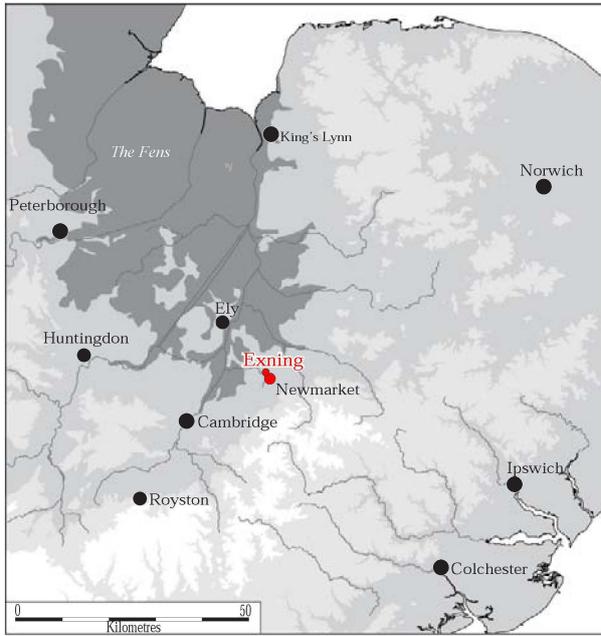


Figure 1. Location Plan

road to the south of the is projected as following the present Exning to Chippenham road to the south of the site according to Fox (1923). Recent excavations at the Isolation Hospital site (EXG 074) and adjacent land have revealed field boundary ditches and occupation evidence dating to the 1st century and late 2nd to early 3rd century. Further crop marks to the north are seen as suggesting the presence of a Roman Building (Adams 2009). An evaluation and further excavation (EXG 083) on land now forming the car park to the south of Beech House revealed a series of pits and post-holes including a layer of Roman tiles. A metal detecting survey of the site also recovered a large collection of coins dated from the late 3rd to 4th centuries (Muldowney 2010).

A Saxon cemetery is located to the south-west of the site at Windmill Hill (Fox 1923). Metalwork recovered from the site has provided evidence for high status burials of 6th century. date. Adjacent to the site an excavation has produced evidence of a possible Saxon hall type structure (EXG 052).

In 1888 the Newmarket and Moulton Infectious Diseases Hospital was founded on the site, with modifications and extensions to the Hospital made in 1897, 1928, 1929 and 1945. At present the buildings, with some more recent additions, serve as a low secure hospital referred to as Beech House. The recent works outlined on and adjacent to the Hospital site have highlighted the significant potential for further archaeological material and structures to be uncovered during any future works.

1.4 Methodology

The preparatory works for the ground slab were carried out by the contractor's team (Eclipse Construction) and monitored by a member of the CAU. The work was carried out using a mini-digger with a toothless bucket clearing an area 10m x 6m to a maximum depth of 0.5m. Any potential archaeological features and material would be investigated and treated in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation drawn up by the CAU (Standing 2010) and the Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service. The recording was carried out following the CAU modified MoLAS system of archaeological site recording (Spence 1990). All work was carried out in accordance with statutory Health and Safety legislation and with the recommendations of SCAUM (Allen & Holt 2005).

2.1 Results

Initial clearance, of the area (10x 6m) being prepared for the construction of the new building, removed the current car park surface and revealed a layer of made up ground comprised of a yellow builders sand with frequent medium to large sub angular gravel inclusions. The layer (Fig. 2) of made up ground extended to a depth of 0.5m and overlay the surface of an earlier car-park level. The eastern edge of the excavated area exposed the ragged edge of the sand and gravel made up ground overlying the edge of this earlier car park surface, at this point the layers butted up against another layer of made up ground comprising of a reddish brown sandy silt loam with frequent inclusions of construction debris. Further works for posts and the laying of services were not scheduled to impinge on layers below this level.

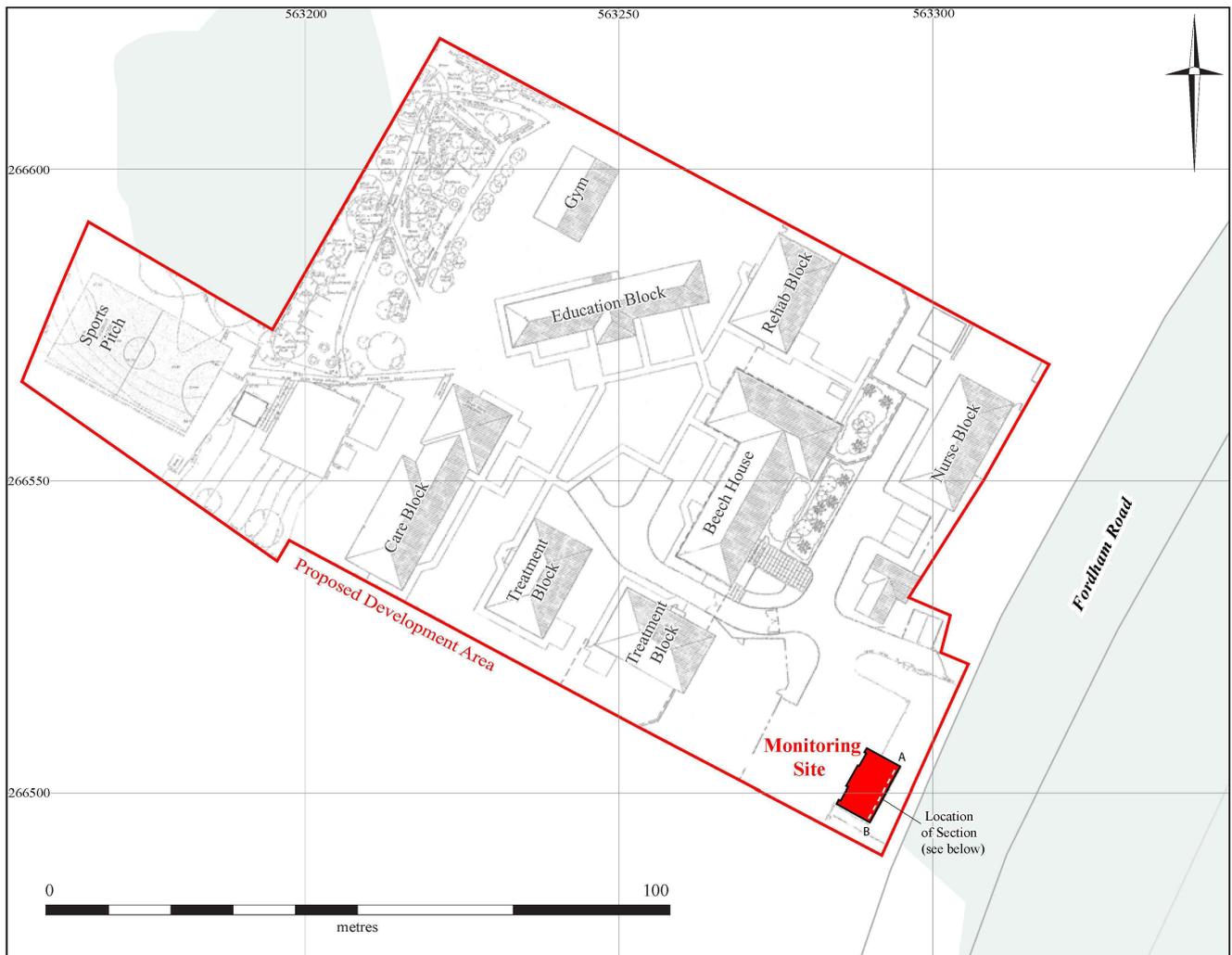


Figure 2. Plan of proposed development area and photograph of North-East facing section of car park layers

3.1 Discussion

It was noted during the monitoring that the level of the current car park was significantly raised above the land surface at the point of ground works. Despite the close proximity of known archaeological features (Muldowney 2010) no archaeological features or material was noted during the watching brief.

4.1 Conclusions

The works considered in this watching brief were contained within stratigraphy comprised of recent layers of made up ground overlying a modern redundant car park surface, the works did not impinge on any archaeologically sensitive layers. Although this small-scale excavation did not reveal any archaeological material, other excavations in close proximity to the site have revealed extensive archaeological features and quantities of material (EXG 074, EXG 083) and any further works within the vicinity should be monitored in relation to the positive results from those excavations rather than the negative result of this watching brief.

Acknowledgments

The work was commissioned by Care Principles Ltd, Robin Standring was the project manager acting for the Cambridge Archaeology Unit. Bryan Crossan digitized the plans and prepared the graphics. Co-ordination with the contractors Eclipse Construction was provided by Lyle Dormer of Care Principles Ltd.

References

Adams. M. 2009 Land adjacent to St.Martin's Church Hall, Church Lane, Exning, Suffolk. Archaeological Solutions ltd. Report no. 3416.

Allen. J.L. and Holt. A. 2002. *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology*. SCAUM

British Geological Survey. 1981. Cambridge. England and Wales. Sheet 188. Solid and Drift: 50,000 series

Fox. C. 1923 The archaeology of the Cambridge region; a topographical study of the bronze, early iron, Roman, and Anglo-Saxon ages

Gurney. D. 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. (East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.) Gressenhall; ALGOA

Johnston. D. 1959 *A Roman Well at Exning*. Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society. Vol. 47, 11-20.

Lethbridge. T. 1954 *Burial of an Iron Age Warrior at Snailwell*. Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society. Vol. 47, 25-37.

Muldowney. M. 2010 *Land Adjacent to Beech House Hospital, Exning*. Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service. Report no. 2008/214

Spence. C. 1990. *Archaeological Site Manual*. London: Museum of London.

Standring 2010 Written Scheme of Investigation. Beech House, Fordham Road TL 632 665 Planning Reference F/2009/0479/FUL Project Specification for Archaeological Monitoring Site Code: EXG 094.

Abbreviations

EXG Suffolk Historic Environment Record

CHER Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record

Appendix 1: OASIS Data Collection Form: England

Project Details	
Project Name	Archaeological Monitoring of works at Beech House, Fordham Road, Exning, Suffolk.
Short Description of the Project	The Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook the archaeological monitoring of the preparatory works for the installation of a single storage building at Beech house, Fordham Road Exning, Suffolk. During the monitoring no archaeological material was recovered and no archaeological features or structures were encountered. The works involved did not penetrate beyond recent made up ground.
Project Dates	13-12-2010 -14-12-2010
Previous/Future Work	Not known
Any Associated Project Reference Codes	Site code EXG 094 Event no.
Type of project	Field Evaluation
Site Status	none
Development Type	rural/urban commercial and residential
Reason for Investigation	Direction from Local Planning Authority
Position in Planning Process	after full determination...
Current Land Use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Project location	
County	Suffolk
Site Location	SUFFOLK FOREST HEATH SANTON DOWNHAM Beech House, Fordham Road, Exning Postcode CB8 7LF
Study Area	50 sq. m.
Site Coordinates	Site coordinates NGR - TL 6317 6655 LL - 52.272424 0.391701 (decimal) LL - 52 16 20 N 000 23 30 E (degrees) Point
Height OD	22m

Project Creators
Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project Brief Originator	City/Nat. Park/District/Borough archaeologist
Project Design Originator	Robin Standing
Project Director/Manager	Robin Standing
Project Supervisor	D.Webb
Type of Sponsor/Funding Body	Landowner
Name of Sponsor/Funding Body	Care Principles Ltd
Project Archives
Physical Archive Recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Physical Archive ID	EXG 094
Physical Contents	
Digital Archive Recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	EXG 094
Digital Contents	

Digital Media Available	Images Raster / Digital photography
Paper Archive Recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	EXG 094
Paper Contents	
Paper Media Available	'Context sheet','Notebook - Excavation, Research, General Notes','Plan','Section'

Project Bibliography (Report Details)	
Publication Type	Grey Literature
Title	Archaeological Monitoring of works at Beech House, Fordham Road, Exning, Suffolk.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	1: D.Webb
Date	2011
Issuer or Publisher	Cambridge Archaeological Unit Report XXXX
Place of Issue or Publication	Cambridge
Description	A4 wire bound with plastic laminate front
Entry Data	
Name & E-Mail	Dave Webb dww25@cam.ac.uk
Date	07/08/2011