

The Old Rectory, Kingston, Cambridgeshire

An Archaeological Evaluation



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University of Cambridge
October 2011
Report No. 1056
Event Number: **ECB 3662**

Non-technical summary

An archaeological evaluation was conducted by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit on the 12th and 13th of September 2011 at the Old Rectory, Kingston, Cambridgeshire, in the vicinity of a high status 12th–13th century stone aisled hall with a 14th century cross wing. The evaluation revealed evidence for some 12th–13th century activity contemporary with the aisled hall and a 14th–16th century metalled yard surface and timber building contemporary with the cross wing.

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was conducted by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on the 12th and 13th of September 2011, on the site of the Old Rectory, Kingston, Cambridgeshire (centred on TL 3466 5544) (Figure 1). The work was undertaken on behalf of the landowner Mr. Simon Gardener, as part of a condition placed upon a planning consent.

Topography and Geology

The current ground surface lies at *c.* 42m OD and the site is located on Third River Terrace sands and gravels. Untruncated natural lay at *c.* 41.2m OD.

Archaeological, Historical and Cartographic Background

The archaeological, historical and cartographic background of the PDA is fully considered in a historic building and archaeological assessment (Beacon Planning & Archaeological Risk Management 2010) and a recent consideration of the site (Oosthuizen 2010). Prior to the evaluation a geophysical survey was also undertaken (Graham 2009). This material will not be re-iterated in this document, but will be discussed where relevant. There is some extremely limited evidence for Prehistoric and Roman activity in the vicinity (Beacon Planning & Archaeological Risk Management 2010, 40–42). Kingston is recorded in Domesday Book as *Chingestone* (king's farm) in 1086 and 'sherds of Saxo-Norman ware (probably C11), much early Medieval and Post Medieval etc' were allegedly found during work at the Old Rectory, however as this material has been lost its dating cannot be relied upon.

The Grade II* listed Old Rectory comprises a high status 12th–13th century aisled hall with outer stone walls and a stone stair turret, a 14th century cross wing and numerous later additions (Beacon Planning & Archaeological Risk Management 2010, 17–38). Nevertheless it should be noted that considerable doubts have been raised about the dating of a number of internal elements of the standing building as it appears that the 19th–20th century modifications to the structure have been more extensive than previously recognised. Whilst many elements are clearly of relatively early date it appears that some may not be in their original location. The elements immediately adjacent to the proposed extension are of Post-Medieval and Modern date (Beacon Planning & Archaeological Risk Management 2010, appendix 5). It has been argued that the Old Rectory relates to the royal holding at Kingston. This passed into the hands of the St. George family prior to 1182, and the aisled hall may also have been constructed by members of this family before or around 1189 (Oosthuizen 2010). If this is correct the St. George family would also have been responsible for the 14th century cross wing. At some stage the building stopped being a residence of the St. George family and was occupied by the rectors of the adjacent parish church. The advowson of the church was conveyed to King's College, Cambridge, in 1457; it was relinquished in 1926 and the building ceased to be a rectory in 1931.

Methodology

The evaluation was conducted following a brief for archaeological evaluation produced by Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (Gdaniec 2010) and a specification produced by the CAU (Beadsmoore 2011). The uppermost 19th–20th century garden-related deposits were removed using a tracked machine with

a 1.4m wide toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision. The underlying archaeological features were initially hand excavated, with some further machine excavation where appropriate to remove portions of general layers. A metal detector survey of the machined overburden and exposed features was undertaken; this failed to reveal any material other than 19th–20th century nails and other detritus. The spoil heaps of machined material were also visually scanned for material.

All discrete archaeological features encountered were hand excavated. A plan of each trench was drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections recorded at a scale of 1:10. The recording followed the CAU-modified MoLAS system (Spence 1994), whereby numbers were assigned to individual contexts (e.g. **[001]**) and stratigraphic events (e.g. **F.01**). All work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory health and safety legislation and recommendations of the Federation of Archaeological Managers & Employers (Allen and Holt 2010). The site code is **ORK 11** and the HER event number is **ECB 3662**.

The evaluation relates to a proposed kitchen and breakfast area, abutting the northern side of the standing building, 7.9m by 4.85m in extent (c. 38.3m²). Due to the presence of a live foul pipe crossing the area of the proposed extension two trenches 2.65m by 2.5m (Trench 1) and 2.3m by 1.4m (Trench 2) respectively were excavated (Figure 2). These covered 9.85m², or c. 25% of the area of the proposed extension.

Results

The archaeological features revealed in Trenches 1–2 can be divided into three main phase of activity:

- Phase 1: early activity pre-dating the establishment of the metallised surface
- Phase 2: metallised surface and associated features
- Phase 3: garden area and services

Phase 1: early activity

The Phase 1 activity consisted of a substantial but undated pit (**F.16**) in Trench 1, probably dug as a gravel quarry, and a general agricultural/horticultural layer (**F.14**) in Trench 2, which contained predominantly Saxo-Norman (10th–12th century) pottery plus some medieval (13th–14th century) pottery.

Feature descriptions

F.14: Sealed beneath gravel surface **F.10** in Trench 2, **F.14** was a homogenous deposit of mid greyish brown silt c. 0.19–0.28m thick. As far as could be determined this was a layer rather than a series of intercutting features and it appears to represent a mixed topsoil/subsoil deposit that has been significantly affected by agriculture or horticulture. Context **[019]**.

F.16: Sealed beneath gravel surface **F.10** in Trench 2, this large sub-circular pit had shallow concave sides and a flat base; it measured over 1.6m in extent and at least 0.36m deep. It was backfilled with mid reddish brown silty sand and gravel and appears to be a gravel quarry pit. No dating evidence was recovered; however, the appearance of the fills suggests an early date probably predating the agriculture/horticulture activity that created **F.14**. Contexts **[038]–[040]**.

Phase 2: metalled surface and associated features

In Phase 2 a substantial gravel surface was established in Trenches 1 (**F.13/F.15**) and 2 (**F.10**) (Figures 3–5). This was 0.04–0.12m thick and covered an area of at least 6.5m by 2.7m, representing a significant event. The earth resistance survey of the area indicated the presence of a high resistance area anomaly covering an area including Trenches 1–2, this was interpreted as possible structural remains/debris or hard or compacted ground (Graham 2009, figure 9). It is probable that this is the metalled surface revealed in Trenches 1–2, suggesting that it covered an extensive area.

Part of the metalled surface in Trench 1 was covered by a timber structure. This was represented by postholes **F.02** and **F.07**, post-pad **F.08**, board slot **F.03** and the impression of a timber beam which had been laid over the gravel connecting **F.02** and **F.03**. The presence of the timber structure meant that the metalled surface weathered differently inside and outside (**F.13/F.15**). The overall size of this timber building is unknown. It appears that the timber from at least posthole **F.02** was removed, and the backfilling of this feature contained 14th–15th century pottery. In Trench 2 part of the metalled surface was covered by cobbled surface **F.09**, but as only a small area of this was revealed its function is unclear. Wedged into this surface was some 13th–15th century pottery.

The metalled surface in Trench 1 appears to have continued in use as a surface after the timber building was removed. Whilst the surface was still in use pit **F.01** - which contained 13th–15th century material - was dug through it. In Trench 2 another pit **F.11** - containing 16th–17th century pottery - was also dug through the metalled surface. The top of the lintel of a blocked doorway in later 17th century wall to the south of Trench 1 (RCHM(E) 1968, 155–56) was *c.* 1.25m (*c.* 4ft) higher than the current ground surface and *c.* 1.75m (*c.* 5.7ft) above metalled surface **F.13/F.15**. This suggests that in the 17th century the surface must have lain at around the height of metalled surface **F.13/F.15**.

Feature descriptions

F.01: cut through metalled surface **F.15**, sub-rectangular pit **F.01** had steep almost vertical sides and a rounded base; it was 0.6m+ by 0.2m+ in extent and 0.57m+ deep. The pit was predominantly filled with mid grey silt and contained 13th–15th century pottery and 14th–15th century tile fragments. Contexts [009]–[012].

F.02: cut through metalled surface **F.13/15**, sub-circular posthole **F.02** had vertical sides and a flat base; it was 0.34m by 0.29m in extent and 0.17m deep. The posthole was predominantly filled with mid grey silt and contained 13th–15th century pottery, including a large sherd of 14th–15th century pottery that must have post-dated the removal of the original post. Contexts [024]–[025].

F.03: cut through metalled surface **F.13/15**, oval cut feature **F.03** had nearly vertical sides and a rounded base; it was 0.30m long by 0.14m wide and 0.08m deep. The feature was predominantly filled with mid brownish grey silt, it does not appear to have been a posthole *per se*, but may well have been a slot that held an upright board. Contexts [026]–[027].

F.07: cut through metalled surface **F.15**, sub-circular posthole **F.07** had concave sides and a rounded base; it was 0.34m by 0.27m in extent and 0.21m deep. The posthole was predominantly filled with mid greyish brown silt. Contexts [034]–[035].

F.08: cut through metalled surface **F.15**, roughly square post-pad **F.08** had vertical sides and a flat base; it was 0.27m by 0.28m in extent and 0.10m deep. The post-pad was largely filled by a single stone with a flat upper surface, with some greyish-brown silt around the sides. The appearance of **F.08**

indicates that it was dug as a post-pad and there is no evidence that it was originally a posthole that was later converted. Contexts [036]–[037].

F.09: lying over metal surface **F.10** was cobbled surface **F.09**. This consisted of a bedding layer of mid greyish brown sandy silt 0.08m thick and a layer of well packed and firmly embedded rounded cobbles that were 0.1–0.2m long by 0.1–0.15 wide and 0.08–0.10m thick. The cobbles were local fieldstone, similar to those incorporated into the structure of the 12th–13th century aisled hall. The exposed area of cobbling covered an area of 0.7m by 0.6m and it is unclear if this was part of a general yard surface or the footing for part of a timber building. Firmly embedded into the surface of the cobbles was some 13th–15th century pottery. Contexts [016]–[017] and [023].

F.10: this consisted of a firmly packed yellowish orange sandy gravel surface 0.08–0.12m thick and covering the entirety of Trench 2, except where there was later truncation. There was only a single layer of gravel, with no evidence that the surface was ever re-laid or patched. Context [018].

F.11: cut through metal surface **F.10**, sub-circular pit **F.11** had steep almost vertical sides and a flattish base; it was *c.* 0.8m in diameter and 0.4m deep. The pit was predominantly filled with mid greyish brown silt and contained 16th–17th century pottery, plus 13th–15th century pottery and 14th–15th century tile fragments as well as several fieldstone cobbles that may derive from **F.09**. Contexts [020]–[021].

F.13/F.15: this consisted of a firmly packed yellowish orange sandy gravel surface 0.04–0.06m thick covering the entirety of Trench 2, except where there was later truncation. Although apparently laid as a single surface there were clear variations in appearance, probably due to differential weathering related to the construction of a timber building over part of the metal surface. There were what appeared to be internal ([022]) and external ([005]) areas, plus a *c.* 0.16m wide strip connecting **F.02** and **F.03** which probably relates to a timber beam being laid over the gravel. There was only a single layer of gravel, with no evidence that the surface was ever re-laid or patched. Makeup deposit [006] underlying [005] contained 13th–15th century pottery. Contexts [005], [006] and [022].

Phase 3: garden-related features

The Phase 2 metal surface(s) eventually went out of use and were covered by a range of garden-related deposits in both trenches (**F.12**). The degree of horticultural activity meant that any ephemeral Post-Medieval deposits that originally lay above the Phase 2 gravelled surface would have been entirely removed, although the relative paucity of 17th–18th century material culture indicates that there was relatively little activity of this date. **F.12** was probably created during the 18th century, it was truncated by several late 18th–20th century services (**F.4–F.6**) and contained a range of 19th–early 20th century pottery.

Feature descriptions

F.4: a circular metal pipe, this represents a secondary insertion along the line of earlier drain **F.5**. Contexts [007], [008] and [013].

F.5: a north-northeast to south-southwest aligned drain, consisting of a row of cylindrical field drains with flattened bases in a buff/yellow fabric indicating that they were produced on or near the Isle of Ely. Drains of this form are known to have been used in Cambridge in the 1870s and 1880s. **F.5** appears to be deliberately aligned to pass around the part of the standing building located to the west, dated to the 16th–17th centuries. Contexts [028]–[030].

F.6: a north-south aligned drain built from 17th–early 19th century bricks, the presence of creamware indicates a date of *c.* 1740 or later. Contexts [031]–[033].

F.12: A series of garden-related deposits consisting of a dark humic upper layer and lighter lower deposits. Contexts [001]–[004] and [014]–[015].

Finds and environmental evidence

Pottery, Craig Cessford

A small assemblage of pottery spanning the 12th–20th centuries was recovered (82 sherds, 1145g). The earliest material recovered dates to the Saxo-Norman period (10th–12th century) and consists of Thetford-type ware (6 sherds, 74g) and St. Neots-type ware (1 sherd, 32g). There is some medieval (13th–15th century) material, consisting of various local coarsewares (22 sherds, 185g) and a single fineware sherd (101g). Post-Medieval material is represented by Glazed Red Earthenware (9 sherds, 375g).

The Modern (18th–20th century) pottery from Trenches 1–2 was washed and identified but not retained. The only stratified Modern pottery was a single sherd of creamware weighing 2g ([033] F.6) which probably dates to *c.* 1760–80 and is no earlier than *c.* 1740. The garden-related deposits produced a considerable quantity of 19th–early 20th century pottery. In Trench 1 ([001] F.12) located closest to the standing building there were numerous sherds; much of this material consisted of large unabraded sherds with some cross-fits. This consisted of whiteware (41 sherds, 373g, MNI 10 vessels) including plain vessels, blue and white transfer printed vessels, and Mocha style decorated vessels, late unglazed red earthenware (1 sherd, 11g), iron glazed red earthenware (1 sherd, 21g), Sunderland-type coarseware (1 sherd, 379g) and blue bodied earthenware (1 sherd, 1g). In contrast in Trench 2 ([014] F.12) there was only a single whiteware sherd with blue and white transfer printed decoration (3g).

Overall the small pottery assemblage, whilst it provides useful dating evidence for the sequence, is of limited significance.

Tile, Craig Cessford

A small quantity of tile (17 pieces, 180g) was discarded from Phase 2 deposits. These fragments were all of typical 14th–15th century forms and fabrics and were probably deposited in the 15th–16th centuries. A range of Modern bricks, tiles and drains were observed in Phase 3 deposits.

Glass, Craig Cessford

Some late 19th–20th century vessel glass was present in Phase 3 deposits but was not retained. A small amount of earlier glass was also present in Phase 3 deposits. A single small fragment of decorated *grisaille* medieval window glass (14th–15th century) weighing 1g was recovered from [014] F.12. A small fragment of possibly Post-Medieval (16th–17th century) vessel glass was recovered from [001] F.12.

Worked bone, Craig Cessford

A single piece of worked bone was recovered from [014] F.12. This was part of a perforated expanded-headed pin (MacGregor 1985, 120) made from a sheep-sized tibia (identification by Vida Rajkovača) weighing 2g.

Animal bone, Craig Cessford

A small quantity of animal bone (5 pieces, 17g) was discarded from Phase 2 deposits. The identifiable bone was all sheep/goat and was generally in good condition.

Environmental remains, Craig Cessford

Visual examination of sediment from the investigated features revealed extremely low densities of charred plant remains, dominated by charcoal. No waterlogged deposits were present.

Discussion

The archaeological evaluation revealed no evidence for activity prior to the establishment of the high status 12th–13th century stone built aisled hall nearby. The Phase 1 activity, which consisted of a gravel quarry pit and evidence for agriculture or horticulture, is probably contemporary with the aisled hall and indicates that the trenches lay within a peripheral but utilised area. The Phase 2 activity, which consisted of an extensive gravelled yard and a timber building, dates to the 14th–16th centuries. It is plausible that the yard was laid at the same time as the 14th century cross wing of the standing building was constructed. The timber building was definitely contemporary with the cross-wing, although it is unclear whether it was a freestanding structure, such as a kitchen, or if it was physically connected to the cross wing. The timber building appears to have been removed in the 15th–16th centuries and the yard continued in use until at least the 16th century and conceivably as late as the 18th century. The area was then used as a garden that was crossed by services (Phase 3).

While the scale of the evaluation means that it has provided a relatively modest insight into archaeological remains, the rarity of surviving 12th–13th century domestic stone buildings means that the results are nonetheless important (*cf.* Grenville 1997, 74; Quiney 2003, 163; for a recent local discussion see Newman and Dickens 2011)

Acknowledgments

The evaluation was directed by Craig Cessford and undertaken with the assistance of Marcus Brittain. The project manager for the CAU was Emma Beadsmoore. Graphics are by Bryan Crossan. The site was monitored by Kasia Gdaniec, Senior Archaeologist of the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team. Adrian Tindall was the archaeological consultant for the client. Thanks are due to Stephen Hurst and his staff for their assistance with the machining and other aspects of the project.

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Figure 1. Location plan

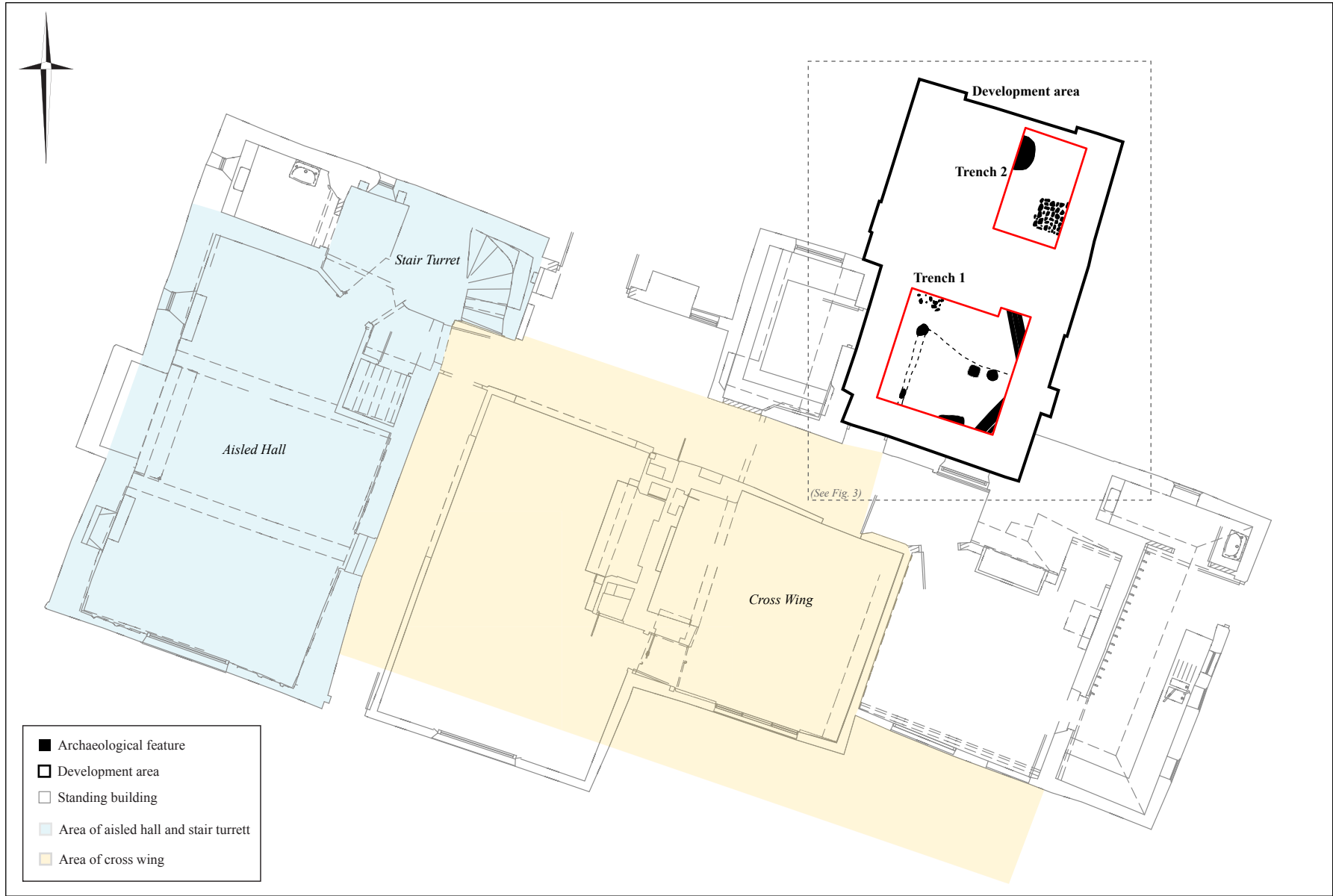


Figure 2. Trench plan



Figure 3. Plan of the Phase 2-3 features

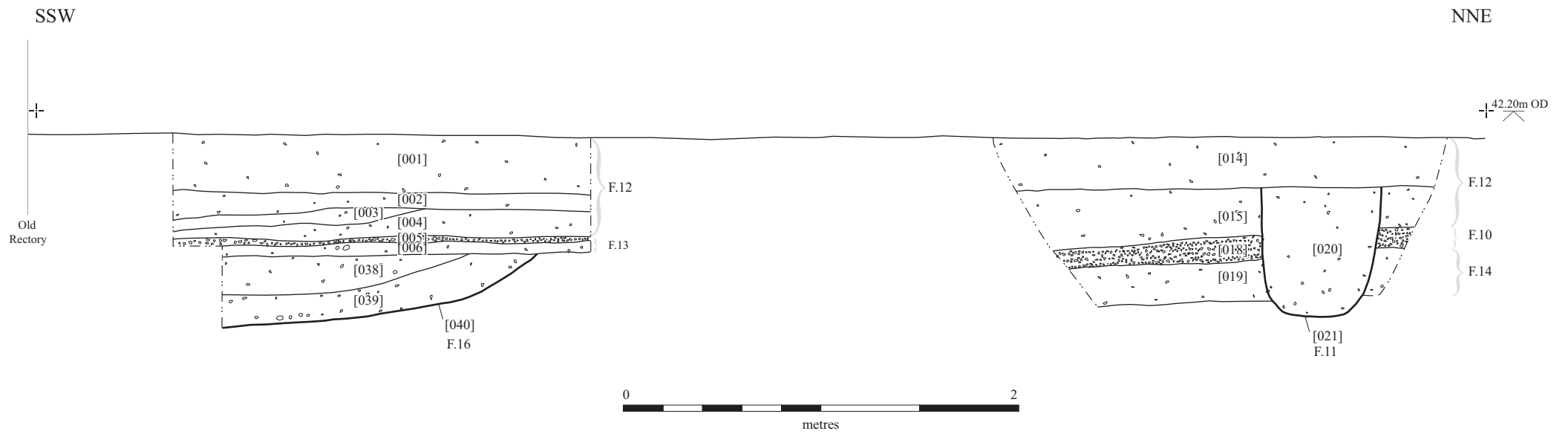


Figure 4. Section of Trenches 1-2



Figure 5. Photograph of Trench 1, facing sothwest, showing metallated surface F.13 / F.15 with posthole F.02, board slot F.03 and connecting beam impression visible

Oasis Form

OASIS ID: cambridg3-112402	
Project Details	
Project name	Old Rectory, Kingston
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was conducted by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit between the 12th and 13th of September 2011 at the Old Rectory, Kingston, Cambridgeshire, in the vicinity of a high status 12th-13th century stone aisled hall with a 14th century cross wing. The evaluation revealed evidence for some 12th-13th century activity contemporary with the aisled hall and a 14th-16th century metalled yard surface and timber building contemporary with the cross wing.
Project dates	Start: 12-09-2011 End: 13-09-2011
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ORK 11 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ECB 3662 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	PITS Medieval
Monument type	POSTHOLES Medieval
Monument type	METALLED SURFACES Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	WORKED BONE Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Small-scale extensions (e.g. garages, porches, etc.)
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 SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE KINGSTON Old Rectory, Kingston
Postcode	CB23 2NG
Study area	38.3 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 3466 5544 52.1803305972 -0.030261371609 52 10 49 N 000 01 48 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 41.20m Max: 41.20m
Project Creators	
Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator	Emma Beadsmoore
Project director/manager	Emma Beadsmoore
Project supervisor	Craig Cessford
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr Simon Gardener
Project Archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Physical Archive ID	ORK11
Physical Contents	'Ceramics','Glass','Worked bone'
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	ORK11
Digital Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	ORK11
Paper Contents	'Ceramics','Stratigraphic','other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Photograph','Plan','Section'
Project Bibliography	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	The Old Rectory, Kingston, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cessford, C.
Other bibliographic details	Cambridge Archaeological Unit Report No. 1056
Date	2011
Issuer or publisher	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Place of issue or publication	Cambridge
Description	An A4 wire bound document with a plastic laminate cover. It is 14 pages long, and has 5 illustrations.
URL	http://www.oasis.ac.uk
Entered by	Richard Newman (rn276@cam.ac.uk)
Entered on	21 October 2011