

Land off Gaul Road, March, Cambridgeshire

An Archaeological Evaluation.



Jonathan Tabor

**CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE**



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CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

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Jonathan L. Tabor

with contributions by Emma Beadsmoore, Mark Knight, Vida Rajkovaca
and Anne de Vareilles

Illustrations by

Bryan Crossan

Cambridge Archaeological Unit
University of Cambridge

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Summary

A trial trench based archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on land off Gaul Road, March, Cambridgeshire (centred on TL 4079 9661) in November 2011. The proposed development area (PDA) comprises a 1.4ha plot immediately to the south of Gaul Road.

The trial trenching programme comprised seven trenches (totalling 234m of trenching). Ten features – four definitely of archaeological origin – were excavated and recorded at the site, with a further six possible features identified and planned following the extension of two of the trenches in the vicinity of identified archaeological features. Only one feature, an Early Neolithic pit, could be securely dated. The pit contained sherds of Mildenhall style Early Neolithic pottery and a small assemblage of worked flint and animal bone. A series of topsoil-filled linear features occurring across the site were clearly associated with post-medieval agriculture and appear to be related to either drainage or cultivation.

Although the recorded archaeological features were relatively few and only one could be confidently dated, the results of the evaluation are significant and indicate the potential for further archaeological remains being present at the site. The site – along with two nearby flint scatters to the north-west of the PDA – potentially represents a zone of Early Neolithic activity in the vicinity of Gaul Road and is the only known site of this period on the March 'island'.

INTRODUCTION

A trial trench based archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on land off Gaul Road, March, Cambridgeshire (centred on TL 4079 9661) in November 2011. The proposed development area (PDA) comprises a 1.4ha plot immediately to the south of Gaul Road.

The project was undertaken in order to address a condition placed upon planning consent for the construction of housing with associated services and access. Work was carried out in accordance with a project design specification (Beadsmoore 2011) produced by the CAU in response to a brief issued by Dan McConnell of the Historic Environment Team, Cambridgeshire County Council.

The work was commissioned by Andrew Hodgson of Savills Ltd. on behalf of Ashley King Developments.

Location, Topography and Geology

The PDA is located c.300m to the west of March town centre (Figure 1). The site is bounded to the north by Gaul Road and to the south by an electricity sub station. The land immediately to the east of the PDA is occupied by housing while a pasture field lies to the west. The site is bisected by an access road for the electricity sub station. At the time of evaluation the site was pasture and used for grazing horses.

The PDA is flat and situated at approximately 1m AOD. The underlying geology comprises Kimmeridge Clay overlain by glacial till (boulder clay).

Archaeological Background

The Gaul Road site lies within the East Anglian Fenland, the largest area of former coastal wetland in Britain (Waller 1994) and a rich archaeological landscape. March, together with Wimblington and Doddington to the south, is situated on an 'island' within this former fen and as a result has been a focus for settlement throughout history and much of prehistory.

The fens are characterised by a dynamic and complex environmental history as a consequence of marine inundation and subsequent fen formation. As a result the character and location of archaeological remains are inherently linked to the palaeoenvironment. Beyond the prehistoric 'fen edge', approximately 1km to the west of the Gaul Road site, a complex system of palaeochannels has been recorded by the Fenland Project (Hall 1987) including a major rodden (palaeochannel) representing the Neolithic course of the combined River Ouse and Nene. An 'inlet' or channel, possibly dating from the Mesolithic, is also recorded immediately to the north of Gaul Road however the findings of the Fenland Project (*ibid.*) suggest the site itself has been 'dry land' throughout history and prehistory.

Earlier prehistoric

The Fenland Project (Hall 1987) identified only two earlier prehistoric sites in the parish of March, both Mesolithic/Neolithic flint scatters and both in close proximity to the PDA. The sites were originally discovered by F.M. Walker in the 1920s and the flint assemblages collected by Walker have recently been re-evaluated by R. Middleton (1990). The flint scatters are located either side of the 'inlet' or channel to the north of Gaul Road and comprise largely Mesolithic material along with considerable amounts of Neolithic flint. A recent evaluation of the area to the north of Gaul Road has confirmed the presence of the Mesolithic and Neolithic scatter in this area and identified a preserved buried soil deposit on the site (Peachey 2008).

Further evidence of Mesolithic and Neolithic activity in the vicinity is limited to residual and surface finds. However, the quantities of material recovered from recent evaluations around March and attributed to 'background' activity, suggests that activity may well have been relatively extensive during these periods: Mesolithic and/or Neolithic flint has been recorded at sites including the proposed College of West Anglia site to the south-west of Gaul Road (Tabor 2007) and at sites off Hundred Road (Hutton 2008) and Foundry Way (Murrell 2009), to the north.

Slightly further a field in Stonea, to the south-east of March a probable buried soil sealed beneath a Bronze Age barrow near Stonea Camp yielded an assemblage of almost 600 sherds of pottery including Mildenhall, Ebbsfleet and Grooved Ware styles (Potter 1977).

Later prehistoric

The closest recorded Bronze Age site lies 250m to the south-west of the PDA at Cherry Holt and comprises a flint scatter where a Bronze axe was also found. Generally, however, few significant prehistoric sites have been recorded in March, although barrows are known from Wimblington and Stonea island to the south-east (Hall 1987). This may be a reflection of the fact that built up areas largely cover the well-drained gravel belt running north to south, logically the area of preference for prehistoric occupation. Indeed, glimpses of potentially extensive Bronze Age occupation are provided by chance finds as well as recent archaeological work in and around March. Within the town, finds recovered during the 19th century from near March station include a Bronze Age pottery vessel (Hall 1987) and immediately to the north at Estover, a pit containing Beaker pottery associated with a flint scatter was encountered during the excavation of Roman remains at the site (James and Potter 1996). An archaeological evaluation at Hundred Road, March (Hutton 2008) also encountered three Middle Bronze Age cremations and a number of other possibly Bronze Age features including pits and a watering hole. Various archaeological evaluations and excavations, including that at Hundred Road (*ibid.*), have also recorded the remains of undated fieldsystems, which are potentially Bronze Age.

Occupation of the March 'island' appears to have been relatively extensive in the Iron Age. Two Early Iron Age sites were identified in March by the Fenland Project, with activity in the Late Iron Age also being represented by a number of coin hoards (Hall

1987). The site of a major Late Iron Age camp and a number of earlier settlements is located on Stonea island just to the south-east of March island.

Roman

A great number of Roman sites are known – through aerial photographs, excavations and find spots – on the ‘island’ of March. The area was clearly of significance during the Roman period and it has been the subject of academic interest for some time. Major settlements are recorded at Grandford and Flagrass (to the north of the PDA), and Stonea Grange (to the south-east), along with numerous smaller settlements. An extensive transport and communication infrastructure also existed, which includes the Fen Causeway, the major Roman Road that traversed the Fens, as well as a network of smaller roads and canals linking individual settlements. Indeed the extent of the infrastructure around March has led to suggestions that the area is a ‘planned’ landscape – albeit one which may not have achieved its full intended potential (see Hall 1987) - established in order to exploit the rich resources of the area. Briquetage recovered in large quantities at many sites suggests that salt production was a major part of the Roman economy while livestock rearing is suggested by cropmarks representing extensive fieldsystems, paddocks and droveways visible on aerial photographs (*ibid.*).

The main concentrations of Roman activity are, however, in the north and east of March ‘island’ and Stonea to the south-east, little is recorded in the immediate vicinity of the PDA.

Medieval - present

During the Saxon period the ‘centre’ of the region appears to have moved from March to Doddington to the south (Hall 1987). Little is known about the location of the medieval settlement of March although the Church of St. Wendrada and areas of recorded ridge and furrow lie to the south of Gaul Road (*ibid.*). The current settlement at March dates largely to the 19th century or later and is associated with the expansion of the railways.

Methodology

The trial trenching programme comprised seven trenches, a total of 234m of trenching (Figure 2). Trial trenches were excavated using a tracked 360° excavator fitted with a toothless bucket and operating under direct archaeological supervision at all times. Trenches were located using an advanced Global Positioning System (GPS) with Ordnance Datum (OD) heights obtained. Potential archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50 and subsequently sample excavated with all archaeological finds retained. A written record of archaeological features and any environmental sequences was created using the CAU recording system (a modification of the MoLAS system) and sections drawn at an appropriate scale.

Following the excavation of the seven trial trenches, two further areas (totalling 43 square metres) around identified archaeological features in Trenches 4 and 5 were machine stripped in order to better define the extent and nature of the archaeological remains. Potential features in these areas were planned and located but not sample excavated.

The work was carried out in full accordance with the IFA's *Standard Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.

RESULTS

Across the majority of the site (Trenches 1,2,3,4 and 5) the slightly peaty topsoil (maximum depth: 0.45m) directly overlay the natural glacial till deposit – a mottled orange brown slightly sandy clay with chalk inclusions and occasional sand and gravel lenses. Only in the north-west of Trench 6 and the north-east of Trench 7 was any trace of a potential subsoil observed (see below).

A total of ten archaeological features were exposed within Trenches 1, 4, 5 and 6 (see Figures 2 and 3). A further six possible features were identified and planned following additional machine stripping adjacent to Trench 5. Trenches 2, 3 and 7 were devoid of archaeological features and are not further discussed.

Numerous post-medieval field drains and a series of north-south aligned post-medieval gullies/shallow trenches, which are interpreted as cultivation features were also recorded in Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Apart from three, which were sample excavated in order to confirm their post-medieval date, these features were not recorded in detail. Details of each trench and the features within them are included in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located in the south-east of the PDA and revealed two archaeological features. **F. 01** comprised a small, shallow circular pit measuring 0.47m in diameter by 0.09m deep. The pit contained a single seemingly sterile fill, which yielded no finds. A second possible pit, or ditch/gully terminus, was located some 12m to the east. **F.03** was irregular in plan and profile and contained a single fill, which yielded no finds. Although recorded as an archaeological feature, the irregular form of F.03 suggests it could also potentially be of natural origin.

A series of three topsoil-filled linear features were also recorded in Trench 1. Similar features, all north-south aligned, were recorded across the site and sample excavated in Trenches 4, 5 and 6 (see below). All are clearly post-medieval in date and appear to be either field drains - the ceramic pipes of which were observed during machining in many trenches - or shallow trenches most likely associated with 'deep' cultivation.

Trench 4

A single archaeological feature, a short gully (**F.02**) was encountered in Trench 4. The gully measured 4.01m long by 0.12m wide and was 0.12m deep. It contained a single compact clay fill, with occasional charcoal flecks, which produced no finds. The gully was truncated by a post-medieval field drain and seems likely to pre-date this period, however, it remains undated.

A total of eight post-medieval field drains/cultivation trenches were also exposed. One such feature (**F.04**) was sample excavated and yielded sherds of 19th century pottery and fragments of clay pipe stem.

Trench 5

The highest density of archaeological features was encountered in Trench 5, which as a result was extended or 'boxed' around the area of archaeological activity in order to better understand the character of the features exposed. Only features that fell within the original trench were sample excavated.

The most significant recorded feature comprised a sub-circular pit (**F.05**), which measured 2.5m in diameter by 0.86m deep (Figure 4). The pit contained a sequence of five fills - including a charcoal rich primary fill ([17]) - which yielded 20 sherds of Early Neolithic Mildenhall style pottery, seven worked flints and two fragments of animal bone (see Specialist Studies, below). A bulk environmental sample from primary fill [17] yielded few preserved plant remains although one hazelnut shell and an unidentified wild seed were recovered along with small amounts of charcoal (see De Vareilles, below).

Three further features, which are potentially associated with this Early Neolithic activity were sample excavated. Immediately to the north of and 'abutting' pit F.05, a possible gully (**F.11**), was partially exposed. The gully was of undetermined length but measured 0.76m wide by 0.3m deep. It contained a single, relatively charcoal rich fill, which produced one possibly worked flint. Immediately to the east of, and inter-cutting with, pit F.05 an irregular hollow (**F.12**) c.0.1m in depth was also recorded. Upon extension of Trench 5 to the east, the feature was shown to measure approximately 2.5m by 2m; no finds were recovered. Finally, some 2m to the north of pit F.05 an irregular pit or hollow (**F.06**) was exposed. The feature contained four relatively sterile fills, which produced no finds. The irregular form and sterile fills suggest that, although potentially archaeological, this feature is perhaps more likely to be of natural origin.

A further six possible archaeological features, including potential pits, were recorded – but not excavated - to the east of pit F.05 in the Trench 5 extension. Surface finds from this area, which are potentially feature-related, comprise two worked flints. One of the flints is chronologically diagnostic and is broadly Neolithic in date.

A single post-medieval linear gully/cultivation trench was recorded running the length of Trench 5. Sample excavation yielded 19th century pottery and a clay pipe stem

fragment, providing further evidence that these topsoil-filled features which occur across the site are post-medieval in date.

Trench 6

A cluster of three possible pits/irregular hollows (**F.08**, **F.09** and **F.10**) towards the western end of the trench were the only potential archaeological features - aside from post-medieval drains/cultivation trenches - exposed in Trench 6. None of the features produced any finds and all contained relatively sterile fills but with occasional 'peaty' lenses. Although potentially archaeological it is equally possible that these features are natural and could for example, represent a tree throw.

Along with Trench 7, Trench 6 was the only trench to have any trace of subsoil beneath the topsoil. A grey silty clay deposit a maximum of 0.1m was recorded at the north-west end of the trench. While fenland sites have a high potential for the survival of intact prehistoric buried soils, it seems more likely - especially given the location of the site away from the 'fen edge' - that this deposit represents the trace of a relict plough soil from more recent times. Equally, it was not clear from the area exposed within Trench 5 whether or not the deposit could merely be a variation in the underlying glacial till, which by its very nature was very mixed.

DISCUSSION

Of the ten excavated features, only Early Neolithic pit F.05 could be securely dated. Nevertheless, even on its own the feature is a significant find. That the pit - which is large in comparison to most Early Neolithic pits - could be part of a causewayed enclosure has been considered. However, given its circular - rather than elongated - form and with no associated pits located immediately to either side, it appears more likely to be settlement related.

Early Neolithic 'pit sites' - clusters or groups of pits containing characteristic artefactual assemblages including Mildenhall pottery and worked flint - form an important part of the prehistoric archaeological record in East Anglia and in the absence of any known house sites are the primary evidence for Early Neolithic settlement in the region. Examples of major 'pit sites' include Hurst Fen in Suffolk (Clark *et al* 1960) and Kilverstone in Norfolk (Garrow *et al* 2005) as well as a number of fenland sites which in terms of situation are more comparable to the Gaul Road site. These include Barleycroft Farm (Evans *et al* 1999) and a recently excavated site at Sutton Gault (Tabor 2011) both in Cambridgeshire. Gaul Road is, however, the only Early Neolithic 'site' - aside from the two nearby flint scatters - so far identified in the March area and one of few sites identified on a 'deep fen island' rather than a 'fen edge' location. Furthermore, the location of the site on clay soils is also unusual - the prehistoric preference for well-drained sands and gravels being well documented - although increasingly it is becoming clear that heavy soils do not necessarily prohibit prehistoric settlement (see Evans 2002, for example).

The extent of the Early Neolithic activity south of Gaul Road is not known, however, the possible archaeological features identified in the Trench 5 extension may well

represent further Early Neolithic features and two flint surface finds from this area are probably associated. Furthermore, undated features such as pit F.01 in Trench 1 and gully F.02 in Trench 4 could be contemporary with pit F.05. Given that Early Neolithic sites are often dispersed with features often occurring in tight clusters (leaving large 'blank areas' and making them difficult to identify through trial trench evaluation) the limited evidence from the site takes on added weight and indicates the potential for further remains in the vicinity. Certainly, along with the flint scatters to the north-west, which have an Early Neolithic component, the evidence from the PDA suggests the presence of a zone of Early Neolithic activity in the Gaul Road area.

The remaining features encountered within the PDA were all post-medieval in date or undated. Although a number of the undated features may be associated with the Early Neolithic activity, as discussed above, a number appear more likely to be natural in origin (tree throws, for example). The post-medieval features are all clearly associated with agriculture and would appear to be either drainage features, or in some cases, possibly the scars of some kind of 'deep' trench cultivation.

STATEMENT OF POTENTIAL

Although the recorded archaeological features were relatively few and only one could be confidently dated, the results of the evaluation are significant and indicate the potential for further archaeological remains being present at the site. Early Neolithic pit F.05 is almost certainly settlement related and a number of possible features close by may represent further settlement remains. The site – along with the two nearby flint scatters to the north-west – potentially forms part of a zone of Early Neolithic activity in the vicinity of Gaul Road and is the only known site of this period on the March 'island'.

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SPECIALIST STUDIES

Flint – Emma Beadsmoore

A total of ten (<138g) flints were recovered from the field walking transects during the evaluation of the site; nine (<136g) are worked, whilst one (2g) is worked and burnt. The flint is listed by context and type in Table 1

Feature	Surface find	Type						Totals	
		chunk	chip	secondary flake	tertiary flake	secondary blade	multiple platform core		end scraper
5				3	1	1	1	1	7
11		1							1
	1				1				1
	2		1						1
Sub totals		1	1	3	2	1	1	1	10

Table 1 – Flint types listed by feature/surface find

The majority of the material was recovered from one feature, F.05, a pit that also yielded Mildenhall pottery. The seven flints recovered from F.05 comprise a small assemblage of flint working waste and one tool, an end scraper. The assemblage is the product of systematic flake production/core reduction, where narrow flakes and blades were manufactured from prepared platforms, which is characteristic of earlier Neolithic flint working strategies and chronologically compatible with the pottery. One flake was broken and burnt and the end scraper was well worn, indicating that at least some of the material had not been deposited in the pit straight after working.

The remaining material comprised a chronologically non-diagnostic chunk recovered from F.11 and two surface finds, one of which, Surface Find 1, dates broadly to the Neolithic.

Prehistoric pottery – Mark Knight

An assemblage of 20 sherds (plus crumbs) of Early Neolithic plain Mildenhall pottery weighing 140g (MSW 7g) was recovered from pit F.05. The fabric of all the sherds was identical (flint tempered, poorly sorted) and the majority, if not all, probably derive from the same vessel. Both rim and body sherds, characteristic of a plain bowl with an S-shaped profile, are present in the assemblage.

The assemblage is most comparable – in terms of fabric and form – with the Mildenhall assemblage from Barleycroft Farm, Needingworth, Cambridgeshire (Evans *et al.* 1999).

Faunal remains - *Vida Rajkovača*

Early Neolithic (Mildenhall) pit F.05 contained two bone specimens with a combined weight of 17g. A cow rib fragment came from primary fill [17] displaying a series of fine knife marks and a deep cut mark consistent with meat removal. Context [21] yielded a heavily eroded roe deer antler tip.

Assessment of Bulk Environmental Samples - *Anne de Vareilles*

A single 15 litre sample from the primary fill [17] of Early Neolithic pit F.05 was processed using an Ankara-type flotation machine. The flot was collected in a 300µm aperture mesh and the heavy residue washed over a 1mm mesh. Both the flot and heavy residue were dried indoors prior to analysis. Sorting of the flot and identification of macro remains were carried out under a low power binocular microscope (6x-40x magnification). Frances Cox scanned through the small heavy residue; a little extra charcoal was recovered. Nomenclature follows Stace (1997).

The sample produced a small flot of *c.*3ml of charcoal, of which a few pieces measure up to 5mm across. Although not abundant the charcoal is in good condition and could be *insitu*. Modern rootlets and goosefoot seeds (*Chenopodium* sp.) are present. Apart from charcoal the only archaeobotanical remains recovered are a fragment of a hazelnut shell (*Corylus avellana* L.), which are often found in Neolithic features, and a small fragment of an unidentified wild seed.

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APPENDIX 1

Trench descriptions

Trench 1							
General Description					Orientation		NW-SE
Trench contained one undated pit and a possible pit as well as a series of N-S aligned field drains and post-medieval 'cultivation features'. Exposed natural subsoil comprised light orange brown slightly sandy clay with sand and gravel lenses.					Max. Topsoil Depth (m)		0.4
					Max. Subsoil Depth (m)		N/A
					Width (m)		2
					Length (m)		32
Contexts							
Feature No.	Feature Type	Context No.	Cut/Fill/Layer	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Selected artefacts	Comments
1	Pit	1	Fill				Undated
		2	Cut	0.47	0.09		
3	Irregular pit(?)	5	Fill				Undated
		6	Cut	0.5	0.16		

Trench 2							
General Description					Orientation		NE-SW
Trench contained only post-medieval field drains (E-W aligned). Exposed natural subsoil comprised light orange brown slightly sandy clay with sand and gravel lenses.					Max. Topsoil Depth (m)		0.4
					Max. Subsoil Depth (m)		N/A
					Width (m)		2
					Length (m)		39

Trench 3							
General Description					Orientation		NW-SE
Trench contained only post-medieval field drains and top-soil filled 'cultivation features' (N-S aligned). Exposed natural subsoil comprised light orange brown slightly sandy clay with sand and gravel lenses.					Max. Topsoil Depth (m)		0.4
					Max. Subsoil Depth (m)		N/A
					Width (m)		2
					Length (m)		28

Trench 4							
General Description					Orientation		NW-SE
Trench contained as single undated gully as well as a series of N-S aligned post-medieval field drains and 'cultivation features'.					Max. Topsoil Depth (m)		0.4
					Max. Subsoil Depth (m)		N/A
					Width (m)		2
					Length (m)		34
Contexts							
Feature No.	Feature Type	Context No.	Cut/Fill/Layer	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Selected artefacts	Comments
2	Gully	3	Fill				Undated
		4	Cut	0.4	0.12		
4	Gully/trench	7	Fill			Pottery, clay pipe stem	Post-medieval
		8	Cut	0.63	0.25		

Trench 5							
General Description					Orientation		NE-SW
Recorded features comprise an early Neolithic pit along with a potentially contemporary gully, an undated possible pit and a post-medieval 'cultivation feature'. A further 6 possible features – which were not sample excavated – were exposed upon extension of the trench to the east and west Exposed natural subsoil comprised light orange brown slightly sandy clay with sand and gravel lenses.					Max. Topsoil Depth (m)		0.45
					Max. Subsoil Depth (m)		N/A
					Width (m)		2
					Length (m)		33
Contexts							
Feature No.	Feature Type	Context No.	Cut/Fill/Layer	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Selected artefacts	Comments
5	Pit	16	Cut	2.5	0.86		Early Neolithic
		17	Fill			Pottery, flint, animal bone	
		18	Fill			Pottery, flint	
		19	Fill				
		20	Fill				
		21	Fill			Animal bone	
6	Irregular pit(?)	9	Cut	>1	0.52		Undated
		10	Fill				
		11	Fill				
		12	Fill				
		13	Fill				
7	Gully/trench	14	Cut	0.4	0.23		Post-medieval
		15	Fill			Pottery, clay pipe stem	
11	Gully/ditch	28	Fill	0.76	0.3		Undated
		29	Cut			Flint	
12	Irregular hollow(?)	30	Fill				Undated
		31	Cut	2.5	c.01		

Trench 6							
General Description					Orientation		NW-SE
Trench contained a series of post-medieval field drains and 'cultivation features' as well as a cluster of three undated irregular pits/hollows at the NW end of the trench. A grey silty clay deposit – a possible subsoil – was identified towards the NW end of the trench. Exposed natural subsoil comprised light orange brown slightly sandy clay with sand and gravel lenses.					Max. Topsoil Depth (m)		0.35
					Max. Subsoil Depth (m)		0.1
					Width (m)		2
					Length (m)		33
Contexts							
Feature No.	Feature Type	Context No.	Cut/Fill/Layer	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Selected artefacts	Comments
8	Irregular hollow/pit	22	Fill				Undated
		23	Cut	0.91	0.22		
9	Irregular hollow/pit	24	Fill				Undated
		25	Cut	>1.4	0.23		
10	Irregular hollow/pit	26	Fill				Undated
		27	Cut	1	0.15		

Trench 7							
General Description					Orientation		NE-SW
Trench contained no archaeological features. A grey silty clay deposit – a possible subsoil – was identified towards the NE end of the trench. Exposed natural subsoil comprised mottled light orange brown slightly sandy clay with sand and gravel lenses.					Max. Topsoil Depth (m)		0.4
					Max. Subsoil Depth (m)		0.1
					Width (m)		2
					Length (m)		35

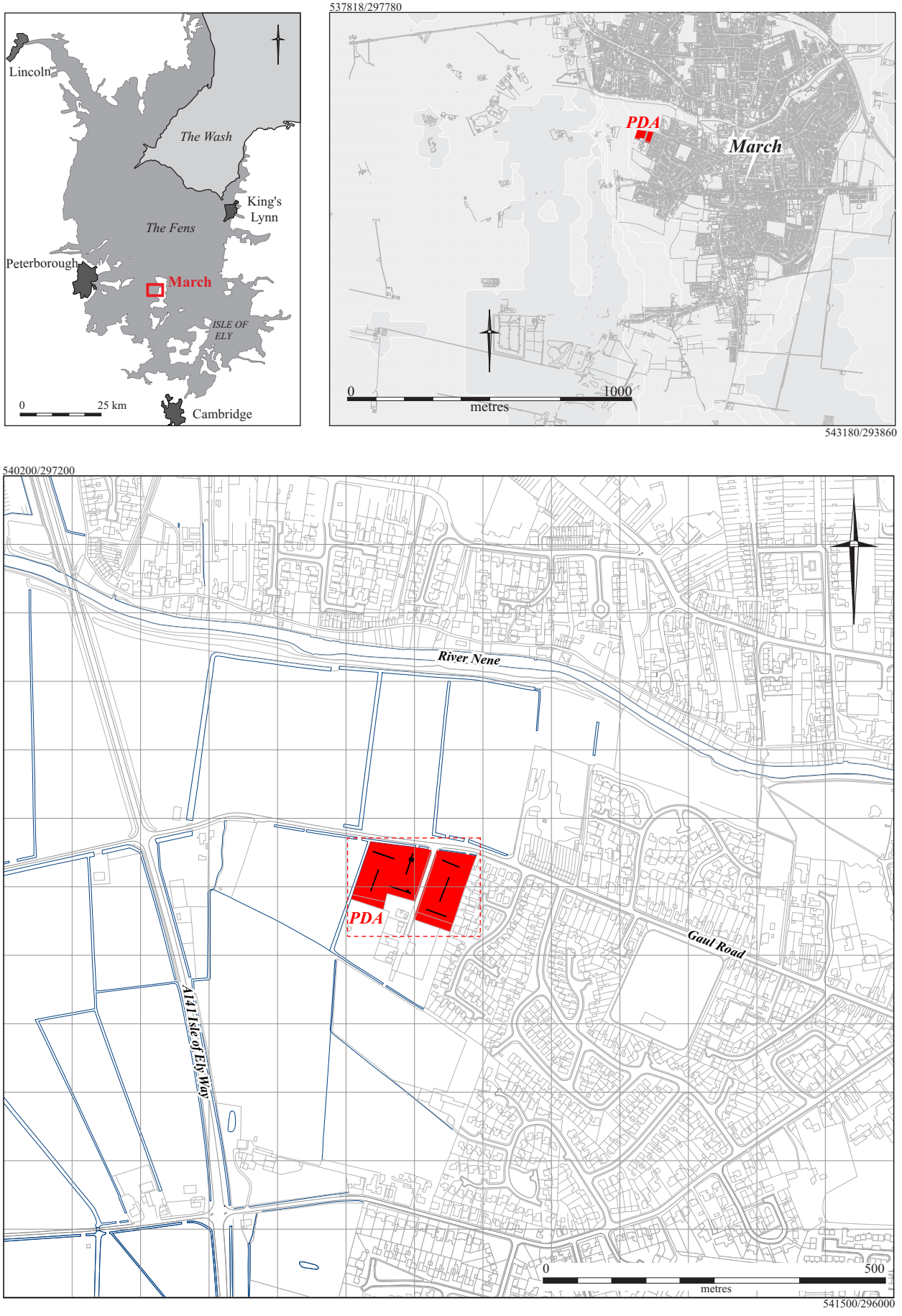


Figure 1. Location map

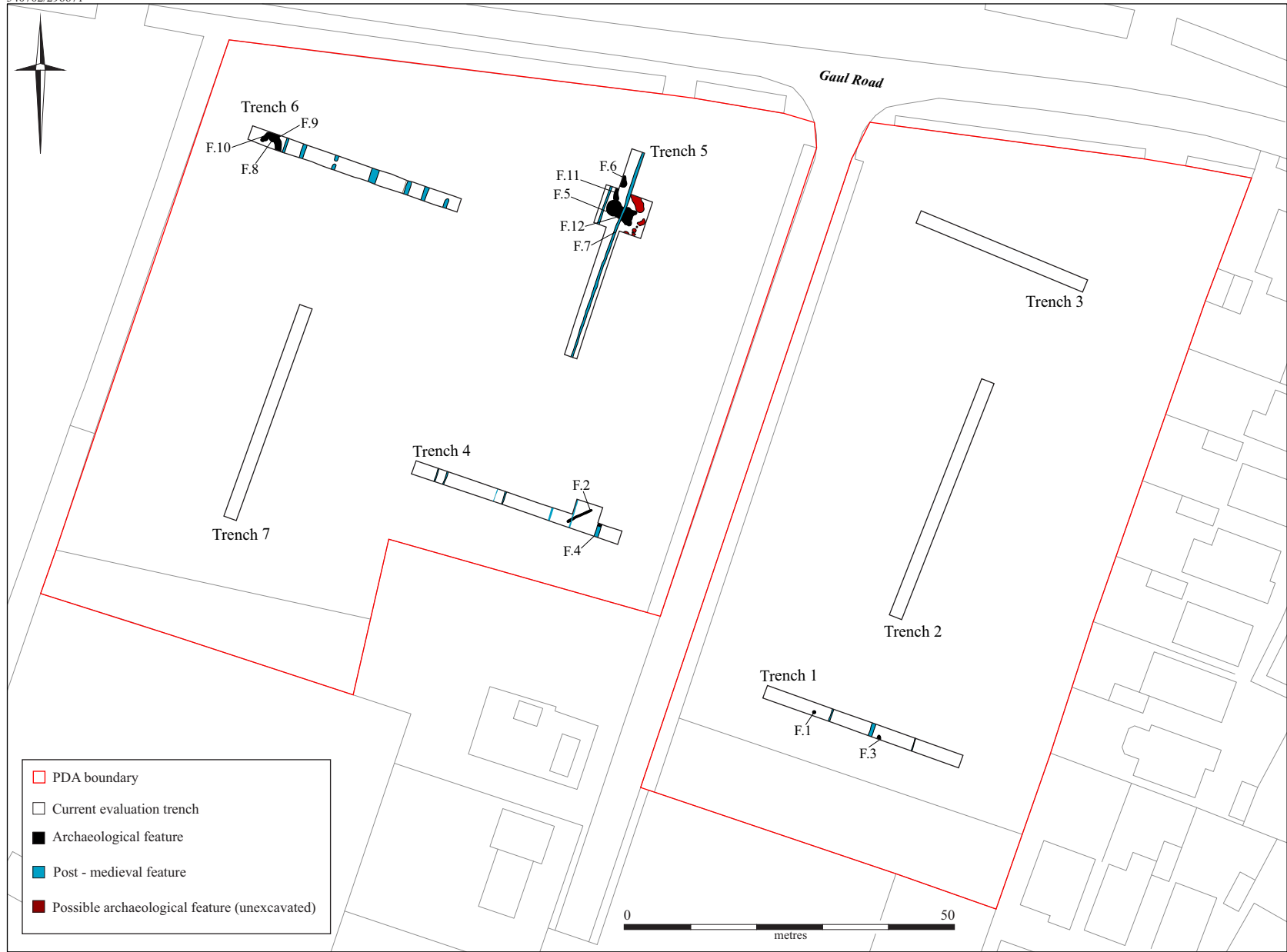


Figure 2. Location map

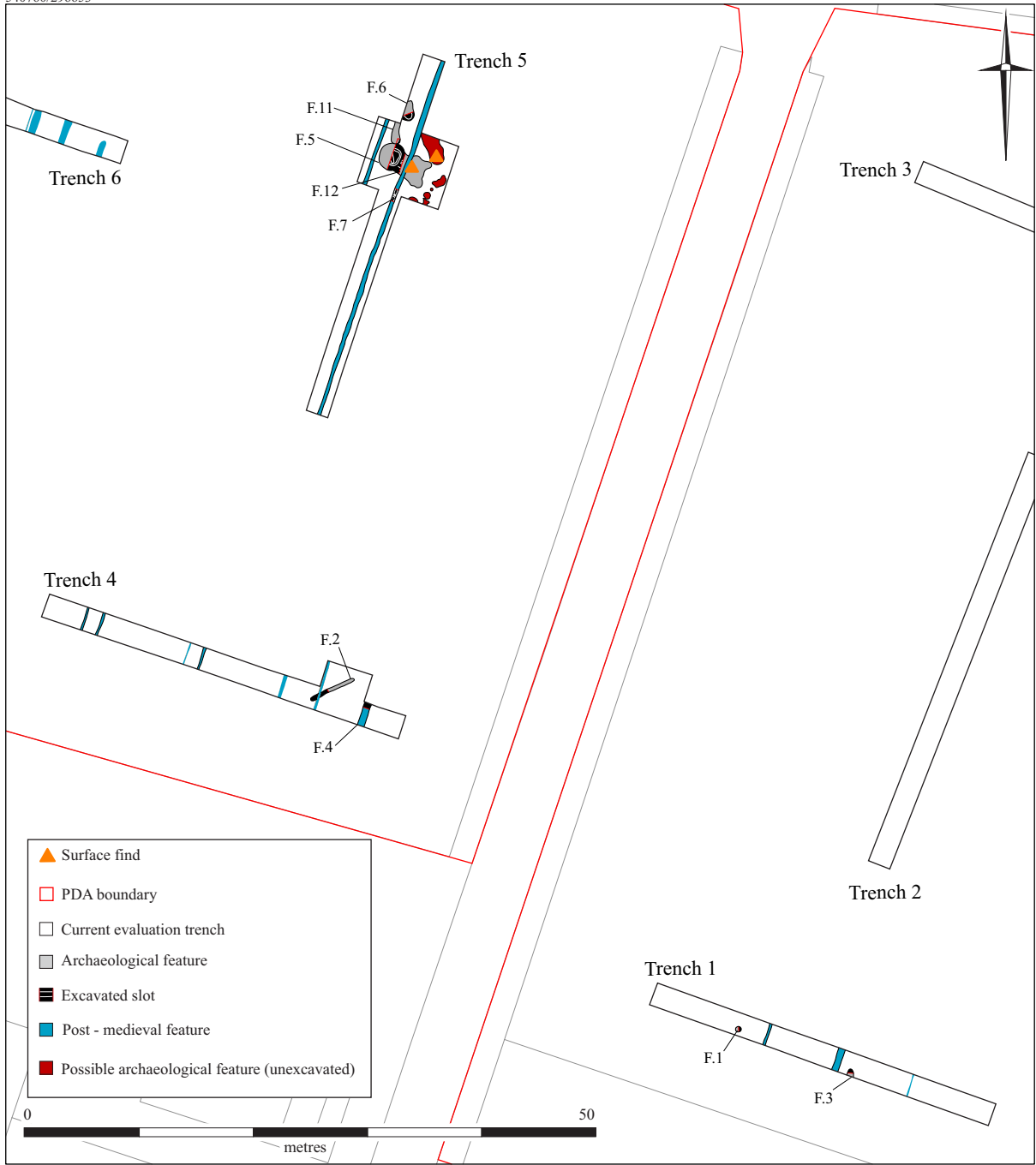


Figure 3. Plan of Trenches 1, 4 and 5.

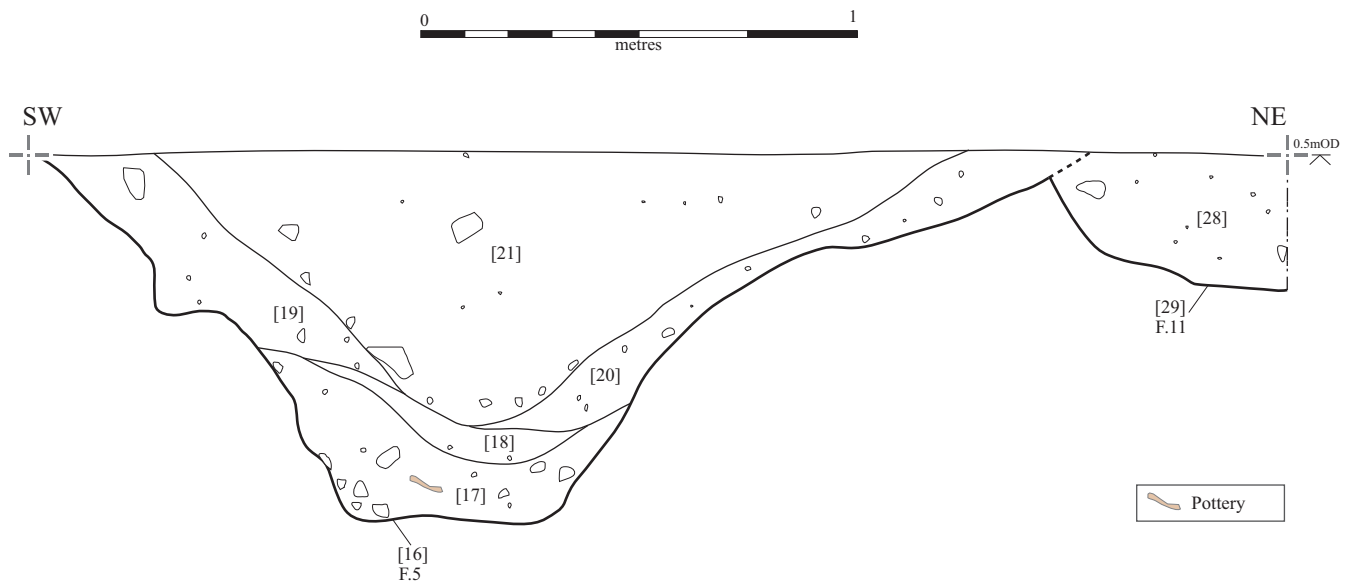


Figure 4. Photograph and section of Early Neolithic pit F.05.

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OASIS ID: cambridg3-115333

Project details

Project name	LAND OFF GAUL ROAD, MARCH
Short description of the project	A trial trench based archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on land Gaul Road, March, Cambridgeshire (centred on TL 4079 9661) in November 2011. The proposed development area (PDA) comprises a 1.4ha plot to the south of Gaul Road. The trial trenching programme comprised seven trenches (totalling 234m of trenching). Ten features - four of which were definitely archaeological in origin - were excavated and recorded at the site, with a further six possible features identified and planned following the extension of two of the trenches in the vicinity of identified archaeological features. Only one feature, an Early Neolithic pit could be securely dated. The pit contained sherds of Mildenhall style Early Neolithic pottery and a small assemblage of worked flint and animal bone. A series of topsoil-filled linear features occurring across the site were clearly associated with post-medieval agriculture and appear to be related to either drainage or cultivation. Although the recorded archaeological features were relatively few and only one could be confidently dated, the results of the evaluation are significant and indicate the potential for further archaeological remains being present at the site. The site - along with the two nearby flint scatters to the north-west - appears to form part of a zone of Early Neolithic activity in the vicinity of Gaul Road, which is the only known site of this period on the March 'island'.
Project dates	Start: 23-11-2011 End: 28-11-2011
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	GRM 11 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ECB3641 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 3 - Disturbed
Monument type	GULLY Uncertain

Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Monument type	PIT Early Neolithic
Significant Finds	POTTERY Early Neolithic
Significant Finds	FLINT Early Neolithic
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Early Neolithic
Methods & techniques	'Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Housing estate
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE FENLAND MARCH Land off Gaul Road, March
Postcode	PE15 9RY
Study area	1.40 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 4079 9661 52.5487213954 0.07662319134210 52 32 55 N 000 04 35 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0.20m Max: 1.20m

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	Jonathan Tabor
Type of sponsor/ funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/ funding body	Ashley King Developments

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Physical Archive ID	GRM 11
Physical Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Environmental','Worked stone/lithics'

Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	GRM 11
Digital Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Environmental','Worked stone/lithics'
Digital Media available	'Spreadsheets','Survey','Text','Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	GRM 11
Paper Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Environmental','Worked stone/lithics'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Drawing','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Survey ','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land off Gaul Road, March, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Tabor, J.L.
Other bibliographic details	Report No.1061
Date	2011
Issuer or publisher	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Place of issue or publication	Cambridge
Description	A4 wire bound with plastic laminate front, 17 pages 1 colour plate.

Entered by	Jonathan Tabor (jlt42@cam.ac.uk)
Entered on	9 December 2011

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