

Cable Trench South of Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge

An Archaeological Watching Brief



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University of Cambridge
Division of Archaeology

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HER Number: ECB3842

Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was conducted by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on the 12th and 13th of July 2012, on land to the south of Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge (centred on TL4652 5484; site code **ATT12**, HER number ECB3842). The work was undertaken on behalf of Countryside Properties and relates to a *c.* 0.8–1.2m wide trench and an adjacent *c.* 8m wide easement being dug by the contractor Tamdown to install cabling. This took place along the southern and eastern edges of archaeological Area 3 of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus Expansion, where excavation was originally scheduled to begin in Autumn 2008 (Dickens 2007) but has still not begun (for other fieldwork on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus Expansion see Newman *et al* 2008, Collins 2009). This landscape has been subject to a considerable number of archaeological investigations, which have recently been published (Evans *et al* 2008), and is the focus of on-going development and associated archaeological work. Several trenches dug as part of the evaluation of the 2020 lands (Trenches 29-32) are located in the immediate vicinity of the area investigated and analysis of aerial photographs has identified features in the area (Evans and MacKay 2005). This revealed a cluster of settlement features with predominantly Early Roman pottery (Site V; Evans *et al* 2008, 149 and fig. 3.5) located to the north of the investigated area. A curving enclosure(?) ditch revealed both through aerial photography and trial trenching (Trench 22 **F.123**, Trench 28 **F.81** and Trench 32 **F.81/123** plus **F.139**; Evans and MacKay 2005, 55, fig. 22) passed through the area to be trenched.

The pipe trench and easement had already been dug and substantially backfilled by the contractor prior to the CAU being informed. As a result it was not possible to conduct a standard watching brief. A rather irregular trench *c.* 4.0m wide was re-machined, the location of this was determined to avoid the recently laid cable and to remain within the area of the easement so as to not cause any additional damage. The trench covered 513m². Severe groundwater issues, exacerbated by the contractor pumping groundwater from the trench into the archaeological area, meant that the majority of the features could not be excavated. The feature numbers used in recording were **F.500–510** (numbered so as to avoid duplication with earlier phases), given the limited work undertaken no context numbers were assigned. Photographic recording consisted solely of a set of digital images. All work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory health and safety legislation and the recommendations of the Federation of Archaeological Managers & Employers (Allen and Holt 2010).

The current ground surface lay at 14.83–15.06m OD, the surface of the re-machined trench lay at between 14.50–14.70m OD. The trench revealed that relatively little damage had been done, the easement was only dug to a depth of 0.35–0.4m and no more than 0.05m of this was below the topsoil.

Archaeological results

The trench effectively consists of three zones:

Zone A: The broadly southwest-northeast aligned arm contained a series of north-south aligned modern furrows spaced *c.* 1.8m apart (**F.501**) and a ditch (**F.500**) on the

same alignment. The narrow spacing of the furrows indicates that they are of recent date and are probably 19th or 20th century. The ditch was 0.78m wide by 0.45m deep with a u-shaped profile and contained a fragment of clay tobacco pipe indicating a date of *c.* 1580+.

Zone B: The only potentially significant archaeology encountered was located at the curving junction of the two arms of the trench. This consisted of two small ditches, one broadly west-east aligned (**F.502**), which was *c.* 0.7m wide, and one broadly northnortheast-southsouthwest aligned (**F.504**), which was *c.* 0.6m wide (equates to F.139 in the 2005 evaluation phase). Due to the water conditions it was not possible to elucidate the relationship between these two features, both ditches appeared to continue beyond the junction, but this was somewhat uncertain and it is possible that they did not. It is unclear if another feature (**F.503**) is related to these ditches or is a modern furrow.

Zone C: The north-south aligned length of the trench was largely occupied by a *c.* 3.4m wide modern service (**F.507**) running along its length, it is unclear if there was just a single service with several distinct fills or if there were two separate services. Based upon information from the contractor this is likely to be a piped stream/drain and/or a gas main. There was also a large rectangular modern cut which is Trench 32 from the 2005 evaluation phase. The probable enclosure ditch, visible in aerial photographs, and shown to pass through evaluation Trench 32 (F.123/81) was not observed here, almost certainly due to the prevailing ground conditions. In the small remaining area of the trench not occupied by modern features there were a probable tree throw (**F.506**) and some possible gullies (**F.508**, **F.509**, **F.510**), which could not be investigated due to groundwater.

In addition to the re-machined trench undertaken it was noted that in several areas designated for future excavation (Area 3 of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus Expansion; Dickens 2007) the contractors' vehicles had cause severe rutting. The location of these was recorded (figure 3), in many instances these ruts were up to 0.4m deep and in several areas ruts 0.6–0.7m deep were present. This may have caused a more significant impact on the underlying archaeology than the easement excavation.

Discussion

Partially due to the scale of investigations and partly due to circumstances on the site the watching brief produced minimal archaeological results, the only features of any note being ditches **F.502** and **F.504**. It did, however, confirm that Site V does not extend this far south. Towards the northern end of the field where Site V was located there was no easement associated with the trench, because of this and the presence of a diverted pedestrian and cycle route it was impractical to conduct any machining in this area and it also proved impossible to record any features in the trench. It is probable that some damage has been caused to the archaeological deposits in this area associated with Site V, it will unfortunately not be possible to rectify this during future investigations due to the presence of the services.

With regard to the potential future investigation of Area 3 of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus Expansion the large modern service (**F.507**) allows an eastern boundary for archaeological investigation to be redefined, whilst the plotting of the rutting by the contractors machines will prove useful when the extent of damage beneath is exposed at a future date. The recognition of the difficulties presented by groundwater should be incorporated into any investigation strategy.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken by Craig Cessford and Tony Baker, the site was surveyed and digitised by Donald Horne and the project manager for the CAU was Alison Dickens. The consultant was Annie Calder of URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited and the site was monitored by Andy Thomas, Senior Archaeologist of the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CHET).

References

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Dickens, A. 2007. *A Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Mitigation at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus extension, (The 2020 Lands), Cambridge, Cambridgeshire*. Unpublished CAU document.

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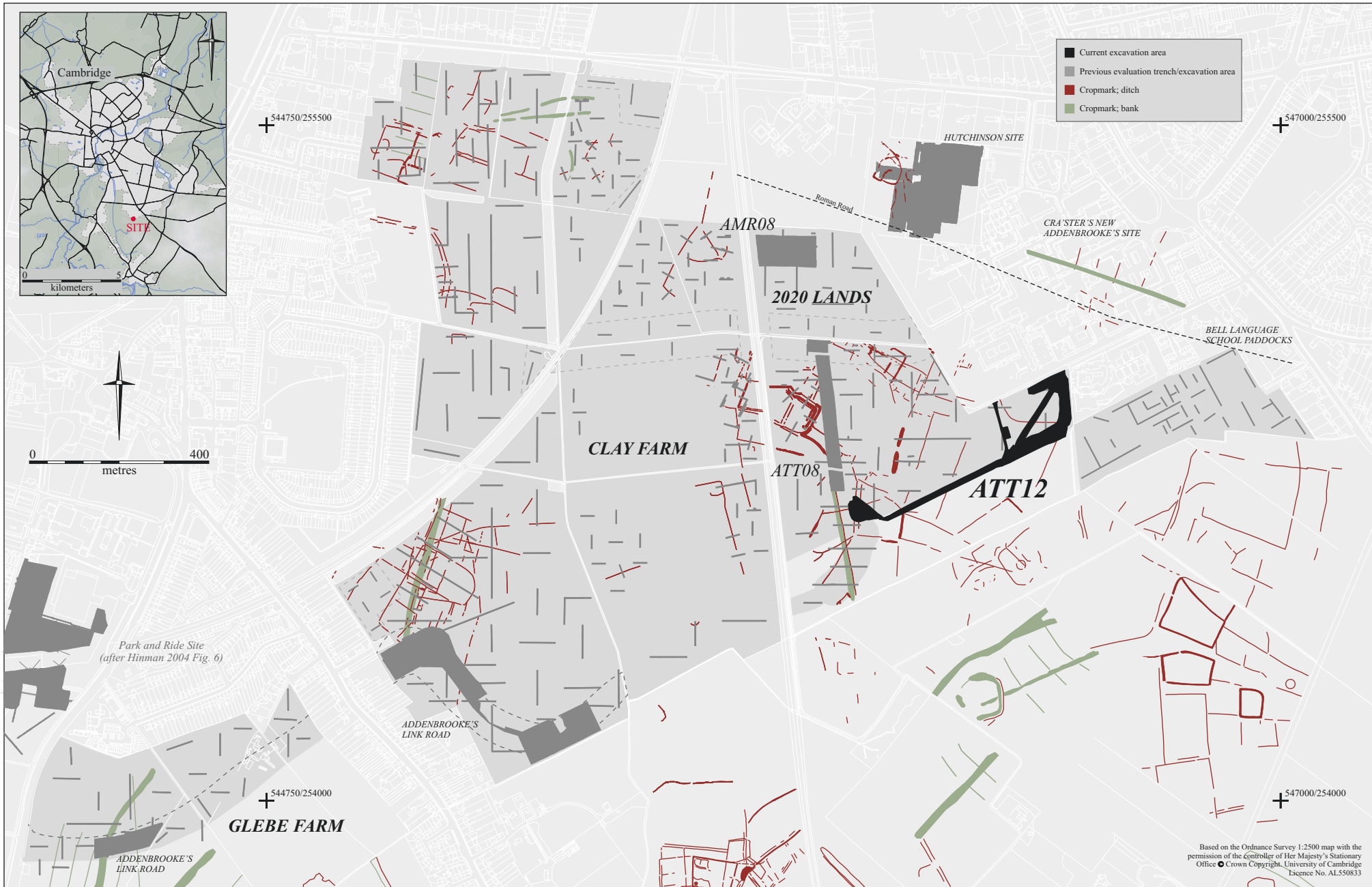


Figure 1. Location map

Based on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown Copyright, University of Cambridge Licence No. AL550833

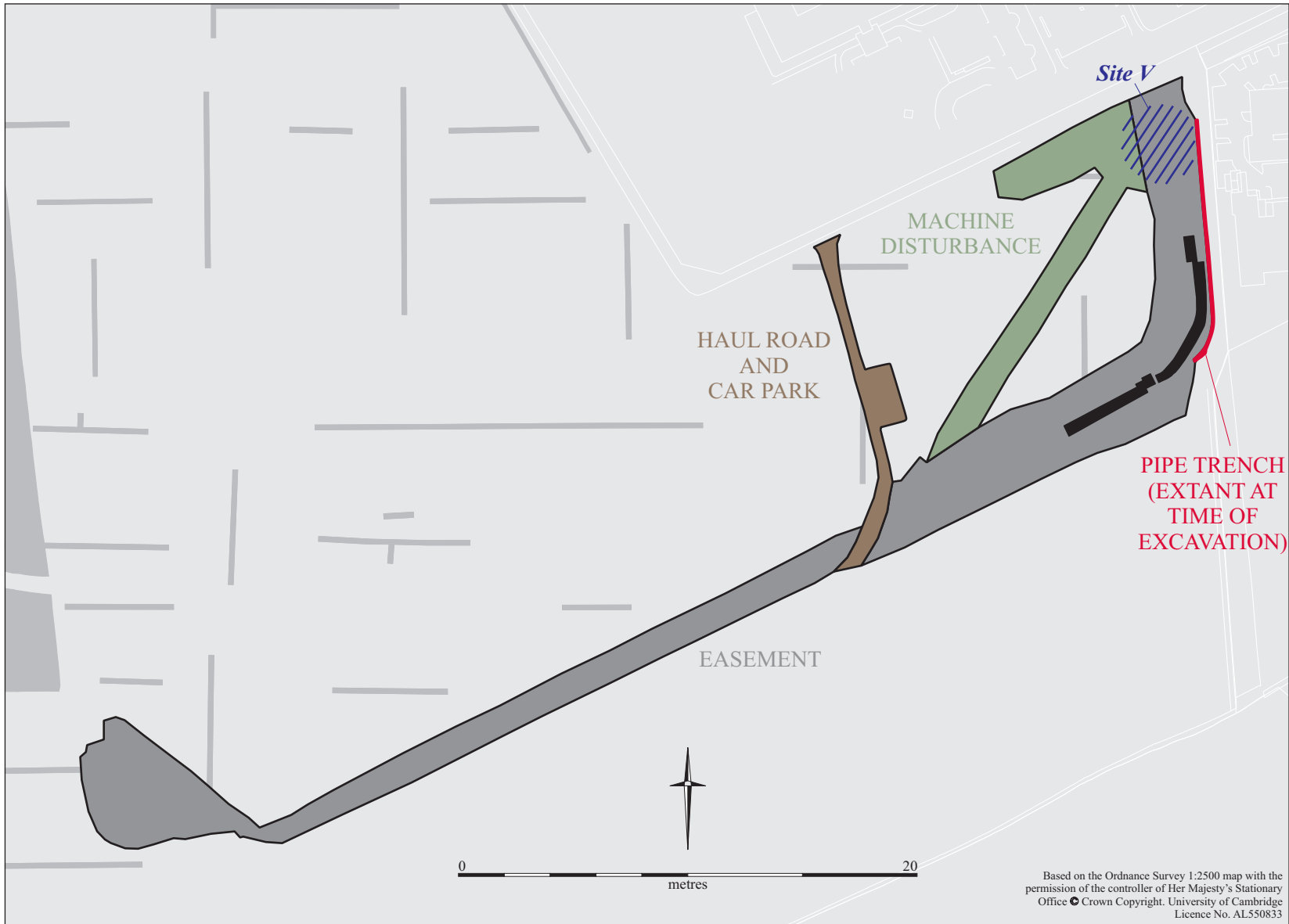


Figure 2. Site plan

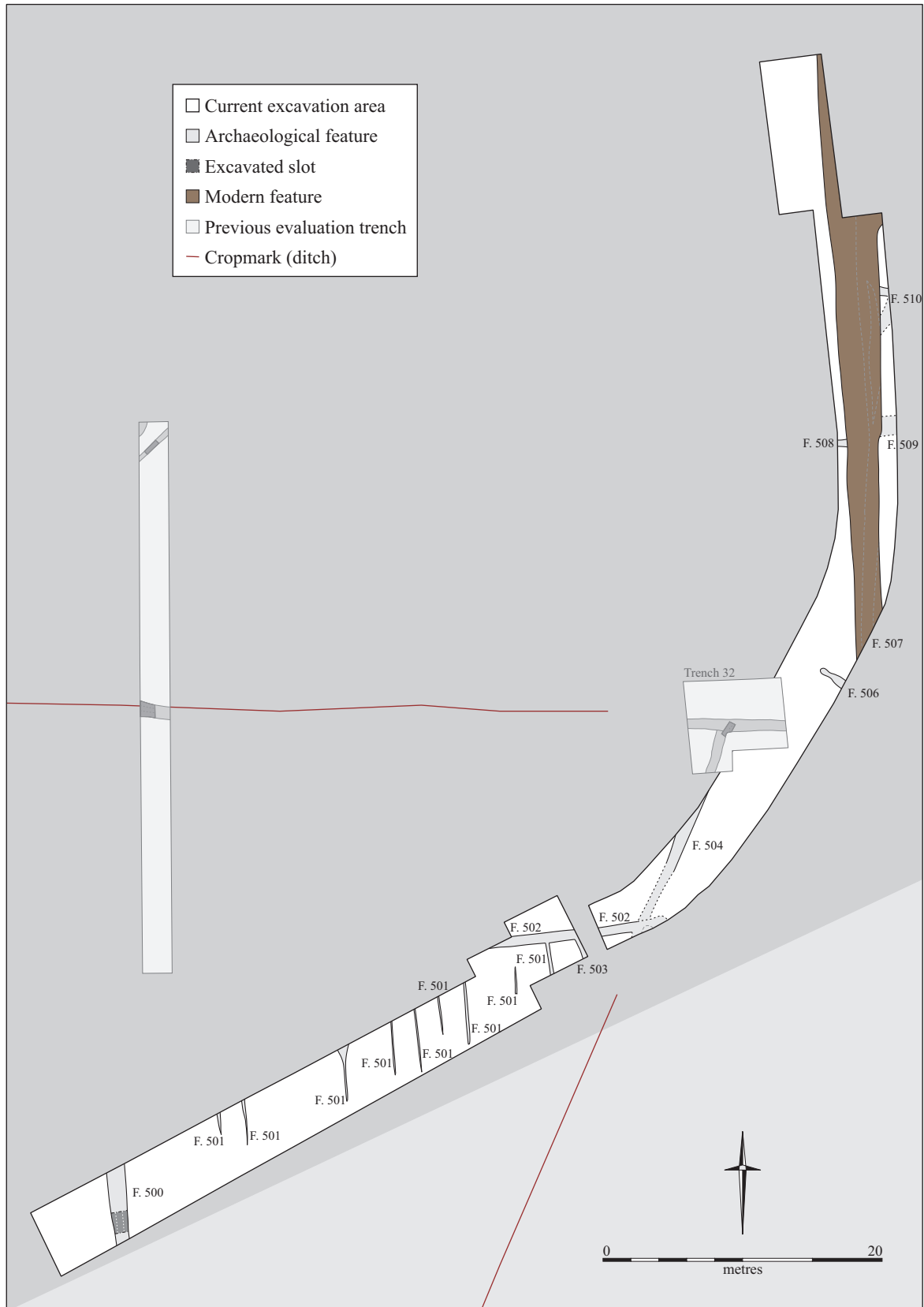


Figure 3. Site plan

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Project details

| | |
|--|--|
| Project name | Cable Trench Watching Brief Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge |
| Short description of the project | An archaeological watching brief was conducted by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on the 12th and 13th of July 2012, on land to the south of Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge. The pipe trench and easement had already been dug and substantially backfilled by the contractor prior to the CAU being informed. As a result it was not possible to conduct a standard watching brief. A rather irregular trench c. 4.0m wide was re-machined, the location of this was determined to avoid the recently laid cable and to remain within the area of the easement. Severe groundwater issues, exacerbated by the contractor pumping groundwater from the trench into the archaeological area, meant that the majority of the features could not be excavated, however a number were revealed and planned, some relating to those found in earlier evaluation trenching. |
| Project dates | Start: 12-07-2012 End: 13-07-2012 |
| Previous/future work | Yes / Yes |
| Any associated project reference codes | ATT12 - Sitecode |
| Any associated project reference codes | ECB3842 - HER event no. |
| Type of project | Recording project |
| Site status | None |
| Current Land use | Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed |
| Monument type | DITCH Uncertain |
| Significant Finds | NONE None |
| Investigation type | ""Field observation"", ""Salvage Record"", ""Watching Brief"" |
| Prompt | Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16 |

Project location

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Country | England |
| Site location | CAMBRIDGESHIRE CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE Addenbrooke's Hospital Cable Trench |
| Postcode | CB2 0SR |
| Study area | 513.00 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | TL 4652 5484 52 0 52 10 18 N 000 08 34 E Point |
| Height OD / Depth | Min: 14.80m Max: 15.10m |

Project creators

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Name of Organisation | Cambridge Archaeological Unit |
| Project brief originator | Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body |

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Project design originator | Alison Dickens |
| Project director/manager | Alison Dickens |
| Project supervisor | Craig Cessford |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | Developer |
| Name of sponsor/funding body | Countryside Properties |

Project archives

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Physical Archive Exists? | No |
| Digital Archive ID | ATT12 |
| Digital Media available | "Survey","Text" |
| Paper Archive ID | ATT12 |
| Paper Media available | "Drawing","Notebook - Excavation"," Research"," General Notes","Photograph" |

Project bibliography 1

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Publication type | Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript) |
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