

Clare College Graduate Accommodation Site, Newnham Road, Cambridge

An Archaeological Evaluation



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An archaeological trench evaluation was conducted within the car park to the rear of nos. 40-52 Newnham Road (properties of Clare College) between 21st-22nd May and 27th-28th September 2012. Following that a small watching brief was undertaken on 31st October 2012. Four archaeological trenches totalling 25.5m were excavated on two sides of the car park to reveal a deep sequence of 19th – early 20th century garden soil beneath the modern topsoil, overlying rubble and gravel standing. Several ‘modern’ bottle and pottery dumps had been dug through these garden soils, whilst from the lower sub-soil boundary at around 1-1.2m depth within Trenches 1-3 some Medieval (14th-15th century) coarseware sherds were recovered. Beneath this a number of amorphous-looking soil-filled ‘pit-like’ features had been cut through the sub-soil into the top of the underlying sandy gravel; the latter containing small amounts of locally-made 14th/ 15th or 15th-century pottery alongside some degraded clay daub, charcoal, burnt flint and small amounts of animal bone. It could not be determined within the small area exposed whether or not these had been dug as rubbish pits, shallow quarries, or were simply artefact-filled Medieval tree-throws. Subsequently, at the rear of the property, from a depth of c.1.4m, Trench 4 revealed a slightly better preserved artefact-filled Medieval soil and a 15th-century curvilinear ditch fragment, the latter cutting through what appeared to be a slightly earlier quarried surface. However, there was no evidence for a property boundary ditch within the area examined. Following this the watching brief carried out on the deepest area of excavations undertaken for the insertion of a plant room did not reveal any significant archaeology.

As in the case of the neighbouring properties nos. 34-38 Newnham Road whose backyard plots were examined in 2006, the patchily preserved archaeological evidence suggests a continuation of the occupation or area of activity linked to the 14th-15th century Medieval settlement centred on Malting Lane and Newnham House (formerly the location of Mortimer Manor) and its associated Medieval tenancies.

Introduction

The proposed development area (PDA) comprises part of a terrace of 19th century buildings fronting Newnham Road with yards to the rear (GR TL 4448 5774) (Figure 1). The current investigation which is located to the rear of these buildings covers an area of c.860 sq m. The properties at 40-52 Newnham Road are owned by Clare College who have applied for planning permission for the erection of 18 student residential units to the rear of the existing houses. The archaeological work was commissioned by 3i Project Management on behalf of Clare College. The Written Scheme of Investigation for this work (Dickens 2012) was first agreed by Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET).

Site location and topography

The site lies on the west side of Newnham Road some 60m south of Malting Lane and 60 m south-west of Newnham Mill at an elevation of approx 7.6m O.D. on the edge of the former floodplain of the River Cam (Figure 1).

Geology

Located on the 1st Terrace Gravels approximately 40 m to the east of the alluvium-filled basin of the Cam. The slightly higher 2nd Terrace lies 100m to the east of this site, and beyond that the outcrop of the Gault (BGS 1974).

Archaeological background

The area occupied by these buildings is shown as an established ‘place’ on some of the earliest maps of Cambridge. Lyne’s map of 1574 shows buildings either side of Newnham Road whilst Loggan’s planimetric representation of 1688 shows structures and back lots covering the PDA with another cluster of houses to the east adjacent to the Mill. Both sources suggest an established Medieval ‘place’, which was situated outside of the cultivated West Fields, the suggested outline plan of which was drafted by Hall and Ravensdale in 1976. Immediately to the north of here is the assumed location of the 14th century Mortimer Manor, known to have been associated with other tenanted buildings – perhaps those shown on Lyne’s map of 1574. A further group of buildings (also thought to be associated with the Manor) are recorded to the immediate east of the site within the area now occupied by the Mill and High Street. Malting Lane and Newnham House are situated about 50m to the north of here.

An archaeological investigation and watching brief undertaken during the redevelopment of Newnham House located substantial building remains of the 17th or 18th century. Meanwhile, the finding of 13th – 14th century pottery ‘of freshly broken appearance’ within an early garden soil at this site provided the first indications of the close proximity of medieval settlement (Gdaniec 1992), suggesting perhaps that the Malting Lane shown in 1688 was an already well-established medieval street. In January 2006 the properties adjacent to the present site on its north side (i.e. nos. 34 to 38 Newnham Road) were archaeologically investigated prior to the refurbishment of these houses by Clare Hall for the purposes of

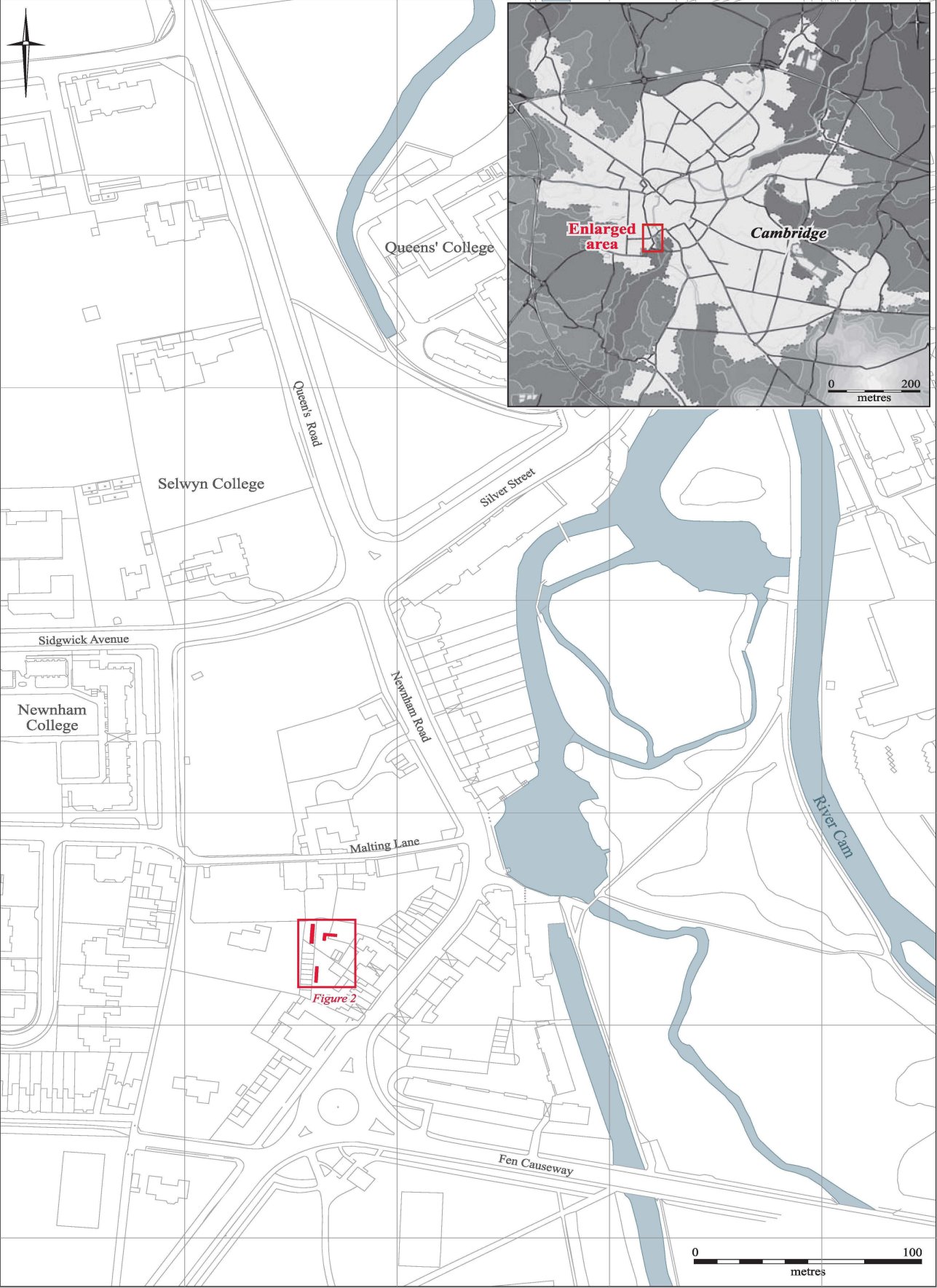


Figure 1. Site location

student accommodation (Huton & Timberlake 2006). Two archaeological test pits were excavated within the yard area to the rear of number 34 Newnham Road, whilst another two were examined and recorded within its interior. Archaeological features, perhaps different parts of the same large pit were identified. One of these proved to be more than 2.5 m deep and contained layers of dumped sand, lime/clunch, burnt sedge and other organic material suggesting use as a refuse or cess pit. These deposits contained pottery and also a fragment of a medieval ceramic water pipe dating from the 14th to the 16th century associated with layers of waterlogged silt and preserved organics consisting of straw, moss, bone, oyster and mussel shell, suggesting perhaps the existence here of a rank pond connected by a drain to the mill pond and/or mill race to the west. Within this were found large amounts of burnt sedge fuel and charred cereal threshing waste – the latter perhaps the discarded contents of medieval bread ovens. The infilling of this feature from the north-east suggests that occupation refuse was then coming from an area of settlement around the current Malting Lane and Newnham House – formerly the location of Mortimer Manor and associated medieval tenancies. Beneath the foundations of the other building two test pits revealed the brick footings for what were probably once 17th century dwellings.

The occurrence of extensive Anglo-Saxon settlement is recorded along the length of the terraces of the River Cam (Pollard 1996), and recent archaeological work within the West Cambridge area indicates the potential for finding other settlement or cemetery remains. In July 2011 an archaeological excavation at no.25 Cranmer Road near Leckhampton House (Corpus Christ College Sports Field) revealed evidence of Early-Middle (5th – 7th century AD) Saxon settlement in the form of an entrance to an inturned enclosure, ditches and pits (Timberlake 2011). Prior to this in 2002 excavations carried out on the site of the Institute of Criminology in discovered a hitherto unknown and much larger Anglo-Saxon settlement dating from the 6th to 7th centuries AD (Dodwell et al 2004). This uncovered evidence for a large timber building or hall, as well as two Grubenhauser with suspended floors, along with a number of associated pits. The distribution of the settlement was revealed to be linear, extending over a large area, although there was no way of establishing its full extent.

Previous finds indicate fairly extensive evidence for Roman occupation on the backs and along Grange Road. In 2006 archaeological work undertaken on the site of the Newnham College Buttery confirmed the presence of a long established Roman or Romano-British settlement, with some pottery finds dating from the 1st century AD, but the majority dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD (Webb, Timberlake & Armour 2006). Previous records of Roman burials and pottery found on the College site in 1938/1939 combine to suggest the proximity of a significant settlement and possible inhumation cemetery here (the latter perhaps associated with a road and river crossing) just 300m to the north-west of the Newnham Road site. The extent to which this settlement continues towards Newnham village is not known, but the potential for associated Roman activity remains high. Archaeological evaluation carried out at Ridley Hall some 150m to the north-east of Newnham Road in 2009 found evidence of activity from the Iron Age to the Roman period, whilst subsequent excavation in 2012 indicated that there might also be a Saxon component to this occupation

(Brittain 2009). In the wider landscape Roman and Saxon cemeteries are known at King's Hostel (Dodwell 2001) and the University Library.

Given its location on the lowest gravel terrace close to the river, the potential for prehistoric finds along Newnham Road remains high. For example, worked flints were recovered from one of the rear gardens of the Maltings Building (Browne 1975).

Aims and Objectives

Archaeological evaluation was undertaken with the aim of determining the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains exposed and liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

The objectives were to undertake detailed recording and sample excavation of any archaeological features revealed in these trenches, with particular attention to the evidence for Medieval and possibly also Anglo-Saxon Roman and Later Prehistoric (particularly Iron Age) occupation, or other relevant research issues highlighted for East Anglian and particularly Cambridgeshire archaeology within the regional research framework (Glazebrook 1997; Glazebrook & Brown 2000).

Methodology

Four trenches were laid out following scanning for services on site; the east-west orientated Trench 1 being 4.5m long, Trench 2 being 3.25m long and laid at right angles to this, whilst 15m to the south of this was Trench 3 (7.5m long). Trench 4 (c.10m long) was dug later at the time of the demolition of the outbuildings, the latter located beneath the floor of one of the garages adjacent to the rear boundary wall of the property (Figure 2). For Trenches 1-3 the machining was carried out using a 1.5 ton 360° excavator fitted with a 1m wide ditching bucket; the compacted gravel and rubble layer(s) being removed first, followed by the garden soil and upper sub-soil layers down to a the top of the natural/subsoil boundary to a maximum depth of 1.2m. Each bucket from the lower cultivation soil/ sub-soil layers (which contained pre-modern finds) was examined visually for the presence of pottery etc. and the spoil heaps were scanned by metal detector. Trench 4 was dug using a 10 ton 360° excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide ditching bucket; the trench in this case was widened to 2.5m, and dug to a maximum depth of 1.4m. Trench 5 (8m x 10m) was dug in the course of the final watching brief on site. This was the area of the proposed plant room for the accommodation block, the area initially being stripped down to the gravel surface, then planned and sampled. Trench plans (at 1:50 scale) plus a measured location plan for Trenches 1-3 with respect to the surrounding buildings were drawn-up, and trench sheets recorded, following which a representative section through the topsoil and subsoil layers (Trench 2) plus a number of small features cut into the sub-soil/natural were dug and 50% sampled. Within Trench 4 a ditch cut by some more modern pit-like features were planned at a scale of 1:25. Feature sections were all drawn at 1:10, the layers being recorded using an amended version of the

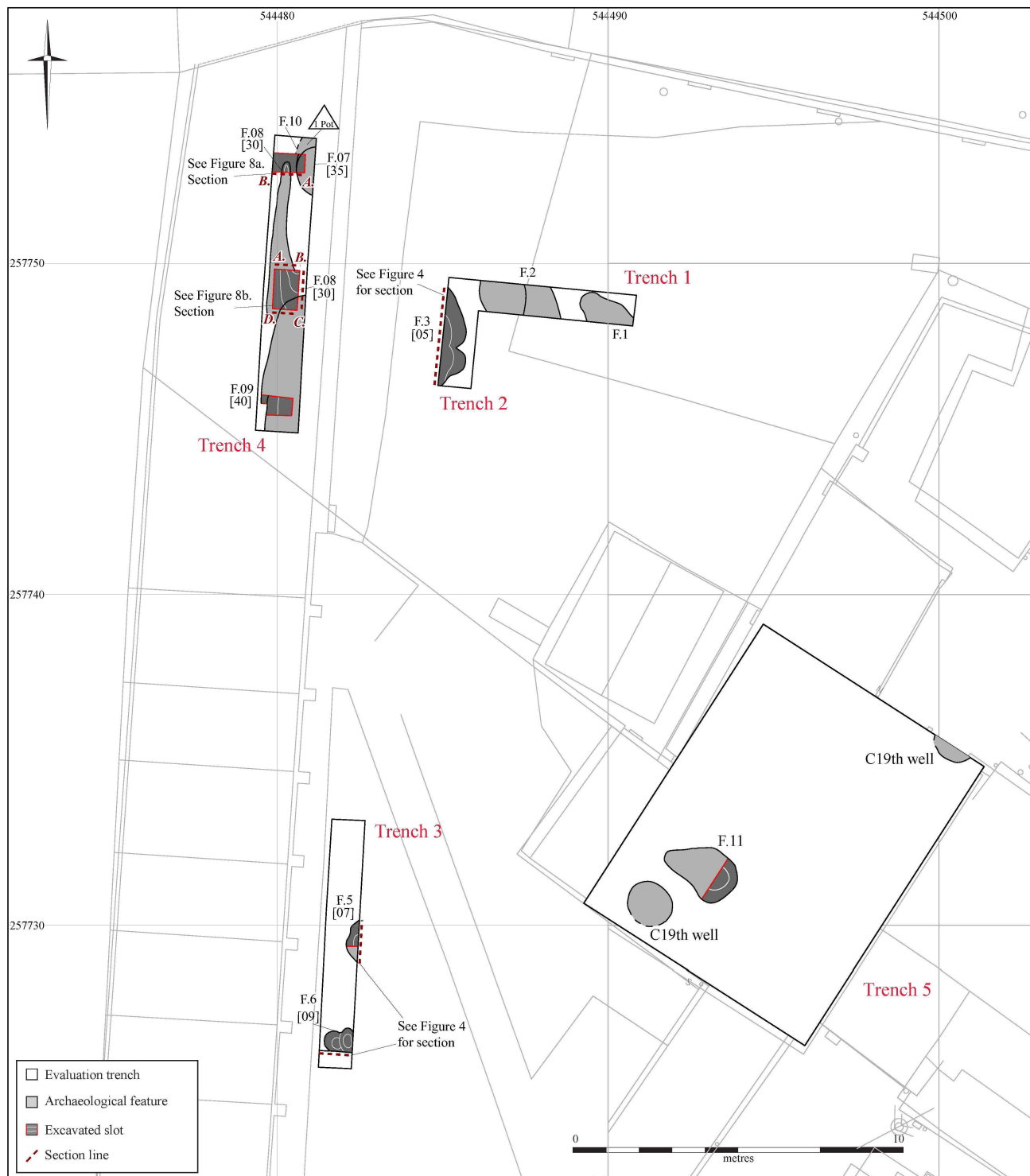


Figure 2. Trench Plan.

Museum of London context system (Spence 1990). A scaled photographic (digital colour) record was also undertaken. Finds were bagged and labelled, then washed and re-bagged within the CAU Finds Department before being examined by an in-house specialist. The CAU site code was CNR12.

Results (See Figures 2-8)

In all four trenches the depth of garden or cultivation soil was much greater than expected (between 1 – 1.4m). However, only the top (darker) part of this which contained recognisably modern (19th – early 20th-century) artefacts that was referred to as the topsoil. Each of the trenches was recorded in 1-5 places, dependent upon variabilities in stratigraphy.

Trench 1

East end: 0-0.15m Rubble hardcore/gravel; 0.15–0.5m Topsoil (dark grey humic garden soil); 0.5-1.05m Sub-soil (dark orange-brown garden soil); 1.05-1.15m Sub-soil-natural interface; 1.15m Natural (orange-yellow clayey sand)

West end: 0-0.2m Sand + rubble; 0.2-0.6m Topsoil; 0.6-1m Sub-soil; 1-1.10m Sub-soil – natural interface; 1.10m Natural

Cut by 19th-century/ early 20th-century rubbish pits (with complete and broken beer and wine bottles, broken china and ceramic jars) from just below the topsoil. These appear to have obliterated anything else that was in the trench. It was not possible to excavate these fully.

Trench 2

North end: 0-0.2m Rubble; 0.2-0.75m Topsoil; 0.75-1.15m Sub-soil.

Trench 3

South end: 0-0.14m Made-up gravel car park surface; 0.14-0.4m Made up gravel and brick rubble; 0.4-0.7m Topsoil; 0.7-0.9m Sub-soil (earlier cultivation soil (11)); 0.9-1.10m grey silt (08) F.6; 1.10-1.25m mixed grey-yellow gravelly-sandy silt (10); 1.25 Natural (yellow sand).

Middle (3.8m): 0-0.16m Made-up gravel surface; 0.16-0.45m brick rubble and gravel with modern soakaway pipe; 0.45-0.76m Topsoil; 0.76-0.93m Subsoil (earlier cultivation); 0.93-1.31m grey silt with mixed yellow/grey sandy silt at base (06) F.5; 1.31 Natural (yellow-orange sand and gravel).

North end (6.8m): 0-0.17m Made-up gravel; 0.17-0.36m brick rubble, mortar and gravel; 0.36-0.6m Topsoil (with clay pipe); 0.6-0.86m Subsoil (earlier cultivation); 0.86-1.21m Lower sub-soil (humic grey-yellow sand); 1.2m Natural (pale yellow gravel).

Trench 4

North end (at 0m): 0-0.2m Laid concrete floor of garage; 0.2-0.4m modern brick rubble + concrete; 0.4-0.9 black garden soil with 19th-early 20th sherds + TP; 0.9-0.95m dark peaty organic lens; 0.95-1.05m earlier 19th century brick rubble and CBM; 1.05-1.3m construction trench soil fill with mortar and brick fragments; 1.3m orange-dk green mottled sandy silt (sub-soil) overlying gravel

North end (at 1.7m): 0-0.22m Brick foundation; 0.22-0.35 brick rubble and concrete; 0.35-1.10 dk grey-black garden soil backfill within garden pit (F.7); 1.1-1.2m dark peaty horizon (F.7); 1.2m basal dark soil fill of pit containing moderate amounts of broken brick, tile and terracotta flower pot (F.7).

Middle (at 4 m): 0-0.3m Brick foundation; 0.3-0.4m concrete; 0.4-1.0m upper topsoil (modern garden soil); 1.0-1.45m gravelly silt and soil (sterile); 1.45m dark grey-brown gravelly subsoil with gravel beneath

South end (at 6.5m): 0-0.25m concrete; 0.25-0.6m upper topsoil (garden soil); 0.6-1.25m lower black garden soil with gravel inclusions; 1.25-1.35m dark grey silty clay and gravel (top fill of F.9)

South end (at 8m): 0-0.2m dirty topsoil with modern CBM; 0.2-0.45m loose CBM and sand etc.; 0.45-0.6m upper topsoil (black garden soil) with slate fragments etc; 0.6-1.1m black garden soil with gravel; 1.1-1.2m dark grey silt with some burnt flint; 1.2-1.4m dark grey-black silty clay (top fill of F.9)

Trench 5

South end (at 2m): 0-0.32m Modern building rubble make-up underlain by Geotex membrane; 0.32-0.76m black garden soil with brick fragments, cinders + glass; 0.76-0.91m black garden soil with 19th –century finds; 0.91-1.20m dark brown loamy soil mixed with clay (arable cultivation horizon); 1.2-1.27m brown-yellow subsoil; 1.27-1.35 sandy-silty yellow gravel with clay patches (natural)

Just two ‘modern’ features were recognized within Trench 1, both of these being deep rubbish-filled pits or bottle dumps (F.1 & F.2).

F.1 1m long (excavated distance), c.3m wide and 1.2m deep (excavated depth). This appears to have been dug from just beneath the modern topsoil with moderately steep but quite diffused sides (these were steeper on the east side than the west), but with some evidence of slumping. This contained a single fill (01) consisting of a dark grey-black loose silt with frequent broken pot, bottles and metal (ferrous) rubbish, and some occasional whole utensils, including glass aerated-water and beer bottles, the style of these suggesting a very late 19th century, but probably early 20th century date.

F.2 1m long (excavated), c.2m wide and 1.2m deep (the excavated extent). This had moderately steep but poorly defined sides. The upper fill (03) consisted of a dark silt with frequent broken bottles, pot and ferrous metal (similar to (01)), whilst the lower fill (02) consisted of a mid-dark yellowish brown grey sandy clayey silt with frequent gravel and some, but a much smaller amount of bottle glass, pot and other rubbish. Some of the bottles were evidently 20th century (perhaps pre-1930s) in date a few of the beer bottles were intact with stone stoppers and rubber seals. Two sherds of a 15th century AD Coarse Sandy ware were found re-deposited within (02) whilst another two sherds of a 14th-15th century Coarse Greyware plus one sherd of 14th-15th century Essex Red ware were recovered from the machined spoil removed from this feature during excavation. A further find recovered from this spoil was a small piece of Niedermendig (Rhineland) basalt lava quern, presumably also of Medieval date.

Trench 2 contained an amorphous-looking feature (F.3) which consisted of at least two hollows (see Figures 3 & 4). This appears to have been cut from the bottom of the subsoil into the clayey-sandy natural. However, it could not be ascertained for certain that this wasn't an early tree-throw, although this did seem to contain a moderate amount of quite period-specific (pre-modern) pottery.

F.3. The true extent of this ‘feature’ could not be properly determined within the small space of this trench, though it appeared to be at least 3m long, >0.75m wide and 300mm+ deep. The sides of this were uneven, but gently sloping and concave, the uneven base of this consisting of a double-lobed cut ([05]), which was in general poorly defined and irregular in outline. The ‘lobes’ of this cut were c. 1.75m and 0.75m wide. The fairly



A



B



C



D

Figure 3. A- Trench 1, F.2 'modern' bottle dump; B- Trench 3, F.5; C- Trench 2, F.3; D- Glass bottles and ceramic jars - early 20th century (F.1 and F.2)

homogenous single fill (04) consisted of a mid-yellowish brown clayey silt with frequent gravel inclusions and occasional to moderate amounts of bone and 10 small sherds of Late Medieval coarseware pot (this included seven sherds of 15th-century Coarse Greyware (including one base) and three sherds of 15th-century Coarse Pink. Another three sherds of 14th-15th century Coarse Greyware (including one jug rim) were also recovered from this feature during the machining. A single non-descript ferrous find and six pieces of animal bone (cattle and sheep) were recovered from context (04) whilst digging. A full interpretation of this feature was not possible given the small sample of this showing in the trench. However, the larger quantity of pot and bone recovered and its condition did not really support the interpretation of this as a tree-throw. Yet another possibility is a series of shallow interconnected soil and rubbish-filled quarry pits. To establish exactly what this is would require a larger-scale investigation.

Trench 3 contained another two similarly amorphous-looking features (F.5 & F.6). Likewise it was not possible within the confines of this small excavation trench to be certain as to whether or not these were intentionally cut, thus as dug features, or else simply tree-throws with period-specific cultural inclusions.

F.5. The edge of a c.0.9m long, 0.38m+ wide and 0.33m deep 'pit' with an irregular-rounded outline, a rounded base and shallow-steep concave sides ([07]) (Figures 3 & 4). The feature contained a single fill consisting of a mid-dark grey compact clayey-sandy silt (06) with rare red fabric coarseware pot sherds, including one of 15th-century Coarse Pink and one of 15th-century Coarse Grey ware. This feature also produced flecks of charcoal and occasional smears from pieces of degraded clay daub. The fill of this was not that dissimilar from the overlying sub-soil layer (011) which appeared to contain rather similar-looking pottery inclusions (three sherds of 14th-15th century Coarse Grey ware).

F.6. Only the edge of this feature was visible adjacent to the step at the southern end of this trench (see Figure 4). It was evident though that this irregular-looking cut [09] was 0.76m+ long, 0.68m+ wide and 0.27m deep with shallow, concave and irregular sides, and a flat-concave bottom (see Figure 3). The 'pit' contained two fills; an upper fill (08) consisting of a moderately compact damp clayey-sandy light-mid grey silt with moderate occasional flint gravel (rounded-angular <40mm diameter clasts) and streaky inclusions of unburnt/ partially burnt rotted daub clay, occasional charcoal and spots of burnt ash, plus three sherds of thin 14th-15th-century coarseware pot, including one body sherd of Coarse Grey and two of Coarse Pink (one of these sherds was decorated with a pinched strip). Beneath this was a lower fill (10) consisting of a mixed grey silt and yellow gravelly sand with patches of chalky clay covering the base. The latter contained some charcoal and rare daub fragments, but no pot. There remains the distinct possibility that this was the edge of an irregular man-made feature, though if it was, on the eastern side it had been cut by (part of) a tree throw. The slightly burnt and broken-up daub may represent re-deposited hearth material, whilst some of the pottery was broken-up and slightly abraded, other pieces appearing to be moderately fresh.

Trench 4 contained an additional four features, at least one of which (F.8) was moderately well-defined, perhaps the truncated segment of an E-W to N-S aligned ditch. In addition there was the suggestion of earlier and quite shallow Medieval? quarry pits within this area (F.10), perhaps also a Postmedieval quarry (F.9), and a modern garden pit (F.7). Below 1.4m the surviving deposits appeared to be waterlogged, suggesting good potential for archaeological preservation.

F.7 A 1.5m+ deep and 1.5m wide circular pit filled with modern garden soil (34) and some traces of 19th-20th century garden waste such as terracotta flower pots and glass (see Figure 7 + 8b). This cut the ?Medieval sub-soil (33) at a depth of around 1.3m, as well as the edge of an early ditch or quarry pit (F.10).

F.8 A 5m+ long ditch, the 0.5m wide and 0.2m deep terminal of which was encountered within the northernmost trench slot, and then a c. 90° turn in this linear some 4 m to the south of this point within the

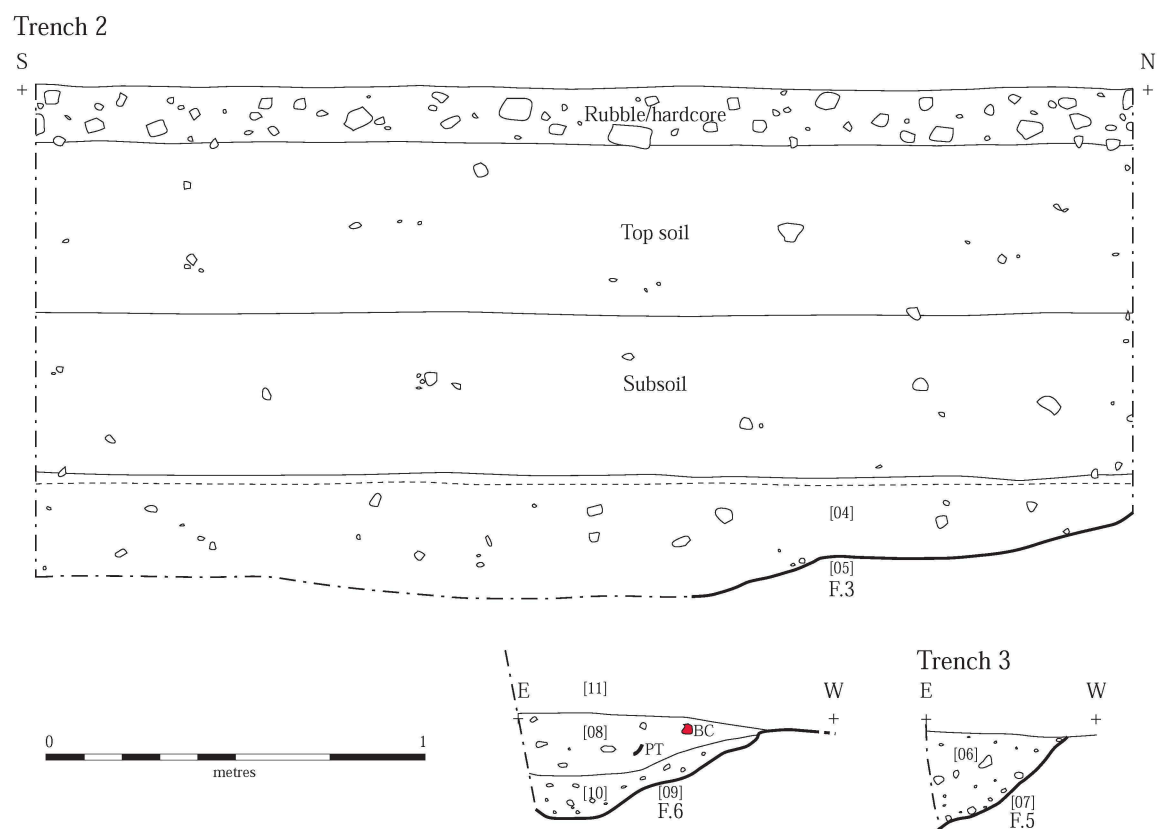


Figure 4. Sections of Trench 2 with F.3 (top) and Trench 3 with F.5 and F.6 (below).

middle trench slot. Here a clear 'U' to 'V' shaped lower profile to this ditch (1m wide by 0.5m deep) was visible within the south-facing section, immediately beyond which the ditch turned to the east, becoming much broader (probably in excess of 2m wide), slightly deeper (0.6m+), and with a flattened base ([30]) (Figures 5 + 8a). At this point the ditch disappears beneath the eastern side of the trench, presumably heading in the direction of the Newnham Road frontage (NB the continuation of this feature (at least as a ditch) was not picked up within Trench 2 – some 5-10m further east). However, the easterly turn of this feature can quite clearly be seen within the north-eastern corner of this excavated slot (see Figure 5). Unfortunately on this eastern side the slot was too close to the trench edge to section back further, whilst on the south side it was partially cut by the modern pit F.9 (Figure 8b). The clearest south-facing section revealed a thick upper fill of brown-grey clayey silt and frequent gravel (20) which contained occasional to moderate amounts of animal bone and occasional sherds of unabraded Medieval coarseware pot, and beneath that a fairly sterile layer of clayey silt with occasional gravel (21), a dark grey silty clay with frequent gravel and organics and rare finds of bone and pot (22), and at the base a layer of redeposited gravel and orange-brown sandy clay (23). The west and north-facing sections of this feature present similar fills but with further lenses of material including a grey-brown clayey silt with greenish organic (cess?) inclusions (24), redeposited orange silty sands with iron staining (27 + 29), gravelly silty clay (25), and a dark grey silty clay (26 + 28) (Figure 8a). The 'terminal' end of this ditch ([39]) sectioned within a second excavation slot some 4m to the north of this clearly cut what appeared to be a Medieval buried soil/ sub-soil layer (33), the latter infilling an irregular gravel topography, perhaps the result of still-earlier quarrying. The fill of this shallow terminal (F.8) resembled (20); here consisting of a dark sandy-silty clay with frequent round flint gravel and pea-grit size inclusions of chalk, together with occasional-moderate amounts of bone, pot, burnt flint, charcoal, and a single lump of burnt clay (Figures 7 + 8b).

(33) A layer of mottled dirty yellow-orange to dark olive green-grey sandy silt with occasional moderate amounts of round-angular gravel (<20mm), small chalk (pea-grit size) inclusions and iron pan. Contains rootlet holes in places. With rare to occasional finds of animal bone and pottery sherds (SF <1> = x2 re-fitting pieces from the rim of Medieval decorated coarseware jar (see Figure 2 for location)).

F.9 A moderately deep (0.6m) and wide (4m x 2m+) 'scoop' type pit cut into the coarse gravel layer from the top of the subsoil/ basal soil horizon (Figure 6: bottom). This was filled with now waterlogged garden soil layers (41-43) containing numerous fragments of 17th-18th-century redeposited brick plus a number of late 19th-century finds including fragmentary willow-pattern china, tile and clay tobacco pipe. Almost certainly a late Postmedieval quarry pit with backfilled late 19th-century garden soil.

F.10 The edge of a substantially earlier deep-cut feature is preserved on the edge of the modern garden pit F.7 (Figures 7 & 8b). Little survives of this, except for a steep-sided (0.2-0.3m deep) cut into the gravel and an infill rather similar in appearance to the surrounding ?Medieval sub-soil layer(33). No finds were recovered, apart from a possible fragment of partially squared chalk (clunch). The sub-soil located just 0.5m from the edge of this feature produced two adjoining sherds of Medieval pot (see (033)). Most probably this feature is the edge of a quarry pit, although conceivably it might be the fragment of a ditch sub-parallel to the terminus of F.8, and of approximately the same age.

Trench 5 contained the bases of two destroyed brick-lined and rubble-filled 19th-century wells and at the south end the remnant of a very truncated amorphous-looking feature (F.11) which was sampled, yet produced no dateable evidence, or even a clearly discernible form. On the basis of the quality of the bone found within it, and also the type of fill examined, it was concluded this could have been a remnant patch of Medieval(?) buried soil, but that it was not significant in terms of the overall archaeology of the site.

F.11 A shallow irregular-oval shaped feature some 2.2m x 1.2m wide and 0.2m deep, with a flattish but uncertain base, and general east-west orientation [47]. This 'feature' was half-sectioned and recorded. The upper fill (46) consisted of a reddish silty sand with pea grit size chalk gravel and moderately abundant angular flint



Figure 5.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.

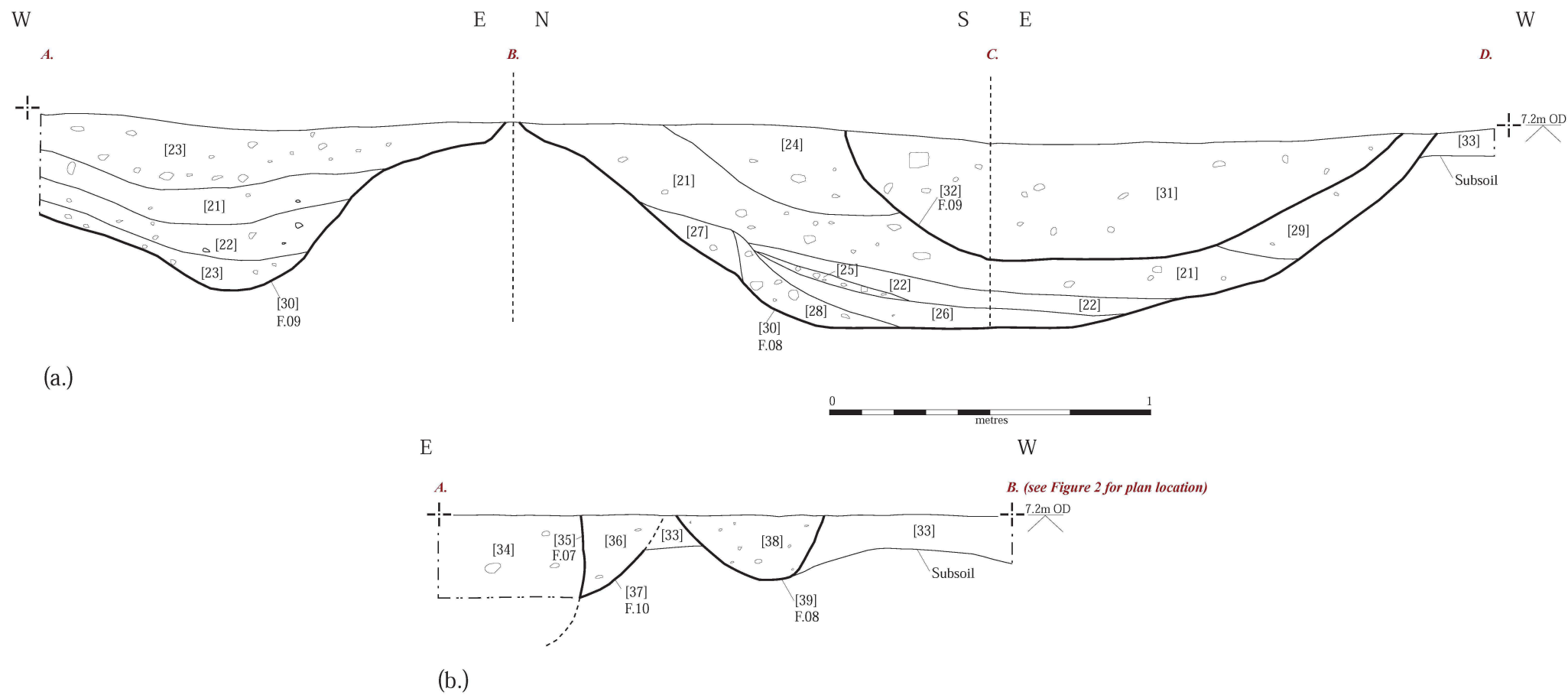


Figure 8. Section of F.07, F.08 and F.09 and F.10.

inclusions. Small fragments of charcoal were present but rare, and a single group of crushed cattle (rib) bone fragments was collected. The lower but poorly-defined fill consisted of a pale-coloured silty flinty gravel (48).

Finds

Medieval Pottery *David Hall and Simon Timberlake*

Spot dates and a brief commentary on the diagnostic sherds was undertaken. All 26 sherds recovered from Features 3, 5 & 6 as well as from the lower subsoil layer (11) proved to be of 14th-15th century date and consisted of a fairly small group of coarsewares including types: (1) Coarse Sandy (x2 sherds); (2) Coarse Pink (x6 sherds); (3) Coarse Buff (x1 sherd); (4) Coarse Grey (x16 sherds) and (5) Essex Red (x1 sherd). Most of these were small broken-up pieces, although the majority of them appeared to be freshly broken, thus if they were re-deposited, they were probably only locally so. Five diagnostic sherds were also noted: two bases (Coarse Grey and Coarse Pink); a body sherd decorated with a pinched strip (Coarse Pink); a flat-topped jar rim with sand and white and iron grits (Coarse Buff – a surface find); and one jug rim (of Coarse Grey).

From the ditch fills of F.8 came another two sherds of 15th-century Coarse Grey ware (from (020)); a single sherd of Coarse Buff Ware (020) plus a handle of a pimkin of the same from the associated ditch terminal (038); three sherds of a Grey Ware base (038); two further sherds of Essex Red (022); and one sherd of Heddingham Ware (020). Other 15th-century pottery was recovered from the adjacent sub-soil (033), in this case two re-fitting sherds of Coarse Brown Ware in the form of a jar rim with decorated rills.

The assemblage was fairly distinctive, and most probably (except for the Essex Red and Heddingham Ware) locally made (D.Hall *pers.com.*). The reddish-pinkish and buff fabrics with white grit temper are quite distinctive, and have been encountered elsewhere in Cambridge. For instance, the same pottery types were also found during a recent archaeological evaluation carried out at Auckland Road, off Midsummer Common (AUR 12) in May/June 2012 (Timberlake 2012 *forthcoming*). The strong presumption of the pottery dating evidence is that all or most of the features found within the backyard plot(s) of nos. 40-52 Newnham Road are of 15th-century date.

Post-medieval – Modern ceramic and bottles *identified by Andy Hall*

A considerable amount of broken china plate and some large ceramic bottles and jars, including a heavy blue and white glaze bottle, glass wine bottles, beer bottles and aerated water bottles (including ‘Campton’s Aerated Waters’) which can be dated to the first few decades of the 20th century were recovered from the bottle/ rubbish pit dumps (Features 1 & 2) in Trench 1 (See Figure 4). Some miscellaneous 19th-century pottery including part of a dish of willow-pattern china was recovered from F.9., alongside fragments of tile and brick. Pieces of thin window glass (greenhouse glass?) and some fragments of earthenware pot (flower pot) were recovered from F.7, of probable 20th-century date.

A 19th century clay tobacco pipe bowl was recovered from the topsoil (garden soil) horizon in Trench 3, and another fine clay pipe stem from F.9 within Trench 4.

Worked Stone *Simon Timberlake*

One undiagnostic fragment of Niedermendig basalt lava quern stone was recovered from the machined spoil removed from Trench 1. This was recorded as possibly coming from the area of the modern (early 20th-century) bottle and pottery dump (F.2), though it seems most likely that it came from the cut lower subsoil, or an as yet unrecognised feature subsumed within this.

Niedermendig quern was still being imported into Britain from the Rhineland during the Early Medieval period, but by the Late Medieval this trade had almost disappeared. Lava quern and other handmill querns were by then

being curated, perhaps even hidden, as tolls were paid for the use of local manorial mills such as the water-powered mill at Newnham. The use of this resource would have been an important source of income for the manor. Old lava quern has also been found in contexts where it was re-used for lining hearths (Watts 2002).

Daub and burnt clay *Simon Timberlake*

Very degraded traces of unburnt and partly burnt white marly daub were recovered from the excavated fills of Features 3, 5 and 6. Given the oxidised and bioturbated nature of the silt and 'soil-filled' features the condition of this material was not at all surprising. Much of this had the appearance of being re-deposited, but nevertheless probably reflects the nearby presence of wattle and daub walled dwellings.

Animal bone *Vida Rajkovača*

Six fragments of domestic animal bone were recovered from the probable Late Medieval F.3 (04) in Trench 2. This included some small re-fitting fragments from a cow skull, some fragments of cattle-sized mandible, and a sheep-sized limb bone fragment. Another seven cattle-sized bone fragments were recovered from F.8 and one from F.9, alongside a single sheep-sized fragment from F.7 and eight more from F.8. Also from F.8 came one pig bone fragment, two specimens of a small equid, one specimen of a dog, two of chicken, and one of a domestic goose. Ditch F.8 was also of Late Medieval date. The distinctly different assemblage of animal bone recovered from this feature (when compared to F.7 and F.9) supports the overall integrity of this as a medieval deposit.

Taxon	F.3	F.7	F.8	F.9	Total NISP
	NISP	NISP	NISP	NISP	
Cow	1				1
Sheep/goat		.	5	.	5
Sheep		1	.	.	1
Pig		.	1	1	2
Equid (?Donkey)		.	2	.	2
Dog		.	1	.	1
Chicken		.	2	.	2
Domestic goose		.	1	.	1
Sub-total to species	1	1	12	1	15
Cattle-sized	1	.	7	1	9
Sheep-sized		1	8	.	9
Total	2	2	27	2	33

Table 1 Number of Identified Specimens for all species.

Butchery was recorded on just four specimens, all of which were indicative of meat removal and axial splitting. Equid specimens were fragmented and impossible to measure and further identify to species (horse vs. donkey), yet the overall size of these suggested donkey.

Shell

Two oyster shells were recovered from F.9 and another from F.8. These represent food waste.

Assessment of Environmental Bulk Soil Sample <1> from Trench 4 (F.8) *Anne de Vareilles*

A single 6litre soil sample was taken and processed using an Ankara-type flotation machine. The flot was collected in a 300µm aperture mesh and the remaining heavy residue washed over a 1mm mesh. The flot and heavy residue were dried indoors prior to analysis. J. Hutton sorted the >4mm fractions of the heavy residues by eye. The flot was analysed by the author under a low power binocular microscope (6x-40x magnification). Nomenclature follows Stace (1997) for flora and an updated version of Beedham (1990) for molluscs.

The sample produced a small flot of <1mm volume of fine (<2mm) charcoal and a few waterlogged seeds, namely mint (*Lamium* sp.), buttercups (*Ranunculus* spp.) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*). *Trichia* sp. and *Columella edentula* were the only mollusc shells present.

Discussion

Little can be deduced from this small-scale archaeological investigation except that it appears to confirm the continuation of 14th-15th century AD occupation alongside this roadside frontage in a south-westerly direction from that previously established within the backyard plots behind nos. 34-36 Newnham Road – the area immediately to the rear of Malting Lane and the former site of Mortimer Manor (Gdaniec 1992; Hutton & Timberlake 2006). However, to the rear of nos 40-52 Newnham Road the depth of ‘modern’ cultivation of the garden soil and the frequent digging of rubbish pits associated with the occupancy of these houses as student/ college properties during the 19th to early 20th centuries has tended to obscure (if not truncate) many of the earlier Medieval features. Additionally, within most of the area examined (Trenches 1-3) it was not possible to be certain whether an undisturbed Medieval soil survived beneath the level of modern cultivation. In all probability the absence of modern artefacts within these basal layers would seem to imply that the majority of amorphous-looking features (i.e. F.3 - F.6) cut into sub-soil and gravels within Trenches 2 and 3 were real, nevertheless the majority of these remained difficult to interpret in terms of shape or function. One possible explanation is that all, or some of the features found beneath the main garden area were eroded and soil-filled quarry pits containing re-deposited or contemporary Medieval pottery, another that these were Medieval tree-throws. The slightly better evidence from the partially waterlogged deposits within the deeper and wider Trench 4, which lies c.5m to the west of Trench 2, supports the notion that this end of the plot may have been quarried, with features such as F.10 (and perhaps also F.8) dug from the top of the buried Medieval soil/ sub-soil layer downwards into a coarse clean gravel.

The pottery and other finds recovered from F.8, including daub, quern and animal bone (such as sheep, cow, chicken, goose and pig as food waste plus horse/donkey and dog as other domesticates) as well as the small amount of environmental (plant) evidence supports the idea that these were moderately busy backyard plots during the 14th – 15th centuries; perhaps used for the keeping of domestic animals, for small-scale gravel quarrying linked to local use, for middening, and subsequently perhaps for garden cultivation. If anything, the pottery dates suggest a much shorter period of intensive occupation and use of this land (effectively during the 15th century) than the range of dates previously indicated by the pottery assemblages (14th - 17th-century) recovered from nos. 34-38 Newnham Road, located just to the north-east of the current area (Hutton & Timberlake *ibid.*).

A further question raised, but not resolved by the excavation of the final trench, was whether the short N-S to E-W oriented curvilinear feature (F.8) was part of a boundary ditch to the property, or else was a drain or other cutting associated with various pits and quarries. Supporting the idea that it was a ditch was the presence of a clear ‘V’ cut section at its

deepest point, and immediately to the south of this, a well-defined right-angled turn on its northern side. The problematical petering-out of this feature just a few metres to the north of this point seems linked to a rise in the level of its base, yet the upper part of this feature may have been removed entirely by truncation resulting from the overlying deep-garden cultivation. Because of this there remains a possibility that we may not be looking at a true termination to this feature. Nevertheless, it seems rather unlikely that this was the curvilinear end to a SW-NE aligned ditch which formed the southern boundary to this property. For example, no continuation of a ditch could be seen within Trench 2, even though F.3 might have been the other end of this same feature. Invariably ditched property boundaries are not uncommon features of urban and near-urban Medieval sites in Cambridge; examples of which have been found at the Grand Arcade (Cessford 2007) and most recently at Neath Farm, Cherry Hinton (Slater 2012) and Newmarket Road (Newman *forthcoming*). Here at nos. 40-52 Newnham Road the small surviving patch of Medieval soil/ sub-soil (33) also seems to have been moderately artefact-rich; the very limited evidence from Trench 4 suggesting that this may once have covered, and partially infilled, an already quite uneven gravel-quarried ground surface (e.g. F.10). Subsequently F.8 was dug through this horizon, either as a gravel working, or else as a short section of ditch or drain.

Most likely small-scale gravel quarrying (as well as middening) recommenced during the 19th and early 20th centuries, the latter pits being dug from an altogether higher level within the garden soil, the upper layers of which appear to have been imported into and dumped on-site.

Conclusion

The current archaeological investigation has provided moderately good, though indirect evidence for Medieval occupation dating mostly to the 15th century within the backyard area behind nos. 40-52 Newnham Road. The precise nature of this activity could not be ascertained within the four small trenches opened, yet the limited findings suggest the presence here of ditches, gravel pits, middens, and perhaps the keeping of animals in this area, yet no evidence so far of any early property boundaries.

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OASIS ID: cambridg3-135570

Project details

Project name	Clare College, Newnham Road, Cambridge
Short description of the project	An archaeological trench evaluation was conducted within the car park to the rear of nos.40-52 Newnham Road (properties of Clare College) between 21st-22nd May and 27th-28th September 2012. Four archaeological trenches totalling 25.5m were excavated on two sides of the car park to reveal a deep sequence of 19th - early 20th century garden soil beneath the modern topsoil, overlying rubble and gravel standing. Several 'modern' bottle and pottery dumps had been dug through these garden soils, whilst from the lower sub-soil boundary at around 1-1.2m depth within Trenches 1-3 some Medieval (14th-15th century) coarseware sherds were recovered. Beneath this a number of amorphous-looking soil-filled 'pit-like' features had been cut through the sub-soil into the top of the underlying sandy gravel; the latter containing small amounts of locally-made 14th/ 15th or 15th-century pottery alongside some degraded clay daub, charcoal, burnt flint and small amounts of animal bone. It could not be determined within the small area exposed whether or not these had been dug as rubbish pits, shallow quarries, or were simply artefact-filled Medieval tree-throws. Subsequently, at the rear of the property, from a depth of c.1.4m, Trench 4 revealed a slightly better preserved artefact-filled Medieval soil and a 15th-century curvilinear ditch fragment, the latter cutting through what appeared to be a slightly earlier quarried surface. However, there was no evidence for a property boundary ditch within the area examined. As in the case of the neighbouring properties nos. 34-38 Newnham Road whose backyard plots were examined in 2006, the patchily preserved archaeological evidence suggests a continuation of the occupation or area of activity linked to the 14th-15th century Medieval settlement centred on Malting Lane and Newnham House (formerly the location of Mortimer Manor) and its associated Medieval tenancies.
Project dates	Start: 21-05-2012 End: 28-09-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	CNR12 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ECB 3803 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 2 - Institutional and communal accommodation
Monument type	QUARRY PITS Medieval
Monument type	QUARRY PITS Post Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Medieval
Monument type	GARDEN PITS Modern
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	QUERN Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Modern
Significant Finds	GLASS BOTTLES Modern

Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE Clare College Graduate Accommodation, 40-52 Newnham Road, Cambridge
Postcode	CB3 9EY
Study area	860.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 4447 5772 52 0 52 11 54 N 000 06 51 E Point
Lat/Long Datum (other)	52 11 54N000 06 51E
Height OD / Depth	Min: 7.20m Max: 7.60m

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	Simon Timberlake
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Clare College, Cambridge

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Physical Archive ID	CNR12
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones", "Ceramics", "Environmental", "Glass", "Worked stone/lithics", "other"
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	CNR12
Digital Contents	"Animal Bones", "Ceramics", "Environmental", "Glass", "Stratigraphic", "Survey", "Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Media available	"Database", "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	CNR 12
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic", "Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Map", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey "

**Project
bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Clare College Graduate Accommodation Site, 40-52 Newnham Road, Cambridge: An Archaeological Evaluation
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