

No. 100 Histon Road, Cambridge

An Archaeological Evaluation Assessment



Matthew Collins

CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



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Matthew Collins
Illustrations by Bryan Crossan

Cambridge Archaeological Unit
University of Cambridge
Department of Archaeology

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1. Summary

An archaeological trenched evaluation was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on land behind 100 Histon Road, Cambridge in advance of the sites redevelopment. The trenches revealed no archaeological features or deposits dating prior to the Victorian period although several plough scars and modern pits and postholes were present.

2. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) in the week of 13th May 2013 on land behind 100 Histon Road, Cambridge. The evaluation, commissioned by Januarys on behalf of Bondsway Limited, was carried out in advance of the redevelopment of the site and aimed to establish the presence, date, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological remains. This report details the results of the evaluation, together with an assessment of the archaeological evidence in relation to the regional research framework, (Glazebrook 1997, Brown & Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott 2011).

The evaluation was carried out and this report was produced in accordance with an archaeological specification written by the CAU (Dickens 2013 and approved by Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CHET), (Thomas 2013).

2.1 *Location, Topography and Geology*

The Proposed Development Area (PDA) centres on TL 4437/5978 and extends over 2380m² (0.238 ha). The site is currently occupied by former public house 'The Ranch', a car park, and an area of overgrown scrubland. It is bounded to the west by Histon Road; to the north by Lindon Close; to the east by housing and gardens; and to the south by a block of flats, (see Figure 1), and is located on relatively flat ground averaging 18.1m OD. The underlying geology within the western half of Trench 1 was 4th Terrace sand and gravel that abruptly changed to Lower Chalk marl, which was also present across the remainder of the PDA, (BGS).

2.2 *Archaeological Background*

The PDA lies outside the known foci of local prehistoric activity, and limited evidence has been identified for pre Iron Age activity within a 500m radius of the site. However, Arbury camp, a large circular Iron Age enclosure, lies approximately 700m to the north, and excavations within Arbury itself have uncovered evidence for Early to Late Iron Age settlement (Lisboa 1994 – 1995, Clarke 2005). Furthermore, a Late Iron Age settlement is known to have existed around Castle Hill approximately 350m to the southeast of the PDA, suggesting there is a possibility that further Iron Age activity could be identified within the boundaries of the site.

The PDA is located to the immediate north of the Romano-British town of 'Duroliponte' which centred on Castle Hill and extended to within 250m of the site (Alexander & Pullinger 2000). Furthermore, a large villa complex is known to have existed approximately 700m to the northeast of the PDA which was linked to Duroliponte via the Roman road, Akeman Street, whose line is projected to run approximately 400m to the east of the PDA (Timberlake 2006). This suggests the site is likely to lie within an area liable to extra-mural development during the Roman period.

The area lies outside the core of the medieval and post-medieval development of Cambridge and historical maps suggest the area was primarily agricultural fields until the mid-late 19th century when housing first developed along Histon Road, and then later infilled the surrounding fields during the 20th century. Furthermore, the maps for the late 19th century onwards suggest several small buildings were built within the northern half of the PDA, although these had been demolished by the mid 1920's, whilst the southern half of the PDA was not built upon, (Davis & Fleming 2012, Timberlake 2006), aside from the laying of concrete to create the current car-park. This suggests that any earlier archaeology within the PDA could be relatively undisturbed, particularly within its southern half.

2.3 Methodology

Five archaeological trenches totalling 60m in length (a 4% sample of the area) evaluated the PDA. Trench 1 was placed within the former beer garden, Trench 2 within the area of scrubland and Trenches 2-5 within the car park (see Figure 2).

All five trenches were CAT scanned prior to excavation. The concrete was broken and removed using a concrete breaker and toothed bucket and other deposits (including topsoil and subsoil) were removed under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist by an 8-ton, 360° tracked machine using a toothless ditching bucket. The removed overburden and all exposed features were scanned by metal detector for artefacts and a digital photographic record taken. Excavation of archaeological features was carried out using hand-tools and ambiguous natural features were also tested. The recording followed a CAU modified MoLAS system (Spence 1990) whereby feature numbers, F. were assigned to stratigraphic events and numbers [fill] or [cut] to individual contexts. The evaluation trenches were planned at 1:50 and individual sections drawn at 1:10.

All work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory Health and Safety legislation and with the recommendations of FAME (Allen & Holt 2010) and in accordance with a site specific risk assessment and the CAU Health and Safety policy. The CAU assigned site code is OHR 13 and event number is ECB 3967.

2.4 Archive

Several modern features were identified and recorded and surface finds including pottery and tile were recovered and catalogued. All documentary records and accompanying artefacts have been assembled into a catalogued archive in line with Appendix 6 of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991) and are currently being stored at the CAU offices.

3. Results

Within the five evaluation trenches no archaeological features dating prior to the Victorian period were identified (see Figure 2). Furthermore, the metal detecting survey of the removed overburden and exposed features yielded no non-ferrous artefacts, and a brief examination of the removed subsoil and topsoil deposits yielded no pre-Victorian finds.

Trench 1, located within the former beer garden, contained two pits, **F.100** and **F.101**, both of which had large quantities of modern ceramic on their surface (a sample of which was retained). **F.101** additionally contained the relatively fresh remains of a pig. Also present in this trench were: several modern postholes probably relating to a children's play apparatus that was present within the beer garden; a modern water-pipe; and the shallow foundations of a brick wall likely relating to the 19th and early 20th century structures known to exist within this part of the PDA (Davies & Fleming 2012).

Trench 2, located in the southern half of the PDA and within an area of scrubland, contained several natural silt hollows (see Figure 3) which were tested and found to contain small modern brick fragments and coal. Trench 4, located within the car-park, contained several plough scars which were tested and found to contain small quantities of brick and tile. Given the type of artefacts recovered from them, these features are likely to date to the areas use as fields during the post-medieval period. In contrast, Trenches 3 and 5, which were both also located within the car-park, contained no natural or archaeological features of any kind, although modern machine-dug geological test-pits were present in both.

Trench 1		
General Description	Orientation	E-W
Trench 1 contained two small Victorian/modern rubbish pits, the foundations of two modern brick walls and several modern postholes.	Avg. Topsoil Depth (m)	0.20
	Avg. Made-Ground Depth (m)	0.17
	Avg. Subsoil Depth (m)	0.20
	Width (m)	1.60
	Length (m)	17.65

Trench 2		
General Description	Orientation	E-W
Trench 2 contained no archaeological features or deposits. Several natural silt hollows were present which had a small quantity of modern artefacts pressed into the top of them.	Avg. Topsoil Depth (m)	0.14
	Avg. Subsoil Depth (m)	0.19
	Width (m)	1.60
	Length (m)	17.20

Trench 3		
General Description	Orientation	NE-SW
Trench 3 contained no archaeological features or deposits. A modern geological? test-pit was present at the southern end of the trench.	Avg. Concrete Depth (m)	0.18
	Avg. Made-Ground Depth (m)	0.20
	Avg. Subsoil Depth (m)	0.30
	Width (m)	1.60
	Length (m)	8.50

Trench 4		
General Description	Orientation	E-W
Trench 4 contained several plough scars but no other archaeological features or deposits.	Avg. Concrete Depth (m)	0.20
	Avg. Made-Ground Depth (m)	0.15
	Avg. Subsoil Depth (m)	0.18
	Width (m)	1.60
	Length (m)	8.30

Trench 5		
General Description	Orientation	NE-SW
Trench 5 contained no archaeological features or deposits. A modern geological? test-pit was present towards the northern end of the trench.	Avg. Concrete Depth (m)	0.17
	Avg. Made-Ground Depth (m)	0.15
	Avg. Subsoil Depth (m)	0.28
	Width (m)	1.60
	Length (m)	8.35

4. Discussion

The archaeological evaluation has shown the area of the former beer garden, surveyed by Trench 1, to be highly disturbed by Victorian and modern activity, although the absence of any earlier artefacts or features suggests it is unlikely any archaeological evidence has been lost through truncation.

In contrast, Trenches 2-5 all contained preserved subsoil, suggesting that despite its urban location and the presence of the concrete car-park, underlying deposits across much of the PDA were relatively undisturbed by modern activity; indicating that any potential archaeology within the site would have survived. Therefore, as no significant archaeological remains were identified it is highly likely the PDA falls outside of the foci of activity dating prior to the post-medieval period and saw limited utilisation during Roman and prehistoric times.

5. Acknowledgements

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Januarys on behalf of Bondsway Limited. Monitoring was undertaken on behalf of CHET by Andy Thomas. Alison Dickens was CAU project manager. Donald Horne (CAU) undertook the surveying and Emma Rees and Matt Wood (both of the CAU) assisted the author on site.

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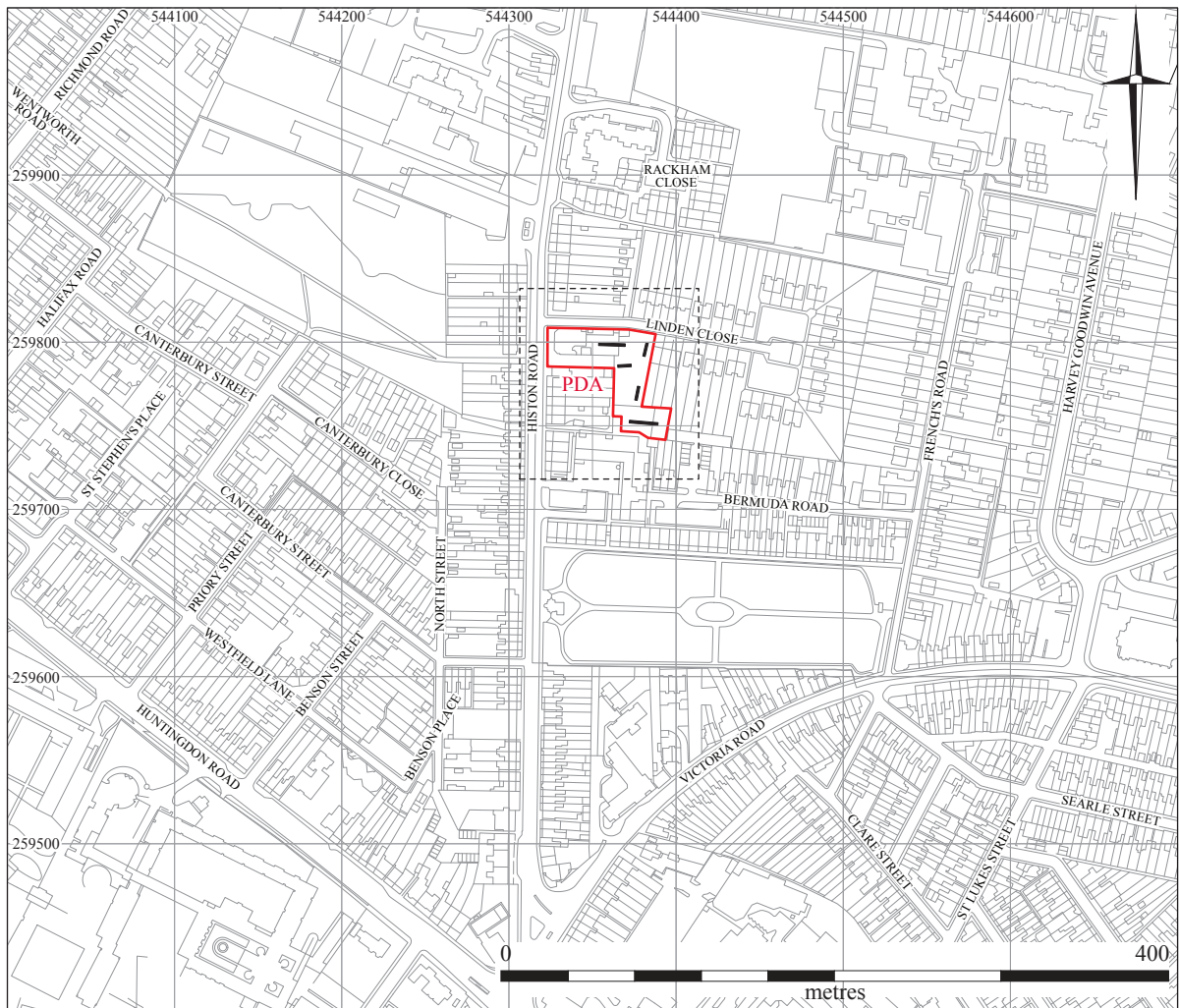
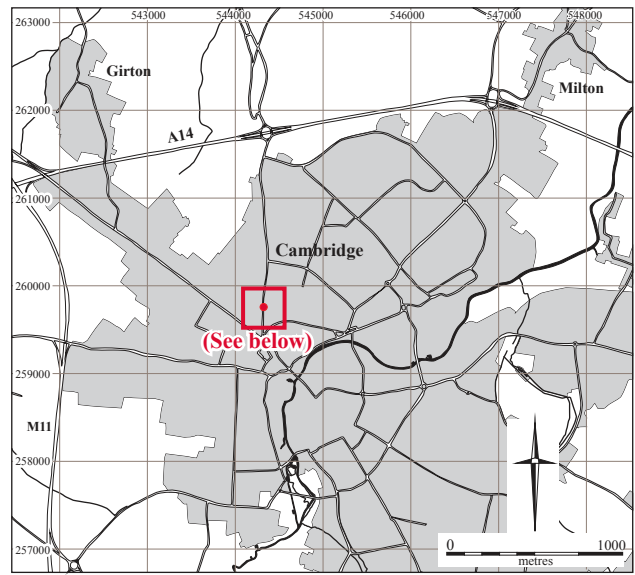
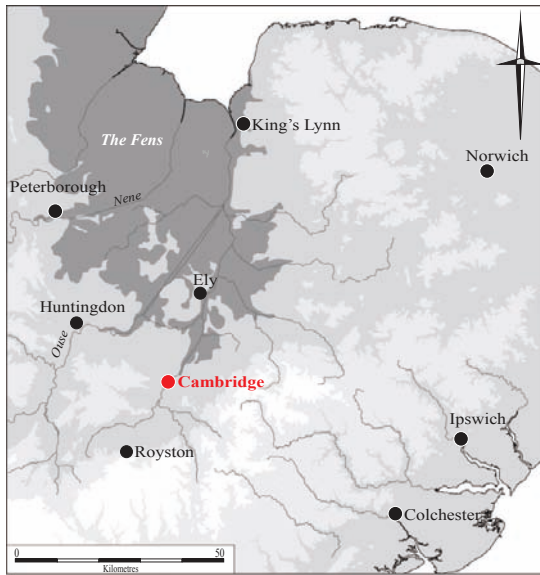


Figure 1. Site location

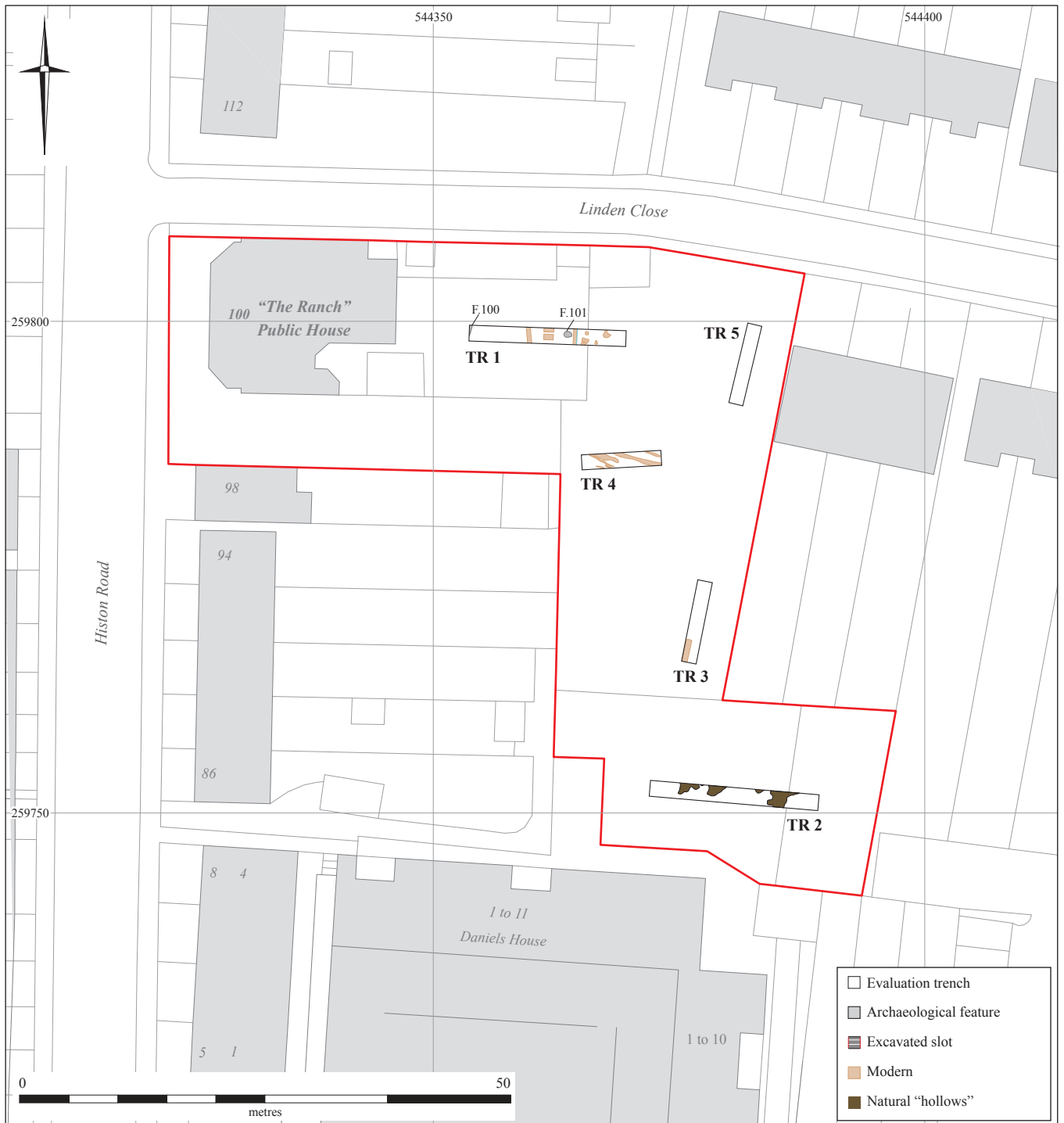


Figure 2. Trench plan.



Figure 3. Photograph of Trench 3, looking East (above) and Trench 4, looking West (below).

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Project details

Project name	100 Histon Road, Cambridge
Short description of the project	An archaeological trenched evaluation was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on land behind 100 Histon Road, Cambridge in advance of the sites redevelopment. The trenches revealed no archaeological features or deposits dating prior to the Victorian period although several plough scars and modern pits and postholes were present.
Project dates	Start: 13-05-2013 End: 14-05-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	OHR 13 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Monument type	PITS Modern
Significant Finds	POTTERY Modern
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, 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 CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE 100 Histon Road, Cambridge
Postcode	CB4 3JP
Study area	2380.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 4437 5978 52 0 52 13 00 N 000 06 48 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 18.00m Max: 18.00m

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	Matthew Collins
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Bondsway Limited

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Physical Archive ID	OHR 13
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	OHR 13
Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
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