

Girton Glebe School, Girton

An Archaeological Evaluation



David Webb & Alison Dickens

**Girton Glebe School,
Girton**
An Archaeological Evaluation Assessment

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**Report No. 1208
Event No. ECB4097**

Summary

An archaeological trenched evaluation was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on land to the rear of Girton Glebe School. The trenches revealed evidence for the previous agricultural use of the land and construction of the school, but no archaeology was revealed.

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on 28th January 2014 in a playground immediately to the rear of the main buildings of Girton Glebe School in Girton (TL4250 6219). The evaluation, commissioned by Coulsons on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, was carried out in advance of the redevelopment of part 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.

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), following production of a brief (Gdaniec 2013).

Location, Topography and Geology

Located towards the middle of Girton Village, the proposed development area (PDA) lies immediately east of the main block of school buildings in an area currently laid to tarmac as a playground. The PDA extends over c. 350 sq metres. The underlying geology is Gault Clay overlain locally by head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel (BGS website accessed 18/12/2013).

Archaeological Background

The site lies about 3.5km to the northwest of the Roman town of Cambridge, in the wider hinterland around the town area. The underlying geology is Gault Clay overlain locally by head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel (BGS website accessed 18/12/2013).

To the south of this part of the village the landscape has been characterised by evidence of an extensive, and locally intensive, sequence of Iron Age and Roman settlements and trackways, particularly those findings resulting from work at NIAB (Luke et al 2013) and Northwest Cambridge (Evans et al 2013). A Roman site was identified from aerial photographs and subsequently partially investigated during construction of the A45 (now A14) in 1975 (HER 09527), which shows that this component of the landscape extends at least this far. The wider Girton parish straddled the Roman road leading northwest from Cambridge, (now Huntingdon Road, a turnpike between 1745 and 1874) although the village itself lies over 1 km. to the north of that road line.

Closer to the PDA, however, the known archaeology is characterised more by later periods, specifically Saxon and medieval. St Andrew's Church, only 140m to the northwest of the PDA, has visible Norman components, but is certainly older in origin (MCB14021).

Test pitting around the village in 2009 included finds of late Saxon and early medieval pottery at locations near the High Street as well as later post-medieval wares (MCBs 18593 – 18597; Blinkhorn 2009).

Listed as Grittune in around 1060 and Gretone in the Domesday Book, the village's name is derived from the Old English grēot + tūn meaning "farmstead or village on gravelly ground", as the settlement was formed on a gravel ridge. Girton village lay east of and parallel to Washpit brook, along a slightly curving high street running southwest from the old Histon boundary. From the north end a road runs towards Oakington, while towards the middle a lane (now called Girton Road) leads east to the parish church, then turns southeast to link the village with the main road (VCH 1989: 115). The PDA lies just east of this road, in an area of former open arable field

Methodology

Two archaeological trenches totalling 10m in length (a 5.7% sample of the area) evaluated the PDA. These were located either side of an existing foul water pipe crossing the PDA. The trenches were CAT scanned prior to excavation. The tarmac was cut and then it and underlying rubble removed using a toothed bucket. The deposits below (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. No archaeological features were revealed, the trench section sequence was recorded.

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 GGP14 and CHER event number is ECB 4097.

Results

No archaeological features were identified in either trench; metal detecting survey of the removed overburden and exposed natural yielded no artefacts, and a brief examination of the removed subsoil and topsoil deposits yielded no finds other than brick based rubble above them underlying the tarmac.

Trench 1

Length: 4m, orientation southwest – northeast.

Height at surface 22.10m AOD, height at base 21.14m AOD

0.00 - 0.10 m	Tarmac, School playground
0.10 – 0.25 m	A rubble layer comprised of fine sandy gravel and frequent broken yellow brick. Made up ground supporting Tarmac surface
0.25 – 0.40 m	A very dark grey near black layer of silty clay with a slight sand presence with occasional small sub angular gravel inclusions. Upper part of layer is contaminated with material from above layer.
0.40 – 0.75 m	A dark yellowish brown sandy clay with occasional small to medium sub angular gravel inclusions moderately sorted and evenly distributed. Sub soil.
0.75 – 1.00 m plus	A yellowish grey sandy clay with occasional small to medium sub angular gravel inclusions well sorted and evenly distributed. Natural

Trench 2

Length: 6m, orientation north - south

Height at surface 22.00m AOD, height at base 21.07m AOD

0.00 - 0.10 m	Tarmac, School playground
0.10 – 0.30 m	A rubble layer comprised of fine sandy gravel and frequent broken yellow brick. Made up ground supporting Tarmac surface
0.30 – 0.50 m	A very dark grey near black layer of silty clay with a slight sand presence with occasional small sub angular gravel inclusions. Upper part of layer is contaminated with material from above layer.
0.50 – 0.85 m	A dark yellowish brown sandy clay with occasional small to medium sub angular gravel inclusions moderately sorted and evenly distributed. Sub soil.
0.85 – 1.20 m plus	A yellowish grey sandy clay with occasional small to medium sub angular gravel inclusions well sorted and evenly distributed. Natural

Discussion

The archaeological evaluation revealed a sequence indicative of the former agricultural use of the land with a developed plough soil sitting above the natural geology. The upper part of this had been stained by material associated either with construction activity related to the school or perhaps more intensive agricultural activity shortly predating that. THE rubble did not appear to relate to activity on the site itself and was presumably brought in to level up and provide a firm base for creation of the playground.

Acknowledgements

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Dave Watson of Coulsons on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council. Monitoring was undertaken on behalf of CHET by Kasia Gdaniec. Alison Dickens was CAU project manager. Jon Moller (CAU) undertook the surveying.

Many thanks to the Headteacher, Philip Atkin, and the staff and pupils at Girton Glebe School for their patience.

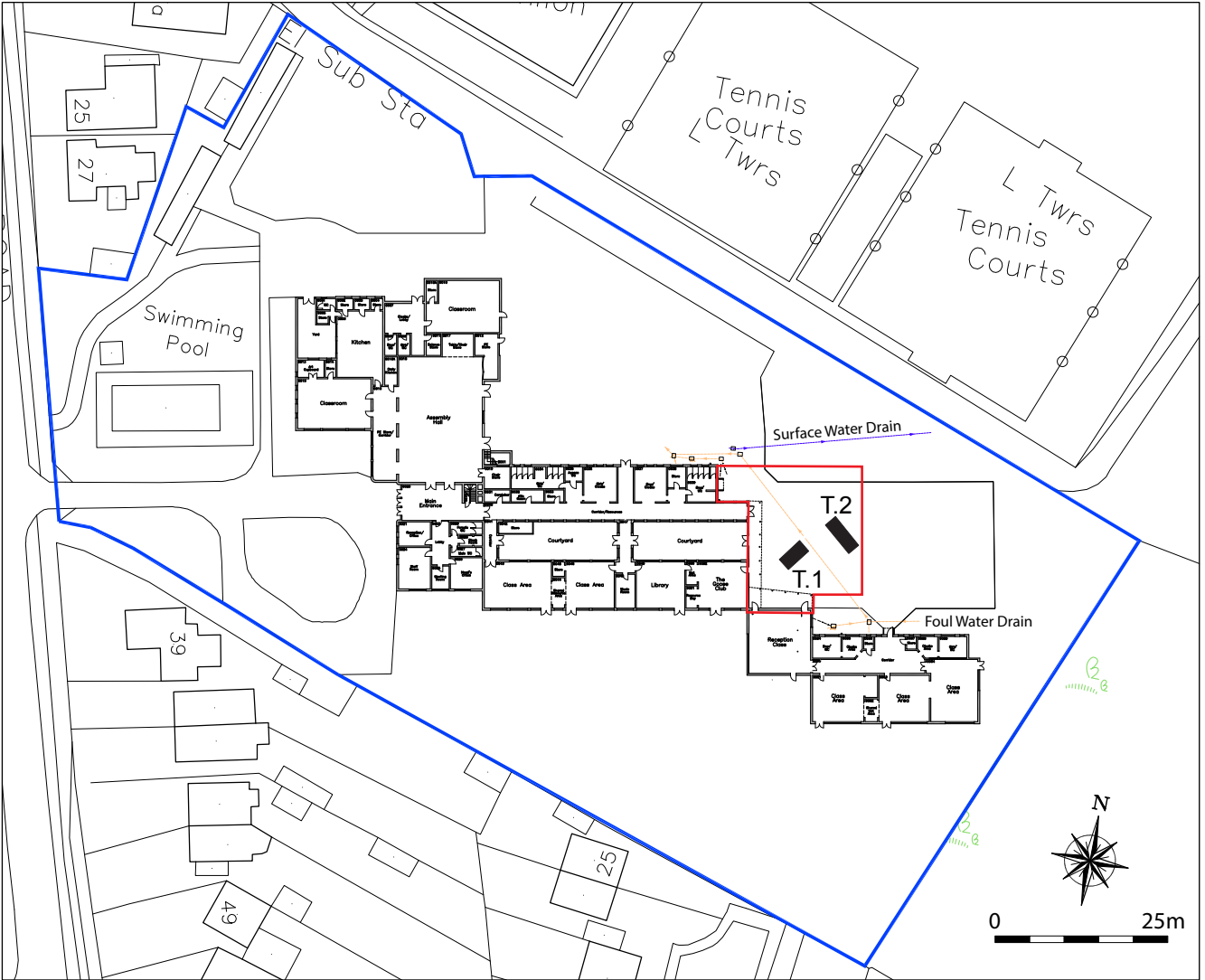
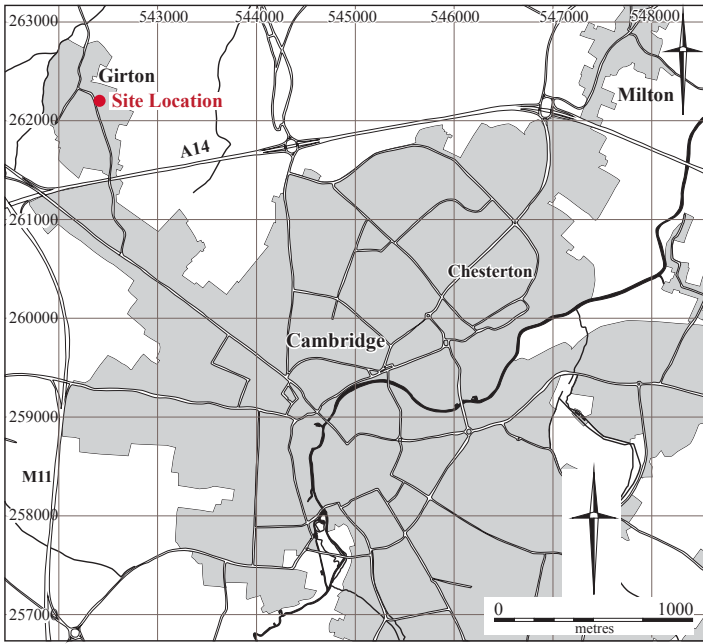
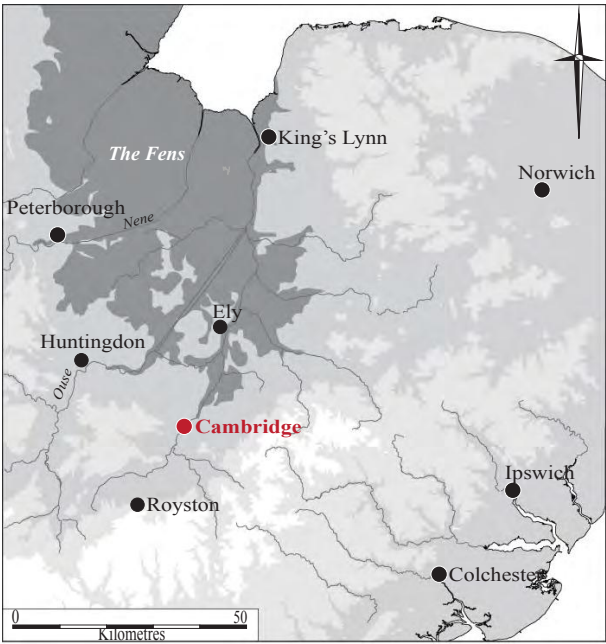


Figure 1: Site and Trench Location



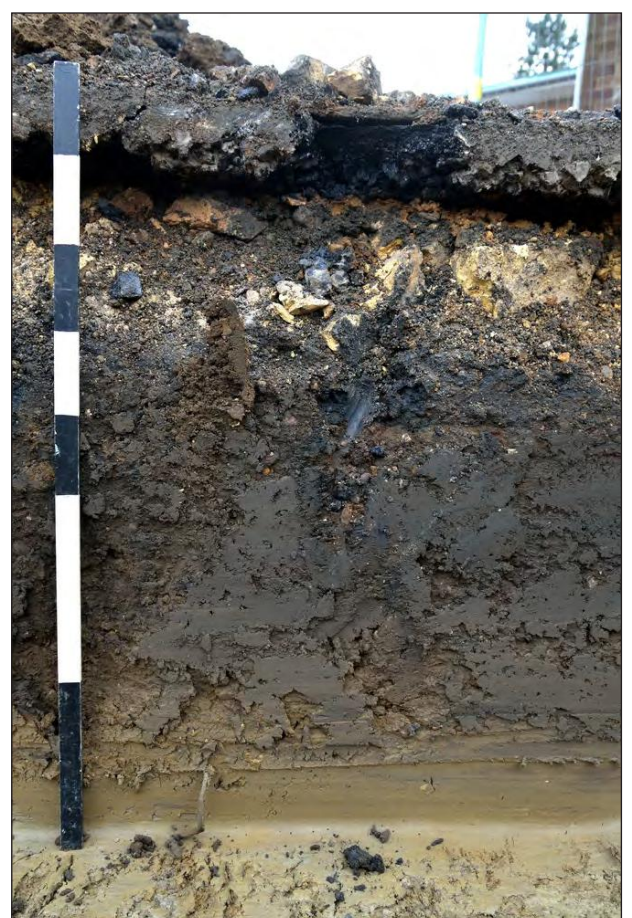
Trench 1



Trench 1 - Northwest Section



Trench 2



Trench 2 - West Section

Figure 2: Trenches and Sample Sections

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OASIS ID: cambridg3-170707

Project details

Project name	Girton Glebe School
Short description of the project	An archaeological trenched evaluation was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on land to the rear of Girton Glebe School. The trenches revealed evidence for the previous agricultural use of the land and construction of the school, but no archaeology was revealed.
Project dates	Start: 28-01-2014 End: 28-01-2014
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	GGP14 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ECB4097 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Methods & techniques	""Targeted Trenches""
Development type	Large/ medium scale extensions to existing structures (e.g. church, school, hospitals, law courts, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE GIRTON Girton Glebe School
Postcode	CB3 0FH
Study area	350.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TL 4250 6219 52.2390080368 0.0871797766723 52 14 20 N 000 05 13 E Point
 Height OD / Depth Min: 21.07m Max: 22.10m

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 David Webb
 Type of sponsor/funding body County Council
 Name of sponsor/funding body Cambridgeshire County Council

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
 Digital Archive recipient Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Store
 Digital Archive ID GGP14
 Digital Contents "Survey"
 Digital Media available "Survey"
 Paper Archive recipient Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Store
 Paper Archive ID GGP14
 Paper Contents "Stratigraphic"
 Paper Media available "Notebook - Excavation"," Research"," General Notes","Photograph"

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