

Archaeological Monitoring at Godolphin Cottage, Gog Magog Hills Estate, Cambridgeshire.



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Summary

The Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook the archaeological monitoring of the preparatory works for the refurbishment of Godolphin Cottage, a converted dwelling, formerly part of the South Stable Block of the Wandlebury Estate built in 18th C. The estate is located within Wandlebury Ringworks, a scheduled multivallate Iron Age hillfort. During the monitoring, elements of the earlier phases of the structure of the cottage were noted, no earlier archaeological features or structures pre-dating the cottage were encountered.

Archaeological Monitoring at Godolphin Cottage, Gog Magog Hills Estate, Cambridgeshire. (WAN15)

Introduction

The Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook the archaeological monitoring of refurbishment works at Godolphin Cottage between 01-10-2015 and 30-10-2015. The Godolphin Cottage is part of the Southern Stable Block buildings of the Wandlebury Estate. The investigation was commissioned by Patrick Ward of Haysom Ward Miller Architects, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Shenton, with the aim of establishing and recording the presence, date, condition and significance of any archaeological remains. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by the CAU (Beadsmoore 2015). The WSI was approved and work monitored by Gemma Stewart for Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

Location and Topography

The area of works is located within Wandlebury Ringworks situated approximately 6.5 km to the south of Cambridge and 2km to the north of the village of Stapleford, centred at National Grid Reference TL 4936 5331. The site is situated at the northern end of the Gog Magog Hills, a chalk ridge overlooking the Cam valley and the fens beyond. The site is located at 70m AOD with the underlying geology being New Pit Chalk.

Archaeological Background

Wandlebury Ringworks (CHER 04636, DCB189) is a circular multivallate Iron Age hillfort. The inner bank and ditch was levelled in the 17th C. during the construction and landscaping of the Wandlebury Estate for the 2nd Earl Godolphin (CHER 04846). The South stable block range was added to the estate property in the late 18th C. Recent work and re-evaluation of previous studies has suggested a prolonged exploitation of the hillfort site and the surrounding landscape from the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC into the 1st millennia AD (French 2004). To the south of the site is a possible Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Little Tree Hill (DCB195, CHER 371685). A barrow group is also located to the south and east of Wandlebury (MCB10025 and MCB5318). In 1895 the Godolphin family sold the Wandlebury estate and it was purchased by Harold William Stannus Gray in 1904. Sir Harold died in 1951 and his wife two years later. Their son presented the hillfort to the Cambridge Preservation Society in 1954. The Society at the same time bought the surrounding 38.67 hectares. Wandlebury House was demolished in 1955, with the Stable Blocks and associated buildings being converted into domestic dwellings in the late 1950's.

Methodology

The area of investigation was excavated by a contractor operating a 360° tracked mini digger employing a 1.00m toothless bucket and when required with hand tools. The works were monitored by a member of the CAU. The area of the proposed development stripped for investigation was approximately 100 sq m. Any potential archaeological features and material were investigated and treated in accordance with the WSI drawn up by the CAU (Beadsmoore 2015). The recording was carried out following the CAU modified MOLAS system of archaeological site recording (Spence 1990). All work was carried out in accordance with statutory Health and Safety legislation and with the recommendations of SCAUM (Allen & Holt 2005). The Archive is to be stored in Cambridge County Council approved deep storage.

Site Code WAN15

Planning Ref S/3000/14/LB – S/30001/14/FL

Results

Garage (west end of Southern Stable Block)

Before the machine stripping of the garage floor, three test pits were excavated to assess the depth and make-up of the ground underlying the area of works. The test pits were excavated by hand to the depth required for the works. Test pit 1 was extended beyond depth of the area of works due to the presence of the soakaway structure and to gain further information regarding the composition of the made up ground. Test pit 2 was extended in area to confirm the presence and nature of the residual chimney structure.

Test Pit 1

Location: North-West corner of garage interior 0.5m's from north and west wall.

Dimensions: 0.40 x 0.40m depth 0.80m

0.00-0.10m Concrete floor

0.10-0.30m A loose layer of reddish brown silty sand with very frequent small to large sub angular rubble fragments including red brick, yellow brick concrete, poorly sorted unevenly distributed. Made-up ground.

00.30-0.80m (LOE) Within the northern segment of the test pit a yellow brick wall with pale mortar could be seen aligned approximately east to west (later stripping of the whole area revealed part of a soakaway structure). The rest of the test pit was filled with a yellowish brown silty clay with a moderate frequency of small to medium sub angular gravel inclusions gravel with occasional fragments of building debris, poorly sorted.

Test Pit 2

Location: North-East corner of garage interior 0.5m's from north and east wall.

Dimensions: 1.00 x 1.00m depth 0.30m

0.00-0.10m Concrete floor

0.10-0.30m A loose layer of reddish brown silty sand with very frequent small to large sub angular rubble fragments including red brick, yellow brick concrete, poorly sorted unevenly distributed. Made-up ground.

00.30m (LOE) Top of yellow brick wall with pale sandy mortar exposed, with adjacent compacted reddish brown sandy clay surface with frequent small to medium sub rounded chalk inclusions. Latter stripping of the area revealed the brickwork to be the truncated base of a large chimney and fireplace butting up to the east wall.

Test Pit 3

Location: Centre of garage approximately 3.5m from east and west walls

Dimensions: 0.40 x 0.40m depth 0.30m

0.00-0.10m Concrete floor

0.10-0.30m A loose layer of reddish brown silty sand with very frequent small to large sub angular rubble fragments including red brick, yellow brick concrete, poorly sorted unevenly distributed. Made-up ground.

0.30m (LOE) Compacted reddish brown sandy clay surface with frequent small to medium sub rounded chalk inclusions.

Once the Test pit investigations had established the depth and composition of the underlying strata of the area of works, the made up ground was removed by machine to the depth required for the works (0.30m). The machining revealed the full extents of the remnants of earlier phases of the building and made up ground.

North to South Connecting Corridor

Removal of the floor in the north to south corridor (Fig 3) adjacent to the garage exposed a compacted rubble layer of 20th c. building material overlying a stone slab floor. The floor comprised six rows of stone slabs (width 0.25 -0.23m, length 0.21- 0.30m, depth 0.10m) aligned in a north south direction with narrow rows placed end on butting up to the east and west walls. Stripping of the walls in the central area of the corridor exposed the brickwork of the dividing walls, the lower courses of the walls were covered in coal dust. A wooden sill plate was uncovered, this had most likely formed the base of the dividing partition between the staircase and fuel store that can be seen on the 1957 plan (Fig 4). A test pit (TP4 see Fig 3) examining the strata underlying this floor revealed made up ground to a depth of at least 0.80m. The strata was similar to that seen in the adjacent garage area. The corridor will still serve the same function after the rebuilding works and will have the same dimensions (6m x 1.5m).

Property's exterior

Several small works carried out by the contractors around the exterior of the property were also monitored during the refurbishment of the properties drainage and examination of the

foundations. The shallow pits only revealed the same made up ground as observed in the adjacent interior areas of work. A larger test pit to examine the damp course and foundations condition (TP5 1m x 0.5m x 0.8m see Fig. 4) was excavated by the contractors on the south side of the property was recorded in more detail however the strata was again the same made up ground as recorded in the interior of the property.

Garden

Further works monitored involved the construction of a structure for the installation of a fuel tank in the south west corner of the property's garden and the provision of a pipeline connecting to the house. Test-pitting along the western edge of the property and garden following the route of the pipeline (TP 6 approximately 30m x 0.25m see Fig. 4), exposed similar ground to that previously recorded within the other works mentioned above. Two larger pits (TP 7 and 8 dimensions 0.50m length x 0.20m width x 0.80m depth) were excavated in the south west corner to examine the strata underlying the proposed foundations for the fuel tank. The investigation of the pits only encountered made up ground, excavation was discontinued upon reaching the limits of excavation for the works at 0.80m. (See Fig. 4).

Finds (all areas)

During the monitoring of the works only very late post medieval and modern material was recovered from the made up strata, this material was examined and discarded on site. Due to the depth of made up ground overlying the site and the frequency of modern ferrous material metal detecting to detect any archaeological significant material was not possible.

Conclusions

The initial stripping of the ground in preparation for the works within the dwelling revealed structural remnants of parts of the buildings. The removal of the fireplace and chimney stack base (fig 11) exposed by the stripping were most likely the result of works done in the late 50's to convert the stable block into domestic dwellings, plans (fig 5) dating to the period show details of the fireplace and further internal divisions of the garage. The garage is located at the western extent of the former stable block. Internally there is a straight joint at the corner where the south elevation butts up to the wall suggesting the garage structure is a later addition to the 18th C. Stable block range. The soakaway (fig 12) uncovered in the north west corner of the garage lies in an unusual position in relation to the garage, with parts of it underlying the garage doorstep and west wall. Its placement suggests it predates the construction of the garage.

Works in the area adjacent and to the east of the garage revealed traces of earlier internal divisions with remnants of a staircase base (fig 9) including a sill plate. Underlying these was a paved stone floor (fig 10) forming a front to back connecting corridor possibly part of the original Stable Block construction. Initial plans for the conversion of the Stable Block from 1957 (fig 5), show the internal divisions and staircase within the connecting corridor as well as the fireplace and chimney base attached to the east interior wall of the garage, their removal probably dates to this period. The internal divisions in the southern segment of the connecting corridor are described as a fuel store, during the works the original brickwork in this area was exposed and appeared to be coated in coal dust confirming its function as a fuel store.

The composition and similarity of the strata noted in all the areas of works suggests that at least the west end of the Southern Stable Block range and the associated garden was constructed upon a layer of made up ground. Due to the limited depth of the works, a complete understanding of the underlying strata and its relation to the natural topography could not be reached. It was not clear if the made up ground formed a platform superimposed upon the previous landscape potentially preserving earlier landscapes or if landscaping had truncated remaining archaeology. It is possible that earlier features may be well preserved under a platform of made ground but further investigation would be required to confirm this notion. No underlying earlier archaeological features, earlier strata or material culture was noted other than that associated with the construction and use of the existing structure of Godolphin Cottage.

Acknowledgements

The work was commissioned by Patrick Ward of Haysom Ward Miller Architects, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Shenton. The site was investigated by Dave Webb and Marcus Brittain, Emma Beadsmoore was the project manager and. Bryan Crossan digitized the plans and prepared the graphics.

References

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Abbreviations Used.

CAU Cambridge Archaeological Unit
CHER Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Records
LOE Limit of Excavation
PCAS Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society

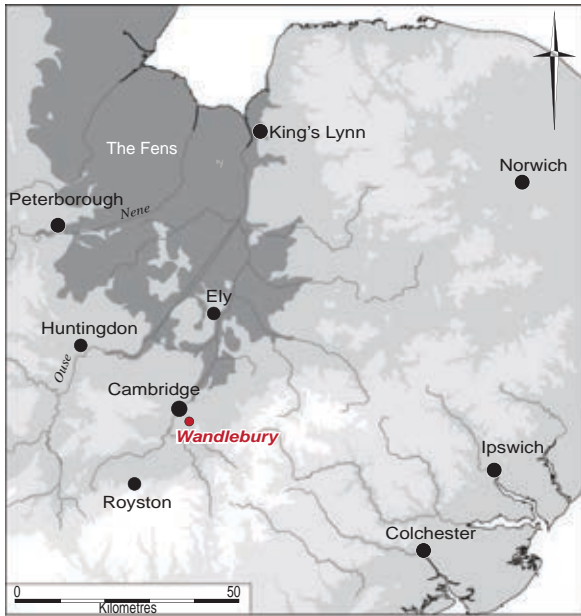
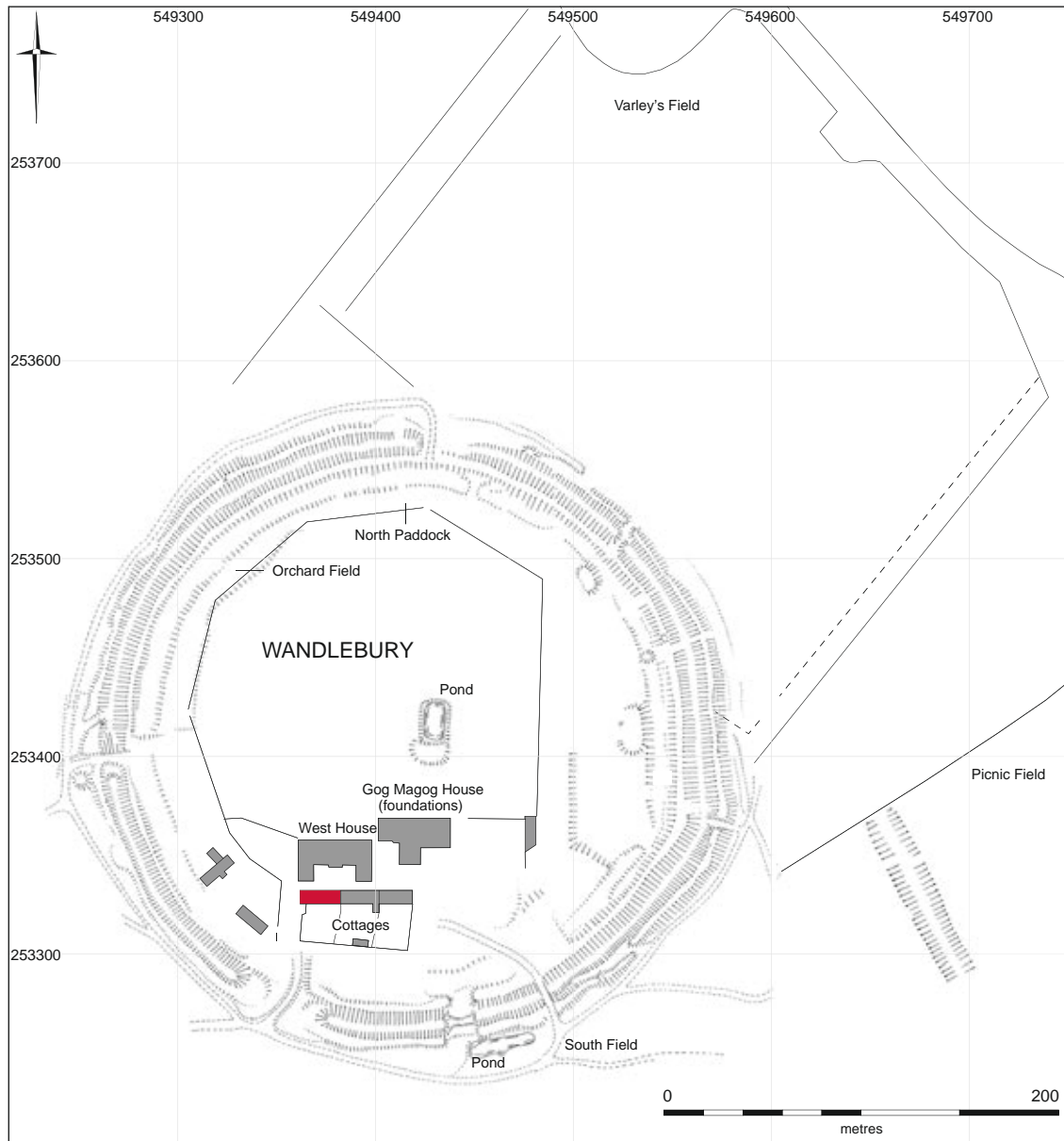


Figure 1. Location plan

● Site location



● Site location

Figure 2. Plan of Wandlebury with site location

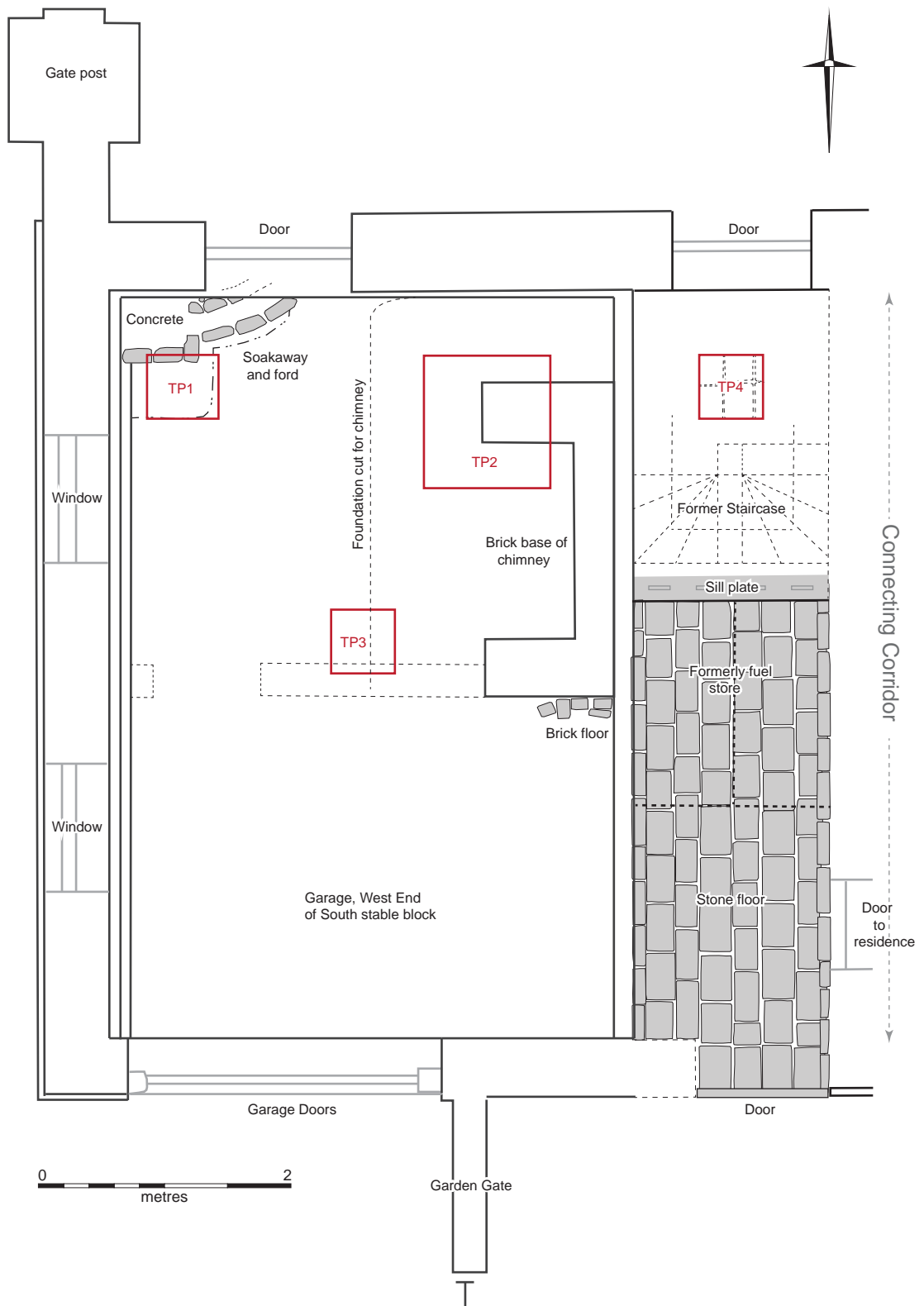


Figure 3. Plan of excavation area

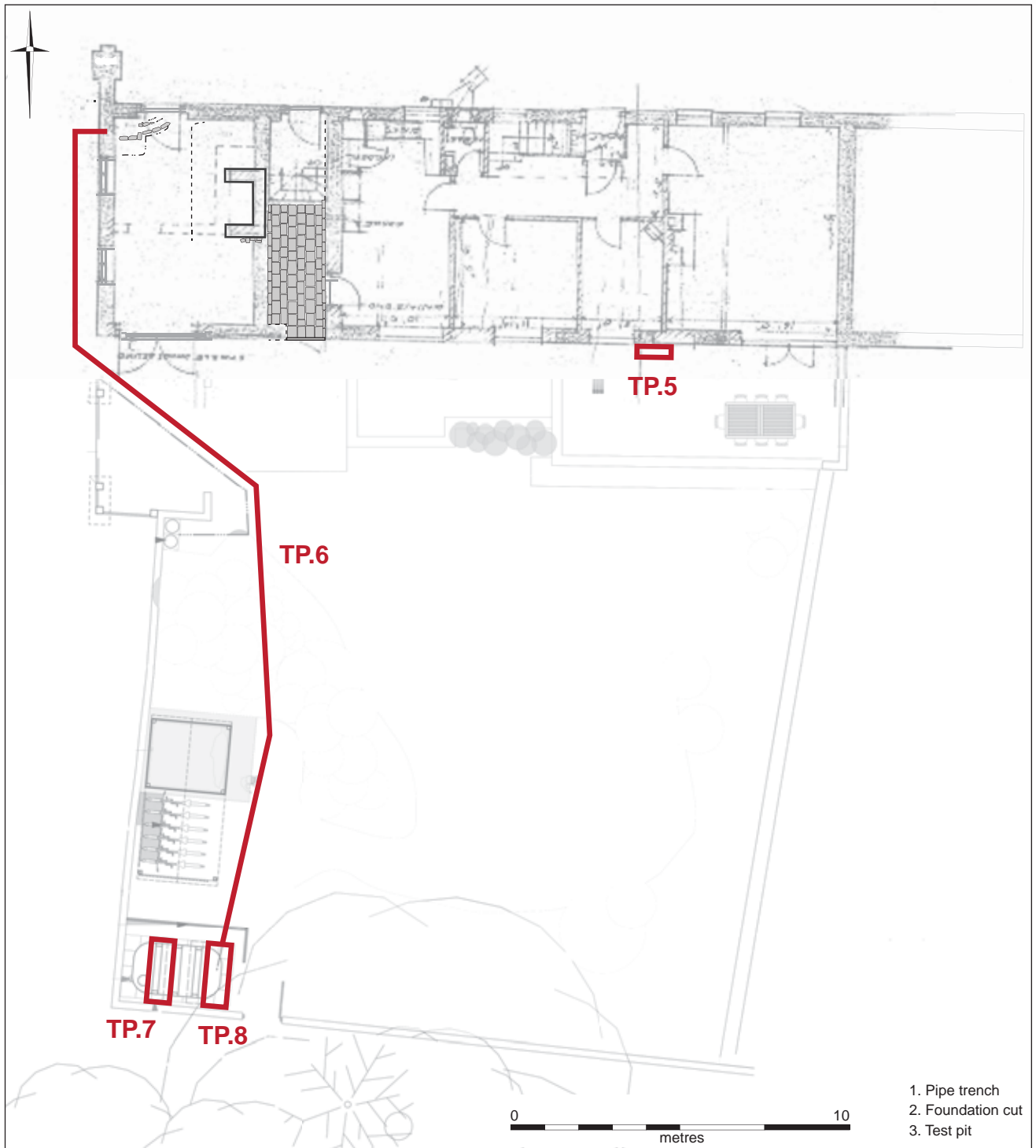
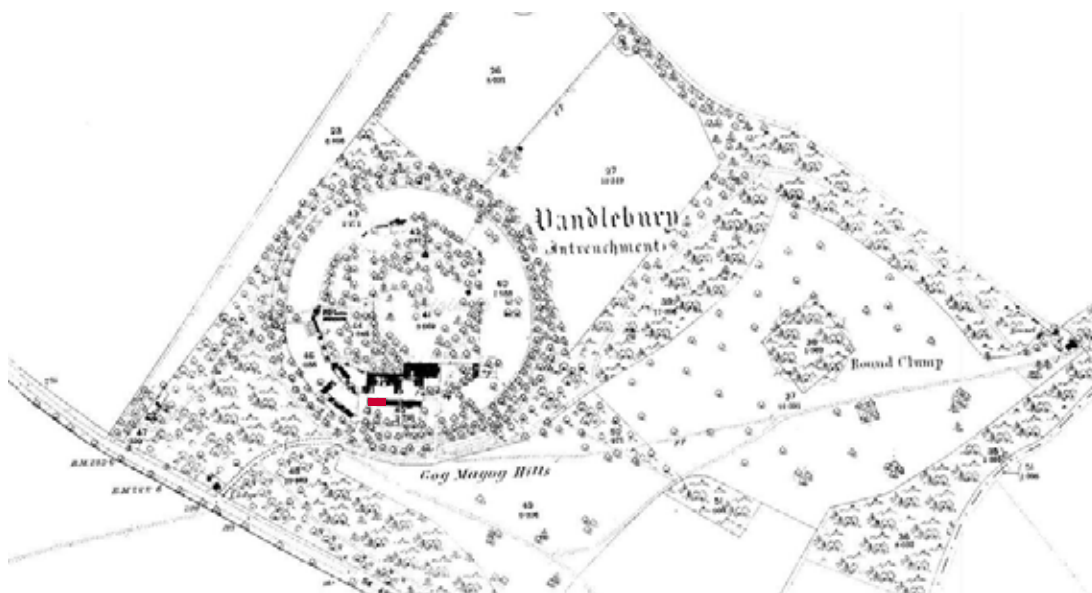


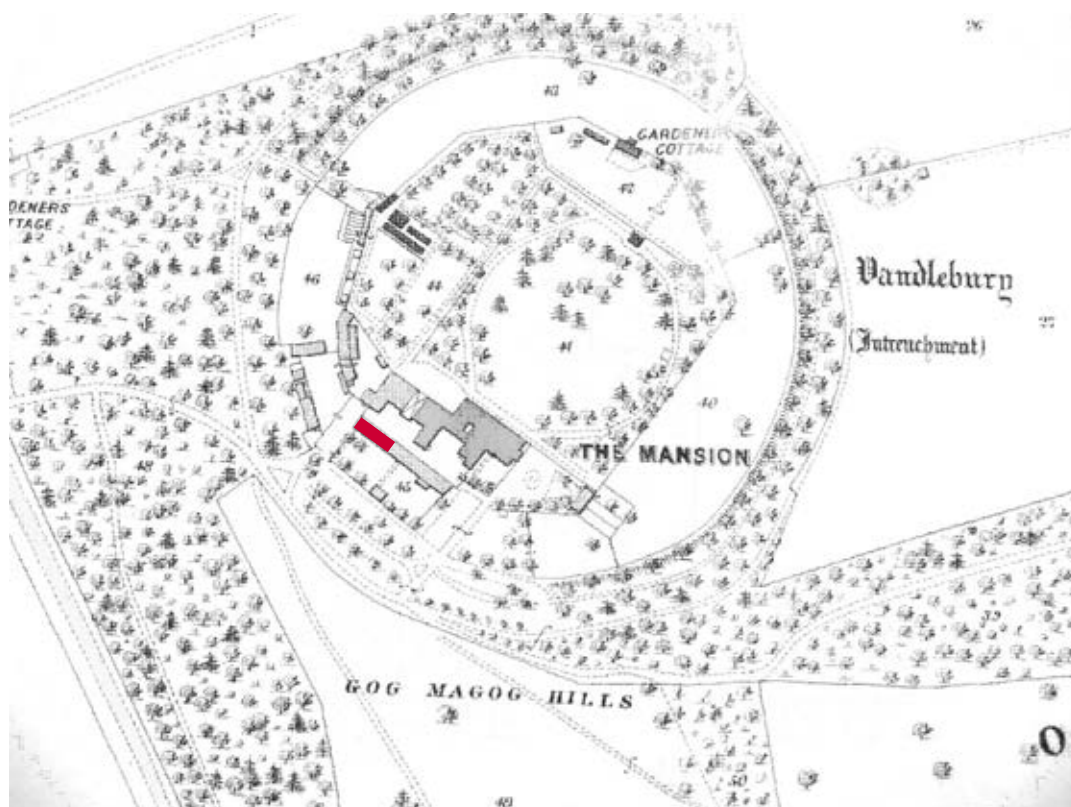
Figure 4. Plan of pipe trench, foundation cut and test pit



Figure 5. 1957 plans of works for conversion to dwellings with location of area of excavation



1885 1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map



Sales particulars, 1894. Cambridgeshire Archives K296/SP/B/955

Figure 6.



Figure 7. View of north facing west end of southern Stable Block



Figure 8. View of south facing west end of southern Stable Block



Figure 9. Wooden baseplate exposed in connecting corridor



Figure 10. Stone slab floor in connecting corridor



Figure 11. Remnants of Chimney base



Figure 12. Drain serving soakaway in the north west corner of garage

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Project details

Project name Archaeological Monitoring at Godolphin Cottage, Gog Magog Hills Estate, Cambridgeshire

Short description of the project The Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook the archaeological monitoring of the preparatory works for the refurbishment of Godolphin Cottage a converted dwelling, formerly part of the South Stable Block of the Wandlebury Estate built in 18th C.

Project dates Start: 01-10-2015 End: 01-11-2015

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference codes WAN15 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Listed Building

Current Land use Other 2 - In use as a building

Monument type STABLE BLOCK Post Medieval

Significant Finds NONE None

Methods & techniques "Test Pits","Visual Inspection"

Development type Building refurbishment/repairs/restoration

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 SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE STAPLEFORD Godolphin Cottage
Postcode CB22 3AE
Study area 0 Square metres
Site coordinates TL 549368 253323 51.904487360919 0.252458111316 51 54 16 N 000 15 08 E Point

Entered by Dave Webb (dww25@cam.ac.uk)

Entered on 18 January 2016

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