

THE TOILYARD, KIRTLING, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

An Archaeological Evaluation



Alison Dickens MIFA

CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



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Introduction

This archaeological evaluation was commissioned in by Kirtling Estates to define the archaeological potential of land at the Toilyard, Kirtling. This was in response to a condition placed on planning (05/00758/FUL) and in line with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Dickens 2008) approved by Andy Thomas at the Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning & Countryside Advice Office (CAPCA). The fieldwork was carried out on the 20th and 21st of October 2008.

The site is situated about 500m to the west of the village of Kirtling and 350m southwest of Kirtling Tower. Extending over c. 2300 sq metres, this is the location of the former Kirtling Estate Toilyard which consisted of a two-storey weather-boarded structure, timber framed with a tiled roof, and later extensions to east and west clad in corrugated 'tin' sheeting. The extensions have recently been removed for safety reasons. The remaining structure is probably later 19th century and has planning permission for conversion to a dwelling.

No previous work has been carried out on the site. Investigations in the vicinity have been focused on Kirtling Tower, about 350m to the northeast. These produced evidence for the Roman, Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval periods, much of the later activity being focused on the mound of the former stately home (Boast 1991, Miller 1992, Dickens 1996). Other finds and sites in the area include enclosures near Upend (c. 3km to the northeast) and cropmarks about 2.7km to the southeast. A poorly located LBA socketed spearhead is also mentioned in the Victoria County History (Clark 1938).

Buildings are mapped within Toilyard Plantation from 1884 onwards, which probably includes elements of the building still there now.

Methodology

Four trenches were excavated across the site, Trench 1 was targeted on the area of a proposed basement, the remainder across the plot but focusing on zones of likely disturbance from access, services and landscaping. In addition a possible sawmill pit was investigated, primarily to determine date. The sample is c. 2.8% of the whole plot, but 10.6% of the proposed building footprint.

Results

Trench 1

The original position of Trench 1 coincided with a 20th century brick inspection pit. The trench was subsequently moved c. 2m to the north.

Trench 1 was 10.12m in length and 1.75m wide.

The sequence was:

A - 0.15m dark friable topsoil

B - 0.20m dirty mixed clay and topsoil

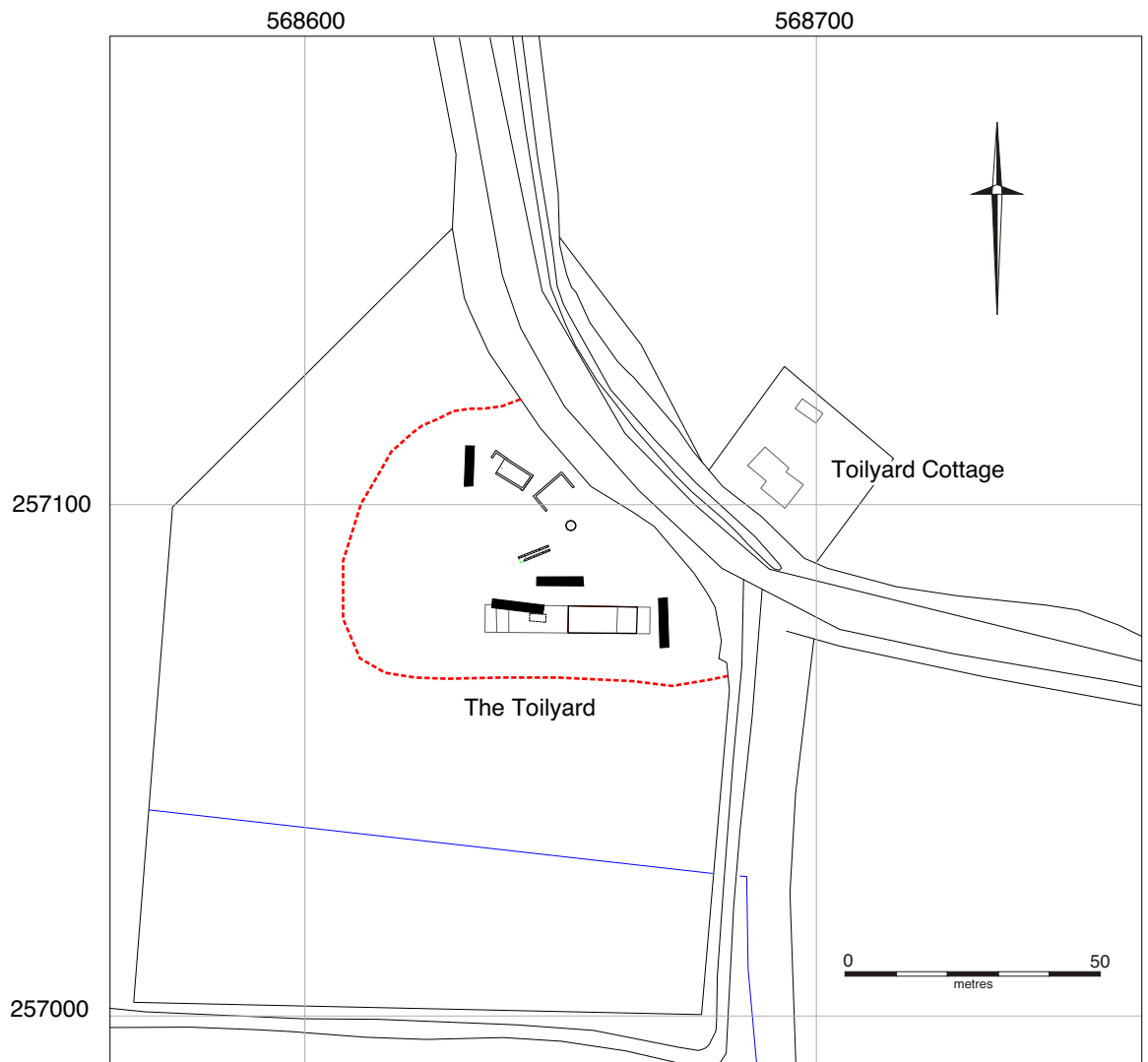


Figure 1: The Toilyard, Kirtling, Location

C - 0.50m mid to pale brown clay with scarce chalk inclusions

Natural was a soft pale brown clayey marl with patches of a chalkier marl showing through. The only feature observed was a modern posthole with wood still visible.

Initially it was thought that the clay of C might be natural. There was, however, flecks and slightly larger pieces of brick or tile throughout. It is apparent that in this part of the site everything above the clean clay marl natural is redeposited.

No finds earlier than late 19/20th century were observed.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was 9.65m long and 1.73m wide.

The general sequence was:

A - 0.46m topsoil

B – 0.24m mixed mid brown clay with occ. sandy patches

C – 0.10m similar to B but with fewer inclusions.

Natural was an orange/red gravel.

The natural gravel was only encountered at the northern end of the trench, the remainder having been removed by a large steep sided pit backfilled with loose brick rubble and mortar, 1.30m deep from the top of natural, 2.10m deep from the present ground surface. This pit extended beyond the bounds of the trench to the east, south and west. Towards the southern end the upper deposits of the pit were dominated by late 19/20th century waste including metal sheet and wire, broken window glass and a dump of largely intact bottles. Twenty-one complete bottles were recovered including several examples of both large and small “Crompton & Co Aerated Waters” “Codd” bottles (dating between 1884 and 1912 based on the bottle manufacturer’s stamp on three of them – “A Alexander & Co Leeds & London”); a “Goodall Backhouse & Co. Yorkshire Relish” bottle dating to the later 19th century and a “Scott’s Emulsion • Cod Liver oil • With Lime & Soda”. A date around the turn of the 19/20th century for the group is probably about right. Although the bottles may have been deposited over time the several examples of the same type suggests that the dump was a more isolated event.

No finds earlier than late 19/20th century were observed.

Trench 3

The intended position of Trench 3 was actually coincident with the sawpit. Subsequently the trench was moved about 6m to the south.

Trench 3 was 9.01m long and 1.73, wide.

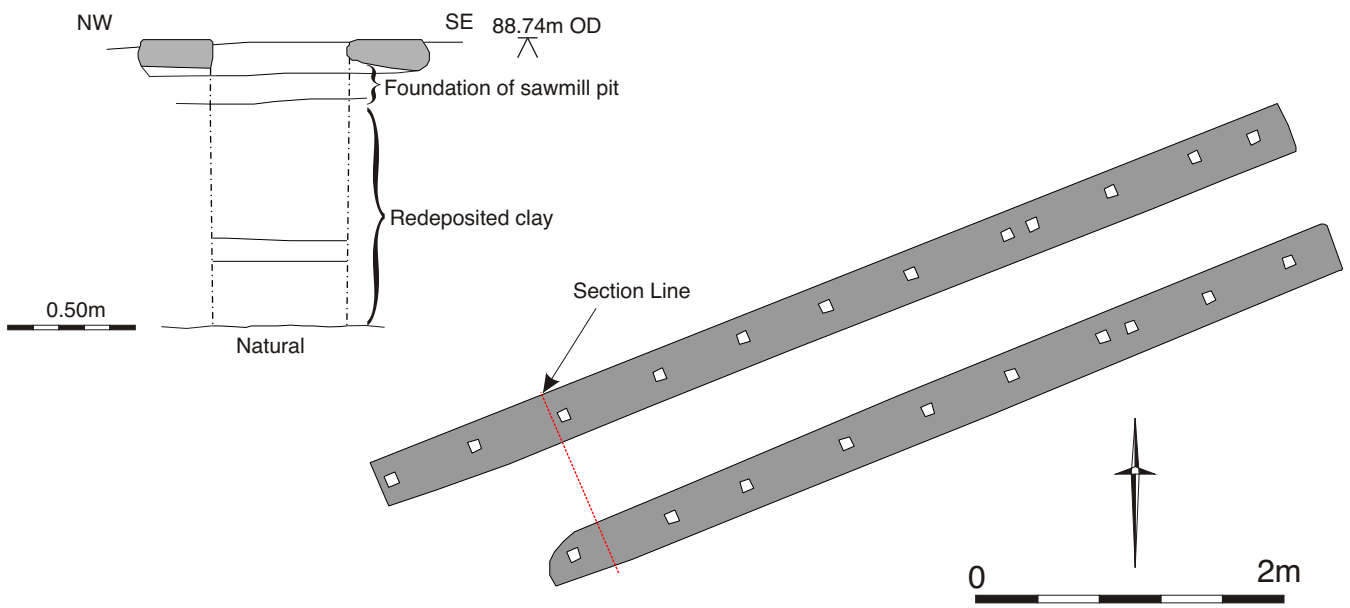
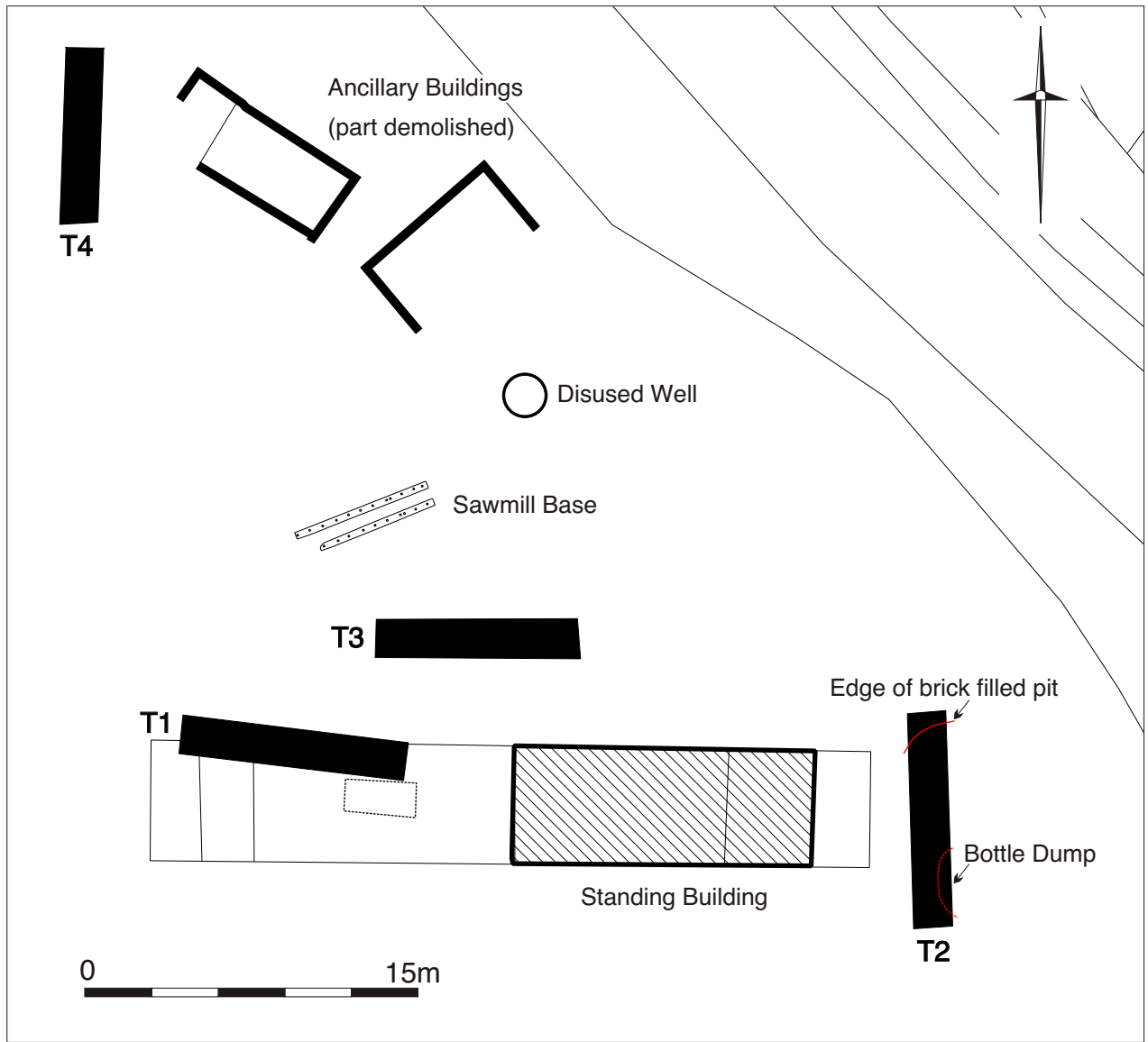


Figure 2: Trench locations and detail of sawmill base

The sequence was:

A - 0.10m topsoil.

B - 0.20m mixed dirty clay with frequent chalk inclusions

C - 0.28m clay with chalk inclusions and occasional tile and clinker

Natural was a soft pale brown clayey marl.

At the east end of the trench, at a depth of 0.40m, was a compact bitumen surface approximately 0.03m thick. This extended for about 0.44m to the west, but ended about 0.08m short of the north edge of the trench. This may have been a deliberate yard surface but may equally have been an area of spillage from the bitumen treatment of wood in the toilyard. Sealed beneath the bitumen layer were a small pit and a posthole, both demonstrably 20th century in date. Other than a broken ceramic field drain at the base no other features were observed in the trench.

No finds earlier than late 19/20th century were observed.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was 7.95m long and 1.70m wide.

The sequence was:

A - 0.20m topsoil

B - 0.22m mixed clay, frequent chalk, brick and tile fragments.

C - 0.10m mid brown clay, moderate chalk inclusions, some brick and tile fragments

D - 0.50m mottled, mostly mid-grey clay. A complete brick was observed at the interface between D and the natural.

Natural, observed in a mid-trench sondage, was a mid to pale brown clay with less frequent chalk inclusions than seen above.

During excavation it appeared that there may a linear cut (possible a service) through C and D with a rather more brown fill. The mid-trench sondage was positioned to investigate this, but at depth there was no indication that this was a real feature. It seems more likely that it was just a more mixed area within the redeposited material represented here by C and D.

No finds earlier than late 19/20th century were observed.

The Sawmill Structure

The sawmill pit, visible at ground surface, was located about 10m south of the main building and orientated southwest – northeast. As investigated the structure consisted of two parallel brick footings 6.30m long set 0.50m apart. The brick structure was one brick deep (0.25m), with each side 0.35m wide. Incorporated within the mortar of the structure were fragments of 19th century bottle glass suggesting a later 19th century date for the structure. Along the top of each side was series of square holes, each about 70x70mm and up to 90mm deep. These were set about 0.55 – 0.65m apart alternating on each side with an offset of about 0.30m. About 1.60m west of the east

end were two double hole settings. The holes would have held stakes or posts supporting a bench structure above, the double setting suggesting that more weight was carried at the east end. This would indicate that the pit sat below a bench carrying a circular saw and forming a sawmill. This may have had a structure over it, but these were often ephemeral and no trace was observed during the investigation.

Below the brick structure was a packed clay foundation with mortared CBM rubble at the top. Between the two brick footings was a mid to dark redeposited topsoil, below that a mixed mid brown clay (0.12m thick) with frequent chalk and occasional to rare CBM. The latter form the base of the saw structure. The whole rested upon a made-ground deposit of mid brown clay (0.88m deep) with occasional to rare chalk and CBM inclusions. Natural was a fine pale brown clayey marl, identical to that observed in Trenches 1 and 3.

Discussion

Other than the sawmill structure and bottle dump, little of interest was encountered during the investigation. It is clear however, that the site has been subject to significant landscaping in the past with evidence for both cutting down into the prevailing topography (as demonstrated by the drop of some 2m from the field level to the north) and a build-up of redeposited clay over much of the site, raising the level by as much as 0.80m. This would appear to be an episode of deliberate and determined effort to create a level area in which to situate the Toilyard and probably took place in the later part of the 19th century. Had any archaeology from earlier periods existed on the site it would not have survived this process.

The sawmill is typical of structures that would have at one time been distributed across a chiefly agricultural working landscape. The standing building on the site is constructed entirely from sawn timber and it is likely that the material for it was processed on this site at the mill. There is no evidence to indicate how the sawmill was powered.

The bottle dump, dominated by the Crampton's Aerated Water "Codd" bottles, is interesting in that it may provide an insight into the habits of the Toilyard workers for a limited period at the turn of the 20th century. Although there are three bottles that might have contained wine or beer, fizzy soda water seems to be the tippie of choice.

References

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Dickens, A. 1996 *The Archaeological Investigation of a Wall in the Mound at Kirtling Tower* CAU Report **179**

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Miller, J. 1992 *Archaeological Investigations at Kirtling Towers, Cambridgeshire* CAU Report **56**



Figure 3: The Toilyard Building from the northeast



Figure 4: The Toilyard Building from the south east



Figure 5: The Sawmill pit

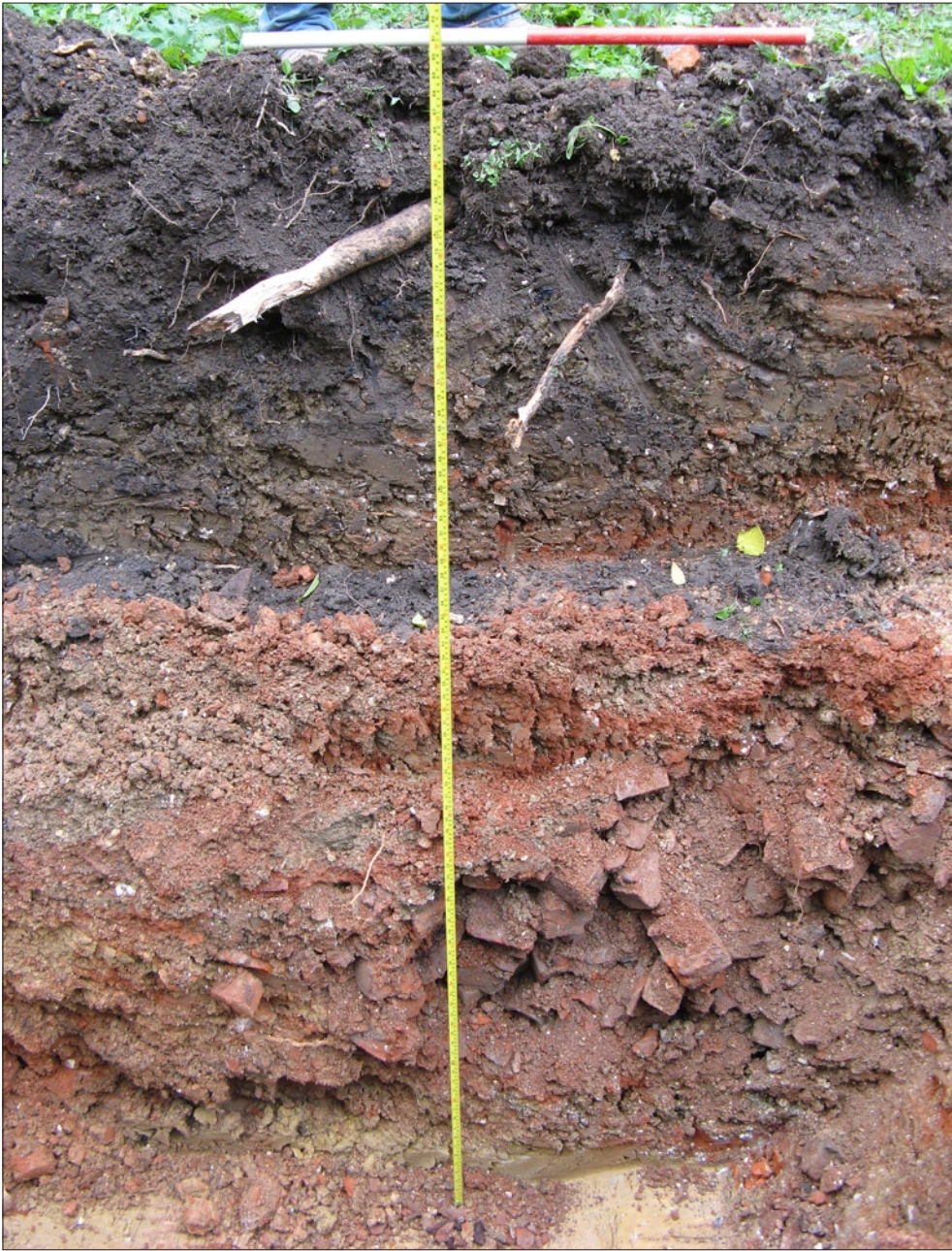


Figure 6: Brick filled pit in Trench 2



Figure 7: Redeposited clay above natural in Trench 1



Figure 8: Trench 3



Figure 9: Selection of bottles from dump in Trench 2

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OASIS ID: cambridg3-52327

Project details

Project name	The Toilyard Kirtling, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation
Short description of the project	Evaluation trenching revealed no archaeology or material culture dating earlier than the later 19th C, the date of the establishment of the Kirtling Estate Toilyard. The work showed that there had been both truncation and build-up of redeposited material on the site, presumably to level it for construction of the toilyard.
Project dates	Start: 20-10-2008 End: 04-12-2008
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	KTY08 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	ECB3081 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	N/A None
Significant Finds	GLASS BOTTLES Modern
Methods & techniques	'Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
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 EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE KIRTLING The Toilyard, Kirtling, Cambridgeshire
Study area	2300.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TL 686500 571000 52.1858725398 0.467304414546 52 11 09 N 000 28 02 E Point
 Height OD / Depth Min: 88.00m Max: 88.00m

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 Alison Dickens
 Type of sponsor/funding body Landowner
 Name of sponsor/funding body The Kirtling Estate

Project archives

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 Digital Archive recipient Cambridge Archaeological Unit
 Digital Archive ID KTY08
 Digital Contents 'none'
 Digital Media available 'Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets','Survey','Text'
 Paper Archive recipient Cambridge Archaeological Unit
 Paper Archive ID KTY08
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 Paper Media available 'Drawing','Manuscript','Plan','Report','Section','Survey '

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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