

School of Veterinary Medicine, West Cambridge

An Archaeological Evaluation



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**School of Veterinary Medicine, West Cambridge:
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Illustrations by Bryan Crossan

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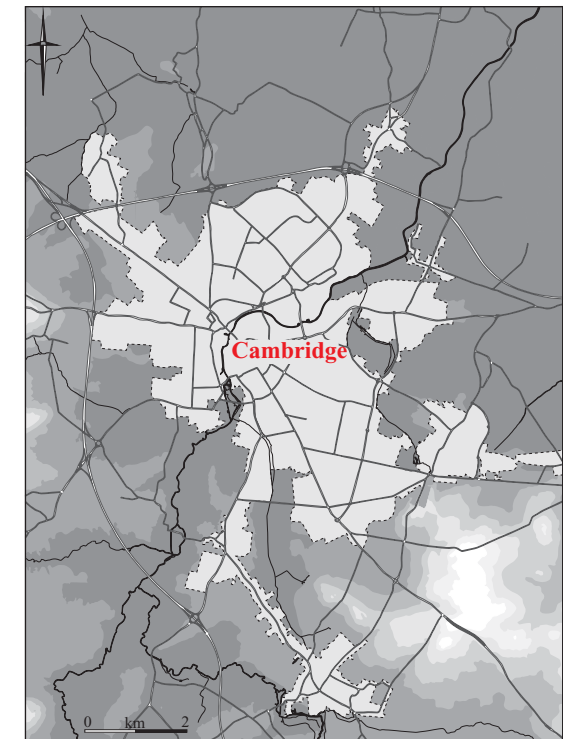
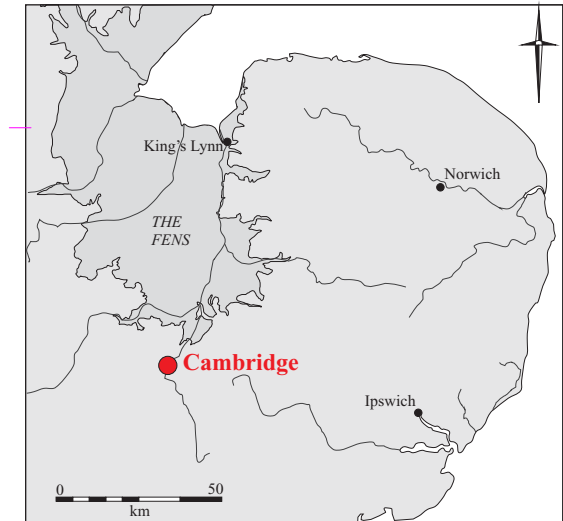
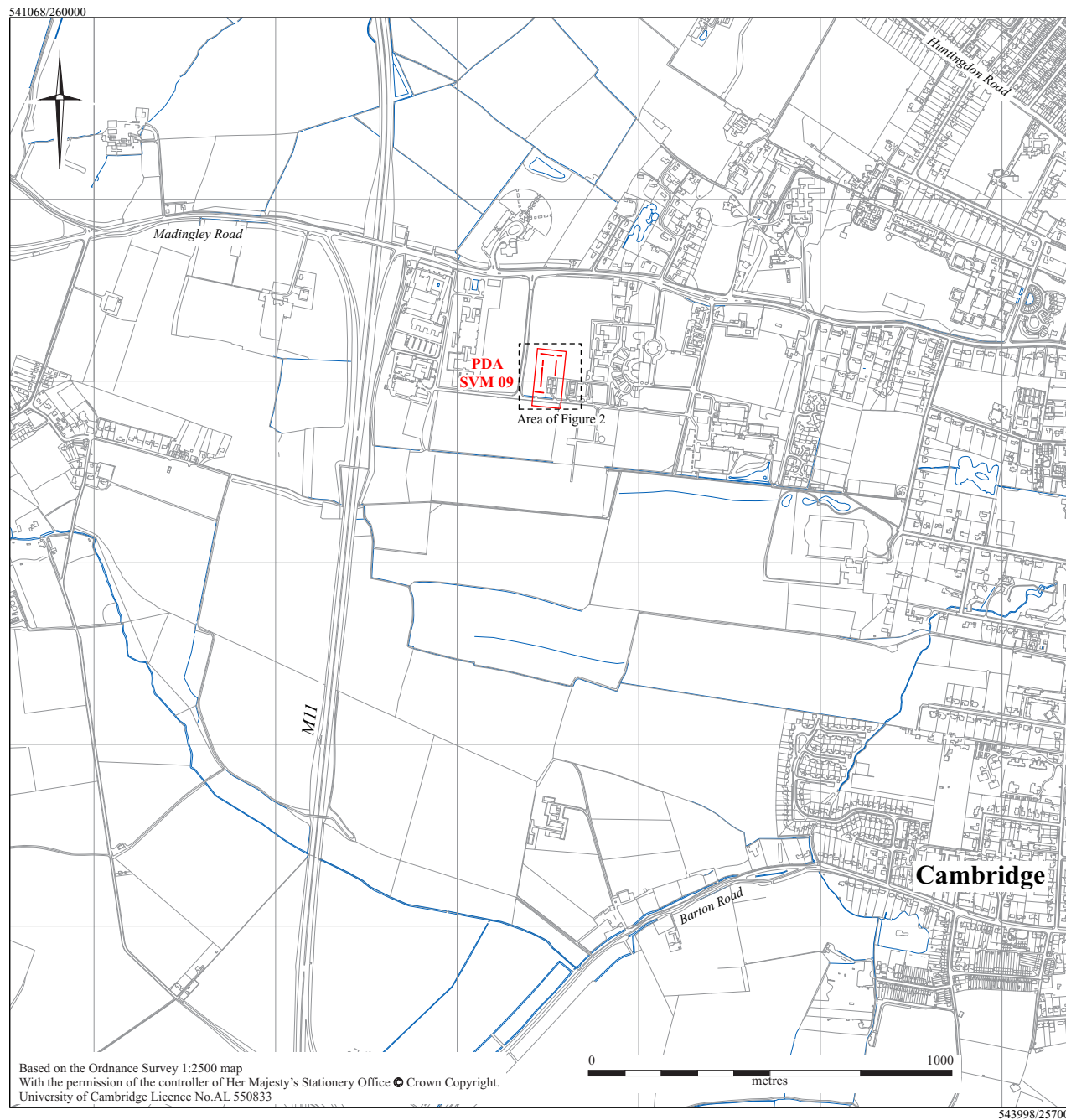


Figure 1. Location Map

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land adjacent to the Cambridge University School of Veterinary Medicine, Cambridge, (NGR TL 4240 5900) between 29th and 30th September 2009 to address a condition placed upon planning permission for the construction of a University-related building. The evaluation trenches were excavated across the Proposed Development Areas (PDA) in order to determine the presence/absence of any archaeological remains and investigate their date, extent, character, significance and state of preservation. The trenches revealed archaeological remains pertaining to ridge and furrow agricultural system that contained pottery dating from between the 16th and 19th centuries.

Topography, Geology and Archaeological Background

The PDA was bounded to the west by the Schlumberger buildings and to the east by grassed paddocks and various out-buildings and stables related to the Veterinary School, and to the south by an open grassed field; the site is currently under pasture. The underlying geology is gault clays and the surface of the ground undulates across the area (British Geological Survey 1978). The area extended over *c.* 0.9ha and was approximately between 19.50m and 20.50m OD. An area of ground around Trenches 3 and 4 were previously landscape in 2003 with topsoil and rubble which was placed on top of the existing topsoil.

The site lies in an area of archaeological potential for the Iron Age and Roman periods and full details of the historical and archaeological background of the wider West Cambridge environs has been fully outlined in an early desktop study (Alexander 1996). An archaeological evaluation that previously took place in the fields immediately to the south of the PDA provided evidence of Middle to Later Iron Age and early Roman settlement (Whittaker 2001). To the east of the PDA an open-area excavation at Vicar's Farm revealed evidence for Mesolithic, Neolithic and extensive Romano-British settlement occupation. The Roman settlement included an inhumation and cremation cemetery, and a ritual centre spanning four centuries from the 1st to the 5th century AD. More recently, excavations carried out by the CAU at Northwest Cambridge have highlighted further Roman occupation in the form of evidence of a possible villa to the north of Madingley Road and a settlement adjacent to Huntingdon Road (Newman, forthcoming).

Methodology

The trenches were stripped to the level at which archaeological activity would be revealed using a 360° tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist. The unit-modified version of the MoLAS recording system was used; all archaeological and relevant geological features were planned at 1:50, with sections drawn at 1:10. Archaeological features were assigned a unique number (e.g. **F.001**; in bold upon first use within the text) and each stratigraphically distinct episode (e.g. a cut, a fill) was recorded with a unique context number (e.g. [001]). All exposed features were metal detected using a Laser Rapier metal detector. The site was surveyed into the Ordnance Survey Grid and Ordnance Datum by means of a RTK GPS unit. All work was carried out in strict accordance with Statutory Health and Safety legislation and with recommendations within SCAUM.

In total, six features were identified during the excavation, with two separate contexts allotted. The artefacts and accompanying documentation have been compiled into a stable, cross-referenced and indexed archive in accordance with Appendix 6 of MAP 2 (English Heritage 1991). The archive is currently stored at the offices of the Cambridge Archaeological Unit under the project code SVM 09.

Excavation Results

The layout of the trenches were altered slightly than originally planned, due to the presence of a wooden fence across the area; this resulted in two previously planned trenches split into two, thus 6 trenches were cut in total. The trenches varied in length ranging from 12.50m to 53m; totalling 182 linear meters or 327.60m². Archaeological features were recorded in three trenches (Trenches 1, 2 and 3) and modern dumping debris used for consolidating the access to the field was recorded in Trench 6.

Trench 1

This trench was 12.50m in length and orientated east-west and contained one feature; a furrow which was not sampled.

Trench 2

This trench was 40.00m in length and orientated north-south and contained one feature; a furrow.

Trench 3

This trench was 35.50m in length and orientated east-west and contained four features; furrows that were orientated north-south. One furrow, **F.1** was sampled and contained glazed red earthenware pottery dated between 16th and 19th century. The overburden of topsoil was prevalent in this part of the site, see Appendix.

F.1 was a linear. The cut [002] had sloping concave sides with gradual break of slope and flat base (1.54m wide and 0.10m deep). It contained a single fill; [001] firm mid grey/brown clayey silt with frequent gravel and stone inclusions with occasional flecks of charcoal and chalk. Artefacts included pottery, tile, oyster shell and coal.

Trench 4

This trench was 16.00m in length and orientated north-south and contained no archaeological features

Trench 5

This trench was 53.00m in length and orientated north-south and contained no archaeological features.

Trench 6

This trench was 25.00m in length and orientated east-west and contained modern building rubble laid down to improve access into the field during recent times. No archaeological features were evident.

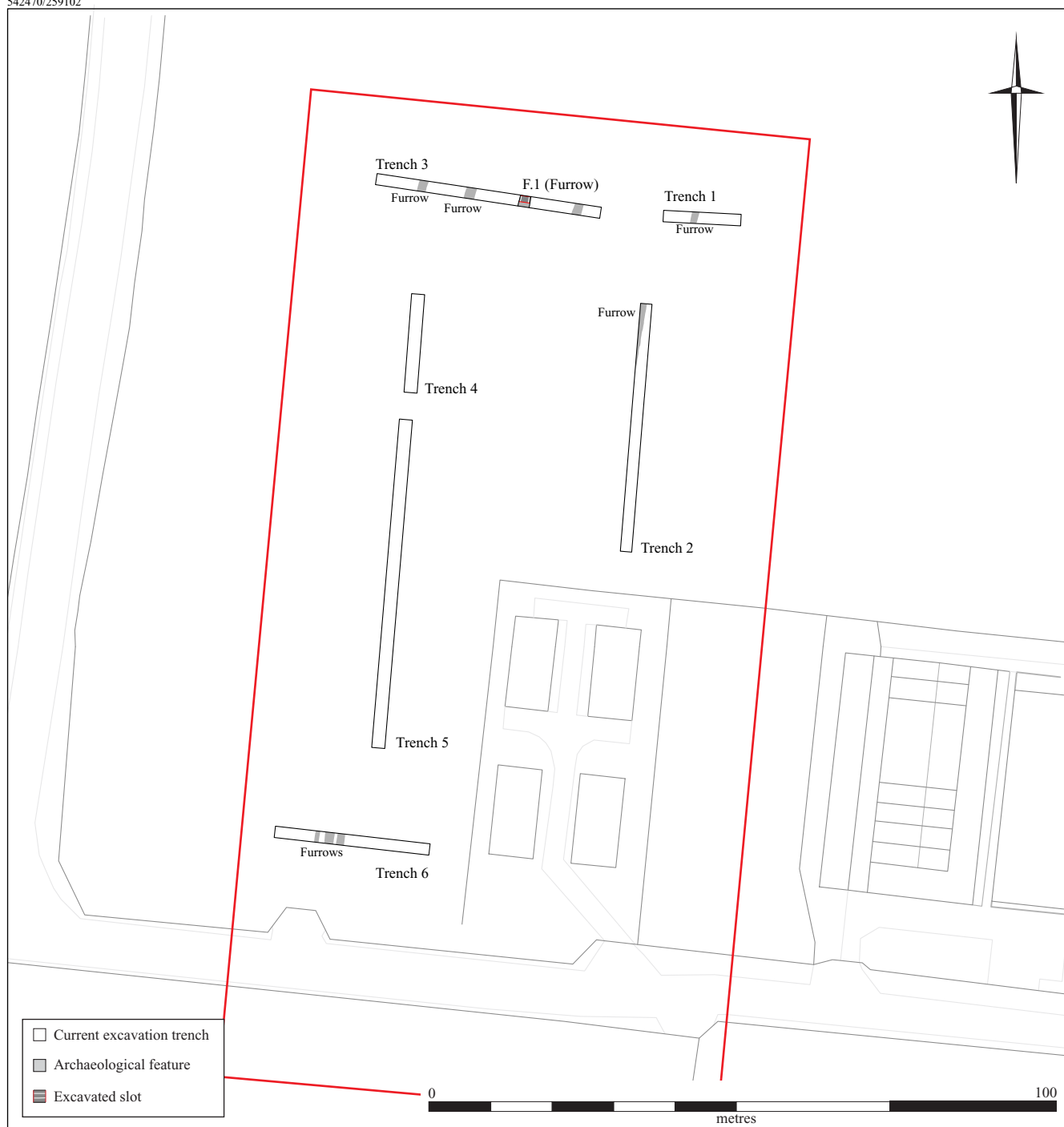


Figure 2. Plan of Trenches

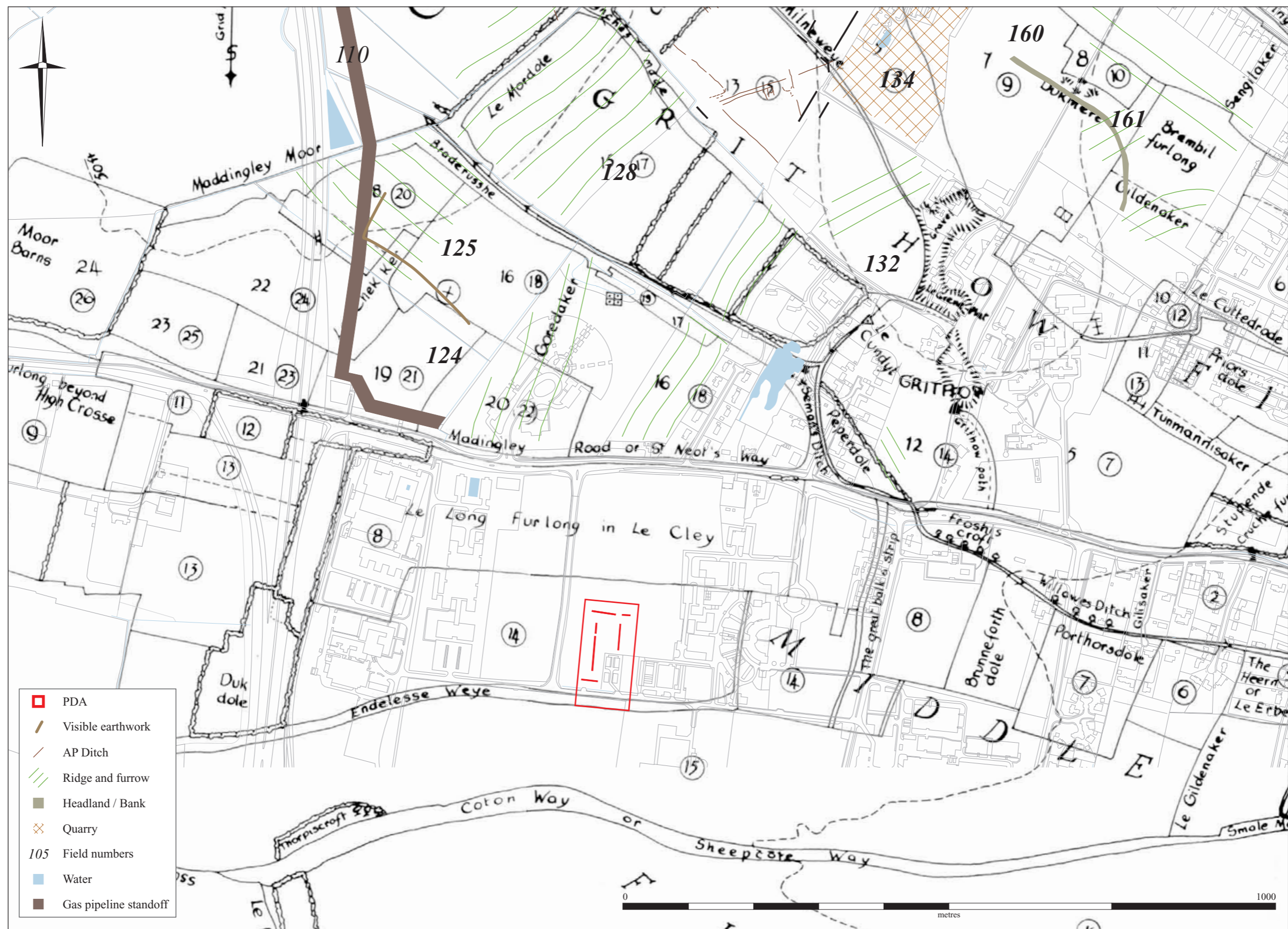


Figure 3. OS map and historical data

Discussion

The juxtaposition of this evaluation site within the previously recorded settlement sites could have provided potential evidence of the wider landscape during the Iron Age and Roman periods. The lack of complimentary archaeological features and residual artefacts pertaining to these periods can imply an absence of archaeology in this area and has placed this site outside the area of the known settlements and associated field systems.

The material recovered from the furrow, such as coal, tile etc, suggest the re-deposition of topsoil or loam from elsewhere, perhaps linked to the infill of earlier Medieval ridge and furrow systems in the 19th century (Hall & Ravensdale 1976). The absence of furrows in Trench 6 could be explained by the truncation and disturbance caused by the entrance to the field and the dumping of construction debris to consolidate the ground in this area. Alternatively, the furrows could have been restricted to the northern part of the area, either intentionally or they have since been ploughed out through more recent agricultural activity judging from the depth of the topsoil to the south of the PDA.

The furrows recorded on this site correlate with cropmarks of furrows to the north of Madingley road and appear to be on the same orientation. The site lies partly in a field known as 'Le Long Furlong in Le Clay' which obviously references the geology of that area (Figure 3). The primary documentary resource for this part of Cambridge during the Medieval period is the Corpus Terrier (or *Terrarium Cantabrigiae*), a manuscript recording the tithes due from the west fields of Cambridge that was compiled c. 1360. This document appears to have been a 'working copy' extracted from the more extensive Barnwell Tithe Books, but which now comprises the earliest known extant record of this information (Hall & Ravensdale 1976).

Acknowledgements

The Project was commissioned by Brian Lees of the University of Cambridge Estates Management Services. At the CAU it was managed by Christopher Evans, FSA, and monitored on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council by Andy Thomas. The machine-excavation was conducted with great care by Phillip Burton from Lattenbury Services. The archaeology was excavated and interpreted by the author and Laura James. The area was surveyed by Donald Horne and digitised by Bryan Crossan. Illanith Pongolini sorted and catalogued the finds and Bryan Crossan produced the illustrations.

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Appendix

Trench Depths

Trench No.	Orientation	Length	Archaeological Features?	Location	Topsoil	Dumped Material	Overall Depth	Geology
1	E-W	12.50m	Furrow	0m (W)	0.25m	x	0.25m	Orange/brown and grey clay with patches of orange gravel
1	E-W	12.50m	Furrow	5m	0.27m	x	0.25m	Orange/brown and grey clay with patches of orange gravel
1	E-W	12.50m	Furrow	12m (E)	0.26m	x	0.26m	Orange/brown and grey clay with patches of orange gravel
2	N-S	40.00m	Furrow	0m (S)	0.25m	x	0.25m	Orange/brown and grey clay with patches of orange gravel
2	N-S	40.00m	Furrow	20m	0.27m	x	0.27m	Orange/brown and grey clay with patches of orange gravel
2	N-S	40.00m	Furrow	40m (N)	0.27m	x	0.27m	Orange/brown and grey clay with patches of orange gravel
3	E-W	35.50m	Furrow	0m (W)	0.08m	0.49m	0.57m	Orange/brown and grey clay with patches of orange gravel
3	E-W	35.50m	Furrow	6m	0.10m	0.58m	0.68m	Orange/brown and grey clay with patches of orange gravel
3	E-W	35.50m	Furrow	17m	0.13m	0.68m	0.81m	Orange/brown and grey clay with patches of orange gravel
3	E-W	35.50m	Furrow	26m	0.13m	0.83m	0.78m	Orange/brown and grey clay with patches of orange gravel

3	E-W	35.50m	Furrow	35m (E)	0.11m	0.55m	0.66m	Orange/brown and grey clay with patches of orange gravel
4	N-S	16.00m	None	0m (S)	0.15m	0.21m	0.36m	Orange gravelly clay
4	N-S	16.00m	None	8m	0.12m	0.70m	0.82m	Orange gravelly clay
4	N-S	16.00m	None	16m (N)	0.12m	0.82m	0.94m	Orange gravelly clay
5	N-S	53.00m	None	0m (S)	0.27m	x	0.27m	Orange and grey clay with orange/white gravel patches
5	N-S	53.00m	None	26m	0.28m	x	0.28m	Orange and grey clay with orange/white gravel patches
5	N-S	53.00m	None	53m (N)	0.34m	x	0.34m	Orange and grey clay with orange/white gravel patches
6	E-W	25.00m	Modern	0m (W)	0.18m	x	0.18m	Orange and grey clay with orange/white gravel patches
6	E-W	25.00m	Modern	12m	0.28m	x	0.28m	Orange and grey clay with orange/white gravel patches
6	E-W	25.00m	Modern	25m (E)	0.19m	x	0.19m	Orange and grey clay with orange/white gravel patches

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Project details

Project name	School of Veterinary Medicine, West Cambridge. An Archaeological Evaluation
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land adjacent to the Cambridge University School of Veterinary Medicine, Cambridge, (NGR TL 4240 5900) between 29th and 30th September 2009 to address a condition placed upon planning permission for the construction of a University-related building. The evaluation trenches were excavated across the Proposed Development Areas (PDA) in order to determine the presence/absence of any archaeological remains and investigate their date, extent, character, significance and state of preservation. The trenches revealed archaeological remains pertaining to ridge and furrow agricultural system that contained pottery dating from between the 16th and 19th centuries.
Project dates	Start: 29-09-2009 End: 30-09-2009
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Type of project	Field evaluation
Monument type	RIDGE AND FURROW Medieval
Monument type	RIDGE AND FURROW Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Aerial Photography - interpretation','Environmental Sampling','Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Not recorded
Development type	University building
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	Between deposition of an application and determination

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge
Postcode	CB3 0ES
Study area	327.60 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 4240 5900 52.2103705030 0.08437298296520 52 12 37 N 000 05 03 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 19.50m Max: 20.50m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Christopher Evans
Project director/manager	Christopher Evans
Project supervisor	Jacqui Hutton
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Name of sponsor/funding body	University of Cambridge

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Physical Archive ID	SVM09
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	SVM09
Digital Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Media available	'GIS','Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	SVM09
Paper Contents	'Ceramics','Environmental','Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Aerial Photograph','Map','Photograph','Plan','Section','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

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