

103 High Street, Trumpington.

An Archaeological Evaluation



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Non Technical Summary

Two trenches and four test pits were excavated in the grounds of No. 103 High Street, Trumpington and the only features present were two late 19th/early 20th century wells and a modern rubbish pit. A small quantity of Victorian and modern finds were also recovered from within the topsoil and subsoil.

Introduction

An archaeological excavation was carried out by Cambridgeshire Archaeological Unit (CAU) on the 26th January 2010 at No. 103 High Street, Trumpington, Cambridge in advance of the demolition of the current dwelling and proposed redevelopment of the site. Commissioned by Mr Tom Ulman, the evaluation aimed to establish the presence, date, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological remains. The evaluation was carried out and this report written in accordance with an archaeological specification written by the CAU (Beadsmoore 2010) in response to a brief by Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning Countryside Advice (CAPCA). It was approved and monitored by an Archaeological Officer from CAPCA.

Location, topography and geology

The Proposed Development Area (PDA) is centred on TL 4460 5477 and extends over 800m² or 0.08ha. The site currently incorporates an early 20th century dwelling with a small outbuilding and lawned garden. It fronts on to High Street to the west and has adjoining properties to the north, south and east (see Figure 1).

The modern ground surface of the PDA averages 17.4m OD and the underlying geology is 3rd Terrace river gravels overlaying Gault Clay.

Archaeological background

The area surrounding this site has been subject to extensive study by the CAU over the preceding few years and includes a number of desktop assessments (Appleby 2004, Dickens 2002), evaluations (Cessford & Mackay 2004, Collins 2009, Evans, Mackay & Patten 2005) and excavations (Collins & Dickens 2009, Timberlake 2007), their relevant findings are briefly detailed below.

An aerial photographic survey of the fields at Clay and Glebe Farms just to the east of the PDA showed a dense pattern of crop-marks, including possible trackways and rectangular enclosures, which expand north and east for some distance. Subsequent evaluations in 2004 and 2005 (Cessford and Mackay 2004, Evans, Mackay & Patten 2005) dated these crop-marks primarily to the Late Iron Age and Roman periods, and suggested they probably formed a series of small rural settlements with associated in-field systems. To the east, off Shelford Road, a CAU excavation (Timberlake 2007) revealed scattered Bronze Age burnt pits along with Late Iron Age and Roman outfield paddocks, Roman horticultural beds and drove-ways/tracks. Further evaluations and excavations of the eastern fields of Clay Farm and the fields around Addenbrookes hospital have also shown a pattern of Prehistoric and Roman field-systems and settlement (Evans and Mackay 2005).

Approximately 350m to the east of the PDA, an excavation, again carried out just off Shelford road (Collins & Dickens 2009), showed evidence for a Late Iron Age/Early Roman field system, along with an earlier phase of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age activity. Although on the western half of this site, the point closest to the PDA, archaeological activity appeared to peter out. Another small evaluation off Shelford Road just to the southeast (Collins 2009) also appeared to suggest an area of no archaeological activity.

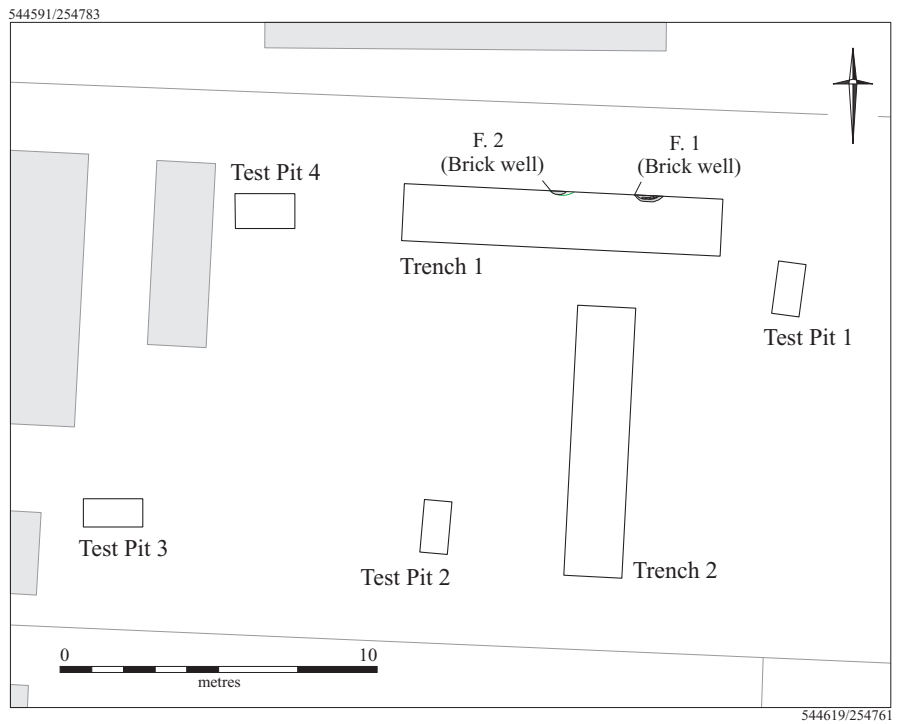
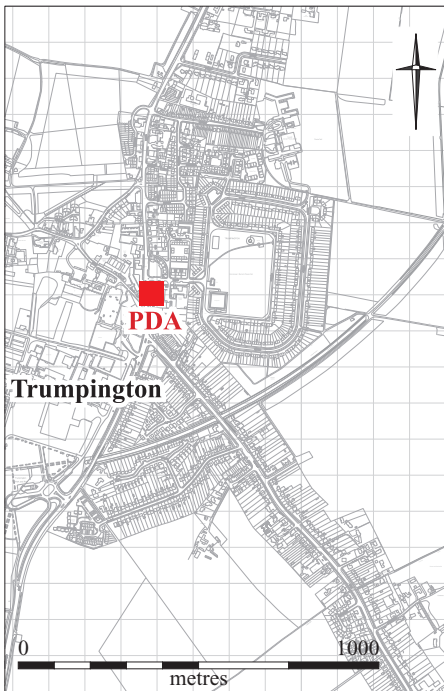
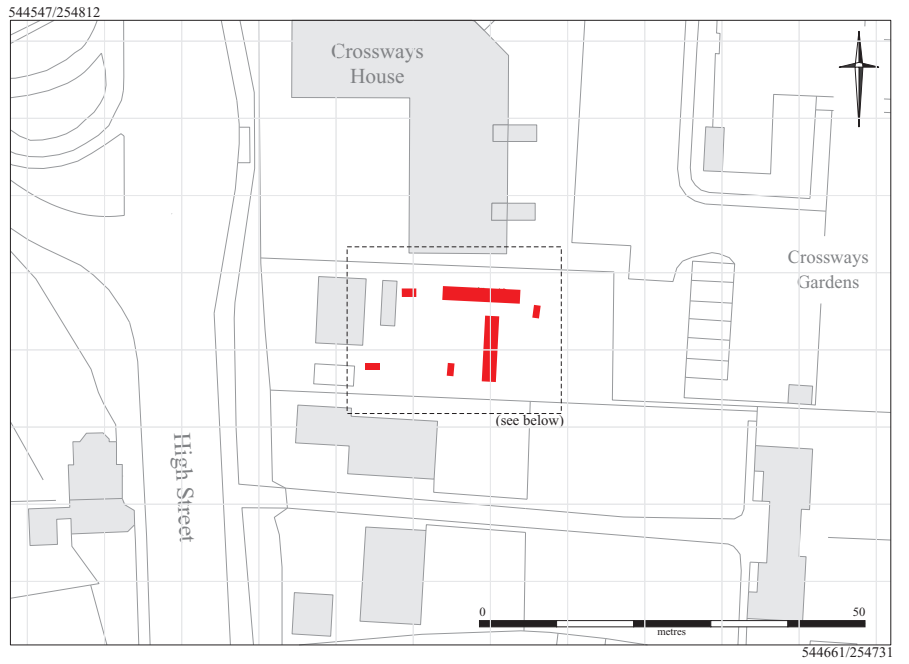
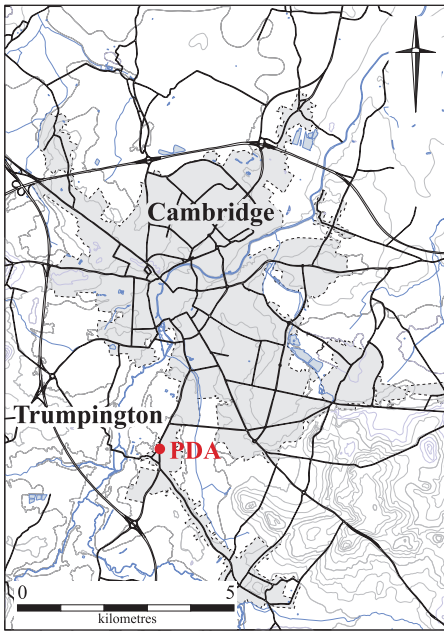


Figure 1. Locations of PDA, trenches and test pits.

Methodology

Evaluation of the PDA was carried out by excavating 2 trenches totalling 20m in length (4.5% of the site area), in the lawned area to the rear of the current building. This was augmented by four machine dug geological test pits which were observed for archaeological remains (see Figure 1).

Topsoil and underlying deposits were removed under archaeological supervision with a tracked 360° machine using a 1m wide toothless ditching bucket for the trenches and a 0.75m toothed excavation bucket for the test pits. Both topsoil and subsoil were tested for finds and metal detected. All work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory Health and Safety legislation and with the recommendations of SCAUM (Allen & Holt 2007), and in accordance with a site specific risk assessment and the Cambridgeshire Archaeological Unit Health and Safety policy. The site code was HTC 09 and CHER number was ECB 3322.

Archive

A data sheet recording the general information of each trench was generated and a digital photographic archive was compiled. These records have been assembled into a catalogued archive in line with Appendix 6 of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991), and are being stored at the Cambridge Archaeological Unit offices.

Results

Trench 1

Trench 1 was 10m in length on an east-west orientation. Topsoil depth varied between 0.31m towards the west to 0.16m towards the east and subsoil depth averaged 0.26m. Two late 19th/early 20th century wells were exposed in the northern section of the trench (See Figure 2) and a modern rubbish pit containing corrugated iron and small amounts of asbestos was observed but not recorded in the southern section. A small number of Victorian and modern finds were observed within the topsoil and subsoil, and no artefacts were located during metal detecting of the spoil.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was 10m in length on a north-south orientation. Topsoil depth averaged 0.22m and subsoil 0.17m. No archaeological features were present and the only finds within the topsoil and subsoil were dated Victorian or modern. No artefacts were located during metal detecting of the spoil.

Test pits 1-4

The four test pits measured 1.75m in length by 0.75m wide and were each up to 2.2m in depth. No archaeological features were observed and the only finds present dated either Victorian or later.



Figure 2. Late 19th/Early 20th Century wells.

Discussion

The absence of archaeological features within the trenches, and pre 19th century artefacts within the topsoil/subsoil across the PDA supports the findings of the excavation carried out just to the east (Collins & Dickens 2009) and the evaluation just to the southeast (Collins 2009) in that the dense pattern of archaeology known to exist within the surrounding landscape did not extend to this area.

This area of negative evidence for archaeological activity could represent a gap or break in the Iron Age and Roman rural settlement pattern observed elsewhere in this landscape, and furthermore, that prior to expansion of Trumpington within the 19th and early 20th centuries, this area was probably only utilised for agricultural purposes.

Acknowledgements

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