

Lensfield Hotel, Cambridge:

An Archaeological Evaluation



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Non Technical Summary

Two test pits were excavated on land to the rear of Lensfield Hotel, Cambridge and no features or archaeological remains were encountered and only modern finds were recorded within the deposits overlying the Terrace gravels.

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on the 10th March 2010 on land to the rear of Lensfield Hotel, Lensfield Road, Cambridge in advance of the proposed construction of a spa facility and extension to the existing buildings. Commissioned by the hotel, 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 development area is centred on TL 4523 5763 and located in two backyards at the rear of the Lensfield Hotel (see Figures 1 and 2). The sites current primary use is for car parking and consists of two gravelled areas covering approximately 117m². The two yards open onto Saxon Street to the south, with buildings to the west and gardens to the east.

The development area is situated on 2nd Terrace river gravels (British Geological Survey 1983) with the modern ground surface averaging 12m OD.

Archaeological Background

Evidence for early archaeological activity near the development area is provided by the presence of Palaeolithic flints recovered from the site of the Catholic Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs, whilst Hills Road to the east is thought to be on the route of a Roman road.

The development area is south of the historic city of Cambridge, however, archaeological investigations nearby have exposed Saxon and medieval features. Known medieval activity in the area includes a medieval leper hospital to the north which later became an almshouse after 1526, before being demolished in 1852. Friars founded the Friars of the Sack in 1258 where the Fitzwilliam museum now stands, with the friary being abandoned by 1307. A Gilbertine Priory and House of Theological Studies were also nearby, whilst a medieval cross used to stand at the junction of Lensfield Road. The development area is also situated near to the English Civil War defences.

Methodology

Evaluation of the development area was initially planned to be carried out by the excavation of two 5m trenches and work began on the western half of the development area. However, due to the presence of services the evaluation strategy was adapted to comprise of test pits

The gravel layer covering the development area and the underlying deposits was removed under archaeological supervision with a 3 ton tracked 360° machine using a 1m wide toothless ditching bucket. Underlying deposits were tested for finds and

lower deposits were also 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 is LRH 10 and CHER number is ECB 3340.

Archive

A data sheet recording the general information of each test pit 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

Test Pit 1

Test Pit 1 was approximately 1.4m wide and 2.5m long. The northern end was dominated by a large concrete slab at a depth of 0.28m which appeared to overlay a rubble filled void. The southern half of the test pit had deposits 0.85m deep overlaying the Terrace gravels. The upper deposits consisted of disturbed and made ground 0.49m deep, whilst the lower deposits, 0.36m deep, consisted of pale to mid brownish grey clayey sandy silt which possibly represented a former subsoil. The lower deposits were scanned for finds but none dating earlier than the post medieval period were present and no features cut into the underlying geology.

Test Pit 2

Test Pit 2 was approximately 1.2m, wide and 1.75m long and 0.95m deep. Upper deposits consisted of made and disturbed ground 0.58m deep whereas lower deposits were 0.37m deep and consisted of the same pale to mid brownish grey clayey sandy silt seen in Test Pit 1. The lower deposits were scanned for finds but none dating earlier than the post medieval period were present and no features cut into the underlying geology.

Discussion

The depth and nature of the deposits seen in Test Pits 1 and 2 suggests the site has been highly truncated, probably during the construction of the Georgian buildings along Lensfield Road. Truncation to this level would probably have removed any potential archaeology located here. Alternatively, the lack of archaeology could represent an area where there is no archaeological activity.

References

Allen, J.L. and A. Holt. 2007. *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology*. SCAUM

Beadsmore, E. 2010. *A specification for Archaeological Evaluation at: Land to the rear of the Lensfield Road Hotel, Cambridge*. CAU

British Geological Survey. 1983. *Cambridge; Sheet 188*.

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Spence, C. 1990. *Archaeological Site Manual*. Museum of London.

Acknowledgements

The work was commissioned by the Lensfield Hotel and the site was monitored by Dan McConnell (CAPCA). Emma Beadsmore was the project manager and thanks go to Shannon Hogan for assisting the author on site.

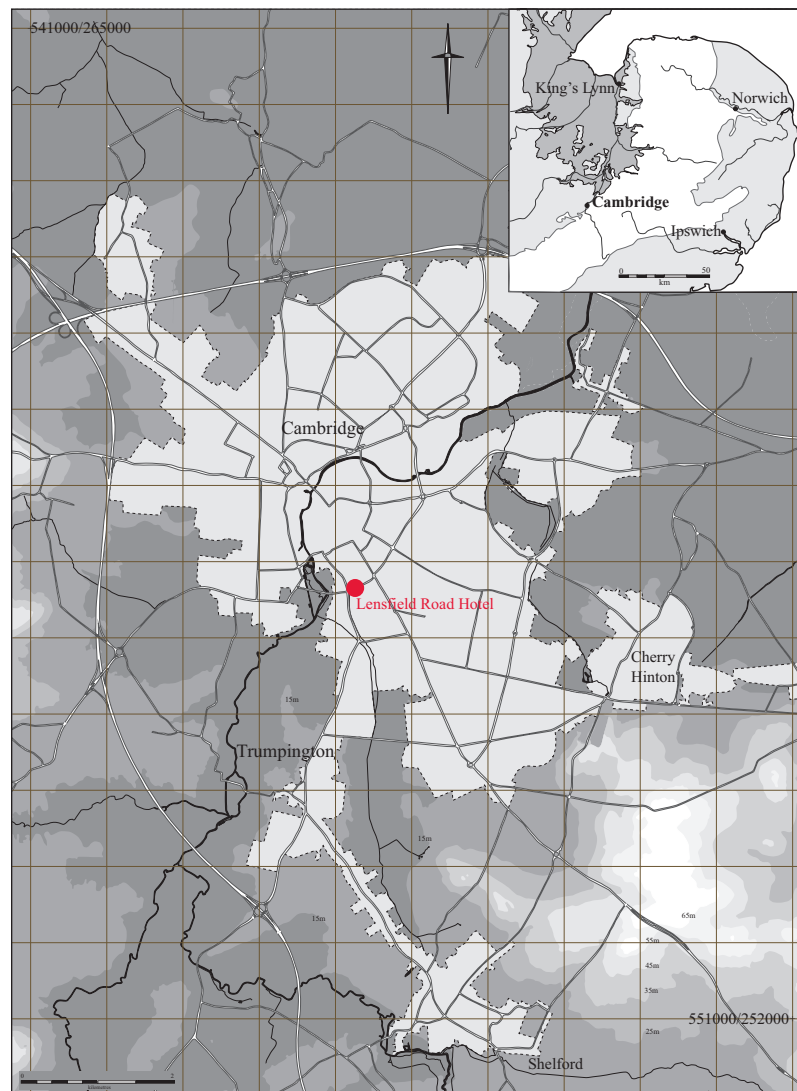


Figure 1. Location map



Figure 2. Test pit location plan

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Project details

Project name	Lensfield Hotel, Cambridge. An Archaeological Evaluation
Short description of the project	Two test pits were excavated on land to the rear of Lensfield Hotel, Cambridge and no features or archaeological remains were encountered and only modern finds were recorded within the deposits overlying the Terrace gravels.
Project dates	Start: 10-03-2010 End: 10-03-2010
Previous/future work	No / No
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	'Test Pits'
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE Lensfield Hotel
Postcode	CB2 1EN
Study area	117.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 4523 5763 52.1973202530 0.125178833756 52 11 50 N 000 07 30 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 12.00m Max: 12.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Emma Beadsmoore
Project director/manager	Emma Beadsmoore
Project supervisor	Matthew Collins
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Lensfield Hotel

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	LRH 10
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	LRH 10
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Correspondence','Miscellaneous Material','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

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