

Post Medieval
quarry pits and
Railway buildings at
Academy House
Hills Road
Cambridge

Archaeological Evaluation Report



**Client: The Unex Group** 

OA East Report No: 1280 OASIS No: oxfordar3-104754

NGR: TL 4600 5683



# Post-medieval quarry pits and railway buildings at Academy House, Hills Road, Cambridge

Archaeological Evaluation

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Report Date: July 2011

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Report Number: 1280

Site Name: Academy House, Hills Road, Cambridge

HER Event No: 3609

Date of Works: June 2001

Client Name: The Unex Group

Client Ref: 13145

Planning Ref: 10/1181/FUL

**Grid Ref**: TL 4600 5686

Site Code: CAMAHO11

Finance Code: CAMAHO11

Receiving Body: CCC Stores, Landbeach

Accession No: -

Prepared by: Gareth Rees
Position: Project Supervisor
Date: 8th July 2011

Checked by: Steve Macaulay Position: Project Manager

Date: 9th July

Signed:

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#### Summary

On the 21st June and the 22nd June 2011 Oxford Archaeology East conducted an archaeological evaluation at Academy House, Hills Road, Cambridge, in advance of the proposed development of offices and associated car parking. The site lies in the vicinity of a possible Roman temporary camp, thought to lie to the east and close to the route of the Via Devana Roman Road. Historic mapping shows that the first modern use of the site was in the mid-19th century, when buildings associated with the railway were constructed here.

Two trenches were excavated in the car park of an existing building, Unex House, that lies to the north of the site. Evidence of quarrying of the natural gravels, dating to the Post-Medieval period, was uncovered in Trench 1. All of the deposits encountered in Trench 2 were associated with the mid 19th century engine sheds and goods yards. No archaeological deposits relating to earlier periods were uncovered on the site. The Roman Via Devana is unlikely to have crossed through this site and any associated road side settlement was either not present or has been truncated by later activity.

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#### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Location and Scope of Work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Academy House, Hills Road, Cambridge (Figure 1, TL 4600 5683) on behalf of Kier Eastern and Cambridgeshire County Council over an area of 0.25ha in advance of the proposed development of offices and associated car parking.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application 10/1181/FUL), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East.
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

#### 1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The site comprises a car park located to the south of Unex House and stands at a height of 15.70m to 15.90m AOD. It lies on River Terrace deposits consisting of sands and gravels with higher ground lying to the north-east of the site. According to the British Geological Survey (2002) these gravels are underlain by the West Melbury Marly Chalk formation which is self overlies Gault clay formation. Only sand and gravel geological deposits were encountered during the current works.

# 1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background Prehistoric and Roman

- 1.3.1 There is very little evidence in the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER) prehistoric activity in the immediate vicinity (www.heritagegateway.org.uk, 04/07/11). Excavations at the former government offices off Brooklands Avenue uncovered a Bronze Age pit and at least two phases of undated ditches, which may have been used during the prehistoric or Roman periods (CB15309; MCB16312; Kenny 2000; Dickens and Pattern 2003; Cooper 2004). Further undated ditches, possibly associated with 1st to 2nd century Roman field systems, have been uncovered on Clarendon Road 100m to the west of the current site (CB15331; Kenny 2000a). A stone object interpreted as dating from the prehistoric period was found 500m to the south of the site on Purbeck Road (CHER04600).
- 1.3.2 It is thought that the Via Devana Roman Road ran close by, probably to the east of the current proposed development area. However, it has only been tentatively located, at two sites: at the Perse School, 1.5km to the south-south-east (CHER04812; CHER04819; Walker 1910) and in the Cambridge Botanic Gardens to the north (CHER04614). The remains of a Roman temporary marching camp are thought to have been located directly to the east of the current site, at the Old Cattle Market, but excavations in this area did not uncover any surviving remains (CHER05145; CHER04841; CB15509; Mackay 2001). A gravel extraction pit containing a significant

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assemblage of Roman pottery was uncovered on this site. Gravel extraction pits were also uncovered to the north of the Old Cattle Market on Hills Road (MCB17356; Mackay 2006).

#### Medieval

1.3.3 Evidence for activity in the medieval period has been uncovered at the former government offices on Brooklands Avenue as well as at the Marshall's Garage site off Cherry Hinton Road (Kenny 2000; Dickens and Pattern 2003; Cooper 2004; Newman 2009 MCB18423). Features uncovered at these sites related to the establishment and use of a 14th century field system in this area evidenced by ditches and furrows.

#### **Post-Medieval and Modern**

- 1.3.4 Features in the vicinity of the proposed development area that have been dated to the post-medieval period tend to indicate predominantly agriculture and quarrying in this area. Quarrying was uncovered on Purbeck Road to the south-east (MCB17537; Semmelmann 2006) and at the former government offices on Brooklands Avenue to the west (Kenny 2000).
- 1.3.5 The area was developed considerably in the 19th century with the construction of the railway and the station in 1845, with goods yards and engine sheds added later (HER04906). The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map from 1885 shows sidings and an engine shed standing on the proposed development site. The cattle market had also been built, to the east, by this time indicating the continued growth of the city in this period (Figure 2).

#### 1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The author would like to thank Stephen Walsh of the Unex group who commissioned and funded the work. The project was managed by Stephen Macaulay. I am grateful for specialist advice from Carole Fletcher. Steve Porter excavated and recorded the site; Louise Bush digitised the records and produced the illustrations. Rachel Clarke edited the report.

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#### 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

#### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The Brief required that an adequate sample of the development area was examined by intrusive investigation in order to assess to potential of surviving archaeological deposits.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled (rubber duck) 360 type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out by Gareth Rees and Lucy Offord using a Leica 1200 GPS and Leica TCR705.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metaldetected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.6 The site consisted of a car park with a tarmaced surface which was in-use at the time of the evaluation. In the interests of safety, the trenches were surrounded by Heras fencing during the excavations. An hydraulic breaker was used to break through the upper levels of tarmac and hardcore over the trenches, after which excavations continued with a 1.80m ditching bucket. Both trenches were stepped at the level of the tarmac and again at a depth of 1m in order to minimise risks associated with section collapse (see Macaulay 2011, Appendix 2).

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#### 3 Results

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The results of the archaeological evaluation are presented below, trench by trench, with deposits described stratigraphically from earliest to latest where appropriate (Figure 3). A comprehensive listing of trench depths, descriptions and related context data can be found in Appendix A.

#### 3.2 Trench 1 (Figure 3, 4 and 5; plate 1)

- 3.2.1 Situated in the south-western corner of the car park, an area of 5m by 5m of tarmac was broken out adjacent to curbing prior to excavation (Flgure 4). This trench was excavated to a total depth of 2.40m. The overburden deposits consisted of up to 0.35m of tarmac founded on 0.42m of gravel hardcore. A layer of compacted dark grey silty clay (15) was encountered below this hardcore, containing modern and late post-medieval debris. A sondage measuring 3.80m by 3.80m was excavated within this area to a depth of 1.20m. A feature 4, containing 18th and 19th century pottery, could be seen to truncate a compacted mid-brown silt to the west of the trench (14); no other features were visible at this level.
- 3.2.2 Excavation continued in an area measuring 2m by 2m in the centre of this trench for a further 1m where upon natural River Terrace sand and gravels were uncovered. The cut feature 4 identified at the higher level to the west of the trench was seen to continue down at this level. The total depth of this feature was not revealed during excavation due to safety considerations.
- 3.2.3 Feature **2** was observed cutting into the natural gravels at the base of the trench and could be seen in the north, west and south facing sections to have been cut from 0.10m below the stepped level of the trench (Figure 5, section 1). It measured 1.10m deep and contained a sherd of post-medieval pottery as well as several pieces of CBM (Appendix B).
- 3.2.4 A wedge of natural sands and gravels could be seen between features 2 and 4 indicating that the original level of the natural deposits had lain 1.20m below the upper tarmac level (Plate 1). These features had been dug down for some depth into the natural gravels and most likely functioned as extraction pits for this material in the post-medieval period.

#### 3.3 Trench 2

- 3.3.1 Located in the north-east part of the proposed development area, this trench measured 5.50m from east to west and 4m from north to south and was excavated to a total depth of 2.78m (Figure 4). The trench was extended 1.50m to the west in order to avoid a brick-built wall (7) that lay directly below 0.30m of gravel hardcore car park make-up. Modern and post-medieval deposits abutted this wall and continued down beyond a depth of 1.20m where the trench was stepped. A machine-excavated sondage, measuring 2m x 2m to the west of the trench, continued down for a further 1m to the base of these deposits. A sandy gravel deposit, thought to be geological, was encountered at a total depth of 2.78m below the car park surface.
- 3.3.2 The features uncovered in this trench were all associated with post-medieval brick walls 7 and 8 with no archaeology of an earlier date encountered. Wall 7 was aligned north-north-east to south-south-west across the trench and abutted wall 8, orientated west-

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- north-west to east-south-east, to the south. Both walls, measuring 0.75m wide, were brick-built with an English bond and survived to a height of 1.90m (Plate 2). The base of wall 8, uncovered in a 0.50m section, was 1.20m below the surface, with a brick and mortar foundation seen to continue downwards.
- 3.3.3 The earliest deposit uncovered (11) consisted of a mid yellow-brown friable sandy-silt with gravel inclusions. This was overlain by a loose, charcoal and ash rich deposit (6) which appeared to have been dumped from the north.
- 3.3.4 A loose dark grey fine silt (5) with a high frequency of charcoal and fuel ash abutted the base of the walls and overlay deposit (6). This deposit contained a range of broken ceramics dating to the 19th century, including a sherd of refined white earthen ware, as well as a fragment of Welsh slate tile (Appendix B). Context (5) appeared to have been a general refuse deposit accumulated to the north and west of the walls. A series of silt and rubble deposits had then accumulated up against the walls to the west, and to the east of wall 7. A large faced sandstone block, measuring 0.40m wide x 1.45m long and 0.20m thick was uncovered in the rubble to the east of the wall 8; this may have been a lintel from a structure associated with these walls (not retained).

#### 3.4 Finds Summary

- 3.4.1 The evaluation produced a small pottery assemblage of nine sherds from five contexts. The pottery, all dating to the post-medieval period, is mainly utilitarian domestic wares and although a fragment of gilded pottery is present the quality of the vessel is not high. The pottery recovered here, although domestic in origin, most likely represents rubbish disposal.
- 3.4.1 Other finds comprised a single iron nail and a fragment of welsh slate of late post medieval or 19th century date; four fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) and a single oyster shell were also recovered.

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#### 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The archaeological evaluation at Academy House, Hills Road, Cambridge, has uncovered evidence of 19th century walls in the northern part of the proposed development area and post-medieval gravel quarry pits to the south. No evidence of earlier occupation, particularly that associated with Roman activity thought to lie to the east, was uncovered.
- 4.1.2 Quarrying of the gravels in this area has been taking place since the Roman period although that uncovered during the current phase of work may be associated with the southerly expansion of the city of Cambridge in the mid to late 19th century. This expansion, stimulated by the coming of the railway in 1845, was also evidenced in Trench 2. Brick built walls, associated with 19th century pottery and a large amount of fuel ash and charcoal, are likely to have been part of the railway goods yards shown to have existed on this plot on the 1st edition OS map of 1885 (Figure 2). Walls shown running perpendicular to the northern end of the sidings tracks on this map are likely to be those uncovered in this trench. The lack of substantial foundation material or surfaces associated with these walls is indicative of a use as a retaining or boundary wall against which refuse had built up; however is it possible that these walls formed part of the engine shed, that is known to have stood here, or another goods yard building.
- 4.1.3 The depth and extent of the post-medieval truncation in Trench 1 and the substantial late 19th century structures uncovered in Trench 2 tends to suggest that the potential for survival of deposits relating to earlier periods is low.

#### 4.2 Significance

4.2.1 Results of the evaluation of this site will add to the current knowledge of the development of post-medieval and modern Cambridge. The lack of any residual Roman artefacts may also be of note due to the probable importance of this area in the Roman period.

#### 4.3 Recommendations

4.3.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

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## APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1								
General d	escription	l						
	xcavated to	Avg. depth	(m)	2.40				
				atures, <b>2</b> and <b>4</b> , were cut into se surface level. These	Width (m)		3.80	
features w		eted as gr	avel quari	ry pits. No features of earlier	Length (m)		3.80	
Contexts								
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	da	ate	
1	Fill	-	1.10	Quarry in-fill	CBM, Ceramic	16 <sup>th</sup> to 19	9 <sup>th</sup> century	
2	Cut	+ 1.40	1.20	Quarry pit	-		-	
3	Fill	-	1.25	Quarry in-fill	Ceramic	18 <sup>th</sup> to 19	9 <sup>th</sup> century	
4	Cut	+ 0.50	1.25	Quarry pit	-	-		
Trench								
General d	escription	l			Orientation		E-W	
				ne western half of the trench	Avg. depth	(m)	2.78	
			n excavated down a further ecentre of this area was	Width (m)	4.00			
then excav 0.40m dov	vated to wh vn. Two br ch. Materi	at appear ick-built w	ed to be r alls abutte	natural gravels a further ed each other at 90 degrees entury pottery was built up	Length (m)		5.50	
Contexts								
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	da	ate	
5	Layer	-	1.30	Dump Deposit	Ceramic, Slate	19 <sup>th</sup> c	entury	
6	Layer	-	1.80	Dump Deposit	-	-		
7	Wall	0.75	1.90	-	-	-		
8	Wall	0.75	1.90	-	-	-		
	Layer	1.30	0.60	Dump Deposit	-	-		
9		1	0.60	Rubble	-	-		
9	Layer	1.40	0.60	Tabbic		-		
	Layer Layer	1.40	0.60	Accumulation	-		-	
10	-	1.40 - 2.00			-		-	

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#### APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

#### **B.1 Pottery**

By Carole Fletcher

#### Introduction

- B.1.1 The evaluation produced a small pottery assemblage of nine sherds, weighing 0.282kg, from five contexts including unstratified material. The condition of the overall assemblage is unabraded and the average sherd weight from individual contexts is moderate at approximately 31g.
- B.1.2 Ceramic fabric abbreviations used in the text are:

IGW Iron glazed ware

NOTTS Nottinghamshire Type Stonewares

PMR post medieval Redwares
RFWE Refined White Earthenware

#### Methodology

- B.1.3 The medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG) documents A guide to the classification of medieval ceramic forms (MPRG 1998) and Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of post-Roman Ceramics (MPRG 2001) act as a standard.
- B.1.4 Dating was carried out using OA East's in-house system based on that previously used at the Museum of London. Fabric classification has been carried out for all previously described medieval and post-medieval types. All sherds have been counted, classified and weighed. All the pottery has been recorded and dated on a context-by-context basis.
- B.1.5 The pottery was offered for educational use and not retained in the site archive. The written archives are curated by Oxford Archaeology East until formal deposition.

#### Assemblage

- B.1.6 The assemblage comprises pottery from the 19th century, recovered as relatively large unabraded sherds from a small number of contexts. The pottery is mainly utilitarian domestic wares and although a fragment of gilded pottery is present the quality of the vessel is not high and no bone china or porcelain vessels were recovered.
- B.1.7 The pottery recovered here, although domestic in origin, most likely represents rubbish disposal.

#### Statement of Research Potential and Further Work

B.1.8 An assemblage of this size provides only basic dating information for a site. No further work is required on this assemblage.

Context	Fabric	Sherd Count	Weight (kg)	Comments	Context Date Range
1	PMR	1	0.020		16th-19th century
3	NOTTS	1	0.007		18th-end of

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Context	Fabric	Basic Form	Sherd Count	Weight (kg)	Comments	Context Date Range
						19thcentury
5	RFWE		1	0.009		19th century
		Plate	1	0.107	Blue annular painted decoration around rim.	19th century
		Jar	1	0.020	Moulded-incised decoration over painted with blue.	
		Bowl	1	0.053	Crude sponge print decoration in blue.	
		Cup	1	0.008	Three fine lines of gilding below rim on exterior and single gilded line below rim on inside of vessel.	
	IGW	Teapot	1	0.057	Rockingham type buff bodied earthenware	
99999	RFWE		1	0.001		19th century

Table 3: Pottery dating

#### **B.2 Stone**

By Carole Fletcher

#### Assemblage

B.2.1 A fragmentary slate roof tile was recovered from context 5. The slate tile is subrectangular and slightly tapering, having lost almost entirely one end and both corners on the surviving end. No nail hole survives. The fabric is mid to dark grey and is probably Welsh slate, suggesting a 19th century date.

B.2.2

Context	Form	Weight (kg)	Count	Material
5	Roof Tile	0.241	1	Slate

Table 4: Building stone artefacts

#### **B.3 Ceramic Building Material and Fired Clay**

By Carole Fletcher

#### Assemblage

B.3.1 A small assemblage of four fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), weighing 0.078kg, was recovered from contexts 1 and 99999. The condition of the overall assemblage is abraded.

#### Statement of Research Potential and Further Work

B.3.2 An assemblage of this size provides only basic dating information for a site. No further work is required.

Context	Form	Count	Weight (kg)	Fabric	Range
1	Roof Tile	1	0.052	Dull red completely	post medieval or

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Context	Form	Count	Weight (kg)	Fabric	Range
				oxidised slightly sandy fabric with occasional large flint.	later
	Roof Tile	1	0.015	Hard fired dull orange slightly sandy fabric.	post medieval or later
	Roof Tile	1	0.032	Well fired dull red surfaces and cream-pink swirls and pellets.	Not closely datable
99999	Undiagnostic	1	0.004	Hard fired orange-red sandy fabric	Not closely datable

Table 5: Ceramic building material

#### B.3.1 Mollusca

By Carole Fletcher

#### Assemblage

B.3.1 A total of 0.008kg of shells of marine molluscs were collected from the excavated area. The oyster shell, *Ostrea edulis* is moderately well preserved.

#### Further Work

B.3.1 No further work is required on this assemblage

Context	Туре	Weight (kg)	Count
99999	Ostrea edulis	0.008	1

Table 6: Mollusca types

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# APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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# APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project De	etails												
OASIS Num	ber	ber oxfordar3-104754											
Project Nam	ne	Evalua	tion of Acad	ills Road,	Cambrid	ge							
Project Date	es (field	work)	Start	21-06-2011			Finish	22-0	06-201	1			
Previous Wo	ork (by	OA Ea	ast)	No			Future	Wor	k Unl	known			
Project Refe	erence	Code	s										
Site Code	CAMAH	011			Planni	ng App	No.		10/11	31/FUL			
HER No.	ECB360	9			Relate	d HER	OASIS N	lo.					
<b>Type of Proj</b> Prompt Developmen		Dire		Local Planning	y Authority	/ - PPS 5		L					
Please sele	ect all	tech	niques	used:									
Please select all techniques used:  Aerial Photography - interpretation Aerial Photography - new Annotated Sketch Augering Dendrochronological Survey Metal Detection Documentary Search Environmental Sampling Fieldwalking Geophysical Survey  Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Polist feature types using the NMR Monument Type Thesaurus together with their respective periods. If no features/finds we			core anning d Survey stectors te Survey ammetric Surve Photogra Period urus and	Survey yey aphy Is significan	t finds usinç e state "nor	the	Samp Surve Targe Test I Topog Vibro Visua	graphic Surv -core I Inspection	Of Fabri es ey (Initial Si	ic/Structi			
Monument Railway Depot	-		Post Med	ieval 1540 to 1	Q01	cerami	<u> </u>			Post Medie	val 1540	to 1901	
	•					Ceraiii	ceramic					10 1901	
Quarry				ieval 1540 to 1	to 1901				Select perio				
Select period								Select perio	od				
Project Lo	ocatio	n											
County Cambridgeshire				Site Address (including postcode if possible)									
District	Cambridge City				Unex House, 132-134 Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 8PA								
Parish	Cambridge												
HER	Cambri	dge											
Study Area	0.25	0.25				National Grid Reference TL 4600 5683							



# **Project Originators**

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Dan McConnell
Project Design Originator	Stephen Macaulay
Project Manager	Stephen Macaulay
Supervisor	Gareth Rees
Proiect Archives	

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
CCC stores	CCC stores	OA East
CAMAHO11	CAMAHO11	CAMAHO11

#### **Archive Contents/Media**

	Physical Contents		Paper Contents
Animal Bones			
Ceramics	$\boxtimes$		
Environmental			
Glass			
Human Bones			
Industrial			
Leather			
Metal			
Stratigraphic			
Survey		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$
Textiles			
Wood			
Worked Bone			
Worked Stone/Lithic			
None			
Other			

Digital Media	Paper Media
Database	Aerial Photos
GIS	
Geophysics	Correspondence
	☐ Diary
	☑ Drawing
☐ Moving Image	Manuscript
Spreadsheets	□ Мар
⊠ Survey	☐ Matrices
▼ Text	Microfilm
☐ Virtual Reality	☐ Misc.
	Research/Notes
	☑ Photos
	☑ Plans
	⊠ Sections
	Survey

#### Notes:



F	Plans
Limit of Excavation	
Illustrated Section	S.14
Archaeological Feature	
Archaeological Deposit	
Wall	
Excavated Slot	
Cut Number	118
Garranger	110
	Sections
Cut	
Deposit Horizon	
Modern Deposit Horizon	
Top Surface/Top of Natural	
Cut Number	02
Deposit Number	03
Ordnance Datum	18.45m OD 不
Inclusions	

Convention Key

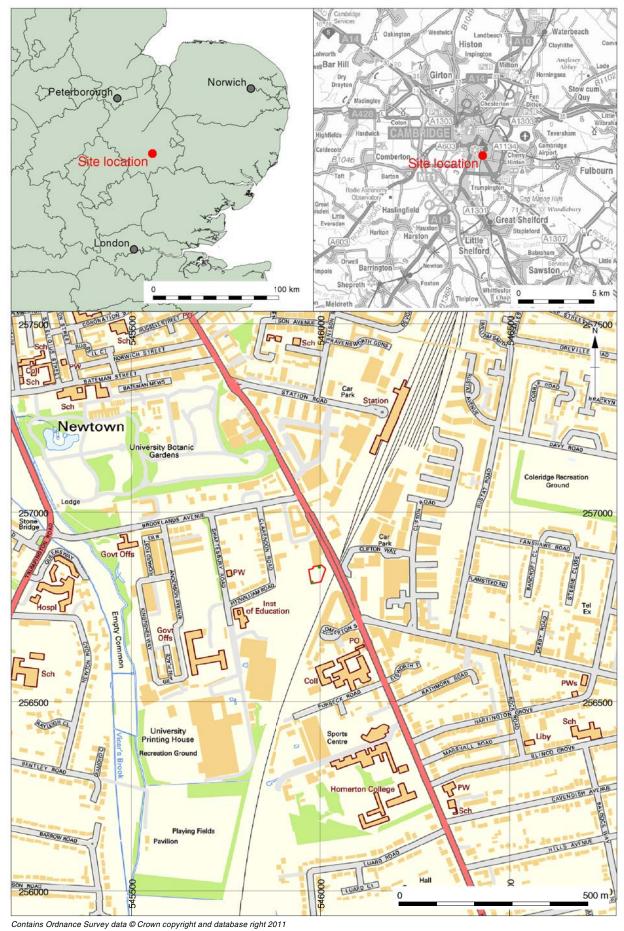


Figure 1: Site location with development area (red) and trenches (green)



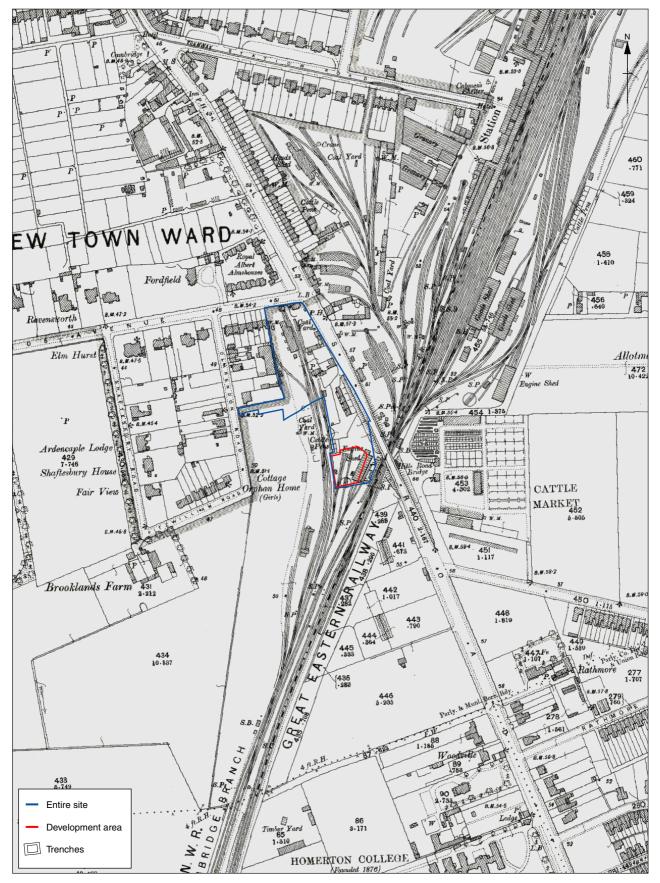


Figure 2: First edition 25" Ordnance Survey map 1885



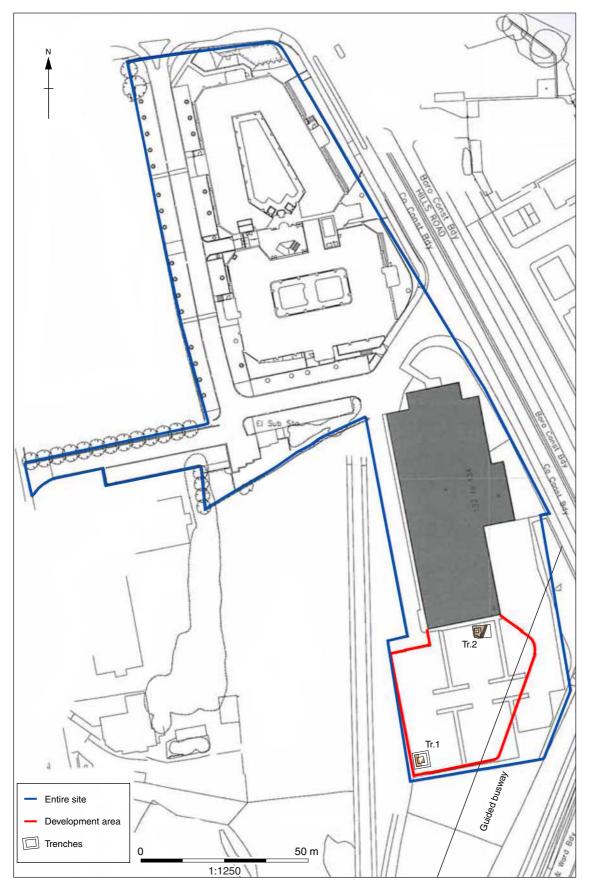


Figure 3: Development area with trenches highlighted



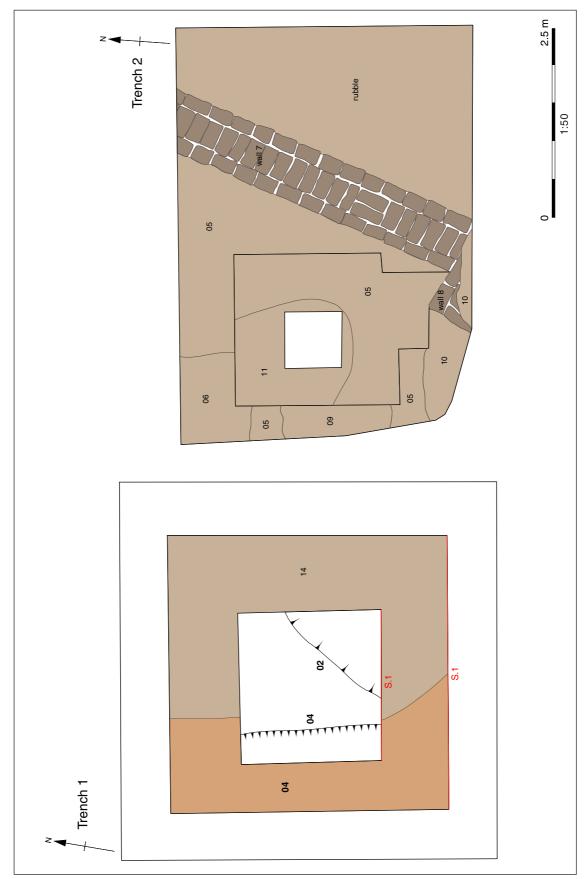


Figure 4: Trench plans



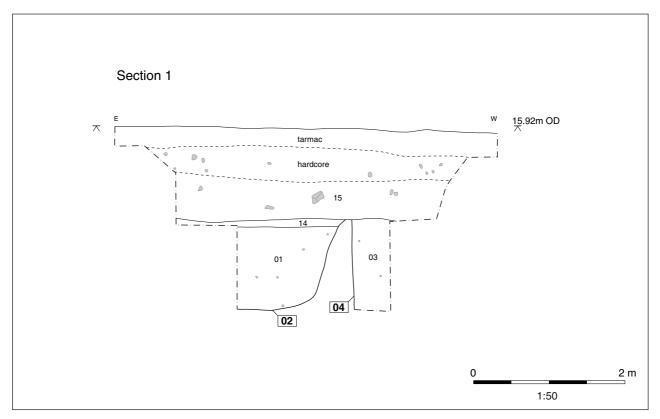


Figure 5: Section





Plate 1: Trench 1, facing south (feature 2 left and feature 4 right)



Plate 2: Trench 2, facing south



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