Mill Road Cemetery
Mortuary Chapel
an Archaeological
test pit Evaluation



Archaeological Evaluation Report



January 2010

Client: Cambridge City Council

OA East Report No: 1150 OASIS No: Oxfordar3-70591

NGR: TL 46169 58397



Mill Road Cemetery Mortuary Chapel; an Archaeological test pit Evaluation

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Report Date: January 2010

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Report Number: 1150

Site Name: Mill Road Cemetery

HER Event No: ECB 3294

Date of Works: November 2009

Client Name: Cambridge City Council

Client Ref: CAMCIT

Planning Ref: n/a

Grid Ref: TL 46169 58397

Site Code: CAM MRC 09

Finance Code: CAM MRC 09

Receiving Body: CCC Stores, Landbeach

Accession No: CAM MRC 09

Prepared by: Nick Gilmour Position: Supervisor Date: January 2010

Checked by: Stephen Macaulay
Position: Project Manager
Date: January 2010

Signed:

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Summary

On Friday 13th and Saturday 14th November 2009, Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological test pit evaluation on the site of the former mortuary chapel in Mill Road Cemetery, Cambridge. These investigations revealed that the foundations of the chapel were in good condition and that part of the building had originally had a lower floor level, resulting in the preservation of a part of the internal fabric of the building in this area.

This project was part of a Your Heritage Lottery Funded project to regenerate and restore Mill Road Cemetery. The project aims to safeguard the fabric of the Grade II Victorian cemetery, using appropriate materials and methods, and increase the understanding of the sites history and value. The test pit evaluation was also part of a wider community and education project which involved local schools, volunteers, The Friends of Mill Road Cemetery and the wider community.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological test pit evaluation was conducted in Mill Road Cemetery, Cambridge. This archaeological test pit evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Specification prepared by OA East (formerly CAMARC; Cambridgeshire County Council's Archaeological Field Unit).
- 1.1.2 The archaeological investigation was part of a Your Heritage Lottery Funded project to regenerate and restore Mill Road Cemetery. The project aims to safeguard the fabric of the Grade II Victorian cemetery, using appropriate materials and methods, and increase the understanding of the sites history and value. A conservation and management plan has been written for the site by Cambridge City Council (Mill Road cemetery Conservation Plan 2004) and this has identified the key issue for the sites future protection. An element of the project involves the investigation of the foundations of the demolished Gilbert Scott mortuary chapel (a building which once formed the focal point of the cemetery), with a view to potentially displaying the remains.
- 1.1.3 This archaeological test pit evaluation aimed to ascertain the state of preservation and record the surviving remains of the mortuary chapel, in advance of any proposed restoration work.
- 1.1.4 The test pit evaluation is also part of a wider community and education project which will involve local schools, volunteers, The Friends of Mill Road cemetery and the wider community and will include the creation of teaching resources.
- 1.1.5 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 sits on 4th terrace gravels, overlaying the lower chalk (BSG 188).
- 1.2.2 Mill Road Cemetery lies in the south-east quarter of the city of Cambridge. The c 3.5ha site is bounded to the north, east, and south by the gardens of private houses, and to the west by the grounds of Anglia Polytechnic University. The ground is level and entirely enclosed by a low brick wall, with limited views into the site from the surrounding gardens and houses.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Mill Road Cemetery is a city cemetery, established by the parochial clergy and opened by the Bishop of Ely in 1848, in response to the creation of a burial ground at Histon Road, Cambridge opened to Nonconformists in 1843.
- 1.3.2 The Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record records the rapid growth of Cambridge in the early C19 put the city's churchyards under severe pressure. Following calls for new burial grounds by the Cambridgeshire Chronicle in 1832, the Cambridge Cemetery Company, a private, non-profit-making body, opened the Histon Road Cemetery (qv) in 1843 for 'persons of all religious persuasions'. In response to this, the established church began to take action the following year and set up the Parish Burial Ground Committee (PBGC). This body was charged with the responsibility of raising funds by voluntary contributions to purchase a site for a burial ground. In 1847 c 3.5ha

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- of land, used as the University cricket ground, were conveyed to the Church Building Commissioners, having been purchased from the estate of the Rev Dr Geldart (PBGC Minutes, 23 November 1847), for the use of thirteen parishes.
- 1.3.3 Each of the parishes was allocated its own area within the cemetery and the boundaries were marked by small stones, some set into the boundary wall. A central area was set aside for the erection of a chapel when funds permitted. Once the land had been drained, boundary walls, gravel drives, railings, gates, and a lodge were laid out and the grounds were consecrated at the official opening by the Bishop of Ely on 7 November 1848. This event was reported in detail in the Cambridgeshire Chronicle the following day.
- 1.3.4 By 1850 over 700 burials had taken place, and the committee noted that 'a very general and increased desire prevails that the erection of a chapel should no longer be deferred' (PBGC Minutes). The committee already had £400, so an appeal was launched to raise £600, making a total budget of £1000 for the building. The architect George Gilbert Scott (1811-78) was approached and asked to prepare a design for the chapel. His subsequent plans, dated 22 April 1851, show that his building would cost £1800 to erect, so amendments were requested. There followed protracted discussions and alterations, which went hand in hand with the fund-raising efforts and finally contracts were signed in 1856, following the gift of £250 from the Rev Professor Whewell, Master of Trinity College. Professor Whewell showed an interest in the design of the chapel and may have had a hand in asking for further alterations to Scott's plans (Proc Cambs Antiq Soc 1995).
- 1.3.5 Problems with the interior meant that the chapel did not open until May 1858, ten years after the cemetery was established and in the intervening years, the lodge had been used as a mortuary chapel. Following the completion of the chapel the cemetery continued in use until some of the parish areas were filled and closed in 1904, with the remainder closing in 1949.
- 1.3.6 In 1954 the chapel was demolished, following significant damage caused by a fire.. In 1999 the Friends of Mill Road Cemetery were formed to raise awareness of the cemetery as a place of remembrance, and of historic and ecological interest. The site remains in the ownership of the Church of England, apart from the lodge which is privately owned. It is administered by trustees (the incumbents of the parishes) and is managed by the City Council.
- 1.3.7 In addition to the known mortuary chapel, graves and monuments known to be a part of the cemetery, a pagan Anglo Saxon burial was discovered on the site (HER 0622). This was recovered in 1847 and was reported to be an inhumation with a spear and shield. It is probable that this was found in close proximity to the mortuary chapel.

1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The author would like to thank the friends of Mill Road Cemetery and Cambridge City Council, particularly Sarah Tovell who helped and supported throughout the fieldwork. The project was managed by Stephen Macaulay, the fieldwork was carried out by James Fairbairn, Nick Gilmour, Jon House and Tom Lyons. The illustrations were produced by Louise Bush.

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2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The primary aim of this archaeological test pit evaluation was to establish the extent and state of preservation of the remains of the Chapel.
- 2.1.2 In the event that other archaeological remains were present the evaluation sought to establish the character, date, state of preservation and extent of these deposits.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Geophysical survey was carried out prior to excavation. This has included both ground penetrating radar (GPR) and resistivity surveys. This work was conducted by Pete Masters of Cranfield university. The results of these surveys were used to determine the location of the test pits over the mortuary chapel. The results of the geophysical survey are presented in appendix A.
- 2.2.2 Test pits were excavated by hand to the depth of geological horizons, or to the upper interface of archaeological features or deposits, whichever was encountered first.
- 2.2.3 Five 1m x 1m square test pits were dug in locations determined by the results of the geophysical survey. Four of these test pits were extended in order to gain a better view of foundations uncovered. The test pits were located over the entrance and interior floor, as well as the exterior walls.
- 2.2.4 All excavation was carried out by hand, using spades, shovels and trowels. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel as necessary in order to clarify located features and deposits. Trench spoil was scanned visually and in some cases sieved in order to increase the recovery of artefacts.
- 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 photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.6 Weather conditions on site were poor, with frequent rain.

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3 Results

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Details of the structural elements identified are discussed by test pit below. Descriptions of the topsoil and building materials identified are given in separate sections.

3.2 Topsoil Description

3.2.1 The topsoil covering the site was a dark greyish brown loam with frequent organic and occasional gravel inclusions. Several sherds of porcelain and other post-Medieval pottery were recovered from it. None of the test pits were excavated below the level of the topsoil.

3.3 Test Pit 1

- 3.3.1 This test pit was positioned over a separate room on the north side of the chapel. This is shown on a photograph of the chapel (Plate 1) with a lower roof then the main building. Test pit 1 revealed the corner of this side chamber and also showed that it had a considerably lower floor then the rest of the chapel building. This was excavated to 0.96m below current ground level, although the faced wall continued beyond this depth.
- 3.3.2 This sunken floored area had been backfilled with rubble during demolition, but remained in good condition. The internal facing was of brick at the corners and flint cobbles elsewhere. The sill of a splayed window still remained in place. The window frame was of sandstone with a carved clunch architrave (plate 3).

3.4 Test Pit 2

3.4.1 This was positioned over the foundation of the apsidal eastern end of the chapel. It revealed a wall foundation 0.10m below the present ground surface. This wall was 0.98m wide, with an internal brick facing, a core of mortar with flints and an exterior of flints with mortar.

3.5 Test Pit 3

3.5.1 This was situated over a buttress on the southern wall of the church, which was located 0.19m below the present ground surface. The buttress was just over 1m wide and extended 1.22m from the outside surface of the wall. The exterior of this buttress was faced with brick, with a mortar core.

3.6 Test Pit 4

3.6.1 This test pit was located inside the walls of the chapel and identified a mortar surface 0.22m below present ground level. This is unlikely to have been the original floor surface of the chapel and likely represents a bed for either flagstones or tiles, which were removed during demolition. This mortar layer, while similar in appearance to the core of the wall foundations, was much softer.

3.7 Test Pit 5

3.7.1 Test pit 5 was positioned over the main entrance of the chapel at its' western end. This revealed the western wall of the chapel 0.12m below the ground surface. To the west of this a gravel surface was revealed 0.14m below ground level. This surface consisted of



topsoil with very frequent flint gravel inclusions. This may represent the remains of an area of hard standing in front on the Chapel door, or a path leading up to it.

3.8 Finds Summary and Building Material Descriptions

- 3.8.1 Some of the original fabric of the building was recovered, which confirmed the basic appearance of the building was similar to The Lodge, still standing in the south west corner of the cemetery. Amongst the material recovered was red brick, knapped flint, stone roof tiles and window glass. A large section of architectural stonework was also recorded buried in rubble in test pit 1, however, this could not be recovered.
- 3.8.2 All of the bricks visible were of similar manufacture, with dimensions of 224mm long, 105mm wide and 73mm thick, they were not frogged.
- 3.8.3 Several sherds 19th-20th century pottery were also found, along with a mother of pearl button.

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4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Chapel Foundations

- 4.1.1 The foundations of the chapel survived in extremely good condition, which would be expected as there have only been fifty years since its' demolition. The presence of wall foundations in all of the test pits excavated across them would suggest the the complete floor plan of the chapel survives. They were all internally faced with brick, while the main structure of the footing was mortar with flint inclusions. The outside of the footing had more frequent inclusions of flint. Brick impressions in the mortar would suggest that the upper structure had been of brick, while a small amount of knapped flint facing survived on top of the footing in test pit 1. The foundations were buried beneath between 0.10m and 0.22m of topsoil.
- 4.1.2 The internal floor of the chapel survived as a mortar layer, which presumably provided a base for either a flagstone or tile surface. No trace of this original floor covering was found.

4.2 The Sunken Floored Room

4.2.1 On the north side of the chapel a protruding room was shown to have a lower floor level then the rest of the chapel. This had resulted in the survival of at least 0.96m of wall which had been faced internally with brick and flint. Set into this was was a window, the base of which, as well as part of the architrave survived. The floor surface of this area may have survived, however, it was not possible to reach this in the test pit excavated.

4.3 Significance

- 4.3.1 This archaeological test pit evaluation has shown the foundations of the mortuary chapel in Mill Road Cemetery have survived well. The survival of a deeper area was unexpected and this has ensured the survival of faced walls as well as architectural element of the original chapel.
- 4.3.2 The investigation has demonstrated that the excellent condition of the foundations would mean that exposing and presenting these as a landscape feature would be possible. Consolidation would, of course, be necessary but the remains exist to make such a project possible.

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APPENDIX A. GEOPHISICAL SURVEY

By Peter Masters

Abstract

A.1.1 Ground Penetrating Radar and earth resistance surveys were carried out in the grounds of Mill Road Cemetery, Cambridge. The work was undertaken in October 2009. The purpose of the survey was to locate the remains of the former mortuary chapel, which once stood in the central circle of the cemetery. Both Ground Penetrating Radar and earth resistance successfully recorded the plan of the Mill Road mortuary chapel with some internal features. The outline plan of the chapel was rectangular in shape with an apsidal end to the east. No features relating to the earlier use of the ground as a cricket field was recorded.

Introduction

- A.1.2 A geophysical survey consisting of ground penetrating radar and earth resistance techniques was undertaken on behalf of OA East and Friends of Mill Road Cemetery as a Heritage Lottery Funded project.
- A.1.3 The purpose of the survey was to locate the remains of the former Mill Road mortuary chapel demolished in 1954. The survey was carried out in October 2009.
- A.1.4 The survey methodologies described in this report are based upon guidelines set out in the English Heritage document 'Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation' (EH 2008).

Location and Descriptions

- A.1.5 The information contained within sections 2 and 3 of this report is based on information supplied by OA East and Mill Road Community Project as well as the website http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/news-releases/2009/mill-roadcemetery-dig.en.
- A.1.6 The site is situated between Mill Road, Norfolk Street and Gwydir Street, Cambridge. The former chapel remains lie at the centre of Mill Road Cemetery within a grassed circle surrounded by a gravel path.
- A.1.7 The underlying geology is comprised of sand and gravels (Geological Map data © NERC 2009). The GPR and earth resistance responses of these types of geologies is generally good depending on depth and target being detected (Gaffney & Gater 2003, 78; EH 2008, 15, 28).

Background Information

- A.1.8 Mill Road Cemetery is listed on the English Heritage Parks and Gardens register as a site of Special Historic Interest as a Grade II site. It is owned by the Church of England and is maintained by Cambridge City Council. Since 1949, it has been a closed cemetery except for those with family graves.
- A.1.9 The Cemetery was consecrated in 1848 having been purchased through subscriptions, to be held in trust by thirteen city parishes, with their incumbents acting as trustees. It is believed the design of the cemetery was developed by the then Curator of the Botanical Gardens, Andrew Murray. George Gilbert Scott, leading architect of gothic revival in the Victorian era, designed the mortuary chapel and lodge, with only the lodge still in



- existence in 1956. The chapel was of the Middle Pointed style or Victorian Gothic, with a spire (Pevsner 1954, 184).
- A.1.10 The foundation stones of the mortuary chapel stood in the centre of the cemetery up until 1954 when it was demolished due to vandalism. The site was originally owned by university and used as a cricket pitch in the early 1800's.

Methodology

- A.1.11 A Malå Geoscience AB RAMAC/GPR system consisting of shielded monostatic antenna, CUII control unit and XV monitor was used to collect profiles with a 500MHz antenna.
- A.1.12 The 500MHz antenna was selected as most suitable centre frequency for obtaining the depth penetration and lateral resolution required for the survey. A single grid was surveyed over the site at 0.5m intervals and a station spacing of 0.05cm.
- A.1.13 Processing was carried out using Reflex3DScan software. DC offset correction and linear time gain was applied to the radar data to correct for low frequency noise and amplitude attenuation with distance respectively (Fig 2).

Resistivity

- A.1.14 Resistivity survey measures the electrical resistance of the earth's soil moisture content. A twin probe configuration is normally used, which involves the pairing of electrodes (one current and one potential), with one pair remaining in a fixed position (remote probes), whilst the mobile probes measure resistivity variations across the survey grids. Resistance is measured in ohms, and this method is generally effective to a depth of 1m.
- A.1.15 Features such as wall foundations are usually identified as high resistance anomalies, as well as rubble spreads, made surfaces (i.e. yards and paths) and metalled roads and track ways. In contrast, low resistance values are normally associated with waterretentive features such as large pits, graves, ditches, drains and gulleys.
- A.1.16 The resistivity survey was carried out using a Geoscan RM15 Resistance Meter with a twin probe array configuration in mobile probe spacing of 0.5m. The zigzag traverse method of survey was used, with 1m wide traverses with readings taken at 0.5m intervals across a 20m x 20m grid.
- A.1.17 The data was processed using Archeosurveyor v.1.3.2.8. It was despiked to remove extremely high readings caused by bad contact with the ground surface. The enhanced data was high and low passed filtered in order to remove near surface geology and other trends as well as give it a smoother appearance. The results are plotted as greyscale, colour scale and trace plot images (Fig. 2).

Results (Figs. 1 - 3)

- A.1.18 The survey conditions at the site were very reasonable for GPR as the ground is under grass. The depth of penetration was generally good with significant reflections recorded to a two-way travel depth of up to 1.6m.
- A.1.19 Ground Penetrating Radar produced extremely good results of the underlying remains. High amplitude reflections recorded the outline plan of the surviving wall foundations of the chapel (Figs 1 and 3). It is apsidal in plan and is visible from 7.20ns (0.17m) to 24.0ns (c.1m). At the western end of the building, on each corner two short linear

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- anomalies were recorded in the image indicating that the chapel may have had supporting buttresses.
- A.1.20 At the point where the nave joins the chancel end of the chapel, two short linear anomalies on either side of the building remains were clearly recorded in the image indicating possible buttresses, which were required in order to support the spire. The narrowness of the building and a steeply pitched roof would have needed some support due to the load bearing weight of the spire.
- A.1.21 Internally, four square shaped high amplitude anomalies were recorded indicating possible supports or column bases for the spire.

Earth Resistance

- A.1.22 A clear plan of the wall foundations of the chapel was recorded. The image, however, does not show any internal features. However, it does complement the results recorded by GPR.
- A.1.23 Along the mid-northern side and north-west corner, zones of the high resistance can be seen in the resultant plot (Fig.2, shaded red lines) indicating possible rubble spreads probably relating to the demolition of the chapel.

Conclusions

- A.1.24 Both techniques have produced a good response to the underlying remains of the former mortuary chapel. The chapel is rectangular in plan with an apsidal end to the east. Internally, four square shaped features were recorded in the GPR data possibly denoting the foundations for the spire.
- A.1.25 It can be concluded that the survey was successful in locating the foundations of the former chapel by GPR and earth resistance techniques.

Acknowledgements

A.1.26 Cranfield University, Centre for Archaeological and Forensic Analysis would like to thank Stephen Macaulay and the Friends of Mill Road Cemetery for this commission.

Bibliography

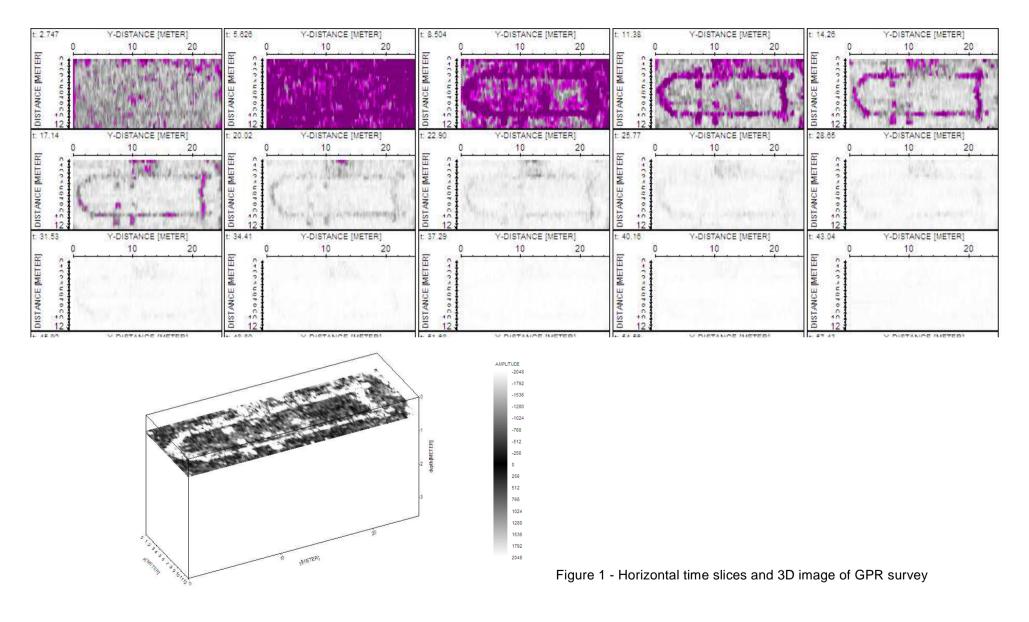
E.H. 2008 Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation. London,

English Heritage: Research & Professional Guidelines No.1. 2nd Edition

Pevsner, N. 1954 The Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire. Penguin books.

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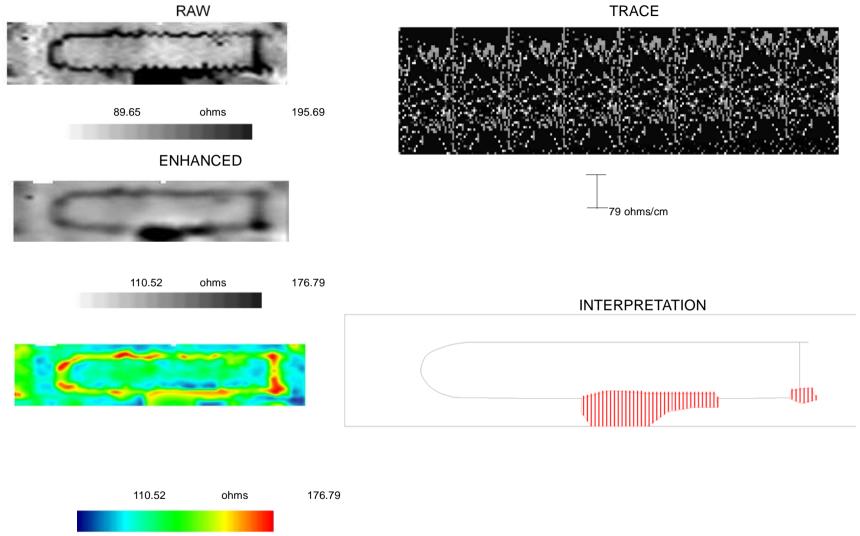


Figure 2: Resistance survey: Grey scale, colour scale and trace images of raw and enhanced data with interpretive plan, scale – 1:500



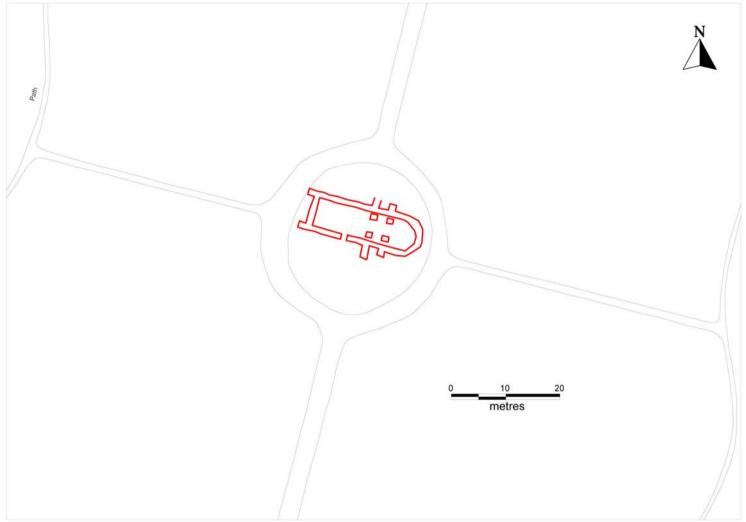


Figure 3: Interpretation of GPR data



APPENDIX B. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project De	etails										
OASIS Number Oxfordar3-70591											
Project Name e.g. Evaluation at land off A road, Sometown						_					
Project Date	es (field	work) Sta	art	13-11-2009			Finish	14-	11-200	9	
Previous Wo	ork (by	OA East)		No			Future	e Wo	rk Un	known	
Project Refe	erence	Codes									
Site Code	CAMMR	C09			Planning App. No.		n/a	/a			
HER No.	ECB 329)4			Relate	ed HER	d HER/OASIS No. n/a				
Type of Proj	iect/Tec	hniques	Used	<u> </u>							
Prompt	,	Voluntar									
Developmen	t Type	Other									
Please sele	ect all	techniqu	ues	used:							
Aerial Photo	ography -	interpretatio	n	Grab-Sa	mpling				Rem	ote Operated Vehicle Survey	
Aerial Photo	ography -	new		Gravity-C	Core				Sample Trenches		
X Annotated S	Sketch			Laser Scanning			Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure		re		
☐ Augering							Targe	argeted Trenches			
			X Metal De	▼ Metal Detectors ▼ Test Pits							
☐ Documentary Search ☐ Phospha			te Survey	/			Торо	graphic Survey			
☐ Environmental Sampling			Photogra	mmetric	Survey			Vibro	-core		
Fieldwalking			Photogram								
☐ Geophysical Survey ☐ Rectified Photogr				Photogra	aphy						
Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods List feature types using the NMR Monument Type Thesaurus and significant finds using the MDA Object type Thesaurus together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".											
Monument	ما	Peri		ioval 1510 to 1	001	Object				Period Select period	
mortuary chap	lei	[F05	i weai	lieval 1540 to 1901					Select period		
Select peri			riod					Select period			
Select peri			riod						Select period		
Project Lo	ocatio	n									
County	cambridgeshire				Site Address (including postcode if possible)						
District	Cambridge City				Mill Road Cemetery, Mill Road, Cambridge, CB1 2AW						
Parish	Cambridge			Janibi	iage, ODT	∠/ \ \ \					
HER	Cambridgeshire										
Study Area 500sqm				Nation	al Grid F	Refer	ence	TL 46169 58397			



Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST	DA EAST					
Project Brief Originator	n/a	n/a					
Project Design Originator	Stephen Macaulay						
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Project Archives							
Physical Archive		Digital Archive		Paper Archive			

Archive Contents/Media						
CAMMRC09	CAMMRC09	CAMMRC09				
CCC Stores	OA East	CCC Stores				
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive				

Archive Contents/Media

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

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

Notes:



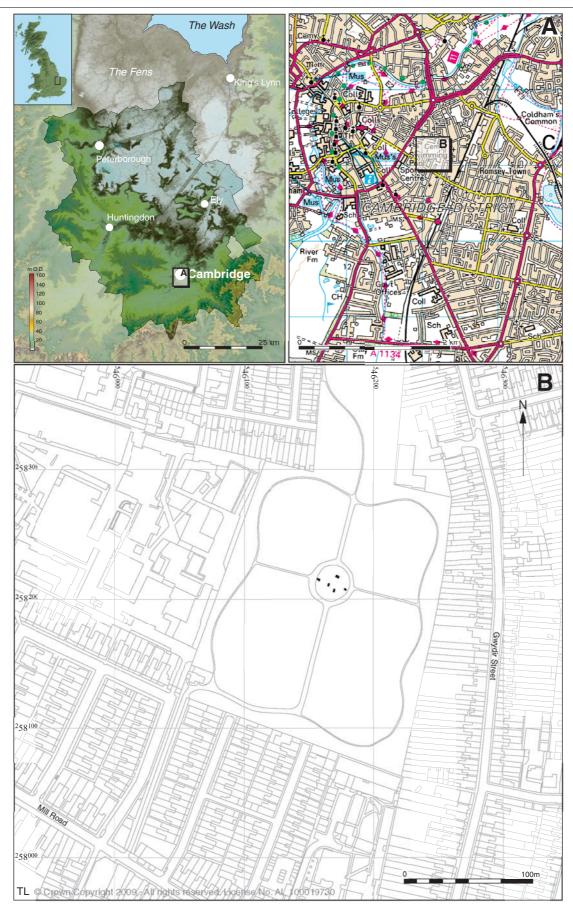


Figure 4: Location of test pits (black)

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Figure 5: Plan of test pits



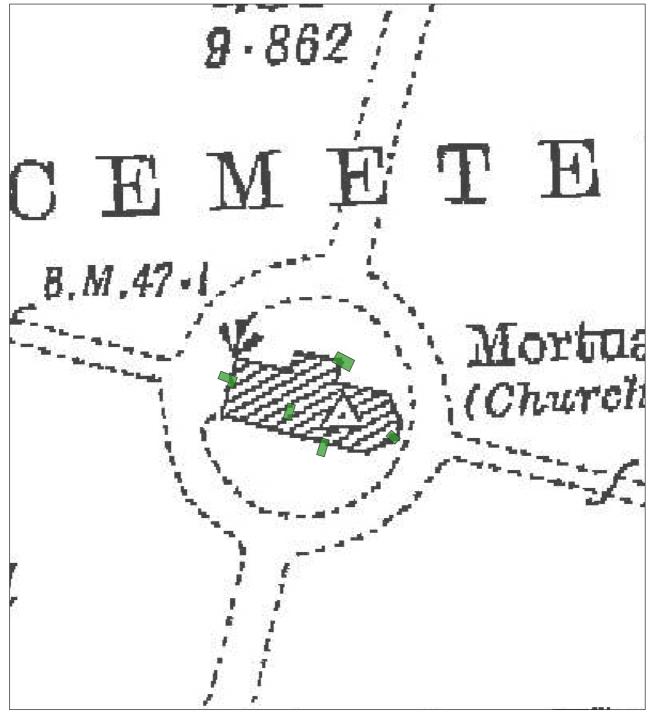


Figure 6: 1925 Ordnance Survey map of Mill Road Cemetary showing chapel and test pits (green)

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Plate 1: The Mortuary Chapel during demolition, viewed from the west (Courtesy of the Cambridge Collection)

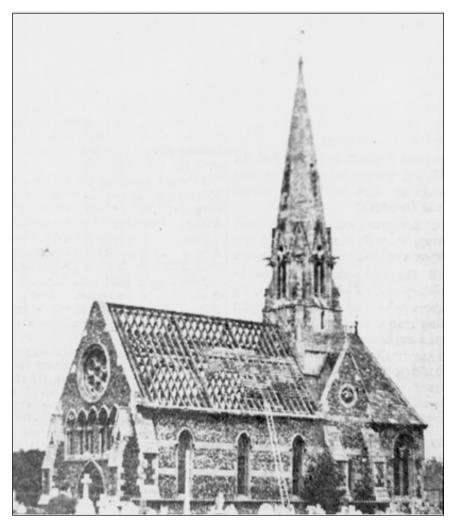


Plate 2: The Mortuary Chapel during demolition, viewed from the south (Courtesy of the Cambridge Collection)







Plate 3: Test pit 1 after excavation



Plate 4: Test pit 2 after excavation

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