



# 291 Hills Road, Cambridge

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

March 2020

**Client: Enterprise Property Group Ltd**

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## 291 Hills Road, Cambridge

### *Archaeological Evaluation Report*

*Written by Edmund Cole BSc*

*With illustrations by Sara Alberigi*

#### Contents

Summary.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
<b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Scope of work.....	1
1.2 Location, topography and geology .....	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background .....	1
<b>2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Aims.....	3
2.2 Methodology .....	3
<b>3 RESULTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Introduction and presentation of results.....	5
3.2 General soils and ground conditions .....	5
3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.4 Insert description title (e.g. Trench 1, or Trenches in Field 1 etc).....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.5 Insert description title (e.g. Trench 2, or Trenches in Field 2 etc).....	5
3.6 Finds summary.....	5
<b>4 DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1 Reliability of field investigation.....	6
4.2 Evaluation objectives and results.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.3 Interpretation .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.4 Significance.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<b>APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>APPENDIX B BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>APPENDIX C OASIS REPORT FORM .....</b>	<b>9</b>

## List of Figures

- Figure 1 Site location map  
Figure 2 HER data map surrounding the investigated area

## List of Plates

- Plate 1 Site view showing Trench 2 in the back garden of the house, looking north-east  
Plate 2 Site view showing Trench 1 in the front garden of the house, looking east  
Plate 3 Trench 1, looking north-east  
Plate 4 Trench 2, looking north  
Plate 5 Section of Trench 2 showing made ground (3), looking east  
Plate 6 Section of modern feature 1 in Trench 2, looking east  
Plate 7 Section showing bioturbation in Trench 2, looking south-east

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## Summary

On the 16th of March 2020, Oxford Archaeology East (OAE) conducted an archaeological investigation on land at 291 Hills Road in Cambridge, Cambridgeshire (centered TL 4663 5559) ahead of residential development. Two trial trenches were excavated.

The site was devoid of archaeological remains. Trench 1 was completely blank while Trench 2 exposed a modern made ground layer underlying the topsoil, with patches of bioturbation, caused by tree roots, visible in the underlying natural geology. One modern feature, a shallow pit or hollow containing modern building material, was found sealed by the made ground at the northern end of the trench.

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## Acknowledgements

OAE would like to thank Enterprise Property Group Ltd for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Andy Thomas who monitored the work on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CHET) and provided advice and guidance.

The project was managed for OAE by Pat Moan. The fieldwork was directed by Edmund Cole, who was supported by Lattenbury Services. Survey and digitising was carried out by Valerio Pinna. Thanks to Sara Alberigi for producing the illustrations. Thanks are also extended to Kathrine Hamilton who prepared the archive.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 OAE was commissioned by Enterprise Property Group Ltd to undertake a trial trench evaluation at the site of 291 Hills Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 4663 5559; Figure 1; Plate 1-2).
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref. 17/1372/FUL). A brief was set by Andy Thomas of CHET outlining the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to discharge the planning condition. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced by OAE (Moan 2020) detailing the methods by which OAE proposed to meet the requirements of the brief. This document outlines how OAE implemented the specified requirements.

### 1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies on the southern edge of the city of Cambridge and to the north-east of Addenbrooke's Hospital. It is located just off the junction between Hills Road (A1307) to the west and the Queen Edith's Way (A1134) to the south and residential properties north and east.
- 1.2.2 The site is situated on a relatively level piece of land at 15m above Ordnance Datum (OD).
- 1.2.3 The investigated area consists of a large residential property and its associated back gardens. The property is to be demolished and replaced by residential development containing 15 flats, along with access, car parking and associated landscaping.
- 1.2.4 The geology of the area is mapped as West Melbury Marl Chalk Formation, with no superficial deposits recorded (British Geological Survey Online Viewer, accessed 19/03/2020)  
<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyofBritain/viewer.html>).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site is derived from the information provided by OAE in the WSI (Moan 2020) and supplemented by information from the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). Pertinent records are shown in Figure 2.
- 1.3.2 The site is situated in an area of high archaeological potential, particularly known for its dense archaeological remains from the prehistoric and Roman periods.

#### *Prehistoric*

- 1.3.3 The Addenbrooke's landscape contains extensive evidence for Bronze Age activity. A Middle Bronze Age triple ditched enclosure has been investigated on the Addenbrooke's 2020 Lands (CHER 08339), c.1km to the south-west of the current site.
- 1.3.4 Further field systems, three post alignments and a pit alignment were recovered from the excavations at the Bell Language School 800m to the south (ECB 3736).

- 1.3.5 At Addenbrooke's Hospital, c.500m to the south-west of the development area, the excavation of a Middle Iron Age settlement was carried out (CHER 04800). Findings included a sub-rectangular enclosure, a house, ditches, a pit and a post hole.
- 1.3.6 The Addenbrooke's Hutchison site (CB 15770), situated c.700m west revealed Late Iron Age ditched enclosures and roundhouses.

### *Roman*

- 1.3.7 Roman activity at the Hutchison site (CB 15770) focused on a large sub-rectangular enclosure which was sub-divided into smaller compounds. A possible east to west aligned road was also identified at the southern end of site along with eleven kilns and a mid to late 1st century cemetery.
- 1.3.8 Archaeological works carried out on the Addenbrooke's southern perimeter road (ECB 3959) 800m to the south-west, revealed two portions of an Early Roman field system along with three phases of Roman enclosure ditches and a kiln containing pottery dated to the 1st century.
- 1.3.9 The projected course of the Roman road Via Devana is located directly west of the site, heading south-east from Cambridge to Colchester (CHER 07970). A high density of finds related to Roman occupation are also concentrated around the junction of the A1307 Hills Road and the A1134 Queen Edith's Way (CHER 04812; CHER 04821; CHER 04824), including burials (CHER 04820; CHER 07972).



## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 This evaluation sought to establish the character, date and state of preservation of archaeological remains within the proposed development area. Specifically, the scheme of works aimed to:
- i. establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains on the site, characterise where they are found (location, depth and extent), and establish the quality of preservation of any archaeology and environmental remains
  - ii. provide sufficient coverage to establish the character, condition, date and purpose of any archaeological deposits
  - iii. provide sufficient coverage to evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking deposits
  - iv. provide – in the event that archaeological remains were found – sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables, and orders of cost.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Two trenches measuring 10m long and 2m wide were machine excavated. This equates to a 5% sample of the impacted development area, as required by CHET. The siting of the trenches was decided upon when on-site and were surveyed in the most suitable locations, considering site obstructions.
- 2.2.2 Before trenching took place, the footprint of each trench was scanned by a qualified and experienced operator using a CAT and Genny with a valid calibration certificate.
- 2.2.3 All machine excavation took place under the supervision of a suitably qualified archaeologist.
- 2.2.4 The trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator to the depth of geological horizons; the average depth of Trench 1 being 0.48m and Trench 2 being 0.55m. A toothless ditching bucket with a width of 2m was used to excavate the trenches. Overburden was excavated in spits no greater than 0.1m thick.
- 2.2.5 Spoil was stored alongside trenches. Topsoil and subsoil were kept separate during excavation to allow for sequential backfilling of the excavations. Trenches were not backfilled without the approval of CHET.
- 2.2.6 The mechanically exposed surface of the natural geology in Trench 2 was cleaned by hand in order to clarify and locate features.
- 2.2.7 Possible features were hand excavated in order to adequately characterise them and establish whether they were of archaeological interest.
- 2.2.8 There was sufficient excavation (down to undisturbed natural geology) to give clear evidence for the date, depth, nature and sequence of the deposits.
- 2.2.9 Records comprised survey, drawn, written and photographic data.

- 2.2.10 Surveying was carried out using a survey-grade differential GPS (Leica) fitted with 'smartnet' technology with an accuracy of 5mm horizontal and 10mm vertical.
- 2.2.11 A register of the trenches, feature, photographs and drawings was kept
- 2.2.12 All layers, deposits and the modern feature found in Trench 2 were issued with unique context numbers. The modern feature was individually documented on a context sheet, and hand-drawn in section. Written descriptions were recorded on proforma sheets comprising factual data and interpretative elements.
- 2.2.13 The section of the single modern feature in Trench 2 was hand-drawn at 1:20 scale and plans of the two trenches were drawn at 1:50 scale. The drawings included the following information: site name, site code, scale, section and plan numbers, relevant context numbers, orientation, date and the initials of the archaeologist who prepared the drawings.
- 2.2.14 The photographic record comprised high resolution digital photographs.
- 2.2.15 Photographs included general shots of the site and the individual trenches as well as photographs of features and deposits found in Trench 2. Where relevant, photographs included a scale, north arrow, site code, and feature number, unless they are to be used in publications. The photograph register recorded these details, and photograph numbers were listed on corresponding context sheets.
- 2.2.16 Bucket samples of 90 litres of excavated topsoil, subsoil and made ground were checked for artefacts and ecofacts.
- 2.2.17 Metal detector searches took place at all stages of the excavation by an experienced metal detector user. Excavated areas were detected immediately before and after mechanical stripping. Both excavated areas and spoil heaps were checked.
- 2.2.18 Metal detectors were not set to discriminate against iron.

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below. Both trenches were located within the garden of the residential property (Plates 1 and 2); Trench 1 (Plate 3) was blank, and will not be discussed further, whereas, Trench 2 did reveal modern features/deposits (Plate 4). No features or finds of archaeological significance were found in either of the trenches.
- 3.1.2 Full details of both trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A.

### 3.2 Ground conditions

- 3.2.1 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, and the site remained dry throughout. Features were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

### 3.3 Trench 2

- 3.3.1 Trench 2 (Plate 4) was located on the east side of the residential property and was orientated north to south.
- 3.3.2 Across the whole trench, a layer of modern made ground ((3); Plate 5) was revealed underlying the topsoil (4) and overlying the natural geology (5). This was a mixed deposit of light, mid and very dark grey clayey silt, containing a significant amount of modern brick, mortar and concrete.
- 3.3.3 A modern feature (1), a very shallow pit or hollow cut into the natural geology, was revealed at the northern end of the trench (Plate 6). The shape and extent in plan were undetermined, but in profile it was shallow, steep sided with a gradual break in slope and flat-based. It was filled by a mixed deposit (2), that was very similar and probably the same as to the overlying made ground layer ground (3). This fill also contained modern brick and mortar.
- 3.3.4 Irregular elongated/linear patches of bioturbation caused by tree roots were found at the southern end of the trench (Plate 7).

### 3.4 Finds summary

- 3.4.1 The only finds revealed from the evaluation include building material from the modern deposits in Trench 2. None of this material was retained. Metal detecting and bucket sampling of the excavated areas and spoil heaps did not produce any other artefacts or ecofacts.

## **4 DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Reliability of field investigation and interpretation**

- 4.1.1 The investigation is considered to have produced reliable results; the level of natural geology was easily defined and any features/disturbances to the natural were readily identified. The made ground (3) and single possible feature (1) in Trench 2 represent a recent event of modern disturbance of the site, which may have caused some damage or truncation to any archaeological remains in this area.
- 4.1.2 Despite the relatively rich record of the prehistoric and Roman activity in the area, the evaluation clearly demonstrated an absence of archaeological remains in the area sampled by the trenching.

## APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	SE-NW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of greyish white clay.					<b>Length (m)</b>	10
					<b>Width (m)</b>	2
					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.48
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
8	Layer	-	0.18	Topsoil	-	-
7	Layer	-	0.23-0.34	Subsoil	-	-
6	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 2						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	N-S
Trench contained one shallow pit. Consists of topsoil and layer of made ground overlying natural geology of greyish white clay. Patches of bioturbation, caused by tree roots, were found towards the southern end of the trench.					<b>Length (m)</b>	10
					<b>Width (m)</b>	2
					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.55
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
5	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
4	Layer	-	0.10-0.18	Topsoil	-	-
3	Layer	Indeterminate	0.32-0.47	Made ground	Brick, mortar and concrete	Modern
2	Fill	Indeterminate	0.12	Fill of pit 1	Brick, mortar	Modern
1	Cut	Indeterminate	0.12	Pit	-	Modern

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## APPENDIX B      BIBLIOGRAPHY

British Geological Survey Online Viewer,  
<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyofBritain/viewer.html> (accessed  
19/02/20)

Moan, P. 2020, *291 Hills Road, Cambridge. Written Scheme of Investigation*. OA East (unpublished)

## APPENDIX C OASIS REPORT FORM

### Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-384763		
Project Name	291 Hills Road, Cambridge		
Start of Fieldwork	16/03/2020	End of Fieldwork	16/03/2020
Previous Work	No	Future Work	No

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	ECB6185	Planning App. No.	17/1372/FUL
HER Number	ECB6185	Related Numbers	n/a

Prompt	Planning condition - NPPF
Development Type	Residential
Place in Planning Process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Techniques used (tick all that apply)

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography – interpretation | <input type="checkbox"/> Grab-sampling              | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new            | <input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-core               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning             | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording of Fabric/Structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Augering                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey            | <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors | <input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey           | <input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling              | <input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey     | <input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey        | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography      |   |

Monument	Period	Object	Period
N/A	Choose an item.	N/A	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.		Choose an item.
	Choose an item.		Choose an item.

Insert more lines as appropriate.

### Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Address (including Postcode) 291 Hills Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB2 8RP
District	Cambridge City	
Parish	Queen Edith's	
HER office	Cambridgeshire	
Size of Study Area	840 sqm	
National Grid Ref	TL 4663 5559	

### Project Originators

Organisation	Oxford Archaeology East
Project Brief Originator	Andy Thomas
Project Design Originator	Pat Moan

Project Manager	Pat Moan
Project Supervisor	Edmund Cole

## Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	N/A	N/A
Digital Archive	OA East	CAMHLL20
Paper Archive	CCC Stores	ECB6185

### Physical Contents

#### Present?

#### Digital files associated with Finds

#### Paperwork associated with Finds

Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

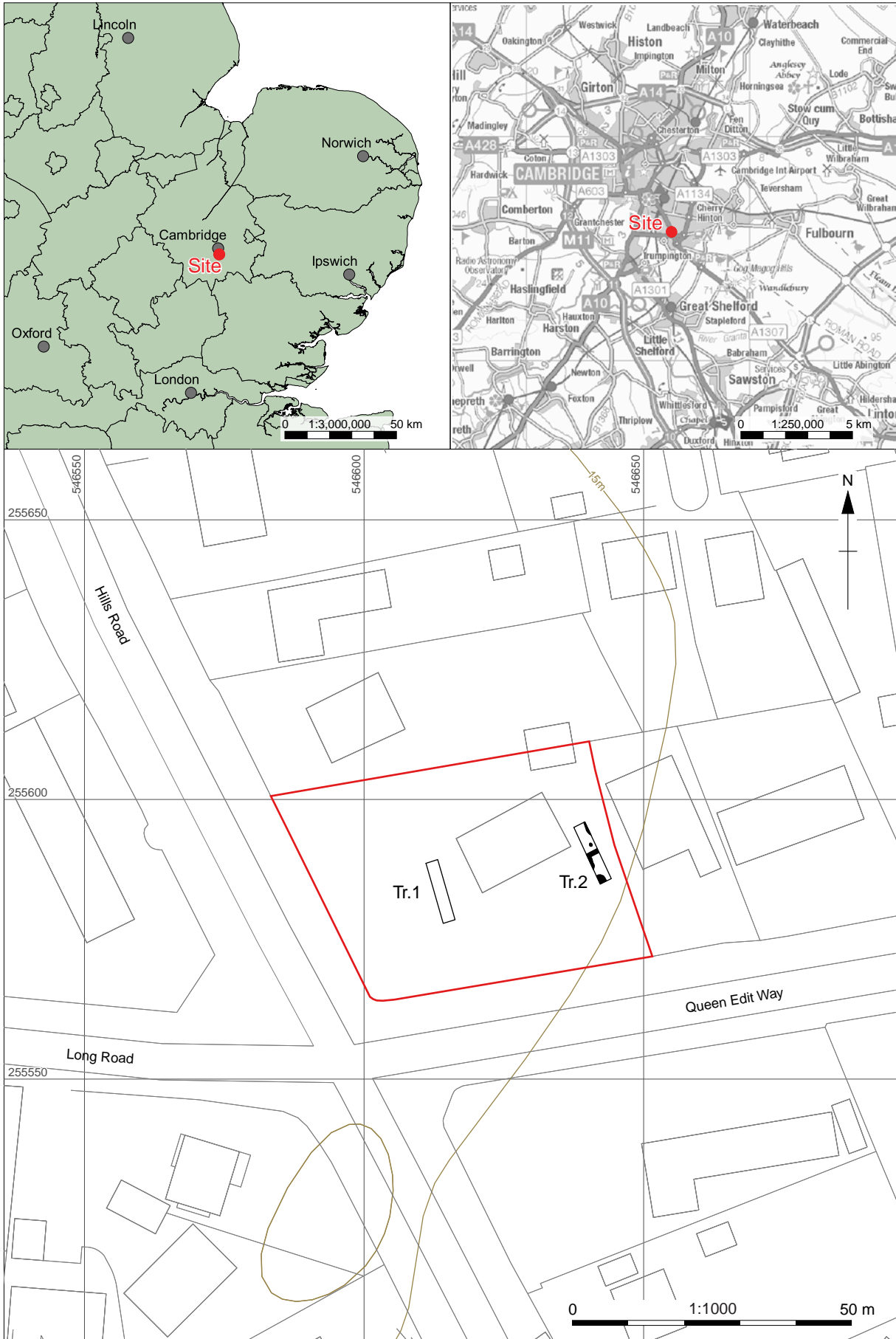
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Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Paper Media

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Context Sheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drawing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manuscript	<input type="checkbox"/>
Map	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matrices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Microfiche	<input type="checkbox"/>
Miscellaneous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research/Notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photos (negatives/prints/slides)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sections	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>





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Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trenches (black) in development area outlined (red)



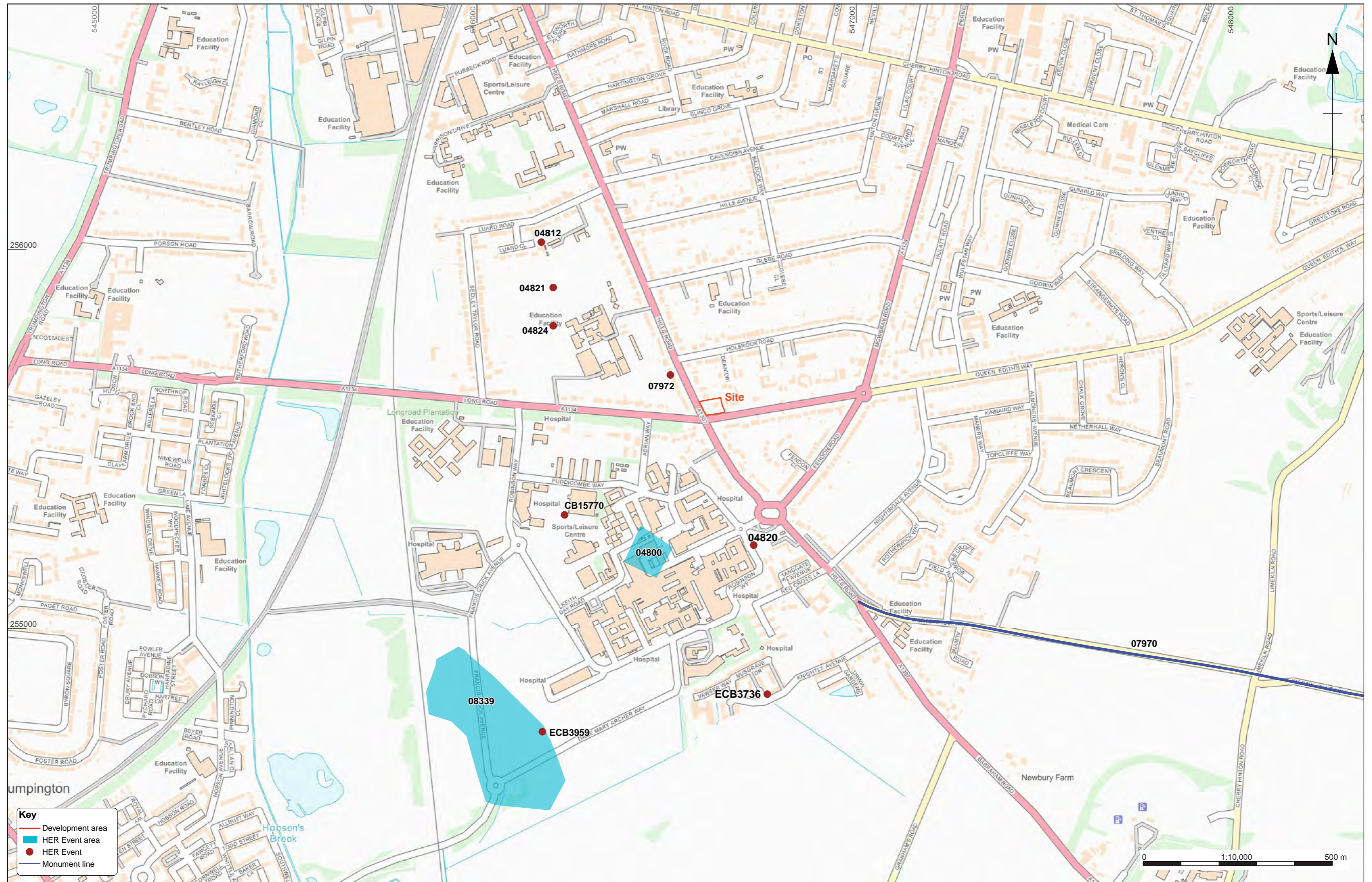


Figure 2: Map showing ChER data surrounding the investigated area, mentioned in the report





Plate 1: Site view, showing Trench 2 in the back garden of the house, looking north-east



Plate 2: Site view, showing Trench 1 in the front garden of the house, looking east





Plate 3: Trench 1, looking north-east



Plate 4: Trench 2, looking north





Plate 5: Section of Trench 2 showing made ground 3, looking east



Plate 6: Section of modern feature 1 in Trench 2, looking east





Plate 7: Section showing bioturbation in Trench 2, looking south-east



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