



Archaeological Field Unit

**14-18 Victoria Avenue, Cambridge:  
An Archaeological Evaluation**

Steve Hickling

April 2005

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No. 798

Commissioned by Keyasia Ltd

**14-18 Victoria Avenue, Cambridge:  
An Archaeological Evaluation**

Steve Hickling

April 2005

Editor: Elizabeth Shepherd Popescu  
Illustrator: Carlos Silva



Report No. 798

©Archaeological Field Unit  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Fulbourn Community Centre  
Haggis Gap, Fulbourn  
Cambridgeshire CB1 5HD  
Tel (01223) 576201  
Fax (01223) 880946

[arch.field.unit@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:arch.field.unit@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
<http://edweb.camcnty.gov.uk/afu>

## SUMMARY

*The Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) conducted an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching in April 2005 at 14-18 Victoria Avenue, Cambridge. The work was carried out in advance of the redevelopment of the plot into an apartment block.*











*Two trenches were excavated, revealing no archaeological features.*

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**







<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	
Figure 1 Site location plan	2
Figure 2 Trench plan and section drawings	4

# Drawing Conventions

## Sections

Limit of Excavation	
Cut	
Cut - Conjectured	
Soil Horizon	
Soil Horizon - Conjectured	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Top of Natural	
Top Surface	
Break in Section	
Cut Number	
Deposit Number	117
Ordnance Datum	$\frac{18.45\text{m}}{\times}$ ODN

## Plans

Limit of Excavation	
Deposit - Conjectured	
Natural Features	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Sondages/Machine Strip	
Illustrated Section	
Cut Number	118

**14-18 Victoria Avenue, Cambridge:  
An Archaeological Evaluation  
(TL 4531 5942)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

During April 2005 the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU) conducted an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at the rear of 14-18 Victoria Avenue, Cambridge. The work was carried out at the request of Keyasia Ltd and was undertaken in order to fulfil a brief for archaeological investigation issued by Kasia Gdaniec, Development Control Archaeologist, Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Section (Gdaniec 2004).

The site is located 1.5km to the east of the historic core of Cambridge city and 50m north of the River Cam. The Roman road represented by Chesterton Road lies 50m to the north. The proposed development (Planning application C/02/0618/FP) of this site includes the construction of an apartment block containing eight flats. An area totalling 17.2m<sup>2</sup> was investigated in two trenches.

**2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

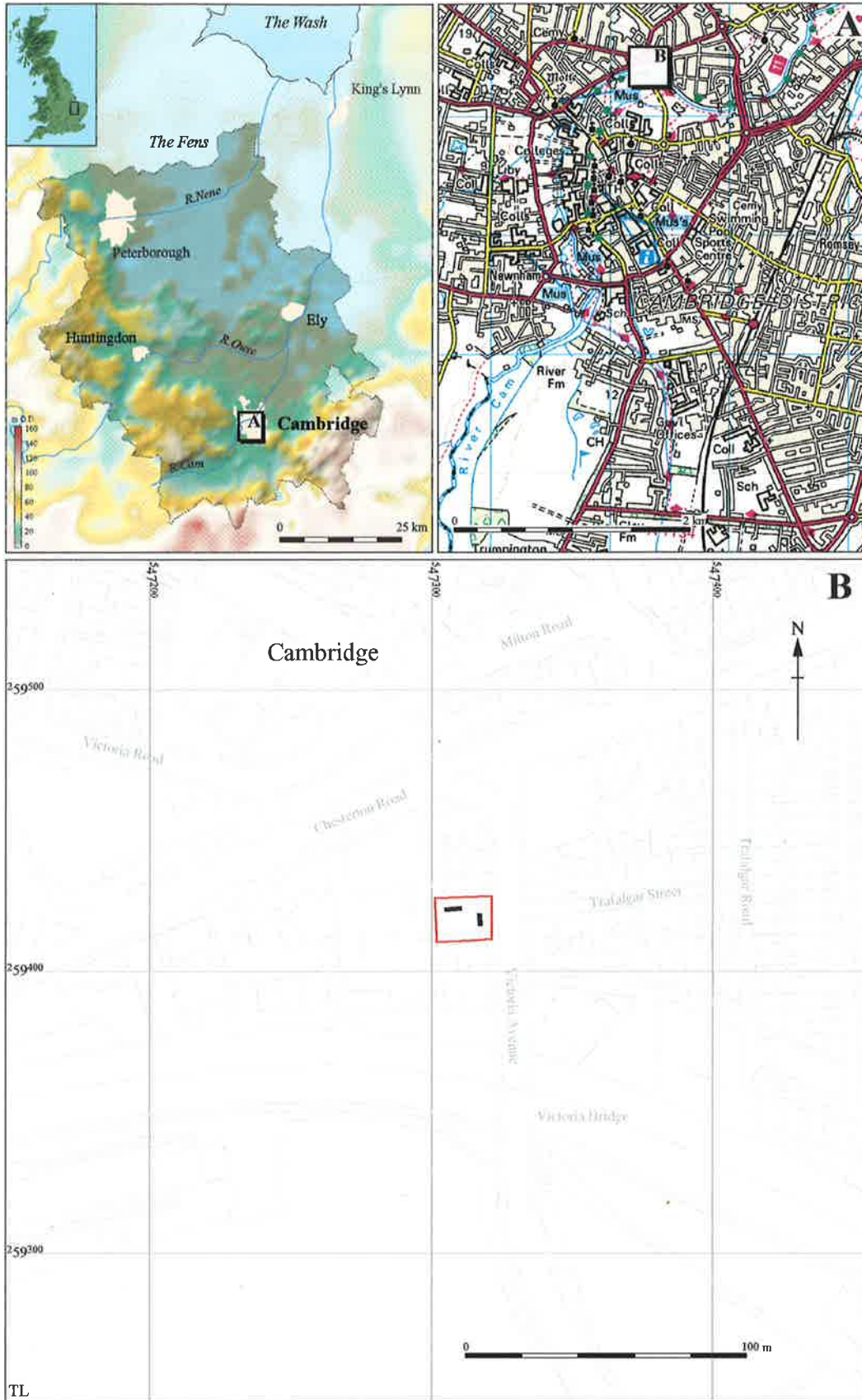
According to the British Geological Survey Map (Cambridge, Sheet 188, 1:50,000), the development site is situated on river gravels, adjacent to a spine of Gault Clay, which runs parallel to the meander of the River Cam.

The site is on land gently sloping to the south, at a height of 7.5m above sea level. It is on the north bank of the River Cam.

**3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Bronze Age activity has been noted south of the River Cam (SMR 4801).

The site lies 5-600m east of the walled Roman town centred on Castle Hill, and 1.5km south of extensive Roman remains at Kings Hedges, Arbury Road and Humphry's Road, comprising stone walls, wells, hearths and kilns (Macaulay 2003,7). Closer to the development site, Roman pottery has been found on Jesus Close (SMR 4621) and Roman drainpipes on Chesterton Road



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Cambridgeshire County Council 100023205 2005

**Figure 1** Location of evaluation trenches (black) and development area (red)

(SMR 4547). Chesterton Road is thought to have been a Roman road. It was thought that this site may fall within an area of Roman extramural settlement.

Anglo-Saxon inhumations were noted at Milton Road (SMR 4551).

The medieval Chesterton Abbey lies 800m to the East, along Chesterton Road (Scheduled Ancient Monument 25).

Archaeological investigations across the road (Hickling 2003) revealed medieval activity of an agricultural or horticultural nature.

Victoria Avenue and its river crossing are 19th century in date.

The area of the site appears to have been agricultural since at least medieval times, until the 19th century.

#### **4 METHODOLOGY**

Two trial trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using the backhoe of a JCB fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil and subsoil was stripped down to the level of the natural geology (in this case river gravels), where any cut features would become apparent.

The exposed surfaces were cleaned in order to clarify any features and deposits. All exposed features and deposits were excavated and recorded according to AFU standards and practices. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50, sections at 1:20.

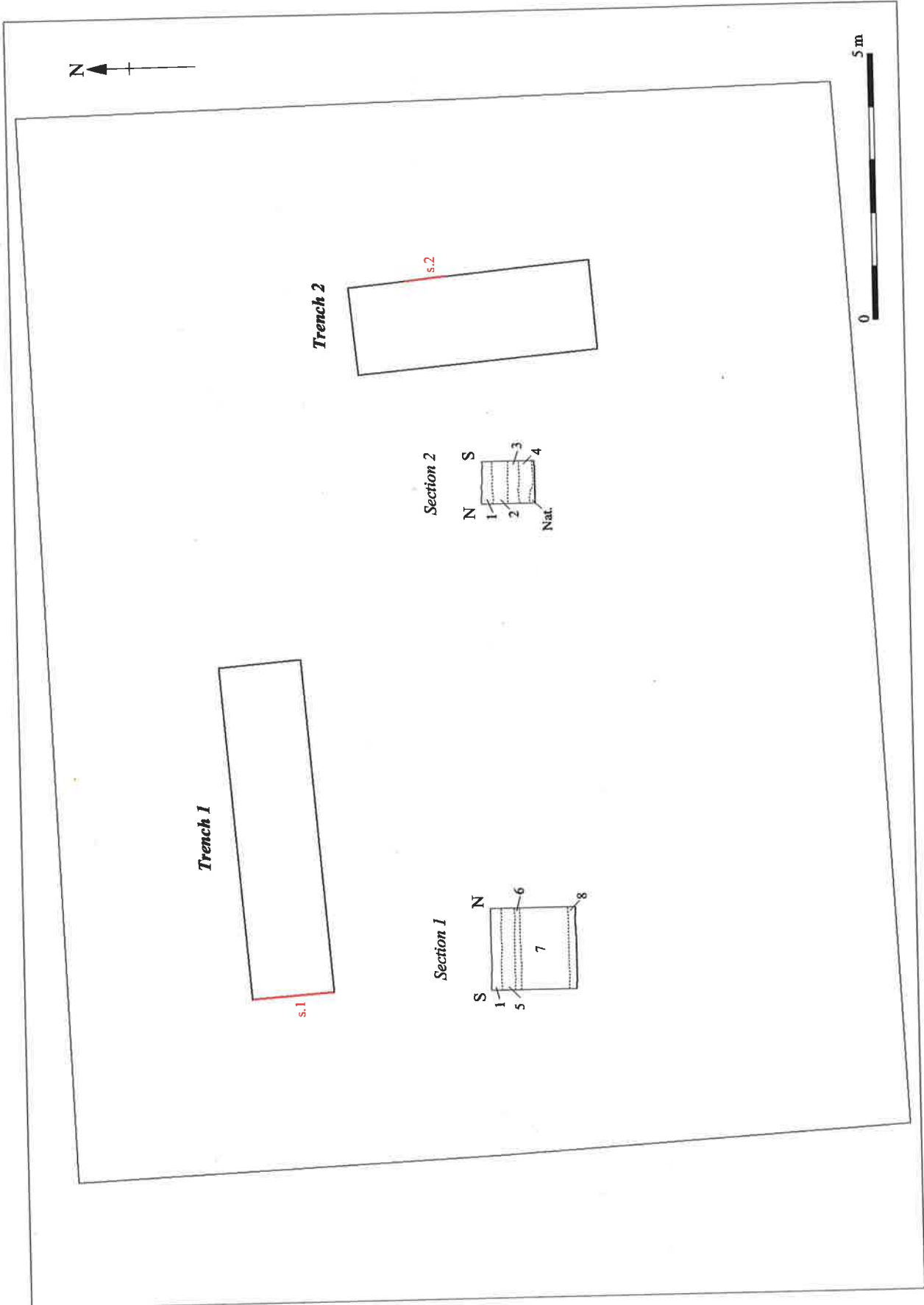
#### **5 RESULTS**

##### **Trench 1**

This trench was 6.25m long, 1.6m wide at the base and orientated east to west. It was excavated by machine to a depth of 1.6m, the sides being stepped for stability. The top 55cm consisted of modern building debris (layers 1,5 and 6). Below this was a layer 90cm deep of dark brown clay rich sand with gravel and occasional brick fragments (layer 7). Finally, just above the gravel natural was a layer of black gravely peat 15cm thick (layer 8). Two fragments of unglazed pottery were recovered from layer 8, dating from later than 1350.

There were no archaeological features present.





**Figure 2** Evaluation trenches and sections. Scale 1:100.

## **Trench 2**

This trench was 4.5m long, 1.6m wide and aligned north to south. It was excavated by machine to a depth of 1m. The top 20cm was modern building debris (layer 1). Below this was a 30cm thick layer of dark brown clay rich sand with frequent gravel and small amounts of modern pottery and brick fragments (layer 2). Below this was a 20cm thick layer of pale blue/grey clay (layer 3). The lowest layer (4), above the natural gravel, was a mid brown clay rich sand with frequent gravel and occasional pan tile fragments.

There were no archaeological features present.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

Although there were no archaeological features present in this evaluation, the difference in depth between the two trenches may be significant. Trench 1 was 60cm deeper than Trench 2 and contained a layer of peat, suggesting that this area was low lying and marshy. The fact that Trench 2, closer to the road was not as marshy may explain why the present bridge and Victoria Avenue were located here, on dryer land.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

There were no archaeological features present in either trench.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author would like to thank Keyasia Ltd who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Judith Roberts. Carlos Silva produced the illustrations for this report, while Carole Fletcher examined the pottery.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Kasia Gdaniec, County Archaeology Office. Adrian Scruby of the County Archaeology Office visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Gdaniec, K. 2004 *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation: 14-18 Victoria Avenue, Cambridge.* CCC CAO
- Hickling, S. 2003 *17-21 Victoria Avenue, Cambridge: An Archaeological Evaluation* CCC AFU report A227
- Macaulay, S. 2003 *An Archaeological Desktop Assessment: The new Milton Road Primary School Site, Cambridge* CCC AFU report A221

Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record



Cambridgeshire  
County Council

Education, Libraries  
and Heritage

*The Archaeological Field Unit  
Fulbourn Community Centre  
Haggis Gap  
Fulbourn  
Cambridge CB1 5HD  
Tel (01223) 881614  
Fax (01223) 880946*