

The Jaguar Land Rover Used Car Showroom, Newmarket Road, Cambridge

Archaeological Interim Statement



Jonathan Tabor

**THE JAGUAR LAND ROVER USED CAR
SHOWROOM, NEWMARKET ROAD,
CAMBRIDGE**

Archaeological Interim Statement

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Report No. 1342

Site Code JLU15
Event No. ECB4549
June 2016

Introduction

This interim statement outlines the results of archaeological excavation undertaken by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on behalf of Marshalls Group and Jaguar Land Rover. The site is located to the north of Newmarket Road on the eastern side of Cambridge and c.1km to the south of the village of Fen Ditton (centred on TL 4898 5929). An area totalling 1.8ha was machine stripped revealing archaeological remains dating from the Early Neolithic through to the post-medieval period (Figures 1 and 2). The vast majority of the archaeology comprises settlement features including pits, postholes, ditches and enclosures dating to a period spanning the Iron Age (c.800 BC – AD43).

The site lies c. 200m to the south-west of the site of Late Iron Age settlement and Early Roman kilns at Greenhouse Farm (Lucas and Gibson 2002) and c. 150m to the west of Middle Iron Age settlement remains excavated at the Newmarket Road Park and Ride site (Hinman 1997; Taylor 1998). Furthermore, multiple phases of archaeological evaluation undertaken by the CAU have identified extensive later prehistoric – particularly Iron Age – and Early Roman activity across the wider area (Collins 2013, Cooper 2003, Hatherley 2003, Mortimer 1997).

Results

A total of 988 archaeological features were recorded, dating largely to the Iron Age but also including at least one Neolithic pit, Early Roman ditches, medieval furrows and a single post-medieval boundary ditch. A substantial finds assemblage – again largely Iron Age in date – was recovered and is quantified in Table 1.

Material	Quantity	Weight (g)
Pottery	7317	113358
Animal bone	14865	240701
Human bone	803*	11886
Burnt clay/daub	853	31943
Flint	305	2259
Metalwork	28	201
Worked Stone	69	17322
Worked Clay	54	3226
Worked Bone	7	96
Slag	55	2036
Other	75	1830
Total	24431	424858

Table 1: Finds totals (*comprising six articulated/partially articulated skeletons and disarticulated bones)

No specialist work on the finds has yet been undertaken and consequently the following broad phasing is based on observations made in the field.

Pre-Iron Age

Pre-Iron Age activity was represented by a single pit, containing small quantities of pottery, provisionally dated to the Early Neolithic and worked flint. Further pits within the vicinity may yet produce a Neolithic date although on the whole activity during this period appears to have been limited. Evidence of further Neolithic/Early Bronze Age activity was also recorded in the form of residual flint within Iron Age features and while some degree of flintworking may have taken place in the Iron Age, a large proportion of the site's 305 worked flints seem most likely to be earlier prehistoric in date.

Small quantities of later Bronze Age pottery were also identified during the evaluation of the site (Mortimer 1997) and although as yet unidentified it seems likely that features dating to this period will be identified following specialist work.

Iron Age

Settlement remains at the site including enclosures, structures, pits, watering holes/wells and boundary ditches have been provisionally dated to a period spanning the Iron Age, with features identified during the site's evaluation (Mortimer 1997) producing pottery dating to the Early Iron Age (c. 600-300BC), the Middle Iron Age (c.300-100BC) and Late Iron Age (10BC-43 AD). The features are concentrated in the south and east of the excavation area and particularly in the south-eastern half where a dense pattern of ditches and enclosures represent multiple phases of activity.

A large pit (F.108) dating to the Early Iron Age was partially excavated during the 1997 evaluation (*ibid.*) and was 100% excavated during the current phase of excavation (Figure 3). Located in the south-west of the site the pit has now produced over 1500 sherds of pottery as well as a large quantity of animal bone and two neonate human burials. The pit appears to mark a concentration of Early Iron Age activity and at least 18 four-post structures in the vicinity as well as further pits and isolated postholes appear likely to be contemporary. Two adult human burials were also recorded in this part of the site; one was complete, lying in a supine extended position, whilst the other was extremely truncated and comprised only the partial remains of a left leg. This possible concentration of Early Iron Age activity appears to have been unenclosed and based on the apparent shift – recorded widely in the region – from open settlement to enclosed settlement during the Middle Iron Age it seems likely that the majority of the sites' enclosures belong to the latter.

Middle Iron Age activity appears to have been concentrated in the south-eastern half of the site where multiple enclosures and a high density of pits were located. This area of activity was defined to the north-west by a multi-phase ditch (aligned north-east to south-west), which appears to have marked a major boundary. The majority of the site's c.500 pits were also located within this area and the remains clearly represent part of a substantial settlement site, which extends beyond the limit of excavation to the east and the Park and Ride excavations (Hinman 1997; Taylor 1998). Multiple phases of settlement and enclosure were in evidence and detailed phasing of the site will be undertaken once pottery spot dates have been attained. Finds recovered from the pits and enclosure ditches include large amounts of animal bone and pottery as well as fragments of burnt clay/daub, which were concentrated in

the southern half of the settlement area, suggesting that the enclosures in the north were probably not 'domestic'. No clearly defined structures were identified (although loose clusters of postholes were) and it seems likely that the construction technique of any contemporary houses (eg. on post-pads or very shallow – now truncated – postholes) makes their exact location very difficult, if not impossible, to identify. The remains or partial remains of four human skeletons, all buried within pits, were recorded within the settlement area. Three had been disturbed to varying degrees, however, a fourth was well preserved and buried with a pottery vessel, in addition the pit in which it was buried appeared to be one of a pair, of which the other contained a substantial deposit of animal bone (see Figure 3).

Late Iron Age/Conquest period activity was recorded by the 1997 evaluation in the south of the excavation area (Mortimer 1997) and further features recorded during the current excavation and provisionally dated to this period also appear to be concentrated in the south of the site. As such, it seems likely that the main focus of Late Iron Age/Conquest period activity may lie to the south of the site in an area identified as a potential settlement site by trial trenching in 2002 (Cooper and Evans 2003). A trackway in the north-western half of the excavation area, extending north-westward from the settlement also seems likely to Late Iron Age in date – although it is possible that it has earlier origins – and is linked by a second trackway (aligned north-east to south-west) to the Late Iron Age/Conquest period settlement at Greenhouse Farm to the north (Lucas and Gibson 2002)

Early Roman

Settlement at the site and within its immediate vicinity appears to have declined markedly following the Late Iron Age/Conquest period. Consequently, the only features, which yielded Early Roman finds were a series of boundary ditches, potentially forming a trackway, which originated during the (later?) Iron Age and probably continued in use into Roman period.

Summary

The Iron Age remains at the site represent a settlement of some scale and an archaeological site of considerable importance. Whilst earlier prehistoric activity is limited to one Neolithic pit, activity at the site appears to have spanned the Iron Age period before declining in the Early Roman period. This potentially unbroken sequence of occupation, associated with substantial artefactual assemblages, has considerable potential in furthering our understanding of Iron Age settlement and its economy. In addition, the significant pottery and animal bone assemblages have potential in advancing specialist studies in these areas whilst the human bone assemblage should provide important insight into the treatment of the dead during the Iron Age.

Acknowledgements

The work was commissioned by Marshall Group and the assistance and full cooperation of Richard Oakley and all those involved from Marshall Group Properties Ltd. as well as Guy Robertson of Bidwells is greatly appreciated. The CAU excavation team are also grateful for the cooperation throughout of the Regent Construction staff. The project was monitored by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team. The project was managed by Alison Dickens and the work of all the CAU site staff and post-excavation team is gratefully acknowledged.

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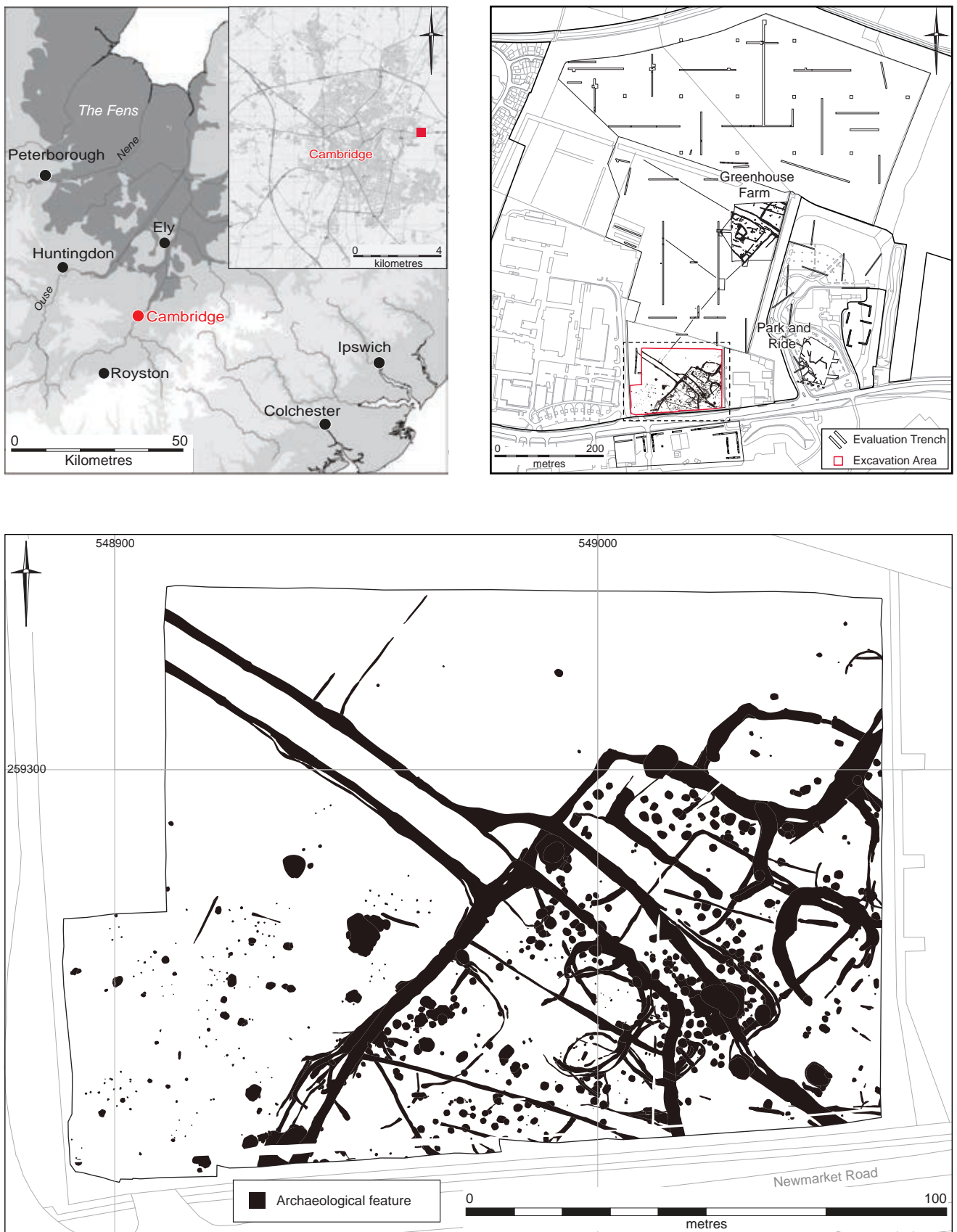


Figure 1. Site location and plan of excavation area

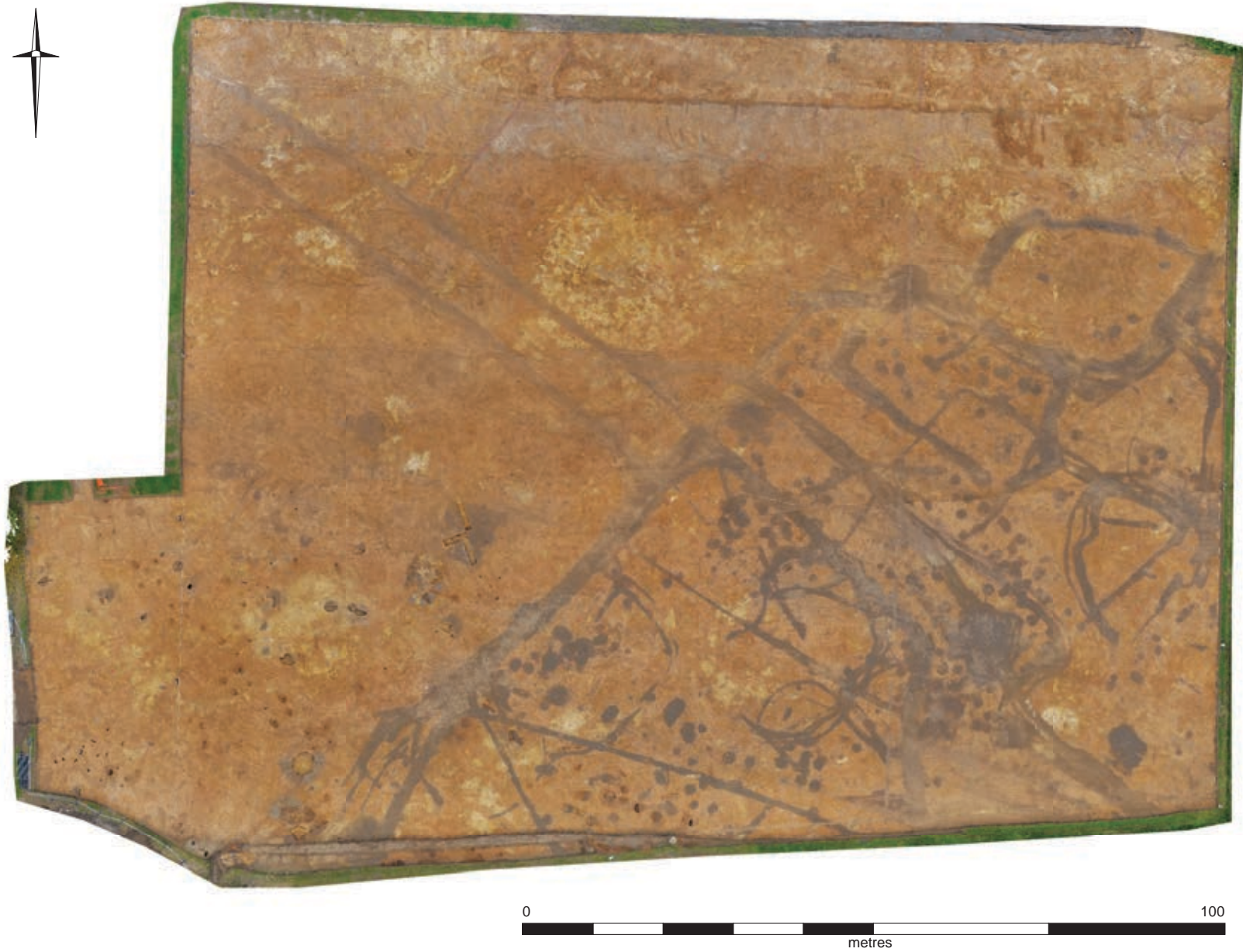


Figure 2. Aerial photograph of site

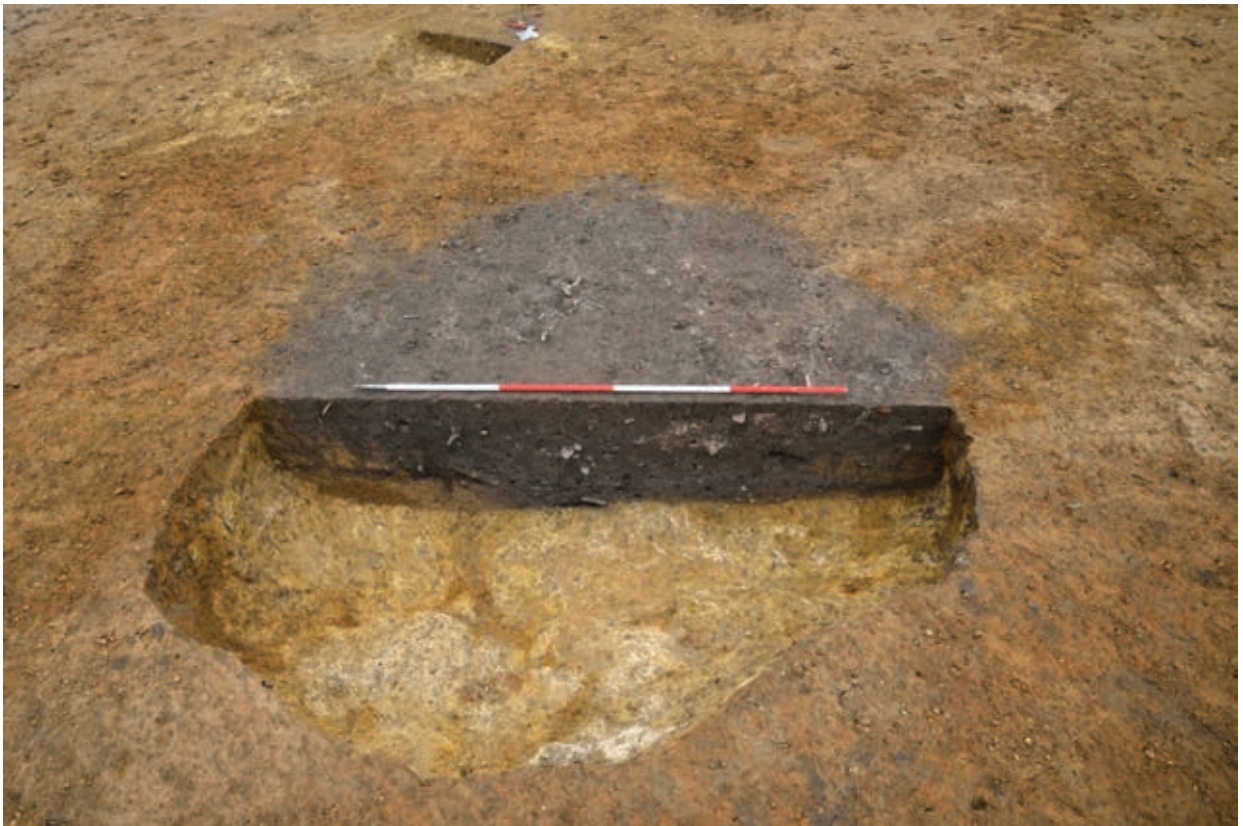


Figure 3. Iron Age pits. Pit F.108 (top), pits with human skeleton and animal bone deposit (bottom)