

Monitoring and Recording at
6 The Vineyards
Ely
Cambridgeshire



**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



July 2013

Client: Swift Build Ltd

OA East Report No: 1498

OASIS No: oxfordar3-155031

NGR: TL 5446 8032

Monitoring and Recording at 6 The Vineyards, Ely, Cambridgeshire

Watching Brief

Site Code: ELYVIN12
CHER No. ECB 3886
Date of Works: 9 - 10th July 2013
Report No: 1498
Excavator: Helen Stocks-Morgan
Client: Swift Build Ltd
Report Date: 11/07/2013

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Summary

On the 9th July 2013, OA East carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at 6 The Vineyards, Ely (TL 5446 8032). The monitoring was carried out during the excavation of foundations of a residential dwelling. No archaeological remains were encountered during the works.

1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.1.1 The underlying geology in the vicinity of Ely comprises of Kimmeridge Clay. The superficial deposits which were encountered during the excavations consisted of Lower Greensands (Woburn Sands) (BGS, 1980).
- 1.1.2 The site itself was located on a steep slope, facing south-east, with an average height of 20m OD.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Neolithic

- 2.1.1 Settlement and activity during the Neolithic is mainly concentrated along the fen-edge and along water courses. Little evidence of settlement has been found within Ely, however this may be the result of their remains being ephemeral within the archaeological record. Evidence for settlement in the environs of Ely have been recorded to the north of the site at Bray's Lane, where a roundhouse and several pits were found (Hunter, 1991).

Bronze Age

- 2.1.2 During the Bronze Age the climate deteriorated and Ely would have become a flooded landscape with little settlement. Within the immediate area a small pit which contained worked flint was recorded at 26 The Vineyards (McConnell, pers comm).

Iron Age

- 2.1.3 The area around Ely continued to be subject to periods of inundation during the Iron Age. The higher ground would have attracted some settlement, evidence for field systems was found at Bray's Lane (Hunter, 1991).

Roman

- 2.1.4 During the Early Roman period Ely continued to be unsuitable for settlement. During the later Roman period the climate improved and the water receded. The land around the Fen-edge became good agricultural land and was organised into farming estates. Evidence for this includes a series of rectilinear encloses and trackways at Prickwillow Road (CHER CB14805; Atkins and Mudd 2003)
- 2.1.5 These estates would have been located along a network of roads, allowing the transportation of produce to market. A Roman road (Akeman Street) runs north from Cambridge to Ely and on to Littleport, which was originally a Roman settlement. This followed the high ground close to the modern course of Lynn Road, although no trace of it has been found in the area (Phillips, 2013).

Saxon

- 2.1.6 The first reference to Ely in the historical record is in connection with the foundation of a monastery by Etheldreda in c. 673. It has often been assumed that the monastery stood on the site of the cathedral precinct but other possible sites include St Mary's church or the hospital of St John the Baptist. The town grew around the monastery and became an extensive settlement of nucleated houses, extending from the riverside to West Fen Road.
- 2.1.7 Within the immediate vicinity of the site remains of Late Saxon settlement have been attested by the recovery of residual pottery during excavations at Lisle Lane (Connor, pers comm).

Medieval

- 2.1.8 The Medieval town of Ely prospered, with settlement centred around the cathedral precinct. At this time Ely also developed a thriving port which became a centre of economic activity.
- 2.1.9 Within the vicinity of the site, evaluations at Tesco and Jewson's Yard found domestic occupation on the street frontage dating back to the 13th century, with channels and subsequent lanes and walls running east to the river. The Jewson's Yard site also produced industrial activity relating to tanning from the 14th-17th centuries, as well as kiln waste and shellfish dumps (ECB 383 Alexander 1998). A subsequent watching brief revealed domestic activity from the 12th-15th centuries and further industrial activity from the 16th century (ECB 1059 Cessford 2006).
- 2.1.10 The subject site is thought to have been located in an area of vineyards within the abbey precinct.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The soil stripping was carried out under archaeological supervision and the subsoil checked for any archaeological features, in accordance with a brief supplied by Cambridgeshire county council (McConnell, 2012).
- 3.1.2 The area of investigation was located on land at 6 The Vineyards, Ely (TL 5446 8032) (see fig. 1).
- 3.1.3 Deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 3.1.4 Site conditions were dry and sunny

4 RESULTS

4.1 Foundation Trenches

- 4.1.1 Four trenches, 0.7m wide, which formed the perimeter of a rectangle were excavated by tracked 8 tonne machine, using a toothed bucket. These measured 9m by 6m with the long axis orientated north-west to south-east. (see fig.2)
- 4.1.2 The north-western trench was excavated to a depth of 1.6m. The natural Kimmeridge clay was reached at a depth of 0.9m and this was overlain by a layer of Greensands measuring 0.5m deep. The Greensands were capped by a 0.6m thick, layer of dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil (1) (see plate 1). A modern service pipe was cut through the topsoil to the north-east of the trench.
- 4.1.3 The south-eastern trench was excavated to a depth of 1.9m deep. The Kimmeridge clay was reached at a depth of 1.4m and this was overlain by the Greensands, measuring 0.8m deep. The Greensands were capped by a layer of dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil (1) 0.6m thick. The continuation of the modern service pipe was seen to the north-east of the trench (see plate 2).

The two trenches running perpendicular showed the soil deposits gently sloping down following the natural topography of the land.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 No archaeological features were found during the watching brief. Despite inspection of the soils no finds were retrieved other than modern ceramic building material, this is likely a result of reworking of the soil during the recent past.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1.1 The author would like to thank Geoff and Daniel Argent of Swift Build who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Aileen Connor.
- 6.1.2 The brief for archaeological works was written by Dan McConnell, who monitored the watching brief.

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APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-155031		
Project Name	Monitoring and recording at 6 The Vineyards, Ely		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	10-07-2013	Finish	11-07-2013
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	ELYVIN12	Planning App. No.	11/00037/FUL
HER No.	ECB 3886	Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Field Observation (periodic visits)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Record
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Excavation (100%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Field Walking
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Metal Detector Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pit Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Open-Area Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief

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	Period	Object	Period
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<input type="text"/>	Select period...	<input type="text"/>	Select period...
<input type="text"/>	Select period...	<input type="text"/>	Select period...

Project Location

County	cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	Ely	6 The Vineyards, Ely CB7 4QG	
Parish	Ely		
HER	ECB 3886		
Study Area	Ely	National Grid Reference	TL 5442 8032

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Dan McConnell
Project Design Originator	
Project Manager	Aileen Connor
Supervisor	Helen Stocks-Morgan

Project Archives

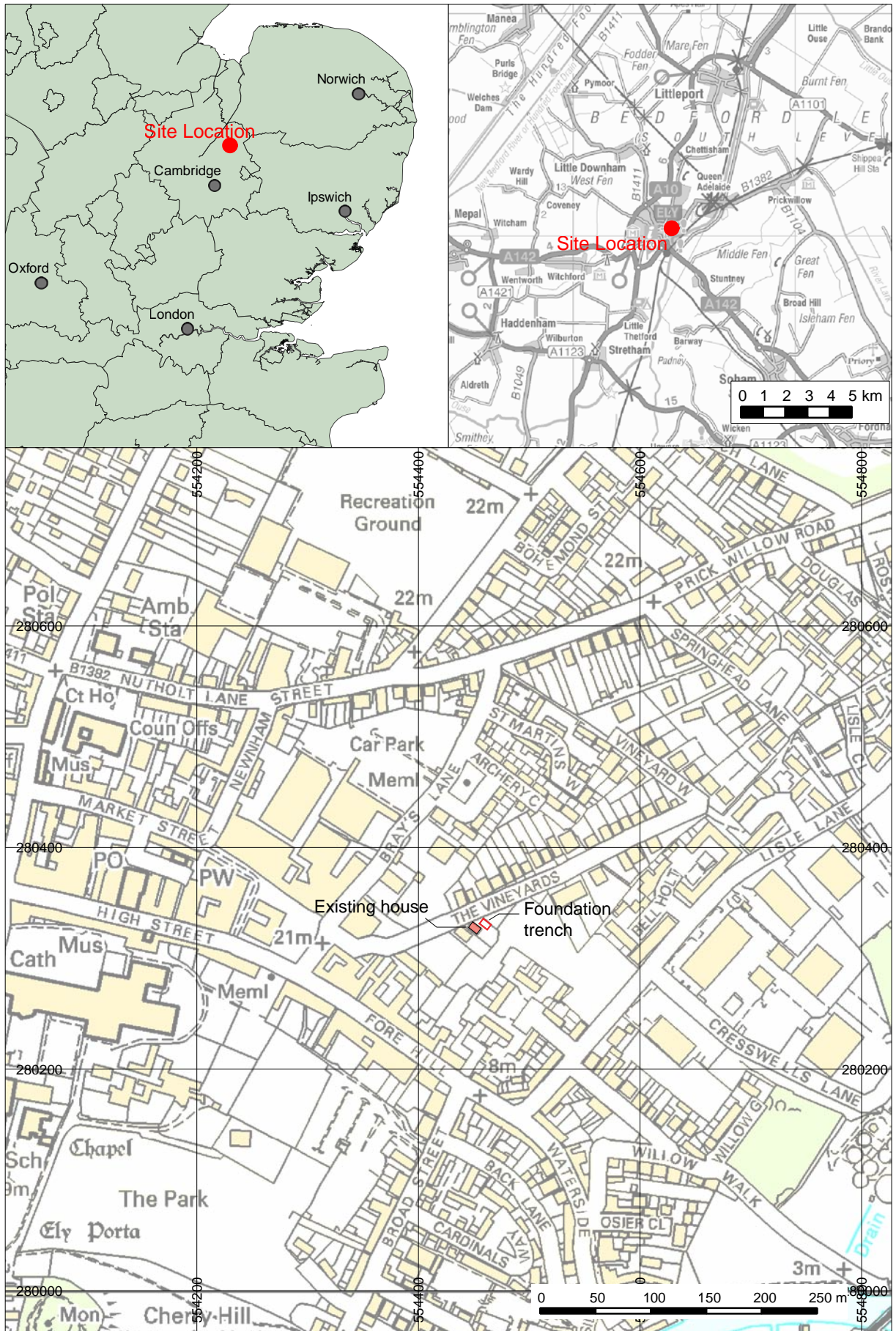
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Location ...	Location ...	Location ...
Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...

Archive Contents/Media

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location showing foundation trench

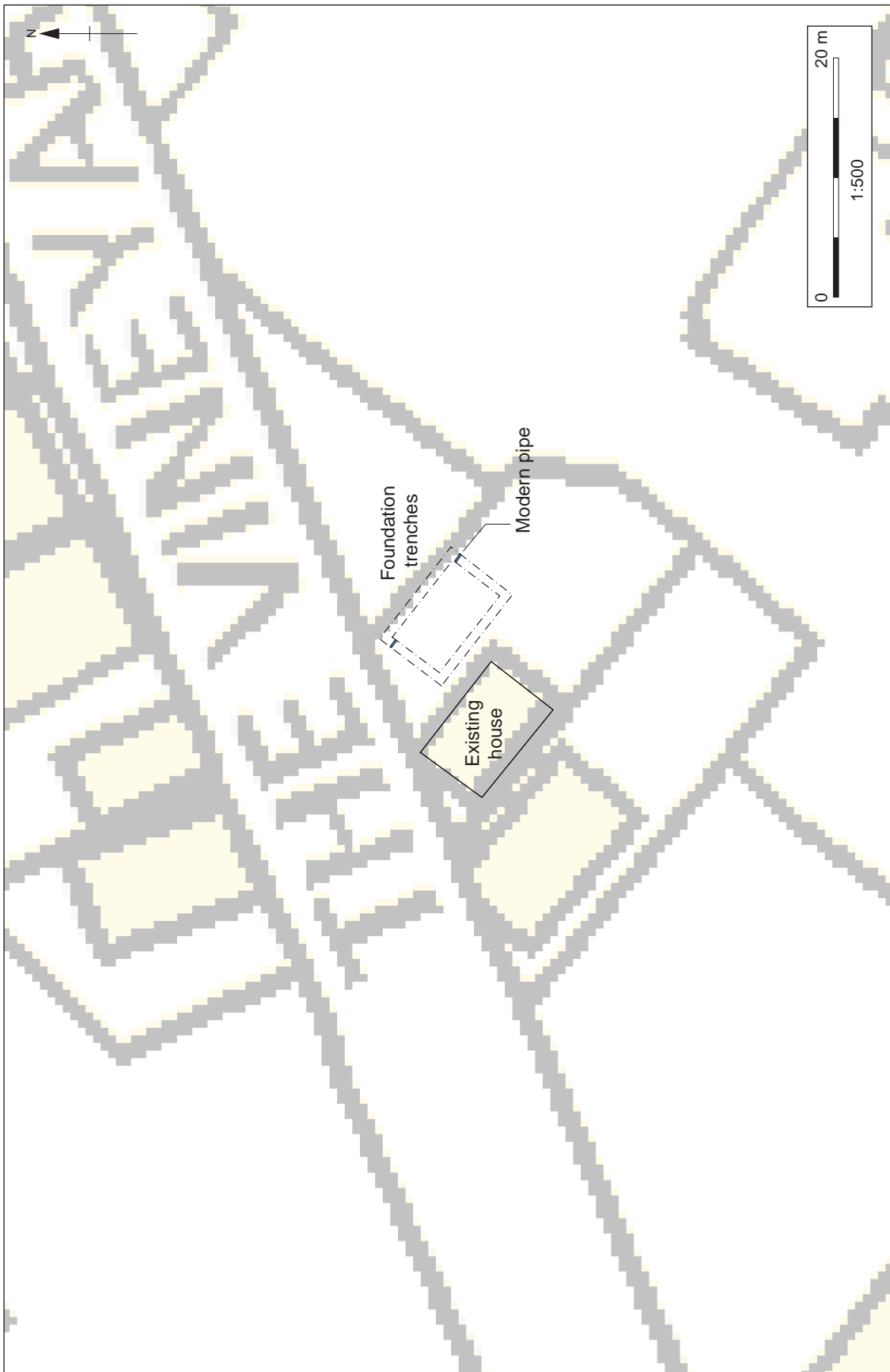


Figure 2: Trench plan (scale 1:500)



Plate 1: Section of south-eastern trench, looking north-west



Plate 2: Section of north-western trench looking south-east



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