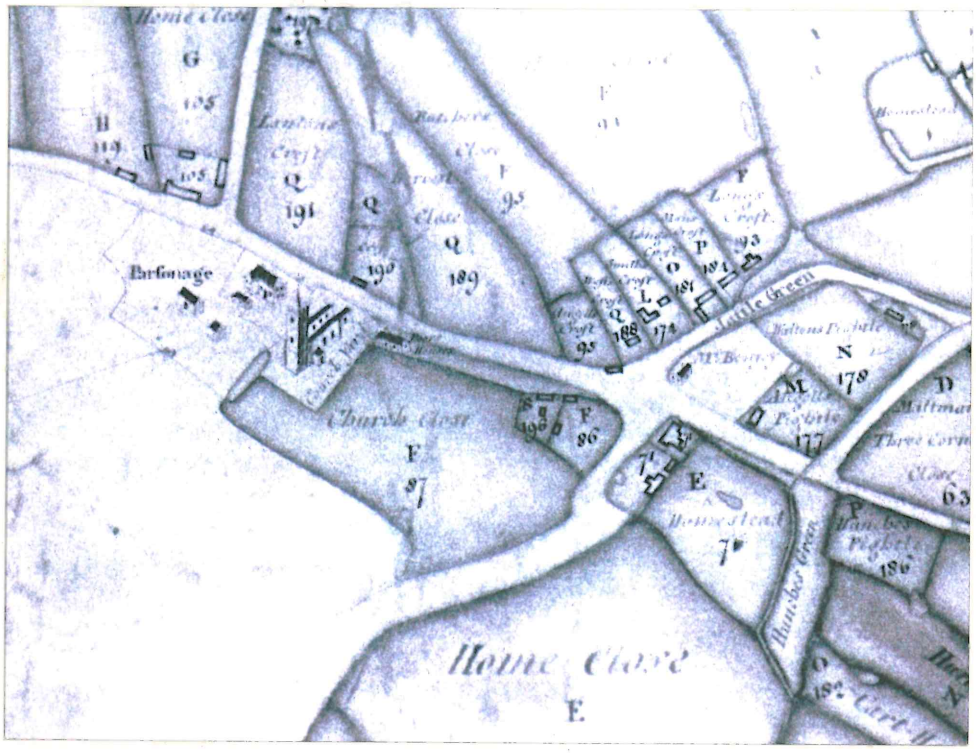


ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD OFFICE
FULBURN COMMUNITY CENTRE
HAGGIS GAP, FULBURN
CAMBRIDGE CB1 1SH

THE PARSONAGE, ABBOTS RIPTON



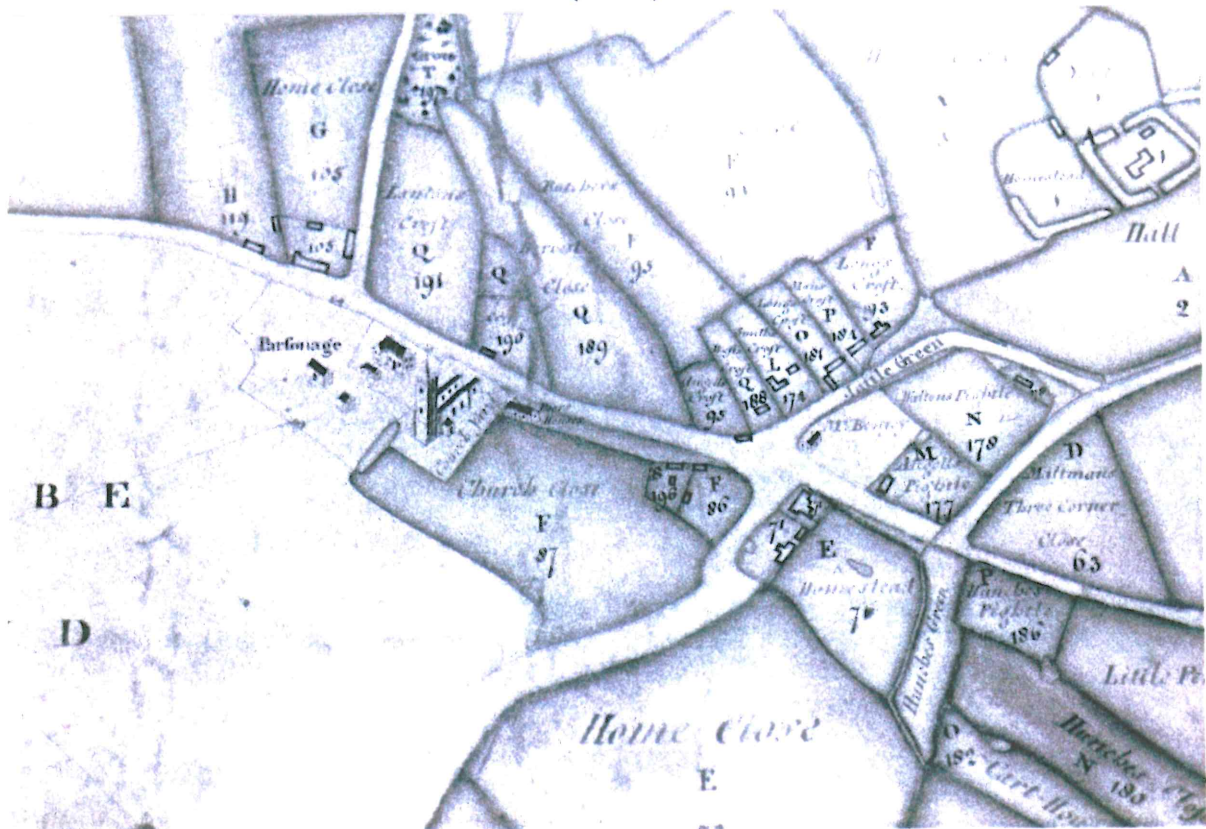
Cambridgeshire
County Council

The Parsonage, Abbots Ripton.

by Steve Kemp AIFA

Historical Report By Twigs Way BSc. MA. AIFA
Archaeological Landscape Consultant
January 1993

Cambridgeshire Archaeology
Property Department
Room 303, ShireHall
Castle Hill
Cambridge CB3 0AP
Tel. (0223) 317312



report no. 79

Abbots Ripton 1774/76 showing St. Andrews church and the parsonage.
(HRO Acc 2068/MD2)

Rectory Farm, Abbots Ripton.
Archaeological Field Evaluation, December 1992
Site Code: ART RF 92
NGR: 230/781

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Abstract

Following the submission of proposals for housing development within the village of Abbots Ripton, archaeological work was carried out by Cambridgeshire Archaeology, the County Councils archaeological field service during November 1992.

Evaluation areas lie on the north-western fringes of the village of Abbots Ripton in the vicinity of Rectory Farm and St. Andrews church. Three fields were assessed; these lay to the north, north-west and east of the present church.

Historical researches recognised the presence of a post-medieval parsonage located in the south-east corner of Site 1. The Archaeological evaluation showed that the site was heavily disturbed by demolition and robbing activities which are presumably related to the construction of the 19th century rectory.

The assessment suggests that this area may be important in understanding the present layout of the village and may provide information concerning the social framework.

Introduction

Proposals for housing development on three areas within the village of Abbots Ripton have been submitted by Strutt and Parker Property Consultants and Managers. Due to the proximity of the development sites to St. Andrews church the County Archaeological Office recommended an archaeological evaluation to ascertain the presence and nature of archaeological remains within the defined areas (see fig 1). This work was carried out by Cambridgeshire Archaeology, the County Council's archaeological field service on behalf of Strutt and Parker.

Background

1.1 *Location*

Evaluation areas lie on the north-western fringes of the village of Abbots Ripton, close to Rectory Farm and St. Andrews church. Three fields were assessed; these lay to the north, north-west and east of the present church (fig.2).

1.2 *Geology and topography*

The church lies on 'high' land (approximately 32m O.D), slightly lower than the twentieth century rectory (36m O.D) and Rectory Farm (38m O.D). The church overlooks the village lying to the south and presumably is visible from the hamlet of Wennington (45m O.D) to the north east of Abbots Ripton. Consolidated geological deposits are masked by Quaternary deposits of glacially derived moraine (boulder clay).

1.3 *History*

Parish

In the 10th century the Earl Alfwold granted Ripton with Wennington to Ramsey Abbey, these possessions were confirmed in the charter of AD 974 (VCH 1932). In 1086 Ripton was returned as a manor. From the 12th century Ripton became known as Abbots Ripton being held by the Abbots of Ramsey until the Dissolution. In 1794 the manor was acquired by William Fellowes (VCH 1932).

The Domesday survey (1086) records the existence of a church with priest at Ripton. The earliest evidence within the present church is of a building dating to the third and fourth decades of the 13th century (VCH 1932). Further alterations and rebuilding occurred in the 15th and 16th centuries. The church was restored in 1858 and 1868. The rebuilding was presumably associated with the construction of a 'new' rectory (RCHM 1926).

Site Specific

Records before 1623 have not been consulted due to problems of access. Early court rolls from when the manor was held by the Abbot of Ramsey are located at the British Museum and Public Record Office. Cartographic material dates back to 1623; this map shows the then existing field boundaries, church, and parsonage (lying to the south-east of the twentieth century rectory). Other buildings were situated at Rectory Farm and 'close' to the Girl Guide headquarters.

The parsonage is described in 1702 as a timber and tiled building, with a below stair's parlour, 6 chambers upstairs, and various outhouses within the grounds (see appendix 1). These buildings were demolished sometime between 1847 and 1886. The parsonage was replaced by a rectory, itself demolished in the mid-1970's.

Nineteenth and century developments included landscaping and terracing to the south of the rectory, and the construction of nissen huts by the Royal Air Force (see trench B).

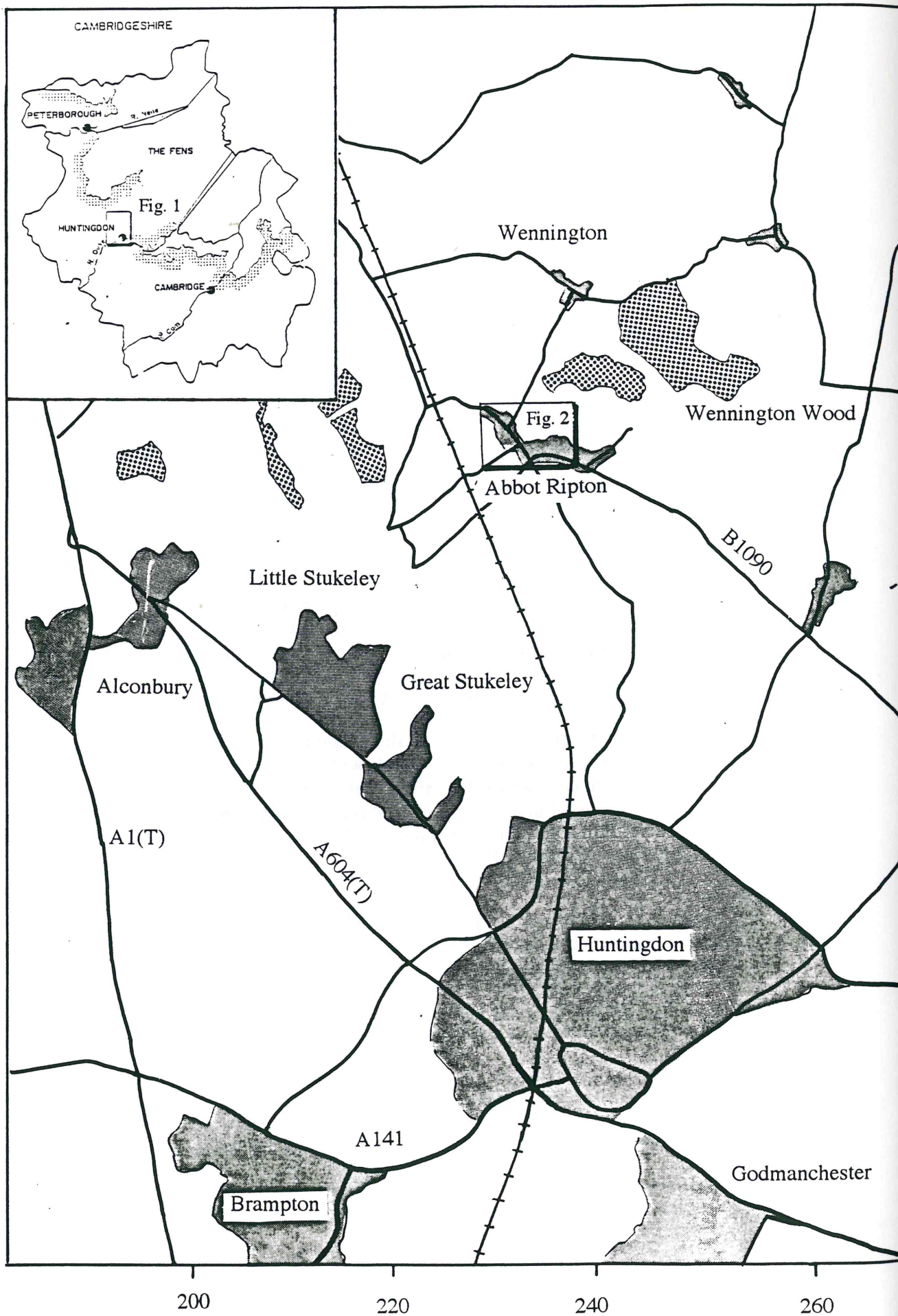


Fig.1 Location plan.

Site 1

The site contains the remains of several dwellings dating before 1623 and upto the 20th century with associated outhouses. The site has increased slightly taking in areas of glebe land lying to the west.

Documentary evidence (see appendix 1) suggests;

1. occupation and ownership of the site was closely connected to the church.
2. until recently the church and rectory lay on the northern edge of the village, this may indicate that the rectory site may be formed from more than one tenement suggesting that the village extended further northwards.
3. that the holding of the manor by Ramsey Abbey prior to the Dissolution may have important implications for the organisation of the village and in particular the status and placement of the parsonage.

Site 2

This site appears to have been under pasture for much of the area's known history.

Site 3

Historical evidence suggests that tenements may have existed prior to 1623 in the areas known as 'Simpson's' and 'Slanton's' crofts. A building is indicated on 1774/6 Fellowes estate map as lying within 'Simpson's' croft.

1.4 Archaeology

The Sites and Monuments Records for Cambridgeshire (SMR) was consulted to recover information concerning reported archaeological remains in the area.

No 'known' archaeological sites exists in the area, the sites lie in proximity to a thirteenth century (to recent) church. Domesday survey indicates the presence of an earlier church within the village, its exact location is unknown.

No prehistoric remains are recorded as have being found in the immediate vicinity of the sites. To the north of Site 2 lies a Roman settlement site recognised by DN Hall of the Fenland Survey, English Heritage. Other Roman sites are known to lie to the south of Abbots Ripton near to Mount Pleasant. Medieval remains include the moated manorial site at Moat House, Moat Lane, agricultural remains and numerous ponds which have been 'dated' to this period, one of which lies within Site 1 and two within site 2, one of which is still recognisable to the north of the Girl Guide headquarters. Deserted village remains lie near to Bellamy's Grove, a medieval moated site.

There are 16 Listed Buildings within Abbots Ripton 'dated' to earlier than the 18th century. Those within the vicinity of the assessment area have been marked on fig.2.

Archaeological Evaluation**2.1 Methodology**

Sixteen trenches were opened up within three areas to seek the presence of archaeological features. The trenches were opened by a digger/loader (JCB) with a 1.8m wide ditching bucket. Trenches were stripped to 'clean' *natural* except where features or rubble layers were recognised at higher levels (Fig.3).

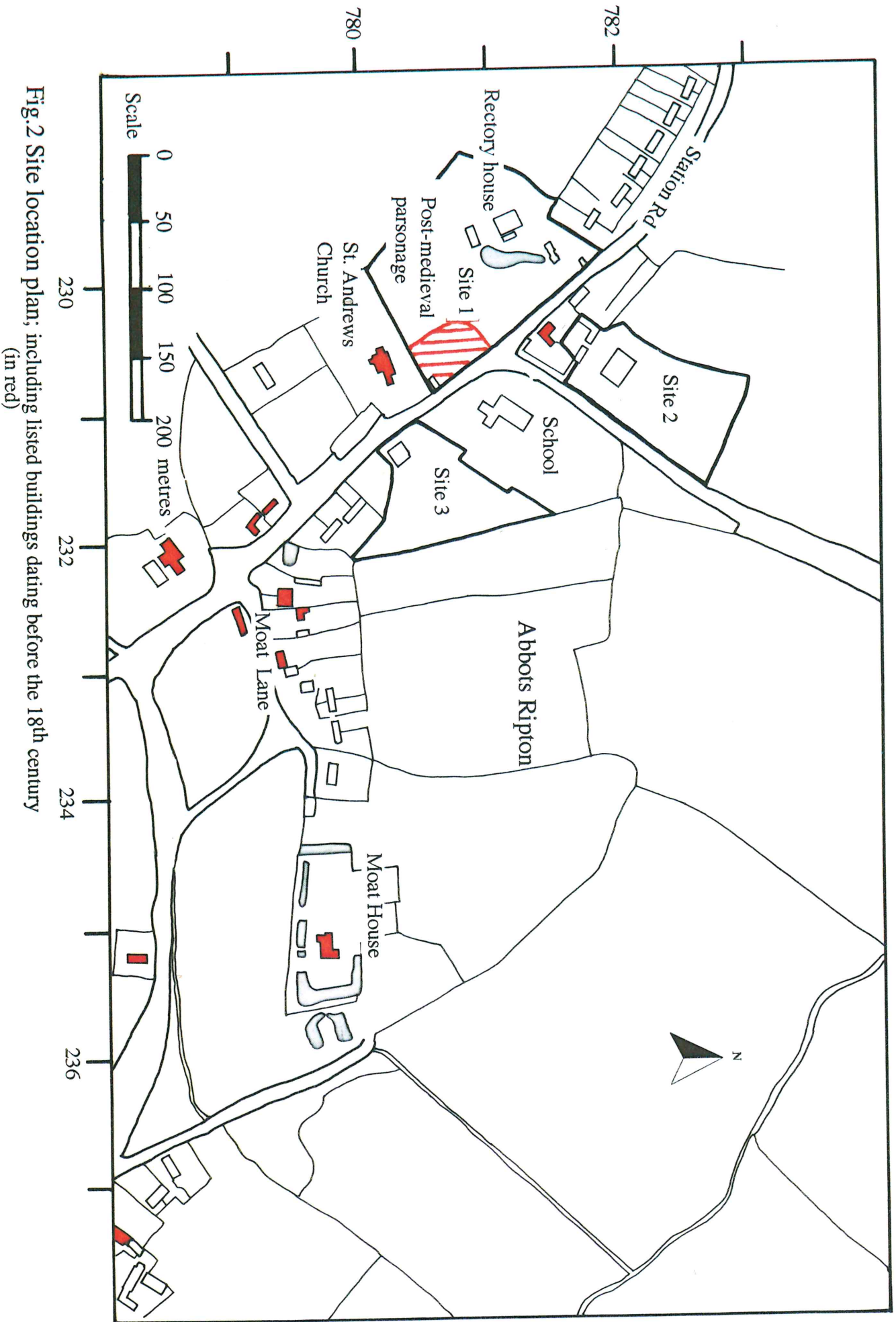


Fig. 2 Site location plan; including listed buildings dating before the 18th century (in red)

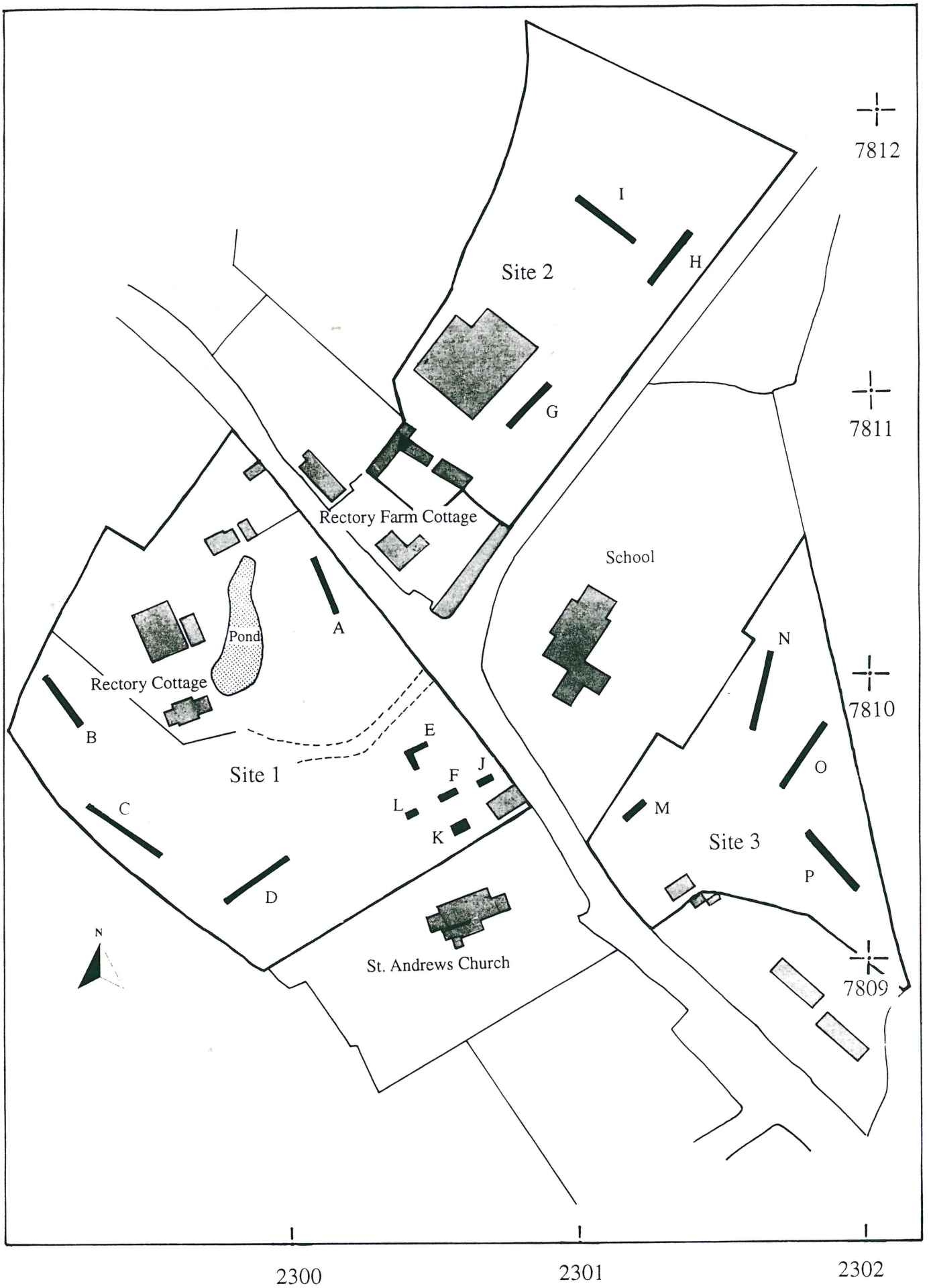


Fig.3 Trench location plan.

2.2 Trenching

Codes

(#) = Fill or Layer

[#] = Feature

{#} = Master No. - un-excavated Feature/Fill

Features listed in stratigraphical order.

Site 1

Site 1 lies to the north of St Andrews church. Nine trenches were opened in site 1 assessing 3% of the proposed development site. Trenching was restricted by existing buildings, demolition material associated with the nineteenth/twentieth century rectory and Tree Preservation Orders. Five trenches were opened to assess the nature and extent of post-medieval occupation and the potential for the preservation of medieval remains in the south-east corner of the site.

Trench Contexts and Description

- A. Located to the east of the pond within Rectory Cottage gardens. Series of late nineteenth/twentieth century pits and two east-west running ditches. Features remained un-excavated, finds recovered from these features during cleaning suggest a post-medieval to recent date.
Top-soil depth = 0.40m.
{3} yellowish-brown silty clays with mortar and charcoal flecks. *Pit* ? 0.80m in diameter, partially exposed against west section.
{4} yellowish-brown silty clays with mortar and charcoal fragments. *Pit* ? 1.0m in diameter, partially exposed against west section. Cuts {7}.
{7} yellowish-brown sandy clay with charcoal and brick fragments. 6.0m in width. East-west running *ditch* cut by pits {3} and {4}.
{5} light-grey silty clays with chalk flecks. 1.5m in width. *Ditch* runs north-east south-west across the trench.
{6} grey-brown silty clay with charcoal and mortar flecks. 1.5m in width. *Ditch* running north-east south-west across the trench.
- B. Located to the north-west of Rectory Cottage. No archaeological features noted.
Topsoil depth = 0.30m.
- C. Located to the south-west of Rectory Cottage. No archaeological features noted. Concrete bases for nissen huts were discovered during trenching, the site is associated with the Royal Air Force. 'Natural' deposits were undisturbed by this war time activity.
Top soil depth = 0.30m.
- D. Located to the south of Rectory Cottage and north-west of the church, within the landscaped gardens of the 19th century rectory. No archaeological features noted.
Topsoil depth = 0.30m-0.45m.
- E. L-shaped trench located to the north of St. Andrews church. Archaeology consisted of a series of post-medieval-19th century pits and *robber* trenches. Excavation occurred within 0.50m wide sondage. These features are probably *outside the main post-medieval building (parsonage)* seen in trenches F and K, and may relate to *outbuildings*.

[24] north-south linear feature; 0.70m in width and > 0.25m in depth exposed in western arm of trench. Contains a fill of yellowish-brown silty sandy clay with building rubble, and a piece of worked limestone. *Robber trench and fill* possibly removing an earlier wall alignment.

[26] north-east south-west running feature; 0.40m in width and 0.30m in depth. Contains a dark greyish-brown clayey silt with brick and tile fragments. The feature is likely to extend the length of the north-south arm of this trench., [26] is separated from a similarly aligned feature by an area of disturbance approximately 1.80m across. *Ditch and fill*, possibly relating to a period of *robbing* of structural material. Finds included a sherd of cream ware and green glazed earthenware dating to the 17th or 18th century.

[31] ill-defined feature approximately 0.90m in width and > 0.50m in depth. Upper fill of brown clayey silts, lower fill of grey-brown clayey silts with occasional brick and tile. *Pit/ditch* terminating within east-west arm of trench. Finds are largely of 18th century date.

[28] feature 0.50m in diameter, 0.16m in depth contains a dark grey clayey silt with occasional brick and mortar fragments. *Pit possibly relating to later garden activities following the demolition and robbing of the building remains.*

[47] ill-defined feature 1.0m in width, > 1.5m in length and > 0.30m in depth, similar in form to feature [31]. Eastern edge has been partially removed by linear feature [26]. Upper fill is a grey-brown sandy clayey silt with mortar flecks; overlies a yellow-brown mottled deposit of sandy clayey silts with occasional brick fragments. *Pit/ditch feature* appears to terminate in the north-west corner of the trench. Finds were of a 18th century date, pottery sherds included cream ware and Chinese porcelain.

[51] Feature lying in the north-west corner of trench; > 1.20m in diameter and > 0.40m in depth. Eastern side has been partially cut away by feature [46]. Upper fills are of grey-brown clayey silts, overlying brown sandy clayey silts with occasional brick and tile. Finds are largely of eighteenth century date, though one piece of abraded roman pottery was discovered.

[35] feature 1.5m in diameter and 0.50m in depth. Contains an upper fill of brown clayey silts with mortar flecks, below which is a yellowish-brown clay. The basal excavation unit within the feature was a dark brown sandy silt with a high proportion of charcoal flecks. Excavation was incomplete. Interpreted as a *pit* into which burnt organic material was deposited. Finds include one piece of post-medieval red ware and another of Staffordshire salt glazed pottery

[40] [41] ill-defined feature truncated to the west by pit [35]. Feature is > 2.60m in diameter and > 0.50m in depth. Upper fill is of a yellow-brown mottled sandy clayey silt with mortar flecks, beneath which lies a deposit of grey-brown clayey silts with occasional brick and mortar fragments. Stratigraphically below these deposits lies grey-brown clayey silts with charcoal and mortar flecks. Large *pit feature*, most of which remained unexcavated. Finds were largely of post-medieval and 18th century date.

(42) *Layer* of yellowish-brown sandy clayey silt with charcoal and mortar flecks. with building debris pressed into the upper surface.

(43) grey-brown silty clay with charcoal and mortar flecks. *Layer*.

(44) *layer* of grey-brown to yellow brown silty clays.

(52) *Layer* of yellowish-grey clay, possibly the same as (44).

F. Located in the south-east corner of Site 1, to the south of trench E. Archaeology consisted of nineteenth century (?) pitting and trenching; these were located to remove walling associated with the post-medieval building (fig.5). Wall remains were found to exist in association with foundation trenches at 35.80m O.D.

Topsoil depth is between 0.10m and 0.25m

Late medieval pottery lay within deposit (15) a grey brown silty clay found to overlying 'natural'. This deposit was similar in nature to deposits found

elsewhere in sites 2 and 3 where a grading between natural and topsoil could be distinguished and trench E *layer* (44). The occurrence of medieval material through out the layer may suggest that there has been 'mixing' of the deposit or re-deposition of the material, the later may suggest the earlier presence of floor surfaces. The majority of the trench was overlain by 0.10-0.20m of demolition material (16).

[17] east-west orientated sub-rectangular *pit*. 1.44m by 1.00m in size, 0.32m in depth. Contains a fill of grey silty clays with mortar and brick fragments. Finds included medieval/late medieval pottery including St.Neots ware and English stoneware.

[63] feature lying at the west end of the trench, only the eastern side of which was exposed. Contains a grey-brown sandy clayey silt over lying grey-brown silty clays with mortar and brick fragments. Excavation incomplete, though a north-south alignment of bonded bricks was exposed at the limit of excavation. Interpreted as a *robber trench* aligned with wall [65]. This may be the same as feature {58} exposed in trench K. Finds included early post-medieval red wares.

[64] east-west aligned feature cut by [63] lies against the southern section of the trench. Feature depth is approximately 0.80m, terminating where an east-west alignment of *in-situ* bricks was discovered. Contains yellow-grey mottled silty clays with brick and tile. Interpreted as a *robber trench*. Finds include two pieces of St.Neots ware.

(16) grey brown sandy silts and clays with flint cobbles, chalk, brick and tile fragments. Interpreted as *demolition* material. Finds include medieval and early post-medieval pottery.

[18] curvilinear feature extending north-south across the trench. 0.40m in width and 0.14m in depth. Contains sandstone, limestone and bricks set into a yellow-brown sandy clay matrix. Interpreted as the remnants of a *wall and foundation trench*. The nature of the deposit suggests that these remains are non-structural and may represent *garden walling*, this could be contemporary with other structural remains discovered at the base of features [63] and [64].

(15) grey-brown silty clays containing flint and chalk fragments. Finds included thirteen sherds of St.Neots ware, as well as Thetford and Stamford wares dating to the 12th century.

[65] remnants of brick wall exposed during excavation of feature [63].

[66] remnants of east-west aligned brick wall exposed during excavation of feature [64].

Trenches J, K and L were stripped in order to define the extent of post-medieval and medieval activity, particularly building remains.

J. Located in the south-east corner of Site 1. The only archaeological feature noted lay on the eastern side of the trench. Finds from cleaning included post-medieval pottery including a piece of Tudor Brown ware. Topsoil depth = 0.30m.

K. Archaeological remains consisted of sandstone and limestone walling which appear to be faced with brick. Walling survives at a height of about 35.50m, 0.20m below present ground level (fig.3). Finds collection during surface cleaning produced medieval and post-medieval pottery types.

{22} surface cleaning produced medieval and post-medieval pottery including St.Neots ware and Tudor Brown pottery.

{53} Bricks lying within a yellow-brown silty clay matrix.. Interpreted as *walling*, possibly facing bricks to {55} wall; lies within a *foundation trench*.

{54} brown silty sands with mortar and brick fragments. Interpreted as fill to robber trench, removing brick material {53}.

{55} east-west aligned deposit of well bonded limestone and sandstone blocks. Interpreted as *structural wall* lying within a *foundation trench*, associated with the post-medieval parsonage. This wall appears to have been faced with bricks {53} which lie within the same feature.

{56} brown sandy clayey silts with mortar and tile fragments, possibly the same as {54}. Interpreted as *robber trench and fill*.

{57} north-south aligned feature containing sandstone and limestone blocks. cemented by a yellow-brown silty sandy mortar. Interpreted as the remnants of a wall lying within a foundation trench.

{58} yellow-brown silty clays with mortar, tile and brick fragments. Interpreted as robber trench and fill aligned north-south. This may be associated with feature [63] trench F.

{60} north-south aligned feature, 0.30m in width. contains yellow brown silty clays with mortar and brick fragments. Possibly a *robbed-out wall*; the wall is unlikely to have been structural/load supporting.

{61} grey-brown silty clays containing flint and quartzite pebbles. Similar in nature to layer (15) trench F.

- L. Located in the south-east corner of site 1. Archaeology consisted of an unexcavated feature lying on the eastern side of the trench. Finds from cleaning included early to late medieval pottery including Thetford and St. Neots wares.

Site 2

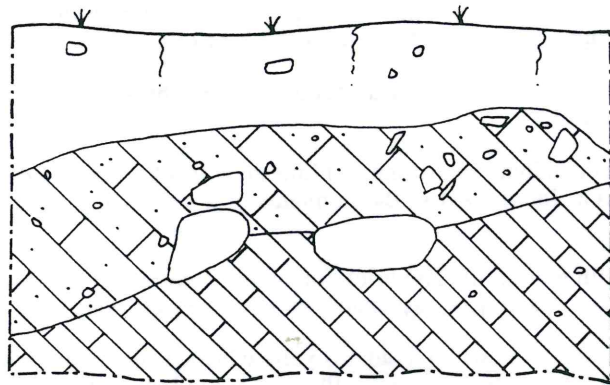
Located to the east of Rectory farm.
Three trenches assessed 3% of land of the proposed development area.
Topsoil depth = 0.30m.

- G. No archaeological features noted. A cobbled surface was discovered at the western edge of this trench. This is presumed to be associated with the development of the 19th century farm.
- H. No archaeological features noted.
- I. No archaeological features noted.

Site 3

Four trenches assessing 4% of the proposed development area. The street frontage had been landscaped in the area where tenement remains were expected.
Topsoil depth = 0.20-0.30m.

- M. No archaeological features noted.
- N. No archaeological features noted.
- O. No archaeological features noted.
- P. No archaeological features noted.



Topsoil

Sandy silts and clays with brick and tile frags.
(*demolition layer*)

Silty clay

Fig.4 Schematic section through deposits in the south-east corner of site 1. Topsoil overlies demolition material related to the destruction of the post-medieval parsonage.

2.2 Results

Substantial archaeological deposits were recognised only in the south-west corner of Site 1 as suggested by the historical documentation. These consisted of wall alignments in varying degrees of preservation. A number of these walls were non-load bearing and may define external activity centres associated with the main building. No floor surfaces were recognised. In trench K substantial building remains were uncovered; no excavation occurred. The nature of deposits (robber trenches) would suggest that floor deposits would have been disturbed if they had existed in this area.

Pottery suggests that the majority of the excavated features were of a post-medieval to recent date. The significant amount of medieval pottery especially from layer (15), suggests earlier occupation and activity centres within this area.

The site gives the impression of being 'efficiently' demolished and the site largely cleared. The brick-work was probably re-used during the construction of the late nineteenth century rectory.

2.3 Discussion

The historical and archaeological evidence shows the presence of an important post-medieval building located in the south-east corner of Site 1. This area is of particular interest due to the land and building's known association with the church during the post-medieval period, and the likely pre-Dissolution association with Ramsey Abbey. The relationship of the buildings and persons to the church during these earlier times and the configuration of the village may suggest that the site exerted some control over land within its immediate vicinity. Alternatively, as no other medieval and only one other post-medieval building have been discovered in immediate vicinity to the church this may be a reflection of the medieval social order. The historical report (see appendix 1), recognises a medieval croft located on the site of Abbots Ripton primary school. Present village form may then be the result of early post-medieval (pre-1623) restructuring. Subsequent to this the boundaries associated with the church lands remained relatively stable.

This site is likely to provide a 'key' to understanding this social transition, and the relative controls of post-medieval and medieval (church) *establishments* on the local community.

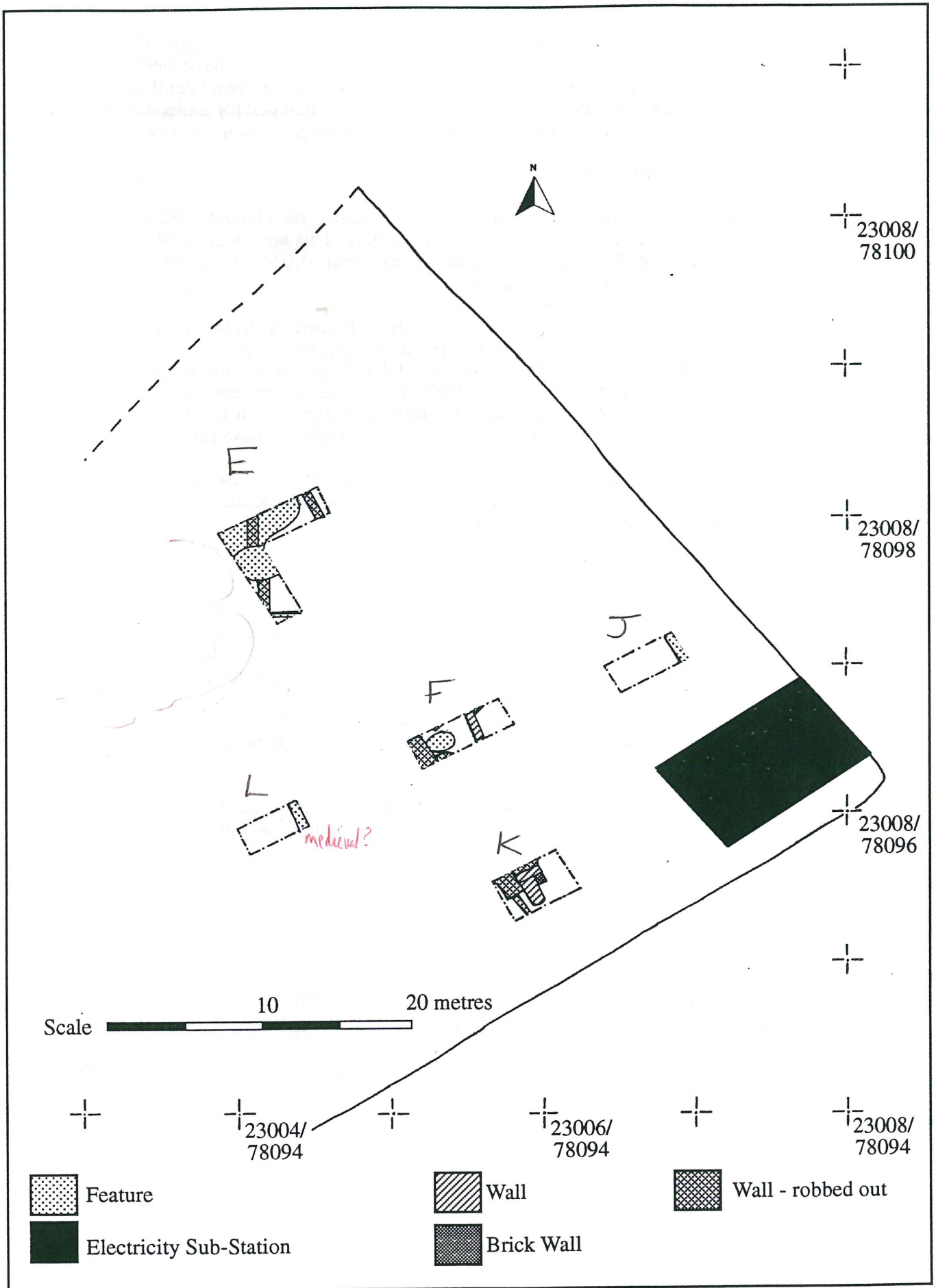


Fig.5 Plan showing archaeological features relating to the post-medieval parsonage.

How much information can be gathered from a site where many of the remains have been effectively *robbed*?. Post-medieval remains have been drastically reduced. Earlier deposits may exist, as shown by the presence of St. Neots and Thetford wares and provide a chronological framework for understanding of the social order and the process of village restructuring.

Recommendations and mitigation

Archaeological remains will only be affected if development occurs within the south-east corner of Site 1 as defined in fig.1. This area is presently proposed for car-parking. Soil-depth in this area is minimal 0.10-0.20m, the archaeology is *vulnerable* to construction activity.

The scale of development will obviously be limited by the tree preservation order. It may be necessary to raise the ground level in this area in order to maintain the present root system. It is recommended that if other areas are not available for car parking, the surfaces should be built up from the present ground surface, with the possible use of geo-textiles to minimise compression of the archaeological resource. Should preservation not be possible further excavations are justifiable.

All services should be located to avoid the defined area. Should any ground disturbance occur within this area an archaeologist should be on site monitoring activities and recording disturbed remains.

Conclusion

Archaeological remains of the parsonage and associated outbuildings were recognised in south-east corner of Site 1; as indicated by the historical documentation. The parsonage and outbuildings have been drastically reduced. In the main the buildings survive as a series of robber trenches and demolition material, though foundations do exist (trench K). Archaeological deposits in this area are vulnerable to the development program. Other areas evaluated showed little evidence for activities resulting in remains detectable by archaeological inquiry.

Archaeological and historical research could provide information on social relationships and village structure during the medieval and post-medieval periods.

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Appendix 1.

A Documentary History of the Rectory Farm Site, Abbots Ripton By Twigs Way BSc. MA. Archaeological Landscape Consultant

Introduction

This report has been produced at the request of the Cambridgeshire County Council Field Archaeology Section to assist in their archaeological evaluation of the Rectory Farm Site, Abbots Ripton. The report concentrates on the immediate vicinity of the two areas to be developed and does not include manorial or parish background other than where this is of direct relevance to the site. The results and discussions of the two site areas are presented together.

Sources

Documentary sources used in this report are both primary and secondary, the research concentrated on cartographic rather than textual sources for reasons discussed below. These sources were supplemented by reference to the Sites and Monuments Record held by the Cambridgeshire County Council. Only material held locally was consulted at this stage, although it is noted that further information is available in both national repositories and record offices for other counties and it is recommended that this material be consulted should further archaeological work be carried out. The present research concentrated on records held in the Huntingdon Record Office (HRO) and the Cambridge University Library (CUL).

Research into the history of individual sites is usually based on a combination of manorial extents or surveys and descriptions of land holdings recorded in the manorial court rolls. In the case of Abbots Ripton although some extremely early court records of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries are held in national repositories (the British Museum and Public Record Office) the whereabouts of the court rolls subsequent to the fifteenth century is unknown¹.

This gap has been somewhat redressed by an excellent cartographic record running from 1623 to the present day. 1:2,500 OS Maps have been used back to the edition of 1886 (OS Sheet XIV.13 1926, 1901, 1886), previous to this a Tithe Map and accompanying apportionment survive from 1847 (HRO 2196/36/1a). In 1741 the then Lord of the Manor carried out an estate survey, this was revised in 1774/6 and an excellent map survives accompanying this latter survey (HRO 2068/MD2 map; HRO R40/4/4 terrier). A much earlier map of 1623 is preserved in the present estate offices and was consulted with the permission of the estate manager (Mr Pickard). Photographic copies of this map are also preserved in the HRO (HRO PM4/2c) and were used for closer examination and tracing (which would have been harmful to the original). This map, produced as part of a more general survey of the holdings of the Earls of Bolingbrook was also accompanied by a survey. This survey is currently held in the Bedfordshire Record Office as part of the Wade-Gery deposit and it is recommended that this document should be consulted should further historical work be required following the initial assessment.

Site 1 is adjacent to the church and was the site of the parsonage/rectory until comparatively recently. This meant that Glebe Terriers were likely to contain information on both the site and any buildings in the area. Unfortunately only two glebe terriers survive, both from the early eighteenth century, but the earlier of these does give a full description of the parsonage building whose origins may have dated to a much earlier period (HRO File 230 1709, 1724).

¹ Information provided by Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts from Manorial Documents Register.

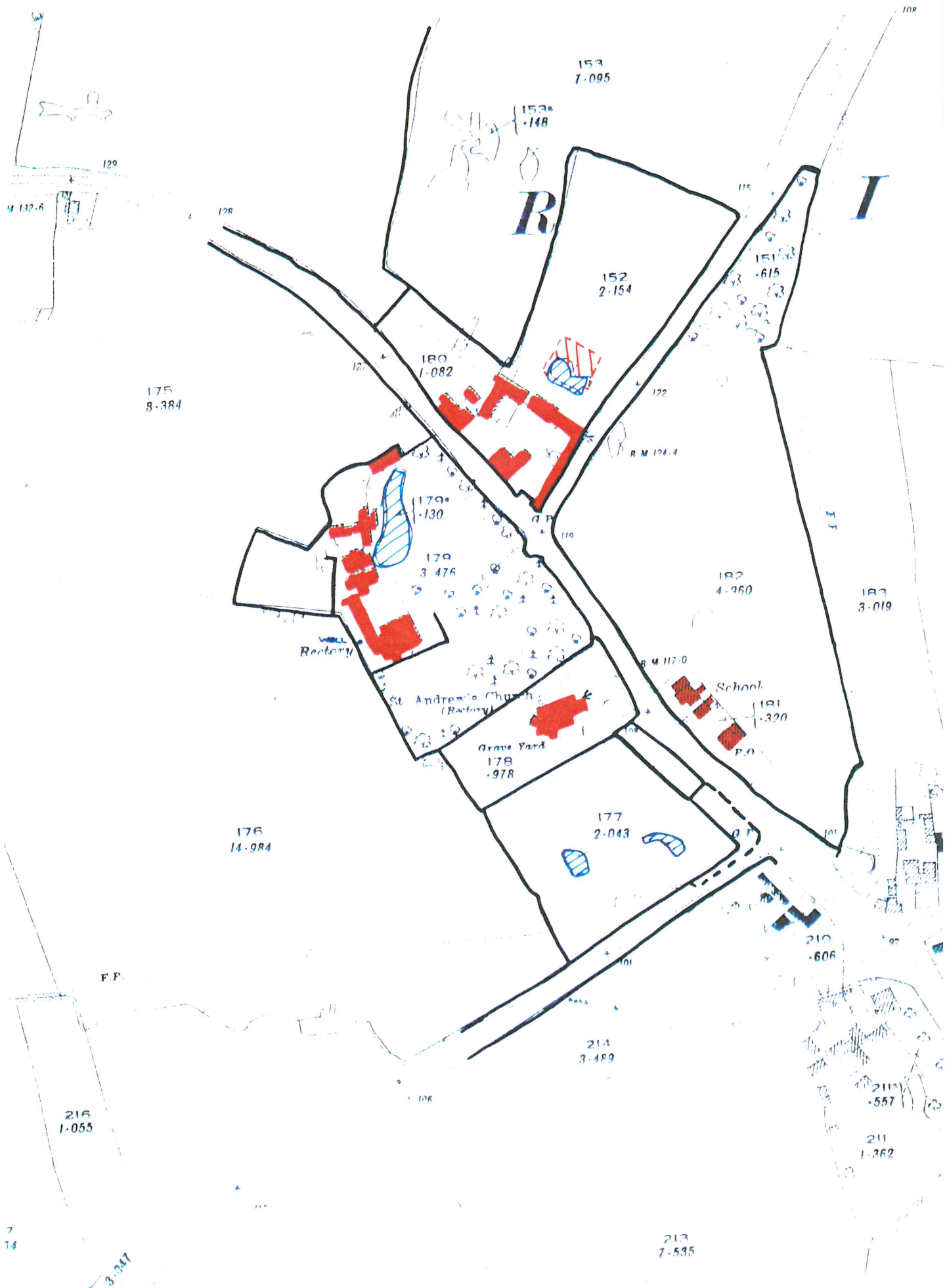


Figure 6. Overlay showing buildings and boundaries in the immediate vicinity of the sites in 1926 (with post 1926 additions). Taken from OS 1:2,500 sheet XIV.13 1926.

Much primary material concerned with what was originally the Ramsey Abbey estate and became the Fellowes estate was deposited by the Fellowes family in the Huntingdon Record Office about eight years ago. This has been thoroughly catalogued and many documents are calandered. This catalogue was consulted for information on changes in landholdings and general descriptions of manorial holdings (HRO catalogue of Fellowes collection).

Although pre-16th century primary texts or nationally held texts are not usually consulted at assessment stage a case in the Court of Requests dating to 1543 and concerning Abbots Ripton was consulted recently by myself in connection with another project and information from this has been used in this report (PRO Ct Req. Bdle 7 no10). Secondary material on the early holdings of Ramsey Abbey were also consulted.

Results

i. Site 1

a. The current situation

Following the demolition of the nineteenth century rectory and outbuildings the site has become overgrown. Gardens which were created as part of the rectory site only survive as areas of non-indigenous shrubs and trees. Preservation orders on trees dating both to this nineteenth century period and earlier have affected the area available for development and archaeological investigation. Much brick rubble is present and some compacted material indicates driveways and paths.

b. Late nineteenth century (Figure 6)

At sometime between 1847 and 1886 a new rectory building was constructed which dominated the site until its recent demolition. This large brick building was accompanied by numerous outbuildings and a landscaped lawn and gardens. Much of this landscaping appears to have taken place between 1886 and 1901 and the area is shown as tree covered in 1901 (OS Sheet XIV.13). The area expanded to 3.516 acres at this time from an original 3 acres this expansion taking place in the west and north. Archaeologically it must be noted that a well is shown to the immediate east of the rectory building and an ornamental lake to the north west.

This rebuilding is probably connected with the 'appointment' of Rev. Rooper, who in fact held the advowson as owner of a moiety of the estate and who was occupying the parsonage in 1841. The church was refurbished again at this time (VCH Hunts vol ii 206-207) and this may also be the period at which the graveyard was expanded to the west over the area of 'Church close', almost doubling in size. The exact area of this expansion may be marked by differentiation on gravestone dates.

c. Pre 1847

Prior to the mid nineteenth century the site is dominated by the earlier parsonage building and outhouses most of which date to at least 1623. It is very probable that the buildings developed from earlier structures on the site. Why the later rectory did not occupy the same area but moved to the north of the site is unknown.

These building can be seen in plan on the Tith Map of 1847 (Figure 7) and the parsonage in particular can be seen in more detail on the plans of 1774/6 (Figures 8 and 10) and 1623 where typical 'birds eye' perspectives of important buildings are combined with plan views of the rest of the parish (Figure 9). It must be stressed that evidence from early maps must be treated with much caution and the positions of buildings indicated on the overlay based on the 1623 map are only very approximate (Figure 10). I would suggest that in fact the main parsonage building did not change its actual position between the seventeenth and eighteenth century although expansion may have taken place as indicated by the drawings.



Figure 7. Overlay showing buildings and boundaries in the immediate vicinity of the sites in 1847. Taken from Tithe map and apportionment 1847 HRO Acc 2196/ 1a.

A very full description of the parsonage building and outhouses is given in a glebe terrier of 1702 (HRO File 230) and this is produced in brief below (modern spelling and phraseology used).

'That there is a mansion house belonging to the rectory and habitation of the present incumbent . . . built of timber and tiled, containing below stairs a parlour, a little room adjoining both of which are boarded, a hall, pantry, kitchen, dairy, scullery all of which are bricked, and above stairs six chambers a study and closet all of which are boarded'.

'Also . . . a brew house with other . . . offices standing away a little distance from the west side of the said mansion house and a barn of three bays with a lean to at one end and a stable at the other standing in the midst of the yard with orchard and gardens being about the house. . . containing by estimation 3 acres'.

A later terrier of 1724 contains an identical description (HRO File 230) and both accord well with the cartographic evidence although smaller outbuildings are not indicated on the map of 1623. The survey of 1623 (held in BRO) may hold a fuller description of the buildings at that time.

d. Pre 1623

As discussed above primary records for the period prior to 1623 are not held locally and have not been consulted for this report. The manor was held by Ramsey Abbey from the tenth century until the Dissolution in the sixteenth. Frequent mention is made of the village in general and to specific tenants and their duties in the records of the Abbey (Cartul. Mon. de Rames.) but a search of the secondary material found little of relevance to the specific sites. However, a description in 1252 does refer to the land of the church as including;

'one free virgate of land [20 acres locally] and a tenement on which are the parsons buildings, and three houses of three tenants who pay at two terms of the year . . .'

It is possible that the tenement referred to here is on the same site as the later parsonage. However it is not known whether the three other houses referred to also occupy the same area (suggesting earlier internal divisions of the three acres occupied by the eighteenth century) or whether they were elsewhere in the village. On the map of 1774/6 several houses are shown to the immediate south of the church within Church Close and more occupy a corner of the same close further south. Although these houses date to seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (RCHM Hunts, 3) they may be on the site of earlier buildings. Certainly the present layout of the village with a substantial area free of buildings along the road on either side of the church would be slightly unusual in the medieval period. References in the thirteenth century to a John 'Attechurch' may also indicate dwellings in the vicinity of the church.

ii. Site 2

The history of this site can also be traced back to the early seventeenth century using mainly cartographic sources. However there is little documented change prior to the twentieth century and the site will not be discussed in great detail.

Site 2 is placed to the immediate north of Rectory Farm and includes an area which was covered in buildings until recently (see Figure 1 with post 1926 buildings added). There are also indications that a small pond was present fairly central to the site area prior to the imposition of the later building. The site straddles the boundary between the field to the north which was known as 'Home Close' in 1774/6 and the outbuildings and yards of the tenement. The house does not appear to have been known as Rectory Farm

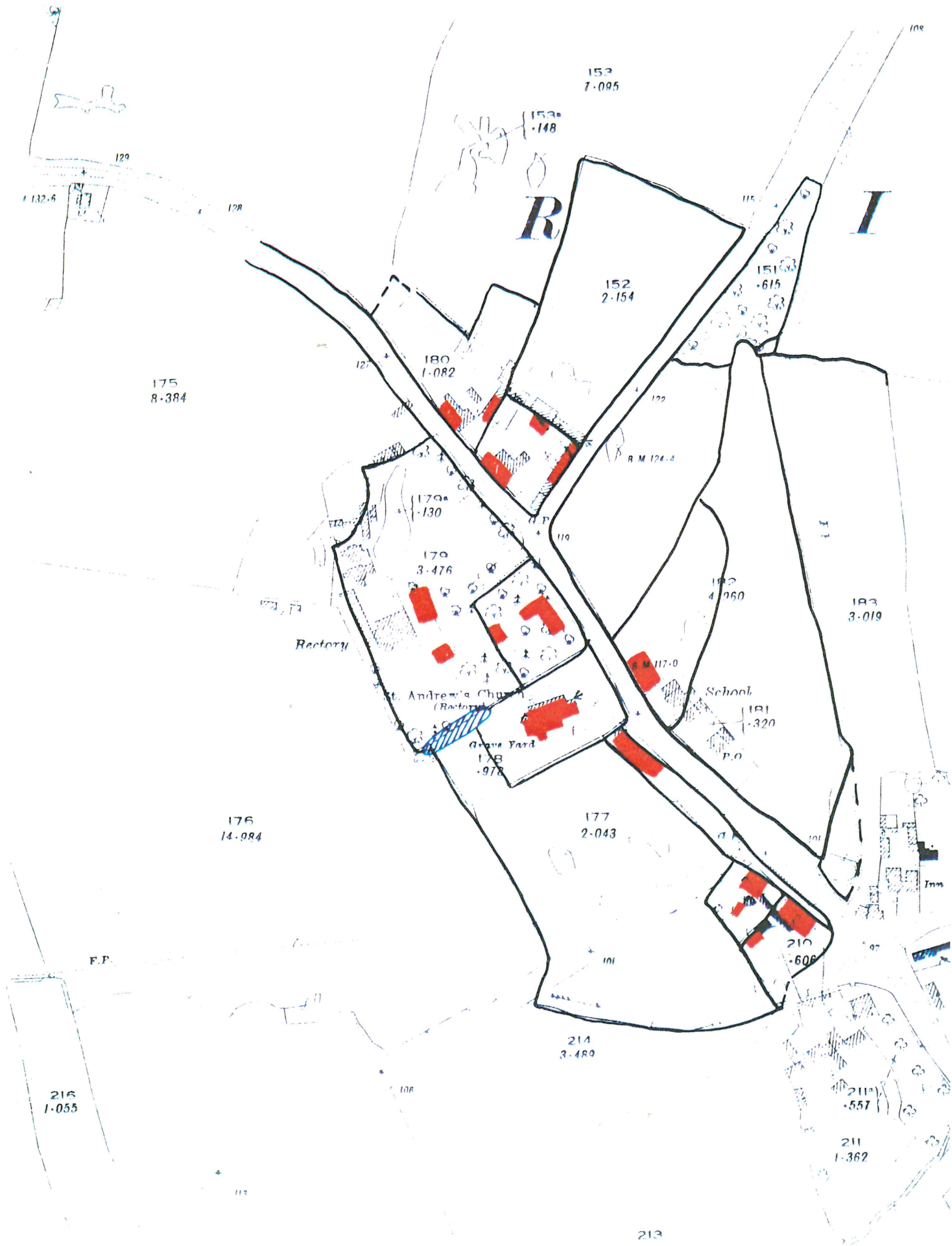


Figure 8. Overlay showing buildings and boundaries in the immediate vicinity of the sites in 1774/6. Taken from Map of the Estate 1774/6 HRO Acc 2068/ MD2.

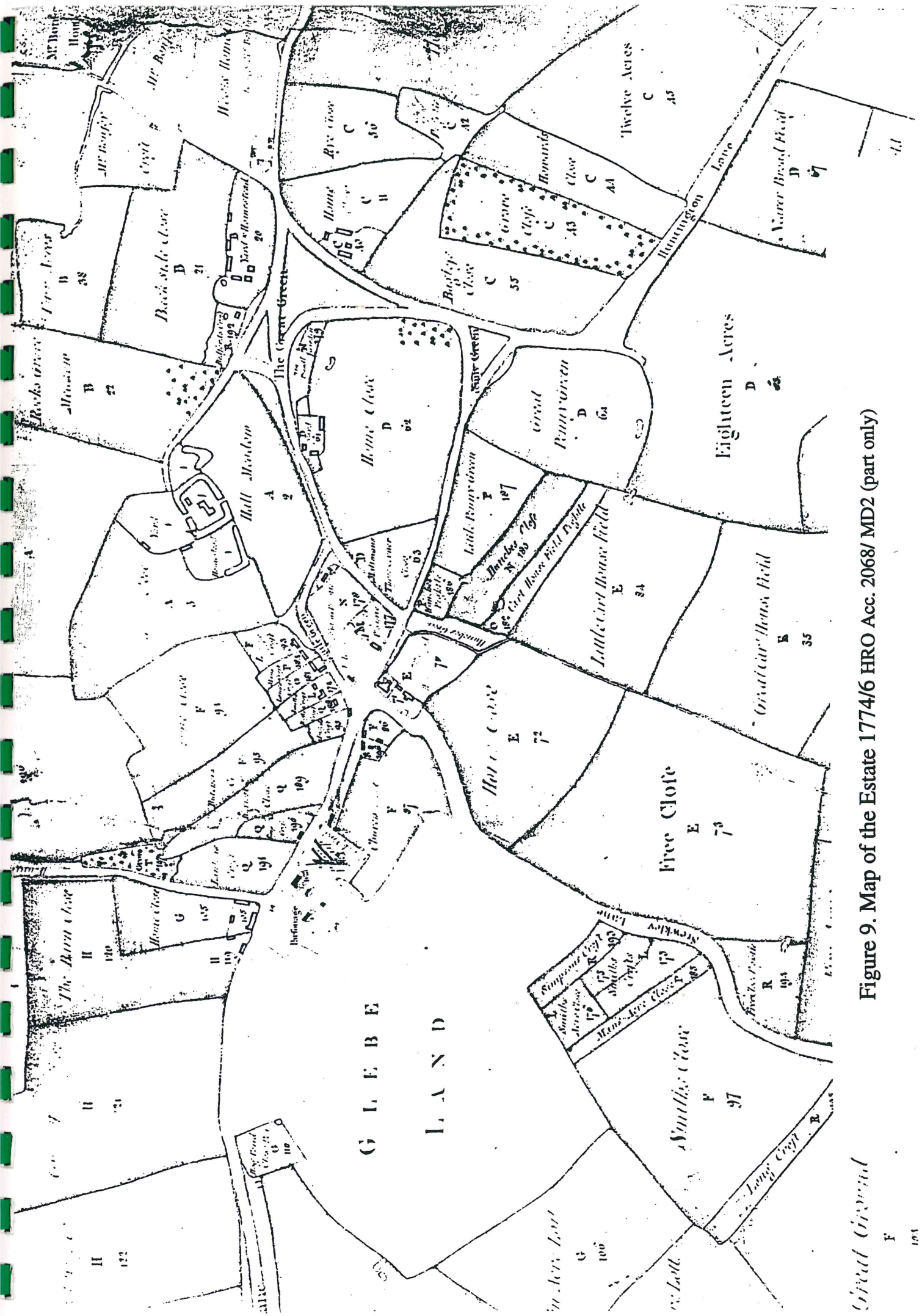


Figure 9. Map of the Estate 1774/6 HRO Acc. 2068/ MD2 (part only)

Great Ground

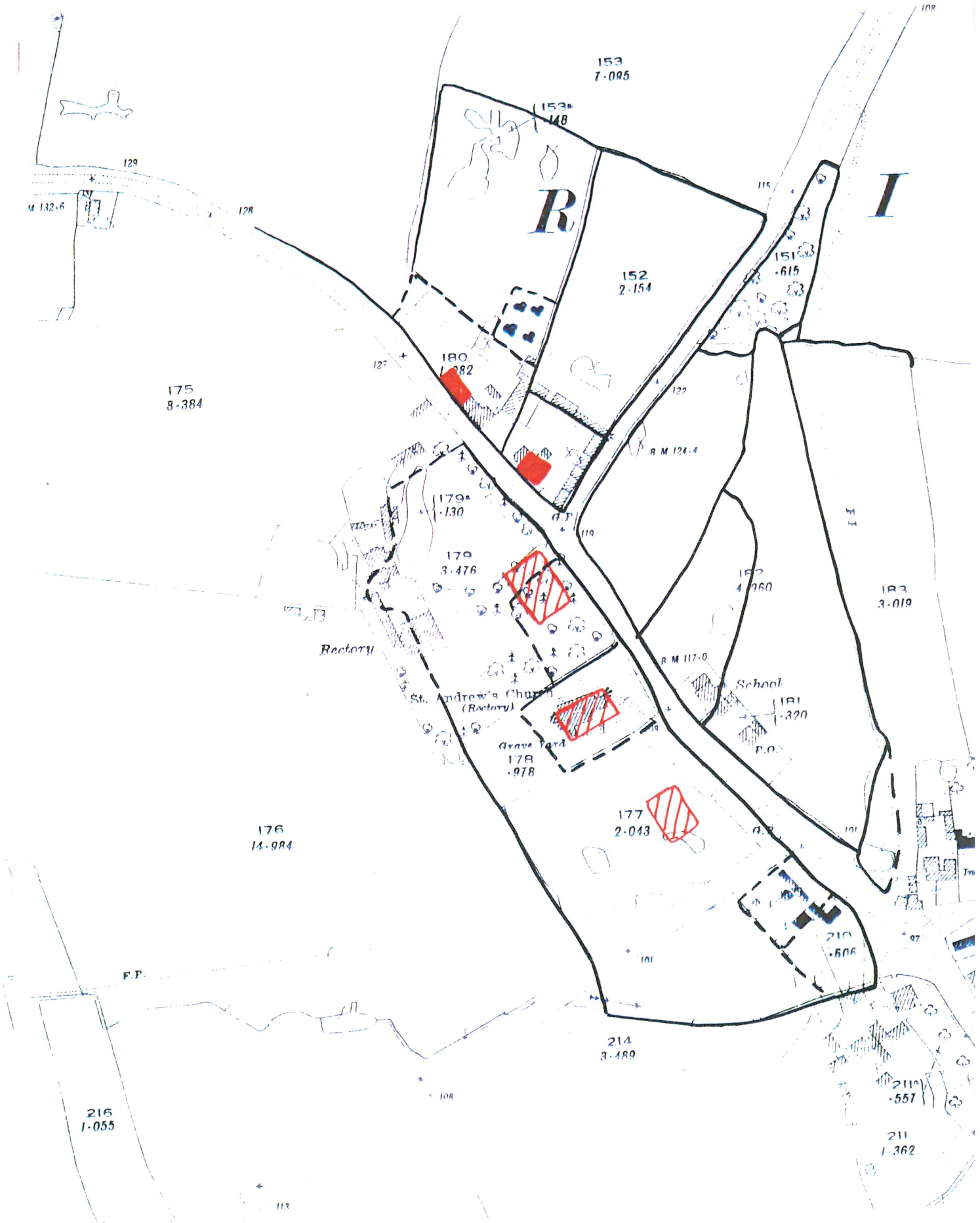


Figure 10. Overlay showing buildings and boundaries in the immediate vicinity of the sites in 1623. Taken from Estate map 1623 original held at Estate Office (copy held at HRO PF4/2c)

until the nineteenth century. In 1623 the boundary division between the field and the tenement appears to have been identical to that shown on the later eighteenth century map, but fewer buildings are shown within the boundaries of the tenement (Figure 9). No name is given on this map but the reference numbers D1, D2 and D3 undoubtedly refer to entries within the accompanying survey held in Bedfordshire.

Ownership histories indicate that both the field and the attached tenement were rented out by the manor who were the land holders from at least the eighteenth century. The land appears to have been under continuous pasture from 1623 until at least 1847. There is no indication of any post sixteenth century buildings extending along the side of the road to Wennington .

Discussion

i. Site 1

Documentary sources indicate a continuous and complex building history on this site dating back to 1623 and probably into the thirteenth century. The situation of the site next to the church has several specific consequences;

a. the occupation and ownership of the site has been closely connected with the church and this has led to sequences of rebuilding which appear to relate closely to refurbishment sequences of the church itself;

b. until lately the church was on the northern edge of the village with only the rectory and Rectory Farm laying further north. It is unlikely that this was the situation at all periods of village development, unless the positioning of the church was made with reference to the outlying hamlet of Wennington. This may indicate that the present site of the rectory might originally have formed several more tenements, extending the village northwards;

c. churches are frequently found in close association with the main manorial dwelling (Morris, 1989). The position of several moated sites in the village is known and at least one of these is presumed to be manorial (PRN 01035, 01036, 01038) indicating that this association does not hold true for Abbots Ripton subsequent to the sixteenth century. It is possible that both the spatial organisation of the village and the status of the dwelling next to the church were modified following the Dissolution and change to secular land holding. Certainly the granting of the manor to Sir John St John by the crown in 1541 was followed by massive upheavals in terms of the social organisation as copyholders were denied rights, common woodland sold, rents increased and a large area of private parkland imposed on the parish. The holding of the manor by Ramsey Abbey prior to this period may have important implications for the organisation of the village and in particular the status and placement of the 'parsonage';

d. it is possible that the site of the church building itself and the graveyard surrounding it has moved slightly over the years. The present church is thirteenth century (dedicated 1242), much refurbished in the sixteenth, but a church was recorded in Domesday the exact site of which is not known.

ii. Site 2

This documentary history has thrown little light on this site. It appears to have been under pasture for much of its known history, but its situation running alongside the road to Wennington means that the presence of houses at an earlier period cannot be discounted.

Conclusion

Documentary research on the Rectory Farm Sites at Abbots Ripton has indicated that the two areas have very different histories.

Site 1 has been subjected to frequent disturbance and contains the remains of several dwellings and associated outhouses, some of which buildings appear to have been very substantial. The boundary of the area has increased slightly associated with a final rebuilding and landscaping phase and archaeological trenches lying to the extreme east may in fact be located in an area of glebe land originally forming the agricultural land associated with the church. There is also a possibility of disturbing a well on the western boundary.

Much of the central area of Site 1 has probably been destroyed by nineteenth century building which is likely to have included cellars, but the area of the earlier parsonage appears undisturbed other than by tree roots. The position and number of dwellings on the site previous to 1623 is not known from documentary sources but results of archaeological work shedding light on this will be vital for assessment of the early medieval development of the village. This may in turn have much wider implications for the impact of the Dissolution on those villages which had been held by ecclesiastical bodies.

Examination of Site 2 should also supplement our meagre information on the medieval development of Abbots Ripton and in particular its relationship with the hamlet of Wennington.

A Documentary History of the Rectory Farm Site, Abbots Ripton (Site 3)

Introduction

This report has been produced at the request of the Cambridgeshire County Council Field Archaeology Section to assist in their archaeological evaluation of the Rectory Farm Site, Abbots Ripton. The report was produced following the addition of Site 3 to the area to be evaluated. This report is supplementary to the main report produced for Sites 1 and 2 and deals exclusively with the immediate vicinity of the area of Site 3.

Sources

The sources used for this supplementary report are largely the same as those used for the main report. However the glebe terriers were not re-examined as the site lies further away from the church than Site 1 and previous research indicated that it would not be included in these terriers.

See main report for full discussion of sources.

Results

a. The current situation

The site lies in a triangular area of grassland to the north of the Girl Guide headquarters and the east of Abbots Ripton School. The western boundary (to the school) appears to have been altered fairly recently to allow a swimming pool to be inserted at the rear of the school leaving a slightly irregular boundary. The eastern boundary continues from the back of Audley Cottages through to the Grove area to the north of the school, this boundary is very straight and relatively modern. There are no buildings or other features on the actual site at present.

b. Late nineteenth century (Figure 6)

On the OS Map of 1926 the school is shown in the current approximate position of the Girl Guide headquarters, whilst the area currently occupied by the school is bereft of buildings, with a small pond being the only feature in the area. A small pond is also shown to the rear of the (then) school. The boundary that currently runs between the two plots is not present, but the current eastern boundary is identical (with a footpath running along its eastern side). The area included between the road to Wennington and the eastern boundary was 5.150 acres.

The school appears to have been constructed sometime between 1847 and 1886 as it is not on the Tithe Map for Abbots Ripton.

c. Eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century (Figure 7 & 8)

During this period the boundaries around the site change substantially. Prior to 1776 (Fellowes Estate Map) until at least 1847 the area that formed just over five acres in 1886 was divided into three fields. These were known as S[L]antons Croft (1-3-10), Simpsons Croft (0-2-17) and Harvest Close (2-1-16) (from west to east). All three areas were under pasture, but Simpsons Croft contained a small building fronting onto the road. The total area is actually just under five acres the difference being accounted for by a very slight shift in the easternmost boundary.

There is no building indicated on S[L]antons Croft but the appellation of 'croft' combined with the fact that no other building is described as 'S[L]antons' may indicate that a building had been there at some time. It is possible that the personal name may have been in use for some time to describe the land area and that it may originally have contained an associated toft.

d. Map of 1623 (Figure 10)

Within the limits of accuracy of this map (discussed in the main report) the boundaries and land use appear identical to the late eighteenth century, however a building could not be discerned in the small area of 'Simpsons Croft'. It is possible that this is due to the poor photographic copy that was consulted. Consultation of the original may be of assistance here, however the original is itself now rather worn in this area.

e. Pre 1623

Without access to the manorial court rolls there is no means of tracing the history of this small plot previous to the early seventeenth century. However should these records be located and further research be necessary the information already gained on tenant names should enable the earlier history to be readily attained.

It should be stressed here that the prefixes 'Simpsons' and 'S[L]antons' do not necessarily refer to current tenants at the time of reference. In many cases these names refer to tenants several generations previous and occasionally may last for centuries despite frequent changes in land tenure.

Summary

The area of Site 3 has undergone several boundary changes in the last few centuries. Originally divided into three areas it was firstly amalgamated into one before being subdivided again, this time into two main areas. A small tenement present in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries appears to have been destroyed when the initial school was placed on the southern boundary of the area in the nineteenth century. The area appears to have been under pasture for all of its known history.

Conclusion

There are no indications of any important features in the area of Site 3 since at least 1623. Furthermore the field names in use since the eighteenth century do not suggest the presence of any features or associated remains, the particular area of Site 3 being known as 'Harvest Close'. Depending on the exact placement of the archaeological trenches previous field boundaries of the post medieval period may be located, particularly unfortunate siting may lead to the 'discovery' of the nineteenth century pond.

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NOTE: ALL FIGURES ARE OVERLAID ONTO THE 1926 OS 1: 2,500