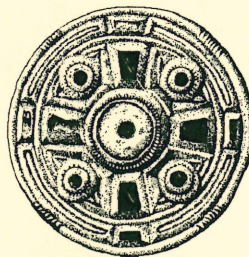


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Archaeological Field Unit

Archaeology on the A1 between  
Alconbury and Fletton Parkway (TL1915/7400 - 1425/9420)  
Stage 3 Assessment  
Volume 1

S Kemp and T Reynolds

1995

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No. 112

*Commissioned By Department of Transportation, Cambridgeshire County Council*

**Archaeology on the A1 between  
Alconbury and Fletton Parkway (TL1915/7400 - 1425/9420)  
Stage 3 Assessment**

**Volume 1**

S Kemp BA, MSc, AIFA and T Reynolds MA, PhD.

1995

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*Report No 112*

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## SUMMARY

*The Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council have been undertaking an assessment of the archaeology within the A1 widening corridor between Alconbury (TL190/740) and Fletton Parkway (TL139/942) on behalf of the Transportation Department of Cambridgeshire County Council. This work is required as part of the environmental impact assessment and the present document brings to a close the Stage 3 (as defined in the DoT Roads and Bridges Manual Volume 11) assessments. Work was begun in January 1991 and the final field assessment was completed in April 1995. In the interim, two desk-based studies have been completed and a total of 10 other reports produced. These reports are appended to the present one as supporting materials in Volume 2 (the first desk-top by Evans & Shotliff is not included as it was updated and replaced by that of Pelling and Leith) .*

*The current report provides a brief description of the archaeological background, a summary of the work carried out and provides a landscape use model for archaeological interpretation. This is then used to define constraint areas where further archaeological works are advised. Four forms of constraint area are defined, Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs), Sites of Regional Importance, Sites of Potential Importance, Sites of Low Archaeological Priority and then the remainder of the route. There are 3 SAMs, 2 sites of regional importance, 4 areas of potential importance, and 2 areas with archaeology of low priority. The areas of potential importance are defined because access to certain areas has not been possible and so invasive evaluation of the archaeology in these has not been possible.*

*The AFU were required, during this work, to concentrate solely on a narrow corridor defined by the widening scheme itself, base investigation on 'known' sites (i.e. those on the SMR) and to avoid pursuing research and academic factors. These criteria have been met but limit an effective landscape based assessment. The broader context of the road and its archaeology must be addressed in future synthetic work. It is particularly important to link the work between Alconbury and Fletton Parkway with that on immediately adjacent stretches of the road. A bibliography is supplied as part of this report, not merely to provide references for the present report but as source material for future archaeological work.*

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### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AFU</b>	Archaeological Field Unit
<b>NGR</b>	National Grid Reference
<b>SAM</b>	Scheduled Ancient Monument
<b>SMR</b>	Sites and monuments record

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council have been undertaking an assessment of the archaeology within the A1 widening corridor between Alconbury (TL190/740) and Fletton Parkway (TL139942) on behalf of the Transportation Department of Cambridgeshire County Council. This work is required as part of the environmental impact assessment and the present document brings to a close the Stage 3 (as defined in the DoT Roads and Bridges Manual Volume 11) assessments. Work was begun in January 1991 and the final field assessment was completed in April 1995. In the interim, two desk-based studies have been completed and a total of 10 other reports produced. These reports are appended to the present one as supporting materials in Volume 2 (the first desk-top by Evans and Shotliff is not included as it was updated and replaced by that of Pelling and Leith).

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## 2 TOPOLOGY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The geology of the A1 corridor consists largely of weathered or unaltered Oxford Clays. The Oxford clays comprise green to blue-grey shaly mudstones with beds of argillaceous limestone with inclusions of flint and nodules of iron and clay stones.
- 2.2 Anglian glacial diamicton, commonly known as till or boulder clays, occur between School Lane, Alconbury and Stangate Hill, and between Norman Cross and Morborne Lane. The diamicton is up to 30m thick consisting of a poorly sorted deposit dominated by chalk. Included in the diamicton are clasts of quartz, quartzite, and flint with non-local basalts, sandstones and siltstones.

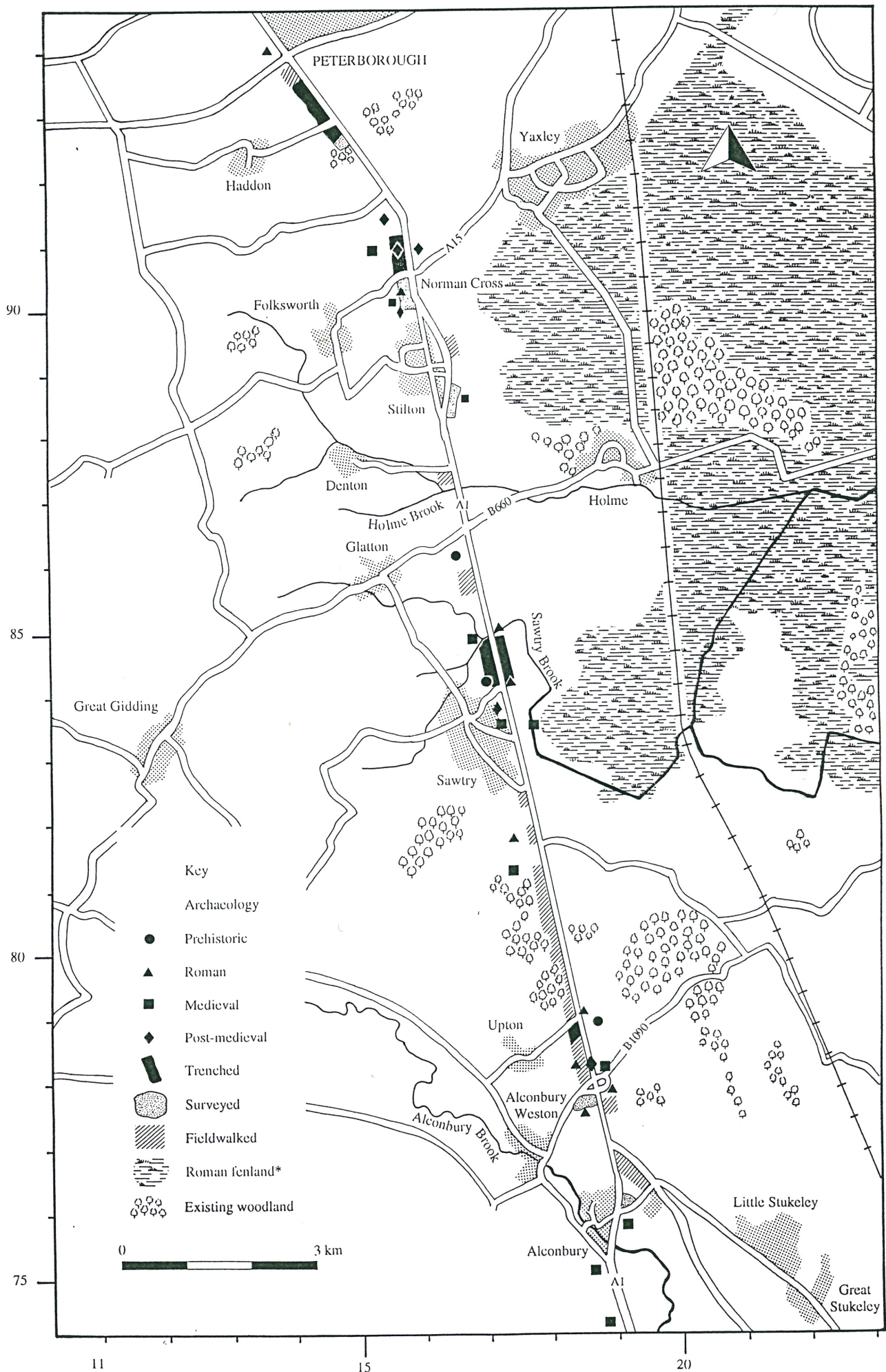


Figure 1 The A1 Alconbury to Fletton Parkway: Archaeology and investigation plan



- 2.3 Glacial gravels overlie the Anglian boulder clays. These deposits are of fluvio-glacial origin with angular to sub-angular clasts of flint, quartz, quartzite and limestone.
- 2.4 South of Alconbury and north of the assessment area terrace gravels and alluvium are present. The Fenlands lie directly to the east of the road corridor; here post-glacial geology is dominated by sediments resulting from marine inundations and regressions during prehistoric and historic times (Waller 1994). In the Fenlands fluctuations in sea and ground water levels resulted in a complex of marine and estuarine clays and fen peats. Sediments within the Fenland embayment of Holme Fen, Sawtry record the extension of marine and estuarine conditions close to the A1 during the early Bronze Age (French 1992). Following several marine transgressions during the Roman period a series of freshwater meres formed east of Yaxley (Waller 1994). Radiocarbon dating indicates that Whittlesey Mere formed after  $1995 \pm 70$  BP (Waller 1994). By the early nineteenth century the Mere was intermittently largely dry due to the progress of Fenland drainage (Godwin 1978).
- 2.5 Pre-Quaternary and Quaternary geology, particularly post-glacial landscape change, would have imposed intermittent constraints on both habitable land and locally available resources. The fen margin offered access to the diverse resources of both upland and Fenland habitats. Heavy clay soils developing on Jurassic Clays and Anglian tills may have severely limited early cultivation and settlement beyond the fen edge and may explain the sparse evidence for early prehistoric settlement over much of the evaluation area.

### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.0.1 Archaeological remains within the A1 widening corridor have been listed in a series of desk-top assessments undertaken by the Archaeological Field Unit, Cambridgeshire County Council (Evans and Shotliff 1990, Pelling and Leith 1992). The county's sites and monuments record (SMR), aerial photographs and fieldwalking records were researched to assess the archaeological potential of the corridor. An outline of the archaeological sites identified by these authors is presented, by period, below.

#### **3.1 Prehistory**

- 3.1.1 Prehistoric remains are sparse within the evaluation corridor. This may be because much of the route is under pasture and reconnaissance methods used to date are insensitive to prehistoric remains preserved in such environments.
- 3.1.2 The greatest concentration of prehistoric remains, particularly the highly visible monuments, occur on the terrace gravels to the north and south of the assessment area. This may indicate a prehistoric preference for better drained and lighter soils and prove to be a reason for the sparse evidence for prehistoric occupation within the corridor. Such prehistoric remains are commonly found close to the Fenland margins, probably indicating the importance of the Fenland environment within the prehistoric landscape. Embayments such as that at Sawtry would have provided immediate access to a wide variety of Fenland habitats which could supplement an upland or fen edge resource base.

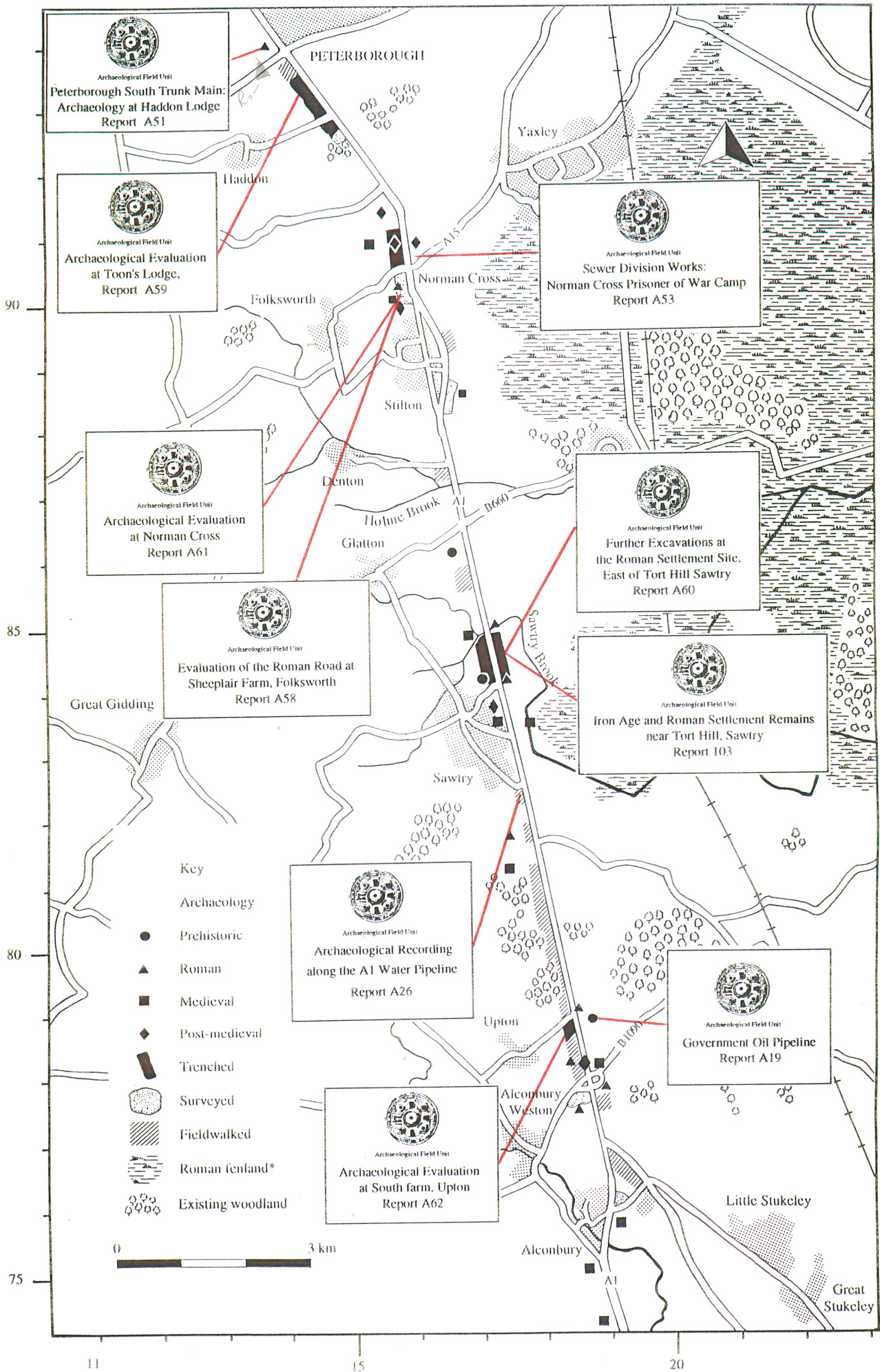
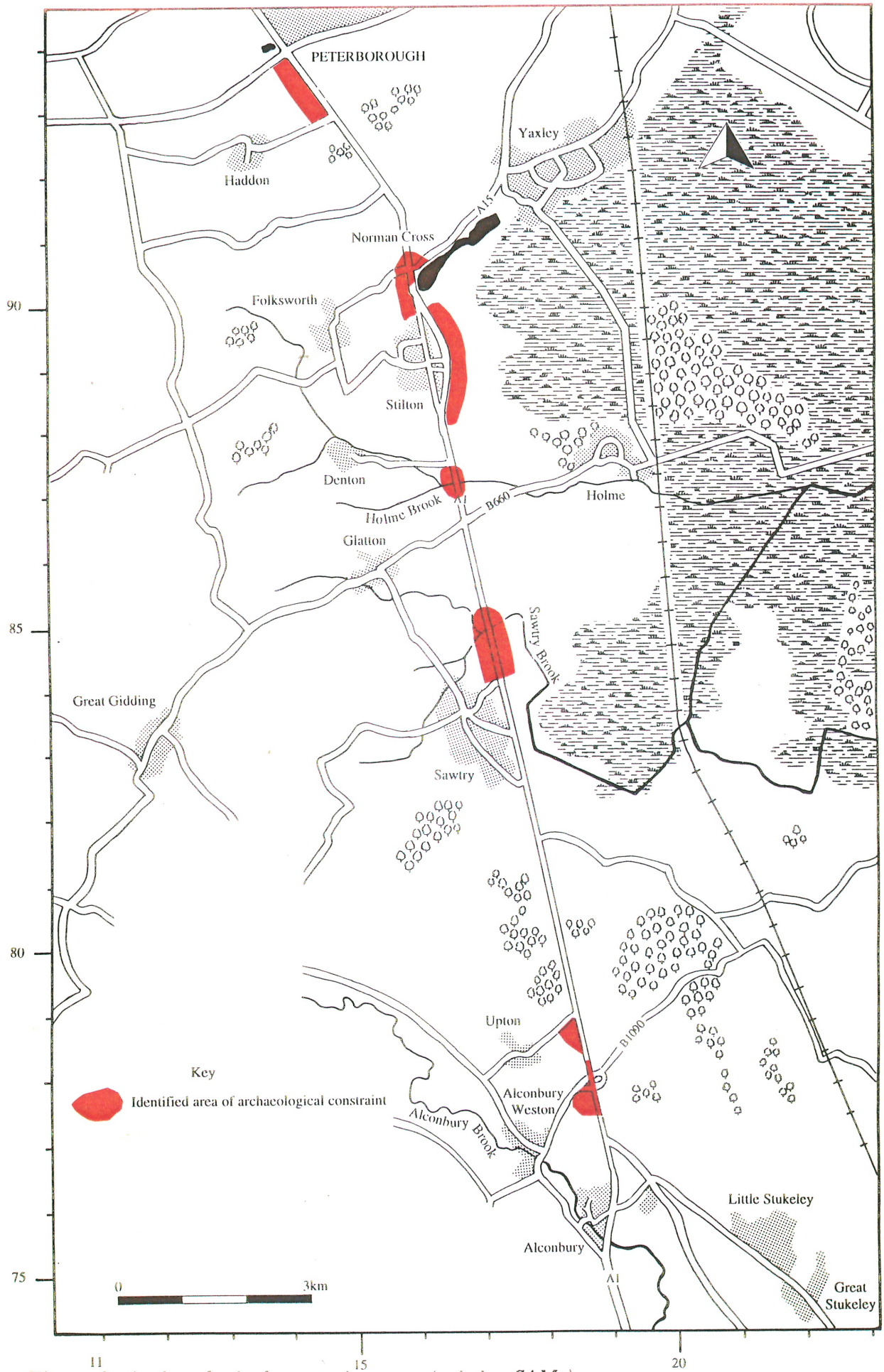


Figure 2 Distribution of archaeological investigation

- 3.1.3 Prehistoric remains recorded from the SMR are centred around two areas. The first at Vinegar Hill, Alconbury, where a number of sherds of Iron Age pottery were recovered. The second was from two sites lying to north and south of Monks Wood Farm Upton. Here remnants of Iron Age enclosures and field systems were identified from aerial photographs. The only Iron Age find from this area was a beehive quern; other finds indicate a Romano-British settlement. Both of these areas are dominated by Roman remains. Further analysis and refined dating of these remains may indicate continuity of settlement patterns following the arrival the Roman legions.
- 3.1.5 Given the limitations of the earlier assessments these finds distributions are biased towards the investigation of the highly visible Romano-British settlements. Earlier farmsteads and settlements, which did not become part of the Romano-British settlement pattern, may have gone un-noticed. Added to this earlier prehistoric pottery is notoriously unstable and degrades quickly on exposure within a ploughed environment.
- 3.1.6 The results indicate that the scale of investigation up to 1992 was inadequate for the recognition of prehistoric archaeology, except where it occurred in association with Roman archaeology. This aspect would obviously skew any prehistoric landscape study and any predictions made on this basis must be seen as very tentative. It is apparent from excavations within the Fens how important fen edge locations were to Bronze Age and Iron Age communities. Particular attention needs to be paid to fen edge environments where they are impinged upon by the road corridor as these areas could contain the prehistoric settlement remains which have so far proved elusive. It still needs to be seen whether the Welland Valley settlement system continues into the south-western fen edge.

## 3.2 Roman

- 3.2.1 The Romano-British populations provided some of the most numerous archaeological deposits within the road corridor. This may be accounted for by the durability of their remains in comparison with the prehistoric deposits, their high visibility and the intense nature of many Roman activity and settlement sites.
- 3.2.2 Two of the most prominent remains of this period which occur along the route of the A1 within Cambridgeshire are Durobrivae and the Roman road, Ermine St. The A1 and Great North Road join the Roman road at Alconbury, Ermine Street having negotiated southern Cambridgeshire from Braughing to Godmanchester (Margary 1967:205). At Alconbury Hill the road turns northwards to Norman Cross, and then on and through the Roman settlement of Durobrivae. Though generally straight Margary (1967:206) notes distortions in the course of the road at Sawtry which are related to the poor ground conditions as the road passes through Sawtry Fen. Ermine Street is the major artery and communication route along the western side of the Fenland, with a number of secondary roads branching to east and west. It should be expected that one of the most important north - south routes in the country would have an important impact on settlement location and the functioning of the activity units.
- 3.3.3 One of the most important settlement sites in Roman Cambridgeshire was Durobrivae. Though outside the limits of this project the site probably had an important bearing on the local landscape in terms of trade and communications. Wild (1974:145) suggests that this fortress was initially



11 15 20  
**Figure 3** Archaeological constraint areas (existing SAMs)

constructed to guard the Nene crossing. In the second century the site enclosed a ribbon development which had developed along the course of Ermine Street (Wild 1974:145). The repeated rebuilding of structures suggests a thriving community, this is also indicated by the extensive industrial and commercial zones which spread to the north and west of the town (Burnham and Wachter 1990:89, Wild 1974:147). Agricultural expansion westwards into the Fenland occurred during the first century and may be linked to the growth of Durobrivae as a commercial and market centre (Wild 1974:147). Though appearing to dominate commercial activities in the western Fenland region Durobrivae may provide some indication of settlement development along the course of the Roman road.

- 3.3.4 The desktop survey defined five areas of Romano-British settlement along the course of the A1 (Pelling and Leith 1992). The Roman road and its relationship to settlement along its course has largely been divorced from the landscape. Reference to Ermine Street is made as part of the post-medieval landscape at Norman Cross, where the road is defined as a hollow way consisting of a bank and hedge, and at Alconbury Hill. The route may prove to be one of the significant elements explaining Romano-British settlement patterns along the south-western Fen.
- 3.3.5 At Vinegar Hill, Alconbury the SMR lists numerous Romano-British remains, including rubbish pits and pot scatters. Close to this site, on the eastern side of the A1, a series of Roman buildings were excavated in 1940 (Pelling and Leith 1992). In 1938 remains of the metalling of Ermine Street were uncovered during road works 200m to the north of this settlement area.
- 3.3.6 North of Vinegar Hill, at Monks Wood Farm, Sawtry, lie two adjacent cropmarks dated to the Iron Age and Roman periods. Cropmarks indicate settlement with associated field systems. No Roman remains have been recovered by the farmer during the course of ploughing these sites (S. Kemp pers. comm.), though Roman pottery and a barrow are known from the northern site which lies outside the A1 widening corridor.
- 3.3.7 Another important Roman site occurs at Tort Hill, Sawtry. Pelling and Leith (1992) note the presence of a Roman settlement which was partially excavated by Garrod (1940, 1947). Remains included large quantities of Roman pottery found during road re-alignments in 1939 and fieldwalking in 1983. Two Roman coffins were found within grid square TL17-/84-, Pelling and Leith (1992:19) associate these with the Tort Hill settlement.
- 3.3.8 During 1989 a Roman farmstead on the course of the proposed A605, was excavated by the Fenland Archaeological Trust (French 1994). Archaeological works exposed a farmstead and field system occupied between the 1st and 4th centuries AD. A small scale Iron Age settlement was also discovered.
- 3.3.9 Unlike Durobrivae the Roman sites recognised along the Roman road appear to have Iron Age antecedents. Given the proximity of these sites to the course of the road it is possible that an Iron Age, lowland route formed the basis for at least part of the Roman road. This idea should be considered during further archaeological excavations on both Iron Age and Roman sites. Durobrivae offers some indication of the settlement structure expected along the Ermine Street. Here Roman remains occur in a ribbon development along both sides of the road without a typical gridded street pattern (Wild 1974:145). The evidence presented by Pelling and Leith (1992) suggests that the sites of Vinegar Hill, Alconbury, and Tort Hill, Sawtry developed along both sides the Roman routeway, probably also without a formal street

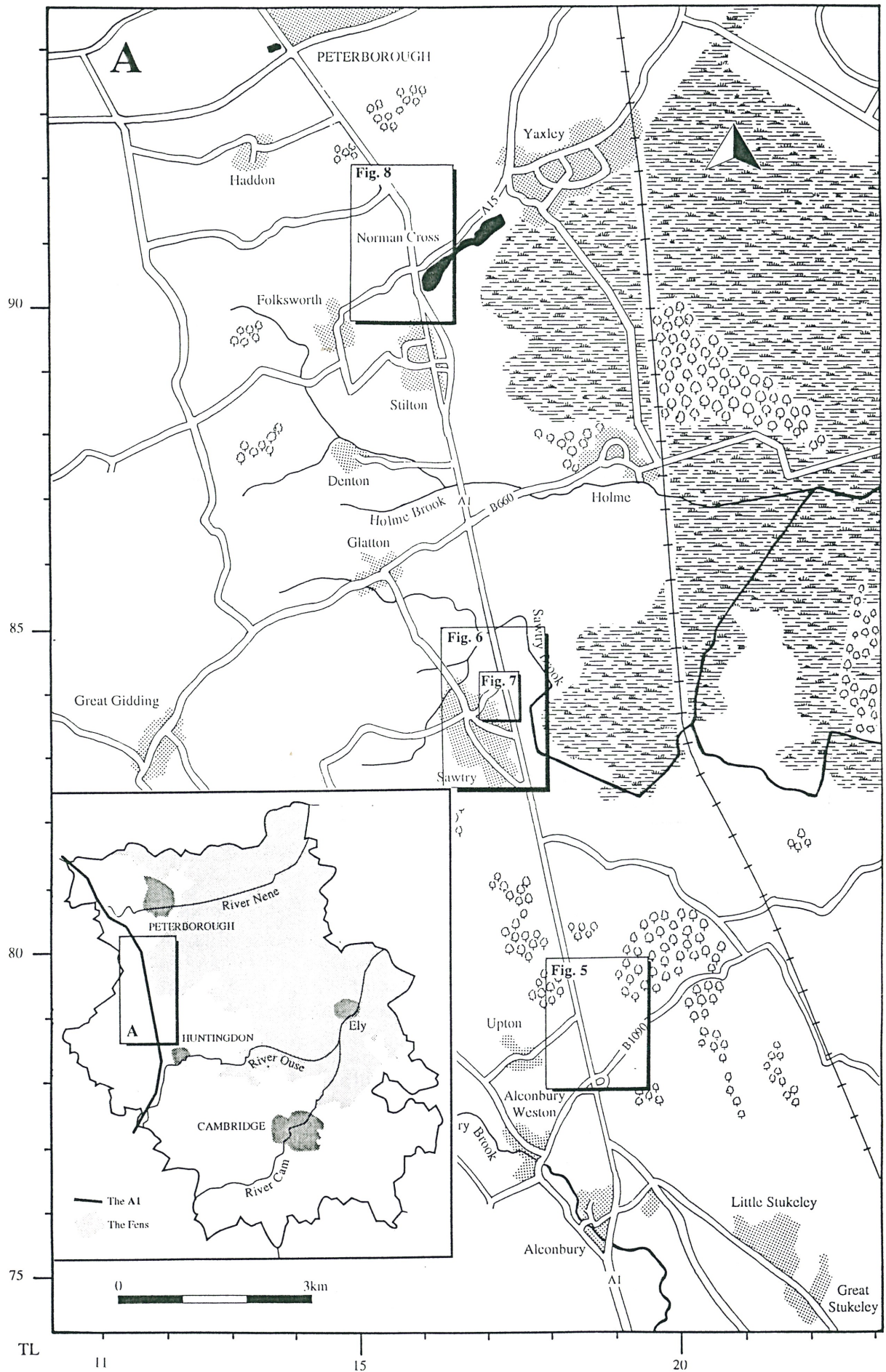


Figure 4 Scheduled Ancient Monuments location maps

pattern. Further work needs to be undertaken on the development of these settlements in relation to the local communications network and of market centres within the local landscape.

### 3.3 Medieval and Post Medieval

- 3.3.1 Medieval cultivation and post-medieval land use has impeded investigation of the prehistoric and Roman landscapes. The development of ridge and furrow cultivation would have cut into archaeological deposits, disturbing earlier remains. The transfer from arable to pasture protected archaeological remains from further plough damage. Transfer to pasture has inhibited archaeological reconnaissance because archaeological artefacts commonly obtained from the ploughsoil are no longer accessible, whilst the technique of aerial photography only records surface morphology as grasslands are much less responsive than arable crops to sub-surface features because of their shallow root systems.
- 3.3.2 Medieval cultivation remains are commonly preserved within areas of pasture along the course of the A1. The preponderance of pasture adjacent to the course of the road has been related to the importance of droving along this route during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Way, unpublished report). Taylor (1979) suggests that droving was originally important along roads further to the west, indicating a partial abandonment of this route, for certain tasks, during for parts of the medieval period.
- 3.3.3 Pelling and Leith (1992) defined several medieval landscapes, with post-medieval enclosure boundaries commonly imposed on the open field system. Such landscapes are preserved around Brooklands and Homefield Farm Alconbury, on the eastern side of Sawtry at Tort Hill, at Sheep Lair Farm, Folksworth and at Toon's Lodge, Haddon. It needs to be recognised that these agricultural remains are only a single component of the medieval and post-medieval landscape; churches, manorial dwellings and settlements formed an integral part of the local environment. Relationships between these need to be assessed in order to understand how the local population perceived the structure of the landscape, how they performed within the local landscape, reacted to environmental change and altered their landscape.
- 3.3.3 One of the more complete medieval/post-medieval landscapes within the assessment area is located in the parish of Sawtry, to the east and west of the A1. This landscape includes the shrunken medieval village of Sawtry, the adjacent church of All Saint's on the western side of the A1 and St Andrews on the east, a moated farmstead and cultivation remains, only part of this site is scheduled (Fig.7). A seventeenth century gun emplacement has been superimposed on the medieval landscape indicating the dynamic nature of any landscape. The medieval landscape at Sheep Lair Farm also includes examples of landscape change from Roman times (Ermine Street) to the nineteenth century (quarrying). Other important medieval and post-medieval remains which form part of the landscape are the remnants of a medieval moated site on the east side of the A1 at Alconbury Hill and the Grange of Sawtry Abbey (SAM 171) (Pelling and Leith 1992).
- 3.3.4 To the north east of the Norman Cross roundabout, with Yaxley parish, lies a Napoleonic Prisoners of War Camp (SAM268) (Fig. 8). The site was occupied as such between 1797 and 1816 for the detention of French troops. At least 3 cemeteries are known to be associated with the Prisoners of War

Camp, two of which occur within the scheduled area. The third is believed to have been overlooked by a memorial erected in 1914. In 1990-91 Peterborough Museum undertook evaluations within the widening corridor to locate this cemetery, no archaeological remains were recovered (Meadows 1991). Given the large number of detainees who died between 1800 and 1801, mass burial may have occurred. In such a case the large distances between archaeological trenches excavated in 1990-91 would not have been an appropriate strategy. Rev. Brown (1880) and Walker (1915) both argue for individual interment suggesting an extensive cemetery which if present would have been recognised by Meadows (1991). The memorial, erected in 1914, was removed in 1990 following the theft of a bronze eagle from the monument. Remaining pieces of the monument are held by the Transportation Department, Cambridgeshire County Council at their Stilton offices.

- 3.3.5 Pelling and Leith (1992) also list Conington Bridge, constructed during the late sixteenth or seventeenth centuries; the report includes an initial survey of the structure. A 1613 map of Glatton indicates a stone cross at TL166/877, the cross is no longer present.
- 3.3.6 Medieval and post-medieval settlement remains are situated within the present settlements. Only at Sawtry, where the village has shifted, are important medieval settlement remains exposed along the route of the A1; the remains are scheduled and therefore protected by national legislation.
- 3.3.7 An important aspect of the landscape which needs further clarification is the conversion from arable to pasture along the routeway. This may be linked to the development of the toll road in the late seventeenth century and the increasing importance of droving. It is likely the presence of the toll road led to a number of deviations from the original course of the Roman road, as at Folksworth and Alconbury. In such areas well preserved segments of the Roman, or medieval, road surfaces may be encountered.

#### **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION OF THE A1 ROAD WIDENING CORRIDOR**

- 4.0.1 Between 1993 and 1995 a series of Stage 3 evaluations were undertaken by the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council within the road widening corridor. Sites for evaluation were chosen on the basis of archaeology identified in the reports produced by Evans and Shotliff (1990) and Pelling and Leith (1992).
- 4.0.2 It was recognised during this period that a wider landscape approach was necessary and that reconnaissance techniques employed by previous authors and earlier excavators were not appropriate for defining the full nature of the archaeological resource along the road widening corridor. Other techniques, including geophysical and earthwork survey, trenching and documentary research, have been used to assess the archaeological background for the area. The main restriction to work has proved to be the intransigence of land owners refusing access to much of the corridor. Academic restrictions have been imposed by a site specific approach within a corridor commonly less than 50m wide.



#### **4.1 Alconbury, The Caravan Park NGR TL 191/756**

- 4.1.1 A geophysical survey was undertaken on land adjacent to the Caravan Park, Alconbury. The area proved to be relatively 'noisy' magnetically due to the presence of ridge and furrow and debris associated with the A1 and caravan site. The earthworks have been disturbed by pitting. Other than this no other archaeological responses were encountered.

#### **4.2 Alconbury Hill, Vinegar Hill NGR TL 186/778**

- 4.2.1 During September 1993 a magnetometer survey was undertaken at Vinegar Hill, Alconbury, details can be found in Pelling and Leith (1992). The survey located a series of linear anomalies which were interpreted by the survey team as furrows associated with medieval cultivation. The team identified a single semi-circular anomaly which may be archaeological. It is apparent from the plot presented by the Northampton Archaeological Unit that a series of conjoined circular features of very weak response may have been filtered out during the course of their interpretation. These circular features are unlikely to be of periglacial origin due to the nature of the geology (Jurassic Clays) which would be more prone to linear gully formation, particularly on slopes. Given the geology and the problems encountered with resistivity and magnetometer surveys at Sheep Lair Farm, Folksworth, the quality of Roman remains on the eastern side of the A1 and the quantity of Roman pottery recorded from this site, significant archaeological remains could be present.

#### **4.3 Upton, South Farm NGR TL 1841/7896 (Sutherland 1995)**

- 4.3.1 Evaluation trenches were excavated on the western side of the A1 to assess the continuation of Roman settlement remains from Monk's Wood, Sawtry into the widening corridor. The majority of archaeological features proved to be eighteenth century land drains, although the presence of two Roman ditches indicates the continuation of the Roman field system into this area. Settlement remains, of any period, were absent.

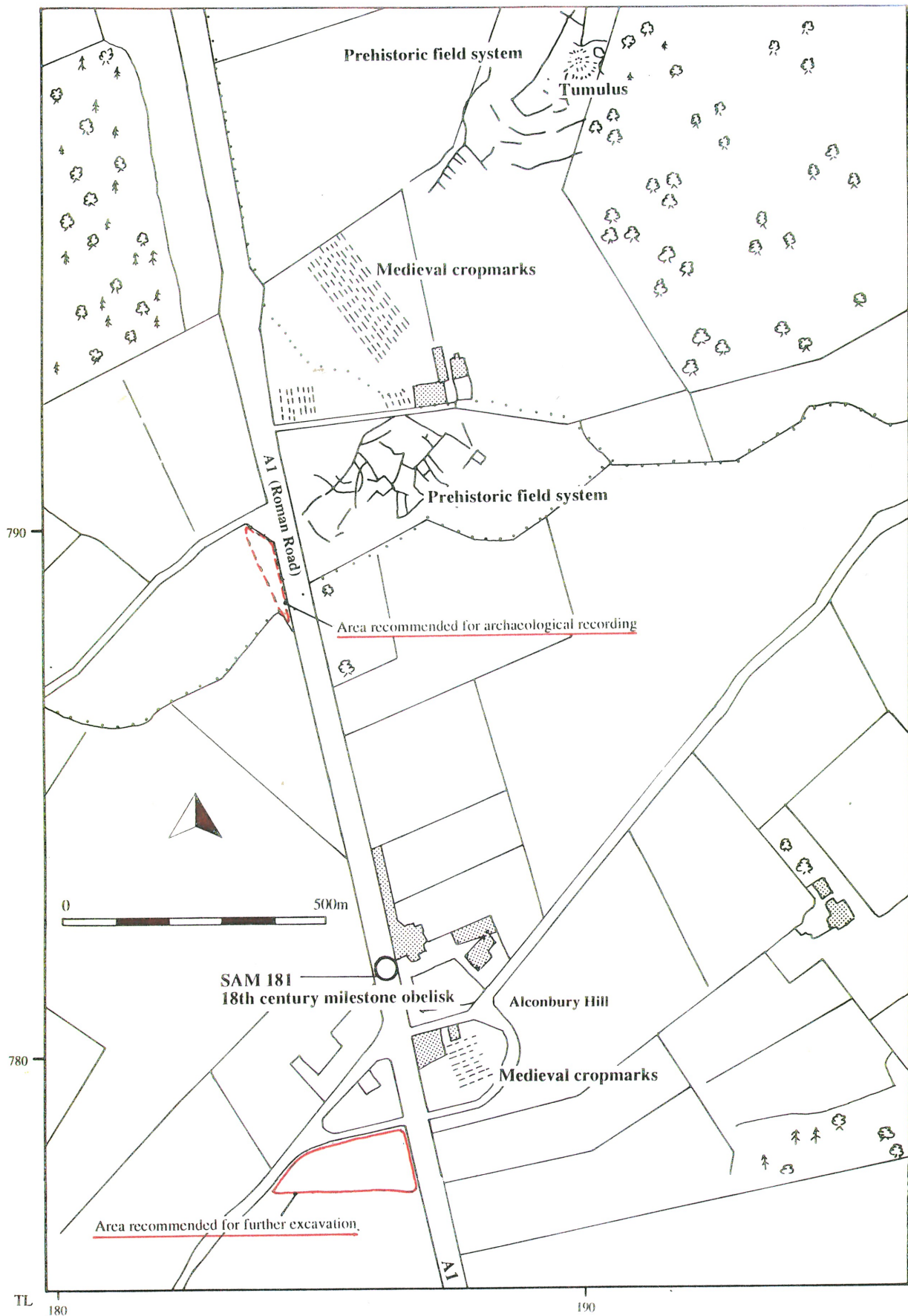
#### **4.4 Sawtry**

##### **4.4.1 Government Oil Pipeline (Hatton 1993)**

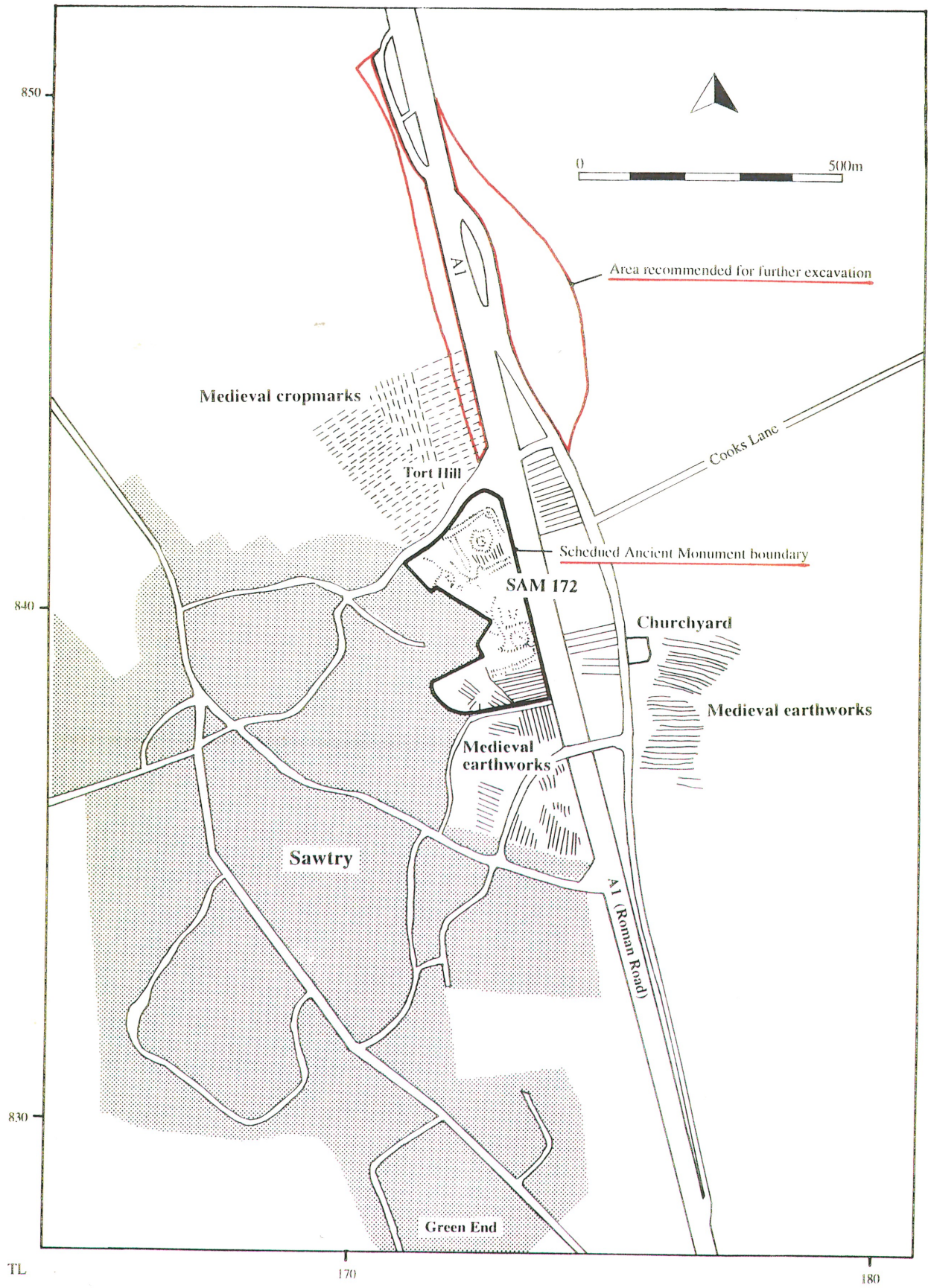
- 4.4.1.1 The pipeline passes through the prehistoric (Pelling and Leith 1992) and Romano-British settlement (Cox 1994) site of Monks Wood, Sawtry. No archaeological features were encountered during the course of this watching brief, though four sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the site. Replotting of the aerial photographic data by Cox (1994) suggests that the remains are significantly less complex than indicated by the SMR, with a large number of features probably of natural origin.

##### **4.4.2 A1 Water Pipeline (Heawood and Leith 1994)**

- 4.4.2.1 This pipeline passed south of Sawtry along the course of the A1 and adjacent to the Grange of the Abbey of Sawtry (SAM 171). Apart from a number of modern features the remains of ridge and furrow were recognised within the subsoil and natural.



**Figure 5** Plan constraint areas for Vinegar Hill, Alconbury and South Farm, Upton and of SAM 181



*Figure 6* General plan of Sawtry showing constraint area and SAM 172

#### **4.4.3 Tort Hill NGR TL 1720/8460 and TL 1720/8485 (Welsh 1994)**

4.4.3.1 On the western side of the A1 (centred on TL 1720/8460), a small ditched enclosure, with associated pits and ditches, was exposed. These probably represent a prehistoric farmstead. Pottery from some of the features indicates that settlement initially occurred immediately before the Roman occupation of Britain in the first century AD and probably continued into the Roman period.

4.4.3.2 To the east of the A1 (centred on TL 1720/8485), a large number of pits, ditches, and other features were recorded. These produced a large quantity of, mainly, second to fourth century Roman pottery, as well as iron objects, coins, and other domestic refuse. These deposits probably represent a peripheral area of a Roman roadside settlement where activities such as rubbish disposal, and perhaps small scale industrial processing, took place.

#### **4.4.4 Pipeline evaluation, east of Tort Hill NGR TL1725/8480 (Roberts 1995)**

4.4.4.1 Archaeological assessment occurred along an easement stripped to accommodate a water pipeline diverted in advance of widening of the A1. Part of the easement not damaged by pipe laying was mechanically cleaned, features identified and hand excavated. A number of ditches and postholes were found to contain variable quantities of Roman pottery, fragments of prehistoric pottery, iron objects and metal slag, coins and other domestic refuse. One large and several small cobbled areas at the northern end of the easement were recognised. Two ovens or hearths were identified towards the south of the easement.

4.4.4.2 The area probably represents plots to the rear of the Roman roadside settlement along Ermine Street. The economy of the settlement appears to be based primarily on agriculture with small scale subsidiary activities. The assessment complements the previous work to the west of the easement and indicates that the settlement was a ribbon development along Ermine Street. The archaeology represents plots to the rear of the roadside occupation where secondary activities were being undertaken. The ditches are suggestive of property boundaries extending eastwards from the road.

#### **4.5 Stilton, South NGR TL 1665/8880 (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford)**

4.5.1 Geophysical survey was undertaken on two fields immediately to the south of Stilton on either side of the A1. Responses were largely of an agricultural nature, indicating ridge and furrow cultivation. Aerial photographic surveys showed this area to be covered in ridge and furrow, however, closer inspection indicates that this area was levelled and the remaining narrow furrows are indicative of more modern drainage.

#### **4.6 Folksworth**

##### **4.6.1 Sheep Lair Farm Roman Road TL 1605/9042 (Kemp 1995)**

4.6.1.1 The evaluation area lies to the south of the Norman Cross roundabout and Sheep Lair Farm, Folksworth, and to the west of the A1. Trenches were placed on the southern part of the field just north of Stilton where the Roman road survived as a pronounced *agger*. Five trenches of up to 20m in length were excavated by machine through the Roman roadway in order to record the construction sequence and assess the condition of the road. Excavation

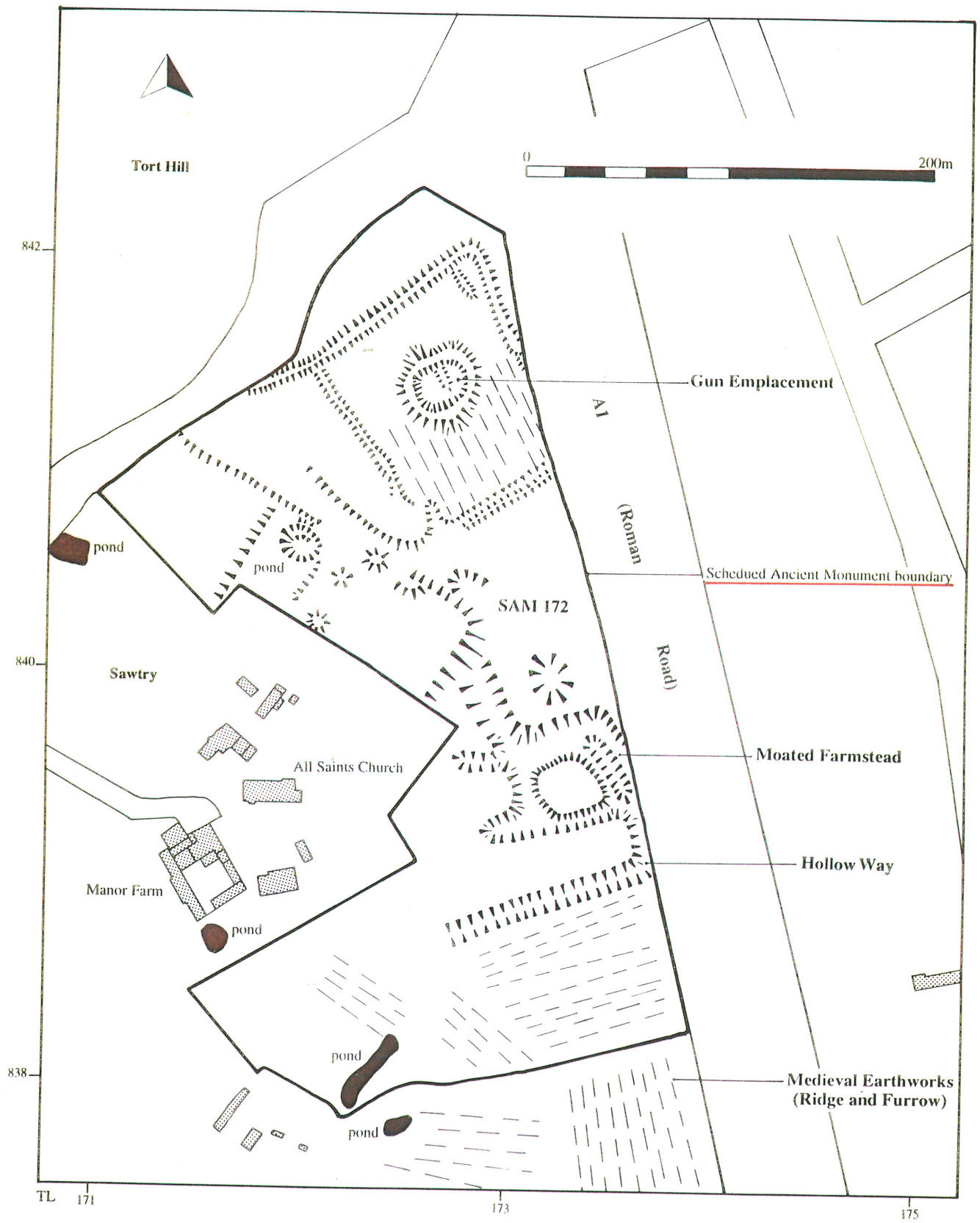


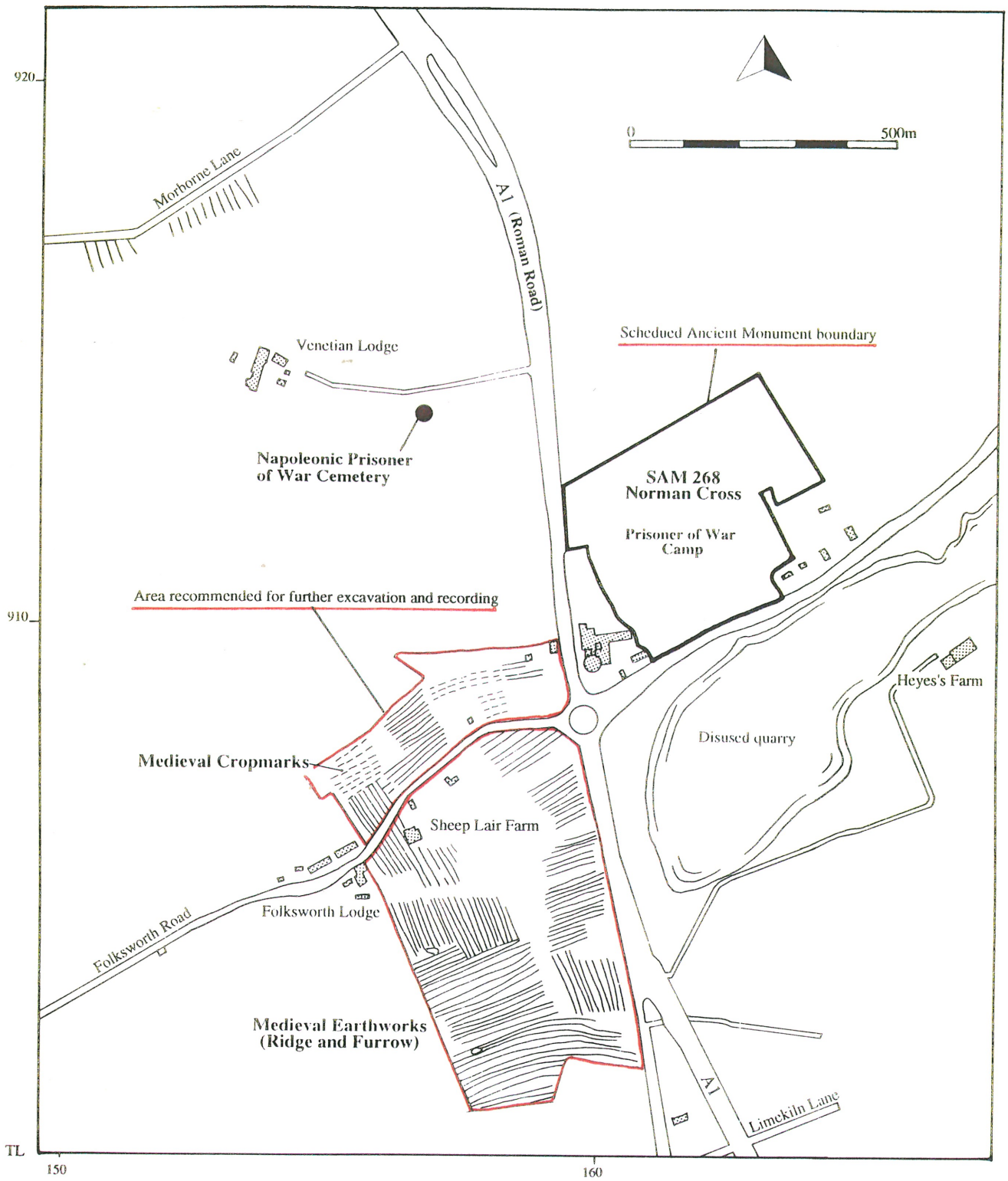
Figure 7 Sawtry: Plan of SAM 172

showed the road to consist of two flint cobble layers overlying made-up ground. No roadside ditches were encountered, however, the evaluation area was restricted due to disturbance to grazing land.

- 4.6.1.2 Remnants of a medieval landscape were also recognised as being of archaeological interest (Evans and Shotliff 1990). These consist of medieval agricultural remains, largely of ridge and furrow and headlands, with a hollow way lying on the eastern side of the Roman road. Pelling and Leith (ibid.) indicated the vulnerability of these remains within the widening programme.
- 4.6.1.3 Quarries lie within or close to the intake of land. Quarrying caused significant landscape alteration during the post-medieval period in the parish of Folksworth. References to gravel extraction occur in 1550 and again in 1821 and 1844 suggesting land alterations associated with the construction and maintenance of the Great North Road (Way, ibid).
- 4.6.1.4 Ogilbey's map of 1675 indicates that Ermine Street was certainly a major routeway in the seventeenth century. However, Taylor (1979) demonstrated that during parts of the medieval period a more westerly course was preferred. Historical research indicates a single shift of route from the Roman road to the present alignment by 1821. This probably occurred during the late seventeenth century when the Great North Road between Alconbury and Peterborough was turnpiked (Way, ibid).
- 4.6.1.5 Geophysical survey recognised a series of high magnetic anomalies which may represent kilns. As these features were not recognisable during the course of the earthwork survey it is probable that they represent archaeological activities prior to the transfer of arable fields to pasture during the late seventeenth century.

#### **4.6.2 Sheep Lair Farm Smithing Remains NGR TL 1593/9059 (Sutherland 1995)**

- 4.6.2.1 Geophysical survey in 1994 detected a high magnetic anomaly which was interpreted as a kiln, possibly of Roman date.
- 4.6.2.2 One 30 metre long trench and two test pits were excavated in the south-east corner of the field, within the road widening corridor to assess the archaeological potential of this magnetic anomaly. A trench was excavated but revealed no trace of archaeology. The area was re-scanned with a fluxgate magnetometer in order to more accurately fix the location of this anomaly and test-pits excavated to define the nature of this feature. No archaeological features were encountered.
- 4.6.2.3 The site is located on land with surviving ridge and furrow cultivation strips. The topsoil and subsoil produced sparse amounts of post-medieval, glazed cream ware and red ware pottery, brick fragments, small fractured parts of bones from medium to large sized animals, and most significantly a large piece of iron slag. The slag has a distinctly globular surface which is clearly the result of prills of slag cooling on a part of one side. This is indicative of slag, formed below the tuyere, or air inlet, in a smithing hearth. The location of this distinctive smithing hearth bloom suggests that this anomaly may mark the remains of a small scale smithing hearth, alternatively, the slag may represent a coincidental intrusion onto the site from elsewhere. Given the importance of the Great North Road, and associated routeways for droving, small scale smithing hearths were probably not uncommon. Horseshoes and nails found during this work support the interpretation.



*Figure 8 Plan of the Norman Cross area showing constraint area, probable location of cemetery and SAM 268*

#### **4.6.3 Napoleonic Prisoners of War Camp Cemetery at Venetian Lodge NGR TL 1565/9140**

4.6.3.1 Documentary research was undertaken to locate the Prisoners of War Camp cemeteries associated with the monument erected in 1914. This research defined the area of land purchased for the burial of prisoners and showed that earthworks associated with the cemetery were in existence as late as the early twentieth century. Research suggests that the cemetery was located in the north-western corner of the field abutting the track leading to Venetian Lodge (Way, *ibid.*). This is supported by finds retrieved by the farmer and reports from farm personnel which suggest plough damage to tiled paths in this area.

4.6.3.2 Documentary research also located a toll house associated with the turnpiking of the Great North Road during the late seventeenth century. This is located within the widening corridor and as one of the earliest roads to be turnpiked these remains are considered to be of importance as part of the post-medieval landscape.

#### **4.7 Haddon, Toon's Lodge NGR TL 147/932 (Guttmann 1995)**

4.7.1 Archaeological evaluations were undertaken at Toon's Lodge, Haddon. A gradiometry survey and a series of trial trenches failed to positively identify any prehistoric or Roman features below the medieval ridge and furrow.

### **5.0 DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Landscape Model and Interpretation**

##### **5.1.1 Prehistory**

5.1.1.1 Evaluations revealed that little prehistoric activity is identifiable along the A1 widening route. In prehistoric times the river valleys, with their lighter gravel and alluvium based soils, were preferred with upland areas exploited for woodland resources and grazing. As such, earlier prehistoric material would be expected to be of low intensity and sporadic in form, but any remains would be of great importance. The later Iron Age saw a move on to the clay lands for arable activity and this may be what is shown at Tort Hill, Sawtry. Again, however, exploitation of these areas would have been sporadic.

##### **5.1.2 Roman**

5.1.2.1 In the Romano-British period (especially in early Roman times) land use in southern and eastern England was superimposed upon existing Iron Age patterns. This is particularly interesting as the area was sparsely occupied in the Iron Age and innovative changes resulted from the Roman impact. Most important of these was the road itself. The main settlements in the area, both outside the Alconbury - Fletton Parkway section of the A1, are at important river crossings with significance as transport intersections (*Durobrivae* in the north and *Godmanchester* in the south). It is relevant that the section lacking substantial remains occurs on the clay lands and where settlement is known, at Sawtry, other landscape components are relevant. At Sawtry, the



proximity of the fen edge is significant, as is the topography, a local hill with a strategic position. Around the road agricultural systems sprung up, some of which were based on villas.

### **5.1.3 Saxon**

5.1.3.1 Saxon evidence is poor but could be explained by long term successful occupation of sites; the Saxon material presumably being under modern settlements. The encroachment of marine conditions into the Fenlands during the late Roman and medieval periods would have restricted settlement and local economies. Given a reduced supply of agricultural resources from the Fenlands, a shift in occupation focus away from the fen edge route, may have been necessary. This may be reflected in the importance of more westerly droveways during the Medieval period (Taylor 1979).

### **5.1.4 Medieval and Post-Medieval**

5.1.4.1 Medieval settlements have shifted slightly at places like Sawtry but generally occupation since that time has been successful. Later medieval and post-medieval periods saw changes in land use relating to the establishment of droveways, and land adjacent to the A1 route was put into pasture from arable to support this activity.

5.1.4.2 The advent of toll roads in the late seventeenth century and the turnpiking of the Great North Road may have altered a number of the other landscape elements, particularly land use. Documentary research suggests that much of the land around Stilton was converted from arable to pasture about the same time as the turnpiking of the Great North Road, it is also apparent that there was a shift in droving to the Great North Road about the same time. The survival of large amounts of pasture along the course of the A1 suggests a regional phenomena which may be associated with these changes. It is necessary to assess the contemporaneity of these occurrences and the effect they had on post-medieval economies and the local landscape in terms of morphology and human perception.

## **6.0 CONSTRAINT AREAS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

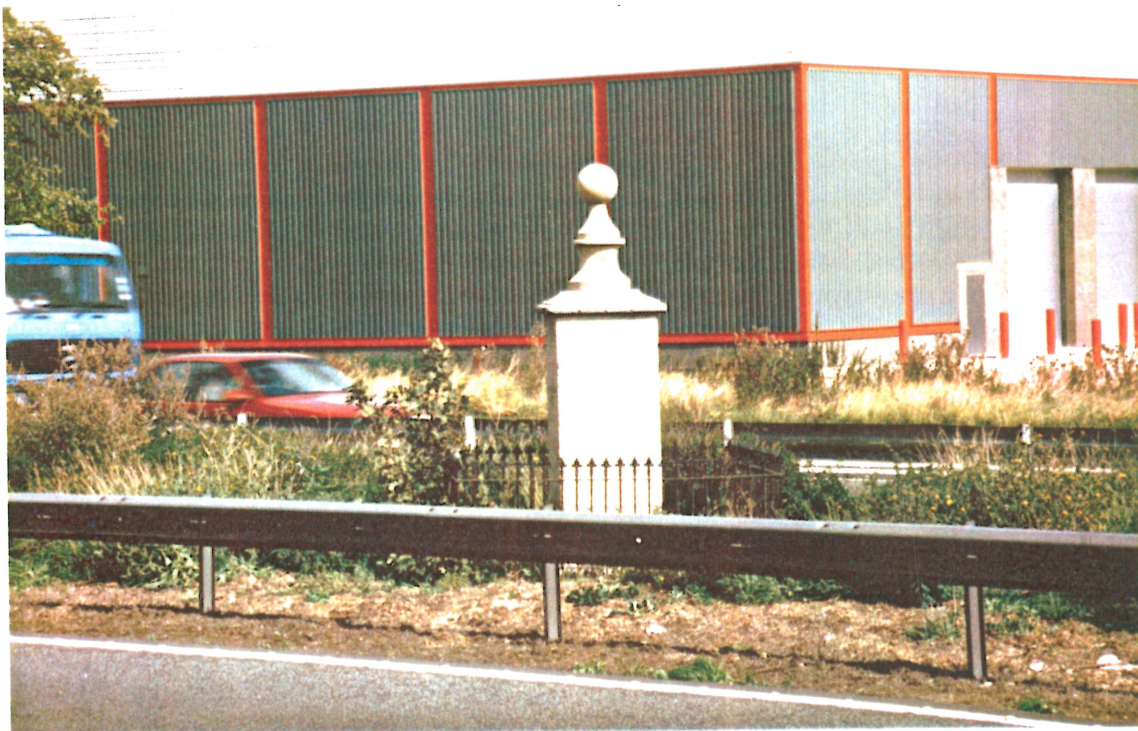
- 6.1.1 There are four levels of constraint area;
- i) those identified by Scheduling under the Ancient Monuments Act (1979) and so protected by law
  - ii) those areas identified by evaluation as being of regional importance using the criteria used by English Heritage (EH) for scheduling
  - iii) those areas where important archaeology may occur but which have not been assessed sufficiently for application of the EH criteria
  - iv) those areas where archaeology exists but is not of sufficient standing to warrant significant disruption of works.
- 6.1.2 As a result of the A1's mostly Roman origin, there are no areas where a response below this level can be considered.

## 6.2 Scheduled Areas

6.2.1 There are three Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the affected area (County Numbers 172, 181 and 268) plus another nearby (No.171) which must be avoided by any dumping, construction camps, borrow pits, etc.

6.2.2 SAM181 TL1864/7812- An eighteenth century milestone in the form of an obelisk, placed in the central reservation of the A1, at Alconbury (Fig. 5; Plate 1). This monument is particularly susceptible to machine damage and should be fenced during roadworks and all contractors notified of its presence. An alternative might be removal and then replacement but this can be undertaken only with authority from English Heritage and should be carried out by qualified personnel.

Bar -  
moved  
during  
work  
not in  
original position



*Plate 1 SAM 181: Eighteenth century milestone*

6.2.3 SAM 171 TL1750/8125 - A medieval moated site in the form of earthworks and cropmarks adjacent to Archer's Wood. This is beyond the widening corridor but its presence should be notified to contractors to avoid tipping, machine damage, etc. It should be monitored by the contract archaeologist as part of their monitoring duties.

6.2.4 SAM 172 TL1725/8420 - A series of medieval and post-medieval earthworks, currently under pasture, between Sawtry village and the A1 on the western side of the present road (Figs. 6 and 7). No construction activity can be carried out here without first obtaining Scheduled Monument Consent from English Heritage. Preservation of this site precludes disturbance of any kind. Fencing should be used along affected boundaries to ensure the site is

protected and it should be signposted so that contractors are aware of their responsibilities.

- 6.2.5 SAM 268 TL1625/9110 - A Napoleonic Prisoners of War camp in the north-eastern segment of the Norman Cross interchange (Fig. 8). This lies on the edge of the road widening scheme and should not be affected but fencing and notification of contractors should be undertaken. Again no development of the site itself is permitted.

### **6.3 Sites of Regional Importance**

#### **6.3.1 English Heritage funding criteria**

These are defined using the EH criteria for funding, i.e.:

1. Survival/Condition
2. Period
3. Rarity
4. Fragility/Vulnerability
5. Documentation
6. Group Value
7. Potential

There are two sites which fall into this category:

#### **6.3.2 Sawtry, Tort Hill TL1725/8470**

- 6.3.2.1 An area of Iron Age and Romano-British remains identified by documentary sources and evaluation trenching. In terms of the EH criteria it is classified as follows:
1. The remains are affected by ploughing and evaluation has revealed the presence of deposits and layers above cut features (Roberts 1995; Welsh 1994).
  2. Iron Age remains are very rare on the clay land but Romano-British finds are relatively common.
  3. As above, the Iron Age remains are especially interesting in showing a use of the clay lands at a time when such land was generally difficult to exploit. The Romano-British remains whilst common are of a form (roadside settlement) which is still a research priority and could provide important evidence for the dating and development of the road.
  4. The remains are extremely vulnerable in that they occur in the widening corridor and are threatened by the development. Road construction will destroy all such remains where the road itself is widened.
  5. The A1 is well documented as a routeway, the medieval remains just to the south provide a focus for documentation and finds of Romano-British materials in the Tort Hill area have also been published. The documentary sources for the remains, therefore, are a useful resource.
  6. The remains have a high group value being part of the Roman road landscape and thus linked, through function, to a series of remains along the road. In addition, the remains have a group value to be gained by integrating work on them with previous work on roadside settlement in the Roman period.
  7. The remains have yielded a variety of deposits and materials mostly with a limited potential for analysis but study of the function and economy of the site is important and requires elaboration.

### 6.3.3 Norman Cross, TL1593/9059

6.3.3.1 A mixed-period earthwork landscape with associated SAM and burials. This site is assessed as follows:

1. The earthworks are still upstanding and unaffected by ploughing.
2. The multi-period aspect of the earthworks is important in understanding the development of the landscape and reflects changes in land use which originally affected a broader region along the A1.
3. The ridge and furrow earthworks are not particularly rare even in this area but these are well-preserved and a palimpsest of periods, not simply a single system. This latter component makes the remains rare.
4. The remains are extremely vulnerable to development, not only does the road widening affect them but access roads are planned which will cross the site and destroy associations between earthwork features.
5. Documentation of the area is available, especially for the nineteenth century, it is important also to see the surveys of ridge and furrow landscapes for Northampton as relevant documentation, as are the medieval components of the Fenland Survey conducted by Hall (1992), particularly for Yaxley.
6. The group value of the remains is high as they reflect, in part, the impact of a landscape change which affected a large part of the A1 route.
7. The potential of the remains is high as they relate to landscape changes, historically identifiable activities and the presence of the Roman road.

### 6.4. Sites of Potential Importance, Not Fully Assessed

#### 6.4.1. Vinegar Hill, Alconbury TL 186/778

6.4.1.1 This site was fieldwalked, subjected to geophysical survey (magnetometry) and aerial photographic data was examined but invasive techniques could not be used as landowners would not grant access. The SMR records fieldwalking finds of mortar, *opus signinum* and quantities of early Roman pottery. On the east of the A1 a series of Roman buildings were excavated in 1940. It is likely that a high quality building is present in the area now threatened by development. However, neither geophysical survey nor aerial survey show any trace of building remains and it is possible that some of the Roman building material may be residual (equally, robbing out of the building may have rendered it unidentifiable by these techniques, although this is unlikely).

6.4.1.2 In terms of the EH criteria it may be assessed as follows

1. Unknown.
2. Romano-British (early)
3. Substantial Roman buildings on the A1 are rare and so of significance.
4. The remains are threatened by development and would be destroyed by road widening.
5. The remains have been documented, in part, by the 1940 excavations and other research on roadside structures can add to the available documentation for this site.
6. Group value is low as no other such remains are recognisable in the Alconbury - Fletton Parkway stretch of the A1, however, as a roadside component of the landscape it is of high group value through association with the road and its related features.
7. Unknown.

## 6.4.2 Areas of fen inlets

- 6.4.2.1 There are two such areas, one at Stilton and one near Sawtry. These have unknown archaeological potential as overlying deposits mask earlier prehistoric ones. Insufficient is known to classify these areas according to EH criteria but reference should be made to the relevant Fenland Project research goals, including the environmental components identified by Waller (1994).

*refanched.*

## 6.5 Sites with Archaeology of Low Priority

### 6.5.1 South Farm, Upton (TL1841/7896)

- 6.5.1.1 There are two areas where features identifiable from cropmarks on the east of the road appear to continue on the west. These represent agricultural systems, enclosure and boundary ditches of the Romano-British period.

### 6.5.2 Toon's Lodge, Haddon (TL 147/932)

- 6.5.2.1 An area of low earthworks of ridge and furrow form, with occasional headlands, have been evaluated and a single, possibly, agricultural ditch identified. This probably relates to the Roman villa partly excavated by French (1994) further north but is undated. The proximity of the villa justifies the inclusion of this area here.

## 6.6 The Remaining Areas

- 6.6.1 As the A1 follows the Roman road closely for much of its length between Alconbury and Fletton Parkway there is no stretch that can be ruled out entirely for archaeological potential; burials and temporary roadside structures are possible, as are continuations of field systems - all of Romano-British date. Prehistoric remains are possible and medieval deposits in the form of ridge and furrow are common. The latter mask areas from non-invasive techniques and could hide surviving archaeology. The clay geology is also a limiting factor for geophysical survey.

## **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 Scheduled Ancient Monuments**

- 7.1.1 All SAMs must be protected from development with appropriate fencing and signposting in consultation with English Heritage. No development, tipping, pitting or machine movement is permitted on these areas.

### **7.2 Sites of Regional Importance**

#### **7.2.1 Sawtry, Tort Hill**

- 7.2.1.1 Full excavation of the surviving remains in all threatened areas should be undertaken by a team of recognised archaeologists under the requirements of project briefs set by the project monitors (Bob Sydes of the CAO and Francis Pryor for the DoT). This should be run according to the guidelines of MAP2 and exploit monitoring points and review phases to maximise the problem orientation of the project within economic and time constraints.

#### **7.2.2 Folksworth and Norman Cross**

- 7.2.2.1 This area should be subject to a full documentary study integrating medieval and later documentation, discussing the nature of past road developments, the reasons for fossilisation of the landscape and the impact of the Prisoner of War Camp.
- 7.2.2.2 Archaeologically, the surviving remnant of the Roman road should be sample excavated to confirm the findings of the evaluation and a watching brief conducted for the stripping of areas covered by earthworks.

### **7.3 Sites of Potential Importance, Unevaluated**

#### **7.3.1 Vinegar Hill, Alconbury**

- 7.3.1.1 This site must be rapidly evaluated once possession of the site is gained. A review of findings should then be undertaken in consultation with the project monitors and further work follow from this review. The further work may include full excavation or more limited recording.

#### **7.3.2 Fenland Areas**

- 7.3.2.1 All areas should be augured to test the surviving deposits, and a review held to identify what the appropriate level of response should be. As a minimum, a recording brief should be undertaken in these areas.

### **7.4 Sites of Low Archaeological Priority**

- 7.4.1 All these sites require recording briefs, subject to specifications set by the project monitors. There should be staged recording following topsoil removal and subsoil removal. Sample areas *must* be cleaned before recording is undertaken as the clay geology and machine movements obscure almost all features.

## **7.5 The Remaining Route**

- 7.5.1 A watching brief must be conducted for these areas with a level of monitoring to be decided by the project monitors. Again sample cleaning must be undertaken.

## **8.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. No action beyond preservation.
- 8.2 Tort Hill, Sawtry. Full excavation subject to a brief from the CAO.
- 8.3 Norman Cross. Sample excavation of Roman road, further documentary work and recording, subject to CAO brief.
- 8.4 Vinegar Hill, Alconbury. Evaluation followed by review of need for further work.
- 8.5 Areas of Fenland. Auguring to establish sedimentary history and potential, further work subject to CAO brief.
- 8.6 Toon's Lodge, Haddon. Phased recording brief.
- 8.7 South Farm, Upton. Phased recording brief.
- 8.8 All other areas, sample watching brief.

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