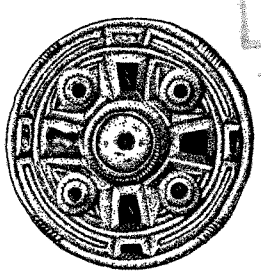

Archaeological Field Unit

An Archaeological Evaluation at Southfork Farm, Wisbech St. Mary, Cambridgeshire, 1993.

S.P. Macaulay

1993

Cambridgeshire Archaeology

REPORT NO A14.

Commissioned By Gary Patrick

Archaeological Evaluation at Southfork Farm, Wisbech St. Mary, Cambridgeshire, 1993

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In June 1993, Cambridgeshire Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation on the proposed Trout Lake at Southfork farm.

Substantial archaeological remains have been identified to the south along the side of a roddon (extinct water channel) dating to the Roman and Medieval periods. Fieldwalking and air photographs have revealed many sites in this area, however alluviation (deposits from flooding) has lead to possible masking of features not on roddons and they would only be revealed through trenching.

No archaeological activity, either sites or artefacts, were recovered within the trench excavated. The assessment investigated down 2.50 metres in places, the maximum depth of the Trout Lake, and revealed no archaeology appearing at this depth. It was concluded that no archaeology will be disturbed by the development.

1 ABSTRACT

In June 1993, Cambridgeshire Archaeology undertook an archaeological assessment on the proposed Trout Lake at Southfork Farm, Wisbech St. Mary. The area had produced archaeological activity associated with roddons (relict waterways) and to the south of the area extensive cropmark sites had been identified. The assessment, however, produced no traces of any archaeological activity occurring above the maximum depth of the Trout Lake. Archaeological activity may exist beneath this depth, pre-dating alluviation.

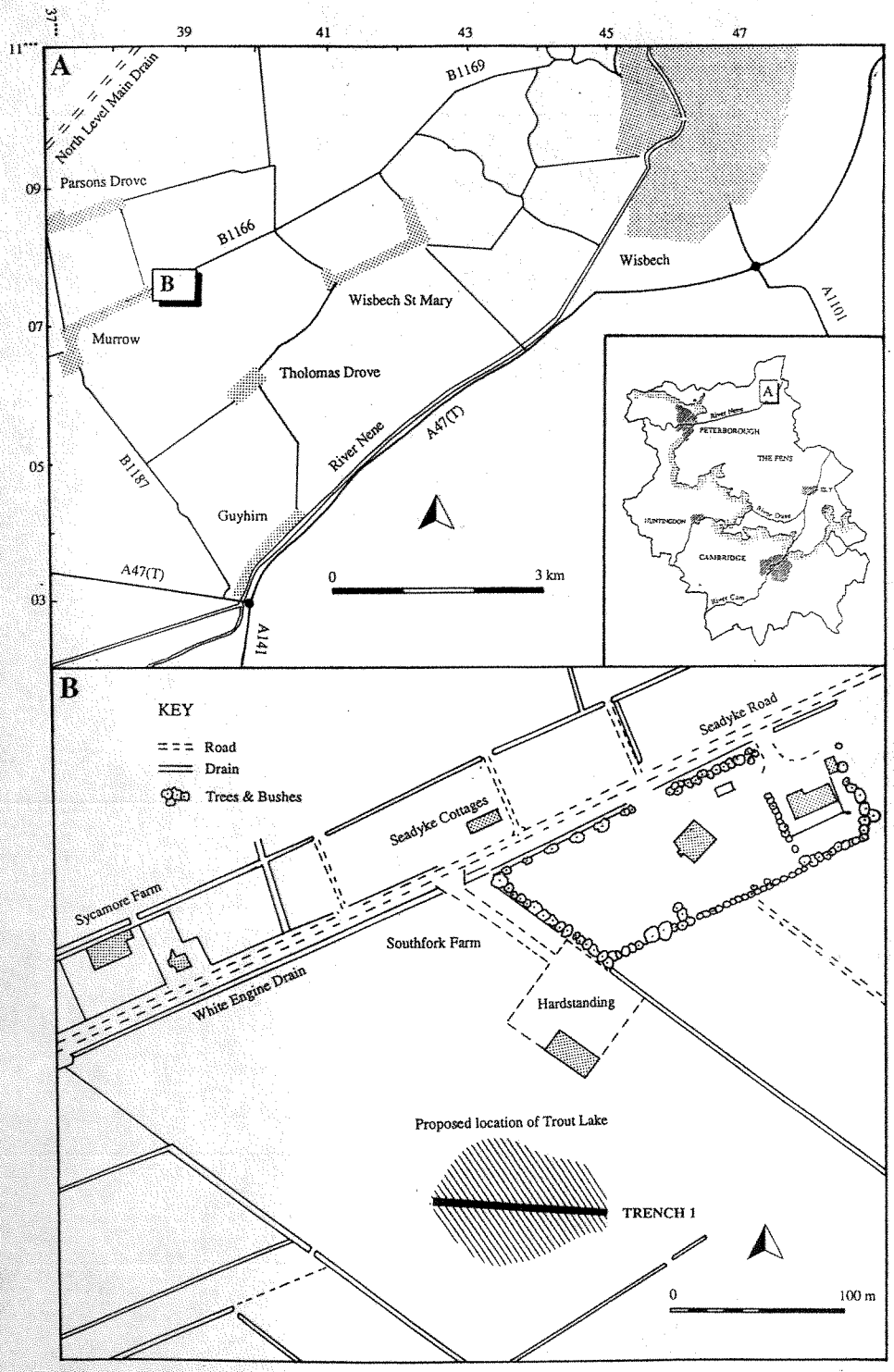

Figure 1 - Location Map

2 INTRODUCTION

Between the 21st to 23rd, 1993 Cambridgeshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological assessment (TF 3885 0750) on behalf of Gary Patrick, on the planned area (revised) of a Trout Lake on Southfork Farm (Fig 1). This work was carried out following a brief provided by the County Archaeological Office to satisfy an archaeological planning condition.

No previous records existed for any archaeological finds in the immediate vicinity, but it was felt that the area was in close enough proximity to substantial cropmark sites of Romano-British and Medieval date, located to the south along roddons, to warrant an archaeological investigation.

3 TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY

The area of the Trout Lake lies off the Seadyke Road on Southfork Farm (Gary Patrick), northwest of Murrow.

The geology of the site is defined on the 1:50,000 IGS map as Older Marine Alluvium (Barrow Drove Beds).

4 BACKGROUND

The construction of a gas pipeline (1976) revealed extensive cropmark site through fieldwalking and air photographs. Romano-British settlement and salt-making sites along with Medieval occupation were identified along a roddon to the south of Seadyke road. (SMR nos; 01999, 02001, 03805, 03806, 03813, 03814, 03815, 03872, 07875, 07888, 07915, 07916).

The roddon probably acted as a focus for salt-making industries in both the Roman and Medieval periods. Extensive briquettage (evidence of salt-making) as well as pottery and settlement evidence was discovered.

5 METHODOLOGY

A single trench, 100 metres long, was opened using a mechanical excavator, initially with a 5ft toothless ditching bucket and subsequently with a toothed bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist. The change of buckets was deemed necessary due the compaction of the clay. The trench was located across the entire width of the development area to investigate the disturbance caused by the proposed Trout Lake.

Once opened the trench was cleaned by hand, photographed and planned, so that any features could be recorded and excavated using the standard techniques of the Archaeological Field Unit.

6 RESULTS

Topsoil was removed completely from the trench, the depth varying from 0.20-0.35 metres. Within the trench the topsoil overlay a blue/grey alluvial clay deposit [2], which in turn sealed off a series of alluviation sequences.

There was an increase in the silt/sand content of the clay towards the eastern end of the trench, these deposits [21, 22, 23] overlay the clay [2], which increased in depth towards the east and lay beneath the topsoil. Beneath the clay [2] running from the west at varying depths (0.01-0.28 m OD) appeared a black organic deposit [3], laid down through alluviation (Dr C.A.I. French pers comm). Beneath this ran more clay [4] and occurring towards the east alluvial sand/silt [8] and sand/silt/clay [18] rose up. All of these were above a blue/grey silt-clay beginning at -0.84 to -1.22 m OD which continued beneath 2.5 m below ground surface (the maximum depth of the Trout Lake).

No archaeology was discovered anywhere in the sampled area, only modern field drains were identified to have disturbed the alluvium beneath plough depth.

Samples were taken of the organic deposit [3] and sand/silt/clay deposit [18] and these were removed for analysis.

7 INTERPRETATION

There was no evidence of any archaeological activity in the area of alluvium sampled. Similarly no traces occurred above the maximum depth of alluvium to be disturbed as a result of development.

Contrary to initial expectations the site does not lie on a roddon, although the size of the proposed lake had been greatly reduced from the original plans.

The most important data retrieved from the site relates to the environmental conditions of the alluviation sequences. However, within the scope of the evaluation brief this was of no direct archaeological importance.

8 CONCLUSIONS

The proposed Trout Lake will not disturb any archaeological deposits above 2.50 m beneath ground level. The site does not lie on or near to any roddon, where archaeological activity would be expected.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the client for their financial support of the project. Gary Patrick (Client and machine operator), Dr C.A.I. French and Dr Tim Reynold (Project Manager) for their help on the project. Finally Mary Alexander for her work on the site.

10 APPENDIX

List of Contexts

Context	Description	Nature	Above	Below
1	Topsoil	Dark grey brown, clay-silt	2,21	
2	Alluvium	Blue grey, clay	3,4	1,22,23
3	Organic deposit	V. dark grey, peaty silt-clay	4	2
4	Alluvium	Blue brown, clay	5,8,18	2,3
5	Alluvium	Blue grey, silt-clay	-?-	4,8,18
6	Fill of [7]	Rusty brown silt-clay	7	1
7	Cut of ditch	P/Med field drain	4	6
8	Alluvium	Blue, silt-sand + low % clay	5,18	4
9	-Same as 8 above-			
10	Fill of [11]	Brownish grey silty-clay	16	2
11	Cut of N-S linear feature	Modern drainage ditch	4	17
12	Fill of [13]	Brown silt-clay	13	1
13	Cut of ditch	Modern land drain	4	1
14	Fill of [15]	Mottled orange blue grey, silt-sand	15	1
15	Cut of N-S Linear feature	P/Med field drain	4	14
16	Fill of [11]	Dark brownish grey peaty silt-clay	17	10
17	Fill of [11]	Mid grey with yellow lense silt	11	16
18	Alluvium	Blue mottled orange silt-sand-clay	5	4,8
19	Fill of [20]	Dark grey brown, silt-clay	20	1
20	Cut of N-S drain	Modern land drain	18	19
21	Alluvium	Mid pinky brown grey, silt-clay	22	1
22	Alluvium	Mid blue grey/ yellow brown, silt-clay with grey sand-silt lenses	2,23	1,21
23	Alluvium	Mid brownish grey, silt-clay with grey sand-silt lenses	2	22

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