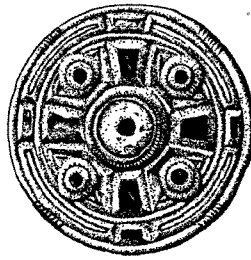


ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD OFFICE
FULBOURN COMMUNITY CENTRE
HAGGIS GAP, FULBOURN
CAMBRIDGE CB1 3HD
Archive Guy



Archaeological Field Unit

Archaeological Recording Brief at High Street Farm, West Wrating.

T L Sutherland

1994

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. A047

Commissioned By Redoak Frames Ltd.

**Archaeological Recording Brief at High Street Farm,
West Wrattling**

T L Sutherland B.Sc.,HND.,PIFA

1994

Editor: Paul Spoerry Phd.

Illustrators: C Gait-Utime M.Phil. (Cantab) & J May Dip. Applied Comm. Design

Report No A 47

Archaeological Field Unit
Cambridgeshire County Council
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap, Fulbourn
Cambridgeshire CB2 5HD
Tel (0223) 881614
Fax (0223) 880946

SUMMARY

Planning permission had been granted for a house to be built on a plot of land known as High Street Farm, fronting onto High Street, West Wrating, Cambridgeshire (TL 6065-5200). Trenching for the house foundations was carried out on 1st December 1994, observations of which recorded the presence of a brick floor, from approximately the 18th or 19th century, and a steep sided, one meter deep ditch which ran approximately north-east/south-west across the site. This ditch contained several sherds of pottery, a number of which were particularly noteworthy. This pottery suggests that the ditch was open in the later medieval period (C. 13th-15th century) and remained open until relatively recently when the upper part of it was used as a route for a one inch diameter, steel water pipe. Both the ditch (part of an older field boundary), and a structure in the position of the recorded floor can be identified on 19th century maps. No other significant features were found.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Geology and topography	1
Archaeological and historical background	1
Methodology	1
Results	3
Interpretation	4
Acknowledgements	4
Bibliography	4

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Location map showing archaeological features in the development area.	2
Figure 2 Part of a Late Medieval spouted pitcher found in the excavated ditch.	3

1 INTRODUCTION

In December 1994 contractors acting on behalf of Redoak Frames Ltd., carried out trenching for building foundations at High Street Farm, fronting onto High Street, West Wrating, Cambridgeshire (TL 56065-25200). The locations of the site and the trenches are given in *Figure 1*. Archaeological observations were carried out and completed for the client in a single day by The Archaeology Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The underlying geology is Chalky Boulder Clay (British Geological Survey 1932).

The site lies at 117m OD, is generally flat with the land to the north-west and north-east gradually sloping away. The high street runs north-west- south-east on the south-west of the site, whilst arable fields lie to the north-east.

The site area had been recently left unused, the area immediately to the north-west having been built upon in 1993 and the area immediately to the south-east is due to be developed.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To the rear of the property, is an area of earthworks, described on the SMR as the possible remains of medieval settlement evidence comprising several banks and ditches. However, assessment work by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit, carried out in response to a proposed golf course (CAU 1991), suggested that these earthworks are the degraded remains of medieval field systems and a hollow way. As the site itself fronts onto the high street it was thought that it may contain evidence of earlier, perhaps, medieval properties.

The enclosure map of 1813 shows the present development area as containing three structures and boundaries different to those recorded at present, as does the later 1885 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map. A 1993 revised 1:2500 map shows the earlier boundaries but no structures even though the remains of any of these features are no longer visible on the surface.

4 METHODOLOGY

The foundation trenches were excavated with a mechanical excavator using a 0.8 metre wide toothed bucket to a depth of 1.8 metres. The depth of the trenches was determined by the close proximity of a number of very large trees.

Trenching was only carried out in the positions of the proposed foundations and therefore dictated the areas which would be investigated. Observations

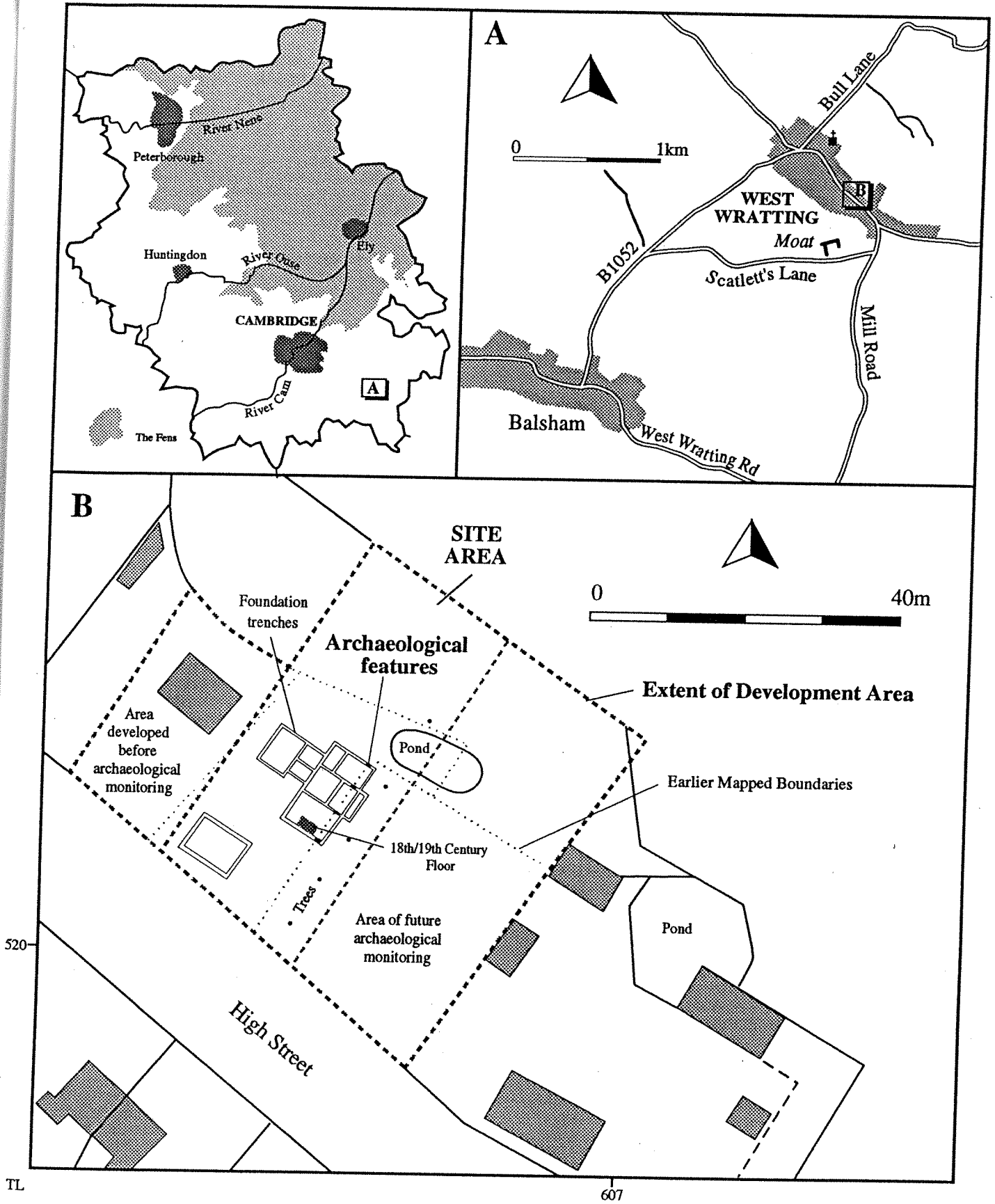


Figure 1 Location map showing archaeological features in the development area

were carried out as the excavations progressed until the work was complete. Areas of archaeological interest were then photographed, recorded on plan and section and any artefactual evidence retrieved and recorded.

5 RESULTS

The general area of the trenches had been recently disturbed when used as a spoil heap in 1993 for constructional work on the adjacent plot which lies to the west. This led to a great deal of material from elsewhere being spread across the site, resulting in unreliable upper contextual evidence.

Only two areas uncovered archaeologically stratified material of a particular interest.

The most obvious stratified context was that of a laid brick floor (stretcher style) bonded by a fine lime mortar matrix, on a bed of orange sand. The bricks measured 23.5 cm x 11.5 cm x 4.5 cm and are of a mass produce, hard fired type from the late 18th /early 19th century. They were evident in an area covering at least 3m x 2m to the north-east of trench 1. No other stratified structural remains were found.

A 1m wide x 1m deep ditch was recorded in several sections which ran across the site in a south-west/north-easterly direction which produced some datable artefactual evidence. These consisted of:-

Four sherds of a late medieval spouted pitcher, with a rope handle, of red fabric and speckled green glazed. possibly from the Sible Heddingsam production area of Essex and probably late medieval (?AD 1350-1500?) in date (*Fig. 2*).

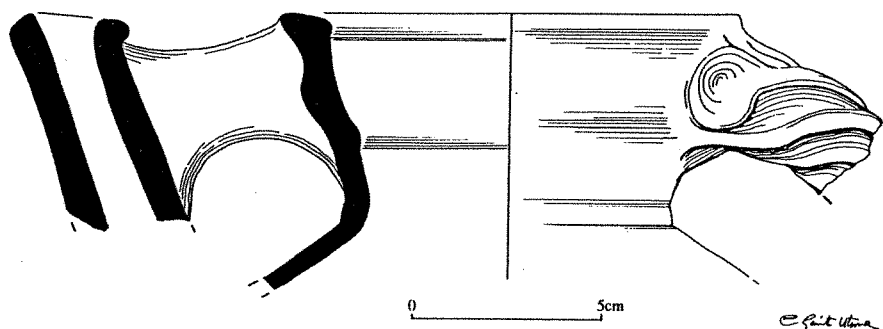


Figure 2 Part of a Late Medieval spouted pitcher found in the excavated ditch

One sherd of medieval grey-ware (?Hertfordshire -type) from a thin-walled cooking vessel dating from approximately AD 1200-1400, was also found in the lower fills of this feature.

In the upper layers of the ditch three small oyster shells, two sherds from different vessels of late-medieval/early post medieval pottery and a piece of post- medieval roof tile were recovered.

A section through the ditch revealed a length of one inch diameter steel water pipe which lay approximately 0.40m below the surface and appeared to be sealed by a layer of river cobbles set in a humic matrix similar to that of the topsoil.

The more stratigraphically sealed, or lower, levels of the topsoil revealed a variety of post medieval pottery, of which the following three sherds were typical. One sherd is from a modern glazed earthenware vessel dating from after 1820; one sherd of glazed post-medieval red-ware dating from somewhere between 1600-1800; and one sherd of Staffordshire Butterpot dating between 1650-1700.

6 INTERPRETATION

The laid bricks appear to be the remains of a floor from a building which once stood on the site. These bricks however do not provide a date for the structure as the floor may have been laid inside the building after it was constructed. The floor does appear to have been laid some time after the end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century. No datable evidence was found sealed beneath the floor, but the pottery evidence from the stratified topsoil does suggest that pottery was more abundant here in the late 18th / early 19th centuries. This conforms with the map evidence which shows buildings on this plot in the early 19th century.

The ditch appears to have been open in the medieval period although the medieval material may have deposited in a later ditch more recently. The 1813 enclosure map shows this feature extending across the fields behind the road for approximately 100 metres and it should therefore be seen as at least part of a major field boundary. On the later 1885 Ordnance Survey map this boundary is restricted in length to that of the building plot. This shortened ditch seems to have been a negative feature earlier this century as what appears to be a mains water pipe was placed within it, buried and protected by a layer of cobbles. These were themselves covered by soil, although when this happened is debatable. As there does appear to be some stratigraphic integrity to the fills of the ditch, and the sherds are relatively unabraded, the dating evidence is probably reliable.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the clients, Peter Hawkins and Redoak Frames Ltd. for their financial support for this project, the Client's Agent, John Alderton Partnership for their professional involvement, the editor Dr. Paul Sperry, the Cambridgeshire Records Office and the Assistant County Archaeologist, Bob Sydes. Thanks must also be extended to Malin Holst who assisted in part of the recording work, and C. Gait-Utime and J. May for the production of the illustrations.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

British Geological Survey, 1932, 1: 50,000 map of England and Wales, Ordnance Survey, Southampton.