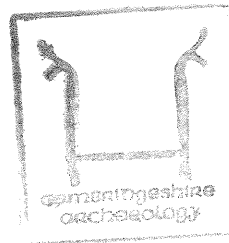


**An Archaeological Assessment of Land on and Behind Thrapston Road,
Spaldwick, 1995**

Duncan E Schlee MSc

1996

Editor: Paul Spoerry PhD
Illustrator: Melodie Paice BSc



ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD OFFICE
FULBOURN COMMUNITY CENTRE
HAGGIS GAP, FULBOURN
CAMBRIDGE CB1 5HD Tel: 881614
(Fax)

OFFICE COPY.

Report No A79

Archaeological Field Unit
Cambridgeshire County Council
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap, Fulbourn
Cambridgeshire CB1 5HD
Tel (01223) 881614
Fax (01223) 880946

SUMMARY

An assesment excavation commissioned by McLean Homes Ltd., was undertaken by the Archaeology Field Unit From November 30th 1995, returning in the new year for a second phase of assessment. Although the majority of the site was found to be devoid of any archaeological features, an area of street frontage on the Thrapston Road was found to contain Late Saxon cut features, including a beam slot, drip gulley, pits and postholes. These are believed to represent settlement in Spaldwick prior to the founding of the Bishops Palace and foundation of demesne estate centre immediately to the south of the evaluation site. This earlier phase of occupation appears to be aligned differently to those of the present day, supporting the theory that the village underwent wholesale re-planning when the palace was founded in the mid twelfth century.

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An Archaeological Assessment of Land on and Behind Thrapston Road, Spaldwick. 1995. (NGR TL 128 729)

1 INTRODUCTION

This archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Mr. Jim Woolnough, of McLean Homes East Anglia Ltd. to assess the archaeological potential of the proposed development site and the impact that this development may have on the archaeological record. Work was carried out in accordance with the design brief produced by Louise Austin of the Archaeology section of Cambridgeshire County Council (planning app. no.:H/1401/94) in November 1995. The fieldwork was supervised by D.E. Schlee of the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Field Unit, with up to two site assistants, and took place between November 30th and 6th December.

The proposed development involves the construction of 18 houses with access, services, and landscaping, on an area of approximately 1.1 hectare. The majority of the site lies on the outskirts of the medieval village of Spaldwick on vacant (rough pasture and scrub) land behind the present day street-front properties and garden plots. The development area also includes a small piece of street frontage near the centre of the village at the eastern end of the Thrapston road, where it makes a right angled turn towards the village green (*Figure 1*).

Spaldwick formed the centre of a large Saxon estate, which C.C Taylor (1990) suggests became the property of the Bishops of Lincoln in the twelfth century. At this time a 'palace' and demesne farm were constructed and the village is believed to have been re-aligned in relation to this. It was considered possible that any development in the centre of the village might reveal evidence of this earlier phase, increasing our understanding of the development of such villages.

Due to the difficulties encountered in satisfactorily evaluating the survival of archaeological features during the initial assessment, a second stage of evaluation was proposed. The additional work took place between January 8th-11th 1996, in advance of further preparation and development of the site, once the bungalow on the site had been demolished and its foundations removed. A further five trenches were machine-dug to ascertain the extent and concentration of features within the development area, prior to open plan excavation of the site.

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The village of Spaldwick lies 11 km west of Huntingdon on the 1st/2nd gravel terraces of the Ellington Brook (a tributary of the Alconbury Brook) which flows west-east to the north of the site. The gravels overlie Oxford Clays. The results of test pitting undertaken by the developers show that beneath the 'topsoil' at a depth of between 0.5m and 1.0m, there is orange-brown silty clayey gravelly sand and light brown/ olive silty clay with sandy and gravelly pockets. These would appear to represent the top of the terrace deposits

associated with the Alconbury Brook. What is referred to as topsoil is in fact a silty clay alluvium (2), up to 0.80m thick. The true topsoil is approximately 0.25m thick.

3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Desk top Study

A desk top study was carried out of the available documentary sources relating to the area to be developed and the village of Spaldwick as a whole. The study was based on cartographic and written documents available in the Huntingdon Records Office (HRO), and the Cambridgeshire Sites and Monuments Office (SMR). Documentary evidence was sparse, mainly consisting of maps and an article on the morphological history of Spaldwick by C.C. Taylor(1989).

3.2 Cartographic Evidence

The earliest maps available for Spaldwick are two enclosure maps from 1775 and 1776 which show that the property boundaries of the proposed development site have not changed appreciably since that time. On the enclosure maps, one building is shown to occupy the area of street frontage presently occupied by a bungalow. Since it is not clear how the 1776 street lies in relation to the road layout today, it is not clear exactly where this building stood in relation to the present street frontage. The fields behind the street front properties do not appear to have changed appreciably in function since 1776. The next available map was the 1926 edition Ordnance Survey map. Although the property boundaries and function of the fields remain unaltered, the street front property appears to have been replaced with a more substantial building or buildings. More recent maps show the street frontage property with the bungalow that occupies the site today. From the cartographic evidence and from surviving foundations encountered during the evaluation, it is clear that this site has undergone several re-developments since the 1775 map was drawn. Apart from these maps, no evidence was found to indicate when the various buildings that have stood on the site were built or demolished.

3.3 SMR Archive

The SMR maps and database entries for Spaldwick mostly relate to standing Medieval and Post Medieval buildings (733a/b, 04549a), stone crosses etc. (911, 734, 722), and a gravestone (721). One stray find, (a medieval token) is recorded (840). Apart from these entries there are extensive traces of ridge and furrow systems in the fields surrounding Spaldwick (719, 09853, 09855). The main focus of interest is however, the area between Thrapston Road and Stow road, to the west of the village green, immediately to the south of the proposed development area. This area is largely an open area with extensive evidence of earlier buildings, banks and ditches, visible as undulations in the overlying grassland. This is interpreted in the SMR as a deserted or shrunken medieval village (719). There is no record of any previous archaeological excavation in the Village.

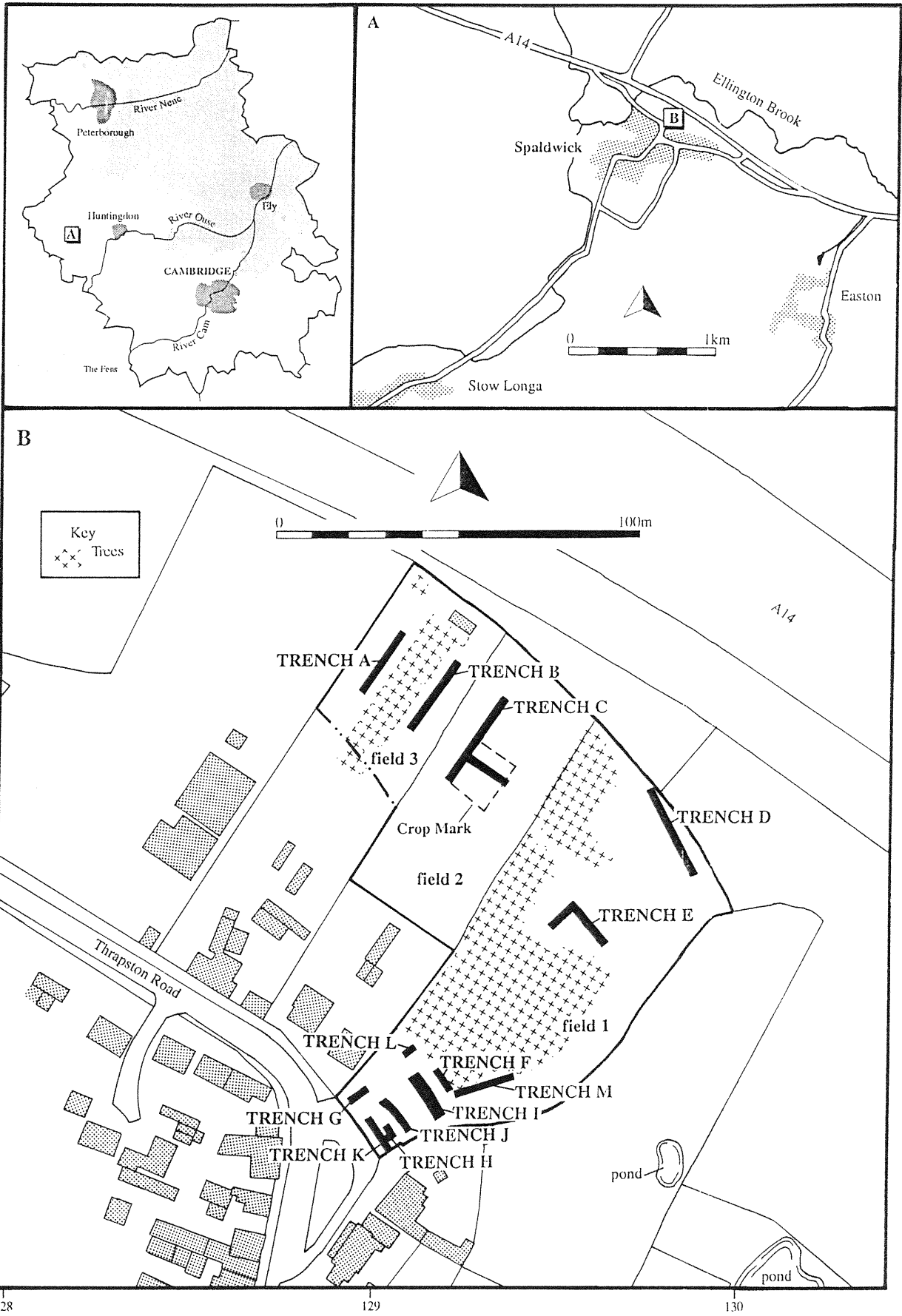


Figure 1 Site Location and Trench location Plan

C.C. Taylor has discussed the morphological history of Spaldwick (1989). He suggests that the area between Thrapston Road and Stow Road represents the enclosure of a palace and demesne farm belonging to the Bishops of Lincoln. He argues that the plan of the village as it stands today, was laid out around this palace in the twelfth century, with the High Street and village green forming an approach to the main gates of this centre. This redevelopment had the effect of putting the village on its present day east-west alignment. Prior to construction of the palace, Spaldwick was the centre of a large Saxon estate. The shape and location of the settlement prior to this re-alignment is not known, although the trend in villages in this part of Huntingdonshire is to lie along a succession of SW-NE route ways. It seems likely that the sunken trackway that forms the western extent of the enclosure, links the Spaldwick Road and the road that runs up to Beltons Hill, forming just such a SW-NE axis. Spaldwick's Saxon arrangement is likely to have been similar to others in region and the obvious location for early settlement is therefore along, and between, the Thrapston and Spaldwick roads 200m west of the assessment site, although an alternative route is directly through this site.

3.4 Aerial Photographic Assessment

An assessment of the archaeological potential of the site from aerial photographic evidence was commissioned (appendix C) in order to identify any features within the assessment area, or features in the immediate vicinity, that might have a bearing on the positioning of trenches during the assessment itself. Although the fields surrounding Spaldwick contain extensive traces of ridge and furrow agriculture, the specific area of assessment did not contain any traces of archaeological features. A rectangular feature visible in field 2 was believed to be a modern garden feature (see below)

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Trenching Strategy

The tender specification for the assessment as a whole, suggested linear trenching of 150m (approx. 2% of the total assessment area), unless significant archaeological deposits were encountered. All these parameters were considered in deciding the positions of the trenches. Eight trenches were dug using a JCB with a 1.60m wide toothless ditching bucket. Their combined length was 153.25m. The locations of the trenches are shown in *figure 1*. The land under assessment appears to have been largely abandoned for a number of years, having become overgrown with brambles and long grass. Trenches A and B, in Field 3, were positioned where practical and in order to gain representative coverage of the area. Trench C, in Field 2, was positioned to locate a possible feature indicated by aerial photographic survey. Trench D, in Field 1, was positioned to ascertain whether a raised feature visible on the ground in the field directly to the north, may have extended into the assessment area. The remainder of Field 1 was overgrown with brambles, saplings, and small trees which severely restricted the possibilities for trenching. Trench E was positioned in the only practical space available. Trenches were machine dug to an average depth of 1.0m, roughly at the top of the silty clay with pockets of sandy and gravelly deposits (3).

The area of land closest to the street frontage was considered most likely to produce deposits of archaeological significance. Some of the larger trees in

this area, are however, protected by a conservation order. This consideration, the position of drains and service trenches associated with a bungalow standing on the site, and problems of access for vehicles, and the dumping of spoil, further limited the areas in which trenching was feasible in this area. Trench F was positioned behind the bungalow. Trenches G and H were positioned at the front of the property in the only practical locations.

During the second stage of evaluation, which followed the demolition of the bungalow and removal of the associated hard standing, an additional five trenches (I-M) were dug to ascertain the extent, concentration, and character of the archaeological features prior to stripping a large open area.

All trenches were machine dug down to the top of natural clays and gravels, or to the level of significant archaeological deposits. Features were excavated by hand and recorded according to standard AFU procedures. Trench edges and a pre excavation plan were plotted using an EDM, and excavated features were planned by hand.

4.2 Limiting factors

In addition to the constraints upon the positioning of trenches discussed above (section 4.1), the extent of machine trenching was limited by the amount of work that could be done within daylight hours. This meant that only a cursory assessment of Trenches G and H (which had to be excavated and backfilled on the same day) was possible. In addition, the weather was cold and heavy snow flurries interrupted work towards the end of the excavation. It is not, however, believed that these considerations have had any significant impact on the results of the evaluation. For the second phase of evaluation working conditions were even more unpleasant, with heavy rain making the overburden (already disturbed by the demolition of the bungalow) very muddy and soft. Recognition of features was hampered by ground water collecting rapidly in the cut trenches, and a leaking water pipe, with the result that limited recording and sampling of features was only possible in three of the five trenches

5 RESULTS

The positions of Trenches A to M are shown in *figure 1*.

Trenches A, B, C, D, and E, were all found to contain no archaeological deposits whatsoever. Machine excavation was continued down to an approximate depth of 1.0m, (well into the top of the gravel terrace deposits), at which point it was decided that no archaeology was likely to be present. Topsoil(1) was generally 0.25m thick, consisting of a dark greyish brown, sandy clay. This overlies a layer of brownish yellow sandy clay alluvium (2) approximately 0.80m thick. This in turn overlies natural river terrace gravels mixed with pockets of Oxford Clay (3). *Figure 2* shows a representative section of the stratigraphy in these trenches.

5.1 Trench A

Trench A was 2.0m long and was dug to a depth 1.20m. No archaeologically significant deposits were found.

5.2 Trench B

Trench B was 23m long and was excavated to a depth 1.20m. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered.

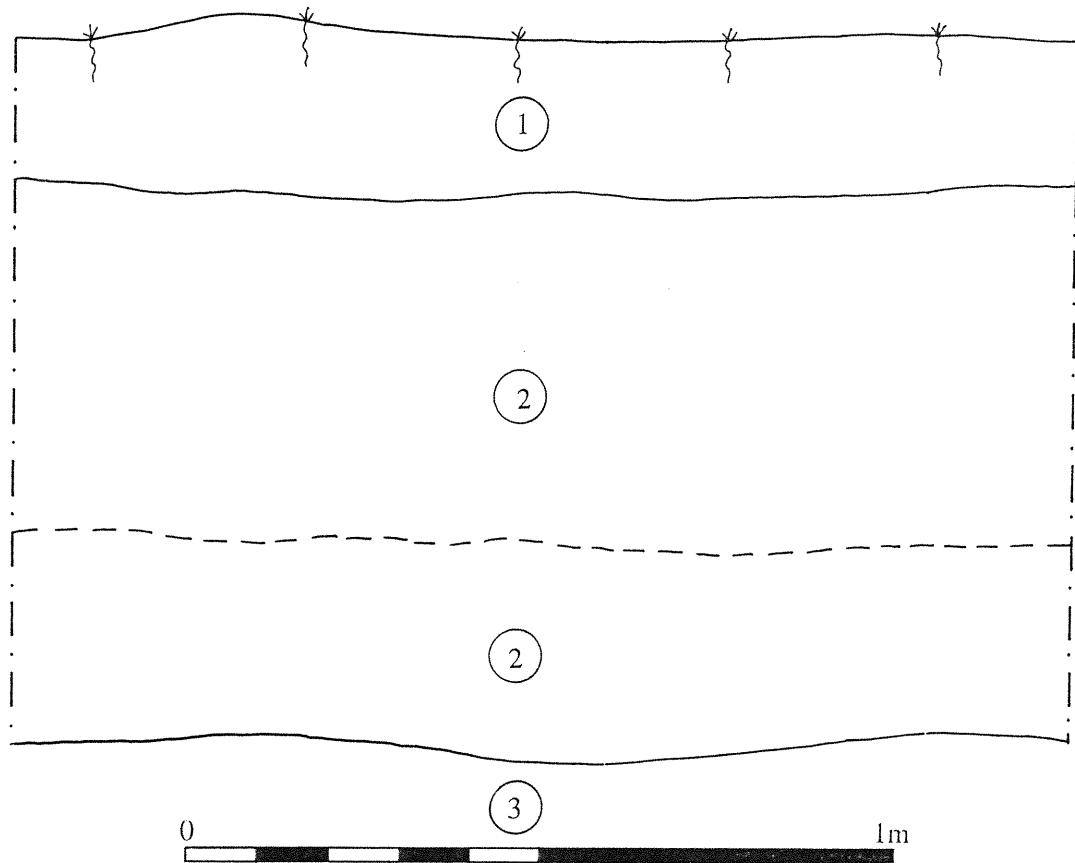


Figure 2 Representative section for Trenches A to E

5.3 Trench C

Trench C was cut as a T-shape, with a total length of 43m to a depth of 1.20m. The crop mark indicated in the aerial photographic survey was thought to be a square ditched feature with sides 20m long. It was hypothesised that this might be a modern garden feature. No traces of any cut features were revealed in Trench C, and it is thought that surface indications of a feature were formed by plastic sheeting within the topsoil, intended as some form of drainage or irrigation system, and which was discovered during machining.

5.4 Trench D

Trench D was 27m long and cut to a depth of 1.20m. The raised feature in the field to the north of Field 1, coincided with an old boundary indicated on the 1755 enclosure map of Spaldwick. It was thought that this might be a headland between two fields, or possibly the line of a raised track-way that might continue into the assessment area. However, the western end of the trench, positioned to section any continuation of this feature, failed to reveal anything to support either of these hypotheses. While the feature may still have been a headland, it was noticed that a modern drainage pipe, leading into

or out of the ditch forming the northern and eastern boundary of Field 1, appeared to have been inserted along the length of this feature, and may, in part, be responsible for its present character.

The ditch along the eastern edge of Field 1, also appears to have been contained within drainage pipes and diverted from its original alignment. The increased depth of alluvium in the vicinity of the ditch, and a drop in the level of the underlying natural gravels, suggests that the ditch and drain follow the line of a relict streambed. Alternatively, since no streambed deposits were revealed during trenching, the drop-off may indicate the edge of the gravel terrace of the nearby Ouse tributary. This is not however, clear on the geological map of the area.

5.5 Trench E

Trench E was cut as a L shape with a total length of 25m, to a depth of 1.20m. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered.

5.6 Trench F

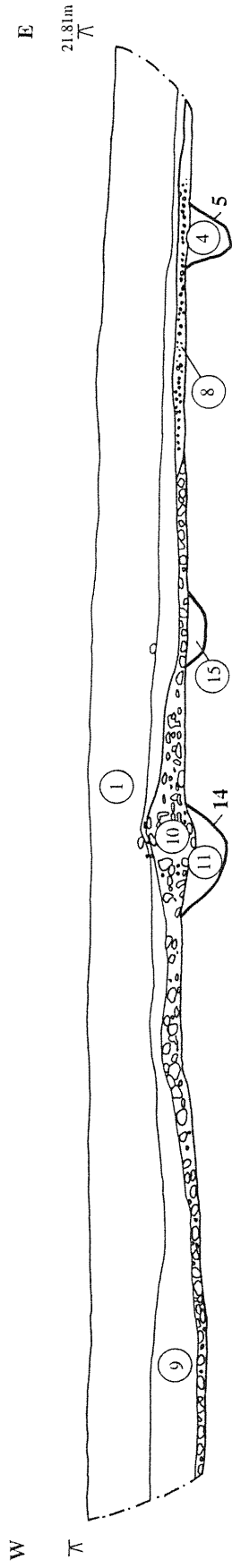
Trench F was positioned at the back of the present standing building in order to assess the extent of survival of any earlier buildings on the property or other associated features. The trench was 6.25m long and was machine dug to a depth of 0.40m. As was expected, since the area was closer to the centre of the village and was therefore likely to be on slightly higher, dryer ground, there was no alluvial deposit (2) in this area, and natural gravels and Oxford Clay occurred on average, 40cm below the present ground surface.

Immediately below topsoil, which contained fragments of late eighteenth/early nineteenth century china along with Roman grey ware and St Neots ware (900-1150), was a layer of clayey silt (9) considered to be a gradual build up of occupation debris and soil which sealed a cobbled surface. Layer (9) contained fragments of animal bone, daub, clinker, and pot sherds dated to 1150-1350.

The layer of ccbbling 10, which was laid directly onto the natural clays, probably represents a yard surface associated with an earlier building on the site. To the east of the trench, this ccbbling appeared to peter out and to be replaced by a layer of gravel 8. Although root disturbance obscured the exact relationship between these two layers, it is assumed that there was originally some form of division between them. This may have been a fence, since there is no evidence of a more substantial structure. The thickness of the cobble layer varies considerably from 0.05m at its edges, to 0.20m in the centre of the trench (see discussion of cut 14 below). Artefacts recovered from layer 10 were pig bones, a daub/brick fragment, and pot fragments dated to 1500-1600.

Sealed beneath the cobbled layer, and cut into the natural clays and gravel, four cut features were revealed (*figure 3*). These all appear to pre-date the cobbled layer. Cut 5 was a roughly V shaped linear feature up to 0.34m deep and 0.46m wide. This had a thin lense of coarse sand at its base and seems to be a drip gully or possibly a beam slot, indicating some form of a structure existed nearby, unfortunately, probably just beyond the eastern limit of the trench. Along with sheep and cow bones, and daub fragments, the pottery from the fill of this feature (4), was St Neots ware and Stamford ware dated to 1000-1150.

TRENCH F



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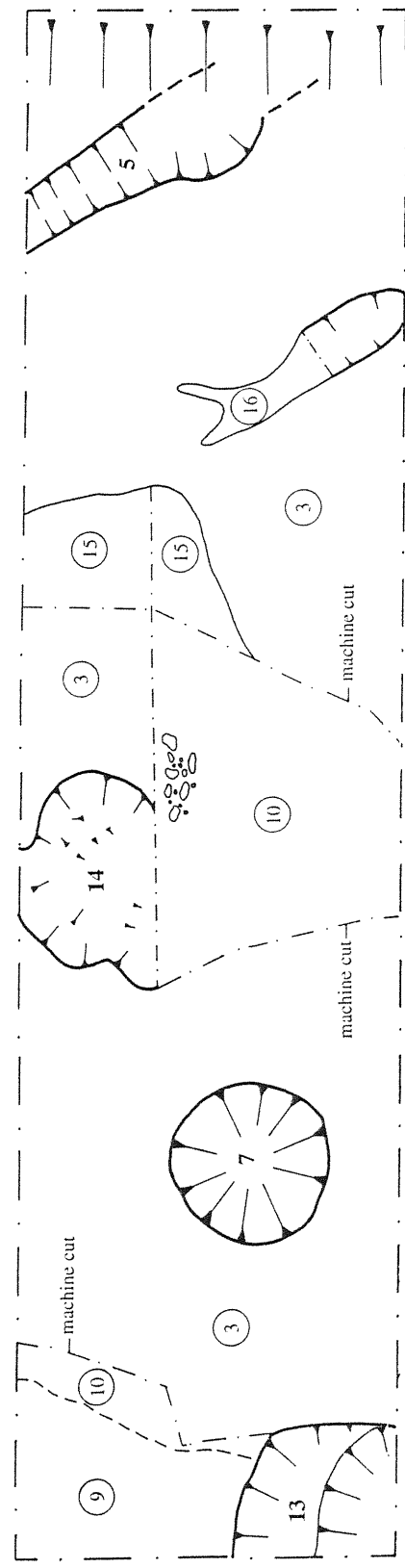


Figure 3 Plan of features and south Facing Section in Trench F

Cut **13** is believed to be a circular post hole with stepped sides and a compacted gravel base. Only one quarter of the feature occurred within the trench however, so its exact shape is uncertain. Several fragments of St Neots ware cooking pot and a bowl rim, were recovered from its fill (12), dated to 900-1150.

Cut **7** is a circular, bowl-shaped feature, which although less convincing, is probably also a posthole, or a shallow or truncated pit cut. The fill of this feature (6), contained sherds of St. Neots ware and "Sandy Shelly ware", dated to 1000-1150.

Cut **14** was sectioned with a 60cm slot but appears to have been an irregular circular feature. Its sides and base were irregular and appear to have been disturbed by root action. Although possibly a tree bole, it is likely that this was a post hole that has been obscured by root disturbance. The fill (11), yielded pot sherds spot dated 1000-1200. Cobble layer 10 is at its thickest where it overlies this feature. While the cobbles have partially sunk into the feature, (i.e. below the level from which it is cut), they generally appear to be heaped up over it. This may be as a result of root action growing into the feature and churning up the cobbles.

Two other contexts (15 and 16), are thought to be layers of redeposited natural, probably disturbed by root holes. Layer 15 contains several pot sherds dated to 900-1150 and two later sherds dated to 1350-1550. Layer 16 contained one fragment of Stamford ware (900-1150).

5.7 Trenches G and H

Trench G was 5m long and was machine excavated down to the top of the natural clays and gravels. This involved the removal of up to 0.40m of topsoil and modern building rubble. A modern ceramic drainage pipe cut diagonally across the trench. Despite all this disturbance, a small patch of cobbling similar to that encountered in Trench F survived, the full extent of its survival however, could not be ascertained under the circumstances.

Trench H was approximately 4m long and was machine dug down to the top of some apparently recent wall foundations. The construction cut for these foundations cut through a layer (17) of what is presumably dumped soil, containing pot sherds ranging in date from 1700-1900. This soil directly overlaid natural clays and gravels and no archaeological features were observed.

5.8 Trench I

Trench I was cut 3m wide and 13.5m long, to a depth of up to 0.50m on an east-west axis parallel to the road. Deposits were removed down to the top of the natural clays, although pockets of the cobbled surface 10, remained in the western end of the trench. Two modern drains cut across the trench and two other cut features were found, on excavation, to be modern.

At the eastern end of the trench, three linear features were identified. Their exact relationships to each other are not clear, due either to truncation by the modern drain that cuts across the trench or because the intersection points lie outside the limits of the trench. While these features lie at right angles to each other, forming three sides of a rectangle, it became apparent on excavation,

that each was significantly different, so it is still unclear whether together, they represent a single structure.

Cut **28** appears to be a linear feature but only one edge occurred within the trench, making it impossible to ascertain its actual shape. No dating evidence was recovered from the fill of this feature (27).

Cut **18** was a linear feature with vertical sides, 0.30m deep, and a level base. This feature is characteristic of a beam slot for a timber-framed building. The fill of this beam slot (19) is itself cut by linear cut **20**, within, and along the same alignment as cut **18**, this is thought to represent a rebuild or repair to the structure within the original cut. Cut **20** is filled by 21. Dating evidence from pottery within fill 19 ranges from 900-1150, while 21 is dated to between 1000-1200.

Cut **26**, at right angles to cut **18**, (but with their physical relationship truncated by a modern drain), was also found to be a beam slot but with no evidence of a later re-cut. The beam slot terminates with a post hole **24** which contained large cobbles which would originally have formed packing around the post. Pottery from posthole fill 22 ranges from 1000-1200.

Surviving pockets of cobbled surface 10 were removed producing large quantities of animal bone and pottery fragments dated to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, no further Late Saxon features were discovered beneath it. The survival of the cobbled surface in the western half of the trench indicates that the level of the underlying natural clay has dropped below the level to which the trench was excavated by machine. This may suggest that the Late Saxon building foundations were purposefully situated on slightly higher ground, or else that the ground surface was truncated prior to the deposition of the cobbled surface.

5.9 Trench J

Trench J was 11m long, cut parallel to the road to a depth of up to 0.40m. Although cut features of possible Late Saxon date and a later Medieval ditch, were observed during machining, ground water and a leaking water pipe prevented this trench being recorded before it became flooded. Two linear features were however visible beneath the water.

5.10 Trench K

Trench K was 10m long, positioned close to the street front on a NW/SE alignment. It contained a linear cut on a SW/NE alignment. This was partially dug out by machine and filled up with water before it could be excavated or recorded. Another possible linear ditch feature was identified to the SE but this was not excavated. Between these two features, a linear cut **30** running approximately E/W was excavated. It was found to be 0.40m wide and 0.10m deep with a level base, and may represent a truncated beam slot. Its fill (29) contained no dating evidence. Sodden conditions and limited time, prevented further excavation in this trench.

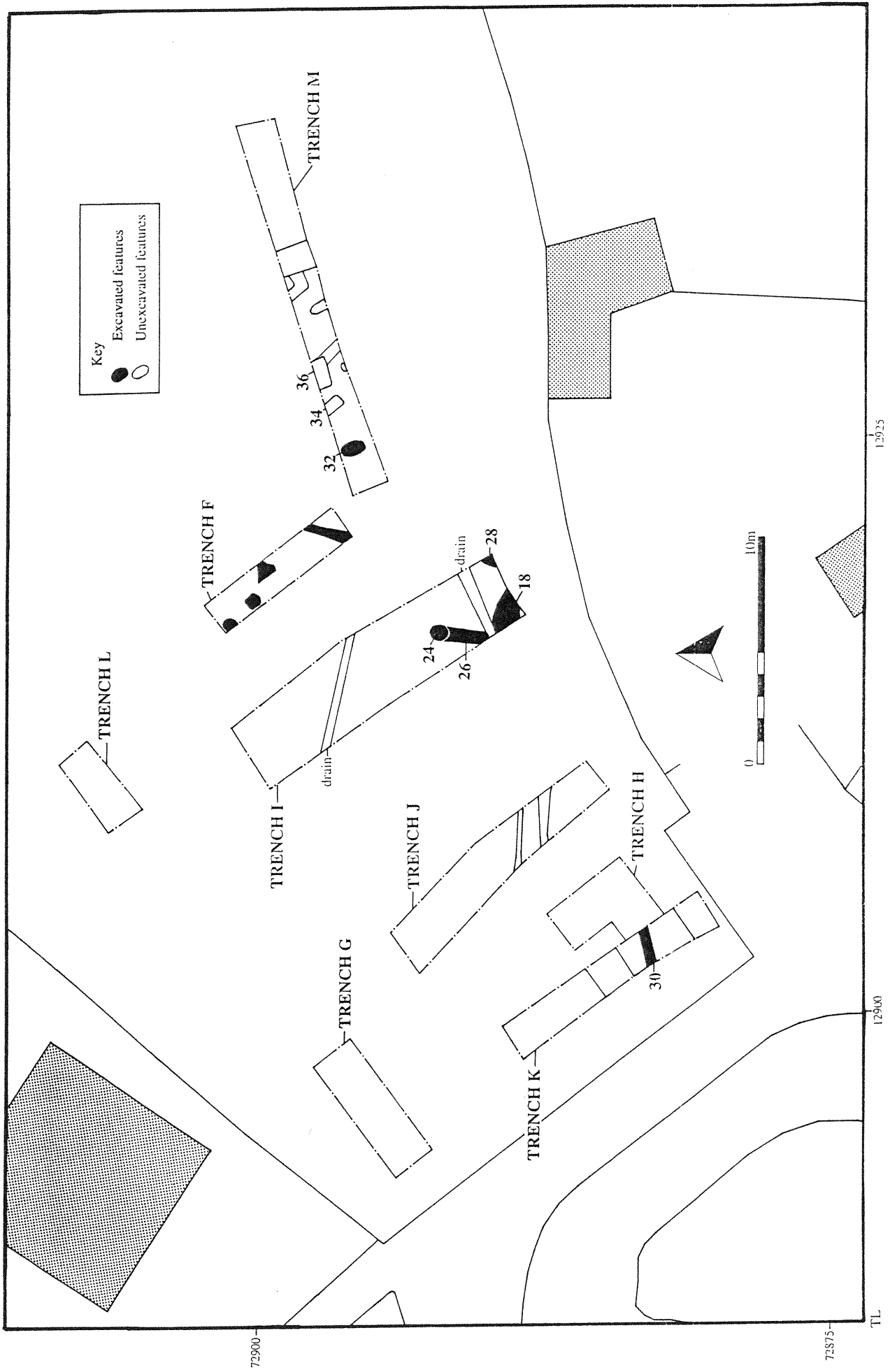


Figure 4 Plan of features in Trenches F to M

5.11 Trench L

This trench was cut 3.75m long, at a right-angle to the road. Although a linear feature running approximately SW/ NE was observed during machine excavation, this trench became filled with water before the feature could be recorded or sampled for dating evidence. It is not inconceivable that it represents the northern limit of the Saxon features.

5.12 Trench M

Trench M was 16.5m long, on an approximately E/W alignment to ascertain how far back from the street frontage significant archaeological features extended. Although several features were visible after cleaning the trench, only one, cut **32**, was excavated. It was found to be a sub circular cut up to 0.15m deep, and may represent the base of a truncated pit or post hole. The fill (31) contained one abraded sherd of pottery dating between 900-1150. Pottery fragments dating between 900-1150 were also recovered from two of the other features, **34** and **36** during cleaning. Although not excavated, several other features including linear and subcircular cuts, all contained similar fills and are also believed to be of Late Saxon date. A linear cut, aligned approximately N/S towards the eastern end of the trench, is thought to represent the easternmost extent and the bounding limit of the Saxon features.

5.13 Summary of finds

The quantity of finds recovered from the assessment is not great, virtually all of them coming from Trenches F, I, and M. While most of the finds are pot sherds, there is also a fair quantity of animal bone (mostly from layer 10). The Late Saxon feature also contained small fragments of burnt daub. A tabular summary of the quantities and weights of the different finds categories recovered is included with this excavation summary (appendix B). Since the features excavated did not merit environmental sampling, none were taken. All finds have been processed and are currently stored at the AFU office in Fulbourn.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Deposit model

It is apparent from the assessment excavation that the majority of the site is devoid of any archaeological deposits. The street front area, however, contains archaeological deposits of significance in understanding the settlement history of Spaldwick. Within the constraints upon the assessment that have been discussed above (section 4.1), it is apparent that archaeological deposits can be expected back from the Thrapston Road street front, for a distance of approximately 40m. From the second stage of evaluation, archaeological deposits are shown to have survived beneath the bungalow foundations. The main concentration of features appears to be in the southern and eastern area of the site. The linear feature in the eastern end of Trench M may represent a boundary to the archaeological features. There appear to be fewer features towards the street front. To the north there appears to have been some truncation of the Saxon deposits, which possibly accounts for an apparently low concentration of features.

6.2 Interpretation

Ground conditions prevented the sampling (for dating evidence) and recording of all the features exposed, but it appears that the density of features declines towards the street front. From the pottery evidence, all the deposits except 9, 10, 15, and 17, seem to indicate activity in the Late Saxon/Early Post-conquest period (i.e. 1000-1150). There is no evidence for pre 900 activity. All this pottery is represented by reasonably sized, unabraded sherds with crisp breaks, and occurring with other cultural material such as bone and burnt daub fragments. These artefacts, in association with cut features suggest that there is survival of Saxon habitation on the site.

Although foundation cuts for wooden beams and structural post holes have been located, it is still not clear exactly what shape or size of building or buildings is present. From the limited evidence available so far, it does, however, seem likely that the Late Saxon features have a different general alignment to that of the present day.

It also appears that the density of Saxon features declines to the north of the site towards the street front. It must be assumed that the several episodes of re-development on the site, have resulted in some damage and truncation to the underlying Late Saxon features. The fact that the cobbled surface 10 in Trench F and I, lies directly above, and is pressed down into the natural clays, into which the Saxon features are cut, suggests that the ground was stripped of topsoil probably at some time in the sixteenth century (1500-1600). This will have removed the ground surface associated with the Late Saxon period. The top of natural appears to slope downwards towards the north in Trench I. While it is likely that this depression is entirely due to truncation (accounting for the absence of Saxon features), it is possible that although truncation has occurred, the depression may represent a natural undulation and that the Saxon building foundations and other features are concentrated on the slightly higher ground. Although the height difference does not seem sufficiently great to warrant this, since the Late Saxon ground surface associated with these features is not present, and an unknown degree of truncation does appear to have occurred, the height difference may originally have been greater.

6.3 Conclusions

Due to the location of the site, there is no direct physical evidence as to whether these remains are contemporary with the Bishops Palace and estate (situated on the other side of the Thrapston Road, south-west of the site), or whether they represent settlement that pre-dates the proposed re-alignment of the village when the palace was constructed.

The exact date of the founding of the palace is however uncertain. Taylor discusses the possible dates when the palace could have been founded, and suggests that a mid twelfth century date is the most likely (Taylor. 1989). The dating evidence recovered from the evaluation excavation falls within this period, and does not extend beyond 1150, making it probable that the Late Saxon features do indeed represent settlement that predates the construction of the palace.

At a local level, it would be of considerable interest in understanding the development of the village, to ascertain whether the earlier settlement is aligned on the same east-west axis as is the case today, or whether a different alignment, as is suggested by Taylor (1989), can be perceived for the earlier settlement. It would also be of interest to gain some idea of the character and

status of the settlement prior to the founding of the Bishops Palace. A better understanding of the early layout of the village would clarify the extent to which wholesale re-alignment took place when the palace was founded. It has not been possible from the assessment to deduce the alignment of these probable domestic Saxon structures, and it is by no means certain that the site will be able to supply unequivocal evidence to support either hypothesis. The assessment has, however, confirmed Taylor's suggestion for a twelfth century date for the re-development of the village.

At a regional level, this evaluation represents a rare opportunity to excavate a Late Saxon/Early Medieval rural settlement. In addition to gaining an understanding of the development of Spaldwick and the evolution of villages within Cambridgeshire generally, the site offers the potential to yield a pottery and possibly a bone assemblage that can be usefully compared with assemblages of the same date from urban Huntingdon. More specifically, Spaldwick and other villages that are believed to have been re-developed under the jurisdiction of the Bishops of Lincoln are a class of settlement which are not well represented by archaeological excavation.

In particular it is important to recognise that Spaldwick was the administrative centre of a major Saxon estate by at least the late 10th century (VCH,1926, 342;VCH,1932,97-8) and this estate was the large holding given to the Bishops of Lincoln in 1109. It thus represents a class of settlement apart from the standard Saxon to Medieval village in both the pre-conquest and post episcopal replanning periods. An opportunity to study the development of a settlement of this type is undoubtedly very significant.

6.4 Recommendations

Considering the potential significance of the archaeological deposits as representing the village settlement prior to the re planning of the village in the twelfth century, and the limited interpretation possible from the results of the assessment, it would be desirable to carry out further excavation of the street frontage area. Due to the proximity of these remains to the surface, and the fact that the main access to the site will be over this area, it seems likely that the surviving deposits will sustain damage during development of the site. It is therefore suggested that before further development occurs, the twentieth century overburden should be stripped under archaeological supervision and any of further archaeological work deemed necessary, should take place before development of the site proceeds.

While some degree of excavation would be desirable towards the street frontage in order to clarify the date, alignment, and significance of those features, the main focus of excavation should be to the south and east of the site. An open area excavation is the most desirable approach and will yield the best results in terms of understanding the archaeology. As a result it may be simplest to strip the whole area within the assessment area rather than limiting the extent of the excavation. Close consultation with the contractors as to the implications of this for their work would be desirable, but if not possible, the area between Trench J and Trench M appears to be the most significant area.

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APPENDIX A List of contexts

Trench	Context no.	feature type	description	dating
All	1	Topsoil layer	10Y/R 4/2 Dark greyish-brown sandy clay	-
A,B,C,D,E	2	Alluvial layer	10Y/R 6/6 Brownish yellow sandy clay	-
All	3	Natural Clay/ gravel layer	Silty clay with pockets of sand, gravel, and Oxford clay.	-
F	4	Fill of [5]	10Y/R 4/1 Dark grey silty clay (pot, bone, daub).	1000-1150
F	5	Drip gully?	V-shaped, linear cut.	-
F	6	fill of [7]	5Y 3/2 Dark olive-brown sandy silty clay (Pot, bone, Fe obj.)	1000-1150
F	7	Pit?/Posthole	Circular, concave cut.	-
F	8	layer	Gravel surface.	-
F	9	layer	2.5Y 4/3 Olive brown clayey silt, occupation? debris. (Pot, bone, Fe obj.)	1150-1350
F	10	layer	Cobbled surface (Pot, bone, CBM, Fe obj.)	1500-1600
F	11	Fill of [14]	10YR 3/3 Dark brown silty clay (pot).	1000-1200
F	12	Fill of [13]	5Y 3/2 Dark olive grey (Pot).	900-1150
F	13	Post hole cut	Circular? stepped sides flat, compacted base.	-
F	14	Pit / Post hole	Sub circular, steep irregular sides and base.	-
F	15	layer	Redeposited clay.	1350-1550
F	16	Fill	Tree root? (pot).	1000-1150
H	17	Layer	Post Med make-up (Pot).	1700-1900
I	18	Cut	Ditch/Beam slot.	-
I	19	Fill of cut 18	Mid grey brown silty clay sand (pot).	900-1150
I	20	Cut	Recut of Ditch/Beam slot.	-
I	21	Fill of cut 20	Dark grey brown silty clay sand (pot).	1000-1200
I	22	Fill of cut 24	Mid grey silty clay	1000-1200

Trench	Context no.	Feature type	Description	Dating
I	23	Fill of cut 24	Light grey clay with Cobble packing.	1000-1200
I	24	Cut	Post hole in ditch terminal.	-
I	25	Fill of Cut 26	Dark grey brown silty clay.	1000-1200
I	26	Cut	Beam slot.	-
I	27	Fill of Cut 28	Mid olive brown sandy silty clay.	-
I	28	Cut	Linear ditch?	-
K	29	Fill of Cut 30	Light olive brown silty sandy clay.	-
K	30	Cut	Truncated Beam slot?	-
M	31	Fill of Cut 32	Dark olive brown Sandy silty clay (pot).	900-1150
M	32	Cut	Truncated pit base. Oval, concave.	-
M	33	Fill of Cut 34	Unexcavated (pot).	900-1150
M	34	Cut	Unexcavated Pit/post hole.	-
M	35	Fill of Cut 36	Unexcavated (pot).	900-1150
M	36	Cut	Unexcavated Pit/post hole.	-

TL 129730, SPALDWICK
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

Chris COX MA MIFA

1: INTRODUCTION

This aerial photographic assessment was commissioned to examine an area of some 1.1 hectares centring TL129730 at Spaldwick, Cambridgeshire. It aimed to identify and accurately map any archaeological, recent, and natural features showing on available aerial photographs and thus provide a guide for field evaluation.

2: ARCHAEOLOGY FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Detailed interpretation of contemporary and historical aerial photographs allows the accurate mapping of archaeological sites. Archaeological features are recorded from the air as cropmarks (caused by the differential growth of crops or grass over buried features), soilmarks (caused by differences in soil colour over ploughed features) and shadows cast by upstanding earthworks. Aerial photographic interpretation provides information that is not easily detected by other means. It is a complementary part of multi disciplinary archaeological investigation and provides a cost effective landscape overview and accurate guidance for ground based investigations.

Aerial photographic evidence is, however, limited by seasonal, agricultural, meteorological and environmental factors which affect the extent to which either buried or upstanding archaeological sites can be detected under a given set of environmental conditions.

2.2: The Study Area

The archaeological study area, as defined by Cambridgeshire Archaeology, comprises grassed gardens and an area which was wooded in 1988. The study area lies on the northern edge of the modern village of Spaldwick, between Thrapston Road and the new alignment of the A14.

Within the limits of the extent of Ordnance Survey mapping made available within the timescale of the assessment, an area extending to 1 km either side of the area was examined.

3: PHOTO INTERPRETATION AND MAPPING METHODOLOGY

Coversearches were made at the Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs (CUCAP) and the National Library of Aerial Photographs (NLAP) in Swindon. Due to the short timescale of the assessment, the oblique photographic collection at NLAP was manually searched, and the County record Office in Huntingdon was not visited. The site was covered directly by vertical photographs. Its immediate environs were covered by specialist obliques, taken to record the Medieval village.

The photographs were examined by eye and under 1.5x and 4x magnification, according to the principles defined by Palmer and Cox, 1993. Stereoscopic viewing, which may have assisted identification of past settlement, was not possible in this case. Features identified were mapped at 1:10000 scale using the Bradford Aerial Photographic Rectification System, AERIAL 4.2 (Haigh 1993). The rectified data were then processed through the graphics package PROFESSIONAL DRAW, to combine the information with digitised modern features as in Figures 1 and 2. The modern 1:10000 OS map background was used to fix mapping control, with supplementary information taken from a faxed copy of the 1:2500 map.

4: COMMENTARY

Spaldwick was a Medieval settlement, and characteristic earthworked remains of the former village can be seen to the south of the study area. The locations of the former village earthworks are indicated on Figure 1. Integral to, and outlying, these earthworks is a typical and cohesive Medieval field system, seen on aerial photographs as upstanding remains of ridge and furrow and associated headlands. Some of the ridge and furrow is very degraded. There are no traces of ridge and furrow within the study area, but landuse in the study area is not suitable to determine the former extent of Medieval fields.

The study area contains a rectilinear ditched enclosure, which was seen on vertical photograph RC8-Kn BN 14. This feature is recorded and shown in detail at 1:2500 by Figure 2. It is slightly upstanding, although the lack of a printed stereo pair to this photograph prohibits further interpretation. The feature is likely to have been part of a modern garden feature, upon which the owner of the property may be able to comment. Its use cannot be determined, beyond this speculative statement, from the available aerial photographic sources. The feature appears to be disused and degraded.

The immediate adjacent area at Manor Farm contains traces of linear ditched and slightly embanked features, of unknown date, and unrecognisable pattern.

The adjacent areas of Medieval earthworks have been targetted by aerial archaeologists and are well recorded. The extent of the former village is, however, unclear. Construction of the modern village centring on Thrapston Road, the church and High Street, has probably obliterated the interface between Medieval settlement and fields, which is likely to be situated in, or adjacent to, the study area.

5: REFERENCES

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Palmer, R., and Cox., C., 1993. *Uses of aerial photography in archaeological evaluations. Institute of Field Archaeologists, Technical Paper 12.* IFA, Birmingham..

6: APPENDIX

Aerial photographs consulted

Source: Cambridge University Collection

Oblique photographs

70 LIN 263 - 263

4th December 1932

Vertical photographs

RC8-Kn BN 14-16

16th July 1988

1:10000 colour prints

Source: National Library of Aerial Photographs

Oblique photographs

TL 1272 1 - 5

25th April 1954

Assessment area only visible in the far background of these photos, which concentrate upon the Medieval earthworks.

The NLAP vertical photographic collection was not searched due to time constraints.

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