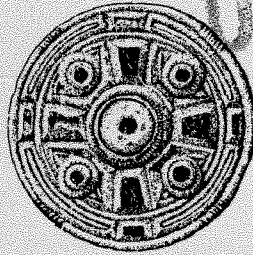


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Archaeological Field Unit

Roman and Medieval Boundary Ditches along Earning Street, Godmanchester.

S.N.Kemp

1996

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. A103

Commissioned By Bryan Denley

**Roman and Medieval Boundary Ditches along Earning Street,
Godmanchester.**

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1996

Illustrator: Carol Fletcher

Report No A 103

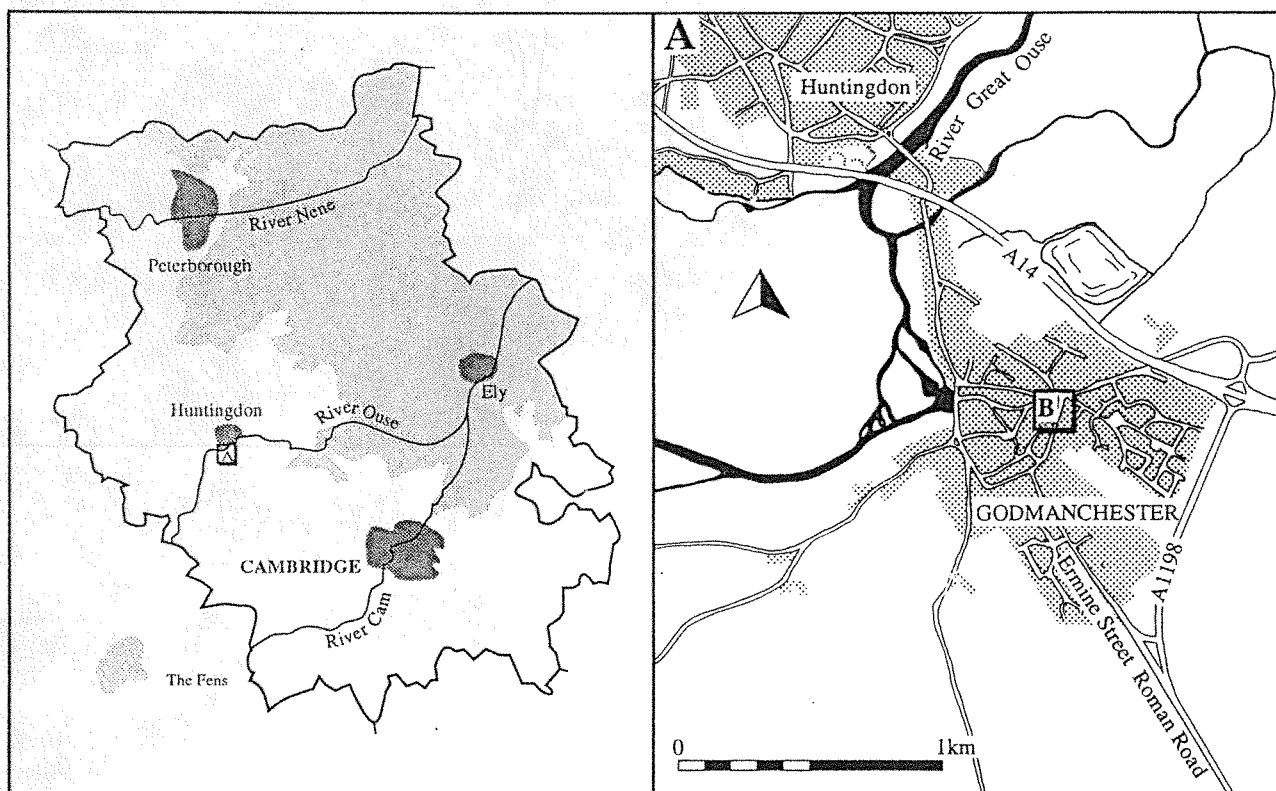
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Roman and Medieval Boundary Ditches along Earning Street, Godmanchester. TL8450/4450

1. INTRODUCTION.

The Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County was commissioned to monitor groundworks adjacent to 22 Earning Street, Godmanchester Cambridgeshire (Fig.1). Machine excavation included soil stripping and the digging of foundation trenches prior to the construction of a house with attached garage (Fig.2).

The development area lies on the eastern side of the first and second century Roman town, and within the town walls which are presently bordered by Earning Street (Green 1977). As well as the likely presence of Roman finds including walls, there was also the potential for the survival of Saxon and medieval settlement evidence within the development area.



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Figure 1. County Location Plan

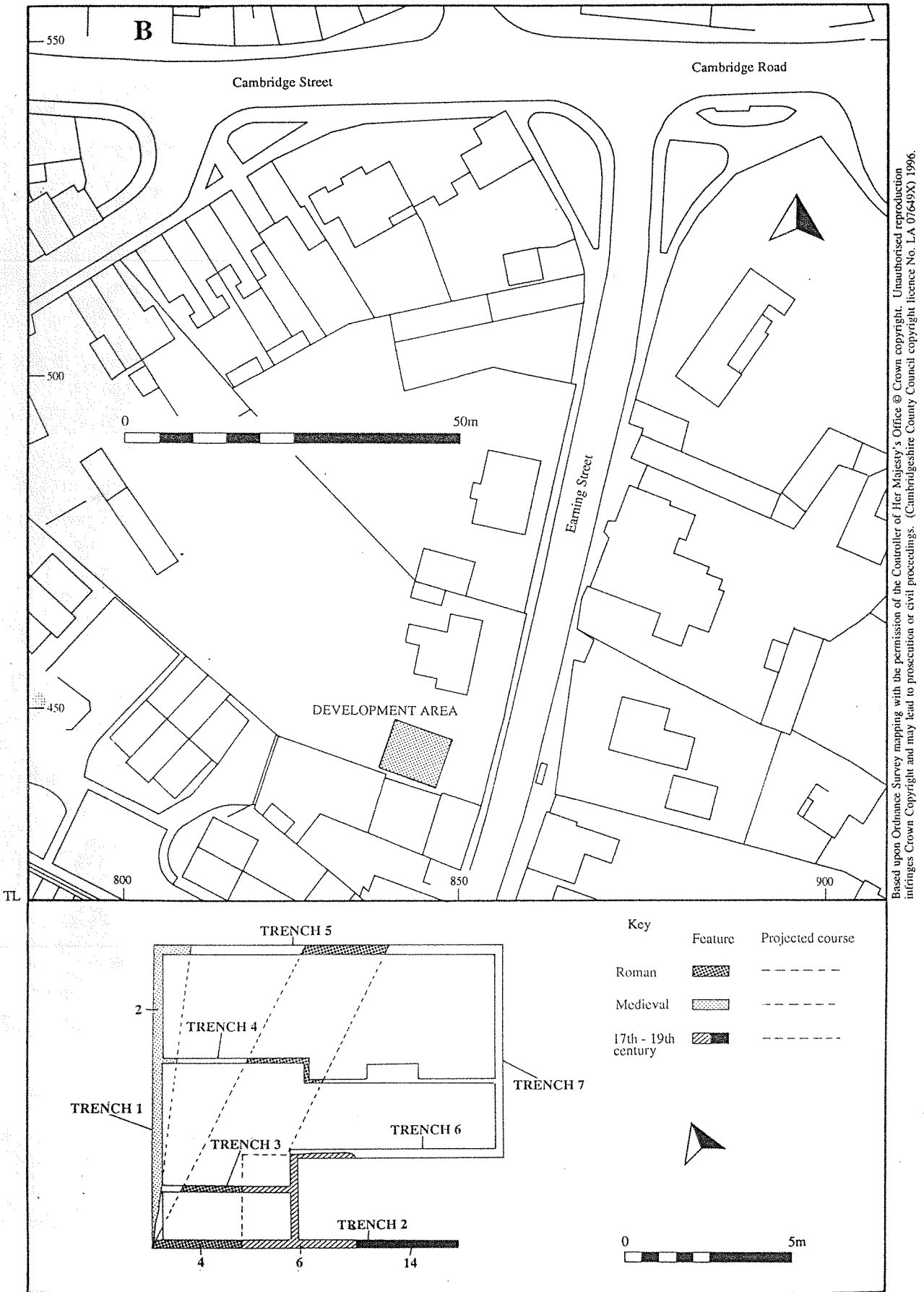


Figure 2 Location Plans for the Development Area and Archaeology.

2. METHODOLOGY

An archaeologist was present during soil removal and foundation excavation in order to monitor and record archaeological deposits disturbed during this work.

Photographic, drawn and written records were produced during the course of site monitoring. Artefactual evidence was also collected for dating purposes.

Features were only exposed in section within foundation trenches which were up to 0.50m in width. Although the topsoil was stripped during the course of this work the extent of archaeological features were not completely visible in plan.

3. RESULTS

Four features were recognised during monitoring. These features consisted of two ditches and two probable quarry pits. The earliest feature was an east-west orientated Roman ditch (4). This ditch was filled with brown silty sands and gravels with unabraded sherds of Roman pottery.

To the north of the Roman ditch lay a post-medieval ditch (2) which ran northeast-southwest across the western trench, Trench 1 (Fig. 2). The full width of the feature was not recorded as the ditch ran obliquely to the western section. The occasional sherd of post-medieval pottery was found alongside Roman sherds. The dating of the Roman and post-medieval ditches could not be corroborated by their stratigraphic relationship as the intersection of the ditches lay outside the development area (Fig. 2).

Two other features extended into the southern side of the development area. These both had vertical or steeply angled sides and were over 3 metres in width. Features, 6, extended 3 metres into the development area whilst 14 did not extend so far north (Fig. 2). Both penetrated into a homogeneous lens of pure sand; it is therefore probable that they are quarry pits associated with the extraction of sand. As later garden digging has removed the relationship between these two quarry features it was impossible to assess whether these represent single or multiple periods of activity.

Some Roman pottery was recovered from quarry pit 6, however, it is likely that these features are not ancient. Excavations at Sweetings Road, Godmanchester (TL246968) suggests that quarrying of sands and gravels occurred between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries around Godmanchester (Macaulay 1994). It is likely that these quarry features can be related to the same period of activity.

Green suggests that Earning Street was laid out after 917AD when Edward the Elder recaptured Godmanchester from the Danes. Earning Street was supposedly walled with internal lanes (Green 1977). No evidence for construction, or demolition, activities relating to this episode or any earlier Roman fortifications were encountered within the development area.

What is believed to be the remnants of a truncated buried soil was visible in section, so where the subsoil was undisturbed by ditching and quarrying. No evidence of Roman, Saxon or medieval cultural layers were visible in section. It is therefore possible this

area of land, which Green (1977) believed to have been on the boundary of the Roman and medieval settlements, was never built on.

4 CONCLUSION

Although lying within the boundaries of the Roman, Saxon and medieval settlements as defined by Green in 1977, no occupation evidence, construction or destruction deposits were encountered. Instead the development area was crossed by Roman and medieval ditches. Two probable post-medieval quarries were located on the southern side of the development area. The development has not disturbed significant archaeological deposits relating to the cultural development of the Roman, Saxon or medieval settlements.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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