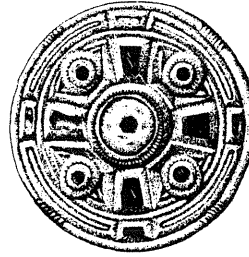


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Archaeological Field Unit

An Archaeological Recording Brief at Place Farm,  
Kirtling Towers, Kirtling

S. Damant

1998

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No. B26

*Commissioned By Lyster Grillet & Harding*

## **SUMMARY**

*Archaeological monitoring was carried out during the excavation of foundation trenches for the redevelopment of a farm building adjacent to the moated site of the Kirtling Towers. The site lies immediately outside this Scheduled Ancient Monument and is therefore of archaeological importance. Modern deposition to level the area within and around the barn was encountered to a depth of (0.6m). A surface, probably from an earlier building was identified and recorded next to the existing barn, however no further archaeological features were revealed.*

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING BRIEF AT PLACE FARM KIRTLING TOWERS ,KIRTLING (TL65/75)**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

A member of staff from the Archaeological Field Unit was called in to monitor and record work being carried out on Monday 20th and Tuesday 21st April 1998 at the site of the Kirtling Towers, during mechanical excavation of foundations in and around one of the barns adjacent to this Scheduled Ancient Monument (S.A.M. 13608). The work was carried out on behalf of Lyster,Grillet and Harding in response to a request for monitoring from the County Archaeology Office(Development Control).

### **2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site lies on Pleistocene glacial boulder clay which caps the upper and middle chalk of the raised topography to the south of Newmarket.

### **3 SITE BACKGROUND**

The recording brief was of particular interest due to its location to the south- east of Kirtling Towers moated site/medieval castle; Cambs Scheduled Ancient Monument 13608. One of the 19th century barns within the Place Farm complex was being converted to include leisure facilities, the foundations of which could potentially damage archaeological deposits related to the area immediately south of the eastern moat terminus. The moat itself is one of the largest surviving examples in the County and was formerly the centre of the barony of Kirtling. The present Elizabethan house lies 100m west of the site, on the southern edge of the main moated area. The original medieval building in the centre of the moat was described as a 'castle' in contemporary documents and dates from at least the thirteenth century. The barony was a major estate from the late Saxon times and somewhere in the vicinity there should also be the remains of earlier buildings relating to this phase.

### **4 METHODS AND RESULTS**

There were three main areas where the development and restoration of the barn would expose potential archaeological deposits. Work had already begun on the excavation of the foundations using a JCB with a toothed bucket (0.80m wide), on the initial visit a 3m x 5m trench, 1050mm deep, had been dug in the interior of the barn. Previously this area had been filled by a large static agricultural silo which was broken up and removed. The deposits were recorded, but it is likely that this area has probably suffered from disturbance during the initial installation of the structure. The upper fill of the west section revealed 0.9m of modern made ground which sealed a sterile light olive brown marl below. The footings for the conservatory outside the eastern side of the barn had also been completed, on inspection the section to the south revealed a layer of essentially modern make up (0.6m thick) which contained plastic drain pipes ,bricks and modern floor tile. Directly below was a (0.1m thick)

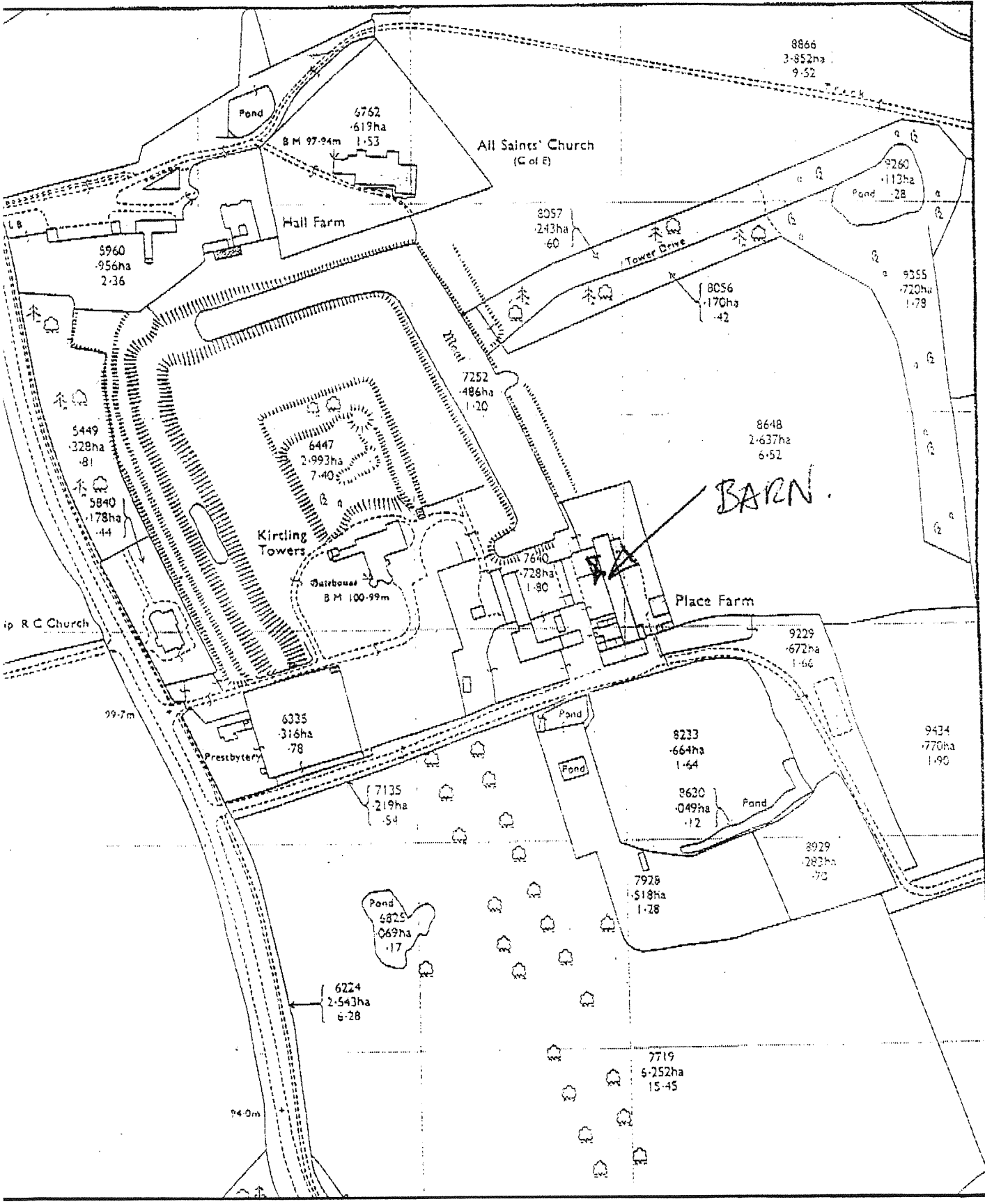
layer of compacted chalk which presented a level surface on its upper face, below the chalk a light olive brown marl (with occasional flecks of charcoal and stones of flint) showed an irregular interface where the chalk had been rammed onto it to make a floor surface. The southern section had also been heavily disturbed by modern services which in places cut through the chalk layer and into the marl below. The other foundations and piles for the billiards room were excavated with a mini digger using a (0.8m wide) toothed bucket, these trenches within the barn to the south end were completed 21st April 1998 and showed little of archaeological interest. The compacted chalk surface did not persist the other side of the barn's east entrance, although a modern small brick drain was noted aligned east-west through the doorway. The trenches further south contained three deposits, the upper modern ground make-up which was considerably thinner (0.3m thick) sealed a mottled alluvial silty clay (0.6m thick) which also contained modern brick and tile in its upper 0.2 metres. Below that the marl was present again and found to extend across the interior of the barn.

## **5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

No artefacts relating to any period other than the modern disturbance were recovered. The trenches and piles in the southern half of the barn interior showed no features of archaeological interest. The interior of the barn where the swimming pool had been partially excavated revealed natural geology below the level of the modern disturbance. Further excavation of the pool is not expected to reveal any other archaeological deposit as it will only effect the modern made up ground above. The chalk surface in the conservatory foundations has however been recorded as it indicates a previous use for the area the exact nature of which is not obvious. To the north, on the edge of the moat, a brick wall indicates that farm buildings extended from the moat edge south. The rammed chalk floor is likely to be the floor surface of one of these, now demolished, buildings.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Castles of Cambridgeshire: A.Taylor, Cambridgeshire Archaeology



8866  
3-852ha  
9-52

All Saints' Church  
(C of E)

Hall Farm

Tower Drive

BARN

Place Farm

R C Church

Presbytery

Kirtling Towers

Outhouse  
B M 100-99m

94-0m

99-7m

Pond

Pond

Pond

Pond

Pond

6762  
619ha  
1-53  
B M 97-94m

9260  
113ha  
2-28

5960  
956ha  
2-36

8057  
243ha  
60

8056  
170ha  
42

9355  
720ha  
1-79

7252  
486ha  
1-20

8648  
2-637ha  
6-52

5449  
328ha  
81

6447  
2-993ha  
7-40

5840  
178ha  
44

7640  
728ha  
1-80

9229  
672ha  
1-66

6335  
316ha  
78

9233  
664ha  
1-64

9434  
770ha  
1-90

7135  
219ha  
54

8620  
409ha  
12

8929  
283ha  
72

6825  
669ha  
17

7928  
518ha  
1-28

6224  
2-543ha  
6-28

7719  
6-252ha  
15-45

