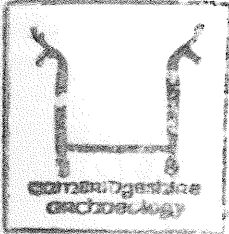
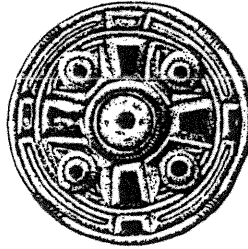


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Archaeological Field Unit

Allotment Site, Newmarket Road, Cambridge: A Desktop Study

Rebecca Casa Hatton

April 2001

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. ~~A180~~ A195/1

Commissioned by John Milner of Bailey . Garner
On behalf of Granta Housing Association

Allotment Site, Newmarket Road, Cambridge: A Desktop Study

(TL 4847 5931)

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2001

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SUMMARY

This Desktop Assessment was undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit as part of the requirements prior to residential development of a plot of land adjacent to Newmarket Road, Cambridge (TL 4847 5931).

The development site comprises an allotment area of 1.28 hectares to the north of Newmarket Road. The area is located on the eastern edge of the historic city of Cambridge, near the western boundary of the parish of Fen Ditton and north of Teversham.

The present study shows that the allotment area lies within a rich archaeological landscape, being surrounded by sites of prehistoric and Roman date. Although no finds are known from the subject site itself, its archaeological potential can be considered moderate to high, with particular reference to the Iron Age and Roman period.

The area does not appear to have been affected by modern development or disturbance. The state of preservation of any archaeological remains and deposits that might be encountered during excavation is likely to be good.

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Allotment Site, Newmarket Road, Cambridge: A Desktop Study (TL 4847 5931)

1 INTRODUCTION

This Desktop assessment was undertaken by the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council as part of the requirements prior to development of a plot of land north of Newmarket Road, Cambridge (TL 4847 5931) (Fig. 1). The first stage of the evaluation requires an archaeological desktop study. The results of this study are presented in this report.

It was commissioned by John Milner of Bailey Garner, on behalf of Granta Housing Association.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Planning Background

The Planning Application was submitted by Granta Housing Association. The proposal is for residential development of land located to the north of Newmarket Road, Cambridge. Given the known archaeological background of the area under investigation (below), the Archaeology Office of Cambridgeshire County Council (CAO) made recommendations to the District Planning Authority for an archaeological evaluation to be undertaken. A Design Brief was issued by Andy Thomas, Development Control Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office (Thomas, 3 January 2001). In response to it, a Specification was produced by Steve Kemp, Project Officer (JAN179/01).

2.2 Topography and Geology

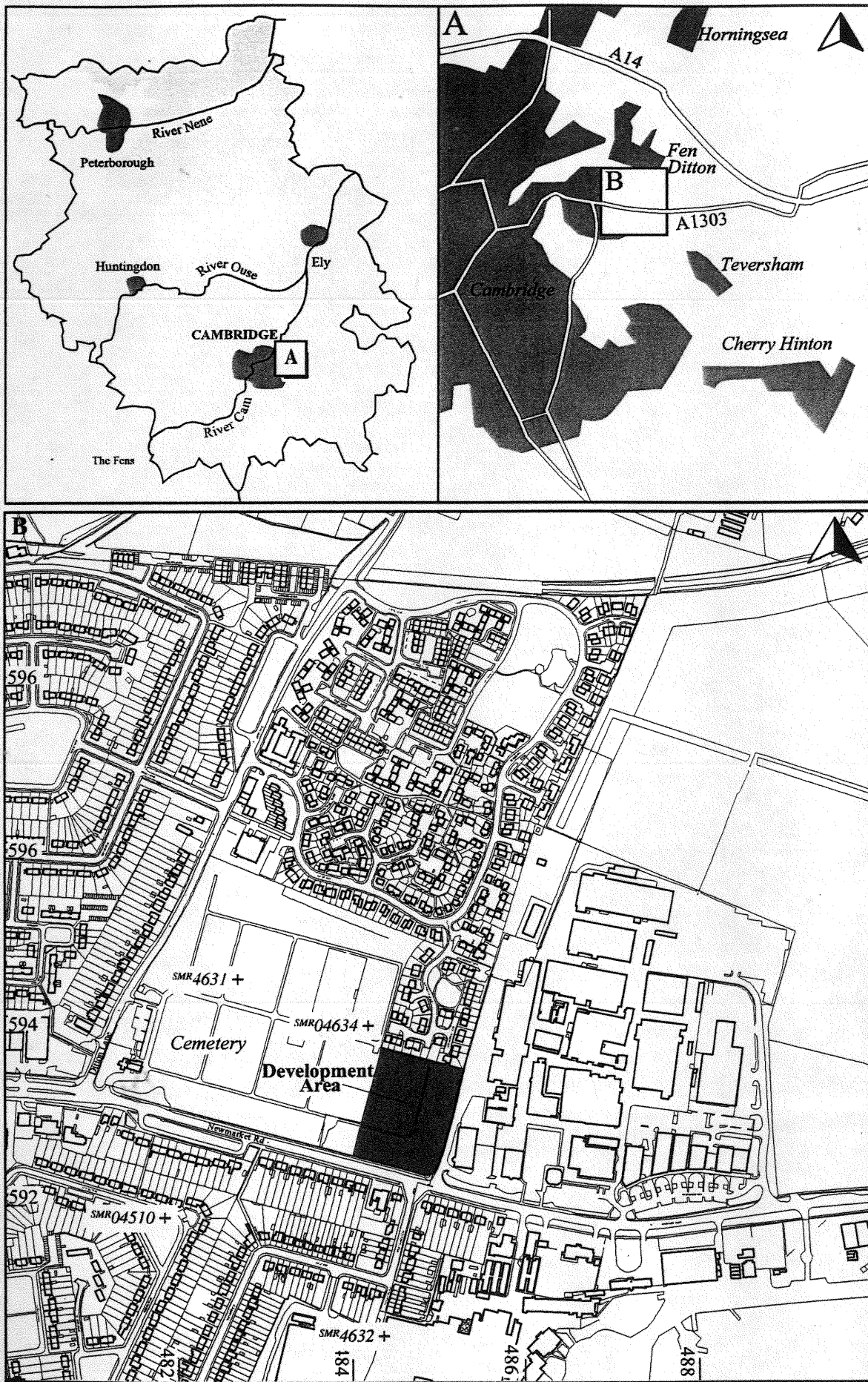
In relation to Cambridge, the development area lies on the eastern side of the city, between the Newmarket Road Cemetery to the west and Marshal's Works to the east. To the north is a modern housing estate (Fig. 1).

The site comprises a rectangular plot of 1.28 hectares that was formerly part of Newmarket cemetery and used for allotment gardens. It is bounded by lines of trees. Trees are also present within the development area itself.

The site is located on the Fourth Terrace of the River Cam, at a height of 15m OD. The local geology consists of chalk marl beneath gravel and green sand (Worssam 1969).

2.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

For this report a documentary search of the area within 1km radius was undertaken.



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Figure 1 Location of development area (shown in dark tone) and Sites and Monuments records in the area

Information was obtained from the following: Cambridgeshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record Office (SMR), Cambridgeshire County Council Record Office (CRO). SMR Parish Files and overlay maps of aerial photographs were consulted, and the results from recent archaeological interventions in the area integrated with the SMR entries.

Cartographic evidence was integrated with the available documentary sources.

Prehistoric

Early prehistoric activity from the Palaeolithic period is documented by stray finds and finds scatters, namely lithic implements (e.g. SMR 4691: two flint flakes and four cores from Elfreda House). Prehistoric finds of uncertain date also include worked flint (SMR 04514).

Neolithic/Bronze Age worked flint was found re-deposited in Iron Age features excavated at Green House Farm (Mould 1996, *passim*).

A crop-marked ring ditch visible on aerial photographs (SMR 09237) could be associated with the Neolithic/Bronze Age finds from Greenhouse Farm.

Finally, a Bronze Age cremation in a biconical urn was uncovered some 0.5km to the south-west of the development site (SMR 04685).

Iron Age

The Iron Age is well represented in the area. In particular, there is evidence for occupation in the form of scatters of pottery and bone (SMR 05151 and 05156) found some 0.5km to the east of the development site, near Green House Farm (Paul Firman, Notes, AFU Archive). Recent archaeological work undertaken at Green House Farm (TL/4900/5940) has uncovered evidence for occupation spanning the entire Iron Age (c. 600 BC-AD 43). During an evaluation conducted in 1996 Early Iron Age occupation emerged in the form of pits, a number of which contained burnt stone and fired clay, together with refractory material, possibly from the outer mould casting of bronze objects. Further south, a later focus of activity dating to the Mid to Late Iron Age consisted of a series of ditched enclosures. One of the enclosures contained pits with charred plant remains and postholes that may have belonged to timber-built dwellings. Two major boundary ditches seem to have separated the domestic settlement area from the cultivated land (Mould 1996, *passim*). Later excavations in the southern part of the evaluation area confirmed the presence of Mid to Late Iron Age activity in the form of domestic and 'ritual' pits, ditched enclosures and boundary ditches (Hinman, forthcoming). To the west of the 1996 evaluation/excavation areas, further archaeological work conducted in 1997 revealed the presence of an Early Iron Age open settlement set within ditched fields. To the north of it, a Late Iron Age/Early Roman phase of activity was characterised by the presence of droeways and enclosures for stock management, and short-lived pottery kilns (Mortimer, 1997; Gibson & Lucas 2000). As a whole, the evidence would suggest the presence of two distinct and separate settlement areas, one dating to the early Iron Age, the other showing possible continuity from the Mid Iron Age to the Late Iron Age/Early Roman period (Hinman, *Per. Comm.*).

Roman

Roman activity in the area is also well known through scattered finds and archaeological excavations. For instance, in 1922 a ring was found in the

allotment gardens, immediately to the east of the development site, (SMR 04634). Further to the south, Roman pottery was uncovered in 1937 (SMR 4632). Finally, a fourth century Roman coin was found less than 1km to the north-west of the site (SMR 04693). Excavations at Greenhouse Farm revealed evidence of early Roman occupation (above).

Saxon and Medieval

The site lies within the modern boundaries of Cambridge. Historically, it belonged to the parish of Fen Ditton.

Although Fen Ditton is not referenced in Domesday Book, documentary evidence may support a Saxon origin for it. The boundary between Fen Ditton and Horningsea was only established in 1412 indicating that the area was probably a single unit. Furthermore, Ditton seems to have been the property of the Ealdormen Aelfgar who left it by will (946-951) to his daughter and, thereafter, to the church of Ely. At the beginning of the twelfth century Ditton became one of the Episcopal manors. Earthwork remains survive on a formerly moated site at Biggin (or Biggin Abbey), close to the boundary with Horningsea (RCHME 1972, 47-49).

Saxon activity near the development area is represented by scatters of finds. Saxon artefacts, including a double-sided bone comb, were found in Newmarket Road (SMR 05338, generic grid reference). More certain is the location of Saxon/Medieval finds (e.g. a socketed iron spear) some 200m south-east of the site (SMR 4510). Further to the east, burials were found in 1957 during road works at the south-east end of Fleam Dyke, in the upper level of the ditch-fill. Recent work has shown that the dyke was multiphase, having been built in the early Saxon period and re-defined in the course of the sixth century. It appears to have been in use during the following century after which period the dyke started to silt-up (Malim *et al.* 1997, 58 ff.).

The original medieval settlement probably stretched from the Church of St Mary Virgin (13th century) to Biggin at Fen Ditton. During the later part of the Middle Ages occupation shifted from the riverside along the line of Fleam Dyke (RCHME 1972, 49).

Ridge-furrow systems and headlands are visible as large linear earthworks on aerial photographs to the south of Newmarket Road, in the parish of Teversham (SMR 08902). The cropmarks are located in the former Causeway Field, a large common field that was enclosed in 1815.

An undated rectangular enclosure visible on aerial photographs has been located in the area of ridge and furrow (SMR 08902). Its relationship with the medieval field system is uncertain.

Post-Medieval/Medieval

The post-medieval history of the site is assisted by cartographic evidence.

Some of the common fields of the parish of Fen Ditton were enclosed in 1807 (Inclosure Map and Award). The Inclosure Map shows the development site as being part of a large rectangular plot defined by Cambridge Road (later Ditton Lane) to the west and Newmarket Road to the south. Greenhouse Farm is not shown. The map also depicts most of the land of the parishes of Fen Ditton and Teversham as Common Fields. The OS Draft of 1810 shows the progressive enclosures of the fields around Cambridge and includes the western portion of Fen Ditton (Fig. 2)

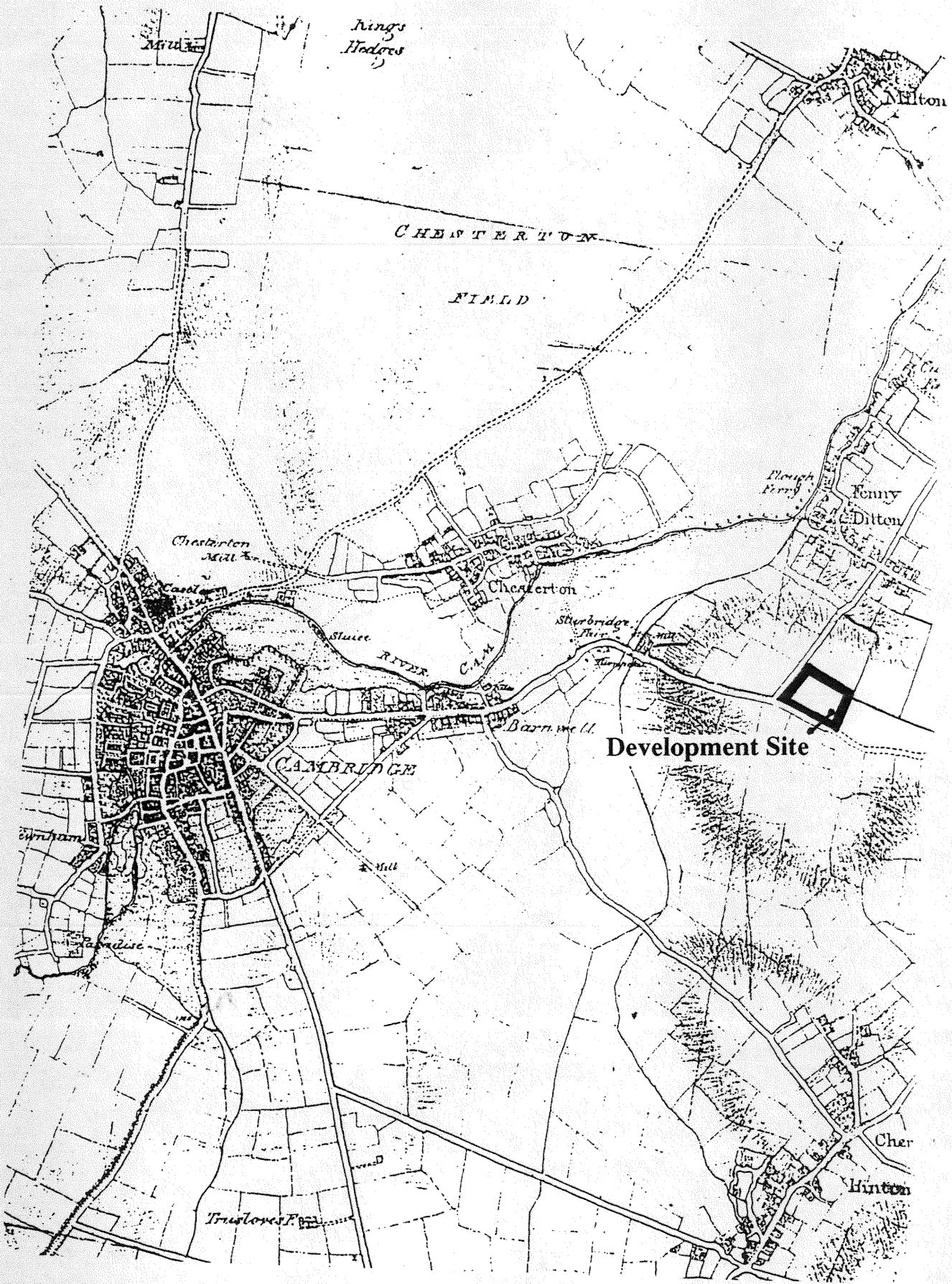


Fig. 2: Extract from Draft OS 1810

In 1830 the development site was still part of Fen Ditton, as indicated by Baker's Map of Cambridge (1830) which shows the eastern boundary of the Borough of Cambridge.

In 1902 the plot containing the development site together with the land immediately to the north was purchased by the Council for use as a cemetery, the proposal for the creation of the cemetery going back to 1896 (Cambridge, Collections, Central Library).

The first interment in Newmarket Road cemetery took place in June 1903. By that date, the southern part of Fen Ditton, including the development site, had been incorporated in the Borough of Cambridge (OS Map of 1903) as part of the new development of the town between the middle of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

At the same time as burial began, the eastern portion of the cemetery area was transformed in allotment gardens. The allotment site went out of use in recent times as the result of progressive housing development

3 SOURCES AND CONFIDENCE RATING

3.1 Sites and Monuments Records (SMR)

The SMR of Cambridgeshire County Council records a number of finds around the development site. Most entries refer to chance discoveries through farming practices and ground-work, including interments in the modern cemetery off Newmarket Road. No entries relate to recent excavations.

The information provided by the SMR is affected by random and biased collection of finds through chance discovery. Nonetheless, it represents a fairly reliable source of information for the areas around the development site. There are no entries within the site itself.

3.2 Overlay of Aerial Photographs (SMR)

The SMR has a collection of maps showing overlays of aerial photographs. Aerial photographs for the eastern part of the parish of Fen Ditton (Cambridge University Archaeological Collection of Aerial Photographs, CUCAP) and the northern part of the parish of Teversham (NMR AP and CUCAP?) show undated cropmarks and earthworks to the east and south of the development site.

There are no cropmark/earthwork features within the development site. The land use of the site for the past one hundred years makes it extremely unlikely that any cropmarks/earthworks would be visible.

3.3 Documentary Sources

The development site lies within the boundary of modern Cambridge. Historically, it belonged to the parish of Fen Ditton. This latter is known through regional and local documentary sources. However, these tend to be biased towards:

- The medieval ecclesiastical history.

- The medieval origin and development of the village with little, if any, information on the rural surroundings.

Fen Ditton has been included in the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) series. However, it has not been published in the Victoria County History of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely (VCH). As a whole, the documentary sources provide reliable background information, with particular reference to the history of Fen Ditton from the Saxon-medieval period onwards.

With reference to the development site, the area under investigation has suffered from its peripheral position in relation to both the western boundary of the parish of Fen Ditton and the medieval core of the village.

3.4 Archaeological Sources and Surveys

Due to its position outside the Fen-edge, Fen Ditton has not benefited from the Fenland Survey conducted in the 1980s.

By contrast, recent development on the outskirts of Cambridge has prompted a series of archaeological investigations. With reference to the development site, evaluation and excavations at Green House Farm in Fen Ditton, away from the medieval core of the village, have revealed evidence for occupation from the Bronze Age to the early Roman period, confirming the provenience of SMR stray finds from the area.

To the South of the development site, excavations have been conducted in the Parish of Teversham.

3.5 Cartographic evidence (CRO)

Fen Ditton was enclosed in 1807 (Inclosure Map and Award). Later maps include OS surveys from the early part of the nineteenth century onwards.

As a whole, the available maps provide useful information for the post-medieval history of Fen Ditton, with particular reference to changes affecting land ownership and boundaries. From the early nineteenth century, the cartographic sources provide details of the development site showing no major disturbance or alterations affecting the area.

4 ASSESSMENT

The aim of the background research was to obtain information to be analysed in order to determine the location, extent, survival and significance of the known archaeological and historical remains in the vicinity and within the development area. All available local sources were consulted (above) and are discussed below.

The development site lies in an area that was historically contained within the boundaries of Fen Ditton. Located immediately outside Cambridge Borough and the parish of Teversham, away from the main settlement *nuclei*, the development area was part of a common field that was enclosed in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Notwithstanding the impact caused by chance discovery on the distribution of finds away from the nucleated villages at Fen Ditton and Teversham, systematic excavations at Green House Farm have demonstrated the potential for the recovery of archaeological remains .

In particular, Iron Age and early Roman occupation is well known through a series of recent archaeological work at Green House Farm, in the context of what seems to have represented an intensively populated landscape during the Iron Age and Roman period (Heawood 1997).

Little is known of Saxon Fen Ditton. The presence of burials at the south-east end of Fleam Dyke may be indicative of a settlement nucleus. Finds around the development site are limited to chance discovery and do not represent significant evidence for Saxon occupation.

The survival of medieval and post-medieval remains on the site is highly probable, with particular reference to the evidence for agricultural practices, as suggested by cropmarks on aerial photographs of areas to the south of the site.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Based on the assessment of the archaeological potential of the development site (above), rating can be described as follows:

Mesolithic/Neolithic/Bronze Age	moderate
Iron Age	moderate/high
Romano-British	moderate/high
Anglo-Saxon	low/unknown
medieval	moderate/high
post-medieval	moderate/high

The present study shows that the site lies within a rich archaeological landscape, being surrounded by sites of prehistoric and Roman date, albeit not in the immediate vicinity. Although no finds are known from the subject site itself, its archaeological potential can be considered moderate to moderate/high, with particular reference to the Iron Age and Roman period.

Despite the creation of allotment gardens during the last century, the development area does not appear to have been affected by severe development or disturbance. The state of preservation of any archaeological remains and deposits encountered during excavation should be good, notwithstanding the possibility of some degree of truncation caused by ploughing (and later horticultural activity) during the medieval and post-medieval period.

6 CONCLUSIONS

An assessment of the surrounding archaeology would suggest that the proposed development is in an area with substantial archaeological potential, with particular reference to the evidence for Iron Age and Romano-British field-systems in the context of farmsteads.

Geological conditions and expected archaeology might be conducive to reasonable results with magnetometry, but resistivity survey would not be recommended for study of an extensive field-system. A resistivity survey conducted at Greenhouse Farm proved to be ineffective, despite the existence of known archaeological features and the shallowness of the overburden (Mortimer 1997, 4).

There is no guarantee that pre-trenching magnetometry would resolve features deriving from agricultural rather than occupational origin. Furthermore, the use of the development site for allotments since the late nineteenth century is bound to produce anomalies not necessarily conducive to cropmarks. Finally, the presence of trees within the development site would prevent both geophysical and aerial photographic investigation of the site.

Given the potential of the development area and the lack of disturbance by modern interventions in contrast with the surrounding area, an archaeological evaluation aimed at zones most likely to be affected by the proposed development should provide confident results.

The presence of trees within the development site may prevent direct evaluation of some areas of deemed archaeological potential. Any conflicts of planning requirements has to be resolved between the District Council Arboralist and the archaeology adviser (CAO), with particular reference to areas where trenching and soil deposition may take place.

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Worssam, B. C. *et al*. 1969. *Geology of the Country around Cambridge. Memoir for 1:50000 Geological Sheet 188 (England and Wales)*. Institute of Geological Science.

MAPS CONSULTED

Inclosure Map of 1808

Draft OS Map of 1810

Baker's Map of 1830

OS Map of 1886 Sheet XL.16

OS Map of 1903 Sheet XL.13

OS Sheet 54, reprint of the one-inch OS of England and Wales

RCHME 1972 Map



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