

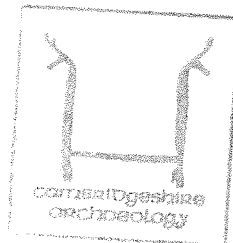
Archaeological Field Unit

# An Archaeological Recording Brief at Land Adjacent to No. 64 Cambridge Road, Waterbeach

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1998

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**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No. B23

*Commissioned By Chas Holliday Building Services*

## **SUMMARY**

*Archaeological recording during the excavation of foundation trenches for a new dwelling adjacent to No. 64 Cambridge Road, Waterbeach (TL493651) revealed no direct evidence of archaeological deposits. The site may lie on the route of the Roman Car Dyke Canal (Sam 3), and the results are of interest because the natural Gault clay was not encountered within the trenches (max. depth 1.1m), garden soil and sub-soil were encountered to a depth in excess of 1m and may indicate modern infilling of the depression formed by the canal. There is, however, no conclusive proof of the presence of the canal.*

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING BRIEF AT LAND ADJACENT  
TO NO. 64 CAMBRIDGE ROAD, WATERBEACH (TL 493/651)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Staff from the Archaeological Field Unit carried out monitoring and recording work on Thursday March 26th 1998 at the site of No. 64 Cambridge Road, Waterbeach, during the mechanical excavation of foundation trenches. The work was carried out on behalf of Chas Holliday Building Services in response to an request for monitoring from the County Archaeology Office (Development Control).

**2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site lies on a 'spur' of Gault Clay which juts into the 2nd Terrace River Gravels which lie to the west of Waterbeach. It is likely that the site lies almost on the interface of these geological formations. At no point was the 'base' natural geology observed during the recording brief. The site was previously a garden to the west of the modern house.

**3 SITE BACKGROUND**

The recording brief was of particular interest due to its location, potentially, on the route of the Roman Car Dyke Canal (Macaulay & Reynolds 1994, Macaulay (Forthcoming)). The canal runs roughly due north from the River Cam, however, within 100m of the Cambridge Road it appears to turn west running on a more northwest-southeast direction. Whether this is the true course of the Roman canal or a later influence is at present unknown, however to connect with the Car Dyke at Goose Hall the canal makes another turn to the west. If the canal truly does turn at this juncture then No. 64 Cambridge Road would lie directly in the path of the canal (See Map). Previous archaeological investigations into the Car Dyke at Waterbeach (Macaulay & Reynold 1994) have shown the canal was re-cut in the post-medieval period and that undisturbed Roman deposits were not encountered within the upper deposits of the canal.

The Waterbeach area and within the vicinity of the development has recorded remains dating from the Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and Medieval Periods. The site lies within 500m of the site of a medieval abbey (to the southeast) and 200m north of Saxon settlement remains.

#### 4 METHODS & RESULTS

Only a small area was revealed by the foundation trenches for the development. The entire area of the foundations was 7m x 10m and to a maximum depth of 1.1m. The trenches were excavated by a JCB using a toothed ditching bucket (0.80m wide). The trench layout was two 10m x 0.80m trenches running northwest-south east and three 7m x 0.80m trenches running perpendicular northeast-southwest. The trenches were dug through 0.65m of garden soil (a grey-brown very loose sandy/clay) and a further 0.40m+ of subsoil (a yellow-brown slightly sandy/clay with frequent small stones/gravel). In the southeast corner a blue/grey silty/clay+charcoal/shells deposit was only partially revealed which may be the only evidence of the possible top of canal deposits. However at no other location was this deposit encountered and no artefacts were found.

#### 5 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Although no evidence of the Roman Car Dyke Canal itself was encountered within the foundation trenches and no artefacts dating to any period other than modern were recovered from the top and subsoil horizons, the recording brief has provided some important information. Of interest was the surprising depth of the topsoil (garden soil) and subsoil layers. At 1.1m the natural geology would be expected to be encountered. Topsoil was only 0.30m deep at the archaeological excavation on the Car Dyke 500m to the south (Macaulay & Reynolds 1994). It is quite possible that the great depth of the modern deposits is the result of infilling of the depression, caused by the presence of the Car Dyke canal, to level the ground surface. This would tally with the predicted course of the Car Dyke as it heads northwest towards Goose Hall, to the west of Denny End. In addition the presence of the blue/grey silt/clay deposit may relate to post-medieval (or potentially earlier) deposits which composed the latest Car Dyke waterborne infilling episodes.

In conclusion the recording brief at No. 64 Cambridge Road, Waterbeach, while not recovering any archaeological deposits has proved extremely useful in understanding the route of the Car Dyke canal.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Mr Holliday and his staff for their help on site.

#### REFERENCES

Macaulay S.P. & Dr T. Reynolds (1994 Revised 1996) *Car Dyke A Roman Canal at Waterbeach*. Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit Report No.98

Macaulay S.P. (Forthcoming) *Excavations on the Car Dyke Roman Canal at Clayhithe, Waterbeach*.

# ORDNANCE SURVEY

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT

SOUTH EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE CO CONST

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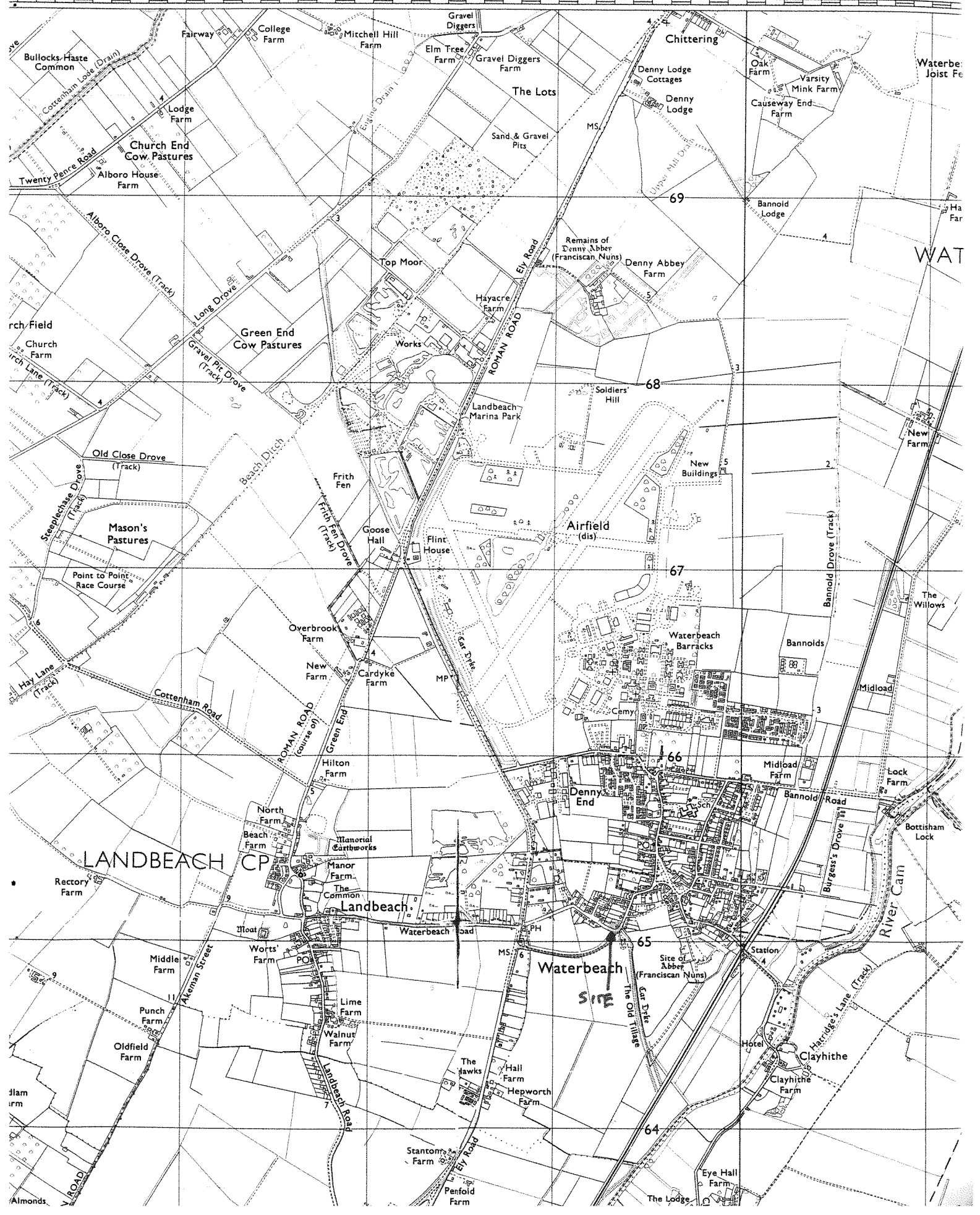
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WILBURTON  
5 km or 3 miles





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