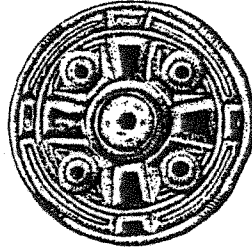




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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT GOTE LANE, GOREFIELD, LEVERINGTON.

S.N.Kemp BA MSc AIFA

1999

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. B 48

Commissioned by

Snowmountain Investments Ltd

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Editor: Tim Malim

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Archaeological evaluation at Gote Lane, Gorefield, Leverington. TF 41751215.

Introduction

Archaeological evaluations at Gote Lane, Gorefield, Leveington were undertaken by the Archaeological Field Unit, Cambridgeshire County Council on behalf of Snowmountain Investments Ltd.

The site lies at TF 41751215, on the western side of Gote Lane within an area of open ground between the 19th century St Paul's Church and the Old Vicarage (Figure 1). The condition of the land was level at about 2.5m OD and covered with wild grass and flowers. On the frontage adjacent to Gore Lane lay a Victorian tree plantation consisting of Ash, London Plane, Scots Pine, Wellingtonia and Yew which are likely to be associated with the Old Vicarage and are presumed to have been planted to screen the house from the road.

The development plans indicate the construction of four houses on the western side of the property with a road leading onto Gote Lane. The Victorian plantation has been kept along the frontage and has restricted the trenching scheme to the western side of the development.

Archaeological Background

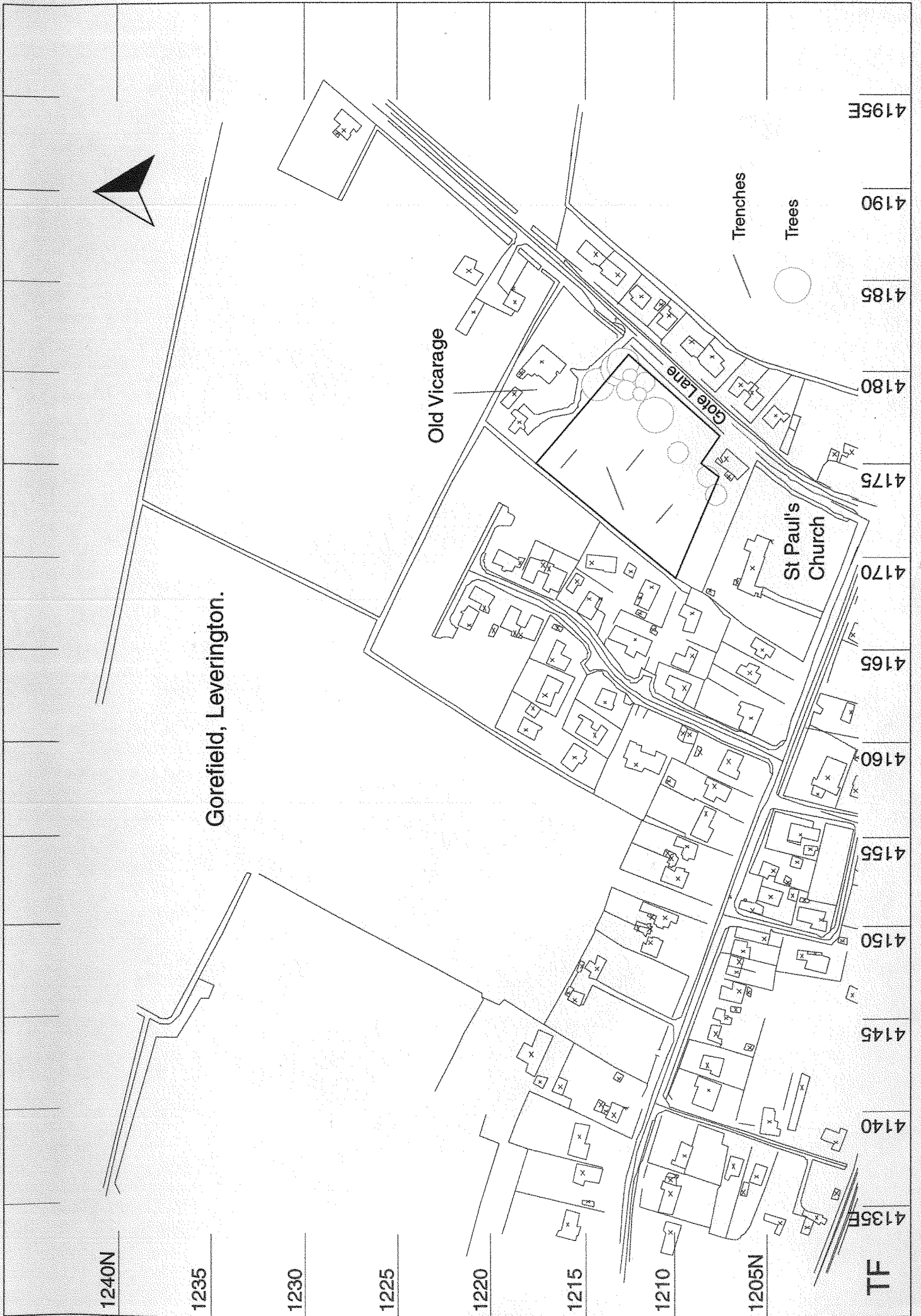
The village of Gorefield lies in the parish of Leverington which was researched by the Fenland Survey Project and reported in East Anglian Archaeology Vol. 79. The Project suggested that the earliest occupation of Gorefield is likely to have been in the Roman period as prior to this marine sedimentation had dominated (Hall 1996; 169). Some Roman finds (SMR 03999 and 04000) have been found in Gorefield, particularly south of the church and also south of Richmond Hall. These sherds of pottery suggest that there may have been Roman settlement within the village.

Gorefield is likely to have had a medieval origin and was founded on the drove between Leverington and the Fens (Hall 1996; 164). The main site of archaeological significance is the former manor house and moated site at Richmond Hall (SMR 01185) which lies about 500m to the south-west of the development site. The site of Richmond Hall was ploughed over in about 1944 (Hall 1996; 182). Medieval sherds of 13th century date have been recovered from the moated site and the manor was first mentioned in 1390 when an application was made for a licence to build a manorial chapel (Hall 1996; 182).

The little evidence for early settlement activity within the village of Gorefield suggests that pre-late Iron Age settlement is likely to be absent due to the position of the village within the marine silts. Archaeological interest in the site therefore concentrated on the Roman and medieval development of the fen and coastal settlement. Roman activity evidence is sparse within the village, however, salterns, turbaries and settlement sites in the parishes of Newton, Parsons Drove and Wisbech St Mary indicate that the Romans were very active in the local environment and therefore should be expected on this area of slightly higher land. Occupation may have continued from the Roman period into the medieval, however, present archaeological evidence provides no firm record of a village in the vicinity until the thirteenth century.

Methodology and Results

Four linear trenches totalling 66m were excavated with a JCB (digger/back loader) using a ditching bucket of 1.80m in width. These trenches were used to sample 3% of the development area.



1240N

1235

1230

1225

1220

1215

1210

1205N

4195E

4190

4185

4180

4175

4170

4165

4160

4155

4150

4145

4140

4135E

TF

Gorefield, Leverington.

Old Vicarage

Trenches

Trees

Gore Lane

St Paul's Church

As no archaeological remains were identified machining continued to a depth of about 0.20m into the marine silts, which were the basal deposits of the site, and below which archaeology would be unexpected. A maximum depth of 1.30m was reached by machine in one part of the site. The stratigraphy of which is described below.

The stratigraphy of the site was homogenous throughout the trenches and consisted of:

Topsoil. 0.14m in depth. 10YR4/5. Pasture.

Archaeology. Modern pit in the northern trench. Finds included 20th century broken tea pot, pottery, and glass bottles.

Soil horizon. 0.26m in depth. 10YR 4/3. Homogeneous clayey silts.

Soil horizon. 0.13 in depth. 10YR5/6. Mixed fine sands and clays.

Marine silts. >0.70m in depth. 10YR5/3 and 10YR5/6. Lenses of fine sands and clays.

No Roman or medieval features were found. The only feature encountered was modern and contained bottles, a tea pot and a candlestick holder. The occasional fragment of modern tile and slate were found in the topsoil, no earlier finds were identified.

Conclusions

No archaeology was identified within the development area. There was no evidence for any other landuse for the area other than the use as gardens as evidenced by the surrounding. The Victorian plantation confirms that this land once formed part of the gardens of the Old Vicarage and it is probable that garden landscaping would have removed any traces of earlier agricultural earthworks had they existed prior to this date.

Acknowledgements

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This study was prepared in response to an archaeological Brief prepared by Andy Thomas of the County Archaeology Office.

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