

Archaeological Field Unit

**90 High Street, Earith:
An Archaeological Evaluation**

S Kenney

2001

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. B82

Commissioned by Richard Beaty (Building Designs) Ltd

**90 High Street, Earith:
An Archaeological Evaluation**

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SUMMARY

Between the 16th and 19th of March 2001, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation on land at 90 High Street, Earith, Cambridgeshire (TL 4438/1135). The work was commissioned by Richard Beaty (Building Design) Ltd on behalf of S & S Developments.

No archaeology was found in any of the three trenches excavated, however, it was demonstrated that the site had been extensively built up, probably since the medieval period.

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**90 High Street, Earith:
An Archaeological Evaluation
TL 3825/7478**

1 INTRODUCTION

Between the 16th and 19th March 2001, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council (AFU) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at 90 High Street, Earith, Cambridgeshire (TL 3825/7478). The work was carried out at the request of Richard Beaty (Building Design) Ltd on behalf of S & S Developments, and was in response to a brief set by the County Archaeology Office (CAO); it was supervised on-site by the author.

The site lies towards the west end of the village of Earith, on the road to Bluntisham. It is irregular in plan and approximately 0.15ha in area. The buildings which had formerly stood on the site had been demolished and hard standing removed. A large heap of crushed concrete stood towards the front of the site, with others on the east side and near to the river at the back. These obstacles necessitated a slight alteration in the placement of trench 2.

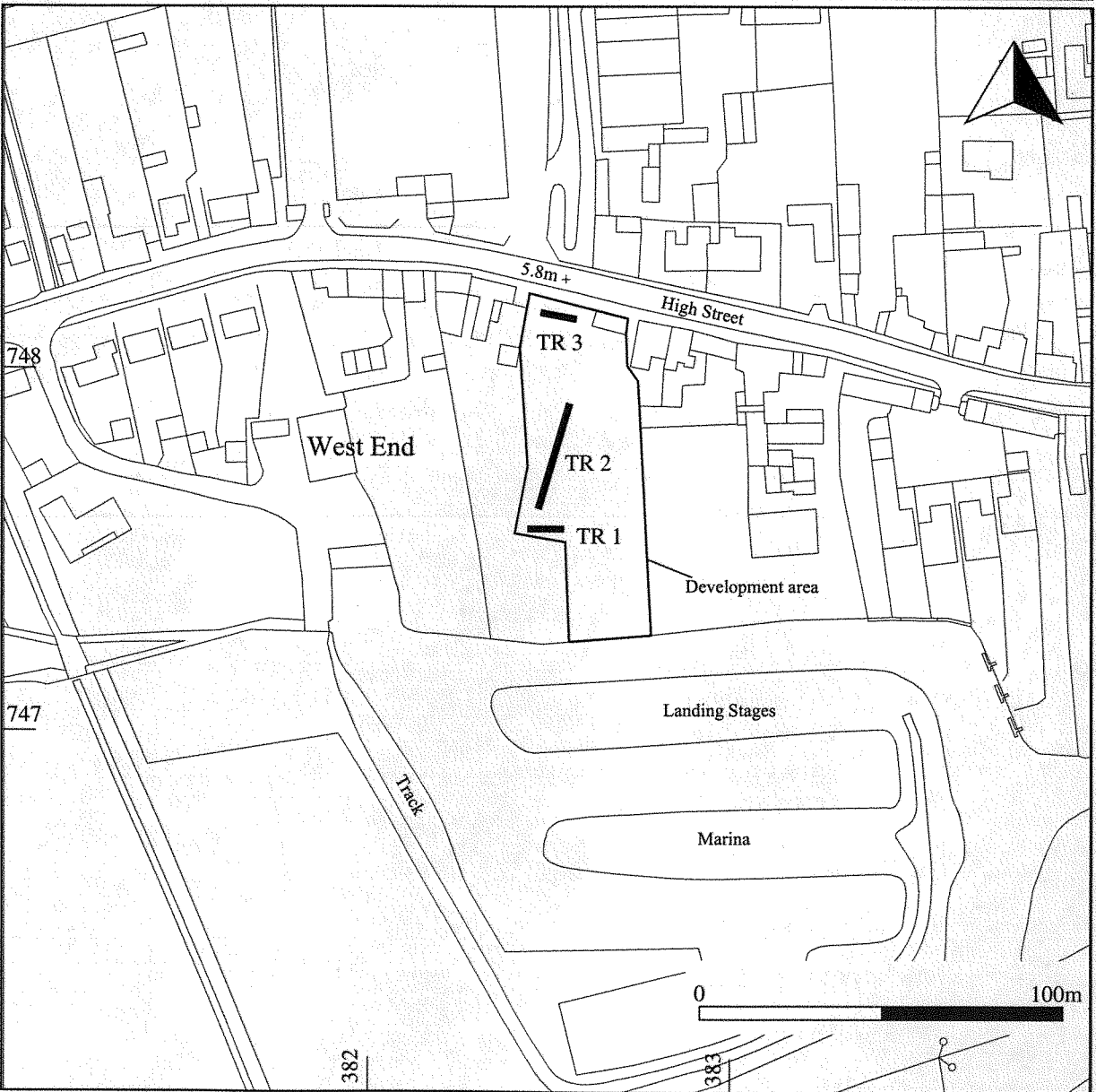
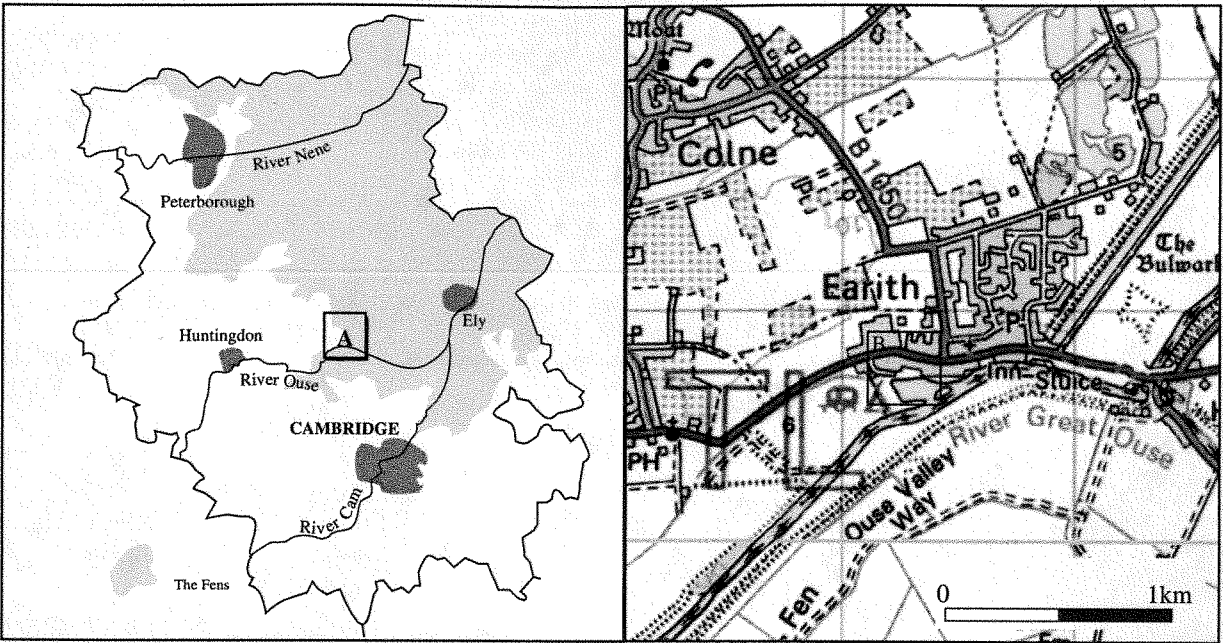
The presence of archaeological remains was considered likely by the CAO on the basis of information contained in the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). It records Iron Age and Roman finds in the general area of the village.

Weather conditions during the fieldwork were fine, and there were no factors which are likely to have had an adverse effect upon context recognition. Although the trenches subsequently flooded, there was ample opportunity to examine them for archaeological remains. Accordingly, the confidence rating to be applied to the results is judged to be high.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

According to the British Geological Survey, the site lies on 1st-2nd Terrace Ouse River Gravels overlying the Jurassic Ampthill Clay.



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Figure 1 Site location

2.2 Topography

The site is located on some of the higher ground in the parish at around 6m OD. The adjacent land is slightly lower and the site shows evidence of having been raised by landscaping, which was confirmed by a borehole survey conducted on the site.

3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Historical Background

Lying 8km north-east of St Ives, Earith was not mentioned in Domesday, and the first reference to it is in 1219 as '*pontem de Herithe*', meaning Earith bridge. The name probably means 'muddy landing place', which is appropriate for the village's location on the bank of the Ouse (Reaney 1926). Earith is mostly strung out along the road to Bluntisham and St Ives. Much of the northern part is relatively modern.

3.2 Archaeological Background

Iron Age

Iron Age pottery was found in the river bank 300m east of the subject site (SMR 01717).

Roman

Stray finds of Roman pottery have been made at several locations within 400m of the subject site, usually from dredging of the Ouse and ditch cleaning (SMR 01554, 01558, 01559, 01814).

4 METHODOLOGY

Three trenches, with a total length of 50m, were opened using a mechanical excavator with a 1.8m toothless ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist (see Fig. 1).

The trenches were cleaned by hand where appropriate, photographed, and base planned by hand at a scale of 1:100.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 10m long and contained no archaeology. At least two large intercutting modern pits contained debris associated with the former jam factory which once stood on the site. Natural gravel was encountered at around 1.2m below original ground level.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 30m long and contained no archaeology. Up to 1.6m of modern rubble, hardcore and post-medieval makeup overlay 0.7m of orange-flecked olive silty clay alluvium. This in turn overlay orange gravel natural. A single sherd of late medieval pottery was recovered from the post-medieval makeup layers.

5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was 10m long and contained no archaeology. In this trench, 0.2m of topsoil overlay 0.8m of olive silty clay alluvium, which in turn overlay 0.2m of mid-grey clay. Below this was a further layer of pale blue clay 0.1m thick which overlay natural Ampthill Clay.

6 DISCUSSION

The aim of the project was to establish the character, date, state of preservation, and extent of any archaeological remains within the site.

Despite the proximity to the site of Roman and Iron Age find spots, no evidence was found of archaeological remains of any period.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

No further archaeological works are recommended before construction takes place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank S & S Developments Ltd for funding the work, and Aileen Connor for managing the project. This project was carried out in response to a brief drawn up by the County Archaeology Office.

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