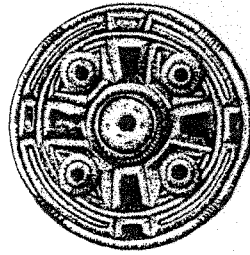


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Archaeological Field Unit

**Medieval Features at 69 Mill Lane, Fordham.
An Archaeological Evaluation**

Andrew Hatton

2001

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. B 83

Commissioned by Mr Roger Human

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An Archaeological Evaluation**

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Editor: Aileen Connor: BA, AIFA
Illustrator: Scott Kenney



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©Archaeological Field Unit
Cambridgeshire County Council
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap, Fulbourn
Cambridgeshire CB1 5HD
Tel (01223) 881614
Fax (01223) 880946

Arch.Field.Unit@libraries.camcnty.gov.uk
<http://www.camcnty.gov.uk/library/afu/index.htm>
<http://www.archaeology.freewire.co.uk>

Summary

On the 18th April 2001 the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) undertook an archaeological evaluation on the site of 69 Mill Lane, Fordham (TL 6311 7047). The work was carried out in connection with a proposed development of the site involving the construction of a single dwelling and associated ground works.

A single 'L' shaped trench was excavated within the proposed building footprint in order to ascertain the presence or absence of archaeological remains. The subsequent investigation of the trench revealed two narrow ditches and the lowest course of a clunch wall. The only dating evidence was a single sherd of medieval pottery from one of the ditches and may relate to the medieval settlement located to the north.

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Medieval Features at 69 Mill Lane, Fordham.
An Archaeological Evaluation
(TL 6311 7047)

1 INTRODUCTION

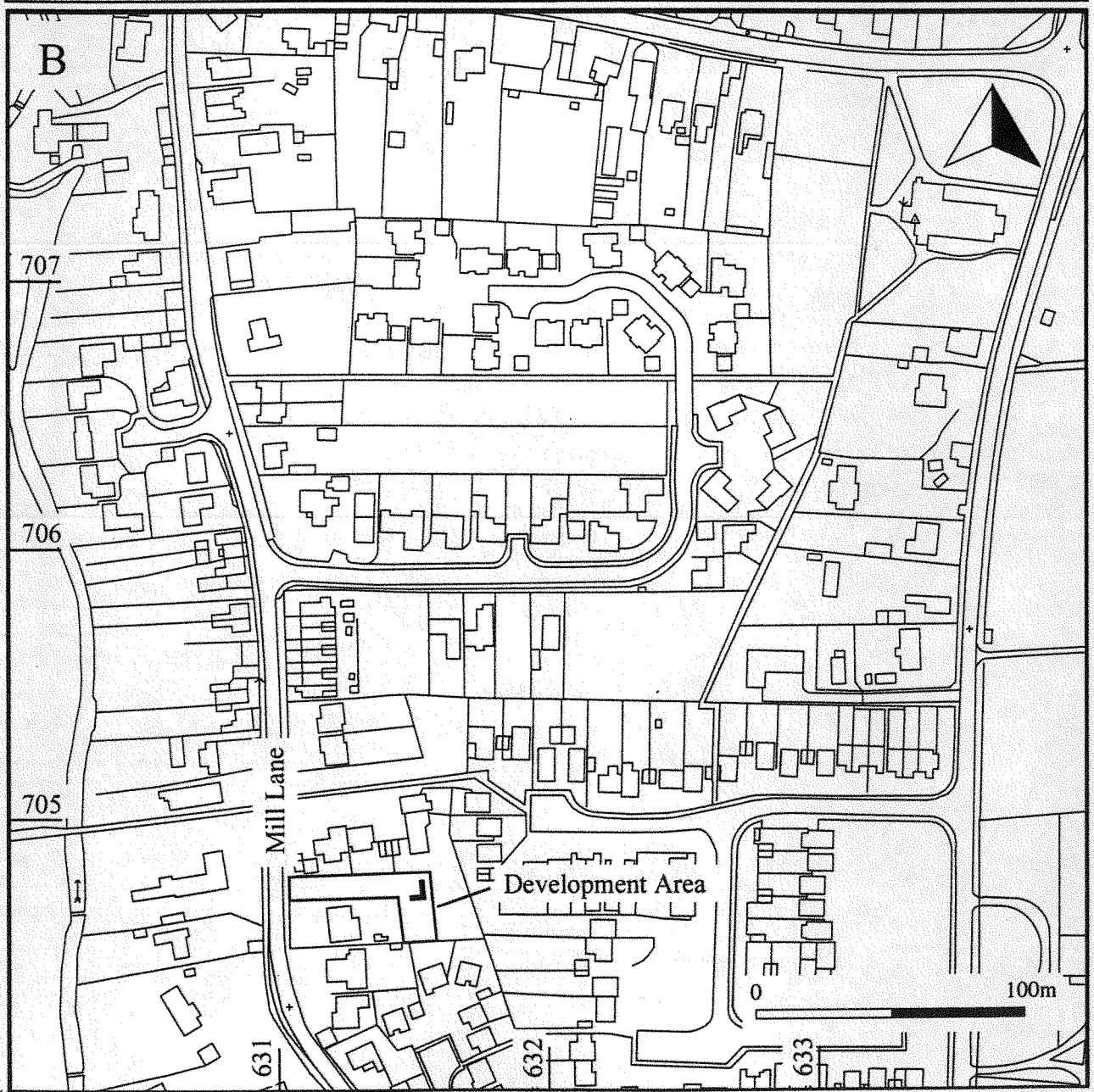
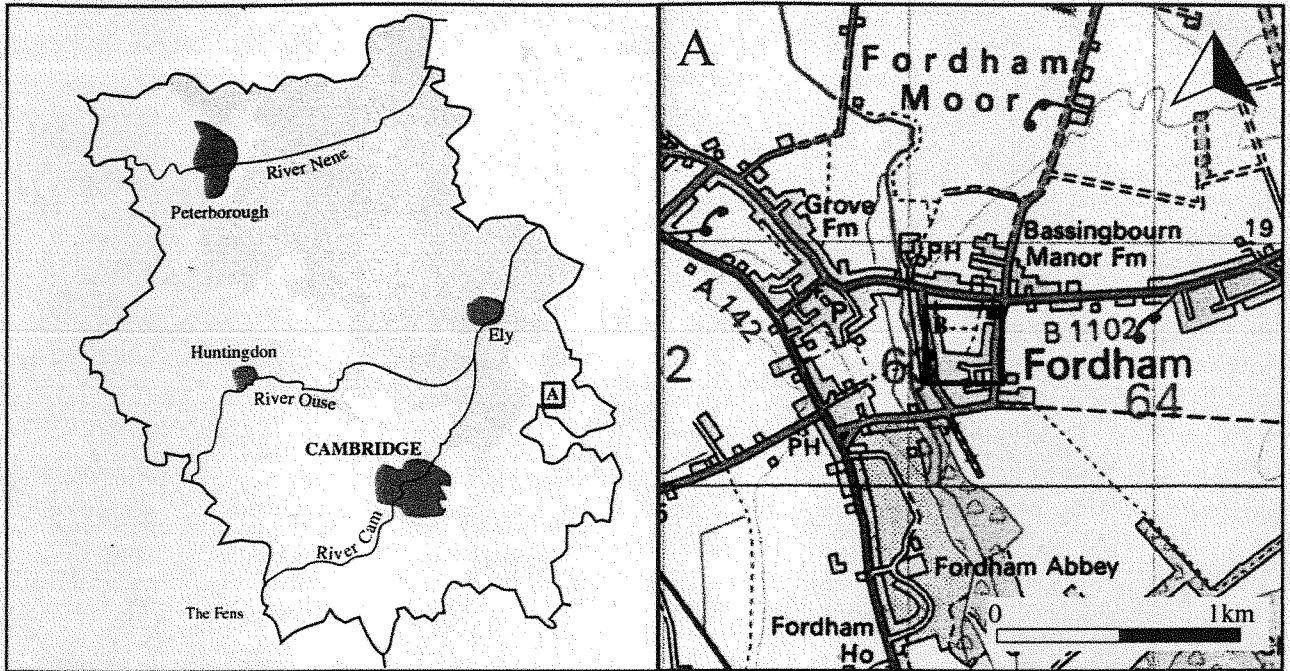
On the 18th April 2001 the Cambridgeshire County Council archaeological Field Unit (AFU) undertook an archaeological evaluation on the site of 69 Mill Lane, Fordham, (Fig. 1). The work was carried out to satisfy a planning condition (Application No. E/00/0896/0) in advance of development.

The proposed development entails the construction of one dwelling, garage, access road and associated ground works. The site is located to the south of the historic centre of Fordham (TL 6311 7047), in an area of high archaeological potential, hence the need for an archaeological evaluation.

The work was carried out by staff of the AFU on behalf of Mr Roger Human, in response to a brief issued by Cambridgeshire County Council County Archaeology Office (Andy Thomas, 2001)

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Fordham is located on the River Snail and extensive deposits of sand occur along the valley (Worssam & Taylor 1969). Lower chalk beds (chalk Marl) also occur in the village (Sheet 188, British Geological Survey 1978). Evidence of both the chalk and sand geologies was found within the site itself. The site was fairly level on the proposed location of the bungalow, but sloped moderately steeply down towards Mill Lane. The nearest Ordnance Survey Bench Mark was located to the north on 46 Mill Lane at a height of 11.07m. The eastern part of the site was located at approximately 13m above Ordnance Datum.



TL

Figure 1 Site location

Based upon Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. (Cambridgeshire County Council licence No. LA 07649X 2001)

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Evidence for prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the village generally is confined to stray artefact finds, which include a Mesolithic axe (SMR 07551), Mesolithic flints (SMR 07511), Neolithic axes (SMR 07552 and 07548), Neolithic flints (SMR 07553 and 07555), and Bronze Age finds (SMR 07741).

The presence of Iron Age human burials (SMR 07549) could possibly be clearer evidence of settlement. No prehistoric activity has been recovered close to the development area. Evidence of Roman activity recovered from south of the village consisted of a Roman coin (SMR 07579).

Fordham was first mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon Charter of c.972 (Reaney, 1943). Evidence for the Anglo-Saxon origins and development of the village has been found in excavations a short distance to the north of the development area at Hillside Meadows (Mould 1999), and to the Northeast of the development area at Fordham Primary School (Connor 2000). The Hillside Meadows site included sunken featured buildings, at the Primary School site a post built structure and parallel ditches with associated postholes were found.

The parish church of St Peter and St Mary Magdelene (SMR 07574) is located to the Northeast of the site. The church is largely 13th century in date but has some Norman elements, and is likely to have earlier origins.

3 METHODOLOGY

A single L-shaped trench 1.6m wide and 12m in length, was excavated using a wheeled mechanical excavator with a flat bladed ditching bucket under the supervision of an archaeologist. Location of the trench was determined by the position of the new dwelling.

The trenches were hand cleaned, where necessary, photographed and base planned. Once identified, features were excavated, planned and recorded using the AFU's standard recording system.

4 RESULTS (Fig. 2)

Trench 1A & 1B was arranged in an 'L' shape in obtain maximum coverage of the area to be investigated

Trench 1A (7m x 1.6m), north/south orientated. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.49m through 0.22m of topsoil, 0.27m of mid brown sandy silt subsoil. Removal of the subsoil revealed the natural geology to consist of sandy silts in the northern half of the trench, abruptly changing to Lower Beds (Chalk Marl) in the southern half.

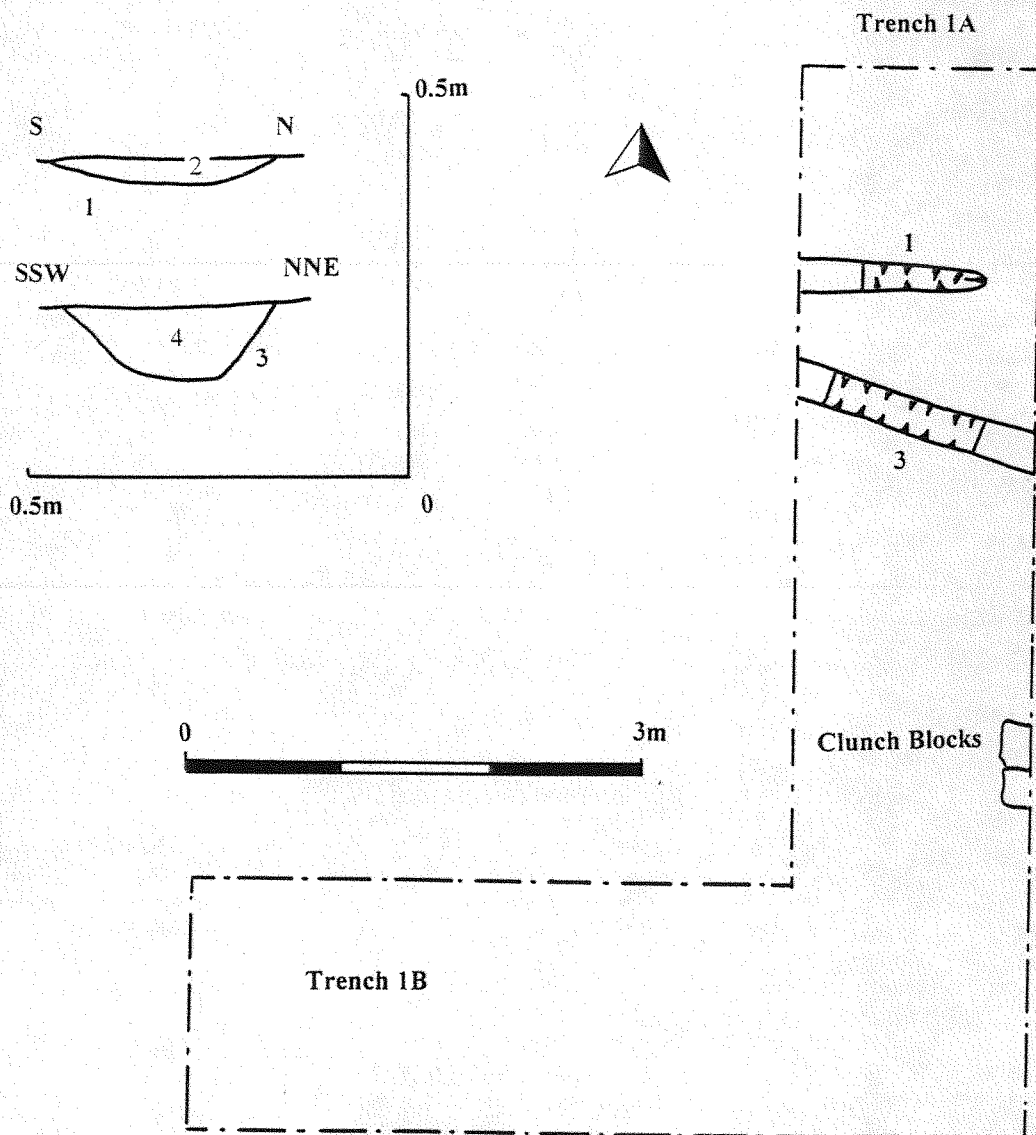


Figure 2 Plan and Section Details

These features were present in the base of the trench: two ditches and a clunch wall. Ditch terminus 1, aligned east/west (0.30m wide and 0.04m deep) contained a single fill, 2, which was a brown sandy silt, from which a single bone fragment was recovered on excavation.

Ditch 3, aligned south-east/north-west (0.28m wide and 0.10m deep) contained a single fill, 4, which was a brown sandy silt, from which a single sherd of pottery c. 13th to 14th century in date and a bone fragment was recovered on excavation. Feature 3 may have function as a drainage ditch.

The lower course of a clunch wall was also identified in the base of the trench. However, due to the absence of subsoil above the wall it was considered to be relatively modern construction.

Trench 1B (5m x 1.6m) east/west alignment. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.44m through 0.26m of topsoil, 0.18m of mid brown sandy silt subsoil. Removal of the subsoil revealed the natural geology to consist of Lower Beds (Chalk Marl) which had been extensively root disturbed. No archaeological features were observed in the trench.

5 DISCUSSION

The aims of this study were to highlight the potential for preservation of archaeological remains on the subject site and to identify the nature of any remains that may be affected by the proposed development.

The development involves considerable construction work on site including excavation of trenches for foundations, services and an access road.

A key research issue was to determine how far the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval settlement evidence extends in a southerly direction (see above). The evaluation trench revealed two ditches one of which (ditch 3) could potentially be associated with the medieval settlement indicating possible peripheral cultivation/field systems (see above). Both ditches were very narrow and shallow, they may have been cut for drainage purposes. They were aligned

slightly differently suggesting the possibility that they were cut at different dates, although the evidence is insufficient to phase them.

Evidence for pre-13th century activity on the site was absent. Although post-medieval evidence was present in the form of the lower course of a clunch wall (undated).

6 CONCLUSION

It is clear that this land was not within the settlement of Fordham prior to the 13th century but suggest rather that it was peripheral to the settlement and has probably been used for agriculture over many years. The evaluation has shown that no archaeological evidence of medieval or earlier settlement survives on this plot of land and no further work is recommended.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Mr Roger Human who commissioned the work. Thanks are also due to Aileen Connor who managed the project. Andy Thomas of the County Archaeology Office supplied the Brief and monitored the project

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The Archaeological Field Unit
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap
Fulbourn
Cambridge CB1 5HD
Tel (01223) 576201
Fax (01223) 880946