

Archaeological Field Unit

**Land north of 58-60, Victory Avenue, Whittlesey:
An Archaeological Evaluation**

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Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. B98

Commissioned by Robert Powell

**Land north of 58-60 Victory Avenue, Whittlesey:
An Archaeological Evaluation
(TL 7930/7490)**

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SUMMARY

The Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation on 525m² of land north of 58-60, Victory Avenue, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire (TL 7930/7490). This was in advance of a proposed housing development.

No archaeology was located in the two excavated trenches.

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1 INTRODUCTION

On the 25th of March 2002, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) on a plot of land north of 58-60, Victory Avenue, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire (TL 7930/7490) (Fig. 1). It was commissioned by Robert Powell in response to a brief set by the County Archaeology Office (CAO).

The site lies on the north-east side of Whittlesey, and to the east of Victory Avenue. It is subrectangular in plan, 525m² in area and has been in use as a temporary car park until the present time.

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).

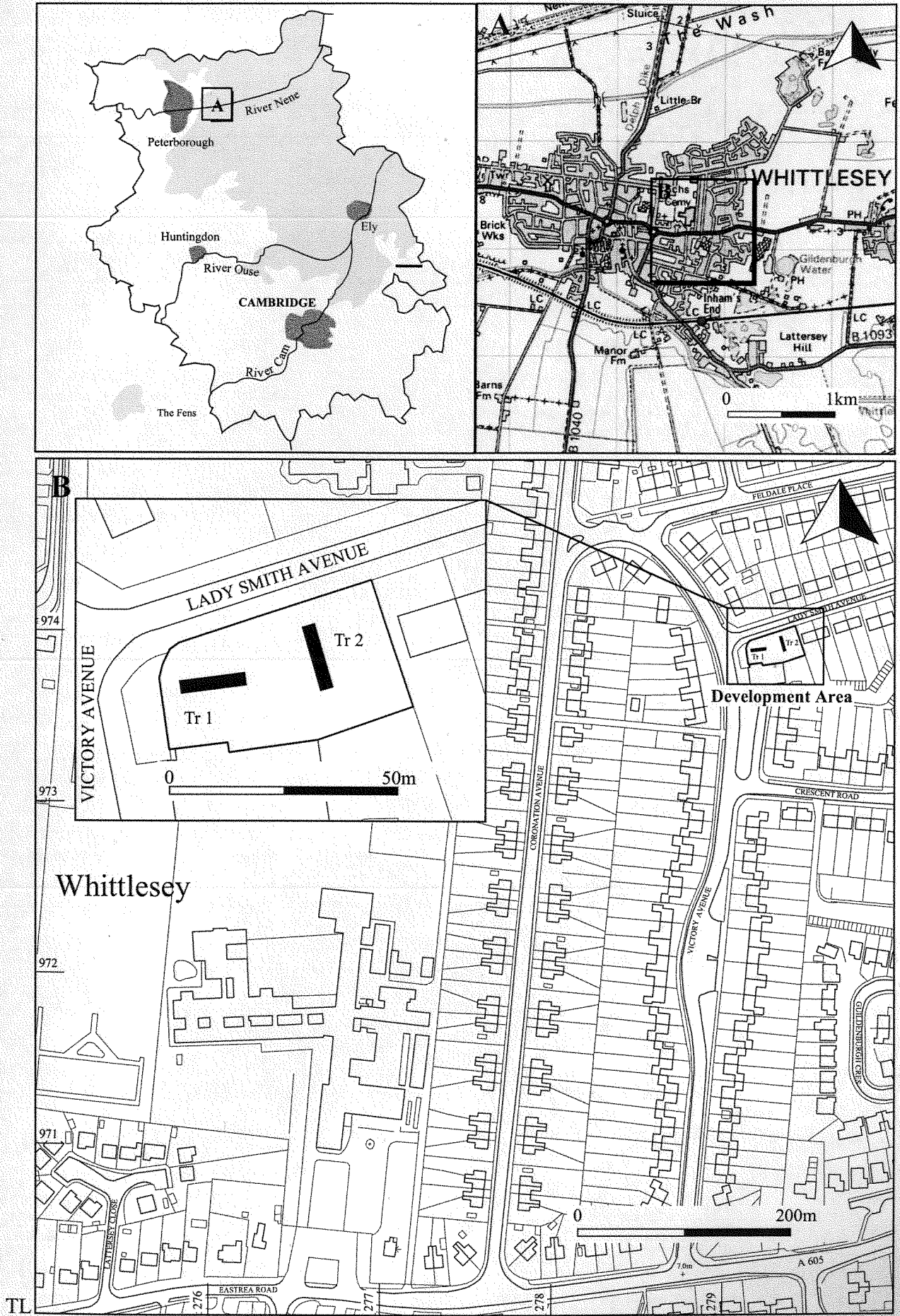
2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

According to the British Geological Survey, Whittlesey sits on the Quaternary March gravels, which overlie Jurassic Oxford Clay, the source material for the town's brickworks (BGS 1974).

2.2 Topography

The town of Whittlesey lies due east of Peterborough, and reaches a maximum height of 8m OD.



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Figure 1 Site location

3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The name Whittlesey is first recorded c. 972 in an Anglo-Saxon Charter, as 'Witlesig', meaning 'Wittel's Island' (Reaney 1943, after Robertson 1939). Wital is the name of a moneyer, and is a diminutive of Witta.

Whittlesey was shared by the two Saxon monasteries of Thorney and Ely, with the land roughly divided into east and west, with the Ely manor largely on the west. These manors became parishes that were united in 1850 for civil purposes, but continued as separate entities for ecclesiastical matters.

The population of Whittlesey has grown from around 1500 in 1563 to almost 14000 in 1991.

Brickmaking began in the late 19th century and has continued ever since, permanently altering the skyline of the town with its tall chimneys.

The site lies some 50m to the north of the line of the Fen Causeway, the Roman route to March, a section of which was excavated to the east of the development area (SMR11048). Saxon settlement has been identified to the north (SMR 04281) and a Saxon cemetery was found to the west (SMR 10594).

4 METHODOLOGY

Two trenches were opened by a JCB using a flat-bladed ditching bucket 1.6m wide, under the supervision of an archaeologist. The total length of the trenches was 18m and this constitutes a 5.5% sample of the development area.

5 RESULTS

Trench 1 was 9m long and contained no archaeology. 0.15m of dark brown clay silt topsoil overlay a thin layer of tarmac. Below this, 0.2-0.4m of orange-brown sandy clay silt subsoil overlay the natural gravels.

Trench 2 was 9m long and contained no archaeology. 0.1m of dark brown clay silt topsoil overlay 0.4m of orange-brown sandy clay silt subsoil. This in turn overlay the natural gravels.

6 DISCUSSION

Despite the apparent proximity of the development area to the Roman Fen Causeway, no archaeological remains were discovered, and there was no suggestion of truncation of deposits on the site, either in antiquity or modern times.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank Robert Powell for funding the work, and Stephen Macaulay 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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