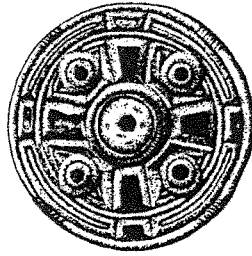


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Archaeological Field Unit

**Land at Model Farm, Old Weston:
An Archaeological Evaluation**

Andrew Hatton

2002

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. B 101
Commissioned by Bernard Ward Developments

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at Model Farm, Old Weston NGR TL 09830 77320 in order to inform the planning process. The work was carried out by, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council on the 3rd and 4th July 2002.

Three trenches totalling 100m in length, giving a 5% sample, were located within the 3350m² of a proposed housing development. The aim of the intervention was to record and assess the nature of any archaeological evidence encountered prior to construction and hence to assess the potential for further surviving remains. Given the presence of Roman and Anglo-Saxon artefacts and the location of the deserted medieval village particular attention was paid to the identification and interpretation of deposits and features in the context of what seems to be a rich archaeological landscape.

During the archaeological investigation, probable landscaping and modern disturbance were observed. No positive evidence was recovered of early land use.

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**Land at Model Farm, Old Weston:
An Archaeological Evaluation
(TL 09830 77320)**

1 INTRODUCTION

On the 3rd and 4th of July 2002 the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council undertook an archaeological evaluation at Model Farm, Old Weston (TL 09830 77320). The work was carried out to satisfy a planning condition in advance of development.

2 SITE BACKGROUND

2.1 Planning Background

The proposed development entailed the construction of three dwellings with access roads and services. Given the known archaeological background of the area (below), the possibility of their being Roman and later archaeological remains within the application area determined the requirement for an evaluation.

The work was carried out by the AFU on behalf of Bernard Ward Developments, in accordance with a Brief produced Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office.

2.2 Geology

The local geology consists of boulder clay (BGS sheet 186)

2.3 Topography

The site lies on a slight rise within an undulating landscape at a height of 53.50m OD. The land drops away to the south but rises to the west, north and east.

3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Evidence of prehistoric activity within the immediate vicinity of the village is inconclusive; however, there are two groups of cropmarks (SMR 00344 and



Figure 1 Site location and Trench Plan

SMR 00345) and a single set of soilmarks (SMR 00349). Despite a lack of artefactual evidence, these have potential for being prehistoric in date especially considering their shape in plan.

Evidence of Roman activity consisted of pottery sherds (SMR 07877) and a single stray find (SMR 00348).

Evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity is confined to a field immediately south of the churchyard and consists of large amounts of pottery sherds. The location of the Anglo-Saxon pottery does seem to correspond with the location of the village of Old Weston (as mentioned in the Domesday Survey), which extended south of the church and across the brook. Development of the village during the medieval period appears to follow that of the Anglo-Saxon period (SMR 00348).

The church of St. Swithin is also mentioned in the Domesday survey, although there are no remains from the 11th century. The earliest parts of the present church date to the late 13th century and include the nave arcades.

The Late Medieval period saw the construction of Model Farm (early 17th century) on the site of the medieval manor house, which is known to have stood on the site in 1279 (SMR 00363). The land associated with the manor covered an area of 10 acres and was enclosed by a ditch (VCH 1974).

Much of the medieval village of Old Weston south of the church was destroyed on the 28th February 1701, leaving only a small number of buildings north of the brook undamaged

4 METHODOLOGY

Three trenches totalling 100m in length, giving a 5% sample, were located within the 3350m² area of a proposed housing development. Topsoil and modern overburden were removed in the trenches using a wheeled mechanical excavator with a flat-bladed ditching bucket to a width of 1.6m, under the full time supervision of an archaeologist. Trenches were located to give a representative sample of the available area.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 (30m x 1.6m) east/west oriented. The trench was located on undisturbed land at the eastern end of the trench and a farm trackway at the western end. The reason for the location of the trench was to determine the

degree of disturbance of any archaeological features caused by the construction of the trackway.

The segment of section examined at the eastern end of the trench showed that the topsoil (0.20m thick) consisted of dark brown clayey silt. The topsoil lay immediately on top of the natural boulder clay. This sequence continued for a distance of 24m from the eastern end of the trench at which point what appeared to be a road cut was observed which had removed the topsoil.

The segment of section examined at the western end of the trench showed the stratigraphic sequence to be: hoggin (0.06m thick) which overlay pea-gravel (0.10m thick) this in turn sealed rubble infill (0.55m thick) consisting of brick, concrete and clay. No archaeological features were identified in the trench.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 (36m x 1.6m) northeast/southwest oriented. The trench was located across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling and associated car park. This allowed for maximum coverage of the area to be disturbed during construction.

The segment of section examined at the north-eastern end of the trench showed that the topsoil had been completely removed and replaced with sand (0.20m thick). The sand sat immediately on top of the natural boulder clay, which was found to contain modern debris (brick and concrete fragments), which had been hammered in to the clay to provide a stable surface. The same sequence continued for the entire length of the trench with the sand increasing in thickness to 0.22m. No archaeological features were identified in the trench.

5.3 Trench 3A and 3B

Trench 3A and 3B were arranged in a 'T' shape in order to obtain maximum coverage of the area to be disturbed during construction work

Trench 3A (26m x 1.6m) northwest/southeast oriented. The segment of section examined at the north-western end of the trench showed that the topsoil (0.28m thick) consisted of dark brown clayey silt. The topsoil sat immediately on top of a mixed natural, consisting of silty sand and boulder clay. The same sequence continued for the entire length of the trench with the topsoil increasing in thickness to 0.45m.

Cutting in to the natural geology approximately 10m from the north-western end of the trench was a large pit 4m in diameter. Contained within the pit was a dark brown silty sand together with fragments of brick, shards of glass, and rusty metal. Identification of the various artefacts contained within the pit indicated an early to mid 19th century date for its excavation.

Trench 3B (6m x 1.6m) northeast/southwest oriented. The segment of section examined at the north-eastern end of the trench showed the topsoil to be 0.32m

thick. The topsoil sat immediately on top of a mixed natural, consisting of silty sand and boulder clay. No archaeological features were identified in the trench.

6 DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

The aims of the 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 the excavation of foundation trenches, services and road construction.

The key issues specific to the site relate its location to the historic core of Old Weston. The evaluation trenches revealed no archaeological features relating to any the Anglo-Saxon/Medieval development of the village. The only evidence of activity (obscured by overburden) was the presence of modern rubbish pits identified in Trench 3 (fig 1).

It is possible the absence of any archaeological features may be due to the position of Model Farm being the same as the original manor (ibid) thus any archaeological remains being under the building itself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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