Archaeological Field Unit

Medieval Features at Manor View, Whittlesey, and Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation

Taleyna Fletcher

April 2004

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. 718

Commissioned by Mr J D Harris

AFU Reports

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Medieval Features at Manor View, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation (TL 2712 9710)

Taleyna Fletcher

April 2004

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Report No. 718

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SUMMARY

The Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation on land west of the Manor House, Manor View, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire, in early April 2004. The work was commissioned by Mr J. D. Harris in advance of development of the site for a single dwelling, integral double garage, access road and accompanying services.

The investigation comprised three trenches within the proposed development area. All three trenches revealed significant quantities of archaeological features including walls, pits, postholes and ditches. Most features contained dating evidence ranging from the Anglo-Saxon to medieval periods. Evidence of a medieval metal working area was also identified. The evaluation also revealed a significant amount of soil had been brought in to the area, probably during the mid 20th century when a plant nursery occupied the present site. As a result the evaluation trenches were significantly deeper than anticipated.

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Medieval Features at Manor View, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation
(TL 2712 9710)

1 INTRODUCTION

In early April 2004 the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council undertook an evaluation on land to the west of the Manor House, Manor View, Whittlesey (TL 2712 9710). The site is in the historic core of the medieval town of Whittlesey, less than 30m to the west of The Manor House and 50m southwest of the church of St Mary. The work was commissioned by Mr J. D. Harris in advance of the proposed development of the site for a single dwelling with double integral garage, access road and accompanying services.

The excavations were carried out in accordance with the Brief dated 22nd December 2003 (Thomas 2003). The archaeological objectives for the excavation were recorded in the specification for the site (Macaulay 2004). These objectives were to establish the character, date, state of preservation and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area. The specification (and location of the trenches) was approved by the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office (CAO) before the start of the evaluation.

Three trenches were opened, all of which contained archaeological features.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The underlying geology of the fen basin at Whittlesey consists of Jurassic Oxford Clay that crops out around the later (Pleistocene) March Gravels. The March Gravels consist of sand and gravel of marine/estuarine origin, which form the first terrace deposits of the River Nene. The two gravel islands of Whittlesey (west island) and Eastrea with Coates and Eldernell (east island) are surrounded by Flandrian Lower Peat. Later marine transgression caused the deposition of silty clay Barroway Drove Beds. Barroway Drove clay is clearly exposed between Whittlesey and Eastrea (Horton 1989).

Whittlesey was a gravel island that was once surrounded by ancient river tributaries to the south and east and open water to the north. The gravel island (interglacial gravels overlying Oxford Clay) formed a secure crossing point for a 2nd century Roman road – the Fen Causeway – that crossed the fenland between Peterborough and Denver, Norfolk.

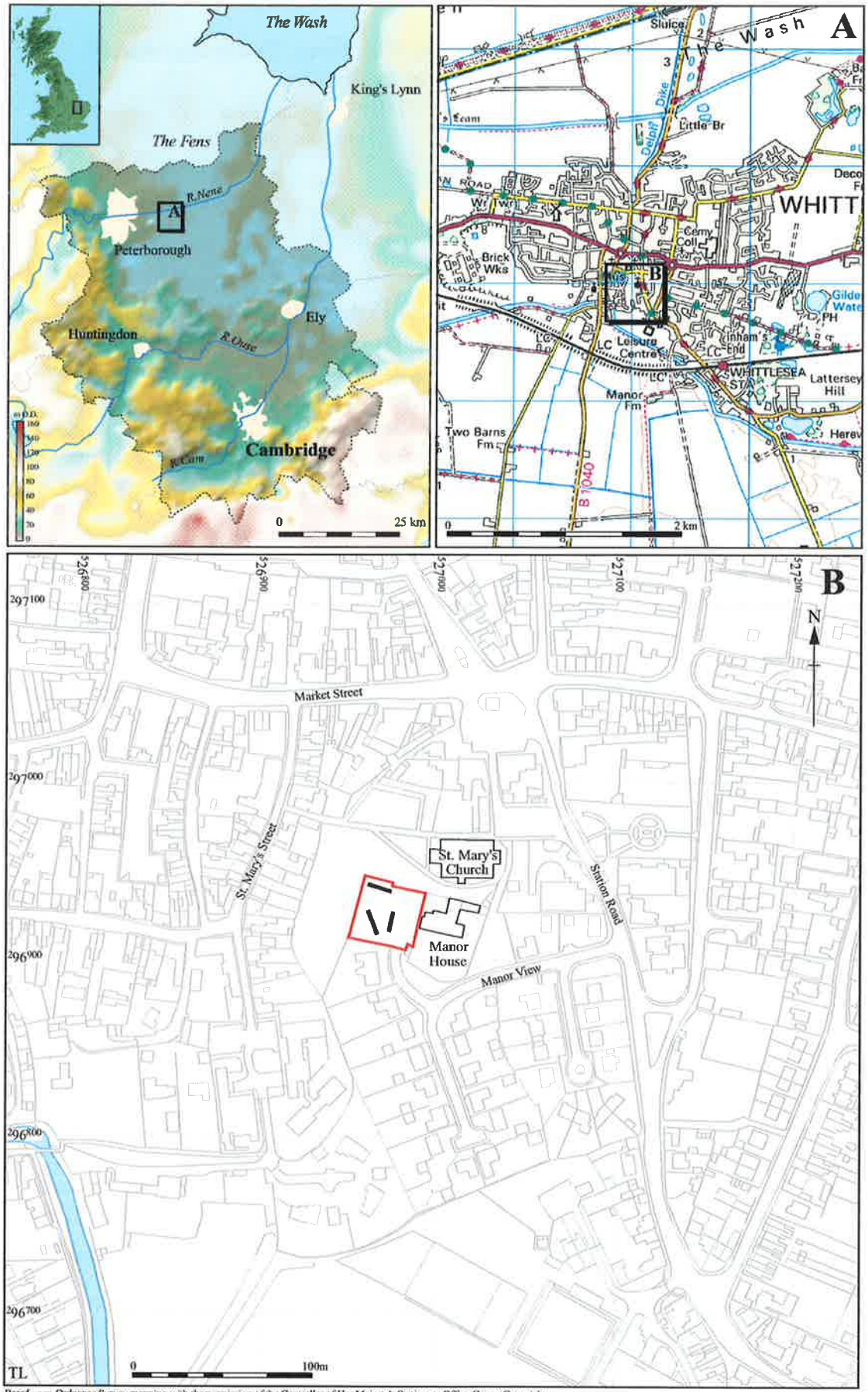

Figure 1 *Location of trenches (black) with the development area outlined (red)*

The development site is on the March gravels in an area of high archaeological potential in the historic town core.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric finds are known from the area around Whittlesey, their distribution along the fen-edge placing emphasis on the economic significance of the fen as an essential grazing resource. Early prehistoric activity is mainly represented by lithic scatters and stray finds.

3.1 Bronze Age

The Bronze Age is characterised by both ritual activity and settlement. Barrow mounds have been identified at Eldernell and Suet Hill (to the south of Whittlesey).

Recent excavations between Whittlesey and Fengate have revealed evidence for settlement that had previously gone undetected through traditional air recognisance and field surveys. Furthermore the archaeological investigations have offered the opportunity to study the location of settlements in relation to the Bronze Age fen. At King's Dyke West excavations revealed the presence of a short-lived Late Bronze Age open settlement consisting of five roundhouses, four-post structures and pits. A cluster of pits inside one of the houses contained remains of butchered lambs. Outside, there were pits with fragments of pottery and disarticulated pig bone. The same type of pottery had been incorporated into the floors of the buildings, suggesting a link between the pits, the living spaces and the breaking of objects. The upland limit to the settlement distribution was around was around the 4m OD contour (Knight 1999).

Further work at Bradley Fen also revealed evidence of Early and Late Bronze Age occupation in the form of pits, and postholes (representing round houses), respectively. The Late Bronze Age settlement seems to have occupied a narrow belt between the 1.5m and 4m contours, which was beyond the southern and north-eastern limits of the evaluation site. Below the 1.5m contour and beyond the settlement belt, an isolated pocket of probable contemporary settlement features was identified, including a rectangular post-built structure (Knight, 2000).

3.2 Iron Age

Iron Age finds have been reported from the brick clay quarry *c.* 2km to the west of the development site (Hall 1987, 57).

3.3 Roman

The projected course of the Roman Fen Causeway from Peterborough to Grandford near March crosses the north of Whittlesey. It enters the island from Flag Fen and Northey, where portions of the gravel road have been seen.

Recent excavations at Stonald Field, to the east of the present development site, have confirmed the route of the Roman road in the eastern portion of the parish. Dating evidence indicates that it was originally built in the 1st century AD, probably for military purposes. As time went by, the road began to attract occupation, as suggested by the presence of paddocks, enclosures, a pottery kiln and evidence for iron working around the fringes of the settlement (Mortimer 1996; Knight 2000). A large number of rural sites are visible as crop marks along the Fen Causeway at both Whittlesey and Eastrea. Some of these crop marks (Hall 1987; Sites 7, 8, 9) were recently replotted. The re-assessment showed the presence of a possible marching camp at TL 32339882 (Palmer in Heawood 1997). Roman material from the clay quarries and brick pits may represent more sites on the islands (Hall 1987, 58).

Excavations at Bradley Fen (above) revealed the course of a secondary route, parallel to the established course of the Fen Causeway, at Stonald Field. Earthwork remains of a field system further north are crossed by a trackway, which aligns with the road found at Bradley Fen. This latter may have represented a possible alternative route to the Fen Causeway. It corresponds with a trackway earthwork north of Moreton's Leam, which bypasses the settlement at Stonald Field (Knight 2000). The track may join the route identified near Hall's Site 8 (Palmer in Heawood 1997) where, compared with the traditional course, the Fen Causeway seems to turn sharply to the north at its landfall.

3.4 Saxon and Medieval

The Whittlesey area is not particularly rich in Saxon and early medieval remains. Approximately 1km to the east of the development area an Anglo-Saxon cemetery (SMR 10594) consisting of seven inhumations was uncovered in the 19th century. All of the skeletons were orientated on an east to west alignment.

The place-name of Whittlesey indicates a Late Saxon origin, being recorded in *c.*972 as *(W)itlesig*, meaning '*Wil(t)el*'s island', from a personal name (Reaney 1943, 258). It has been suggested that the route formed by Wallcroft Road to the west, Stonald and Bassenhally Roads to the north and Cemetery Road and Inham's Lane to the east may represent the line of an earthen rampart and stockade associated with an early settlement (Pugh 1967, 123). However, Stonald Field is recorded in documents (from 1246) as *Litlestanhale* meaning 'field by the gravel nook' (Reaney 1943, 262-3) and refers to the gravelly soils in the western part of the parish.

Early historical records refer to two separate manors that belonged to Thorney (Whittlesey St Mary, acquired in 973) and Ely (Whittlesey St Andrew's acquired in *c.*1000) .

The Manor House, (SMR CB3634) to the immediate east of the site is of medieval origin, and underwent considerable alteration during the 17th and 19th centuries. The west wing of the house dates back to the 15th century and still retains several features of this period. In the early part of the 17th century the west wing was extended and later during the same century the north wing was added. The 19th century saw the insertion of new windows and considerable alterations to the building interior.

The earliest part of St Mary's Church, (SMR CB3644), to the north-east of the site has its origins in the 13th century, having been rebuilt following a fire in 1244 which devastated much of the town of Whittlesey. Additions were made to the aisles, chancels and spire in the 14th and 15th centuries.

Later medieval finds have been discovered from the central area of Whittlesey. The churches of St Andrew and St Mary's also appear to be relatively late in date, having been erected during the 13th century.

3.5 Post-Medieval

The two prosperous parishes of St Mary and St Andrew's were unified after the Dissolution. The economic importance of the town continued in the 17th century when Whittlesey ranked second among the towns of the Isle, Ely coming first. The right to hold a market was granted in 1715. Drainage of the fens started at the beginning of the 18th century followed by the enclosure of large portions of land.

The SMR entries for Whittlesey correspond to the areas of known activity from the prehistoric period and show the progressive shifts of occupation in relation to the changed environmental conditions, from the prehistoric fenlands to the gravel island in historic times.

4 METHODOLOGY

The aim of the evaluation was to attempt to establish the character, date, state of preservation and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area.

Plate 1 *Section of Trench 2 indicating stratigraphy of the site*

Plate 2 *Location of trenches looking southwest*

Three 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 39m and this constitutes a 5% sample of the development area. The machine continued to remove overburden and deposits until reaching the interface between the soil horizons and the natural gravels, the level at which archaeological features were encountered. Due to the depth of the trenches and the unstable nature of the soft soil deposits encountered, the trenches were all stepped for easy access and safety. The position of the trenches was determined by a trench plan approved by the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office (CAO) (Fig. 1). After machining, the trench was cleaned in order to fully expose the archaeological features and to understand their extent and relationships within the trench. All features were hand excavated and recorded using the AFU standard contextual recording system. The trenches were planned at a scale of 1:20 and sections were drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 depending on size and detail required. Colour print, colour slide and monochrome photographs were taken as well as digital photographs using a Canon A60 Powershot Digital camera. Environmental samples were taken where appropriate. The spoil heaps, features and trench surfaces were scanned for metal artefacts using a metal detector. The spoil heap was also scanned visually for pottery and bone.

The trench locations were surveyed using a Leica Total Station Theodolite and tied in to the Ordnance Survey grid. The individual trench plans showing feature locations were then incorporated with the surveying data.

5 RESULTS

In this report deposit numbers are shown in plain text and cut numbers are in **bold** text. Each of the trenches contained archaeological features which are described below by trench and in stratigraphic order within that trench, latest first.

All three trenches revealed basically the same stratigraphic sequence, (Fig 3, Section 2). The upper layer consisted of compacted hardcore and modern building debris which varied in thickness across the site between 0.20m and 0.60m. The next layer was a band of firm black material, (56), this was approximately 0.20m in thickness containing occasional small gravel stones and was probably deposited to support the upper hardcore layer from sinking into the soft soil deposits below. Below the black band was a very rich dark brown layer of garden soil, 57. This layer was a very soft clayey silty dark brown deposit and varied in thickness between 0.30m and 0.45m and contained flecks of charcoal, occasional small stones and frequent plant roots. The next layer in the sequence was another deposit of rich garden soil, 61, very similar to the layer above, but a more grey brown. This deposit varied in thickness between 0.30 and 0.40m with the same stone, charcoal and root

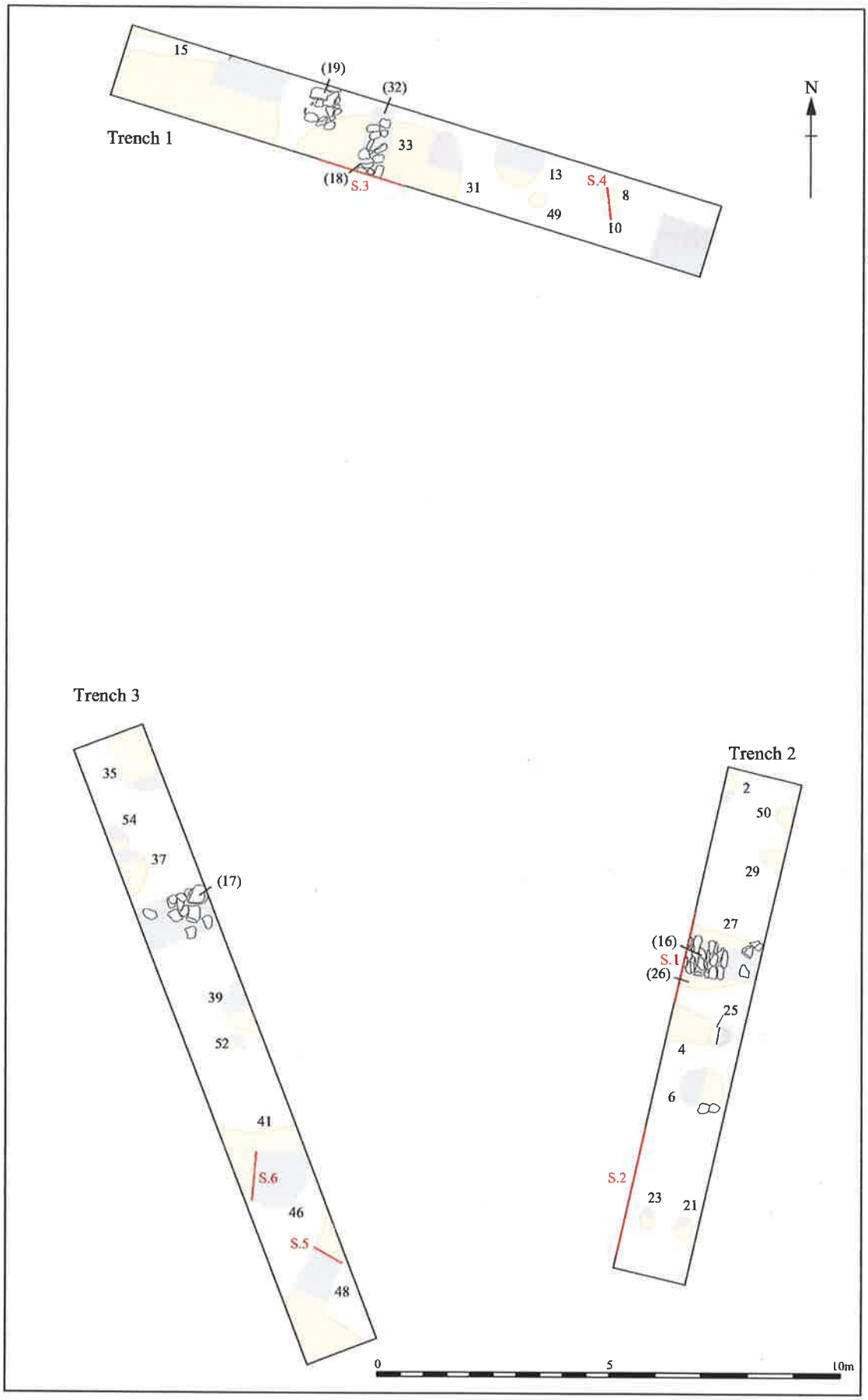

***Figure 2** Trench plan*

inclusions. A layer of subsoil, (62), was the final deposit in the stratigraphic sequence between the garden soils and the natural bright gravels. Both of these rich garden soil layers are associated with the nursery which was located on this site until recent years. The subsoil layer was on average 0.20m deep and was a light mixed orangey brown gravel silty soil with frequent gravel inclusions (Plate 1).

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 13.30m long and 1.60m wide. The trench was on an approximate east to west alignment and was positioned as far as was possible to the north of the site in order to investigate whether earlier graveyard boundaries extended into the subject site. The depth of the trench was approximately 1.25m and as a result was stepped.

Wall **18**, cut **33**

This truncated wall or wall foundations ran on a north to south alignment. The surface of the wall was cleaned to determine its full extent and relationship with other features, but was not excavated in this investigation. In plan, the wall measured 1.30m in length, with the wall foundation trench, (**33**), observed over a length of 1.50m, and a maximum of 0.60m wide. The feature continues into the trench edge to the south and ends to the north, 0.10m from the trench edge. As there was limited investigation of the wall through excavation, little can be recorded about the foundation cut. The deposit within the foundation, (32) was a light brownish yellow sandy, silty mix with occasional small stones and chalky flecks; this may have acted as a bonding material or backfill of the foundation trench.

There was no evidence remaining of any courses or formation to the wall and the stone fragments/blocks used did not appear to have been shaped or worked in any way, suggesting that the remains may be represent heavy rubble foundations or remnants of a robbed out structure. Although not entirely clear, a second possible cut, (**65**) was observed in the section which may represent a robber trench (Fig. 3, Section 3)

Although no dating evidence was retrieved during cleaning of the wall and the deposit around it, this does appear to be one of the later features in this trench and could be seen in the trench section to be cut from a higher level than any other of the features in this trench. This feature does however truncate (**31**), which was dated between AD 1150 and 1350 by pottery retrieved from it.

Sub-rectangular feature **31**

This feature was not fully exposed within the dimensions of the trench although from the amount which was exposed, it may have been sub-rectangular in plan. The length of the feature was a minimum of 4m, fading

out and becoming less clear in plan to the west. The excavated north-east corner revealed that this feature had very steep sloping edges, coming down onto a flat base. It had a maximum depth of 0.32m and was filled by context 30, a mid brown, sandy, clayey silt with inclusions of small gravel stones and occasional charcoal flecks. The finds retrieved from this deposit included oyster shell animal bone and fragments of pottery. Sherds of Shelly Ware dated 1150–1350 and one residual sherd of Saxon date were recovered. An environmental sample was taken from the fill of this feature to learn more about its function. The sample contained evidence of domestic refuse including cereal grains, legumes and animal bones. The function of this feature could not be established during the investigation and the results of the environmental sample were also inconclusive.

Wall **19**

This truncated wall or wall foundation ran on a north to south alignment parallel to wall **18**. The surface of the wall was cleaned to determine its full extent and relationship with any other features, but was not fully excavated in this investigation. In plan the wall measured 0.90 in length, and the maximum width was 0.70m. The feature continued into the trench edge to the north and ends to the south, 0.70m from the trench edge. As there was no investigation of the wall through excavation, little can be recorded about any cut, although some of the stones themselves appeared to have been shaped or cut as they were all relatively flat. Unlike wall **18**, there seemed to be more cohesion of stones in this wall. There was no obvious bonding material used, but the stones were more closely laid together and less random than in wall **18**. No evidence of a cut for a foundation was recorded in the trench section. Wall **19** does appear to truncate an area of dark brown deposit, a possible continuation of **31** but no certain relationship can be established at this time. No finds were retrieved during the cleaning or recording of this wall.

Sub-rectangular feature **15**

This feature was not fully exposed within the dimensions of the trench although it appeared to be sub-rectangular in plan. The length of the feature was a minimum of 3.50m, continuing beyond the edge of the trench to the west. The excavated north-east corner revealed that this feature had very steep sloping sides, coming down onto a flat base. It had a maximum depth of 0.40m and was filled by a very dark black brown, soft clayey silt with inclusions of small gravel stones and frequent charcoal flecks (14). The finds retrieved from this deposit included shell, Shelly Ware dated 1150–1350, several lumps of light glassy slag which had a low metal content, (SF4) and a small strip of flattened iron (SF1). Analysis of the environmental sample taken from this context revealed a moderately large quantity of artefacts and ecofacts associated with domestic refuse, including cereal grains, legumes and nutlet of *Cladium mariscans* (Saw-sedge, often used for thatching). The sample also contained a moderate amount of hammerslag and hammerscale,

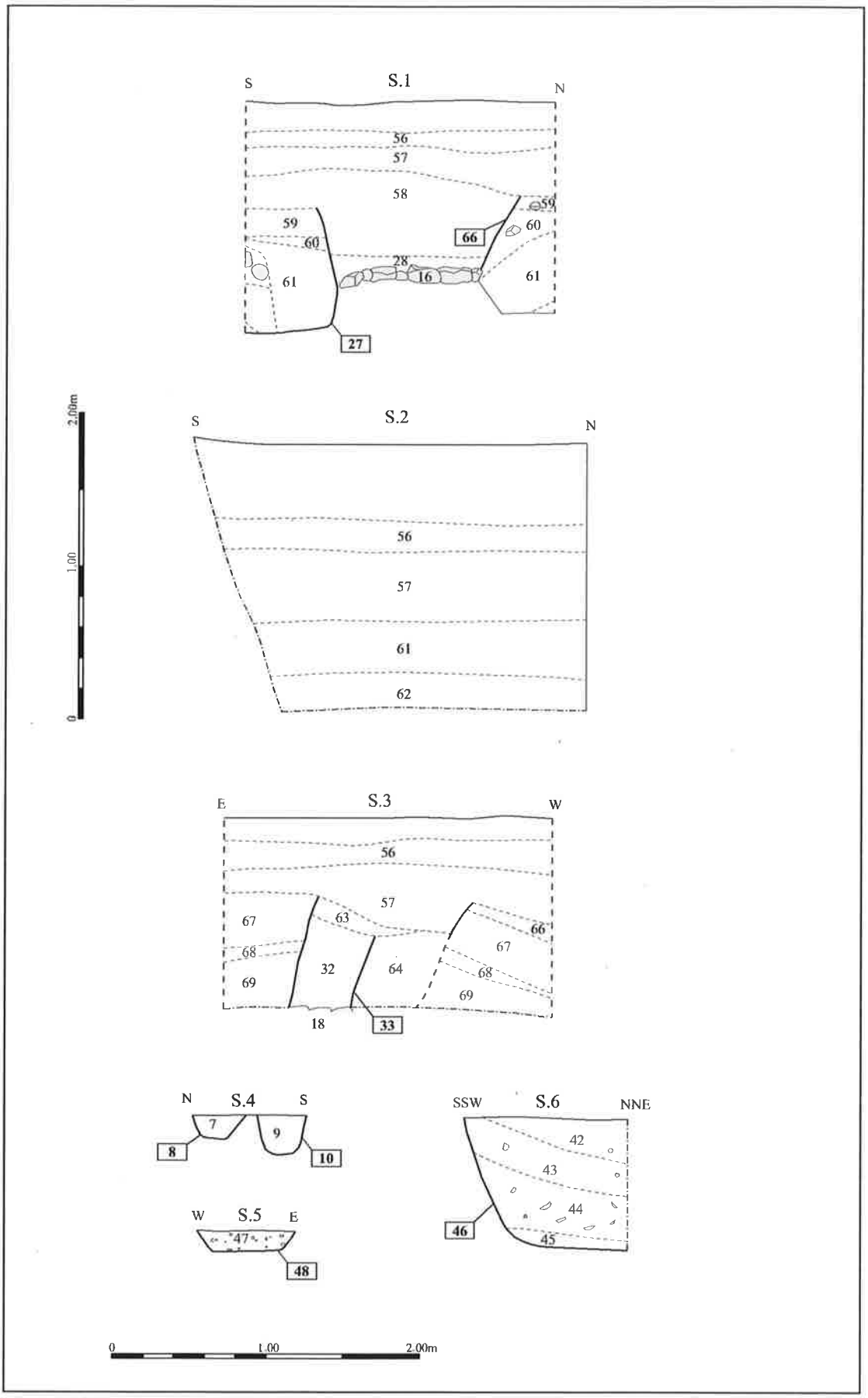

***Figure 3** Feature sections*

associated with the lumps of slag found during excavation, further suggesting that metalworking was taking place on this site.

Rubbish Pit **13**

This pit was not fully exposed within the trench. The excavated section revealed that this pit had a width of 0.96m and a maximum depth of 0.32m, with moderately sloping edges and a flat base. Two separate deposits were recorded within the pit, both containing a large quantity of animal bone from small and medium sized mammals. The lower fill, (12) was a mid to dark blackish brown, silty clay with charcoal flecks, occasional stones, animal bone and mussel and oyster shell. The pottery which came from this fill was identified as St Neots Ware, which dates this feature to between AD 900 and 1150. A second, upper fill was recorded, (11), this was a dark blackish brown clayey silt, which was rich in charcoal, and contained small stones and a significant quantity of animal bone. The pottery retrieved was identified as Saxon and Roman, these are likely to be residual. Analysis of the environmental sample taken from this context revealed a substantial amount of wood charcoal as well as animal and fish bones and cereal grains. These finds from a soil sample are typical of those found in a domestic rubbish pit of this period.

Post hole **08**

This was one of two postholes less then 0.08m apart located in the eastern end of Trench 1. This feature was circular in plan, 0.34m wide with a maximum depth of 0.15m. It had moderately steep sloping edges and a flat base (Fig. 3, Section 4). The fill, (07) was a dark blackish brown clayey, sandy silt, with small gravel stones and charcoal flecks. No finds were retrieved from this context.

Post hole **10**

This was the second of two postholes less then 0.08m apart located in the eastern end of Trench 1. This feature was circular in plan, 0.30m wide with a maximum depth of 0.25m. It had steep sloping edges and a flat base. (Fig. 3, Section 4). The fill (09)was a dark blackish brown clayey, sandy silt, with small gravel stones and charcoal flecks. No finds were retrieved from this context.

Post hole **49**

This posthole was not investigated during the evaluation, but was cleaned by hand, planned and recorded. It was circular in shape with a width of 0.30m; its depth and the character edges and base are all unknown. The fill, (48), was

the same as contexts 07 and 09, a dark blackish brown clayey, sandy silt, with small gravel stones and charcoal flecks.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 11.35m long and 1.60m wide. The trench was on an approximate north to south alignment. The depth of the trench was approximately 1.50m and as a result was stepped.

Ditch **04**

This ditch was on an east to west alignment, continuing into the trench edge to the west and terminating less than 0.20m from the eastern edge. The terminus of the ditch was excavated revealing moderately steep sloping edges and a flat base, in which a posthole, (**25**) was revealed. The ditch had a maximum width of 0.53m and a depth of 0.13m. The fill (03), comprised a mid brown silty clay with no obvious inclusions other than pottery sherds identified as St Neots Ware type dating the ditch between AD 950 and 1150. One sherd of Saxon pot was also retrieved.

Posthole **25**

Revealed in the base of ditch **25**, this posthole is believed to be contemporary with the cut of the ditch. Although not fully revealed, this feature appears to have been circular in plan with a width of 0.38m, gently sloping edges and a concave base. The fill of this posthole, (24) was the same as ditch fill 03 suggesting that these features were contemporary. No finds were retrieved from this context.

Pit **02**

This pit was not fully revealed in plan and continued beyond the western edge of the trench. The excavated segment of this feature revealed very steep sloping edges with a maximum depth of 0.30m. The deposit within this pit, (01) was a moderately soft mid to dark brown, silty sandy clay containing occasional medium sized gravel stones. The pottery retrieved from this context was St Neots Ware, dating the feature between AD 950 and 1150. One sherd of Romano-British pottery was found but this was thought to be residual.

Pit **06**

This very shallow pit was sub-circular in plan with a length of 0.95m, a width of 0.88m and a maximum depth of 0.13m. This feature had very gradual

sloping edges and a flat, level base. It was filled with a soft, dark blackish brown clayey silt, (05) with occasional small stones, moderate charcoal flecks and three large stones with average dimensions of 0.30m x 025m x 0.10m. The deposit also contained animal bone and sherds of pottery which were identified as Ely Ware, dated between AD 1200 and 1350.

Wall **16**, Cut **27**

This truncated wall or wall foundations ran on an east to west alignment. The surface of the wall was adequately cleaned to determine its full extent and relationship with other features, although was not excavated in this investigation. In plan, the wall itself measured 1.60m in length, the full width of the trench. Fewer stones survived or were present towards the eastern edge. The width of the wall was approximately 0.70m and depth is unknown. The wall cut,(**27**), could be traced through the width of the trench and the maximum width was 1.40m. As there was no investigation of the wall through excavation, little can be recorded about the cut. Its fill (26) was a very dark, black brown clayey silty mix with occasional small stones and chalky flecks; this may have acted as a bonding material or backfill of the foundation trench.

There was no evidence remaining of any courses or formation to the wall and the stone fragments/blocks used did not appear to be shaped or worked in any way, suggesting that the remnants may represent heavy rubble foundations or remains of a mostly robbed out structure. As with wall **18** in Trench 1, a second possible cut, (**66**) was evident in the section which may represent a robber trench (Figure 3, section 1)

Although no dating evidence was retrieved from within cleaning the wall or the deposit around, this does appear to have been one of the later features in this trench.

Posthole **21**

This posthole was sub-circular in plan, measuring 0.50m in length, 0.35m in width, with a maximum depth of 0.18m. This feature had moderately steep sloping edges and a rounded base. Its fill, (20) was a soft, light–mid brown silty sandy clay with occasional gravel and flint stones and rare charcoal flecks. No finds were retrieved from this deposit.

Posthole **23**

This posthole was sub-circular in plan, measuring 0.52m in length, 0.26m in width, with a maximum depth of 0.16m. This feature had moderately steep sloping edges and a rounded base. Its fill (22) was a soft, light to mid brown silty sandy clay with occasional gravel and flint stones and rare charcoal flecks. No finds were retrieved from this deposit.

Posthole **29**

This posthole was sub-circular in plan, measuring 0.52m in length, 0.26m in width, with a maximum depth of 0.16m. This feature had moderately steep sloping edges and a rounded base. Its fill (28) was a soft, light to mid brown silty sandy clay with occasional gravel and flint stones and rare charcoal flecks. No finds were retrieved from this deposit.

Posthole/Ditch terminus **50**

This feature against the eastern edge of Trench 2 was not excavated and not fully revealed in plan. Its visible shape in plan suggests this is a small pit or posthole or the terminus of an east to west orientated ditch. The fill, (49) was a light to mid brown clayey silt. No finds were retrieved during the cleaning or recording of this feature.

5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was 14.35m in length and 1.60m wide. The trench was on an approximate north-west to south-east alignment. The depth of the trench was approximately 1.50m at the south-eastern end and sloped down to a maximum 1.80 at the north-western end and as a result the trench was stepped on both sides. The pottery found dates the majority of features within this trench to around the 13th and 14th centuries.

Sub-rectangular feature **35**

This feature was not fully exposed within the dimensions of this trench although it may have been sub-rectangular in plan. The length of the feature was a minimum of 1.50m, continuing beyond the edge of the trench to the north-west. The excavated corner revealed that this feature had gently sloping edges, although not enough of the base was encountered to permit comment. It had a maximum depth of 0.25m and was filled by (34), a very dark black brown, soft clayey silt with inclusions of small gravel stones and frequent charcoal flecks. The finds retrieved from this deposit included shell and sherds of Thetford Ware dated AD 900–1200.

Pit **37**

This moderately shallow pit was not fully revealed in plan and continued into the edge of the trench. Although not fully revealed this feature was probably sub-circular, with a width of 1.10m and a depth of 0.16m. It had moderately gradual sloping edges and a flat base. It was filled by a soft, very dark

blackish brown clayey silt mix (36), with occasional small stones, moderate charcoal flecks. This deposit also contained animal bone and sherds of pottery which were dated between AD 1200 and 1400. This pit truncated another smaller pit, **54**.

Pit **54**

This feature was not fully revealed in plan and continued into the edge of the trench. Although not fully revealed in plan this feature was probably sub-circular. Its full length and width are unknown and its depth was a maximum 0.20m. This feature had moderately gradual sloping edges and a flat base. It was filled with a soft, very dark blackish brown clayey silt mix, (53), with occasional small stones, moderate charcoal flecks. No finds were retrieved from the deposit. This pit was truncated by **37.**

Wall **17**, cut **55**

This truncated wall or wall foundations ran on a north-east to south-west alignment. The surface of the wall was not fully cleaned, although enough was cleaned to determine its full extent and relationship with other features. No excavation of the wall or cut was undertaken as part of the evaluation. In plan, the wall measured 1.60m in length, the full width of the trench. The width of the wall was approximately 1.0m and its depth is unknown. The wall cut, (**55**), could be traced through the width of the trench and the maximum width was 1.10m. As there was no investigation of the wall through excavation, little can be recorded about the cut. There was no evidence remaining of any courses or formation to the wall and the stone fragments/blocks used did not appear to be shaped or worked in any way, suggesting that if this was indeed a wall, it could represent heavy rubble foundations or remains of a mostly robbed out structure.

During cleaning around the stones, sherds of Ely Ware pottery were found together with a large amount of peg tile fragments. Although it must be considered that these finds were residual and only within the upper surviving stones, the wall could date to *c.*AD 1200 to 1500. The cut for the wall could be seen relatively higher than all other features within this trench in the section, making this the latest feature in Trench 3.

Ditch **41**

This ditch was very difficult to define in plan as it was so heavily truncated by pit **46** and had an indistinguishable fill from the upper deposit of the pit. The ditch appeared to run on a north-east to south-west alignment, continuing beyond the edges of the trench. It has an identified width of 1.0m and a depth of 0.30m. An excavated slot against the edge of the trench revealed vertical sloping edges and a possible flat base. Only one fill was identified, (40)

which was a very soft, dark blackish brown, clayey silt with occasional small pebble stones, charcoal flecks and oyster shell within. Pottery, animal bone and shell were all recovered from the deposit of this ditch, the pottery was identified as Shelly Ware, AD 1200–1350.

Rubbish Pit **46**

This pit was very difficult to define in plan, as its upper fill was indistinguishable from the deposit filling ditch **41**. The edge revealed during excavation suggests that it was circular in plan.. It had very steep, almost vertical sides, a depth of 0.80m and a flat base (Fig. 3, Section 6). Four separate deposits were recorded within this pit.

The very lowest deposit was a mixed bright natural gravel and pea grit (45), measuring 0.15m in thickness, this was likely to be the result of a slump or natural in-wash from the collapsed edges, an expected event associated with such a steep sided feature. The third and main fill of the pit was context 44. This was a very soft, organically rich deposit with a maximum depth of 0.30m. This deposit represents a rubbish dump. It was rich in organic material and contained several pieces of mussel and oyster shell. An environmental sample was taken from this deposit which revealed further evidence of waste food products, including more mussel shells, fish bones and scales and charred grains. Although fish bones and mussel shells were found in other contexts, this deposit contained considerably more given its thickness and the inclusion of fish scales also suggests it may be waste from food preparation. The pottery from this lower layer was dated 1200–1350. The next deposit (43) was a dark brown silty clay with few inclusions; pottery dated 1200-1250 and animal bone were recorded. This deposit had a maximum thickness of 0.20m. The latest deposit in the sequence, very dark blackish brown fill, (42 the same as context 40) containing pottery, oyster and mussel shell and pieces of animal bone, had a maximum depth of 0.15m.

Ditch **48**

This enclosure or boundary ditch was located at the south-eastern end of trench 3. This ditch appeared to run on a north to south orientation from the trench edge, then turning at a right angle to an east to west orientation, running into the southeast limit of the trench. The excavated section through this ditch revealed that it was very shallow, with a maximum depth of 0.13m and a width of 0.63m. The edges were moderately steeply sloping and the base was flat (Fig. 3, Section 5). The deposit within this ditch, (47) was a mid to light yellowish brown gravely and sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks. One sherd of pottery was retrieved from cleaning the surface of the ditch, a piece of Stamford Ware, dated c.1200, as well as one piece of animal bone and a fragment of roof tile.

Pit **39**

This sub-circular pit was not fully revealed in plan and continued beyond the edge of the trench, with a minimum width of 1.20m. The excavated segment of this feature revealed very steeply sloping edges with a maximum depth of 0.55m and a rounded base. The deposit within this pit (38) was a soft, dark blackish brown, silty clay containing occasional medium sized gravel stones, charcoal flecks and oyster shells. Five sherds of pottery retrieved from this context and give very mixed date ranges; St Neots Ware (950–1150), Shelly Ware, (1200–1350), Late Saxo-Norman Stamford Ware jar, (850-1000), dating the feature to the Late Saxon to early Medieval period.

Post hole **52**

Located next to pit **39**, this posthole was oval in plan with moderately sloping edges and a flat base. It had a length of 0.30m, was 0.20m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.07m. The fill of this posthole, (51), was a moderately soft, dark brown clayey silt with occasional small stone inclusions and charcoal flecks. No finds were retrieved from this feature.

6 DISCUSSION

Despite the presence of Romano-British and more commonly Late Saxon pottery within features, this was generally found in the upper fills or mixed in with artefacts of a later date. It would therefore appear that these finds are residual, yet indicate that there has been activity, particularly from the Saxon period on this site or within close proximity which has been greatly disturbed by activity during the medieval period. The location of the site close to the church of St Mary reinforces the argument for Saxon occupation nearby, as the name itself is widely associated with churches of the Saxon period. Historical evidence indicates that the church was rebuilt following a fire in 1244, suggesting that there was an earlier church on or near this site before.

Evidence of inter-cutting features represents two phases of activity. The close date ranges of the finds from these two phases however suggests there was not a great deal of time between them. For example, investigations in Trench 3 revealed one pit truncating another as well as a large storage or rubbish pit, (**46**) truncating a ditch (**41**), both of which contained pottery dating to around 13th to 14th centuries. Trench 1 also revealed more than one phase of activity, with sub-rectangular feature (**15**) truncating another large feature or spread of unknown date. The phases could perhaps be interpreted as one phase of settlement boundaries (represented by ditch **04** in Trench 2 and ditches **41** and **48** in Trench 3), with a second phase, fairly shortly afterwards, represented by more intensive activity with rubbish pits, postholes and metal working area. The majority of the later features encountered during

investigations were characterised by dark and organic deposits, usually containing domestic waste.

The walls or wall foundations on the site represent a later phase. Walls **16** in Trench 2, **17** in Trench 3, and **18** in Trench 1 all appear to have been contemporary. They all consisted of the same unworked, unfinished stone of similar dimensions and geological material. All three of these features were encountered at the same stratagraphic and physical level within their trenches and all could be seen within the trench sections as being cut from a higher level than any of the other features in those trenches. Although there was only dating evidence from within the stones of wall **17**, (one sherd of Ely Ware (1200–1350), and several fragments of medieval roof tile), this may not necessarily represent the period of construction. The roof tile may have been included within the construction of the wall or foundations from a disused or dismantled building in the location, which dated from an earlier building.

Although interpretation of the sub-rectangular features (**15, 31** and **35)** is difficult given that the full dimensions and profile were not exposed, it could be suggested that these features were quarry pits for the extraction of gravel. These features were relatively shallow in comparison to most quarry pits, but as the gravel was overlying clay, it is likely that extraction would have stopped at the interface of the geological changes if only gravel was required. The location of these pits close to both the medieval manor house and St Mary's Church suggests that the gravel may have been required for maintenance of trackways and roads to these and other structures in the vicinity. Domestic and industrial waste may then have been used to level these depressions, resulting in the mixture within these deposits of straw, pottery, animal bone and in the fill of **15**, iron slag and fragments of lead. These and other organic waste materials gave the fill its distinctive dark colouration.

Town plans held in the Whittlesey Museum surveyed by Marshall and Tuthill in 1854 show no evidence of the walls at this time, nor do they appear on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map for the area dated 1885 or on the later 1926 version (Plate 3). The OS maps do show a boundary or footway, although it is not possible to determine whether these were marked by a path or walled route. The route is aligned on an approximate east to west orientation, equivalent to wall **16** in Trench 2.

7 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, investigations at Manor View have revealed the presence of intensive activity dating from the medieval period on the site and suggest Late Saxon and possibly Roman activity in close proximity. The discovery of archaeology was of little surprise here given the nearby location of the church of St Mary and the medieval manor less than 30m away. The investigation established that the church burial ground boundaries have altered very little, with no evidence of burials in the evaluation trenches. The investigation has proved that there are substantial remains within the development area,

including possible structures and industrial activity represented through iron working. The domestic rubbish pits and food waste found within other large features also suggests that people were living in close proximity to the site during the medieval period. Further investigation could significantly improve our understanding of social and industrial activities taking place in this area of Whittlesey during the Late Saxon and medieval periods.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Mr J. D. Harris who commissioned the archaeological work. Thanks are due to Tom Lyons and Abby Antrobus for their work on the site, to Rachel Fosberry for the environmental analysis and Carole Fletcher for the pottery analysis. Thanks also to Steve Critchley who volunteered his services to detect for metal finds on the site and thanks also to Crane Begg for the illustrations and supply of the survey data. The project was managed by Judith Roberts.

Andy Thomas, County Archaeology Office, visited the site and monitored the evaluation and Kasia Gdaniec wrote the Brief for archaeological works.

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Plate 3 *1st edition OS map showing site location*

APPENDIX 1: APPRAISAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

by Rachel Fosberry

1 Introduction and method

Bulk samples were taken from four pits within the evaluation area and were processed for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present.

Ten litres of each soil sample was processed by bucket flotation, the flot being collected in a 0.5mm mesh and the residues retained in a 1.0mm sieve.

The flot was allowed to air-dry prior to examination under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification. The dried residue was scanned by eye and any artefacts were removed and reunited with the hand-excavated finds. A magnet was run through each residue in order to recover magnetised material such as hammerscale.

2 Results

The results are summarised in Table 1.

Preservation in all the samples is by charring and is generally poor. Very few weed seeds or crop processing waste (which might give clues about agricultural practices) were recovered however cereal grains are present in all the samples. Wheat is predominant but Sample 4 contains barley and oats as well.

Sample 1, context 11
This sample contains a substantial amount of wood charcoal. The presence of animal and fish bones together with a few cereal grains suggests domestic refuse, possibly hearth sweepings.

Sample 2, context 44
This sample contains numerous waste food products including mussel shells, fish bones and scales and charred cereal grains indicating domestic refuse, possibly from food preparation, fish cleaning etc. The small amount of hammerscale detected is probably not significant.

Sample 3, context 14
This sample was taken from a large pit/layer that was not fully excavated. It contains cereal grains, legumes and a nutlet of *Cladium mariscans* (Saw-sedge, often used for thatching). The amount of domestic refuse recovered suggests a possible midden area. A glassy, magnetic slag was recovered from this feature and the sample contained a moderate amount of spheroidal

hammerslag and flake hammerscale indicating that metalworking was taking place on site.

Sample 4, context 30
This sample was taken from a large pit/layer that was not fully excavated. This sample also contains domestic refuse in the form of cereal grains, legumes and animal bones. The bones are either small fragments of broken bones or rodent bones (including a lower mandible).

3 Conclusion

The samples show that although preservation was not particularly good, there is good potential for the retrieval of substantial environmental information from this site.

The range of food plants present suggests that the charred plant debris derives from domestic, culinary activities rather than agricultural.

The presence of hammerscale and slag indicates that metalworking is taking place somewhere in the vicinity of context 14 (the deposit within **15**). Sheroidal hammerslag is produced either during primary smithing or during the welding process

Sample No.	1	2	3	4
Context No.	11	44	14	30
Context type	pit fill	pit fill	pit fill	pit fill
Sample volume (litres)	15	20	20	20
Volume sample processed	10	10	10	10
Secondary flotation?	yes	yes	YES	YES
Comments	charcoal up to 1.5cm. Fish scale, metacarpel (human?). Only a few grains/ preservation poor	Domestic refuse cont Mussel shells, fish bones & scale, sm amount of hammerscale. Moderate quantity of cereal grains but preservation not good; degraded and fragmented	Rich flot cont. processed grain, legumes, fish scale, mussel shells, spheroidal hammerslag and flake hammerscale. Secondary deposit Midden? or metalworking area	Mixed cereals; oats, barley and wheat. Peas
RESIDUE SORTING	-	-		-
Residue volume	800	1800	1600	2000
Small mammal bones	#	#	-	#
Large mammal bones	#	##	#	#
fish bones	#	#	-	#
bird/amphibian bones	-	-	-	-
Molluscs	-	#	#	-
Pottery	-	#	#	-
Magnetic residues	-	#	##	-
Metal	-	#	#	-
burnt flint	-	-	-	-
FLOT SORTING	-	-	-	-
Flot volume (ml)	20	25	50	-
cereal grains	#	##	##	##
legumes	-	-	#	#
chaff	-	-	-	-
bones	-	-	-	-
charcoal	###	#	##	#
fish scale	-	##	#	
hammerscale			#	
snails	#	#	-	-
weed seeds	-	#	#	-
		Rumex	Cladium mariscans	

Table 1: Plant macrofossils and other remains

APPENDIX 2: FINDS QUANTIFICATION TABLE

Context Number	Bone (g)	Pottery (g)	Tile (g)	Shell (g)	Small Find : description and number
01	1				
03	8				
05	3			31	
09	1				
11	1396	187		13	
12	1210	59			
14	123	310			Lead object, SF 1 & Slag (33g) SF 4
17	48	17	136		
26	16				
30	53	32			
32	27		93		
34		19			
36	2	22			
38	2	48			
40	140	106			
42	134	103		23	
43	98	89			
44	128	199		3	Small fe object – hook? SF 5
47	8	10	52		
9999 (unstrat)	281		663		Lead weights SF 2 & 3

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