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**Post-Medieval Ditches at 10 Carlton Way,
Cambridge**

Taleyna Fletcher

July 2004

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. 730

Commissioned by *Mr. & Mrs. R. Johnson*



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**Post-Medieval Ditches at 10 Carlton Way,
Cambridge**
(TL4490 6025)

Taleyna Fletcher

July 2004

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SUMMARY

The Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation on land at the rear of 10 Carlton Way, Cambridge. The investigation consisted of one "F-shaped" trench totalling 15.5m in length, within the proposed development area of a single dwelling (with access road and services) to be built at the rear of 10 Carlton Way, Cambridge.

The trench revealed two post-medieval ditches, thought to be associated with 19th century landscaping and two modern postholes from a fenceline.

The site was in an area of high archaeological potential along the route of the Roman Road of Akeman Street.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	1
3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	1
4	METHODOLOGY	3
5	RESULTS	4
6	DISCUSSION	6
7	CONCLUSIONS	7
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	7

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location	2
Figure 2: Trench Plan and Section Drawing	5

Drawing Conventions

Sections

Limit of Excavation	
Cut	
Cut - Conjectured	
Soil Horizon	
Soil Horizon - Conjectured	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Top of Natural	
Top Surface	
Break in Section	
Cut Number	
Deposit Number	117
Ordinance Datum	$\frac{18.45m}{X}$ ODN

Plans

Limit of Excavation	
Deposit - Conjectured	
Natural Features	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Sondages/Machine Strip	
Illustrated Section	
Archaeological Deposit	
Excavated Slot	
Modern Deposit	
Cut Number	118

Post-Medieval Ditches at 10 Carlton Way, Cambridge
(TL4490 6025)

1 INTRODUCTION

On the 8th June 2004 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at the rear of 10 Carlton Way, Cambridge (TL 4490 6025) by the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council. The project was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. R. Johnson in advance of construction of a single dwelling with access road and associated services to be built at the rear of 10 Carlton Way, Cambridge. The work was carried out in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office.

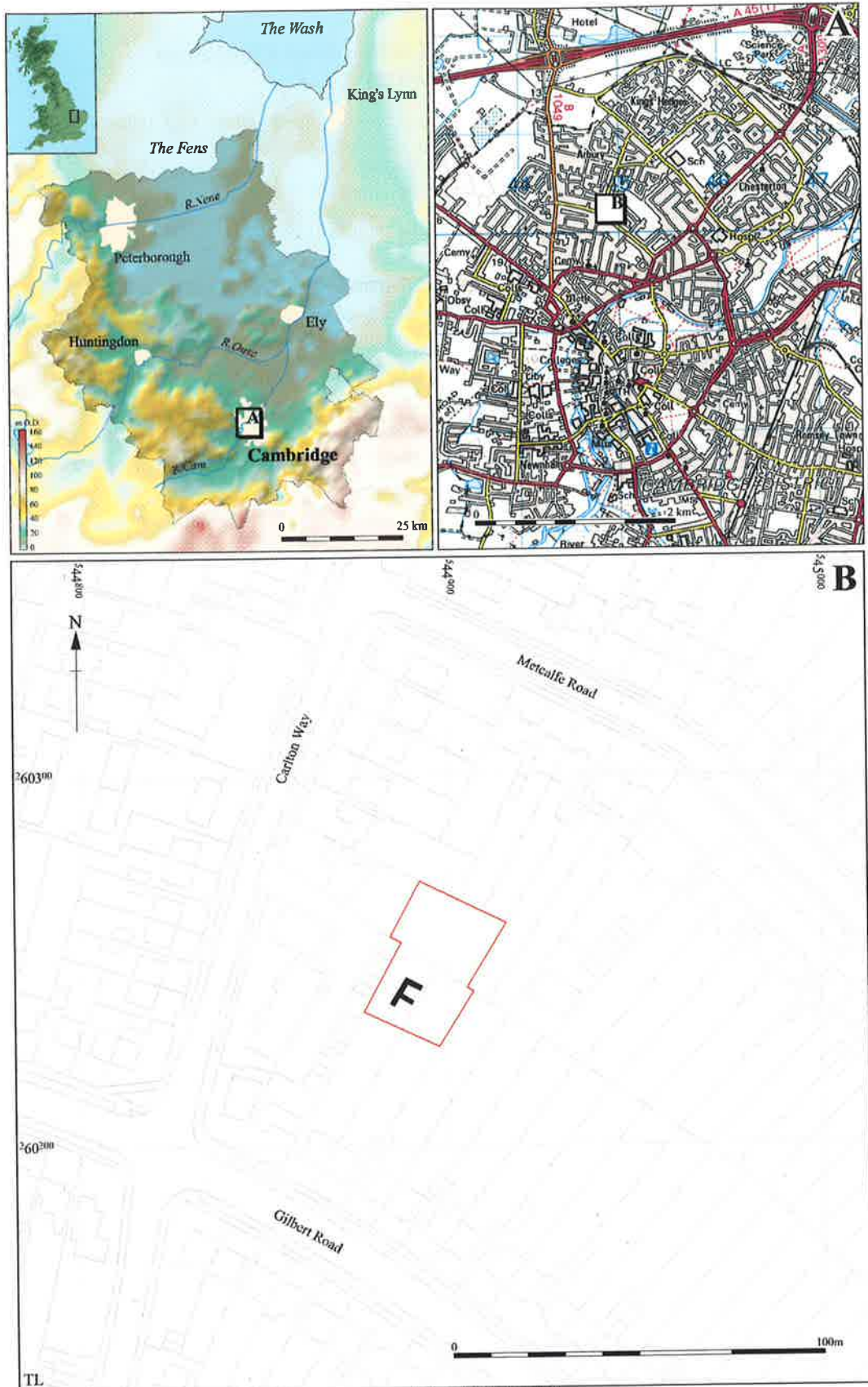
2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The British Geological survey has mapped the underlying geology and it was expected that the site lay on 3rd Terrace River Gravels (BGS Sheet 188). However, gravels were not encountered, and the site was found to lie on an outcrop of chalk as yet unmapped by the British Geographical Survey. The site is presently under grass in a private garden and the trench was located within a vegetable plot. The site lies above the 10m (OD) contour, on the northern side of the River Cam.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The development area is located to the north of Cambridge city, along the route of the Roman Road of Akeman Street – the main Roman road heading north-east towards Ely and passing through the known location of a Roman Villa estate at Arbury. The precise route of this road is not fully understood.

Although no archaeological remains have previously been recorded within the development area itself, the site lies within a rich and important archaeological landscape. The site has significant archaeological remains surrounding it, notably the complex multi-period site at Castle Hill (Shire Hall) lying c.1000m southwest (Alexander and Pulingner 1999) and the extensive Roman (and multi-period) site(s) on Arbury Road and around Kings Hedges, some 1000m to the north.



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Figure 1 Location of trench with the development area outlined (red)

3.1 Prehistoric

Prehistoric (Neolithic) finds have been recorded to the south of the subject site on Stretten Avenue, where a polished flint axe and arrowheads were found (SMR CB2430).

The nearby Lady Adrian School on Courtney Way, to the east of the site has recently produced evidence for Bronze Age activity in the area, with pits and a segmented ditch. (Fletcher, 2004 forthcoming).

3.2 Roman

Within 500m of the subject site are known Roman remains - to the south of Arbury Road and the Roman Road of Akeman Street - along present day Carlton Way. To the north of the site (within 500m) are rich and extensive Roman remains centred on Humphrey's Road and spreading south. These remains have been discovered during the construction of housing since the 1950s. A spot find of Roman pottery has been recorded on Carlton Way, less than 100m to the north of the site (SMR CB6315).

3.3 Saxon

There are Saxon remains to the south and east of the proposed development area, and these include an Anglo-Saxon cemetery site (Swann's Gravel Pit) now occupied by the Westbrook Centre (off Milton Road).

3.4 Medieval and Post-Medieval

Historical cartographic evidence has confirmed that the subject site was agricultural land in the 19th century and most probably since the medieval period. Further evidence of medieval activity was recorded at the Lady Adrian School Site, where medieval field boundary ditches were found (Fletcher, 2004 forthcoming).

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.

One "F-shaped" trench was opened by a "mini-digger" mechanical excavator using a flat-bladed ditching bucket, to a width of 1.6m under the supervision of

an archaeologist. The total length of the trench was 15.5m and this constitutes over 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 chalk, the level at which features were encountered. The position of the trench 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. All features were hand excavated and recorded using the AFU standard contextual recording system. The trench was planned at a scale of 1:50 and sections were drawn at 1:20. Colour print, colour slide and monochrome photographs were taken as well as digital photographs using a Canon A60 Powershot Digital camera. The spoil heaps, features and trench surfaces were visually scanned for artefacts.

For the purposes of this report, cut numbers will be represented in **bold** text, all other contexts will be in standard plain text.

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

Trench 1 was F-shaped, 15.5m in length and 1.60m wide. One length of trench was initially excavated, on a north-east–south-west orientation with two shorter lengths both at right angles to the east forming extensions, resulting in an “F-shape” (Fig.2). In most of the trench, a dark blackish brown topsoil (context 01), up to 0.35m thick and a lighter orangey brown subsoil (context 02) up to 0.15m thick was recorded overlying the natural chalk. However, the shallow depth of the topsoil layer and the infrequent presence of the sub soil suggests the area has been landscaped or heavily truncated at some earlier point. The sections of the trench show evidence of undulating top and sub soils, and as the area has been a vegetable patch for some years, the upper and lower soil horizons have been greatly disturbed. No artefacts were recovered from these layers during machining.

Ditch **05**, filled by 03 and 04

At the north end of the trench was a ditch (**05**), not fully revealed in plan, on a north-west–south-east orientation, which continued beyond the edges of Trench 1. This ditch was at least 2.26m wide and 0.78m deep, with steep sloping edges and a flat base. Two deposits were recorded within this ditch. The upper deposit, 03, was a compacted dark greyish brown silty, sandy clay with moderate large gravel stone inclusions and occasional charcoal flecks. No finds were retrieved from this deposit. The lower, primary, deposit was a very compacted mid greyish brown silty clay with frequent moderate sized

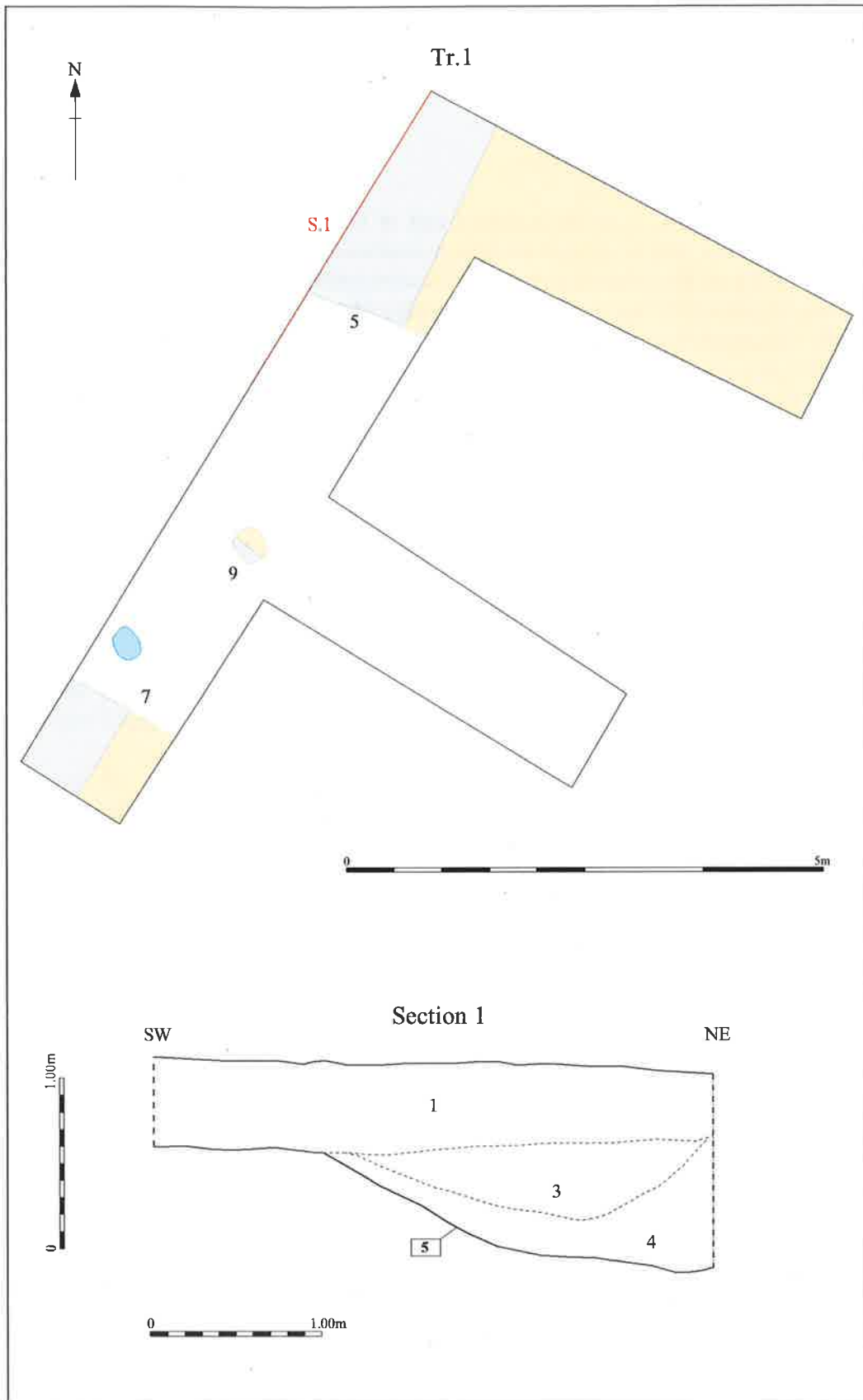


Figure 2 Trench plan and section 1

stone inclusions and charcoal flecks. This deposit produced two large fragments of yellow coloured post-medieval brick.

Ditch (?) **07**, filled by **06**

This feature, **7**, in the southern end of the trench, was not fully revealed in plan but was orientated northwest–southeast, suggesting it could be a parallel ditch to **05**. This feature had vertical edges and a flat base with a maximum depth of 0.14m. The deposit within the feature, context **06**, was a light orangish brown clayey silt with moderate large stone inclusions. One small fragment of post-medieval brick was found within the fill of this deposit.

Posthole **09**, filled by **08**.

Posthole **9** was circular in plan with moderate sloping edges, a concave base and a diameter of 0.25m. The deposit within this feature, context **08**, was a compacted mid grey brown clayey silt with no obvious other inclusions. No date could be established for this feature.

6 DISCUSSION

This evaluation has identified the presence of two parallel ditches located at either ends of the trench both on a northwest–southeast orientation. These two features were securely dated to the post-medieval period. Both of these ditches may be associated with Hall Farm, which appears on an 1889 map of the area with associated buildings. Hall Farm was located on the junction of Gilbert Road and Carlton Way. Little evidence of this building or estate survives but personal communications with local residents suggests it was demolished within the last century. Ditch **05** may be surviving evidence of a boundary ditch associated with the farm estate. Two rows of apple trees were present on the site and could be seen continuing to the east of the site on the same orientation as the ditches. The 1889 map shows lines of trees, which may represent an orchard and the ditches may be associated with the Hall Farm orchard.

Two postholes were also recorded, one which was clearly modern, still containing the base of the wooden post (unrecorded), and the other, which was in close proximity contained no dating evidence at all. It is likely that these posts are associated with the vegetable plot, but as posthole **09** contained a clearly different deposit, it must be considered that it could be earlier.

The shallow depth of the trench suggests that there has been some landscaping on the site, and there was a clear visible edge where the land drops down to the level of the area under investigation. It appears that soil has been stripped

from the investigation area and moved to the north-east. This landscaping has not been intrusive enough to affect any of the archaeological evidence within the investigation area.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this evaluation has identified the presence of post-medieval ditches and a posthole, possibly part of a field or orchard boundary system associated with the Hall Farm, the site of which is located on the opposite side of Carlton Way from the present investigation area. Despite the strong possibility that the development area is close to the route of Akeman Street, no evidence of the road or associated routes or activity was picked up in this evaluation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Brief for archaeological works was written by Kasia Gdaniec, County Archaeology Office (CAO) who visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

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