



**CCC AFU Report Number 861**

**Bowd Engineering Site,  
East Street, St Ives**

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**Desktop Assessment**

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Site Code: STI EST 06  
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Grid Ref: TL 3132 7140

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## Summary

The present report was commissioned by Campbell Buchanan. Its aim is to provide information on the date, extent, distribution and character of the historical and archaeological resources of the Bowd Engineering site, East Street, St Ives. The outcomes of this study will inform a plan for the redevelopment of that site.

The town of St Ives lies to the south-east of Huntingdon, on the gravel terrace of the River Great Ouse. In relation to the town, the site lies within the historic medieval core, at TL 3132 7140 and at c.6.50m OD.

There is no direct evidence for prehistoric or Roman occupation on the site, though the numerous stray finds from both periods in the vicinity means the possibility cannot be ruled out.

In the Saxon period, the site lay between two known areas of occupation, centred on All Saints Church to the west and the Priory to the east.

The site remained undeveloped in the first map of the town apart from the western frontage (Pettis 1728) and well into the post-medieval period. The East Street frontage was developed in the late 19th/early 20th century and subsequent development took place behind the frontage.

The current plans for the redevelopment are confined to the existing building footprints and truncation of archaeological deposits will be limited to any new below-ground foundations and associated service runs.

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## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Planning Background**

Campbell Buchanan commissioned a desktop study from Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU). The aim of this assessment is to determine the archaeological potential of the Bowd Engineering Site, East Street, St Ives prior to redevelopment.

The work contained in this document is entirely produced from a desk-based assessment and does not include any data from physical investigation at the proposed development site.

### **1.2 Location, Topography and Geology**

The site is located on the south side of East Street, St Ives (Fig.1). It is centred at TL 3132 7140 at a height of approximately 6.50m OD.

The underlying geology comprises First Terrace river gravels of the Great Ouse valley (British Geological Survey 1993).

## **2 Archaeological and Historical Sources**

### **2.1 Historical Sources**

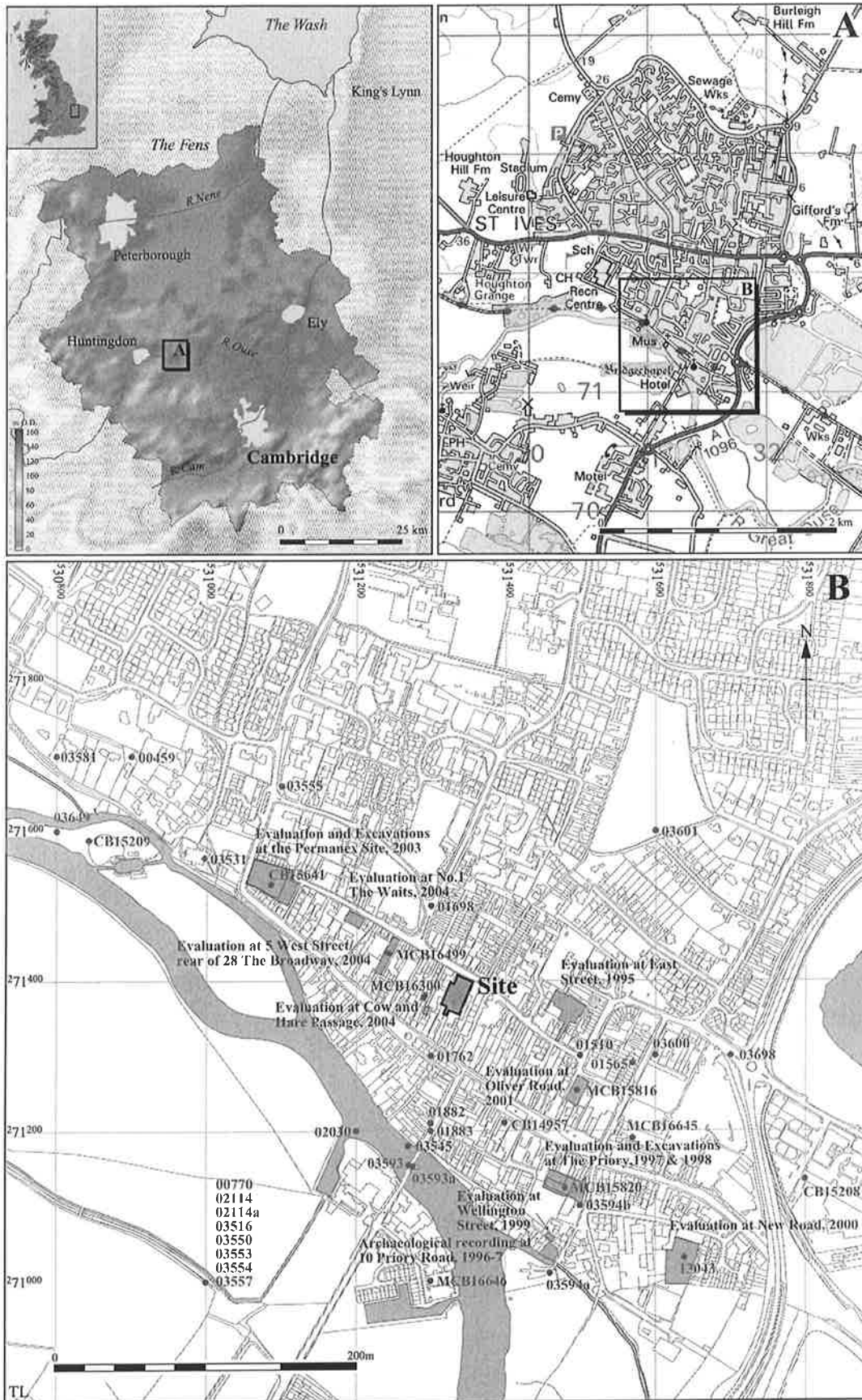
Original archive research has not been undertaken as part of this study. For the present report reference has been made to secondary sources.

### **2.2 The Historic Environment Record (formerly SMR)**

There are no Historic Environment Record (HER) entries from within the site itself, though there are several located nearby. These are referred to in the text where appropriate and listed in the summary in Appendix 2.

### **2.3 Cartographic Evidence**

Edmund Pettis' survey of St Ives in 1728 (Fig.2) is the first detailed map of the town. Later maps include the 1808 enclosure map (Fig.3) and editions of the Ordnance Survey from the end of the 19th century onwards (Fig.4).



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Figure 1 Location of the site, showing sites mentioned in the text and Appendix 2.

## **2.4 Aerial Photographs**

There are no aerial photographs relevant to this site.

## **2.5 Earthworks**

There is no record of surviving earthworks within the proposed development site.

## **2.6 Archaeological Excavations and Surveys**

The area under study has seen a number of recent excavations and evaluations in advance of development (Fig.2).

### **2.6.1 Cow and Hare Passage (ECB1832)**

An evaluation in 2004 revealed a possible cess pit and post-medieval occupation or levelling layers (Cooper 2004a).

### **2.6.2 Nos 6-8 East Street (ECB1506)**

An evaluation in 1995 produced evidence predominantly for post-medieval agriculture and horticulture as well rubbish dumping in pits (Oakey 1995).

### **2.6.3 No. 5 West Street (ECB1952)**

An evaluation in 2004 revealed three medieval pits, three ditches and a possible hearth. Pottery indicated a 12th- to 15th-century date for this activity (Grassam & Eddisford 2004).

### **2.6.4 No. 1 The Walts (ECB1518)**

Evaluation in 2004 revealed undated and modern postholes, as well as modern and post-medieval layers associated with the garden of Burleigh House (Cooper 2004b).

### **2.6.5 The former Permanex Site (ECB1851)**

Excavations in 2003 revealed evidence for activity in the medieval, post-medieval and modern periods including 13th- to 14th-century



boundary ditches, a 17th-century cockfighting ring and an 18th-century well (Nicholson 2004).

#### **2.6.6 Oliver Road (ECB264)**

An evaluation in 2001 revealed a complex pattern of pitting from the medieval period (Prentice 2001).

#### **2.6.7 No. 17 Wellington Street (ECB273)**

An evaluation in 1999 revealed evidence from the Saxo-Norman and medieval periods (Cooper 1999). The post-medieval period was represented by garden soil from an orchard.

#### **2.6.8 The Priory (ECB1532/265)**

Following an evaluation in 1997 at the Priory site, excavation in 1998 showed evidence of occupation from the Romano-British, Saxon and medieval periods as well as post-medieval evidence (Fell *et al* 2003).

#### **2.6.9 No. 10 Priory Road (ECB276)**

A watching brief in 1998 revealed evidence of post-medieval dumping along the edge of the Old River, a channel of the Great Ouse (Robinson 1998).

#### **2.6.10 New Road (ECB275)**

An evaluation in 2000 produced evidence of post-medieval boundary ditches (Abrams 2000).

### **3 Official Designations**

There are no known designations within the proposed development site. There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the search area, relating to St Ives bridge (SAM 129) and the Priory Barn (SM 24433) but neither will be affected by the proposed development.

## **4 Archaeological and Historical Background**

### **4.1 General Background**

#### **4.1.1 Prehistoric**

There have been a number of prehistoric find spots within 500m of the site, though no direct evidence of settlement activity. These find spots include palaeolithic hand axes (MCB2176 (01698)), neolithic flint implements (MCB2686 (02114a)), a Bronze Age arrowhead and spear (MCB2685 and 2594 respectively (02114 and 02030)), and an Iron Age coin (MCB4367 (03554)).

A Pliosaur skeleton was also dug up in the 1920's and was reburied except for one bone presented to St Ives High School Museum.

#### **4.1.2 Roman**

The Ouse valley was extensively occupied during the Roman period but direct settlement evidence from St Ives itself has proved elusive. The excavations at the Priory (ECB 1532) provided the first evidence for Roman settlement, though there have been frequent finds of Roman pottery and coins (eg MCB4478, 4413 and 4362 (03649,03594b and 03550)).

#### **4.1.3 Saxon**

The Anglo-Saxon settlement of Slepe (later St Ives) was probably close to All Saints church, at the west end of The Broadway, though the presence of a *grubenhause* on the excavations at the Priory site suggests that occupation was not limited to the west of the town.

In the early medieval period settlement focus shifted to the part of the town known as the 'Street', which runs east-west from the church, parallel to the river. The site is located within the medieval core of the historic town of St Ives, a holding of Ramsey Abbey since the late 10th century, which developed into an important medieval market with international renown in the cloth trade.

The once flourishing medieval market and fair declined and was abandoned in 1511, although the town continued as a market centre of local importance.

A fire devastated St Ives in 1689, after which rebuilding took place and the town soon became known for its weekly cattle market.

#### **4.2 Site Background**

The site itself lies on a plot of land lying to the south of East Street. This would have been to the rear of one of the medieval burgage plots fronting onto Broadway to the south.

Pettis' map of 1728 shows the site largely undeveloped apart from the western frontage and it appears to remain so until the late nineteenth century when the 1887 O/S map shows buildings on the East Street frontage. The area behind the frontage was gradually infilled in subsequent maps.

### **5 Confidence Rating**

#### **5.1 Historical Sources**

Original documentary research has not been undertaken, as it lies outside the scope of this survey.

General outlines of the history of the county, together with accounts of individual parishes, are provided by the Victoria County History (VCH).

The VCH tends to be biased towards the following:

- the medieval ecclesiastical and manorial history;
- the medieval origin and development of the villages with emphasis on extant monuments and earthwork remains;
- social history.

As a whole, the available documentary sources provide useful and reliable information on the historic, economic and social development of the town.

#### **5.2 The Historic Environment Record (formerly SMR)**

The information provided by the SMR is affected by the following:

- the distribution of entries has a bias towards periods that are well represented by material culture, i.e. medieval and post-medieval remains, and towards classes of monuments which can be related to historical sources, i.e. religious buildings and manorial sites. This bias has its roots in the kind of information provided by the Ordnance Survey records, i.e. the precursor of

the SMR, that placed emphasis on extant remains, including earthworks, and important finds' spots;

- most pre-medieval finds are the result of chance discovery and are not always accurately provenienced;
- the distribution of entries is conditioned by the limited amount of archaeological work undertaken within and immediately outside the historic nucleus of the town.

The SMR collection represents a variable source of information that has been influenced by fieldwork strategies, collection of finds, antiquarian observations, local and professional interests. The degree of accuracy of the entry is therefore variable.

### **5.3 Cartographic Evidence**

The earliest available map of St Ives, including the study area, is the Pettis map of 1728 (Fig.2). This shows the town divided into building plots whose boundaries appear to have continued to the present day, thus suggesting a reasonable degree of confidence can be placed on the map. The map shows the site lying at the rear of a property fronting onto Broadway to the south.

### **5.4 Archaeological Excavations and Surveys**

Several excavations/evaluations have taken place in St Ives. Of particular relevance are those at Cow and Hare Passage, immediately to the west (Cooper 2004b), and 5 West Street a little further to the west (Grassam & Eddisford 2004). These both lay to the rear of medieval building plots similar to the study area and the archaeological sequence is likely to be similar.

## **6 Deposit Mapping of Archaeological Remains**

In this section, an attempt has been made to map all known monuments and events (Fig.1) and, based on this mapping, to predict the existence of further remains within the proposed development site. These predictions should not be used to produce 'constraint maps'.

### **6.1 Prehistoric and Roman**

To date, evidence of prehistoric and Roman settlement within St Ives is scanty, in contrast with the large number of isolated finds. Scarcity of finds from the historic settlement is possibly due to medieval and later remains obliterating earlier features and deposits.



Figure 2: Pettis' map of 1728, with the location of the site highlighted.

## 6.2 Saxon and Medieval

St Ives is a known Saxon village. It is likely that there were two foci of settlement, one centred on All Saints church to the west and the other on the Priory to the east. The medieval village focused on the bridgehead and expanded along the area known as the 'Street'. Late-Saxo-Norman and medieval remains could therefore exist in the historic core underneath the present day town, allowing for a higher degree of disturbance along the street frontages due to post-medieval and modern re-development.

## 6.3 Post-medieval

Cartographic evidence suggest the site remained undeveloped until the late 19th century when the East Street frontage was developed, followed by the east and west sides of the mews behind the frontage.

## 7 Degree of Survival of Archaeological Remains

This section broadly assesses the degree of survival of archaeological remains in the areas defined by deposit mapping. The assessment takes the form of a prediction model based on probability and not certainty. It is intended as a guide only.

The degree of preservation of potential buried remains within the study area is likely to have been affected by the existing buildings on site, particularly their foundations and any associated below-ground services. It is not thought the existing buildings have basements. Any previous post-medieval buildings on the site may also have affected the survival of earlier deposits. The area of the mews itself appears not to have developed.

Based on the available evidence, it is not possible to predict the location of prehistoric and Roman sites within St Ives, although the potential for their existence within the study area cannot be ruled out.

It is probable that medieval remains will survive on this known medieval building plot, although these are likely to be similar to those from Cow and Hare Passage and No. 5 West Street, both a short distance to the west, where pits and dumps to the rear of buildings fronting onto the main road to the south were found.

Similar deposits might be expected from the post-medieval period until the site was developed at the turn of the 20th century.

## 8 Rating

Based on the distribution of known finds and their degree of survival in the study area, as defined in the previous sections, rating can be summarised as follows:

<i>Period</i>	<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Survival</i>
Prehistoric	moderate	unknown
Roman	moderate	unknown
Medieval	high	good
Post-medieval	high	good

## 9 Conclusions

Whilst there is no direct evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity on site, the possibility cannot be ruled out.

The site lies within the historic core of St Ives. Medieval and post-medieval deposits are likely to survive on the site. These deposits will probably be characteristic of backyard/open area deposits relating to buildings to the south.

Truncation to these deposits is likely to be limited to foundations of the existing buildings and associated service runs, as well as the foundations of any other buildings built since c.1900 and subsequently demolished.

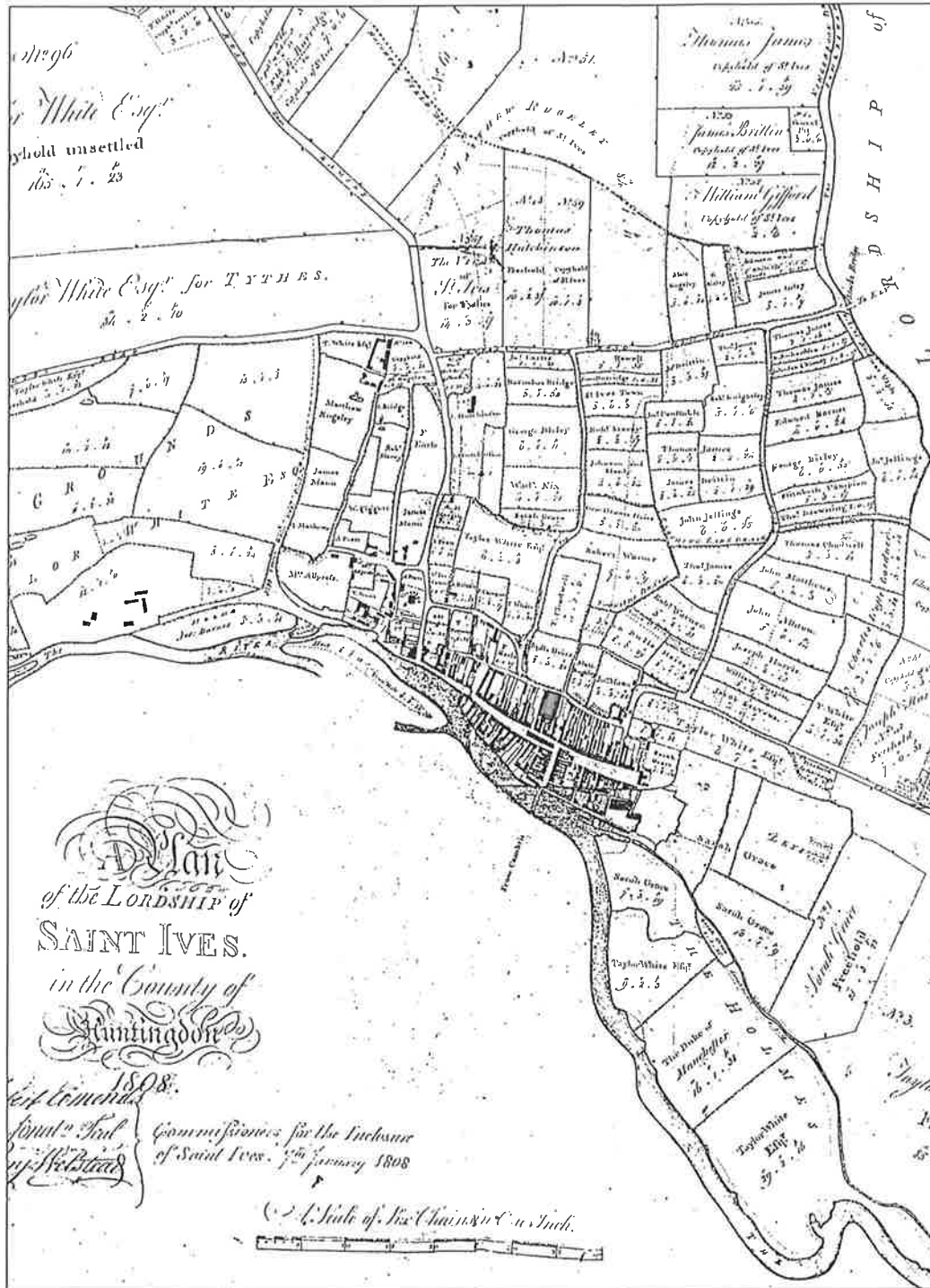
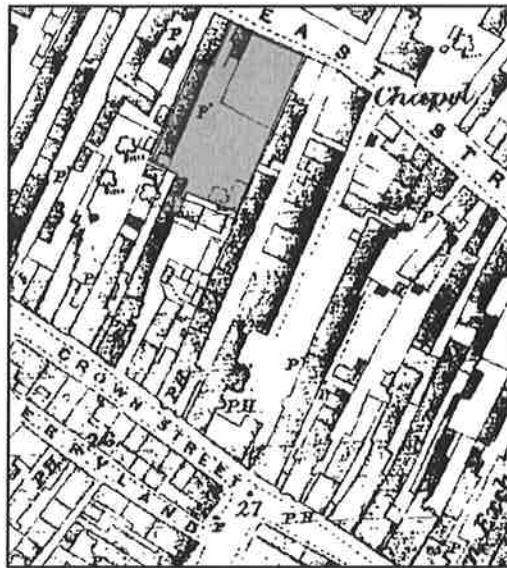
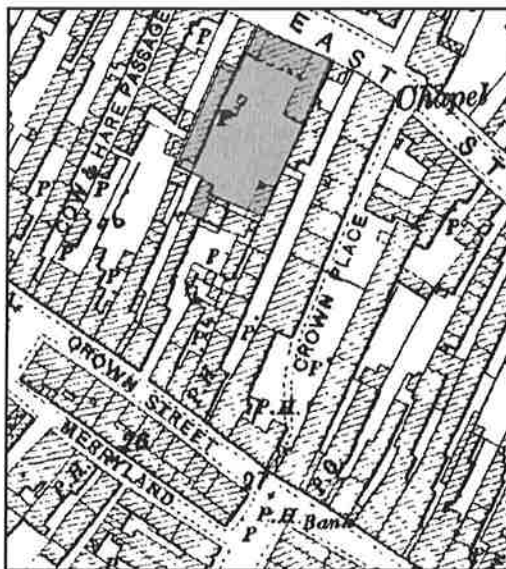


Figure 3: The Enclosure Map of 1808, with the location of the site highlighted.

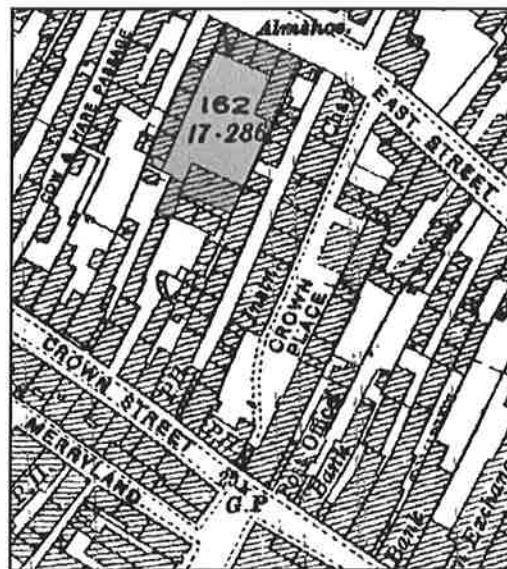




1st Series 1885



2nd Series 1887



3rd series 1901

Figure 4: The Ordnance Survey maps of 1885, 1887 and 1901, with the location of the site highlighted.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Campbell Buchanan who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray.

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## Maps Consulted

British Geological Survey, 1993 Sheet 187, England and Wales 1:50,000  
(Provisional Series)

Pettis Map of St Ives 1728

Enclosure map of c.1808

O/S map 1885

O/S map 1887

O/S map 1901

## **Appendix 1: Health and Safety Statement**

The CCC AFU will ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with Cambridgeshire County Council's Health and Safety Policies, to standards defined in *The Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act, 1974* and *The Management of Health and Safety Regulations, 1992*, and in accordance with the manual *Health and Safety in Fieldwork Archaeology* (SCAUM 1997).

Risk assessments prepared for the CCC AFU office will be adhered to.

The CCC AFU has Public Liability Insurance. Separate professional insurance is covered by the Public Liability Policy held by the CCC AFU as part of Cambridgeshire County Council. The CCC AFU's insurance cover is:

Employers Liability	£20,000,000
Public Liability	£30,000,000

Full details of Cambridgeshire County Councils' Health and Safety Policies and the archaeological unit's insurance cover can be provided on request.

## Appendix 2: Summary of HER Entries

HER No.	Grid Ref.	Keywords	Period	Form	Designation
01882	TL 3130 7121	Animal bone	U	Stray find	
01698	TL 313 715	Palaeolithic flints	Pa	Stray find	
02114a	TL31 71	Lithic implement	Pre	Stray find	
02114	TL31 71	Arrowhead	Pre	Stray find	
02030	TL 312 712	Spear	Pre	Stray find	
03554	TL 31 71	Coin	IA	Stray find	
03600	TL 316 713	Unidentified object	Pre	Stray find	
03649	TL 3080 7160	pottery	Ro	Stray find	
03594b	TL 315 711	Pottery	Ro	Stray find	
03531	TL 308 717	Pottery	Ro	Stray find	
03555	TL 3110 7166	Pottery	Ro	Stray find	
03553	TL 31 71	Quernstone	Ro	Stray find	
03550	TL31 71	Coins	Ro	Stray find	
03516	TL 31 71	Coin	Ro	Stray find	
01883	TL 313 712	Coin	Ro	Stray find	
00459	TL 309 717	Coin	Ro	Stray find	
00770	TL 31 71	Pewter plate	Ro	Stray find	
03601	TL 316 716	Unidentified object	Ro	Stray find	
03557	TL 31 71	Brooch	Early med	Stray find	
03594a	TL 3146 7101	Figurine	Med	Stray find	
03531	TL 310 716	Church	Med	Building	
01565	TL 3157 7129	Stepe hall (site of)	Med	Monument	
MCB 16646	TL 313 710	Steam Mill	Pmed	building	
CB15208	TL 3180 7113	Pillbox	Mod	monument	
CB15209	TL 3084 7159	Pillbox	Mod	monument	
CB 14957	TL 3140 7121	Church		building	
03698	TL 372 841	Railway	pmed	monument	
03593a	TL313 712	St Lawrences Chapel	Med	monument	SAM 129
03593	TL 313 712	St Ives bridge	Med	monument	SAM 129
03545	TL 3127 7118	Manor House	Pmed	building	
01762	TL 313 713	C15 building	Med/Pmed	building	
01510	TL 315 713	Burials in vault	Pmed	monument	
MCB 16499	TL 31 24	Medieval features	Med	evaluation	
MCB16300	TL 3129 7138	Cess pit?	Med/Pmed	evaluation	
MCB15820	TL 3148 7112	Muti-period remains	Ro/Sax/Med/PMed	excavation	
MCB15816	TL 3149 7125	Medieval /post-medieval features	Med/PMed	evaluation	
MCB15641	TL 3109 7153	Medieval /post-medieval features	Med/PMed	excavation	
13043/ MCB14564	TL 3163 7103	Post-medieval ditch	PMed	evaluation	

### Key to periods:

IA	Iron Age
Med	Medieval
Mod	Modern
Pa	Palaeolithic
Pre	Prehistoric
P Med	Post-medieval
Ro	Roman
U	Undated



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Cambridgeshire County Council's **Archaeological Field Unit** undertakes a wide range of work throughout the county and across the eastern region.

Our key purpose is to increase understanding of the rich heritage of the region.

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