Archaeological Field Unit

A Middle and Late Saxon Property at Fordham Primary School, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Excavation.

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SUMMARY

An archaeological excavation was carried out by the Archaeological Field Unit in the grounds of Fordham Primary School (TL 6336 7085) *between the 24th and 28th April 2000. The work was undertaken on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council in advance of construction of new classrooms.*

Evidence for a post built structure possibly of middle Saxon date was found at the south end of the site. Two parallel ditches crossed the site on an east-west alignment, and a series of post holes were located parallel with the most southerly ditch. Finds from the southern ditch included late Saxon pottery, three iron knives, a whet stone, a chalk spindle whorl and fragments of lava quern. The northern ditch and the post holes contained few artefacts which could be closely dated. All the features are likely to be associated with property boundaries dating from at least as early as the Late Saxon period. The data gathered from the site provides valuable information regarding the early history of Fordham, especially when placed in context with the nearby medieval or earlier parish church and known early Saxon settlement remains to the west of the church.

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A MIDDLE AND LATE SAXON PROPERTY AT FORDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGESHIRE: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION.

1 INTRODUCTION

A scheme of archaeological work was required as a condition of planning consent for the construction of new classrooms at Fordham Primary School (TL 6336 7085). The first stage of this work was an archaeological evaluation carried out in response to a Brief set by the County Archaeology Office. Based on the findings of the evaluation, a second stage of work was required to further excavate and record the archaeological remains on the site. The Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council undertook both stages of the work during April 2000. This report details the results of those investigations.

2 GEOLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY

Fordham is located on the River Snail and extensive deposits of sand occur along the valley. The subject site is located on these deposits (Worssam & Taylor 1969). Excavation revealed the presence of very sandy geology on a fairly level site. Recent building work at the school had raised the modern ground level over the area of excavation, two sumps for draining ground water were present on the north part of the site and other disturbance was recorded along the southern boundary of the excavation area.

3 HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Fordham was first mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon Charter of c.972 (Reaney, 1943). The site itself is located within the village of Fordham, close to the parish church of St Peter (Sites and Monuments Record 07574). The church is largely 13th century in date but has some Norman elements, and is likely to have earlier origins. It is within an area of medieval settlement, although the school itself is quite modern, opposite it is a stud and plaster dwelling dating to at least as early as the 17th century. Evidence for Saxon settlement, including sunken featured buildings, was found at nearby Hillside Meadows (Mould 1999).

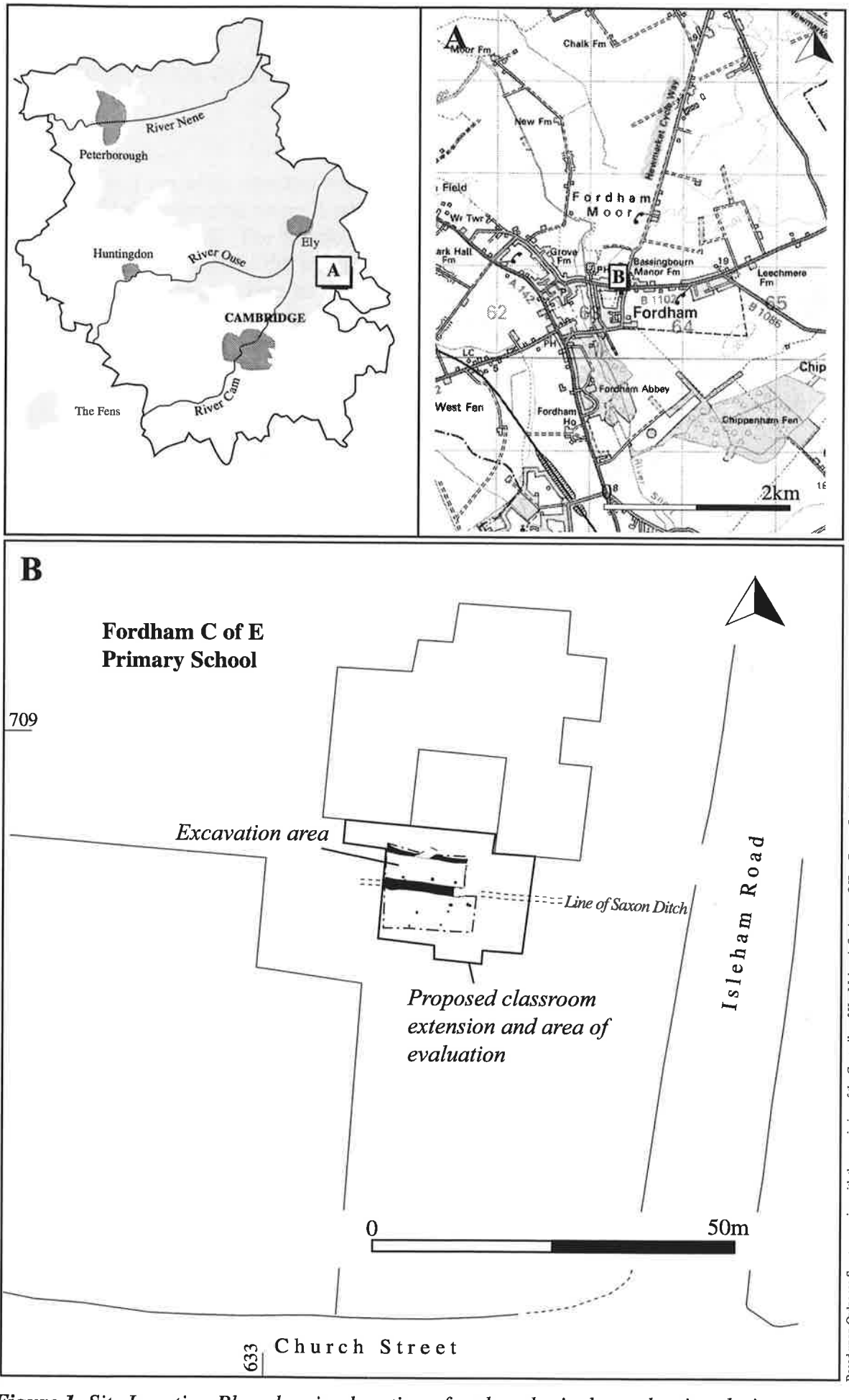


Figure 1 *Site Location Plan showing location of archaeological trenches in relation to the development area*

4 METHODOLOGY & CONSTRAINTS

4.1 Evaluation

Three 1.6m wide trenches were placed within the area of the proposed school building extension using a wheeled mechanical excavator with a flat bladed ditching bucket. The trenches were located in the grassed area only to allow continued access to the school buildings and the playground whilst the work was undertaken. Due to the small area the three trenches were positioned parallel to one another on a north-south alignment. Trench 1 was 5m long, trench 2 was 8m long and trench 3 was 6m long. The total area of trenching was 30 square metres, approximately 10% of the area to be developed.
Topsoil and subsoil was removed to expose natural gravel into which archaeological features had been cut.
The area was subsequently reinstated due to the close proximity of the children's playing areas and access routes.

4.2 Excavation

Topsoil and subsoil was stripped from the footprint of the new classroom extension except along the edge nearest to the school where an access route was maintained. Those areas along the northern edge were also left untouched where modern drains and sumps were in situ. Topsoil and subsoil stripping was undertaken using a mechanical excavator with a flat bladed bucket. All topsoil and subsoil was retained on the site.

Half of each discrete feature and one quarter of the ditches was excavated by hand. Plans and sections were hand drawn at a scale of 1:50 and 1:20 respectively. Single context recording was used to describe the features. Colour slides, monochrome and colour prints form part of the archive. Samples were taken to aid in the recovery of environmental finds. The pottery was identified by Dr Paul Spoerry, the animal bones were identified by Ian Baxter and the charred plant remains were identified by Dr. Alan Clapham, Chris Montague compiled the small finds catalogue. The reports on the pottery, small finds, animal bones and plant remains form part of the archive. A complete list of the records and finds that comprise the archive can be found in *appendix A*. Catalogues of the finds can be found in *appendices B to E*.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Evaluation Results

5.1.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was the most westerly trench, it was 5 m long and excavated by machine to 0.6m deep through 0.15m of topsoil, 0.45m of mid brown gravelly

subsoil onto a layer of gravel mixed with brown silty sand, no archaeological features were observed at this depth. The trench was therefore re-excavated to a depth of 0.95m at which depth clean yellowish brown sandy gravel was exposed, no archaeological features or deposits were exposed at this depth. The extra depth of sub-soil in this trench may have been caused by localised quarrying.

5.1.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was located adjacent and to the east of trench 1, it was 8m long and excavated by machine to 0.6m deep, through 0.15m of topsoil 201, 0.45m of mid brown gravelly subsoil 202 onto yellow sandy gravel natural and gravel mixed with brown silty sand. One archaeological feature, **206**, was observed at this depth. The ditch was observed in excavation to be the same as ditch **5/11**.

5.1.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was the most easterly trench, it was 6m long and excavated by machine to 0.55m deep, through 0.20m of topsoil 301, 0.35m of subsoil 302 onto yellow sandy gravel natural and gravel mixed with brown silty sand. Two archaeological features were observed at this depth, ditch **306** was observed to be the same as ditch **5/11** in the excavation phase, and post hole **308** was associated with a possible middle Saxon post built structure.

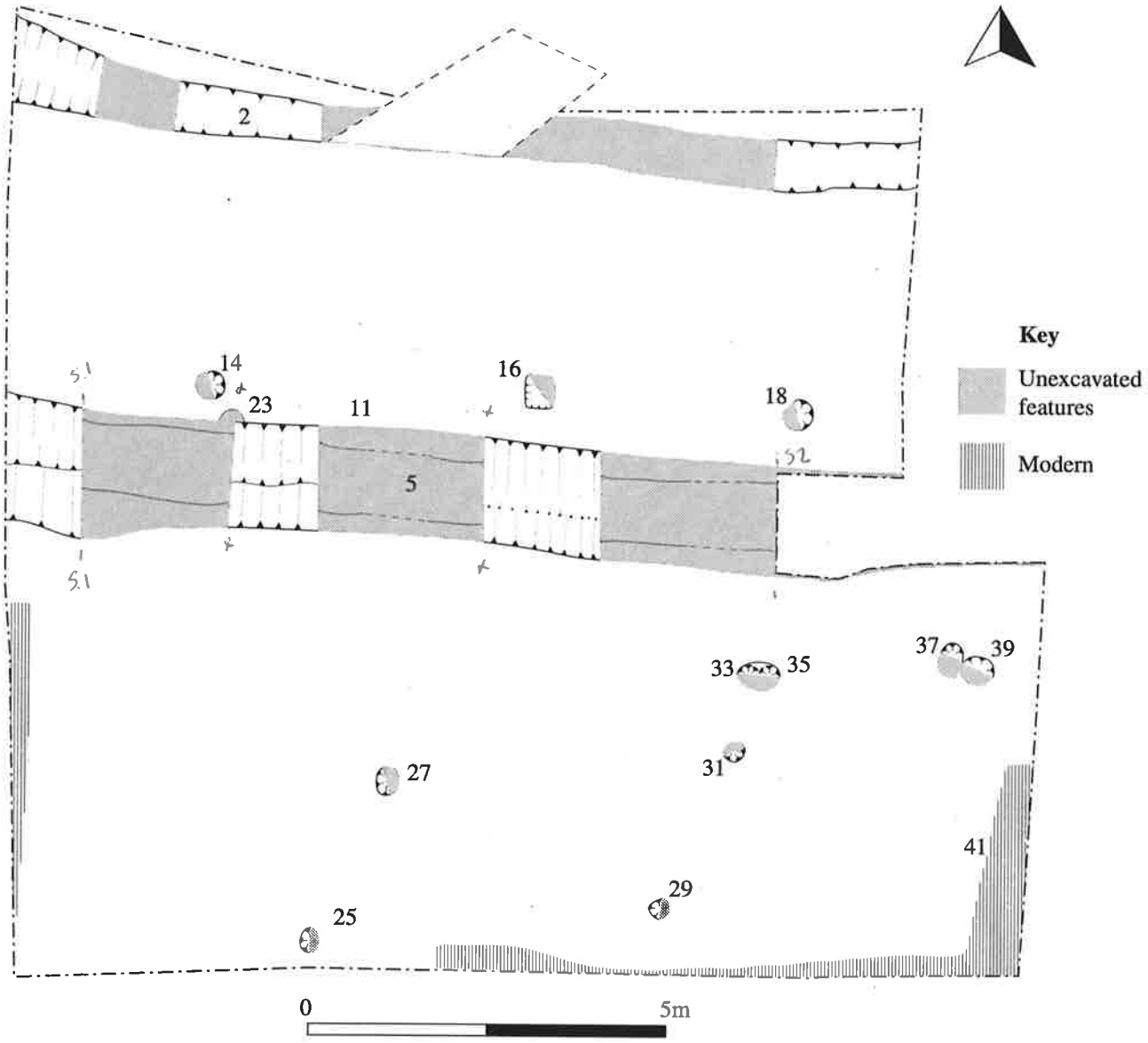
5.2 Excavation Results

5.2.1 Unphased

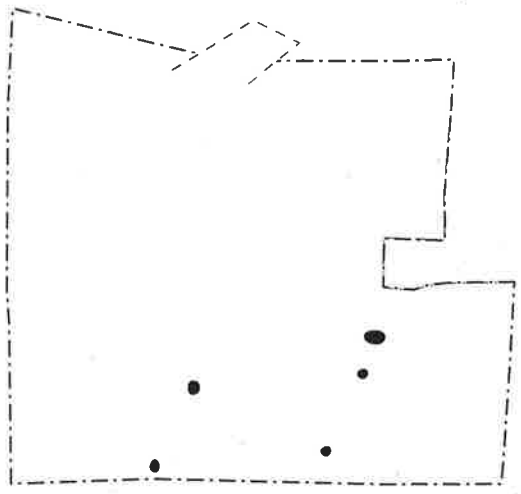
Two post holes **37** and **39** were not phased, they could have been contemporary with any of the phase 1 or phase 2 features but were spatially unrelated to either phase and contained no finds. The two features almost certainly related to the same structure, since post hole **37** evidently cut through and probably replaced post hole **39**.

Post hole **37** was approximately 0.4m in diameter and 0.10m deep, it was sub-circular with moderately steep sides and a flat base. It was filled by 36, a black ashy sand with frequent charcoal. One sample was taken (sample1) which was dominated by charcoal but also contained a single grain of a free-threshing wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and a barley grain (*Hordeum* sp.). It also contained non-cultivated species including a single nutlet of knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*) (Clapham unpub.). It is possible that 36 may be the charred remains of a timber post. Post hole **37** truncated post hole **39**.

Post hole **39** was approximately 0.4m in diameter and 0.22m deep, it was circular in shape with steep sides and a concave base. It was filled by 38, a mid greyish brown faintly silty sand and contained no finds. Post hole **39** was truncated by post hole **37**.



Phase 1



Phase 2

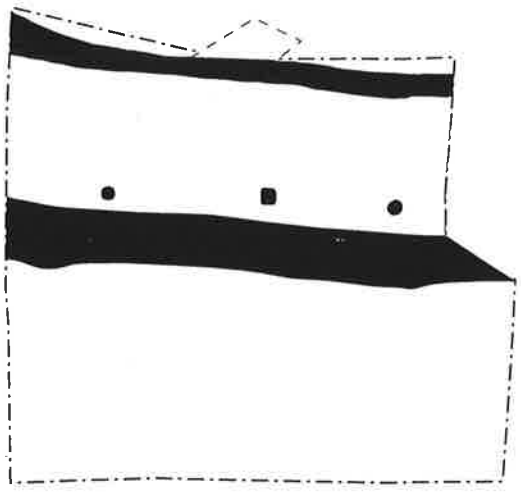


Figure 2 *(Above) Plan showing excavated features*
(Below) Phases 1 and 2 (unphased features not shown)

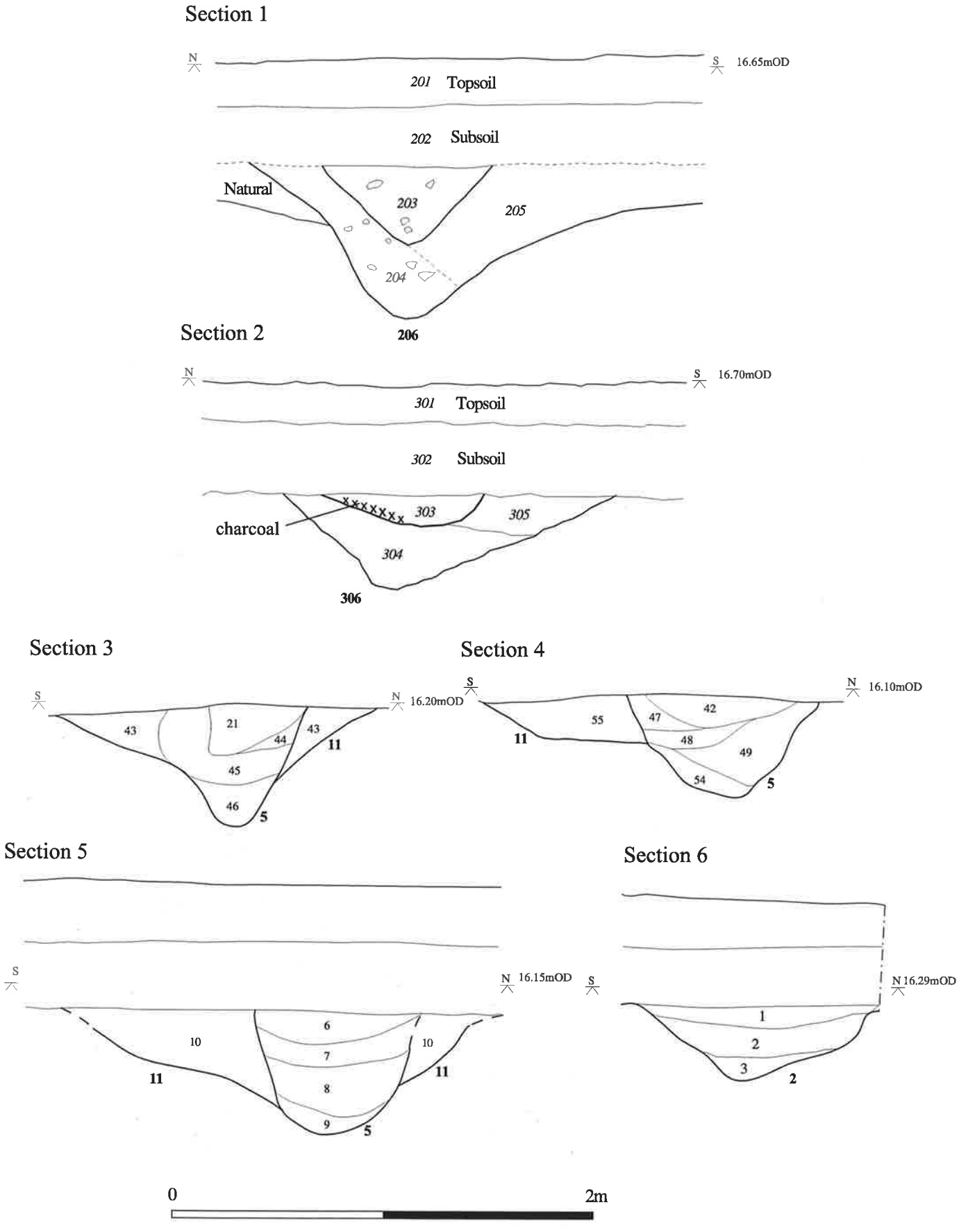


Figure 3 *Sections of excavated features*

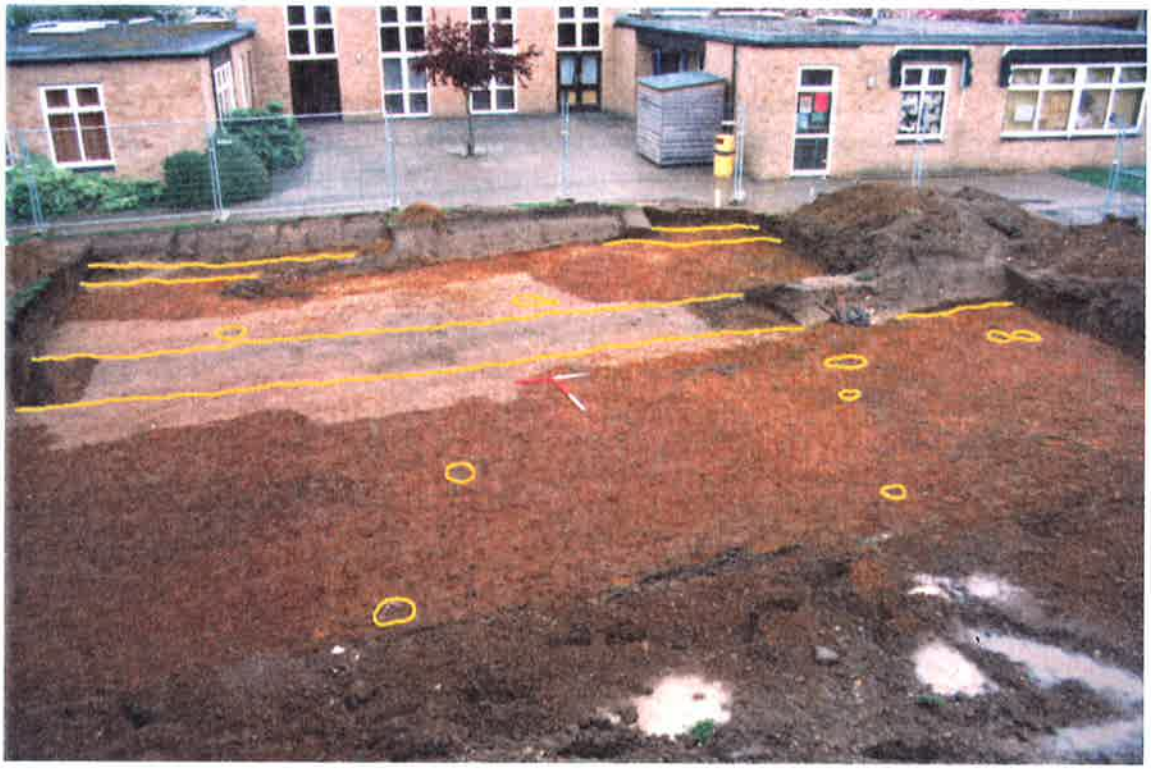


Figure 4 *View of the excavation from the south, with the archaeological features enhanced.*

Figure 5 *Pottery, spindle whorl, whet stone and 3 knife blades from the phase 2 Late Saxon ditch 5/11.*

5.2.2 Phase 1 ?Middle Saxon Timber Post Built Structure

Possibly the earliest evidence of activity on the site was a group of six post holes, **25**, **27**, **29**, **31**, **33**, **35**, **308**, which may be the remains of a timber building on a SSW-NNE orientation. The post holes formed two parallel lines, approximately 4 metres apart. The surviving post holes were all very shallow and others are likely to have been completely truncated. Ditch **5** may have truncated the post hole projected to have existed at the north west corner of the proposed building. It is projected that the building would have been approximately 4 metres wide by approximately 8 metres long, there was no associated hearth, nor any other associated features. The phasing of the feature is based on a tenuous stratigraphic link between a projected post hole at the north-west corner of the building and ditch **5**.

Post hole **25** was 0.33m diameter by 60mm deep. It was circular with steep sides and a flat base, it was filled by 24 a mid yellowish brown silty sand containing a moderate quantity of sub-angular chalk fragments, the chalk fragments may have been packing around a post.
Post hole **27** was 0.33m long by 0.24m wide and 80mm deep. It was sub-circular with moderately steep sides and a complex double U shaped base. It was filled with 26, a mid greyish brown slightly silty sand with occasional chalk fragments. The chalk may be the remnant of packing around a post, and the double U profile suggests that the post may have been replaced.
Post hole **29** was 0.19m in diameter and 80mm deep. It was filled by 28, a mid greyish brown slightly silty sand, a small fragment of animal bone was found in the deposit but no other finds.
Post hole **31** was 0.3m diameter by 70mm deep, it was circular with gradual sides and a slightly concave base. It was filled by 30, a mottled yellowish brown and greyish brown sand with moderate sub-angular flints.
Post hole **33** was 0.3m diameter and 100mm deep, it was circular with moderately steep sides and a slightly concave base. It was filled by 32, a mid greyish brown sand with moderate sub-angular flints and chalk fragments. Small fragments of brick or tile were found in the deposit, these may be contamination from the modern rubble deposits immediately to the north. The post hole cut **35**, and may have replaced it, alternatively post hole **33** may be quite modern, and its position coincidental.
Post hole **35** was 0.25m in diameter and 60mm deep, it was circular with gradual sides and a gentle U shaped base. It was filled by 34, a mottled greyish brown and yellow slightly silty sand. It was truncated by post hole **33** which may have been cut to replace **35**.
Post hole **308** was 0.4m in diameter and 0.14m deep, it was circular with moderately steep sides and a flat base. It was filled by 307, a mid yellowish brown silty sand containing no finds.

5.2.3 Phase 2 ?Late Saxon

A pair of parallel ditches **2** and **5/11** , and a group of three post holes, **14**, **16** and **18** on an approximately east-west alignment may all be late Saxon in date. The ditches were approximately 3m apart, and the line of post holes was approximately 0.5m north of ditch **5/11**. The more southerly ditch **11** was much broader and deeper and there was evidence that it had been re-cut on at least one occasion, **5**. The latest phase of the southerly ditch was artefact rich and contained other evidence for occupation in the form of layers rich in charcoal and burnt daub. Finds included three iron knife blades, a spindle whorl, a whetstone, lava quern fragments, and large sherds of late Saxon pottery including a Thetford ware double handled pitcher. The knives were

characteristic of mid 9th to mid 11th century types (appendix D), similar knives were found in Thetford (Goodall and Ottaway 1970). The samples from this layer were rich in charred plant remains probably representing the remains of stored crops including free-threshing wheat, barley, rye, flax and possibly oats. The grains may have been accidentally charred during food preparation (appendix E.). Bones of sheep, goat and pig were also found in the deposit some of which were burnt, possibly during cooking (appendix E.). The deposit is likely to represent the discarded remains from a kitchen. The northerly ditch in contrast was almost devoid of artefacts, only a few fragments of pottery and animal bone were found in it despite excavating a good proportion of its length. It was also filled by much cleaner sandy layers which appeared to have been little affected by occupational debris and it may have been filled with natural silts rather than deliberate dumps of material. Only one segment through the ditch at its western end showed evidence for occupation debris in the form of thin lenses of charcoal in the latest fill.

A fence line consisting of three post holes, **14**, **16** and **18** lay parallel with the southern ditch **5/11** and approximately 0.5m to its north. The post holes were less than 0.5m in diameter and were spaced at approximately 3.5m intervals. It was impossible to ascertain whether the fence was contemporary with the ditch, although it certainly reaffirmed the same boundary.

The conjunction of these three groups of features all following the same alignment indicates a property boundary of some importance and duration.

It is likely that ditch **2** was following the same boundary as ditch **5/11** and the adjacent row of post holes. It is not clear, however, whether ditches **2** and **5** were contemporary and therefore delineating the edges of a track between properties, or whether they were consecutive and indicative of a shifting boundary.

Ditch **11** was an east west orientated feature at least 15 metres long and 2 metres wide. The ditch had a broad shallow U shaped profile and was approximately 0.4m deep. It was filled by 10=43=55=205=305 a pale yellowish brown sand with distinct pale greyish yellow mottling and 204=304 a mid brown gravel rich silty sand. Three sherds of pottery and 21 grams of animal bone were recovered from the feature. The animal bone included Cattle, sheep, pig and dog or fox. It was truncated by ditch **5** on the same alignment, which was probably a later re-cut of the same feature.

Ditch **5** an east-west orientated feature was at least 15 metres long and between 0.7m and 0.9m wide. It was a narrower and deeper re-cut of ditch **11** and followed the same alignment. The ditch had a strong U shape changing to an almost V shaped profile along its length. It's primary fill 9=54=46 was a pale yellowish brown sand containing moderate gravel but no finds. It was almost certainly derived from the adjacent natural and probably accumulated soon after the ditch was cut. Lying over 9=54 was a layer of pale yellowish brown to greyish brown sand 8=45=49. Layer 7, a mid yellowish brown sand with lenses of greyish ashy sand was above 8, it was probably equivalent to 48, a layer of mid brownish yellow slightly ashy sand . Although it may have been deposited at the same time, layer 44, a mid yellowish brown silty sand in segment 2 contained no evidence of ash or burning. The latest layer in the ditch 6=21=42 contained a lot of ash, charcoal, charred grains and occasional fragments of daub. Two samples were taken from this ash rich deposit, sample 2 from context 21 and sample 3 from context 42. Sample 2 was very rich in plant remains, although it was dominated by free-threshing wheat grains (*Triticum* sp.). Barley grains were also present. Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*) was present and may have been cultivated for oil and/or fibre production. A large number of oat grains (*Avena* sp.) were also present but these may have been a weed of the wheat and barley crops rather than a crop. Rye grains (*Secale cereale*) were also identified. Weeds including fat hen (*Chenopodium album*), corn gromwell (*Lithospermum*

arvense) cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) lesser burdock (*Arctium minus*) and a mineralised nutlet of the great fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) were also present (Clapham unpub.). Sample 3 was less rich but still contained barley, free threshing wheat and rye. The commonest weed in the sample was corn gromwell, but clover (*Trifolium* sp.) was also present.
The bones from sheep, goat and pig were present in the deposit.
These layers were not distinguished in the two sections excavated in the evaluation trenches where they were given a single context number 203=303.
Segments 2 and 3 through the ditch both showed evidence for a possible structure which was probably constructed after the ditch was filled in. The interface between layers 21 and 45 and between layers 47 and 55 was very sharp and nearly vertical on the southern edge indicating the presence of a hard structure such as a wooden post or plank.
Ditch **2** was parallel with ditch **5** and approximately 4m to its north. The ditch was 1.05m wide, at least 15m long and 0.35m deep. It had a U shaped profile, becoming irregular where the sides had collapsed. Three sections were excavated across the ditch. All of the sections contained a pale yellowish brown sand basal fill (4=50=51), probably derived from the adjacent natural, no finds were recovered from this earliest deposit. Lying over 4=50=51 was 3=19=20, a mid-pale yellowish brown with faintly darker mottled sand, this contained 5 sherds of pottery and 12 grams of animal bone in 20 but was almost certainly derived from the adjacent natural. The ditch had been truncated along the easternmost stretch and 19=20 was the latest fill, the westernmost section, Segment 1, contained a further deposit, 1, of mid faintly yellowish brown sand with some dark mottles and lenses of ashy sand and flecks of charcoal. A lens of charcoal was particularly pronounced towards the base of the deposit. No finds were recovered from the deposit.
Post hole **14** was circular and approximately 0.4m in diameter and 0.2m deep. It had moderately steep sides and a flat base. It was filled by mid greyish brown faintly silty sand 13 which contained no finds.
Post hole **16** was sub rectangular, approximately 0.4m by 0.5m and 0.45m deep. It had evidence for an in situ rotted post 15, backfilled with clean mid greyish brown silty sand. 1 very small sherd of pottery was recovered from the fill.
Post hole **18** was circular and approximately 0.4m in diameter and 0.2m deep, it was filled by clean mid greyish brown slightly silty sand, 17, which contained no finds.

5.2.4 Phase 3 Modern

A layer of subsoil 0.35 to 0.45m thick sealed the phase 2 features. It was cut by several modern sumps and land drains which entered the excavation area along its northern edge. In addition feature **41** was possibly a drain or service trench, only a small portion of it was visible in the excavation.

Cut **41** was approximately 11m long, at least 0.5m wide, and at least 0.40m deep, it was filled by 40, a yellow coarse sand containing a fragment of post-medieval black-glaze mug or tyg. Very little of the feature was visible in the excavation area, but it may be a trench for a drain or other service.

6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Although only a very small area was available for excavation, two phases of activity, almost certainly relating to settlement were evident. Evidence for a post building was present on a different alignment to the medieval roads still in use today. The building is estimated to have been approximately 4 metres by 8 metres in size with its long axis very approximately north-south. These suggested dimensions are consistent with the small to medium floor plans of Anglo-Saxon buildings found on a number of sites including Cowdery's Down in Hampshire and West Stow in Suffolk (Welch, 1992). At both of these sites

the smaller buildings were interpreted as workshops or store rooms (*ibid.*). The building was almost certainly earlier than property divisions dated to the late Saxon period, and may, therefore be contemporary with some of the earlier settlement features located to the west of St. Peters church and excavated by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (Mould 1999).

Later property divisions were evidenced by the presence of parallel ditches and a fence line. The parallel ditches may also have bounded a track, or perhaps indicate a shifting boundary, dating evidence was not sufficient to be certain. The southerly ditch was evidently used for dumping domestic, probably kitchen waste towards the end of its life as a ditch, after which it may have been replaced by a fence. The finds associated with this dumping episode included knives and charred cereal grains probably associated with food preparation (appendix F), a spindle whorl and the presence of flax seeds imply the possibility of cloth production although the flax seeds may also have been used in the production of oil (*ibid.*). Cereals may have been used to make bread or pottage, and linseed or other oil containing seeds (such as flax) may have been used to enrich cereal based pottage (Hagen, 1992). Pottery associated with the rubbish suggests that this event may have occurred in the late Saxon period, more specifically between 900 and 1100 AD (appendix C). Three iron knives found with the rubbish deposit are also consistent with a late Saxon date (appendix D). The pottery also supports the suggestion that the rubbish deposit came from a kitchen since it largely comprised vessels with a degree of sooting implying that they had been used as cooking pots (*ibid.*).

The ditches may have acted as a property boundary, either between adjacent properties fronting onto Isleham Road, or between a property fronting onto Church Street and a property fronting onto Isleham Road. The latter interpretation would make the Church Street property approximately 60m long. The proximity of the church which has some Norman remains in its fabric but could well be much earlier, would suggest that the owners of the property may have had some status. The range of finds recovered from the southern ditch may support this interpretation, particularly when compared with the much sparser quantity of finds recovered from the more northerly ditch.

In summary, a suggested reconstructed history of the site is as follows: In phase 1 a timber post built structure was erected on the site some time before the late Saxon period. The building may be broadly contemporary with the middle Saxon settlement located to the west of St Peters Church, although this could not be confirmed. It was not possible to determine whether the building was a domestic structure since there were very few associated finds. The post built structure then went out of use, whether it was demolished or simply fell into decay is unclear but it was replaced in phase 2 by an east-west orientated ditch, a second parallel and possibly contemporary ditch was also cut, and a fence erected. The exact sequence was ambiguous, all three features may have been contemporary and evidence for a track or lane between properties. Alternatively a consecutive sequence might indicate a shifting property boundary. In either case, the presence of these features suggests a more

organised and planned approach to the settlement layout. Evidence for re-cutting of the southern ditch suggests that this boundary at least remained in use over a reasonably long period of time and there is some evidence to suggest that the property division may have continued as a fence. The final fill of the southern ditch included finds which probably derived from a late Saxon kitchen in a household of some wealth and status. The close proximity of St Peters Church may also indicate that the owners of the property had significant status.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Andrew Thomas of the County Archaeology Office supplied the Brief. Aileen Connor and Tony Baker undertook the fieldwork for the AFU. David Seal supplied the mechanical excavator, Newmarket Plant Hire supplied the CAT scanner. Gordon Millar of Property Services arranged hire of secure fencing.

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Appendix A Total Quantity of Records and Artefacts

Context Records:	*55*
Plans at 1:50 :	*5*
Sections at 1:20 :	*14*
Environmental Samples:	*3*
Colour print film:	*1*
Monochrome Print Film:	*1*
Colour Slide Film:	*1*
Animal Bones	*402g*
Pottery	*46 sherds, 639g*
Metal Artefacts	*3 1ron Knife blades*
Other Artefacts	*1 chalk spindle whorl* *1 whetstone* *19g shell* *178g lava quern* *10g flint* *32g Ceramic Building Material* *1g mortar* *773g burnt stone* *g slag*

Appendix B Context and Artefacts List (Numbers in **Bold** indicate Cut)

Δ indicates small find, g indicates grams.

Cut	Context	Type	Master No	Phase	Bone	Pot	Other finds
2	1	Ditch fill	2	2			
2	**2**	Ditch cut	2	2			
2	3	Ditch fill	2	2			
2	4	Ditch fill	2	2			
5	**5**	Ditch cut	5	2			
5	6	Ditch fill	5	2	262g	8g, 1 sherd	2g shell
5	7	Ditch fill	5	2	4g		
5	8	Ditch fill	5	2			
5	9	Ditch fill	5	2			
11	10	Ditch fill	11	2			
11	**11**	Ditch cut	11	2			
14	13	Post-hole		2			
14	**14**	Post hole		2			
16	15	Post hole		2		2g, 2 sherds	
16	**16**	Post hole		2			
18	17	Post hole		2			
18	**18**	Post hole		2			
2	19	Ditch fill	2	2			
2	20	Ditch fill	2	2	12g	27g, 5 sherds	

Cut	Context	Type	Master No	Phase	Bone	Pot	Other finds
5	21	Ditch fill	5	2	7g	403g, 18 sherds	Whetstone Δ2, 773g burnt stone
25	24	Post hole		1			
25	**25**	Post hole		1			
27	26	Post hole		1			
27	**27**	Post hole		1			
29	28	Post hole		1	1g		
29	**29**	Post hole		1			
31	30	Post hole		1			
31	**31**	Post hole		1			
33	32	Post hole		1			32g CBM, 1g mortar
33	**33**	Post hole		1			
35	34	Post hole		1			
35	**35**	Post-hole		1			
37	36	Post hole		Up			
37	**37**	Post hole		Up			
39	38	Post hole		Up			
39	**39**	Post hole		Up			
41	40	Feature fill		3		3g, 1 sherd	
41	**41**	Feature cut		3			
5	42	Ditch fill	5	2	19g	59g, 2 sherds	17g shell, 10g flint
11	43	Ditch fill	11	2			
5	44	Ditch fill	5	2			
5	45	Ditch fill	5	2			
5	46	Ditch fill	5	2			
5	47	Ditch fill	5	2			
5	49	Ditch fill	5	2			
2	50	Ditch fill	2	2			
2	51	Ditch fill	2	2			
16	52	Post hole		2			
18	53	Post hole		2			
5	54	Ditch fill	5	2			
11	55	Ditch fill	11	2			
	201	Topsoil		3			
	202	Subsoil		3			
206	203	Ditch fill	5	2	20g	207g, 12 sherds	Spindle whorl Δ1, 2 fe knife blades Δ3 Δ4
206	204	Ditch fill	11	2		7g, 2 sherds	
206	205	Ditch fill	11	2	19g		
206	**206**	Ditch cut	11	2			
	301	Topsoil		3			
	302	Subsoil		3			
306	303	Ditch fill	5	2	1g	21g, 1 sherd	178g lava quern, fe knife blade Δ5
306	304	Ditch fill	11	2		5g, 1sherd.	
306	305	Ditch fill	11	2	30g		Slag
306	**306**	Ditch cut	11	2			
308	307	Post hole		1			
308	**308**	Post hole		1			

Appendix C The Pottery by P. Spoerry BTech, PhD

Forty four sherds of pottery totalling 742g were recovered from ten contexts. The one sherd from context 40 is a post-medieval black glaze mug or tyg fragment, with all other sherds being late Saxon in date.

The late Saxon sherds are mostly in variants of St Neots type ware (33 sherds). The remaining 10 sherds are of Thetford ware, most likely from variants made in Thetford itself.

The Thetford ware includes eight sherds from one spouted and handled pitcher in context 203. This context also produced iron knife blades and a spindle whorl. The Thetford ware pitcher sherds are un-abraded and it seems likely that the vessel was discarded here soon after breakage, with no later disturbance.

The St Neots type ware is mostly found in jar forms, with the degree of sooting implying that most of these were probably used as cooking pots.

The largest group is from a ditch fill, context 21. Seventeen of the eighteen sherds are St Neots type ware and rim fragments from four jars and one in-turned bowl are present. All these vessels are sooted. These were found with a whetstone and burnt stone.

This small group is indicative of one phase of activity only. Even the smallest sherds are un-abraded and the average sherd weight of 16.9g is high in comparison to many rural groups of this date. The assemblage is wholly domestic; all of the vessels represented could have been utilised for cooking food. The objects found in association tend to support this view.

The assemblage has no closely dated vessel or fabric types. Nonetheless, the larger size of some cooking pots and the presence of the pitcher might suggest that it does not date to the very earliest part of production of these types. Likewise, the absence of any fabrics or forms from the 12th century suggests the group is not very late either. A date in the broad bracket 900-1100 might be most appropriate for the use and deposition of this assemblage.

			St. Neots Ware		Thetford Ware		Post-Medieval Black Ware	
Context	**Cut**	**Phase**	**Number of sherds**	**Weight in grams**	**Number of sherds**	**Weight in grams**	**Number of sherds**	**Weight in grams**
6	**5**	2	1	8				
15	**16**	2	1	2				
20	**2**	2	5	27				
21	**5**	2	17	355	1	48		
40	**41**	3					1	3
42	**5**	2	1	12	1	47		
203	**206**	2	3	12	9	195		
204	**206**	2	2	7				
303	**306**	2	1	21				
304	**306**	2	1	5				

Appendix D Catalogue of Small Finds by C. Montague

Small Find Number	Context Number	Cut Number	Phase	Description
1	203	**206**	2	Chalk spindle whorl. Length 23mm. Diameter at top 12mm. Diameter at base 30mm. Diameter of perforation 10mm.
2	21	**5**	2	Slate whetstone. Length 42mm. Width 17mm. Thickness 4mm. Pierced at top. Diameter of perforation 3mm.
3	203	**206**	2	Iron Whittle Tang Knife (fragment). Length of blade 80mm (estimated). Thickness 4mm. Shoulder angled back. Length of tang 40mm (estimated).
4	204	**206**	2	Iron Whittle Tang Knife. Length of blade 62mm. Thickness 4mm. Shoulder angled back. Length of tang 35mm
5	303	**206**	2	Iron Whittle Tang Knife. Length of blade 70mm. Thickness 2mm. Shoulder angled back. Length of tang 62mm

Appendix E Report On the Animal Bones by Ian L. Baxter BA MIFA

Introduction

This is a tiny assemblage of animal bones consisting of twenty-three fragments, of which ten or 43% are identifiable to species or genera. Identifications are listed in context order in the accompanying catalogue. All the bones are Late Saxon-Early Medieval in date and mostly derive from the main boundary ditch (A. Connor pers. comm.).

Discussion

The equid cranial fragment from context (6) cannot be identified to species because the nuchal crest is missing (Groves and Mazák 1967: 321, 324, Fig. 3).

The closely related species sheep (*Ovis* f. domestic) and goat (*Capra* f. domestic) were distinguished using criteria described and illustrated by Boessneck (1969).

Table of Species

	Context
Equid (*Equus* sp.)	6
Cattle (*Bos* f. domestic)	203, 205
Sheep (*Ovis* f. domestic)	21, 305
Goat (*Capra* f. domestic)	42
Sheep/Goat (*Ovis/Capra* f. domestic)	203
Pig (*Sus* f. domestic)	21, 205
Dog/Fox (*Canis familiaris/Vulpes vulpes*)	305

References

Boessneck, J. 1969. Osteological Differences between Sheep (*Ovis aries Linne*) and Goat (*Capra hircus Linne*). In: Brothwell, D.R. and Higgs, E. (eds.), **Science in Archaeology**, pp. 331-359. London: Thames and Hudson.

Groves, C. and Mazák, V. 1967. On some taxonomic problems of Asiatic wild asses; with the description of a new sub-species (Perissodactyla; Equidae). **Zeitschrift für Saugetierkunde** 32: 321-55.

Appendix F The Charred Plant Remains by A.J. Clapham PhD

Introduction

A total of three samples were examined from the excavations at Fordham Primary School. These were sample 1 from context 36, sample 2 from context 21 and sample 3 from context 42. Sample 2 consisted of two flots which were combined. Each sample was scanned for charred cultivated and wild plant species contained within.

All three samples contained charred plant remains, but the two flots from sample 2, context 21 contained a greater number of charred plant remains and sample 1, context 36 was dominated by small fragments of charcoal.

Results

Sample 1, context 36
This sample was dominated by charcoal fragments, but other charred plant remains were present, these included a single grain of a free-threshing wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and a barley grain (*Hordeum* sp.). Non-cultivated species present included a single nutlet of knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*).

Sample 2, context 21
The dominant cereal remain was free-threshing wheat grains, the lack of any chaff debris, makes it impossible to determine whether the grain represents the tetraploid free-threshing wheats such as durum or rivet (*Triticum durum* or *T. turgidum*), or the hexaploid free-threshing bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum* ***sensu strictu***). Barley grains were also present but due to the small numbers and lack of chaff, it was not possible to determine if the grains represented six or two-row barley. Other cultivated crops identified from this sample include flax (*Linum usitatissimum*), which could have been cultivated for oil and/or fibre production. A large number of oat grains (*Avena* sp.) were also recovered but due to the lack of preservation of the basal floral parts it was not possible to determine if this grain was grown as a crop or present as a weed of the wheat and barley crops. As both the wild and cultivated oat grains are edible, it is unlikely that these grains would have been removed during the grain cleaning process. Rye (*Secale cereale*) grains were also identified.

Weed species present within this sample included, fat hen (*Chenopodium album*), corn gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*), this was the commonest weed species in the

sample, cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), lesser burdock (*Arctium minus*) and a mineralised nutlet of the great fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*).

Sample 3, context 42
The commonest cereal identified from this sample was barley, but free-threshing wheat and rye were also present. The commonest weed was again corn gromwell. Other weed species included a seed of clover (*Trifolium* sp.) and a badly preserved cypsela of the daisy family.

Discussion and Conclusions

In general these samples represent the remains of stored crops. The crops were, free-threshing wheat, barley, rye and flax with the possibility of oats. The average size of the weed seeds corresponds in at least one dimension to that of the crop, again suggesting that the charred plant remains within these samples were discarded crops, probably charred accidentally during food preparation. It is possible that the remains represent the cleaning out of storage facilities, such as pits, by fire before the new crop was deposited.

Table of plant species found in environmental samples

	Sample Number	1	2	3
	Context Number	36	21	42
	Cut Number	**37**	**5**	**5**
	Phase	UP	2	2
Common name	**Latin name**			
Wheat	*Triticum* sp.	X	X	X
Barley	*Hordeum* sp.	X	X	X
Flax	*Linum usitatissimum*		X	
Oat	*Avena* sp.		X	
Rye	*Secale cereale*		X	X
Knotgrass	*Polygonum aviculare*	X		
Fat hen	*Chenopodium album*		X	
Corn gromwell	*Lithospermum arvense*		X	X
Cornflower	*Centaurea cyanus*		X	
Lesser burdock	*Arctium minus*		X	
Great fen-sedge	*Cladium mariscus*		X	
Daisy family	*Trifolium* sp.			X

X indicates presence

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