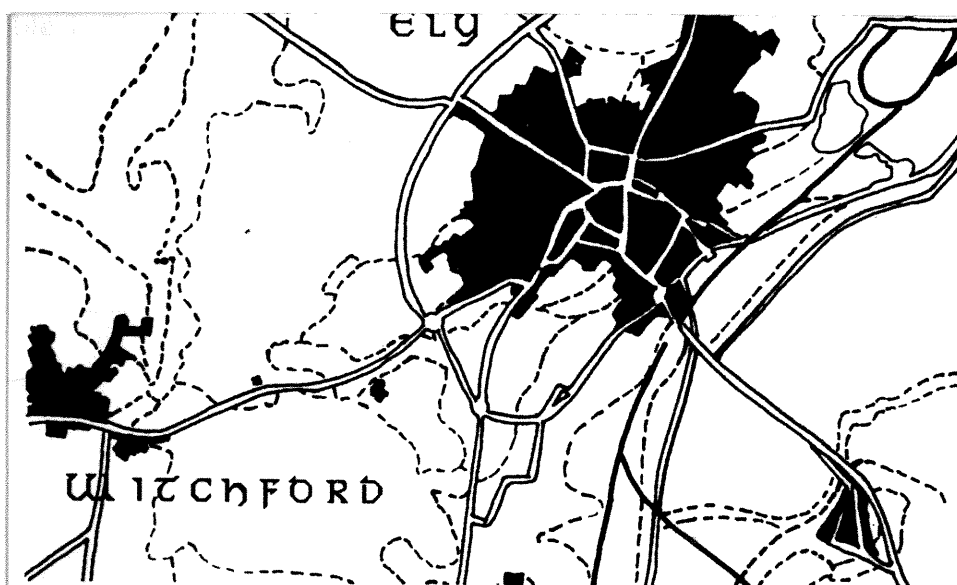


no 48

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## CAMBRIDGE ROAD ELY



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Map based on the Geological Survey of Great Britain. Sheet 173



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# Cambridge Road, Ely

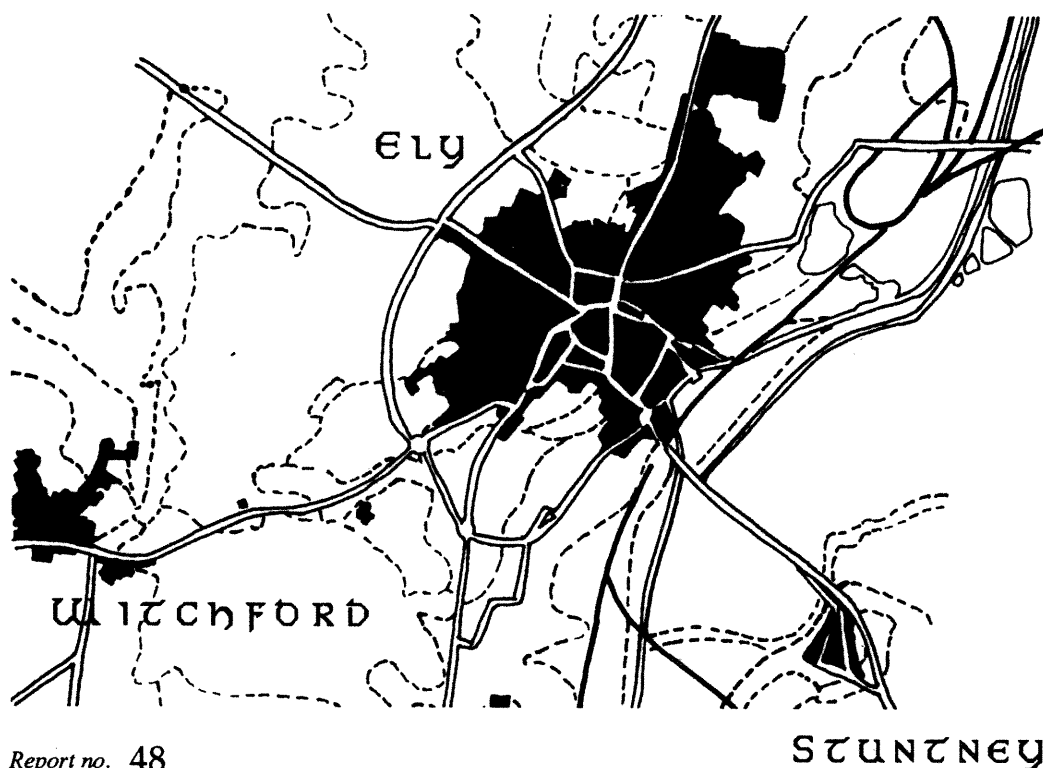
## Archaeological Desk-Top Assessment

By

Steve Kemp AIFA

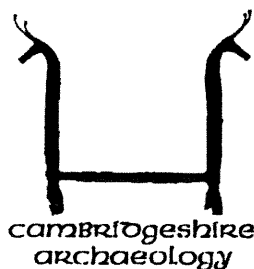
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## Cambridge Road, Ely. Archaeological desk-top assessment

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## Summary

This desk-top assessment was commissioned by Rapleys Commercial Property and Planning Consultants on behalf of their clients to define areas of archaeological potential ahead of development on the land between Cambridge Rd, Witchford Road and the A10 Ely Bypass. (Fig.1)

The analysis of available archaeological information has shown areas in the vicinity of the City of Ely to have been poorly researched in the past. No archaeological remains are known from the development area though cropmark enclosures probably relating to settlement are in close proximity. Significant finds scatters were also discovered during fieldwalking along the nearby route of the A10 bypass in 1984.

Important archaeological remains dating from the Prehistoric to the Medieval periods lie immediately adjacent to the development area. The general paucity of known remains may be the result of limited archaeological field work in the area. The present distribution of artefacts may be also be influenced by the topography of the land.

On the basis of the archaeological and historical documentation available for this report there would appear to be no overriding need for the preservation of the whole site. Fieldwork will be necessary in the advance of detailed permission to determine which areas, if any, justify preservation or excavation.

## Introduction

This desk-top assessment was commissioned by Rapleys Commercial Property and Planning Consultants on behalf of their clients in order to define known archaeological remains likely to be affected by the development proposals for land lying between Cambridge Road , Witchford Road and the Ely Southern By-Pass (Fig.1). The work was carried out by the Archaeology Section, Cambridgeshire County Council using the Sites and Monuments Record and available historical documentation. Due to the time restrictions agreed between the County Archaeologist and the Developer no detailed search of county archives was possible.

## Planning Policies

National and Local planning guidelines exist concerning archaeology in Cambridgeshire.

### Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, November 1990. (PPG 16)

(PPG 16)  
Paras. 6 to 8

"Archaeological remains should be seen as a finite, and non-renewable resource. Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. Preservation is a material consideration in determining planning conditions".

PPG 16  
Para. 13

"If physical preservation *in situ* is not feasible, an archaeological excavation for the purposes of preservation by record may be an acceptable alternative".

PPG 16  
Para. 21

"When existing information suggests that important archaeological remains may exist but the information is not sufficient to determine the application, the local planning authority will request that the developer provides resources for an archaeological evaluation before the application is determined".

**East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Draft 1991**

Para. 26 "The Council will seek to ensure that scheduled ancient monuments and non-scheduled sites of national or regional importance remain intact and that their settings are not prejudiced by development".

**Cambridgeshire County Council Structure Plan 1989**

Policy P14/13 "Where there is no overriding case for the preservation of an archaeological site opportunities will be sought prior to the granting of planning permission, for excavation and recording of the site".

**Geology and Topography**

Geology of the area is varied, including Jurassic kimmeridge clays, Cretaceous lower green sands, and Pleistocene glacial sands and gravels which provide a mixture of soil types in the vicinity (Fig.2). Boulder clays are concentrated to the south and north. This underlying geology combined with the effects of periglacial activity had a major impact on farming practices in the immediate area. The positioning of local settlements and the development of the social landscape also reflect these influences.

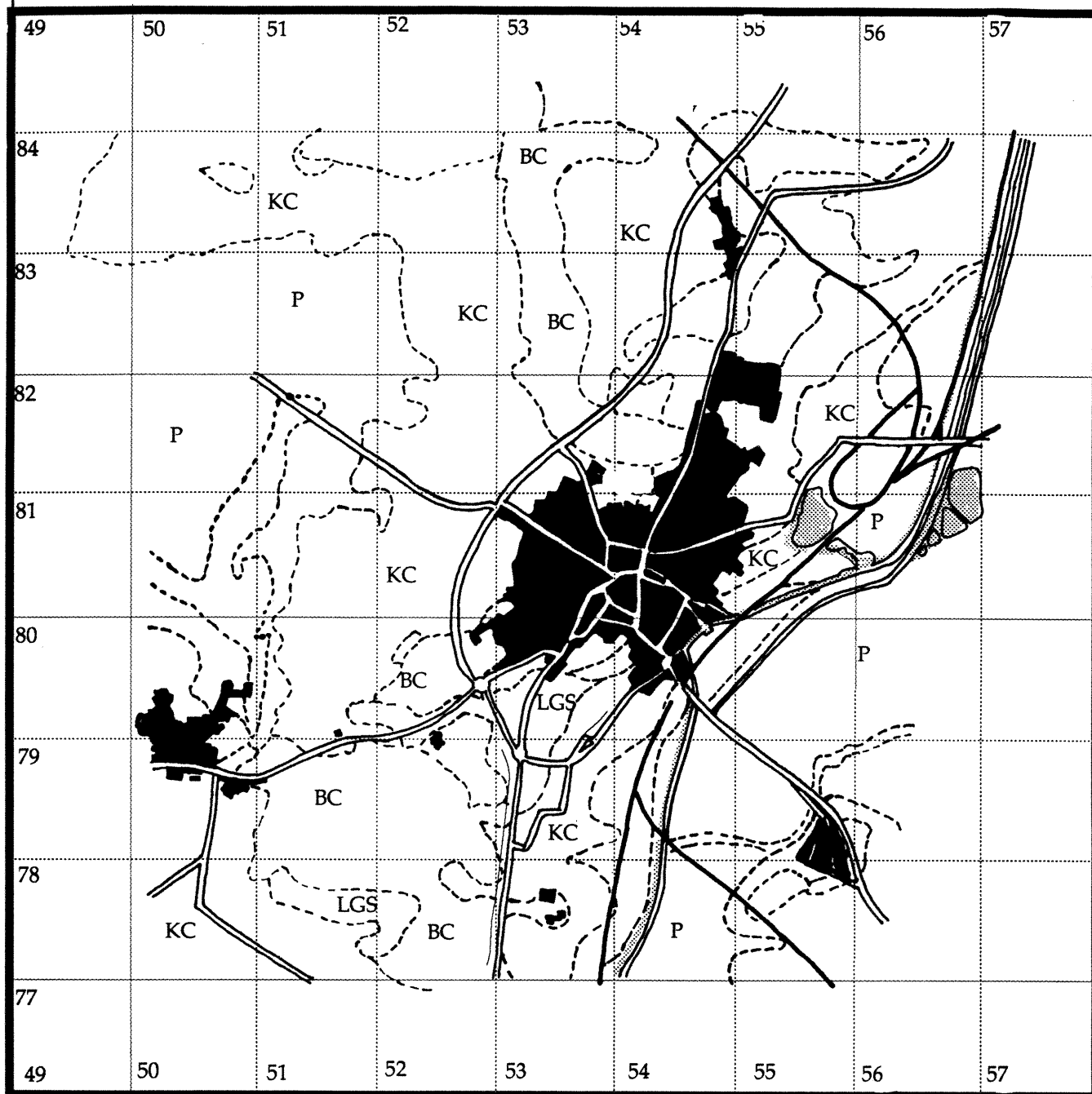
The topography of the area dips steeply from the periglacial deposits which provide a capping to the lower green sand in the north of the development (25m O.D) gently grading down to the kimmeridge clays (10m O.D). The glacial boulder clays form uplands to the north and south of the development zone.

**Archaeological Background**

The archaeological resource was researched from the Sites and Monuments Record for Cambridgeshire with the addition of a field visit by the author.

**i) Sites and Monuments Record.**

The archaeological information for the area is recorded on the sites and Monuments Record held by the Archaeology Section Cambridgeshire County Council. Recorded information on the database provides details on field monuments (earthworks), archaeological excavations and field work carried out by amateur and professional archaeologists, artefacts reported to the County Council or museums, historical documentation detailing archaeological remains and sites discovered by aerial photographs. This record allows archaeologists to build up a detailed picture of past land use in a given area.



BC= Boulder Clay  
 KC= Kimmeridge Clay  
 LGS= Lower Green Sand  
 P= Peat

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archaeology**  
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 Cambridgeshire County  
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Fig.2 Geology of the Ely Area

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This database is not complete and new sites are being discovered regularly by archaeological activities, and previously untouched sites are being disturbed by deep ploughing, the erosion of the Fenland peat and urban/rural development.

Work in the Ely area has centred on the the City of Ely and particularly the Cathedral precincts where the urban religious establishment lies relatively undisturbed. No systematic field walking has occurred on the fields to the south of Ely at the edge of the residential/urban zone. Limited fieldwalking was carried out along the route of the A10 Ely bypass by Ely District Archaeological Society (EDAS) in 1984.

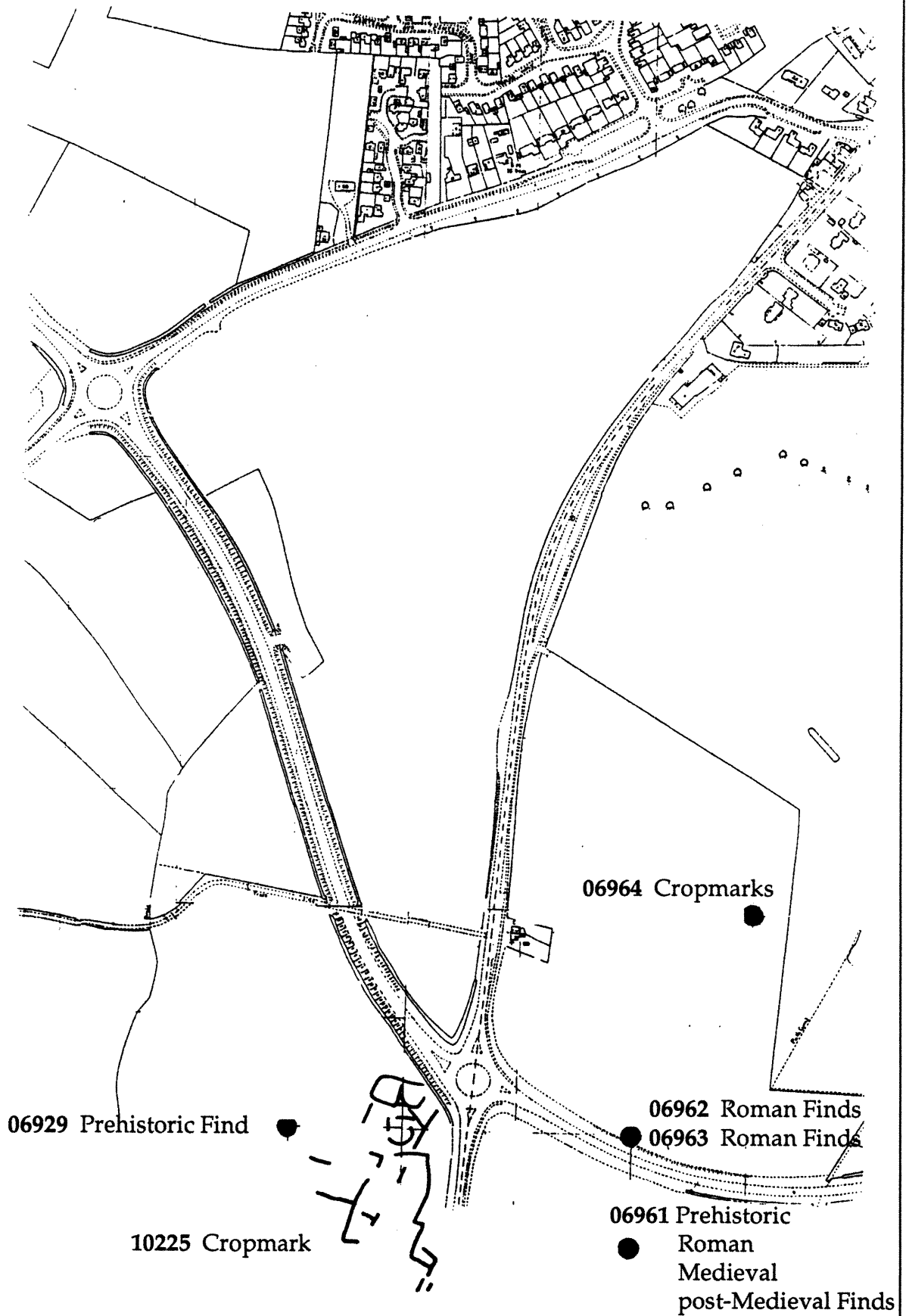
Archaeological details are given for the development area between the Cambridge Road, Witchford Road and the Ely Southern Bypass, additional areas of potential within the vicinity are also included . (Table 1)  
These have been set out in period order.

## **ii) Field visit**

The development area was visited on the 17th February 1992 as part of the initial archaeological assessment. No access to the field was afforded due to crop growth which had reached between 0.05-0.10m in height, visibility was very poor. No finds were observed along the edge of the field. The development area is largely one arable field, all traces of earlier internal field boundaries having largely been eradicated by recent ploughing.

The field lying to the south of the A10 bypass within which cropmarks (SMR 10225) and Prehistoric finds scatters (SMR 06929) are located were also visited. Visibility was also inhibited here due to crop growth. No finds were observed along the field edge. The field to the east within which numerous Roman finds have been discovered in the past was also viewed with a similar lack of success, no access could be gained due to crop growth. Similar problems also existed for the field lying between St.Johns road and the Witchford road.





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**Fig.3 Archaeological Sites in the  
 Development Area**

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Date  
 27/2/92

**Table 1: The Archaeological Record**

No finds are known from the development area.

<b>SMR No</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>06961</b>	532/787	Prehistoric	Flint artefacts (Scrapers) from field walking by EDAS in 1984.
<b>06961A</b>	532/787	Roman	Finds scatter of pottery and part of a quern found by EDAS in 1984.
<b>06962</b>	532/788	Roman	Finds scatter of 3-4th century pottery found by EDAS in 1984. Due to the absence of building material EDAS suggest that the settlement lay further to the north.
<b>06963</b>	532/788	Roman	Finds scatter including pottery, roof tile and fragments of stone flooring found by EDAS in 1984.
<b>06961B</b>	532/787	Medieval & P.Med.	Pottery scatter dating upto the 17th century found by EDAS in 1984.
<b>06929</b>	529/788	Unknown	One hammer stone and flint artefacts found by EDAS in 1984.
<b>06961C</b>	532/787	Unknown	Faunal remains found by EDAS in 1984.
<b>06962A</b>	532/788	Unknown	Bronze artefact found by EDAS in 1984.
<b>06964</b>	533/790	Unknown	Cropmarks of a subrectangular enclosure visible on RAF aerial photographs from 1965. Traces of field systems also shown.
<b>10225</b>	530/788	Unknown	Cropmark of sub-circular enclosures and field boundaries marked on the SMR 1:10,000 aerial photograph overlay. The original reference was not discovered.

CUCAP is the Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs

## Historical Background

The City of Ely lies on an outlier of lower greensand, partially capped with boulder-clays and gravels, "rising from the waste of waters opening wide" which in *early* times occupied the hollows of the underlying kimmeridge clays (VCH 1953 vol iv. p28). The development area occurs on a promontory trending southwards from Ely and would appear to be largely beyond the level of the waste waters during the historical periods (fig.2).

Under Roman occupation the 'City' was linked to the fortified Roman town of Cambridge by an 'important' Roman road which ran from the area of Castle Hill, Cambridge to Market Downham, Norfolk. The importance of Ely really began with the founding of the religious settlements during Anglo-Saxon period. 'Dominance' of the social landscape began with the re-founding during the Medieval period. (VCH 1953).

The geographical location of Ely made the place an 'ideal' refuge, therefore command of the approaches was of a high priority to the inhabitants of the Isle. The chief causeways were the eastward route to Stuntney and the two causeways of Aldreth and Earith. "Prolonged experience of war and devastation" (VCH 1953 vol iv. p.33) necessitated the priority mentioned above, this presumably entailed an element of agricultural self sufficiency; much of the surrounding lands would have been maintained for arable or pastoral production.

No *early* maps are available for Ely. A post-Medieval map of the City of Ely in 1661 (Hermannides 1661. CUL Maps.53.66.2) is terminated at the northern end of the field between St.Johns road and Witchford road. Three buildings are located at this point on the map, the surrounding area being un-developed was presumably cultivated in the post-Medieval period. The position of associated farm buildings is unknown. The English Place-Name Society (Reaney 1943) lists the name "Paradise Farm" as possibly associated with Paradise Close with a reference dating to 1564 (Penes notes and transcripts of W.M. Palmer). This is probably the same as the close of the Prior of Ely called Paradise North (1630). Further details within the 1630 reference (Clare MSS 6th October 1630) suggest the location of "Paradise". A plot of ground in Newnham in the City of 'Elle', lying between the lands of the Almoner of the Abbey of Ely, abutting the highway to the south and against the close of the Prior of Ely called Paradise North was leased by Oliver Cromwell Esq. of Ely from Clare Hall. As the suburb of Newnham lies towards the north-east of the City it is unlikely that this name refers to the Paradise Farm encountered in this study. A modern date for Paradise farm is further suggested by the absence of any mention of the farm in the Tithe records of 1846. Tithe maps for Ely dated 1846 show that the development area was largely arable with some pasture prior to the 1850's. The land was a series of allotments and fields largely owned by the Dean and Chapter of Ely Cathedral. The 1811 Draft for the First Edition O.S map also marks the area as a series of fields lying on the modern residential fringe of Ely.

## **Conclusion**

The currently available archaeological and historical data provide few clues to the activities within the development area during the Prehistoric and Historic periods.

Prehistoric activity is known from archaeological remains found to the south-east of the development area; Roman and Medieval finds concentrations also occur in this area. It is likely that the undated cropmarks are associated with these finds scatters or later Prehistoric activities. This evidence demonstrates that earlier settlements existed in the area prior to the expansion of the City of Ely during the Medieval periods. These settlements may have been more dispersed than present settlement patterns indicate. The paucity of archaeological knowledge may be the result of limited archaeological fieldwork occurring here in recent decades, rather than a true sparsity of occupation on the Isle of Ely during earlier periods. The only finds in the vicinity of the development area (excluding results from aerial photographs) are known from fieldwalking of the route for the A10 Ely bypass.

The topography is likely to lead to the concentration of archaeological materials towards the base of the slope in such local environs; the 1984 collection by EDAS may have been disturbed from elsewhere (possibly from within the development area) by ploughing. Cropmarks may indicate the actual location of sites and suggest that settlement in earlier periods may have been positioned in areas that during the Medieval period may have been considered to be agriculturally 'marginal' (though probably still having social and economic 'value')

During the Medieval period the development area and the surrounding lands appear to have largely used for agricultural activities, presumably supporting the developing urban and secular populations. The area has remained in production until the present day. The Medieval open and inclosed field boundaries have been largely replaced by the existing boundaries.

Constant ploughing will have 'degraded' traces of earlier land-use that did not involve deep disturbance of the subsoil e.g pits, ditches etc.

## **Recommendations for further work**

Due to the presence of Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval remains within 100m of the southern boundary of the development site and the lack of previous systematic archaeological work in the area it is difficult to assess the actual potential of the area. This could be quite high in the south-eastern corner of the site.

It is strongly recommended that further archaeological works be carried out prior to the granting of detailed planning conditions this will allow

archaeologists to make recommendations for the preservation of archaeological remains *in situ* or detailed recording (if necessary) in accordance with the Department of the Environment's PPG 16 (1990). The archaeological evaluation should (as a minimum) contain the following stages of work;

**Stage 1.** The site should be fieldwalked under good ground conditions with high levels of visibility once the crop has been harvested and the land ploughed. Geophysical techniques should be used in addition to field walking, especially in areas judged to be of high potential. Such techniques can be used to define the extent of settlement areas where there may have been ground penetrating features i.e pits and ditches.

**Stage 2.** Trial trenching (up to 2%) of the area depending on the results of the field survey (Stage 1) will be required to define the nature and state of preservation of sites. An area of high potential occurs in the south-east corner of the development area where soil depth is likely to be greater than average due to the topography. Sampling topsoil should occur in order to define activity areas which may be preserved within this layer and only recently affected by ploughing. These pits should be excavation by hand.

At this point it should be possible for the archaeologists to provide detailed information concerning the state of preservation of archaeological remains and the extent of any sites. Detailed recommendations can then be provided concerning areas suitable for preservation *in situ*, preservation by record (excavation) or where no further comment is required and development can occur unaltered. Areas recommended for preservation may require alterations to the development proposals which should be agreed with the County Archaeologist prior to the granting of detailed planning permission. Preservation by record (excavation) if necessary is likely to occur as part of the final planning agreement.

All phases of archaeological work should be carried out well in advance of any construction, this work should be conducted by professional archaeological contractors recognised for the Cambridgeshire area. Provision should be made by the Developer for funds to cover all stages of archaeological work including finds processing, storage and the publication of the results.

A detailed brief needs to be agreed between the County Archaeologist the contracted Archaeologists and the Developer before the commencement of any archaeological works. Provision should be made for the access of the County Archaeologist or nominated Officer to the site in order to monitor the standards of field evaluation and excavation.

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- |                               |      |  |
|-------------------------------|------|--|
| Reaney P.H                    | 1943 | <i>Place -Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely.</i><br>English Place-Name Society |
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