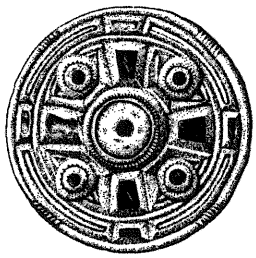

Archaeological Field Unit

Iron Age features adjacent to Foxton Brook, Shepreth: an archaeological evaluation

Judith Roberts

October 1998

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. A139

Commissioned by SEEARO Construction

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Report No A139

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SUMMARY

In September 1998 the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit carried out observation and recording of topsoil stripping and evaluation on 2.8ha of land in Shepreth parish, between Shepreth pit and Foxton Brook. An area was stripped of topsoil to establish the depth of surviving remains and to determine the amount of disturbance caused by quarrying and modern agriculture. Six trenches were machine excavated.

The trenches revealed mainly linear features. Several contained material of probable Iron Age/Romano-British date. Other features appear to be either 'geological' or post-medieval. The absence of medieval or post-medieval material suggests this land was not close enough to a contemporary settlement for manuring to have occurred or else the ground was unsuitable for arable agriculture. This is borne out by the nineteenth century Tithe and Enclosure Maps which show part of the site as meadow.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Iron Age features adjacent to Foxton Brook, Shepreth: an archaeological evaluation

(TL 399 485)

INTRODUCTION

Between 1st and 7th September 1998 a team from the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council carried out observation and field evaluation of 2.8ha of land in Shepreth parish, between Shepreth pit and Foxton Brook. Observation and recording of topsoil stripping took place on the western part of the site and evaluation on the eastern part of the site (Fig. 1). The work followed an assessment of documentary sources for the area. The evaluation was carried out in response to a Cambridgeshire County Council Development Control Office brief and was commissioned by Mr. C. Onslow of SEEARO Construction.

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The land lies at approximately 15m OD and the underlying geology is alluvium along the line of the Foxton Brook with first–second terrace river gravels overlying Lower Grey chalk (BGS 1976). The land to the east of the brook appears to rise rapidly whilst that to the west is more gently sloping suggesting the brook is at the eastern extent of the plain it occupies. The land has been under arable agriculture for over fifty years. The site lies to the west of Foxton Brook and north of the Cambridge–Royston railway line, adjacent to a modern quarry and refuse pit.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Cambridgeshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record lists various sites in the vicinity, in the parishes of Shepreth and Foxton. Most of the sites are cropmarks of unidentified date, the remainder are stray finds of prehistoric flints and Roman artefacts. Apart from the cropmarks (SMR nos. 8602 and 8627) immediately to the north and east of the site the main focus of interest is the Roman site (SMR no. 3364, SAM 85) to the south of the subject site, which was excavated during the late nineteenth century and documented in 1886 by Prof. McKenny Hughes. Parts of this site were excavated again, between 1968 and 1972 by Rowland Parker, to reveal villa-type buildings and associated settlement (Cambridgeshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record office parish files).

Excavation in the north-eastern part of the site (in advance of a British Gas pipeline in 1994) revealed late Iron Age and early Roman features, including ditches that followed the edge of the alluvium, possibly flood-control measures (Wilson and Taylor, 1995). A stratigraphic sequence with over 1m of deposits was revealed with bands of peat which have been radio-carbon dated to the post-Roman period (AD405-665). The late Iron Age activity in this area was interpreted as relating to grazing on

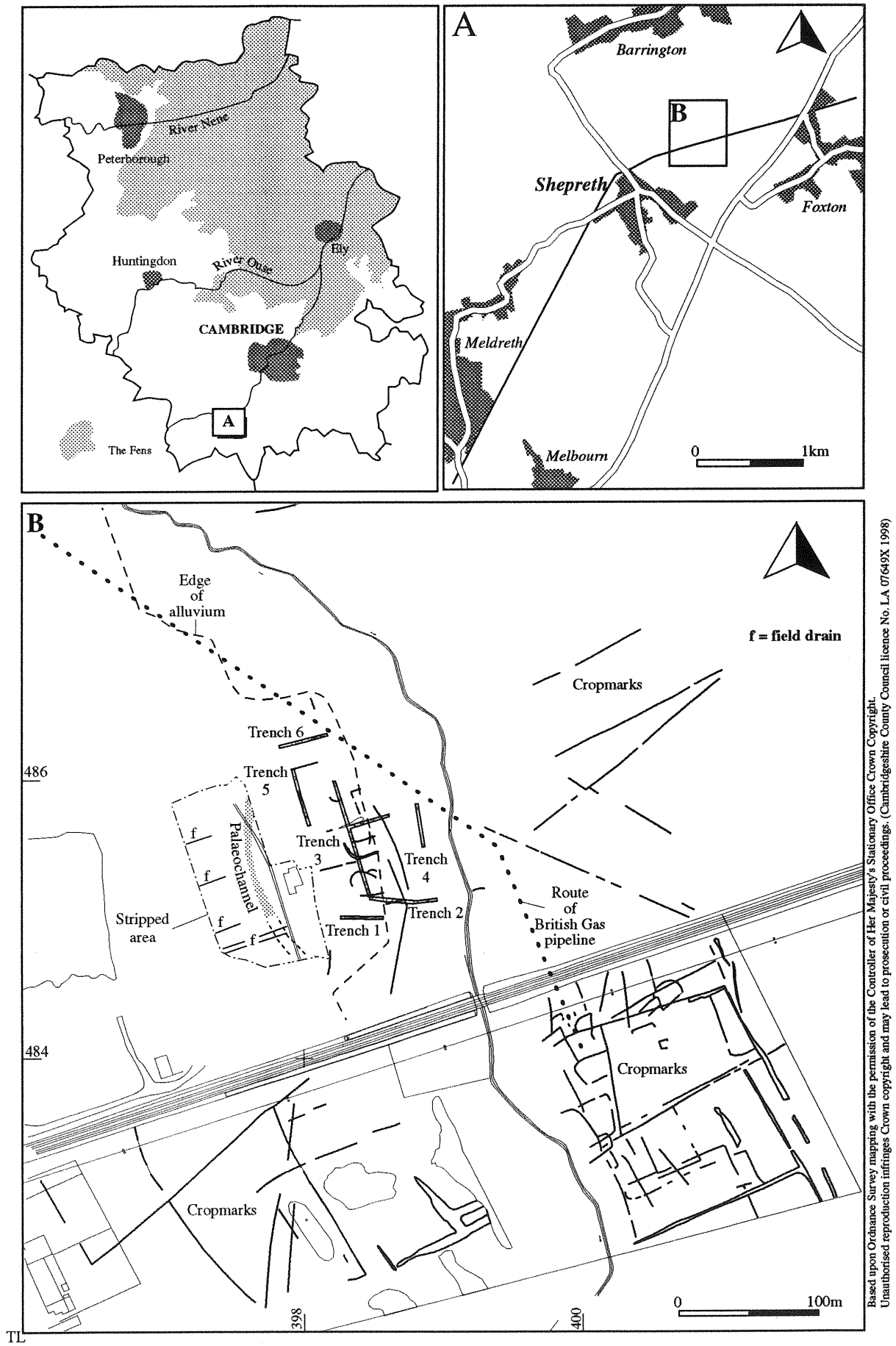

Figure 1 *Location of archaeological trenches, cropmarks and modern features*

pasture close to the brook, with field boundaries and flood-control ditches, and occupation to the west on the higher gravels.

Shepreth has been an agricultural parish throughout its history, with coprolite digging from the mid-nineteenth century and development of the cement works in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. Parts of the parish are known to have been wet since at least the thirteenth century (VCH 1973), with dykes and ditches being dug to alleviate the problem of waterlogging. Mettle Mead shown on Tithe and Enclosure maps suggest the land to the west of Foxton Brook (the present application area) was used as meadow during the nineteenth century.

METHODOLOGY

A desktop assessment of available documentary evidence from the Sites and Monuments Record and other sources, and an assessment of aerial photographic evidence for the site was considered before any intrusive evaluation took place.

The application area was divided into western and eastern parts as the western part was required for immediate use whilst that to the east will not be used until 1999. Two different approaches were, therefore, needed to investigate the site.

The western part, an area to the east of the present tip (a former quarry) was monitored during topsoil stripping to establish the depth of surviving remains and to determine the amount of disturbance caused by quarrying and modern agriculture.

In the eastern part of the site six trenches (total length 304m) were machine stripped using a tracked vehicle with a 2.1m wide, flat-bladed ditching bucket. Evaluation trenches were located to target areas of high potential suggested by documentary and cartographic research and replotting of aerial photographic evidence of the site and the surrounding area.

The primary objective of the project, following documentary and aerial photographic assessment, was to establish the character, extent, state of preservation and date of any archaeological remains within the subject site. Site specific research questions were framed as follows in the specification for the evaluation:

- Assess the environmental potential of the site;
- Assess the potential of artefactual and faunal evidence from the site;
- Assess the regional context of the site and highlight any relevant research issues within a national and regional framework;
- Provide a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relative importance against known development proposals, including an impact assessment.

Archaeological areas and features were recorded using a Zeiss RecElta 15 Total Station, and a digital base plan of the site was produced with Prosurveyor mapping software. A sample of archaeological features were excavated and recorded using the

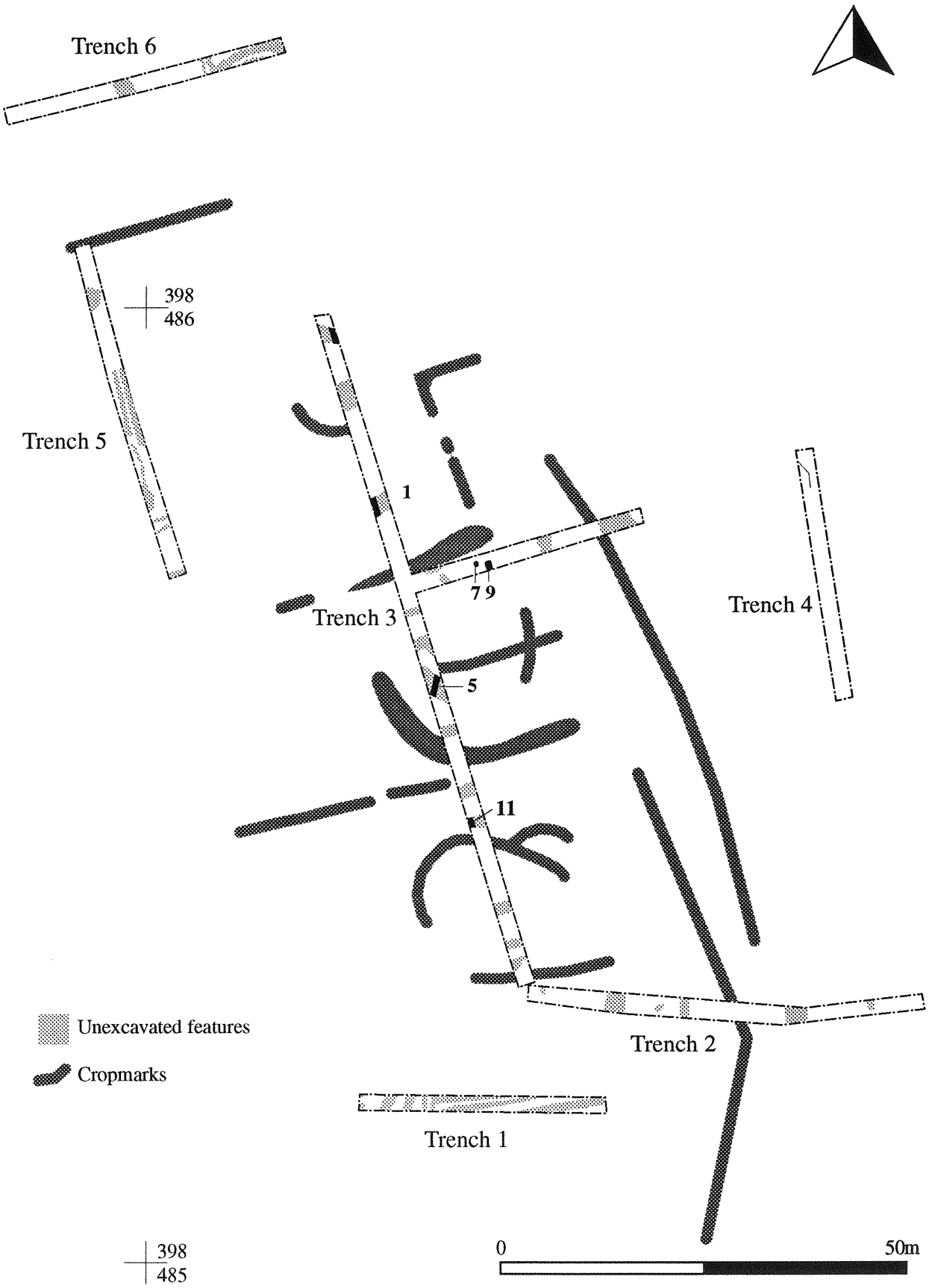

Figure 2 *Plan of recorded archaeological features*

pro-forma recording sheets of the Archaeological Field Unit. Features were hand excavated and planned at a scale of 1:20. Sections and profiles across excavated features were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate. A written record of all excavated features was made on single context recording sheets and the drawn and written record was supplemented by monochrome and colour photographs. Site records and artefacts are currently held at the AFU offices in Fulbourn under the site code SHHSP98. In this report fill numbers are shown in plain text and cut numbers in bold. Conditions for excavation and recording were variable, being for the most part dry and bright.

RESULTS

Aerial photographic assessment

The aerial photographic assessment (Appendix 1) highlighted rectilinear ditch systems on both sides of the brook and north and south of the railway which appear to relate to the Roman buildings to the south of the site. Within the assessment area there were a small number of ditches which may represent ditched enclosures (possible occupation sites) and field boundary ditches. Medieval ridge and furrow noted in the surrounding area was not visible on the subject site. Other features identified in the aerial photographic assessment include post-medieval field divisions and quarrying. Natural features include the alluvial material deposited on the shallowly-sloping western bank of the brook and various periglacial patterns.

An enclosure reported in earlier work on the site (Wilson and Taylor 1995) was not noted during the present replotting from available photographs.

Observation of topsoil stripping

The western part of the site (Fig. 1) was monitored during top-soil stripping. This revealed considerable agricultural or quarrying disturbance into the underlying gravels with frequent field drains (constructed with gravel, ceramic pipe and clunch blocks) and ditches (spaced approximately 30m apart). The majority of these ran approximately east–west, towards the brook. One ditch ran approximately north–south at the eastern extent of the exposed area. Machine excavation showed this to be part of the post-medieval drainage system. The north–south ditch was approximately 0.5m deep with an active ceramic field drain and the east–west drains were slightly shallower but again contained active ceramic drains.. A dark, stony feature (varying between 4m–6m wide) curved across the eastern part of the stripped area. A section was dug, by machine, and confirmed it as a palaeochannel with a dark organic clay lower fill (0.12m deep) with shallow lenses (0.04m deep) of sand sealed by a dark greyish brown silty clay (0.16m deep) with large stones and coarse gravel. Apart from fragments of post-medieval brick no finds were noted during machining and no finds, other than the ceramic field drains, were recovered from the machine-dug sections.

Intrusive evaluation

A sample of features were hand excavated, mainly in trench 3. The following interpretation of features in trenches was based on the similarity of fills. More complete excavation on the site would be needed to confirm this interpretation.

Trench 1 (31m long) was sited to test an area that appeared to be blank on the available aerial photographs. It was found to contained a series of linear features and at least two pits (at the western end) (Fig. 2). Four ditches/gullies ran approximately north-north-east–south-south-west across the western part of the trench. None of these was excavated but they had dark silty clay fills with varying amounts of gravel and large stones incorporated. The pits at the extreme western end of the trench were only partially revealed and contained a very dark brown silty clay fill.

Trench 2 (49m long) was sited to define the edge of the alluvium and the cropmarks noted in the aerial photographic assessment. It ran approximately parallel to trench 1 (Fig. 2) and its eastern end exposed alluvial and peat deposits. Two pits were cut into the gravels in the western part of the trench and there were four linear features which crossed the trench in an approximately north–south orientation. These features were not excavated but their fills were superficially similar to features in trench 3 which contained animal bone and prehistoric pottery.

Trench 3 (T-shaped, 125m total length) was located to refine the aerial photographic evidence which suggested various linear features in this part of the field. The majority of features were linear, running in an east–west direction (Fig. 2). There were also three north–south linear features in the east–west running part of the trench, together with three shallow (probably truncated) pits. Five features were sample excavated. Ditch **1** (0.9m deep and 2.30m wide) was oriented south-west–north-east and had a stepped profile with concave upper sides and a narrow gully in the base. The lower fill, 2, was a dark grey clay silt with occasional flints, chalk nodules and contained abraded tile fragments and a single cow astragalus. The lower fill, 3, was a compact dark grey silty clay with frequent stones and chalk nodules and contained sherds of pottery (Appendix 2). Ditch **5** (0.82m deep and 2.1m wide), oriented north-west–south-east, contained a single dark grey silty clay fill (4) with frequent stones, chalk nodules and fragments of abraded pottery, animal bone, mainly sheep/goat or

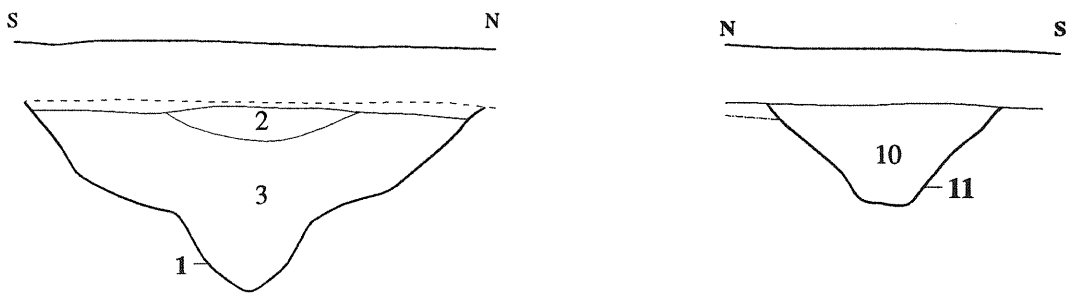

***Figure 3** Sections through Ditches 1 and 11*

small deer and a coiled lead strip (cross-section 7x4x4mm). The profile of this ditch was similar to **1** above with concave sides and a gully in the base. The third ditch, **11**, in this part of trench 3 was 0.58m deep and 1.1m wide. The fill, 10, was a dark grey silty clay with frequent stones and chalk nodules. Animal bone (including pig mandible, sheep/goat and cow limb bones) was recovered from this feature but no dating material.

In the east–west extension to trench 3 one linear feature was sample excavated. Ditch **9**, 0.75m wide and 0.18m deep, oriented approximately north–south had concave sides and a concave base. The single fill, 8, was a dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional flints. No finds were recovered from this feature. Less than half a metre to the west was a shallow post-hole or pit, **7**, 0.72m wide, 0.22m deep, with a flat base and gradually sloping sides. The fill, 6, was a dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional stones. A small quantity of abraded pottery was recovered from this fill.

Trench 4 (30m long) Trench 4 was excavated through the deep alluvial soils close to the brook. This trench was to determine whether features were sealed by alluvium and peat and therefore were were not visible in aerial photographs. Apart from two modern field drains no features were noted during machining. The depositional sequence confirms the sequence noted in the British Gas pipeline excavations with alluvial layers sealing peat deposits over a grey chalky marl. The British Gas pipeline report suggests a post-Roman date for the build up of the peat. Water seeped into this trench at 1.2m and it became impossible to record the sequence in any detail.

Trench 5 (42m long) was sealed by 0.3m of topsoil over less than 0.05m of subsoil. At the southern end of this trench was a linear feature which appears to be a westward extension of ditch **1** (in trench 3). Six metres to the north of this was a narrow linear feature running on a similar orientation. Beyond this, 4m to the north, was a narrow curving linear feature. The central part of the trench had been disturbed by ceramic field drains. At the northern end of the trench was a semi-circular feature which extended beyond the western section of the trench. This contained a silty clay fill and sloped shallowly to the north-west. No finds were recovered from a section dug through this feature.

Trench 6 (35m long) in the northern part of the site had 0.3m of topsoil sealing 0.15m of dark clay silt subsoil, which was, however, only 0.1m deep at the western end of the trench. Both this trench and trench 5 above was sited to test areas that appeared blank in the aerial photographic assessment. At the eastern end of the trench several features were noted in the underlying gravel natural. At least two post-medieval field drains ran north-west–south-east across the eastern part of the trench. At the extreme east of the trench was a pale fine gravel, cut by a curving, linear feature (approximately 0.5m wide) containing a dark brown silty clay. To the west of this was a complex of intercutting linear features (an oblique T-shape) with a dark brown silty clay with occasional large stones. Parallel to the north-west–south-east linear in the previously mentioned group of features and approximately 10m to the west was a further linear feature (1.8m wide), running across the trench. This contained a very dark greyish brown silty clay fill with frequent large stones. The western part of the trench contained bands of natural gravel with sandy patches. No features were recognised in the western part of the trench.

DISCUSSION

The site has considerable potential for waterlogged remains. The base of most excavated deep features contained water. The presence of peat sealing deposits in the eastern part of the site suggests this area may contain well-preserved organic remains.

Western area: monitoring of topsoil stripping

If any early occupation of this part of the site had survived into the post-medieval period it appears to have been destroyed by quarrying or agricultural activity. No features were recorded in the aerial photographic assessment in this area.

Eastern area: intrusive evaluation

Evaluation trenches revealed the presence of archaeological features across the western part of the field, decreasing in number towards the east. Excavated features contained prehistoric (Iron Age?) pottery and animal bone. The majority of features appear to be ditches (drainage and boundary) with few pits but no obvious structural remains. It is possible that shallow features have been lost or truncated by agriculture. Archaeological features appear to be clearly distinguishable from the surrounding gravels and geological features. The site is important as it indicates the possibility of Iron Age fields, and possibly settlement, close to the later high status Roman site to the south.

The survival of deep features indicates that even where shallow features have been destroyed or truncated by modern agriculture a significant number of possible pits and ditches remain to give some indication as to the nature of the occupation of this site.

Trench 1 contained mainly linear features with several running approximately north–south and others running approximately east–west. These were probably drainage ditches or field boundaries. Two apparent pits at the western end of the trench extended beyond the edge of the trench. It was impossible to ascribe a function during the evaluation and no dating material was recovered from them.

Trench 2 contained linear features and two possible pits. As no features were excavated it is not possible to assign dates but these appear to be either boundary or drainage ditches.

Trench 3 The excavated features from this trench were mainly deep ditches with gullies in the base. It is possible these held some form of post or fence but the excavated section was not long enough to confirm this. The lack of subsoil sealing features and the shallowness of some of the features indicates heavy truncation.

Trench 4 This trench contained a deeply (over 1.1m deep) stratified sequence of alluvium, peat and clay similar to that noted in the British Gas pipeline excavations (Wilson and Taylor 1995). Apart from a couple of field drains (over 1m deep) no other features were noted in the base of this trench. Water seeped into the trench at this depth and no further work was carried out here during the evaluation.

Trench 5 The westward extension of one of the ditches in trench 3 appears to continue into this trench. There were relatively fewer features in this trench and they were much narrower and, in the case of the pit, shallower than those in trench 3.

Trench 6 The similarity of fills in this trench to those containing Iron Age material in trench 3 suggests that at least three of the features noted in the eastern part of the trench may be of Iron Age date.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presence of possible archaeological features in five of the six trenches suggests that the deeper soils in part of the site have protected underlying archaeology from the damaging effects of agriculture. It would appear that occupation close to the brook was limited by the wetness of this area and may have been restricted to field boundaries rather than structures. It is possible that structural or settlement remains originally had been located on the better drained gravels in the western part of the site but recent activity has prevented any evidence surviving. Unfortunately the soils in this area are much shallower and features are thus liable to damage from agriculture or other activity on site.

Topsoil stripping alone will have minimal impact as little material appears to have survived in the topsoil and subsoil which seals the archaeological features. It is essential, however, to plan features within the eastern part of the site. As the proposed development involves dumping of large quantities of waste material problems with compression, and possibly contamination, are inevitable and will have considerable impact on the underlying archaeology.

No further work is recommended for the western part of the site where topsoil stripping has indicated that only the remnants of a palaeochannel and post-medieval field drains survive.

Further work is, however, recommended to clarify the extent of surviving remains on the western and northern part of the trenched area, to preserve by record the surviving archaeological features, in advance of waste disposal on the site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Mr. Clive Onslow of SEEARO Construction who commissioned this work and provided machinery and staff. AFU site staff were Nick Armour and Bob Hatton (observation and investigation of stripped western area) and Chris Montague (excavation in evaluation trenches). Simon Bray carried out the Total Station plotting of the site and trenches. Scott Kenney collected background information and William Wall was the Project Manager. The work was carried out in accordance with a specification written in response to a Brief issued by the Development Control Office of Cambridgeshire County Council. Work on site was monitored by Simon Kaner (Development Control) and Tim Reynolds (Sites and Monuments Record).

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APPENDIX 1

Aerial photographic assessment by Rog Palmer

SHEPRETH, TL398486, CAMBRIDGESHIRE: AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY

This assessment of aerial photographs examined an area of some 3.5 hectares (centred TL398486) in order to identify and accurately map archaeological and natural features.

The assessment area has never been photographed by archaeological observers as a target in its own right but features identified in adjacent fields suggest the strong possibility that ditches and other sub–surface features of (at least) Roman date are likely to be present. Traces of such evidence have been mapped in the assessment area and are of similar alignment to the major Roman settlement traces south of the railway.

Medieval fields, mainly in the form of headlands, have been recorded over much of the area surveyed.

Post–medieval ditched boundaries, on very close alignment to those of Roman date, have been identified on both sides of the stream.

The area includes considerable extents of patterned ground resulting from periglacial activity. This may confuse the picture from the air and on the ground.

SHEPRETH, TL398486,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE:
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

Rog Palmer MA MIFA

INTRODUCTION

This assessment of aerial photographs was commissioned to examine an area of some 3.5 hectares (centred TL398486) in order to identify and accurately map archaeological and natural features and thus provide a guide for field evaluation. Mapping was to be at 1:2500.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL FEATURES FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

In suitable cultivated soils, sub-surface archaeological features – including ditches, banks, pits, walls or foundations – may be recorded from the air in different ways in different seasons. In spring and summer these may show through their effect on crops growing above them. Such indications tend to be at their most visible in ripe cereal crops, in June or July in this part of Britain, although their appearance cannot accurately be predicted and their absence cannot be taken to imply evidence of archaeological absence. In winter months, when the soil is bare or crop cover is thin (when viewed from above), features may show by virtue of their different soils. Upstanding remains are also best recorded in winter months when vegetation is sparse and the low angle of the sun helps pick out slight differences of height and slope.

Natural faults and deposits can cause similar differences in crop growth and may also appear as startling colour changes in bare winter soils. On the soils of this assessment area we may expect indications of periglacial activity to show as 'polygons' or 'patterned ground' (see Wilson 1982, 150-152; 1987, 8-10). These deeper soil pockets can affect the growth of crops and become visible at the same times as archaeological features and thus affect perception. Varying depths of alluvial spread, such as from the stream bounding the east of the assessment area have the ability to mask sub-surface archaeological features completely.

The most informative aerial photographs of archaeological subjects tend to be those resulting from specialist reconnaissance. This activity is usually undertaken by an experienced archaeological observer who will fly at seasons and times of day when optimum results are expected. Oblique photographs, taken using a hand-held camera, are the usual product of such investigation. Although oblique photographs are able to provide a very detailed view, they are biased in providing a record that is mainly of features noticed by the observer, understood, and thought to be of archaeological relevance. To be able to map accurately from these photographs it is necessary that they have been taken from a sufficient height to include surrounding control information.

Vertical photographs cover the whole of Britain and can provide scenes on a series of dates between (usually) 1946-7 and the present. Unfortunately these vertical surveys are not necessarily flown at times of year that are best to record the crop and soil responses that may be seen above sub-surface features. Vertical photographs are taken by a camera fixed inside an aircraft and adjusted to take a series of overlapping views that can be examined stereoscopically. They are often of relatively small scale and their interpretation requires higher perceptive powers and a more cautious approach than that necessary for examination of obliques. Use of these small-scale images can also lead to errors of location and size when they are rectified or re-scaled to match a larger map scale.

All certain archaeological features mapped for this assessment are the sub-surface remains of former pits and ditches which have been identified as differences in crop growth or soil colour. Interpretation and mapping has translated this crop-marked evidence back into its archaeological reality.

PHOTO INTERPRETATION AND MAPPING

Photographs examined

Cover searches were obtained from the Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs (CUCAP) and the National Library of Air Photographs (NLAP), Swindon. Photographs included those resulting from specialist archaeological reconnaissance and routine vertical surveys.

Photographs consulted are listed in the Appendix to this report.

Base maps

Ordnance Survey digital data (tiles TL3948 and TL4048) were provided by the client.

Photo interpretation and mapping

All photographs were examined by eye and under slight (1.5x) magnification, viewing them as stereoscopic pairs when possible. Interpretations were marked on overlays to individual prints following procedures described by Palmer and Cox (1993). All rectification was computer assisted and carried out using AERIAL 4.2 software (Haigh 1993).

AERIAL computes values for error of control point match between the photograph and map. In all rectifications prepared for this assessment these were less than ±2.0m. Rectified and plotted output was combined and overlain on the OS digital data to form the basis of the finished digital plan that accompanies this assessment and has been reduced to illustrate this report. The finished plan has been supplied to the clients, as requested, in .dxf format.

COMMENTARY

Soils

The Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW 1983) shows the area to be situated on river terrace and chalky drift (series 512f). This soil series allows the development of differential crop growth above sub-surface features and so indications of past land use are likely to be visible from the air if crops, weather and time of observation are appropriate.

Archaeological features (see map)

The assessment area has never been specifically targeted on any of the oblique photographs examined and features mapped within it are those that appeared, by default, in photographs taken of adjacent fields. This prompts two reminders to anyone attempting to assess the archaeological potential of that area:

1 It is possible that no archaeological features were visible on the dates of oblique photography or, if they were, they were not recognised as such by the airborne observers;

2 The mapped information is likely to be a partial record of what may be present within the assessment area since no photographs record the complete area when crop conditions were responsive. The information mapped was identified in the corners of two photographs only that showed only the south–east part of the assessment area.

The predominant archaeological features in the area surveyed are the now-levelled ditches which make up the rectilinear system that was almost certainly related to the Roman buildings identified on the OS plan (in TL398483). This system of ditches is visible on both sides of the stream and north and south of the railway. The 1:2500 plan shows only the major features of this system beyond the assessment area (sufficient to indicate alignments and changes of form) but these appear to represent dense and multi–phase use in the vicinity of the buildings (ie south of the railway) and may be just field divisions to the north. Substantial roads or trackways leading to the east and south attest the importance of this site in Roman times.

Within the assessment area are a small number of possible ditches on similar alignment and showing similar forms to those of more certain Roman–period origin. [Unfortunately the Roman alignment is almost identical to that of the post–medieval fields, which makes it difficult to date these features on the basis of the aerial photographic evidence alone.] If they are archaeological, the features mapped could include parts of ditched enclosures (possibly occupation sites) and field or paddock boundary ditches. As such they would mirror others, mapped with more confidence, to the south–east. Any related ditched system would be expected to extend to the east and west, most probably to the south, and possibly to the north of the traces mapped.

Headlands, delineating medieval furlongs, can be seen throughout the Shepreth area. In general terms they are aligned WSW to ENE (ie contour-following) and indicate that the land was farmed in medieval times. Traces of ridge and furrow are *just* suggested on some photographs

but are not visible within the assessment area although slight furrows remaining from these may be identified if the topsoil is removed.

Non-archaeological features

Recent features
A series of parallel linear features lie approximately perpendicular to, and on both sides of, the stream. These are likely to indicate former, but almost certainly post-medieval, field and/or paddock divisions.

East of the stream and abutting the railway embankment is a shallow depression showing former quarrying. A much smaller, but similar, cut feature abuts one of the former field divisions within the assessment area.

Unmapped, on the eastern side of the stream, is a pipeline which runs between the stream–railway boundary and the sewage works (north of the area surveyed at TL40153910). This pipeline does not cross the present assessment area.

Natural features
The stream bounding the east edge of the assessment area appears, on the most stereoscopically responsive photographs, to be situated in the bottom of a broad (maybe up to 60m wide) and relatively steeply sloping bed. This is most visible on its east side, the west being deduced by the presence of a band of deeper soil, probably alluvial material, with what may be a levee on its outer (west) side. This levee shows as a very slight bank on RC8-CK series prints (1977) and on others (notably OS 1972 verticals) appears to be marked or followed by a sinuous, and now-levelled, boundary ditch. The band of deeper soil may mask any sub-surface features that extend from the higher (west) ground towards the stream.

Patterned ground, resulting from periglacial activity, shows clearly (and differently) on a number of photographs. There are hints of patterning throughout the area surveyed, but the largest continuous extents are those within the assessment area and, slightly to the north, on the east side of the stream. Among these patterns, and possibly related to them, are a number of near parallel bands aligned approximately SSW to NNE. No such band was identified within the assessment area, but they may indicate a general trend of natural alignments that may become apparent if sample trenches are opened. Patterned ground, which becomes visible through differential crop growth, can blur the clarity of archaeological features although many examples are known where the two coincide and can be distinguished (eg Wilson 1982, figure 94).

Land use

All fields within the zone surveyed have been in arable use on all dates of photography. The quarry immediately west of the assessment area has been extant from 1946 and provides no information relevant to this report.

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APPENDIX

Aerial photographs examined

Source: Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs

Oblique photographs

ABY 50-54	12 July 1960
AHO 10-11	11 July 1963
BIX 22-24	22 June 1972
BKY 15-21	25 October 1972
BTI 43-46	30 June 1975
BUA 4-7	7 July 1975
BUT 24-29	21 July 1975
CQU 76-78	9 July 1986

Vertical photographs

RC8-CK 66-69	16 November 1977	1:10000
RC8-JO 132-133	2 July 1987	1:10000
RC8-JO 182-183	2 July 1987	1:10000
RC8-KnBE 18	12 June 1988	1:10000

Source: National Library of Air Photographs

Specialist collection

TL3948/1	Undated, probably 1930s
TL3948/2/95-96	11 June 1976
TL3948/3/141-142	28 March 1980
TL3948/4	21 July 1981
TL3948/6-8	21 July 1981
TL4048/1/169-170	6 May 1975
TL4048/3,	16 April 1985
TL4048/6-10	16 April 1985
TL4048/11	22 June 1995
TL4048/12	22 June 1995

Vertical collection

106G/UK/1835: 4416-4418	9 July 1946	1:10000
106G/UK/1712: 4001-4002	30 August 1946	1:9600
106G/UK/1718: 3113-3115	6 September 1946	1:9800
CPE/UK/1993: 4044-4046	13 April 1947	1:9800
OS/52R31: 108-110	23 May 1952	1:8050
OS/52R58: 32-35	8 October 1952	1:8000
F21.58/1119: 6-7	11 May 1953	1:10000
F22.58/1119: 6-8	11 May 1953	1:10000
F22.58/1337: 422-423	11 January 1954	1:10000
OS/67145: 33	5 June 1967	1:7500
OS/67145: 34-35	5 June 1967	1:7500
MAL/68038: 96-98	2 June 1968	1:11000
MAL/69053: 59-61	8 June 1969	1:10500
MAL/69054: 80	9 June 1969	1:10500
MAL/69069: 178-180	22 July 1969	1:10500
OS/72234: 209-211	16 July 1972	1:7000
OS/72416: 550-552	6 October 1972	1:7200
OS/74/187: 228-231	22 July 1974	1:7500

Most informative photographs

Within the assessment area:

BUA 5	(possible archaeological features)
OS/72234: 210	(natural and recent features)
TL3948/6	(natural and recent features)

Shepreth, Cambridgeshire: area centred TL398487. Features interpreted from aerial photographs.

Key to features as interpreted through their effect on crop growth or in bare soil. All are now levelled.

Archaeological features

- Ditch
- Possible ditch

Archaeologically related features?

- Light-toned (?chalky) mound
- Damp ground (March 1980)

Recent features

- Former field boundary
- Former quarry

Natural features

- Area of deeper soil (?alluvium)
- Area of periglacial stripes
- Apparent band within stripes

- Extent of survey

Original photo interpretation and mapping at 1:2500, based on photographs held at CUCAP and NLAP.

Air Photo Services (Cambridge)
21 Gunhild Way
Cambridge CB1 4QZ

\shepreth.dwg

Note: This print is at no standard scale but reduced to fit the page.

APPENDIX 2

Pottery assessment by Dr. Paul Spoerry

Most of the pottery from this site comprised small, frequently abraded sherds although several larger sherds were found in deeper contexts (3 and 4).

Context 2

Sherds of handmade pottery with possible wiping and turntable finish and possibly a slight incised decoration.
Fragments of Roman brick or tile

Context 3

Mostly sherds of reduced, possibly wheelmade or turntable finished, sand tempered pottery with few calcareous inclusions
1 sherd of slightly shell tempered buff pottery
3 or 4 sherds of reduced, partially oxidised handmade pottery with incised or scratched decoration

Context 4

Large sherds from possibly flared bowl. Prehistoric, handmade pottery with a low firing temperature, a black core and oxidised surface, various calcareous and other inclusions but no deliberate temper.
Sherds of handmade shell tempered pot.
Sherds of handmade grog tempered pot with some possible burnt organic temper.
Some sand tempered pottery with a possible turntable finish.

Context 6

Numerous small, very fragmented sherds of handmade pottery

The pottery from the site would seem to be of late prehistoric date. There appears to be little similarity between pottery forms and fabrics from different contexts although there are some areas of overlap. Considering the small number of features excavated there is a wide variation in fabric, form and date.

APPENDIX 3

Finds list – in grams and by count

context	pottery	sherds	tile & brick	lead	burnt stone	burnt flint	worked flint	flint frags	animal bone
2	20	10	94			13			33
3	126	27			303				
4	115	30		61					63
6	21	>15							
10					278	21	6	1	182

Animal bone – species identification by Dr. M. Levine

	Species	Element
Context 2:	cow	astragalus
Context 4:	sheep/goat	2 proximal metatarsals
	sheep/goat	1 lower M1/2
	sheep/goat	1 upper P3/4
	sheep/goat or small deer	1 shaft tibia
	sheep/goat	pelvis fragment
	seventeen small shaft fragments, large and medium mammal	
	two fragments burnt bone	
Context 10:	pig	mandible
	pig	mandibula condyle
	cow	calcaneum
	large ungulate	femur fragment
	sheep/goat	1st phalange
	sheep/goat	tibia
	two small shaft fragments from medium mammal	

The faunal assemblage is what might be expected for domestic food debris from a late prehistoric occupation site. Although there is slight evidence of species differentiation between contexts the sample is too small for significance to be attached to this.

Cambridgeshire
County Council

Archaeology

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