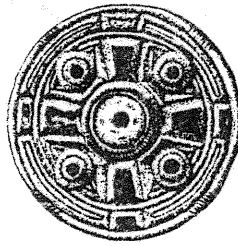


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Archaeological Field Unit

**Roman Remains at 15/17 Hay Street, Steeple Morden
STEHS02
Cambridgeshire (TL 286 426)**

Andrew Rudge

December 2002

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. A215

Commissioned by *Wedge Homes Ltd*

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Andrew Rudge BSc MSc

2002

Editor : Judith Roberts
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SUMMARY

The Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation/assessment in December 2002, at 15/17 Hay Street, Steeple Morden, Cambridgeshire (TL286 426). The work was carried out in advance of the proposed construction of two dwellings on the site.

A single trench was excavated, and a large ditch was identified containing a significant quantity of Romano-British pottery. Post-medieval finds were also identified in overlying layers.

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Drawing Conventions

Sections	Plans
Limit of Excavation -----	Limit of Excavation _____
Cut _____	Deposit - Conjectured -----
Cut - Conjectured -----	Natural Features
Soil Horizon -----	Intrusion/Truncation -----
Soil Horizon - Conjectured	Sondages/Machine Strip -----
Intrusion/Truncation -----	Illustrated Section _____ S.14
Top of Natural _____	
Top Surface _____	
Break in Section -----	
Cut Number 118	
Deposit Number 117	
Ordinance Datum 18.45m ODN	

**Roman Remains at 15/17 Hay Street, Steeple Morden, Cambridgeshire.
(TL 286 426)**

1 INTRODUCTION

On the 18th of December 2002, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council (AFU) conducted an archaeological evaluation/assessment on land at 15/17 Hay Street, Steeple Morden, Cambridgeshire (TL 286 426). The work was carried out at the request of Wedge Homes Ltd. and was undertaken in order to fulfil a Brief for archaeological investigation prepared by Andy Thomas, Principal Archaeologist, Land Use and Planning, Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Section.

The site is located in the centre of Steeple Morden on the west side of Hay Street, and lies to the immediate north of the Primary School. The proposed development of this site includes the construction of two dwellings, on either side of two standing semi-detached cottages (currently being renovated as a part of the same development), garages and access.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site is located within the centre of Steeple Morden is sited on the Lower Beds (known as Chalk Marl) of the Cretaceous Lower Chalk ridge of south Cambridgeshire (BGS 1976), at a height of approximately 48m OD. To the north the village lies on the Upper Beds of the Lower Chalk.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Recent archaeological fieldwork, both on site (Grant & Wilkins, 2002), and adjacent to the site (Kenney, 2001), has revealed the presence of a large number of features of archaeological interest, including ditches and enclosures of Romano-British date. For a more in depth account of the sites archaeological and historical background see Grant & Wilkins (2002) and Kenney (2001).



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Figure 1 Location of Trench with Development Area outlined.

4 METHODOLOGY

A single trench was excavated to the immediate west of the proposed southern dwelling. The trench was excavated under archaeological supervision by a tracked machine using a toothless ditching bucket, and was aligned north-south, running between the northern boundary wall of the school and the most westerly out-building associated with number 15 Hay Street.

5 RESULTS

Trench 1 was 8.60m in length and 1.70m in width, and was excavated to a depth of c1.0m. Towards the northern end of the trench a narrow (c 0.90m wide) sondage was excavated to a depth of c1.60m.

The lowest layer identified, 1007, was encountered at a depth of c1.45m. Layer 1007 was a clayey, light to pale yellow/grey chalk, which appeared to be the upper level of the natural. Overlying 1007 was 1002, a dark grey, slightly mixed, layer of silty sandy clay, c0.45m – 0.50m deep. Cut into 1002 is 1004. The cut was very indistinct having been heavily disturbed by root action, but appears to have gradually sloping sides with a slightly concave base. Filling 1004 was 1003, a medium to dark grey silty sand clay, similar to 1002 but containing occasional sherds of Romano-British pottery and animal bone. To the south of 1004 was 1006 a second very distinct cut for a northwest-southeast aligned ditch. The cut appeared to have gradual sloping sides, but the extent and depth were undefined due to the level of ground water. Ditch 1006 was filled by 1005, a light to medium grey silty clay with occasional to moderate clasts, including flint nodules, bone and Romano-British pottery. Overlying 1006 in the south and 1004 in the north were 1001 and 1008 consecutively. Deposit 1001, the sub-soil, was c0.50m deep and consisted of medium grey sandy clay with occasional flint clasts and rootlets. Layer 1008 was a very mixed, medium to dark grey sandy clay, probably equivalent to 1001, but heavily disturbed by root action. Both 1001 and 1008 were overlain by 1000, the top soil, a medium to dark grey brown, slightly clayed, silty sand, with a crumb structure and occasional small to medium sub-rounded and sub-angular clasts. The lower boundary between 1000, and 1001 and 1008, was distinct.

6 DISCUSSION

In light of the results obtained from Trench 1, it appears that both contexts 1006 and 1004 correspond to the southern and northern sides, respectively, of a single, large ditch c4.20m wide. The ditch appears to run in a northwest-southeasterly alignment, and from the finds recovered was of Romano-British date. Later post-medieval finds were also recovered from the trench in overlying layers (i.e. 1008), which may

indicate relatively undisturbed survival at greater depth, particularly where tree root activity has been limited. No medieval remains were identified.

7 CONCLUSION

The objective of the fieldwork was to establish the character, date, extent and state of preservation of any archaeological remains within the area of the proposed development, and to this effect the work was successful. A large ditch containing well preserved Romano-British pottery as well as animal bone was identified. This, along with recent work, both on site and within its surrounding environs, suggests that significant and often well preserved archaeological remains of Romano-British date survive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Wedge Homes Ltd who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Judith Roberts. The fieldwork was conducted by Judith Roberts and Andrew Rudge, and the illustrations were prepared by Emily Oakes.

The Brief for archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas, County Archaeology Office.

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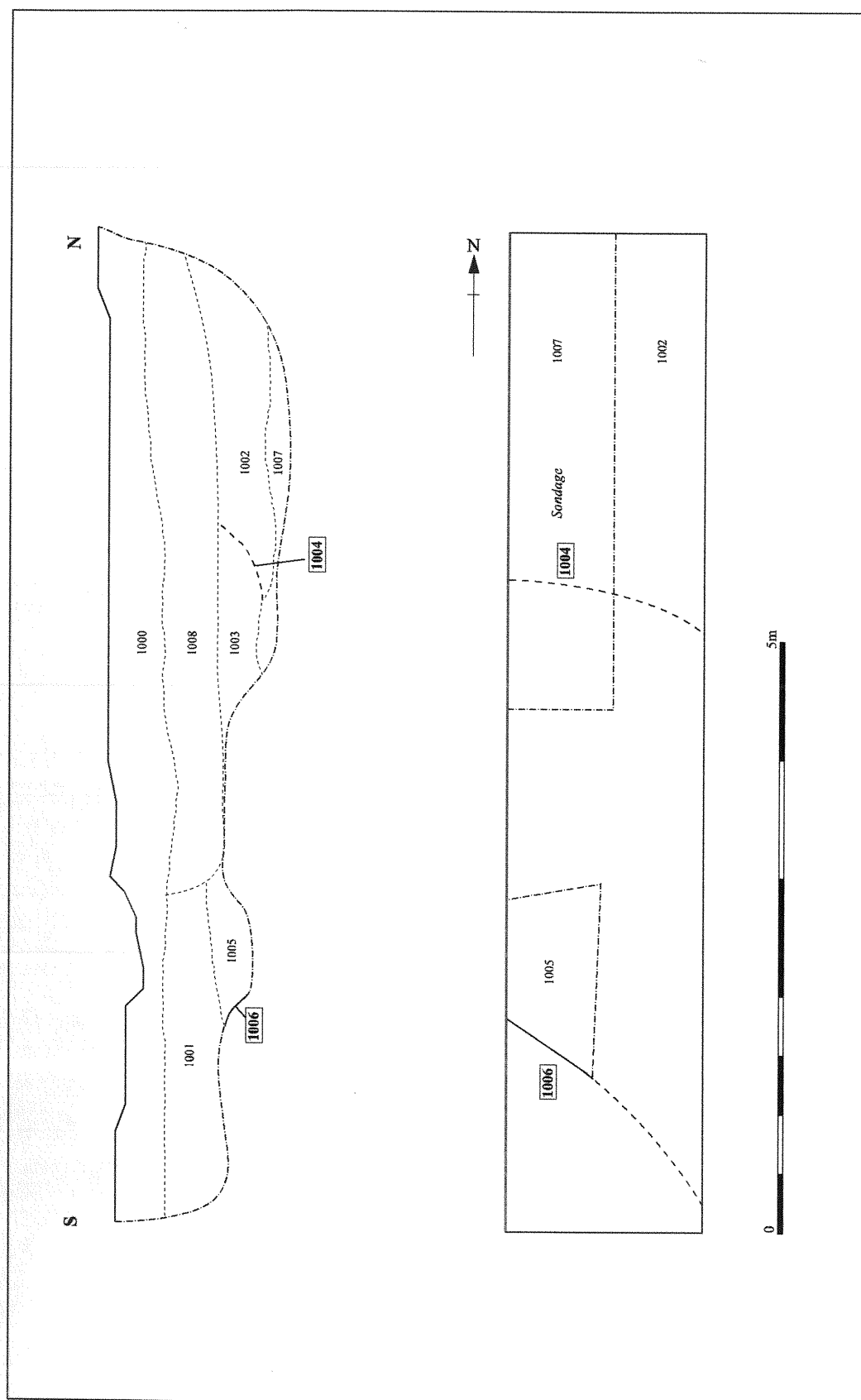


Figure 2 Section Drawing and Trench Plan



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