

Archaeological Field Unit

Manor Farm, Leighton Bromswold, Cambridgeshire:
A Recording Brief

A Hatton and T Way

1997

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. B15

Commissioned By Colin Fox

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INTRODUCTION

The Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council carried out a recording brief at Manor Farm, Church Lane, Leighton Bromswold (TL 515753) over several days in February and March 1997. The recording brief was commissioned by Colin Fox, in order to comply with a condition of planning permission relating to the proposed construction of two dwellings at Manor Farm. The work was designed to meet the requirement of a brief produced by the County Archaeology Office (Austin 1996).

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

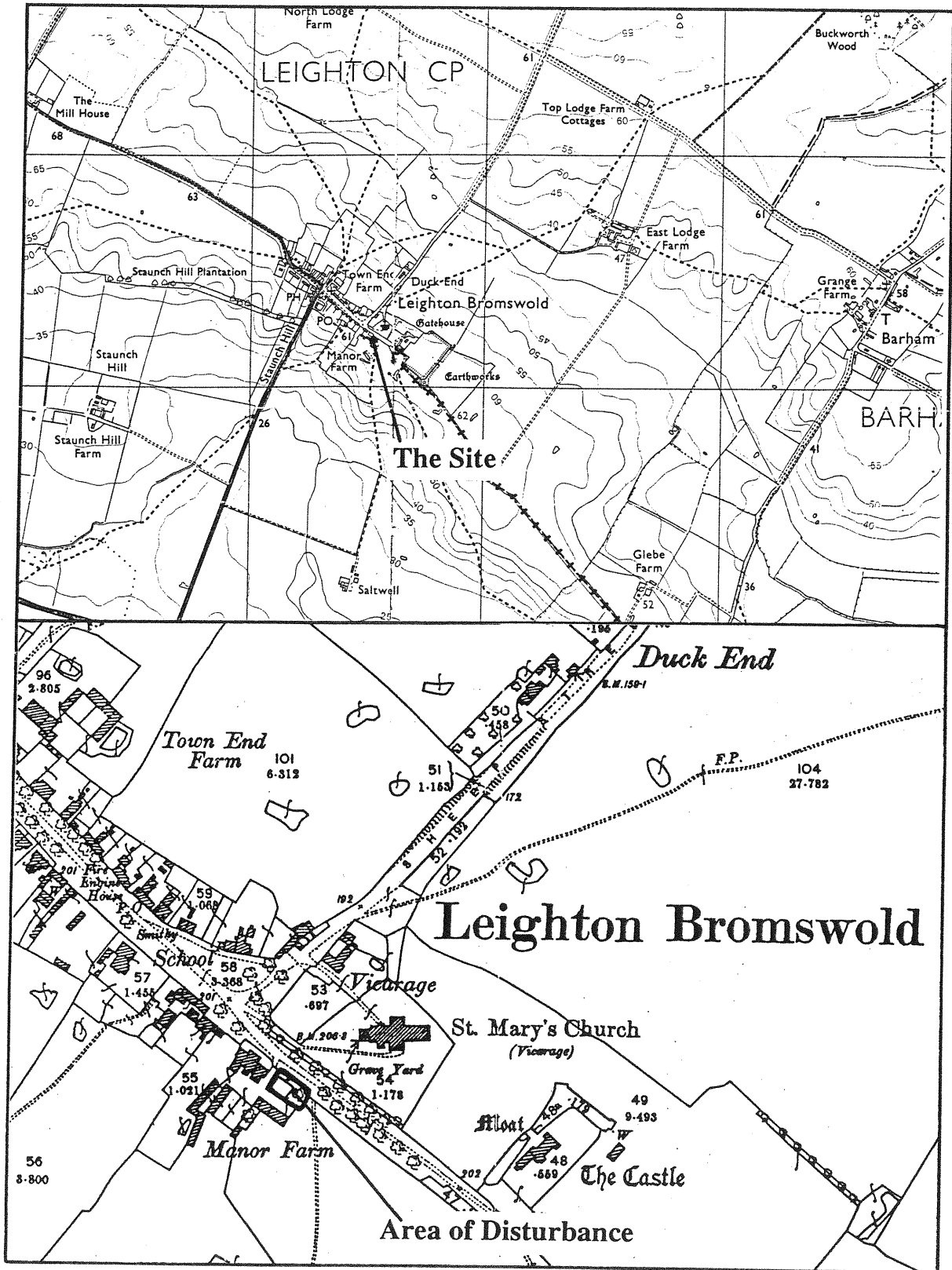
The village of Leighton Bromswold is situated on a ridge between two brooks that flow through the parish, one from the west through the north and middle part of the parish, and the other, the Ellington Brook, eastwards through the southern part of the parish (VCH Hunts vol. iii, 86). The site itself lies on Boulder Clay at a height of 75m on this ridge. The area of the recording brief lies within the grounds of the Manor Farm, situated just off Church Lane, whilst immediately opposite, across this lane, is the site of St Mary's Church. The main area of the current village lies to the north west.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The village of Leighton Bromswold has a high concentration of archaeological sites and the property is judged to be located in an area of great archaeological sensitivity. In addition to the proximity of the medieval church (SMR 707), the property lies just to the north west of an area of earthworks of former medieval settlement and the probable gatehouse of Leighton Bromswold Manor House. These earthworks (SAM 190) are associated with a period of emparkment and garden enclosure dating to the mid-seventeenth century, at which period the original village layout underwent substantial alteration; although there is some suggestion that this area of village had already undergone considerable shrinkage by this time. It can however be stated that at some period prior to the seventeenth century the area under investigation would have been more centrally placed within the village (Brown and Taylor 1984). The Manor Farm itself was previously known as Church Farm which is presumed to relate to its holding, rather than location.

Leighton Bromswold has a particularly rich cartographic history. A map of the parish by Norton dating to 1660 (orig. BM Add.Ms. 1803; Printed copy VCH Hunts. vol. iii, 86) shows the area under investigation to have contained typical small dwellings and associated 'tofts', stretching from the road back towards an area of pasture closes and lays. By 1793 the area had undergone considerable alteration, with consolidation of the old tofts into larger areas and alteration of the dwellings (HRO Acc. 1682). No later cartographic or documentary works were consulted for the purposes of the recording brief.

Figure 1 Site Location and Area of Site Disturbance



METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

An archaeologist was on site to monitor initial removal of topsoil and to observe the house foundation trenches, and record any archaeological features revealed within these. The initial removal of topsoil was undertaken by machine, and the house foundation trenches were excavated to a depth of 750mm using a 500mm wide machine bucket.

An initial site visit on 6th February noted the presence of modern debris and make-up within areas of topsoil stripping and a dark organic deposit, from which were recovered post medieval and modern pottery fragments.

Subsequent visits on the 10th of February and 4th of March, to observe the house foundation trenches, noted the absence of any archaeological features within these trenches.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the archaeological sensitive nature of the area, and the density of medieval and post medieval earthworks to the immediate south east and east, no archaeological remains were noted within the development area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Archaeological Field Unit would like to thank Colin Fox for commissioning this project.

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