

Archaeological Field Unit

Post-Medieval Deposits at Main Street and Colliers Lane, Stow-cum-Quy

Spencer Cooper

1999

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No.B51

Commissioned By Upware Marina Ltd

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SUMMARY

Between 11th and 14th June 1999 the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council carried out an archaeological evaluation on land off Main Street and Colliers Lane, Stow-cum-Quy (TL 468599). The work was commissioned by Mr Foreman of Upware Marina Ltd before the construction of commercial properties. The results from the evaluation revealed minimal archaeological activity. A small number of features were observed in trenches 1 and 2 including pits and ditches. Finds dating to the Post-Medieval period were recovered from the pits in trench 1. No artefacts were recovered from the ditches in trench 2.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Between 11th and 14th June 1999 the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Main Street and Colliers Lane, Stow-cum-Quy (TL52156068) on behalf of Upware Marina Ltd before the construction of a new office development and associated car parking. The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit Specification SPM Apr//99/11 drawn up by Stephen Macaulay in response to a design brief issued by Simon Kaner of the County Archaeology Office.
- 1.2** The site lies to the north-east cross road that formed the early core of the settlement. There was a strong likelihood that medieval frontages and associated features might be identified in the southern part of the site. The presence of Mesolithic and Neolithic artefacts found in the area suggest that prehistoric remains may have been encountered.

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1** The site lies on the land adjacent to the village of Stow-cum-Quy directly on Main St and Colliers Lane on the B1102 to Lode. The site is bounded on the south by the Fulbourn Fen, on the west by Quy Water and on the north by the main Fen. The site is located on an area of Lower Chalk with 4th terrace gravels to the north.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

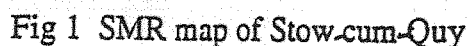
3.1 Historical Background

In the medieval period Stow and Quy were two separate villages which were combined in the 13th century. Stow is Stoua in 1086 probably meaning place or very probably Holy place and Quy is Coeeia or Cow Island. Both villages originated on road crossings on a ridge of higher ground that stood above the fen on the 10m contour. This road that runs through Stow -cum -Quy was part of a long distance Cambridge-East Anglia route. The village of Stow lay along the this route and in the later middle ages by a drove road running south-east to north west from the Wilbrahams to the Fens. The medieval village also had at least one street lined with houses extending to the Cambridge- Newmarket road. The village of Quy lay along the long and ancient track from Brinkley (Taylor 1998).

The population of the two villages was about 20 in 1086, Quy probably being the principal place. In 1377 there was a modest population of 148. In the 16th century 31 households paid tax , growing to 45 in the 17th century. In 1801 there was a total population of 235, which grew to a peak of 387 in 1881.

In terms of village development both Quy and Stow appear to have had primary streets running NW-SE . Bakers map of 1821 shows a small group of cottages on the southern part of the development.

Other archaeological remains include medieval ridge and furrow (SMR No 06695, 06699, 06698) in the fields to the east and south-east. Roman settlement (SMR No 06036) to the west of the site near Quy Hall, finds recovered from this site include pottery, roof tile and fragments of box flue tiles. A Mesolithic axe has been recovered from the village and a prehistoric flint scatter is recorded by the church. There are also cropmarks (SMR No 06340, 11482) to the south east of the site.



4 METHODOLOGY

Following the initial documentary study series of six trenches totalling 66m in length, (all trenches except for Trench 2 were 1.6m wide), were excavated using a JCB with a toothless ditching bucket. The location of trenches was severely constrained due to large parts of the site being crossed by electricity, water and telephone services. Field observations enabled trenches to be positioned away from cables. A total of 5% of the development area was evaluated. The locations of the trenches are shown in Figure 2. After machining was completed each trench was cleaned by hand and photographed and recorded using the AFU standard archaeological recording system. In addition all of the spoil heaps from the trenches were scanned visually and with a metal detector to aid recovery of artefacts.

5 RESULTS

Results revealed no evidence of medieval occupation. Post-Medieval pits were revealed in trench 1. Truncated ditches of an unknown date were recorded in trench 2.

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was an L-shaped trench 14m long and 0.5m deep on a north-south alignment and 1.2m long, 3.2m wide and on a east-west alignment. It was located in order to investigate the possible medieval frontage and to avoid live service trenches and pipes. The over burden (layer 1) consisted of a dark grey clay silt which was 0.30m deep and contained modern brick and pottery. In the northern part of the trench two large intercutting pits were encountered at 9.6m OD. Pit 6 measured 1.95m wide and 1.1m deep and contained two fills 4 and 5. Fill 4 was 0.70m deep and 1.95m wide and consisted of a sandy silt with frequent fragments of chalk. Post-Medieval sherds were recovered from fill 4. Fill 5 was 0.40m deep and consisted of a sandy chalk. This fill 5 was truncated by Pit 8, which measured 1.45m wide and 1.20m deep and contained two fills. Fill 7 was 0.40m deep and was composed of a pale brown sandy silt with frequent chalk fragment. Post-Medieval sherds were recovered from fill 7. Fill 9 was 0.80m deep and was composed of a pale brown sandy chalk. In the centre of the trench a rectangular post hole 3 was revealed. Post hole 3 was 0.30m wide and 0.10m deep and contained a dark brown sandy silt. No artefacts were recovered from this post hole.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 6.2m long 0.8m deep and was located on an north-south alignment. It was positioned in order to investigate possible medieval frontage on Colliers Lane. Intercutting ditches were identified in the centre of the trench, with Ditch 10 cutting Ditch 12. Ditch 10 was concave and ran on a east west alignment. It was 0.45m wide and 0.10m deep and contained a brown silty sand 11 with occasional fragments of chalk. Ditch 12 was concave and ran on a east-west alignment 1.56m wide and 0.20m deep and contained a 13 dark brown silty sand with no artefacts.

5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was 25m long and 0.85m deep and positioned on a east-west alignment. It was located in order to identify archaeological potential associated with medieval back yard activity. Topsoil was 0.70m deep and composed of a dark greyish brown silty clay which contained modern artefacts. Subsoil was 0.15m a pale brown clay silt with occasional chalk fragments. No archaeological features were encountered in this trench. Sandy periglacial deposits in association natural chalk were observed.

5.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 was 9.6m long and 1.2m deep and positioned on a east-west alignment. It was located in order to identify potential medieval buildings in the southern part of the development site. Topsoil was 0.70m deep and composed of a dark greyish brown silty clay which contained modern artefacts. Subsoil was 0.50m a pale brown clay silt with occasional chalk fragments. No archaeological features were encountered in this trench. Sandy periglacial deposits in association natural chalk were observed.

5.5 Trench 5

Trench 5 was 5m long and 1.4m deep and positioned on a north-south alignment between the factory building and Colliers Lane. Topsoil was 0.50m deep and consisted of a dark grey clay silt. This sealed 16 which was 0.52m deep and composed of a dark grey clay silt. This layer contained a number of modern artefacts. Subsoil was 0.40m deep and consisted of a pale brown clay silt with occasional chalk fragments.

5.6 Trench 6

Trench 4 was 4m long and 1.2m deep and located on a north-south alignment between the factory building and Colliers Lane. Topsoil was 0.5m deep and composed of a dark greyish brown silty clay which contained modern artefacts. This overlay a brown silty sand subsoil which was 0.50m deep and consisted of a pale brown clay silt with occasional chalk fragments.

6 Interpretation.

- 6.1** A small number of features were observed in trenches 1 and 2. The intercutting pits revealed in trench 1 contained Post-medieval ceramics. These features may represent quarrying or possibly storage pits. The two ditches revealed in trench 2 appear to have been heavily truncated and they may represent property boundaries.

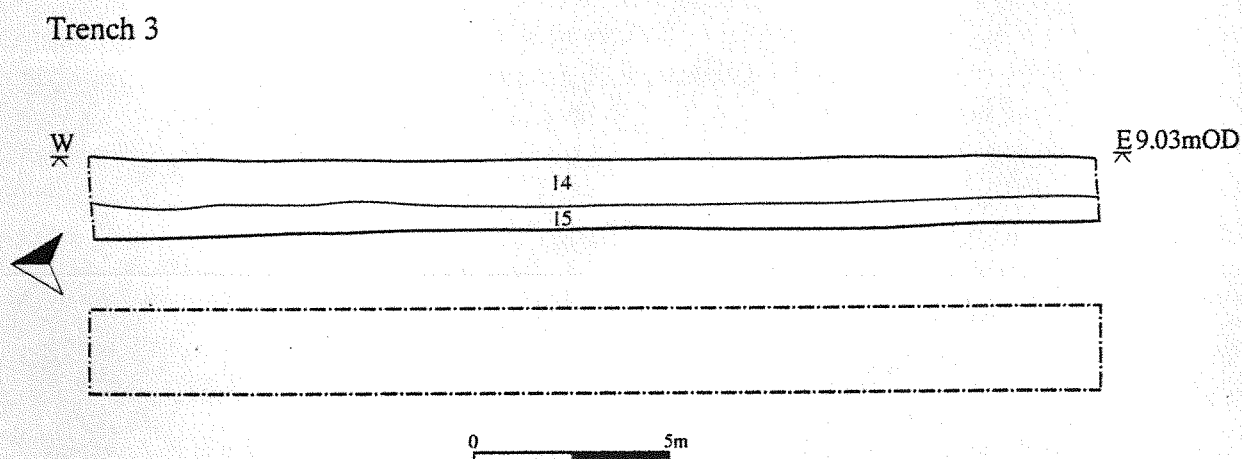
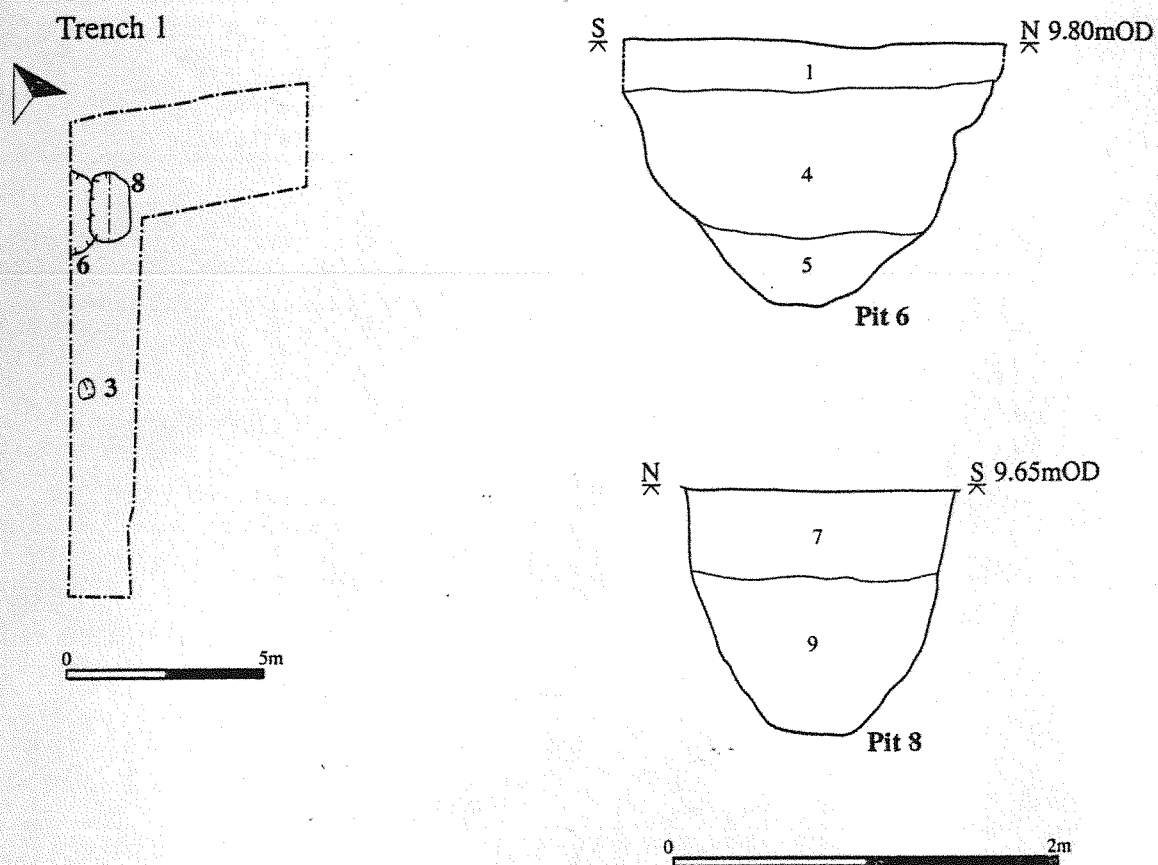


Figure 3 Trench 1 plan and pit sections; Trench 3 plan and trench section

7 Conclusion

Results from the first professional archaeological evaluation in Stow Cum Quy has produced minimal amount of archaeological activity. No features or artefacts from the medieval period were encountered in the six excavated trenches. This lack of medieval activity is surprising considering its proximity to St Nicholas Church and its position to the historic core of Stow. The implications of this data is that there was very little development along Colliers Lane in the medieval period. While there is no evidence to suggest any earlier Prehistoric or Roman occupation it is likely that the site lay beyond the medieval village.

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## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author wishes to thank the developer Mr J Foreman for their co-operation, Simon Kaner for monitoring on behalf of the CAO and Tony Baker for his work on site,

## **10 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Taylor, A.1998 Archaeology of Cambridgeshire Vol 2: South East Cambridgeshire and the Fen.

RCHM, NE Cambs, 1972

Maps consulted

Bakers 1830 map of Cambridgeshire consulted at Fulbourn

Cambridgeshire Sites and Monuments Record.

## 8 Appendix A

### List of Contexts

1. Over burden dark grey clay silt 0.30m deep
2. fill of post hole, dark brown clay silt 0.30m deep 0.50m wide
3. Cut of post hole rectangular, concave sides 0.30m deep 0.50m deep
4. Fill of pit dark brown sandy silt with frequent 70m deep, 1.95 wide
5. Fill of pit brown sandy chalk 0.40m wide 1.m deep
6. Cut of pit oval concave 1.95m wide 1,10m deep.
7. Fill of pit pale brown sandy silt with chalk fragments
8. Cut of pit subcircular concave 1.45m wide 1.20m deep
9. Fill of cut pale brown sandy chalk was a 0.80m deep
10. Cut of ditch concave 0.45m wide and 0.10m deep
11. Fill of Ditch brown sandy silt 0.45m wide and 0.7m
12. Cut of ditch was 1.56 wide 0.20m deep.
13. Fill of ditch dark clay silt was 1.56 and 0.20m deep
14. Topsoil dark grey clay silt varies from 0.70m-0.50m.
- 15.. Subsoil pale brown clay silt varies from 0.30m-0.50m
- 16 Dark greyish silt 0.52m deep

### SMR Entries

- 06340 St Nicholas Church late medieval  
06036 Roman settlement- Finds recovered include pottery, roof tiles and box tiles  
06375 Quay Hall  
06510 White Swan Two storey late 17th century Inn  
06513 Mesolithic axe.  
06695 Ridge and Furrow  
06998 Ridge and Furrow  
06699 Ridge and Furrow  
11321 Mesolithic and Neolithic Flint Scatter  
11323 Mesolithic and Neolithic Flint Scatter



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