

Archaeological Field Unit

**View Farm, Park Lane, Dry Drayton:
an archaeological evaluation**

Judith Roberts

July 1999

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. B55

Commissioned by David Reed Homes Ltd.

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation of a 0.6ha site at View Farm, Dry Drayton was undertaken by the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit in July 1999. Three trenches were dug and revealed remnants of ridge and furrow agriculture along the north-western part of the site but much of the site was truncated by services and modern building foundations. No clear evidence for Saxon or medieval settlement on the area was discovered in spite of the presence of medieval earthworks nearby.

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**View Farm, Park Lane, Dry Drayton:
an archaeological evaluation
(TL 383 620)**

INTRODUCTION

In July 1999 the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council undertook an evaluation to reveal archaeological remains at View Farm, Park Lane, Dry Drayton (TL383/620) (Fig. 1). The work was carried out on behalf of David Reed Homes Ltd before development of the land for housing.

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The 0.6ha site lies on grey-blue Gault Clay (British Geological Survey 1978), on a low rise sloping from north-west to south-east, from approximately 29mOD in the north-western part of the site to 27m in the south-eastern part.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Cambridgeshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) records medieval settlement earthworks and ridge and furrow (SMR nos. 1091 and 275) in the fields to the south-west and this appears to be the heart of the medieval village.

The remaining SMR records for the area include Roman coins and pottery (SMR nos. 0452 and 3479) and an Anglo-Saxon glass beaker together with at least 12 skeletons were found during works along the A14 (formerly A604) (Harden, 1982). This find indicates an important late Anglo-Saxon burial in the vicinity on the parish boundary and probably from a barrow later used as a gallows site (Taylor, 1982).

The name of Dry Drayton derives from 'Farm by the hill' (Reaney 1943) and the area was once well wooded. At the time of the Domesday Survey the vill had 52 peasants and the population has fluctuated but remained low until the twentieth century (VCH 1989). There was considerable re-modelling of the medieval centre of the village during the seventeenth century when Dry Drayton House was built to the south-east of the church (Sekulla 1981). An desk-top assessment of the subject site (Taylor 1998) highlighted the history of Dry Drayton and noted the presence of buildings at View Farm, shown on maps dating from 1844. Since this time the site has included various farm and light industrial buildings. Several nineteenth century maps show a pond on the south-western part of the site. This has been filled and levelled.

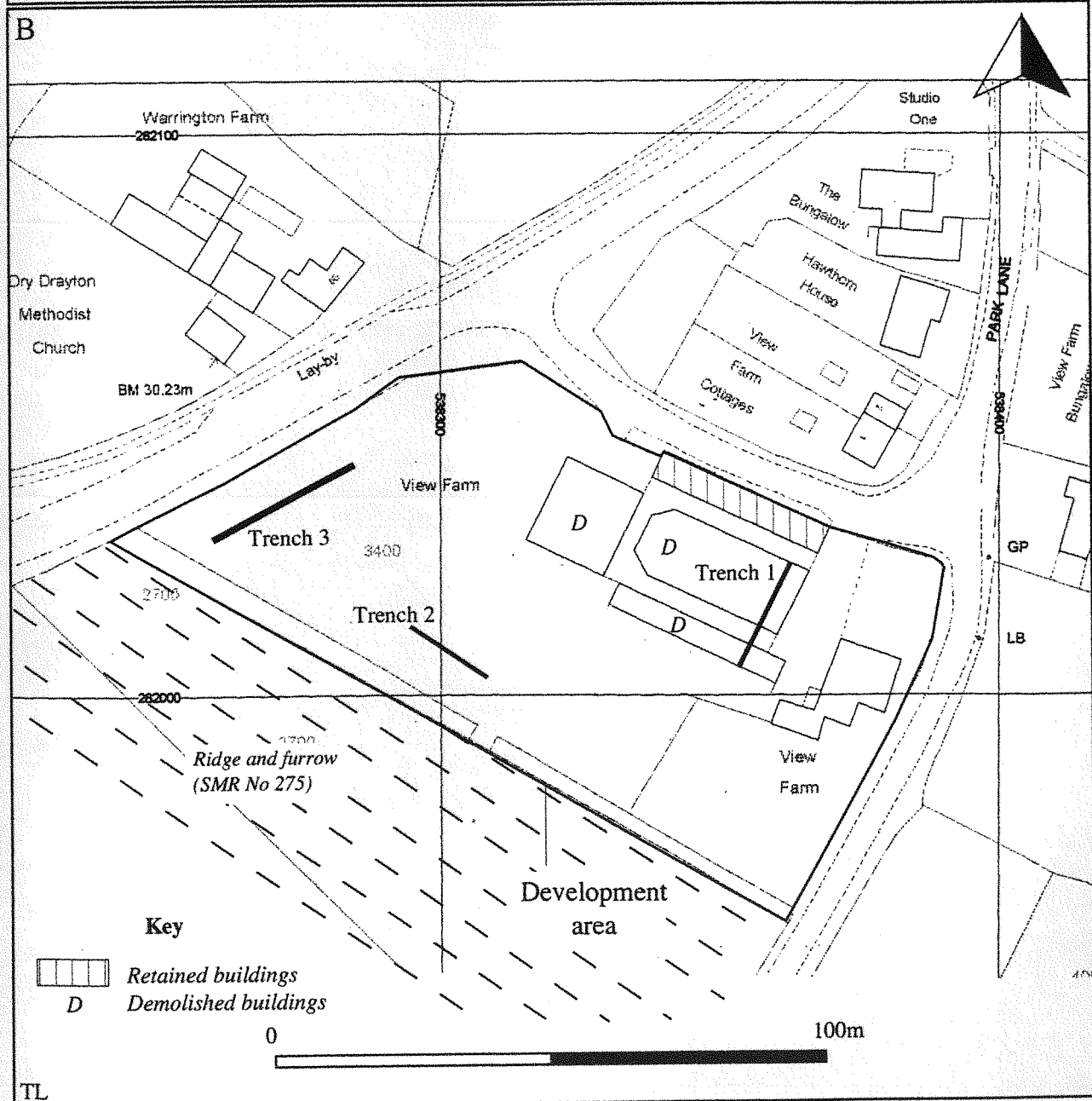
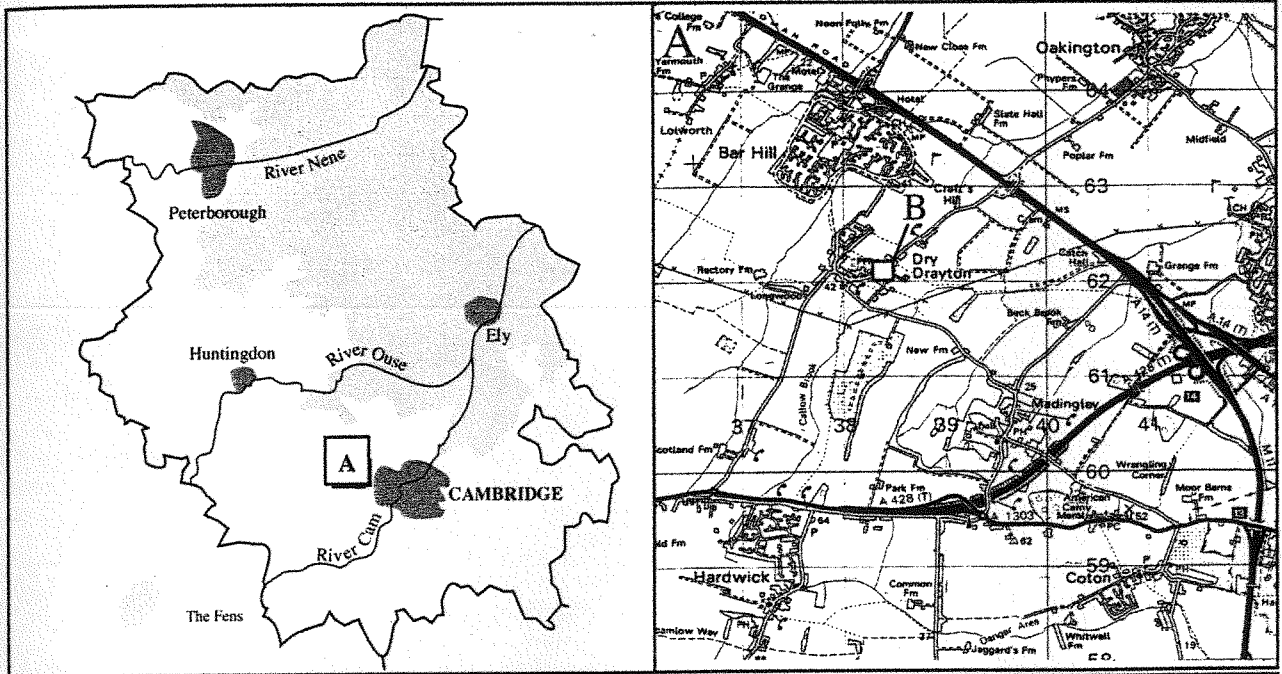


Figure 1 Site location

In the twentieth century the farm was owned by Chivers Ltd. and part was planted with fruit trees. In the 1950s it was a pig farm and subsequently has been used for cattle, as a haulage yard and by a fencing company. Much of the site had been covered in concrete hard-standing and buildings.

METHODOLOGY AND CONSTRAINTS

Agricultural buildings cover the north-eastern edge of the site. Other farm buildings and concrete hard standing had been removed but the broken concrete was retained in heaps on the western part of the site. The area available was further limited by the need to maintain access routes and avoid both underground and overhead services. Vegetation around the edge of the site and disused farm machinery also reduced the area available for evaluation.

The total area opened by machine was approximately 105 sq.m. The trenches were planned, photographed and recorded using the standard techniques of the AFU. Modern intrusive features, such as postholes relating to the agricultural buildings, were recorded in plan but not excavated.

RESULTS

Trench 1

Trench 1 (20.8m long) was located close to the south-eastern edge of the site, approximately parallel to the boundary with View Farm house (see Fig. 1).

This part of the site was stepped down (by approximately 0.5m) – possibly as a result of the concrete stripping – and the surface was littered to a depth of 0.10m with stoneware jar sherds. These date from the period when Chivers Ltd. owned the site.

At the north-eastern part of the trench was a layer of clunch blocks (in no discernible pattern) 80mm deep which sealed a layer of sandy red brick, mortar and concrete rubble, ash and cinder. This sealed a layer of silty sandy with moderate flint nodules and flecks of brick. The trench extended 0.18m into plastic blue grey clay with very occasional flint nodules (between 50mm and 100mm).

Along the trench were a variety of brick and concrete foundations and ceramic, plastic and cast-iron pipes (several of which appeared to connect with inspection covers on the adjoining property. Between these foundations and services natural blue grey clay was exposed. At the south-western end of the trench fragments of yellow brick and gritty sand sealed the clay. This deposit contained post-medieval (eighteenth to twentieth centuries) glazed sherds. Water seeped into the north-eastern part of the trench.

Trench 2

Trench 2 (16.5m long) was located to avoid the backfilled pond (marked on nineteenth century maps) but to test for survival of archaeological remains close to the medieval earthworks in the adjacent field. At approximately 1m from the south-eastern end the trench was crossed by a recently dug pipe trench. This trench cut into plastic blue grey clay with chalk flecks. Two metres from the south-eastern end was an irregular pit containing pig bones, fragments of slate and wood. This extended beyond the western end of the trench. To the north a glazed ceramic pipe crossed the trench and immediately to the north of this pipe was a rectangular pit, again this contained pig and other animal bone, glazed pottery, brown glass beer bottles (serial no. Q1795 5 B C.T.G), slate and brick fragments. Mid-way along the trench was a natural sandy clay patch. Two and a half metres from the northern end of the trench was a plastic pipe and beyond this the was blue grey clay with flint nodules and chalk flecks.

Trench 3

Trench 3 (28.5m long) was dug parallel to Park Street to determine the presence of earlier street front properties. Modern post holes were visible in the sandy clay at the south-western end of the trench. Patches of clay and root disturbance was evident in the south-western quarter of the trench. Beyond this two parallel linear features with a silty clay fill were noted. A ceramic field drain ran through the middle of one of these features. These appear to be base of furrows which run on the same alignment as those in the field to the west. At the north-eastern end of the trench 0.68m of brick and concrete rubble, ash and cinder had been used to make up the ground surface and sealed with tarmacadam.

DISCUSSION

Documentary research, aerial photography and earthwork survey (CAFG 1984) all suggested that the development area was beyond the core of the medieval village. Evaluation trenches suggests that this area had been used as pasture from the medieval period until the nineteenth century. The lack of Saxon and medieval materials similar to those found in nearby excavations (Sekulla 1981) suggests this area was not part of the settlement and not farmed intensively. Possibly this is because development site lay on heavy clay, 100m from the settled gravel deposit to the south-west. The presence of ceramic field drains in trench 3 confirms the documentary evidence that the western part of the site was not part of the farm yard until the middle of the nineteenth century. There was no evidence of prehistoric or Roman occupation (masked by ridge and furrow) on the heavy clay lands in this part of Dry Drayton.

The conditions were warm and dry and cut features were clearly visible in the sub-soil and natural geology. It is likely that had medieval or earlier features existed on the site they would have been identifiable.

CONCLUSIONS

The absence of medieval or earlier remains and high level of modern disturbance across the site suggest that further work is unlikely to provide further information on the early occupation of Dry Drayton.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank David Reed Homes Ltd. which funded the project, Tim Malim, Project Manager and Jon Cane for the illustrations. The project was monitored by Andy Thomas of the County Council Archaeology Office (Development Control).

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SMR SITES IN AND AROUND THE PARISH OF DRY DRAYTON

SMR no.	Grid ref.	Type
250	TL3800/6195	church
272	TL394/629	post-medieval windmill
273	TL390/635	undated skeleton
275	TL381/619	medieval earthwork
275a	TL381/619	post-medieval manor
275b	TL381/619	Roman pottery
294	TL368/609	medieval ridge and furrow
380	TL395/630	Anglo-Saxon glass vessel
380a	TL395/630	medieval quarry and inhumations
452	TL381/609	Roman coins
1091	TL3821/6198	medieval moated site
1091a	TL3821/6198	medieval quarry and post-med pond
1286	TL3837/6200	post-medieval building, View Farm
1287	TL3846/6224	post-medieval building, Croft's Farm
1288	TL3793/6223	post-medieval building, Cotton's Farm
1465	TL375/634	Anglo-Saxon cemetery
3304	TL3550/5972	Iron Age coin
3513	TL3765/6217	post-medieval ice house
8149	TL38-/62-	documentary evidence of DMV
9573	TL373/599	medieval ridge and furrow
10084	TL3799/6241	medieval earthworks
10407	TL3780/6220	post-medieval dovecote
11441	TL3660/6024	undated cropmark enclosures



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