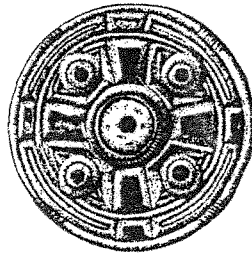


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Barrington Primary School, An Archaeological Evaluation

Andrew Hatton
2002

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No.B 96
Commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council
Property and Procurement

Barrington Primary School, An Archaeological Evaluation

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SUMMARY

On the 19th February 2002 the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation at Barrington CE Primary School, on land immediately south-west of the main school building (TL 3969/5003). The aim of the intervention was to record and assess the nature of any archaeological evidence encountered and hence to assess the potential for surviving remains, given the subject site's location within a rich historic landscape.

During the excavation of the four evaluation trenches extensive modern disturbance was observed. This had potentially removed any evidence of early land use.

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**Barrington Primary School, An Archaeological Evaluation
(NGR TL 3969/5003)**

1 INTRODUCTION

On the 19th February 2002 the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council undertook an archaeological evaluation on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council (Property and Procurement Department) at Barrington CE Primary School, on land immediately south-west of the main school building. The work was carried out to satisfy a planning condition in advance of construction of new school buildings.

2 SITE BACKGROUND

Planning Background

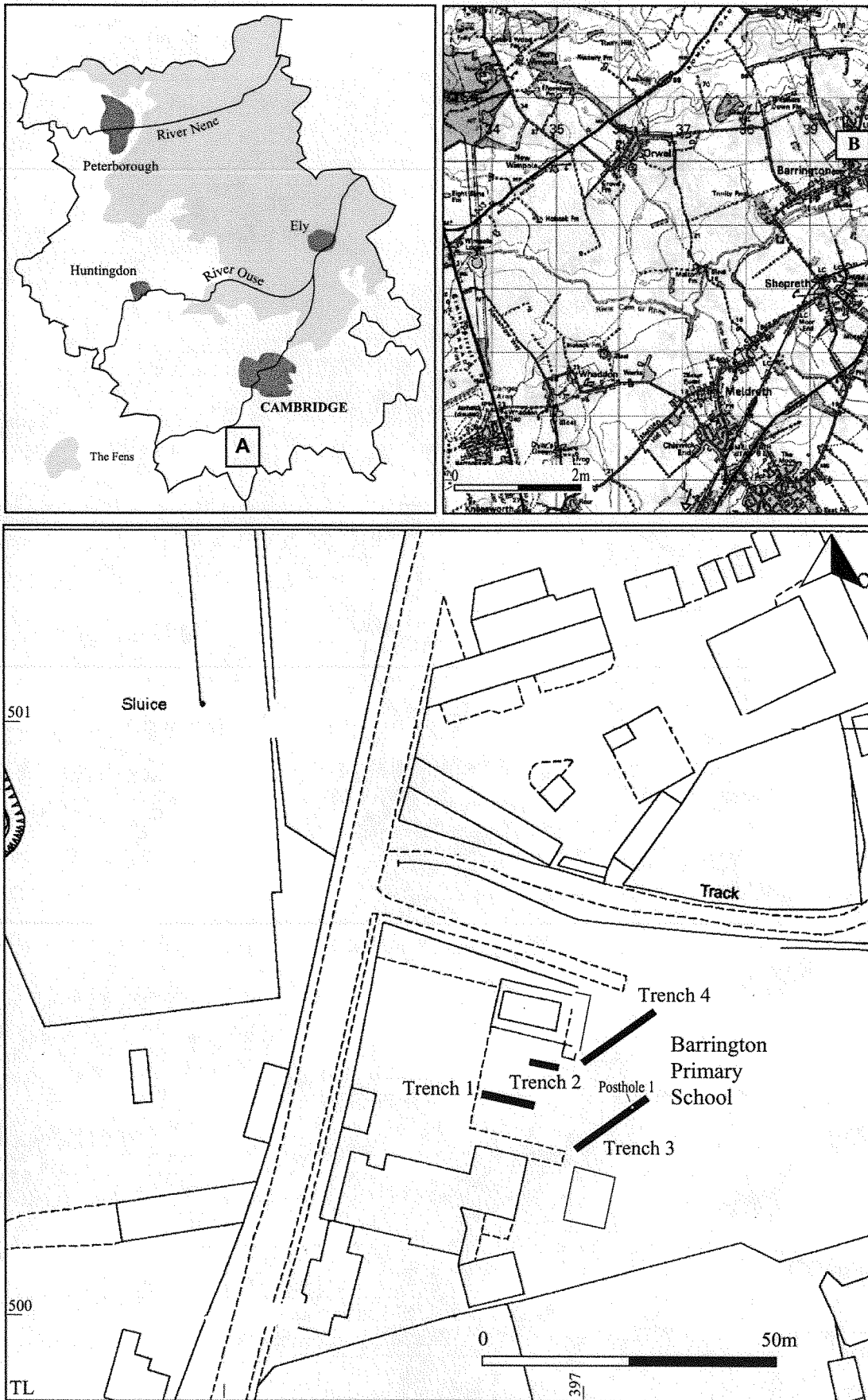
The proposed development is for the construction of a new hall and playground covering an area of 1550m². Given that the site is close to a number of historical sites, there was a possibility of there being archaeological remains within the application site, it was this that determined the requirements for an archaeological evaluation (Fig 1).

The brief was produced by Andy Thomas, Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office (CAO), (Brief for Archaeological Evaluation, 7/12/2001).

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

At the time of the archaeological investigation the development site comprised 1550m² of reasonably drained land that had been used as a play area for the school children. It is centred on NGR TL3969/5003 at an average height of 17.96m AOD.

The local geology consists of 3rd Terrace River gravel overlying Taelle Gravel (BGS Sheet 204).



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Figure 1 Trench location

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Directly to the south of the site is the 13th century All Saints Church (SMR 00357). To the west across Haslingfield Road lies the 17th century Barrington Hall (SMR 03183). To the north is the 16th century Church Farmhouse (SMR 03339), and to the north-west, a medieval moated site (SMR 01114). 150m to the east of the site, an archaeological evaluation in 1996 revealed the presence of medieval structural remains, particularly in the north-west of the site, closest to the current area of study (Roberts, J, 1996). Further to the west within the village, an Anglo-Saxon cemetery was discovered in about 1880 (SMR 03264). Previously, another Anglo-Saxon cemetery was discovered at Edix Hill to the west of the village in 1860, following the unearthing of a single burial in 1840 (SMR 09832); it was subsequently excavated between 1988 and 1991 (Malim, T, 1998). The Anglo-Saxon settlements associated with these cemeteries have yet to be identified.

4 METHODOLOGY

Four evaluation trenches were excavated (44m x 1.5m) using a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were located across the site in order to achieve maximum coverage of the area whilst avoiding children's climbing frames and services.

The trenches were cleaned as necessary for feature and deposit recognition. Exposed deposits were recorded and photographed using the AFU pro-forma recording sheets. Trenches were located using tapes and offset to standing buildings.

5 RESULTS (Fig. 1 and 2)

Trench 1

Trench 1 (9m x 1.5m) east/west orientated. At the western end of the trench, dark brown topsoil (0.20m thick) overlay a make-up layer (0.50m thick), consisting of soil mixed with modern pottery, glass, and brick fragments. Removal of the make-up layer exposed the natural sandy gravel, which had been heavily truncated by modern disturbance. The modern disturbance continued for a distance of 4m from the western end of the trench at which point undisturbed natural geology was exposed. The sequence at the eastern end of the trench consisted of dark brown topsoil (0.25m thick) overlying mid-brown subsoil (0.40m thick). Removal of the subsoil revealed the sandy gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were observed in Trench 1.

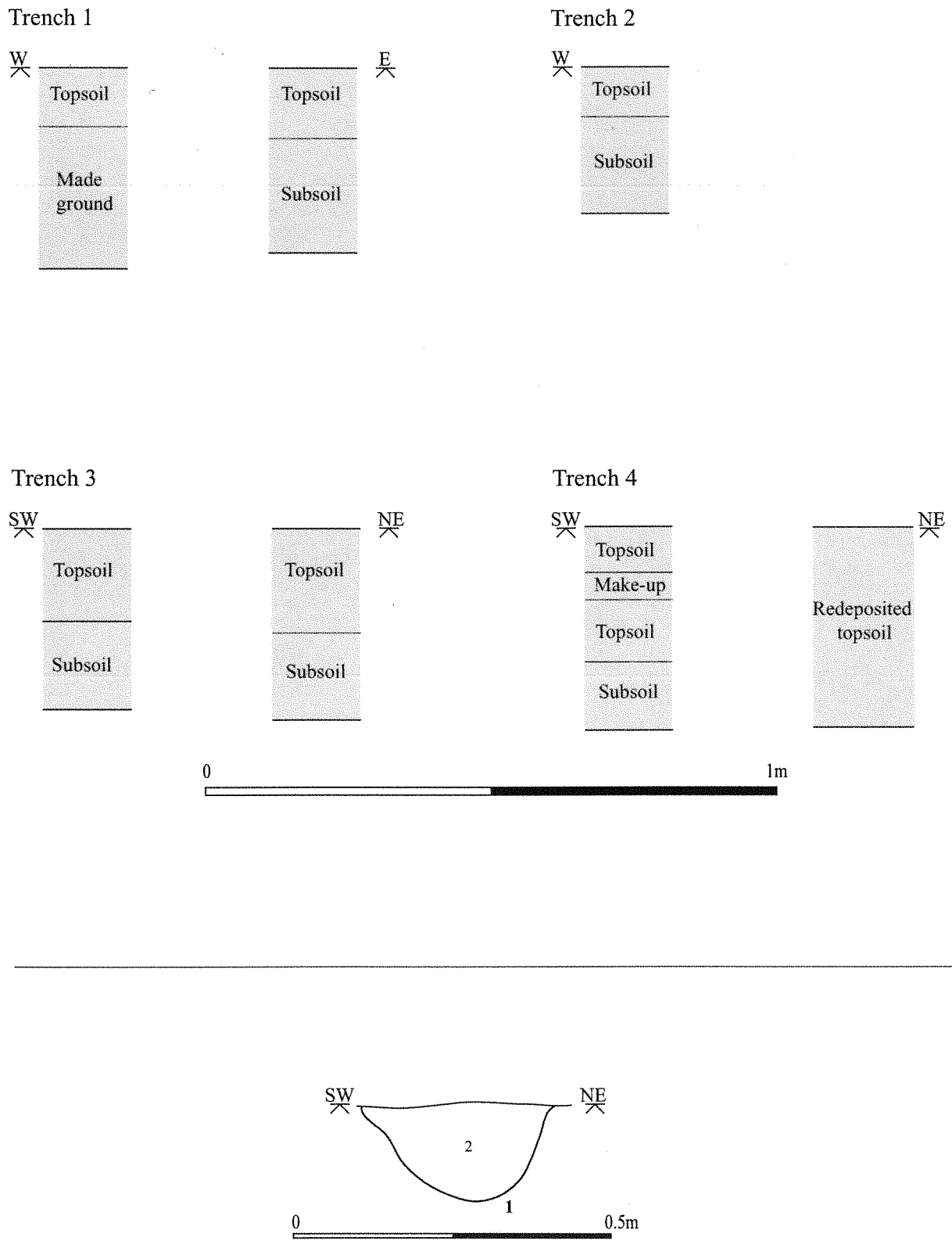


Figure 2 Schematic sections of trenches (above) and section of Posthole 1 (below)

Trench 2

Trench 2 (5m x 1.5m) east/west orientated. At the western end of the trench, dark brown topsoil (0.18m thick) overlay mid-brown subsoil (0.33m thick). Removal of the subsoil revealed the sandy gravel natural. Excavation of Trench 2 continued in an easterly direction for a distance of 2.5m, at which point a service pipe was uncovered. Excavation of the trench continued for a distance of 2.5m beyond the service pipe. However, at a depth of 0.15m an electric cable was revealed at a distance of 0.30m to the east of the service pipe. Further excavation of Trench 2 could not take place due to restrictions imposed by another service pipe and a climbing frame. No archaeological features were observed in Trench 2.

Trench 3

Trench 3 (15m x 1.5m) south-west/north-east orientated. At the south-western end of the trench, dark brown topsoil (0.33m thick) overlay mid-brown subsoil (0.30m thick). Removal of the subsoil revealed the sandy gravel natural. This sequence was seen at the north-eastern end of the trench, with a slight increase of the topsoil thickness to 0.38m, whereas the subsoil thickness remained at 0.30m. Removal of the subsoil revealed the sandy gravel natural.

A single posthole was observed cutting into the natural geology.

Cut 1 (0.30m in diameter, 0.15m deep, steep sides, concave base), circular in plan. 1 contained a single fill, 2, greyish brown silty clay with <1-% small inclusions. A fragment of coal was recovered during the excavation of feature 1 that suggested a reasonably modern date for the posthole excavation.

Trench 4

Trench 4 (15m x 1.5m) south-west/north-east orientated. At the south-western end of the trench, dark brown topsoil (0.15m thick) overlay a make-up layer (0.08m thick), consisting of soil mixed with modern pottery, glass, and brick fragments. Removal of the make-up layer revealed buried dark brown topsoil (0.24m thick) which, in turn overlay mid-brown subsoil (0.28m thick). Removal of the subsoil exposed sandy gravel natural geology. At a distance of 7m from the south-western end of the trench the subsoil and natural geology was heavily truncated by a large modern pit, (which continued beyond the end of the trench), which had been filled with blocks of chalk, brick and glass. As a result the sequence at the north-eastern end of the trench consisted only of dark brown re-deposited topsoil (0.70m thick).

6 DISCUSSION

The aims of this study were to highlight the potential for preservation of archaeological remains on the subject site and to identify any remains that may

be affected by the proposed development. The development involves the excavation of foundation and service trenches for the new school hall.

The key issues specific to the site relate to its location in respect of known historic sites: the 13th century All Saints Church, a medieval moated site, 16th century farmhouse and the 17th century Barrington Hall.

Local knowledge suggests the site was very boggy prior to being built up. The site may therefore have been landscaped to create a drier more stable surface on which a school playing field could be located. It is possible that extensive disturbance of the landscape has removed any traces of archaeological features within the development site.

7 CONCLUSION

A single posthole 1, identified in Trench 3 produced a fragment of coal that would suggest a reasonably modern date for this feature. The high degree of modern disturbance revealed during the evaluation would seem to suggest extensive infilling and landscaping of the development site had taken place. Evidence of any former landscape use is therefore likely to have been heavily disturbed by more recent activity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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