



Archaeological Field Unit

**Westview Marina, Earith:
An Archaeological Evaluation**

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SUMMARY

On the 26th May 2005 the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit conducted an archaeological excavation on land at West View Marina, Earith, Cambridgeshire (TL 3812 7476) in advance of construction of new housing.

Two machine cut linear trenches were excavated. Both were overlain by a considerable depth of modern deposits and contained only riverine deposits, from a channel known to have existed in recent times.

Other than a post-medieval ditch or channel in Trench 1, no archaeological features were noted in either of the two trenches opened.

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Westview Marina, Earith: An Archaeological Evaluation
(TL 3812 7476)

1 INTRODUCTION

An Archaeological evaluation was carried out at Westview Marina, Earith, Cambridgeshire (TL 3825 7475; Fig. 1) in advance of the construction of new housing.

The evaluation was carried out by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological field Unit (CCC AFU) on 26th May 2005 on behalf of Les and Elaine Fidler, Westview, Marina, Earith, Cambridgeshire. This work was a planning condition requirement of Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice section (Thomas 2005), in advance of a housing development.

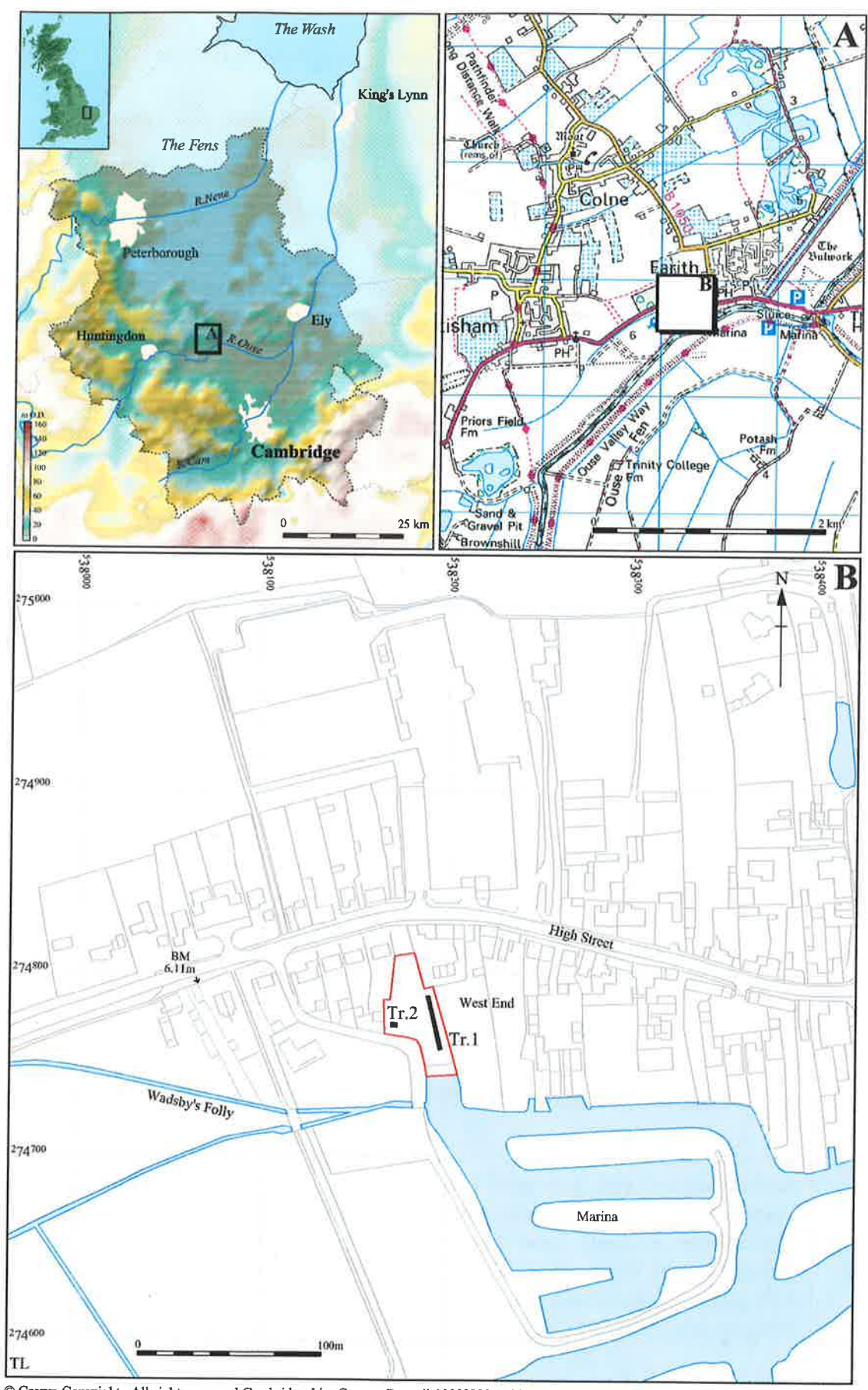
The Archaeological objectives of the site were recorded in the archaeological specification for work (Macaulay 2005). This required the evaluation to seek to establish the character, date, state of preservation and extent of any archaeological remains in the proposed development area. In the event that archaeological remains were present, the evaluation was required to consider appropriate methodologies and suitable resourcing levels for excavation.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site is located in the historic village of Earith. The underlying geology of the village of Earith is 2nd terrace River gravels with alluvium deposits towards the riverbank (British Geological Survey 1993).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Archaeological and historical sources at the archives of CCC AFU and Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER; formerly Sites and Monuments Record) have recorded previous archaeological work, any archaeological finds reported and the historic documentation for the area. Although no archaeological remains are recorded from the site itself, a considerable amount of archaeology is known from the surrounding area.



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Figure 1 Location of trenches with the development area outlined (red)

3.1 Historic Background

Lying 8km north-east of St Ives, Earith was not mentioned in Domesday, and the first reference to it is in 1219 as '*pontem de Herith*', meaning Earith Bridge. The village name itself probably means 'muddy landing place', which is appropriate for the village's location on the bank of the Ouse (Reaney 1943). Earith is largely strung out along the road to Bluntisham and St Ives. Much of the northern part of the village is relatively modern (Kenney, S., 2001).

3.2 Archaeological Background

Extensive prehistoric and Roman remains have been recovered in the area, most notably during the gravel extraction works in the nearby quarries located to the north of the development site. Post-medieval remains have also been identified in the vicinity of the development site.

3.2.1 Prehistoric

HER 1680 (TL 389/756), to the north-west of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of a double-edged scraper fashioned from grey flint.

HER 1681 (391/759), to the north-west of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of a scraper fashioned from brown flint.

HER 1695 (391/759), to the north-west of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of a flake of brown flint and a blade of white flint, retouched along both edges.

HER 1786 (391/763), to the north of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of a bifacially-worked tool fashioned out of grey flint and a core of brown flint.

HER2542 (3895/7595), to the north-west of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of a flint implement, possibly a scraper.

3.2.2 Roman

HER 907 (3917/7598), to the north of the development site: the entry describes the observation and excavation of a large Roman settlement.

HER 907 a-k (391/759), to the north of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of various artefacts which include: fragments of an iron plate, half a bronze bracelet, the face from a face urn, a bone pin, a bronze pin, a fragment quern stone, a clay loom weight, the lid of red-brown ware jar, a mid-3rd century coin, a sherd of coarse ware pottery and a decorated wooden handle.

HER 1937 (390/758), to the north-west of the development site: the entry describes the recovery of a Roman pottery.

3.2.3 *Post-medieval*

HER1780 (3930/7500), to the south-west of the development site: the entry describes The Scones Civil War fortification.

HER 8813 (3903/7536), to the south-west of the development site: the entry describes a sub-circular enclosure with an entrance on the south side, visible as a cropmark.

HER 8814 (393/758), to the north of the development site: the entry describes a rectilinear enclosure together with a circular gun-emplacment.

4 METHODOLOGY

A mechanical excavator with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket excavated two trenches to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains on the site.

The trenches were cleaned by hand (where possible), photographed, and the bases planned.

5 RESULTS

Trench 1 was 29m long, orientated north-west to south-east. A sequence of deposits was revealed: the uppermost consisted of modern demolition materials (1) such as crushed concrete from a former workshop on the site, and was noted to a depth of 0.40m. Beneath this was a deposit of re-deposited clay (2), which was pale yellow mixed with brown, and also contained crushed modern concrete to a depth of 0.44m. Underlying this was a layer of highly organic, compacted, silty clay (3), 0.12m in depth, sealing a layer of pale grey clay (4) with crushed building material in its upper half, totalling 0.46m in depth. Beneath this was a deposit of mid-brown, clayey gravel (5) to a depth of 0.18m, overlying compacted brown, sandy gravels (6) to a depth of 0.30m.

A former ditch/channel (7) was noted within Trench 1, entering it at the northern end from the west, and turning towards the river within the length of the trench (Fig. 2). Finds from this feature indicate that it was post-medieval in date. No other archaeological features were found.

Trench 2 was opened using the same excavation method as Trench 1 and was found to contain the same sequence; flooding from the water table did not permit a full investigation, but no archaeological features were seen before the trench became flooded – it was decided not to expose the trench any further than 8m in length.

6 DISCUSSION

In the light of the results obtained in both trenches, it appears that this area, which is immediately north of the river, was not occupied at any time. This conclusion, however, does not rule out the possibility of activity on the site, as archaeological remains may exist nearby due to the close proximity of the river, which has always attracted activity and occupation in various forms throughout history.

7 CONCLUSIONS

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.

The project has been successful in this aim and, other than a single ditch/channel of post-medieval date noted in Trench 1, no archaeological features were noted. The entire development area has undergone recent truncation and disturbance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Westview Marina (Les and Elaine Fidler) who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Stephen Macaulay. The report was edited by Elizabeth Shepherd Popescu and Stephen Macaulay, and Crane Begg produced the illustrations. Adrian Scruby, Development Control archaeologist, Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice (CAPCA), visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

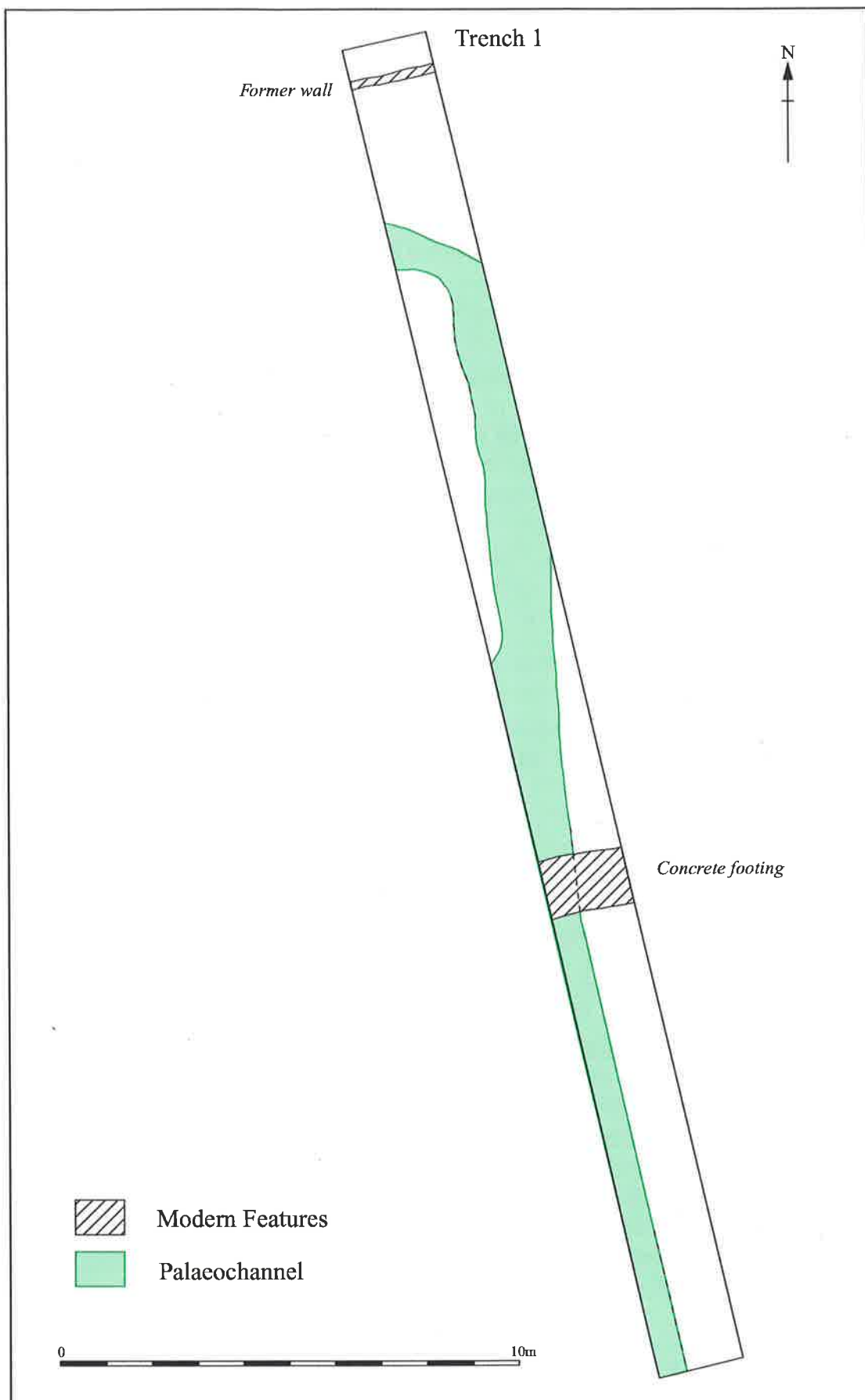


Figure 2 Trench plan

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