

# **The Historic towns of Cambridgeshire Extensive Urban Survey**

## **CAXTON**

### **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

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SUMMARY.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	6
LANDSCAPE.....	9
Location and Topography.....	9
THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE.....	10
Archaeological Evidence.....	10
Cartographic Evidence.....	11
Aerial Photographic Evidence.....	11
Other Surveys.....	11
PERIOD SYNOPSES AND DISCUSSION.....	12
Overview of the Parish.....	12
Historic Core Plan Form Components.....	13
Prehistoric.....	17
Roman.....	17
Medieval.....	17
Post-Medieval.....	19
DEPOSIT MODELLING AND SURVIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS.....	23
Prehistoric and Roman.....	23
Anglo-Saxon and Medieval.....	23
Post-Medieval.....	24
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	25
APPENDIX 1: HER DATA IN HISTORIC CORE.....	28
APPENDIX 2: THE MANORS.....	31

## List of Abbreviations Used in the Text

AFU	Archaeological Field Unit
BGS	British Geological Survey
BUFAU	Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
CAU	Cambridge Archaeology Unit
CCC	Cambridgeshire County Council
CRO	Cambridge Record Office
CUCAP	Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs
CUL	Cambridge University Library
ECB	Event in Cambridgeshire
HAT	Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust
HECA	Historic Landscape Character Areas
HER	Historic Environment Record
LB	Listed Building
MCB	Monuments in Cambridgeshire
NMR	National Monuments Record
PCAS	Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society
RCHM(E)	Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments (of England)
SCB	Source number for a fieldwork report in Cambridgeshire
VCH	Victoria County History

## SUMMARY

The parish of Caxton (South Cambridgeshire District) covers an area of approximately 905ha and falls within two Historic Landscape Character Areas. The northern part of the parish, where the historic core is located, lies within The Central Claylands (HECA 14). The southern part of the parish falls within The Cambridgeshire Claylands (HECA 13).

The underlying geology comprises Boulder Clay (Till) bisected by a series of small brooks. Along the Bourne Brook are First Terrace gravels.

Although there is no record of positively identified prehistoric sites within the village, prehistoric activity is documented by finds of worked lithics from disturbed deposits at Firs Farm. Recent investigations at Cambourne to the north-east of Caxton have produced scant evidence for Bronze Age activity.

Despite the presence of Ermine Street, evidence for Roman activity at Caxton is confined to the site of a possible villa to the west of the village.

Caxton is first recorded in the Domesday Book as Caustone, probably from the old Nors kokkr, meaning 'lump' and tun, meaning 'farm'.

The original Saxo-Norman settlement at Caxton appears to have clustered around the church of St Andrew, which stands some distance away from the modern village. The area located between the church and Ermine Street contains the earthwork remains of tofts/closes which were later amalgamated with the surrounding fields when the site reverted to agricultural use.

The village gradually moved to Ermine Street as this developed into the main through route. The 'new' medieval houses were built on the existing strips of the common fields, for the surviving garden plots are long and narrow, curved strips running back to meet the remains of ridge and furrow. Settlement shift and redevelopment probably occurred after the middle of the 13th century, following the grant of a market charter to Baldwin de Freville in 1247. In the later medieval period the route system was probably very similar to that established by 1750 (Map of Caxton Manor).

After the Restoration, Caxton was selected as the county toll point for the North Road (Ermine Street) turnpike. By the early 16th century Caxton had obtained a certain importance as a posting station and travel stage, with extensive coaching inns flourishing within the village along the North Road. The settlement continued to grow between the middle of the 16th and the middle of the 17th century, as attested by the number of surviving buildings of this period. Late 19th century and early 20th century editions of the OS Maps show little change. Since the Second World War the village has expanded northwards and, more recently, along Gransden Road and Bourne Road.

## INTRODUCTION

This report is an archaeological and historical assessment of Caxton (Fig 1) and forms part of the Cambridgeshire Extensive Urban Survey of 28 historic settlements in Cambridgeshire. This project, funded by English Heritage, forms part of a nationwide reassessment of the management of the urban archaeological resource. The original EUS project was carried out between 1999 and 2003, and involved work by Quinton Carroll, Bob Hatton, and Rebecca Casa-Hatton, all of Cambridgeshire County Council. It was refreshed and completed by Steven Morgan of Oxford Archaeology (East) in 2014.

A number of sources were used to compile this report, including the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record, the Database of Listed Buildings held by the County Planning Department, and various cartographic and documentary records, in particular the Victoria County History. The maps and tables were prepared using the computerised mapping system and database of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record.

This report presents the findings of the assessment and characterisation stage of the process. A further stage of works, carried out by CCC, provides a strategy outlining management guidance for the defined environment resource.

In addition to the written and illustrated reports, a computer-based digital mapping and database has been created using Exegesis Geographical Information System (GIS) and forms an important element of the project outputs. It is intended that elements of this report will be made available online

The study area focuses geographically on the historic core of the village of Caxton as defined on Fig 2, and chronologically from the Palaeolithic through to c.1900 AD. Where appropriate, these restrictions may be exceeded on occasion. The definition of the historic core is based on the extent of settlement in the village at the time of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1885).



Fig 1 Location of Caxton

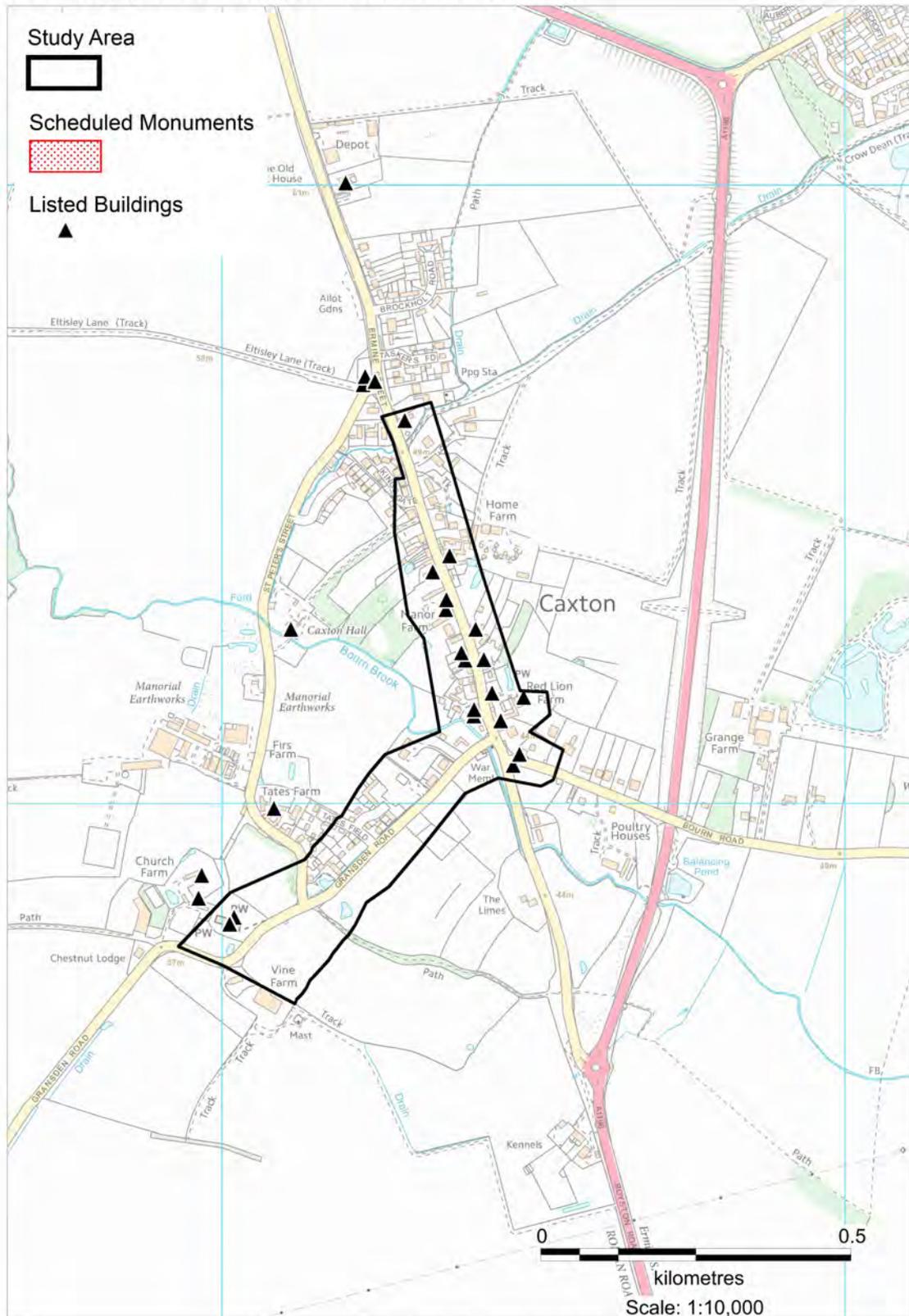


Fig 2 Map of Historic Core

## **LANDSCAPE**

### **Location and Topography**

The parish of Caxton belongs to South Cambridgeshire District. The modern village is located some 15km west of Cambridge and 12km east of St Neots. To the north-east is Cambourne New Settlement which stretches across the parishes of Caxton and Bourne.

Presently, the parish as a whole covers an area of approximately 905ha, which are predominantly arable with some pasture.

The nucleated settlement occupies the narrow valley of the Bourne Brook and stretches north-south along Ermine Street (A1198, Royston Road), between the 45m and the 55m contour.

### **Geology**

The underlying geology comprises Boulder Clay (Till) bisected by a series of small brooks. Along the Bourne Brook are First Terrace gravels (BGS Sheet 187, Huntingdon).

## THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE

### Archaeological Evidence

A summary of archaeological data within the historic core of Caxton is contained in the Cambridgeshire HER. Using the convention for the HER, there have been four Events in the historic core of Caxton parish. Grey literature relating to these can be found at Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record. HER numbers in this study are preceded by ECB for an event or MCB for a monument. Every event has a fieldwork report and these are listed in the bibliography with their SCB number - the source number for the report. A list of all monuments and events for the historic core can be found in Appendix 1.

The distribution of entries is conditioned by the extent of archaeological work undertaken within and immediately outside the historic nucleus of the village.

Many prehistoric finds are without provenance and generically located within the parish. The HER collection represents a variable source of information that has been influenced by fieldwork strategies, collection of finds, antiquarian observations, local and professional interests. The degree of accuracy of the entry is therefore variable

Fieldwork in the historic core has been carried out by the CAU, BUFAU, Archaeological Solutions, Stratascan and Chris Taylor. This work comprises an evaluation (ECB120, Mould 1996) and an excavation (AFU 1999) at Firs Farm and an evaluation at Oliver's Barn, 94 Ermine Street, Caxton (ECB2887, McCall *et al.* 2008). In addition to these, Chris Taylor investigated land at 95 Ermine Street in 1991 (Taylor 1991). A geophysical survey was carried out at Firs Farm in 1996 (ECB 2485, Baker 1996).

### Listed Buildings

Caxton village contains 28 Listed Buildings of statutory designation, of which four are Grade II Star Listed Buildings (LBII\*), including the medieval parish church of St Andrew (LB 51114) and the seventeenth century Magistrates' Court or Caxton Hall (LB 51117). The remaining buildings are all Grade II Listed (LBII) and comprise post-medieval domestic, agricultural and commercial buildings. In addition, the mid twentieth century Caxton Gibbet at the junction between the A428 and the A1198 is a Building of Local Interest (BLI).

### Conservation Area

The historic nucleus of the village along Ermine Street is a designated Conservation Area (South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 1999). The area comprises most of the Listed Buildings and a Protected Village Amenity Area.

### Documentary

There is no survey of the documentary sources for Cambridgeshire. A listing of historical documents is provided by Rae and Saunders (1980).

Original archive research was not undertaken as part of this study. For the present report reference was made to secondary sources and, in particular, to the study by R. W. Dunning (VCH 1973, vol. V, Cambridgeshire).

Official historical sources for medieval and post-medieval Caxton include the

Domesday Book, the Rotuli Hundredorum (Rot. Hund.), the Calendars of Inquisitions, Patent Rolls, manorial Court Rolls, Rentals and Terriers.

Many post-medieval manorial documents are held at the CRO.

General outlines of the history of the county and accounts of individual parishes based on documentary sources can be found in the VCH of Cambridgeshire, 10 volumes.

There are also regional studies that concentrate on specific research topics, e.g. place-names (Reaney 1943), buildings (Pevsner 1970), medieval villages (Taylor 1983) and history of Cambridgeshire (Taylor 1977; Kirby & Oosthuizen 2000).

Local history studies include the work by Palmer (1927).

Of particular relevance to the present study is the paper by Oosthuizen (1997) published in the PCAS series on evidence for prehistoric field systems surviving into the medieval period.

### **Cartographic Evidence**

A detailed account of all available estate maps for Cambridgeshire and their location is provided by Sarah Bendall (1992). Pre-enclosure cartographic evidence for Caxton includes a series of manorial surveys dating to the eighteenth century.

Of particular relevance to the present study is the Map of Caxton Manor drawn in 1750.

The first comprehensive and detailed map of the parish is the Enclosure Map of 1834. Later maps include editions of the Ordnance Surveys from the end of the nineteenth century onwards.

There is no Tithe Map of Caxton.

### **Aerial Photographic Evidence**

The HER has a collection of maps showing overlays of aerial photographs plotted in the 1980s and digitised in 2001 from research in the CUCAP and NMR collections. The original aerial photographs were taken in the late 1940s and in the 1960s-1970s.

In 1997 Cambridgeshire County Council commissioned an aerial photographic coverage of the whole county. The photographs are available in digital format.

The available aerial photographs show remains of ridge and furrow on both sides of Ermine Street. These extend into the parishes of Bourne to the east and Papworth to the north.

### **Other Surveys**

The parish was included in the HECA survey.

## PERIOD SYNOPSES AND DISCUSSION

### Overview of the Parish

There follows an overview of the archaeology of the parish of Caxton followed by a detailed discussion of the archaeology of the historic core on a period by period basis.

With the exception of a few redeposited flints, which were recovered from Firs Farm (Mould 1996; AFU 1999), there are no traces of prehistoric settlement in the parish.

With reference to the later prehistoric period, Iron Age activity is documented at Cambourne where settlement appears to span the whole of the Iron Age, possibly continuing into the Roman period. Evidence from recent excavations would point to the presence of small and dispersed communities practising both arable and livestock farming (Wessex Archaeology 2003).

It has been suggested that the pattern of medieval ridge and furrow around Caxton respects 'Celtic' co-axial field systems (Oosthuizen 1997, 149), although the evidence for 'continuity' without a break in cultivation is controversial. It is however likely that prehistoric remains may be buried or masked by later medieval field systems. At Cambourne, all excavated sites contained remains of ridge and furrow which had caused varying degrees of damage to underlying features and deposits (Wessex Archaeology, 98).

As a whole, the distribution of finds would suggest limited pre-Iron Age activity in the Caxton area. The evidence from Cambourne points to a landscape largely dominated by woodland with interspersed small farmsteads in close proximity to watercourses, with progressive clearance occurring throughout the Iron Age to create arable land.

Despite the presence of Ermine Street, evidence for Roman activity at Caxton is confined to the site of a possible villa to the west of the village (HER 02416). By contrast, archaeological investigations at Cambourne have revealed evidence for dense occupation on the higher clay land overlooking Ermine Street. The evidence suggests large-scale re-organisation of the landscape during this time, with intensification of land use and increased population inhabiting planned settlements consisting of round houses set within carefully laid out rectangular field-systems. The economy continued to be based on a mixture of arable and livestock farming. Similar settlement patterns have recently emerged during investigations in the neighbouring parishes of Papworth Everard (Hatton & Kemp 2002) and Caldecote (Kenney 2002), where agricultural exploitation of the landscape appears to have intensified during the Iron Age and Roman period.

Work recently carried out by Oxford Archaeology (East) in the north-western part of the parish has uncovered traces of Roman activity in the form of the remains of a probable barn (Thatcher, forthcoming).

Saxo-Norman and medieval remains have been found at Firs Farm, in the village itself (see below).

## Historic Core Plan Form Components

The following is a list of components that have been identified for the historic core of Caxton. Meaningful mapping of the historic core is not possible for any evidence pre-dating the Saxo-Norman period. The boundaries of these components have therefore been defined by elements of the Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval development of the village. Each is a region defined chronologically, so there are several areas where components overlap.

Figs 3-5 relate to these components. Further discussion of these periods and associated activity can be found in the synopses.

Component		Evidence / Description	Fig
No.	Name		
<b>Saxo-Norman</b>			
CAX 1	Settlement	Ditches, postholes Street layout	3
<b>Medieval</b>			
CAX 2	Settlement	Structures, yards, pond Street layout	4
CAX 3	St Andrew's Church	13th century church and churchyard	4
CAX 4	Market place	Foundations of the market stalls Street layout	4
<b>Post-medieval</b>			
CAX 5	Settlement	Cartographic Extant buildings	5

Table 1: Historic Core Plan Form Components

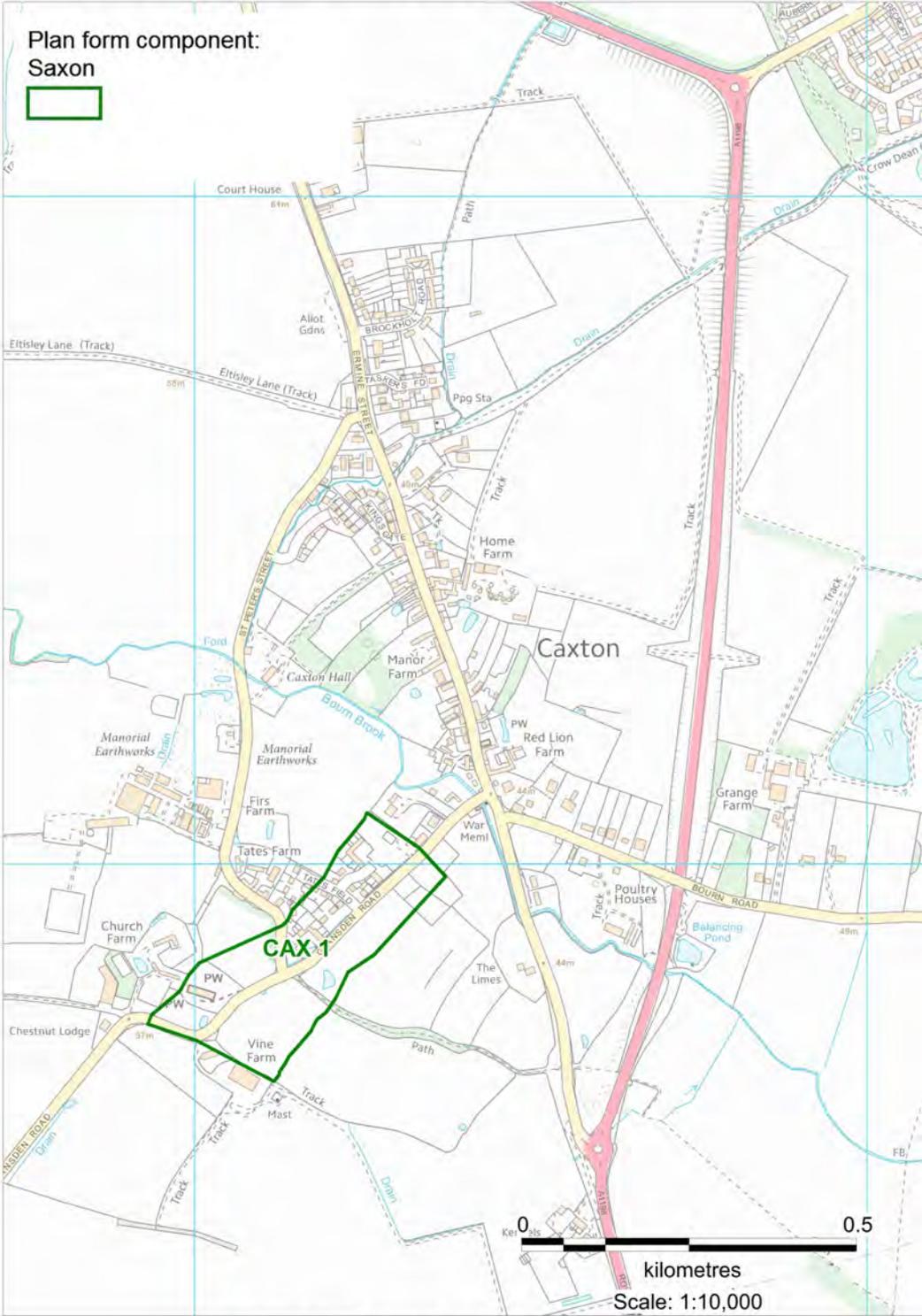


Fig 3 Saxo-Norman Plan Form Components

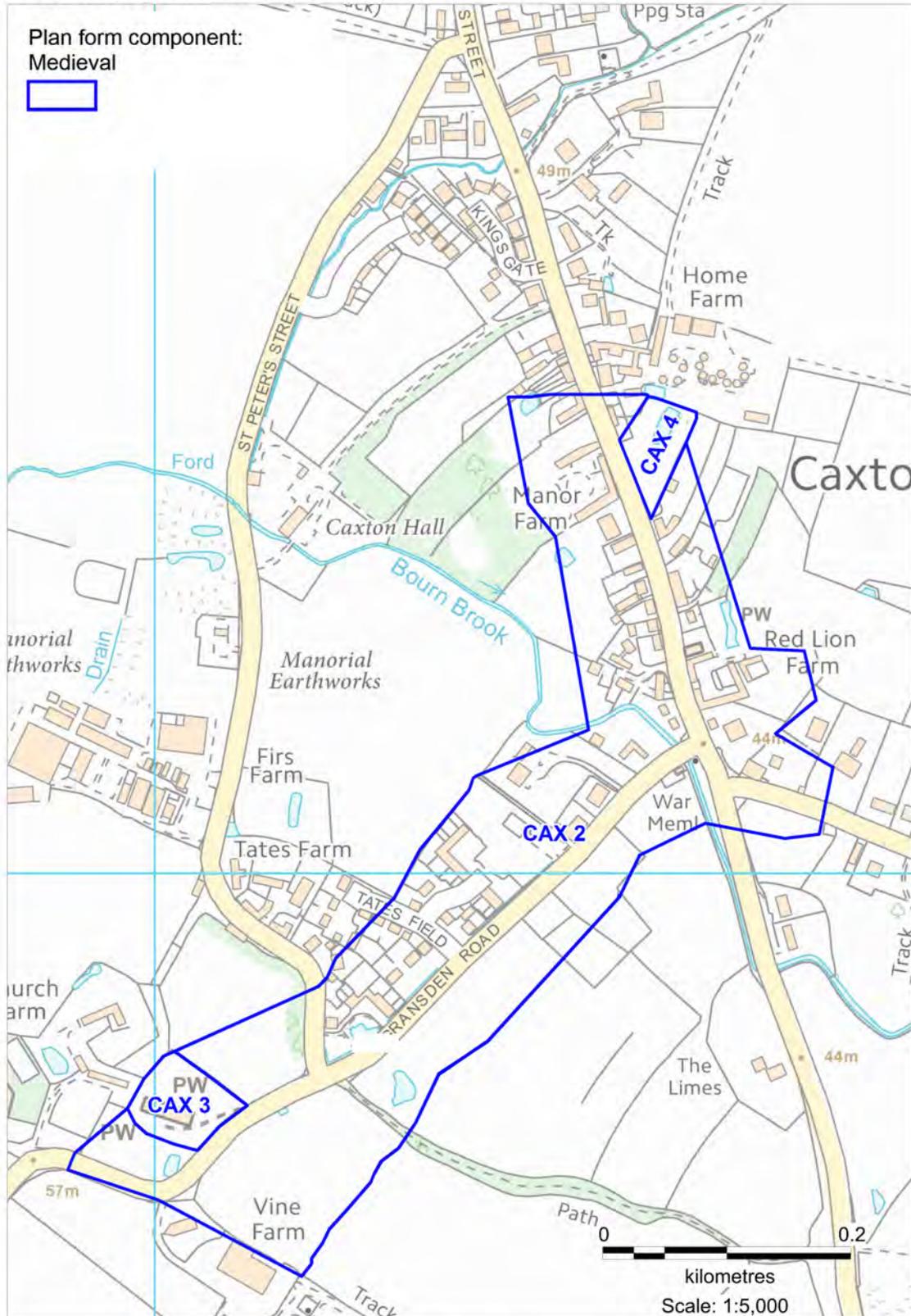


Fig 4 Medieval Plan Form Components

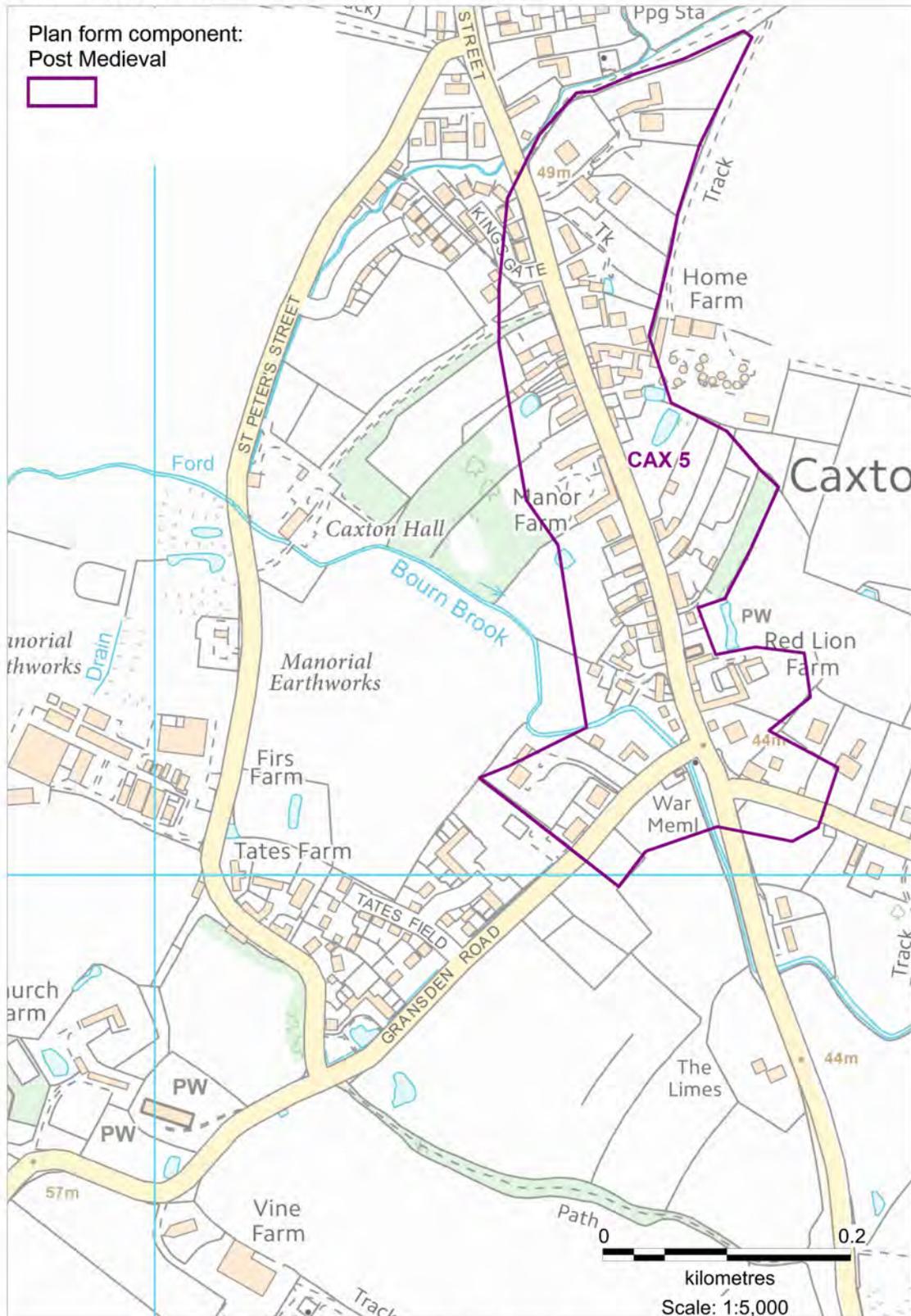


Fig 5 Post-Medieval Plan Form Components

## **Prehistoric**

Redeposited flints found at Firs Farm (ECB120) are the only evidence of prehistoric activity from the historic core (Mould 1996; AFU 1999).

## **Roman**

Although the Roman road of Ermine Street bisects the village, no traces of activity dating to this period have been recovered from within the historic core.

## **Medieval**

### Settlement

#### *Saxo-Norman (CAX 1)*

Early Saxon occupation in Caxton and the surrounding areas remains elusive, suggesting absence of activity following the abandonment of the Roman settlements at Cambourne (Wessex Archaeology 2003) and the decline of Ermine Street.

Caxton village stretches along the route of Ermine Street (later Great North Road). The original Saxo-Norman settlement appears to have clustered around the church of St Andrew which stands some distance away from Ermine Street. The area located between the church and the Roman road contains the earthwork remains of a shrunken village (HER 03366). These are comprised between two parallel holloways which run on an east-west alignment, perpendicular to Ermine Street. The northernmost holloway, known as Green Ditch Lane in 1750 (Map of Caxton Manor), runs eastwards from the junction of Gransden Road (Church Way in 1750) with St Peter's Street (Potton Way/Barn Street in 1750). In 1750 it continued eastwards beyond Ermine Street as a field track leading to Caxton End (Bourne Parish). To the west of Ermine Street this old route survives as a sunken path between 7.5m and 12m wide and up to 1m deep. The southern holloway (White Heads Lane in 1750) runs from a point immediately south of the church for some 450m before turning north-east to meet the northern holloway. It survives as a sunken track between 9m and 15m wide and some 2m deep. Near the north-west end a ramp 36m wide leads out of its southern side into a field with remains of ridge and furrow. Between the two holloways are the remains of ridge and furrow within three (or four) curving 'closes' divided by banks 0.60m wide and up to 0.30m high (HER 03409). To the north of the area are further closes overlaid by ridge and furrow (RCHM(E) 1968, 42 (24)). It is possible that the northern holloway represents the original village street, with the southern holloway acting as a back-lane. The subdivision of the area between these two lanes would, in fact, suggest the presence of earlier tofts later amalgamated with the surrounding fields when the site was abandoned and reverted to agricultural use. The original length of the tofts appears to have been c. 185m.

An evaluation at Firs Farm (ECB120) produced evidence for medieval timber-framed buildings and a cobbled stone surface. These remains probably represented part of the Saxo-Norman settlement which clustered around the church of St Andrew (Mould 1996). This was confirmed during the following excavations at Firs Farm, at the junction between St. Peters Street and Gransden Road, where a phase of building activity dating to the Saxo-Norman period (AFU 1999) along with a ditched track were recorded (Connor 2009). This phase was followed by the remains of levelling activity, which also included evidence of postholes and possible clay floors, carried out during the Saxo-Norman period in advance of subsequent settlement. The

evidence suggests that the Saxo-Norman settlement nucleus stretched westwards, to include the area to the north of the church.

### *Medieval (CAX 2)*

The village gradually moved towards Ermine Street as this developed into the main through route. The medieval houses were probably built on the existing strips of the common fields, for the surviving garden plots are long and narrow, curved strips running back to meet the remains of ridge and furrow (Taylor 1973, 227-228). Settlement shift and redevelopment probably occurred after the middle of the 13th century, following the grant of a market charter to Baldwin de Freville in 1247 (below).

Recent archaeological investigations at Firs Farm revealed a phase of late medieval building activity (1350-1500) including structures, yards and a pond (AFU 1999). The evidence would suggest that the area of early settlement near the church continued to be partly occupied after the village had moved towards Ermine Street.

The RCHM(E) has mapped the medieval cultivation remains in the parish based on aerial photographs and surviving earthwork remains of ridge and furrow (RCHM(E) 1968, 42 (25)). The extent of ridge and furrow has been tentatively used in this report to map the boundaries of the medieval settlement.

### St Andrew's Church (CAX 3)

A church had been established at Caxton by c.1145 when Stephen de Scalers granted it to Lewes Priory (Sussex). In 1351 the advowson of the vicarage was transferred to the Crown and, later, to the warden of the college of St George, Windsor. The warden and college have continued to enjoy the advowson ever since (Dunning 1973, 34).

The parish church of St Andrew (HER 00350/LB 51114) stands in a rectangular churchyard bounded on the north by a ditch and on the south by a low bank. The walls are of fieldstones with clunch and freestone dressings; the roofs are of tile. A building may have stood here in the 11th century, as suggested by the presence of architectural fragments preserved in the 13th century church. The chancel and west wall of the nave are 13th to 15th century in date, the remainder of the nave, with the south aisle and most of the ground stage of the west tower, date to the late 14th or 15th century. Restoration was carried out during the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century.

### Manors

The Manor of Caxton and The Moats, The Manor of Colne (or Dunhold), The Manor of Brockholts and Caxton Pastures and Swansley Manor all lie outside the historic core and are discussed in Appendix 2.

### Transport and Roads

Ermine Street probably went out of use following the withdrawal of the Roman army from Britain. In fact, the Saxo-Norman settlement developed away from it. As seen above, Green Ditch Lane/Barn Street and White Head Lane may have represented the original village streets. During the medieval period Ermine Street developed as the main route, possibly under commercial stimulus, attracting settlement expansion along its sides.

In the later medieval period the route system was probably very similar to that established by 1750 (Map of Caxton Manor). As the settlement developed along Ermine Street, the Saxo-Norman village was abandoned with the church standing in isolation.

The presence of narrow lanes running perpendicular and parallel to Ermine Street to the south and west of the village would indicate an established network which was progressively integrated with the new settlement layout. Some of these lanes are likely to have originated as field tracks.

## The Economy

### *Agriculture*

The open fields of Caxton were under a triennial rotation. The principal crop was wheat. Other agricultural produce included oat, dredge, beans and peas, much of which was sold locally. There is record of a mill at Caxton in the 13th century, though it is likely that the village was served by the mill at Bourne throughout the medieval period. An earthwork survey was undertaken on an area of ridge and furrow at Oliver's Barn, 94 Ermine Street (ECB2887, McCall *et al.* 2008) that recorded a series of ten parallel furrows across the site.

Besides agriculture, sheep farming and associated activities represented an important element of the local economy.

During the early 14th century there was a recession in cultivation and the agricultural emphasis shifted onto sheep farming.

There are records of closes around the village from the later 15th century suggesting the process of enclosure was gradual (Dunning 1973, 30 ff.). The common arable and pasture survived until Enclosure in 1834 (below).

### *Markets and Fairs (CAX 4)*

In 1247 King Henry III granted a market to Sir Baldwin de Freville. According to Palmer (1927, 60), the market place was located in a triangular area known as Pond Field opposite Caxton Manor House, where a weekly market was held until the 18th century. The foundations of the market stalls were uncovered during antiquarian excavations (Palmer 1927, 60). The market probably served the local community. It had probably lapsed by the 17th century.

### Population

At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 Caxton contained 17 villains, 8 bordars and 10 cottagers.

By 1279 (Rot. Hund.) 83 land tenants are recorded.

In 1377 the whole village contained only 131 adult taxpayers.

## **Post-Medieval**

### St. Andrew's Church

The Warden and College of St George, Windsor, continued to enjoy the advowson of the vicarage and the rectorial glebe throughout the post-medieval period. The inappropriate rectory was leased out until the middle of the 19th century when the freehold was transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who sold it to the lessees. In 1535 one of the lessees held the Red Lion Inn (below) which was attached to the parsonage (Dunning 1973, 30).

### Settlement (CAX 5)

The settlement probably grew between the middle of the 16th and middle of the 17th century, as attested by the number of surviving buildings of this period.

The Map of Caxton Manor shows the extent of settlement in 1750, with dense occupation along the western side of Ermine Street. By this date the market had probably declined, and the former market area is depicted as an empty space. At the time of Enclosure in 1834 the eastern side of Ermine Street and the former market area had been partly in-filled. Under the stimulus of population growth, infilling and subdivision of the earlier plots on both sides of the road continued throughout the 19th century, as suggested by the OS Map of 1886.

Since the Second World War the village has expanded northwards and, more recently, along Gransden Road and Bourne Road.

Two fires in 1896 and 1897 destroyed more than a dozen cottages. Caxton however retains few historical post-medieval buildings, some of which (Caxton Manor, The Crown House and Red Lion farm) were former inns (below). Sixteenth and 17th century timber framed and brick rendered buildings survive along Ermine Street.

Among the most important secular buildings is Caxton Hall in St Peter's Street (LB 51117). It is a two-storey red brick building with attics built in 1670 with early 18th century extension and later alterations (RCHM(E) 1968 (15)).

#### Transport and Road

After the Restoration Caxton was selected as the county toll point for the North Road turnpike. The gate was probably located near Caxton manor house, but could be easily evaded via Potton Way. The Cambridgeshire Gate was therefore transferred to Arrington in 1668 (RCHM(E) 1969, 35).

The road layout was considerably altered between 1750 (Map of Caxton Manor) and 1834 (Enclosure Map).

By 1834 White Heads Lane had disappeared. Gransden Road had been created from a field track and incorporated the former Church Way. Potton Way had been re-named Rosemary Green (later St Peter's Street, OS Map of 1886) and incorporated the former Barn Street. The original Rosemary Green, which ran parallel to the brook, had fallen out of use by 1834. The lane to the north-west of the former Church Way had disappeared by 1886. Bourne Road had been enlarged by 1834.

The Old North Road, formerly Ermine Street, was part of the first turnpike road established in Britain in 1663 (Taylor 1997). By the early 16th century Caxton had also obtained a certain importance as a posting station and travel stage, with extensive coaching inns flourishing within the village along the Old North Road.

- The Crown House, formerly The Crown Coaching Inn (LB 51106/HER 03205), is a 16th century two-storey red brick building with attics and cellars. The inn was the Post Office for the village before 1660 (Dunning 1973, 29). It later became the collecting Post Office for North Cambridgeshire and was used as a Magistrates Court until 1839. It ceased to be an inn in c. 1860 (RCHM(E) 1969 (11)). It is known from historical sources to have been in existence by 1545.
- Caxton Manor House, formerly The George Coaching Inn (LB 51104/HER 03201), is a late 16th century two-storey brick-built building with attics and cellars. It was re-fronted in the early 18th century (RCHM(E) 1969, 37 (8)).

- Red Lion Farmhouse, formerly Red Lion Inn (LB 51093/HER 03371), is an early 17th century timber-framed and plastered two-storey building with painted brick (RCHM(E) 1969, 37, (6)).

## The Economy

### *Agriculture*

Throughout the post-medieval period cereals remained the dominant produce in the traditional rotation of crops and fallow. In 1750 (Map of Caxton Manor) the parish was divided into three open fields of possible medieval origin, Stow Field in the south, Mill Field in the east and Wood Field in the north. The common pastures lay mostly in the north of the parish and included Sheep Common and Cow Common. Enclosure was by then limited to the area between Ermine Street and Potton Way, which was divided into small closes.

The fields of the parish were enclosed in 1835. Following Enclosure, the land was divided among a few large farms which have been only slightly altered.

### *Market and Fair*

The medieval market had probably lapsed by the 17th century, for in 1668 Ralph Bovey received a grant of a market and two fairs. By 1839 no regular market was held. One of the two fairs died out in the mid 19th century. The other fair, latterly for the sale of cloths, had ceased by 1892 (Dunning 1973, 32). Following the advent of the railway at the end of the 19th century, the volume of traffic on the North Road was reduced. Decline of traffic brought coach travel and related activities to a halt, also affecting the struggling market.

## Administration

Caxton Manor held a court on the estate. Court Rolls from the 17th century survive.

In 1835 Caxton became part of Caxton and Arrington Poor-Law Union. A workhouse was built in Caxton the following year and had been closed by 1933. The divisional Magistrates met at the Crown Inn until 1859 when the Old Court House was built at the north end of the village (LB 51100). This latter is a one-storey house in yellow gault brick, with two-storey ranges to the rear accommodating prison cells and police offices with domestic quarters. The building was in use until 1969.

The parish was incorporated with the Chesterton Registration District in 1934 (Dunning 1973, 32).

## Schools, Charities, Public Health and Non-Conformity

General Baptists are recorded from the 1650s. In 1700 a house in Caxton was licensed for the worship of Independents. A Baptist chapel was built on Ermine Street in 1842 (LB 51095) to replace an earlier chapel that had been privately owned.

A national School was built in 1854 on glebe land off Gransden Road. It was closed in 1959 and the building sold in 1961.

Charities at Caxton are recorded as early as the 1550s (Dunning 1973, 35).

## Population

The size of the population remained stable throughout the 16th to 18th centuries.

As with most settlements in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Caxton, witnessed a growth in the size of the population up to the middle of the 19th century, with a

peak of 631 in 1871. This growth was followed by a slight decline ascribed partly to the movement of surplus agricultural population to local areas of industrial expansion (Jones 2000).

Population figures for the 19th and 20th century are summarised below (CRO, Census 1801-1991). The figure for 1996 is taken from South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (1999).

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>
1801	336
1841	558
1871	631
1901	451
1961	368
1991	330
1996	410

Table 2: Population figures for Caxton

## **DEPOSIT MODELLING AND SURVIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS**

In this section an attempt has been made to predict the existence and survival of archaeological remains in the historic core of Caxton. The assessment takes the form of a prediction model based on probability and not certainty. It is meant as a guide only and should not be used to produce 'constraint maps'.

### **Prehistoric and Roman**

To date, there is no record of prehistoric and Roman activity in the village. Absence of finds from the settlement core may be partly due to medieval (namely ridge and furrow) and later remains obliterating earlier features, as at Firs Farm where unstratified worked lithics were recovered from disturbed deposits (Mould 1996; AFU 1999).

By contrast, Iron Age and Roman activity is documented at Cambourne where excavations have produced evidence for progressive wood clearance to create arable land and livestock enclosures on the high contour.

Based on the available evidence, it is not possible to predict the existence of pre-medieval sites within and immediately around Caxton. Areas that escaped destruction caused by medieval land use and modern development could potentially produce prehistoric and Roman remains, though occupation sites are expected to be located on the higher contour to the north-east (Cambourne) and south-west of the village.

In contrast with the wealth of well-preserved evidence for Iron Age and Roman occupation at Cambourne, there are no known prehistoric and Roman finds from the village. As with most built-up areas, absence of evidence is likely to be partly due to destruction caused by later medieval and post-medieval activities. The limited extent of archaeological investigations within the village has prevented an assessment of the state of preservation of potential remains. As a result, the rate of survival for the prehistoric and Roman period can only be described as unknown level.

### **Anglo-Saxon and Medieval**

Early Saxon Caxton remains elusive. By contrast, recent archaeological excavations have produced evidence for Saxo-Norman occupation to the north-of the church of St Andrew. The evidence is consistent with the presence of earthworks associated with the Saxo-Norman/medieval shrunken village which stretched from the church to Ermine Street. The extent of settlement is unknown, though the presence of ridge and furrow in the northern part of the site at Firs Farm would suggest that occupation clustered around the church.

Following the grant of a charter to Baldwin de Freville in 1247 the settlement shifted towards Ermine Street, with new houses being built on former arable land. Later medieval Caxton is known from historical sources and, indirectly, from post-medieval cartographic evidence (Map of Caxton Manor of 1750) which provides a clue as to the original layout of the village.

Although presently unknown, there is potential for the survival of medieval remains (evidence for settlement and light industrial activity) in undeveloped pockets of land

within the village core. This is hinted at by excavations by Palmer (1927) which uncovered evidence of the market place in an open area in the east of the historic core.

Outside the village envelope, medieval remains are visible as cropmarks and earthworks associated with medieval cultivation and with the shrunken Saxo-Norman/early medieval settlement to the east of the church. The settlement earthworks are not protected by statutory scheduling and are not included within the village Conservation Area, though they are located in a designated area of Best Landscape (above, Local Plan).

Recent excavations at Firs Farm to the north of the church produced further evidence for Saxo-Norman building activity. Continued use of the site had caused severe truncation of earlier phases of activity. Furthermore, the most northerly part of the excavation area had suffered disturbance in recent years due to the presence of a cattle and pig farm (AFU 1999).

There have been no archaeological excavations within the built-up area of the later settlement which grew along Ermine Street. The presence of ridge and furrow, visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs, suggest that the settlement was superimposed to the earlier pattern of medieval cultivation. As a whole, the rate of survival of potential medieval remains (settlement, farming and light industrial activities) is predicted to have been variable, affected by post-medieval and modern land-use. Potential remains are expected to have survived in better conditions within undeveloped plots away from the street frontages.

### **Post-Medieval**

Post-medieval Caxton is well documented through extant buildings and cartographic evidence (Map of Caxton Manor, 1750). Although very few elements of the original medieval plan survived into the later period, including the site of the former market place opposite Caxton Manor and a few streets/lanes, the post-medieval layout is consistent with that of a chartered market 'town' and posting station, which developed progressively along Ermine Street. Village growth throughout the post-medieval period probably took the form of progressive replacement and/or refurbishment of earlier timber-framed buildings, together with in-filling of the former property plots. Caxton village retained its traditional linear layout until recent expansion along Gransden Road.

The degree of preservation of potential buried remains is presently unknown due to a lack of archaeological investigations within the village. It is reasonable to assume that post-medieval, namely pre-18th century, remains may survive underneath the present village, allowing for a higher degree of truncation along the street frontage due to continuous alterations in the course of the following centuries.

The post-medieval nucleus of Caxton lies within the Conservation Area which includes Listed Buildings of historical and archaeological interest dating from the 16th century.

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#### **MAPS CONSULTED**

Enclosure Map of 1834 CRO Q/RDc49  
Map of Manor of Caxton, 1750 (Photostat) CUL Maps R.b.10

OS Maps Sheets Cambridgeshire XXXVIII.16 and XLV.4 (CRO)

- OS 1st ed. 1886 and 1887
- OS 2nd ed. 1903
- OS provisional ed. 1950

BGS Sheet 187 (Huntingdon), 1:50 0000 (British Geological Survey of England and Wales).

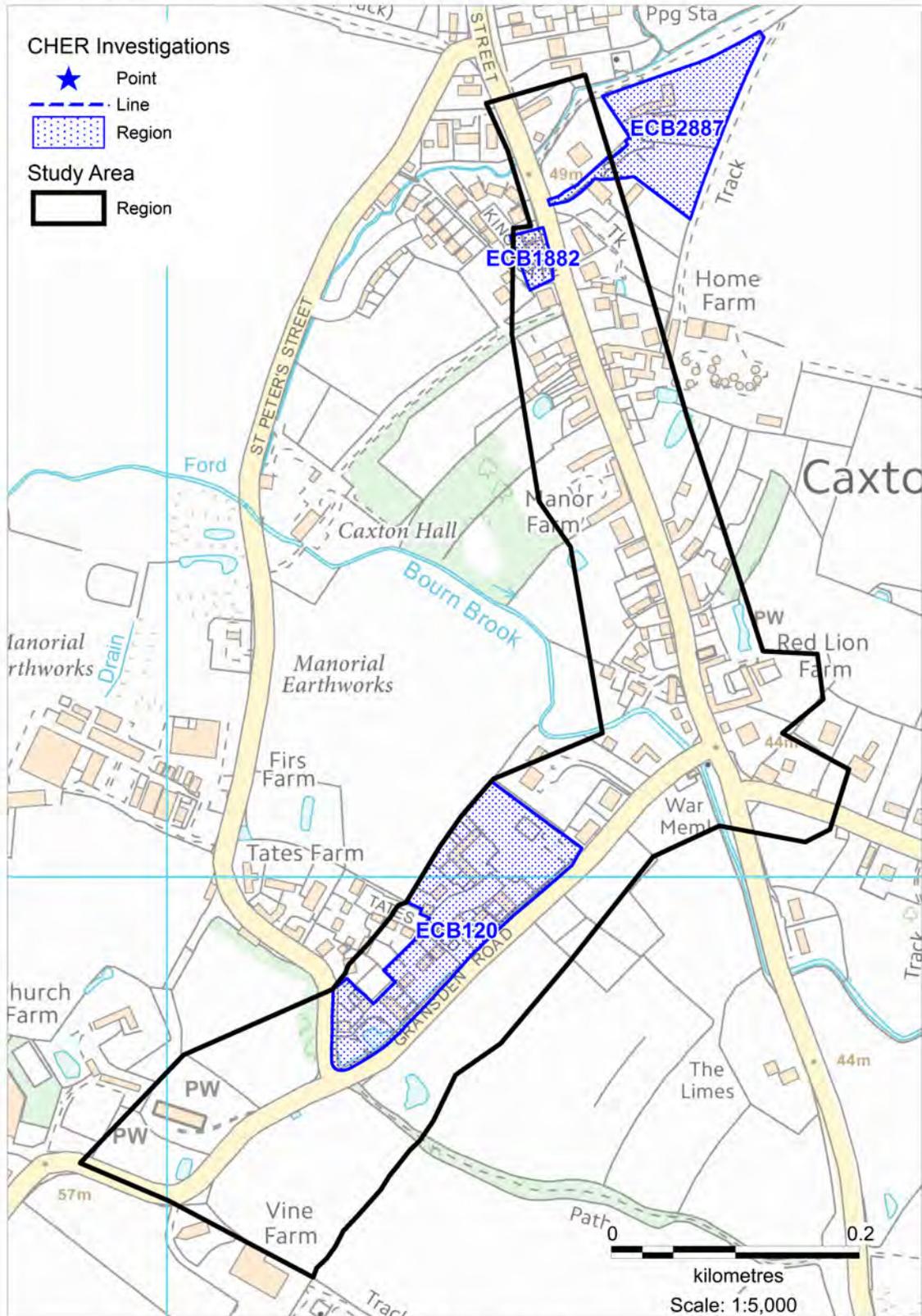
**APPENDIX 1: HER DATA IN HISTORIC CORE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	
Palaeolithic	50000BC	10000BC	<b>Prehistoric</b>
Early Mesolithic	10000BC	7000BC	
Mesolithic	10000BC	4000BC	
Early Neolithic	4000BC	3000BC	
Neolithic	4000BC	2200BC	
Bronze Age	2500BC	700BC	
Late Bronze Age	1000BC	700BC	
Iron Age	800BC	43AD	
Roman	43AD	410AD	
Early Anglo-Saxon	410AD	650AD	
Middle Anglo-Saxon	650AD	900AD	
Late Anglo-Saxon	900AD	1066AD	
Anglo-Saxon	410AD	1066AD	
Medieval	1066AD	1540AD	
Post Medieval	1540AD	1900AD	
Modern	1900AD	present	

Table 3: Date Ranges

HER No.	Name	Organisation / Source	Description
ECB120	Evaluation at Firs Farm, Caxton, 1996	BUFAU Mould, C. 1996. An archaeological evaluation of land at Firs Farm, Caxton, Cambridgeshire 1996. BUFAU Report 392 (SCB17024)	An evaluation found features and deposits of medieval date, and a backfilled pond of possible medieval date. Evidence of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation was also recorded.
ECB1882	Investigation of land at 95 Ermine Street, Caxton, 1991	Chris Taylor Taylor, C.C. 1991. Report on Archaeological Investigation of Land at 95 Ermine Street, Caxton, Cambridgeshire. (SCB19195)	The whole area had been covered with material from elsewhere in the later 19th/early 20th century. No finds were recovered to suggest occupation in this area before the 18th century.
ECB2485	Geophysical survey of land at Firs Farm, Caxton, 1996	Stratascan Baker, P. 1996. Geophysical Survey for Birmingham Archaeology, Land at Firs Farm, Caxton. Stratascan Report	A magnetometer and resistivity survey of four test areas, each measuring 40m by 20m, was conducted. Apart from two magnetic converging rectilinear anomalies in the third area, little of archaeological interest was found.
ECB2887	Evaluation at Oliver's Barn, 94 Ermine Street, Caxton, 2008	Archaeological Solutions McCall, W., Unger, S., Lamprey, C. and Newton, A. 2008. Oliver's Barn, 94 Ermine Street, Caxton, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Evaluation. Archaeological Solutions Report 3077 (SCB20804)	An earthwork survey was undertaken on an area of ridge and furrow, which recorded a series of ten parallel furrows across the site. Three evaluation trenches revealed no archaeological features or finds.

Table 4: Event Data



HER Events in the Historic Core

## APPENDIX 2: THE MANORS

### Medieval

Unless otherwise cited, the content of this paragraph draws upon Dunning (1973).

Caxton is first recorded in the Domesday Book as Caustone, probably from the old Nors kokkr, meaning 'lump' and tun, meaning 'farm' (Reaney 1943, 157).

#### Manor of Caxton and The Moats

This manor lies outside the historic core, approximately 700m to its west-north-west, and is, therefore, only briefly outlined below.

Before the Conquest, the major landowner at Caxton was Thorgar, King Edward's thane. In 1086 Hardwin de Scalers held the whole vill of Caxton, including the manor, which included 6 hides taxable, land for 12 ploughs, 17 villains, 8 bordars and 10 cottagers with 8 ploughs. It had meadow and wood for fences and houses (Morris 1981, 26.42). The manor later passed through marriage to the de Freville family, with whom it descended until the 15th century.

The site known as The Moats (HER CB15405/SM 27190) from c.1825 (Reaney 1943, 157) could be the seat of the Manor of Caxton. The site includes a group of three interlinked moated enclosures arranged in an inverted "L"-shaped plan with associated water features, fishponds and warren earthworks. The most elaborate enclosure is located at the north-west corner of the group. It measures approximately 75m by 45m and is surrounded by a broad flat-bottomed ditch up to 18m in width and 2.5m in depth. Raised rectangular platforms occupy the east and west ends of the island.

The site may have originated in the 12th century as the seat of the de Scalers. In the fourteenth century it was the site of the dower-house of Lady Eleanor de Freville. The northern island is thought to be the earliest part of the complex. The arrangements of platforms and the scale of the moat have been compared with the rectangular motte at Burwell Castle near Newmarket, which is known to have been built in the middle of the 12th century, during "The Anarchy". It has been suggested that the two sites were contemporary, forming part of a series of fortifications intended to contain the rebellion of Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex. The date of expansion of the complex, with additional islands, fishponds and warren, is uncertain.

#### Manor of Colne (or Dunhold)

The manor of Colne or Dunhold lies outside the historic core, approximately 250m to its west, and is, therefore, only briefly outlined below.

In the 12th century Geoffrey, son of Swein of Croxton, owned land at Caxton which was probably part of the original Scalers' fee. In 1251 it was held by John of Colne and later passed through marriage to the Dunholts.

At the time of the survey by the RCHM(E) the Manor of Colne (HER 01092) on Firs Farm comprised a small moat enclosing a trapezoidal area of some 0.20ha, two ponds, and an enclosure. The moat was 7.5m wide, and up to 1.5m deep. To the west of the moat was an outer bank 3.5m wide and 0.60m high. The moat is no longer visible. One of the two original ponds was created by widening the south arm

of the moat. A second, smaller, pond adjoined it to the south. The surviving ponds are now much smaller. Finally, to the south of the ponds was a rectangular platform. The whole complex was enclosed by a bank on the west and south sides with a dry outer ditch presently marked by a drain (RCHM(E) 1968, 41 (23)).

#### Manor of Brockholts and Caxton Pastures

The Manor of Brockholts and Caxton Pastures lie outside the historic core, approximately 1.7km to its north-north-west, and is, therefore, only briefly outlined below.

The Dunholts probably also acquired the manor of Brockholts, which seems to have merged with the Dunholts' estate sometime during the 15th century.

The moated site known as Caxton Pastures (HER 01180/SM 33275) from c. 1825 (Reaney 1943, 157), in the north-west corner of the parish, was probably the seat of the manor of Brockholt. The moat is a wet ditch, some 8m wide and 1.5m deep from the water level, which encloses an area of c. 2ha. On the south and south-east sides there is an external bank 6m wide and up to nearly 1m high. Six causeways of uncertain date cross the ditch (RCHM(E) 1969, 41 (22)). The interior is presently occupied by an eighteenth century farmhouse (HER 01180A) and by an 18th century converted dovecote (HER 01180B/LB 51111). The moat is partly filled-up and overgrown; the interior is disturbed.

#### Swansley Manor and Swansley Wood

This manor lies outside the historic core, approximately 2km to its north, and is, therefore, only briefly outlined below.

Swansley (or Monk's) Manor (HER 01087) originated in a grant that Stephen de Scalers made to St Neots Priory sometime before the middle of the 12th century. The property also comprised messuages and crofts in the village. St Neots Priory held the property until the dissolution of the monastic house.

This site comprises a rectangular area of 25sqm surrounded by a moat 4.5m wide and 1.8m deep. On the north side of the moat there are traces of slight enclosures, together with a large sub-rectangular depression (fishpond?) on the north-east side (RCHM(E) 1968, 41 (21)). Since the survey by the RCHM(E) the moat has been in-filled and the interior of the moat built upon.

### **Post-Medieval**

Unless otherwise cited, the content of this paragraph draws upon Dunning (1973).

#### Manor of Caxton and The Moats

In the 16th century the Manor of Caxton was acquired by the Cages who later sold it to the Boveys.

In 1750 the site known as The Moats consisted of one rectangular moated area styled as 'Moat Close' with no buildings. At the time of the Enclosure Map of 1834 the site appeared to consist of three interlinked square moats (above) of uncertain date.

The house known as Caxton Manor on the west side of Ermine Street (LB 51104/HER 03201), of two storeys with attics, brick walls and slate roofs, dates from c.1600. The house was converted into The George Inn in the 18th century when it was re-fronted and the interior largely remodelled. It later reverted to private use (RCHM(E)1968, 37 (8)).

#### Manor of Colne

From the later 16th century the Manor of Colne or Brockholts had become part of the main Manor of Caxton owned by the Cages.

In 1750 (Map of Caxton Manor) the platform to the south of the medieval moat was occupied by a building, no longer extant. The map does not depict the moat.

#### Manor of Brockholts and Pastures Moats

In 1750 Pastures Moat of Brockholts manor consisted of a large rectangular moat with no evidence for a building. The extant 18th century house must have been built after 1750. It is a two-storey building with attics, partly brick-built and partly timber framed (HER 1180A). One of the contemporary outer buildings is a dovecote (LB 51111/HER 01180B) converted to a brick dwelling before 1914 (RCHM(E) 1969, 41 (16)). The dovecote is a two storey building with red brick walls and plain tile gabled roof (Davies 1986).

#### Swanley Manor

After the Dissolution of St Neots Priory, the estate came into the hands of the Crown and was leased out. Towards the end of the 16th century the property was conveyed to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. The college retained possession until 1899.

By 1583 a manor house stood to the south of Swansley Wood, together with two barns, stables and a malting house in the moated area. The Map of Caxton Manor (1750) does not depict the moat, the site of which is marked by 'Swansley Close'. By this time the manorial buildings had probably already been demolished.