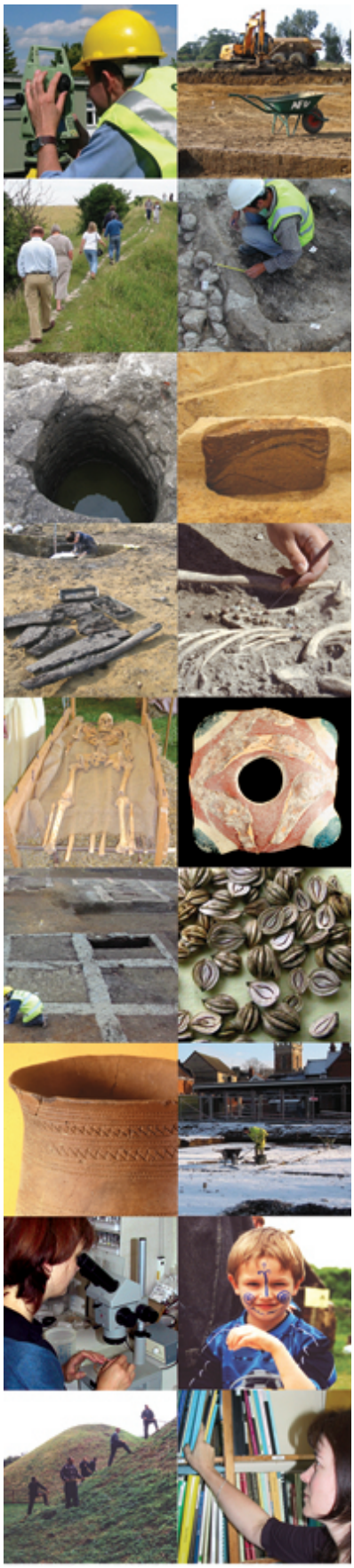
cambridgeshire archaeology
archaeological field unit



CCC AFU Report Number 911

Medieval Remains at 22a Middle Street, Thriplow, Cambridgeshire

An Evaluation

Alexandra Howe

January 2007

Cambridgeshire County Council
Environment & Community Services

Commissioned by IGM Construction

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Medieval Remains at 22a Middle Street, Thriplow, Cambridgeshire

An Evaluation

Alexandra Howe

With contributions by Dr Paul Spoerry, Chris Faine and Rachel Fosberry

Site Code: THR MIS 06
CHER Event Number: 2411
Date of works: 18th to 20th October 2006
Grid Ref: TL 4385 4637

Editor: Elizabeth Popescu
Illustrator: Severie Bezie and Alexandra Howe

Summary

Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU) carried out an archaeological evaluation at 22a Middle Street, Thriplow, Cambridgeshire (TL 4385 4637). The work was conducted in advance of construction of a single new dwelling, double garage and associated services and landscaping. One 20m trench was excavated.

The evaluation discovered early and late medieval remains including post pads for a barn and four ditches as well as other undated features.

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Ordnance Datum 18.45m OD

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Feature 27

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Field Drain

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Cut Number **118**

1 Introduction

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application [S/00946/06]), supplemented by a Specification prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by CAPCA, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by CCC AFU and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

2 Geology and Topography

The site overlies Holywell Nodular Formation chalk (British Geological Survey 2002). The land rises from about 20m above sea level in the north to 50m in the south. It lies on the spring line.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The area around Thriplow is rich in sites and areas of archaeological interest. The village lies on perhaps two or three of the east-west routes of the Icknield Way. The surrounding heathland was once well known for its many prominent burial mounds (MCB 5197, MCB 5122, MCB 5121, ECB 471), one of which appears to have given the village its Saxon name (*trepeslau* “Tryppa’s burial mound”).

A Middle Palaeolithic axe was found near the Green and others came from a track leading to Whittlesford. A large number of Neolithic flints and an axe (MCB 5113) were also found in the village. Artefact scatters dating from the Neolithic to the 19th century have been discovered around the area of Church Street which lies to the east of Middle Street (MCB 16724, MCB 5200).

The site lies within the historic core of the village of Thriplow, within the grid-like pattern of streets that may have a Saxon origin. Middle Street, as suggested by the name, is the most central of the north south routes that make up the grid. The older properties of this village are all located along this north-south grid.

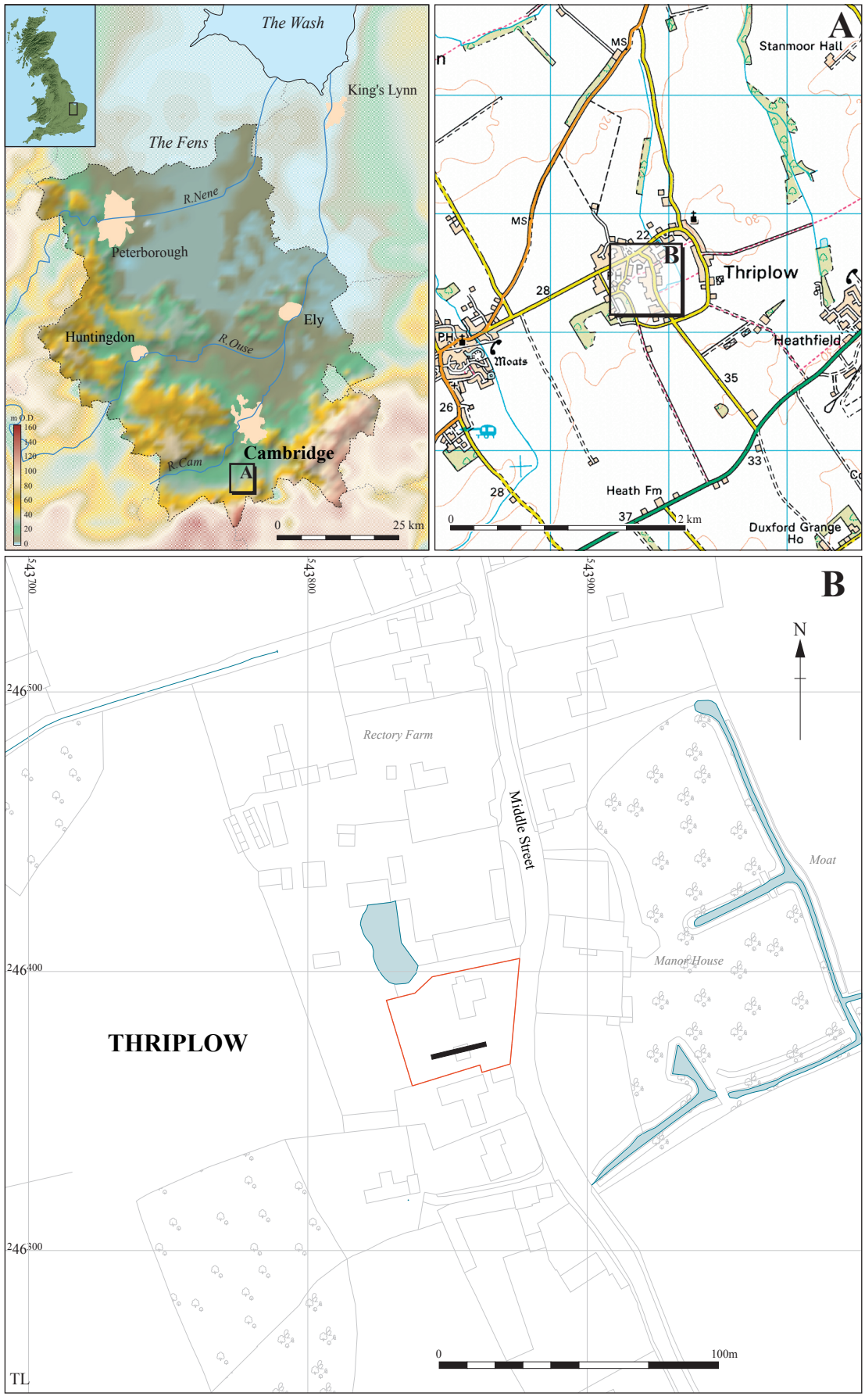

Figure 1: Location of trench (black) with the development area outlined (red)

The development area lies opposite the major medieval estate centre of Barrington's Manor, once owned by Geoffrey de Mandeville. There are still the remains of a dried up double moat. The present house that occupies this site still contains parts of the 16th century building which replaced the medieval manor house (Taylor 1997).

4 Methodology

The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that 5% of the development area was investigated. This equated to a c.20m trench being excavated.

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using 1.6m toothless ditching bucket.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using CCC AFU's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

A small number of environmental samples were taken as required by Kasia Gdaniec from CAPCA.

Site conditions were good. The development area had been cleared of vegetation and a small garage had been demolished prior to the commencement of works. The client had building materials of site which dictated the positioning of the trench.

5 Results

5.1 Overburden

A single trench measuring 20m was machined from east to west. It varied in depth from 0.42m to 0.98m.

The topsoil was a dark blackish brown sandy clayey silt between 0.22m and 0.1m deep. It contained frequent modern brick and building material and was heavily disturbed by roots.

The topsoil was truncated in parts by modern features. At the eastern end of the trench it was truncated by the construction of a driveway that originally led to the neighbouring property.

The subsoil was a mid-yellowish grey sandy silt with occasional chalk fragments. It was a maximum thickness of 0.34m. The sub soil was only identifiable approximately 5 metres from the western end of the trench.

5.2 Possible natural features

Feature **27** was a large natural gully or perhaps a pond or other water filled feature. It was 7m wide and 1m deep to the limit of excavation. The upper fills (36, 67, 68/48 and 69) contained a high quantity of silts and organic material implying that this feature was waterlogged or inundated during silting up. The lower fill was a mottled light grey. This was not excavated. Features **29**, **33** and **35** truncated this fill.

Feature **26** was a linear feature containing (36) a dark brown organic clay. It was 0.9m wide although it had been truncated by machining. This feature may represent the base of an upper fill of **27**.

5.3 First phase of build up

Layer 56 was a mid brownish grey silty clay. It was 0.14m thick. This may represent an 'over spilling' of feature **27**'s earliest fills. Features **23** and **11** cut this layer. Feature **15** has an uncertain relationship with 56.

5.4 Possible Roman feature

Ditch **31** was 0.45m wide and 0.1m deep. It lay on an east-west alignment. The ditch became shallower towards the east. The fill of **31** (30) contained a piece of Roman micaceous ware. This feature is cut by **29**. Ditch **31** may cut through the lower fill of **27**, which would make the later the earliest feature in the trench. It is also possible that the Roman sherd from ditch **31** was residual, perhaps deriving from **27**.

5.5 Medieval features

Ditch **23** was curvilinear in plan and ran from the SSW – ENE. It was 0.7m deep and 0.58m width. It was filled by 22 a mid brownish grey

sandy silt. It contained one piece of Stamford Ware pottery and one piece of early medieval Essex micatious sandy ware. This feature lay beneath post pad **8**. Feature **66** also appeared to be a narrow ditch running N-S however only a very small proportion was visible before it headed into the baulk. Features **23**, **31** and **66** were all truncated in part by **29**, a ditch on an E-W alignment. Ditch **29** was 0.5m wide and 0.3m deep. It contained a single fill (28) which had pottery dating to AD 1250 – 1350.

Feature **11** was 0.56m deep and 1.42m wide. It was not possible to determine the shape in plan as it ran underneath the southern baulk. This feature cut through **13**, a shallow feature also running into the baulk. The fill of 11 (10), contained a piece of Ely type ware dating to AD 1150 – 1350.

Feature **15** was shallow and ran underneath the northern baulk of the trench. It was 0.35m wide to limit of excavation and 0.15m deep. It contained a single fill (14) a light grey silty sand. The feature was capped by 56. 56 is a mid brownish grey clayey silt with occasional chalk fragments. Above 56 lay 55 (same as 54) a mid brown friable clayey silt.

5.6 Second phase of build-up

Layers 54/55 are mid brown friable clayey silts. These layers occur over features **11** and **23.** These contexts probably relate to an episode of either natural ground surface build up caused by the flooding of feature **27** or leveling by human activity prior to building on the site. If the later had occurred there is a possibility that the material was imported from elsewhere.

5.7 Later Medieval foundation remains

Seven chalk or clunch filled post pads (**3** – **9**) were observed along the northern side of the trench and are visible in Section 1 (Fig. 2). They were aligned SW – NE. It was not possible to see the full extent of a single post pad but all were observable in section. The post pads were between 0.5m and 0.8m wide and up to 0.48m deep. The bases of the features were approximately 0.52m below top surface. The posts pads cut through the upper fills of **27** and layers 54/55.

5.8 Modern

Five modern features were identified with in the trench. All apart from **41** were observed from the section. None of these features were excavated.

Features **39** and **50** were possible pits containing burnt wood and some building rubble. Feature **41** appeared to be the cut of a soak-away. The soak-away was circular in shape and brick lined. It had a circular cap constructed of concrete and two field drains leading to it. Feature **45** was the foundation trench of the garage. The fills contained modern building rubble including breeze block. Layers 46 and 47 were modern levelling layers comprising of sand and gravel. Layers 51-53 and 59-61 were associated with the construction of the driveway.

5.9 Undated

Five post holes (**17**, **21**, **25**, **33** and **35**) and one narrow ditch **31** was undated. Post holes **17**, **33** and **35** were isolated features and post holes **21** and **25** had uncertain relationships with medieval ditch **23** and undated feature **19**. The post holes were 0.3m - 0.25m in diameter and 0.07m – 0.15m deep and they all contained a single fill. All post holes were on an approximate WNW – ESE alignment.

Feature **19** was a ditch or gully on a N – S alignment 0.82m wide and 0.26m thick. It was filled by 18 a light grey sandy silt. It's function is uncertain.

6 Discussion

Linear features **26** and **27** may well represent two episodes in the infilling of the same water course, either natural or man-made. The fills of these features suggest that they were subject to inundation or standing water. The fills are quite silty and organic. Initially it was thought that this may be a natural gully or water channel as the edges of the feature were quite diffuse. However there is a notable pond feature to the north of the development area (see Fig. 1) which runs on the same axis as feature **26**. There is a possibility that this may have originally been part of the same water management feature. Another possibility is that they are separate pond features but are contemporary in their origin. It was also observed that if the pond and feature **26** are contemporary they are parallel to the eastern side of the moat for the Manor House and perpendicular to the southern side perhaps suggesting an association with this medieval site.

Even though feature **31** has been dated to the Roman period there is a strong possibility that the sherd was residual. The feature is similar in character to the collection of other features dated to the medieval period.

The collection of medieval pits and linear features obviously indicate activity in this area, however, the small quantity of finds would imply that the site was situated away from an area of intense occupation activity.

Post pads (**3** – **9**) form the southern wall of a medieval barn which is visible on the 1886 – 1887 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of Thriplow (see Fig. 3). The barn is on an E-W alignment facing the road. It is said to have fallen down in the 1960s. A similar barn is still standing within the village of Thriplow at Rectory Farm to the north of the development area. The Rectory farm barn is dated to c. 1320s (Thriplow Society). Plate 1 shows the barn with a thatched roof in the 1920s. It now has a corregated iron roof.

The undated postholes (**17**, **21**, **25**, **33** and **35**) are on the similar alignment as the post pads. This therefore may suggest that these features are related to the afore-mentioned barn.

7 Conclusions

In conclusion, natural features, perhaps representing a water course or pond, may pre-date a ditch containing a single Roman sherd, which is more likely to be medieval in date by association with other remains.

This is superceded by a group of features that are dated by pottery of the 12th to 14th centuries. The form of these remains (curvilinear ditches, small pits etc) suggest activity areas, although a relative absence of artefacts might preclude interpretation as domestic occupation.

The later build up phase on balance is likely to be preparation for subsequent barn construction.

The post pads and post holes are identified from documentary records and by analogy, as the foundations for a barn, extant on the site until the 1960s and likely to be late medieval in origin (Plate 1).

Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank IGM Construction who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Dr Paul Spoerry. Claire Martin assisted on site. Elizabeth Popescu edited the report. Thank you also to Shirley Wittering for the use of the photo.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Kasia Gdaniec, who visited the site and monitored the excavation.

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Taylor, A	1997	*Archaeology of Cambridgeshire Vol.1 South West Cambridgeshire* (Cambridgeshire County Council)

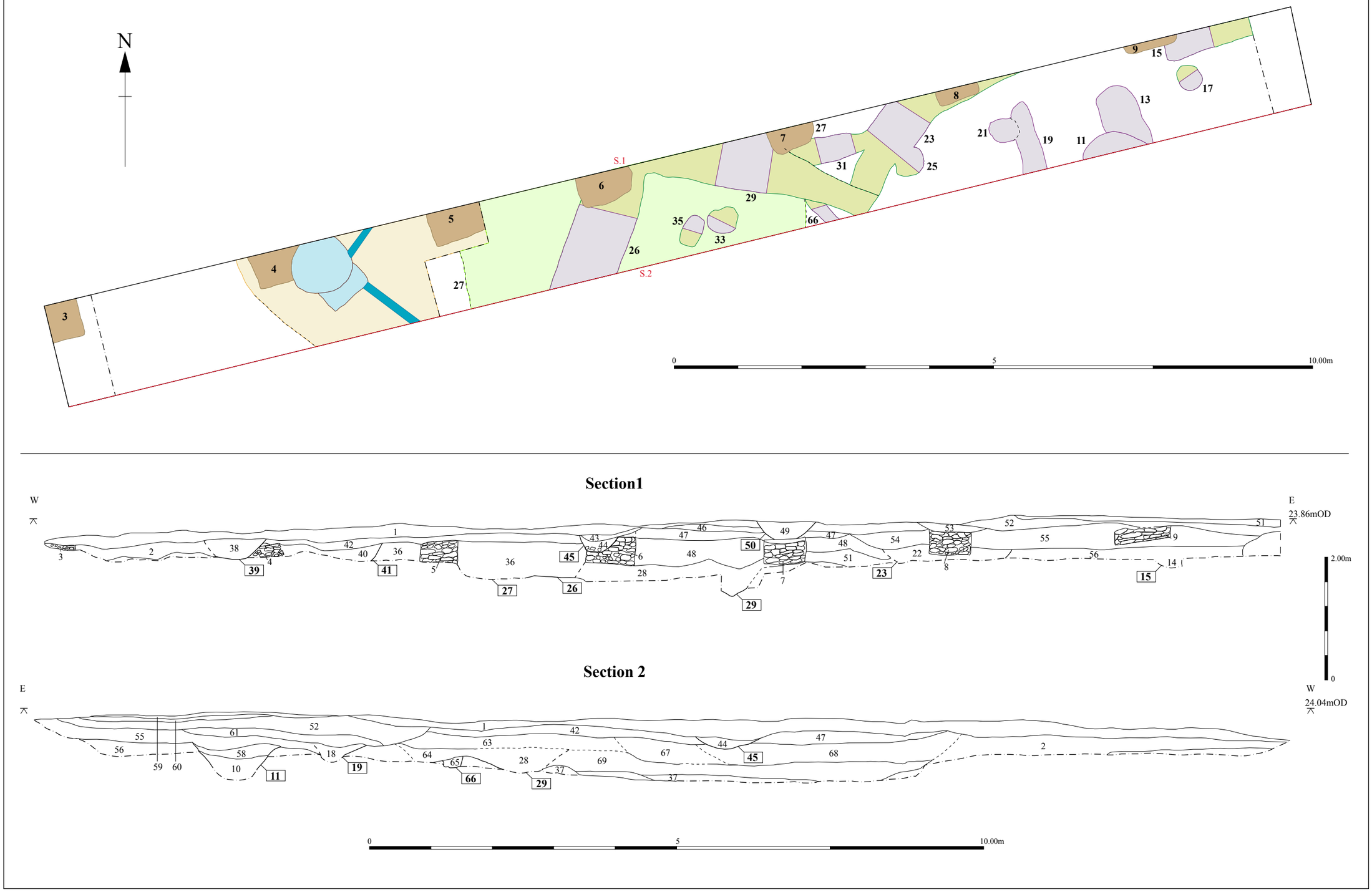

Figure 2: Trench plan and section drawings

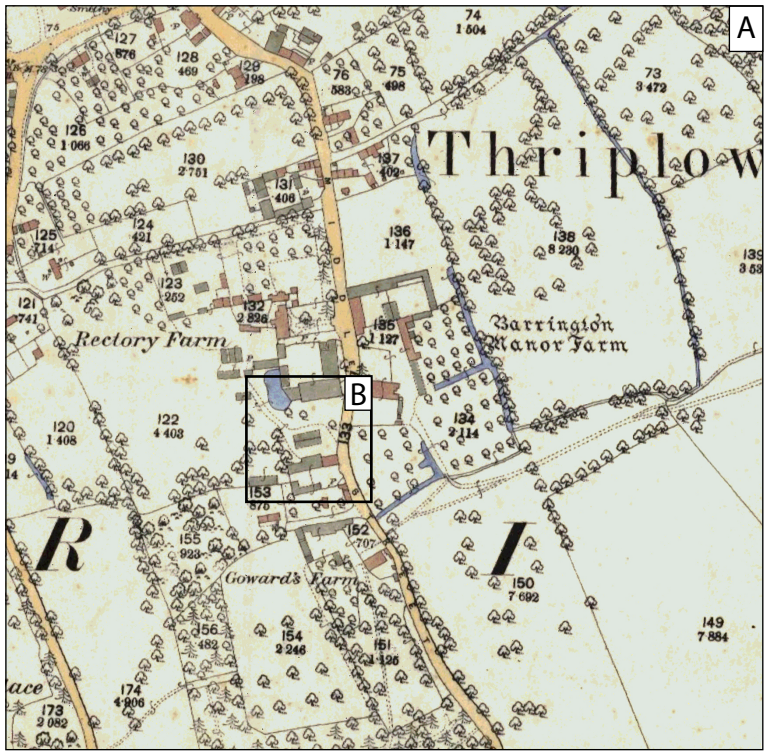

Figure 3a: 1st edition (1886-1887) Ordnance Survey map

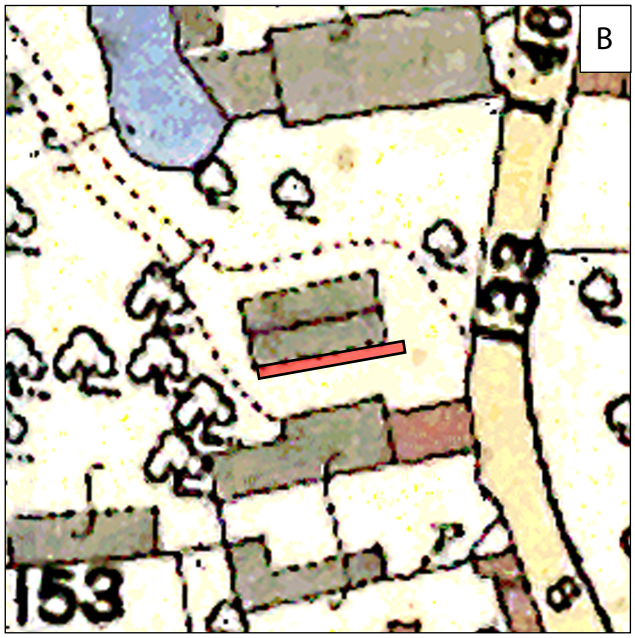

Figure 3b: Location of trench

Plate 1: The Tithe barn, Rectory Farm, Middle Street c. 1920s

Appendix 1: Context Data

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Colour	Fine component	Compaction	Thickness /Extent	Shape in Plan	Orientation
1		topsoil			dark blackish brown	sand clay silt	loose - moderate			
2		subsoil			mid yellowish grey	sandy silt	moderate			
3	0	cut	post pad	structure						
4	0	cut	post pad	structure						
5	0	cut	post pad	structure						
6	0	cut	post pad	structure						
7	0	cut	post pad	structure						
8	0	cut	post pad	structure						
9	0	cut	post pad	structure						
10	11	fill	pit/ditch ?	disuse	dark blackish grey	silty sand	moderate	basal fill, 0.34m thick		
11	11	cut	pit/ditch ?	unknown					unknown	N - S
12	13	fill	ditch	disuse	dark blackish	sandy silt	moderate	Basal fill,		

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Colour	Fine component	Compaction	Thickness /Extent	Shape in Plan	Orientation
					grey			0.15m		
13	13	cut	ditch	unknown					linear	N -S
14	15	fill	pit/ditch ?	disuse	light grey	silty sand	-	0.12m thick		
15	15	cut	pit/ditch ?	unknown					linear?	E -W
16	17	fill	post hole	disuse	light grey	silty sand		0.14m		
17	17	cut	post hole	structure					circular	-
18	19	fill	ditch	disuse	light grey	silty sand	moderate	0.14m single fill		
19	19	cut	ditch	unknown/ structural					linear	N -S
20	21	fill	post hole	disuse	light grey	silty sand	moderate	0.14m single fill		
21	21	cut	post hole	structure					circular	
22	23	fill	ditch	disuse	mid brownish grey	sandy silt	moderate	0.7m single fill		
23	23	cut	ditch	use					linear	NE -SW
24	25	fill	post hole	disuse	mid brownish grey	sandy silt	moderate	single fill 0.15m thick		
25	25	cut	post hole	structure					circular	
26	26	cut	gully	natural					linear	NE - SW
27	27	cut	gully	natural					linear	NE - SW

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Colour	Fine component	Compaction	Thickness /Extent	Shape in Plan	Orientation
28	29	fill	ditch	disuse	dark greenish grey	sandy silt	moderate	0.45m thick single fil		
29	29	cut	ditch	unknown					linear	NW -SE
30	31	fill	ditch	disuse	v light gray	silty sand	moderate	0.1m thick		
31	31	cut	ditch	unknown					linear	E - W
32	33	fill	post hole	disuse	light grey	silty sand	loose	0.05m thick		
33	33	cut	post hole	structure					circular	
34	35	fill	post hole	disuse	light grey	silty sand	loose	0.07m thick		
35	35	cut	post hole	structure					oval	
36	26	fill	ditch	disuse	dark brown	organic/silt	soft			
37	27	fill	gully	disuse	dark brown	organic				
38	38	fill	pit?	rubbish	dark blackish grey	clayey silt	loose	0.34m thick		
39	39	cut	pit?	rubbish					?	
40	41	fill	soke away		mixed dark brownish black	sand clay silt	loose			
41	41	cut	soke away						Not fully excavated	
42	0	layer		levelling	mid brownish orange	silty clay	firm	0.16m thick		
43	45	fill	ditch	use	light grey	concrete and sand				

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Colour	Fine component	Compaction	Thickness /Extent	Shape in Plan	Orientation
44	45	fill	ditch	use	dark blackish brown	clay sand silt	loose	0.18m		
45	45	cut	ditch	foundation trench					linear	N - S
46	0	layer	modern		Mid greyish yellow	sand	loose			
47	0	layer		modern levelling layer	Mid orangey brown	silt clay	moderate	0.16m		
48	0	layer		old top soil?	mid to dark brown	sandy silt slightly organic	moderate	0.44m		
49	50	fill	pit/ tree bowl	rubbish	dark blackish grey	silty clay	friable	0.28m single fill		
50	50	cut	pit/tree bowl						circular	
51	0	layer		modern levelling layer for driveway	Dark blackish grey	modern aggregate		0.1m thick 5m from eastern extent of trench		
52	0	layer		modern levelling layer for driveway	mid yellow			0.22m thick 5m from eastern extent of trench		
53	0	layer		modern levelling layer for driveway	dark blackish grey	silty clay	friable	0.12m thick, 1.2m wide		

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Colour	Fine component	Compaction	Thickness /Extent	Shape in Plan	Orientation
54	0	layer			mid brown	clayey silt	friable	0.4m thick		
55	0	layer			sames as 54					
56	0	layer			mid brownish grey	clayey silt	firm	0.1m		
57	0									
58	11	fill	pit/ ditch	disuse	mid brownish grey	silty clay	firm	0.2m		
59	0	layer		levelling						
60	0	layer		modern levelling						
61	0	layer			dark blackish grey	clayey silt	friable	0.14m		
62	0	layer			same as 42					
63	27	layer/fill?	natural		mid greyish brown	clayey silt slightly organic	firm	0.12m		
64	0	layer			mid brownish grey	silty clay	firm	0.14m		
65	66	fill	post hole?	disuse	light brownish grey	silty clay	firm	single fill 0.18m thick		
66	66	cut	post hole?	structure					?	
67	27	fill	gully	diuse	mid brownish grey	clayey silt	firm - moderate	0.34m thick		
68	27	fill	gully	disuse	Mid brown	organic material and silt	firm	0.34m		
69	27	fill	gully	disuse	dark brown	organic/ silt	firm	0.32m thick		

Appendix 2: Pottery by Dr Paul Spoerry

Context number	Pottery Type	Date
10	1 piece Ely type ware MELT	AD 1150 - 1350
22	Stamford ware spouted vessel 8 handle and rim	AD 900 - 1150
22	1 piece early medieval Essex micaceous sandy ware	AD 1000 - 1200
28	1 piece medieval Essex micaceous ware	AD 1150 - 1350
28	5 pieces late Hedingham ware HEDI	AD 1250 - 1350
28	1piece Ipswich ware IPSW fabric variant	AD 700 - 850
30	1 piece Rroman micaceous ware	AD 100 - 400
36	1 piece Roman grey ware	AD 100 - 400

Appendix 3: Animal Bone by Chris Faine

Fifteen fragments of animal bone were recovered from five contexts, with six fragments being identifiable to species. Context **22** contained metacarpal. Context **37** contained a left sheep/goat radius and a heavily butchered portion of pig 1st phalange. Context **28** contained three fragments of cattle pelvis, also showing signs of butchery.

Appendix 4: Environmental Remains by Rachel Fosberry

1 Introduction and Methods

Three bulk samples were taken from features within the evaluated areas of the site in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.

Ten litres of each sample were processed by tank flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 1mm sieve. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with

the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification and the presence of any plant remains or other artefacts is noted in Table 1 below.

2 Results

Sample Number	Context Number	Cut Number	Context Type	Charred cereal grains	Charred seeds	Charcoal
1	10	11	Pit/ditch fill	+	-	+
2	22	23	Ditch fill	+	-	+
3	37	27	Ditch fill	+	-	+

Table 1: Environmental samples from THR MIS 06

Preservation is by charring and charcoal fragments are present in each of the samples in sparse quantities. The flots of all three samples are remarkably similar in composition. Between ten and fifteen cereal grains are present in each of the samples and can be identified as *Triticum* sp. (wheat) by their morphology. Modern contaminants in the form of rootlets and seeds are present throughout. Small snail shells are abundant in each sample.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

The samples examined from this evaluation produced a low abundance of charred material in the form of cereal grains and sparse charcoal fragments. This suggests the samples represent general scatters of burnt debris rather than discrete purposeful deposits.

The samples show only a low abundance of charred material that is not considered worthy of further analysis. If further work is planned in this area, it is recommended that environmental sampling is included as this assemblage shows that there is potential for the recovery of plant remains.

Key to Tables

+ = 1 – 10 specimens ++ = 10 – 100 specimens +++ = 100+ specimens

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Better Local Public Transport
2005-2006
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