



CCC AFU Report Number 889

An Early Post-Medieval ditch on Land at 3 Church Street, Wimblington, Cambridgeshire

An Evaluation

Alexandra Howe

July 2006

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**An Early Post-Medieval Ditch
on Land at 3 Church Street,
Wimblington, Cambridgeshire**

An Evaluation

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Site Code: WIM CHS 06
CHER Event Number: ECB 2326
Date of works: 28th to 29th June 2006
Grid Ref: TL 4162 9221

Editor: Dr Paul Spoerry
Illustrator: Alexandra Howe

Summary

On the 28th and 29th June 2006, Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching land to the rear of 3 Church Street, Wimblington (TL 4162 9221). The works were carried out in advance of the construction of two bungalows and separate garages.

Three modern features and a recut early post-medieval ditch were identified.

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Drawing Conventions

Sections	Plans
Limit of Excavation	Limit of Excavation
Cut	Deposit - Conjectured
Cut-Conjectured	Natural Features
Deposit Horizon	Sondages/Machine Strip
Deposit Horizon - Conjectured	Intrusion/Truncation
Intrusion/Truncation	Illustrated Section S.14
Top Surface/Top of Natural	Archaeological Deposit
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing	Excavated Slot
Cut Number	Modern Deposit
Deposit Number 117	Cut Number 118
Ordnance Datum $\frac{18.45m OD}{\lambda}$	
Inclusions	

1 Introduction

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application F/YR05/1316/F), 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 Amphill Clay (British Geological Survey 1980) and lies at 4m OD.

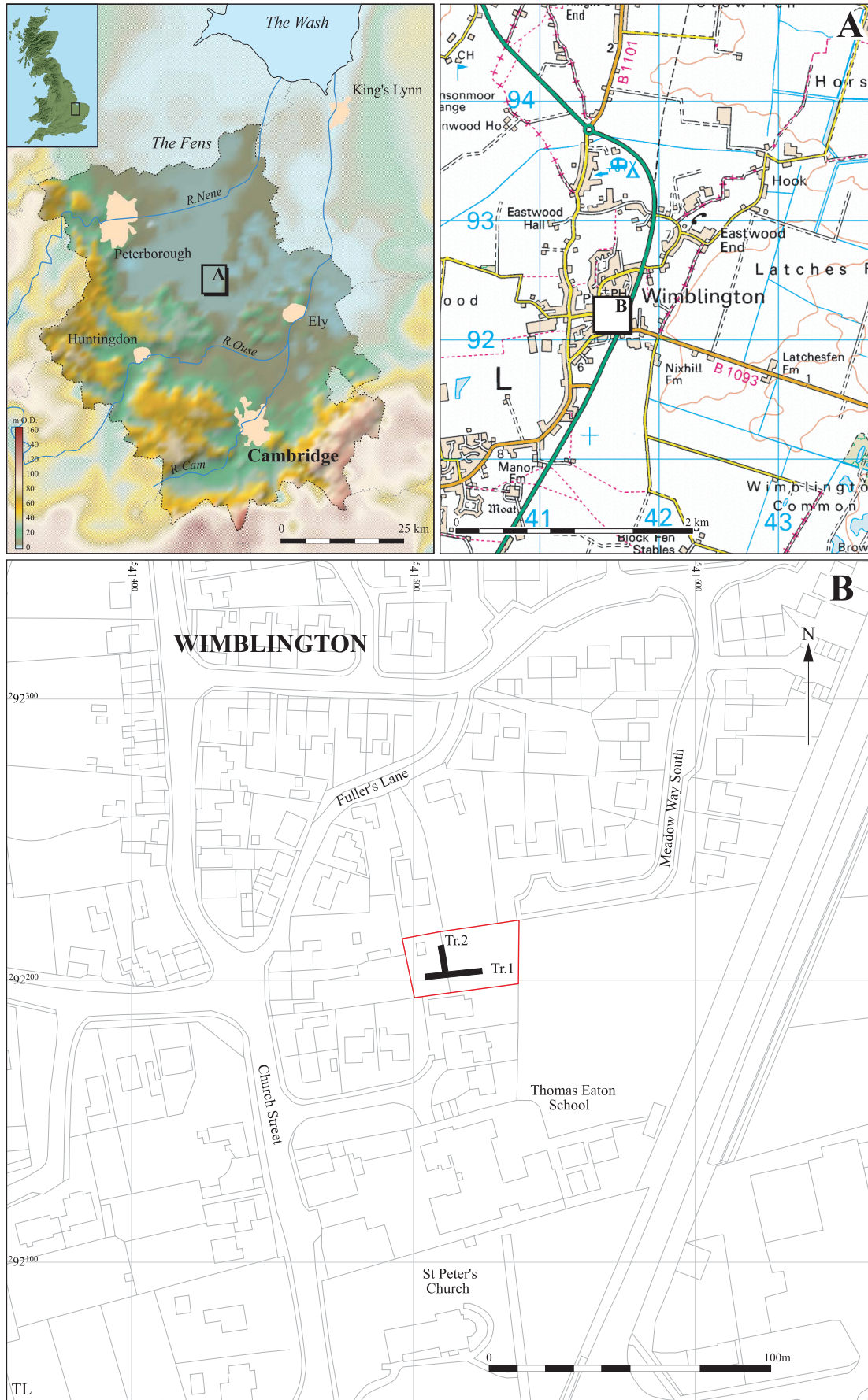
3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site lies in the historic core of the village of Wimblington, which was originally a hamlet of Doddington, the main Saxon settlement on March island. Wimblington is a name of early Saxon origin, but was not recorded in documents until the tenth century.

Bronze Age to Roman remains are known from the Fen Edge to the west of the village (Hall 1992). Undated enclosures have been observed on aerial photographs to the north of the village ((MCB13690).

As this site is not close to the Manor on Doddington Rd, it may not be in the oldest part of the settlement, although the street pattern here is conversely suggestive of some antiquity.

Recent fieldwork has revealed evidence of prehistoric, medieval and early post-medieval activity in the vicinity. The prehistoric remains constitute a Mesolithic ditch found at Norfolk St, some 120m to the west of the subject site (Emery 2005). Medieval remains constitute furrows and a ditch found at March Road 400m west of the site (Hickling 2005). Post-medieval remains were found at Norfolk Street (16th-17th century pits and later boundary ditches) with drainage



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

ditches, also of post-medieval date, found at another evaluation site further to the west towards Doddington (Redding 2002).

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 should be subject to trial trenching. Two trenches measuring 20.2m and 9.2m were machined, covering approximately 6.82% of the development area.

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 360° excavator using a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket.

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.

Environmental samples were not taken due to the relatively late date of the archaeological features on site.

Site conditions were generally good. Access for the machine was good and the ground was dry. The weather was sunny and dry. Placement of the trenches was restricted due to the presence of a large spoil heap on the north-east side of the site and a strip of hard standing running north-south also to the east. A boundary and small building present on recent Ordnance Survey maps had been removed.

5 Results

Trench 1 ranged from 1.16m deep to 0.7m deep. The natural occurred at approximately 0.7m. Trench 2 was 0.62m deep to natural.

The topsoil (1) was 0.45m thick. It was a dark greyish brown silty clay that was heavily disturbed with tree roots and contained occasional modern glass, china and bricks. The subsoil (2) was 0.27m thick and a mid grey orange silty clay. The natural (3) was a light yellow orange clay.

The trenches contained three modern features that were backfilled with brick, china, stone and asbestos. They were a maximum width of

0.6m. They were not excavated. The paved garden path was visible in the upper levels of Trench 2 to a depth of 0.25m. Trench 2 also had concrete post settings from an old fence line. They did not cut through the natural and were machined out.

A ditch with three cuts (**7**, **9**, **11**) ran east to west and was visible in both trenches. It appeared to be cut from the subsoil and the upper layers were very mixed with modern rubble, wood, pottery and other waste. The initial layers were machined off to reveal clearer edges and the feature was found to cut into natural.

Ditch **7** was U-shaped with steep sides and 0.38m deep. It was filled by a dark grey brown silty clay (**6**). It contained 16th and 17th century pottery, bone and glass. Another slot was excavated in this ditch approximately 5m to the west (**4** and **5**). The shape of the cut and nature of the fill were the same. It contained glass, metal and clay pipe. Ditch **9** was 0.32m deep. It was truncated by **7** to the south and had an unclear relationship with **11** to the north. The ditch had a flattish base and was filled by (**8**) a mid greyish brown silty clay that contained 18th century pottery. An exploratory sondage (**13**) was excavated in this ditch also about 5m to the west to investigate animal bones that were showing through the surface. The bones were collected and later identified as cat and pig bones (**12**). The feature was excavated to a depth of 0.25cm and not bottomed. Ditch **11** had a gradual north side and an uncertain/truncated south side. The ditch was 0.36m deep and filled with (**10**) a light brownish grey silty clay. It also contained 18th century pottery.

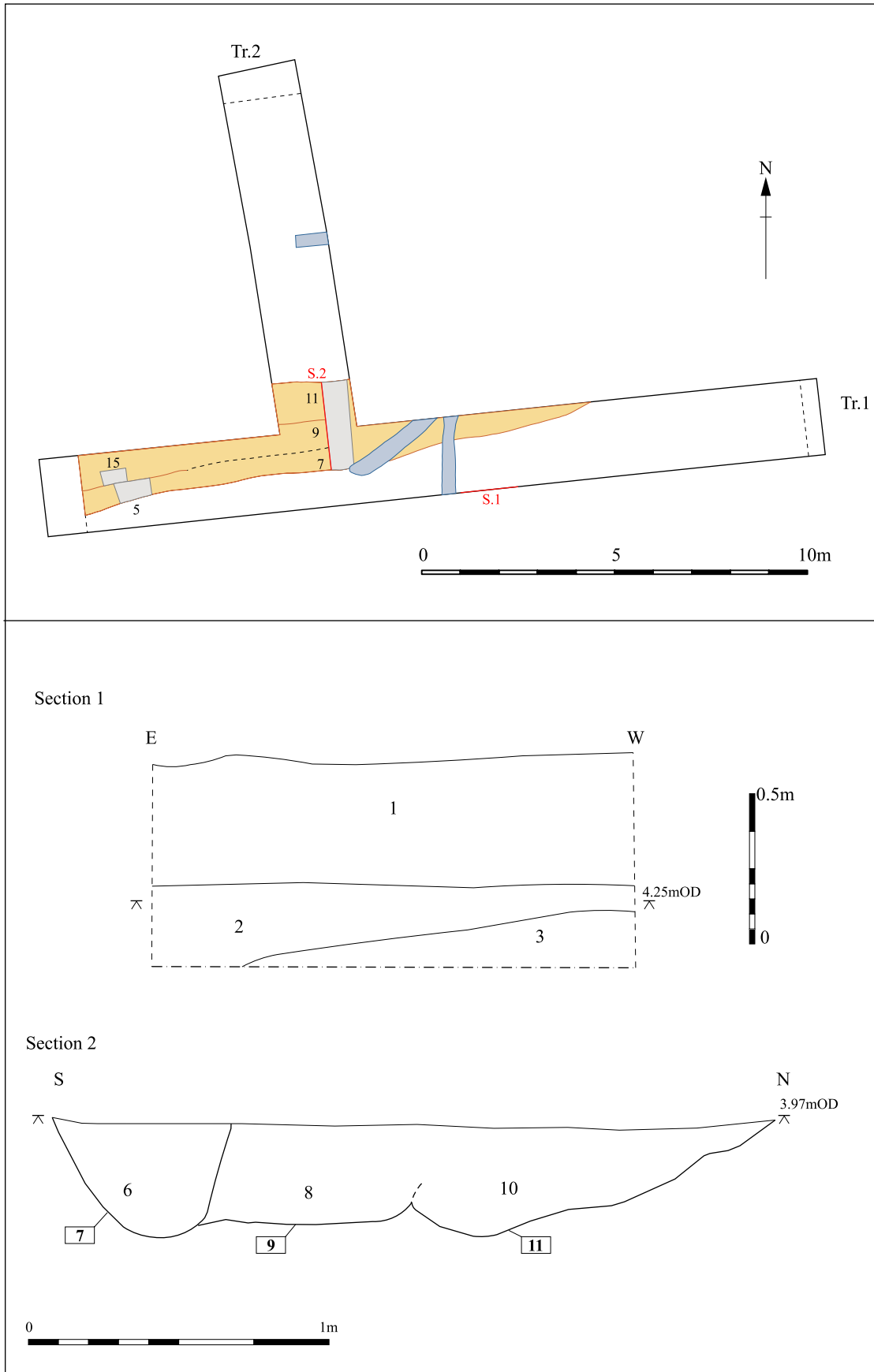


Figure 2: Trench plan and sections

6 Discussion

The ditch was identified as being 17th century in date and may have been a boundary or drainage ditch that was backfilled over time.

7 Conclusions

The development area was recognised as being located within an area of high archaeological potential. The proximity to the afore-mentioned evaluation on Norfolk Street where prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval remains were found, would certainly suggest this. However, only an early post medieval boundary/drainage ditch was found. This site was initially identified as being located on March gravels, however excavation showed that it is situated on clay which may affect the nature of archaeological remains in this part of Wimblington village.

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

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank G. K. Enterprises who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. Dr Paul Spoerry managed the project and edited the report. Gareth Rees assisted on site.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas, who visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

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Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context Number	Cut/Fill/Layer	Fill of	Description
1	Layer	-	Topsoil- dark grey brown, clayey silt, occasional grit and gravel, friable
2	Layer	-	Subsoil – Mid orange grey, silty clay occasional gravel, firm
3	Natural	-	Light yellowish orange with light grey mottling.
4	Fill	5	Dark grey brown, silty clay, occasional gravel and charcoal, firm
5	Cut	-	Linear, moderate 45° sides, sharp break of slope at top and base, concave base, V shape profile.
6	Fill	7	Dark grey brown, silty clay, occasional gravel and charcoal, firm
7	Cut	-	Linear, moderate 45° sides, sharp break of slope at top and base, concave base, U- shape profile.
8	Fill	9	Mid greyish brown, silty clay, occasional stones, firm.
9	Cut	-	Linear, Truncated south side, uncertain north side, gradual breaks of slope, E-W orientation, U-shape?
10	Fill	11	Light brownish grey, silty clay, occasional stones, firm.
11	Cut	-	Linear, north side uneven, gradual south side, gradual breaks of slope at top and base, concave base, E-W orientation, wide U shape?
12	Fill	13	Fill of sondage, Mid greyish brown, silty clay, occasional stones, firm.
13	Cut	-	Cut of sondage, 0.35m x 0.75m x 0.25m deep

Appendix 2: Finds Quantification

Context	Material	Object Name	Weight in kg
4	Bone	Bone	0.01
4	Ceramic	Tobacco pipe	0.01
4			0.00
4	Stone	Stone	0.01
4	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.06
4	Cinder		0.00
4	Shale		0.00
4	Glass	Vessel	0.02
6	Bone	Bone	0.01
6			0.01
6	Ceramic	Tobacco pipe	0.00
6	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01
6	Ceramic	Fired clay	0.00
6	Glass	Vessel	0.01
10	Ceramic	Vessel	0.00
10	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.38
8	Ceramic	Vessel	0.02
8	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.10
8	Bone	Bone	0.05
10	Bone	Bone	0.01
12	Bone	Bone	0.22

Appendix 3: The Animal Bone, by Chris Faine MA, Msc, BBAO

Animal remains were recovered from five contexts, with preservation on the whole being extremely good. Context 12 contained the remains of a pig of around one year of age. These included all of the lower limbs, pelvis, scapulae and a number of lumbar vertebrae and ribs. In addition to this a single scapula and both femora of a younger individual (around six months old), were also recovered. Context 12 also contained the remains of a single juvenile cat also around one year old. These included mandibles, humerii, portions of skull and a number of cervical and lumbar vertebrae. No evidence of butchery was found on these elements.

All other contexts contained far fewer elements. Context 8 contained an intact cattle 1st phalange and a portion of rib, along with three fragments not identifiable to species. Context 4 contained a single butchered cattle axis. Context 6 contained a portion of sheep radius, with a hole bored through the proximal metaphysis. This may have been deliberate but is more likely the result of small animal gnawing.

Appendix 4: Finds Analysis by Dr Paul Spoerry

Context Number	Material	Discussion
4	Clay Pipe	19 th Century
6	Pottery	1 piece of rim from a brown Cistercian type earthenware, probably made in Ely
6	Pottery	Post –medieval red ware with internal glaze, 16 th /17 th century
6	Pottery	2 small unglazed earthenware sherds, 15 th /16 th century
8	Pottery	1 piece of cream ware dating from the earliest 1770
8	Pottery	5 pieces Staffordshire white salt glazed ware, 1720 - 1770
10	Pottery	1 piece Staffordshire white salt glazed ware, 1720 - 1770



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