



CCC AFU Report Number 884

## **An Archaeological Evaluation at No. 80 High St Sutton-in-the- Isle, Cambridgeshire**

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### **Archaeological Evaluation**

Spencer Cooper

December 2006

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**An Archaeological Evaluation  
at No. 80 High St Sutton-in-the-  
Isle, Cambridgeshire**

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**Archaeological Evaluation**

Spencer Cooper HND, BA

Site Code: SUT HIS 06  
CHER Event Number: ECB 2317  
Date of works: 19-20/6/06  
Grid Ref: TL 4421 7881

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## **Summary**

On 19th and 20th June 2006, Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at No.80 High St, Sutton in advance of the construction of dwellings.

It was envisaged that this evaluation would identify activities associated with the medieval settlement of Sutton. In the event the evaluation revealed limited evidence in the form of post-medieval/modern build up or levelling layers.

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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 <span style="color: red; font-size: small;">S.14</span>
Top Surface/Top of Natural	Cut Number <b>118</b>
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing	
Natural Deposit	
Cut Number	
Deposit Number 117	
Ordnance Datum $\frac{18.45\text{m OD}}{\wedge}$	
Inclusions	

## **1 Introduction**

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec (Gdaniec 2005) of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application 05/00280/FUL), supplemented by a Specification prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU).

The development includes the construction of two houses and associated services.

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.

## **2 Geology and Topography**

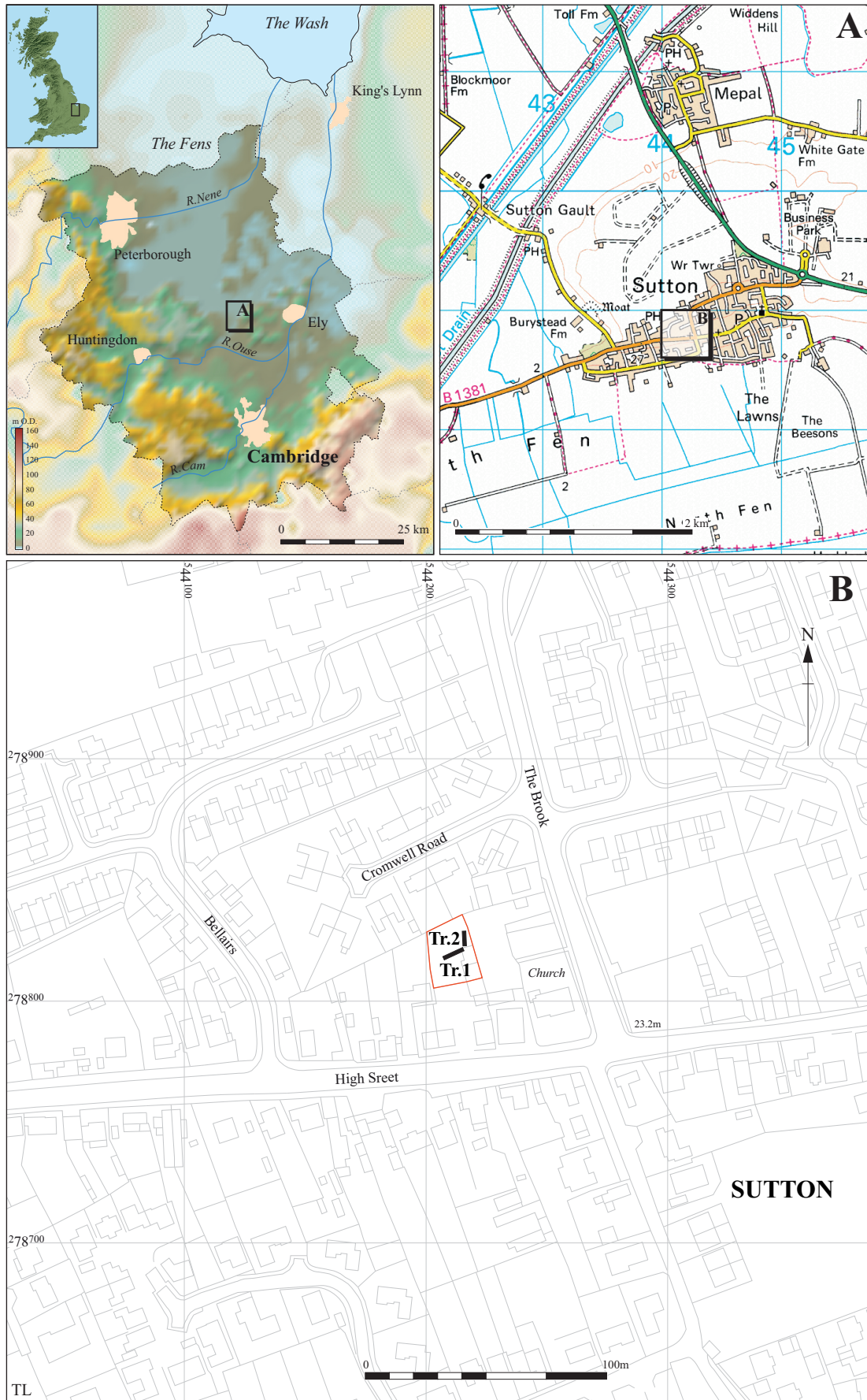
The site lies at 23m OD above the east-west ridge of Kimmeridge Clay (British Geological Survey 1980) which underlies Sutton village.

## **3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

### **3.1 Prehistoric**

Important prehistoric remains have been found in the parish of Sutton, most from the rises and islands of lighter soil in the fens, particularly North Fen and Sutton Meadlands to the west of the village. These sites include Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age period activity including a long barrow and round barrows. In addition a number of important prehistoric artefacts have been discovered within the vicinity of the development area including a Bronze Age sword of the Wilburton phase (HER 020340).

A recent evaluation by CCC AFU at the Brook, Sutton (ECB 1796; Atkins 2004) identified the eastern part of a Late Iron Age and Roman settlement, with evidence of mixed farming.



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

### 3.2 Roman

Roman remains have been found in the vicinity of the village, including a cremation of probable 2nd-century date (CHER 05744) found whilst cutting a drainage channel along Oates Lane, which is approximately 50m north of the subject site. The ashes were contained in a large storage jar with another smaller jar placed inside. Other Roman remains have been found in the parish but these are largely unprovenanced. Tebbutt found pottery sherds in 1953 at TL 3929 7897 'on a roddon' (Hall 1996). Hall notes that a site at that location is unlikely and the finds probably represent some outliers of the Roman complex in neighbouring Colne Fen to the west. A bronze statuette of Hercules was found before 1891 (HER 05631; Heichelheim 1937) and a Christian hoard of six large platters and a pewter tazza of the 4th century were found in 1898 (HER 05884; Toynbee 1964).

### 3.3 Anglo-Saxon

Archaeological work in the village has found dwellings (c.500m to the west of the subject area) dating from the 9th century to later medieval period (Abrams 2000; Hatton 2002). Anglo-Saxon remains including a gold ring (Albert 1849) have been recorded in the parish but these again are unprovenanced.

### 3.4 Medieval

The name Sutton means South Town and may relate to its position in the Isle of Ely. The medieval village probably clustered around the church and along the High Street. The village is L-shaped, more than a kilometre long, and runs along the former main road from Ely to Chatteris. Medieval pottery has been found in the village, as might be expected in a village which is listed in the Domesday survey (Pugh 1967). The general importance of medieval Sutton can be seen by the fact that in 1313 the Prior of Ely received the right to hold a weekly market at Sutton on Thursdays. The village was the only conventual estate outside Ely itself with such a privilege (Pugh 1967). The market continued into the post-medieval period.

An archaeological evaluation, comprising three trenches located approximately 40m down slope from the High Street, was undertaken to the rear of No. 31 High Street in 2004 (Fletcher 2005). This identified a number of ditches and inter-cutting pits in two of the three trenches, which produced pottery datable to the 12th to early 14th century, although the majority of features are securely dated to the 13th century. The location of these features set back from the medieval High



Street is representative of backyard activity including rubbish deposition and drainage.

Another small excavation at Red Lion Lane revealed 12th to 14th-century pits, ditches and two hearths. Activity came to an end c.1350 (Hatton 2002, ECB 252).

### 3.5 Post-Medieval

The high degree of prosperity in Sutton is demonstrated by the name of Golden Sutton found in the Chancery proceedings of 1599 (Pugh 1967). Immediately to the east of the development is a brick built Georgian Baptist chapel with an associated burial ground. This chapel was built in 1749 and by 1820 it had a regular membership of nearly 60 and a congregation of 200 to 250 (Pugh 1967).

Archaeological evidence for this period is characterised by post-medieval quarrying which is located 135m to the south of the subject site at Nos 8-10 the Row (ECB1864; Atkins 2005), and also 300m to the west at Painters Lane (ECB251; Hatton 2001).

## 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 at least 5% of the development should be subject to trial trenching.

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a 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.

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## **5 Results**

### **5.1 Trench 1**

Trench 1 was located in the western part of the development area in close proximity to the modern western boundary. It measured 9m long and 1.1m deep and was located on an east to west alignment. This trench contained five occupation layers which represent levelling or build up layers overlying Kimmeridge clay. No archaeological features were identified within this trench. The earliest deposit encountered was natural greyish blue Kimmeridge clay (6). Above 6 was a brownish pale orange silty clay (layer 5) that was 0.26m deep and contained modern post-medieval brick. Layer 5 was overlain by layer 4 which was a brown silty clay and 0.46m deep. Above layer 4 was a mid brown clay silt (layer 3) which was 0.38m deep. Layer 3 was overlain by a mid orange brown that was 0.42m deep and contained crushed concrete. Topsoil (1) was a dark orange brown silty clay which was 0.08m deep and contained modern brick.

### **5.2 Trench 2**

Trench 2 was located in the centre of the development area in close proximity to the modern northern boundary. This trench measured 6.5m long and 1.1m deep and was located on a north to south alignment. No archaeological features were identified within this trench. It contained three occupation layers overlying Kimmeridge clay. The earliest deposit encountered was natural greyish blue Kimmeridge clay (6). Above 6 was a light brown silty clay (layer 9) which was 0.35m deep and contained post-medieval brick. Layer 9 was overlain by layer 8 which was a brown silty clay and 0.30m deep. Above layer 8 was a greyish brown (layer 7) silty clay which was 0.10m deep and contained crushed concrete.

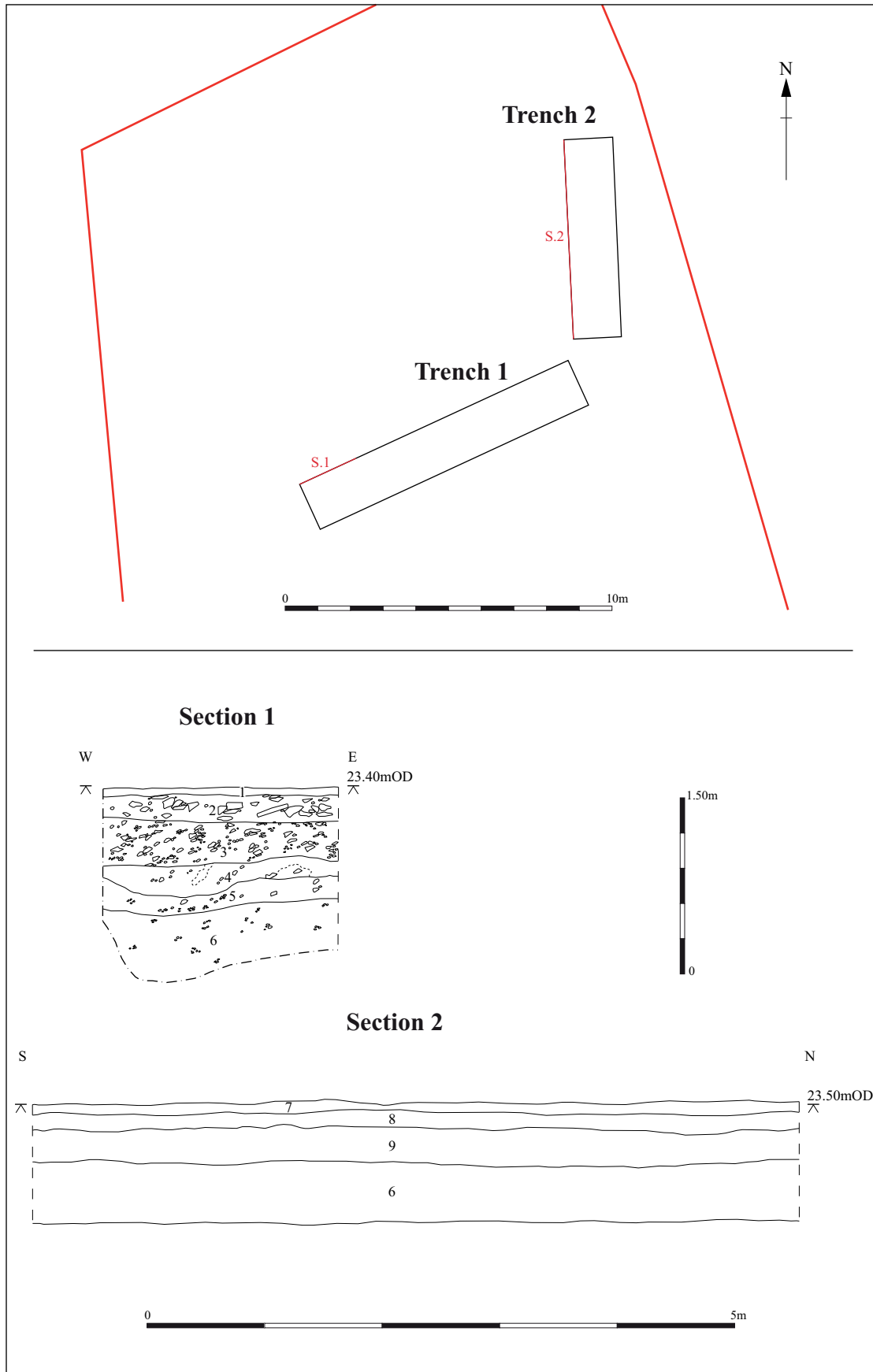


Figure 2: Trench plans and drawing sections

## **6 Discussion**

The two trenches demonstrate post-medieval /modern build up layers (layers 1-8) overlying Kimmeridge clay. Results of the evaluation indicate an absence of Roman, Iron Age and medieval remains in the development area. This is surprising considering the central location of the site within the present settlement.

## **7 Conclusions**

The aim of the project was to establish the character, date, state of preservation and extent of any archaeological remains within the site.

Results of the evaluation have made a limited contribution to the understanding of the medieval and post-medieval landscape of Sutton. In terms of the settlement development it may be the case that this site denotes the periphery of the medieval settlement and that further to the west is predominantly post-medieval in character.

Post-medieval build-up layers and lack of archaeological features uncovered in this evaluation have implications for a working model for the development medieval Sutton.

The County Archaeology Office will make recommendations for any future work based upon this report.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author would like J. Carey to thank who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. James Drummond-Murray managed the project and Dave Brown assisted with the fieldwork. The illustrations were completed by Séverine Bézie.

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

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