



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
FORMER TWENTYPENCE INN, TWENTYPENCE ROAD,
WILBURTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

NGR: TL 4797 7127

on behalf of Mande Developments Limited



Nicholas A Crank BSc AIFA

May 2005

ASC: 679/WTR/02

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	WTR	<i>Project no:</i>	679
<i>County:</i>	Cambridgeshire		
<i>Village:</i>	Wilburton		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Wilburton		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 4797 7127		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.0.45ha		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Vacant		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of 6 dwellings, garages etc.		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	E/02/00550/FUL		
<i>Client:</i>	Mande Developments Limited 5 Meadway, Ilford, Essex IG3 9BQ		
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Internal Quality Check

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Cover: Trench 2a, looking northeast

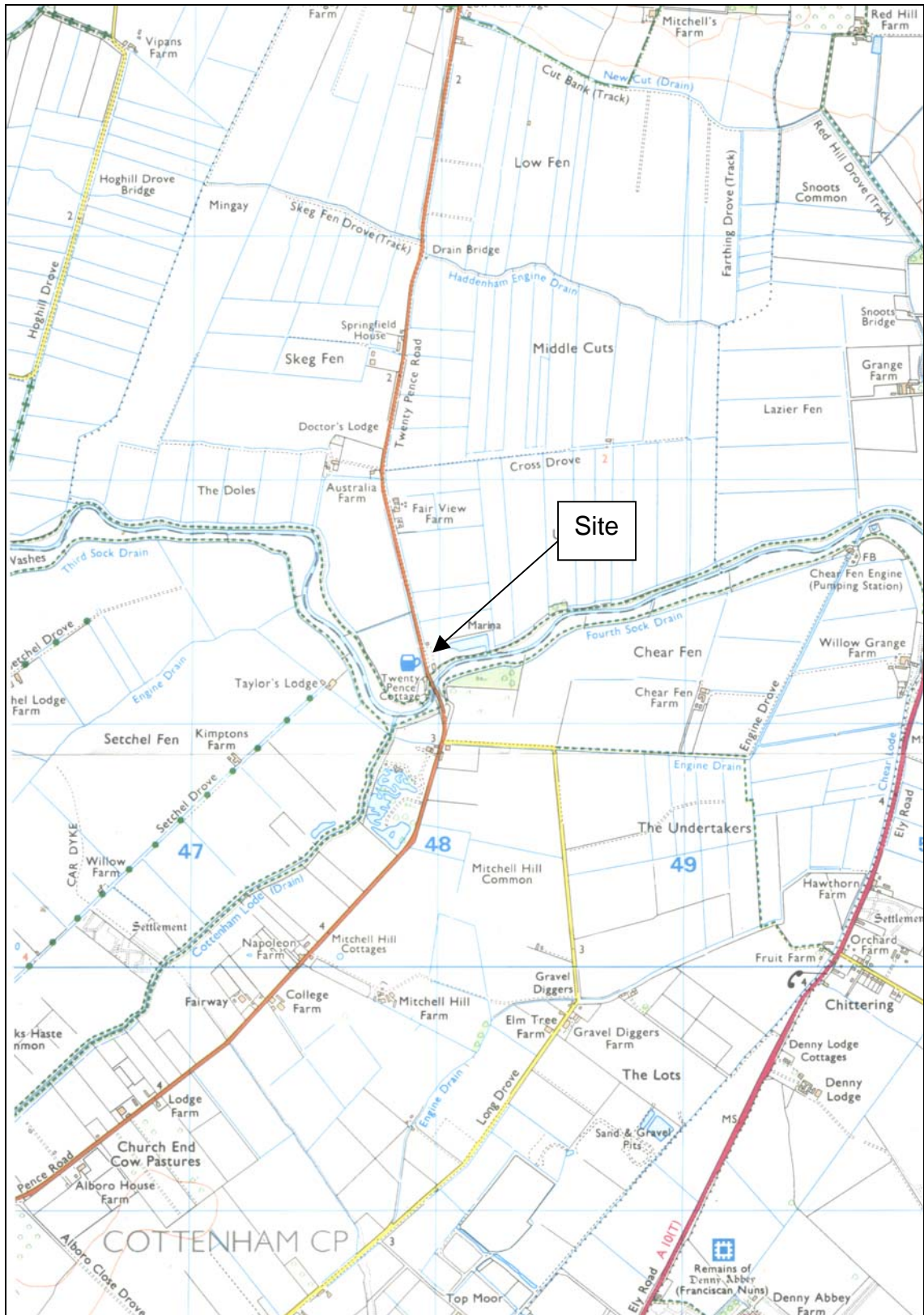


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During May 2005 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on a site at Twentypence Road, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire. The work was undertaken in advance of proposed residential redevelopment of the site.

A total of three trenches were excavated. No archaeological features were revealed in the trenches although substantial concrete foundations were noted in trenches 2a and 2b, considerable hydrocarbon contamination and staining was also present in all the trenches. No artefacts were recovered from the excavated spoil.

In conclusion it seems likely that the area remained largely undisturbed and undeveloped prior to the construction of the Twentypence Inn in the late 19th century.

1 Introduction

1.1 In May 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Twentypence Road, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire (NGR: TL 4794 7127; Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Mande Developments (2003) Ltd, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Crank 2005), and a brief (Gdaniec 2005) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA) by their archaeological advisor (AA), Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice. The relevant planning application reference is E/02/00550/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of 6 new dwellings with garages, associated driveways and services.

1.3 *Location*

The site is located c.4km to the south of Wilburton village on the southern edge of the parish. It lies on the east side of Twentypence Road (B1049) a north-south route linking Cottenham and Wilburton. To the south of the site is the West River and to the east a marina.

1.4 *Description*

Access to the site is gained via a short driveway off Twentypence Road, which also forms access to the adjacent marina. No structures stand on the site, the former Public House having been demolished two years ago. The northern half of the site has a layer of tarmac hardstanding. To the south the site widens and is largely overgrown with low scrub, the ground appears uneven and disturbed in places due to demolition activity. The southern edge of the site is bounded by a substantial flood bank crested by a public footpath and flanking the Old West River. A modern two-storey house and marina office is sited adjacent to the north of the site.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The site occupies level ground at an elevation of *c.*3.0m AOD. Soils in the vicinity are those of the Clayhythe association described as ‘ deep humose fine loamy over sandy and fine loamy over clayey soils. Some peat soils’ (Soil Survey 1983). The underlying geology is river terrace drift over Kimmeridge Clay.

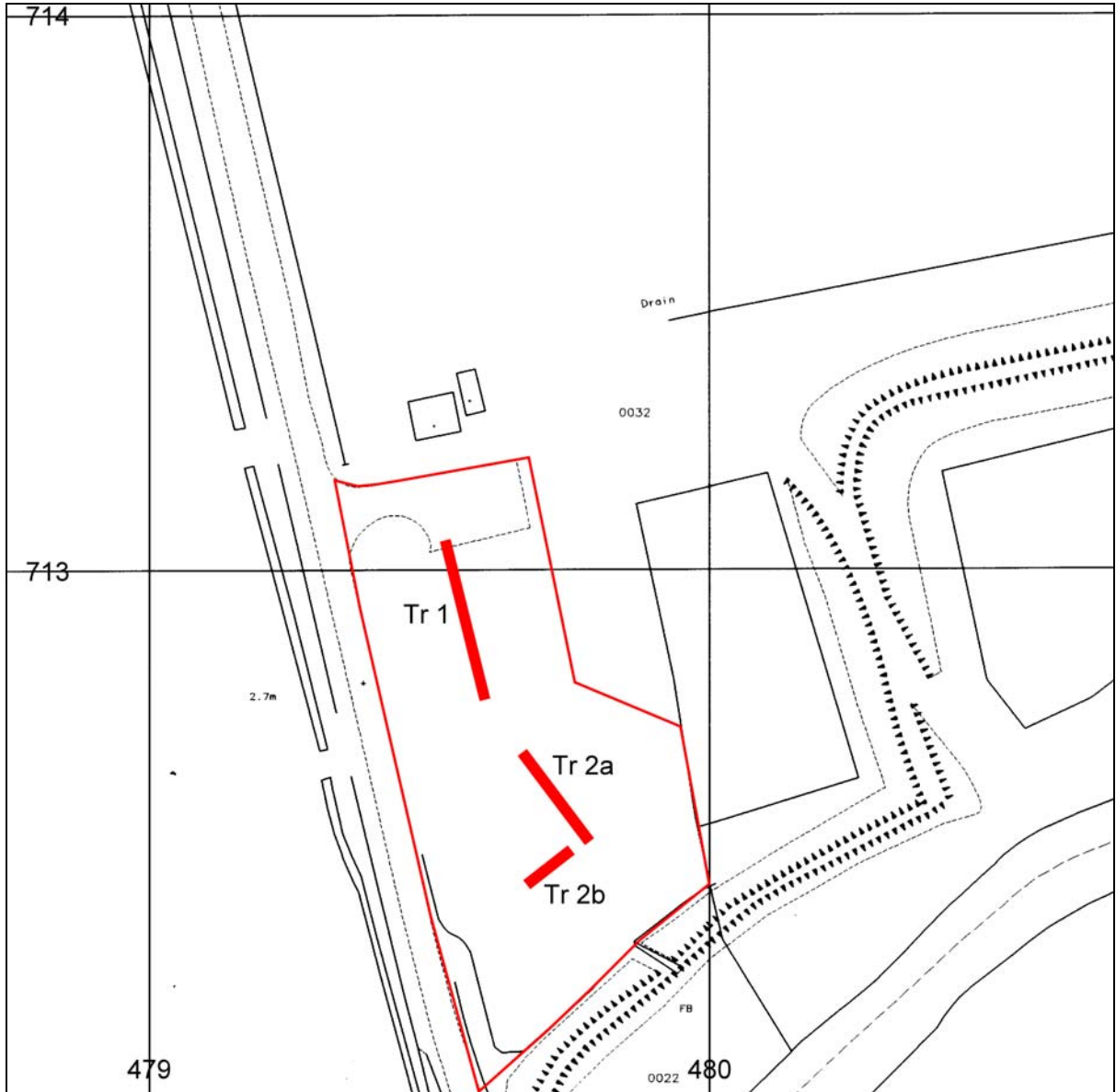


Figure 2: Site Plan and Trench Layout (*scale 1:1250*)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 3), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains which are liable to be threatened by the development.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH1991), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 2), which required:

- A suitable level of documentary research including consultation of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record, to set the results in their geographical, topographical, archaeological and historical context;
- field evaluation of threatened archaeological remains comprising a programme of linear trial trenching to adequately sample the threatened available area, avoiding areas disturbed by cellaring from the former public house and targeting the remaining areas of proposed construction. Trench locations are shown on Figure 2 (above).

2.4 Constraints

Due to the presence of deep modern foundations it was necessary to split trench 2 creating trenches 2a and 2b (Fig. 2).

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

CHER = Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record

- 3.1 No archaeological remains are known from the site itself. The fenland in Wilburton parish is described as ‘a most unlikely area for prehistoric activity’ (Hall 1996) despite the discovery of two hoards of Bronze Age metalwork, one within 600m of the assessment site (CHER 05716). On the opposite bank of the West River in Cottenham parish probable prehistoric activity is more abundant in cropmark and excavated form. Of particular note is the recent discovery of Late Bronze Age settlement features during an evaluation adjacent to Long Drove, c.1km to the south-east. This site lies to the immediate east of the Mitchell Hill Common cropmark complex (CHER 08398, 8869-70, 11093/6). This comprises an as yet undated system of double-ditched droves and paddocked enclosures for which there is some sparse evidence of continuation to the north of the Old West River, east of the assessment site.
- 3.2 Evidence of Roman activity in the vicinity is more concrete but still concentrated in Cottenham parish to the south. Of particular note is the scheduled site of Bullocks Haste (SAM 66) lying c.1.7km southwest of the assessment site. The site comprises a large settlement and port straddling either bank of the Car Dyke and initially pre-dating the canal. Unusually for the locality the site yielded evidence of occupation throughout the Roman period, producing high status finds in addition to some masonry. The site survives as earthworks within a planned landscape that may include the complex at Mitchell Hill Common (above 3.1) in addition to other cropmarks lying between here and the assessment site. (Taylor 1998).
- 3.3 No Saxon sites are noted in the CHER for the study area, however both the villages of Wilburton to the north and Cottenham to the south probably have their origins during this period. Excavations at the moated site of Crowlands on the A10 Cambridge Road to the south east revealed some Saxon activity.
- 3.4 During the medieval period the village of Wilburton developed on the higher ground of the greensand ridge to the north and it is likely that the area around the assessment site remained unsettled although the fen would have formed a useful resource for seasonal pasture, reed, peat and game at this time. The importance of access to this resource is reflected in the distinctive wedge shape of Wilburton and adjacent parishes giving a wide base on the West River. The present parish boundaries were formed in the 13th century (Wright & Lewis 1989).
- 3.5 Although drainage to the south may have been effected by the cutting of Cottenham Lode and other more minor medieval ditches. In Wilburton parish serious attempts at drainage began in the 17th century and continued with the construction of windmills (CHER 05597) and later steam engines to pump the excess water off the lower lying land into the West River. The net result of this activity was loss of the peat resource and the downgrading of these areas to ‘Skirtland’ (Astbury 1958).
- 3.2.6 Twentypence Bridge appears to have begun life as a ferry during the post-medieval period, the Aldreth Causeway to the west being the medieval crossing of choice. With the inclosure of Cottenham parish in 1847 straight drove roads across the fens were

laid out including Twenty Pence Road linking the north end of High Street and Twenty Pence ferry. This new route seems to have become popular as demands for it to be made a public road in the mid 19th century were followed in 1910 by calls for a bridge to replace the ferry. By 1901 there was a private toll-house on the road and a floating bridge over the West River. In 1929 the road was adopted by the county council, metalled and a fixed bridge opened in 1931 (Wright & Lewis 1989).

- 3.7 The earliest available map showing the site is the 1838 tithe map for Wilburton parish (Fig. 3). On this the site is depicted as completely undeveloped although the toll-house and ferry are labelled to the southwest and Twentypence Drove has been laid out. By the time of the First Edition Ordnance Survey 25in in 1888 (Fig. 4) the site has been subdivided, is partly wooded in the northern half and the Bridge Inn complex of buildings has been constructed in the south. By the 1902 edition (Fig. 5) the situation is little changed although some minor additions to the Bridge Inn have been made.

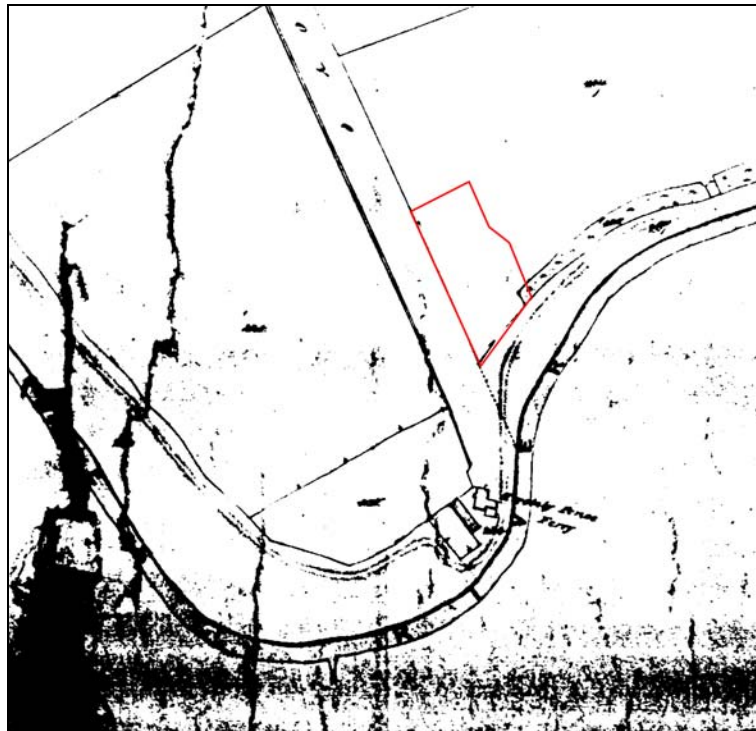


Figure 3: Tithe Map 1838 (*not to scale*)

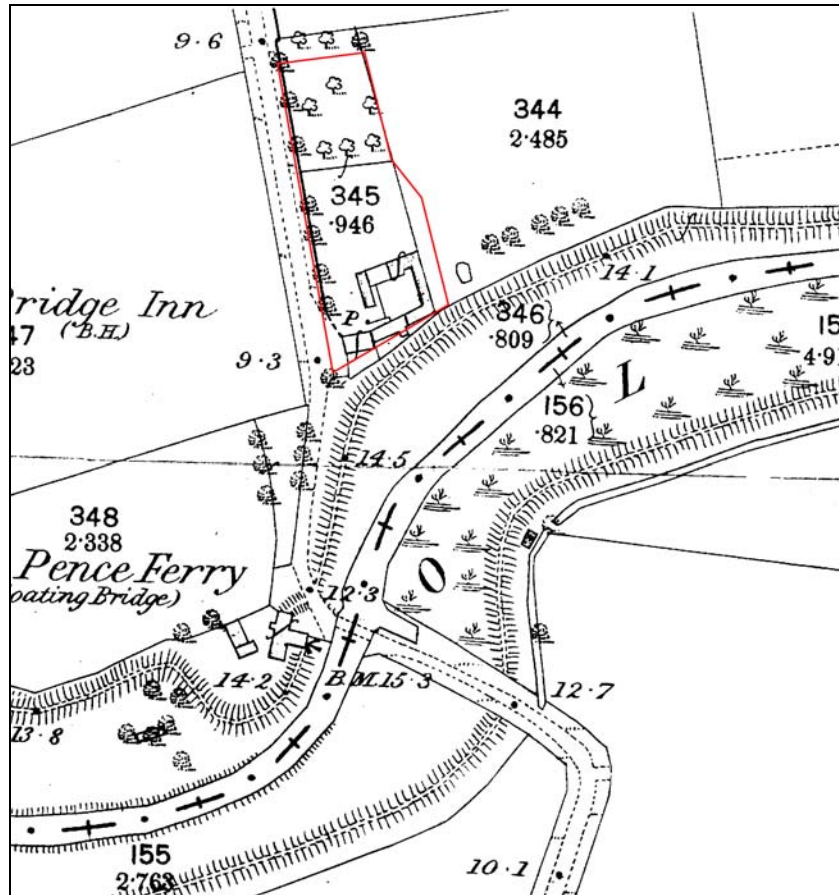


Figure 4: Ordnance Survey 1888 (not to scale)

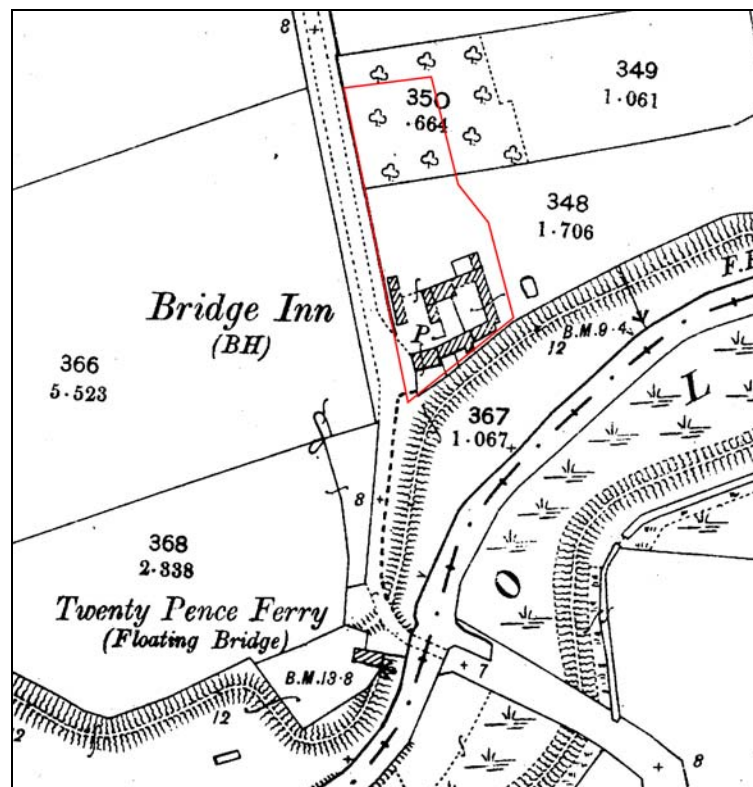


Figure 5: Ordnance Survey 1902 (not to scale)

4 Results

- 4.1 The following paragraphs provide a summary of the results of the trial trenches. A full description of the trenches with illustrations, is provided in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 *Results*
- No cut archaeological features were revealed within the trenches and no pre-twentieth century artefacts were recovered from the excavated spoil.
- 4.3 The trenches revealed a generally consistent pattern of soil formation. A layer of demolition rubble capped all the trenches and was underlain by a hydrocarbon contaminated blackish/brown clayey silt loam, and a thin silt subsoil. The depth of overburden across the site was generally between 0.80 – 0.95m. In trenches 2a and 2b the presence of substantial concrete foundations had resulted in truncation to the natural strata. The presence of leached hydrocarbon contamination in all trenches had resulted in staining of the natural strata in the trench base.
- 4.4 An orange sand and gravel layer was revealed beneath the subsoil layer and is interpreted as the natural strata. A machine cut box section in the southern end of trench 1 revealed the natural sand and gravel to continue beyond 1.25m below the present ground level. The underlying Kimmeridge Clay stratum was not revealed.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The evaluation revealed no archaeological features and no artefacts were recovered from the overburden excavated from the trenches. Close examination of the trenches and their profiles suggests that the natural strata has been subject to little truncation other than the clear modern disturbance caused by the substantial concrete foundations in trenches 2a and 2b. It should also be noted that despite the presence of considerable hydrocarbon contamination and staining of the trench bases it was felt that this was not of a sufficient intensity to mask significant archaeological features should they be present.
- 5.2 The available archaeological and historical evidence for the site and its environs suggests that it is 'a most unlikely area for prehistoric activity' (Hall 1996) and also indicates that it remained undeveloped and unoccupied until the construction of the first inn during the late 19th century. The areas of known intensity of prehistoric and Roman activity identified to the south of the site beyond the Old West River occupy areas of slightly higher elevation (3 – 4m AOD) than the present site where a mean value of 1.9m AOD was obtained. It seems reasonable to suggest that this difference in elevation to the north of the Old West River may in part explain the apparent paucity of both excavated and cropmark evidence although other factors such as unsuitable crop cover (French & Wait 1988, 73) cannot be ruled out.
- 5.3 In the light of the above it seems reasonable to conclude with a high level of confidence that the lack of pre-19th century activity indicated by the evaluation is a representative result. However, while it is unlikely that significant archaeological remains are present on the site, the potential presence of occasional isolated remains away from the evaluation trenches should not be entirely excluded.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Mr Mike Brady of *Mande Developments (2003) Ltd* for commissioning the evaluation, in addition to Messrs Derek and Shaun Andrews, and Geoff Cannon for their on-site assistance. The input and advice of Kasia Gdaniec, Development Control Archaeologist with *Cambridgeshire County Council* is acknowledged.

The research and fieldwork was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by Nicholas A Crank BSc AIFA, assisted by Karin Semmelmann MA PIFA, the report was prepared by Nicholas A Crank and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. Site record drawings
7. List of photographs
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record, ref 1925.

8. References


Standards & Specifications


- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.
- Crank, N.A. 2005 *Former Twentypence Inn, Twentypence Rd, Wilburton, Cambs: Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation* (ASC: 679/WTR/01)
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- Gdaniec, K. 2005 *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation: Former Twentypence Inn, Twentypence Rd, Wilburton, Ely* (dated: 28/04/05)
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.


Secondary Sources

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- Hills, R.L. 1967 *Machines, Mills, and Uncountable Costly Necessities: A Short History of the Drainage of the Fens*
- Pugh, R.B. (Ed.) 2002 *The Victoria History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely, Volume IV: City of Ely; Ely, N. and S. Witchford and Wisbech Hundreds*
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Taylor, A 1998 *The Archaeology of Cambridgeshire: Volume II, South-East Cambridgeshire and the Fen Edge*
- Wilkes, J.J. & Elrington, C.R. (Eds.) 1978 *The Victoria History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely, Volume VII*
- Wright, A.P.M. & Lewis, C.P. 1989 *The Victoria History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely, Volume IX: Chesterton, Northstowe and Papworth Hundreds*

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	29.8m	Width	2.0m	Depth	0.95m
	Levels					
	Trench base north		1.0m OD			
	Trench top north		1.74m OD			
	Trench base south		0.97m OD			
	Trench top south		1.9m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	N	TL47953 71305		S	TL47960 71277	
	Orientation		NNW to SSE			
Reason for Trench		General evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
1001	layer	Demolition rubble/hardcore	--	150	--	
1002	layer	Blackish clayey silt – Contam. Topsoil	--	600	150	
1003	layer	Mid brown sandy silt – Subsoil layer	--	120	750	
1004	natd	Mid yellowish orange sand /gravel – Natural drift	--	--	870+	

Trench 2a						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	20.0m	Width	2.0m	Depth	0.95m
	Levels					
	Trench base northwest		1.13m OD			
	Trench top northwest		2.11m OD			
	Trench base southeast		1.02m OD			
	Trench top southeast		1.83m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	TL47967 71267		SE	TL47979 71251	
	Orientation			NW to SE		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
2001	layer	Demolition rubble/hardcore	--	200	--	
2002	layer	Blackish clayey silt – Contam. Topsoil	--	500	200	
2003	layer	Mottled green/brown silt – Subsoil layer	--	180	700	
2004	natd	Mid yellowish orange sand /gravel – Natural drift	--	--	880+	

Trench 2b						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	10.0m	Width	2.0m	Depth	1.20m
	Levels					
	Trench base northeast		0.99m OD			
	Trench top northeast		1.80m OD			
	Trench base southwest		1.04m OD			
	Trench top southwest		2.07m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NE	TL47966 71250		SW	TL47968 71243	
	Orientation			NE to SW		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
2001	layer	Demolition rubble/hardcore	--	350	--	
2002	layer	Mottled grey/brown clayey silt – Contam. Topsoil	--	200	350	
2003	layer	Mid brown silt – Subsoil layer	--	200	550	
2004	natd	Mid yellowish orange sand /gravel – Natural drift	--	--	750+	