28-32 High Street, Madingley, Cambridgeshire.

An Archaeological Evaluation

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An Archaeological Evaluation at 28-32 High Street, Madingley, Cambridgeshire

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June 2007

Report No. 770

ECB 2531

Contents

Cambridge Archaeology Unit carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at 28-32 High Street, Madingley, Cambridgeshire with the aim of establishing the presence, date, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological remains. The evaluation comprised trial trenching within the gardens of these premises, which revealed low density potentially medieval activity in the form of linear features, as well as overlying evidence for the demolition of post medieval buildings formerly occupying this land.

Introduction

The archaeological evaluation was carried out as a condition of Planning Permission in advance of residential development. Commissioned by Mr G. Heslop, trial trenching took place on 8th May 2007 and was undertaken by archaeologists from Cambridge Archaeology Unit. The evaluation was carried out and this report was written in accordance with a project design approved and monitored by the Senior Archaeologist at Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning Countryside Advice (CAPCA).

Location and topography

The proposed development area (PDA) is located on the western side of the High Street, Madingley, Cambridgeshire, approximately three miles west of Cambridge, (NGR: 539620/260618). The PDA comprises a total of 0.04ha, (Figure 1). The underlying geology is grey and grey blue clay (British Geological Survey 1975), and the site lies at c.27m OD.

Archaeological Background

Previous archaeological investigations carried out near the PDA have provided evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement; 6th-7th pottery was recovered during fieldwork in advance of a new access road to Madingley Hall in 1991 (Gdaniec 1991). Whilst subsequent work revealed a significant quantity of Mid Saxon and medieval pottery in toft or field boundary ditches in the meadow to the southwest of the hall (Gdaniec 1992). Further evidence for Saxo-Norman settlement was exposed during the excavation of service ducts extending over the area to the south and east of the Hall complex. The plot or toft divisions were revealed aligned north from a hollow way. Evidence of domestic activity within this area was provided by the recovery of pottery, oyster and mussel shells, pits and deposits of heat affected chalk that were potentially associated with quick-lime production (Regan 1998). A cobbled surface was also identified (Hunter 1991). Previous archaeological investigations therefore indicate that there was extensive occupation of the land now encompassed by the parkland of Madingley Hall.

During the medieval period, settlement seems to have shifted in focus, the shift may have been related to the location of the 12th century church of St Mary Magdalene beside the former crossroads. There are well preserved earthwork remains of the medieval village in the fields to the west of the church and on the opposite side of the crossroads, which include enclosures, terraces and house platforms (Taylor n.d.). An evaluation east of the PDA, to the northeast of the village and next to surviving earthworks revealed ridge and furrow and yielded some medieval pottery (Gdaniec 1993). The surviving earthworks located here suggest the mid medieval to 18th century village comprised a main property lined street, with a possible green and a crossroads.

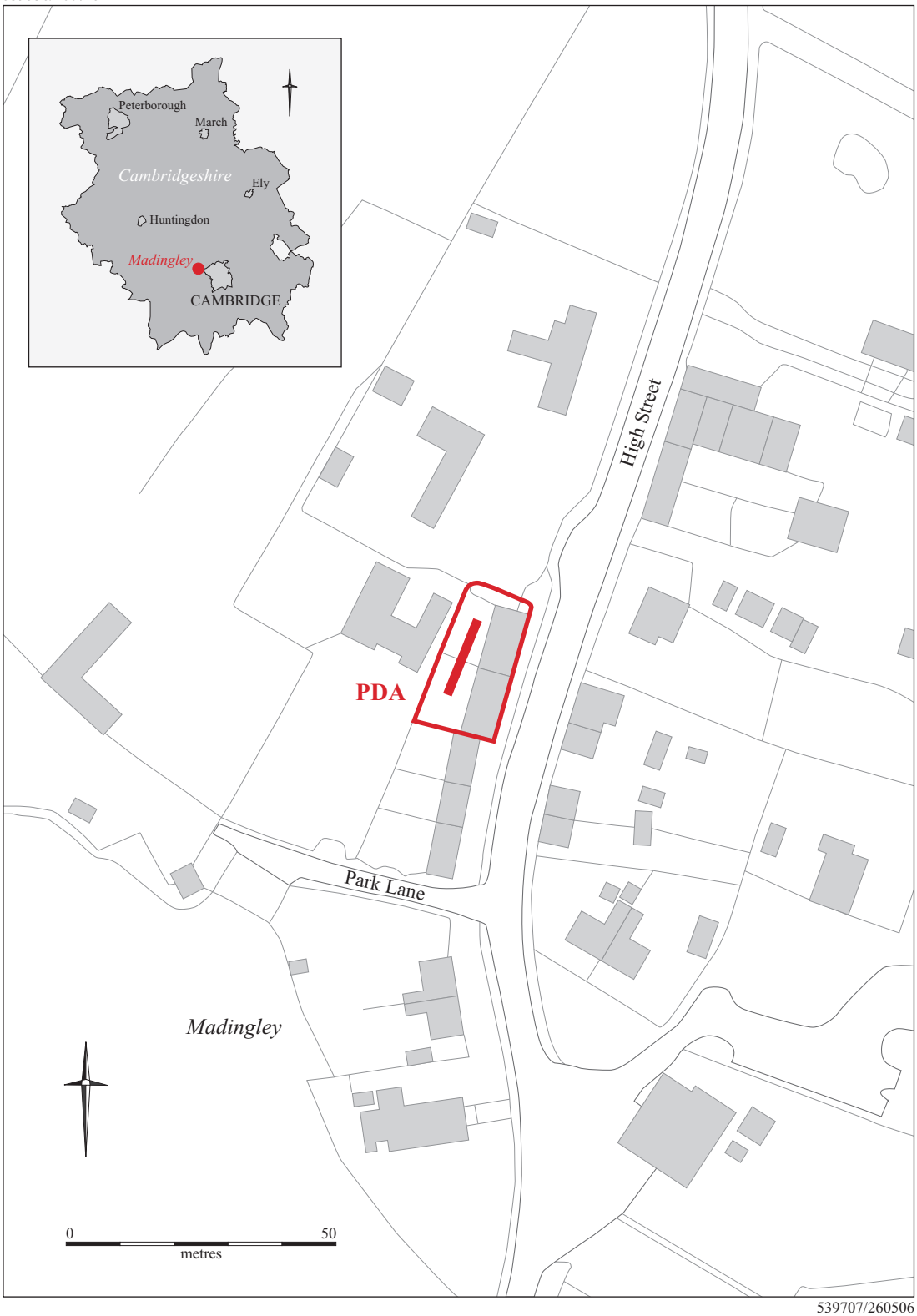

Figure 1. Location map

A thorough history of Madingley Hall and its environs has been extensively documented elsewhere (e.g. RCHM 1968) and consequently will not be discussed in detail here. Briefly, John Hinde acquired the Shire Manor and parts of the parish in the 16th century and began constructing the present Madingley Hall on land to the west of the contemporary village. Although some of this original building survives, John Hindle and his son Francis continued to develop the hall and acquire further land in the parish. They also closed one of the village roads in 1546 (Taylor 1997), the closure of which seems to have had little impact on the village. It was not until the later emparkment of land surrounding Madingley Hall in the mid 18th century that the hall had a significant impact on the layout of the village. The medieval village, west of the church was cleared and the focus of settlement moved northwards, along what is now the High Street creating a linear settlement

Methodology

A single evaluation trench totalling 15m in length was excavated by a tracked 360° machine using a 1.40m wide toothless ditching bucket, providing a 5.25% sample of the PDA. Topsoil and underlying deposits were removed under archaeological supervision and samples of unstratified late 19th to early 20th pot were recovered. The exposed archaeological features were subsequently metal detected, planned and thoroughly sample excavated.

Excavation of archaeological features was carried out using hand tools. The recording followed a CAU modified MoLAS system (Spence 1990); whereby feature numbers, F. were assigned to stratigraphic events, and numbers (fill), or [cut] to individual contexts. The trench plan was drawn at scale 1:50 and sections at 1:10. A representative number of environmental samples were taken and a small digital photographic archive was compiled. All work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory Health and Safety legislation and with the recommendations of SCAUM (Allen and Holt 2002). The site code is MHS 07.

Results

The depth of the evaluation trench varied between 0.59m a 1.02m. The variations in depth were because the site had been levelled to provide an improved building platform for the construction of the residential dwellings that occupied the PDA until the development that is the subject of this report. The buildings were built c.1967. As a consequence of this earthmoving, the southwestern end of the trench measured only 0.59m deep and had no surviving subsoil, whilst the northeastern end of the trench measured 1.02m deep with a considerable layer of subsoil and overburden.

The topsoil contained large quantities of unstratified building rubble and late 19th to early 20th pottery sherds, a representative sample of which was recovered. Underlying the topsoil, subsoil and overburden were two linear features. F.1, was a northeast-southwest aligned ditch, whilst F.2, was a northwest-southeast orientated, wide, shallow, probable furrow (Figure 2). In spite of the excavation of a generous sample of these two features, no dating evidence was recovered from either. A bulk environmental sample was taken from F.1.

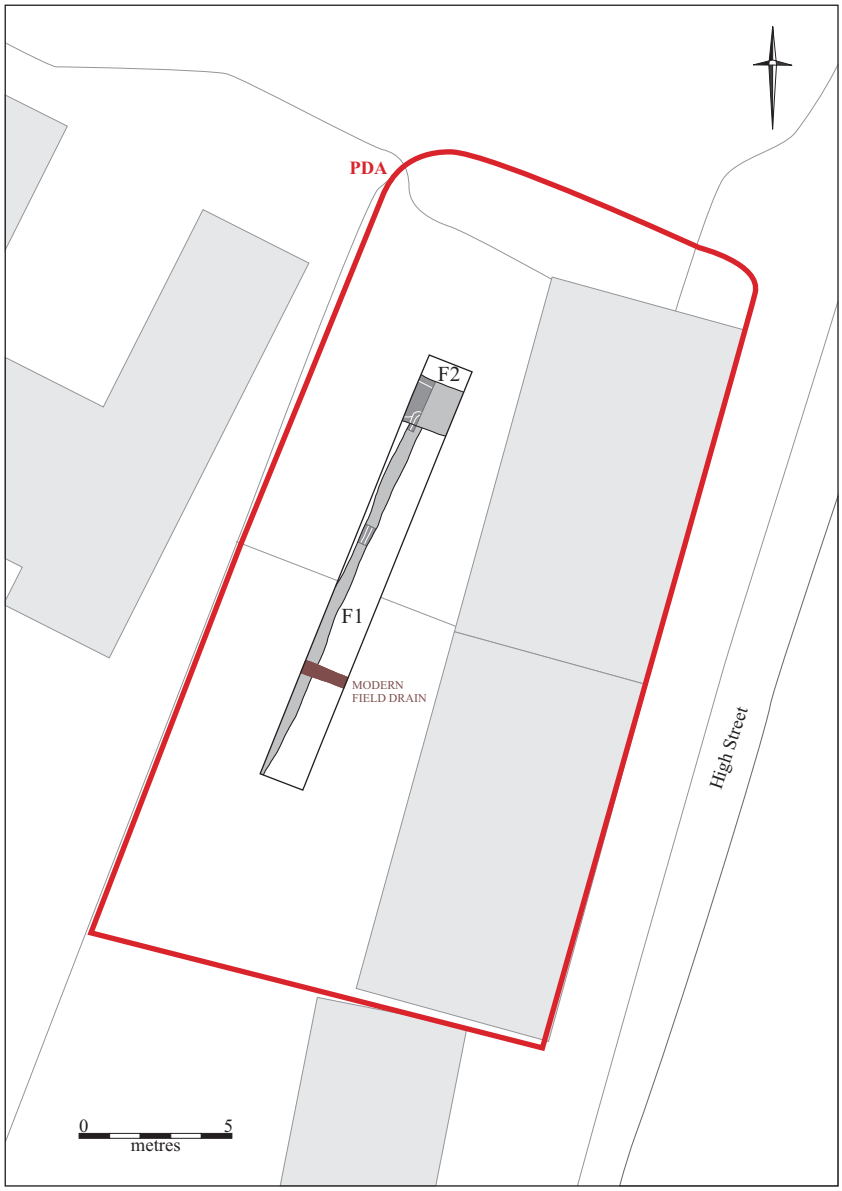

Figure 2. Trench plan

Figure 3. Photo of south-west facing ditch section, F1

F.1 Small NE-SW aligned ditch that was cut by furrow F.2. It had a visible length of 12.50m and two slots, cuts [2], (figure 3), and [4] were excavated. Width was 0.65m and depth varied between 0.30m and 0.33m. Both had quite steeply sloping sides leading to a concave base. The two slots contained single fills [1] and [3], and these were both mid grey silty clay with occasional small to medium sized gravel inclusions. No finds were recovered.

F.2 NW-SE orientated furrow that cut linear ditch F.1. It had a visible length of just 1.40m and one slot, [6], was excavated. Width was 1.50m, and depth 0.13m. Fill [5] was a mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional medium sized gravel inclusions. No finds were recovered.

Ditch F.1 appeared to terminate towards the northeastern end of the trench, this terminus was then cut by furrow F.2.

Discussion

In line with previous archaeological investigations carried out within Madingley village, no evidence for pre-medieval activity was uncovered by the evaluation (Gdaniec 1991-93, Hunter 1991 and Regan 1998).

The two features identified in the evaluation, although undated, are potentially medieval. The paucity of finds from both of the features is potentially because they were away from the main area of settlement and domestic activity and are more likely to be part of the outlying fieldsystems. The environmental sample taken from F1 would also appear top support this view, (Appendix 1). Ridge and furrow is still visible today in the fields surrounding what would have been the medieval village of Madingley. It is likely that when the settlement shifted in location and focus, it moved onto previously agricultural land.

The large quantities of unstratified building rubble and late 19th to early 20th pottery within the topsoil are probably the result of the demolition of the 19th century cottages that were on the site prior to the construction of the bungalows in c. 1967.

Conclusion

The evaluation of land at 28-32 High Street, Madingley, took place in a part of the village where no previous archaeological investigations have been carried out. Although small in scale, the evaluation provides further support for the suggestion that the village moved over time. The ditch and evidence for ridge and furrow exposed by the evaluation suggest that the PDA was part of the agricultural landscape related to the medieval village, rather than within the settlement itself.

Appendix 1

Assessment of the Bulk Environmental Sample -Anne de Vareilles

Methodology

The soil sample taken on site was processed using an Ankara-type flotation machine at the Cambridge Archaeological Unit. The flot was collected in a 300µm mesh and the remaining heavy residue washed over a 1mm mesh. The flot was dried indoors and scanned for the presence of charred plant macro remains and other ecofacts.
Sorting was carried out under a low power binocular microscope. Seed identification was made using the reference collection of the George Pitt-Rivers Laboratory, McDonald Institute, University of Cambridge. Nomenclature follows Stace (1997) for plants and Beedham (1972) for molluscs. All environmental remains are listed in Table 1.

Preservation

The sample is rich in molluscs, indicating that there is a good potential for the recovery of such environmental indicators through more appropriate sampling. Conversely, a total of only one, carbonised, seed was found and very little charcoal.

Results and Conclusion

The only cereal grain is wheat, probably of a free-threshing variety (*Triticum* cf. *aestivum).*

Although the sample was not processed specifically for the recovery of snail shells many were recovered by flotation. Juveniles are present as well as adults, suggesting that a vibrant community inhabited the ditch. The most abundant specimen is *Anisus leucostama*, a fresh-water snail that can withstand seasonal drying. The second most common is *Lymnaea peregra*, also a fresh-water snail; it can withstand a wide range of environments. These species suggest a wet environment, of probably standing rather than flowing water, with occasional, dryer periods.

Sample number		**<1>**
Context		[1]
Feature		1
Feature type		Ditch
Phase/Date		Med.
Sample volume - litres		12
Flot fraction examined		100%
Cereal		
Triticum cf. *aestivum*	Possible free-threshing wheat grain	1
Charcoal		
>2mm		-
Vitrified		-
Mollusc	Habitat	
Lymnaea peregra	Most fresh waters	++
Anisus leucostama	Ponds, ditches, resists drying (fresh-water)	+++
Carychium tridentatum/minimum	In damp-wet areas: in moss, under logs	+
Vertigo pygmaea	Widely distributed	-
Vallonia excentrica/pulchella	(Land snail)	-
Ceciloides acicula	Blind burrowing snail.	-
Cepaea sp.	(Land snail)	-
Trichia striolata/hispida	Varying habitats	+

Key: '-' 1 or 2, '+'<10, '++'10-50, '+++'>50 items

Table 1: Environmental remains from F.1

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