

**An archaeological evaluation
at 35 Clacton Road,
St Osyth, Essex
October 2009**

**report prepared by
Howard Brooks and Ben Holloway**

**on behalf of
Leisurefame Ltd**

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1 Summary

The site lies on the eastern edge of the site of the historic settlement of St Osyth, and on the western edge of the modern village. St Osyth Priory is 250m to the west.

The site, in the garden of no 35 Clacton Road, consisted of an area of overgrown grass and shrubs. No 35 was a weather-boarded house which occupied the rear of the plot. A new house was proposed for the Clacton Road frontage, on part of the garden.

A 12m-long evaluation trench was positioned in the middle of the footprint of the proposed new building and revealed three post-medieval pits, a post-medieval brick and tile foundation, and a modern post-hole.

No archaeological evidence was recovered relating to the medieval development of St Osyth, or to the priory complex. The excavated features appear to derive from domestic activity associated with properties fronting onto Clacton Road.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report on an archaeological trial-trenching evaluation at no 35 Clacton Road, St Osyth, Essex, commissioned by Mr Terry O'Dell of Leisurefame Ltd, and carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the 6th October 2009. Post-excavation work was carried out in October and November 2009.

The site, in the garden of no 35, is a roughly rectangular parcel of land, approximately 30m x 12m, located approximately 120m east of the crossroads of the Clacton Road and Colchester Road on the western edge of modern St Osyth. The site centre is at NGR TM 124 157.

The Historic Environment Management (HEM) team of Essex County Council (ECC) were consulted by Tendring District Council in July 2007 on an outline planning application (no 07/01097/FUL) for the construction of a new three-bedroom house. In response to consultation, the HEM team made the following recommendation in line with DoE Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (PPG16: DoE 1992):

'... The applicant should be required to conduct a field evaluation to establish the nature and complexity of the surviving archaeological deposits. This should be undertaken prior to a planning decision being made. This evaluation would enable due consideration to be given to the archaeological implications and would lead to proposals for mitigation of disturbance and/or the need for further investigation ...'

A brief detailing the required archaeological work, ie an evaluation by trial-trenching, was written by the HEM team officer (Adrian Gascoyne: HEM 2009). All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a WSI (Written Scheme of Investigation) produced by CAT in response to the HEM team brief and agreed with the HEM team (CAT 2009).

In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with CAT's *Policies and procedures* (CAT 2008), Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (CIMS 2008), the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008b). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of research projects in the historic environment* (MoRPHE) and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) was also followed.

3 Archaeological and historical background

The site is located within an area of archaeological potential on the eastern edge of the site of the historic settlement of St Osyth.

Located to the west of the site, the major historic feature of St Osyth is the priory (EHER no 4), which was founded in the 1120s for the Augustinian Canons by the Bishop of London. It is widely thought that the historic settlement was founded by the priory, and was centred on the crossroads of which the Clacton Road forms the east-west axis.

Previous excavation and archaeological work in the historic settlement has demonstrated the survival of well-preserved medieval and post-medieval stratigraphy (Medlycott 1998, 4-12).

The Chapman and André map of 1777 clearly shows that the evaluation site was built-up in the 18th century, as does the 1st edition OS map (c 1876) for the 19th century.

4 Aim

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains and deposits likely to be affected by groundworks associated with the redevelopment of the site. Specific attention was to be paid to evidence of activity associated with the medieval and post-medieval development of St Osyth.

5 Results of the evaluation (Figs 2-3)

This section gives an archaeological summary of the evaluation trench 1 (T1), with context and finds-dating information.

A mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket was used to progressively strip the topsoil and upper soil horizons down to the uppermost surviving level of archaeological significance. All further investigation was carried out by hand.

Trench 1: summary

T1 was positioned in the centre of the footprint of the proposed new house on the Clacton Road frontage.

T1 was excavated through these horizons: L1, a humic deposit of modern topsoil 150-200mm thick; and L2, an accumulated layer of slightly leached-out silty clay 100-150mm thick. L2 sealed natural yellow/orange boulder clay containing occasional gravel patches (L3).

T1 revealed five archaeological features, three of which were post-medieval pits (F1, F2, F4) dated by the peg-tile and post-medieval pottery in their fills. The remaining feature (F3) was a post-medieval brick and peg-tile foundation. This was probably a plinth which once supported a wooden structure (now missing). The plinth was later cut by pit F4.

The size and profile of modern post-hole F5 indicate that it was probably a modern garden fence post.

T1 – contexts and dating.

Feature no	Type	Dated finds	Period
F1	pit	pottery	post-medieval/ modern
F2	pit	peg-tile, pottery	post medieval
F3	plinth	brick, peg-tile, clay tobacco-pipe	post-medieval
F4	pit (or robbing activity?)	pottery, brick, peg-tile, clay tobacco-pipe	post-medieval
F5	post-hole	brick	modern

6 Finds

6.1 The post-Roman pottery

by Howard Brooks

Description of pottery

Post-Roman pottery fabrics are after CAR 7. Fabrics present include: Fabric 45c (Raeren stoneware); Fabric 40 (post-medieval red earthenware - PMRE); and Fabric 51b (flowerpot). A list of fabrics by context is given in the catalogue below.

Catalogue of pottery

F1

Finds number 2

Fabric 45c (Raeren stoneware), 1 sherd from frilled base, 65g.

Fabric 40 (PMRE), 3 sherds, 150g.

Fabric 51b (flowerpot), 1 sherd, 12g.

F2

Finds number 1

Fabric 45c (Raeren stoneware), 1 sherd, 21g.

F4

Finds number 5

Fabric 40 (PMRE), 1 sherd, 8g.

Comment

This small group (7 sherds, 256g) is mainly of post-medieval date. The pottery indicates that pit F1 is of 19th- to 20th-century date, but the other cut features (F2, F4) date to a period spanning the 16th-18th centuries. We can, therefore, assume that they relate to houses which stood on the street frontage in the 18th and 19th centuries.

6.2 Animal bone

by Adam Wightman

F1, finds number 2

The single bone fragment (14g) is a well-preserved *ovis* tibia fragment which has been chopped on the distal articulation, probably during disarticulation. It is most likely to be waste from domestic consumption or butchery.

6.3 Clay tobacco-pipe

by Emma Spurgeon

Most of the clay-tobacco pipe assemblage consists of plain stem fragments with a variety of bore-hole diameters. None of the fragments can be closely dated, with the exception of the bowl from F4 which is probably of Colchester Type 9, dated to c 1700-40 (CAR 5, 51-2).

L1. Finds number 1. Seven plain stem fragments: 1) length 75.55 mm, bore diameter 1.90 mm; 2) length 72.27 mm, bore diameter 2.32 mm; 3) length 64.99 mm, bore diameter 1.93 mm; 4) length 48.15 mm, bore diameter 1.93 mm; 5) length 41.44 mm, bore diameter 1.59 mm; 6) length 34.46 mm, bore diameter 1.93 mm; length 30.94 mm, bore diameter 1.86 mm.

F1. Finds number 2. Plain stem fragment. Length 23.82 mm, bore diameter 2.21 mm.

F4. Finds number 5. Complete bowl and partial stem of probable Colchester Type 9, with a long bowl with slight curve to the front, straight back and plan rim. Three plain stem fragments: 1) length 73.62 mm, bore diameter 2.44 mm; 2) length 58.14 mm, bore diameter 3.04 mm; 3) length 41.49 mm, bore diameter 3.03 mm.

6.4 Small finds

by Emma Spurgeon

The assemblage consists of two iron objects. These cannot be closely dated, but they are likely to be of post-medieval or modern date. Measurements are based on corroded sizes.

SF1 (Finds no 5) F4.

Iron object tapering to a point. Length 58.38 mm, width at tip 10.52 mm, depth at tip 5.02 mm. Width at widest part 39.21 mm, depth at widest part 23.71 mm.

(Finds no 5) F4. Complete iron nail with slightly convex head. Clenched length 62.81 mm.

6.5 Bulk finds

by Howard Brooks

Context	Finds number	Quantity	Weight (grammes)	Description
F2	1	4	185	Pale brown mortar fragments.
F2	1	3	316	Peg-tile fragments, 10mm-12mm thick; one with circular peg hole.
F3	3	1	158	Septaria lump.
F3	3	6	791	Fragments of the same brick?; 45mm thick; re-use shown by mortar on a broken face. 17th century?
F5	4	2	128	Peg-tile fragments, 10mm-11m thick.
F5	4	2	409	Post-medieval brick fragments, with mortar adhering to several faces. 37mm and 40m thick, so 'Tudor' type; probably 17th century.

7 Discussion

The excavated features were all of post-medieval or modern date. None, therefore, shed any light on the medieval origins or layout of St Osyth; the site may be too far away from the site of the medieval core of the village for that. However, the excavated features do add some detail to what is known of the development of the post-medieval village.

The Chapman and André map of 1777 shows buildings along the north side of Clacton Road. As far as can be seen from the map evidence, T1 should have coincided with the position of an 18th-century frontage building. In fact, brick and peg-tile plinth F3 may have originally carried the frontage wall of a timber-framed building which stood here in the 18th century, but no sign of its rear wall was found in this evaluation.

The debris in the fill of pit F2 indicates that it was probably a domestic rubbish-pit. The difficulty of this interpretation is that, unless F2 pre-dated the building, it must have been an internal feature. F4 cut the brick plinth, and so may date to the time when the house was demolished. F5 was a modern garden fence post.

8 Acknowledgements

The Trust would like to thank Mr Terry O'Dell of Leisurefame Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed and carried out by B Holloway. The project was monitored for the ECC HEM team by Adrian Gascoyne.

9 References

CAR 5	1988	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 5: Post-Roman small finds from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by N Crummy
CAR 7	2000	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-1985</i> , by J Cotter
CAT	2008	<i>Policies and procedures</i>

CAT	2009	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological trial-trenching at 35 Clacton Road, St Osyth, Essex, September 2009</i>
CIMS	2008	<i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester and Ipswich Museums</i>
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14, ed by D Gurney
HEM	2009	<i>Archaeological trenching and potential excavation on land at 35 Clacton Road, St Osyth, September 2009</i>
IfA	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>
IfA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Medlycott, M	1998	<i>St Osyth: historic towns project assessment report</i> , Essex County Council Planning Department
MoRPHE	2006	<i>Management of research projects in the historic environment</i> , English Heritage

10 Abbreviations and glossary

AOD	above Ordnance Datum
axial	bones in the head and trunk of the body
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
ECC	Essex County Council
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
fill	the soil filling up a hole such as a pit or ditch
HEM	Historic Environment Management team of ECC
IfA	Institute for Field Archaeologists
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
<i>ovis</i>	sheep species
Roman	the period from AD 43 to around AD 430

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museums under accession code COLIM 2009.64.

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Distribution list:

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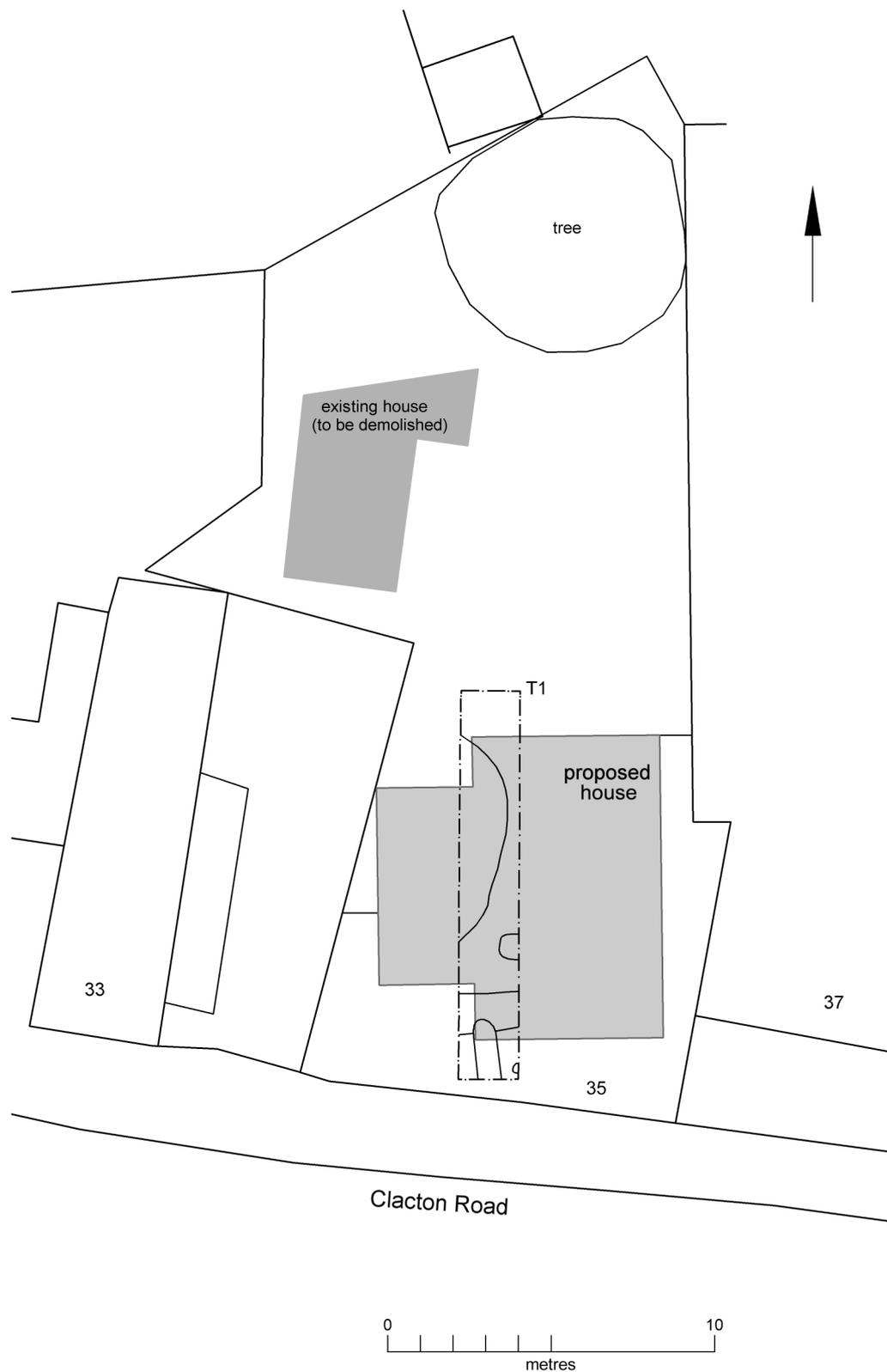


Fig 1 Site plan.

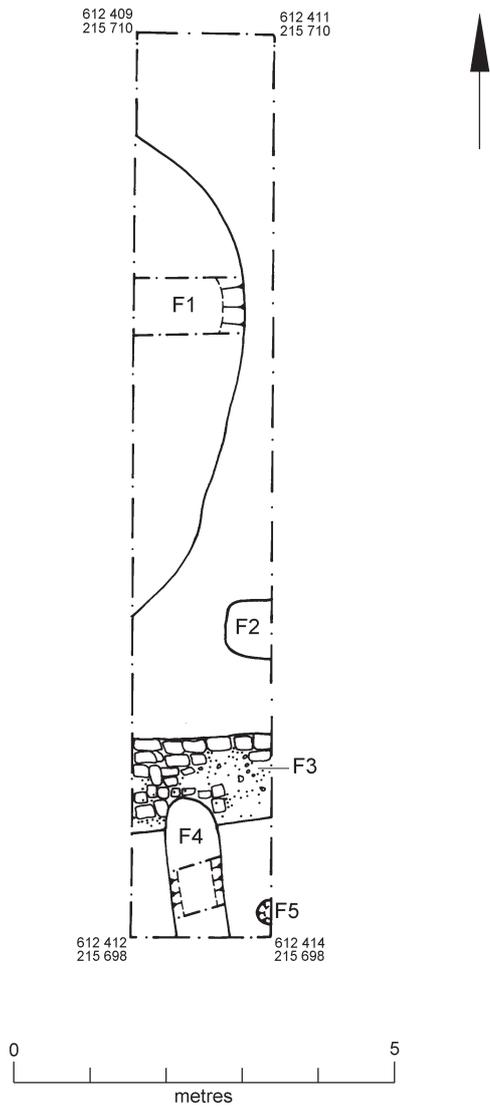
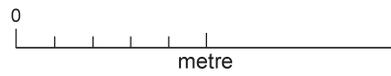
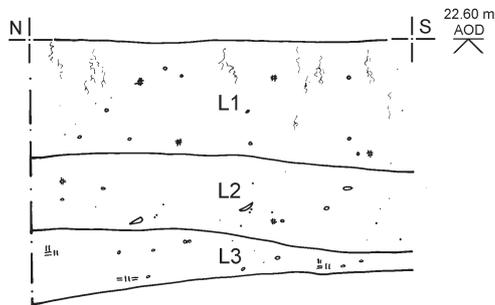
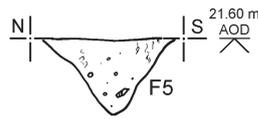
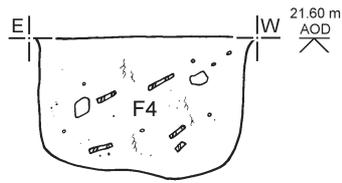
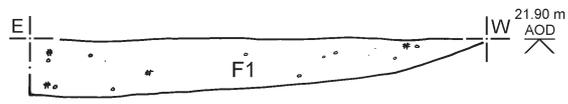


Fig 2 T1: plan.



-  sand
-  small stones
-  clay
-  charcoal
-  mortar
-  peg-tile

Fig 3 Sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Site address: 35 Clacton Road, St Osyth, Essex	
Parish: St Osyth	District: Tendring
NGR: TM 124 157 (c)	Site codes: CAT - 09/9c HEM - STO CR 09 Museum accession - COLIM 2009.64
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: October 2009	Size of area investigated: 12 x 1.8m trench
Location of curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museums	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER no: 4
Final report: CAT Report 529 and summary in EAH	
Periods represented: post-medieval, modern	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p><i>The site lies on the eastern edge of the site of the historic settlement of St Osyth, and on the western edge of the modern village. St Osyth Priory is 250m to the west.</i></p> <p><i>The site, in the garden of no 35 Clacton Road, consisted of an area of overgrown grass and shrubs. No 35 was a weather-boarded house which occupied the rear of the plot. A new house was proposed for the Clacton Road frontage, on part of the garden.</i></p> <p><i>A 12m-long evaluation trench was positioned in the middle of the footprint of the proposed new building and revealed three post-medieval pits, a post-medieval brick and tile foundation, and a modern post-hole.</i></p> <p><i>No archaeological evidence was recovered relating to the medieval development of St Osyth, or to the priory complex. The excavated features appear to derive from domestic activity associated with properties fronting onto Clacton Road.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Keywords: post-medieval, plinth, pit	Significance: -
Author of summary: Howard Brooks	Date of summary: November 2009