

**An archaeological evaluation
by trial-trenching on land to the rear of 60 North
Street, Great Dunmow, Essex
December 2011**



**report prepared by
Adam Wightman**

**on behalf of
Foxley Builders**

CAT project ref.: 11/11g
NGR: TL 6278 2240
ECC project code: GD32
Saffron Walden Museum accession code: 2012.1



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CAT Report 626
January 2012

An archaeological evaluation at the rear of 60 North Street, Great Dunmow, Essex

This is a summary report about an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) in December 2011 prior to the construction of two detached houses on land behind 60 North Street, Great Dunmow (TL 6278 2240) (Fig 1).

The Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (ECC HEM) team advised that archaeological trial-trenching be undertaken because of the proximity of the site of a Roman road extending north from Great Dunmow towards Thaxted (HER 1185), and the potential on the site for the remains of late medieval to post-medieval occupation associated with the roadside settlement extending back from North Street (Fig 1). The trial-trenching was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (CAT 2011) produced by CAT in response to a brief issued by ECC HEM (HEM 2011- included with the report).

Two evaluation trenches (T1 & T2) were excavated within the footprints of the two proposed houses (Fig 2) using a tracked excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision through an imported dark-grey sandy-silt topsoil (L1) and an underlying clayey-silt soil accumulation (L2) (Fig 4). The imported topsoil (L1) contained very few inclusions and no finds. The presence of a fragment of flower pot in the buried soil beneath L1 (L2) suggests that the topsoil was deposited here in the 20th century. At the south end of T2 a layer of compacted orange sand, gravel and clay (L4) was encountered beneath L1 at a depth of 0.4m below modern ground level (Fig 3). Initially this layer was believed to be natural geology. However, the deposit was found to have two parallel edges and overlay the buried topsoil layer L2. It is probable that L4 is the remains of an old garden path.

The buried soil (L2) was very dry, compacted and notably clayey making it very difficult to excavate. A small quantity of finds was recovered from L2 during its excavation. A medieval pottery sherd and fragments of peg-tile were recovered from L2 in T1, and medieval, post-medieval and modern pottery sherds as well as post-medieval brick and peg-tile fragments and a complete clay pipe bowl, were found in L2 in T2 (see Appendix 1). The yellow/brown natural clay with small chalk nodules (L3) was reached at a depth of 0.7m below modern ground level. Following consultation with the ECC HEM officer, the lengths of the two trenches were reduced to 4.5m x 2m (T1) and 4m x 2m (T2) as a result of the significant depth and solidity of the soil in the two trenches, the excavation of which was resulting in significant disturbance to the ground on which the houses were to be built.

Two small features had been cut into the natural clay in T2 (Fig 3). Both features had similar clayey-silt fills. However, pit F2 contained modern roof slate and peg-tile fragments whereas the shallow pit/linear terminal F1 contained a medieval pottery sherd, animal bone and a fragment of peg-tile. It is possible that F1 could be medieval in date although the medieval pot fragment may have been residual in a later context.

No archaeological deposits or finds related to the Roman road or a potential roadside settlement or cemetery, was identified during the evaluation. However, medieval and post-medieval pottery sherds and CBM fragments recovered from both trenches indicate that activity associated with the roadside settlement on North Street during these periods extended a considerable distance back from the street frontage.

References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in .pdf format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

CAR 7	2000	John Cotter <i>Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , Colchester Archaeological Report 7
CAT	2011	Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological trial trenching and excavation at land to the rear of 60 North Street, Great Dunmow, Essex, by Emma Spurgeon
Cunningham, C, & Drury, P	1985	<i>Post-medieval sites and their pottery: Moulsham Street, Chelmsford</i> , CBA Research Report 54
HEM	2011	<i>Archaeological trial trenching and excavation at 60 North Street, Great Dunmow, October 2011</i> , by R Havis

List of plates and figures

Frontispiece: General view of site with T2 in the foreground and T1 being backfilled in the background, view north-east.

- Fig 1 Site location.
- Fig 2 Site plan.
- Fig 3 Results
- Fig 4 F1-2: sections and T1-2: representative sections.

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Appendix I: finds

by Stephen Benfield

A small quantity of bulk finds of medieval, post-medieval and modern date was recovered from two evaluation trenches. The finds consist of pottery, ceramic building material (CBM), clay pipe and animal bone. These were recovered from a buried topsoil layer (L2) and two features (F1 & F2). The finds are listed in the table below and spot dates are provided for each context finds number. The medieval and post-medieval pottery fabric types refer to the Essex post-Roman fabric series (Cunningham & Drury 1985; CAR 7 2000) and are listed below.

Table 1; Pottery fabrics

Fabric code	Description	Date
20	medieval sandy grey wares (general)	M12-M14C
21	medieval sandy orange wares (general)	13-15C
21A	Colchester-type ware	13-16C
40	post-medieval red earthen wares (general)	16/17-18C
48D	Staffordshire-type white earthen wares	18/19-20C
51B	flowerpot	19-20C

Table 2; Spot dated list of finds by context

Trench	ctxt	finds no	finds	spot date
T1	L2	5	pottery Medieval: Fabric 21A 1@77 g, base of large handle with traces of white slip/paint, possibly from a cistern, possibly a Colchester product (14/15-16C) CBM Post-Roman: peg-tile 6@955 g, large pieces, 12-14 mm thick, three with circular peg-holes up to 14 mm diameter animal bone 1@16 g, worn tooth from medium-large mammal	14/15-16C
T1	F1	3	pottery Medieval: Fabric 20 1@11 g CBM peg-tile 1@16 g, fragment 13-14 mm thick, traces of cream mortar on base animal bone 3@43 g, medium-large mammal bone pieces	pottery M12-14C
T1	F2	4	CBM Post-Roman: peg-tile 3@93 g, fragment s 12-14 mm thick, round peg-hole, one with traces of cream mortar on base stone Slate 1@18 g, roof slate, probably 19-20C	19-20C
T2	L2	1	pottery Medieval: Fabric 20/21 1@1 g, sherd flake. Post-medieval: Fabric 40 1@27 g rim sherd from a large bowl or pancheon; Fabric 48D 3@28 g, sherds from bowl and small bowl (all plain white); Fabric 51B (flowerpot)	19-20C
T2	L2	2	pottery Medieval: Fabric 20 3@17 g; Fabric 21 1@8g, sandy fabric an probably early (13-14C); Fabric 21A(?) 1@1 g, white slip, possibly a Colchester product. Post-medieval Fabric 40 2@ 35 g; Fabric 48D 2@10 g, (plain white) CBM Post-Roman: peg-tile 18@674 g, 10-11 mm thick, round fixing holes. Post-medieval: brick 1@89 g, fragment, red fabric, probably post-medieval clay pipe 2@23 g complete bowl Crummy Type 12 (1988) dated c 1780-1820 & stem fragment animal bone 3@43 g, medium-large mammal bone pieces	L18/19-20C with residual medieval

Appendix II: contents of archive

One A4 document wallet containing:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Copy of the evaluation brief issued by the ECC HEM team
- 1.2 Copy of the WSI produced by CAT
- 1.3 Risk assessment
- 1.4 1 A3 plan showing excavations in Great Dunmow

2 Site archive

- 2.1 Digital photographic record
- 2.2 Context sheets (L1-L4, F1-F2, 2 trench sketch sheets)
- 2.3 Attendance register
- 2.4 Finds register
- 2.5 Site photographic record on CD
- 2.6 1 A3 section drawing sheet

3 Research archive

- 3.1 Monitoring (client) report

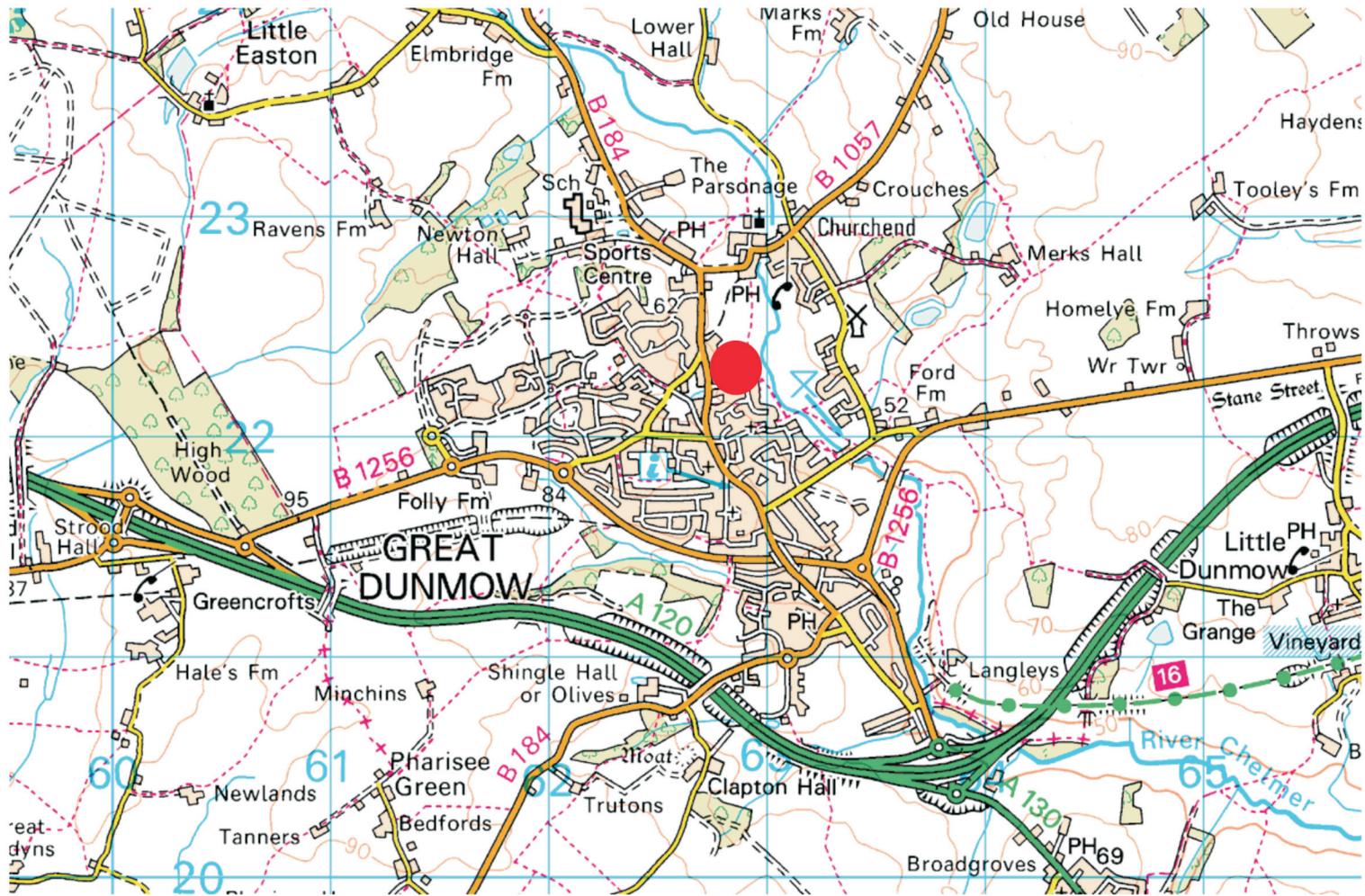


Fig 1 Site location, marked by a red dot.

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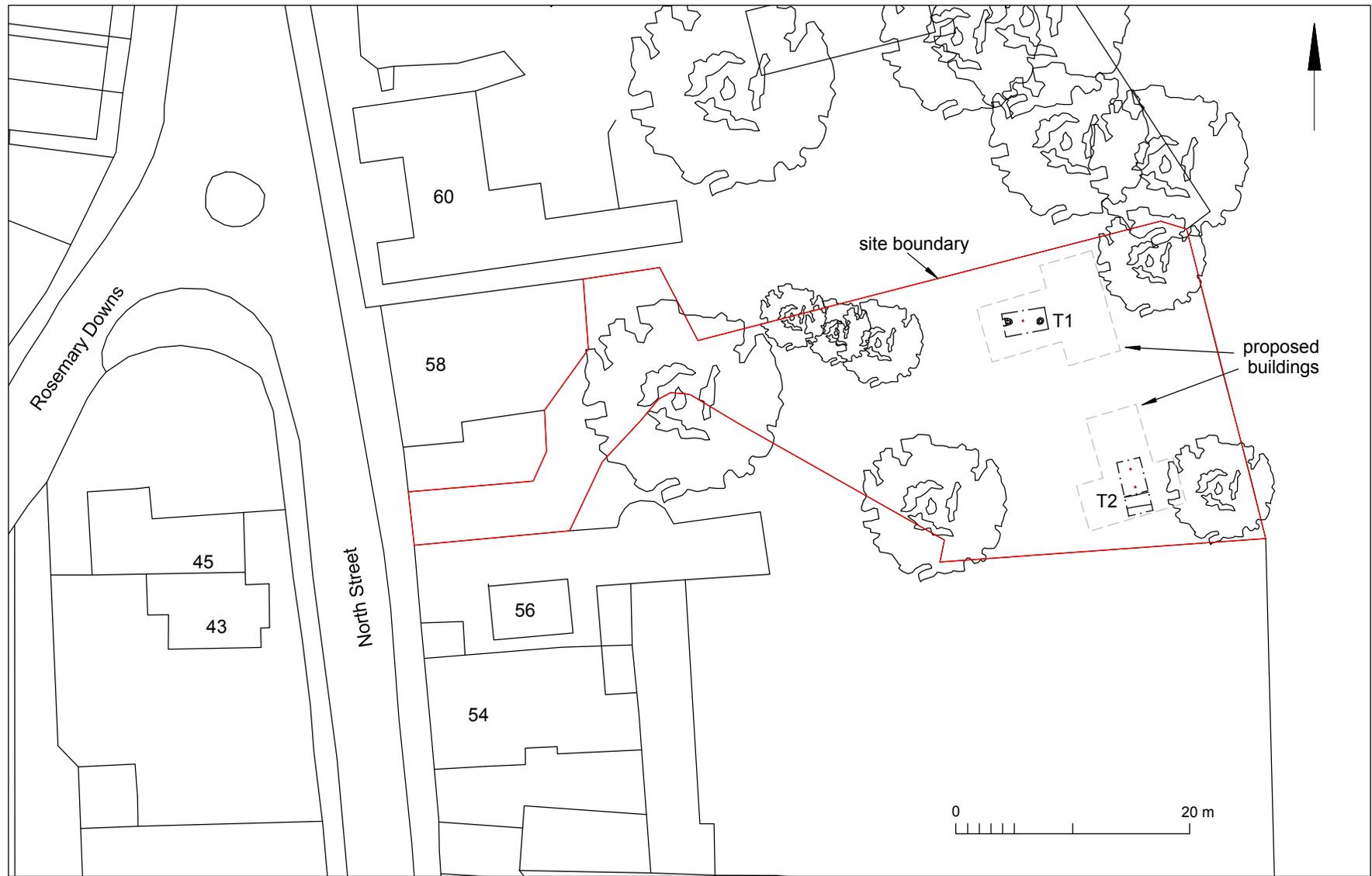


Fig 2 Site plan.

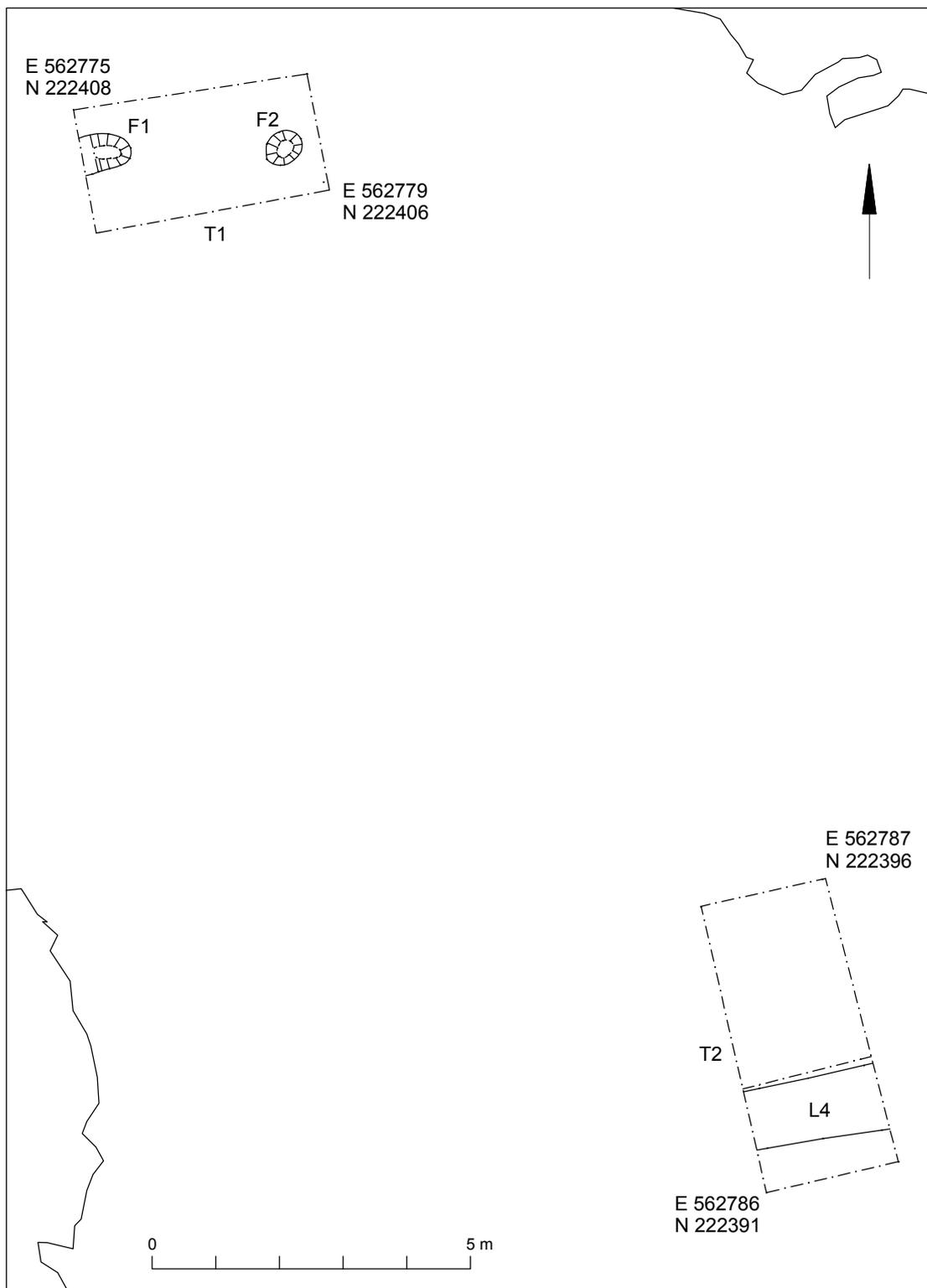


Fig 3 Results.

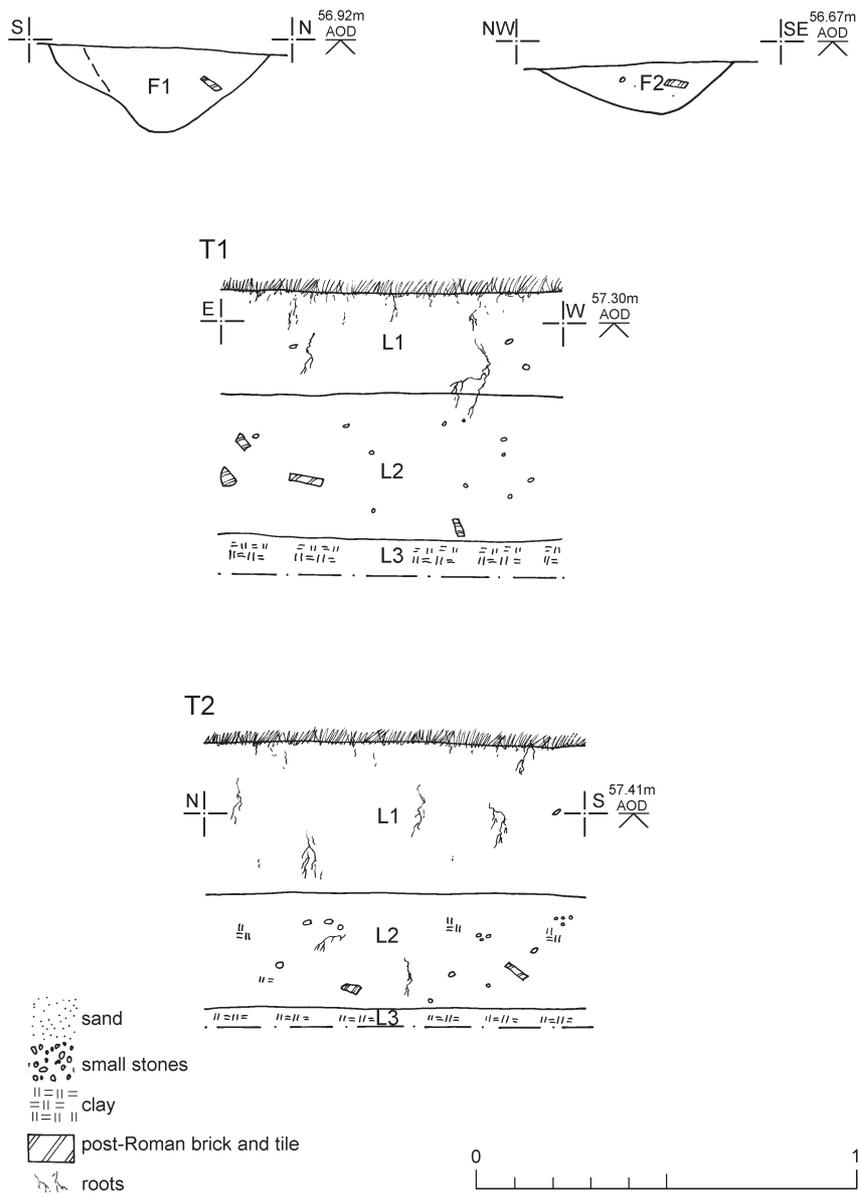


Fig 4 F1-2: sections and T1-2: representative sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Land to the rear of 60 North Street, Great Dunmow, Essex	
Parish: Great Dunmow	District: Uttlesford
NGR: TL 6278 2240	Site codes: CAT project – 11/11g ECC – GD32 Museum accession – 2012.1
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: December 5th 2011	Size of area investigated: 8.5m of trench (2m wide) in a 1080 sq m site
Location of curating museum: Saffron Walden Museum	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER numbers: 1185
Final report:	CAT Report 626
Periods represented:	<i>medieval, post-medieval</i>
<p>Summary: <i>An archaeological evaluation by two trial-trenches revealed an absence of archaeological deposits or finds associated with the Roman road which extended north from Great Dunmow towards Thaxted (HER 1185). However, medieval and post-medieval pottery sherds and CBM fragments from both trenches indicate that activity associated with the roadside settlement on North Street during these periods extended a considerable distance east back from the street frontage.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: none	
Keywords: <i>medieval/post-medieval pottery</i>	Significance: *
Author of summary: Adam Wightman	Date of summary: January 2012

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING
AND EXCAVATION AT 60
NORTH STREET, GREAT DUNMOW**

October 2011



Essex County Council

Site: 60 North Street, Great Dunmow

Planning app. no.: UTT/1976/08

Applicant: Foxley Builders (normangill@foxleybuilders.co.uk)

Historic Environment Management Team Officer: Richard Havis

Museum: Uttlesford

This archaeological brief is only valid for six months. After this period the Historic Environment Management Team of Essex County Council should be contacted to assess whether changes are required to the brief. Any written scheme of investigation resulting from this brief shall only be considered for the same period.

The contractor is strongly advised to visit the site before completing their written scheme of investigation as there may be implications for accurately costing the project.

1. Introduction

This brief for archaeological trial trenching and excavation has been prepared by the Historic Environment Management Team of Essex County Council. The brief sets out the requirements for a programme of archaeological work in advance of the construction of two houses with associated parking and an access road. The archaeological work will consist of the initial excavation of trial trenches followed by open area excavation of deposits identified. The development lies on the line of the Roman Road from Great Dunmow to Thaxted and on the edge of the medieval and post medieval town of Great Dunmow.

2. Site Location and Description

The proposed development lies to the rear of 60 North Street, Great Dunmow (TL 627223) on the northern side of Great Dunmow. The development comprises the construction of two detached houses with associated access road and parking bays.

3. Planning Background

A planning application (UTT/1976/08) for the construction of two houses and associated parking was submitted to Uttlesford District Council in December 2008. As the site lies within a sensitive area known to contain archaeological deposits a full archaeological condition was recommended to the District Council. At the time this followed the guidance provided within PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning. The archaeological condition that was recommended states:

"No development, or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work and recording in

accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the planning authority."

4. Archaeological Background

The following archaeological background utilises the Essex Historic Environment Record (HER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford. It is advisable to visit the HER prior to the completion of any archaeological written scheme of investigation (To make an appointment contact Ms A. Bennett, 01245 437637).

A Roman small town developed along Stane Street, to the west of the road junction on a prominent ridge above the river crossing. It is estimated the town covered an area of 10-12 hectares. A Roman road is recorded (HER 1185) running north from Great Dunmow towards Thaxted. There is also the potential for late medieval and post medieval occupation associated to the road side settlement extending back from North Street.

The Historic Town survey (Medlycott 1999) of Great Dunmow will provide further information on the history and development of Great Dunmow.

5. Requirement for Work

The specific aim of the archaeological trial trenching and excavation is to preserve, by record, the archaeological deposits that will be disturbed or destroyed by the development. Trenches will be positioned to both assess the exact proposed house plots and the position of the Roman road. Where archaeological deposits are identified further excavation will be required. The site specific research aims include:

- Identify surviving evidence relating to the Roman Road
- Identify evidence of roadside settlement or cemeteries
- Assess the potential and extent of medieval and post medieval occupation

6. General Methodology

- 6.1 A professional team of field archaeologists shall undertake the trenching and excavation. The number of staff involved and the structure of the team shall be stated in the written scheme of investigation. Notification of the supervisor/project manager's name for the project shall be provided to the HEM Team one week in advance of commencement of work.

- 6.2 The archaeological contractor is expected to follow the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 6.3 The contractor shall ensure detailed study of all mains' service locations and avoid damage to these.
- 6.4 All Health and Safety guidelines must be followed on site.
- 6.5 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 6.6 **A meeting shall be held on site once the initial phase of the trial trench has been completed. A summary of the results and overall plan shall be available for the meeting. The meeting will define requirements for further work if necessary.**

7. Trial Trenching Methodology

- 7.1 The archaeological trench will be a minimum of 1.8 metres wide. A proposed trench plan will be provided with the WSI.
- 7.2 Machine stripping shall be undertaken to an agreed standard, using a toothless ditching bucket, and under the supervision and to the satisfaction of a professional archaeologist. The exposed sub-soil or archaeological horizon will be cleaned by hand immediately after machine stripping, if required and any archaeological deposits or negative features planned.
- 7.3 Machine stripping will only be undertaken to the top of the archaeological horizon unless agreement is obtained from the HEM officer to deepen the trench by this method.
- 7.4 The contractor shall provide details of the site surveying, excavation and finds recovery policy in the written scheme of investigation. The site grid shall be tied into the National Grid.
- 7.5 Where archaeological deposits are identified in the initial trenching a meeting will be held on site to define the requirements for further work. His meeting will define the nature and extent of further archaeological work required.

- 7.6 Details of the site planning policy shall be given in the written scheme of investigation. The normal preferred policy for the scale of archaeological site plans is 1:20 and sections at 1:10, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be more appropriate.
- 7.7 The contractor shall provide details of the sampling strategies for retrieving artefacts, biological remains (for palaeoenvironmental and palaeoeconomic investigations), and samples of sediments and/or soils (for micromorphological and other pedological/sedimentological analyses). Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from the English Heritage Regional Adviser in Archaeological Science (East of England).
- 7.8 Should human remains be discovered the coroner will be informed and a licence from the Home Office sought immediately; both the client and the monitoring officer will also be informed. These will require full excavation.
- 7.9 The photographic record shall include both general and feature specific photographs, a photographic scale (including north arrow) shall be included in the case of detailed photographs. The photographic record shall be accompanied by a photographic register detailing as a minimum feature number, location, and direction of shot.
- 7.10 The site and spoil heaps shall be checked by metal detector, with any finds recovered.
- 7.11 The IFA's *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations, and excavations* and the EAA *Standards for Field Archaeology in the Eastern Region* document should be used for additional guidance in the production of the written scheme of investigation, the content of the report, and the general execution of the project.

8. Finds

- 8.1 All finds, where appropriate, shall be washed.
- 8.2 All pottery and other finds where appropriate, shall be marked with the site code and context number.
- 8.3 The written scheme of investigation shall include an agreed list of specialist consultants, who might be required to conserve and/or report on finds, and advise or report on other aspects of the investigation.

8.4 The requirements for conservation and storage shall be agreed with the appropriate museum (Saffron Walden 01799 510333) prior to the start of work, and confirmed in writing to the HEM Team.

9. Results

9.1 The final report shall be submitted within a length of time (but not exceeding 6 months) from the end of the fieldwork, to be agreed between the developer and archaeological contractor, with a copy supplied to the HER. A full digital copy of the report will be supplied to the HEM.

9.2 This report must contain:

- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the archaeological work.
- Location plan of excavated areas and/or other fieldwork and buildings in relation to the proposed development. At least two corners of each of the areas or trenches shall be given 10 figure grid references.
- A section/s drawing showing depth of deposits including present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale.
- Methodology and detailed results including a suitable conclusion and discussion. Where appropriate the discussion should be completed in consultation with the Eastern Counties Research Agenda and Strategy (Brown and Glazebrook 2000).
- Specialist reports
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results.

9.3 An HER summary sheet shall also be completed within four weeks (copy attached with brief) and supplied to the HEM Team officer. This will be completed in digital form (copy can be emailed) and shall include a plan showing the position of the trenches.

9.4 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the HER. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

9.5 Publication of the results, at least to a summary level (i.e. round up of archaeology in Essex in *Essex Archaeology and History*) shall be undertaken in the year following the archaeological field work. An allowance shall be made within the costs for full publication in an appropriate journal.

10. Archive Deposition

- 10.1 The requirements for archive storage shall be agreed with the appropriate museum (Saffron Walden 01799 510333), and confirmed in writing to the HEM Team.
- 10.2 If the finds are to remain with the landowner a full copy of the archive shall be housed with the appropriate museum.
- 10.3 The full archive shall be deposited with the appropriate museum within 2 months of the completion of the report and confirmed with the HEM Team.
- 10.4 A summary of the contents of the archive shall be supplied to the HEM Team at the time of deposition to the museum.

11. Monitoring

- 11.1 The HEM Team of Essex County Council will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project. This will include the fieldwork, post-excavation and publication stages.
- 11.2 Notification of the start of work shall be given to the HEM Team one week in advance of its commencement.
- 11.3 Any variations of the written scheme of investigation shall be agreed with the HEM Team prior to them being carried out.

12. Contractors Written Scheme of Investigation

- 12.1 In accordance with Standards and Guidance produced by the IFA this design brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. A WSI is required therefore in order to provide *the basis for a measurable standard* and for submission by the developer to the Local Planning Authority for approval.

12.2 Archaeological contractors shall forward a written scheme of investigation to the HEM Team of Essex County Council for validation **before** any work is undertaken on site. This validation is undertaken on behalf of the Planning Authority.

12.3 The involvement of the HEM Team shall be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

References

- Brown, N. and 2000 *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2.*
Glazebrook, J. *Research agenda and strategy East Anglian. Archaeol. Occ. Pap. 8*
Gurney, D. 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England East Anglian.*
Archaeol. Occ. Pap. 14
Medlycott, M. 1999 *Great Dunmow: Historic Town Assessment*

For further information regarding the content of this brief and as part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content and presentation of this archaeological brief. Please address them to the author at the address below.

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