

**An archaeological evaluation at
the former Hamilton Motors site,
Boreham, Essex
November 2006**

**report prepared by
Stephen Benfield**

**commissioned by
Norman Gill
on behalf of
the Tower Property Group**

CAT project ref.: 06/11d
Chelmsford Museum accession code: 2006:330
HEM site code: BOHM06
NGR: TL 756 102



Colchester Archaeological Trust
12 Lexden Road,
Colchester,
Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051
(01206) 500124
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

CAT Report 399
December 2006

Summary

Three archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated at the former Hamilton Motors site, Main Road, Boreham, Essex (TL 756 102). One trench was excavated at the south end of the site, and two trenches were excavated close together at the north end of the site near to Main Road. Of the small number of features revealed, all were either of modern date or of probable modern date. Apart from one small struck flint flake of possible prehistoric date, all the finds which were recovered from the features or from the spoil from the trenches were modern. The trenches which were dug close to Main Road revealed evidence of considerable modern disturbance at the north end of the site.

Introduction

This is the report on an archaeological evaluation carried out at the former Hamilton Motors site, Main Road, Boreham, Essex (TL 756 102), by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the 27th November 2006. The evaluation was commissioned by Norman Gill, on behalf of the Tower Property Group, following an archaeological condition and subsequent archaeological brief issued by the Historic Environment Management (HEM) team of Essex County Council (ECC). The work followed the acceptance of a Written Statement of Intent (WSI), prepared by CAT in response to the archaeological brief issued by the HEM team. The archaeological condition was issued following a planning application (CH/0044/05) for the redevelopment of the site as two residential blocks. Pat Connell of the ECC HEM team monitored the project.

There was a requirement by the HEM team for an archaeological investigation of the development site, as it lies within an area of significant archaeological potential. The earliest dated find from the surrounding area is a hoard of Late Bronze Age metalwork, discovered to the south of the site (Essex Historic Environment Record or EHER nos 6179-6180). The site is also situated on the south side of the line of an important Roman road, on the line of the current Main Road, linking the Roman towns of Colchester, Chelmsford and London. Previous archaeological work along the line of Main Road, at the former Buxted Chicken Factory site (some 450 m to the east), revealed evidence of extensive settlement dating to the 13th-14th century and possibly earlier, as some pottery could date to the 10th-11th century (Foreman 1997). There was also a small quantity of residual Iron Age and Roman finds.

The evaluation and its results (Fig 1)

The initial scheme of investigation required two trenches, each approximately 15 m in length and 1.6 m wide, to be excavated using a ditching bucket. Final placement of the trenches was to be determined by three factors. It was agreed that one trench would be positioned at the south end of the site and one at the north end of the site, to investigate the areas where the two proposed residential blocks would be built. The trenches would be excavated, as far as possible, outside the footprint of the proposed residential blocks, and the trench at the north end of the site would be dug as close as was practicable to Main Road. In the event, only a single 15 m trench, Trench or T1 (Fig 1) could be excavated at the south end of the site (TL 756 102). However, at the north end of the site (TL 756 101), the proposed single trench had to be split into two, ie T2, approximately 10 m long (Fig 1) and T3, approximately 6 m long (Fig 1), to avoid substantial surviving foundations from a building which formerly occupied the site and which cut the footprint of one of the proposed residential blocks.

Trench 1 (Fig 1)

T1 was excavated in the south-west corner of the site. The deposits in T1 consisted of between about 200-250 mm of topsoil, consisting of a medium-light grey clay-loam above yellow-brown sandy clay natural. The natural sandy clay became more stony and gravel-like towards the north end of the trench. Five small shallow features (F1-F5) were recorded, spread out along the length of the trench (Table 1). They were cut into the natural sandy clay, and all were filled with medium-light grey clay-loam of the same appearance as the topsoil. Where datable finds were associated with these features (F1, F2, F4, F5), they were of modern date (Table 1). A small struck flint flake of possible

prehistoric date was residual in the fill of F1. The flint is a secondary flake (having cortex on three of the sides), and measures approximately 20 mm by 20 mm. There is a small percussion bulb below the striking point, and a flaking scar on the other face.

Trench 2 (Fig 2)

The north end of T2 was dug close to the property boundary with Main Road and outside an area of disturbance resulting from the demolition of the buildings which formerly occupied the site. A length of approximately 9 m was excavated before very large concrete footings were encountered to the south, so that the trench could not be excavated any further in that direction. The area was covered by a thin layer of mixed demolition material and disturbed topsoil. This demolition material and disturbed topsoil covered a gravelly yellow-brown sandy clay natural towards the north end of the trench, although the natural became less stony toward the south end of the trench. Rare pieces of modern brick or tile from the upper part of the natural showed that it had been subjected to some disturbance. Three features were observed, cut into the natural gravelly clay (Table 1). At the north end of the trench was a large dark modern feature, and along most of the east side of the trench was a modern pipe trench. These features were excavated by machine to 630 mm below the current ground-level, but were not bottomed. At this level, water began to seep into the trench. Over the remainder of the trench, the natural was encountered at about 200 mm. Cut into this, towards the south end of the trench, was a small pit or disturbance filled with dark grey stony clay and which was also clearly of modern date.

Trench 3 (Fig 2)

T3 was a short trench, approximately 6 m long. It was located immediately to the south of the large footings encountered at the south end of T2 and continued on the line established by T2. The area was covered by the same mix of demolition material and disturbed topsoil as the area of T2, and here was about 100 mm thick. This sealed yellow brown, slightly stony, sandy clay natural. Deeper excavation in the centre of the trench showed that this sandy clay extended to about 400 mm below the present ground-level, and below this was mottled yellow brown sandy clay natural with small streaks of manganese. Only one feature (F6; Table 1), was observed. F6 was a large feature, probably a pit, in the central part of the trench. The upper part of the pit was filled with dark grey stony clay which sealed a lower fill of grey sandy clay. The lower fill was streaked with a black watery liquid which appeared to contain some oil. The feature was excavated by machine to about 700 mm below the current ground-level, but was not bottomed. At this level, as in T2, water began to seep in at the base of the trench. The feature was almost devoid of finds, although eventually some modern tile and concrete pieces were recovered from the lower grey sandy clay fill.

Table 1: description and date of features by trench.

Trench	Feature number	Description	Feature date
T1	F1	small pit with medium-light grey clay-loam fill, depth of feature 150 mm; contained a small quantity of finds: modern glass, concrete chips, brick fragment, coal/slag, small mammal bones and a struck flint flake of possible prehistoric date	modern
T1	F2	small irregular pit or ?burrow with medium-light grey clay-loam fill, depth of feature 146 mm; contained a small quantity of finds: a sherd of white-surfaced modern china and bones of a small mammal, possibly a rabbit	probably modern
T1	F3	small pit with medium-light grey clay-loam fill, depth of feature 91 mm; no finds recovered	presumed modern
T1	F4	small pit with medium-light grey clay-loam fill, depth of feature 43 mm; contained a small quantity of finds: a modern brick or tile chip and some bones from a small mammal	probably modern
T1	F5	small pit with medium-light grey clay-loam fill, depth of feature 98 mm; contained a small quantity of finds: fragments/pieces of coal, coke or dark slag and an iron nail	modern

T2	three features - not numbered	large pit or pipe trench and a pipe trench, both in excess of 630 mm below the current ground-level, and a small pit or disturbance, 50 mm deep, all filled with dark gravelly sandy clay, although the pipe trench also contained pea-shingle; all contained modern finds: concrete, plastic or tarmac	all modern
T3	F6	large pit in excess of 600 mm deep below the current ground-level, with upper fill of dark gravelly sandy clay and lower fill of grey sandy clay streaked with black watery oily liquid; finds rare, but pieces of concrete and fragments of modern brick and tile came from the lower fill	modern

Discussion

No features or finds of archaeological significance were recorded on the site during the evaluation. The small number of features revealed were either of modern date or of probable modern date. Apart from one struck flint flake of possible prehistoric date from F1 (T1), no finds were recovered from any of the features or from the spoil from the trenches that were other than modern. The trenches located near to Main Road revealed considerable disturbance from modern service trenches and pits, and from the foundations of the buildings which formerly occupied the site. While the trenches at the north end of the site were located in the north-east corner, the nature of the modern features suggests that this disturbance is general to the north end of the site.

Reference

Foreman, S 1997 'Medieval Boreham: excavations at the former Buxted Chicken Factory, Boreham, 1992-93', in *Essex Archaeology and History*, 28, 103-112

© Colchester Archaeological Trust 2006

Distribution list:

Norman Gill
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust

12 Lexden Road,
Colchester,
Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051
(01206) 500124
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy
Date: 19.12.06

Adams c:/reports06/boreham/report399.doc

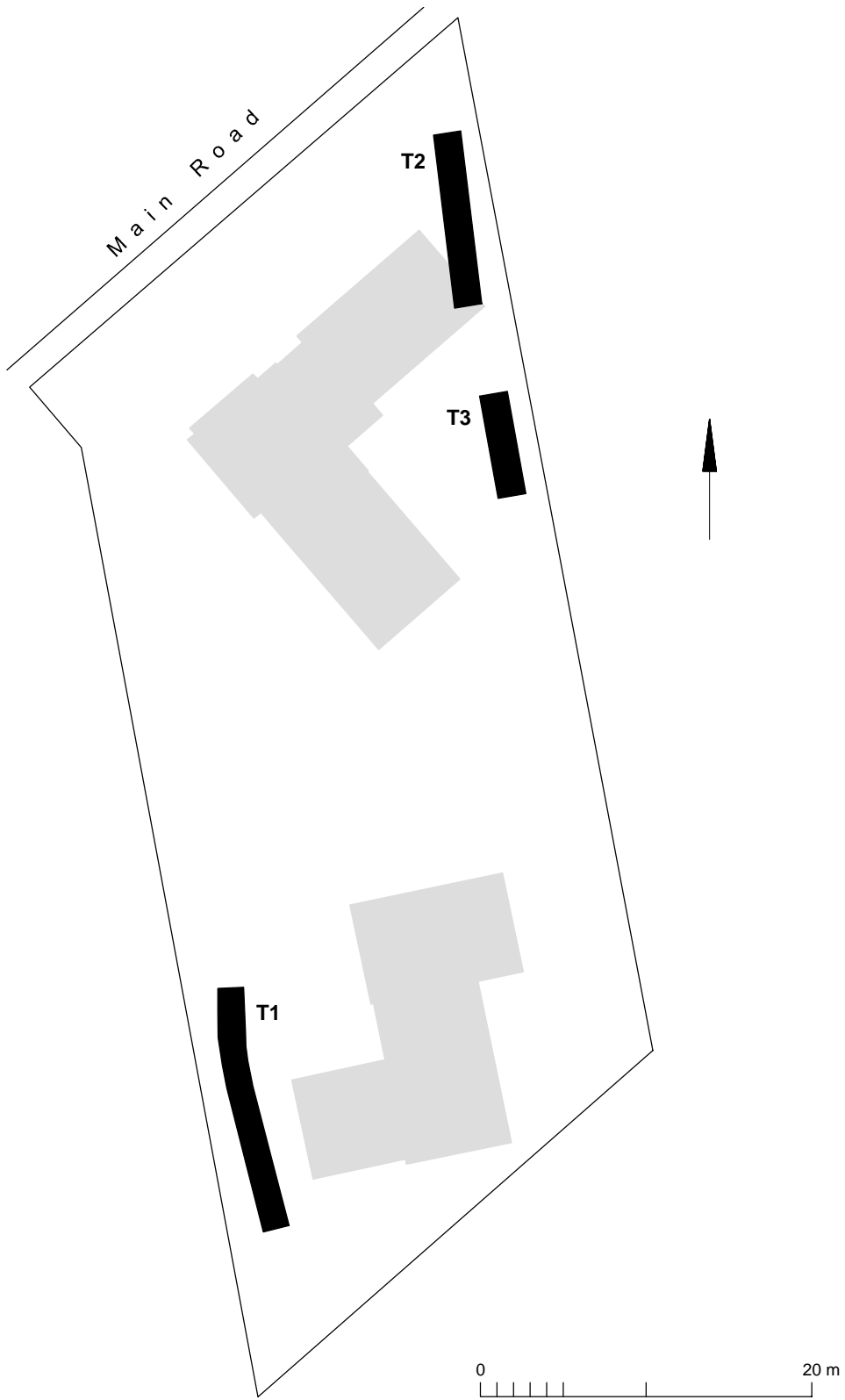


Fig 1 Plan of site, showing location of trenches and footprints of the two proposed residential blocks (toned).

Essex Historic Environment Record/ *Essex Archaeology and History*

Summary sheet

Site address: the former Hamilton Motors site, Main Road, Boreham, Essex	
Parish: Boreham	District: Chelmsford
NGR: TL 756 102	Site code: BOHM06
Type of work: Archaeological evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: November 2006	Size of area investigated: 0.25 hectares
Location of finds/curating museum: Chelmsford Museum (accession code: 2006:330)	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER nos: 6179-6180, 14596-14597
Final report: CAT Report 399 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: modern	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Three archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated at the former Hamilton Motors site, Main Road, Boreham, Essex (TL 756 102). One trench was excavated at the south end of the site, and two trenches were excavated close together at the north end of the site near to Main Road. Of the small number of features revealed, all were either of modern date or of probable modern date. Apart from one small struck flint flake of possible prehistoric date, all the finds which were recovered from the features or from the spoil from the trenches were modern. The trenches which were dug close to Main Road revealed evidence of considerable modern disturbance at the north end of the site.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: S Benfield	Date of summary: December 2006