

**An archaeological evaluation
by trial-trenching
to the rear of 51, High Street, Stock, Essex**

May 2010



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

on behalf of Mr Paul Fenwick

CAT project ref.: 10/5a
HEM project code: SKHS10
Chelmsford Museums accession code: CHMRE 2010.046
NGR: TQ 6896 9882 (c)



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CAT Report 551
July 2010

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1 Summary

The site lies in the historic core of Stock. An evaluation by two trial-trenches revealed no significant archaeological features. A modern foundation pad associated with a Nissen hut and a pit backfilled with modern building debris were recorded in T1.



Plate 1: excavating T1, view N

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the archive report on the archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on behalf of Mr Paul Fenwick at land rear of 51, High Street, Stock, Essex on the 19th of May 2010.
- 2.2 The proposed development is situated along High Street (TQ 6896 9882) within the historic core and conservation area of the village of Stock. The site lies at a cross-roads within the medieval and post-medieval village.
- 2.3 The site is currently an area of overgrown open ground to the rear of and formerly associated with 51 High Street. The eastern half of the site was occupied by the base of a demolished Nissen hut. The remainder of the site had previously been used as a smallholding, and contained chicken sheds (owner *pers comm*).
- 2.4 Proposed works involve the removal of the remaining shed base and the construction of a new dwelling and cart lodge in the current garden (Fig.1).

3 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application for a new dwelling and cart lodge to the rear of 51 High Street, Stock was submitted in January 2010 (09/01772/FUL).
- 3.2 As the site lies within an area of archaeological potential, the Essex County Council Historic Environment (HEM) Team advised that a full archaeological condition be attached to any planning consent. This advice followed the guidance given in *Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning* (DoE 1990). The recommendation made to Chelmsford Borough stated:

"No development, or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the

applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the planning authority."

- 3.3 A brief detailing the required archaeological work (an evaluation by trial-trenching) was written by the HEM officer (Teresa O'Connor: HEM 2010). 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 2010).
- 3.4 Apart from the WSI (above) all work was carried out according to standards and practices contained in 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), *Management of research projects in the historic environment* (MoRPHE) and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14).

4 Archaeological background

The development site is located at a crossroads in the historic core of medieval and post-medieval Stock. To the south lies the 13th-century church. A number of listed 15th- to 19th-century buildings survive along the High Street.

Stock may have early (possibly Iron Age) origins – to the east of the development area there is evidence of an enclosure which would have surrounded a settlement site. Roman finds and features indicative of settlement activity have been uncovered here in the past, including a possible Roman cemetery indicated by a large number of urns on the site of the Roman Catholic School. It is possible that the road network within the village may also have earlier origins.

5 Aim

The aim of the evaluation was to locate, identify and assess the quality of any surviving archaeological remains. This information would then enable an informed decision to be taken on the preservation or otherwise of any deposits and the need for further work and/or mitigation. This follows the guidelines provided for in *Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning* (DoE 1990).

6 Results

Evaluation trenches (Figs 1-3)

Two evaluation trenches were cut in positions shown on Figure 1 (Trenches 1-2, or T1-T2). The evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator. Two layers were removed: modern topsoil between 400mm and 500mm thick (L1) and a subsoil horizon (L2). L2 sealed F1 and F2 (see below) and, at the west end of the trench natural hill wash (L3).

This section gives a summary of the excavated sequence and finds information from each trench.

T1: summary

The evaluation trench was located in the southern part of the site and within the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. The trench contained two modern features (foundation pad F1 and pit F2), but no significant archaeological remains.



Plate 2: Trench 1 view NE, showing modern foundation F1

T1 – archaeological contexts and dating.

Context no	Type	Dated finds	Period
F1	foundation pad	--	modern
F2	pit	mesh/render (not retained)	modern

T2: summary

T2 was located in the south of the site and also in the footprint of the proposed new building. As in T1, T2 was cut through a substantial deposit of topsoil whose upper fill contained small quantities of brick rubble and concrete fragments possibly associated with the chicken sheds which formerly occupied the plot. Topsoil (L1) sealed accumulation material (L2), which in turn sealed the archaeological deposits and the natural clay and Bagshot gravel deposits L3).



Plate 3: T2 view S, T1 in foreground



Plate 4: typical trench stratigraphy: L1, L2, L3



Plate 5: Trench 2, view SE

T3: was not excavated because a change of use of proposed construction method meant that there would be no significant below-ground work.

7 Finds

None

8 Discussion

No material of archaeological significance was identified by this evaluation. The location of the evaluation trenches (south of the street frontage) may account for the lack of archaeological activity, which may be focussed on the frontage to the north-west.

Two modern features were identified, neither of them significant, and both probably associated with the 20th-century use of the site as a small-holding. Foundation pad F1 appeared to be part of the base of a Nissen hut which occupied the eastern half of the site. Pit F2 contained a substantial deposit of modern building debris (wire mesh and plaster render), almost certainly dumped in the 20th century. The level of surviving topsoil was thicker than expected, and its upper parts contained substantial amounts of brick rubble, probably derived from the 20th-century small-holding activity. There were (until recently) chicken sheds in the southern part of the site, and the brick rubble found in this evaluation probably represents the removal of these structures.

9 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited with Chelmsford Museum under accession code CHMRE 2010.046.

10 Acknowledgements

The Trust would like to thank Mr Paul Fenwick for commissioning and funding the evaluation.

The fieldwork was conducted by B Holloway. Digital survey by C Lister and B Holloway. Figures by CL. The project was monitored by Teresa O'Connor on behalf of Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch.

11 References

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

CAT	2010	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological trial trenching to the rear of 51 High Street, Chelmsford, Essex. May 2010.</i>
DoE	1990	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning</i>
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England, East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14, ed by D Gurney</i>
HEM	2010	<i>Archaeological trial trenching at rear of 51 High Street, Stock, Chelmsford. May 2010.</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>
MoRPHE	2006	<i>Management of research projects in the historic environment</i> (English Heritage)

12 Glossary

context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by the ECC
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
HEM	Historic Environment Management Team
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
layer	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	after Henry VIII to around the late 18th century
Roman	the period from AD 43 to AD 410, approximately

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Fig 1 Proposed trench plan for 51 High Street, Stock.

**Essex Historic Environment Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

Site address: land to the r/o 51 High Street, Stock, Essex	
Parish: Stock	District: Chelmsford
NGR: TQ 6896 9882 (c)	Site code: CAT project – 10/5a HEM project code: SKHS10
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: May 2010	Size of area investigated: 2 trenches, each 7 m long and 1.8m wide.
Curating museum: Chelmsford Museum accession: CHMRE 2010.046	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? no	Related EHER nos:
Final report: CAT Report 551 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>The site lies in the historic core of Stock. An evaluation by two trial-trenches revealed no significant archaeological features. A modern foundation pad associated with a Nissen hut and a pit backfilled with modern building debris were recorded in T1.</i>	
Previous summaries/reports: none	
Keywords: -	Significance: neg
Author of summary: B Holloway and H Brooks	Date of summary: July 2010