

**An archaeological evaluation
by trial-trenching at
Highbanks, Barn Hall Road,
Tolleshunt Knights, Essex
July 2011**



**report prepared by
Adam Wightman**

**on behalf of
Mr A R Curtis**

CAT project ref.: 11/7a

NGR: TL 9283 1471

ECC project code: TKHB11

Colchester and Ipswich Museums accession code: COLEM 2011.47



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CAT Report 605
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EHER summary sheet

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1 Summary

An evaluation by two trial-trenches has revealed an absence of archaeologically significant features or remains on the site of a proposed development at Highbanks, Barn Hall Road, Tolleshunt Knights, Essex.

Frequent peg-tile fragments were present in the topsoil suggesting that a building, probably dating to the post-medieval period, was re-roofed or demolished in the vicinity.

The only evidence associated with the possible Roman villa site located to the north-east was a single unstratified sherd of Roman grey ware pottery.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on behalf of Mr A R Curtis at Highbanks, Barn Hall Road, Tolleshunt Knights, Essex.
- 2.2 The evaluation site is located on a greenfield site to the south of Barn Hall Farm, east of the village of Tolleshunt Knights (NGR TL 9283 1471).
- 2.3 A planning application for the construction of a single house and associated driveway and garage was submitted to Maldon District Council in 2011 (planning application no MAL/00333/11).
- 2.4 Given the proximity of the evaluation site to the site of a possible Roman villa (EHER nos 11447, 11494), the Historic Environment Management (HEM) team of Essex County Council advised that an archaeological evaluation be completed in advance of planning consent being granted.
- 2.5 A brief detailing the required archaeological work was written by the HEM officer Maria Medlycott (HEM 2011). All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CAT in response to the HEM team brief and agreed with the HEM team (CAT 2011).
- 2.6 In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with the Colchester Archaeological Trust's *Policies and procedures* (CAT 1999, updated 2008). This report mirrors 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). Other sources used are *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14).

3 Archaeological background

The evaluation site is adjacent to the site of a possible Roman villa. This was recorded by Morant in 1768 as comprising mosaic pavements found near Barn Hall as well as Roman tiles said to have been found north-east of the church (EHER nos 11447, 11494). The evaluation site has, therefore, potential for significant surviving archaeological remains of Roman date.

4 Aim

The aim of the evaluation was to determine the presence or absence and significance of any surviving archaeology and record the deposits prior to the development. 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.

5 Results (Figs 1-2, Plates 1-3)

Two trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator (Plates 1-2). T1 was excavated diagonally across the footprint of the proposed building and T2 was excavated in the area of the proposed garage and driveway (Fig 1). The trenches were the width of a single machine bucket.



Plate 1: Trench 1, view north-west. Plate 2: Trench 2, view west.

A thin layer of turf and topsoil (180mm-230mm thick) was removed by the mechanical excavator (Plates 1-2). The topsoil was a grey/brown clayey-silt with occasional flint gravel (L1; Plate 3). Rare charcoal flecks, brick fragments and common peg-tile fragments were noted in the topsoil (see section 6). A fragment of Roman pottery, a flint flake and part of the base of a post-medieval pot were also recovered from the topsoil in T1.

The topsoil overlay the natural geology (L2), which was an orange/grey clay (Fig 2, Plate 3). Patches of flint gravel were present in the clay throughout the two trenches. Peg-tile fragments were pressed into the surface of the clay. It is probable that the peg-tiles derive from the thin layer of topsoil overlying the clay, and were pressed into the clay during ploughing or trampling by horses when the ground was wet.

No archaeological features were identified in either trench.



Plate 3: Representative section in T1, view north-west.

6 Finds

A large quantity of peg-tile fragments was present in the topsoil (L1), and pressed into the surface of the natural clay (L2). A small sample of peg-tile fragments was recovered from each trench. Nine fragments weighing 390g were recovered from T1. These varied in thickness between 11mm and 15mm. Fourteen fragments weighing 531.8g were collected from T2. These varied in both colour and thickness (12mm-14mm). A post-medieval/modern brick fragment was also recovered from T2 (41.5g). The quantity of building material encountered suggests that a building, probably dating to the post-medieval period, was re-roofed or demolished in the vicinity; the building may have been Barn Hall Lodge. None of the peg-tile or brick fragments have been retained.

The base of a post-medieval red earthenware pot (Fabric 40, 51.3g), probably dating to the 19th century (H Brooks pers comm), a fragment of Roman grey ware pottery (Fabric GX, 4.3g) and a flint flake (3.1g) were also recovered from the topsoil (L1) in T2. These finds suggest some activity in the vicinity of the evaluation site during the post-medieval, Roman and prehistoric periods respectively.

7 Conclusion

The absence of archaeological features in the two evaluation trenches indicates that there is little or nothing of archaeological significance on the evaluation site.

The quantity of building material encountered suggests that a building, probably dating to the post-medieval period, was re-roofed or demolished in the vicinity. This building may have been Barn Hall Lodge, which was situated 70m to the south-east on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1874.

The only evidence associated with the site of the possible Roman villa located to the north-east was a single unstratified sherd of Roman grey ware pottery. A single flint flake also attests to activity in the area during the later prehistoric period.

8 Archive deposition

The paper archive and finds are currently held by CAT at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museums under accession code COLEM 2011.47.

9 Acknowledgements

CAT is grateful to Mr A R Curtis, for commissioning and funding this project. Site work was undertaken by Adam Wightman. The project was monitored by Maria Medlycott and Richard Havis of the ECC HEM team for Essex County Council.

10 References

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

CAT	1999, revised 2008	<i>Policies and procedures</i>
CAT	2011	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at Highbanks, Barn Hall Road, Tolleshunt Knights, Essex, by A Wightman</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	2011	<i>Archaeological investigation: Highbanks, Barn Hall Road, Tolleshunt Knights, by M Medlycott</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 (English Heritage)</i>

11 Abbreviations and glossary

AOD	above Ordnance Datum
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
HEM	Historic Environment Management
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
layer	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
modern	period from c AD 1800 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
prehistoric	pre-Roman
Roman	period of assimilation of Britain as part of the Roman Empire, c AD 43-410

12 Appendix 1: 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 2 x A4 site plans provided by the developer
- 1.5 EHER information and map

2 Site archive

- 2.1 Digital photo. record
- 2.2 Context sheets (L1-L2, 2 x trench sketch sheets)
- 2.3 Attendance register
- 2.4 Finds register
- 2.5 Site photographic record on CD
- 2.6 1 A4 sheet with three representative section drawings

3 Research archive

- 3.1 Monitoring (client) report

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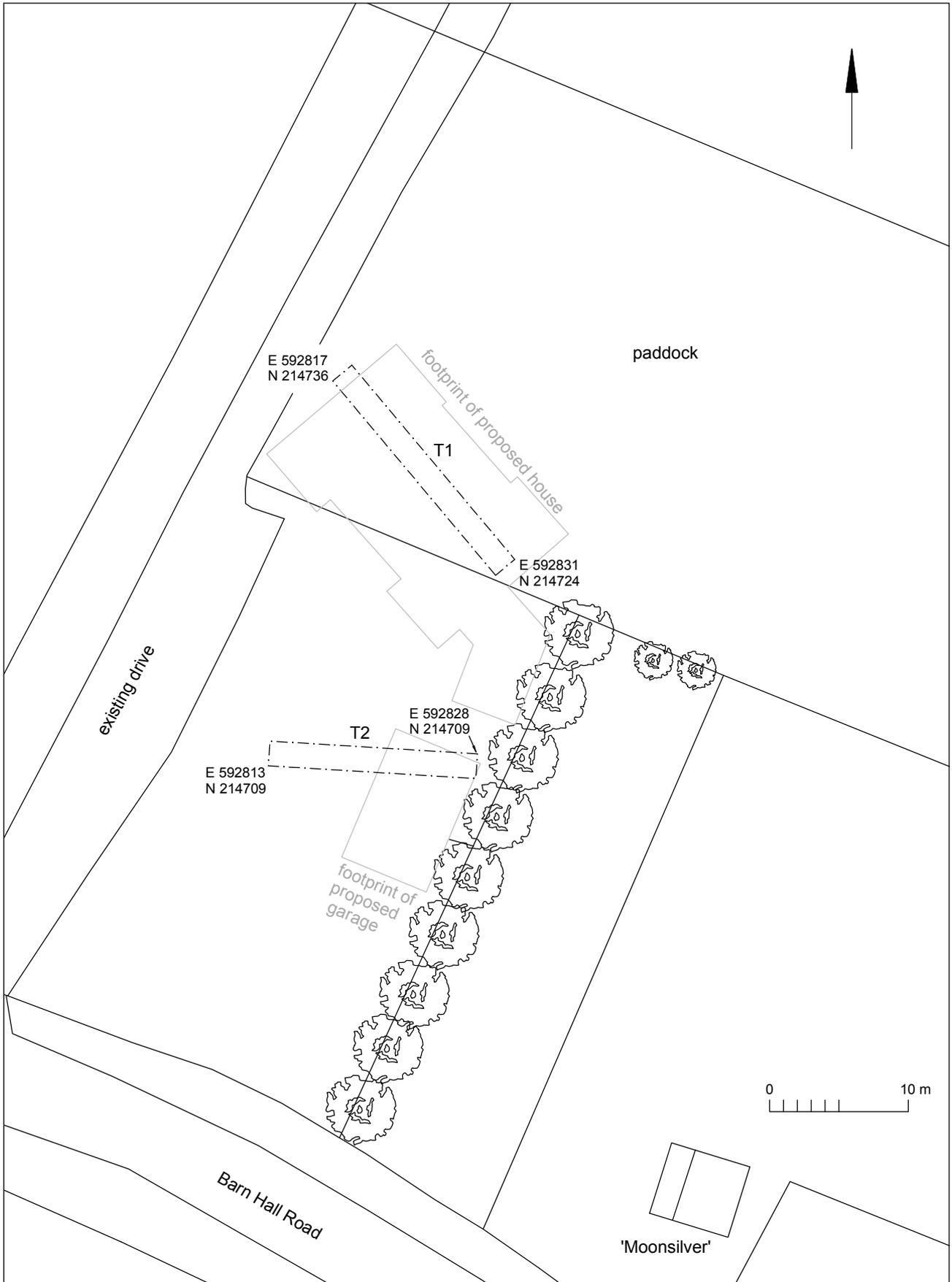
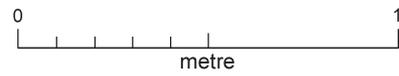
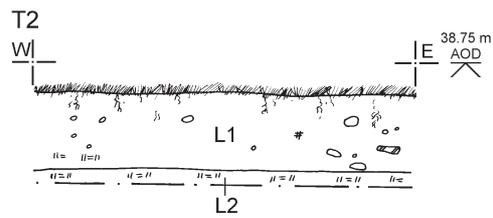
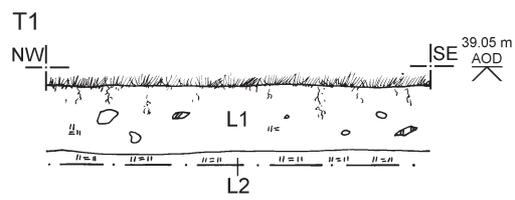


Fig 1 Site plan.



- ⋯ sand
- ⊙ small stones
- large stones
- || clay
- ## charcoal
- ▨ post-Roman brick and tile
- √ roots

Fig 2 T1-T2: representative sections.

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

Summary sheet

Address: Highbanks, Barn Hall Road, Tolleshunt Knights, Essex	
Parish: Tolleshunt Knights	District: Maldon
NGR: TL 9283 1471	Site codes: CAT project – 11/7a ECC – TKHB11 Museum accession – COLEM 2011.47
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 12th July 2011	Size of area investigated: 59.5m ²
Location of curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museums	Funding source: Mr A R Curtis
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER numbers: 11447, 11494
Final report:	CAT Report 605
Periods represented:	post-medieval/modern
<p>Summary: <i>An evaluation by two trial-trenches has revealed an absence of archaeologically significant features or remains on the site of a proposed development at Highbanks, Barn Hall Road, Tolleshunt Knights, Essex.</i> <i>Frequent peg-tile fragments were present in the topsoil suggesting that a building, probably dating to the post-medieval period, was re-roofed or demolished in the vicinity.</i> <i>The only evidence associated with the possible Roman villa site located to the north-east was a single unstratified sherd of Roman grey ware pottery.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: none	
Keywords: post-medieval, modern	Significance: neg
Author of summary: Adam Wightman	Date of summary: July 2011