Archaeological evaluation on land at Minstead, Deerbank Road, Billericay, Essex, CM11 1BB

April 2019

by Dr Elliott Hicks
figures by Chris Lister, Ben Holloway and Emma Holloway
fieldwork by Ben Holloway with Adam Tuffey

commissioned by Richard Smalley, Kingfisher Homes

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CAT Report 1406
May 2019
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OASIS summary sheet

List of photographs and figures

Cover: extract from Chapman and André's map of Essex, 1777

Photograph 1 T1 trench shot, looking south-east 2
Photograph 2 T2 trench shot, looking north-west 2

Fig 1 Site location
Fig 2 Evaluation results
Fig 3 Representative sections
1 Summary
An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out on land at Minstead, Deerbank Road, Billericay, Essex in advance of the construction of a new dwelling. The site is located within the deerpark of Norsey Wood, an area of medieval and post-medieval woodland which was also a site of settlement during the prehistoric and Roman periods. Despite being located in an area of archaeological interest no archaeological remains were encountered.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)
This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation on land at Minstead, Deerbank Road, Billericay, Essex which was carried out on 16th April 2019. The work was commissioned by Richard Smalley of Kingfisher Homes, in advance of the construction of a new dwelling, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Teresa O'Connor advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2018).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a Brief detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa O'Connor (ECCPS 2019), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the Brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2019).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with English Heritage’s Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (English Heritage 2006), and with Standards for field archaeology in the East of England (EAA 14 and 24). This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Institute for Archaeologists’ Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluation (CIfA 2014a) and Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (CIfA 2014b).

3 Archaeological background
The following archaeological background draws on the Brief and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessible to the public via http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk.).

Medieval Billericay (HER 5410) was a 13th-century creation by the Cistercian monks of Stratford Langthorne Abbey. The name itself is not recorded until 1291, although there may well have been a market on the site since 1253 (EHER 18415). Billericay was built on wasteland, where the Mountnessing and Great Burstead parish boundaries met, and the urban area incorporated land from several manors. In 1345 a chapel was built in Billericay (EHER 5411-2).

The proposed development lies within the former extent of Norsey Wood, a medieval deerpark of national importance (Scheduled Ancient Monument no 29428). Medieval deerarks form an important part of the Essex historic environment, with Norsey Wood an exceptionally fine example, as reflected by its Scheduled Ancient Monument status. The Scheduled Monument includes the perimeter earthworks and interior of Norsey Wood, an area of mixed and coppice woodland immediately east of Billericay. The Wood contains one of the most remarkable collections of archaeological features anywhere in the region. In addition to the medieval and post-medieval woodland, there is considerable evidence for prehistoric and Roman settlement both within and to the south of the wood (EHER nos 5304-5338). In particular, the northern and western
boundary of the garden of Minstead abuts the edge of the Scheduled area and the proposed development potentially lies on the line of ‘The Deerbank’ (EHER nos 5328-5329). The deerbank was a 5-6ft high bank, with an external ditch, which survived until 1895 and was designed to contain deer and cattle in the park. The place-name evidence suggests that the woodland may have been enclosed prior to 1066. The bank dates to some time between 1201 and 1323. The wood was also used for military exercises during the Second World War.

4 Aims
The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to record the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits and to assess the archaeological potential of the site to allow the ECCHEA to determine if further investigation is required.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)
Trench 1 was excavated through modern hardstanding (L4, c 0.44-0.5m thick) and L2 (0.01-0.07m thick) onto L3 (encountered at a depth of 0.5-0.52m bcgl). A sondage was excavated Trench 2 to ensure that the natural had been reached.

Trench 2 was excavated through topsoil (L1, c 0.38-0.45m thick, soft/friable, dry medium/dark brown silty-clay with <3% stones) and subsoil (L2, c 0.22-0.26m thick, soft/friable, dry light/medium yellow/orange/brown silty-clay with >2% stones) onto natural (L3, soft, dry light/medium grey/brown silty-clay, encountered at a depth of 0.62-0.67m below current ground level [bcgl]).

No archaeological remains were encountered.

6 Finds
There were no finds.
7 Conclusion
No evidence of the deerpark boundary – either the ditch or the bank – was observed during this investigation. Nor were any other archaeological remains encountered, despite the location of the site being in an archaeologically-sensitive area.

8 Acknowledgements
CAT is grateful to Richard Smalley and Kingfisher Homes for commissioning and funding the project. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway with A Tuffey. Figures are by C Lister, B Holloway and E Holloway. The project was monitored by Teresa O’Connor for Essex County Council Archaeological Services.

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


CAT 2018 Health & Safety Policy

CAT 2019 Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological trial-trenching on land at Minstead, Deerbank Road, Billericay, Essex, CM11 1BB

CIfA 2014a Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation

CIfA 2014b Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials

ECCPS 2019 Brief for archaeological trial-trenching evaluation on land at Minstead, Deerbank Road, Billericay. By T O’Connor


Historic England 2015 Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)


10 Abbreviations and glossary
CAT Colchester Archaeological Trust
CIfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context a single unit of excavation, which is often referred to numerically, and can be any feature, layer or find.

ECC Essex County Council
ECCHEA Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor
ECCPS Essex County Council Place Services

feature (F) an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, can contain ‘contexts’
layer (L) distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material

medieval period from AD 1066 to c AD 1500
modern period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural geological deposit undisturbed by human activity

NGR National Grid Reference
OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main

post-medieval from c AD 1500 to c 1800
Roman the period from AD 43 to c AD 410

section (abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s

WSI Written Scheme of Investigation
11 Contents of archive

Finds: n/a

Paper record
One A4 document wallet containing:
The report (CAT Report 1406)
ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation
Original site record (feature and layer sheets, finds record, sections)
Site digital photos and log

Digital record
The report (CAT Report 1406)
ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation
Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log
Graphic files
Survey data

12 Archive deposition

The paper archive and finds are currently held by CAT at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex, but will be permanently deposited with Chelmsford Museum under accession code CHMER: 2019.027.

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Distribution list:
Richard Smalley, Kingfisher Homes
Teresa O’Connor, ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisors
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

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checked by: Philip Crummy
date: 30.04.2019
Fig 1  Site location.
Fig 2 Evaluation results.
Fig 3 Representative sections.
OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

OASIS ID: colchest3-347493

Project details

Project name: Archaeological trial-trenching on land at Minstead, Deerbank Road, Billericay, Essex

Short description of the project: An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out on land at Minstead, Deerbank Road, Billericay, Essex in advance of the construction of a new dwelling. The site is located within the deerpark of Norsey Wood, an area of medieval and post-medieval woodland which was also a site of settlement during the prehistoric and Roman periods. Despite being located in an area of archaeological interest no archaeological remains were encountered.


Previous/future work: No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes: 19/00154/FUL - Planning Application No.

Type of project: Field evaluation

Site status: None

Current Land use: Residential 1 - General Residential

Current Land use: Other 5 - Garden

Monument type: NONE None

Significant Finds: NONE None

Methods & techniques: "Targeted Trenches"

Development type: Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)

Prompt: National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Position in the planning process: After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country: England

Site location: ESSEX BASILDON BILLERICAY Minstead, Deerbank Road, Billericay, Essex

Postcode: CM11 1BB

Study area: 50 Square metres

Site coordinates: TQ 38030 95323 51.63926392112 -0.005089849744 51 38 21 N 000 00 18 W Point

Height OD / Depth: Min: 91.16m Max: 92.6m

Project creators

Name of Organisation: Colchester Archaeological Trust

Project brief originator: HEM Team Officer, ECC

Project design originator: Emma Holloway

Project director/manager: Ben Holloway

Project supervisor: Chris Lister

Type of sponsor/funding: Owner
<table>
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**Project archives**

- **Physical Archive Exists?**: Yes
- **Digital Archive recipient**: Chelmsford Museum
- **Digital Archive ID**: CHMER 2019.027
- **Digital Contents**: "Survey"
- **Digital Media available**: "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
- **Paper Archive recipient**: Chelmsford Museum
- **Paper Archive ID**: CHMER 2019.027
- **Paper Contents**: "none"

**Project bibliography 1**

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