

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS SITE  
DAGNETS FARM  
MILL LANE  
TYE GREEN  
BRAINTREE  
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION  
AND MONITORING**



**Essex County Council**

**Field Archaeology Unit  
September 2005**

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MILL LANE, TYE GREEN  
BRAINTREE  
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AND MONITORING**

Prepared By: Mark Germany  Position: Project Officer	Signature:  Date:
Approved By: Mark Atkinson  Position: Unit Manager	Signature:  Date:

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	1 ECC HER
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As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or the presentation of this report.

Please contact the Archaeological Fieldwork Manager, at the  
**Field Archaeology Unit,**  
Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 3YQ  
Tel: 01376 331431  
Fax: 01376 331428

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Essex CM1 1LF

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**TELECOMMUNICATIONS SITE,  
DAGNETS FARM, MILL LANE,  
TYE GREEN, BRAINTREE, ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION  
AND MONITORING**

Client: Gridcom (UK) Limited

FAU Project No: 1246

NGR: TL 77455 20782 (Centre)

Site Code: CRDF 04

Date of Fieldwork: 22/04/04 and 23/04/04, and 6/06/05

**SUMMARY**

*Archaeological excavation and monitoring in advance of the construction of a compound and cable trench for a telecommunications installation at Tye Green, Essex, has uncovered a 19th/20th-century field ditch, and an undatable ditch and post-hole. The investigation has encountered no evidence for the Roman farmstead or villa, which is postulated to lie close to the development site.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report contains the results of an archaeological excavation and watching brief at Tye Green, Essex. Both pieces of archaeological work were carried out by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) work on behalf of Gridcom (UK) Limited. They followed an archaeological brief and a written scheme of investigation (ECC HEM 2003; ECC FAU 2003(a)), and were undertaken in advance of the construction of a telecommunications installation. The excavation took place in April 2004 and the watching brief in May 2005. Essex County Council Heritage Environment Management (ECC HEM) monitored the work.
- 1.2 Copies of this report will be supplied to the client, ECC HEM, and the Essex County Council Historic Environment Record. The report will become part of the OASIS online record (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>). The site archive will be held at Braintree Museum.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Location and topography**

- 2.1.1 The site lies in an arable setting, west of Tye Green, and overlooks the river Brain and the railway line from Braintree to Witham (Fig. 1). The footprint for the proposed telecommunications installation measures 10m x 10m and is located immediately west of a large electricity pylon. The pylon sits on the brow of the river valley slope and is approximately 60m above sea level. A spring issues c. 100m east of the site. The village of Black Notley lies on the opposing (east) side of the river valley.

### **2.2 Geology**

- 2.2.1 The drift geology is a yellowish brown silt clay containing frequent small rounded stones, and is probably a colluvial deposit related to the development of the Brain valley. The topsoil overlying the site varies in depth from 0.30m at the eastern limit to 0.40m at the western edge.

### **2.3 History and Archaeology**

- 2.3.1 The following information has been obtained from the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER), which is held at County Hall, Chelmsford:

- Pieces of Roman tile and pottery lying nearby on the surface of the plough-soil suggest that the site lies next to a Roman farm or villa (EHER 14136 and 17406).
- Roman finds, including tile and tesserae, imply that a Roman villa was formerly present in the field immediately north of Black Notley hospital, on the opposite (east) side of the river Brain (EHER 14020). It is possible that both sites were in use at the same time and were inter-visible.

### **3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The general aim of the excavation and following watching brief was to assess and record the nature and complexity of any surviving archaeological remains in the development area.
- 3.2 Specific research objectives were:
- To determine the date, nature and development of the possible Roman villa
  - To pay special attention to dating evidence and possible surviving environmental deposits

### **4.0 METHOD**

- 4.1 The ECC FAU recording system was used to record all uncovered deposits and features, with plans being drawn at 1:20 and sections at 1:10 (ECC FAU 2003(b)). The sample size was 50% for self-contained features (e.g. pits and post-holes), and 10% for linear features (e.g. gullies and ditches). Two cameras were used to take a photographic record – black and white prints and colour transparencies - of the work in progress. The work was carried out in accordance with the by-laws and guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 The topsoil overlying the 10m by 10m footprint of the proposed development was removed by a mechanical excavator with a broad toothless bucket (Fig. 1). The removal of the topsoil was carried out under the supervision of a member of ECC FAU staff. The exposed surface was inspected for archaeological features and finds.
- 4.3 The watching brief observed the excavation by the contractor of a cable trench, which linked the excavation area to the north-west corner of the electricity pylon (Fig. 1). The cable trench was 12m long, 1.6m wide and 1.2m deep.

## **5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS**

### **5.1 Excavation**

5.1.1 The archaeological excavation uncovered a large modern ditch (Fig. 2, context 3). The ditch ran north-west to south-east and was c. 0.54m deep and extended for over 8m along the western edge of the site. Within the excavated part of the ditch were a fill similar to topsoil, and two pieces of 19th/20th-century pottery.

5.1.2 Near the north edge of the site was a small circular feature, which may have been a post-hole (Fig. 2, context 5). It had a diameter of c. 0.60m and was less than 0.10m deep. The date of the post-hole is not known because it contained no datable finds.

### **5.2 Watching brief**

5.2.1 At the east end of the cable trench was an undatable ditch on a north-west south-east alignment, 1m wide, and more than 0.25m deep and 2m long (Fig. 2, context 8). The ditch contained a single deposit. The watching brief found no archaeological finds.

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 The modern ditch (3) is recorded on the Ordnance Survey First Edition (1881) and is a disused field boundary.

6.2 The significance of the undatable ditch (8) and post-hole (5) is unknown. The parallel alignment of both ditches is probably a reflection of the general direction of the nearby river.

6.3 The absence of Roman features and finds possibly indicates that the Roman villa is centred higher up the valley slope, further away from the flood plain of the river Brain.

## **Acknowledgements**

ECC FAU undertook the excavation and the watching brief with the help and co-operation of the following people: Andrew Brading of LCC UK, Harry Lota and Mick Dunican of Gridcom (UK) Limited, and Nick and John Cousins of Dagnets Farm.

The excavation was carried out by Ben Barker, and the watching brief by Andrew Letch. This report was written by Mark Germany. The illustrations are by Andrew Lewsey.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- ECC FAU 2003(a) *Written scheme of investigation: Archaeological excavation at telecommunications site at Dagnets Farm, Mill Lane, Tye Green, Braintree, Essex.* Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit, Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree
- ECC FAU 2003(b) *Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit: Site recording manual.* Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit, Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree
- ECC 2003 *Archaeological excavation, telecommunications site at Dagnets Farm, Mill Lane, Tye Green, Braintree, Essex.* Essex County Council Historic Environment Management, County Hall, Chelmsford
- HEM



## Appendix 1: Fieldwork data

Context	Category	Description	Date
1	Deposit	Topsoil	Modern
2	Deposit	Single fill of ditch 3	Modern
3	Cut	Ditch	Modern
4	Deposit	Single fill of post-hole 5	Undated
5	Cut	Post-hole	Undated
6	Deposit	Subsoil	Undated
7	Deposit	Single fill of ditch 8	Undated
8	Cut	Ditch	Undated
9	Deposit	Subsoil	Undated

## Appendix 2: Contents of archive

Contained within one A4 file:

### Research Archive

- 2 Client reports
- 1 Written scheme of investigation
- 1 Archaeological brief

### Site Archive

- 1 context register sheet
- 9 context record sheets
- 1 section/planning register sheet
- 1 Watching brief site record sheet
- 2 photographic register sheet
- 11 Colour transparencies
- 12 Black and white prints and negatives
- 3 sheets of site drawings

**Appendix 3: Essex Historic Environment Record Summary Sheet**

<b>Site name/Address:</b> Dagnets Farm, Mill Lane, Tye Green, Braintree, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Cressing	<b>District:</b> Braintree
<b>NGR:</b> TL 7746 2078	<b>Site Code:</b> CRDF 04
<b>Type of Work:</b> Excavation and monitoring	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> Ben Barker, Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit
<b>Date of Work:</b> 22/4/04 to 23/4/04, and 6/6/05	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> 119m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b> Braintree	<b>Client:</b> Gridcom (UK) Limited
<b>Further Seasons Anticipated?:</b> No	<b>Related HER Nos.:</b> 14136, 17406
<b>Final Report:</b> Summary in <i>Essex Archaeology and History</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Modern	
<b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b> Archaeological excavation and monitoring carried out in advance of the construction of a telecommunications installation found a disused modern field ditch, an undatable ditch, and an undatable post-hole. No finds were discovered apart from two sherds of 19th/20th century pottery. The investigations encountered no evidence for the postulated nearby Roman farmstead or villa (HER 14136 and 17406).	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> Mark Germany	<b>Date of Summary:</b> September 2005

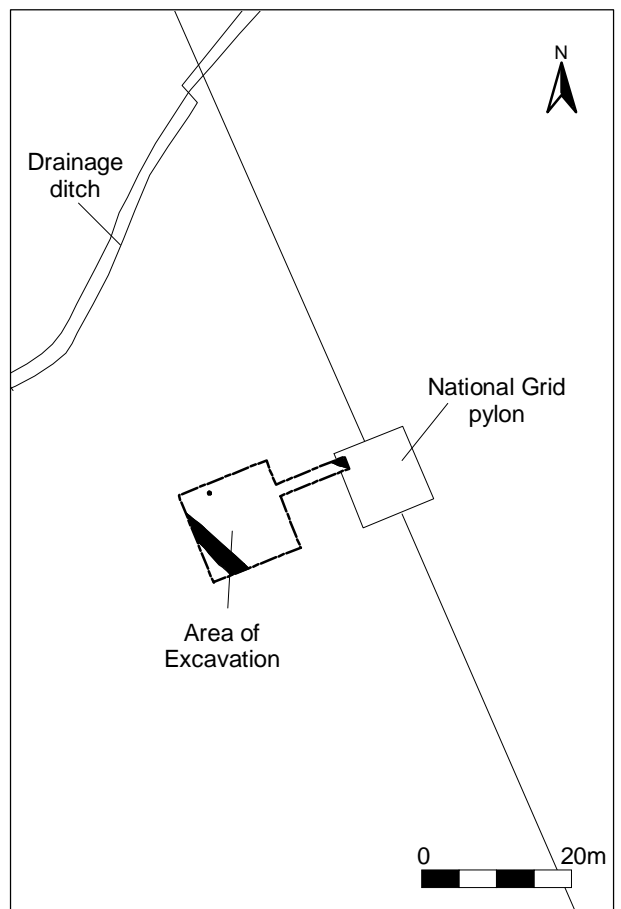
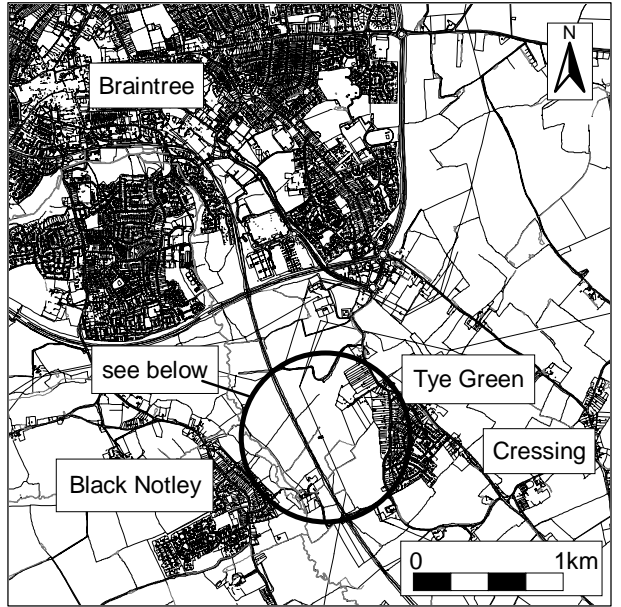
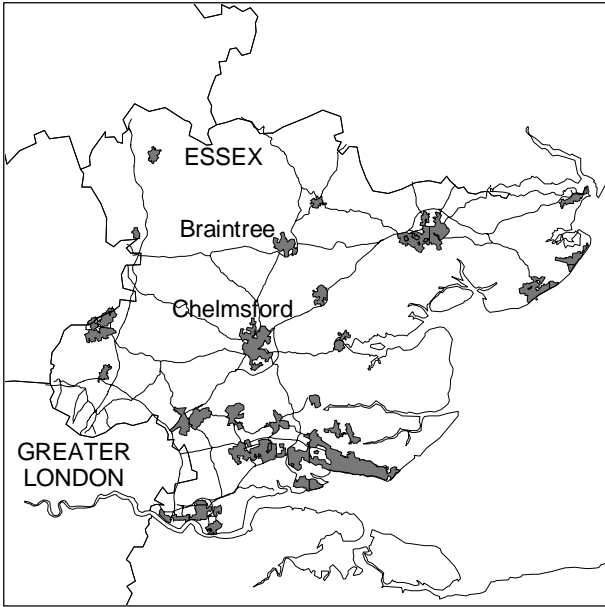


Fig.1 Site Location

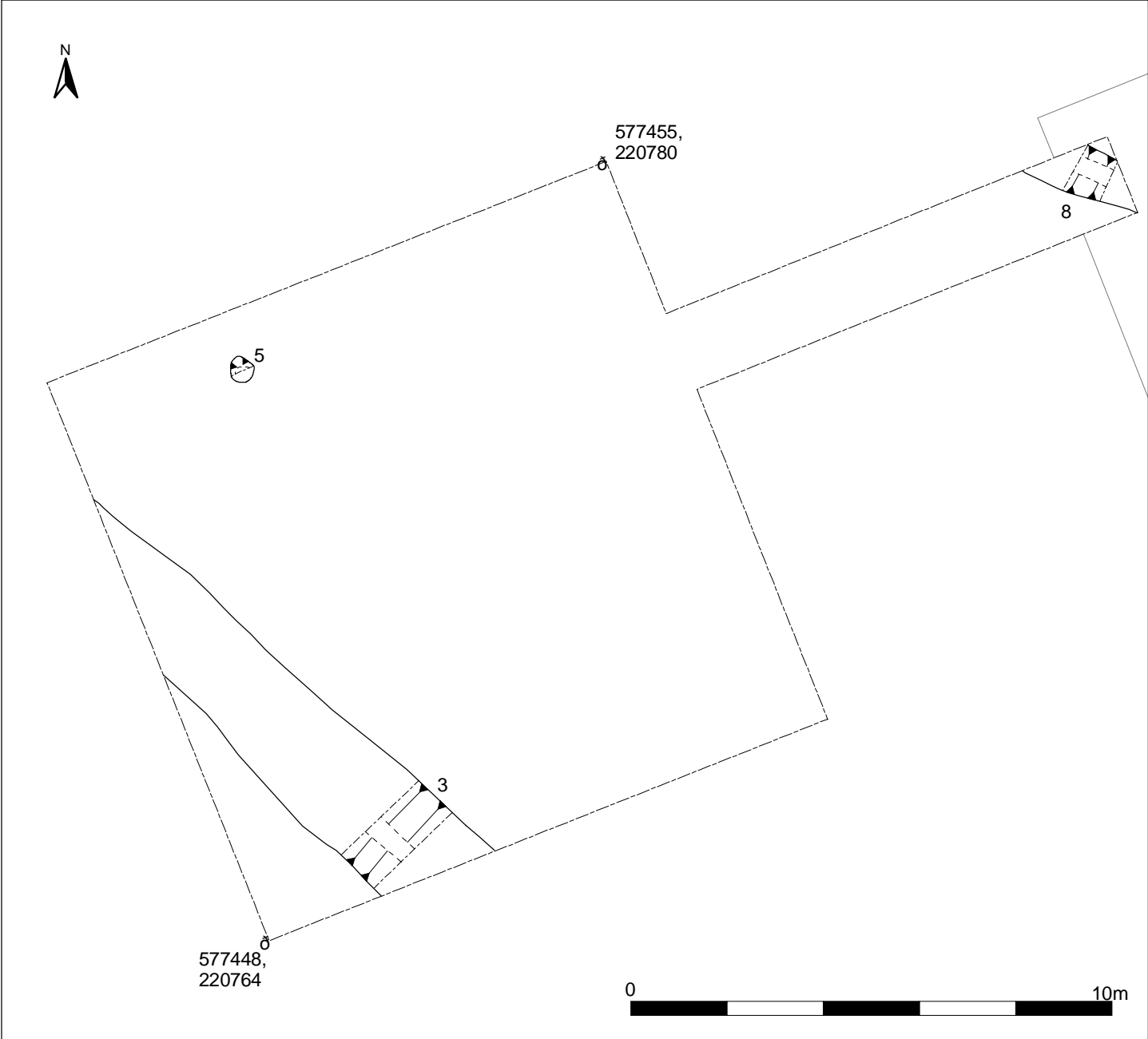


Fig.2. Excavated features