

**The Old Bus Depot, Chancery Lane,  
Debenham, Suffolk**

**Planning application: 1541/13**

**HER Ref: DBN 168**

**Archaeological Monitoring Report**

(© John Newman BA MCIFA, 2 Pearsons Place, Henley, Ipswich, IP6 0RA)

(December 2016)

(Tel: 01473 832896 Email: [johnnewman2@btinternet.com](mailto:johnnewman2@btinternet.com) )

## **Site details for HER**

Name: The Old Bus Depot, Chancery Lane, Debenham, Suffolk, IP14 6PH

Client: Gipping Homes

Local planning authority: Mid Suffolk DC

Planning application ref: 1541/13

Development: Erection of four detached dwellings and garages

Date of fieldwork: 20 March, 2015 & 28 & 30 November, 2016

HER ref: DBN 168

Event ref: ESF 25151

OASIS: johnnewm1-270857

Grid ref: TM 1724 6360

## **Contents**

Summary

1. Introduction & background
2. Monitoring methodology
3. Results
4. Conclusion

Fig. 1 Site location

Fig. 2 Location of monitored areas

List of appendices

Appendix I - Images

Appendix II- OASIS data collection form

*Summary: Debenham, The Old Bus Depot, Chancery Lane (DBN 168, TM 1724 6360) monitoring of the removal of old fuel tanks and the only deep works, which were drainage pipe trenches, revealed a site with extensive disturbance of later Post medieval date typical of quarry type pitting. The only stray finds in the upcast spoil were of post 1800 date (John Newman Archaeological Services for Gipping Homes).*

## 1. Introduction & background

1.1 Gipping Homes commissioned John Newman Archaeological Services (JNAS) to undertake the archaeological monitoring of ground works required under a condition for a programme of archaeological works of the planning decision notice for application 1541/13. Initially an evaluation had been required by Dr A Antrobus of the Suffolk CC Archaeological Service (SCCAS), however this was altered to a monitoring following examination of the deposits at the site during the removal of fuel tanks and with the knowledge that foundations will be piled with the related beams being almost at ground level. This development concerns the erection of four dwellings with garages at The Old Bus Depot, Chancery Lane, Debenham.

1.2 Debenham is a small market town in central Suffolk to the north of Ipswich that had, in all probability been established by the late Saxon period at least, and flourished through the medieval period with the market being recorded from 1221. The town is focused on the area around the parish church and the main, north-south aligned, historic high street that runs parallel to the upper part of the River Deben which rises to the north-west of the town. This development site is located on the north-western edge of the historic core of the settlement some 430m north-west of the parish church and it forms the northern part of a block of land bounded by Chancery Lane to the east, Brook Lane to the north and Great Back Lane to the west all of which are historic lanes (see Fig. 1). The name of the latter adjacent lane also gives a good indicator to the local topography as the upper part of the River Deben flows in an easterly direction on the northern side of Brook Lane before it turns to flow southwards as it meets the Aspall Road while Great Back Lane delimits the western side of the historic settlement. The earliest large scale map of Debenham is the tithe map of 1837 and this numbers the site as plot 356 and describes it as 'Barn and yard,' occupied and owned by Edward and Thomas Barker of Brices Farm which is now The Firs higher up the River Deben to the west. Some 50 years later the first edition large scale Ordnance Survey map of 1884 shows a terrace of three small cottages in the north-eastern part of the PDS and a barn type structure in the south-western corner.

1.3 While no listed buildings are adjacent to the site one is located c50m to the south-east on Chancery Lane and due to its previous use the site is excluded from the Conservation Area at Debenham which otherwise covers the historic part of the settlement. Prior to development works starting the site was a disused former bus depot covered by areas of concrete yard and commercial buildings of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century date. It was also known that at least four former fuel tanks and one vehicle inspection pit existed at the site.

1.4 Topographically the site is flat at 36m OD with the water level of the River Deben 10m to the north being recently recorded at just below 35m OD. Recent ground testing at the site indicated naturally occurring glaciofluvial deposits comprising a 'medium dense light grey slightly clayey gravelly fine to coarse sand' below 900mm

to 3400mm of overburden with 5 of 6 boreholes recording a depth of 2000mm or more. The borehole that recorded 900mm of overburden was located in the north-western part of the site. With regard to the depth of overburden at the site it is of interest to note that recent archaeological investigations at The Sir Robert Hitcham Primary School (HER DBN 148) on the opposite side of the River Deben to the north-east recorded depths of up to 2000mm of deposits.

1.5 Archaeological interest in this development was therefore generated by its location within the area defined in the County Historic Environment Record (HER) as the historic core of Debenham (HER DBN 131) where deposits of medieval and earlier Post medieval date might be anticipated.

### 2. Monitoring methodology

2.1 A single visit was initially made to the site to monitor the removal of the fuel tanks and at a later date a further two visits were made to monitor the shallow soil strip across the new dwelling footprints and the mechanical excavation of the drainage pipe trenches using a medium sized 360 machine. During all of the monitoring visits site visibility was good under dry weather conditions. The upcast spoil was examined visually but was not scanned with a metal detector due to the amount of modern debris that was present. To record the monitoring a number of digital images were taken (see Appendix I).

### 3. Results

3.1 The removal of the old fuel tanks revealed up to 2000mm of overburden containing fragments of Post medieval brick and tile in the eastern and central parts of the site and up to 900mm of similar deposits on the western edge of the site. It was following this site visit and with the knowledge that the foundations will be piled with ground beams at a very shallow depth that after consultation with SCCAS the archaeological programme of works was changed to a monitoring of ground works. In addition it may be noted that the borehole investigation indicated up to 3400mm of overburden in one area.

3.2 As indicated above the only deep excavation work at the site was for the drainage pipe trenches. These trenches (see Fig. 2) were 500mm to 600mm wide and between 900mm and 1100mm deep. Again subsoil containing Post medieval brick and tile fragments was revealed with glaciofluvial pale yellow sand being exposed in small areas though the majority of the trenches examined remained within subsoil deposits. Apart from the brick and tile fragments the only finds seen in the upcast spoil were whiteware pottery sherds of 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

### 5. Conclusion

5.1 As outlined above this site revealed extensive evidence for ground disturbance of Post medieval date to a depth varying between 900mm and 2000mm in the small areas taken to any depth for the removal of old fuel tanks and the excavation of

drainage pipe trenches. However these ground works did cover various areas across the site and the overall conclusion concerning past land use suggests that extensive disturbance took place in the later Post medieval period; perhaps caused by open area quarrying to retrieve sand and stone from the site.

5.2 Finally it can be concluded that while this site lies in the area defined as the historic settlement at Debenham at the old bus depot, Chancery Lane, no significant archaeological deposits were revealed by this development with the site having already been heavily disturbed by relatively recent probable quarrying type activity.

*(Acknowledgements: JNAS is grateful to everyone on site from Gipping Homes for their close cooperation)*



Fig. 1: Site location  
(Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2008 All rights reserved Licence No 100049722)



Fig. 2: Location of monitored areas (light blue- footprint areas with shallow soil strip, black lines- drainage trenches, brown- old fuel tanks)

(Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2016 All rights reserved Licence N0 100049722)

## Appendix I- Images



Deposit profile following removal of fuel tank in central part of the site



Soil strip for north-western dwelling plot



Maximum depth of soil strip in the central part of the site



Drainage trench in north-eastern part of the site





Drainage trench in southern central part of the site

## OASIS ID: johnnewm1-270857

### Project details

Project name	The Old Bus Depot, Chancery Lane, Debenham, Suffolk-Archaeological Monitoring Report
Short description of the project	Debenham, The Old Bus Depot, Chancery Lane (DBN 168, TM 1724 6360) monitoring of the removal of old fuel tanks and the only deep works, which were drainage pipe trenches, revealed a site with extensive disturbance of later Post medieval date typical of quarry type pitting. The only stray finds in the upcast spoil were of post 1800 date.
Project dates	Start: 20-03-2015 End: 30-11-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	ESF 25151 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	DBN 168 - Related HER No.
Any associated project reference codes	1541/13 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	PITS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BRICK Post Medieval
Significant Finds	TILE Post Medieval
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK MID SUFFOLK DEBENHAM THE OLD BUS DEPOT, CHANCERY LANE
Postcode	IP14 6PH
Study area	1400 Square metres
Site coordinates	TM 1724 6360 52.227155141193 1.181280472497 52 13 37 N 001 10 52 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 33m Max: 34m

Project creators	
Name of Organisation	John Newman Archaeological Services
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	John Newman
Project director/manager	John Newman
Project supervisor	John Newman
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Discarded
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Suffolk CC Archaeological Service
Digital Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Suffolk CC Archaeological Service
Paper Contents	"Ceramics"
Paper Media available	"Report"
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	The Old Bus Depot, Chancery Lane, Debenham, Suffolk-Archaeological Monitoring Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Newman, J
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	John Newman Archaeological Services
Place of issue or publication	Henley, Suffolk
Description	Loose bound client report and pdf
Entered by	John Newman (johnnewman2@btinternet.com)

Entered on

22 December 2016