

**Vale House, The Street,
Pleshey, Essex**

Planning application: CHL/18/00197/FUL

HER Ref: PY 28

Archaeological Monitoring Report

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

(October 2018)

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Site details for HER

Name: Vale House, The Street, Pleshey, Essex, CM3 1HA

Client: Mr & Mrs J Bloomer

Local planning authority: Chelmsford CC

Planning application ref: CHL/18/00197/FUL

Development: Erection of garage

LPA Archaeological advisor: Historic Environment Branch, Essex CC

Date of fieldwork: 21 August, 2018

HER ref: PY 28

SM ref: close to SM 22 (EHER 1126)

OASIS: johnnewm1-328078

Grid ref: TL 6639 1444

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Summary: Pleshey, Vale House, The Street, The Street (PY 28, TL 6639 1444) monitoring of ground works for a new garage revealed one large pit of later Post medieval date and a smaller pit of uncertain date; both of these features were left in situ at the base of the excavated trenches. The only stray find of interest was a sandy medieval coarseware pottery sherd of 13th/14th century date (John Newman Archaeological Services for Mr & Mrs J Bloomer).

1. Introduction & background

1.1 Mr & Mrs J Bloomer 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 CHL/18/00197/FUL. The monitoring requirements were set by Ms A Bennett of Place Services at Essex CC to satisfy this condition and in response JNAS produced the relevant Written Scheme of Investigation (see Appendix II) in order that conditional discharge could be gained from the LPA and ground works commence on site. This development concerns the erection of a garage at Vale House, The Street, Pleshey.

1.2 The relevant brief outlines how Pleshey is a rare and well preserved example of a medieval castle and associated defended town. With origins in the earlier 12th century, then slighted in 1157-58 and re-fortified in 1167, the survival of earthworks and a street plan directly related to the medieval layout has led to a high level of protection for the built and buried heritage at Pleshey. Much of the settlement forms part of the Scheduled Monument covering Pleshey castle and town (Essex SM 22) with Vale House being just outside the scheduled area close to the northern edge of the motte and bailey castle. In addition the town is a Conservation Area. The street pattern within Pleshey has largely retained its medieval plan as the various defence lines have had a strong and lasting influence with Vale House being on the northern side of The Street which runs between the eastern and western gate locations (see Fig. 1).

2. Monitoring methodology

2.1 A single visit was made to the site to monitor the excavation of the foundation trenches for the planned garage. This work was undertaken using a medium sized 360 machine equipped with a flat 450mm bucket and which was under continuous archaeological supervision with weather conditions being dry and sunny giving good site visibility. Upcast spoil was inspected closely as the work progressed. Where necessary the exposed base of the trenches was cleaned by hand to examine areas obscured by loose spoil and a number of digital images were taken in order to record the monitoring (see Appendix I).

3. Results

3.1 The 19m of 450mm wide trenching (see Fig. 2) revealed 250mm of topsoil with the western trench being taken to a depth of 750mm through a further 500mm of mid brown clay subsoil while the eastern trench was excavated to a depth of 450mm with 200mm of similar subsoil. The northern trench varied between 750mm deep at its western end to 450mm at its eastern end. Where exposed the local naturally occurring glaciofluvial deposit was stiff pale brown chalky clay with flints.

3.2 The only features revealed in the trenches (see Fig. 3) were a large, 4m plus wide, pit (0002) containing later Post medieval brick fragments in the southern half of

the western trench and a 600mm wide pit (0003) of uncertain date close to the north-western corner of the foundations. Both of these features were left in situ within the foundation trenches so were not investigated beyond the base of the trenches.

3.3 The only stray find of interest recovered from the upcast spoil was a base sherd of sandy medieval coarseware pottery (wt. 38g) of 13th/14th century date. The remaining finds in the upcast spoil were occasional small sherds of blue and white decorated and whiteware pottery of later 19th/earlier 20th century date and small fragments of later Post medieval brick and tile.

4. Conclusion

4.1 In conclusion it can be confirmed that while Vale House is located within the historic settlement at Pleshey the groundworks for the new garage did not reveal any significant archaeological deposits or finds with the two pits that were revealed being left in situ. However the ground disturbance was limited to 19m of 450mm wide foundation trench so represented a small sample of this area.

(Acknowledgements: JNAS is grateful to Alan, Steve and Connor for their close cooperation during the monitoring and to Sue Holden for her specialist illustration work)

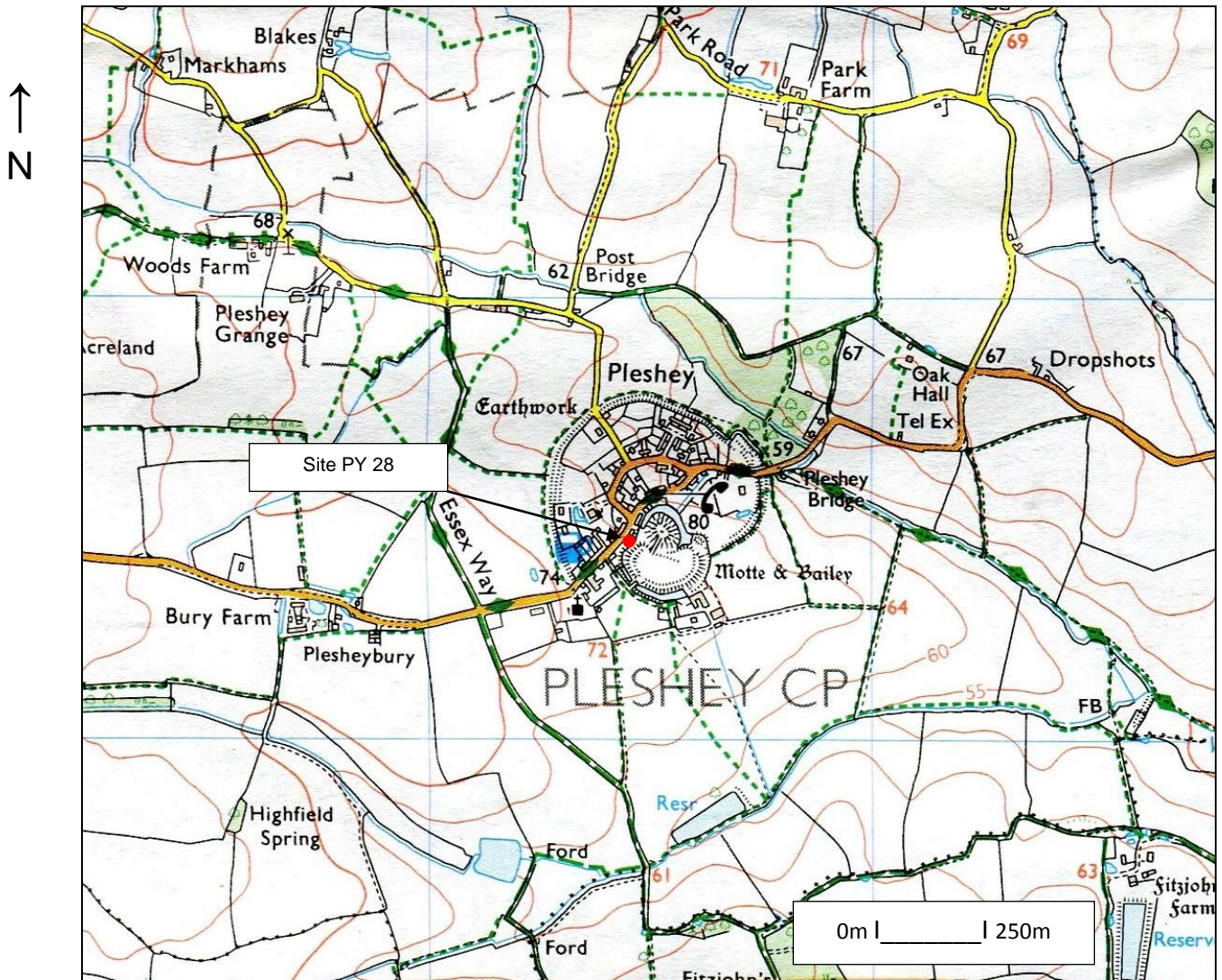


Fig. 1: Site location (Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2008
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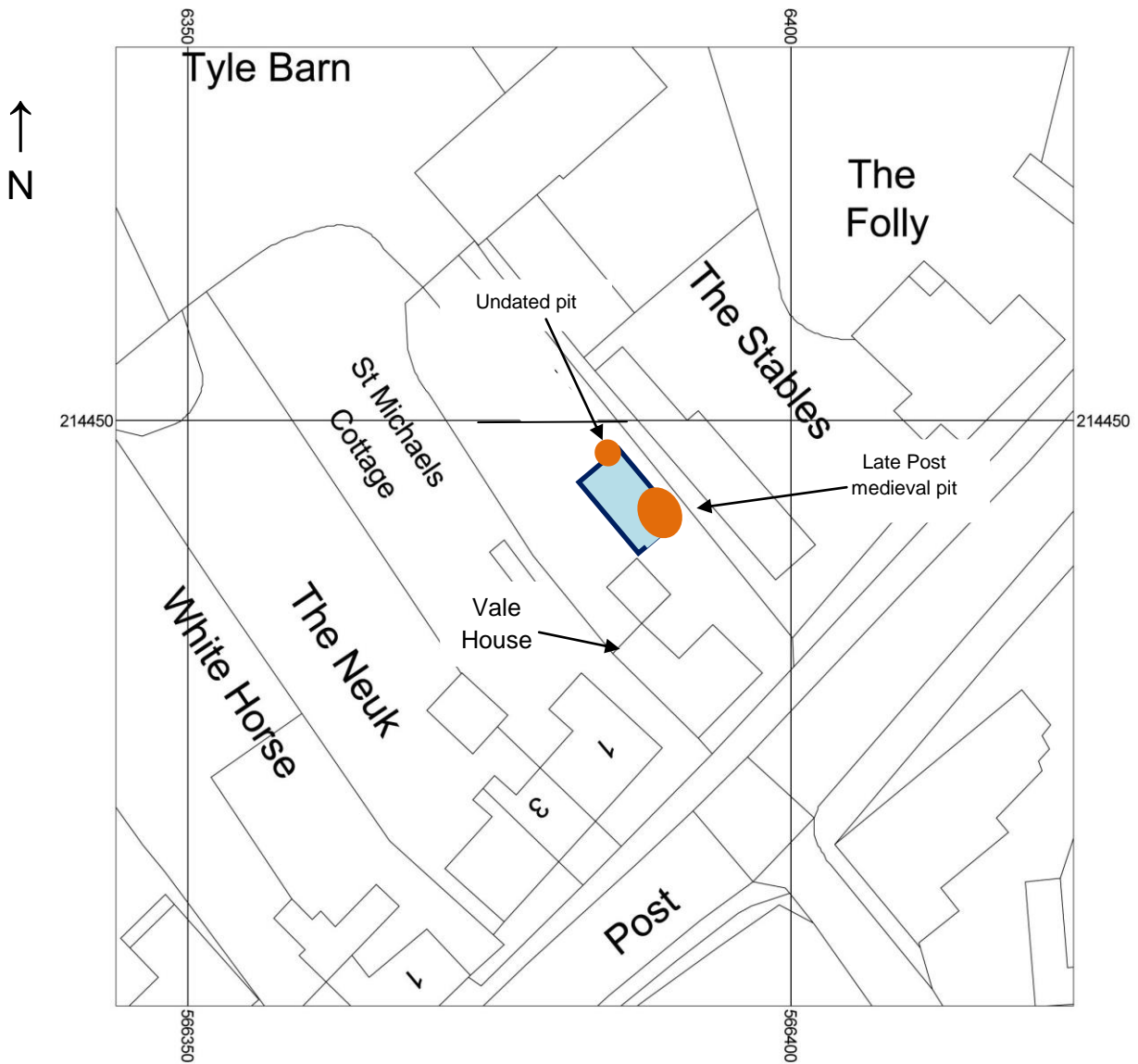
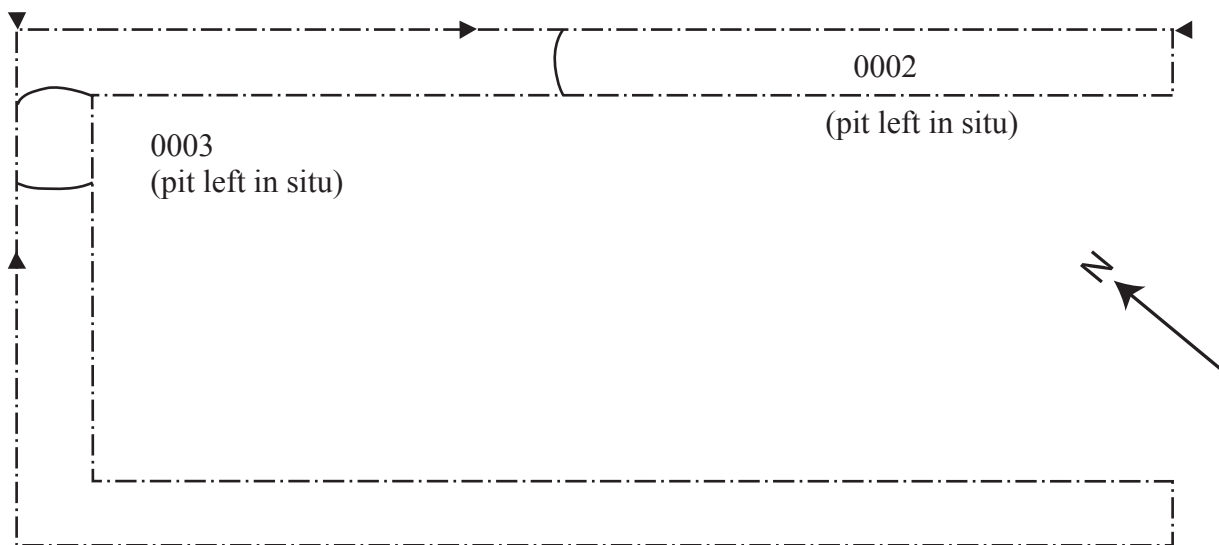


Fig. 2: Monitored new garage area (dark blue- foundation trenches, see also Fig. 3)

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Plan and sections

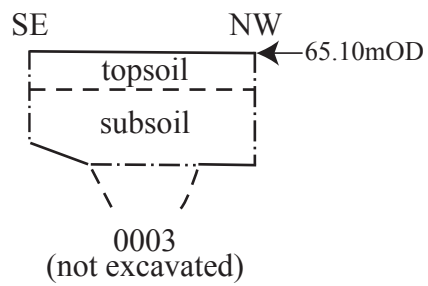
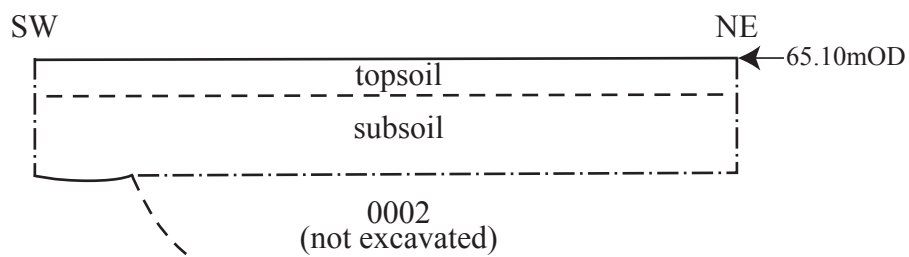


Fig. 3: Foundation trench plan and sections.

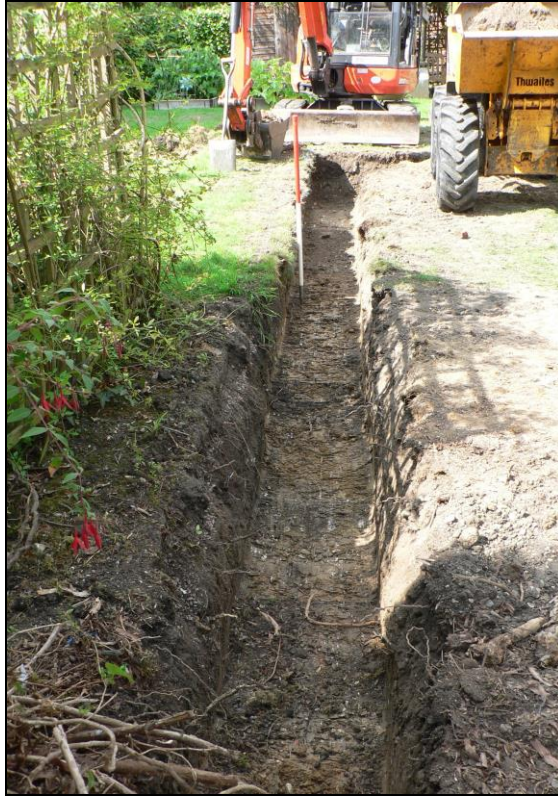
Appendix I- Images



General view from north



Western trench from south with large late Post medieval pit in foreground



Eastern trench from south



Deposit profile of eastern trench



Northern trench from east

**Vale House, The Street,
Pleshey, Essex**

Planning application: 18/00197/FUL

**Written Scheme of Investigation for
Continuous Archaeological Monitoring**

Site details

Name: Vale House, The Street, Pleshey, Essex, CM3 1HA

Client: Mr J Bloomer

Local planning authority: Chelmsford CC

Planning application ref: 18/00197/FUL

Proposed development: Erection of garage

Proposed date for ground works: tbc

Grid ref: TL 6650 1460

Scheduled monument ref: Close to SM 22 (EHER 1126)

Brief ref: CHL_18_00197_FUL_Vale_House_TheStreet_Pleshey_evalbrief

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2. Location, Topography & Geology
3. Archaeological & Historical Background
4. Aims of the Site Monitoring
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Planned new garage site

1. Introduction

1.1 Mr J Bloomer has 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 18/00197/FUL. This written scheme of investigation (WSI) details the background to the archaeological condition and how JNAS will implement the monitoring requirements set by Ms A Bennett of Place Services at Essex CC to satisfy the condition. The WSI will also set out how potential risks will be mitigated. This proposed development concerns the erection of a new garage at Vale House, The Street, Pleshey.

1.2 The monitoring will be carried out to the standards set regionally in the *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (EAA Occ. Papers 14, 2003)* and nationally in *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (Institute for Archaeologists 1994, revised 2001, reissued 2014)*.

2. Location, Topography & Geology

2.1 The brief outlines how Pleshey is a rare and well preserved example of a medieval castle and associated defended town. With origins in the earlier 12th century, then slighted in 1157-58 and re-fortified in 1167, the survival of earthworks and a street plan directly related to the medieval layout has led to a high level of protection for the built and buried heritage at Pleshey. Much of the settlement forms part of the Scheduled Monument covering Pleshey castle and town (Essex SM 22) with Vale House being just outside the scheduled area close to the northern edge of the motte and bailey castle. In addition the town is a Conservation Area. The street pattern within Pleshey has largely retained its medieval plan as the various defence lines have had a strong and lasting influence with Vale House being on The Street which runs between the eastern and western gate locations.

2.2 Vale House is at c74m OD with a recent monitoring at White Horse Cottages (EHER PY 26) nearby confirming that the local drift geology is stiff pale brown clay with flints.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 Archaeological advice given by Essex CC with regard to this planned development notes that as it lies within the historic core of the well preserved castle and town complex at Pleshey it has a high potential to reveal deposits of medieval and earlier Post-medieval date. However as the anticipated ground disturbance will be limited to small scale ground works Place Services at Essex CC have confirmed in the relevant brief that these interventions can be mitigated by a programme of continuous monitoring of any ground works by a suitably qualified archaeologist so a full record of the exposed deposits can be made.

4. Aims of the Site Monitoring

4.1 As outlined in section 3 above the site lies in a location with high archaeological potential where evidence for activity medieval to Post medieval date might be found and close monitoring of ground works can best record what may be revealed. This monitoring will aim to record all possible details relating to the depth of overburden and evidence, character and date of any past activity that is revealed with the primary aim of gaining more information related to the overall church/hall complex.

5. Methodology

5.1 The excavation of the planned foundations, which will be undertaken using a flat bucket, will be observed once they are underway and then through to completion and any up cast spoil examined for finds visually and with a metal detector and any archaeological features or deposits will be investigated and recorded. Notice of ground works starting and then any unexpected findings will be reported back to the relevant Essex CC Archaeological Officer. Time will be available to hand clean sections as necessary and investigate any possible archaeological deposits.

5.2 Site records will be made under a continuous and unique numbering system of archaeological contexts under the site code supplied by Essex CC. All contexts will be numbered and finds recorded by context. Conventions compatible with the county HER will be used throughout the monitoring. Site plans will be drawn at 1:20 as appropriate and sections at 1:10 (all on plastic drawing film) and related to OS map cover with the monitored footings shown and sections related to the relevant trench sections. Sections will be levelled to a datum OD. A photographic record of high resolution digital images will be made of the site and exposed features.

5.3 As necessary and to define archaeological deposits exposed surfaces will be trowelled clean before recording. Archaeological deposits will be fully hand investigated and recorded within the constraints of the trench foundations with sections recorded related to the trench sides, if possible, and with levels OD and at least half a day will be allowed for the full investigation of any interventions. Even if no archaeological deposits are revealed every effort will be made to gain a record of the natural occurring deposits and overburden that could help in the understanding of the general history of land use and topography in the town. Where appropriate palaeoenvironmental samples (40 litres) will be taken for processing and assessment by a specialist conversant with regional archaeological standards and research agendas if relevant archaeological deposits are revealed. If human burial evidence is revealed the ECC Archaeological Officer will be informed and a Ministry of Justice licence obtained before excavation, recording and removal of the remains with 100% retention of any cremation deposits for full processing and assessment. The possibility of modifying the ground work design to leave any such remains in situ will also be examined (the potential of this site to contain burials is assessed as being low).

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5.4 All finds will be collected and processed unless any variation is agreed with the relevant ECC Archaeological Officer. Finds will be assessed by recognised period specialists and their interpretation will form an integral part of the overall report. Finds will be stored according to ICON guidelines with specialist advice/treatment sought for fragile ones. Every effort will be made to gain the deposit of the site finds with the site archive at the relevant area museum at Chelmsford under their relevant HER code and site numbering for future reference. If this is not possible then the ECC Archaeological Officer will be consulted over any requirements for additional recording. Any discard policy will be discussed and agreed with the relevant Archaeological Officer at Essex CC.

5.5 An archive of all records and finds will be prepared consistent with the principles in *MoRPHE* and this will be deposited at the relevant area museum within 4 months of working finishing on site under the relevant HER number. As necessary the site digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) within the agreed allowance for the monitoring and reporting works.

5.6 The monitoring report will be consistent with the principles in *MoRPHE* and this report will summarise the methodology employed and relate the archaeological record directly to the level of visibility allowed by the operation of plant given the nature of the underlying natural deposits. The report will also give an objective account of the deposits and stratigraphy recorded and finds recovered with an inventory of the latter. Any interpretation of the monitoring results will be clearly separated from the objective account of the monitoring and its results. The report will give a clear statement regarding the results of the site monitoring in relation to both the more detailed aims in section 2 above and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (EAA Occ. Papers 3, 8 & 24 1997, 2000 & 2011). A draft pdf version of the report will be presented to the Place Services at Essex CC within 3 months of the completion of the site works. Once accepted the report will be sent to the client so they can gain discharge of the relevant condition. The project will be registered on the OASIS online archaeological record before site works start followed by submission of the final draft in .pdf format. An HER summary sheet will be completed and a summary prepared of any positive results for inclusion in the annual Essex county round-up.

6. Risk Assessment

6.1 Protective clothing will be worn on site (hard hat, high visibility vest/coat, steel-toe cap boots & ear muffs if required). A safe working method will be agreed with the contractors on site in order to maximise access to disturbed ground and up cast spoil while at the same time allowing efficient use of plant. Suitable clothing will be available to mitigate against extremes of weather.

6.2 Vehicles will be safely parked away from work areas and lines of access.

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6.3 Before work on site starts any special requirements regarding potential site contamination will be discussed with the client and any ground test reports examined. Gloves and hand wash/wipes be available and any information on possible ground contamination will be passed to finds and environmental specialists. The potential for services in the area will be discussed with the client and their contractor.

6.4 A fully charged mobile phone will be carried and a first aid kit will be taken to site.

6.5 Deep holes/trenches will only be entered if assessed to be safe and after consultation with the contractor on site, they will not be entered if no-one else is in the vicinity.

6.6 JNAS holds full insurance cover for archaeological site works from the specialist provider Tovergate Risk Solutions covering Public & Products Liability, details can be supplied on request.

7. Specialists

Conservation:	Conservation Services
Faunal remains:	J Curl (Sylvanus Archaeology)
Human remains:	S Anderson (Freelance)
Palaeoenvironmental samples:	V Fryer (Freelance)
Pre-historic flint:	S Bates (Freelance)
Pre-historic pottery:	S Percival (Freelance)
Post Roman ceramics & CBM:	S Anderson (Freelance)
Roman period ceramics	S Benfield (CAT)
Post Roman small finds:	JNAS



Planned development

OASIS ID: johnnewm1-328078

Project details

Project name	Vale House, The Street, Pleshey, Essex- Archaeological Monitoring Report
Short description of the project	Pleshey, Vale House, The Street, The Street (PY 28, TL 6639 1444) monitoring of ground works for a new garage revealed one large pit of later Post medieval date and a smaller pit of uncertain date; both of these features were left in situ at the base of the excavated trenches. The only stray find of interest was a sandy medieval coarseware pottery sherd of 13th/14th century date.
Project dates	Start: 21-08-2018 End: 21-08-2018
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	PY 28 - Related HER No.
Any associated project reference codes	CHL/18/00197/FUL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	ESSEX CHELMSFORD PLESHEY VALE HOUSE, THE STREET
Postcode	CM3 1HA
Study area	32 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 6639 1444 51.803318632884 0.413565606009 51 48 11 N 000 24 48 E Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	John Newman Archaeological Services
Project brief	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning

originator	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	Landowner
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Essex CC HER
Digital Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Essex CC HER
Paper Contents	"Ceramics"
Paper Media available	"Report"
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Vale House, The Street, Pleshey, Essex- Archaeological Monitoring Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Newman, J
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