

**Archaeological Monitoring at  
63 West Street  
Coggeshall  
Essex**

**Prepared for:**  
Alistair Pryke

Prepared by:  
Dennis Payne BA (Hons) ACIfA  
Archaeoserv (Dennis Payne Archaeological Services)  
Great Heath 351 High Road  
Trimley St Martin Suffolk  
IP11 0RS

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**Site References:**

Grid reference: TL 84573 22460

Planning Application No: 20/02078/FUL

Site code : CG25

Oasis No.: 433461

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording took place between the 21st - 22nd of February 2022 at 63 West Street Coggeshall.

The work was based upon a brief written by Teresa O'Connor of the Essex County Council Historic Environment Team, dated 12th of October 2021.

The proposed development concerns the demolition of an existing building and the erection of one new dwelling adjacent to 63 West Street Coggeshall.

During the monitoring, a demolition layer was exposed just below the surface, which extended to a maximum depth of 0.70m. It was considered that the demolition layer probably relates to earlier cottages that once stood near to or on the development site. The layer consisted of cbm, mainly bricks and brick fragments. Pottery finds were 19th century in the main with one sherd of medieval pottery, which could indicate medieval activity on or close to the development site. Furthermore, it would appear that medieval activity had taken place this far west of the medieval core of Coggeshall.

No other finds were made during the monitoring.

## 1. Site Location and Geology



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**Figure 1. Location of Witham and site location**

### 1.1 Site Location

The site lies on Newland Street in Witham, Essex. the property is situated within the medieval core of the town which is the main street through Witham (the former A12 London - Colchester road, which is now by-passed by the modern A12).

## **1.2 Geology**

The surface geology for this location is: *London Clay Formation - Clay, Silt And Sand. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 48 to 56 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period. Local environment previously dominated by deep seas.* (BGS online).

## **2. Planning Background**

The Local Planning Authority (LPA) has granted planning consent conditional upon an agreed programme of historic building recording work taking place in accordance with this Written Scheme of Investigation.

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The planning application (20/02078/FUL) was submitted to Braintree District Council in December 2020 for the construction of one new dwelling at 65 West Street Coggeshall Essex. The development will necessitate the demolition of a small outbuilding at 65 West Street Coggeshall, therefore a Historic Building Record (carried out in 2021) and archaeological monitoring was requested by the HEMT as a condition of the planning decision.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the Historic Environment Record as having potential for archaeological deposits being present and affecting a historic building an archaeological condition was recommended to the Local Planning Authority.

The condition on the decision notice states: *'Condition 9 & 10 - No demolition/ conversion shall take place until the applicant has secured and undertaken a programme of archaeological work including Historic Building Recording in accordance with a written scheme of investigation to be submitted to, and approved in writing by the local planning authority.'*

This condition is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019).

## **3. Archaeological and Historical Background**

### **3.1 Archaeological Background**

The HEMT brief states: *'The following archaeological background utilises the Essex Historic Environment Record held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford. Prospective contractors are advised to obtain the EHER data prior to the completion of any archaeological written scheme of investigation.'*

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contractors are advised to obtain the EHER data prior to the completion of any archaeological written scheme of investigation.

The origins of Coggeshall town can be traced to the 12th century when the monks of Coggeshall Abbey gained a Fair charter and Market charter soon after and a market was established at the junction of Stane Street. Coggeshall became a wealthy town and benefited from the late medieval prosperity of the East Anglian cloth industry. Settlement soon spread from the centre along the roads and continued into the post-medieval period.

The building proposed for demolition appears on the 1st edition OS map and so would pre-date c.1896, the Tithe map of 1851 depicts cottages and gardens in this location which appear to have been replaced by the terrace of houses seen on the 1st edition maps. The building has been used as commercial premises, previously a clock shop and possibly originating as a wheelwrights. The building is of two timber frame bays with a front brick wall.

Excavation in the adjacent fields has confirmed the continuation of medieval activity and later along this road and there is the further potential for archaeological remains relating to the medieval and post-medieval expansion of the town along the road frontage and backland plots.

The site lies along West Street which follows the route of the Roman road, Stane Street, which ran from Braughing to Colchester. Roman settlement within the town has been shown to exist further to the east, however evidence for cremations and possible Roman cemeteries have been discovered to the north of the road and would have been located beyond the settlement areas. (Historic Environment Management Team - brief, 2021)

## 4. Cartographic & Documentary evidence

4.1 The following figures (figs 3-5) are all of the available map images in chronological date order, beginning with Chapman & Andre's map of 1777.



**Figure 2. The Chapman & Andre map of 1777**





**Figure 3. The Tithe map of 1853**



**Figure 4. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1875**

#### **4.2 Discussion of map evidence**

On the first map by C & A, (1777) a single detached building is shown along with a terrace of cottages that once stood at the development's location.

The second map (Tithe of 1853), buildings are shown at this location, but the quality of the map does not allow for a clear interpretation of the buildings.

The third map (O.S.1st ed.,1875) shows the current terrace of cottages, 63 West Street being adjacent to the site of the new development.



## 5. Results

5.1 Archaeological monitoring took place during groundworks for a new dwelling at 63 West Street Coggeshall.

A single trench was excavated down to a maximum of 1m by 0.75m in width for the footings of the new building (fig. ).

An initial surface layer (1003) of mixed a blackish-grey top soil and debris was removed down to a depth of 0.10m maximum to reveal a demolition layer (1000) consisting of a very high content of brick and brick fragments along with some plain tile mixed in with sparse broken chalk lenses that were possibly the remains of floors. Also within the first 0.20m of the demolition layer was the brick course remains for the building that was demolished as part of the development for the new dwelling.

Within the demolition layer a further demolition pit was recorded [1002] filled by (1001) a very similar, blackish-grey silt with common cbm, to the demolition layer (1000). The pit cut extended to the surface and can be assumed to be much later; width 2.20m by 0.90m depth (fig. ).

### 5.2 Contexts

Context (1000) was a demolition layer containing high densities of bricks, whole and fragmented along with sparse tile fragments with sparse chalk lenses.

Context (1001) was a blackish-grey silty fill of pit[1002]; width 2.20m, depth 0.90m.

Context [1002] was a pit cut for demolition material containing 19th century cbm.

Context (1003) was a surface layer of top soil and debris; depth 0.10m.

Context (1004) was the natural, a sandy clay, its horizon was encountered at 0.90m in depth, varying down to 1.90m in depth.

The main feature was the demolition layer (1000) which extended over 80% of the trench area, with no sign of it in the north-west corner of the footings trench.

6. Plans and Sections

6.1 Plan

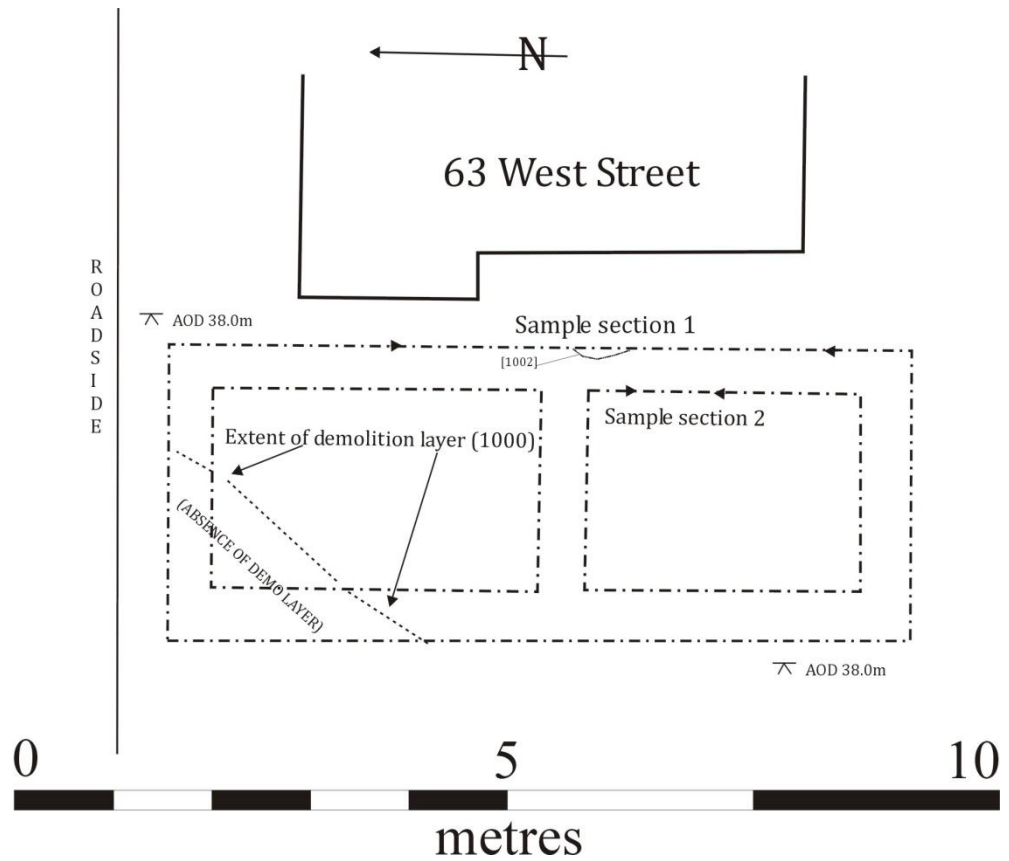


Figure 5. Plan of footings trench

6.2 Sections

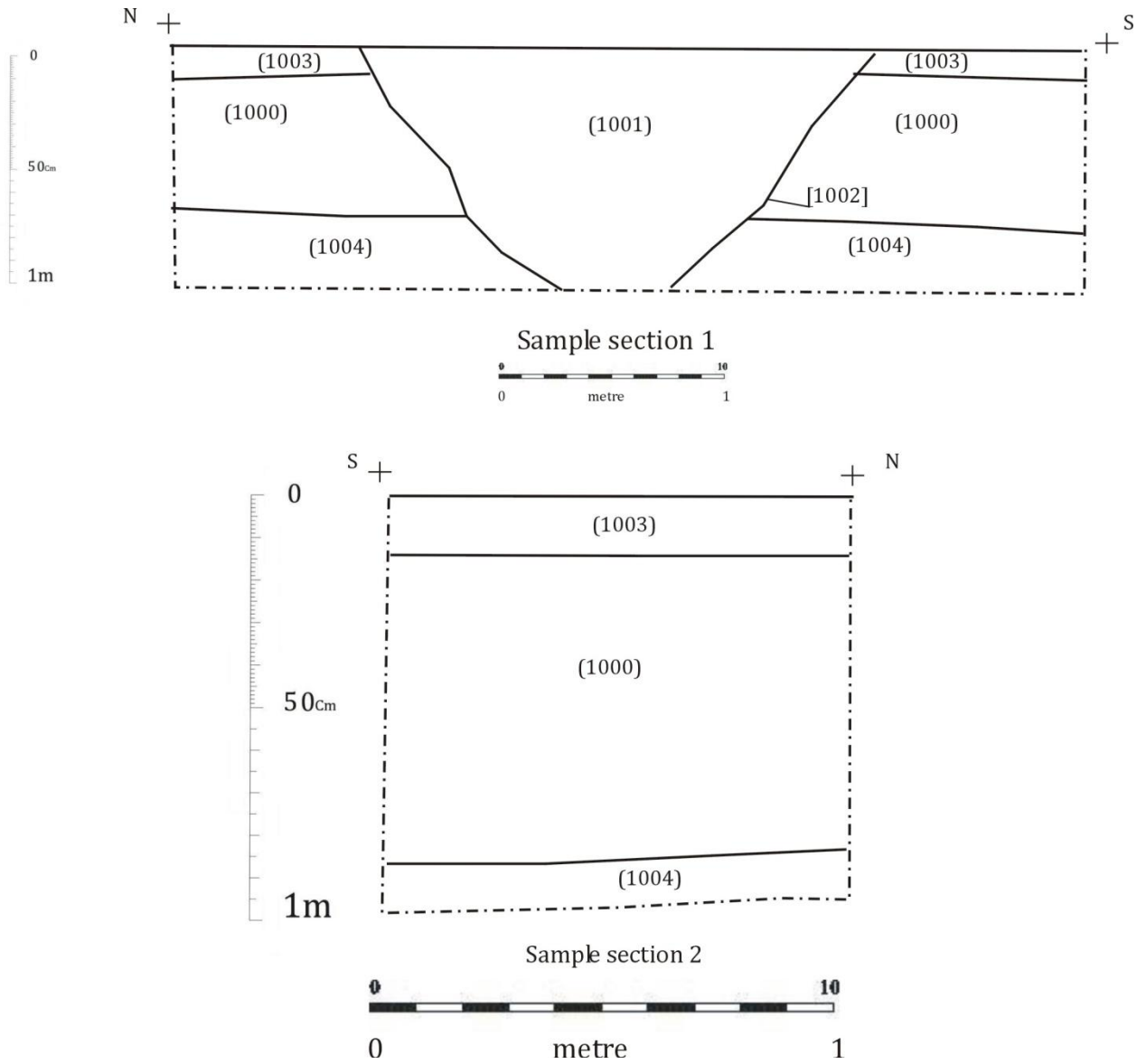
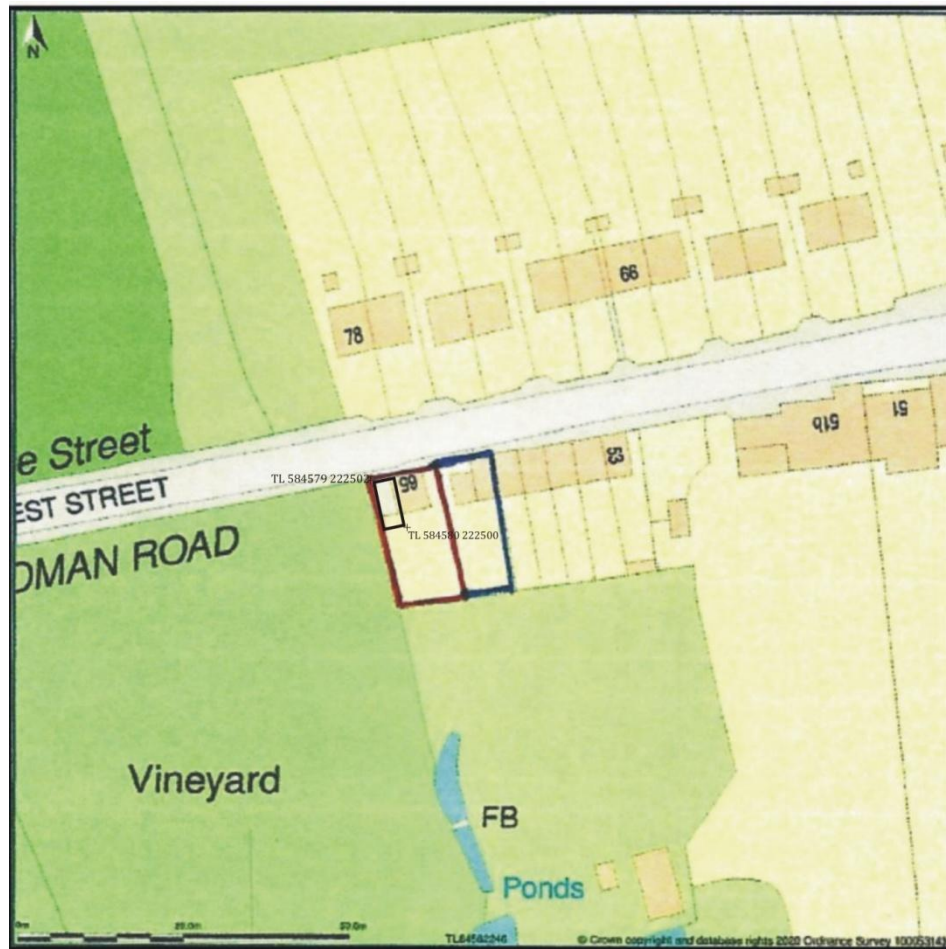


Figure 6. Sample sections



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**Figure 7. Context plan of trench location with NGR  
(NGR: NW: TL 584579 222502; SE: TL 584580 222459)**

## **7. The pottery finds by Andy Fawcett**

A total of three sherds of pottery with a combined weight of 26g were recovered from Demolition layer 1000.

The pottery has been briefly scanned at x20 vision in order to identify the fabrics of the individual sherds. These sherds have then been allocated a fabric code which is based upon those in current use across East Anglia as a whole.

A single slightly abraded body sherd of a general medieval coarse ware (MCW) has been identified (5g).

The sherd has a reduced outer and brown inner surface and contains abundant ill-sorted quartz, alongside sparse grog. It is dated from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century. A second slightly abraded body sherd is in an oxidised fabric (9g). This contains abundant fine quartz sand and is reasonably micaceous. The fabric is a transitional late medieval/early post-medieval type (LMT) and is dated to the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century. The final sherd is a rim fragment which represents the remains of transfer printed ware plate (TPW) that is dated from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This is a very small and mixed assemblage spanning the medieval and post-medieval periods which has been recovered from a layer, which for instance also contains CBM of a mixed date.

The assemblage has little interpretational value and the pottery has been fully recorded, it is therefore recommended that no further work on the material will be required

### **8. Interpretation and Conclusion**

The monitoring revealed a large area of demolition, seen in 80% of the trench section. It is considered that the demolition layer (1000) possibly belongs to the buildings that once stood on this site, as seen in the early mapping of West Street Coggeshall (C&A map 1777; fig. 2). They are assumed to be cottages or other domestic dwellings that do not appear by the latest map of 1875 on the O.S. First edition, having been replaced by the late Victorian houses now in existence

The inclusion of one sherd of 12th - 14th century pottery and a late medieval- early post medieval (15th-16th centuries) sherd of pottery, although somewhat a small pieces of evidence, does suggest that medieval to early post medieval activity took place on or near the location of the current development in West Street Coggeshall.

It is therefore hoped that this evidence goes a little way in understanding the western extent of medieval to post- medieval settlement at Coggeshall and that this information will contribute towards the knowledge of the "urban medieval" and in particular the research questions as highlighted in '*Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24; 2011 Medlycott, M (ed.)'.

This monitoring has therefore demonstrated that no significant archaeology will be compromised by the development.

## **9. Archive preparation and deposition**

The digital archive will be presented to the Essex County Historic Environment and to the designated museum being Braintree Museum to the standards as laid out in their specification/brief.

## **10. Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank Mr Alistair Pryke (Client) for appointing Archaeoserv to the task. Teresa O'Connor (ECC HET) produced the brief for this project.

## **11. Copyright**

Copyright will remain that of the author. Licence will be given to the client to present any reports, copyright of the author, to the planning authority in good faith of satisfactory settlement of account.

## **Bibliography**

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**Gurney, (2003) Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England**

**Historic Towns In Essex, Witham, Historic Towns Assessment Report, 1999, Essex County Council**

**Medlycott, M., 2011 Medlycott, M (ed.) (2011) *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24**

### **Internet resources:**

*PastScapes*: <http://www.pastscape.org/homepage/index.htm>



**Appendix I: Digital Images**



***Plate 1. Pre-excavation - general view to the north***





***Plate 2. General view of demolition layer (1000)***



***Plate 3. North-east corner of footing where demolition layer (1000) was absent  
(cbm seen is from last building demolished)***





***Plate 4. General view to the south-east across footings showing demolition layer (1000)***



***Plate 5. Central area of footings showing demolition layer (1000)***





*Plate 6. Sample section, looking east*



*Plate 7. Long section showing later demolition pit*





***Plate 8. Sample of cbm from demolition layer (1000)***

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**Appendix II: OASIS**