

Archaeological Evaluation on Land adjacent to Broadgate House Church Street Steeple Bumpstead Essex

Grid reference: TL 6780241050
Planning Application No: 09/00994/FUL

Oasis No. 127731

Prepared for

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Date 23/08/2012

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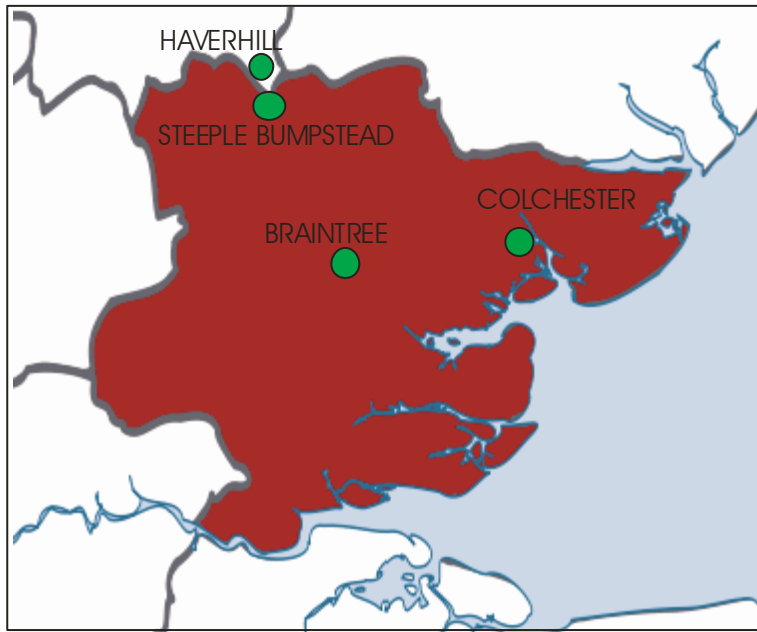


Figure1. Steeple Bumpstead Location

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by a single trial trench on land adjacent to Broadgate House Church Street Steeple Bumpstead Essex (TL 6780241050). This was in advance of the erection of a new dwelling. The work was carried out in response to an archaeological brief written by Teresa O'Connor of the Essex County Council Historic environment Management Team, dated April 2012.

One 15m long by 2m wide trench was sited to cover the footprint of the proposed development and also to locate any further evidence of the Roman remains thought to lie within the grounds of Broadgate House.

One pit was located containing bone, pottery, worked antler and slag material of the medieval period; a further spread of material containing bone and pottery was considered to be 18th-19th centuries. No further archaeology was revealed and no evidence of the Roman remains thought to be close by were located.

1. Introduction

An application has been made by the client Jonathan Cooper for the construction of a new dwelling on land adjacent to Broadgate House Church Street Steeple Bumpsted Essex. Planning Policy S5: Archaeology and Planning, issued by the Department of the Environment in 1990, sets out the requirements for developers to provide sufficient information on the archaeological impact of development to enable a reasonable planning decision to be made. Local Plan Policy B22, while stating that there should be a presumption in favour of the preservation of nationally important archaeological features and sites, outlines the process to be followed in order that the archaeological importance of a site may be determined and mitigation strategies put in place if necessary. This is also the requirement of the Deposit Joint Replacement Structure Plan (Policy 7, June 1998). As a result of the application, and to comply with planning policy, an archaeological evaluation was commissioned from Archaeoserv – DP Archaeological Services. Research was undertaken at the Essex County Council Records Office, Chelmsford and the Essex County Council Historic Environment Record office was consulted. A copy of this report will be deposited with the Essex County Council H.E.R. and an on-line report will be made available with the Archaeological Data Service/project oasis.

2. Site Location and Description

Broadgates is located immediately to the west of the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Steeple Bumpstead (TL6780241050). The proposed development lies to the west of Broadgates. The site is accessed off Church Street.

The geology for the site is Cretaceous Chalk (BGS, sheet 205).

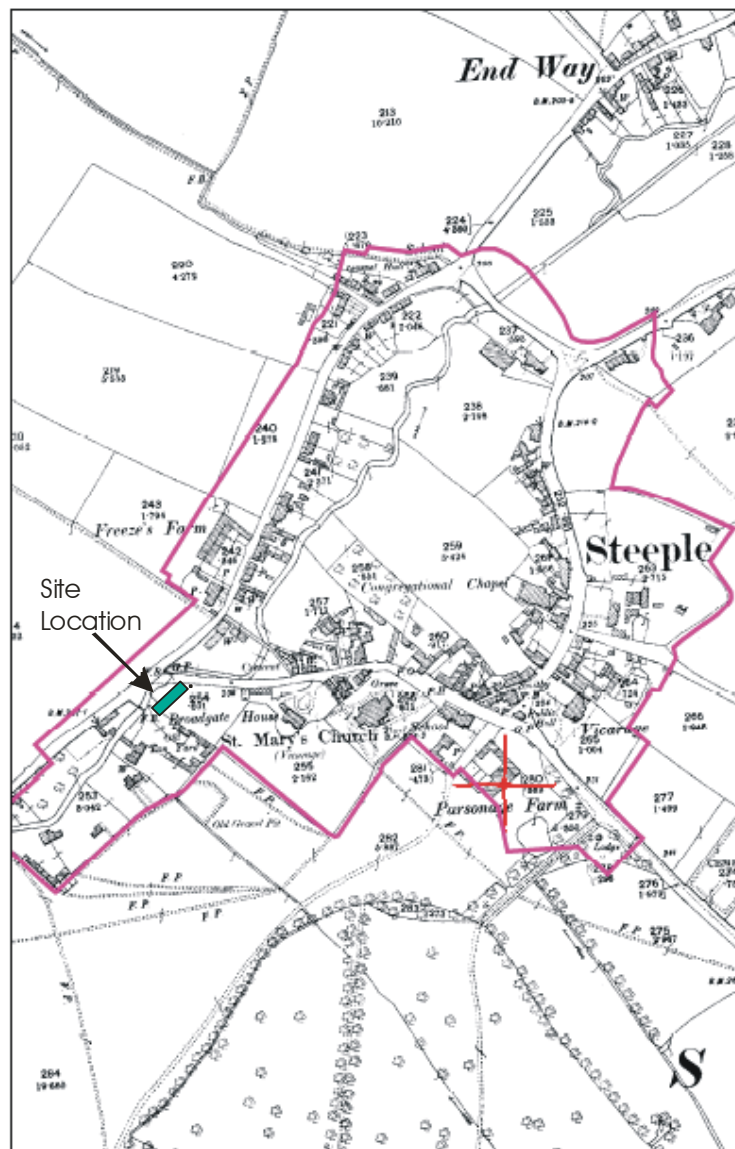


Figure 2. Site location

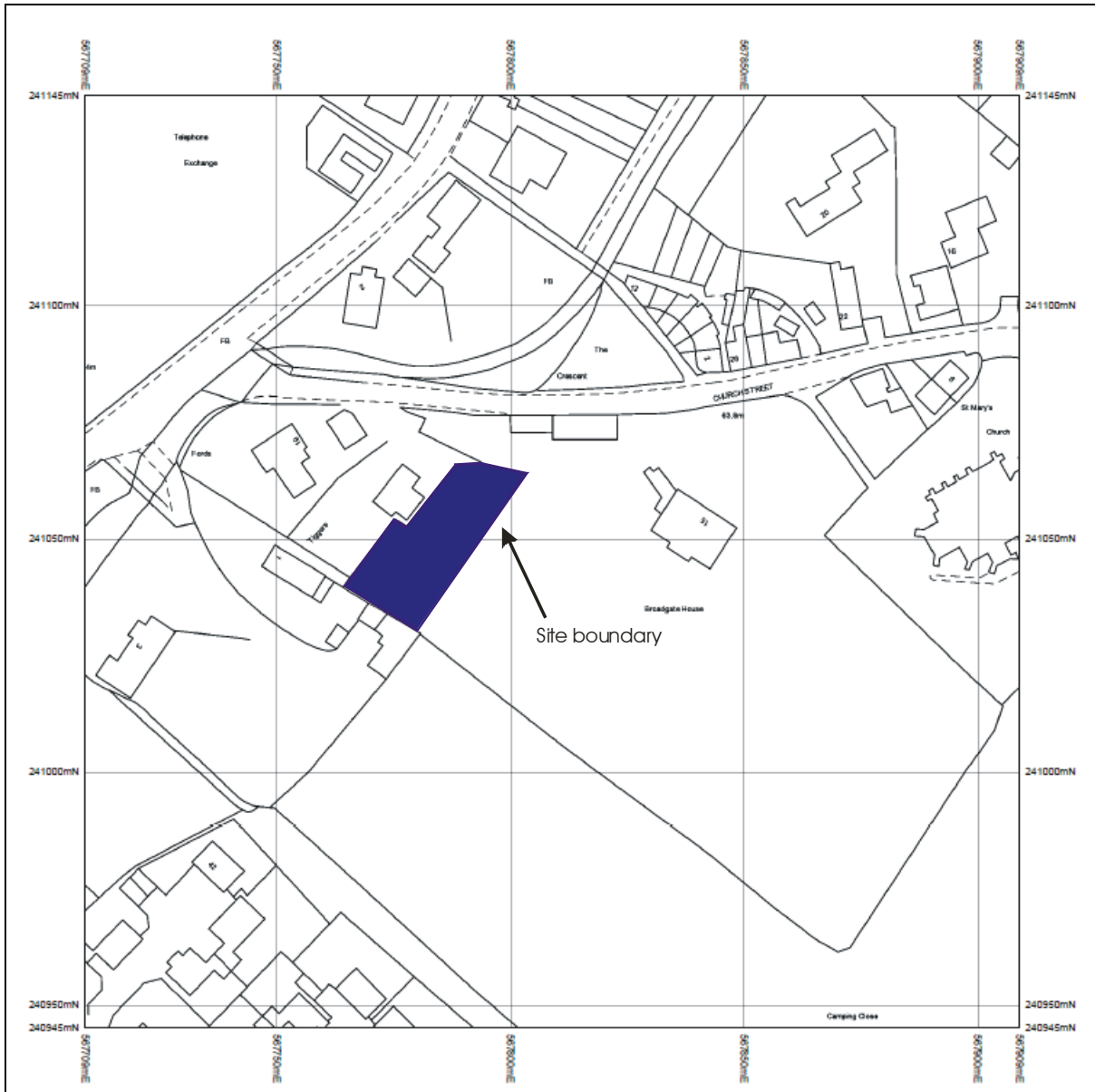


Figure 3. Block plan showing site location

3. Archaeological and historical background

Archaeological events

3. 1 The Victoria County History on Roman Essex (Hull, 1963) records ‘Extensive foundations’ under the lawn of Broadgates, which were said to be Roman in date. The information came from Mrs P.G. Lucas, who was an occupant of Broadgates in 1949 (HER No. 1622- MEX5867).

The course of a Roman road is known just to the north of the village on a south-west to north-east alignment (HER 1626 - MEX5896).

Foundation trenches for a new house were observed, just to the north-east of the current development site, off Church Street, Steeple Bumpstead (HER No.18593 - MEX1032371). The trenches cut down through a 2m depth of dark grey silty soil. Natural clay was visible intermittently below this depth. No archaeological features or finds anywhere. The great depth of soil here has undoubtedly been deposited by the nearby stream which runs along the west and north sides of this site. Although the level of the stream is now some way below the ground level of the site this was obviously not always the case. (Brooks, H. 1991. Watching brief report off Church St. Steeple Bumpstead) Another watching brief, (HER No.18591 - MEX1032372) two hundred and fifty metres north-east of the development uncovered a single medieval sherd (Havis, Richard. 1992. Watching brief report Lions Meadows, Steeple Bumpstead). An evaluation carried out at 5 Chapel Street, one hundred and eighty metres north-east of the development site, (HER No.45358 - MEX1036376) did not locate any finds or features (Gibson, S. 2000. 5 Chapel Street, Steeple Bumpstead). A further evaluation (HER No. 46450 - MEX1039033) on land adjacent to the Red Lion, Steeple Bumpstead was also a negative result (Scruby, Adrian. 2007. Land adj. to the Red Lion, Steeple Bumpstead).

Historical Background

3.2 Helions Bumpstead was well known to historians in the time of Edward the Confessor, before the Norman Conquest. Then the whole area of which we know now as Steeple and Helions Bumpstead, was called collectively Bumsteda, or variations of this earliest way of spelling. As more people drifted into this area, two distinct centres developed, with the Helions part taking on the title of Bumpstead Magna (Great) and the Steeple district Bumpstead Parva (Little). The origins for the place name Bumpstead are believed to derive from ‘*a place where flax or hemp grows*’ (Wikipedia online resource).

The adjacent St Mary’s Church is 11th century in origin, with extensive rebuilding in the 14th century and 19th century refurbishment (HER No. 29569 - MEX1004952). A possible 8th century Irish bronze boss is attached to the chancel door. Historically Steeple Bumpstead comprised a largely dispersed settlement, with a small focus around the church.

William White in his directory of Essex states: Steeple Bumpstead is a large and pleasant village, with several good houses on the banks of a tributary stream of the Stour, 3 miles South of Haverhill, and 8 miles North West by West of Castle Hedingham, and West, South West of Clare. Its parish contains 1212 inhabitants, and 3296A, 1R, 25P. of land, generally having a heavy fertile soil, well cultivated and highly productive both in grain and grass.

4. Results

4.1 Fieldwork

A plan of the single trench was drawn to a scale of 1:50; sections were drawn to a scale of 1:10.

A metal detector survey was carried out at all stages of the project.

All artefactual evidence was retained for dating and analysis.

A full photographic archive was produced consisting of colour slide, monochrome print and digital at 10 million pixels resolution, and will form part of the site record to be curated at the Braintree Museum archive..

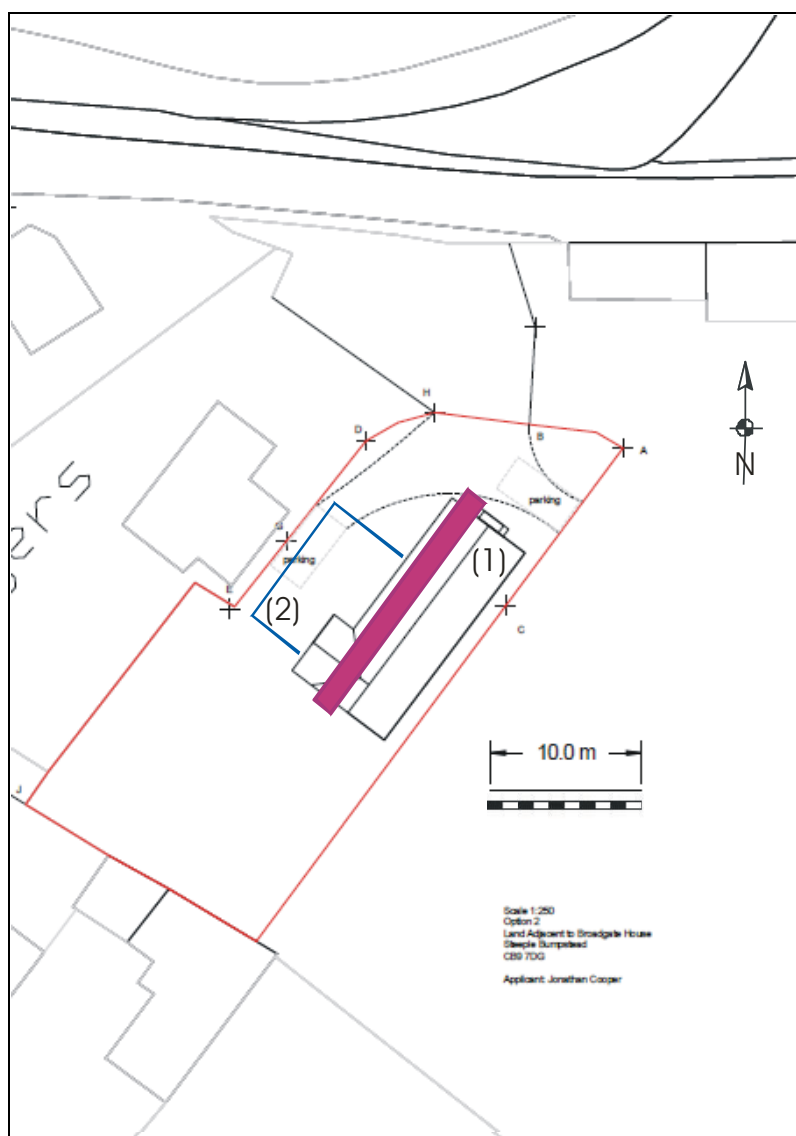
Site plans and sections were digitized to archive standard, reduced versions of which are included in this report.

All features were described in detail with an overall statement of the potential for further work.

4.2 The Trenched Evaluation.

The trenched evaluation produced one pit [04] containing pottery of a medieval date, animal bone, slag material (post-medieval) and one piece of worked antler. Due to the indistinguishable fill of the pit to its surrounding sub-soil, it was only recorded in section. Once drawn and photographed, the remaining fill was removed for artefactual dating evidence and a 20 ltr sample of the fill (03) was taken for environmental analysis. The pit [04] contained a mixed assemblage (see appendix A), which contained a piece of non-metallic slag, possibly from a post-medieval blast furnace and is considered residual in view of the predominant medieval date of the remainder of the assemblage. This feature contained a good number of pottery sherds (25) and the fabrics had a date range of between the late 12th- early 13th centuries, allowing the best dating for the feature. The animal bone included horse and sheep, the sheep bone being a piece of sawn-off horncore, but not closely dateable. A fragment of fired clay was also present in the fill, was un-diagnostic and again not closely dateable. Within the environmental sample taken, charred plant remains were found including cereaal crops and some legumes. Oyster shell was also present within the fill.

No other archaeology was noted in the trench except for a spread of post-medieval, probably eighteenth-nineteenth century dumped waste material containing animal bone, brick fragments and pottery, found within the garden soil (01).



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Figure 4. Trench location

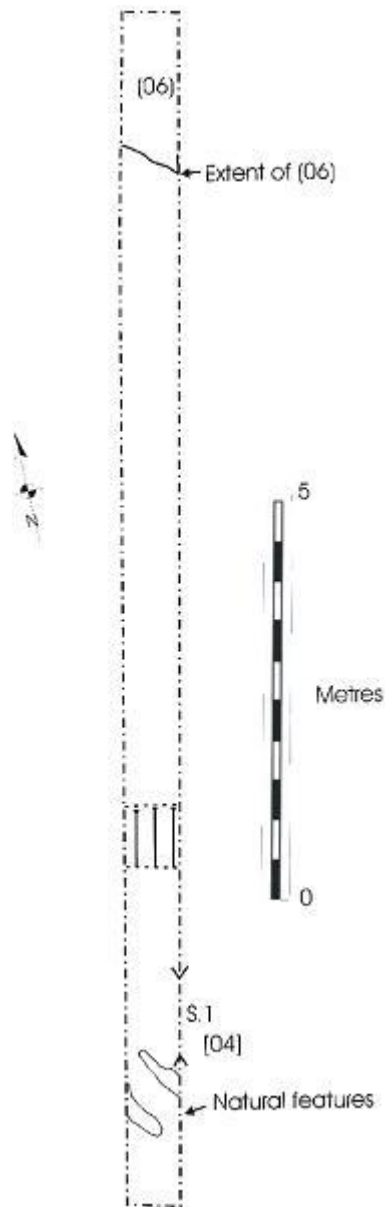


Figure 5. Plan of Trench

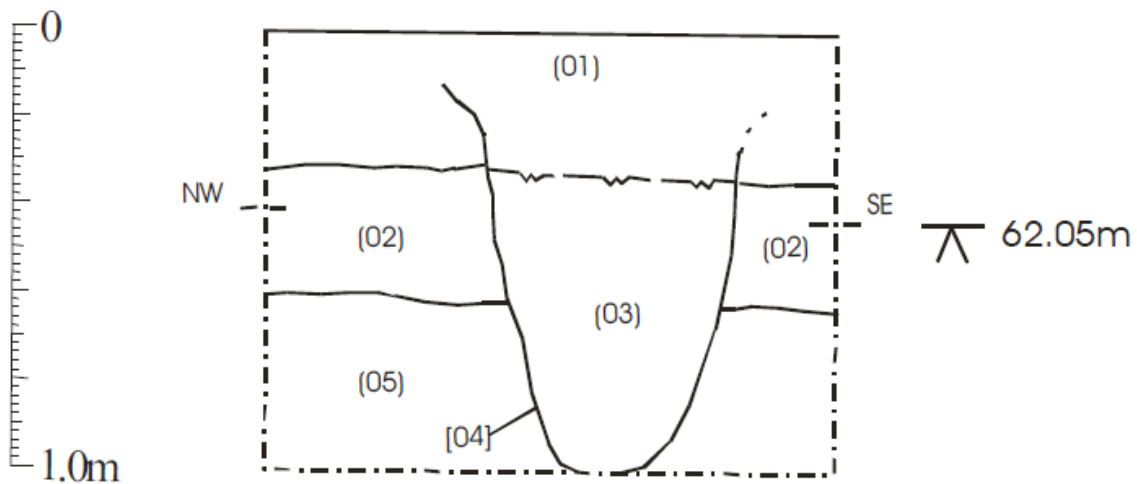


Figure 6. Section of pit [04] at 1:10

4.3 Summary of results

One pit of a medieval date was recorded. The specialists report has given a date-range for the pottery from between late 12th - early thirteenth centuries, therefore a date for the context (03) is a considered date range for the feature.. A spread or layer was seen in the north end of the trench within the garden soil containing post-medieval material. Samples were retained of the finds within the post-medieval spread (06) for confirmation of the dating from the pottery and other datable evidence such as the brick fragments. Subsequent dating of (06) gave a range of eighteenth-nineteenth centuries so no further work was done on this assemblage.

5. Interpretation

5.1 The location of the pit may belong to back yard activity of a former medieval house or other building located in this area and represents domestic waste. As seen above, the date range for the context is between the late 12th-early 13th centuries and being the only feature, it is therefore gives only a limited view into the activities of this area during this period. With the absence of further evidence it is impossible to say how the pit connects with its location or within the wider context of the site. The spread from the garden soil may have been generated from Broadgate House or another place all together, again it is not possible to say in either case.

The environmental findings have shown that further sampling from the site, should there be a further phase of excavation, would be highly recommended.

Table 1. Context descriptions

Context	Type	Description/Dimensions	Interpretation	Find Types /comments
(001)	Layer	Dark brown top soil; depth, 0.30m (max)	Garden soil	
(002)	Layer	Dark-greyish brown silty clay with regular chalk inclusions; depth, 0.30m (max)	Sub soil	
(003)	Fill	Dark-greyish brown silty clay; depth, 0.68m; width, 0.55m	Fill of pit	Fired clay; cut horn; bone; pottery; slag material
(004)	Cut	Dimensions as (03)	Cut of pit	
(005)	Layer	Yellowish brown clay with common chalk inclusions	Natural	
(06)	Spread	Dark brown garden soil	Dump of waste material- spread	Tile, Brick, Pottery, Bone

6. Discussion

The results of this evaluation have successfully shown that only one feature was revealed and it is unlikely that any other archaeology will be compromised by this development. No further archaeological work is thought necessary, except that if any other development takes place in the close vicinity to this location, environmental sampling (to retrieve further preserved charred plant remains) would add to the current knowledge from this site.

7. Archive deposition

The paper and photographic archive will be held at the Essex County Council Historic Environment Records Office (EHER)

A digital record and copies of the report can be viewed at the Essex County Council Historic Environment Records Office (EHER). The digital report may also be viewed at the following site: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>.

The physical finds archive will be deposited at the County Store, Braintree Museum Braintree Essex

8. Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mr Jonathan Cooper who commissioned this work.

This report for archaeological evaluation was written by Dennis Payne BA (Hons) (DPAS), who also managed the project and carried out the field-work.

Bibliography

British Geological Survey. 1990 (sheet 205)

Online References

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

APPENDIX A: Specialists Finds Reports

Non-Metallic Slag by Peter Boardman

Assemblage

A piece of post-medieval blast furnace waste was recovered from context 3. It consists of ash with a small amount of calcitic inclusions. Formed under pressure by super compression and super heating, such material builds up on the internal surfaces of the furnace and is periodically removed. The waste may have been used as hardcore.

No further work is required on this assemblage.

Context	Form	Count	Weight (kg)	Date Range
3	Blast furnace waste	1	0.189	post-medieval

Table 1: Slag

Pottery by Carole Fletcher

Introduction and methodology

The excavation produced a small pottery assemblage of 25 sherds, weighing 0.280kg, recovered from context 3. The condition of the overall assemblage is moderately abraded. The average sherd weight from individual contexts is small to moderate at 11g.

Ceramic fabric abbreviations used in the catalogue are:

Early Medieval Shell Tempered Ware	Fabric12A
Early Medieval Sandy Wares	Fabric 13
Early Medieval Sandy Wares (transitional)	Fabric 13T
Medieval Sandy Greyware or Medieval Coarse Ware	Fabric 20

Methodology

The Medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG) documents A guide to the classification of medieval ceramic forms (MPRG, 1998) and Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics (MPRG, 2001) act as a standard.

Dating was carried out using OA East's in-house system based on that previously used at the Museum of London. Fabric classification has been carried out for all previously described medieval and post-medieval types. All sherds have been counted, classified and weighed. All the pottery has been recorded and dated on a context-by-context basis.

The pottery and archive are curated by Dennis Payne Archaeological Services until formal deposition.

Assemblage

Context 3 produced 13 moderately abraded and unabraded sherds, a further 11 moderately abraded to abraded sherds were recovered from sample 1. Present in the assemblage is an unabraded rim sherd from an Early Medieval Sandy Ware vessel: the rim diameter is 130mm, indicating a relatively small narrow necked vessel, with an externally thickened, flat-topped, internally beaded rim of type B2a (Cotter, 200. Fig 27, p50). This is a rim type present from the mid 12th century into the early 13th century. Also present are sooted base sherds from four Early Medieval Sandy Ware jars including a sherd tentatively identified as Fabric 13T. A sherd recovered from sample 1 has girth grooves and may be a Middleborough Early Medieval Sandy Ware sherd. Four small sherds of a more uniform grey fabric may be Fabric 20. Also present is a single abraded, sooted sherd of Shelly Ware tentatively identified as Fabric 12A which Walker suggests has a date range of early 11th-13th century (Walker, 2004, p399). The presence of several large sherds and the unabraded to moderately abraded nature of the majority of the assemblage suggests that these sherds may have been recovered in or close to their place of primary deposition. Domestic in origin, these sherds represents occupation or rubbish disposal on or close to the site.

Context	Fabric	Basic Form	Sherd Count	Weight (kg)	Pottery Date Range	Context Date Range
3	Fabric 13	Jar (rim)	1	0.040	Mid 12th-early 13th century	Late 12th-early 13th century
	Fabric 13	Jar (base)	2	0.047	Early 11th-early 13th century	
	?Fabric	Jar	11	0.096		
Sample 1	13T	(base)				From Sample 1
	?Fabric 13T	Jar (base)	1	0.069		
	Fabric 12A	Jar	1	0.004	Early 11th-13th century	
	Fabric 13		4	0.009	Early 11th-early 13th century	
	Fabric 13		1	0.006		
	?Fabric 20	Jar	3	0.006	Late 12th-late 14th century	
	?Fabric 20		1	0.002		

Table 2: Pottery Dating

Statement of Research Potential and Further Work

An assemblage of this size provides only basic dating information for a site. Unless further excavation takes place no further work is required on this assemblage.

Fired Clay
by Carole Fletcher
Assemblage

A small assemblage of fragments of fired clay weighing 0.046kg, was recovered from context 3. The condition of the overall assemblage is moderately abraded. The fired clay has one surface and the clay appears to have been squeezed but there are no wattle impressions.

Statement of Research Potential and Further Work

An assemblage of this size provides little dating information for a site and no further work is required.

Context	Form	Count	Weight (kg)	Fabric	Range
3	Undiagnostic fired clay	2	0.046	Mottled pink and off white clay chalk marl with very coarse irregular lumps of chalk up to 8mm	Not closely datable

Table 3: Fired Clay

Appendix B: Environmental Reports

Faunal Remains by Chris Faine

Assemblage

B.1.1 A total of 112g of animal bone was recovered from the excavation, all from context 03. Eight fragments were recovered with two identifiable to species; a butchered horse metacarpal and a portion of sheep horncore with tip the sawn off.

No further work is required on this assemblage.

Mollusca By Carole Fletcher

Assemblage

B.1.2 A total of 0.004kg of shells of marine molluscs were collected. The shells were collected by hand from context 3. They are poorly preserved, although they do not appear to have been deliberately broken or crushed.

Further Work

B.1.3 No further work is required on this assemblage.

Context	Type	Weight (kg)
3	Oyster :Ostrea edulis	0.004

Table 4: Mollusca

Environmental Remains

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction

B2.1 A single bulk sample was taken from site STBCST12 and submitted to the Environmental Department at Oxford Archaeology East in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological analysis.

Methodology

B2.2 The total volume (30 litres) of the sample was processed by tank flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 0.5mm sieve. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope and the presence of any plant remains or other artefacts are noted on Table 5. Identification of plant remains is with reference to the Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands and the authors' own reference collection. Nomenclature is according to Stace (1997).

Quantification

B2.3 For the purpose of this initial assessment, items such as seeds, cereal grains and small animal bones have been scanned and recorded qualitatively according to the following categories :

B2.4 # = 1-10, ## = 11-50, ### = 51+ specimens ##### = 100+ specimens

B2.5 Items that cannot be easily quantified such as charcoal, magnetic residues and fragmented bone have been scored for abundance

B2.6 + = rare, ++ = moderate, +++ = abundant; 1.1.4, f = fragment

Results

Context Number		3
Sample Number		1
Feature		4
Feature type		Pit
Sample volume/ litres		30
Flot volume (millilitres)		120
Fraction of flot sorted		50.00%
CHARCOAL		
estimated volume charcoal >2mm/ millilitres		2
large charcoal [>4mm]		+
med. charcoal [2-4mm]		+
small charcoal [<2mm]		+
CHARRED CEREALS		
Avena sp. caryopsis	Oats [wild or cultivated]	#
Hordeum vulgare L. caryopsis	domesticated Barley grain	#
free-threshing Triticum sp. caryopsis	free-threshing Wheat grain	####
cereal indet. caryopsis		#
cf. cereal indet. culm node	Cereal stem-joint [indicates straw]	#
CHARRED OTHER EDIBLE OR ECONOMIC PLANTS		
Pisum sativum L. seed	Garden Pea	#
Vicia faba L. seed	Celtic Bean	#f

Table 5: Charred plant remains

B2.7 Plant remains are preserved by carbonization and are comprised of cereal grains and charcoal. Wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains predominate, the compact, rounded morphology suggesting that they are the free-threshing bread wheat type (*T. aestivum/compactum*). A single grain of barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) was noted along with a few grains of oats *Avena* sp.). It was not possible to distinguish whether the oats were of the cultivated or wild type. Chaff elements were restricted to occasional culm nodes.

A single pea (*Pisum sativum*) and a fragment of bean (*Vicia faba*) were also recovered.

B2.8 Artefacts retrieved from the sample residue include pottery, bone and oyster shell fragments.

Discussion

B2.9 The charred plant assemblage from the site at Steeple Bumpstead is comprised of cereal grains predominantly wheat. Such a concentrated sample of grain would suggest a single deposition event of burnt material. It is likely that the grain were accidentally burnt during drying in an oven or cooking over an open fire. Wheat grains were often dried prior to milling as it was supposed to have quickened the grinding process (Moffett 1984). Barley was often used for animal fodder but may have been used for human consumption in the form of bread, stews and soup and it was also used for the brewing of beer. No germinated grains were recovered to suggest brewing activities and the single grain recovered is probably a contaminant. The presence of oats may also be as a contaminant of the wheat field or an actual crop. As the grains are edible they may not necessarily have been removed as a contaminant of the prepared grain. Nodes most likely indicate the use of straw as fuel.

B2.10 A single pea and bean fragment were noted. Legumes are under-represented in the archaeobotanical record as they do not need to be exposed to fire in the same ways as cereals.

Conclusions

B2.11 In summary, the plant remains recovered from this site are dominated by crop plants, both cereals and legumes. The single sample assessed has shown that there is the potential for the recovery of charred plant remains from this site. If further excavations are planned for this area, it is recommended that a schedule for environmental sampling should be appended to the updated project design.

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APPENDIX C: Digital Images



Plate 1. Pre-excitation, view from the north



Plate 2. Pit [04] in section of trench with natural feature seen in plan below



Plate 3. Trench seen from the south, showing the geological hollows running parallel and diagonally.



Plate 4. The trench from the north-east



Plate 5. Trench from the north showing the partially excavated post-medieval spread in the foreground