# BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL, LONDON ROAD, BISHOP'S STORTFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

#### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

#### THE BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL, BISHOP'S STORTFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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NGR: TL 4880 1972 Report No: 3028					
District: Bishop's Stortford	Site Code: AS1113				
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: P2652				
Signed:	Date: February 2008				

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# **OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

Project details						
Project name	The Bishop'	s Stortfor	rd High School, Bi	shop's S	Stortford, Hertfordshire	
Project description (250 wo	ords)					
In February 2008, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation (trial trenches) on land at the Bishop's Stortford High School, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 4880 1972), prior to the submission / determination of a planning application to be submitted for residential redevelopment of the site.						
Desk-based assessment revea alert area, as designated by th and a Romano-British cremat	led that the s he local counc ion and occup	ite's wes il. The ar ation (H	tern section is sitt rchaeological alert IER 1090).	uated wi t area re	ithin an archaeological fers to Bronze Age pits,	
The evaluation revealed evia northern and western boundar the majority of which contain drains were also present. A b rich Trench 4.	lence of Roma ries of the site. 1ed finds of R 10ne needle wa	an occup Feature omano-E as also re	pation within three is include eleven d British date. A moo ecovered from a d	e trench itches, si dern der itch loco	es located towards the ix pits and three gullies, nolition layer and field ated in the most feature	
Project dates (fieldwork)	11/02/08 to	15/02/08				
Previous work (Y/N/?)	Y	Futur	e work (Y/N/?)	Y		
P. number	P2652	Site c	ode	ASIII	3	
Type of project	Archaeologi	ical evalı	uation			
Site status	Partially with	thin an A	lert Area			
Current land use	School grou	nds and	playing fields			
Planned development	Residential d	developn	ient			
Main features (+dates)	Roman pits	and ditch	nes			
Significant finds (+dates)	Bone Needle	e, Roman	Fine Ware			
<b>Project location</b>						
County/ District/ Parish	Herts		East Herts		Bishop's Stortford	
HER/ SMR for area	Hertfordshir	re HER	·			
Post code (if known)						
Area of site	c.6.6 hectar	es				
NGR	TL 4880 197	72				
Height AOD (max/min)	70 - 80m AC	)D				
<b>Project creators</b>	·					
Brief issued by	HCC HEU					
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Tim Schofie	ld				
Funded by	Countryside	Propert	ies (Special Projec	ts) Limi	ted	
	1 -		· • •	,		
Full title	The Bishop's Stortford High School, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire. An Archaeological Evaluation					
Authors	Tim Schofiel	ld HND I	BSc			
Report no.	3028					
Date (of report)	Date (of report) February 2008					

## THE BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL, BISHOP'S STORTFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

#### SUMMARY

In February 2008, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation (trial trenches) on land at the Bishop's Stortford High School, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 4880 1972), prior to the determination of a planning application to be submitted to redevelop the site.

The desk-based assessment revealed that the site's western section is situated within an archaeological alert area, as designated by the local council. The archaeological alert area refers to Bronze Age pits and a Romano-British cremation and occupation (HER 1090).

The evaluation revealed evidence of Roman occupation within three trenches located towards the northern and western boundaries of the site. Features include eleven ditches, six pits and three gullies, the majority of which contained finds of Romano-British date. A modern demolition layer and field drains were also present. A bone needle was also recovered from a ditch located in the most feature-rich trench (Trench 4).

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In February 2008, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation of a proposed development site at the Bishop's Stortford High School, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 4880 1972) (Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Countryside Properties (Special Projects) Ltd prior to the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment to support a planning application for proposed residential redevelopment of the site. The evaluation consisted of a field evaluation (trial trenching). It followed on from an archaeological desk-based assessment (Doyle 2006) and geophysical survey prepared by Stratascan Ltd (2007).

1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with an advice letter issued by Hertfordshire County Council, County Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU, dated 14<sup>th</sup> November 2007) and a specification prepared by AS (dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2007) and approved by HCC HEU. The project followed the procedures outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Code of Conduct*, and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (revised 2001). It also adhered to the relevant sections of *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14 (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The aims of the evaluation were to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains on the site, focussing on anomalies recorded by geophysical survey work undertaken by Stratascan Ltd.

#### **Planning policy context**

1.4 The relevant planning policies which apply to the effect of development with regard to cultural heritage are Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG15) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 'Archaeology and Planning' (PPG16) (Department of the Environment).

1.5 PPG16 (1990) is the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to archaeology. It states that there should always be a presumption in favour of preserving nationally important archaeological remains in situ. However, when there is no overriding case for preservation, developers are required to fund opportunities for the recording and, where necessary, the excavation of the site. This condition is widely applied by local authorities.

1.6 PPG15 (1994) is the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to the conservation of the historic environment by protecting the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and protecting listed buildings (of architectural or historical interest) from demolition and unsympathetic change and safeguarding their settings as far as is possible. This condition is also widely applied by local authorities.

# **2 THE EVIDENCE**

## 2.1 Topography, geology and soils

2.1.1 The topography of Bishop's Stortford is undulating and slopes away towards the River Stort, which flows on an approximate north to south orientation at c. 58m AOD. Situated on the western side of the river valley and c. 400m from the River Stort, the site ranges in height from 70m AOD at its north-eastern corner to c. 82m AOD at its north-westernmost extent. The site lies on gently sloping land, and declines by 10m down towards the north-eastern corner of the eastern section and towards the nearby River Stort.

2.1.2 The settlement of Bishop's Stortford is situated on a cusp of two different solid geologies comprising both Lower Eocene Reading Beds, comprising a complex of vertically and laterally varying gravels, sands, silts and clays, to the north and Eocene London Clay to the south, upon which the site lies (McDonald 1997; BGS 1978). Along the River Stort and to the immediate east of the site, however, is a narrow strip of Cretaceous Upper Chalk. Overlying the solid geology of Reading Beds, London Clay and Cretaceous Upper Chalk is mainly later drift geology of Boulder Clay, although the river valley of the Stort contains river terrace gravels of a younger age.

2.1.3 As with the geology, the town of Bishop's Stortford lies across the junction between a number of different soil types. The majority of the East Hertfordshire district and most of the settlement of Bishop's Stortford lie on soils of the Hanslope association, which are described as slowly permeable, calcareous clayey soils with some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils, all of which are at slight risk of water erosion (SSEW 1983). Such soils of the Hanslope association generally lie on a chalky till geology and are used in agriculture for winter cereals with some other arable crops and grassland. The areas of Bishop's Stortford, however, within the valley of the River Stort, which probably includes the easternmost section of the site, comprise soils of the Melford association, which are described as deep, well-drained fine loamy over clayey, coarse loamy over clayey and fine loamy soils, some with calcareous clayey subsoils (SSEW 1983). Such soils of the Melford association also generally

lie on a drift geology of chalky till; their common agricultural use is the growing of cereals, sugar beet and other arable crops.

## 2.1.4 Site Description

The site comprises the western playing field of Bishop's Stortford High School. It contains seasonal pitches (rugby at the time of the evaluation) and artificial cricket wickets, as well as a pavilion. Access was obtained from Grace Gardens to the east.

# 2.2 Archaeological and historical background

The information given below is a summary of that presented in the desk-based assessment (Doyle 2006)

# 2.3 Prehistoric

2.3.1 Few finds of prehistoric date have been found including a Palaeolithic hand axe and a further flint axe near the bank of the River Stort, and two possible Mesolithic sites to the north and north-east of the town.

2.3.2 Bronze Age to Iron Age activity was located at Thorley 1km to the south-west of the site. Iron Age Halstatt pottery sherds were found 100m from the south-eastern corner of the site (HER 2785).

2.3.3 Extensive early Iron Age to Romano-British occupation evidence include a possible middle Iron Age round house drainage gully to the east of Bishop's Stortford and a late Iron Age silver quarter stater coin of Cunobelin, 600m to the south-west (HER 6540). Bronze Age pits (HER 1090) were recorded in conjunction with a Romano-British cremation and occupation evidence on the Thornbera Road extension (see below). Significantly the western part of the assessment site is part of the local council designated archaeological alert area (HER 1090). A Bronze Age barbed and tanged flint arrowhead was also found along Piggott's Way, 600m northwards (HER 2835).

# 2.4 Romano-British

2.4.1 A large scale Romano-British settlement was located where Stane Street crossed the River Stort, excavations revealed a probable date from c. 50 AD for the first phase and a second constructional phase during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century when the settlement probably developed. Discoveries included  $2^{nd} - 4^{th}$  century pottery,  $4^{th}$  century timber buildings foundations, post holes and boundary ditches.

2.4.2 Romano-British occupation is mainly focused along both sides of Stane Street between Cannons Close and Grange Paddocks in the form of a ribbon development. Buildings, rubbish pits, burials and large quantities of pottery and finds from the  $1^{st} - 4^{th}$  century AD were revealed (Hunn 2000). A possible tile kiln lies to the north of the known settlement (Cooper 2005) and several burials (including a stone coffin burial) and cremations suggest that a cemetery exists on the eastern side of the settlement. Roman coins, including one of Maximian (c. 286 – 7 AD), have been found on London Road and 300m to the north-west (HER 2135).

2.4.3 Thorley Park, located 750m to the east produced evidence of  $3^{rd} - 4^{th}$  century Romano-British occupation associated with clay digging and later transitional occupation (HER 4852). A small Romano-British bronze fibula was found 600m to the south-west of the site (HER 6537), and nine bronze and one silver Roman coins (HER 6539).

2.4.4 The Thorley Hill site, to the immediate west of the playing field at Bishop's Stortford High School, revealed a Romano-British cremation, 'rough walling' and occupation evidence, during construction works in 1955-58 (HER 1090), in addition to the Bronze Age activity noted above (2.3.3). The area now lies beneath housing.

# 2.5 Anglo-Saxon

2.5.1 The present town of Bishop's Stortford was probably established by the  $5^{\text{th}}$  century, adjacent to the fording point along the River Stort in the area of North Street, High Street and Market Street (Orton 1976). The  $15^{\text{th}}$  century parish church of St Michael may overlie a Saxon site. The settlement formed part of the Braughing Hundred.

# 2.6 Medieval

2.6.1 In the early  $13^{\text{th}}$  century, the settlement of Bishop's Stortford became a pawn in the disputes between King John and the Pope (Bishop's Stortford official town website). The King seized the town from the Bishop and ordered the destruction of Waytemore Castle in 1208. Yet barely six years later the King had to finance the rebuilding of the castle. The motte and bailey Waytemore Castle, which lies *c*. 1.60km to the north of the site, was unusually sub-rectangular in plan and is scheduled as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No. 20628). It lay in ruins by 1549 but the prison survived and was apparently used throughout the  $16^{\text{th}}$  century to hold religious dissenters and was known as '*The Convict's Prison*' until its demolition in 1649 (Cussans 1874, 110).

2.6.2 Throughout the medieval period, the town of Bishop's Stortford developed into a thriving commercial centre, attested by a large number of inns in the town. Fairs were held three times a year on the feasts of St Michael, Ascension and Corpus Christi, and Session Rolls record that part of the fairs were held inside the churchyard until the end of the 16th century (Page 1912, 293; Hunns 2000). From the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, a successful tanning and leather industry developed rapidly in Bishop's Stortford, centred on Water Lane; medieval court rolls contain frequent references to the surnames of Skinner and Tanner. Tanning required a ready supply of water and at this time the River Stort ran parallel to Water Lane (BSDLHS 1992; Page 1912, 292).

# 2.7 Post-medieval

2.7.1 A significant event for the town during the post-medieval period was the opening of the Stort Navigation in 1769, which linked Bishop's Stortford with London via the Lea Navigation, itself constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This provided a direct link to the markets of London and as a result, the prosperity of the town in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was fuelled by the brewing and malting industry as evidenced by the high number of maltings and inns recorded in the HER (Cooper 2005).

2.7.2 The 18<sup>th</sup> century brought substantial growth and transformation in the economy of Bishop's Stortford. Although it was still described as a considerable market town in 1770 (Munby 1977), its horse and cattle fairs had enabled an enormous expansion in leather-working by the 1750's through the tanners of Water Lane. It is believed that during the 18<sup>th</sup> century tanners and leather-workers, primarily glovers and shoemakers, comprised almost a quarter of the working population in Bishop's Stortford, yet by the end of the century the industry was already in decline (Hunns 2000).

2.7.3 By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century connection to the railway laid the foundation for Bishop's Stortford's present importance as both a market town in its own right and as a favoured commuter area for the capital. Such development necessitated the construction of numerous post-medieval road bridges (HERs 5136 & 6788), and railway bridge (HERs 5639 & 5640) over the River Stort.

# 2.8 Modern

2.8.1 As was the case in the post-medieval period, from 1900 onwards the settlement of Bishop's Stortford expanded significantly in size, thus encompassing the former parish of Thorley lands within which the site lies.

# **3 METHOD OF WORK**

3.1 The site comprises the existing playing field of Bishop's Stortford High School, and as such is in constant use in term-time. The archaeological works took place during the February half-term, and access was only available during this period to complete the works. Five trenches was excavated (Fig. 2), in locations agreed with HCC HEU and the School. The trenches overlay the principal anomalies identified during the geophysical survey.

3.2 Undifferentiated overburden was mechanically excavated, under close archaeological supervision. Thereafter all further investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro-forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the trenches were scanned by metal detector. Trench locations were logged by Total Station.

# 4 **DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS**

Individual trench descriptions are presented below:

# 4.1 Trench 1 Figs. 2-3, Plates 1 & 6

Sample section: South-east end, facing north-west					
0.00 = 79.12m AO	D				
0.00 - 0.24m	L1000. Topsoil. Loose mid greyish brown clayey silt with sparse sub-angular				

	flint stones (0.03m-0.05m).
0.24m-0.34m	L1001. Subsoil. Mid yellowish brown, compact clayey silt with occasional chalk
	flecks and occasional sub-rounded flint stones (0.10m-0.20m).
0.34m+	L1002. Natural Drift. Light yellowish brown, compact silty clay with frequent
	sub-angular chalk stones (0.05-0.10m) and chalk flecks and occasional large flint
	stone nodules (0.10-0.25m).

Description: Trench 1 contained two ditches (F1011 and F1025), one gully (F1013), one pit (F1023) and two modern land drains.

Ditch F1011 was orientated N/S and excavated in four segments (A - D) described in Table 1 below. Ditch F1011 was cut by Gully F1013, Ditch F1025 and Pit F1023.

Segment	Context	Plan	Segment	Profile	Fill	Finds
			Dimensions			
F1011A	L1012A	Linear	24.00m+ x	Regular, steep	Compact mid	Pottery
			0.64m+ x	sides, concave base	yellowish brown	(12g), cbm
			0.44m		silty clay	(16g)
F1011B	L1012B	Linear	24.00m+ x	Regular steep	Compact mid	Animal
			0.64m+ x	sides, concave base	yellowish brown	bone (50g)
			0.44m		silty clay	
F1011C	L1012C	Linear	24.00m+ x	Regular steep	Compact mid	-
			0.64m+ x	sides, concave base	yellowish brown	
			0.44m		silty clay	
F1011D	L1012D	Linear	24.00m+ x	Steep sides, flattish	Compact mid	-
			0.90m+ x	base	yellowish brown	
			0.30m		silty clay	

Table 1. Excavated segments of Ditch F1011 in Trench 1

Gully F1013 was linear in plan ( $1.50m+ x 0.98m \times 0.40m$ ) orientated east-west with irregular sides and an irregular base. It was cut by a modern land drain. Its fill, L1014, was a mid yellowish brown compact silty clay. No finds were present. Gully F1013 cut Ditch F1011. It was sealed by subsoil L1001.

Large Pit F1023 was sub-circular in plan (6.00m+ x 0.85m x 0.30m) with steep sides and a flattish base. Only the western part of the pit was located in the trench. Its fill, L1024, was a firm mid grey brown clayey silt with occasional angular flint stones (0.01-0.03m) and occasional sub-angular chalk stones (0.01m-0.03m) and chalk fleck. Roman Pottery (16g) and animal bone (<1g) were present. Pit F1023 cut Ditches F1011 and F1025.

Ditch F1025 was linear in plan (1.60m x 2.00m x 0.40m) with steep parallel sides and a flattish base, and it was aligned E/W. It contained two fills, L1026 and L1027. The basal fill, L1026, was a firm mid brownish grey clayey silt with moderate sub-rounded chalk stones (0.01m - 0.02m) and occasional angular flint stones (0.02-0.05m). Roman Pottery (88g), animal bone (124g), cbm (208g) and oyster shell (36g) were present. The upper fill, L1027, was a firm mid grey brown clayey silt with occasional chalk. It contained Roman pottery (80g), cbm (54g) and animal bone (104g). Ditch F1025 cut Ditch F1011. It was cut by a modern land drain and by Pit F1023.

#### 4.2 Trench 2 Figs. 2 -3, Plates 2 & 7

Sample Section 2: $v_{0.00} = 77.34m AO$	west end, facing east D	
0.00 - 0.13m L1000. Topsoil. As above Trench 1		
.13 – 0.25m L1001. Subsoil. As above Trench 1		
0.25m+	L1002. Natural Drift. As above Trench 1	

Description: Trench 2 contained a modern demolition layer (L1005) which was cut by a trench for a modern wooden fence (F1003).

Fence trench cut, F1003, was linear in plan  $(1.50m+ \times 0.10m \times 0.10m)$  and orientated N/S. It had regular parallel edges, vertical sides and a flat base. It contained wooden fence panel L1004 and packing layer L1056. L1004 was the base of a modern fence panel. L1056 was a loose dark orange-grey brown clayey silt, and contained modern brick and tile fragments.

Demolition layer L1005 (10.0m+x 1.5m x 0.10m) was a loose mid orange-grey clayey silt. It contained modern brick and tiles, glass, nails and aluminium foil. This layer was probably derived from the construction of the housing estate to the north of the trench.

## 4.3 Trench 3 Figs. 2 - 3, Plates 3 & 8

Sample Section 5: East-south-east end, west-north-west facing				
0.00 = 78.27m AOD				
0.00 - 0.09m	L1000. Topsoil. As above Trench 1			
0.09 – 0.30m L1001. Subsoil. As above Trench 1				
0.30m+	L1002. Natural Drift. As Above Trench 1			

Description: Trench 3 contained two near-parallel ditches (F1006 and F1015).

Ditch F1006 was linear in plan (1.50m+ x 1.10m x 0.50m) and orientated NE/SW. It had relatively steep sides and a flat base. It contained two fills, L1018 and L1007. The basal fill, L1018, was a compact light greyish yellow silty clay with frequent chalk flecks and occasional sub-angular chalk (0.03-0.06m). No finds were present. The upper fill, L1007, was a compact mid greyish brown silty clay with moderately chalk flecks and occasional sub-angular flint stone (0.05-0.25m). It contained Roman pottery (116g), animal bone (639g), ceramic building material (356g), and oyster shell (50g).

Ditch F1015 was linear in plan (1.50m+ x 1.02m x 0.45m) and also orientated NE/SW. It had relatively steep sides and a flat base. It contained two fills, L1016 and L1017. The slumped basal fill, L1016, was a compact light yellowish grey silty clay with occasional rounded pea chalk. No finds were present. The upper fill, L1017, was a compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with frequent chalk flecks and occasional sub-angular chalk (0.01-0.04m) and sub-angular flint stone inclusions (0.03-0.05m). No finds were present.

#### 4.4 Trench 4 Figs. 2 & 4, Plates 4, 9 & 10

Sample section: South-east end, facing north-west 0.00 = 77.01m AOD

0.00 - 0.10m	L1000. Topsoil. As above Trench 1
0.10 - 0.30m	L1001. Subsoil. As above Trench 1
0.30m+	L1002. Natural Drift. As above Trench 1

Description: Trench 4 contained six ditches (F1040, F1030, F1050, F1053, F1021 and F1008), two gullies (F1048 and F1019) and five pits (F1034, F1032, F1028, F1038 and F1036).

Ditch F1040 was linear in plan (1.5m+ x 1.7m x 0.9m) and orientated ENE/WSW. It had steep sides and a concave base. It contained three fills, L1041, L1042 and L1043, described in Table 2 below. Ditch F1040 cut Ditch F1030, of which it may represent a re-cut. Layer L1031 was a moderately compact dark black/brownish grey clayey silt with charcoal and moderate sub-angular chalk and flint (0.03-0.07m). It was contained within the depression caused by the slumping of Ditches F1040 and F1030. It contained Roman pottery (307g), animal bone (413g), CBM (274g), a bone needle (SF1; <1g) and iron nail fragments (14g).

Fill	Colour	Composition	Consistence	Inclusions	Finds
L1043	Dark	Clayey silt	Moderately	Occasional chalk and	Pottery (86g),
Basal	brownish		compact	charcoal flecks.	animal bone
	grey		-	Occasional sub-angular	(507g)
				flint (0.03-0.07m)	
L1042	Mid	Silty clay	Moderately	Moderate sub-angular	No finds
	greyish		compact	chalk and flint (0.03 -	
	yellow		-	0.07m)	
L1041	Dark	Clayey silt	Moderately	Occasional charcoal	Pottery, animal
Upper	yellowish		compact	flecks, occasional sub-	bone, CBM
	grey			angular chalk and flint	
				(0.03-0.07m)	

Table 2. Fills of Ditch F1040 in Trench 4

Ditch F1030 was linear in plan  $(1.5m+x 2.5m \times 0.9m)$  and orientated ENE/WSW. It had steep sides and a concave base. It contained four fills that are described in Table 3 below. Ditch F1030 was cut by Ditch F1040.

Fill	Colour	Composition	Consistence	Inclusions	Finds
L1047	Mid	Silty clay	Moderately	Moderate sub-angular	Pottery (52g)
Basal	orangish		compact	chalk stones (0.03-0.07m),	
	yellow			occasional sub-angular	
				flint (0.03-0.07m)	
L1046	Mid	Clayey silt	Moderately	Occasional chalk and	Pottery (941g),
	yellowish		compact	charcoal flecks, occasional	animal bone
	brownish			sub-rounded flint (0.03 -	(1071g)
	grey			0.07m)	
L1045	Light	Silty clay	Moderately	Occasional sub-angular	No finds
	greyish		compact	chalk and flint (0.03-	
	yellow			0.07m)	
L1044	Mid	Clayey silt	Moderately	Occasional chalk and	Pottery (419g),
Upper	brownish		compact	charcoal flecks, occasional	animal bone
	grey			sub-rounded flint (0.03 -	9856g)
				0.07m)	

Table 3. Fills Ditch F1030 in Trench 4

Ditch F1050 was linear in plan (1.60m+ x 0.90m x 0.30m) and orientated NE/SW. It had moderately steep sides and a concave base. It contained two fills, L1051 and L1052. The basal fill, L1051, was a firm mid orange/brown clayey silt with occasional angular flint (0.01-0.05m) and occasional sub-rounded chalk stones (0.01 – 0.03m). It contained Roman pottery (18g) and oyster shell (26g). The upper fill, L1052, was firm mid greyish brown clayey silt with occasional angular flint stones and sub-rounded chalk (0.01 – 0.03m). It contained Roman pottery (165g), animal bone (82g), oyster shell (<1g) and a fragment of an iron loop (34g). Ditch F1050 cut Ditch F1053.

Ditch F1053 was linear in plan ( $2.00m+ \times 0.76m \times 0.27m$ ) and orientated NW/SE. It had steep sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L1054, was a firm mid orange/brown clayey silt with occasional chalk flecks and angular flint (0.01-0.03m). No finds were present. Ditch F1053 was cut by Ditch F1050.

Gully F1048 was linear in plan (1.5m+ x 0.37m x 0.27m) and orientated E/W. It had near vertical sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1049, was a moderately compact mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional flint (0.10-0.20m). Roman pottery (50g), animal bone (68g) and iron nail fragments (16g) were present.

Pit F1034 was sub-circular in plan ( $0.73m \ge 0.40m \ge 0.06m$ ). It had shallow gently sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L1035, was a friable dark greyish brown silty clay. No finds were present.

Pit F1032 was sub-circular in plan ( $0.43m \ge 0.40m \ge 0.06m$ ). It had shallow gently sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1033, was a friable light brownish grey silty clay. No finds were present.

Gully F1019 was excavated in two segments, A and B, and was linear in plan (2.00m x 0.33m x 0.16m). It was orientated E/W. It had steep sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1020, was a mid greyish brown silty clay. It contained Roman pottery (100g), cbm (38g) iron nail fragments (6g) and animal bone (10g). Gully F1019 was cut by Ditch F1021.

Curvilinear Ditch F1021 was excavated in three segments that are described in Table 4 below. Ditch F1021 cut Gully F1019 and Pit F1028.

Segment	Context	Segment	Profile	Fill	Finds
F1021A	L1022A	4.20m+ x 0.96m x 0.22m	Irregular sides, uneven base	Light greyish brown silty clay	Pottery (228g), cbm (230g), animal bone (82g), oyster shell (24g), iron nail (6g)
F1021B	L1022B	4.20m+ x 0.86m x	Steep sides, narrow base	Light greyish brown silty	Pottery (296g),

		0.29m		clay	cbm (38g)
					animal
					bone
					(92g)
					oyster
					shell (6g)
					struck
					flint (4g)
F1021C	L1022C	4.20m+ x	Shallow sides,	Light greyish	Pottery
		0.88m x	concave base	brown silty	(242g),
		0.17m		clay	animal
					bone
					(631g)

Table 4. Excavated segments of Ditch F1021 in Trench 4

Pit F1028 was sub-circular in plan (0.60m x 0.50m x 0.06m). It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1029, was a friable mid brownish grey silty clay. Roman pottery (96g) and an iron nail (10g) were present. Pit F1028 was cut by Ditch F1021.

Pit F1038 was sub-circular in plan ( $0.90m \ge 0.76m \ge 0.26m$ ). It had steep shallow sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1039, was a compact mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional chalk flecks and sub-angular flint (0.05-0.20m). No finds were present. Pit F1038 was cut by Pit F1036.

Pit F1036 was oval in plan (1.50m+ x 0.80m x 0.32m). It had steep sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1037, was a compact mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional chalk flecks and sub-angular flint (0.05-0.20m). It contained Roman pottery (164g) and animal bone (165g). Pit F1036 cut Pit F1038.

Ditch F1008 was linear in plan (1.90m+ x 0.66m x 0.48m) orientated E/W, and partially revealed in the southern end of the trial trench. It had shallow moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It contained two fills, L1009 and L1010. Basal fill L1009 was a compact light brownish grey clayey silt with occasional small sub-angular and sub-rounded flint and chalk (0.01-0.04m). Roman pottery (378g), animal bone (30g) and iron fragments (76g) were present. Upper fill L1010 was a compact mid greyish brown clayey silt with occasional sub-angular flint and chalk (0.05 - 0.10m). Roman pottery (1351g), cbm (234g), animal bone (204g), oyster shell (12g), iron nail fragments (18g) and slag (60g) were present.

#### 4.1.5 Trench 5 Figs. 2 & 4 Plate 5

Sample Section 4: South-south-west end, facing north-north-east			
$0.00 = 74.74m \ AOD$			
0.00 - 0.26m	L1000. Topsoil. As above Trench 1		
0.26 - 0.55m	L1001. Subsoil. As above Trench 1		
0.55m+	L1002. Natural Drift. As above Trench 1		

Sample Section 3: North-north-east end, facing south-south-west 0.00 = 75.06m AOD

0.00 - 0.14m	L1000. Topsoil. As above Trench 1
0.14 - 0.26m	L1001. Subsoil. As above Trench 1
0.26m+	L1002. Natural Drift. As above Trench 1

Description: Trench 5 contained a modern land drain. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

## 5 CONFIDENCE RATING

5.1 Small-scale modern intrusions were present (Trenches 1, 2, and 5), but it is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features and finds.

## 6 **DEPOSIT MODEL**

6.1 The deposit model was uniform across site with only the depth of the deposits exhibiting variation. This change in depth was largely due to the slope of the site from north to south. The topsoil ranged in depth from 0.09m to 0.30m. Topsoil L1000 was a mid greyishbrown clayey silt with sparse sub-angular flint (0.03-0.05m).

6.2 Beneath L1000 was Subsoil L1001, a compacted mid yellowish brown clayey silt with occasional chalk flecks and sub-rounded flint (0.10-0.20m). This layer ranged between 0.25m to 0.55m in depth with the deepest deposit in Trench 5 located on the south side of the site.

6.3 At the base of the stratigraphic sequence is compacted natural clay L1002, a compact light yellowish brown silty clay with frequent sub-angular chalk stones (0.05-0.10m) and chalk flecks, and occasional large flint stone nodules (0.10-0.25m). It lay at a depth of between 0.25m and 0.55m beneath ground level.

# 7 **DISCUSSION**

#### 7.1 *Summary of the archaeology*

7.1.1 Trenches 2 and 5 were devoid of archaeological features. Trench 2 revealed a modern wooden fence (F1003) and a modern demolition layer (L1005). Trench 5 revealed a modern land drain, and a second drain was seen in Trench 1.

7.1.2 Trenches 1, 3 and 4 contained numerous archaeological features

Trench	Feature Type	Context Number
1	2 Ditches	F1011, F1025
	1 Gully	F1013
	1 Pit	F1023
2	2 Ditches	F1006, F1015
4	6 Ditches	F1008, F1021, F1030, F1040, F1050, F1053
	2 Gullies	F1019, F1048
	5 Pits	F1028, F1032, F1034, F1036, F1038

7.1.3 Trenches 1 and 3 were located on the western side of the site, and Trench 4 was contained in the northern sector of the site. The features were most dense in Trench 4.

7.1.4 The features which contained finds all date from the later Roman period, and pottery, cbm, animal bone, oyster shell and fragments of iron nails were common finds. The quantity of finds is relatively large, and substantial assemblages were obtained from Ditches F1008, F1021 and F1030 (Tr.4). A bone needle was found in L1031, the uppermost fill of Ditches F1030 and F1040.

# 7.2 Interpretation of the site: archaeology and history

7.2.1 The evaluation succeeded in clarifying the nature of a number of geophysical anomalies re4corded during the previous survey of the site. In particular, the features indicate activity of Romano-British date to be present across the northern and western part of the playing field.

7.2.2 The possible enclosure recorded as a geophysical anomaly was targeted by Trench 4, which revealed ditches of later Romano-British date which may form part of this enclosure. Parallel ditches recorded by the geophysical survey were targeted by Trench 3 and found to contain material of Romano-British date. Further ditches recorded by the geophysical survey in the western part of the site were examined in Trench 1, and were also found to be present, and to date to the Romano-British period.

# 7.3 Interpretation of the site: geology and topography

7.3.1 The site lies on the edge of the clay plateau above the western terrace of the Lea. The site slopes down from north to south, with occupation appearing to be centred on the higher ground to the north and west.

# 7.4 Finds and environmental evidence

7.4.1 The finds assemblage was relatively well-preserved (though the animal bone was of moderate condition) and the volume of finds suggests occupation in the near vicinity. Many of the features recorded during the evaluation were 'open' ditches rather than sealed pits, with a consequently lower potential for the preservation of environmental remains. The bulk of the finds assemblage dates to the later Roman period.

# 7.5 **Preservation of the archaeology**

7.5.1 The archaeological features were commonly sealed by a mature subsoil and were generally well-preserved.

# 7.6 Research potential

7.6.1 The East Anglian Regional Research Frameworks (Glazebrook 1997 and Brown & Glazebrook 2000) set out a number of research agendas which have the potential to be addressed by any potential future works at the site. Research topics for the Roman period are set out by Going & Plouviez (in Brown & Glazebrook 2000, 19-22). These topics include analysis of early and late Roman military developments, further analysis of large and small towns, evidence of food consumption and production, further research into agricultural production, landscape research (in particular further evidence for potential woodland

succession/regression and issues of relict landscapes, as well as further research into the road network and bridging points), further research into rural settlements and coastal issues.

7.6.2 The principal research issues may centre on the potential to clarify the nature of occupation of the site in the Romano-British period (such as the nature of any agricultural activity/occupation, and its possible relationship to the evidence excavated to the west, Romano-British activity further afield at Thorley Park and what is believed to have been the core settlement area to the north of the town at Grange Paddocks/Cannons Close).

## 8 **ARCHIVE DEPOSITION**

8.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with the finds from the site, at Bishop's Stortford Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

## 9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank Countryside Properties (Special Projects) Ltd for commissioning this evaluation (in particular Mr Martin Cooper for his kind assistance). As is also pleased to acknowledge the assistance of Bishop's Stortford High School. AS would also like to thank Mr Laurence Quail of Andrew Martin Associates.

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# APPENDIX 1 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

## APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORTS

#### **The Roman Pottery**

Andrew Peachey

Trial trench excavations produced a total of 484 sherds (5127g) of slightly abraded Romano-British pottery that was largely recovered from late Roman ditch features. For the purposes of this evaluation the pottery was subject to a detailed scan and recorded by sherd count and weight (g) with fabrics examined at x20 magnification and listed below. Where possible fabrics were cross referenced with those recorded at Chelmsford (Going 1987) and in the National Roman Fabric reference collection (Tomber & Dore 1998). However, no attempt was made at a programme of fabric analysis to differentiate the sandy grey wares (GRS), which undoubtedly represent several local and regional sources. All data was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet designed to supplement the recording of any material from future excavations on the site, and to be deposited as part of the site archive.

#### Fabric Descriptions

GRS: Sandy grey wares (Going 1987, 9: fabric 47)

- BSW: Black surfaced/Romanizing grey ware (Going 1987, 9: fabric 45)
- BB2: Black-burnished ware 2 (Going 1987, 8: fabric 41; Tomber & Dore 1998, 131)
- STOR: Grog-tempered storage jar fabric (Going 1987, 9: fabric 44)
- HAD OX: Hadham oxidised ware (Going 1987, 3: fabric 4; Tomber & Dore 1998, 151)
- OXS: Oxidised sandy wares (Going 1987, 6: fabric 21)
- HAD WS: Hadham white-slipped ware (Going 1987, 5: fabric 14)

LNV CC: Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware (Going 1987, 3: fabric 2; Tomber & Dore 1998, 118)

OXF RS: Oxfordshire red-slipped ware (Going 1987, 3: fabric 3; Tomber & Dore 1998, 176)

- ROB SH: Romano-British shell-tempered ware (Going 1987, 10: fabric 51; Tomber & Dore 1998, 212)
- RHZ SA: Rheinzabern samian ware (Tomber & Dore 1998, 39)

TRI SA: Trier samian ware (Tomber & Dore 1998, 41)

#### Commentary

The bulk of the pottery recovered from the trial trench excavations, 91.32% by sherd count (93.84% by weight), was recovered from features in Trench 4 (Table 1) with particularly notable concentrations in Ditches F1008 (157 sherds, 1610g), F1021 (91 sherds, 780g) and F1030 (116 sherds, 1729g). The presence and nature of these relatively well-preserved concentrations, along with further pottery in Trench 4 Ditches F1040 and F1050, is reflected by the mean sherd weight for the Trench 4 Ditches being higher than that for the total assemblage and higher than for any other feature type in the assemblage (Table 1).

Trench	Feature Type	No. of features	No. of sherds	Weight (g)	Mean sherd
No					weight
4	Ditch	5	393	4395	11.18
4	Gully	2	22	156	7.09
4	Pit	2	27	260	9.63
(sub-total fe	or Trench 4)	(9)	(442)	(4811)	(10.88)
1	Ditch	2	23	181	7.87
1	Pit	1	3	16	5.33
(sub-total fe	or Trench 1)	(3)	(26)	(197)	(7.58)
3	Ditch	1	16	119	7.44
(sub-total fo	or Trench 3)	(1)	(16)	(119)	(7.44)

Assemblage Total	13	484	5127	10.59
Table 1: Distribution of R	Comano-British	pottery in excav	vated trenches an	nd feature types

The pottery from Ditch F1008 included a range of fabrics dominated by locally produced coarse wares (GRS, OXS, BSW & STOR) with sparse sherds of BB2, LNV CC & Hadham products (HAD OX & HAD WS). Diagnostic forms are limited to Ditch F1008 L1010 with the most common type the bead and flange rim dish (Going 1987: type B6) produced from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD and present in several fabrics, however a cup-rimmed flagon in GRS (Going 1987: type J7 1/1) was probably only produced in the mid to late 4<sup>th</sup> century AD and is probably also a product of the Hadham kilns (although fabric analysis at this stage could not determine this). Several jars with everted bead rims were also present but could not be assigned specific form types. The range of pottery in Ditch F1021 is very similar to that in Ditch F1008; however sparse sherds of ROB SH are also present, along with an isolated sherd of TRI SA in Ditch F1021 L1022A. The general date of the ditch appears to be in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD although the presence of the samian ware sherd may be indicative of earlier activity or residual material. The diagnostic fragments in Ditch F1021 include bead and plain rims from jars, flagons, storage jars and dishes but cannot narrow the chronological range for the feature any further.

The range of pottery in Ditch F1030 is comparable to that present in the late Roman Ditches F1008 and F1021 in Trench 4 with the addition of an isolated sherd of OXF RS, which suggests a date around the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century or later (although the 4<sup>th</sup> century remains feasible). Numerous coarse ware diagnostic forms are present and are again dominated by bead and flange rim dishes (Going 1987: type B6) with bead rim dishes and jars also present. The fine ware in Ditch F1030 includes fragments from a pedestal base beaker in LNV CC, as well as probably residual sherds of RHZ SA. The pottery in the remaining Trench 4 features: Ditches F1040, F1050, Gullies F1019, F1048, Pits F1028 and F1036 contain a far lesser degree of diagnostic sherds and are dominated by GRS fabrics, although Ditch F1050 L1052 contains a sherd of OXF RS and Gully F1019 sherds of HAD OX, LNV CC & ROB SH that suggest these features may be contemporary with Ditches F1008, F1021 and F1030 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, if not in the latter part of the 4<sup>th</sup> century although without further diagnostic sherds this cannot be categorically stated.

The features in Trench 1: Ditches F1011, F1025 and Pit F1023 produced sparse quantities of GRS and STOR fabrics, including bead and flange rim dish fragments (late 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD), as well as a single small body sherd from an LNV CC indented/folded beaker in Ditch F1025 L1026. The single feature that produced Roman pottery in Trench 3: Ditch F1006 produced sparse sherds of GRS including fragments of a bead and flange rim dish (late 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) with isolated STOR and ROB SH sherds that further suggest a late Roman date. In conclusion the pottery recovered from the trial trench evaluation appears to indicate that the features recorded in Trench 4, principally the concentrations in Ditches F1008, F1021 and F1030, date to late Roman period, probably in the latter half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, while the features in Trenches 1 and 3 certainly date to the late 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries but cannot be confirmed contemporary with the Trench 4 features without further diagnostic sherds. The range of forms and fabrics present in the assemblage are all closely comparable to those recorded as part of the typology for Chelmsford, as may be expected in this part of the region.

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#### The Ceramic Building Materials

Andrew Peachey

Trial trench excavations produced a total of 21 fragments (1481g) of moderately abraded Romano-British CBM from a series of ditch and gully features. The CBM was quantified by fragment count and weight with fabrics analysed at x20 magnification. Forms were assigned according to Brodribb (1987). All data was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that will be deposited as part of the archive.

The CBM was present in a single fabric that is oxidised red (2.5YR 5/8) with inclusions of abundant fine quartz (<0.1mm) with sparse larger quartz grains (0.2-0.5mm), sparse red/black iron oxide (0.2-1.5mm), and occasional flint fragments (2-7mm). The fabric is hard with a slightly powdery feel.

The CBM in this assemblage can be assigned recognised forms but nonetheless is in a highly fragmented condition and no extant dimensions or typological characteristics beyond thickness could be recorded. The bulk of these small fragments are derived from tegula roof tile, including those from Ditches F1008 L1010, F1011 L1012A, F1021 L1022B, F1025 L1026 & L1027 and F1030 L1031. Ditch F1006 L1007 contained single fragments of both tegula and imbrex roof tile, while a further fragment of imbrex roof tile were present in Gully F1019 L1020A.The only fragment of CBM not derived from a form of roof tile was a fragment of 40mm thick brick in Ditch F1021 L1022A, probably derived from a bessalis type brick. The CBM in this assemblage demonstrates a high degree of homogeneity but due to the low fragment size and low degree of concentration does not allow any further conclusions to be drawn.

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# **The Animal Bone**

By Carina Phillips

#### Introduction

194 fragments of animal bone were recovered during hand excavation. The bone is of moderate condition. Fragmentation in some instances hindered identification of the bone and is likely to have affected identification of butchery evidence. The hand recovery technique used may be biased towards the recovery of larger bones, possibly resulting in an under-representation of small bones and small species, particularly bird and fish. All the features containing animal bone have been given Roman spot dates.

Method

Bones were identified and recorded to species and element when possible. The category sheep/goat has been used unless it was possible to clearly identify the species sheep (*Ovis sp.*) or goat (*Capra sp.*). Measurements were taken when viable following the methods of Jones *et al* (1976) and von den Driesch (1976). When available the fusion state of identifiable bones was also recorded. It was not possible to assess ages for any species due to the absence of tooth eruption/wear and low amount of bone fusion data. Fragments unidentifiable to a particular species were recorded under the categories of 'large sized', consisting of cattle (*Bos sp.*), large deer and horse (*Equus sp.*) sized fragments and 'small sized' consisting of sheep/goat, small deer, pig (*Sus sp.*) and dog (*Canis familiaris*) sized bone fragments. All other unidentifiable bone fragments were recorded as such. Evidence of burning, sawing, chopping, knife-cutting and gnawing was also recorded, as was smashed bone. The minimum number of individuals (MNI) of a species was calculated from most frequent left or right skeletal element (minimum number of elements).

#### Results

30% of the bones were identified to species. Cattle (*Bos* sp.) and sheep/goat (*Ovis/Capra* sp.) were most frequently identified in the assemblage. Butchery evidence was observed in small numbers and occurred most frequently on cattle bones. The butchery evidence indicates carcass skinning, dismemberment and filleting and evidence of marrow removal. Domestic species horse (*Equus* sp.), pig (*Sus* sp.) and dog (*Canis familiaris*) bones were also identified. A fragment of chopped red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) antler represents the only wild species identified in the assemblage.

	NISP	MNI	Chopped	Cut	Smashed	Gnawed	Burnt
Cattle	35	4	3	2	2	0	0
Sheep/goat	13	2	1	0	0	0	0
Horse	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Pig	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Dog	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Red Deer	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Bird	1	-	0	0	0	0	0
Large sized	38	-	0	0	6	0	0
Small sized	9	-	2	0	0	1	0
Unidentifiabl							
e	89	-	1	0	0	0	2
Total	194	-	8	2	8	1	2

Table 2: Number of Identified Specimens/fragments (NISP), Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI) and counts of butchery, gnawed and burnt bone.

#### Discussion

The number of fragments identifiable to species, suggest that cattle and sheep/goat were utilised in the highest numbers. This is a usual occurrence in British archaeological assemblages, with cattle, sheep/goat and pig representing the main meaty producing species. The butchery evidence indicates utilisation of the carcasses; however it is not possible to suggest husbandry patterns for any species due to the lack of ageing data and small amount of butchery evidence. This is likely to be a result of the small size of the assemblage. The presence of chopped red deer antler indicates utilisation of this species. Red deer prefer a woodland/forest environment suggesting this environment may have been close to the site. They can adapt to more open environments, but because it is not their natural environment they are usually smaller, rarely achieving the size of woodland and forest animals (Ritchie 1920 *The Bishop's Stortford High School, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire* 

cited by Yalden 1999). It was not possible to assess if the antler fragment represented a shed antler.

#### Potential

Further excavation may also produce an assemblage limited by its small size. If this is the case it may only be possible to identify some of the bone to species; detailed consideration of the utilisation of these species and the butchery techniques used will be restricted. Further evidence of the surrounding environment and utilisation of wild species, particularly red deer may be gained from further excavation.

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#### PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX 1

Trench 1 looking north



3



2



4

Trench 4 looking north



5 Trench 5 looking south



6 Pit F1025, ditch F1011D and ditch F1023, Trench 1 looking east



Demolition layer F1003, Trench 2 looking northwest





7

Ditch F1030 and F1040, Trench 4 looking southwest



8

Ditch F1006, Trench 3 looking northwest





Ditch F1008, Trench 4 looking east















	Archaeological Solutions Ltd	
g. 3	Trench plans and sections	
e 1:100	and 1:20 at A3	
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# Archaeological Solutions Ltd Fig. 4 Trench plans and sections Scale 1:100 and 1:20 at A3

