

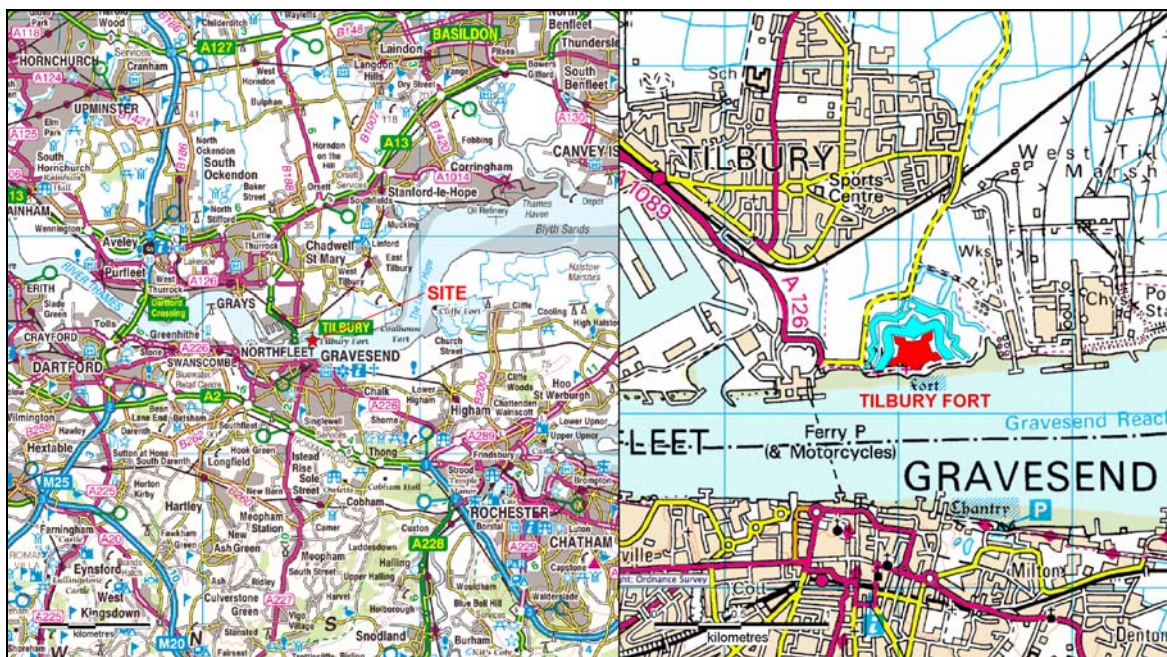
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

TILBURY FORT, TILBURY, ESSEX (ESSEX SMR ref. 1678)

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF GROUNDWORK ASSOCIATED WITH THE INSTALLATION OF AN ELECTRIC CABLE WITHIN THE FORT COMPLEX

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2006/120

Summary: Archaeological monitoring of the excavation of trenches for an electric cable within Tilbury Fort, Tilbury, did not reveal any significant features or deposits. This site is recorded on the Essex County Sites and Monuments Record under the Essex SMR ref. 1678. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, with funding from English Heritage.



The installation of a new electrical supply was required in order to provide safe lighting within the magazine and cartridges stores under the North-East bastion as part of ongoing improvements to the fort's electrical system. The work entailed the installation of a new cable to link into the existing electrical system running from an electrical box in the former officer's stables to a second electrical box mounted in the southwestern entrance of the North-East bastion magazines. This required the excavation of a short trench across a grassed area within the fort to link into an existing duct. As there was a potential for the loss of archaeological evidence the excavation of trenches was subjected to archaeological monitoring. Figure 2 illustrates the general layout of the fort.



Figure 2: General Layout of Tilbury Fort

The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team who were commissioned and funded by English Heritage.

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Methodology

The monitoring was undertaken through observation of the trenches during their excavation, to observe for cut features and any significant deposits. The spoil was also examined for artefacts. The trench locations and depths were recorded and the revealed soil profile was noted. A small number digital photographs were taken as part of the record of the works undertaken (reproduced as Plates I-IV). A few fragments of ceramic building material (brick, etc.) and other relatively undiagnostic objects were recovered but these were not retained and all excavated material, spoil, artefacts and all, was returned to the trenches. Had any significant artefacts been identified during the monitoring these would have been retained for further analysis.

The trenches themselves were hand dug by a local building contractor using narrow spades with the spoil being placed immediately alongside the trench. The cable was laid within the trench which was then backfilled and the turf replaced.

Results

A single trench, just under 0.2m wide, was hand excavated to a depth of 0.25m to 0.3m. The cable ran from the southern of the two entrances to the North-East bastion magazines to the former officer's stable; see figure 3 for a plan of its route. Excavation was commenced close to the top of the earthwork that covers the magazines in the North-East bastion of the fort and ran down the the slope of the earthwork before turning to the southeast and running along the side of the roadway for *c.* 14m before entering an existing



Figure 3: Cable Route

cable duct that ran beneath the roadway. This duct could be accessed from within the former stable through a hole in floor adjacent the northeastern wall.

The initial section of trench running down the magazine earthwork followed an earlier electric cable. At the base of the earthwork this cable continued in a southwest direction whilst the course of the new cable entailed a gentle curve to the southeast. Only a dark brown loamy topsoil was encountered along this stretch of trench. The trench continued along the base of the earthwork running adjacent to the roadway. Again only the upper layer of stratigraphy was disturbed. This comprised a dark brown/black sand and silt containing a moderately large amount of small brick rubble fragments and occasional fragments of mortar. The brick fragments were similar in appearance to the grey-brown bricks as used in the North-East bastion gun battery. No significant artefacts were recovered from the trench fill and all material was returned to the trench.

Conclusion

No significant archaeological deposits appear to have been damaged or destroyed by these works. The trench excavated for the new cable was relatively shallow and did not encounter any significant or meaningful stratigraphy.



Plate I: View of trench adjacent magazine entrance



Plate II: View of trench along base of earthwork



Plate III: General view of work underway. Camera facing southeast



Plate IV: General view of work underway. Camera facing northwest