

BEAUCHAMP SCHOOL

WICKFORD

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND EXCAVATION



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

MAY 2011

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As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or the presentation of this report. Please contact the Archaeological Fieldwork Manager, at the

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BEAUCHAMPS SCHOOL

WICKFORD

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & EXCAVATION

Client: GML Construction Limited

NGR: TQ 76109352

Site Code: WKBS11

Oasis No.: essexcou1-101376

Dates of Fieldwork: 15th and 22nd March 2011

SUMMARY

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at Beauchamps School, Wickford, Essex in advance of the construction of a new modular classroom, external canopied/ covered teaching area and associated service runs.

Although the area is rich in archaeological remains no archaeological features or finds of any period were noted or recovered during the monitoring works. However, this is more likely to be a reflection of the comparatively small area investigated and the level of disturbance arising from the original construction of the School, rather than an indicator of a genuine absence of remains in the surrounding area. Given the absence of any remains it is clear that the development has had no impact upon the archaeological record.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of archaeological monitoring undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of a new classroom and external covered teaching/ training area at Beauchamps School, Wickford, Essex. The fieldwork was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) for GML Construction Limited on behalf of Atkins for the school, in accordance with an archaeological brief prepared by Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (ECC HEM 2011) and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ECC FAU (2011).

The monitoring was undertaken in response to a condition placed on planning consent by the local planning authority (Basildon District Council) which required that a programme of archaeological works be undertaken prior to development (Planning Ref.: 10/1402/FULL).

The site archive will be deposited in Chelmsford Museum. A digital version of this report will be submitted, along with a project summary, to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>).

2.0 BACKGROUND (Fig. 1)

2.1 Topography and Geology

Beauchamps School is located on the northeast side of Wickford, surrounded by residential properties on three sides and playing fields to the north, at NGR TQ 76109352. The classroom and canopy are located in an area of grass to the north of the existing school buildings and measure c. 9m x 10m and 6m x 15m respectively. The surface geology of the Wickford area comprises London Clay.

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

The following archaeological background utilises the Essex Historic Environment Record (HER), held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford.

The proposed development lies within an area containing Iron Age and Roman remains (HER 7534, 7535 and 7536). Those of the Iron Age period probably relate to Early and Middle Iron Age farmsteads, followed by extensive Late Iron Age enclosures and settlement. A polygonal structure was possibly a shrine. The Late Iron Age settlement was possibly destroyed by fire. Settlement across the area during the Roman period probably reached a peak during the 4th century. The remains from that period include 1st to 4th-century cremation burials and a possible villa with masonry foundations.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General aims

The specific aim of the investigation was to determine the presence or absence, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any archaeological remains that were present within the development area.

Specific attention was to be paid to:

- To investigate the origins and development of the Iron Age settlements
- To obtain more information about the Roman settlement
- To look for signs of post-Roman occupation

3.2 Research objectives

In the event that significant archaeological remains were encountered this report would have aimed to place the results in context with the research objectives laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000). As no features of any significance were identified the project will not contribute to any of the research agendas.

4.0 METHOD

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the machine excavation of 25 foundations pads for the modular classroom, each measuring 0.6m square by 0.45m deep, and a series of drains runs and a new soakaway. Due to the complete absence of remains in these areas, with the agreement of the ECC HEM monitoring officer, the foundation pads for the canopy were not monitored.

All work was carried out in accordance with IfA (Institute for Archaeologists) by-laws and guidelines and complied with Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003). Standard ECC FAU excavation, artefact collection and recording methodologies were employed throughout.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

Monitoring was undertaken during the removal of a large modern spoil mound and the initial reduction of ground levels, followed by the excavation of 25 post-pads, each measuring 0.6m square by 0.45m deep, for the new modular classroom (Plate 1). The excavated sequence largely consisted of topsoil with subsoil exposed in the base of a number of the pads (Plate

2). Redeposited clay was also noted in several pads, sandwiched between the topsoil and subsoil, and it appears that none of the post-pads was of sufficient depth to reach the archaeological horizon.

Monitoring of the new drain runs and a soakaway revealed a similar deposit sequence, with clean natural clay exposed in the soakaway at a depth of 0.7m below existing ground level, overlain by 0.4m of subsoil and a 0.3m thick layer of topsoil. The northern half of the pipe trench, nearest the new classroom, contained much redeposited material and natural clay was not seen, while at the southern end of the trench, nearest the existing Sports Hall, natural clay was exposed below a very thin layer of topsoil, suggesting that the area had been stripped previously (Plate 3).

6.0 DISCUSSION

Although the area is rich in archaeological remains no archaeological features or finds of any period were noted or recovered during the monitoring works. However, this is more likely to be a reflection of the comparatively small area investigated and the level of disturbance arising from the original construction of the School, rather than an indicator of a genuine absence of remains in the surrounding area. Given the absence of any remains it is clear that the development has had no impact upon the archaeological record.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The involvement of the ECC FAU in the project was initiated by Trevor Pyman of Atkins and the works were commissioned by GML Construction Limited on behalf of the School. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Trevor Ennis of the ECC Field Archaeology Unit, the illustrations are by Andrew Lewsey And the project was managed by Adrian Scruby, who also authored the report. The works were monitored by Richard Havis of the ECC Historic Environment Management team, on behalf of Basildon District Council.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Glazebrook J. (eds) | 2000 | <i>Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy</i> , E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. 8 |
| ECC FAU | 2011 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Monitoring & Excavation at Beauchamps School, Wickford, Essex</i> . ECC FAU internal publication |
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| Gurney, D. | 2003 | <i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> , E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. 14 |
| Institute for
Archaeologists | 2001 | <i>Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation</i> (revised) |

APPENDIX 1: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

SITE NAME: Beauchamps School, Wickford, Essex
SITE CODE: WKBS11

Index to Archive:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 ECC HEM Design Brief
- 1.2 ECC FAU WSI

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Client Report

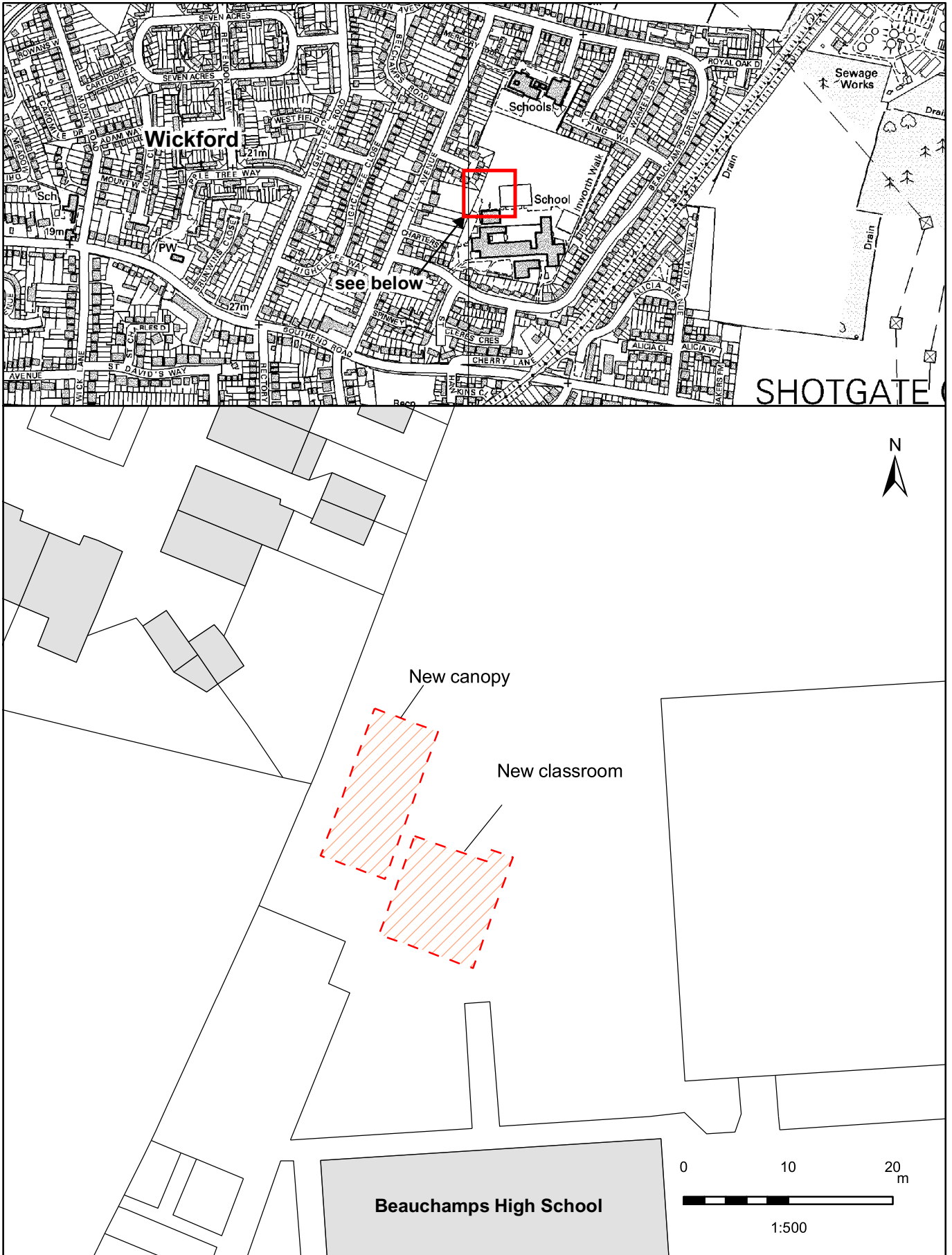
3. Site Archive

- 3.1 Plan Register
- 3.2 Section Register
- 3.3 2 A4 plan/section sheetS
- 3.4 Trench location plan
- 3.5 Photographic Registers
- 3.6 Site Photographic Record (1 set of Black & White prints, 1 Set of digital images on disk)
- 3.7 Miscellaneous notes/plans

APPENDIX 2: HER SUMMARY SHEET

HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Beauchamps School, Wickford, Essex	
Parishes: Wickford	District: Basildon
NGR: TQ 76109352	Site Code: WKBS11
Type of Work: Archaeological Monitoring	Site Director/Group: T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Dates of Work: 15 th and 22 nd March 2011	Size of Area Investigated: 90 sqm
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Chelmsford Museum	Funding source: Client - GML Construction Limited
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.: 7534, 7535 and 7536
Final Report: EAH note	Oasis No.: essexcou1-101376
Periods Represented: modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>Archaeological monitoring was carried out at Beauchamps School, Wickford, Essex in advance of the construction of a new modular classroom, external canopied/ covered teaching area and associated service runs.</p> <p>Although the area is rich in archaeological remains no archaeological features or finds of any period were noted or recovered during the monitoring works. However, this is more likely to be a reflection of the comparatively small area investigated and the level of disturbance arising from the original construction of the School, rather than an indicator of a genuine absence of remains in the surrounding area. Given the absence of any remains it is clear that the development has had no impact upon the archaeological record.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: None	
Author of Summary: A. Scruby	Date of Summary: May 2011



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Fig.1. Areas of archaeological monitoring



Plate 1: General view of post-pads under excavation



Plate 2: View of post-pad



Plate 3: View of service trench looking south