

**PORTERS HALL COTTAGE  
STEBBING  
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING**



**Essex County Council  
Field Archaeology Unit**

**SEPTEMBER 2011**



# PORTERS HALL COTTAGE

## STEBBING

## ESSEX

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

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	ECC HEM
	Essex Historic Environment Record

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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# PORTERS HALL COTTAGE

## STEBBING

## ESSEX

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & EXCAVATION

Client: Francine Morgan

NGR: TL 67800 23500

Site Code: STPC10

Oasis No.: essexcou1-109384

Dates of Fieldwork: 09<sup>th</sup> September

#### **SUMMARY**

*Archaeological monitoring was carried out at Porters Hall Cottage, Stebbing during groundworks associated with the construction of a new house and garage, including the removal of foundations and a concrete floor slab from a previously demolished house on the site and the reduction of ground levels for new concrete rafts for the house and garage. The proposed development area lies to the south of the Scheduled Monument of Porters Hall (SM 20691), a medieval moated site with water-filled arms varying between 6 and 12 metres wide. The present Porters Hall dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is listed Grade II\*. One arm of the moat extends towards the development area, potentially extending beneath the position of the proposed garage, while the development area also lies on the edge of an historic Green probably associated with Porters Hall.*

*Although the area is rich in archaeological remains no archaeological features or finds of any period were noted or recovered during the monitoring works. Ground disturbance arising from the construction of the original house appeared to be relatively minor and localised, with only shallow foundations and drain runs, while the rest of the plot, including the new house footprint and garage appeared to be largely undisturbed, with the removed topsoil giving off a strong, rank smell suggesting that it was poorly drained and had been infrequently turned-over. No trace was seen of the postulated moat arm extending towards the site, while the absence of remains from other periods is more likely to be a reflection of the comparatively small area investigated 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.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report describes the results of a programme of archaeological monitoring undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of a new house and garage at Porters Hall Cottage, Stebbing, Essex. The fieldwork was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) for the landowner, Francine Morgan, in accordance with an archaeological brief prepared by Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (ECC HEM 2010) and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ECC FAU (2010).

A planning application for the construction of a new house and garage was submitted to Uttlesford District in July 2010 (UTT/1194/10/FUL). Due to the location of the site in an area of some archaeological potential the ECC Historic Environment Management team recommended that a condition requiring a programme of archaeological works be attached to any grant of consent, based on the advice given in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

The site archive will be deposited in Saffron Walden 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**

The development site comprises a residential property and garden known as Porters Hall Cottage (TL 6780 2350). The plot is located on the west side of Porters Hall Road and is surrounded by agricultural fields and grassland, with the Scheduled moated site of Porters Hall located immediately to the north. The plot is currently occupied by an existing house that will be demolished prior to construction of the new house and garage (Fig. 1).

### **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 area lies to the south of the Scheduled Monument of Porters Hall (SM 20691), a medieval moated site with water-filled arms varying between 6 and 12 metres wide (HER 1236-7). The present Porters Hall dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is listed Grade II\*. One arm of the moat extends towards the development area, potentially extending

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beneath the position of the proposed garage, while the development area also lies on the edge of an historic Green probably associated with Porters Hall.

### **3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 General aims**

The general aim of the archaeological work was to identify and record any remains that are likely to be damaged or disturbed by groundworks associated with the development.

#### **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**

The new buildings will be constructed with piled foundations and the archaeological work comprised the monitoring of the removal of the foundations and floor slab for the demolished house formerly standing on the plot, topsoil stripping, and the reduction of ground levels for a new concrete raft for the house and garage. Due to the relatively shallow depth at which undisturbed clean natural geology occurred monitoring of the excavation of the ring-beam trenches was not required. Due to the small size of the site/ compact nature of the development all of the monitoring works were undertaken in a single day.

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 the floor slab, drainage runs and other below-ground remains of the demolished cottage that had formerly stood on the site, followed by the reduction of ground levels to accommodate a pile mat and concrete raft for the new house and garage.

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The remains of the former cottage were cleared by mechanical excavator and shown to be of relatively poor construction, with shallow concrete slab floors. Service/ drain runs were also very shallow, with in some instances foul and surface water drains lying immediately under a concrete slab yard surface/ path (Plate 1). No archaeological remains were noted in the area of the former cottage.

Topsoil stripping and the reduction of ground levels for the pile mat/ raft for the new house and garage also revealed no archaeological remains, with a thin (c. 10 – 15cm thick), rank-smelling layer of topsoil removed to reveal a yellow-brown chalky clay (Plates 2 and 3).

Monitoring ceased once clean natural geology had been reached and the absence of any archaeological remains established.

## **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 may well be a reflection of the comparatively small area investigated 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**

ECC FAU would like to thank Francine Morgan, owner of the site, for commissioning the work, and Michael Spink of Rightbuild (Essex), who carried out the groundworks. 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 Uttlesford District Council.



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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- |                                     |      |   |
|-------------------------------------|------|---|
| Brown N. and<br>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. <b>8</b>                          |
| ECC FAU                             | 2010 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Monitoring &amp; Excavation at Porters Hall Cottage, Stebbing, Essex</i> . ECC FAU internal publication             |
| ECC HEM                             | 2010 | <i>Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring &amp; Excavation of a proposed house and garage at Porters Hall Cottage, Stebbing, Essex</i> . ECC HEM internal publication |
| Glazebrook, J. (ed.)                | 1997 | <i>Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 1, resource assessment</i> , E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. <b>3</b>                                   |
| Gurney, D.                          | 2003 | <i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> , E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. <b>14</b>  |
| Institute for<br>Archaeologists     | 2001 | <i>Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation</i> (revised)   |

## **APPENDIX 1: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE**

**SITE NAME:** Porters Hall Cottage, Stebbing, Essex  
**SITE CODE:** STPC10

### **Index to Archive:**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 ECC HEM Design Brief
- 1.2 ECC FAU WSI

#### **2. Research Archive**

- 2.1 Client Report

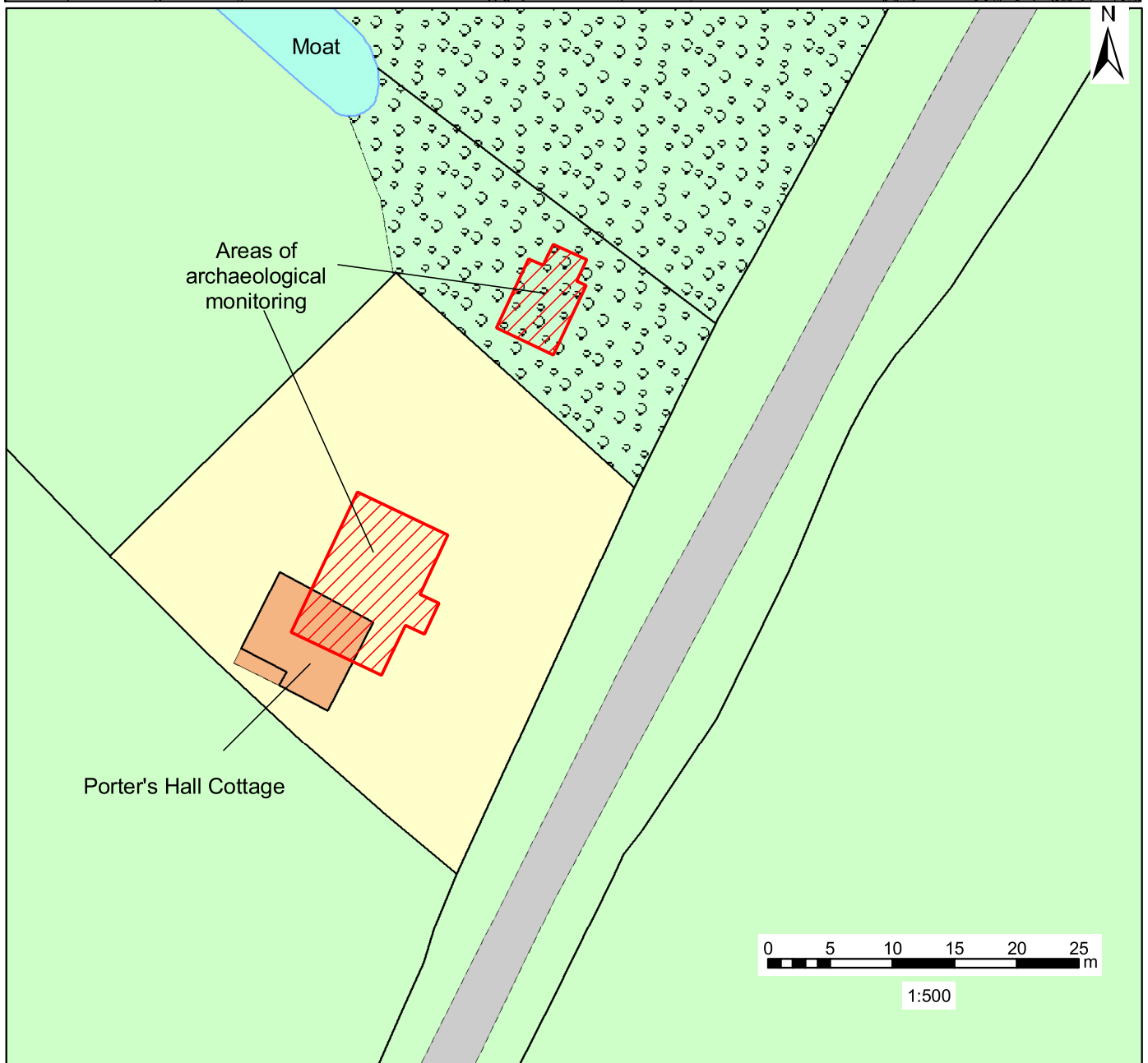
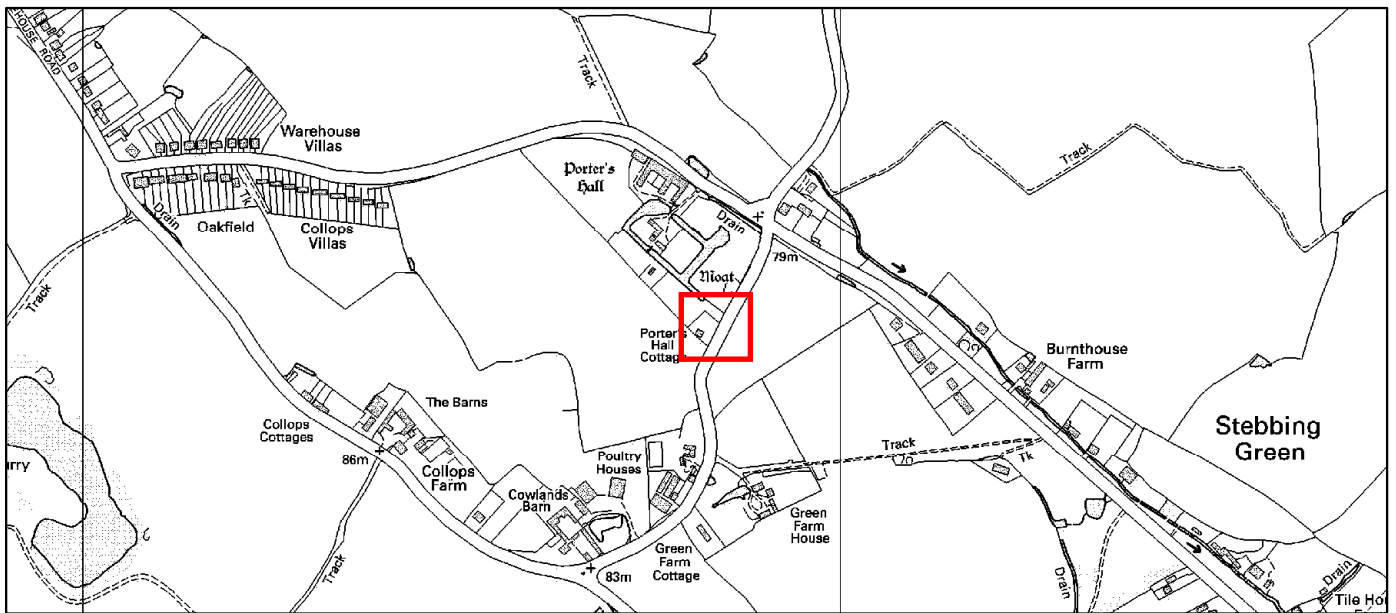
#### **3. Site Archive**

- 3.1 Location plan
- 3.2 Photographic Registers
- 3.3 Site Photographic Record (1 set of Black & White prints, 1 Set of digital images on disk)
- 3.4 Miscellaneous notes/plans

## APPENDIX 2: HER SUMMARY SHEET

### HER SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site name/Address:</b> Porters Hall Cottage, Porters Hall Road, Stebbing, Essex	
<b>Parishes:</b> Stebbing	<b>District:</b> Uttlesford
<b>NGR:</b> TL 67800 23500	<b>Site Code:</b> STPC10
<b>Type of Work:</b> Archaeological Monitoring	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
<b>Dates of Work:</b> 09 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> 90 sqm
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b> Saffron Walden Museum	<b>Funding source:</b> Client – Francine Morgan
<b>Further Seasons Anticipated?:</b> No	<b>Related HER Nos.:</b> None
<b>Final Report:</b> EAH note	<b>Oasis No.:</b> essexcou1-109384
<b>Periods Represented:</b> modern	
<p><b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b></p> <p>Archaeological monitoring was carried out at Porters Hall Cottage, Stebbing during groundworks associated with the construction of a new house and garage, including the removal of foundations and a concrete floor slab from a previously demolished house on the site and the reduction of ground levels for new concrete rafts for the house and garage. The proposed development area lies to the south of the Scheduled Monument of Porters Hall (SM 20691), a medieval moated site with water-filled arms varying between 6 and 12 metres wide. The present Porters Hall dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is listed Grade II*. One arm of the moat extends towards the development area, potentially extending beneath the position of the proposed garage, while the development area also lies on the edge of an historic Green probably associated with Porters Hall.</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. Ground disturbance arising from the construction of the original house appeared to be relatively minor and localised, with only shallow foundations and drain runs, while the rest of the plot, including the new house footprint and garage appeared to be largely undisturbed, with the removed topsoil giving off a strong, rank smell suggesting that it was poorly drained and had been infrequently turned-over. No trace was seen of the postulated moat arm extending towards the site, while the absence of remains from other periods is more likely to be a reflection of the comparatively small area investigated 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>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> A. Scruby	<b>Date of Summary:</b> September 2011



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Fig.1. Indicative location of archaeological watching brief





Plate 1 Removal of floor slabs, yard area and drains to former Porters Hall Cottage

Plate 2 Topsoil stripping of house footprint







Plate 3 Garage area following topsoil stripping