

**BRIDEWELL HOUSE
WYDIAL ROAD
BUNTINGFORD
HERTFORDSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

APRIL 2013

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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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Plate 4 Trench 4

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BRIDEWELL HOUSE
WYDIAL ROAD
BUNTINGFORD
HERTFORDSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Client: Graham Dickerson (Grovebury Homes Ltd.)

NGR: TL 36295 29705

Site Code: BUWR 13

Oasis No: 147968

Dates of Fieldwork: 11/04/2013

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land at Bridewell House, Wydial Road, Buntingford, in advance of the construction of a two-storey dwelling, a detached garage and an access road. Four evaluation trenches measuring on average 7.1m long by 1.7m wide were excavated across the 317 sqm site.

Located on the edge of the centre of Buntingford, Bridewell House is a timber-framed grade II listed building that was erected in the late 15th century (HER 10074). It was previously the Wagon & Horses Inn, until 1700, and then a local bridewell up to 1843 when it was subdivided into two cottages. The building was renovated in 1939 and an extension was added eleven years later.

The archaeological investigation revealed four soil layers overlying an orangey brown silty gravel natural deposit. Two layers noted underneath the existing topsoil and an immediately underlying soil layer appeared to be the original topsoil and a subsoil horizon, which were presumably buried during landscaping works in the past, perhaps when the housing estate around Bridewell House was erected or if the ground level on the site was raised to protect against flooding from the nearby river. No archaeological features and only a few fragments of unstratified, modern brick and animal bone were discovered.

Although it is likely that archaeological remains associated with the existing house survive closer to the property, particularly in the rear, in the "backyard" area; however, the results of the evaluation show that the investigated area is devoid of archaeological remains and, as a

consequence, it is suggested that the proposed development will have no impact upon the archaeological record.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out on a plot of land attached to Bridewell House, Wydial Road, Buntingford, prior to the construction of a two storey dwelling, a detached garage and an access road (3/12/0674/FP). The archaeological work was undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of Graham Dickerson of Grovebury Homes Ltd., in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by ECC FAU (2012) and approved by the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority.

Copies of this report will be supplied to Grovebury Homes Ltd., HCC CHEU and the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record. 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>). The site archive and copies of the report will be deposited at Hertford Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and Geology (Fig. 1)

The site is located in the centre of Buntingford, between High Street and the River Rib, on a plot of land attached to Bridewell House (TL 36295 29705). The ground around the site slopes slightly towards the river and the results of the evaluation show, that the development area had been a subject to landscaping works at some point in the past. The underlying geology consists of glaciofluvial deposits (sand and gravel with lenses of silt and clay) overlying Chalk.

2.2 Archaeology and History (Fig. 1)

The following archaeological background is based on information contained in the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

Bridewell House is a timber-framed grade II listed building that was erected in the late 15th century (HER 10074). It was previously the Wagon & Horses Inn until 1700 and then a local bridewell up to 1843 when it was changed into two cottages. The building was renovated in 1939 and an extension was added eleven years later.

Buntingford developed in the post-medieval period around the Old London Road (Roman Ermine Street), now the High Street, which runs through the centre of Buntingford and used to be main route between London and Cambridge.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

The specific aim of the evaluation was to determine the presence or absence, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any archaeological deposits that may be present and the likely impact of development upon them. Information provided by the evaluation would then be used to determine the necessity for any further archaeological work to mitigate the impact of development, based on recommendations from the HCC CHEU monitoring officer.

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) and the more-recent *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2012). As no archaeological features were identified the project has little potential to contribute to any of the research agendas.

4.0 METHOD (Fig. 1)

Four archaeological trial-trenches, totalling 28.4m, were excavated by a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of an archaeologist. With the agreement of a member of HCC CHEU, the proposed number, location and lengths of the trenches were amended on site due to the presence of existing services, thick concrete garage foundations, trees and an access road. The new location of the trenches was surveyed with a GPS and is shown on figure 1. Further information on the trench co-ordinates, depths, lengths and alignments can be found in appendix 1.

The spoil heaps were scanned for unstratified artefacts. Standard ECC FAU excavation, artefact collection and recording methodologies were employed throughout. ECC FAU is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) and all work was carried out in accordance with IfA by-laws and guidelines (IfA 2010; 2008) and complied with Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003).

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

The deposit sequence was fairly consistent across the site and consisted of four layers. The topsoil comprised 0.2-0.3m of light to mid greyish brown sandy silt and was underlain by 0.2-0.25m of mid yellowish grey gravelly silt subsoil. Beneath was a 0.25-0.3m thick layer of dark greyish brown friable sandy silt, overlying 0.2-0.25m of light greyish brown silty sand-gravel, which in turn was underlain by mid orangey brown compact silty gravel natural (Plate 5). A few unstratified fragments of brick, tile and animal bone were discovered across the site but no archaeological features were identified. All finds were modern and none of them was retained.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND ASSESMENT OF RESULTS

The presence of four different layers overlying the natural deposits indicates that the site has been a subject to landscaping works in the past. The first two layers, lying immediately above the natural, were presumably the original topsoil and subsoil that had been buried underneath the two top layers, which now comprise the current topsoil and a base layer, when the ground was raised and levelled. It was not possible to establish when those landscaping works took place, although the amount of artefacts discovered, much smaller than expected in the vicinity of a building that had been in use for the last four centuries, suggests a fairly recent date. The potential archaeological remains might have been truncated during that process, however it is more likely that the investigated area was devoid of any features and if such are present on site, they are surviving closer to the existing house, perhaps to the rear, where rubbish pits would normally be located. Consequently, it is suggested that the proposed development will have no impact upon the archaeological record.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ECC FAU would like to thank Graham Dickerson of Grovebury Homes for commissioning the work. The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Lewsey, Robert McIntosh and Lukasz Miciak of the ECC Field Archaeology Unit. The report was prepared by Lukasz Miciak with illustrations by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Alison Tinniswood and Kate Batt of HCC CHEU.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------|---|
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APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DATA

All dimensions given in metres

Trench	Measurements	Co-ordinates (end, centre)
1	7.3m x 1.8m x 0.9m, orientated NW-SE	X = 536300.7 Y = 229703.6 X = 536302.7 Y = 229696.6
2	7.5m x 1.75m x 0.85m, orientated NW-SE	X = 536296.7 Y = 229702.3 X = 536298.6 Y = 229695.0
3	6.1m x 1.6m 0.75m, orientated NE-SW	X = 536278.5 Y = 229707.4 X = 536284.5 Y = 229708.7
4	7.5m x 1.6m x 1.05m, orientated NW-SE	X = 536285.0 Y = 229700.2 X = 536287.2 Y = 229693.0

APPENDIX 2: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

Site Name: Bridewell House, Wydial Road , Buntingford, Herts
Site Code:

Index to Archive:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Design Brief
- 1.2 Written Scheme of Investigation

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Client Report (1 bound, 1 unbound copy)

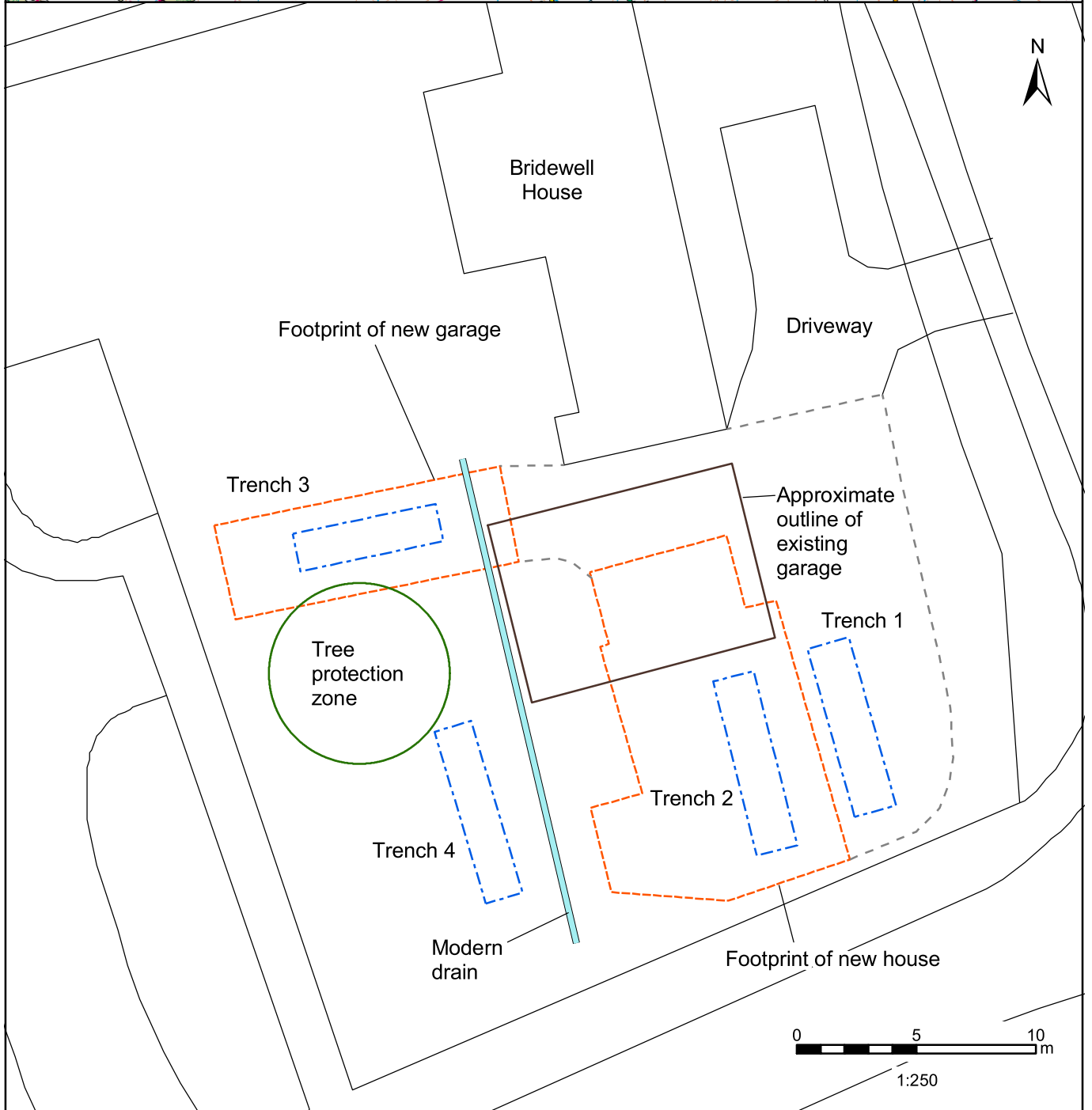
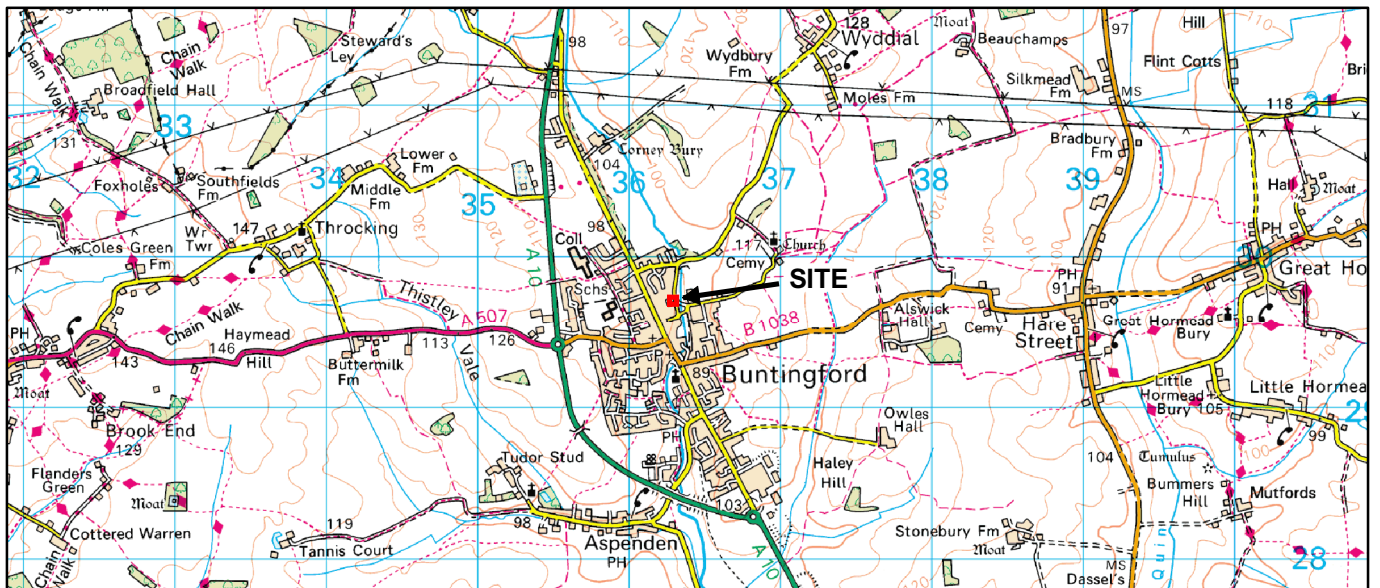
3. Site Archive

- 3.1 Trench Recording Sheet
- 3.2 Photographic Register and thumbnail print sheet
- 3.3 Site Photographic Record (colour prints from digital images)
- 3.4 CD-Rom containing digital data (report copy, photo images, etc)

APPENDIX 3

HERTFORDSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address: Bridewell House, Wydial Road, Buntingford, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire	District: East Herts	
Village/Town: Buntingford	Parish: Buntingford	
Planning application reference: 3/12/0674/FP		
HER Enquiry reference: N/A		
Funding source: Developer		
Nature of application: Single, two storey house		
Present land use: Garden		
Size of application area: 317 sqm	Size of area investigated: 28.4 sqm	
NGR (to 8 figures minimum): TL 36295 29705		
Site code (if applicable): BUWR 13		
Site director/Organization: L Miciak, ECC Field Archaeology Unit		
Type of work: Archaeological Evaluation		
Date of work:	Start: 11/04/13	Finish: 11/04/13
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Hertford		
Related HER Nos: N/A	Periods represented: N/A	
Relevant previous summaries/reports: N/A		
Summary of fieldwork results:		
<p><i>An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land at Bridewell House, Wydial Road, Buntingford, in advance of the construction of a two-storey dwelling, a detached garage and an access road. Four evaluation trenches measuring on average 7.1m long by 1.7m wide were excavated across the 317 sqm site.</i></p> <p><i>Located on the edge of the centre of Buntingford, Bridewell House is a timber-framed grade II listed building that was erected in the late 15th century (HER 10074). It was previously the Wagon & Horses Inn, until 1700, and then a local bridewell up to 1843 when it was changed into two cottages. The building was renovated in 1939 and an extension was added eleven years later.</i></p> <p><i>The archaeological investigation revealed four soils layers overlying an orangey brown silty gravel natural deposit. Two layers noted underneath the existing topsoil and immediately underlying soil layer appeared to be the original topsoil and subsoil, which were presumably buried during landscaping works in the past, perhaps when the housing estate around Bridewell House was erected or if the ground level on the site was raised to protect against flooding from the nearby river. As no archaeological feature and only a few fragments of unstratified, modern brick and animal bone were discovered, it is possible that some of the remains were lost at that time.</i></p> <p><i>It is believed that valuable deposits are still surviving in the immediate vicinity to the existing house, although the results of the evaluation show that the investigated area was devoid of archaeological remains and, as a consequence, it is suggested that the proposed development will have no impact upon the archaeological record.</i></p>		
Author of summary: L Miciak	Date of summary: April 2013	



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Fig.1. Location of archaeological evaluation trenches



Plate 1. Trench 1



Plate 2. Trench 2



Plate 3. Trench 3



Plate 4. Trench 4



Plate 5. Sequence of stratigraphy, trench 4