

**PALLET YARD
PRIORS GREEN
TAKELEY
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
BY
TRIAL TRENCHING**



Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit



December 2006

**PALLET YARD
PRIORS GREEN, TAKELEY
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
BY
TRIAL TRENCHING**

Prepared By: Andrew Robertson Position: Project Officer	Signature: Date:
Approved By: Mark Atkinson Position: Unit Manager	Signature: Date:

Document Ref.	1701evalrep.doc
Report Issue Date	December 2006
Circulation	RPS Planning
	Countryside Properties Plc
	ECC Historic Environment Management
	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

Field Archaeology Unit,

Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 3YQ

Tel: 01376 331470

Fax: 01376 331428

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. BACKGROUND	2
2.1 Location and topography	
2.2 Geology	
2.3 History and Archaeology	
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	3
4. METHOD	4
5. FIELDWORK RESULTS	4
6. FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL	5
7. CONCLUSIONS	5
Acknowledgements	5
BIBLIOGRAPHY	6
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Fieldwork Data	8
Appendix 2: Archive Index	8
Appendix 3: EHER Summary	9
Figures	
Figure 1. Location of trenches in relation to Geotechnical pits and Pallet Yard	7

**PALLET YARD
PRIORS GREEN, TAKELEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
BY
TRIAL TRENCHING**

Client: RPS Planning (on behalf of Countryside Properties Plc)

FAU Project No.: 1701

NGR: TL 5690 2125

Site Code: TAPG 06

OASIS No.: essexcou1-18996

Date of Fieldwork: 25 – 26 September 2006

SUMMARY

As part of an ongoing programme of construction works in the Priors Green area of Takeley, Essex, Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned by RPS Planning to evaluate by trial trenching the eastern edge of a former Pallet Yard alongside the Dunmow Road.

Two trial trenches were excavated along the eastern edge of the Pallet Yard, the remaining area was shown to be highly truncated by the monitoring of geotechnical trial pits. Although a build-up of topsoil contaminated by modern debris was observed, no archaeological features or deposits were identified in either of the trenches, nor any artefacts collected.

There is no indication that archaeological remains are present within the area of the Pallet Yard.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is an assessment of the results of an archaeological evaluation consisting of two trial trenches, on the eastern edge of the former Pallet Yard Priors Green, Takeley, Essex (Fig. 1). It is a follow-up to the monitoring work done on the geotechnical pits around the Pallet Yard which has been reported on separately (Robertson 2006b)

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) carried out the monitoring for RPS Planning on behalf of Countryside Properties Plc. The project was carried out in accordance with a Method Statement produced by RPS Planning.

Both the fieldwork and the reporting have been carried out to professional standards and guidance issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999) and the *ALGAO* standards for fieldwork (Gurney 2003).

The report is structured to describe the background to the project, followed by the results of the fieldwork, and a discussion of the archaeological potential. Appendices include descriptions of the trenches, details of the archive contents and the EHER summary. All illustrations are placed together towards the back of the report.

The site archive will be deposited at Saffron Walden Museum. A copy of this report will be deposited with the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER), a further copy will also be uploaded to the OASIS database.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography (Fig 1)

The location of the Pallet Yard is to the west and south of the recently constructed spine road within the Priors Green development. It is bounded to the east and north by woodland, to the west by open fields, to the south by Dunmow Road. The land falls gently from north to south towards Dunmow Road.

The area was formerly a builders yard, which was split into several bays. The eastern edge of the investigation area is covered by rough grass and scrubby bushes, while the remainder is covered with modern hardcore. The south west corner of the area contained the remains of concrete footings, for the buildings shown on the current OS map.

2.2 Geology

Over the majority of the site the topsoil had been removed and a layer of modern hardcore laid down. Along the eastern side of the site the depth of the topsoil averaged c.0.4m, with approximately 0.2m of mid grey brown silty clay subsoil below this. The observed undisturbed natural geology was a mid orange brown silty clay.

The drift geology of the site is generally that of pale brown chalky boulder-clay of the Lowestoft Formation, although this becomes chalkier approximately 2m below ground level. The underlying solid geology of the area is London Clay (BGS map EW222 Great Dunmow v.2).

2.3 History and Archaeology

The site is located within a wider agricultural landscape, that has evolved from the Bronze Age through to the present day. This landscape is becoming increasingly better understood and documented as a result of archaeological fieldwork taking place in advance of extensive construction development in the Takeley area. This is particularly evident in the recent work at Stansted Airport (Havis & Brooks 2004; Framework Archaeology in prep), evaluation and excavation work undertaken in advance of the re-alignment and construction of the A120 (Fitzpatrick 2001), Frogs Hall (Ennis in prep) and also by recent work undertaken in Takeley itself (Robertson 2005 and 2006a) and some 1.5km to the west of the present site (Roberts 2003).

To the immediate south of the site Dunmow Road is thought to be on the approximate line of Stane Street, the Roman road from Braughing/Puckridge to Colchester (Drury and Rodwell 1980). To the northeast at Frogs Hall is a presumptive Roman villa (ESMR 9140) with associated Roman landscape features whilst Warish Hall (ESMR 4572), a Scheduled medieval moated site (protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979), lies 1km to the north. Another medieval moated site, Jacks Green (ESMR 4655), is located to the northwest of the current investigation area. Jacks Lane, a bridleway that runs east-west to the north of the site, is also thought to have medieval origins. Prior to becoming a builder's yard the area was previously open fields.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The general aim of the project was to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains along the eastern edge of the Pallet Yard and to preserve by record any significant remains. The research objectives follow those outlined in the regional research objectives (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) with the specific objectives being laid out in the Research Design (RPS 2005).

4.0 METHOD

The investigation comprised two trenches positioned along the eastern edge of the area. The trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision. The location of each trench was recorded, described on a pro forma trench sheet and a representative section drawn. A photographic record comprising monochrome prints and digital images was maintained throughout the fieldwork. All plans were linked to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

Standard FAU methodologies were employed with regard to the recording. All *IFA* standards and by-laws and *ALGAO's* Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003) were adhered to throughout the project.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS (Fig 1)

Both of the trenches were situated in the rough grass and scrub that lay along the eastern edge of the Pallet Yard. Each measured 20 x 1.6m and was approximately 0.6m deep. Each trench is briefly described below. Further information can be found in Appendix 1.

The remainder of the area was not subject to evaluation as the results from the Geotechnical Pit Monitoring (Robertson 2006b) indicated that it was heavily disturbed and that the potential for survival of archaeological features was low.

5.1 Trench 1

Located towards the north eastern corner of the Pallet Yard, this trench was excavated to a depth of 0.62m onto the undisturbed natural geology. Two distinct layers were recorded; from the top down these were 0.39m of modern topsoil mixed with modern rubble and 0.23m of mid grey brown silty clay which may be an original topsoil. It seems likely that the upper of these two layers was the topsoil that had been removed from the rest of the Pallet Yard and dumped upon the pre-existing topsoil. Both layers contained a quantity of modern debris, although the upper layer contained significantly more. No archaeological remains were identified and no finds were collected.

5.2 Trench 2

To the south of Trench 1, Trench 2 was excavated to a depth of approximately 0.6m onto the undisturbed natural geology. The layers identified in the trench section were virtually identical to those seen in Trench 1. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

6.0 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL

No finds were recovered any of the trenches. No deposits with perceived environmental potential were identified and so no soil samples were taken.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological remains were identified in either of the two trenches. When considered in conjunction with the results of the geotechnical pit monitoring that was done over the remainder of the Pallet Yard, it is unlikely that any archaeological remains are present/ survive within the area.

It seems likely that the topsoil that had been removed from the majority of the site has been deposited along the eastern edge. The redeposited topsoil was full of modern debris and lay on top of what may well have been the original ground-surface.

The amount of truncation over the majority of the site suggests that even if remains were once present in this area they have been removed by the creation of the builders' yard. The lack of even unstratified archaeological finds in any of the test pits or trenches would suggest that there was never a significant presence of archaeological remains.

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by RPS Planning on behalf of Countryside Properties Plc. Thanks go to Simon Blatherwick his assistance throughout the project. Thanks are also due to Breheney Ltd for their assistance on site. R Havis of HEM monitored the trenching on behalf of the local planning authority. M. Atkinson managed the project and the author carried out the fieldwork.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| British Geological Survey | Accessed Feb 2005 | http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html |
| Brown, N. & 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 |
| Dept. of Environment | 1990 | <i>Planning Policy Guideline 16: Archaeology and Planning</i> |
| Drury, P.J. & Rodwell, W. | 1980 | 'Settlement in the later Iron Age and Roman periods' in Buckley, D.G. (ed), <i>Archaeology in Essex to AD1500</i> , CBA 34 , 59 – 75 |
| Ennis, T. | In prep | <i>Roman and Medieval land-use in the upper Roding valley: excavations at Frogs Hall Borrow Pit, Takeley, Essex 2002</i> |
| Fitzpatrick, A.P. | 2001 | 'East Anglia' in <i>Roman Britain in 2000</i> Britannia XXXII, 311 – 400 |
| Gurney, D. | 2003 | <i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. 14 |
| Havis, R. & Brooks, H. | 2004 | <i>Excavations at Stansted Airport, 1986 – 91</i> E. Anglian Archaeol. mono. 107 |
| Institute of Field Archaeologists | 1999 | Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation |
| Robertson, A. | 2005 | <i>Priors Green, Takeley, Essex. Archaeological Evaluation by trial Trenching. Phase 1 Stage 1</i> ECC FAU/ RPS client report 1428 |
| Robertson, A. | 2006 a | <i>Priors Green, Takeley, Essex. Archaeological Excavation. Phase 1 Stage 2</i> ECC FAU/ RPS client rep 1478 |
| Robertson, A. | 2006 b | <i>Pallet Yard, Priors Green, Takeley, Essex. Archaeological Watching Brief on Geotechnical Site Investigation Test Pits.</i> ECC FAU/ RPS client report 1701 |
| Roberts, B. | 2003 | <i>Land South of the A120 Essex (Report 1301)</i> Arch. Solutions client report |
| RPS | 2005 | <i>Priors Green Takeley Revised Archaeological Research Design and Mitigation Strategy</i> RPS project design |

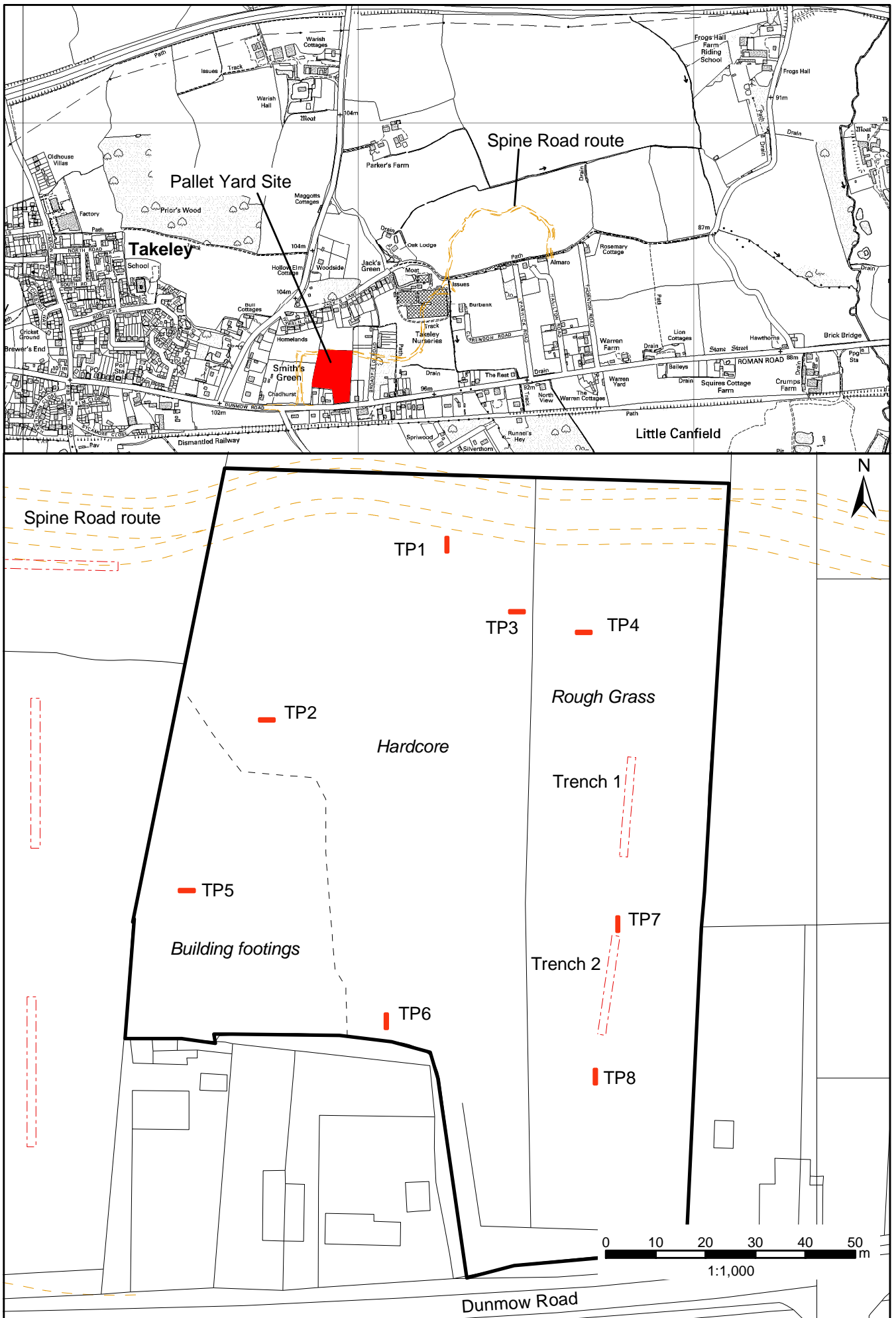


Fig.1. Location plan

Mapping reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. Crown copyright. Licence no.LA100019602.

APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK DATA

All dimensions are given in metres.

Trench	Dimensions (L x W)	Depth	Truncation of ground level?	Archaeological Features	Co-ordinates(NW and SE corners)
1	20 x 1.6	0.62	No	No	TL 56962 21264 / TL 56962 21244
2	20 x 1.6	0.6	No	No	TL 56959 21229 / TL 56958 21209

APPENDIX 2: ARCHIVE INDEX

SITE NAME : Pallet Yard, Priors Green, Takeley (TAPG 06)

Index to the Archive

File containing:

1. Research Archive

1.1 Client Report

2. Site Archive

2.1 2 x Trench sheets (inc scaled plans & sections)

2.2 2 x digital images

No finds

APPENDIX 3: EHER SUMMARY SHEET

Site Name/Address: Pallet Yard, Priors Green, Takeley	
Parish: Takeley	District: Uttlesford
NGR: TL 5690 2125	Site Code: TAPG 06
Type of Work: Evaluation by Trial trenching	Site Director/Group: A. Robertson ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: 25 – 26 September 2006	Size of Area Investigated: Development area c.1ha
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Saffron Walden Museum	Funding Source: RPS Planning (on behalf of Countryside Properties Plc)
Further Work Anticipated? No	Related EHER Nos: 4572; 4655; 9140
Final Report: N/A	
Periods Represented: None	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>A trial trenching evaluation was undertaken within a former Pallet Yard alongside the Dunmow Road.</p> <p>Two trial trenches were excavated along the eastern edge of the Pallet Yard, the remaining area was shown to be highly truncated by the earlier monitoring of geotechnical trial pits. Although a build-up of topsoil contaminated by modern debris was observed no archaeological features or deposits were identified in either of the trenches, nor any artefacts collected.</p> <p>There is no indication that archaeological remains survive within the area of the Pallet Yard.</p>	
<p>Previous Summaries/Reports: Robertson, A. 2006 <i>Pallet Yard, Priors Green, Takeley, Essex. Archaeological Watching Brief on Geotechnical Site Investigation Test Pits.</i> ECC FAU/ RPS client report 1701</p>	
Author of Summary: A. Robertson (ECC FAU)	Date of Summary: November 2006