

**PYE CORNER/ CROWN STREET
CASTLE HEDINGHAM
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY
TRIAL TRENCHING**



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

December 2006

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CASTLE HEDINGHAM
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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.

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**PYE CORNER/ CROWN STREET
CASTLE HEDINGHAM
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING**

Client: Mr Peter Tiffin
FAU Project No.: 1718
NGR: TL 78445 35763
Planning Application Nos.: BTE/1380/06
Site Code: CH 5
Date of Fieldwork: 11th December 2006
OASIS Ref: essexcou1-21424

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation, consisting of four trenches, was carried out on the site of a small residential development at Pye Corner/Crown Street, Castle Hedingham, Essex. The site was formerly an allotment, and had previously been heavily terraced and landscaped. The presence of a significant depth of modern overburden in all of the trenches resulted in only a small area of the undisturbed natural geology being exposed.

The trenches showed that there was approximately 1.5m of modern redeposited material on top of the original topsoil. The approximate depth to the undisturbed natural was 2m. No archaeological remains were identified in any of the trenches. The amount of overburden suggests that if any archaeological remains do survive they will be undisturbed by the development.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out on a proposed residential development at Pye Corner/Crown Street, Castle Hedingham (Fig. 1). The evaluation consisted of trial trenching in the footprints of the proposed houses. The investigation was designed to determine the presence, nature, date and survival of any archaeological remains in the proposed development area.

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) carried out the evaluation for Mr Peter Tiffin. The project was carried out in accordance with a brief prepared by the Historic Environment Management (HEM) Team of Essex County Council, who also monitored the work. 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 (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>) and a summary will appear in the journal *Essex Archaeology and History* (EAH). The site archive will be deposited at Braintree Museum.

This report initially describes the background to the project, followed by the fieldwork results and the finds report with conclusions at the end. The appendices include trench data, details of the archive contents and the EHER summary. All illustrations are placed together towards the back of the report.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Planning

A planning application (BTE/1380/06) for the construction of residential dwellings was submitted to Braintree District Council. The HEM Team of Essex County Council, due to the perceived archaeological potential of the proposed development area, advised that a full archaeological condition should be attached to any future planning consent.

2.2 Location and Topography

The proposed development area consists of a plot of undeveloped land some 375 sq m in area. It is bounded to the north, south and east by residential properties and to the west by Crown Street (Fig.1).

The site is currently allotments with a ground level approximately 1.0 – 1.5m above the current road. The ground level slopes gently downwards from north to south. The relative ground level heights of the surrounding properties suggest that the area has been extensively terraced and landscaped.

2.3 Geology

The present ground level is approximately 1.5m above the original level of topsoil, which was identified in Trench 2. The modern land surface was formed by the terracing and landscaping of the site, presumably during the construction of the surrounding houses.

The undisturbed surface geology, amid-orange brown clay-silt, was only observed in one trench at a depth of 2m. The underlying geology is London Clay (BGS, Accessed Dec 2006).

2.4 History and Archaeology

The development area is known to be within the extent of the medieval town of Castle Hedingham. No structures are noted on the development area on any of the earlier edition Ordnance Survey maps. However, the surrounding area is shown as having been built up on both the 1592 Israel Armyse and 1777 Chapman and Andre maps. To the north – east of the site lies the 12th-century castle (EHER 6787) with an inner and outer bailey. The development lies just outside the outer bailey (Medlycott 1998).

No known archaeological investigations have previously taken place within the boundaries of the development area or in the close vicinity.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of work was to determine whether archaeological features survive within the proposed development area and, if so, to record their location, extent, date, and character. In relation to what is currently known about the medieval and post-medieval town.

The general research objectives of the project are in line with those laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. Research agenda and Strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000). The site specific-objectives are:

- To identify and investigate the remains of former roadside tenements and buildings along Crown Street, and to seek indications of former commercial and industrial activities.
- To investigate the origins of the medieval town. Did it develop following the construction of the 12th-century castle, or did it have a precursor in the form of a Late Saxon nucleated settlement?

4. METHOD

A mechanical excavator equipped with a flat-bladed bucket was used to open four trenches under archaeological supervision. The requirement was for a 9% sample of the total development area to be investigated, with a 1% contingency. To this end four short trenches were excavated within the footprints of the proposed buildings; the contingency was not utilised.

Standard ECC FAU methodologies were employed with regard to excavation and recording. The machine-excavated surface of the trenches was sufficiently cleaned to ensure that any features present were visible. Surveying and planning was tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record consisting of black and white print and colour digital images was maintained throughout the course of the investigation. A description of each trench was compiled on a *pro-forma* recording sheet.

Both the fieldwork and the reporting have been carried out to professional standards and guidance issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999) and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers for the East of England (ALGAO) (Gurney 2003).

5. FIELDWORK RESULTS (Fig.1)

Four trenches were positioned to provide a representative sample of the potential archaeological remains across the development area. Much of the modern topsoil had previously been cleared by the developer, to a depth of approximately 0.3m. Due to the instability of the trench sides and the waterlogged nature of the ground none of the trenches was excavated down onto the natural geology, with the exception of a 2m deep sondage in Trench 2. Each trench is described briefly below. Further information on the trenches is presented in Appendix 1. The figures are situated at the rear of the report.

5.1 Trench 1 (Fig 1)

Located within the footprint of Building A, this trench was aligned north – south. It measured 4.5m long and 1.7m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.7m. The southern end was truncated due to the presence of a water main running across the line of the trench. The remaining modern topsoil was 0.2m thick and lay directly on top of a layer of mid brown grey redeposited clay. No archaeological remains were identified within this trench. No finds were collected and no deposits with perceived environmental potential were encountered.

5.2 Trench 2 (Figs 1 and 2)

Trench 2 was situated to the south of Trench 1 and ran east-west. It measured 6m in length and was 1.7m wide. With the exception of the easternmost 2m, the trench was excavated to a depth of 0.76m. At the eastern end of the trench a sondage was machine-dug to a depth of approximately 2m, onto the undisturbed natural geology (Fig 2). The remaining modern topsoil was 0.2m deep, overlying 1.32m of redeposited clay, which in turn overlay 0.4m of mid grey clay loam, possibly the original topsoil, which rested on mid orange brown clay-silt, undisturbed natural geology at a depth of 1.92m. No archaeological remains were identified and no finds were collected from this trench.

5.3 Trench 3 (Fig 1)

Trench 3 was situated along the southern edge of the site, and was within the footprint of Building B. The trench was orientated east–west and measured 6m long and 1.7m wide. It was excavated to a depth of 0.77m. The remaining modern topsoil was 0.35m deep and overlay redeposited clay. The undisturbed natural geology was not encountered within the trench. No archaeologically significant features or deposits were identified, although a dump of modern rubbish, containing sauce bottles and metal cans, was identified towards the western end. No finds were collected and no environmental samples were taken.

5.4 Trench 4 (Fig 1)

Trench 4 ran north–south off of Trench 3, but remained within the footprint of Building B. It was 5m long, 1.7m wide and excavated to a depth of 0.77m. The remaining modern topsoil was 0.36m deep and overlay the redeposited clay seen in the other trenches. No undisturbed natural geology was encountered. A dump of modern shoes (complete with plastic moulded soles) was uncovered during the excavation of the trench. No other archaeological features were identified and no finds were collected.

6. FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL

As no archaeological features or deposits were identified, no finds were collected and no environmental samples were taken from any of the trial trenches.

7. CONCLUSIONS

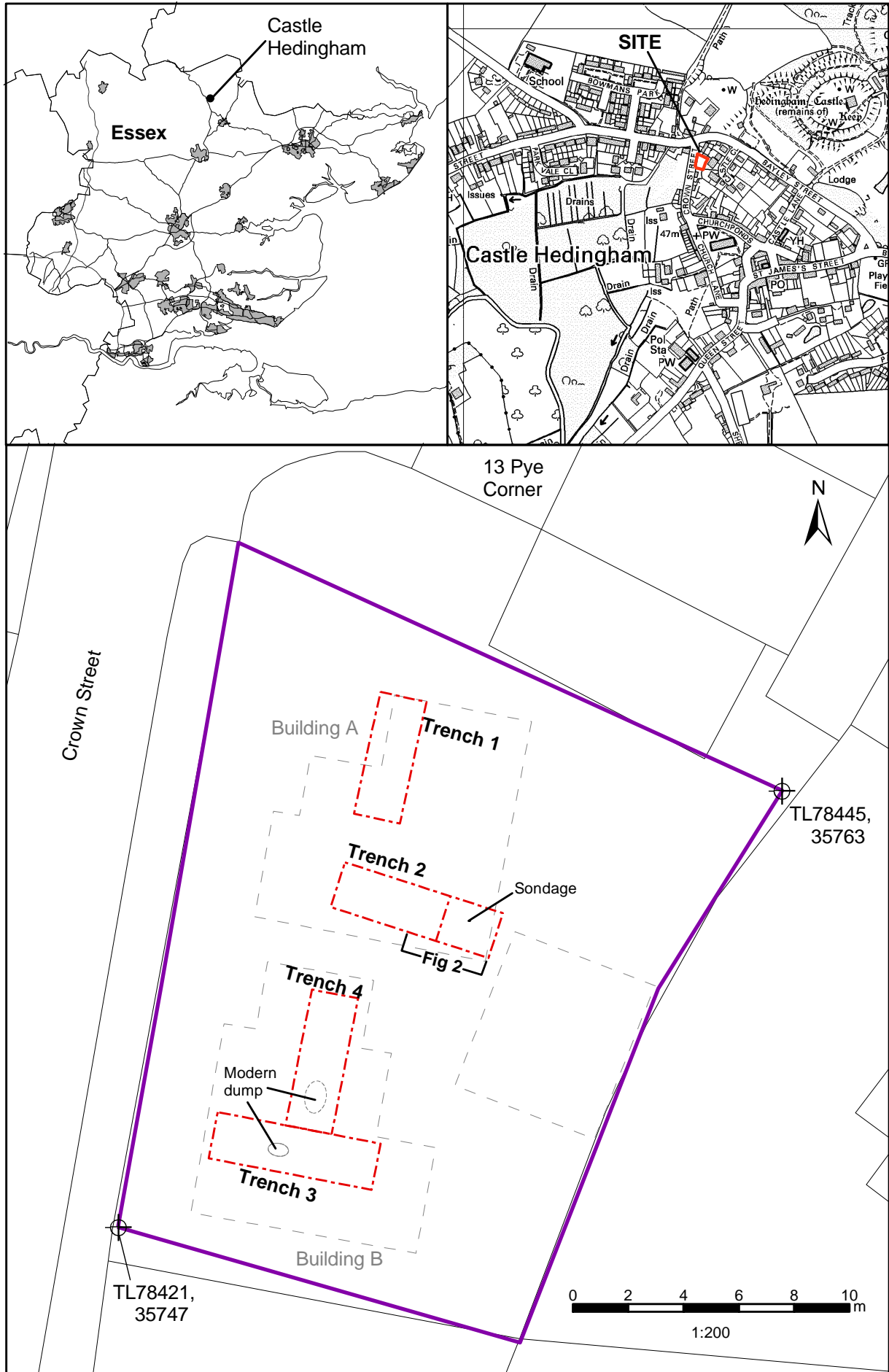
The surface of the undisturbed natural geology was only examined at the east end of Trench 2 due to the depth of the modern overburden, approximately 2m. As undisturbed ground was not reached the potential still exists for archaeological remains to exist on the site. However, as no significant ground reduction is planned during construction it is unlikely that any surviving archaeological remains will be disturbed by the development, and are likely to be preserved *in-situ*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was commissioned by Mr Peter Tiffin, to whom thanks are due for his assistance throughout the project. The project was conducted by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit. Digitising of plans and digital illustration was undertaken by Andy Lewsey. The project was managed by Patrick Allen of ECC FAU. Vanessa Clarke of the ECC HEM Team monitored the evaluation on behalf of the Local Planning Authority. The fieldwork was carried out by the author.

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Fig.1. Location plan

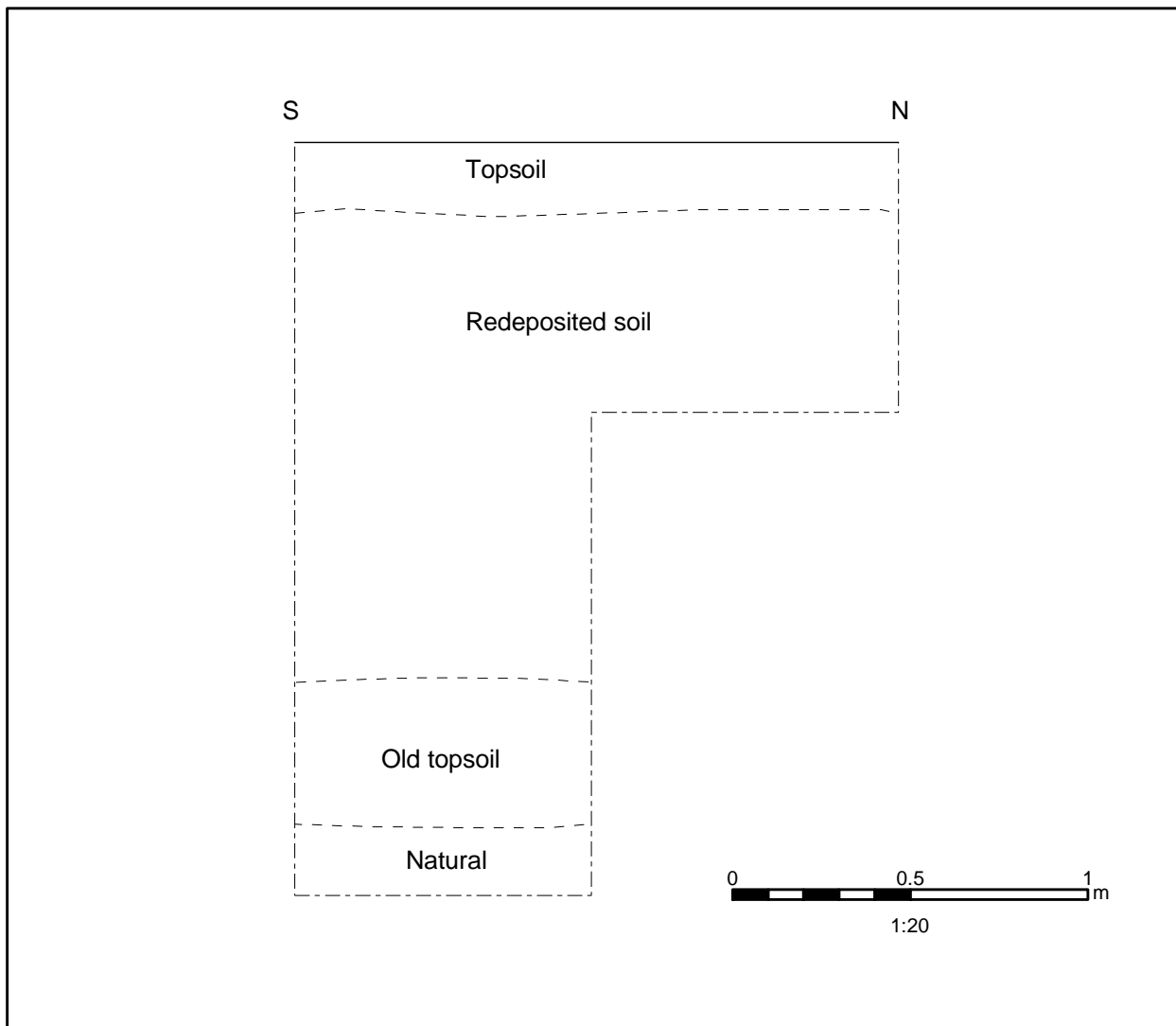


Fig.2. North facing section across sondage in Trench 2

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY

Trench No	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Area (m ²)	Features
1	4.5	1.7	0.7	7.65	No
2	6	1.7	0.76 + 2.12	10.2	No
3	6	1.7	0.77	10.2	No
4	5	1.7	0.77	8.5	No

APPENDIX 2: ARCHIVE INDEX

SITE NAME: PYE CORNER / CROWN STREET, CASTLE HEDINGHAM, ESSEX (CH 5)

Index to the Archive

File containing:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brief for Evaluation
- 1.2 Written Scheme of Investigation for Evaluation.

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Evaluation Report

3. Site Archive

- 3.1 4 x Trench Sheets
- 3.2 2 x Photographic Register
- 3.3 Site Photographic Record (4 x B+W Prints; 6 x Colour Digital Images inc Hard copies)
- 3.4 Site Plans and Sections and notes(1 x A5 sheet)

No finds

APPENDIX 3: EHER SUMMARY SHEET

Site Name/Address: Pye Corner/ Crown Street, Castle Hedingham, Essex	
Parish: Castle Hedingham	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 78445 35763	Site Code: CH 5
Type of Work: Evaluation by Trial Trenching	Site Director/Group: A Robertson ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: 11th December 2006	Size of Area Investigated: Approx. development area 375 ² m (9% = 33.75 ² m) Area investigated = 36.55 ² m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Braintree	Funding Source: Mr Peter Tiffin
Further Work Anticipated? No	Related EHER Nos: 6787
Final Report: EAH Summary.	
Periods Represented: Modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: An archaeological evaluation, consisting of four trenches, was carried out on site of a small residential development at Pye Corner/Crown Street, Castle Hedingham, Essex. The site was formerly an allotment, and had previously been heavily terraced and landscaped. The presence of a significant depth of modern overburden in all of the trenches resulted in only a small area of the undisturbed natural geology being exposed. The trenches showed that there was approximately 1.5m of modern redeposited material on top of the original topsoil. The approximate depth to the undisturbed natural was 2m. No archaeological remains were identified in any of the trenches. The amount of overburden suggests that if any archaeological remains do survive they will be undisturbed by the development.	
Previous Summaries/Reports: N/A	
Author of Summary: Andrew Robertson (ECC FAU)	Date of Summary: December 2006