

**LITTLE GODDARDS
WIDFORD
HERTFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
AND RECORDING**



Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit

FEBRUARY 2007

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WIDFORD
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AND RECORDING**

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HCC Planning Department	
Archive (x 2)	

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SUMMARY

Client: Mr and Mrs Gauld

NGR: TL 419 516

Project No: 1740

Date of Fieldwork: 23rd January 2007

Oasis Accession Number: Essexcou1-22914

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out on residential development at Little Goddards, Widford, Hertfordshire, because the site lies within a conservation area and the existing house is Grade II listed. The development comprised construction of a small extension to the rear of a previous extension to the 17th century property.

No archaeological remains were identified during detailed observations within the areas adjacent to Little Goodards. In particular, no remains were encountered that alluded to the Saxon or medieval origin and development of the property, village or wider area. Furthermore no features or deposits survived that could be associated with the 17th century dwelling, or other nearby listed buildings.

Reduction of the ground level by removal of topsoil, subsoil, overburden and up to 0.20m of natural deposits had taken place in advance of previous development and extensive landscaping immediately to the rear of the existing property. All Foundations, associated services and modern garden features truncated the natural. Behind the demolished boundary wall on the southern limit of the site the deposition sequence was relatively undisturbed. Natural was encountered approximately 0.5m below a 0.39m-thick subsoil that was sealed by a c.0.21m-thick accumulation of modern garden topsoil. No finds were recovered from any part of the depositional sequence.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Background

The Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) carried out the monitoring work, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Gauld, under the terms of an archaeological condition placed on planning consent (planning application: 3/06/1134/LB and 3/06/1123/FP) in accordance with Planning Policy Guideline 16 (PPG16). The condition was placed by following specialist advice from the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU), as the site lies in a potentially sensitive archaeological area. The archaeological work followed a brief produced by HCC HEU and the written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by ECC FAU (2007).

1.2 Report and Archive

Copies of this report will be supplied to the client, HCC HEU and the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER). A version will be uploaded to the Online Access Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>). The project archive, including two copies of the report, will be deposited at Hertford Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, Geology and Topography

The development area is located to the south of Widford village centre. The site of the proposed extension is a rectangular plot c.11sqm (TL 41964 51630) to the rear of the existing house at Little Goddards, Hunsdon Road, a Grade II listed property.

2.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

The following archaeological information is derived from a desktop assessment in Barker 2004 that was based on information held in the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record. English Heritage's LBS (listed building online) catalogue was also consulted.

Prehistoric activity is present within the wider area, as the Hertfordshire Victoria County History mentions two barrows, of unknown date, on a hill in the northwest of the parish (VCH Vol. III, 403). No prehistoric or roman remains have been found within the immediate study area.

There are two entries for Widford or *Wideford* recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. They record that, after the Norman Conquest (1066), the rights of the manor passed from Edred to the Bishop of London. The manor was assessed at 3 hides and the entries note a mill, meadowland and significant amount of woodland (VCH Vol.III, 403).

In 1118 the manor was given to the Prior and Convent of St. Saviour, Bermondsey, by the Earl of Leicester (Traviss-Lockwood 1883). This Cluniac Abbey retained the rights to the manor until the dissolution *circa* 1556 (VCH Vol.III, 403).

There is evidence of a 12th century church at Widford. The current building of St John the Baptist Church contains fabric from an earlier building: most notably a chevron pattern moulding can be seen above the south door.

The extant house of Little Goddards (LBS 160027-28) dates to the 17th century, with 19th century additions. Several other buildings in the area are of similar date.

No known archaeological investigations have taken place in the development area but the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record includes three undated but nearby sites of archaeological activity. To the north-west there are traces of earthworks in the form of a small square enclosure (HHER No.2570). These may represent a cattle corral or possible moated site. A larger square enclosure cropmark is located to the south-west (HHER No. 9014). In this same area two linear cropmarks at right angles are recorded (HHER No. 9015). These do not align with the post-medieval field boundaries and could, therefore, be earlier.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General Objectives

Generally, the aim of the work was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance, and quality of any surviving archaeological remains exposed during groundworks.

3.1 Research Objectives

The research objectives for the project reflected those laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000).

The specific objectives of the investigation were to identify and investigate any Saxon or medieval remains within the development area, and relate these to the wider area.

4.0 METHODS

The monitoring was undertaken during the groundworks, comprising excavation of an L-shaped foundation trench for the extension to the existing property (fig. 1).

Observation encompassed extraction of soils until natural was exposed or the required depth of the foundation trenches was reached. The work was carried out according to regional standards in field archaeology and all fieldwork methods and recording conformed to the codes of practice, and guidance issued by the IFA (1999) and adhered to ALGAO guidelines (Gurney 2003). Standard ECC FAU recording and excavation methods were used. A digital photographic record was maintained throughout the project.

Standard ECC FAU recording and excavation methods were used. All fieldwork methods and recording conformed to the codes of practice and guidance issued by the IFA (1999) and adhered to regional guidelines (Gurney 2003).

5.0 RESULTS

Monitoring identified no archaeological remains surviving within the areas impacted by the groundworks. Reduction of the ground level by removal of topsoil, subsoil, and overburden had previously taken place immediately to the rear of the property prior to the construction of

the recent additions to the building and extensive landscaping of the area that included the laying of a patio and pathways. The foundations of the property and boundary wall had truncated the natural and all subsequent soil horizons. In those small areas where no previous development had caused truncation, clean natural gravely clay **3** was encountered consistently c.0.5m below the present ground surface. This was overlain by a 0.21m-thick mixed gravely substrate/subsoil **2**. Above the subsoil was a dark c.0.39m-thick accumulation of heavily disturbed modern garden topsoil **1**. These deposits were observed in section at the southern edge of site behind the demolished boundary wall **11** (fig.1). No finds were recovered from anywhere in the depositional sequence. The substrate/subsoil and topsoil represented the build-up of soils in the front garden of the adjoining property and had roots and vegetation growing throughout.

The patio **15** was laid on a thin bed of sand **14** that sat directly above the natural. At either end of the trench the c.0.50m-deep concrete foundations **12** and **18** of the existing property were exposed. A roughly square 0.40 by 0.40m brick-built culvert **9** was encountered against the foot of the foundations in the east. In the north an active modern ceramic drain was uncovered **16/17** (fig. 1). Small retaining and property boundary walls that were built on c.0.40m-thick concrete foundations were part demolished and survived in section on the western edge of the trenching.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

No significant archaeological remains were identified during the monitoring of the construction groundworks at Little Goddards. There was no evidence for prehistoric and Roman remains or the presence of Saxon or Medieval activity potentially associated with earlier origins and development of the property, village and wider area. Furthermore, no evidence was encountered for Late medieval or early post-medieval remains associated with surrounding activity and occupation of the listed building.

To the rear of the dwelling, recent construction, ground reduction and extensive garden landscaping together with the insertion of a range of services, has brought about significant truncation and disturbance. It is likely that this has resulted in the removal of any archaeological remains that may have once been present within the areas monitored, specifically of remains associated with the 17th century building. However, the lack even of residual artefacts within the topsoil/ subsoil may suggest no such remains had been present at this location.

Unfortunately, the small-scale nature of the observed works does not allow confident prediction of the widespread absence or removal of archaeological remains through truncation in other areas of Widford. The survival of significant remains elsewhere cannot be discounted.

7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ECC Field Archaeology Unit thanks Mr and Mrs Gauld for their assistance and funding of the project. Mark Atkinson managed the project, Matthew Pocock carried out the fieldwork, and Andrew Lewsey produced the digital illustrations. Alison Tinniswood of the HCC HEU monitored the investigation on behalf of the local planning authority.

8.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK DATA

Context information

Context No.	Type	Description	Depth/ Thickness (m)	Date
1	Layer	Topsoil – dark grey compact clay (Modern?)	0.39	Modern
2	Layer	Substrate/subsoil – a mid grey brown clay silt	0.21	Modern
3	Layer	Natural, gravely clay-sand	Unknown	Undated
4	Cut	Trench for Boundary and retaining wall foundation	0.44	Modern
5	Fill	Fill of 4 – grey-brown mixed backfill	0.44	Modern
6	Cut	Trench for brick culvert	1.00	Modern
7	Fill	Fill of 6 – Dark brown mixed backfill	1.00	Modern
8	Fill	Fill of 6 – Dark Brown fine silt	0.06	Modern
9	Structure	Brick Culvert	0.40	Modern
10	Fill	Fill of 4 – Mixed backfill, sand, gravels etc	0.28	Modern
11	Structure	Within 4 – Boundary wall, low retaining wall and concrete foundation	n/a	Modern
12	Structure	Within 13 – Concrete foundation and existing property wall (eastern limit of the trenching)	n/a	Modern
13	Cut	Trench cut for property foundations	0.70	Modern
14	Layer	Sand	0.03	Modern
15	Layer	Patio	0.06	Modern
16	Cut	Modern drain trench		Modern
17	Fill	Fill of 16 – Dark mixed modern backfill	0.94	Modern
18	Structure	Within 20 – Concrete foundation and existing property wall (northern limit of the trenching)	n/a	Modern
19	Fill	Fill of 13 – Mixed backfill	0.22	Modern
20	Cut	Trench cut for property foundations	0.48	Modern

APPENDIX 2: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

SITE NAME; Little Goddards, Widford, Hertfordshire

Index to the Archive

File containing:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brief for the archaeological investigation
- 1.2 Written scheme of investigation

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Client Report

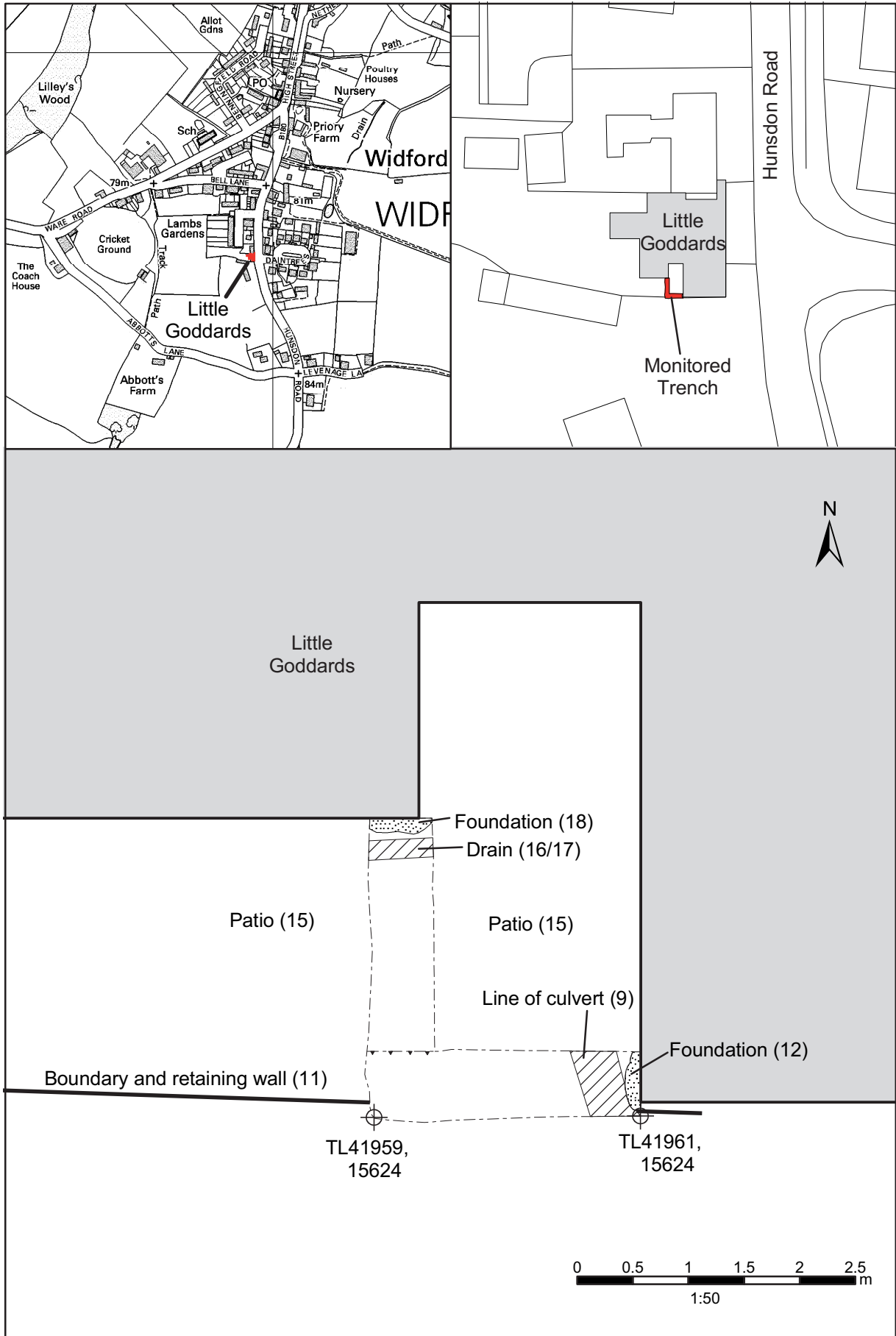
3. Site Archive

- 3.1 Original Context Records 1-20
- 3.2 2 Section Drawing (1:20)
- 3.3 1 Plan (1:20)
- 3.4 CDR of Digital Photographs
- 3.5 Digital Photographic Register
- 3.6 Miscellaneous maps and plans

No finds were recovered

APPENDIX 3: HER SUMMARY

SITE NAME/ADDRESS: Little Goddards, Widford Hertfordshire	
OASIS ACCESSION NUMBER essexcou1-22914	
PARISH: Widford	DISTRICT: East Hertfordshire
NGR: TL 41964 51630	SITE CODE: n/a
TYPE OF WORK: Monitoring and Recording	SITE DIRECTOR/GROUP: M.Pocock of ECC FAU
DATE OF WORK: 23th January 2007	SIZE OF AREA INVESTIGATED: 10.5 square metres
FINDS/CURATING MUSEUM:	FUNDING SOURCE: Developer
FURTHER WORK ANTICIPATED. No	RELATED HER No.
FINAL REPORT: Yes	
PERIODS REPRESENTED: Modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>No archaeological remains were identified during detailed observations within the areas adjacent to Little Goodards. In particular, no remains were encountered that alluded to earlier Saxon or medieval origin and development of the village. Furthermore no features or deposits survived that could be associated with the 17th century dwelling or other nearby listed buildings.</p> <p>Reduction of the ground level by removal of topsoil, subsoil, and overburden had taken place in advance of previous development and extensive landscaping that culminated in construction of low walls, pathways and a patio immediately to the rear of the existing property. Foundations, associated services and reduction of the ground surface by up to 0.6m had truncated the natural and all subsequent soil horizons. Behind the demolished boundary on the southern limit of the site the deposition sequence was relatively un-disturbed. Natural was encountered approximately 0.5m below a 0.39m-thick subsoil that was sealed by a c.0.21m-thick accumulation of modern garden topsoil. No finds were recovered from anywhere in the depositional sequence.</p>	
PREVIOUS SUMMARIES/REPORTS: None	
AUTHOR OF SUMMARY: Matthew Pocock (ECCFAU)	DATE OF SUMMARY: Jan 2007



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Fig.1. Location plan