

**ALBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
ALBURY
HERTFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING



Essex County Council

FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

June 2007

ALBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
ALBURY
HERTFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Prepared By: Mark Germany Position: Project Officer | Signature: Date: |
| Checked By: A. Scruby Position: Project Manager | Signature: Date: |
| Approved By: M. Atkinson Position: Unit Manager | Signature: Date: |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Doc. Ref. | 1756Report2.doc |
| Report Issue Date | 8/6/07 |
| Circulation | Wilby and Burnett |
| | The Governors of Albury C of E Primary School |
| | HCC Historic Environment Unit |
| | HCC Historic Environment Record |
| | Hertford Museum |
| | |

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

fieldarch@essexcc.gov.uk

Tel: 01376 331470

Fax: 01376 331428

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|---------------------|---|
| | SUMMARY | 1 |
| 1.0 | INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| 2.0 | THE SITE | 3 |
| 3.0 | AIMS AND OBJECTIVES | 4 |
| 4.0 | METHOD | 5 |
| 5.0 | FIELDWORK RESULTS | 6 |
| 6.0 | FINDS | 6 |
| 7.0 | CONCLUSIONS | 7 |
| 8.0 | ASSESSMENT | 8 |
| | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 9 |
| | BIBLIOGRAPHY | 9 |

APPENDICES

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------|----|
| 1. | TRENCH DIMENSIONS AND LOCATIONS | 10 |
| 2. | FINDS DATA | 10 |
| 3. | CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE | 10 |
| 4. | HCC HER SUMMARY SHEET | 11 |

FIGURES

| | | |
|----|---------------|----|
| 1. | Location plan | 12 |
|----|---------------|----|

PLATES

| | | |
|----|-------------------------|-------|
| 1. | Trench 1, looking east | Cover |
| 2. | Trench 1, looking west | 13 |
| 3. | Trench 2, looking south | 13 |

ALBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
ALBURY, HERTFORDSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL-TRENCHING

Client: Wilby and Burnett (for Albury C of E Primary School)

NGR: TL 43470 24725

Planning Reference: 3/06/2225

Site Code: ASEV 07

Oasis No: essexcou1-23936

ECC FAU Project No: 1756

Date of fieldwork: 27/2/07

SUMMARY

Two archaeological trial-trenches were dug at Albury Church of England Primary School in advance of the intended construction of a new school hall and play area. The excavation of three engineering trial pits was also observed for the presence of archaeological deposits, features and finds.

The trenches and trial-pits revealed the presence of a gravel pit, which had been backfilled within the last 160 years. The gravel pit extended across most of the development area, and contained fragments of tile, late 18th/early 19th-century brick, and pieces of post-medieval and 19th-century pottery. The oldest find was a piece of unglazed sandy orange ware dating from the 14th to 16th century. It is conjectured that the gravel pit had been dug for the extraction of 'hoggin', for the surfacing of tracks and roads.

The construction of the new school hall and play area will have minimal impact upon the archaeological resource of Albury. It is likely that most, if not all of the earlier archaeological deposits and features (if ever present), have been destroyed by the gravel pit.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at Albury Church of England Primary School. The trial-trenching was monitored by the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU) and was carried out in accordance with an archaeological brief and a written scheme of investigation (HCC HEU 2007; ECC FAU 2007). It was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of a new school hall and play area and was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) at the request of Wilby and Burnett, who were acting on behalf of the school governors.

Copies of this report will be supplied to Wilby and Burnett, the school governors, the HCC HEU and the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HCC HER). A copy of this report will form part of the OASIS on-line archaeological record (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>).

2.0 THE SITE

2.1 Location

The hamlet of Albury lies in a rural setting, c. 6km north-west of Bishops Stortford (Fig. 1). The nearest main road is the A120, to the south. The valley of the River Ash is situated to the north and east.

Access to the hamlet is via a small lane called The Bourne. The school sits north of this lane and lies immediately west of the parish church of St Mary the Virgin. The ground to the north of the lane has a gradual south-facing slope.

The proposed development area will cover approximately 400m² and will be constructed in the school's playing field/garden. The Bourne is lower than the playing field/garden and is separated from it by a downward step of c. 1m.

The geology of the area comprises Boulder Clay. Within the Boulder Clay are pockets of 'hoggin', which is a mixture of clay and gravel.

2.2 Archaeology and history

The local plan indicates that the proposed development site lies within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 445 (HCC HEU 2007). Albury has medieval or earlier origins and is recorded in the Domesday Book.

The following information has been obtained from the HCC HER, the Albury village website (<http://www.alburyvillage.org.uk>), the Albury Church of England school website (<http://www.albury.herts.sch.uk/school>) and the English Heritage Listed Building Online Catalogue (<http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk>).

The school was built in 1784 by public subscription and was enlarged in 1865. The school playing field/garden was covered by grass and trees in 1883 (Ordnance Survey 1st edition).

The church is a grade II* listed building (listed building no.160073). The chancel is its earliest part and was built in the 13th century. The nave and aisles are 14th century, and the tower and spire were added in c. 1450.

The building to the immediate west of the school playing field is a former public house and is late 17th century (listed building no. 160074).

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the trial-trenching was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any existing archaeological remains threatened by the construction of the new school hall and play area.

The specific objectives of the trial-trenching were to uncover (if present) evidence for former road-side activity and settlement, and to relate it to the historical development of the adjacent church and hamlet.

4.0 METHOD

The trial-trenching was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IFA 1999), and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers' *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003). The ECC FAU is a registered archaeological organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

The ECC FAU uses its own recording system to record all uncovered archaeological deposits and features (ECC FAU 2006). The minimum excavation sample sizes are 50% for self-contained features (e.g. pits and post-holes), and 10% for linear features (e.g. ditches and gullies). Plans are drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections at a scale of 1:10. Digital photographs and monochrome and colour prints are taken of significant features and of work in progress. Each context is individually numbered and is recorded on individual pro-forma sheets. Modern (*i.e.* 19th/20th-century) deposits and features are not archaeologically excavated, unless it is specifically stipulated in the archaeological brief and the written scheme of investigation.

The development area was sampled by using a mechanical excavator to strip two 1.6m x 10m trenches (Fig. 1, trenches 1 and 2). The machining used a broad toothless bucket, and was carried out under archaeological supervision. The trenches had to be slightly repositioned (contrary to that shown in WSI) in order to avoid existing trees and hedges and a small garden pond. The depth of the trenches did not exceed 1.2m for reasons of safety.

The excavation of three trial-pits (Fig. 1, A to C) by a structural engineer was carried out on the same day as the trial-trenching and was monitored by the ECC FAU for the presence of archaeological deposits and finds. Each test pit measured 0.45m x 1m and was *c.* 2.5m deep. The trial-pits were dug by a mechanical excavator using a narrow, toothed, bucket.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

5.1 Trial-trenches 1 and 2 (Fig. 1)

Both trial-trenches revealed modern deposits (context 1) beneath 0.3m to 0.4m of redeposited topsoil. The deposits extended the length of both trenches and

continued below the maximum safe working depth of 1.2m. They comprised lightly compacted dark-yellowish-brown clay, and contained infrequent pieces of slate, coal, glass, and orange-red tile and un-frogged brick, and a small amount of post-medieval/modern pottery (context 1). Undisturbed natural Boulder Clay was not encountered in either trench. There were no other finds and nothing unequivocally earlier than the 14th to 16th centuries. The pottery and a sample of brick were retained for analysis and dating.

5.2 Trial-pits A to C (Fig. 1)

Each of the three trial-pits produced different results. Deposits of redeposited Boulder Clay and Hoggin were encountered in trial-pit A, all the way down its maximum depth of 2.5m. Fragments of orange-red brick lay embedded in the clay from the bottom of the trial pit. Trial-pit B revealed undisturbed Boulder Clay immediately beneath topsoil. Trial-pit C contained undisturbed Boulder Clay and Hoggin beneath modern deposits. The Boulder Clay in trial-pit C occurred at a depth of c. 1m.

6.0 FINDS, by Joyce Compton

Unstratified finds (context 1), comprising sherds of pottery and a piece of brick, were recovered from the modern deposits in both trenches. These have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details can be found in Appendix 2. The finds are described by category below. No further work is required on any of the finds and nothing needs to be retained.

Brick

Regular-sided brick fragment in pale red-orange sandy clay. There are large angular flint inclusions. The fabric and measurements suggest a late 18th to early 19th century date.

Pottery, by Helen Walker

Four sherds of pottery (108g) were found. The earliest is a sherd of unglazed sandy orange ware, which is probably late medieval, broadly dating to the 14th and 16th centuries. There are two sherds of post-medieval red earthenware, one, a base sherd perhaps from a large bowl could be as late as 19th or early 20th century, but the second, which has a reduced core, may be earlier, perhaps late 16th/17th

century. The remaining sherd is from the shoulder of an 'upright bottle' and shows a brown salt glaze. These bottles were used for storage, and were manufactured during the mid 19th to 20th centuries (Green 1999, 164-5, 169-70).

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the fieldwork suggest that the development area extends across a former gravel pit (context 2), which has been backfilled within the last 160 years. The deep deposits of redeposited dark-yellowish-brown clay encountered in trenches 1 and 2 and in trial-pits A and C represent the backfill. The fragments of brick from the bottom of trial-pit A indicate that the base of the gravel pit lies at least 2.5m below the existing ground level of the school playing field/garden. It is likely that the gravel pit was dug from the road, and was cut into the south-facing slope. Undisturbed Boulder Clay lay immediately below topsoil in trial-pit B and this suggests that the back edge of the gravel pit runs between it and the north end of trench 2. It is possible that the back edge of the gravel pit continues just north of trial-pit C, as the depth of the undisturbed Boulder Clay in that feature is comparatively shallow. From the results of the fieldwork, the size of the gravel pit is conjectured to be c. 20m wide (north-south) and at least 20m long (east-west). It is not known if the gravel pit extends beneath the existing school yard. Landscaping following the backfilling of the gravel pit probably accounts for the existing 1m high step between The Bourne and the school playing field/garden.

The backfilling of the gravel pit must have happened within the last 160 years, as the latest find from the trial-trenching is a large sherd of English stoneware, dating from the mid 19th/20th century. The pit also contained a sherd of late medieval pottery and pieces of late 18th/early 19th-century brick, although these are likely to have been residual. It is not known for how long the gravel pit had been left standing open

before it was backfilled. The pit does not appear on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition, so it cannot have been in use in 1883.

The gravel pit was probably dug to extract 'hoggin'. 'Hoggin' comprises a mixture of clay and gravel and was traditionally used for the surfacing of roads and tracks. The clay within the 'hoggin' maintains the structural integrity of the road and acts as a binder.

8.0 ASSESSMENT

The construction of the new school hall and play area will have minimal impact upon the archaeological resource of Albury. It is likely that most, if not all, of any archaeological deposits and features that may have been previously present have been severely denuded or destroyed by the gravel pit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The trial-trenching was commissioned by Wilby and Burnett of Provident House, 123 Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden on behalf of the governors of Albury Church of England Primary School. The ECC FAU would like to thank the school staff and governors for their cooperation and assistance.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Mark Germany and Dave Smith. The finds were processed by Phil McMichael and were analysed by Joyce Compton and Helen Walker. The illustration was drawn by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby, and was monitored by the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- | | | |
|------------|------|--|
| ECC FAU | 2006 | <i>Site Recording Manual (Version 2)</i> . ECC Field Archaeology Unit |
| ECC FAU | 2007 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation by Trial-trenching at Albury Church of England Primary School, Hertfordshire</i> . ECC Field Archaeology Unit WSI 1756 |
| Green, C. | 1999 | <i>John Dwight's Fulham Pottery: Excavations 1971-79</i> . English Heritage Archaeological Report No. 6 |
| Gurney, D. | 2003 | <i>Standards for Field Archaeologists in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14 |
| HCC HEU | 2007 | Design Brief for Archaeological Evaluation: Albury School, Albury (Planning Ref. 3/06/2225). HCC Historic Environment Unit |
| IFA | 1999 | <i>Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (Revised)</i> . Institute of Field Archaeologists |

Appendix 1: Trench dimensions and locations

| Trench | Length (m) | Width (m) | Coordinates |
|--------|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 10 | 1.6 | TL 43483 24727 TL 43473 24727 |
| 2 | 10 | 1.6 | TL 43458 24719 TL 43463 24710 |

Appendix 2: Finds data

| Context | Feature | Count | Weight | Description | Date |
|---------|---------|-------|--------|---|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 1 | | Brick fragment, sandy fabric, width 105mm, depth 65mm | 18th-19th C |
| | | 1 | 21 | Pottery; sandy orange ware, unglazed, abraded | 14th to 16th C |
| | | 2 | 47 | Pottery; post-medieval red earthenware | late 16th-19th C |
| | | 1 | 40 | Pottery; English stoneware sherd from shoulder of an upright bottle, brown salt-glaze | mid 19th-20th C |

Appendix 3: Contents of Archive

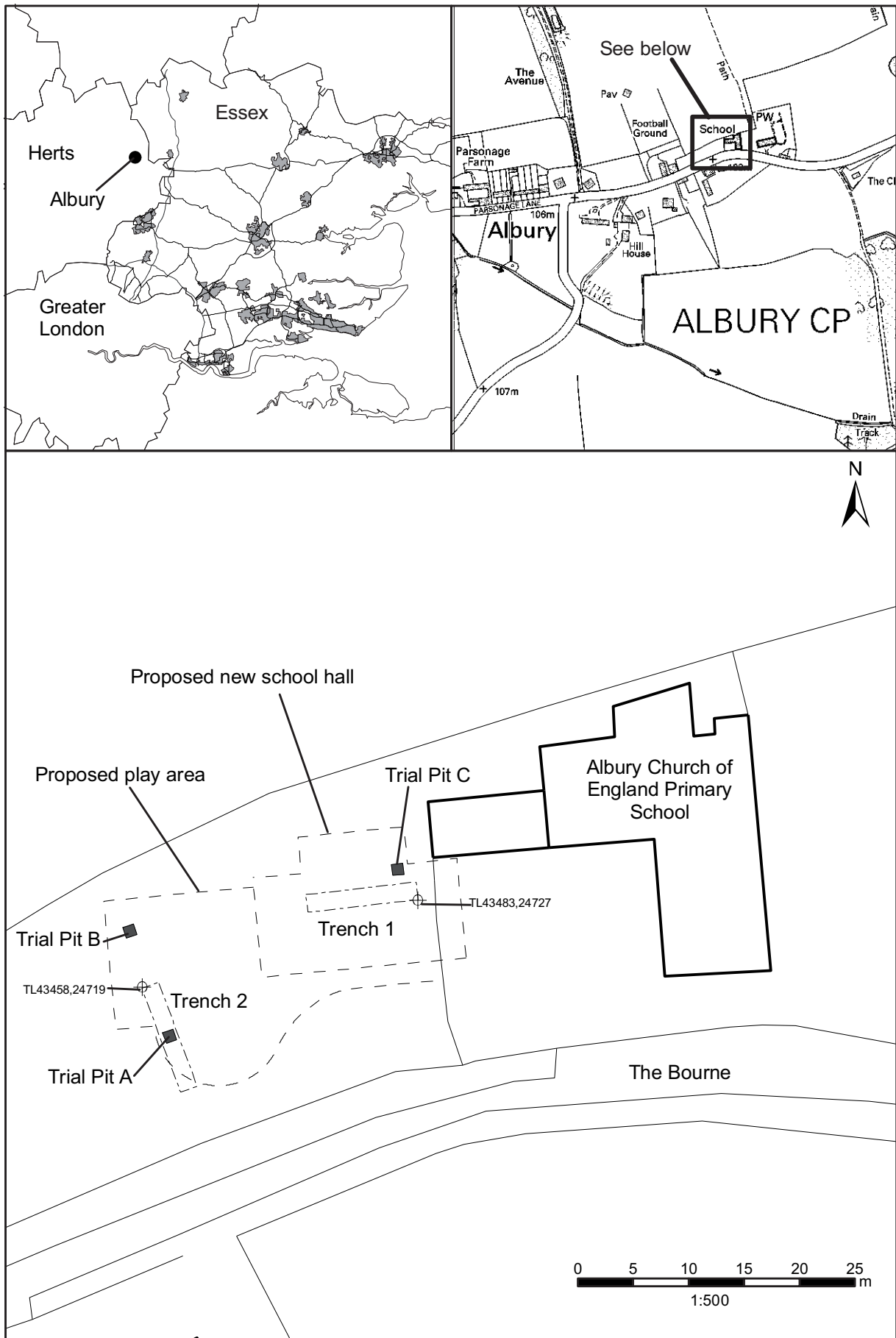
Contained in one A4 folder:

- 1 Copy of this report
- 1 Copy of the archaeological brief
- 1 Copy of the written scheme of investigation
- 2 Trench recording sheets
- 1 Finds list
- 9 Colour photographs
- 11 Black and white photographs

There are no site drawings and no finds have been retained.

Appendix 4: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record

| | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| Site name and address: Albury Church of England Primary School | | |
| County: Hertfordshire | District: East Hertfordshire | |
| Village/Town: Albury | Parish: | |
| Planning application reference: 3/06/2225 | | |
| Client name, address, and tel. no.: Wilby and Burnett, 123 Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden, Essex | | |
| Nature of application: Construction of new school hall and play area | | |
| Present land use: School playing field and garden | | |
| Size of application area: 400m ² | Size of area investigated: 32m ² | |
| NGR (to 8 figures): TL 43470 43475 | | |
| Site code: ASEV 07 | | |
| Site director/Organization: Mark Germany, Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit | | |
| Type of work: Archaeological evaluation by trial trenching | | |
| Date of work: | Start: 27/2/2007 | Finish: 27/2/2007 |
| Location of finds/Curating museum: Hertford | | |
| Related SMR Nos: | Periods represented: Post-medieval and modern | |
| Relevant previous summaries/reports: None | | |
| <p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>Two archaeological trial-trenches were dug in advance of the proposed construction of a new school hall and play area. The excavation of three engineering trial pits was also observed for the presence of archaeological deposits, features and finds.</p> <p>The trenches and trial-pits revealed the remains of gravel pit, which had been backfilled within the last 160 years. The gravel pit extended across most of the development area, and contained fragments of tile, late 18th/early 19th-century brick, and pieces of post-medieval and modern pottery. The oldest find was a residual piece of unglazed sandy orange ware dating from the 14th to 16th century.</p> | | |
| Author of summary: Mark Germany | Date of summary: March 2007 | |



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

Fig.1. Location plan



Plate 2: Trench 1, looking west



Plate 3: Trench 2, looking south