# THE STREET, TAKELEY ESSEX

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING AND MONITORING



May 2008

# LAND ADJACENT TO WESTWOOD HOUSE TAKELEY,ESSEX

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING AND MONITORING

Prepared By: Matthew Pocock	Signature:
Position: Project Officer	Date:
Checked by: Adrian Scruby	Signature:
Position: Project Manager	Date:

Document Ref:	1842rep.doc
Report Issue Date:	May 2008
Circulation:	Craft Services Group Ltd (x2)
	ECC Historic Environment Management
	Essex Historic Environment Record
	Archive (x2)

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

© Field Archaeology Unit, Essex County Council, c/o County Hall, Chelmsford Essex CM1 1QH

#### **CONTENTS**

		Page
	Summary	1
1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Background	3
3.0	Aims and Objectives	4
4.0	Methods	4
5.0	Results	5
6.0	Finds	7
7.0	Conclusions	8
8.0	Assessment of Results	8
	Acknowledgements	10
	Bibliography	11
APP	PENDICES	
	Appendix 1: Fieldwork Data	12
	Appendix 2: Finds Data	14
	Appendix 3: Contents of Archive	15
	Appendix 4: EHER Summary	16
PLA	TES	
1.	Ditch 14 (West Facing Section)	17
	Ditch 14 (West Facing Section)	
2	Ditch 21 (North Facing Section)	17
FIGI	JRES	
1.	Location Plan (1:600)	18
2.	Trench plans 1-3 (1:200)	19
3.	Sections 1, 2 and 3 (1:20)	20
4.	Plan of monitoring works (1:100)	21

### LAND ADJACENT TO WESTWOOD HOUSE TAKELEY, ESSEX

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING AND MONITORING

Client: Craft Services Group Ltd

**NGR:** TL 5486 2118

Planning Application No: UTT/2079/06

Site Code: TAWH08 Project No: 1842

**Date of Fieldwork:** February/ March 2008 **Oasis Accession Number:** Essexcou1-33456

#### **SUMMARY**

An archaeological evaluation and follow-up monitoring work was undertaken by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit in an area of perceived archaeological potential on land adjacent to Westwood House, Takeley, in advance of residential development. The evaluation demonstrated the survival of archaeological remains in some areas of the site, possibly relating to the road frontage.

The earliest remains were Late Iron Age, and consisted of a loosely metalled surface and an east-west ditch. Later remains included a 2nd century north-south ditch and two further east-west ditches close to the road frontage, one of which remained undated, the other being post-medieval in date. A cluster of large undated pits was also discovered in addition to several small isolated stake-holes. Some of these undated features may relate to 'back yard' activity associated with nearby properties.

Little impact has been made on archaeological levels across the site by recent development principally because of the importation of up to 1.20m of waste material and soils in the early modern/ modern period. Consequently, groundworks taking place on the property frontage only impacted on the upper zero to 0.10m of the features present. Overall, the investigation established the character and extent of the archaeological remains encountered and many of the significant features and deposits were preserved in situ.

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Planning Background

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) was commissioned by Craft Services to undertake an archaeological evaluation as a condition of planning consent (UTT/2079/06) for the construction of ten residential properties and an access road on land adjacent to Westwood House, Takeley (TL 548211). Following on from the evaluation, a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was subsequently undertaken during groundworks at the front of the development.

The fieldwork was carried out following a WSI (ECC FAU 2008) produced on behalf of the client in response to a design brief produced by the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management Team (ECC HEM 2007).

#### 1.2 Report and Archive

Copies of this report will be supplied to Craft Services limited, ECC HEM and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). A version will be uploaded to the Online Access Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<a href="http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis">http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis</a>). The project archive, including two copies of the report, will be deposited at Saffron Walden Museum.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Location, Topography and Geology

The site is located to towards the western end of Takeley village and lies on the south side of the B1256 (the old A120). It is bounded east and west by residential properties and to the south by the redundant Bishops Stortford to Braintree railway line. The c.0.35ha site comprises the amalgamated parts of former gardens to the rear of the street frontage.

The underlying geology is chalky boulder clay with ground surface heights ranging between 83 and 85m OD.

#### 2.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

The following archaeological information is derived from the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER).

The road (B1256) defining the northern boundary of the site is thought to follow the line of a Roman Road from Braughing to Colchester (EHER 4698 – Stane Street Roman Road).

Consequently, it is believed that there is potential for Roman and/or Medieval ribbon development or isolated farmsteads along its length. A Roman boundary ditch, running perpendicular to the road, was discovered immediately to the east of the site, during the course of residential development (Germany 2007, EHER 45949).

#### 3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

#### 3.1 Aims

The aim of the archaeological investigation was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving remains within the area under investigation and to establish the necessity for any further work. More specific objectives were to determine the presence of any Roman or medieval roadside settlement.

Following the discovery of the archaeological remains during the evaluation phase, the principal objective of the monitoring work was to recover further information on the features identified by the evaluation.

#### 4.0 METHODS

The archaeological investigation comprised the excavation of three trenches totalling c.109sqm (fig. 1), targeted to investigate areas impacted by the proposed development. Following the evaluation, further mitigation was agreed involving monitoring of groundworks along the road frontage (fig. 4), to ensure any surviving archaeological remains that were encountered were mapped and, where appropriate, investigated and recorded.

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

Topsoil, subsoil and other overburden was stripped using a small 360 excavator with a toothless bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist. All surfaces were sufficiently cleaned to ensure that any features present were visible and spoil heaps were examined for archaeological material. Archaeological features and deposits were excavated using hand tools and finds were collected and bagged by context. The trench locations were surveyed through measurement to site boundaries recorded on Ordnance Survey, and levels were taken relative to Ordnance Datum. Features and deposits were recorded using pro forma

site recording sheets. Plans and sections were drawn at 1:20 and 1:10 respectively. A full photographic record was maintained throughout the investigation.

#### 5.0 RESULTS

The following description of fieldwork results is supplemented by further information on the excavated features and deposits presented in Appendix 1.

#### 5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 (c.51sqm – figures 1 & 2) was aligned north-south and set back slightly from the road frontage. The archaeological sequence was characterised by a Late Iron Age ditch and a number of post-medieval or later features. Flooding caused problems at the northern end of the trench, as a consequence of which features (16) and (26) were not fully excavated. The southern end of the trench remained dry.

Undisturbed natural geology in the form of yellow/white clay (13), which sloped gently to the north, was encountered between 82.3 and 83.2m OD. All archaeological remains were discovered at this level. At the northern end of the trench, an east-west ditch (16) was uncovered that produced finds including animal bone and fragments of post-medieval brick. Further south, three large elongated pits were recorded, two (33 and 26) were excavated but remained undated. The upper material extracted from (26) was waterlogged and had a distinctive cess like smell. An east-west ditch (14) (fig. 3, plate. 1) was located towards the southern end of the trench and was dated by the recovery of prehistoric and Late Iron Age pottery sherds. It also contained several flint flakes, burnt flint, and baked clay fragments. A number of poorly defined features which could have been evidence for a fence line were discovered on the eastern edge of the trench, one of which (30) contained a flattened pebble, possibly a hammerstone. All features within the trench were overlain by a firm clay-silt subsoil (04) which generally increased in thickness to the south, acting to exaggerate the slope of the area. Rich organic garden topsoil (03) sealed the subsoil and effectively levelled the site. A substantial quantity of dumped modern debris (01 and 02) lay across the front of site. Its thickness varied between 0.30m to 0.60m and it comprised various soils and mixed gravels.

#### 5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 (c.26sqm, fig. 2) was aligned broadly north-south and located to the rear and east of the development. The yellow/white clay natural (12) was revealed at a depth of c.83m OD in the centre of the trench, within a small machined sondage (fig. 2). Across the remainder of

the trench excavation was limited to the top of a perceived land/ external surface (08)/ (09) (fig. 3 - section 1) that overlay the natural. The surface comprised a c.0.10m-thick brown clay (09) that was overlain by worn gravels and stones (08) together with sherds of prehistoric and Late Iron Age pottery, contemporary flint flakes and a fragment of burnt flint. A c.0.12m thick subsoil sealed the loose cobbled surface. Towards the northern end of the trench, the base of a later but undated stake or post-hole (10) truncated 08/09 and the subsoil. Its relationship with the overlying c.0.25m thick garden topsoil was not ascertained. In this part of the site, the dump of modern material averaged about 0.32m and primarily consisted of mixed gravels, mixed soils, and fragments of brick, plastic sheeting, and metal objects.

#### 5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 (c.33sqm) was aligned east-west and located to the rear and the west of the development (fig. 2).

Archaeological remains consisted of a ditch (21) (fig. 3 – section 3, plate 2) and two isolated stake/ post holes, (19) and (24). These cut into the natural clays, which were encountered at around 84m OD sloping from west to east. The ditch contained four fills, the second of which produced large quantities of charcoal and domestic debris including pottery dating to the 2nd century, animal bone, oyster shell, and a fragment of burnt flint. The ditch was perpendicular to Stane Street and could have represented a property boundary associated with nearby occupation along the frontage. Two stake holes encountered in the trench remained undated and so could not be convincingly associated with any particular phase of activity on site. Subsoil and topsoil were present throughout the length of the trench, being 0.20 and 0.10m thick respectively. A 0.24m-thick layer of modern build-up covered all previous activity.

#### 5.4 Monitoring

Monitoring took place during the excavation of footings within plots 1 and 2 of the development, (fig. 1 and 4) adjacent to the road. It confirmed a sequence of soil build-up on site consistent with that encountered in Trench 1 during the previous evaluation. A single east-west ditch, ditch terminus, or elongated pit (37) was discovered at the front of the site at a depth of 1.15m (fig. 4), which had not been identified in Trench 1, possibly because it turned or terminated, or because it was masked by the unexcavated slope into the trench. Furthermore, as a consequence of the depth of the trench, ground water inundation, and limited exposure of the feature it could not be sampled excavated or dated. However, it remains preserved in site below the construction level of the development. The remainder of

the groundworks were either located in areas free of archaeological remains or were not deep enough to impact on archaeological levels.

#### 6.0 FINDS

Small groups of finds were recovered from five contexts. All of the finds have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details can be found in Appendix 2. The prehistoric pottery found in two contexts (see below) has not been identified by Nick Lavender, although it has to be said that all of the sherds from both contexts are very small (ASW 2.5g). The finds are described briefly by category below.

#### 6.1 Pottery

A total of 30 sherds, weighing 314g, was recovered from three contexts. Very small sherds of similar pottery came from layer (8) (Trench 2) and the fill of ditch (14) (Trench 1). These comprise a mixture of prehistoric and Late Iron Age pottery types. The pottery from the fill of ditch 21 (Trench 3), however, comprised fully Romanized wares in the form of two mortarium rim sherds and two body sherds in black-surfaced ware. The mortarium sherds provide a 2nd century date for the feature.

#### 6.2 Flints and burnt flints

Two contexts (8) and (15) produced worked flints, amounting to nine pieces. Layer (8) included three flakes, one of which was retouched another was a blade with cortex platform. Fill (15) of east-west ditch (14) contained two flakes, a patinated blade fragment, and a blade core fragment. Burnt flint was also recovered from both these deposits and from fill (23) of ditch (21). A flattened pebble was recovered from the fill of pit/post-hole 30 (Trench 1). It has been suggested that this could be a hammerstone.

Most of the flintwork is later prehistoric, possibly Iron Age in date. However, the patinated blade and core fragments are likely to be of earlier Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date, suggesting they were residual.

#### 6.3 Brick

Six abraded post-medieval brick fragments (486g), probably all from the same brick, came from the fill of ditch 16 (Trench 1). This is the only dating evidence from this feature.

#### 6.4 Other finds

These are few; animal bone fragments totalling 11 pieces, weighing 34g, were recovered from two contexts, a small piece of baked clay came from the fill of ditch 14 and an oyster shell from the fill of ditch 21.

#### 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

A number of Late Iron Age and prehistoric finds provide the earliest evidence for activity on site. These were recovered from a probable external surface (8) that survived in the southeast corner of the development and a narrow east-west ditch (14), running parallel to the street frontage and set back some 27m from the road. Given the alignment of the ditch in relation to the road and the small abraded nature of the prehistoric pottery from both features, it is likely that these finds are residual and the features instead relate to roadside Roman activity. However, the presence of these earlier finds does suggest the possibility of prehistoric occupation nearby, perhaps centred on the Pincey Brook.

There is further evidence of Roman activity on site in the form of a ditch (21) running perpendicular to road, along the modern boundary between Westwood House and the development. This contained a particularly rich charcoal fill from which sherds of 2nd century mortarium, a black-surfaced ware, animal bone, and oyster shell were recovered. It is possible that the ditch denotes the boundary to domestic activity along the road frontage, but the evaluation was unable to discover any contemporary structural remains to support this theory.

Other archaeological remains comprised either undated features that may be contemporary with the Iron Age/ Roman development of the area, or are post-medieval in date and potentially relate to garden and 'back-yard' activities associated with nearby properties.

#### 8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

The evaluation appears to confirm that activity was taking place in this area of Takeley from the early stages of the Roman period until at least the 2nd Century. Certainly, the road side appears to be divided into plots at this time. However, whether this relates to ribbon development or an isolated farmstead is currently unclear and, given the low frequency of buried remains on site and the small number of archaeological investigations undertaken alongside the B1256, it is very difficult to suggest which is more likely.

Current evidence suggests a hiatus of activity between the Roman period and the 15th century when properties that still exist today begin to appear. However, it is unlikely that the roadside became significantly developed until the 17th century, particularly on the south side where much of the land fell within Hatfield Forest until the construction of the Bishop's Stortford to Braintree railway line opened up the land between the B1256 and the railway for development.

The foundations for the new houses have caused minimal damage to the archaeological record, either because archaeological deposits were not present, were located at a depth not impacted by the footings or because they have been recorded as part of the investigation. Further work in the area will need to consider the Roman remains found on this site, but of particular interest is the possibility of earlier, prehistoric features and deposits surviving nearby or surrounding the Pincey Brook. Medieval or early post-medieval remains may also survive in places and, collectively, the potential exists for further work along the B1256 to shed light not only the development of the present village, but also patterns of Prehistoric and Roman activity.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The ECC Field Archaeology Unit thanks Craft Services Group Ltd for commissioning the archaeological evaluation. Tony Blowers and Marcus Hedifen carried out the fieldwork under the supervision of Matthew Pocock. The finds were processed by Phil McMichael, and the finds report was prepared by Joyce Compton with Tony Blowers. The main report text was written by Matthew Pocock with digital illustrations produced by Andrew Lewsey and editing by Adrian Scruby. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby and Richard Havis of ECC HEM monitored the investigation on behalf of the local planning authority.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Brown, N. and Glazebrook, J.	2000	Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy, E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper 8
ECC FAU	2008	Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological trial- trenching on Land Adjacent to Westwood House, Takeley, Essex.
ECC HEM	2007	Archaeological Trenching and Excavation on Land Adjacent to Westwood House, The Street, Takeley. ECC HEM brief, Sept 2007
ECC HEM	2008	Archaeological Monitoring on Land Adjacent to Westwood House, The Street, Takeley. ECC HEM brief, Feb 2008
Gurney, D.	2003	Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England, E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper <b>14</b>
IFA	1999	Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (revised), Institute of Field Archaeologists

#### **APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK DATA**

Context Number	71		Width	Depth	Trench	Date
1	Layer	Modern rubble spread.	n/a	0.3	1	
2	Layer	Redeposited natural spread.	n/a	0.3	1	
3	Layer	Garden topsoil - rich brown and organic with small chalk flecks throughout.	n/a	0.23	1	
4	Layer	Subsoil - firm mid brown clay.	n/a	n/a	1	
5	Layer	Mixed modern dumping and build-up.	n/a	0.38	2	
6	Layer	Garden topsoil - rich brown and organic with small chalk flecks throughout.	n/a	0.27	2	
7	Layer	Subsoil - firm mid brown clay.	n/a	0.25	2	
8	Layer	Loosely metalled surface.	n/a	0.06	2	Late Iron Age
9	Layer	Mid brown orange clay silt.	n/a	0.14	2	, rige
10	Cut	Possibly a small stake-hole.	0.4	0.11	2	
11	Fill	Fill of [010] - dark grey clay silt with evidence of small brick/tile fragments and flecks.	0.4	0.11	2	
12	Layer	Natural.	n/a	n/a	2	
13	Layer	Natural.	n/a	n/a	1	
14	Cut	A u-shaped ditch with steep sides and a flat base - aligned E-W.	0.85	0.21	1	
15	Fill	Fill of [014] - mid brown silty clay.	n/a	0.21	1	Late Iron Age
16	Cut	An E-W ditch. (Not fully excavated due to water).	1.47	0.4	1	7.90
17	Fill	Fill of [016]. Yellow brown clay silt with heavy manganese staining.	n/a	0.2	1	
18	Fill	Fill of [016]. A soft yellow grey clay silt with v.small rounded grits and gravels.	1.19	0.4	1	Post- Med
19	Cut	A small circular stake-hole with vertical sides and a narrow flat base.	0.3	0.16	3	
20	Fill	Fill of 019. Dark brownish grey clayey silt with common charcoal flecks and fragments.	0.3	0.16	3	
21	Cut	A N-S ditch with moderate sloping sides and a flat base.	2.88	0.66	3	
22	Fill	Fill of [021]. Yellow/mid brown silty clay with chalk and small gravel inclusions.	1.6	0.24	3	
23	Fill	Fill of [021] A black, near pure charcoal clayey silt.	2.16	0.22	3	Roman (2nd Century)
24	Cut	A small circular stake-hole with gradually	0.4	0.24	3	Oemaly)

Context Type Number		Type Description		Depth	Trench	Date
		sloping sides to a narrow base.				
25	Fill	Fill of [024]. A greyish mid brown clayey silt.	0.4	0.24	3	
26	Cut	A large elongated pit excavated to a depth of 0.50m (Partial excavation due to flooding).	n/a	0.5	1	
27	Fill	Fill of [026]. Mottled clay silt, Evidence of cess (?).	n/a	0.4	1	
28	Fill	Fill of [026]. Yellow brown clay with small chalk, grits, and gravel inclusions.	n/a	0.12	1	
29	Fill	Fill of [026]. Yellow clay silt with few inclusions.	n/a	0.3	1	
30	Cut	A possible circular pit disturbed by later activity. Alternatively a natural feature.	0.45	0.2	1	
31	Fill	Fill of [030]. Mid yellow brown silty clay with small chalk, burnt clay and gravel inclusions.	n/a	0.2	1	
32	Cut	A natural feature with and irregular profile.	0.58	0.18	1	
33	Cut	Either an E-W ditch, with an irregular edge or an elongated pit.	1.1	0.52	1	
34	Fill	Fill of [033]. Yellow grey clay silt with small grit and gravel inclusions.	1.1	0.52	1	
35	Fill	Fill of [21]. Mid yellow/brown silty clay with common chalk inclusions.	0.3	0.15	3	
36	Fill	Fill of [21]. Mid brown/ grey clay silt, with chalk and charcoal inclusions.	0.9	0.18	3	
37	Cut	Ditch, aligned WNW/ESE. Unexcavated. C.4m revealed within the foundation trench.	n/a	n/a	WB	
38	Fill	Fill of [37]. Light yellow/white/brown redeposited clay. Chalk and grit inclusions.	n/a	n/a	WB	
39	Fill	Fill of [37]. Light to mid brown clay silt. Chalk, gravel, and charcoal inclusions.	n/a	n/a	WB	
40	Fill	Fill of [37]. Pale grey/beige/brown clay silt. Chalk and gravel inclusions.	n/a	n/a	WB	

#### **APPENDIX 2: FINDS**

#### **All Finds**

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
8	Layer	4	24	Flint flakes; One secondary retouched flake, One secondary blade with cortex platform Two secondary flakes	Later Pre
		1 17	54 42	Burnt flint Pottery; rim and body sherds, mainly grog-tempered (at least two look prehistoric)	- LIA
15	14	5 2 1 9	32 18 24	Flint flakes; One blade core fragment, patinated One tertiary blade fragment, patinated One secondary flake, patinated One tertiary flake, brown Burnt flints Baked clay Pottery; body sherds, some decorated, at least one is prehistoric	Later Neo/EBA Later Pre
18	16	7 6	4 486	Animal bone; ?skull fragments Brick fragments, abraded	- Post med.
23	21	4 1 1 2 2	30 4 54 232	Animal bone; fragments with cancellous tisue Shell; oyster, one valve Burnt flint Pottery; mortarium rim sherds, same vessel, pale cream, flinty fabric with pinkish core, probably Colchester buff ware Pottery; body sherds, black-surfaced ware	- - 2nd C
31	30	1	246	Pebble, possible hammerstone	-

#### **APPENDIX 3: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE**

#### SITE NAME; LAND ADJACENT TO WESTWOOD HOUSE, TAKELEY, ESSEX

#### **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 (plus x2 bound copies at the rear of the file)
- 2.2 Analytical Reports
  - 2.2.1 Finds Report
- 2.3 Catalogues
  - 2.3.1 Context Finds Record
  - 2.3.2 Finds Catalogue

#### 3. Site Archive

- 3.1 Context Index
- 3.2 Context Record Sheets 1 40
- 3.3 Register
  - 3.3.1 Plan Registers
  - 3.3.2 Section Registers
  - 3.3.3 Digital Photo Register
  - 3.3.4 Level Register
- 3.4 Trench Sheets
- 3.5 Miscellaneous maps, plans and sketch sections

CD (Digital photos and archive data)

#### Not in the file:

x2 A1 plan sheets and x1 A1 section sheet The finds occupy less than one box.

#### APPENDIX 4: EHER SUMMARY

SITE NAME/ADDRESS:	Land Adjacent to Westwood House, Takeley, Essex
CONTRACTING UNIT PROJECT NUMBER	1842
OASIS ACCESSION NUMBER	essexcou1- 33456
Parish: Takeley	DISTRICT: Uttlesford
<b>NGR:</b> TL 5486 2118	SITE CODE: TAWH08
TYPE OF WORK: Evaluation (Trial Tre	enching) SITE DIRECTOR/GROUP: M.Pocock of ECC FAU
and Monitoring	
DATE OF WORK: Feb - March 2008	SIZE OF AREA INVESTIGATED:
FINDS/CURATING MUSEUM: Saffror Walder	
FURTHER WORK ANTICIPATED. No	RELATED HER Nos. None
FINAL REPORT: Yes	
PERIODS REPRESENTED: Iron Ag	ge, Roman and post-medieval

#### SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:

An archaeological evaluation and follow-up monitoring work was undertaken by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit in an area of perceived archaeological potential on land adjacent to Westwood House, Takeley, in advance of residential development. The B1256, which defines the northern boundary of the site, is thought to follow the line of a Roman Road from Braughing to Colchester (EHER 4698 – Stane Street Roman Road). Consequently, the potential exists for Roman and/or Medieval ribbon development or isolated farmsteads along its length. A Roman boundary ditch running perpendicular to the road was previously discovered immediately to the east of the site, during the course of residential development (Germany 2007, EHER 45949).

The evaluation demonstrated the survival of archaeological features and deposits in some areas the site possibly relating to the road frontage. The earliest evidence of archaeological activity on site came from a number of Late Iron Age and prehistoric finds. These were recovered from an external surface that survived in the south-east corner of the development and a narrow east-west ditch running parallel to the road and set back some 27m from the street frontage. Given the alignment of the ditch in relation to the road it is likely that these finds were residual and the features relate to roadside Roman activity. However, the presence of these earlier finds does suggest the possibility of prehistoric occupation nearby, perhaps centred on the Pincey Brook.

Further evidence of Roman activity on site occurs in the form of a ditch running perpendicular to the road. It contained a particularly rich charcoal fill from which 2nd century material was recovered and it is possible that the ditch denotes the boundary to domestic activity along the road frontage although the evaluation was unable to discover any contemporary structural remains to support this theory. Other archaeological remains comprised either undated features that may have been contemporary with the Iron age/ Roman activity, or are medieval or post-medieval in date and possibly related to garden/ 'back-yard' activity associated with nearby properties.

The foundations for the new houses have caused minimal damage to the archaeological record, either because archaeological deposits were not present, were located at a depth not impacted by the footings or because they have been investigated and characterised as part of the investigation. Further work in the area will need to consider the Roman remains found on this site, but of particular interest is the possibility of earlier, prehistoric features and deposits surviving nearby or surrounding the Pincey Brook. Medieval or early post-medieval remains may also survive in places and, collectively, the potential exists for further work along the B1256 to shed light not only the development of the present village, but also patterns of Prehistoric and Roman activity.

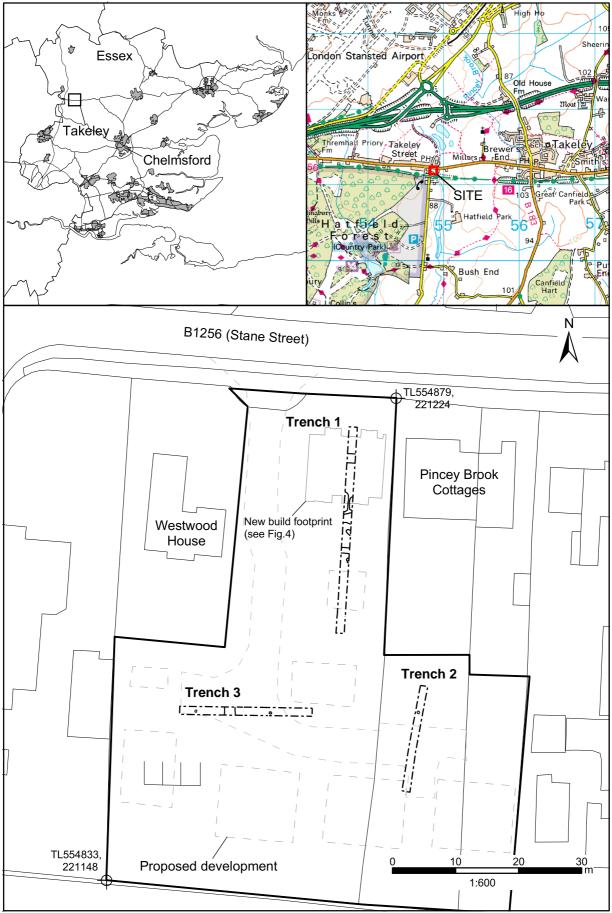
PREVIOUS SUMMARIES/RE	PORTS: None		
AUTHOR OF SUMMARY:	Matthew Pocock (ECCFAU)	DATE OF SUMMARY:	May 2008



Plate 1. Ditch 14 (West Facing Section)



Plate 2. Ditch 21 (North Facing Section)



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



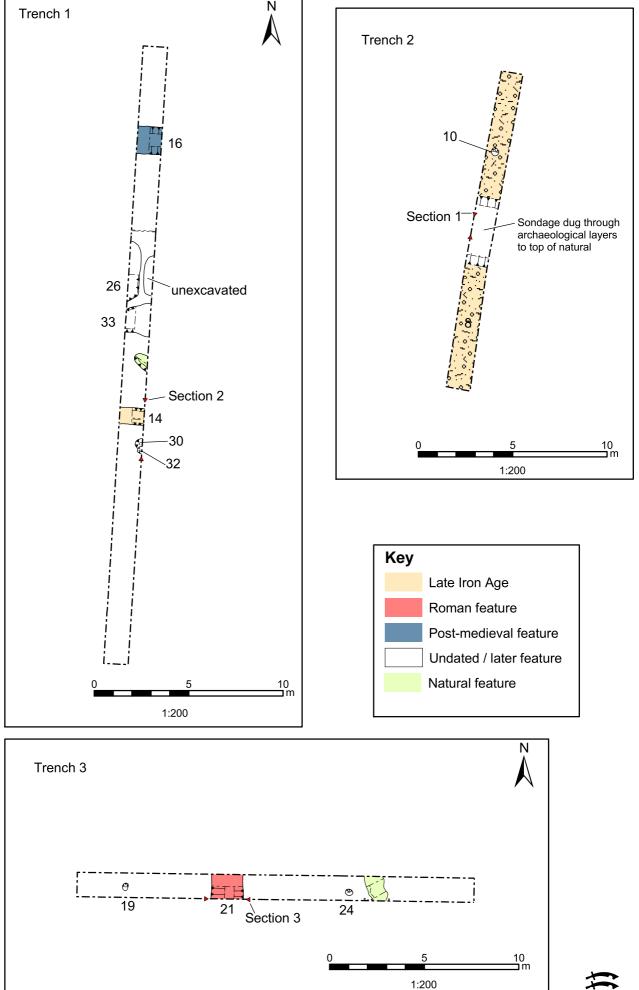


Fig.2. Trench plans

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit

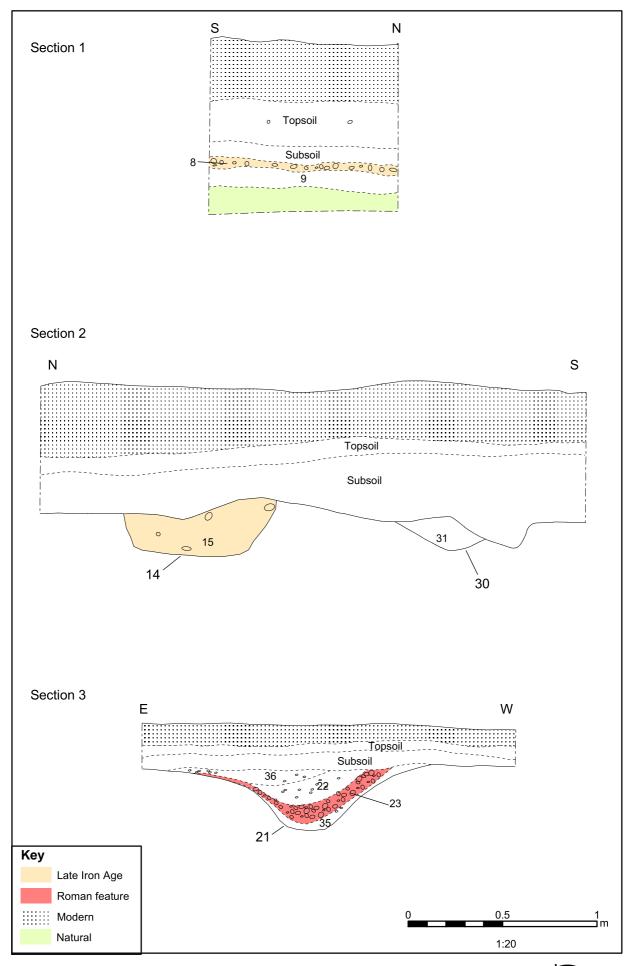


Fig.3. Sections



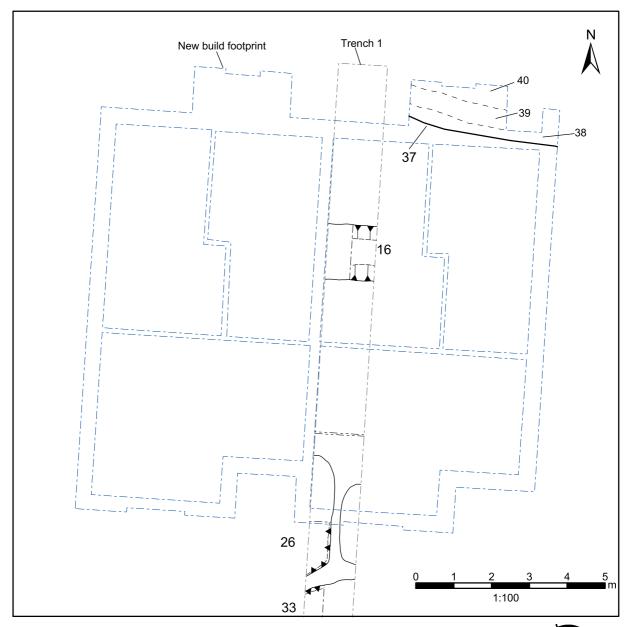


Fig.4. Detail of new build footprint, (Plot 1 & 2)

