

**CRIERSWOOD TO WITHAM PIPELINE  
HALE'S FARM, LITTLE BRAXTED  
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING SUMMARY**



**Essex County Council  
Field Archaeology Unit**

**NOVEMBER 2008**

## ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site name/Address:</b> Crierswood to Witham Pipeline, Hale's Farm, Little Braxted, Essex	
<b>Parishes:</b> Little Braxted	<b>District:</b> Maldon
<b>NGR:</b> TL 84006,13756 to 84308,13544	<b>Site Code:</b> LBRH 08
<b>Type of Work:</b> Archaeological Monitoring	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
<b>Dates of Work:</b> 17th-19th September 2008	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> 410m length
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b> Colchester & Ipswich	<b>Funding source:</b> Essex and Suffolk Water
<b>Further Seasons Anticipated?:</b> No	<b>Related HER Nos.:</b> EHER 8870
<b>Final Report:</b> EAH summary	<b>Oasis No.:</b> essexcou1- 51261
<b>Periods Represented:</b> Post-medieval, Undated	
<b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b>	
<p>Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during construction of the central section of the Crierswood to Witham water pipeline during September 2008. The proposed route had been subject to a prior desk-based assessment (Heppell 2008) in which only one area of archaeological significance, a concentration of cropmarks (EHER 8870) to the west of Hale's Farm, had been identified. Given this low archaeological potential, monitoring was restricted, after consultation with the ECC HEM monitoring officer, to the immediate area of the cropmark concentration.</p> <p>The pipe-trench was between 1.5m and 2m in depth and was cut through varying deposits of brown clay-silt, sand and gravel. Several sections of trench were highly unstable and prone to collapse. The trench was situated within an easement previously stripped of plough soil although not to a depth to expose the archaeological horizon, since subsoil was left in place.</p> <p>Six archaeological features (3, 7, 9, 11, 14 and 16) were observed in the sides of the pipe trench (Fig. 1) and are described below in numerical order. Further context and finds information is included in Appendix 1.</p> <p>Pits 3 and 7 were located 3m apart. Pit 3 was 2.4m wide by 0.5m deep and contained two fills (1 and 2) (Plate 1). The pit was visible in both sides of the trench but was narrower in the southern section. The lower fill (2) comprised dark grey clay with frequent charcoal and was 0.08m thick. The upper was 0.42m thick and comprised mid greyish brown silty clay with several intermittent lumps of reddish clay towards its base. Both fills were disturbed by the insertion of a modern ceramic field drain. Two lumps of baked clay were recovered, although there was no evidence of <i>in situ</i> burning. It is possible that the burnt material originated from nearby fire-pit 7. Pit 7, only visible in the northern section, was 1.75m wide and 0.3m deep and contained three fills (4, 5 and 6) (Plate 2). Reddened clay beneath the pit provided clear evidence of <i>in situ</i> burning. In the base of the pit was a thin deposit of reddish grey clayey silt (6) overlain by a thin deposit of orange-red baked clay (5). Infilling the top two thirds of the pit was 0.23m of gravelly greyish brown silty clay (4) that was noticeably charcoal-flecked towards its base. No finds were recovered.</p> <p>Two ditches (9 and 11), appearing in both sides of the trench section, were recorded towards the north-west end of the observed pipeline route. Ditch 9 was 2m wide by 0.8m deep and was filled with dark grey clay silt (8). Ditch 11, located 6m to the south-east, was wider</p>	

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(2.8m) and deeper (1.2m) but was less well defined with a more mottled fill (10). No finds were recovered from either feature.

A large feature (14), probably an infilled pond, was recorded at the south-east end of the observed route close to Hale's Farm. This was 7m wide and over 1.5m deep. The lower fill (13) comprised mid-dark grey silty clay and the upper fill a more gravelly greyish brown silty clay (12). One piece of peg-tile was noted in section and an adjacent field drain was noted that may have drained into the pond when it was in use. This feature is therefore likely to be of post-medieval date.

A second large feature (16) was located in the centre of the route. This was approximately 13.5m wide by 1.4m deep and was filled with mid greyish brown gravelly sandy clay silt (15). No finds were recovered and this feature was poorly defined. It was most likely a large pit or pond although does broadly align with a cropmark in the field to the north-east of the road and could conceivably be an earlier field boundary ditch.

With the exception of pond 14, none of the features was firmly dated. Pits 3 and 7 were located 3m apart and both contained evidence of burning and are therefore likely to be contemporary. The recovery of two pieces of baked clay is suggestive of a medieval or earlier date for these features. Ditches 9 and 11 could be a southerly continuation of a possible trackway indicated by two parallel ditches shown to the north on the cropmark plot (Fig. 1), however there is no indication of a date for this feature. The one cropmark ditch depicted as crossing the pipeline, and shown as a boundary on 19th century Ordnance Survey maps, was not identified probably because it was located within one of several areas of trench collapse.

The monitoring was successful in that six new archaeological features were identified. However, the lack of dating evidence provides little help in determining the age of the adjacent cropmarks which clearly relate to several phases of activity given the visible differences in alignment and intersection.

A copy of this summary (OASIS No.: essexcou1- 51261) will be submitted to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>).

**Previous Summaries/Reports:** Heppell, E. 2008 *Crierswood Reservoir to Witham Mains Scheme Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. ECC FAU Report 1904

**Author of Summary:** T. Ennis

**Date of Summary:** November 2008

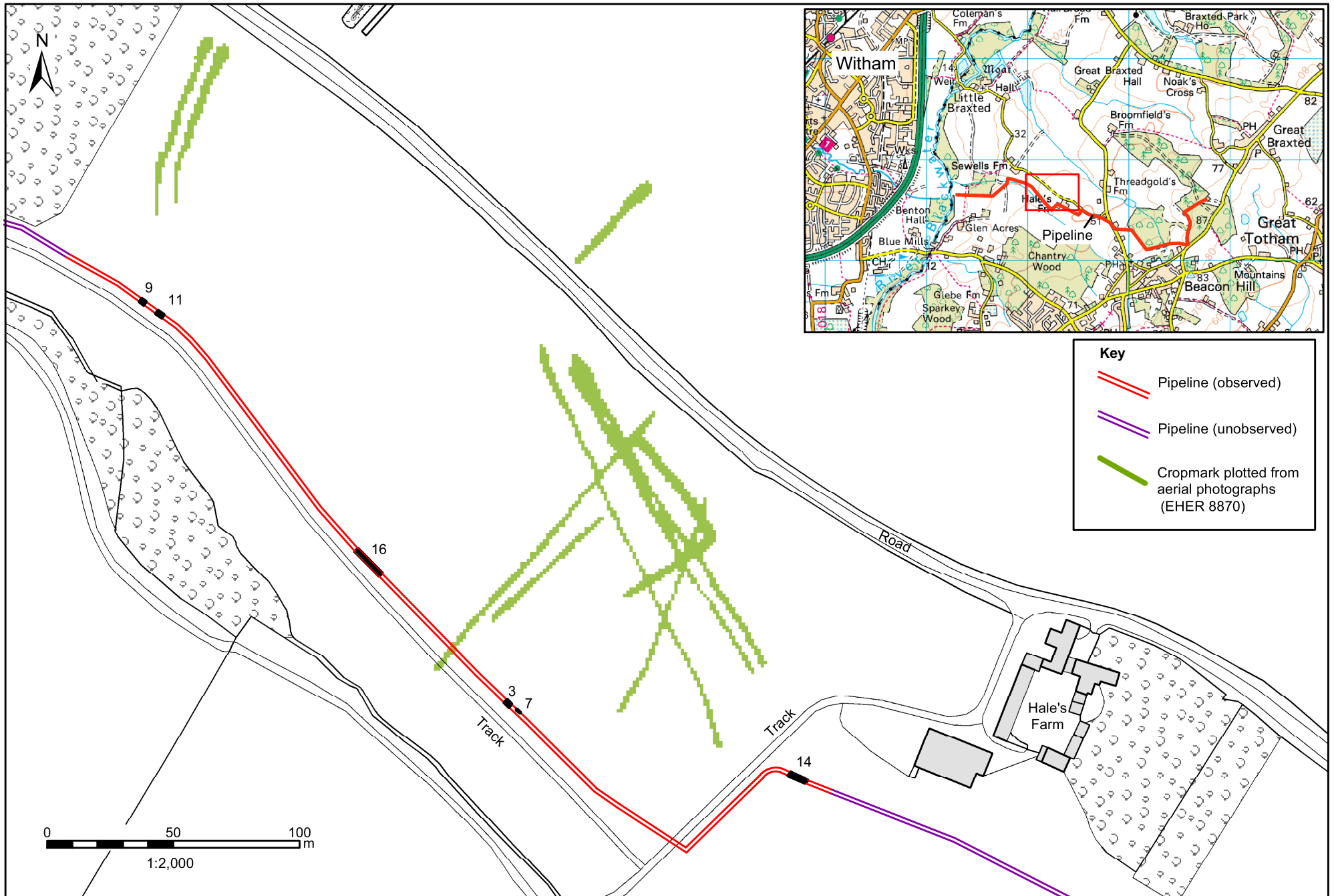
## APPENDIX 1

### Context data

Context	Type	Description	Period
1	Fill of 3	Mid greyish brown silty clay, 0.42m thick	-
2	Fill of 3	Dark grey clay, frequent charcoal, 0.08m thick	-
3	Pit	2.4m wide x 0.5m deep	-
4	Fill of 7	Mid greyish brown silty clay, 0.23m thick	-
5	Fill of 7	Orange-red baked clay, 0.04m thick	-
6	Fill of 7	Reddish grey clayey silt, 0.03m thick	-
7	Pit	1.75m wide x 0.3m deep	-
8	Fill of 9	Dark grey clay silt	-
9	Ditch	2m wide x 0.8m deep	-
10	Fill of 11	Mottled mid-light grey clay silt	-
11	Ditch	2.8m wide x 1.2m deep	-
12	Fill of 14	Mid greyish brown gravely silty clay, 0.6m thick	Post-medieval
13	Fill of 14	Mid-dark grey silty clay, 0.9m thick	Post-medieval
14	Pond	c.7m wide x 1.5m+ deep	Post-medieval
15	Fill of 16	Mid greyish brown gravely sandy clay silt	-
16	Pit/Pond	c.13.5m wide x 1.4m deep	-

### Finds data

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
1	3	2	58	Baked clay	-



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Fig.1. Site location



Plate 1. Pit 3 (1m scale)



Plate 2. Pit 7 (1m scale)