

STANLEY HALL

PEBMARSH

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



Essex County Council
Planning
Field Archaeology Unit

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	ECC HEM
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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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STANLEY HALL

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Client: N.D. Charles Morris Architects (for C. Stewart-Smith)

NGR: TL8365 3272

Site Code: PMSH 05

Planning Application No: BTE/2288/04

ECC Monitoring Officer: Vanessa Clarke

EH Monitoring Officer: Deborah Priddy

Date of Fieldwork: 06-07 January 2005

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by the ECC Field Archaeology Unit on land at Stanley Hall moated site, Pebmarsh, Essex following a planning application for the construction of an extension and annexe on the moated platform..

The Stanley Hall moated site is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 20731) and the extant hall, dating to the late 16th century, is a Grade II Listed Building.

A single trench was excavated across the width of the footprint of the proposed annexe, to locate, record and assess any remains in the area in order to determine the archaeological potential of the site. The only finds identified on site were recovered from the subsoil, and all dated to the post medieval period.

Topsoil and sub-soil were removed from the trench using a mini-digger, down onto a silty clay layer 03, which overlay the natural clay. This deposit is thought to be upcast material from the digging of the moat. A single post hole, containing no finds, was identified in the trench. This feature is likely to be modern in date.

The results of this trial trenching would therefore suggest that the archaeological potential of the proposed development area is low, a conclusion further supported by the complete absence of any artefactual material pre-dating the 17th century.

1.0 INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation on land to the east of Stanley Hall, a late 16th century hall. The work was undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit, who were instructed by Charles Morris Architects for Christopher Stewart-Smith. The work was carried out in accordance with a brief of works prepared by Vanessa Clarke of Essex County Council Historic Environment Management Team, in consultation with Deborah Priddy of English Heritage (Clarke 2004).

The proposed development comprises extensions and alterations to the existing (Grade II Listed) 16th century Stanley Hall which is located on a moated platform. An extension, comprising office accommodation, garden room and cloakroom is proposed on the rear of the existing building. A separate annexe building, for disabled accommodation, is also proposed. All these works are located within an area designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument, in accordance with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (SAM 20731). Archaeological trial trenching was therefore required prior to development to determine the presence/absence of archaeological remains and determine the need for further works.

2.0 BACKGROUND (Fig. 1)

2.1 Location

Stanley Hall is located approximately 1.75km to the south west of Pebmarsh Church at TL 8365 3272. The site lies at approximately 75m OD, overlooking a valley to the east. The underlying geology of the site comprises boulder clays.

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

The following archaeological background uses the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER; 9354, 9355) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford and on-line listed building records. A detailed history of the site can also be found at www.stanleyhall.co.uk.

The Stanley Hall site is one of approximately 6000 moated sites known to exist in England, over of which are in Essex (recorded in the EHER). Such sites are typically medieval in date, the peak period for building being between 1250 and 1350. These moats enclosed either monastic or domestic or religious buildings. It is considered that these features were more of a status symbol than a defensive feature. There is considerable variation of the layout and size. Features on the platforms include houses and ancillary structures such as granaries.

The Stanley Hall moat is triangular in shape, with arms around 40m long. At some point the platform which it encloses was further sub-divided by an intermediate ditch. The stub ends of this are still visible, and a dip in the ground marks its route across the platform. The moat itself is around 10m wide and water filled, fed by springs. It is crossed by a wooden footbridge and two modern bridges. The scheduled area comprises the area within the outer edge of the moat (ie the moat and platform), including the areas under the extant buildings (SAM 20731, information from English Heritage).

The site was called *Stanlegh* in 1282, meaning 'stone clearing' and there are also references to *Stanley(e)* in the 13th and 14th centuries. The extant hall was constructed in the late 16th century, built on an 'L' shaped plan, it is Grade II listed (LB No TL 83 SW 3/88 [28/595]).

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The proposed development lays within an area where archaeological remains may be present, and may be disturbed by the proposed development. Archaeological trial trenching was therefore undertaken. The aims of this were to establish the presence or absence of archaeological features within the proposed development area; and to locate, identify and record any such remains. The assessment of this results from this trial trenching evaluation will allow informed decisions to be made, by the appropriate authorities, as to the requirements (if any) for further works.

4.0 METHOD (Fig 2)

Archaeological works comprised the excavation of a single trial trench, orientated NNW to SSE, within the footprint of the proposed annexe building. The trench ran from 0.8m of the top edge of the moat (ie the break of slope), around 2m from the waters edge to allow a safe working distance from the deep water. The other end of the trench was located against an existing paved driveway.

The topsoil was removed by machine (mini-digger) down to a subsoil deposit. An area at the north end of the trench was not excavated further as yellow tape, marking the route of an electricity cable, was located. The subsoil was removed from the rest of the trench. All subsequent excavation was carried out by hand.

It was noted that both the topsoil, subsoil and layer 03 were heavily disturbed by tree roots, some of which were substantial and had to be removed by axe.

All work was carried out in accordance with IFA (Institute of Field Archaeologists) by-laws and guidelines. Standard ECC FAU excavation and recording methodologies were employed.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS (Figs 2 and 3)

Trench location data and context information is presented as Appendix 1.

The lawn and topsoil were removed by a mini excavator to a depth of 0.3-4m onto a lighter dark brown clay silt sub-soil which contained numerous brick and tile fragments (layer 02). A representative sample of this material was retained for finds analysis (see section 6, this report). Below layer 02 a cleaner light brownish yellow silty clay was uncovered (Layer 03).

A single feature was located in the trench, in the south east corner. This was a post hole cut through layer 03. This post hole, which extended slightly beyond the trench edge was 0.33m deep, with a breadth. There were two fills (04 and 05), neither of which contained any artefacts.

In order to establish if layer 03 was a natural deposit a small test pit was hand excavated through it. This showed that it overlay a clean clay layer, thought to be the natural. No finds were recovered from these layers.

6.0 FINDS by Joyce Compton

Finds were recovered from a single context (layer 2), comprising brick and tile fragments and a single sherd of pottery. All were recorded by count and weight, in grams, and the brick fragments were also measured. Full details can be found in the table 1, below.

The bricks are plain, unfrogged and irregularly-made; approximately half of each remains. Only one example retains the full width of 110mm and this has faint pressure marks on the edges, made when pressing the wet clay into a mould and then stacking the bricks ready for firing. This brick has an average thickness of 50mm, whereas the second example has an average

thickness of 55mm. Using the brick typology in Ryan (1996, 94-6), it can be seen that these are late 17th or early 18th century red 'place' bricks.

The roof tile fragments are unremarkable; one has mortar attached. All are post-medieval but cannot be more closely dated.

The sherd of post-medieval red earthenware has an internal glaze over a red wash, and of a type current from the 17th to 19th centuries.

Nothing in the assemblage requires further work, and the finds need not be retained

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
2	Layer	2	1950	Bricks; thickness 55mm, mortared on upper and lower surfaces; width 110mm, thickness 50mm	Late 17th/early 18th C
		4	410	Roof tile fragments	Post med.
		1	4	Pottery, body sherd, post-medieval red earthenware with internal glaze	17th to 19th C

Table 1 Finds Data

7.0 DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT

The evaluation at Stanley Hall has identified no features which date to the medieval or indeed post-medieval periods. The single post-hole, although undated, is likely to be a modern feature as it is located in the same position as a the gate post to kennels which stood here (C. Stewart-Smith *pers comm.*).

Layer 03, a dirty and mixed clay deposit, is either simply a layer of natural clay which has been disturbed by the considerable number of tree roots in the area, or a platform. The latter would comprise material excavated from the moat and then deposited on the enclosed platform area to raise the height of the platform and to level it off. Height data shows that the area within the moat is relatively level, with only a 0.4m variation across the northern 'point' of the platform triangle. It would therefore seem most likely that layer 03 is the moat platform, whose thickness will vary across the site, but which once deposited has remained relatively undisturbed.

The results of this trial trenching would therefore suggest that the archaeological potential of the proposed development area is low, a conclusion further supported by the complete absence of any artefactual material pre-dating the 17th century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The archaeological excavation was undertaken by EM Heppell and A Turner of the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Charles Morris Architects, for C Stewart-Smith . The excavation was monitored by V Clarke of the ECC Historic Environment Management Team and D Priddy of English Heritage.

Machine excavation was carried out by M Page, under the direction of the author. Thanks are due to M Page, C Bruin (Site Manager) and C Stewart-Smith (landowner).

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- | | | |
|-----------|------|---|
| Clarke, V | 2004 | <i>Brief for an Archaeological Investigation at Stanley Hall, Pebmarsh, Essex.</i> ECC Internal Publication |
| Ryan, P. | 1996 | <i>Brick in Essex: from the Roman conquest to the Reformation</i> (Chelmsford) |

APPENDIX 1

TRENCH DATA AND CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

TRENCH DATA

Trench	Description	Co-ordinates
1	Single trench on moated platform. Orientated NW to SE	TL 83650 32779 (NW corner) TL 83654 32776 (SE Corner)

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Type	Trench	Description	Date of Context
1	Layer	2	Topsoil., 0.3-4m thick .	Modern
2	Layer	2	Subsoil, 0.2-03m thick	Post Med to modern
3	Layer	2	Disturbed mid yellow brown clastic clay, c0.2m .thick	Medieval
4	Fill of 06	2	Fill of post hole 06.	Modern
5	Fill of 6	2	Fill of Post hole 06	Modern
6	Post Hole	2	Irregular pit, orientated NW/SE, .4m x 1.3m x 0.5m deep.	Modern

APPENDIX 2

CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

One A4 file containing:

1. Introduction

1.1 Copy of the Brief for the Excavation

2. Research Archive

2.1 Monitoring Report (Client Report)

2.2 Finds Report

3. Site Archive

3.1 Context Record Register

3.2 Original Context Records (1 to 6)

3.3 Plan Register

3.4 Section Register

3.5 1 A1 Plan and section sheet

3.6 Site Photographic Record (1 Set of Colour prints)

Not in File

Finds

The finds occupy less than one box (discard recommended)

APPENDIX 3

EHER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Stanley Hall, Pebmarsh, Essex	
Parish: Pebmarsh	District: Braintree
NGR: TL8365 3272	Site Code: PMSH 05
Type of Work: Archaeological Evaluation	Site Director/Group: E.Heppell ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: 06-07 January 2005	Size of Area Investigated: 10m ²
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Braintree	Funding source: Mr C Stewart-Smith
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.: 9354,9355
Final Report:	
Periods Represented: Medieval/Post medieval/Modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>An archaeological evaluation was carried out by the ECC Field Archaeology Unit on land at Stanley Hall moated site, Pebmarsh, Essex following a planning application for the construction of an extension and annexe on the platform..</p> <p>The Stanley Hall moated site is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 20731) and the extant hall, dating to the late 16th century, is a Grade II Listed Building.</p> <p>A single trench was excavated across the width of the footprint of the proposed annexe, to locate, record and assess any remains in the area in order to determine the archaeological potential of the site. The only finds identified on site were recovered from the subsoil, and all dated to the post medieval period.</p> <p>Topsoil and sub-soil were removed from the trench using a mini-digger, down onto layer 03, a mixed yellowish brown silty clay which overlay the natural clay. This deposit is likely to be upcast material resulting from the construction of the moat. A single post hole, containing no finds, was identified in the trench. This feature is likely to be modern in date.</p> <p>The results of this trial trenching would therefore suggest that the archaeological potential of the proposed development area is low, a conclusion further supported by the complete absence of any artefactual material pre dating the 17th century.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: -	
Author of Summary: E. M. Heppell	Date of Summary: January 2005