

**73 – 81 HIGH STREET
CHIPPING ONGAR
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY
TRIAL TRENCHING**



Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit

FEBRUARY 2005

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CHIPPING ONGAR
ESSEX**

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TRIAL TRENCHING

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	HEM
	HER

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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**73 – 81 HIGH STREET
CHIPPING ONGAR, ESSEX
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING**

SUMMARY

Client:	Mr Andrew Taylor
FAU Project No.:	1116
NGR:	TL 5519 0282
Planning Application No.:	EPF/0668/02
Site Code:	CO 13
Date of Fieldwork:	31/1/2005 – 1/2/2005

An archaeological evaluation, consisting of two trenches, was carried out on the site of proposed residential development on land to the rear of 73 – 81 High Street, Chipping Ongar.

Trench 1, situated in the approximate centre of the proposed development area, contained no archaeological features or deposits. Trench 2, at the eastern end of the area, contained three features; a modern ditch and two post-medieval pits.

The ditch was probably the footing for a wall and was filled with modern ballast, mortar and brick fragments. Both pits contained very ashy fills as well as post-medieval tile and animal bone. The southernmost of the pits contained 17th century pottery while the only dating evidence retrieved from the other was residual 12th to 13th century pottery.

Both pits were likely to have been c.17th century rubbish pits for the disposal of domestic waste at the rear of properties on the High street. The recovery of residual medieval pottery in these pits is not surprising given the known medieval occupation of Chipping Ongar. However, no primary evidence of occupation or land-use of this date was encountered.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of an archaeological evaluation prior to the construction of housing at the rear of 73 – 81 High Street, Chipping Ongar, Essex (Fig. 1). The evaluation consisted of two trial trenches across an area of perceived archaeological potential. The investigation was designed to determine the presence, nature, date and survival of any archaeological remains in the proposed development area.

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) carried out the evaluation on behalf of Mr A Taylor who also funded the project. The project was carried out in accordance with a brief prepared by the Historic Environment Management (HEM) Team of Essex County Council, who also monitored the work. The site archive will be deposited at Epping Forest Museum. A copy of this report will be deposited with the Essex Historic Environment Record (HER) and a summary will appear in Essex Archaeology and History (EAH).

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Planning

A planning application (EPF/0668/02) for the construction of four houses, with associated parking and gardens, was submitted to Epping Forest District Council by Mr A. Taylor in March 2002. The HEM Team of Essex County Council, due to the perceived archaeological potential of the proposed development area, advised that a full condition should be attached to the planning consent. In response to this condition Mr Taylor commissioned Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) to undertake an evaluation, by trial trenching, on the development area. This report presents the results of the trial trenching investigation.

2.2 Location and Topography (Fig. 1)

The proposed development lies within a parcel of land behind 73 – 81 High Street, Chipping Ongar. It is bounded to the north by St Helen's Church, to the south by the Fire and Ambulance Station and to the west by Cripsey Brook (TL 5519 0282) (Fig.1).

The site is currently waste ground, mostly overgrown with brambles, but was formerly a garden. The ground slopes, with increasing steepness, westward down toward Cripsey Brook. Several dilapidated outbuildings were located at the eastern end of site and were surrounded by a significant quantity of dumped modern rubbish.

2.3 Geology

The depth of the topsoil in Trench 1 was c.0.64m, with a sub-soil deposit of disturbed sandy silt of c.0.18m deep below this. The undisturbed natural geology was a light grey sandy gravel with patches of pale grey sand and light brown silt mixed in. Given the proximity to the river, together with anecdotal evidence, these deposits possibly represent episodes of ancient flooding of the nearby watercourse.

Trench 2 had 0.4m of topsoil and rubble over 0.6m of dark rubble silty sand. The undisturbed natural geology below was an orange silty clay.

The drift geology of this area is generally chalky boulder-clay (ECC Planning 1992).

2.4 History and Archaeology

Ongar traces its origins back to before the compilation of the Domesday Book. The Castle was constructed in the years following the 1066 as the primary manor of the Boulogne family estates. The town itself seems to have been planned to support the castle and was an important market town by the late 13th century. By the 17th century the town was a staging post for travellers with accommodation for horses outnumbering that for people.

A number of small excavations have taken place around the town, particularly off of Banson's Lane (Ennis In prep). These have revealed medieval and post-medieval domestic remains behind the present High Street frontage as well as a medieval town enclosure ditch (Medlycott 1998).

In 1992 a watching brief was maintained on the construction of a sewage pipeline (HER 9559) which ran through the current site. Only Post-medieval rubbish layers and the foundations for a Victorian outside privy were identified (Medlycott 1993). The concrete capping for this sewage pipe was seen in Trench 1 of the current excavation.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The evaluation work was undertaken to locate, identify and record any surviving remains and to assess the impact that the development would have on the archaeological resource within the proposed development.

In particular, the evaluation sought to:

- Establish the presence and nature of medieval and post-medieval deposits within the historic town.
- Establish evidence of dating, trade, distribution networks and socio-economic factors from the artefactual assemblages (Cooper 2002).

4. METHOD

A mechanical excavator with a flat-bladed bucket was used to open both trenches under archaeological supervision.

The machine-excavated surface of the trenches were sufficiently cleaned to ensure that any features present were visible. Archaeological features and deposits were excavated using hand tools.

Standard ECC FAU methodologies were employed with regard to excavation and recording. All features were recorded using the FAU's context recording system. Planning and surveying was tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record consisting of colour slide and black and white print was maintained throughout the course of the excavation.

5. FIELDWORK RESULTS

Two trenches were excavated in the development area. Trench 1 was located in the centre of the area and measured 27 x 1.8m and 0.7m deep, it was orientated approximately east-west. Trench 2, at the eastern end of the development area, measured 12 x 1.8 and approximately 1m deep and ran approximately north-south. Further information on the trenches and contexts is presented in Appendix 1.

5.1 Trench 1 (Figs. 2 and 3a)

Trench 1 contained no archaeological remains. The eastern end of the trench contained a large concrete block that was presumably the cover for a sewage pipe, the construction of which was monitored in 1992 (Medlycott 1993). The rest of the trench was devoid of any archaeological features or deposits. A series of naturally-laid flood deposits were identified at the western end of the trench.

5.2 Trench 2 (Figs. 2, 3b and 3c)

Three features were identified in this trench; two rubbish pits, 1 and 3, and modern ditch 5. At the southern end of the trench sub-rectangular Pit 1 contained large quantities of 17th century pottery, animal bone and tile. The fill of the pit was very ashy suggesting that fire debris, along with other domestic rubbish, had been dumped into the pit. To the north, Pit 3 lay along the eastern edge of the trench and was cut by Ditch 5. Both Pit 3 and Ditch 5 were very waterlogged and could not be fully investigated due to the speed with which water filled the excavated segments. However, enough was excavated to date and characterise both features. Although Pit 3 contained pottery dating to the Late 12th or early 13th century it is clear that this was residual, as it also contained

quantities of post-medieval tile and brick and had a similar ashy fill to Pit 1. It is likely that both pits are of the same date and that they were used for rubbish disposal to the rear of dwellings, which faced onto the High Street. Ditch 5 ran east-west and was filled with modern ballast which suggests that this was a possible footing for a relatively recent wall. Indeed the latest Ordnance Survey map shows several structures overlying the trench (Fig. 1). Although none of the structures area were fully extant at the time of the excavation it seems clear that they were of recent origin, and destruction.

6. FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL by J Compton

Finds were recovered from two contexts, the fills of pits 1 and 3. The finds were recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context and full details are provided in Appendix 2. The pottery was identified by Helen Walker.

Pit 1 produced a range of material, representing the disposal of rubbish in the post-medieval period. The relatively large amount of pottery (21 sherds, weighing 578g) had a consistent 17th century date. The vessels are all clearly breakages from a domestic assemblage, comprising drinking vessels, a storage jar and a bowl or porringer. The fabrics are consistent with those of post-medieval red earthenware produced at Harlow and the sherds are all unabraded. This suggests that the pottery has not travelled far from the point of deposition.

Two of the brick fragments are 50mm deep, made in poorly-mixed red-firing clay. These are also likely to be 17th century, as is the small sherd of vessel glass. Several of the finds are more recent, the clear glass for example, but these are probably modern intrusion. The roof tiles are of a type which is not closely datable within the post-medieval period. The animal bone mostly represents food waste. Cattle, pig and bird, probably domestic fowl, were identified, along with the jawbone from a horse. The cattle bones are from immature animals and there are chop marks visible on some of the bones. It is unlikely that the horse was derived from domestic food waste, however, although horsemeat may have been fed to dogs.

The finds from Pit 3 were fewer in number. The pottery comprises two sherds, weighing 92g, dated to the late 12th to early 13th centuries. The largest sherd is from a jug or tripod pitcher in coarse sandy orange ware, showing slip-coating and partial green glaze. Neither of the sherds is particularly abraded. The remaining finds from this pit fill consist of a sheep/goat mandible and a whelk shell. The finds are too few to draw firm conclusions from, but the presence of medieval pottery from excavations in Chipping Ongar is only to be expected.

No environmental samples were taken due to the amount of contamination from the modern rubbish in the sub-soil and topsoil and the relatively low perceived significance of the post-medieval remains encountered.

7. DISCUSSION

The depth of the topsoil and subsoil in both trenches indicates that the area of the site, especially at the eastern end, has been used as a dumping ground for a considerable period of time. A large quantity of coal slag and ash was mixed in with the soil suggesting that household fire rake out was dumped behind the dwellings that faced onto the High Street and perhaps worked into garden soil.

The silts and gravels that formed the natural geology of Trench 1 seem likely to be the result of water deposition. The Cripsey Brook, which forms the western boundary to the site, is known to have flooded with a reasonable occurrence in the past. A retaining wall now stops all but the worst flooding episodes.

The two pits investigated in Trench 2 are likely the result of domestic rubbish disposal. While both pits seem badly truncated, the amount of bone, pottery and tile, along with the ash, suggest that this dumping of rubbish was probably not a single event but constitutes the day-to-day disposal of household material over a period of time, possibly derived from occupation of dwellings on the High Street.

Residual pieces of 12th/13th century pottery do indicate earlier activity in the area of the site. Medieval pottery around this area is only to be expected give the perceived southern extent of the medieval town.

8. ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

Given the depth at which the features were identified it is likely that further remains do survive. However, any remaining features are likely to be concentrated at the eastern end of the site under the standing buildings. If present, a range of similar waste disposal features and modern intrusions may be reasonably expected to be encountered. Given their relatively late date and low significance, it is unlikely that further archaeological investigation will produce worthwhile results.

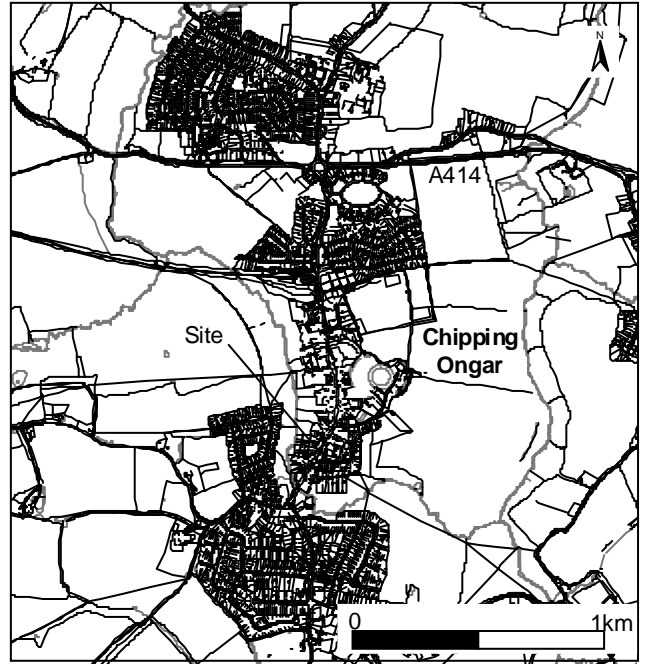
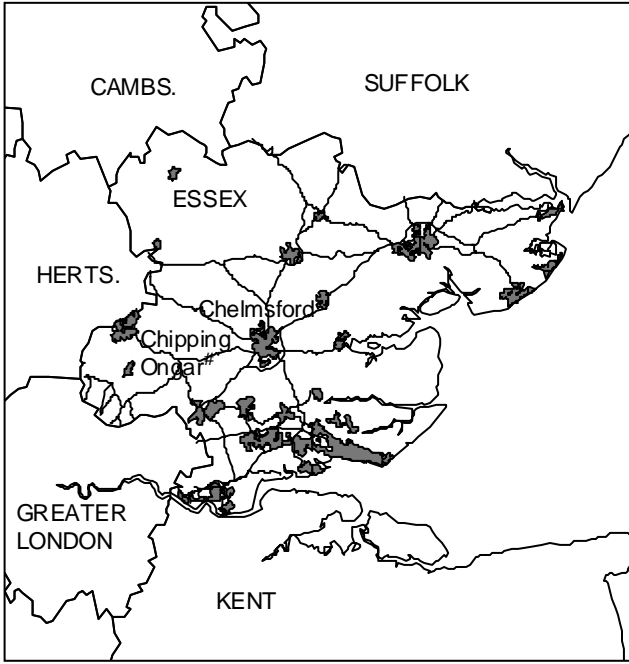
The success of the project in relation to the stated objectives is mixed, as the project has further identified post-medieval deposits to the rear of dwellings along the High Street and tentatively identified medieval activity in the vicinity. However, little can be discerned about the trade, distribution processes of socio-economic conditions from the small quantity of artefacts recovered.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was commissioned and funded by Mr A. Taylor, who is thanked for his assistance throughout the project. The project was conducted by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit. The fieldwork was carried out by the author with the assistance of J Archer. All finds were processed by Phil McMichael and the pottery was analysed by Helen Walker and the bone and tile by Joyce Compton. Digitising of plans and digital illustration was undertaken by Andy Lewsey. The project was managed by Mark Atkinson of ECC FAU. V Clarke of the ECC HEM Team monitored the fieldwork.

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Fig.1. Location plan

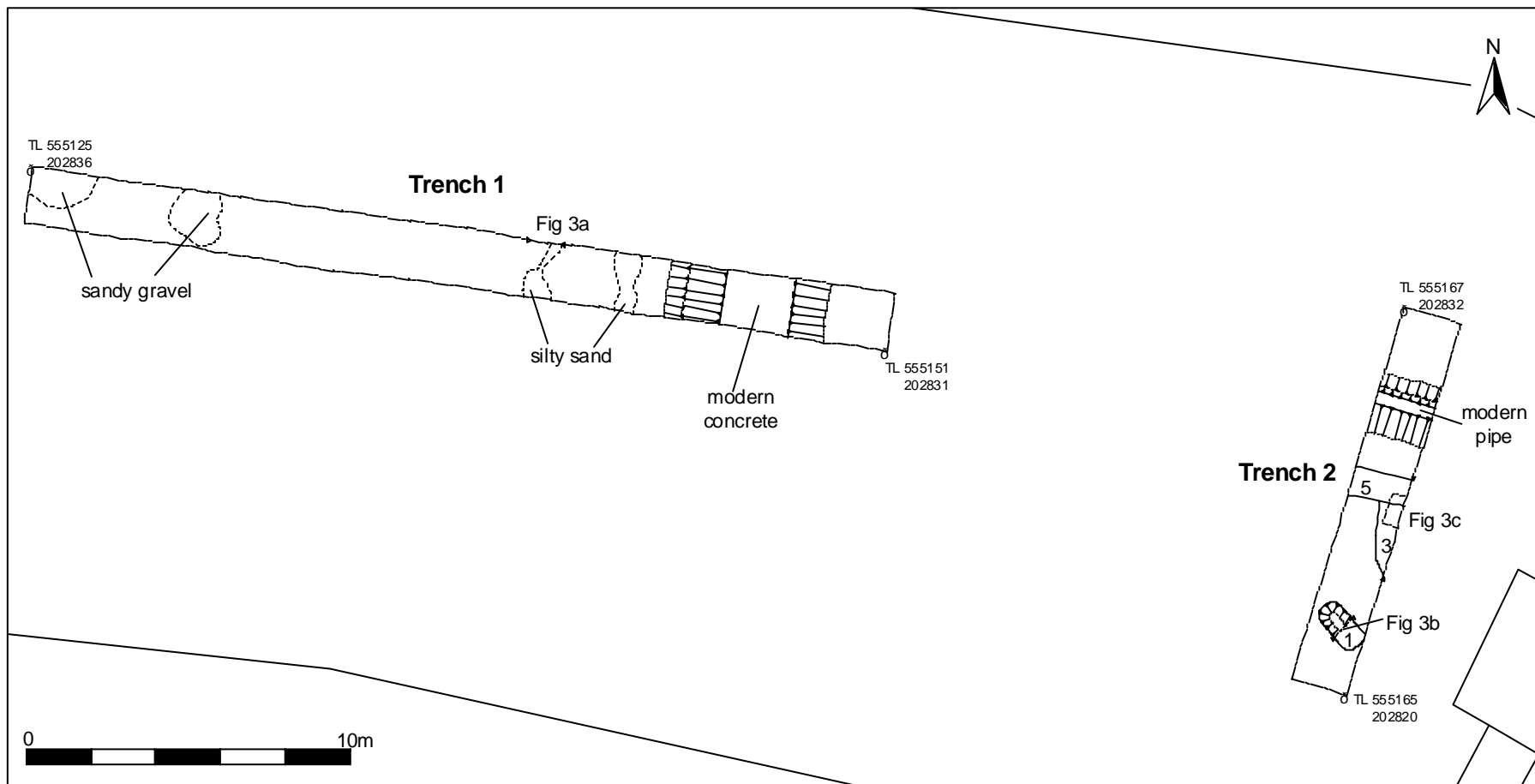
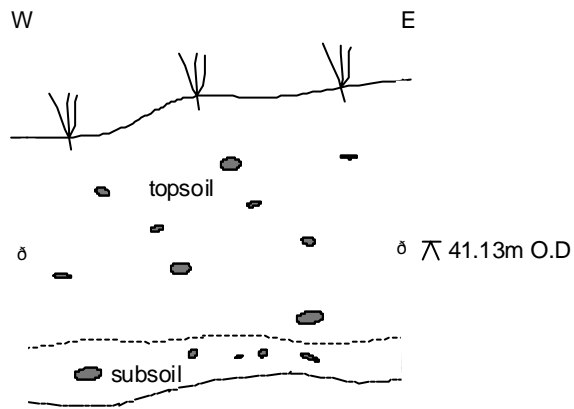
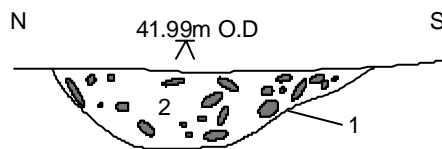


Fig.2. Trench 1 and 2

Section 3a
South Facing of Trench 1



Section 3b
West Facing of Pit 1



Section 3c
West Facing of Trench 2, Pit 3 and Ditch 5

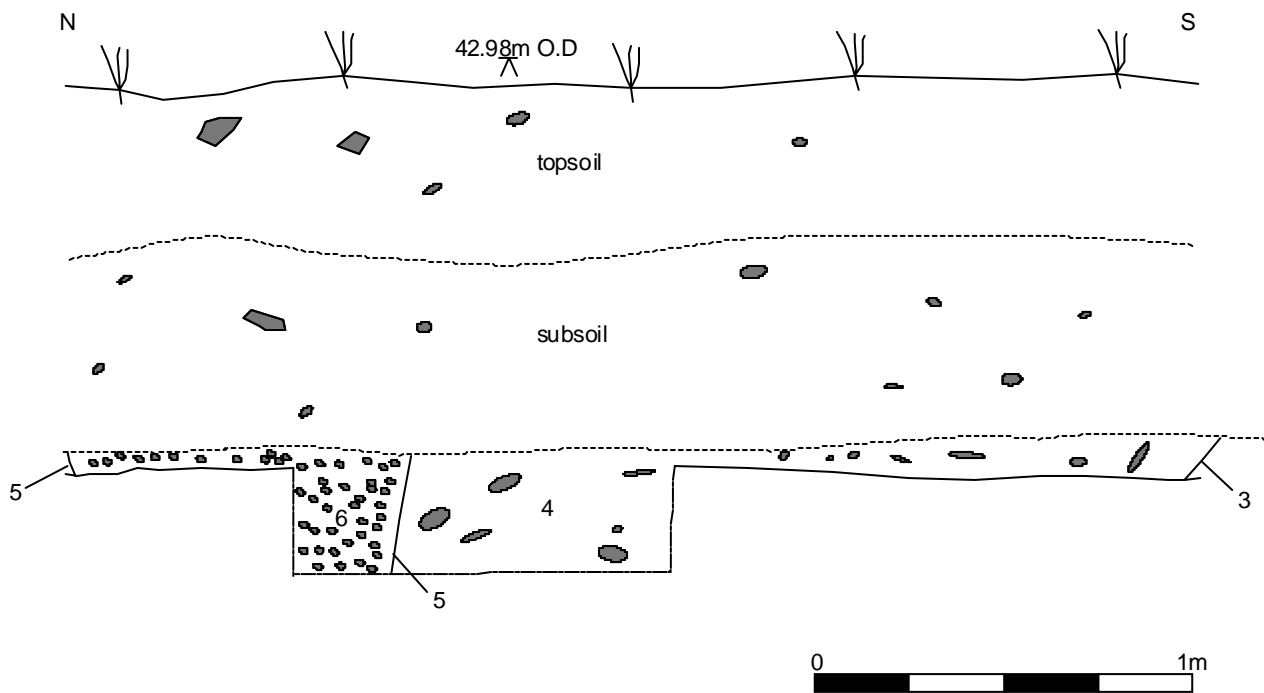


Fig.3. Sections

APPENDIX 1 : FIELDWORK DATA

All dimensions are given in metres

Trench Summary

Trench	Length	Width	Depth	Area	Grid Refs. NW & SE corner	Orientation	Features
1	27	1.8	0.8	48.6	TL 55125/02836 55151/02831	East-West	None
2	12	1.8	1	21.6	TL 55167/02832 55165/02820	North-South	Pits 1 & 3, Ditch 5

Context Summary

Number	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Cuts	Length	Breadth	Depth	Trench	Date
1	Pit	2			+1.5	0.8	0.2	2	17th C
2	Fill		1		+1.5	0.8	0.2	2	17thC
3	Pit	4			+2.1	+0.75	+0.3	2	17th C
4	Fill		3		+2.1	+0.75	+0.3	2	17th C
5	Ditch	6		3	+1.8	0.9	+0.3	2	Mod
6	Fill		5		+1.8	0.9	+0.3	2	Mod

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

All weights are given in grams

Finds data

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
2	1	1	16	White metal lid (Discarded)	Modern
		2	38	Iron objects; triangular-shaped piece and hook	-
		4	26	Iron nails, encrusted	-
		65	1650	Animal bone; mandibles, horse and cattle; maxilla, hoof and scapula, cattle; cattle metapodials, distal end, unfused; cattle and pig molars; pelvis fragments, large mammal; scapula, long bone, rib and skull fragments, nearly all large mammal; bird bones, inc humerus, distal end	-
		1	12	Oyster shell; one valve	-
		2	1	Glass; one sherd clear and flat; one sherd thin, curved and iridescent	Modern/post med.
		3	554	Brick fragments	Post med.
		14	1220	Roof tile fragments	Post med.
		21	578	Pottery; lid-seated storage jar rim and rim of small bowl or porringer, PMRE, both internally glazed; handle; body sherds, inc. black-glazed ware	17th C
		4	3	1	34
1	6			Whelk shell	-
2	92			Pottery; jug or pitcher rim, coarse sandy orange ware with slip-coating and partial green glaze; body sherd	Late 12th/ early 13thC

APPENDIX 3: ARCHIVE INDEX

SITE NAME: CO13

Index to the Archive

File containing:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brief for Evaluation
- 1.2 Specification for Evaluation

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Evaluation Report
- 2.2 Analytical Reports
 - 2.2.1 Finds Reports
- 2.3 Finds Catalogues
 - 2.3.1 Context Finds Record

3. Site Archive

- 3.1 1 x Context Record Register
- 3.2 Original Context Records 1 to 7
- 3.3 2 x Trench Sheets
 - 3.3.1 1 x Plans Register
 - 3.3.2 1 x Sections Register
- 3.4 1 x Levels Register
- 3.5 2 x Photographic Register
- 3.6 Site Photographic Record (3 x B+W prints; 3 x Colour Slides)

Not in Files:

Site Drawings – 1 x A1 Permatrace section sheets
2 x A5 Permatrace plan sheets

1 box of finds

APPENDIX 4: HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site Name/Address: 73 – 81 High Street, Chipping Ongar.	
Parish: Chipping Ongar	District: Epping Forest
NGR: TL 5519 0282	Site Code: CO 13
Type of Work: Evaluation by Trial Trenching	Site Director/Group: A Robertson ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: 31st Jan 2005 and 1st Feb 2005	Size of Area Investigated: Development area c.0.345 ha Trenching: 2 trenches = 70.2m ² (2%)
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Epping Forest Museum	Funding Source: Mr A. Taylor
Further Work Anticipated? No	Related HER Nos: 9559
Final Report: Summary in Essex Archaeology and History.	
Periods Represented: Medieval Post-medieval Modern	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>An archaeological evaluation, consisting of two trenches, was carried out on the site of proposed residential development on land to the rear of 73 – 81 High Street, Chipping Ongar.</p> <p>Trench 1, situated in the approximate centre of the proposed development area contained no archaeological features or deposits. Trench 2 at the eastern end of the area contained three features a modern ditch and two post-medieval pits.</p> <p>The ditch was probably the footing for a wall and was filled with modern ballast, mortar and brick fragments. Both pits contained very ashy fills as well as post-medieval tile and animal bone. The southern most of the pits contained 17th century pottery while the only dating evidence retrieved from the other was residual 12th to 13th century pottery.</p> <p>Both pits were likely to have been c.17th century rubbish pits for the disposal of domestic waste at the rear of properties on the High street. The recovery of residual medieval pottery in these pits is not surprising given the known medieval occupation of Chipping Ongar.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: N.A.	
Author of Summary: A. Robertson (ECC FAU)	Date of Summary: January 2005