

37 - 61 HIGH STREET

GREAT DUNMOW

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

BY TRIAL TRENCHING

(ADDENDUM TO 2003 AND 2007 REPORTS)



Essex County Council

FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

November 2009

37 – 61 HIGH STREET, GREAT DUNMOW, ESSEX
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING
ADDENDUM

Introduction

This report is an addendum to two earlier phases of archaeological trial trenching evaluation which have been carried out to the rear of 37-61 High Street, Great Dunmow (Regan 2003; Pocock 2007) in advance of re-development.

The excavation of an archaeological trial-trench preceded a further phase of house construction to the immediate rear of 37 to 61 High Street, Great Dunmow (Fig. 1). The archaeological work was recommended by the Essex County Council Historic Environment team and was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of CgMs Consulting Ltd, acting on behalf of Taylor Wimpey. The main aim of the project was to investigate the medieval origins and the subsequent development of Great Dunmow.

Previous archaeological work

The establishment of a market in Great Dunmow in AD1227 is postulated to have been accompanied by a shift in its settlement focus, from Church End to the High Street (Medlycott 1998). The first four editions of the Ordnance Survey (dated 1872 to 1947) record that the southern end of the trial-trenching site was formerly occupied by a slaughter house.

Two phases of archaeological work have previously taken place to the rear of 37 to 61 High Street, the first by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit in October 2002 and the second by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit in February 2007 (Regan 2003; Pocock 2007) (Fig. 1). The main discoveries from these comprise a thin scattering of 13th/14th-century, post-medieval and modern post-holes and pits, post-medieval/modern quarry pits, and various layers representing levelling accumulations, terracing and landscaping from the 16th and 17th centuries onwards. The density of the archaeological remains diminishes with distance from High Street.

Method

This phase of evaluation comprised a single trench, 1.8m wide and 18.6m long, which was excavated by the developer/contractor using a mechanical excavator with a broad ditching bucket. This machine excavation of the trench was not undertaken under archaeological supervision and the below-ground remains present were inadvertently truncated by c.0.25m. ECC FAU subsequently undertook the sample excavation and recording of all exposed remains.

Fieldwork results

A late 18th/19th-century pit (203), a modern pit (204), two modern drains (209 and 211) and a modern drain hole (213) were revealed in the trench (Figs 2 and 3; Plates 1 and 2). The features cut sand and gravel and lay beneath disturbed topsoil and modern hardcore (201) which became thicker towards High Street, reaching a maximum combined depth of c.1.2m. Pits 203 and 204 lay at opposite ends of the trench and contained small amounts of animal bone and post-medieval artefacts, including roof tile and pottery. Pit 204 also contained a modern brick and corrugated asbestos fragments, indicating that its post-medieval finds were residual. Drain-hole 213 cut pit 204 and was lined with re-used late 18th/19th-century bricks. The two drains, which fed into the drain hole, contained plastic and ceramic pipes. No further archaeological features, other than modern service trenches, were present in the trench sections, probably indicating that no further significant remains had been lost due to the over-stripping of the trench by the developer. Further details about the deposits and features are presented in Appendix 1.

Finds (by J. Compton and H. Walker)

Finds, mainly of post-medieval or modern date, were recovered from five contexts, three of which (205 to 207) were from pit 204. All of the material has been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details are presented in Appendix 2.

A total of nineteen sherds, weighing 633g, was excavated from four contexts. The earliest pottery comprises a jug rim and a body sherd in unglazed sandy orange ware, dating to the 14th to 16th centuries. The body sherd shows chalk flecks and may be a product of the Harlow industry. Of some interest are sherds from a globular jug in Frechen stoneware, showing a mottled salt-glaze, which would have been imported from Rhineland Germany during the third quarter of the 16th century (Hurst *et al.* 1986, fig. 106.333). Nearly all the remaining pottery comprises sherds of glazed post-medieval red earthenware, including fragments from jars, a bowl and a possible jug. None is closely datable. Modern pottery comprises part of a white salt-glazed stoneware jug, later than the Frechen stoneware, dated late 18th to 19th century, and made in England.

Three contexts produced post-medieval brick and tile, amounting to seven pieces, weighing 759g, and a sample brick was recovered from the fill of drain pit 213. The brick is regular-sided with a depth of 65mm and, referring to the typology in Ryan (1996, 94-6), can be dated to the late 18th to 19th centuries.

Four contexts produced animal bone, almost all of which came from pit 204. Forty-six pieces, weighing 727g, were recorded and some, especially the sheep/goat from fills 206

and 207, was buried relatively recently. Besides sheep/goat, cattle was also noted but the assemblage is too small for meaningful comment.

All of the remaining finds are from fills 206 and 207 of pit 204, and are extremely modern, comprising perspex, corrugated asbestos sheet fragments and a small piece of pink-painted render/plaster.

Conclusions

The results from this current archaeological work complement those of the two earlier phases of site evaluation, carried out in 2002 and 2007, and further indicates that the area to the rear of 37-61 High Street contains a low density of archaeological remains dating from the 13th/14th century onwards, though largely post-medieval and modern. Collectively, recorded remains from the three phases of site evaluation include a medieval well, post-medieval pits and post-holes, and late post-medieval/modern sand and gravel pits, which are interpreted to relate to the undertaking of domestic and commercial activities in backyard areas. No features or finds have been identified that refute the perceived view that the High Street area of medieval Great Dunmow was un-occupied or only lightly occupied until the founding of the town's market in 1227.

Acknowledgements

This work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of the developer, Taylor Wimpey plc. The assistance of Duncan Hawkins and Lorraine Darton is acknowledged, as is the co-operation of Taylor Wimpey on-site personnel. Mark Germany and Phillippa Sparrow of ECC FAU carried out the fieldwork. Mark Germany prepared this addendum report with illustrations produced by Andrew Lewsey. Joyce Compton and Helen Walker carried out the finds study. Mark Atkinson managed the project. Richard Havis of ECC HEM monitored the work on behalf of the LPA.

Bibliography

Hurst, J.G, Neal, D.S, and Beuningen, H.J.	1986	<i>Pottery produced and traded in north-west Europe, 1350-1650.</i> Rotterdam Papers VI
Medlycott, M.	1998	<i>Great Dunmow. Historic Towns Project Assessment Report.</i> Essex County Council Planning Dept.
Pocock, M.	2007	<i>37-61 High Street, Great Dunmow, Essex. Archaeological Evaluation by Trial-trenching.</i> ECC FAU report 1752
Regan, R	2003	<i>Great Dunmow, Essex. Evaluation to the rear of 37-61 High Street.</i> Cambridge Archaeological Unit, University of Cambridge
Ryan, P.	1996	<i>Brick in Essex: from the Roman conquest to the Reformation</i> (Chelmsford)

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DATA

No.	Category	Description	Date
200	Made ground	Concrete rubble, gritty sand and terram. Yard surface for builder's compound. 0.5m thick. Above 201	Modern
201	Topsoil	Dark brownish grey friable sandy silt clay with occasional small stones. Contains post-medieval and modern building debris. 0.6m thick. Below 200	Modern
202	Fill	Dark brownish grey soft / wet / sticky sandy silt clay with infrequent small stones. Similar to topsoil. Single fill of pit 203	Post-medieval
203	Pit	Circular. Funnel-shaped profile. Base not exposed (below water table). 0.85m+ long, 0.72m+ wide, 0.66m+ deep. Filled by 202	Post-medieval
204	Pit	Rectangular, steep-sided, un-even base. 1m+ long, 0.58m+ wide, 0.75m deep. Filled by 205 to 208	Modern
205	Fill	Grey loose / wet silty sand with occasional small stones. Primary fill of pit 204	Modern
206	Fill	Light grey firm silty sand with frequent flecks of charcoal. Secondary fill of pit 204	Modern
207	Fill	Brownish grey loose sandy silt with occasional small stones and flecks of charcoal. Third fill of pit 204	Modern
208	Fill	Light grey loose silt sand with frequent small stones. Top fill of pit 204. Cut by drain pit 213	Modern
209	Drain	Linear. Slightly irregular sides. 0.4m wide, 5m+ long. Not excavated. Connected to drain pit 213. Filled by 210	Modern
210	Fill	Dark grey firm silt sand. Contains ceramic drain pipes: 0.12m diameter, 0.32m long. Single fill of drain 209	Modern
211	Drain	Linear. Slightly irregular sides. Turns 90 degrees. 0.45m wide, 1.6m+ long. Not excavated. Connected to drain pit 213. Filled by 212	Modern
212	Fill	Gravel. Contains ceramic and plastic drain pipes: 0.12m diameter, 0.32m long. Single fill of drain 211. Not excavated	Modern
213	Drain pit	Oval. 1.34m long, 1.28m wide. Lined with un-frogged, un-mortared bricks, 0.21m long, 0.1m wide, 0.06m deep. Filled by 214. Cuts 208. Not excavated	Modern
214	Fill	Brownish grey wet / sticky silty sandy clay with occasional small stones. Contains chunks of lime-based mortar. Single fill of drain pit 213. Not excavated	Modern

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

Further details can be found in the site archive. No further work is required on the finds and nothing needs to be retained. Some of the modern finds, especially the asbestos tile, have already been discarded following recording.

Finds

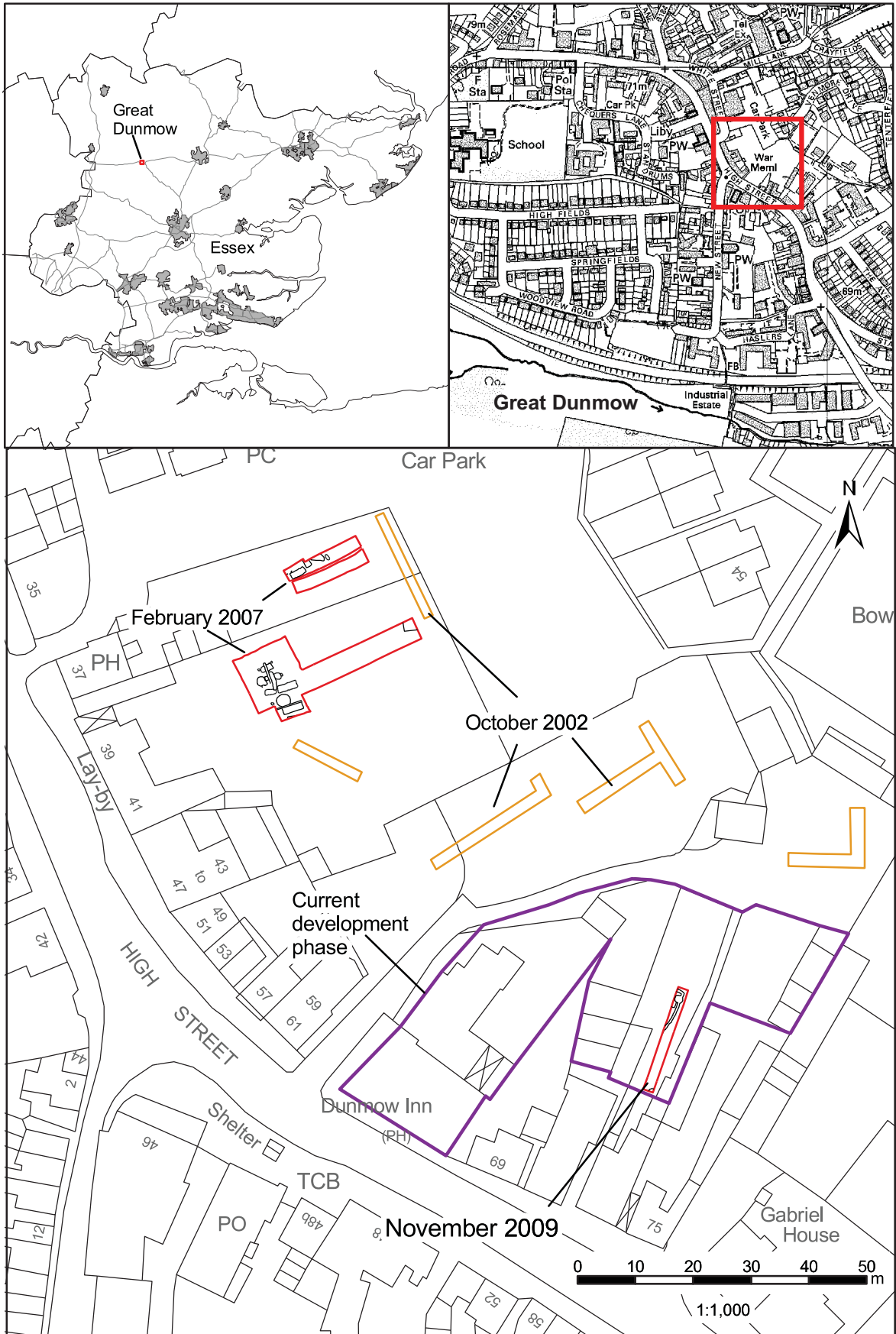
Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
202	203	1	14	Animal bone; fragment (Discarded)	-
		4	505	Roof tile fragments	Post med.
		3	104	Pottery; rim, base and body sherds	Post med.
205	204	6	94	Animal bone; sheep/goat maxilla and mandible fragments, both with molars; fragments, inc ribs and part of an orbit	-
		1	20	Brick fragment (Discarded)	Post med.
		1	164	Roof tile fragment	Post med.
		5	170	Pottery; rim and body sherds, mostly one vessel	Post med.
206	204	33	585	Animal bone; cattle hoof, incisors, molars and mandible fragments; sheep/goat mandibles and loose molars; sheep/goat radius, proximal end, and scapula, distal part of blade missing; fragments inc skull and long bone, large mammal [Most is relatively recent]	-
		3	90	Corrugated asbestos tile fragments (Discarded)	Modern
		1	8	Plaster/render, pink-painted (Discarded)	Modern
		1	70	Roof tile fragment	Post med.
		8	224	Pottery; rim, base and body sherds	Post med.
207	204	6	34	Animal bone; cattle incisor; radius, proximal end, sheep/goat; fragments, inc ribs (Discarded) [All relatively recent]	-
		1	2	Perspex (Discarded)	Modern
		2	36	Corrugated asbestos tile fragments (Discarded)	Modern
		3	138	Pottery; rim, base and body sherds	Post med.
214	213	1		Sample brick, skim of mortar on one long face, regular-sided, 205+ x 100 x 65mm	Post med.

Pottery

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
202	203	1	15	Late medieval sandy orange ware with chalk flecks, probably made at Harlow, unglazed, reduced external surface	14th to 16th C
		1	21	Post-medieval red earthenware, thickened everted jar rim, abraded, but with remains of lustrous internal glaze, distinct zone of wear around outside of rim	?17th C
		1	66	White salt-glazed stoneware from body of globular jug	late 18th or 19th C
205	204	2	16	Post-medieval red earthenware, one sherd from a hollow ware with an all over glaze, one glazed sherd, perhaps from a flowerpot	16th to 19th C
		3	155	Frechen stoneware, fragments from body of globular jug, cf. Hurst et al. 1986 fig.106.333	1575-1600
206	204	8	224	Post-medieval red earthenware, glazed, including a carinated bowl rim with internal glaze, a thin-walled inturned ?jug rim with all over glaze and joining sherds from a base, which shows a zone of fire-blackening and sooting around the edge, and on the breaks, showing the vessel has been reused after breakage	later 16th to 19th C
207	204	1	32	Sandy orange ware unglazed jug rim, burnt after breakage	14th to 16th C
		2	104	Post-medieval red earthenware, joining sherds from an internally glazed jar base	17th to 19th C
		19	633		

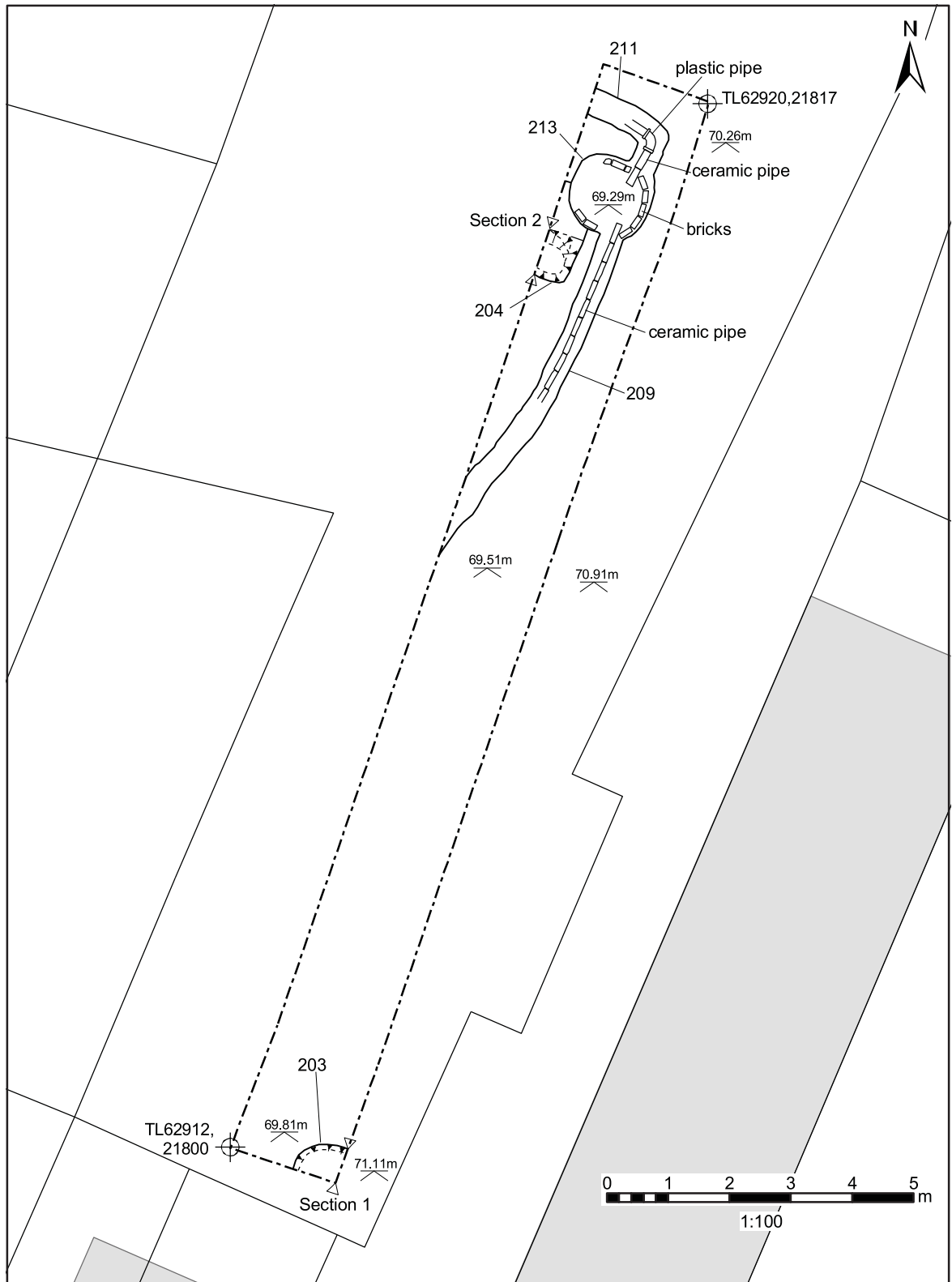
ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SUMMARY

Site name/Address: Land to the rear of 37 – 61 High Street, Great Dunmow	
Parish: Great Dunmow	District: Uttlesford
NGR: TL 62912 21800	Site Code: GD 21
Type of Work: Archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching	Site Director/Group: Mark Germany, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: 4/11/09	Size of Area Investigated: One trench, totalling 33.5m ²
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Saffron Walden	Client: CgMs Consulting on behalf of Taylor Wimpey
Further Seasons Anticipated?: ?	Related EHR Nos.:
Final Report: Essex Archaeology and History (summary)	
Periods represented: Medieval Post-medieval Modern	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>A third phase of phase of trial trenching evaluation was carried out to the rear of 37-61 High Street, Great Dunmow, in advance of ongoing re-development.</p> <p>The excavation of a single trench revealed a late 18th/19th-century pit, a modern pit, two modern drains and an associated drain-hole. No remains of medieval or earlier date were identified at this location. All features cut natural sand and gravel and lay beneath disturbed topsoil and modern hardcore which became thicker towards High Street, reaching a maximum combined depth of c.1.2m.</p> <p>This constitutes further evidence for a low to modest presence/survival of remains of domestic and commercial activities in backyard areas of the historic Core of Great Dunmow.</p>	
<p>Previous Summaries/Reports:-</p> <p>Pocock, M. 2007 <i>37-61 High Street, Great Dunmow, Essex. Archaeological Evaluation by Trial-trenching.</i> ECC FAU rep. 1752</p> <p>Regan, R. 2003 <i>Great Dunmow, Essex. Evaluation to the rear of 37-61 High Street.</i> Cambridge Archaeological Unit, University of Cambridge</p>	
Author of Summary: Mark Germany	Date of Summary: 12 November 2009



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Fig.1. Site location



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Fig.2. Excavated features

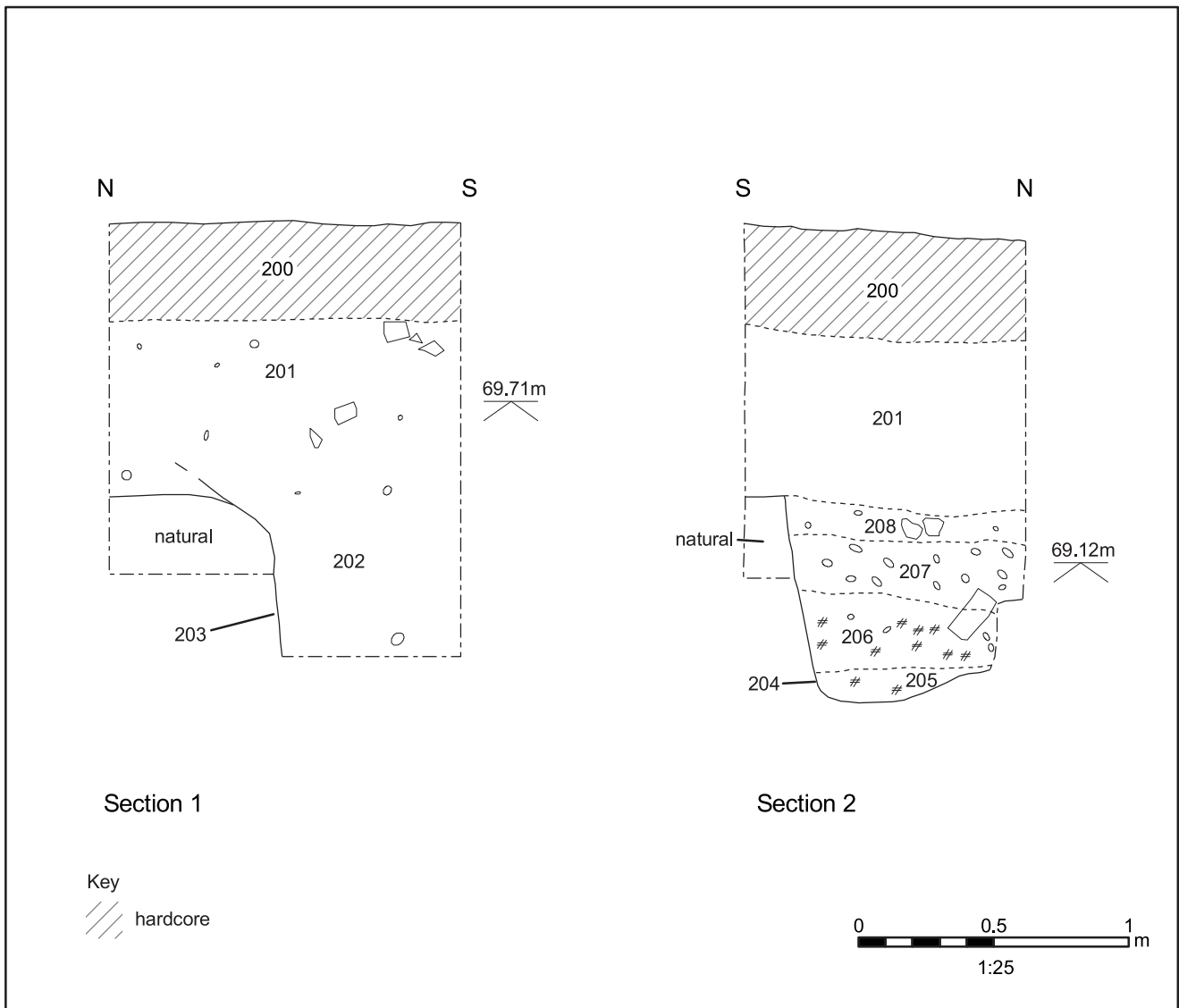


Fig.3. Sections 1 and 2



Plate 1: Pit 204, drain-hole 213 and drains 209 and 211 (1m scale)



Plate 2: Pit 203 (1m scale)