

**HILL HOUSE
CAPPELL LANE
STANSTEAD ABBOTTS
HERTFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION



Essex County Council

**Field Archaeology Unit
January 2005**

**HILL HOUSE
CAPPELL LANE
STANSTEAD ABBOTTS**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

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	Geary and Black Ltd
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	NMR

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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CONTENTS

	<i>Page No.</i>
SUMMARY	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Planning Background	
2.0 BACKGROUND	2
2.1 Location and topography	
2.2 Geology	
2.3 History and archaeology	
3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	4
4.0 METHOD	4
5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS	4
6.0 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL	4
7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS	4
Acknowledgements	5
BIBLIOGRAPHY	5
APPENDIX 1: ARCHIVE INDEX	6
APPENDIX 2: ON SITE TIME AND RESOURCES	6
APPENDIX 3: HERTFORDSHIRE SMR SUMMARY	7
FIGURES	
Figure 1 – Site Location plan	3

**HILL HOUSE
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

SUMMARY

Client: Mr and Mrs Pilkington
FAU Project No.: 1442
NGR: TL 38764 12291
Planning ref: 3/04/1230
Site Code: HHSA 05
Date of Fieldwork: 24 – 25 January 2005

An archaeological excavation was carried out at Hill House, Stanstead Abbots. An area of 17.5 x 13.5m was stripped of topsoil and modern overburden in advance of the construction of a swimming pool.

No archaeological remains were identified and no finds were collected. Although the site itself seems undisturbed by Post-medieval activity, the construction of Hill House in c.1800 involved terracing part of the hillside. This is likely to have removed any archaeological remains to the northwest of the investigated site. This negated the need to monitor the groundworks associated with the construction of a plant/ changing room and other services related to the swimming pool.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Background

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) was commissioned by Geary and Black Ltd architects, on behalf of the owners, Mr and Mrs Pilkington, to carry out an archaeological excavation prior to construction of a swimming pool and associated amenities. The site is situated on the southeastern side of Hill House, Cappell Lane, Stanstead Abbots, Hertfordshire. In line with PPG16 (DOE 1990), Hertfordshire County Council Archaeology office issued a brief of archaeological works for an archaeological excavation of the footprint of the pool. This report presents the results of the excavation.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography (Figure 1)

The site is located to the southeast of Hill House, Stanstead Abbots. It is surrounded by fields and to the north and west a mature garden. Prior to works commencing the site was a pasture with mature trees around the edge. The land slopes downwards to the west and immediately to the north has been terraced to a depth of c. 2m, presumably to create a level platform for the construction of Hill House.

2.2 Geology

The topsoil ranged in depth from approximately 0.5m at the bottom of the slope to 0.25m at the top. Below the topsoil the undisturbed natural deposit was a light brown gravelly silt.

2.3 History and Archaeology

The development site lies in an area of historical interest, with the Manor of Stanstead Abbot being seized by Henry VIII during the dissolution and passed to the Baesh family. The 18th century saw the start of the Malting industry, which still continues today, in the town. (Leevalley-online 2005)

Although no known archaeological excavations have taken place in the immediate vicinity of the development area there is potential for Roman and Post medieval remains. Hill House and the stable block are listed buildings dating to c.1800 (LBS 355895 & 355894) and Roman cremation burial (HSMR 1755) have been found to the south of the development area beyond the church.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the evaluation was to 'determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains...' (Smith 2004).

4.0 METHOD

The topsoil, and modern overburden, was removed from a 17.5 x 13.5m area using a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision. Sections and plans were recorded following standard ECC FAU methodologies. A photographic record, comprising of monochrome prints and colour slides was maintained throughout the project. The excavation area was located by measuring off buildings and boundaries extant on the OS map.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS (Figure 1)

The area was excavated to a depth of approximately 0.8m. No archaeological remains were identified. An area of burning was seen along the western edge of the area, but this was likely to have been the result of a very modern bonfire, which was removed during the topsoil stripping. The only other features were modern post-holes, which still contained the metal posts.

6.0 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL

No finds were collected and no environmental samples were taken, as no archaeological features were identified.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

The lack of archaeological remains in the stripped area and the presence of artificial terracing suggest that it is unlikely that any other remains predating the 19th century survive in the immediate area of the site or the house.

Further archaeological monitoring of the groundworks associated with the construction of the plant / changing room and the related services is unlikely to produce positive results as these lie to the north of the site in the area which has been previously terraced.

Acknowledgements

The work was commissioned, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Pilkington, by Geary and Black Ltd. Thanks are due to Mr and Mrs Pilkington for their assistance and funding of the project. Mr J Smith from Hertfordshire County Council Archaeology Office was the monitoring officer on behalf of the local planning authority. The project was managed by Mr M Atkinson and the fieldwork was carried out by the author and J. Archer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- DoE 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* DoE
- Leevalley- 2005 Stanstead Abbots
online <http://www.leevalley-online.co.uk/towns/misc/stanstead.htm> Accessed
26/01/05
- Smith J 2004 *Design Brief of an Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at Hill House, Cappell Lane, Stanstead Abbots* Hertfordshire County Council Archaeology Office Archaeological Brief

APPENDIX 1: ARCHIVE INDEX

Hill House, Cappell Lane, Stanstead Abbots, Hertfordshire (HHS A 04)

Index to the Archive

File containing:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brief for Evaluation
- 1.2 Written Scheme of investigation

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Evaluation Report

3. Site Archive

- 3.1 1 context register
- 3.2 2 context sheets
- 3.3 2 Photographic registers
- 3.4 5 B+W Prints
- 3.5 5 Colour Slides
- 3.6 2 Permatrace sheets – site plan and section

No artefacts were collected

APPENDIX 2: ON-SITE TIME AND RESOURCES

Date	No of Staff
24th Jan 05	1 + JCB
25th Jan 05	2 (½ day)

APPENDIX 3: HERTFORDSHIRE SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD SUMMARY

Site name and address: Hill House, Cappell Lane, Stanstead Abbotts		
County: Hertfordshire	District: East Hertford	
Village/Town: Stanstead Abbotts	Parish:	
Planning application reference: 3/04/1230		
Client name, address, and tel. no.: Mr and Mrs Pilkington, Hill House, Cappel Lane, Stanstead Abbotts		
Nature of application: Swimming Pool and associated facilities		
Present land use: Pasture / Residential		
Size of application area: Approx. 1225sq. m	Size of area investigated: 236.25 sq. m	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 38764 12291		
Site code: HHSA 05		
Site director/Organisation: A Robertson ECC FAU		
Type of work Archaeological Excavation		
Date of work:	Start: 24th January 2005	Finish: 25th January 2005
Location of finds/Curating museum: Hertford Museum		
Related SMR Nos.: -	Periods represented: None	
Relevant previous summaries/reports -		
Summary of fieldwork results: An archaeological excavation was carried out at Hill House, Stanstead Abbotts. An area of 17.5 x 13.5m was stripped of topsoil and modern overburden in advance of the construction of a swimming pool. No archaeological remains were identified and no finds were collected. Although the site itself seems undisturbed, by Post-medieval activity the construction of Hill House in c.1800 involved terracing part of the hillside. This is likely to have removed any archaeological remains to the northwest of the investigated site. This negated the need to monitor the groundworks associated with the construction of a plant/changing room and other services related to the swimming pool.		
Author of summary: A Robertson	Date of summary: 26th January 2005	