

**SLEEPER'S FARM
RIVER VIEW
CHADWELL ST MARY
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

January 2011

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EHER SUMMARY SHEET

Site Name/Address: Sleeper's Farm, River View, Chadwell St Mary, Essex	
Parish: Chadwell St Mary	Borough: Thurrock
NGR: TQ 6458 7847	Site Code: THSF10
Type of Work: Archaeological Trial Trenching	Site Director/Team: Phillippa Sparrow (ECC FAU)
Dates of Work: 5th – 7th January 2011	Size of Area Investigated: 4492m ²
Curating Museum: Thurrock Museum	Funding Source: Landowner
Further Work Anticipated? No	Related HER Nos. EHER 1717, 35172
Final Report: Summary in EAH	OASIS Ref: 90021
Periods Represented: None	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>An archaeological trial trenching evaluation was undertaken in advance of residential development. The site is situated in the centre of Chadwell St Mary, c. 4.5km to the north of the River Thames (Fig. 1). A small bungalow was located in the north-west corner of the site and the remaining land was used as a car mechanic's garage and yard, with three large depots formerly located in the south-eastern corner.</p> <p><u>Archaeological and historic background</u></p> <p>The site is located in an archaeologically sensitive area. The remains of a Roman mosaic are loosely recorded either within the site itself or further to the south-west (HER 1717) and evidence of Saxon occupation comprising a sunken floored building and other features has been discovered in the grounds of the school, immediately to the north (HER 17282).</p> <p>To the east of the site lies the church of St Mary which dates to the 12th century (HER 35273). Sleepers Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building of 15th century origin (EHER 35172). It comprises a timber-framed and plastered house with a thatched roof (LBS No. 119624). 19th and early 20th century cartographic sources show a range of farm buildings present, almost certainly related to Sleepers Farm. The largest group of these lies towards the southern end of the development area, and there is a further range on the eastern side of the plot.</p> <p><u>Methodology</u></p> <p>The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) proposed a total of nine trenches to sample 8% of the site area. Ground conditions prevented the excavation of three trenches: 8 and 9 were not excavated because the demolition of the former depots in the south-eastern corner had disturbed the ground to a depth of around 3m; trench 4 was abandoned because the eastern site boundary was further to the west than the maps indicated, thereby considerably shortening the proposed trench, and a foul water pipe ran through the western half of the trench. All but one of the remaining trenches were moved slightly off from their proposed locations for the following reasons: trench 2 was shortened by 9m and trench 3 was moved 9m to the east, due to the presence of a large heap of recently cleared topsoil; trench 6 was shifted 2m to the east as the western site boundary was slightly further to the east than originally thought; trench 1 was shortened by 1.5m due to the presence of a service and trench 5 was shortened by c.3m and moved c.3m to the east to accommodate the shifted position of trench 2 (Fig. 1).</p>	

Results

Prior to its demolition, a large concrete retaining wall bisected the site and was aligned north-south running from the south-western corner of Sleeper's Farm (Fig. 1). The ground level to the east of the wall had been reduced probably after the demolition of the farm buildings shown on the 19th century and early 20th century maps, as no evidence related to these buildings was revealed in any trench. Once the wall had been removed the eastern half of the site had been artificially raised with modern demolition material in order to level the land immediately prior to the archaeological trial trenching. As such the eastern three quarters of trench 2 (Plate 1), the whole of trench 5 (Plate 2) and a very small length at the end of trench 6, contained only modern backfill. The modern backfill deposit was deepest at the southern end of trench 5 where it extended to a depth of 1.74m and overlay natural sand.

Trench 7, in the south-western corner, revealed three modern post-holes which contained the remains of the original wooden posts and a modern east to west aligned gully (Plate 3). A layer of modern made ground (8) overlay disturbed topsoil (7) which was situated above a very dark buried topsoil (9) in the southern and deepest part of the trench. Trench 6, located to the north of trench 7, contained three modern, square postholes (Plate 4). Two undated linear features (13 and 15, aligned east to west and north to south respectively) located in the northern end of trench 3 and the western end of trench 2 were probably associated with the back garden of the demolished bungalow (Fig. 3 - Plate 5). One undated ditch (11) aligned north-west to south-east was also present in the northern end of trench 3.

Trench 1 was located in the north-western corner of the site, in the front garden of the former bungalow, and was targeted upon a former possible boundary ditch depicted in the historic mapping (Plate 6). One ditch (5) and two intersecting gullies (1 and 3) were revealed (Fig. 2). Ditch 5 was aligned north-east to south-west (Plate 7) and contained one fill (6) which produced animal bone (tooth) two sherds of very late medieval/ early post-medieval pottery and a presumably residual sherd of possible Saxon pottery. No relationship between ditch 5 and the other features within the trench could be ascertained. The two intersecting gullies, one aligned east to west (1) and one aligned north-south (3), were probably garden features as they were very shallow. A further feature aligned east to west was present in the first 0.15m of the trench and appeared to cut ditch 5. It contained a similar fill to that within 1 and 3 and therefore may have been contemporary.

Conclusion

Although trench 1 was targeted upon a boundary ditch depicted in the historic mapping, no such feature was revealed. The two intersecting gullies (1 and 3) are more likely to have been garden features given their shallow nature, and ditch 5 did not follow the same alignment as the targeted ditch. The boundary identified on the historic mapping may have only been represented by a low fence or wall which has since been demolished and no trace of which remains. Ditch 5 yielded the only archaeological finds from the site and its alignment did not follow any of the modern features, or that of the 15th-century Sleeper's Farmhouse, suggesting that it may predate the early post-medieval and current layout of the site.

Undated ditch 11 in trench 3 was aligned north-west to south-east and was the only other feature not to be aligned along a north-south/east-west axis. This suggests that it may be associated with ditch 5, trench 1, and also predates the modern use of the site. The trenches in the eastern half of the site revealed that the ground level had previously been reduced and as a result no evidence of

the farm buildings depicted on the historic maps was discovered. With the exception of a residual sherd of possible Early Medieval pottery, no evidence of Roman or Saxon activity was revealed. It is therefore concluded that the site holds little to no research potential and further work has not been recommended.

Previous Summaries/Reports: None

Author of Summary: P. Sparrow

Date of Summary: 24th January 2011

APPENDIX 1 TRENCH CO-ORDINATES

Trench No.	Coordinates		
1	N	TQ64536	78508
	S	TQ64536	78500
2	W	TQ64539	78473
	E	TQ64554	78474
3	N	TQ64540	78474
	S	TQ64540	78455
5	N	TQ64563	78480
	S	TQ64563	78460
6	W	TQ64527	78450
	E	TQ64552	78452
7	N	TQ64535	78446
	S	TQ64535	78425

APPENDIX 2 FIELDWORK DATA

Context	Type	Trench	Description
1	Cut	1	3.6m x 0.5m x 0.28m. Cut of shallow linear aligned N-S. Moderately steep sides and concave base. Contemporary with and perpendicular to linear 3. No finds.
2	Fill	1	Fill of 1. Mid brown silty gravelly sand, loose.
3	Cut	1	1.8m+ x 0.76m x 0.4m. Cut of shallow linear, aligned E-W. No finds.
4	Fill	1	Fill of 3. Mid brown silty gravelly sand, loose.
5	Cut	1	2m+ x 0.94m x 0.28m. Cut of ditch aligned NE-SW. No relationship between 5, 1 and 3 definable. Steep NW edge, gradual SE edge with concave base.
6	Fill	1	Fill of 5. Dark brown gravelly silty sand, loose.
7	Deposit	7	Disturbed topsoil. Dark brown silty clay.
8	Deposit	7	Modern made ground. Greyish brown silty clay. Modern.
9	Deposit	7	Buried topsoil. Very dark greyish brown silty sand.
10	Deposit	7	Natural orange brown sand.
11	Cut	3	1.8m+ x 0.95m x 0.4m. Cut of shallow linear aligned NW – SE, steep sides and concave base. No finds.
12	Fill	3	Mid grey brown silty sandy gravel, loose.
13	Cut	2 & 3	1.8m+ x 0.58m x 0.13m. Cut of linear aligned E-W. Shallow with gradually sloping sides and concave base. Associated with modern concrete above?
14	Fill	2 & 3	Fill of 13. Mid grey brown silty sandy gravel, loose.
15	Cut	2	1.6m+ x 0.74m x 0.28m. Cut of linear aligned N-S. Moderately steep sides and concave base, probably contemporary with 13. No finds.
16	Fill	2	Fill of 15. Mid grey brown silty sandy gravel, loose.

APPENDIX 3 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL

By Helen Walker

Finds were recovered from a single context, context 6 the fill of ditch 5. All of the material has been tabulated and recorded by count and weight (in grams).

Pottery

A total of three sherds weighing 56g were recovered, comprising a possible Saxon sherd and two medieval sherds, the latter recorded onto Essex County Council's EFASYS database. Medieval finds comprise a London-type Ware jug rim, probably from an early rounded jug, datable to the late 12th century (*cf.* Pearce et al. 1985, fig.11.9) and a sherd of Surrey-White Ware. The latter comprises an unglazed base sherd perhaps from a kitchen ware vessel, which could date anywhere between the mid 13th to late 15th/early 16th centuries. Both types of pottery occur throughout Essex, but are particularly common on sites bordering the River Thames. It is significant that the Surrey White Ware sherd is from a kitchen ware as utilitarian vessels in this ware seem to be confined to sites bordering the Thames, for example at nearby Great Garlands Farm, near Stanford-le-Hope (Walker 2005, fig. 7.3). Elsewhere in Essex, Surrey White Ware vessel forms usually comprise jugs for table use.

Animal bone

The molar from a sheep was also found in context 6.

Comments on the assemblage

These finds indicate activity predating Sleeper's Farm House and the finds of non-local medieval pottery from London and Surrey reflects the River Thames' importance as a trade-route. All finds apart from the sheep tooth have been retained and occupy less than one box.

References

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Vince, A. G. and
Jenner, M. A. | 1985 | <i>A Dated Type Series of London Medieval Pottery Part 2: London-type ware</i> Trans London Middlesex Archaeol. Soc. special paper no. 6 |
| Walker, H. | 2005 | 'Medieval and post-medieval pottery' in Dale R. and Peachy, M. 'A late medieval site at Great Garlands Farm, Stanford-Le-Hope, and other archaeological work on the Coryton to Mucking pipeline, Essex. <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 36 , 137-143 |