

**CHELMER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL
BROOMFIELD
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND TRIAL TRENCHING



Essex County Council
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT
February 2011

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BROOMFIELD
ESSEX**

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CHELMER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL, BROOMFIELD, ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND TRIAL TRENCHING

Client: LCE blonski Architects for Chelmer Valley High School

Planning application no.: 10/01049/ECC3 and CC/CHL/85/10

Grid reference: TL 70285 10950

Dates of fieldwork: 13/8/10, 16/8/10, 17/8/10, 26/1/11 and 27/1/11

Site code: BROCV10 and BROCV11

ECC FAU project no.: 2287 and 2367

Oasis ref.: essexcou1-93550

SUMMARY

Archaeological monitoring and trial-trenching was carried out in advance of and during the construction of three new school building and a new netball/ tennis court at Chelmer Valley High School, Broomfield. The school lies 250m to the south-west of a cluster of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pits and the site of a Late Bronze Age farmstead excavated in advance of housing development in 1992 (Atkinson 1995).

Monitoring of the construction of the new netball/ tennis court revealed a small amount of Neolithic and Bronze Age worked flint in the topsoil and subsoil. The flints comprise debitage, a piercer and several scrapers, complementing that from the archaeological site to the north-east and adding further evidence for the use of this section of the Chelmer Valley in the Neolithic and Bronze Age.

Trial-trenching within the footprint of the new school buildings revealed no archaeological remains, possibly partly due to modern disturbance and the small size of the areas investigated.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological monitoring and trial trenching undertaken in advance of and during the construction of a tennis/ netball court and three school buildings at Chelmer Valley High School, Broomfield. The archaeological work was recommended by the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team (ECC HEM) and was commissioned by LCE Architects for Chelmer Valley High School. The work was carried out in two phases, commencing with the monitoring of the tennis/ netball court in August 2010 and followed by the evaluation of the new building plots in January 2011, in accordance with two Design Briefs produced by ECC HEM (ECC HEM 2010 and 2011 respectively) and the responding Written Scheme of Investigation (ECC FAU 2010 and 2011). The new school buildings will comprise a two storey Performing Arts building, a two storey VI Form building and a single storey Technology Block.

Copies of this report will be sent to LCE blonski Architects, Chelmer Valley High School, ECC HEM and the Essex County Council Historic Environment Record. A digital version of the report will form part of the Oasis on-line database of archaeological investigations at www.oasis.ac.uk. The site archive will be stored at Chelmsford Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site location and geology

Chelmer Valley High School is situated at the west end of Court Road, Broomfield, immediately south of Broomfield Hospital (Fig. 1). The construction of the new tennis / netball court, the VI Form building and the Technology Block took place in grass playing fields, and the construction of the Performing Arts building in a redundant tarmac-covered netball court.

The surface geology of the site consists of a patchwork of brownish-yellow and yellowish-brown clay beneath c. 0.4m of topsoil and subsoil.

2.2 Archaeology

The following information is partly derived from the Essex County Council Historic Environment Record.

An archaeological investigation carried out in advance of a housing development to the immediate north-east of the site in 1991 and 1992 revealed Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age

pits containing pieces of Grooved Ware and worked flint, a Late Bronze Age farmstead situated inside a D-shaped enclosure, and a Roman ditch (Atkinson 1995).

Aerial photographs show cropmarks to the north and north-east, some of which head towards the school grounds (HER 6142).

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the archaeological work was to determine the absence or presence, date, character, condition and significance of any archaeological remains within the footprint of the new buildings and tennis / netball court.

The objectives of the archaeological work were:

- to establish if any of the nearby cropmarks extend into the development area
- to find further evidence for Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age, Late Bronze Age and Roman activity

4.0 METHOD

The archaeological work consisted of the monitoring of the groundworks for the new tennis and netball court, and the trial trenching of the footprints of the three new buildings. The groundworks for the court were shallow and consisted of the removal of all of the topsoil and part of the subsoil. The underlying brownish-yellow and yellowish brown clay (*i.e.* the archaeological horizon) was not revealed, apart from along the western side. The trenching consisted of three trenches, measuring 1.5m wide and 15m, 25m and 30m long respectively. Trench 1 investigated the Performing Arts building, trench 2 the Technology Block, and trench 3 the VI Form building.

The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* and the Association of Local Government Officers' *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (IfA 2008; Gurney 2003). The ECC FAU is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the Institute for Field Archaeologists. The ECC FAU uses its own recording system to record all archaeological deposits and features. Further details of the excavation method can be found in the Written Schemes of Investigation (ECC FAU 2010 and 2011).

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

The groundworks for the tennis/ netball court revealed only subsoil and a c. 15m wide strip of natural clay (Fig. 1). There were no archaeological remains apart from infrequent pieces of prehistoric worked flint in the topsoil and subsoil, with no apparent concentrations.

The trenching revealed modern made-ground above natural clay in trench 1, and topsoil and subsoil above natural clay in trenches 2 and 3. There were no archaeological remains. The made ground in trench 1 consisted of layers of grit and modern hardcore beneath tarmac and was related to the construction of the existing netball court.

6.0 FINDS, by Alan Jacobs

A total of fourteen pieces of flint were recovered from the topsoil and subsoil of the tennis / netball court. All of the material has been sorted into context and recorded by count and weight. The flints are described and tabulated in Appendix 1; they are uniformly of a dark grey untarnished fabric. Most of the items consist of debitage. The exceptions to this comprise a blade, two scrapers, a piercer and a debitage/scrapper. The flints lack clearly definable forms that date beyond the late prehistoric period; their blocky roughly finished form suggests a Neolithic to Bronze Age date.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The two pieces of archaeological work have found no remains apart from a small quantity of residual worked flint of Neolithic and Bronze Age date. The limited results of the investigations are possibly partly due to the small size of the investigation areas, and to the site of the Performing Arts building having been previously disturbed. The pieces of worked flint complement Neolithic and Bronze Age flints that were found during the excavation of the Late Bronze Age farmstead to the north-east (Atkinson 1995), and are further evidence for activity in the locality during these periods. The near absence of remains suggests that the construction of the netball/ tennis court and new school buildings have had little impact on the archaeological record.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The archaeological work was commissioned by LCE blonski Architects for Chelmer Valley High School and was carried out with the co-operation and help of Hilda Brachet.

The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken by Trevor Ennis, Mark Germany and Henry Springett. The finds were analysed by Alan Jacobs, and figure 1 was drawn by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby, and monitored by Teresa O'Conner of ECC HEM.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atkinson, M.	1995	'A Late Bronze Age enclosure at Broomfield, Chelmsford'. <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 26, 1-23
ECC FAU	2010	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological monitoring. New all-weather pitches at Chelmer Valley High School, Chelmsford.</i>
ECC FAU	2011	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological evaluation. New buildings at Chelmer Valley High School, Chelmsford.</i>
ECC HEM	2011	<i>Archaeological trial trenching at Chelmer Valley High School, Chelmsford.</i>
Gurney, D.	2003	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> , E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper 14
IfA	2008	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation</i> . Institute of Field Archaeologists

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DATA

Trench	Width	Length	Depth	Coordinates
1	1.5m	30m	0.5m	TL 70308 11029 (NE), TL 70285 11009 (SW)
2	1.5m	25m	0.4m	TL 70273 10864 (W), TL 70298 10864 (E)
3	1.5m	15m	0.4m	TL 70249 10864 (W), TL 70264 10864 (E)

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

Worked flint

Context	Count	Weight	Object	Description
1	1	18	Debitage	Flake with outer cortex surviving
1	1	6	Debitage	Flake, secondary
1	1	4	Debitage	Flake with outer cortex surviving
1	1	6	Debitage	Flake with outer cortex surviving
1	1	10	Debitage	Flake with outer cortex surviving
1	1	6	Debitage	Flake with outer cortex surviving
1	1	22	Debitage	Flake with outer cortex surviving
1	1	10	Debitage	Flake with outer cortex surviving
1	1	18	Debitage	Flake with outer cortex surviving
1	1	16	Debitage/Scraper	Flake, partly shaped?
1	1	24	Piercer	Roughly shaped Neolithic/Bronze Age?
1	1	24	Scraper	Flake, retouched
1	1	2	Scraper	Flake, light grey fabric
1	1	8	Blade	Outer cortex present, retouched?
Total	14	174		

Context 1 = unstratified finds from the netball / tennis court

APPENDIX 3: CONTENTS OF SITE ARCHIVE

Contained within one A4 folder:

1. Client report
1. Archaeological brief (trial-trenching)
1. Written Scheme of Investigation (monitoring)
1. Written Scheme of Investigation (trial-trenching)
1. Worked flint report and table
1. Context register
1. Context sheet
3. Trench recording sheets
1. Digital photo register
20. Digital photographs
1. Site drawing
14. Worked flints in one small bag
1. Computer disk containing copies of the brief, WSIs, reports and photographs

APPENDIX 4: EHER SUMMARY

Site name/Address: Chelmer Valley High School, Court Road, Broomfield	
Parish: Broomfield	District: Chelmsford
NGR: TL 70285 10950	Site Code: BROCV10 and BROCV11
Type of Work: Archaeological monitoring and trial trenching	Site Director/Group: Mark Germany, Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: August 2010 and January 2011	Size of Area Investigated: Trenching: 3 trenches, totalling 105m ² Archaeological monitoring: 3750m ²
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Chelmsford Museum	Client: Chelmer Valley High School
Further Seasons Anticipated?:	Related HER Nos.: 6142
Final Report: Essex Archaeology and History (summary)	
Periods represented: Prehistoric	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>Archaeological monitoring and trial-trenching was carried out in advance of and during the construction of three new school building and a new netball/ tennis court at Chelmer Valley High School, Broomfield. The school lies 250m to the south-west of a cluster of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pits and the site of a Late Bronze Age farmstead excavated in advance of housing development in 1992 (Atkinson 1995).</p> <p>Monitoring of the construction of the new netball/ tennis court revealed a small amount of Neolithic and Bronze Age worked flint in the topsoil and subsoil. The flints comprise debitage, a piercer and several scrapers, complementing that from the archaeological site to the north-east and adding further evidence for the use of this section of the Chelmer Valley in the Neolithic and Bronze Age.</p> <p>Trial-trenching within the footprint of the new school buildings revealed no archaeological remains, possibly partly due to modern disturbance and the small size of the areas investigated.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:- Atkinson, M. 1995 'A Late Bronze Age enclosure at Broomfield, Chelmsford'. <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 26 , 1-23	
Author of Summary: Mark Germany	Date of Summary: February 2011

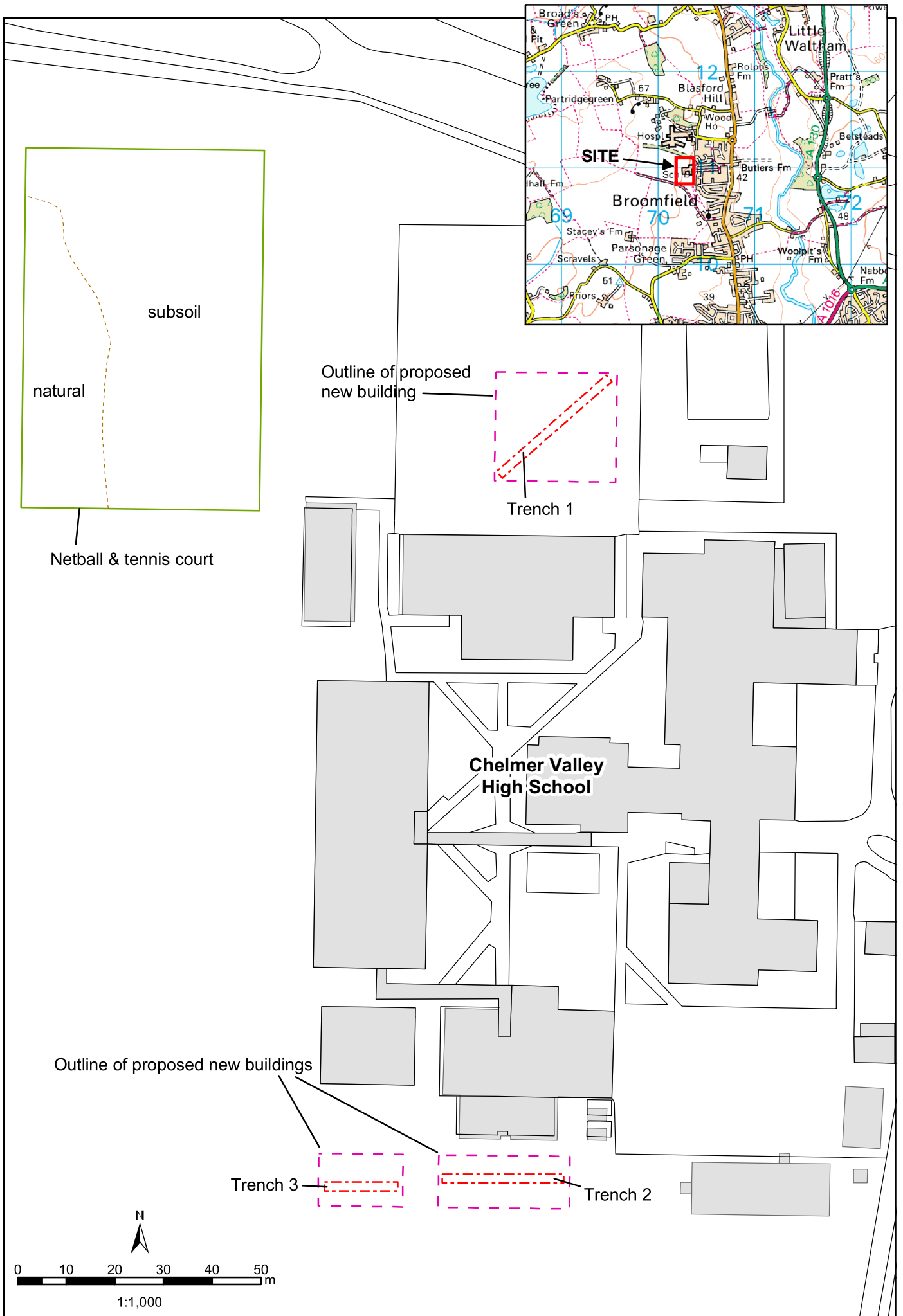


Fig.1. Site location

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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north-east



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking west



Plate 3. Trench 3, looking west