

HERITAGE NETWORK



DOVE HOUSE **Town Street, Thaxted, Essex**

HN532

Archaeological Monitoring & Excavation Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

DOVE HOUSE

Town Street, Thaxted, Essex.

HN532

Archaeological Monitoring & Excavation Report

Prepared on behalf of Mr & Mrs Peter Latchford

by

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Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Robin Densem. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Abigail Rothwell. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

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Summary

Site name and address:	Dove House, Town Street, Thaxted, Essex		
County:	Essex	District:	Uttlesford
Village/town:	Thaxted	Parish:	Thaxted
Planning reference:	UTT/0150/05	NGR:	TL 61127 30907
Client name and address:	Mr & Mrs P Latchford, Dove House, 23 Town Street, Thaxted, Essex, CM6 2LD		
Nature of work:	Garage and Store	Present land use:	Garden Plot
Size of affected area:	c.77m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.77m ²
Site Code:	TX13	Other reference:	HN532
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Monitoring	Archive location:	Uttlesford
Start of work	01/06/2005	Finish of work	02/06/2005
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Post-medieval
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In response to a condition on the planning permission for a new garage and store at Dove House, Town Street, Thaxted, Essex, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks.

Despite the site's location within the core of the medieval town, 50m south of the Guildhall, and on the proposed site of the former Manor House and its grounds, the monitoring of the groundworks associated with the new development uncovered no archaeological features earlier than post-medieval in date.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of Mrs and Mrs Peter Latchford, as a specification for a programme of archaeological investigation in advance of development works at 'Dove House', Town Street, Thaxted, Essex.

1.2 The investigation was a requirement of the planning consent for the development, under the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990). The work was defined in an *Archaeological Brief* prepared by the *Historic Environment Management Team* (HEMT) of Essex County Council (ref. RH 04/05/05), acting as advisers to the local planning authority, Uttlesford District Council (UDC) (planning ref. UTT/0150/05). A full specification for the work was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated May 2005.

1.3 The study area (centred on NGR TL 61127 30907) is located to the rear of the property, which forms a reverse L-shaped plot fronting on Town Street. It lies in the core of the medieval town, 50m south of the Guildhall, and on the proposed site of the former Manor House and its grounds. The development involved the construction of double garage and store on ground which was formerly used as garden.

1.4 It was considered that the investigation had potential to contribute to an understanding of the development and growth of the medieval settlement, and the economic and industrial influences on them. In addition, HEMT defined evidence for the late medieval cutlery industry in Thaxted, evidence for structures associated with the Manor, and evidence for the medieval and post-medieval garden features, as being of particular interest.

1.5 The aim of the present project has been to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which were uncovered; and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements which would allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed in accordance with current regional research agenda (Brown and Glazebrook, 2000), and subject to the limitations of reasonable safety and practicality.

1.6 The present report is intended to complete the record of the project, and, together with the deposition of the archive for the project with Uttlesford Museum, to complete the requirements of the planning condition.

2. Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site lies within the town of Thaxted to the east of the River Chelmer. The affected area is currently used as a garden plot and covers an area of approximately 77m². The site sits at approximately 84mOD, the levels dropping away slightly to the east.

2.2 The underlying natural geology consists of a glaciofluvial drift characterised as a dirty orange silty clay with occasional lenses of angular gravel.

METHODOLOGY

2.3 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule. Two site visits were made to supervise the ground reduction and the excavation of foundations.

2.4 The machining was undertaken using a small tracked 'Kubota' mechanical excavator, under careful archaeological supervision.

2.5 Spoil from the various stages of the groundworks was inspected for archaeological artefacts.

2.6 The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Design Brief, and with the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design* dated May 2005, and followed the relevant sections of the Heritage Network's *Operations Manual*.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

Stratigraphy

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)			Level (mOD)
			Length	Width	Depth	
1	Topsoil	Very dark grey (10YR 3/1) loose silty sand, occasional angular gravel	>13.60	>6.8	0.20	c.84.63
2	Subsoil	Very dark grey (7.5YR 3/1) silty clay, occasional gravel and chalk fragments.	>13.60	>6.8	0.20	c.84.28
7	Subsoil	Olive brown (2.5Y 4/3) sandy clay occasional small chalk and ceramic building material flecks	>9.0	>6.0	0.07	84.06
5	Natural	Dirty orange silty clay with occasional lenses of angular gravel	-	-	-	83.88
6	Modern Concrete	Modern concrete slabs laid over the topsoil on the eastern side of the site	13.60	2.5	0.20	84.35

Fieldwork Results

2.7 The groundworks included the reduction of the ground level within the footprint of the proposed new building for the raft foundation, the excavation of the beam slot around the edge of the footprint, and the reduction of the ground level for an area of external brick paving.

Raft Foundation

2.8 The affected area measured approximately 9m long and 6m wide. The ground was reduced to between 0.10m and 0.30m. The reduction exposed only the topsoil [1] and subsoil [2] and did not reach the natural geology. Modern concrete slabs, [6], laid over the topsoil on the eastern side of the site were removed.

2.9 The topsoil [1] contained modern debris such as plastic fragments. Artefacts such as tile, pottery and glass were recovered from within subsoil layer [2]. These artefacts suggest that this is a post-medieval garden soil layer below the current modern topsoil [1].

2.10 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed during this process.

Beam Slot

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)			Level (mOD)
			Length	Width	Depth	
3	Ditch Fill	2.5YR 4/3 olive brown silty clay with frequent small charcoal flecks and gravel.	>0.50	1.08	>0.45	84.35
4	Ditch Cut	Linear feature with steep sides, orientation N-S	>0.50	1.08	>0.45	<84.01
8	Ditch Cut	Linear feature, orientation N-S, unexcavated	>0.50	1.10	-	84.63

2.11 The beam slot was excavated from the base of the excavation for the raft foundation, around its perimeter. The slot was c.0.50m wide and between 0.30m and 0.50m deep.

2.12 The beam slot was the only reduced area on the site where the natural geology was exposed. As the site lies on a slight slope it could be seen only in the northern and western strips. The rest of the area exposed subsoil layer [7].

2.13 Two features were exposed during this process. In the northern strip, linear feature [4], potentially a ditch, contained fragments of post-medieval tile and pottery. The base of the feature was not reached. It may be a boundary or drainage ditch.

2.14 The surface of a second linear feature, [8], was identified in the southern strip. It is possible this feature represents a continuation of ditch [4]. No artefacts were recovered from this feature.

Brick Paving

2.15 The affected area measured approximately 14m long and 6m wide. As with the area reduced for the raft foundation, the ground reduction in this area exposed only the topsoil [1] and subsoil [2] and did not reach the natural geology.

2.16 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed during this process.

Concordance of finds

2.17 The identified subsoil, [2], contained nine fragments of post medieval pottery weighing in total 170g. Most of these fragments were small and abraded. Two fragments of tile, weighing 110g and one sherd of glass, weighing <5g, were also recovered. These objects are also post-medieval in date.

2.18 The fill of ditch [4] contained one fragment of pottery, weighing 10g, and one fragment of tile, weighing 70g. Both these objects are post-medieval in date.

Recommendations

2.19 Due to the small size of the assemblage and its limited significance, no further work is recommended on these objects.

3. Discussion and Conclusion

3.1 Despite the site's location within the core of the medieval town, 50m south of the Guildhall, and on the proposed site of the former Manor House and its grounds, the monitoring of the groundworks associated with the new development uncovered no archaeological features earlier than post-medieval in date.

3.2 No evidence for the late medieval cutlery industry in Thaxted, evidence for structures associated with the Manor, or evidence for the medieval and post-medieval garden features were identified.

3.3 Two linear features identified on the site may represent a post-medieval boundary or drainage ditch.

Conclusion

3.4 Despite the site's location within an area of known archaeological potential, the monitoring of the groundworks associated with the new garage revealed no archaeological features earlier than post-medieval in date. This may be because of the limited nature of the groundworks undertaken.

3.5 It is possible that archaeological features may be preserved below the impact level of the development.

Confidence Rating

3.6 During the course of the fieldwork, the conditions were generally acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation.

3.7 There are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

4. Schedule of Site Visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
01/06/2005	RD	10.5	Monitoring ground reduction
02/06/2005	RD	12	Monitoring ground reduction

5. Bibliography

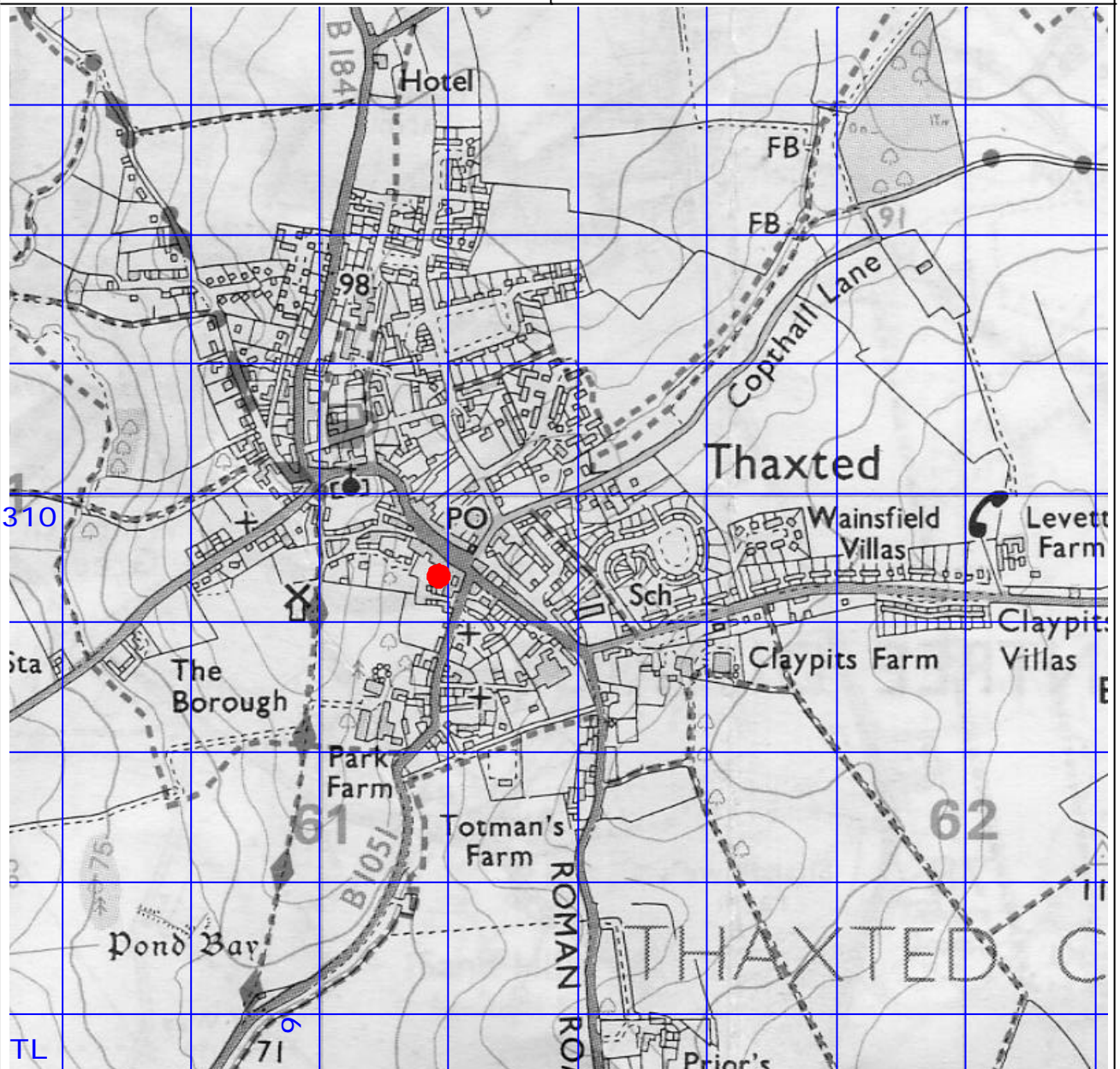
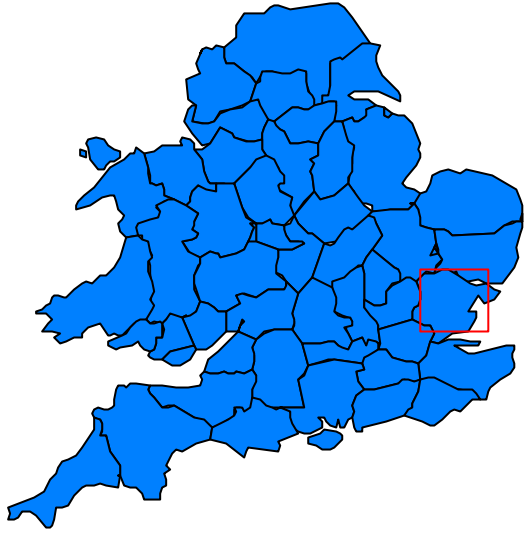
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6. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Identified Features and Deposits



Site Location

Scale 1:10000

