

**West View Cottage  
Dunmow Road  
Takeley  
Essex  
Archaeological Monitoring**

**Project No: 8152  
Site Code: TYWC 14**



**Report No: 2014191**

**June 2014**



**West View Cottage  
Dunmow Road  
Takeley  
Essex  
Archaeological Monitoring**

**NGR: TL 57070 21190**

**ASE Project No: 8152**

**Site Code: TYWC 14**

**ASE Report No: 2014191**

**OASIS No: 180943**

**by**

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**June 2014**

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## **Summary**

*Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Mr Gavin Prentious to undertake archaeological monitoring in association with the construction of a new house on the west side of West View Cottage, fronting onto Dunmow Road, Takeley.*

*The site was located within an area of high archaeological potential, primarily its position on the north side of the B1256 Dunmow Road, which follows the line of Stane Street, the Roman Road from Braughing to Colchester. In addition, Prehistoric occupation of Iron Age, Bronze Age and Neolithic date as well as medieval activity has been found across the nearby Priors Green development site (HER 46298).*

*Monitoring works recorded topsoil, an undisturbed clay subsoil layer and natural chalky boulder clay. No deposits or features of archaeological significance were found nor finds relating to previous activity on the site.*

*The development is judged to have had a negligible impact on the below-ground heritage resource of this part of Takeley.*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Mr Gavin Prentious to undertake archaeological monitoring in association with the construction of a new house on land adjacent to West View Cottage, Dunmow Road, Takeley in May 2014.

1.1.2 The house plot occupies an area of 88sqm located immediately to the north of the B1256 Dunmow to Bishop's Stortford road on the east side of Takeley village (Fig. 1; NGR: TL 57070 21190).

### 1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 According to British Geological Survey mapping ([www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)) the underlying geology of the site comprises London Clay overlain by glacial tills of the Lowestoft Formation (BGS Geology of Britain Viewer – accessed 14/05/2014).

1.2.2 Previously the site was used by the owner of West View Cottage as a builder's yard and parking area. The land is flat at around 96.50mOD and bounded by roadside houses to the east, the Dunmow Road to the south, a thin parcel of woodland to the west and the garden of West View Cottage to the north (Fig. 1). The garden is bounded by woodland which screens the Priors Green housing development at the back.

### 1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 A planning application was submitted to Uttlesford District Council in 2003, with a further supporting application in 2009, for the erection of a dwelling and alterations to the existing access (UTT/0775/03/OUT and UTT/1290/09/DFO). As the site is located in an area of archaeological interest, Essex County Council (ECC) Place Services, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, recommended that a programme of archaeological works be undertaken in order to mitigate the impact of the development on the historic environment.

1.3.2 The recommendation made by ECC Place Services was subsequently attached as a planning condition to the grant of consent for the development (condition C 16 2), which reads:

*“No development shall take place on the site until the applicant or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the Applicant to and approved by the local planning authority in writing.*

*Reason: to allow for excavation and recording of this site of archaeological importance in advance of and during development, as advised in DoE Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 16” (now replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework – DCLG 2012).*

- 1.3.3 An outline of the works required was provided in a brief issued by ECC Place Services (2014) and detailed in a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Archaeology South-East (2014) which was subsequently approved by the Place Services team.

#### **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

- 1.4.1 The aim of the work was to determine the location, extent, date character, condition and significance of any surviving remains, and if such were present, assess and excavate them to enable their preservation by record.

The objective of the work was to examine and record any deposits or features associated with Roman roadside activity along the former Stane Street and any prehistoric activity, which is known from previous work at Priors Green to the northeast.

- 1.4.2 This was to be achieved by monitoring the excavation of foundation trenches for the new dwelling and any service trenches likely to disturb earlier deposits.

#### **1.5 Scope of Report**

- 1.7.1 This report details the results of monitoring and recording during the excavation of foundation trenches in association with the construction of a new house at West View Cottage carried out by Andy Letch (Senior Archaeologist) between 19th and 21st May 201. The fieldwork was managed by Adrian Scruby.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The following archaeological background utilises the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford and the brief for the site, which show that the scheme works are located within the vicinity of a number of known archaeological sites.
- 2.2 Evidence for Prehistoric and medieval occupation was found on a number of areas across the nearby Priors Green development site (HER 46298). Prehistoric activity was represented by two small Neolithic features, Early to Middle Iron Age field systems and a Late Iron Age boundary ditch. A Roman watering hole and some residual finds were collected, but otherwise the Roman evidence was negligible. Medieval farming plots, large pits and part of a post-built structure, probably a barn, were also recorded (Robertson 2006). An extensive strip field system of likely medieval date comprising parallel sets of ditches, was identified to the north-east of the application area. Similar field systems have been recorded elsewhere in the vicinity, including during works at Stansted Airport, and are thought to represent the initial cultivation of land cleared for agriculture in the 12th or 13th century (Framework Archaeology 2008).
- 2.3 The development site is set close to the road frontage of the B1256 Dunmow Road, which follows the line of Roman Stane Street, running from Braughing to Colchester (HER 4698). This was a major routeway through the area in both the Roman and later periods. It is believed to also have been used in the pre-Roman period.

2.4 Archaeological evaluations have been carried out along the B1256 to the east of the site. Two evaluations at The Rest, and land adjoining it on the north side of the Dunmow Road, uncovered no evidence of earlier roadside settlement (Germany 2009 and 2010). Similar work prior to the redevelopment of land at the former Stansted Motel and 2 Hamilton Road for residential use also found no earlier settlement evidence and concluded that historic occupation in the vicinity on this side of the road was sparse (Germany 2012).

### 3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.1 Monitoring works followed the excavation of foundation trenches for a new house on the west side West View Cottage.

3.1.2 The foundation trenches were dug with a mechanical excavator equipped with a 0.45m bucket through topsoil and onto the level of natural subsoil. Their location is shown in Figure 1. Standard ASE excavation recording methodologies were employed throughout. Pro-forma monitoring sheets were used to record the deposits uncovered and photographs were taken using a digital camera, including site views and working shots. Some of these photographs are included in this report and others may be found in the archive.

3.1.3 All work was carried out in accordance with IfA (Institute for Archaeologists) by-laws and guidelines and complied with Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003).

3.1.4 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Saffron Walden Museum in due course. The contents of the archive are summarised below (Table 1).

No. of contexts	3
No. of files	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Photographs	6
Bulk finds	None

*Table 1: Quantification of site archive*

### 4.0 RESULTS

4.1 In the main part of the site the trenches were dug to a depth of approximately 2m and on the western side to 2.20m below the tree roots of the neighbouring wood. At this depth the trench bases were below the water table and water started to seep through the natural clay, which had to be pumped out. Following inspection, the sides of the trenches were shored up with sheets of chipboard.

4.2 Topsoil [01] was recorded across the excavation, comprising a 0.3m thick layer of brown grey firm silt clay with frequent chalk flecks and frequent small tree roots on the western side. Some modern building material was found in



the deposit as well as a gravel spread located at the south end, all of which is to be expected given its former use as a builder's yard. A cast iron water pipe was located in the northeast corner of the trench at a depth of c. 0.5m. Below the topsoil was a 0.70 thick layer of undisturbed brown clay subsoil, which contained no cultural material at all, only chalk flecks and lenses. Natural light brown chalky boulder clay was encountered c.1m from existing ground level at around 95.50mOD.

- 4.3** No archaeological remains were observed, either in plan or section, within the foundation trenches. No further monitoring works were carried out.

All context information is provided in Table 2.

Context	Type	Description	Depth/thickness
01	Topsoil	Mid brown grey firm silt clay. Freq. chalk flecks	0.3m
02	Subsoil	Undisturbed mid brown clay. Moderate chalk lenses and flecks. Probably natural	1m
03	Natural	Light brown chalky boulder clay.	Over 1m

*Table 2: List of recorded contexts*

## **5.0 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL**

- 5.1** No finds were recovered during the monitoring works or environmental samples taken.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

- 6.1** West View Cottage was built in the late 19th or early 20th century at the same time as the Takeley Nursery was established to the north. Some of the old fruit trees remain along the northern boundary of the property. Prior to this the site was arable farmland. It is therefore likely that the topsoil represents a former ploughsoil. Layer 02 below it is the remains of an undisturbed subsoil. Natural boulder clay was recorded at c.95.50mOD.
- 6.2** No archaeological remains were discovered or finds retrieved during the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks.
- 6.3** Prehistoric and medieval activity has been recorded in the proximity of the site, but despite the position of the Stane Street to the immediate south, very little evidence of Roman activity has been found. This confirms similar results found on other road frontage sites on the north side of the B1256 through excavation on the southern fringes of the Priors Green development immediately to the east and evaluations carried out nearby. It would appear therefore that activity is located further back from the road or else is intermittent in the landscape, which has always been predominantly rural in character.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Gavin Prentious for commissioning the archaeological work and for his assistance throughout the project. Thanks also to his colleague, Colin and to Mrs Prentious. Richard Havis of ECC Place Services monitored the project on behalf of the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological work was undertaken by Andy Letch of Archaeology South-East. Andrew Lewsey produced the figures for this report. The fieldwork was managed by Adrian Scruby. Mark Atkinson managed the post-excavation process.

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**Appendix 1: EHER Summary Form**

<b>Site name/Address:</b> West View Cottage, Dunmow Road, Takeley	
<b>Parish:</b> Takeley	<b>District:</b> Uttlesford
<b>NGR:</b> TL 5707 2119	<b>Site Code:</b> TYWC 14
<b>Type of Work:</b> Archaeological monitoring	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> A. Letch, ASE
<b>Date of Work:</b> May 2014	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> 88sqm
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b> Saffron Walden Museum	<b>Funding source:</b> client
<b>Further Work Anticipated?:</b> No	<b>Related HER Nos.:</b> 4698 & 46298
<b>Final Report:</b> EAH roundup	<b>OASIS No:</b> 180943
<b>Periods Represented:</b> None	
<p><b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b></p> <p><i>Archaeological monitoring was carried out in association with the construction of a new house on land on the west side of West View Cottage, Dunmow Road, Takeley.</i></p> <p><i>The site was located within an area of high archaeological potential, primarily its position on the north side of the B1256 Dunmow Road which follows the line of the Roman Stane Street. The site also lies in to the south of the Priors Green development site where extensive prehistoric and medieval remains were uncovered.</i></p> <p><i>The site was previously used as a builder's yard by the occupants of the house. Prior to the construction of West View Cottage in late 19th or early 20th century, the area on this side of the road was farmland. Monitoring works recorded topsoil, an undisturbed clay subsoil layer and natural chalky boulder clay. No deposits or features of archaeological significance were found nor finds relating to previous activity on the site, which follows the pattern of other roadside excavations and evaluations in the vicinity.</i></p>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> A. Letch	<b>Date of Summary:</b> 6th May 2014

## Appendix 2: OASIS Form

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-180943**

### Project details

Project name	West View Cottage, Dunmow Road
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring was undertaken in association with the construction of a new house on the west side of West View Cottage. The site was located on the north side of the B1256 Dunmow Road, which follows the line of Roman Stane Street. In addition, Prehistoric and medieval occupation has been found on a number of areas across the nearby Priors Green development site (HER 46298). Monitoring works recorded topsoil, an undisturbed clay subsoil layer and natural chalky boulder clay. No deposits or features of archaeological significance were found nor finds relating to previous historic activity on the site.
Project dates	Start: 19-05-2014 End: 21-05-2014
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	8152 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	TYWC 14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX UTTLESFORD TAKELEY West View Cottage
Study area	88.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 57070 21190 51.8666707473 0.281557929819 51 52 00 N 000 16 53 E Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Essex County Council Place Services
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Adrian Scruby
Project supervisor	Andy Letch

Type of sponsor/funding body Landowner

Name of sponsor/funding body Mr G. Prentious

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Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Saffron Walden Museum

Digital Contents "other"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"

Paper Archive recipient Saffron Walden Museum

Paper Contents "other"

Paper Media available "Photograph","Report"

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Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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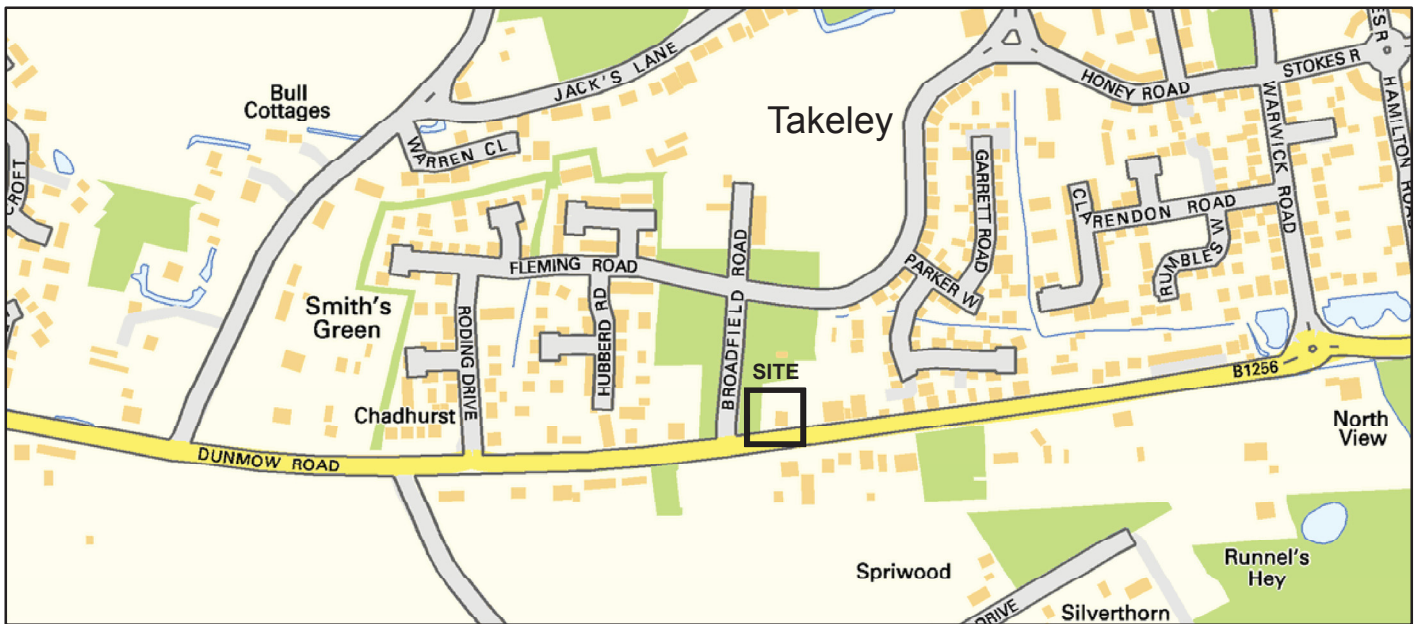
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Description Slim A4 report with text, photos and analysis

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Entered by Andy Letch (a.letch@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 10 June 2014



© Archaeology South-East		West View Cottage, Dunmow road, Takeley	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8157	Jun 2014	Location of monitored foundation trenches	
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Fig. 2 Photograph of foundation trenches viewed to southwest



Fig. 3 Photograph of foundation trenches viewed to north

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