

**An Archaeological Evaluation
at land adjacent to
11 Stane Close, Bishop Stortford
Hertfordshire**

NGR: TL 48800 22010

**ASE Project No: 8344
HER event no: EHT7871
Site Code: BSSC15**



March 2015

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NGR: TL 48800 22010

Planning Ref: 3/14/1473/FP

**ASE Project No: 8344
HER enquiry No: 321/14
HER Event No: EHT7871
Site Code: BSSC15
ASE Report No: 2015079
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March 2015

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Marks Heeley Ltd to conduct an archaeological evaluation at land adjacent to 11 Stane Close, Bishop Stortford, Hertfordshire. The site is currently unoccupied land on the west bank of the River Stort.

A single north-south trench was excavated on the higher part of the site within the footprint of the proposed dwelling. No archaeological deposits or features were recorded.

Natural alluvial clay silt was revealed at 1.2m below ground level at the south end of the trench. The material above consisted of a sequence of modern dumps designed to raise the level of the ground above the flood level of the adjacent river.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Marks Heeley Ltd structural engineers,, to conduct an archaeological evaluation at land adjacent to 11 Stane Close, Bishop Stortford, CM23 2HU.

1.1.2 The site lies on a corner of Stane Close on currently derelict land between the road and the River Stort (TL 48800 22010) (figure 1). The site has not been occupied by a building. It was originally part of the garden to 11 Stane Close but has been unoccupied and overgrown for many years. It is bounded by residential development to the north and south, by Stane Close to the west and the River Stort immediately to the east.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 Due to the presence of the River Stort the site lies in an area of transitional geology, with Stane Close road broadly demarcating the transition between deposits associated with the river valley and drier environments. The superficial geology of the site is mapped by the British Geological Survey (BGS) as the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation (undifferentiated), overlain by Alluvium (clay, silt, sand and gravel) associated with the Stort lying broadly to the east of Stane Close road, while to the west of the road the superficial deposits are comprised of Head, typically clay, silt, sand and gravel (BGS Geology of Britain viewer – accessed 11/03/2015).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 A planning application (3/14/1473/FP) was submitted to East Hertfordshire District Council in 2014 for the construction of 1 no. 3 bedroom house on land adjacent to 11 Stane Close, Bishops Stortford. As the site abuts an Area of Archaeological Significance (No. 114) identified in the East Herts Local Plan, the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (CHEU), in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, recommended that an archaeological condition be attached to any grant of planning consent. This advice is based upon guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012) and the condition (no. 4) that was subsequently attached to the planning consent states that:

“No development or groundworks shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme, and this condition will only be discharged when the required archaeological reports are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

To secure the protection of and proper provision for any archaeological

**remains in accordance with policies BH2 and BH3 of the East Herts
Local Plan Second Review April 2007”**

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report presents the results of a single archaeological evaluation trench excavated on the site on 11th March 2015 (figure 2). It followed the methodology laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2015).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The development area abuts Area of Archaeological Significance No. 114, which includes an area of urban Roman settlement situated alongside Stane Street, the Roman road from Braughing to Colchester. Excavations in advance of the construction of the Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre swimming pool, approximately 125m north-east of the site, uncovered extensive of Roman activity/ settlement (HHER 6505), while Roman burial were found in 2009 during an extension to the Leisure Centre (HHER 12051).
- 2.1.2 Mesolithic flint tools (HHER 2849) including a tranchet axe have been found to the south-east of the site, next to the Stort and the river valley would have been a topographically favourable area for early communities to exploit, offering access to natural resources and providing a natural route for travel and trade.
- 2.1.3 In addition, the depositional environment in the valley bottom may be conducive to the formation and survival of geoarchaeological/ palaeoenvironmental remains that can provide evidence to help model the landscape and its transformation as brought about by natural events and human action over time.

2.2 Project Aims and Objectives

- 2.2.1 As stated in the WSI (ASE 2015) the aim of the archaeological evaluation was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any surviving remains, and if such are present to sufficiently excavate them to enable their preservation by record.
- 2.2.2 The aim of the geoarchaeological work was to determine the presence/ absence and potential of any organic-rich sediments and/ or any other strata (e.g. peat) underlying the site to contain/ preserve palaeoenvironmental deposits and/ or Pleistocene faunal remains. The evaluation was expected to establish the broad potential for the deposit sequence to contain significant ecofacts through in-situ recording and the recovery of appropriate samples, and present specialist recommendations for any further off-site sub-sampling and assessment that is required, including scientific dating.
- 2.2.3 In the event that significant discoveries were made, the post-excavation assessment and reporting phase of the project would have sought to place these in the context of any appropriate research objectives, with particular reference to Research and Archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. Research agenda and strategy (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England. (Medlycott 2011). However, as no archaeological remains were uncovered the results of the work will not contribute towards any research framework objectives.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.1 The single trench (Trench 1) measured 7m north-south and 1.60m wide. It was dug across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling and was positioned on the highest part of the plot away from the River Stort (see Figure 2).

3.1.2 The trench was a maximum of 1.3m deep and was excavated using a 3 tonne tracked excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. The trench was recorded onto a standard ASE trench recording sheet and a full photographic record was made.

3.2 Archive

3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Bishops Stortford Museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	5
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs (digital)	18
Bulk finds	0
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Depth from top of trench
1/001	Topsoil	Compact dark grey silty gravel, brick and concrete inclusions. Rooty.	>7.00	>1.60	0.24-0.30	0.00
1/002	Modern dump	Compact pale orange/brown clay and silt with frequent gravel. Contained modern concrete, cbm	>7.00	>1.60	0.40-0.50	0.30
1/003	Modern dump	Compact light brown chalky clay silt. Contained modern concrete, cbm, tarmac	>7.00	>1.60	0.25-0.35	0.70
1/004	Modern dump	Very compact dark grey gravel and broken cbm. Contained modern concrete, cbm,	>7.00	>1.60	0.25-0.35	0.95
1/005	Natural alluvium	Clean compact light grey silty clay with brown veining. Not excavated	>4.60	>1.60	n/a	1.20

Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

4.1.1 The trench was excavated on the raised area of the site towards the south boundary. Topsoil was relatively uniform and consisted of dark grey silty gravel with extensive rooting and other disturbances. Concrete and modern artefacts were recovered from all excavated layers down to 1.20m below ground level. In the south end of the trench alluvial silty clay [1/005] was observed in the base of the trench (figures 3 to 5).

4.1.2 The deepest modern dump, [1/004] was plainly deposited as a compacted working surface over the soft alluvium beneath. The dumps above were designed to raise the level of the site to a height sufficient to avoid flooding from the River Stort. It is assumed that this was undertaken when the site was developed into the present housing estate.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 As no significant archaeological remains appear to be present on site it is judged that the proposed development will have a negligible impact upon the heritage resource of the area. It is understood (Graham Newman, Marks Heeley Ltd, pers comm) that the strip foundations for the proposed dwelling will only be 450mm deep and that they will be constructed on 10no. 300mm diameter piles. The effect of the works on the alluvium, and any possible archaeological remains within them, will therefore be minimal.

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The fieldwork was undertaken by Robin Wroe-Brown, who also authored the report. Andrew Lewsey produced the figures and Adrian Scruby managed the project.

Appendix 1: HER Summary Form

Site name and address: 11 Stane Close, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire	District: East Hertfordshire	
Village/Town: Bishops Stortford	Parish: Bishops Stortford	
Planning application reference: 3/14/1473/FP		
HER Enquiry reference: 321/14		
Funding source: Client		
Nature of application: residential - detached dwelling		
Present land use: domestic garden		
Size of application area: 200 sqm	Size of area investigated: 11.2 sqm	
NGR (to 8 figures minimum): TL 48800 22010		
Site code (if applicable): BSSC15		
Site director/Organization: Robin Wroe-Brown, Archaeology South-East		
Type of work: Archaeological Evaluation		
Date of work:	Start: 11 th March 2015	Finish: 11 th March 2015
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Bishops Stortford Museum		
Related HER Nos: None	Periods represented: modern	
Relevant previous summaries/reports: None		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Marks Heeley Ltd to conduct an archaeological evaluation at land adjacent to 11 Stane Close, Bishop Stortford, Hertfordshire. The site is currently unoccupied land on the west bank of the River Stort.</p> <p>A single north-south trench was excavated on the higher part of the site within the footprint of the proposed dwelling. No archaeological deposits or features were recorded. Natural alluvial clay silt was revealed at 1.2m below ground level at the south end of the trench. The material above consisted of a sequence of modern dumps designed to raise the level of the ground above the flood level of the adjacent river.</p>		
Author of summary: A. Scruby	Date of summary: March 2015	

Appendix 2: OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-206206	
Project details	
Project name	Archaeological evaluation at 11 Stane Close, Bishops Stortford
Short description of the project	Archaeological evaluation was undertaken on unoccupied land on the west bank of the River Stort. A single trench was excavated within the footprint of the proposed dwelling. No archaeological deposits or features were recorded. Natural alluvial clay silt was revealed at 1.2m below ground level at the south end of the trench. The material above consisted of a sequence of modern dumps designed to raise the level of the ground above the flood level of the adjacent river.
Project dates	Start: 11-03-2015 End: 11-03-2015
Any associated project reference codes	BSSC15 - Sitecode EHT7871 - HER event no. 8344 – contractors project ref.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE EAST HERTFORDSHIRE BISHOPS STORTFORD 11 Stane Close, Bishops Stortford
Postcode	CM23 2HU
Study area	200.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 48800 22010 51.8763126048 0.161878281059 51 52 34 N 000 09 42 E Point
Entered by	Adrian Scruby (a.scruby@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	13 March 2015



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© Archaeology South-East		10 Stane Close, Bishops Stortford	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8344	Feb 2015	Site location	
Report No: WSI	Drawn by: APL		



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© Archaeology South-East		10 Stane Close, Bishops Stortford	Fig.2
Project Ref: 8344	Feb 2015	Location of evaluation trench	
Report No: WSI	Drawn by: APL		



Figure 3: View of trench section showing modern overburden overlying alluvium



Figure 4: View of trench base showing alluvium overlain by modern deposits



Figure 5: View of trench looking north showing alluvium with modern overburden visible in trench sections

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