

**LAND ADJACENT TO CROSS FARM
WALTHAM'S CROSS
GREAT BARDFIELD
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

**ASE Project Number: 160161
Site Code: FFCF16**

ASE Report Number: 2016432



November 2016

Archaeological Watching Brief

**Land adjacent to Cross Farm
Great Bardfield
Essex**

NGR: TL 69573 30273

Planning Ref: 15/00727/FUL

**ASE Project No: 160161
Site Code: FFCF16**

**ASE Report No: 2016432
OASIS id: 267372**

By Mark Germany

**With contributions by Larine Le Hegarat
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|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|
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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief which was carried out in late October 2016 on groundworks for a small block of new stables in the west corner of a green-field site, immediately south-east of Cross Farm, Hull Lane, Waltham's Cross, Great Bardfield, Essex. The archaeological work was commissioned by the landowners, Mr and Mrs Lynch, and was undertaken by Archaeology South-East.

The remains of a Roman villa and a possible Roman stone coffin have been found previously in the Waltham's Cross vicinity. A Roman road is postulated to have run west of Cross Farm. Investigations along a water pipeline route found Late Bronze Age and Roman remains, including a Roman burial, a short distance to the east of the development site.

The monitoring of the groundworks for the new stable block identified few archaeological remains, possibly because the required construction depth was mostly too shallow to reveal undisturbed archaeological features. The sole findings were three pieces of prehistoric struck flint retrieved from the topsoil.

The construction of the stables block is likely to have had a negligible impact upon any archaeological remains present within this site.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks for a small block of stables and five paddocks within a plot of greenfield land, immediately south-east of Cross Farm, Waltham's Cross, Essex, in October 2016 (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 This archaeological work was recommended and monitored by Essex County Council Place Services and carried out by Archaeology South-East on behalf of Mr and Mrs Lynch.

1.2 Location, Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 Cross Farm is located in rural countryside in Braintree District, in central-west Essex (TL 69573 30273). The nearest towns are Great Dunmow to the south-east and Braintree to the south-west. Nearby villages include Great Bardfield to the west, Wethersfield to the north-east and Shalford to the south-east.
- 1.2.2 The site is located just south-east of the hamlet of Waltham's Cross. Access to the site is via Hull Lane, which runs from Great Bardfield to Shalford and forms the site's northern boundary.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the site consists of Kesgrave sands and gravels above a bedrock of London Clay (bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home).
- 1.2.4 The wider topography of the site consists of rolling countryside, ranging between 50m and 80m OD. The nearest river is the River Pant, c.1km to the east. It flows south-eastwards and is a tributary of the River Blackwater.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 Braintree District Council granted full planning permission in 2015 (Planning Ref. 15/00727/FUL) for the construction of a stable block and five paddocks. The block was to consist of an American barn, hay barn and utility shed. Post and rail fencing was to be used to define the five paddocks.
- 1.3.2 The planning consent included the recommendation that archaeological recording and monitoring was to accompany any significant groundworks, because the site lay within an area known to contain sub-surface archaeological remains. The recommendation was made by Essex County Council Place Services in their capacity as advisors to the local planning authority and in accordance with the guidance contained within Condition 5 of the National Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).
- 1.3.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation was subsequently produced (ASE 2016) and approved by the ECC Place Services Historic Environment officer, prior to the commencement of site works.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The aim of the archaeological monitoring was to observe construction groundworks for the presence of archaeological remains and to investigate and recorded them in order to understand their nature, date and significance.

1.4.2 The project-specific research objectives were:

- Do the Bronze Age landscape remains found in the Anglian Water pipeline extend into the site?
- What is the nature and significance of any Bronze Age remains present to the understanding of enclosure, agricultural exploitation and settlement in this vicinity?

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report presents and assesses the significance of the results of an archaeological watching brief, carried out during groundworks for a stable block within a greenfield site immediately south-east of Cross Farm, Walthams Cross, Great Bardfield, Essex.

1.5.2 The archaeological work was carried out by Mark Germany of Archaeology South-East from 24/10/16 to 25/10/16. Fieldwork was managed by Niall Oakey, post-excavation work by Mark Atkinson.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 This background is drawn from the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) and from other sources such as available excavation reports and historic mapping. Sites and find spots mentioned in the text are shown on Figure 1.

2.1.2 The vicinity of the site contains a small number of known archaeological sites, some of which were discovered during the relaying of an Anglian water main alongside the south side of Hull Lane in 2005 and 2006 (Orr 2007).

2.2 Period Summaries

2.2.1 The relaying of the water main revealed a small number of possible Late Bronze Age pits and ditches, close to the site of a Roman grave pit alongside Hull Lane, c.50m east of the site. The grave pit was large and box-like in form. Contained within it were four small pottery vessels, thirteen iron box or coffin nails, a copper-alloy strap-keeper, and a shard of blue-green glass from a jug. There were no skeletal remains, although this was probably due to the local soil being very acidic.

2.2.2 A stone coffin, which was assumed to be Roman, was discovered c.200m north of the site in 1855 (EHER 1505).

2.2.3 In 2005, an archaeological evaluation at Petches Yew Farm, c.500m north-east of the site, revealed remains of a Roman masonry building with at least one heated room. The structure was probably part of a Roman villa and it was accompanied by remnants of at least one timber building. Remains of Middle to Late Iron Age ditches were also present (Benfield 2005).

2.2.4 Lodge Wood, c.200m west of the site, contains banks of earth, which are postulated to have partly defined the course of a Roman road, running south to meet Stane Street (Essex Historic Sites and Monuments Record 1506).

2.2.5 The boundaries of the site have remained unchanged since at least 1876, according to early editions of the Ordnance Survey.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 The groundworks comprised the hand-drilling of c.400 small post-holes for wooden fencing, and the machine excavation and terracing of a plot of ground measuring c.26m by 12m for the new block of stables (Figure 2).
- 3.1.2 The groundwork for the stables was carried out by the landowners' contractor. A tracked excavator equipped with a broad, toothless ditching bucket was used to strip soil, and a dumper was used to transfer spoil to the opposite end of the site.
- 3.1.3 The levelling and terracing of the plot was archaeologically monitored. All exposed contexts were recorded and photographed, and all finds were retained for analysis and dating. No bulk samples for environmental remains were taken since no pre-modern deposits (other than natural) were encountered.
- 3.1.4 Plans of the site were produced by hand and by use of a digital global positioning system (DGPS). The DGPS was also used to take spot heights.
- 3.1.5 The hand drilling of the post-holes for the wooden fencing was not monitored. The post-holes were less than 0.3m wide and were being dug intermittently over a long period of time.

3.2 Fieldwork Constraints

- 3.2.1 There were no fieldwork constraints.

3.3 Site Archive

- 3.3.1 The site archive is currently held by ASE. Subject to the consent of the landowners, it will be deposited at Braintree District Museum in due course.
- 3.3.2 The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Number of Contexts | 3 |
| No. of files/paper record | 3 |
| Plan and sections sheets | 1 |
| Colour photographs | 0 |
| B&W photos | 0 |
| Digital photos | 22 |
| Permatrace sheets | 1 |
| Trench Record Forms | 0 |

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS (Figure 3)

4.1 Stable Block

- 4.1.1 The groundworks for the c.26m x 12m stable block revealed a deposit sequence of layers of topsoil, subsoil and natural, but no archaeological features. Topsoil was located at between 74.68m and 75.57mOD.
- 4.1.2 The required depth of the groundworks was mostly shallower than the 0.25m thickness of the topsoil and consequently, due to the lie of the ground, the underlying natural was only exposed in the plot's south-east corner.
- 4.1.3 A 0.20m thick layer of dark brownish orange friable sand was present between the natural and subsoil in the plot's north-west corner, although it was unclear as to whether it was subsoil or natural.
- 4.1.4 The only archaeological remains recovered were three pieces of prehistoric struck flint. They came from the topsoil and they were possibly of Mesolithic and Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date.

| Context | Type | Interpretation | Max. Length m | Max. Width m | Deposit Thickness m |
|----------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 001 | Layer | Natural | >24.90 | >11.30 | >0.25 |
| 002 | Layer | ?Subsoil | >7.50 | >7.00 | 0.20 |
| 003 | Layer | Topsoil | >24.90 | >11.30 | 0.25 |

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Worked Flint by Karine Le Hegarat

- 5.1.1 The watching brief produced three pieces of struck flint weighing 64g. They were recovered from context [003]. The pieces are in a relatively poor condition. They display heavy edge damage implying significant degree of post depositional disturbance. Two of them exhibit rust marks, which are frequently associated with ploughing activities. The small assemblage comprises a broken blade-like flake and two modified pieces. The later are crudely retouched. The first retouch piece is made on a flake struck from a pebble. It displays direct retouch on the distal end. The second is made on a natural piece detached by frost / thermal process. It displays minimal inverse retouch. The blade-like flake is likely to be Mesolithic or Neolithic in date, but no conclusive date can be securely given for the modified pieces; although based on technological grounds, they are likely to be later (Bronze Age / Early Iron Age).

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Discussion

- 6.1.1 The monitoring of the groundworks for the stable block has revealed no archaeological remains to be present, apart from three pieces of prehistoric struck flint retrieved from the topsoil.
- 6.1.2 It is likely that the required construction depth was insufficient to expose the archaeological horizon / top of the natural deposit over the majority of the site. As such, it is possible that archaeological remains could be present within the site at a greater depth below ground.
- 6.1.3 The undiagnostic worked flints offer little insight into prehistoric land use and have negligible significance and no potential for further study.
- 6.1.4 No tangible Late Bronze Age remains or further Roman burials, such as those found to the east in the water pipeline works, have been encountered and so the site does not offer any insights into the nature of land enclosure, agricultural exploitation and settlement in this vicinity of the landscape.

6.2 Conclusions

- 6.2.1 The groundworks for the construction of the stable block have had a negligible impact upon the heritage resource of this vicinity of Waltham's Cross.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ASE. 2016, *Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological monitoring and Recording at Land adjacent Cross Farm, Waltham's Cross, Finchingfield, Essex.* Archaeology South-East project number 160161

Benfield, S. 2005, *An Archaeological Evaluation on Kell Field, Petches Yew Farm, Finchingfield, Essex, June-July 2005.* Colchester Archaeological Trust Report 329

Orr, K. 2007. *Archaeological Monitoring of an Anglian Water Mains Replacement Scheme from Shalford Green in Shalford to Petches Bridge in Great Bardfield, Essex, December 2005-March 2006.* Colchester Archaeological Trust Report 374

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE thanks Mr and Mrs Lynch for commissioning the work and for their assistance and hospitality, and T. Jarvis Groundworks for accommodating the archaeological fieldwork.

Appendix 1: HER Summary

| | |
|--|--|
| Site name/Address: Land adjacent to Cross Farm, Hull Lane, Waltham's Cross, Great Bardfield, Essex | |
| Parish: Great Bardfield | District: Braintree |
| NGR: TL 69573 30273 | Site Code: FFCF16 |
| Type of Work: Watching brief | Site Director/Group: Mark Germany, Archaeology South-East |
| Date of Work: 24/10/16 to 25/10/16 | Size of Area Investigated: 281m ² |
| Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Braintree | Funding source: Landowner |
| Further Seasons Anticipated?: No | Related HER No's: 1505 |
| Final Report: Essex Archaeology & History (roundup summary) | OASIS No: 267372 |
| Periods Represented: Prehistoric | |
| SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: | |
| <p>The groundworks for the construction of a small block of stables in the west corner of a greenfield site to the immediate south-east of Cross Farm Waltham's Cross, Great Bardfield revealed no archaeological remains apart from three pieces of struck flint of possible Mesolithic and Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date.</p> | |
| Previous Summaries/Reports: None | |
| Author of Summary: Mark Germany | Date of Summary: November 2016 |

Finds summary

| Find type | Material | Period | Quantity |
|--------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Worked flint | Flint | Prehistoric | 3 pieces |

Appendix 2: OASIS Form

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| OASIS ID: archaeol6-267372 | |
| Project details | |
| Project name | Cross Farm, Waltham's Cross, Great Bardfield, Essex |
| Short description of the project | Archaeological monitoring of ground works for a small block of stables to the south-east of Cross Farm, Waltham's Cross, Great Bardfield, Essex revealed no archaeological remains apart from three pieces of worked flint. |
| Project dates | Start: 24-10-2016 End: 25-10-2016 |
| Previous/future work | No / No |
| Associated project reference codes | FFCF16 - Sitecode 160161 - Contracting Unit No. |
| Type of project | Recording project |
| Site status | None |
| Current Land use | Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland |
| Monument type | NONE None |
| Significant Finds | FLINT Late Prehistoric |
| Investigation type | ""Watching Brief"" |
| Prompt | Direction from Local Planning Authority - Direction 4 |
| Project location | |
| Country | England |
| Site location | ESSEX BRAINTREE GREAT BARDFIELD Land adjacent Cross Farm, Waltham's Cross |
| Postcode | CM7 4QH |
| Study area | 281 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | TL 69573 30273 51.944596032792 0.467468457708 51 56 40 N 000 28 02 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 | Niall Oakey |
| Project supervisor | Mark Germany |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | Landowner |

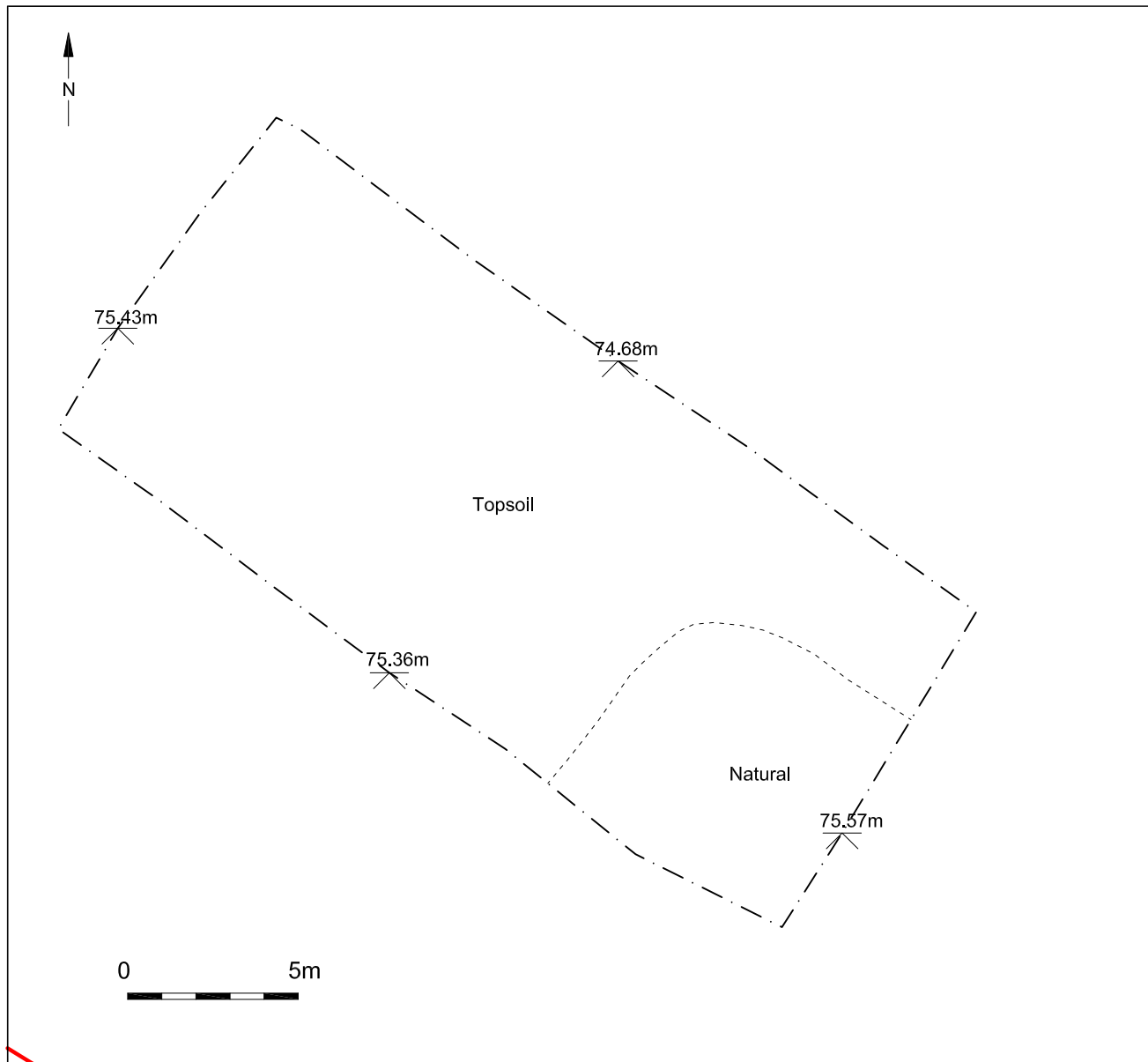
| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Name of sponsor/funding body | Mr and Mrs Lynch |
| Project archives | |
| Physical Archive recipient | Braintree Museum |
| Physical Contents | "Worked stone/lithics" |
| Digital Archive recipient | Braintree Museum |
| Digital Contents | "Stratigraphic", "Worked stone/lithics" |
| Digital Media available | "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text" |
| Paper Archive recipient | Braintree Museum |
| Paper Contents | "Stratigraphic", "Survey", "Worked stone/lithics" |
| Paper Media available | "Context sheet", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Survey " |
| Project bibliography | |
| Publication type | Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript) |
| Title | Archaeological Watching Brief. Land Adjacent to Cross Farm, Great Bardfield, Essex |
| Author(s)/Editor(s) | Germany, M. |
| Other bibliographic details | 160161 |
| Date | 2016 |
| Issuer or publisher | Archaeology South-East |
| Place of issue or publication | Witham |
| Description | A4. 12 pages of text. 3 illustrations |
| Entered by | Mark Atkinson (mark.atkinson@ucl.ac.uk) |
| Entered on | 11 November 2016 |



| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| © Archaeology South-East | | Cross Farm, Waltham's Cross | Fig. 1 |
| Project Ref: 160161 | Nov 2016 | Site location | |
| Report No: 2016432 | Drawn by: APL | | |



| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| © Archaeology South-East | | Cross Farm, Waltham's Cross | Fig. 2 |
| Project Ref: 160161 | Nov 2016 | Location of stable block | |
| Report Ref: 2016432 | Drawn by: APL | | |



The stable block area during excavation



The south-west corner of the excavated area, 0.5m and 1m scales

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|--|--------|
| © Archaeology South-East | | Cross Farm, Waltham's Cross | Fig. 3 |
| Project Ref: 160161 | Nov 2016 | Plan and photographs of the monitored area | |
| Report Ref: 2016432 | Drawn by: APL | | |

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