

**76 HIGH STREET,  
OLD HARLOW, ESSEX**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Author: Tim Schofield (Fieldwork & report)	
NGR: TL 4745 1159	Report No. 3612
District: Harlow	Site Code: HAHS 10
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3990
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**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
<b>Project name</b>	76 High Street, Old Harlow, Essex		
<p><i>In August 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at land 76 High Street, Old Harlow, Essex (NGR TL 475 116). The evaluation was commissioned by Dovehouse Homes Ltd, and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a new 5-bedroom dwelling within the former garden of No.76 (HW/PL/10/00095).</i></p> <p><i>The site lies on the southern side of the High Street, Old Harlow, within the Old Harlow Conservation Area. The High Street forms part of the main historic thoroughfare through Harlow, with Market Street and Mulberry Green. The site had a potential for medieval and post-medieval remains.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	18 <sup>th</sup> August 2010		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	Y	Future work (Y/N/?)	N
P. number	3990	Site code	HAHS 10
Type of project	An Archaeological Evaluation		
Site status	Within Old Harlow Conservation Area		
Current land use	Garden		
Planned development	New 5-bedroom dwelling		
Main features (+dates)	-		
Significant finds (+dates)	-		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	Essex	Harlow	Old Harlow
HER/ SMR for area	Essex HER		
Post code (if known)	CM17 0DR		
Area of site	c.375m <sup>2</sup>		
NGR	TL 475 116		
Height AOD (min/max)	c.60m		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	ECC HEM		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Tim Schofield		
Funded by	Dovehouse Homes Ltd		
Full title	76 High Street, Old Harlow, Essex. An Archaeological Evaluation		
Authors	Schofield, T.		
Report no.	3612		
Date (of report)	August 2010		

## 76 HIGH STREET, OLD HARLOW HERTFORDSHIRE

### AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

#### SUMMARY

*In August 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at land 76 High Street, Old Harlow, Essex (NGR TL 475 116). The evaluation was commissioned by Dovehouse Homes Ltd, and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a new 5-bedroom dwelling within the former garden of No.76 (HW/PL/10/00095).*

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*In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.*

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at land 76 High Street, Old Harlow, Essex (NGR TL 475 116; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Dovehouse Homes Ltd and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a new 5-bedroom dwelling within the former garden of No.76 (HW/PL/10/00095).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (ECC HEM; dated 17/08/2010) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 16/07/2010) and approved by ECC HEM. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008), as well as the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. Specific research aims for the programme were:

- to locate any evidence of medieval/post-medieval occupation, its nature and extent,
- to examine the relationship of any of this evidence of occupation in the context of the development of the historic town,

- to identify and record any medieval or post-medieval ribbon development.

### *Planning policy context*

1.4 PPG16 (1990), the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to archaeology and PPG15 (1994) the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to conservation of the historic environment (by protecting the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and protecting listed buildings (of architectural or historical interest) from demolition and unsympathetic change and safeguarding their settings as far as is possible) have been replaced by Planning Policy Statement 5 (2010), the national Planning Policy Statement that applies to the historic environment.

1.5 PPS5 states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The Planning Policy Statement aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. It aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. It states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past, and to make this publicly available, should be taken, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

## **2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

2.1 The site is located in the Old Harlow, which lies to the immediate north east of Harlow New Town. Old Harlow is located within Harlow District of Essex County, and lies c. 0.5km to the east of the A414 road and c. 0.25km to the north of B183, Gilden Way. A railway line is located c. 1km to the north.

2.2 The site lies on the southern side of the High Street, Old Harlow within the Old Harlow Conservation Area. The development site comprises land adjacent to No.76 High Street, a large corner plot located on the southern side of the High Street, and to the north of the recreation/cricket ground. The proposed development is within the former gardens of the main house (No.76) and is unbuilt and laid to grass.

## **3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

3.1 The site is located to the south of valley of the river Stort and lies on relatively flat land at a height of c. 60m AOD, slightly rising to the south.

3.2 Soils in the vicinity are chalky tills of the Melford and Hanslope associations, described as deep, well drained fine or coarse loamy over clayey and fine loamy soils. The river alluvium to the immediate north, within Stort Valley, is of the Thames association and comprises stoneless, mainly calcareous clayey soils. The drift geology of the immediate area is Boulder Clay and glacial sand and gravel, with head deposits further east. The solid geology is London Clay, with a band of Upper Chalk locally (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### *Prehistoric*

4.1 A copper flat axe and an extensive late Bronze Age settlement in the town are recorded (Bedwin 1996). The Bronze Age settlement may include the earliest human cremation in the country, located in the centre of a pond barrow (Bedwin 1996). To the north-west of the present site lay a large temple. The latter became well-established in the Roman period but was originally constructed in the late pre-Roman Iron Age. Pre-Roman finds include a pit at the temple that contained the skull of a young adult, a bronze ring and an iron spear blade, dating to c.50 BC. It has been suggested that a prone burial at the temple is indicative of an execution or the discarding of an outcast (Bedwin 1996; Kemble 2001). To the south of the Old Town, at Church Langley, there is also evidence for activity ranging from the Palaeolithic to the early Iron Age (Medlycott 2000).

### *Romano-British*

4.2 There is a considerable amount of evidence relating to Harlow's Roman past; the Roman town first grew in response to the foundation of a temple, in the north-western sector of modern Harlow. The temple was located on a hill which had previously been occupied by an Iron Age temple. A substantial area of occupation developed to the north and east of the temple during the Roman era, with evidence of masonry and timber buildings, an internal road pattern and manufacturing areas (Medlycott 1999).

4.3 The only extant monument dated to the Roman period is the temple hill. The plan of the temple is marked out in concrete, but no walls are visible. Three routes are known to have converged on the settlement; one ran south from the temple towards Epping, the second ran north-east from the river crossing and the third led north-west towards Braughing. It has been suggested that Old Road/Langley Lane may have been a Roman road. Harlow Mill would appear to be located close to the second of these roads, that which ran north-east from the river crossing. Some traces of internal streets have been identified during excavations, but the results remain unpublished (Medlycott 1999).

## *Anglo-Saxon*

4.4 Three 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century brooches have been discovered, suggesting that an early Saxon cemetery was positioned to the north of the modern town, in the valley of the river Lea. To the north of the temple site, early Saxon occupation is recognised by an earth-fast post structure, which lay above levels of Roman destruction, and has been interpreted as a sub-Roman individual or small group occupying the remains of a Roman structure (Bedwin 1996, 110).

## *Medieval, post-medieval and later*

4.5 Following settlement in the Roman period, Harlow developed at Harlowbury as a manorial centre, followed by the development of settlement at Churchgate during the later 11<sup>th</sup> century. Old Harlow, on the Dunmow-Hertford Road appears to have been a deliberate establishment by the dominant landowners, the Abbots of Bury St Edmunds, with the grant of a market and annual fair in 1218 (though a small settlement and market had been present in the reign of King Stephen). The settlement was centred on a row of properties on the southern side of Fore Street/High Street with the market place in front. As commonly happened, the market became infilled with further properties, with Midil Rowe on the north side and rows between Fore Street and Back Street.

4.6 It has been suggested that there was little use of the market place at Harlow prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Andrews 1991), and the market was largely disbanded at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, to continue only sporadically. At this time timber-framed buildings were probably built to replace the former market stalls with permanent structures. Archaeological excavations in Old Harlow have revealed evidence of 13<sup>th</sup> century structures on the north side of Market Street, identified by a series of post-holes. The structures were replaced by further timber-framed structures during the following century, interpreted as market stalls. Another building was later built on the same part of Market Street in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Andrews 1991). The current site lies within an area of the medieval and post-medieval town.

4.7 Archaeological evaluations carried out by AS in 2009 at 64 High Street, Old Harlow (Pozorski 2009 & 2010) revealed the remains of the 19<sup>th</sup> century building that occupied the site until its recent demolition. It also revealed a Victorian well and a more recent pumping chamber.

## **5 METHODOLOGY**

5.1 One trench was excavated using a mechanical 360° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). The trench location was approved by ECC HEM and was situated within the footprint of the proposed dwelling. The trench measured 20 x 1.60m.

6.2 Topsoil and undifferentiated overburden were mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was searched for finds and the trenches were scanned by a metal detector.

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

### Trench 1 (Fig. 2)

<i>Sample section 1 : SW side, NE facing</i> <i>0.00 = 53.59m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.45m	L1000	Topsoil. Mid grey brown, silty clay with occasional angular and rounded flint.
0.45m +	L1001	Natural. Pale yellow sandy silt.

*Description:* No archaeological features or finds were present.

## 7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds.

## 8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The site was overlain by Topsoil L1000, a mid grey brown, silty clay (0.45m thick).

8.2 The natural, L2001, was a pale yellow, sandy silt.

## 9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for the medieval and post-medieval remains related to the settlement of Old Harlow. There was also possibility of prehistoric and Roman remains to be present on the site.

9.2 In the event no archaeological features or finds were revealed. No indication of any previous development of the southern part of the site was identified. No residual finds were recovered.



## 10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Harlow Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Dovehouse Homes for funding the project (in particular Mr Kris de Havilland for his assistance).

AS is also pleased to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Adam Garwood and Mr Richard Havis of Essex County Council Historic Environment Management Team.

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## APPENDIX 1

## ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD (HER)

EHCR	NGR TL	Description
<b>Prehistoric</b>		
3643	470 116	A few sherds of residual prehistoric pottery and a small number of Neolithic flint tools (scrapers and blades) were recovered in 1989 to the east of the church
9123	4717 1158	13 pieces of residual worked flint including cores, flakes and a rod fabricator. The latter is probably Mesolithic/early Neolithic, also a single rim sherds was found, probably from a simple flint-tempered coarse-ware bowl (not closely datable)
<b>Roman</b>		
9124	4717 1158	Roman brick and tile fragments, including a piece of combed box flue tile. Copper alloy objects consisted of a 3 <sup>rd</sup> century barbarous radiate, and a Hod Hill-type brooch. 6 pot sherds were recovered comprising a sandy grey ware, Hadham Oxidised Ware, and Samian (?South Gaulish)
<b>Medieval</b>		
3642	470 116	St Johns Church, some medieval pottery found to the east of the church in 1989
9122	471 115	Old Harlow – the medieval township of Harlow, now known as Old Harlow, grew up after the grant in 1218 of a Monday market and annual fair to abbot Hugh II of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, who held the manor of Harlowbury. The market place lies half a mile SE of Harlowbury, beside the junction of the north-south London to Epping to Newmarket Road, and the east-west Hertford to Dunmow road. The Rentals of 1302 and 1430 list 54 tenants in the market place. It is possible that an earlier market may have been held on this site during the reign of Stephen
9125	4717 1158	A sequence commenced with a structure built with earth-fast posts, datable to the 13 <sup>th</sup> century, which was succeeded by a more permanent building dating to the 13 <sup>th</sup> –14 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Post-medieval</b>		
3617	470 116	Post-med finds made to the east and west of the church of St John the Baptist, 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> century pottery noted in sand pits, may reflect commercial sand extraction or backfilling
3641	4709 1162	Church of St John the Baptist, brick church built 1839-41 as a chapel of ease to the medieval church of St Mary the Virgin. In 1857 it became a parish church in its own right but in 1923 the two parishes were reunited. Made redundant in 1977
9126	4717 1158	A layer of gravel covering the entire site seems to represent a major renewal of the market surface c. 16 <sup>th</sup> –17 <sup>th</sup> century. On this was constructed a timber framed building which probably underwent several phases of reconstruction before being demolished in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century



## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX

1



Post excavation shot, Trench 1, looking south-east.

2



Sample Section 1, Trench 1, looking south-west.

3



General site shot, Trench 1 looking south.

4



General site shot, Trench 1, looking north.

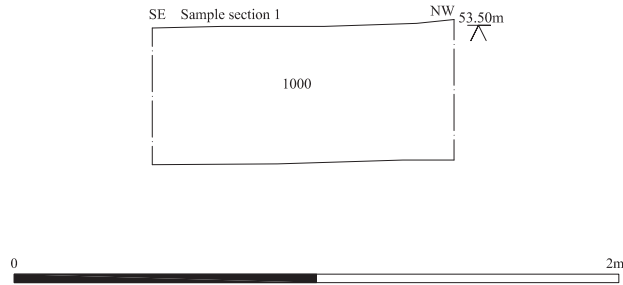




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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4





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**Fig. 2 Trench location plan & section**  
 Scale plan at 1:500 & section at 1:25 at A3

