Archaeological Evaluation
Lea Lane Farm, Lea Lane, Great Braxted, Essex CM8 3EW

Site Code: LLF15

NGR: TL 8388 1499

November 2015

TOUCHSTONE ARCHAEOLOGY
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Archaeological Trial trenching of
Lea Lane farm, Lea Lane, Great Braxted, Essex CM8 3EW

Site Code LLF15

Date of report: 11/11/2015

Plate 1. Aerial view of site (Yellow pin) showing the site prior to development.

(Google Earth 9/9/2006: Eye altitude 1.28km).
1.0 Introduction

On 5th November, Touchstone Archaeology carried out Archaeological Trial trenching on an area designated for the erection of agricultural buildings at Lea Lane farm, Lea Lane, Great Braxted, Essex CM8 3EW. (Fig. 1 & Plate 1).

2.0 Summary

1.2. The Planning Application Number for the development is FUL/MAL/15/00852.

1.3. The works were carried out on behalf of the owner and instructions received from Smart Planning Ltd.

1.4. The Archaeological Trial trenching was to watch for any signs of archaeological activity. In particular, any evidence relating to crop marks located within 250m to the north.

1.5. The weather was overcast and dry, rain began at the point of completion of the trial trenching.

1.6. The site was a pasture field that was at one time a ploughed field that comprised part of the farm, bounded to the north by a fence and Lea Lane Road, to the east by open fields and field boundaries, to the west by the existing farm buildings and to the south by further pasture land.

1.7. The archaeologist walked the ploughed field to assess the surface for evidence of archaeological deposits but none were found.

1.8. Archaeological trial trenching was carried out across the length and width of the proposed development area with a bladed bucket measuring 1.5m to a depth of natural clay at 30cm. (Plates 1-4).

The archaeological work was undertaken in one phase.

Phase 1: 2no trial trenches.

Trench 1: Northwest – Southeast – L50m x W.1.5m x D.0.30m
Trench 2: Southwest - Northeast – L60m x W.1.5m x D.0.30m

1.9. Stratigraphy:

Trenches 1
0 – 30cm depth – Topsoil
30cm depth – Clay (orange brown sticky clay clean with stone and flint inclusions)
Trench 2
0 – 30cm depth – Topsoil
30cm depth – Clay (orange brown sticky clay clean with stone and flint inclusions)
70cm from the southwest end of the trench a gravel area was uncovered, although based on aerial photography and discussion with the farmer this was connected to previous works in that area.

1.10. Although the archaeological potential was medium to high the Archaeological trial trenching revealed no buried archaeological features or deposits.

2.0 Planning Background

Planning application FUL/MAL/15/00852 was submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Essex County Council Heritage and Conservation (ECCHC), on behalf of the LPA requested that Archaeological trial Trenching be undertaken in order to record any archaeological remains uncovered prior to the development work. The following condition was attached to the planning consent:

L1 Archaeological Assessment

No development including any site clearance or groundworks of any kind shall take place within the site until the applicant or their agents; the owner of the site or successors in title has submitted an archaeological assessment by an accredited archaeological consultant to establish the archaeological significance of the site. Such archaeological assessment shall be approved by the local planning authority and will inform the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. The development shall be carried out in a manner that accommodates such approved programme of archaeological work.

L2 Implementation of Archaeological Fieldwork Programme

No development including any site clearance or groundworks of any kind shall take place within the site until the applicant or their agents; the owner of the site or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work from an accredited archaeological contractor 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 be carried out in a manner that accommodates the approved programme of archaeological work.

3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site (Zoe Schofield TOUCHSTONE Archaeology) and monitored the excavation works on 5th November 2015.

4.0 Aims and Objectives
4.1. The reason for the trial trenching was to observe, excavate and record archaeological remains revealed by the trenching works, to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area and ensure suitable specialist observation close to a potential archaeological site.

4.2. The trial trenching comprised of one trench the full length of the PDA and one trench the full width of the PDA in a cross shaped fashion. (Plates 1-5).

4.3. A full programme of proposed works by the contractor was made available to Touchstone Archaeology before the on-site trial trenching took place.

4.4. Confidence Rating
No factors hindered the recognition of archaeological features and deposits during the Trial trenching and recording exercise.

5.0 Archaeological and Geological Background

5.1. The underlying geology at the site according to the British Geological Survey map is Bedrock geology of London Clay Formation. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 34 to 56 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period (BSG website 1: 50,000). The geology revealed on site was silty clay & sand topped by dark brown humic topsoil.

5.2. The application site consisted of an area adjacent to the Lea Lane Road, east of the River Blackwater and close to the villages of Rivenhall, Little Braxted and Great Braxted. The site itself is generally level at a height of about 19m aOD.

5.3. The site lies within an area dominated by agriculture, surrounded by fields and ancient hedgerows and tree copses and the landscape is rich in cropmarks.

There are no records in the Essex HER within 100m of the PDA.

Within 250m of the PDA is the site of Elm Springs, Great Braxted (SMR9138/TL838150/TL81NW), crop marks of a sub\ rectangular enclosure measuring 70m x 69m and linear features.

Further afield and within 500m of the PDA and North of Colemans Farm (8297) aerial photography from 1976 shows two parallel lines (possible track way), linear features and two parallel, curving lines (possibly part of an enclosure or concentric ring ditch).

South of Colemans Farm (8395) is a findspot of Roman pottery.

The possible site of a Saxon cemetery (8396) was uncovered during gravel extraction in 1974. Spearheads, swords, a bronze ferrule, a shield boss, pottery and one human long bone, dating to the 6th Century.

The Church of St Nicholas, Little Braxted (8183) dates to the 11th Century but iron objects
thought to be Saxon and Roman brick and pottery have been found to the north of the hall.

Little Braxted Hall (38921), is a Grade II Listed Building dating to between AD1397 and AD1419 with adjacent Kitchen/Dovecote.

Little Braxted Mill, Mill House and attached bridge (38918) is an 18\textsuperscript{th} Century Grade II Listed building with a medieval core.

Within 1km of the PDA at Lee Lane an aerial photograph shows a ring ditch with linear features.

6.0 Methodology

6.1. The Trial trenching was conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification compiled by ECC and it also complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists’ Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Monitoring (IfA: 1994, revised Oct 2008).

6.2. The works comprised the observation of trial trenching, including the inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and finds.

6.3. The Trial trenching was carried out in one phase according to the needs of the land owner on 5\textsuperscript{th} November 2015.

6.4. Excavation of the area was carried out by contractors using a 360-degree machine equipped with a toothless bucket (1.5m) necessary to excavate the 2no trenches (Plates 1-4).

6.5. All excavation was carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

6.6. Where possible the areas of excavation were subsequently hand-cleaned with the intention of revealing any observed features in plan and section.

6.7. If found archaeological features under threat were to be excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations, should these prove to be necessary.

6.8. The archaeological Trial trenching was carried out in accordance with current IfA Standards and Guidance, (IfA: 2008), and methodology agreed with the Archaeological Officer ECC.

7.0 Results

No archaeological features or deposits were revealed in the subsoil encountered across the site. No archaeological features were revealed in the natural geology and no archaeological finds retrieved from the topsoil (Fig.5).
8.0 Finds
No buried archaeological features were located in the Archaeological Trial trenching phase.

9.0 Discussion
The development site is in an area of archaeological potential. Unfortunately there were no archaeological features or finds relating to the nearby cropmarks.

10.0 Conclusion
The Archaeological Trial trenching has fulfilled the primary aims and objectives of the ECC Archaeological Specification. As far as it is known no buried archaeological features have been affected as a result of the development.

11.0 Acknowledgments
Touchstone Archaeology would like to thank Smart Planning Ltd for commissioning the project. Fieldwork was undertaken and report written by Zoe Schofield.

Zoe Schofield

References
HER data (ECC 2015)
ECC Archaeological Trial trenching (2015)
Appendix 1
Essex County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Lea Lane Farm, Lea Lane, Great Braxted, Essex CM8 3EW
Touchstone Archaeology Site Code: LLF15
Site Address: As above

Summary:
On 5\textsuperscript{th} November 2015, 121sqm Trial Trenching was carried out on an area of 0.42 Ha
designated for the construction of new farm buildings. The trial trenching was applied
across the full length (60m) and full width (50m) of the area to natural clay at a depth of
30cm with a 1.5m bucket but revealed no archaeological deposits or features.

District/Unitary: Maldon
Period(s): None
NGR (centre of site to ten figures) 83888 14990
Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Trial trenching
Date of recording: 5\textsuperscript{th} November 2015
Unit undertaking recording: Touchstone Archaeology
Geology: Underlying geology is London Clay Formation

at Lea Lane Farm, Lea Lane, Great Braxted, Essex CM8 3EW

Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where
appropriate)
See above

Location of archive/finds: Touchstone Archaeology. The Ridings, White Elm Road, Danbury
Essex CM3 4LR

Contact at Unit: Zoe Schofield
Date: 11/11/2015
Plates

Plate 2. Trench 1 (facing Southwest)
Plate 3. Trench 1 (facing Northeast)

Plate 4. Trench 2 (facing Southeast)
Plate 5. Trench 2 (facing Northwest)
Plate 6. Point at which both trenches cross each other

Plate 7. Gravel deposit
This plan shows the general position, not the exact line, of the boundaries. It may be subject to distortions in scale. Measurements scaled from this plan may not match measurements between the same points on the ground.
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