

**An archaeological watching brief at
'Lulworth', 44 Feering Hill, Feering,
near Kelvedon, Essex
May-August 2004**

**report prepared by
Kate Orr**

**on behalf of
Vaughan and Blyth (Builders) Ltd**



CAT project code: 04/5c
Braintree Museum accession code: 2005.6
NGR: TL 867 192 (c)



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Plate 1 No 44 Feering Hill, looking north-west (front cover).

Fig 1 Site location, showing surrounding archaeological remains indicated by EHER and SAM numbers.

Fig 2 Plan of site, showing monitored areas (grey).

1 Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during a small residential development at 44 Feering Hill, Feering, Essex. The ground appeared to be undisturbed except by tree roots. Roman or Anglo-Saxon burials or settlement evidence was expected on the site; however, no features of archaeological interest were observed. No finds were retrieved although spoil heaps were checked. It is possible that outlying burials are present on the site but randomly placed and not disturbed by the groundworks. In terms of settlement, there was no evidence of anything earlier than modern occupation. Pottery, shell, bone and other finds indicative of settlement activity were absent.

2 Introduction (Figs 1-2, Plate 1)

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological watching brief carried out at 'Lulworth', 44 Feering Hill, Feering, Essex.
- 2.2 The watching brief was prompted by a planning application for two detached houses each with a double garage. The recommendation was for a 'programme of archaeological work', more specifically archaeological monitoring of all groundworks, with the possibility of excavation (planning application no BTE/2515/03).
- 2.3 Feering is a small village just to the north-east of Kelvedon and divided from it by the River Blackwater. The proposed development site is located on the southern side of Feering Hill, which was formerly part of the main route from London to Colchester (NGR TL 867 192). The 0.1448 hectare triangular plot was formerly part of the garden to 44 Feering Hill.
- 2.4 The monitoring was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between the 28th May and the 13th August 2004. A brief was supplied by the Essex County Council (ECC) Historic Environment Management (HEM) group.
- 2.5 The project was monitored by the Essex County Council HEM group.
- 2.6 This report follows the standards set out in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CM 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (CM 2003), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IFA 1999) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment* (EAA 3), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (EAA 8), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) was also followed.

3 Archaeological background (Fig 1)

- 3.1 In Kelvedon, evidence of Late Iron Age settlement has been found, consisting of individual house plots, fields, a possible temple, and some industrial activity. In the Roman period, the town of Canonium developed to the south-west of the development site. Later the settlement spread along the main Roman road (now the High Street) and was enclosed by a defensive earthwork. The site of a large Roman cemetery lies approximately 80m to the south of the development site (Essex Historic Environment Record or EHER nos 8134, 8176, 8237-8238 and 8241-8242); this included a number of inhumations in stone coffins. Romano-British tile has been recorded from Feering House, just to the west of the development site (EHER no 8356). The cemetery continued in use into the early Anglo-Saxon period, suggesting a continuity of occupation in the area (Medlycott 1999, 3). Finds from the burials include a sword, spear, brooches, buckles, and these appear to be 6th to early 7th century in date (Jones 1980, 90; Rodwell 1988, 26-31).

- 3.2 The site of the Anglo-Saxon settlement is not known. However, the development site, being on the main road and near the cemetery, may possibly contain occupation evidence. The Anglo-Saxon burials are protected as a scheduled ancient monument (SAM no 24866).
- 3.3 During the medieval period, a settlement grew up at Easterford, by the river. Medieval sherds have been found to the north-east of the development site (EHER no 8236; Rodwell 1988, 137).
- 3.4 The Estate Map of Kelvedon and Coggeshall dating to 1605 shows that the plot immediately to the west of the site was occupied by houses at this time.

4 **Aim**

The aim of the work was to record the surviving archaeological remains threatened by the proposed development. Specific aims were to:

- Identify surviving evidence relating to the Roman and Anglo-Saxon cemetery
- Identify surviving evidence relating to the Anglo-Saxon occupation of this area
- Define the longevity of the settlement
- Identify surviving evidence relating to the post-medieval town and the nature of that occupation.

5 **Methods** (Fig 2)

- 5.1 The method of investigation was that of a watching brief, whereby an archaeologist monitors the groundworks, though provision was made for hand excavation of any potentially significant archaeological deposits that might be encountered.
- 5.2 Twelve site visits were made by CAT archaeologists, who monitored groundworks consisting of three engineer's test-pits, soil-stripping of the driveway and an area to the rear of no 44, trenches for ground-beams, and one sewer-trench. Drainage trenches and soakaways were not monitored, and neither were foundation trenches for two of the garages.
- 5.3 Liaison was maintained with the Essex County Council HEM group monitoring officer and the contractors to maintain an appropriate strategy to investigate deposits on the site.
- 5.4 Individual records of features were entered on CAT pro-forma recording sheets. Section drawings of layers were made at a scale of 1:10 together with written descriptions.
- 5.5 Finds were registered on CAT pro-forma record sheets and assigned find numbers according to context. Finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context.
- 5.6 Colour photographs of the test-pits, the general site and the site environs were taken with a digital camera.

6 **Results of the archaeological observations** (Fig 2)

6.1 **Test-pits 1-3 – May 2004**

Three test-pits were dug by engineers to test the ground prior to groundworks (TP1-TP3). They were dug to between 2.2m and 2.5m depth and their dimensions were 1.6m x 2.4m. In TP1 and TP3, 250mm of loamy topsoil with areas of tree-root disturbance overlaid 500-950mm of yellowish brown clay silt subsoil. Below this, natural sands and gravels were recorded.

In TP2, 200mm of topsoil directly overlaid 950mm of natural gravels without the intervening clay silt. At 1.15m below ground-level, brownish yellow sand was encountered.

6.2 Soil-stripping for driveway – July 2004

350mm of topsoil was stripped off at the entrance to the site before the laying of the driveway. No features were observed and no finds were made.

6.3 Ground reduction to the rear of no 44 – July 2004

A 5m x 5m area was stripped of 600mm of material at the back of the house. Yellowish brown sandy silt subsoil was reached and scraped with a toothless ditching bucket. No features were exposed. Three trees were removed at the time of the ground reduction. The tree bowls left after removal were inspected. Two tree bowls penetrated yellowish brown sandy silt subsoil. No features were observed and no finds were made.

6.4 Sewer-trench – July 2004

A trench was cut for a new sewer, within the area stripped for the driveway. The trench was dug to a depth of between 650mm and 750mm below the reduced ground-level. 450-500mm of clean yellowish brown silt clay overlaid natural flint gravel and sand.

6.5 Foundation trenches in plots 1 and 2, and garage to no 44 – August 2004

All the foundation trenches for plot 2 and the western trenches only of plot 1 were monitored, after discussion with the HEM group officer. The house foundation trenches were up to 1.5m deep. 300mm of loamy topsoil overlaid clean clay silt varying in colour from yellowish brown to orangey brown. Natural sand and gravel was encountered at 1.1m below ground-level. The foundation trenches for the garage built at no 44 were also monitored. The soil profile was similar to those for the other groundworks with no features or finds observed.

7 Discussion

The opportunity was given to examine trenches at various points over the whole site, most of which extended to natural ground. The ground appeared to be undisturbed except by tree roots. Roman or Anglo-Saxon burials or settlement evidence was expected on the site; however, no features of archaeological interest were observed. No finds were retrieved although spoil heaps were checked. It is possible that outlying burials are present on the site but randomly placed and not disturbed by the groundworks. In terms of settlement, there is no evidence of anything earlier than modern occupation. Pottery, shell, bone and other finds that would indicate settlement activity were absent.

8 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited with Braintree Museum under accession code BRNTM 2005.6.

9 Acknowledgements

The Trust would like to thank Vaughan and Blyth (Builders) Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The fieldwork was carried out by Stephen Benfield and Kate Orr.

10 References

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11 Glossary

EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
layer	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
NGR	National Grid Reference
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
post-medieval	after Henry VIII to around the late 18th century

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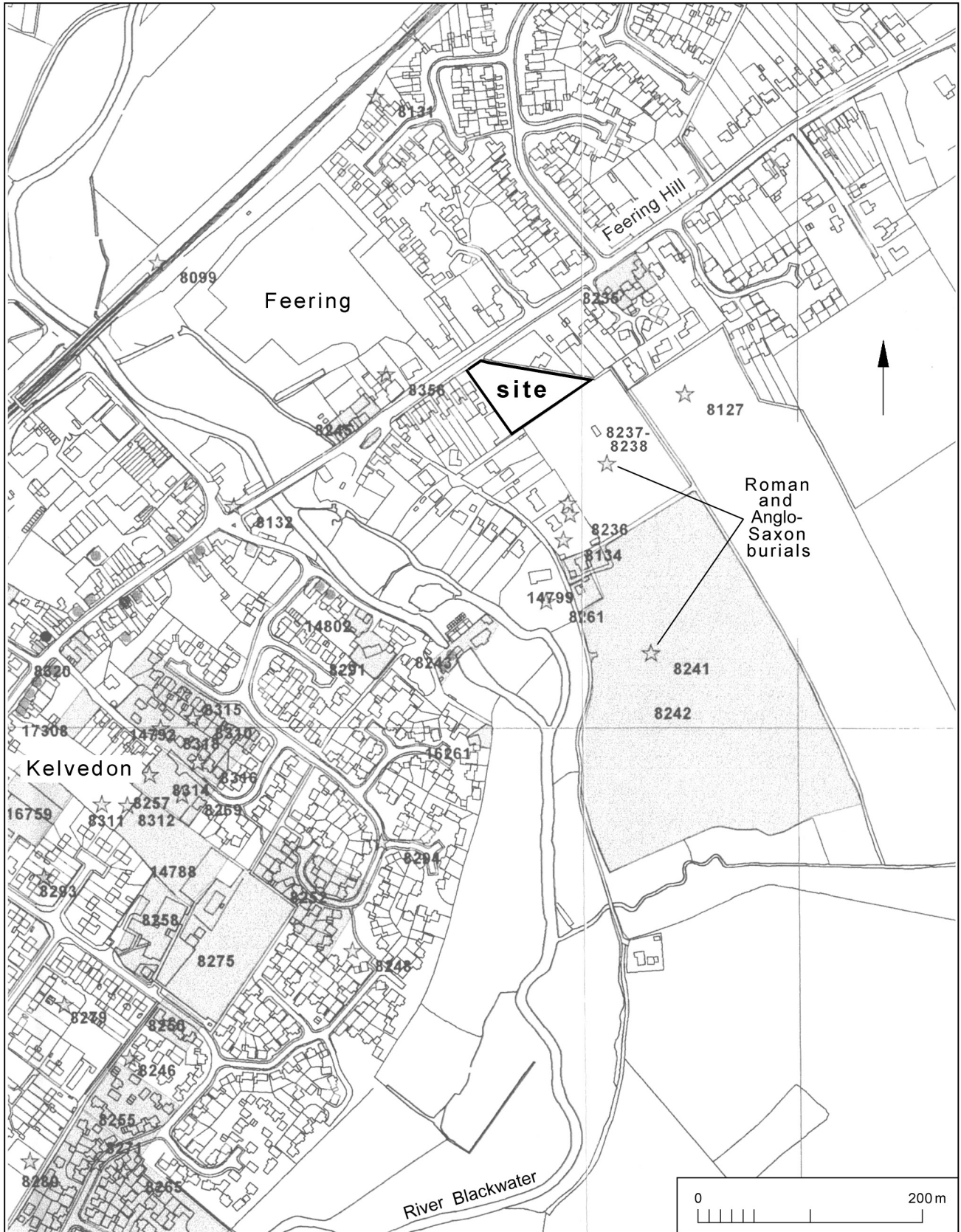


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Fig 1 Site location, showing surrounding archaeological remains, indicated by EHER numbers.

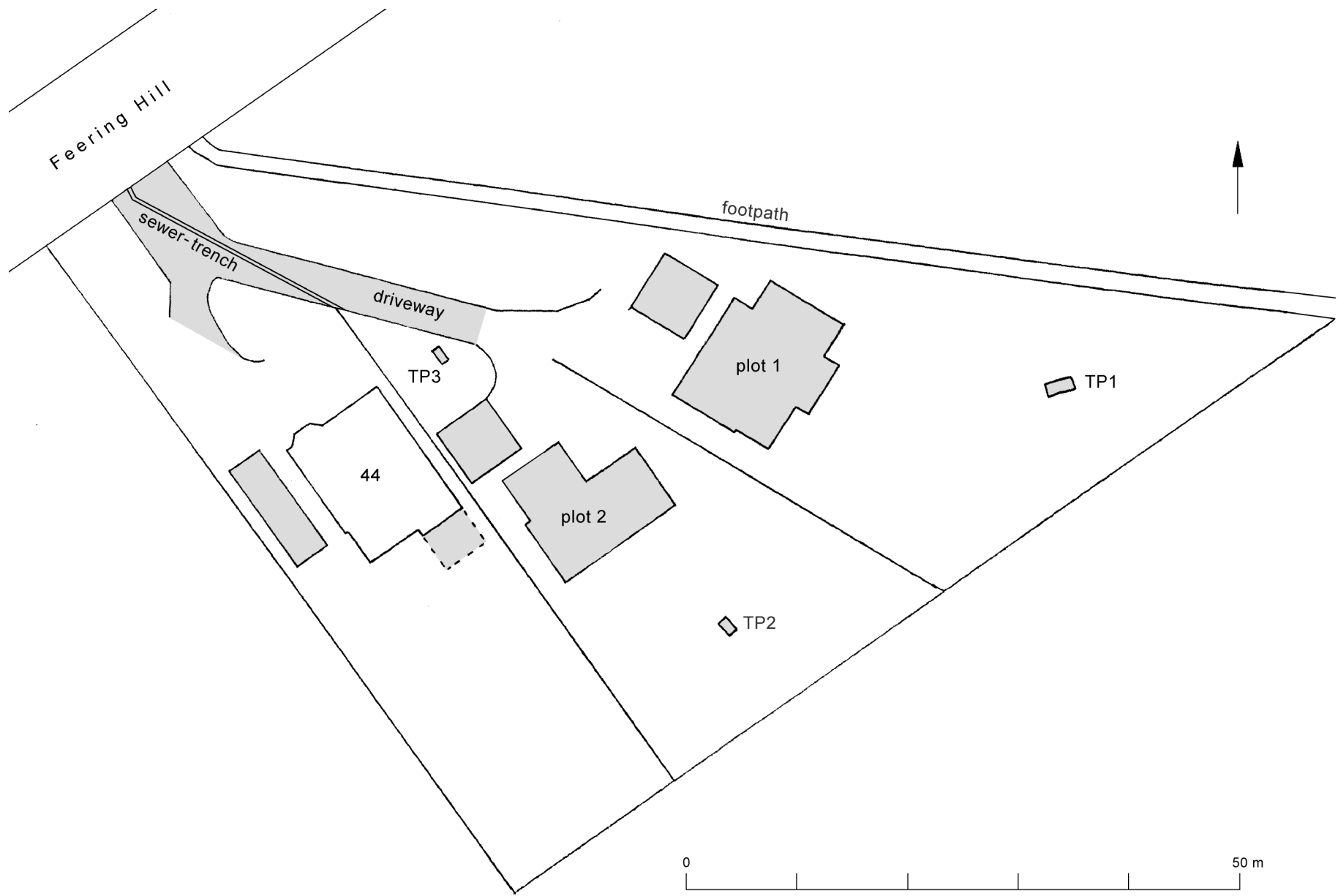


Fig 2 Plan of site, showing monitored areas (grey).

**Essex Historic Environment Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

Site address: 'Lulworth', 44 Feering Hill, Feering, Essex	
Parish: Feering	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 867 192 9 (c)	Site code: ECC site code: FEFH 04 Accession code: BRNTM 2005.6
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: May-August 2004	Size of area investigated: 0.1448 hectare
Location of finds/curating museum: Braintree Museum	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER nos: 8134, 8176, 8237-8238, 8241-8242, 8356, 8326
Final report: CAT Report 328	
Periods represented: None	
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>An archaeological watching brief was carried out during a small residential development at 44 Feering Hill, Feering, Essex. The ground appeared to be undisturbed except by tree roots. Roman or Anglo-Saxon burials or settlement evidence was expected on the site; however, no features of archaeological interest were observed. No finds were retrieved although spoil heaps were checked. It is possible that outlying burials are present on the site but randomly placed and not disturbed by the groundworks. In terms of settlement, there was no evidence of anything earlier than modern occupation. Pottery, shell, bone and other finds indicative of settlement activity were absent.</i>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: June 2005