

CAT Report 774:
Archaeological monitoring at The Old Milking Barn,
West Street, Coggeshall, Essex, May 2014

By Mark Baister

1 Summary

A watching brief was carried out during construction of an outbuilding adjacent to the Old Milking Barn, West Street, Coggeshall. During the groundworks, no archaeological features were uncovered, and the foundations of the outbuilding only impacted modern layers. Nothing of archaeological interest was discovered.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report describes an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on 22nd May on the footprint of an outbuilding adjacent to the Old Milking Barn, West Street, Coggeshall. The site (which is centred at NGR TL 8424 2270; see Fig 1) is located to the north of West Street, within the compound of Highfields Farm. The monitoring was carried out by a professional archaeologist from CAT.

The proposed outbuilding has a approximately 12.5m by 6.5m footprint and is to be constructed within the existing boundaries of the farm compound. As a result the site has not been cultivated in recent history.

Mr. Mike Yeo commissioned CAT to carry out the specified archaeological monitoring. The monitoring was carried out on 22nd May 2014 in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by CAT (CAT 2014), and approved by Historic Environment Officer Teresa O'Connor. Post-excavation work was carried out in May 2014. In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was carried out in accordance with standard policies and procedures as outlined in CAT 2012, IfA 2008a, IfA 2008b, MoRPHE, EAA 14, and EAA 24.

3 Archaeological background

The Essex Historic Environment (HER) Record shows that the proposed development may affect a site of archaeological interest. Evidence from cartographic sources and aerial photographs reveal a number of potential archaeological features including trackways, circular features and linear features surrounding the proposed development area and possibly within the development area. Within the area finds of prehistoric flint implements and Roman material have been recovered, and it has been suggested that a Roman cemetery lies to the west of Highfields Farm. Highfields Farm itself is likely to be of medieval origin. The existing farmhouse is late medieval in date. The 1st Edition OS maps depicts a circular feature in the area of the proposed outbuilding, the origin of which is unknown.

4 Aim

The monitoring was intended to preserve by record the character, extent, date and significance of any archaeological remains and deposits that may be impacted by the construction of the outbuilding and associated groundworks.

5 Results (Fig 2)

The footprint and foundation trenches of the building were stripped using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket under archaeological supervision. As well as the outbuilding foundations, a small soakaway had was excavated to the north-east of the Old Milking Barn (see Fig 1). Upon discussion with the client, it arose that the

proposed access for the development was going to consist of a gravel pathway, and as such would not have the potential to impact any archaeological remains.

During the strip of the outbuilding and soakaway, four layers were encountered (Plate 1 and 2):

Context	Description	Finds	Date
L1	medium grey/brown sandy silt placed topsoil, 280mm thick across whole footprint	modern CBM (not retained)	modern
L2	dark mottled black/orange sandy silt	plastic, modern CBM, asbestos roof tiles (not retained)	modern
L3	medium brown/grey sandy silt ploughsoil, 300m thick	-	post-medieval/modern
L4	light yellow/brown sand, gravel lenses	-	post-glacial

L1 and L2 were uncovered in the foundation trenches, and L3 and L4 were observed in the soakaway. No archaeological features were observed.



Plate 1 L1 (placed topsoil), and L2 (modern build up) visible in section of foundation trench. Shot facing east.



Plate 2 L3 (recent ploughsoil), and L2 (natural sand) visible in soakaway section. Shot facing east.

5 Conclusion

These results suggest that the site of the outbuilding has been heavily built up in the modern period. Being within a working farm complex, this build up of waste and modern layers is unsurprising. The circular feature visible on the 1st edition OS map was not encountered, but it is possible it was a pond that was later filled.

The foundation trenches were all dug into modern debris (L2), with no natural subsoil encountered. In a conversation with a local groundworker, it was suggested that this was the case for the entire north side of the farm complex, and that a substantial build-up of modern material had occurred within recent history.

The small soakaway was located just outside the farm complex, in land that was until recently cultivated. As a result, it was not impacted by modern disturbance like the foundation trenches. It was excavated to a depth of 700mm, and the natural sand (L4) was observed just below the ploughsoil (L3). Nothing of archaeological interest was encountered.

6 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Mr Mike Yeo for commissioning the work. The project was managed by B Holloway and fieldwork carried out by M Baister. The project was monitored by ECC Historical Environment Officer Teresa O'Connor.

7 References

CAT	2012	<i>Policies and procedures</i>
CAT	2014	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Monitoring and Excavation at The Old Milking Barn, West Street, Coggeshall, Essex May 2014</i>
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Department of Communities and Local Government
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, by David Gurney (editor)
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the east of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeological Occasional Papers 24, by Maria Medlycott
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (MoRPHE)
HEM	2014	<i>Brief for archaeological monitoring and excavation at The Old Milking Barn, West Street, Coggeshall</i> Essex County Council Brief, by Teresa O'Connor
IfA	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>
IfA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>

8 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material (brick, tile, tessera).
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
EHEN	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
fill	the soil filling up a hole such as a pit or ditch
HET	Historic Environment Team
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
layer	an accumulation or deposition of archaeological material
medieval	the period from AD 1066 to AD 1500
modern	the period from AD 1800 to present day
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OS	Ordnance Survey
post-medieval	the period from AD 1500 to AD 1800

9 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Circular Road North, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Braintree Museum (an accession code has been requested).

10 Contents of archive

Finds archive

No finds recovered.

Paper archive

1 A4 wallet containing:
this report
original site record (context and finds sheets)
section drawings
digital photo log
attendance record
sundry papers
digital photos on disc

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Distribution list:

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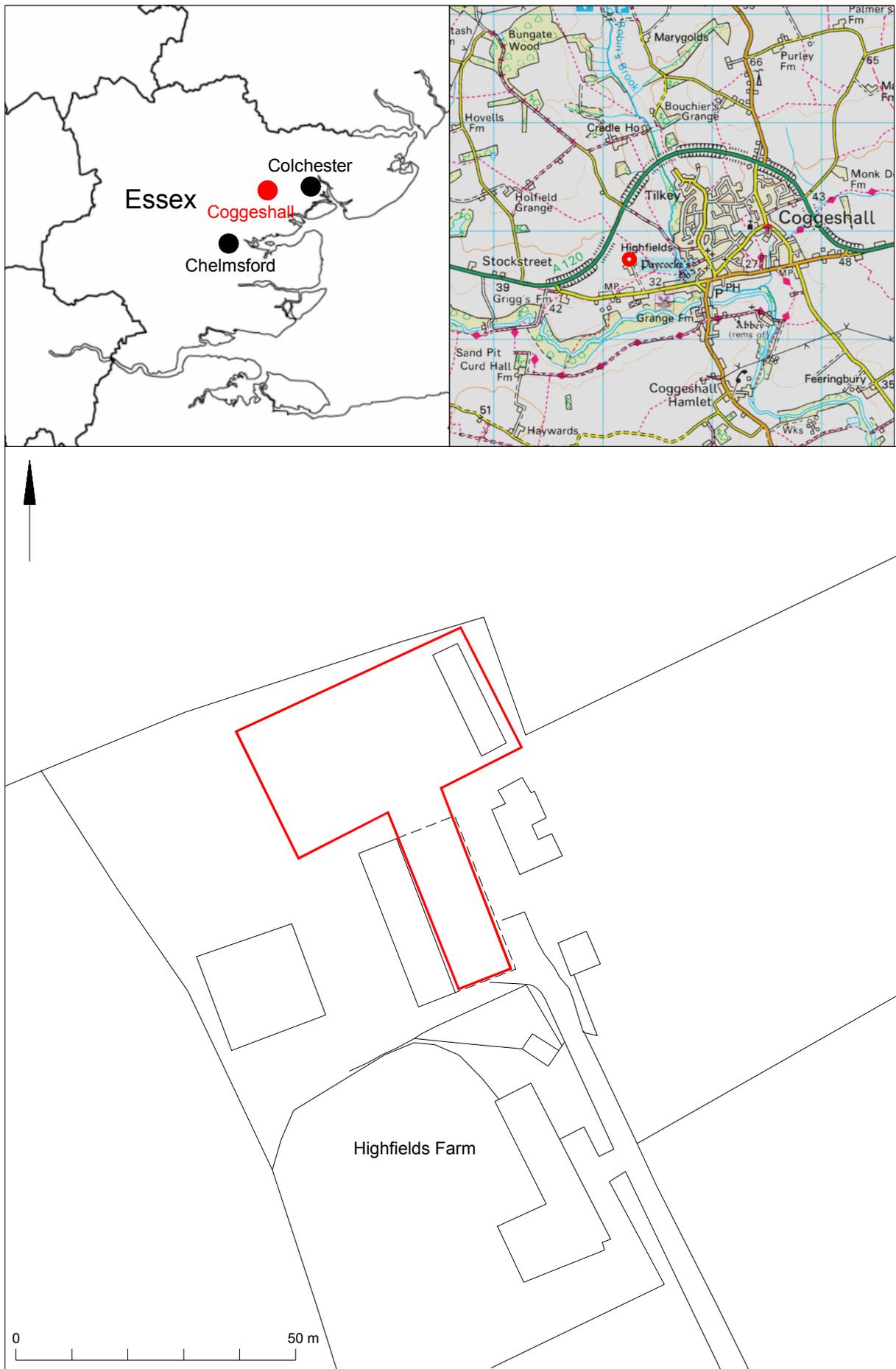
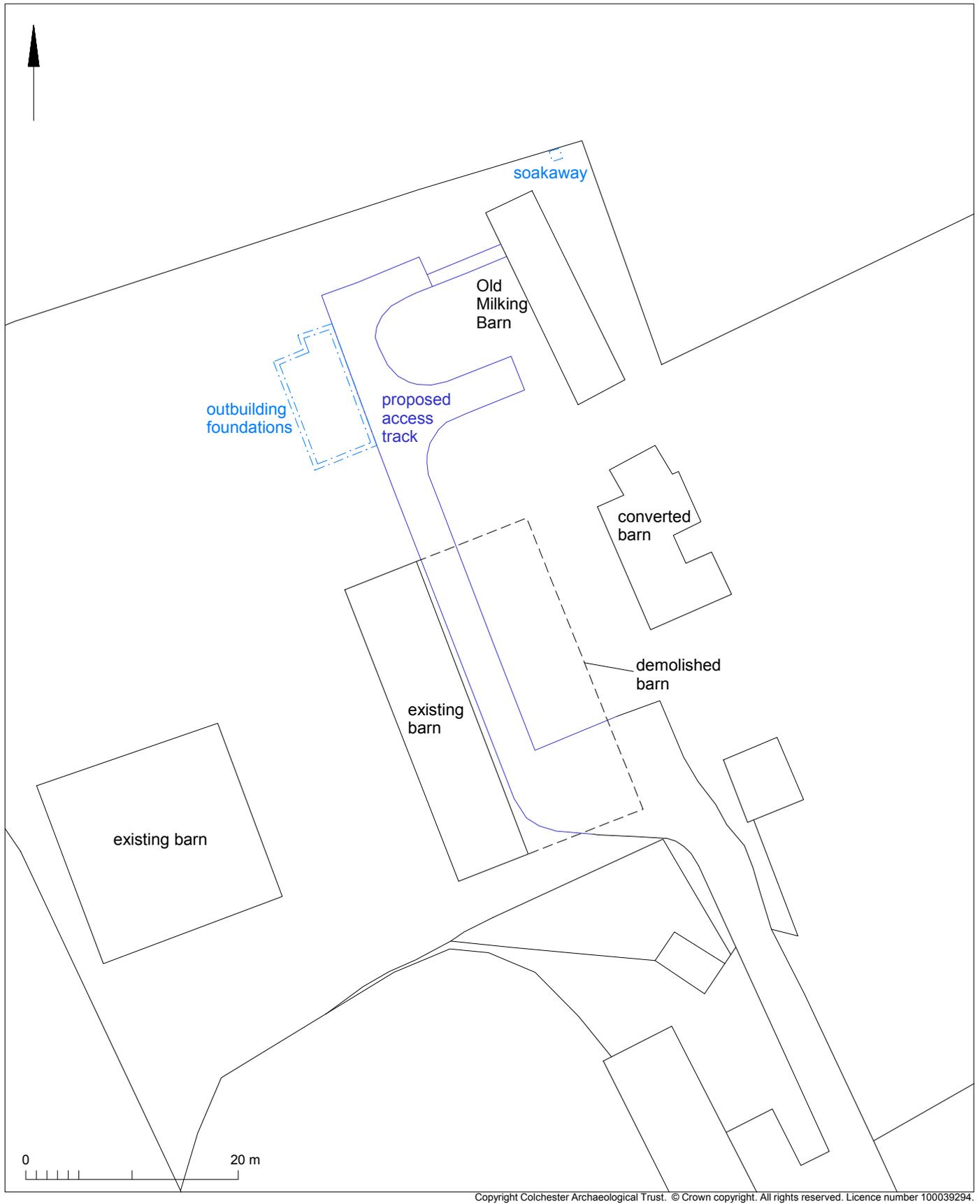


Fig 1 Site location.



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Fig 2 Monitoring results.