

TOUCHSTONE ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Archaeological Evaluation

1 Forge Cottage, Back Lane, Pleshey CM3 1HL

March 2016

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# **Archaeological Monitoring of foundation trenches at 1 Forge Cottage, Back Lane, Pleshey, Essex CM3 1HL**

**NGR TL 6647 1459**

**Site Code: FC16**

## **Summary**

*Touchstone Archaeology (TA) carried out an Archaeological evaluation to the foundation trenches at 1 Forge Cottage, Back Lane, Pleshey CM3 1HL. A planning application (15/01883/FUL) for the construction of a two-storey extension to the east elevation of the existing house was submitted to Chelmsford City Council, whereby the Council requested that an Archaeological evaluation be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out in Condition 5 of the planning consent and the Brief (CHL\_01883\_15) issued by the Historic Environment Advisor, Essex County Council.*

*A WSI was submitted on 26<sup>th</sup> February and approved on the 29<sup>th</sup> February. A Fieldwork Notification form was submitted on 13<sup>th</sup> March and work began on 14<sup>th</sup> March. The excavation of the trenches was completed on 15<sup>th</sup> March.*

*The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of the monitoring of the mechanical excavation of four foundation trenches, which encountered no archaeological features or deposits.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Touchstone Archaeology (TA) was commissioned by CRM Architects Ltd to carry out an archaeological monitoring at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (WSI-FC16) and in discussion with the Historic Environment Advisor, Essex County Council. The archaeological monitoring was carried out from the 14-15 March 2016.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site is located on the south side of Back Lane, opposite Vicarage Road and midway between both junctions with The Street. Immediately adjacent and east of the site is the village allotment area.

The house is a semi-detached, two storey property, with rendered finish, slate roof and decorative brick chimney. The property was on the OS Map of 1875 but



it is possible that it was rebuilt after 1951, as the size and shape are different on the National Grid Map (1951). The area of construction is on the site of a demolished carport and second floor extension and measures 2.45m x 8.2m approximately. It is centred on NGR TL 66476 14599.

According to the maps of the British Geological Survey, (1:50,000) the site has Bedrock Geology of London Clay, clay, silt and sand with Superficial Deposits of Lowestoft Formation, Diamicton. The site is situated within the historic town enclosure of Pleshey Castle. The site averages 71.00mOD.

## PLANNING BACKGROUND

Chelmsford City Council (CCC) approved planning consent 15/01883/FUL for the demolition of the two-storey side extension and the construction of a single and two-storey side/rear extension, with the condition that an archaeological evaluation and assessment be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The Local Planning Authority (CCC) placed the following condition on the planning consent:

### ***L1 Archaeological Assessment:***

*No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority.*

*Reason: This information is required prior to the commencement of the development because this is the only opportunity for archaeological investigation work to be undertaken. These works are required to ensure that adequate archaeological records can be made in respect of the site in accordance with Policy DC19 of the Adopted Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.*

The HEA set out the following requirements for the archaeological assessment in the Brief (CHL\_01883\_15) on 14th January 2016:

### ***Brief: Section 5:***

*The archaeological work should aim to record the location, extent, date and character of any surviving archaeological remains within the area of the proposed*

*development. Two trial trenches shall be excavated, both within the footprint of the new extension, one along the side of the house and one along the back, to assess the potential for further archaeological remains being recovered from this development.*

*Specific aims: To record the location of any surviving archaeological remains within the area of the proposed work and identify its relationship to the medieval or post medieval town development.*

*To record the stratigraphic sequence of deposits affected by the development.*

However, following a discussion with the HEA and CRM Architects it was agreed that, to avoid undermining the new foundations with additional trenching, the requirement would change to archaeological monitoring of the new groundworks, service and foundation trenches and Touchstone Archaeology undertook an Archaeological Watching Brief to the excavation of the new foundations.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The village of Pleshey is of National importance and remains one of the best-preserved medieval town and castle complexes in England. The name Pleshey may derive from the *pleached* or intertwined hedges around the castle settlement or *le pleisse*, a French term for an enclosure. Finds of metalwork trace Pleshey's origins to at least the Bronze Age and Roman remains found at Plesheybury in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century suggest occupation from the early 1<sup>st</sup> Century to the late 4<sup>th</sup> Century. Ploughing to the west of the village revealed foundations, a mosaic floor, a brick paved vault with Roman burials, a stone coffin and earthen pots and bottles with brass stoppers set in niches filled with earth and bones. William the Conqueror gave the manor of Pleshey to Geoffrey De Mandeville, in appreciation of his services as battle commander in the Norman conquest of 1066. It became his home and his centre of administration (Caput), for the many villages given to him by the King and later King Stephen made his grandson Earl of Essex. Geoffrey built a Motte and Bailey castle here in the mid 12<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1157 the castle was partially demolished following a general order to destroy all of the de Mandeville's castles in response to Geoffrey de Mandeville II's arraignment for treason. In 1167 permission to refortify the castle was given to William de Mandeville and it was rebuilt with a southern bailey and a semi circular ditch and earth bank that created the town enclosure in which the PDA is sited. In 1228 it passed, by marriage, to the Bohun family. The medieval period saw a rise in Pleshey's fortunes from the noble and Royal patronage of the castle, however after the Duke of Gloucester, the then owner, was executed by Richard II it fell into decay and by 1559 a survey of the estate

found most of the buildings to be ruinous and the Motte was being used as a rabbit warren. Finally, in 1692, it was dismantled and used for building materials. The surviving 50ft high Motte is one of the largest in England and is surrounded by a moat, a 15<sup>th</sup> Century Grade I Listed Bridge and an outer bailey. Excavations suggest three periods of construction – 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Both the Mount and the Moat are within 100m south of the PDA. The land surrounding the castle was made up of Deer parks and to the west, fields for the townspeople.

The property is located within the original north Bailey of the castle and within the later 14-hectare town enclosure (19759) of a semi circular ditch and earth bank, created around 1167. The 13<sup>th</sup> Century Back Lane, known as Brette Street was one of the three roads that navigated the town; the other two being The Street and new Street. A row of buildings edged the north side of The Street, curving around the market place. To date there is no evidence for any settlement north of Back lane. The old Forge (48262/19761) located within c.100m northwest of the site revealed undisturbed ground that suggests it was part of the hinterland during the medieval period. The recording of foundation trenches at The Gardens (1143911/1235498) c.100m south, uncovered a row of post-holes marking a 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> Century boundary fence or building and two late medieval pits. A pit/cut feature was found at Lavender cottage (46487) c100m northwest. Hill House on Back Lane (16965/16967/7323) c.150m east is the site of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century St Mary's church. An excavation on Butlers (16162/16164), located c.300m southwest of the property, revealed a curving ditch that was thought to be part of the earthwork enclosure belonging to the north bailey of the castle and a fragment of a Roman lava quern.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the archaeological monitoring is to determine whether any significant archaeological features, particularly relating to Pleshey Castle Bailey and the medieval town enclosure, survive on the development site.

## METHODOLOGY

Archaeological monitoring took place on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the specification, and ECC and IFA standards and guidance. A single context recording system was used to record the deposits, and context recording numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. These are used in the report and shown in bold.

## MONITORING

Curatorial advice was available during the course of the evaluation.

## RESULTS

Four trenches totalling 13.08m were mechanically excavated to a depth of between 1.3 and 2.3m. The excavation revealed topsoil (001) and the underlying subsoil (004). The topsoil consisted of century refuse. The subsoil comprised of a dark brown/black organic matter. The subsoil sealed the natural light brown/orange clay (005) and natural deposits of chalk (006) and flint (007). The foundation of the demolished extension (002) in Trench 2 was left in situ and the foundation of the existing house were exposed (003). A clay land drainage pipe (008) of 5cm Diameter was uncovered just above the natural clay at a depth of 70cm in Trench 1 and continued in a north south direction through Trench 4. A second clay drainage pipe of 10cm diameter was uncovered at a depth of 60cm at the base of the subsoil in Trench 3 running in a northeast – southwest direction.

## FINDS

No finds were recorded.

## DISCUSSION

The watching brief revealed ground that aside from the installation of the original strip foundation and the drainage pipes had been undisturbed. It is unfortunate that the watching brief failed to identify any archaeological features or deposits associated with Pleshey Castle, the Medieval Town Enclosure or the ditch that was revealed at Butlers (16162/16164) c.350m SW. A watching brief at The old Forge (48262/19761) located c100m opposite the site to the north also revealed undisturbed ground suggesting that it was part of the hinterland during the medieval period. The development site is set within the curtilage of the town enclosure but no evidence of occupation was visible suggesting that it may have been pastureland.

## CONCLUSION

The archaeological monitoring has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. A common and naturally undulating stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site and comprised of Topsoil

(001), Subsoil (004) and the natural sandy silty clay (005) with chalk (006) and flint (007) inclusions.

No archaeological activity was found during the monitoring programme, which will inform the HER of the archaeological potential of the site.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

No further work required.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Touchstone Archaeology would like to thank Chris Mew of CRM Architects Ltd for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Alison Bennett, Historical Environment Advisor, Essex County Council for her advice and assistance. Zoe Schofield supervised the fieldwork and managed the project.

**Zoe Schofield**

**Touchstone Archaeology**

18<sup>th</sup> March 2016

## References

Essex County Council: Brief for archaeological evaluation at Forge Cottage, Back Lane, Pleshey - 2016

Touchstone Archaeology: WSI for archaeological monitoring of groundworks in advance of the proposed development at 1 Forge Cottage, Back Lane, Pleshey, Essex CM3 1HL - 2016

Institute for Field Archaeologists (IfA), Rev (2011) Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation

## Maps

Ordnance Survey Surveyors Drawings 1816

Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500 (1875 – 1921)

National Grid 1:2500 (1951 – 1993)

## Websites

Essex Historic Environment Record  
<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/>

British geology Survey <http://www.bgs.ac.uk>

Plate 1. View of Trench 1 facing west showing foundation of existing house (003)





Plate 2. View of Trench 1 facing North showing land drainage pipe (008) at 70cm





Plate 3. View of Trench 3 & 4 facing south showing foundation of demolished extension (002).





Plate 4. View of Trench 3 & 4, facing east, where they join.



Plate 5. View of Trench 3 facing east showing drainage pipe at 60cm (009)





Plate 6, View of Trench 4 facing west showing existing foundation of building (003)



**Site Details:**

1 FORGE COTTAGE, BACK  
LANE, CHELMSFORD, CM3 1HL

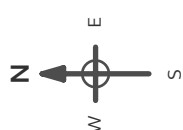
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**Report Ref:** GS-2782169  
**Grid Ref:** 566411, 214639

**Map Name:** National Grid

**Map date:** 1993

**Scale:** 1:2,500

**Printed at:** 1:2,500



Surveyed N/A  
Revised N/A  
Edition N/A  
Copyright 1993  
Levelled N/A

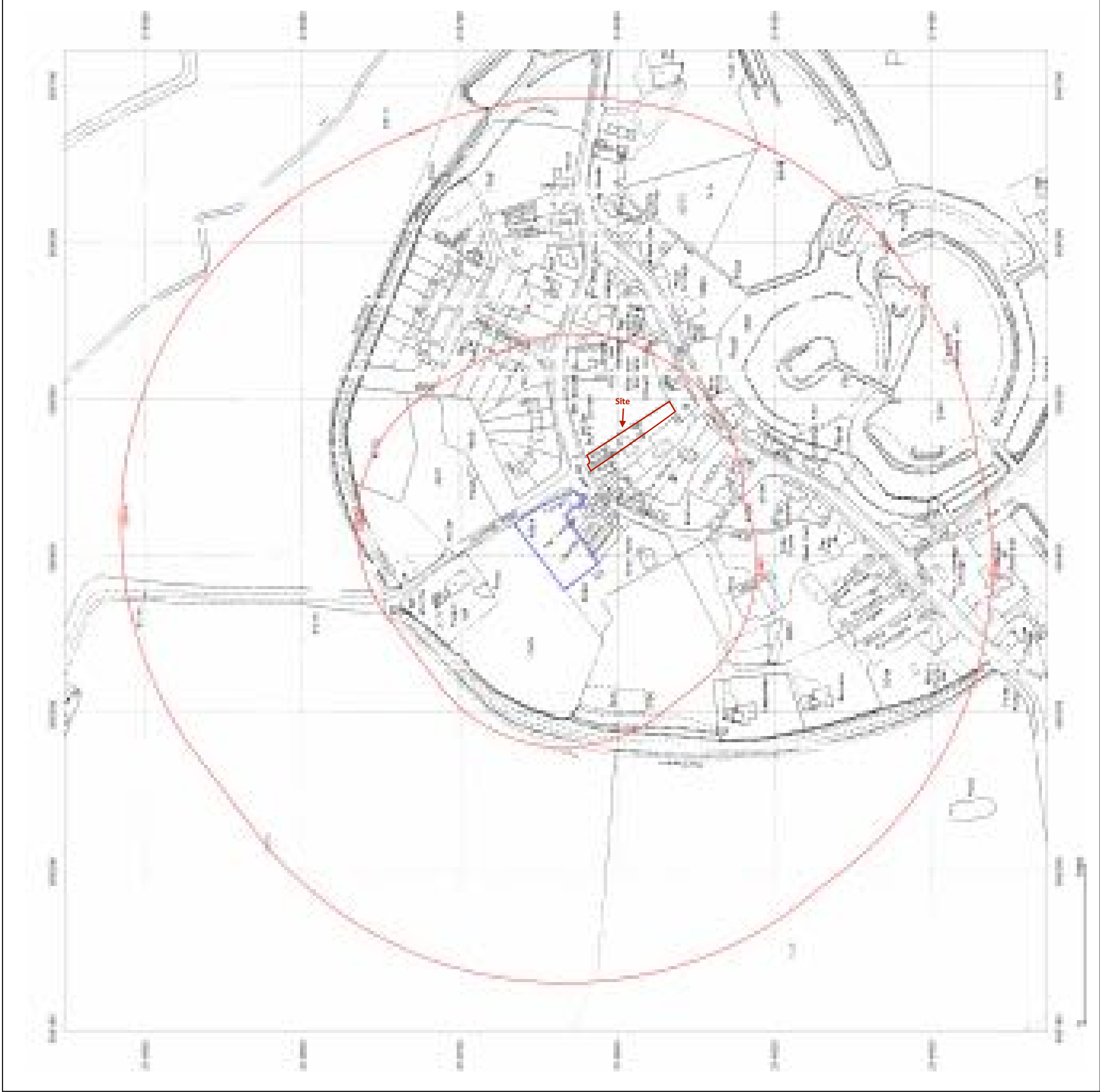


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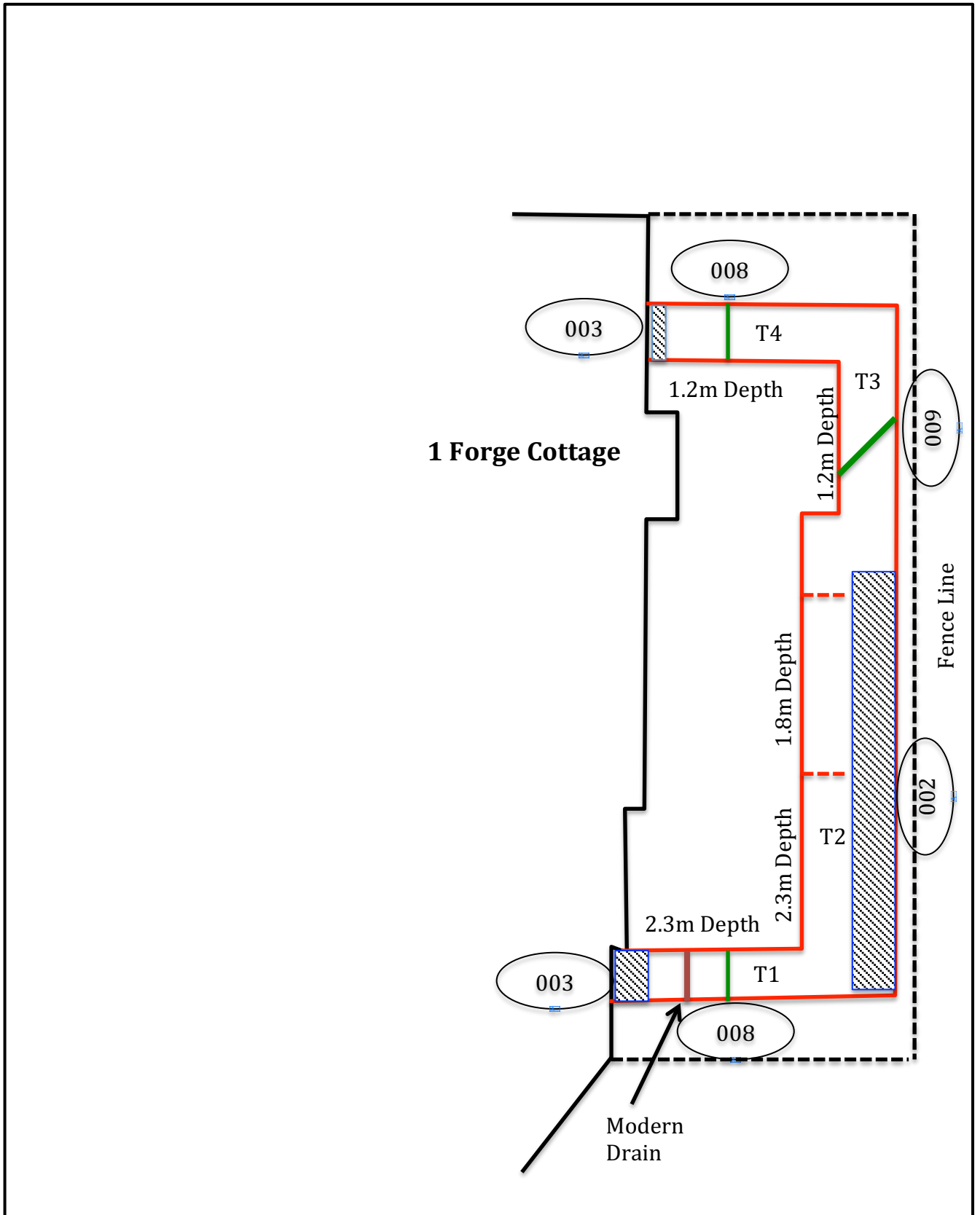
Production date: 25 February 2016

To view map legend click here [Legend](#)



# APPENDIX 2: Location of Foundation Trenches

Drawing 1 - Scale: 1:50 - Z Schofield - 18<sup>th</sup> March 2016



APPENDIX 1 – Essex County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: 1 Forge Cottage, Back Lane, Pleshey, Essex CM3 1HL	
SWAT Site Code: FC16	
Site Address:	
As above	
Summary:	
<p>Touchstone Archaeology (TA) carried out archaeological monitoring at 1 Forge Cottage, Back Lane, Pleshey, Essex. A planning application for the demolition of the existing extension and construction of a new two-storey extension was submitted to Chelmsford City Council (CCC) whereby Essex County Council Place Services, requested that Archaeological Monitoring be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within the Archaeological Specification (CHL_01883_15) and (WSI-FC16).</p> <p>The Archaeological monitoring revealed no archaeological features or deposits.</p>	
District/Unitary: Chelmsford	Parish: High Easter
Period(s): 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	
NGR (centre of site : 8 figures): TL 6647 1459	
Type of archaeological work:	
Archaeological monitoring of foundation trenches	
Date of Recording: July 2013	
Unit undertaking recording: Touchstone Archaeology (TA)	
Geology: London Clay with chalk and flint inclusions	
Title and author of accompanying report:	
Schofield Z. Archaeological monitoring of foundation trenches at 1 Forge Cottage, Back Lane, Pleshey CM3 1HL	
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)	
As above	
Location of archive/finds: TA, The Ridings, White Elm Road, Danbury Essex CM3 4LR	
Contact at Unit: Zoe Schofield	Date:18/03/16

## **APPENDIX 2 – Context List**

### Trench 1 (L2.65 x W0.50m x D2.3m)

- (001) Topsoil
- (002) Foundation to demolished section of existing building visible in east section
- (003) Foundation to existing building visible in west section
- (004) Sub soil – Dark brown/Black – Friable - Small stone inclusions
- (005) Clay - Light brown/orange – Sticky – Small to medium chalk and large flint inclusions
- (006) Chalk pocket – Mixed size chalk rubble in southeast corner of trench
- (008) Land drainage pipe (5cm Dia.) at a depth of 70cm running north-south

### Trench 2 (L5.4m x W0.50m x D2.3m rising to 1.8m after L2.0m)

- (001) Topsoil
- (002) Foundation to demolished section of existing building visible in east section
- (004) Sub soil – Dark brown/Black – Friable - Small stone inclusions
- (005) Clay - Light brown/orange – Sticky – Small to medium chalk and large flint inclusions
- (006) Chalk pocket – Mixed size chalk rubble in southeast corner of trench
- (007) Flint pocket – large flints (4no) in east section

### Trench 3 (L2.95m x W6.0m x D1.8m)

- (001) Topsoil
- (002) Foundation to demolished section of existing building visible in south section
- (004) Sub soil – Dark brown/Black – Friable - Small stone inclusions

(005) Clay - Light brown/orange – Sticky – Small to medium chalk and large flint inclusions

(009) Clay drainage pipe (unknown use 10cm Dia.) at a depth of 60cm running northeast to southwest

Trench 4 (L2.80m x W0.60m x D1.2m)

(001) Topsoil

(003) Foundation to existing building visible in west section

(004) Sub soil – Dark brown/Black – Friable - small stone inclusions

(005) Clay - Light brown/orange – sticky – small to medium chalk and large flint inclusions

(008) Land drainage pipe (5cm Dia.) at a depth of 70cm running north south continuing from Trench 1

<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>	<b>T3</b>	<b>T4</b>
001	Topsoil	0-20cm	✓	✓	✓	✓
002	Foundation 1	20-110cm	✓	✓	✓	
003	Foundation 2	20-Unknown	✓			✓
004	Subsoil	20-100cm	✓	✓	✓	✓
005	London Clay	50-230cm	✓	✓	✓	✓
006	Chalk pocket	50-140cm	✓	✓		
007	Flint pocket	70-170cm		✓		
008	Land Drainage	70-75cm	✓			✓
009	Clay Drainage	60-70cm			✓	



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### Project details

Project name	1 Forge Cottage, Back Lane, Pleshey CM3 1HL
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring of foundation trenches in advance of the construction of the proposed extension to the east elevation.
Project dates	Start: 14-03-2016 End: 15-03-2016
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	FC16 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	15/01883/FUL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX CHELMSFORD PLESHEY 1 Forge Cottage
Postcode	CM3 1HL
Study area	7 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 6647 1459 51.804642342206 0.414796975941 51 48 16 N 000 24 53 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 71m Max: 71m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	TOUCHSTONE ARCHAEOLOGY
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Zoe Schofield
Project director/manager	Zoe Schofield
Project supervisor	Zoe Schofield
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Name of sponsor/funding body	Private

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Zoe Schofield
Digital Archive ID	FC16
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Essex HER
Paper Archive ID	FC16
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Map","Photograph","Plan","Report"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological monitoring of foundation trenches at 1 Forge Cottage, Back lane, Pleshey CM3 1HL
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Zoe Schofield
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	Touchstone Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	www.touchstonearchaeology.com
Description	Written report with photographs, maps and written description.
URL	www.touchstonearchaeology.com

Entered by	Zoe schofield (Zoe@touchstonearchaeology.com)
Entered on	21 March 2016

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