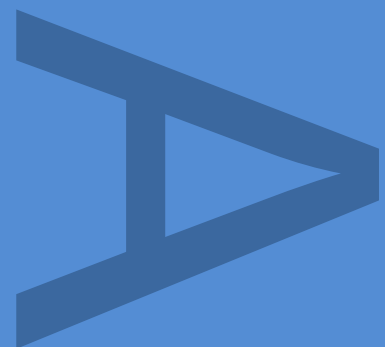


**LAND ADJACENT TO DUTCH  
COTTAGE, STURMER ROAD,  
BIRDBROOK, ESSEX, CO9 4BB:  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL  
TRENCH AND TEST PIT  
EVALUATION**

**JULY 2015**



**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY  
R12148**

LAND ADJACENT TO DUTCH  
COTTAGE, STURMER ROAD,  
BIRDBROOK, ESSEX, CO9 4BB

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

**Quality Control**

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
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Report Number	R12148

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**Land Adjacent to Dutch Cottage, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex, CO9 4BB:**

**An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation**

**Local Planning Authority:** Essex County Council

**Planning Reference:** 14/01307/14

**Central National Grid Reference:** TL 70599 42960

**Site Code:** BKDC15

**Report No.** R12148

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**July 2015**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This report describes the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation and test pitting carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land adjacent to Dutch Cottage, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex (NGR TL 70599 42960) on the 8th July 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Chris Darby in response to an archaeological brief attached to the construction of a stable. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.*

*Despite the presence of Roman activity in the vicinity of the site, no archaeological remains were present.*

*Further monitoring will be required when the access road is constructed. The results of the monitoring will be incorporated into this report to create an updated record.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land adjacent to Dutch Cottage, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex, CO9 4BB (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 70599 42960) on the 8th July 2015 (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Chris Darby in response to an archaeological brief written by Teresa O'Connor of Essex County Council Place Services (O'Connor 2015).
- 1.1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Stephen Porter of PCA (Porter 2015).
- 1.1.4 The aim of the evaluation was to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition and quality of any archaeological remains on the site, to assess the significance of any such remains in a local, regional, or national context, as appropriate, and to assess the potential impact of the development proposals on the site's archaeology.
- 1.1.5 The foundation design for the proposed works have been designed to have minimal impact below ground and are likely to consist of a raft foundation. However the potential for complex, stratified archaeological deposits on this site is high and there is the potential for disturbance of archaeological horizons at a relatively shallow level, as well as the potential for human remains being uncovered. Archaeological was therefore required in any areas of ground reduction, including the foundations and include any stripped areas and service runs should they need to be excavated into ground where archaeological horizons may survive.
- 1.1.6 Following discussions with Teresa O'Connor after arrival on site one trench was excavated within the footprint of the stables and three test pits were excavated along the access road.
- 1.1.7 Further monitoring will be required when the access road is constructed. The results of the monitoring will be incorporated into the report to create an updated record.

1.1.8 This report describes the results of the evaluation and aims to inform the design of an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy. The site archive will be deposited at Braintree Museum.

## **2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

### **2.1 Geology**

2.1.1 The underlying geology of the site comprises Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation, Newhaven Chalk Formation and Culver Chalk Formation (British Geological Survey; Website 1). Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 71 to 94 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period.

### **2.2 Topography**

2.2.1 The site comprises an area of approximately 0.9ha. It is located c.3km to the south-east of Haverhill along the A1017. The site is situated at an elevation of approximately 54m OD (above Ordnance Datum) in the valley of the River Stour. The area rises to the west and east of the river valley.



### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 General**

- 3.1.1 This archaeological and historical background has been drawn from the archaeological brief (O'Connor 2015) and the Essex HER (EHER).
- 3.1.2 Antiquarian records indicate the presence of a Roman camp c.200 yards north of Watsoe Bridge (EHER 6958). 18th century records state that there was formerly a tower and earthworks interpreted as defensive structures. Human remains were also found in the vicinity.
- 3.1.3 Ten Roman skeletons were found in the 19th century in a field in the vicinity of the site (EHER 6955). Roman brooches, a ring and pottery have also been found in this field.
- 3.1.4 Almost 1200 sherds of Roman pottery were found in infill deposited in the railway cutting at TL 692 433, the soil having been redeposited after the construction of a reservoir (EHER 6960). The pottery dated from the 1st to mid-3rd century and included box-flue tiles.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Excavation and Sampling**

- 4.1.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation proposed the archaeological monitoring of all ground reduction associated with the stables, services and access road. Following discussions with Teresa O'Connor after arrival on site one trench was excavated within the footprint of the stables and three test pits were excavated along the access road.
- 4.1.2 Ground reduction was carried out under archaeological supervision using a 6-ton tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m-wide toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed natural geological deposits where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel and hoe as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools. Overburden deposits were set aside beside each trench and examined visually and with a metal-detector for finds retrieval.
- 4.1.3 Field excavation techniques and recording methods are detailed in the PCA Fieldwork Induction Manual (Operations Manual I) by Joanna Taylor and Gary Brown (2009).

### **4.2 Recording Methodology**

- 4.2.1 The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.
- 4.2.2 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a unique record number (often referred to within British archaeology as 'context numbers') and recorded on individual pre-printed forms (Taylor and Brown 2009). Archaeological processes recognised by the deposition of material are signified in this report by round brackets (thus), while events constituting the removal of deposits are referred to here as 'cuts' and signified by square

brackets [thus]. The record numbers assigned to cuts and deposits are entirely arbitrary and in no way reflect the chronological order in which events took place. All features and deposits recorded during the evaluation are listed in Appendix 2. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.

- 4.2.3 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process. Digital photographs were taken of all archaeological features and deposits.

## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The trenches are described below in numerical order, with technical data tabulated.

### 5.2 Trench 1

5.2.1 There were no archaeological features present in Trench 1.

TRENCH 1	Figure 2	Plate 1	
Trench Alignment: N-S	Length: 10m	Level of Natural (m OD): 56.08-57.88m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		N End	S End
Topsoil	(100)	0.26m	0.27m
Subsoil	(101)	0.65m	0.76m
Natural	(102)	0.65m+	0.76m+
<b>Summary</b>  Trench 1 was located across the footprint of the building foundations. No archaeological			

### 5.3 Test Pits

5.3.1 Three test pits were excavated along the length of the access road to determine the extent of any archaeological remains and the depth of the natural. No archaeological features were present in the test pits.

## **6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1.1 One trench and three test pits were excavated within the footprint of the stable and the route of the access road.
- 6.1.2 Despite the proximity of Roman activity in the area no archaeological features or deposits were seen during the evaluation of this site. In all areas of the site, the topsoil lay directly above the natural superficial deposits, which remained undisturbed by human activity.

## **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

7.1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Mr Chris Darby for commissioning the work. PCA are also grateful to Teresa O'Connor of Essex County Council Place Services for her advice and for guidance during the work. The author would like to thank Taleyna Fletcher for managing the project and PCA's CAD department for preparing the figures.

## **8 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

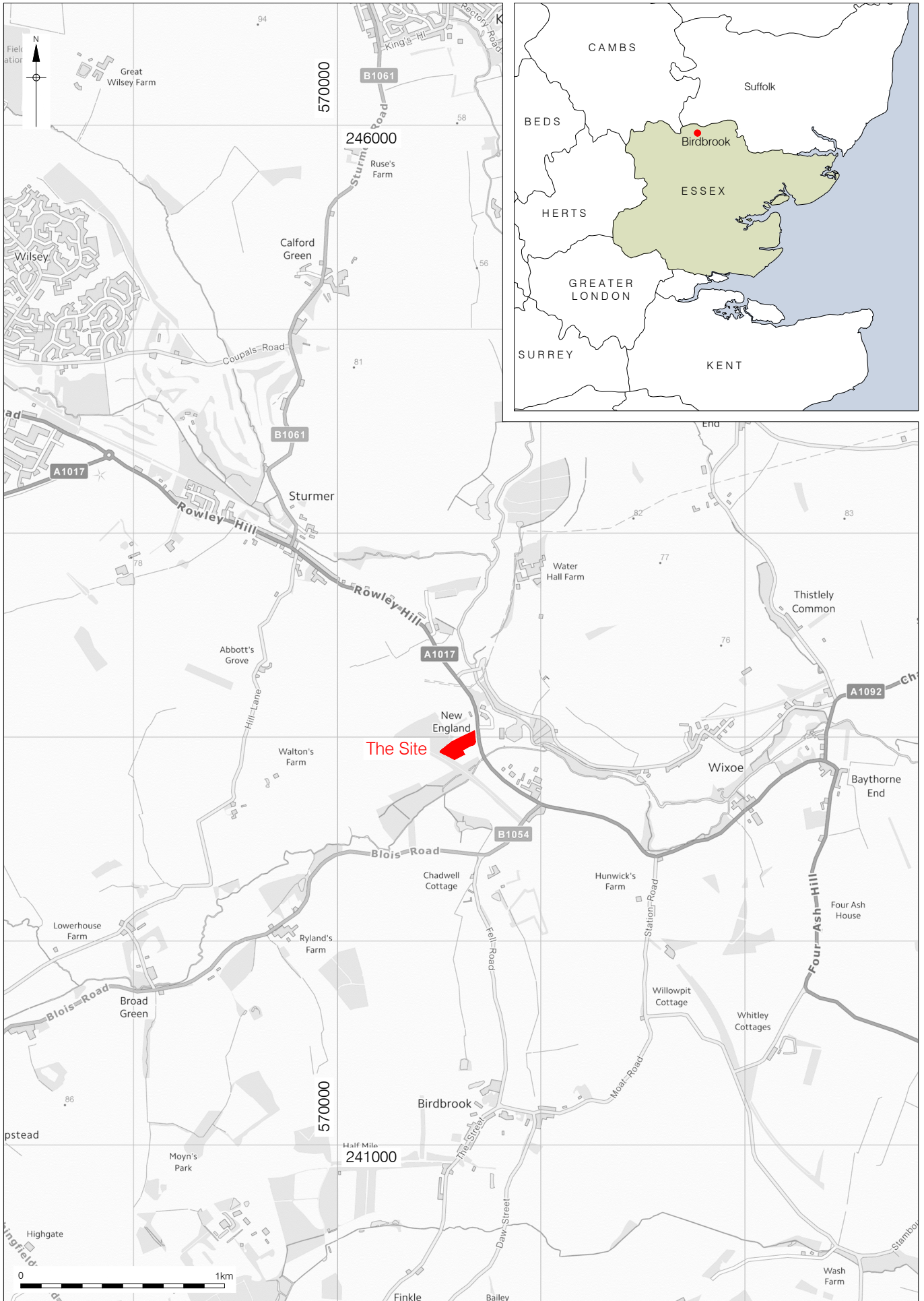
### **8.1 Printed Sources**

O'Connor, T. 2015 Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Excavation at Land Adjacent to Dutch Cottage, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook. Essex County Council Place Services (unpublished)

Porter, S. 2015 Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Monitoring and Excavation at Land Adjacent to Dutch Cottage, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, CO9 4BB. Pre-Construct Archaeology (unpublished)

### **8.2 Websites**

1) <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>. Date accessed 08/07/2015



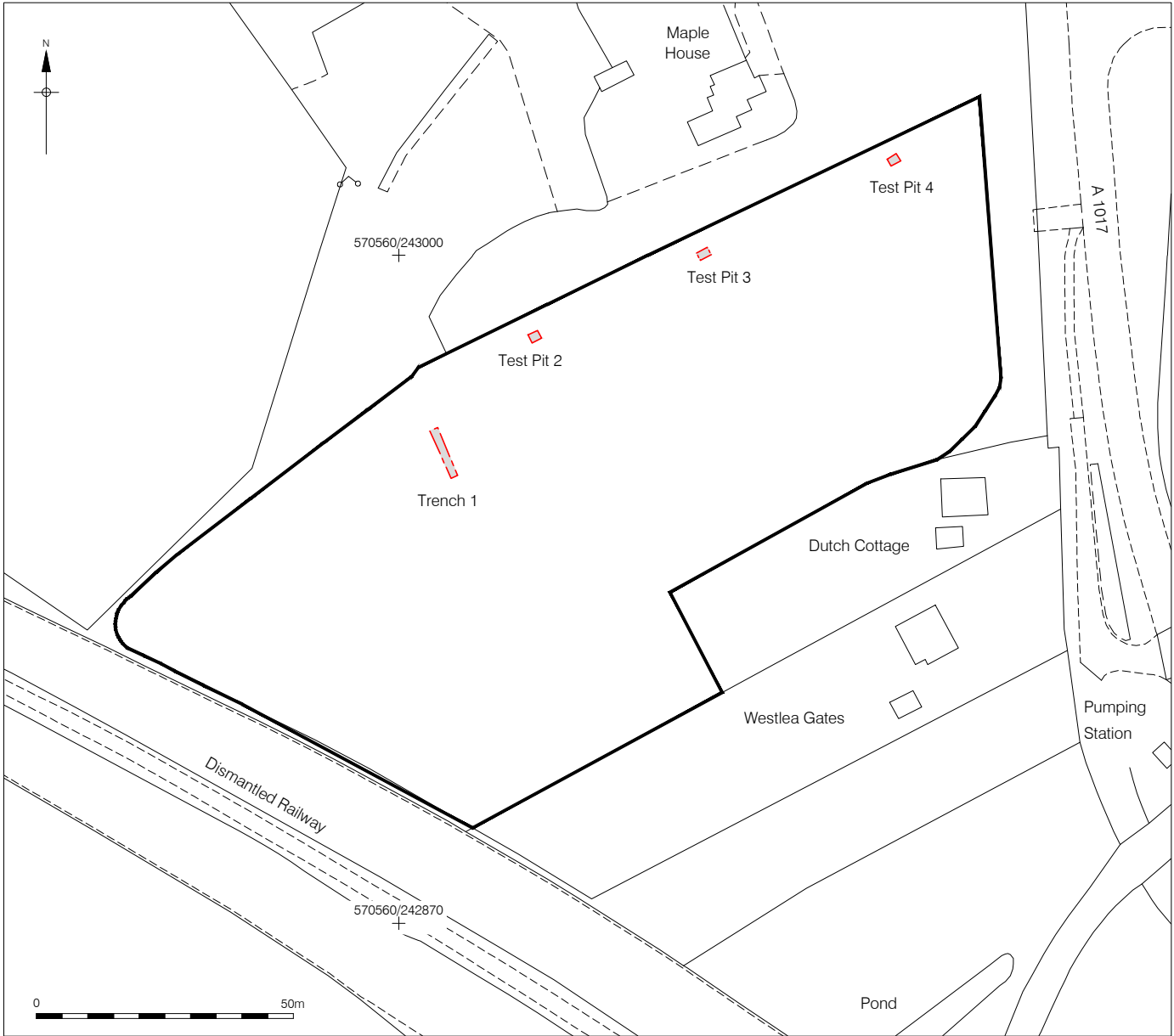
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2014

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16/07/15 JS

Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:2,000,000 & 1:25,000 at A4





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16/07/15 JS

Figure 2  
Trench and Test Pit Locations  
1:1,250 at A4

**9 APPENDIX 1: PLATES**



Plate 1: Trench 1, view south



Plate 2: Test Pit 2, view north



Plate 3: Test Pit 3, view south



Plate 4: Test Pit 4, view north



Plate 5: General site shot pre-excavation, view west

## 10 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Cut	Type	Category	Interpretation	Trench Number
100	-	Layer	Topsoil	Overburden	-
101	-	Layer	Subsoil	Overburden	-
102	-	Layer	Natural	Natural Geology	-

## 11 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

### OASIS ID: preconst1-217227

#### Project details

Project name Land Adjacent to Dutch Cottage, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex,  
CO9 4BB: Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

Short description of the project This report describes the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation and test pitting carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land adjacent to Dutch Cottage, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex (NGR TL 70599 42960) on the 8th July 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Chris Darby in response to an archaeological brief attached to the construction of a stable. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area. Despite the presence of Roman activity in the vicinity of the site, no archaeological remains were present.

Project dates Start: 08-07-2015 End: 08-07-2015

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes BKDC15 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland

Monument type N/A None

Significant Finds N/A None

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches", "Test Pits"

Development type Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the Not known / Not recorded  
planning process

---

Project location

Country England

Site location ESSEX BRAINTREE BIRDBROOK Land adjacent to Dutch Cottage,  
Sturmer Road, Birdbrook

Postcode CO9 4BB

Study area 0.90 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 70599 42960 52.0582514447 0.488699211511 52 03 29 N 000  
29 19 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 56.08m Max: 57.88m

---

Project creators

Name of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.

Organisation

Project brief Essex County Council  
originator

Project design Teresa O'Connor  
originator

Project Taleyna Fletcher  
director/manager

Project supervisor Mary-Anne Slater

Type of Private Client  
sponsor/funding  
body

Name of Chris Darby  
sponsor/funding  
body

---

Project archives

Physical Archive No  
Exists?

Digital Archive Braintree Museum  
recipient

Digital Archive ID BKDC15

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media "Images raster / digital photography","Survey"  
available

Paper Archive Braintree Museum  
recipient

Paper Archive ID BKDC15

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media "Context sheet","Report"  
available

---

Project bibliography

1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

Title Land Adjacent to Dutch Cottage, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex,  
CO9 4BB: An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

Author(s)/Editor(s) Slater, M.

Date 2015

Issuer or publisher Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Place of issue or Cambridge  
publication



## 12 APPENDIX 4: ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

Site name/Address: Land adjacent to Dutch Cottage, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex, CO9 4BB	
Parish: Birdbrook	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 70599 42960	Site Code: BKDC15
Type of Work: Monitoring and Evaluation	Site Director/Group: Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Date of Work: 08/07/2015	Size of Area Investigated: 0.9ha
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Braintree Museum	Funding source: Private Developer
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER No.s: N/A
Final Report: Land adjacent to Dutch Cottage, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex, CO9 4BB: An Archaeological Excavation	
Periods Represented: N/A	
<p><b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b></p> <p>One trial trench and three test pits were excavated within the building footprint and the access road. No archaeological remains were present.</p>	
<p>Previous Summaries/Reports:</p> <p>N/A</p>	
Author of Summary: M Slater	Date of Summary: 09/07/2015

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