

**ST JOHN'S HOUSE, ST
JOHN'S ROAD, EPPING,
ESSEX, CM16 5DN
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION**

SITE CODE: ESJE16

REPORT NO: R12523

JUNE 2016



**PRE-CONSTRUCT
ARCHAEOLOGY**

ST JOHN'S HOUSE, ST JOHN'S ROAD, EPPING, ESSEX, CM16 5DN
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Site Code: ESJE16

Local Planning Authority: Epping Forest District Council

Central NGR: TL 4595 0215

Commissioning Client: P.C.C of St John the Baptist Church, Epping

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DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

ST JOHN'S HOUSE, ST JOHN'S ROAD, EPPING, ESSEX, CM16 5DN

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. prior to the proposed redevelopment of St John's House, St John's Road, Epping, Essex, CM16 5DN.
- 1.2 The fieldwork was carried out on 9th and 10th June 2016. The fieldwork comprised the excavation of two evaluation trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development.
- 1.3 The evaluation observed that the most recent underlying geological deposit to survive was sandy clay, consistent with the projected underlying geology of the Stanmore Gravel formation. The only potential for archaeological remains encountered was a single layer of relatively sterile disturbed natural, uncertain in date.
- 1.4 All geological deposits on site were sealed by thick layers of modern made ground, indicative of ground raising prior to the construction of the current St. John's House. Some deposits were also heavily truncated by modern services. It is possible that the development of the current St. John's House in the 20th century might have had an impact of any cultural remains that may have once existed on the site.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. (PCA) prior to the proposed redevelopment of St John's House, St John's Road, Epping, Essex, CM16 5DN. The fieldwork comprised the excavation of two evaluation trenches to encompass the entirety of the area proposed for redevelopment.
- 2.2 The site was centred at National Grid Reference TL 4595 0215 and is situated within the jurisdiction of Epping Forest District Council. The site occupied a sub-rectangular plot of land covering an area of approximately 384m², and was bounded to the west by St John's Road. It was bounded to the north and east by other buildings and by the church of St John the Baptist to the south.
- 2.3 PCA was commissioned for the evaluation by the P.C.C of St John the Baptist Church, Epping. No Scheduled Ancient Monuments were within the development site.
- 2.4 The project was undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Hawkins 2016).
- 2.5 Following the completion of the project the site archive will be deposited in its entirety at the Epping Museum identified by the unique code ESJE16.
- 2.6 The evaluation was conducted on 9th and 10th June 2016. The project was monitored by Maria Medlycott, Historic Environment Advisor of Place Services, for Essex Country Council and project-managed for PCA by Helen Hawkins. The evaluation was supervised by Poppy Alexander of PCA.

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted on 27 March 2012, and now supersedes the Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). The NPPF constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers both in drawing up plans and as a material consideration in determining applications (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012).

3.1.2 Chapter 12 of the NPPF concerns the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, with the following statements being particularly relevant to the proposed development:

128. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

129. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

3.1.3 Additionally:

141. Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

3.1.4 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority will now be guided by the policy framework set by the NPPF.

3.1.5 The NPPF also states that:

214. For 12 months from the day of publication, decision-takers may continue to give full weight to relevant policies adopted since 2004 even if there is a limited degree of conflict with this Framework.

215. In other cases and following this 12-month period, due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

3.1.6 As such the Local Planning Authority will continue to also be guided by the existent Development Plan policy and by other material considerations

3.2 Epping Forest District Council: Local Planning Policy

3.2.1 Epping Forest District Council's original Local Plan was adopted in 1998. In 2006 the Council adopted the Local Plan Alterations, which replaced parts of the 1998 Local Plan. A new Local Plan is currently being developed but the Local Plan altered and saved in 2006 is currently still applicable (Epping Forest District Council, 2006).

3.2.2 The policy statements which apply today and concern the city's heritage are as follows:

3.3 POLICY HC1- SCHEDULED MONUMENTS AND OTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

On sites of known or potential archaeological interest, planning permission will only be granted for development which would not adversely affect nationally important remains, whether scheduled or not, or their settings. The Council will also require:

- (i) the results of an archaeological evaluation to be submitted as part of any application;
- (ii) the preservation in situ, and provision for appropriate management, of those remains and their settings considered to be of particular importance;
- (iii) provision for recording and/or excavation by a competent archaeological organisation prior to the commencement of development, where in situ preservation is not justified.

3.4 POLICY HC2- ANCIENT LANDSCAPES

The Council will not grant planning permission for development which could adversely affect the nature and physical appearance of ancient landscapes (identified as such on the Proposals Map).

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

4.1.1 The following Geological and Topographical backgrounds are taken from the archaeological brief, the *Epping Historic Town Assessment* (Medlycott 1999) and the Victoria County History (VCH 1966 Vol 5: Essex).

4.2 Geology

4.2.1 The British Geological Survey shows the bedrock geology of the site is Claygate Member. The Claygate Member comprises dark grey clays with sand laminae, passing up into thin alternations of clays, silts and fine-grained sand, with beds of bioturbated silt. Ferruginous concretions and septarian nodules occur in places. London Clay Formation. Formed approximately 34 to 56 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period, this formation comprises deposits of clay, silt and sand and is indicative of a local environment previously dominated by deep seas (BGS, 2016).

4.2.2 Superficial deposits on the site are recorded as Stanmore Gravel Formation. This comprises gravel and sand, which is clayey near the base. Gravel mostly composed of flints, up to 150mm in diameter, with a little quartz, quartzite and Lower Greensand chert in the fine fractions. The matrix is of orange-brown, pale grey, red mottled clay and sandy clay, with pockets of coarse sand (Ibid.).

4.3 Topography

4.3.1 The site currently has a grassed area to the front and a larger grassed area to the rear with a house in the centre, at a height of c106m OD (Ordnance Datum). The land rises up by six steps from the road towards the house, but is relatively level at the rear of the house. There are several trees present on the site.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC BACKGROUND

5.1.1 The following Archaeological and Historical backgrounds are taken from the archaeological brief, the *Epping Historic Town Assessment* (Medlycott 1999) and the Victoria County History (VCH 1966 Vol 5: Essex).

5.2 Prehistoric

5.2.1 The Iron Age hill-fort of Ambresbury Banks is located to the south of the town. Pottery from the ditch silts suggest that it was in use in the second half of the first millennium BC, with later re-use in the early years of the first century AD just prior to the Roman Conquest. A hoard of Iron Age coins was found by a metal detector user close to the hill-fort and a gold coin of Tasciovanus has been recovered from Bell Common on the edge of the historic town. No prehistoric finds have been made within the town itself.

5.3 Roman

5.3.1 The only evidence of Roman activity in the vicinity of the town is a possible Roman tile kiln just to the east of the urban area. The attribution of this site is uncertain.

5.4 Saxon

5.4.1 Saxon settlement of the area appears to have been concentrated to the north of Cobbin's Brook in the Epping Upland area. It appears that the area of the later town was underneath Epping Forest, indeed the 'purlieu bank' marking the forest and parish boundary ran along the eastern side of the High Street.

5.5 Medieval

5.5.1 The settlement that became Epping town did not exist until the mid-thirteenth century. Before that date the principal settlement in the area was Epping Upland.

5.5.2 The earliest buildings in Epping town appear to have been sited on the west side of the road, in the area of the chapel of St John the Baptist and the market-place. Evaluation trenches to the rear of 237-255 High Street revealed rubbish pits dating to the 13th-14th centuries, suggesting that the medieval dwellings were confined to the present street frontage and did not extend into the back-plots. The stratigraphic and pottery evidence from the rubbish-pits does however suggest a sustained period of occupation activity on the western side of the High Street in the 13th and 14th centuries. As the town developed structures were erected on the eastern side of the road, above the 'purlieu bank' which marked the forest and parish boundary. As a consequence the properties on the east side of the High Street are sited at a level above the road and those at the southern end of the street are set back from the street frontage behind the purlieu bank. The properties on the eastern side of the High Street were quite short in depth, being limited by Back Lane (later Hemnall Street).

5.5.3 The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) shows that the proposed development is sited within the core of historic Epping immediately to the rear of St John's Church. The church was originally built in the 14th century or earlier as a free chapel belonging to Waltham Abbey. It was enlarged in 1622, restored in 1784 and rebuilt in 1832 and 1839. In 1889 it was demolished and replaced by the current church, designed by Bodley and Garner in a 14th century style (VCH 1966). The Chapel is shown in its earlier form on the 1872 Ordnance Survey map, in the centre of the corner plot, with an empty plot where St John's House now stands. The 1896 Ordnance Survey map shows the current layout of the Bodley and Garner church, with the church building fronting directly onto the High Street. The plot behind the church is still empty. The plot remains empty in 1920 and 1936 but by 1969 has been replaced by a car park. The plot is still empty in 1986, so the current house post dates this period.

5.5.4 Given the proximity of this development to the church and to the High Street the possibility of archaeological remains being present is high, including the potential for human remains.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 In accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Hawkins 2016), an archaeological evaluation was undertaken. The evaluation consisted of the machine excavation of two trenches located within the footprints of the proposed redevelopment area. The machine excavation was monitored by the attendant archaeologist until archaeological deposits or features, or natural stratigraphy was encountered. These trenches were 5m, all 1.8m wide, all of which were excavated to a maximum of 1.20m below ground level.
- 6.2 The trenches and exposed sections were cleaned by hand, recorded and photographed. Recording of the deposits was accomplished using the Single Context Recording Method on proforma context and planning sheets, as presented in PCA's Operations Manual 1 (Taylor 2009), which is fully compatible with other archaeological archives produced in Essex. Contexts were numbered and are shown in this report within squared brackets. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate.
- 6.3 The archaeological trenches were located by means of triangulation from existing buildings.
- 6.4 The completed archive, comprising all written, drawn and photographic records, will be deposited within the Essex County Museum under the unique Site Code ESJE16.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Phase 1: Natural

- 7.1.1 The earliest deposit encountered across the study site comprised a firm, yellowish brown, red mottled clay [1] and [3] consistent with the projected underlying geology of the Stanmore Gravel formation. This was recorded within both trenches. The clay was recorded between elevations of 106.45m OD and 106.19m OD.

7.2 Phase 2: Post-Prehistoric/Undated (Disturbed Natural)

- 7.2.1 Within Trench 2, a deposit [2] was recorded which appeared to represent a natural accumulation, however, it contained flecks of charcoal and CBM; inclusions indicative of human occupation within the wider area. This interface between the natural and the modern made ground has been described as 'disturbed natural'.
- 7.2.2 Redeposited clay [2] was relatively clean, greyish brown, with flint gravel inclusions. Recorded at an elevation of 106.59m OD, and extending up to 0.4m thick, the layer remained undated due to a notable lack of cultural material within the deposit.

7.3 Phase 3: Modern

- 7.3.1 Both trenches were located within the gardens of St John's House, which was constructed on an empty plot behind the church, post 1986. The plot stands considerably higher than St John's Road, and within both trenches there were thick deposits of made ground.
- 7.3.2 Trench 1 was heavily truncated by modern pipes, and a large soakaway, which extended across a large area of the trench. Below the topsoil and grass, a 0.8m thick layer of modern made ground was visible in section, presumably ground levelling prior to the construction of St John's House.
- 7.3.3 Within Trench 2, modern made ground deposits slumped from the north east to the south west, in the direction of St John's Road, further suggesting the ground was raised and levelled prior to the construction of St. John's House.

Plate 1: South facing shot of Trench 1



Plate 2: North east facing shot of Trench 2



8 INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 A natural deposit of sandy clay was observed across the entirety of the site. This was overlain in Trench 2 by a redeposited accumulation of clay. This layer was relatively clean, with the exception of occasional flecks of charcoal and CBM, suggesting that the impacts or exploitation of the area of the site itself remained minimal.
- 8.2 The site underwent extensive development during the 20th and 21st centuries. Trench 1 was heavily truncated by modern pipes and a soakaway, and both trenches had approximately 1m of made ground levelling and raising deposits, presumably for the construction of St. John's House. In the case of Trench 2, these made ground deposits were slumping towards the road.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank Steve Carter and the P.C.C of St John the Baptist Church, Epping for commissioning the fieldwork. Thanks also go to Maria Medlycott for monitoring the work on behalf of Essex County Council.
- 9.2 The authors would like to thank Helen Hawkins for project management and editing, Leonardo Penades for his work on site, and Josephine Brown for the illustrations.

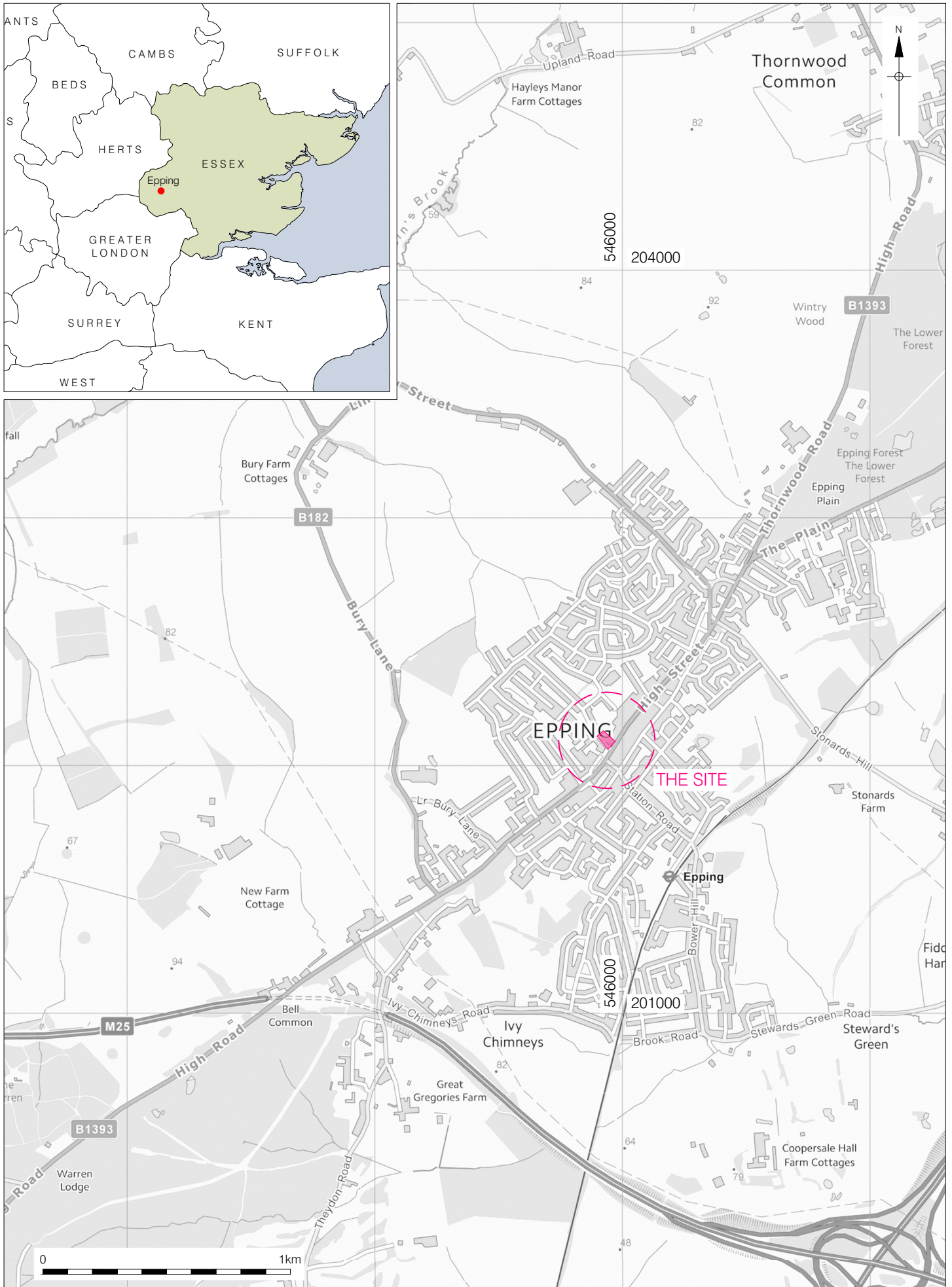
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Medlycott, M 1999 *Epping Historic Town Assessment Report* downloaded from the ADS website
Victoria County History of Essex Volume 5 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol5/pp132-140>

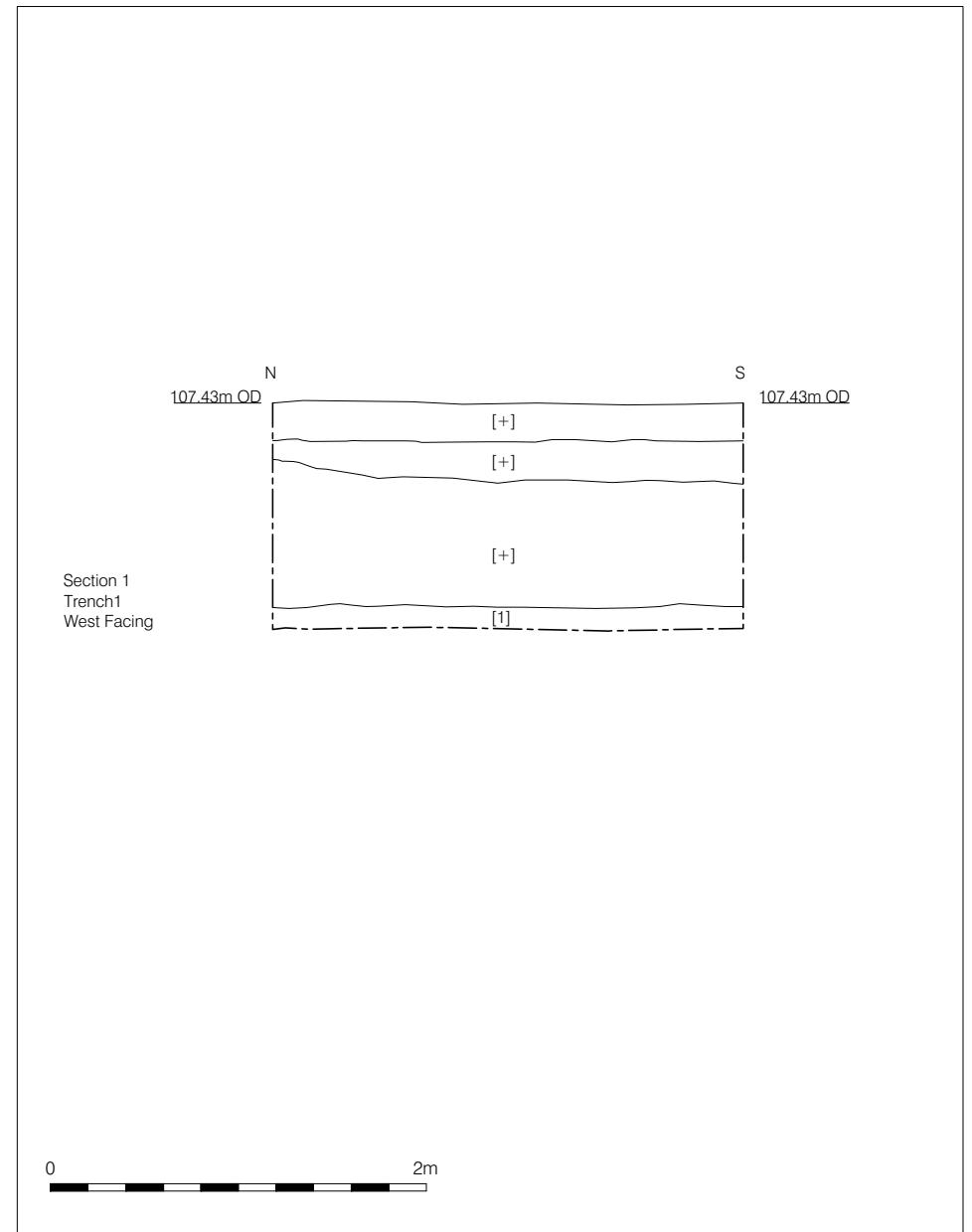
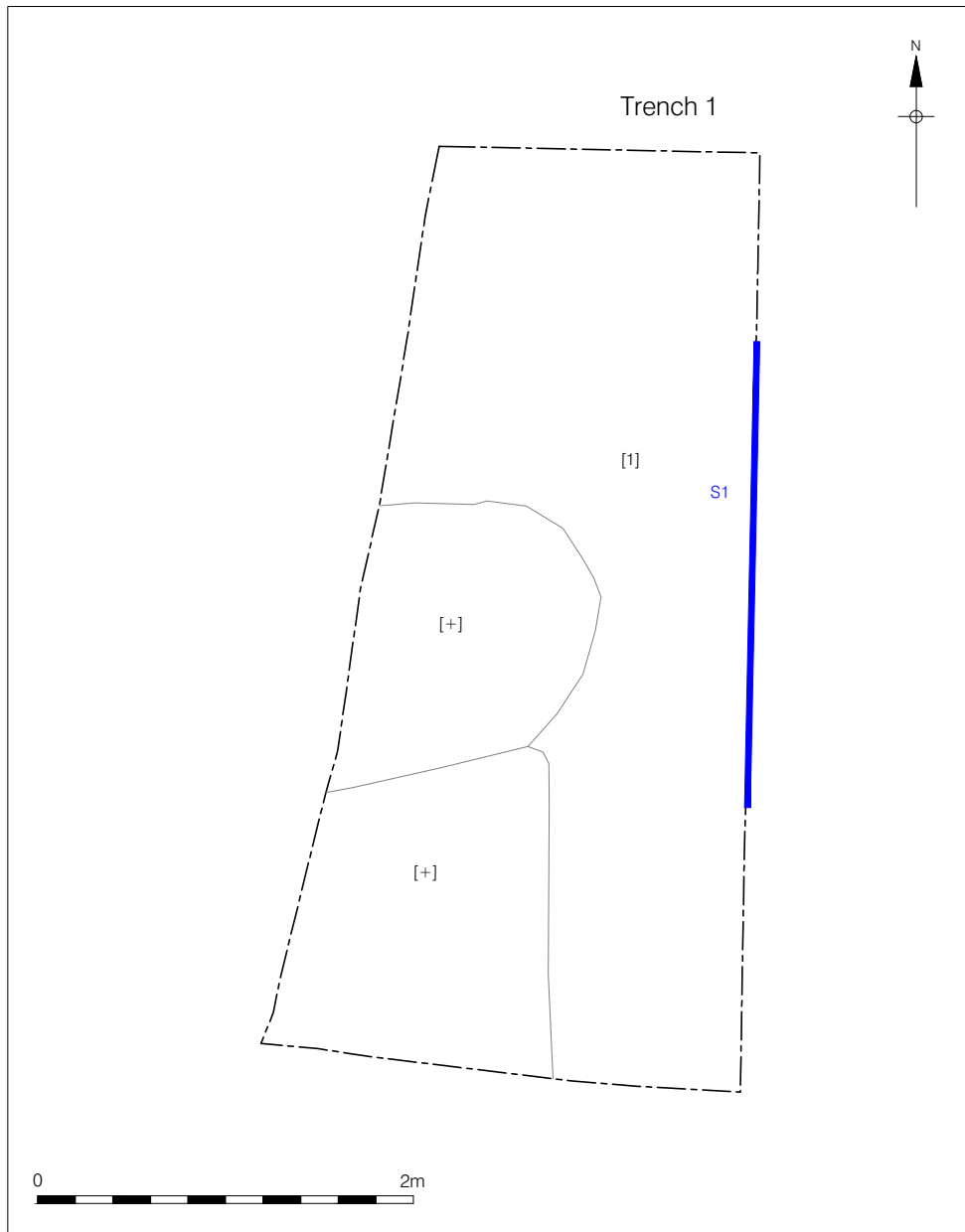
Taylor, J. with Brown, G. 2009. *Fieldwork Induction Manual: Operations Manual 1*, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited





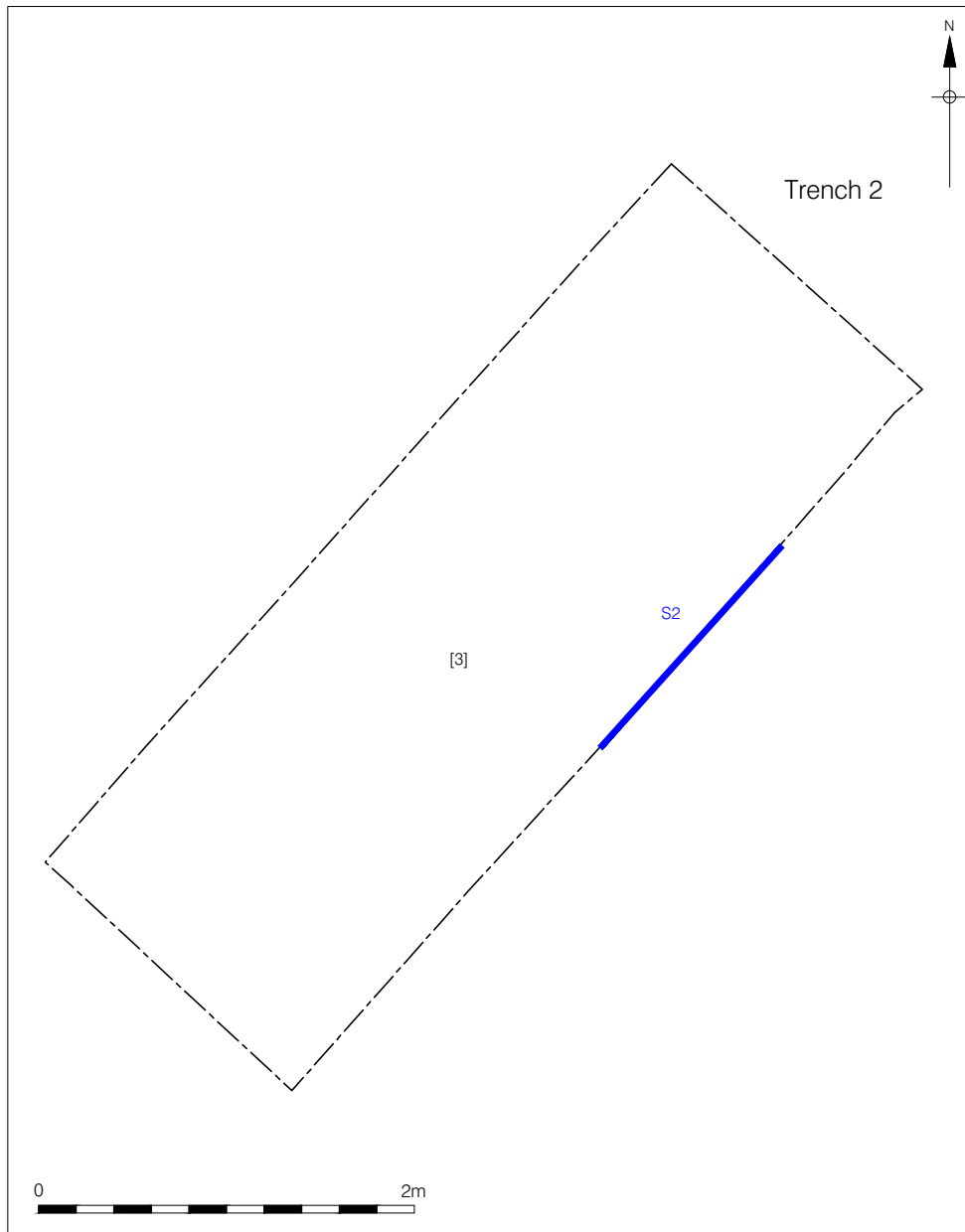
0 20m
 © Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd 2016
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Figure 2
 Trench Location Plan
 1:400 at A4



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Figure 3
Plan and Section of Trench 1
1:40 at A4



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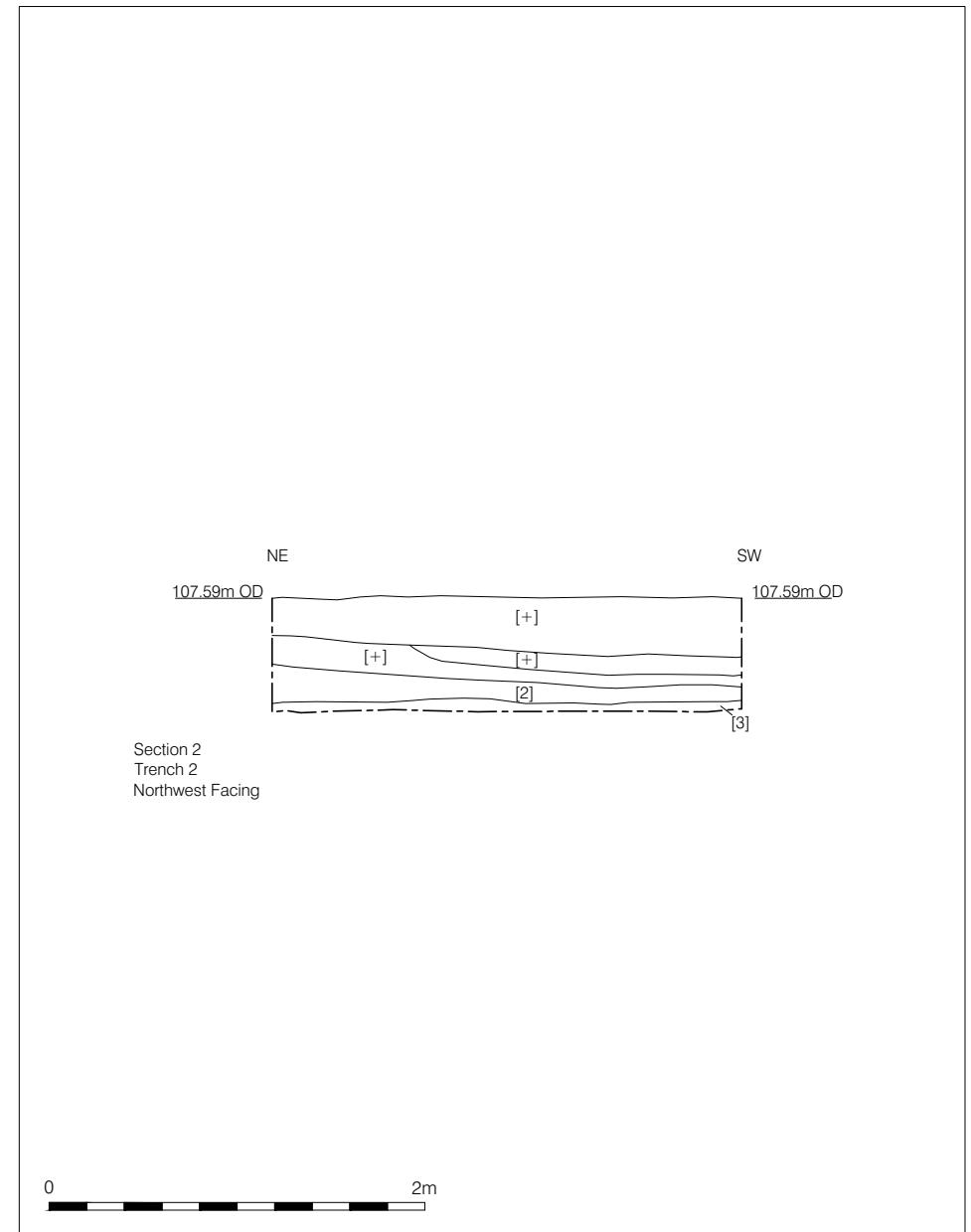
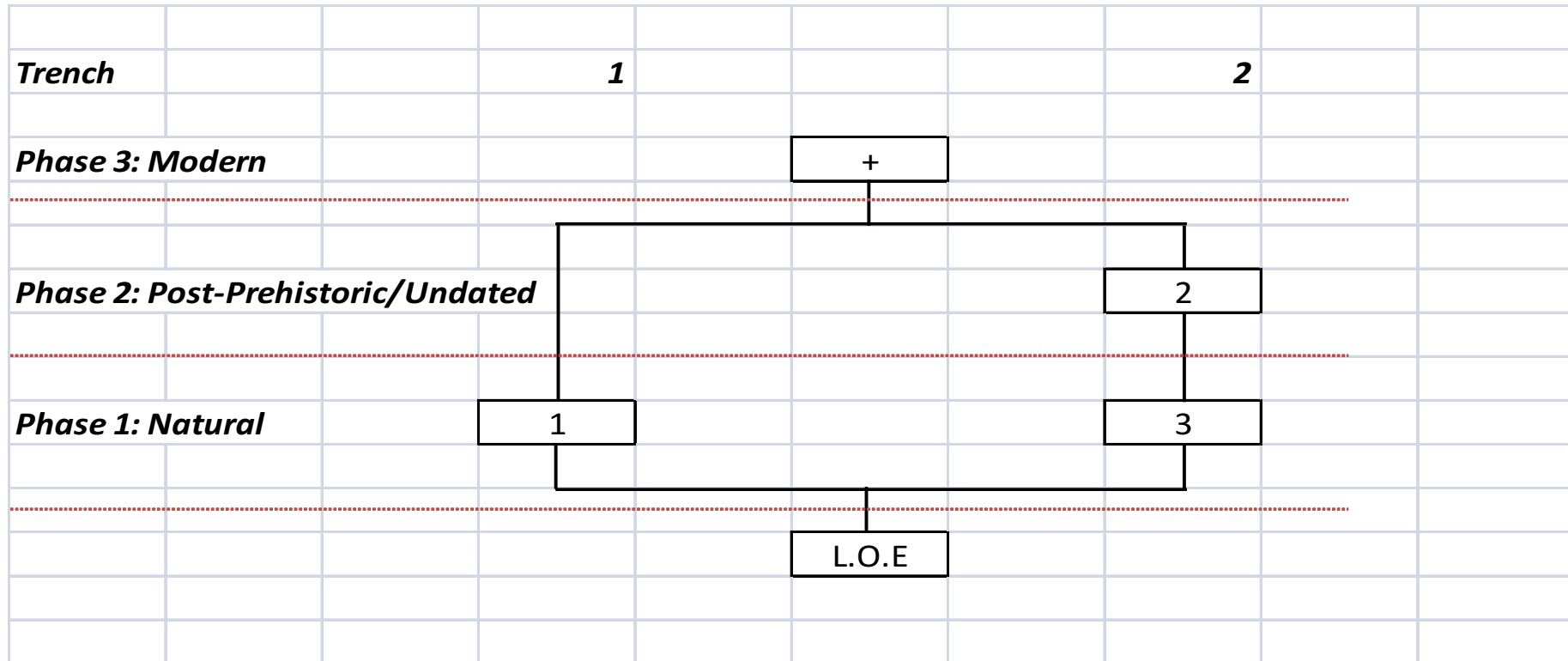


Figure 4
Plan and Section of Trench 2
1:40 at A4

APPENDIX 1: PHASED MATRIX



APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Cont ext No.	Plan	Section / Elevation	Type	Description	Date	Phase	Photos No.
ESJE-16	1	Trench 1	1	Layer	Firm, yellowish brown, red mottled, sandy clay. Superficial natural.	Natural	1	D1 (2-6)
ESJE-16	2	n/a	2	Layer	Seen in section. Firm, greyish, gravelly clay. Disturbed natural.	Post-Prehistoric/Undated	2	n/a
ESJE-16	3	Trench 2	2	Layer	Firm, yellowish brown, red mottled, sandy clay. Superficial natural.	Natural	1	D1 (7-8)

APPENDIX 3: OASIS REPORT FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-254667

Project details

Project name	St. John's House, St John's Road Epping
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. (PCA) prior to the proposed redevelopment of St John's House, St John's Road, Epping, Essex, CM16 5DN. The fieldwork comprised the excavation of two evaluation trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development. The evaluation observed that the most recent underlying geological deposit to survive was sandy clay, consistent with the projected underlying geology of the Stanmore Gravel formation. The only potential for archaeological remains encountered was a single layer of relatively sterile disturbed natural, uncertain in date.
Project dates	Start: 09-06-2016 End: 10-06-2016
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ESJE16 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Large/ medium scale extensions to existing structures (e.g. church, school, hospitals, law courts, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX EPPING FOREST EPPING St John's House, Epping
Postcode	CM16 5DN
Study area	384 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 459500 021500 51.698607763949 0.112146876622 51 41 54 N 000 06 43 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 106.19m Max: 106.45m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	of	PCA
Project originator	brief	Maria Medlycott
Project originator	design	Helen Hawkins
Project director/manager		Helen Hawkins
Project supervisor		Poppy Alexander
Type of sponsor/funding body		Church
Name of sponsor/funding body		PCC of St John the Baptist, Epping

Project archives

Physical Exists?	Archive	No
Digital Exists?	Archive	No
Paper recipient	Archive	Epping Forest District Museum
Paper Archive ID		ESJE16
Paper Contents		"none"
Paper available	Media	"Context sheet", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

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