

# **An Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Exercise of Land at Audley End Railway Station, Audley End, Essex**

**Site Code: EAER 09  
Central National Grid Reference: TL 516 363**

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## 1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological strip and map and sample exercise undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited during groundwork for the construction of a new car park on land at Audley End Railway Station, Audley End, Essex.
- 1.2 A desk-based assessment prepared by CgMs Consulting<sup>1</sup> considered the archaeological potential of the site as modest. In the desk-based assessment, with exception of the Roman period, which was accorded moderate status, the potential for encountering archaeological remains from all periods (Palaeolithic – Post-Medieval) was described as low.
- 1.3 The ground was reduced across the site by approximately c.300-400mm onto glacial sand and gravel. No archaeological features were identified during this ground reduction. This absence of archaeological features conforms well to the modest potential of the site identified in the desk-based assessment.
- 1.4 The only artefacts recovered from the site were three small fragments of pottery recovered from the subsoil, two of which can be ascribed an early Saxon date, whilst the third, more abraded sherd, is likely to be Romano-British.

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<sup>1</sup> Hawkins, D. 2009a

## 2 INTRODUCTION

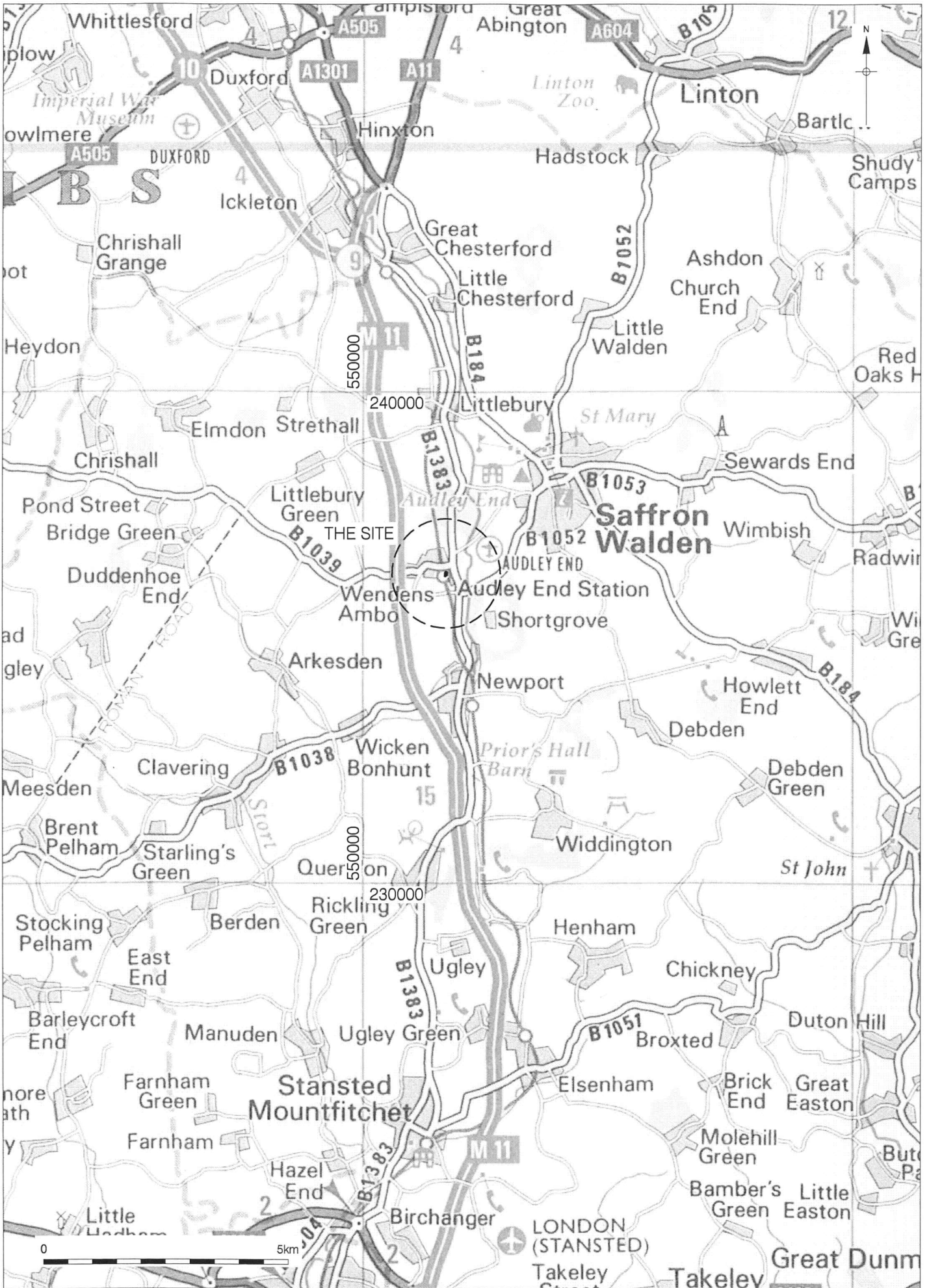
- 2.1 An archaeological strip and map and sample exercise undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited during groundwork for the construction of a new car park on land at Audley End Railway Station, Audley End, Essex. The work was commissioned by CgMS Consulting.
- 2.2 The site comprises a large irregular area of former pasture land, bounded immediately to the west by the existing car park at Audley End Railway Station. The northern and western edge of the site follows the line of the dismantled Saffron Walden Railway. Mutlow Hall lies to the east of the site, whilst an agricultural hedge provides the southern boundary.
- 2.3 The work was carried out to the specifications detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Consulting<sup>2</sup>. This Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared in consultation with the Historic Environment Officer from the Historic Branch of Essex County Council (Richard Havis), acting as the archaeological advisor to Uttlesford District Council.
- 2.4 The site was stripped between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2009. The investigation was conducted within the general parameters defined by PPG16 'Archaeology and Planning', the Essex County Structure Plan, the Uttlesford District Local Plan and the 'Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research Agenda and Strategy'.
- 2.5 The site was stripped in accordance to the methodology detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation. The whole site was stripped by machine, using a standard toothless ditching bucket to depth of c.300mm to 400mm, under direct archaeological supervision. The material stripped from the site was used to create large bunds or banks along the south-eastern and eastern boundary of the site, apparently to reduce light pollution when the new car park becomes operational.
- 2.6 The National Grid Reference of the site is TL 516 363, and the site was assigned the code EAER 09.
- 2.7 The watching brief was conducted by A G Pullen of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, and the archaeological consultant was Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Consulting. The project was managed by Tim Bradley for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.

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<sup>2</sup> Hawkins, D. 2009b

### **3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 3.1 British Geological Survey 1:50, 000 series Sheet 222 (Great Dunmow) shows the site to be underlain by Glacial Sand and Gravel within a large infilled channel. The natural gravel was recorded across the area of the site at heights of between 66.43m OD (north) and 62.05m OD (south).
- 3.2 Prior to machining the site comprised a small partly overgrown field of pasture which sloped down from 67.28m OD on the north east to 62.18m OD on the south west.



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Figure 1  
 Trench Location  
 1:100,000 at A4

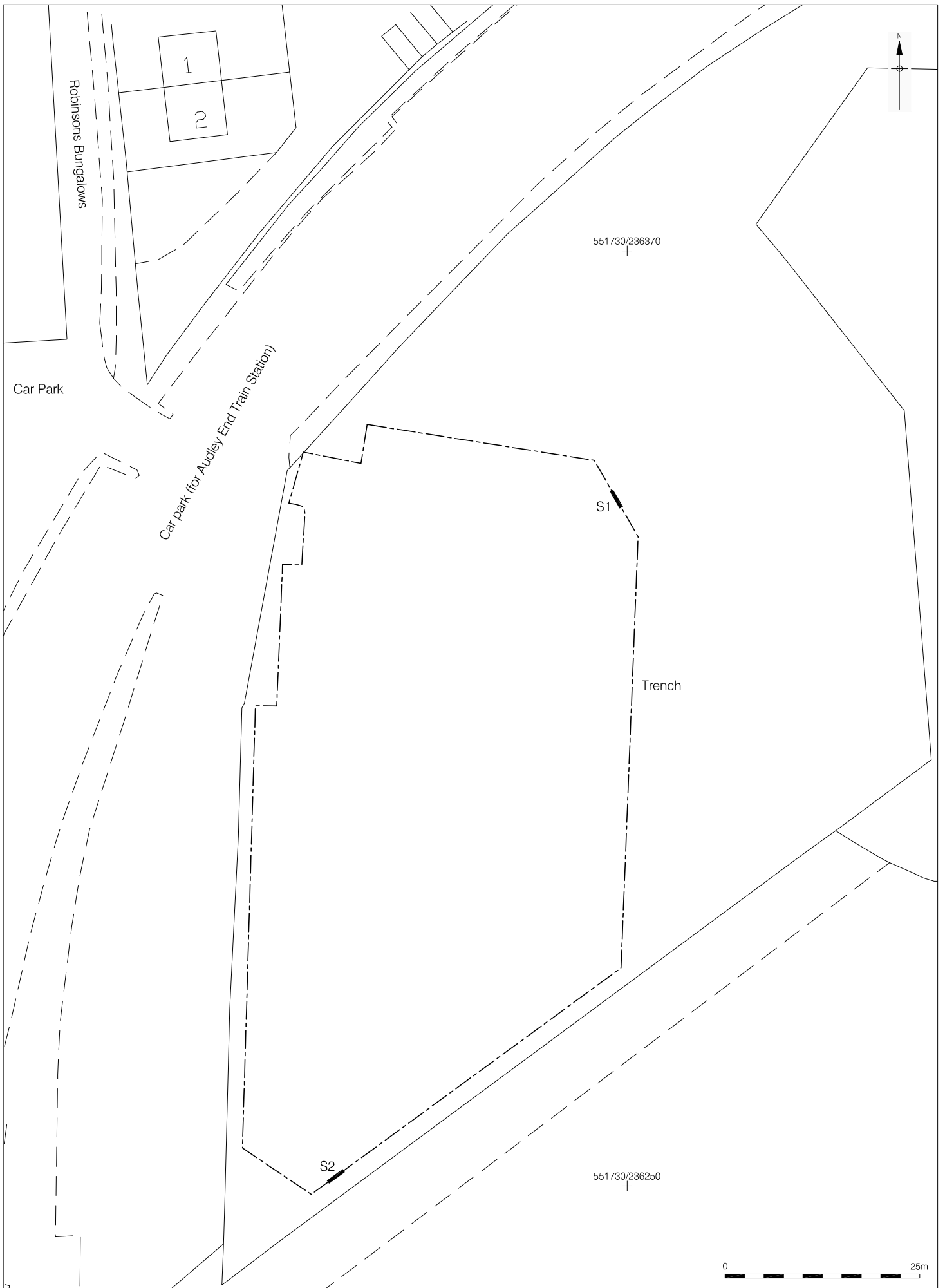
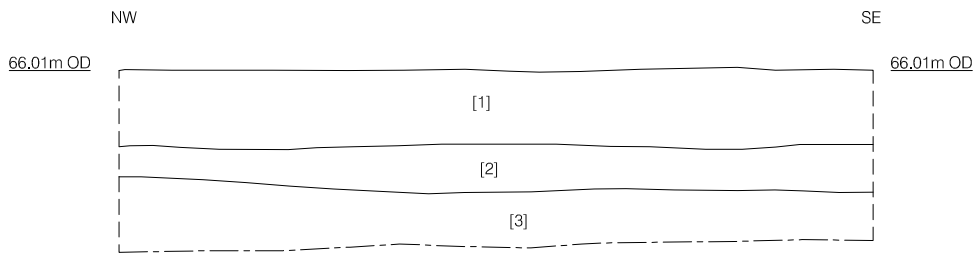
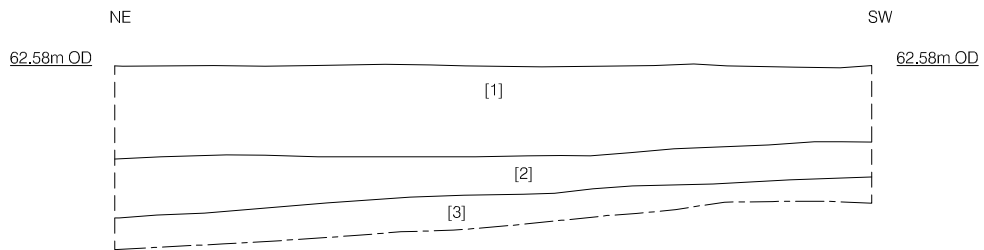


Figure 2  
 Trench Location  
 1:625 at A4



Section 1  
Southwest Facing



Section 2  
Northwest Facing



Figure 3  
Sections 1 & 2  
1:25 at A4



## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The archaeological and historical background together with the potential for the survival of remains on the site are covered in detail within the desk-based assessment<sup>3</sup>, from which the following information is extracted.
- 4.2 No certain finds of Palaeolithic material are recorded within a 750m radius of the study site. Finds of possible Mesolithic date were encountered during the construction of a railway culvert 'west of Uttlesford Bridge' in 1864. These finds included human and animals bones together with tree remains from a possible river channel. The humans remains comprised part of a skull. The precise context and date of the 1864 find remains uncertain.
- 4.3 Neolithic and later flints were recorded during road widening alongside the Bell Public House at Wendens Ambo.
- 4.4 An archaeological evaluation at Duck Street, Wendens Ambo revealed a small collection of worked flint and one sherd of Prehistoric pottery. Bronze Age and Iron Age burial urns are recorded from 'west of Uttlesford Bridge' some time before 1913.
- 4.5 A ring ditch possibly representing a ploughed down Bronze Age burial mound is recorded at TL 5195 3670. A single worked flint is recorded from the line of the M11 recovered during fieldwalking (HER Ref: 292; TL 510 369).
- 4.6 A Roman occupation site (1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century AD) is recorded from the line of the M11 (HER Refs 169-170). Agricultural activity associated with this occupation, including boundary ditches, was recorded at Duck Street, Wendens Ambo (HER Ref: 1952; TL 511 363). This was probably also the findspot of an assemblage of Roman tile and pottery recorded before 1963 (HER Ref: 260; TL 510 360).
- 4.7 A 'reputed Romano-British site' is recorded near 'Wenden Hall' but the HER entry for this site provides no details (HER Ref: 1952; TL 511 363). A number of Roman finds have been unearthed by metal-detecting within 1 km of the site (HER Ref: 17991; TL 5035) and the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Wendens Ambo features reused Roman brick and tile (HER Refs: 217 & 218; TL 5130 363, HER Ref: 36775; TL 51290 36388). An assemblage of

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<sup>3</sup> Hawkins, D. 2009a

'Roman burial urns' is recorded from 'west of Uttlesford Bridge' prior to 1913, though the precise nature of these remains is unclear (HER Ref: 2221; TL 5178 36060).

- 4.8 In 1847 an early Anglo Saxon warrior burial was identified by labourers at a depth of approximately 1 to 1.25m on the north side of Mutlow Hill to the east of the study site (HER 229; TL 518 363). Finds included a ceramic flagon, three iron spearheads and an iron shieldboss. No other certain finds of early Anglo Saxon date are recorded within a 1 km radius of the study site. Evidence for late Saxon occupation has however been identified at Wendens Ambo (HER Ref: 17339; TL 510 368).
- 4.9 The site is relatively remote from the main foci of late Medieval and Post Medieval settlement in this area, at Wendon to the west of the site (now Wendens Ambo), and Little Wendon further to the west. Evidence for late medieval occupation and agriculture is recorded at Duck Street Wendens Ambo (HER Ref: 46001; TL 50953 35957).
- 4.10 The mainline railway to Cambridge was constructed in 1845 with a branch line to Saffron Walden opened in 1865. The latter flanks the western and northern boundary of the site and with a former goods yard forms the bulk of the existing car park facility.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 This Strip, Map and Sample exercise was carried out in accordance with the methodology statement detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation<sup>4</sup>. The fieldwork was designed to determine the location, form, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains, irrespective of period, liable to be threatened by the proposed development.
- 5.2 The site was stripped by machine using a standard toothless ditching bucket to a depth of circa 300mm to 450mm under direct archaeological supervision. No archaeological features were encountered during ground reduction. The area was thus taken down to the top of the 'natural' glacial sands and gravels. Careful inspection of the machined surface revealed no evidence of archaeological features.
- 5.3 Given the lack of archaeological features at this site, detailed archaeological mapping or sampling of individual features was redundant. Levels were recorded over the stripped area and two representative sections drawings were made of the baulk (Fig. 3).
- 5.4 During machining three fragments of black pottery were recovered from the subsoil. These were sent to the relevant specialist at Pre-Construct Archaeology for assessment.
- 5.5 The completed archive, comprising all written, drawn, photographic and artefactual material, will be deposited with the appropriate recipient body under the Site Code EAER 09.

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<sup>4</sup> Hawkins, D. 2009b

## 6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 6.1 Over the whole site the following stratigraphy was recorded. A loose yellowish-brown coarse sandy-gravel [3] was overlain by a yellowish-brown sandy-silt subsoil [2]. This subsoil was approximately 0.10-0.15m thick. Overlying the subsoil was a 0.20 to 0.30m thick mid to dark brown topsoil [1]. The top of the natural decreased from 66.43m to OD 62.05m OD from the northern to the southern margin of the stripped area.
- 6.2 Three sherds of pottery, including two rim fragments, were recovered from subsoil [2] near the western perimeter of the site in an area of considerable tree root disturbance. The assemblage was formed of an early Saxon chaff-tempered ware, a granite and quartz-tempered ware body sherd, also of Saxon date, and a third, slightly abraded rim from a jar in a fine sandy greyware fabric of possible Romano-British in date. No further finds were recovered during the investigations.

## **7 CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 The absence of archaeological features discovered during this Strip, Map and Sample exercise indicate that the modest archaeological potential of this area of pastureland advanced in the desk-based assessment was accurate.
- 7.2 The occurrence of two fragments of Anglo-Saxon pottery in the sub-soil is indicative of activity in the vicinity. As was noted above, an early Anglo-Saxon warrior burial was found nearby on the northside of Mutlow Hill in 1847 and evidence for late Saxon occupation was identified at Wendens Ambo. Equally the recovery of a probable Roman-British sherd reflects stray finds being recovered in the wider vicinity.

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Consulting for commissioning this project on behalf of National Express, and Richard Havis, Essex County Council, for monitoring the work.
- 8.2 Thanks to the Jennifer Simonson at PCA CAD department for preparing the figures, and to Chris Jarrett for his pottery assessment. Tim Bradley managed the project and edited this report.

## 9. REFERENCES

Hawkins, D. 2009a. *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, Land at Audley End Railway Station, Audley End, Essex*. CgMs Consulting.

Hawkins, D. 2009b. *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Exercise. Land at Audley End Railway Station, Audley End, Essex*. CgMs Consulting.

## APPENDIX 1: POTTERY ASSESSMENT

Chris Jarrett

Three sherds of pottery were recovered from a single context [2] and two are dated to the early Saxon period, the third is thought to be Roman. The sherds are on the whole in a good condition, small in size but forms can be recognised. The fabrics are classified according to Cunningham (1985) and Cotter (2000). Fabric 1: Early Saxon vegetable-tempered ware (chaff-tempered ware) is recorded as a simple, upright jar rim with burnished surfaces and is reduced very dark grey throughout. A granite and quartz-tempered ware body sherd can only be placed under the general Saxon pottery code for other wares: Fabric 4. The sherd is reduced a very dark grey throughout and burnished on both surfaces. The granite inclusions could indicate that the source of clay is either from the Charnwood Forest area, Leicestershire or a glacial drift deposit. The third sherd is slightly abraded and consists of a rolled everted rim from a jar in a fine sandy greyware fabric and is possibly Romano-British in date. The types of Saxon pottery present indicate a deposition date between the late 5th-7th centuries AD.

### References

- Cotter, J. P. 2000, *Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85*. Colchester Archaeol Rep 7.
- Cunningham, C. M., 1985, 'A typology for post-Roman pottery in Essex', in Cunningham, C. M., and Drury, P. J., 'Post-Medieval sites and their pottery: Moulsham Street, Chelmsford'. *Chelmsford Archaeological Trust, Report 5, Council for British Archaeology*, 54, 1 – 16.



## APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context No.	Section / Elevation	Type	Description
EAER09	1	1,2	Layer	Topsoil
EAER09	2	1,2	Layer	Sub-soil
EAER09	3	1,2	Layer	Natural Gravel

## APPENDIX 3: MATRIX

[1]	Topsoil
[2]	Subsoil
[3]	Natural

#### APPENDIX 4: OASIS FORM

**OASIS ID: preconst1-67192**

##### Project details

Project name Strip and Map Audley End Railway Station

Short description of the project The ground was reduced across the site by approximately c.300-400mm onto Glacial sand and gravel. No archaeological features were identified during this ground reduction. This absence of archaeological features conforms well to the modest potential of the site identified in the desk-based assessment. The only artefacts recovered from the site were three small fragments of pottery, two of which have been dated to the early Anglo Saxon period and the third thought to be Roman in date. This material was recovered from the subsoil.

Project dates Start: 03-11-2009 End: 09-11-2009

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes EAER09 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds POT Early Medieval

##### Project location

Country England

Site location ESSEX UTTLESFORD SAFFRON WALDEN Audley End Railway Station

Postcode CB11 4LB

Study area 1.00 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 516 363 52.0039539970 0.208826590793 52 00 14 N 000 12 31 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 62.05m Max: 66.43m

Project creators

Name of Organisation      PCA

Project brief originator      CgMs Consulting

Project design originator      Duncan Hawkins

Project director/manager      Tim Bradley

Project supervisor      Alexander Pullen

Type of sponsor/funding body      National Express

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient      Local museum

Physical Contents      'Ceramics'

Digital Archive Exists?      No

Paper Archive recipient      PCA

Paper Media available      'Context sheet','Plan','Section'

Entered by      Alexander Pullen (apullen@pre-construct.com)

Entered on      11 November 2009