



REWSALLS LANE, EAST MERSEA, COLCHESTER

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION





REWSALLS LANE, EAST MERSEA, COLCHESTER

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Prepared on behalf of:
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Potter Raper Partnership,
Tolgate West,
Colchester,
Essex,
CO3 8AQ

By:
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September 2017

Site Code	ECC4046	NGR	TM 03854 13334
Project No.	P1204		
Planning Ref.	170783	OASIS	britanni1-293500
Approved By:		Date	September 2017



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Abstract

From the 12th to 15th September 2017 Britannia Archaeology Ltd (BA) undertook a trial trench evaluation at Rewsalls Lane, East Mersea, Colchester, Essex (TM 00801 12508) on behalf of Mr Phil Glasse of Potter Raper Partnership, for a remedial trial trench evaluation and monitoring of services for a sewage treatment plant and associated works at Rewsalls Lane, East Mersea, Colchester (TM 03854 13334). The work was undertaken in response to a design brief issued by Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBC/AA) (Tipper, J. dated 20th July 2017) which required a programme of linear trial trenching to sample the available area. This constituted three linear trial trenches, two measuring 30.00m x 1.80m aligned north to south, and the third trench measuring 15.00m x 1.80m aligned east to west, to be excavated adjacent to the new development.

The archaeological background for the site suggested there was moderate potential for encountering early occupation remains at this location and no previous systematic archaeological investigation had taken place within the proposed development site. No archaeological features were encountered but the evaluation potentially revealed one phase of activity on site relating to a colluvial sub soil which possibly represents the remains of a palaeochannel running east to west across the northern area of the site.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

From the 12th to 15th September 2017 Britannia Archaeology Ltd (BA) undertook a trial trench evaluation at Rewsalls Lane, East Mersea, Colchester, Essex (TM 00801 12508) on behalf of Mr Phil Glasse of Potter Raper Partnership, for a remedial trial trench evaluation and monitoring of services for a sewage treatment plant and associated works at Rewsalls Lane, East Mersea, Colchester (TM 03854 13334).

The work was undertaken in response to a design brief issued by Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBC/AA) (Tipper, J. dated 20th July 2017) which required a programme of linear trial trenching to sample the threatened available area. This constituted three linear trial trenches, two measuring 30.00m x 1.80m aligned north to south, and the third trench measuring 15.00m x 1.80m aligned east to west, to be excavated adjacent to the new development. Continuous monitoring of ground works for underground services and any other intrusive activity was also required (Fig. 2).

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located on the south coast of East Mersea, Essex. The site lies c.500m inland from the middle of the southern coast and is bound on all sides by rural farmland.

Bedrock geology is described as Thames Group Clay, Silty. This sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 34 to 56 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period when the local environment was previously dominated by deep seas, (BGS, 2017). No Superficial deposits have been recorded for the site at present (BGS, 2017)

3.0 PLANNING POLICIES

The archaeological investigation was carried out on the recommendation of the local planning authority, following guidance laid down by the *National Planning and Policy Framework* (NPPF, DCLD 2012) which replaces *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5, DCLG 2010). The relevant local planning policy is the *Colchester Borough Council Core Strategy (adopted 2008, updated 2014)*.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND (Fig. 2 & 3)

The following archaeological background uses the Colchester Historic Environment Record (EHER) and Record Office (1km search centred on the site), Historic England PastScape (www.pastscape.org.uk), and the Archaeological Data Service (www.ads.ahds.ac.uk) (ADS).

The EHER holds 17 records within 1km of the site (Figs 2 & 3).



The earliest activity in the search area is represented by 2 entries from the EHER both located c.750m north of the site. MCC5681 (FCC2676) refers to a Mesolithic pebble macehead with hour-glass perforations. A perforated hammerstone made from large quartzite pebble dating from the early Neolithic (c.4000BC) to the late Bronze Age (c.701AD) was found (MCC8767).

In addition the remains of 2 red hills resulting from salt making have been recorded surviving only as very low mounds and soil marks. These features are undated but are generally associated with the Bronze Age and Iron Age up to the Roman period and are located c.500m east of the site (MCC10099, MCC10110).

Records from the EHER relating to medieval activity are limited. Just north of the site a cropmark of a ring ditch has been interpreted as a possible early medieval windmill mound accompanied by a linear former field boundary likely of a later date (MCC8725). MCC5595 refers to the cropmarks of former field boundaries visible on 1st edition OS map interpreted as Medieval in date and located in the fields north west of the site (c.1066–1539AD). MCC8883 refers to what is known locally as Deremy's stone located at the northern extent of the search area. It is locally believed this stone was placed to define the boundary of the manor of West Mersea granted by Edward the Confessor to the monastery of Ouen at Rouen in 1046 which divided the island. However it is likely an erratic boulder and is in the wrong location to form part of the boundary.

Five records relating to Post Medieval activity were returned by the EHER. MCC4013, MCC4015, and MCC4016 refer to three Grade II listed timber framed structures north of the site dating from c.16th century to the 19th century. Cropmarks showing the foundations of a building visible in 1938 were found at the eastern extent of the search area (MCC8819). MCC8931 refers to a Decoy Pond located on the south-western extent of the search area which was constructed during the 2nd half of the 18th century and worked until the third quarter of the 19th century.

One record relating to WW2 activity was returned c.400m south of the site. MCC7254 refers to the site of a destroyed pillbox on the south coast, the possible outline of which was seen in an aerial photograph from 1946.

An additional 4 undated records were returned from the EHER. MCC8721 refers to a potential ring ditch and various disordered linear features in addition to a number of former field boundaries in a field c.750m north-west of the site. The cropmarks of 2 parallel linears and former field boundaries (MCC8726) and vague cropmarks of ring ditches and a rectangular feature (MCC8880) have been identified but not dated in fields c.500m north-east of the site. Close to the southern extent of the search area, just off the southern coast, an undated line of post holes were noted from an aerial photograph in 1993 as a possible fish trap (MCC4811). Nets would be strung from lines of posts at right angles to the shore to catch migrating mullet swimming along the edge of the coast.

The development site is located in an area of archaeological interest, defined in the Colchester Historic Environment Record (HER), as an area that is topographically



favourable for early occupation. Recent archaeological investigations along the adjacent foreshore have defined a variety of previously unknown archaeological remains and a number of cropmarks have been noted in nearby fields. There was therefore, **moderate** potential for encountering early occupation remains at this location and no previous systematic archaeological investigation has taken place within the proposed development site.

5.0 PROJECT AIMS

The CBC/AA brief states that the trial trenching and monitoring exercise was required to:

- Identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit, together with its likely extent, localised depth and quality of preservation.
- Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking colluvial/alluvial deposits.
- Establish the potential for the survival of environmental evidence.
- Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.

6.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The research objectives for the project were in line with those laid out in *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24 (Medlycott, 2011).

Project objectives covered the following:

- To recover as much information as possible on the extent, date, phasing, character, function, status and significance of the site. Also that the state of preservation of archaeological features and deposits should be determined.
- Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.
- An assessment of the environmental potential of the site through examination of suitable deposits (to be arranged with a suitably qualified specialist)

7.0 FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

Work at the site has been undertaken in breach of the planning condition relating to archaeology. Consequently, the CBC/AA Brief required a linear trenched evaluation adjacent to the development area in order to mitigate the potential damage caused to archaeological remains on the site. This constituted three linear trial trenches, two 30.00m



x 1.80m (aligned N to S) and one 15.00 x 1.80m (aligned E to W), which were excavated adjacent to the new development.

A 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket was used to machine down to the first archaeological horizon, thereafter all excavation work was undertaken by hand unless agreed with the CBC/AA planning archaeologist (Fig.4).

The archaeology was recorded using pro-forma record sheets, drawn plans and section drawings and appropriate photographs were taken.

8.0 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS (Fig. 4, 5 & 6)

8.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was orientated north to south and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.64m in sample section 1. Trench 1 contained no archaeological features.

Topsoil **1000** was present to a depth of 0.16m in sample section 1. This layer overlay colluvial sub soil **1001** which was present from a depth of 0.16m to 0.64m. This layer overlay natural geology **1002**.

8.1 Trench 2

Trench 2 was orientated east to west and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.35m in sample section 2. Trench 2 contained no archaeological features.

Topsoil **1000** was present to a depth of 0.35m in sample section 1. This layer overlay natural geology **1002**.

8.1 Trench 3

Trench 3 was orientated north to south and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.70m in sample section 3. Trench 3 contained no archaeological features.

Topsoil **1000** was present to a depth of 0.25m in sample section 3. This layer overlay colluvial sub soil **1001** which was present from a depth of 0.25m to 0.50m. This layer overlay natural geology **1002**.

9.0 DEPOSIT MODEL (Fig. 5)

The deposit model was broadly consistent across the site, with the exception of a colluvial subsoil present across the northern area of trenches 1 and 3.



At the top of the stratigraphic sequence in all three trenches was topsoil **1000** which was present to a depth of 0.35m sample section 2. This comprised of a very compact dark grey brown sandy silt and clay.

Beneath topsoil layer 1000 was colluvial sub soil **1001** which comprised a very compact light grey brown clayey silt. This layer was present to a depth of 0.64m to a maximum thickness of 0.48m in sample section 1. This colluvial layer is only present in the northern area of trenches 1 and 3 where there is a depression running east to west. It is possible this layer is the remnant of a palaeochannel.

At the base of the stratigraphic sequence, present from a depth of 0.64m in sample section 1, was natural geology **1002**, which consisted of a compact light yellow orange clay.

10.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The archaeological background for the site suggested that there was moderate potential for encountering early occupation remains at this location and no previous systematic archaeological investigation had taken place within the proposed development site. However no archaeological features were encountered.

The evaluation potentially revealed one phase of activity on site relating to colluvial sub soil **1001** which possibly represents the remains of a palaeochannel running east to west across the northern area of the site.

Despite the moderate potential for early occupational remains, the evaluation did not encounter any archaeological features but identified a possible palaeochannel in the form of a colluvial sub soil.

11.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

Arrangements will be made for the archive to be deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museum. The digital archive will be stored with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).

12.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Britannia Archaeology would like to thank Mr Phil Glasse of Potter Paper Partnership for commissioning and funding the project.

We would also like to thank of Dr Jess Tipper the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBC/AA) for his advice and assistance on the project.

The site was excavated by Matt Adams and Martin Brook of Britannia Archaeology Ltd.



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Historic England PastScape www.pastscape.org.uk

Archaeological Data Service (ADS) www.ads.ahds.ac.uk



English Heritage National List for England

www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england

HER Data

Will be provided and licenced by Colchester Borough Council Historic Environment Record.



APPENDIX 1 – DEPOSIT TABLES

Deposit Tables

TRENCH 1

Trench No	Orientation	Height AOD	Shot ID
1	N-S	4.93	
Sample Section No	Location	Facing	
1	N end, E side	W Facing	
Context No	Depth	Deposit Description	
1000	0.00-0.16m	Topsoil: Dark grey brown very compact sandy silt and clay	
1001	0.16-0.64m	Sub Soil (Colluvium): light grey brown very compact clayey silt	
1002	0.64+	Natural: light yellow orange compact clay	

TRENCH 2

Trench No	Orientation	Height AOD	Shot ID
2	E-W	6.11	
Sample Section No	Location	Facing	
2	NW end of trench	NW Facing	
Context No	Depth	Deposit Description	
1000	0.00-0.35m	Topsoil: Dark grey brown very compact sandy silt and clay	
1002	0.35+	Natural: light yellow orange compact clay	

TRENCH 3

Trench No	Orientation	Height AOD	Shot ID
3	N-S		
Sample Section No	Location	Facing	
3	SE end of trench	NE Facing	
Context No	Depth	Deposit Description	
1000	0.00-0.25m	Topsoil: Dark grey brown very compact sandy silt and clay	
1001	0.25-0.50m	Sub Soil (Colluvium): light grey brown very compact clayey silt	
1002	0.50+	Natural: light yellow orange compact clay	



APPENDIX 2 – OASIS SHEET

OASIS FORM - Print view

<https://oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm>

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

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OASIS ID: **britannia1-293500**

Project details

Project name	Rawsalls Lane, East Mersea, Colchester, Essex
Short description of the project	From the 12th to 15th September 2017 Britannia Archaeology Ltd (BA) undertook a trial trench evaluation at Rewsalls Lane, East Mersea, Colchester, Essex (TM 00801 12508) on behalf of Mr Phil Glasse of Potter Raper Partnership, for a remedial trial trench evaluation and monitoring of services for a sewage treatment plant and associated works at Rewsalls Lane, East Mersea, Colchester (TM 03854 13334). The work was undertaken in response to a design brief issued by Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBC/AA) (Tipper, J. dated 20th July 2017) which required a programme of linear trial trenching to sample the available area. This constituted three linear trial trenches, two measuring 30.00m x 1.80m aligned north to south, and the third trench measuring 15.00m x 1.80m aligned east to west, to be excavated adjacent to the new development. The archaeological background for the site suggested there was moderate potential for encountering early occupation remains at this location and no previous systematic archaeological investigation had taken place within the proposed development site. No archaeological features were encountered but the evaluation potentially revealed one phase of activity on site relating to a colluvial sub soil which possibly represents the remains of a palaeochannel running east to west across the northern area of the site.
Project dates	Start: 12-09-2017 End: 15-09-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	P1204 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	170783 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	ECC4052 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Coastland 6 - Other
Monument type	NONE None
Monument type	NONE None



OASIS FORM - Print view

<https://oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm>

Significant Finds NONE None
Significant Finds NONE None
Methods & techniques ""Sample Trenches""
Development type Service infrastructure (e.g. sewage works, reservoir, pumping station, etc.)
Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England
Site location ESSEX COLCHESTER EAST MERSEA Rawsalls Lane
Postcode CO5 8SX
Study area 485 Square metres
Site coordinates TM 03854 13334 51.780934773188 0.955640808919 51 46 51 N 000 57 20 E Point
Lat/Long Datum WGS 84 Datum
Height OD / Depth Min: 4.29m Max: 4.93m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Britannia Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator Matthew Adams
Project director/manager Matthew Adams
Project supervisor Matthew Adams
Type of sponsor/funding body Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body Phil Glasse of Potter Raper Partnership

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient Ipswich Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID ECC4052
Digital Contents "none"
Digital Media available "GIS", "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"



OASIS FORM - Print view

<https://oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm>

Paper Archive recipient Ipswich Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID ECC4052
Paper Contents "none"
Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Map", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey "

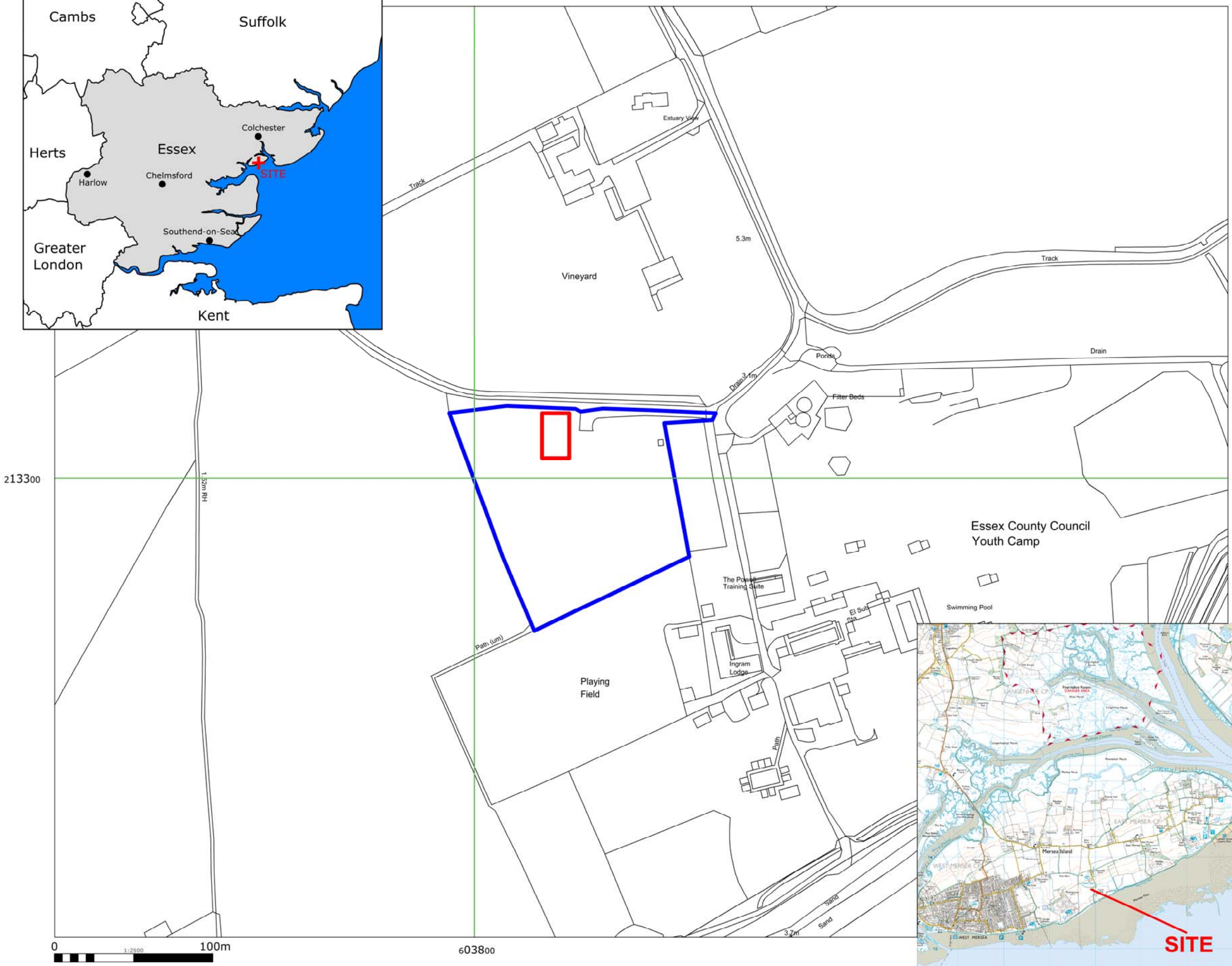
**Project
bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title Rewsalls Lane, East Mersea, Colchester: An Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s) Cunningham, L
Other bibliographic details R1175
Date 2017
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- Site Boundary
- Development Area



NGR:	603854 213334	REF:	R1175
PROJECT:	REWSALLS LANE, EAST MERSEA, COLCHESTER, ESSEX		
DESCRIPTION:	GENERAL LOCATION PLAN		
CLIENT:	POTTER RAPER PARTNERSHIP		
BRITANNIA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD			
		UNIT 2 THE OLD WOOL WAREHOUSE ST ANDREWS STREET SOUTH BURY ST EDMUNDS SUFFOLK IP33 3PH	
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DATE:	SEPT 2017	FLOT:	A3
VERSION:	1	FIGURE:	1
AUTHOR:	MCA	APPROVED:	MB

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-  Cropmark
-  Development Area
-  HER Search Area

1:10000 0 1:10000 500m

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OSGR:	603854 213334	REF:	R1175
PROJECT:	REWSALLS LANE, EAST MERSEA, COLCHESTER, ESSEX		
DESCRIPTION:	EHER DATA: CROPMARKS		
CLIENT:	POTTER RAPER PARTNERSHIP		
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DATE:	SEPT 2017	FLOT:	A3	VERSION:	1
AUTHOR:	DPM	FIGURE:	2		
APPROVED:	MB				

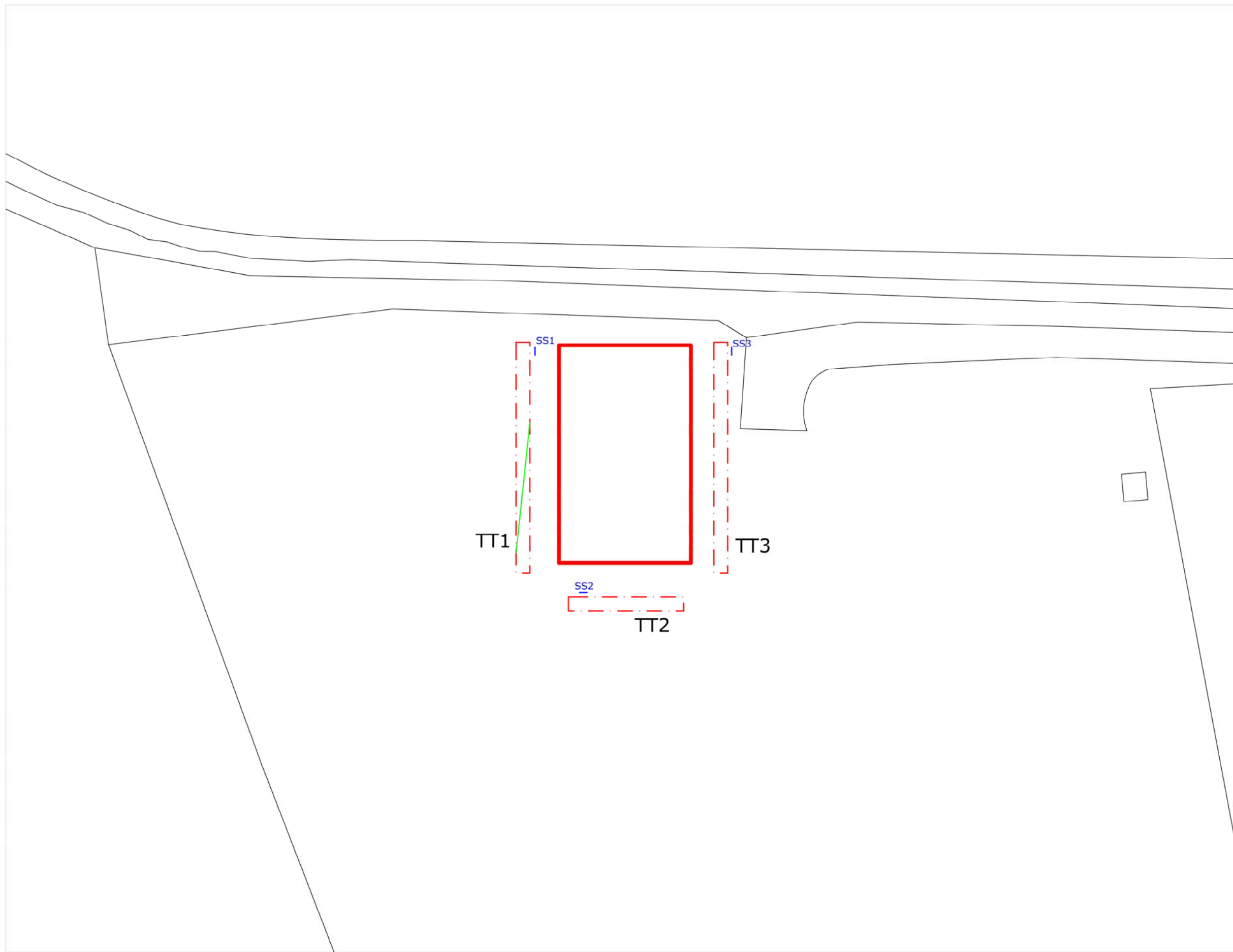


- Undated Record
- Multiperiod Record
- Modern Record
- Post-medieval Record
- Medieval Record
- Anglo Saxon Record
- Roman Record
- Iron Age Record
- Bronze Age Record
- Neolithic Record
- Mesolithic Record
- Palaeolithic Record
- Development Area
- HER Search Area

1:10000 0 500m

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NGR: 603854 213334	REF: R1175
PROJECT: REWSALLS LANE, EAST MERSEA, COLCHESTER, ESSEX	
DESCRIPTION: EHER DATA: MONUMENTS	
CLIENT: POTTER RAPER PARTNERSHIP	
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DATE: SEPT 2017	FIGURE: 3
FLUT: A3	VERSION: 1
AUTHOR: DPM	
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0 1:500 30m

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-  Sample Section
-  Modern Land Drain
-  Trench
-  Development Area

NGR: 603854 213334 REF: P1204

PROJECT: REWSALLS LANE, EAST MERSEA, COLCHESTER

DESCRIPTION: TRENCH LOCATION PLAN

CLIENT: POTTER RAPER PARTNERSHIP

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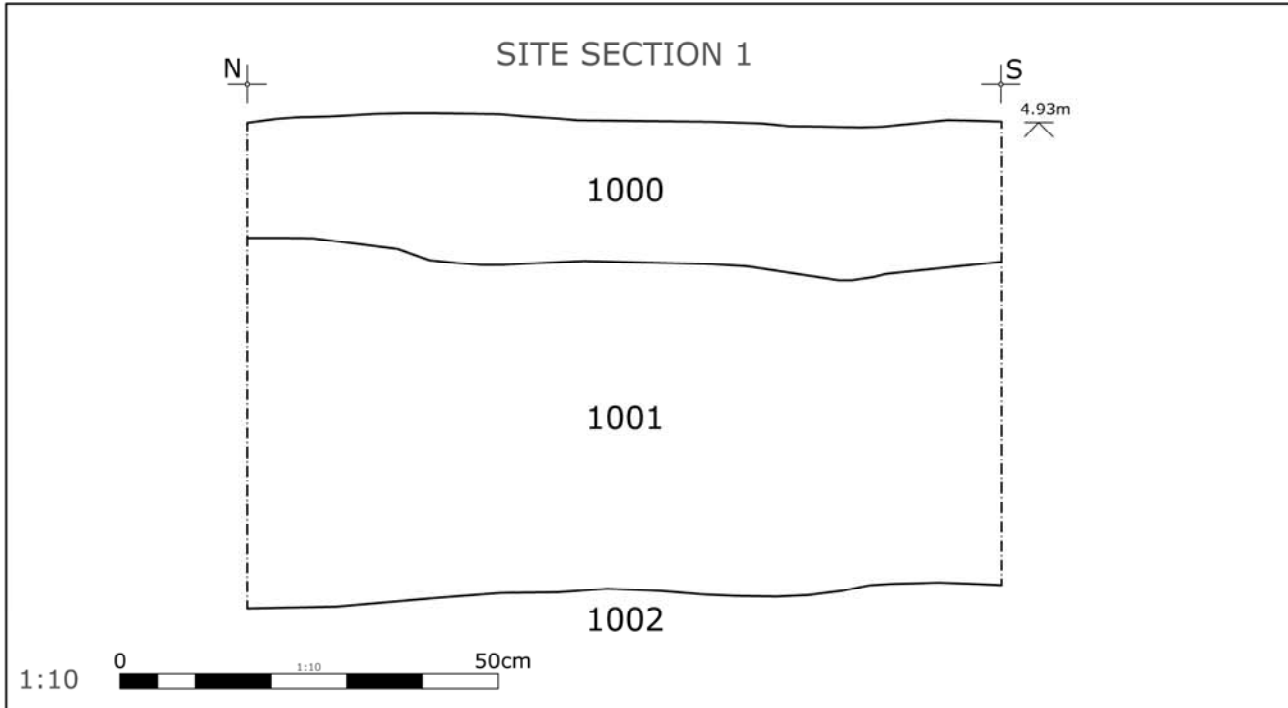
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DATE: SEPT 2017 PLOT: A3 VERSION: 1

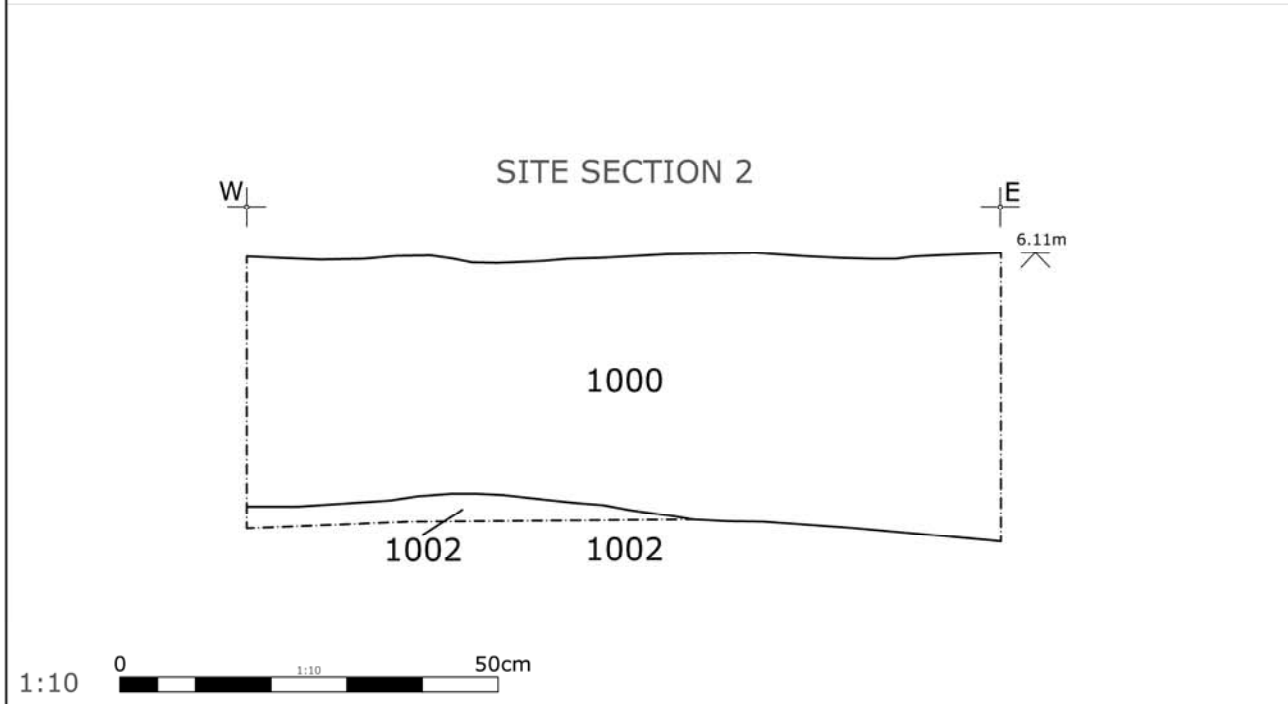
AUTHOR: DPM

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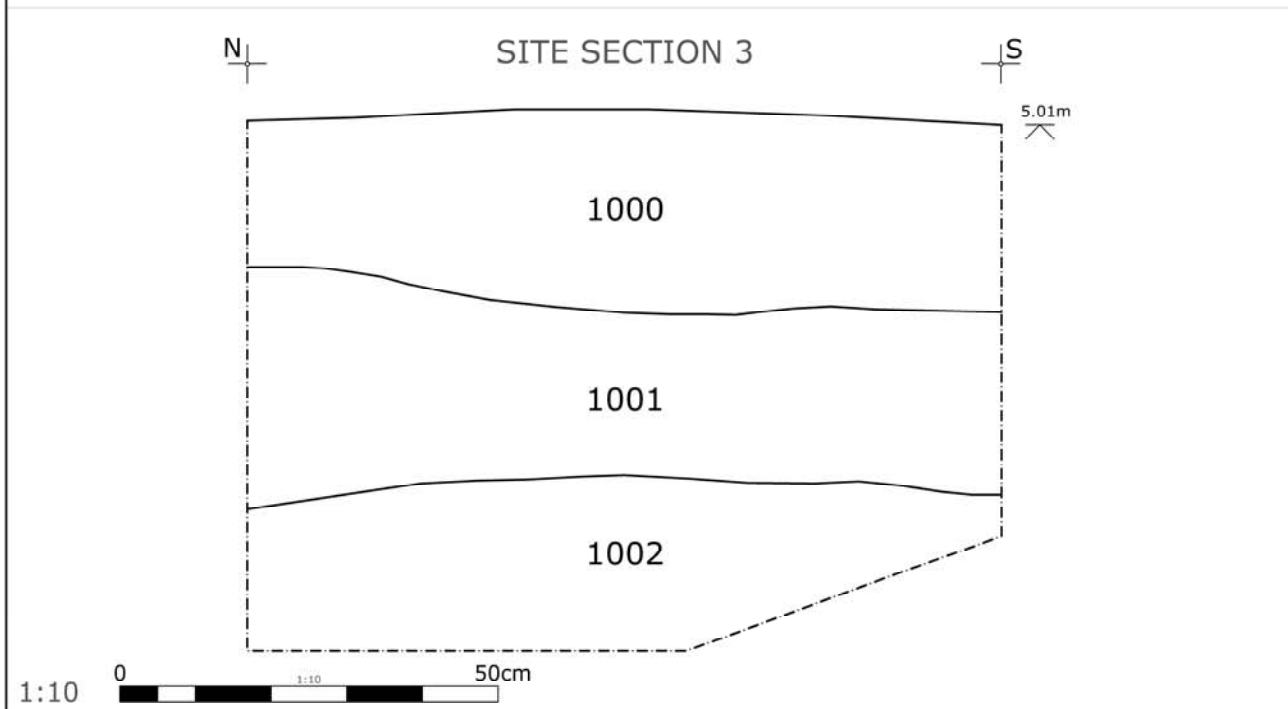
FIGURE: 4



DP1 - SS1 - VIEW E



DP3 - SS2 - VIEW N



DP5 - SS3 - VIEW E

(NGR):	603854 213334	(REF):	R1175
PROJECT:	REWSALLS LANE, EAST MERSEA, COLCHESTER, ESSEX		
DESCRIPTION:	SITE SECTIONS & PHOTOGRAPHS		
CLIENT:	POTTER RAPER PARTNERSHIP		
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DATE:	SEPT 2017	PLOT:	A3
VERSION:	1		
AUTHOR:	DPM		FIGURE:
APPROVED:	MB		5



TRIAL TRENCH 1 - DP2 - VIEW S



TRIAL TRENCH 2 - DP4 - VIEW E



TRIAL TRENCH 3 - DP6 - VIEW N

NGR: 603854 213334 REF: R1175

PROJECT: REWSALLS LANE, EAST MERSEA, COLCHESTER, ESSEX

DESCRIPTION: TRENCH PHOTOGRAPHS

CLIENT: POTTER RAPER PARTNERSHIP

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DATE: SEPT 2017 PLOT: A3 VERSION: 1

AUTHOR: DPM
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FIGURE: 6