

# LAND AT 51 MAIN ROAD, GREAT LEIGHS, ESSEX

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



Report Number: 1217 October 2018



# LAND AT 51 MAIN ROAD, GREAT LEIGHS, ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Prepared for:

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Site Code	GLMR 18	NGR	TL 7250 1664
Project No.	P1255	Museum ACC	-
Planning Ref.	CHL 15/01589/FUL	OASIS	britanni1-330619
Approved By:	M	Date	November 2018



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#### **Abstract**

On the 23rd October 2018, Britannia Archaeology Ltd (BA) undertook a trial trench evaluation on behalf of Mr Francis Caulfield. The archaeological work was required as a condition of application (CHL 15/01589/FUL), for the construction of a single dwelling house & garage at Land at 51 Main Road, Great Leighs, Essex (TL 7250 1664).

The archaeological background for the site suggested that there was a moderate potential for remains on the site relating to the Roman period and for later medieval and post-medieval activity associated with the development of the village.

The evaluation encountered no archaeological features despite the moderate potential for features and finds relating to the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. The site does appear to have been subject to late 20<sup>th</sup> Century landscaping.



#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018, Britannia Archaeology Ltd (BA) undertook a trial trench evaluation on behalf of Mr Francis Caulfield. The archaeological work was required as a condition of application (CHL 15/01589/FUL), for the construction of a single dwelling house & garage at Land at 51 Main Road, Great Leighs, Essex (TL 7250 1664) (Fig. 1).

The evaluation was undertaken in response to a design brief issued by Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS) (Bennett. A. 14th September 2018) which required a programme of linear trial trenching to adequately sample 5% of the threatened available area. Two trenches measuring 10.00m x 1.80m were located over the new building and garage footprint and were excavated using a 360o tracked, mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

#### 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION (Fig. 1)

The site is located west of Main Road and north of Deres Bridge in the south of the village of Great Leighs which lies approximately 6.00 km south of the town of Braintree. Residential properties are located to the south and north of the site. Agricultural fields are located to the sites west and east.

#### 2.1 Site Geology

The bedrock geology is described as London Clay Formation. This clay mainly comprises silty clays, clayey silts and sandy clays. It formed approximately 56 to 47 million years ago in the Ypresian Age (BSG, 2018).

The superficial deposits are recorded as Lowestoft Formation – Diamicton; an extensive sheet of chalky till with outwash sands, gravels, silts and clays formed up to 450,000 years ago in the Anglian Stage (BSG, 2018).

#### 3.0 PLANNING POLICIES

The archaeological investigation is to be carried out on the recommendation of the local planning authority, following guidance laid down by the *National Planning and Policy Framework* (NPPF, DCLD 2018). The relevant local planning policy is the *Chelsmford Borough LDF 2001-2021 – Core Strategy & Development Control Policies (Adopted 2008)*.

#### 4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND (Fig. 2 & 3)

The following archaeological background draws on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) (1km search centred on the site), English Heritage PastScape (www.pastscape.org.uk), and the Archaeological Data Service (www.ads.ahds.ac.uk) (ADS) (Fig. 2 & 3).



#### 4.1 Romano-British

Located adjacent to the assessment site is part of the course of the Chelmsford-Braintree-Long Melford road (6057). The Roman road does not follow the present road south of Little Leighs, where the present road bends. Aerial photography shows the Roman road continuing straight- presumably it regains the modern road line at Denes Bridge. Archaeological field evaluations by trial trenching along the path of the A131 Great Leighs Bypass have confirmed the presence of the Roman road at several points along its course. There was an absence of finds, however was to be expected in roadside ditches flanking a road well away from settlements.

Further evidence is located close to the assessment site. A field walking survey (14581) was carried out along the proposed route of the Great Leighs Bypass. One sherd of Roman pottery weighing 28g was found at this location. This was a fragment of a storage jar, datable only generally to the period 1st - 4th century.

#### 4.2 Saxon and Medieval

The closest record to the site (MCB30419), located 50m to the north refers to a 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century range of timber framed houses, originally five tenements, now reduced to two. In the wider search area records of note of medieval date include the church of St John the Evangelist in Little Leighs (30457). The church, located approximately 550m west of the site originally was a small simple building of 12<sup>th</sup> century origin with a 13<sup>th</sup> century chancel. The nave and chancel are undivided structurally. The walls are of flint rubble.

#### 4.3 Post-medieval and Modern

The post medieval period marks the expansion of Great Leighs into a form more similar to the current form of the village. Chatley House (30487) located 30m north east of the site is typical of the kind of buildings from this period. The cottage dates from the 17th or 18th century is timber framed. Similarly, Vixen Tor (30488) located 35m north east of the site is also timber framed and dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 4.4 Undated

The site lies adjacent to a large area of cropmarks (13954). The cropmarks appear to be of linear features and of roughly circular pits, possibly gravel extraction pits.



#### 4.5 Archaeological Potential

Given the above, the predominant potential for archaeology at this site was likely to relate to Roman and post-medieval periods.

Therefore, there was a **Moderate** potential for remains on the site relating to the Roman period. The potential for later medieval and post-medieval activity associated with the development of the village was considered **moderate**, while archaeology relating to remaining periods was considered **low**.

No previous archaeological field work had been undertaken on this site.

#### 5.0 PROJECT AIMS

The ECCPS brief stated that 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. Trenching should sample all the areas to be disturbed by the new development. (Bennett, A. Brief, Section 5).

Both the WSI, fieldwork and resulting report/archiving will be undertaken in accordance with CIfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations, 2014.

Two trenches measuring 10.00m x 1.80m will be excavated to achieve these aims (Fig. 4).

All aspects of the trial trenching will be undertaken in accordance with the CIfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations, 2014 and Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England, 2003.

#### 6.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Research objectives for the project are 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).

Particular study of the following should occur:

- presence/absence of palaeosols and old land surface soils/deposits,
- the character of deposits and their contents within negative features
- palaeochannels
- site formation processes generally.

An assessment of the environmental potential of the site through examination of suitable deposits must also be arranged with a suitably qualified specialist. Attention should be paid:

 to the retrieval of charred plant macrofossils and land molluscs from former dryland palaeosols and cut features, and to soil pollen analysis;



- to the retrieval of plant macrofossils, insect, molluscs and pollen from waterlogged deposits located.
- provision for the absolute dating of critical contacts should be made: *eg* the basal contacts of peats over former dryland surfaces; distinct landuse or landmark change in urban contexts

The evaluation should also carefully consider the retrieval, characterisation and dating (including absolute dating) of artefact, burial or economic evidence to assist in the characterisation of the site's evidence and in the development of future mitigation strategies

#### 7.0 FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

The ECCPS brief requires a programme of linear trial trenching in advance of the construction of the house and associated garage. The trenching will comprise two 10.00m x 1.80m trenches.

A 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket will be used to machine down to the first archaeological horizon, thereafter all excavation work will be undertaken by hand (Fig. 4).

The archaeology will be recorded using pro-forma record sheets, drawn plans and section drawings and appropriate photographs will also be taken.

#### 8.0 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS (Figs. 4 - 8)

Two trenches were excavated across the site. No archaeological features were encountered. A modern land drain and live service were encountered in Trench 2.

A metal detector was used to scan the site both prior and post excavation of the trenches along with the spoil heaps. Only demonstrably modern finds, which included modern nails and fencing pins were encountered and were not retained.

#### 8.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was orientated northwest to southeast and measured 10.00m x 1.80m. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.59m.

Topsoil Layer **1000** was present to a depth of 0.25m and overlay Subsoil **1001** which was present to a depth of 0.56m and overlay Natural Geology **1002**.

#### 8.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was orientated northeast to southwest and measured 10.00m x 1.80m. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.48m. The trench contained no archaeological features, a land drain and a live service.



Topsoil Layer **1000** was present to a depth of 0.21m and overlay Subsoil **1001** which was present to a depth of 0.48m and overlay Natural Geology **1002**.

#### 9.0 DEPOSIT MODEL (Fig. 5)

The deposit model was consistent across the site.

At the top of the stratigraphic sequence was Topsoil layer **1000**. This comprised a dark black brown, firm silt clay with frequent small-medium stone inclusions. This layer was present to a maximum depth of 0.25m in sample section 1. This layer contained fragments of late post-medieval to modern CBM as well as iron nails and clay pipe, and modern rubbish. It is broadly dated from the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century and likely represents a period of landscaping at the site.

Beneath Topsoil layer **1000** was Subsoil **1001**. Mid grey brown, compact silt clay with moderate small-medium stone and flint inclusions and occasional chalk inclusions. This layer was present to a maximum depth of 0.59m in sample section 1, with. This layer likely represents a former agricultural subsoil.

At the base of the stratigraphic sequence in all trenches was Natural Geology **1002**, comprising a mid-yellow brown/grey, very compact clay and chalk with frequent small-large chalk nodules and moderate small-medium flint inclusions.

#### 10.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The archaeological background for the site suggested that there was a moderate potential for remains on the site relating to the Roman period and a potential for later medieval and post-medieval activity associated with the development.

The evaluation encountered no archaeological features despite the moderate potential for features and finds relating to the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. The site does appear to have been subject to late 20<sup>th</sup> Century landscaping.

#### 11.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

The final archive will be deposited following the acquisition of the transfer of title. The deposition will be made with Colchester Museum. The digital archive will be stored with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).

#### 12.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Britannia Archaeology would like to thank Mr Francis Caulfield for commissioning and funding the project.



We would also like to Alison Bennet of Essex County Council Place Services for monitoring and her assistance on the project.

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



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English Heritage PastScape <a href="www.pastscape.org.uk">www.pastscape.org.uk</a>

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



# English Heritage National List for England

 $\underline{www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-\underline{england}$ 

DEFRA Magic <a href="http://magic.defra.gov.uk/website/magic">http://magic.defra.gov.uk/website/magic</a>



## APPENDIX 1 – DEPOSIT TABLES

## TRENCH 1

Trench No	Orientation		Height AOD		Shot ID	
1	NW - SE		41.72m		DP1	
Sample Section No	Location			Facing		
1			NE Side, SE End SW Facing		SW Facing	
Context No	Depth		Deposit Description			
1000	0.00 – 0.26m Top Soil: Dark black brown, firm silt clay with frequent silt medium stone inclusions			t clay with frequent small-		
1001			oil: Mid grey brown, compact silt clay with moderate medium stone and flint inclusions and occasional chalk ons			
1002	free		frequen	tural: Mid yellow brown/grey, compact clay and chalk with equent small-large chalk nodules and moderate smalledium flint inclusions		

### **TRENCH 2**

Trench No	Orienta	Orientation		Height AOD		Shot ID	
2		NE - SW		42.50m		DP3	
Sample Section No		Location		Facing			
2			SW End, SE Side SW Facing		SW Facing		
Context No	Depth		Deposit Description				
1000	0.00 - 0	0.00 – 0.21m Top So		oil: Dark black brown, firm silt clay with frequent small-			
		medium stone inclusions					
1001	0.21 – 0	0.21 – 0.48m Sub Soil: Mid grey		il: Mid grey browr	y brown, compact silt clay with moderate		
			small-medium stone and flint inclusions and occasional chall				
			inclusions				
1002	0.48m+	0.48m+ Natura		ral: Mid yellow brown/grey, compact clay and chalk with			
				•	lk nodul	es and moderate small-	
			medium	flint inclusions			



#### **APPENDIX 3 - OASIS SHEET**

OASIS FORM - Print view

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# OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: **England**

List of Projects | Manage Projects | Search Projects | New project | Change your details | HER coverage | Change country | Log out

Printable version

OASIS ID: britanni1-330619

#### **Project details**

Project name Land at 51 Main Road, Great Leighs, Essex

of the project

Short description On the 23rd October 2018, Britannia Archaeology Ltd (BA) undertook a trial trench evaluation on behalf of Mr Francis Caulfield. The archaeological work was required as a condition of application (CHL 15/01589/FUL), for the construction of a single dwelling house and garage at Land at 51 Main Road, Great Leighs, Essex (TL 7250 1664). The archaeological background for the site suggested that there was a moderate potential for remains on the site relating to the Roman period and for later medieval and post-medieval activity associated with the development of the village. The evaluation encountered no archaeological features despite the moderate potential for features and finds relating to the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. The site does

appear to have been subject to late 20th Century landscaping.

Project dates Start: 17-10-2018 End: 19-10-2018

Previous/future

work

No / Not known

GLMR 18 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference

codes

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Other 15 - Other Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None Methods &

techniques

"Sample Trenches"

type

Development Rural residential

Prompt

National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF Position in the After full determination (eg. As a condition)

planning process

**Project location** 

Country England

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

17/11/2018

#### Land at 51 Main Road, Great Leighs, Essex Archaeological Evaluation

#### OASIS FORM - Print view

Page 2 of 3

Site location ESSEX CHELMSFORD CHELMSFORD Land at 51 Main Road, Great Leighs,

Essex

Postcode CM3 1NE Study area 0 Hectares

TL 7250 1664 51.821224156778 0.503199915119 51 49 16 N 000 30 11 E Site coordinates

Point

Lat/Long Datum Unknown Height OD / Min: Om Max: Om

Depth

Project creators

Name of Britannia Archaeology Ltd Organisation

Project brief Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District

Archaeologist) originator Project design Martin Brook

originator

Project Martin Brook

director/manager

Project Martin Brook supervisor

Type of Developer

sponsor/funding

body

Name of sponsor/funding

body

Mr Francis Caulfield

#### Project archives

Physical Archive No

Exists?

Digital Archive Essex HER recipient

Digital Archive ID GLMR 18

Digital Media

Digital Contents "none" "GIS", "Images raster / digital photography", "Spreadsheets", "Survey", "Text"

available

Paper Archive

recipient

Essex HER

Paper Archive ID GLMR 18 Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

available

**Project** bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

Title Land at 51 Main Road, Great Leighs, Essex

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#### Land at 51 Main Road, Great Leighs, Essex Archaeological Evaluation

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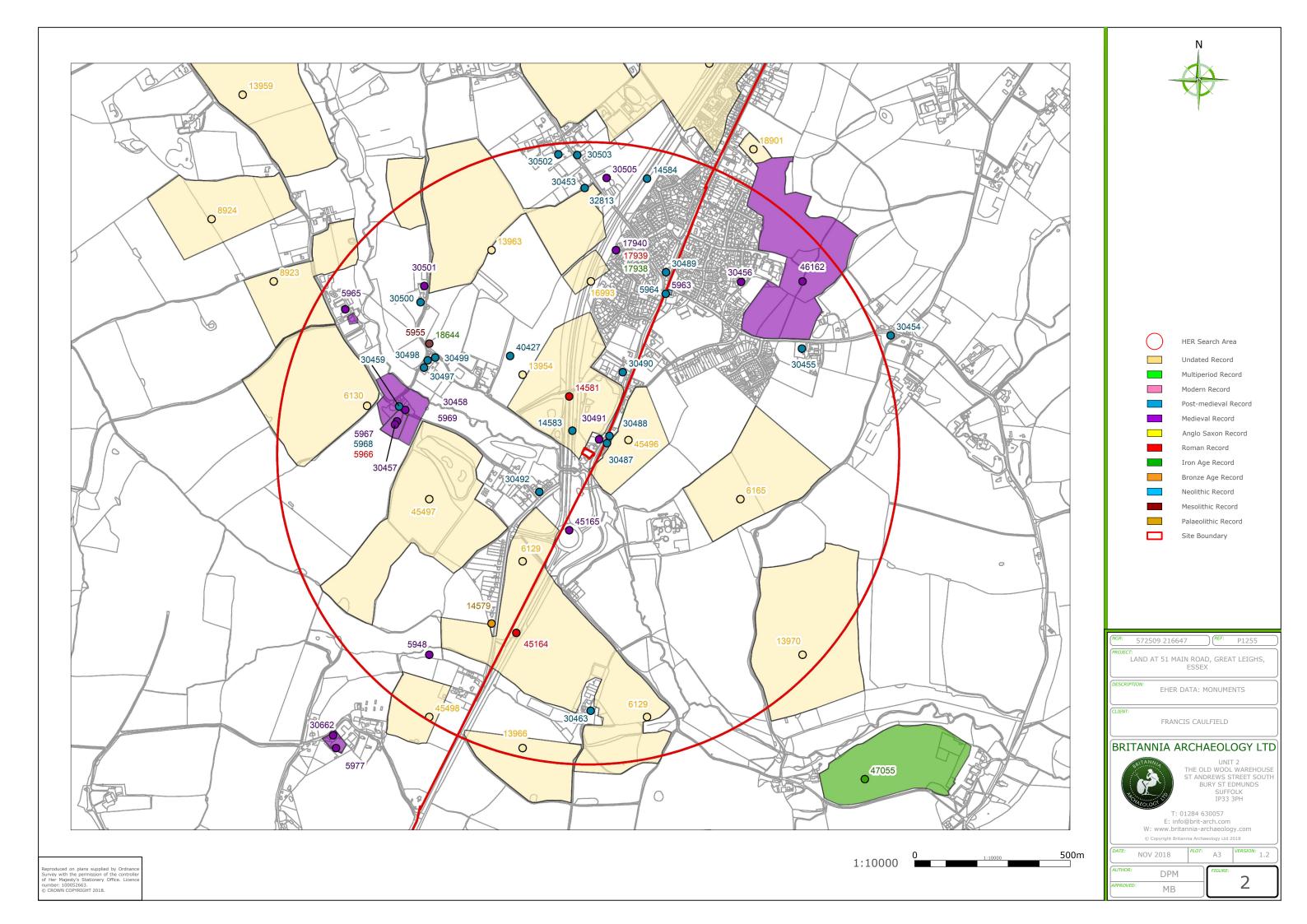
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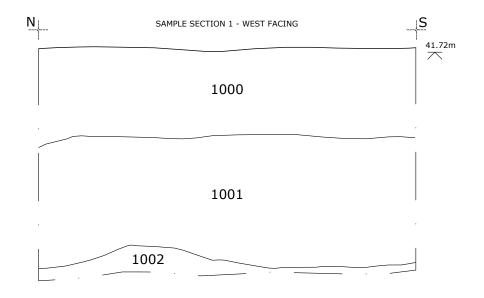
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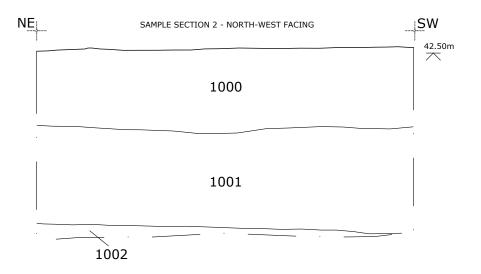


DP1 - SAMPLE SECTION 1, VIEW EAST



DP2 - TRENCH 1, VIEW NORTH







DP3 - SAMPLE SECTION 2, VIEW SOUTH-EAST



DP4 - TRENCH 2, VIEW SOUTH-WEST

