

NSRE13



NORTH STREET, ROCHFORD, ESSEX

Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr J Suttling

08/00906/FUL

May 2013

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Parish: Rochford

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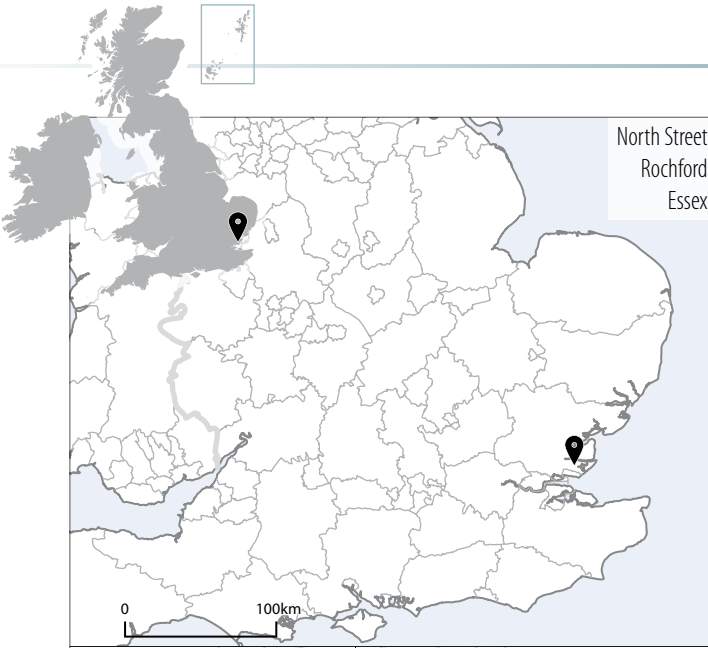
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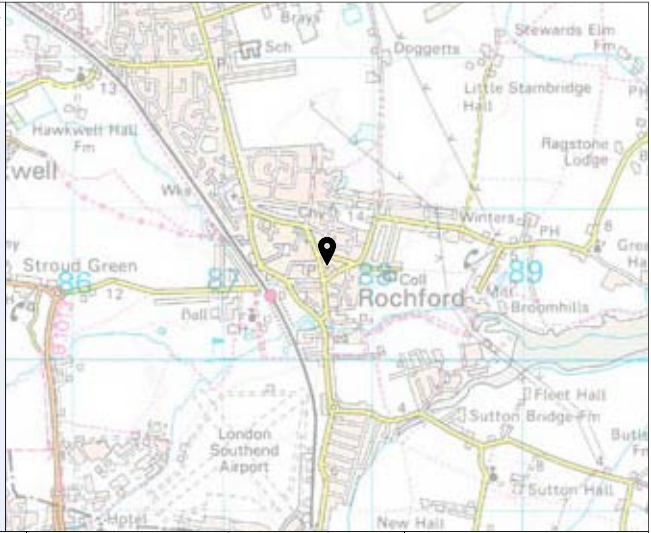
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North Street
Rochford
Essex



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scale 1:500 @ A4



Illus 1

Site location

NORTH STREET, ROCHFORD, ESSEX

Archaeological Evaluation

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd conducted an evaluation at a proposed development site at 14 North Street, Rochford, Essex in order to provide further information on the archaeological potential of the site. The work was commissioned by Mr J Suttling. A total of three trenches were excavated over the Development Area (DA). They revealed the presence of undated linear features and pits and a deposit containing post-medieval and early-modern pottery. These features are likely to have been associated with backplots of post-medieval housing lining the adjacent street fronts. The relative paucity of artefactual material indicates the remains are not associated with medieval settlement or market activity and are considered to be of local significance.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Background

Mr J Suttling (the Client) has been granted planning permission (08/00906/FUL) for the proposed development works on the Development Area (DA) which includes construction of houses and access as well as the demolition of outbuildings. Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (HEM) team requested that a condition be attached to the consent requiring a programme of archaeological investigation. This is in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5 Policy HE 6.1:

Condition 14: No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To allow for proper investigation and recording of the site which is of archaeological and/or historic significance.

The client has commissioned Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and undertake the site investigations which comprise trial trenching evaluation prior to the commencement of construction and write a report (this document) on the results. The work was designed to determine whether any significant archaeology was present within the DA and provide sufficient information to inform on the nature and scope of any mitigation measures (if required by HEM).

1.2 Site location and background

The DA is located adjacent to and north of 14 North Street, Rochford (TQ 8766 9058). The site lies on the eastern side of North Street and occupies a corner plot at the junction of North Street and Old Ship Lane. The site presently comprises the grade II listed Old Ship Inn, which dates to the 18th Century or earlier and forms part of the development proposals and a number of outbuildings which will be demolished. The main area of the DA is under hard-standing with some grass in the NE part of the DA.

The geology of the area is identified as London Clay formations with overlying River Terrace deposits (British Geological Survey website).

1.3 Archaeological background

The Historic Environment Record shows that the DA lies at the heart of the historic core of medieval and post-medieval Rochford (EHER 13579). Archaeological test pits dug at 6 North Street revealed evidence of possible medieval and post-medieval non-structural deposits possibly associated with the market place (Wardill 1997) and trial trenching revealed the presence of a post-medieval pit at 3 North Street (Gadd 1998)

Rochford was granted a market in 1257 and the Lawless Court, a court leet for the Honour of Rayleigh was transferred from Rayleigh to Rochford in the 15th Century and held at King's Hall.

The street pattern of the medieval town took the form of ribbon development along East Street, West Street and North Street and along Weir Pond Road. A triangular market place which has since been infilled was located at the junction of East Street and North Street. The NE arm of this market place is now Old Ship Lane.



To the west of this there is a rectangular market place, within which stood Market Hall (EHER 1707-1861), which along with the south side of West Street seem to represent a planned late 15th Century extension to the town.

West Street, North Street and South Street are characterised by the survival of largely eighteenth or nineteenth century buildings, including C18-C19 grade II listed Old Ship public house, which forms part of the development.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives

In general the objectives of the evaluation are presented in the WSI (Headland Archaeology 2013, Section 4).

Specifically the aims of the investigation include:

- to clarify the nature and extent of medieval or post-medieval occupation;
- to identify and record medieval or post-medieval ribbon development along North Street;
- to identify evidence relating to medieval or post-medieval development in the area of the triangular market place;
- back plot development to the rear of 14 North Street.

2.2 Methodology

Fieldwork took place between the 17th and 18th April 2013. Three trenches between 10 and 17.5m in length and 1.6m in width were excavated (*Illus 1*). Trenches were laid out in order to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the DA.

The trenches were opened down to the top of the natural geology or the archaeological horizon whereupon archaeological features were hand excavated.

2.3 Recording

All recording was in accordance with the code of practice of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). All trenches and contexts were given unique numbers and all recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards that conform to accepted archaeological standards. All stratigraphic relationships were recorded.

An overall site plan at an appropriate scale and relative to the National Grid was recorded by digital survey using a differential GPS.

A full photographic record comprising colour slide and black and white print photographs was taken, supplemented with digital photography. A metric scale was clearly visible in record photographs of contexts.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

Full trench descriptions, including orientation, length and depth of overburden are presented in Appendix 1.1, Trenches 1 and 2 were shortened in length due to spatial constraints. However, because the width of the trenches was 2.0m instead of 1.6m the area coverage remained the same. In general the stratigraphy of the trenches comprised c. 0.5–0.8m of post-medieval and modern overburden overlaying natural gravels. Technical details of individual contexts are presented in Appendix 1.2. Context numbers are expressed according to the trench in which they were found; ie. Trench 1 – [100], [101]; Trench 2, [200], [201] etc. Cut features are shown as [100] and the deposits within them are expressed as (102).

3.1.1 Trench 1

The remains of two shallow pits [103] and [105] were identified at the southern end of the trench, measuring 0.8 and 0.6m in diameter respectively. Both these pits were filled with grey silt with gravel however no finds were recovered. The terminus of a broadly aligned N-S drainage gully measuring 0.7m in width and 0.32m deep was also identified [107], with light grey silty sand and gravels (108). Although no datable artefacts were recovered, fragments of animal bone and oyster shell were recovered and a sample was taken (Section 4).

3.1.2 Trench 2

The remains of a modern posthole [203] and a treebole [205] were identified. A broadly aligned ENE-WSW aligned, flat-based ditch [207] was also identified with a width of 1.35m and a depth of 0.42m (*Illus 2*). No finds were recovered from any of the features.

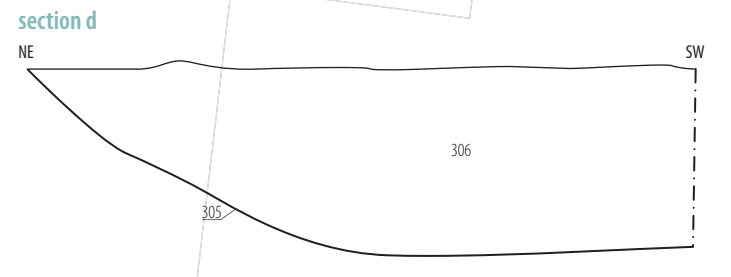
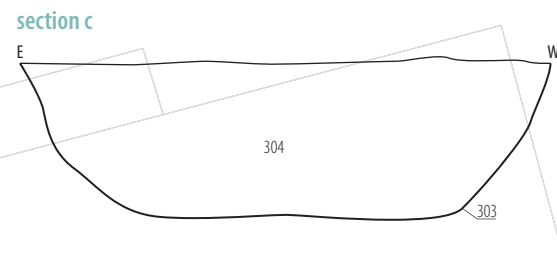
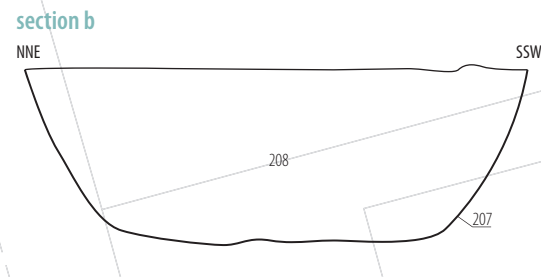
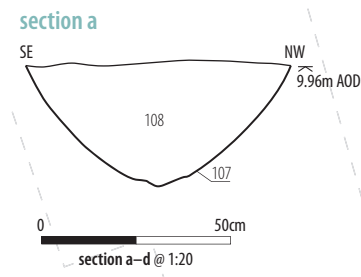
3.1.3 Trench 3

A N-S aligned ditch [303] was identified at the eastern end of the trench. It measured 1.4m in width and 0.4m in depth and had a flat base. No finds were recovered from the feature and although its alignment does not match that of ditch [207] its profile was identical, indicating they may part of the same ditch forming a right-angle. A large feature [305] was revealed at the western most end of the trench. It was 1.8m wide and 0.45m deep and contained a single deposit (306) of dark grey sandy clay silt from which yielded a small assemblage of late medieval and post-medieval pottery along with animal bone and a nail. It is likely to be a rubbish pit or midden and may be associated with the construction of nearby buildings in the post-medieval or modern period.

3.2 Description of the significance of the Heritage Assets

Relevant regional research frameworks comprise *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the eastern counties*, 2: *Research Agenda and Strategy* (East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8) (Brown, N and Glazebrook, J 2000) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A revised framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011) which states that medieval urban areas (70):

Retain their high medieval planned layout of market places and Burbage plots but much remains to be understood about these places before this layout occurs



Illus 2.1
Trench 1 (facing NNW)



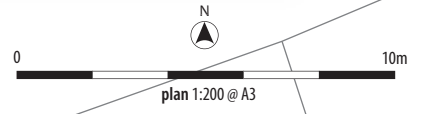
Illus 2.2
Trench 1, showing section through gully [107] (facing SW)



Illus 2.3
Trench 3 (facing E)



Illus 2.4
Trench 3, showing section through ditch [303] (facing NE)



Illus 2
Trenches 1-3

Old Sheep Ln

And further adds that *the high street should be a priority for buildings research, including the identification of industrial and commercial buildings and structures.*

Although it is possible that some of the ditches may relate to Burbage plots, the lack of datable evidence within them means their date is inconclusive. This, combined with the lack of structural features indicates that the remains identified by trial trenching do not contribute to the regional research frameworks. They are characterised as being of local significance.

4. FINDS ASSESSMENT

by Paul Blinkhorn & Julie Franklin

The finds assemblage numbered nine sherds of pottery, three of roof tile and one iron artefact. All finds derived from the same pit fill, Context (306). The finds dated to the late medieval to early post-medieval periods. But for one sherd of late medieval pottery, the assemblage dates to the 17th and 18th centuries. Therefore the fill of the ditch is likely to post-date this period.

4.1 Medieval and post-medieval Pottery

The pottery assemblage comprised nine sherds with a total weight of 453g. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology based on that of the Post-Roman pottery from Colchester (Cunningham 1985; Cotter 2000). A complete catalogue is available below. All the wares are types which are well-known in the region.

Four of the sherds of Red Earthenware are from the same vessel which is, unusually, reduced to a dark grey colour, and with a near-black glaze. One of the body sherds is very warped, and while the vessel may have been a 'second' which was nevertheless used.

A sherd of tin-glazed earthenware, which is from a large dish or 'charger' has painted polychrome decoration of the highest quality. The interior has fragments of flowers and/or fruit executed in blue, orange, and yellow, with a similar range of designs and geometric banding on the exterior, in the same palette plus green. It seems almost certainly to be Dutch, and has similarities with a group of Netherlandish vessels from Lion Walk, Colchester (Cotter 2000, Fig. 162). It is therefore likely to be of a similar, early 17th-18th century date (ibid. 237).

4.2 Ceramic building material (CBM)

There were three fragments of roof-tile with a total weight of 211g. They were all in an orange, slightly sandy fabric with rare calcareous and flint fragments up to 1mm. One piece has a single flint inclusion c 10mm across. The sherds are not closely datable.

4.3 Iron

One iron find was recovered. It appears to be a very large nail head, with a rectangular shaft, narrowing to a chisel edge. Its function is uncertain, though it seems likely that it is some sort of structural fitting.

4.4 Finds catalogues

4.4.1 Pottery

Context	Fabric code	Fabric name	Sherds	Weight (g)	Date
306	F21A	Late medieval Colchester Ware	1	72	1400–1550
306	F40	Red Earthenware	7	359	L15th–18th
306	F46	Dutch, Anglo-Dutch and English Tin-Glazed Earthenwares	1	22	17th–18th

4.4.2 Finds

Context	Material	Object	Description	Sherds	Weight (g)	Date
306	Iron	Nail	Very large nail head with rectangular shaft, narrowing to a chisel edge, head width 60, shaft length 43mm	1	213	–
306	CBM	Roof tile	Orange, slightly sandy fabric with rare calcareous and flint fragments up to 1mm	3	211	–

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

by Laura Bailey

This report presents the results of a palaeoenvironmental remains recovered during the course of evaluation at 14 North Street, Rochford, Essex. One bulk sample (001) was received for flotation and wet sieving. Animal bone and shell, hand collected from pit fill (306), were also received for assessment. Finds recovered from pit fill (306) dated to the late medieval to the late post-medieval period.

5.1 Method

The samples were subjected to flotation and wet sieving in a Siraf-style flotation machine. The floating debris (the flot) was collected in a 250 µm sieve and, once dry, scanned using a binocular microscope. Any material remaining in the flotation tank (retent) was wet-sieved through a 1mm mesh and air-dried. This was then sorted and any material of archaeological significance removed.

The aim of the animal bone assessment was to provide a basic quantification of the available data, to characterise the assemblage as far as possible and to help identify the focus for any further analysis. Identifications are provisional and will need confirmation at analysis stage if necessary.

5.2 Results

Results of the assessment are presented below in Tables 1 (Retent Samples), 2 (Flot samples) and 3 (Animal bone).

5.2.1 Retents (Table 1)

A fragment of bone from a small mammal and fragment of oyster shell were the only remains recovered from (108) (Sample 001).



Context	Sample	Sample Vol (l)	Small mammal bone	Marine shell	Comments
---------	--------	----------------	-------------------	--------------	----------

108	001	20	+	+	-
-----	-----	----	---	---	---

Key: += rare (0-5), ++ = occasional (6-15), +++ = common (15-50) and ++++ = abundant (>50)

NB charcoal over 1cm is suitable for identification and AMS dating

Table 1

Environmental remains recovered from Sample 001

5.2.2 Flots (Table 2)

The flot from Sample 001 was sterile.

Context	Sample	Total flot Vol (ml)	Comments
108	001	0	Sterile

Table 2

Flotation results

5.2.3 Animal bone (Table 3)

A very limited assemblage of hand collected animal bone, was recovered from deposit (108) and pit fill (306) amounting to 3 and 12 bone fragments respectively (Table 3). The preservation of the surface was fair to poor. The bone was fragmented and both pre- and post-depositional breaks were visible.

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The assemblage included sheep/goat, pig and possibly cattle bones and therefore belong to the main domestic species. However, the assemblage is too small to provide reliable information concerning the relative importance of the species present.

5.2.4 Hand-collected shell

Two oyster shells and a fragment of cockle shell were hand collected from Context 306. Two degraded oyster shells fragments were also collected from deposit 108. Oyster shells are commonly found in late medieval to early post-medieval sites in the area (e.g. Germany 2005) and their presence is unremarkable given the close proximity of the site to the Essex coast.

5.3 Environmental potential

As it stands, the environmental assemblage offers little potential to address key research questions for the land-use and occupation for this part of the Greater Thames Estuary (Heppell 1999) or Eastern Region (Medlycott 2011). Little further information could be gained from analysis of the assemblage.

6. DISCUSSION

Trial trenching revealed the presence of archaeological features on the DA which are discussed below.

The features in Trench 1 are likely to be related to settlement activity, the linear feature shares characteristics of a drainage gully and the pits themselves could have served as refuse pits but given their shallow depths this can only be speculative. However given the lack of datable evidence from these features it can only be speculated as to whether they were from medieval or later activity in the area.

The linear features identified in Trenches 2 and 3 both share a similar profile and could form part of an enclosure system. Such an enclosure could have been related to Burbage plots associated with the medieval core of Rochford or the nearby Old Ship Inn. Specifically, the lack of datable evidence means the date is questionable. In general, despite limited finds of roof tile and nails the relative lack of finds within the ditches is not consistent with densely occupied settlement nearby. It is possible that the large pit-like feature identified at the end of Trench 3 is a result of clearance works associated with the construction of the Old Ship Inn. Indeed, the dates of the pottery are consistent with the 18th century construction date for the Inn.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Based on their form and likely function, the archaeological remains identified by trial trenching are likely to be related to back plots associated with post-medieval buildings lining the adjacent street fronts. The lack of structural remains within the evaluation area is consistent with this. The form and function of these remains also suggests that they have no relationship with the nearby triangular market. Indeed, the lack of topsoil and subsoil within the DA and

Context	Sample	Condition	Weight (g)	No. of fragments	Large mammal (eg. cow/horse)	Medium sized mammal (eg. pig/sheep/goat)	Very small animal (eg. bird/amphibian/mouse)	Comments (fragmentation, diversity, cut marks and other observations re. bone type)
108	001	good	<0.1	1	-	-	1	-
108	Hand collected	poor	57	2	2	-	-	Longbone fragments
306	Hand collected	poor	383	12	2	10	-	Sample includes pig jaw and teeth, large mammal rib, long bones, pelvis, ovis jaw and teeth
Total				15	4	10	1	

Table 3

Animal bone assemblage

the shallow depth of many of the archaeological features indicate substantial truncation in the post-medieval and modern era and therefore, more ephemeral remains such as postholes may not survive. These remains contribute little to the regional research frameworks and are considered to be of local significance. Little further information could be gained from further analysis of the data.

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9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Site registers

Appendix 1.1 Trench register

Trench	Orientation	Length (m)	Description	Min depth of archaeology (m)
001	NW-SE	8	0–0.17m, made ground, 0.17–0.44m grey silty clay with bricks and gravels; 0.44–0.72m brown grey silt with gravels and bricks; 0.72m+ natural gravels	0.72
002	SW-NE	14	0–0.17m, made ground, 0.17–0.49m grey silty clay with bricks and gravels; 0.49–0.75m brown grey silt with gravels and bricks; 0.75m+ natural gravels	0.75
003	ENE-WSW	12.5	0–0.17m, made ground, 0.17–0.46m grey silty clay with bricks and gravels; 0.46–0.58m brown grey silt with gravels and bricks; 0.58m+ natural gravels	0.58

Appendix 1.2 Context register

Context	Area	Description
100	Tr1	Made ground consisting of concrete rubble, tarmac, bricks
101	Tr1	Dark grey silty clay with bricks, gravels, glass, clay pipe, tile
102	Tr1	Grey brown silt with brick and gravels
103	Tr1	Pit cut, W=0.8m, D=0.09m
104	Tr1	Grey silt with gravel inclusions
105	Tr1	Pit cut, W=0.6m, D=0.05m
106	Tr1	Grey silt with gravel inclusions
107	Tr1	Gully terminus cut, L=1.0m, W=0.7m, D=0.33m
108	Tr1	Light grey silt with gravels, bone and oyster shell finds
200	Tr2	Made ground consisting of concrete rubble, tarmac, bricks
201	Tr2	Dark grey silty clay with bricks, gravels, glass, clay pipe, tile
202	Tr2	Grey brown silt with brick and gravels
203	Tr2	Posthole cut, 0.2m wide, 0.11m deep
204	Tr2	Loose dark brown silty clay with brick fragments
205	Tr2	Treebole cut, W=1.0m, D=0.36m
206	Tr2	Light grey silt with gravels and roots
207	Tr2	Ditch cut, L=1.0m, W=1.4m, D=0.42m
208	Tr2	Dark grey silt with gravels
300	Tr3	Made ground consisting of concrete rubble, tarmac, bricks
301	Tr3	Dark grey silty clay with bricks, gravels, glass, clay pipe, tile
302	Tr3	Light grey silt with brick and gravels

Context	Area	Description
303	Tr3	Ditch cut, L=1.0m, W=1.4m, D=0.4m
304	Tr3	Dark grey silt with gravels
305	Tr3	Pit cut, W=1.8m, D=0.45m
306	Tr3	Grey silt with red patches, pottery, nail, animal bone and oyster shell finds

Appendix 1.3 Drawing register

Drawing	Plan	Section	Description
001	1:50	–	Trench 1
002	–	1:10	West facing section of gully [107]
003	–	1:10	South facing section of Pit [103]
004	1:50	–	Trench 2
005	1:50	–	Trench 3
006	–	1:20	South facing section of ditch [303]
007	–	1:20	Northeast facing section of ditch [207]
008	–	1:20	Southeast facing section of pit [305]

Appendix 1.4 Photographic register

Frame	Direction	Description
001	N	Trench 1
002	NE	Trench 2
003	W	Trench 3
004	SW	Gully [107]
005	NE	Pit [105]
006	N	Pit [103]
007	NE	Posthole [203]
008	E	Ditch [207]
009	SW	Pit [205]
010	N	Ditch [303]
011	NE	Pit [305]
012	N/A	Pit [305]
013	E	Pit [305]

Appendix 2 Essex historic environment record / Essex archaeology and history

Summary sheet

Site name/Address: 14 North Street, Rochford, Essex

Parish: Rochford

District: Rochford

NGR: TQ 8766 9058

Site Code: RF 19

Type of Work: Archaeological Evaluation

Site Director/Group: James Newbould, Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd

Date of Work: 17th April 2013

Size of Area Investigated:

Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Southend

Funding source: Private

Further Seasons Anticipated?: No

Related HER Nos: n/a

Final Report: Headland Archaeology 2013. Archaeological Evaluation at North Street, Rochford, Essex.

Periods Represented: Post-medieval/Early Modern

SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd conducted an evaluation at a proposed development site at 14 North Street, Rochford, Essex in order to provide further information on the archaeological potential of the site. The work was commissioned by Mr J Suttling. A total of three trenches were excavated over the Development Area (DA). They revealed the presence of undated linear features and pits and a deposit containing post-medieval and early-modern pottery. These features are likely to have been associated with backplots of post-medieval housing lining the adjacent street fronts. The relative paucity of artefactual material indicates the remains are not associated with medieval settlement or market activity and are considered to be of local significance. 9

Previous Summaries/Reports:

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Date of Summary: 10.05.2013



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