

**Written Scheme of Investigation for an
Archaeological Evaluation
on land at
The Distaff, Belmont Hill, Newport
Essex**

NGR: TL 55214 23441

ASE Project no: 8205

Site Code: TBC

June 2014

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared by Archaeology South-East (ASE) on behalf of the land owner in response to a design brief prepared by ECC Place Services (2014) for a programme of archaeological work in advance of residential development on land at The Distaff, Belmont Hill, Newport, Essex. The site has potential for surviving archaeological remains of Medieval and Post-Medieval date.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Site Description and Location

- 2.1.1 The site is located on the south side of Water Lane, which runs broadly west to east off the B1383 Belmont Hill. The plot currently comprises a domestic garden surrounded by residential properties located on the northern edge of the historic core of Newport, at NGR TL 55214 23441.

- 2.1.2 The solid geology of the study site is shown by the British Geological Survey as comprising the New Pit Chalk Formation overlain by deposits of Alluvium associated with Wicken Water, which is a tributary of the River Cam. Deposits of Head are present to either side of the Alluvium (BGS Geology of Britain Viewer – accessed 19/06/2014).

2.2 Reasons for Project

- 2.2.1 A planning application (UTT/13/1037) was submitted to Uttlesford District Council in April 2013 for the erection of a single property on land north of The Distaff, with pedestrian and vehicular access on to Water Lane. As the site lies in an area highlighted by the Historic Environment Record as having the potential for archaeological deposits to be present ECC Place Services, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, recommended that an archaeological condition be attached to any grant of planning consent. This advice was in line with guidance contained in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012) and the condition states that:

"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 planning authority."

2.3 Historical and Archaeological Background

2.3.1 The site lies on the northern edge of the historic core of the town, on the east side of the old London to Cambridge road, between the edge of the medieval settlement and the site of the Hospital of St Mary and St Leonard, which was located on the east side of the Cambridge Road. Medieval remains have been found in the vicinity of the site, at Belmont House, while Distaff Cottage is of 17th century date.

2.3.2 Wicken Water, a small broadly east-west flowing stream, runs to the south of the site, flowing into the River Cam. Both water courses would have been an important resource over the millennia and a focus for a range of activities, including those of agricultural, pastoral and industrial nature, suggesting that there is some potential for remains of virtually periods, but particularly those of medieval and post-medieval date, to survive in the vicinity.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

The aim of the archaeological evaluation is to determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains and to establish their character, location, extent, date, quality and significance. Any archaeological remains uncovered by the evaluation will be assessed against the wider background of previous fieldwork in the area.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 Specific research aims for the initial trenching will be to identify any evidence for:

- Medieval structures/ settlement associated with the road and historic settlement;

- Other medieval deposits such as industrial production or occupation associated with the River Cam or Wicken Water;

3.2.2 With regard to Medlycott, the dynamics of medieval settlement and the origins and development of different settlement types have been identified as a topic for further research (2011, p 70). In addition, , the development of towns, changes in their internal layouts and housing densities, and the understanding of the inter-relationships between towns and their hinterlands and their role as centres of supply and demand have all been highlighted as needing further study.

3.2.3 In the event that significant discoveries are made the report will seek to review the existing research objectives and identify any other appropriate research themes for any further work that is required, in line with those laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. Research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England*. (Medlycott 2011).

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Requirements

4.1.1 Prior to the commencement of fieldwork a site code will be obtained from ECC Place Services and an OASIS record will be initiated for the evaluation.

4.1.2. The ECC Place Services Design Brief for the archaeological work requires a single trench to be cut within the footprint of the new dwelling. The location of the trench is shown in Figure 1.

4.1.3. In the event that important archaeological remains are identified a site meeting will be held with the client and the ECC Place Services monitoring officer to discuss the significance of the remains and decide whether any variations to the evaluation strategy are appropriate, and/ or the nature and scope of any further work that is required in order to mitigate the impact of the development on the archaeological record e.g. open area excavation of the

threatened remains within the house plot. Where further work is required this will be subject to separate costs, timescales for delivery and reporting and may be subject to a separate Brief and WSI, depending upon the requirements of the ECC Place Services monitoring officer.

4.2 Standards

4.2.1 ASE will adhere to the IfA *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2013a & 2013b), and the ALGAO *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003) throughout the project. ASE is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the IfA.

4.3 Machining

4.3.1 Machining will be carried out to ASE standards under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist. The removal of modern overburden will be performed by a tracked excavator equipped with a toothless bucket whenever possible. Machine-excavation of each trench will stop at the uppermost archaeological surface, or the natural geology, whichever is encountered first, and will create a clean and level surface for further excavation and recording by hand.

4.3.2 In areas where subsoil exists between soil/overburden and clean natural, subsoil stripping will take place under archaeological supervision.

4.3.3 Any spoil heaps generated will be visually scanned and checked with a metal detector as appropriate.

4.3.4 Any subsoil excavated will be stored separately from topsoil. All trenches will be backfilled, with subsoil deposited first, and followed by topsoil.

4.4 Excavation and Recording

4.4.1 All exposed archaeological features and deposits will be recorded and excavated, except obviously modern features and disturbances.

4.4.2 Standard ASE methodologies will be employed. All stratigraphy will be recorded using the ASE context recording system.

- 4.4.3 The trench will be accurately located using Global Positioning System (GPS) or Total Station survey equipment if required. All features revealed will be planned either by hand or using digital survey equipment.
- 4.4.4 Where drawn, site plans will be at 1:20 scale unless circumstances dictate otherwise. Plans at other scales will be drawn if appropriate (e.g. cremation burials at 1:10). Sections will be drawn at 1:10.
- 4.4.5 Datum levels will be taken where appropriate. Sufficient levels will be taken to ensure that the relative height of the archaeological/subsoil horizon can be extrapolated across the whole of the development area.
- 4.4.6 Archaeological features and deposits will be excavated using hand tools, unless they cannot be accessed safely or unless a machine-excavated trench is the only practical method of excavation. Any mechanical excavation of archaeologically significant features will be agreed with the ECC Place Services monitoring officer in advance.
- 4.4.7 With the exception of modern disturbances, normally a minimum 50% of all contained features will be excavated. Modern disturbances will only be excavated as necessary in order to properly define and evaluate any features that they may cut. Normally 10% (or at least a 1m-long segment) of non-structural linear features will be excavated. At least 50% of linear features with a possible structural function (e.g. beam slots) will normally be excavated. Details of the precise excavation strategy and any alterations to it will be discussed with the monitoring officer if particularly significant archaeology is revealed. Further discussion and agreement on the approach to the excavation of complex areas may be requested during the project.
- 4.4.8 All articulated human remains, graves and cremation vessels/deposits will receive minimal excavation to define their extent and establish whether they are burials or not. Generally all graves and cremation burials will be recorded and their positions noted without full excavation, only surface cleaning. A decision would then be made on future treatment of the human remains in consultation with the client/ their agent and the ECC Place Services

monitoring officer, and the coroner would be informed. Graves and cremation burials would only be excavated if they have already been disturbed, or if it is decided that a small sample of the burials need be evaluated to assess their condition and preservation.

- 4.4.9 A full photographic record comprising colour digital images will be made with monochrome prints of significant features/feature groups or in situ artefacts only. The photographic record will aim to provide an overview of the excavation and the surrounding area. A representative sample of individual feature shots and sections will be taken, in addition to working shots and elements of interest (individual features and group shots). The photographic register will include: film number, shot number, location of shot, direction of shot and a brief description of the subject photographed.

4.5 Finds/Environmental Remains

- 4.5.1 In general, all finds from all features will be collected. Where large quantities of post-medieval and later finds are present and the feature is not of intrinsic or group interest, a sample of the finds assemblage will normally be collected sufficient to date and characterise the feature.
- 4.5.2 Finds will be identified, by context number, to a specific deposit or, in the case of topsoil finds, to a specific area of the site.
- 4.5.3 All finds will be properly processed according to ASE guidelines and IfA *Guidelines for Finds Work*. All pottery and other finds, where appropriate, will be marked with the site code and context number.
- 4.5.4 If appropriate, environmental samples will be taken from well-stratified, datable deposits that are deemed to have potential for the preservation/survival of ecofactual material. Bulk soil samples (minimum 40 litres or 50% of context) will be taken for wet sieving and flotation, and for finds recovery. ASE's environmental consultant is Karine Le Hegarat (ASE) and, if necessary, the English Heritage regional scientific advisor will be consulted. In all instances deposits with clear intrusive material shall be avoided.

4.5.5 Any finds believed to fall potentially within the statutory definition of Treasure, as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, amended 2003, shall be reported to the Essex County Council Finds Liaison Officer. Should the find's status as treasure be confirmed the Coroner, the client, landowner and the ECC Place Service monitoring officer will also be informed. A record shall be provided to the Coroner and to the ECC Place Service monitoring officer of the date and circumstances of discovery, the identity of the finder, and the exact location of the find(s) (OS map reference to within 1 metre, and find spot(s) marked onto the site plan).

4.5.6 See above and Appendix 1 for information regarding specialist consultants

5.0 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

5.1 Client Report

5.1.1 Within 4 weeks of the completion of fieldwork a report will be produced containing the following information:

- SUMMARY: A concise non-technical summary
- INTRODUCTION: General introduction to project including reasons for work and funding, planning background.
- BACKGROUND: to include geology, topography, current site usage/description, and what is known of the history and archaeology of the surrounding area.
- AIMS AND OBJECTIVES: Summary of aims and objectives of the project
- METHOD: Methodology used to carry out the work.
- FIELDWORK RESULTS: Detailed description of results. In addition to archaeological results, the depth of the archaeological horizon and/or subsoil across the site will be described. The nature, location, extent, date, significance and quality of any archaeological remains will be described.
- SPECIALIST REPORTS: Summary descriptions of artefactual and ecofactual remains recovered. Brief discussion of intrinsic value of assemblages and their more specific value to the understanding of the site.

- **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS:** Overview to include assessment of value and significance of the archaeological deposits and artefacts, and consideration of the site in its wider context.
- **APPENDICES:** Context descriptions, finds catalogues, contents of archive and deposition details, HER summary sheet.
- **FIGURES:** to include a location plan of the archaeological works in relation to the proposed development (at an Ordnance Survey scale), specific plans of areas of archaeological interest (at 1:50), a section drawing to show present ground level and depth of deposits, section drawings of relevant features (at 1:20). Colour photographs of the more significant archaeological features and general views of the site will be included where appropriate.

5.1.2 In addition to copies of the report supplied to the client, a digital copy of the report will be supplied to the ECC Place Service monitoring officer for planning purposes and inclusion in the Essex Historic Environment Record.

5.1.3 Copies of the report will also be submitted to Saffron Walden Museum as part of the project archive.

5.1.4 A form will be completed for the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> in accordance with the guidelines provided by English Heritage and the Archaeological Data Service.

5.2 Publication

5.2.1 Publication will be by an evaluation report produced within four weeks of the completion of fieldwork. Subject to a timescale to be approved by the Client a summary report will also be submitted for publication in the annual fieldwork round-up in *Essex Archaeology and History*. In the event that no further works are planned and exceptional archaeological remains are found which warrant publication in their own right a separate note on these will be produced to a timetable to be agreed with ECC Place Services.

5.3 Archive

- 5.3.1 Guidelines contained in UKIC's *Guidelines for the Presentation of excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* and the MGC's *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* will be followed for the preparation of the archive for museum deposition.
- 5.3.2 Finds from the archaeological fieldwork will be kept with the archival material.
- 5.3.3 Subject to agreement with the legal landowner ASE will arrange with Saffron Walden Museum for the deposition of the archive and artefact collection. Any items requiring treatment will be conserved. The landowner will be asked to donate the finds to the local museum.

6 0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

6.1 Site Risk Assessment and Safety Measures

- 6.1.1 ASE's Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) system covers most aspects of excavation work and ensures that for most sites the risks are adequately controlled. Prior to and during fieldwork sites are subject to an ongoing assessment of risk. Site-specific risk assessments are kept under review and amended whenever circumstances change which materially affect the level of risk. Where significant risks have been identified in work to be carried out by ASE a written generic assessment will be made available to those affected by the work. A copy of the Risk Assessment is kept on site.

6.2 Site risk assessment and safety measures

- 6.2.1 An initial appraisal of risk suggests that adherence to ASE's RAMS system should adequately control identified risk. Assessment of risk is an ongoing process and should circumstances demand additional risk assessments will be carried out prior to and during archaeological work.
- 6.2.2 ASE staff will liaise with the client and/or their agent and will follow any additional Health and Safety instructions that are given/ agreed.
- 6.2.3 Archaeology South-East is insured against claims for: public liability to the value of £50,000,000 any one occurrence and in the aggregate for products liability; professional indemnity to the value of £10,000,000 any one

occurrence; employer's liability to the value of £50,000,000 each and every loss.

7 RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

7.1 Staffing and Equipment

7.1.1 The archaeological works will be undertaken by a professional team of archaeologists, comprising a project supervisor with support from an assistant archaeologist and a surveyor as required.

7.1.2 The project supervisor will be responsible for fieldwork, post-excavation reporting and archiving in liaison with the relevant specialists and under the overall direction of the fieldwork project manager (Adrian Scruby) and the post-excavation project manager (Mark Atkinson).

7.1.3 The ECC Place Service monitoring officer will be notified of the supervisor assigned to the project prior to the start of works and should any subsequent change of personnel occur. CVs of all key staff are available on request.

7.1.4 Specialists who may be consulted are listed in Appendix 1.

7.1.5 Other specialists may be consulted if necessary. These will be made known to the monitoring office for approval prior to consultation. Similarly, any changes in the specialist list will be made known to the monitoring office for approval prior to consultation.

7.2 Timetable and Programme

7.2.1 The works are provisionally programmed to start on Monday 30rd June and it is envisaged that machining, recording and excavation will take one or two days to complete. The production of the report will take c. 4 weeks from the end of the fieldwork. The client and their agent are aware of working methods and provision has been made to allow access to undertake the evaluation works.

8 MONITORING

- 8.1 The ECC Place Services monitoring officer will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project.

- 8.2 Any variations to the specification will be agreed with the ECC Place Services monitoring officer prior to being carried out.

- 8.3 The ECC Place Services monitoring officer will be kept informed of progress throughout the project and will be contacted in the event that significant archaeological features are discovered. Arrangements will be made for the monitoring officer to inspect the evaluation trenches before they are backfilled. The trenches will not be backfilled without the agreement of the monitoring officer.

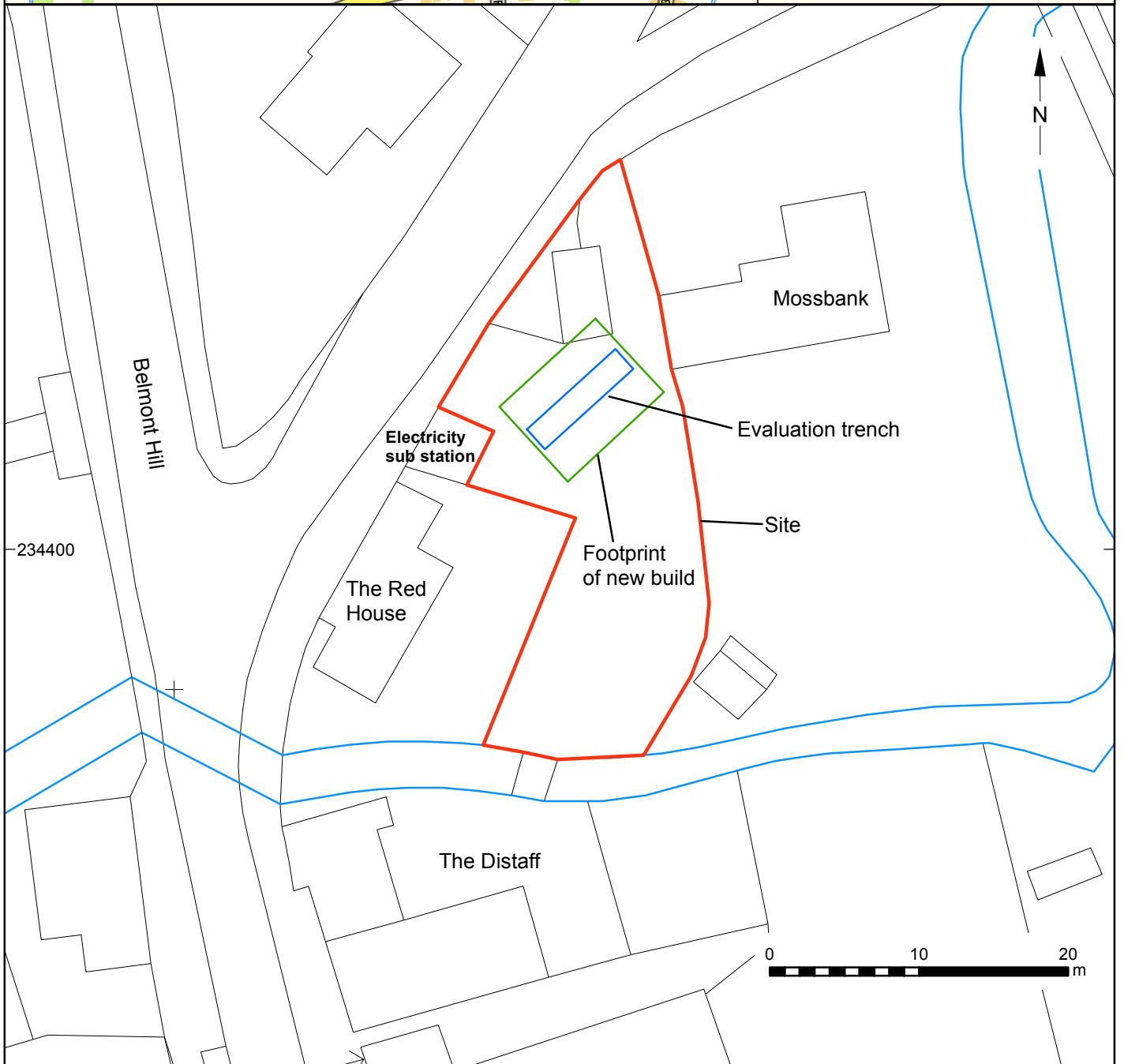
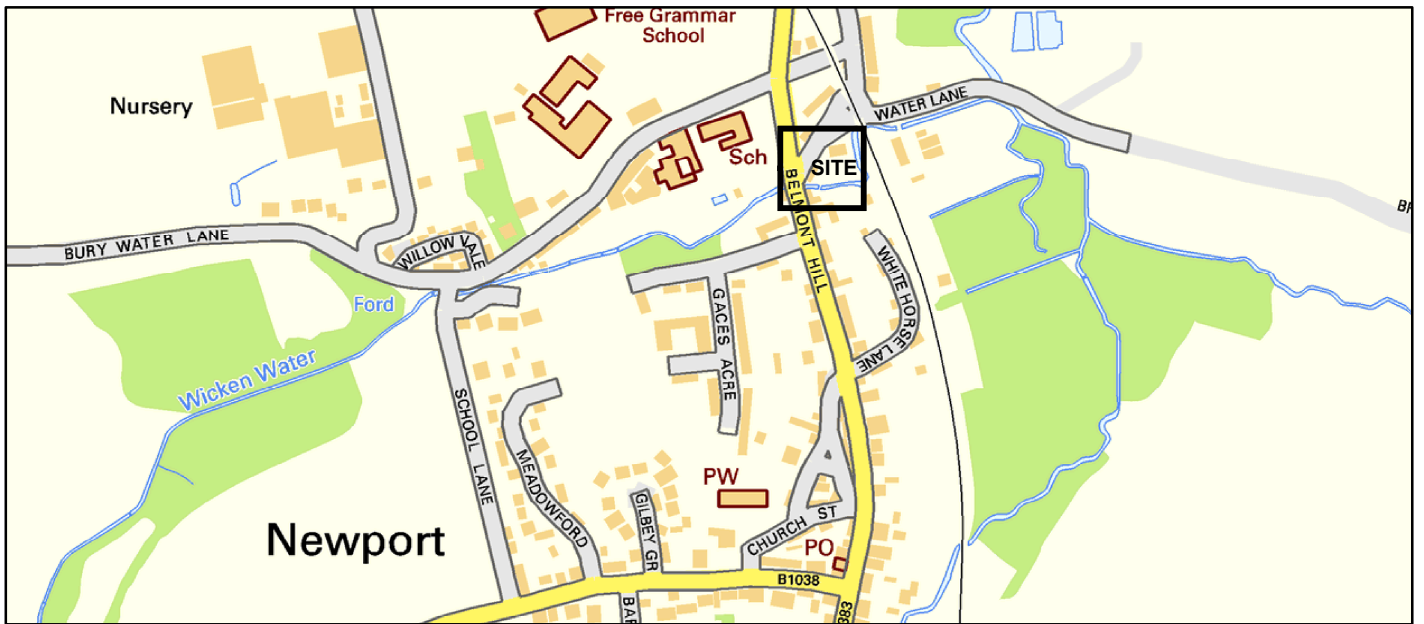
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APPENDIX 1

Specialists to be used as necessary:

Prehistoric and Roman pottery	Louise Rayner & Anna Doherty (ASE)
Prehistoric	Nick Lavender (external: Essex region)
Post-Roman pottery	Luke Barber (external: Sussex, Kent and London)
Post-Roman pottery (Essex)	Helen Walker (external: Essex)
CBM	Sue Pringle & Luke Barber (external)
Fired Clay	Elke Raemen & Trista Clifford (ASE)
Clay Tobacco Pipe	Elke Raemen (ASE)
Glass	Elke Raemen (ASE)
Slag	Luke Barber, Lynne Keyes (external); Trista Clifford (ASE)
Metalwork	Trista Clifford (ASE)
Worked Flint	Karine Le Hégarat (ASE); Hugo Anderson-Whymark (external)
Geological material and worked stone	Luke Barber (external)
Human bone incl cremated bone	Lucy Sibun (ASE)
Animal bone incl fish	Gemma Ayton (ASE)
Marine shell	Elke Raemen (ASE); David Dunkin (external)
Registered Finds	Elke Raemen & Trista Clifford (ASE)
Coins	Trista Clifford (ASE)
Treasure administration	Trista Clifford (ASE)
Conservation and x-ray	Fishbourne Roman Villa or UCL Institute of Archaeology
Geoarchaeology	Dr Matt Pope & Liz Chambers (ASE)
Geoarchaeology (incl wetland environments)	Kristina Krawiec (ASE)
Macro-plant remains	Dr Lucy Allott & Karine Le Hégarat (ASE)
Charcoal & Waterlogged wood	Dr Lucy Allott & Dawn Elise Moony (ASE)



© Archaeology South-East		The Distaff, Belmont Hill, Newport	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8205	Jun 2014	Indicative location of archaeological evaluation trench	
Report Ref: WSI	Drawn by: APL		