

**LAND ADJACENT TO 1-3 EASTERN ESPLANADE
CANVEY ISLAND
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

June 2011

Land adjacent to 1-3 Eastern Esplanade, Canvey Island

HER Summary Report

Prepared for Brian Davison Associates

Archaeological monitoring was carried out during groundworks associated with the re-development of an area of land adjacent to 1-3 Eastern Esplanade, Canvey Island. This document presents the results of that monitoring, undertaken between March-May 2011.

The work was carried out for Brian Davison Associates in line with a design brief issued by Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (Adrian Gascoyne) and a responding Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by the ECC Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU).

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Prepared by:	Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit Fairfield Court Fairfield Road Braintree CM7 3YQ Tel 01376 331431
Project Manager:	Adrian Scruby
Project Officer:	Ellen Heppell

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Site Name/Address: Land Adjacent to 1-3 Eastern Esplanade, Canvey Island	
Parish: Canvey Island	District: Castle Point
NGR: TQ80265 82533	Site Code: CAEE11
Type of Work: Archaeological Monitoring	Site Director/Team: E. Heppell (ECC FAU)
Dates of Work: March-May 2011	Size of Area Investigated: 0.27 ha of 0.6 ha
Curating Museum: Southend Museum	Funding Source: Developer
Further Work Anticipated? No	Related HER Nos. None
Final Report: Summary Report for EHER	OASIS Ref: excou1-103784
Periods Represented: Modern	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>Archaeological monitoring took place during groundworks associated with the redevelopment of a site, 0.6ha in area, lying to the east of 1-3 Eastern Esplanade, Canvey Island (Fig. 1). The site was bounded to the west by the Monico Hotel, the north by residential development, to the east by a cinema and to the south faced on to Eastern Esplanade.</p> <p>Comprising what was, prior to embankment in the 17th century, a group of marshland islands separated by fleets Canvey Island is the site of a number of salterns of a type known as 'red hills'. These are characterised by extensive deposits of red briquetage debris and are generally Late Iron Age or Roman in date, although examples of earlier date have been recorded. The proposed redevelopment lay between two groups of such monuments (Fig. 2) as recorded on the EHER, although it should be noted that there is some debate as to the precise location of EHER 7103 and 7104.</p> <p>The redevelopment lay in an area of former marshland which was undeveloped until the 1930s. In 1933 the Canvey Casino was opened, the first building on the Eastern Esplanade (Yearsley 2000, 27). The main building was along the front of the redevelopment site, housing amusements on the ground floor and a ballroom and restaurant on the first floor. To the rear the plot was covered by hardstanding and a steel framed building. This housed larger rides such as dodgems. The casino was demolished in the 1990s but the site was retained as an open amusements site. Various buildings were present on the site in 1999 (Google Earth).</p> <p>The redevelopment of the site comprised the construction of five blocks of residential</p>	

accommodation, Blocks A – C to the rear of the plot and D and E along the road frontage (Fig. 3). These were to be built on raft foundations, with the addition of piles in the case of Blocks D and E. In each case the area of the building was cleared of modern debris (e.g. demolition rubble) and the existing concrete hardstanding removed. Following this the ground level was reduced by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, in order to create a 'clean' level surface onto which a blinding layer was placed. The reduction in ground level was minimal, typically a maximum of 600mm from the existing ground level, inclusive of the concrete hardstanding. For the purpose of the archaeological monitoring each of the plots were examined following the removal of concrete and during/following levelling.

No archaeological features were identified in any of the building plots. In each case the natural subsoil, where exposed, comprised greyish brown alluvial clay, consistent with British Geological Survey mapping. In the case of Block A this was relatively undisturbed, although it was crossed by a number of services. Blocks B and C were heavily disturbed by modern services, particularly drains, and patches of black 'oily' clay were noted, along with patches of hogging and crushed hardcore. Blocks D and E, along the frontage, were heavily disturbed and crossed by numerous services, they were also the site of a large concrete-lined drain access shaft and the pad foundations of the two-storey casino.

Although the level of disturbance on the redevelopment on site was significant it is considered that any substantial features, for example the remains of 'red hills' would have been visible and the absence of any such remains is considered to be accurate. Should any more discrete features have been present, for example small post-holes and isolated finds, it is unlikely that they would have been visible due to the high level of disturbance.

Bibliography:

Yearsley, I. 2000 *Islands of Essex*

Acknowledgements:

Thanks are due to Brian Davison Associates for commissioning the works and Paul White (Builder) for his assistance and co-operation on site.

Previous Summaries/Reports: None

Author of Summary: E. Heppell

Date of Summary: 30 June 2011



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Fig.1 Site Location

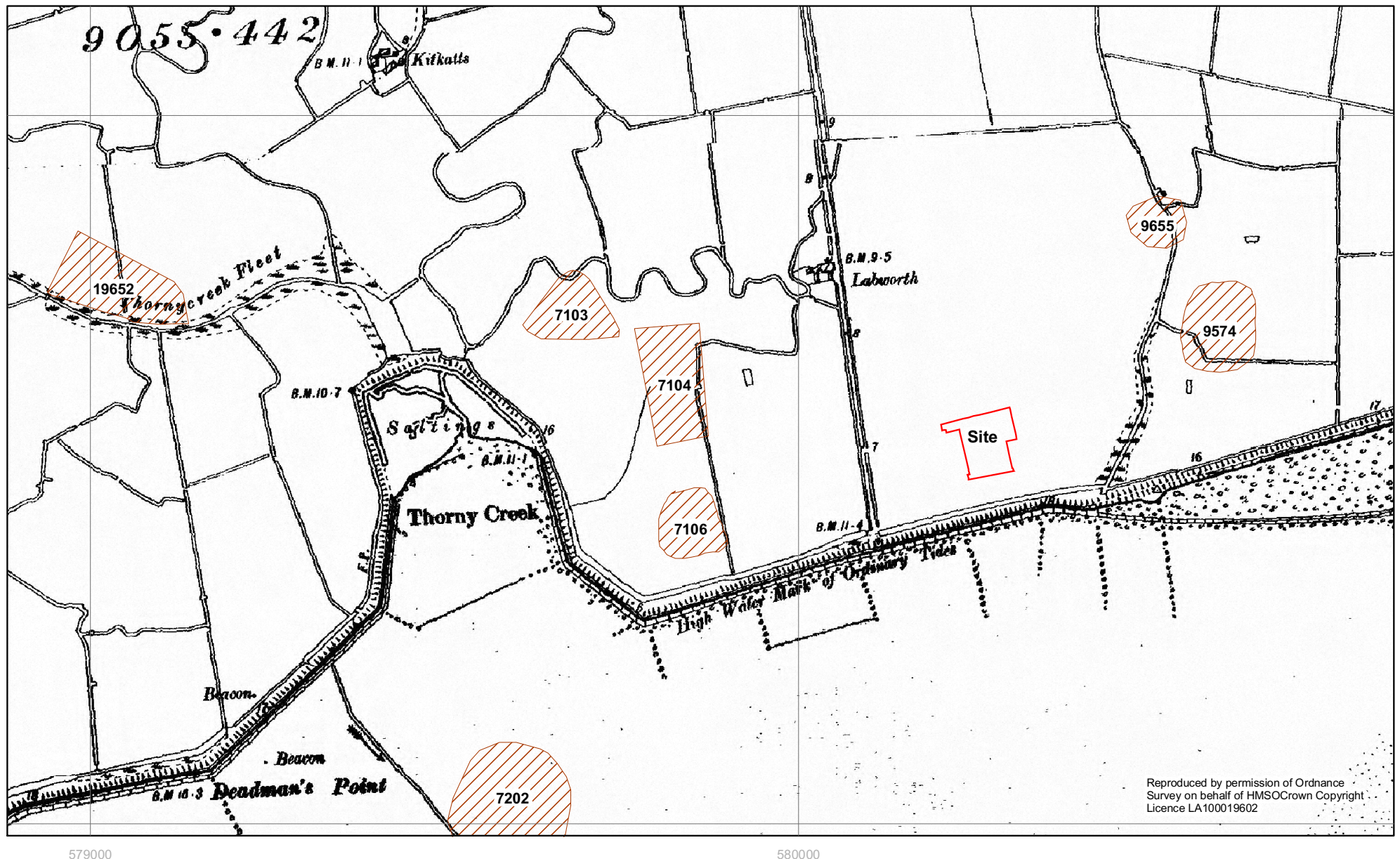


Fig.2 Site showing selected EHER References on 2nd Edition OS 6" mpa (1898)

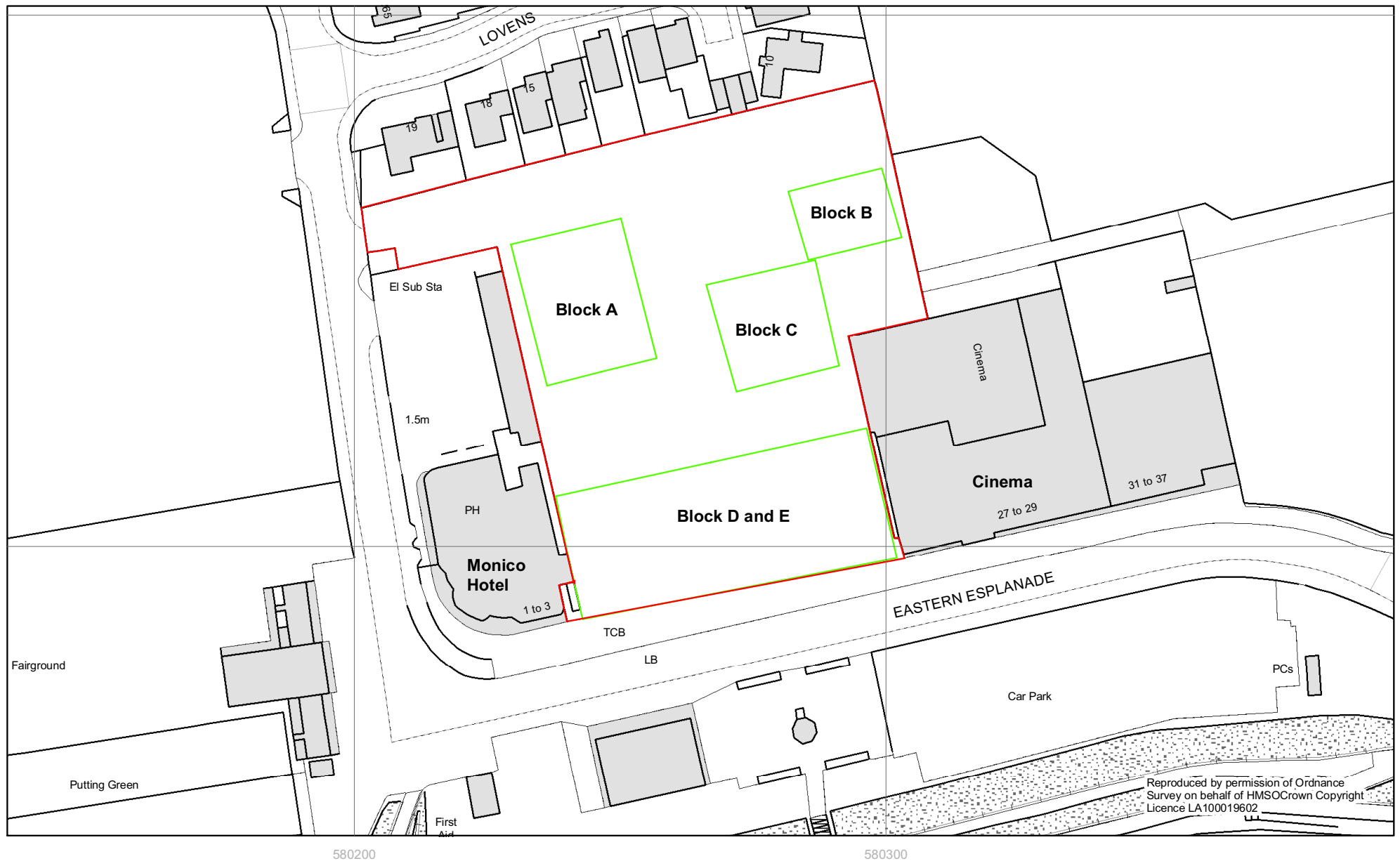


Fig.3 Areas of Archaeological Monitoring

Selected Photographs:



Plate 1 and 2: Levelling following the removal of hardstanding, Block C





Plate 3: Concrete lined access to drains, located on the frontage between Block D and E



Plate 4: Remnant of brick pad footing from the 1930s casino



Plate 5: Block D



Plate 6: Block E