

SPRINGFIELD BUSINESS PARK CHELMSFORD
PLOTS C, M AND N
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
INTERIM SUMMARY

Client: CgMs for Churchmanor Estates

FAU Project No.: 1653

NGR: TL734 082 (Plots N, M and K) and TL 734 084 (Plot C)

Site Code: SPAC 06

Date of Fieldwork: 27th June to 4th July 2006

OASIS Ref: essexcou1 - 16512

SUMMARY

A trial trenching evaluation was carried out on plots C, N and M of the Springfield Business Park development. The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Churchmanor Estates and was undertaken by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit. The monitoring officer was Mr Pat Connell of the Essex County Council HEM team on behalf of the local planning authority. The site was divided into 4 separate plots C, K, M and N. Plots K, M and N lay around the edges of the Springfield Lyons Bronze Age causewayed enclosure and Saxon cemetery, both of which were excavated in the late 1970s and 1980's.

The original specification of 25 trenches was rendered impossible due to the inaccessibility of some areas of the site. The whole of plot K and part of plot M was covered with spoil from the adjacent building works and part of plot N was covered by dense vegetation. The northern side of plots M and K have been encroached upon by the construction area and compound. With the agreement of both CgMs and HEM the trench plans for plots M and N were redesigned (Fig. 1) and the investigation of plot K has been postponed until the spoil is removed by the contractors.

Area C

Six trenches each measuring 25m x 1.8m were machine excavated in this area. The natural geology in each trench was covered by approximately 1m of modern overburden. All the trenches were heavily disturbed by modern intrusions and no archaeological features were identified and no finds recovered.

Area N

Five trenches were excavated around the edges of this area. On average the topsoil was 0.3m deep although at the western end of trench 2 it was only 0.15m in depth. Very little subsoil was identified in any of the trenches. Trench 1 contained a single shallow ditch, 110, running northwest-southeast. A small amount of baked clay and bunt flint was recovered from the fill, which although it is not intrinsically datable, does suggest a prehistoric origin for this ditch. Trench 3 was laid over a cropmark known to be a WWII anti-tank ditch, 313, which was previously investigated on the Springfield Lyons causewayed enclosure site. This feature was identified towards the south of the trench. It measured approximately 6m wide and 1.5m deep and the remains of a possible bank, 315, were identified along the northern edge. Trench 8 also contained a single shallow ditch, 804, running approximately northwest-southeast. Its fill contained one sherd of

pottery, which is probably part of a Bronze Age bucket urn, and a single worked flint flake. The only other possible feature identified was an area of compacted soil, 904, in trench 9, although it is unclear what this is. It may simply be the remains of a path to or from the old tennis courts. The only find recovered from this trench was a small piece of unstratified clay pipe stem, which was discarded on site. It seems likely that although some features possibly survive in the remainder of this area they will be subject to significant root disturbance.

Area M

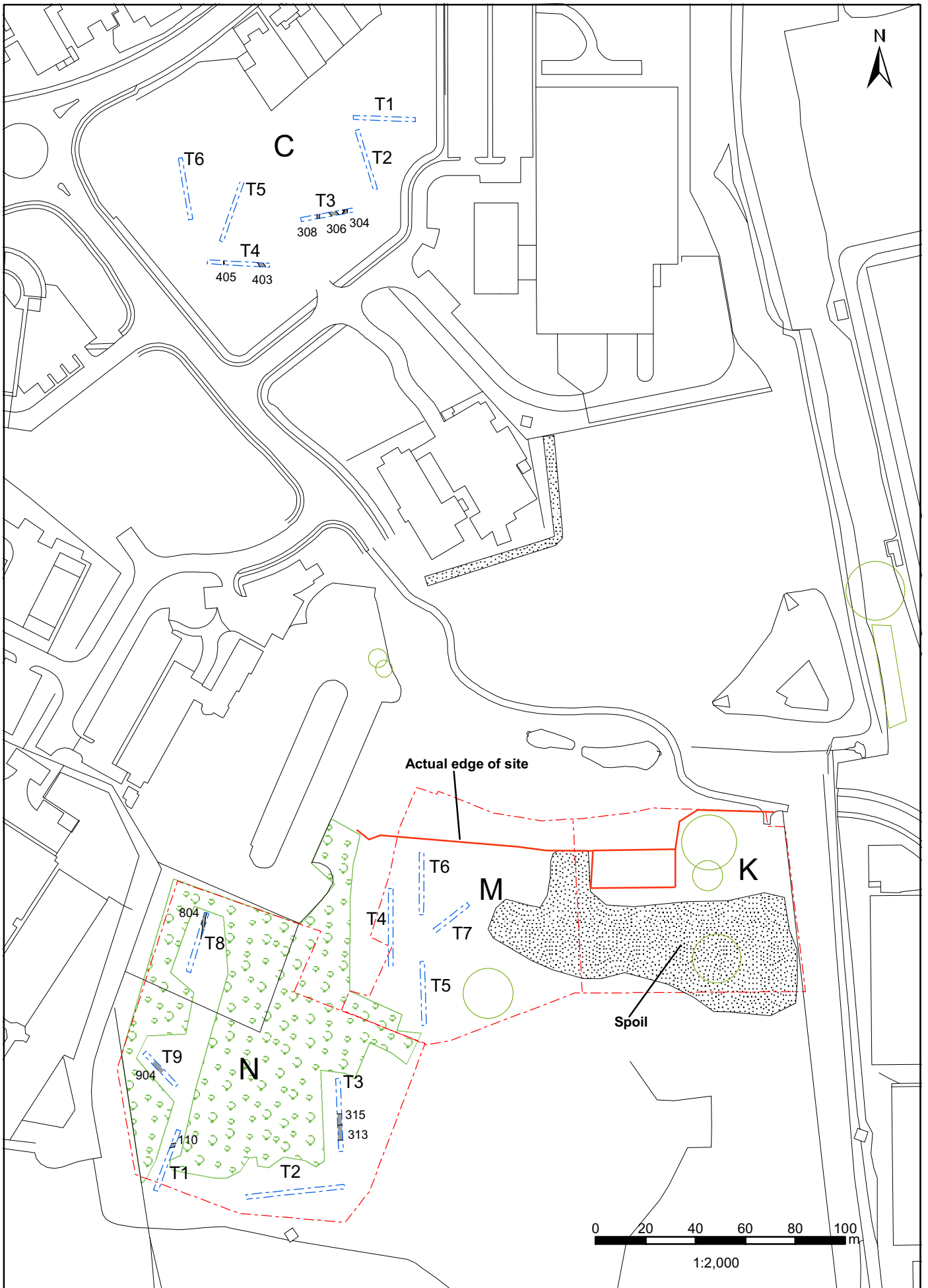
Only four trenches were excavated in this area, as its eastern part was inaccessible. The topsoil was approximately 0.2m deep over all of the trenches with approximately 0.2m of subsoil in trench 6. No archaeological features or finds were identified in any of the trenches and it seems likely that this area has been truncated.

Conclusion

Plots C and M have been heavily truncated and it is likely that only particularly deep archaeological features will survive in these areas. Although some archaeological features do survive around the edge of plot N, their shallow nature when combined with the root disturbance caused by the heavy vegetation covering the majority of this area suggests that very little will survive in the remainder of the area.

Further evaluation, if warranted, can only be undertaken if spoil heaps and dense scrub are removed from plots K and N respectively.

Andrew Robertson
ECC FAU Project Officer
12th July 2006



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Fig 1. Location of evaluation trenches - Areas C, M and N