

**FAULKBOURNE FARM
CRESSING ROAD
WITHAM
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

SEPTEMBER 2007

**FAULKBOURNE FARM
CRESSING ROAD
WITHAM
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

Prepared By: Trevor Ennis	Signature:
Position: Project Officer	Date:
Approved By: Mark Atkinson	Signature:
Position: Unit Manager	Date:

Document Ref.:	1309Rep
Report Issue Date:	September 2007
Circulation:	David Hunter, SRC Ltd
	ECC Historic Environment Management
	Essex Historic Environment Record

As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or the presentation of this report.

Please contact the Archaeological Fieldwork Manager, at the
Field Archaeology Unit,
Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 3YQ.
fieldarch@essexcc.gov.uk
Tel: 01376 331470
Fax: 01376 331428

© **Field Archaeology Unit**, Essex County Council, c/o County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1LF

CONTENTS

	Page No.
SUMMARY	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	2
2.0 BACKGROUND	2
2.1 Topography and Geology	
2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background	
3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	3
3.1 General aims	
3.2 Research objectives	
4.0 METHOD	4
5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS	4
6.0 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL	5
6.1 Introduction	
6.2 Prehistoric pottery	
6.3 Animal bone	
6.4 Roof tile	
6.5 Flints	
6.6 Environmental material	
6.7 Comments on the assemblage	
7.0 CONCLUSIONS	6
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
BIBLIOGRAPHY	8
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX 1 Context Data	
APPENDIX 2 Finds Data	
APPENDIX 3 Prehistoric pottery	
APPENDIX 4 Contents of Archive	
APPENDIX 5 EHER Summary	
FIGURES	
Fig. 1 Location plan	
Fig. 2 Excavation area	
Fig. 3 Sections	

FAULKBOURNE FARM
CRESSING ROAD, WITHAM
ESSEX
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

Client: Sewells Reservoir Construction Ltd

NGR: TL 8077517390

Site Code: WHSP 07

Oasis No.: essexcou1- 31419

Dates of Fieldwork: 2nd to 8th August 2007

SUMMARY

Archaeological excavation was undertaken at Faulkbourne Farm, Cressing Road, Witham during August 2007 in advance of the construction of an agricultural reservoir. Previous trial-trenching and limited excavation (Barker 2002) had revealed the presence of medieval and prehistoric remains, including a pit and tree throw that both contained prehistoric pottery. The subsequent excavation, covering an area of 963 sq m, was located in the southern part of the scheme area and centred on the two prehistoric features.

Two further features, a pit and a fire-pit, also containing prehistoric pottery were revealed and investigated in the excavation area. A third feature represented the remains of a tree throw. The pottery in the pit broadly dated from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age. The remains, although not extensive, do suggest a late prehistoric presence in the landscape at, perhaps associated with land clearance and early agriculture.

A north-east/south-west aligned ditch containing post-medieval roof tile was excavated at the northern end of the excavation area. Its position did not match with any boundaries shown on early editions of the Ordnance Survey, which might imply a pre-19th century date for this feature. It is possible that this ditch could be contemporary with a number of undated field boundary ditches noted in the evaluation trenches and others identified from crop marks to the north of the site (EHER 14106).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of archaeological excavation undertaken at Faulkbourne Farm prior to the construction of an agricultural reservoir. The fieldwork was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of SRC Ltd, in accordance with a design brief for archaeological investigation prepared by the ECC Historic Environment Management team (ECC HEM 2003) and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ECC FAU (2007). The project was monitored by ECC HEM.

The excavation was carried out as part of an archaeological condition placed on planning consent (planning application ref: ESS/56/00), at the request of Essex County Council, on the advice of the ECC HEM team. Trial trenching in 2002 (Barker 2002) had previously revealed three areas of archaeological activity. Two of these areas were investigated at the time. The third area, centred on a pit and tree-throw containing prehistoric pottery, required open-area excavation and is the subject of this report.

The site archive will be deposited in Braintree Museum. A digital version of this report will be submitted, along with a project summary, to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>).

2.0 BACKGROUND (Fig. 1)

2.1 Topography and Geology

The site of the proposed reservoir is located in open farmland, at a height of between 40 and 45m AOD. Situated approximately 1km to the north of Witham, the site is bordered on the west by the B1018 Braintree to Witham road, and on the east by a small stream. The 2007 excavation area was located some 70m from the road in an area of former arable land overgrown with weeds.

The drift geology of the reservoir site varies between chalky boulder clay and clay mixed with sands and gravels. Directly underlying the excavation area were deposits of chalky boulder clay and clay separated by lighter clay silt. A number of 'ice-wedge' periglacial features were noted.

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

This background makes use of the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held and maintained at County Hall, Chelmsford

In December 2000, 12 hectares of land on the proposed site of an agricultural reservoir was subjected to archaeological evaluation by fieldwalking (Gibson 2000). Background scatters of material were present for most periods. Some form of prehistoric activity was indicated by a large spread of burnt or fire-cracked flint across the northern part of the survey area.

A further phase of evaluation was carried out by trial trenching in 2002 (Barker 2002), across the northern part of the survey area (4.2 hectares) containing the scatter of burnt flint. The majority of the archaeological features revealed by this trial trenching were back-filled boundary ditches of unknown date. A series of cropmarks identified from aerial photographs have been recorded to the north of the site (EHCR 14106). The Essex Mapping Project has also identified these as backfilled field boundaries; it appears that the cropmarks and excavated examples form part of a larger field system of probable medieval or post-medieval date.

Separate areas of prehistoric and medieval remains were identified. In the northwest of the evaluation area a pit and a tree throw containing prehistoric pottery and flint were excavated. To the north of the centre of the trenching area, a ploughed-out series of pits and post-hole were recorded. The presence of highly degraded pottery suggested a prehistoric date. Excavation in the north-eastern corner revealed a hearth, a pit/well and two post-holes, bounded on the south and west by two ditches. Pottery recovered from the upper fill of the pit/well produced pottery dating to the 13th century. It is thought that this area of medieval activity was short-lived and probably abandoned due to flooding.

In April 2006 trial trenching and excavation was carried out in the field to the immediate east of the reservoir scheme area prior to the construction of a gravel processing plant. A number of Middle Iron Age features were excavated along with a ditch of Late Iron Age or Roman date. Prehistoric worked and burnt flint was also recovered (Germany 2006), attesting to earlier occupation of this landscape.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General aims

The aim of the work was to preserve by record any archaeological deposits that would be truncated or destroyed by reservoir construction.

Specific attention was to be paid to:

- Identifying the nature and date of any features present and relating these to other known deposits in the area.

3.2 Research objectives

The research objectives for the project were undertaken with reference to those laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000). However, too few archaeological remains were recovered from the excavation to make any meaningful contribution to regional research.

4.0 METHOD

The excavation area was stripped of topsoil under archaeological supervision by a 360° excavator fitted with a flat bladed bucket. A roughly rectangular area of 963 sq m was opened around the position of the two prehistoric features identified in the trial trenching.

All work was carried out in accordance with IFA (Institute of Field Archaeologists) by-laws and guidelines and complied with Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003). Standard ECC FAU excavation, artefact collection and recording methodologies were employed throughout.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS (Figs 2 and 3)

Between 0.3m and 0.5m of dark grey brown topsoil was removed. The exposed natural deposits comprised chalky clay to the north and clean brown clay to the south. The two areas were separated by an hour-glass shaped deposit of light brown silt presumably infilling a natural hollow. Three well-defined archaeological features were identified in addition to the pit and tree throw found by the evaluation (features 4 and 26) and are summarised below. Further context information is included in Appendix 1.

Pit 107 was located along the south-eastern side of the excavation area. It continued beyond the edge of the site and was over 1m in length by 1.5m wide and 0.71m deep (Fig. 3,

Section 2). It was filled with mid yellowish grey silty clay (108) and contained cattle tooth fragments and 12 sherds of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age pottery.

Fire pit 101 was oval in plan and measured 0.54m by 0.45m by 0.16m deep (Fig. 3, Section 1). It was filled by charcoal-stained clay (102) containing a few tiny fragments of burnt bone. Further tiny fragments of burnt bone, baked clay and a single crumb of prehistoric pottery were recovered from a soil sample taken from this deposit for analysis. Traces of heat-reddened clay were noted around the sides of the pit.

Ditch 106 was aligned north-east/south-west and was located along the north-western edge of the excavation area. It was over 20m in length and continued beyond the edge of the site in both directions. The ditch was 0.9m deep and in excess of 1.8m wide (Fig. 3, Section 3). It was filled by mid yellowish brown silty clay (105) from which a single fragment of post-medieval roof tile was retrieved.

A large poorly-defined depression (103) was investigated in the south-east corner of the excavation area. It was filled with light yellowish brown clay (104) and was probably of natural origin. A deeper area within the feature appeared to have resulted through root activity. A second linear deposit of yellowish brown clay located immediately to its north, overlain by bright brown clay, appeared upon investigation to be a periglacial feature. It is possible that feature 103 and tree throw 26 from the evaluation may both constitute the remains of prehistoric land clearance.

6.0 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL by Joyce Compton

6.1 Introduction

Small groups of finds were recovered from three contexts. All of the material has been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full details can be found in Appendix 2. The finds are described briefly by category below.

6.2 Prehistoric pottery

Thirteen sherds of pottery (weight 49g) were identified by Nick Lavender. Almost all of the assemblage came from the fill of pit 107 and comprises body sherds, some very small, which have been given a broad Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age date. Pottery details can be found in Appendix 3.

6.3 Animal bone

Two cattle tooth fragments, in poor condition, were recovered from the fill of pit 107.

6.4 Roof tile

A small piece of post-medieval roof tile was found in the fill of ditch 106.

6.5 Flints

Six small unworked flints, and one piece of burnt flint, were recovered from the fills of fire-pit 101 and pit 107.

6.6 Environmental material

A single bulk soil sample, <1>, was taken from the fill of fire-pit 101. This was processed by wet-sieving with flotation using a 0.5mm mesh and collecting the flotation fraction (flot) on a 0.5mm sieve. The residues were then dried and separated into coarse and fine fractions, using 4mm and 2mm sieves. The material in the coarse fraction (>4mm) was sorted by eye, and artefacts and environmental material extracted and bagged separately. The fine fractions were dried but not sorted; the flot was also dried and scanned for ecofacts. Retrieved artefacts were recorded by count and weight, where possible, and these details added to the quantification table in Appendix 2. Few finds were recovered, comprising pieces of baked clay or burnt soil, and very small fragments of burnt bone, which are too small for further identification. Fine charcoal was noted in both the fine fraction and the flot, but was not retained. No other ecofacts were retrieved.

6.7 Comments on the assemblage

Finds quantities are very small and thus do not provide much information. The material from the soil sample appears to confirm the identification of pit 101 as a fire-pit. Most of the activity represented can be tentatively dated to the prehistoric period, although ditch 106 contained a small fragment of post-medieval roof tile only and is likely to be of this date. Further work on the assemblage is not required. All of the finds have been retained and occupy less than one box.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The 2002 evaluation revealed two features containing prehistoric pottery. The 2007 excavation area was opened up around these features to check for the presence of further archaeological remains of prehistoric date. Two additional prehistoric features, a pit and a

fire-pit, were revealed by the excavation. However, there was no clear association between these remains which were spread throughout the excavation area. The pit contained sherds of prehistoric pottery that could be broadly dated to the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age. Although not necessarily indicative of settlement per se, the remains do suggest a Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age presence in the landscape perhaps associated with land clearance and early agriculture.

The ditch at the northern end of the excavation area contained a fragment of post-medieval roof tile and is therefore most probably of post-medieval or more recent date. The position of the ditch does not match with any shown on early editions of the Ordnance Survey or later maps which might imply a pre-19th century date for this feature. It is possible that this ditch could be contemporary with a number of undated field boundary ditches noted in the evaluation trenches and others recorded from crop marks to the north of the site (EHER 14106), though no direct correlation could be established.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SRC Ltd are thanked for commissioning and funding this investigation. In particular, the assistance of David Hunter is acknowledged. The archaeological excavation was undertaken by Trevor Ennis, John Hewitt, and Vickie Williams of the ECC Field Archaeology Unit. The project was managed by Mark Atkinson of ECC FAU and monitored by Richard Havis of ECC HEM on behalf of the local planning authority.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|--|
| Barker, B. | 2002 | <i>Faulkbourne Farm, Cressing Road, Witham, Essex: Archaeological Evaluation by Trial-trenching</i> (ECC FAU Rep. 823b) |
| Brown, N. | 1988 | 'A Late Bronze Age enclosure at Lofts Farm, Essex' <i>Proc. Prehist. Soc.</i> 54 , 249-302 |
| Brown, N. and
Glazebrook, J. (eds) | 2000 | <i>Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy</i> , E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. 8 |
| ECC FAU | 2007 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Excavation at Faulkbourne Farm, Cressing Road, Witham, Essex.</i> ECC FAU internal publication |
| ECC HEM | 2003 | <i>Brief for Archaeological Investigation at Faulkbourne Farm, Cressing Road, Witham, Essex.</i> ECC HEM internal publication |
| Germany, M. | 2006 | <i>Processing Plant, Faulkbourne Farm, Cressing Road, Witham: Archaeological Trial Trenching and Excavation</i> (ECC FAU Rep. Report 1586) |
| Gibson, S. | 2001 | <i>Strutt & Parker Farm, Cressing Road, Witham, Essex: Fieldwalking Survey</i> (ECC FAU Rep. 823a) |
| Gurney, D. | 2003 | <i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> , E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. 14 |
| Institute of Field
Archaeologists | 1999 | <i>Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation</i> (revised) |

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DATA

All dimensions given in metres.

Context	Type	Description	Period
100	Layer	Topsoil/machining	-
101	Fire-pit	0.54m x 0.45m x 0.16m deep	Prehistoric
102	Fill of 101	Black clay	Prehistoric
103	Depression	c.4m x 3m x 0.33m deep	Natural
104	Fill of 103	Light yellowish brown clay	Natural
105	Fill of 106	Mid yellowish brown clay	Post-medieval
106	Ditch	20m+ x 1.8m+ x 0.9m deep	Post-medieval
107	Pit	1.51m x 0.97m+ x 0.71m deep	Prehistoric
108	Fill of 107	Mid yellowish grey silty clay	Prehistoric

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

All weights in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
102	101	37	2	Burnt bone from sample 1	-
		2	2	Flints (unworked)	-
		1	18	Burnt flint	-
		10	2	Baked clay/burnt soil from sample 1	-
		1	<1	Pottery; crumb	Prehistoric
105	106	1	6	Roof tile fragment, overfired	Post med.
108	107	2	4	Animal bone; cattle tooth fragments, in poor condition	-
		4	32	Flints (unworked)	-
		12	48	Pottery; body sherds and crumbs	Prehistoric

APPENDIX 3: PREHISTORIC POTTERY*

All weights in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Fabric	Date
102	101	1	<1	Crumb	Z	Prehistoric
108	107	12	48	Body sherds and crumbs	A and C	LBA-EIA
		13	49			

*The pottery has been recorded according to a system devised for prehistoric pottery in Essex (Brown 1988: details in archive)

APPENDIX 4: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

SITE NAME: Faulkbourne Farm, Cressing Road, Witham

SITE CODE: WHSP 07

Index to Archive:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 ECC HEM Brief
- 1.2 ECC FAU Written Scheme of Investigation

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Client Report
- 2.2 Finds Reports

3. Site Archive

- 3.1 Context Record Register
- 3.2 Context Records (100 to 108)
- 3.3 Plan Register
- 3.4 Section Register
- 3.5 4 A4 plan sheets
- 3.6 Levels Register
- 3.7 Trench location plan
- 3.8 Photographic Registers
- 3.9 Site Photographic Record (1 set of Black & White prints, 1 Set of digital images on CD-Rom)
- 3.10 Miscellaneous notes/plans

Not in File

Two large plans, one large section drawing

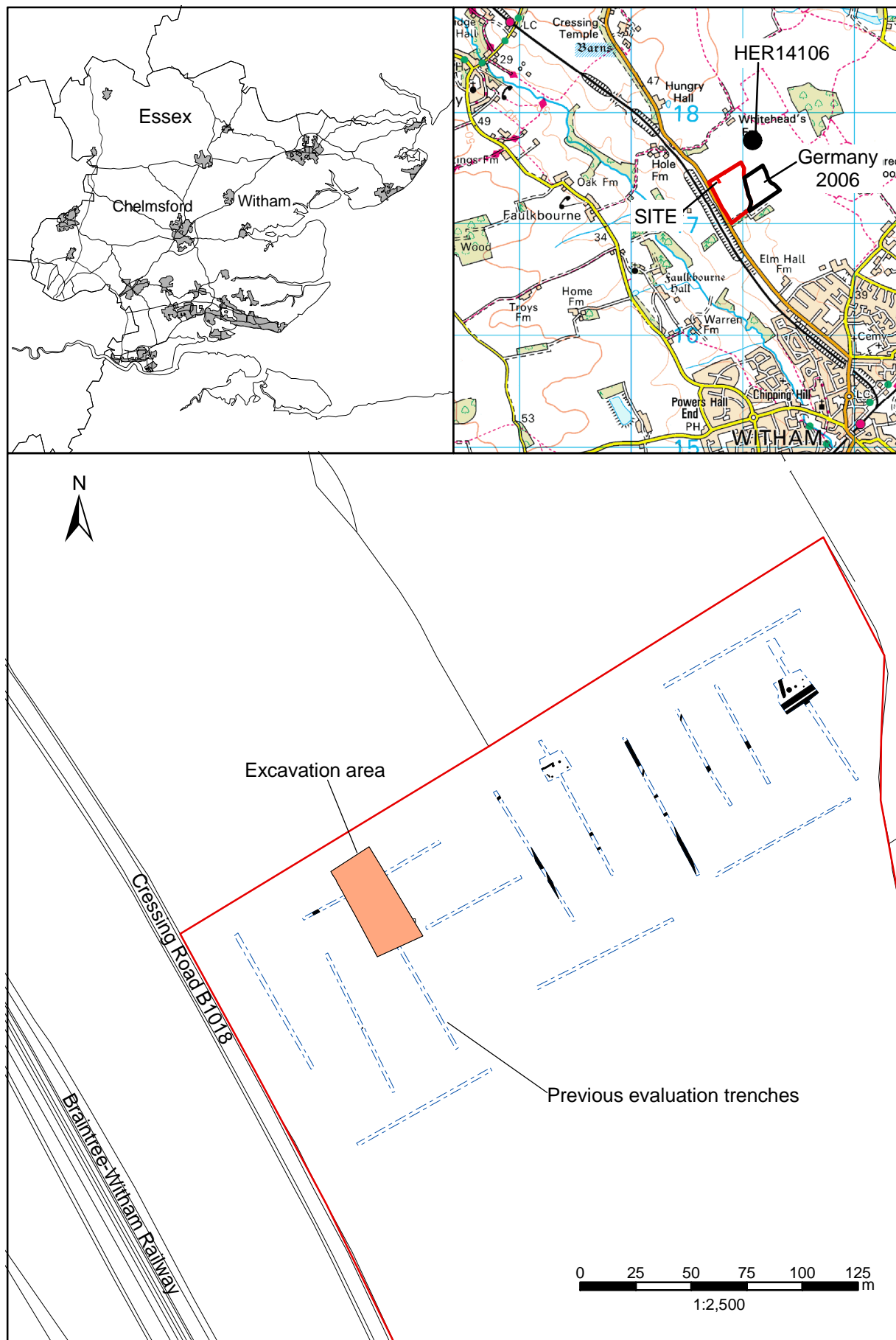
Finds

The finds occupy less than one box.

APPENDIX 4: EHER SUMMARY SHEET

EHER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Faulkbourne Farm, Cressing Road, Witham	
Parishes: Witham	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 80775, 17390	Site Code: WHSP 07
Type of Work: Archaeological excavation	Site Director/Group: T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: 2nd to 8th August 2007	Size of Area Investigated: 963 sq m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Braintree	Funding source: developer, SRC Ltd
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.: 14106
Final Report: EAH round-up	
Periods Represented: Prehistoric, Post-medieval	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: <p><i>Archaeological area excavation was undertaken at Faulkbourne Farm in advance of the construction of an agricultural reservoir. Previous evaluation by trial trench (Barker 2002) had revealed the presence of two features, a pit and tree throw, containing prehistoric pottery. The excavation, covering 963 sq m, was centred on these features.</i></p> <p><i>The excavation revealed two further man-made features, a pit and a fire-pit, containing prehistoric pottery. A third feature, a probable tree throw, was also identified. The pottery in the pit broadly dated to the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age. The remains, although not extensive, do suggest a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age presence in the landscape, perhaps associated with land clearance and early agriculture.</i></p> <p><i>A north-east/south-west aligned ditch containing post-medieval roof tile was excavated at the northern end of the excavation area. Its position did not match with any boundaries shown on early editions of the Ordnance Survey which might imply a pre-19th century date for this feature. It is possible that this ditch could be contemporary with a number of undated field boundary ditches noted in the evaluation trenches and others recorded from crop marks to the north of the site (EHER 14106).</i></p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: <i>Strutt & Parker Farm, Cressing Road, Witham, Essex: Fieldwalking Survey (ECC FAU Report 823a).</i> <i>Faulkbourne Farm, Cressing Road, Witham, Essex: Archaeological Evaluation by Trial-trenching (ECC FAU Report 823b)</i>	
Author of Summary: T. Ennis	Date of Summary: September 2007



Mapping reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. Crown copyright. Licence no.LA100019602.

Fig.1. Location plan

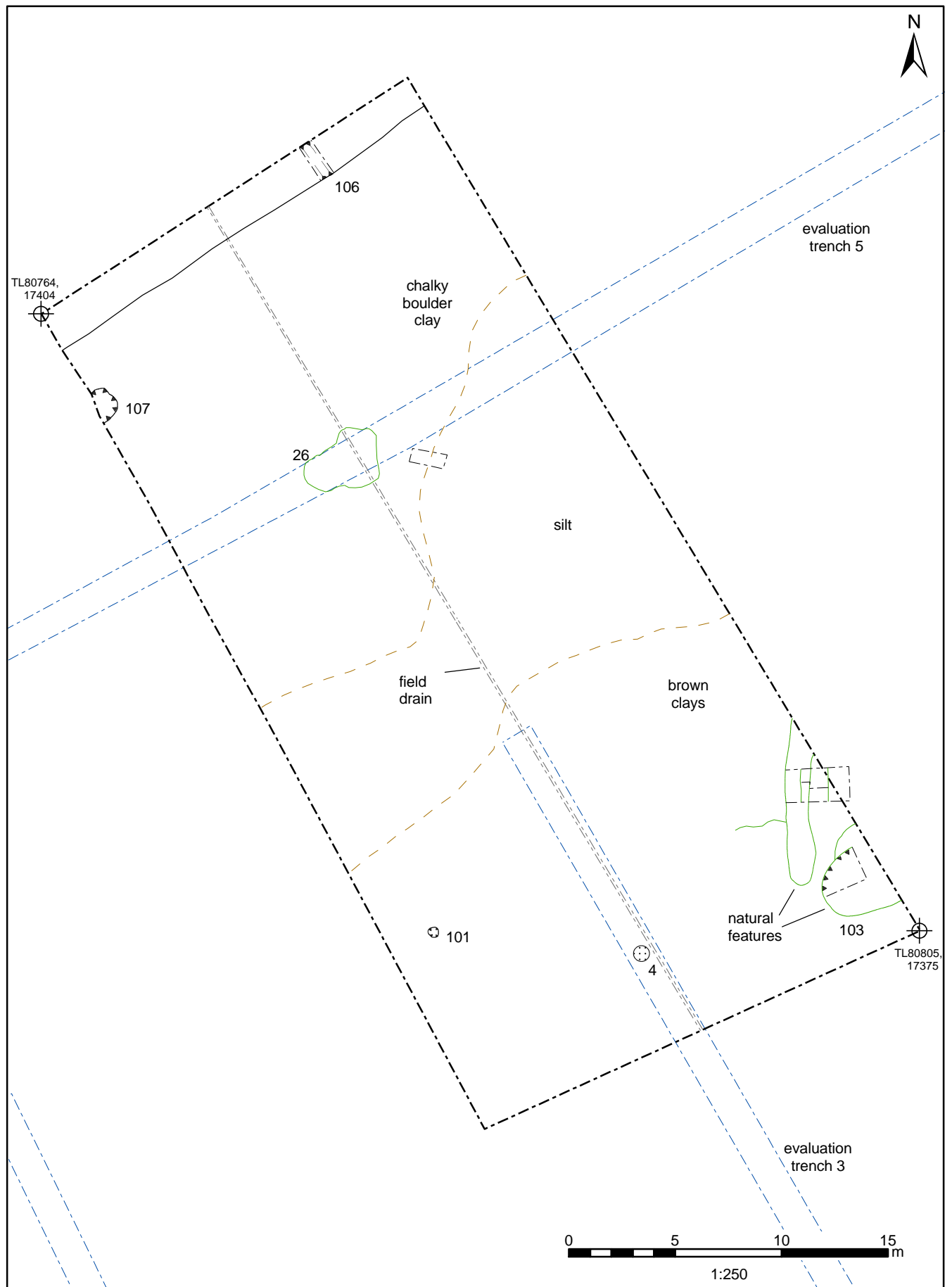


Fig.2. Excavation area

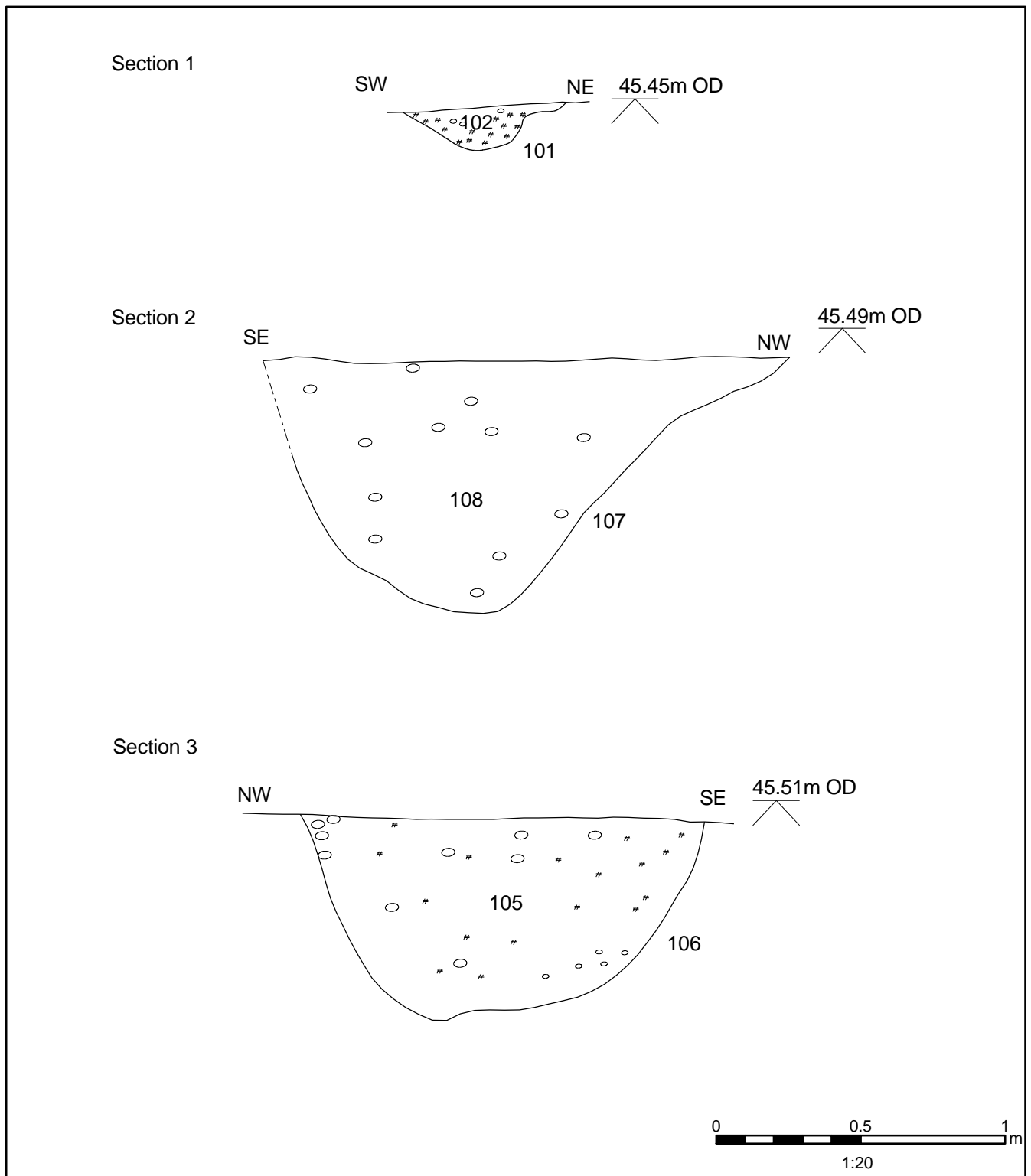


Fig.3. Sections