

**LAND SOUTH OF LANDGUARD  
STATION ROAD  
SAWBRIDGEWORTH  
HERTS**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**



**Essex County Council  
Field Archaeology Unit**

**SEPTEMBER 2008**



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

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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

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**LAND SOUTH OF LANDGUARD  
STATION ROAD  
SAWBRIDGEWORTH  
HERTS  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Client: Wendy Thomas

NGR: TL 48540 15025

Site Code: SAWLG08

Oasis No.: essexcou1- 43505

Dates of Fieldwork: 13th to 16th June 2008

**SUMMARY**

*An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land south of Landguard, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, Herts in advance of residential development. Three evaluation trenches totalling 30m in length were excavated.*

*No archaeological features pre-dating the post-medieval period were identified; however, the recovery of single sherds of Late Iron Age and early medieval pottery from the topsoil does indicate that there may have been earlier activity in the vicinity. In the medieval period this may have been agricultural in nature given the considerable distance from the site to the street frontages (c.50m south of Station Road and c.0.75m north of The Forebury).*

*Two archaeological features were investigated, one was an undated pit of possible natural origin and the other a post-medieval boundary ditch. The ditch was aligned east-west and contained a variety of finds broadly dating from the late 18th to the 20th century. This boundary is shown on the first four editions of the Ordnance Survey. In addition, the rubble-filled remains of a former swimming pool were noted at the northern end of Trench 1.*

*Based upon the results of the investigation, it is unlikely that the development will have any impact upon the archaeological record and no further work will be required.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching undertaken on the proposed site of a single dwelling on land to the south of Landguard, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth. The fieldwork was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of Wendy Thomas, in accordance with an archaeological brief prepared by the County Historic Environment Unit of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC CHEU 2008) and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ECC FAU (2008).

The evaluation was undertaken in response to a condition placed on planning consent by the local planning authority (East Hertfordshire District Council) which required a programme of archaeological investigation prior to development (Planning Ref.: 3/07/2146). The programme of investigation comprises a field evaluation and the subsequent implementation of any necessary mitigation measures indicated by the evaluation's findings.

The site archive will be deposited in Bishop's Stortford 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 development area is located in Sawbridgeworth, upon land to the south of Landguard on the south side of Station Road (NGR TL 48540 15025). The site is situated some 200m north of Great St Mary's Church and the medieval core of the town. The area was formerly part of a domestic garden and comprises patches of open ground surrounded by trees and shrubs.

The underlying surface geology consists of mixed glacial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel of the Lowestoft Formation.

### **2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background**

Remains dating to the Prehistoric and Roman periods have been recorded in the Sawbridgeworth area (e.g. National Monuments Record numbers 370153, 370069). The proposed development site is located adjacent to Area of Archaeological Significance No. 166, as identified in the East Herts District Council Local Plan (Second Review 2007). While there are currently no records of significant below ground archaeological remains at the site,

it is situated close to The Forebury, the area in which the medieval manor of Sayesbury (Sawbridgeworth) was situated. The property known as Landguard is a Listed building (Grade II) which dates to 18th century, but was re-modelled as a Regency cottage ornée in the early 19th century. Further listed buildings, dating to the 17th and 18th century, are located in Station Road (numbers 68, 70 and 72) to the north of Landguard.

### **3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 General aims**

The main aim of the evaluation was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

More specifically, the report aims to provide a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains likely to be present on the site and includes an assessment of their significance.

#### **3.2 Research objectives**

In the event that significant archaeological deposits were encountered the report would aim to highlight appropriate research themes for further work, in line with regional research frameworks (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook 2000). Unfortunately, due to the limited results from the evaluation, the work has little potential to contribute to any of the relevant research themes highlighted in these documents.

### **4.0 METHOD**

Three evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide flat-bladed bucket. Trench 1 was L-shaped in plan comprising two 8m long arms aligned north-south and east-west. Trenches 2 and 3 were both 7m long and aligned north-south. Trenches were deliberately located outside of the existing tree canopies to avoid damage to root systems.

The trenches were cleaned and potential features were hand-excavated. 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 1 - 3)**

A small number of archaeological features and deposits were identified and are described in trench order. Additional context information is presented in Appendix 1 below.

Topsoil in all three trenches comprised a deep deposit of dark grey to dark greyish brown silty sandy loam (1) that was generally root-disturbed and became browner with depth. Underlying were silty-clay subsoil deposits (2) that varied in colour from mid greyish brown to orange brown and overlay natural orange sandy clay.

### **5.1 Trench 1 (Plate 1)**

Overburden in Trench 1 comprised of up to c.0.95m of turf and topsoil overlying 0.3m of greyish brown subsoil. Natural orange brown clay silt was exposed in the base of the trench.

At the north end of the trench were the partially demolished remains of a swimming pool backfilled with modern brick rubble. The pool was retained within a curving brick wall that had concrete adhering to its base and side. Traces of a blue plastic lining were noted on the inside of the wall.

A small number of residual finds (9) were recovered from the buried topsoil in the western section, south of the former swimming pool. These included one sherd of grog-tempered Late Iron Age pottery and one sherd of early medieval pottery.

Pottery and glass of a more modern date were recovered from the upper topsoil in the western arm of the trench during machining. These included part of a late 19th-century marmalade jar and an early 20th-century lemonade bottle. No archaeological features were observed.

### **5.2 Trench 2 (Plate 2)**

The overburden in Trench 2 comprised c.0.6m of dark grey topsoil overlying 0.2m of mid to dark greyish brown subsoil. Natural orange brown clay silt was exposed in the base of the trench.

A poorly-defined oval pit (7) was excavated in Trench 2 (Figs 2 and 3). This measured in excess of 0.85m long by 0.8m wide and was 0.2m deep. The fill consisted of root-disturbed mid brownish grey clay silt (6) which produced no finds and may have been of natural origin. No other archaeological features were observed.

### **5.3 Trench 3 (Plate 3)**

The overburden in trench 3 comprised of up to 0.65m of dark greyish brown topsoil overlying c.0.4m of orange brown silty sandy clay subsoil. Natural orange sandy clay was exposed in the base of the trench.

A large, east-west aligned, boundary ditch (3) was excavated in Trench 3 (Figs 2 and 3). The ditch was 1.9m wide and 0.78m deep and cut through the natural subsoil (2). It was filled with a dark greyish brown sandy silty clay (4). Finds ranged in date from the late 18th to the 20th century and included several sherds of post-medieval pottery and pieces of flowerpot. Similar unstratified material (5) was recovered during the initial machining and clean-over of the trench. No other archaeological features were observed.

## **6.0 FINDS REPORT** by Joyce Compton

### **6.1 Introduction**

Small groups of finds were recovered from four contexts, across three evaluation trenches. All of the finds have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details can be found in Appendix 3. The finds are described by category below.

### **6.2 Pottery**

Pottery was recovered from four contexts, amounting to a total of twenty-five sherds, weighing 1477g. Two pieces (725g) were collected during the machining of Trench 1 (finds context 8) and comprise a complete white earthenware condiment pot and a large rim sherd from a Dundee marmalade jar. The sherd has '...Vienna 1873' printed in black above the logo. However, it does not have 'Gold Medal International Exhibition, Edinburgh 1886' underneath the logo, and a date for the jar of between 1873 and 1886 can be suggested. A residual sherd (14g) of Late Iron Age grog-tempered pottery was recovered from the topsoil in the vicinity of Trench 1 (finds context 9). The remainder of the pottery has been examined by Helen Walker, as follows;

A small amount of pottery, twenty-two sherds, weighing 1204g, was excavated from three contexts (Appendix 3). An early medieval ware cooking pot rim was recovered from the topsoil in the vicinity of Trench 1 (finds context 9). The rim is everted with an external bevel (Cunningham's type A4A) and shows signs of fire-blackening from the hearth. This is potentially an early type rim, which at Colchester is dated mid 11th century, or earlier, to c.1200 (Cotter 2000, fig.27).

The remaining pottery is much later. The fill of ditch 3 (Trench 3) produced the remains of three flowerpots including one semi-complete pot, dating from the 18th to 20th centuries. A few sherds of post-medieval red earthenware were also found in the ditch. None is closely datable, and one sherd, which is unglazed with a thick grey core, may be as early as 16th century. More-closely datable pottery comprises a sherd of fine red stoneware dating from the mid to later 18th century, and the latest sherd is the base of a yellow ware bowl or jar dating from the late 18th to 20th centuries. Further fragments of flowerpot and post-medieval red earthenware were collected during machining of Trench 3 (finds context 5). The latest pottery comprises examples of ironstone china, including one with a pictorial transfer-print depicting a cherub between two swans, dating from the 1820s to 20th century.

The single medieval sherd may relate to the nearby medieval manor, or could be entirely devoid of its original context, having been imported into the site during landscaping works, manuring etc. There is no evidence (from the pottery) of occupation until the post-medieval period, and the pottery from Trench 3 probably relates to the property, 'Landguard', first built in the 18th century. However, the assemblage does not reveal much information as to function, status, date etc, except that perhaps they were keen gardeners!

### **6.3 Glass**

The machining of Trench 1 (finds context 8) produced two glass bottles, one incomplete. The complete example is a dark green lemonade bottle with an internal screw thread at the rim which received a secure stopper. The second is colourless and the embossed letters suggest the contents were likely to have been a concentrate such as coffee extract, as sold by the Co-operative Society. The style of both suggests an early 20th century date.

### **6.4 Other finds**

These are few; a small piece of baked clay was retrieved from the topsoil in Trench 1 (finds context 9); two pieces of post-medieval roof tile were found in the fill of ditch 3 (Trench 3); oyster shells also came from the fill of ditch 3, and from the machining of Trench 3 (finds context 5); a piece of slag and a small amount of animal bone were recovered from the topsoil in Trench 1 (finds context 9). Details can be found in the table in Appendix 3.

### **6.5 Comments on the Assemblage**

Most of the finds are relatively recent in date. The earlier material was found unstratified, but hints at earlier activity in the vicinity. No further work is required on any of the finds. The modern material collected during machining of Trench 1 has already been discarded. The remaining finds need not be kept beyond the archiving stage.

## **7.0 DISCUSSION**

No archaeological features pre-dating the post-medieval period were identified. However, the recovery of single sherds of Late Iron Age and early medieval pottery from the topsoil do suggest that there may have been earlier activity in the vicinity. This is perhaps unsurprising given the archaeological and historic background of Sawbridgeworth. It is possible that this activity is of an agricultural nature in the medieval period given the lack of remains and the considerable distance from the site to the street frontages (c.50m south of Station Road and c.0.75m north of The Forebury).

Post-medieval boundary ditch 3 (Trench 3) contained finds dating from the late 18th to 20th century. This boundary is shown on the first four editions of the Ordnance Survey (Fig. 1, projected line). However, it is not clear from the mapping whether this boundary is a ditch, fence or hedge, or a combination of two. The lack of clearly modern material from the ditch might suggest that it was infilled in the 19th century and continued as a boundary fence or hedge up until at least the middle of the 20th century.

Any remains in the northern part of the house footprint (Trench 1) will have been destroyed during the construction of the modern swimming pool.

## **8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS**

Although the general area is of some archaeological potential, no remains pre-dating the post-medieval period were identified and it is unlikely that any such features are present within the building footprint or elsewhere within the development area. Also, the substantial depth (0.8m+) of overburden protecting the archaeological horizon means that if any remains are present they are unlikely to be adversely affected by groundworks associated with the new access road and car turning area.

Too few remains were investigated to contribute to any of the current regional research agendas/ objectives (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook 2000). In conclusion, the impact of the proposed development on the archaeological record appears to be low.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The investigation was commissioned by Wendy Thomas. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Trevor Ennis and Dave Smith of the ECC Field Archaeology Unit. Illustration was by Andrew Lewsey. Finds were processed by Phil McMichael and analysed by Joyce Compton and Helen Walker. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby of ECC FAU and monitored by Alison Tinniswood of HCC CHEU.

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| Noël Hume, A.                     | 1974 | <i>Archaeology and the Colonial Gardener</i> , Colonial Williamsburg's Archaeol. Ser. <b>7</b> (Williamsburg, Virginia, The Williamsburg Foundation)                                 |

## APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DATA

All dimensions given in metres

Trench	Measurements	Co-ordinates
1	8m x 8m x 1.6m x 1.25m deep orientated N-S/E-W	SW 548518.2, 215016.2 SE 548526.0, 215015.8 NE 548526.4, 215023.6
2	7m x 1.6m x 0.8m deep orientated N-S	NW 548541.0, 215021.5 SE 548542.6, 215014.7
3	7m x 1.6m x 1m deep, orientated N-S	NW 548548.0, 215026.0 SE 548549.6, 215018.9

## APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT DATA

All dimensions given in metres

Context	Trench	Type	Description	Period
01	1,2,3	Layer	Dark greyish brown silty sandy loam (topsoil)	-
02	1,2,3	Layer	Mid greyish brown to orange brown silty clay (subsoil)	-
03	3	Ditch	1.5m+ x 1.9m x 0.78m deep	Post-med
04	3	Fill of 3	Dark greyish brown sandy silty clay	Post-med
05	3	Finds	Machining/cleaning	Post-med
06	2	Fill of 7	Mid brownish grey clay silt	-
07	2	Pit	Oval, 0.85m+ x 0.8m x 0.2m deep	-
08	1	Finds	Machining (west end of trench)	Modern
09	1	Finds	From topsoil in section (north arm of trench)	-

### APPENDIX 3: FINDS DATA

All weights in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
4	3	2	20	Shell; oyster, two valves	-
		2	68	Roof tile fragments	Post med.
		4	63	Post-Medieval Red Earthenware, misc. sherds; two internally glazed, one thick-walled with an all over glaze, and one unglazed sherd with a thick-grey core, ?early type	16th to 19th C
		7	789	Flowerpots: one semi-complete flowerpot, ht. 195mm, rim diameter 200mm, collared rim, comparable to later 18th C flowerpot rims at Williamsburg (Noël Hume 1974, fig.26.6), single incised band 55mm below top; base fragment from second flowerpot showing central drainage hole and (?accidental) glaze on underside, possibly early; beaded rim ?from small flowerpot	18th to 20th C
		1	3	Red stoneware	from mid 18th C
1	60	Yellow ware footring base ?from jar or bowl	late 18th to 20th C		
5	Finds	1	10	Shell; oyster, one valve	-
		1	25	Post-medieval red earthenware pad base, internally glazed	17th to 19th C
		3	133	Flowerpots: remains of two flowerpots, a large pot with a triangular beaded rim and a smaller pot with a hooked rim	18th to 20th C
		4	122	Ironstone china with transfer-printed decoration comprising a willow pattern plate/dish rim and a footring base probably from a bowl with a print in the centre showing a cherub between two swans, on the underside of the base 'voyagers' is printed inside a cartouche, presumably the name of the pattern	1820s to 20th C
8	Finds	2	725	Glass; complete bottle, dark green (embossed R White and Sons) with internal screw-thread stopper; incomplete bottle, colourless (Co-operative Society embossed on one side, ..MY & NAVY on the other) (Both Discarded)	Modern
		2	260	Pottery; white earthenware; rim sherd from a large Dundee marmalade jar; complete cream pot (Both Discarded)	Modern
9	Finds	6	82	Animal bone; cattle phalanx; rib and long bone fragments, large mammal	-
		1	130	Slag	-
		1	8	Baked clay	-
		1	9	Early medieval ware thickened everted rim, probably from a cooking pot	10th/11th C to c.1200
		1	14	Pottery; body sherd, grog-tempered	LIA

## **APPENDIX 4: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE**

**SITE NAME:** SAWLG08

**SITE CODE:** Land south of Landguard, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth

### **Index to Archive:**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 HCC CHEU Design Brief
- 1.2 ECC FAU WSI

#### **2. Research Archive**

- 2.1 Client Report
- 2.2 Finds Reports

#### **3. Site Archive**

- 3.1 Context Record Register
- 3.2 Context Records (1 to 9)
- 3.3 Plan Register
- 3.4 Section Register
- 3.5 2 A4 plan/section 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 disk)
- 3.10 Miscellaneous notes/plans

#### **Not in File**

- 1 large plan/section sheet

#### **Finds**

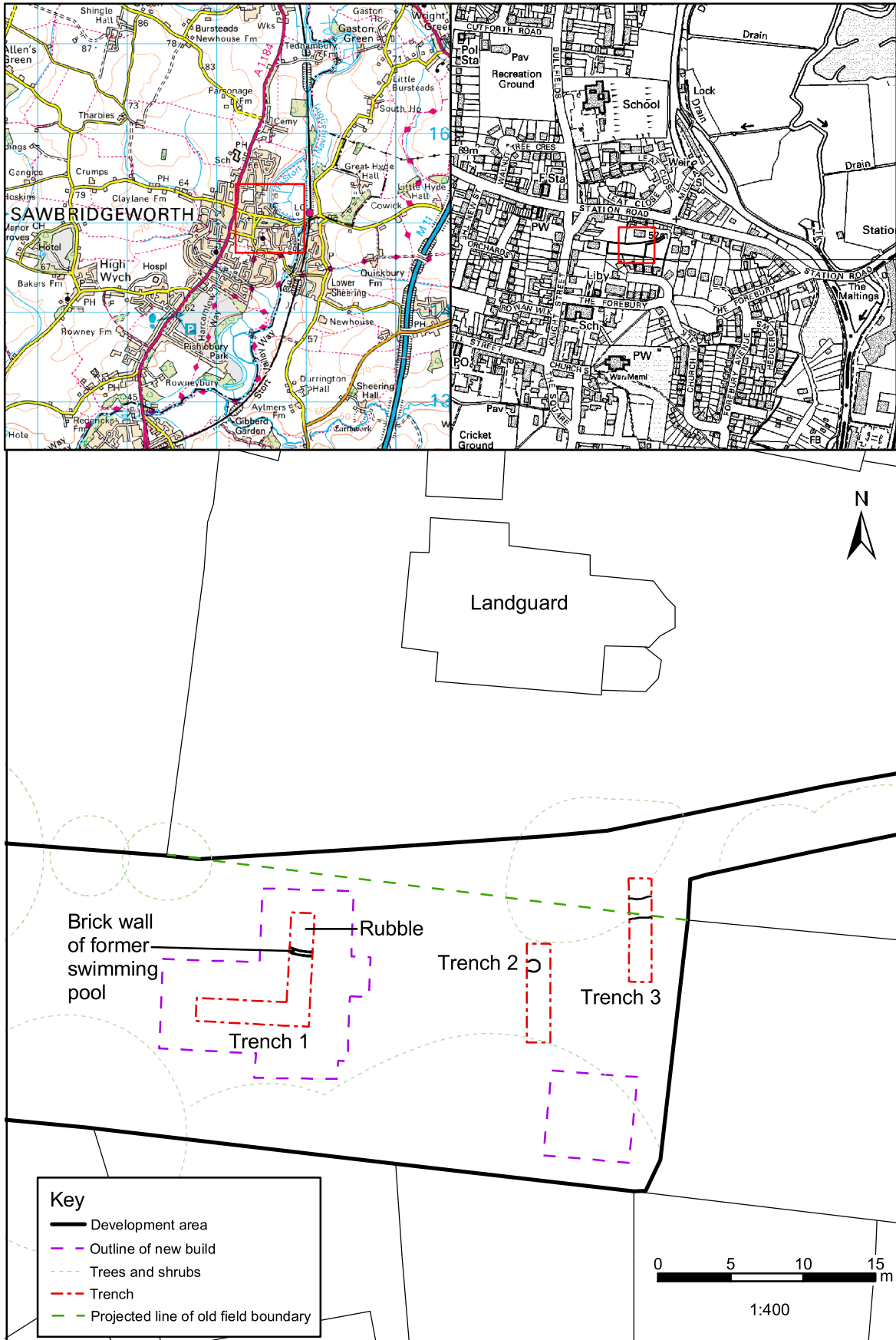
The retained finds occupy less than one box.



## APPENDIX 5: HER SUMMARY SHEET

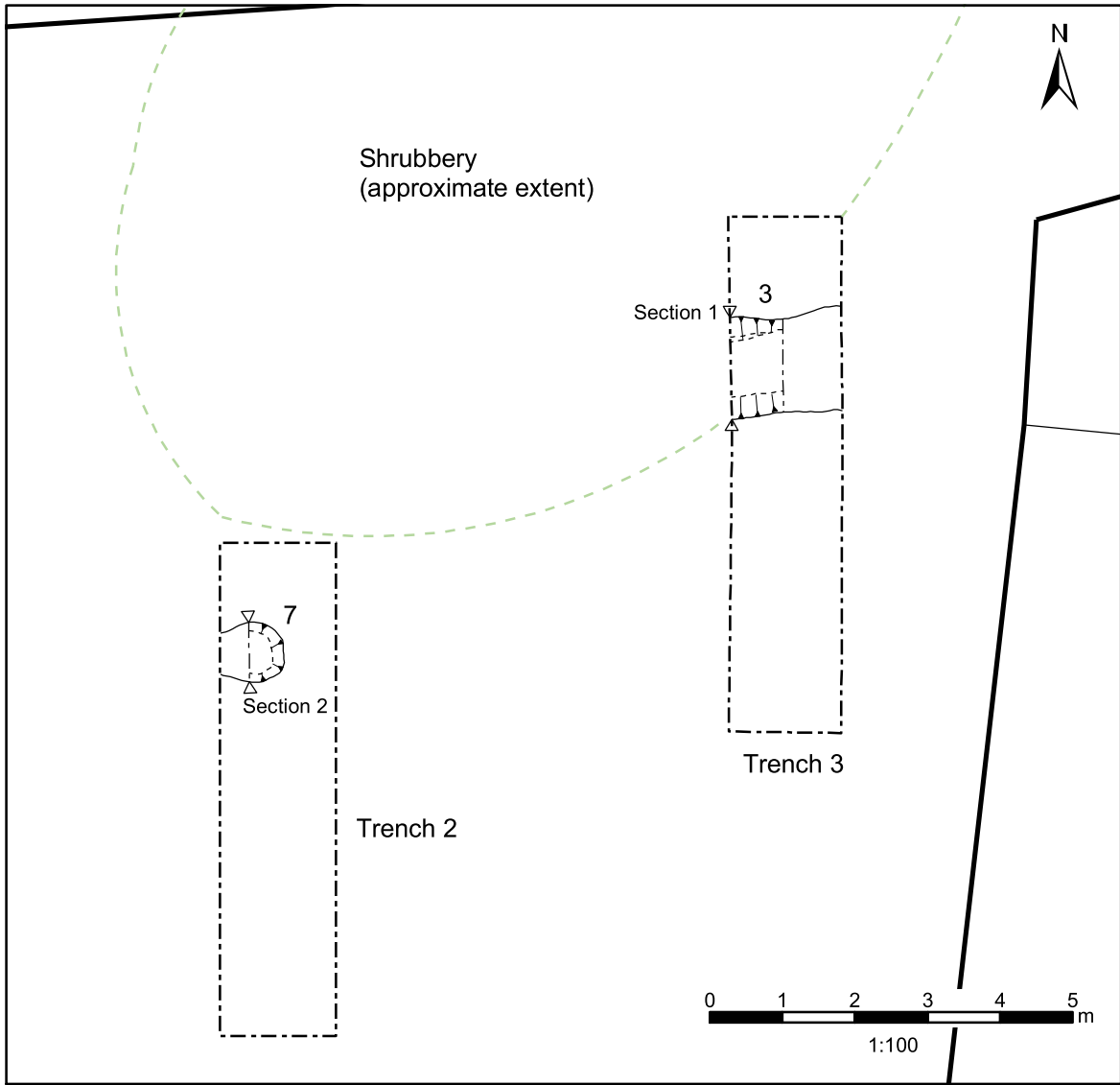
### HER SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site name/Address:</b> Land south of Landguard, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, Herts	
<b>Parishes:</b> Sawbridgeworth	<b>District:</b> East Hertfordshire
<b>NGR:</b> TL 48540 15025	<b>Site Code:</b> SAWLG08
<b>Type of Work:</b> Archaeological Evaluation	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
<b>Dates of Work:</b> 13th to 16th June 2008	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> 46 sq m
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b> Bishop's Stortford	<b>Funding source:</b> Client
<b>Further Seasons Anticipated?:</b> No	<b>Related HER Nos.:</b>
<b>Final Report:</b> HAH note	<b>Oasis No.:</b> essexcou1- 43505
<b>Periods Represented:</b> Post-medieval, modern	
<b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b>	
<p>An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land south of Landguard, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, Herts in advance of residential development. Three evaluation trenches totalling 30m in length were excavated.</p> <p>No archaeological features pre-dating the post-medieval period were identified; however, the recovery of single sherds of Late Iron Age and early medieval pottery from the topsoil does indicate that there may have been earlier activity in the vicinity. In the medieval period this may have been agricultural in nature given the considerable distance from the site to the street frontages (c.50m south of Station Road and c.0.75m north of The Forebury).</p> <p>Two archaeological features were investigated, one was an undated pit of possible natural origin and the other a post-medieval boundary ditch. The ditch was aligned east-west and contained a variety of finds broadly dating from the late 18th to the 20th century. This boundary is shown on the first four editions of the Ordnance Survey. In addition, the rubble-filled remains of a former swimming pool were noted at the northern end of Trench 1.</p> <p>Based upon the results of the investigation, it is unlikely that the development will have any impact upon the archaeological record and no further work will be required.</p>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b>	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> T. Ennis	<b>Date of Summary:</b> September 2008



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Fig.1. Site location



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Fig.2. Trenches 2 and 3

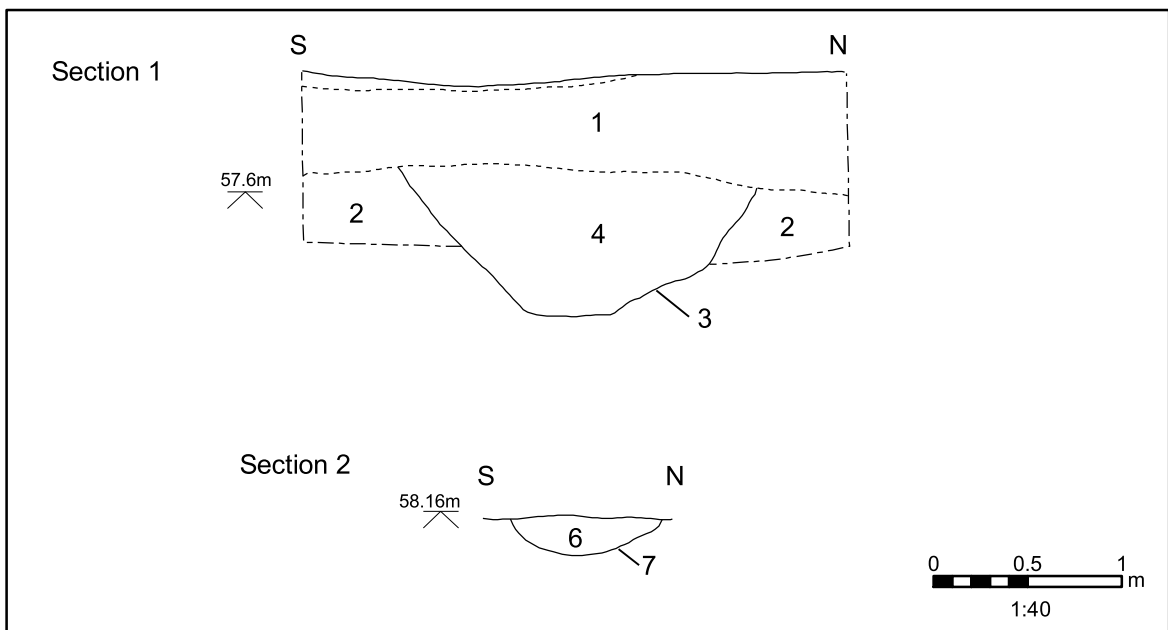


Fig.3. Sections



Plate 1 Trench 1 looking north  
(2m scale)



Plate 2 Trench 2 looking north  
(2m scale)



Plate 3 Trench 3 looking north (1m scale)