LAND AT DEVEREUX FARM KIRBY- LE - SOKEN ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION





MANAGED RE-ALIGNMENT & HABITAT CREATION WORKS AT DEVEREUX FARM

KIRBY-LE-SOKEN

ESSEX

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.

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DEVEREUX FARM

KIRBY-LE-SOKEN

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

SUMMARY

Client: Environment Agency

Planning application: FAU Project No.: 1961 NGR: TM 23463 22736

Site Code: FWDF08

OASIS ID: essexcou1-46839

Date of Fieldwork: 11th to the 14th August 2008

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land to the north of Devereux Farm, Island Lane, Kirby-Le-Soken by the Essex CC Field Archaeology Unit, on behalf of the Environment Agency, in advance of managed re-alignment and habitat creation works. The work was commissioned in order to determine the presence or absence, date, character, quality and significance of any archaeological remains present within the footprint of the development and the likely impact of any construction works upon them.

Nine evaluation trenches, each measuring $30m \times 1.6m$, were excavated within the area of the proposed works. All trenches revealed clean, orange/brown clay at an average depth of 0.60m with the exception of trench 9, in which alluvial deposits were present at 1.20m.

No archaeological features were present in trenches 1, 4, 5 and 8, while trenches 2, 3 and 7 contained isolated archaeological remains in the form of a 12th Century pit in trench 7, possible prehistoric deposits in trench 3 and a curvelinear gully of unknown date in trench 2. A small undated pit containing animal remains was also investigated in trench 6, while a linear feature seen in Trench 9 may be a natural channel or man-made drainage ditch.

Overall, the density of archaeological features is low; however, given the relatively shallow depth at which archaeological remains were encountered in trenches 3 and 7 (0.65m and 0.4m below existing ground level respectively), it is suggested that they will be vulnerable to disturbance from all but the shallowest of development works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out at Devereux Farm, Kirby-le-Soken in advance of a programme of managed re-alignment and habitat creation works. The investigation was undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of the Environment Agency, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by ECC FAU (2008).

Copies of this report will be supplied to the client, ECC HEM and the Essex Historic Environment Record. A digital copy of this report has been uploaded onto the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis). The archive is to be held at Colchester and Ipswich Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography (Fig 1)

The site is located to the north-east of the village of Kirby-le-Soken and immediately south of an area of coastal marshland and braided channels known as the The Wade (NGR: TM 23463 22736 – see Fig. 1). Situated on the edge of the Tendring Plain, the underlying geology broadly consists of London Clay overlain by remnants of the Kesgrave Sand and Gravel Formation and light loams. The development area itself was thought to be reclaimed marshland, although clay was encountered in all trenches, with estuarine deposits only seen in trench 9. The fields immediately either side of Island Road (areas A & C and B respectively) are currently under arable cultivation while the remaining parcels are scrubby grassland which is exposed to periodic inundation with the intention of reverting it back to salt marsh.

As part of the proposed works a new counterwall will be constructed using materials extracted from a series of borrow pits/ scrapes which will then be left open to form shallow ponds as part of a habitat creation programme. A new access track will also be created to serve one of the borrow pits.

2.2 History and archaeology

This historical and archaeological background is based on information held in the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) at County Hall, Chelmsford.

The Tendring Plain is rich in sites of archaeological interest; although of particular relevance to the development site is the coastal location and the discovery of salt producing sites (salterns) in the general vicinity, including examples at Kirby Quay, on nearby Horsey Island and along the creek edge to the north of Marsh House/ Birch Hall. These sites are commonly known as 'red hills' from the colour of the briquetage debris found on them and generally thought to be Roman in date, although it is likely that both Bronze Age and Iron Age examples survive. In addition to salt, the marsh also provided an important source of grazing throughout the Roman, Saxon and Medieval periods, while the coastal location afforded local communities easy access to sea-based trade routes and the exploitation of marine resources.

Prior to trial-trenching, a programme geophysical survey was undertaken, targeting the location of the access track and borrow pits. The survey detected two anomalies in the footprint of the access track, which were targeted during trenching, as well as the line of the water pipe to Horsey Island. Beyond this, the survey results were blank, with the exception of a number of discrete ferrous anomalies which are believed to relate to the use of parts of the site as a camp site (i.e. discarded/lost tent pegs, ring-pulls etc).

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The general aim of the project was to confirm the presence or absence, date, character, quality and significance of any archaeological remains present in the four areas affected by construction/landscaping works. In the event of significant discoveries a further aim of the evaluation was to identify appropriate research objectives for any future work, 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).

4.0 METHOD

The archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' standards and by-laws, and the IFA's and ALGAO's Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (IFA 1999; Gurney 2003). ECC FAU is a registered archaeological organisation with the IFA. The ECC FAU uses its own recording system to record all archaeological deposits and features (ECC FAU 2006). The archaeological work was monitored by Adrian Gasgoyne of ECC HEM.

Nine trial-trenches, each measuring 30m long by 1.6m wide were excavated, totalling 432sqm of trenching. Trenches 1 and 2 were located with a borrow-pit/ landscape scrape (area A), as were trenches 3 to 5. Trenches 6 to 8 were located in the footprint of a new access track and further borrow-pit area, while trench 9 was located on the line of a new counterwall. Excavation did not generally exceed a safe working depth of 1.2m below existing ground level, although machine-cut sondages were excavated as required in each trench to more-fully investigate the deposit sequence.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

5.1 Trenches 1-9

The evaluation consisted of nine machine-dug trenches, measuring 30m x 1.60m located within the footprint of the development area (Fig 1). The excavated remains are described and interpreted by broad chronological period and further context information is included in Appendix 1.

Trenches 1, 4, 5, and 8 were machined to a depth of 0.60m, onto an orangey/brown clay. They contained no archaeological remains.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2), contained the possible remains of a post hole (9 - plate 1) and a gully (11 - plate 2), which ran roughly east-west across the trench and appeared to have a slight curve to it. Unfortunately no dating evidence was retrieved from either feature.

In trench 3 (Fig. 4) a number of features of possible prehistoric date were encountered at a depth of approximately 0.65m below existing ground level, although only three of these could be properly investigated due to the constraints of the narrow excavation area. Pit 15, which cut a small gully, 17, produced small fragments of possibly residual prehistoric pottery and burnt flint, while part of what could be a large enclosure ditch (23 - plate 5) was excavated but yielded no clear dating evidence, although irretrievable fragments of baked clay and charcoal pieces were present. In addition to the above, a 2m x 0.50m sondage (plate 4) was cut through grey silty deposits 14 and 20, to a depth of 0.60m, but showed no clear evidence of a cut feature.

In trench 6 (Fig. 5), a small pit (5 - plate 6) containing the decayed skeletal remains of a juvenile sheep or goat was uncovered partway along the trench. No dating evidence was found but the close proximity of the feature to the topsoil/subsoil interface suggests it may be relatively modern, while the fact that the animal appears to have not survived long after birth suggests that it was unlikely to have been slaughtered for food.

In trench 7 (Fig. 6), a large pit (7 - plate 7) containing sherds of unabraded medieval pottery and baked clay was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.4m below existing ground level. Only part of the pit was visible and no other features were noted in the trench, but it seems unlikely to be an isolated feature, given its size and the quantity of pottery recovered.

In trench 9 (Fig. 3), the presence of alluvial sands and silts (plates 8) throughout the trench, from a thin topsoil to an excavated depth of 1.20m, suggest this area has seen frequent flooding and long periods as marshland. Linear feature 1/3 appears to be a naturally formed channel leading off the higher ground from the west, although there is the possibility that it may be a drainage ditch. Unfortunately, the depth of the trench and groundwater ingress made it difficult to confirm this.

6.0 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL by Joyce Compton

Small groups of finds were recovered from five contexts, across four of the excavated trenches. All of the material has been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details can be found in Appendix 1 The finds are described by category below.

6.1 Pottery

Three contexts produced pottery, amounting to 115 sherds, weighing 1157g. The bulk of the assemblage is medieval, mainly recovered from the fill of pit 7 (Trench 7). This pottery forms the subject of a separate report, see below. The remainder of the pottery (from contexts in Trench 3) is prehistoric and the sherd size and condition may indicate residuality.

6.2 Prehistoric pottery by Nick Lavender

Awaiting report

6.3 Medieval and later pottery by Helen Walker

A total of ninety-nine sherds weighing just over a kilo was excavated from fill 8 of pit 7. The pottery comprises two semi-complete cooking pots, plus rim fragments from at least two more cooking pots and miscellaneous body sherds in early medieval ware and medieval coarse ware. The only fine ware is a single sherd of abraded Hedingham ware, unfortunately unglazed and undecorated. In addition, a single small sherd of early medieval ware was recovered from soil sample <2> in fill 16 of pit 15 (Trench 3).

The most complete vessel comprises the profile of an early medieval ware shouldered cooking pot with a thickened everted rim. It shows the typical fire-blackening and sooting residues on the sides associated with use in a wood-burning hearth, and therefore, as the name implies, was probably used for cooking, although the sooting encrustations are unusually thick. The second semicomplete cooking pot is again in early medieval ware and comprises the base and sides of the cooking pot. Again, it shows fire-blackening and sooting residues on the sides consistent with cooking, but the underside of the base is thickly encrusted with yellowish, rust-brown and black-coloured residues. In addition, there is a rust-orange coloured zone around the basal angle above which the fire-blackening begins. This might suggest that the cooking pot was placed in a tripod (or similar stand). The yellow and rust-coloured encrustations indicate the pot came into contact with iron. Neither cooking pot showed internal residues. The large fragment from the body of a medieval coarse ware vessel also shows traces of use in the form of a line of fire-blackening around the broken edges, implying some kind of secondary use after the vessel was broken.

The presence of early medieval ware and medieval coarse ware together suggests a later 12th to early 13th century date. The dating can be refined by the presence of a developed cavetto type cooking pot rim produced in the first half of the 13th century. The sherd of Hedingham ware, although unfeatured, has an orange fabric consistent with a 13th, rather than a 12th century date. Therefore, a date in the early 13th century is most likely for this group.

The unusual residues and the fact the site is not close to a medieval settlement could mean that non-domestic heating activity was going on, perhaps associated with salt-marsh industries such as fish/shellfish processing, smelting of bog-iron, or salt extraction, (although the latter is unlikely as salt was concentrated-out by heating in lead pans (Ridgeway 2000, 149)). The presence of baked clay and a piece of burnt flint also attests to possible specialised activity. It is also possible that people were cooking in the field, although the fact that the remains of several vessels are represented shows this was not a one-off occurrence. Medieval hearths and associated 13th century pottery have previously been found in coastal areas, at Canvey Island, on the remains of Roman 'Red Hill' saltings (Rodwell 1966), although the nature of the medieval occupation is not discussed in the article.

6.4 Baked clay

Two contexts produced baked clay, amounting to 58 pieces, weighing 784g. The pieces from the fill of ditch 1 (Trench 9) are featureless and very small, and further comment is not possible. Most of the assemblage was recovered from the fill of pit 7 (Trench 7) and was associated with the medieval pottery described above. The fragments are orange-red in colour but have no other

distinguishing features. It is not possible to ascertain whether these are the remains of objects, the residues from a hearth, or derived from building material, such as daub.

6.5 Flints, burnt flints and burnt stone

A small piece of burnt flint was recovered from the fill of pit 7. The remainder of the burnt flint and a single flint chip came from contexts in Trench 3, and are associated with prehistoric pottery. The same contexts in Trench 3 also produced small quantities of burnt stone.

6.6 Animal bone

A small quantity of fragmentary animal bone was recovered from the fill of pit 5 (Trench 6). The bones were identified using Schmid (1972). The recognisable skeletal elements mainly comprise molars, feet and leg bones from a juvenile sheep/goat. Most of the bones are unfused and the molars appear to be unerupted. This, coupled with the condition of most of the assemblage, indicates burial of an animal which did not survive for long after birth.

6.7 Environmental material

Bulk soil samples were taken from two contexts (fills 8; Trench 7, and 16; Trench 3) for the purposes of environmental analysis. Both were 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 flots were dried and bagged by context. Retrieved artefacts were recorded by count and weight and these details added to the quantification table in Appendix 1. The retrieved finds comprise pottery and baked clay. Small amounts of charcoal, including occasional carbonised seeds, were present in the flots but the potential for further study is extremely low.

6.8 Comments on the Assemblage

Small groups of finds of differing dates were recovered. Exploitation of the coastal zone at various times in the past is indicated. The medieval pottery came from a large feature on the highest point of the investigation area. The purpose to which the vessels were put is unclear at present, but the process appeared to involve a certain degree of heating. The baked clay associated with the pottery also indicates a high temperature, but there are no features, such as salt splashes, which would help to clarify matters. Further work on any of the finds is not required at this stage, but examination of the external residues on the pottery might be considered in the future, especially if further work in the area is carried out. All of the finds should be retained and occupy less than one box.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation trenches identified an island or spur of dryer land with evidence for activity in the medieval period in the north of the development area and possible prehistoric activity in the southeast. A number of more-ephemeral features were identified in trench 2, but these remain undated and somewhat dubious in nature. Contrary to initial expectations, alluvial/ marine deposits were only encountered in one trench, trench 9, which appears to show the eastern extent of the headland where alluvial silts formed against the London Clay

Overall, the density of archaeological features is low. Nevertheless, the presence of the pit in trench 7, containing a large quantity of domestic pottery, clearly indicates that some form of activity was taking place here, although the suggestion that it was neither intensive nor long-lived cannot be discounted and the pit may be associated with seasonal activity, possibly related to salt making or grazing. The small sherds/ fragments of prehistoric pottery recovered from the features in trench 3 are again clearly of some interest, in that if not residual they point to a probable Bronze Age presence in the area. Even if residual, they were nevertheless recovered from features that showed no evidence for being of recent origin.

As a result of the relatively limited results of the evaluation it has not been possible at this stage to identify any key research objectives for any subsequent work that should take place, beyond highlighting general themes relating to settlement and exploitation of the coastal zone and marshland in Prehistory and the Medieval period.

Given the relatively shallow depth at which archaeological remains were encountered in trenches 3 and 7 (0.65m and 0.4m below existing ground level respectively), it is suggested that they will be vulnerable to disturbance from all but the shallowest of development works.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was commissioned by the Environment Agency and special thanks are due for their assistance, especially to Merle Leeds, John Hipkin and Phil Catherall. The monitoring officer was Mr A Gasgoine of ECC HEM, on behalf of Essex County Council. A.Scruby managed the project and the author carried out the excavation with the assistance of D. Smith. The illustrations were prepared by the author and A Lewsey.

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ECC FAU	2008	Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological evaluation at Devereux Farm, Kirby- le – Soken, Essex. ECC FAU 2008
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Ridgeway, V.	2000	'A medieval saltern mound at Millfields Caravan Park, Bramber, West Sussex', Sussex Archaeological Collections 138, 138-52
Rodwell, W.J.	1966	'The excavation of a 'Red Hill' on Canvey Island', <i>Trans Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 2 28-33
Schmid, E.	1972	Atlas of Animal Bones: For Prehistorians, Archaeologists and Quaternary Geologists (Amsterdam, London, New York)

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT, TRENCH & FINDS DATA

CONTEXT	TYPE	DESCIPTION	DATE
01	Ditch	Linear, 3.80m+ x 2.00m x 0.30m deep	-
02	Fill of 1	Pale grey clayey silt	-
03	Ditch	Linear, 3.80m+ x 1.00m x 0.40m	-
04	Fill of 3	Pale grey clayey silt	-
05	Pit	Oval, 0.20m x 0.40m x 0.10m deep	-
06	Fill of 5	Dark greyish brown clayey silt	-
07	Pit	Oval, 4.00m+ x 1.00m+ x 0.40m deep	medieval
08	Fill of 7	Yellowish brown clayey sandy silt	medieval
09	Post Hole	Oval, 0.24m x 0.20m x 0.03m deep	-
10	Fill of 9	Greyish mid brown clayey silt	-
11	Gully	Linear, 0.50m x 0.54m x 0.25m deep	-
12	Fill of 11	Pale greyish brown clayey silt -	
13	Channel	Linear, 1.50m+ x 2.00m+ x 0.60m+ deep	Prehistoric
14	Fill of 13	Brownish mid grey clayey silt	Prehistoric
15	Pit	Oval, 1.10m x 1.00m x 0.46m deep	medieval/Prehistoric
16	Fill of 15	Brownish mid grey clayey silt	medieval/Prehistoric
17	Gully	Linear, 0.46m x 0.48m x 0.09m deep	
18	Fill of 17	Greyish mid brown clayey silt	-
19	Unknown	Number created to accommodate deposit 20	-
20	Fill of 19	Mottled yellowish mid grey clayey silt	-
21	-	Unused number	-
22	-	Unused number	-
23	Ditch (?)	Linear, 1.00m+ x 1.40m x 0.55m deep	-
24	Fill of 23	Yellowish mid grey clayey silt	-

Trench data

Trench No	Co-ordinates	Orientation
1	X = 623454.7 Y = 222465.8 X = 623454.7 Y = 222435.8	north-south
2	X = 623472.2 Y = 222487.1 X = 623501.2 Y = 222494.8	east-west
3	X = 623096.6 Y = 222410.4 X = 623096.6 Y = 222380.4	north-south
4	X = 623116.7 Y = 222397.0 X = 623145.6 Y = 222404.8	east-west
5	X = 623163.5 Y = 222425.4 X = 623163.5 Y = 222395.4	north-south
6	X = 623352.7 Y = 222517.2 X = 623334.2 Y = 222593.7	northeast-southwest
7	X = 623447.1 Y = 222635.3 X = 623428.8 Y = 222611.4	northeast-southwest
8	X = 623462.5 Y = 222714.6 X = 623462.5 Y = 222684.6	north-south
9	X = 623788.0 Y = 222419.2 X = 623816.3 Y = 222429.0	east-west

Finds data

Context	Featur	Count	Weight	Description	Date
	е				
2	1	2	4	Baked clay	-
5	Cut No	82	82	Animal bone; molars, ribs, feet and leg bones and fragments from a juvenile sheep/goat (mostly unfused)	-
8	7	1 56 99	6 780 1120	Burnt flint Baked clay; 14/6g from sample 1 Pottery; rim, base and body sherds; 9/30g from sample 1	- - Medieval
14	13	1 5	4 26	Burnt stone Pottery; body sherds and crumbs	- Prehistoric
16	15	1 5 3 1 10	1 32 50 2 9	Flint chip from sample 2 Burnt flints Burnt stone, as for 14 Pottery; body sherd from sample 2 Pottery; body sherds and crumbs; 1/1g from sample 2	- - - Medieval Prehistoric

APPENDIX 2 ARCHIVE INDEX

SITE NAME: Devereux Farm (FWDF08)

Index to the Archive

File containing:

- 1. Introduction
- 1.1 Written Scheme of Investigation for Evaluation
- 2. Research Archive
- 2.1 Client Report
- 3. Site Archive
- 3.1 23 Context Sheets
- 3.2 1 Plans Register
- 3.3 1 Sections Register
- 3.4 1 Levels Register
- 3.5 1 Permatrace Section/Plan sheet
- 3.6 9 Trench Sheets
- 3.7 1 Box Finds

APPENDIX 3 EHER SUMMARY SHEET

Site Name/Address: Devereux Farm Island Lane Kirby-le-Soken			
Parish:	District:		
NGR TM 23463 22736	Site Code: FWDF08		
Type of Work: Evaluation	Site Director/Group: Tony Blowers, ECC FAU		
Date of Work: 6 th to 14th August 2008	Size of Area Investigated: 300000 sq m		
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Colchester Museum	Funding Source: Environment Agency		
Further Work Anticipated?	Related EHER Nos:		
Final Report: EAH Summary	OASIS ID: essexcou1-46839		

Periods Represented: medieval SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land to the north of Devereux Farm, Island Lane, Kirby-Le-Soken by the Essex CC Field Archaeology Unit, on behalf of the Environment Agency, in advance of managed re-alignment and habitat creation works. The work was commissioned in order to determine the presence or absence, date, character, quality and significance of any archaeological remains present within the footprint of the development and the likely impact of any construction works upon them.

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No archaeological features were present in trenches 1, 4, 5 and 8, while trenches 2, 3 and 7 contained isolated archaeological remains in the form of a 12th Century pit in trench 7, possible prehistoric deposits in trench 3 and a curvelinear gully of unknown date in trench 2. A small undated pit, containing animal remains was also investigated in trench 6, while a linear feature seen in Trench 9 may be a natural channel or man-made drainage ditch.

Overall, the density of archaeological features is low; however, given the relatively shallow depth at which archaeological remains were encountered in trenches 3 and 7 (0.65m and 0.4m below existing ground level respectively), it is suggested that they will be vulnerable to disturbance from all but the shallowest of development works.

Previous Summaries/Reports:	
Author of Summary: Tony Blowers	Date of Summary: May 2008

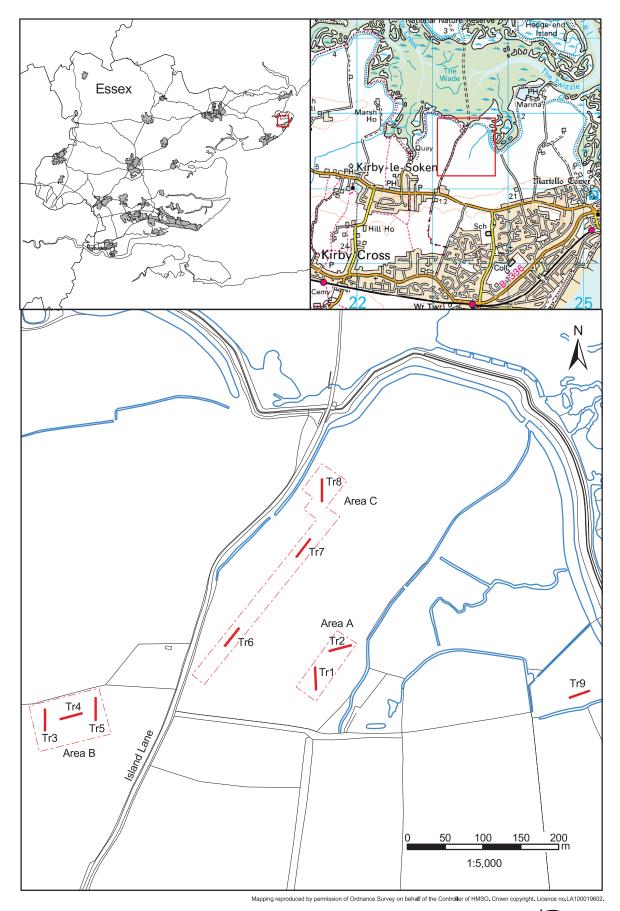


Fig.1. Site location



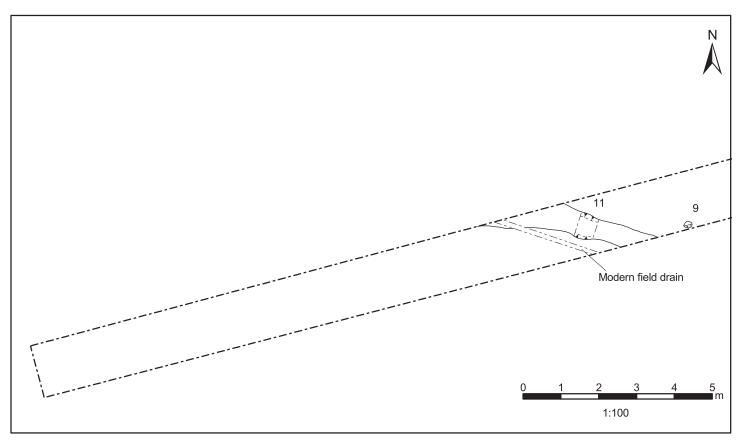


Fig.2. Trench 2, Area A

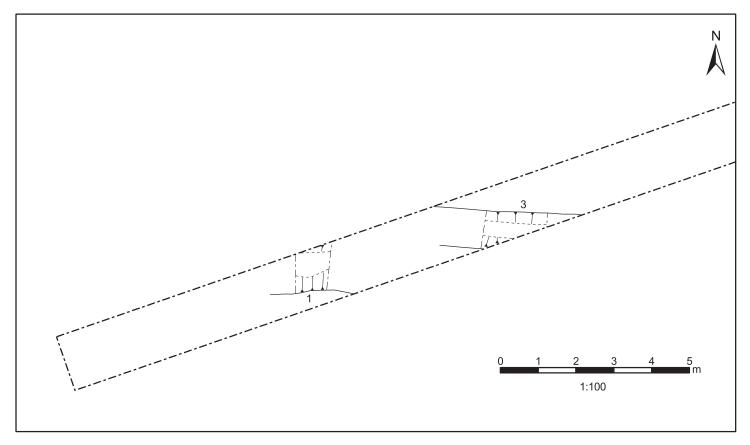


Fig.3. Trench 9



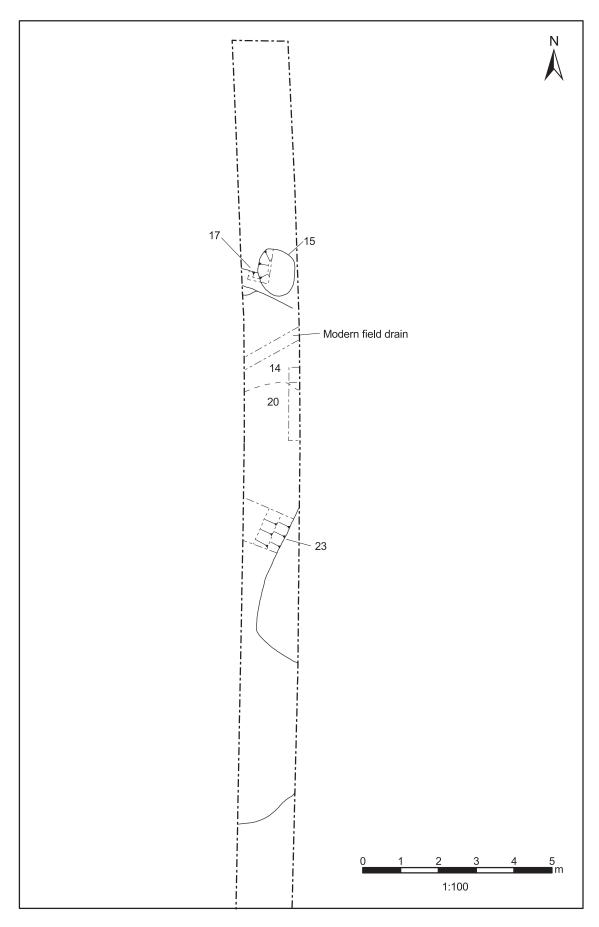


Fig.4. Trench 3, Area B



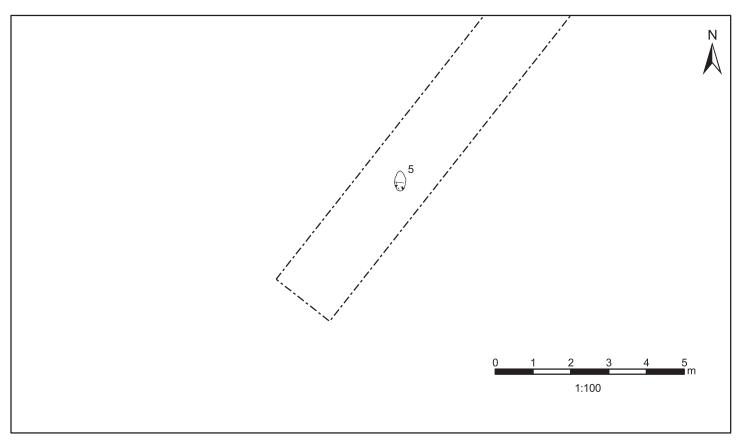


Fig.5. Trench 6, Area C

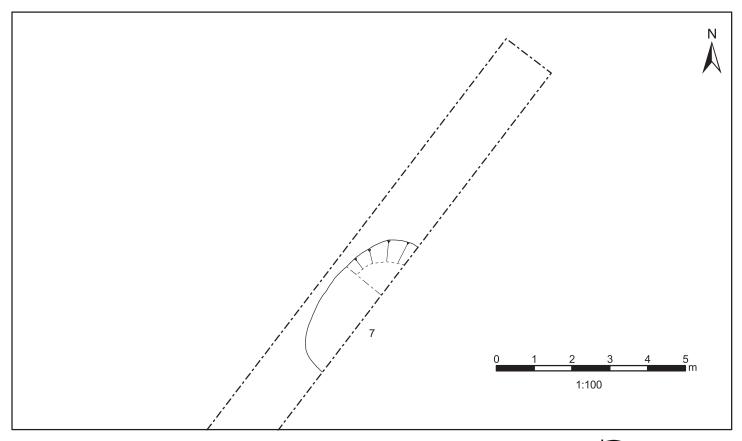


Fig.6. Trench 7, Area C



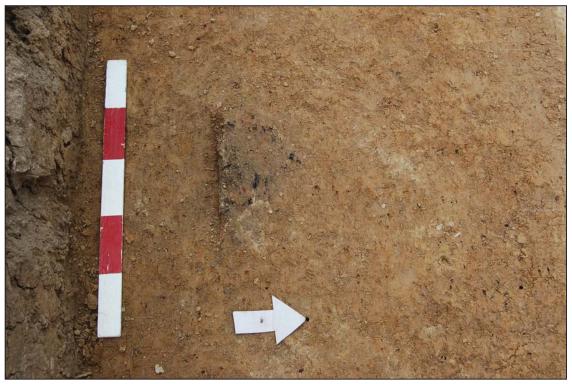


Plate 1: Trench 2, Possible Post Hole 9



Plate 2: Trench 2, Gully 11



Plate 3: Trench 3, Pit 15 and Gully 17



Plate 4: Trench 3, Sondage



Plate 5: Trench 3, Ditch 23



Plate 6: Trench 6, Pit 5



Plate 7: Trench 7, Pit 7



Plate 8: Trench 9, Eastern Silt Deposits