

**CROSSROADS
WATER LANE
HELIONS BUMPSTEAD
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
BY TRIAL TRENCHING**



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

AUGUST 2008

CROSSROADS, WATER LANE

HELIONS BUMPSTEAD

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

BY TRIAL TRENCHING

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**CROSSROADS, WATER LANE
HELIONS BUMPSTEAD
ESSEX
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
BY TRIAL TRENCHING**

Client: Enterprise Property Group Ltd

NGR: TL 6502 4155

Site Code: HBWL08

Oasis No.: essexcou1- 47183

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out at Crossroads, Water Lane, Helions Bumpstead, Essex in advance of a small residential development. The site is located in the centre of the historic village, which is recorded by the Domesday Survey as existing before 1066, and was considered to have a high potential for Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains. The evaluation was carried out by the Essex CC Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of the Enterprise Group Ltd, and was monitored by the Essex CC Historic Environment Management team on behalf of the local planning authority.

The evaluation trench was located in Plot 2, a garden area in the north of the site, and was L-shaped with two 10m long arms. Plot 1 was not investigated as it was occupied by the existing bungalow. The trenching identified no evidence of the Saxon or medieval village other than a single sherd of residual 13th-14th century pottery. Two small 17th century pits were recorded, but otherwise only modern features were found, dating to the 19th and 20th century. The only evidence of the buildings showing on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey were 19th century or later cobbled and clay surfaces in the extreme north of the site.

The archaeological evaluation did not identify any significant new evidence for the Saxon or medieval origins of the village, or of post-medieval buildings within the site area.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching carried out at Crossroads, Water Lane, Helions Bumpstead, in advance of a small housing development in the centre of the historic village. The evaluation was undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of Enterprise Property Group Ltd. Since the site was considered to have potential to contain significant archaeological remains, a condition for archaeological investigation was placed on planning consent (BTE/02485/07), following advice given by the Essex CC Historic Environment Management team (ECC HEM) based on Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (DoE 1990). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with an archaeological brief prepared by the ECC HEM (2008) and a written scheme of investigation prepared by the ECC FAU (2008).

The development comprised the demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of two new houses in its stead. One house (Plot 1) was to be constructed on the footprint of the former bungalow and did not require archaeological investigation. The second house (Plot 2) was to be constructed in a garden area at the north end of the site and is the subject of this report.

Copies of this report will be supplied to Enterprise Property Group (including a copy to forward to the Local Planning Authority), ECC HEM and the Essex Historic Environment Record. 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>). The site archive and copies of the report will be deposited at Braintree Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and Geology (Fig. 1)

Helions Bumpstead is located in the north of Braintree District close to the borders with Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. The development area was located to the south-west of the church close to the crossroads in the centre of the village (TL 6502 4155). The southern half of the site comprised the existing bungalow named 'Crossroads' (Plot 1) that is due for demolition. Plot 2 was located in the northern half of the development area in an overgrown

garden area, bordered to the west by a fence and to the east and north by small trees and shrubs.

The underlying surface geology comprises mixed clay silt sand and gravel of the Lowestoft Formation overlying Chalk.

2.2 Archaeology and History (Fig. 1)

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

The manor of Helions Bumpstead is recorded in the Domesday Survey as existing before 1066 (Rumble 1983). After the conquest it was held by Tihel the Breton, who came from Hellean in Brittany, from which the 'Helions' element of the village's name is derived. Domesday refers to 9 villagers and 3 smallholders in 1066, so it appears that the present village has late Saxon or earlier origins.

The moated manorial site, 0.5km south-west of the present village (Scheduled Monument 20742; EHER 1591), is presently occupied by a mid 19th century farmhouse, but recent investigations have showed that the manorial site has been occupied continuously from at least as early as c. 1200 (Ennis 2001). A surface containing pottery of that date was recorded, as well as two pits containing 12th-13th century pottery. Late medieval pottery was recovered from the fill of the moat.

Chapman and André's map of 1777 shows a path along the south side of the current development area, leading to the moated manorial site, suggesting a close link between the two historically. It is also reasonable to assume that the crossroads at the centre of the village was its historical focus. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey shows cottages along the north and west sides of the development site, now demolished, that may have had medieval or post-medieval origins.

There is a possibility of prehistoric and Roman activity predating the village, as prehistoric finds have been recovered (EHER 9932) and cropmarks have been recorded west of the village (EHER 17085). Evidence of Roman occupation was recorded in an archaeological evaluation of the Post Office site, Church Hill (EHER 9924).

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

The general aim of the investigation was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological remains within the area of the new house in Plot 2.

3.2 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). The date and character of the earliest phases of medieval villages, especially those with possible Saxon origins, is an important regional research topic.

The specific objectives of the project were to:

- Investigate any evidence for the development of the medieval and post-medieval village, and especially its Saxon origins.
- Locate the remains of the houses shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey and establish their date and character.
- Investigate any evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity predating the village.

4.0 METHOD

The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' by-laws and guidelines (IFA 1999) 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. The archive

One L-shaped evaluation trench, with arms orientated east/west (10.8m long) and north/south (10.0m long), was excavated across Plot 2 in the north of the development area under archaeological supervision using a mini-excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket. The trench was cleaned and features were hand-excavated. The trench was tied into Ordnance Survey by measurement to existing boundaries.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

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

The majority of the trench was 0.5m or less in depth. Overburden consisted of dark grey clay-silt topsoil (0.21-0.35m deep) above dark greyish brown clay-silt subsoil (0.15-0.20m deep). Natural comprised light brown clay-silt with occasional patches of brown gravel overlying yellow chalky clay at depth.

5.1 Medieval

No archaeological remains of medieval or earlier date were observed. One residual sherd of 13th to 14th century pottery was recovered from a later feature.

5.2 Post-medieval (Fig. 2)

Two, similarly sized, post-medieval pits (6 and 8) were excavated in the western arm of the trench. Pit 6 was roughly oval, measured 0.7m long by 0.6m wide and 0.29m deep, and was filled with greyish brown clay silt (5). Pit 8 was circular with a diameter of 0.6m and a depth of 0.3m, and was also filled with greyish brown clay silt (7). Both pits produced a variety of finds including pottery dating to the 17th century. A further sherd of post-medieval pottery broadly dating to the later 16th to 19th centuries was recovered from a deposit of dark grey clay silt (15) located at the western end of the trench. This deposit was 0.5m thick and overlay natural yellow chalky clay. It was not clear whether the deposit was a layer or fill of a cut feature as it continued beyond the trench on three sides and to the fourth was truncated by a modern pit.

5.3 Modern (Fig. 2)

A number of modern features, dating from the 19th and 20th centuries, were identified. At the north end of the trench was the remains of a cobble surface (1) constructed from large pebbles, chalk lumps and occasional pieces of brick. One piece of post-medieval (17th century?) brick was recovered but is unlikely to truly reflect the date of the surface as it may have been old when incorporated. The surface was sealed by a layer of yellowish clay (2) containing 19th century and later pottery. To the south of these deposits was a large pit (17), 2.9m long, containing a mixed fill of clay, chalk and mortar (16). This pit was not fully excavated as the recovery of three stoneware bottles indicated it was 19th century or later in

date. The top of the pit was cut by a small post-hole (4) clearly of a comparatively modern date. Two other post-holes (11 and 13) located nearby may also be contemporary. The fill of post-hole 11 produced a fragment of modern pantile.

Two other modern features were identified in the southern arm of the trench. Pit 10 was 0.7m long, steep-sided and cut from directly below the topsoil. Its fill (9) contained fragments of post-medieval brick and tile and a sherd from a modern white earthenware plate. At the west end of the trench was a larger modern pit that was not fully investigated due to the recovery of a 20th century 'Shell' oil can (not retained) from its fill.

6.0 FINDS REPORT

by Joyce Compton

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

6.1 Pottery by Helen Walker

A small quantity of pottery, twenty sherds weighing 1664g, was excavated from six contexts (Appendix 3). The only medieval pottery is a residual sherd of Hedingham ware from the body of a strip jug, dating from the 13th to earlier 14th centuries. Fill 7 (pit 8) and layer 15 produced glazed examples of post-medieval red earthenware, and the presence of a fragment of cylindrical drinking vessel in fill 7 indicates a most likely date of 17th century for deposition. Fill 5 of pit 6 produced a sherd of probable Anglo-Netherlands tin-glazed earthenware which can also be assigned a 17th century date. The remaining pottery is modern and includes three 19th-century ginger-beer bottles, one with the impressed mark 'J Bourne & Son Patentee, Denby & Codnor, Park Potteries near Derby, Vitreous Stone Bottles, warranted not to absorb'.

6.2 Brick and tile

Eight contexts produced brick and tile fragments, amounting to 18 pieces, weighing 6429g. Most of the assemblage is too fragmentary for measurements to be taken or for further comment, but those from surface 1 and the fills of pits 8 and 17 are more substantial. Using the typology in Ryan (1996, 94-6), the bricks from surface 1 and pit 8 are likely to be post-medieval, perhaps 17th century, flooring bricks. The worn condition of the brick in pit 8

would support this identification. The brick in pit 17 is regular-sided and of standard proportions, indicating a more recent date of late 18th to 19th centuries.

Seven fragments of roof tile, weighing 458g, were recorded; one, from the fill of post-hole 12, is an edge piece of modern pantile. The remaining fragments are featureless, and are also likely to be relatively recent.

6.3 Other finds

Three contexts, pit fills 5, 7 and 9, produced slag fragments, amounting to 530g. Their presence is probably incidental and not significant. Small amounts of animal bone were recovered from two contexts, pit fills 7 and 9. The recognisable elements are cattle bones with transverse cut marks, probably indicating butchery waste. A clay tobacco pipe stem was recovered from layer 2 and a small piece of oyster shell came from fill 5 of pit 6.

6.4 Comments on the assemblage

Except for a single sherd of medieval pottery, the finds, where datable, are post-medieval or modern. No further work is required on any of the material. The modern finds, except for the larger bricks, have been discarded, as indicated in the table in Appendix 2. The slag could be discarded at the archiving stage. The remainder of the assemblage should be retained.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Although no deposits of medieval date were identified, the recovery of a single sherd of 13th to 14th century pottery does at least attest to medieval activity in the area and accords with the historical record.

Post-medieval remains include two pits dating to the 17th century, but otherwise are of 19th century or later date. It is likely that the 19th century and modern features relate to the ill-defined structures depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. The cobble surface (1) might be part of a 19th/20th century outbuilding floor, while post-holes 4, 11 and 13 might form part of a structure cut through the large 19th century pit 17.

8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

No evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity predating the village was identified, nor was any specific evidence relating to its Saxon or medieval origins. Few structural remains survived that could be linked with specific buildings depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. The majority of the finds evidence points to a 19th to 20th century date for the bulk of the excavated remains, although two 17th century pits suggest the presence of an earlier building of this date in this part of the village.

The character and chronological development of Saxon and medieval villages is an important research topic in archaeological research throughout the region, especially where there is a record of settlement in Domesday, but in this case the results are inconclusive. The absence of any evidence of early settlement is perhaps surprising given the site's location on a road frontage in the centre of the village. It is possible that previously the site was open ground, but more likely that the evidence has simply not survived. Below-ground evidence of Saxon and medieval timber buildings is often superficial and is extremely vulnerable to later disturbance, while deep features, such as pits, are usually found towards the rear of plots, away from the road frontage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Essex CC FAU thanks Enterprise Property Group Ltd for commissioning and funding the archaeological evaluation, especially Mark Le Blond and Peter Stocking for their help in setting up the project. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Trevor Ennis and Chris Down of the ECC Field Archaeology Unit. Finds were processed by Phil McMichael and analysed by Joyce Compton and Helen Walker. The report was prepared by Trevor Ennis with illustrations by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Patrick Allen and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Teresa O'Connor of ECC HEM.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DATA

All dimensions given in metres

Context	Type	Description	Period
01	Cobble surface	Pebble and chalk, 1.2m x 0.56m+ x 0.08m deep	Modern?
02	Layer	Light yellowish grey brown clay, 0.15m thick	Modern
03	Fill of 4	Greyish brown chalky silt	Modern
04	Post-hole	Pear-shaped, 0.36m x 0.36m x 0.19m deep	Modern
05	Fill of 6	Greyish brown clay silt	Post-med
06	Pit	Irregular, 0.7m x 0.6m x 0.29m deep	Post-med
07	Fill of 8	Mixed dark grey and brown clay silt	Post-med
08	Pit	Circular, 0.6m diameter x 0.3m deep	Post-med
09	Fill of 10	Greyish brown clay silt	Modern
10	Pit	Sub-circular, 0.7m x 0.34m+ x 0.35m deep	Modern
11	Post-hole	Circular, 0.39m diameter x 0.2m deep	Modern
12	Fill of 11	Dark grey brown sandy silt	Modern
13	Post-hole	Sub-circular, 0.44m diameter x 0.2m deep	Modern?
14	Fill of 13	Dark grey brown silty sand	Modern?
15	Deposit	Dark grey clay silt, 0.5m thick	Post-med
16	Fill of 17	Mixed grey and brown clay, chalk and mortar	Modern
17	Pit	Irregular, 2.9m x 1.2m+ x 0.3m+	Modern

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

All weights in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
1	Surface	1	945	Brick fragment, orange-red with blackened corner, flint inclusions, 100 x 60mm	Post med.
2	Layer	1 6	2 44	Clay pipe stem (Discarded) Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, white earthenware, most with blue transfer-printing, one with hand-painted leaf-and-flower (Discarded)	Post med. Modern
3	4	3	362	Brick fragments (Discarded)	Post med.
5	6	1 - 2 1	2 94 38 10	Shell; oyster fragment (Discarded) Slag Roof tile fragments (Discarded) Pottery; base sherd, tin-glazed earthenware	- - Post med. Post med.
7	8	2 - 1 1 8	262 174 1250 108 134	Animal bone; cattle humerus, distal end, and metacarpus, distal end, unfused, with transverse cut marks Slag Brick, incomplete, orange-red, blackened edge, flint inclusions, worn/abraded, >190 x 100 x 50mm Roof tile fragment (Discarded) Pottery; base and body sherds, glazed	- - Post med. Post med. Med/post med.
9	10	1 - 2 3 1	12 262 162 278 8	Animal bone; ?skull/vertebra fragment (Discarded) Slag Brick fragments (Discarded) Roof tile fragments (Discarded) Pottery; plate base sherd, white earthenware (Discarded)	- - Post med. Post med. Modern
12	11	2 1	156 34	Brick fragments, one overfired (Discarded) Pantile edge fragment (Discarded)	Post med. Modern
14	13	1	226	Brick corner, depth 62mm (Discarded)	Post med.
15	Layer	1	8	Pottery; body sherd, glazed both sides (Discarded)	Post med.
16	17	1 3	2870 1460	Brick, orange-red, regular sides, upper surface has skim of mortar and a 7mm dia hole which obliquely penetrates the brick for c.60mm, 225 x 110 x 62mm Pottery; stoneware bottles, one incomplete, one is stamped 'J Bourne & Son Patentee, Denby & Codnor, Park Potteries near Derby, Vitreous Stone Bottles, Warranted not to absorb' (Discarded)	Modern Modern

APPENDIX 3: MEDIEVAL AND LATER POTTERY

All weights in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
2	Layer	6	44	Modern white earthenware, mainly willow pattern, transfer-printed sherds from plates/dishes, one with scenery transfer print, also base of ?bowl with hand-painted leaf-and-flower	1820s onwards
5	6	1	10	Anglo-Netherlands tin-glazed earthenware base reddish fabric, partial lead glaze on underside, white tin-glaze on inside with central blue-painted spiral and concentric thick blue band	17th C
7	8	1	3	Heddingham ware sherd showing applied strips under a green glaze	13th to earlier 14th C
		7	131	Post-medieval red earthenware including internally glazed base sherds and pad base from cylindrical drinking vessel in dark green rather than usual black glaze	late 16th to 17th centuries or later
9	10	1	8	Modern white earthenware base sherd from plate, undecorated	19th to 20th C
15	Layer	1	8	Post-medieval red earthenware, body sherd from hollow ware, glazed both sides	later 16th to 19th C
16	17	3	1460	Modern stoneware, three cylindrical bottles, complete apart from one missing rim, surviving rims are rolled ginger-beer types, one bottle is impressed 'J Bourne & Son Patentee, Denby & Codnor, Park Potteries near Derby, Vitreous Stone Bottles, Warranted not to absorb'	19th century
		20	1664		

APPENDIX 4: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

Site Name: Crossroads, Water Lane, Helions Bumpstead
Site Code: HBWL08

Index to Archive:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brief
- 1.2 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 (1 to 17)
- 3.3 1 Trench Record sheet
- 3.4 Plan Register
- 3.5 Section Register
- 3.6 1 A4 plan sheets
- 3.7 Levels Register
- 3.8 Trench location plan
- 3.9 Photographic Registers
- 3.10 Site Photographic Record (1 set of Black & White prints, 1 Set of digital images on disk)
- 3.11 Miscellaneous notes/plans

Not in File

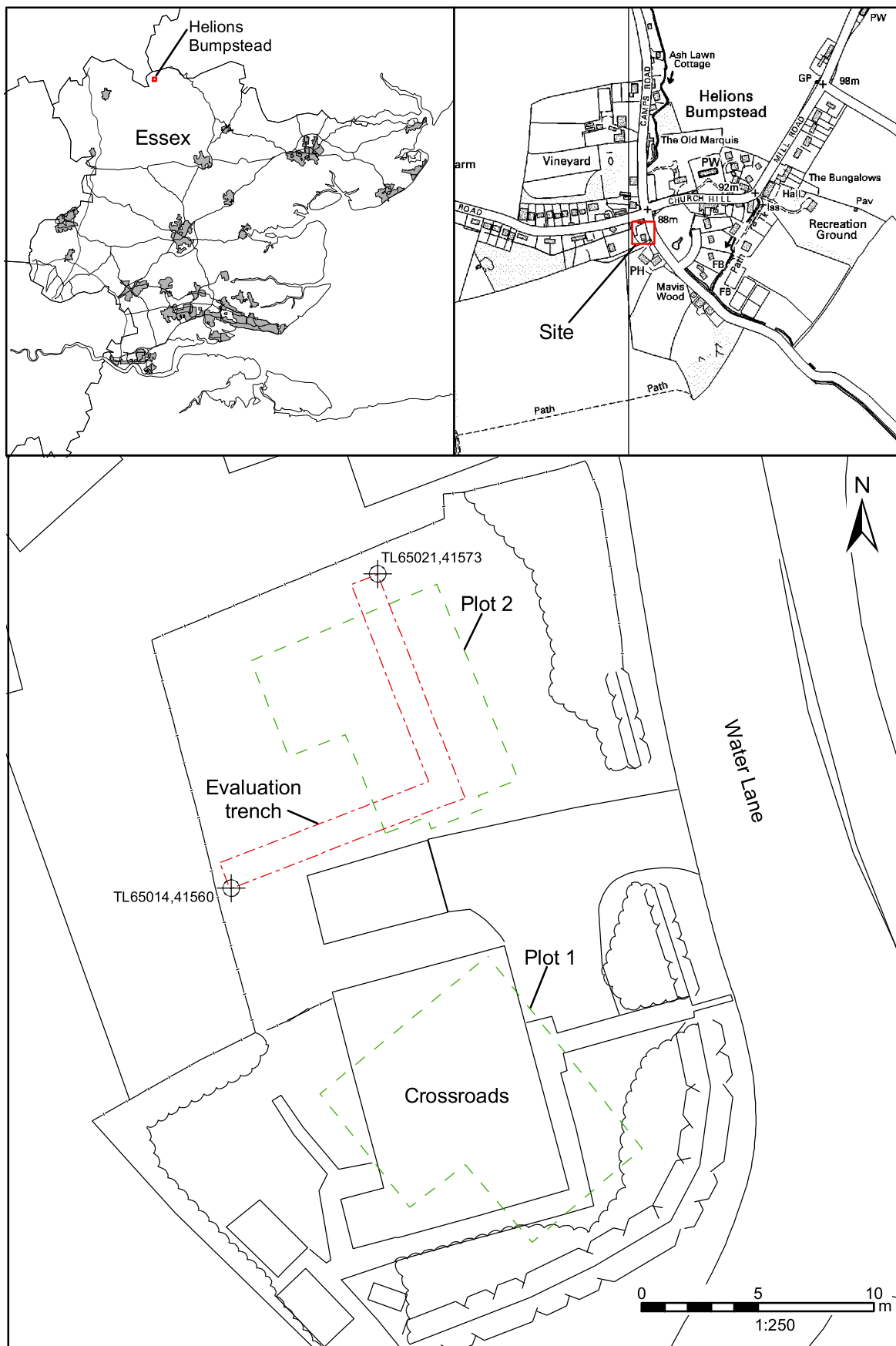
2 large plan/section sheets

Finds

The retained finds occupy one box.

APPENDIX 5: ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Crossroads, Water Lane, Helions Bumpstead, Essex	
Parishes: Helions Bumpstead	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 6502 4155	Site Code: HBWL08
Type of Work: Archaeological Evaluation	Site Director/Group: T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Dates of Work: 25 June 2008	Size of Area Investigated: 24 sq m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Braintree	Funding source: Client
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.: -
Final Report: EAH summary	Oasis No.: essexcou1- 47183
Periods Represented: Post-medieval, modern	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out at Crossroads, Water Lane, Helions Bumpstead, Essex in advance of a small residential development. The site is located in the centre of the historic village, which is recorded by the Domesday Survey as existing before 1066, and was considered to have a high potential for Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains. The evaluation was carried out by the Essex CC Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of the Enterprise Group Ltd, and was monitored by the Essex CC Historic Environment Management team on behalf of the local planning authority.</p> <p>The evaluation trench was located in Plot 2, a garden area in the north of the site, and was L-shaped with two 10m long arms. Plot 1 was not investigated as it was occupied by the existing bungalow. The trenching identified no evidence of the Saxon or medieval village other than a single sherd of residual 13th-14th century pottery. Two small 17th century pits were recorded, but otherwise only modern features were found, dating to the 19th and 20th century. The only evidence of the buildings showing on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey were 19th century or later cobbled and clay surfaces in the extreme north of the site.</p> <p>The archaeological evaluation did not identify any significant new evidence for the Saxon or medieval origins of the village, or of post-medieval buildings within the site area.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:	
Author of Summary: T. Ennis	Date of Summary: August 2008



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Fig.1. Site location

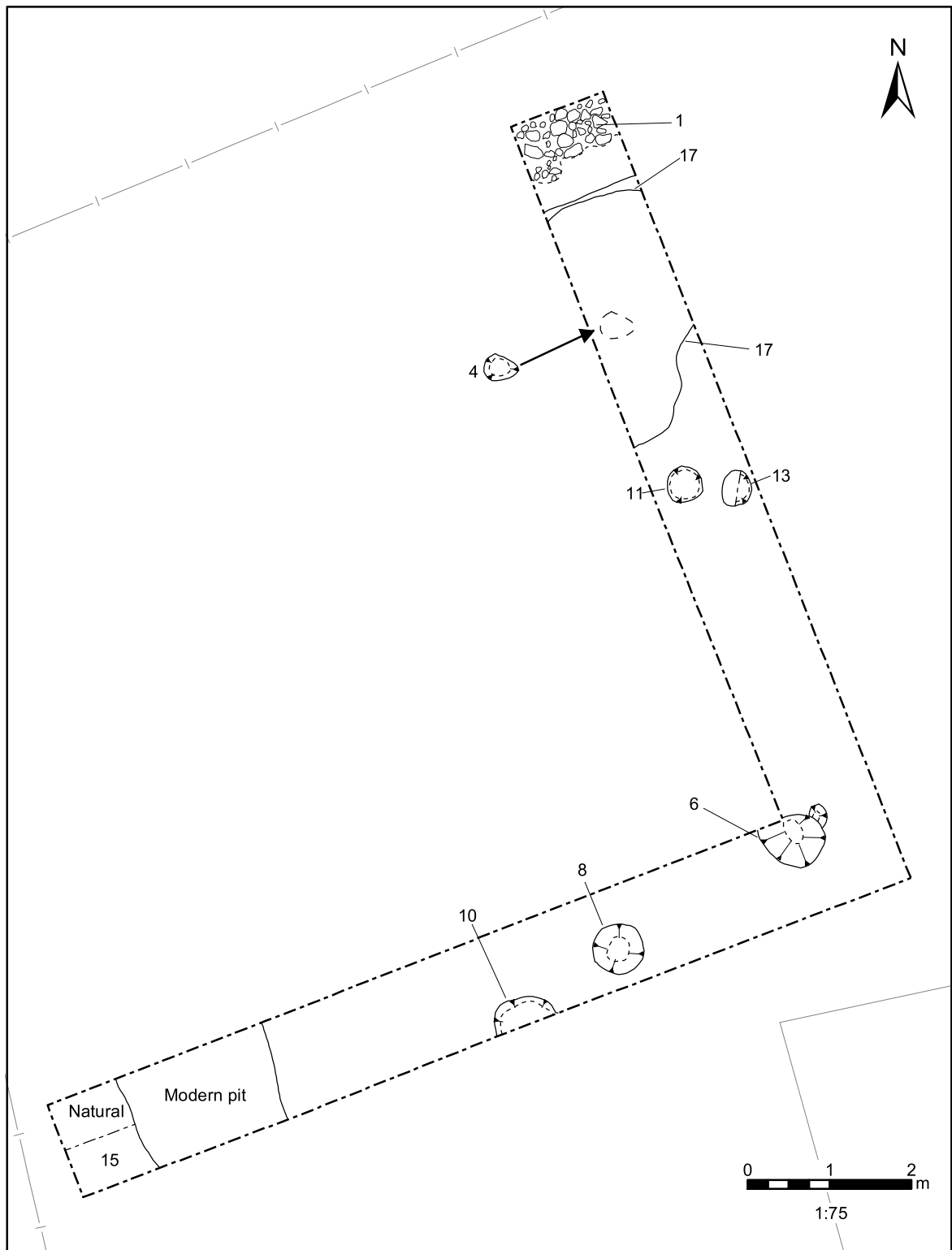


Fig.2. Evaluation trench