

**LAND TO THE REAR OF 39 JULIEN COURT ROAD,  
BRAINTREE,  
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING**



Essex County Council

**Field Archaeology Unit**  
November 2009

## ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY

<b>Site name/Address:</b> Land to the rear of 39 Julien Court Road, Braintree, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Braintree	<b>District:</b> Braintree
<b>NGR:</b> TL 7637 2373	<b>Site Code:</b> BT44
<b>Type of Work:</b> Archaeological evaluation by trial trenching	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> Phillippa Sparrow, Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit
<b>Date of Work:</b> 18/11/09 – 19/11/09	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> Four trenches totalling a length of 52.4m x 1.85m
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b> Braintree	<b>Client:</b> developer - Pinnacle Construction Ltd
<b>Further Seasons Anticipated?:</b> No	<b>Related HER Nos.:</b> None
<b>Final Report:</b> Summary in Essex Archaeology and History	<b>OASIS Ref:</b> essexcou1-67693
<b>Periods represented:</b> Prehistoric Post-medieval	
<p><b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b></p> <p>An archaeological trial trenching evaluation, comprising four trenches, was conducted prior to the construction of two new residential dwellings and an access drive at land to the rear of 39 Julien Court Road, Braintree, Essex (Fig. 1). The archaeological work was conducted in accordance with an archaeological condition placed upon planning consent (09/01233/FUL) and with an ECC HEM brief. The trenches were located within the footprints of the planned dwellings and drive.</p> <p>The aim of the evaluation was to determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains, including a specific objective to investigate any finds or features associated with the Roman villa remains found during the construction the Great Bradfords housing estate during the 1970s (EHER 6482, 6477). A further objective was to investigate the palaeoenvironmental potential of any associated waterlogged remains that might be affected by the development.</p> <p>The trenches were stripped of topsoil and subsoil by a tracked mini-excavator with a broad toothless bucket. Trenches 1, 2 and 3 contained subsoil and topsoil deposits to a depth of c. 0.6m, whereas trench 4 did not contain subsoil and displayed a slope, falling by 0.7m to the north-western end of the trench (from 0.4m to 1.1m). Trench 4 was slightly shorter than its intended length due to the close proximity of a spring and a boggy, waterlogged area. The presence of the spring resulted in waterlogged trenches, with trench 1 being the least affected.</p> <p>Trenches 1 and 2, located in the northern area of the site were sterile of finds and features.</p> <p>Trench 3, located in the south-western corner of the site, was L-shaped and aligned north-east to south-west and south-east to north-west. It contained a small, modern pit cut into the top of the subsoil and sealed by the topsoil. Due to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century finds within the pit, it was not further investigated or recorded. Several burnt areas, on the top of the subsoil were indicative of modern bonfires. The modern pit overlay a large area of rooting (3) in the south-western corner which is likely to relate to the oak tree present just outside the site boundary.</p> <p>An undated small pit (1) was located in the north-eastern end of the trench and contained no finds. An unstratified, undiagnostic struck flint, to the west of pit 1, was the only find recovered.</p>	

Trench 4 was situated at the highest point, in the south-eastern corner of the site. Aligned north-west to south-east, the trench was cut into the wettest area. The presence of two damaged land drains, aligned east to west, (one located above the other) in the north-western end of the trench indicates that site drainage has always been a concern.

A north-east to south-west aligned post-medieval ditch (5) was present in the north-western end of trench 4. It contained one piece of fragmented ceramic tile and a small piece of oyster shell, though, due to their poor preservation, neither find was retained. The alignment of the feature indicates that it was probably intended for site drainage, as well as forming a plot boundary. Further to the south, a small root channel (7) was aligned roughly east to west.

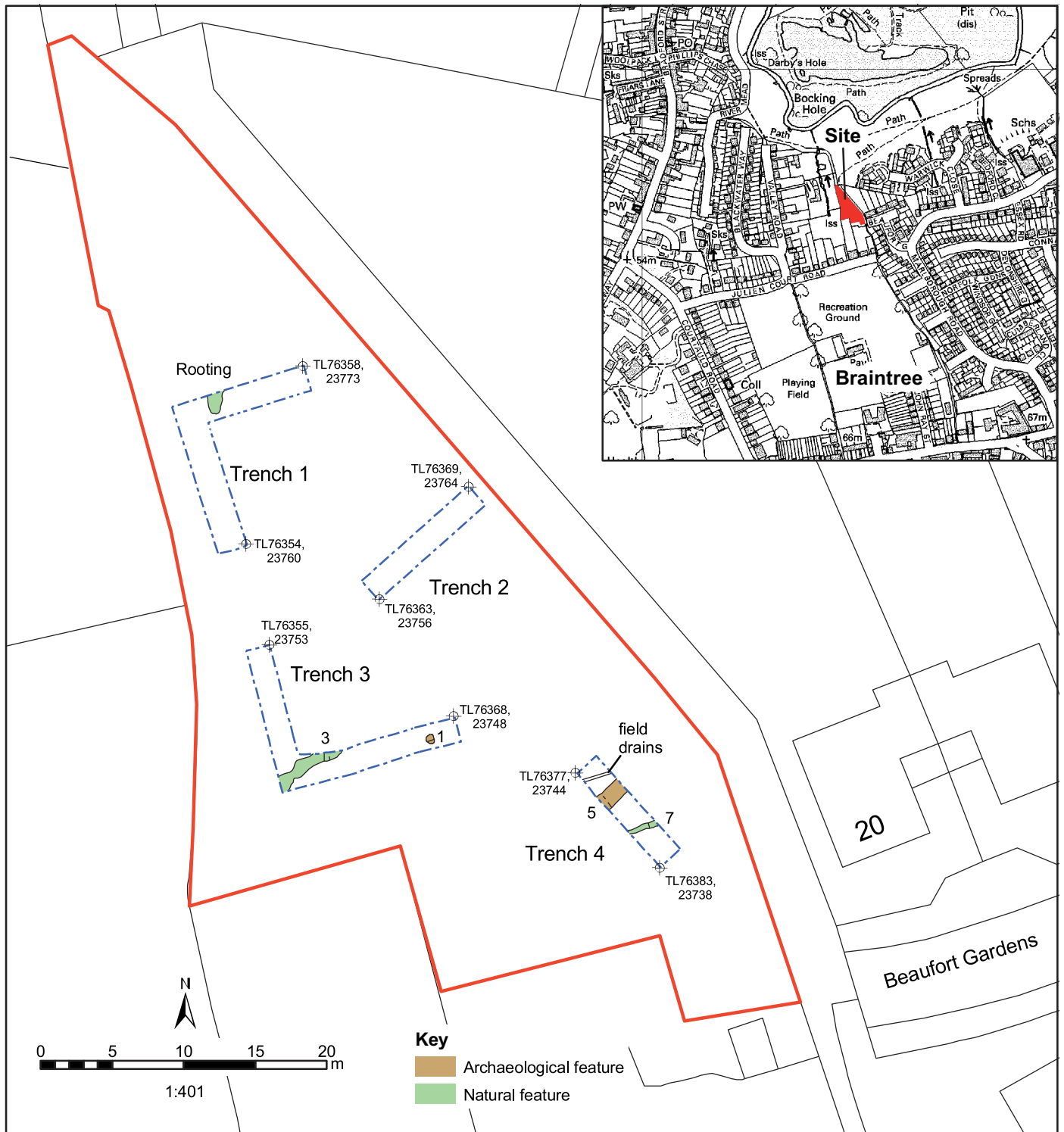
One struck flint indicates the transitory presence of prehistoric people, though its presence does not aid further interpretation of prehistoric Braintree. No evidence of Roman to medieval activity was found, perhaps indicating that the site was marginal land throughout history. The 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Ordnance Surveys of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries show a boundary running through the site, along a similar alignment, and in the same place as ditch 5. The evidence provided by cartographic sources that the site remained agricultural until the 1970s is supported by the post-medieval ditch and a lack of other datable features and finds.

Though the majority of the trenches were waterlogged they lacked suitable soils for palaeoenvironmental analysis - the subsoil and topsoil were formed during the post-medieval and modern periods.

*Previous Summaries/Reports:- none*

**Author of Summary:**  
Phillippa Sparrow

**Date of Summary:**  
November 2009



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

Fig.1. Trench location plan



Plate 1. Trench 3, north-east to south-western leg. Looking south-west.



Plate 2. Trench 4, looking south-east.