RECONSTRUCTION OF LAWFORD LANE CYCLE/ BRIDLEWAY BRIDGE WRITTLE ESSEX: ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

Essex County Council
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT
October 2010

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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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RECONSTRUCTION OF LAWFORD LANE CYCLE/ BRIDLEWAY BRIDGE WRITTLE ESSEX: ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

SUMMARY

Client: ECC Public Rights of Way and Rural Network
FAU Project No.: 2202
NGR: TL 68566 07218
Site Code: WRLL10
Dates of Fieldwork: April to May 2010

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during the reconstruction of the Lawford Lane cycle/bridleway bridge. The excavations revealed a sequence of post-medieval and possibly earlier tracks, although no finds predating the post-medieval period were recovered, and no evidence was seen for a putative Roman crossing point or road thought to have existed here..

Environmental samples taken from two layers sandwiched between track deposits revealed that that the margins of the river were shallow and muddy with an abundance of club-rush and sedge fruits while the banks of the River Can became overgrown with wetland herbs, ruderal weeks and colonising shrubs between the laying of the first track surface and its subsequent resurfacing. The samples also revealed that the land-use around the river remains similar to the present day – a mixture of arable and meadow.

Several timbers relating to a 1940s / 1950s wooden bridge, the precursor to the concrete footbridge, were revealed within the upper stratigraphic layers.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at Lawford Lane Bridge, Writtle (TL 68566 07218), conducted by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) during groundworks for the reconstruction of the bridge. The fieldwork was undertaken in response to an enquiry from Heritage Writtle, the local archaeological group, to the Historic Environment Branch at Essex County Council regarding possible archaeological implications arising from the works. The Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team (ECC HEM) provided a brief for the archaeological monitoring, given in line with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation provided by ECC FAU (2010), and was monitored by ECC HEM on behalf of Essex County Council.

Bound and digital copies of this report will be supplied to ECC Public Rights of Way and Rural Network, ECC HEM and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). A digital copy of the report will be uploaded on the online access to the index of archaeological investigations (www.oasis.ac.uk). The site archive and copies of the report will be deposited at Chelmsford Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, Geology and Topography (Fig. 1)

The bridge lies at the northern end of Lawford Lane, situated at the point of a former ford across the River Can and located just upstream of the confluence of the Rivers Can and Wid. Lawford Lane itself is a popular bridleway/ cycle route, linking the village of Writtle with Roxwell Road, which is thought to follow the line of a Roman Road to Chelmsford.

The works comprised the erection of a temporary footbridge followed by the removal of the existing structure and the installation of a new bridge to the immediate east of its current position. Information obtained from discussions with the Heritage Writtle Group regarding the project indicates that the existing river banks are an artificial creation resulting from the infilling and channelisation of the river when the modern footbridge was installed during the late 20th century.

2.2 History and Archaeology

The following information is taken from the ECC HEM Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and the ECC Historic Environment Record (EHER).

Multi-period finds have been recovered from the vicinity of the River Can, including possible Palaeolithic faunal remains, Neolithic flints, a Bronze Age urn and Iron Age, Roman and post-medieval pottery. A desk-based assessment of land to the north of Skeggs Farm incorporated comprehensive geotechnical information confirming that the geology of the site is alluvium overlying glacial till (Boulder Clay). However the alluvium appears to be a very ancient deposit comprising Brickearth rather than alluvial clay or peat (HER 14057). Mammoth bones were found at Admirals Park, 325m to the north-east of the site, and fossilised bones were revealed close to the Can, some 540m east of the site.

Lawford Lane (HER 14137) was 'the King's Highway' in 1292 running from the market in Writtle to Chelmsford, and forming part of the route to London. The road fords the River Can just upstream of the confluence with the River Wid and may have been in use as a river crossing before this. In 1376 it was known as 'lollefordstrat' and as late as 1739 was still referred to as a high road. In 1871 after long disuse, it was downgraded to a bridlepath.

It has been suggested that the road may have Iron Age origins and was in use during the Roman period; however, no physical or documentary evidence for this has been uncovered as yet. Observations of possible gravelled surfaces and timbers along the banks have been reported however, these have not been confirmed as archaeological in origin. A small collection of post-medieval metropolitan ware pottery was found 70m to the south of the bridge (EHER 827).

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the archaeological monitoring was to preserve by record any archaeological deposits that may be damaged or destroyed by the development. With a specific objective to identify and record any evidence of earlier bridges and fords, including the removal, cleaning and where possible dating, of any timbers/structures.

4.0 METHOD

The fieldwork was undertaken in three phases, all of which were conducted under archaeological supervision:

i. The existing river bank was excavated by mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket to form a level platform upon which a temporary footbridge was erected alongside the existing bridge.

ii. The original bridge was then removed by mechanical excavator, including the abutments on both banks, and a section of concrete wall along the northern river bank.

iii. Two rectangular areas were excavated on both banks (Figs. 2-5). The southern bank excavation was undertaken in three stages due to the instability of the excavation sides.

The archaeological fieldwork was carried out in accordance with *IFA* standards and by-laws (IFA 1997), and especially the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IFA 1999), and ALGAO's *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, EAA Occ. Paper 14 (Gurney 2003) throughout the project. The ECC FAU is a registered archaeological organisation with the *IFA*.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS (Fig. 1)

The first phase of groundworks, comprising the stripping of an area on both the north and south banks of the river, to a maximum depth of 0.5m, revealed no archaeological finds or features (Plate 1).

The removal of the concrete footbridge and its abutments on both the northern and southern bank revealed areas of disturbance associated with the construction of the modern bridge during the 1960s or 1970s. The removal of the southern abutment revealed a sandy cement packing material between the concrete abutment and the river bank (Plate 2). A similar deposit was present behind the northern abutment, along with a very mixed deposit of sands and gravels which related to the apparent artificial creation of the northern bank when the footbridge was constructed (Plate 3). No archaeological finds or features were present. One wooden stake was recovered from the area immediately in front of the abutment, in the river channel (Plate 4). Its location *in situ* in an area that is highly likely to have been greatly disturbed during the construction of the concrete bridge indicates that it might have been used during the construction of the concrete abutment, possibly as an initial support while the concrete hardened.

The third phase of groundworks comprised the excavation of a rectangular area on each bank (Fig. 1). The southern bank was excavated in three stages. The initial excavation method comprised the excavation of a small pit measuring 3m x 2m x 1.64m and aligned north-west to south-east. Four layers of alluvial deposits were overlain by modern overburden (Fig. 6). A cobbled gravel surface (deposit 1) was present beneath the alluvial layers at a depth of 1.18m. A lack of large cobbles in places indicates that the surface was considerably worn and a patch of darker clay in the north-western corner of the pit might represent maintenance of deposit 1(Plate 5). Finds recovered comprise ceramic tile, post-medieval pottery and oyster shell fragments. Part of a stake and a partial plank were embedded in deposit 1 (Fig. 3, Plate 6).

The excavation strategy was revised when the pit-sides collapsed. The pit was backfilled and a U-shaped trench, 5.7m long, 1m wide and 2.64m deep, was excavated around the north-east, north-west and south-west sides of the original pit (Fig. 4). This revealed several timbers within the upper stratigraphic layers (Plates 7 & 8). Located above known post-medieval deposits, the timbers were clearly modern and were therefore not accurately planned as they held no archaeological significance (Fig. 4). Discussions with the Heritage Writtle Group suggest that they are likely to be the remains of an earlier timber bridgem, preceding the current concrete structure, which members of the group recollect being in place in the 1940s/1950s.

The deposit stratigraphy differed slightly in the south-eastern corner of the trench, compared with that revealed during the excavation of the pit. Deposit 1 was overlain by three alluvial deposits, which in turn were overlain by modern gravel (Fig. 6; Plate 9). The trench was considerably deeper than the pit and cobbled gravel surface 1 was situated above a dark grey, slightly organic, clay layer (deposit 2) which had formed above a compact sandy clay ground surface (deposit 3) containing two fragments of animal bone. Once these deposits had been recorded metal shuttering was erected around the edges and the trench was partially backfilled (Plate 10).

A second pit, measuring 3.35m x 1.4m, was excavated in the middle of the southern groundworks area (Plate 11). A thin surface-like deposit, comprising silty clay, gravel and pebbles (deposit 4) and containing the sole from a post-medieval shoe, was located approximately 1.4m below the tarmac of the modern track. Deposit 4 overlay an earlier possible gravel surface (deposit 5) which itself was stratigraphically above an earlier surface comprising fairly compact sandy gravel that produced no finds (deposit 6). The natural sands and gravels were reached at 2.4m below the existing ground level.

The northern groundworks were excavated in a similar manner to stages 2 and 3 of the southern groundworks, though it was not possible for an archaeologist to monitor the excavation prior to the erection of metal shuttering. A mechanically excavated pit in the centre of the northern groundworks revealed three natural alluvial gravelly deposits (7, 8 & 9, Appendix 1) with no finds (Plate 12).

6.0 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL

6.1 Finds

By Joyce Compton

A small selection of post-medieval finds was recorded in context 1, mainly comprising brick and tile fragments. The single piece of pottery is a body sherd in post-medieval red earthenware with a brown internal glaze. This type of pottery has a broad date range of 17th to 19th centuries. None of the finds from context 1 has been retained.

A leather shoe inner-sole was recovered from context 4. This has worn through in the heel area and the toe is missing. Part of the stitched welt-strip is visible. The sole is robust and is probably made from cow-hide. There is no accompanying dating evidence, but the style and condition suggest a date similar to the pottery from context 1, i.e. 17th to 19th centuries.

Context 3 produced two pieces of animal bone, apparently retrieved from a waterlogged environment. The bone is in good condition, but stained due to burial conditions. The cattle metatarsus has pebbles and angular flint concreted to the distal end and part of the proximal end. The articular surface of the proximal end is eburnated, probably indicating an older animal at death.

6.2 Environmental assessment

By Val Fryer

Introduction and method statement

Excavations recorded the remains of two gravelled trackways of possible late medieval/post-medieval date, situated immediately to the south of the River Can. Samples for the retrieval of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from deposits overlaying the gravelled surfaces, and two were submitted for assessment.

The samples were processed by manual water flotation/washover and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. Although both assemblages contained high densities of waterlogged/de-watered plant remains, the macrofossils were generally very robust and the flots were, therefore, slowly air dried after processing to facilitate sorting and storage. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 1. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace 1997) for the plant remains and Kerney and Cameron (1979) and Macan (1977) for the molluscs. With the exception of very rare charcoal/charred wood fragments, all plant remains were waterlogged/de-watered.

The non-floating residues were collected in a 1mm mesh sieve and sorted when dry. With the exception of the mollusc shells, which were returned to the main assemblages, no artefacts/ecofacts were recovered.

Results

Both assemblages contained a moderate to high density of wetland/aquatic plant remains along with a limited range of seeds of dry land herbs and tree/shrub macrofossils. Preservation was generally very good, although some seeds were distorted, probably as a result of the compression of the deposits from which the samples were taken.

Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus*/*Schoenoplectus* sp.) fruits were particularly abundant, along with sedge (*Carex* sp.) nutlets, wild celery (*Apium graveolens*) and water dropwort (*Oenanthe* sp.) seeds and bur-reed (*Sparganium* sp.) fruits. Other wetland plant remains occurred less frequently but did include seeds of marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*), meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and pond weed (*Potamogeton* sp.). Seeds of dry land herbs were less abundant than those of wetland plants, with the assemblage from sample 2 containing more than that from sample 1. All were of common segetal, ruderal or grassland species including orache (*Atriplex* sp.), meadow/creeping/bulbous buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*/*repens*/*bulbosus*), dock (*Rumex* sp.) and black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*). The flax (*Linum usitatissimum*) seeds noted with the assemblage from sample 2 possibly indicated that the production and/or processing of this plant was occurring in the near vicinity in the later medieval/post-medieval period. Tree/shrub macrofossils were relatively uncommon, but did include hazel (*Corylus avellana*) nutshell fragments, sloe (*Prunus spinosa*) fruit stones and bramble (*Rubus* sect. *Glandulosus*) 'pips'. Both assemblages also contained high densities of waterlogged root/stem fragments as well as indeterminate leaf fragments, moss fronds, twigs and pieces of wood.

Shells of both freshwater obligate and terrestrial molluscs were also recorded, with the latter only occurring within the assemblage from sample 2. The freshwater specimens were largely of species common in larger bodies of slow to moderate velocity running water (e.g. *Bithynia* sp.), although marginal species (e.g. *Valvata cristata*) and marsh species (e.g. *Anisus leucostoma*) were also recorded. Shells of terrestrial species were rare, but those recovered were mostly of open country species, especially those commonly found in areas of short-turfed grassland (e.g. *Vallonia costata*).

Other remains were very scarce. Both assemblages contained waterlogged arthropod remains and the assemblage from sample 2 also included a moderate density of caddis larval cases.

Conclusions

In summary, both assemblages are largely typical of fluvial deposits, containing both the remains of plants growing in or adjacent to the river and materials which were washed or blown into the water from the surrounding area. The abundance of club-rush and sedge fruits would appear to indicate that the margins of the river were shallow and muddy, while the banks were moderately well populated with wetland herbs, ruderal weeds and colonising shrubs, possibly suggesting that this stretch of the river received little regular maintenance. It would appear quite likely that some land adjacent to the river was under cultivation, whilst other areas were probably being managed as meadow.

As the taphonomy of riverine assemblages is often very complex, quantification is rarely undertaken, particularly when the overall number of samples taken is small and the deposits are largely undated, as is the case here. Therefore, although the list of recorded species is relatively comprehensive, no further analysis is recommended at this stage. However, a written summary of this assessment should be included within any publication of data from the site.

7.0 CONCLUSION AND ASSESSMENT

The archaeological monitoring and recording project revealed evidence of a post-medieval track (deposit 1) overlying at least one earlier, though undated, gravel surface (deposit 3) at the southern bank of the River Can. The track was not present in the northern groundworks, perhaps indicating that it previously followed a different course. Alternatively deposit 3 might represent an ‘apron’ of cobbles and gravel at the point that cattle entered the river in order to reinforce the banks. Its absence in the northern groundworks might suggest it is present further into the bank; it is unlikely to have survived further into the river as it would wash away.

Timbers discovered at the southern bank are likely to have been part of a wooden bridge present during the 1940s / 1950s as they were found within the upper layers of the excavated area, above the post-medieval surface.

The three stages of excavation at the southern bank, and the slightly different locations of the two pits and the trench, hindered a conclusive interpretation of the deposit model. It is probable that deposits 5 and 6, revealed during the stage 3 excavations, are the same as layers 2 and 3, found within the stage 2 trench; they share a similar composition (Appendix 1) and are present at a similar depth below the former ground surface (Fig. 6).

Environmental samples taken from deposits 2 (sample 1) and 4 (sample 2) revealed that the edges of the river channel underwent little maintenance during the time they took to accumulate. Both deposits are likely to date to the post-medieval period; deposit 4 contained the sole of a post-medieval shoe. Layers 2 and 4 were sandwiched between gravelly layers, suggesting that the track was resurfaced rather than regularly cleared. The presence of a darker clay patch in the upper track surface (deposit 1) indicates that the track was regularly maintained in more recent years.

The samples also revealed that the local land-use during the post-medieval period comprised a mixture of meadow and arable, very similar to its current use.

The groundworks were excavated down to the natural substrate and no finds predating the post-medieval period were identified. It has previously been suggested that a Roman precursor to the post-medieval ford was present at the crossing, however, no evidence of this was found during the monitoring and recording exercise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ECC FAU would like to thank ECC Public Rights of Way and Rural Network for commissioning and funding the archaeological investigation. Thanks are also due to VolkerFitzpatrick for their help during the groundworks.

The finds were processed and analysed by Joyce Compton and the environmental samples were processed and analysed by Val Fryer. The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken by Trevor Ennis, Mark Germany and Phillippa Sparrow. The figures were drawn by Andrew Lewsey.

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Kerney, M. P. and Cameron, R. A. D.	1979	*A Field Guide to the Land Snails of Britain and North-west Europe* Collins
Macan, T. T.	1977	British Fresh- and Brackish-Water Gastropods: A Key *Freshwater Biological Association Scientific Publication No. **13***
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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DATA

Context	Feature	Type	Measurements	Description
1	-	Surface	0.3m thick	Dark grey to orange clay. Occasional large cobbles, smaller pebbles and sub-angular gravel. The more angular material is located below the larger stones. Worn – quite a lot of the upper surface is missing – not many rounded cobbles. Compacted in parts. Occasional pieces of decayed wood – part of a stake and piece of flat wood recorded in plan. Finds: tile, pot, oyster shell fragments.
2	-	Deposit	0.26m thick	Dark grey clay with occasional medium pebbles, frequent smaller ones. Cub-angular flints/fragments. Occasional charcoal flecks, occasional decayed twigs. Above compact dark grey surface.
3	-	Deposit	0.75m thick	Mid to dark grey sandy gravel/cobbles. Common medium rounded cobbles, common smaller rounded to sub-angular flints/pebbles. Compact. Rare small lenses of yellow clay. Rare decomposed twig fragments. Below (2) and above natural orange/yellow sandy gravel. Finds: 2 pieces bone.
4	-	Deposit	0.1m thick	Dark grey silty clay with occasional larger cobbles. Common small to medium rounded pebbles. Firm. Surface-like. Located to w and n of excavated area. Shoe found here or (5). 1.4m below tarmac (approx.) Above (5).
5	-	Deposit	0.22m thick	Mid to dark grey gravel and clay, Common small to medium pebbles and smaller gravels. Clay lenses. Occasional small decomposed twigs. Slightly clayier towards base. Possible surface? Above (4) and below (6).
6	-	Deposit	0.25m thick	Mid to dark grey with a greenish tinge, sandy gravel. Common small to medium pebbles and small gravellier bits. Firm. Quite compact Above natural yellow and orange sandy gravel.
7	-	Deposit	0.1m thick	Greyish brown silty sand with abundant rounded and angular gravel. Soft/loose. No finds. Above (8.)
8	-	Deposit	0.12m thick	Light brownish grey sandy silty clay with frequent rounded and angular gravel. Soft/plastic. No finds. Naturally deposited.
9	-	Deposit	0.6m thick	Brownish orange sand with abundant grit and infrequent gravel. Loose. No finds. Naturally deposited.

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
1		3 5 1	70 82 8	Brick fragments (Discarded) Roof tile fragments (Discarded) Pottery; body sherd, brown internal glaze (Discarded)	Post med. Post med. Post med.
3		2	230	Animal bone; cattle metatarsus; ulna hinge, large mammal	-
4		1		leather shoe inner-sole.	Postmed

APPENDIX 3: ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

Sample No.	**1**	**2**
Context No.	**2**	**4**
Dry land herbs		
Agrostemma githago L.		xtf
Anthemis arvensis L.	x	
Atriplex sp.	x	x
Carduus sp.		x
Chenopodium album L.		x
Cirsium sp.	x	
Daucus carota L.		xcffg
Linum usitatissimum L.		xx
Persicaria maculosa/lapathifolia		x
Large Poaceae indet.		xcf
Polygonum aviculare L.		x
Ranunculus acris/repens/bulbosus	x	xx
Rumex sp.	x	xx
(tepal frags.)	x	x
Solanum sp.	x	
S. nigrum L.	x	x
Urtica dioica L.	x	
Wetland/aquatic plants		
Alisma plantago-aquatica L.	x	
Apium graveolens L.	xx	xx
Bolboschoenus/Schoenoplectus sp.	xxxx	xxx
Caltha palustris L.		x
Carex sp.	xxx	xx
Filipendula ulmaria L.	x	
Menyanthes trifoliata L.	xcffg	
Nuphar lutea L.		xcf
Oenanthe aquatica (L.)Poiret	xx	xx
Potamogeton sp.	x	xx
Ranunculus subg *Batrachium* (DC)A.Gray	x	
Sparganium erectum L.	xx	x
Tree/shrub macrofossils		
Corylus avellana L.	x	xcf
Crataegus monogyna Jacq.	xcffg	

Prunus spinosa L.	xcffg	x
Rubus sp.		x
R. sect. *Glandulosus* Wimmer & Grab	x	x
Salix sp. (fruit)	x	
Sambucus nigra L.	x	
Other plant macrofossils		
Charcoal <2mm	x	
Waterlogged root/stem	xxxx	xxxx
Indet.bark	x	
Indet.buds	x	
Indet.fruit stone/nutshell frag.	x	
Indet.leaf frags.	xxx	x
Indet.moss	x	x
Indet.seed		x
Indet.thorn *(Rosa* type)		x
Indet.twigs	xx	x
Waterlogged wood <5mm	xx	xx
Waterlogged wood >5mm	x	xx
Sample No.	**1**	**2**
Context No.	**2**	**4**
Terrestrial molluscs		
Cochlicopa sp.		x
Vallonia sp.		x
V. costata		x
V. pulchella		xcf
Vitrea sp.		x
Freshwater obligate molluscs		
Anisus leucostoma	x	xx
Bathyomphalus contortus	x	x
Bithynia sp.	x	xxxx
(operculi)	x	xxx
B. tentaculata	x	xx
Gyraulus albus	x	x
Hippeutis sp.		x
Lymnaea sp.		x
Pisidium sp.	x	xx
Planorbis sp.	x	
P. planorbis	x	x
P. carinatus		x
Succinea sp.		x
Theodoxus fluviatilis		x
Valvata cristata	x	x
V. piscinalis	x	x
Other remains		
Caddis larval cases		xx
Waterlogged arthropods	xx	x
Sample volume (litres)	**5**	**5**
Volume of flot (litres)	**0.4**	**0.2**
% flot sorted	**25%**	**50%**

Key to Table
x = 1 – 10 specimens xx = 11 – 50 specimens xxx = 51 – 100 specimens xxxx = 100+ specimens
tf = testa fragment cf = compare fg = fragment

APPENDIX 4: ARCHIVE INDEX

WRLL10 RECOSTRUCTION OF LAWFORD LANE CYCLE/BRIDLEWAY BRIDGE, WRITTLE, ESSEX: ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

Index to the Archive

File containing:

1. Introduction

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3. Site Archive

3.1 Context record register
3.2 Context sheets (1-9)
3.3 Watching brief form
3.4 Section register
3.5 Plan register
3.3 Photographic register
3.4 Photograph contact sheet
3.5 Miscellaneous maps and plans
3.6 Sections and plans

Not in file:
1 sheet permatrace
1 box of finds

APPENDIX 5: ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY

Site Name/Address: Reconstruction of Lawford Lane Cycle/Bridleway Bridge, Writtle, Essex	
Parish: Writtle	***District:*** Chelmsford
NGR: TL 68566 07218	***Site Code:*** WRLL10
Type of Work: Archaeological Monitoring and Recording	***Site Director/Team:*** *Trevor Ennis, Mark Germany and* Phillippa Sparrow ECC FAU
Dates of Work: April to May 2010	***Size of Area Investigated:*** c. 29m²
Curating Museum: Chelmsford Museum	***Funding Source:*** ECC Public Rights of Way and Rural Network
Further Work Anticipated? No	***Related HER Nos.*** None
Final Report: Summary in EAH	***OASIS Ref:*** essexcou1-76338
Periods Represented: modern	

SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during the reconstruction of the Lawford Lane cycle/bridleway bridge. The excavations revealed a sequence of post-medieval and possibly earlier tracks, although no finds predating the post-medieval period were recovered, and no evidence was seen for a putative Roman crossing point or road thought to have existed here..

Environmental samples taken from two layers sandwiched between track deposits revealed that that the margins of the river were shallow and muddy with an abundance of club-rush and sedge fruits while the banks of the River Can became overgrown with wetland herbs, ruderal weeks and colonising shrubs between the laying of the first track surface and its subsequent resurfacing. The samples also revealed that the land-use around the river remains similar to the present day – a mixture of arable and meadow.

Several timbers relating to a 1940s / 1950s wooden bridge, the precursor to the concrete footbridge, were revealed within the upper stratigraphic layers.

Previous Summaries/Reports: None	
Author of Summary: P. Sparrow	***Date of Summary:*** 19th October 2010

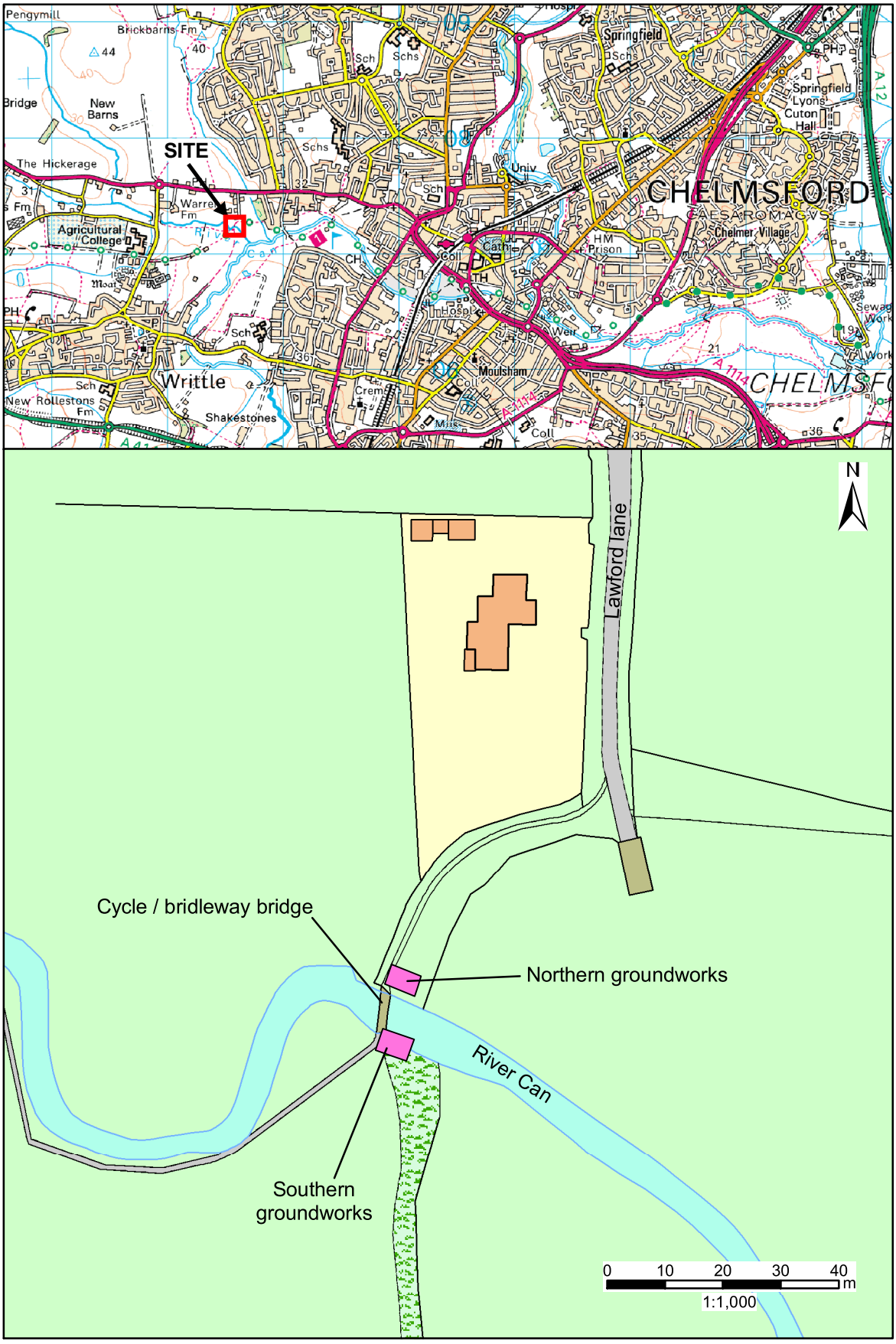

Fig.1. Site location

Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit

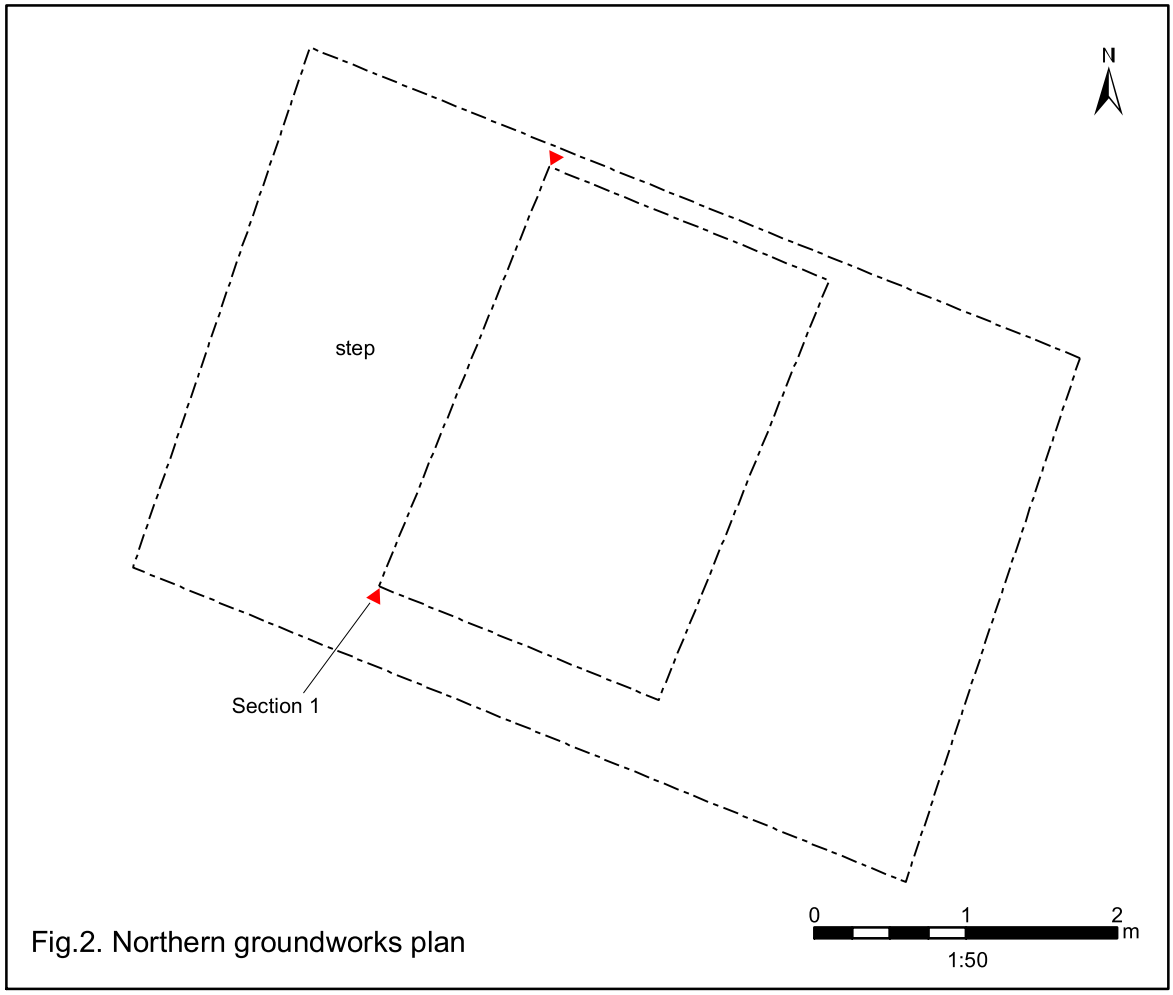

Fig.2. Northern groundworks plan

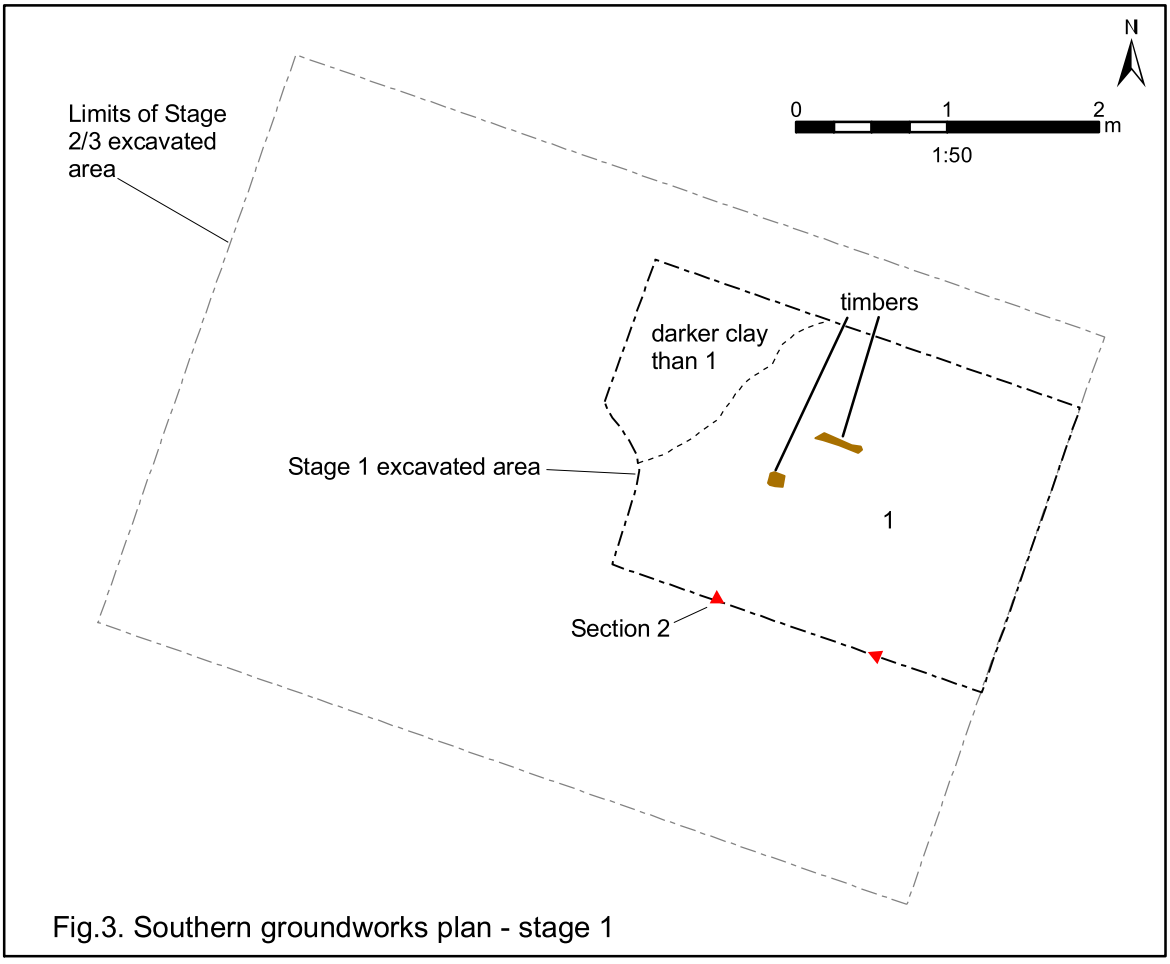

Fig.3. Southern groundworks plan - stage 1

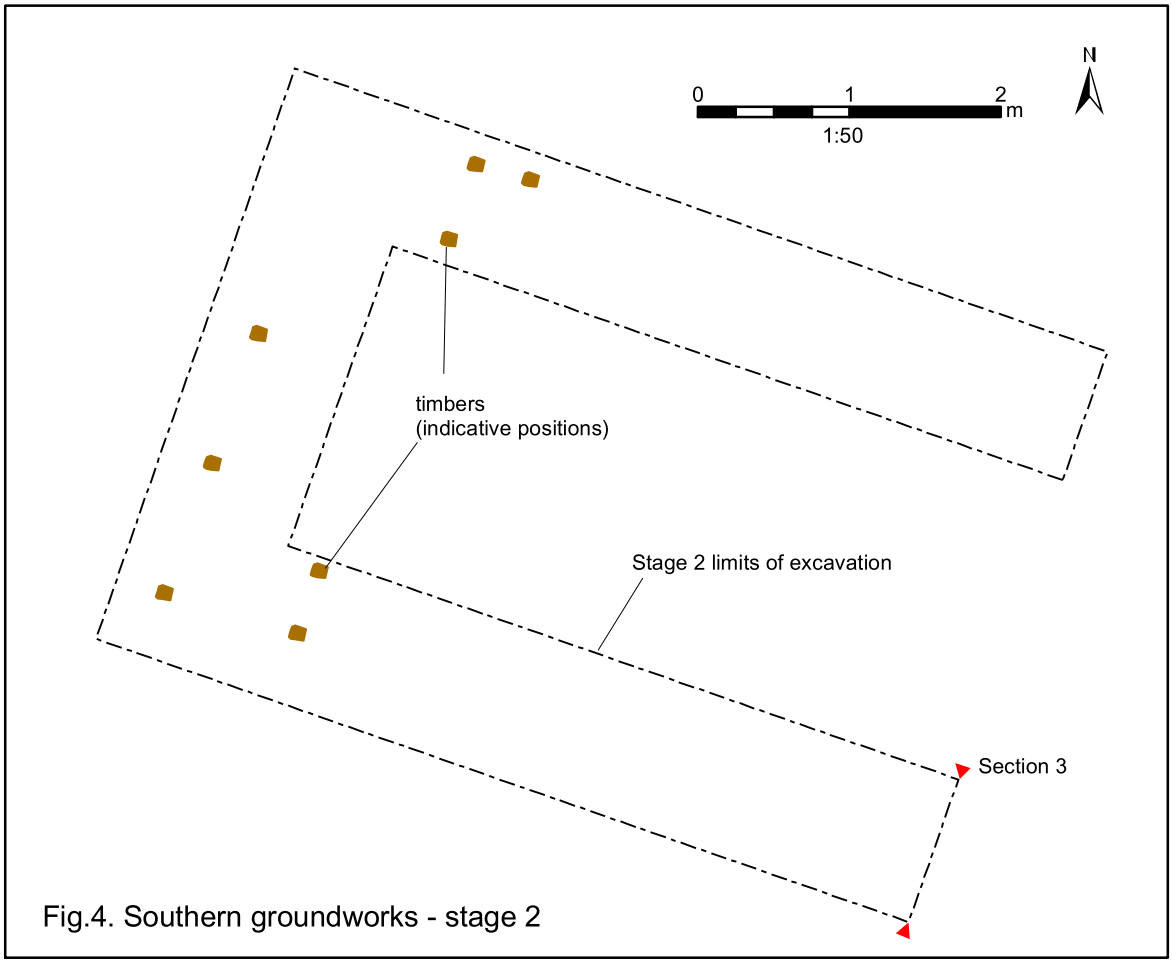

Fig.4. Southern groundworks - stage 2

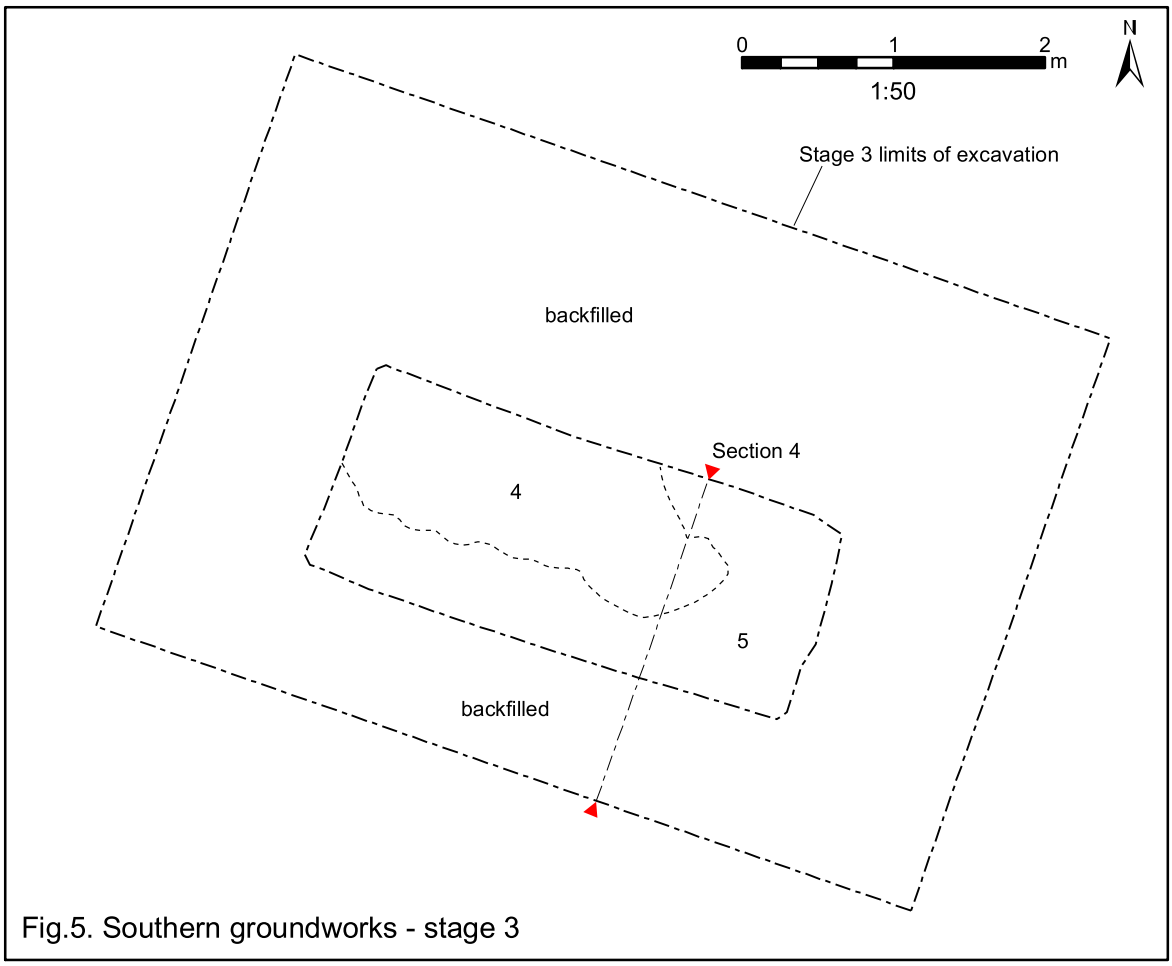

Fig.5. Southern groundworks - stage 3

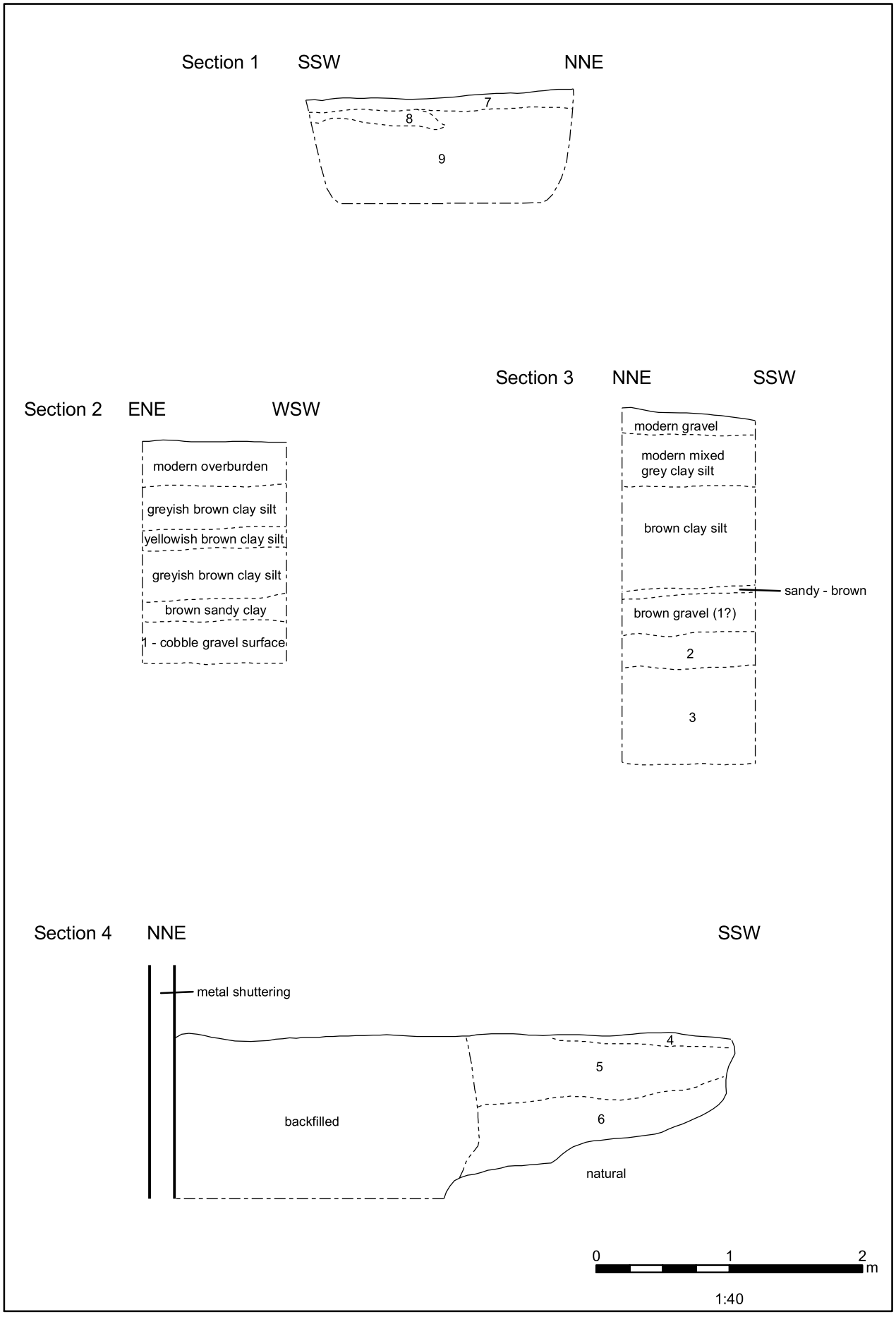

Fig.6. Sections 1 - 4

Essex County Council
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Plates

Plate 1. Excavated southern bank, looking south.

Plate 2. Southern bank after abutment removal, looking south-west.

Plate 3. Northern river bank after abutment removal (infilled river channel), looking north.

Plate 4. Wooden stake in front of northern bank abutment.

Plate 5. Southern groundworks, stage 1 pit. 1m scale, looking north-east.

Plate 6. Waterlogged timber in stage 1 pit. 1m scale, looking north-east.

Plate 7. Exposed timber in stage 2 trench, southern groundworks.

Plate 8. Excavated timber, stage 2 southern groundworks. 1m scale.

Plate 9. Section 3. 2m scale. Looking south-east.

Plate 10. Southern groundworks, metal shuttering.

Plate 11. Southern groundworks, stage 3 pit. 1m scale, looking north-west

Plate 12. Northern groundworks. 1m scale.