

**LAND BETWEEN 3 AND 7 THE CLOSE,  
SOUTH BENFLEET,  
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**



**Essex County Council  
Field Archaeology Unit**

**June 2010**



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## EHER SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site Name/Address:</b> Land between 3 and 7 The Close, South Benfleet, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> South Benfleet	<b>District:</b> Castle Point
<b>NGR:</b> TQ 7778 8602	<b>Site Code:</b> TCCP10
<b>Type of Work:</b> Archaeological Evaluation	<b>Site Director/Team:</b> Phillippa Sparrow ECC FAU
<b>Dates of Work:</b> 10th June 2010	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> one 7m x 1.8m trench
<b>Curating Museum:</b> Southend Museum	<b>Funding Source:</b> Bishop Lowes Development
<b>Further Work Anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related HER Nos.</b> None
<b>Final Report:</b> Summary in EAH	<b>OASIS Ref:</b> essexcou1-78727
<b>Periods Represented:</b> Prehistoric, medieval, post-medieval	
<p><b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b>  This summary presents the results of an archaeological trial-trench evaluation at land between 3 and 7 The Close, South Benfleet in advance of the construction of a new residential building (CPT/719/08/FUL) (Fig. 1). The site is located within the historic core of South Benfleet, around 200m north of Benfleet Creek, and within the South Benfleet Conservation Area (Plate 1).</p> <p>The original aims of the archaeological evaluation were to determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits within the development area and to record any surviving remains that would be destroyed by the construction of the building. The more specific objectives were to investigate evidence for medieval and post-medieval structures, and to identify any evidence of industrial or domestic occupation of the site.</p> <p>The trench measured 7m long by 1.8m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.88m (Fig 2; Plates 2 and 3). A modern drain was cut into the north-western end of the trench. A patch of the natural orange-grey silty clay in the north-western corner of the trench was overlain by a waterlain marsh-like deposit of light grey brown silty clay (layer 2). A small undiagnostic, unstratified, retouched flint (7) was present on the surface of the natural silty clay, beneath layer 2.</p> <p>A large rubbish pit (5) was cut into the natural silty clay (Figs. 2 and 3; Plates 2 - 4). Irregular in plan, the shallow pit (0.27m deep) extended beyond all sides of the trench and contained a dark grey silty clay fill (6). The majority of the finds date to the 19th to 20th centuries, though one residual late medieval German stoneware sherd was also found (Appendix 1).</p>	

A large modern soakaway (3), containing frogged brick rubble (4), was located immediately above pit 5 (Fig. 3). This feature was cut into layer 2 and overlain by layer 1, a possible former topsoil or dumped deposit.

The evaluation revealed that the site was used for rubbish disposal during the 19th to 20th centuries. This may have been associated with the post-medieval landfill discovered during archaeological investigations at the Hoy and Helmet Public House, just 20m to the north-west of the site. It has been suggested that the landfilling was intended to build the area up from the marsh (EHER 7089). Perhaps significantly, the top of the pit was located just above the water table. A residual sherd of medieval pottery and an unstratified struck demonstrate earlier activity in the vicinity of the site. The presence of a modern service and soakaway further shows that the site has undergone severe modern disturbance.

***Previous Summaries/Reports:*** None

***Author of Summary:*** P. Sparrow

***Date of Summary:*** 28th June 2010

## **APPENDIX 1 FINDS**

### **By Helen Walker**

All finds were recovered from context 6, the fill of pit 5, apart from a single flint found unstratified. All of the material has been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details can be found below, and the finds are described by category.

### **Pottery**

Pit 5 produced twelve sherds, weighing 693g. Most is 19th century, but there is one sherd of German stoneware, its curved shape suggesting it may be from a globular costrel (a type of portable water container). The fabric is consistent with that of Siegburg Stoneware, although the partial brown glaze isn't characteristic of Siegburg, and it may be a product of one of the other German stoneware production centres, such as Langerwehe (cf. Hurst et al. 1986. fig.92.295). It most likely dates to the mid 14th to mid 15th centuries.

The 19th century pottery includes industrial slipwares and transfer-printed table wares that could all have been current around the 1830s (Barker and Crompton 2007), however, the latest datable piece is the base of a stoneware Keiller marmalade jar with the printed date of 1862, although this may be the patent date, rather than the year of manufacture. Thus the jar provides a date of 1862 or later for the group. Also present are sherds of late kitchen earthenware and the remains of a small Long Tom flowerpot.

### **Brick and tile**

A single fragment of peg tile and a part brick were recovered. The peg tile fragment is small and undiagnostic and not closely datable within the post-medieval or modern periods. The brick is sienna-coloured without a frog, measuring 110mm in width, but with an irregular depth ranging from 42 to 50mm. A covering of mortar makes it impossible to examine the surface features, but its irregular shape and surviving dimensions suggest it may date to the 15th to early 17th century (Ryan 1996, 95) although a later date cannot be precluded. Mortar on the breaks suggests the brick was reused after breakage.

### **Glass**

The most interesting glass finds are two complete Victorian bottles, comprising a plain rectangular bottle that perhaps contained a chemist's preparation and an egg-shaped Hamilton mineral-water bottle with the embossed maker's name 'W. INGRAM SOUTHEND'. These early mineral water bottles, which came into general use around 1840, needed to be stored horizontally to keep the corks wet and prevent the bottle from exploding from a build-up of gas. Fragments of 19th century moulded glass and bottle glass are also present.

## **Metalwork**

The metalwork comprises an amorphous lump of iron and two coins/tokens/disks, encrusted with iron and without any visible detail.

## **Shell**

The shell comprises a winkle, a cockle shell valve and an oyster shell valve. Given the nature of the deposit, the winkle and the cockle may be naturally present and not an archaeological find.

## **Flint**

A piece of struck flint with a retouched edge was found unstratified (from finds context 7).

## **Comments on the assemblage**

The pottery and glass bottles represent domestic refuse deposited not before 1862. There are two earlier finds from pit 5, the sherd of German stoneware and the part brick, both of which could have been current during the 15th century. The retouched flint (unfortunately unstratified) indicates possible prehistoric activity in the area. The mineral-water bottle is also of some interest as it is evidence of a local bottling industry at Southend.

## **References**

- |  |      |  |
|--|------|--|
| Barker, D. and Crompton, S.                    | 2007 | <i>Slipware in the Collection of The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery</i> (City of Stoke-on-Trent; London A & C Black) |
| Hurst, J. G., Neal, D. S. and Beuningen, H. J. | 1986 | <i>Pottery Produced and Traded in North-West Europe 1350 – 1650</i> (Rotterdam Papers VI)                              |
| Ryan, P.                                       | 1996 | <i>Brick in Essex: from the Roman conquest to the Reformation</i> (Chelmsford)   |



## Archive tables

### Pottery data

Context	Feature	Count	Weight (g)	Description	Date
6	5	1	16	German stoneware body sherd perhaps from a costrel showing partial brown glaze, cf. Hurst et al. 1986, fig.92. 295	?1350-1450
		1	26	Creamware/pearlware mug rim showing turned reeding below the rim highlighted in green glaze and blue and brown slip-banding interspersed with bands of pearl-beading, moulded handle, comparable to Barker and Crompton 2007, nos 1951 P58 and 1965 P46)	c.1820
		3	41	Yellow ware, sherds from carinated bowl showing mocha decoration	1830s/40s to late 19th C
		3	76	Modern white earthenware, all with blue transfer-printed decoration, comprising fragments from two willow pattern plates and a hollow ware sherd with a foliage design	1820s to 20th C
		1	404	Modern stoneware, base of marmalade jar with transfer-printed label – James Keiller of Dundee, and printed date of 1862	1862 or later
		2	79	Late kitchen earthenware, fragments from flanged-rim bowl	19th to early 20th C
		1	51	Flowerpot, profile of a very small Long Tom	19th to 20th C
		<b>12</b>	<b>693</b>		

### Brick and tile data

Context	Feature	Count	Weight (g)	Description	Date
6	5	1	58	Peg tile fragment (discarded)	Post-med or modern
		1	633	Part brick, sienna-coloured, no frog, width 110mm, depth irregular, 42mm one side, 50mm the other, mortar on the breaks suggest the brick was reused after breakage	15th to early 17th C or late 17th to early 18th C
		<b>2</b>	<b>691</b>		

### Metalwork data

Context	Feature	Count	Weight (g)	Description	Date
6	5	2	16	Two identical coins, tokens or disks, 28mm diameter, encrusted with rust, no detailing even on areas without rust	undated
		1	224	Iron, amorphous lump	undated
		<b>3</b>	<b>240</b>		

## Glass data

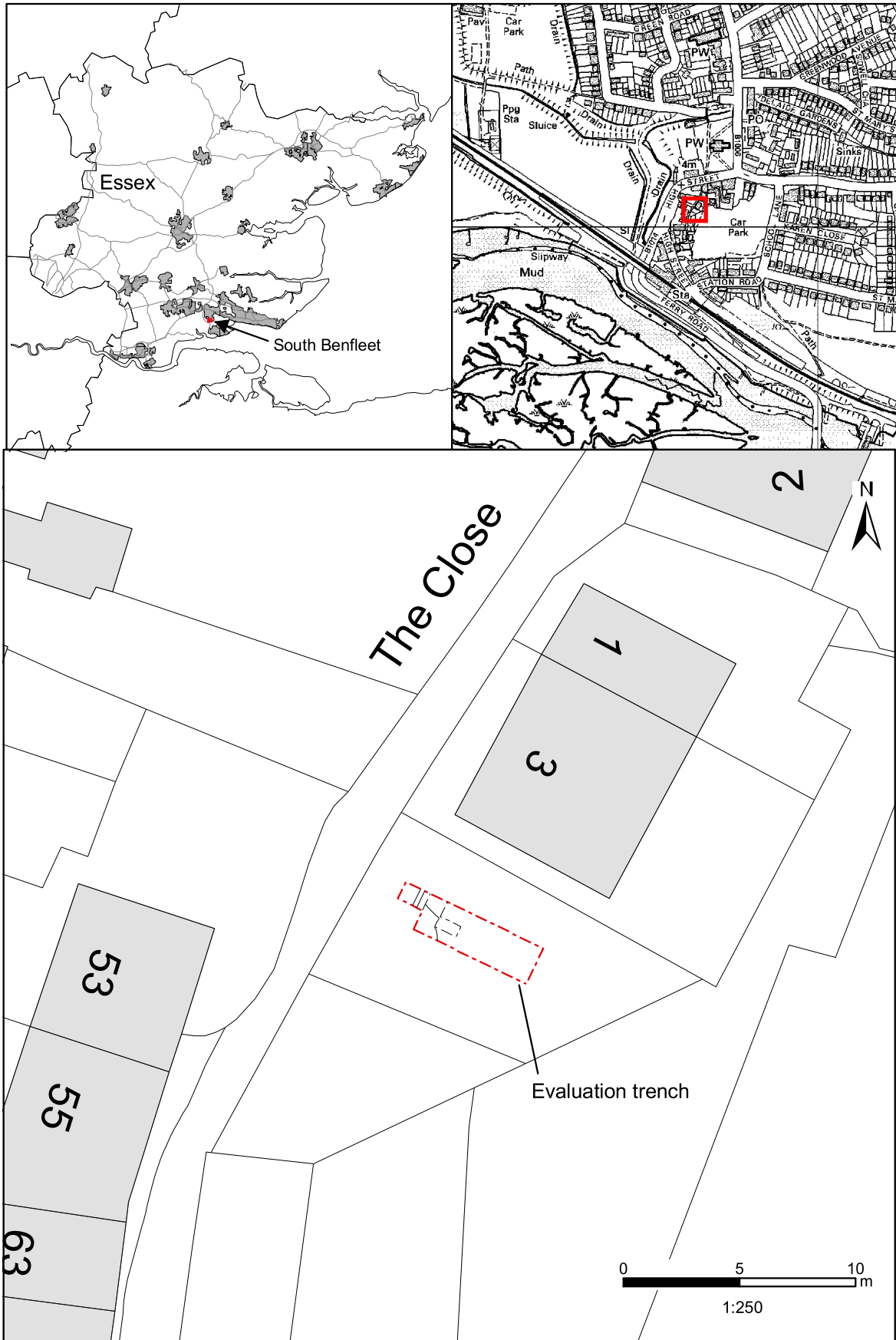
Context	Feature	Count	Weight (g)	Description	Date
6	5	1	354	Complete horizontal Hamilton mineral water bottle with embossed maker's name 'W. INGRAM SOUTHEND (weight includes sediment inside bottle)	c.1840 to late 19th C
		1	178	Complete rectangular bottle with long neck and flanged lip, greenish glass, plain, apart from embossed '2' on underside of base, ht 125mm, probably for chemist's preparation (weight includes sediment inside bottle)	?Victorian
		1	40	Fragment of moulded glass perhaps from a vase or other hollow ware	19th to 20th C
		2	5	Fragments of bottle glass, thin-walled, green tinge	19th to 20th C
		<b>5</b>	<b>577</b>		

## Shell

Context	Feature	Count	Weight (g)	Description
6	5	1	3	Complete winkle shell
		1	3	Cockle shell, single valve
		1	13	Oyster shell, lower valve
		<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	

## Flint

Context	Feature	Count	Weight (g)	Description	Date
7	Finds context	1	4	Struck flint with retouched edge, no patina	?prehistoric



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Fig. 1. Site location

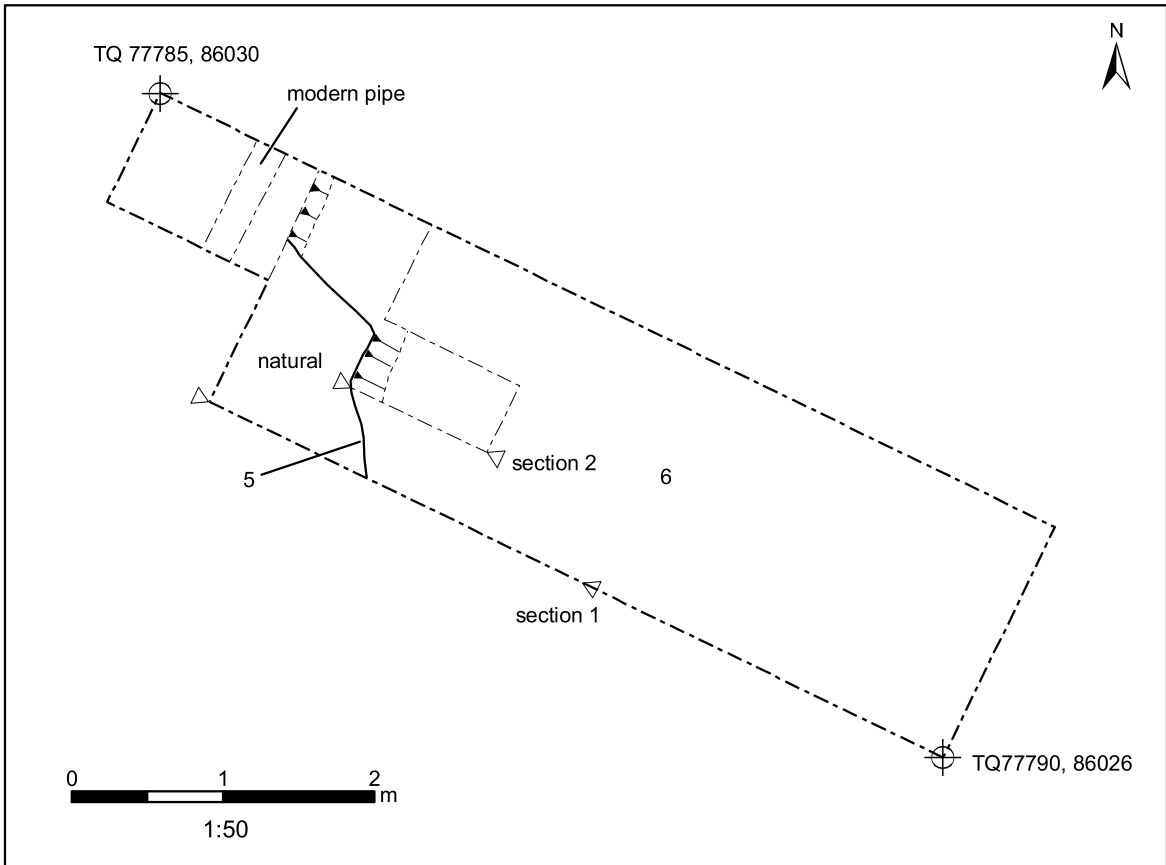


Fig.2. Trench plan

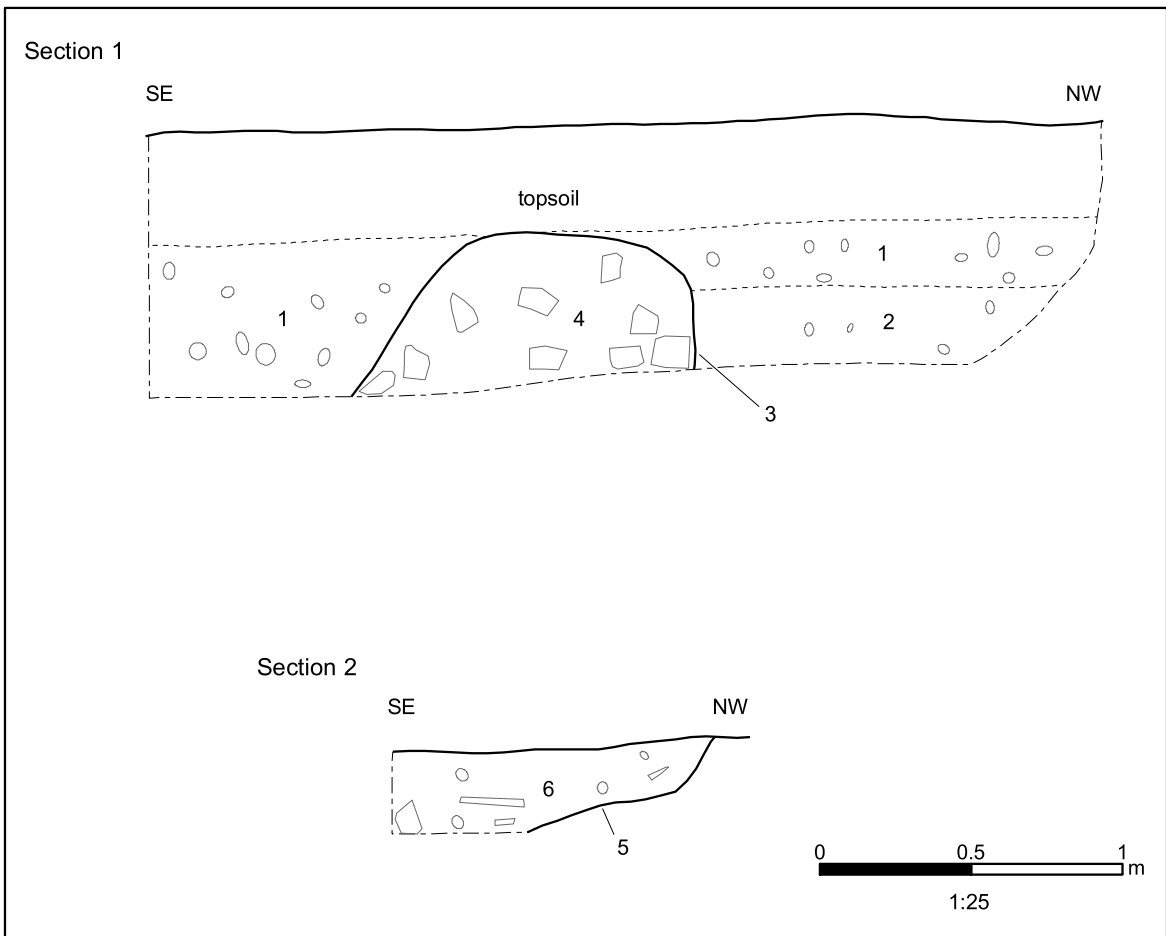


Fig.3. Sections 1 and 2

## Plates



Plate 1. The Close, part of South Benfleet Conservation Area



Plate 2. Trench, looking south-east. 2m scale.





Plate 3. Trench, looking south. 2m scale.



Plate 4. Sections 1 and 2, looking west-south-west. 2m scale.