

THE RIVERSIDE CENTRE

BRAINTREE

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

SEPTEMBER 2010

ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site Name/Address: The Riverside Centre, Braintree, Essex	
Parish: Braintree	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 75840 22633	Site Code: BT 45
Type of Work: Archaeological Evaluation	Site Director/Group: T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Dates of Work: 6th August 2010	Size of Area Investigated: c. 300 sq m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Braintree	Funding source: Parkland Developments Ltd
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.: - 6427
Final Report: EAH summary	Oasis No.: essexcou1- 81977
Periods Represented: Modern, post-medieval	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>Archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out on land to the east of 45/47 Notley Road, Braintree, in advance of proposed residential development at the Riverside Centre (Fig. 1) The evaluation was undertaken as part of a condition placed on planning consent by Braintree District Council (10/0187/FUL) on the advice of the Essex CC Historic Environment Management team (ECC HEM). As much of the Riverside Centre area has been subject to previous quarrying activity and industrial/modern disturbance only Phase 5 (plots 66-73) of the development was required to be evaluated.</p> <p>A single evaluation trench, orientated north-east/south-west, was located within the rectangular footprint of the new build (Fig. 1). The trench position was limited by a number of small to medium-sized trees along the north-western edge of the footprint and the presence of a live electricity cable crossing the south-eastern end of the footprint. The trench was 27m long by 1.6m wide and varied in depth from 0.6m in the west to 1.2m in the east.</p> <p>In the western half of the trench 0.6m of mixed modern overburden was removed to reveal a series of walls constructed from brick and concrete and varying from 0.23m to 0.50m in width (Fig. 2). The bricks were dark grey/purple in colour and of the 'Engineering' type, each with a deep well-defined frog within which were the letters N and S. The walls enclosed four separate chambers that extended to a depth of at least 0.6m (1.2m below ground level) and had been backfilled with mixed grey silt and numerous large lumps of concrete (Plate 1). Extending beyond the easternmost wall of these structures was a large iron pipe in a well-defined construction trench backfilled with brown clay silt and fragments of slate.</p>	

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The pipe construction trench cut an extensive layer of orangey brown sandy gravel (1), 0.25-0.30m thick, which sloped slightly downwards from east to west and contained a small collection of abraded post-medieval finds broadly dating from the 17th to 19th centuries. Machine removal of part of layer (1) revealed a thick underlying deposit of dirty brown clay (2) within which fragments of peg-tile and decomposed animal bone were observed (Plate 2). The excavation of a small sondage revealed this deposit to be about 0.7m thick and to overly cleaner (possibly natural) orange clay at a depth of 1.6m below existing ground level.

The overburden sealing the sandy gravel was 0.60-0.65m deep and consisted of dark grey ashy clay silt containing small fragments of peg-tile and coal overlain by rooty grey topsoil. In the southern section these two deposits were separated by a 0.10m thick band of re-deposited reddish brown clay.

Although prehistoric remains have been found to the north of the Flitch Way and west of the site around Hoppit Bridge (EHER 6427) none were identified during the evaluation. The considerable depth of deposits (up to 1.6m) in the eastern half of the trench is unusual and implies an element of infilling or levelling of this area in the later post-medieval period. It is possible that this activity took place after an episode of quarrying or was perhaps associated with consolidation of this low-lying riverside area. The sandy gravel deposit was quite compact and may have been quarry waste material deliberately laid down as a firm surface. The only identified features were a series of brick and concrete-walled chambers of modern (20th century) date that are almost certainly associated with the former use of the site as a water works. These structures are likely to have truncated any earlier remains in the western half of the site.

As no archaeological remains of any significance were identified during the evaluation it is unlikely that the development will have any adverse impact upon the archaeological record.

Previous Summaries/Reports: none

Author of Summary: T. Ennis

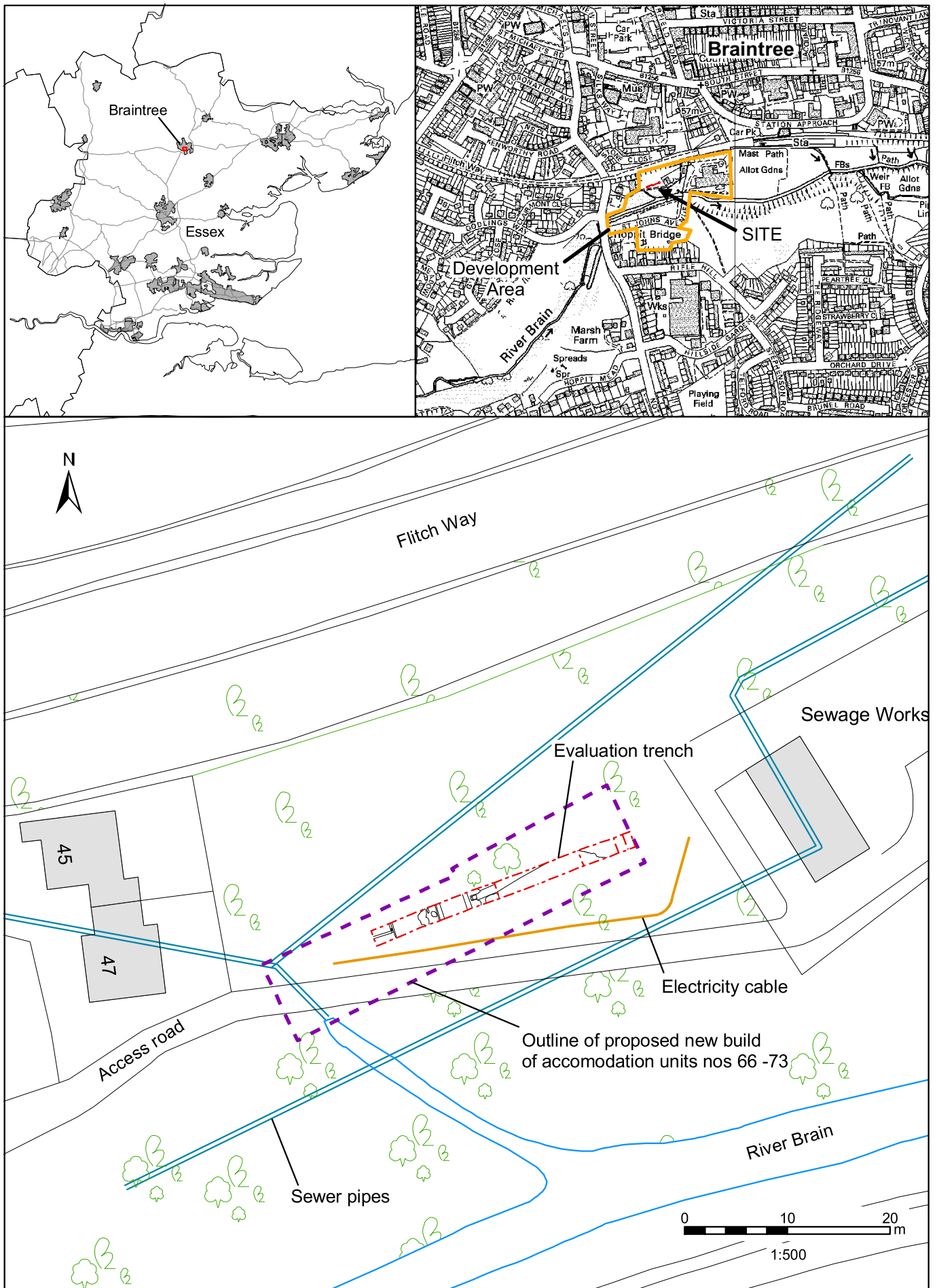
Date of Summary: September 2010

Finds Report by Helen Walker

Finds were recovered from a single layer, Layer 1, and have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, tabulated below. All finds are abraded. A total of four sherds of post-medieval red earthenware were excavated, showing either an internal or an all over glaze. Featured sherds comprise a horizontal handle, most likely from a large storage jar or bread crock, and an everted rim probably from a small bowl. These finds were accompanied by a very small piece of roof tile, too abraded to be datable, and two clay pipe stems, with a relatively small bore size of around 2mm. The finds are datable to the 17th to 19th centuries and indicate activity in the area at this time. All finds have been retained until the archiving stage and if kept will occupy less than one box.

Finds data

Context	Feature	Count	Weight (g)	Description	Date
1	Layer	2	11	Clay pipe stems, diameter 9mm; diameter of bore 2mm, abraded	Post-medieval
		1	21	Roof tile, one surface extremely abraded, undatable	Med or post-med
		4	123	Pottery: post-medieval red earthenware, all with an internal or all over glaze, featured sherds comprise a horizontal handle most likely from a storage jar and an everted from a small bowl, rilled externally, all sherds are abraded/weathered	17th to 19th C



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Fig.1. Trench location plan

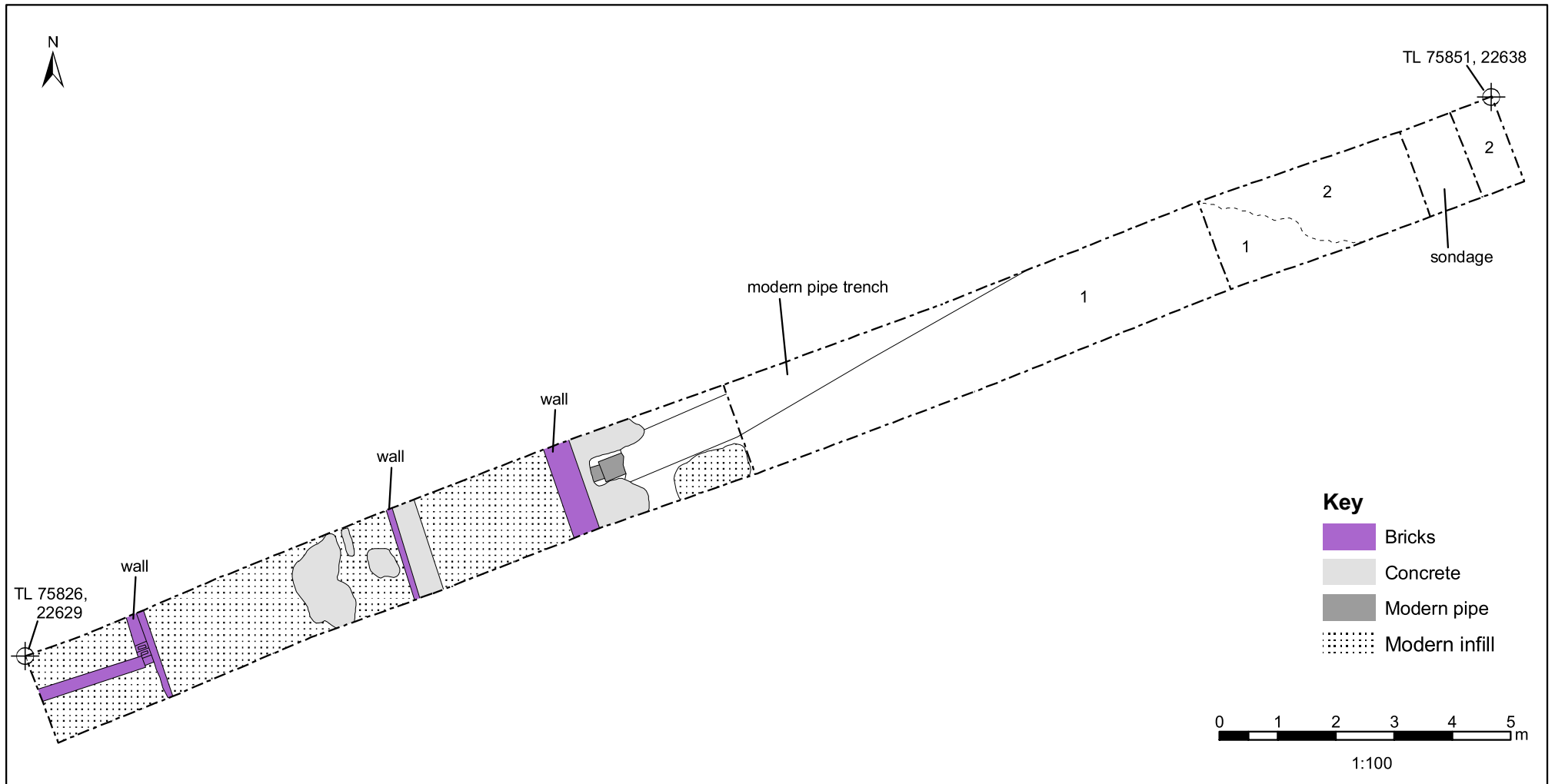


Fig.2. Trench plan



Plate 1. Walls and backfilled chambers (2m scale)



Plate 2. Layers 1 and 2 (2m scale)