

**Archaeological Evaluation  
Land at The Old Vicarage  
The Street  
Shalford, Essex**

**Project No: 8181  
Site Code: SFTS 14  
Report No: 2014172**



**May 2014**



**Archaeological Evaluation  
Land at The Old Vicarage  
The Street  
Shalford, Essex**

**NGR: TL 72210 29255  
Planning Ref: BTE13/01435/FUL**

**ASE Project No: 8181  
Site Code: SFTS 14  
OASIS id: 179588**

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**May 2014**

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken within the grounds of an early 16th century former vicarage in Shalford, known as The Old Vicarage, prior to residential development. The site is located near to The Street, in the centre of the village, which contains several listed medieval and post-medieval buildings, and to the west of the medieval St Andrew's Church. It was therefore possible that archaeological remains from these periods survived on the site associated with former roadside tenements.*

*Four trial trenches were dug; two within the house footprints, a third within a garage footprint, and a fourth elsewhere because of the presence of overhead electric cables. In general the ground was undisturbed, apart from the presence of tree roots and tree bowls.*

*A single undated archaeological feature was identified; the remains of a former field boundary ditch in Trench 1 that had been piped and infilled in the modern period. Two natural tree bowls were recorded in Trenches 2 and 3. No finds were recovered from these.*

*The results of the evaluation suggest there is little potential for significant archaeological remains to be present elsewhere within the site.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Jenny Moody Properties Ltd to undertake an evaluation within the grounds of the Old Vicarage, Shalford in May 2014, prior to the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes.
- 1.1.2 The village of Shalford is situated along the B1053 Saffron Walden road, approximately 7km north-west of Braintree town centre. The Old Vicarage is located on the northeast side of The Street, which is the main road through the village. The parish Church of St Andrew stands to the east (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.3 The development site (NGR: TL 72210 29255; Fig.1) comprises an area of approximately 1600sqm in the northwest part of the Old Vicarage garden. To the northeast of the site is the Clifffield housing estate, a post-war housing development, and to the southeast are the rest of the Old Vicarage grounds, comprising the house, lawns and wooded area.

### **1.2 Topography and Geology**

- 1.3.1 The southwest half of the site comprises fruit and vegetable gardens surrounded by hedging and to the north east is an area of lawn. The surrounding environs of the site are rural in nature. Topographically the area is flat, with a slight natural slope from west (55.25mOD) to east (54.03mOD).
- 1.3.2 The superficial geology of the site is mapped by the British Geological Survey (BGS) as consisting of the Kesgrave Catchment Sub-group (sand and gravel), overlying London Clay (BGS Geology of Britain Viewer; Accessed 06/05/2014).

### **1.3 Planning Background**

- 1.3.1 A planning application (13/01435/FUL) was submitted to Braintree District Council in December 2013 for the erection of two dwellings with associated garages. As the site lies within an area highlighted by the Historic Environment Record as having a high potential for archaeological deposits to be present, ECC Place Services, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, recommended that an archaeological condition for evaluation by trial trenching be attached to any grant of planning consent. The archaeological condition that was recommended and subsequently attached was based upon guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, which has subsequently been replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012). It states that:

#### **RECOMMENDATION: Full condition**

***"No development, or preliminary groundworks, of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work and recording in accordance with a***

***written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the planning authority”.***

- 1.3.2 The work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Archaeology South-East (ASE) which was based on a Brief issued by Essex County Council Place Services team (2014) and approved prior to the start of fieldwork.

#### **1.4 Scope of Report**

- 1.4.1 This report details the results of an evaluation in the grounds of the Old Vicarage carried out by Andy Letch (Senior Archaeologist) between the 12th and 13th May 2014. The fieldwork was managed by Adrian Scruby and Mark Atkinson managed the post-excavation process.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) shows that the development site lies in an area of archaeological interest suggested by its location in the historic centre of the village.
- 2.2 The Old Vicarage is Grade II Listed (List ref: 115560) and dates from around 1500 or earlier, with alterations in the 16th century and early 19th century. The house is half-timbered and comprises a Hall range of 3 bays with a late 16th century axial stack and an early 19th century cross-wing. The nearby Grade II Listed public house, The George Public House (List entry 115559) is also of medieval date, with 16th, 17th and 18th century alterations, as is the adjacent Grade I listed parish Church of St Andrew, which is of 14th century origin. Accordingly, it is possible that evidence for medieval settlement is preserved on this site and may be damaged or destroyed by the proposed development.
- 2.3 Historic mapping shows that the north-eastern part of the Old Vicarage garden was part of a large field in the late 19th and early 20th century, and it was only in the 1950s with the construction of the Cliffield estate that the grounds were expanded (<http://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ancientroam/historic>). No street frontage buildings are shown in the area of the evaluation.
- 2.4 No previous archaeological work has been undertaken on the site but some work has been done in the vicinity. Monitoring works carried out for a new extension on the north side of St Andrews Church in 2009 found fragments of Roman tile and medieval pottery (Letch 2009). Archaeological trial trenching and excavation in the corner of a field immediately opposite Alwynds within the probable medieval settlement of Church End further to the south in 2010, found two Middle Bronze Age pits, Roman, medieval and post-medieval gullies and ditches, and a thin scatter of worked flint and pottery (Germany 2010). A medieval pit was also found (EHER 47392-4).

## **2.3 Aims and Objectives**

- 2.3.1 The aim of the archaeological watching work was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological remains in order to understand the archaeological potential of the site and the implications of the proposed development upon it. Furthermore, if such evidence were found, the evaluation would inform possible mitigation measures to avoid damaging archaeological deposits through development.
- 2.3.2 Specific research aims for the initial trenching were to determine the presence or absence of any medieval activity/occupation associated with the foundation and subsequent development of Shalford. Pertaining to this is the possibility of uncovering buildings, or the back yards of buildings facing onto The Street, and to determine their date.
- 2.3.3 The Revised Research Framework for the East of England (Medlycott 2011) identifies, the origins and development of different rural settlement types and the dynamics of medieval settlement as a topic for further research (2011, p 70).

## **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 The ECC Place Services Design Brief (2013) required the evaluation trenches to be cut within the footprint of the proposed two dwellings and garages. They comprised both linear and L-shaped trenches. Linear trenches were cut for house plot 1 and garage plots 1 and 2 (Trenches 1, 3 and 4) and an L-shaped trench was cut for plot 2 (Trench 3). Because of the presence of overhead electricity cables, Trench 4 was dug outside of the garage footprint.
- 3.2 The trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator using a flat-bladed bucket through topsoil and subsoil onto the top of the natural clay. All trenches were dug to their required lengths and positions apart from Trench 2 whose southern arm was moved by ten degrees to the east to avoid a hedge. Their locations may be found in Figure 1. Trench width was a consistent 1.5m.
- 3.4 Standard ASE methodologies were employed. Trenches were surveyed with GPS and recorded on pro-forma sheets, containing descriptions and measured sketch scale plans and sections. No finds were collected. Photographs were taken in digital format, a representative selection of which is reproduced at the back of the report. The remainder can be found in the archive.

## **3.5 Archive**

- 3.5.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Braintree Museum in due course. The contents of the archive are summarised below (Table 1).



Number of contexts	3
Number of trench sheets	4
Plan and sections sheets	0
Photographs	8
Bulk finds	None
Bulk soil samples	None collected

*Table 1: Quantification of site archive*

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 General

4.1.1 Most of the features encountered during the evaluation have natural origins associated with the Old Vicarage garden as root bowls to trees and shrubs or else relate to its former use as agricultural land. Therefore the level of cultural disturbance is low. All of the encountered remains were well-defined and shallow and investigated to confirm their origins.

4.4.2 Trench descriptions are presented below, with further context detail contained in Table 2 below.

Trench no.	Context	Type	Description	Depth/ Thickness m	Height m AOD
1	01	Layer	Topsoil: brown clay silt sand	0.30-0.36	54.68-55.25
1	03	Natural	Yellow brown clay	-	54.38-54.69
1	04	Cut	Ditch	Over 1m	54.38
1	05	Fill	Fill of [04]	-	-
2	01	Layer	Topsoil	0.28-0.30	54.09-54.40
2	02	Layer	Subsoil: yellow brown silt sand	0.30	54.01-54.12
2	03	Natural	Mottled yellow brown & orange clay silt sand	-	53.80
3	01	Layer	Topsoil	0.20	54.03-54.07
3	02	Layer	Subsoil: yellow brown silt sand	0.20-0.25	53.83-53.87
3	03	Natural	Yellow brown clay	-	53.58-53.67
4	01	Layer	Topsoil	0.15-0.30	c.54.40
4	02	Layer	Subsoil: yellow brown silt sand	0.18-0.29	c.54.10-54.25
4	03	Natural	Yellow brown clay	-	53.96-53.92

*Table 2: Trenches 1-4 list of recorded contexts*

### 4.2 Trench 1

4.2.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 2) was aligned northeast to southwest and located towards the western side of the development area in plot 1, currently part of a fruit/vegetable garden. The only feature was a large modern service trench.

4.2.2 A layer of dark brown slightly clayey silt sand topsoil was removed across

the trench (context [01]), which was thickest at 0.36m to the south west and 0.30m to the northeast. This overlay a yellow-brown natural clay layer (context [03]) riddled with small tree roots and recorded at 54.69mOD at the south-west end and slightly higher at 54.38mOD to the north-east. A single feature, a ditch cut into the natural deposit, was exposed.

4.2.3 Ditch [04] was over 3m-wide and crossed the northeast end of the trench on a NW-SE alignment. Filled with a brown clay silt sand [05], a ceramic drainage pipe was discovered towards the bottom of the trench, 1m down from present ground level and aligned northwest to southeast (Figs. 1 and 2). Excavation stopped at this point. Modern debris including brick and tile, glass and iron reinforcement rods were present in the fill, none of which were kept.

4.2.4 No other archaeologically significant features were found.

### **4.3 Trench 2**

4.3.1 Trench 2 (Fig. 3) was an L-shaped trench aligned northwest to southeast and located within the area of lawn towards the eastern side of the site, in plot 2. The main part was 10m long, with a 5m long arm to the southwest, which was moved slightly from its proposed location during the evaluation. Both arms contained tree/root disturbance.

4.3.2 Topsoil [01] was consistently 0.3m thick along the trench and overlay a yellow brown silty sand subsoil [02] of similar thickness that petered out at in the southern arm of the trench. At the base of the trench was a mottled yellowish brown and orange clayey silt sand natural clay layer (context [03]), recorded at 53.80mOD both ends.

4.3.3 The northwest arm contained the remains of a tree stump towards the north-west end and two recent but quite shallow shrub or tree bowls at the opposite end and in the southern arm. The latter two were excavated and found to be only 0.15m deep. The owner of the house had clarified that there had been trees on the lawn.

4.3.4 No archaeologically significant features were found.

### **4.4 Trench 3**

4.4.1 Trench 3 (Fig. 4) was excavated along the southeast edge of the site close to the eastern corner, on the site of the garage for plot 2. As a consequence the trench was only 5m long, and aligned west to east.

4.4.2 Topsoil [01] was identified along the trench at only 0.2m thick, below which was an undisturbed yellow brown clay sand subsoil [02] that was the same thickness. Layer [02] overlay natural yellowish brown clay sand (context [03]) at approximately 53.67mOD to the west and 53.58mOD to the east.

4.4.3 In the centre of the trench was a shallow root bowl (Fig. 4), which was excavated but contained nothing of interest.

4.4.4 No archaeologically significant features were found.

#### **4.5 Trench 4**

- 4.5.1 Trench 4 (Fig. 5) was located to the rear of plot 1, offset from its intended position by 6m to the southeast to avoid an overhead power line (Fig. 1). The trench was 5m long and aligned northeast to southwest.
- 4.5.2 Topsoil [01] in the trench was 0.2m thick, below which was subsoil [02], between 0.18m and 0.29m thick. Layer [02] was removed onto natural yellowish brown clay sand [03] at approximately 54.20mOD.
- 4.5.3 No archaeologically significant features were found.

### **5.0 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES**

#### **5.1 Summary**

- 5.1.1 As no archaeological deposits or features of pre-modern date were encountered, no finds were recovered or samples taken during the evaluation.

### **6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The broad objective of the project was to determine the nature of any archaeological features or deposits within the development area and, if present, to preserve them by record. More specifically, the project aimed to record any evidence of medieval activity on the site, which is evidenced along The Street by existing standing buildings.
- 6.2 The evaluation recorded natural disturbance in the form of root bowls and a ditch containing a modern drainage pipe. No medieval activity was recorded or any other archaeological remains.
- 6.3 Historic map evidence shows that during the late 19th century the northeast part of the site was used as farmland, lying on the edge of a large open field. In the 1950s the southwest part of the field was enclosed to build the Clifffield estate and at the same time the Old Vicarage garden was extended. The subsoil layer found in Trenches 2-4 therefore represents a former ploughsoil. The southwest field boundary ditch shown on historic mapping correlates with the location and alignment of ditch [04] containing the drainage pipe found in Trench 1. The ditch is therefore a pre-existing drainage/boundary feature of probable post-medieval date; the pipe being inserted into it when it became part of the Old Vicarage garden around the time the housing estate was built. The date of the field boundary could not be ascertained by the evaluation because the excavated backfill was entirely modern.
- 6.4 The site is largely undisturbed and until relatively recently was in agricultural use. The results of the evaluation suggest there is little potential for significant archaeological remains to be present on the site.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeology South-East would like to thank Steve Wheelhouse, Land Manager at Jenny Moody Properties, for commissioning the work and to the owner of the house and his father for their assistance. Teresa O'Connor, Historic Environment Officer for Essex County Council Place Services monitored the project on behalf of the LPA. The evaluation was directed by Andy Letch. The author would like to thank Andrew Lewsey who produced the figures for this report and Adrian Scruby who managed the evaluation. The post-excavation process was managed by Mark Atkinson.

**Appendix 1: HER Summary Form**

<b>Site name/Address:</b> Land at The Old Vicarage, The Street, Shalford, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Shalford	<b>District:</b> Braintree
<b>NGR:</b> TL 72210 29255	<b>Site Code:</b> SFTS 14
<b>Type of Work:</b> Archaeological evaluation	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> A. Letch, ASE
<b>Date of Work:</b> May 2013	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> 1600sqm
<b>Curating Museum:</b> Braintree Museum	<b>Funding source:</b> client
<b>Further Work Anticipated?:</b> No	<b>Related HER No:</b> None
<b>Final Report:</b> EAH roundup	<b>OASIS No:</b> 179588
<b>Periods Represented:</b> None	
<b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b>	
<p><i>Four evaluation trenches were excavated on the proposed site of a small residential development within the grounds of an early 16th century former vicarage in Shalford, known as The Old Vicarage. The site lies along the main road through the village which contains standing buildings of medieval and post-medieval date suggesting there was potential for settlement evidence on the site, behind the street frontage.</i></p> <p><i>The four trenches were dug within the intended house and garage footprints, apart from Trench 4, which had to be dug away from existing overhead electric cables. In general the ground was undisturbed apart from the presence of tree roots and tree bowls.</i></p> <p><i>A modern ceramic drainage pipe was uncovered within Trench 1, which had been placed within a probable post-medieval field boundary ditch. A former ploughsoil was identified on the northeast side of the site. No datable archaeological remains were found or finds recovered.</i></p>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> A. Letch	<b>Date of Summary:</b> May 2014

## Appendix 2: OASIS Form

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-179588**

### Project details

Project name	Land at the Old Vicarage
Short description of the project	<p>Four evaluation trenches were excavated on the site of a new residential development within the grounds of the Old Vicarage in Shalford. The site lies along the main road through the village which contains standing buildings of medieval and post-medieval date.</p> <p>The four trenches were dug within or adjacent to the intended house and garage footprints. In general the ground was undisturbed apart from the presence of tree roots and tree bowls.</p> <p>A modern ceramic sewer pipe was uncovered which had been placed within an earlier, undated, field boundary ditch. A subsoil layer was interpreted as a former ploughsoil. No datable archaeological remains were found or finds recovered.</p>
Project dates	Start: 12-05-1014 End: 13-05-1014
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	8181 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	SFTS 14 – Site code
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	PIPE TRENCH AND PIPE Modern
Significant Finds	None
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX BRAINTREE SHALFORD Land at the Old Vicarage
Postcode	CM7 4QY
Study area	1600.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 72210 29255 51.9346382598 0.505290549856 51 56 04 N 000 30 19 E Polygon
Height OD / Depth	Min: 54.03m Max: 55.25m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Essex County Council Place Services
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Adrian Scruby
Project supervisor	Andy Letch
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Jenny Moody Properties

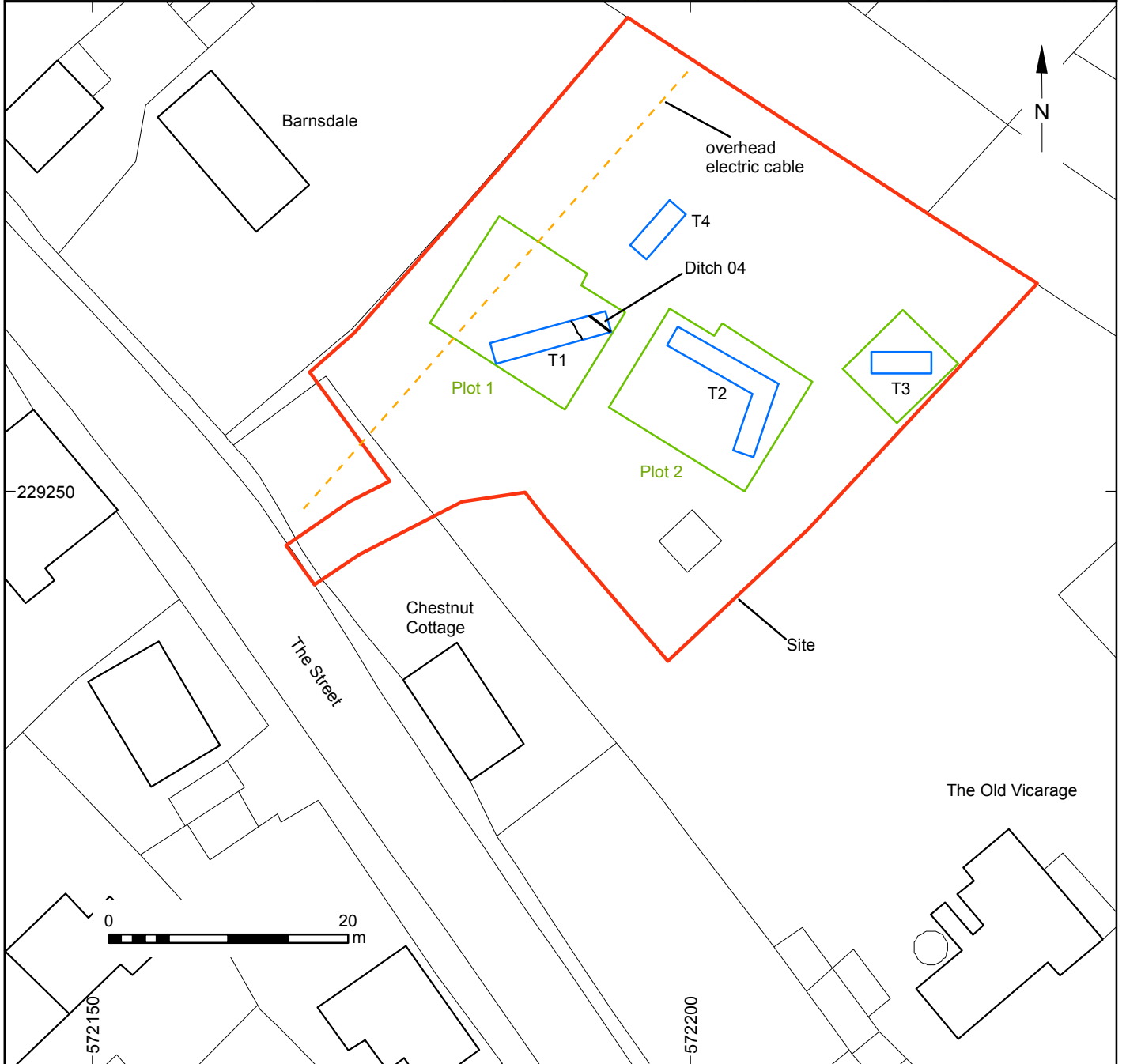
**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Braintree Museum
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Braintree Museum
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Photograph", "Report"

**Project bibliography**

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Entered by	Andy Letch (a.letch@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	27 May 2014



© Archaeology South-East		The Old Vicarage, The Street, Shalford		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8181	May 2014	Location of archaeological evaluation trenches		
Report Ref: 2014172	Drawn by: APL			





Figure 2 Trench 1 viewed to southwest, with ditch [04] in foreground



Figure 3 Trench 2 viewed to southwest





Figure 4 Trench 3 viewed to west



Figure 5 Trench 4 viewed to northeast

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