

**Archaeological Evaluation
at
Car park associated with Chaucer House
Grimshaw Way and Western Road
Romford
London Borough of Havering**

**ASE Project No: 8117
Site Code: CUH14**

ASE Report No: 2014227



June 2014

**Archaeological Evaluation
at
Car park associated with Chaucer House
Grimshaw Way and Western Road
Romford
London Borough of Havering**

Centred at NGR: TQ 51519 88731

Planning Ref: P1492.12

**ASE Project No: 8117
Site Code: CUH14
GLHER Enquiry Ref: 11161**

**ASE Report No: 2014227
OASIS id: 182869**

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June 2014

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land between Grimshaw Way and Western Road, Romford, in advance of the construction of a new leisure centre.

The site lays to the south of the historic core of Romford, with the High Street, the medieval market place and the site of St Edward the Confessor Church, consecrated in 1410, lying to the north and northwest of the development. To the north of the site a small number of urned Roman cremations were discovered during the construction of the Dolphin shopping centre, in the early 1980s. The presence of a cremation cemetery along with other reported finds of Roman material from the area, including antiquarian finds of Roman coins and a possible timber structure, from the High Street and Romford Market area, would suggest some form of settlement in the vicinity

The 1870 first edition Ordnance Survey map shows that the northwest part of the site, most recently used as a car park, was formerly occupied by a school building, while the southeastern part was covered by trees. The building was in use for over half a century and subsequently demolished in the 1960-70's

Three evaluation trenches, each measuring 30m long by 1.8m wide and comprising a 5% sample of the 2800 sqm development footprint, were excavated in the first instance, uncovering the remains of a modern demolished building in trench 1, a further area of modern disturbance or a possible tree-throw in trench 2 and a large tree throw/ area of root disturbance in trench 3.

No archaeological features were discovered in any of the trenches and it is concluded that the development will not have an adverse impact upon the archaeological record in this vicinity of Romford.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land between Grimshaw Way and Western Road, Romford, in advance of the construction of a new leisure centre.

1.2 Location, Topography and Geology

1.2.1 The proposed development is located immediately off the junction of Grimshaw Way and Western Road, in a 0.42ha area that currently forms the car park to a substantial modern office block known as Chaucer House (NGR: TQ 51519 88731). The plot is surrounded by commercial/office development on all four sides.

1.2.2 The superficial geology of the site is mapped as Head (clay, silt, sand and gravel), with the sands and gravels of the Hackney Gravel Member lying immediately to the north and south. Bedrock deposits consist of London Clay (BGS Geology of Britain Viewer; Accessed 24/01/2014).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission (application ref. P1492.12) has been granted by Havering Council for the site to be redeveloped as a leisure centre, including a swimming pool and ice rink. As important heritage assets may be present within the site that could be damaged or destroyed by the development, the English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (EH GLAAS) have recommended that an archaeological evaluation is undertaken in the first instance, in order to confirm the presence or absence, date, character, condition and significance of any remains that may be present within the development area. This requirement is in accordance with guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012) and has been secured through a condition (No. 29) attached to the planning consent for the scheme, which states that:

'A) No demolition or development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority. B) No development or demolition shall take place other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Part (A). C) The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Part (A), and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured. Reason: Heritage assets of archaeological interest survive on the site. The planning authority wishes to secure the provision of archaeological investigation and historic buildings assessment followed by the subsequent recording of significant remains prior to development (including preservation of important remains), in accordance with recommendations given by the borough and in PPS 5/NAPPY'

- 1.3.2 Prior to the commencement of works a Written Scheme of Investigation that specified the aims and methodology was produced by ASE.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The initial aim of the archaeological work was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any surviving remains.
- 1.4.2 A specific objective was to identify any evidence for Roman activity/ occupation on the site and whether it can be related to the activity noted to the north, in the vicinity of the former Dolphin Centre and the Romford Market area.
- 1.4.3 Due to the presence of a culverted off-shoot of Black's Brook skirting the southern edge of the site, which may contain palaeoenvironmental or waterlogged deposits, the evaluation also had the potential to contribute towards addressing the TL2 framework objective, as identified in *A Research Framework for London Archaeology* (MoL 2002):

'Understanding London's Hydrology and river systems and tributaries, in particular, understanding the role of the Thames in shaping London's history, and the relationships between rivers and floodplains.'

- 1.4.4 In the event that significant discoveries were made this report would have sought to identify appropriate research objectives for any future work, in line with those laid out in *A Research Framework for London Archaeology* (MoL 2002) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011). However, given the negative results the work has no potential to contribute to any research objectives.

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation undertaken between the 17th and 19th June 2014 and has been prepared in accordance with the WSI. The fieldwork was carried out by Lukasz Miciak with assistance from Jo Ahmet.
- 1.5.2 The reported results will be supplied to the client and to the GLAAS officer and will inform decisions on the requirement for, and nature and scope of, any further archaeological work either before or during development.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following archaeological background makes use of information regarding the site and surrounding area obtained from the Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER report No. 11161).
- 2.2 The site lies to the south of the historic core of Romford, with the High Street, the medieval market place and the site of St Edward the Confessor Church, consecrated in 1410, lying to the north and northwest of the development. Very few archaeological investigations have taken place in close proximity to the site to date and no work within the development area itself, which lies outside the Archaeological Priority Areas covering the historic core of the town.

- 2.3 While previous archaeological works at 10 – 14 Western Road revealed only 19th and 20th century deposits (ELO 6410), remains of 16th and 17th century date have been recorded during monitoring works in the South Street area, to the west of the site (ELO 4648) and in the Market Place, to the north (ELO546, ELO4434 & ELO4418). Archaeological monitoring during development on the eastern side of Mercury Gardens, to the east of the site, did not reveal any archaeological remains (ELO4430).
- 2.4 To the north of the site, a small number of urned Roman cremations, along with an unspecified number of coins and brooches, were discovered during the construction of the Dolphin shopping centre in the early 1980's (GLHER 060156). However, archaeological works in connection with the redevelopment of the site in 2003 found that the site had been extensively basemented and no remains of prehistoric, Roman or medieval date survived (ELO734), suggesting that either the remains uncovered in the 1980's were an isolated survival or that development of the site at that time destroyed any other remains that were present.
- 2.5 The presence of a cremation cemetery along with other reported finds of Roman material from the area, including antiquarian finds of Roman coins and a possible timber structure, from the High Street and Romford Market area, would suggest some form of settlement in the vicinity.
- 2.6 To the east of the site lies Lodge Farm Park, essentially a 20th century creation that contains a number of landscape/ parkland features, including a large ornamental lake, Black's Canal, that were originally part of an extensive designed landscape of 18th century and later date belonging to the nearby, and now demolished, Gidea Hall. The western boundary of the Park follows the line of Blacks Brooks, a tributary of the Thames that flows south towards the River Rom, also feeding the ornamental Black's Canal en-route. At the southern end of the Park a culverted off-shoot of the Brook runs southwest towards the development area, appearing to skirt the southern boundary of the site, although the BGS note no alluvial deposits in this area and this section of the stream lies outside the Archaeological Priority Area that encompasses the feature to the northeast, in the area of Lodge Farm Park.
- 2.7 Historic maps show that the site was a vacant plot until the late 19th/early 20th century, when St Mary's Convent School was built. The building was in use for over half a century and subsequently demolished in the 1960-70's.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork

- 3.1.1 Three 30m long by 1.8m wide trenches were excavated using a tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist. The removal of overburden deposits stopped at the top of the archaeological horizon or else on reaching the top of the undisturbed natural geological deposit.
- 3.1.2 All trenches were positioned as indicated in the WSI.

- 3.1.3 All trenches, features and spot heights were located in relation to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and recorded using GNSS technology.
- 3.1.4 Standard ASE excavation, artefact collection and recording methodologies were employed throughout. All work was undertaken in accordance with the IfA Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation, and Code of Conduct (IfA 2013a and 2013b), and the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service: Standards for Archaeological Work (GLAAS 2014). ASE is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the IfA.
- 3.1.5 All stratigraphy was recorded using the ASE context recording system, with all exposed archaeological features and deposits recorded and excavated, except obviously modern features and disturbances. A written record, including trench sheets was produced together with survey drawings of all trenches and features identified within them. A digital photographic record was also created.
- 3.1.6 No deposits judged to have significant potential for environmental analysis were identified. Consequently, no bulk soil or other environmental samples were collected.

3.2 Archive

- 3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited with LAARC in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	10
No. of files/paper record	3 (trench record sheets)
Plan and sections sheets	1 section sheet
Bulk soil samples	N/A
Photographs	14 (digital)
Bulk finds	N/A
Registered finds	N/A
Environmental flots/residue	N/A

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 Trench locations and other pertinent information, alluded to in the results text below, are shown on Figure 1.
- 4.1.2 Deposit thicknesses and heights in metres AOD for every trench can be found in the table in Appendix 1.

4.2 Trench 1 (Fig. 4 & 5)

- 4.2.1 T-shaped trench 1 was located at the northwest end of the site which, according to the first edition Ordnance Survey map, was formerly occupied by a building.
- 4.2.2 The deposit sequence consisted of a 0.06m thick layer of tarmac [1/001], overlying a 0.1-0.2m thick layer of hard core [1/002] that in turn was underlain

by 0.3-0.4m of modern made ground [1/003]. Underneath was a 0.1-0.25m layer of subsoil [1/005] which sealed natural geology, comprising brownish orange compact clay and gravel [1/006]. A slightly different sequence of deposits was recorded at the southwest end of the trench, where a 0.75m thick demolition layer [1/004] was noted underlying the hard core and sealing natural geology.

- 4.2.3 Remains of a modern demolished wall were clearly visible in the northeast arm of the trench, while the southwest end was truncated by drainage pipes and layer [1/004] mentioned above. No archaeological features or artefacts were discovered in this trench.

4.3 Trench 2

- 4.3.1 Northwest/southeast aligned trench 2 was positioned in the central part of the site.

4.3.2 The deposit sequence comprised a 0.06m thick layer of tarmac [2/001], overlying a 0.28-0.48m layer of hard core [2/002], which was underlain by a 0.21-0.36m layer of modern made ground [2/003]. The latter sealed natural geology which consisted of brownish orange compact clay and gravel. A thin (0.12m) layer of subsoil [2/004], lying between the hard core and natural geology, was identified only at the northwest end of the trench.

- 4.3.3 One modern irregular cut containing pieces of glass and china (not retained) was identified but no archaeological features or finds were discovered below made ground.

4.4 Trench 3 (Fig. 3, 6 & 7)

- 4.4.1 This L-shaped trench was located at the southeast end of the site, which is the lowest part of the development area.

4.4.2 The deposit sequence revealed in the trench comprised a 0.06m thick layer of tarmac [3/001] overlying a 0.2-0.45m thick layer of hard core [3/002], which lay directly on top of natural deposits [3/007] that consisted of brownish orange sandy clay and gravel.

4.4.3 Over 11m long by at least 1.8m wide, cut [3/006] was identified in the southwest half of trench 3. It survived underneath the hard core and contained three deposits. The latest, comprising 0.35m of greyish black sandy silt with rubble [3/003], sealed a 0.55m thick layer of mid grey compact clay with very high organic content (tree roots), which in turn partially overlay a 0.24m thick deposit [3/004] of dark brown sandy clay. No artefacts were retrieved from this feature which, due to the obvious presence of an extensive root system, is likely to mark the position of a tree or large shrub removed prior to the formation of the car park (Fig. 3 & 7).

4.4.4 Two sondages located at the northeast and northwest end of the trench were excavated down to 1.08 m below the base of the trench (15.25 mAOD) and 0.74m below the trench base (15.29 mAOD) respectively. They showed that the natural clay and gravel was underlain by a clean yellowish orange fine sand.

5.0 FINDS

- 5.1 No artefacts were recovered from the site during this evaluation.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The remains of a wall and the demolition layer identified in trench 1 were presumably associated with the building, St Mary's Convent School, depicted on the 1870 Ordnance Survey map, which is known to have been demolished in the 1960s/ 70s.
- 6.2 The large feature identified in trench 3 was probably formed by pulling out/cutting down a tree or large shrub and backfilling the resulting depression. This is likely to correspond with the area of trees shown on the 1870 map to the rear of the plot, which may have been either ornamental in nature or a small group of fruit trees.
- 6.3 Despite the presence of the culverted off-shoot of Black's Brook close to the southern edge of the development area, no alluvial deposits were identified within the site.
- 6.4 None of the evaluation trenches encountered any archaeological remains and it concluded that the development will not have an adverse impact upon the archaeological record.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Matthew Smith at CgMs Consulting and their client for commissioning the work and Adam Single, monitoring officer at the English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service, who monitored the work on behalf of the local planning authority.

The site work was directed by Lukasz Miciak, assisted by Jo Ahmet. Andrew Lewsey produced the figures. Adrian Scruby managed the fieldwork and Mark Atkinson managed the post-excavation work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Archaeology South-East 2013 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation at Car park associated with Chaucer House, Grimshaw Way and Western Road, Romford, London Borough of Havering*
- GLAAS 2014 *Standards for Archaeological Work*
- IFA 2013a *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*
- IFA 2013b *Code of Conduct*
- Medlycott, M. (ed) 2011 *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the East of England*, E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper 24
- Museum of London 2002 A Research Framework for London Archaeology

Appendix 1: Archaeologically negative trenches: list of recorded contexts

Trench Number	Context	Type	Description	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
1	1/001	Layer	Tarmac	0.06	17.74-17.78
1	1/002	Layer	Hard core	0.10-0.20	17.68-17.72
1	1/003	Layer	Made ground	0.30-0.40	17.53-17.57
1	1/004	Layer	Demolition layer	0.75	17.70
1	1/005	Layer	Subsoil	0.10-0.15	17.01-17.07
1	1/006	Layer	Natural	-	16.74-16.92
2	2/001	Layer	Tarmac	0.06	17.25-17.27
2	2/002	Layer	Hard core	0.28-0.48	17.19-17.21
2	2/003	Layer	Made ground	0.21-0.36	16.83-16.85
2	2/004	Layer	Subsoil	0.12	16.94
2	2/005	Layer	Natural	-	16.66-16.82
3	3/001	Layer	Tarmac	0.06	16.76-17.06
3	3/002	Layer	Hard core	0.30-0.45	16.70-17.00
3	3/003	Fill	Fill of [3/006]	0.30-0.35	16.36-16.40
3	3/004	Fill	Fill of [3/006]	0.24	16.40
3	3/005	Fill	Fill of [3/006]	0.25-0.55	16.28-16.58
3	3/006	Cut	Tree bowl	-	16.03
3	3/007	Layer	Natural	-	16.00-16.33

Appendix 2: HER Summary Form

Site name/Address: Car park rear of Chaucer House, Grimshaw Way and Western Road	
Parish: Romford	District: London Borough of Havering
NGR: TQ 51519 88731	Site Code: CUH14
Type of Work: Evaluation	Site Director/Group: Lukasz Miciak, Archaeology South-East
Date of Work: 17th – 19th June 2014	Size of Area Investigated: 0.42ha
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: LAARC	Funding source: developer
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related GLHER Nos: None
Final Report: Yes	OASIS Ref: 182869
Periods Represented: Modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land between Grimshaw Way and Western Road, Romford, in advance of the construction of a new leisure centre.</p> <p>The site lays to the south of the historic core of Romford, with the High Street, the medieval market place and the site of St Edward the Confessor Church, consecrated in 1410, lying to the north and northwest of the development. To the north of the site a small number of urned Roman cremations were discovered during the construction of the Dolphin shopping centre, in the early 1980s. The presence of a cremation cemetery along with other reported finds of Roman material from the area, including antiquarian finds of Roman coins and a possible timber structure, from the High Street and Romford Market area, would suggest some form of settlement in the vicinity</p> <p>The 1870 first edition Ordnance Survey map shows that the northwest part of the site, most recently used as a car park, was formerly occupied by a school building, while the southeastern part was covered by trees. The building was in use for over half a century and subsequently demolished in the 1960-70's</p> <p>Three evaluation trenches, each measuring 30m long by 1.8m wide and comprising a 5% sample of the 2800 sqm development footprint, were excavated in the first instance, uncovering the remains of a modern demolished building in trench 1, a further area of modern disturbance or a possible tree-throw in trench 2 and a large tree throw/ area of root disturbance in trench 3.</p> <p>No archaeological features were discovered in any of the trenches and it is concluded that the development will not have an adverse impact upon the archaeological record in this vicinity of Romford.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: N/A	
Author of Summary: L. Miciak	Date of Summary: June 2014

Appendix 3: OASIS Record

OASIS ID: archaeol6-182869

Project details

Project name	Chaucer House, Romford
Project dates	Start: 17-06-2014 End: 19-06-2014
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	CUH14 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	8117 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Transport and Utilities 2 - Other transport infrastructure
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON HAVERING ROMFORD Car park raer of Chaucer House, Grimshaw Way and Western Road
Postcode	RM1 3EL
Study area	0.42 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 51519 88731 51.5765488716 0.186867623549 51 34 35 N 000 11 12 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 16.00m Max: 16.92m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator GLAAS

Project design originator Archaeology South-East

Project director/manager Adrian Scruby

Project supervisor Lukasz Miciak

Type of sponsor/funding
body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding
body CgMs Consulting

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Contents "other"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Text"

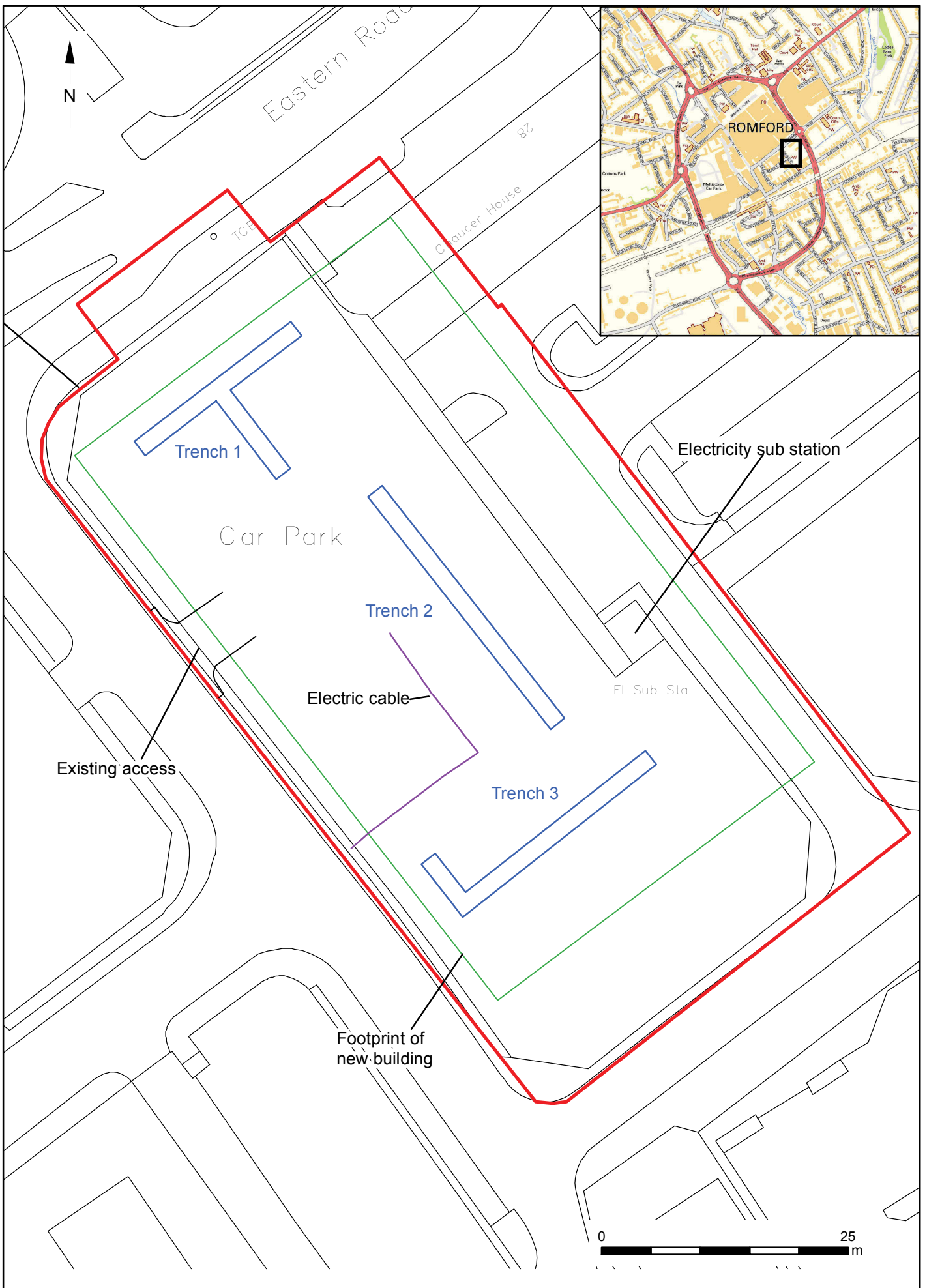
Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Contents "other"

Paper Media available "Photograph","Report","Section","Unpublished Text"

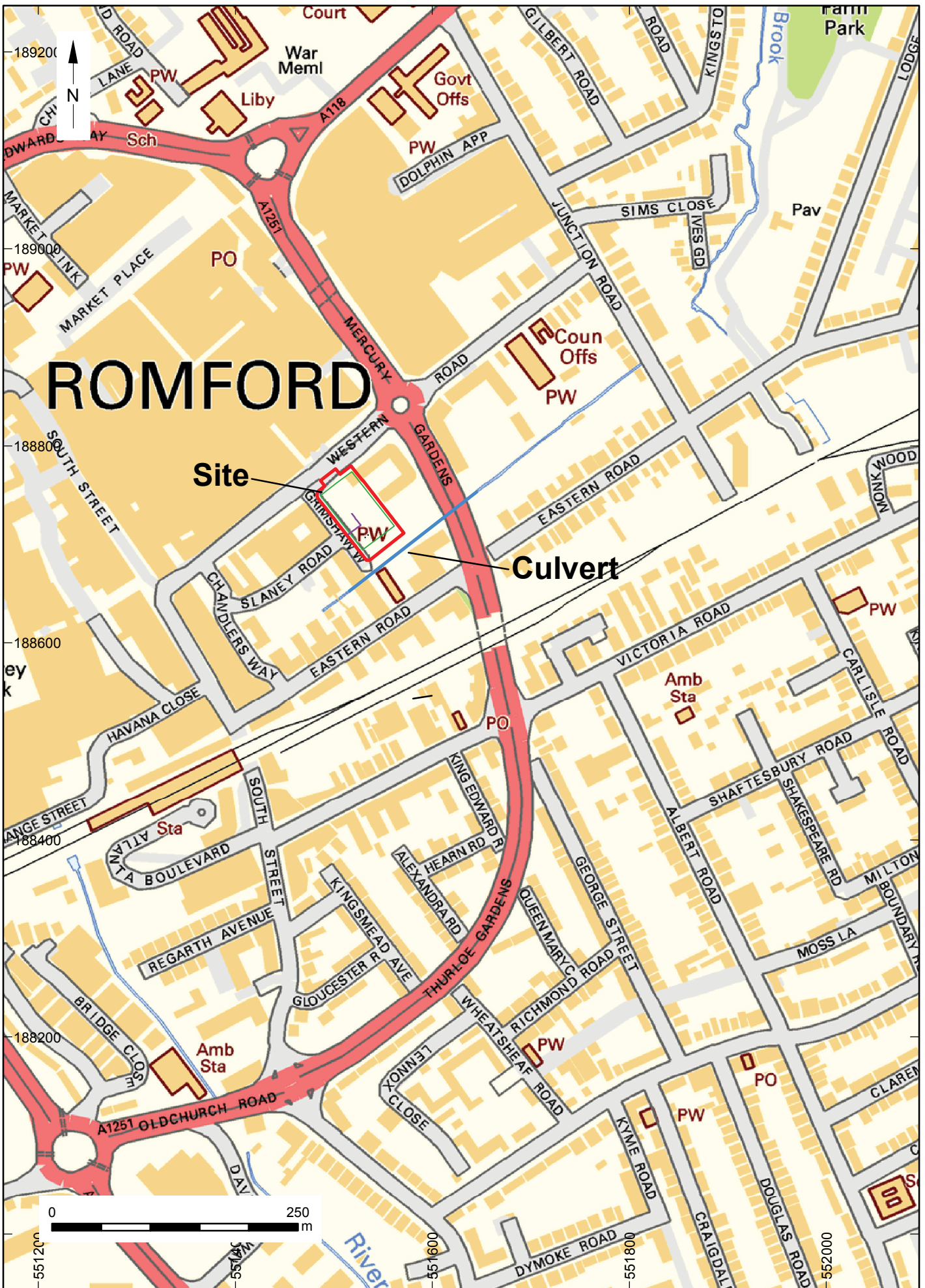
Entered by Lukasz Miciak (l.miciak@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 30 June 2014



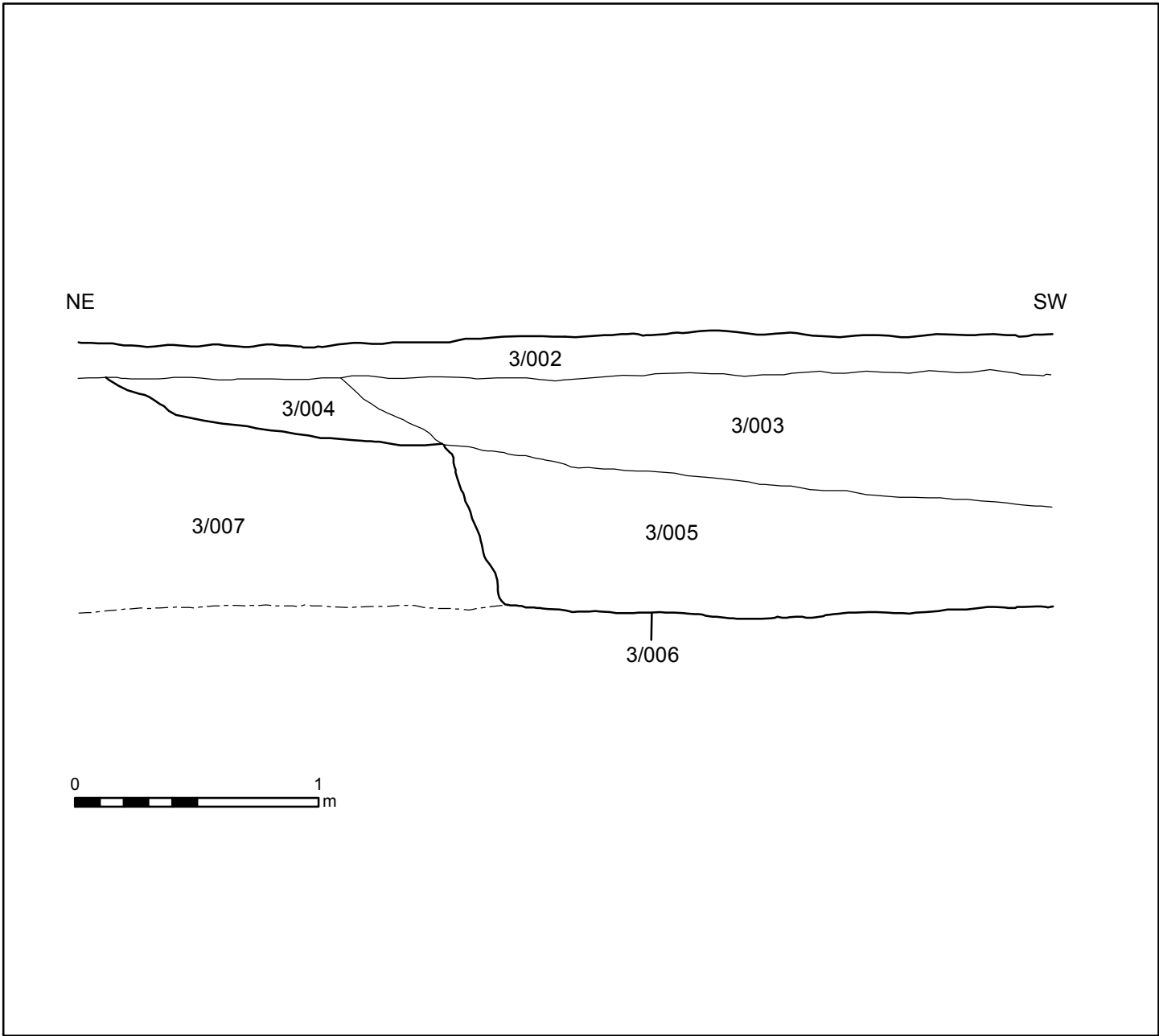
© Archaeology South-East		Chaucer House, Romford	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8117	Jun 2014	Location of archaeological evaluation trenches	
Report Ref: WSI	Drawn by: APL		

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© Archaeology South-East		Chaucer House, Romford	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 8117	Jun 2014	Site plan showing Black's Brook and River Rom	
Report Ref: 2014227	Drawn by: APL/MLM		

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© Archaeology South-East		Chaucer House, Romford	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 8117	Jun 2014	Section 1, Trench 3	
Report Ref: 2014227	Drawn by: APL/LM		



Figure 4: Trench 1



Figure 5: Trench 1



Figure 6: Trench 3



Figure 7: Section 1 in trench 3