

**Archaeological Evaluation Report
Land at 66 Hall Farm Road
Benfleet, Essex**

NGR: TQ 77693 86291

**Planning Application No: CPT/503/13/FUL
Appeal Reference No: APP/M1520/A/14/2211936**

**ASE Project No: 8179
Site Code: HFB14**

**ASE Report No: 2014309
OASIS id: 190134**



By Lukasz Miciak

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By Lukasz Miciak

**With contributions by
Luke Barber, Trista Clifford, Anna Doherty
Hayley Forsyth and Lucy Allott**

September 2014

**Archaeology South-East
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex
BN41 1DR**

**Tel: 01273 426830
Fax: 01273 420866
Email: fau@ucl.ac.uk**

Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned to undertake an archaeological field evaluation on land at 66 Hall Farm Road, Benfleet, Essex. The evaluation comprised the excavation of three 10m long trenches, one located within the footprint of each of the proposed building. On the request of the monitoring archaeologist part of trench 3 was doubled in width.

The sequence of stratigraphy was consistent across the site and comprised mid brown compact silty clay overlain by dark brownish grey soft silty clay topsoil.

Trench 2 revealed one pit, while trench 3 contained one pit, one gully and one ditch. No features were discovered in trench 1.

Both of the pits were dated to the 1st century and the ditch was of medieval date, however it also produced a couple of 3rd century sherds and an early 4th century coin. The gully contained one small piece of Roman pottery.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Derek Frost of Frost Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at 66 Hall Farm Road, Benfleet Essex (Figure 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The site is located in an area of domestic garden previously associated with No. 66 Hall Farm Road, located between Fleet Road to the west, Hall Farm Road to the east and bounded by surrounding residential development to the north and south.

1.2.2 The geology of the site is mapped by the British Geological Survey (BGS) as London Clay, with no superficial deposits present. Tidal Flat deposits associated with East Haven/ Benfleet Creek occur to the south-west of the site but do not appear to extend as far north-east as the site itself (BGS Geology of Britain Viewer; accessed 29/04/2014).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission has been granted on appeal (Ref.: APP/M1520/A/14/2211936) for the construction of three bungalows subject to conditions. Condition 4 relates to archaeology and states:

“No development or preliminary groundworks shall take place until a programme of archaeological work has been implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.”

1.3.2 Accordingly a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared in order to set out the scope of work, methodology and research aims for the programme of archaeological evaluation trenching. It has been approved by Castle Point District Council.

1.4 Scope of Report

1.4.1 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation undertaken between 20th and 21st of August 2014 and has been prepared in accordance with the WSI. The fieldwork was carried out by Lukasz Miciak.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Extensive evidence for Roman settlement and industrial activity has been noted around the coast of Canvey Island and in the Benfleet Creek area, primarily associated with salt workings or “red hills”. Roman material, including pottery and brick, has previously been recovered during building works in the High Street area, to the south-east of the site (e.g. EH Pastscape ref 416959 and 416940), while the 12th century and later parish church of St Mary the Virgin, also lying to the southeast, contains much reused Roman brick and tile in its walls.

2.2 Of particular relevance to the current site is the discovery of Roman and Medieval finds over a period of years, including a number of coins, on land at 70 Hall Farm Road (EHER 7169). This area was previously known as “Town Mead” and was the site of an annual Fair.

2.3 Project Aims and Objectives

2.3.1 The aims of the archaeological investigation were as follows:

- To determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.
- To enable the Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC) planning officer to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further work required in order to satisfy the archaeology condition.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 Three 10m long, north-east – south-west aligned trenches were excavated, one positioned within the footprint of each of the proposed dwellings. The exact location of the trenches is shown on Figure 1.
- 3.1.2 The trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using a machine fitted with a 1.6m wide, toothless, ditching bucket. The excavation at the top of archaeological deposits (trenches 2 and 3), or the top of natural geology (trench 1).
- 3.1.3 On the request of Richard Havis of Essex County Council Place Services, who inspected the site once all the trenches were opened, trench 3 was extended north-east by 1.6m. The request was prompted by the discovery of two parallel, linear features, one of which contained a number of artefacts dated to the Roman period.
- 3.1.4 All trenches and features were accurately positioned in relation to the Ordnance Survey National Grid using an RTK GNSS receiver (Leica GS14/CS15).

3.2 Archive

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

Number of Contexts	12
No. of files/paper record	15
Plan and sections sheets	1 section sheet
Bulk Samples	2
Photographs	8
Bulk finds	123
Registered finds	1
Environmental flots/residue	2

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1

Trench Number	Context	Type	Description	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
1	[1/001]	Layer	Topsoil	0.65-0.7	5.80-5.85
1	[1/002]	Layer	Natural	-	5.11-5.18

Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

4.1.1 The revealed sequence of stratigraphy comprised mid brown compact silty clay natural geology [1/002] overlain by 0.65-0.7m thick layer of dark brownish grey soft silty clay topsoil [1/001].

4.1.2 No archaeological features or finds were discovered within the trench.

4.2 Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
[2/001]	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.60-0.7	6.39-6.69
[2/002]	Layer	Natural	Trench	Trench	-	5.80-6.03
[2/003]	Cut	Pit	1.7	0.66+	-	6.03
[2/004]	Fill	Fill of [2/003]	1.7	0.66+	0.38	6.03

Table 3: Trench 2 list of recorded contexts

4.2.1 The natural geology in trench 2, comprising of mid brown compact silty clay [2/002], was sealed by 0.6-0.7m of dark brownish grey soft silty clay topsoil [2/001].

4.2.2 One small pit was identified within trench 2 [2/003]. The feature was surviving at 6.03m AOD and was located in the south-east half of the trench and extending beyond its edge.

4.2.3 The 0.38m deep pit was oval in shape, had irregular sides, a flat base and contained single dark brownish soft silty clay fill [2/004] that produced a couple of sherds of Roman pottery, a few fragments of CBM and a bone fragment.

4.2.4 The south-east side of pit [2/003] was truncated by a small square modern cut.

4.3 Trench 3

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
[3/001]	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.6	6.41-6.55
[3/002]	Layer	Natural	Trench	Trench	-	5.79-5.99
[3/003]	Cut	Pit	0.85+	0.83	-	5.99
[3/004]	Fill	Fill of [3/003]	0.85+	0.83	0.2	5.99
[3/005]	Cut	Gully	2.77	0.4	-	5.99
[3/006]	Fill	Fill of [3/005]	2.77	0.4	0.15	5.99
[3/007]	Cut	Gully	2.77	0.4	-	5.94
[3/008]	Fill	Fill of [3/007]	2.77	0.4	0.12	5.94
[3/009]	Cut	Ditch	3.31	1.87	-	5.97
[3/010]	Fill	Fill of [3/009]	3.31	1.87	0.57	5.97

Table 4: Trench 3 list of recorded contexts

- 4.3.1 The sequence of stratigraphy revealed in trench 3 comprised mid brown compact silty clay natural geology [3/002] overlain by 0.6m of dark brownish grey soft silty clay topsoil [3/001].
- 4.3.2 Two east-west aligned linear features and one pit were discovered within the trench.
- 4.3.3 Surviving at 5.99m AOD pit [3/003] was situated in the south-east, extended part of the trench and continued beyond its north-east edge. Presumably oval in shape, the pit had moderately steep sides, a flat base and contained one dark brownish grey fill [3/004]. A few pieces of Roman pottery, a couple of fragments of CBM and small quantity of animal bone were recovered from the fill.
- 4.3.4 Pit [3/003] cut the eastern part of a gully [3/005]/[3/007], which ran east-west across the southern part of trench 3. The 0.4m wide by 0.15m deep gully was surviving at 5.99m AOD. The feature had moderately steep sides, a concave base and contained a single mid brownish grey fill [3/006]/[3/008] which produced one small sherd of pottery.
- 4.3.5 Running across the central part of the trench and parallel to gully [3/005]/[3/007], ditch [3/009] measured 1.87m wide by 0.57m deep and was discovered at 5.97m AOD. The feature had sides sloping at c. 45° angle and a concave base. Several sherds of Roman and medieval pottery, over 3.5kg of brick and tile fragments and numerous small pieces of animal bone were recovered from the single mid greyish brown soft silty clay fill [3/010]. A coin dated to AD 335-341 was also discovered in the soil sample taken from this fill.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 The evaluation at Hall Farm Road, Benfleet, Essex produced a small assemblage of bulk finds (quantified in Table 5) as well as a single registered find. Finds were quantified by count and weight and subsequently bagged by material and context. Packaging and storage policies follow IfA (2013) guidelines.
- 5.1.2 The finds assemblage includes pottery, ceramic building material, iron and animal bone of Roman and late medieval date, as well as a single late Roman coin. Beyond providing dating evidence, the assemblage as it stands is too small to inform our understanding of topics like site function or status.

Context	Pottery	Wt (g)	CBM	Wt (g)	Bone	Wt (g)	Stone	Wt (g)
2/004	4	42	5	366	1	12		
3/004	4	22	2	170	18	458		
3/006	1	22						
3/010	11	522	37	3688	40	400	1	980
Total	20	608	44	4224	59	870	1	980

Table 5. Quantification of hand-collected bulk finds

5.2 Prehistoric and/or Roman Pottery by Anna Doherty

- 5.2.1 A small assemblage of Roman pottery, totalling 17 sherds, weighing 351g, was recovered from four stratified contexts in Trenches 2 and 3. The pottery has been quantified according to the standard methodology in use in the Essex region (Biddulph et al in prep). The pottery appears to fall into two distinct date ranges. Contexts [2/004] and [3/004] both produced examples of early shell-tempered fabrics (ESH) and black-surfaced Romanising fabrics containing sparse grog (BSW). Both of these fabrics are typical of assemblages dating to the 1st century AD. In the case of context [2/004], shelly wares were accompanied by a post-conquest, well-fired grey ware fabric (GRS).
- 5.2.2 By contrast, context [3/010] contained a range of fabrics and forms suggesting a date in the 3rd century AD. These include a jar with a short neck and rolled rim (G24 2.2) possibly in Hadham grey ware, a plain rim dish (B1) in BB2, a fragment of central Gaulish samian ware probably from a beaker form and a sherd in a late variant of Colchester colour-coated ware (COLC). The remainder of this group was made up by sherds in storage jar fabrics (STOR). Although this group consisted of quite large and unabraded sherds, they were associated with a 4th century coin and with even more substantial sherds from a single medieval vessel, suggesting that they are probably residual.
- 5.2.3 The final context containing Roman pottery was [3/006], which contained only a single grey ware bodysherd (GRS). Although this is not closely datable, it

looks more typical of later Roman fabrics in terms of the hardness of firing.

5.3 Post-Roman Pottery by Luke Barber

5.3.1 All of the post-Roman pottery was recovered from context [3/010]. This deposit produced four large fresh conjoining sherds (364g) from the sagging base of a probable bunghole pitcher. The vessel, which has some accidental thin green glazing patches on its exterior base, is in an oxidised fine well-fired earthenware of mid 15th- to mid 16th- century type.

5.4 Ceramic Building Material (CBM) by Trista Clifford

5.4.1 A small assemblage of 44 fragments weighing 4224g was recovered from three separate contexts. The assemblage is in a poor, abraded condition and a high proportion is vitrified and/or reduced. Contexts [2/004] and [3/004] contained small amounts of Roman material, possibly brick or tile. Material from context [3/010] is also largely undiagnostic, however a small piece of combed box flue tile was recovered, along with a three fragments of tegula, two of which are conjoining.

5.4.2 The tegulae show evidence of knife trimming and deliberate flange removal which is indicative of reuse. A small fragment of possible imbrex was also recovered from this context. Fabrics are very similar across the assemblage, tempered with varying amounts of rose quartz and calcareous material.

5.5 Geological Material by Luke Barber

5.5.1 Context [3/010] produced a single 978g piece of fine-grained glauconitic sandstone. The stone is finely bedded, with some thin dull red ferruginous seams between the more usual light grey ones, and is almost certainly from the Thanet Beds. The upper surface shows some signs of sooting and it is possible the stone was set close to a hearth. Such stone is quite common in the Thames Estuary area and its presence here is not remarkable.

5.6 Registered Finds by Trista Clifford

5.6.1 A single coin, RF<1>, was recovered from [3/010] sample <1>. It is a Roman contemporary copy nummus of the House of Constantine, GLORIA EXERCITVS reverse type, minted between AD335-341.

5.7 Animal Bone by Hayley Forsyth

5.7.1 A small assemblage of animal bone containing 578 fragments of bone weighing 945g was recovered from three contexts [2/004], [3/004], [3/010]. Only 47 fragments could be identified to taxa.

5.7.2 The bone fragments are in poor condition with signs of surface erosion and no complete bones are present. The majority of the bones are unidentifiable, the assemblage contains fragmentary remains from horse, sheep/goat, pig, large mammal, medium mammal, small mammal, fish, anuran.

5.7.3 Context [2/004] contained a single sheep/goat metacarpal.

- 5.7.4 Context [3/004] included nine horse teeth and a medium mammal tibia fragment. The residue samples from this context, <2>, contained bone fragments from fish, small mammals, medium mammals, pig and sheep/goat.
- 5.7.5 Context [3/010] produced eleven fragments of bone and included a long bone fragment and scapulae from large mammals, a metapodial and tibias from medium mammals, a pig atlas vertebra and a sheep/goat mandible. The residue samples from this context, <1>, produced bone fragments from small mammals, fish and anuran.
- 5.7.6 Butchery is evident on two of the bones from context [3/010]; a large mammal long bone fragment and a medium mammal metapodial have been chopped. This type of butchery suggests portioning of the carcass for meat consumption. Gnawing was evident in the medium mammal metapodial from [3/010]. Small amounts of burnt bone have been noted in residue samples <1> and <2> from contexts [3/010] and [3/004] respectively.
- 5.7.7 Due to the remains being fragmented, no metrical data could be recorded. One sheep/goat mandible can be aged. No evidence of pathology has been noted.

6.0 THE ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES by Lucy Allot

6.1 Introduction and Methodology

6.1.1 Two samples were taken during archaeological work to establish evidence for environmental remains and their potential to provide further information regarding the economy of the site and past vegetation. Samples were taken from ditch context [3/010] <1> and pit [3/004] <2>. The samples were processed in their entirety by flotation and the dried residues were passed through 8, 4 and 2mm geological sieves prior to sorting for environmental remains and artefacts. The flots were scanned under a stereozoom microscope at x7-45 magnifications and estimated quantities of their contents recorded. Taxonomic identifications were made by comparing the macrobotanical remains with modern specimens and with those documented in reference manuals (Jacomet 2006). Nomenclature used follows Zohary and Hopf (2000).

6.2 Results

6.2.1 Sample <1> [3/010] contained a small quantity of wood charcoal, charred cereal caryopses and faunal remains (including teeth). Although the flot from sample <2> was moderately rich in charcoal almost all of the assemblage consisted of small flecks measuring <2mm in size. Assemblages from both samples are considered too small to merit further identification work. Macro plant remains include poorly preserved wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and barley (*Hordeum* sp.) grains.

6.3 Summary

6.3.1 Sampling has provided evidence for a limited quantity of environmental remains including wood charcoal, charred cereal caryopses and faunal remains (including teeth). The botanical assemblages are too limited to provide significant information regarding the economy, plant or fuel use.

7.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Discussion

- 7.1.1 The natural ground slightly sloped westwards from 6.03m AOD in trench 2 to 5.11m AOD in trench 1.
- 7.1.2 The lack of subsoil in any of the trenches could suggest the site had been a subject to landscaping works in the past, however, the features discovered in trenches 2 and 3 did not seem to be disturbed.
- 7.1.3 Two pits, one gully and one ditch were identified in trenches 2 and 3, while trench 1 was devoid of any features.
- 7.1.4 A small pottery assemblage was retrieved from each of the pits and the ditch. Both of the pits were dated to the 1st century AD while the ditch contained the 3rd century pottery, an early 4th century coin, as well as a few bigger sherds of medieval pottery. Such dating evidence suggest that the ditch was of medieval date and the earlier finds were residual.
- 7.1.5 The single sherd of pottery recovered from the gully in trench 3 was dated to the Roman period. This dating indicates that the alignment of the gully, parallel to the alignment of the ditch is incidental.

7.2 Conclusions

- 7.2.1 The discovery of two Roman pits and a gully, and a medieval ditch within the evaluation trenches corresponds with the earlier discovery of Roman and medieval finds immediately to the south of the site, on land at 70 Hall Farm Road, as well as with the wider archaeological landscape of the area.
- 7.2.2 Due to the small size of the ground revealed within the evaluation trenches and the amount of the recovered artefacts it is impossible to ascertain the site function and extent.

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HER Summary

Site name/Address: 66 Hall Farm Road, Benfleet, Essex	
Parish: Benfleet	District: Castle Point
NGR: TQ 77693 86291	Site Code: HFB14
Type of Work: Evaluation	Site Director/Group: Lukasz Miciak, Archaeology South-East
Date of Work: 20-21 August 2014	Size of Area Investigated:
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Southend	Funding source: Client – Frost Homes Ltd
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER No.s:
Final Report: East Anglian Archaeology	
Periods Represented: Roman	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned to undertake an archaeological field evaluation on land at 66 Hall Farm Road, Benfleet, Essex. The evaluation comprised the excavation of three 10m long trenches, one located within the footprint of each of the proposed building. On the request of the monitoring archaeologist part of trench 3 was doubled in width.</p> <p>The sequence of stratigraphy was consistent across the site and comprised mid brown compact silty clay overlain by dark brownish grey soft silty clay topsoil.</p> <p>Trench 2 revealed one pit, while trench 3 contained one pit, one gully and one ditch. No features were discovered in trench 1.</p> <p>Both of the pits were dated to the 1st century and the ditch was of medieval date, however it also produced a couple of 3rd century sherds and an early 4th century coin. The gully contained one small piece of Roman pottery.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:	
Author of Summary: Lukasz Miciak	Date of Summary: September 2014

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-190134

Project details

Project name 66 Hall Farm Rd, Benfleet

Archaeology South-East was commissioned to undertake an archaeological field evaluation on land at 66 Hall Farm Road, Benfleet, Essex. The evaluation comprised the excavation of three 10m long trenches, one located within the footprint of each of the proposed building. On the request of the monitoring archaeologist part of trench 3 was doubled in width.

Short description of the project

The sequence of stratigraphy was consistent across the site and comprised mid brown compact silty clay overlain by dark brownish grey soft silty clay topsoil. Trench 2 revealed one pit, while trench 3 contained one pit, one gully and one ditch. No features were discovered in trench 1. Both of the pits were dated to the 1st century and the ditch was of medieval date, however it also produced a couple of 3rd century sherds and an early 4th century coin. The gully contained one small piece of Roman pottery.

Project dates Start: 20-08-2014 End: 21-08-2014

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes 8179 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes HFB14 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Current Land use Other 5 - Garden

Monument type DITCH Roman

Monument type PIT Roman

Significant Finds POT Roman

Significant Finds TILE Roman

Methods & techniques ""Sample Trenches""

Development type Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

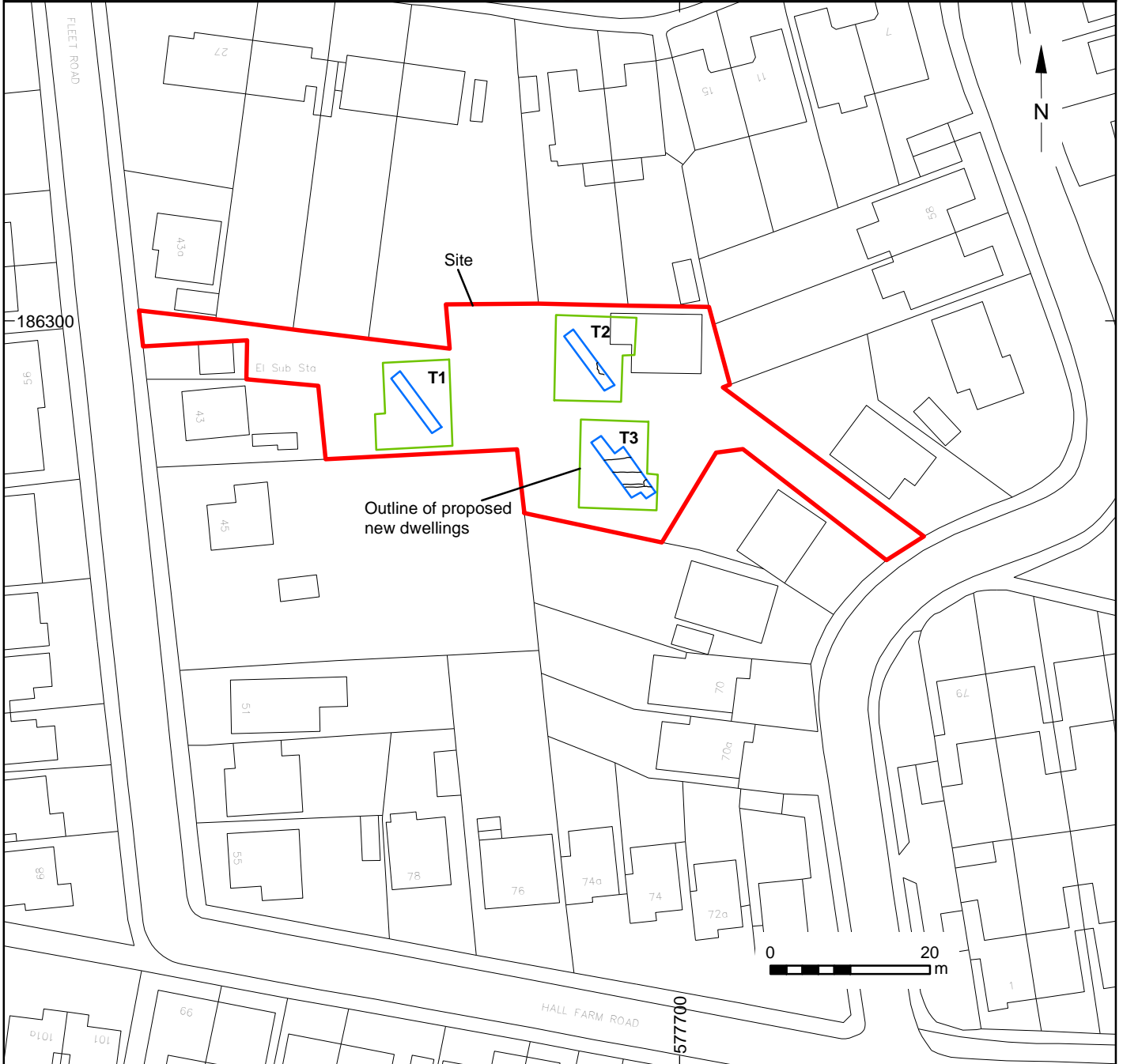
Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

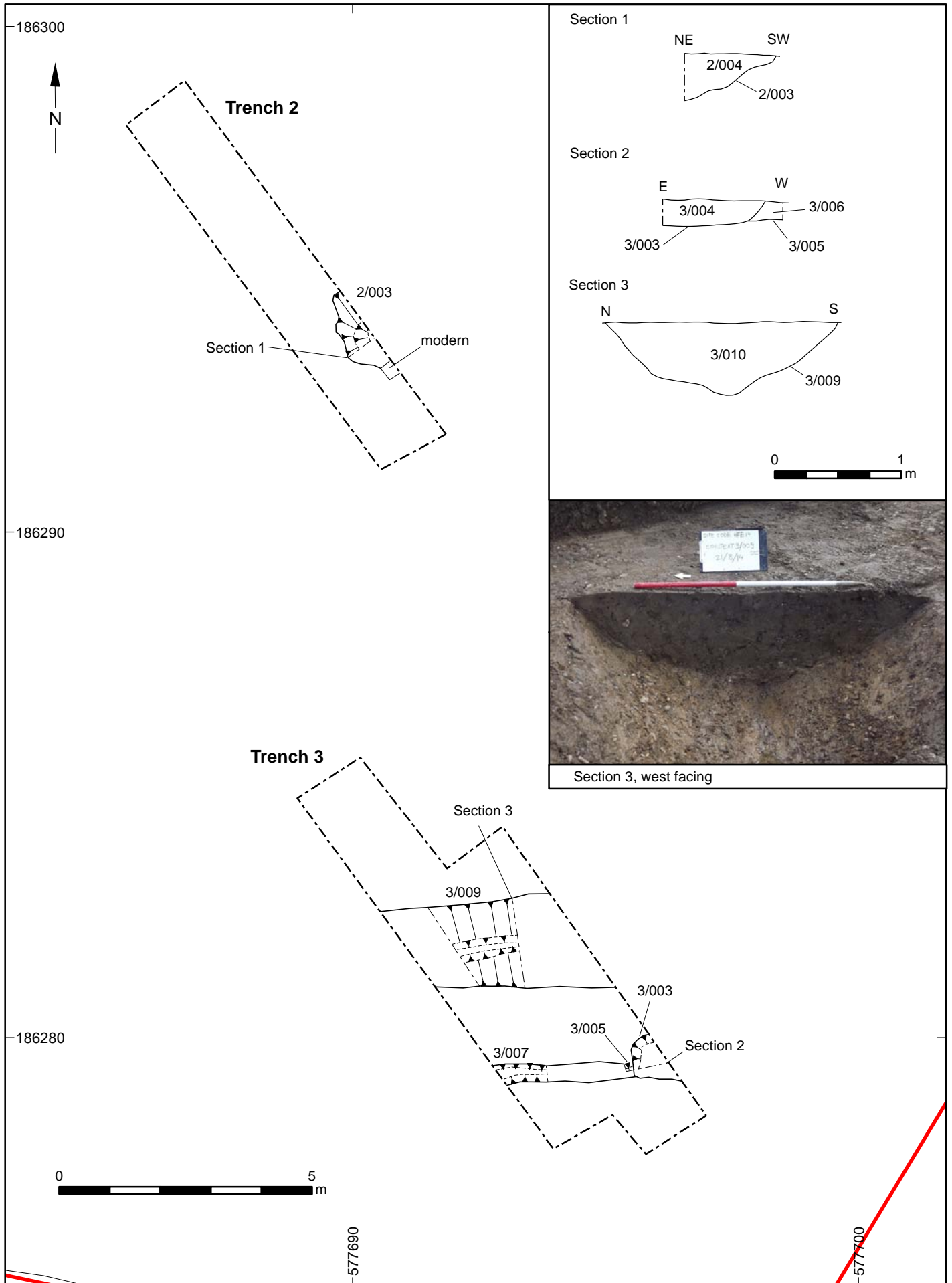
Country England

Site location ESSEX CASTLE POINT SOUTH BENFLEET 66 Hall Farm Road

Postcode	SS7 5JR
Study area	0.13 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 77693 86291 51.5469623678 0.563025840241 51 32 49 N 000 33 46 E Point
Lat/Long Datum (other)	OSGB36
Height OD / Depth	Min: 5.11m Max: 6.03m
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	Andrew Leonard
Project supervisor	Lukasz Miciak
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Frost Homes Ltd
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Southend Museum
Physical Contents	"Ceramics", "Environmental"
Digital Archive recipient	Southend Museum
Digital Contents	"Ceramics", "Environmental"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Southend Museum
Paper Contents	"Ceramics", "Environmental"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Photograph", "Report", "Section", "Survey "
Entered by	Lukasz Miciak (l.miciak@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	16 September 2014



© Archaeology South-East		66 Hall Farm Road, Benfleet	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8179	Sept 2014	Location of archaeological evaluation trenches	
Report Ref: 2014309	Drawn by: APL		



© Archaeology South-East		66 Hall Farm Road, Benfleet	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 8179	Sept 2014	Trench 2 & 3	
Report Ref: 2014309	Drawn by: APL		



3.1 Trench 1, looking north-west (1m scale bars)



3.2 Trench 2, looking north-west (1m scale bars)



3.3 Feature 2/003, looking south-east (1m scale bars)

Sussex Office

Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex BN41 1DR
tel: +44(0)1273 426830
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk

Essex Office

The Old Magistrates Court
79 South Street
Braintree
Essex CM7 3QD
tel: +44(0)1376 331470
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk

London Office

Centre for Applied Archaeology
UCL Institute of Archaeology
31-34 Gordon Square
London WC1H 0PY
tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
web: www.ucl.ac.uk/caa

