

Archaeological Evaluation

**The Rifleman Public House
Rifle Hill, Braintree
Essex**

ASE Report No: 2015282



August 2015

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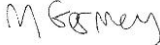
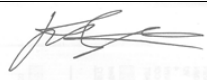
NGR: 575780 222474

Planning Ref: (14/00558/FUL)

**ASE Project No: 8416
Site Code: BTRH15**

**ASE Report No: 2015282
OASIS id: 219925**

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With Illustrations by
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Date of Issue:	August 2015		
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Abstract

An archaeological evaluation consisting of a single trench preceded residential development to the rear of The Rifleman Public House, Rifle Hill, Braintree, Essex in July 2015. The archaeological work was recommended by Essex Place Services and was commissioned by S.L.K. (Essex) Ltd.

The Rifleman public house lies near the site of an Iron Age / Roman cremation burial ground, and river gravel deposits, potentially containing Palaeolithic material and Pleistocene faunal remains.

The evaluation trench was L-shaped and 30m long. It exposed an undated pit cut into subsoil and three overlying layers of modern made ground. There were no pre-modern archaeological artefacts present.

The results of the trenching suggest that the site contains no significant archaeological remains and has been previously stripped and landscaped.

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Archaeological Background**
- 3.0 Archaeological Methodology**
- 4.0 Results**
- 5.0 Finds**
- 6.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

Bibliography
Acknowledgements

HER Summary Sheet
OASIS Form

FIGURES

Front Cover: Trench 1, looking north-west

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Trench location

Figure 3: Trench plan, section and photographs

TABLES

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 S.L.K. (Essex) Ltd commissioned Archaeology South-East (ASE) (UCL) in July 2015 to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of residential development to the rear of The Rifleman public house, Rifle Hill, Braintree, Essex. The archaeological work was recommended and monitored by Essex County Council Place Services.

1.2 Site Location, Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The site lies to the rear of The Rifleman Public House, on the north side of Rifle Hill road, within the middle of Braintree. It has north facing slope and overlooks the River Brain.

1.2.2 London Clay forms the bedrock of the site and is overlain by a series of deposits associated with the valley of the River Brain. Kesgrave Catchment Subgroup deposits lie immediately south of the site and compose fluvial gravels with sedimentary structures indicating deposition by a braided river. The valley side exposes London Clay deposits, and the valley floor holds alluvial deposits associated with the river channel (BGS Geology of Britain Viewer; accessed 13/07/2015).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 In April 2014, Braintree District Council received a planning application (14/00558/FUL) for construction of four terrace dwellings with associated hard surfacing on land to the rear of The Rifleman Public House. The local authority recommended attachment of a full archaeological condition to the planning consent for that work since the development site potentially contained archaeological deposits, as suggested by information held by the Historic Environment Record.

1.3.2 The full archaeological condition, based on guidance given in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012), stated that no groundworks of any kind were to take place until the site had been archeologically investigated in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) and an agreed programme of archaeological work. ASE produced a WSI for the work which was approved by Essex County Council Place Service (ASE 2015).

1.4 Scope of Report

1.4.1 This report presents and assesses the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out to the rear of The Rifleman Public House, Braintree, 20th to 21st of July 2015.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction and background

- 2.1.1 The following information derives from the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER), held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford.
- 2.1.2 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential for prehistoric and Roman activity. Prehistoric cinerary urns and Roman grave goods uncovered by gravel extraction close to Hoppit Bridge to the north-west (EHER 6472 and 6425) are potentially part of a substantial cemetery of Iron Age and/or Roman date overlooking the River Brain (EHER 6425 and 6472).
- 2.1.3 Historic maps suggest gravel extraction has formerly taken place close to the proposed development site and The Rifleman Public House. The underlying gravel is part of the Kesgrave Catchment Subgroup, which is sometimes found to contain Palaeolithic material and Pleistocene faunal remains, in the form of animal bones and stone tools.
- 2.1.4 Archaeological investigation along Rifle Hill has encountered remains of 19th century or earlier houses, previously recorded by the first edition of the Ordnance Survey.

2.2 Research Aims and Objectives

- 2.2.1 The research aim of the archaeological evaluation was to determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains within the development boundary and to establish their character, location, extent, date and significance. Significant discoveries were to be assessed against previous discoveries from the within the locality.
- 2.2.2 Specific research aims for the initial trenching were:
- To determine the presence or absence of occupation activity associated with the possible Iron Age/Roman burial ground
 - To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains of other periods
- 2.2.3 If significant discoveries were made then the evaluation report would seek out and identify appropriate research objectives in line with those previously presented by *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties 2, Research Agenda and Strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000), and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 The development site was archaeologically evaluated by a single L-shaped trench, cut across the footprint of the proposed new dwellings. The trench was 1.8m wide and its two arms measured 5m and 25m long respectively. The main arm of the trench was aligned east-west across the river terrace.
- 3.1.2 The trench was stripped of its modern overburden by a tracked excavator, equipped with a broad, toothless bucket. The stripping of the trench was archaeologically supervised.
- 3.1.3 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were excavated and recorded, except obviously modern features and disturbances.
- 3.1.4 All stratigraphy was recorded using the ASE context recording system.
- 3.1.5 The trench and its features were accurately located and planned by using a Global Positioning System. Datum levels were taken where appropriate.
- 3.1.6 Section drawings were drawn at a scale of 1:10, and all archaeological features were hand excavated.

3.2 Archive

- 3.2.1 The archive and artefactual material generated by the archaeological work will be deposited at Braintree Museum, subject to agreement with the legal landowner.

Number of Contexts	8
No. of files/paper record	3
Plan and sections sheets	1
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	11
Bulk finds	0
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Max Height m AOD
1/001	Layer	Imported topsoil	25+	5+	0.30	46.61
1/002	Layer	Made ground	10+	5+	0.10 – 0.30	46.51
1/003	Layer	Made ground	25+	5+	0.40 – 0.70	46.41
1/004	Layer	Subsoil	25+	5+	0.10 – 0.12	46.0.1
1/005	Layer	Natural				45.91
1/006	Fill	Fill of 1/007	2	1.35	0.62+	45.91
1/007	Cut	Pit	2	1.35+		45.91
1/008	Layer	Made ground			0.30	

Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

- 4.1.1 Trench 1 exposed a large, undated pit [1/007] and modern layers of made-ground [1/002] and [1/003] and imported topsoil [1/001].
- 4.1.2 The natural geology was exposed at 46.28-45-91m AOD and was sealed by subsoil [1/004].
- 4.1.2 Cut through the subsoil, [1/004], was pit [1/007]. This feature lay roughly central to the east-west arm of the trench and extended beyond the north bulk. It was steep sided and 0.7m deep. The single deposit [1/006] which lay within it consisted of loose greyish brown silt sand with rounded stones up to 0.10m wide. No artefacts were recovered.
- 4.1.3 The deposition overlying the pit consisted of three layers, the first of which consisted of loose modern rubble and fragments of concrete [1/003], the second of firm yellowish brown silty sand and gravel [1/002], and the third (and latest) of imported greyish brown topsoil [1/001]. No artefacts were discovered apart from infrequent pieces of modern concrete and ceramic building material in layers [1/001] to [1/003], none of which were retained for analysis.

5.0 FINDS

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 The archaeological evaluation found no artefacts other than occasional fragments of modern concrete and ceramic building material in layer [1/003]. These were noted, but not retained.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Overview of the stratigraphic sequence

- 6.1.1 The archaeological sequence consists of a large undated pit [1/007] cut into subsoil [1/004].
- 6.1.2 Overlying this were three layers of modern-made ground [1/001] to [1/003], the latest of which [1/001] comprises redeposited topsoil. This sequence is clearly man-made and is almost certainly due to the height of the site having been artificially increased, probably as an act of landscaping within the last c. 100 years. The original topsoil has been removed and replaced by layers of soil and hardcore [1/002] and [1/003], before being reinstated at a new level [1/001], increasing the height of the site by c.0.5m in the process.
- 6.1.3 Pit [1/007] contained a non-informative fill and no artefacts. It pre-dates the aforementioned landscaping, but was cut through the subsoil so is unlikely to be of any great antiquity.

6.2 Conclusions

- 6.2.1 The site appears to contain few archaeological features, deposits or artefacts. It has been previously stripped/disturbed to at least the level of the underlying subsoil. No pre-modern artefacts were recovered from this subsoil perhaps implying that for much of its history, the site has lain distant from areas of settlement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ASE 2015 Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation at The Rifleman Public House, Rifle hill, Braintree, Essex.

Brown, N. and Glazebrook, J. 2000 *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties 2, Research Agenda and Strategy*. E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper 8

DCLG 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*. HMSO

Medlycott, M. 2011 *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the East of England*. E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper 24

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE thanks Steve Durrell of S.L.K (Essex) Ltd for commissioning the archaeological work and for his advice and assistance. It also thanks Essex County Council Place Services for its guidance and monitoring.

HER Summary Form

Site name/Address: The Rifleman Public House, Rifle Hill, Braintree	
Parish: Braintree	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 75780 22474	Site Code: BTRH15
Type of Work: Archaeological trial trenching	Site Director/Group: Mark Germany, Archaeology South-East
Date of Work: 2015	Size of Area Investigated: 60m ²
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Braintree Museum	Client: CgMs
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos: 64725 and 6472
Final Report: Essex Archaeology and History round-up	OASIS Ref:
Periods represented: Modern	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>An archaeological evaluation consisting of a single trench preceded residential development to the rear of The Rifleman Public House, Rifle Hill, Braintree, Essex in July 2015. The archaeological work was recommended by Essex Place Services and was commissioned by S.L.K. (Essex) Ltd.</p> <p>The Rifleman public house lies near the site of an Iron Age / Roman cremation burial ground, and river gravel deposits, potentially containing Palaeolithic material and Pleistocene faunal remains.</p> <p>The evaluation trench was L-shaped and 30m long. It exposed an undated pit cut into subsoil and three overlying layers of modern made ground. There were no pre-modern archaeological artefacts present.</p> <p>The results of the trenching suggest that the site contains no significant archaeological remains and has been previously stripped and landscaped.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: None	
Author of Summary: Mark Germany	Date of Summary: August 2015

OASIS ID: 219925

Project details

Project name	The Rifleman Public House, Braintree, Essex
Short description of the project	Residential development to the rear of The Rifleman pub, Rifle Hill, Braintree, Essex was preceded by an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching, comprising a single trench. The trench exposed a large un-datable pit, and three overlying layers of modern-made ground. No artefacts were present apart from pieces of modern building material. The results of the trenching imply that the development site has been previously stripped and landscaped, probably within the last 100 years.
Project dates	Start: 20-07-2015 End: 21-07-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	8416 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	BTRH15 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - Direction 4
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX BRAINTREE The Rifleman Public House, Rifle Hill, Braintree, Essex
Study area	60.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TL 75780 22474 51.8726050773 0.553712518488 51 52 21 N
000 33 13 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 46.02m Max: 46.28m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Essex County Council Place Services
Project design originator	ASE/CgMs
Project director/manager	Adrian Scruby
Project supervisor	Adam Dyson
Type of sponsor/funding body	CgMs Consulting

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	n/a
Physical Contents	"other"
Digital Archive recipient	Braintree Museum
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic", "Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Spreadsheets", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Braintree Museum
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic", "Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Evaluation. The Rifleman Public House, Rifle Hill, Braintree, Essex

Author(s)/Editor(s) Germany, M.

Other bibliographic details 2015282

Date 2015

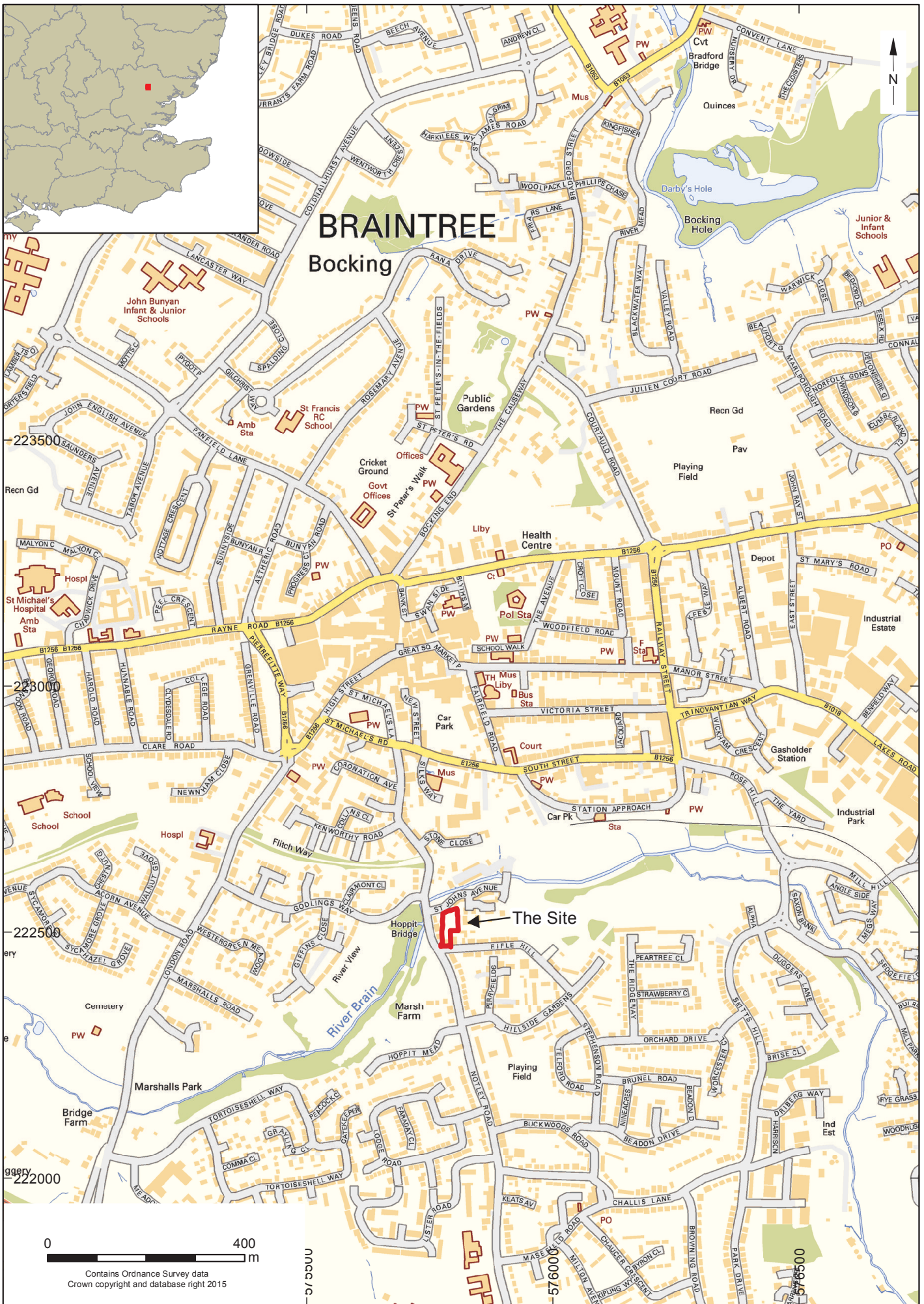
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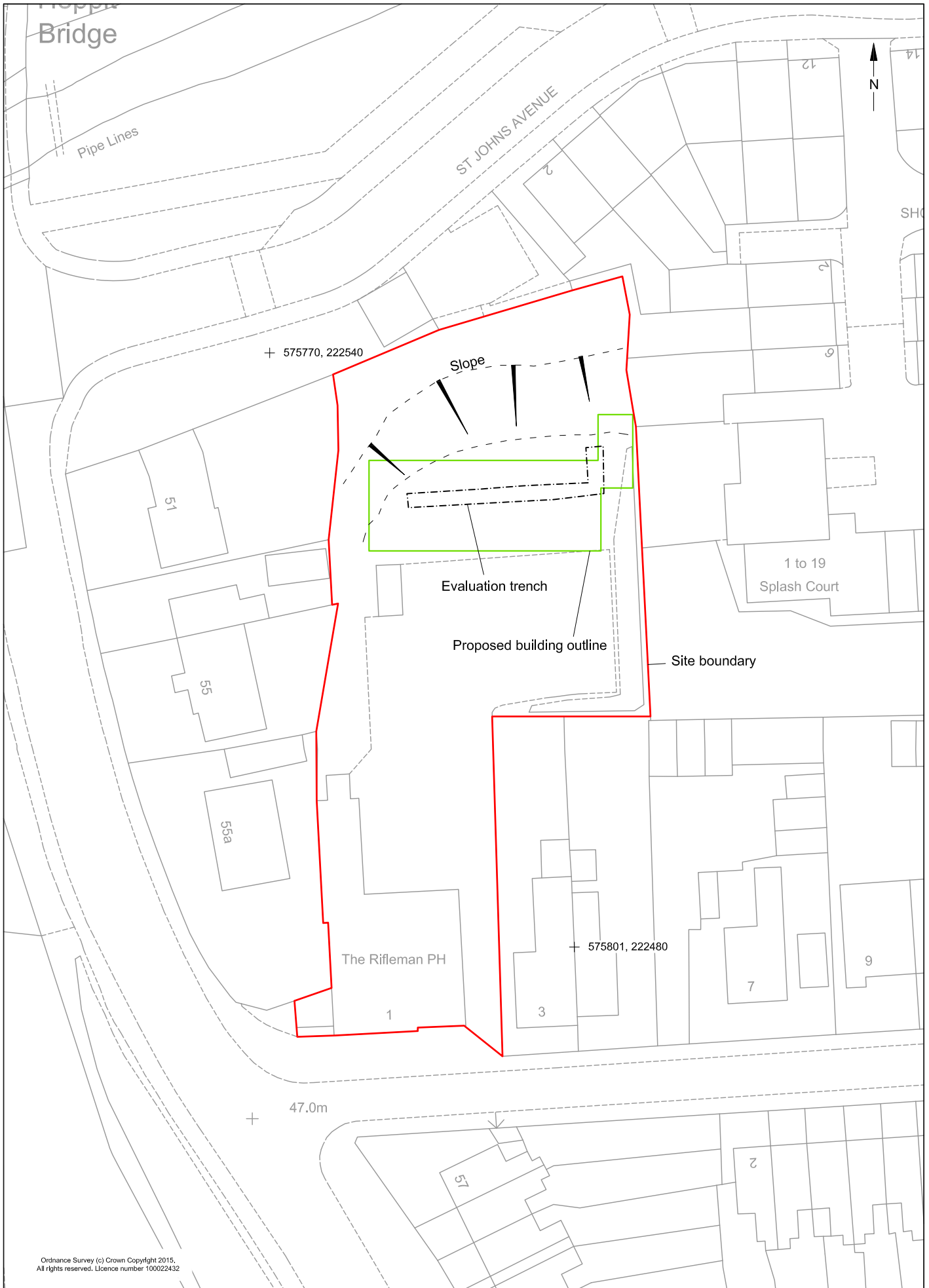
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Entered by Mark Germany (mgermany@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 7 August 2015

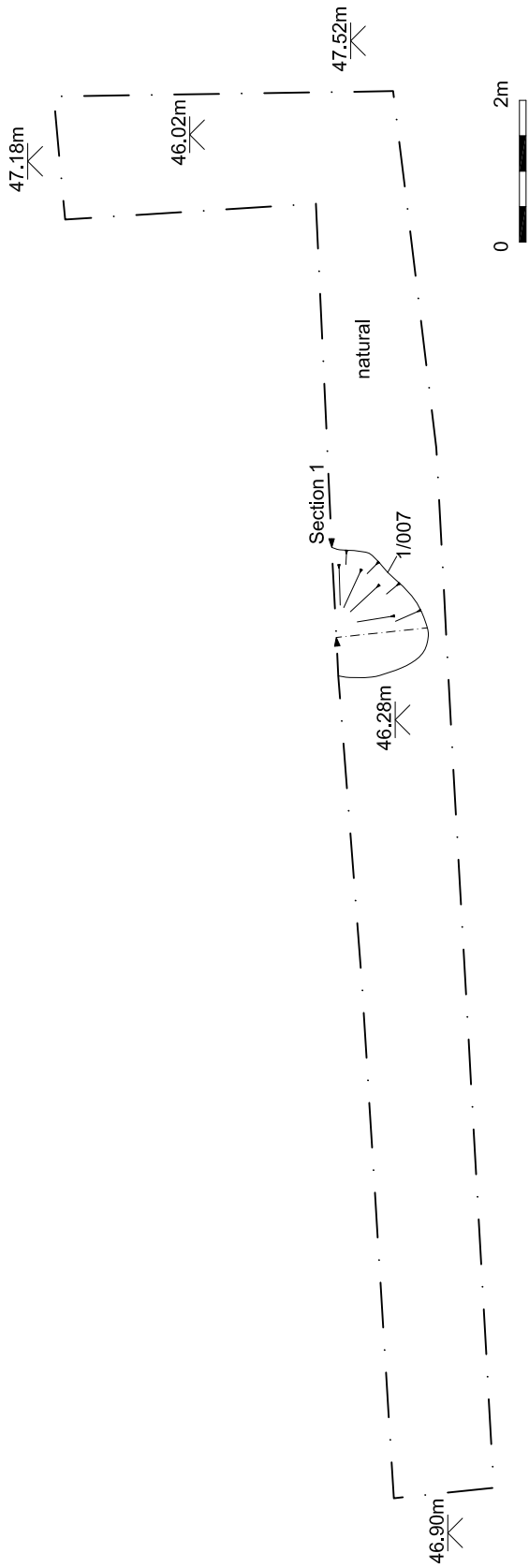
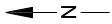


© Archaeology South-East		The Rifleman, Rifle Hill, Braintree		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8416	Aug 2015	Site location		
Report No: 2015282	Drawn by: APL			



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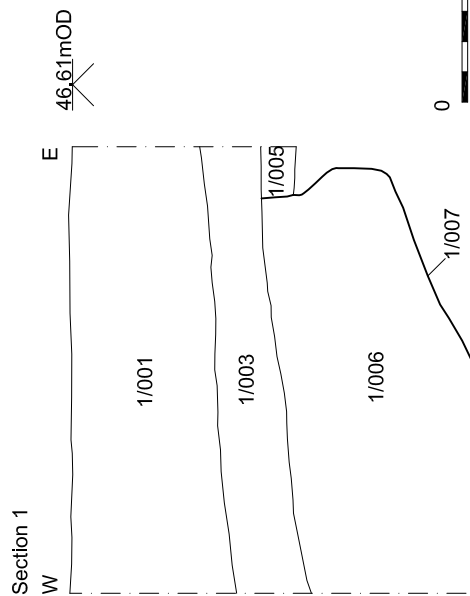
© Archaeology South-East		The Rifleman, Rifle Hill, Braintree		Fig. 2
Project Ref: 8416	Aug 2015	Trench location		
Report Ref: 2015282	Drawn by: APL			



West end of trench looking east, 1m scales



Pit 1/007 looking west, 1m scale



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Report Ref: 2015282

Aug 2015
Drawn by: APL

The Rifleman, Rifle Hill, Braintree

Trench plan section and photographs

Fig. 3

Sussex Office

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