

**Archaeological Evaluation Report
Coopers Beach Holiday Park
Church Lane, East Mersea
Colchester, Essex, CO5 8TN**

NGR: TM 05008 13937

Planning Ref: 150383

ASE Project No: 8410

Site Code and Accession no: COLEM 2015.94

ASE Report No: 2015353

OASIS id: archaeol6-225057

HER Event no: EVT 4239



By Kate Clover

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|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|
| Prepared by: | Kate Clover | Archaeologist |  |
| Reviewed and approved by: | Dan Swift | Project Manager |  |
| Date of Issue: | September 2015 | | |

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Park Resorts Limited to undertake a trial trenching evaluation at Coopers Beach Holiday Park, Church Lane, East Mersea, Essex. The work was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of an extension to the holiday park consisting of 60 holiday lodges along with associated roadways, parking and other infrastructure. The site currently comprises an area of overgrown scrub to the west of the existing holiday park.

Nine trial trenches were excavated, within the areas of the proposed roadways. The work was carried out between the 9th and 11th of September 2015.

No features or finds of archaeological interest were revealed. Modern dumping was observed in Trenches 2 and 7 but no other disturbance was recorded. It is concluded that the lack of archaeological remains indicates very low potential for the presence of archaeological remains of any period across the site.

CONTENTS

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1.0 | Introduction |
| 2.0 | Archaeological Background |
| 3.0 | Archaeological Methodology |
| 4.0 | Results |
| 5.0 | Discussion and Conclusions |

Bibliography
Acknowledgements

EHER Summary
OASIS Form

Appendix 1: Tabulated summary of trenches

Appendix 2: Written Scheme of Investigation

TABLES

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

FIGURES

Front Cover: Working shot, view south

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Trench locations

Figure 3: Trench photographs

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was contracted by Park Resorts Limited to undertake a trial trenching evaluation at Coopers Beach Holiday Park, Church Lane, East Mersea, Essex. The work was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of an extension to the holiday park consisting of 60 holiday lodges along with associated roadways, parking and other infrastructure.
- 1.1.2 East Mersea is situated 12 km south-east of Colchester, on Mersea Island. The site is centred on National Grid Reference TM 05008 13937 (Figure 1) and comprises an area of c.3.25ha lying to the west of the Coopers Beach Holiday Park site, separated from it by a north-south track (Figure 2).
- 1.1.3 Currently, dense scrub covers much of the site. A recently relocated sewage treatment works is situated towards the north-west corner. This is accessed via a new track which runs along the northern boundary of the site. The western boundary of the site is defined by a ditch and high deciduous hedge (largely Hawthorne and Blackthorn). The eastern boundary, also ditched and hedged (as above) separates the site from a tarmac/gravel track. This continues the line of Church Lane and links to a leisure centre and sea wall. The southern boundary is defined by a new fence and dense brambles, separating the site from a playing field.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey there is no mapped superficial geology across the site and the solid geology comprises London Clay. Whilst the East Mersea area in general is known for the presence of significant geological deposits of Pleistocene date none are present within the site.
- 1.2.2 The proposed site is situated on a gentle south facing slope at c. 5.5 -12m AOD.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 Planning permission has been sought from Colchester Borough Council for the construction of an extension to the holiday park (Planning Ref 150383). In support of this application a programme of archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was required to establish the impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains that might be present. A heritage statement was also required (ASE 2015a).
- 1.3.2 Accordingly, a written scheme of investigation (ASE 2015b) for archaeological evaluation was compiled and approved prior to fieldwork.

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report presents the results of the evaluation conducted by the author in September 2015. It followed the methodology laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2015b), based on the brief (CBC 2015) provided by Jess Tipper of Colchester Borough Council – the Borough’s archaeological advisor.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The site lies in an area of high archaeological interest, as defined in the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). A desk-based assessment (ASE 2015a) for the site was compiled from which the following is summarised:

2.2 Prehistoric

2.2.1 Whilst there is evidence, in the form of artefacts, for Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic activity on Mersea Island there are no known heritage assets of these dates that have been definitively recovered from the site or study area.

2.2.2 The EHER records a 'split quartzite pebble, possibly a rubber', perhaps of Neolithic date, as being recovered from East Mersea (EHER 2094). Whilst its mapped location lies within the site boundary it is likely to be indicative only, being the south-west corner of a 1:10,000 map sheet. Such points are typically used where only a general location (e.g. parish or 6 figure grid reference) for a find is known.

2.2.3 A late Bronze Age sword (EHER 1910) of the Ewart Park type, dating to the 7th-6th century BC has been recovered from the foreshore at Coopers Beach.

2.3 Romano-British

2.3.1 There are no references to known Romano-British remains on the site itself other than a record of a 'small flask' (EHER 2103/4); a coin which may be part of a hoard (EHER 2106) and pottery '... from a red hill in this area' (EHER 2096). As with the rubbing stone discussed above (2.2.2) the recorded location of these finds within the site is likely to be indicative only. This is demonstrated by the presence of material from a 'red hill'; these are salt working sites which require tidal waters and thus are situated on what would have been the coastline, around the c.4-5m OD contour. Whilst these monuments are numerous around the north shore of the island there is a possible example in the vicinity of Coopers Beach, lying to the south-east of the site. The EHER description simply states 'red hill' with no further detail.

2.3.2 The recorded remains of Romano-British date within the study area are limited to a reference to the use of Roman brick and tile in the medieval St Edmunds Church (EHER 2121) and in the churchyard. A coin has also been found there. There '... are reports of a villa under or near the church' (EHER 2121). The source of this information continues the statement above with the caveat that 'Nothing is conclusive – the evidence needs to be sought when any further disturbances take place in or around the church' (Rodwell and Rodwell 1977, 113).

2.3.3 There is evidence of Romano-British remains on the island in general, with a villa complex being identified at West Mersea and funerary monuments such as a wheel-shaped tomb in Beach Road (West Mersea) and the Mersea Barrow (e.g. Yearsley 2000). The road from the island to the major trading

centre at Colchester was also established in this period.

2.4 Anglo-Saxon/Danish and Medieval

- 2.4.1 The place-name Mersea, Meres ig(e) 'the island of the pool' is Anglo-Saxon in origin, being first recorded in 895AD (Reaney 1969). This mention derives from the Anglo-Saxon chronicle of that year, when a Danish force retreated to 'an island called Mersea' where they encamped to muster for a counterattack (Medlycott 2000). It has been suggested that this camp may have been the moated area which surrounds the (medieval) church/hall complex at East Mersea lying to the north-east of the site (see below). Similarly it is thought that the dedication of the church to St Edmund the Martyr may suggest that this Norman/12th century church is situated on the site of an earlier foundation (Rodwell and Rodwell 1977).
- 2.4.2 The Domesday Survey of 1086 records that the manor of East Mersea was held by Robert son of Wymarc prior to the Norman Conquest and it was subsequently granted to Swein of Essex (Rumble 1986). The manor had woodland for 40 pigs, pasture for 100 sheep and 4 fisheries along with meadow and 8 ploughs.
- 2.4.3 The extant church of St Edmunds (EHER 2120) is of medieval and later date and is a Grade I Listed Building. Rodwell and Rodwell identify parts of the nave and chancel as being Norman with the '... details being of a later date' (Rodwell and Rodwell 1977). The church was apparently built on land belonging to the Cluniac Priory of Prittlewell in c. 1170 (Medlycott 2000), a slightly later date than that suggested by Rodwell and Rodwell. The adjacent hall, which lies to the east (EHER 31249) dates to c. 1500 with later additions (EHER 32149).
- 2.4.4 The church/hall complex is defined to the north and east by an irregular moat and pond (EHER 2119). These may '... possibly be connected to other earthworks around the church and hall, Danish camp/DMV?' [Deserted Medieval Village] (EHER 2119). It is possible that the field system surrounding this complex may have its origins in the medieval period.

2.5 Post Medieval and Modern

- 2.5.1 Reference to historic mapping suggests that the area around the church/hall complex, and the site, remained largely rural in character through the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.
- 2.5.2 Mersea Island in general and East Mersea in particular are situated in a strategic location, being at the entrance to the River Colne which provided access for supplies to Colchester. During the Civil War (1642-51) the Parliamentary forces utilised the church as a barracks and stables, damaging the windows and the interior.
- 2.5.3 In the mid-19th century the site lay within East Hall Farm. The site lay within 'First Hough Field' which could perhaps suggest it was initially used as grazing but by 1887 documents indicate it was under arable cultivation. The farm buildings lay to the south of the hall itself and were, at that time,

described as 'modern'.

2.5.4 Mersea Island was extensively fortified in World War II, with a number of pillboxes being positioned along the shoreline of the island, with an extant example on Coopers Beach and the former site of a pillbox being located to the west of the site (EHER 10024). A World War II heavy anti-aircraft gun site is thought to have been located to the south of the site, in the vicinity of the modern leisure complex which serves the site.

2.5.5 The 20th century saw the increasing development of Mersea Island's role as a seaside resort, particularly at West Mersea. East Mersea has remained largely rural but there are a number of caravan/holiday parks along the shoreline including that at Coopers Beach which lies adjacent to the site. Reference to historic mapping shows that the Coopers Beach caravan/holiday park was established between the 1930s and the 1950s, with the initial plots being situated along the seafront. These have gradually been extended northwards through subsequent decades. The modern holiday park extends just to the south of the church/hall complex and incorporates the East Hall Farm buildings. These are currently used for storage/ maintenance.

2.6 Project Aims and Objectives

2.6.1 As stated in the WSI (ASE 2015b) the aim of the archaeological evaluation was to determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains and to establish their character, location, extent, date and quality.

2.6.2 As stated in the brief (CBC 2015) Specific research aims for the initial trenching were to:

- Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses and the possible presence of masking colluvial/alluvial deposits
- Establish the potential for survival of environmental evidence
- Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost

2.6.3 In the event that significant discoveries had been made the report would seek to identify appropriate research objectives for any future work, in line with those laid out in 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). As no archaeological features were uncovered the site has no potential to contribute to any regional research objectives.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 In accordance with the brief, the evaluation comprised a 5% sample of the site which amounted to nine trenches measuring 30m x 2m (Figure 2). The trenches were accurately located using a Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS).
- 3.1.2 The trenches were excavated using a 13-tonne tracked excavator equipped with a standard toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision.
- 3.1.3 Machine excavation was carried out to the top of the surface of natural geology.
- 3.1.4 The trenches were recorded using ASE trench sheets.
- 3.1.5 No soil samples were taken and no artefacts retrieved.
- 3.1.6 Excavation and recording was undertaken in accordance with this WSI (ASE 2015b) and the relevant *Standards and Guidance* of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a), the Brief (CBC 2015) and the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

3.2 Archive

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

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Number of Contexts | 3 |
| No. of files/paper record | 17 |
| Plan and sections sheets | 0 |
| Bulk Samples | 0 |
| Photographs | 19 |
| Bulk finds | 0 |
| Registered finds | 0 |
| Environmental flots/residue | 0 |

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1

4.1.1 Trench 1 was an east-west aligned trench dug to a maximum depth of 0.62m. Between 0.18m and 0.37m of topsoil sealed natural yellowish silty clay. No definite intervening subsoil was observed. Several irregular siltier patches were evident within the natural clay and these were investigated and found to be natural.

4.1.2 No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

4.2 Trench 2

4.2.1 Trench 2 was an east-west aligned trench located at the site entrance. It was moved 1m north in order to avoid blocking the entrance-way. The trench was dug to a maximum depth of 0.78m, partially into the natural clay. A depth of up to 0.47m of dumped modern materials mixed with topsoil were observed on the surface. This dumped layer sealed a mid brown-grey silty clay subsoil containing flecks of modern ceramic building material (CBM). This in turn sealed natural clay with gravel bands.

4.2.2 No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

4.3 Trench 3

4.3.1 Trench 3 was located at the western part of the site and was east-west aligned. It was dug to a maximum depth of 0.64m, partially into the natural clay. Up to 0.4m depth of topsoil sealed natural clay with no intervening subsoil. Natural irregular silty patches, similar to those seen in Trench 1, were observed.

4.3.2 No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

4.4 Trench 4

4.4.1 Trench 4 was north-south aligned. It was dug to a maximum depth of 0.6m, partially into the natural clay. Natural clay was sealed by between 0.2m and 0.3m of topsoil, with no intervening subsoil. Two sub-circular silty patches were investigated and found to be natural.

4.4.2 No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

4.5 Trench 5

4.5.1 Trench 5 was east-west aligned and dug to a maximum depth of 0.7m, partially into the natural clay. Natural was sealed by between 0.22 and 0.37m of topsoil with no intervening subsoil layer. Three irregular silty patches were noted but not investigated.

4.5.2 No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

4.6 Trench 6

4.6.1 Trench 6 was north-south aligned and was dug to a maximum depth of 0.48m, partially into the natural clay. Natural was sealed by between 0.25m and 0.3m of topsoil, with no intervening subsoil layer.

4.6.2 No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

4.7 Trench 7

4.7.1 Trench 7 was east-west aligned and located on the eastern side of the site. It was dug to a maximum depth of 0.65m partially into the natural clay. At the eastern end of the trench a large amount of recently dumped materials had to be cleared including, brick rubble, parts of old caravans and bikes. Between 0.25m and 0.3m of topsoil sealed natural clay, with no intervening subsoil layer. One linear feature was investigated but found to be a shallow natural anomaly.

4.7.2 No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

4.8 Trench 8

4.8.1 Trench 8 was aligned east to west and was moved 18m to the east in order to avoid an obstruction (a tree) to the west. It was dug to a maximum depth of 0.84m, partially into natural clay. Between 0.1m and 0.2m of topsoil sealed a layer of subsoil containing modern CBM flecks which in turn sealed natural clay.

4.8.2 No archaeological features or finds were recorded. One modern land drain was recorded at the eastern end of the trench (Figure 3).

4.9 Trench 9

4.9.1 Trench 9 was east-west aligned and was dug to a maximum depth of 0.6m, partially into the natural clay. It, like Trench 8 was on the southern extremity of the site, at the lowest point. Between 0.15m and 0.23m of topsoil overlaid a sandy silt subsoil between 0.27m and 0.33m thick which contained iron pan but was archaeologically sterile. This subsoil was very similar to natural sandy silt below and may therefore be a reworked natural.

4.9.2 No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

5.1.1 There was little in the way of stratigraphy over the site. In the majority of trenches (Trenches 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6) topsoil seemingly overlaid natural stiff yellowish clay (London Clay) with no intervening subsoil. However, differentiating between the subsoil and the London Clay was problematic as one merged into the other with no visible definition and it was only the presence of flecks of modern CBM above natural clay in Trenches 7 and 8 that indicated the presence of a subsoil here. It was for this reason that most of the trenches were deliberately dug deep, ostensibly into the London Clay. In Trench 9 the 'subsoil' was siltier and did not contain CBM flecks but did display some iron panning. It may be a reworked natural layer.

5.1.2 Natural was generally observed to be a stiff pale yellow silty clay – The London Clay - with some bands of gravel in places and some irregular silty patches. At the southern part of the site, in Trench 9, the natural was slightly sandier and siltier and may represent hillwash (colluvium) near the base of the slope. No evidence of marine alluvial deposits were encountered, which was to be expected as the site is probably too far inland and high enough in altitude to have not been inundated by the sea.

5.1.3 No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

5.2.1 Modern dumping had occurred at the eastern end of the site, as evidenced in Trenches 2 and 7. However this had not impacted on the deposits below, which appeared to be undisturbed.

5.2.2 The evaluation revealed that the site holds no potential for survival of environmental evidence.

5.3 Discussion of archaeological remains by period

5.3.1 No archaeological features were recorded nor any artefactual material that pre-dates c. 1800. The absence of archaeological remains cannot be explained by modern disturbance (see 5.2.1) and it therefore seems likely that this area has not been utilised in the past except for agriculture or for some other archaeologically undetectable activity.

5.3.2 Cartographic evidence from the mid-17th century onwards indicates the site as a field, with access to the coast provided by the adjacent routeway of Church Lane (ASE 2015a; figs 3-8). It is likely that this post-medieval land-use perpetuated an earlier arrangement, perhaps dating as far back as the prehistoric period.

5.4 Potential impact on archaeological remains

- 5.4.1 The lack of archaeological features and finds suggest that the site has very low potential for archaeological remains of any period.
- 5.4.2 Given this paucity of archaeological data, the impact that any proposed development is likely to have on archaeological remains is considered to be very low.

5.5 Conclusions

- 5.5.1 It is concluded that the lack of the archaeological remains recorded within the evaluation trenches indicates a low potential for the presence of archaeological remains from any period within this part of the site.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EHER Summary Form

| | |
|--|---|
| Site name/Address <i>Coopers Beach Holiday Park, Church Lane, East Mersea, Colchester, Essex, CO5 8TN</i> | |
| Parish: <i>East Mersea</i> | District: <i>Colchester</i> |
| NGR: <i>TM 05008 13937</i> | Site Code: <i>COLEM 2015.94</i> |
| Type of Work: <i>Archaeological Evaluation</i> | Site Director/Group: <i>Kate Clover, Archaeology South-East</i> |
| Date of Work: <i>9th-11th September</i> | Size of Area Investigated: <i>3.25 ha</i> |
| Location of Finds/Curating Museum: <i>Colchester Museum</i> | Funding source: <i>Holiday Park</i> |
| Further Seasons Anticipated?: <i>unknown</i> | Related HER Nos: <i>4239</i> |
| Final Report: <i>EAH roundup and ASE report 2015353</i> | OASIS No: <i>archaeol6-225057</i> |
| Periods Represented: <i>Modern</i> | |
| SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: | |
| <p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Park Resorts Limited to undertake a trial trenching evaluation at Coopers Beach Holiday Park, Church Lane, East Mersea, Essex. The work was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of an extension to the holiday park consisting of 60 holiday lodges along with associated roadways, parking and other infrastructure. The site currently comprises an area of overgrown scrub to the west of the existing holiday park.</i></p> <p><i>Nine trial trenches were excavated, within the areas of the proposed roadways. The work was carried out between the 9th and 11th of September 2015.</i></p> <p><i>No features or finds of archaeological interest were revealed. Modern dumping was observed in Trenches 2 and 7 but no other disturbance was recorded. It is concluded that the lack of archaeological remains indicates very low potential for the presence of archaeological remains of any period across the site.</i></p> | |
| Previous Summaries/Reports: <i>DBA June 2015 (ASE report 2015228)</i> | |
| Author of Summary: <i>Kate Clover</i> | Date of Summary: <i>September 2015</i> |

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-225057

Project details

| | |
|--|--|
| Project name | Archaeological Evaluation Report Coopers Beach Holiday Park, Church Lane, East Mersea, Colchester, Essex, CO5 8TN |
| Short description of the project | Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Park Resorts Limited to undertake a trial trenching evaluation at Coopers Beach Holiday Park, Church Lane, East Mersea, Essex. The work was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of an extension to the holiday park consisting of 60 holiday lodges along with associated roadways, parking and other infrastructure. The site currently comprises an area of overgrown scrub to the west of the existing holiday park. Nine trial trenches were excavated, within the areas of the proposed roadways. The work was carried out between the 9th and 11th of September 2015. No features or finds of archaeological interest were revealed. Modern dumping was observed in Trenches 2 and 7 but no other disturbance was recorded. It is concluded that the lack of archaeological remains indicates very low potential for the presence of archaeological remains of any period across the site. |
| Project dates | Start: 09-09-2015 End: 11-09-2015 |
| Previous/future work | No / Not known |
| Any associated project reference codes | COLEM 2015.94 - Museum accession ID |
| Any associated project reference codes | 8410 - Contracting Unit No. |
| Any associated project reference codes | 4239 - HER event no. |
| Any associated project reference codes | 150383 - Planning Application No. |
| Type of project | Field evaluation |
| Site status | None |
| Current Land use | Other 13 - Waste ground |
| Monument type | NONE None |
| Significant Finds | NONE None |
| Methods & techniques | "Targeted Trenches" |
| Development type | Holiday Park extension |
| Prompt | National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF |
| Position in the planning process | Between deposition of an application and determination |

Project location

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Country | England |
| Site location | ESSEX COLCHESTER EAST MERSEA Coopers Beach Holiday Park, Church Lane, East Mersea |
| Postcode | CO5 8TN |
| Study area | 3.25 Hectares |
| Site coordinates | TM 0500 1393 51.785866071728 0.972584462545 51 47 09 N 000 58 21 E Point |

Height OD / Depth Min: 5m Max: 12m

Project creators

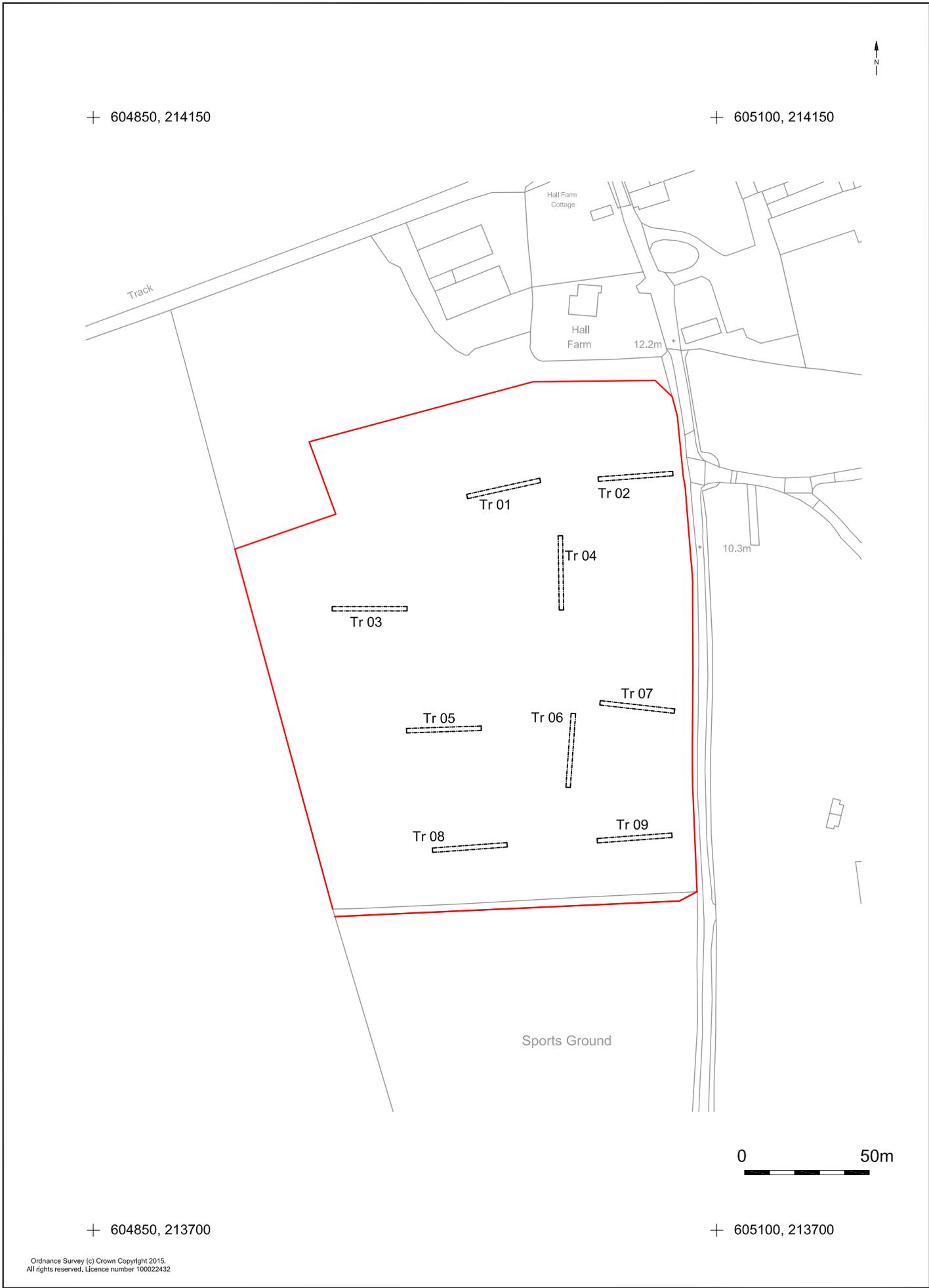
Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator Jess Tipper, Colchester Borough Council
Project design originator ASE
Project director/manager Andy Leonard
Project supervisor Kate Clover
Type of sponsor/funding body Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body Park Resorts Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service
Physical Archive ID COLEM 2015.94
Physical Contents "other"
Digital Archive recipient Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service
Digital Archive ID COLEM 2015.94
Digital Contents "other"
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Images vector","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service
Paper Archive ID COLEM 2015.94
Paper Contents "none"
Paper Media available "Context sheet","Correspondence","Map","Notebook - Excavation','
Research',' General Notes","Plan","Report"
Entered by Kate Clover (k.clover@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on 30 September 2015

Appendix 1: Tabulated summary of trenches

| Trench Number | Context | Type | Description | Thickness m |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | 001 | Layer | Made ground – topsoil/plastics/ gravels/ building materials | 0.18-0.37 |
| | 002 | Layer | Natural stiff pale yellow clay with gravel bands. Patches of siltier natural throughout | 0.25-0.35 |
| 2 | 001 | Layer | Topsoil- dark grey brown silty clay with some coarse sand. Occasional CBM flecks throughout | 0.36-0.47 |
| | 002 | Layer | Subsoil– mid brown grey silty clay with CBM flecks throughout | 0.15-0.35 |
| | 003 | Layer | Natural stiff pale yellow to pale grey brown clay with gravel bands. | 0.13-0.4 |
| 3 | 001 | Layer | Topsoil – mid brown grey silty clay | 0.37-0.4 |
| | 002 | Layer | Natural – mixture of clay and siltier patches | 0.08-0.24 |
| 4 | 001 | Layer | Topsoil - mid brown grey silty clay | 0.2-0.3 |
| | 002 | Layer | Natural - mixture of clay and siltier patches | 0.23-0.3 |
| 5 | 001 | Layer | Topsoil- dark grey brown silty clay with some coarse sand. Occasional CBM flecks throughout | 0.22-0.37 |
| | 002 | Layer | Natural – stiff light yellow brown silty clay with siltier patches. Iron pan also evident. | 0.13-0.4 |
| 8 | 001 | Layer | Topsoil- dark grey brown silty clay with some coarse sand. Occasional CBM flecks throughout | 0.25-0.3 |
| | 002 | Layer | Natural stiff pale yellow to pale grey brown clay with gravel bands. Becoming drier and crumblier | 0.19-0.22 |
| 7 | 001 | Layer | Made ground – dark brown grey silty clay with bricks, scrap metal etc. At east end of trench only | 0.25 |
| | 002 | Layer | Topsoil - mid brown grey silty clay with CBM flecks throughout | 0.2-0.3 |
| | 003 | Layer | Natural stiff pale yellow to pale grey brown clay with gravel bands | 0.23-0.3 |
| 8 | 001 | Layer | Topsoil – pale grey brown sandy silt | 0.15-0.23 |
| | 002 | Layer | Subsoil - pale grey brown sandy silt with clay with flecks of CBM and chalk | 0.27-0.33 |
| | 003 | Layer | Natural pale grey yellow sandy silt with clay | 0.10-0.4 |
| 9 | 001 | Layer | Topsoil – loose pale grey brown sandy silt, occasional flecks of CBM but otherwise sterile | 0.15-0.23 |
| | 002 | Layer | Subsoil or re-worked natural- pale grey brown sandy silt with clay. Same as 9/003 except in colour | 0.27-0.33 |
| | 003 | Layer | Natural pale grey yellow sandy silt with clay. Iron pan speckled throughout | 0.12 |



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|--------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|--|--------|
| © Archaeology South-East | | Coopers Beach, East Mersea | | Fig. 2 |
| Project Ref: 8410 | Sept 2015 | Trench locations | | |
| Report Ref: 2015353 | Drawn by: APL | | | |



Trench 1, view west

Trench 2, view west

Trench 3, view east

Trench 4, view south

Trench 5, view east

Trench 6, view south

Trench 7, view west

Trench 8, view west

Trench 9, view west

Appendix 2: Written Scheme of Investigation

Land at Coopers Beach Holiday Park, East Mersea, Essex.

Written Scheme of Investigation

NGR: TM 0500 1393

Planning Application No: 150383

ASE Project no: 8410

Prepared by Stephen White

August 2015

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeology South-East (a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London) has been commissioned by Bilfinger GVA, acting on the behalf of Park Resorts Ltd, to carry out an archaeological evaluation prior to the proposed extension (lodge development) at the Coopers Beach Holiday Park, East Mersea, Essex (Fig.1; TM 0500 1393).
- 1.2 The site is centred on National Grid Reference TM 0500 1393 (Fig. 1) and comprises an area of c.3.25ha lying to the west of the Coopers Beach Holiday Park.
- 1.3 Planning permission is to be sought from Colchester Borough Council for the construction of an extension to the current holiday park. In support of this application a programme of archaeological evaluation by trenching is to be undertaken to establish the impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains that might be present.
- 1.4 Colchester Borough Council's archaeology advisor, Jess Tipper, has provided advice for the required trenching work in a letter of 1st July 2015, upon which this Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) is based. The advice suggested a 5% sample evaluation of the site but following negotiations between the Client and Colchester Borough Council's archaeology advisor it has been agreed to undertake the excavation of nine 30m x 1.8m trenches in the location of the proposed access roads.
- 1.5 This WSI sets out the scope of work, methodology and research aims for the programme of archaeological evaluation trenching. All work will be undertaken in accordance with this document, Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, 2003) and the relevant standards and guidance of ClfA (2014). It has been submitted to Colchester Borough Council and their archaeology advisor for approval.

2.0 Archaeological Background

2.1 The following information is taken from the DBA (ASE 2015) prepared for this site.

Prehistoric and Roman

2.2 The results of the research carried out as part of the DBA did not identify any known heritage assets of prehistoric or Romano-British date on the site itself. In the wider study area prehistoric remains are limited to a Bronze Age sword recovered from the beach. Known Romano-British remains are similarly limited, comprising findspots and a possible 'red hill' which are typically (although not exclusively) Late Iron Age and Roman salt working sites. It has also been speculated that the church sits on the site of a Roman villa. The paucity of known assets may, at least in part, reflect the absence of archaeological investigation in the area to date.

2.3 It is considered that there is some potential for the site to contain as yet unknown heritage assets of these periods. However, given the paucity of information available and lack of archaeological work to date the likelihood of such remains being present is undetermined.

Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

2.4 The place-name Mersea, Meres ig(e) 'the island of the pool' is Anglo-Saxon in origin, being first recorded in 895AD. This mention derives from the Anglo-Saxon chronicle of that year, when a Danish force retreated to 'an island called Mersea' where they encamped to muster for a counterattack. It has been suggested that this camp may have been the moated area which surrounds the (medieval) church/hall complex at East Mersea, lying to the north-east of the site. Similarly it is thought that the dedication of the church to St Edmund the Martyr may suggest that this Norman/12th century church is situated on the site of an earlier foundation.

2.5 The Domesday Book records that the manor of East Mersea was held by Robert son of Wymarc prior to the Norman Conquest and it was subsequently granted to Swein of Essex. The manor had woodland for 40 pigs, pasture for 100 sheep and 4 fisheries along with meadow and 8 ploughs.

2.6 The extant church of St Edmunds is of medieval and later date. Rodwell identifies parts of the nave and chancel as being Norman with the '...details being of a later date'. The church was apparently built on land belonging to the Cluniac Priory of Prittlewell in c. 1170, a slightly later date than that suggested by Rodwell. The adjacent hall, which lies to the east dates to c. 1500.

2.7 The church/hall complex is defined to the north and east by an irregular moat and pond. These may '... possibly be connected to other earthworks around the church and hall, Danish camp/DMV?' [Deserted

Medieval Village]. It is possible that the field system surrounding this complex may have its origins in the medieval period.

- 2.8 Given the proximity of putative Anglo-Saxon and known medieval heritage assets to the proposed development it is considered possible that as yet unknown heritage assets of these periods may be present within the site.

Post-Medieval and Modern

- 2.9 Reference to historic mapping suggests that the area around the church/hall complex and the site remained largely rural in character through the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Trade of agricultural produce, including shellfish, was of economic importance and a landing stage was built on the south side of the island 'seaward of East Mersea Church' mentioned in a sale catalogue of Hall Farm in 1887. This may have been situated at the 'hard' depicted on early Ordnance Survey mapping at the end of Church Lane, or perhaps at the head of a dammed channel running in a southeasterly direction from the church/hall to the shore. In addition to the export of produce trading vessels, such as the Thames Barges, would have imported 'London Muck' for manuring.
- 2.10 Mersea Island in general and East Mersea in particular are situated in a strategic location, being at the entrance to the River Colne which provided access for supplies to Colchester. During the Civil War the Parliamentarian forces utilised the church as a barracks and stables, damaging the windows and the interior. Yearsley also notes that it was garrisoned during the subsequent campaigns when a united English force was preparing to repel both Dutch and French invasions'. This perhaps refers to the First Anglo-Dutch War (1652-4) and perhaps the French Revolutionary Wars (1792-1802).
- 2.11 In the mid-19th century the site lay within East Hall Farm, owned by George Round and occupied by Elizabeth Croydon. The site lay within 'First Hough Field' which could perhaps suggest it was initially used as grazing but by 1887 documents indicate it was under arable cultivation. The farm buildings lay to the south of the hall itself and were, at that time, described as 'modern'.
- 2.12 Mersea Island was extensively fortified in World War II, with a number of pillboxes being positioned along the shoreline of the island, with an extant example on Coopers Beach and the former site of a pillbox being located to the west of the site. A World War II heavy Anti- Aircraft Gun site is thought to have been located to the south of the site, in the vicinity of the modern leisure complex which serves the site.
- 2.13 The 20th century saw the increasing development of Mersea Island's role as a seaside resort, particularly at West Mersea. East Mersea has remained largely rural but there are a number of caravan/holiday parks along the shoreline including that at Coopers Beach which lies adjacent

to the site. Reference to historic mapping shows that the Coopers Beach caravan/holiday park was established between the 1930s and the 1950s, with the initial plots being situated along the seafront. These have gradually been extended northwards through subsequent decades. The modern holiday park extends just to the south of the church/hall complex and incorporates the East Hall Farm buildings. These are currently used for storage/ maintenance.

- 2.14 It is considered that there is low to moderate potential for the site to contain heritage assets of post medieval date. These are most likely to comprise artefacts, such as those derived from the manuring spreads.

Geology and Topography

- 2.15 The site is situated on a gentle south facing slope at c. 12-5.5mOD. The site comprises an area of c. 3.25ha located in the south-west of Mersea Island, adjacent to the established Coopers Beach Holiday Park. The proposed development site lies to the west of the holiday park, separated from it by a north-south track. A recreation area lies to the south and agricultural fields to the west and north. The site lies to the south-west of the historic church and hall complex. This group comprises two Listed buildings, St Edmund's Church and East Mersea Hall, situated within an area of earthworks and an irregular moat.
- 2.16 The British Geological Survey shows no mapped superficial geology across the site. The solid geology comprises London Clay.

3.0 Research Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The general aims of the archaeological investigation are 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 Colchester Borough's archaeologist to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further work.

- 3.2 Site specific research objectives are:

- Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses.
- Establish if there any archaeological features or deposits related to recorded landscape features of Mersea.
- Establish the potential for the survival of environmental evidence.

4.0 Methodology

- 4.1 The work comprises the excavation of nine 30m by 1.8m archaeological trenches as set out in Figures 2 & 3.
- 4.2 Any significant changes to the approved trench layout due to on-site constraints will be agreed in advance by the Colchester Borough Council. Spoil will be bunded around the edges of the trenches and these will not be fenced.
- 4.3 The trenches will be accurately located using offsets from known positions or a Digital Global Positioning System (DGPS) and DGPS Total Station (Leica 1205 R100 Total Station, Leica System 1200 GPS).
- 4.4 All trenches will be scanned prior to excavation using a CAT scanner. Trenches will be mechanically excavated using a toothless ditching bucket and under constant archaeological supervision.
- 4.5 Machine excavation will continue to the top of archaeological deposits or the surface of natural geology, whichever is uppermost. The exposed sub-soil or archaeological horizon will be cleaned by hand immediately after machine stripping, if required and any archaeological deposits or negative features planned.
- 4.6 The opportunity to have a meeting on site shall be provided once the trench is open with the Borough archaeologist to assess the results.
- 4.7 Backfilling will be undertaken by the machine on completion of the work, but there will be no reinstatement to existing condition.
- 4.8 Spoil heaps and trench bases will be scanned with a metal detector as will the spoil derived from excavated features. Any finds recovered by this method will be suitably bagged in accordance with sections 7 and 8 below.
- 4.9 An OASIS online record will be compiled for the project.

5.0 Excavation and Recording Techniques

- 5.1 Excavation and recording will be undertaken in accordance with this WSI and the relevant *Standards and Guidance* of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2009), the Brief (CBC, 2015) and the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).
- 5.2 Prior to commencing work on site an OASIS online record will be initiated with key fields completed. Upon completion of the fieldwork the remainder of the form will be updated and a copy included in the evaluation report.
- 5.3 An Event number will be obtained from the Archaeology Advisor to Colchester Borough Council. This will be used as the unique site identifier for all records and finds.
- 5.4 All hand excavation will be carefully undertaken and will follow the stratigraphy of any encountered archaeological layers, features and/or deposits.
- 5.5 In certain appropriate situations and should dry site conditions prevail, water will be used to aid the identification of exposed archaeological features and/or deposits to be hand excavated.
- 5.6 A sufficient sampling of archaeological features and/or deposits will be undertaken in order to determine their nature, date, condition, character and extent. This will comprise at least 10% of the length of linear features such as ditches in sections of up to 2 metres in length and at least 50% (or by half section) of the fills of other discrete archaeological features such as pits, postholes etc. Other specific features such as burials may require 100% sampling if necessary.
- 5.7 Should any human burials or remains be encountered the client and the Colchester Archaeological Advisor will be immediately informed. No human remains will be lifted during the course of the evaluation.
- 5.8 The Colchester Archaeological Advisor will be informed at the earliest opportunity of any archaeological features or deposits worthy of preservation.
- 5.9 All excavated archaeological features; layers and/or deposits will be planned, photographed and recorded utilising the assigned site code. All excavated contexts; structures, features and deposits will be drawn on plastic film at a scale of 1:20. Additional plans at a scale of 1:10 will be made of specific features where appropriate, such as human inhumations or cremation burials. Sections of all excavated archaeological contexts will generally be drawn at a scale of 1:10, and where appropriate at a larger scale of 1:20. All site drawings will be digitised.

- 5.10 Bulk soil samples will be collected from datable excavated contexts of buried soils, well-sealed slowly silting features; sealed hearths; sealed features containing evident carbonised remains; peats; well-sealed closed features and water-logged deposits. A representative range of undated features if present will also be sampled. Soil samples will be taken in accordance with English Heritage Guidelines and be a minimum of 40-60 litres (where possible), or 100% of the context where this is smaller. A 20 to 30% sub-sample of each will be wet-sieved using 0.5mm meshes. Recovered material will be assessed in order to establish its potential for providing information relating to past environment and human activity. Additional guidance will be sought from the Historic England Regional Science Advisor as appropriate. Allowance will be made for taking column samples and C14 dating if necessary.
- 5.11 A metal detector will be used on the site to check all archaeological horizons, fills and spoil heaps.
- 5.12 A full digital photographic record will be made of all archaeological features. All photographs, except working shots, will include a board that will detail: the site code, date and context number, a scale and a north arrow.
- 5.13 All archaeological remains will be recorded and levelled relative to Ordnance Datum by an archaeological surveyor, using DGPS (Differential Global Positioning System) technology. All archaeological features and deposits will be recorded using the standard context record sheets used by the UCL Field Archaeology Unit. Soil colours are recorded using visual inspection and not by reference to the Munsell Colour chart.
- 5.14 An ongoing site matrix will be compiled during the fieldwork stage, which will be fully phased during the subsequent post excavation stage.

6.0 Treatment of Human Remains

- 6.1 If human remains are found, work will cease and all necessary statutory provisions followed. The Borough archaeologist and the Client will also be informed. No burials will be lifted at evaluation stage unless they will be demonstrably damaged by not doing so and in such cases only with a licence from the Ministry of Justice.

7.0 Treatment of Artefacts and Ecofacts other than Human Remains

7.1 Pottery, worked flint, metal and other finds of archaeological significance will be retained and treated according to standard Archaeology South-East procedures. Identification of retained finds will be undertaken by staff of, and specialists contracted by, Archaeology South-East as necessary. All pottery, bone and worked flint recovered from the excavations will be washed and marked with an appropriate code to identify the site and context. Most ceramic and other building material and burnt flint will be identified, counted, weighed and discarded. Samples will be retained as appropriate. Finds will be bagged in polythene bags according to type and context.

7.2 The following specialists will be used if necessary and where appropriate:

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Prehistoric and Roman pottery (ASE) | Louise Rayner & Anna Doherty |
| Prehistoric and Roman pottery (region) | Nick Lavender (external: Essex) |
| Post-Roman pottery (and London) | Luke Barber (external: Sussex, Kent) |
| Post-Roman pottery (Essex) | Helen Walker (external: Essex) |
| CBM | Sue Pringle & Luke Barber (external) |
| Fired Clay | Elke Raemen & Trista Clifford (ASE) |
| Clay Tobacco Pipe | Elke Raemen (ASE) |
| Glass | Elke Raemen (ASE) |
| Slag | Luke Barber, Lynne Keyes (external); |
| Trista Clifford (ASE) | |
| Metalwork | Trista Clifford (ASE) |
| Worked Flint | Karine Le Hégarat (ASE); Hugo |
| Anderson-Whymark (external) | |
| Geological material and worked stone | Luke Barber (external) |
| Human bone incl cremated bone | Lucy Sibun (ASE) |
| Animal bone incl fish | Gemma Ayton (ASE) |
| Marine shell (external) | Elke Raemen (ASE); David Dunkin |
| Registered Finds | Elke Raemen & Trista Clifford (ASE) |
| Coins | Trista Clifford (ASE) |
| Treasure administration | Trista Clifford (ASE) |
| Conservation and x-ray | Fishbourne Roman Villa or UCL |
| Institute of Archaeology | |
| Geoarchaeology | Dr Matt Pope & Liz Chambers (ASE) |
| Geoarchaeology (incl wetland environments) | Kristina Krawiec (ASE) |
| Macro-plant remains (ASE) | Dr Lucy Allott & Karine Le Hégarat |
| Charcoal & Waterlogged wood | Dr Lucy Allott (ASE) |

- 7.3 The lithic and ceramic finds will be identified by specialists within Archaeology South-East, and preliminary identification of faunal remains may be undertaken if the nature of the deposits justifies such study. All finds in an unstable condition will be stabilised using passive conservation techniques where appropriate before being deposited with the receiving museum.
- 7.4 Palaeoenvironmental remains will be sampled and processed in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (EH 2011). Bulk samples will be processed using tank flotation unless considered detrimental to the samples or recovery rate (such as for waterlogged samples). Bulk samples will target recovery of plant remains (charcoal and macrobotanicals), fish, bird, small mammal and amphibian bone, and small artefacts. Waterlogged samples will be wet sieved through nested sieves and stored in wet, cool conditions or dried if considered an appropriate form of conservation for the remains. Specialist samples may also be taken from dry or waterlogged contexts. Such samples will target recovery of pollen (using monolith tins), molluscs, foraminifera, parasites and insects. Larger samples (80-100 litres) will be extracted wholesale from deposits rich in marine molluscs and large mammal bones. As a general rule waterlogged wood specimens will be recorded in detail in their original location. If removed they will be cleaned, photographed and a thin section sample will be taken for identification. Specimens will either be stored in wet cool conditions or dried if considered appropriate for the material. In all instances deposits with clear intrusive material shall be avoided.
- 7.5 Any finds believed to fall potentially within the statutory definition of Treasure, as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, amended 2003, shall be reported to the Essex County Council Finds Liaison Officer. Should the find's status as treasure be confirmed the Coroner, the client, landowner and the Borough archaeologist will also be informed. A record shall be provided to the Coroner and to the Borough archaeologist of the date and circumstances of discovery, the identity of the finder, and the exact location of the find(s) (OS map reference to within 1 metre, and find spot(s) marked onto the site plan).

8.0 Post-Excavation Analysis, Reporting and Archive

8.1 Upon completion of the fieldwork a written report, including plans, digital photographs and drawings, will be completed within four weeks; this will be dependent on the prompt production of any necessary specialist reports. A draft copy will be sent initially to the client for comment and approval and then to the Borough archaeologist. Once the report has been accepted then two final hard copies and one electronic copy in PDF format will be sent on CD at a minimum resolution of 300dpi to the HER.

8.2 The report will contain:

- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the trenching
- Location plan of the excavated area and/or other fieldwork in relation to the proposed development. At least two corners of each of the trenches shall be given 10 figure grid references.
- Section drawing(s) showing depths of deposits including present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale.
- Methodology and detailed results including a suitable conclusion and discussion. Where appropriate the discussion will be completed in consultation with the Eastern Counties Research Agenda and Strategy (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and the Historic Town Assessment.
- All specialist reports
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results.
- A clear statement of the archaeological value of the results, and their significance.
- A comparative discussion with relevant known archaeological information held on the EHER
- An opinion on the requirement for further work, accepting that the final decision will rest with CBC.
- A copy of the WSI as an appendix

8.3 The report, initially marked DRAFT, will be submitted to CBC for approval within four weeks of completion of the fieldwork. Once approved a pdf version of the document will be submitted to the UAD, as well as the EHER. If appropriate a digital vector plan will be included with the report, compatible with MapInfo GIS software.

8.4 An EHER summary sheet will be completed within four weeks. This will be completed in digital form and emailed to the EHER Team Officer. This shall include a plan showing the position of the excavation.

8.5 Upon completion of the fieldwork an OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) form will be completed for the project. A print-out of the form will be included as an appendix to the final report.

Archaeology South-East

Land at Coopers Beach Holiday Park, East Mersea, Essex
Written Scheme of Investigation

- 8.6 The archive and any finds will be submitted to Colchester and Ipswich Museums' Store, in accordance with the Guidelines on the Preparation and Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Colchester & Ipswich Museums (2008). Permission has been sought from the landowner to deposit the full site archive, including the physical archive, with the Museum.

- 8.7 Publication of the results (including any further analysis of the finds from the evaluation stage) at least to summary level (i.e. round up of archaeology in Essex in *Essex Archaeology and History*) shall be undertaken in the year following the archaeological fieldwork.

9.0 Project Management

9.1 The fieldwork will be managed by Andy Leonard and the post-excavation analysis by Mark Atkinson.

10.0 Health and Safety

10.1 Health and Safety must take priority over archaeological requirements. It is essential that all projects be carried out in accordance with safe working practices and under a defined Health and Safety Policy. A Risk Assessment for the project will be prepared prior to the commencement of work and all relevant health and safety regulations will be adhered to.

11.0 Insurance

11.1 Archaeology South-East is insured against claims for: public liability to the value of £50,000,000 any one occurrence and in the aggregate for products liability; professional indemnity to the value of £15,000,000 any one occurrence; employer's liability to the value of £50,000,000 each and every loss.

Archaeology South East
August 2015

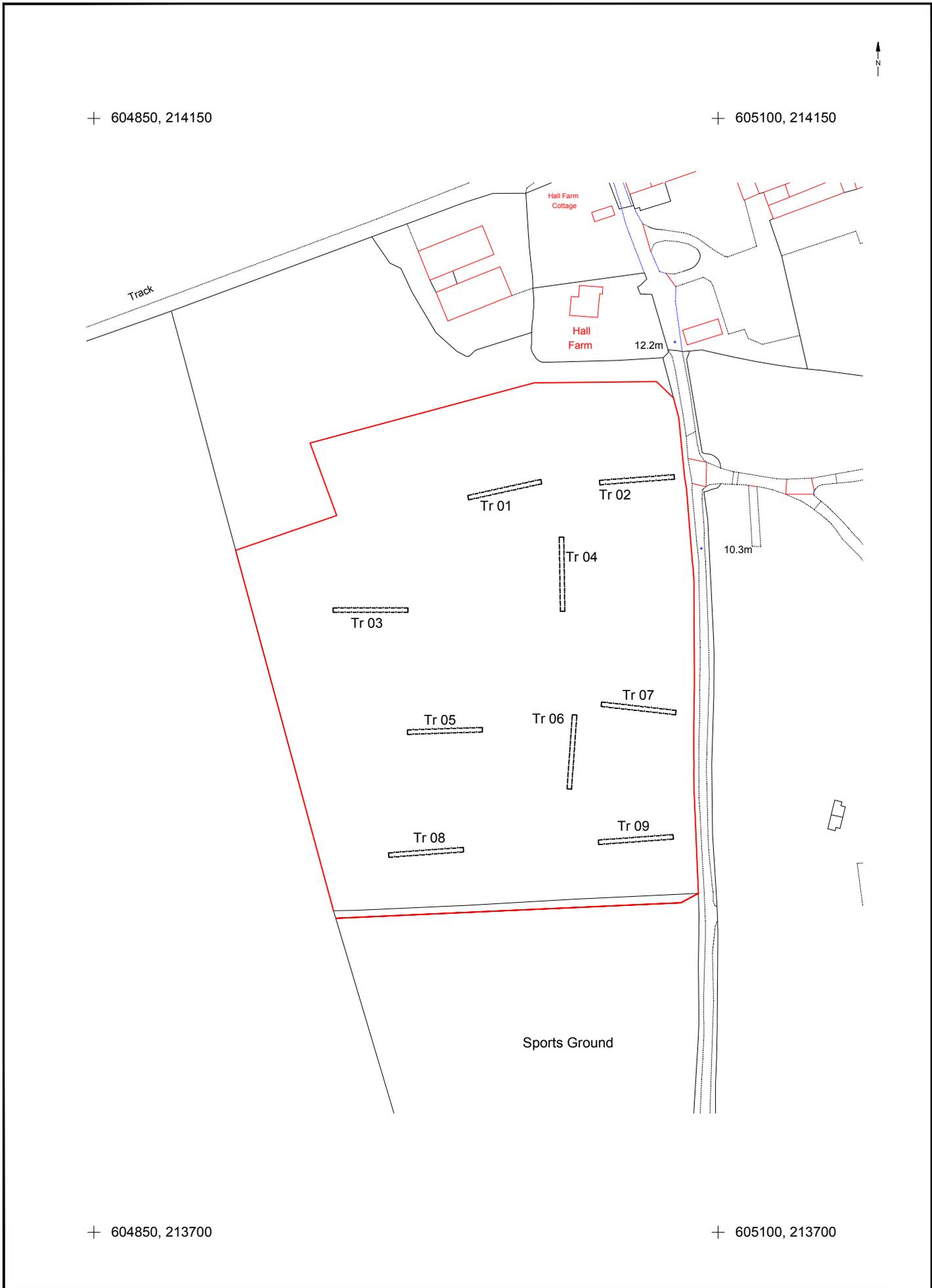
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| © Archaeology South-East | | Coopers Beach, East Mersea | Fig. 1 |
| Project Ref: 8410 | August 2015 | Site location | |
| Report Ref: WSI | Drawn by: DJH | | |



| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|--|--------|
| © Archaeology South-East | | Coopers Beach, East Mersea | | Fig. 2 |
| Project Ref: 8410 | August 2015 | Trench layout | | |
| Report Ref: WSI | Drawn by: DJH | | | |

+ 604850, 214150

605100, 214150



+ 604850, 213700

+ 605100, 213700

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Coopers Beach, East Mersea

Project Ref: 8410

August 2015

Report Ref: WSI

Drawn by: DJH

Trench layout in relation to proposed development

Fig. 3

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