

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report  
137-139 High Street  
Billericay, Essex**

**NGR: TQ 67342 94362**

**Planning Refs: 14/01394/FULL & 14/01395/LBBAS**

**ASE Project No: 160974  
Site Code: BL23**

**ASE Report No: 2017188  
OASIS id: archaeol6-283076**



**By Mark Germany**

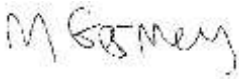

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<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Mark Germany</b>	<b>Archaeologist</b>	
<b>Reviewed and approved by:</b>	<b>Dan Swift</b>	<b>Project Manager</b>	
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**Archaeology South-East  
27 Eastways  
Witham  
Essex  
CM8 3YQ**

**Tel: 01376 331470  
Email: [fau@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)  
[www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeologyse](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeologyse)**

**Abstract**

*Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Breley Design Ltd to conduct an archaeological watching brief during groundworks ahead of the construction of a new extension to the rear of 137-139 High Street, Billericay.*

*Other than a late 19th/early 20th century pit/soakaway, no archaeological finds, features or deposits were recorded. The natural geology, of sand and gravel, was directly overlain by a disturbed topsoil horizon and tarmac.*

*The results of the watching brief complement those of previous archaeological investigations along Billericay High Street, in that most of them have revealed no, or only small amounts of, archaeological evidence for pre-post-medieval roadside occupation. As such it is possible that Billericay High Street was initially only lightly occupied and became more densely occupied during the 18th century and later.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background (Figure 1)**

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Breley Design Ltd to conduct an archaeological watching brief during groundworks ahead of the construction of a new extension to the rear of 137-139 High Street, Billericay (Figure 1; NGR: TQ 67342 94362).

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey website (BGS 2017), the geology at the site is Stanmore Formation Sand and Gravel, above Bagshot Formation Sand, and London Clay.

1.2.2 The site was generally flat and laid to hardstanding behind the road frontage building.

1.2.3 The topography of general area is rolling hills, ranging in height from 45m to 90m OD. The nearest river/river valley is the Crouch, c.2km to the south.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 The archaeological work was carried out to fulfil a condition of the consent for planning applications 14/01394/FUL and 14/01395/LBBAS and was advised by Teresa O'Connor of Essex County Council Place Services:

*Archaeological fieldwork*

2. *No groundworks of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological fieldwork in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the planning authority.*

*NB. The archaeological fieldwork will be required to take place following demolition of the existing extension. A WSI will need to be received and approved prior to the demolition.*

1.3.2 Accordingly, a Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording and Archaeological Watching Brief (ASE 2017a) was compiled and approved prior to the commencement of groundworks and monitoring.

### **1.4 Scope of Report**

1.5.1 This report presents the results of the archaeological watching brief undertaken between 3/4/17 and 5/7/14.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Overview**

- 2.1.1 Billericay originated as a Late Iron Age enclosure which had developed into a settlement by the Roman period, focussed c. 500m to the south of the site near the present-day school. The Roman remains are characteristically urban and therefore probably part of a Roman small-town. Those to the north, by contrast, are more rural in character and therefore perhaps part of a Late Iron Age/Roman farm or farmstead (ECC 1999). There is no evidence that this persisted into the early middle ages, when the landscape is likely to have been marginal or agricultural land, and lay on the boundary between two earlier parishes.
- 2.1.2 The history of Billericay began in the mid-13th century, when it was established by the monks of Stratford Langthorne Abbey, and was probably the site of a market. It subsequently developed either side of the High Street, before expanding as a ribbon settlement in the post-medieval period (Medlycott 1999). The earliest recorded mention of Billericay dates to 1291 (ECC 1999).
- 2.1.3 Number 137 High Street was constructed as a dwelling in the late 18th/early 19th century, before being incorporated into the adjacent Three Horseshoes Inn in the mid-19th century and subdivided into two shops in the mid-20th century. Number 139 High Street, by contrast is slightly earlier. It was erected in the 18th century, as the 'Three Horseshoes' and was one of the town's main coaching inns.
- 2.1.4 Historic maps indicate the site to have been occupied by roadside buildings since at least 1827, with fields to the west until c.1840 at the latest (ASE 2017b, figs 3-9).
- 2.1.5 Billericay is an example of a 'linear town'. Such towns are very common and are composed of a single row of house plots on each side of a main road (Hindle 1990).
- 2.1.6 Fifteen of the buildings fronting Billericay High Street are listed and 15th century and later (ECC 1999). No. 137 High Street is statutorily listed at Grade II (List Entry no. 1338407). No. 139 High Street is statutorily listed (as 'Three Horseshoes House') at Grade II (List Entry no. 1122230). They lie within Billericay Conservation Area, as designated by Basildon Council.
- 2.1.7 The Church of St Magdalen on Billericay High Street was constructed in c.1342 and then rebuilt in brick in the late 15th century. Pilgrims from the north heading south towards the tomb of St Thomas a Becket in Canterbury are conjectured to have used it as a place of worship (Billericay & Little Burstead Team Ministry 2017).

## 2.2 Recent Archaeological Investigation (Figure 2)

2.2.1 According to the Essex Sites and Monuments Record (EHER), Billericay High Street has undergone six recorded archaeological investigations (Table 1). The findings of those six sites are mostly slight and nearly all post-medieval and modern. Archaeological investigation has also taken place at number 38, but is apparently unrecorded by the EHER (ASE 2015). Two of the sites revealed no archaeological remains.

HER No.	Location	Description
14419	51 High Street	Post-medieval pits and ditch
14676	108 High Street	Residual earlier post-medieval artefacts
16839	148-150 High Street	No archaeological remains
18010	112-118 High Street	Tarmac resting on natural. No Archaeological remains
18459	91 High Street	19th century well
18940	72-82 High Street	No archaeological remains
No number	38 High Street	Undated post-holes, 16th century and later pits and pot sherds. Quarry pit. 19th century brick building and well

Table 1: Summary of HER/SMR data

2.3.2 The archaeological work at number 38 took place rear of Harry's Bar, a 16th century Grade II listed building and former inn. Its findings included 16th century and later pits and pot sherds and undated post-holes. Also present were a possible quarry pit, a small 19th century brick building, and infilled well (ASE 2015).

## 2.4 Aims and Objectives

2.4.1 The groundworks have the potential to expose evidence of earlier phases of development and activity on the site. As such, the general aim of the work is to monitor the above and below-ground works in order that any evidence relating to the dating and development of the existing buildings or previous phase of development on the site may be recorded and analysed, and used to enhance its understanding.

2.4.2 Additional questions specific to this site include:

- What is the date of the post-medieval ribbon settlement southwards along Billericay High Street? (Medlycott 1999, 4)
- What date did the site become a coaching inn? Was it adapted to this purpose or specially built?
- Can the construction date of the two structures be refined?
- Does either structure retain any elements of, or evidence for, pre-existing buildings on the site?

2.4.3 The Research Framework for the East of England sets out a research agenda for improving understanding of the region (Medlycott 2011). It recognises the importance of archaeological excavation/recording of buildings, particularly aspects of post-medieval rural housing and material culture. The research framework also highlights the importance of the study of post-medieval modification to existing structures and better dating thereof. Of particular relevance in this respect are:

- The origin of towns in the region, together with changes in their internal layouts and housing densities and their role as centres of supply and demand for both the Roman and medieval periods.
- The medieval and post-medieval High Street should be a priority for buildings research, including the identification of public houses.

2.4.4 In addition, the general objectives are to ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant planning conditions and to make available the results of the work by publication of the results in accordance with the requirements of the WSI (ASE 2017a). Consideration will also be given to publication of the results in a local journal and/or presentation/s to local historical and archaeological societies should the results be of sufficient interest.



### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork Methodology** (Figure 3)

- 3.1.1 The archaeological work consisted of monitoring of machine excavation of the footings for a new building extension in the yard immediately rear of 137-139 High Street. The extension measured 13m wide and 26m long.
- 3.1.2 Each of the footing trenches measured c.0.6m-0.8m wide and c.2m deep. These were mostly excavated by a mechanical excavator equipped with a 0.6m wide toothless bucket. For reasons of safety, no footing more than 1m deep was entered.
- 3.1.3 The findings of each day on site were recorded on pro-forma context, and watching brief record sheets. Digital photographs were taken of the footings and of the work in progress. The footings were planned via reference to the architect's site plans. No spot heights were taken.

#### **3.2 Fieldwork Constraints**

- 3.2.1 There were no fieldwork constraints, other than the depth of the footings mentioned above.

#### **3.3 Site Archive**

- 3.3.1 The site archive consists of paperwork, digital photographs and documents only and will be deposited at Chelmsford Museum, subject to agreement with the site's legal landowner. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 2).

Number of Contexts	5
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	29
Permatrace sheets	0
Trench Record Forms	0

Table 2: Quantification of site archive

#### 4.0 RESULTS (Figures 3 and 4)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
001	Layer	Tarmac	Site	Site	0.06
002	Layer	Topsoil	Site	Site	c.0.75
003	Layer	Natural	Site	Site	>1.25
004	Fill	Single fill	c.1.5m	c.1.5m	c.2m
005	Cut	Pit	c.1.5m	c.1.5m	c.2m

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

- 4.1.1 Inspection of the footings trenches for the extension revealed loose to friable sand and gravel [002] overlain by a c.0.75m layer of topsoil [1] which lay directly beneath c.0.06m thick tarmac. It also revealed a 2.2m deep pit [005].
- 4.1.2 The topsoil [001] a brownish-grey loose to friable sand with occasional small gravel stones contained occasional post-medieval and modern artefacts, including bricks, roof tiles, concrete, bottles, glass, plastic, iron scrap, modern pot sherds and animal bones. These were evenly spread, apart from a large dump of buried roof tile in the extension's north-east corner. Buried within the topsoil within the extension's south-west corner was a small surface of unmortared frogged bricks, the full extent of which was not exposed.
- 4.1.3 Pit [005] was situated in the north-east corner of the extension. It appeared to be square in plan and vertical sided and its fill of redeposited natural sand and gravel [004] became darker and more humic close to its base. In the bottom of the pit were pieces and complete examples of early 20th century ginger beer bottles, a small number of which were retained for analysis.

## 5.0 FINDS

### 5.1 Summary

5.1.1 A small group of complete/ near-complete ceramic and glass bottles was recovered and were washed and dried or air dried as appropriate. They were subsequently quantified by count and weight and were bagged by material and context (Table 3). All finds have been packed and stored following ClfA guidelines (2014).

Context	Pottery	Weight (g)	Glass	Weight (g)
004	4	2180	1	614
Total	4	2180	1	614

Table 4: Finds quantification

### 5.2 The Pottery by Helen Walker

5.2.1 Four stoneware ginger beer bottles were excavated from context [004] the fill of pit [005]. All are complete although two show some pre-excavation damage, and all are roughly the same size, measuring around 150mm in height with a base diameter of around 170mm. The bottles weigh between 520 and 594g, and when filled to the neck, their capacity is 310mls or just over half a pint.

5.2.2 The bottles are described as follows:

- Two bottles show a lead glaze with a brown wash from rim to shoulder and exhibit a black transfer-printed label enclosed in a shield-shaped cartouche showing the words 'ARTHUR J. WATTS REGISTERED TRADE MARK BILLERICAY & SOUTHEND-ON-SEA'. At the centre of the label, enclosed between the words 'registered' and 'trade mark', is an oak leaf emblem depicting a twig with four oak leaves and an acorn at the top. There is no manufacturer's mark (that is the manufacturer of the bottle, not the ginger beer).
- Bottle with a brown salt glaze and the impressed words 'A. J. WATTS SOUTHEND' around the shoulder. There is a manufacturer's mark just above the base of the bottle, impressed 'BOURNE EASTWOOD' enclosed in an oval cartouche. (Presumably A. J. Watts and Arthur J. Watts are the same person)
- Bottle with a pale brown salt glaze and the impressed words 'WYARD & TAYLOR ROMFORD' around the shoulder. There is a manufacturer's mark just above the base impressed 'DOULTON LAMBETH' arranged in an oval shape enclosing an impressed number '20'.

5.2.3 It is the blob-shaped rim designed for the insertion of a cork that identifies these bottles as ginger beers, a popular drink of the working classes from the early Victorian period until the 1950s. The bottles came in various shapes, but all these examples have straight sides and a short, angled shoulder and are known as the standard shape (Blakeman 2002, 20-21). No information

could be found about Arthur J. Watts or Wyard and Taylor other than to say they were local brewers of ginger beer. The latest bottles are the two with the transfer-printed labels which replaced the rather inconspicuous impressed marks during the 1890s, although early specimens are rare and most examples with such transfer-printed labels belong to the early 20th century, dating from about 1900 to 1920 (Hedges 1986, 19; Blakeman 2002, 20-23).

### **5.3 The Glass** by Elke Raemen

- 5.3.1 A near complete aqua Codd bottle was recovered from context [004]. The bottle is broken beneath the rim and misses its marble. It is embossed "ARTHUR WATTS SOUTHEND-ON-SEA" with "TRADEMARK REGISTERED Arthur I. Mills" as well as an acorn in the centre. "WATTS" is embossed beneath the base. The bottle maker was DAN RYLANDS L<sup>D</sup>, which is embossed on the back along with "4" "SOLE MAKERS" and "BARNESLEY". The bottle dates between c.1880 and 1910.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1.1 The machine excavation of the footings trenches for the rear extension revealed a sequence of c.0.75m of topsoil overlying natural sand and gravel, but no datable archaeological features or finds predating the 19th/20th century. The existing topsoil included numerous 19th/20th century finds and has probably been cultivated and turned over during the recent past.
- 6.1.2 Pit [005] was the only feature identified. It was more than 2m deep and probably dug as a soakaway. It contained glass and ceramic lemonade/ginger beer bottles firmly dating it to the late 19th/early 20th century.
- 6.1.3 No evidence of earlier phases of site development were seen and so none of the specific research questions listed in 2.4.2 or 2.4.3 can be addressed.
- 6.1.4 The results of the watching brief complement those of the other archaeological watching briefs and excavations which have taken place along Billericay High Street, in that most of them have produced little or no pre-18th century evidence for High Street occupation. Modern destruction of earlier remains is probably one reason for this, although it may be the case that Billericay remained sparsely occupied until the 18th century, and that it was only after that date that it became more densely occupied. Numbers 137 - 139 High Street are near the far south end of High Street and as such may be some of the town's latest pre-modern buildings.
- 6.1.5 The results are not considered sufficient to warrant further analysis or publication.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeology South-East thanks Breley Design Ltd for commissioning the archaeological work and its assistance. It also thanks John Dean, Dominic and Terry for their on-site assistance. The project was managed by Sarah Ritchie, and was undertaken by Mark Germany. Figures 1 to 3 were drawn by Andrew Lewsey. The post-excavation process was managed by Mark Atkinson and Dan Swift.

## Essex HER Summary

<b>Site name/Address:</b> 137-139 Billericay High Street, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Billericay	<b>District:</b> Borough of Basildon
<b>NGR:</b> TQ 67342 94362	<b>Site Code:</b> BL23
<b>Type of Work:</b> watching brief	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> Mark Germany/ASE
<b>Date of Work:</b> April 2017	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> c20m x c15m
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b> Chelmsford Museum	<b>Funding source:</b> Client: Breley Design Ltd
<b>Further Seasons Anticipated?:</b> no	<b>Related HER Nos:</b>
<b>Final Report:</b> yes	<b>OASIS ref:</b> 283076
<b>Periods Represented:</b> late post-medieval /modern	
<b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b>	
Other than a late 19th/early 20th century pit/soakaway, no archaeological finds, features or deposits were recorded. The natural geology, of sand and gravel, was directly overlain by a disturbed topsoil horizon and tarmac.	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b> ASE. 2017b, 137-139 High Street, Billericay, Essex. Historic Building Record. Archaeology South-East Report 2017022	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> Dan Swift	<b>Date of Summary:</b> 27/4/17

## Finds summary

Find type	Material	Period	Quantity
Drink bottle	Ceramic and glass	19th/20th century	4

## OASIS Form

### OASIS ID: archaeo16-283076

#### Project details

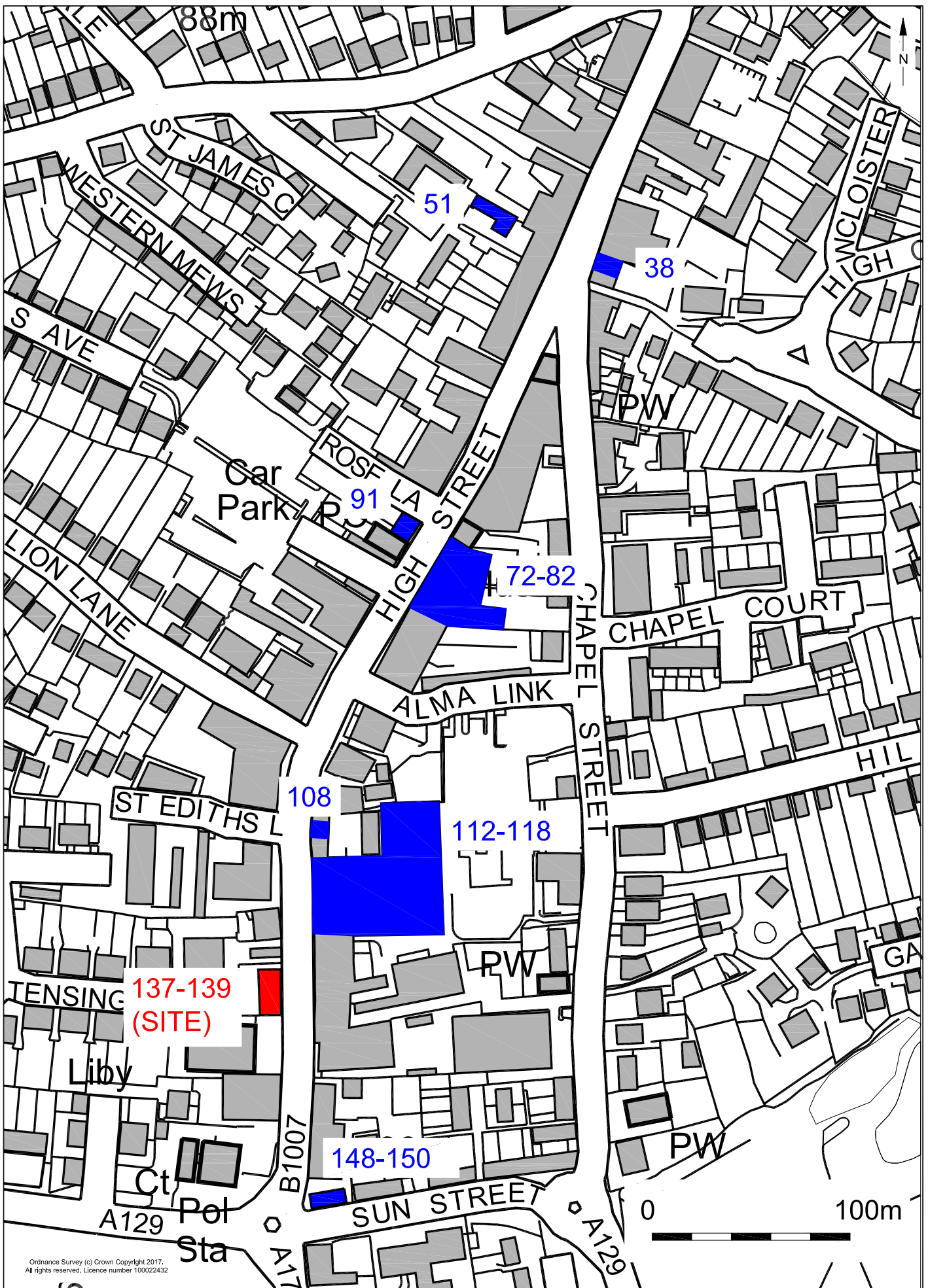
Project name	Archaeological Watching Brief. 137-139 Billericay High Street, Essex
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring of groundworks for building extension rear of 137-139 High Street, Billericay, Essex revealed no datable pre-modern archaeological remains.
Project dates	Start: 03-04-2017 End: 05-04-2017
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	BL23 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	160974 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	BUILDING Post Medieval
Monument type	BUILDING Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	ESSEX BASILDON BILLERICAY 137-139 High Street, Billericay
Site coordinates	TQ 67342 94362 51.622650889655 0.417718832057 51 37 21 N 000 25 03 E Point
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	Sarah Ritchie
Project supervisor	Mark Germany
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Breley Design Ltd
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No



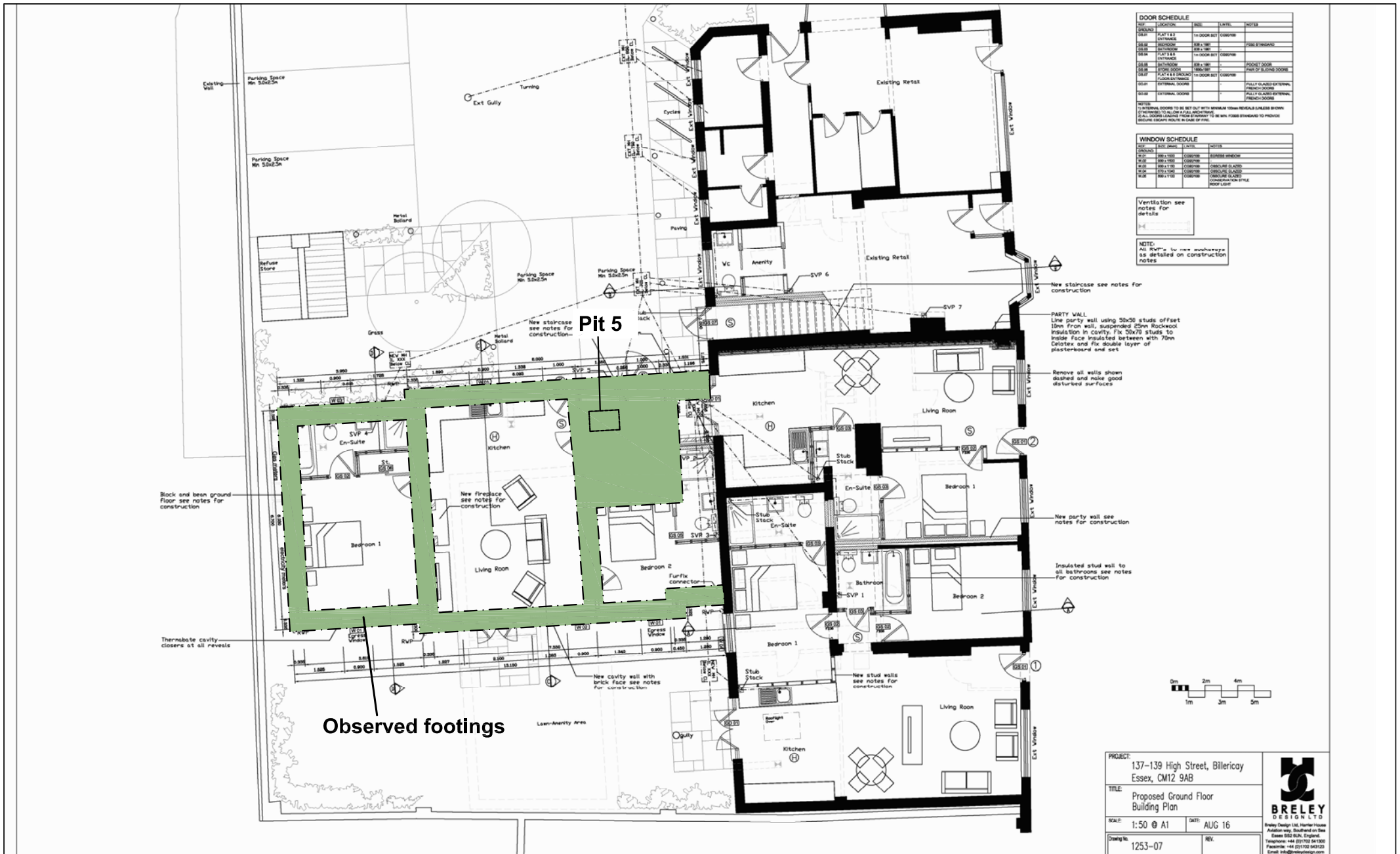
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Digital Archive recipient	Chelmsford Museum
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Chelmsford Museum
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief. 137-139 High Street, Billericay
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Other bibliographic details	2017188
Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South-East
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Description	A4. 13 pages of text and tables. 3 illustrations
Entered by	M. Germany (m.germany@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	19 April 2017



© Archaeology South-East		137-139 High Street, Billericay	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 160974	Apr 2017	Site location	
Report No: 2017188	Drawn by: APL		



© Archaeology South-East		137-139 High Street, Billericay		Fig.2
Project Ref: 160974	Apr 2017	Location of site and others mentioned in the text		
Report Ref: 2017188	Drawn by: APL			



REF	LOCATION	BSI	LEVEL	NOTE
DR01	FLAT #11 ENTRANCE	1st DOOR SET	CONVINE	
DR02	FLAT #11 ENTRANCE	2nd DOOR SET	CONVINE	POSS. FORWARD
DR03	FLAT #11 ENTRANCE	1st DOOR SET	CONVINE	
DR04	FLAT #11 ENTRANCE	1st DOOR SET	CONVINE	
DR05	FLAT #11 ENTRANCE	1st DOOR SET	CONVINE	
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REF	SYMBOL	ACTIVITY	DETAIL
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W02	W02	CONVINE	CONVINE
W03	W03	CONVINE	CONVINE
W04	W04	CONVINE	CONVINE
W05	W05	CONVINE	CONVINE
W06	W06	CONVINE	CONVINE
W07	W07	CONVINE	CONVINE
W08	W08	CONVINE	CONVINE
W09	W09	CONVINE	CONVINE
W10	W10	CONVINE	CONVINE
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W12	W12	CONVINE	CONVINE
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W22	W22	CONVINE	CONVINE
W23	W23	CONVINE	CONVINE
W24	W24	CONVINE	CONVINE
W25	W25	CONVINE	CONVINE
W26	W26	CONVINE	CONVINE
W27	W27	CONVINE	CONVINE
W28	W28	CONVINE	CONVINE
W29	W29	CONVINE	CONVINE
W30	W30	CONVINE	CONVINE
W31	W31	CONVINE	CONVINE
W32	W32	CONVINE	CONVINE
W33	W33	CONVINE	CONVINE
W34	W34	CONVINE	CONVINE
W35	W35	CONVINE	CONVINE
W36	W36	CONVINE	CONVINE
W37	W37	CONVINE	CONVINE
W38	W38	CONVINE	CONVINE
W39	W39	CONVINE	CONVINE
W40	W40	CONVINE	CONVINE
W41	W41	CONVINE	CONVINE
W42	W42	CONVINE	CONVINE
W43	W43	CONVINE	CONVINE
W44	W44	CONVINE	CONVINE
W45	W45	CONVINE	CONVINE
W46	W46	CONVINE	CONVINE
W47	W47	CONVINE	CONVINE
W48	W48	CONVINE	CONVINE
W49	W49	CONVINE	CONVINE
W50	W50	CONVINE	CONVINE

Ventilation see notes for details

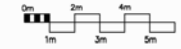
NOTE: All items to see annotations as detailed on construction notes

PARTY WALL: Line party wall using 50x50 studs offset 10mm from wall, suspended 25mm Rockwool insulation in cavity. Fix 100x70 studs to inside face insulated between with 70mm Celotex and fix double layer of plasterboard and set.

Remove all walls shown dashed and make good disturbed surfaces

New party wall see notes for construction

Insulated stud wall to all bedrooms see notes for construction



PROJECT:	137-139 High Street, Billericay Essex, CM12 9AB
TITLE:	Proposed Ground Floor Building Plan
SCALE:	1:50 @ A1
DATE:	AUG 16
Drawing No:	1253-07
REV:	



Breley Design Ltd, Harter House  
 Pavilion Way, Boreham-on-Sea  
 Essex, SS12 8AN, England  
 Telephone: +44 (0)1702 541300  
 Fax/Email: +44 (0)1702 541303  
 Email: info@breleydesign.com



Building footings north-east corner, looking south-west



Building footings north-east corner, looking north



Building footings, south side looking east



Pit 5 looking north-east

© Archaeology South-East		137-139 High Street, Billericay	Fig.4
Project Ref: 160974	Apr 2017	Site photographs	
Report Ref: 2017188	Drawn by: APL		

**Sussex Office**

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

**Essex Office**

27 Eastways  
Witham  
Essex  
CM8 3YQ  
tel: +44(0)1376 331470  
email: [fau@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)  
web: [www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeologyse](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeologyse)

**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](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)  
web: [www.ucl.ac.uk/caa](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/caa)

