

**Archaeological Evaluation at  
Hill View, Stanford Road, Orsett, Essex**

**ASE Project no: 170412**

**Site Code: THHV17**

**ASE Report No: 2017293**



**July 2017**

**Archaeological Evaluation at  
Hill View, Stanford Road, Orsett  
Essex**

**NGR: TQ 65622 81242  
Planning Ref: 16/01266/FUL**

**ASE Project No: 170412  
Site Code: THHV17**

**ASE Report No: 2017293  
OASIS id: 289022**

**By Mark Germany  
with Robin Wroe-Brown**

**Illustrations by Andy Lewsey**

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**Abstract**

*An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching in advance of residential development at Hill View, Stanford Road, Orsett, Essex was commissioned by MR Services Essex and carried out by Archaeology South-East.*

*Six trenches were excavated in the garden of this private residence. The trenches revealed a simple deposit sequence of topsoil and subsoil above natural deposits, but no archaeological features or finds.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching, carried out in advance of residential development at Hill View, Stanford Road, Orsett, Essex, RM16 3BS. The archaeological work was recommended and monitored by Essex County Council Place Services. It was commissioned by MR Services Essex and undertaken by Archaeology South-East (ASE) on 31st May and 1st June 2017.

### **1.2 Location, Topography and Geology**

1.2.1 Orsett is located in Thurrock Unitary District, in the south-east of Essex. The site is located within the property known as 'Hill View', which lies immediately west of Annabell Avenue and the Southfields residential estate (Figure 1; TQ 65622 81242).

1.2.2 The site comprised the garden of an existing house with a patio and garage (Figure 2). Trenches 1 and 2 were located on the front lawn of the property, Trench 3 was excavated through a concrete-based patio to the rear of the house and Trenches 4-6 were dug into the back lawn. The land was relatively flat, varying in level by less than 0.4m from 34.29m OD adjacent to Trench 1 and 34.67 adjacent to Trench 5.

1.2.3 The geology of the site comprises sands and gravels of the Black Park Gravel Member overlying Lambeth Group bedrock of clay, silt and sand (BGS 2017). On site, this was observed as mixed light orange gravel and sand with brown silty sand.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 Thurrock Council has granted permission for the existing buildings of Hill View to be demolished and replaced by four new dwellings (Planning permission ref: 16/01266/FUL).

1.3.2 Condition 7 of the planning permission relates to archaeology and states that

*“no demolition or groundworks of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the planning authority”.*

*REASON: In the interests of the historical and archaeological value of the site.*

1.3.3 A Brief for the archaeological evaluation was produced (ECC 2017) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared and submitted by ASE (2017) prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

## **1.4 Scope of Report**

- 1.4.1 This report presents the results of the archaeological evaluation carried out by ASE on the site between 31<sup>st</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017. Fieldwork was directed by Mark Germany, assisted by Rob Cullum. Sarah Ritchie managed the fieldwork and Mark Atkinson managed the post-excavation process.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 The following archaeological background is a brief description of the archaeology of the area taken from the Archaeological Brief (Place Services, 2017) with due acknowledgement and the Essex Historic Environment Record (HER). Because much of the information is multi-period or from cropmarks which are not securely dated, these have not been presented by period. The Essex HER numbers are located on Figure 1.

### **2.2 Cropmarks in the vicinity**

2.2.1 The site lies within an area of extensive cropmarks indicative of multi-period occupation. A c.90ha area of cropmarks is present around Barrington's Farm, c. 670m north-east of the site, encompassing at least three different superimposed field systems, as well as rectilinear and sub-rectangular enclosures of unknown date (HER 5191).

2.2.2 A complex of cropmarks c.700m south of the site at Orsett Golf Course include trackways, enclosures and remains of burial mounds, indicative of a prehistoric date (HER 5226). Approximately 600m south-west of the site is a larger complex of cropmarks (HER 5159–5164), which include a Scheduled Ancient Monument of a Neolithic causewayed enclosure. Ditches, pits, further enclosures and probable burial mounds are also present.

2.2.3 Further cropmarks c.650m to the east are field boundaries of an unknown date (HER14706).

### **2.3 Previous excavations – the Orsett Cock enclosure**

2.3.1 Excavations c. 100m to the north and north-west of the site during the building of the A13 revealed a wide range of features comprising linear ditches, ring ditches, large pits and enclosure systems and possible settlement dating to the Bronze and Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods (HER1857-1862, 5218-5225).

2.3.2 This site was first recognised in 1946 as a rhomboidal, double-ditched enclosure, known as the Orsett Cock enclosure. The site was trial-trenched in 1956-1957 and in 1960-1961 a watching brief was undertaken on the realignment of the Brentwood Road. In 1968-1970 watching briefs were undertaken on the laying of gas pipelines. The site had been scheduled in 1960 as a Roman fort or camp. The 'camp' was part of a whole complex of cropmarks including superimposed field systems, enclosures, annular and pennanular gullies. The 'camp' itself appeared to be single-ditched on the south and west sides, almost certainly so on the east (where part had been lost to road realignment) but not so on the north. An east-west ditch cut across the enclosure, cutting the inner 2 ditches, stopping short of the outer one (probably in the tail of a bank). The entrance was presumed to be on the east side (not visible).

- 2.3.3 Inside the enclosure were cropmarks of internal subdivision, ring ditches (fragments), pits, postholes etc. To the south of the enclosure a ditch seemed to end in a rectangular enclosure at its west end and at its other end seemed to link to field systems east of the Brentwood Road. The 2 inner ditches were interpreted as forming a probably defensive enclosure. A short period of use was implied by the lack of silting with the original banks being thrown back into ditches.
- 2.3.4 The site was excavated 1976-1979 in advance of total destruction by the dualling of the A13. These excavations showed the earliest 'cardinal' feature in the late Iron Age to have been a square enclosure to the north of the one already described. It had an internal bank and possibly had a bridged entrance on the south east side. Two groups of post-holes within it could have belonged to circular or oval buildings. In the succeeding phase a ditch was added on 3 sides (north, west, east) and it is likely that the southern enclosure came into being at this time, in a less substantial form than its later appearance. In its first definite appearance this was double ditched and the north enclosure was used as an annexe.
- 2.3.5 The south enclosure was entered by a causeway on the east side, the northern one by a causeway on its south eastern side, from the south enclosure. Two large post-holes in the southern enclosure entrance probably mark the ends of the inner rampart. There were signs of an entrance corridor. The rampart width was indicated by a discontinuous gully within the inmost ditch c2.5m from its inside edge. The gully was probably for a rampart revetment. The two ditches of this phase are again interpreted as having a short-life but the lower ditch fills contained iron age finds alone. Roman finds were only made higher up, in tipped material. The enclosure seems to have been laid out around a post hole building within a pennanular gully. Its fill produced late Iron Age to early Roman finds and it probably stood until the later 1st century AD. Another building may have succeeded it or coexisted with it. Its date range could not be determined. Both structures were similar to building forms at Little Waltham. Other features of this period include working areas (possibly), a length of curving ditch and a pit, and a four-post structure.
- 2.3.6 Just before Romanized fabrics appeared on the site both enclosures were combined in a multivallate defended complex. A ditch was put around them (of 2 phases). This ditch functioned with the earlier ditches of the southern enclosure and (for one phase) with the earlier northern enclosure ditches (a building was put over them in the 2nd phase).
- 2.3.7 It is possible that this clearly extensive multi-period landscape may extend southwards into the area of the site. However cropmarks investigated less than 100m to the north at Orsett Fire Station revealed only medieval field systems (HER 5219).

## **2.4 Other HER references**

- 2.4.1 A World War One landing ground in operation between 1917-1919 used by the 78 Squadron RFC on home defence duties was situated c.300m south-east of the site (HER 16685). The site covered 80 acres with no permanent buildings



erected. The site saw use as an emergency landing ground in WWII and post war a Royal Army Service Corps depot was built on the southern half of the old landing ground. A large World War II military camp was erected c.430m south-east of the site (HER 21491). Very little is known about the camp, however aerial photos from 1946 show c.300 huts with pitched roofs. The site has been completely destroyed by late 20th century gravel extraction.

## **2.5 Map regression**

2.4.2 Map regression using historic mapping from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards shows that the site was situated within open land, fronting Stanford Road to the north, until c.1920, when a gravel pit is recorded immediately to the west of the site. Hill View House is built by c.1950 and the plot established. The site itself does not change after this date.

## **2.6 Aims and Objectives**

2.6.1 The general aims of the archaeological investigation were described in the WSI (ASE 2017) as follows:

- To determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.
- To enable the Essex County Council's Archaeological Advisor to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further work.

2.6.2 Due to its proximity of the Orsett Cock enclosure and the extensive cropmarks in the vicinity, the site was considered to have high potential to include agricultural and settlement remains from the Bronze-Age through to the medieval period. Site-specific research questions were set out in the WSI, with relation to Medlycott (2011) and Brown and Glazebrook (2000), as follows:

- What forms do farms take, what range of building types are present and how far can functions be attributed to them?
- Are there regional or landscape variations in settlement location, density or type?
- How far can the size and shape of fields be related to agricultural regimes?
- What is the relationship between rural and urban sites?
- Examination of the inter-relationships between settlements, together with variation and changes in settlement types, offers considerable potential to explore the social changes taking place, as well as the interrelationship between settlements and monuments. Can this be observed at the site?
- Given the potential for continual activity within multi-period landscape, can the site shed light on the evolution of agricultural development from the Bronze Age through to the Anglo-Saxon period?

### 3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 Not all of the evaluation trenches could be positioned in accordance with the WSI (ASE 2017). Trenches 1 and 2, originally planned to form a T-shape were moved and separated due to the presence of live electric cables. Trench 1 was moved to the north-west corner and Trench 2 was moved 5m to the east of its original position. Trench 4 was shortened from 5m to 3.7m due to the presence of a tree stump. The final position of trenches is shown in Figure 2.
- 3.1.2 All trenches were excavated using a 13-tonne tracked 360° excavator with a toothless bucket and were a uniform 1.80m wide. Trench 1 measured 10m in length and Trench 2 was 5m long. Trench 3 was excavated into a patio (for which a toothed bucket was employed) and was 5.3m long. Trenches 4 and 6 were parallel and connected together by Trench 5 which ran orthogonally between them. Trench 4 was 3.7m long (shortened due to a tree stump) and was also partly excavated through the patio, Trench 5 measured 5m long and Trench 6 was 10m in length.
- 3.1.3 The evaluation trenches were cleaned by hand and recorded using standard ASE trench sheets. In the event no archaeological remains were present in any of the trenches.
- 3.1.4 A full photographic record comprising colour digital images was made (a selection are reproduced in Figure 3). All trenches were photographed from each end (trench shots). No context shots were required. In addition, a number of representative photographs of the general work on site were taken (working shots). The photographic register includes the shot number, location of shot, direction of shot and a brief description of the subject photographed.
- 3.1.5 All work was carried out in accordance with the WSI (ASE 2017), the standards and guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a-d) and the standards for field archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003)

#### 3.2 The Site Archive

- 3.2.1 The site archive does not contain artefacts and is therefore entirely composed of digital files, photographs and paperwork. With the consent of the legal landowner of the site, the site archive will be deposited at Thurrock Museum. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	0
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	28
Permatrace sheets	0
Trench Record Forms	6

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 Summary of the trenches

4.1.1 The results have been summarised in tabular form below (Table 2). The context descriptions are as follows:

*Tr/001 Topsoil:* Turf over mid grey sandy silt with moderate pebbles/gravel inclusions.

*Tr/002 Subsoil:* Mid orange brown sandy silt with moderate pebbles/gravel inclusions

*Tr/003 Natural:* Mixed light orange gravel/sand and light orange brown silty sand.

Trench	Context	Type	Interpretation	Deposit Thickness m
1	1/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.23-0.28
1	1/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.09-0.15
1	1/003	Layer	Natural	n/a
2	2/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.15-0.19
2	2/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.02-0.10
2	2/003	Layer	Natural	n/a
3	3/001	Layer	Patio & concrete	0.18
3	3/002	Layer	Made ground	0.36-0.72
3	3/003	Layer	Natural	n/a
4	4/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.18-0.23
4	4/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.15
4	4/003	Layer	Natural	n/a
4	4/004	Layer	Patio & concrete (N side only)	0.20
5	5/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.20-0.25
5	5/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.14-0.16
5	5/003	Layer	Natural	n/a
6	6/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.14-0.19
6	6/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.04-0.20
6	6/003	Layer	Natural	n/a

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

4.1.2 Trenches 1, 2, 5 and 6 revealed a sequence of natural (Tr/003) overlain by subsoil (Tr/002) and topsoil (Tr/001). In trench 3 the subsoil and topsoil had been replaced by a layer of made ground (3/002) and a patio surface (3/001). The patio surface extended along the northern edge of Trench 4 (4/004).

4.1.3 No archaeological deposits, features or finds were revealed in any of the trenches.

## **5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence**

- 5.1.1 The natural geological deposit was encountered between 33.97m AOD in the north (Trench 1) and 34.32m AOD towards the south (Trench 5) reflecting a very small difference across the site of less than 0.40m over a distance of 40m.
- 5.1.2 The overburden varied in depth from 0.17m to 0.39m and consisted of 0.15m to 0.28m of topsoil above 0.02m to 0.16m of subsoil overlying natural deposits of sandy gravel. In Trench 3 and the north edge of Trench 4 the overburden also included the modern patio surface over concrete, with made ground up to 0.72m deep in one part of Trench 3.
- 5.1.3 No archaeological features were encountered.

### **5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts**

- 5.2.1 The only major truncation observed in the trenches was caused by the patio and its make-up in Trench 3 (Trench 3 in Figure 3), which cut into the natural deposits by up to 0.72m. The foundations of the existing buildings on site (the house and garage) will also have truncated the natural horizon.

### **5.3 Consideration of project aims and updated research agenda**

- 5.3.1 The trial trenching has achieved its general aim in that it has shown an apparent absence of archaeological survival within the site, thus enabling the ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further work to satisfy the archaeology condition.
- 5.3.2 The site-specific aims cannot be addressed as no archaeological remains were found of any period. However, the presence of multi-period sites and cropmarks within close proximity of the site (see section 2.2 and 2.3 above) suggests that archaeological material is likely to be present in the immediate vicinity.
- 5.3.3 It is not possible to update the research aims due to the lack of archaeological discoveries in the evaluation trenches.

### **5.4 Conclusions**

- 5.4.1 The trial trench evaluation has provided no evidence for the presence of archaeological remains at the site. It is considered that the development will therefore have a negligible impact upon the below-ground heritage resource of this vicinity.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ASE would like to thank MR Services Essex for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and ECC Place Services for providing the brief and monitoring the works. Mark Germany supervised the evaluation fieldwork under the project management of Andy Leonard. Robin Wroe-Brown produced the report, with post-excavation project Management provided by Jim Stevenson and Mark Atkinson.

## Appendix 1: HER Summary

<b>Site name/Address:</b> Hill View, Stanford Road, Orsett, Essex, RM16 3BS	
<b>Parish:</b> Orsett	<b>District:</b> Thurrock
<b>NGR:</b> TQ 65622 81242	<b>Site Code:</b> THHV 17
<b>Type of Work:</b> Archaeological evaluation	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> Mark Germany, Archaeology South-East
<b>Date of Work:</b> 31/05/2017 – 01/06/2017	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> 0.15 ha
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b> Thurrock	<b>Funding source:</b> Landowner
<b>Further Seasons Anticipated?:</b> No	<b>Related HER Nos:</b>
<b>Final Report:</b> EAH roundup	<b>OASIS No:</b>
<b>Periods Represented:</b> None	
<b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b>  Six evaluation trenches were excavated in the garden of a private residence. The trenches revealed only a simple deposit sequence of layers of topsoil and subsoil above natural deposits, but no archaeological features or finds.	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> Robin Wroe-Brown	<b>Date of Summary:</b> 30/06/2017

## Appendix 2: OASIS Form

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-289022**

### Project details

Project name	Hill View, Stanford Road, Orsett
Short description of the project	Six evaluation trenches were excavated by Archaeology South-East in the garden of a private residence. The trenches revealed single layers of topsoil and subsoil above natural deposits, but no archaeological features or finds.
Project dates	Start: 31-05-2017 End: 01-06-2017
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	THHV17 – Sitecode 170412 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods techniques	& "Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX THURROCK ORSETT Hill View, Stanford Road, Orsett
Postcode	RM16 3BS
Study area	1134 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 65622 81242 51.505284220277 0.386709191342 51 30 19 N 000 23 12 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 33.97m Max: 34.32m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project originator	brief Essex County Council Place Services

Project design ASE  
 originator

Project Sarah Ritchie  
 director/manager

Project supervisor Mark Germany

Type of Developer  
 sponsor/funding body

Name of MR Services Essex  
 sponsor/funding body

### Project archives

Physical Archive No  
 Exists?

Physical Archive Thurrock Museum  
 recipient

Digital Archive Thurrock Museum  
 recipient

Digital Contents "Survey","Stratigraphic"

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

Paper Archive Thurrock Museum  
 recipient

Paper Contents "Stratigraphic"

Paper Media "Context sheet","Report"  
 available

### Project bibliography

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title An Archaeological Evaluation at Hill View, Stanford Road,  
 Orsett, Essex

Author(s)/Editor(s) Germany, M., Wroe-Brown, R.

Other bibliographic ASE report number 2017293  
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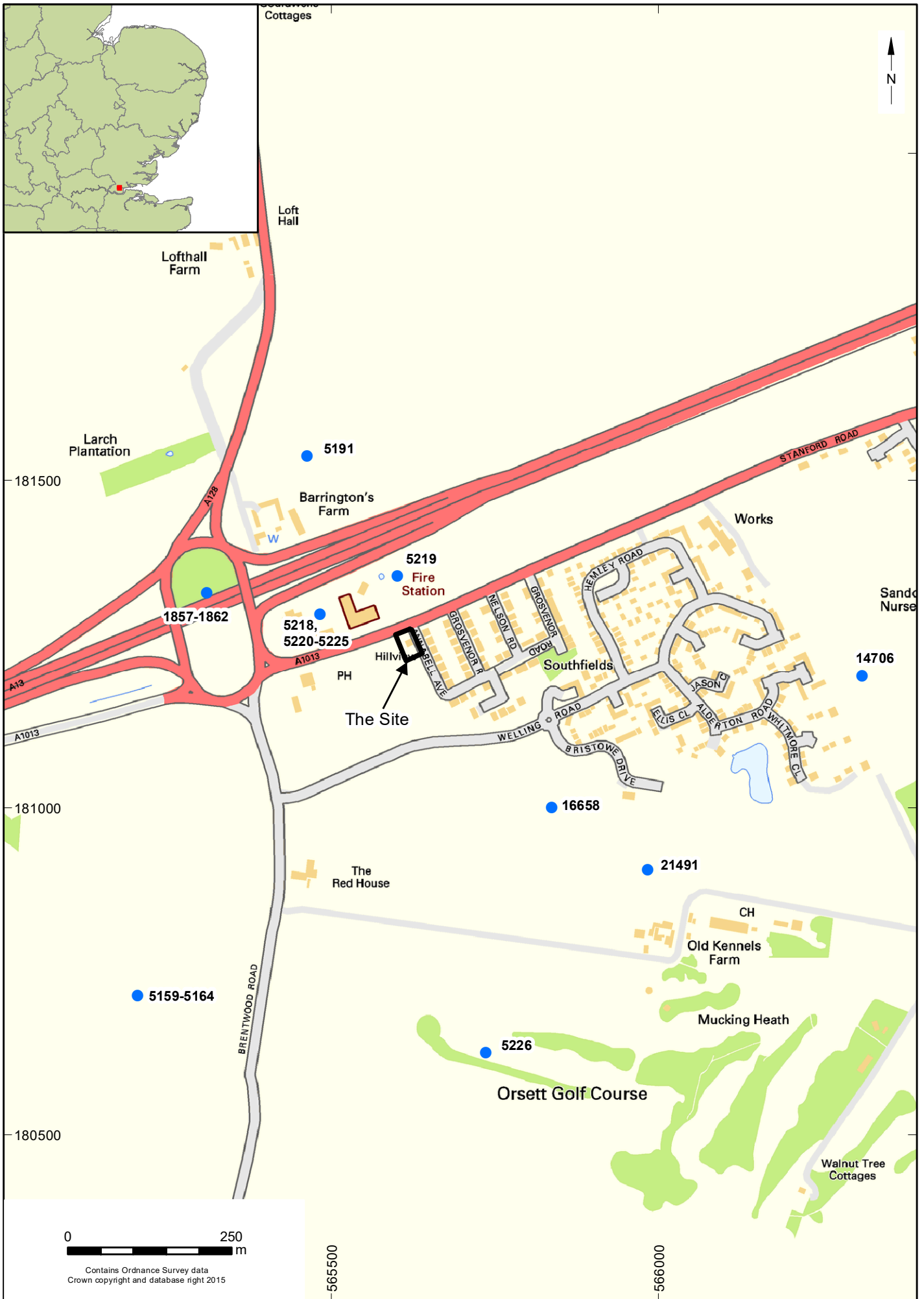
Place of issue or Witham  
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Description A4 report

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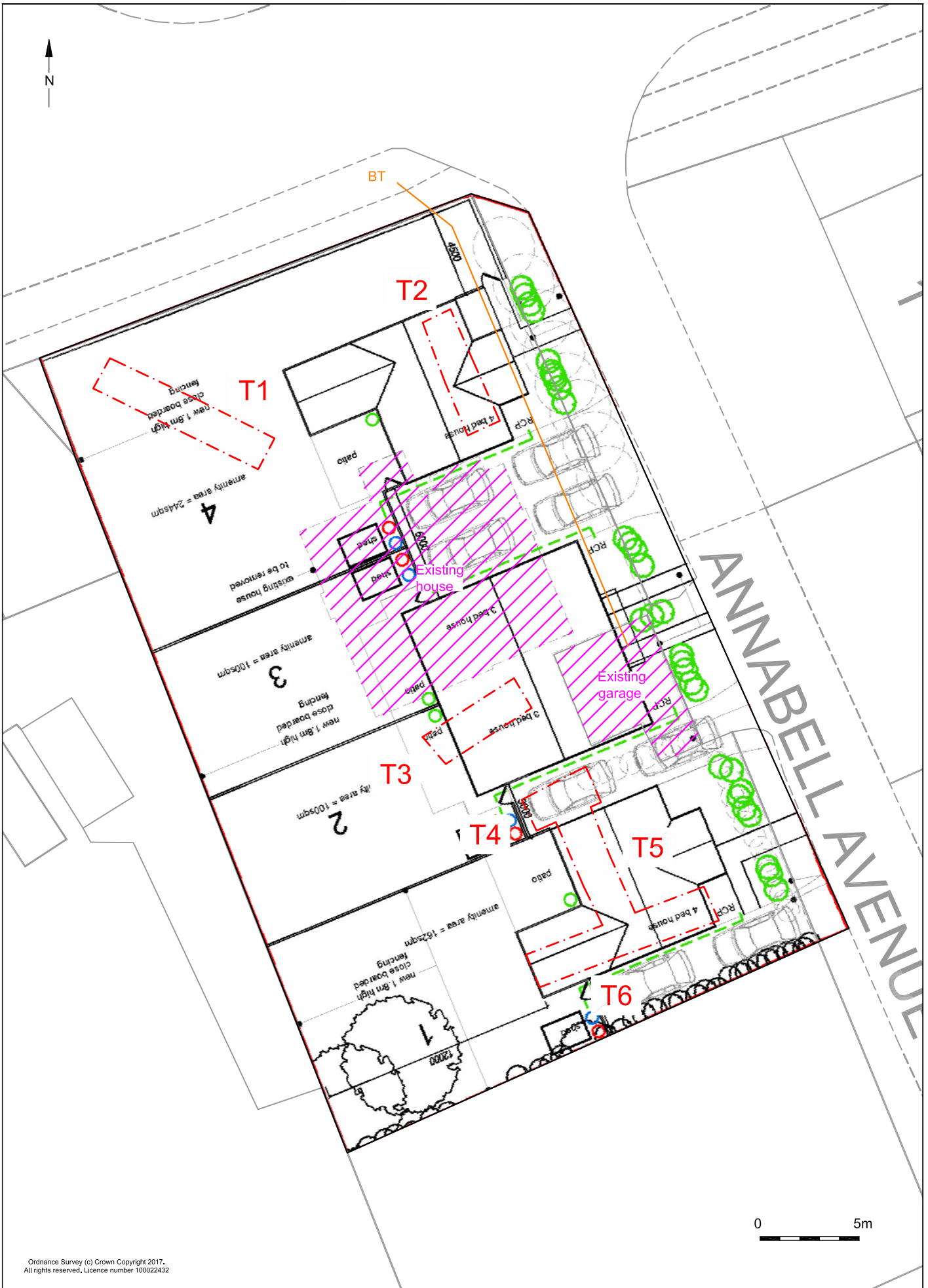
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Project Ref: 170412	June 2017	Site location and local HER references	
Report No: 2017293	Drawn by: APL		



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© Archaeology South-East		Hillview, Stanford Road, Orsett	Fig.2
Project Ref: 170412	June 2017	Evaluation Trench locations with the proposed development plan	
Report Ref: 2017293	Drawn by: APL		





General site view with Trenches 1 and 2 looking west

General site view with Trenches 4, 5 and 6 looking north

Trench 1 looking north-west, 1m scale

Trench 2 looking north-north-west, 1m scale

Trench 3 looking east-north-east, 1m scale

Trench 4 looking east-north-east, 1m scale

Trench 5 looking east-south-east, 1m scale

Trench 6 looking east-north-east, 1m scale

© <b>Archaeology South-East</b>		Hillview, Stanford Road, Orsett	Fig.3
Project Ref: 170412	June 2017	Selected photographs	
Report Ref: 2017293	Drawn by: APL		

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