

Archaeological Evaluation

**Land adjacent to Chain Bridge Farm,
Roman Road, Shenfield,
Essex**

**ASE Project No: 180424
Site Code: MSCBF18**

ASE Report No: 2018286



September 2018

Archaeological Evaluation

**Land adjacent to Chain Bridge Farm,
Roman Road,
Shenfield, Essex
CM15 8SG**

**NGR: TQ 62305 96951
Brentwood Borough Council**

Planning Ref: 17/01221/FUL

**ASE Project No: 180424
Site Code: MSCBF18**

**ASE Report No: 2018286
OASIS id: 327101**

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East on land adjacent to Chain Bridge Farm, Shenfield, Essex. The fieldwork was commissioned by Court & Co. in advance of residential development at the site. The fieldwork took place from the 28th-29th August 2018.

Three evaluation trenches were investigated within an area of garden to the east of the range of historic farm buildings and south of the farmhouse.

No archaeological remains were uncovered within the evaluated areas. The natural geology is buried beneath 0.32-0.40m of disturbed topsoil, which contained 20th-century glass and ceramic material. Modern land drains and service gullies were observed cut through the overburden into the natural deposit.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of UCL's Institute of Archaeology Centre for Applied Archaeology, were commissioned by Court & Co., to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Chain Bridge Farm, Roman Road, Shenfield, Essex in advance of a small residential development.
- 1.1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in fulfilment of an archaeological condition attached to planning consent.

1.2 Location, Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The site is located between the towns of Shenfield and Mountnessing, in west Essex (NGR TQ 62305 96951; Fig. 1). It is bounded on the southeast by Roman Road (formerly the A12), to the northeast by the River Wild with a tributary to the northwest and an open field to the southwest.
- 1.2.2 The British Geological Survey (BGS 2018) online geological mapping (1:50,000 scale) shows the underlying bedrock geology of the site is formed of London Clay (clay, silt and sand) with superficial deposits of Head (clay, silt, sand and gravel)
- 1.2.3 The site is located on the 55m AOD contour and very gently slopes up to the southwest corner, away from the river. It is currently occupied by a farmhouse, workshop garages and a swimming pool with associated hardstanding along the northwest side of the site with the remainder laid to grass and fringed by trees.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 Brentwood Borough Council has granted conditional planning permission for the development, which will include demolishing of the existing workshop buildings and construction of five new dwellings with associated car parking, garden space, landscaping and associated infrastructure (Ref. 17/01221/FUL). Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), in their role as archaeological advisors to Brentwood Borough Council, recommended that an archaeological condition be placed on the planning permission as the site is considered to lie within an area of archaeological interest.
- 1.3.2 The archaeological condition was based upon guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012) and local planning policy. It states that:

"No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of trial trenching and excavation in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the local planning authority".

- 1.3.3 Court & Co. subsequently commissioned ASE to undertake the fieldwork and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (ASE 2018) was submitted to ECCPS and approved prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation undertaken from the 28th–29th August 2018. It describes the archaeological remains encountered in the excavated trenches, assesses their significance and considers the archaeological potential/implication for the wider site.
- 1.4.2 The fieldwork and survey was undertaken by Samara King (Senior Archaeologist). The fieldwork was managed in the field by Andy Leonard (Project Manager) and in post-excavation by Mark Atkinson (Post-Excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The site lies in what was a predominantly rural area prior to the mid to late 20th century, and thus an area where little archaeological investigation has been undertaken. As such, there is a general paucity of known archaeological remains in the general vicinity of the site.

2.1.2 The following information has been drawn from the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2018), which refers to the Essex Historical Environmental Record (EHER). The sites mentioned in the text (by their HER number), and closest to the current site, are shown on Figure 1.

2.2 Prehistoric and Roman

2.2.1 There are no known remains of prehistoric date within the general vicinity of the site.

2.2.2 The site lies to the northwest of Roman Road, which was the A12 prior to the construction of the Ingatestone Bypass. The original Roman road (EHER 5428) runs along the route of this road, which linked the Roman (and later) settlements of Londinium (London) and Camulodunum (Colchester) via Caesaromagus (Chelmsford).

2.2.3 However, there are undated cropmarks known within the general area. These are typically of linear features that have been interpreted as former field boundaries, which could potentially be prehistoric or Roman in date. None of these remains extend into the site area.

2.3 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

2.3.1 There are no known remains of Saxon origin and the known medieval sites in the area are limited in number, likely reflecting both its rural character and minimal archaeological investigation previously undertaken in this vicinity.

2.3.2 Fitzwalters Farm (now Courage Farms), which is located to the northwest of the development, is the site of a homestead moat. Such sites are typically medieval in date and in this instance, the site is thought to have 14th-century origins (EHER 5346), although the extant listed building is of 18th-century date (EHER 5347). The earlier mansion house, presumably within the moated enclosure, is described in the 18th century as being built for John Morecroft. Medieval artefacts have been recovered from the field surfaces at Arnolds Farm (EHER 5470), to the south-east.

2.4 Post-medieval and modern

2.4.1 Post-medieval sites in the area are generally limited to Listed Buildings, such as that at Fitzwalters. The development site was probably part of the later estate. The chain bridge, located to the east of the development, appears to have been present in some form by 1699 when it is mentioned in John Ogilby's

'Travellers Guide' of that year. Chain Bridge Farm was established at some point between 1777 and 1876, that is between the publication of the Chapman and Andre map and the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey.

2.4.2 Historic map evidence shows that the general layout of the site has changed little since the 1880s. The 1st and 2nd edition OS maps depict the farmhouse and associated buildings with an adjacent garden bisected by an east/west path, separating lawn and tree-covered areas. Early 20th century maps show changes to the garden layout and additions to the range of outbuildings.

2.4.3 No previous archaeological investigations have been conducted on the site or in the general vicinity.

2.5 Project Aims and Objectives

2.5.1 The general aims of the archaeological investigation were as follows:

- To determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.
- To enable ECCPS to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further work required in order to satisfy the archaeology condition.

2.5.2 Given the paucity of known archaeological remains in the area, site-specific research aims were not defined within the WSI (ASE 2018).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 A unique site code (MSCBF18) was obtained from ECCPS and was used as the unique site identifier for the entire project archive.
- 3.1.2 The archaeological evaluation of the site comprised the excavation of three trenches as located on Figure 2. The trenches were positioned as close as possible in accordance to the WSI (ASE 2018). However, due to on-site constraints of mature trees, existing outbuildings and associated underground services, Trench 1 was shifted c.5m northeast, the southwest end of Trench 2 was shortened, and Trench 3 was both shortened and very slightly shifted eastwards.
- 3.1.3 The trenches were accurately located, planned and levelled using a Digital Global Positioning System (DGPS).
- 3.1.4 All trenches were scanned for the detection of buried services prior to excavation using a CAT scanner. Trenches were mechanically excavated using a toothless ditching bucket and under constant archaeological supervision.
- 3.1.5 Machine excavation continued to the top of archaeological deposits or the surface of the natural geology, whichever was uppermost. The exposed subsoil or archaeological horizon was cleaned by hand immediately after machine stripping where required; any archaeological deposits or negative features were planned as appropriate.
- 3.1.6 Trenches and features/deposits were recorded, as needed, on ASE pro-forma trench and context sheets, and sections were recorded at 1:10 scale on A4 drawing film sheets.
- 3.1.7 A photographic record comprising colour digital images was made. All trenches and individual contexts were photographed (trench and context shots). In addition, a number of representative photographs of the general work on site were taken (working shots).
- 3.1.8 Backfilling and compaction was undertaken by the machine on completion of the work, but there was no reinstatement to existing condition.
- 3.1.9 Spoil heaps and trench bases were scanned with a metal detector as was the spoil derived from excavated features.
- 3.1.10 The fieldwork adhered to the preceding WSI (ASE 2018) as well as the ClfA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*, and *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014a, b). The fieldwork also complied with the *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003). ASE is a Registered Organisation with the ClfA.

3.2 Archive

- 3.2.1 Guidelines contained in the ClfA *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (2014c) will be followed for the preparation of the archive for deposition at Chelmsford Museum.
- 3.2.2 Finds from the archaeological fieldwork will be kept with the archival material
- 3.2.3 Subject to agreement with the legal landowner, ASE will arrange with Chelmsford Museum for the deposition of the archive and artefact collection. Any items requiring treatment will be conserved. The landowner will be asked to donate the finds to the local museum.
- 3.2.4 The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Tables 1 and 2).

Context sheets	0
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	9
Context register	0
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	0
Trench Record forms	3

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box)	0
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	0
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 A total of three trenches were excavated, all 1.8m wide and varying in lengths. Trench 1 measured 22m, Trench 2 was 16m, and Trench 3 was 25m in length. Their positions are shown on Figure 2.
- 4.1.2 The general site sequence consisted of a mid-brownish grey silty clay topsoil and turf over a light yellowish brown clay silt subsoil that in turn overlay the light brownish yellow silty sand natural deposit that contained scattered patches of gravel. This sequence was c.0.32-0.40m deep across the site. Twentieth-century iron fragments were observed in the topsoil, but not recovered/retained.
- 4.1.3 Modern disturbances were observed below the turf, cutting down into the natural. These comprised various modern land drains, service runs, square-cut postholes, and test-pits, the fills of which contained post-medieval brick, glass, modern plastic tubing and clinker. The locations of these modern features are shown on Figure 2.
- 4.1.4 None of the trenches contained any archaeological remains.
- 4.1.5 The recorded stratigraphic sequence is summarised in Table 3.

Trench	Context	Type	Interpretation	Depth m	Height m AOD
1	1/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.16-0.20	54.92-55.02
1	1/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.10-0.20	-
1	1/003	Deposit	Natural	-	54.64-54.78
2	2/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.15-0.16	54.62-55.01
2	2/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.15-0.18	-
2	2/003	Deposit	Natural	-	54.26-54.76
3	3/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.18-0.24	54.16-54.99
3	3/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.10-0.14	-
3	3/003	Deposit	Natural	-	53.82-54.65

Table 3: Trenches 1-3 context register

- 4.1.6 No finds were retained from these modern features, nor from the topsoil or subsoil. No earlier artefacts, residual in these features and deposits, were observed.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Overview of Stratigraphic Sequence

5.1.1 The general stratigraphy remained consistent across the site, generally comprising c.0.15-0.24m of mid-brownish grey silty clay topsoil overlying c.0.10-0.20m of light yellowish brown clay silt subsoil, which sealed the natural deposit of light brownish yellow silty sand with patches of gravel. The height of the natural and archaeological horizon varied from 54.78m OD (Trench 1) in the south-east of the site down to 53.82m OD (Trench 3) in the north.

5.1.2 Post-medieval brick, 19th-20th century ceramics and iron fragments from both overburden layers suggest a modern topsoil and a disturbed subsoil interface, likely through service installation and landscaping associated with the existing farm buildings. This was corroborated by the presence of modern land drains, service gullies and test pits, cut from below the turf into the natural deposit, in all three trenches.

5.1.3 No archaeological features or artefacts were encountered within the evaluated areas.

5.2 Deposit Survival and Existing Impacts

5.2.1 The evaluation has demonstrated that moderate impacts from post-medieval/modern landuse, mainly from the installation of services and landscaping, have resulted in a mixture of 20th-century finds being distributed throughout topsoil and subsoil horizons and in the localised disturbance/truncation of the underlying natural deposit.

5.2.1 The absence of archaeological features and of any pre-modern artefacts occurring residually in the overburden deposits suggests that incidence of archaeological remains across the wider site is likely to be low to negligible.

5.3 Consideration of Research Aims

5.3.1 The archaeological evaluation has demonstrated that no features of pre-modern archaeological origin exist in the evaluated areas and that localised, but significant, modern truncation and disturbance has taken place.

5.3.2 In the absence of any archaeological remains, the site has no potential to address the local or regional research aims identified for this project (2.5).

5.4 Conclusions

5.4.1 No features of archaeological origin have been found within the evaluated areas.

5.4.2 It is judged that the wider site has no potential for the presence of archaeological remains. As such, its residential development will have no impact upon the heritage resource of this vicinity of Shenfield.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Court & Co. for commissioning the work and the ECC Place Services Archaeological Advisor, Helen Saunders, for her guidance and monitoring on behalf of the LPA. The fieldwork was supervised by the author, assisted on site by Chris Rees. Project management of the fieldwork was carried out by Andy Leonard and Gemma Stevenson and the post-excavation work was managed by Mark Atkinson. The figures for this report were produced by Andrew Lewsey.

Appendix 1: HER Summary

Site name/Address: Land Adjacent of Chain Bridge Farm, Roman Road, Shenfield, Essex CM15 8SG	
Parish: Brentwood	District: Mountnessing
NGR: TQ 62305 96951	Site Code: MSCBF18
Type of Work: Trial-trench evaluation	Site Director/Group: S. King / Archaeology South-East
Date of Work: 28-29 August 2018	Size of Area Investigated: 1.03ha
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: ASE / Chelmsford Museum	Funding source: client
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER No's: none
Final Report: ADS Grey lit	OASIS No: 327101
Periods Represented: Modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p><i>An archaeological trial-trench evaluation was carried out in advance of a residential development within this post-medieval farmstead complex.</i></p> <p><i>Three trenches were excavated, but no remains of archaeological origin were identified. Modern disturbances were noted from below the turf, cut through into the natural deposit, resulting from the installation of services, land drainage and landscaping.</i></p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: none	
Author of Summary: S. King	Date of Summary: 06/09/2018

Appendix 2: OASIS Form
OASIS ID: 327101
Project details

Project name	Land Adjacent to Chain Bridge Farm, Roman Road, Shenfield, Essex
Short description of the project	An archaeological trial-trench evaluation was carried out in advance of a residential development. Three trenches were excavated, but no remains of archaeological origin were identified. Modern disturbances were noted.
Project dates	Start: 28-08-2018 End: 29-08-2018
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	MSCBF18 - Sitecode 180424 - 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	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX BRENTWOOD MOUNTNESSING Land Adjacent to Chain Bridge Farm
Postcode	CM15 8SG
Study area	1.03 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 62305 96951 51.647392435759 0.346212615749 51 38 50 N 000 20 46 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 53.82m Max: 54.78m

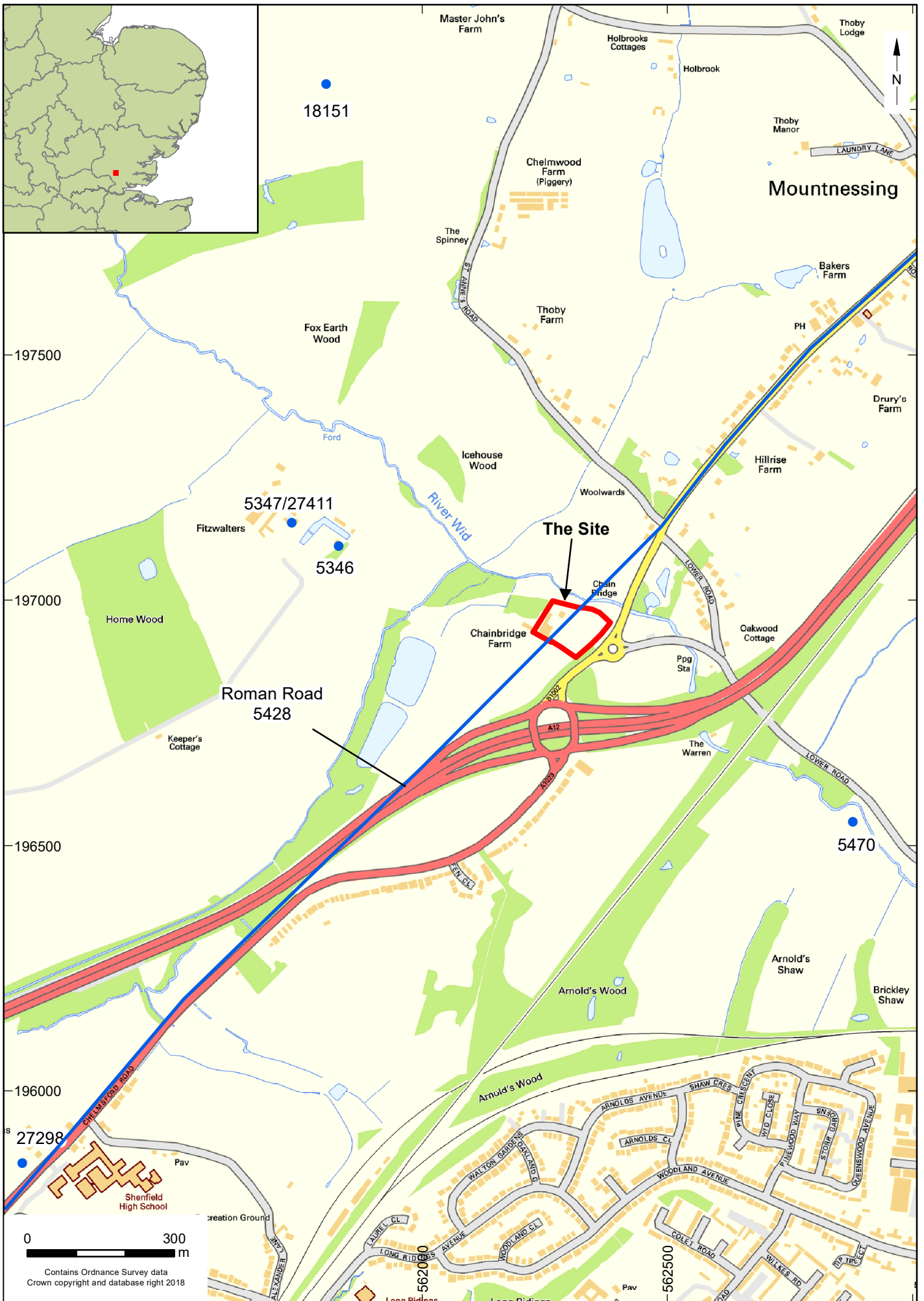
Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Essex County Council Place Services
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Gemma Stevenson; Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Samara King
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client

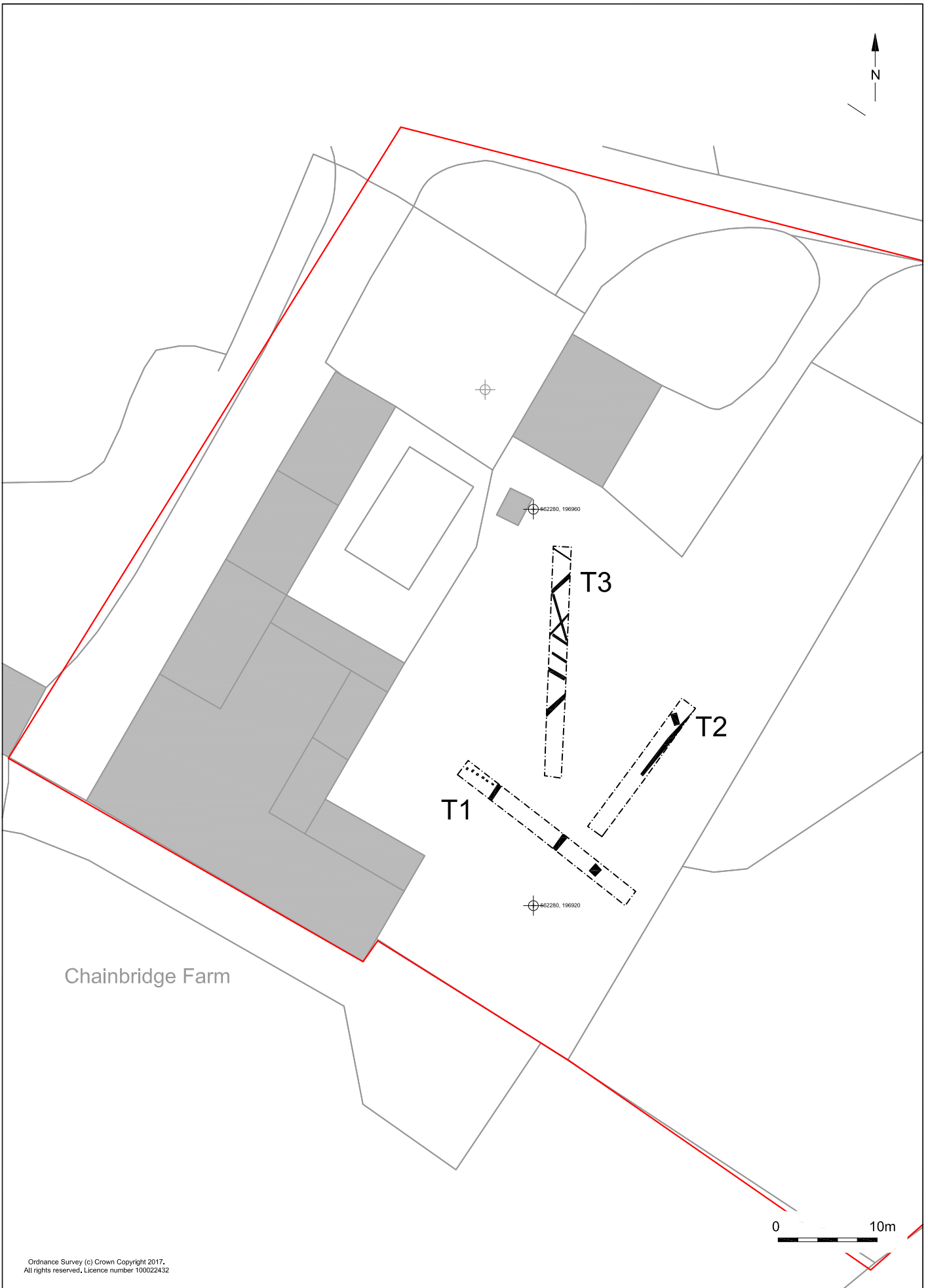
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital/Paper Archive recipient	Chelmsford Museum
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic", "Survey"
Digital Media available	"GIS", "Images raster / digital photography", "Text"

Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic", "Survey"
Paper Media available	"Map", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Survey "
Project bibliography	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Evaluation: Land adjacent to Chain Bridge Farm, Roman Road, Shenfield, Essex CM15 8SG
Author(s)/Editor(s)	King, S.
Other bibliographic details	ASE Report No. 2018286
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Description	A4 report of approximately 27 pages including appendices and figures.
URL	archaeologydataservice.ac.uk



© Archaeology South-East		Chain Bridge Farm, Roman Road, Shenfield	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 180424	Aug 2018	Site location and selected HER references	
Report No:	Drawn by: APL		



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© Archaeology South-East		Chain Bridge Farm, Roman Road, Shenfield	Fig.2
Project Ref: 180424	Sept 2018	Location of the evaluation trenches with modern disturbance marked in black	
Report Ref: 2018286	Drawn by: APL		



Trench 1

Trench 2

Trench 3



General site view

© Archaeology South-East		Chain Bridge Farm, Roman Road, Shenfield	Fig.3
Project Ref: 180424	Sept 2018	Trench photographs	
Report Ref: 2018286	Drawn by: APL		

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