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**LAND ADJACENT TO THE BUNGALOW,
SOUTHMINSTER ROAD, ASHELDHAM, ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

Authors: Mark Blagg-Newsome (Fieldwork & Report) Peter Thompson (Archaeological Background)	
NGR: TL 97077 01303	Report No: 5166
District: Maldon	Site Code: AMB16
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: P6047
	Date: 13 July 2016

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OASIS SUMMARY

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Land adjacent to The Bungalow, Southminster Road, Asheldham, Essex</i>		
<p><i>In July 2016 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to The Bungalow, Southminster Road, Asheldham, Essex (TL 87077 01303). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for a single dwelling with associated car parking and services (Maldon District Council Planning ref. FUL/MAL/14/00252), based on the advice of Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council.</i></p> <p><i>Commencing approximately 75m to the south-east of the development site is an Iron Age hill-fort, Asheldham Camp, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 1014142). It contains multi-period finds dating from the Neolithic to medieval periods, including a possible Neolithic settlement and Belgic/early Roman cemetery (EHER 12051-60, 12128-30). It is probable that the hill-fort was reoccupied in the late Saxon period. It was heavily quarried in the 1930s.</i></p> <p><i>Approximately 200m to the west of the proposed development are cropmarks of an undated probable ring ditch and other linear features (EHER 16003). Four possible ring ditches are located 370m north-east of the development site (EHER 12185). Nearby were a group of ditches and pits which produced Neolithic and particularly early Iron Age pottery (EHER 12185).</i></p> <p><i>In the event no archaeological features or finds were present.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>July 2016</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>P5047</i>	Site code	<i>AMB16</i>
Type of project	<i>An archaeological evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Grass field/paddocks</i>		
Planned development	<i>Dwelling with associated car parking and services</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
Significant finds(+dates)	<i>None</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Maldon</i>	<i>Asheldham</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>5,560m²</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 97077 01303</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>Approximately 16-18m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Essex County Council HEA</i>		
Project Supervisor	<i>Mark Blagg-Newsome</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mrs Anderson</i>		
Full title	<i>Land adjacent to The Bungalow, Southminster Road, Asheldham, Essex. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Blagg-Newsome, M.</i>		
Report no.	<i>5166</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>July 2016</i>		

**LAND ADJACENT TO THE BUNGALOW, SOUTHMINSTER ROAD,
ASHELDHAM, ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In July 2016 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to The Bungalow, Southminster Road, Asheldham, Essex (TL 87077 01303). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for a single dwelling with associated car-parking and services (Maldon District Council Planning ref. FUL/MAL/14/00252), based on the advice of Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council.

Commencing approximately 75m to the south-east of the development site is an Iron Age hill-fort, Asheldham Camp, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 1014142). It contains multi-period finds dating from the Neolithic to medieval periods, including a possible Neolithic settlement and Belgic/early Roman cemetery (EHER 12051-60, 12128-30). It is probable that the hill-fort was reoccupied in the late Saxon period. It was heavily quarried in the 1930s.

Approximately 200m to the west of the proposed development are cropmarks of an undated probable ring ditch and other linear features (EHER 16003). Four possible ring ditches are located 370m north-east of the development site (EHER 12185). Nearby were a group of ditches and pits which produced Neolithic and particularly early Iron Age pottery (EHER 12185).

In the event no archaeological features or finds were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In July 2016 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to The Bungalow, Southminster Road, Asheldham, Essex (TL 87077 01303; Figs.1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for a new single dwelling with associated car-parking and services (Maldon District Council Planning ref. FUL/MAL/14/00252), based on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council.

1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA; *Brief for archaeological trial-trenching on Land adjacent to The Bungalow, Southminster Road, Asheldham*, dated 13/11/ 2014). It was also carried out according to a written scheme of investigation prepared by Archaeological Solutions (dated 14/11/2014). The project adhered to appropriate sections of Gurney (2003) 'Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England', *East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14*, and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008).

1.3 The aims of the evaluation were to investigate the location, extent, date and character of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

Planning policy context

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.5 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings and scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE Figs.1 & 2

2.1 Asheldham is a small village located 12.5km south-east of Maldon on the Dengie Peninsular in south-east Essex. The site comprises an L-shaped block of land fronting a dog-leg in the B1021 Southminster/Tillingham Road. It consists of grassy paddocks containing several small enclosures and fence lines, with ancillary sheds or other temporary structures present.

3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

3.1 The site is located at approximately 16-18m AOD on a slight plateau overlooking the Asheldham Brook which flows approximately 320m to the west and south. A large amount of quarrying has taken place just to the east and north-east of the village.

3.2 The site lies close to the interface of two soil types. To the east are soils of the Hurst Association described as coarse and fine loamy permeable soils mainly over gravel variably affected by groundwater. The superficial geology is river terrace gravels. To the west are soils of the Ratsborough Association described as predominantly fine silty and fine loamy over clayey soils with slow permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. The underlying superficial geology here is drift over Eocene Clay. The solid geology of the area is London Clay.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Asheldham Camp, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is a slight univallate hillfort located roughly in the centre of the Dengie peninsular, with its western rampart approximately 75m from the south-east corner of the development site. The defences include a bank and external ditch, which are visible as earthworks to the south of Southminster Road, the road itself probably follows the line of the northern rampart (EHER 12051; SAM 1014142). Observation of gravel digging at Asheldham Camp in the 1930S noted Bronze Age, Iron Age and Saxon remains, chiefly pottery, and also some fragments of Roman pottery.

4.2 The prehistoric finds consisted of a general scatter of flintwork (mainly waste flakes and blades plus some cores and two scrapers), suggesting Neolithic/Early Bronze Age activity. Most of the flintwork came from the southern end of the site where survival of archaeological features seemed better. An excavation in 1985 recovered a possible Neolithic pot recovered from a pit, and it is suggested the area may have been a focus of early Neolithic open settlement (EHER 12052, 12053). A watching brief in 1984 approximately 220m to the east of the development site, prior to gravel extraction, identified several pits one of which yielded some large

unabraded sherds of Neolithic pottery, which supports the settlement interpretation (EHER 12186). A small scatter of prehistoric flint tools and pottery and Roman pottery, have been found in the area between the Riding Stables and Oaklands farm between 160m and 260m south of the site (EHER 12128-12130).

4.3 To the west of the proposed development are cropmarks of an undated probably pen-annular ring ditch and various linear features (EHER 16003). These are given a central grid reference of 215m to the west-north-west. Aerial photography has also identified 4 possible Bronze Age ring ditches, which are given a central grid reference 370m north-east of the development site, although a watching brief on one ring ditch found no burial (EHER 12185). However, an undated rectilinear ditch nearby seemed to form the southern limit of an area of small pits and post holes and a short length of ditch. The latter features produced early Iron Age pottery and calcined flints, and one pit produced Neolithic pottery (EHER 12185).

4.4 The 1930s gravel digging at Asheldham Camp, also found 'small urns' from 'pits full of black ash'. These are tentatively interpreted as coming from Belgic or Roman cremation burials. The absence of any Belgic or Roman material during the 1985 excavation further suggests the earlier finds represented a compact site such as a cemetery (EHER 12054). Pottery said to have been found during the construction of the waterworks near Asheldham Camp includes a Roman clay candlestick and 6 Belgic vessels, the latter perhaps indicating a cemetery or votive deposit. (It's not clear if the Belgic vessels are the same black vessels mentioned above, or different ones). These finds are given a central grid reference 120m east of the development site (EHER 12058, 12059, 12060).

4.5 A visit to the Iron Age hillfort site in 1978, after scarping back of the former vertical quarry face had been carried out, revealed a rim sherd of 12th-13th century pottery, and the trial trenching at the camp in 1985 showed evidence for a major recut of the ditch, making it wider and shallower. Material from the re-cut ditch dated from the 11th to 13th centuries, with the lowest fill containing a few sherds of late Saxon or early medieval pottery (EHER 12055, 12056). Before the building of the water tower to supply Southminster, there were indications of a possible entrance to the camp situated approximately 130m south-east of the development site. During the excavations it was found that the swampy bottom of the trench had been lined with a rough basket work of large hazel sticks covered with clay and a coating of gravel (EHER 12057). A Viking period axehead and knife dated to the 10th century were found at the same time (EHER 12058).

4.6 Grade II listed St Lawrence's Church is located 750m to the east of the development site, which includes Roman bricks in its fabric (EHER 12163). Excavations outside of the church found evidence for a timber building in the north-west corner of the churchyard, which may

have been a priests house dating between the mid 12th and mid 13th centuries, contemporary with the life of phase 2 of the church. The building of the church also appears to be contemporary with the creation of the present churchyard and the diversion of the road there. An Elizabethan coin dated 1575 was found 50m south of the development site (EHER 12127).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The brief required two trial trenches to be excavated. One across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling, and one across the new driveway (Fig.3).

5.2 The trial trenches were excavated using a small tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

5.3 Undifferentiated overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Thereafter, all further investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the trenches were scanned by metal detector.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 The individual trench descriptions are presented below:

Trench 1 (Fig. 2)

<i>Sample section 1A</i>		
<i>East end, north facing</i>		<i>0.00 = 18.52m AOD</i>
0.00 – 0.33m	L1000	Topsoil. Friable, dark red brown silty sand with occasional small and medium angular stones.
0.33 – 0.58m	L1001	Subsoil. Friable, mid red brown silty sand, with occasional small angular stones.
0.58m+	L1002	Natural deposits. Friable, pale yellowish orange, sand with moderate medium sub-rounded stone and gravel.

<i>Sample section 1B</i>		
<i>West end, south facing</i>		<i>0.00 = 18.45m AOD</i>
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.32 – 0.61m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.61m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As above.

Description: Trench 1 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

Sample section 2A		
North end, west facing		0.00 = 18.13m AOD
0.00 – 0.31m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.31 – 0.61m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.61m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As Above Tr. 1.

Sample section 2B		
South end, east facing		0.00 = 18.03m AOD
0.00 – 0.06m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.06 – 0.20m	L1003	Made ground. Friable, pale yellow grey silty sand with frequent medium and large sub-angular stone.
0.20 – 0.45m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.45m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As Above Tr. 1.

Description: Trench 2 contained only a modern service trench (F1004).

F1004 was an electric cable service trench (1.15+ x 0.32 x 0.43m), orientated ENE/WSW. It had vertical sides and a concave base. Its fill (L1005) was a friable, dark red brown silty sand with occasional small angular stones.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 Uppermost Topsoil L1000 was a friable, dark red brown silty sand, with occasional small and medium angular stones. (0.06 – 0.33m thick). L1000 overlay Subsoil L1001, a friable, mid red brown silty sand, with occasional small angular stones. (0.25 – 0.30m thick).

8.2 The natural geology, L1002, friable, pale yellowish orange, sand with moderate medium sub-rounded stone and gravel. (0.45 -0.61m below the present day ground surface).

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site lies in the historic core of the village of Asheldham, and to the west of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Asheldham Camp (ENHER 12051-60, SM 1014142), and crop marks and finds scatters indicative of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Roman, and Saxon activity. Asheldham Camp itself is an Iron Age univallate hill-fort feature. Finds

of prehistoric and Roman date have also been made to the south at Oaklands Farm.

9.2 The site, therefore, had potential for evidence prehistoric, Roman, and Saxon activity. However, the evaluation revealed only a modern service trench and no archaeological finds or features.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with inventory, will be deposited at Colchester Museum in accordance with their requirements. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank the client Mrs Anderson for funding the project and TMA Chartered Surveyors, in particular Ms Sarah Threlfall, for assistance.

AS is pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Ms Maria Medlycott, Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1
Trench 1 post exc, looking east.



2
Sample Section 1A, Trench 1, looking south.



3
Sample Section 1B, Trench 1, looking north.



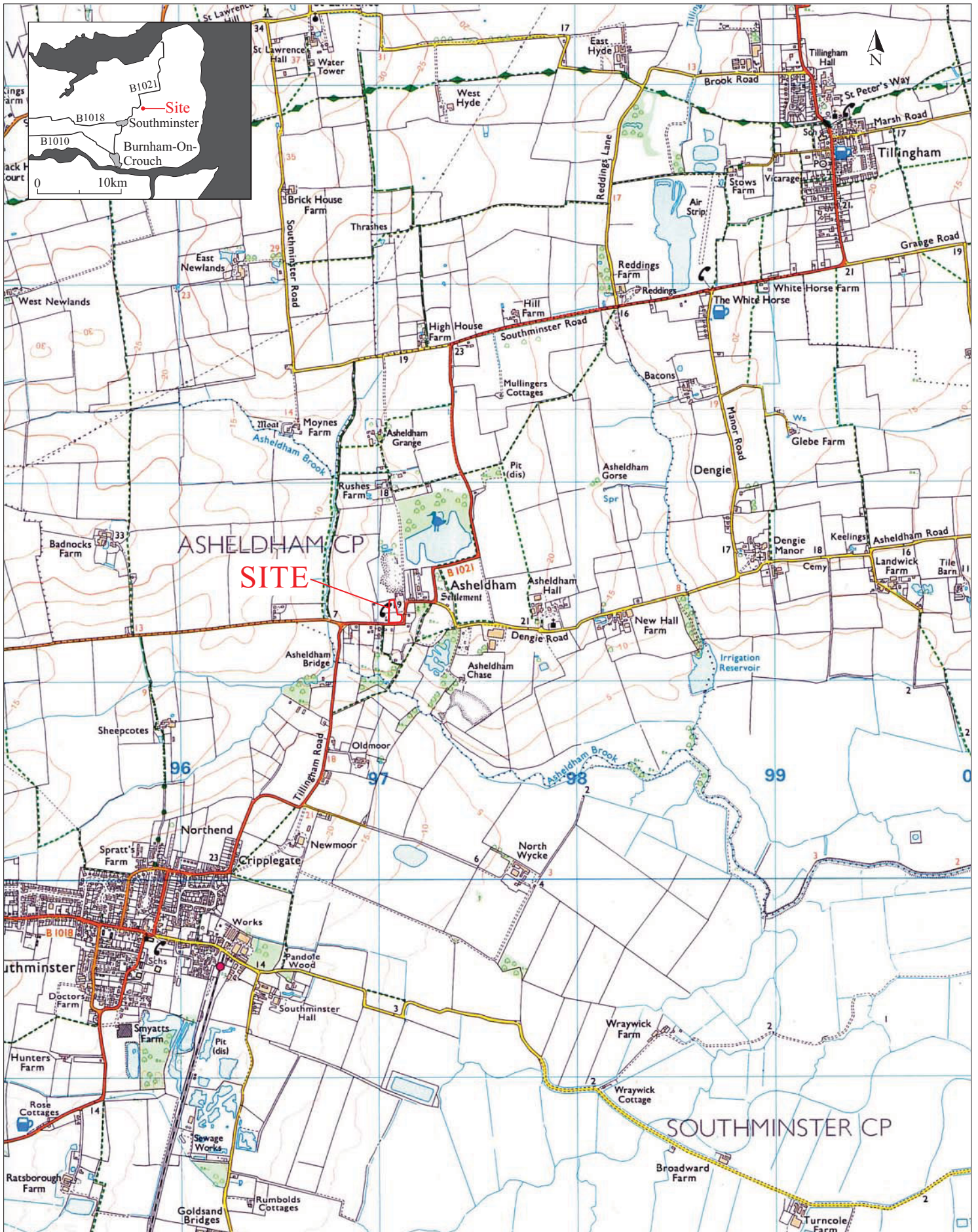
4
Trench 2 post exc, looking south.



5
Sample Section 2A, Trench 2, looking east.



6
Sample Section 2B, Trench 2, looking west.



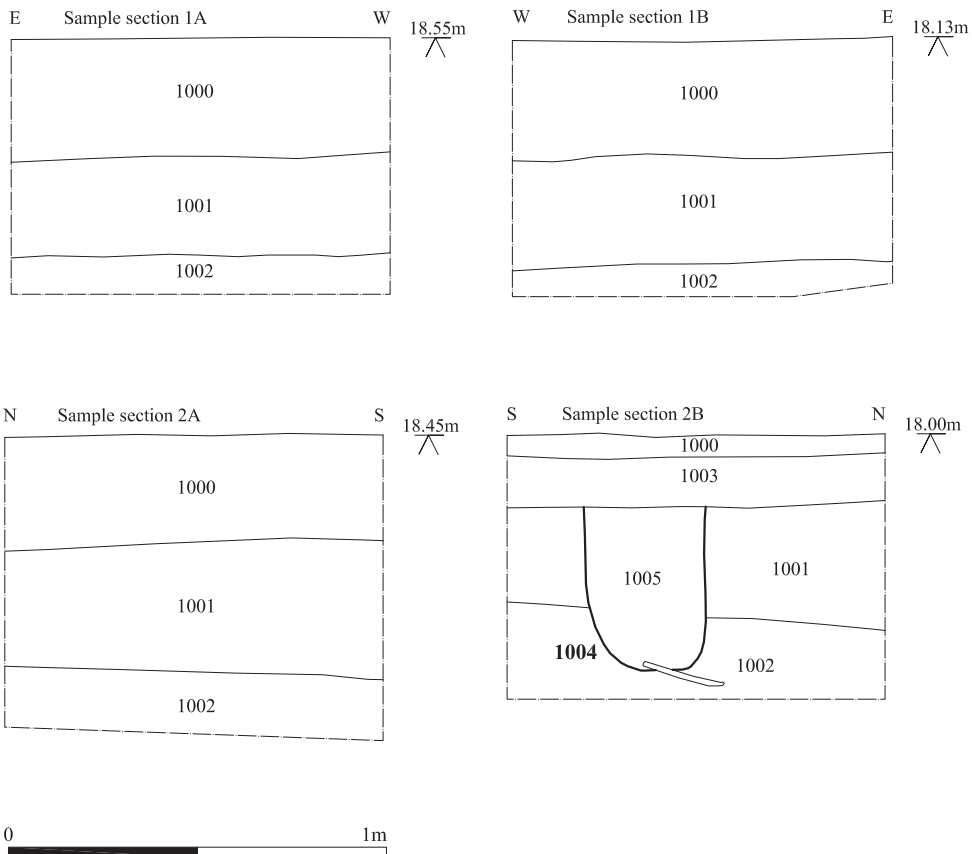
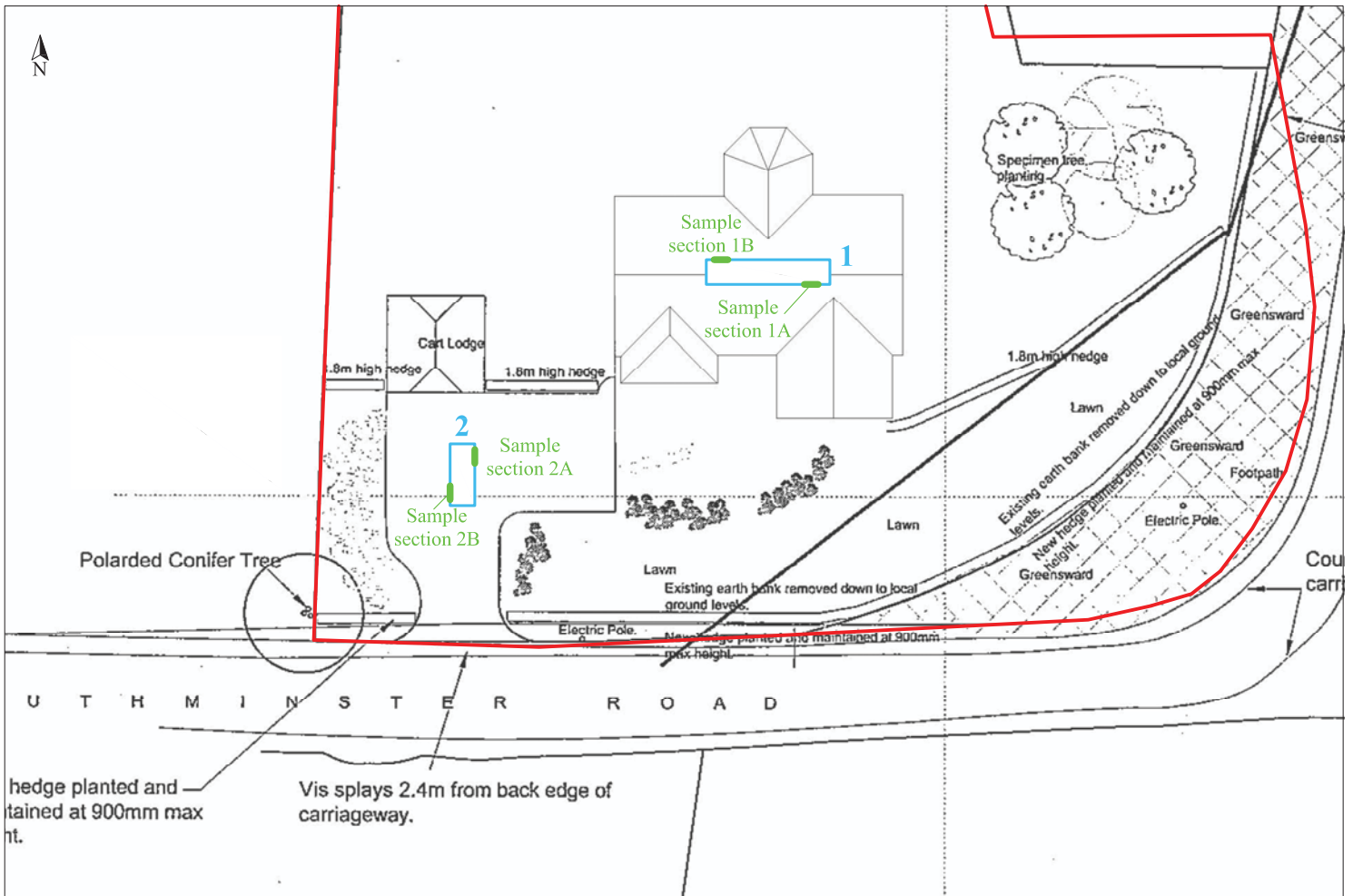
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4
 Southminster Road, Asheldham, Essex (P6047)



0 150m

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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
Scale 1:2500 at A4
Southminster Road, Asheldham, Essex (P6047)



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Fig. 3 Trenches on proposed plan and sections
 Scale 1:200 and 1:20 at A4
 Southminster Road, Asheldham, Essex (P6047)