
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**LAND EAST OF 14 FOX BURROWS LANE,
WRITTLE, CHELMSFORD, ESSEX**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Authors: Gareth Barlow (field work and report) Kathren Henry (graphics) | |
| NGR: TL 6800 0685 | Report No: 5281 |
| District: Chelmsford | Site Code: WRFB17 |
| Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA | Project No: 6840 |
| | Date: 10 January 2017 |

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

| | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|----------------|
| Project details | | | |
| Project name | <i>Land East of 14 Fox Burrows Lane, Writtle, Essex.</i> | | |
| <i>In January 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land east of 14 Fox Burrow Lane, Writtle, Essex (NGR TL 6800 0685). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for redevelopment of the site comprising the erection of an agricultural vehicle workshop and sales building, parking and landscaping (Chelmsford City Council Planning Ref. CHL 16/00131/FUL). The insertion of a planning condition was based on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA).</i> | | | |
| <i>In the event no archaeological features or finds were present. The eastern sector of the site was disturbed but otherwise had archaeological features been present they would have been identified.</i> | | | |
| <i>Project dates (fieldwork)</i> | <i>January 2017</i> | | |
| <i>Previous work (Y/N/?)</i> | <i>N</i> | <i>Future work (Y/N/?)</i> | <i>N</i> |
| <i>P. number</i> | <i>6840</i> | <i>Site code</i> | <i>WRFB17</i> |
| <i>Type of project</i> | <i>An Archaeological Evaluation</i> | | |
| <i>Site status</i> | <i>-</i> | | |
| <i>Current land use</i> | <i>Overgrown</i> | | |
| <i>Planned development</i> | <i>Residential</i> | | |
| <i>Main features (+dates)</i> | <i>None</i> | | |
| <i>Significant finds (+dates)</i> | <i>None</i> | | |
| Project location | | | |
| <i>County/ District/ Parish</i> | <i>Essex</i> | <i>Chelmsford</i> | <i>Writtle</i> |
| <i>HER/ SMR for area</i> | <i>Essex HER</i> | | |
| <i>Post code (if known)</i> | <i>CM1 3SS</i> | | |
| <i>Area of site</i> | <i>c.1.1Ha</i> | | |
| <i>NGR</i> | <i>TL 6800 0685</i> | | |
| <i>Height AOD (min/max)</i> | <i>c.29-31mAOD</i> | | |
| Project creators | | | |
| <i>Brief issued by</i> | <i>ECC HEA</i> | | |
| <i>Project supervisor/s (PO)</i> | <i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i> | | |
| <i>Funded by</i> | <i>RW Crawford</i> | | |
| <i>Full title</i> | <i>Land East of 14 Fox Burrows Lane, Writtle, Essex. An Archaeological Evaluation</i> | | |
| <i>Authors</i> | <i>Barlow, G.</i> | | |
| <i>Report no.</i> | <i>5281</i> | | |
| <i>Date (of report)</i> | <i>January 2017</i> | | |

**LAND EAST OF 14 FOX BURROWS LANE, WRITTLE,
CHELMSFORD, ESSEX**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In January 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land east of 14 Fox Burrow Lane, Writtle, Essex (NGR TL 6800 0685). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for redevelopment of the site comprising the erection of an agricultural vehicle workshop and sales building, parking and landscaping (Chelmsford City Council Planning Ref. CHL 16/00131/FUL). The insertion of a planning condition was based on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA).

The site has an archaeological potential being located to the north of the historic settlement area of Writtle, and this settlement has late Saxon origins. The HER records find spots of prehistoric flints, Roman pottery sherds and post-medieval tile fragments found to the immediate east (EHER 18921-23). A cropmark of a ring ditch also lies to the south east of the site (EHER 18180). An archaeological evaluation carried out at the nearby agronomy centre revealed a medieval feature and medieval pottery sherds (EHER 14588).

In the event no archaeological features or finds were present. The eastern sector of the site was disturbed but otherwise had archaeological features been present they would have been identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land east of 14 Fox Burrow Lane, Writtle, Essex (NGR TL 6800 0685; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for redevelopment of the site comprising the erection of an agricultural vehicle workshop and sales building, parking and landscaping (Chelmsford City Council Planning Ref. CHL 16/00131/FUL), based on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council, *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation at land east of 14 Fox Burrows Lane, Writtle*, dated 1st August 2016) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 02/08/2016) and approved by ECC HEA. The project conformed to the Chartered Institute for

Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014), and the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition significance and quality of any 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, 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

2.1 The site lies on the southern side of Fox Burrow Lane at Writtle, and extends to some 1.18ha. The site is covered in a mix of hardstanding and rough ground with a wooded area to the east, and a barn. The south eastern part of the site is shown on OS mapping from the 1950s to be occupied by a large depression, indicating that this part of the site may have been previously truncated.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) notes the site has an archaeological potential, to the north of the historic settlement area of Writtle (this settlement has late Saxon origins). The HER records find spots of prehistoric flints, Roman pottery sherds and post-medieval tile fragments found to the immediate east (EHER 18921-23). A cropmark of a ring ditch also lies to the south east of the site (EHER 18180). An archaeological evaluation carried out at the nearby agronomy centre revealed a medieval feature and medieval pottery sherds (EHER 14588).

3.2 The site therefore has a potential for evidence of local prehistoric, Roman and post-medieval activity in particular.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The brief required a 4% sample of the proposed development site to be investigated by trial trenching. This would require 9 trenches each 30m x 1.8m. However, a large part of the eastern side of the site is occupied by a known large, backfilled, depression. A large area of this side is also covered with trees. It was, therefore, agreed with ECC HEA that an initial 6 trenches be excavated, with a contingency for additional trenches if required. Trench 3, through the depression was excavated in three sections.

4.2 The topsoil, was mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was searched for finds and the trenches were scanned by a metal detector.

5 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

5.1 The individual trench descriptions are presented below:

Trench 1 (Fig. 2)

| Sample section 1A 0.00 = 30.86m AOD | | |
|--|-------|--|
| 0.00 – 0.39m | L1000 | Topsoil. Firm, mid slightly yellowish brown sandy silt, with very occasional medium sub-rounded and rounded various stones and angular flints. |
| 0.39m+ | L1001 | Natural deposits. Firm, yellowish brown sandy silt with very occasional medium sub-rounded and rounded various stones and angular flints. |

| Sample section 1B 0.00 = 31.16m AOD | | |
|--|-------|-----------------------------|
| 0.00 – 0.39m | L1000 | Topsoil. As above. |
| 0.39m+ | L1001 | Natural deposits. As above. |

Description: Trench 1 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

| Sample section 2A 0.00 = 30.90m AOD | | |
|--|-------|--|
| 0.00 – 0.44m | L1002 | Topsoil/made ground. Friable, dark grey brown silty sand, with frequent small and medium rounded various stones. |
| 0.44m+ | L1001 | Natural. As above, Trench 1. |

| Sample section 2B 0.00 = 31.05m AOD | | |
|--|-------|---|
| 0.00 – 0.15m | L1002 | Topsoil/made ground. As above. |
| 0.15 – 0.33m | L1000 | Topsoil (now buried). As above, Trench 1. |
| 0.33m+ | L1001 | Natural deposits. As above, Trench 1. |

Description: Trench 2 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Trench 3 (Fig. 2)

| Sample section 3A 0.00 = 29.81m AOD | | |
|--|-------|---|
| 0.00 – 0.40m | L1002 | Topsoil/made ground. As above, Trench 1. |
| 0.40 – 0.72m | L1003 | Made ground/backfill. Friable, pale brownish yellow silty coarse sand with frequent small and medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flint. |
| 0.72m+ | L1004 | Made ground/backfill. Mixed patches of firm, dark grey brown sandy silt, and, friable pale brownish yellow silty coarse sand. Frequent small, medium, and large sub-rounded and rounded various stones. |

| | | |
|--|-------|--|
| <i>Sample section 3B</i> <i>0.00 = 29.80m AOD</i> | | |
| 0.00 – 012m | L1002 | Topsoil/made ground. As above, Trench 1. |
| 0.12 – 0.16m | L1005 | Made ground/backfill. Firm, very organic, dark grey brown silty sand, with moderate small sub-rounded flints and frequent dead plant stems. |
| 0.16 - 0.80m+ | L1006 | Made ground/backfill. Mixed patches of friable pale yellowish brown sandy silt, and friable very pale brownish yellow silty coarse sand. Moderate small and medium sub-rounded and rounded various stones. |

| | | |
|--|-------|--|
| <i>Sample section 3C</i> <i>0.00 = 29.79m AOD</i> | | |
| 0.00 – 0.23m | L1002 | Topsoil/made ground. As above, Trench 2. |
| 0.23 - 0.70m+ | L1006 | Made ground/backfill. As above, Trench 3B. |

Description: Trench 3 contained made ground/backfill layers relating to the known depression on this side of the site. These layers contained concrete lumps, modern CBM, plastic and metal objects.

Trench 4 (Fig. 2)

| | | |
|---|-------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Sample section 4A</i> <i>0.00 =30.96m AOD</i> | | |
| 0.00 – 0.42m | L1000 | Topsoil. As above, Trench 1. |
| 0.42m+ | L1001 | Natural deposits. As above, Trench 1. |

| | | |
|--|-------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Sample section 4B</i> <i>0.00 = 31.26m AOD</i> | | |
| 0.00 – 0.43m | L1000 | Topsoil. As above, Trench 1. |
| 0.43m+ | L1001 | Natural deposits. As above, Trench 1. |

Description: Trench 4 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

| | | |
|---|-------|------------------------------|
| <i>Sample section 5A</i> <i>0.00 =30.69m AOD</i> | | |
| 0.00 – 0.46m | L1000 | Topsoil. As above, Trench 1. |
| 0.46m+ | L1001 | Natural. As above, Trench 1. |

| | | |
|--|-------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Sample section 5B</i> <i>0.00 = 31.04m AOD</i> | | |
| 0.00 – 0.44m | L1000 | Topsoil. As above, Trench 1. |
| 0.44m+ | L1001 | Natural deposits. As above, Trench 1. |

Description: Trench 5 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Trench 6 (Fig. 2)

| | | |
|--|-------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Sample section 6A</i> <i>0.00 = 31.17m AOD</i> | | |
| 0.00 – 0.51m | L1002 | Topsoil. As above, Trench 1. |
| 0.51m+ | L1001 | Natural deposits. As above, Trench 1. |

| | | |
|--|-------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Sample section 6B</i> <i>0.00 = 31.16m AOD</i> | | |
| 0.00 – 0.43m | L1000 | Topsoil. As above, Trench 1. |
| 0.43m+ | L1001 | Natural deposits. As above, Trench 1. |

Description: Trench 6 contained no archaeological features or finds.

6 CONFIDENCE RATING

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

7 DEPOSIT MODEL

7.1 Topsoil L1000 was uppermost on the western side of the site. It was still present but reduced and buried in the north-eastern sector. It was absent across the majority of the eastern side of the site. It comprised a firm, mid slightly yellowish brown sandy silt with very occasional medium sub-rounded and rounded various stones and angular flints (0.39 – 0.51m thick). L1000 overlay the natural geology, L1001. The latter comprised a firm, yellowish brown sandy silt with very occasional medium sub-rounded and rounded various stones and angular flints (0.39 -0.51m below the present day ground surface).

7.2 A large depression on the eastern side of the site had been backfilled in modern times. Overlying the whole of the eastern side was topsoil/made ground layer, L1002, a friable, dark grey brown silty sand, with frequent small and medium rounded various stones (0.12 – 0.44m thick). Various fills with modern finds were present below this layer.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 The site lies to the north of the historic settlement of Writtle, a settlement that has late Saxon origins. A ring ditch cropmark is known to the southeast of the site (EHER 18180). Prehistoric flints, Roman pottery sherds, and post medieval tile fragments have been found to the immediate east (EHER 18921-23). An archaeological evaluation carried out at the nearby agronomy centre revealed a medieval feature and medieval pottery sherds (EHER 14588). The site was, therefore, considered to have potential for remains of prehistoric, Roman, and post-medieval date.

8.2 The evaluation revealed only a large depression known to have been backfilled in modern times. No archaeological features or finds were revealed across the rest of the site.

8.3 The eastern sector of the site was disturbed but otherwise had archaeological features been present they would have been identified.

9 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

9.1 Archive records, with inventory, will be deposited at Chelmsford 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 RW Crawford for funding the work and for assistance, and also the assistance of Mr Paul Ruffell of Ingleton Wood and Mr Jack Lilliott of Strutt and Parker LLP.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Alison Bennett, the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 2014, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. CIfA, Reading

Gurney, D., 2003, *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14/ALGAO

APPENDIX 1

HER SUMMARY SHEET

| | |
|--|---|
| Site name/Address: LAND EAST OF 14 FOX BURROWS LANE, WRITTLE, CHELMSFORD, ESSEX | |
| Parish: <i>Writtle</i> | District: Chelmsford |
| NGR: TL 6800 0685 | Site Code: WRFB17 |
| Type of Work: Archaeological evaluation | Site Director/Group: Archaeological Solutions Ltd |
| Date of Work: 01/2017 | Size of Area Investigated: 1.1ha. |
| Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Chelmsford | Funding source: RW Crawford |
| Further Seasons Anticipated?: No | Related HER Nos: |
| <i>Land East of 14 Fox Burrows Lane, Writtle, Essex. An Archaeological Evaluation</i> | |
| Periods Represented: None | |
| SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: | |
| <p><i>In January 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land east of 14 Fox Burrow Lane, Writtle, Essex (NGR TL 6800 0685). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for redevelopment of the site comprising the erection of an agricultural vehicle workshop and sales building, parking and landscaping (Chelmsford City Council Planning Ref. CHL 16/00131/FUL). The insertion of a planning condition was based on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA).</i></p> <p><i>In the event no archaeological features or finds were present. The eastern sector of the site was disturbed but otherwise had archaeological features been present they would have been identified.</i></p> | |
| Previous Summaries/Reports: | |
| Author of Summary: Gareth Barlow | Date of Summary: 01/2017 |

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1

View of site from Fox Burrows Lane. Looking south.



2

View of site looking southeast.



3

View of site looking north.



4

Trench 1. Looking south.



5

Sample section 1A. Trench 1, looking east.



6

Trench 2. Looking north.



7

Sample section 2B. Trench 2, looking west.



8

Trench 3A. Looking north.



9

Sample section 3A. Trench 3A, looking west.



10

Sample section 3B. Trench 3B, looking west.



11

Trench 4. Looking west.



12

Sample section 4B. Trench 4, looking north.



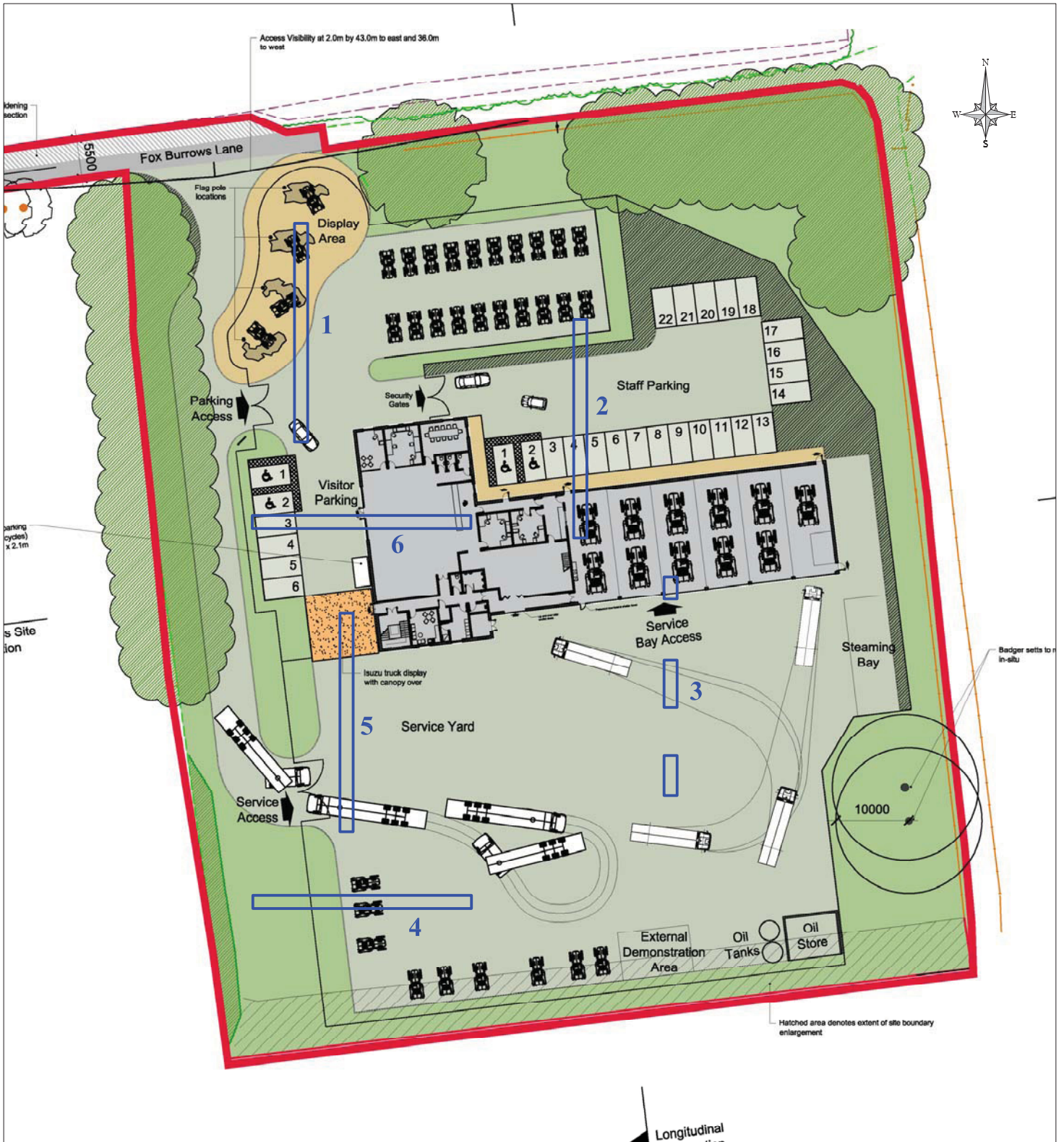
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4
 Fox Burrows Lane, Writtle, Essex (P6840)



0 50m

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Fig. 2 Trench location plan
 Scale 1:750 at A4
 Fox Burrows Lane, Writtle, Essex (P6840)



0 50m

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Fig. 3 Proposed development plan
 Scale 1:750 at A4
 Fox Burrows Lane, Writtle, Essex (P6840)