
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**LAND REAR OF 11 STATION ROAD,
SOUTHMINSTER, ESSEX**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

Authors: Tom McDonald (Fieldwork and report)	
NGR: TQ 95949 99660	Report No: 5412
District: Maldon	Site Code: SOUSR17
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: 7046
	Date: 23 August 2017

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Land Rear of 11 Station Road, Southminster, Essex. . An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
<p><i>In August 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land to the rear of 11 Station Road, Southminster, Essex (NGR TQ 95949 99660; Figs. 1 – 2). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of 2 new detached bungalows and parking on the site (Maldon Council Planning Ref. FUL/MAL/15/00353). The evaluation was required based on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA).</i></p> <p><i>The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds. A modern service traversed Trench 2, and Trench 3 contained the remnants of a modern foundation trench.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>August 2017</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>7046</i>	Site code	<i>SOUSR17</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status			
Current land use			
Planned development	<i>Residential</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Maldon</i>	<i>Southminster</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex Historic Environment Record</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>c.m2</i>		
NGR	<i>TQ 95949 99660</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c.18m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Essex County Council</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr Reynolds</i>		
Full title	<i>Land Rear of 11 Station Road, Southminster, Essex. . An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>McDonald, T</i>		
Report no.	<i>5412</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>August 2017</i>		

LAND REAR OF 11 STATION ROAD, SOUTHMINSTER, ESSEX

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In August 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land to the rear of 11 Station Road, Southminster, Essex (NGR TQ 95949 99660; Figs. 1 – 2). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of 2 new detached bungalows and parking on the site (Maldon Council Planning Ref. FUL/MAL/15/00353). The evaluation was required based on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA).

The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) notes the site lies in the core of the late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlement of Southminster, to the immediate west of the parish church. The settlement has late Saxon origins with a likely early focus around the Minster Church to the west, and the medieval settlement development along the High Street near the church, and Southminster Hall lay to the east, with a number of outlying farms. A market place is believed to have been located on the north west side of the High Street/North Street junction, and the village grew outwards along the main roads in the post-medieval period.

Earlier remains of prehistoric and Roman activity are also well-known from Southminster, including recent test pitting to the south of the proposed development site which recovered Roman material indicative of the presence of a site of this date close by.

The site therefore had a principal potential for evidence of late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval activity in the village core, and also for evidence of earlier activity (in particular Roman activity).

The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds. A modern service traversed Trench 2, and Trench 3 contained the remnants of a modern foundation trench.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land to the rear of 11 Station Road, Southminster, Essex (NGR TQ 95949 99660; Figs. 1 – 2). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of 2 new detached bungalows and parking on the site (Maldon Council Planning Ref. FUL/MAL/15/00353). The evaluation

was required based on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA).

1.2 The evaluation is an initial requirement. If significant remains are present, ECC HEA will require further mitigation, potentially by open area excavation, or a strategy to preserve any remains *in-situ*, to be defined following a site meeting once the trial trenches are open and any finds have been spot dated.

1.3 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA; *Brief for Land rear 11 Station Road, Southminster*, Maria Medlycott, dated 25th January 2017), and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 31st May 2017), and approved by ECC HEA. The project conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation* (2014), and the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.4 The objectives of the evaluation were 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

1.5 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.

1.6 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 Station Road in the core of Southminster. It comprises open land to the rear of properties fronting the street to the north, formerly occupied by glasshouses. It is proposed to erect two detached bungalows with new access drive and parking.

3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

3.1 The town of Southminster is situated on the low-lying Dengie Peninsular, to the north (inland) of Burnham-on Crouch. The Rivers Blackwater and Crouch pass c.5km to the north and south respectively, while the North Sea coast is situated c.7km to the east. The site is situated at c.20m AOD, on the eastern slop of a slightly raised area within the peninsular. The ground slopes down at a moderate gradient to the east towards sea level, and continues to rise slightly to the west towards the urban core of the town. A series of water-filled, former gravel/sand pits are situated c.300m to the south, while the Asheldham Brook passes to the north of the town.

3.2 The solid geology of the Dengie Peninsular is the London Clay formation (clay, silt and sand); overlain by superficial Quaternary River Terrace deposits of sand and gravel (Asheldham Gravels). Local soils are loamy, slightly clayey and slightly acid; often with impeded drainage.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The Dengie Peninsular is largely formed of the Asheldham Gravels, which were deposited during the retreat of the Anglian glaciation, and have been demonstrated to preserve Palaeolithic layers and artefacts; such as at Goldsands Pit (HER 48080) c.500m to the south-east. Southminster would have been situated on a coastal island composed of gravel and shell, known as a chenier, within coastal marsh for much of the prehistoric period, and conducive to seasonal or permanent settlement. An earthwork enclosure in Pandole Wood c.400m to the east may have origins in the Iron Age (HER 11374); while low quantities of prehistoric pottery were recovered from a test-pit c.500m to the south-west on Kings Road (HER 48861).

4.2 In the Roman period the Dengie Peninsular appears to have been characterised by rectilinear field patterns, evidence for salt production and sparse rural settlement, with the late Roman fort of *Othona* situated on the north-eastern end of the peninsula overlooking the Colne estuary. The earthwork complex in Pandole Wood is interpreted as largely Roman in date (HER 11243 & 45904), and a bank leading from the north-east corner appearing to represent the line of a Roman road (HER 11244); while

fragments of pottery have been recovered in the close vicinity (HER 11244 & 11246). The presence of further Roman settlement on the raised ground at Southminster is strongly supported by Roman brick and septaria that is incorporated in the walls of the Church of St Leonard close to the west of the site (HER 11249), while low quantities of Roman pottery has been recovered from land to the south (HER 48866 & 19722)

4.3 The Domesday survey records that by the end of the Saxon period there was a sizeable population residing in or around Southminster (HER 19416), with the manor held by the Bishop of London at Southminster Hall c.600m to the east (HER 11359). A minster church is presumed to underlie the current site of the Church of St Leonard close to the west of the site (HER 19417), with the name 'Southminster' having evolved to distinguish this foundation from another minster at Bradwell to the north. The medieval village appears to have been focussed on the High Street (i.e. HER 38674) with the current church at its eastern end built by the early 12th century (HER 11250 & 38670). A vicarage, endowed in 1219, once stood immediately to the east of the church, close to the assessment site but was relocated in the 19th century (HER 19418). Sparse farmsteads were established on the outskirts of the settlement by the late medieval period, including Home Farm and Spratt's Farm to the north (HER 38678 & 38678); while test pits long Station Road and North Street have recovered early medieval pottery that demonstrated activity, if not settlement from the early 12th century onwards (HER 48857-9).

4.4 Early cartographic sources depict Southminster as a small settlement clustered around the High Street and concentrated around the junction with Burnham Road and North Street, close to the church and the west of the site. Post-medieval pits containing oyster shell and pottery have been recorded in this area, to the south of the church (HER 11364), with further spreads of comparable material at 8 Station Road (HER 18992) and pottery from test-pits on Station Road (HER 48865). Comparable material has been recorded on the High Street and Burnham Road (HER 18969, 48860 & 48862). A maltings situated c.400m to the east on Station Road may have had origins in the 17th century (HER 11325), while the timber-framed cottage at 37 Station Road may have origins in the 18th century (HER 38690). Several 17th to 18th century timber-framed houses also remain extant on North End, High Street, Kings Road and Burnham Road (i.e. HER 38680, 38672-3, 38676 & 38662). The village poor house also stood c.150m to the south-west of the site, but closed in 1860 to be replaced by the National School (HER 19421-2); while the New Moor Farm Brickfields situated c.300m to the east on station road were open from at least the late 18th century (HER 11324). In the mid 19th century housing gradually encroached along Station Road, with building also including the Station Arms PH to the east (HER 38691) and in 1866 the Gas works (HER 40419); culminating with the construction of Southminster Railway Station c.250m to the east in 1886 (HER 40545)

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The ECC HEA advice required trial trenches to be excavated across the proposed house plots and proposed drive/garage. Three trenches were proposed and two trenches were excavated, each 15m x 1.6m (Figs. 2 – 3). The area of proposed Trench 1 was occupied by a newly-built garage, and ECC HEA advised that Trench 1 need not be excavated.

5.2 The topsoil and subsoil 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.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 The individual trench description is presented below:

Trench 1

Not excavated

Trench 2 Figs. 2 - 3

Sample section 2A 0.00 – 18.10xm AOD		
0.00-0.24m	L1000	Cultivated garden soil. Mid to dark grey, loosely compact, loamy clay with occasional small rounded and sub angular flint pebble, CBM, plastic, fragments of plant pots etc
0.24-0.70m	L1001	Subsoil. Mid grey to orange brown, compact, clay with moderate small to medium sub angular and sub rounded flint pebbles, CBM throughout.
0.70m +	L1002	Natural gravel

Sample section 2B 0.00 – 18.12m AOD		
0.00-0.26m	L1000	Garden soil. As above
0.26-0.82m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.82m +	L1002	Natural gravel. As above

Description: Trench 2 contained no archaeological features or finds. A modern drain traversed the trench and it contained fragments of a salt glazed waste pipe.

Trench 3 Figs. 2 - 3

Sample section 3A 0.00 – 17.90m AOD		
0.00-0.07m	L1003	Topsoil. Brown, loosely compacted, loamy clay with frequent CBM.
0.07-0.60m	L1004	Levelling / demolition layer. Dark brown, loosely compacted, loamy clay with lenses of topsoil (L1003). Moderate CBM including frogged brick and modern (19 th -20 th century) pottery.
0.60m +	L1001	Natural. As above

Sample section 3B 0.00 – 17.85m AOD		
0.00-0.05m	L1001	Topsoil. As above
0.05-0.45m	L1004	Levelling / demolition layer. As above
0.45m +	L1001	Natural. As above

Description: Trench 3 contained the remnants of a foundation trench, F1006. Its fill, L1005, was a mid brown silty clay and overlain by L1004. It contained loose red brick, some frogged, crushed brick and slate. The finds were all modern (late 19th-20th century) in date.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

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

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) notes the site lies in the core of the late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlement of Southminster, to the immediate west of the parish church. The settlement has late Saxon origins with a likely early focus around the Minster Church to the west, and the medieval settlement development along the High Street near the church, and Southminster Hall lay to the east, with a number of outlying farms. A market place is believed to have been located on the north west side of the High Street/North Street junction, and the village grew outwards along the main roads in the post-medieval period.

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8.4 The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds. A modern service traversed Trench 2, and Trench 3 contained the remnants of a modern foundation trench.

DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

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 Mr Reynolds for funding the evaluation and for his assistance.

AS would like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Maria Medlycott of Essex County Council

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1
View of Trench 1 looking west



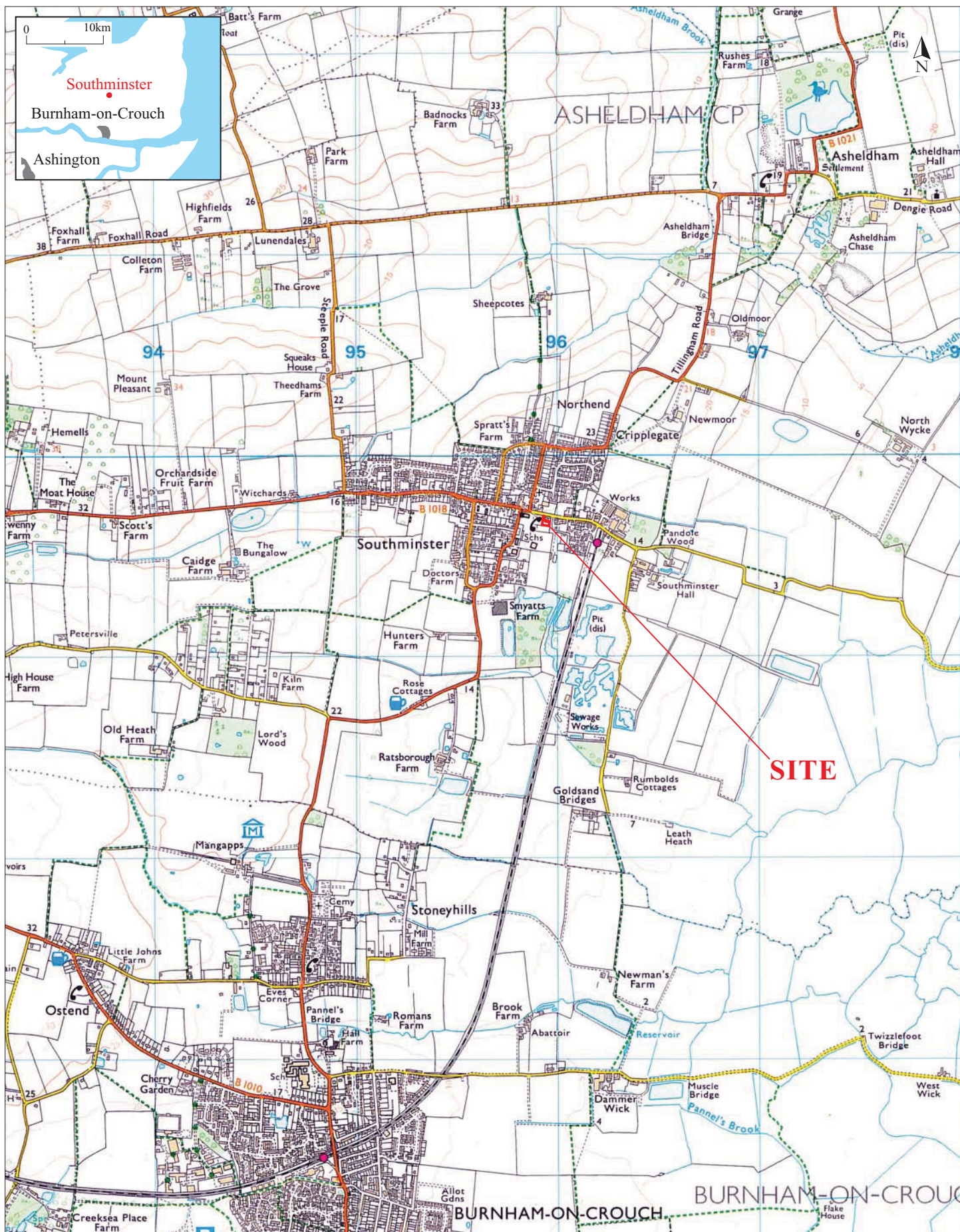
2
Sample Section 1A in Trench 1 looking north



3
View of Trench 2 looking south

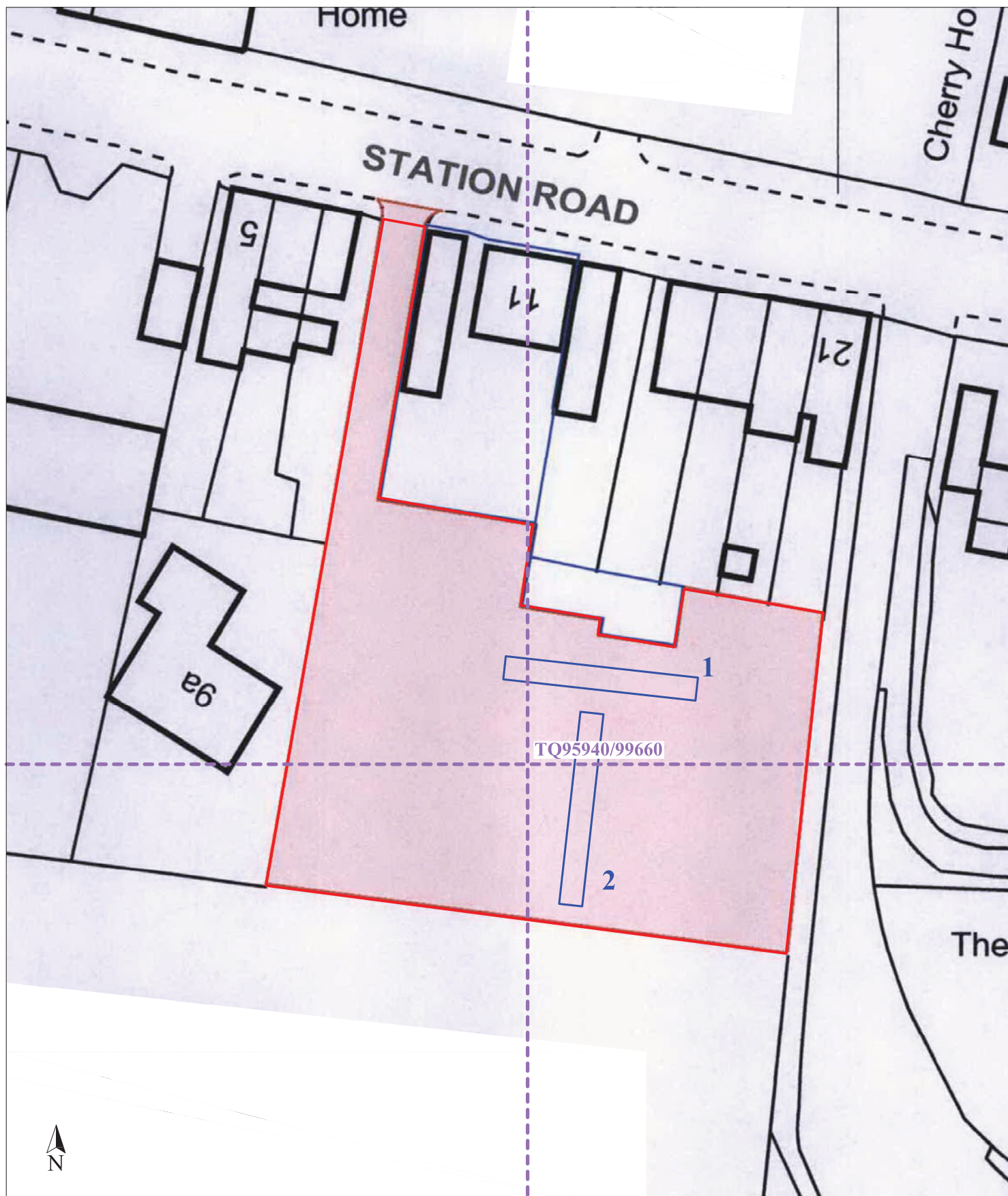


4
Sample Section 2A in Trench 2 looking west



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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4
 White Horse, Southminster, Essex (P7046)



0 25m

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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
Scale 1:400 at A4
Southminster, Essex (P7046)

