

**LAND AT WHITEDITCH LANE, NEWPORT,
ESSEX CB11 3UA**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

Authors: Tom McDonald (Fieldwork and report)	
NGR: TL 51730 34430	Report No: 5436
District: Uttlesford	Site Code: NP26
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: 7299
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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Land at Whiteditch Lane, Newport, Essex CB11 3UA</i>		
<p><i>In September 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Whiteditch Lane, Newport, Essex CB11 3UA (NGR TL 51723 34383). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of four new dwellings (Uttlesford Council Planning Ref. UTT/17/0436/FUL). 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. Modern (20th century) features comprised ceramic field drains cut through Subsoil L1001, concrete pile footings and a large, square, concrete footing. A cluster of five post holes cut from Topsoil L1000 contained plastic plant pot and white polystyrene. The site stratigraphy appeared intact and though modern features were present it is not felt that archaeological features, had they been present, would have been truncated or wholly removed.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>September 2017</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>9291</i>	Site code	<i>NP26</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Former glasshouses</i>		
Planned development	<i>Residential</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Uttlesford</i>	<i>Newport</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex Historic Environment Record</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>CB11 3UA</i>		
Area of site	<i>c.1488m2</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 51723 34383</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c.65m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Essex County Council</i>		
Project supervisor	<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>		
Funded by	<i>Pelham Structures Ltd</i>		
Full title	<i>Land at Whiteditch Lane, Newport, Essex CB11 3UA. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>McDonald, T.</i>		
Report no.	<i>5436</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>September 2017</i>		

LAND AT WHITEDITCH LANE, NEWPORT, ESSEX CB11 3UA

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In September 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Whiteditch Lane, Newport, Essex CB11 3UA (NGR TL 51723 34383; Figs. 1 – 2). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of four new dwellings (Uttlesford Council Planning Ref. UTT/17/0436/FUL). 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 that the site lies within an area of archaeological potential to the immediate north of the medieval town at Newport (EHER 376-7). Documentary evidence also points to the presence of a castle in the vicinity of the site (EHER 234). The site of a medieval leper hospital has also been investigated to the north east, revealing structures and human burials associated with the hospital (EHER 1937). Historic cartographic sources suggest the area to the immediate west of the site has been subject to previous quarrying. Evidence of earlier settlement activity pre-dating the medieval town is also known from the area, with an evaluation to the south revealing two areas of prehistoric activity in the form of numerous pits and ditches, with finds of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date (EHER 48597). A Roman field system has recently been investigated within the area of the extensive nurseries here.

The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds. Modern (20th century) features comprised ceramic field drains cut through Subsoil L1001, concrete pile footings and a large, square, concrete footing. A cluster of five post holes cut from Topsoil L1000 contained plastic plant pot and white polystyrene. The site stratigraphy appeared intact and though modern features were present it is not felt that archaeological features, had they been present, would have been truncated or wholly removed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In September 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Whiteditch Lane, Newport, Essex CB11 3UA (NGR TL 51723 34383; Figs. 1 – 2). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of four new dwellings (Uttlesford Council Planning Ref. UTT/17/0436/FUL). The evaluation was required based on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA).

1.2 The evaluation represents the first phase of works required by the condition. If archaeological remains are present, ECC HEA may require further archaeological mitigation prior to the development.

1.3 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA, Richard Havis, *Brief for Archaeological Trial Trenching and Excavation, On Land at Whiteditch Lane, Newport*, dated 3rd August 2017), and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 8th August 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 northern side of Whiteditch Lane in Newport. It comprises c.1488m² of former nursery glasshouses, recently demolished. It is proposed to erect a new development of 4 new dwellings on the site, with associated works, following demolition of existing glasshouses.

3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

3.1 The site lies at c.65m AOD towards the base of the northern slope of the shallow valley of Wicken Water, a tributary of the River Cam, with which it converges 500m to the east. The site slopes gently down from north to south.

3.2 The solid geology is the Cretaceous New Pit Chalk Foundation (BGS 2016), overlain by a superficial (drift) geology of Lowestoft Formation Diamicton. This is overlain by soils of the Melford Association, described as deep well-drained fine loamy over clayey soils, which may give way to more calcareous soils of the Hanslope Association towards the northern edge of the site.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 A glacial erratic, potentially a fallen standing stone, known as the Leper Stone is situated c.250m to the north-east. Archaeological investigations in the large fields immediately to the north of the site recorded two distinct areas of late Bronze Age to early Iron Age occupation comprising inter-cutting pit groups containing pottery, as well as a middle Iron Age ditch (HER 48597).

4.2 Newport is a medieval town (HER 376-7) with a market place of and royal manor of Saxon origin, though their precise location remains uncertain (HER 18803). The site is to the north-west of the core of the medieval town, including the 12th century church of St. Mary (HER 378 & 25503) and the supposed site of Newport Castle (HER 234). A medieval Guildhall survives of Belmont Hill/High Street (HER 18804), as do several timber-framed buildings of 15th-16th century origin (e.g. 25560 & 25567), while plots to the rear of these properties have revealed medieval features and pottery (HER 47611 & 14921) but remain distinct from the area of the site. A medieval leper hospital with origins in the mid 12th century AD was also situated c.500m to the north-east (HER 172 & 1938), and investigations at the modern carnation Nurseries site have recorded human burials and stone walls associated with the hospital (HER 1939, 1936 & 7305)

4.3 The historic core of Newport, principally aligned along Belmont Hill/High Street and around the church preserves a high density of historic and listed buildings, ranging from the 16th to mid 19th centuries. Buildings closest to the site comprise the 18th century timber-framed houses at 4-6 Bury Water Lane c.200m to the east (HER 25558). Historic editions of the Ordnance Survey maps for the local area indicate the land west of White Ditch Lane remained undeveloped until houses were built between 1921-51 fronting on to the road but probably not encroaching on the site. Land to the east of White Ditch Lane was quarried for gravel. Archaeological investigations at bury grove and Newport Free Grammar School, close to the north and east respectively did not record any archaeological features (HER 48908 & 7307)

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The ECC HEA advice required the trial trenching to take the form of a single trench running the full length of the development site. The trench was c.34m x 1.8m (Fig. 3).

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 trench description is presented below:

Trench 1

Sample section 1A 0.0 = 64.98m AOD		
0.00-0.16m	L1000	Topsoil. Mid brown, loosely compact, loamy clay with occasional small rounded and sub angular flint pebble, frequent small modern CBM, and modern debris including fragments of plastic plant pots, plastic and polystyrene.
0.16-0.57m	L1001	Subsoil. Mid brown, compact clay, occasional small sub angular and sub rounded flint pebbles, occasional to moderate small angular lumps of chalk
0.57m +	L1002	Natural. Mid brown to light grey, compact, clay with frequent small rounded and angular flint pebble and small angular lumps of chalk.

Sample section 1B 0.00 – 64.99mAOD		
0.00-0.25m	L1000	Topsoil. As above with frequent demolition rubble
0.25-0.45m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.45m+	L1002	Natural. As above

Sample section 1C 0.00 = 65.02m AOD		
0.00-0.14m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.14-0.54m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.54m +	L1002	Natural. As above

Sample section 1D 0.00 = 64.99m AOD		
0.00-0.17m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.17-0.60m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.60m +	L1002	Natural. As above

Description: Trench 1 contained no archaeological features or finds. Small amounts of modern CBM were present within Topsoil L1000 and Subsoil L1001 including modern plastics associated with the former nursery. Modern (20th century) features comprised eight ceramic, ribbed, field drains cut at various depths through Subsoil L1001. Other modern features were concrete pile footings mostly present on the eastern side of the trench. A larger, square, concrete footing was revealed towards the southern end of the trench. A cluster of five post holes cut from Topsoil L1000 were also revealed towards the southern end of the trench, and contained plastic plant pot and white polystyrene.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 Though some modern disturbances were present, 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 mid brown, loosely compact, loamy clay with occasional small rounded and sub angular flint pebble, frequent small modern CBM, and modern debris including fragments of plastic plant pots, plastic and polystyrene (0.14 – 0.25m thick).

8.2 Below L1000, Subsoil L1001 was a mid brown, compact clay, occasional small sub angular and sub rounded flint pebbles, occasional to moderate small angular lumps of chalk (0.20 – 0.43m thick).

8.3 At the base of the sequence the natural, Mid brown to light grey, compact, clay with frequent small rounded and angular flint pebble and small angular lumps of chalk (0.45 – 0.60m below the present day ground surface).

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential to the immediate north of the medieval town at Newport (EHER 376-7). Documentary evidence also points to the presence of a castle in the vicinity of the site (EHER 234). The site of a medieval leper hospital has also been investigated to the north east, revealing structures and human burials associated with the hospital (EHER 1937). Historic cartographic sources suggest the area to the immediate west of the site has been subject to previous quarrying. Evidence of earlier settlement activity pre-dating the medieval town is also known from the area, with an evaluation to the south revealing two areas of prehistoric activity in the form of numerous pits and ditches, with finds of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date (EHER 48597). A Roman field system has recently been investigated within the area of the extensive nurseries here.

9.2 The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds. Modern (20th century) features associated with the former nursery comprised ceramic field drains cut through Subsoil L1001, concrete pile footings and a large, square, concrete footing. A cluster of five post holes cut from Topsoil L1000 contained plastic plant pot and white polystyrene.

9.3 The site stratigraphy appeared intact and though modern features were present it is not felt that archaeological features, had they been present, would have been truncated or wholly removed.

DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

Archive records, with inventory, will be deposited at Saffron Walden 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 Pelham Structures Ltd for funding the evaluation and for their assistance (in particular Messrs Chris Hennem and Daniel Needham).

AS would like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Richard Havis of Essex County Council Place Services.

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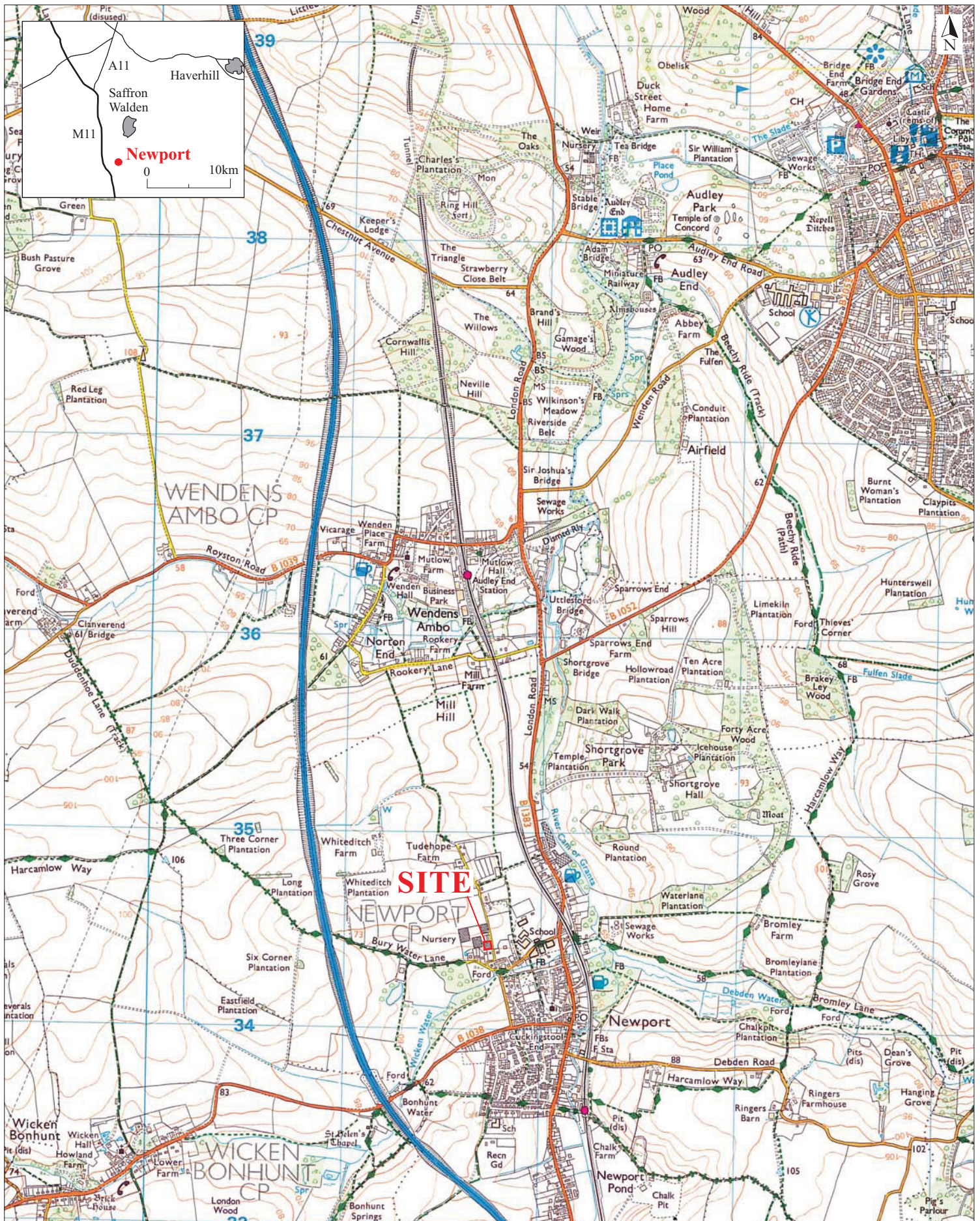
PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1
View of Trench 1 looking north

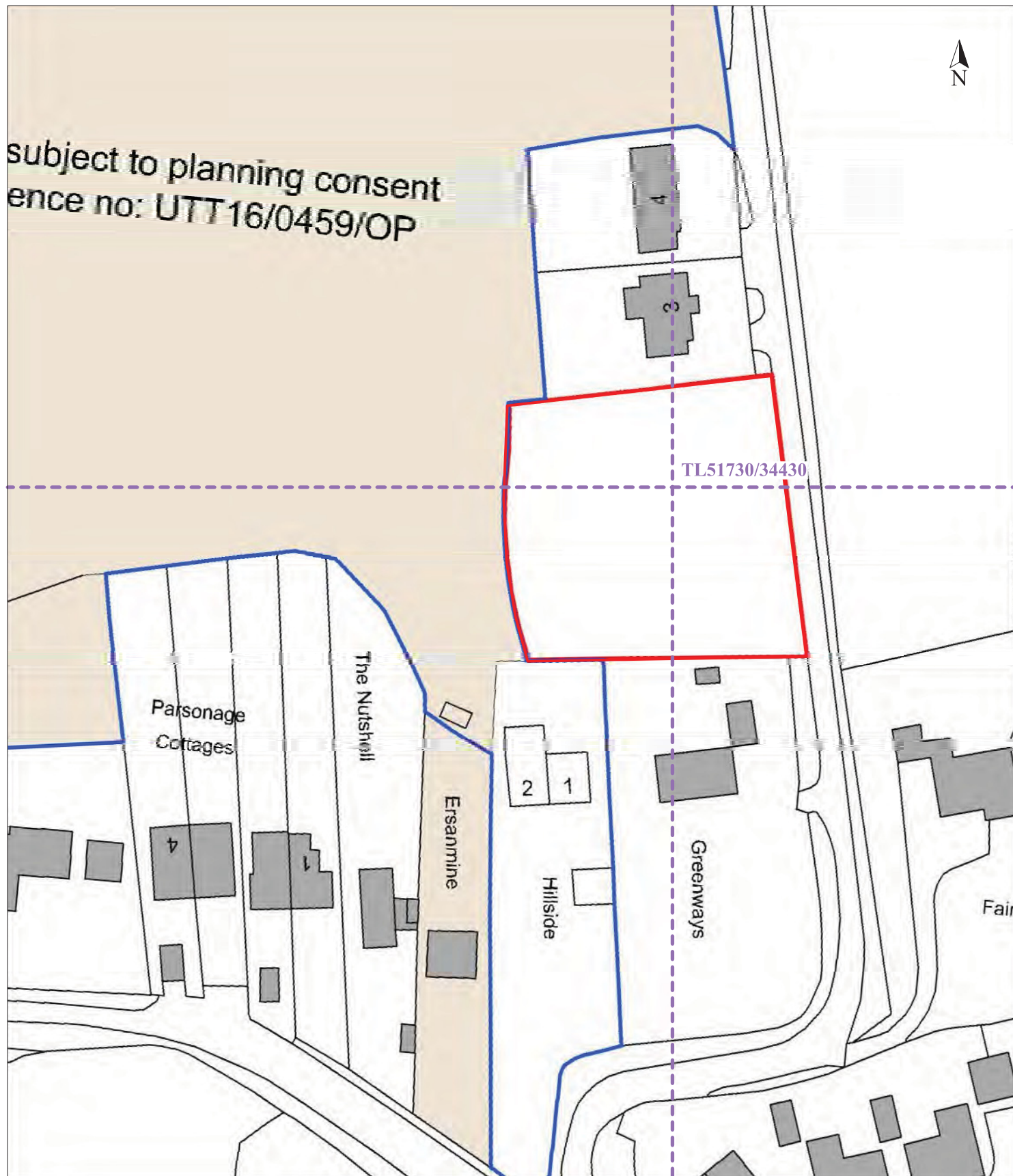


2
Example of piling across the site



Reproduced from the 1999 Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright Archaeological Solutions Ltd Licence number 100036680

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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4
 White Ditch Lane, Newport, Essex (P7299)



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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
Scale 1:750 at A4
White Ditch Lane, Newport, Essex (P7299)



- Land drain
- Modern posthole
- Pile

0 15m

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Fig. 3 Trench location plan
Scale 1:250 at A4
White Ditch Lane, Newport, Essex (P7299)