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# ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

HELPESTONS MANOR, HOLLOW ROAD, FELSTED, ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

Authors: Antony Mustchin (Field work and report)	
NGR: TL 70741 20152	Report No: 5472
District: Uttlesford	Site Code: FLHM16
Approved: Claire Halpin CMIfA	Project No: P6791
	Date: 27 October 2017

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## OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>Helpestons Manor, Hollow Road, Felsted, Essex</i>		
<p><i>In September and October 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at Helpestons Manor, Hollow Road, Felsted, Essex (NGR TL 70741 20152; Figs. 1 - 2). The monitoring was carried out on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council. It was undertaken in compliance with a condition attached to planning approval to extend and alter the current dwelling, convert the listed barn to domestic use and erect a link extension between barn and dwelling, erect a garden shed and a cartlodge (Uttlesford Planning Ref. UTT/12/5539/FUL).</i></p> <p><i>The site is located within the historic farm complex of Helpestons Manor on the northern side of Hollow Road between Thistley Green and Molehill Green near Felsted. One of the buildings within the complex to the NW of the main house is listed (16<sup>th</sup> century possible granary) and the complex is surrounded by a moat.</i></p> <p><i>The Essex Historic Environment Record notes that the proposed development area is within a moated enclosure (EHER 6271). Such moated enclosures in the region are often of medieval date, and Helpestons is recorded in 1327 and 1367. The moated enclosure survives as a moat, ponds and drainage ditches. The 19<sup>th</sup> century 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map shows a number of now demolished buildings on the site.</i></p> <p><i>The monitoring revealed a modern soakaway (F1004), visible in Section 11, modern current and previous paths, and made ground.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	28 September, 2 & 3 October 2017		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>P6525</i>	Site code	<i>FLHM16</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological monitoring</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use			
Planned development	<i>Extension and alteration of current building, barn conversion, erection of garden shed and cartlodge.</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Modern soakaway</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Uttlesford</i>	<i>Felsted</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>c.500m<sup>2</sup></i>		
NGR	<i>TL 70741 20152</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c.72m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>Essex County Council</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr &amp; Mrs Stanger</i>		
Full title	<i>Helpestons Manor, Hollow Road, Felsted, Essex. Archaeological Monitoring and Recording</i>		
Authors	<i>Mustchin, A.</i>		
Report no.	<i>5472</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>October 2017</i>		

# HELPESTONS MANOR, HOLLOW ROAD, FELSTED, ESSEX

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

### SUMMARY

*In September and October 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at Helpestons Manor, Hollow Road, Felsted, Essex (NGR TL 70741 20152; Figs. 1 - 2). The monitoring was carried out on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council. It was undertaken in compliance with a condition attached to planning approval to extend and alter the current dwelling, convert the listed barn to domestic use and erect a link extension between barn and dwelling, erect a garden shed and a cartlodge (Uttlesford Planning Ref. UTT/12/5539/FUL).*

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*The Essex Historic Environment Record notes that the proposed development area is within a moated enclosure (EHER 6271). Such moated enclosures in the region are often of medieval date, and Helpstons is recorded in 1327 and 1367. The moated enclosure survives as a moat, ponds and drainage ditches. The 19<sup>th</sup> century 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map shows a number of now demolished buildings on the site.*

*The monitoring revealed a modern soakaway (F1004), visible in Section 11, modern current and previous paths, and made ground.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In September and October 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at Helpestons Manor, Hollow Road, Felsted, Essex (NGR TL 70741 20152; Figs. 1 - 2). The monitoring was carried out on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council. It was undertaken in compliance with a condition attached to planning approval to extend and alter the current dwelling, convert the listed barn to domestic use and erect a link extension between barn and dwelling, erect a garden shed and a cartlodge (Uttlesford Planning Ref. UTT/12/5539/FUL).

1.2 The monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council

(dated 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016), and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AS (dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016) and approved by HEA ECC. It followed the procedures outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct, Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014). It also adhered to the relevant sections of *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The brief prepared by ECC HEA required a programme of historic building recording and archaeological monitoring during proposed development works at Helpstons Manor. The historic building recording is the subject of a separate report (Wilson *et al* 2017).

1.4 The requirements of the monitoring are set out in the ECC brief namely:

- Archaeological monitoring and recording of any works that affect any below-ground deposits (e.g. services, ground reduction);
- Recording of features of archaeological interest that may be exposed, and any additional research/recording necessary to place the findings of the recording in their context;
- The provision of an adequately detailed project report and the production of an archive; and
- The project should produce a high quality, fully integrated archive suitable for long-term deposition in order to 'preserve by record' the building in its current form prior to alteration.

#### *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 is located within the historic farm complex of Helpstons Manor on the northern side of Hollow Road between Thistley Green and Molehill Green near Felsted. One of the buildings within the complex to the NW of the main house is listed (16<sup>th</sup> century possible granary) and the complex is surrounded by a moat.

## **3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

3.1 Helpstons Manor is on a plateau of slightly raised ground which also includes Pye's Farm to the north-east. The land gently declines towards the River Ter, which curves around the outskirts of Molehill Green and towards Leez Lodge Lakes in the south.

3.2 The underlying geological formation of the local area consists of the London Clay Formation; clay, silt and sand formed in the Palaeogene period. The overlying soil is a lime-rich loamy and clayey soil with impeded drainage.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### *Prehistoric to Anglo-Saxon*

4.2.1 Prehistoric evidence in the surrounding area is limited to a cropmark of a curvilinear enclosure 560m to the west of the site (EHER 47693). Romano-British activity comprises three or four urned cremations, found in 1826 750m to the west of the site (EHER 17489).

### *Medieval*

4.2.2 The church screen, inset into the west elevation of the main house, records a list of owners from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The first name is Thomas de Helpston in 1356 however the archaeological record for

the area suggests the manor is probably associated with the family of John de Helpston from Whelpstones in Newport, Essex (EHER 6271). The original house was moated with the north-east and parts of the north-west and south-east arms surviving waterfilled. The barn is described as 17<sup>th</sup> century (EHER 6272; 37143), which contrasts with the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century date suggested in the list description.

### *Post-medieval*

4.2.3 In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century the estate was owned by a known historical figure: Robert Rich, Baron of Leez. He was Lord Chancellor during King Edward VI's reign and founder of the Felsted School. Initially a lawyer and later chancellor of the Court of Augmentations in 1536, he acquired Leez (Leighs) Priory and numerous manors in Essex. He was made Baron Rich of Leez in 1547 after being an assistant executor of the will of Henry VIII and received a grant of lands. During his time he had a reputation for immorality, financial dishonesty and is said to have a personal hand in the torture of Anne Askew, the only woman to be tortured at the Tower of London (Weir 1991, 517).

4.2.4 The plaque at the house records a Sir Richard Rich owning the estate before Baron Rich, and although little is known about the Rich family before the Baron it is thought his father was a wealthy mercer of London in the 1440s and there is no evidence that he was a landowner (Sergeant 1989, 80). Therefore 'Sir Richard Rich' probably refers to Baron Rich before he was given his title.

4.2.5 The estate passed to his grandson, at this time known as Whelpstones, as his son died only a year after his own death in 1580. Robert Rich was made 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Warwick in 1618 and the estate passed through two generations of the Rich family during which time the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl was leased land in Felsted upon his marriage to Ann Cavendish, daughter of the Earl of Devonshire (ERO ref: D/DCw T22). At the death of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl, the estate, and title, passed to his brother making him Charles Rich, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Warwick. With no heirs on his death in 1673 the title passed to his cousin, but he left his property to his widow, Lady Mary Boyle, here the fortunes of the Rich family and that of the manor of Helpston divide. On her death it passed to Robert and Charles' sister and her husband; the Earl and Countess of Scarsdale, who are also recorded on the plaque.

4.2.6 The manor of Helpston now became linked with Broomfield Hall, another of the Earl of Scarsdale's estates which he sold (probably along with Helpstons) to a London merchant, Herman Olmius. On his death these estates passed to his daughter and then his grandson John Olmius, who was made Member of Parliament for Colchester, was the High Sheriff of Essex in 1746-47 and in 1762 joined the ranks of the nobility, being created the 1st Lord Waltham of Philipstown. His name is the next to appear on the plaque. There are records of

Helpestons being leased to an Arthur Bentall, a yeoman farmer, in 1758 by a John Olmius (ERO Ref: A12724).

4.2.7 Drigue Billers Olmius (2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Waltham), son of John Olmius, continued to lease the estate to Arthur and Anthony Bentall until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (ERO Ref: A12724). Sales particulars from 1801 show the estate being sold in three lots. Lot 1 comprises the manor of Whelpstones with freehold dwelling house and farm in the occupation of Mr Arthur Bentall, with two barns and stables (ERO Ref: SALE/B2339).

4.2.8 The manor was purchased by Luke William Walford who sold it to the resident farmer, Arthur Bentall in 1808 (ERO Ref: A12724). Anthony Bentall appears as the next name on the plaque. 'Whelpstones' is also depicted on the tithe map of 1845 where the house is clearly depicted, with projecting rear service range, and several outbuildings. The apportionment lists plot #460 as being owned and occupied by Anthony Bentall and comprising a homestall, pightle and garden. On an Ordnance Survey map of 1875 the house and outbuildings are still present ([www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)), though the granary appears to have been extended to the east. The arms of the moat are also present as well as an orchard to the south-west of the house. The Second Edition Ordnance Survey map depicts little change, except another large outbuilding has been constructed directly to the north-east of the house ([www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)). On the 1921 Edition the name Helpestons appears for the first time on a cartographic source with some small-scale development in the farmyard ([www.maps.nls.uk](http://www.maps.nls.uk)).

### *Modern*

4.2.9 The manor then passes through three generations of the Bentall family before three generations of the Ham family are listed as owners between 1888 and 1914.

## **5 METHODOLOGY**

5.1 The brief required the monitoring of all groundworks in order to provide a record of any archaeological deposits which might be damaged or removed by any development permitted by the current planning consent. The ground works, and also the upcast soil, were closely monitored during and after stripping in order to ensure no damage occurs to any heritage assets.

5.2 The foundation trenches were excavated using a mini, tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 500mm toothless ditching bucket.

5.3 The archaeological investigation comprised the inspection of the subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features, the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Encountered features and deposits were cleaned by hand and recorded using *pro-forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was checked for finds.

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS Figs. 3 - 4

6.1 The encountered stratigraphy was recorded in sample sections presented below:

### Sample Section 1

0.00 = 71.60m AOD		
0.00 – 0.21m	L1000	Topsoil. Firm, dark brown sandy clay with frequent small rounded stone, and moderate medium – large sub-rounded stone.
0.21 – 0.42m	L1001	Made ground. Firm, mid yellow brown sandy clay.
0.42m+	L1003	Natural deposits. Compact, dark yellow clay with occasional chalk flecks.

### Sample Section 2

0.00 = 71.62m AOD		
0.00 – 0.19m	L1000	Topsoil. As Sample Section 1.
0.19 – 0.36m	L1001	Made ground. As Sample Section 1.
0.19 – 0.47m	L1002	Subsoil. Compact, mid yellow brown sandy clay with occasional small, medium, and large rounded and sub-rounded stone.
0.47m+	L1003	Natural deposits. As Sample Section 1.

### Sample Section 3

0.00 = 71.61m AOD		
0.00 – 0.17m	L1000	Topsoil. As Sample Section 1.
0.17 – 0.38m	L1002	Subsoil. As Sample Section 2.
0.38m+	L1003	Natural deposits. As Sample Section 1.

### Sample Section 4

0.00 = 71.88m AOD		
0.00 – 0.16m	L1000	Topsoil: As Sample Section 1.
0.16 – 0.38m	L1002	Subsoil: As Sample Section 2.
0.38m+	L1003	Natural deposits: As Sample Section 1.

### Sample Section 5

0.00 = 71.79m AOD		
0.00 – 0.04m	L1006	Existing paved surface. Pale grey stone paving slabs.
0.04 – 0.12m	L1007=L1008	Bedding for paving slabs. Pale grey mortar.
0.04 – 0.14m	L1009	Levelling layer for paving. Friable, pale yellow brown sharp sand.
0.00 – 0.10m	L1010	Pale grey concrete.
0.14 – 0.38m+	L1011	Made ground. Firm, mid yellow brown sandu clay with frequent CBM fragments, and moderate medium sub-angular stones.

### Sample Section 6

0.00 = 71.89m AOD		
0.00 – 0.04m	L1006	Existing paved surface. As Sample Section 5.
0.04 – 0.06m	L1012	Black Asphalt.
0.04 – 0.12m	L1009	Levelling layer for paving. As Sample Section 5.
0.12 – 0.48m+	L1002	Subsoil. As Sample Section 2.
0.12 – 0.48m+	L1011	Made ground. As Sample Section 5.

### Sample Section 7

0.00 = 71.70m AOD		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. As Sample Section 1.
0.18 – 0.35m	L1002	Subsoil. As Sample Section 2.
0.35m+	L1003	Natural deposits. As Sample Section 1.

### Sample Section 8

0.00 = 71.71m AOD		
0.00 – 0.12m	L1000	Topsoil. As Sample Section 1.
0.12 – 0.28m	L1002	Subsoil. As Sample Section 2.
0.28 – 0.83m+	L1003	Natural deposits. As Sample Section 1.

### Sample Section 9

0.00 = 71.76m AOD		
0.00 – 0.08m	L1012	Black Asphalt. As Sample Section 6.
0.08 – 0.18m	L1013	Levelling layer for asphalt path. Friable, pale yellow sharp sand with frequent small rounded stones.
0.00 – 0.06m	L1014	Modern path edging. Red/orange terracotta blocks.
0.06 – 0.17m	L1015	Footing for path edging. Pale grey concrete.
0.00 – 0.20m	L1016	Garden soil. Friable, mid yellow brown sandy clay with moderate small sub-angular stones.
0.20 – 0.26m	L1017	Former path surface. Loose, black asphalt fragments.
0.26 – 0.57m+	L1018	Made ground. Compact, mid yellow brown sandy clay with

		frequent small and medium rounded stones, and moderate CBM and charcoal flecks.
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### Sample Section 10

0.00 = 71.76m AOD		
0.00 – 0.05m	L1019	Modern driveway surface. Black asphalt overlain with pea gravel.
0.05 – 0.13m	L1020	Made ground. Mixed patches of pale grey and mid yellow brown sandy clay with gravel and concrete rubble.
0.05 – 0.23m	L1021	Made ground. Mixed patches of firm, dark yellow and pale grey clay with frequent gravel and occasional charcoal flecks.
0.23 – 0.40m+	L1018	Made Ground. As Sample Section 9.

### Sample Section 11

0.00 = 71.60m AOD		
0.00 – 0.20m	L1000	Topsoil: As Sample Section 1.
0.20 – 0.50m+	L1002	Subsoil: As Sample Section 2.

*Description: A modern soakaway, F1004, was visible in Section 11.*

F1004 was an irregular shaped modern soakaway (1.27 x 0.37m+). Its fill (L1005) was a loose, dark brown sandy clay with very frequent CBM rubble.

## 7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 Within the parameters of monitoring it is not felt that any factors restricted the identification of archaeological features or finds.

## 8 DISCUSSION

8.1 The site lies within a medieval moated enclosure (EHER 6271) and contains the farm complex of Helpstons manor. One of the buildings within this complex is listed (16<sup>th</sup> century possible granary). The 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map shows a number of now demolished buildings. The site, therefore, had potential for remains of medieval, post medieval, and early modern date.

8.2 The monitoring revealed only a modern soakaway (F1004), visible in Section 11, modern current and previous paths, and made ground.

## **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 Limited would like to thank Mr & Mrs Stanger for commissioning and funding the works, and Mr Rodney Black of Rodney Black Design Studios for his assistance and John W Younger Builders for assistance.

AS gratefully acknowledges the input and advice of Mr Richard Havis at the Essex County Council and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER), as well as the staff at the Essex Record Office (ERO).

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SSEW 1983 *Soil Survey of England and Wales: Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales* Harpenden, Rothamsted Experimental Station/Lawes Agricultural Trust

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## **Web resources**

[www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1  
Service trenches being excavated



2  
Service trench leading to the house



3  
Sample Section 1 looking north-east



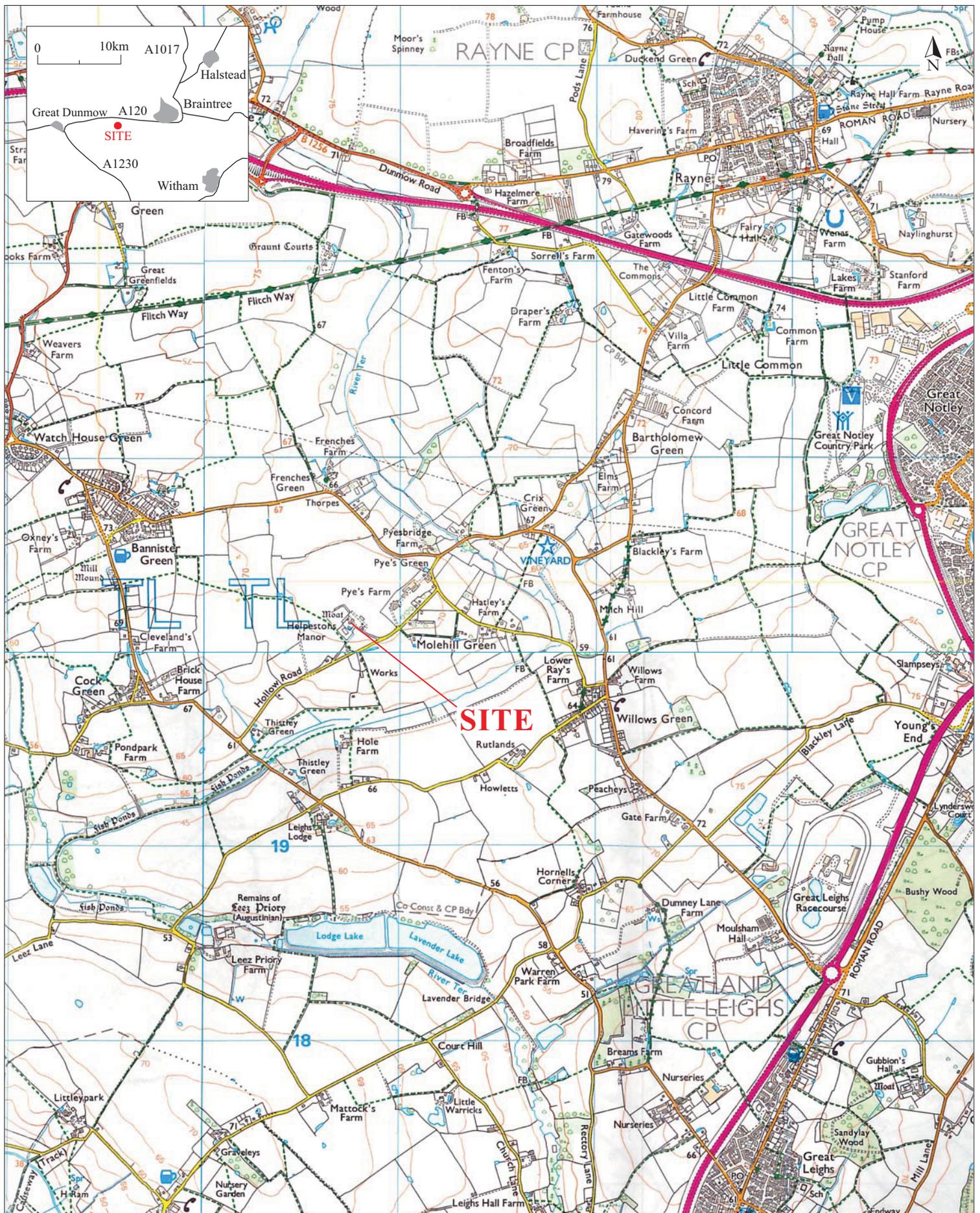
4  
Sample Section 5 looking north-west



5  
Sample Section 7 looking south-west

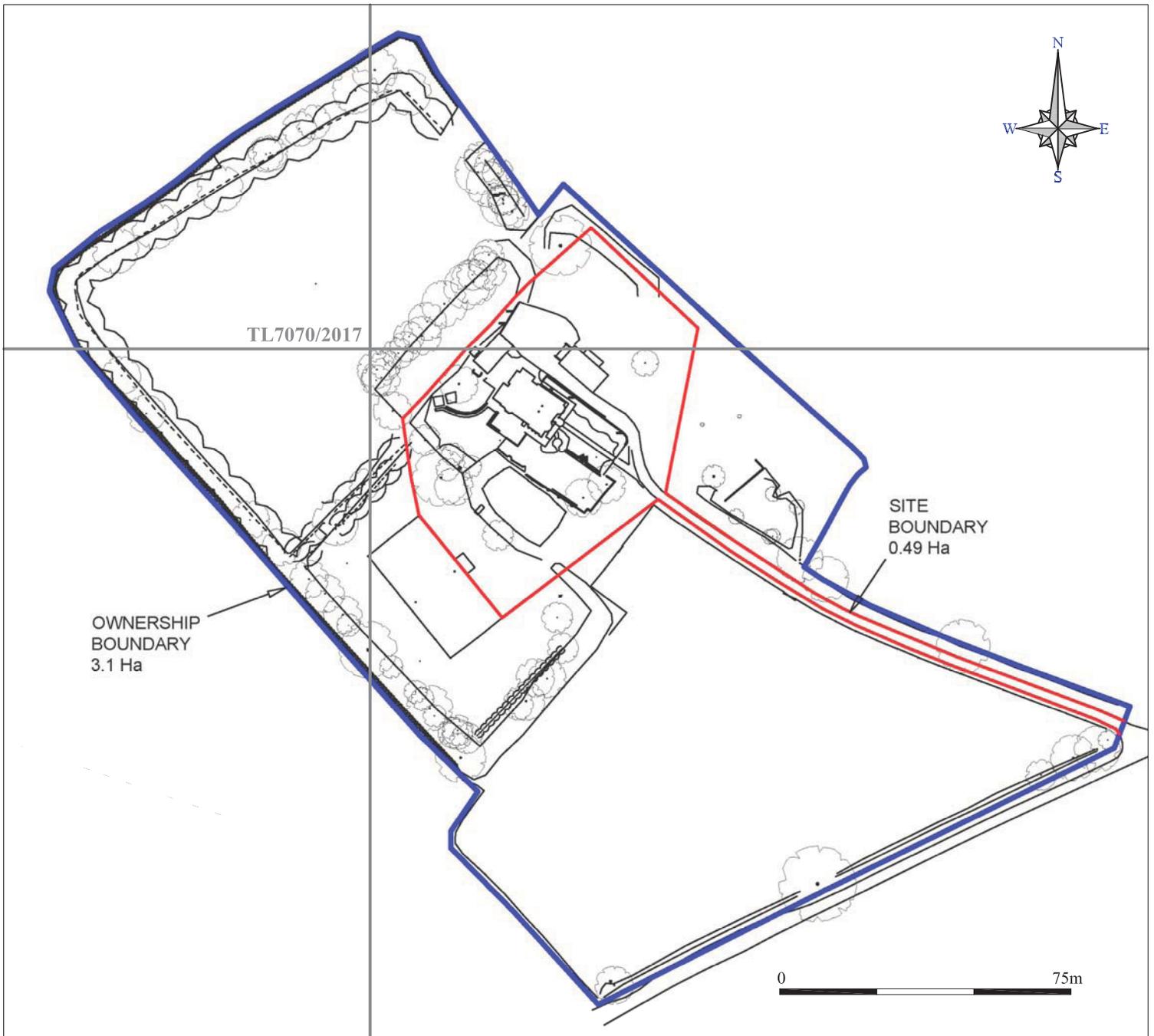


6  
Sample Section 10 looking south



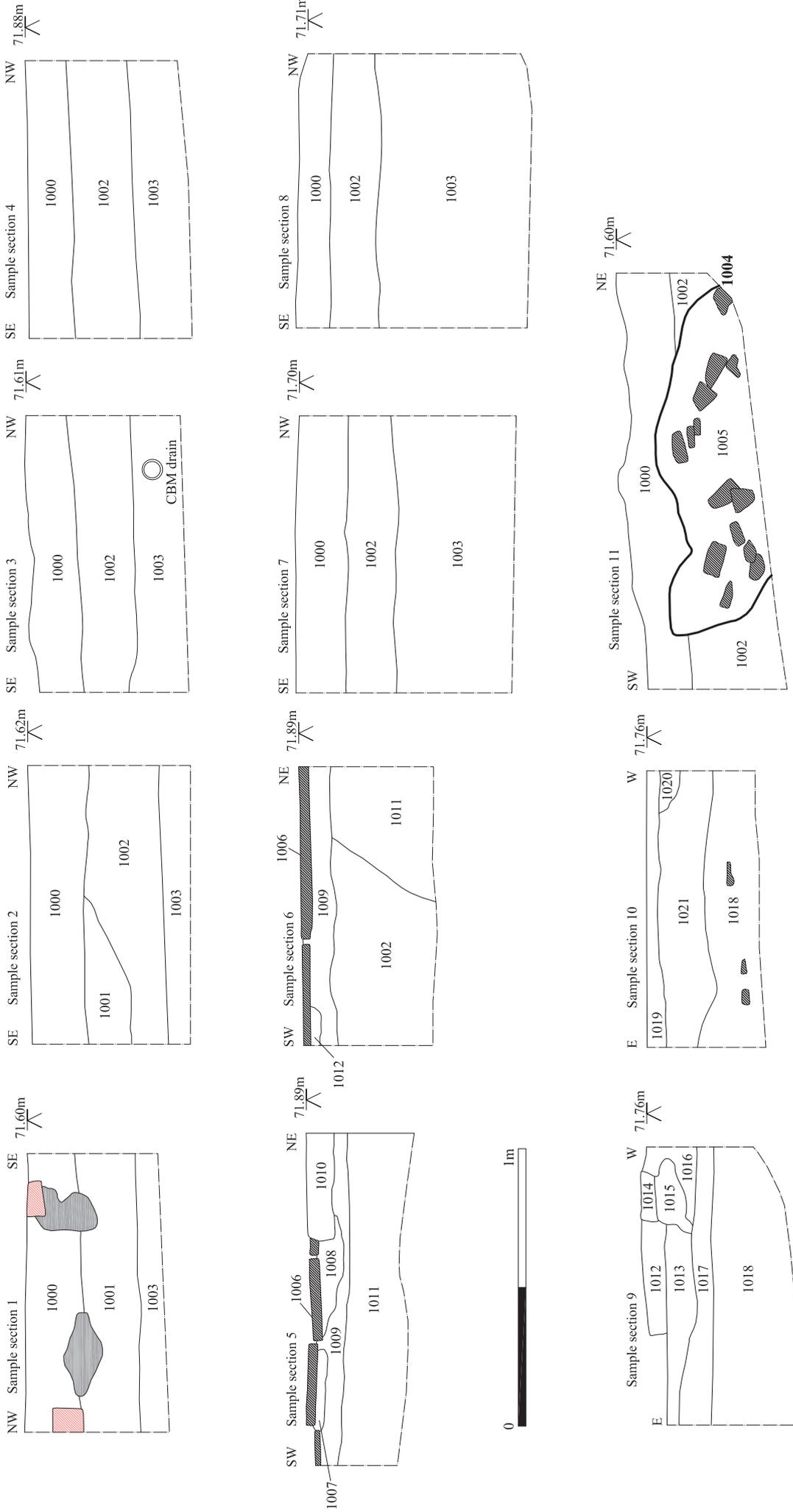
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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4  
 Helpstons Manor, Felsted, Essex (P6791)



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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**  
Scale 1:1500 at A4  
Helpestons Manor, Felsted, Essex (P6791)





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### Fig. 4 Sample sections

Scale 1:20 at A4

Helpestons Manor, Felsted, Essex (P6791)