


**FINGRINGHOE BALLAST QUARRY
COLCHESTER, ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING & RECORDING**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**FINGRINGHOE BALLAST QUARRY,
COLCHESTER, ESSEX**
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING & RECORDING

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NGR: TM 0315 1980	Report No. 3422
Parish: Maldon	Site Code: FIBQ.04
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 1328
Signed: 	Date: November 2009

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details		Fingringhoe Ballast Quarry, Colchester, Essex: Archaeological Monitoring and Recording	
Summary:			
In October 2009, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on behalf of Thames & Colne River Aggregates Ltd during groundworks associated with the extension of the current quarry development at Fingringhoe Ballast Quarry, Colchester (TL 7856 3560).			
The previous evaluation and excavation revealed 17 cremation vessels of approximately 2 nd century date, all located along the edge of a contemporary boundary ditch. Additionally, four graves were identified, though only two contained human bone. Two possible pyre deposits or un-urned cremations were located c. 20m south of these features. Other features comprised a tentatively dated 1 st century BC/AD system of boundary ditches, its 2 nd -4 th century successor, and pits dating to both periods (Trott, K. 2006).			
Previous monitoring revealed a ?Roman cremation (F3016), a pit (F3034) which contained Neolithic pottery and flint including a projectile point. Other archaeological features comprised boundary ditches, gullies, and pits/postholes. Numerous tree hollows and natural features were also investigated, some of which contained residual pottery sherds (Doyle 2005; Greene 2008).			
The current phase of monitoring did not contribute to the above archaeological record as no features or finds were present.			
Project dates (fieldwork)	10/09/09, 14/09/09, 22/10/09		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	Y	Future work (Y/N/?)	Y
P. number	1328	Site code	FIBQ_04
Type of project	Monitoring and recording		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Agriculture		
Planned development	Mineral extraction		
Main features (+dates)	None		
Significant finds (+dates)	None		
Project location			
County/District/ Parish	Essex	Maldon	Fingringhoe
HER/ SMR for area	Essex HER (EHER)		
Post code (if known)	CO5 7DB		
Area of site	c.6000 sq m		
NGR	TL 7856 3560		
Height AOD (max/ min)	24m – 26m AOD		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch (ECC HEM)		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Walter McCall & Gareth Barlow		
Funded by	Thames & Colne River Aggregates Ltd		
Full title	Fingringhoe Ballast Quarry, Colchester, Essex, Essex. Archaeological Monitoring and Recording		
Authors	Adams, MC		
Report no.	3422		
Date (of report)	November 2009		

FINGRINGHOE BALLAST QUARRY, COLCHESTER, ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING

SUMMARY

In October 2009, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on behalf of Thames & Colne River Aggregates Ltd during groundworks associated with the extension of the current quarry development at Fingringhoe Ballast Quarry, Colchester (TL 7856 3560).

The previous evaluation and excavation revealed 17 cremation vessels of approximately 2nd century date, all located along the edge of a contemporary boundary ditch. Additionally, four graves were identified, though only two contained human bone. Two possible pyre deposits or un-urned cremations were located c. 20m south of these features. Other features comprised a tentatively dated 1st century BC/AD system of boundary ditches, its 2nd -4th century successor, and pits dating to both periods (Trott, K. 2006).

Previous monitoring revealed a ?Roman cremation (F3016), a pit (F3034) which contained Neolithic pottery and flint including a projectile point. Other archaeological features comprised boundary ditches, gullies, and pits/postholes. Numerous tree hollows and natural features were also investigated, some of which contained residual pottery sherds (Doyle 2005; Greene 2008).

The current phase of monitoring did not contribute to the above archaeological record as no features or finds were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In October 2009, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on behalf of Thames & Colne River Aggregates Ltd during groundworks associated with the extension of the current quarry development at Fingringhoe Ballast Quarry, Colchester (TL 7856 3560; Figs. 1 - 2).

1.2 The monitoring and recording was conducted in accordance with a brief issued by the Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch (ECC HEM) (Garwood, dated 19/11/04), and a specification prepared by AS (dated 13/12/04). The recording conformed to the Institute of Archaeologists' (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (revised 2001), and *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, Gurney (2003).

1.3 The objectives of the project were:

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quantity of any surviving archaeological remains and geological deposits that are threatened by the proposed development;

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect archaeological remains;
- To secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme;
- To secure the full analysis and interpretation of the site archive and the publication of the project results, if appropriate;
- To secure the conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.

1.4 The relevant planning policies which apply to the effect of development with regard to cultural heritage are Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG15) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 'Archaeology and Planning' (PPG16) (Department of the Environment). PPG15 (1994) is the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to the conservation of the historic environment by protecting the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and protecting listed buildings (of architectural or historical interest) from demolition and unsympathetic change and safeguarding their settings as far as is possible. This condition is also widely applied by local authorities.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 The site lies to the south of Fingringhoe village, between Jaggers Farm and Plane Hall Farm, and to the north-east of South Green Farm (Fig 2). It is set within a sub-rectangular field, formerly in arable use. It is bounded to the north and east by Furneaux Lane while the western and southern site boundaries are marked by the courses of bridleways.

3 TOPOLOGY AND GEOLOGY

3.1 The local solid geology is of Eocene clay. This is overlain by the glacio-fluvial sands and gravels. Soils in the area are of the Wix Association (SSEW 1983), described as deep permeable coarse loamy soils that have been affected by groundwater. The site itself is fairly flat, lying at an average height of 25m AOD, but the land to the south and east slopes downwards towards the marshy area between the Pyfleet Channel (c. 3km south of the site) and the River Colne (c. 2km east of the site); the North and South Gredon Creeks pass through this area, the former passing within 750m of the site.. A tributary of the Colne, the Roman River, passes c. 600m north of the site. The site thus occupies the highest point of a 'triangular promontory between the River Colne and North/South Gredon Creek (Fig 1).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Prehistoric and late Iron Age

Stray find of stone tools attest prehistoric presence in this part of Essex from at least the Neolithic period. To the west of Plane Hall Farm, excavation by Colchester Archaeological Trust revealed an early Iron Age house (EHCR 12562), and an Iron Age harness (EHCR 17642) was recovered from the plough soil nearby. Cropmarks

c. 300m east of the site represent linear features, a possible field system, and ring ditches; the form of these features suggests an Iron Age date (EHCR 2270). Iron Age pottery (EHCR 2422) was found in this vicinity in 1970. Excavation at Frog Hall Farm to the south-west of the central focus of these cropmarks in 1975-6 revealed a ring ditch and ovalar setting of postholes (EHCR 19867); these were dated as late Bronze Age, but pottery of other periods was also recovered.

The earliest attested activity in the Sheepen area of Colchester, c. 7km north-west of the site, comprises coins and imported Roman Mediterranean goods of the later 1st century BC. Late Iron Age settlement and funerary activity is well attested in this part of Colchester, and by AD 43 the large *oppidum* of *Camulodunum* ('fortress of Camulos', a Celtic war-god) had developed as the tribal capital of the Trinovantes. It was defended by a combination of natural features (rivers, valleys and dense woodland) and a series of man-made dykes. The defensive dykes of *Camulodunum* formed the largest such system known in late Iron Age Britain; their plan suggests a long sequence of unstructured development. Heath Farm Dyke and Berechurch Dyke may have continued southwards to contain the site at Fingringhoe, which would have lain immediately east of the postulated Berechurch Dyke (Dunnett 1975, 21).

4.2 Romano-British

Following the Claudian Conquest (AD 43) a large legionary fortress was constructed within the defended area of *Camulodunum*, but to the east of the foci of late Iron Age activity. The site of this fortress was chosen for Britain's first planned colonia, constructed after the deployment of the 20th legion to Wales in AD 49 (c.f. Kemble 2001). Being located in the hinterland of this major early Roman settlement, the site lay within a well utilised landscape, with villas, other rural occupation and supply bases all attested within a 10km radius. It has been asserted (Cleere 1978, 38) that Fingringhoe served as the harbour of Colchester, at least in the early/ military phase of the settlement. Fingringhoe does indeed seem a suitable site for a harbour serving *Camulodunum*, but this has not been clearly archaeologically attested, and no road link from the fortress/ colonia to Fingringhoe has been identified (cf. Ordnance Survey 1997).

19th and early 20th century quarrying of the gravel deposits of the Fingringhoe area has resulted in the destruction of Roman archaeological sites without full recording. One such site at Fingringhoe Wick, c. 1.5km east of the site, may represent the harbour of *Camulodunum*, discussed above. The archaeological evidence is thought to have attested a 1st century AD military camp (VCH III 4, 132), evidenced by parallel lines of pits which produced large quantities of Claudio-Neronian material (EHCR 2113). Other remains included a possible landing place on the River Colne. The location of this site, on the west bank of the river, is comparable to the location of other Claudian coastal bases both in southern Britain and on the opposing continental coast (VCH III, 4). At least three later buildings, all small but well furnished with evidence of hypocaust systems and tessellated floors, were present site, as well as a cemetery and timber-lined wells. Coins of Cunobelin and sherds of Gallo-Belgic pottery were also recovered from this site, but there is no definite evidence of pre-Roman settlement (HER 2108). Roman building materials have been turned up by ploughing in two fields c. 400m south-east of the Fingringhoe

Wick site/ 1.1km east-south-east of the current site (EHCR 2309).

In Fingringhoe village, a coin of Claudius was found in 1963 (EHCR 2416), and Roman presence is further attested by the re-used septaria and Roman brick in the fabric of the 12th century church of St. Andrew (EHCR 2524). Approximately 100m to the east of the current site's northern end, a watching brief has revealed Roman rubbish pits (EHCR 4875). No archaeological features have been revealed to the south/ south-east of the site but finds evidence has attested Roman presence. This finds evidence comprises two coins, one unidentified and one of Magnus Maximus (AD 383-8) (EHCR 2081), a 5th century brooch (EHCR 17640), and Roman pottery (23 sherds) recovered from the plough soil during excavations at Frog Hall Farm (EHCR 19868). The form of the bridleway which bounds the site to the south (see Section 2.1 and Fig 1) suggests that it may follow the line of a Roman Road or route-way; this has not been confirmed by excavation. Going (in Glazebrook 1997, 37) notes that even the main Roman trunk road network in East Anglia has had little work undertaken recently, and that smaller secondary or local routes are almost wholly unexplored.

The marshland on the lower ground to the south and east of the site would have been ideal for saltings. Roman salterns, known as red hills, have been identified throughout this area of Essex, including one to the south of the Roman River, c. 700m north of the site (EHCR 2658), which yielded several coins, at least two of Claudian date.

4.3 Saxon

A coin of the Eastern Emperor Justinian I (527-565) found c. 900m north-north-east of the site attests continuing activity in the Fingringhoe area in the immediate post-Roman period.

6th – 7th century pottery recovered during excavation at Frog Hall Farm is thought to represent 10 to 15 vessels and to represent an early-middle Saxon settlement site c. 200m east of the site's southern end (EHCR 19869). Metal detector finds in close proximity to the southern end of the site include several 7th-8th century sceatta coins (EHCR 17585, 18622, 18659). One of these was an unusual, possibly Frisian, sceat whose presence could attest to the immigration of Germanic people or distant trading contacts. A strap end (EHCCR 17639) has also been found in this area. The metal items may be further evidence of settlement in this vicinity, but their distribution along the southern edge of the site may also be consistent with the extant bridleway having existed as a route-way by this time, and so possibly with its interpretation as being of Roman origin (see above).

A further, silver, strap end has been recovered to the east of the site's northern end (EHCR 17638), and two lead (alloy?) strap ends were found near the parish church (EHCR 17668). The latter may have been models or trial pieces for copper alloy (or silver) finished products, and so may be indicative of metalworking in the area.

4.4 Previous archaeological work

4.4.1 Fieldwalking survey

An archaeological fieldwalking survey of the site and an additional area (known as Tower Field) north of Furneaux Lane was carried out by HAT (now AS) in October 2000 (Murray & Crank 2000). The field walking survey revealed a light scatter of worked and burnt flint work that included tool types of the early Neolithic and early Bronze Age date. Two small fragments of pottery were recovered the first of Saxon date and the second sherd was medieval in character. A large quantity of post-medieval roof-tile, and a small quantity of post-medieval pottery was also recovered, suggestive either of disturbed sub-surface features or of deposition of post-medieval material associated with agricultural practices (i.e. manuring).

4.4.2 Trial trench evaluation

The trial trench evaluation of the site was carried out by AS in September 2004 (Eddisford 2004) (Fig 2). Twelve trenches were excavated and all were found to contain features (pits, ditches and postholes, many of them undated). Two Romano-British cremation vessels were identified in Trench 9, to the west of a linear feature aligned approximately north-west to south-east. The cremations were left *in-situ*.

4.4.3 Archaeological monitoring and recording in Tower Field

In April 2005, AS carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording in Tower Field, to the north-east of the current site (Doyle 2005). The topsoil was stripped mechanically and all archaeological features exposed were investigated. Two boundary ditches were recorded along with several tree hollows and pits. Dating evidence was very sparse, but a single sherd of late Iron Age-Romano-British pottery was recovered from one of the ditches, and a large assemblage of oyster shell from one of the pits.

4.4.4 Archaeological excavation, Phase 1

In April and May 2006, the two cremation vessels revealed by the evaluation (Tr:9) and left *in situ* were excavated during the excavation phase, along with a further 15 vessels of c. 2nd century date, all located along the edge of a contemporary boundary ditch. Also in this part of the site, four graves were identified, though only two contained human bone. Two possible pyre deposits or un-urned cremations were located c. 20m south of these features.

Other features comprised a tentatively dated 1st century BC/AD system of boundary ditches, and its 2nd -4th century successor. Very sparse pits dating to both periods were also present. The remaining features were undated ditches and pits (Trott 2006).

4.4.5 Archaeological monitoring, 2008

In August 2008 a programme of monitoring revealed a Roman cremation, and a pit

(F3034) which contained Neolithic pottery and struck flint including a projectile point. Other archaeological features comprised boundary ditches, gullies, and pits/post-holes. Numerous tree hollows and natural features were also investigated, some of which contained residual pottery fragments (Greene 2008).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of all groundworks, inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features, the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Deposits were excavated by hand and recorded by means of *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was searched for archaeological finds.

5.2 The monitoring and recording focused on all intrusive activity associated with the quarry works including the stripping of all topsoil and subsoils. The site was visited in September and October 2009.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Site visit 10/09/09

The reduction of soil levels from a narrow swathe of land, orientated NW/SE, separating the quarry from the road corridor to the west was observed (Fig.2, DP 1). The southern end of the area (c. 98 x 23m) was completed on the first day.

Sample Section 1 (southern section)

South-west side, north-east facing	
0.00 – 0.32m	L4000 Topsoil. Compact, dark brown grey silty clay.
0.32 – 0.69m	L4001 Subsoil. Compact, mid yellow brown sandy silt with frequent gravel.
0.69m+	L4002 Natural geological deposit. Loose, mid brown yellow sand with occasional gravel.

Description: Pockets of silt were present within the natural geological deposit. Two of the largest, F4004 and F4006, were recorded in the southern end of the stripped area (Fig 3).

F4004 (17.30+ x 5.22 x 0.68m) was linear in plan, orientated NW / SE, with shallow sides and a concave base (DP 2). Its only fill, L4003, was a compact, medium brown grey sandy silt. No finds were present.

F4006 (15.90 x 1.50 x 0.64m) was linear in plan with steep sides and a narrow base (DP 3). Its only fill, L4005, was a compact, medium brown grey sandy silt with frequent angular gravel.

6.2 Site visit 14/09/09 (DP 4)

The northern end of the investigation area (c. 52.5 x 40.0m) was stripped while the southern end was extended. Only the central portion remained.

Sample Section 2 (northern section)

South-west side, north-east facing		
0.00 – 0.30m	L4000	Topsoil. As above.
0.30 – 0.65m	L4001	Subsoil. As above.
0.65m+	L4002	Natural geological deposit.

Description: No archaeological finds or features were present.

6.3 Site visit 22/10/09

The remaining central portion of the investigation area (c. 113.0 x 36m) was stripped and observed.

Sample Section 3

South-west side, north-east facing		
0.00 – 0.42m	L4000	Topsoil. As above.
0.42 – 0.75m	L4001	Subsoil. As above
0.75m+	L4002	Natural geological deposit. As above

Description: No archaeological finds or features were present.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds during the programme of monitoring and recording.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL (DP 4, 6)

8.1 The area next to the road corridor comprised a simple stratigraphic sequence consisting of topsoil (L4000), subsoil (L4001), and natural geological deposit (L4002). The topsoil was a thick band of compact, dark brown grey silty clay (0.30-0.42m) that encompassed the entire area. Immediately below the topsoil was a layer of yellow brown sandy silt subsoil with gravel throughout (0.33-0.37m). The natural was a yellow brown ballast and occurred at a depth of 0.65 to 0.75 m below the surface. It comprised a few pockets of gravel in a compact, medium brown grey sandy silt matrix (DP 2).

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The archaeological monitoring and recording comprised the observation of soil reduction across a narrow band of land. No archaeological features or finds were present.

DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

The archive will be lodged with Colchester Museum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Thames & Colne River Aggregates Ltd for commissioning and funding the programme of archaeological works.

Archaeological Solutions is also pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of ECC HEM.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1
General view of southern section, Looking South East



2
Silt depression F4004. Looking South East



3
Silt depression F4006. Looking North East

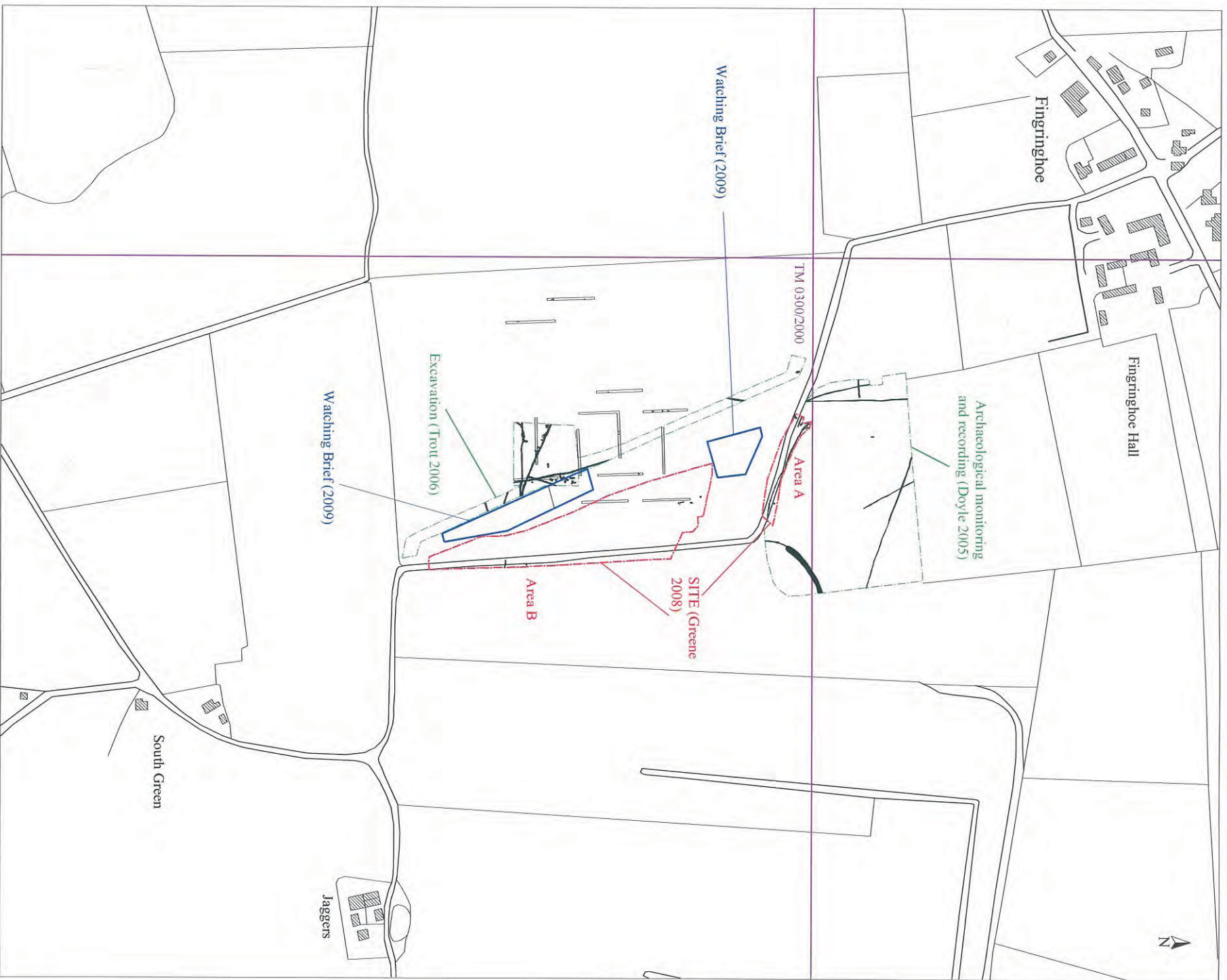


4
General view of northern section, Looking North.



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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan

Scale 1:5000 at A4

