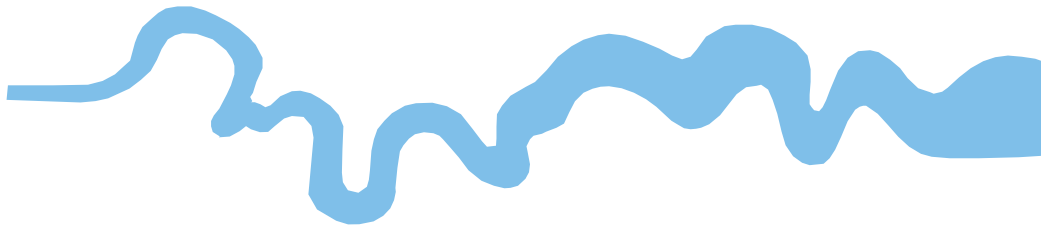


**T V A S**



**SOUTH**

**The Ockendon Academy, Erriff Drive,  
South Ockendon, Essex**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Odile Rouard**

**Site Code: SOA17/155**

**(TQ 5812 8188 )**

**The Ockendon Academy, Erriff Drive,  
South Ockendon, Essex**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for The Ockendon Academy**

by Odile Rouard

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code  
SOA 17/155

**August 2017**

## Summary

**Site name:** The Ockendon Academy, Erriff Drive, South Ockendon, Essex

**Grid reference:** TQ 5812 8188

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 15th -17th August 2017

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Site supervisor:** Odile Rouard

**Site code:** SOA 17/155

**Summary of results:** The evaluation investigated those parts of the site which will be affected by the construction of a new classroom block and sports hall. A post-medieval ditch was recorded and which is possibly that recorded as a cropmark visible on aerial photographs of the area. An undated post-hole, a probable animal burrow and modern services were the only other features observed. The site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Thurrock Museum in due course.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 24.08.17 Steve Preston✓ 24.08.17
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# **The Ockendon Academy, Erriff Drive, South Ockendon, Essex An Archaeological Evaluation**

by Odile Rouard

**Report 17/155**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at The Ockendon Academy, Erriff Drive, South Ockendon, Essex (TQ 5812 8188) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Rebecca Davenport, Finance Department, The Ockendon Academy.

Planning permissions (17/00660/FUL and 17/00772/FUL) have been sought from Thurrock Council for the construction of a new classroom block and sports hall on the site. It is likely that any permissions granted will be subject to planning conditions relating to archaeology and the historic environment. It was therefore proposed to carry out an archaeological field evaluation in order to better inform the planning process, and to formulate a mitigation strategy as necessary. This approach had been recommended by Mr Richard Havis of the Essex County Council Historic Environment Team, who had issued a brief in respect of the classroom block development (ECCHET 2017).

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Havis of Essex County Council, who advises Thurrock Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Odile Rouard and Virginia Fuentes between 15th and 17th August 2017, and the site code is SOA 17/155. The archive is presently held at TVAS, Brighton, and will be deposited with Thurrock Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located at the Ockendon Academy, Erriff Drive, about 1.7km south-west of the historic core of South Ockendon, and is centred on NGR TQ 5812 8188 (Figs 1 and 2). The evaluation took place to the rear of the main school buildings, where the new classroom block and sports hall are to be built. The area is relatively flat and lies at a height of approximately 16m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Lynch Hill Gravel (BGS 1996), and there is a worked out gravel pit immediately to the north of the school site. The natural geology encountered in the evaluation trenches consisted of light orange brown sandy silt with varying levels of gravel inclusions.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a recent brief issued by the Essex County Council Historic Environment Team (ECCHET 2017). In summary, the Historic Environment Record has identified the presence of multi-period archaeological deposits within the school grounds. The development lies in an area of known archaeological deposits comprising a series of cropmarks recorded from aerial photographs. These comprise a double parallel ditch and a potential enclosure. One of the development areas (new classroom block) appears to lie directly above a double trackway. A previous archaeological investigation, during the construction of an extension in the northern part of the school complex (to the east of the present project), revealed a Middle Iron Age occupation site, which included a building which seems to have been rebuilt on multiple occasions. The archaeological features visible on aerial photographs around the school are likely to be associated with the Iron Age evidence identified in this excavation. It was unclear from the excavations whether the building represented a single farmstead or whether this was a small part of a bigger settlement. Trial trenching to the west of the present school buildings found no evidence of surviving archaeological deposits.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of proposed development.

Specific aims of the project were;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if archaeological deposits associated with the prehistoric occupation identified nearby are present.

To determine if archaeological remains relating to the cropmark evidence are present.

The potential and significance of any such deposits located was to be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in English Heritage Research Agenda (EH 2005), and any more local or thematic research priorities as necessary (eg Medleycott 2011).

Three initial trenches were to be dug, to target the footprints of the proposed classroom block and sports hall. They were to be dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision, and all spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

## Results

All of the trenches had to be shortened or moved due to various logistical problems (Fig. 2). Trench 1 was shifted southwards to avoid an internal road and services. The position of trenches 2 and 3 had already been changed to avoid a Tarmac play area, but both trenches had to be moved further to avoid mature trees. All the trenches were 1.80m wide, and measured between 19m and 25.30m in length, and 0.45m and 0.76m in depth. A complete list of the trenches giving lengths, widths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

### Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 1 was orientated approximately SSW-NNE, and was 25.30m long and up to 0.76m deep. The natural geology in the trench was generally observed beneath 0.25m of topsoil (50) and 0.25m of subsoil (51). A post-medieval ditch (4) was investigated at the northern end of the trench. A slot was excavated through this feature by hand and it was seen to be 1.50m wide, and at least 0.38m deep. Unfortunately it could not be bottomed as the ditch started filling up with ground water during excavation. The ditch had an upper fill of dark brown sandy silt with gravel inclusions (57) which contained brick/tile of 1<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century date. It is likely that this is the same ditch as that recorded in trench 3 (3). It may also represent one of the linear cropmark features identified through aerial photographs.

### Trench 2 (Fig 4; Pl 3)

This trench was 23.50m long and up to 0.55m deep, and was orientated WSW-ENE. The trench had to be shifted westwards to avoid a number of mature trees. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.26m of topsoil (50) and 0.20m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded but several modern services and drains were identified.

### Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 4, 5 and 6)

Trench 3 was 19m long and up to 0.45m deep, and was orientated approximately SSE-NNW. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.25m of topsoil (50) and 0.15m of subsoil (51). A possible linear feature (2) was investigated at the southern end of the trench, between 5m and 6.20m. It was up to 0.50m wide and 0.07m deep, but its irregular nature suggests that it was probably an animal burrow. Post-hole 1 was recorded nearby, between 7m and 8m, and was sub-circular in plan. The feature measured 0.40m in diameter and was up to 0.11m deep, with a single fill of dark orange brown sandy silt (52). No finds were recovered from this feature.

A large linear feature (3) was noted in the northern part of the trench, and a small slot was excavated through its northern edge. The ditch was at least 4m wide and 0.46m deep, with an upper fill of re-deposited natural sand

and gravel (56). Fresh fragments of post-medieval brick were found within its lower fill of dark grey brown sandy silt (55), along with two fragments of burnt flint. It is likely that this is the same ditch as that recorded in trench 1 (4), which may represent one of the linear cropmark features identified through aerial photographs.

## **Finds**

### *Ceramic Building Material* by Luke Barber

Two contexts produced small quantities of ceramic building material from the site. Unfortunately these did not produce associated pottery so dating has had to rely on the brick/tile alone. Considering the notorious difficulty in dating such material, combined with its potential longevity in use and indeed re-use, caution is needed when considering dates.

The earliest material was recovered from ditch 3(55), which produced two quite fresh fragments of brick (888g). Both are tempered with abundant fine/medium quartz with occasional buff clay pellets to 2mm. They are relatively well formed, though their sides and bases are quite rough, and medium fired. Only one retained any full dimensions (100mm wide by 52mm thick). A date between the mid/late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century is likely.

Ditch 3 (55) produced two further brick fragments (372g) and a single roofing tile piece (104g). The bricks are notably finer and better made than those in ditch 4 [57]. They are tempered with abundant fine quartz with occasional larger marl or ferruginous sandstone smears but no dimensions survive though the surfaces appear to be neatly finished. The final fragment is from the edge of a 15mm thick pan tile, tempered with abundant fine quartz. The tile is well formed and fired. Taken together the brick and tile from this deposit would suggest an 18<sup>th</sup>- to mid 19<sup>th</sup>- century date.

### *Burnt Flint* by Sean Wallis

Two small fragments of burnt flint, weighing 67g, were recovered from the lower fill of ditch 3 (55) in trench 1. Neither piece had been worked in any way, and both are clearly residual in nature.

## **Conclusion**

Despite a number of logistical restrictions, the archaeological evaluation at the Ockendon Academy successfully investigated those parts of the site which will be affected by the construction of a new classroom block and sports hall. The area appears to have been relatively undisturbed in the past, although a number of service

trenches were noted. A post-medieval ditch was recorded in two of the trenches (1 and 3), and it is possible that this is the feature shown on cropmark plots of the area. The only other features recorded during the evaluation were an undated post-hole and a probable animal burrow. The site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

## References

- BGS, 1996, *British Geological Survey*, Sheet 257, 1:50000, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth.
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- EH, 2005, *Research Agenda*, English Heritage, London.
- Medleycott, M, 2011, *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occ Pap **24**
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO).

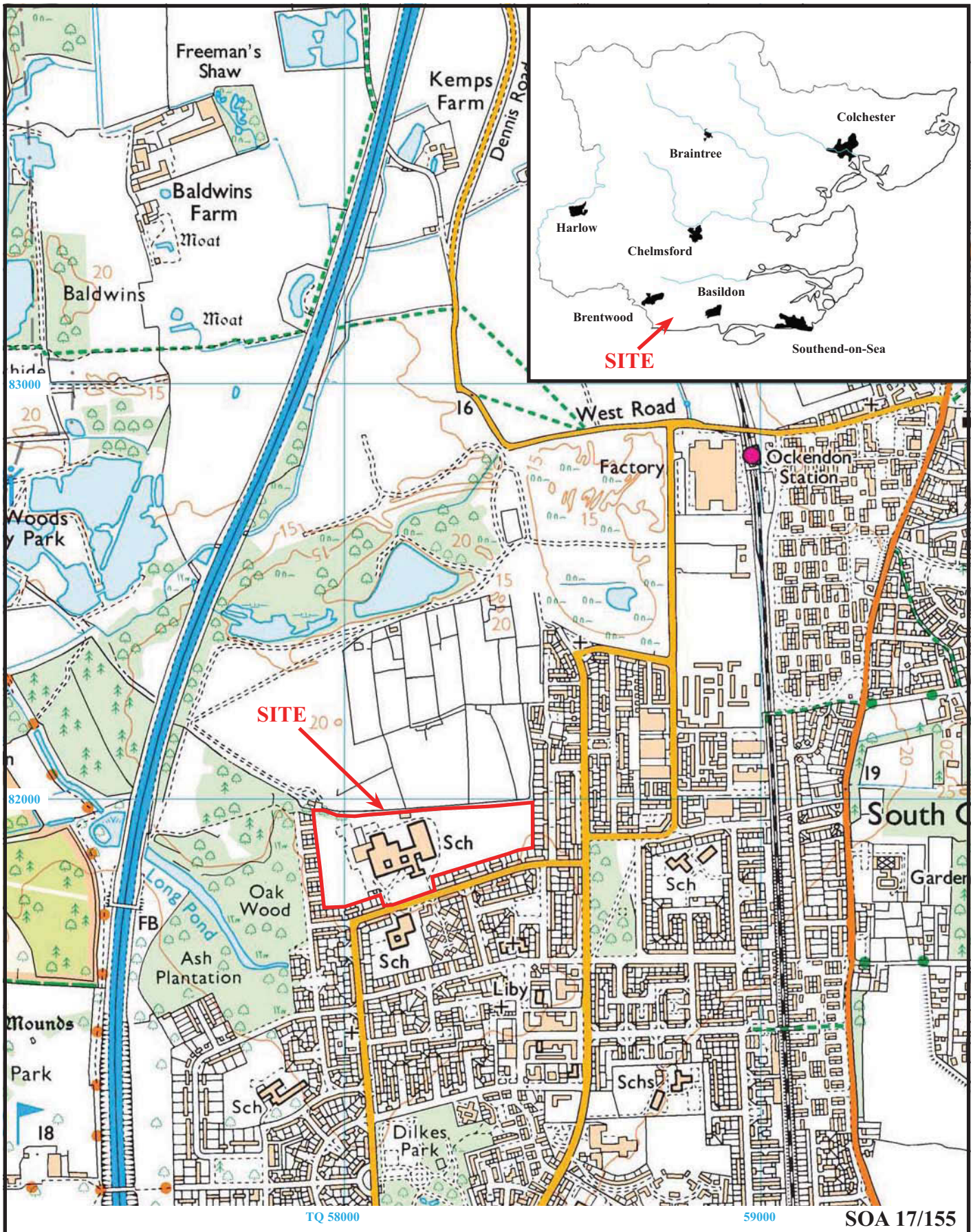


**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	25.30	1.80	0.76	0-0.25m topsoil (50); 0.25-0.50m subsoil (51); 0.50-0.76m+ natural geology (Light orange-brown sandy silt with gravel inclusions). Ditch 1. <b>[Pls 1 and 2]</b>
2	23.50	1.80	0.55	0-0.26m topsoil (50); 0.26-0.46m subsoil (51); 0.46-0.55m+ natural geology (Light orange-brown sandy silt with gravel inclusions). <b>[PI 3]</b>
3	19	1.80	0.45	0-0.25m topsoil (50); 0.25-0.40m subsoil (51); 0.40-0.45m+ natural geology (Light orange-brown sandy silt with gravel inclusions). Ditch 3, post-hole 1 and animal burrow 2. <b>[Pls 4 -6]</b>

## APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
3	1	52	Posthole	Undated	None.
3	2	53	Animal burrow / gully	Undated	None.
3	3	55, 56	Ditch	Post-medieval	Brick/tile
1	4	57	Ditch	Post-medieval	Brick/tile

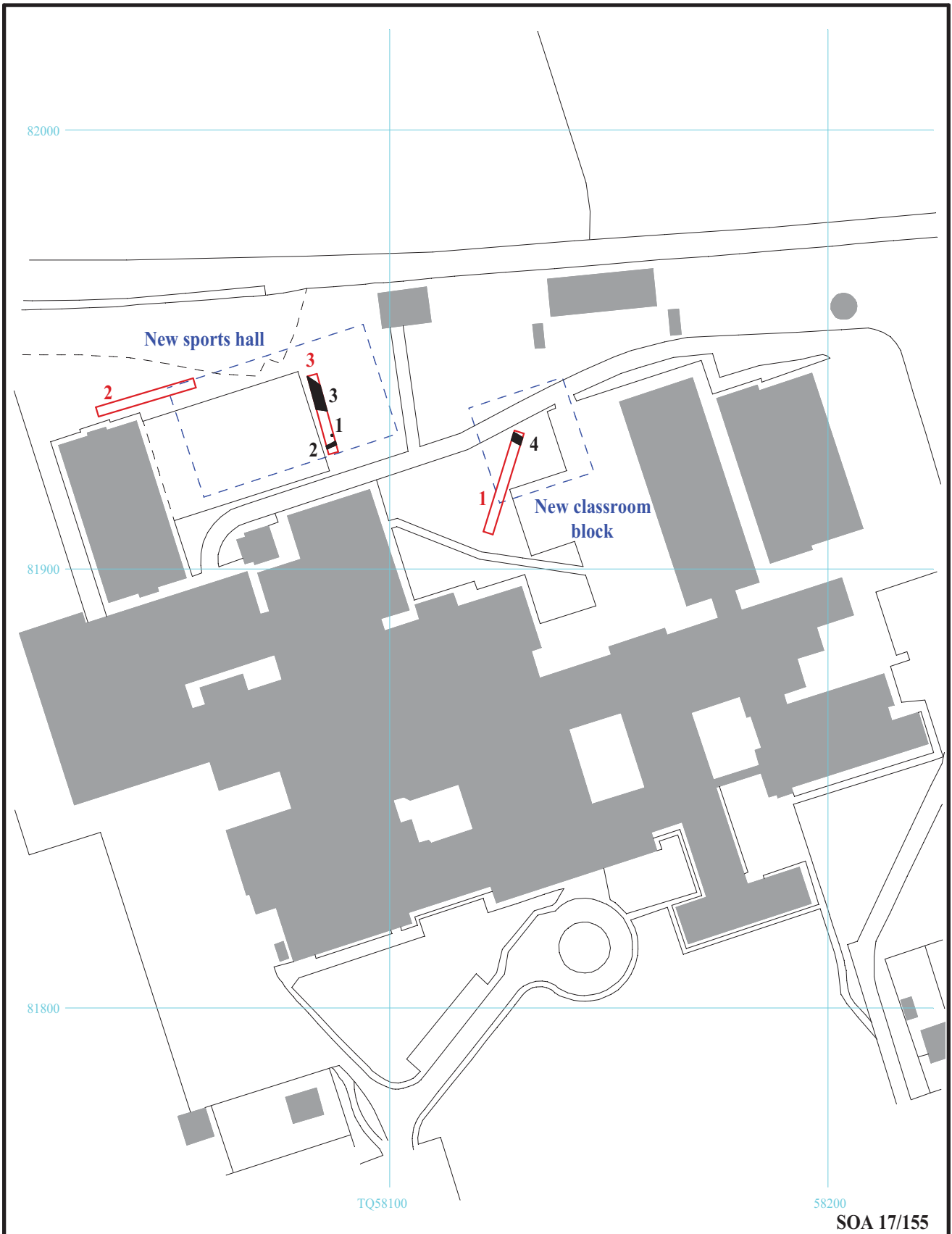


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Figure 1. Location of site within South Ockendon and Essex.

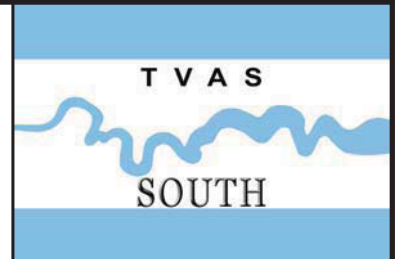
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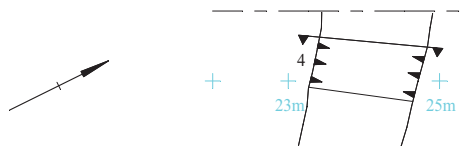


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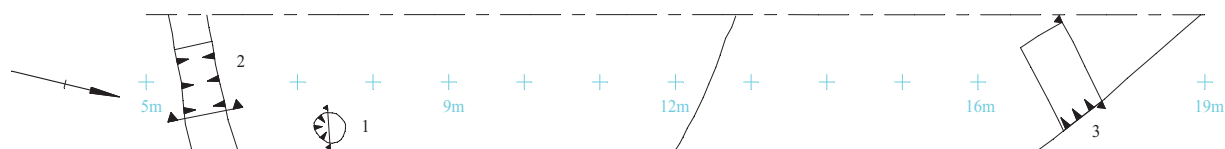
Figure 2. Detailed location of site showing evaluation trenches.



Trench 1



Trench 3



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Figure 3. Plan of trenches 1 and 3.

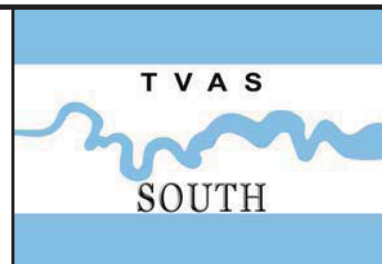






Plate 1. Trench 1, looking North.  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.



Plate 2. Trench 1, ditch 4, looking West.  
Scales: 0.50m and 0.30m.



Plate 3. Trench 2, looking East.  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.



Plate 4. Trench 3, looking North.  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.

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Plates 1 - 4.**





Plate 5. Trench 3, post-hole 1, looking North.  
Scales: 0.30m and 0.10m.



Plate 6. Trench 3, ditch 3, looking North-west.  
Scales: 0.50m and 0.30m.

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Plates 5 - 6.**

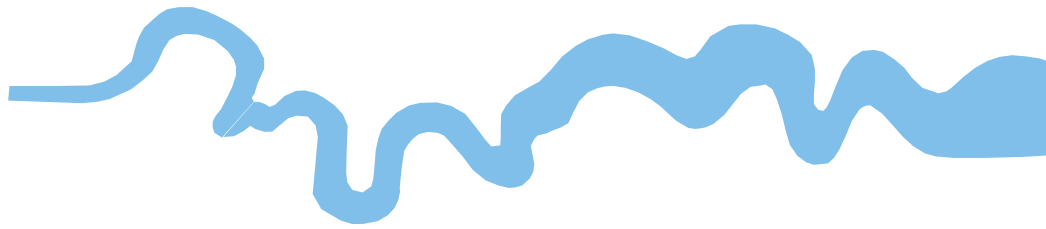




## TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC





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