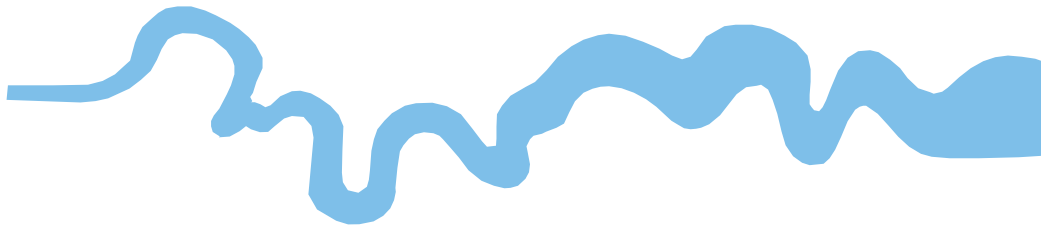


**T V A S**



**SOUTH**

**Cheston House, London Road,  
Great Chesterford, Essex**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Odile Rouard**

**Site Code: GCE17/228**

**(TL 5068 4248)**

**Cheston House, London Road,  
Great Chesterford, Essex**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for Mr Scott Cranfield**

by Odile Rouard

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code  
GC68  
GCE 17/228

**November 2017**

## Summary

**Site name:** Cheston House, London Road, Great Chesterford, Essex

**Grid reference:** TL 5068 4248

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 16th November 2017

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Site supervisor:** Odile Rouard

**Site code:** GCE 17/228 - GC68

**Area of site:** c. 0.11ha

**Summary of results:** The archaeological evaluation investigated areas of the site which will be affected by the proposed new development. Several services and drains were present in Trenches 1 and 3 but nothing of archaeological interest was identified. The area around Trench 3 appears to have been disturbed in the past and a concrete slab as well as concrete steps were encountered in the middle of the trench. Trenches 1 and 2 appeared to be relatively undisturbed but there no archaeological finds or features were visible.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at TVAS, Brighton and will be deposited with Saffron Walden 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✓ 21.11.17 Steve Preston✓ 21.11.17
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# **Cheston House, London Road, Great Chesterford, Essex An Archaeological Evaluation**

by Odile Rouard

**Report 17/228**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Cheston House, London Road, Great Chesterford, Essex (TL 5068 4248) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Scott Cranfield, the property's owner.

Planning permission (UTT/16/0790) had been gained on appeal (APP/C1570/W/16/3155060) from Uttlesford District Council for the construction of a new house in the present rear garden, along with associated access. 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 permission is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, which required that a programme of archaeological trenching be carried out before the commencement of groundworks. This approach was recommended by Mr Richard Havis of the Essex County Council Historic Environment Team, who issued a brief for the project (ECCHET 2017).

The fieldwork was undertaken by Odile Rouard and Virginia Fuentes on the 16th November 2017, and the site code is GC68. The TVAS project code is GCE17/228. The archive is presently held at TVAS, Brighton, and will be deposited with Saffron Walden Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located at Cheston House (formerly known as Dabbs House), London Road, about 400m south of the historic core of Great Chesterford, and is centred on NGR TL 5068 4248 (Figs 1 and 2). The areas to be developed consist of one L-shaped area where the new house is to be built and one linear strip on the side of the old house which will be the new access. The site is generally flat and lies at a height of approximately 37m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of River Terrace Deposits (Sand and Gravel) (BGS 2002). The natural geology encountered in the evaluation trenches consisted of mid orange brown sandy clay with flint inclusions.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within Great Chesterford which lies in a strategically important position next to the River Cam, and close to several significant routes. It also commands the entrance to the Fens through a gap in the surrounding chalk hills. There is evidence of late Iron Age settlement in the area, which was later occupied by a 1st-century Roman fort and the town which subsequently developed from it. Although much of the fort and town have been destroyed by gravel quarrying or obscured by the late Saxon and medieval town, numerous features, including roads, buildings and temples have been identified. The town was surrounded by a flint wall in the 4th century, which was largely extant when William Stukeley visited in 1719, but subsequently robbed to provide material for buildings and roads. The archaeological exploration of the Roman town has a long history (ECC 1999), but little had been published in detail until recently (Medleycott 2011a).

The present site lies on the opposite side of the River Cam from the Roman town, adjacent to London Road, which is likely to have been an important route in the Roman and later periods. Several burials were recorded in the vicinity of the site during gravel extraction in the 19th century, and another possible Roman cemetery has been identified to the south. Cropmarks to the east of the site appear to represent a field system and associated trackway.

## **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 Roman cemetery are present; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits relating to Iron Age and Roman occupation are present.

The potential and significance of any such deposits were to be assessed according to research priorities such as those set out in regional archaeological frameworks (Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Medleycott 2011b).

Three trenches were to be dug, positioned to target those parts of the site which would be most affected by the proposed development. 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. Where

archaeological features were certainly or probably exposed, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief.

## **Results**

The three trenches were dug as close as possible to their original planned positions, although they had to be shortened due to site constraints (Fig. 3). The trenches were between 2.20m and 2.40m wide, and measured between 9m and 12.10m in length, and between 0.50m and 0.80m 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 (Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 10m long and up to 0.53m deep. The natural geology in the trench was observed beneath 0.31m of topsoil (50) and 0.19m of subsoil (51) (Fig. 4, top). No archaeological features or finds were identified but a modern drain was recorded in the south-western part of the trench.

### Trench 2 (Pl. 2)

This trench was 9m long and up to 0.50m deep, and was orientated SE-NW. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.26m of topsoil (50) and 0.16m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in this trench.

### Trench 3 (Pls 3 and 4)

Trench 3 was 12.10m long and up to 0.80m deep, and was orientated approximately SW-NE. In the south-western part of the trench, the natural geology was observed beneath 0.15m of concrete, 0.21m of made-ground (52) and 0.11m of subsoil (51) (Fig. 4, centre). In the north-eastern part of the trench, the natural geology was observed beneath 0.20m of disturbed topsoil (50), 0.22m of made-ground (52) and 0.28m of subsoil (51) (Fig. 3, bottom). This trench contained a modern drain and cellar, which would have obliterated any potential archaeology. As a result, no archaeological finds or features were identified in this trench.

## **Conclusion**

The archaeological evaluation at Cheston House successfully investigated those parts of the site that were to be most affected by the proposed development. Trench 3 was very much disturbed, with a drain running through it and a modern concrete cellar taking up most of the trench. Trenches 1 and 2 appeared to be relatively undisturbed. However, no archaeological finds or features were identified in any of the trenches.

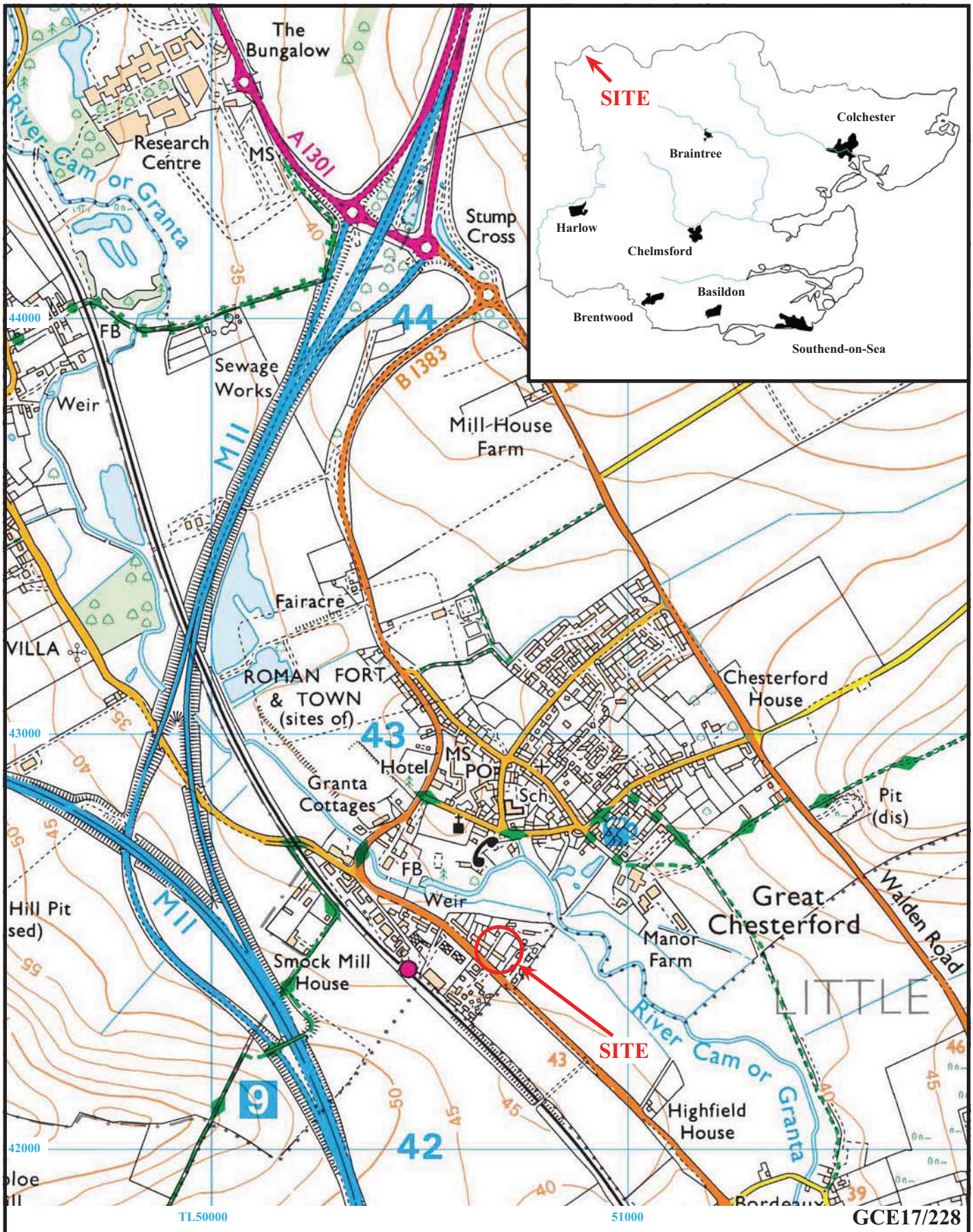
## References

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- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London

**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	10	2.40	0.53	0-0.31m topsoil (50); 0.31-0.50m subsoil (51); 0.50m+ natural geology (mid-orange brown sandy clay with flint inclusions). <b>[Pl. 1]</b>
2	9	2.30	0.50	0-0.26m topsoil (50); 0.26-0.42m subsoil (51); 0.42m+ natural geology (Mid-orange brown sandy clay with flint inclusions). <b>[Pl. 2]</b>
3	12.10	2.20	SW: 0.55 NE: 0.80	SW end: 0-0.15m concrete slab; 0.15-0.36m made-ground (52); 0.36-0.47m subsoil (51); 0.47+ natural geology (Mid-orange brown sandy clay with flint inclusions). NE end: 0-0.20m disturbed topsoil (50); 0.20-0.42m made-ground (52); 0.42-0.70m subsoil (51); 0.70+ natural geology (Mid-orange brown sandy clay with flint inclusions). <b>[Pls 3 and 4]</b>





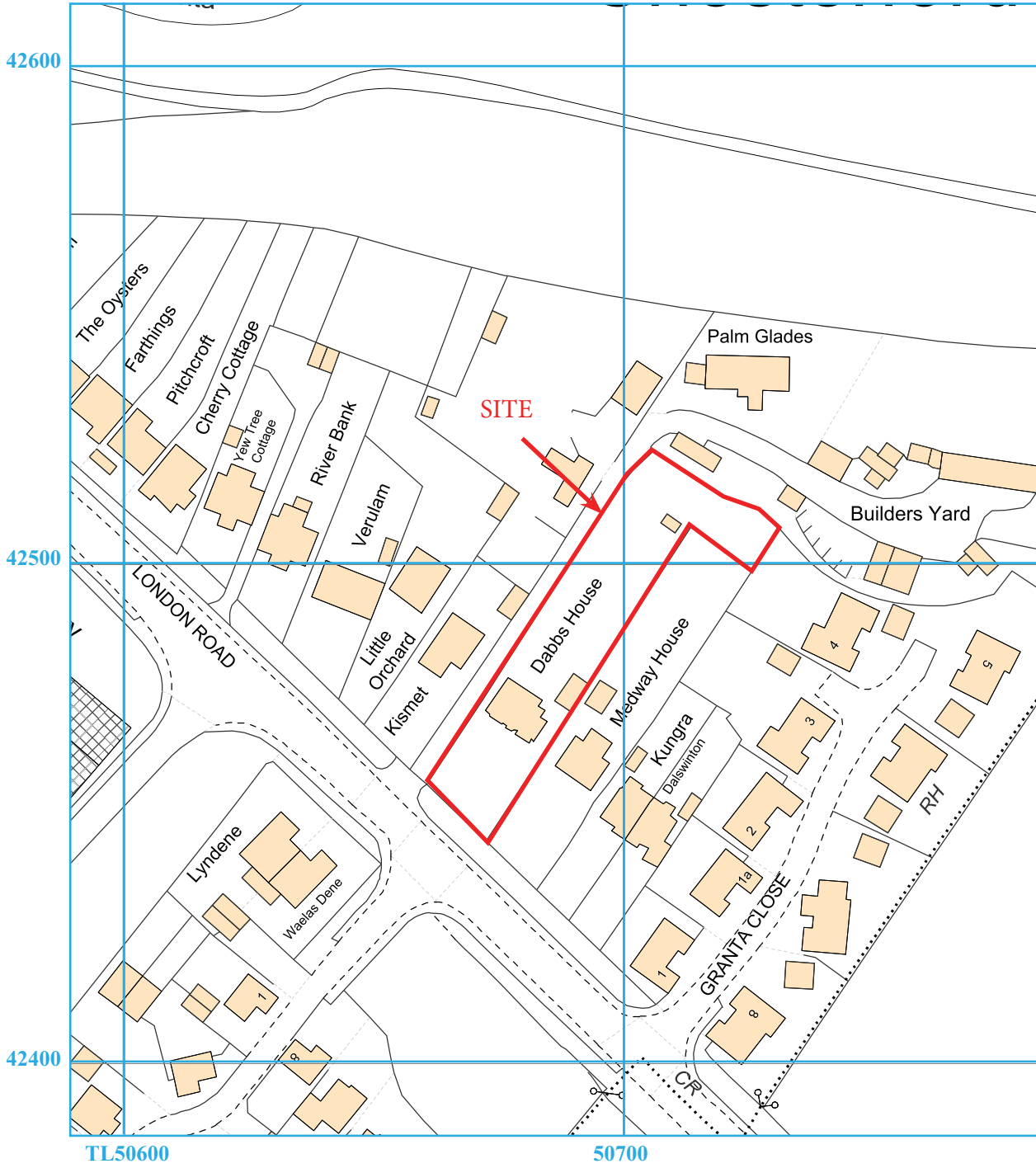
**Cheston House, London Road,  
Great Chesterford, Essex, 2017  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Great Chesterford and Essex.

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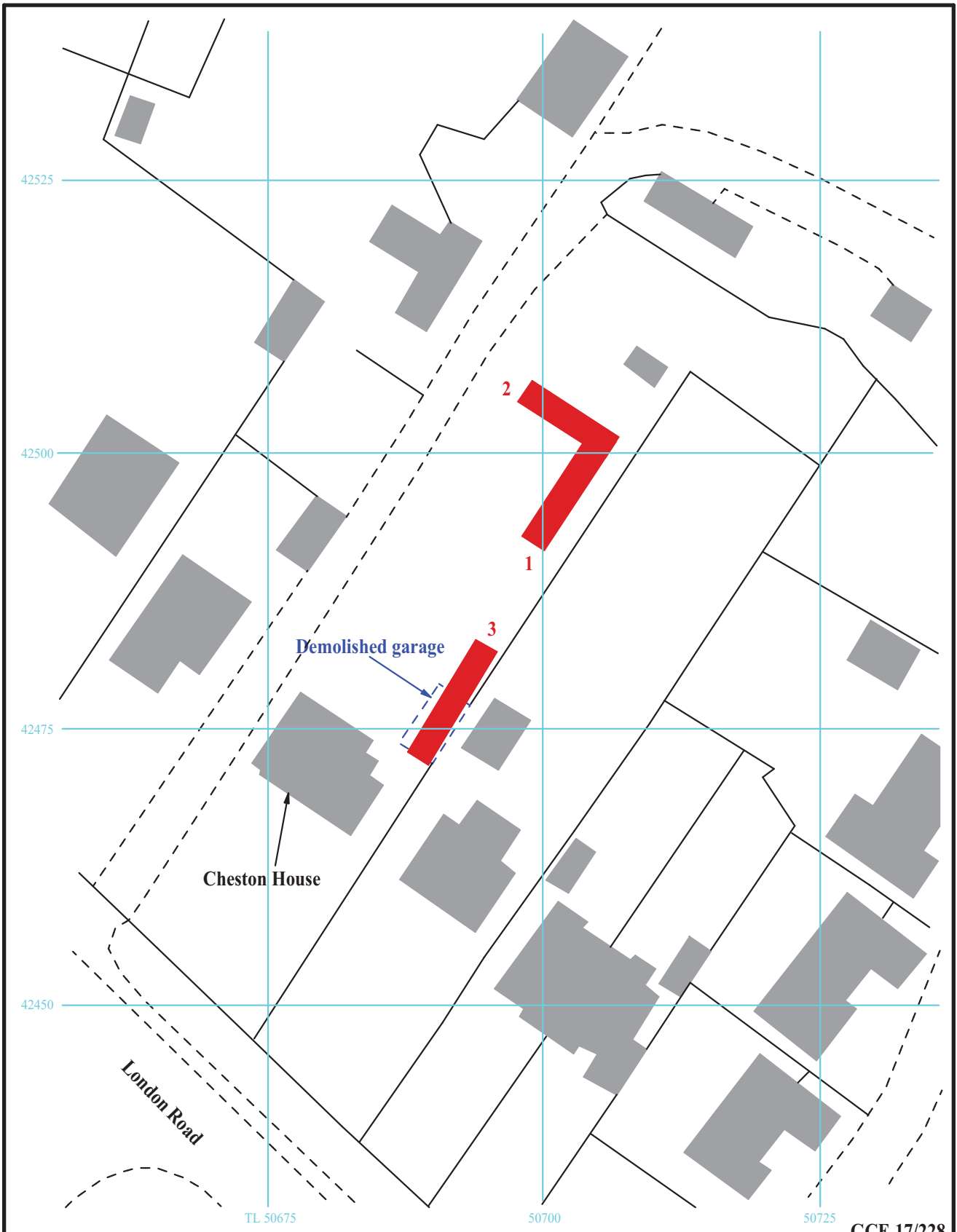
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Archaeological Evaluation**  
Figure 2. Detailed location of site

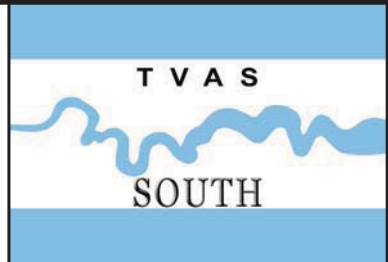
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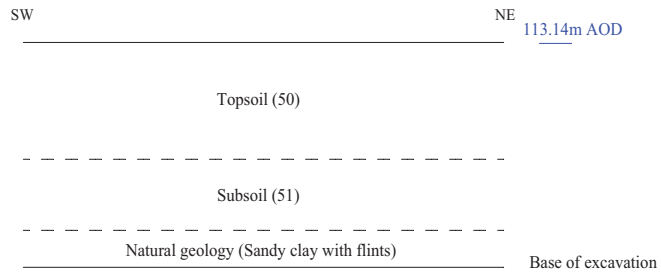
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Figure 3. Site plan showing excavated trenches.

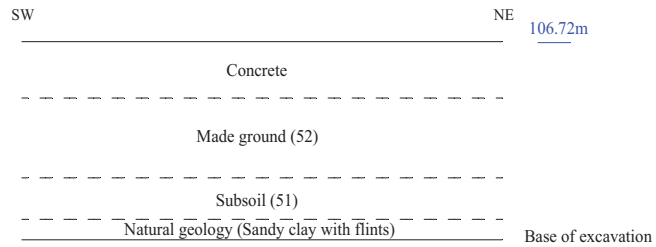


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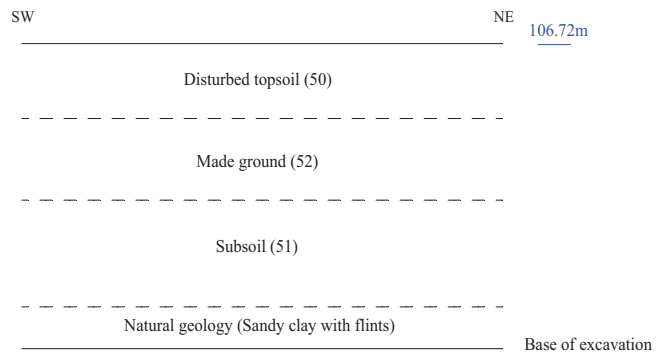
### Trenches 1 and 2



### Trench 3 (SW end)



### Trench 3 (NE end)



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Figure 4. Representative sections.

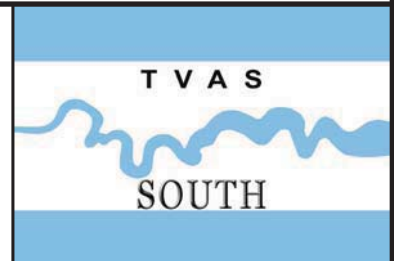




Plate 1. Trench 1, looking North-east.  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.



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



Plate 3. Trench 3, looking South-west.  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.



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

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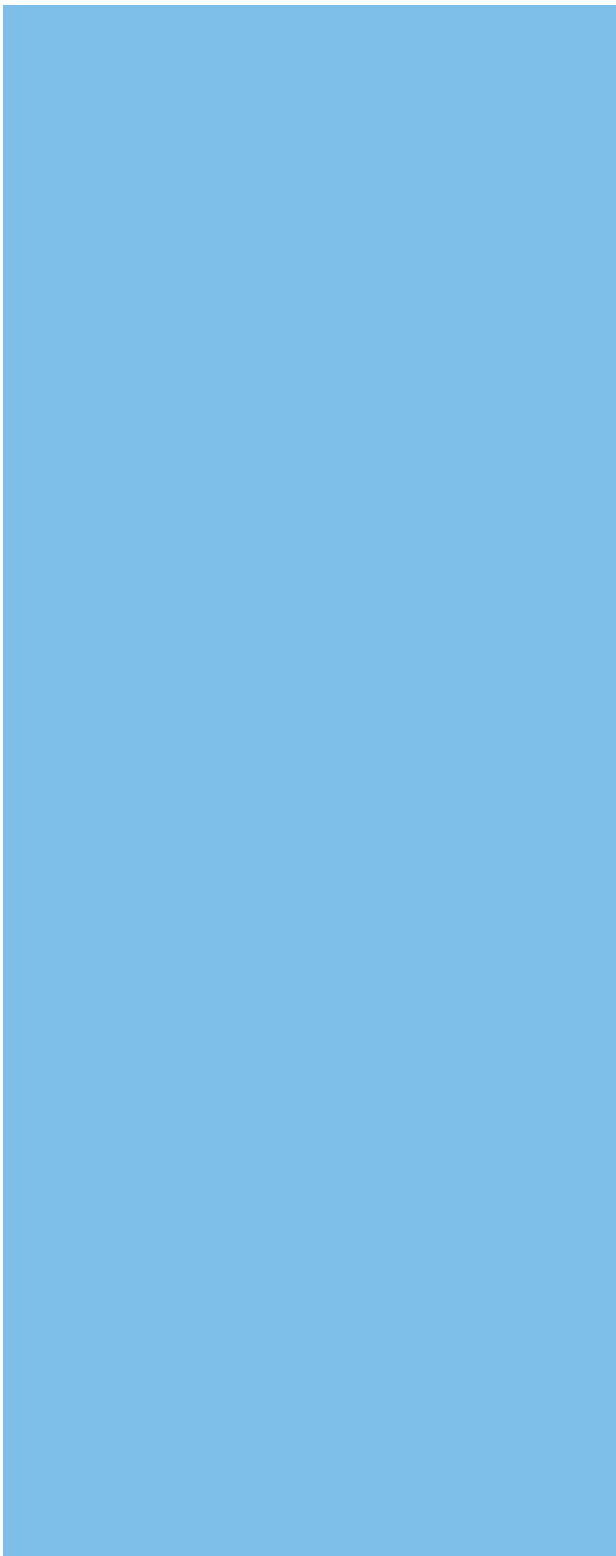
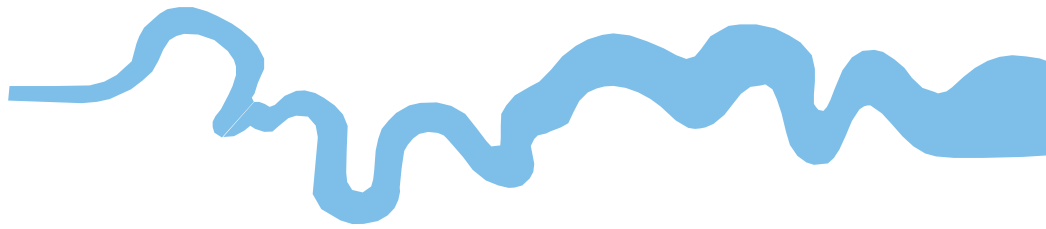
**Cheston House, London Road,  
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Plates 1 - 4.**



## 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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