

**Archaeological Evaluation: Land at Braintree Road, Felstead  
Essex**

**Written Scheme of Investigation**

**NGR: TL 6906 2130**

**Planning Application No: UTT/13/0989/OP**

**ASE Project no: 8139**

**Site Code: FLBR 14**

**February 2014**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of UCL's Institute of Archaeology Centre for Applied Archaeology, have been commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at Braintree Road, Felsted (NGR: TL 6906 2130; Fig. 1).
- 1.2 Uttlesford District Council have granted outline planning consent for the redevelopment of the site, involving the construction of twenty-five dwellings, access from Braintree Road and related infrastructure (Ref. No.: UTT/13/0989/OP).
- 1.3 In support of the application an archaeological Desk Based Assessment was submitted (CgMs 2013). Having considered that document Essex County Council's Historic Environment Management Team required that the site be subject to evaluation by trenching.
- 1.4 Accordingly the following condition (5) has been applied to the planning consent:

*No development or preliminary groundworks can commence until a programme of archaeological trial trenching has been secured and undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the planning authority. A mitigation strategy detailing the excavation/preservation strategy shall be submitted to the local planning authority following the completion of this work.*

REASON: In view of the historic importance of the site, in accordance with Uttlesford District Local Plan Policy Local plan policy ENV4.

- 1.5 Two further conditions attached to the consent relate to archaeology (6 and 7). If the results of the evaluation trenching merit further work as per these latter conditions, such work will be subject to (a) separate Written Scheme/s of Investigation. This document relates solely to Condition 5.
- 1.6 In accordance with the planning condition, this Written Scheme of Investigation has been prepared in order to set out the scope of work, methodology and research aims for the programme of archaeological evaluation trenching. It has been submitted to Uttlesford District Council and their archaeology advisors, Essex County Council's Historic Environment Management Team for approval.

## **2.0 Archaeological Background**

- 2.1 The following information is drawn from the archaeological Desk Based Assessment for the site prepared by CgMs Consulting Ltd (CgMs 2013). For a complete background refer to that document.

### **Geology and Topography**

- 2.2 The site is situated on London Clay capped by superficial deposits of Glacial Till (also believed to be clay based). It comprises 2.02 hectares of open meadow surrounded by dense scrub and trees. In the south of the site there is a small, deep pond.

### **Prehistoric**

- 2.3 There are few HER entries for the prehistoric period; only one entry for a Palaeolithic implement and a small quantity of struck flint are recorded within the vicinity of the site.

### **Roman**

- 2.4 The line of the Roman road Stane Street has been traced from TL 6214 2184 to TL 6348 2202 where it merges with the existing road system. There is also a record of two cremation burials although the provenance of these is unclear.

### **Saxon and Early Medieval**

- 2.5 There are no finds dating to the Saxon or early medieval periods within the vicinity of the site.

### **Late Medieval, Post Medieval and Modern**

- 2.6 There is limited evidence for these periods at the site. Although there is reference to a 'moated site' in the north half of the site, there is no evidence to support this postulation.
- 2.7 A small farmstead or agricultural holding is noted on the Tithe map of 1837. By the time of the first edition OS map of 1875 this is no longer present and the site has been turned over to agricultural use.

### **3.0 Research Aims and Objectives**

3.1 The aims of the archaeological investigation are as follows:

- To determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.
- To enable Essex County Council's Historic Environment Management Team to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further work required in order to satisfy the archaeology condition.

3.2 With reference to the research framework for the eastern counties (East Anglian Archaeology, Paper 8, 2000) particular consideration should be given to the following research topics:

- "More research on the Roman road network is needed, particularly in the later Roman period and beyond. Why did the course of some strategic Roman roads survive, and not others?"
- ""The development of the farmstead 1750-1914"

### **4.0 Methodology**

4.1 The methodology will comprise the machine excavation under archaeological supervision of seventeen trenches measuring 30m by 2m (Fig. 2). Trenches are located in a random 5% sample across the site.

4.2 Any significant changes to the approved trench layout due to on-site constraints will be agreed in advance by the Historic Environment Officer. Spoil will be banded around the edges of the trenches and these will not be fenced.

4.3 The trenches will be accurately located using offsets from known positions or a Digital Global Positioning System (DGPS) and DGPS Total Station (Leica 1205 R100 Total Station, Leica System 1200 GPS).

4.4 All trenches will be scanned prior to excavation using a CAT scanner. Trenches will be mechanically excavated using a toothless ditching bucket and under constant archaeological supervision.

4.5 Machine excavation will continue to the top of archaeological deposits or the surface of natural geology, whichever is uppermost. The exposed sub-soil or archaeological horizon will be cleaned by hand immediately after machine stripping, if required and any archaeological deposits or negative features planned.

- 4.6 The opportunity to have a meeting on site shall be provided once the trenches are open with CgMs Consulting Ltd and the Historic Environment Officer to assess the results.
- 4.7 Backfilling and compaction will be undertaken by the machine on completion of the work, but there will be no reinstatement to existing condition.
- 4.8 Spoil heaps and trench bases will be scanned with a metal detector as will the spoil derived from excavated features. Any finds recovered by this method will be suitably bagged in accordance with sections 7 and 8 below.
- 4.9 An OASIS online record will be compiled for the project.

## **5.0 Excavation and Recording Techniques**

- 5.1 Excavation and recording will be undertaken in accordance with this WSI and the relevant *Standards and Guidance* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2009) and the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).
- 5.2 All archaeological features and deposits will be recorded using the standard context record sheets used by ASE.
- 5.3 Archaeological structures, features and deposits exposed or excavated will be planned in relation to the trench and the trench planned onto a copy of the Ordnance Survey map not smaller than 1:2,500 scale. Trench plans will be maintained at a scale of 1:20 and sections at 1:10 unless circumstances dictate that other scales would be more appropriate.
- 5.4 A digital photographic record will be maintained throughout the fieldwork. A photographic register will be maintained and will detail, as a minimum, the feature number, location and direction of shot. Any worthy features will also be photographed on B&W and colour film.
- 5.5 It is anticipated that bulk soil samples will be collected from suitable excavated contexts, including datable buried soils, well-sealed slowly silting features, sealed hearths, sealed features containing evident carbonised remains, peats and water-logged deposits. It is anticipated that soil samples will be 40 litres where possible, or 100% of the context if smaller.
- 5.6 The Historic Environment Officer will be informed at the earliest opportunity of any archaeological features or deposits worthy of preservation.

## **6.0 Treatment of Human Remains**

- 6.1 If human remains are found, work will cease and all necessary statutory provisions followed. The Historic Environment Officer and CgMs Consulting Ltd. will also be informed. No burials will be lifted at evaluation stage unless they will be demonstrably damaged by not doing so and in such cases only with a licence from the Ministry of Justice.

## **7.0 Treatment of Artefacts and Ecofacts other than Human Remains**

- 7.1 Pottery, worked flint, metal and other finds of archaeological significance will be retained and treated according to standard Archaeology South-East procedures. Identification of retained finds will be undertaken by staff of, and specialists contracted by, Archaeology South-East as necessary. All pottery, bone and worked flint recovered from the excavations will be washed and marked with an appropriate code to identify the site and context. Most ceramic and other building material and burnt flint will be identified, counted, weighed and discarded. Samples will be retained as appropriate. Finds will be bagged in polythene bags according to type and context.
- 7.2 The lithic and ceramic finds will be identified by specialists within Archaeology South-East, and preliminary identification of faunal remains may be undertaken if the nature of the deposits justifies such study. All finds in an unstable condition will be stabilised using passive conservation techniques where appropriate before being deposited with the receiving museum.
- 7.3 Palaeoenvironmental remains will be sampled and processed in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (EH 2011). Bulk samples will be processed using tank flotation unless considered detrimental to the samples or recovery rate (such as for waterlogged samples). Bulk samples will target recovery of plant remains (charcoal and macrobotanicals), fish, bird, small mammal and amphibian bone, and small artefacts. Waterlogged samples will be wet sieved through nested sieves and stored in wet, cool conditions or dried if considered an appropriate form of conservation for the remains. Specialist samples may also be taken from dry or waterlogged contexts. Such samples will target recovery of pollen (using monolith tins), molluscs, foraminifera, parasites and insects. Larger samples (80-100 litres) will be extracted wholesale from deposits rich in marine molluscs and large mammal bones. As a general rule waterlogged wood specimens will be recorded in detail in their original location. If removed they will be cleaned, photographed and a thin section sample will be taken for identification. Specimens will either be stored in wet cool conditions or dried if considered appropriate for the material. In all instances deposits with clear intrusive material shall be avoided.
- 7.4 Any finds believed to fall potentially within the statutory definition of Treasure, as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, amended 2003, shall be reported to the Essex County Council Finds Liaison Officer. Should the find's status as treasure be confirmed the Coroner, the client, landowner and the Historic Environment Officer will also be informed. A record shall be provided to the Coroner and to the Historic Environment Officer of the date and circumstances of discovery, the identity of the finder, and the exact location of the find(s) (OS map reference to within 1 metre, and find spot(s) marked onto the site plan).

## **8.0 Post-Excavation Analysis, Reporting and Archive**

- 8.1 Should the investigation not proceed beyond the initial trial trenching then the written report, including plans, digital photographs and drawings, will be completed within four weeks of the completion of the on-site fieldwork; this will be dependent on the prompt production of any necessary specialist reports. A draft copy will be sent initially to CgMs Consulting Ltd for comment and approval and then to the Historic Environment Officer. Once the report has been accepted then two final hard copies and one electronic copy in PDF format will be sent on CD at a minimum resolution of 300dpi to the HER.
- 8.2 The report will contain:
- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the trenching
  - Location plan of the excavated area and/or other fieldwork in relation to the proposed development. At least two corners of each of the trenches shall be given 10 figure grid references.
  - Section drawing(s) showing depths of deposits including present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale.
  - Methodology and detailed results including a suitable conclusion and discussion. Where appropriate the discussion will be completed in consultation with the Eastern Counties Research Agenda and Strategy (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and the Historic Town Assessment.
  - All specialist reports
  - A concise non-technical summary of the project results.
- 8.3 An EHER summary sheet will be completed within four weeks. This will be completed in digital form and emailed to the EHER Team Officer. This shall include a plan showing the position of the excavation.
- 8.4 Upon completion of the fieldwork an OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) form will be completed for the project. A print-out of the form will be included as an appendix to the final report.
- 8.5 The archive and any finds will be submitted to Saffron Walden Museum upon completion of the project. A summary of the contents of the deposited archive will be supplied to the HEM Team at the time of deposition.
- 8.6 Publication of the results (including any further analysis of the finds from the evaluation stage) at least to summary level (i.e. round up of archaeology in Essex in *Essex Archaeology and History*) shall be undertaken in the year following the archaeological fieldwork.

## 9.0 Project Management

9.1 The fieldwork will be managed by Andy Leonard and the post-excavation analysis by Mark Atkinson.

## 10.0 Health and Safety

10.1 Health and Safety must take priority over archaeological requirements. It is essential that all projects be carried out in accordance with safe working practices and under a defined Health and Safety Policy. A Risk Assessment for the project will be prepared prior to the commencement of work and all relevant health and safety regulations will be adhered to.

## 11.0 Insurance

11.1 Archaeology South-East is insured against claims for: public liability to the value of £50,000,000 any one occurrence and in the aggregate for products liability; professional indemnity to the value of £15,000,000 any one occurrence; employer's liability to the value of £50,000,000 each and every loss.

*Archaeology South East  
February 2014*

## References

BGS 2013, British Geological Survey: Geology of Britain Viewer, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

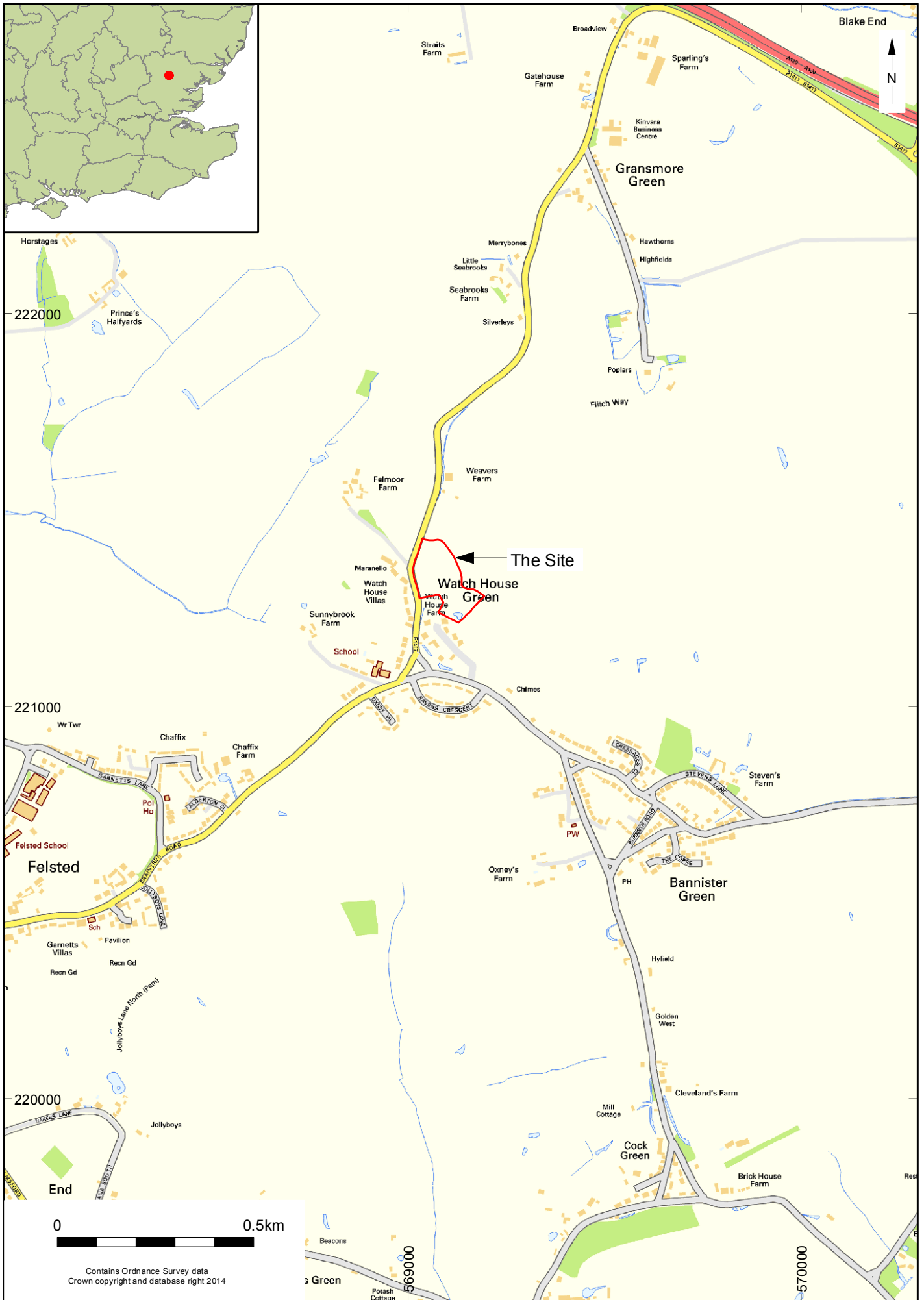
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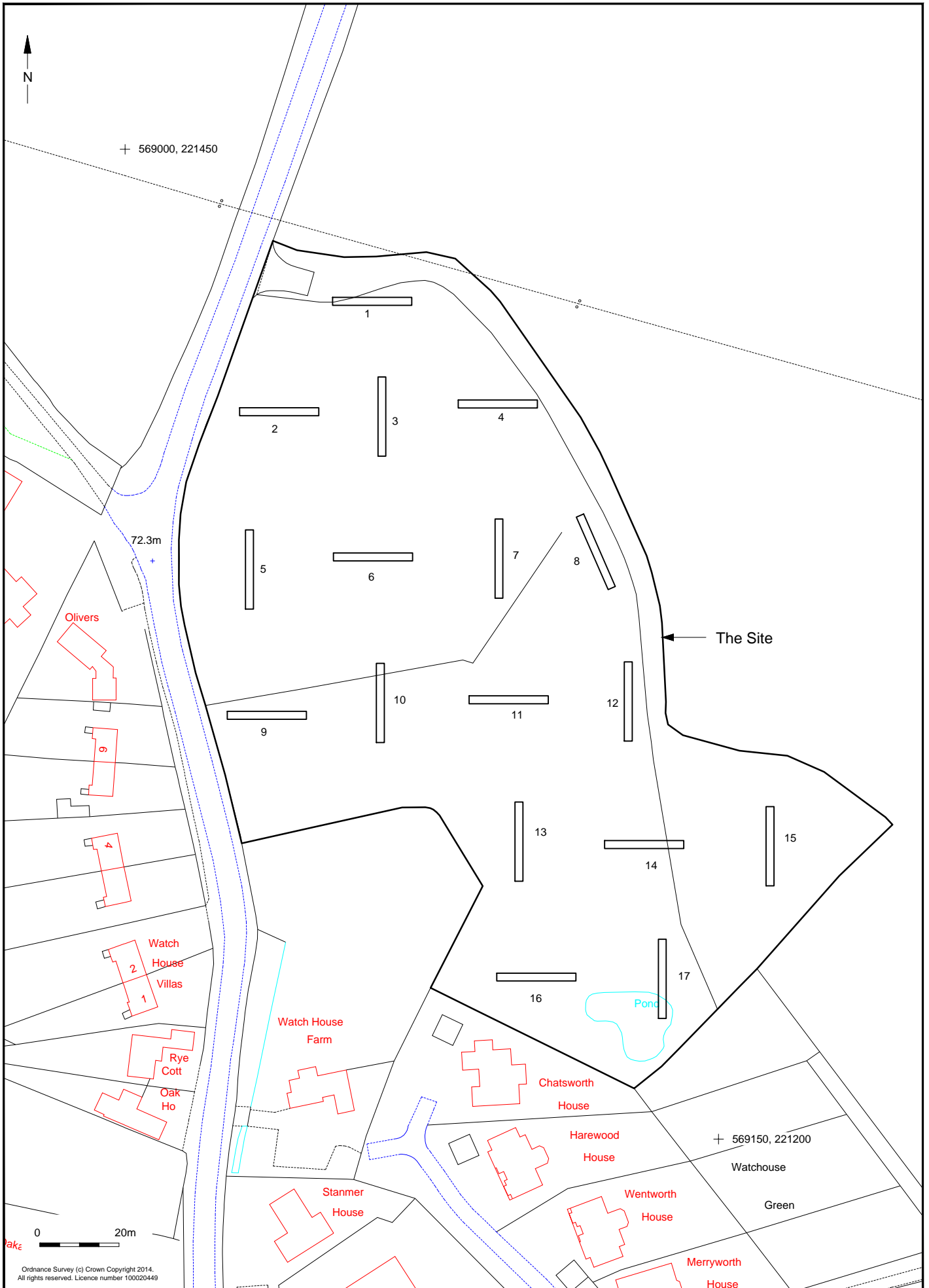
EH 2011 *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), English Heritage

IfA 2009 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*  
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Gurney, D 2003: *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.



© Archaeology South-East		Land at Braintree Road, Felsted	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8139	Feb 2014	Site location	
Report Ref:	Drawn by: JLR		



© Archaeology South-East		Land at Braintree Road, Felsted	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 8139	Feb 2014	Site plan	
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© Archaeology South-East		Land at Braintree Road, Felsted	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 8139	Feb 2014	Proposed development	
Report Ref:	Drawn by: JLR		

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