Colchester Archaeological Trust

Written Scheme of Investigation
for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at
St Mary's Church, Church Road, Rivenhall, Essex,
CM8 3PQ.

April 2024

CAT project ref.: 2024/03d
ECC code: pending

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NGR: TL 82908 17780

CAT project ref.: 2024/03d

Diocese: Chelmsford
Diocesan Archaeological Advisor: David Andrews

EHER code: pending
OASIS id: colchest3- 524017

WSI prepared by: Emma Holloway
Figure by: Chris Lister

commissioned by: Oliver Clarke (PCC)
on behalf of: Rivenhall & Silver End PCC

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Site location and description

St Mary's Church is situated on the northern edge of the village of Rivenhall on the eastern side of Church Road (Fig 1). Rivenhall is a mainly rural parish, located to the immediate north of Witham. It is centred on national Grid Reference (NGR) TL 82908 17780.

Proposed work

The work involves investigating part of the graveyard to define and record the depth/preservation of any existing burials in advance of the area being re-opened for new burials.

Geology

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale[1]) shows the site has a bedrock geology of London Clay Formation (bioturbated or poorly laminated, blue-grey or grey-brown, slightly calcareous, silty to very silty clay, clayey silt and sometimes silt, with some layers of sandy clay). The superficial deposits within the western half of the churchyard comprise of Lowestoft Formation (extensive sheet of chalky till, together with outwash sands and gravels, silts and clays). Superficial deposits within the eastern side of the churchyard comprise of Glaciofluvial Deposits (sands and gravels).

Archaeological background

The following archaeological background includes extracts of CAT Report 128 and information from the Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk).

The archaeological landscape of Rivenhall is dominated by St Mary and All Saints Church and the underlying Roman villa (EHER 19117). The villa, which is a scheduled ancient monument (HA 1013821), consists of at least four major Roman buildings and a variety of associated structures and features, the only surface trace of which is the platform upon which the east end of the church is built. The site has been known for some years from crop, soil and parchmarks and various investigations. The Roman Essex Society undertook fieldwalking and excavations there in 1950 and 1951 and the Essex Society for Archaeology and History excavated in advance of a sewer trench in 1971. However, the villa and church site are synonymous with Warwick and Kirsty Rodwell, who excavated there in 1972-3 and have now published the results in two volumes of CBA Research.

The Rodwell excavations showed that the main villa building measured approximately 60m by 25m and lay on the west side of the complex and is aligned north to south with its southern rooms located under the church. To the north-east is a building which was possibly domestic in use, arranged around a courtyard and leading to a bath complex. Another building to the south-east of the main villa building was probably a timber aisled barn. Between these buildings and surrounding them are several metalled areas and an east-west road. Smaller details include a T-shaped 'corn drier' (i.e. a malting oven) and a possible mill (Rodwell and Rodwell 1986 and 1993).

Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Bronze Age material is also recorded at this site, including *in situ* material from a buried soil horizon (EHER 8080). Cropmarks show field systems of a late Iron Age farmstead to the south of the villa which may be the original farm location.

Anglo-Saxon occupation of the villa site involved the construction of a post-built hall in the centre of the site. A Saxon cemetery was also located on the villa site, and this is undoubtedly connected with a small timber church which was the precursor of the medieval church of St Mary and All Saints (EHER 8085).

[1] British Geological Survey – https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/?

At the adjacent Rivenhall Church of England Primary School site, the building of an extension in 1873 uncovered a large number of tesserae, indicating that a Roman structure may be located here (EHCR 19100). However, a watching brief in 1995 failed to locate any archaeological deposits close to the school (Heppell 1995).

In 2001 CAT carried out an evaluation, followed by a watching brief, at the school. There were no structural remains associated with the adjacent Roman villa site. The principal remains uncovered were modern drains and other features relating to past uses of the school, although, Roman brick/tile and pottery were found in residual contexts (CAT Reports 128 & 150).

For a general background of the Rivenhall area see the *Braintree Historic Environment Characterisation project* (ECC 2010, 164-166)

Project background

The Archaeological Advisor to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAA) advised the PCC that, as the proposed work lies in an area of high archaeological significance, a programme of archaeological work should be secured, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation to be approved by the DAC. This is to safeguard archaeological assets within the approved development boundary from impacts relating to the groundworks and to ensure the proper and timely investigation, recording, reporting and presentation of archaeological assets affected by this work.

Requirement for work (Fig 1)

The archaeological work will consist of an evaluation by trial-trenching as agreed by the DAA (D Andrews, e-mail dated 4th October 2023).

Specifically, CAT proposes to excavate three trial-trenches within the proposed area for re-opening (see Fig 1). The trenches are located to avoid disturbing the area of the scheduled ancient monument. The trenches will each measure 1m wide and up to 5m long, covering an area of 15m^2.

General methodology

All work carried out by CAT will be in accordance with:

- Professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2020, 2022 & 2023 a-b).
- East of England Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011) and the recent review updates on https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/
- Relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2024)
- The archaeological advice given by the DAA (D Andrews, 4th October 2023)

Professional CAT field archaeologists will undertake all specified archaeological work, for which they will be suitably experienced and qualified.

Notification of the supervisor/project manager's name and the start date for the project will be provided to the DAA one week before start of work.

Unless it is the responsibility of other site contractors, CAT will study mains service locations and avoid damage to these.

At the start of the project (when the WSI is written) an OASIS online record http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/ will be initiated and key fields completed (Activity type, Location and Reviewers/Admin areas). At the end of the project all parts of the OASIS online

form will be completed for submission to the EHER. This will include an uploaded .PDF version of the entire report.

A project or site code will be sought from the district Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor (ECCHEA) and/or the curating museum, as appropriate to the project. This code will be used to identify the project archive when it is deposited at the curating museum.

Staffing

The number of field staff for this project is estimated as follows: one CAT project officer and one archaeologist for three days.

In charge of day-to-day site work: Ben Holloway/Harvey Furniss/Nigel Rayner

Evaluation methodology

Each trench will be de-turfed by hand and then partially stripped/levelled using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision and to the satisfaction of a professional archaeologist. Once the modern overburden and any topsoil is removed the trenches will be hand excavated to clean and define any skeletal remains and ascertain the depth of the burials.

If archaeological features or deposits are uncovered time will be allowed for these to be excavated, planned, and recorded.

There will be sufficient excavation to give clear evidence for the period, depth, and nature of any archaeological deposit encountered. All features or deposits will be excavated by hand. This includes a 50% sample of discrete features (pits, etc), at least 10% of linear features (ditches, etc) in 1m wide sections, and 100% of complex structures/features. Complex archaeological structures such as walls, kilns or ovens will be carefully cleaned, planned and fully recorded, but where possible left *in situ*. Only if it can be demonstrated that the complex structure/ feature is likely to be destroyed by groundworks, and only then after discussion with the DAA, will it be removed.

Fast hand-excavation techniques involving (for instance) picks, forks and mattocks will not be used on complex stratigraphy.

A representative section will be drawn of each trench, to include ground level, the depth of machining within the trench and the depth of any sondages.

Trained CAT staff will use a metal detector to scan all trenches both before and during excavation. All spoil heaps will also be scanned and finds recovered.

Individual records of excavated contexts, layers, features, or deposits will be entered on proforma record sheets. Registers will be compiled of finds, small finds and soil samples.

All features and layers or other significant deposits will be planned, and their profiles or sections recorded. The normal scale will be site plans at 1:20 and sections at 1:10, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be appropriate.

The photographic record will consist of general site shots, and shots of all archaeological features and deposits. A photographic scale (including north arrow) shall be included in the case of detailed photographs. A photographic register will accompany the photographic record. This will detail as a minimum feature number, location, and direction of shot.

Site surveying

The evaluation trenches and any features will be surveyed by Total Station or GPS, unless the particulars of the features indicate that manual planning techniques should be employed. Normal scale for archaeological site plans and sections is 1:20 and 1:10 respectively, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be more appropriate.

The site grid will be tied into the National Grid. Corners of excavation areas will be located by NGR coordinates.

Environmental sampling policy

The number and range of samples collected will be adequate to determine the potential of the site, with particular focus on paleoenvironmental remains including both biological remains (e.g. plants, small vertebrates) and small sized artefacts (e.g. smithing debris), and to provide information for sampling strategies on any future excavation. Samples will be collected for potential micromorphological and other pedological sedimentological analysis. Environmental bulk samples will be 40 litres in size (assuming context is large enough).

Sampling strategies will address questions of:

- The range of preservation types (charred, mineral-replaced, waterlogged), and their quality.
- Concentrations of macro-remains.
- Differences in remains from undated and dated features.
- Variation between different feature types and areas of site.

CAT has an arrangement with Val Fryer / Lisa Gray whereby any potentially rich environmental layers or features will be appropriately sampled as a matter of course. Trained CAT staff will process the samples and the flots will be sent to Val Fryer or Lisa Gray for analysis and reporting.

Should any complex, or otherwise outstanding deposits be encountered, VF or LG will be asked onto site to advise. Waterlogged 'organic' features will always be sampled. In all cases, the advice of VF/LG and/or the Historic England Regional Advisor in Archaeological Science (East of England) on sampling strategies for complex or waterlogged deposits will be followed, including the taking of monolith samples.

Human remains

During this evaluation phase we are not excavating and removing burials but exposing, cleaning, and recording their location and depths under Ecclesiastical consent. As the site is an active Christian burial ground and part of a Diocese Faculty, the treatment of any human remains will follow guidance from Historic England (2017). Any disarticulated bones will be recorded, collected, and returned to the Parish for re-internment.

Photographic record

Will include both general and specific photographs, the latter with scale and north arrow. A photo register giving context number, details, and direction of shot will be prepared on site, and included in site archive. Digital site photographs will be taken and archived as per Historic England guidelines (2015a).

Finds

All significant finds will be retained.

All finds, where appropriate, will be washed and marked with site code and context number.

Most of our finds reports are written internally by CAT staff under the supervision and direction of Howard Brooks (Interim Director) and Laura Pooley (Post-excavation Manager). This includes specialist subjects such as:

ceramic finds (pottery and ceramic building material): Matthew Loughton
animal bones: Alec Wade (or Adam Wightman/Pip Parmenter - small groups only)
small finds, metalwork, coins, etc: Laura Pooley
non-ceramic bulk finds: Laura Pooley
flint: Adam Wightman
environmental processing: Bronagh Rae-Quinn
osteology: (human remains): Megan Beale

or to outside specialists:

animal and human bone: Julie Curl (*Sylvanus*)
environmental assessment and analysis: Val Fryer / Lisa Gray
archaeometallurgy: David Dungworth
radiocarbon dating: SUERC Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, Glasgow
conservation/x-ray: Laura Ratcliffe (LR Conservation) / Norfolk Museums Service, Conservation and Design Services

Other specialists whose opinion can be sought on large or complex groups include:

other: EH Regional Adviser in Archaeological Science (East of England).

All finds of potential treasure will be removed to a safe place, and the coroner informed immediately, in accordance with the rules of the Treasure Act 1996. The definition of treasure is given in pages 3-5 of the Code of Practice of the above act. This refers primarily to gold or silver objects.

Requirements for conservation and storage of finds will be agreed with the appropriate museum prior to the start of work and confirmed to the DAA.

A contingency will be made in the budget for scientific assessment/analysis if suitable deposits are identified. This can include soil micromorphological and geochemical analysis of floors and dark earth deposits and/or absolute dating (such as archaeomagnetic and radiocarbon). The Historic England Regional Science Advisor will be consulted for advice.

Results

Notification will be given to DAA when the fieldwork has been completed.

An appropriate archive will be prepared to minimum acceptable standards outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (Historic England 2015).

The report will be submitted within 6 months of the end of fieldwork, with a copy supplied to the DAA as a single PDF.

The report will contain:

- Location plan of trenches in relation to the proposed development. At least two corners of each excavated area will be given a 10-figure grid reference.
- Section/s drawings showing depth of deposits from present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale.
- Archaeological methodology and detailed results including a suitable conclusion and discussion.
- Appropriate discussion and results section assessing the site in relation to the Regional Research Frameworks (Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott 2011. https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/).
- All specialist reports or assessments
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results.

An OASIS summary sheet will be completed at the end of the project and supplied to the DAA. This will be completed in digital form with a paper copy included with the archive. A copy (with trench plan) will also be emailed to the Hon. Editor of the Essex Archaeology and History Journal for inclusion in the annual round-up of projects (paul.gilman@me.com).

Publication of the results at least a summary level (i.e. round-up in *Essex Archaeology & History*) shall be undertaken in the year following the archaeological fieldwork. An allowance will be made in the project costs for the report to be published in an adequately peer reviewed journal or monograph series.

A PDF copy of the full report will be uploaded by CAT to the OASIS website and the Colchester Archaeological Trust's Online Report Library (http://cat.essex.ac.uk/), both of which are publicly accessible.

Archive deposition

The requirements for archive storage shall be agreed with the Curating Museum.

If finds are retained from the site, the full archive will be deposited with Braintree Museum unless otherwise agreed in advance. (A full copy of the archive shall in any case be deposited). If there are no finds a full digital archive will be deposited with ADS Archaeology.

The requirements for archive storage will be agreed with the curating museum.

If the finds are to remain with the landowner, a full copy of the archive will be housed with the curating museum and provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, and analysis) as appropriate.

The digital archive resulting from the work will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk) to safeguard the long-term curation of the digital records. The DAA will be notified when the digital archive has been deposited. Prior to deposition CAT's data management plan (based on the official guidelines from the Digital Curation Centre [DCC 2013]) will ensure the integrity of the digital archive. A summary of the contents of the archives shall be supplied to the DAA at the time of their deposition.

The DAA will be notified when the digital archive has been deposited.

Monitoring

The DAA will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project, and will be kept regularly informed during fieldwork, post-excavation and publication stages.

Notification of the start of work will be given to the DAA one week in advance of its commencement.

Any variations in this WSI will be agreed with the DAA prior to them being carried out.

The DAA will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

The involvement of the DAA shall be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

Public outreach

As part of CAT's public outreach programme, CAT is committed to engaging our local community with their archaeological resource. Among other activities, CAT regularly invites volunteers to engage in finds processing tasks at our office, such as washing, marking, sorting, and packing bulk archaeological finds from commercial archaeological projects. Our volunteer programme is not designed to replace the work of paid archaeologists but to

complement it, and to provide greater public benefit by means of community engagement and participation.

CAT volunteers are fully trained in all tasks they are engaged in and are fully supervised by a CAT employee at all times. Finds processing volunteers are managed and supervised by a Senior Post-Excavation Assistant, whose role is to ensure that all volunteer processing is carried out to the highest possible standard and within professional guidelines. This is overseen by the Post-Excavation Manager and Director.

CAT will never use volunteers in place of employees when funding is agreed for the latter, or if doing so would disadvantageously affect the timetable of works agreed between CAT and our clients.

CAT's liability insurance policies cover the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. All activities are carried out according to CAT's 'Volunteer and work experience policy' and 'Outreach, public relations and publicity policy'.

Events, activities, and social media

In addition, the CAT website (https://catuk.org/) and social media sites are updated regularly with information on our events and activities, with copies of our archaeological reports freely available at http://cat.essex.ac.uk/. Staff regularly give talks/lectures to groups, societies and schools, information on which (including any fees) is available by contacting the office on 01206 501785. CAT also works in partnership with both the Colchester Archaeological Group and Young Archaeologists Club providing venues for their meetings, advice, and assistance.

References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in PDF format at http://cat.essex.ac.uk

Brown, N & Glazebrook, J	2000	*Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy.* East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8 (EAA **8**)
CAT	2023	*Health & Safety Policy*
CAT Report 128	2001	*An archaeological evaluation at Rivenhall Church of England Primary School, Church Street, Rivenhall, Essex*
CAT Report 150	2001	*An archaeological watching brief at Rivenhall Church of England Primary School, Rivenhall, Essex: June-July 2001*
CIfA	2020	*Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation, and research of archaeological materials.*
CIfA	2022	*Code of Conduct.*
CIfA	2023a	*Standard for archaeological field evaluation.*
CIfA	2023b	*Universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation.*
Digital Curation Centre (DCC)	2013	*Checklist for Data Management Plan v. 4.0*
ECC	2010	*Braintree District Historic Environment Characterisation Project.* Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch
Gurney, D	2003	*Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.* East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA **14**).
Heppell, E	1995	*The church of England Primary School, Rivenhall, Essex: Archaeological Watching Brief,* ECC internal publication
Historic England	2015a	*Digital Image capture and File Storage: Guidelines for best practice,* by S Cole & P Backhouse
Historic England	2015b	*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE)
Historic England	2017	*Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England*
Historic England	2018	*The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project.* By S Mays, M Brickley & J Sidell
Medlycott, M	2011	*Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the*

East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA **24**)

Rodwell, WJ and Rodwell KA 1986 *Rivenhall: Investigations of a villa, church and village 1950-77. 1* CBA Research Report **55**

Rodwell, WJ and Rodwell KA 1993 *Rivenhall: Investigations of a villa, church and village 1950-77. 2* CBA Research Report **55**

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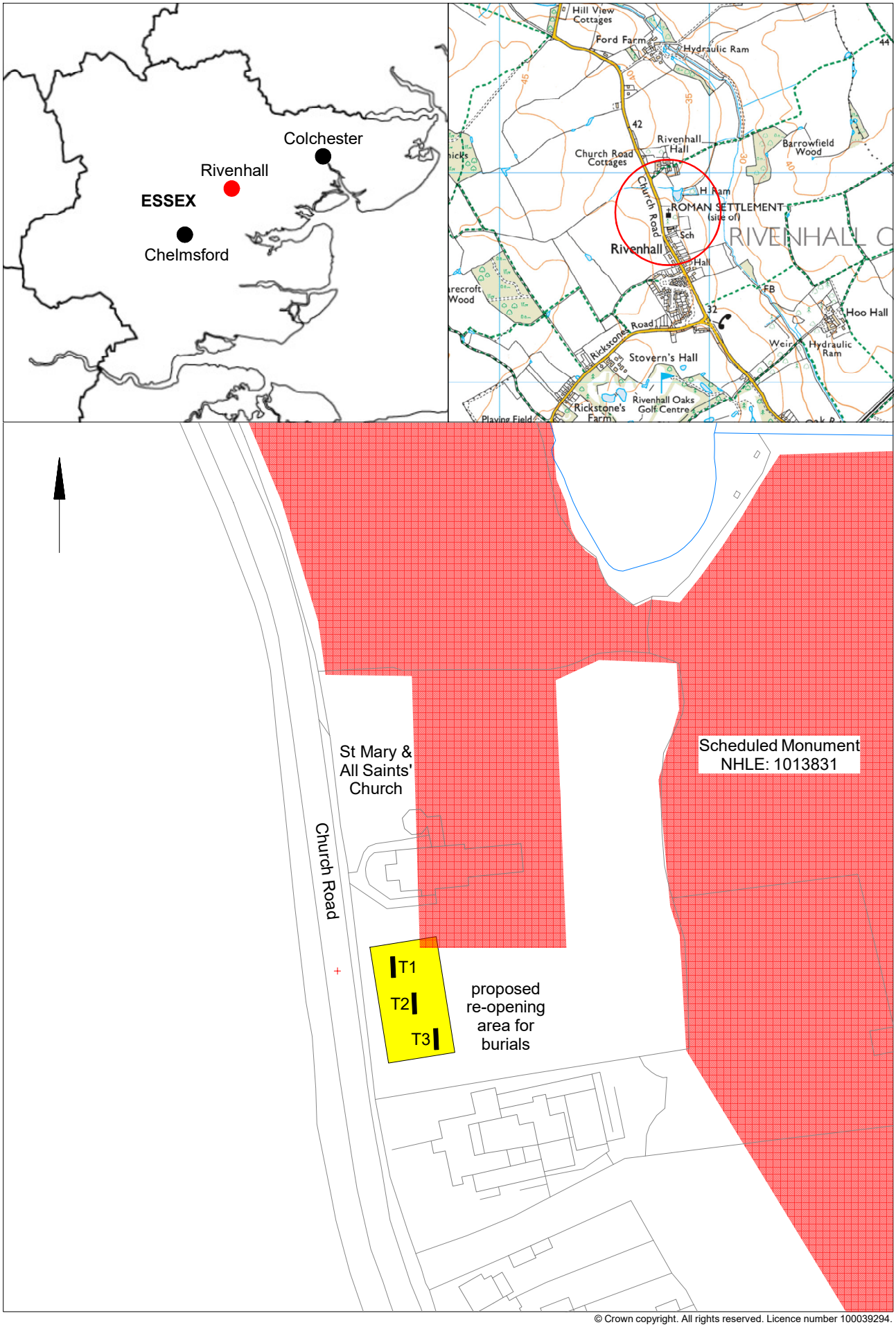

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Fig 1 Site location and trench plan.