

An archaeological desk-based assessment of a site in Broomfield, Essex:



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commissioned by **Strutt & Parker**
on behalf of **J Day (Chelmsford) Ltd**

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Summary

A proposed development site in Broomfield consists mainly of an existing garage site, a small plot of open land, and the rear gardens of properties on Main Road Broomfield and Saxon Way, Broomfield.

The archaeological importance of this site is defined almost entirely by its proximity to the site of the Anglo-Saxon 'princely burial' whose reported location is approximately 200m to the east (the site is now lost to quarrying).

Due to the importance of the area, there will be a requirement for archaeological trial trenching prior to development. Should the trenching reveal anything of importance, there will need to be a second stage of archaeological excavation. The discovery of something as important as the Anglo-Saxon burial would have a considerable cost implication for the client, and may lead to a requirement to preserve it **in situ** within the proposed development. Having said that, recent evaluations to the north of the site have not revealed anything of archaeological significance.

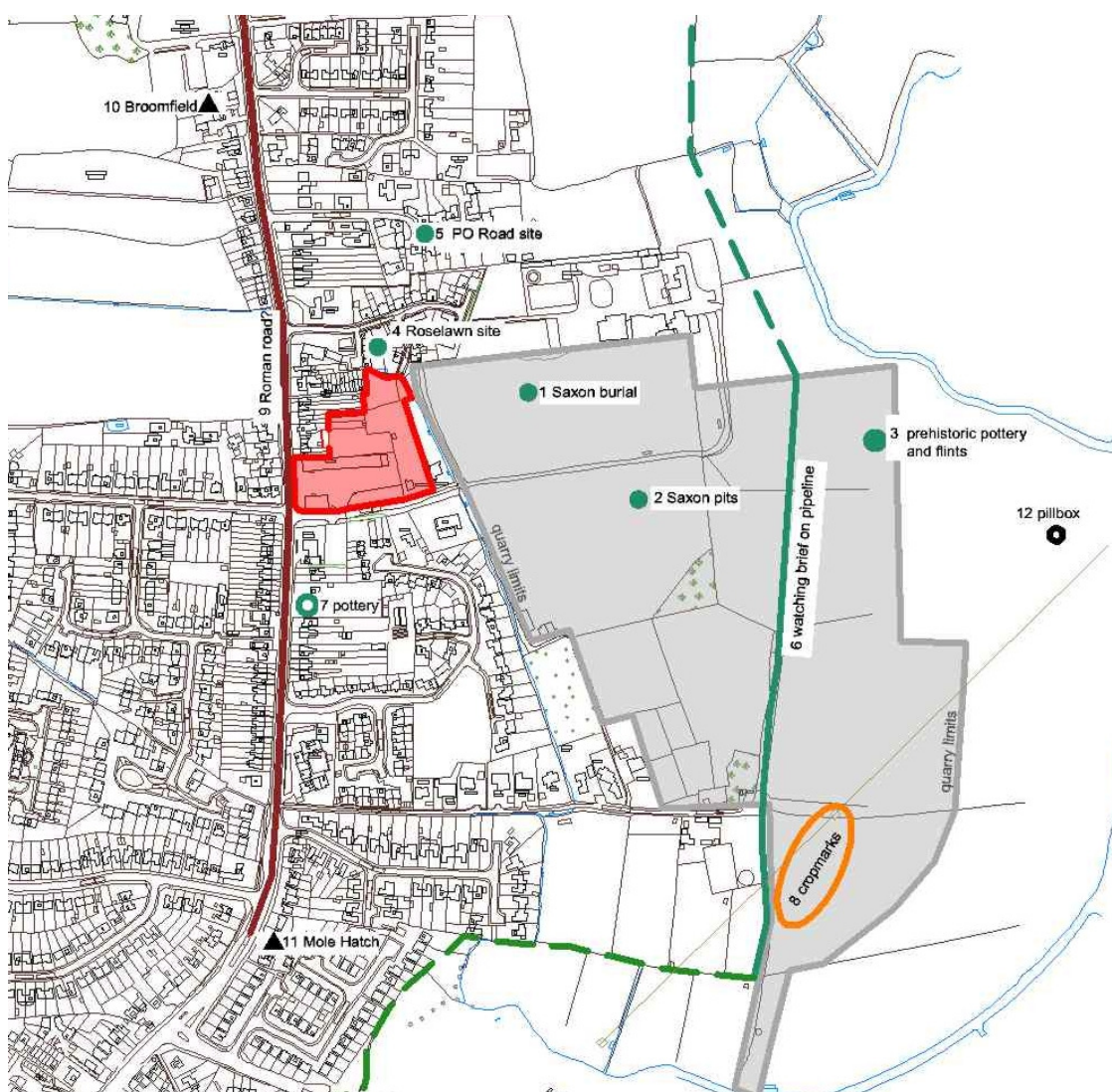


Figure 1: summary of archaeological finds and other heritage assets

Part 1 – Introduction (Figure 1)

1.1 Aim

The aim of this assessment is to catalogue the archaeological sites and discoveries on and around the proposed development site (PDS: outlined in red on Fig 1), to discuss them in their local context, and to determine whether they will cause any constraints on development. For completeness, a range of other heritage assets such as listed buildings and World War II remains are listed, but these do not form the main thrust of this report.

1.2 Methodology

For the purposes of this assessment, a 'search area' has been defined, equating to the area shown on Figure 1. The following resources have been searched for evidence of heritage assets, and archaeological sites and finds in the search area:

- The *Essex Historic Environment Record* (EHER). This is the primary source for an assessment of this type. It is a computerised list of all recorded find-spots of archaeological material in Essex, whether excavated sites or loose finds. It also contains transcriptions of cropmarks taken from extensive air photograph coverage of Essex held by the National Monuments Record (NMR). It has more recently begun to include buildings (some of them listed), industrial archaeology sites, and WWII sites.
- *Essex Place Names* online catalogue. This was searched for place names of archaeological or historical interest. It includes place names on Tithe maps.
- *The Heritage Gateway*. This national database gives English Heritage Listed Buildings, *Images of England* (photographs of listed buildings in England). The *National Monuments Record* of excavations in England and Wales, and *Pastscape* (English Heritage).
- Historic maps and Ordnance Survey coverage
- Relevant reports and publications held by Colchester Archaeological Trust.

Using the information from these sources, a map has been created (Figure 1) which shows the various heritage assets in relation to the PDS. In reference to the figure, the heritage assets are listed below in **Part 3**, under the following headings:

- Finds related to the Broomfield Anglo-Saxon burial (sites 1-2)
- Other excavated or evaluated archaeological sites (sites 3-6)
- Chance discoveries of archaeological material (site 7)
- Cropmarks (site 8)
- Roman road (site 9)
- Listed buildings (sites 10-11).
- WWII site (site 12)

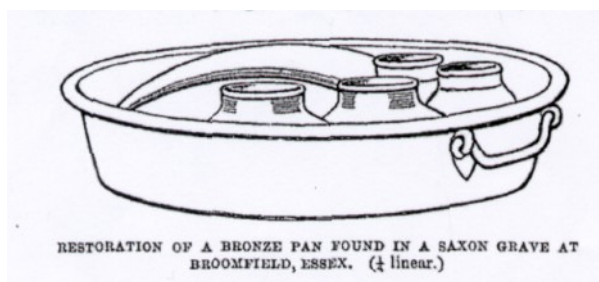


Figure 2: bronze pan from the Anglo-Saxon burial

Part 2 – Legislative framework

National context

Heritage and archaeological issues are informed by the *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). The following policy statements apply:

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

128. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

132. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.....
As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.....

135. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

139. Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

Local Context

Chelmsford City's Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (Chelmsford Borough Local Development Framework 2001- 2021: Adopted 20th February 2008) contains the following policy statement:

POLICY CP9 – PROTECTING AREAS OF NATURAL AND BUILT HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

The Borough Council is committed to protecting and enhancing the Borough's important natural and historic environment. The Borough Council will therefore seek to sustain biodiversity, historic landscape character, archaeological and geological conservation by ensuring sites of international, national, regional and local importance are protected and enhanced.

The Borough Council will designate and keep under review Conservation Areas in order to protect or enhance their special architectural or historic interest and will seek to protect the character and setting of Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens and Protected Lanes. Areas of land within the Chelmsford area that have the function of maintaining the open character of river valleys and associated flood plains and afford the opportunity to protect and enhance sites of nature conservation importance are designated as Green Wedges. The Borough Council will also seek to ensure that the open rural character of the undeveloped coastline within the Coastal Protection Belt is protected.

Part 3 – list of heritage assets

This section consists of a map (Figure 1) illustrating the relationship of the PDS to various heritage assets, which are numbered consecutively and grouped into the following categories

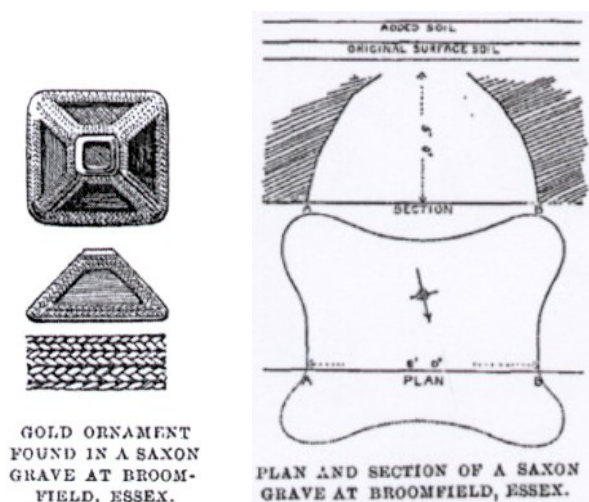
- Finds related to the Broomfield Anglo-Saxon burial (sites 1-2)
- Other excavated or evaluated archaeological sites (sites 3-6)
- Chance discoveries of archaeological material (site 7)
- Cropmarks (site 8)
- Roman road (site 9)
- Listed buildings (sites 10-11).
- WWII site (site 12)

3.1 Finds related to the Broomfield burial

Map reference 1 Broomfield Saxon Princely burial

Essex Historic Environment Record reference: 5546-8
NGR TL:7105 0957

Anglo-Saxon burial, found in 1888, in gravel pit behind Clobb's Row. Workmen digging gravel found remains of a sword, spear and knife 6-7 feet down. The sword's wooden sheath seemed to have been bound with tape-like material. With the sword were a gold pyramid (Fig 3) and buckle plate, both set with garnets. The site was excavated in 1894. The northern part of the grave had been cut away.



Figures 3, 4: gold pyramid, and plan of Anglo-Saxon burial

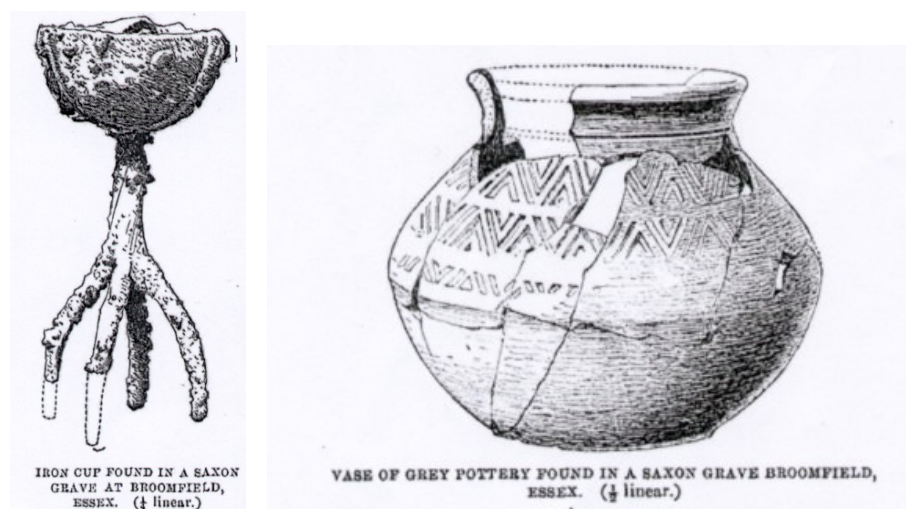
The grave was curiously formed, dome-shaped and with curious extensions at the corners, and was c.8 feet long (Fig 4). The grave walls were covered with soot or charcoal. At the end of the grave were rows of large flint nodules. A two-handled circular bronze pan was found on the eastern side of the centre of the grave (Fig 2). It lay on a mass of folded woollen fabric of two qualities and some coarse material, apparently flax (including perhaps reddish tufts from a hairy cloak) and supported by logs of birch wood lying E-W, close together. In the pan were the tips of two cow's horns, two blue glass bowls (cover illustration), and two lathe-turned wooden cups with gilt bronze rims. Nearby were two wooden buckets with iron mountings, sunk into the earth. A hemispherical iron cup on a tall stem, with four feet, was found in the middle of the south side of the grave (Fig 5). In the south-west corner of the grave was an iron cauldron. At

the north end was a sword, spearhead, shield boss and sherds of a wheel-thrown pot, ornamented with an impressed lozenge stamp (Fig 6). Between the pan and the west end of the grave a good deal of very dark matter was found (presumably charcoal), fragments of wood, parts of flat iron bars, angle irons and rivets. There was no sign of a body. The excavators thought it had been placed in a coffin and then burnt. The finds had no signs of fire damage. Possibly it was a southerly example of a half-burnt burial. The burial has many similarities to the Taplow (Bucks), burial in its richness and the arrangement of the objects. Both are considered to be 'princely burials'. Finds in the British Museum.

Prehistoric flints and Roman tile fragments were found throughout the fill of the Anglo-Saxon burial (EHER 5547-8).

References

OS; Meaney 1964; VCH 1903, p320-326; Read 1894; Aldred 1973; SMR Buckley 1974



Figures 5, 6: iron lamp, ceramic pot from Anglo-Saxon burial

2 Broomfield Borrow Pit

EHER: 5551, (5549-50)

NGR TL: TL 7115 0948

Watching brief at Broomfield Borrow Pit, 1985, near the site of the 7th century Saxon burial (PRN 5546), in advance of gravel extraction for the Chelmer valley (south) route. It was apparent that certain areas had been quarried in the 19th century and filled with refuse. No archaeological features were revealed by topsoil stripping. A small concentration of early Saxon pottery of the 5th-6th centuries was found, not apparently associated with any features. However, 3 oval pits were identified after removal of the subsoil overburden. One pit was 1.6m x 1.3m x 0.45m deep. It had two fills. The upper fill had a small amount of charcoal, daub, animal bone, and several sherds of Early Saxon pottery. The lower fill had little charcoal and daub but several large sherds of Saxon pottery, including a piece of perforated cone-like object, paralleled at Mucking, West Stow and other sites, tentatively interpreted as a brazier. The second pit was 3.6m x 2m x c0.5m deep. It had 3 fills but only the upper fill produced finds. A small amount of decayed, unidentifiable bone, and much early Saxon pottery were found. Lower down were found charcoal, daub, burnt flint and sandstone, some considerable lumps of iron smithing slag and some small, amorphous pieces of iron. The third pit was 2m x 1.2m x 0.1m deep. Its single fill was similar to the upper fill of the second pit, and it contained similar material including charcoal, daub, Early Saxon pottery and badly decayed bone. The evidence indicates Early Saxon activity probably near the edge of a settlement running down toward the river, beyond the boundary of the extraction area. The pottery

suggests a 5th-6th century date. The first and third pits were finally used for refuse. The second pit contained material associated with iron-smithing, apparently taking place nearby. Such activity would be located on the edge of a settlement. Site Assessment = the main Saxon settlement nucleus probably lay beyond the boundary of the borrow pit, possibly nearer the river. Any development in the area would need extensive archaeological reconnaissance to obtain further information. The iron-smithing evidence is of great value.

Note by HB: there is a mistake in the EHER text. The Saxon pits were not beyond the quarry and near the river, but quite firmly within the quarry. Mandy Gee's plan in EAH shows the pits closer to the Saxon Burial site, midway along a line drawn between Campions Farm and Roselawn Farm (at approx TL 7115 0948). It is the prehistoric flints from the eastern edge of the quarry site that may indicate a prehistoric settlement there. Gee's text says that she thinks the settlement was closer to the Main Road in Broomfield Road, with the pits lying east of the settlement. That would fit. But the problem then is that the settlement site is close to the burial. But as Gee says, settlement may have preceded burial (this also fits, the pottery is all 5th-6th century, and the burial is 7th !!).

Reference

Gee, M, 1985

3.2 Other excavated or evaluated archaeological sites

3 Broomfield Borrow Pit

EHER: 5549-50
NGR TL: 714 095

During the same watching brief (site 2 above - 5551) some worked flint was recovered – it could be Mesolithic (EHER 5549). During the same watching brief (5551) much poor quality flintwork was recovered. There was more flintwork in the north eastern part of the site than elsewhere with a higher ratio of possible tools to waste flakes. Most flint was Neolithic-Bronze Age in date (circa 4000-1500 BC). The flintwork indicates low level activity with possible settlement near the river. Flint included 2 scrapers; a possible arrowhead and a retouched blade. Dated to late Neolithic-early Bronze Age (EHER 5550).

Reference

Gee 1985

4 Roselawn Farm, Broomfield

EHER: 18938, 19011
NGR TL: 7090 0960

Negative archaeological evaluation: 15 trenches on a site centred 100m north of Application Site produced only 19th and 20th century garden features

Reference

Ennis 1999

5 Post Office Road, Broomfield

EHER: 47677
NGR TL: 7096 0970

2003: Six trenches were excavated across the development area. No archaeological features or deposits were identified during the course of the evaluation, excepting a

modern brick built well, presumably an ornamental garden feature associated with the now demolished house ('The Cedars'). ,

References

Cullen 2004

6 Cable trench at Saxon Way, Broomfield

EHER: 46302

NGR TL: 712 093

A watching brief on the strip revealed no archaeological features or finds other than that relating to modern disturbance or field boundaries that are present on 1st edition OS map. The monitored topsoil strip was c.1.8m wide and ran for c.550m from TL71255 09043 to TL71254 09552, along the Chelmer Valley. Approx. 0.2m of topsoil was removed from above the mixed sand, and gravel and silty clay subsoil. A c.1m wide trench was then dug to a depth of c.1m within the stripped easement,

References

Barker 2005

3.3 Chance discovery of archaeological material

7 Broomfield

EHER: 5552

NGR TL: 708 093

Pottery found in 1823 in "gravel pit near the Blacksmith's shop at Broomfield". Now in Chelmsford Museum. 2 gravel pits shown near smithy on 1881 OS 6" at TL 7085 0938 and TL 7105 0975.

References

OS cards, CPS

3.4 Cropmark sites

8 near Campion Farm, Broomfield

EHER: 5777

NGR TL: 713 092

Cropmarks of small ring ditch with internal features possibly. A second ring ditch lies to the south. Scatter of dark patches to the north west - pits? To the north features suggesting subrectangular enclosure with 2 'pits' within.

References

Ingle *et al*

3.5 Roman road

9 The Chelmsford-Braintree-Long Melford Roman road

EHER: 6057

NGR TL: 746 197

Part of the course of the Chelmsford-Braintree-Long Melford Roman road. Traceable by line of footpath and road to the Ash Tree, Little Waltham 'except for a slight diversion at Broomfield, where it crosses a stream'. Miller Christy could not find any trace of an embankment along its length. Since the lower part of the line crosses ground liable to

flooding 'this part of the course must lie under suspicion'. From Little Waltham the road is straight to Gosfield 'except for slight twists at streams'. It is on high ground all the way, much of the course being followed by parish boundaries, but there are no signs of an 'agger'. The Roman road does not follow the present road south of Little Leighs, where the present road bends. NMR APs show the Roman road continuing straight (presumably it regains the modern road line at Denes Bridge). Archaeological trial trenching along the path of the A131 Great Leighs Bypass confirmed the presence of the Roman road at several points where metalling (ie, road gravel) survived, but more generally through identifying its road-side ditches. The absence of finds was to be expected in roadside ditches flanking a road well away from settlements. A possible roadside ditch for the Roman road was discovered along with two small ditches, one containing a single sherd of Roman pottery in land north of Goodmans Lane, Little Leighs.

3.6 Listed buildings

10 Broomfield Place

EHER: 30284
NGR TL 706 099
LBO 1338428:
Grade II. Early C19 building

11 Mole Hatch House

EHER: 31482
NGR TL 708 090
LBO ref 141360
Grade II Timber framed house of c.1500.

3.7 World War II site (Fig 7)

12 Pillbox, Roselawn Farm, Broomfield

EHER: 10874
NGR TL: 715094
Type FW3/2 concrete pillbox. Facing E across an open field towards River Chelmer (70 yards away). Inside is a brick-built, Y-shaped pillar. The inner walls were shuttered with wood but the ceiling was shuttered with corrugated iron sheeting (now hanging off).

Reference

Wills 1985



Figure 7: pillbox 12

3.8 Place names

A search of the *Essex Place-Names Online* website revealed no place-names of any particular interest close to the PDS.

4 The heritage assets, period-by-period

There are no recorded archaeological remains within the PDS. Therefore the following summaries apply to finds and sites beyond its boundaries.

4.1 Prehistory

Outside the PDS, prehistoric remains have come to light in two locations. First, the residual prehistoric flints found in the fill of the Anglo-Saxon burial (ie, **site 1**, 200m east of the PDS). Second, the prehistoric flints found by Mandy Gee and Owen Bedwin during the 1985 watching brief (**3**). The location of these flints, approx 600m east of the PDS, probably means that there was a prehistoric settlement here, close to the banks of the River Chelmer. The flints are mostly late Neolithic-early Bronze Age (circa 4000-1500 BC), but there are also some possible Mesolithic pieces.

Unexcavated and undated cropmarks of ring-ditches near Campion Farm (**8**: now destroyed by the gravel quarry) may have been prehistoric burial sites (approx 900m SE of the PDS).

4.2 Roman period

Main Road, Broomfield, immediately east of the site, is probably on the line of the Roman road from Chelmsford to Long Melford via Braintree. Roman road lines are sometimes conjectural, in the sense that antiquarians and archaeologists have assumed that long, straight stretches of modern road (or hedges and tracks) are the lines of Roman roads running between Roman settlements (in this case, Chelmsford and Braintree). In fact, hard evidence of the roads (road surface material or roadside ditches) is rarely seen outside the Roman towns (where surfaced roads are common). Although no road surface or ditches have been seen in Broomfield, roadside ditches were seen in evaluations 8km to the north, on the Great Leighs bypass.

Roman tile fragments were found in the fill of the Anglo-Saxon burial (**1**). These must be derived from a nearby Roman site whose exact location is unknown.

4.3 Anglo-Saxon period

The Anglo-Saxon burial whose recorded find-spot is approximately 200m to the east is by far the most important archaeological site in the area of the PDS. There is only one known burial, but it is of the utmost importance. In its richness, it is compared in the literature with the Princely burial from Taplow in Berkshire, and together with the recently-discovered Prittlewell Prince ('King of Bling'), Broomfield forms an important trio of princely burials in SE Britain.

Taplow and Prittlewell are solitary Anglo-Saxon burials, and it is not really known whether Broomfield was also a solitary burial, or whether it was part of a larger cemetery (like Sutton Hoo). If there were other burials within the extensive quarry area (see Fig 1), then they are probably now long-gone. There have only been two modern archaeological investigations within the quarry. The first was an extensive watching brief by ECC archaeologist Mandy Gee, assisted by Owen Bedwin. What Gee found in 1985 was a cluster of pits 150m SE of the burial (not on the river side of the site, as stated in EHER). These pits had ultimately been filled with Anglo-Saxon rubbish, but some had originally been used for metal-working. This is an important group of material, indicating a mixture of industrial and domestic activity. Gee believed that the pits were part of an Anglo-Saxon settlement near to the Roman road in the 5th and 6th centuries, and the site was then used for the princely burial in the 7th century. This is a sensible reading of the evidence and the available dating material.

The second piece of archaeological work was a negative watching brief on a cable trench which ran north-south approximately 600m east of the PDS.

Outside the quarried area, there have been two pieces of archaeological work quite close to the PDS the requirement for which was partly or completely driven by the presence of the Anglo-Saxon burial. The first was at Roselawn Farm 40m north of the PDS. Here, an evaluation by six trenches found nothing except modern garden features (4). The second was at Post Office Road, 100m north, where an extensive evaluation found nothing but 19th and 20th century garden features (5).

4.4 Medieval and post-medieval period, and WWII - the sites

Post-medieval remains consist of the two listed buildings which fall within our search area (10, 11), and the WWII pillbox near the Chelmer (12).

4.5 Post-medieval period and WWII – the map coverage

Map coverage of the site starts with the 1777 Chapman & André map (Fig 19). This shows the PDS in undeveloped ground overlooking ground which slopes down towards the Chelmer. The main village cluster of Broomfield lies well to the north of the PDS.



Figure 8: extract from Chapman and André map of 1777 (approx site position shown red)

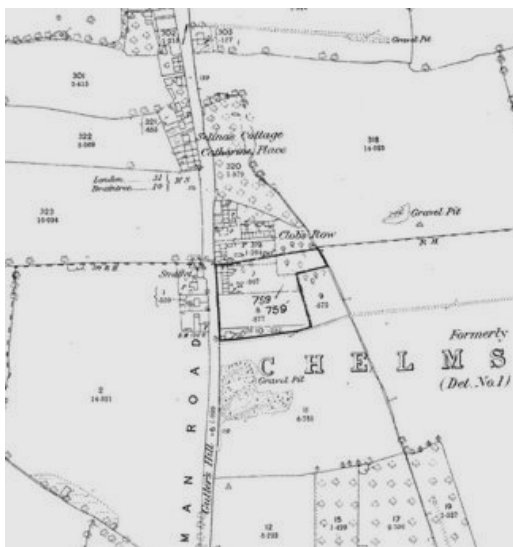


Figure 9: OS 1876: the site is essentially still rural, but among the beginnings of development along Main Road. Gravel working is shown to the E and SE of the PDS.



Figure 10: OS 1976: the site now part of ribbon development along Main Road. Disused pit shown located due east of PDS

Part 5 Discussion of archaeological constraints.

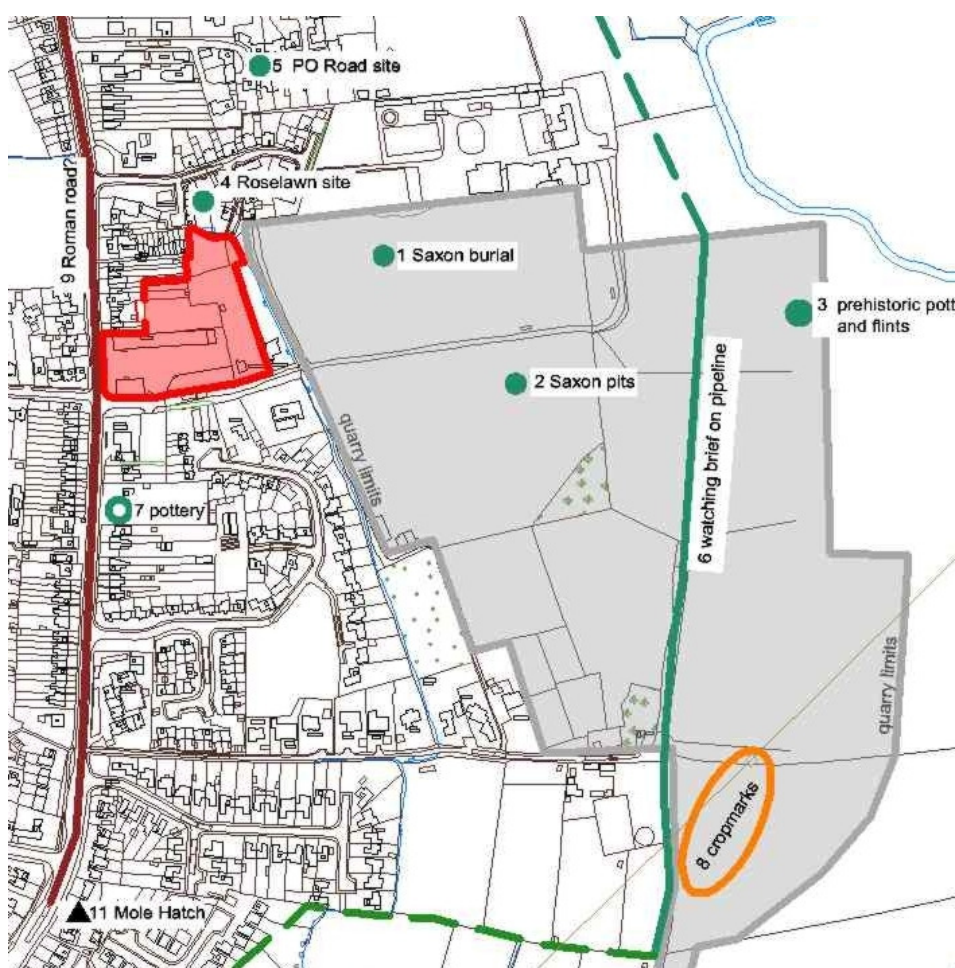


Fig 11: the PDS (red outline) shown in relation to quarried land (grey tone), and the princely burial site (1).

The issue here is whether the archaeological remains around this site will have an effect on (or will be seen as a constraint on) proposed development. The local planning authority Chelmsford City Council (CCC) takes advice on archaeological matters from Essex County Council Place Services (formerly 'County Archaeology Section').

It is, of course, impossible to predict what the ECC Place Services (ECCPS) officer will advise, but given the extraordinary importance of the Anglo-Saxon burial, there can be little doubt that the ECCPS officer will advise CCC that archaeological work should be to be carried out prior to development, and possibly prior to granting of planning consent. The required archaeological work will be detailed in a *Brief* written by the ECCPS officer and sent to the applicant or his agent.

What will the required work consist of? It will probably be a standard 5% trial-trenching evaluation of the site. If any archaeological remains were found by the trial-trenching, there would be a requirement for further excavation, and perhaps for preservation *in situ* of significant remains. If any remains had to be preserved *in situ*, this would impact the amount of land available for development (it may be noted here that recent evaluation trenching to the north of the site at Post Office Road and Roselawn Farm did not reveal anything of significance).

There will be a cost implication for the client due to the trial-trenching evaluation, and any follow-up excavation which ECCPS may require. Finding an Anglo-Saxon princely burial would be expensive.

Part 6 – references and glossary of archaeological terms

References

Aldred, RV	1973	<i>Proposed residential development, Campions Farm, Chelmsford-PE-CHR-3-72</i>
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Cullen, Kate	2004	<i>Post Office Road, Broomfield, Chelmsford.</i> Cotswold Archaeological Trust
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Gee, M	1985	Broomfield Borrow Pit', in <i>Essex Archaeology & History</i> 17 (1986), p144-148
Ingle et al		Ingle, CJ, Strachan, D, Tyler, S and Saunders, H. 1993-2012 NMP plots
Meaney, A	1964	<i>A Gazeteer of Early Anglo-Saxon burial sites</i>
Christy, M	1921	Trans Essex Archaeol Soc, New Series, Vol 15, p207
OS	-	Ordnance Survey record cards
OS	1978	<i>Map of Roman Britain</i>
RCHME	1916	<i>An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Essex - Volume 1</i>
RCHME	1923	<i>An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Essex - Volume 4 , List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest: Chelmsford</i>
Read, CH	1894	'A Saxon Grave at Broomfield' <i>Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London</i> , 15/1893-5/250-5
VCH	1903	<i>Victoria County History, Essex, Vol I . Edited by HA Doubleday</i>
VCH	1963	<i>Victoria County History, Essex, Vol III, by MR Hull</i>
Lavender, NJ	1995	A131 Great Leighs Bypass, Essex, Archaeological evaluation trial trenching
Peachey, M	2001	A131 Great Leighs Bypass-Land north of Goodmans Lane, Little Leighs, Essex- Archaeological Evaluation

Glossary

Anglo-Saxon	(AS) after the Romans – AD 410 to AD 1066
AP	air photograph
Bronze Age	after New Stone Age - approximately 2000 to 700 BC
context	specific location of finds on archaeological site, part of a site sequence
cropmark	ancient features showing as circles or lines in crops due to differential root depth over damp soil in archaeological features.
Early Iron Age	c 700 – c 400 BC
ECC	Essex County Council
EH	English Heritage
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by ECC
FAU	ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Iron Age	after the Bronze Age and before the Romans – 700 BC to AD 43
LIA	Late Iron Age: 100 BC – AD 43
medieval	from AD 1066 to around AD 1530
modern	19th – 21st centuries
Neolithic	New Stone Age – the earliest farming (around 4,000-2,000 BC).
post-medieval	from 16th century to 18th century
prehistoric	before Roman period - i.e. the years BC to AD 43
RCHME	Royal Commission for Historical Monuments in England
Roman period	from AD 43 to around AD 410
residual	out of context, such as a Roman coin in a Victorian pit.
ring-ditch	the plough-flattened remains of a Bronze Age burial mound
unstratified	loose find, not in an archaeological context
VCH	Victoria County History

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