



BALANCING PONDS, CLEMENTS PARK SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, ESSEX

Archaeological Evaluation Report



**BALANCING PONDS, CLEMENTS PARK,
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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Report reference: 62750.02

May 2006

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake a six-trench archaeological evaluation at Clements Park, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, centred on NGR 589231 188090. The site is located adjacent to previous areas of evaluation and excavation undertaken by Wessex Archaeology throughout 2005 under the previous site name of Fossett's Farm. The evaluation was carried as a condition of planning permission granted by Southend Borough Council for a balancing pond facility (reference SOS/06/ 00536/FUL).

Two of the six evaluation trenches contained archaeological features, although most contained geological anomalies and a number of simple land drains. The land drains including both ceramic pipe and shell-filled examples.

Two undated ditches were uncovered during the evaluation and these have been interpreted as possible drainage or field boundary ditches. They were aligned north-south, which mirrors the alignment of field ditches recorded to the west and south of the site in previous evaluations and excavation. It is likely therefore that these ditches form part of the same field system. The ditches were sealed below up to 0.6 m of topsoil and subsoil.

Acknowledgements

This evaluation was commissioned by CgMs Consulting (the Client). The assistance and advice of Paul Chadwick and Sally Dicks (CgMs), and Martin Scott (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council), who monitored the archaeological field evaluation on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, is especially acknowledged.

The fieldwork was carried out by Cornelius Barton and Gary Evans. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Peter Reeves (Senior Project Manager). This report was written by Gary Evans. The illustrations are by Mark Roughley.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting (the Client) to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Clements Park, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, (hereafter the 'Site'), centred on National Grid Reference 589231 188090 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The field evaluation was undertaken as part of a programme of archaeological work to meet a condition attached to planning permission for construction of a balancing pond facility (reference SOS/06/00536/FUL).

1.1.3 The field evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs, 2005 and Wessex Archaeology, 2006. Report ref 62750.01) approved by the archaeological advisor to the local planning authority.

1.1.4 This report presents the results of the evaluation, which was undertaken between 24th and 27th April 2006.

2 SITE LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1.1 The Site occupies a roughly rectangular parcel of land of approximately 0.66 ha and lies on the northern edge of Southend on Sea in the county of Essex (**Figure 1**). The current land-use is unmanaged arable farmland that has reverted to rough scrub.

2.1.2 The Site is bounded to the north and east by open fields currently under crop. To the south it is bordered by rough scrubland, the site of an earlier evaluation (Wessex Archaeology, 2005a Report ref 58810), while its west edge coincides with the north of a proposed Link Road (Oxford Archaeology, 2003a).

2.1.3 The underlying geology of the Site consists of Eocene London Clay overlain by third terrace gravels, in turn overlain by drift deposits of 'Brick earth' (British Geological Survey Sheet 258/259). Further detail of the soil sequence is provided by the evaluation trench summaries (**Appendix 1**).

2.1.4 The Site is located at approximately 18.40m to 17.20m aOD (above Ordnance Datum), on a gentle north/north-west facing slope leading to the valley of the River Roach. The ground surface across the Site is generally even.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Late Bronze Age Early Iron Age (2400 BC-AD 43)

- 3.1.1 The Site lies 230m to the north-east of Prittlewell Camp, a designated Scheduled Monument (SM no. 29408). The monument consists of a circular bank and external ditch measuring *c.* 250m in diameter. Only the south-western third of the perimeter is now visibly defined by an earthen bank surviving to a height of 0.9m and width of 3.5m. Parts of the ditch survive and measure 4m in width and 1.4m in depth. Although it has been subject to archaeological investigation, including a trial trench through the southern rampart in 1929 and more recently field walking, little has been found to clarify the date of the monument. However by analogy it has been interpreted as a low-lying univallate ‘hill fort’ of Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age date.
- 3.1.2 To the immediate west of the Site, a pronounced mound ‘The Look-out’ is situated on the south-eastern part of the Camp’s perimeter. Excavations on this man-made feature, which measures 20m in diameter and 1.5m high, uncovered quantities of tile and medieval pottery dating from the 13th to 15th centuries. It has been suggested that it is the base of a medieval post mill. However, the fact that the field boundaries respect the mound, clearly encircling it, would suggest a pre-*enclosure* origin for this feature.
- 3.1.3 Archaeological excavations undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in 2005, in advance of the proposed B&Q retail warehouse *c.*250m to the south-west of the Site (**Figure 1**) uncovered activity dating from the Late Prehistoric period (Wessex Archaeology, 2005a.).
- 3.1.4 Area D, contained multiple Late Prehistoric enclosures with clearly defined entrances and subdivisions, an east-west aligned trackway and a north-east to south-west orientated field system to the northern part of the excavation area. A series of inter-cutting probable Late Prehistoric quarry pits was discovered close to the eastern boundary of Area D. (Wessex Archaeology, 2005a). This activity is likely to be contemporary with the Scheduled Monument (hill fort) and shows that the landscape was highly organised and managed during the Late Prehistoric period.

Romano British (AD 43-410)

- 3.1.5 In Wessex Archaeology’s Link Road (Area A) excavations to the immediate west of the Site (**Figure 1**), a field system was discovered with a main north-east to south-west ditch and a series of parallel south-east to north-west aligned ditches at *c.*5m intervals respecting the former. Two sherds of Roman pottery were discovered (Wessex Archaeology, 2005a). Work in the same area by Oxford Archaeology also obtained two sherds of Roman pottery (Oxford Archaeology, 2003b). It has been suggested that this field system may represent Roman activity within the vicinity (Wessex Archaeology, 2005a).

- 3.1.6 A few sherds of Roman pottery, *tegula* roof tile and a fragment of box flue tile were discovered in the B&Q excavation Area D (Wessex Archaeology, 2005a). Although they were residual in demonstratively Saxon contexts they provide evidence of a Roman building somewhere in the locality.

Saxon (410-1066)

- 3.1.7 Evidence of activity dating to the Saxon period has been found in Areas D and C. In Area D a sub-rectangular enclosure formed by inter-cutting ditches and later re-defined by domestic pit alignments was excavated. Within the enclosure, on the southern limit of Area D, a beam slot-constructed domestic building was uncovered. This was surrounded by cess and rubbish pits of substantial depth, of a type usually associated with urban centres. On the western side of Area D, a rectangular post-built building was excavated. Two Sunken-Featured Buildings (SFB) were discovered in the area; one to the east of the Saxon enclosure in Area D and one in Area C (Wessex Archaeology, 2005a) (**Figure 1**).
- 3.1.8 Essex County Council's 1992 excavation at Fox Hall Golf Course, to the east of the proposed B&Q development area, excavated another SFB (Essex County Council, 1992).
- 3.1.9 Archaeological evaluations to the immediate west of Area D (**Figure 1**), in advance of a proposed Pizza Hut, displayed a high density of archaeological features of various periods and demonstrated the continuation of Late Prehistoric and Saxon activity from the adjacent B&Q Area D excavation (Wessex Archaeology, 2005b. Report ref 59420.01).
- 3.1.10 The discovery of a rich Saxon royal burial on Eastern Avenue, Prittlewell, c. 1.7km to the south-west of the Site demonstrates that this part of Southend-on-Sea had a rich, hierarchical society during the Saxon period (CgMs, 2004).
- 3.1.11 In May 2005 an evaluation of land proposed for development of a De Vere Hotel took place to the south of the Site (Wessex Archaeology, 2005c. Report ref 58811). This discovered a series of north-south ditches (**Figure 2**) which were interpreted as either drainage or field boundary ditches, some of which contained medieval and post-medieval roof tile. One sherd of prehistoric pottery and four pieces of worked and burnt flint were also found during the evaluation. However, no traces of settlement or other activities were uncovered.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1.1 The evaluation sought to clarify the potential impact upon the archaeological resource by the proposed development and sought to aid in the establishment of an appropriate mitigation strategy. The general aims and objectives of the evaluation were set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology, 2006).
- 4.1.2 The objective of the evaluation was to establish, as far as reasonably practicable and within the constraints of the evaluation sampling strategy,

the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character and condition of any surviving archaeological remains within the Site and assess their significance.

- 4.1.3 The evaluation also sought to assess the degree of archaeological survival and to clarify the impact upon the archaeological resource of any development and to inform the need, if any, for further mitigation of archaeological deposits in advance of development.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1.1 The evaluation and the preparation of this report was undertaken in accordance with the methodology set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology, 2006) which was approved in advance by the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority.

- 5.1.2 All field work was undertaken and this report has been prepared in accordance with the guidance given in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (1994, revised 2001).

5.1 Health and Safety

- 5.1.3 All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety regulations (1992) and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation and regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.

- 5.1.4 A Risk Assessment was prepared by Wessex Archaeology prior to the commencement of fieldwork. This was reviewed as the project progressed.

- 5.1.5 As part of the Project Briefing, all staff were made aware of their responsibilities and site specific hazards identified under the Risk Assessment.

5.2 Fieldwork

- 5.2.1 The fieldwork strategy is described in detail in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology, 2006). In summary the evaluation comprised the machine excavation of six, 25m x 2m trenches which together encompassed an evaluation area of 300m. The trenches were located so as to evaluate the proposed positions of the balancing ponds and the associated access route.

- 5.2.2 Trench locations were surveyed using a Total Station (TST) and tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. All trenches were marked out prior to excavation.

- 5.2.3 Trial trench locations were 'swept' before and during excavation with a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) to verify the absence of any underground services.

- 5.2.4 All trenches were opened by a JCB type excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. This operated under the constant supervision of a suitably

qualified and experienced archaeologist. Topsoil and buried sub soils were removed as a series of shallow spits down to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or natural geological deposits, whichever was encountered first.

- 5.2.5 Where practicable, spoil was scanned for artefacts.
- 5.2.6 Trenches were cleaned by hand where appropriate and planned prior to any hand-excavation.
- 5.2.7 Minimal excavation was undertaken, a sample of the archaeological features and deposits was cleaned, recorded and where possible excavated by hand in order to characterise the nature and, where possible, the date and condition of the remains.
- 5.2.8 Deposits sealing archaeological features and/or undisturbed geology were recorded in order to establish comparative levels of preservation and truncation.
- 5.2.9 A full photographic record was kept comprising black and white negatives, colour transparencies and digital images.
- 5.2.10 A representative section, not less than 1m in length, of deposits from ground surface to the top of the natural geology was recorded in appropriate trenches.
- 5.2.11 All site drawings were drawn at an appropriate scale, typically 1:10 for sections and 1:20 or 1:50 for plans.
- 5.2.12 All written, drawn and photographic records were compiled in accordance with the Wessex Archaeology Fieldwork Recording Manual.
- 5.2.13 Hand-drawn records of individual interventions were tied in to the National Grid with the TST and subsequently digitised.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, a more detailed context description is contained in **Appendix 1**. Fully cross-referenced site records are contained in the site archive.
- 6.1.2 Contexts representing the deposition, re-deposition or re-working of material, signifying use/disuse are enclosed in round parentheses i.e. (00). Those representing the actions of construction, reconstruction or truncation are enclosed in square brackets i.e. [00].
- 6.1.3 No trenches were moved from their proposed locations.

6.2 Soil Sequence

- 6.2.1 All trenches showed a consistent soil sequence, comprising:
- 6.2.2 *Topsoil/A Horizon* - across the Site, the depth of topsoil was relatively uniform ranging in depth from c. 0.20m-0.30m. The topsoil comprised a mid-dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of sub-angular and rounded flint <80mm evenly distributed throughout. Rare

flecks of chalk throughout this layer are likely to originate from liming of fields. The topsoil is covered by grass and rough scrub.

6.2.3 *Subsoil /B Horizon* - the depth of the subsoil showed little variation across the Site, ranging from 0.20m depth to 0.30m. It comprised a mid orange or yellowish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of sub-angular and rounded flint <50mm. This is likely to be a diffuse interface between above topsoil and underlying natural resulting from mixing from ploughing now developed into distinct B horizon.

6.2.4 *Natural Drift Geology* - a mid-light brownish orange silty clay or silty clay with occasional inclusions of sub-angular and rounded flint <60mm. Some of the trenches, at the eastern end of the Site also displayed concentrations of sandy gravel and darker reddish brown clay. The average depth below ground level of this deposit was 0.40m to 0.60m. The base of this deposit was not reached.

6.3 Trench Results

6.3.1 All of the trenches contained a number of geological anomalies as well as a number of simple land drains, including both ceramic pipes and simple shell filled narrow trenches.

6.3.2 **Trench 1** contained a single ditch [103] this was north-south orientated, 1.10m wide and 0.40m deep with a concave base and 45° sloping sides. This probable field boundary and / or drainage ditch was cut into the underlying natural geology (105) and sealed by subsoil (102). This feature was filled with a single fill (104) of mid brown silty clay loam that contained no finds or inclusions (**Figure 3**).

6.3.3 **Trench 2.** No archaeological features or deposits were discovered in this trench.

6.3.4 **Trench 3** No archaeological features or deposits were discovered in this trench.

6.3.5 **Trench 4** Contained a single shallow linear feature [404], north –south orientated, 0.90m wide and 0.35m deep. This possible field boundary and / or drainage ditch was cut into the underlying natural geology (403) and sealed by subsoil (402). This feature was filled with a single fill (405) of mid brown silty clay loam that contained no finds or inclusions (**Figure 3**).

6.3.6 **Trench 5** No archaeological features or deposits were discovered in this trench.

6.3.7 **Trench 6** No archaeological features or deposits were discovered in this trench.

7 FINDS

7.1.1 The only artefacts recovered on Site were unstratified and modern in origin. These were noted but not retained.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 8.1.1 Due to the absence of any suitable archaeological deposits, no samples were taken for environmental analysis.

9 DISCUSSION

- 9.1.1 Two out of six evaluation trenches contained archaeological features, although most contained geological anomalies and a number of simple land drains, including both ceramic pipe and shell-filled examples.
- 9.1.2 The evaluation uncovered two undated ditches which have been interpreted as possible drainage or field boundary ditches [104] and [404] (**Figure 2**). The alignment of both ditches appears to correspond with ditches recorded during Wessex Archaeology's 2005 De Vere Hotel evaluation (**Figure 2**) one of which [1205] contained medieval and post-medieval material (Wessex Archaeology, 2005c).
- 9.1.3 It appears likely that the ditches recorded in the present evaluation are part of an extensive field system extending to the south and west of the Site.
- 9.1.4 The evaluation uncovered no features indicative of settlement, nor was there evidence of the Saxon activity characteristic of the B&Q excavation and the 'Pizza Hut' evaluation (Wessex Archaeology, 2005a and b). The favoured explanation is a topographical one with the broad ridge being a dry location with far ranging views, whilst the lower slopes upon which the Balancing Pond Site is located are wetter and less favourable for settlement but more suitable for agriculture.
- 9.1.5 The depth of the subsoil showed little variation across the Site, ranging from 0.20m depth to 0.30m. The interface between this deposit and the underlying natural was very diffuse. This deposit appears to represent a disturbed B Horizon, a mix of topsoil and underlying natural clay with occasional intrusions of post-medieval and modern material due to ploughing.
- 9.1.6 The underlying natural clay was observed in all the evaluation trenches. This was relatively close to the present ground surface mostly within 0.40m. It was observed at heights of between 17.60 m aOD and 16.90m aOD.

10 ARCHIVE

- 10.1.1 The complete project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990).
- 10.1.2 It is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology, under the site code reference 62750.
- 10.1.3 The resulting archive will be microfiched to the standards accepted by the National Monuments Record (NMR).
- 10.1.4 In due course, the project archive will be deposited with Southend-on-Sea Museum.

11 REFERENCES

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12 APPENDIX 1 TRENCH SUMMARY TABLES

All (+) indicate deposits / features not fully excavated

TRENCH 1

Length 25m Width 1.80m		
Context No.	Description	Depth (m)
101	TOPSOIL/PLOUGHSOIL. Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional sub-angular and rounded flint pebbles<80mm. Rare chalk flecks.	0.0-0.30
102	SUBSOIL/B HORIZON. Mid yellowish brown clay loam with occasional sub-angular and rounded flint, rare chalk flecks, and dark orange brown mottling.	0.30-0.82
103	CUT of N-S ditch. 1.10m wide, 0.40m deep, concave base sides slope 45°. Filled with (105)	Top-0.60 Base-1.00
104	FILL of [103]. Mid -dark yellowish brown clayey silt. Occasional flecks chalk	0.60
105	NATURAL GEOLOGY. Mid orange brown clay loam with rare sub-angular and rounded flint pebbles <70mm and frequent brown mottling.	0.82-1.10 (+)

TRENCH 2

Length 25m Width 1.80m		
Context No.	Description	Depth (m)
201	TOPSOIL/PLOUGHSOIL. Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional sub-angular flint. Occasional chalk flecks.	0.0-0.30
202	SUBSOIL/B HORIZON. Light yellowish brown silty clay with occasional flint pebbles and chalk flecks.	0.30-0.45
203	NATURAL GEOLOGY. Mid orangey brown silty clay with occasional sub-angular and rounded small flint gravel. Also bands of more concentrated gravel and patches of light reddish brown clay and greyish brown silt.	0.45- 0.50 (+)

TRENCH 3

Length 25m Width 1.80m		
Context No.	Description	Depth (m)
301	TOPSOIL/PLOUGHSOIL. Dark greyish brown silty clay loam with 5% sub-angular and rounded flint pebbles <50mm. Rare chalk flecks.	0.0-0.20
302	SUBSOIL/B HORIZON. Mid yellow brown silty clay with 5% sub-angular and rounded flint <50mm. Rare chalk flecks.	0.20-0.49
303	NATURAL GEOLOGY. Mid brownish yellow slightly silty clay with 5% sub-angular flint pebbles<10mm. frequent patches of reddish brown clay and pockets of coarse flint gravel.	0.49 (+)

TRENCH 4

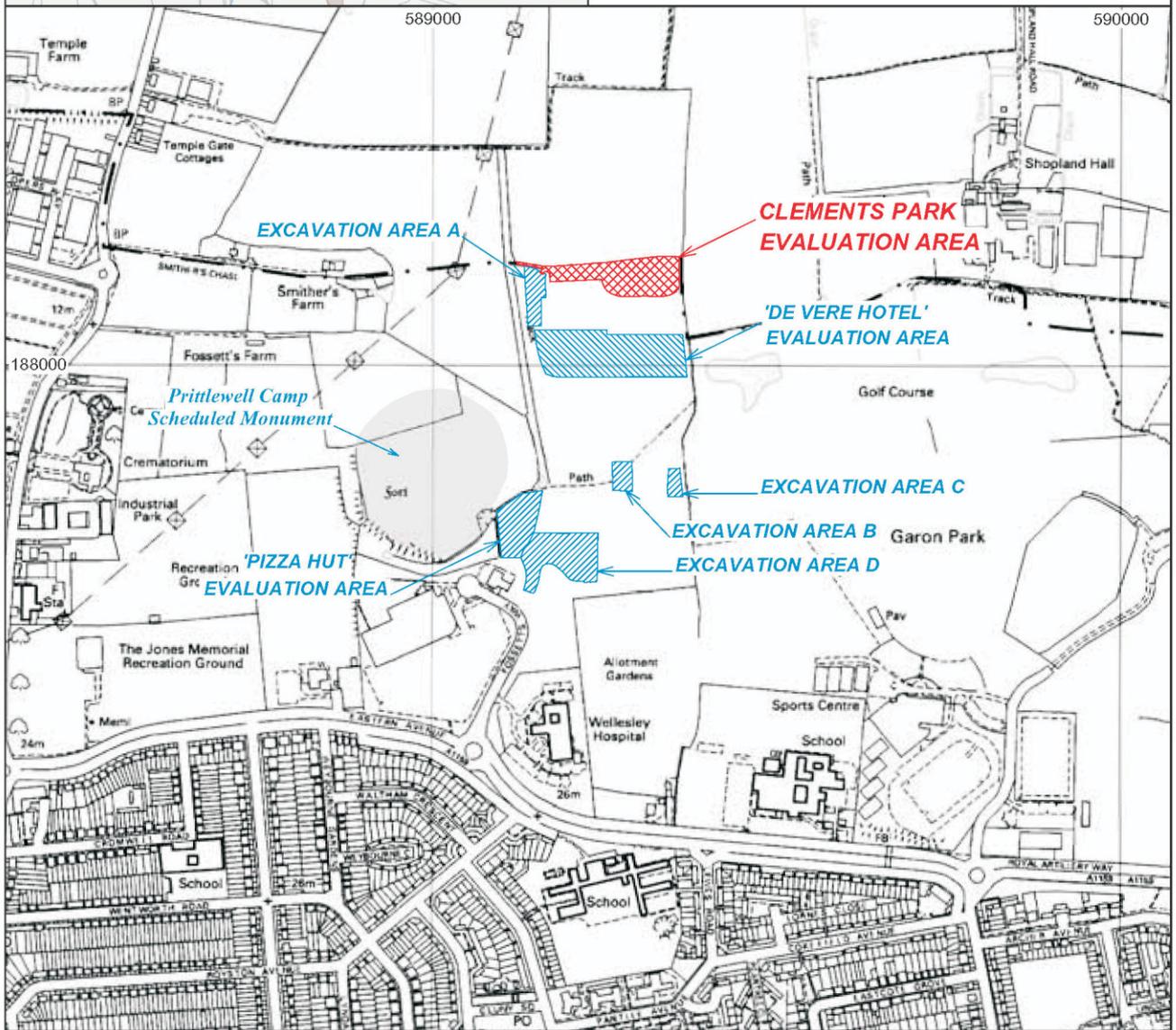
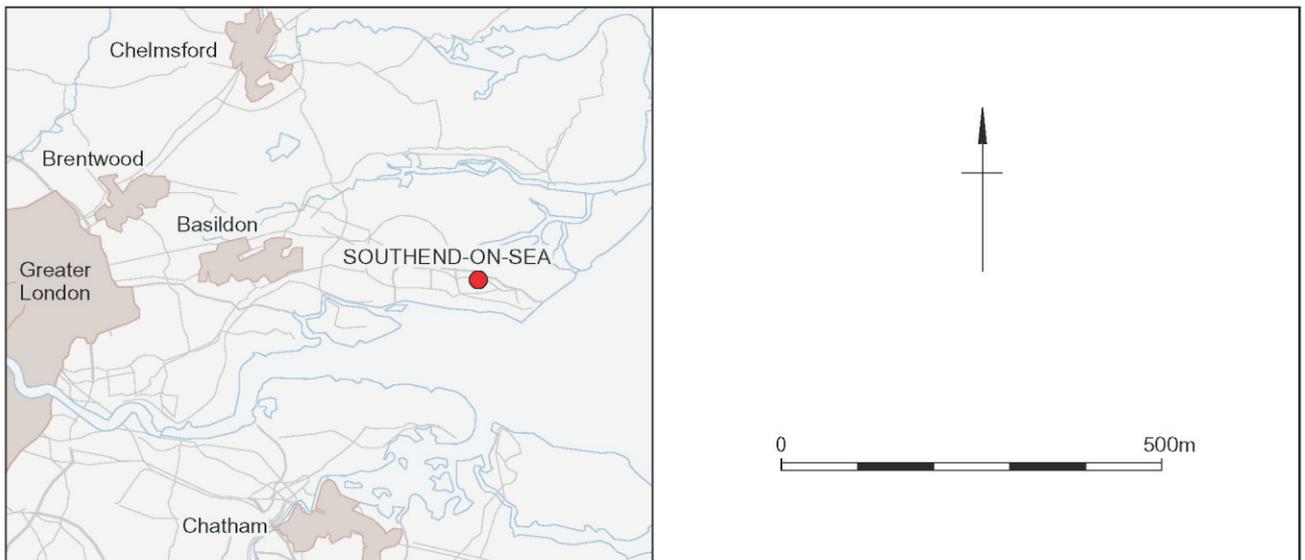
Length 25m Width 1.80m		
Context No.	Description	Depth (m)
401	TOPSOIL/PLOUGHSOIL. Mid greyish brown silty clay loam with 5% sub-angular and rounded flint <50mm and chalk flecks.	0.0-0.28
402	SUBSOIL/B HORIZON. Mid orange brown silty clay with 5% sub-angular and rounded flint <50mm. Rare chalk flecks.	0.28-0.41
403	NATURAL GEOLOGY. Mid orange brown clay with concentrations of flint gravel and silt.	0.41-0.80 (+)
404	FILL of [403]. Light brown silty clay with < 10% dark grey mottling and occasional chalk flecks.	0.40
405	CUT of north-south ditch. 0.90m wide 0.35m deep, concave base. Filled with (404)	Top-0.40 Base-0.75

TRENCH 5

Length 25m Width 1.80m		
Context No.	Description	Depth (m)
501	TOPSOIL/PLOUGHSOIL. Mid greyish brown silty clay loam.	0.0-0.31
502	SUBSOIL/ B HORIZON. Mid orange brown silty clay with 5% sub-angular and rounded flint <50mm.	0.31-0.66
503	NATURAL GEOLOGY. Mid brownish orange clay with patches of reddish brown clay and pockets of flint grave and silt.	0.66-0.70 (+)

TRENCH 6

Length 25m Width 1.80m		
Context No.	Description	Depth (m)
601	TOPSOIL/PLOUGHSOIL. Mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional sub-angular and rounded flint <80mm. Rare chalk flecks.	0.0-0.30
602	SUBSOIL/ B HORIZON. Mid orange brown clay loam with occasional sub-angular and rounded flint	0.30-0.41
605	NATURAL GEOLOGY. Mid brown orange clay with occasional patches of rounded gravel <40mm	0.41-0.50 (+)



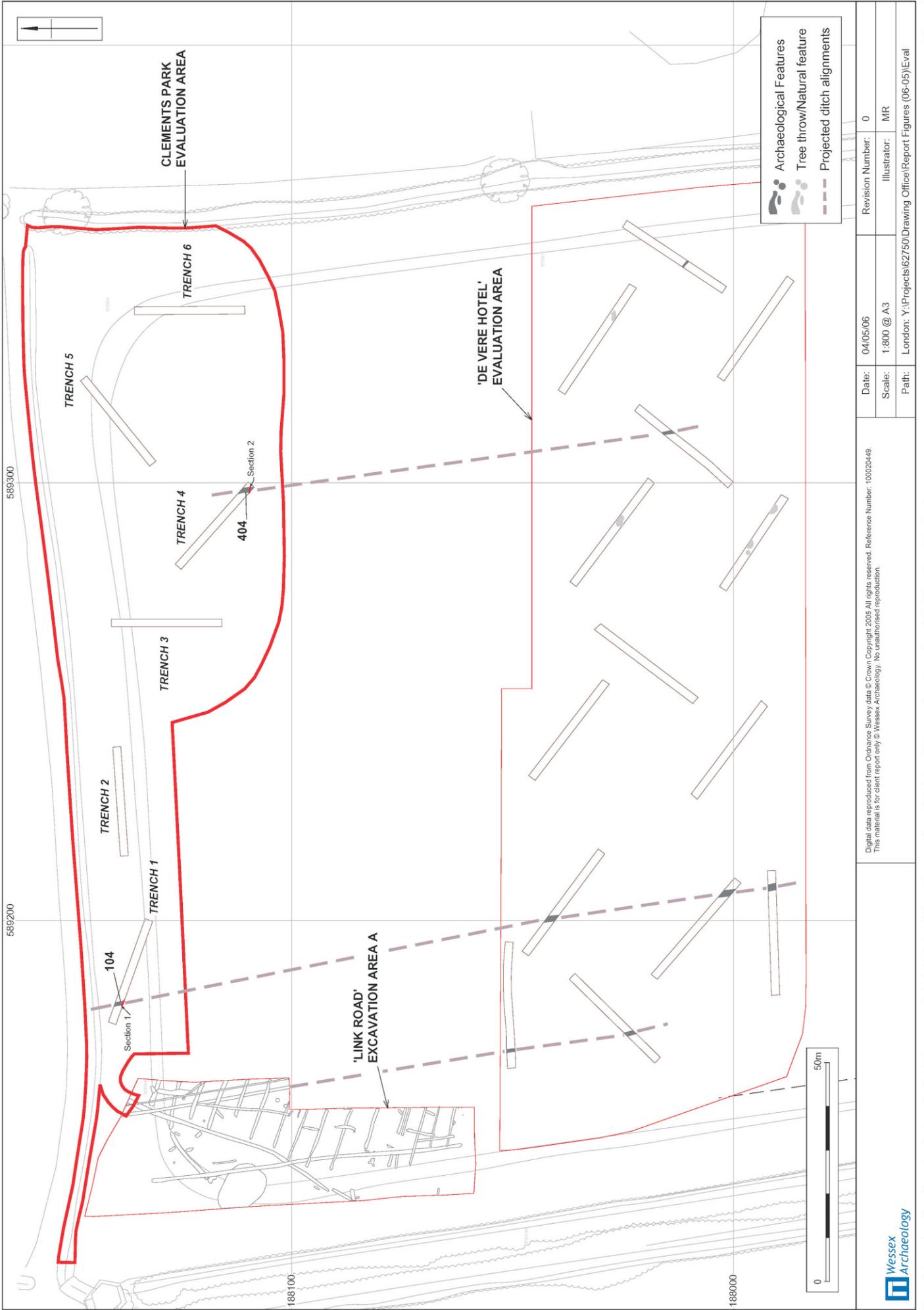
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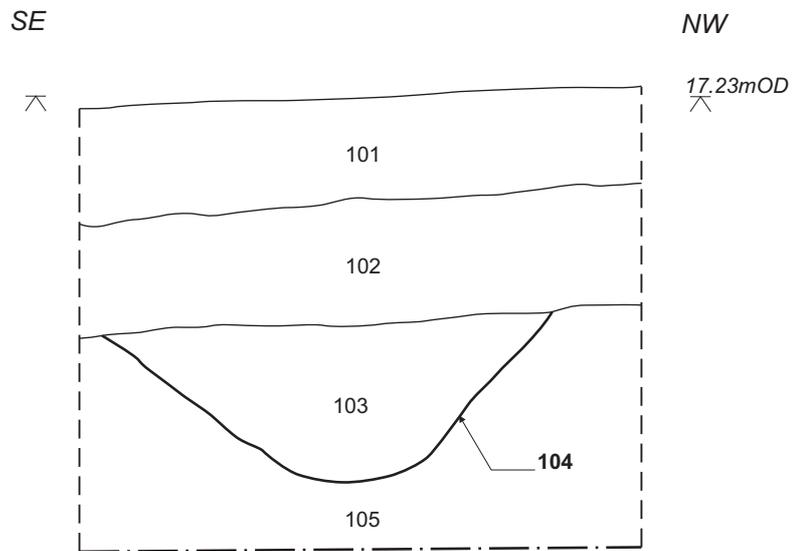
Site Location Map Showing Site in Relation to Previously Investigated Areas

Figure 1



Trench Location Plan Showing Archaeological Features and their Relationship to Features from 'Link Road' Excavation Area A and De Vere Hotel Evaluation

Trench 1 Section



Trench 4 Section



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