

Thorney Bay Road Canvey Island Essex



Archaeological Evaluation



Oxford Archaeology

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Thorney Bay Road Canvey Island, Essex

NGR TQ 790 827

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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SUMMARY

In January 2002, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Thorney Bay Road, Canvey Island, Essex (NGR TQ 790 827) on behalf of Wilcon Homes. The evaluation comprised 5 trenches that revealed natural clay sealed beneath the topsoil and some modern made ground associated with a recent storm drain. No archaeological remains were revealed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In January 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Thorney Bay Road, Canvey Island, Essex on behalf of Wilcon Homes. The work was in respect of a planning application for a residential development (Planning Application No. CPT/731/98/RES).

1.1.2 A Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation giving details of the project brief, was prepared by Rob Bourn of CgMs Consulting (CgMs 2001) and agreed with Ann Wyn, the Planning Archaeologist for the Heritage Conservation Branch of Essex County Council.

1.1.3 The development site is situated between Thorney Bay Road to the north and Thorneycreek Fleet to the south (Fig. 1) and is c 4.2 hectares in area.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The underlying geology of the site is London clay at c 2 m above OD. The site is situated in an area of scrub with no record of previous use, although the area is presumably reclaimed land.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation is based on details held in the Essex Heritage and Conservation Record, the results of which are summarised below. The site itself has produced no archaeological evidence. There are some known sites with archaeological remains adjacent to the development site.

1.3.2 A cluster of Roman burials has been recorded to the north-west of the site, and a Roman salt production site, in the form of a red hill, has been recorded to the east of the site.

1.3.3 A World War II pillbox stood in the centre of the site until it was demolished in 1970. The site also contains relict drainage channels, which may have been associated with previous land reclamation.

1.4 Acknowledgements

OA extends its thanks to Wilcon Homes and their site manager and the local residents for their assistance and interest.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area and determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains.
- 2.1.2 To establish the exigency for a mitigation strategy that would allow for the preservation of any archaeological remains *in situ* or by record.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.4 If significant archaeological remains were discovered then the OAU would signal to all parties that an archaeological find has been made, for which the resources allocated are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- 2.1.5 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of five trenches each measuring 40 m x c 2 m (Fig. 2), where site topography permitted. The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed strata investigated features to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All trenches were planned and sample sections drawn at scales of 1:20.
- 3.2.2 A full photographic record of the site was made using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 No finds were recovered.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 Due to the absence of archaeological features no environmental samples were taken.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 Section 5 includes individual context descriptions, with archaeological deposits and features described from earliest to latest. Context information is summarised in the context inventory (Appendix 1).

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The site consisted of a clay loam over a clayey silt natural to the west and a silty clay natural to the east. The site was not waterlogged at the time of excavation and no problems were encountered.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Trench 1

5.1.1 The trench (Fig. 3) was aligned east-west. A natural clay silt (102) was identified at 1.22 m OD or 0.25 m below ground level at the west end of the trench and at 1.44 m OD (0.19 m below ground level) to the east. A 0.12 m thick layer of clay loam topsoil (101) overlay the natural.

5.2 Trench 2

5.2.1 Trench 2 (Fig. 3) was aligned north-west/south-east. A natural clay silt (202) was encountered at 0.4 m OD (0.3 m below ground level) at the west end of the trench and at 0.59 m OD (0.5 m below ground level) at the east end. This was sealed by a topsoil (201) that was 0.12 m thick.

5.3 Trench 3

5.3.1 Trench 3 (Fig. 3) was orientated east-west. A natural clay silt (302) was seen at 1.29 m OD (0.2 m below ground level). Topsoil (301) consisting of clay loam to a depth of 0.07 m overlay the natural.

5.4 Trench 4

5.4.1 Trench 4 (Fig. 3) was aligned north-south and natural silty clay (402) was encountered at 1.33 m OD (0.5 m below ground level) at the north end of the trench and at 1.53 m OD (0.2 m below ground level) in the south. A disturbed natural layer (401) of reddish-brown silty clay with chalk flecks to a depth of 0.15 m overlay 402, and this in turn was sealed by the clay loam topsoil (400) that was 0.15 m thick.

5.5 Trench 5

- 5.5.1 Trench 5 (Fig. 3) was orientated north-south. Natural silty clay (502) was encountered at 0.64 m below ground level at the north end of the trench (1.25 m OD) and at 0.35 m below ground level towards the south. A clay loam topsoil (501) overlay 502, which was overlain by 500, a dumped modern rubble deposit comprising broken tarmac, stone and brick rubble to a depth of 0.2 m.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 The results obtained from the evaluation would appear reliable and not influenced by intrusive factors. There does not appear to be any large scale truncation within the area although the southern part of site appeared to have been landscaped around the site of a known modern storm drain. There is no evidence that the landscaping has destroyed any archaeological remains and no residual finds were seen.

6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 The evaluation did not reveal any archaeological remains, suggesting that the area may have always been undeveloped. The Roman activity known in the general vicinity has not extended into the area recently evaluated.
- 6.2.2 It is possible that historically the land may have had an agricultural use but there is little evidence for this. The site is low lying and presumably prone to water-logging. The disturbed natural in Trench 4 may be the result of ploughing, though this activity is undated.
- 6.2.3 No evidence of relict drainage channels was seen in any of the excavated trenches.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>No./wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	100	Trench	Trench notes	-		
	101	Layer	Topsoil	-		
	102	Layer	Natural	-		
2	200	Trench	Trench notes	-		
	201	Layer	Topsoil	-		
	202	Layer	Natural	-		
3	300	Trench	Trench notes	-		
	301	Layer	Topsoil	-		
	302	Layer	Natural	-		
4	400	Layer	Topsoil	-		
	401	Layer	Disturbed natural	-		
	402	Layer	Natural	-		
5	500	Layer	Dump deposit	-		
	501	Layer	Topsoil	-		
	502	Layer	Natural	-		

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

CgMs Consulting, 2001 *Thorney Bay Road, Canvey Island, Essex. Specification for an archaeological evaluation*

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Thorney Bay Road, Canvey Island, Essex

Site code: CITB02

Grid reference: NGR TQ 790827

Type of evaluation: Five 40 m long trenches.

Date and duration of project: 7/1/02-9/1/02

Area of site: 4.2ha

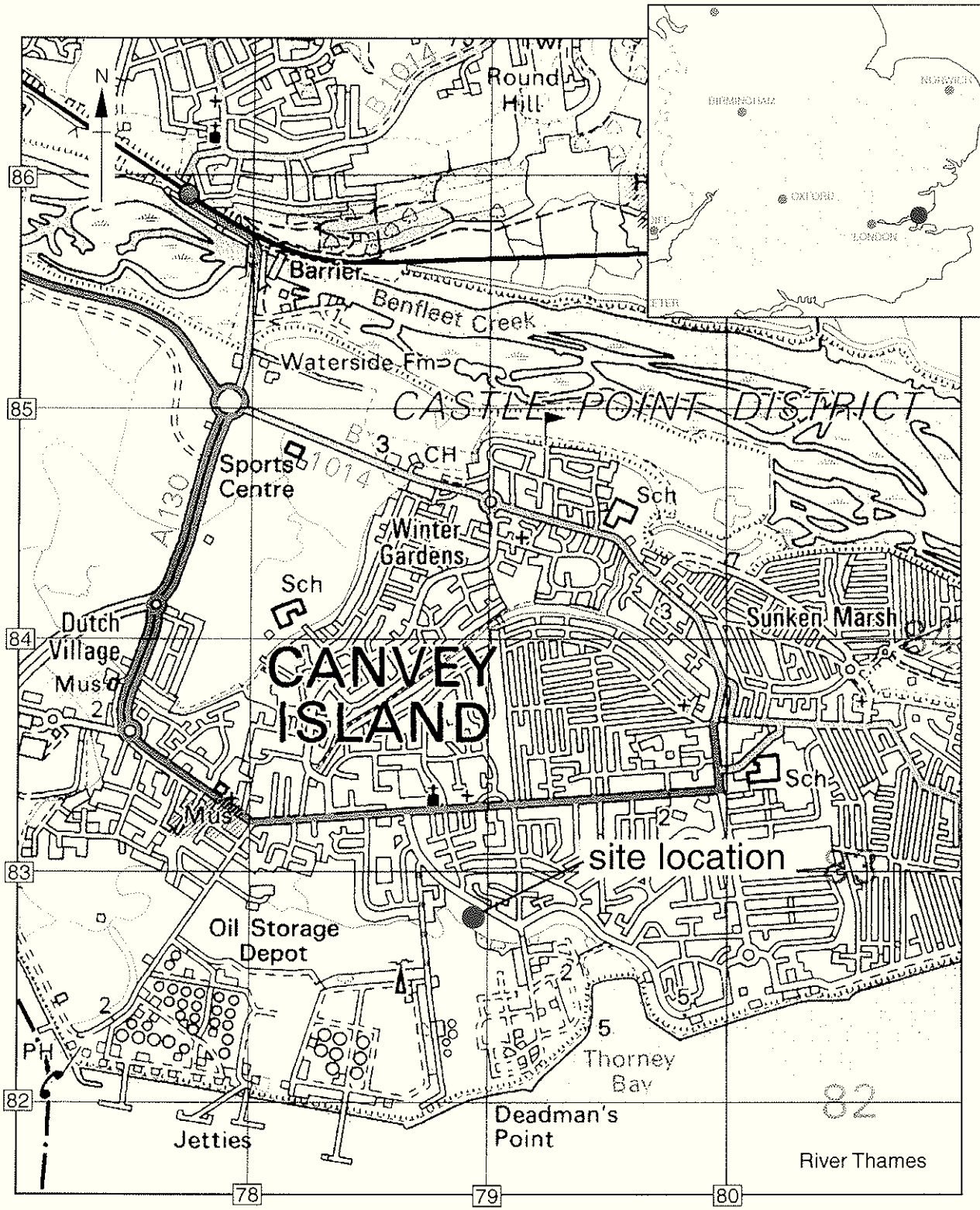
Summary of results: No archaeological remains were seen. Natural clay layers were sealed beneath the present topsoil and modern rubble deposits

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Southend Museum in due course, under the following accession number: SOUMS2002.A1

APPENDIX 4 TRENCH CO-ORDINATES

X = 578885.8775 Y = 182878.6623 Trench 1 North
X = 578916.6417 Y = 182851.8591 Trench 1 South
X = 578834.9398 Y = 182850.9435 Trench 2 North
X = 578855.2926 Y = 182816.5712 Trench 2 South
X = 578941.2093 Y = 182830.4678 Trench 3 North
X = 578980.4086 Y = 182814.9790 Trench 3 South
X = 579022.3634 Y = 182800.0799 Trench 4 North
X = 579008.5204 Y = 182770.7947 Trench 4 South
X = 579068.5119 Y = 182779.5867 Trench 5 North
X = 579067.2352 Y = 182737.1795 Trench 5 South

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Figure 1: Site Location

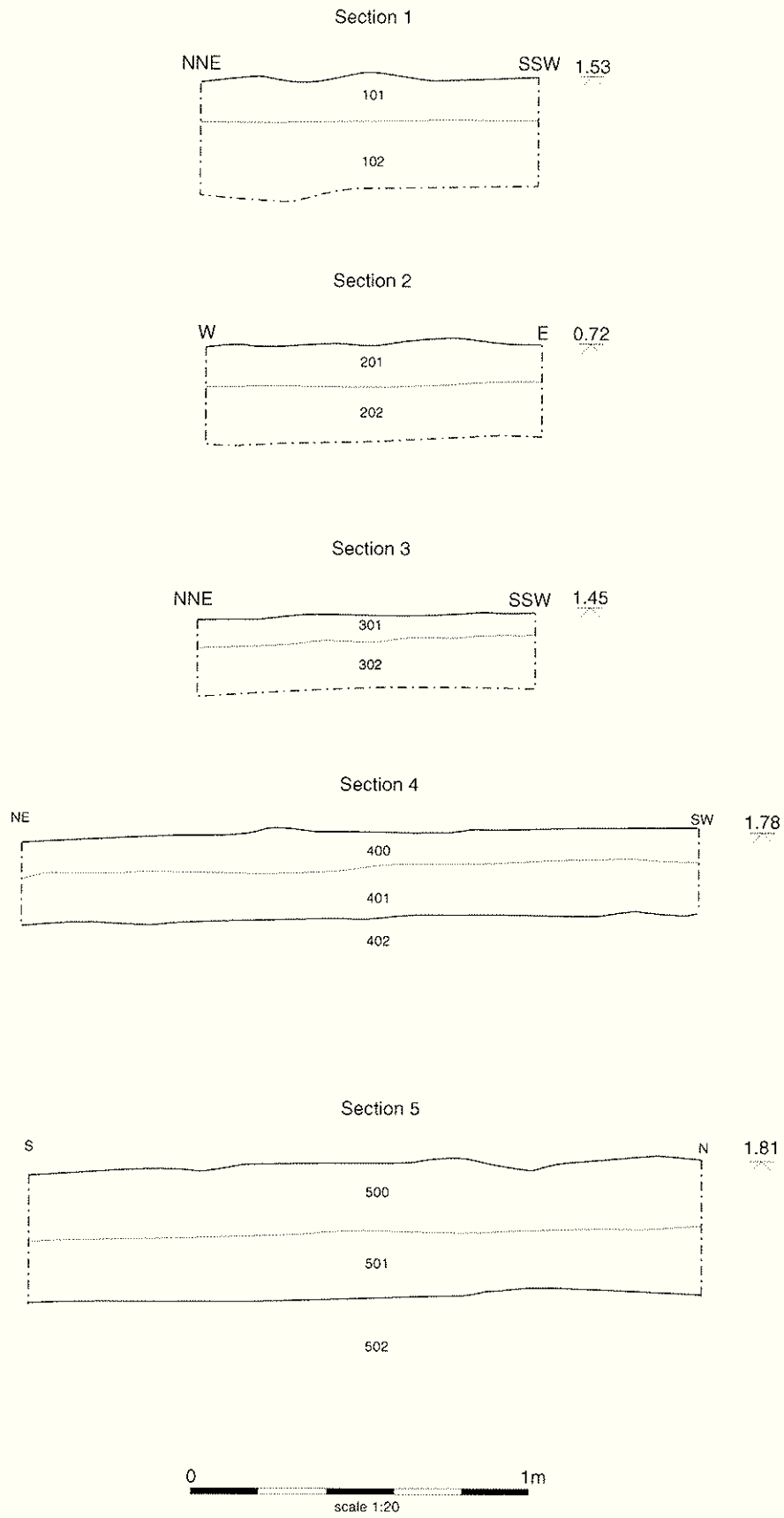


Figure 3: Sections 1 to 5



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