

An archaeological evaluation on Southchurch Park for Anglian Water, November 2007

Site address: land at the western edge of Southchurch Park, Victoria Road, Southend, Essex
Date of fieldwork: 5th-8th November 2007
NGR: TQ 8933 8505 (centre)
Project brief: brief from Ken Crowe, Southend Borough Council officer
Plan attached: Figs 1-4
Site code: SOUMS 2007.5
CAT report no: CAT Report 444
CAT project no: 07/9d

Archaeological background

Significant archaeological finds have been made to the north of the site location. These include water-logged deposits which, it has been suggested, were parts of a 'prehistoric lake village' discovered in the 20th century. The site is low-lying and close to the sea edge. It is thought to be within an area which had been marshy or covered by a mere in the later prehistoric (project brief). For this reason, the main aim of the evaluation was to check for the survival of environmental or other remains of the prehistoric or later periods.

The evaluation

The site (1,275m²) was the subject of a 3% evaluation in advance of a flood alleviation scheme for Anglian Water (Figs 1-2). A total of 39m² of trenching was excavated under archaeological supervision using a 360-degree mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Two trenches were excavated (T1-T2). T1 was 1.3m long and varied between 1.1 and 1.9m wide, and T2 was 1.1m long by 1.9m wide (Fig 2). The trenches were excavated through five horizons: a topsoil remnant (L1), subsoil (L2), dark brown silty clay (L3), medium orange/brown silty clay (L4), and light orange natural boulder clay (L5). The clayey silt topsoil contained sparse scraps of modern building material which did not exceed 30 cm in depth. The dark brown clay subsoil layer ranged in depth between 10 and 18 cm. In T1 this layer was densely filled with small stones, cement dust, sand and small brick fragments, but in T2 there was only the silty clay with modern brick fragments. L3 was the deepest of the layers, ranging from 20 and 62 cm in depth. L4 varied between 28 and 38 cm in depth and L5 was natural. L1-L5 yielded no finds but included a number of flecks of chalk and iron stone.

There were two features, one in each trench, and both were linear. F1 varied in depth between 20 and 40 cm. It included a handful of modern glazed pottery. Two worked flint scrapers were found in the lowest part of the fill (not from a section). F2 was 38 cm deep and contained no finds. The trenches were excavated to a depth of between 30 and 90 cm, at which point the silty clay layers ceased and the solid natural clay began. No archaeological material or features were observed during the course of the evaluation. The thin layer of topsoil and small amount of subsoil overlying natural geological material may indicate that the area had been subjected to some degree of reduction or levelling in the relatively recent past. This would account for the absence of archaeological and environmental material identified in the evaluation.

Finds:

1 bag of modern glazed pottery and two worked flint fragments.

Report author: Emma Spurgeon
Report date: November 2007

Distribution list:

Mr Ken Crowe of Southend Borough Council

Mr Ken Lo of Anglian Water

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust

12 Lexden Road,

Colchester,

Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051

(01206) 500124

email: archaeologists@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 14.11.07

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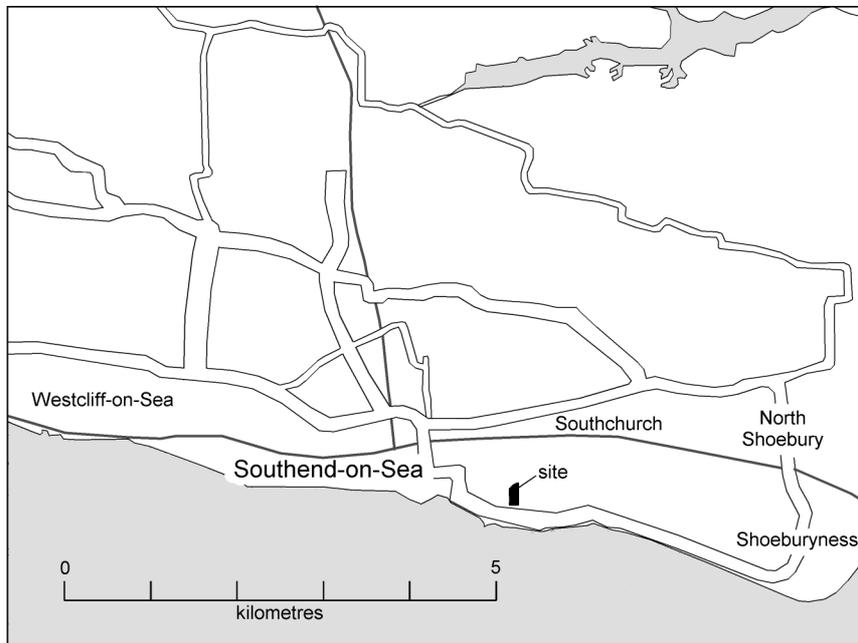


Fig 1 Site location.

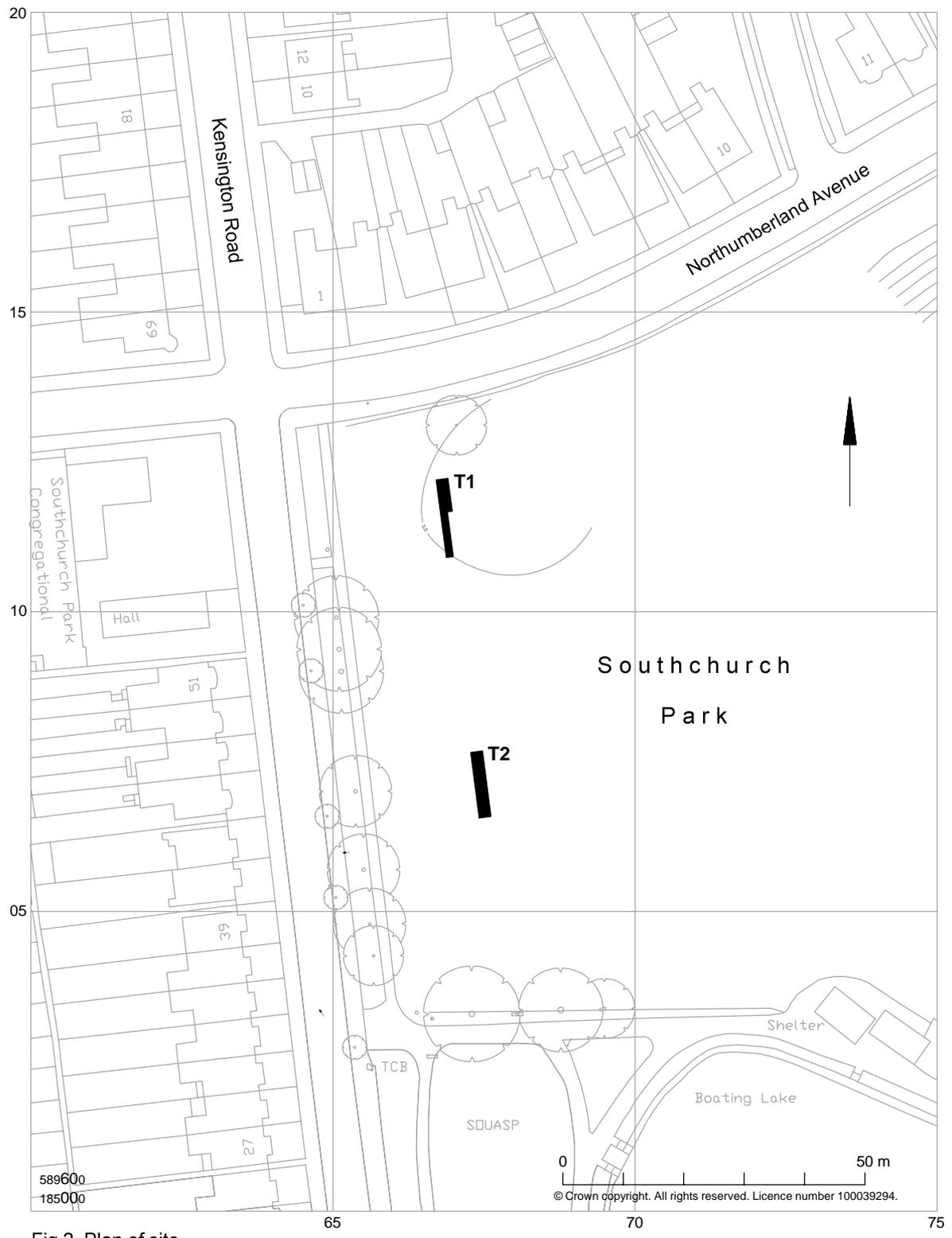


Fig 2 Plan of site.

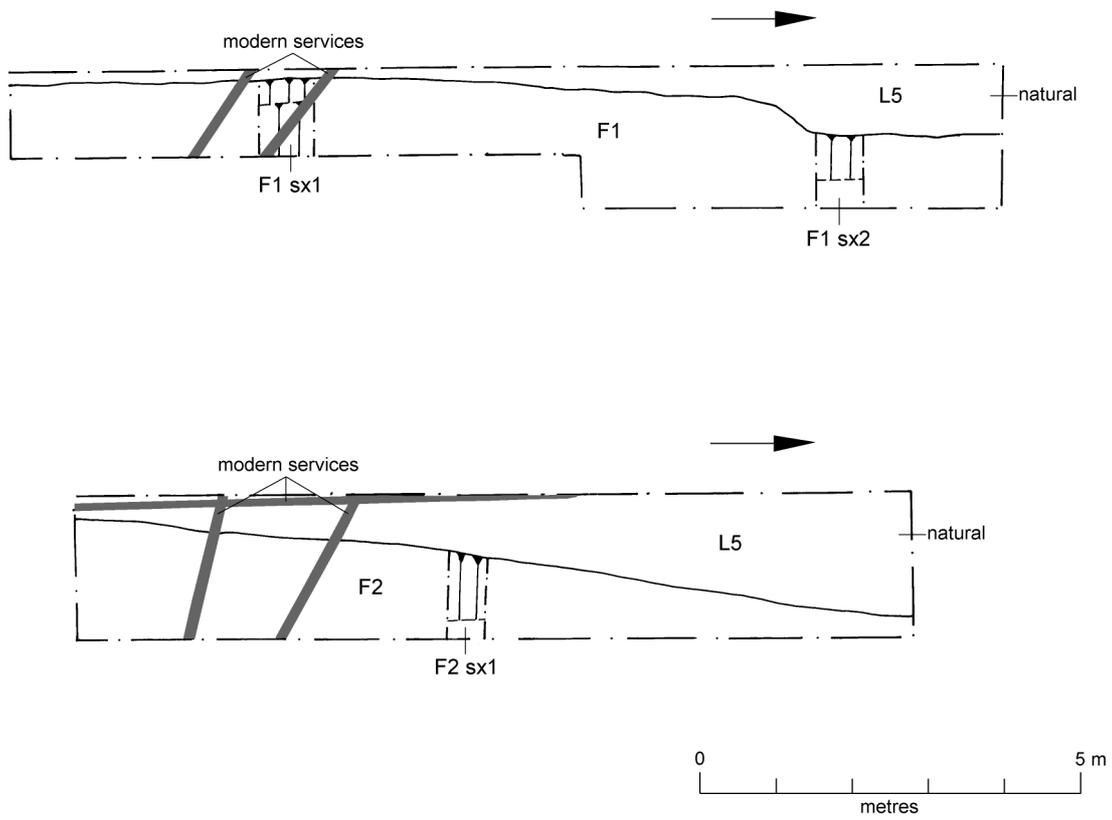
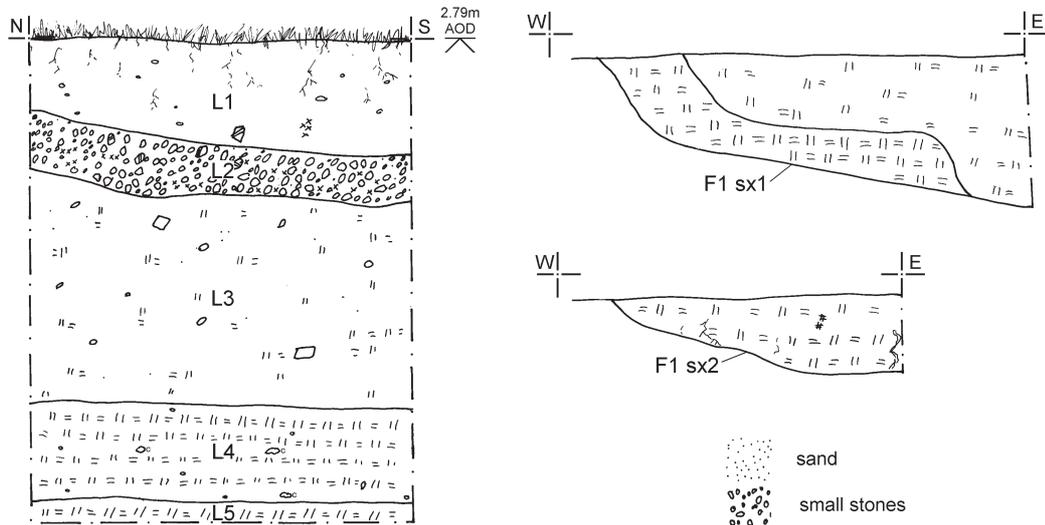
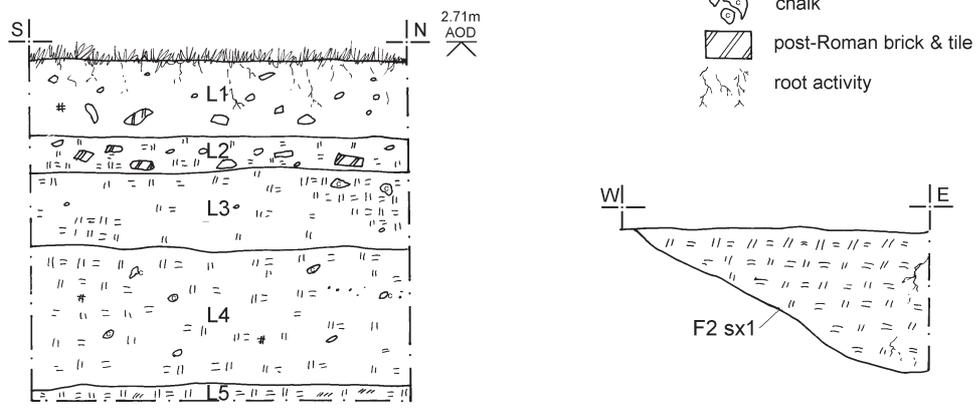


Fig 3 Trenches 1 and 2: plans.

Trench 1



Trench 2



-  sand
-  small stones
-  clay
-  charcoal
-  iron stone
-  chalk
-  post-Roman brick & tile
-  root activity

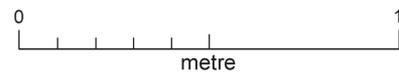


Fig 4 Trench 1 and 2: sections.