

An archaeological excavation at Cefn Coed and Foxburrow, Deerbank Road, Billericay, Essex

Site address: Cefn Coed and Foxburrow, Deerbank Road, Billericay, Essex
Date of fieldwork: 25th March 2008
NGR: TQ 6808 9527
CBC brief?: no: brief from Maria Medlycott, ECC HEM team officer
Plan attached?: yes (Fig 1)
CAT report no: CAT Report 466
CAT project no: 08/3a

Archaeological background

The proposed development lies within the former extent of Norsey Wood, a medieval deer park of national importance (Scheduled Ancient Monument no 29428). Medieval deer parks form an important part of the Essex historic environment, with Norsey Wood an exceptionally fine example, as reflected by its Scheduled Ancient Monument status. In addition to the medieval and post-medieval woodland, there is considerable evidence for prehistoric and Roman settlement both within and to the south of the wood (EHER nos 5304-5338). In particular, the proposed development lies on the line of 'The Deerbank' (EHER nos 5328-5329), a 5-6ft high bank, with an external ditch, which survived until 1895 and was designed to contain deer and cattle in the park. The place-name evidence suggests that the woodland may have been enclosed prior to 1066. The bank dates to some time between 1201 and 1323. The wood was also used for military exercises during the Second World War.

Brief report

In advance of the demolition of two existing semi-detached houses and their replacement by two detached houses, a 30 x 1.8m trench was excavated under archaeological supervision by a 360-degree mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. The trench commenced at the road frontage and extended into the property on a north-east to south-west alignment. The trench was excavated through three horizons: topsoil (L1), subsoil (L2), and natural sands and clay (L3). The sandy silt topsoil contained sparse fragments of modern building material and did not exceed 100mm in depth. The sandy silt subsoil layer ranged in thickness between 50mm in the north-east of the trench, which was on the brow of a hill, and 200mm further south-west. Modern post-holes and tree-throw holes, resulting from the removal of a hedge, were observed in the subsoil but no archaeological features were observed. The trench was excavated down to the orange natural sand and clay which overlies the London Clay. No archaeological material or features were observed during the course of the excavation, nor were any finds recovered. No evidence of the medieval bank or ditch that delimited Norsey Wood was observed in the trench.

Finds

No finds were retrieved.

References:

Medlycott, M, 2008 *Brief for archaeological excavation at Cefn Coed and Foxburrow, Deerbank Road, Billericay*

Report author: Adam Wightman

Report date: April 2008

Distribution list:

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Colchester Archaeological Trust

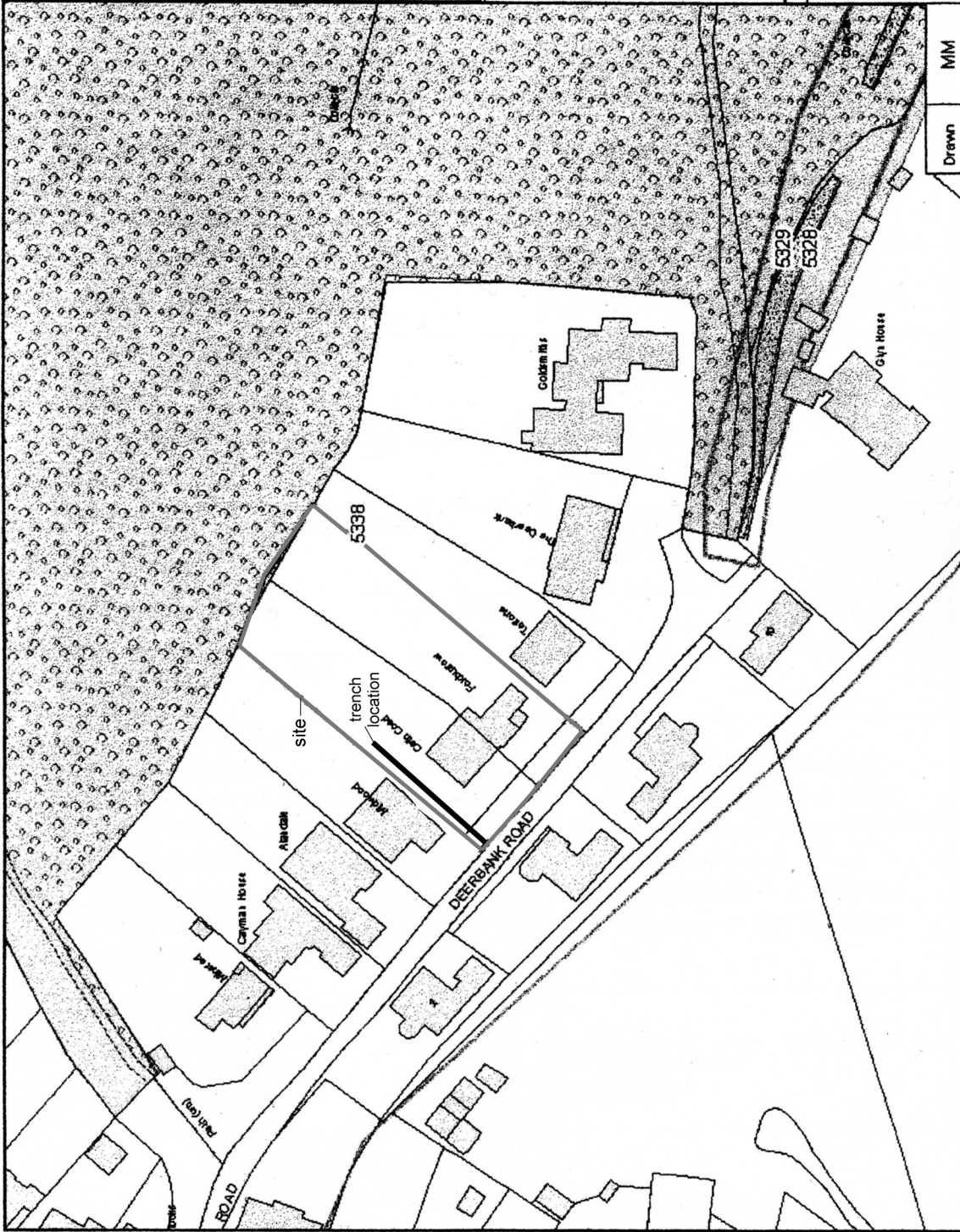
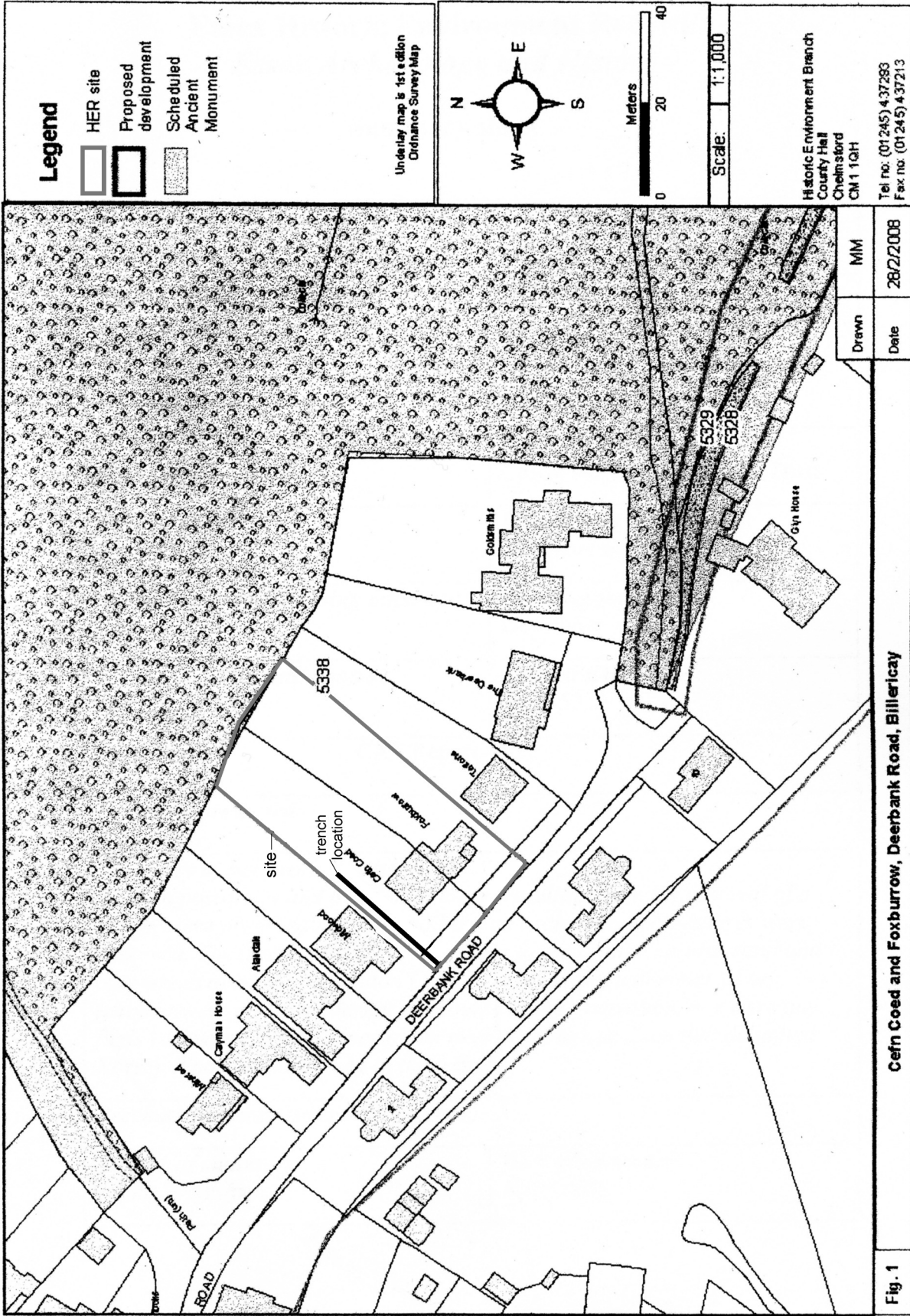
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**Essex Historic Environment Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

Site address: Cefn Coed and Foxburrow, Deerbank Road, Billericay, Essex	
Parish: St Mary the Virgin	District: Billericay
NGR: TQ 6808 9527	Site codes: HEM - BL17 CAT - 08/3a
Type of work: Excavation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 25th March 2008	Size of area investigated: 54 square metres
Location of finds/curating museum: N/A	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER nos: 5328-5329
Final report: CAT Report 466	
Periods represented: -	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Modern post-holes and tree-throw holes, resulting from the removal of a hedge, were observed in the subsoil but no archaeological features were observed. The trench was excavated down to the orange natural sand and clay which overlies the London Clay. No archaeological material or features were observed during the course of the excavation, nor were any finds recovered. No evidence of the medieval bank or ditch that delimited Norsey Wood was observed in the trench.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Adam Wightman	Date of summary: April 2008