LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES
CHELMSFORD DISTRICT

GeoEssex
Promoting the geology and landscape of Essex

ChG15 The Channels Mammoth, Little Waltham

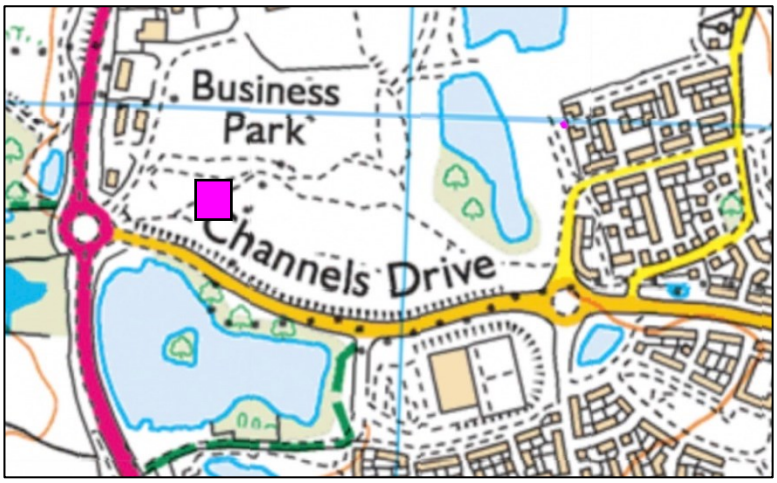
Site location: Above the roundabout from A131 onto Channels Drive.

Grid Reference: TL 7172 1087

Status: Publicly accessible

Summary of the geological interest:

The sculpture encapsulates the essence of the Ice Age deposits exploited by the gravel pits around which the Channels development is sited.



Site Assessment: *Local Geological Sites (LoGS) in Essex are assessed using criteria based on DEFRA guidance. This site has been assessed and qualifies under these criteria. An assessment form is used which asks key questions under four value categories: scientific, educational, historical and aesthetic.*

Scientific interest and site importance:

Broomfield gravel pit on which the Channels development is now situated, was formerly worked for the Kesgrave Sands and Gravels (Kesgrave Formation) which were laid down during the early Ice Age by the River Thames when it flowed through mid-Essex and out across what is now the southern North Sea to become a tributary of the Rhine. The Thames at that time was a wide unbounded braided river swollen by glacial melt waters from the northwest. Ice Age megafauna such as the steppe mammoth, the largest type of mammoth, twice the size of a woolly mammoth, would have lived on its banks.

The Channels mammoth with sculptor Michael Condron and GeoEssex members Ros & Ian Mercer Photo Mike Howgate September 2024.

The sculpture depicts a steppe mammoth with its distinctive spirally curved tusks picked out in stainless steel. Its cladding in Corten steel depicts the braided form of the river. Its eyes are polished vein quartz pebbles that were carried by the Thames. Filling its body as it rises from the landscape are gabions containing Essex White Ballast (the quarry term for the Kesgrave Formation) worked in the local pits. The sculpture thus encapsulates the link with the geological past.