

**16 HIGH STREET
GREAT BADDOW
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

APRIL 2006



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

**16 HIGH STREET
GREAT BADDOW
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

Prepared By: Trevor Ennis Position: Project Officer	Signature: Date:
Approved By: Patrick Allen Position: Project Manager	Signature: Date:

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Please contact the Archaeological Fieldwork Manager, at the
Field Archaeology Unit,
Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 3YQ.
fieldarch@essexcc.gov.uk
Tel: 01376 331470
Fax: 01376 331428

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Essex CM1 1QH

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16 HIGH STREET
GREAT BADDOW, ESSEX
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

Client: M & P Dunn Ltd

NGR: TL 72735 05045

Planning App. No.: CHL/1402/05

Site Code: GBHS 06

Project No.: 1591

Dates of Fieldwork: 9th to 14th March 2006

SUMMARY

An archaeological excavation was carried out on the site of a residential development at the rear of 16 High Street, Great Baddow.

Five shallow pits and two gullies were excavated. A fragment of Roman box-flue tile and a small piece of probable Roman brick attest to Roman activity in the vicinity. No other dateable finds were recovered. One small pit contained burnt animal bone and charcoal and represents the deliberately buried remains of a fire of probable recent origin.

The archaeological features were all located to the rear of the property and appear to be associated with back-yard or garden activity of post-medieval or later date. No evidence was found for the Saxon or medieval origins of Great Baddow.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological excavation carried out in advance of residential development at the rear of 16 High Street, Great Baddow. The fieldwork was undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of M and P Dunn Ltd, in accordance with an archaeological brief prepared by Pat Connell of the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (ECC HEM) Team (ECC HEM 2006) and the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by ECC FAU (2006). ECC HEM monitored the work on behalf of the local planning authority.

The site archive and finds will be deposited in Chelmsford Museum. A .pdf version of this report will be submitted to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS).

2.0 BACKGROUND (Fig. 1)

2.1 Topography and Geology

The development area was located at the rear of an existing building (no. 16) at the north end of Great Baddow High Street (TL 72735 05045). The building, a former doctor's surgery, comprised a large Victorian house with a modern extension to the west. With the exception of a tarmac entrance-drive most of the land to the rear of the buildings was gravelled and used as the surgery car park. This sloped downwards from west to east and appeared to reflect the natural contour of the ground. The tarmac drive and ground around the buildings was flatter and had been terraced.

The underlying drift geology comprised Quaternary glacial head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel.

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

Great Baddow has its origins in the late Saxon period or earlier. It is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 (Rumble 1983) as a manor held by Earl Algar before the Norman Conquest, and after the Conquest the chief tenant was Holy Trinity, Caen. Great Baddow was moderately prosperous, and in 1086 had 16 villagers, 3 freemen, a mill, and rights to woodland and pasture.

The site lies near the presumed core of the historic village, around Maldon Road, the High Street and Church Street. The layout of the village as shown on Chapman and Andre's map of 1777 probably reflects the original medieval layout. The church of St Mary dates to the 13th century and has Roman brick and tile in its fabric. Several listed historic buildings line the High Street which is a Conservation Area.

No archaeological investigations have yet been carried out in the historic centre of Great Baddow.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the archaeological work was to preserve by record (by excavation and creating a record) the archaeological deposits that will be destroyed by the development. The research objectives for the project were in line with those laid out in the regional research agenda (Brown and Glazebrook 2000). The main research objective for villages of known Saxon and medieval origin is "characterisation of settlement forms and functions" (Wade 2000, 25). As no previous archaeological work has been carried out, the first step in this process is to record a dated sequence on the site, to date the layout and development of this part of Great Baddow and to interpret the character of the activity taking place.

The specific objectives were to:

- To record any evidence of Saxon, medieval or post-medieval settlement on the site
- To record any evidence of buildings or other structures in relation to Saxon, medieval or post-medieval development of the site
- To record any evidence of activities taking place on site, in relation to domestic consumption, manufacturing and trade, both from site features and from objects and environmental evidence
- To record any evidence of settlement or activity earlier than the late Saxon period, especially any evidence of the Roman period

4.0 METHOD (Fig. 1)

A rectangular area measuring 12m by 19m was opened up, under the supervision of an archaeologist, by a 360° tracked mini-excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket. The excavation area was hand-cleaned and suspected archaeological features were investigated.

All work adhered to regional standards (Gurney 2003) and was carried out in accordance with IFA (Institute of Field Archaeologists) by-laws and guidelines. Standard ECC FAU excavation and recording methodologies were employed throughout. All finds were collected and one environmental sample was taken for finds retrieval.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS (Fig. 2)

The overburden consisted of approximately 0.3m of gravel and brick rubble of the former car park. This was removed directly onto natural clay and gravel deposits in the eastern half of the site and along its southern edge. Both of these areas had clearly been subject to truncation. The north-west quadrant of the site appeared not to have been subject to truncation. Here the total overburden was up to 0.8m thick and the car park had been laid upon surviving deposits of dark grey topsoil and brown subsoil.

Seven possible archaeological features were identified and excavated. All contained variations of clay silt or silty clay. The features were located in the apparent untruncated part of the site and were sealed beneath varying amounts of topsoil and subsoil. In addition, a few small shallow patches of disturbance were investigated but not recorded as they contained fragments of coal and modern brick.

Pit 2 was 0.2m deep and filled by sticky dark grey silty clay (1). This pit was fully excavated as it contained the only firm datable evidence recovered from the entire excavation, a single piece of abraded Roman box-flue tile originally derived from a hypocaust under-floor heating system. Pit 4 was also 0.2m deep but was larger in plan. It was filled by brownish grey clay silt (3) that contained two tiny slivers of modern brick (not retained) that were too small to reliably date the pit as they could have been present in the fill due to natural processes.

Gully 6 was 4m long, 0.14m deep, S-shaped in plan and filled with dark grey-brown clay silt (5). Scoop 8 was a shallow feature located at the western edge of the excavation area. It was filled by grey silt (7) and may be entirely of natural origin. Gully 10 was 2.8m long and

also shallow at only 0.06m deep. It was filled with sticky dark grey clay (9) very similar to the fill (1) of pit 2.

Pit 12 was 0.18m deep and roughly pear-shape in plan. It was filled by dark brown clay silt (11) and contained two pieces of slag and a small fragment of probable Roman brick. Pit 14 was irregular in plan and 0.09m deep. It was filled with charcoal-flecked brownish grey clay silt and contained three small pieces and several tiny fragments of baked clay, and occasional small fragments of burnt bone. This pit was fully excavated and the soil 100% sampled for further finds retrieval.

6.0 FINDS by Joyce Compton

Small groups of finds were recovered from a total of three contexts. All of the material has been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full details can be found in Appendix 2. The finds are described by feature below.

Pit 2

This produced a single piece of abraded Roman box-flue tile with combed 'keying' on one surface.

Pit 12

Two pieces of lightweight vesicular slag were recovered, along with a small piece of brick. The latter has one sanded surface and is also likely to be of Roman date, although the fragment is too small for certainty. The slag appears to be non-ferrous, and is probably fuel-ash slag fused with soil.

Pit 14

This feature contained undated material only, in the form of burnt bone and baked clay fragments, charcoal and a further piece of slag of similar, but not identical, composition to those in pit 12. Apart from three baked clay fragments, all of the material from this context was retrieved from the soil sample. The sample was processed by wet-sieving with flotation using a 0.5mm mesh and collecting the flotation fraction (flot) on a 0.5mm sieve. The residue was then dried and separated into coarse and fine fractions using 2mm and 4mm sieves. The material in the coarse fraction (>4mm) was sorted by eye and artefacts and environmental material extracted and bagged separately. The fine fraction was saved but not sorted. The

flot was also dried and bagged by context. Carbonised seeds were noted in the flot, along with modern roots and other small pieces of vegetation.

Insufficient burnt bone was collected to allow species identification. Most of the fragments are small and creamy white in colour. Several, however, are blue-grey, indicating a lower degree of heat, and there are at least three fragments which are completely unburnt. One or two of the larger pieces appear to be too robust to be human. On balance, the bone is likely to derive from food animals and the feature probably represents an ash-pit.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

None of the archaeological features could be positively dated. The presence of one piece of Roman box-flue tile is not enough to conclusively prove that pit 2 was a Roman feature, as this may be a residual inclusion. However, its presence, along with the probable Roman brick fragment from pit 12, does attest to Roman activity in the vicinity as also evidenced by the re-used Roman brick and tile in the fabric of the medieval church. Contemporary settlement of the land surrounding Roman Chelmsford (*Caesaromagus*) is to be expected, particularly along the line of the Roman roads leading to and from Chelmsford, one of which is believed to pass through Great Baddow on its way to Heybridge (Wickenden 1996, fig. 12).

The archaeological features were all fairly shallow (0.2m or less in depth) and located over 35m from the High Street frontage. Their position towards the rear of the property suggests that they are most likely associated with back-yard or garden activity and probably post-medieval or later in date. The deposition of the remains of a fire (i.e. burnt animal bone and charcoal) in a small pit (14) is consistent with this theory.

8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

No archaeological evidence for the Saxon or medieval origins of Great Baddow was revealed during the excavation. Any medieval buildings would most probably have fronted onto the High Street and may therefore have been destroyed when the Victorian house was constructed.

The lack of archaeological features in the east of the excavation area appears to be a result of modern truncation through terracing and levelling of the site. This truncation is believed to continue beneath the tarmac drive and the modern extension at the rear of the house.

The finds were recovered in groups of too small a size to benefit from further work. In addition, the finds from pit 14 are undated, reducing the significance of further study. All of the finds should be retained, except for the fine fraction residues.

A brief summary of the results of this excavation will be published in Essex Archaeology and History.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Essex CC Field Archaeology Unit would like to thank M & P Dunn Ltd for commissioning and funding the archaeological work, and especially Paul Dunn for his help in liaison on site and for providing a mechanical excavator. The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken by the author with the assistance of C. Down of the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit. The project was managed by P. Allen of ECC FAU and monitored by P. Connell of the ECC Historic Environment Management Team.

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Rumble, A. (ed.)	1983	<i>Domesday Book</i> . Phillimore, Chichester
Wade, K.	2000	'Anglo-Saxon and Medieval' in Brown & Glazebrook 2000, 23-6
Wickenden, N.P.	1996	'The Roman Towns of Essex' in Bedwin, O. (ed); <i>The Archaeology of Essex: Proceedings of the 1993 Writtle Conference</i> , 76-94. ECC Chelmsford

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DATA

All dimensions given in metres

Context	Type	Description	Period
01	Fill of 2	Dark grey silty clay	Roman?
02	Pit	Irregular, 0.7m x 0.55m x 0.2m deep	Roman?
03	Fill of 4	Brownish grey clay silt	Undated
04	Pit	Sub-circular, 1.8m x 1.5m x 0.2m deep	Undated
05	Fill of 6	Dark grey brown clay silt	Undated
06	Gully	S-shaped, 4m x 0.95m x 0.14m deep	Undated
07	Fill of 8	Grey clay silt	Undated
08	Scoop	Sub-rectangular, 0.7m+ x 0.6m x 0.07m deep	Undated
09	Fill of 10	Dark grey silty clay	Undated
10	Gully	Linear, 2.8m x 0.55m x 0.06m deep	Undated
11	Fill of 12	Dark brown clay silt	Roman?
12	Pit	Pear-shaped, 1.3m x 1m x 0.18m deep	Roman?
13	Fill of 14	Brownish grey clay silt	Undated
14	Pit	Irregular, 1.25m x 0.62m x 0.09m deep	Undated

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

All weights given in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
1	2	1	228	Box-flue tile fragment, abraded	Roman
11	12	2	34	Slag	-
		1	4	Brick fragment	?Roman
13	14	-	14	Burnt bone fragments from sample 1	-
		1	14	Slag/melted glass from sample 1	-
		-	18	Charcoal from sample 1	-
		16	52	Baked clay fragments, inc 13/12g from sample 1	-

APPENDIX 3: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

SITE NAME: 16 High Street, Great Baddow, Essex
SITE CODE: GBHS 06

Index to Archive:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Design Brief
- 1.2 Written Scheme of Investigation

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Client Report
- 2.2 Finds Reports

3. Site Archive

- 3.1 Context Record Register
- 3.2 Context Records (1 to 14)
- 3.3 Plan Register
- 3.4 Section Register
- 3.5 1 x A4 plan sheets
- 3.6 1 x A4 section sheets
- 3.7 Levels Register
- 3.8 Sample Register
- 3.9 Trench Location Plan
- 3.10 Photographic Registers
- 3.11 Site Photographic Record (1 Set of Colour and Black & White prints)

Not in File

One large plan.

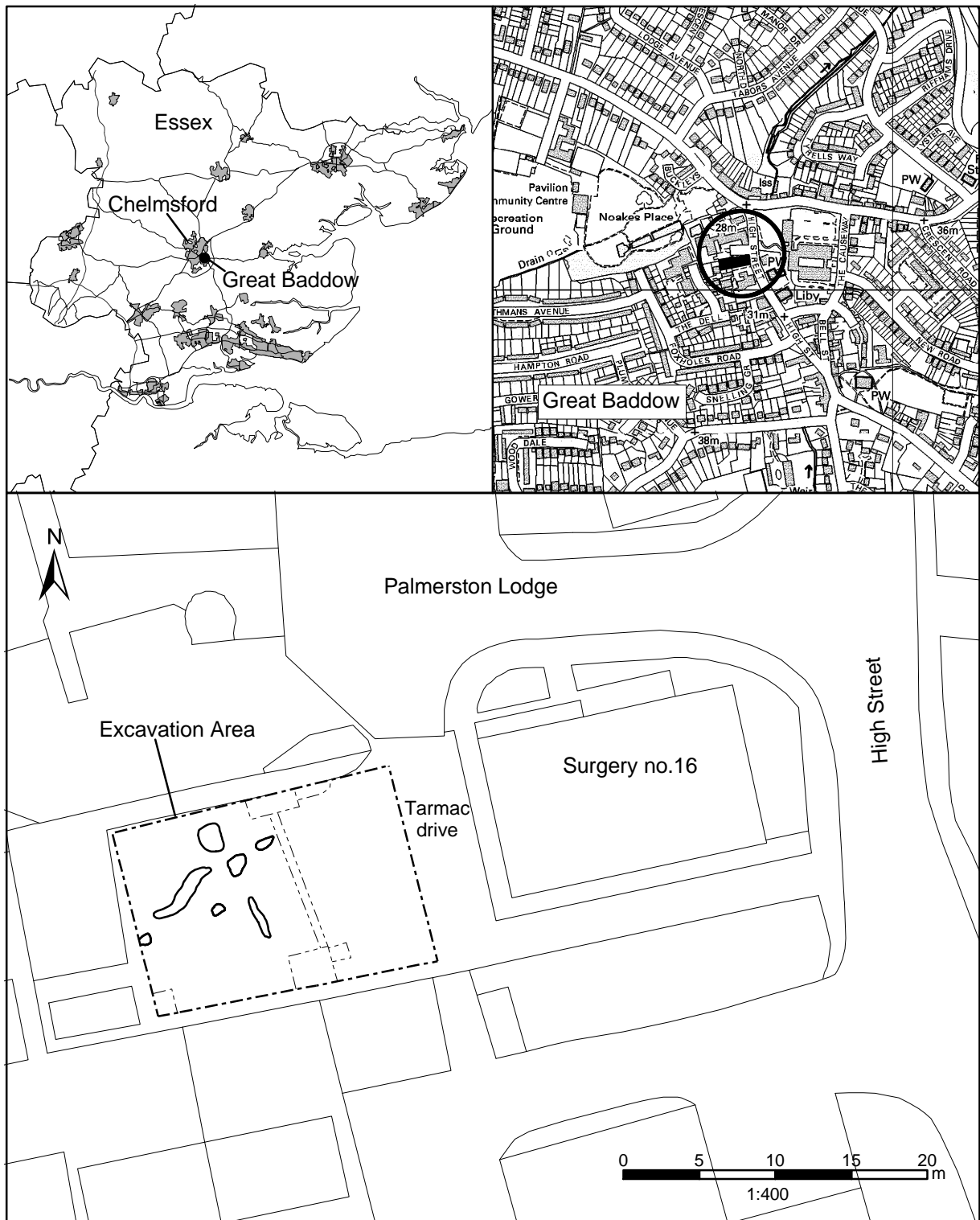
Finds

The finds occupy less than a box.

APPENDIX 5: EHER SUMMARY SHEET

EHER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: 16 High Street, Great Baddow, Essex	
Parish: Great Baddow	District: Chelmsford
NGR: TL 72735 05045	Site Code: GBHS 06
Type of Work: Archaeological Excavation	Site Director/Group: T. Ennis ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: 9th to 14th March 2006	Size of Area Investigated: 228 sq m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Chelmsford	Funding source: M & P Dunn Ltd
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.: 4809-13, 4851, 36058
Final Report: 2006	
Periods Represented: ?Roman, post-medieval	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>An archaeological excavation was carried out on the site of a residential development at the rear of 16 High Street, Great Baddow.</p> <p>Five shallow pits and two gullies were excavated; none were positively dated. One small pit contained a fragment of Roman box-flue tile and a second, a small piece of possibly Roman brick. Both finds are likely to be residual but do attest to Roman activity in the vicinity. No other dateable finds were recovered. A third pit, of probable recent origin, contained the deliberately buried remains of a fire, including a small amount of burnt animal bone and charcoal.</p> <p>The features were all located to the rear of the property and are probably associated with back-yard or garden activity of post-medieval or later date. No evidence pertaining to the Saxon and medieval origins of Great Baddow was encountered.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:	
Author of Summary: T. Ennis	Date of Summary: April 2006



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Fig.1. Location plan

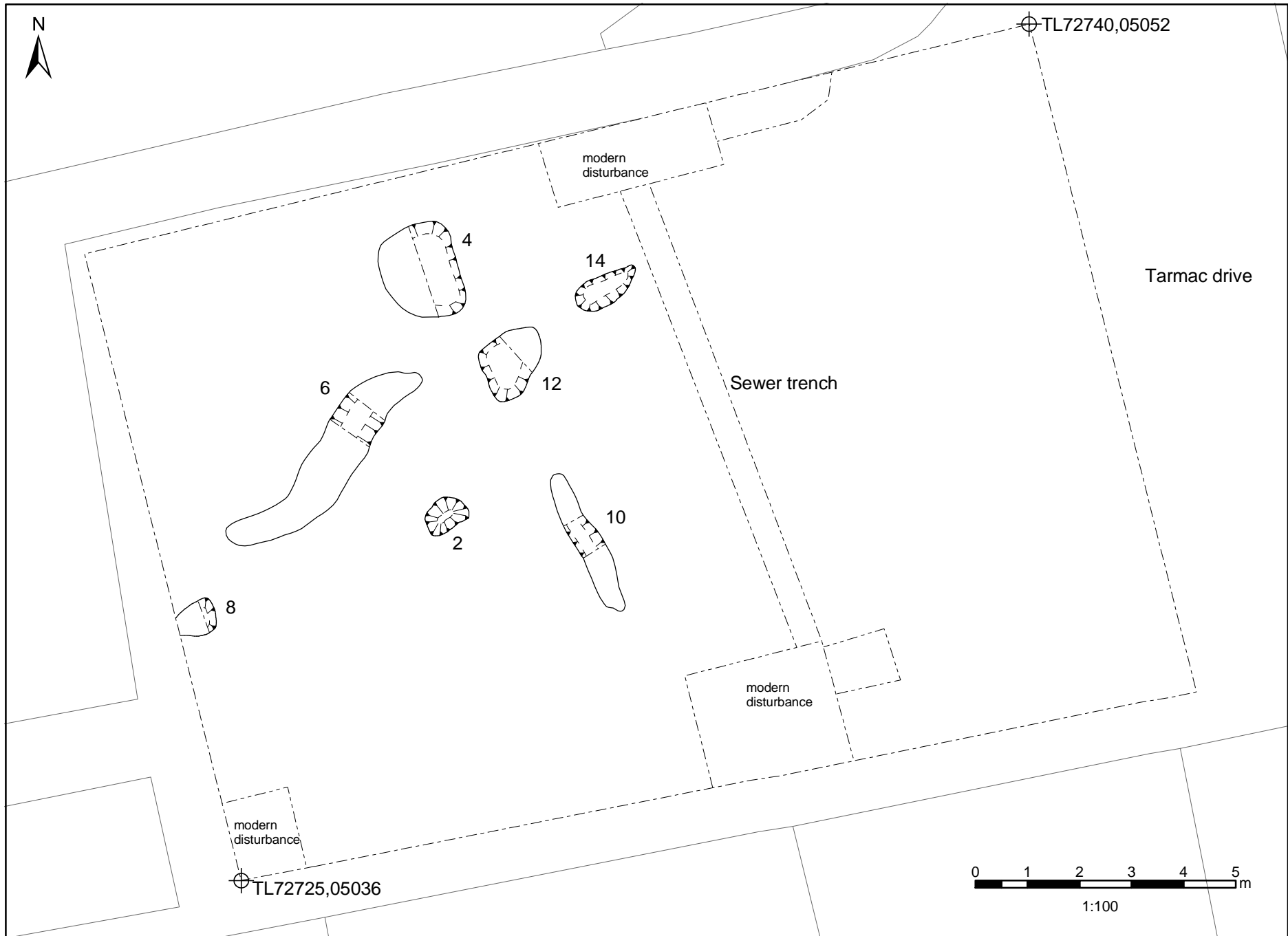


Fig.2. Detail of excavation area