

**LAND AT GLYN-COLIN
HIGH STREET
NEWPORT
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

JULY 2009

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CONTENTS

	Page No.
SUMMARY	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	3
2.0 BACKGROUND	3
2.1 Site Description	
2.2 Archaeology and History	
3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	4
3.1 Aims	
3.2 Objectives	
4.0 METHOD	5
5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS	5
6.0 FINDS	7
6.1 Introduction	
6.2 Pottery	
6.3 Brick and tile	
6.4 Glass	
6.5 Animal bone	
6.6 Shell	
6.7 Comments on the assemblage	
7.0 DISCUSSION	8
8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS	9
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	10
BIBLIOGRAPHY	11
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX 1 Context Data	
APPENDIX 2 Finds Data	
APPENDIX 3 Pottery Data	
APPENDIX 4 Contents of Archive	
APPENDIX 5 EHER Summary	
FIGURES	
Fig. 1 Location plan	
Fig. 2 Evaluation trench section and plan	

LAND AT GLYN-COLIN

HIGH STREET

NEWPORT

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Client: Ian Abrams Chartered Architect, for Dennis Carr

NGR: TL 5221 3409

Site Code: NP16

Oasis No.: essexcou1- 57422

Dates of Fieldwork: 23rd-24th March 2009

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation by trial trench was carried out on land at Glyn-Colin, High Street, Newport in advance of residential development. A single trench was excavated within the footprint of the proposed new building. The ground sloped gently downwards from west to east.

A few sherds of residual medieval pottery were recovered, but no features to indicate that this part of Newport was developed in the medieval period. No remains of Prehistoric, Roman or Saxon date were identified.

The earliest excavated feature was a cess pit dating to the post-medieval period that may be associated with the near-by 17th century Brown House. A north-south aligned ditch may also date to this period. In the 19th century a flint garden wall was built upon the by now infilled ditch. The land to the west of the wall was built-up and levelled while to the east there was a drop to an area of terraced garden. Subsequent landscaping has removed the wall and returned the land to a gentle slope.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching undertaken at Glyn-Colin, High Street, Newport, Essex, in advance of a small residential development. The fieldwork was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of Ian Abrams Chartered Architect, for Dennis Carr.

In November 2008 a planning application (UTT/1662/08 and UTT/1663/08/LB) was submitted to Uttlesford District Council for the demolition and replacement with a new house of a single residential property at the above address. Because the site was deemed to lie in an area of archaeological potential the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team (ECC HEM) recommended that a full archaeological condition be placed on planning permission.

Subsequently an archaeological evaluation was carried out in accordance with an archaeological design brief prepared by ECC HEM (2009) and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ECC FAU (2009). The evaluation would potentially lead to area excavation if significant archaeological deposits/features were identified that could not be preserved *in situ*.

The site archive will be deposited in Saffron Walden Museum. A digital version of this report will be submitted, along with a project summary, to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>).

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site Description

The site is located within the historic core of Newport, immediately off the High Street (TL 5221 3409). The site was occupied by a small bungalow which was demolished prior to the archaeological fieldwork.. The remainder of the site consisted of lawned garden which gently sloped downwards from west to east.

The underlying geology consisted of head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel overlying bedrock chalk.

2.2 Archaeology and History

The following archaeological and historical background incorporates material from the ECC HEM brief, the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) and the Historic Towns Project Assessment Report for Newport (Medlycott 1998).

Place-name and documentary sources suggest that Newport began as a royal manor, with a market. There are also references to a castle, although its precise location is uncertain. The market was lost in 1141, when it was moved to Saffron Walden, resulting in a decline in the town's fortunes; however, it was restored again in the late 13th century, when the town is also mentioned as having borough status. The economy was based upon the market and the wool trade, with the town suffering a further period of decline in the late medieval and early post-medieval period due to the growth of Saffron Walden. To date, there is very little evidence for any prehistoric or Roman activity in the area occupied by the town itself, although scatters of flint have been recovered from the surrounding area and extensive Roman settlement is known to the north and west of the town. 'The Brown House' located to the immediate south-west of the development area is grade II listed and dates from the 17th century (EHER 25514).

3.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

The initial aim of the archaeological work was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving remains. This will provide information (excavation strategy and sampling policy) and will inform the necessity for any further work, based on recommendations from the HEM monitoring officer.

Specific research aims were to determine:

- The date and nature of the town's origins.
- The presence and nature of any Roman or earlier remains pre-dating the establishment of the town.
- The presence and nature of any Saxon, medieval or post-medieval structures, plot boundaries, or any evidence of backland craft/industrial activity.
- Evidence of dating, trade, distribution networks and socio-economic factors from the artefactual assemblages.

3.2 Objectives

A major research priority in the regional research agenda is to establish the origins, date character, and development of medieval towns, especially those like Newport that are documented in the Domesday Book and may have Saxon origins. A further research priority is to establish the date and character of any settlement or landscape elements pre-dating the town.

In the event that significant discoveries were made the report would seek to identify appropriate research objectives for any future work, in line with those laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000).

4.0 METHOD

A single evaluation trench was excavated under archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket. The trench measured 12.6m by 1.8m wide and was located within the east-west arm of the new building footprint, mainly to the east of the position of the demolished bungalow.

The trench was cleaned and potential features were hand-excavated. Standard ECC FAU excavation, artefact collection and recording methodologies were employed throughout. ECC FAU is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the Institute of Field of Archaeologists (IFA) and all work was carried out in accordance with IFA by-laws and guidelines (IFA 1997; 2001) and complied with Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003).

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS (Fig. 2)

Dark greyish brown clay silt topsoil overlay a series of relatively recent deposits, which were recorded in section, and two cut features in the base of the trench. The overburden varied in depth from 1.3m in the west of the trench to 0.6m in the east. The underlying natural comprised of clay and clay with gravel, and varied in colour from orange-brown to yellow.

Perhaps the earliest feature was a sub-rectangular, steep-sided pit (4) cut into the natural clay, 2.1m long and in excess of 0.44m deep (the top of the water table). It was filled with

greenish grey clay silt (3) that became darker with depth, particularly in the west of the excavated segment. Finds consisted of animal bone and a fragment of post-medieval brick. The pit was sealed by a thin deposit of greyish brown gravel (2) containing occasional fragments of post-medieval tile which appeared to form an interface, rather than a compacted surface, between the base of the overlying subsoil and the natural clay. The gravel had slumped slightly into the top of pit 4 forming a slight hollow which was infilled with brownish grey silt (1). Finds from this deposit included two sherds of residual medieval pottery and two sherds of post-medieval pottery, the most recent of which dated to the later 18th century.

Located just over 2m to the west of pit 4 was a north-south aligned linear feature (9). This was only minimally investigated as it clearly continued beneath the safe depth of excavation and its fill (8) produced three sherds of comparatively modern pottery. Seemingly built upon this feature was a north-south aligned wall (19) constructed from sub-angular flints with occasional brick fragments in a buff mortar matrix. The wall was 0.42m wide and over 1.4m high and had been truncated at the current ground level. To the south, a brick structure built into the wall and constructed from both frogged and unfrogged bricks was partly exposed.

With the exception of the most recent topsoil, a differing sequence of deposits was recorded on either side of the wall. Of these, only deposit 16 produced any datable finds, although some deposits contained occasional small fragments of peg-tile that were noted but not collected.

The earliest deposit to the west of the wall was an undated layer of dark grey clay silt (10) that might be a remnant of former topsoil. Above this was a thicker, more mixed, mid to dark grey deposit (11) containing occasional small fragments of peg-tile. This was overlain by two gravelly silt deposits (12 and 13) and a layer of mid brown clay (14). Stratigraphically later was a 0.64m thick deposit of mid greyish brown clay silt (16) that contained three sherds of post-medieval pottery and was possibly a later fill of feature 9. At a higher level deposit 16 merged with a more mixed grey-brown clay silt containing occasional small pieces/flecks of brick and tile. Latest in the sequence was a mixed layer of light brown to mid grey clay silt with a band of chalk flecks at its base (17) and a layer of brown grit (18) of probable modern origin.

Overlying deposit 1 to the east of the wall was a layer of mid to dark greyish brown clay silt, (5) containing occasional tile fragments, that may again be a remnant of former topsoil. A darker grey patch, 0.45m wide and only noticed in section, might mark the position of a small pit cutting this deposit. Above this was a 0.34m thick layer of very dark grey clay silt (6) that was clearly a fairly recent former garden soil and which had a thin (1cm) intermittent band of purple ash above it. At the top of the sequence, below the current topsoil, was a thick, mixed mid to dark grey clay silt (7) containing occasional flecks of brick, chalk and yellow mortar.

6.0 FINDS REPORT by Joyce Compton

6.1 Introduction

Small groups of finds were recovered from five contexts. All of the finds have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context; full quantification details can be found in Appendix 2. The finds are described by category below.

6.2 Pottery by Helen Walker

A small amount of pottery, ten sherds, weighing 128g, was excavated from three contexts. Of most interest are two sherds of early medieval ware from layer 1; one, from the shoulder of a ?cooking pot, is tempered with sparse chalk as well as typical coarse sand inclusions, and no doubt reflects the chalky boulder clay geology of this part of Essex. The second, a body sherd, has no added sand-tempering but shows sparse grog and chalk inclusions. This is an unusual variant, but comparable fabrics have been found at other sites in north-west Essex, for example at Stansted Airport (Walker 2004, 408, fabric 13i) and at Saffron Walden (Cunningham 1982, fabric group I). Early medieval ware is a long-lived type and both sherds date between the 10th and early 13th centuries.

A few sherds of post-medieval pottery are present; potentially the earliest is a fragment of plain red earthenware (from layer 1) showing a reduced 'skin' on the external surface, typical of the late 15th and 16th centuries, although a later date cannot be ruled out. There are also sherds of glazed post-medieval red earthenware and black-glazed ware (from layer 16) spanning the 17th to 19th centuries. A small sherd of Staffordshire-type white salt-glazed stoneware (from ditch 9) shows the typical orange-peel texture of this ware and may date to the later 18th century. The remaining pottery is modern and is not described further (although listed by ware in Appendix 3).

6.3 Brick and tile

Twelve pieces of post-medieval roof tile were recorded, along with a single small brick fragment. The roof tiles are largely undiagnostic, although several from layer 1 are overfired. Apart from a collection of animal bones (see below), the brick fragment was the only find in pit 4.

6.4 Glass

A single sherd of dark green glass was recovered from layer 16. The sherd is flat, but uneven, and one surface is flecked with impurities. This is unlikely to be vessel glass and probably derives from a post-medieval crown window-pane.

6.5 Animal bone

Three contexts produced animal bone, amounting to fourteen pieces, weighing 334g. The bone was scanned for condition and completeness, and the skeletal elements were identified using Schmid (1972). Overall the bone is in good condition, although most from the fill of pit 4, from which most of the bone was excavated, is coated with a green deposit. The assemblage is too small for firm conclusions to be drawn, although the main food animals (cattle, pig, sheep/goat) are all present. The assemblage probably represents domestic food waste, and it is likely that pit 4 was originally dug for the disposal of organic waste.

6.6 Shell

A single, small, oyster shell fragment was recorded in layer 1.

6.7 Comments on the assemblage

Most of the datable finds are post-medieval or modern. Of interest are the medieval sherds in layer 1, although residual. Further work is not required on any of the material. The glass has been discarded on health and safety grounds and the oyster shell fragment has also been discarded. All of the remaining finds should be retained, although further discard of recent material could take place at the archiving stage.

7.0 DISCUSSION

The earliest feature present would appear to be pit 4 which was dated to the post-medieval period by a single fragment of brick. The greenish colour of the fill suggests that the pit may have been used for the disposal of organic waste (cess) and this would account for the green deposit adhering to most of the recovered animal bone.

It is likely that the flint wall 19 was a garden boundary demarcating an area of terracing of the naturally sloping ground. Layer 6, a distinct dark cultivated garden soil to the west of the wall was clearly the top of a former land surface respecting the wall, whilst layer 7 above would appear to have resulted from recent landscaping.

The relationship between wall 19, the surrounding deposits to the west and underlying linear feature 9 is not entirely clear. No foundation cut for the wall was observed in section suggesting that most of the deposits on either side built up after its construction. In particular, deposits 15, 16 and 17, may have been deliberately used to level up the ground on the western side of the wall. However, it is feasible, though perhaps less likely, that a vertical foundation cut was made through deposits 16 and 17 from the east and the wall was then built hard up against this face.

Either linear feature 9 is a backfilled underlying ditch on which wall 19 has been constructed or it is part of the construction cut for the wall. Given that the western edge of feature 9 is located 1m from the wall, the ditch interpretation is perhaps more likely. The ditch would appear to have been infilled in the 19th century but was probably originally dug in the post-medieval period. A boundary broadly in this position is shown on the 1840 Newport Tithe map (ERO D/CT 252B) although it is not clear if it depicts a wall or drainage ditch. All but the most recent editions of the Ordnance Survey appear to show a wall in this position.

8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

No features dating to the Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or medieval periods were identified, although a few sherds of residual medieval pottery were recovered. However, these do little more than suggest activity in the vicinity and are not unexpected in a historic town with medieval origins. The lack of specific remains might suggest that this part of the High Street was not developed in the medieval period.

The earliest activity appears to date to the post-medieval period. If pit 4 was a cess pit it implies near-by occupation and might suggest that there may have been a dwelling at the front of the property at this time. However, it is more likely to be associated with the adjacent Brown House, which dates from the 17th century and may have originally sat in a much larger plot that included the current development area.

The flint wall probably dates to the 19th century and is clearly associated with contemporary and later landscaping activity within an area of garden. Overall, few archaeological remains were identified and the development is unlikely to have a significant impact upon the archaeological record. Any remains that are present are likely to be preserved by the depth of overburden, which was in excess of 1m for much of the length of the trench.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Essex CC FAU thanks Ian Abrams for commissioning the work on behalf of Dennis Carr. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Trevor Ennis of the ECC Field Archaeology Unit. Finds were processed by Phil McMichael and analysed by Joyce Compton and Helen Walker. The report was prepared by Trevor Ennis with illustrations by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Richard Havis of ECC HEM.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DATA

All dimensions given in metres

Context	Type	Description	Period
1	Layer	Mid brownish grey clay silt	Post-med
2	Layer	Greyish brown gravel, occasional tile	Post-med
3	Fill of 4	Mid-dark greenish grey clay silt	Post-med
4	Pit	Sub-rectangular, 2.10m x 0.75m+ x 0.44m+ deep	Post-med
5	Layer	Mid-dark greyish brown clay silt	Modern
6	Layer	Very dark grey clay silt	Modern
7	Layer	Mixed mid-dark grey clay silt	Modern
8	Fill of 9	Dark grey clay silt	Mod/Post-med
9	Ditch	N/S aligned, 1.8m+ x 1.9m x 0.12m+ deep	Mod/Post-med
10	Layer	Dark grey clay silt	Undated
11	Layer	Mixed mid-dark grey clay silt	Undated
12	Layer	Mid brown gravelly clay	Undated
13	Layer	Mid grey clay silt	Undated
14	Layer	Mid brown clay silt	Undated
15	Layer	Mixed grey/brown clay silt	Modern
16	Layer	Mid greyish brown clay silt	Modern
17	Layer	Mixed light brown – mid grey clay silt	Modern
18	Layer	Mid brown grit	Modern
19	Wall	N/S aligned, med-large flints in buff mortar, occasional brick	Modern

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

All weights in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
1	Layer	4	78	Animal bone; cattle phalanx; sheep/goat metapodial, distal end; rib and long bone section, medium-sized mammal	-
		1	4	Shell; oyster fragment (Discarded)	-
		6	424	Roof tile fragments, two with peg holes, one overfired	Post med.
		2	12	Pottery; base and body sherds	Post med.
		2	10	Pottery; body sherds	Medieval
2	Layer	3	314	Roof tile fragments, one with peg hole	Post med.
3	4	9	248	Animal bone; pelvis and radius, sheep/goat; ulna hinge, cattle and pig; rib section, vertebra fragment and radius, proximal end, large mammal; vertebra, unfused, medium-sized mammal, plus epiphysis; most coated with green deposit	-
		1	14	Brick fragment	Post med.
8	9	3	222	Roof tile fragments	Post med.
		3	24	Pottery; body sherds	Post med.
16	Layer	1	8	Animal bone; fragment	-
		1	20	Glass; dark green flat but uneven sherd, ?window pane (Discarded)	Post med.
		3	82	Pottery; base and body sherds	Post med/ modern

APPENDIX 3: POTTERY DATA

All weights in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
1	Layer	1	7	Early medieval chalky ware, from shoulder of vessel, probably a cooking pot	10th to 13th C
		1	2	Early Medieval Ware body sherd tempered with sparse grog and chalk inclusions but no added sand tempering	10th to 13th C
		1	12	Body sherd, unglazed red earthenware with reduced external 'skin', probably Tudor but could be later	later 15th to 16th centuries or later
		1	2	Staffs-type white salt-glazed stoneware base sherd	later 18th C
8	9	2	23	Nottingham/Derby stoneware: joining body sherds from hollowware	18th to 20th C
		1	1	Modern white earthenware, very abraded	19th to 20th C
16	Layer	1	45	Post-Medieval Red Earthenware internally glazed sherd, mortar encrusted	17th to 19th C
		1	10	Black-glazed ware body sherd, perhaps from a jar with an all over glossy black glaze	17th to 19th C
		1	26	Modern white earthenware fragment from carinated jug or bowl with recessed base showing pale blue oriental transfer-print on the external surface	19th to 20th C
		10	128		

APPENDIX 4: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

SITE NAME: Land at Glyn-Colin, High Street, Newport, Essex

SITE CODE: NP 16

Index to Archive:

- 1.** Introduction
 - 1.1 ECC HEM Brief
 - 1.2 ECC FAU WSI

- 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 19)
 - 3.3 Plan Register
 - 3.4 Section Register
 - 3.5 Levels Register
 - 3.6 Trench location plan
 - 3.7 Photographic Registers
 - 3.8 Site Photographic Record (1 set of Black & White prints, 1 Set of digital images on disk)
 - 3.9 Miscellaneous notes/plans

Not in File

1 large plan/section sheet

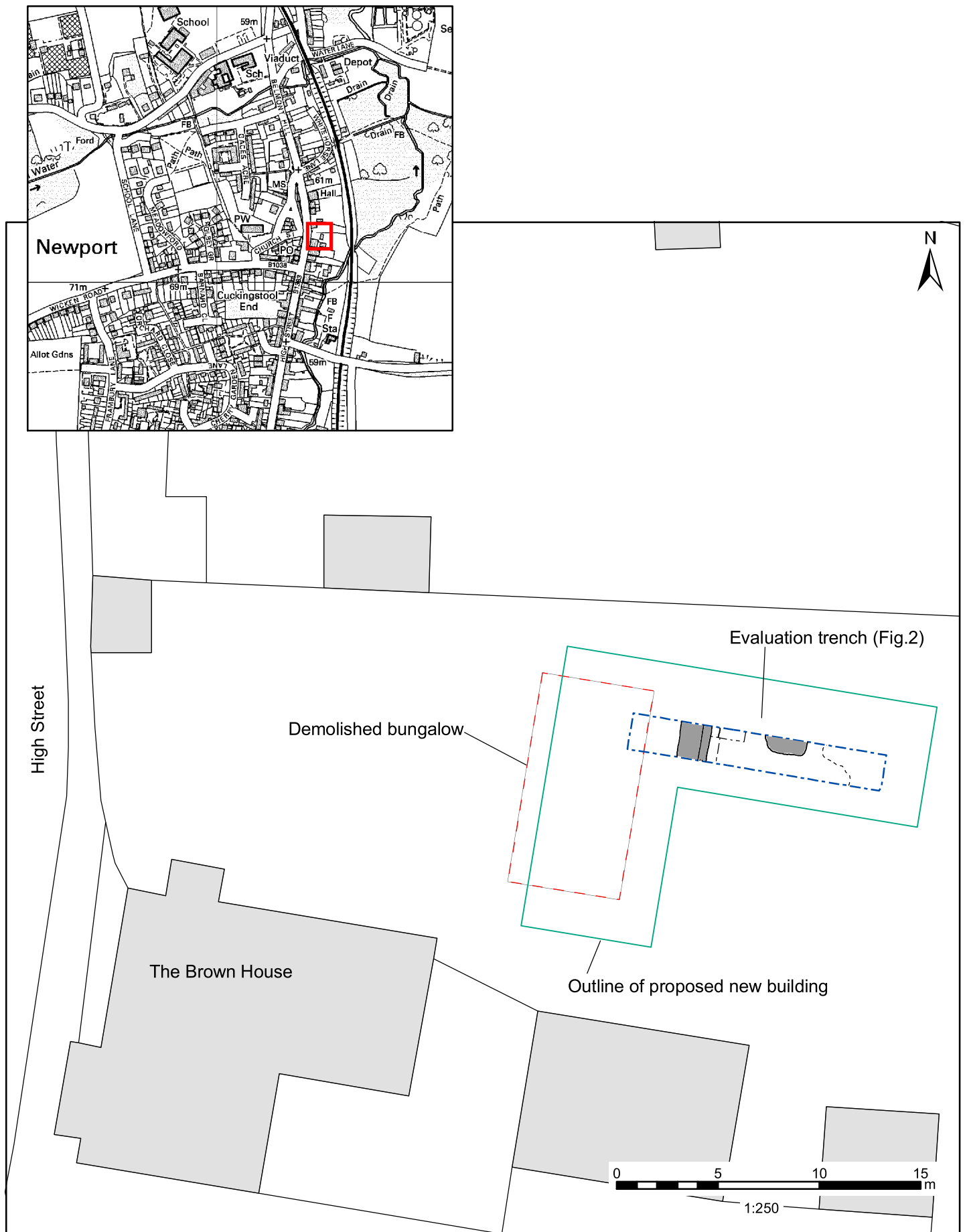
Finds

The finds occupy less than one box.

APPENDIX 5: EHER SUMMARY

ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY

Site name/Address: Land at Glyn-Colin, High Street, Newport, Essex	
Parishes: Newport	District: Uttlesford
NGR: TL 5221 3409	Site Code: NP16
Type of Work: Archaeological Evaluation	Site Director/Group: T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Dates of Work: 23rd-24th March 2009	Size of Area Investigated: 22 sq m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Saffron Walden	Funding source: Client
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.: 25514
Final Report: EAH summary	Oasis No.: essexcou1- 57422
Periods Represented: Post-medieval, Undated	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>An archaeological evaluation by trial trench was carried out on land at Glyn-Colin, High Street, Newport in advance of residential development. A single trench was excavated within the footprint of the proposed new building. The ground sloped gently downwards from west to east.</p> <p>A few sherds of residual medieval pottery were recovered, but no features to indicate that this part of Newport was developed in the medieval period. No remains of Prehistoric, Roman or Saxon date were identified.</p> <p>The earliest excavated feature was a cess pit dating to the post-medieval period that may be associated with the near-by 17th century Brown House. A north-south aligned ditch may also date to this period. In the 19th century a flint garden wall was built upon the by now infilled ditch. The land to the west of the wall was built-up and levelled while to the east there was a drop to an area of terraced garden. Subsequent landscaping has removed the wall and returned the land to a gentle slope.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:	
Author of Summary: T. Ennis	Date of Summary: July 2009



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Fig.1. Location plan

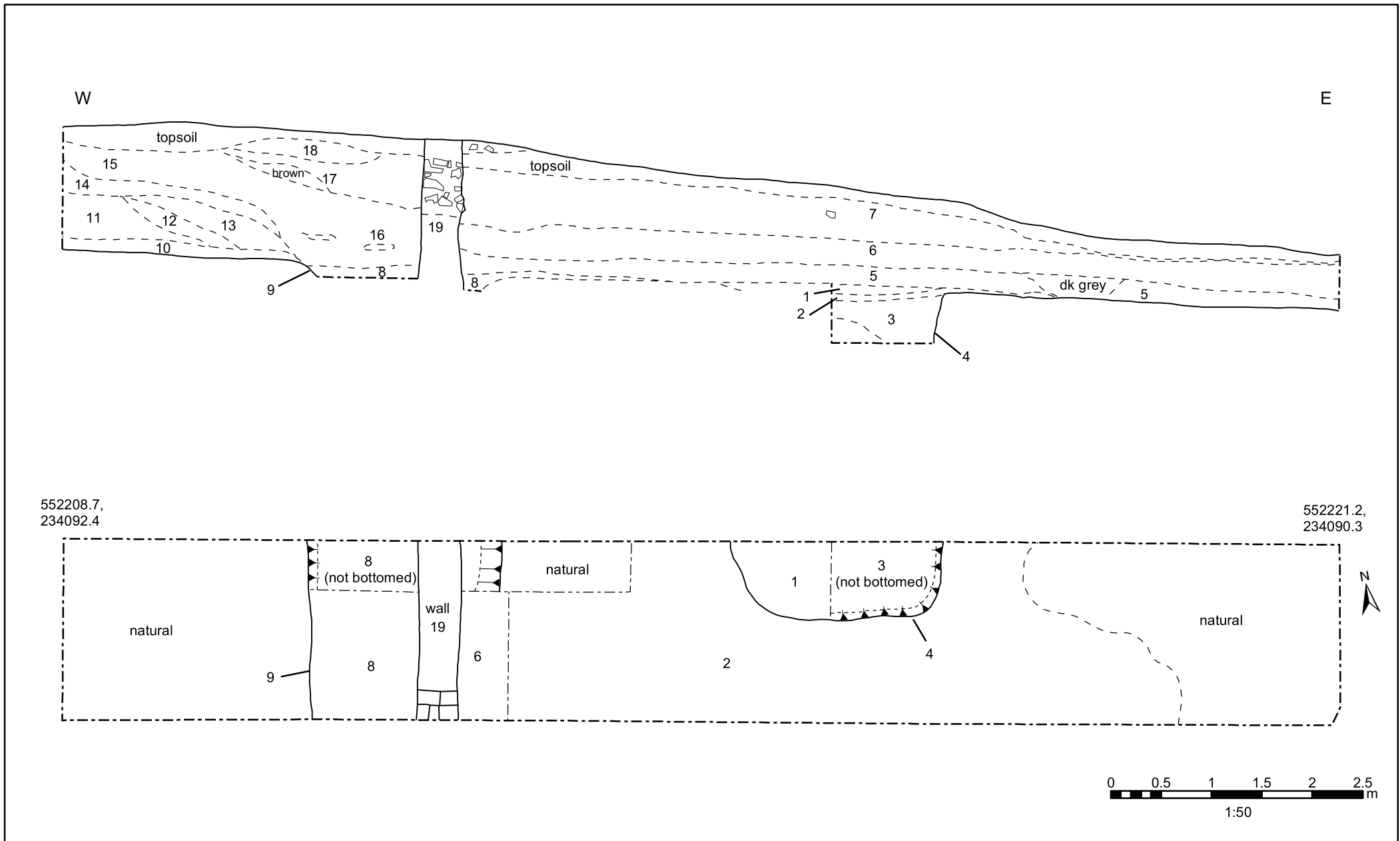


Fig.2. Evaluation trench section and plan