

**COLCHESTER INSTITUTE SITE
MUNDON ROAD
MALDON
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

MAY 2009

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COLCHESTER INSTITUTE SITE
MUNDON ROAD
MALDON
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Client: The Colchester Institute

NGR: TL 8566 0600

Site Code: MD 42

Planning Ref: pre-application

Oasis No.: essexcou1- 59251

Date of Fieldwork: 20th – 23rd April 2009

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out at the proposed Colchester Institute Site, Mundon Road, Maldon, Essex in advance of the submission of a planning application for the construction of a Vocational Training Centre. Seven trenches were excavated across the c. 1.4 hectare site. Three further trenches were originally planned for the south of the site but were not excavated due to the presence of live services.

The proposed development area was located within the southern half of an existing playing field on the eastern side of Mundon Road, close to the south-eastern limit of the modern town and over 0.5 km from Maldon's historic High Street and Hythe area. It also lies 0.5km to the west of the designated battlefield site of the battle of Maldon, fought between the English and the Danes in 991.

A ditch of probable 19th or 20th century date was identified along with a similarly dated brick and flint hardcore deposit perhaps used to firm up a boggy area or part of an area of hard standing. Although the site was located close to the presumed site of a Roman road no remains of that date were identified, nor any remains associated with Saxon or medieval activities on the fringe of the historic town or the designated battlefield.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching carried out at the Colchester Institute Site, Mundon Road, Maldon in advance of the proposed construction of a Vocational Training Centre. The evaluation was undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of GSS Architects acting for the Colchester Institute.

The archaeological evaluation was carried out as a result of preliminary consultation before submission of a planning application by the Colchester Institute for development on the southern half of a playing field site. Since the site lies within an area with the potential to contain archaeological remains the Essex CC Historic Environment Management team (ECC HEM) recommended that a full archaeological condition be placed on any future planning consent and issued a Design Brief for archaeological fieldwork (ECC HEM 2009). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with this Design Brief and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ECC FAU (2009).

Fieldwork was initially to consist of a trial trench evaluation, but if significant remains were found mitigation measures could include extension of the trenches, redesign of the proposed development or area excavation.

Copies of this report will be supplied to GSS Architects (with copies for the Colchester Institute and the local planning authority), ECC HEM and the Essex Historic Environment Record. 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>). The site archive and copies of the report will be deposited at Braintree Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and Geology (Fig. 1)

The proposed development site is located in the southern half of a grassed playing field on the east side of Mundon Road (TL 8566 0600), close to the south-eastern edge of modern-day Maldon (Fig. 1). The site measures c. 110 by 130m (c. 1.4 hectares) and is broadly level

at around 6m OD. The site is separated from the northern part of the field by a row of bollards and a second line of bollards separates the site from Primrose Walk and housing to the east. The majority of the western side of the site, along Mindon Road, is bounded by a fence, apart from a bollarded gap for public access, and the southern side by a deep ditch with adjacent trees and shrubs.

The surface geology is mixed glacial clay and gravel. The ditch running along the site's southern boundary drains into an area of reclaimed coastal marshland to the east of the site that is liable to flooding. The area to the east is shown as saltmarsh on the 3rd edition Ordnance Survey as recently as 1924.

2.2 Archaeology and History (Fig. 1)

This archaeological and historical background is based on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held by Essex County Council at County Hall, Chelmsford.

The site is located over 0.5 km to the south of Maldon's historic core. Maldon is of Middle Saxon origin and developed into an important port and town in the Late Saxon and medieval periods. The closest area of the known historic settlement is The Hythe, at the south-eastern end of Maldon High Street, a harbour area on the Blackwater estuary. The site lies 0.5km to the west of the designated battlefield site of the Battle of Maldon, fought between the English and the Danes in 991, opposite Northey Island.

Mundon Road follows the line of a Roman road (EHER 7824) leading south-eastwards from Heybridge, a Late Iron Age and Roman settlement to the north of Maldon on the opposite side of the crossing of the river Chelmer, a tributary of the Blackwater. Roman artefacts have been found in the area of the Saxon and medieval town and the presence of Roman activity in the vicinity of the Roman road cannot be ruled out. A World War II road barrier of concrete 'pimples' (EHER 10650) is also known in the immediate site area.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to establish the location, extent, date and character of any surviving archaeological remains within the proposed development area in order to inform any future decisions on the proposed development and mitigation of disturbance of surviving archaeological remains.

3.2 Objectives

If significant remains had been identified, research objectives for the project would have been 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).

The specific objectives of the evaluation were to investigate:

- Any surviving evidence of activity alongside the Roman road;
- Any surviving evidence of activity at the fringe of the Saxon and medieval historic town.

4.0 METHOD

Seven evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket. All trenches were 40m long and 1.6m wide. The trenches represent an approximate 5% sample of the available development area, excluding a 25m strip along the south-eastern edge not investigated due to the presence of underground gas, water supply and sewer pipes, and the southern part of the Mundon Road frontage unavailable for trenching due to the presence of an obliquely aligned drain.

The trenches were 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 (Figs 1 and 2)

A few archaeological features of post-medieval or modern date were present in trenches 1, 2 and 5. No archaeological features were observed in trenches 3, 4, 6 and 7. Trench location details are given in Appendix 1, and detailed context information is presented in Appendix 2.

The majority of the trenches were between 0.60m and 0.66m deep. Trench depths were noticeably shallower in the west of the site with Trench 1 being 0.54m deep and the south-

west end of Trench 5 being only 0.4m deep. Conversely, Trench 7 in the east of the site was the deepest with a maximum depth of 0.8m. The overburden generally consisted of 0.30 to 0.40m of dark greyish brown clay-silt topsoil (4) above a similar depth of mid greyish brown to yellow brown clay-silt subsoil (5). The subsoil was only 0.10m deep in Trench 1 and virtually absent from the south-west end of Trench 5. The underlying natural strata comprised brown clay, orange brown clay silt and patches of orange brown gravel.

A series of north-south aligned, pink, corrugated, ceramic field drains were recorded crossing the site at a depth of c. 0.4m below the ground surface and were left *in situ*.

5.1 Trench 1

A well-defined, north-west/south-east aligned ditch (3) was excavated in Trench 1. The ditch was 1.4m wide by 0.37m deep, with a flat base and sides sloping at c. 40° (Fig. 2). It contained two fills, the upper a mid-brownish grey sandy clay (1) and the lower a mid brown silty clay (2), neither contained any dating evidence. The ditch appeared to be cut from directly below the topsoil suggesting that it was likely to be of relatively recent date.

5.2 Trench 2

The investigation of a 0.2m wide, straight-sided, linear feature in the north of Trench 2 revealed a black plastic pipe. Also investigated was a 6.6m wide patch of mid to dark grey silty clay that was 0.25m deep, overlay brown clay, and appeared to be of natural origin.

5.3 Trench 5

Directly below the topsoil in the west end of Trench 5 was a c. 0.1m deep hardcore deposit (6) comprising pieces of brick, tile, flint and mortar in a dark grey clay matrix. Some of the material had been pushed into the top of the underlying natural clay. Finds included frogged bricks (not retained), fragments of modern glassware and an iron spike.

Also present in the trench was a north-west/south-east aligned ditch which was clearly a continuation of ditch 3 from Trench 1. Although the ditch was not further examined, one sherd of modern (19th-20th century) stoneware was recovered from its upper fill (1).

6.0 FINDS

Finds were recovered from two contexts, across two of the excavated trenches. All of the finds have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context; full quantification details can be found in Appendix 3. The finds are described by category below.

6.1 Pottery

A single sherd of modern stoneware was recovered from the upper fill of ditch 3 in Trench 1. This is in buff fabric with a pale brown glaze and is from a large vessel such as a cistern.

6.2 Metalwork

Spread 6 in Trench 7 produced an iron spike of uncertain use. The lack of corrosion products suggests a recent date.

6.3 Glass

Two items of glass were recovered from spread 6. The first is a flat-topped stopper in blue-green glass with surface iridescence. The outer rim has four moulded dots on opposing sides. The stopper is from a utilitarian jar, perhaps for holding industrial chemicals, or similar. The second piece is a base sherd, with part of the kick-up, from a dark green wine bottle, also with surface iridescence. This is probably the earliest piece in the assemblage but, nevertheless, is 19th or early 20th century in date.

6.4 Comments on the assemblage

Very few finds were recorded; all are of relatively recent date and thus all have been discarded following recording.

7.0 DISCUSSION

No archaeological features or deposits of any antiquity were identified. The ditch (3) in trenches 1 and 5 runs parallel to Mundon Road and is likely to be of mid 19th to 20th century date. The rough hardcore deposit was perhaps laid down to firm up a boggy area or to provide an area of hard standing. The finds suggest that this may have occurred at a similar time to the back-filling of the ditch. Neither feature shows on early editions of the Ordnance

Survey suggesting that they may have been short-lived and/or date to later in the 20th century.

The site was broadly flat and there was no obvious signs of truncation or importation of topsoil associated with the use of the ground as a sports pitch. The depth of underlying subsoil might be attributed to past seasonal flooding of the land which today is known as 'Primrose Meadow'.

8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

No remains associated with the Roman road nor any associated with Saxon or medieval activities on the fringe of the historic town were identified. Although it is possible that remains survive between the service trenches within the 25m wide strip in the south-east of development area, or around the obliquely aligned drain on the Mundon Road frontage, the lack of archaeological features in the existing seven trenches suggests this is unlikely.

Given the negative results from the trenching the impact of any future development on archaeological remains is considered to be minimal and further mitigation measures may not be required.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Essex CC FAU thanks GSS Architects for commissioning the work on behalf of the Colchester Institute, especially William Assheton for his help throughout the project. Thanks are also due to Geoff Skewes for arranging access. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Trevor Ennis and Andrew Letch of the ECC Field Archaeology Unit. Finds were processed by Phil McMichael and analysed by Joyce Compton. The report was prepared by Trevor Ennis with illustrations by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Patrick Allen and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Maria Medlycott of ECC HEM.

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| Gurney D. | 2003 | <i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> , E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper 14 |
| IFA | 1997 | <i>Code of Conduct</i> . Institute of Field Archaeologists |
| IFA | 2001 | <i>Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (revised)</i> . Institute of Field Archaeologists |

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DATA

Trench	Measurements	Co-ordinates
1	40m x 1.6m x 0.54m deep, orientated NE/SW	SW - 585582.98, 205991.0 NE - 585618.98, 206008.4
2	40m x 1.6m x 0.66m deep, orientated NW/SE	NW - 585615.5, 206025.3 SE - 585633.0, 205989.3
3	40m x 1.6m x 0.6m deep, orientated NE/SW	SW - 585634.0, 206015.4 NE - 585670.0, 206032.8
4	40m x 1.6m x 0.64m deep, orientated NW/SE	NW - 585676.1, 206049.7 SE - 585693.5, 206013.7
5	40m x 1.6m x 0.4-0.6m deep, orientated NE/SW	SW - 585622.0, 205963.4 NE - 585658.0, 205980.9
6	40m x 1.6m x 0.62m deep, orientated NW/SE	NW - 585655.9, 206009.1 SE - 585673.4, 205973.1
7	40m x 1.6m x 0.7-0.8m deep, orientated NE/SW	SW - 585675.9, 205990.6 NE - 585711.9, 206008.0

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT DATA

All dimensions given in metres

Context	Trench	Type	Description	Period
1	1	Fill of 3	Mid brownish grey sandy clay	Modern
2	1	Fill of 3	Mid brown silty clay	Modern
3	1	Ditch	1.6m+ x 1.4m x 0.37m deep	Modern
4	1 - 7	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown clay silt	-
5	1 - 7	Subsoil	Mid greyish brown to yellow brown clay silt	-
6	7	Layer	Dark grey clay with brick/tile and flint rubble	Modern

APPENDIX 3: FINDS DATA

All weights in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
1	3	1	22	Pottery; body sherd, modern stoneware from large vessel (Discarded)	Modern
6	Spread	1	80	Iron spike, length 145mm (Discarded)	-
		2	178	Glass; complete blue-green stopper, diameter 60mm; green wine bottle base sherd (Discarded)	Modern

APPENDIX 4: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

Site Name: Colchester Institute Site, Mundon Road, Maldon

Site Code: MD 42

Index to Archive:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 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 6)
- 3.3 7 Trench Record sheets
- 3.4 Plan Register
- 3.5 Section Register
- 3.6 1 A4 plan/section sheet
- 3.7 Levels Register
- 3.8 Trench location plan
- 3.9 Photographic Registers
- 3.10 Site Photographic Record (1 set of Black & White prints, 1 Set of digital images on disk)
- 3.11 Miscellaneous notes/plans

Not in File

No large items

Finds

No finds were retained.

APPENDIX 5: ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Colchester Institute Site, Mundon Road, Maldon, Essex	
Parishes: Maldon	District: Maldon
NGR: TL 8566 0600	Site Code: MD 42
Type of Work: Archaeological Evaluation	Site Director/Group: T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Dates of Work: 20th – 23rd April 2009	Size of Area Investigated: c. 1.4 hectares
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Colchester	Funding source: Client
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.: - 7824
Final Report: EAH summary	Oasis No.: essexcou1- 59251
Periods Represented: Post-medieval, modern	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out at the Colchester Institute Site, Mundon Road, Maldon, Essex in advance of the submission of a planning application for the construction of a Vocational Training Centre. Seven trenches were excavated across the c.1.4 hectare site.</p> <p>The proposed development area was located within the southern half of an existing playing field on the eastern side of Mundon Road close to the south-eastern limit of the modern town and over 0.5 km from Maldon's historic High Street and Hythe area.</p> <p>A ditch of probable 19th or 20th century date was identified along with a similarly dated brick and flint hardcore deposit perhaps used to firm up a boggy area or part of an area of hard standing. Although the site was located close to the presumed site of a Roman road no remains of the date were identified nor any remains associated with Saxon or Medieval activities on the fringe of the town.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: none	
Author of Summary: T. Ennis	Date of Summary: May 2009

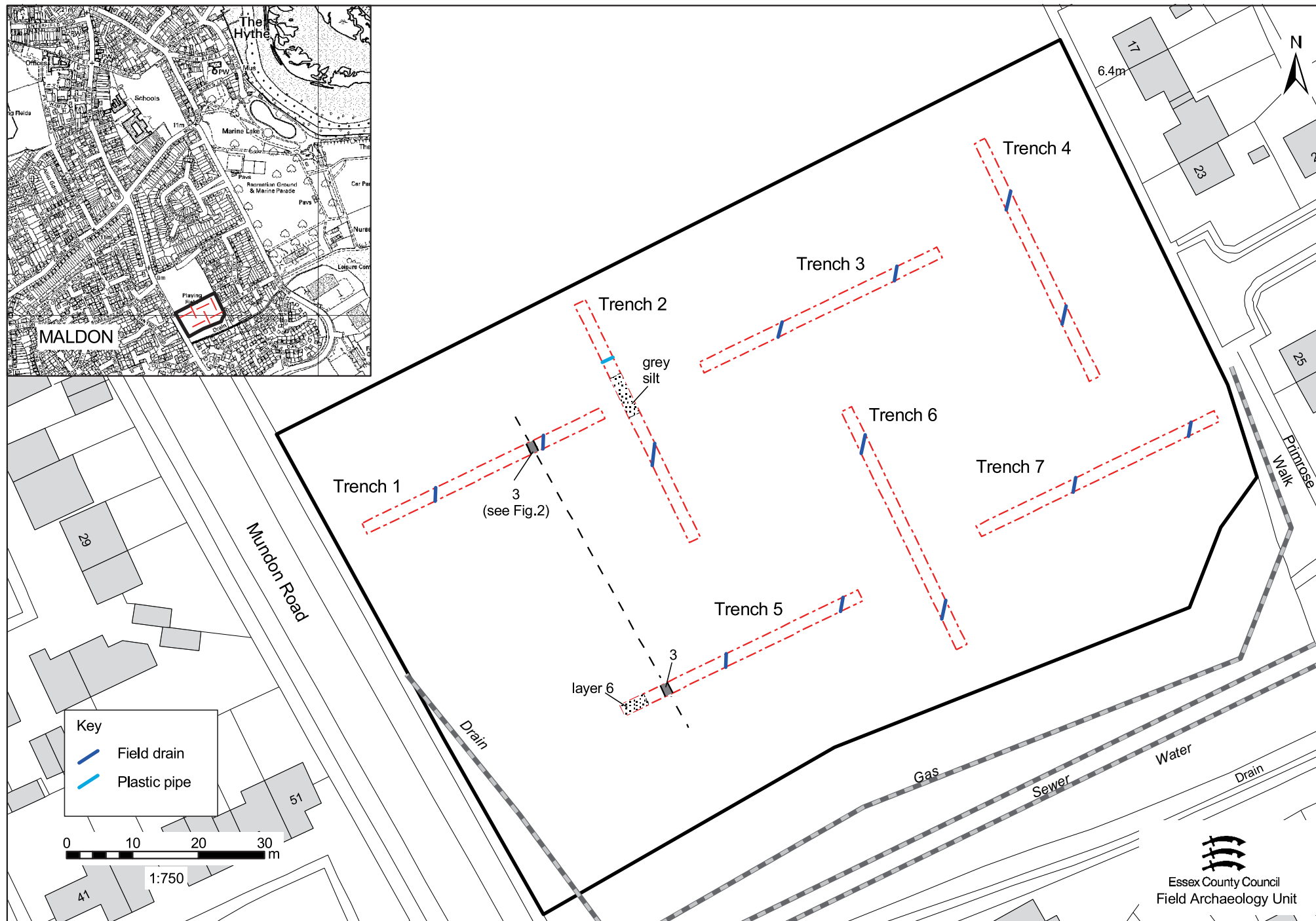


Fig.1. Trench location plan

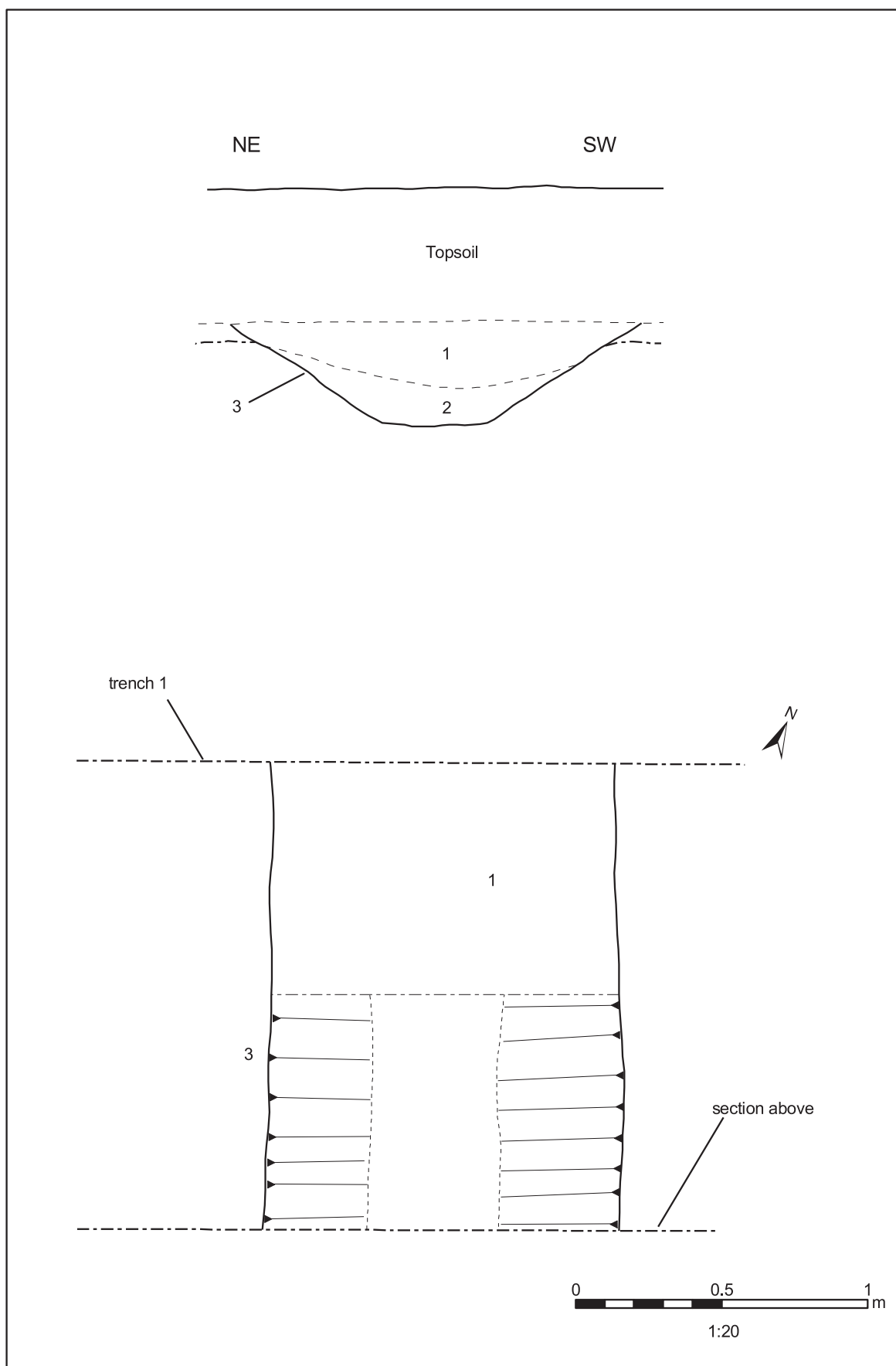


Fig.2. Section and plan of ditch 3, trench 1