

Colchester Archaeological Trust



CAT Report 1886
issued December 2022

**Archaeological evaluation at Hall Meadows,
Hall Road, Asheldham, Essex, CM0 7JF:
November 2022**



CAT project ref.: 2022/11e
ECC code: AMHM22

**Archaeological evaluation at Hall Meadows,
Hall Road, Asheldham, Essex, CM0 7JF:
November 2022**

NGR: TL 97831 01494

Planning ref.: MAL/22/00595

**CAT project ref.: 2022/11e
CAT Report 1886**

**ECC code: AMHM22
OASIS id: colchest3-510774**

**report prepared by Laura Pooley
with contributions from Dr Matthew Loughton
and Adam Wightman**

**fieldwork by Ben Holloway with Elliott Hicks and
Adam Ronn**

commissioned by the landowner

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Prepared by: | Laura Pooley | Post Excavation Manager |
| Reviewed and approved by: | Philip Crummy | Director of Archaeology |
| Issued: | | |

Colchester Archaeological Trust

Roman Circus House,
Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785

email: lp@catuk.org

web: www.thecolchesterarchaeologist.co.uk

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out at Hall Meadows, Hall Road, Asheldham, Essex in advance of the construction of a new dwelling. Located within an area of known cropmarks and surrounded by prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon remains, the development site is also located close to the 17th-century Asheldham Hall. Excavation revealed two ditches, two post-holes, a pit/tree-throw and 11 tree-throws. One of the ditches produced a piece of peg-tile and could be a field boundary ditch. A piece of Roman imbrex was also recovered from the pit/tree-throw. Small sherds of pottery and two pieces of worked flint from five of the tree-throws provides evidence for prehistoric occupation on or close to the development site.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at Hall Meadows, Hall Road, Asheldham, Essex on 28th-29th November 2022. The work was commissioned by the landowner, and took place in advance of the construction of a new dwelling with associated groundworks.

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), the Historic Environment Advisor stipulated that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for a trial trenching and excavation at Hall Meadows, Hall Road, Asheldham* which detailed the required archaeological work (ECCPS 2021), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT (2002) in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS.

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2016), and with *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14 and 24). This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b).

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background includes extracts of the ECC Brief and Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale¹) shows the area has a bedrock geology of Thames Group (clay, silt and sand) with superficial deposits of sedimentary river terrace deposits (sand and gravel). The site is located on the eastern side of the village of Asheldham, within the Dengie Peninsular. The area is characterised by small isolated farms scattered throughout flat open fields, the result of reclamation of the Dengie and Tillingham marshes in the 19th century.

Approximately 140m SSE of the development site is the Grade II listed 17th-century timber-framed Asheldham Hall (NHLE 1346226), with the Church of St Lawrence (NHLE 1110970) another 85m beyond that. Thought originally to have been an Anglo-Saxon timber structure, the church was rebuilt in the early 14th century, with alterations and additions in the 14th-15th century and restoration work in the 19th century. Excavations in the churchyard have recorded a Roman ditch, which had been re-cut multiple times, and a medieval stone dwelling for the priest alongside burials (EHER 12150-7).

¹ British Geological Survey – <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>

Approximately 460m south-west of the development is Asheldham Camp, an Iron Age fort located on a plateau setting. Investigations around the fort have yielded scatters of Neolithic to Bronze Age flint waste flakes and blades. Observations during gravel extraction have revealed evidence of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Saxon remains, especially pottery. Some Roman and a sherd of medieval pottery have also been recorded. During the construction of a water supply for Southminster in 1900, evidence of a possible entrance to the camp was observed. Finds found during construction included a Viking axe-head and knife, and Iron Age and Roman pottery (EHER 12051-12060, NHLE 1014142).

The site is also located within an area of multiple cropmark plots recorded through aerial photography and gravel extraction around the village has meant that some of these cropmarks have been investigated. For example, the excavation of an area of cropmarks north-west of Asheldham Hall revealed pits, post-holes, a possible beam-slot and a metallised surface indicative of a Roman structure such as a villa or farmstead. Clusters of Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age features were also identified along with a ditch which contained a sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery (EHER 12183). The investigation of cropmarks on the south side of the nature reserve included Iron Age pottery and a pit which contained Neolithic pottery (EHER 12185).

Cropmarks on land south of the church (south-west of Asheldham Hall) show a large rectilinear enclosure with a smaller rectilinear enclosure in one corner, as well as a number of linear features and pits (EHER 12184). Road names and early mapping suggest this may also be the area of a possible deserted medieval village (EHER 12088). Monitoring before the construction of a new crop storage building at Dengie Crops Ltd to the SSW revealed part of a known cropmark which crossed the site. The ditch revealed pottery of Early Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon date (EHER 48921).

4 Aims

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to record the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits and to assess the archaeological potential of the site to allow the ECCHEA to determine if further investigation is required.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

Two trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Positioned within the footprint of the new dwelling, the trenches were 15m and 16m long by 1.8m wide, and cut through modern ploughsoil (L1, 0.65-0.7m thick) onto natural (L2).

There were 16 features in the two trenches. The vast majority appear to be tree-throws (F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F12, F13, F14, F15, F16), all fairly irregular in size and shape, and ranging from 1.65m by 1.45m and 0.14m deep, to >0.35m by 0.36m and 0.1m deep. Prehistoric flints were recovered from F5 and F8, with tiny scraps of prehistoric pottery also recovered from F7, F8, F14 and F16. The prehistoric pottery totalled only seven fragments at 13g with a low mean sherd weight, indicating that the pottery was residual and likely to have been present within the ploughsoil for a considerable period before becoming incorporated into the backfill of the tree-throws.

Ditch F1 was aligned north-east to south-west and was V-shaped in profile, 0.63m wide by 0.17m deep. It was cut by pit/tree-throw F2 (>1.8m by 1.4m and 0.33m deep) which produced a piece of Roman imbrex. Ditch F3 was aligned east to west, U-shaped with a wide irregular base. It was c 1m wide by 0.12m deep and a piece of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile was recovered from the fill. Post-holes F10 and F11 were both c 0.38m by c 0.29m, and 0.05-0.7m deep.



Photograph 1 Trench 1, looking north



Photograph 2 Ditch F1, looking north-north-east



Photograph 3 Pit/tree-throw F2, looking east



Photograph 4 Tree-throw F5, looking south-west



Photograph 5 Tree-throw F8, looking west



Photograph 6 Tree-throw F14, looking north



Photograph 7 Trench 2, looking west

6 Finds

6.1 Pottery and ceramic building material

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation uncovered nine sherds of pottery and ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) weighing 90g with a mean sherd weight of 10g (Table 1). This material was recovered from six features (Table 2).

| Ceramic material | No. | Weight (g) | MSW (g) | EVE |
|------------------|----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Pottery | 7 | 13 | 2 | 0.00 |
| CBM | 2 | 77 | 39 | - |
| All | 9 | 90 | 10 | 0.00 |

Table 1 Summary of the pottery and CBM

| Context | Description | No. | Weight (g) | MSW (g) |
|---------|----------------|-----|------------|---------|
| F2 | Pit/tree-throw | 1 | 58 | 58 |
| F3 | Ditch | 1 | 19 | 19 |
| F7 | Tree-throw | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| F8 | Tree-throw | 2 | 3 | 2 |

| Context | Description | No. | Weight (g) | MSW (g) |
|--------------|-------------|----------|------------|-----------|
| F14 | Tree-throw | 1 | 6 | 6 |
| F16 | Tree-throw | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Total | | 9 | 90 | 10 |

Table 2 Quantities of pottery and CBM from specific features**Prehistoric pottery**

There was a small quantity (7 pieces at 13g) of handmade pottery tempered with sand (HMS), flint (HMF), and sand and flint (HMSF). This material is in a very fragmentary state with a low mean sherd weight (2g) and the lack of diagnostic material precludes any precise dating except possible to the later prehistoric period in general (Late Bronze Age to Early-Mid Iron Age).

Ceramic building material (CBM)

A small fragment (58g) of Roman imbrex was recovered from pit F2, while a sherd of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile (19g) came from ditch F3.

Conclusion

Table 3 summarizes the dating evidence for the features which contained dateable pottery and CBM. Four of the features are prehistoric, one is possibly Roman, and one is post-Roman (medieval/post-medieval).

| Context | Description | Prehistoric | CBM | Date Approx. |
|---------|----------------|-------------|-----|------------------------|
| F2 | Pit/tree-throw | - | RI | Roman? |
| F3 | Ditch | - | PT | Medieval-Post Medieval |
| F7 | Tree-throw | HMS | - | Prehistoric |
| F8 | Tree-throw | HMF, HMS | - | Prehistoric |
| F14 | Tree-throw | HMSF | - | Prehistoric? |
| F16 | Tree-throw | HMF | - | Prehistoric |

Table 3 Approximate dates for the individual features**6.2 Worked flint**

by Adam Wightman

Worked flints were recovered from pits F5 and F8. A secondary flake was recovered from pit F8 and the proximal end of a snapped blade was recovered from pit F5. The blade was detached from the core using a soft hammer after first preparing the striking platform. The resulting piece may have been intentionally snapped so that the distal end could be used as the blank for a tool. The flake from F8 most likely dates to the later prehistoric period (Neolithic-Bronze Age). It is possible that the blade from F5 dates to the Mesolithic period, although an Early Neolithic date is more likely.

| Context | Find no. | Artefact type | cortex % | soft/hard hammer | Notes |
|---------|----------|---------------|----------|------------------|--|
| F5 | 4 | blade | 0 | soft | proximal end of a snapped blade |
| F8 | 2 | flake | 40 | hard | thick, rough flake with use-wear/edge-damage |

Table 4 Worked flints**6.3 Miscellaneous finds**

by Laura Pooley

A piece of burnt flint (31.2g) came from F2 (finds no.6). It was cracked and crazed and burnt various shades of white, grey and red. This has been discarded.

7 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation at Hall Meadows, Hall Road, Asheldham revealed two ditches, two post-holes, a pit/tree-throw and 11 tree-throws. Interestingly, five of the tree-throws produced material of prehistoric date – a flint blade dated to the Mesolithic/Early Neolithic period, a flint flake dating to the later prehistoric period (Neolithic-Bronze Age) and seven small sherds of pottery of probable Late Bronze Age to Early-Mid Iron Age date. The small quantity and size of the pottery sherds would suggest that all of this material is residual and had been present within the ploughsoil for a while before becoming incorporated into the backfill of the tree-throws, and the same could be true for the flint. Therefore, although the presence of the pottery and flint would certainly evidence some prehistoric occupation on or close to the development site, it is likely that the tree-throws themselves are of a later date. Neolithic to Bronze Age flint scatters have previously been identified to the south-west of the development site at Asheldham Camp, with features dating to the Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age also present to the north. Pit/tree-throw F2 could also be associated with the 11 tree-throws. Producing a single piece of Roman imbrex, the feature could date to this period, or similarly be a later feature with residual material from the ploughsoil found within it. Peg-tile from F3 indicates that the ditch dates from the medieval/post-medieval onwards and is possibly a field boundary ditch. Historic maps of the area show the development site as open fields, so the tree-throws likely pre-date the 19th century, and may perhaps be associated with the grounds around the 17th-century Asheldham Hall, but they could be older than this.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank the landowner for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, A Wightman and L Pooley, with fieldwork carried out by B Holloway with E Hicks and A Ronn. Figures were compiled by C Lister, B Holloway and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Maria Medlycott.

9 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in PDF format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|---|
| Brown, N & Glazebrook, J | 2000 | <i>Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8 (EAA 8) |
| CAT | 2022 | <i>Written scheme of investigation for an evaluation by trial-trenching at Hall Meadows, Hall Road, Asheldham, Essex, CM0 7JF</i> |
| CIfA | 2014a | <i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation.</i> Revised October 2020 |
| CIfA | 2014b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.</i> Revised October 2020 |
| CIfA | 2014c | <i>Code of Conduct.</i> Revised October 2022 |
| ECCPS | 2021 | <i>Brief for trial trenching & excavation at Hall Meadows, Hall Road, Asheldham,</i> by M Medlycott |
| Gurney, D | 2003 | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14) |
| Historic England | 2015 | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i> |
| Medlycott, M | 2011 | <i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24) |
| MHCLG | 2021 | <i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government |

10 Abbreviations and glossary

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Anglo-Saxon | period from c 500 – 1066 |
| Bronze Age | period from c 2500 – 700 BC |
| CAT | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| CIfA | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists |
| ECC | Essex County Council |
| ECCHEA | Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| ECCPS | Essex County Council Place Services |
| EHHER | Essex Historic Environment Record |
| feature (F) | an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts' |
| Iron Age | period from 700 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43 |
| layer (L) | distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material |
| medieval | period from AD 1066 to c 1500 |
| Mesolithic | period from c 10,000 – 4000BC |
| modern | period from c AD 1800 to the present |
| natural | geological deposit undisturbed by human activity |
| Neolithic | period from c 4000 – 2500 BC |
| NGR | National Grid Reference |
| OASIS | O nline A ccess to the I ndex of A rchaeological I nvestigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main |
| post-medieval | from c AD 1500 to c 1800 |
| prehistoric | pre-Roman |
| Roman | the period from AD 43 to c AD 410 |
| section | (abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s |
| ws | written scheme of investigation |

11 Contents of archive

Finds: small bag (pottery and flint)

Digital record

CAT Report 1886

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Scan of original site section drawings

Site digital photographs

Survey data

Site data

12 Archive deposition

The archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museum under project ref. AMHM22 and the Archaeological Data Service.

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Distribution list:

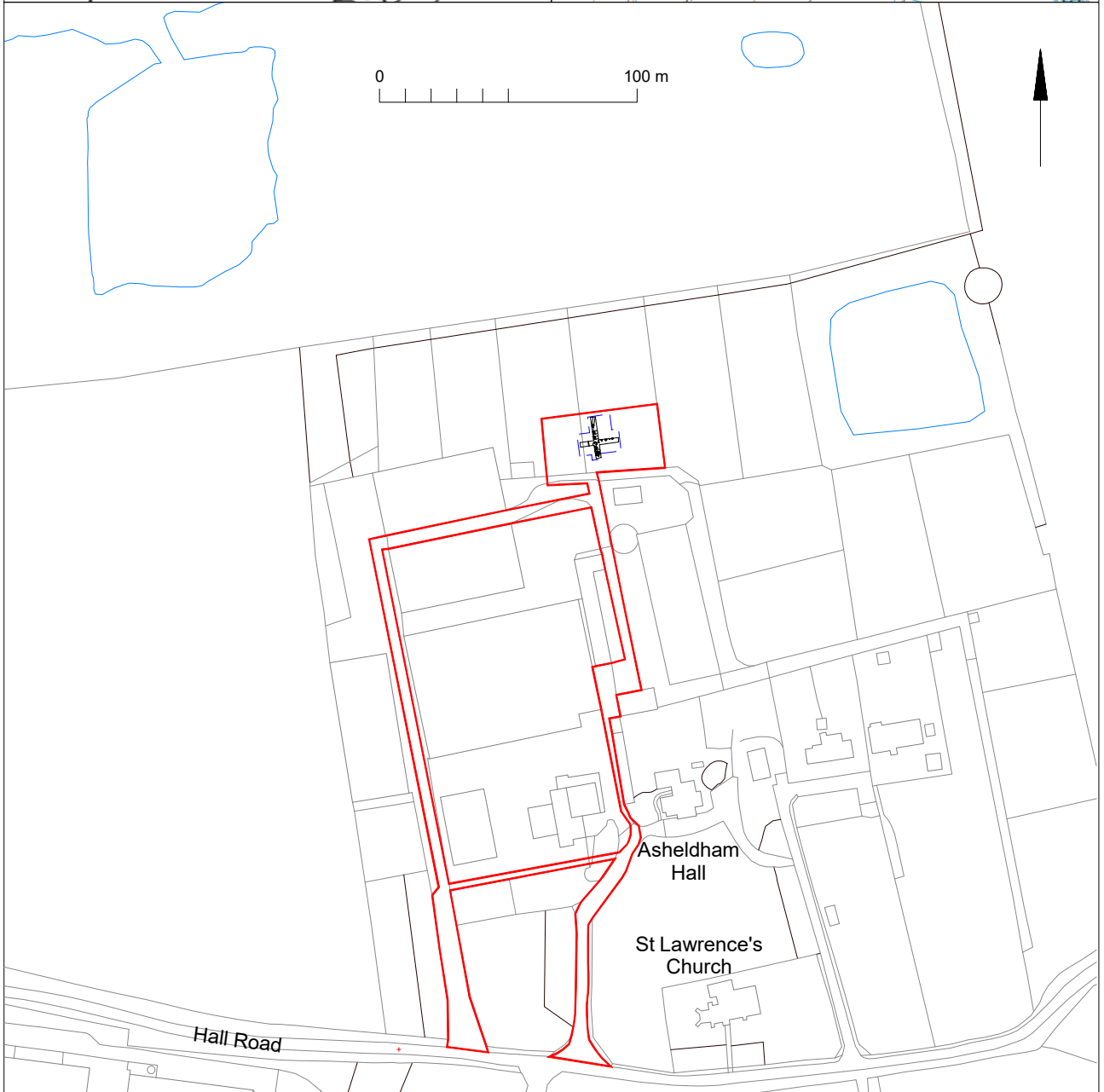
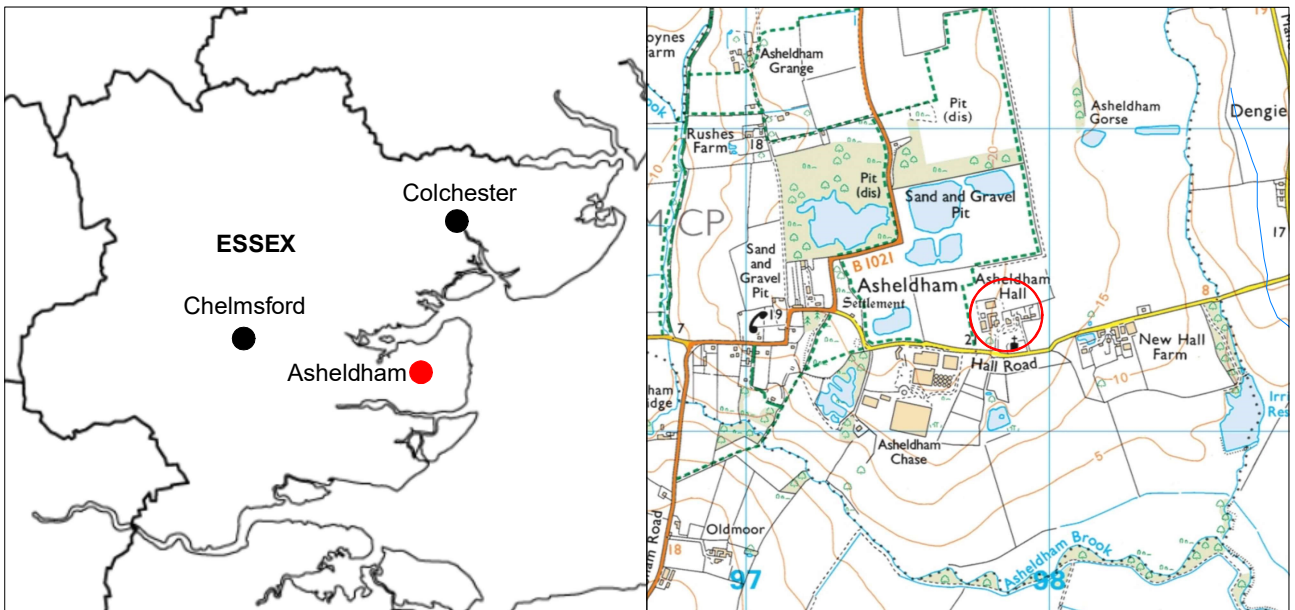
Landowner

ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

Appendix 1 Context list

| Context | Finds no. | Interpretation | Soil description | Period |
|---------|-----------|----------------|--|----------------------------|
| L1 | - | Plough soil | Friable/firm moist medium brown silty loam and inclusions of: stone 1% | Modern |
| L2 | - | Natural | Firm dry light/medium orange/brown sandy silt and inclusions of: stone 1% | Post-glacial |
| | | | | |
| F1 | - | Ditch | Firm moist dark grey/brown sandy silt with charcoal flecks | Undated |
| F2 | 6 | Pit/tree-throw | Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt with charcoal flecks | ?Roman |
| F3 | 5 | Ditch | Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt | Medieval/ post-medieval |
| F4 | - | Tree-throw | Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt | Undated |
| F5 | 4 | Tree-throw | Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt | Undated |
| F6 | - | Tree-throw | Soft moist medium brown sand silt and inclusions of: stone 1% | Undated |
| F7 | 1 | Tree-throw | Soft moist medium brown sand silt and inclusions of: stone 1% | Undated |
| F8 | 2 | Tree-throw | Soft moist medium brown sand silt and inclusions of: stone 1% | Undated |
| F9 | - | Tree-throw | Loose/soft dry medium grey/brown sandy silt with charcoal flecks and inclusions of: gravel 30% | Undated |
| F10 | - | Post-hole | Loose/soft dry medium grey/brown sandy silt and inclusions of: gravel 30% | Undated |
| F11 | - | Post-hole | Loose/soft dry medium grey/brown sandy silt and inclusions of: stone 5% | Undated |
| F12 | - | Tree-throw | Loose/soft dry light grey/brown sandy silt and inclusions of: gravel 20% | Undated |
| F13 | - | Tree-throw | Loose/soft dry light grey/brown sandy silt and inclusions of: gravel 20% | Undated |
| F14 | 3 | Tree-throw | Loose dry medium grey/brown sandy silt and inclusions of: gravel 50% | Undated |
| F15 | - | Tree-throw | Loose/soft dry medium brown sandy silt and inclusions of: gravel 10% | Undated |
| F16 | 7 | Tree-throw | Soft moist medium brown sand silt and inclusions of: stone 1% | Undated |



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Fig 1 Site location (proposed development dashed blue)

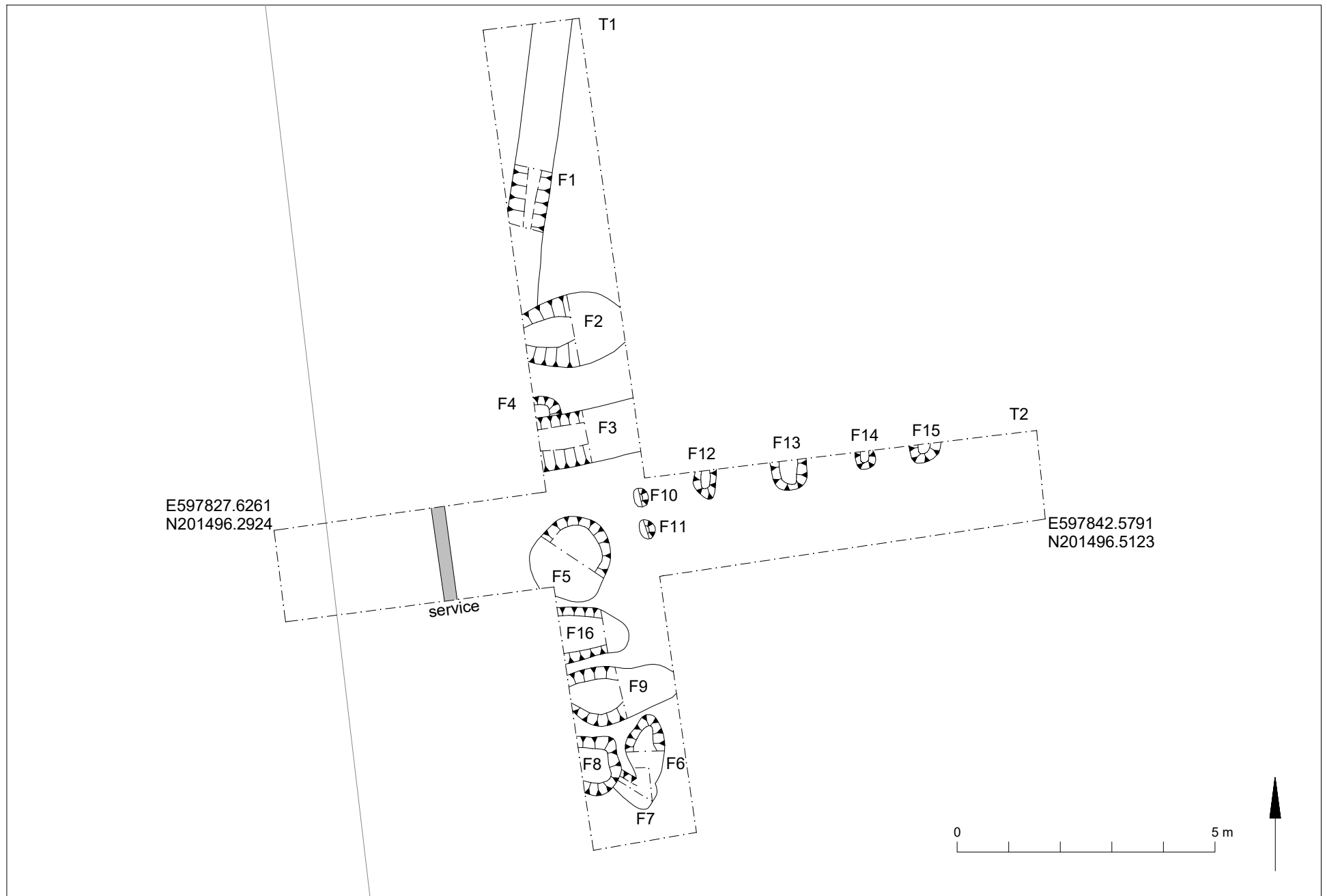


Fig 2 Results

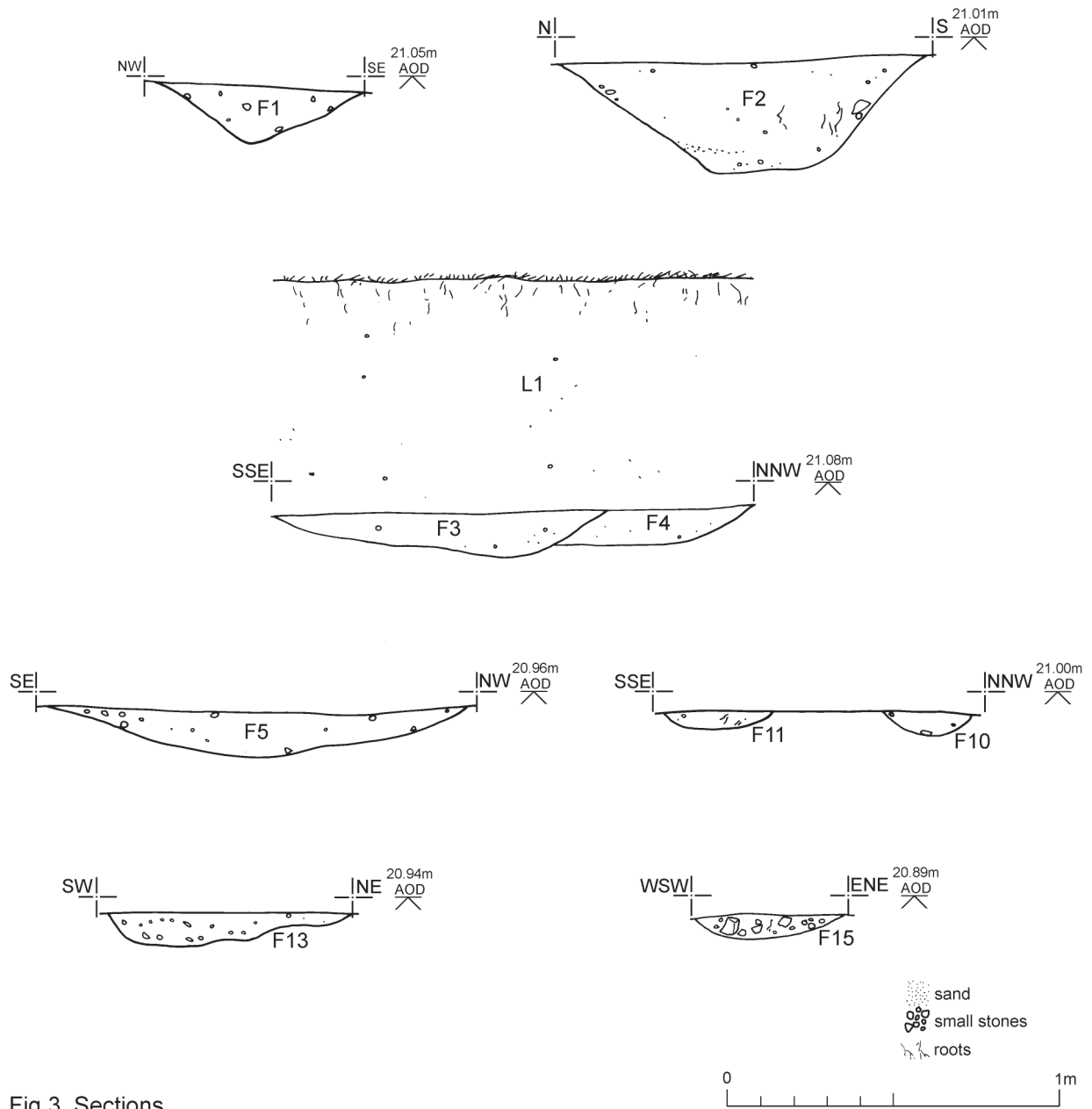
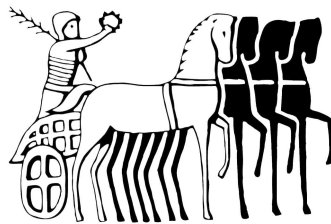


Fig 3 Sections.

Summary for colchest3-510774

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| OASIS ID (UID) | colchest3-510774 |
| Project Name | Archaeological evaluation at Hall Meadows, Hall Road, Asheldham, Essex, CM0 7JF |
| Sitename | Hall Meadows, Hall Road, Asheldham, Essex, CM0 7JF |
| Activity type | Evaluation |
| Project Identifier(s) | 2022/11e |
| Planning Id | MAL/22/00595 |
| Reason For Investigation | Planning: Post determination |
| Organisation Responsible for work | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Project Dates | 28-Nov-2022 - 29-Nov-2022 |
| Location | Hall Meadows, Hall Road, Asheldham, Essex, CM0 7JF NGR : TL 97831 01494 LL : 51.6773612905795, 0.859977894028494 12 Fig : 597831,201494 |
| Administrative Areas | Country : England County : Essex District : Maldon Parish : Asheldham |
| Project Methodology | Archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) carried out as per the conditions laid out in the Brief and WSI |
| Project Results | An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out at Hall Meadows, Hall Road, Asheldham, Essex in advance of the construction of a new dwelling. Located within an area of known cropmarks and surrounded by prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon remains, the development site is also located close to the 17th-century Asheldham Hall. Excavation revealed two ditches, two post-holes, a pit/tree-throw and 11 tree-throws. One of the ditches produced a piece of peg-tile and could be a field boundary ditch. A piece of Roman imbrex was also recovered from the pit/tree-throw. Small sherds of pottery and two pieces of worked flint from five of the tree-throws provides evidence for prehistoric occupation on or close to the development site. |
| Keywords | Sherd - LATER PREHISTORIC - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Lithic Implement - LATER PREHISTORIC - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus |
| Funder | |
| HER | Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD |
| Person Responsible for work | L, Pooley |
| HER Identifiers | HER Monument No - AMHM22 |
| Archives | Physical Archive - to be deposited with Colchester & Ipswich Museum Service (Colchester Collection); Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive; |

Colchester Archaeological Trust



**Written scheme of investigation
for an evaluation by trial-trenching at Hall Meadows,
Hall Road, Asheldham, Essex, CM0 7JF.**

November 2022

**CAT project ref.: 2022/11e
ECC code: tbc**

**Written scheme of investigation for an evaluation by
trial-trenching at Hall Meadows, Hall Road,
Asheldham, Essex, CM0 7JF.**

November 2022

NGR: TL 97831 01494

**Planning district.: Maldon
Planning ref.: MAL/22/00595**

CAT project ref.: 2022/11e

**ECC code: tbc
ECC monitor: Maria Medlycott
OASIS id: colchest3-510774**

**WSI prepared by: Emma Holloway
Figures by: Chris Lister**

Client: Landowner

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Prepared by: | Emma Holloway | Junior Project Officer |
| Reviewed and approved by: | Chris Lister | Contracts Manager |
| Issued: | 10/11/2022 | |

Colchester Archaeological Trust

Roman Circus House,
Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785

web: www.thecolchesterarchaeologist.co.uk
eh@catuk.org

Site location and description

The site is located at Hall Meadows, Hall Road, Asheldham, Essex. The site is centred on national Grid Reference (NGR) TL 97831 01494. The land is on the northern edge of the main farm buildings in an area laid to grass for horse paddocks.

Proposed work

The proposed development comprises the construction of a single detached dwelling and associated groundworks.

Archaeological background

The following archaeological background includes extracts of the ECC Brief and Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale¹) shows both areas have a bedrock geology of Thames Group (clay, silt and sand) with superficial deposits of sedimentary river terrace deposits (sand and gravel).

The site is located on the eastern side of the village of Asheldham, within the Dengie Peninsular. The area is characterised by small isolated farms scattered throughout flat open fields, the result of reclamation of the Dengie and Tillingham marshes in the 19th century.

The development area lies within an area of known archaeological potential. Approximately 460m southwest of the development is Asheldham Camp, an Iron Age fort located on a plateau setting. Investigations around the fort have yielded scatters of Neolithic to Bronze Age flint waste flakes and blades. Observations during gravel extraction have revealed evidence of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Saxon remains, especially pottery. Some Roman and a sherd of medieval pottery have also been recorded. During the construction of a water supply for Southminster in 1900 evidence of a possible entrance to the camp was observed. Finds found during construction included a Viking axe-head and knife and Iron Age and Roman pottery bought by Colchester Museum (EHER 12051-12060, Scheduled Monument reference 1014142).

The site is also located within an area of multiple cropmark plots recorded through aerial photography. These suggest complexes of features covering multiple periods. Gravel extraction around the village has meant that some of these cropmarks have been investigated and proved that the cropmarks do represent real archaeological features. For example an area of cropmarks northwest of Asheldham Hall revealed pits, post-holes, a possible beam-slot and metalled surfacing indicative of a Roman structure such as a villa or farmstead. These features were predominantly dated to the Roman period, with clusters dating to the Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age and one ditch which contained a sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery (EHER 12183). The investigation of cropmarks on the south side of the nature reserve included Iron Age pottery and one pit which contained Neolithic pottery (EHER 12185).

To the south of the site is the Church of St Lawrence. Archaeological work at the church in 1976, prior to its conversion into a youth centre, found evidence that the church was constructed in nine phases. The church was thought to have originally been a timber structure, located slightly to the north of the current location and built in the Anglo-Saxon period. In the early 14th century the church was completely rebuilt from septaria with some Roman brick and dressed in limestone. A number of alterations and additions were added in the 14th-15th century with restoration work in the 19th century. In the churchyard the excavation recorded a Roman ditch which had been re-cut multiple times and a medieval stone dwelling for the priest alongside burials (EHER 12150-7).

¹ British Geological Survey – <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>

Cropmarks on land south of the church (southwest of Ashedham Hall) show a large rectilinear enclosure with a smaller rectilinear enclosure in one corner, as well as a number of linear features and pits (EHER 12184). Road names and early mapping suggest this may also be the area of a possible deserted medieval village (EHER 12088). Monitoring before the construction of a new crop storage building at Dengie Crops Ltd revealed part of a known cropmark which crossed the site. The ditch revealed pottery of Early Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon date (EHER 48921).

Planning background

A planning application (MAL/22/00595) was submitted to Maldon District Council in October 2022 proposing the *construction of a chalet style rural workers dwelling*.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the EHER as having a high potential for archaeological remains an archaeological condition was recommended. This follows the guidelines given in National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2021).

Requirement for work (Fig 2)

The archaeological work will consist of an evaluation by trial-trenching. Details are given in a Project Brief written by the ECCPS (*Brief for trial-trenching and excavation at Hall Meadows, Hall Road, Ashedham – ECC 2022*).

Specifically the brief requests trenching to cover the length and breadth of the proposed development. CAT proposes a cross-shaped trench located within the footprint of the proposed dwelling. The trench will measure 31m in length by 1.8m wide, covering an area of 55.8m².

The initial work will comprise of the trial-trenching which will be followed by a site meeting with the ECCHEA. Further archaeological work may be required. This will be decided by the ECCHEA on completion of the trial-trenching and report.

General methodology

All work carried out by CAT will be in accordance with:

- Professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a-c)
- East of England Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011) and the recent review updates on <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>
- Relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2022)
- the Project Brief issued by ECC Historic Environment Advisor (ECCPS 2022)

Professional CAT field archaeologists will undertake all specified archaeological work, for which they will be suitably experienced and qualified.

Notification of the supervisor/project manager's name and the start date for the project will be provided to the ECCHEA one week before start of work.

Unless it is the responsibility of other site contractors, CAT will study mains service locations and avoid damage to these.

At the start of the project (when the WSI is written) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed (Activity type, Location and Reviewers/Admin areas). At the end of the project all parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the EHER. This will include an uploaded .PDF version of the entire report.

A project or site code will be sought from the ECCHEA and/or the curating museum, as appropriate to the project. This code will be used to identify the project archive when it is deposited at the curating museum.

Staffing

The number of field staff for this project is estimated as follows: One CAT Project Officer and two archaeologists for one day.

In charge of day-to-day site work: Ben Holloway/ Nigel Rayner

Evaluation methodology

Where appropriate, modern overburden and any topsoil stripping/levelling will be performed using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision and to the satisfaction of a professional archaeologist. If no archaeologically significant deposits are exposed, machine excavation will continue until natural geology is reached.

Where necessary, areas will be cleaned by hand to ensure the visibility of archaeological deposits.

If archaeological features or deposits are uncovered time will be allowed for these to be excavated, planned and recorded.

There will be sufficient excavation to give clear evidence for the period, depth and nature of any archaeological deposit. All features or deposits will be excavated by hand. This includes a 50% sample of discrete features (pits, etc), at least 10% of linear features (ditches, etc) in 1m wide sections, and 100% of complex structures/features. Complex archaeological structures such as walls, kilns or ovens will be carefully cleaned, planned and fully recorded, but where possible left *in situ*. Only if it can be demonstrated that the complex structure/feature is likely to be destroyed by groundworks, and only then after discussion with the ECCHEA, will it be removed.

Fast hand-excavation techniques involving (for instance) picks, forks and mattocks will not be used on complex stratigraphy.

The depth and nature of colluvial or other masking deposits will be established. Therefore, a sondage will be excavated in each trench to test the stratigraphy of the site. This will occur in every trench unless it can be demonstrated that a feature excavated within a particular trench has clearly penetrated into the natural geology.

A representative section will be drawn of each trench, to include ground level, the depth of machining within the trench and the depth of any sondages.

Trained CAT staff will use a metal detector to scan all trenches both before and during excavation. All spoil heaps will also be scanned and finds recovered.

Individual records of excavated contexts, layers, features or deposits will be entered on proforma record sheets. Registers will be compiled of finds, small finds and soil samples.

All features and layers or other significant deposits will be planned, and their profiles or sections recorded. The normal scale will be site plans at 1:20 and sections at 1:10, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be appropriate.

The photographic record will consist of general site shots, and shots of all archaeological features and deposits. A photographic scale (including north arrow) shall be included in the case of detailed photographs. A photographic register will accompany the photographic

record. This will detail as a minimum feature number, location, and direction of shot.

The trenches will not be backfilled until they have been signed off by the ECCHEA.

Site surveying

The evaluation trenches and any features will be surveyed by Total Station or GPS, unless the particulars of the features indicate that manual planning techniques should be employed. Normal scale for archaeological site plans and sections is 1:20 and 1:10 respectively, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be more appropriate.

The site grid will be tied into the National Grid. Corners of excavation areas will be located by NGR coordinates.

Environmental sampling policy

The number and range of samples collected will be adequate to determine the potential of the site, with particular focus on palaeoenvironmental remains including both biological remains (e.g. plants, small vertebrates) and small sized artefacts (e.g. smithing debris), and to provide information for sampling strategies on any future excavation. Samples will be collected for potential micromorphical and other pedological sedimentological analysis. Environmental bulk samples will be 40 litres in size (assuming context is large enough).

Sampling strategies will address questions of:

- The range of preservation types (charred, mineral-replaced, waterlogged), and their quality.
- Concentrations of macro-remains.
- Differences in remains from undated and dated features.
- Variation between different feature types and areas of site.

CAT has an arrangement with Val Fryer / Lisa Gray whereby any potentially rich environmental layers or features will be appropriately sampled as a matter of course. Trained CAT staff will process the samples and the flots will be sent to Val Fryer or Lisa Gray for analysis and reporting.

Should any complex, or otherwise outstanding deposits be encountered, VF or LG will be asked onto site to advise. Waterlogged 'organic' features will always be sampled. In all cases, the advice of VF/LG and/or the Historic England Regional Advisor in Archaeological Science (East of England) on sampling strategies for complex or waterlogged deposits will be followed, including the taking of monolith samples.

Human remains

CAT follows the policy of leaving human remains *in situ* unless there is a clear indication that the remains are in danger of being compromised as a result of their exposure or unless advised to do so by the project osteologist or the ECCHEA. If circumstances indicated it were prudent or necessary to remove remains from the site during the evaluation, the following criteria would be applied; if it is clear from their position, context, depth, or other factors that the remains are ancient, then normal procedure is to apply to the Department of Justice for a licence to remove them and seek advice from the project osteologist. Following Historic England guidance (2018) if the human remains are not to be lifted, the project osteologist should be available to record the human remain *in situ* (i.e. a site visit). Conditions laid down by the DoJ license will be followed. If it seems that the remains are not ancient, then the coroner, the client, and the ECCHEA will be informed, and any advice and/or instruction from the coroner will be followed.

Photographic record

Will include both general and feature-specific photographs, the latter with scale and north arrow. A photographic register giving context number, details, and direction of shot will be prepared on site, and included in the site archive.

Finds

All significant finds will be retained.

All finds, where appropriate, will be washed and marked with site code and context number.

Most of our finds reports are written internally by CAT staff under the supervision and direction of Philip Crummy (Director) and Laura Pooley (Post-excavation Manager). This includes specialist subjects such as:

ceramic finds (pottery and ceramic building material): Matthew Loughton
animal bones: Alec Wade (or Adam Wightman/Pip Parmenter - small groups only)
small finds, metalwork, coins, etc: Laura Pooley
non-ceramic bulk finds: Laura Pooley
flint: Adam Wightman
environmental processing: Bronagh Quinn
osteology: (human remains): Megan Seehra

or to outside specialists:

animal and human bone: Julie Curl (*Sylvanus*)
environmental assessment and analysis: Val Fryer / Lisa Gray
archaeometallurgy: David Dungworth
radiocarbon dating: SUERC Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, Glasgow
conservation/x-ray: Laura Ratcliffe (LR Conservation) / Norfolk Museums Service, Conservation and Design Services

Other specialists whose opinion can be sought on large or complex groups include:

flint: Tom Lawrence
prehistoric pottery: Stephen Benfield / Nigel Brown / Paul Sealey
Roman pottery: Stephen Benfield / Paul Sealey / Jo Mills / Gwladys Monteil
Roman brick/tile: Ian Betts
Roman glass: Hilary Cool
small finds: Nina Crummy
other: EH Regional Adviser in Archaeological Science (East of England).

All finds of potential treasure will be removed to a safe place, and the coroner informed immediately, in accordance with the rules of the Treasure Act 1996. The definition of treasure is given in pages 3-5 of the Code of Practice of the above act. This refers primarily to gold or silver objects.

Requirements for conservation and storage of finds will be agreed with the appropriate museum prior to the start of work, and confirmed to the ECCHEA.

A contingency will be made in the budget for scientific assessment/analysis if suitable deposits are identified. This can include soil micromorphological and geochemical analysis of floors and dark earth deposits and/or absolute dating (such as archaeomagnetic and radiocarbon). The Historic England Regional Science Advisor will be consulted for advice.

Post-excavation assessment

An updated post-excavation assessment will be submitted within 2 months or at an alternatively agreed time with the ECCHEA.

Where archaeological results do not warrant a post-excavation assessment then agreement will be sought from the ECCHEA to proceed straight to grey literature / publication.

Results

Notification will be given to ECCHEA when the fieldwork has been completed.

An appropriate archive will be prepared to minimum acceptable standards outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (Historic England 2015).

The report will be submitted within 6 months of the end of fieldwork, with a copy supplied to the Historic Environment Advisor as a single PDF.

The report will contain:

- Location plan of trenches in relation to the proposed development. At least two corners of each excavated area will be given a 10 figure grid reference.
- Section/s drawings showing depth of deposits from present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale.
- Archaeological methodology and detailed results including a suitable conclusion and discussion.
- Appropriate discussion and results section assessing the site in relation to the Regional Research Frameworks (Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott 2011. <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>).
- All specialist reports or assessments
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results.

An OASIS summary sheet will be completed at the end of the project and supplied to the ECCHEA. This will be completed in digital form with a paper copy included with the archive. A copy (with trench plan) will also be emailed to the Hon. Editor of the Essex Archaeology and History Journal for inclusion in the annual round-up of projects (paul.gilman@me.com).

Publication of the results at least a summary level (i.e. round-up in *Essex Archaeology & History*) shall be undertaken in the year following the archaeological fieldwork. An allowance will be made in the project costs for the report to be published in an adequately peer reviewed journal or monograph series.

A PDF copy of the full report will be uploaded by CAT to the OASIS website and the Colchester Archaeological Trust's Online Report Library (<http://cat.essex.ac.uk/>), both of which are publicly accessible.

Archive deposition

The requirements for archive storage shall be agreed with the Curating museum.

If finds are retained from the site the full archive will be deposited with Southend Museum unless otherwise agreed in advance. (A full copy of the archive shall in any case be deposited). If there are no finds a full digital archive will be deposited with ADS Archaeology.

The requirements for archive storage will be agreed with the curating museum.

If the finds are to remain with the landowner, a full copy of the archive will be housed with the curating museum and provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration and analysis) as appropriate.

The digital archive resulting from the work will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk) to safeguard the long-term curation of the digital records. The ECCHEA will be notified when the digital archive has been deposited. Prior to deposition CAT's data management plan (based on the official guidelines from the Digital Curation Centre [DCC 2013]) will ensure the integrity of the digital archive. A summary

of the contents of the archives shall be supplied to the ECCHEA at the time of their deposition.

The ECCHEA will be notified when the digital archive has been deposited.

Monitoring

ECCHEA will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project, and will be kept regularly informed during fieldwork, post-excavation and publication stages.

Notification of the start of work will be given to the ECCHEA one week in advance of its commencement.

Any variations in this WSI will be agreed with the ECCHEA prior to them being carried out.

The ECCHEA will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

The involvement of the ECCHEA shall be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

Public outreach

As part of CAT's public outreach programme, CAT is committed to engaging our local community with their archaeological resource. Among other activities, CAT regularly invites volunteers to engage in finds processing tasks at our office, such as washing, marking, sorting and packing bulk archaeological finds from commercial archaeological projects. Our volunteer programme is not designed to replace the work of paid archaeologists but to compliment it, and to provide greater public benefit by means of community engagement and participation.

CAT volunteers are fully trained in all tasks they are engaged in and are fully supervised by a CAT employee at all times. Finds processing volunteers are managed and supervised by a Senior Post-Excavation Assistant, whose role is to ensure that all volunteer processing is carried out to the highest possible standard and within professional guidelines. This is overseen by the Post-Excavation Manager and Director.

CAT will never use volunteers in place of employees when funding is agreed for the latter, or if doing so would disadvantageously affect the timetable of works agreed between CAT and our clients.

CAT's liability insurance policies cover the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. All activities are carried out according to CAT's 'Volunteer and work experience policy' and 'Outreach, public relations and publicity policy'.

Events, activities and social media

In addition, the CAT website (www.thecolchesterarchaeologist.co.uk) and social media sites are updated regularly with information on our events and activities, with copies of our archaeological reports freely available at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk/>. Staff regularly give talks/lectures to groups, societies and schools, information on which (including any fees) is available by contacting the office on 01206 501785. CAT also works in partnership with both the Colchester Archaeological Group and Young Archaeologists Club providing venues for their meetings, advice and assistance.

References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in PDF format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

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|-------------------------------|-------|--|
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