

**Archaeological trial-trenching
on land to the rear of
223-233 Brentwood Road,
Romford, Essex
February 2013**

**report prepared by
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**commissioned by
Tim Snow Architects
on behalf of
Cliff Park Developments Ltd**

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NGR: TQ 52500 88530 (c)
LAARC site code: BNW13
Planning ref: P1047.12



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1 Summary

Four trial-trenches were excavated by the Colchester Archaeological Trust on former gardens where nine four-bedroom dwellings are proposed to be built.

An undated linear feature and two undated pits were identified in the trenches along with nine modern post-holes.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 This is the archive report on the archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land to the rear of 223-233 Brentwood Road, Romford, Essex (NGR TQ 5251 8853, Fig 1).
- 2.2 The proposed development comprises the construction of nine four-bedroom detached houses. A planning application for this development was submitted to the London Borough of Havering in September 2012 (P1047.12). The programme of archaeological works was carried out in response to a condition recommended by the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS) and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation compiled by CAT.
- 2.3 The site occupies the northern part of six former back gardens, and is characterised by rough grassed areas with many trees and shrubs and garden features. The land is predominantly flat with a very gentle rise to the north. The west side of the site has been used as a dumping ground for builder's waste and rubbish. The site is located on part of the Essex Plateau, the southern edge of the Bagshot Sands and Claygate Member which characterise the southern part of Essex. These sands and gravels form a ridge overlooking the Lea Valley with the land rising sharply from 20m AOD at Romford to 70m AOD at Harold Hill with overlying seasonally wet clays and loams (Baxter 2011).
- 2.4 Four trial-trenches (T1-T4) totalling 70.5m in length were excavated within the proposed development site. The trenches were excavated on 18th February 2013, under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.5 Areas of interest were hand-cleaned and excavated, with individual contexts recorded on pro-forma sheets. The trenches were planned using a Total Station and representative sections of each trench and context were drawn at a scale of 1:10. The site level was tied into Ordnance Survey Datum obtained by dumpy traverse from a cut mark on 204 Brentwood Road. Record shots of both the site and individual contexts were taken on a digital camera and are appended to this report on the accompanying CD. Metal-detecting of the spoil from the trenches and of individual contexts was also undertaken.
- 2.6 The relevant documents of the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA) were followed, i.e. *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (2008) and *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluations* (2008). Other guidelines followed are those published in *GLAAS Standards for Archaeological Work, Papers 3 and 4* (2009).

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 This section is based on records provided by the Greater London Historic Environment Record.
- 3.2 The site overlies the Bagshot Sands with the majority of the soils being seasonally wet clays and loams, making the area generally unsuited to early settlement or agriculture. This led to the existence of major areas of royal hunting forests at Havering and Epping Forest. These were a mix of wood and open grasslands and precluded settlement cores, except around the major roads out of London. The main suburbanisation of the area occurred during the interwar period (Baxter 2011).
- 3.3 Recorded archaeology near to the development area is sparse. Palaeolithic tools were recovered from Globe Road, Hornchurch, south-west of the site (GLHER 060001/00/00) and a Roman coin found at Gidea Park to the north-east (GLHER 060042/00/00). A site excavated on Osbourne Road, Hornchurch, to the south-east

revealed Late Iron Age to Early Romano-British field boundaries (GLHER MLO 100447) and an undated building was found at Heath Park Road to the north (GLHER 060946/00/00). Map evidence suggests the presence of a medieval to early post-medieval moated manor site at Great Gardens Road, Hornchurch to the east (GLHER 060790/00/00) and a 17th-century glass vessel was recovered from Gidea Park (GLHER 060040/00/00).

4 Aims

- 4.1 The specific aim of the investigation was to determine the presence and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits/features within the development area and where present to record these features and to determine the need for any further archaeological work or mitigation measures.
- 4.2 A further aim was to assess the development impact on any archaeological remains found during the evaluation.

5 Results

5.1 T1 (Figs 2-4, Plate 1)

T1 was located east to west to the north of the site (Fig 2). The east end of the trench was excavated through a grassed area with the west end excavated through dumped mounds of imported orange clay. A dark greyish black sandy-silt topsoil (context 18) directly overlaid an orangey-yellow/grey glacial sandy-clay gravel (context 19) (Fig 4). No finds were observed in contexts 18 and 19.

A single archaeological feature was uncovered in T1. This was a shallow linear gully (context 20) with roughly parallel sides, orientated north-east to south-west (Figs 3, 4). The fill of this feature (context 32) was a dark greyish-brown silty-clay with rare charcoal flecks. No other finds were observed in the fill.

T2 (Figs 2-4)

T2 was located north to south in the approximate centre of the development area (Fig 2). A dark greyish black sandy-silt topsoil (context 16, equivalent to context 18) directly overlaid an orangey-yellow/grey glacial sandy-clay gravel (context 17, equivalent to context 9) (Fig 4). No finds were recovered from contexts 16 and 17 and no archaeological features were identified.

T3 (Figs 2-4, Plate 2)

T3 was located east to west in the southern part of the site (Fig 2). In T3, as in T1 and T2, a dark greyish black sandy-silt topsoil (context 13, equivalent to contexts 16 and 18) directly overlaid an orangey-yellow/grey glacial sandy-clay gravel (context 14, equivalent to contexts 17 and 19) (Fig 4). No finds were recovered from these contexts.

A pit feature (context 15) was identified in the eastern end of T3 (Fig 3). Context 15 was round in shape and cut into the natural. The fill of context 15 (context 31) was a dark greyish-brown silt which contained charcoal flecks (Fig 4).

T4 (Figs 2-4, Plate 3)

T4 was located north to south in the south-west part of the site (Fig 2). As in each of the other trenches a dark greyish black sandy-silt topsoil (context 1, equivalent to contexts 13, 16 and 18) directly overlaid an orangey-yellow/grey glacial sandy-clay gravel (context 2, equivalent to contexts 14, 17 and 19) (Fig 4). No finds were recovered from these contexts.

A pit feature (context 12) was identified in T4 (Fig 3). Context 12 was shallow and sub-rectangular in shape and extended east beneath the trench edge. The fill of context 12 (context 30) was a greyish-black silty-clay with charcoal flecking (Fig 4). Nine modern post-holes (contexts 3-9) with the remains of reinforced concrete posts (contexts 21-29) were also identified in T4. These were aligned north to south and were in line with existing garden boundaries.



Plate 1:
T1, context 20 view north-east.

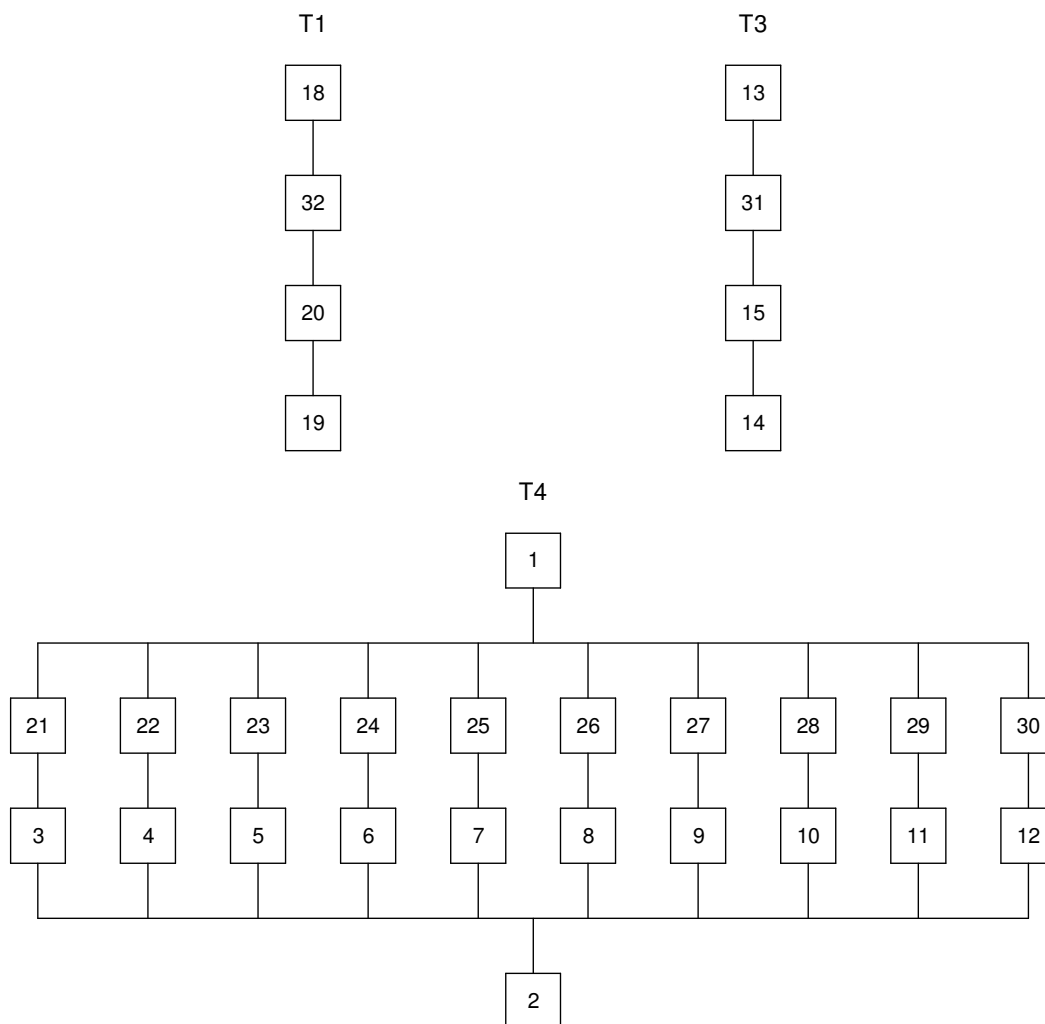


Plate 2:
T3, context 15 view north-west.



Plate 3:
T4, context 12 view east.

5.2 Harris matrices



6 Discussion

Twelve archaeological features were recorded during the evaluation: two undated pits; an undated linear feature; and nine modern post-holes. No definitive evidence for the prehistoric and Romano-British activity noted in the surrounding area was encountered, although it is possible that the undated linear feature may form part of the Romano-British field system discovered at Osbourne Road to the south.

The paucity of archaeological features and finds on the site reflects the limited amount of archaeology recorded in the area surrounding the development. This supports the theory that the land overlying the Bagshot Sands was unsuited for early settlement and remained as a wooded landscape until the urbanisation of the 20th century.

With so little evidence for significant archaeology on the site and surrounding area, CAT recommends that no further archaeological work needs to be undertaken on the site.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Tim Snow Architects for commissioning the project on behalf of Cliff Park Developments Ltd. The site work was undertaken by C Lister

and B Holloway. The digital survey is by C Lister and the section illustrations are by E Holloway.
The project was monitored by Adam Single for the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service.

8 References

Note: all CAT fieldwork reports are available online in .pdf format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

Baxter, A	2011	London's Natural Signatures: The London Landscape Framework
CAT	2013	Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological trial-trenching on land to the rear of 223-233 Brentwood Road, Romford, Essex by C Lister
GLAAS	2012	Archaeological condition advice for trial-trenching on land to the rear of 223-233 Brentwood Road, Romford, Essex issued by Adam Single
GLAAS	2009	<i>Standards for Archaeological Work, Paper 3</i>
GLAAS	2009	<i>Standards for Archaeological Work, Paper 4</i>
IfA	2008	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
IfA	2008	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluations</i>
Museum of London	1998	<i>Guidelines for the Preparation of Archaeological Archives</i>

9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
context	specific location an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
GLAAS	Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service
GLHER	Greater London Historic Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	after Henry VIII to around the late 18th century
Roman	AD 43 to 410

10 Archive deposition

- 10.1 The full archive will be deposited at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre within one year of completion of final publication report on the project under accession code BNW 13.
- 10.2 The storage of the archive will accord with the standards set out in *Guidelines for the Preparation of Archaeological Archives* (Museum of London, 1998).

11 Contents of archive

One A4 document wallet containing:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Copy of the evaluation brief issued by the GLAAS Advisor
- 1.2 Copy of the WSI produced by CAT
- 1.3 Risk assessment
- 1.4 1 x A3 site plan provided by developer

2 Site archive

- 2.1 Site digital photographic record
- 2.2 Site 35mm black and white photographic record
- 2.3 Attendance register
- 2.4 Context sheets (1-32)
- 2.5 Site photographic record on CD
- 2.6 Site 35mm prints and negatives

3 Research archive

- 3.1 Monitoring (client) report

Not in wallet

- 1 x A3 Sx sheet

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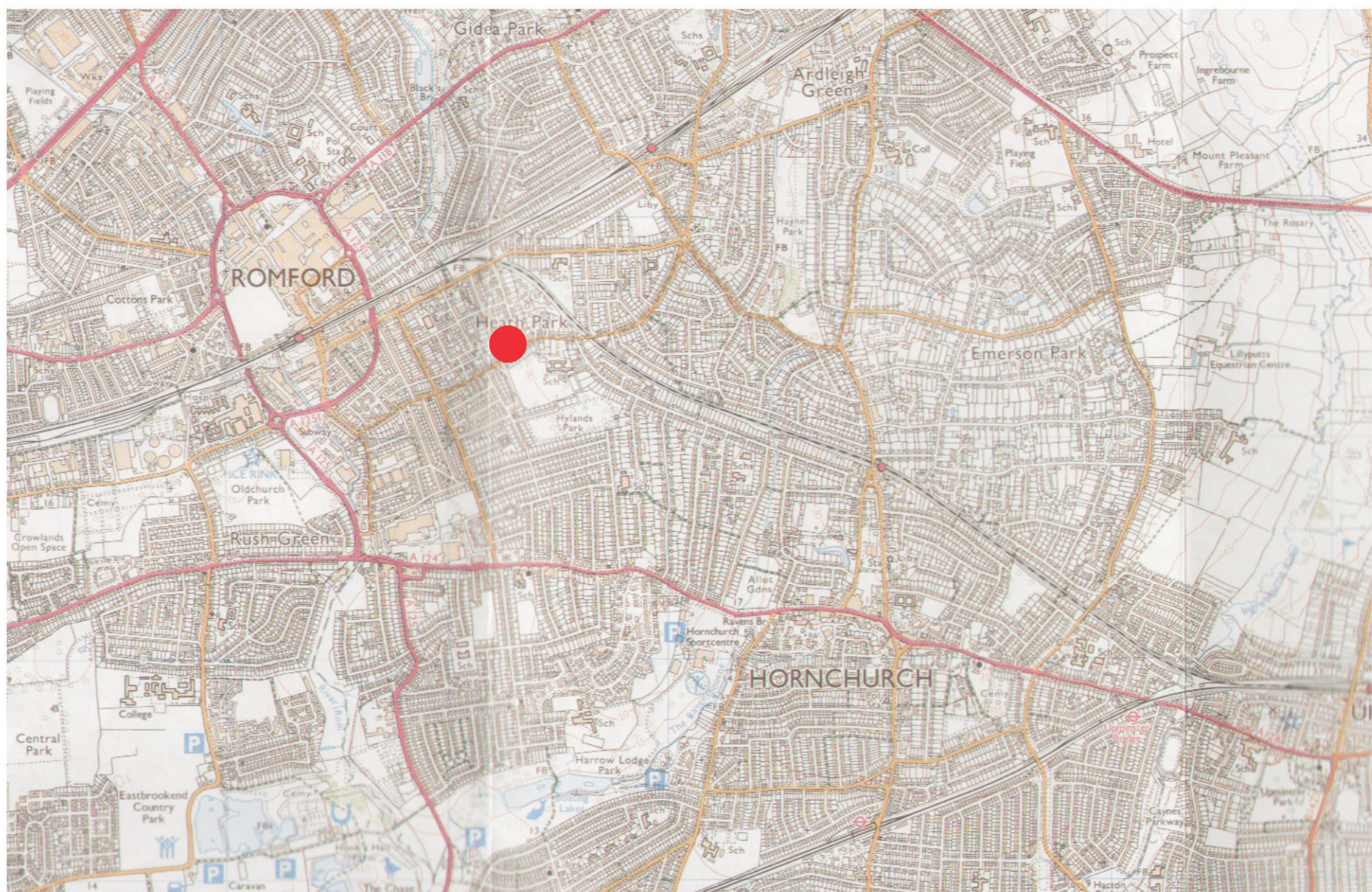
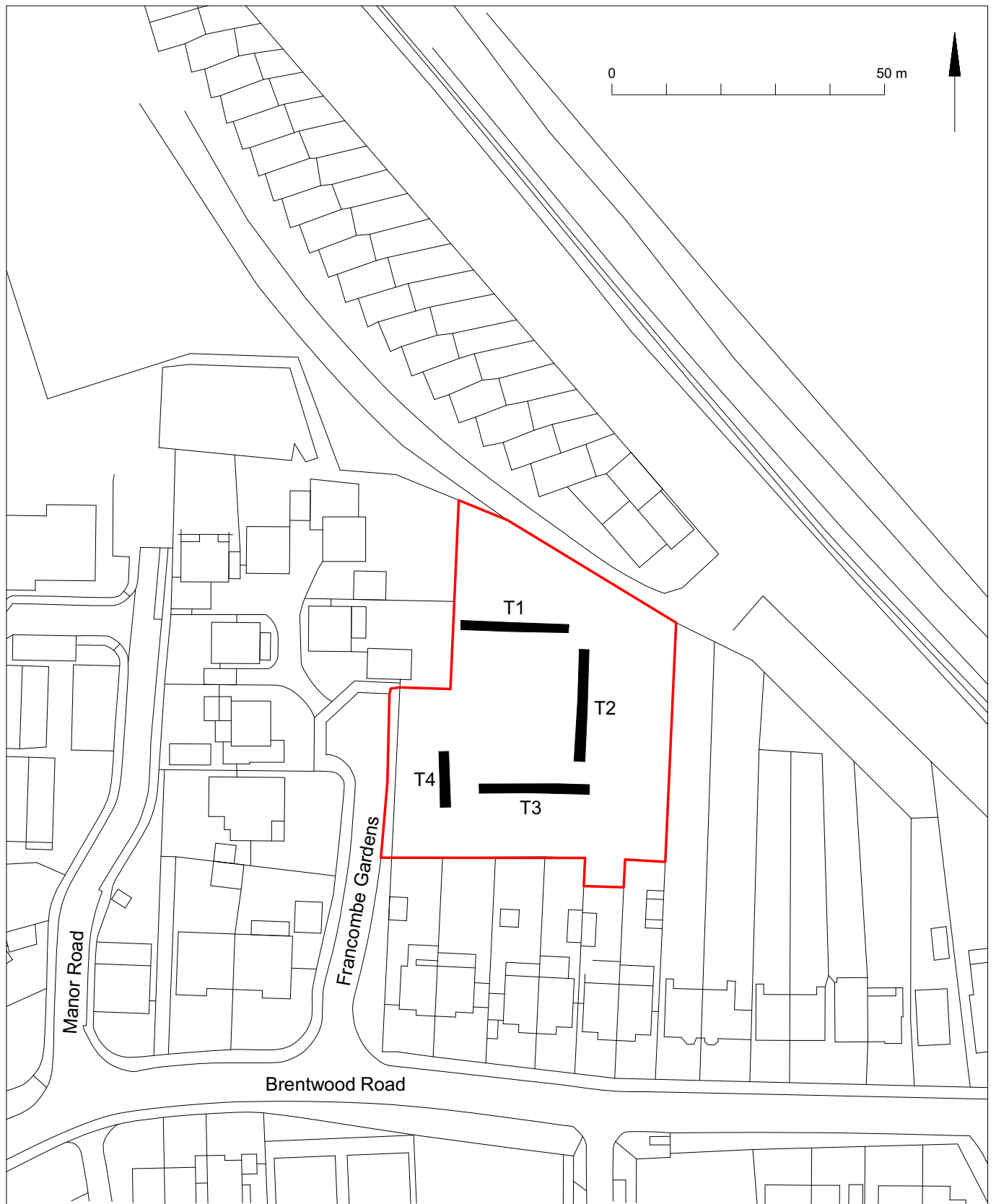


Fig 1 Site location (shown as red dot).

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Fig 2 Trench locations.

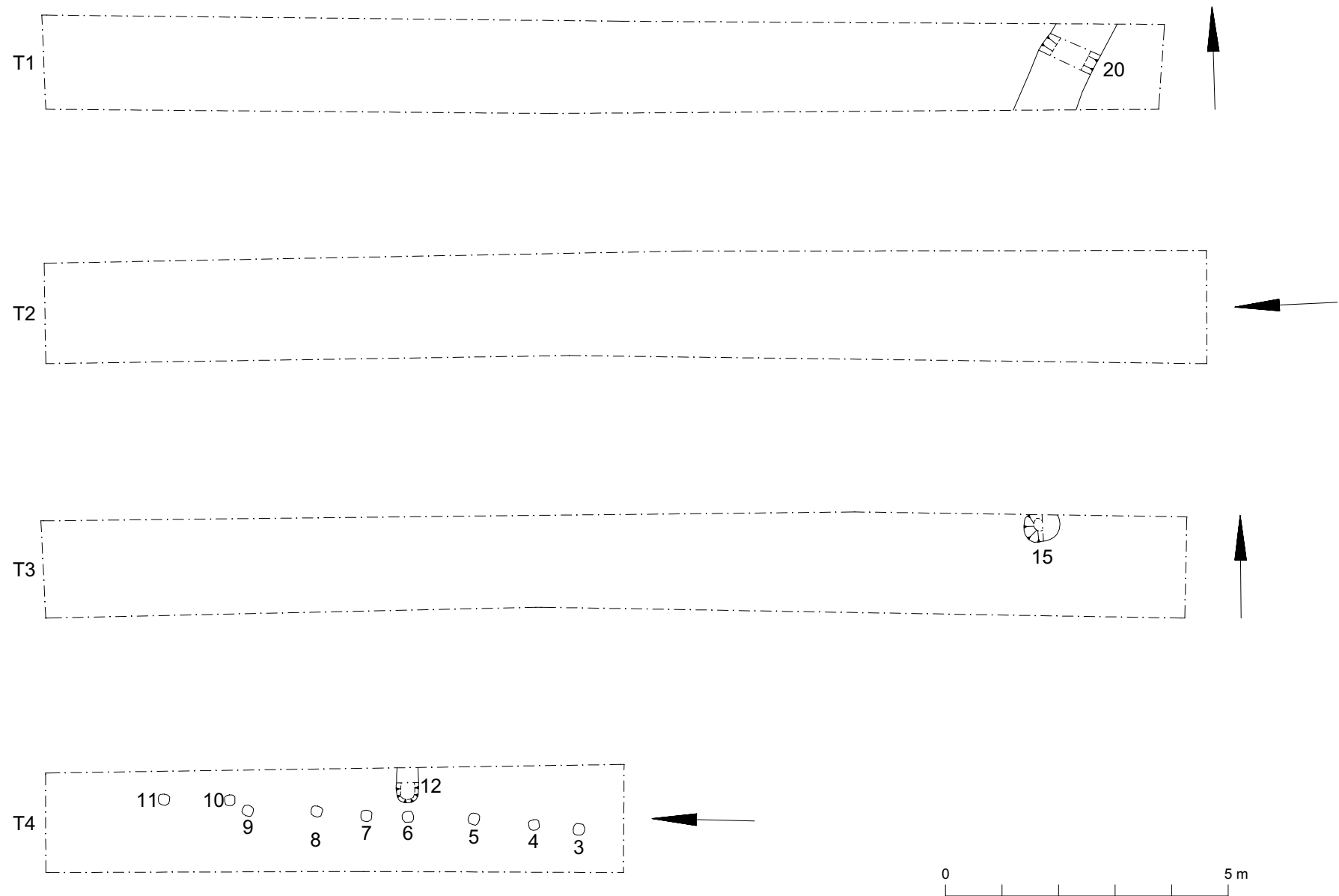


Fig 3 Trial-trenching results.

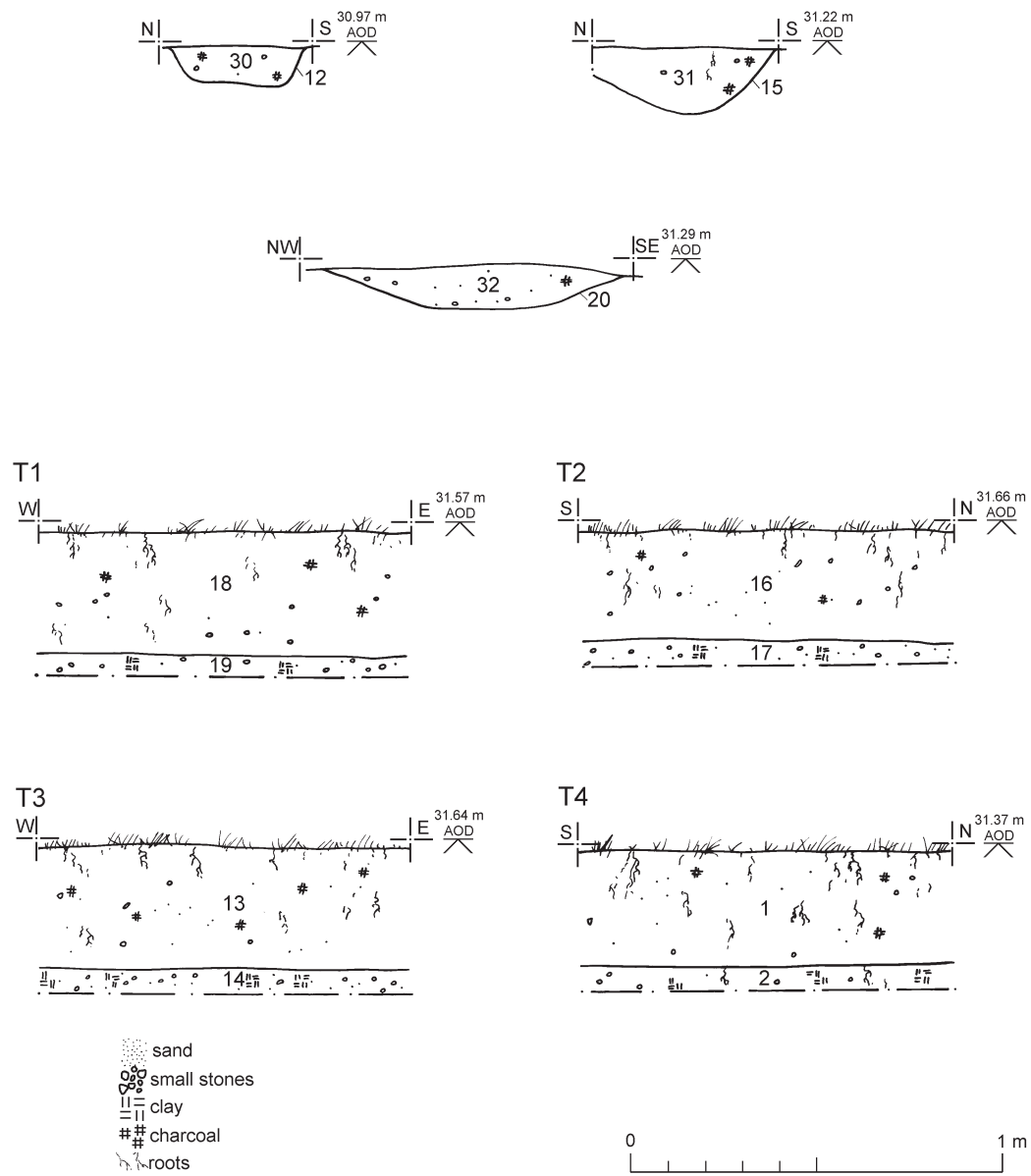


Fig 4 Context sections (12, 15 and 20). Representative trench sections (T1-4).