

Archaeological trial-trenching evaluation at Down Hall Residential Home, Down Hall Road, Bradwell-on-Sea, Essex

January 2014



report prepared by Ben Holloway
and Howard Brooks

on behalf of Mr Simon Patten

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1 Summary

Down Hall is a Domesday manorial site on the northern edge of the historic settlement of Bradwell-on-Sea. The proposed development site is a rectangular area in the landscaped grounds of Down Hall. Five evaluation trenches (total length, 80m) were positioned within the footprint of a terrace of six new units and a pair of linked care units.

There were four archaeological features: post-medieval/modern pits and a ditch. All were associated with the landscaping of the Down Hall grounds. There was no evidence of buildings connected with an earlier medieval manorial hall, or the later Tudor hall.



Plate 1: Trench 1, view east towards Hall

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report on the archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at Down Hall Residential Home, Down Hall Road, Bradwell-on-Sea, on 7th January 2014. The work was commissioned by Simon Patten. Post-excavation work was carried out in January 2014.

At the time of the evaluation the site was in the open and grassed gardens of Down Hall Residential Home. Proposed development involves the construction of a new terrace of six and a pair of linked extra care units and associated infrastructure.

Site centre is NGR TM 0031 7445.

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background utilises the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford.

The proposed development site is located on the site of the Domesday manor of Down Hall (EHER 45957). The original Anglo-Saxon manor was superseded by a medieval manor. In 1580 the medieval manor house was re-built. The Tudor house appears to have been demolished in the early 19th century, and a new house built on the site. The gardens were extensively landscaped in the 1850s. The present Down Hall dates to the 19th/early 20th century. There was therefore a high probability of finding archaeological features and deposits relating to the successive phases of occupation.

4 Methodology

Place Services of Essex County Council (ECCPS) were consulted by Maldon District Council in January 2013 for planning applications 13/00751/MAL. In response to consultation, ECCPS made the following recommendation to the LPA in line with advice given in *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012):

" L2 Implementation of Archaeological Fieldwork Programme

No development including any site clearance or groundworks of any kind shall take place within the site until the applicant or their agents; the owner of the site or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work from an accredited archaeological contractor in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in a manner that accommodates the approved programme of archaeological work."

A brief detailing the required archaeological work (an evaluation by trial-trenching) was written by the Place Services officer (Maria Medlycott: ECC 2013). All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a WSI (Written Scheme of Investigation) produced by CAT in response to the Place Services brief and agreed with the Place Services officer (CAT 2013).

All fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with the recognised national standards as defined in IfA 2008a, IfA 2008b, EAA 14, and EAA 24.

5 Aim

The aim of the evaluation is to record and establish the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any remains and deposits likely to be disturbed by the proposed works.

6 Results of the evaluation (Figs 4-10)

This section gives an archaeological summary of the evaluation trenches (T1-T5), with context and finds dating information.

The evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator, through three layers: L1, a modern topsoil 250mm thick, which sealed L2, a silty/clay accumulation horizon 150mm thick. L2 sealed natural boulder clay with occasional patches of gravel (L3). There were four archaeological features, all of post-medieval/modern origin: pits F1, F2 and F3, and ditch F4. An archaeological summary of each evaluation trench with a tabulation of context and finds dating information follows below.

Trench 1: summary

T1, located on the northern site edge, contained no archaeological material or features.

Trench 2: summary

T2, located on the western site edge, contained the northern edge of a modern backfilled pond which contained large quantities of modern building debris and organic material. Conversation with the client ascertained that the pond backfill was recent.

Trench 2 – archaeology.

Context no	Type	Dated finds	Phase
F1	pond	pottery, brick (not retained)	modern



Plate 2: T3, view north towards Hall

Trench 3: summary

T3, located in the centre of the site, contained a ditch F4, and a modern service run (unexcavated). The ditch is probably a boundary or drainage ditch associated with the grounds of Down Hall, dated to the post-medieval period by the brick and peg-tile fragments in its fill.

Trench 3 – archaeology.

Context no	Type	Dated finds	Phase
F4	ditch	brick	post-medieval/modern

Trench 4: summary

T4, located in the centre of the site, contained two pits, F2 and F3. Both contained post-medieval pottery and peg-tile. Neither contained the volume of material expected of dump of domestic rubbish, so they may be garden features or old shrub pits.

Trench 4 – archaeology.

Context no	Type	Dated finds	Phase
F2	pit	pottery, peg-tile, animal bone	post-medieval/modern
F3	pit	pottery, brick, peg-tile	post-medieval/modern

Trench 5: summary

T5 was located on the southern edge of the evaluation. No archaeological material or features were observed. The trench was excavated through topsoil (L1), accumulation horizon (L2), in to natural geological deposits (L3).

7 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

Introduction

A small quantity of bulk finds was recovered from three contexts (F2, F3 & F4) in two trenches (T3 & T4). The more closely dated finds are of post-medieval and modern date. Finds types are listed by material in Table 1. The pottery was recorded using the Essex post-Roman fabric series (Cunningham, 1985 & *CAR 7*) and the fabrics recorded are listed in Table 2. Finds are listed and described by context in Table 3.

Finds type	no.	wt (g)
Pottery	16	215
Ceramic building material (CBM)	17	4072
Glass	1	2
Slag	1	131
Bone	2	43

Table 1. Type and quantities of finds

Fabric code	Fabric name
40	Pots-medieval red earthenwares (general)
48e	Yellow ware
48d	Staffordshire-type white earthenwares
51b	Flower pot

Table 2. Pottery fabrics list

ctxt	finds no	description of finds	finds spot dating
T3 F4	1	CBM Two complete bricks of same type (one 1343 g, other 1302 g) both approximately 190 x 90 x 40 mm (approximately 7.5 x 3.5 x 1.5 inches) not frogged, cream-yellow fabric, coarse porridgy inclusions up to 5-10 mm, slightly uneven surfaces and slightly rougher base surface. Sunken margin on one brick, creasing visible in sides. Possibly Dutch clinker-type (dated 19th century) (Ryan 1996, 96)	19C?
T4 F2	3	Pottery (14@ 168 g) Fabric 40 (1) (17-18/19C) sherd); Fabric 48D (1) (19-20C); Fabric 48E (11) all part of one bowl (L18/19-20C); Fabric 51B (1) (19-20C) CBM Peg tile pieces (8@ 948 g) one large piece 195 mm long, red sandy fabric, circular cut peg holes, 12-14 mm thick, one small piece appears burnt (med-post-med/modern) Glass (1@ 2 g) green bottle glass (18-19C) Animal bone (2@ 43 g) one can be closely identified as part of a tibia, probably from a sheep	19-20C
T4 F3	2	Pottery (2@ 47 g) Fabric 40 (1) (17-18/19C) sherd); Fabric 48D (1) (19-20C), moulded edge of a plate/dish CBM Peg tile pieces (7@ 479 g) red sandy fabric, circular cut peg holes, 10-14 mm thick, one small piece appears burnt (med-post-med/modern) Slag (1@ 131 g) irregular piece of vesicular, dark coloured, medium weight non magnetic slag with fired clay adhering to one flat surface.	19-20C

Table 3: Types of finds by context and find number

Finds discussion

All of the features produced finds which are, or are probably of modern (19th-20th century) date.

The most closely dated finds are pottery sherds. Modern pottery came from F2 & F3 in Trench 4 (T4) along with a few sherds of post-medieval pottery (17th-18th/19th century).

Pieces of peg-tiles were also recovered from these contexts (F2 & F3). In general the pieces are of a moderately good size and suggest demolition material from structures on or around the site. The peg-tiles are not closely dated, but they appear in relatively common use from the 14th century onward. The date of the contexts here suggest the tiles are most probably of late medieval/post-medieval or modern date.

A third feature F4 (T3) produced two complete bricks. These are probably of Dutch clinker-type, and probably date to the 19th century.

8 Discussion

Evaluation trenching at Down Hall has not produced a great deal of archaeological significance; features were limited and mostly consisted of modern and post-medieval pits. Pottery recovered from F2, F3 and F4 indicates low-level post medieval/modern

activity, probably associated with the early 19th-century development of the grounds of the current Down Hall. There was no evidence for ancillary buildings, or the earlier Anglo-Saxon or medieval manor, or the Tudor structure. This may be due to the fact that the site was extensively landscaped in the 19th century.

Other features were modern, and apparently associated with either the infill of a large ornamental pond on the western site edge, or service infrastructure associated with the current Down Hall.

9 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Mr Simon Patten for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by Ben Holloway, fieldwork carried out by BH, M Baister and Emma Holloway. Figures 1-3 are by MB, and Fig 4 by EH. The project was monitored for the ECC Place Services by Maria Medlycott.

10 References

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

CAR 7	2000	Cotter, J., <i>Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971-85</i> , Colchester Archaeological Report 7
CAT	2013	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological trial trenching at Down Hall, Downhall Road, Bradwell on Sea, Essex</i> . December 2013
Cunningham, C	1985	'A typology for post-Roman pottery in Essex' in Cunningham, C., & Drury, P., <i>Post-medieval sites and their pottery: Moulsham Street, Chelmsford</i> , CBA Research Report 54, 1-16
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> , Department for Communities and Local Government
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14, ed by D Gurney
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 24, by Maria Medlycott
ECC	2013	<i>Brief for archaeological trial trenching at Down Hall Rest Home, Downhall Road, Bradwell on Sea</i>
IfA	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation</i>
IfA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>

11 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material (brick, tile, etc)
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
fill	the soil filling up a hole such as a pit or ditch
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists

modern	from 1800 to nowadays
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	from around 1530 to 1800 AD

12 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by CAT at Roman Circus House, Circular Road North, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museum (accession COLEM 2014.01).

13 Contents of archive

Finds: it is not the intention to retain the finds. However, they will not be discarded until the archive is deposited at Colchester Museum.

Paper record: One A4 wallet containing

Copy of this report
ECC Brief
CAT WSI
Original site record (feature, layer, trench and finds sheets)
Section drawings
Sundries
Photo log and photos on CD

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Distribution list:

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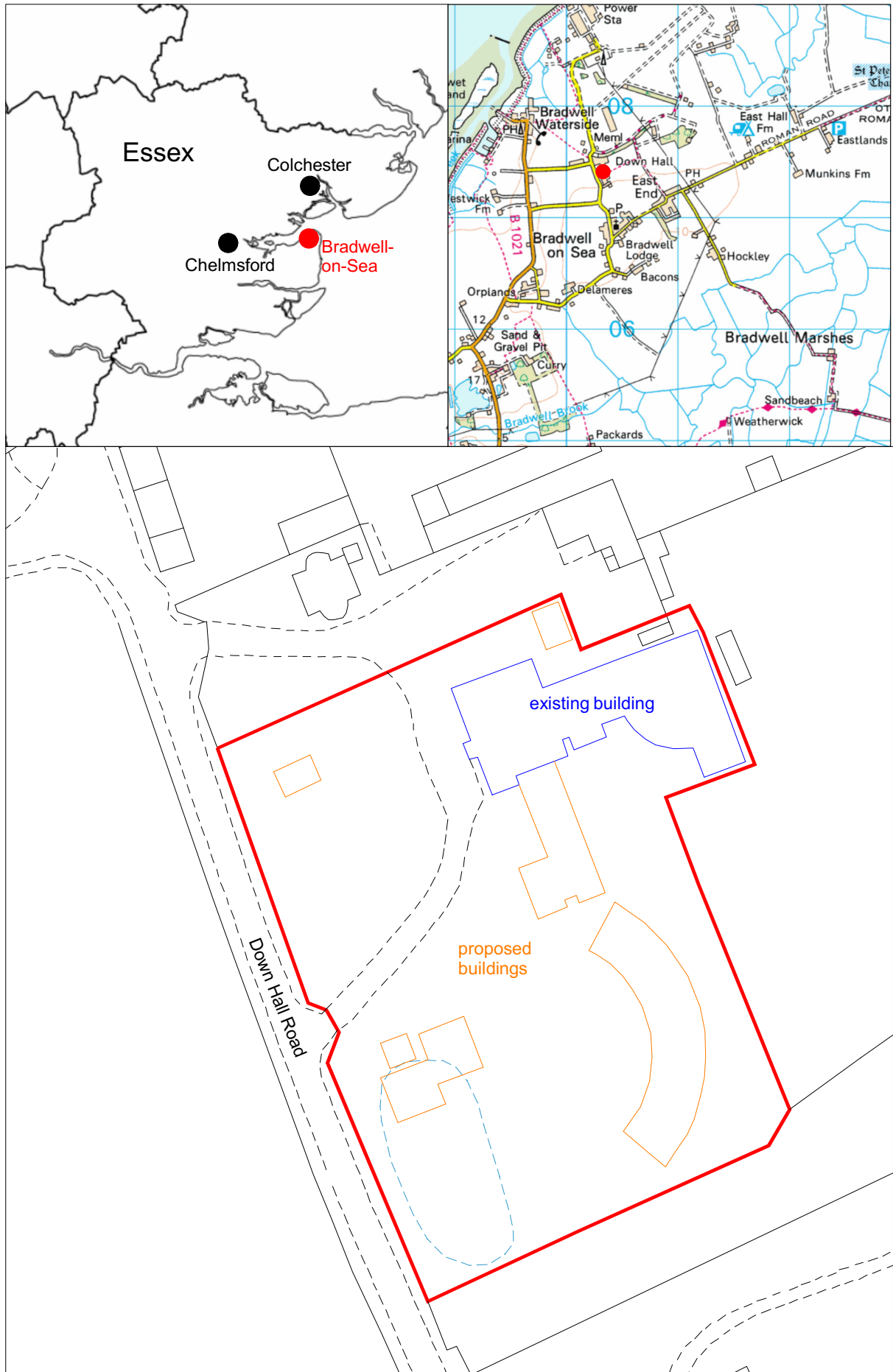


Fig 1 Site location.

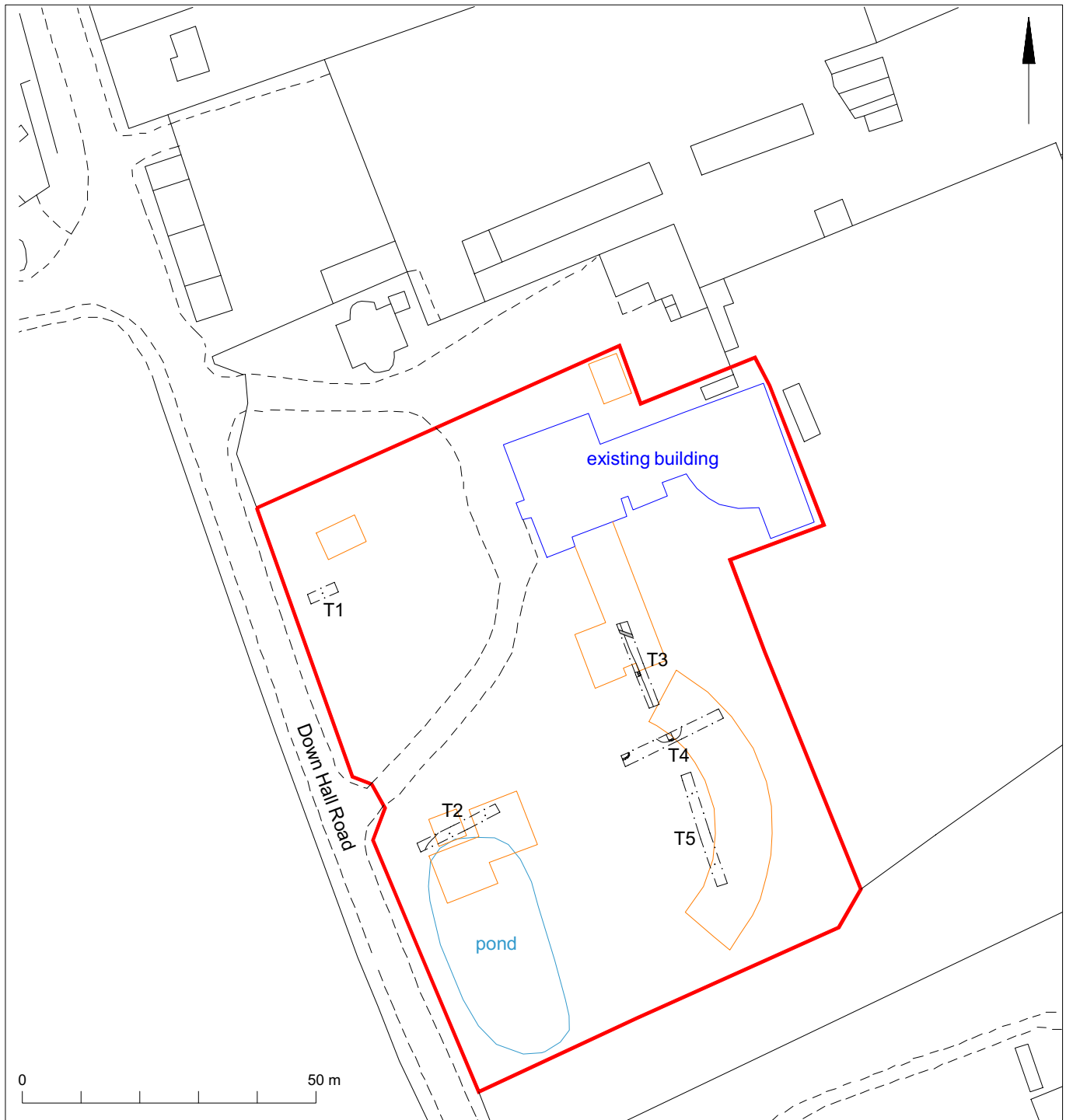


Fig 2 Evaluation results. Proposed development shown in orange.

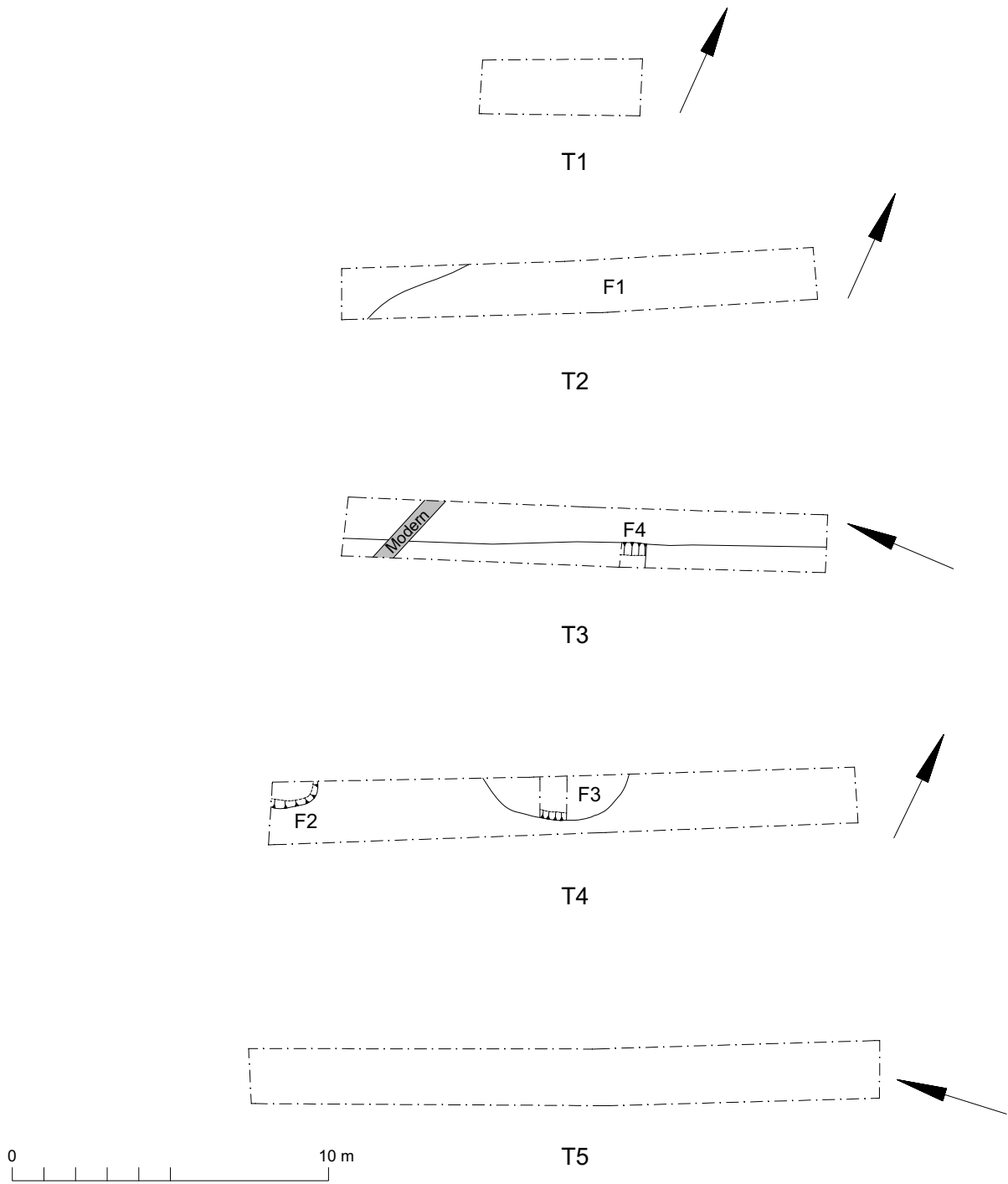


Fig 3 Detailed trench plans.

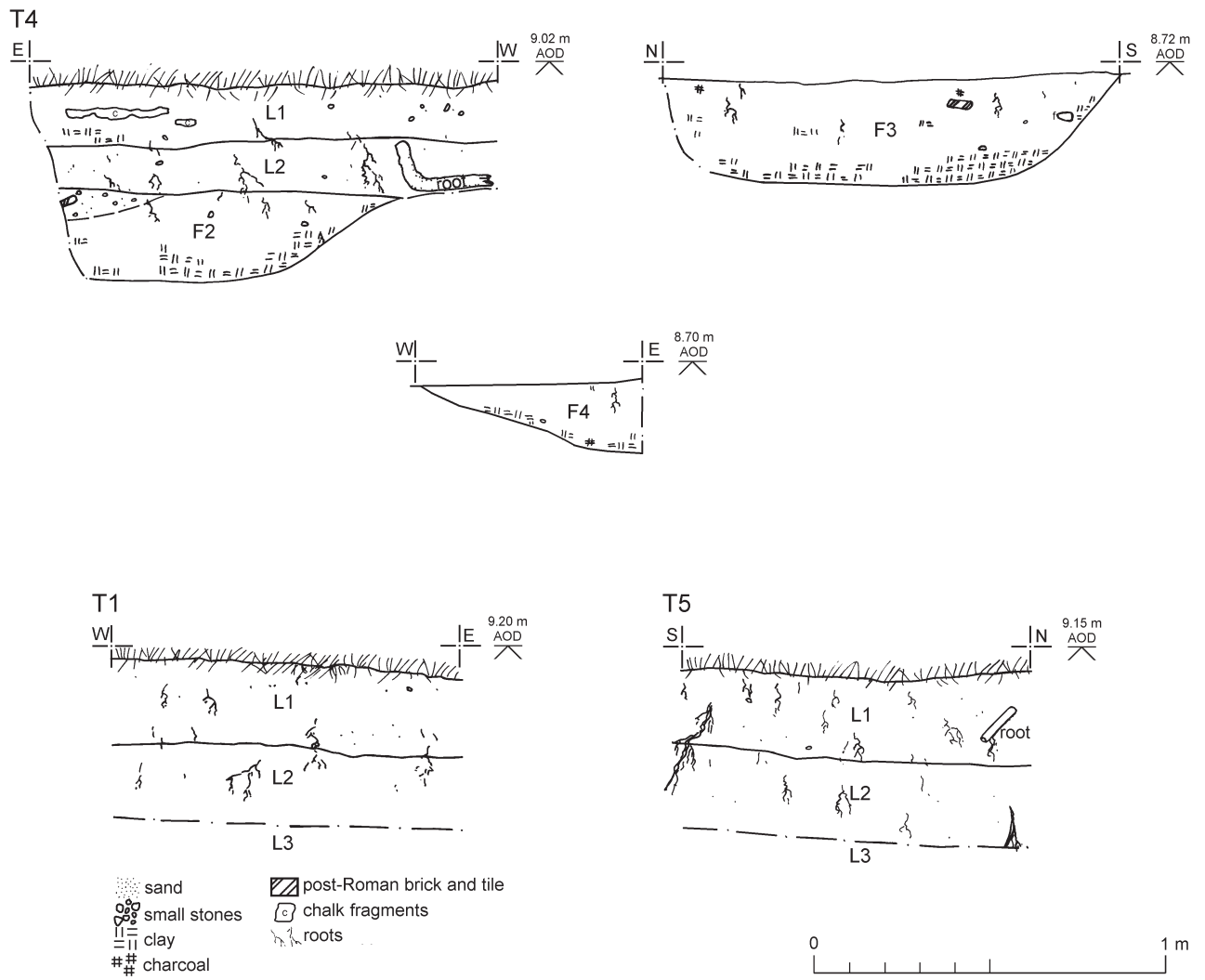


Fig 4 Feature sections (F2-4) and representative trench sections (T1, T4-5).

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Down Hall Residential Home, Down Hall Road, Bradwell-on-Sea	
Parish: Bradwell-on-Sea	District: Maldon
NGR: TM 0031 7445	Site code: CAT project code – 13/12d HET Code – BRDH14
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 7th January 2014	Size of area investigated: 80m (linear)
Location of curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museum accession code : 2014.01	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER number: 45957
Final report: CAT Report 747	
Periods represented: post-medieval/modern	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p><i>Down Hall is a Domesday manorial site on the northern edge of the historic settlement of Bradwell-on-Sea. The proposed development site is a rectangular area in the landscaped grounds of Down Hall. Five evaluation trenches (total length, 80m) were positioned within the footprint a terrace of six new units and a pair of linked care units.</i></p> <p><i>There were four archaeological features: post-medieval/modern pits and a ditch. All were associated with the landscaping of the Down Hall grounds. There was no evidence of buildings connected with an earlier medieval manorial hall, or the later Tudor hall</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: --	
EHER officer: Maria Medlycott	
Keywords: --	Significance: neg
Author of summary: Ben Holloway and H Brooks	Date of summary: January 2014