

Archaeological strip, map and recording on land adjacent to 20 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex

March 2015



by **Pip Parmenter and Adam Wightman**

with a contribution by Stephen Benfield
and illustrations by Emma Holloway

commissioned by Vaughan & Blyth

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CAT Report 832
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EHER summary sheet

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1 Summary

The site is within the Late Iron Age and early Roman 'Lexden Cemetery'. Archaeological strip, map and recording prior to redevelopment revealed a probable post-medieval boundary ditch and six post-medieval/modern pits, but no Roman burials or other features.

2 Introduction

This report presents the results of archaeological strip, map and recording on land adjacent to 20 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex, which was carried out in March 2015 (Figs 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by Vaughan & Blyth in advance of the construction of a four bedroom detached house, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer, Howard Brooks, advised that the proposed site lay in an area of high archaeological importance, and 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 paragraphs 128, 129 and 132 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for archaeological strip, map and recording*, detailing the required archaeological work written by Howard Brooks (CBCPD 2015), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to brief and agreed with CBCPD (CAT 2015).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006), and with *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14 and 24). This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Chartered 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 proposed development site was located within the Lexden Cemetery (EHER 11713, 11714), an extensive Iron Age and Roman cemetery situated on both sides of the Lexden Road, Colchester. It is part of the Iron Age territorial *oppidum* and Romano-British town of Camulodunum. As such, there was a high probability of encountering human remains on the site. The Lexden Dyke (Scheduled Monument 1019966) is just 40m to the west of the site boundary, and the Lexden Tumulus (Scheduled Monument 1019967) is only 140m to the south east. The Lexden Tumulus is an Iron Age barrow that was excavated in 1924. It contained a rich Belgic burial including the remains of funerary bronzes, gold and silver objects and a coin with the head of Augustus mounted as a medallion. The Tumulus is dated to just before the Roman conquest and is thought to possibly be the burial mound of Addedomarus.

4 Results (Figs 2 to 4)

The footprint of the proposed dwelling and associated service trench (an area of approximately 255m²), were excavated using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket.

In the north of the site, a layer of topsoil that had been mixed with sand and gravel from the underlying geology (L1) overlaid the original topsoil (L2) (Fig 4). It is probable that L1 was the upcast soil sand and gravel from the excavation of the foundation trenches for 20 St Clare Road and/or the swimming pool to the west of the site (Fig 2). The original topsoil (L2) was a medium grey/brown sandy-silt which contained very few inclusions other than rounded stones. L2 overlaid the natural geology, which was a compact orange/brown sand (L3). Two sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from L2, and a flint blade, which probably dates to the early Neolithic, was recovered from the interface between L2 and an area of natural sandy-silt (Fig 2).

Eight features were identified (F1-F8). F1 was a large oval-shaped feature with a light grey/brown fill. It contained no inclusions or finds (Fig 3) and was a probably a tree-throw or glacial feature.

Five pits were aligned east to west across the site (F2, F5, F6, F7, F8). They were all shallow and contained medium grey/brown sandy-silt fills. Fragments of peg-tile (not retained) were recovered from pits F5, F6 and F7 and a sherd of post-medieval pottery was also recovered from pit F7. It is possible that these features were post-medieval/modern garden features. Pit F3 was a similar in shape and size to the other five pits and contained the same type of fill, but did not follow the same alignment. Very small pieces of clear bottle glass and post-medieval/modern brick fragments were observed in the fill of F3.

Ditch F4 had a medium brown/grey sandy-silt fill which contained small fragments of peg-tile. It is probable that F4 was a backfilled post-medieval field boundary, as it seems to match a boundary feature that is visible on the 1888 OS Map.

5 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

A very small quantity of finds consisting of a prehistoric worked flint (dating to the late Mesolithic or Neolithic period) and a few sherds of pottery (dating to the Roman and post-medieval period) were recovered from two contexts (L1 & F7). The finds are listed and described in Table 1. The Roman pottery fabrics refer to *CAR 10* and the post-Roman pottery fabrics to *CAR 7*

context	finds no	finds type	fabric	quant	weight	form/description	period	spot date
L2	1	pottery	HZ	2	136	Abraded rim sherd from a large storage jar of form Cam 273, heavily-tempered body sherd from a second vessel of similar type	Roman	M1-2C
L2	3	flint		1	8	Blade with proximal end broken away, earlier parallel blade removal scars on dorsal face, cortex surviving along one edge, use wear/edge damage on other edge (length 60 mm)	prehist	Late Mesolithic-Neolithic (probably Neolithic)
F7	2	pottery	40	1	60	Rim sherd from a large jar, unglazed in fine fabric	post-med	L17-18C

Table 1: Finds by context

6 Discussion (Figs 3 - 4)

Excavation of land adjacent to 20 St Clare Road revealed a ditch and six pits, all thought to be of post-medieval/modern date. The ditch (F4) was probably a backfilled post-medieval boundary ditch, visible on the 1888 OS map of the site. The pits may have been slightly later than the linear feature and related to construction activities around the site. Five of the six pits (F2, F5 – F8) were aligned east to west across the site. The sixth pit (F3) was not on the same alignment but was otherwise very similar to the other pits. The only closely datable item recovered from the pits was a sherd of late 17th/18th century pottery in pit F7. Aside from this, pits F5, F6 and F7 and ditch F4 contained pegtile and pit F3 contained post-medieval/modern brick and fragments of glass. None of the features are thought to be of any particular archaeological significance.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT is grateful to Vaughan & Blyth for commissioning this project. Site work was managed by A Wightman, and undertaken by A Wightman and N Rayner. Figures are by E Holloway.

The project was monitored by Jess Tipper for Colchester Borough Council Planning Department.

8 References

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

CAR 7	2000	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-1985</i> , by J Cotter
CAR 10	1999	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86</i> , by R P Symonds and S Wade
CAT	2015	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological strip, map and recording on land adjacent to 20 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex</i>
CBCPD	2015	<i>Brief for archaeological strip, map and recording on land adjacent to 20 St Clare Road Colchester, Essex</i>
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Dept of Communities and Local Government.
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England, East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14</i> , edited by David Gurney
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24</i> , by Maria Medlycott
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (English Heritage)

9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCAO	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer
CBCPD	Colchester Borough Council Planning Department
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	from Henry VIII to c AD1800
prehistoric	pre-Roman
residual	something out of its original context, e.g. a Roman coin in a modern pit
Roman	the period from AD 43 to circa AD 430
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

10 Contents of archive

Finds

1 museum box containing all finds.

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 832)

CBCPD Evaluation Brief

CAT Written Scheme of Investigation

Original site record (Feature and layer sheets, Finds record, Trench record sheet)

Site digital photographic log: Site photographic record on CD

Attendance register. Benchmark data. Risk assessment

11 Archive deposition

The paper archive and finds are currently held by CAT at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museum under accession code 2015.19.

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Distribution list:

Vaughan & Blyth

Jess Tipper (Colchester Borough Council Planning Department)

EHER



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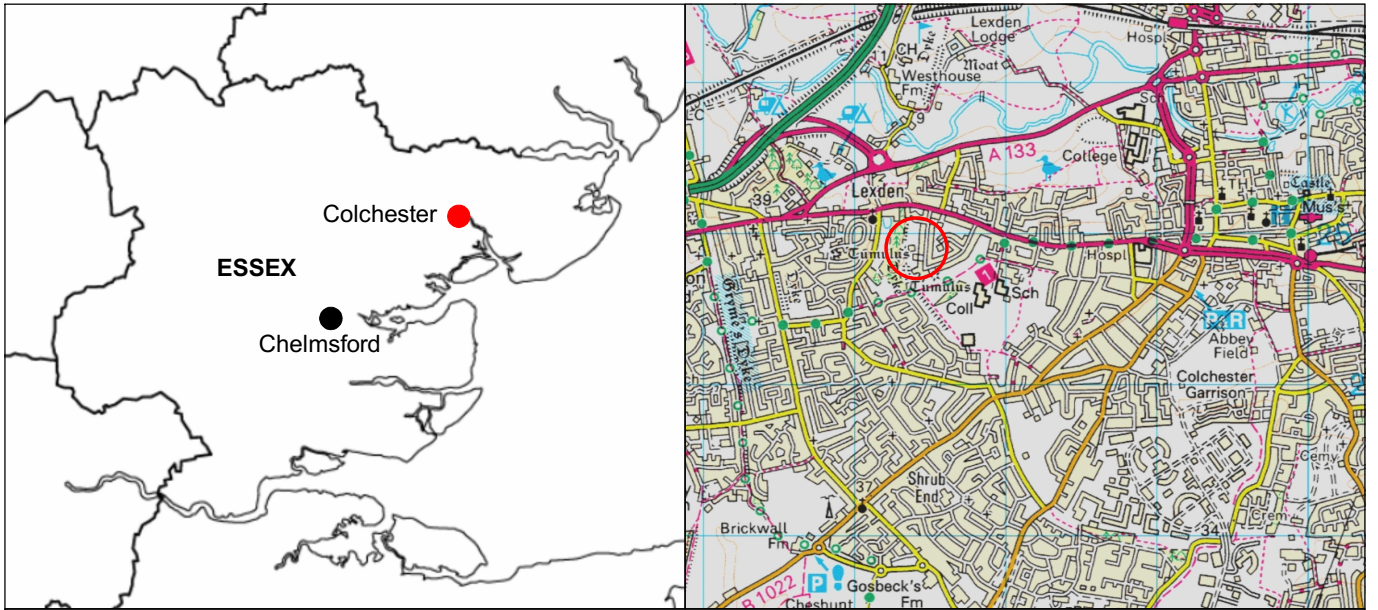
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checked by: Howard Brooks

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Fig 1 Site location.



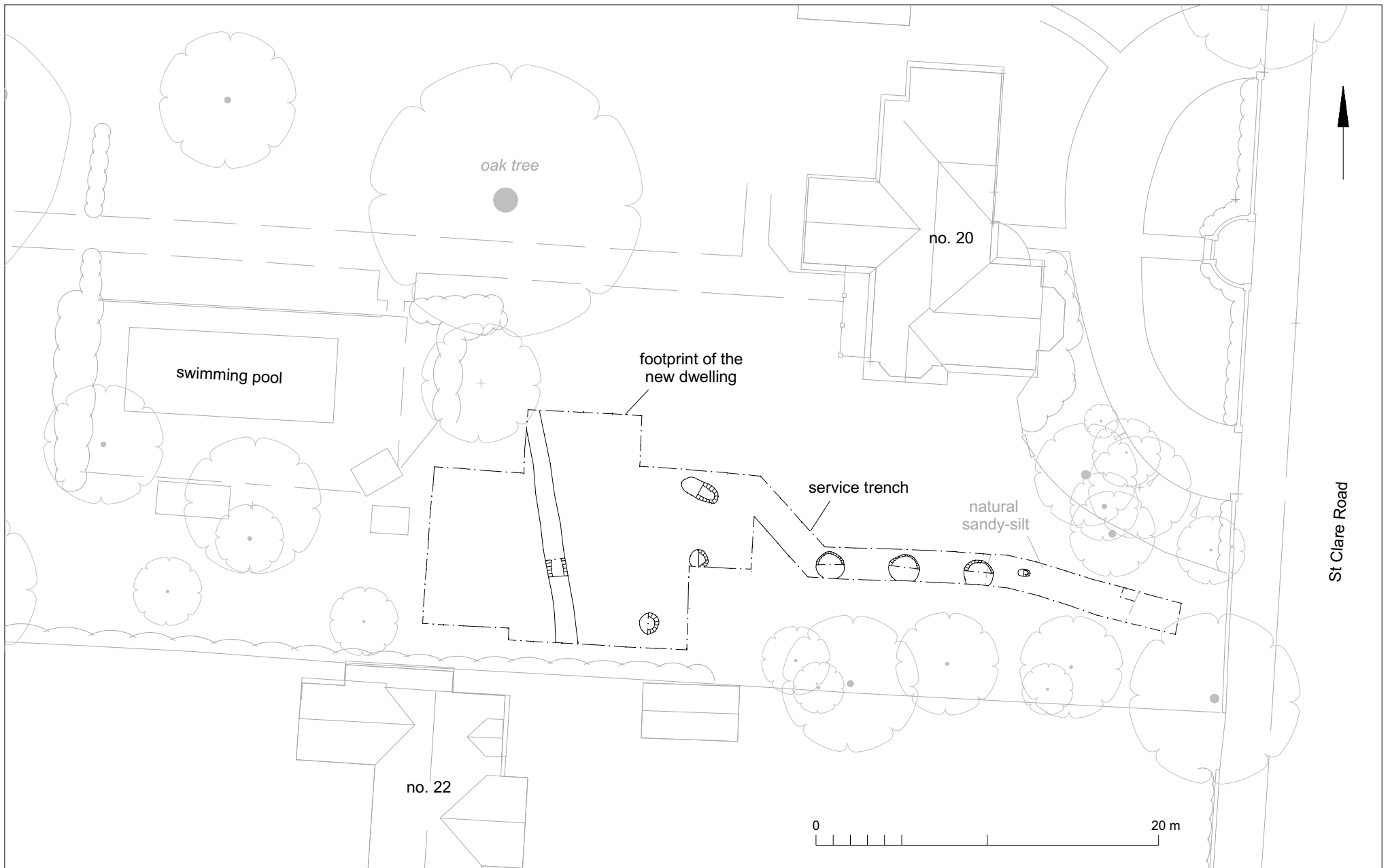


Fig 2 Location of excavation area.

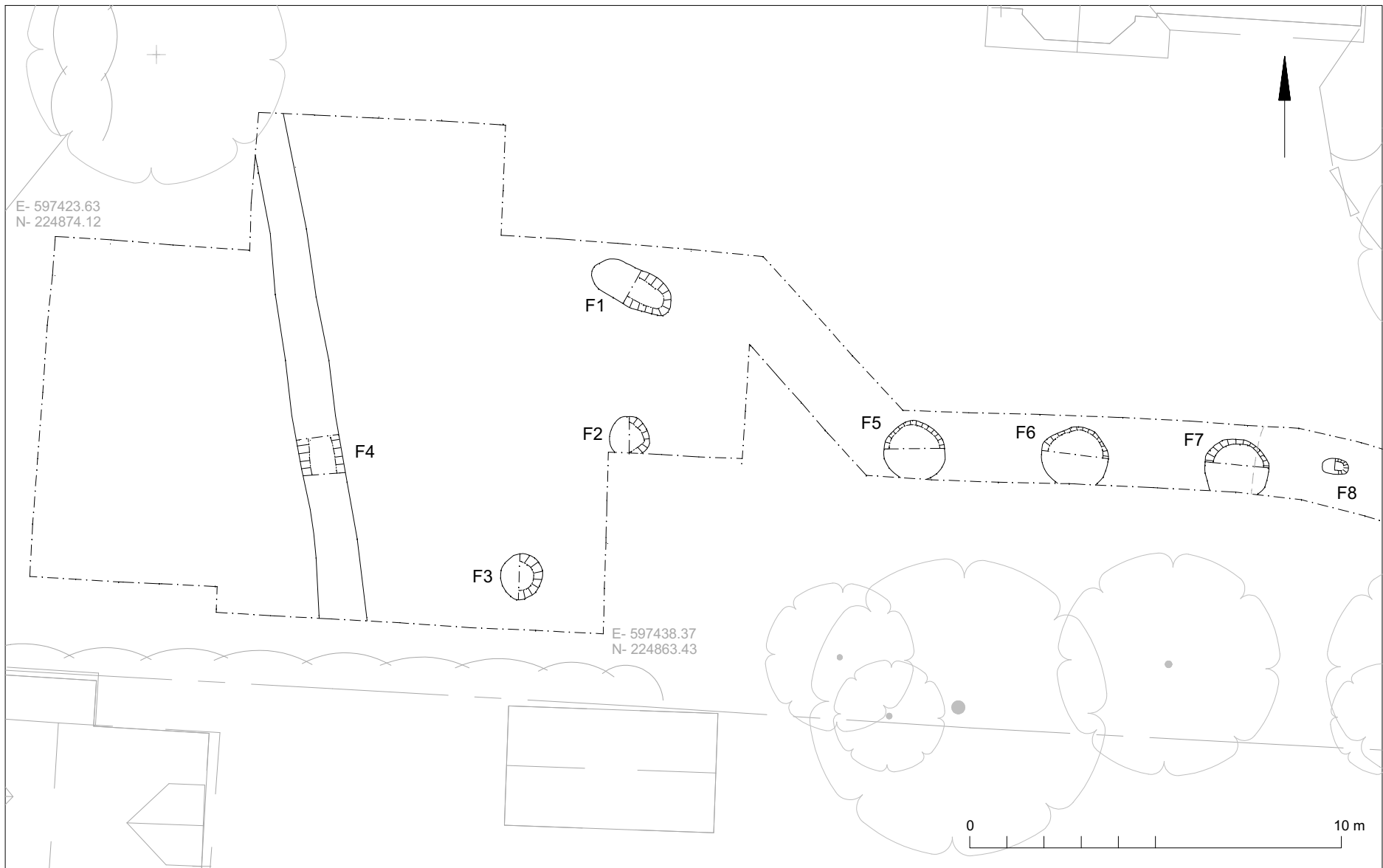


Fig 3 Results.

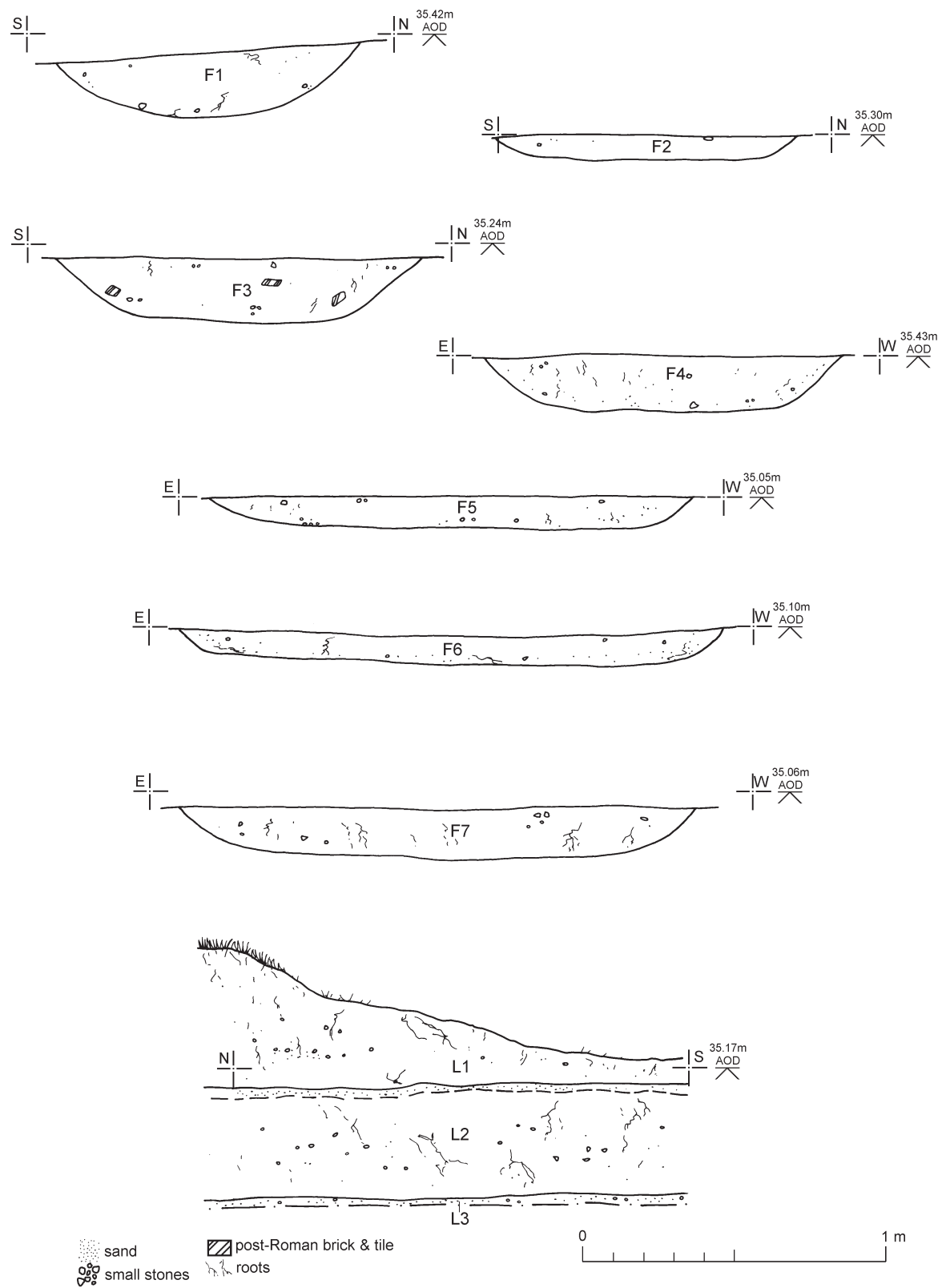


Fig 4 F1-7: sections and a representative section.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: land adjacent to 20 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District/Borough: Colchester
NGR: TL 8193 1316	Site code: CAT project code – 15/02e
Type of work: strip, map, record	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 23rd-24th March 2015	Size of area investigated: c 255 m2
Location of curating museum: Colchester & Ipswich Museum: 2015.19	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? no	Related EHER/SAM numbers: EHER 11713-4. SAM 1019966-7
Final report: CAT Report 832	
Periods represented: post-medieval and modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>The site is within the Late Iron Age and early Roman 'Lexden Cemetery'. Archaeological strip, map and recording prior to redevelopment revealed a probable post-medieval boundary ditch and six post-medieval/modern pits, but no Roman burials or other features.</i>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
CBC monitor: Howard Brooks (WSI), Jess Tipper (fieldwork and px)	
Keywords: post-medieval / modern ditch, pits	Significance: neg
Author of summary: Howard Brooks	Date of summary: April 2015