

**A historic sea wall revealed;  
archaeological trial-trenching at the  
Proctor & Gamble London site,  
West Thurrock, Essex  
February 2013**



**report prepared by Adam Wightman**

**commissioned by Huttons Construction Ltd  
on behalf of Proctor & Gamble London**

CAT project ref.: 13/02a  
Thurrock Museum accession code; pending  
Historic Environment code; THPG13  
NGR: TQ 5931 7724



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**CAT Report 683**  
February 2013

A trial-trench was excavated by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) in an area of open scrubland between the graveyard of St Clement's Church and the Proctor & Gamble staff car park (NGR 559250 177230) (Figs 1 & 2). A historic sea wall visible on early editions of the Ordnance Survey (OS) maps (1867-1920), was located in the centre of the trial-trench (Fig 2). The sea wall was buried when the salt marsh to the south was reclaimed from the River Thames in the years preceding the Second World War.

The sea wall was a clay bank c 8m wide and 1.5m tall (F1). It was located in the position shown on both the 1867 and the 1896-1897 1:2500 OS maps (Fig 1). The bank was constructed from a medium grey alluvial clay with occasional stones, which was probably sourced locally. A thin layer of topsoil (L2; c 70mm thick) survived on the surface of the bank (Fig 2). It had been covered over using a dark grey/brown clayey-silt (L1) that contained a large amount of modern building materials such as slate, concrete and brick, as well as domestic and industrial waste (Fig 3). On the southern side of the clay bank, the alluvial clay began to level out at a depth of 1.8m below modern ground level (Fig 2). However, on the northern side of the clay bank, the modern made-ground (L1) continued below a depth of 1.9m (Fig 3), perhaps indicating that the alluvium used to construct the bank was excavated from this side of the sea wall.

It appears that the clay bank was left undisturbed when the land in this area was infilled. It is probable that the level of the land was raised to a sufficient height to just cover the bank.

It is likely that the bank still exists below the surface of the existing Proctor & Gamble staff car park and in the area of woodland to the west of the car park. The proposed development will not impact upon the sea wall so the trial-trench was backfilled and sea wall was left undisturbed.



**Plate 1: The northern face of the clay bank, view south-west.**



**Plate 2: The modern made-ground to the north of the clay bank, view north-west.**



**Plate 3: The southern face of the clay bank, view north.**



**Plate 4: The top of the clay bank, view south-west.**

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## **Appendix 1: contents of archive**

One A4 document wallet containing:

### **1 Introduction**

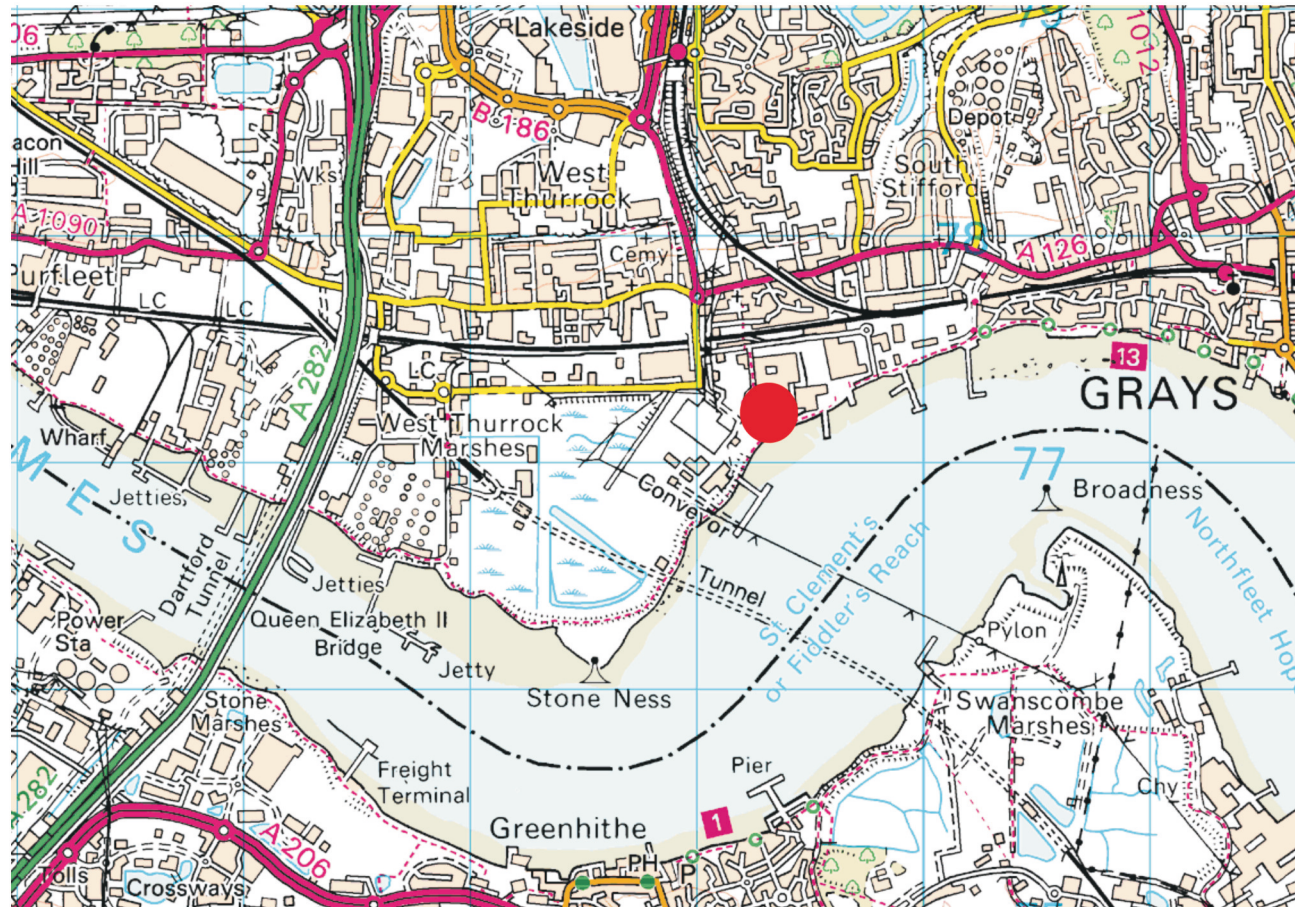
- 1.1 Copy of the evaluation brief issued by ECC HEM
- 1.2 Copy of the WSI produced by CAT
- 1.3 Copy of the 'Report on site visit'
- 1.4 Risk assessment
- 1.5 Method Statement
- 1.6 3 x A3 site plans provided by developer
- 1.7 1 x A1 site plan provided by developer

### **2 Site archive**

- 2.1 Site digital photographic record
- 2.2 2 x A4 sheets of site drawings
- 2.3 Site photographic record on CD

### **3 Research archive**

- 3.1 Monitoring (client) report



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Fig 1 Site location, marked by a red dot.



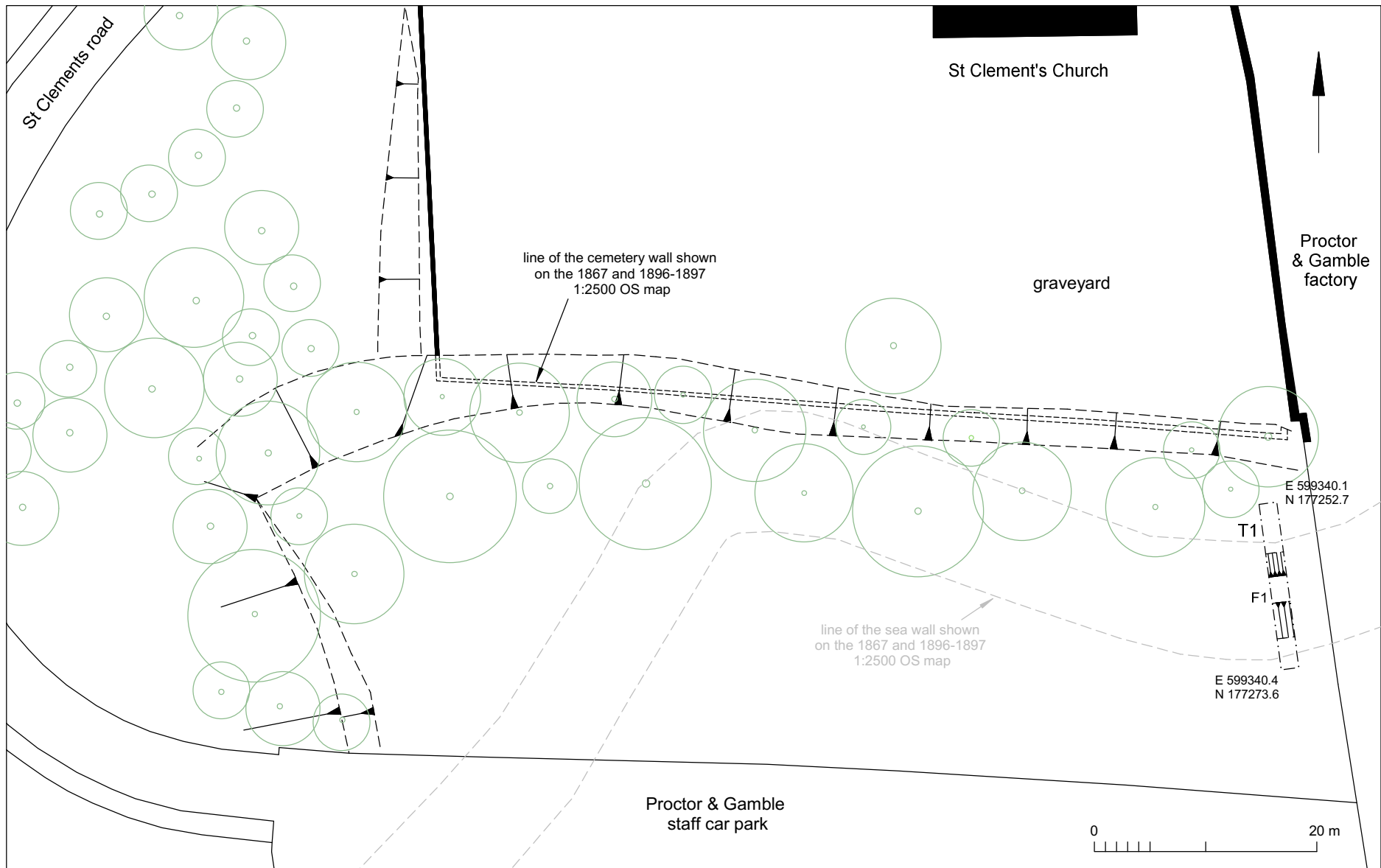


Fig 2 The results.

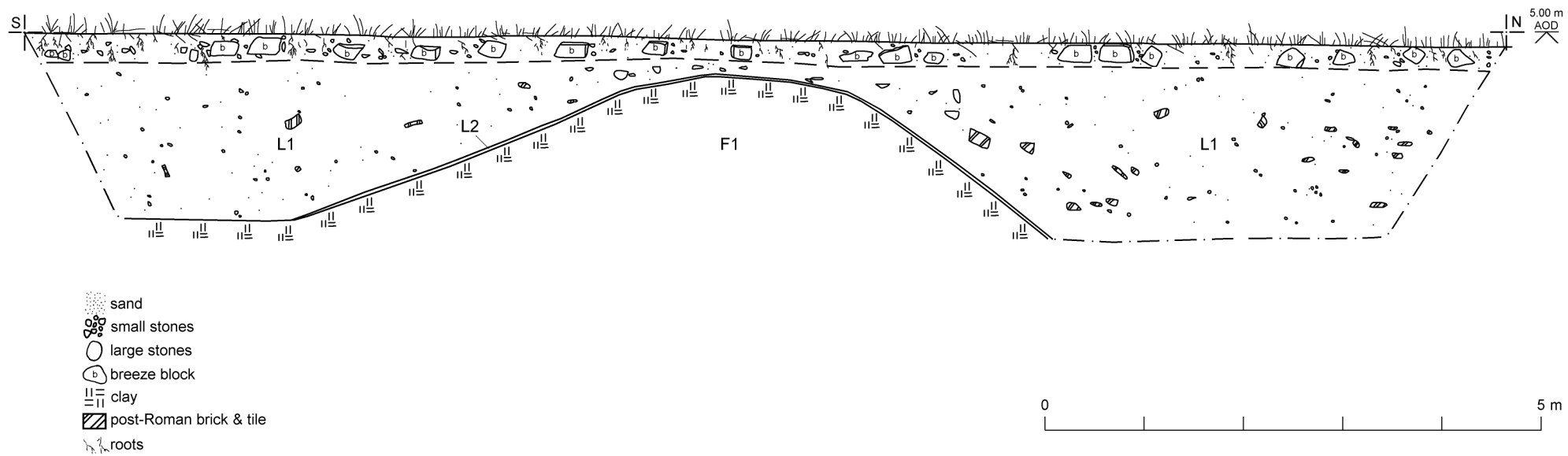


Fig 3 Trench section.

# Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

## Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> St Clement's Road (off Hedley Avenue), West Thurrock, Essex RM20 4AL	
<b>Parish:</b> Grays	<b>District:</b> Thurrock
<b>NGR:</b> TQ 5931 7724	<b>Site codes:</b> CAT project – 13/02a Historic Environment – THPG13 Museum accession – pending
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation by trial-trenching	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 13th February 2013	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> One trial-trench 15m in length
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Thurrock	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHER numbers:</b>
<b>Final report:</b>	CAT Report 683
<b>Periods represented:</b>	medieval-modern
<b>Summary:</b>  A trial-trench was excavated by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) in an area of open scrubland between the graveyard of St Clement's Church and the Proctor & Gamble staff car park. A historic sea wall made from alluvial clay that is visible on early editions of the Ordnance Survey (OS) maps (1867-1920), was located in the centre of the trial-trench. The sea wall was buried when the salt marsh to the south was reclaimed from the River Thames in the years preceding the Second World War. The trial-trench was backfilled and sea wall was left undisturbed as the proposed development will not impact upon the clay bank.	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> none	
<b>Keywords:</b> sea wall	<b>Significance:</b> *
<b>Author of summary:</b> Adam Wightman	<b>Date of summary:</b> February 2013