

**Archaeological trial-trenching evaluation
at Colchester Golf Club,
Braiswick, Colchester, Essex**

April 2013



**report prepared by
Ben Holloway and Howard Brooks**

**on behalf of
Colchester Golf Club**

CAT project ref.: 13/02d
NGR: TL 9857 2712
Colchester and Ipswich Museum accession code: 2013.15



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CAT Report 695
April 2013

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1 Summary

A 5% trial trenching evaluation on the site of a proposed reservoir found a single archaeological feature – a post-medieval ditch filled with brick rubble. An evaluation in 2011 had located a Roman ditch 100m to the south, but apart from a fragment of Roman tile in T3, there was no sign of intensive Roman-period activity here.

2 Introduction, archaeological and planning background (Fig 1)

The site, and proposed works

This is the report on the archaeological trial-trenching carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust at Colchester Golf Club, Braiswick, Colchester, Essex in April 2013. At the time of the evaluation, the triangular site was open ground used for golf practice (TL9857 2712). Proposed work is the construction of a new reservoir.

Archaeological background

The proposed reservoir site lies to the north of the historic town, and beyond the Roman and medieval suburbs and the Roman cemeteries which surround the town. However, it is within the area of the late Iron Age oppidum. Archaeological evaluation in 2011 in connection with the recent proposal for residential development west of the Mile End Road revealed a significant quantity of late Iron Age and Roman pottery in a ditch some 100m south of the current site. These finds probably indicate a nearby Roman farmstead (CAT Report 627: March 2012). There was therefore the potential for deposits of the same date to be identified during the reservoir construction.

Planning

A discussion with Mr Martin Winter, the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer (CBCAO) identified that, because the reservoir site was in an area of archaeological potential, archaeological work would be required prior to construction. Consequently, a *Brief* detailing the required archaeological work (an evaluation by trial-trenching) was written by CBCAO (CBC 2013). Mr Brian Morgan of ADP Ltd commissioned Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) to carry out the work specified in the *Brief*, on behalf of Colchester Golf Club. The required archaeological work was carried out on April 3rd-4th 2013 in accordance with the CBC Brief and a WSI (Written Scheme of Investigation) agreed with CBCAO (CAT 2013). A planning application has not yet been submitted to the LPA, but will be forthcoming.

Policies and guidance

In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with policies and procedures in the following documents: CAT 2008, IfA 2008a, IfA 2008b, CIM 2008a, CIM 2008b, EAA 14, and EAA 24 (detail in References, Section 8).

3 Aim

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains and deposits likely to be disturbed by the proposed works. Specific attention was paid to evidence of activity associated with the Roman ditch found 100m to the south in 2011.

4 Evaluation results (Figs 2-4; plates 1-8 and cover)

This section describes the archaeological sequence in each of the evaluation trenches (T1-T8), with context and finds dating information.

The evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator. Two layers were removed: a thin modern topsoil 100mm thick (L1), and a 250mm-thick silty clay horizon (L2) which was sealed by L1. The removal of L2 revealed natural (boulder clay with occasional patches of gravel: L3).

Trenches 1-4: summary (Fig 1; plates 2-5)

T1-T4 contained no archaeological features. The only find was a Roman tile fragment in T3 L2.



Plate 1: T1 view south



Plate 2: T2 view north



Plate 3: T3 view east



Plate 4: T4 view south

Trench 5: summary

T5, in the south-eastern site corner, contained NW/SE-aligned linear feature (F1), and a modern land drain. F1 contained substantial amounts of crushed post-medieval brick which may have been dumped there in an attempt to consolidate wet or boggy ground. It is unclear whether F1 was localised consolidation of wet ground, or whether it was a part of a longer ditch or farm track.



Plate 5: T5 view east



Plate 6: T6 view east

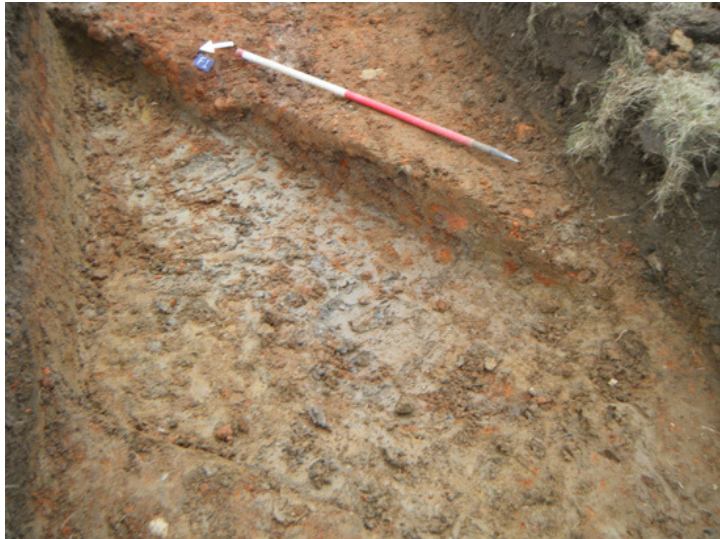


Plate 7: rubble-filled F1: section, view east



Plate 8: T7 view west

Trenches 6-8 : summary

T6-T8, on the eastern site edge, contained no archaeological material.

5 Finds

by Stephen Benfield (CAT)

The finds are listed and described in Table 1. A piece of abraded Roman brick or tile came from L2 (T3). Two pieces of slightly abraded post-medieval unfrosted red brick came from F1 (T5). The thickness of the bricks (approximately 50 mm) suggests a late 16th/early 17th-early 18th century date (later bricks tend to be thicker: Ryan & Andrews 1993, 97-99; Ryan 1996, 94-96). All the finds were discarded following recording.

T	context	finds no	description	spot dating
3	L2	1	abraded flat piece (1 @ 164 g) from a Roman brick/tile, red sandy fabric, max surviving thickness 22 mm	Roman
5	F1	2	two pieces from post-medieval bricks (2@ 2435 g), red sandy fabrics, not frosted, both approximately 110 x 50	post-medieval (L16/17-E18C?)

Table 1: Finds by context

6 Discussion

Evaluation trenching on the proposed reservoir site produced no significant archaeological material. The only feature was a post-medieval ditch in T5 whose fill contained crushed post-medieval brick. This was probably a farm track or field entrance which had become wet or boggy (there are springs on the southern and eastern site edges), and efforts had been made to consolidate the ground using brick rubble.

The only evidence which links with the 2011 discovery of a Roman ditch 100m to the south during the evaluation trenching for the Northern Growth Area Urban Extension (now 'Colchester North') is a single piece of unstratified Roman tile from T3.

Ordnance Survey maps of the 19th century show this area as a landscape of fields and hedges, evidence of which was the field drains and plough-scarring found in some of the trenches. The site remained farmland until it became part of the golf club in the 20th century.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Colchester Golf Club for funding the work, which was commissioned on their behalf by Mr Brian Morgan of ADP Ltd. The project was managed by Ben Holloway, and the fieldwork was carried out by BH and Mark Baister. The project was monitored by CBCAO Martin Winter.

8 References

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|---|
| CAT | 2008 | <i>Policies and procedures</i> |
| CAT | 2013 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation at Colchester Golf Club, Braiswick, Colchester, Essex. March 2013.</i> |
| CAT Report 627 | 2012 | <i>An archaeological evaluation by fieldwalking, geophysical survey and trial-trenching at the Northern Growth Area Urban Extension (NGAUE), Colchester, Essex, 2011. CAT Client report 627 by H Brooks, B Holloway, and T Dennis, for Mersea Homes. Mar 2012</i> |
| CIM | 2008a | <i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester. Colchester and Ipswich Museums.</i> |
| CIM | 2008b | <i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service. Colchester and Ipswich Museums.</i> |
| CBC | 2013 | <i>Archaeological Evaluation, Colchester Golf Club, Braiswick, Colchester, Essex, CBC Brief (M Winter)</i> |
| EAA 14 | 2003 | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (edited by David Gurney)</i> |
| EAA 24 | 2011 | <i>Research & archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England, East Anglian Archaeological Occasional Papers 24, by Maria Medlycott</i> |
| IfA | 2008a | <i>Standard & guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i> |
| IfA | 2008b | <i>Standard & guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> |
| Ryan, P | 1996 | <i>Brick in Essex, from the Roman conquest to the Reformation</i> |
| Ryan, P, & Andrews, D | 1993 | 'A brick and tile typology for Cressing Temple' in Andrews, D, <i>Cressing Temple, a Templar and Hospitaller manor in Essex</i> , 93-99 |

9 Glossary and abbreviations

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material (brick, tile, tessera)
CBCAO	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer
CIM	Colchester and Ipswich Museums
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
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
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
post-medieval	after 1530 and before Victorian
Roman	the period from AD 43 to around AD 430
unstratified	not in context (e.g., a Roman coin in a Victorian pit).

10 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Circular Road North, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museum under accession code COLEM 2013.15.

11 Contents of archive

Finds archive

(no retained finds)

Paper archive

1 A4 wallet containing:

- this report
 - original site record (context and finds sheets)
 - section drawings
 - trench sheets
 - digital photo log
 - attendance record
 - sundry papers
 - digital photos on disc
-

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Distribution list:

Colchester Golf Club

Mr Brian Morgan, ADP Ltd

Martin Winter Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer (CBCAO)

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



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Fig 1 Site location (red outline) in relation to 2011 NGAUE evaluation (orange outlines)

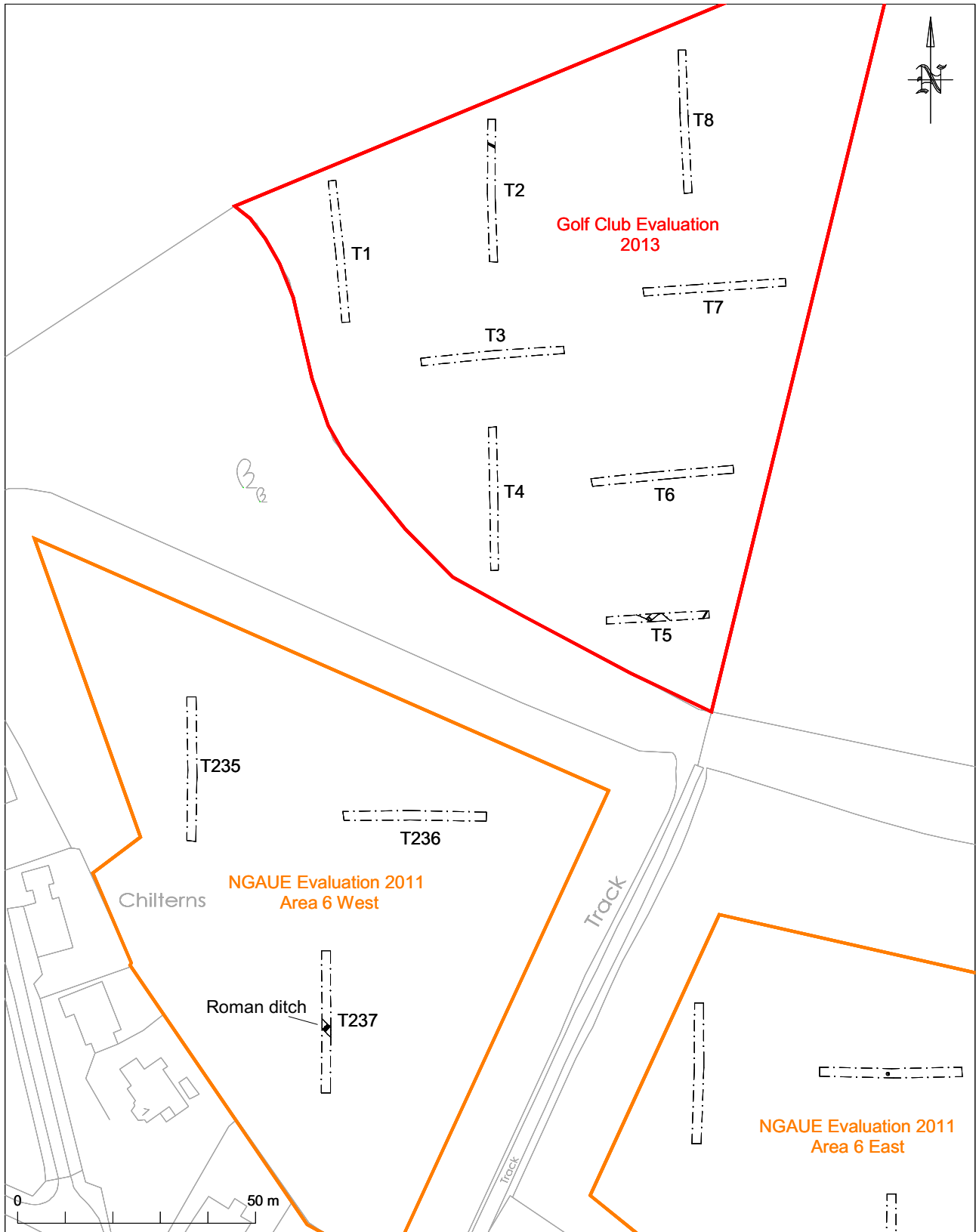


Fig 2 Trench positions in relation to 2011 NGAUE evaluation (orange outline).

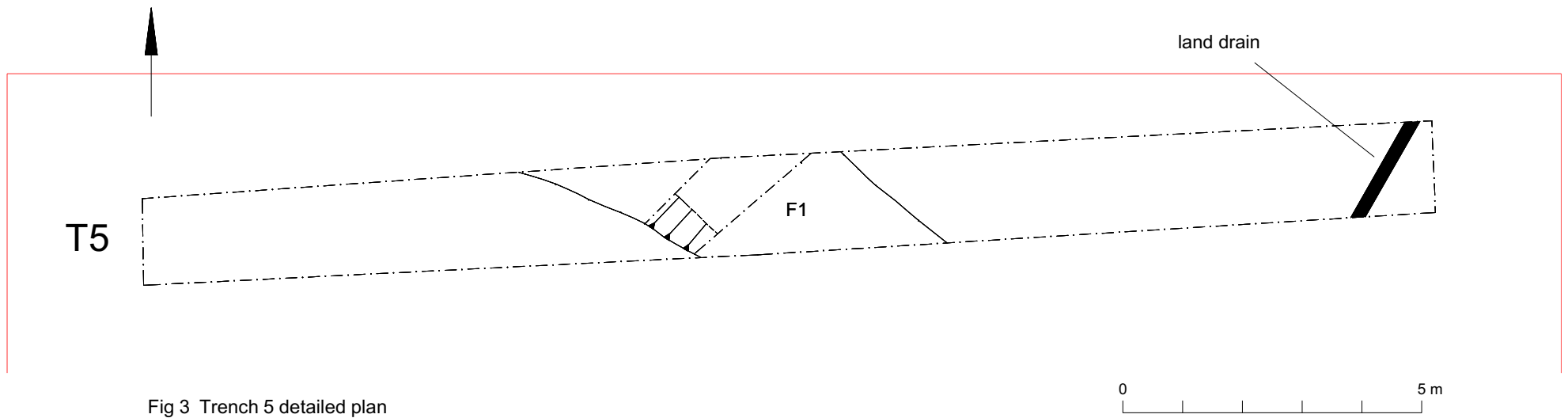


Fig 3 Trench 5 detailed plan

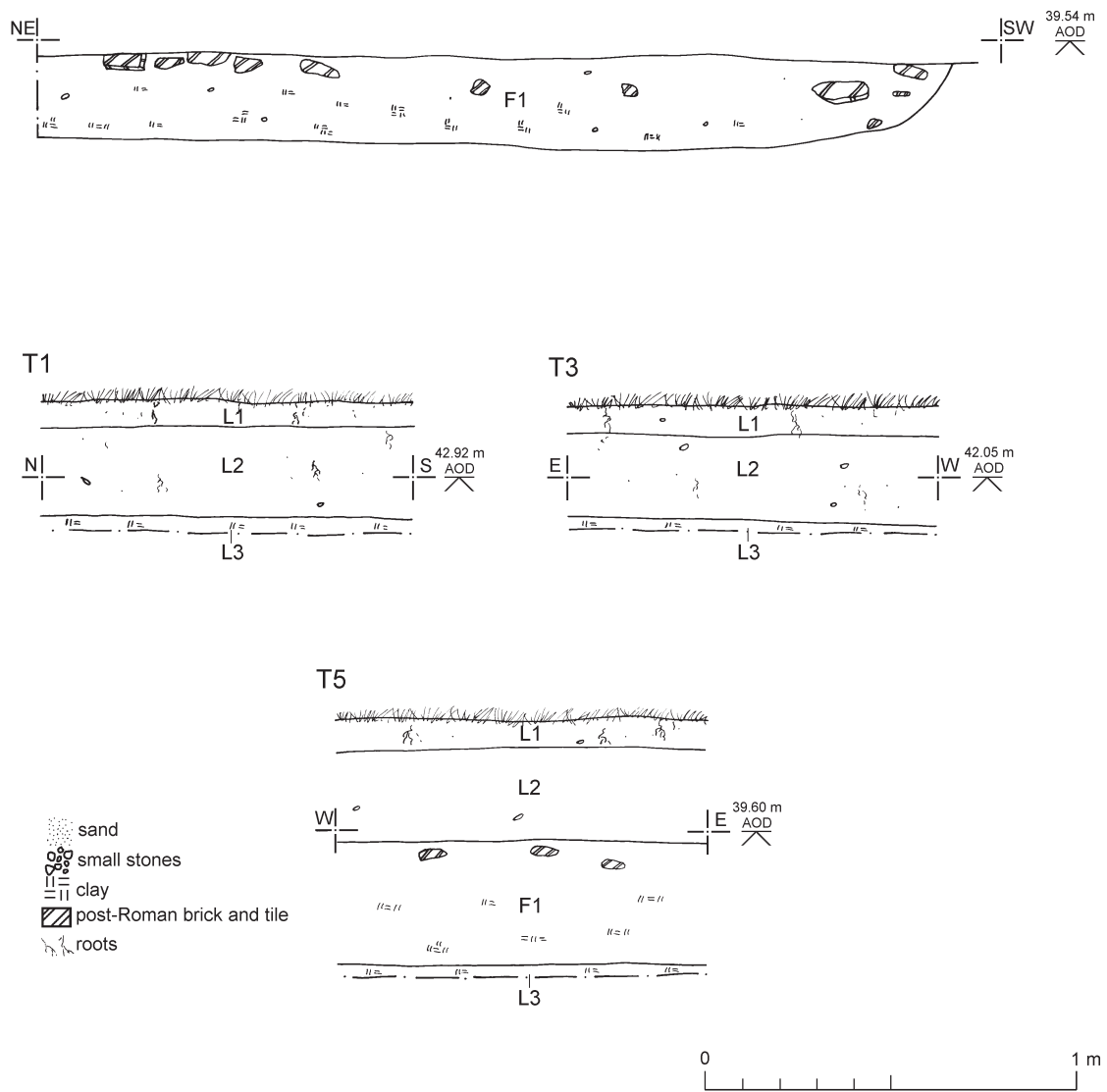


Fig 4 Feature section (F1) and representative sections (T1, T3 and T5).

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Colchester Golf Club, Braiswick, Colchester	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9857 2712	Site code: CAT project code – 13/02d
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 3rd-4th April 2013	Size of area investigated: 230m of trenches in an site of 0.4 ha
Location of curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museum accession code : 2013.15	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER number: -
Final report: CAT Report 695	
Periods represented: Post-medieval/Modern	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>A 5% trial trenching evaluation on the site of a proposed reservoir found a single archaeological feature – a post-medieval ditch filled with brick rubble. An evaluation in 2011 had located a Roman ditch 100m to the south, but apart from a fragment of Roman tile in T3, there was no sign of intensive Roman-period activity here</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Keywords: post-medieval ditch	Significance: *
CBC Monitor: Martin Winter	
Author of summary: Ben Holloway	Date of summary: April 2013