

# Archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of 1-3 Valley Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 4AR

June 2016



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**commissioned by Oliver Burfoot  
on behalf of R Burfoot Construction Ltd**

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out in advance of the construction of eleven new dwellings on land to the rear of 1-3 Valley Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex. Eleven ditches, four pits and one natural feature were recorded. Most were probably of modern date, associated with the plant nursery and market garden that used to occupy the site, and are therefore largely horticultural. Seven sherds of pottery appear to be largely incidental and suggests an area on the periphery of settlement/occupation in the later prehistoric and medieval periods.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land to the rear of 1-3 Valley Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex which was carried out on 27th June 2016. The work was commissioned by Oliver Burfoot of R Burfoot Construction Ltd in advance of the construction of eleven new dwellings. The work was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Adrian Gascoyne advised 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 the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Excavation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Adrian Gascoyne (ECCPS 2015), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2016).

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

The development site lies within the medieval and post medieval historic core of the village of Great Clacton. The village was focused around a church/hall complex of Great Clacton Hall and the 12th-century church of St John, and grew as a ribbon development along St Johns and Old Road. The area is now surrounded by housing due to the expansion of Clacton but retains its character from the impressive parish church and its surrounding churchyard, and a range of 16th-century and later buildings. The scale and importance of the Norman parish church gives some indication of the relative importance of Great Clacton, which was the most significant settlement in the area until the emergence of Clacton-on-Sea in the last quarter of the 19th century. Great Clacton Hall is 18th century in date, having replaced an earlier hall located immediately north of the church. Chapman and André's Essex map of 1777 shows the village concentrated around the south-east corner of a small square of roads where the north-south route from Little Clacton crossed the east-west route between Little Holland and St Osyth. As is so often the case, the roads do not meet in a regular arrangement, and prominent on this map is the important space south-west of the church created as the roads from the south (Old Road) and from the east (Valley Road) converge.

The church contains Roman brick within its quoins which suggest Roman activity in the vicinity, immediately to the east of the development site the EHER records square enclosures, seen as cropmarks, which may have a Roman origin (EHER 1914).

## **4 Results** (Figs 2-5)

Four trial-trenches were located across the development site. Each trench measured 30m long by 1.8m wide (totalling 120m linear or 216m<sup>2</sup>). All the trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision.

Three layers were identified during evaluation. A modern sandy-loam topsoil (L1, c 150-300mm thick) sealed a post-medieval/modern sandy-silt subsoil (L2, c 300-420mm thick) which sealed natural sands and gravels (L3, identified at a depth of c 450-950mm below current ground level).

### **Trench 1 (T1)**

Two parallel N-S ditches were identified at the west end of the trench. Both were undated, shallow features measuring 0.35m wide by 0.09m deep (F1) and 0.82m wide by 0.25m deep (F2). Another two parallel N-S ditches were identified at the east end of the trench. They measured 1.1m wide by 0.3m deep (F4) and 1.22m wide by 0.44m deep (F5). Ditch F4 contained a single sherd of medieval pottery (13th-14th century) and ditch F5 contained a single sherd of Roman pottery. A natural feature (F3) was also recorded.

### **Trench 2 (T2)**

A ditch aligned NW-SE was identified at the north end of the trench (F6). It measured 0.90m wide by 0.15-0.28m deep, and contained small fragments of later prehistoric pottery dating from the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age-Iron Age. It was cut by an E-W ditch (F8) measuring 1m wide by 0.55m deep. In the centre of the trench was a modern service and a sub-oval pit containing fragments of degraded animal bone (F7). Another E-W ditch (F9) was identified at the south end of the trench measuring 0.70m wide by 0.22m deep. No dating evidence was recovered from F7-F9.

### **Trench 3 (T3)**

A large ditch (F10) was identified at the west end of the trench. Measuring 1.7m wide by 0.44m deep it was aligned N-S. A second ditch (F11) aligned NW-SE was identified at the east end of the trench. It measured 0.90m wide by 0.15m deep. No dating evidence was recovered from any of these features.

### **Trench 4 (T4)**

Four undated pits (F12, F14-F16) were identified measuring 0.6-0.7m in diameter. Three were 0.12-0.15m deep with one at 0.27m deep. Another E-W ditch (F13) was identified at the north end of the trench, measuring 0.85m wide by 0.25m deep, with a NW-SE aligned ditch (F17) at the south end, measuring 1.12m wide by 0.22m deep. No dating evidence was recovered from any of these features.



**Photograph 1** T1, looking W



**Photograph 2** T2, looking S



**Photograph 3** T3, looking E



**Photograph 4** T4, looking S

## 5 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

A few sherds of pottery that can be closely dated to the prehistoric period (probably Late Bronze Age-Iron Age) and medieval period were recovered together with a quantity animal bone. All of the finds are listed and described by context in Table 2 and a spot date for the finds from each context is also provided. The pottery fabrics referred to broadly follow Brown 1988 (prehistoric pottery), **CAR 10** (Roman pottery) and **CAR 7** (post-Roman pottery). All of the fabric are listed in Table 1. All of the pottery sherds are small and most have some abrasion. As single small sherds the pottery finds appear incidental to the features themselves. While there is some activity in the prehistoric period, for the medieval period (to which most of the few pottery sherds can be dated) the finds suggests an area peripheral to settlement/occupation, possibly agricultural, the few pottery sherds possibly representing manure scatter.

Fabric code	Fabric
<i>Prehistoric:</i>	
E	Flint & sand-temper (small-medium size)
<i>Roman:</i>	
GX	Roman greywares (general)
<i>Post-Roman:</i>	
20	Medieval sandy grey wares (general)
21	Medieval sandy orange wares (general)
22	Heddingham ware

**Table 1** Pottery fabrics

Trench	Find no	Form/ description	spot date
T1, F4	1	<b>Pottery medieval</b> (1) Fabric 22/Fabric 21 small sherd with reddish-buff micaceous fabric and patchy, pitted pale green glaze (13-14C)	<b>Med</b> (13-14C)
T1, F5	2	<b>Pottery</b> (1) Small sherd in light grey, sandy greyware, slightly abraded, fabric appears Roman (Fabric GX) but sherd could be medieval (Fabric 20). In relation to the other finds a medieval date may be more likely.	<b>Rom/med</b> (?)
T2, F6 sx1	3	<b>Pottery IA</b> (VSQ) small sherds, almost certainly from the same pot, dark sandy fabric with brownish surfaces, flint and quartz sand temper (Fabric E), some abrasion, prehistoric, probably later prehistoric – Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age-Iron Age	<b>Prehistoric - probably LBA/EIA-IA</b> (E-M 1st millenium BC)
T2, F7	4	<b>Animal bone</b> (LQ) bone quite degraded, includes a cattle tooth fragment, other pieces from long bones (medium-large mammal).	(Not closely dated)
T4, L2	5	<b>Pottery medieval</b> (1) Fabric 20 hard, thin sherd in sandy fabric, abraded, some possibly red grog/natural sand inclusions (12/13-14C)	<b>Med</b> (12/13-14C)

**Table 2** Finds by context

Key: VSQ=very small quantity (1-5 pieces/sherds), LQ=large quantity (20-50 pieces/sherds)

## 6 Discussion

The evaluation on land to the rear of 1-3 Valley Road revealed eleven ditches, four pits and one natural feature. There was little dating evidence with only seven fragments of pottery recorded from three ditches, dating to the later prehistoric and medieval periods. However, although they indicate activity in the area in these periods the pottery appears to be largely incidental (residual) to the features in which they were found and suggest the site was peripheral to an area of settlement/occupation. Many, if not all, of the features are probably of modern date, associated with the plant nursery and market garden that used to occupy the site, and are therefore largely horticultural in origin.



**Photograph 5** Aerial shot of the Valley Road site showing some of the N-S / E-W aligned beds and horticultural features that were identified during evaluation

Imagery © 2016 Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, Map data © 2016 Google

## 7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Oliver Burfoot of R Burfoot Construction Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway, R Mathieson, N Rayner and A Wade. Figures are by R Mathieson and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Adrian Gascoyne.

## 8 References

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

Brown, N	1988	'A Late Bronze Age enclosure at Lofts Farm, Essex' in <i>Proceedings of the prehistoric society</i> , Volume <b>54</b> , 249-301
CAR 7	2000	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by J Cotter
CAR 10	1999	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86</i> , by R Symonds and S Wade
CAT	2014	<i>Health and Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2016	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological trial-trenching evaluation on land to the rear of 1-3 Valley Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex</i>
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>
CIfA	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</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, <b>14</b> . Ed. D Gurney
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers <b>24</b> , by Maria Medlycott
ECCPS	2015	<i>Brief for Archaeological Excavation on land to the rear of 1-3 Valley Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex</i>
English	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i>



Heritage (English Heritage)

## 9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
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 cAD 1800
residual	something out of its original context, eg a Roman coin in a modern pit
Roman	the period from AD 43 to cAD 410
Section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

## 10 Contents of archive

**Finds:** none retained

### **Paper and digital record**

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 979)

ECC Evaluation Brief, CAT Written Scheme of Investigation

Original site record (Feature and layer sheets, Finds record, plans)

Site digital photos and log, Architectural plans, Attendance register, Risk assessment

## 11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museum under accession code: COLEM: 2016.59

**Distribution list:**

Oliver Burfoot, R Burfoot Construction Ltd

Adrian Gascoyne/Teresa O'Connor, Essex County Council Place Services

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

Roman Circus House

Roman Circus Walk,

Colchester,

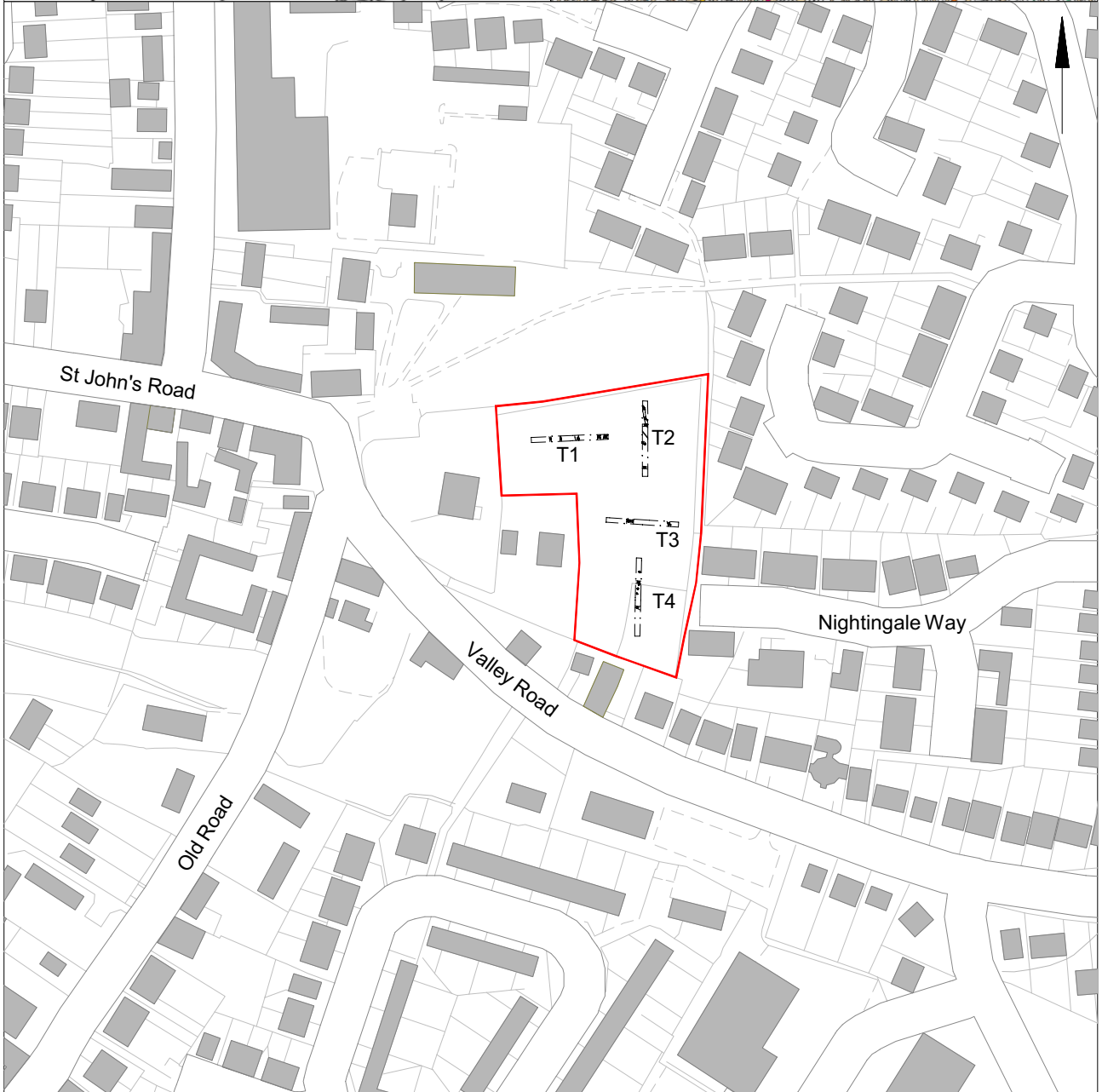
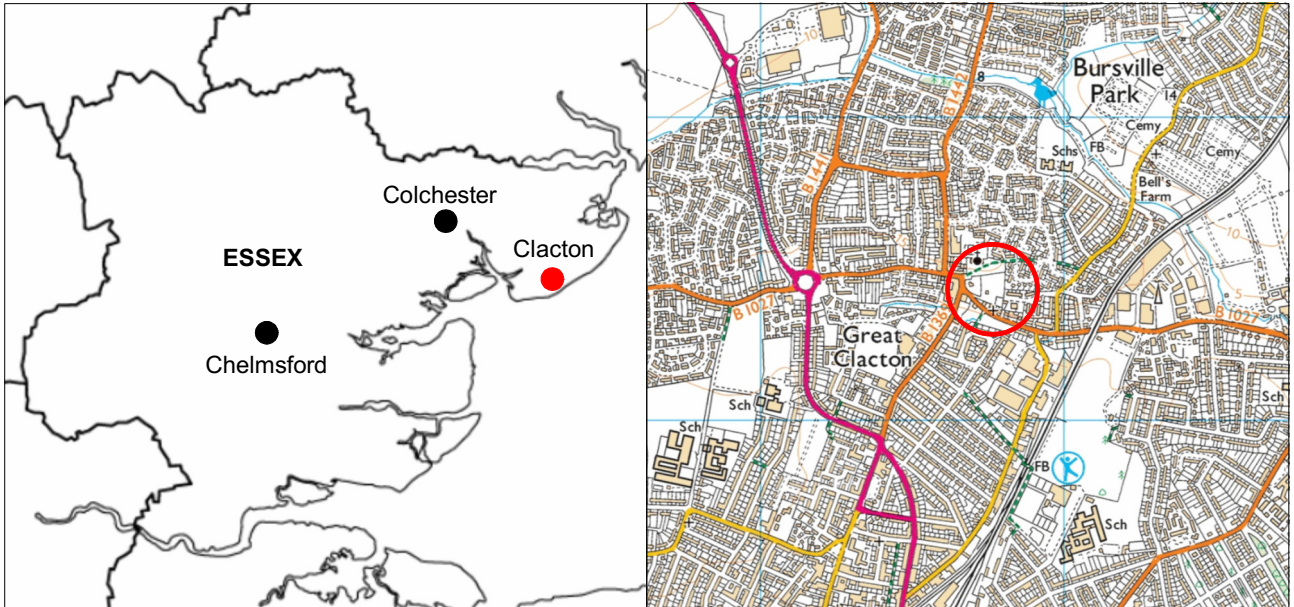
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*Checked by:* Howard Brooks

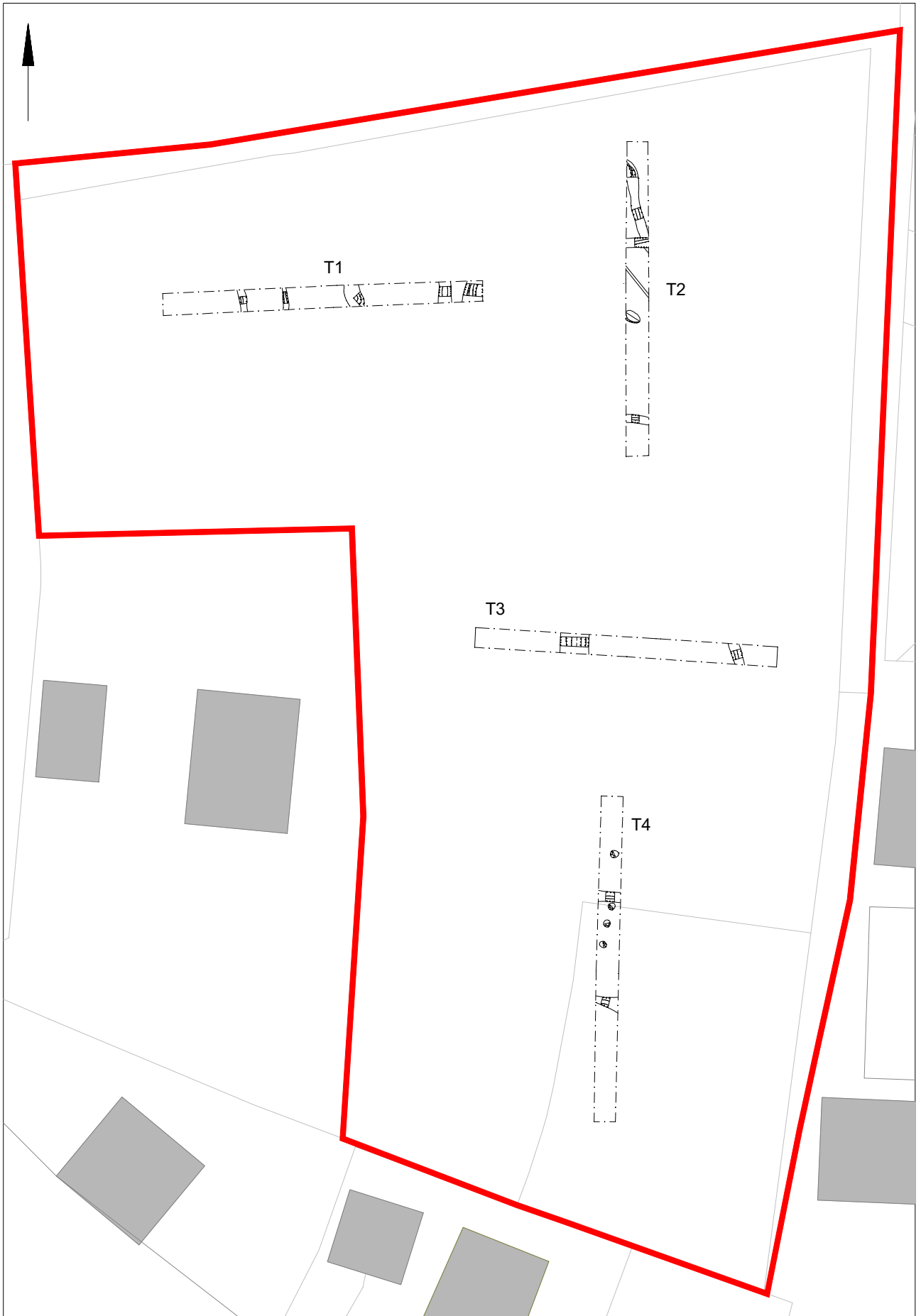
*Date:* 6.7.2016



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Fig 1 Site location.





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Fig 2 Results.



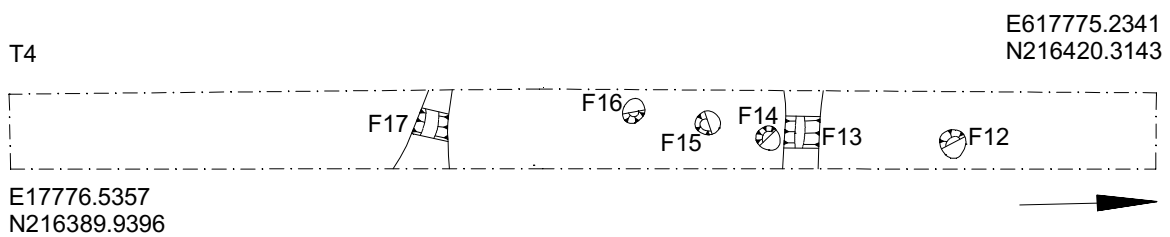
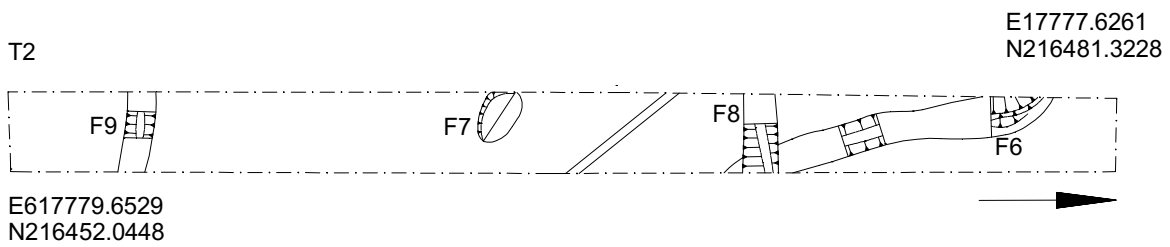
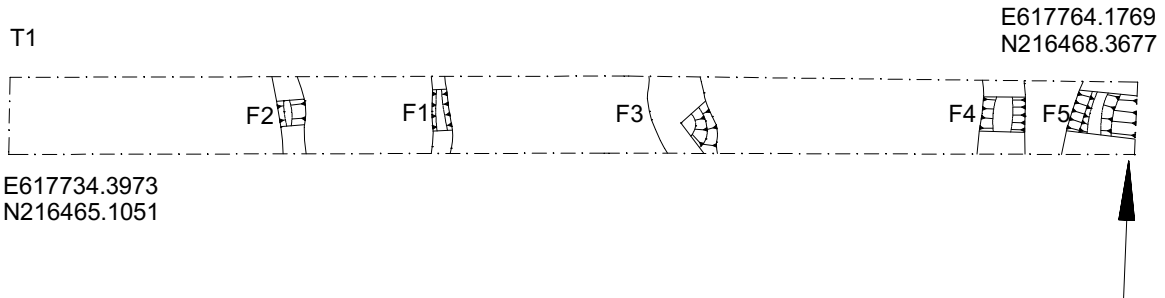


Fig 3 Trench plans.



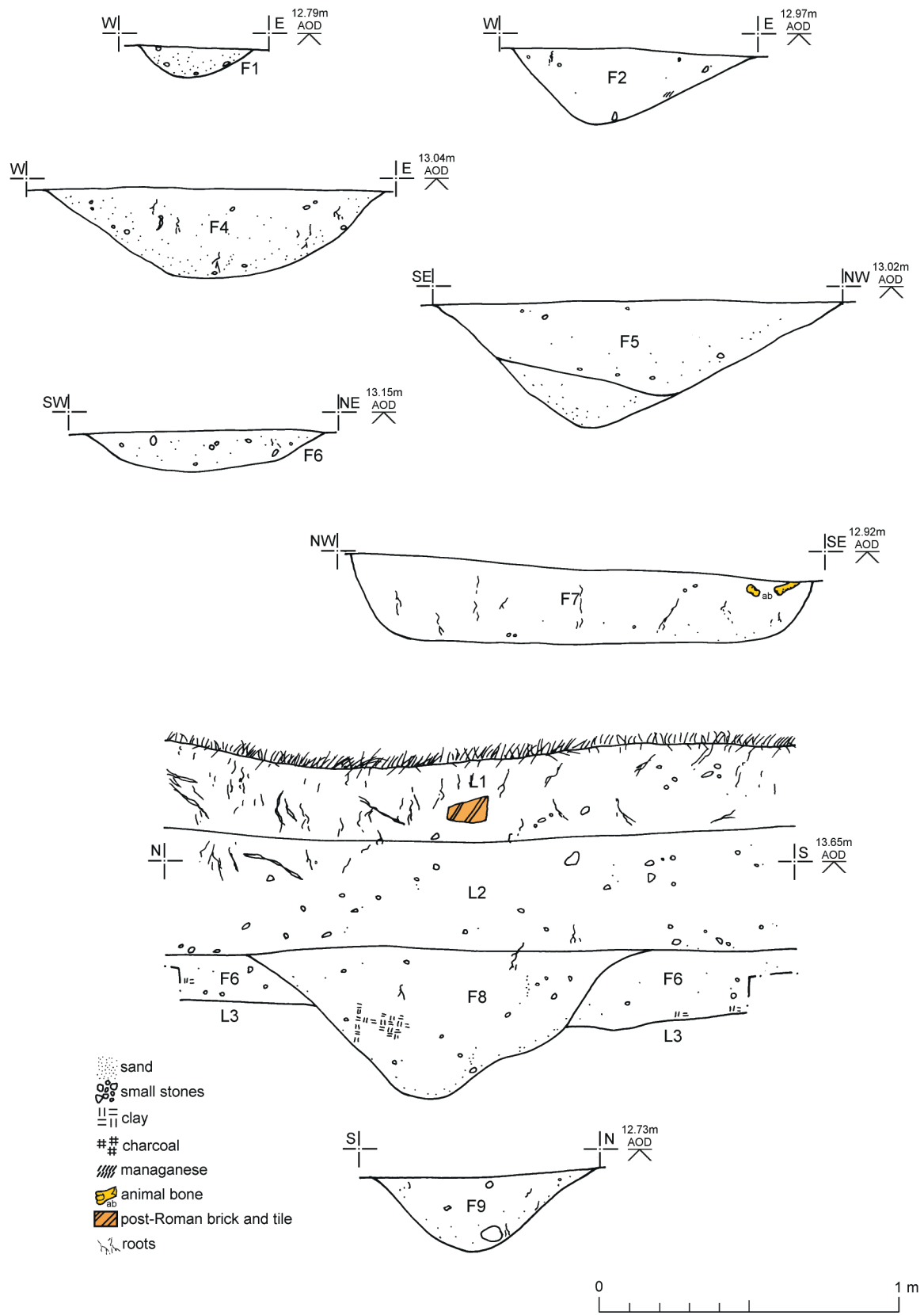


Fig 4 Feature sections.

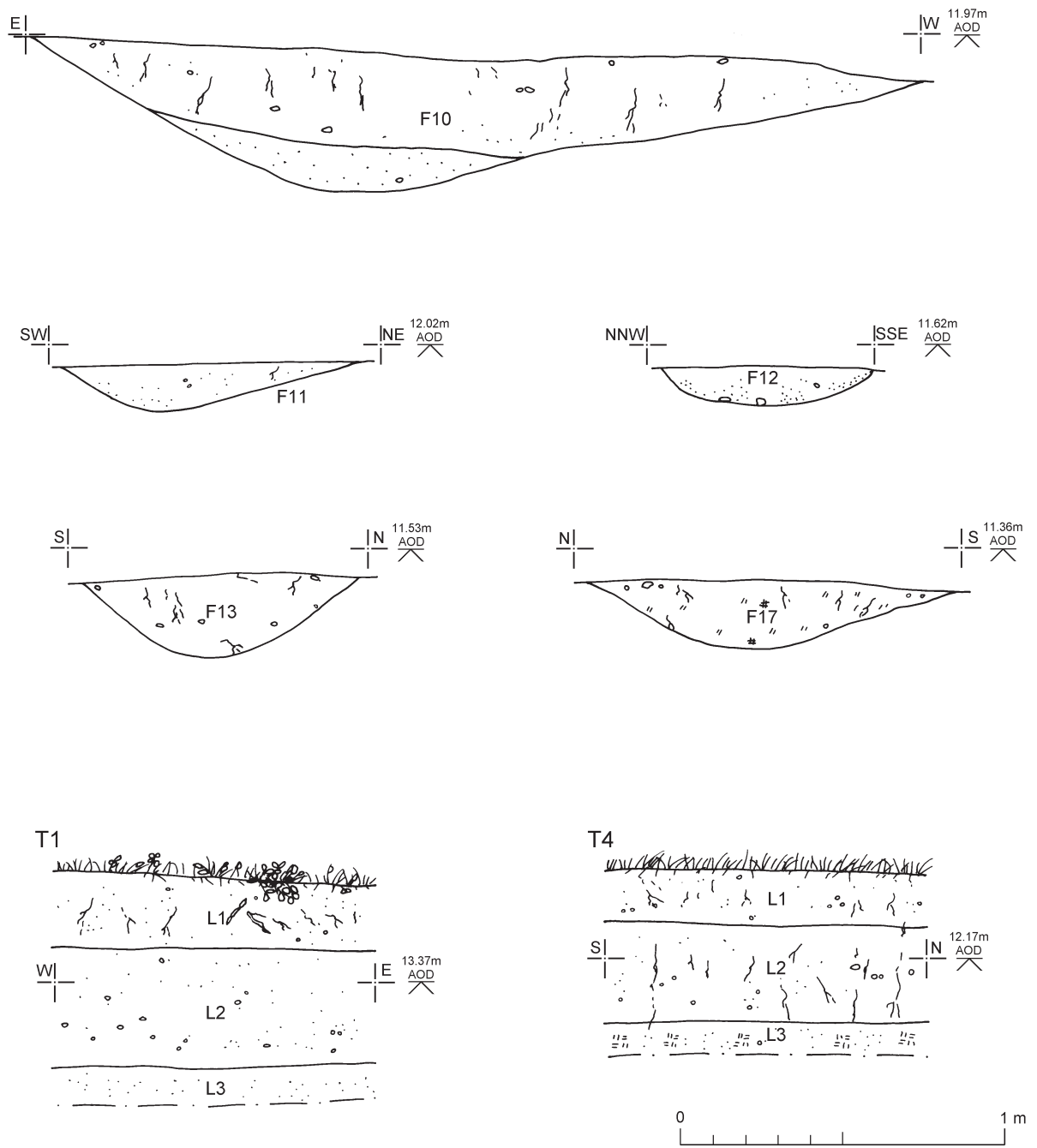


Fig 5 Feature and representative trench sections.

# Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

## Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> Land to the rear of 1-3 Valley Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 4AR	
<b>Parish:</b> Clacton-on-Sea	<b>District:</b> Tendring
<b>NGR:</b> TM 17770 16437 (centre)	<b>Site code:</b> CAT project code: 16/06b ECC project code: CSV16 OASIS project ID: colchest3-253855
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 27th June 2016	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> Four trial-trenches 30m long by 1.8m wide (216m <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Colchester Museum accession code: COLEM: 2016.59	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> Not known	<b>Related EHER number:</b> EHER 1914
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 979	
<b>Periods represented:</b> later prehistoric, medieval, modern	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out in advance of the construction of eleven new dwellings on land to the rear of 1-3 Valley Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex. Eleven ditches, four pits and one natural feature were recorded. Most were probably of modern date, associated with the plant nursery and market garden that used to occupy the site, and are therefore largely horticultural. Seven sherds of pottery appear to be largely incidental and suggests an area on the periphery of settlement/occupation in the later prehistoric and medieval periods.	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> –	
<b>Keywords:</b> –	<b>Significance:</b> –
<b>Author of summary:</b> Laura Pooley	<b>Date of summary:</b> July 2016