



Neolithic, medieval and post-medieval remains at Eight Ash Green, Colchester


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Neolithic, medieval and post-medieval remains at Eight Ash Green, Colchester

Archaeological Excavation Report

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Summary

Between the 1st and the 18th of March 2021 Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) carried out an excavation at land north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, Essex. An open area excavation of approximately 0.85ha targeted prehistoric and medieval – post-medieval features first revealed during an evaluation carried out in November 2020.

The south-western corner of the site contained a group of 14 small, sub-circular pits/postholes, one of which contained pottery dated tentatively to the Late Neolithic period. No obvious structure was formed by these features, although it is possible that some of them may have formed a fence line or wind break. They were probably the result of a low-level, transient presence at the site during the Late Neolithic period.

In the south-eastern corner of the excavation area, close to the current line of Halstead Road, a small rectilinear ditch system was revealed, from which a small medieval ceramic assemblage was recovered. It is probable that this network of ditches belonged to a system of small plots associated with roadside dwellings or cultivation. To the north of this, two broadly parallel boundaries were revealed, possibly belonging to an open field system on the periphery of the village during the medieval period.

The final phase of activity at the site comprised two boundary ditches probably associated with post-medieval field arrangements, the latter of which was present on the 1837 Fordham Parish Tithe Map. A small assemblage of assorted post-medieval finds was recovered from the two ditches.

Acknowledgements

OA East would like to thank RPS Group for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Richard Hoggett, who monitored the work on behalf of Colchester Borough Council.

The project was managed for OA East by Patrick Moan. The fieldwork was directed by Neal Mason, who was supported by Jack Easen. Survey and digitising was carried out by Valerio Pinna. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Natasha Dodwell, processed the environmental remains under the supervision of Rachel Fosberry, and prepared the archive under the supervision of Katherine Hamilton.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 OA East was commissioned by RPS Group to undertake a c. 0.85ha excavation at land north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, Colchester (Fig. 1; NGR: TL 93098 26402). The fieldwork took place between the 1st and 18th of March 2021.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref. 171529). The proposed development is for up to 150 dwellings (including 30% affordable housing) with public open space, landscaping, a sustainable drainage system and new vehicular access off Halstead Road.
- 1.1.3 An evaluation undertaken by OA East in November 2020 (Mason 2020) revealed evidence for prehistoric and medieval to post-medieval activity across the development area. The focus of remains was revealed within the westernmost field.
- 1.1.4 Following this evaluation, the Colchester Borough Archaeologist (Richard Hoggett) determined that mitigation work was required within the western field to record the archaeological remains, prior to development taking place. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced, which detailed the methods by which OA East proposed to meet the mitigation requirements (Moan 2021).
- 1.1.5 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores under the Site Code ECC4569 in due course.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies on the western edge of the village of Eight Ash Green, Colchester, Essex. It is bounded by Halstead Road to the south and Fiddlers Hill to the north, and lies on a plateau overlooking the Colne Valley to the north, with the River Colne flowing approximately 500m to the north. The site slopes gently downwards from south to north, from approximately 44m OD down to approximately 41m OD.
- 1.2.2 The development area consists of three fields, with the westernmost being the site of the excavation.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as London Clay Formation – clay, silt and sand. This is overlain by superficial deposits of cover sand, according to the British Geological Survey (BGS Viewer, accessed 20/11/20).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site is based on a 1km search of the Colchester Borough Historic Environment Record (HER; Fig. 2), supplemented by information from available historic maps and other documentary evidence as outlined in the WSI (Moan 2021) and Desk-Based Assessment (Gailey 2017).

Prehistoric (40,000 BC – AD 43)

- 1.3.2 No evidence of prehistoric activity has been recorded within the 1km search radius of the site. However, Palaeolithic flint artefacts have been found within the wider

landscape of the Colne Valley, and the site's position upon a plateau overlooking the floodplain of the River Colne may have made it suitable for settlement or funerary activity.

Roman (AD 43 – 410)

- 1.3.3 No firm evidence of Roman settlement has been recorded within the 1km radius search area. However, potential Roman occupation was identified from cropmarks and a subsequent geophysical survey c. 500m to the north (MCC7079).
- 1.3.4 The site occupied part of a landscape that surrounded the major Roman centre of *Camulodunum*, meaning that evidence for Roman field systems was more probable than settlement activity. The potential for a Roman trackway, passing close to the south-eastern part of the site, as identified by the Roman Rural Settlement Project, suggested that Roman roadside occupation may be present in this zone.

Post-Roman – Medieval (c. AD 410 - 1500)

- 1.3.5 No archaeological evidence of Anglo-Saxon/early medieval settlement has been recorded within the study area.
- 1.3.6 A corn mill mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 was located at Fordham Bridge approximately 750m north-west of the study site (MCC8237).
- 1.3.7 The Colchester Historic Environment Record records an isolated medieval find adjacent to the site (MCC6051), identified on the Portable Antiquities Scheme as a medieval coin. This most likely represents casual loss.

Post-medieval – modern (16th – 20th centuries)

- 1.3.8 Analysis of historic maps detailed in the Desk-Based Assessment noted the following changes to the landscape of the site during the post-medieval – modern periods:
- During the post-medieval period the site continued to comprise woodland and agricultural land away from the core of any settlement. A farmhouse had been constructed on the site of the later Fiddlers Farm to the north-west of the site.
 - By the early 19th century the woodland had been cleared from the site and it comprised seven fields of arable agricultural land.
 - By the late 19th century three field boundaries had been removed leaving four agricultural fields. By the early 20th century the field boundaries in the east of the site had been removed and replaced on a new alignment.
 - By the late 20th century one of these field boundaries had been removed from the site.

Undated

- 1.3.9 The HER records evidence of cropmarks representing a possible ring ditch and part of a rectangular enclosure immediately to the west of the site (MCC7761).
- 1.3.10 Cropmarks of a possible road/trackway and a straight linear feature have been identified approximately 750m south-east of the study site (MCC8642).

- 1.3.11 Cropmarks of linear features and pits, and a small rectangular enclosure with a south-west facing entrance have been recorded approximately 600m east of the study site (MCC7777).
- 1.3.12 Cropmarks of a further possible rectangular enclosure are recorded approximately 600m north-west of the study site (MCC7762). Also to the north-west of the site are cropmarks of linear features, a faint enclosure and a possible ring ditch (MCC7730).

Previous archaeological works

- 1.3.13 An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment was prepared by CgMs Heritage (Gailey 2017) to support the outline planning application. This report concluded that the site had potential for archaeological evidence of local importance.
- 1.3.14 A geophysical survey undertaken on the site in October 2017 (presented in RPS 2019) identified several natural anomalies as well as several linear and curvilinear anomalies of uncertain/potential archaeological interest. These features were investigated by targeted trenches during the subsequent evaluation.
- 1.3.15 In November 2020 the site was subject to a trial trench evaluation by OA East (Mason 2020). The archaeological remains uncovered fell into two periods; a very small amount of possible Late Neolithic activity was indicated by a pottery assemblage recovered from one of three pits in the southern portion of the western field, and a network of ditches relating to medieval and/or post-medieval agricultural activity was encountered, some of which corresponded to boundaries recorded on the 1837 Fordham Parish Tithe Map (Fig. 4).
- 1.3.16 Of the features not recorded on the Tithe Map, two parallel ditches may have belonged to a narrow trackway in the western field, while the extrapolation of several ditches also revealed in this field indicated a possible enclosure.
- 1.3.17 Nearly all of the ditches uncovered by this evaluation produced medieval – post-medieval pottery and/or CBM, at levels which would probably indicate manuring scatters.

2 EXCAVATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The overall aim of the investigation was to preserve by record the archaeological evidence contained within the footprint of the development area, prior to damage by development, and investigate the origins, date, development, phasing, spatial organisation, character, function, status, and significance of the remains revealed, and place these in their local, regional and national archaeological context.

2.2 Regional Research Frameworks

2.2.1 This excavation took place within, and contributed to the goals of Regional Research Frameworks relevant to this area:

- Glazebrook J., 1997, *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern counties: 1. Resource Assessment*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 3.
- Brown, N. & Glazebrook, J., 2000, *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern counties: 2. Research Agenda and Strategy*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 8.
- Medlycott, M., 2011, *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24.
- Latest review undertaken between 2018-20: <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>

2.3 Site-Specific Research Objectives

2.3.1 Following the results of the evaluation, the following site-specific research objectives were identified for the excavation of the western field:

- Prehistoric pits – *were these isolated features or part of a wider landscape of prehistoric activity?*
- Romano-British presence – *would further excavation provide evidence of activity relating to the wider landscape surrounding Camulodunum?*
- Medieval and post-medieval agriculture – *could further excavation of the apparent trackway and enclosure(s) ditches provide a better understanding of the agricultural regimes employed at the site during these periods?*

2.4 Fieldwork Methodology

2.4.1 The methodology used followed that outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Moan 2021).

2.4.2 The excavation area was set out, and the archaeological features planned, using a Leica survey-grade GPS fitted with 'SmartNET' technology, with an accuracy of 5mm horizontal and 10mm vertical.

2.4.3 Machine excavation was carried out by a 360° type excavator using a 2m wide flat-bladed ditching bucket under constant supervision by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.

- 2.4.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.4.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Feature locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour digital photographs were taken of all interventions.
- 2.4.6 A total of 11 bulk samples were taken from the excavation area (including those taken during the evaluation) to investigate the possible survival of micro- and macro-botanical remains (Appendix C). These samples were targeted to include all feature types and discernible phases, as well as deposits which displayed obvious potential for environmental analysis.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 The results of the excavation are presented below, and include a stratigraphic description of the archaeological remains. Where relevant, results from those evaluation trenches which were located within the subsequent excavation area are also included. Details of all contexts are included in Appendix A, with finds and environmental reports presented in Appendices B and C respectively.
- 3.1.2 Cut numbers were assigned to every archaeological intervention and group numbers were assigned to all linear features which were investigated by multiple interventions. Both cut and group numbers appear in **bold** in the text below. The results are presented according to the chronological sequence of the site, with the evidence of different phases of activity being divided into periods. A small number of features produced no dating or stratigraphic evidence, meaning they were unphased and will be discussed in a specific section. A plan showing all features and phases is included in Figure 3.
- 3.1.3 The principal findings comprised a small group of pits located in the south-western corner of the site and a series of in-filled ditches belonging to two phases of field boundary/field systems, located primarily on the eastern side of the site. The earlier of these ditches were broadly aligned west-south-west to east-north-east and appeared to be contemporary with a more discrete rectilinear network of ditches, forming smaller plots, in the south-east corner of the site. The later ditches comprised one aligned north-west to south-east, followed stratigraphically by another aligned north to south. The latter was recorded on the 1837 Fordham Parish Tithe Map. As noted in the evaluation report (Mason 2020), two of these ditches corresponded with anomalies identified in the geophysical survey (presented in RPS 2019).
- 3.1.4 The activity revealed on the site has been assigned to the following phases:
- Phase 1: ?Late Neolithic (c. 3000 BC to c. 2500 BC)
 - Phase 2: medieval (c. AD 1066 to c. 1500)
 - Phase 3: post-medieval (c. AD 1500 to c. 1900)
 - Unphased features

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

- 3.2.1 The natural geology of clay sand with concentrations of gravel was overlain by a light yellowish-brown subsoil (3105), which in turn was overlain by a dark brown topsoil (3104).
- 3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the excavation were very poor as the site was subject to constant flooding. This was predominantly caused by the seepage of groundwater following an exceptionally wet autumn and winter. Fortunately, the flooding was gradual and it was possible to excavate the features before water ingress became an issue. The only exception to this was ditch **3106**, which due to flooding in the northern and eastern parts of the site, was only able to be investigated with one intervention.

The archaeological features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

3.3 Phase 1: ?Late Neolithic (c. 3000 BC to c. 2500 BC)

- 3.3.1 A closely-spaced group of 14 pits were revealed in the south-western corner of the site and represented the only features identified as belonging to this phase (Fig. 3 and Plate 1). As a group, these circular and sub-circular pits appeared to have a north-east to south-west alignment, with several outliers. It is possible that these features were in fact postholes and the alignment was the remains of a fence line and/or wind-break. From north-east to south-west, the main alignment was formed by pits **3119**, **3117**, **3113** (Fig. 5, Section 29), **3125**, **204**, **3129** and **3127**. All of these features were probably contemporary given that the only feature containing any datable pottery, pit **204** (Plate 2), formed part of the main alignment. This pottery has been ascribed a somewhat tentative Late Neolithic date; while it is composed of a fabric similar to Grooved Ware pottery seen elsewhere in the region, the lack of any diagnostic features and its grog tempered nature, means that a Middle Bronze Age date cannot be ruled out (Appendix B.2). The same pit (204) contained two fragments (6g) of fired clay (Appendix B.5).
- 3.3.2 The sides of these pits ranged from near-vertical to gently sloping and the bases ranged from flat to concave. The fills were generally composed of light to mid brown grey sandy clay. One of the shallowest within the group was pit **3183** (Plate 3). The dimensions, finds and environmental evidence from the pits is presented below in Table 1.

Cut	Width/Dia. (m)	Depth (m)	Fills	Thickness (m)	Finds	Environmental samples
200	0.42	0.26	201	0.26		
202	0.3	0.26	203	0.26		
204	0.35	0.25	205	0.25	12 sherds (50g) Late Neolithic pottery, 2 fragments (6g) of undiagnostic fired clay	(1) Frequent charcoal
3113	0.59 x 0.4	0.26	3114	0.14		
			3115	0.19		(8) Moderate charcoal, rare molluscs
			3116	0.17		
3117	0.25 x 0.24	0.3	3118	0.3	3 fragments (9g) of undiagnostic fired clay	
3119	0.4 x 0.38	0.1	3120	0.1		
3121	0.26 x 0.24	0.1	3122	0.1		
3123	0.38 x 0.26	0.1	3124	0.1		
3125	0.44 x 0.26	0.09	3126	0.09		
3127	0.3 x 0.22	0.07	3128	0.07		
3129	0.26 x 0.18	0.07	3130	0.07		
3131	0.2 x 0.18	0.05	3132	0.05		
3151	0.72 x 0.7	0.12	3152	0.12		
3183	0.64	0.06	3184	0.06		

Table 1: ?Late Neolithic pit group

3.4 Phase 2: medieval (c. AD 1066 to c. 1500)

- 3.4.1 The lack of any features dating between the prehistoric and medieval periods on the site suggests a long hiatus in activity. However, a very small amount of residual Roman

pottery (4 sherds, 34g) recovered from the subsoil (3105) and ditch **3190** (Phase 2) implies a possible Roman presence near to the site (Appendix B.3).

- 3.4.2 The features dating to this phase included a rectilinear network of five narrow ditches (**3187** (Plate 4), **3188** (Plate 5), **3189**, **3190** and **3195**) located in the south-eastern corner of the site. These features probably comprised part of a road-side plot system, aligned broadly perpendicular to a road or track which is today formed by Halstead Road (A1124, Fig. 1) immediately to the south of the site. Immediately to the north of this plot system was a double-ditch boundary (**3193** and **3194**) aligned west-south-west to east-north-east, and close to the northern limit of the site was a similarly aligned ditch (**3106**), which probably also performed a boundary function. These two boundary lines may well have formed part of a larger-scale field system located beyond the system of smaller road-side plots (Fig. 3).

Road-side plot system ditches

- 3.4.3 Aligned broadly north-north-west to south-south-east and west-south-west to east-north-east, the five ditches which made up this apparent plot system comprised features revealed in both the evaluation and excavation. In addition to being aligned either perpendicular or parallel to Halstead Road, it also appeared that this system respected the line of the double-ditch boundary immediately to the north, and were therefore probably contemporary.
- 3.4.4 It is worth noting that these features were very shallow and heavily truncated; therefore the recorded terminals may well have been the result of truncation rather than the original extent of the ditches. While the finds assemblage from this system was extremely small, the combination of datable pottery – one sherd of Mid Roman (Appendix B.3) and two sherds of early medieval pottery (Appendix B.4) – and on-site stratigraphy has resulted in the ditches being assigned to this phase. However, it is possible that these features dated to the Romano-British period and the two sherds of early medieval pottery recovered from ditch **300** were intrusive. The small amount of hulled wheat and barley recovered from environmental sample 9 (ditch **3133**) also hints at this possibility, as this is an assemblage more commonly known from the Romano-British period (Appendix C.1). Equally, the small size of the assemblage may mean that these grains were residual.
- 3.4.5 The sides of these ditches ranged from steep to gently sloping and the bases ranged from flat to concave (Fig. 5, Section 33). The fills generally comprised light to mid grey brown sandy clays. The dimensions, finds and environmental evidence from these ditches is presented below in Table 2.

Group	Cut	Width/ Dia. (m)	Depth (m)	Fills	Finds	Environmental samples
3187	3179	1.27	0.17	3180		
	3181	0.37	0.17	3182		(13) Rare hammerscale
3188	3139 (Fig.5, Section 33)	0.36	0.1	3140		
	3141	0.62	0.1	3142		
3189	3135	0.4	0.08	3136		

Group	Cut	Width/ Dia. (m)	Depth (m)	Fills	Finds	Environmental samples
	3143	0.76	0.12	3144	2 fragments (2g) undiagnostic fired clay	
3190	300	0.64	0.34	301	2 (16g) early medieval pottery	
	3133	0.36	0.12	3134	1 (15g) Mid Roman pottery	(9) Rare hulled wheat and barley
3195	302	0.28	0.03	303		
	304	0.35	0.03	305		

Table 2: Medieval plot system ditches

Double-ditch boundary

- 3.4.6 This west-south-west to east-north-east aligned boundary system comprised ditch groups **3193** and **3194** (Plate 6), and extended across the centre of the site, immediately to the north of the plot system. It is possible that a hedge was positioned between the two ditches in the c. 1.2m wide gap. However, the fact that ditch **3194** terminated within the site, whilst **3193** continued across its whole width, may mean that the two ditches were not in use at the same time and alternatively, they represent different arrangements of this boundary line. It is noteworthy that along with ditch **3106** (which also belongs to this phase), ditch **3193** was truncated by post-medieval (Phase 3) ditches **3191** and **3192**, hence its stratigraphic position in this phase. However, the finds assemblage, particularly the ceramic building material (CBM, Appendix B.5), suggests that this boundary probably continued in use to some degree into the post-medieval period.
- 3.4.7 Ditch **3193** (**306, 400, 402, 404, 3109** (Fig. 5, Section 27), **3171, 3173**) – the southernmost of the two ditches making up this boundary – ranged in width from 1.38m to 1.55m and in depth from 0.11m to 0.34m. Generally, it had gently sloping sides and a flat base, and was filled by light to mid grey brown sandy clays. The shallow depth of this feature meant that each intervention contained only one fill. The finds assemblage from this ditch comprised one sherd (9g) of residual Late Neolithic pottery, two abraded sherds (3g) of early medieval pottery, two refitting fragments (55g) of medieval flat tile, one fragment (475g) of post-medieval pan tile and one irregular fragment (180g) of post-medieval brick (Appendix B.5). Environmental sample 2 taken from this ditch was found to be sterile, whilst sample 12 contained rare amounts of hammerscale and charcoal, and moderate amounts of molluscs (Appendix C.1).
- 3.4.8 Ditch **3194** (**410, 3145, 3153, 3175, 3185** (Fig. 5, Section 48)), the northernmost of the two ditches making up this boundary, extended from the western limit of the site and terminated approximately 12m from the eastern limit. It ranged in width from 0.67m to 1.67m and in depth from 0.04m to 0.17m, with gently sloping sides and a flat base. The shallow depth of this feature meant that each intervention contained only one fill, this being a light to mid grey brown sandy clay. No finds were recovered from this feature.

Ditch 3106

- 3.4.9 Ditch **3106**, located close to the northern limit of the site, was on the same alignment as the double-ditch boundary. The gap between these two ditch lines measured

approximately 66m, possibly representing a moderately-sized field. As stated above, on site flooding allowed only one intervention to be excavated in this feature. At intervention **3106**, the ditch measured 0.95m wide and 0.34m deep (Fig. 5, Section 26). Its moderately sloping sides and concave base were filled by a light grey sandy clay basal fill (3107) and a mid grey sandy clay upper fill (3108). The finds assemblage comprised two refitting, heavily abraded sherds (6g) of probably early to high medieval pottery (Appendix B.4) and one fragment (132g) of probably late medieval to early post-medieval ridge tile (Appendix B.5).

3.5 Phase 3: post-medieval (c. 1500 to c. 1900)

3.5.1 The features in this final phase comprised two boundary ditches, both of which truncated the earlier Phase 2 ditch systems (Fig. 3). Whilst belonging to the same broad phase, there was a clear stratigraphic sequence between these two ditches, probably representing a realignment of the field boundaries during the post-medieval period. Ditch group **3192**, the earlier of the two, was aligned north-west to south-east, whereas ditch group **3191** was aligned broadly north to south. This later ditch was recorded on the 1837 Fordham Parish Tithe Map (Fig. 4) and formed part of the field arrangements recorded in the broader development area to the east during the evaluation. This ditch division had been removed by the time of this investigation.

Ditch 3192 (Plate 7)

3.5.2 Ditch **3192 (703, 800, 3155** (Fig. 5, Section 39), **3157, 3159**) ranged in width from 1.04m to 2.46m and in depth from 0.24m to 0.46m. Its sides were gently to moderately sloped and its base was flat (Plate 7). The sole fill was a mid grey brown sandy clay. The finds assemblage comprised one abraded sherd (5g) of post-medieval pottery, one fragment (41g) of possibly post-medieval CBM and an irregular fragment (1g) of post-medieval brick (Appendix B.5). Environmental sample 3 taken from this ditch produced very rare amounts of charcoal, whilst samples 5 and 10 produced rare amounts of molluscs (Appendix C.1).

Ditch 3191 (Plate 8)

3.5.3 This north to south aligned ditch was stratigraphically the latest feature present on the site. As stated above, it corresponded to a boundary recorded on the 1837 Fordham Parish Tithe Map (Fig. 4). The four excavated interventions (**700, 804, 3111, 3166** (Fig. 5, Section 44) revealed that it had steeply sloping sides and a generally concave base. Two of the interventions recorded only a sole mid brown grey sandy clay fill (805, 3112), whereas the other two interventions recorded an additional light grey brown sandy clay basal fill (701, 3167). It ranged in width from 1.02m to 1.5m and in depth from 0.5m to 0.74m.

3.5.4 The finds assemblage comprised a curved fragment (10g) of probably 19th century vessel glass (Appendix B.1), one sherd (6g) of post-medieval pottery, five fragments (651g) of post-medieval brick, two fragments (43g) of late medieval to post-medieval tile, one undiagnostic fragment (7g) of possible tile, two fragments (8g) of clay tobacco pipe (Appendix B.6) and a single cattle mandible. Environmental sample 4 taken from this ditch produced rare amounts of molluscs, moderate amounts of slag and charcoal,

and a small amount of free-threshing wheat – typically found from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards (Appendix C.1).

3.6 Unphased features

3.6.1 Eight circular and sub-circular pits were identified across the site which had neither dating evidence or obvious associations with other, dated features (Fig. 3). Given that the only other pits on the site belonged to the ?Late Neolithic pit group (Phase 1), it is possible that some or all of these unphased features were contemporary, but there was insufficient evidence to support this interpretation. The dimensions and context information for these features is presented below in Table 3.

Cut	Width/Dia. (m)	Depth (m)	Fills	Environmental samples
406	0.6 x 0.24	0.11	407	
408	0.4	0.14	409	
3147	1.04 x 0.8	0.2	3147	
3149	0.44 x 0.38	0.08	3150	
3161 (Fig. 5, Section 42)	0.66 x 0.64	0.26	3162	(11) Rare molluscs and charcoal
			3163	
3164 (Fig. 5, Section 42)	0.26	0.06	3165	
3169	0.4	0.08	3170	
3177	0.52 x 0.3	0.06	3178	

Table 3: Unphased pits

3.6.2 Two natural features were also investigated on site. The first (**802**, filled by 803) was a light blueish grey silty clay deposit on the western edge of ditch cut **800** (group **3192**). Initially thought to be within the ditch cut, the later excavation revealed it to be a discrete lens of natural silty clay.

3.6.3 The second natural feature (**3137**, filled by 3138) was initially thought to be a large pit, but upon excavation was revealed to be an irregularly shaped probable tree throw.

3.7 Finds and environmental summary

3.7.1 The finds assemblages were generally very small. However, in most cases the datable finds correlated with the stratigraphic relationships observed on site and allowed for a coherent phasing sequence to be constructed. The following summary includes the very small amount of finds recovered from the topsoil and subsoil.

3.7.2 A single fragment (10g) of post-medieval vessel glass was recovered during the evaluation (Appendix B.1).

3.7.3 Twelve sherds (50g) of probable Late Neolithic pottery were recovered from pit **204** and one residual sherd was recovered from ditch **3109** (Phase 2) (Appendix B.2).

3.7.4 Four sherds (34g) of residual Roman pottery were recovered, one being from ditch **3133** (group **3190**, Phase 2) and the remainder from the subsoil (Appendix B.3).

3.7.5 Nine sherds (30g) of medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered, mostly from the Phase 2 and 3 boundary ditches, along with one sherd from the topsoil (Appendix B.4).

3.7.6 A total of 1473g of medieval and post-medieval CBM was recovered, mostly from the Phase 2 and 3 boundary ditches, along with a small amount from the subsoil (Appendix B.5).

- 3.7.7 The fired clay total was 17g, most of which was undiagnostic (Appendix B.5).
- 3.7.8 Two fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recovered from post-medieval ditches (Appendix B.6).
- 3.7.9 A single cattle mandible was recovered during the evaluation from fill 805 of ditch **804** (Trench 8).
- 3.7.10 A total of 11 environmental samples were taken from features within the excavation area, including those taken during the evaluation. In general, the results were poor due to the scarcity of plant remains. However, two samples (4 and 9) did provide limited insights into the nature of the agricultural activity undertaken at the site (Appendix C.1).

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 Following a particularly wet autumn and winter the water table at the site was very high. This resulted in areas of flooding during the excavation, but careful management allowed the fieldwork to proceed and did not unduly affect the results. Features were clearly visible against the underlying geology, allowing for the targeted excavation of interventions. These results, when combined with the results of the evaluation, allowed for the characterisation of the archaeological remains.

4.2 Phase 1: ?Late Neolithic (c. 3000 BC to c. 2500 BC)

4.2.1 The small group of 14 pits located in the south-west corner of the excavation area have all been dated as ?Late Neolithic based on the fact that one of them contained probable Late Neolithic pottery. Small pit groups such as this are commonly found on British prehistoric sites, thus the assumption that they are all related – given their proximity to each other – is not unlikely. It is possible that some of them may well have been postholes, which formed a fence line or wind break. In the absence of any further evidence of prehistoric activity, it is probable that this group represents a low-level, transient Late Neolithic presence at the site.

4.3 Phase 2: medieval (c. AD 1066 to c. 1500)

4.3.1 The features belonging to this phase comprised a small rectilinear network of ditches forming a probable road-side plot system in the southern part of the site and two boundaries to the north which likely delineated a larger field. The assertion that these features were medieval in origin is based on a very small medieval finds assemblage. However, the on-site stratigraphy showed that some of these features were truncated by later, well-dated post-medieval ditches. Furthermore, their absence from the 19th century tithe map for the parish supports an earlier date of origin.

4.3.2 The arrangement of the small rectilinear ditch system close to the current line of Halstead Road implies that they could have formed part of a system of smaller cultivation plots, possibly related to dwellings located along the road during the medieval period. This is a type of land use well-known from the period, as are larger open fields on the periphery of villages, with ditches **3106**, **3193** and **3194** possibly belonging to such a system. Such fields may have been utilised for the strip-field form of agriculture common in the medieval period, which is possible at the current site given that the village of Eight Ash Green has medieval origins.

4.4 Phase 3: post-medieval (c. 1500 to c. 1900)

4.4.1 Two ditches were identified in the excavation area as belonging to the post-medieval period. Ditch **3191** is present on the 1837 Fordham Parish Tithe Map (Fig. 4), and formed part of the field arrangements recorded in the broader development area to the east during the evaluation. Ditch **3192** was stratigraphically earlier than ditch **3191** and on a slightly different alignment. It is probable that this represented an earlier boundary alignment during the post-medieval period, particularly as it was

stratigraphically later than the Phase 2 double-ditch boundary formed by ditches **3193** and **3194**, and contained a small assemblage of post-medieval finds.

4.5 Site-Specific Research Objectives addressed

4.5.1 The Site Specific Research Objectives generated by the results of the evaluation were answered in the following ways during the excavation:

- Prehistoric pits – *were these isolated features or part of a wider landscape of prehistoric activity?*

The excavation found that, within the confines of this relatively small site, the prehistoric pit group appeared to be an isolated occurrence.

- Romano-British presence – *would further excavation provide evidence of activity relating to the wider landscape surrounding Camulodunum?*

No further Roman finds were recovered during the excavation, nor were any features identified as belonging to this period.

- Medieval and post-medieval agriculture – *could further excavation of the apparent trackway and enclosure(s) ditches provide a better understanding of the agricultural regimes employed at the site during these periods?*

A subtle but marked difference was revealed between the agricultural regimes employed in the medieval and post-medieval periods. The apparent trackway was found to be a double-ditch boundary, probably dividing an area of smaller plots close to the road from a more open field system to the north during the medieval period. The post-medieval remains showed a switch to a larger rectilinear field system.

4.6 Significance

4.6.1 The main significance of the findings at this site is the revealing of a hitherto unrecorded prehistoric presence in the vicinity, albeit of a relatively low-level and transient nature.

4.6.2 The medieval and post-medieval ditch system remains are locally significant.

5 PUBLICATION AND ARCHIVING

5.1 Publication

- 5.1.1 Following the approval of this report, a summary note will be prepared for submission to the Essex Archaeology and History journal.
- 5.1.2 This report both supplements the note and is superseded by any new data and interpretations presented within it.

5.2 Archiving, Retention and Dispersal

- 5.2.1 The excavated material and site archive (under site code ECC4569) will be deposited with Colchester Museum and comprises a maximum of one documents box, one bulk finds box and one small find box.

APPENDIX A CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	Context	Category	Feature Type	Cut	Filled By	Phase	Group	Length	Breadth	Depth
2	200	cut	pit	200	201	1		0.42	0.42	0.26
2	201	fill	pit	200		1				0.26
2	202	cut	pit	202	203	1		0.3	0.3	0.26
2	203	fill	pit	202		1				0.26
2	204	cut	pit	204	205	1		0.35	0.35	0.25
2	205	fill	pit	204		1				0.25
3	300	cut	ditch	300	301	2	3190		0.64	0.34
3	301	fill	ditch	300		2	3190			0.34
3	302	cut	ditch	302	303	2	3195		0.28	0.03
3	303	fill	ditch	303		2	3195			0.03
3	304	cut	ditch	304	305	2	3195		0.35	0.03
3	305	fill	ditch	304		2	3195			0.03
2	306	cut	ditch	306	307	2	3193		1.5	0.34
2	307	fill	ditch	306		2	3193			0.34
4	400	cut	ditch	400	401	2	3193		1.38	0.22
4	401	fill	ditch	400		2	3193			0.22
4	402	cut	ditch	402	403	2	3193		0.46	0.15
4	403	fill	ditch	402		2	3193			0.15
4	404	cut	ditch	404	405	2	3193		0.3	0.17
4	405	fill	ditch	404		2	3193			0.17
4	406	cut	pit	406	407			0.6	0.24	0.11
4	407	fill	pit	406						0.11
4	408	cut	pit	408	409			0.4	0.4	0.14
4	409	fill	pit	408						0.14
4	410	cut	ditch	410	411	2	3194		1.15	0.15
4	411	fill	ditch	410		2	3194			0.15
7	700	cut	ditch	700	701, 702	3	3191		1.5	0.64
7	701	fill	ditch	700		3	3191			0.24
7	702	fill	ditch	700		3	3191			0.4
7	703	cut	ditch	703	704	3	3192		1.2	0.36
7	704	fill	ditch	703		3	3192			0.36
8	800	cut	ditch	800	801	3	3192		2.86	0.46
8	801	fill	ditch	800		3	3192			0.46
8	802	cut	natural	802	803				0.64	0.28
8	803	fill	natural	802						0.28
8	804	cut	ditch	804	805	3	3191		1.22	0.74
8	805	fill	ditch	804		3	3191			0.74
13	1300	cut	pit	1300	1301			0.56	0.52	0.1
13	1301	fill	pit	1300						0.1
17	1700	cut	ditch	1700	1701				1.02	0.16

Trench	Context	Category	Feature Type	Cut	Filled By	Phase	Group	Length	Breadth	Depth
17	1701	fill	ditch	1700						0.16
17	1702	cut	ditch	1702	1703				0.7	0.2
17	1703	fill	ditch	1702						0.2
17	1704	cut	pit	1704	1705			0.28	0.28	0.1
17	1705	fill	pit	1704						0.1
18	1800	cut	ditch	1800	1801				0.94	0.18
18	1801	fill	ditch	1800						0.18
18	1802	cut	pit	1802	1803				0.5	0.08
18	1803	fill	pit	1802						0.08
18	1804	cut	pit	1804	1805			1	0.52	0.08
18	1805	fill	pit	1804						0.08
18	1806	cut	posthole	1806	1807			0.26	0.24	0.06
18	1807	fill	posthole	1806						0.06
19	1900	cut	ditch	1900	1901				1.88	0.5
19	1901	fill	ditch	1900						0.5
20	2000	cut	ditch	2000	2001				1.4	0.66
20	2001	fill	ditch	2000						0.66
29	2900	cut	tree	2900	2901			1.8	0.7	0.4
29	2901	fill	tree	2900						0.4
29	2902	cut	tree	2902				2	0.8	0.03
29	2903	fill	tree	2902						0.03
31	3100	cut	ditch	3100	3101				1.87	0.46
31	3101	fill	ditch	3100						0.46
31	3102	cut	ditch	3102	3103				0.94	0.47
31	3103	fill	ditch	3102						0.47
Area 1	3104	layer	Topsoil	0						
Area 1	3105	layer	Subsoil	0						
Area 1	3106	cut	ditch	3106	3107, 3108	2			0.95	0.34
Area 1	3107	fill	ditch	3106		2				0.2
Area 1	3108	fill	ditch	3106		2				0.07
Area 1	3109	cut	ditch	3109	3110	2	3193		1.46	0.18
Area 1	3110	fill	ditch	3109		2	3193			0.18
Area 1	3111	cut	ditch	3111	3112	3	3191		1.02	0.5
Area 1	3112	fill	ditch	3111		3	3191			0.5
Area 1	3113	cut	pit	3113	3114, 3115, 3116	1		0.59	0.4	0.26
Area 1	3114	fill	pit	3113		1				0.14
Area 1	3115	fill	pit	3113		1				0.19
Area 1	3116	fill	pit	3113		1				0.17
Area 1	3117	cut	pit	3117	3118	1		0.25	0.24	0.3
Area 1	3118	fill	pit	3117		1				0.3

Trench	Context	Category	Feature Type	Cut	Filled By	Phase	Group	Length	Breadth	Depth
Area 1	3119	cut	pit	3119	3120	1		0.4	0.38	0.1
Area 1	3120	fill	pit	3119		1				0.1
Area 1	3121	cut	pit	3121	3122	1		0.26	0.24	0.1
Area 1	3122	fill	pit	3121		1				0.1
Area 1	3123	cut	pit	3123	3124	1		0.38	0.26	0.1
Area 1	3124	fill	pit	3123		1				0.1
Area 1	3125	cut	pit	3125	3126	1		0.44	0.26	0.09
Area 1	3126	fill	pit	3125		1				0.09
Area 1	3127	cut	pit	3127	3128	1		0.3	0.22	0.07
Area 1	3128	fill	pit	3127		1				0.07
Area 1	3129	cut	pit	3129	3130	1		0.26	0.18	0.07
Area 1	3130	fill	pit	3129		1				0.07
Area 1	3131	cut	pit	3131	3132	1		0.2	0.18	0.05
Area 1	3132	fill	pit	3131		1				0.05
Area 1	3133	cut	ditch	3133	3134	2	3190		0.36	0.12
Area 1	3134	fill	ditch	3133		2	3190			0.12
Area 1	3135	cut	ditch	3135	3136	2	3189		0.4	0.08
Area 1	3136	fill	ditch	3135		2	3189			0.08
Area 1	3137	cut	natural	3137	3138			2	1.46	0.32
Area 1	3138	fill	natural	3137						0.32
Area 1	3139	cut	ditch	3139	3140	2	3188		0.36	0.1
Area 1	3140	fill	ditch	3139		2	3188			0.1
Area 1	3141	cut	ditch	3141	3142	2	3188		0.62	0.1
Area 1	3142	fill	ditch	3141		2	3188			0.1
Area 1	3143	cut	ditch	3143	3144	2	3189		0.76	0.12
Area 1	3144	fill	ditch	3143		2	3189			0.12
Area 1	3145	cut	ditch	3145	3146	2	3194		0.67	0.04
Area 1	3146	fill	ditch	3145		2	3194			0.04
Area 1	3147	cut	pit	3147	3148			0.8	1.04	0.2
Area 1	3148	fill	pit	3147						0.2
Area 1	3149	cut	pit	3149	3150			0.44	0.38	0.08
Area 1	3150	fill	pit	3149						0.08
Area 1	3151	cut	pit	3151	3152	1		0.72	0.7	0.12
Area 1	3152	fill	pit	3151		1				0.12
Area 1	3153	cut	ditch	3153	3154	2	3194		0.92	0.14
Area 1	3154	fill	ditch	3153		2	3194			0.14
Area 1	3155	cut	ditch	3155	3156	3	3192		1.04	0.28
Area 1	3156	fill	ditch	3155		3	3192			0.28
Area 1	3157	cut	ditch	3157	3158	3	3192		1.3	0.24
Area 1	3158	fill	ditch	3157		3	3192			0.24
Area 1	3159	cut	ditch	3159	3160	3	3192		1.2	0.3
Area 1	3160	fill	ditch	3159		3	3192			0.3

Trench	Context	Category	Feature Type	Cut	Filled By	Phase	Group	Length	Breadth	Depth
Area 1	3161	cut	pit	3161	3162, 3163			0.66	0.64	0.26
Area 1	3162	fill	pit	3161						0.18
Area 1	3163	fill	pit	3161						0.1
Area 1	3164	cut	pit	3164	3165			0.26	0.26	0.06
Area 1	3165	fill	pit	3164						0.06
Area 1	3166	cut	ditch	3166	3167, 3168	3	3191		1.13	0.51
Area 1	3167	fill	ditch	3166		3	3191			0.16
Area 1	3168	fill	ditch	3166		3	3191			0.3
Area 1	3169	cut	pit	3169	3170			0.4	0.4	0.08
Area 1	3170	fill	pit	3169						0.08
Area 1	3171	cut	ditch	3171	3172	2	3193		1.52	0.26
Area 1	3172	fill	ditch	3171		2	3193			0.26
Area 1	3173	cut	ditch	3173	3174	2	3193		1.55	0.11
Area 1	3174	fill	ditch	3173		2	3193			0.11
Area 1	3175	cut	ditch	3175	3176	2	3194		1.67	0.16
Area 1	3176	fill	ditch	3175		2	3194			0.16
Area 1	3177	cut	pit	3177	3178			0.52	0.3	0.06
Area 1	3178	fill	pit	3177						0.06
Area 1	3179	cut	ditch	3179	3180	2	3187		1.27	0.17
Area 1	3180	fill	ditch	3179		2	3187			0.17
Area 1	3181	cut	ditch	3181	3182	2	3187		0.37	0.17
Area 1	3182	fill	ditch	3181		2	3187			0.17
Area 1	3183	cut	pit	3183	3184	1		0.64	0.64	0.06
Area 1	3184	fill	pit	3183		1				0.06
Area 1	3185	cut	ditch	3185	3186	2	3194		1.52	0.17
Area 1	3186	fill	ditch	3185		2	3194			0.17

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Glass

By Carole Fletcher

Introduction and methodology

- B.1.1 A fragment of glass was recovered from Trench 8 during the evaluation; no additional material was recovered during the excavation. The glass was scanned and recorded by form, colour, count, and weight, dated where possible and recorded in the text.

Assemblage and Discussion

Phase 3: Post-medieval

- B.1.2 A curved fragment of dark olive green vessel glass (10g) was recovered from ditch **804** (Group **3191**) in Trench 8. The sub-rectangular fragment is curved, and there are a few small bubbles within the glass, with some weathering to the outer surface and a slight unevenness where it was in contact with the mould. The glass is 3-5mm thick. The shard is from a cylindrical bottle, is very probably 19th century or later and is not significant.
- B.1.3 This statement acts as a full record and the glass may be deselected prior to archive deposition.

B.2 Prehistoric Pottery

By Nicholas Gilmour

Introduction

- B.2.1 The excavation and evaluation yielded 16 sherds (80g) of prehistoric pottery, with a low mean sherd weight (MSW) of 5g. The pottery was recovered from two contexts; fill 205 of pit **204** (Phase 1) and fill 3110 of ditch **3109** (Phase 2). All but one sherd (15g) was recovered during hand excavation, with the exception being recovered from the residue of a bulk soil sample (Table 4).
- B.2.2 The pottery probably dates from the Late Neolithic; however, a Middle Bronze Age date cannot be ruled out for some of the sherds. It does not include any feature sherds and has been dated by fabrics typically associated with ceramic traditions in the region.
- B.2.3 The pottery is in moderate to poor condition. Most sherds are small and abraded, as reflected by the low MSW.

Methodology

- B.2.4 All the pottery has been fully recorded following the recommendations laid out by the Prehistoric Ceramic Research Group (2011). After a full inspection of the assemblage,

fabric groups were devised on the basis of dominant inclusion types, their density and modal size. Sherds from all contexts were counted, weighed (to the nearest whole gram) and assigned to a fabric group. Sherd type was recorded, along with evidence for surface treatment, decoration, and the presence of soot and/or residue. Rim and base forms were described using a codified system recorded in the catalogue, and were assigned vessel numbers. Where possible, rim and base diameters were measured, and surviving percentages noted. In cases where a sherd or groups of refitting sherds retained portions of the rim, shoulder and/or other diagnostic features, the vessel was categorised by ceramic tradition (Collared Urn, Deverel-Rimbury *etc.*)

- B.2.5 All pottery was subject to sherd size analysis. Sherds less than 4cm in diameter were classified as ‘small’ (13 sherds); sherds measuring 4-8cm were classified as ‘medium’ (three sherds), and sherds over 8cm in diameter would have been classified as ‘large’ (none). The quantified data is presented on an Excel data sheet held with the site archive.

Prehistoric pottery fabrics

G1: Moderate coarse grog (mainly <3mm in size). Clay matrix includes micaceous sand.

Fabric	Fabric group	No. sherds	Weight (g)	% fabric (by wt.)	MNV
G1	Grog	14	74	92.5	1

Table 4: Quantification of prehistoric pottery by fabric

Pottery from Trench 2

- B.2.6 The pottery (13 sherds, 65g) recovered from evaluation Trench 2 all came from fill 205 of pit **204**. All this pottery was in fabric G1 and only undecorated body sherds are present. Where the thickness of the vessel walls could be measured it is between 10mm and 11mm. As all of the sherds were recovered from the same feature and are in the same fabric, and the external colour (orangey-brown) and internal colour (dark black/brown) are all the same, it is likely they are from a single vessel. This pottery is likely to be of Late Neolithic date. It is in a fabric which is very similar to much of the Grooved Ware pottery from Gildea Way, Harlow (Gilmour 2020).
- B.2.7 However, the lack of feature sherds makes this date tentative. Grog tempered fabrics are quite common in Deverel-Rimbury pottery of north-east Essex, particularly among vessels of Ardleigh style wares (Brown 1995) and therefore the possibility of a Middle Bronze Age date cannot be ruled out.

Pottery from the excavation area

- B.2.8 A single residual sherd (9g) in fabric G1 was recovered from fill 3110 of ditch **3109** (Phase 2). The body sherd is plain and lacks diagnostic features. In common with the material from Trench 2, it has been dated to the Late Neolithic period due to its fabric.

Discussion

- B.2.9 The small assemblage of prehistoric pottery from this site does not contain any feature sherds to allow detailed comparison to other local sites. However, the pottery does provide evidence for prehistoric activity on the site or in the near vicinity.

B.3 Roman pottery

By Katherine Blackburn

Introduction

- B.3.1 An assemblage of Roman pottery totalling four sherds (weighing 34g) was recovered from the excavation, representing a minimum of two individual vessels. Varying levels of abrasion occurred on these sherds and they range in date from the 1st to 4th century AD, with an average sherd weight of 8.5g.

Methodology

- B.3.2 The pottery was analysed following the national guidelines (Barclay *et al* 2016) and with reference to the national fabric series (Tomber and Dore 1998), and also Tyers (1996). The total assemblage was studied and a full catalogue was prepared (Table 6). The sherds were examined using a hand lens (x10 magnification) and were divided into fabric groups defined on the basis of inclusion types present. Vessel forms were recorded and vessel types cross-referenced and compared to other examples. The sherds were counted and weighed to the nearest whole gram and recorded by context. Decoration, residues and abrasion were also noted. OA East curates the pottery and archive.

The Pottery

- B.3.3 Two pottery fabric types were identified (Table 5) and the assemblage comprises locally produced wheel-made and hand-made coarse ware jars.

Fabric Type	Forms	No of Sherds	Weight (g)	Weight %
SGW (GROG) Sandy grey ware with grog temper	Jar	3	19	55.9
SGW (Q) Sandy grey ware with Quartz inclusions	Jar	1	15	44.1
Total		4	34	100

Table 5: Roman pottery by fabric family

Results

- B.3.4 A single sherd (15g) of a sandy grey ware jar with quartz inclusions was recovered from the fill 3134 of ditch **3133** (Phase 2). This sherd has horizontal incised line decoration and dates to the 2nd to 4th century AD.
- B.3.5 Three sherds (19g) from the same vessel were recovered from the subsoil (3105). The sherds are handmade with large inclusions visible on the exterior surface. These

sherds belong to a sandy grey ware jar with grog tempering and date to the mid-1st to early 2nd century AD.

Conclusion

- B.3.6 A small quantity of Roman pottery dating from the 1st to 4th century AD was recovered from the site. The assemblage was recovered from just two contexts, one of which was ditch **3133** (Ditch group **3190**, Phase 2). The remaining three sherds of Early Roman pottery were recovered from the subsoil. The vessels present are locally produced and suggest that any Roman settlement within the vicinity of the site was likely of a small scale, with few links to the larger Roman pottery industries.

Catalogue

Context	Cut	Group	Category	Feature Type	HM/WM	Fabric Family	Dsc	Form	No of Sherds	Weight (g)	Spotdate	Context Date
3105	-		Layer	Subsoil	HM	SGW (Grog)	U	Jar	3	19	MC1-EC2	
3134	3133	3190	Fill	Ditch	WM	SGW (Q)	U	Jar	1	15	C2-C4	C2-C4

Table 6: Roman pottery catalogue

B.4 Medieval & post-medieval pottery

By Carole Fletcher

Introduction

- B.4.1 A total of four sherds (19g) were recovered from ditches in Trenches 3 and 4 during the evaluation and an additional five sherds were recovered during the excavation, of which two fragments are heavily abraded. The assemblage is otherwise moderately abraded to abraded and represents a background scatter of material across the site.

Methodology

- B.4.2 The Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG), Study Group for Roman Pottery (SGRP), The Medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG), *A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology* (2016) and the MPRG *A guide to the classification of medieval ceramic forms* (MPRG 1998) act as standards. Rapid recording was carried out using OA East's in-house system, based on that previously used at the Museum of London. Fabric classification has been carried out for all previously described types using Essex fabric types (Cotter 2000), based on those of Cunningham (1985). All sherds have been counted, classified, and weighed on a context-by-context basis and recorded in the text of this report. The pottery and archive are curated by OA East until formal deposition.

Assemblage

Phase 2: Medieval

- B.4.3 Ditch **3106** produced two joining, heavily abraded, fully oxidised, body sherds (6g). The form of the vessel is indeterminate, and the level of abrasion makes identification of the fabric uncertain; however, they may be sherds of Hedingham ware (c.1140-1350, Fabric 22).
- B.4.4 Group **3190**: ditch **300**, Trench 3, produced two undiagnostic sherds of pottery, one body sherd (10g) and one possible base sherd (6g), from two separate early medieval sandy ware (Fabric 13) vessels.
- B.4.5 Group **3193**: ditch **400** in Trench 4 also produced two sherds of early medieval sandy ware (Fabric 13). These two abraded, slightly externally sooted, joining body sherds weigh 3g and are not reliable for precisely dating the feature.

Phase 3: Post-medieval

- B.4.6 Group **3191**: ditch **3166** produced an abraded base angle (6g) from a black-glazed, Fabric 40 vessel, possibly a post-medieval drinking vessel.
- B.4.7 Group **3192**: ditch **3159** produced a moderately abraded, internally glazed (honey coloured), flat base sherd (5g) from a post-medieval redware (c. 1550 to 1800, Fabric 40) bowl.

Unphased

- B.4.8 During the excavation, a partial, unglazed, thickened, strap handle, oval in section and with slight splaying where the handle joined the body of the vessel (16g), was recovered from topsoil context 3104. The sherd is very probably from an oxidised Late Colchester-type ware (c.1400/25-1550, Fabric 21A) jug.

Discussion

- B.4.9 The assemblage is fragmentary and represents low levels of pottery distribution. If the area was woodland during at least part of the medieval period, the pottery may relate to temporary occupation by, for example, charcoal burners or squatters, or manuring of open fields. However, the paucity of pottery suggests any early medieval or medieval settlement is not close by. The sherd from the 17th century Martincamp flask and the Fabric 40 sherds may relate to the farmhouse constructed on the site of the later Fiddlers Farm (see 1.3.8).
- B.4.10 The plain and fragmentary nature of the total assemblage means it is of little significance. This statement acts as a full record and the pottery may be deselected prior to archival deposition.

B.5 Ceramic building material and fired clay

By Carole Fletcher

Introduction and methodology

- B.5.1 A fragmentary assemblage of ceramic building material (CBM), consisting mostly of tile fragments and partial bricks (97g), was recovered from Trenches 3 and 8 during the evaluation, mostly from ditches. A further 1376g of CBM was recovered from the excavation. A small amount of fired clay (6g) was also recovered from Trench 2, with an additional 11g from the excavation.
- B.5.2 The assemblage was quantified by context, counted, weighed, and form recorded, where this was identifiable. Fabric is noted and dating is necessarily broad. Only complete dimensions were recorded, which was most commonly thickness. The results are recorded in the text. Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group *Ceramic Building Material, Minimum Standards for Recovery, Curation, Analysis and Publication* (2002) forms the basis for recording, Ryan (1996), Woodforde (1976) and McComish (2015) form the basis for identification. The CBM and archive are curated by OA East until formal deposition or dispersal.

Assemblage

Phase 1: Prehistoric

- B.5.3 Trench 2, pit **204** produced two small, irregular and undiagnostic fragments of fired clay (6g) in a silty orange-red fabric with paler swirls and some reduced areas. The material is not closely datable.
- B.5.4 Pit **3117** produced three irregular, undiagnostic fragments (9g) of dull red and paler red-brown fired clay that is not closely datable.

Phase 2: Medieval

- B.5.5 Group **3189**: ditch **3143**, produced irregular fragments of undiagnostic pale orange-red fired clay (two fragments, 2g). The material is not closely datable.
- B.5.6 Group **3193**: two ditches in this group produced CBM. Trench 3, ditch **306**, produced two refitting fragments (55g) of thin (9-10mm thick), uneven medieval flat tile, in a silty but coarse quartz-tempered fabric, with dull red-orange surfaces and margins, and a mid-grey core. Ditch **306** is a continuation of ditch **400**, which also produced sherds of early medieval sandy ware (Fabric 13).
- B.5.7 Ditch **3171**, also in this group, produced the bulk of the excavation assemblage (475g), comprising a large, somewhat irregular, fragment from a post-medieval (17th century or later) pan tile (295g, 14-16mm thick) in a completely oxidised yellowish-red silty fabric, with the tile formed in a sanded mould, and an irregular fragment from a handmade brick (180g). The brick fragment retains small areas of surface and a somewhat rounded arris. The fabric is quartz-tempered, fully oxidised to a dull brick red with some pebbles in the matrix, relatively poorly mixed and 47-50mm thick. The brick is post-medieval and probably 17th to 18th century.

Ditch **3106** contained a single sub-rectangular fragment of curved tile (132g, 14-16mm thick) in a soft silty quartz-tempered fabric with some clay pellets or grog, fully oxidised, with orange-red surfaces and margins, and a duller red-brown core. The fragment feels too soft and friable to be Roman, although the curvature suggests *imbrex* tiles. The sherd is more probably a late medieval to early post-medieval ridge tile.

Phase 3: Post-medieval

- B.5.8 Group **3191**: three ditch interventions in this group produced CBM, ditch **804** produced a single (2g) undiagnostic fragment of orange-red quartz-tempered fired clay that is probably an abraded and weathered fragment of brick. This context also produced four fragments from a single brick (649g). The fully oxidised dull red-brown fabric is hard fired and quartz-tempered, with the occasional pebble. The brick is handmade, unfrogged, with drag marks on the bed, while the upper is worn somewhat smooth, as if used as a floor brick rather than a wall brick. Slightly rounded arrises survive, as do part of the stretcher and the full header face. The brick's dimensions are 98mm wide, 45mm tall and are from the late 17th to early 18th century.
- B.5.9 Ditch **3111** produced two irregular fragments of flat tile (43g), both hard fired with a sanded base, orange-red surfaces and margins, and a mid grey core. One fragment is 11-12mm thick, the other 13mm thick, and both are similar to the tile recovered from subsoil 3105, and is very probably late medieval to post-medieval.
- B.5.10 The last ditch in this group that produced CBM, ditch **3166**, produced two abraded undiagnostic fragments (7g) of quartz-tempered material, possibly fragments of tile.
- B.5.11 Group **3192**: Trench 8, ditch **800** produced an undiagnostic irregular fragment of dull red-orange, quartz-tempered fabric with occasional darker inclusions (41g). A partial unsanded, slightly overfired, surface survives, giving it a glazed look in part; the fragment may be late 17th to early 18th century. Also present is a small irregular fragment of dull brick red quartz-tempered CBM (1g)

Unphased

- B.5.12 Subsoil 3105 produced a roughly triangular fragment from a post-medieval flat tile (68g) 13-14mm thick, in an orange-red fabric with a heavily sanded base. It has a relatively well-formed edge and arris. A small irregular fragment of hard fired tile with orange-red surfaces and margins, and a mid grey core was also recovered, and is also very late medieval to post-medieval.

Discussion

- B.5.13 The assemblage is plain and fragmentary and, although a small amount of potentially medieval CBM has been recovered, much of the material is later. It is all moderately abraded or abraded and represents a background scatter of reworked material, as found on many rural sites. It relates to distribution of material, very probably by later ploughing, rather than to the demolition (on the site) of brick structures with tiled roofs. The small amount of fired clay recovered could not be closely dated.

B.5.14 This statement acts as a full record and the CBM and fired clay may be deselected prior to archival deposition.

B.6 Clay tobacco pipe

By Carole Fletcher

Introduction and methodology

B.6.1 During the evaluation, two fragments of white ball clay tobacco pipe were recovered from Trenches 7 and 8, although no further material was recovered during the excavation. Simplified recording only has been undertaken, with basic description and weight recorded in the text. Terminology used in this report is taken from Oswald's simplified general typology (Oswald 1975, 37–41), and Crummy and Hind (Crummy 1988, 47-66).

Assemblage and Discussion

Phase 3: Post-medieval

- B.6.2 Group **3191**: environmental sample 4, taken from fill 702 of ditch **700**, in Trench 7, produced a somewhat abraded length of clay tobacco pipe stem (3g), slightly curved and slightly oval, approximately 7.3 x 6.5mm and 40mm in length, with trimmed mould seams and a relatively central small diameter bore.
- B.6.3 A second ditch in the same group, **804** in Trench 8, also produced a single fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem (5g). The stem is slightly teardrop shaped (64mm long) with a larger bore than that of the fragment from Trench 7 and with a more off-centre placement of the bore at one end, more centrally placed at the thicker, more circular end of the stem (7.4 x 6.7mm to 8mm). The stem has well-trimmed mould seams and slight external burning.
- B.6.4 The fragments of clay tobacco pipe recovered represent what are, most likely, casually discarded pipes and does little, other than to indicate the consumption of tobacco on, or near, the site. Ditch **700** and ditch **804** appear to be part of the same boundary recorded on the 1837 Fordham Parish Tithe map (see 3.8.2 and 3.9.4), suggesting the pipes may be 19th century. The vessel glass recovered from ditch **804** is also very probably 19th century.
- B.6.5 The assemblage is fragmentary and is of little significance. This statement acts as a full record and the clay tobacco pipe may be deselected prior to archive deposition.

APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Environmental Samples

By Martha Craven

Introduction

- C.1.1 A total of six bulk environmental samples were taken from the fills of features excavated at land north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green. This was in addition to five bulk samples taken from evaluation trenches in the excavation area. This was done in accordance with the sampling strategy for the site.
- C.1.2 The samples taken during the previous evaluation (Mason 2020) produced carbonised material; however, preservation was very poor (Craven 2020).
- C.1.3 The purpose of this analysis is to combine the results from the evaluation trenches within the excavation area with the results from the excavation area to determine whether environmental remains are present. If so, their mode of preservation and what evidence they can provide about domestic, agricultural, and industrial activities, along with diet, economy and waste disposal are presented.

Methodology

- C.1.4 The samples were soaked in a solution of sodium carbonate for 24hrs prior to processing to break down the heavy clay matrix. The samples were processed by tank flotation using modified Siraf-type equipment for the recovery of preserved plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The floating component (flot) of the samples was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through 10mm, 5mm, 2mm and 0.5mm sieves.
- C.1.5 A magnet was dragged through each residue fraction for the recovery of magnetic residues prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds.
- C.1.6 The dried flots were subsequently scanned by the author using a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 60.
- C.1.7 Identification of plant remains is with reference to the Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands (Cappers *et al.* 2006) and OA East's reference collection. Nomenclature is according to Zohary and Hopf (2000) for cereals and Stace (2010) for other plants. Plant remains have been identified to species where possible. The identification of cereals has been based on the characteristic morphology of the grains and chaff as described by Jacomet (2006).

Quantification

- C.1.8 For the purpose of this assessment, items such as cereal grains have been scanned and recorded qualitatively according to the following categories:

= 1-5, ## = 6-25, ### = 26-100, #### = 100+ specimens

- C.1.9 Items that cannot be easily quantified such molluscs have been scored for abundance:

+ = rare, ++ = moderate, +++ = abundant

Results

- C.1.10 Preservation of plant remains is through carbonisation (charring) and is quite poor. Molluscs are present in small quantities in the majority of the samples (Table 7).
- C.1.11 Most of the samples are either devoid of or contain small quantities of charcoal, with the exception of pits **204** (Trench 2, Sample 1) and **3113** (Sample 8), both of which contain moderate charcoal fragments.
- C.1.12 Two samples contain plant remains other than charcoal. Sample 4, fill 702 of ditch **700** (Trench 7) contains two rachis fragments which have morphological traits suggestive of free-threshing wheat (c.f *Triticum aestivum/turgidum*). Sample 9, fill 3134 of ditch **3133**, produced eight hulled wheat (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*) grains and one barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) grain.

Sample No.	Context No.	Cut No.	Group No.	Exc/Trench	Feature Type	Volume Processed (L)	Flot Volume (ml)	Cereals	Molluscs	Charcoal Volume (ml)	Burnt flint/debitage	Hammerscale	Slag
1	205	204		2	Pit	12	5	0	0	81	0	0	0
2	307	306	3193	3	Ditch	16	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	801	800	3192	8	Ditch	16	20	0	0	1	0	0	0
4	702	700	3191	7	Ditch	16	20	#	+	40	0	0	##
5	704	703	3192	7	Ditch	16	20	0	+	0	0	0	0
8	3115	3113		Ex	Pit	18	10	0	+	52	0	0	0
9	3134	3133	3190	Ex	Ditch	17	5	#	+	5	0	+	0
10	3156	3155	3192	Ex	Ditch	18	10	0	+	0	0	0	0
11	3162	3161		Ex	Pit	16	10	0	+	5	0	0	0
12	3172	3171	3193	Ex	Ditch	18	10	0	++	4	0	+	0
13	3182	3181	3187	Ex	Ditch	14	5	0	0	0	0	+	0

Table 7: Environmental samples from Eight Ash Green

Discussion

- C.1.13 The scarcity of plant remains within the samples means that it is difficult to make inferences regarding plant usage. It could be argued that the low density of plant material indicates that the focus of settlement activity was situated elsewhere.
- C.1.14 The moderate quantity of carbonised cereal grains found within medieval ditch **3133** (Phase 2) is likely to be the result of refuse accumulating naturally in the feature over time. The assemblage, comprising hulled wheat and barley, is typical for the Romano-British period but is also not unknown from the medieval period.
- C.1.15 Free-threshing wheat, such as that found in Sample 4 from post-medieval ditch **700** (Phase 3) is most commonly cultivated from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards (Banham and Faith 2014) but is not unknown from earlier dates in England. Free-threshing wheat has the benefit of requiring less processing than hulled wheat varieties. It is also possible that these rachis are modern intrusions from stubble burning. The samples

do contain a lot of rootlets which could have caused the movement of material between contexts.

Retention and disposal

C.1.16 The flots from this site will be retained within the site archive.

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APPENDIX E OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-418803		
Project Name	Neolithic, medieval and post-medieval Remains at Eight Ash Green, Colchester		

Start of Fieldwork	01/03/2021	End of Fieldwork	19/03/2021
Previous Work	Yes	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	ECC4569	Planning App. No.	171529
HER Number	ECC4569	Related Numbers	

Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework
Development Type	Urban residential
Place in Planning Process	After outline determination (eg. A a reserved matter)

Techniques used (tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography – interpretation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open-area excavation | <input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Record |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Excavation | <input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Field Walking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field Observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Survey | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Systematic Metal Detector Survey |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Excavation | <input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Test-pit Survey |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation | |

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Pit	Late Neolithic (- 3000 to - 2200)	Pottery	Late Neolithic (- 3000 to - 2200)
Ditch	Medieval (1066 to 1540)	Pottery	Roman (43 to 410)
Ditch	Post Medieval (1540 to 1901)	Pottery	Medieval (1066 to 1540)
	Choose an item.	Pottery	Post Medieval (1540 to 1901)
	Choose an item.	Glass	Post Medieval (1540 to 1901)
	Choose an item.	CBM	Medieval (1066 to 1540)
	Choose an item.	CBM	Post Medieval (1540 to 1901)
	Choose an item.	Clay tobacco pipe	Post Medieval (1540 to 1901)
	Choose an item.	Fired clay	Uncertain

Project Location

County	Essex	Address (including Postcode)
District	Colchester	Halstead Road,

Parish	Fordham	Eight Ash Green, Colchester, Essex CO3 9TU
HER office	Colchester Borough Council	
Size of Study Area	0.85ha	
National Grid Ref	TL 93098 26402	

Project Originators

Organisation	OA East
Project Brief Originator	Colchester Borough Council
Project Design Originator	OA East
Project Manager	Patrick Moan (OA East)
Project Supervisor	Neal Mason (OA East)

Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	Colchester Museum	ECC4569
Digital Archive	OA East	XEXEAG20EX
Paper Archive	Colchester Museum	ECC4569

Physical Contents	Present?	Digital files associated with Finds	Paperwork associated with Finds
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Remains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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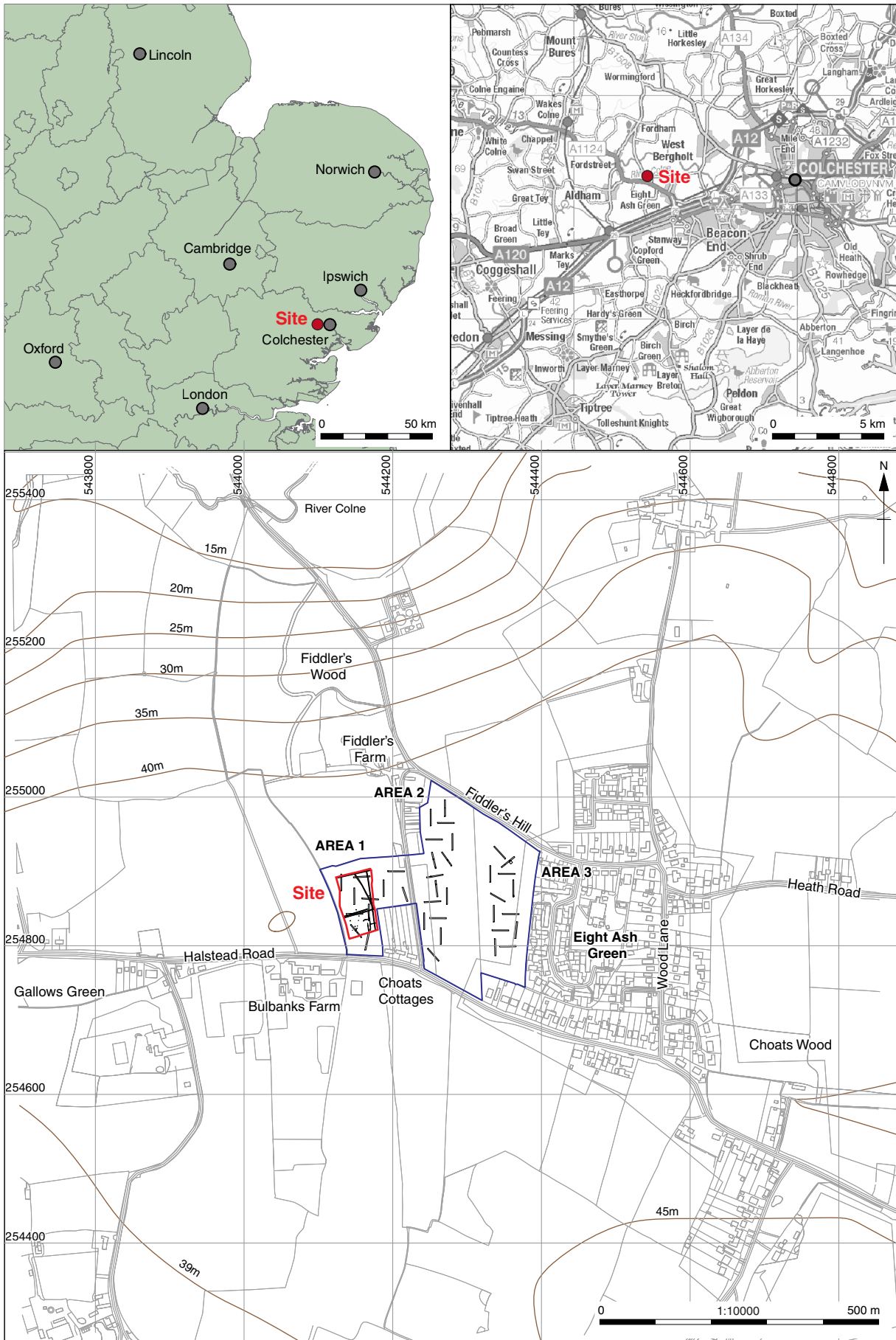
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Illustrations (Figures/Plates)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/>

Paper Media

Aerial Photos	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context Sheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drawing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Manuscript	<input type="checkbox"/>

Spreadsheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Map	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Matrices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Text	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Microfiche	<input type="checkbox"/>
Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/>	Miscellaneous	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Research/Notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Photos (negatives/prints/slides)	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Sections	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological excavation (red) with evaluation trenches (black) in development area (blue)

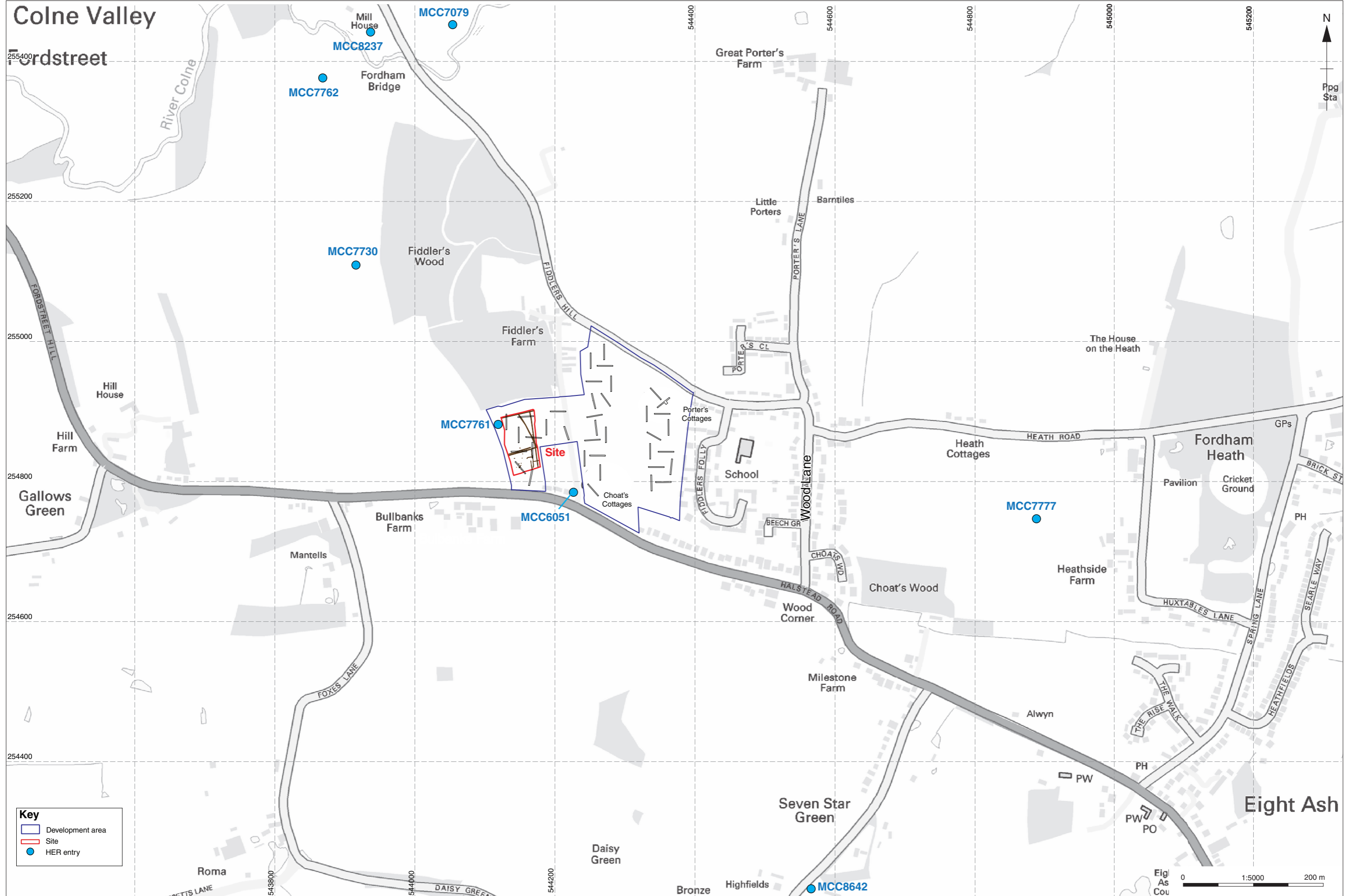


Figure 2: Selected entries from the Colchester Historic Environment Record (after Gailey 2017)

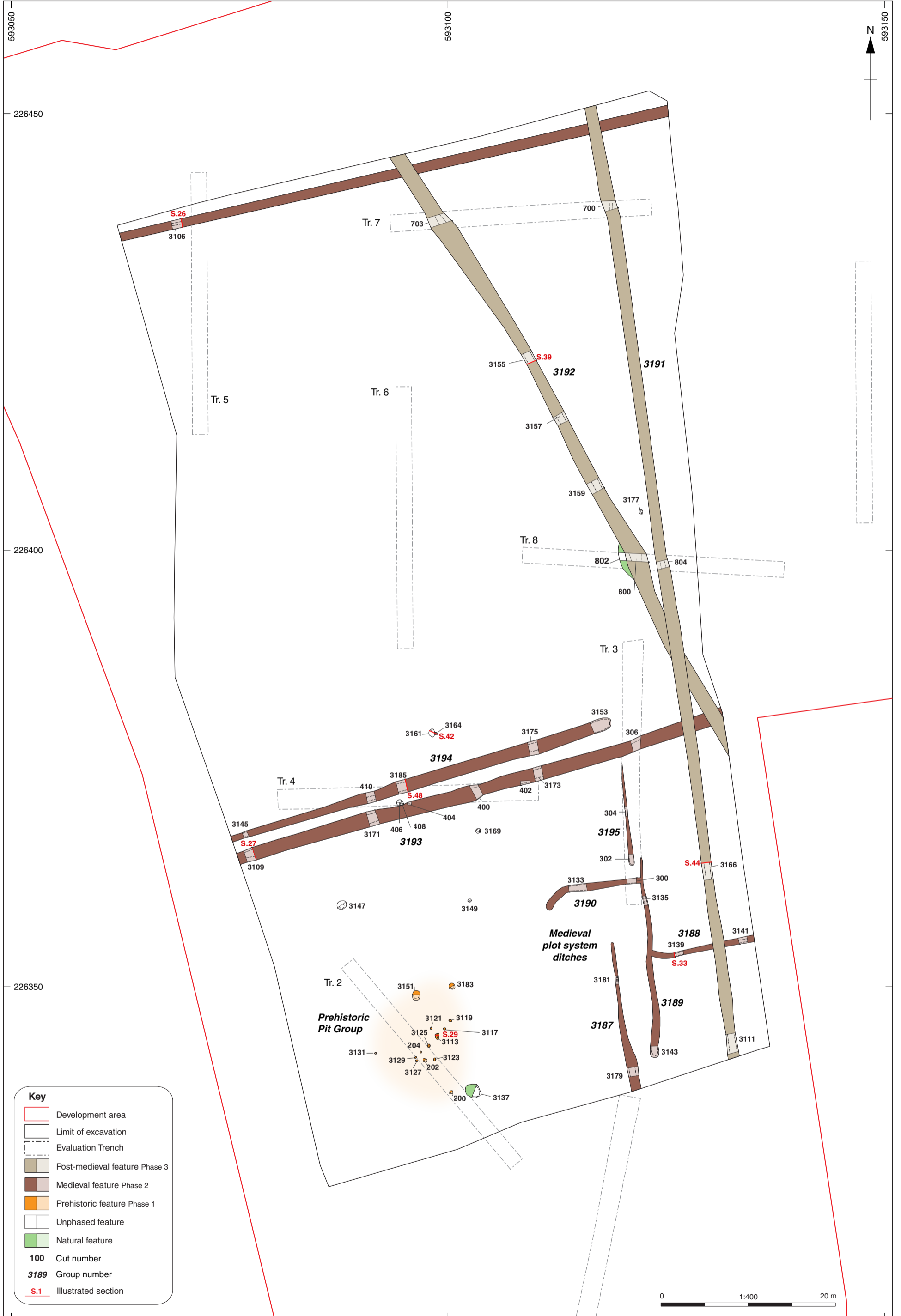


Figure 3: All features and phase plan



Figure 4: 1837 Fordham Parish Tithe Map (after CgMs 2017)

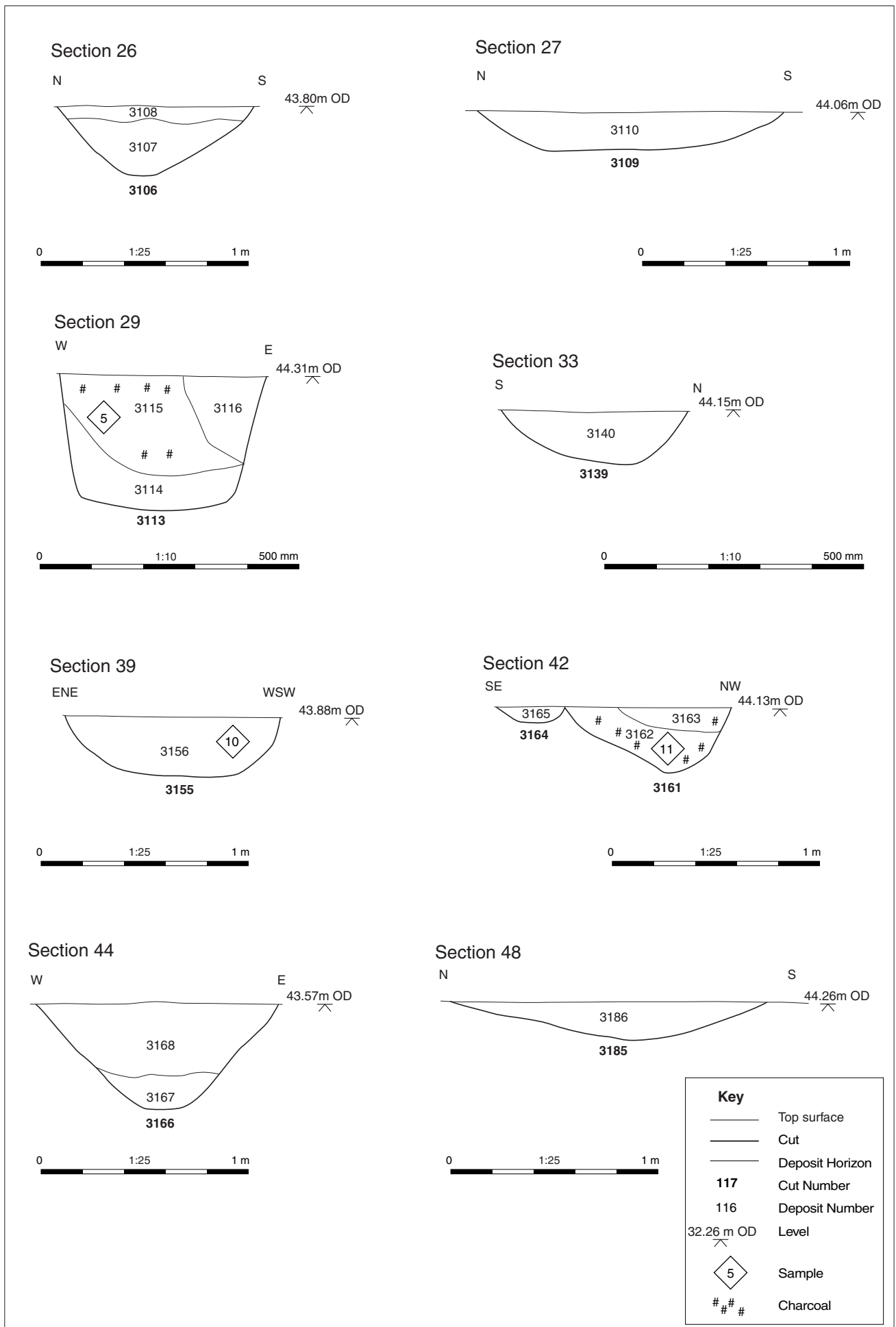


Figure 5: Selected sections



Plate 1: Neolithic pit group, looking west



Plate 2: Pit 204, looking north

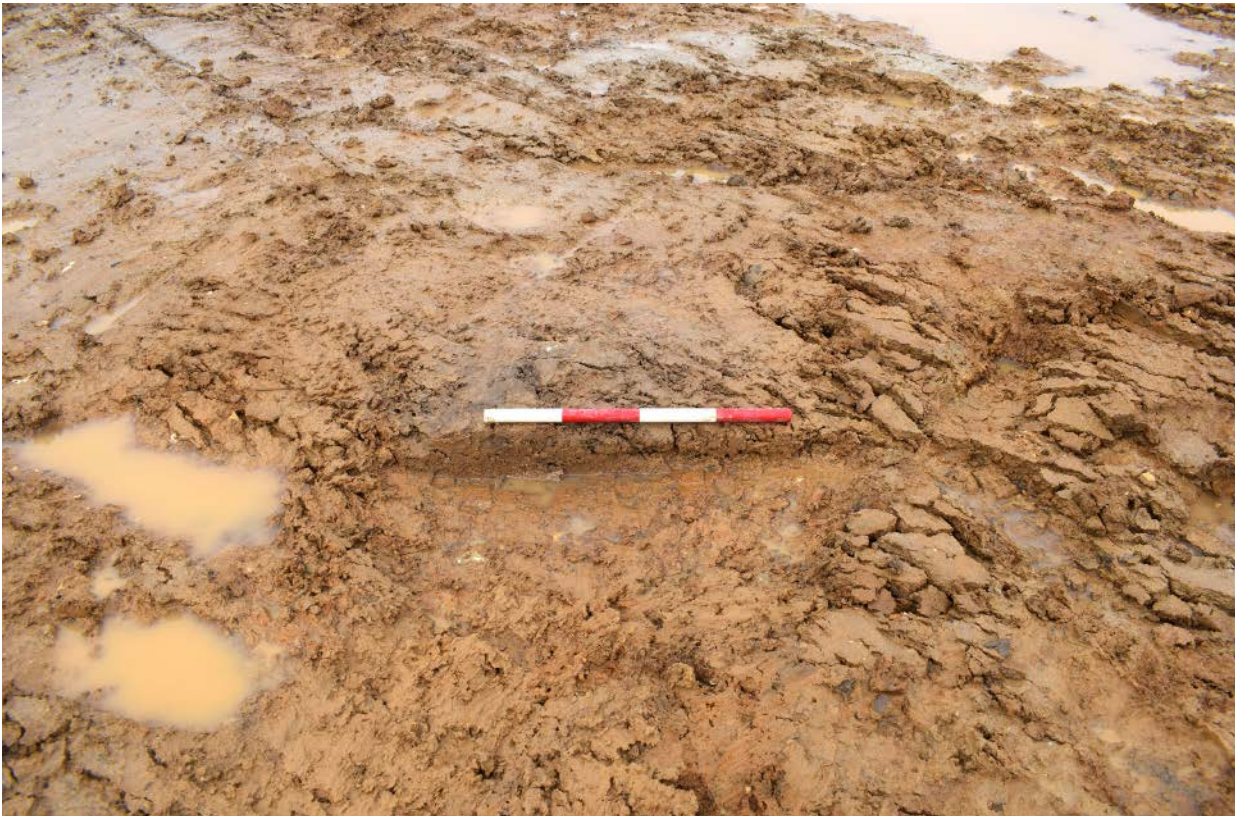


Plate 3: Pit **3183**, looking north-west



Plate 4: Ditch **3187**, looking north



Plate 5: Ditch **3188** cut by ditch **3191**, looking south-west



Plate 6: Double ditch boundaries **3193** and **3194**, looking east



Plate 7: Ditch **3192**, looking north-west



Plate 8: Ditch **3191**, looking north



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