

Watching brief report

**Old Scrap Yard, High Street, Rowhedge**

**Date of visit:** 6th September 2000

**Officer:** Kate Orr

**NGR:** TM 0315 2180

**CAT Project Code:** 00/9A

**CAT Report 90**

**Nature of work:** Re-piling the river bank prior to house-building

**Background**

An evaluation had been carried out on the site by CAT in 1992. Four trenches were excavated, and 19th- to 20th-century deposits were found but no early features. There was no watching brief condition on the current phase of the work because ground contamination caused by the scrapyard was thought to present too much of a danger. However, CAT received a call from a member of the public who had observed large timbers, which could have been part of a medieval quay, being removed from black mud below the present quay level. With the agreement of the Archaeological Officer for Colchester Museums, an officer from CAT was sent out to observe and to retrieve a piece of the timber for dating.

**Description**

The site, bordered to the east by the River Colne and to the west by the High Street, is currently open land following demolition of a scrapyard (see Fig 1). Previous to that the site had been a shipyard with a quay. The surface had been scraped off with a JCB and the replacement sheet piling had already been erected by the time I arrived. All the timbers had been removed and the engineer present showed me the timbers. Approximately ten had been found positioned upright in the mud below high tide level. They were 4m in length with square edges and pointed bases; some had iron reinforcements to aid driving in and nails still remaining. The engineer told me that they had stopped digging once they encountered the alluvial clays.

**Finds**

One of the iron nails was retrieved and later discarded. It was 31.5 cm in length with a rounded head and it appeared to have been cast rather than wrought, which suggests that the timber was relatively modern. It was not thought necessary to remove any of the timbers for dating purposes as they appeared to be fairly recent.

**Photographs:** Three photographs were taken showing the posts and the piling (Figs 2-4)

**Any plans not attached here:** None

**Summary:** Negative

**Museum accession code:** N/A

**References:** CAT evaluation report High Street, Rowhedge 8/92A

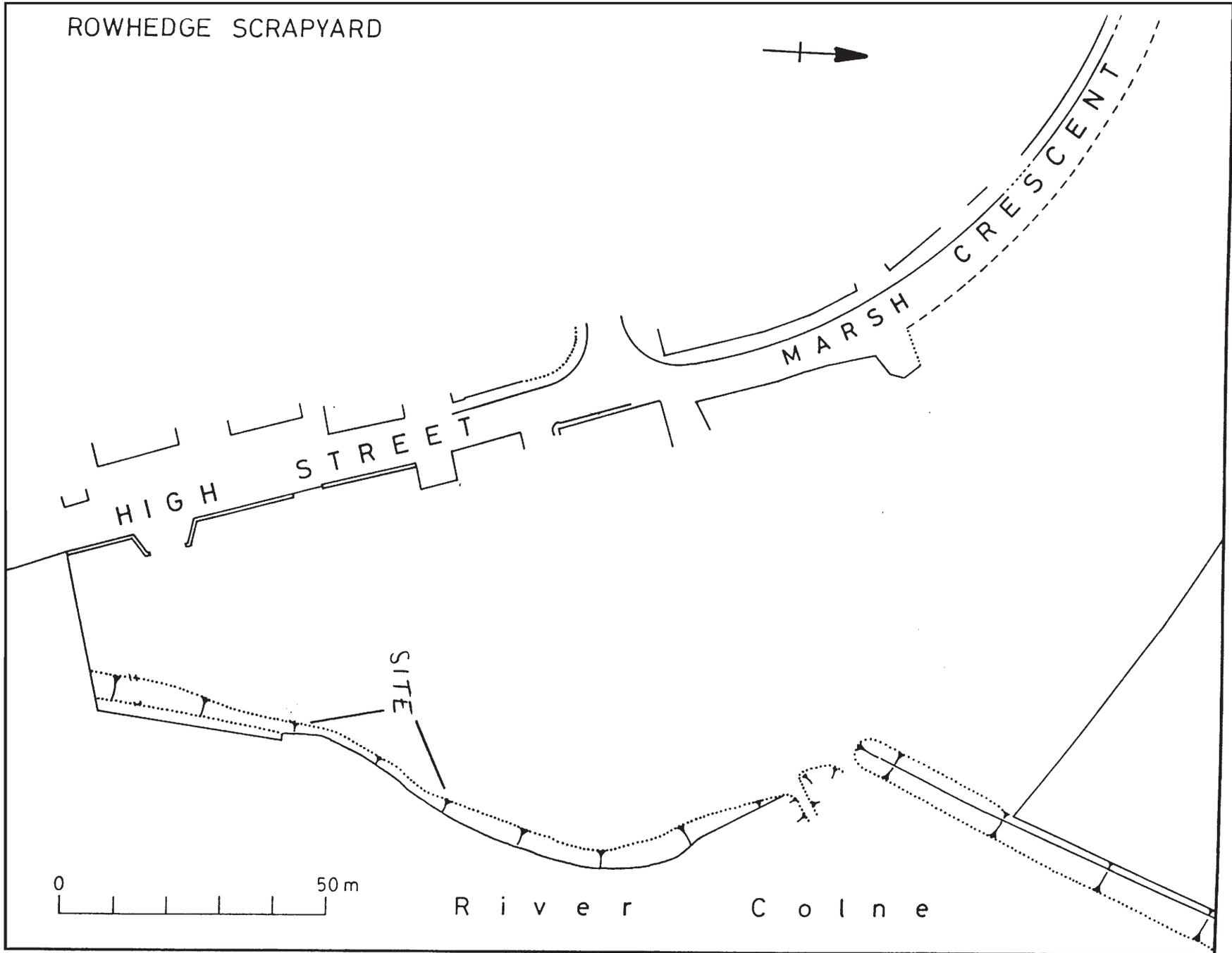


Fig 1  
Site  
location.



**Fig 2 Timber post with new sheet piling to the rear - view north.**



**Fig 3 Timber post with new sheet piling behind.**



**Fig 4 Timber posts.**