

**An archaeological watching brief at
Ruffles Coachworks
(off Church Lane),
Castle Hedingham, Essex**

January-February 2002

**on behalf of
Bermac Properties plc**

CAT project code: 02/1c
Braintree Museum accession code: BRNTM 2002.1
HAMP site code: CH4
NGR: TL 7837 3554



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Contents

| | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Summary | 1 |
| 2 | Introduction | 1 |
| 3 | Archaeological background | 1 |
| 4 | Aim | 1 |
| 5 | Methods | 1 |
| 6 | Results | 2 |
| 7 | Discussion and interpretation | 2 |
| 8 | Acknowledgements | 2 |
| 9 | References | 2 |
| 10 | Glossary | 3 |
| 11 | Archive deposition | 3 |
| 12 | Site data | 3 |

Figures after p 7

EHCR summary sheet

List of figures

- Fig 1 Site location, showing conjectured line of medieval outer defensive ditch, scale 1:1250 approx.
- Fig 2 Trench plan, showing trench numbers, scale 1:200.
- Fig 3 Section drawings of T1 AG facing west and T2 X facing north, scale 1:10.
- Fig 4 Section drawings of T1 A facing east and T1 E facing north, scale 1:10.

1 Summary

During the watching brief at Ruffles Coachworks, Castle Hedingham, Essex, it was observed that the ground-beam trenches did not impinge on the medieval defensive ditch or any other features of archaeological significance. Modern overburden and disturbed ground were encountered. Only a few of the trenches were dug deep enough to reach natural ground.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological watching brief at the former Ruffles Coachworks (off Church Lane), Castle Hedingham, Essex carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between the 24th January and the 21st February 2002 and commissioned by Bermac Properties plc.
- 2.2 The development consists of four dwellings in the yard of the former Ruffles Coachworks. This irregularly-shaped 0.56 acre plot is situated off Church Lane on the western side of the village, at NGR TL 7837 3554 (Fig 1). The site lies on a gentle west-facing slope which is bordered to the west by an area which has recently been cleared of trees, to the north by a garden and a hedge, to the east by a house, and to the south by trees and a hedge. Previously the site was laid to tarmac and contained at least two buildings.
- 2.3 Planning permission was given with a condition for an archaeological watching brief under application numbers BTE/1806/00 and BTE/1807/00/CON.
- 2.4 All fieldwork was done in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which was agreed with the Heritage Advice, Management and Promotion (HAMP) group of Essex County Council.
- 2.5 This report follows standards and practices contained in the IFA's *Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The development site lies on the edge of the town of Castle Hedingham (EHCR 2783). The medieval town was dominated by the castle keep, which was built by the de Vere family inside an existing ringwork in the 12th century (EHCR 6787).
- 3.2 The town was defended on the south and west sides by an inner and outer ditch (EHCR 10676 & 16077). Medlycott (1999) shows the conjectured line of the outer defensive ditch extending across the development site (Fig 1).
- 3.3 The medieval parish church of St Nicholas lies immediately east of the site (EHCR 6784-6786). Medieval tenements surrounded the church and the site is situated to the rear of these.
- 3.4 A Roman coin (EHCR 6818) is recorded from immediately south of the site. This may indicate that further Roman remains lie uncovered here, or it may represent a casual loss.

4 Aim

The aim of the watching brief was to record the location, extent, character, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains relating to the medieval town defences or settlement of Castle Hedingham.

5 Methods

- 5.1 The watching brief was carried out by Laura Pooley and Ben Holloway, professional archaeologists from CAT, who made five visits in total. The watching brief covered only the digging of the ground-beams as, after consultation with HAMP, the monitoring of the piling and drain-digging was not included. The ground-beams were dug by the contractors using a mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching

bucket. Most of the ground-beams were dug 600mm wide and between 500mm and 700mm deep. Spoil heaps were checked for artefacts (Fig 2).

- 5.2 Individual records of layers and features were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.3 Section drawings of a selection of trenches were made at a scale of 1:10, four of which have been reproduced in this report (Figs 3-4).
- 5.4 Finds were listed on CAT pro-forma record sheets and were washed, marked and bagged according to context.
- 5.5 Colour photographs of the sections of the trenches plus general site shots were taken with a digital camera.
- 5.6 A metal detector was not used due to the abundance of modern metal in the spoil.
- 5.7 OD heights were taken of Plot 1 with a level (Fig 2).

6 Results (Figs 2-4)

- 6.1 The four plots were built on in two blocks – Plot 1 was in one block and Plots 2, 3 and 4 were in a separate larger block to the west. The top four layers (layers or L1-L4) contained modern material (see sections 12.1 and 12.3). L1 and L2 consisted mainly of demolition debris, presumably from the buildings which were recently pulled down. Only three of the trenches (T1 G, T2 L and T2 M) reached natural (L6), although L5 may be natural and this was reached in several of the trenches in Plot 1 (T1 N, T1 M, T1 O, T1 P, T1 U, T1 V) (Fig 2).
- 6.2 No features of archaeological significance were observed during the watching brief. There was no evidence of the defensive ditch.
- 6.3 Modern finds consisting of peg-tile, modern pottery, glass, and clay pipe were found in the first four layers (L1-L4) (see section 12.3). Peg-tile and modern wall tiles were discarded.

7 Discussion and interpretation

No features or finds of archaeological significance were observed during the watching brief. Modern material was found in the first four layers (L1-L4) and any earlier pottery was residual within later contexts. Only a few trenches reached natural subsoil, and no intermediate layers with medieval pottery or features were found between natural ground and the modern layers. This may indicate ground reduction on site at some time. There was no evidence of the defensive ditch which would have been cut into the natural subsoil. It may be that the line of the ditch lies further to the west and so was not intercepted by the ground-beam trenches. Alternatively it may be that most of the trenches did not go deep enough to reach the natural ground and therefore did not intercept the ditch.

8 Acknowledgments

- 8.1 The fieldwork was carried out by Laura Pooley and Ben Holloway. The pottery was identified by Howard Brooks and the clay pipe by Nicole Weller of CAT. The project was monitored by Richard Havis, Archaeology Officer for HAMP.
- 8.2 The Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank Andrew Temperton of Bermac Properties plc for funding the work and Trevor Simon of New Build South-East Ltd, the ground contractors.

9 References

- Cotter, John P, 2000 *Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85*, Colchester Archaeological Report 7
- Medycott, M, 1999 *Castle Hedingham: historic town project assessment report*, Essex County Council Planning

10 Glossary

| | |
|----------|--|
| context | specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made |
| EHCR | Essex Heritage Conservation Record (held by Essex County Council) |
| feature | an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts' |
| HAMP | Heritage Advice, Management and Promotion Group, Essex County Council |
| NGR | National Grid Reference |
| natural | geological deposit undisturbed by human activity |
| Roman | the period from AD 43 to around AD 430 |
| medieval | the period from 1066 to c 1500 |

11 Archive deposition

The archive consists of finds, paper records and digital photographs on CD and is held at Colchester Archaeological Trust, 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited at Braintree Museum, under accession code BRNTM 2002.1.

12 Site data

12.1 List of contexts

| Context | Description |
|---------|--|
| L1 | Modern overburden consisting of mid brown silty loam full of stones, bricks, concrete, and rods/pipes. |
| L2 | Light brown silty sand and mortar, with stones, full of demolition debris. |
| L3 | Dark brown silty loam with infrequent stones, tile and modern pottery. |
| L4 | Mid brown silty soil containing stones, some tile/brick and modern glassware and pottery. |
| L5 | Mid brown silty soil with patches of orange/yellow sand and pale clay. |
| L6 | Natural orange sand. |

12.2 List of trenches, layers and depths

| Trench no | Layer nos | Depth of trench in mm |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Plot 1 | | |
| T1 A | L1, L2, L3 | 450 |
| T1 B | L1, L2, L3 | 500 |
| T1 C | L1, L2 (north end of trench only), L3 | 550 |
| T1 D | L1, L2 | 550 |
| T1 E | L1, L2, L3 (west end) | 400 |
| T1 F | L1, L2 (west end only), L3, L4 | 500 |
| T1 G | L1, L4 | 500 |
| T1 H | L1, L4 | 400 |
| T1 I | L1, L4 | 500 |
| T1 J | L1, L4 | 500 |
| T1 K | L1, L4 | 600 |
| T1 L | L1, L4 | 600 |
| T1 M | L1, L2 (west end only), L3, L4, L5 | 500 |
| T1 N | L1, L4, L5 | 600 |
| T1 O | L1, L4, L5 | 600 |
| T1 P | L1, L4, L5 | 600 |
| T1 Q | L1, L3, L4 | 600 |
| T1 R | L1, L3 | 600 |
| T1 S | L1, L3 | 600 |
| T1 T | L1, L3 | 600 |
| T1 U | L1, L4, L5 | 600-750 |

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------|---------|
| T1 V | L1, L4, L5 | 600 |
| T1 W | L1, L3, L4 | 600 |
| T1 X | L1, L4 | 600 |
| T1 Y | L1, L3 | 600 |
| T1 Z | L1, L4 | 700 |
| T1 AA | L1, L4 | 700 |
| T1 AB | L1, L3 | 700 |
| T1 AC | ? | ? |
| T1 AD | L4 and ? | 700 |
| T1 AE | ? | ? |
| T1 AF | L3 and ? | 700 |
| T1 AG | L1, L3, L4, L6 | 900 |
| Plot 2 | | |
| T2 A | L1, L3, L4 | 700 |
| T2 B | L1, L3, L4 | 700 |
| T2 C | L1, L3, L4 | 700 |
| T2 D | L1, L3, L4 | 700 |
| T2 E | L1, L3, L4 | 800 |
| T2 F | L1, L3, L4 | 700 |
| T2 G | L1, L3, L4 | 800 |
| T2 H | L1, L3, L4 | 850 |
| T2 I | L1, L3, L4 | 800 |
| T2 J | L1, L3, L4 | 800 |
| T2 K | L1, L3, L4 | 800 |
| T2 L | L1, L3, L4, L6 | 800 |
| T2 M | L1, L3, L4, L6 | 800 |
| T2 N | L1, L3, L4 | 900 |
| T2 O | ? | ? |
| T2 P | ? | ? |
| T2 Q | L1, L3, L4 | 900 |
| T2 R | ? | ? |
| T2 S | ? | ? |
| T2 T | ? | ? |
| T2 U | ? | ? |
| T2 V | ? | ? |
| T2 W | ? | ? |
| T2 X | L1, L3, L4 | 650 |
| T2 Y | ? | ? |
| T2 Z | ? | ? |
| T2 AA | ? | ? |
| T2 AB | ? | ? |
| T2 AC | ? | ? |
| T2 AD | ? | ? |
| T2 AE | ? | ? |
| T2 AF | ? | ? |
| T2 AG | ? | ? |
| T2 AH | ? | ? |
| T2 AI | ? | ? |
| T2 AJ | ? | ? |
| Plot 3 | | |
| T3 all trenches A-U | L1, L3, L4 | 600-800 |
| Plot 4 | | |
| T4 all trenches A-Y | L1, L3, L4 | 600-800 |

12.3 List of non-pottery finds

| Trench | Context | Find bag no | Weight in g | Date | Description |
|--------|------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| T1 B | L3 | 2 | 8 | modern | Modern glass fragments |
| T1 B | L3 | 2 | 6 | 1660-1700 | Clay pipe stem |
| T1 H | L3 | 3 | 21 | medieval-modern | Peg-tile |
| T1 J | L4 | 5 | 4 | 1 = 19th century 1 = 1660-1700 | 2 clay pipe stems |
| T1 K | L4 | 6 | 246 | modern | Glass bottle and ointment jar |
| T1 | L3 | 7 | 2 | early 18th century | Clay pipe stem |
| T1 | L3 | 7 | 112 | medieval-modern | Peg-tile, one piece with mortar |
| T2 L | L4 | 9 | 51 | medieval-modern | Glass |
| T2 V | L1 | 10 | 3 | 1660-1770 | Clay pipe stem |
| U/S | | 11 | 267 | medieval-modern | Peg-tile, two pieces with mortar |
| U/S | | 11 | 47 | modern | Fragments of glass |
| T1 AD | L4 | 14 | 76 | medieval-modern | Peg-tile |
| T1 AF | L3 | 15 | 2 | modern | Glass |
| T1 AF | L3 | 15 | 2 | 18th century | Clay pipe stem |
| T4 N | L4 | 16 | 40 | medieval-modern | Peg-tile with mortar |
| T4 W | L4 | 17 | 40 | medieval-modern | Peg-tile |
| U/S | area of T4 | 19 | 21 | modern | Glass fragments |

12.4 Post-medieval and modern pottery

by Howard Brooks

This small group (33 pieces, 566 grammes) was recovered during the watching brief. Identifications, quantities and weights are given in the table below. Fabric codes are after Cotter (2000).

The group is dominated by post-medieval red earthenwares (Fabric 40) and Staffordshire-type white earthenwares (Fabric 48d). Although the Fabric 40 pieces are technically earlier, the presence of Fabric 48d in L3 and L4 means that they are both 19th or 20th century in date.

Given the proximity of the site to Sible Heddingham, it is no surprise to find Heddingham ware here (occurring residually in L3). It is difficult to say whether there is any significance in the fact that only a single sherd was found; perhaps a single piece of Heddingham ware means that there was not much happening on this particular site in the main period of Heddingham Ware production (13th-14th centuries: Cotter 2000, 75-91).

The flowerpot sherd is also in a micaceous, Heddingham-type fabric, showing some continuity of local potting tradition into the last few centuries.

| Trench | Context | Find bag no | Quantity | Weight in g | Fabric code | Date | Comments | Discard |
|--------|---------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------|---|---------|
| T4 E | L3 | 18 | 1 | 20 | 45 | later 16th or 17th centuries | German stoneware, probably Frechen ware | |
| T3 I | L3 | 12 | 1 | 5 | 48b | 19th-20th centuries | English porcelain | |
| T3 I | L3 | 12 | 1 | 20 | 40? | 19th-20th centuries | teapot handle | |
| T3 I | L3 | 12 | 1 | 15 | 51b | 19th-20th centuries | flowerpot in local | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|----|-----------|------------|-----|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| | | | | | | | micaceous fabric | |
| area of T4 | U/S | 19 | 3 | 55 | - | 20th century | modern wall tile fragments | D |
| T1 A | L3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 22 | 14th century | Heddingham ware, plain body sherd | |
| T1 A | L3 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 48d | 19th-20th centuries | Staffordshire-type white earthenware | |
| T1 E | L4 | 4 | 1 | 95 | 40 | 16th-18th centuries | glazed PMRE, hefty rim sherd | |
| | U/S | 11 | 2 | 160 | 40 | 16th-18th centuries | glazed PMRE, including rim sherd | |
| | U/S | 11 | 6 | 40 | 48d | 19th-20th centuries | Staffordshire-type white earthenware | |
| | U/S | 11 | 7 | 70 | - | modern | glazed wall tiles | D |
| | U/S | 11 | 2 | 15 | 45m | 19th-20th centuries | modern stonewares | |
| T1 J | L4 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 48b | 19th-20th centuries | English porcelain | |
| T4 N | L4 | 16 | 1 | 6 | 48d | 19th-20th centuries | Staffordshire-type white earthenware | |
| T2 G | L4 | 8 | 1 | 15 | 48d | 19th-20th centuries | Staffordshire-type white earthenware | |
| T1 AF | L3 | 15 | 2 | 30 | 48d | 19th-20th centuries | Staffordshire-type white earthenware | |
| Totals | | | 33 | 566 | | | | |

Kate Orr, June 2002

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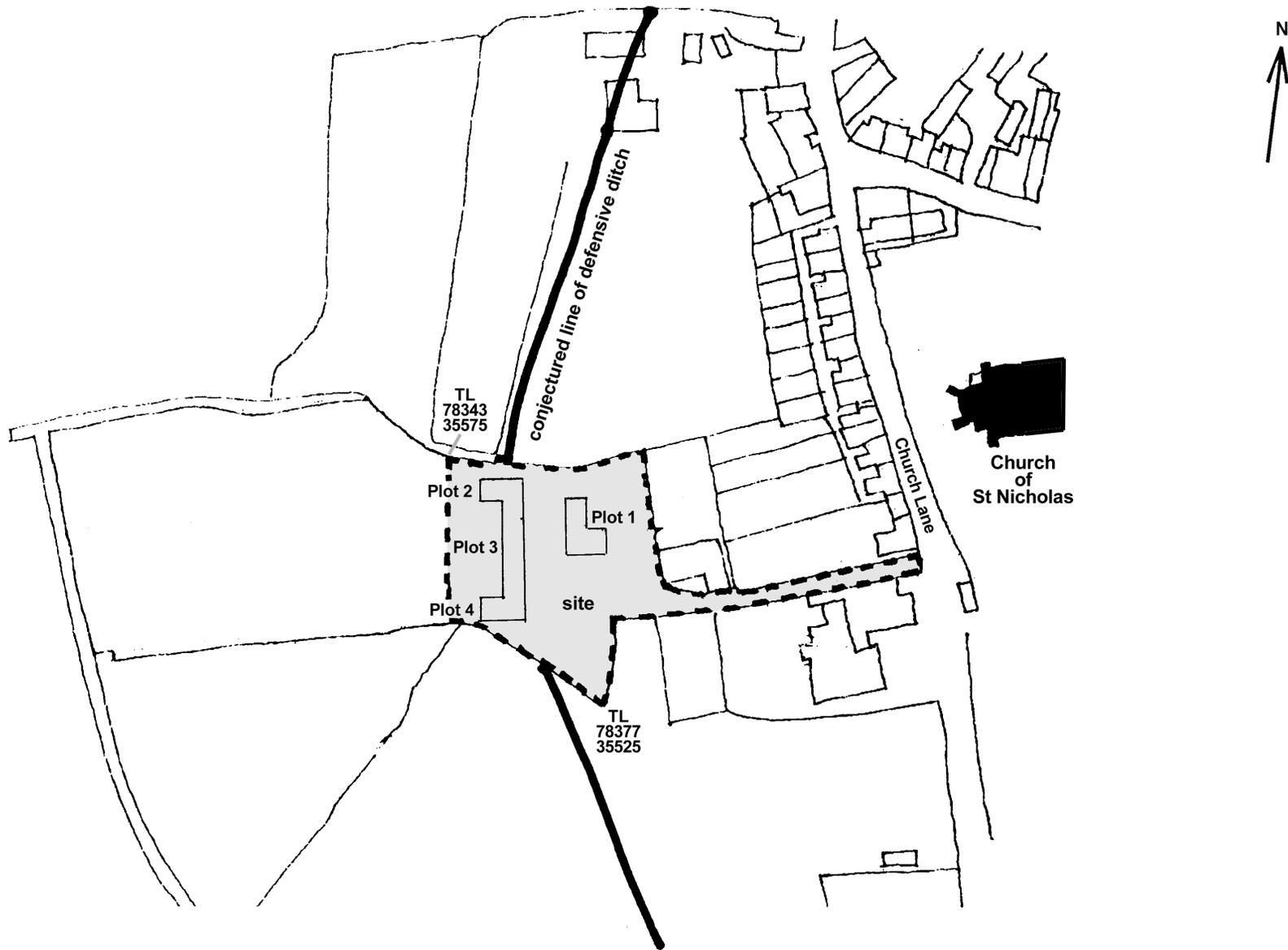


Fig 1 Site location, showing conjectured line of medieval outer defensive ditch, scale 1:1250 approx.



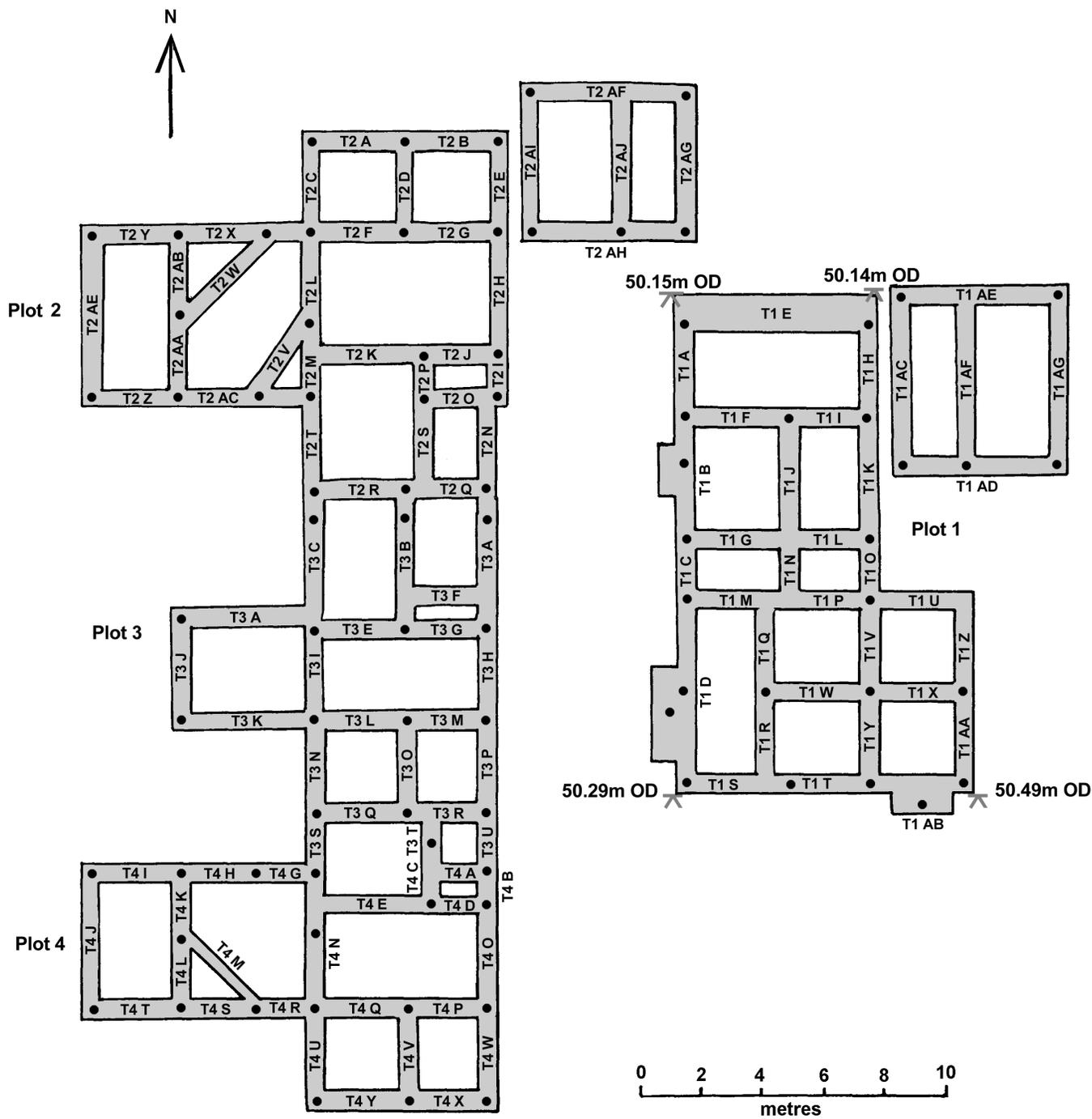
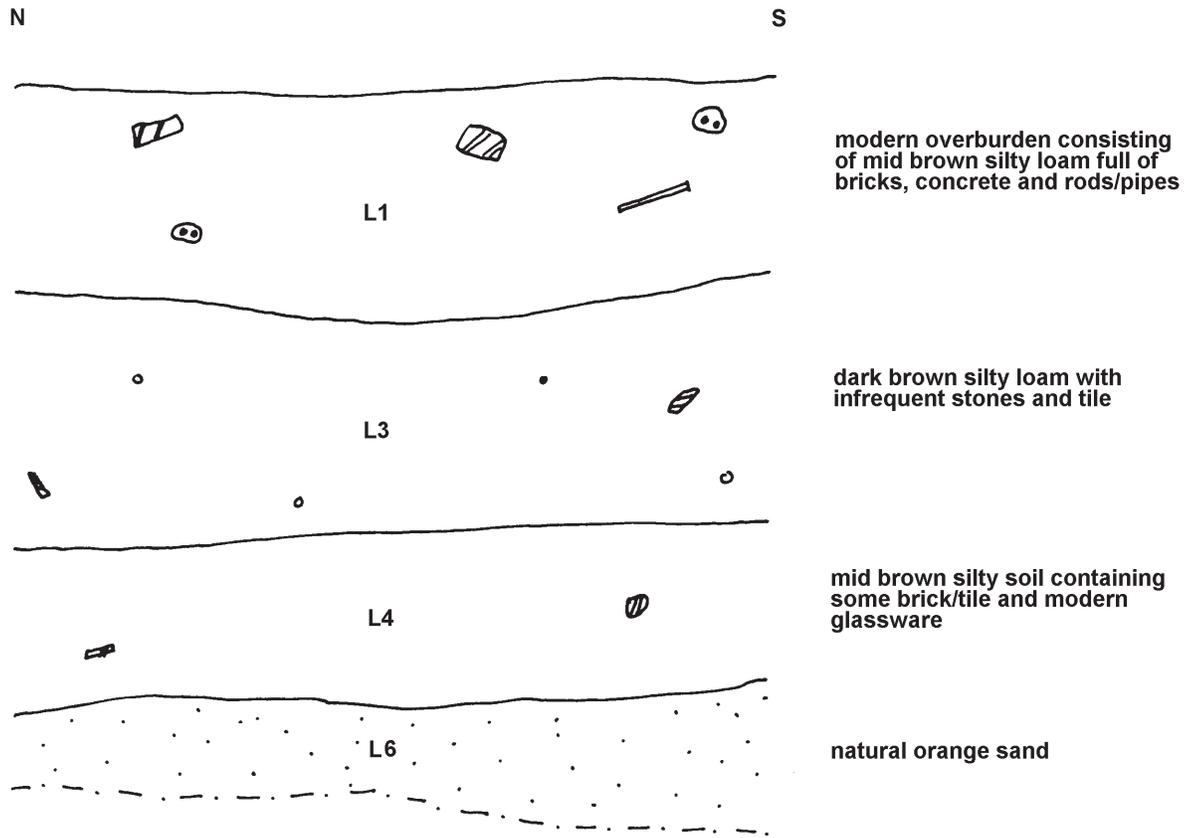
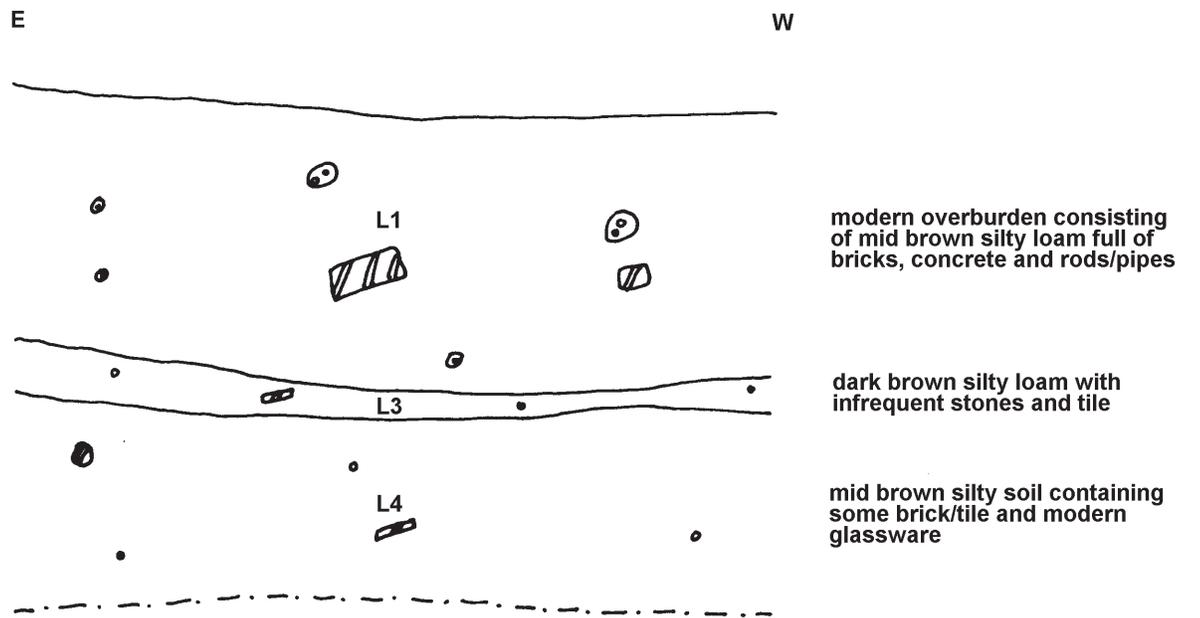


Fig 2 Trench plan, showing trench numbers, scale 1:200.



west-facing section of T1 AG



north-facing section of T2 X

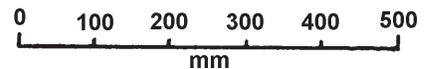


Fig 3 Section drawings of T1 AG facing west and T1 E facing north, scale 1:10.

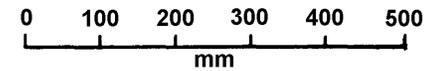
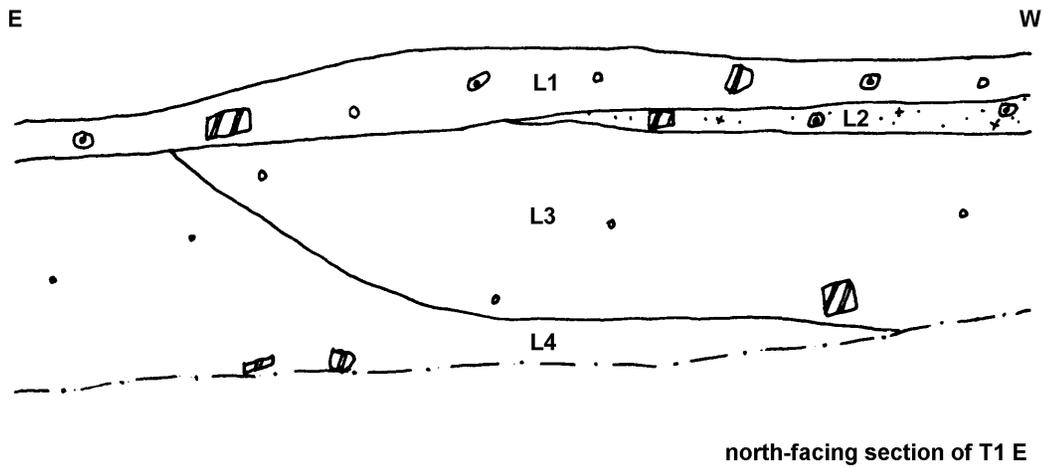
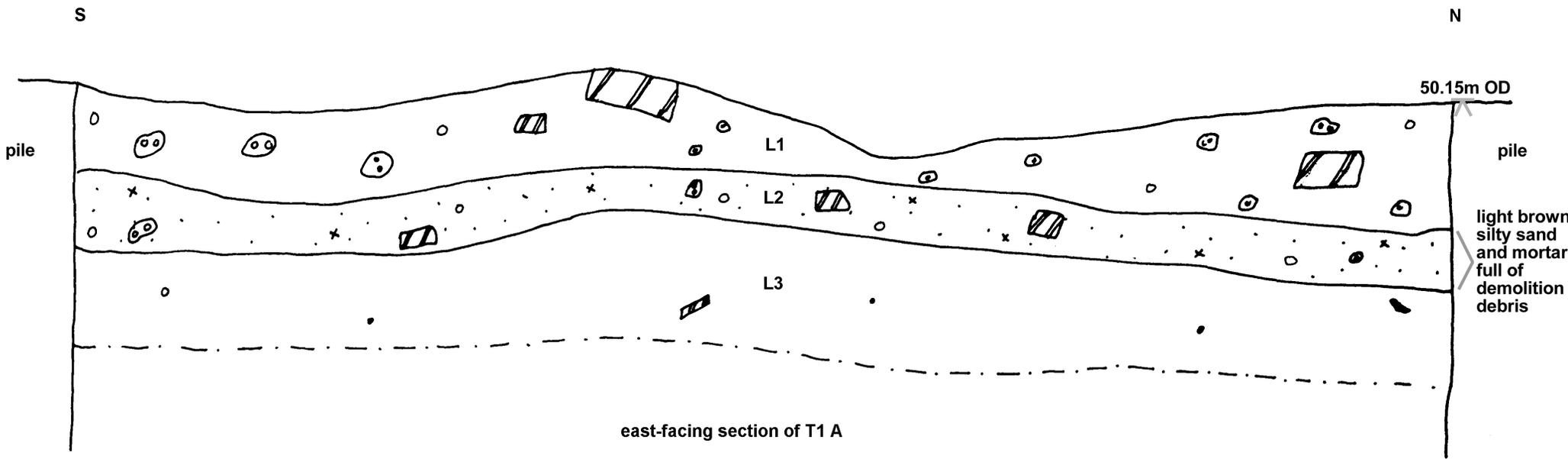


Fig 4 Section drawings of T1 A facing east and T1 E facing north, scale 1:10.

**Essex Heritage Conservation Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

| | |
|---|--|
| Site address: Ruffles Coachworks (off Church Lane), Castle Hedingham, Essex | |
| Parish: Castle Hedingham | District: Braintree |
| NGR: TL 7837 3554 | Site code: CH4 (HAMP) |
| Type of work: Watching brief | Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Date of work: January-February 2002 | Size of area investigated: 0.56 acres |
| Location of finds/curating museum: Braintree Museum | Funding source: Developer |
| Further seasons anticipated? No | Related EHCR nos: 2783, 6818, 6784-6788, 10676, 16077 |
| Final report: CAT Report 189 and summary in <i>EAH</i> | |
| Periods represented: None | |
| Summary of fieldwork results: During the watching brief at Ruffles Coachworks, Castle Hedingham, Essex, it was observed that the ground-beam trenches did not impinge on the medieval defensive ditch or any other features of archaeological significance. Modern overburden and disturbed ground were encountered. Only a few of the trenches were dug deep enough to reach natural ground. | |
| Previous summaries/reports: None | |
| Author of summary: Kate Orr | Date of summary: June 2002 |