

**An archaeological evaluation  
on the site of  
the medical centre,  
Tollgate west,  
London Road,  
Stanway,  
Colchester, Essex  
April 2003**

**report prepared by  
M McDonald**

**on behalf of  
Crandon Construction**

NGR: TL 94780 24549  
CAT project ref.: 03/4a  
Planning application no: F/COL/02/2017  
Colchester Museums accession code: 2003.146



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**  
12 Lexden Road,  
Colchester,  
Essex CO3 3NF

*tel.:* (01206) 541051  
*tel./fax:* (01206) 500124  
*email:* [archaeologists@catuk.org](mailto:archaeologists@catuk.org)

**CAT Report 228**  
May 2003

## **Contents**

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aim	1
5	Methods	2
6	Results	2
7	Finds	2
8	Discussion and conclusions	2
9	Acknowledgements	3
10	References	3
11	Glossary and abbreviations	3
12	Archive deposition	3
13	Site context list	3

Figures after p 4

EHCR summary sheet

## **List of figures**

- Fig 1 Site location plan.
- Fig 2 Detailed site location plan.
- Fig 3 Trenches 1-5: location plan.
- Fig 4 Trench 1: plan.
- Fig 5 Trenches 1, 4, 5: sections.

## 1 Summary

Five evaluation trenches were excavated on the site of the medical centre, Tollgate west, London Road, Stanway, Colchester, Essex. The general area is rich in known and probable archaeological sites, but only one archaeological feature was observed during the evaluation; a shallow pit of unknown date and function. No significant archaeological finds were recovered.

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching carried out on a vacant plot at Tollgate west, next to Currys store and immediately south of and adjacent to London Road, Stanway, Colchester, Essex (Figs 1-2). The site is located at NGR TL 94780 24549.
- 2.2 The site is currently unoccupied and covered by rough uneven scrub. It is believed that 600mm of topsoil-stripping took place some years ago.
- 2.3 The evaluation was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on 28th-30th April 2003.
- 2.4 The evaluation was prompted by the proposed construction of a medical centre comprising two doctors' surgeries, an ancillary medical support building, and a large car park. The buildings will front the road with the car park to the rear (planning application no F/COL/02/2017).
- 2.5 All fieldwork was done in accordance with a specification agreed with the Archaeology Officer of Colchester Borough Council.
- 2.6 This report follows the standards set out in the Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1999, updated 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996, updated 2002), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation* (1999).

## 3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 There has been no previous archaeological intervention at the development site, and no archaeological artefacts have been recorded from this location.
- 3.2 The general area is, however, rich in known and probable archaeological sites. There are extensive areas of cropmarks recorded from a wide area, and some of these have been excavated by CAT on the site of the gravel quarries to the south (Hawkes & Crummy 1995, 161-70). Directly north of London Road and some 200m from the development site, a ring-ditch is recorded (a possible Bronze Age barrow; EHCR 11939). There may be others in the near vicinity which are yet to be identified. The London Road (Stane Street; EHCR 11705) is a known Roman and possible earlier major route towards London.
- 3.3 In March 1996, CAT conducted an archaeological evaluation on a 10-acre site directly north of the development site, between London Road and Essex Yeomanry Way. The evaluation indicated that early activity on the site was, at most, sparse (CAT field projects 1996).

## 4 Aim

The aim of the archaeological investigation was to locate, identify and assess the quality and extent of any surviving archaeological remains prior to the determination of the planning application for the site.

## 5 Methods

- 5.1 Five trenches (Trenches 1-5 or T1-T5), 1.8m wide and totalling 135m in length, were excavated by machine down through the undisturbed subsoil. These were placed to avoid the two large water-main easements truncating the site (Fig 3).
- 5.2 Individual layer and feature records were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.3 The trenches were planned by total station and the sections were hand-drawn at scale 1:10.
- 5.4 Finds were registered on CAT record sheets and assigned numbers according to context. Finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context.
- 5.5 Colour archival photographs were taken with a digital camera.

## 6 Results

- 6.1 The topsoil (Layer or L1; Fig 5) was very compact and covered all five trenches. The depth was uniform at 30-35cm, except in Trench 4 where the depth was 15cm. In all trenches except Trench 4, the topsoil lay directly above undisturbed subsoil (L2, L3). In Trench 4, the topsoil lay above redeposited subsoil (L4), 35cm thick, which in turn sealed the undisturbed subsoil (Fig 5).
- 6.2 The undisturbed subsoil was also very compact. It showed variation: in Trench 1 it consisted of orange sand and very coarse gravel (L3), whilst elsewhere it consisted of very compact yellowish-brown silty clay (L2).
- 6.3 All features observed were sealed by the topsoil or redeposited subsoil and cut into the undisturbed subsoil.
  - 6.3.1 There were two man-made features: in Trench 1 (Fig 4), a shallow pit (Feature or F2; Fig 5) which contained fragments of indeterminate burnt clay and very small charcoal flecks, and in Trench 5 there was a modern field-drain. The function of pit F2 is unknown, and the quantity and condition of the burnt clay was too poor to allow dating.
  - 6.3.2 The other features had irregular edges, were filled by charcoal-free silt, and have been interpreted as naturally occurring: Trench 1 contained a tree bowl and a shallow linear feature, Trench 2 contained a silt patch and a tree bowl, Trench 3 contained four tree bowls, Trench 4 contained a shallow linear feature, and Trench 5 contained a tree bowl.

## 7 Finds

Context	Find no	Notes	Weight (g)	Date
F2	1	Indeterminate fragments of burnt clay	1	unknown
L1	2	A 27mm length of clay tobacco pipe stem	2	post-medieval

## 8 Discussion and conclusions

During the evaluation, very little material of archaeological interest was recorded, even though the general area is rich in known and probable archaeological sites. The site has been heavily disturbed by construction work; it is truncated by two large water-main easements and it is believed that topsoil-stripping took place some years ago on the site. The presence of a thick layer of redeposited subsoil on part of the site seems to confirm this, and it is likely that any archaeological remains were severely damaged by these works.

## 9 Acknowledgements

The Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank Crandon Construction who commissioned and funded the work, and also Martin Winter of Colchester Borough Council for monitoring the work. The excavation and recording were carried out by Ben Holloway and Chris Lister in conjunction with Philip Crummy of CAT.

## 10 References

CAT field projects 1996	1996	Archaeological evaluation at Tollgate north, Colchester, by Carl Crossan (project ref. 3/96e)
Colchester Borough Council	2002	<i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i>
Colchester Borough Council	2002	<i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums</i>
Hawkes, C F C, & Crummy, P	1995	<i>Camulodunum 2</i> , Colchester Archaeological Report 11, 161-70
IFA	1999	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation</i>

## 11 Glossary and abbreviations

EHCR	Essex Heritage Conservation Record
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
post-medieval	19th and 20th centuries
NGR	National Grid Reference
undisturbed subsoil	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity

## 12 Archive deposition

The archive will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museums where it will be held under museum accession code 2003.146.

## 13 Site context list

Context	Trench	Description	Period
L1	T1-T5	Topsoil. Very compact light brownish-grey fine silt with frequent small-large stones and occasional manganese flecks. Root/animal activity.	modern
L2	T2-T5	Undisturbed subsoil. Very compact yellowish-brown silty clay with occasional small stones. Root/animal activity.	-
L3	T1	Undisturbed subsoil. Orange sand and very coarse gravel.	-
L4	T4	Redeposited subsoil. Very compacted orange sand and gravel. Frequent large stones.	modern
F1	T1	Tree bowl filled by greyish-brown silt.	unknown
F2	T1	Shallow pit filled by greyish-brown fine silt with very small charcoal flecks.	unknown
F3	T1	Linear feature – natural? Filled by greyish-brown fine silt.	unknown
F4	T2	Natural greyish-brown patch of fine silt.	unknown
F5	T2	Tree bowl filled by light brownish-grey silt.	unknown
F6	T3	Tree bowl filled by fine grey silt.	unknown
F7	T3	Tree bowl filled by fine grey silt.	unknown
F8	T3	Tree bowl filled by fine grey silt.	unknown

Context	Trench	Description	Period
F9	T3	Tree bowl filled by fine grey silt.	unknown
F10	T4	Natural linear feature filled by light brownish-grey fine silt with manganese flecks and occasional small stones.	unknown
F11	T5	Tree bowl filled by light greyish-brown fine silt.	unknown
F12	T5	Field drain filled by mid brown silt, large stones and brick rubble.	modern

**Distribution list:**

Crandon Construction

Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council

Essex Heritage Conservation Record (EHCR), Essex County Council

© Colchester Archaeological Trust 2003



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

12 Lexden Road,  
Colchester,  
Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051

tel./fax: (01206) 500124

email: [archaeologists@catuk.org](mailto:archaeologists@catuk.org)

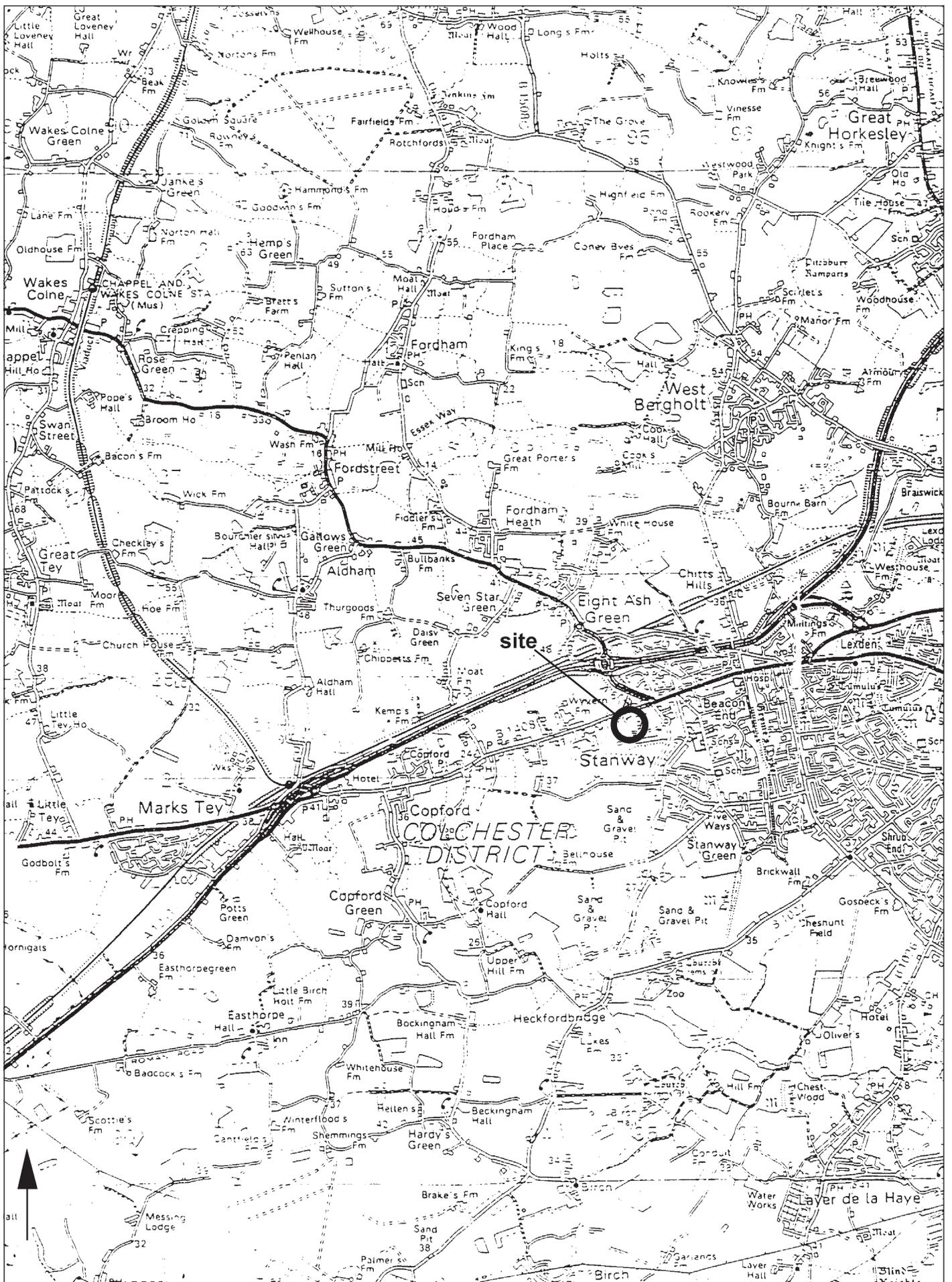
Checked by: Howard Brooks

Date: 16.05.03

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

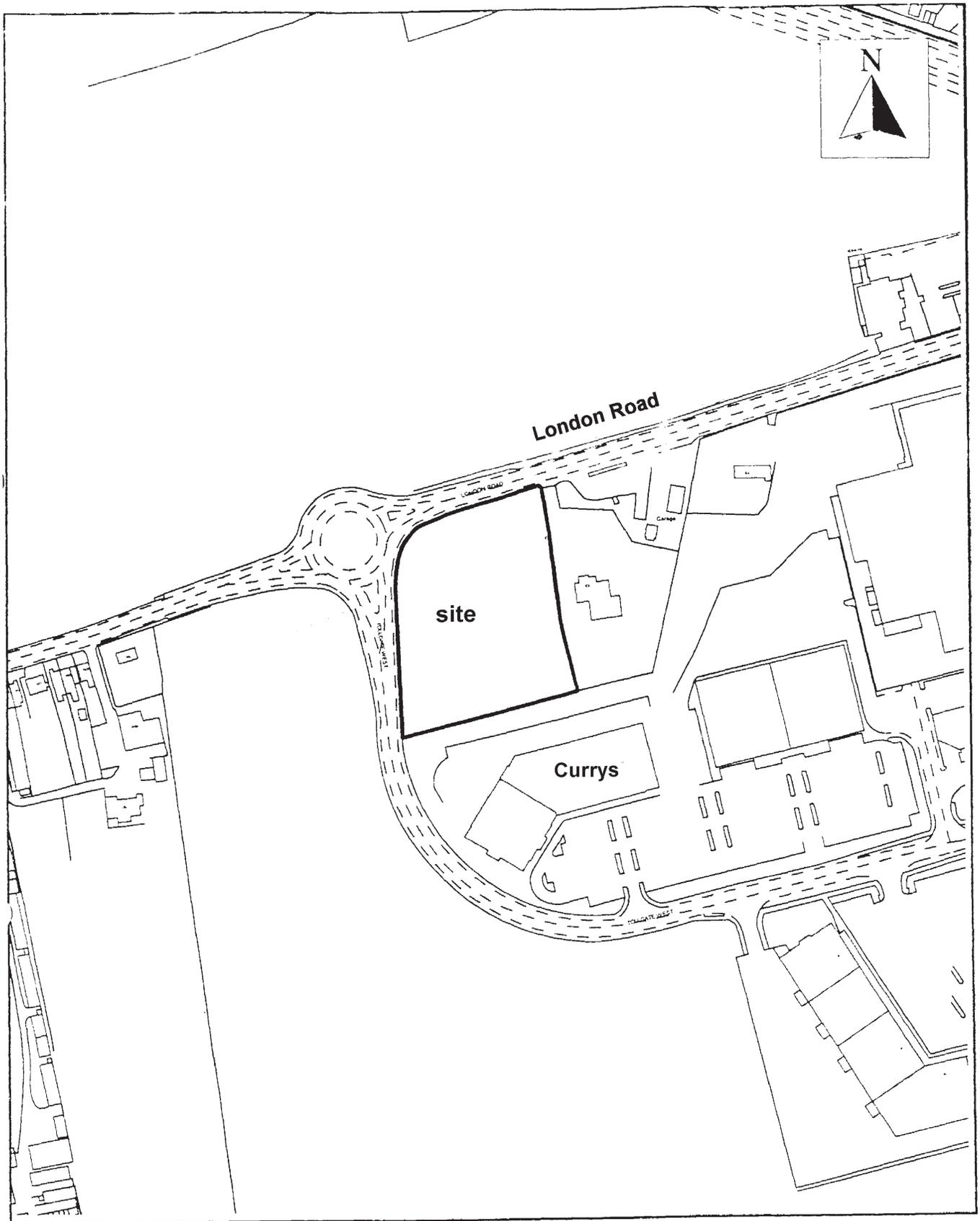
**Summary sheet**

<b>Site name/address:</b> the site of the medical centre, Tollgate west, London Road, Stanway, Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b>	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TL 94780 24549	<b>Site code:</b> Museum accession code 2003.146
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> April 2003	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 243 sq m
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Colchester Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHCR nos:</b> 11939, 11705
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 228 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Post-medieval	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> Five evaluation trenches were excavated on the site of the medical centre, Tollgate west, London Road, Stanway, Colchester, Essex. The general area is rich in known and probable archaeological sites, but only one archaeological feature was observed during the evaluation; a shallow pit of unknown date and function. No significant archaeological finds were recovered.	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of summary:</b> M McDonald	<b>Date of summary:</b> 16th May 2003



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100039294.

Fig 1 Site location plan.



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100039294.

Fig 2 Detailed site location plan.

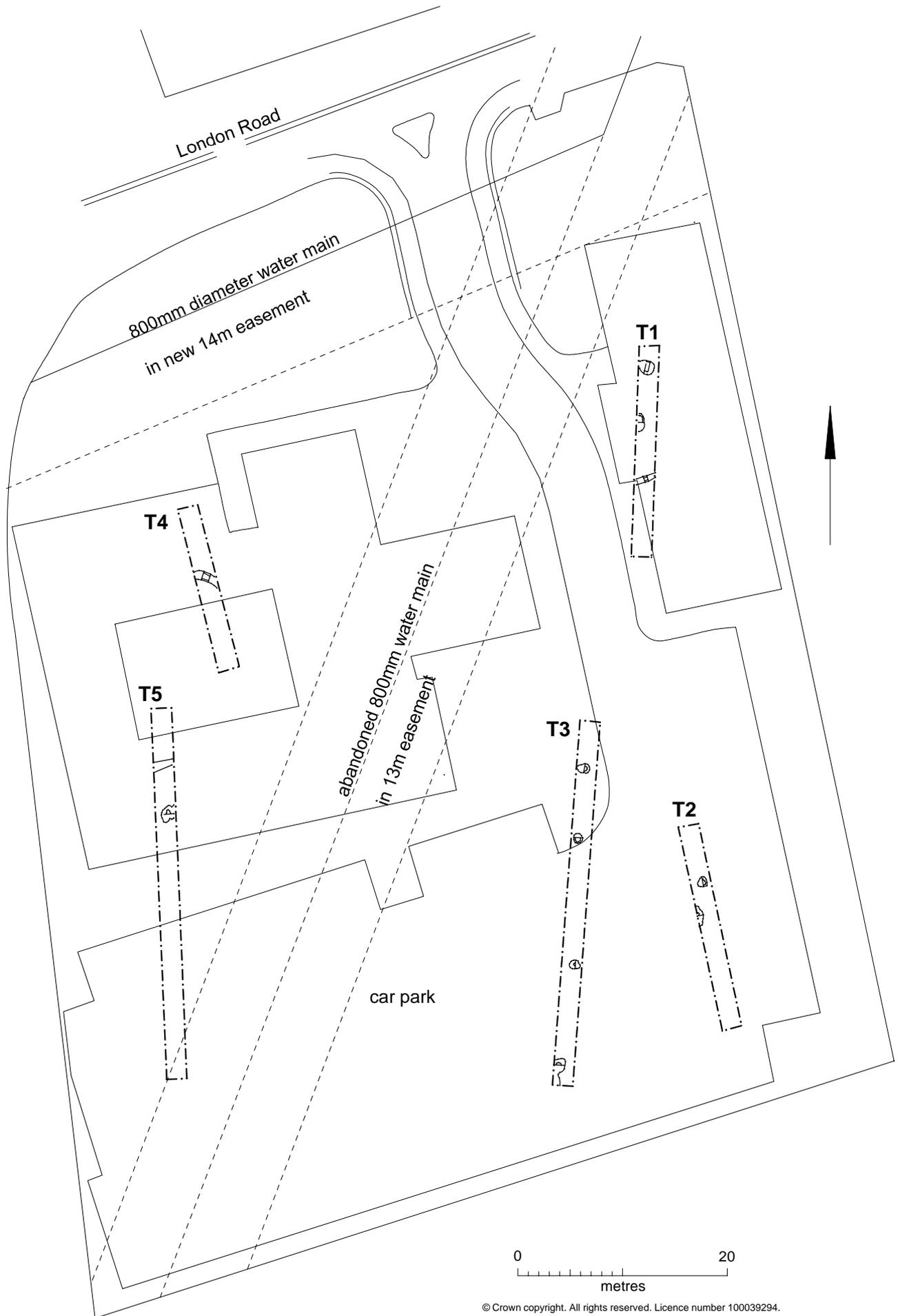
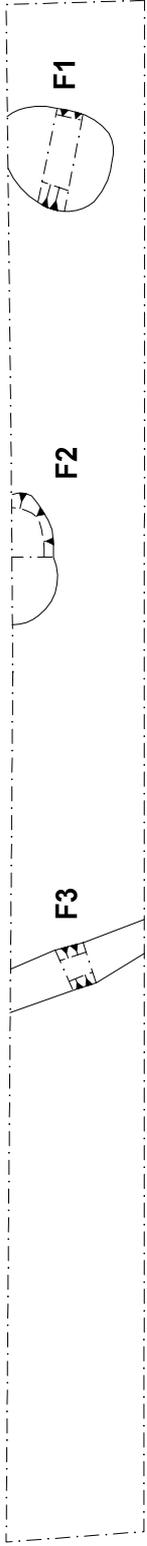


Fig 3 Trenches 1-5: location, plan.



metres

Fig 4 Trench 1: plan.

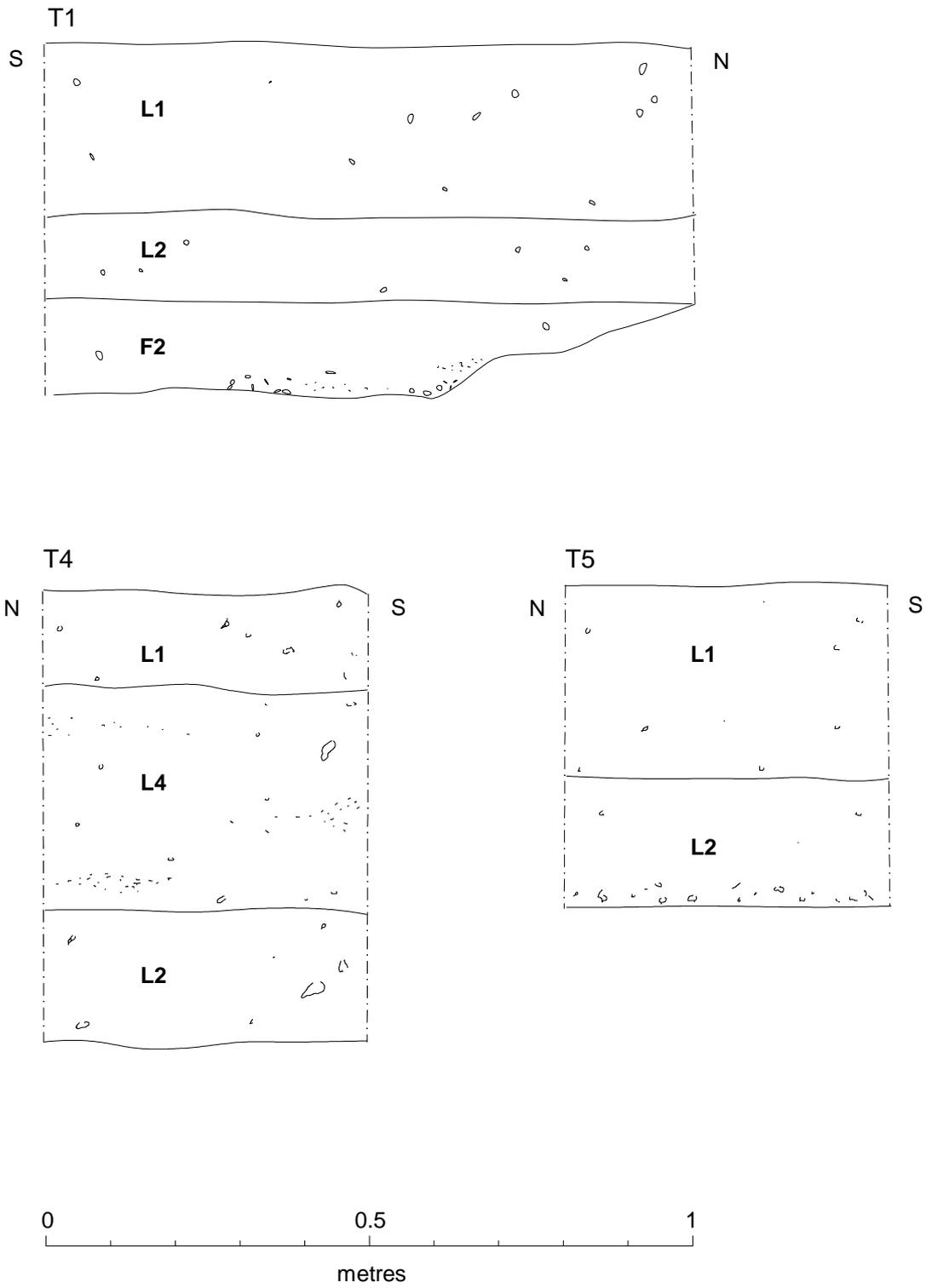


Fig 5 Trenches 1, 4, 5: sections.