

**An archaeological excavation
at 193 High Street,
Kelvedon, Essex
September 2009**

**report prepared by
Ben Holloway and Howard Brooks**

**on behalf of
Marden Homes**

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HEM project code: KL 26
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1 Summary

The site, located in the centre of Kelvedon, lies within an area of Iron Age occupation and close to the site of the Roman town.

In advance of the construction of new housing, an area of approximately 235 square metres was excavated along the route of a new access road, and a trench was placed within the footprint of one of the four houses. Nine archaeological features were identified as a result of these investigations. These included a Roman pit and ditch, and a medieval pit. Other features consisted of modern pits and post-holes associated with the garden of 193 High Street. There was no evidence of a continuation into the site of the Middle-Late Iron Age activity recorded in the 1985-86 excavations at the Doucecroft School site to the west. However, the Roman features may reflect occupation alongside the Roman road (now the High Street), 50m to the south.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report on an archaeological excavation at the rear of 193 High Street, Kelvedon, Essex (site centre at NGR TL 8631 1913), carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT). The site is located about 50m north of the High Street in the centre of modern Kelvedon, where it is bordered by houses and gardens, an industrial estate, and a Quaker burial ground. At the time of the archaeological work, the site was a slightly irregular rectangle of open ground with grass and small trees. It had previously been the rear part of the garden of 193 High Street.

In terms of its archaeological and historical background, the site lies within the area of Iron Age occupation, slightly to the north of the Roman town enclosure, and immediately north of the main built-up area of medieval Kelvedon. Excavations in 1985-86 on land immediately to the west of the site (then part of the grounds of the Doucecroft School) by the Essex County Council Archaeology Section identified multi-period archaeological activity ranging from the Neolithic to the Roman periods, including two Iron Age enclosures (Clarke 1988). The Doucecroft School site is now occupied by Trews Gardens housing estate.

The Historic Environment Management (HEM) team of Essex County Council (ECC) was consulted by Braintree District Council in August 2007 on an outline planning application for the construction of four detached houses with double garages on the site (BTE/01924/07). In response to the consultation, the HEM team made the following recommendation in line with *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: archaeology and planning* (PPG 16: DoE 1990):

'... The applicant should be required to conduct a field evaluation to establish the nature and complexity of the surviving archaeological deposits. This should be undertaken prior to a planning decision being made. This evaluation would enable due consideration to be given to the archaeological implications and would lead to proposals for mitigation of disturbance and/or the need for further investigation ...'

A brief detailing the required archaeological work was written by the HEM team officer (O'Connor 2009). All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a WSI (Written Scheme of Investigation) produced by CAT in response to the HEM team brief and agreed with the HEM team.

In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with CAT's *Policies and procedures* (CAT 2008), the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (IfA 2008a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008b). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of research projects in the historic environment* (MoRPHE) and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) was also followed.

The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Ivor Watson of Marden Homes, and was carried out on the 7th-10th September 2009. Post-excavation work was carried out in September-October 2009.

3 Archaeological and historical background

This section is based on records held by the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). The development site lies in an area of significant archaeological potential spanning the Neolithic to the Roman periods.

During excavation of an adjacent site in 1985-86 at the Doucecroft School, evidence for Middle Iron Age settlement, Late Iron Age enclosures and Roman material was recovered. Within these enclosures was a round-house (EHER nos 9872 and 18765; round-house 3, Clarke 1988). The position of the round-house in Clarke's trench F was such that it and other contemporary features may have extended into the development site.

Evidence of Roman activity in what is now Kelvedon was centred on the town enclosure 300m south of the development site and a fort 500m south of the development site (EHER no 18764; Medlycott 1998, plan captioned 'Roman interpretation'). However, there was also an area of Roman activity to the north of the town enclosure and close to the development site (EHER no 18764; Medlycott 1998, plan captioned 'Roman interpretation'). Previous Roman finds within that area (EHER no 8586) indicate that there was a potential for evidence of Roman activity, either extra-mural and/or roadside, on the development site.

The development site is also located to the rear of the buildings which would have fronted the medieval and post-medieval High Street, and so may have archaeological deposits relating to the historic development of the modern town.

A Quaker burial ground (EHER no 18770) is situated close to the south-eastern corner of the development site. The adjacent, listed early 18th-century Quaker Meeting House at 203-205 High Street (EHER no 30104) is outside the area shown on Figure 1. The 1st to the 3rd edition Ordnance Survey maps indicate that the burial ground did not extend into the development site.

4 Aim

The aim of the excavation was to establish the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains likely to be affected by the development. Of specific interest was evidence of possible Iron Age and Roman activity, as set out in sections 2 and 3 above.

5 Results of the excavation (Figs 1-3)

This section gives an archaeological summary of the archaeological work, with context and finds-dating information.

The excavation of the access road

The access road extended from the western corner of the site, to occupy a large part of the central area of the site between the four house-plots and their garages.

The line of the access road was excavated using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket to remove the following strata: first, a thin deposit of modern humic topsoil 100-150mm thick (L1); and second, an accumulated layer of slightly leached-out silty clay, 250mm thick (L2). L2 sealed the natural yellow/orange coarse gravel and sand (L3). Having reached the uppermost surviving level of archaeological significance, all further investigation was carried out by hand.

Slightly more than half the length of the access road was stripped and fully excavated; this resulted in the excavation of an area of approximately 235 square metres.

Nine archaeological features were identified. These included four post-medieval or modern pits (F3, F4, F8, F9) and a modern post-hole (F7), all of which were probably associated with the garden at the rear of 193 High Street. F8, in particular, may be related to a stand of yew trees (now removed).

F5 was a neat square-shaped pit with vertical sides. This pit or trench is not shown on the excavation site plan (Clarke 1988, fig 1). It is possible that it was a geotechnical pit cut by contractors prior to the current development of the site.

The remaining archaeological features consisted of a medieval pit (F1), and a Roman pit (F2) and a Roman ditch (F6).

The trench within footprint of house 4

A 4m x 2m trench was excavated within the footprint of house 4 to determine if any archaeological remains extended east of the access road. No archaeological features of any date were identified.

Trench 1 – archaeological features, dating and phases.

Feature no	Type	Dated finds	Phase
F1	pit	Pottery	medieval
F2	pit	Tile fragments	?Roman
F3	pit	Peg-tile fragments, brick fragments	post-medieval
F4	pit	Brick fragment	modern
F5	pit	Slate, pot, peg-tile, brick	modern
F6	ditch	Pottery, tile, iron nail	Roman
F7	post-hole	Peg-tile fragments	modern
F8	pit	Pottery, brick, peg-tile	modern
F9	pit	Peg-tile fragments	modern

6 Finds

6.1 Roman pottery

by Stephen Benfield

There was a very small assemblage of Roman material, ie two abraded sherds with a combined weight of 11g. Description of the Roman pottery fabrics is after *CAR 10*.

The material associated with the Roman ditch F6 consisted of one sherd of Fabric GX (a locally-produced coarse grey ware) dating to the Roman period, and a sherd of Fabric HC (oxidised Hadham ware) dating to the 3rd or 4th century AD.

The assemblage is somewhat limited, but it does, however, date the linear ditch F6 to the 3rd or 4th century AD.

6.2 Post-Roman pottery

by Howard Brooks

Introduction

There were two sherds of post-Roman pottery (total weight 16g). Pottery fabric descriptions are after *CAR 7*.

Catalogue

F8 (pit)

Finds number 3

1 sherd of Fabric 48d (modern ironstone), 4g, rim of a plate or dish with blue transfer print around the exterior of the rim; late 19th or 20th century.

F1 (pit)

Finds number 1

1 undiagnostic body sherd of Fabric 21 (sandy orange ware), 12g; 13th-16th century.

6.3 Small finds

by Emma Spurgeon

The assemblage consists only of one iron object which cannot be closely dated. Measurements are all based on corroded sizes.

SF1 (6) F6, Roman ditch. Iron object. One surviving original edge, possible strip or blade fragment. Length 32.93 mm, width 25.81 mm, height 4.80mm

6.4 Clay tobacco-pipe by Emma Spurgeon

The clay pipe consists of only one stem fragment which cannot be closely dated.

(3) F8. Plain stem fragment, length 28.88mm; bore diameter 2.06mm.

7 Discussion

Very little material of archaeological significance was found during this excavation.

The only features of note were two Roman features (F2, F6) and a medieval pit (F1) located at the eastern edge of the line of the access road. In this position, the Roman material seems to relate less to the Roman material to the west at the Doucecroft School site (excavated prior to the development around Trews Gardens) and more to roadside occupation alongside the Roman road 50m to the south (now the High Street). The lack of archaeological activity on the development site is surprising, given the areas of substantial evidence of Middle-Late Iron Age settlement identified in 1985-86 on the site at the Doucecroft School by the Essex County Council Archaeology Section (Clarke 1988).

The majority of the features identified on the development site were post-medieval or modern in origin, and probably associated with the site's previous use as a garden. The medieval pit was probably associated with a medieval building fronting onto the High Street.

The surviving Roman and medieval features were very shallow, which may indicate that this site has been terraced or otherwise reduced at some time (ground-level on the site was notably lower than that in the adjacent Trews Gardens). This ground-reduction probably took place in recent years, although the site owner said that this had not happened within the last 40 years (pers comm).

8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Mr Ivor Watson of Marden Homes for commissioning and funding the work.

The project was managed and conducted by Ben Holloway, assisted by Chris Lister, and monitored for the ECC HEM team by Teresa O'Connor.

9 References

Note: all CAT reports, except DBAs (desk-based assessments) are available online at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk> in .pdf format.

CAR 7	2000	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by J Cotter
CAR 10	1991	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86</i> , by R P Symonds and S Wade, ed by P Bidwell and A Croom
CAT	2008	<i>Policies and procedures</i>
Clarke, C P	1988	'Late Iron Age enclosures at Kelvedon: excavations at the Doucecroft site 1985-86', <i>Essex Archaeology and History</i> , 19 , 15-39
DoE	1990	<i>Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: archaeology and planning</i>
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14 , ed by D Gurney
IfA	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation</i>
IfA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
MoRPHE	2006	<i>Management of research projects in the historic environment</i> (English Heritage)
Medlycott, M	1998	<i>Kelvedon: historic towns project assessment report</i> , Essex County Council Planning

O'Connor, T 2009 *Archaeological excavation at rear of 193 High Street, Kelvedon, April 2009* (Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team)

10 Abbreviations and glossary

context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by Essex County Council
enclosure	a ditched or fenced area within which occupation was focused
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
fill	the soil filling up a hole such as a pit or ditch
HEM	Historic Environment Management team
Iron Age	18th century BC to the Roman conquest of AD 43
medieval	after AD 1066 and before approximately AD 1500
Middle Iron Age	4th to 2nd centuries BC
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
post-medieval	17th-18th centuries
Roman	AD 43 to about AD 430

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but will be permanently deposited with Braintree Museum (accession code pending).

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Distribution list:

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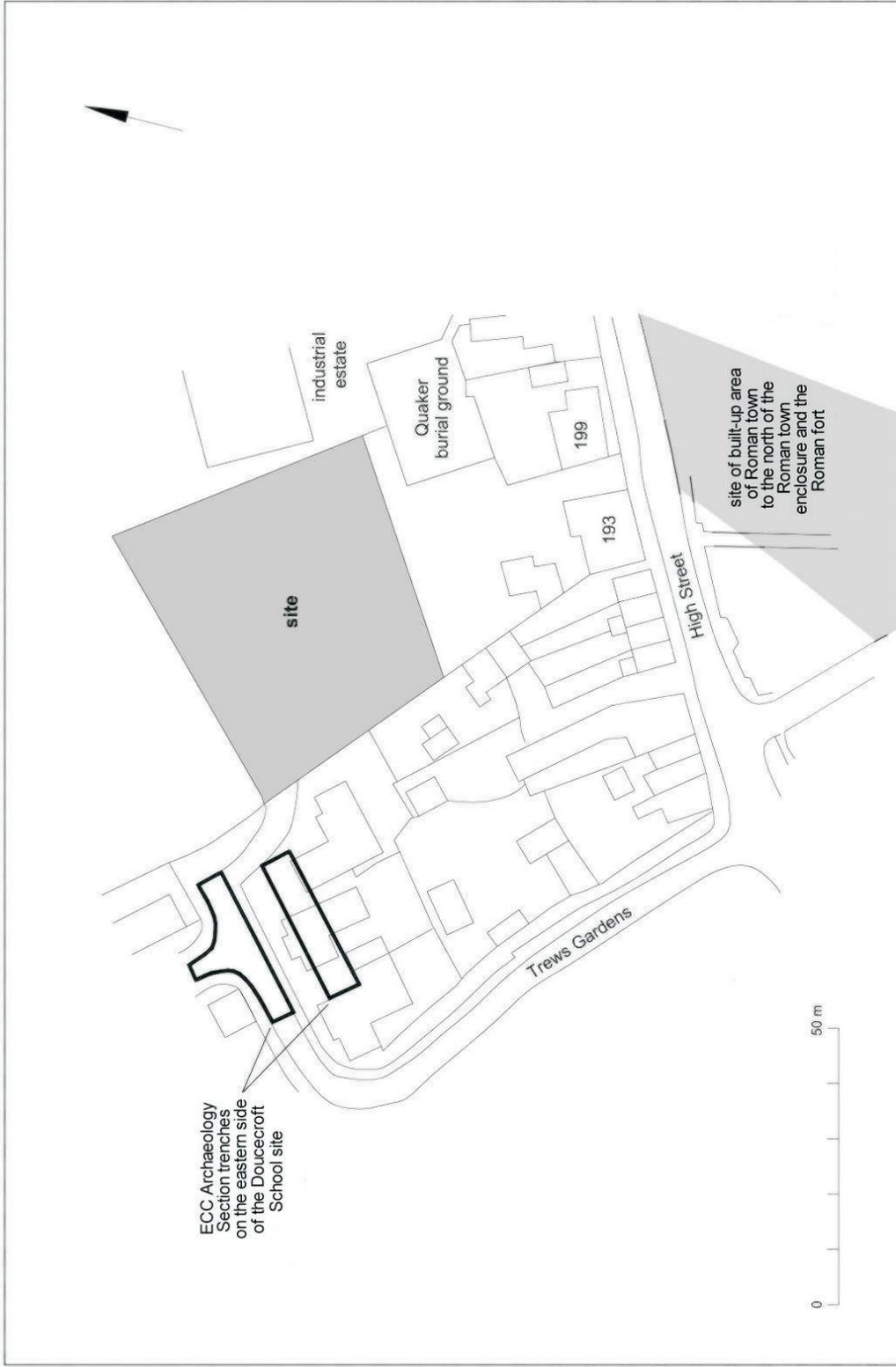
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Fig 1 Site location.

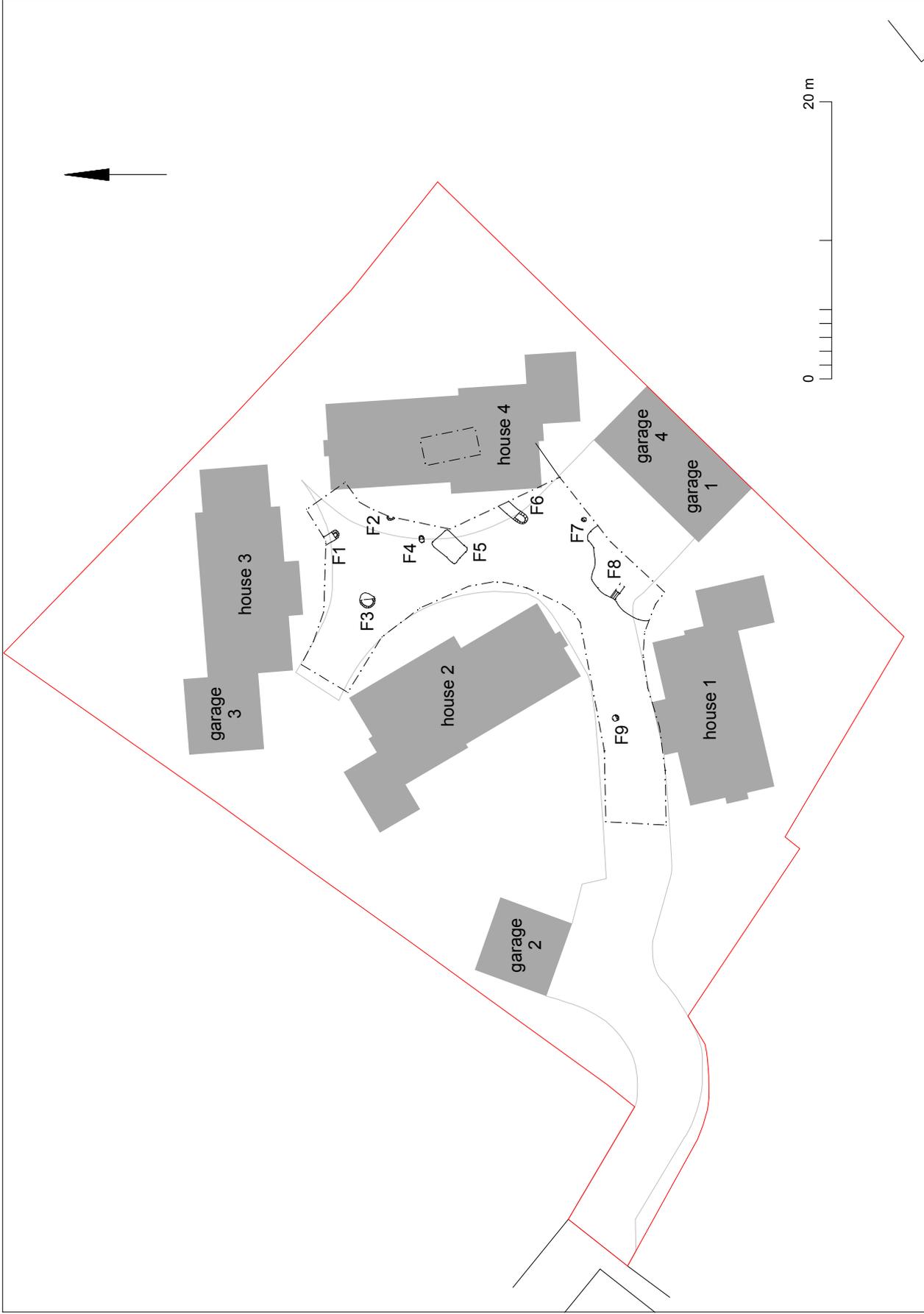


Fig 2 The archaeological features in relation to the proposed development.

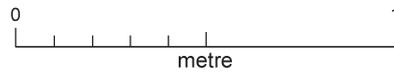
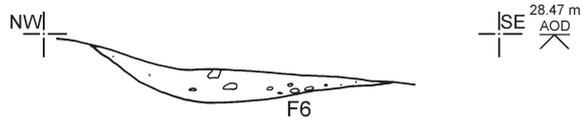
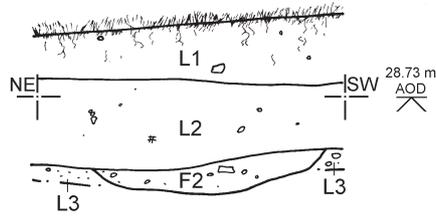
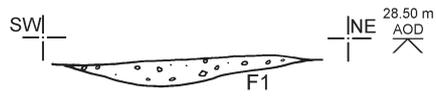


Fig 3 Sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Site address: 193 High Street, Kelvedon, Essex	
Parish: Kelvedon	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 8631 1913 (c)	Site codes: CAT – 09/4g HEM – KL 26 Museum accession – (pending)
Type of work: Excavation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 7th-10th September 2009	Size of area investigated: excavation of 235 square metres within 0.225 ha site
Location of curating museum: Braintree Museum	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER nos: 8586, 9872, 18764-18765, 18769- 18770, 30104
Final report: CAT Report 525 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: Roman, medieval	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>The site, located in the centre of Kelvedon, lies within an area of Iron Age occupation and close to the site of the Roman town.</i> <i>In advance of the construction of new housing, an area of approximately 235 square metres was excavated along the route of a new access road, and a trench was placed within the footprint of one of the four houses. Nine archaeological features were identified as a result of these investigations. These included a Roman pit and ditch, and a medieval pit. Other features consisted of modern pits and post-holes associated with the garden of 193 High Street. There was no evidence of a continuation into the site of the Middle-Late Iron Age activity recorded in the 1985-86 excavations at the Doucecroft School site to the west. However, the Roman features may reflect occupation alongside the Roman road (now the High Street), 50m to the south.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Keywords: Roman pit, Roman ditch, medieval pit	Significance: *
Author of summary: Howard Brooks	Date of summary: October 2009