

Archaeological evaluation on land at Mersea Fleet Way, Chelmer Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 3PZ

July 2016



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on behalf of **David Mittell (Brooks & Wood Ltd)**

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Oasis project ID: colchest3-248429

Braintree Museum accession code: [requested](#)



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CAT Report 977

July 2016

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out in advance of the construction of twelve new dwellings on land at Mersea Fleet Way, Chelmer Road, Braintree, Essex. Despite being located within the historic farm complex of Stubbs Farm (19th century) only one post-medieval pit was excavated that may be associated with the old farm boundary. The remaining layers and features were all of modern date.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land at Mersea Fleet Way, Chelmer Road, Braintree, Essex which was carried out on 1st July 2016. The work was commissioned by David Mittell (Brooks & Wood Ltd) in advance of the construction of twelve new dwellings with associated access road and parking. The work was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Teresa O'Connor advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Trial Trench evaluation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa O'Connor (ECCPS 2016), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2016).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006), and with *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14 and 24). This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b).

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background utilises the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford.

The development site is located upon the historic farm complex of Stubbs Farm, which appears on the 1st edition OS map (Map 1). It must predate *circa* 1875-6 and is likely to be earlier in origin. The farm is depicted as consisting of a farmhouse and several barns with an access track. A range of ponds, or remnants of a moat are visible on the earlier cartographic data. Although the development site has been partly disturbed by the construction of the garages there is likely to be survival of historic features associated with the farm complex in areas of less disturbance and there is evidence within the site investigation works that deeper features, such as the infilled pond, may survive and are likely to preserve potential archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains.



Map 1 Stubbs Farm on the 1st edition OS map, Essex XXV, surveyed 1875-6.

4 Results (Figs 2 & 4)

Four L-shaped trial-trenches were located within the footprint of the new housing blocks. They were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision.

Trench 1 (T1), 15m long by 1.8m wide

Modern topsoil (L1, c 200mm thick) sealed two layers of post-medieval/modern disturbance (L2, c 200mm thick; L3, c 330mm thick). Beneath L2 and L3 was a layer of post-medieval/modern subsoil (L4, c 200mm thick) containing peg-tile, iron nails, coal and slate (none retained). Layers L3 and L4 sealed natural sandy/silty clay (L6, identified at a depth of c 570mm below current ground level). A modern pit (F1) containing brick, tile, plastic and concrete (not retained) was identified along with a post-medieval pit (F2) containing pottery.

Trench 2 (T2), 20m long by 1.8m wide

Modern hoggins (L5, c 150mm thick) sealed natural sandy/silty clay (L6, identified at a depth of c 150mm bcgl). The remains of a modern borehole were identified (F3).

Trench 3 (T3), 20m long by 1.8m wide

Thick modern hoggins (L5, c 500mm thick) sealed natural sandy/silty clay (L6, identified at a depth of c 500mm bcgl). No significant archaeological horizons were identified.

Trench 4 (T4), 15m long by 1.8m wide

Modern topsoil (L1, c 200mm thick) sealed post-medieval/modern subsoil (L4, c 100mm thick) which sealed natural sandy/silty clay (L6, identified at a depth of c 300mm bcgl). A large modern pit (F4) containing brick, plastic and glass (not retained) was identified at the south-east end of the trench.



Photograph 1 T2, looking E



Photograph 3 T4, looking SE

5 Finds

Finds No	Context	Description	Quantity	Weight (g)
1	T2, F2	Post-medieval pottery: Stock-type black-glaze ware (fabric 40B*) (c 17th century)	1	4g

Table 1 All finds by context (* CAR 7)

6 Discussion

The archaeological evaluation on land at Mersea Fleet Way, Chelmer Road, Braintree revealed a number of modern layers and features and a single post-medieval pit. The pit was recorded to the west of Stubbs Farm and may be associated with the old farm boundary (Fig 3). No trace of the farmhouse or associated structures were identified. They may have been removed by the modern activity recorded across the site.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks David Mittell (Brooks & Wood Ltd) for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway, R Mathieson, N Rayner and A Wade. Figures are by R Mathieson and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor.

8 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in PDF format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

CAR 7	2000	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by J Cotter
CAT	2014	<i>Health and Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2016	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation on land at Mersea Fleet Way, Chelmer Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 3PZ</i>
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Dept of Communities and Local Government.
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14 . Ed. D Gurney
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 , by Maria Medlycott
ECCPS	2015	<i>Brief for Archaeological Trial Trench evaluation on land at Mersea Fleet Way, Chelmer Road, Braintree</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (English Heritage)

9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present

natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	from Henry VIII to cAD 1800
residual	something out of its original context, eg a Roman coin in a modern pit
Roman	the period from AD 43 to cAD 410
Section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

10 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 977)

ECC Evaluation Brief, CAT Written Scheme of Investigation

Original site record (Feature and layer sheets, Finds record, plans)

Site digital photos and log, Architectural plans, Attendance register, Risk assessment

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Braintree Museum under accession code: [requested](#)

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Distribution list:

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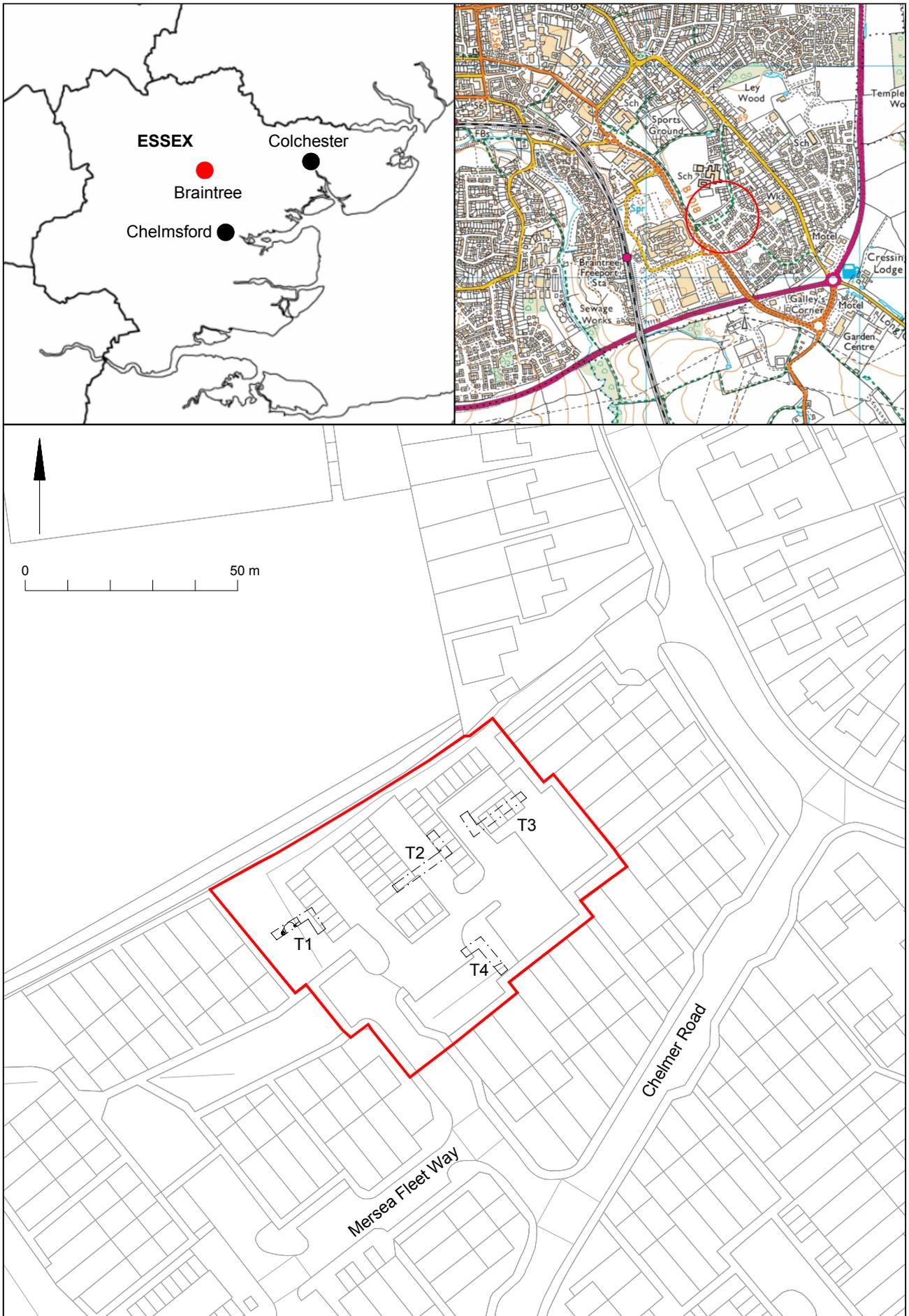
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Checked by: Howard Brooks

Date: 5.7.2016



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Fig 1 Site location.

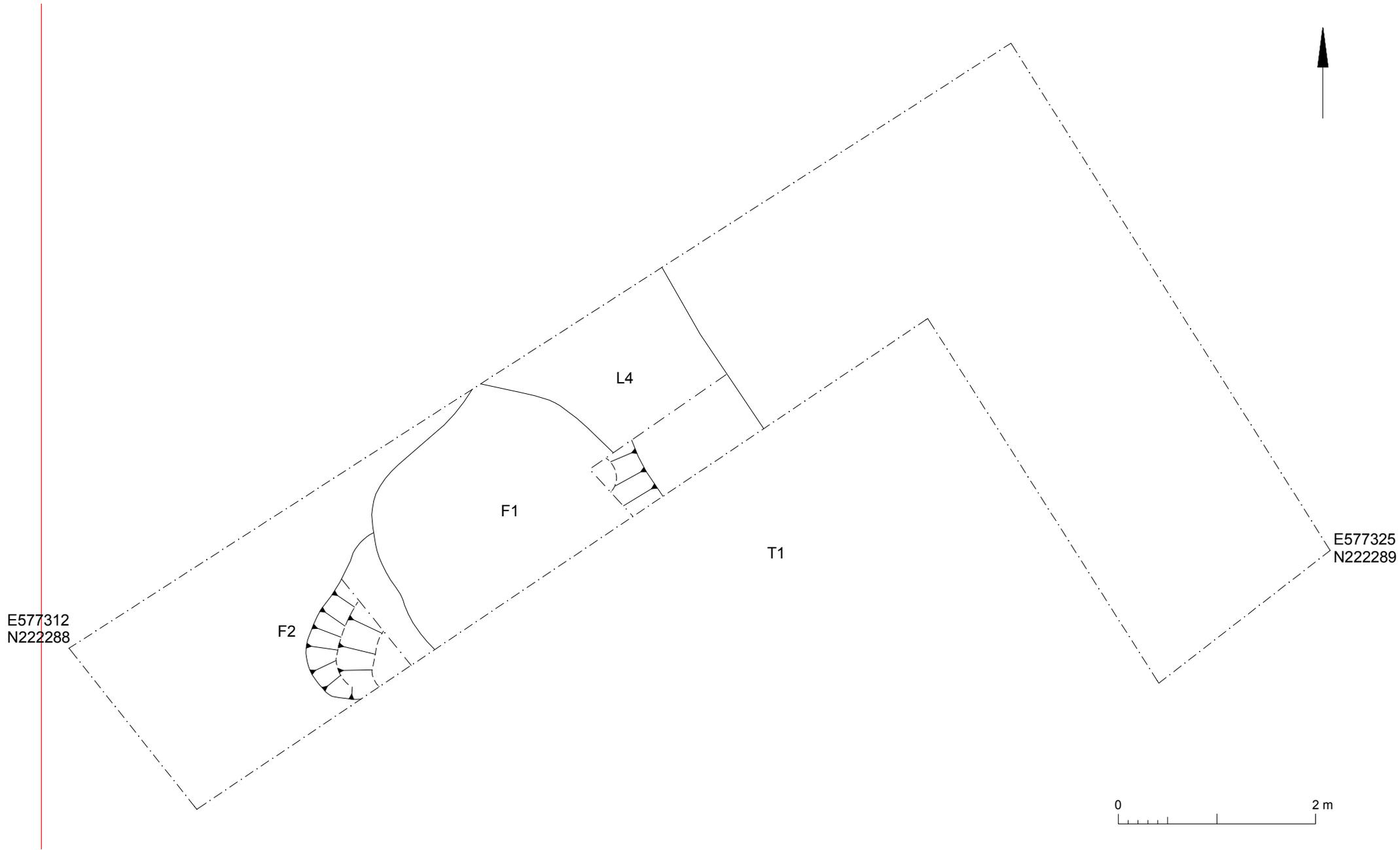


Fig 2 Results.

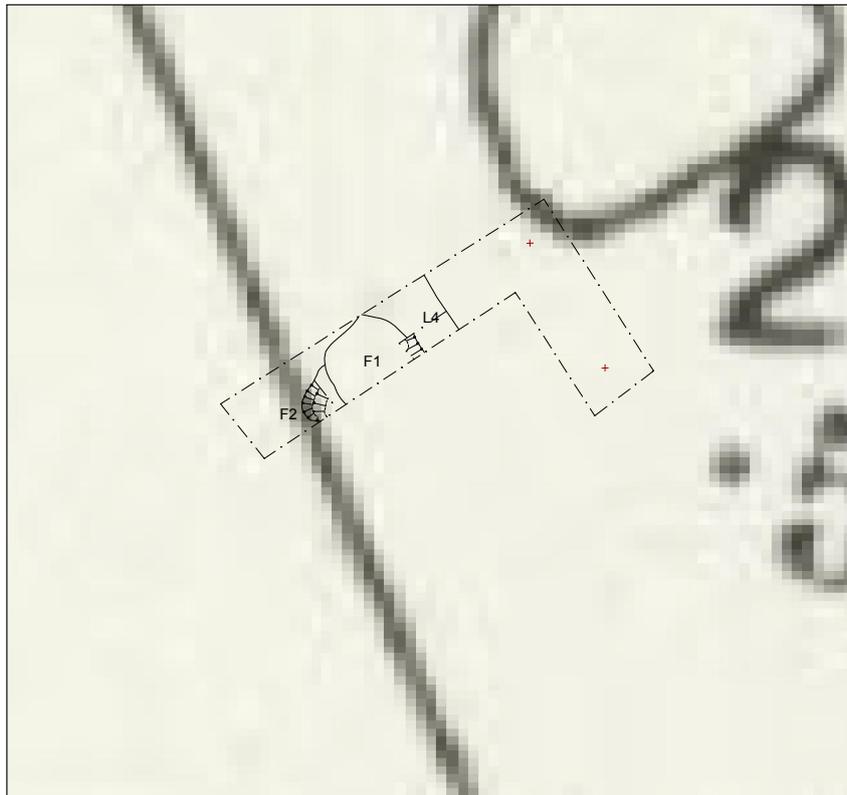
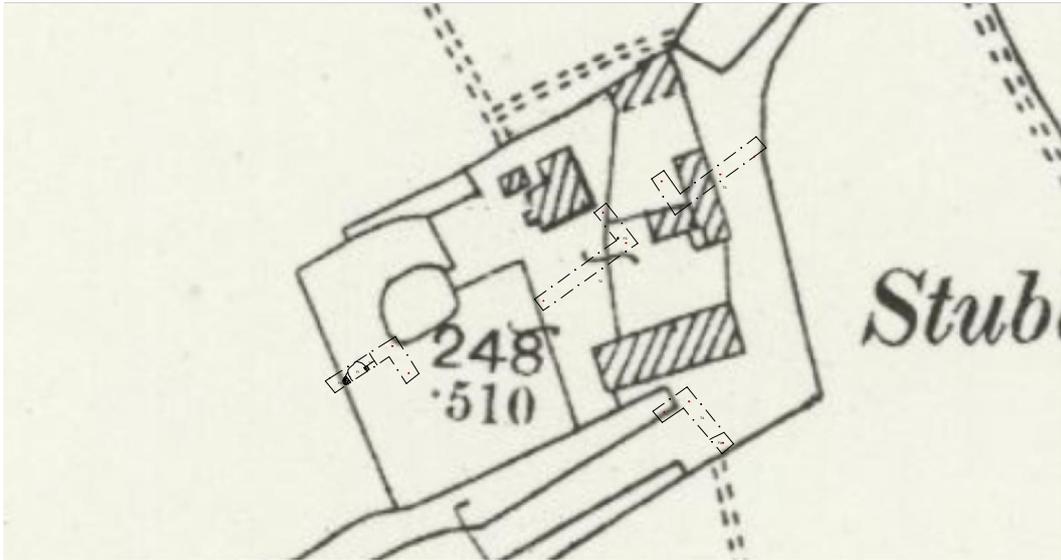


Fig 3 Trench overlay on 1st Edition OS Map

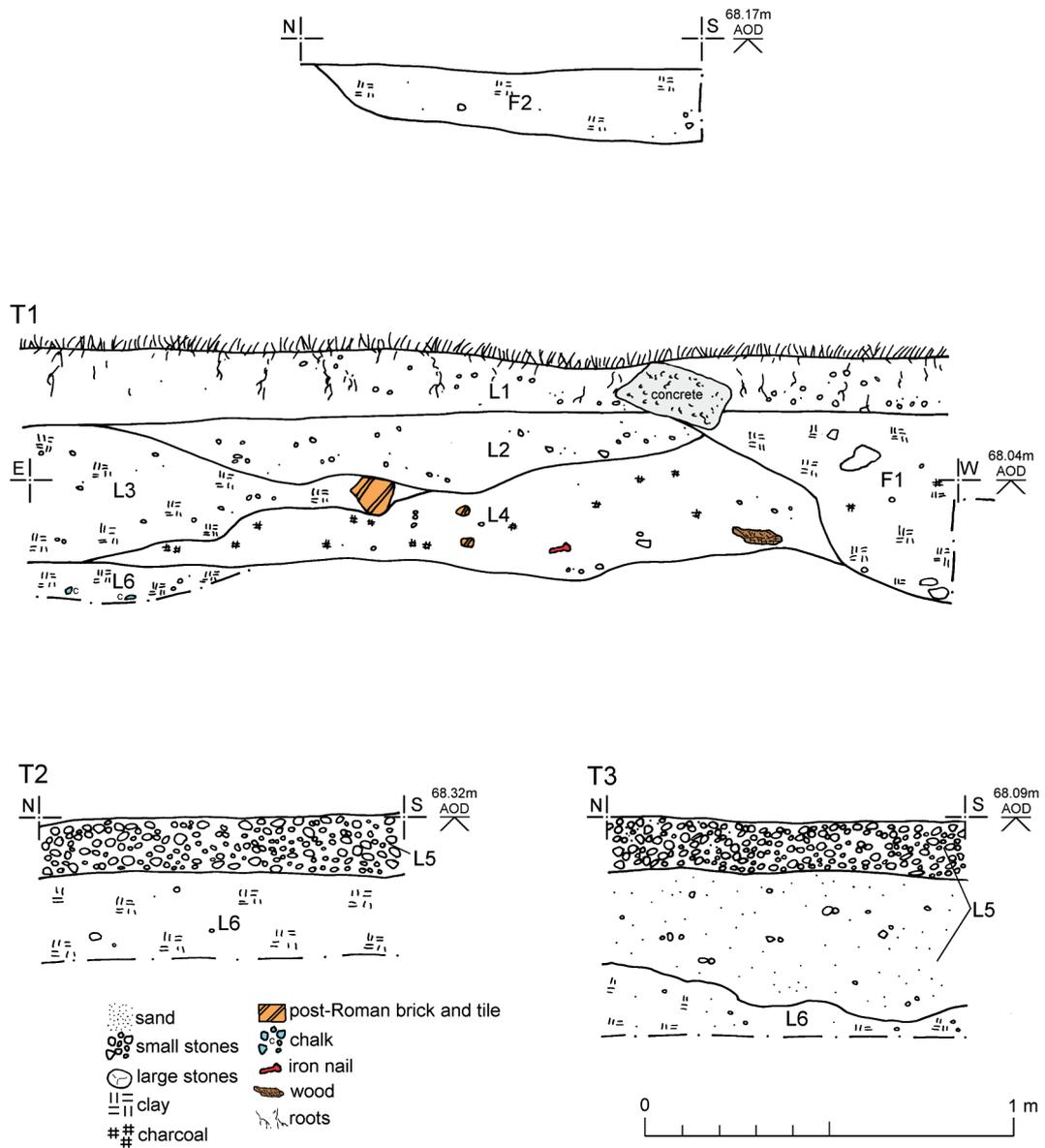


Fig 4 Feature (F2) and representative trench sections (T1-3).

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Land on Mersea Fleet Way, Chelmer Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 3PZ	
Parish: Braintree	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 77345 22304 (centre)	Site code: CAT project code: 16/04h ECC project code: BTCR16 OASIS project ID: colchest3-248429
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 1st July 2016	Size of area investigated: Four trial-trenches totalling 70m long by 1.8m wide (126m ²)
Location of curating museum: Braintree Museum accession code: requested	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER number:
Final report: CAT Report 977	
Periods represented: post-medieval, modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out in advance of the construction of twelve new dwellings on land at Mersea Fleet Way, Chelmer Road, Braintree, Essex. Despite being located within the historic farm complex of Stubbs Farm (19th century) only one post-medieval pit was excavated that may be associated with the old farm boundary. The remaining layers and features were all of modern date.	
Previous summaries/reports: –	
Keywords: –	Significance: –
Author of summary: Laura Pooley	Date of summary: July 2016