

# Archaeological evaluation on land at The Fennes Estate, Fennes Road, Braintree, Essex, CO9 4BB

November 2016



**by Laura Pooley**

figures by B Holloway and E Holloway

fieldwork by Ben Holloway and Alec Wade

**commissioned by Susan Bell  
on behalf of The Tabor Group**

NGR: TL 79196 27350 (centre)

Planning ref.: 16/01066/FUL

CAT project ref.: 16/08m

ECC code: BTFE16

Braintree Museum accession code: [requested](#)

OASIS ref.: colchest3-260804



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**CAT Report 1043**

December 2016

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (one trial-trench) was carried out on land at The Fennes Estate, Fennes Road, Braintree, Essex in advance of the construction of new replacement barn. The estate comprises a 19th-century Grade II listed house with evidence of settlement activity going back to the medieval period. However, only a 20th-century bitumen surface, telegraph pole and water pipe were present.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land at The Fennes Estate, Fennes Road, Braintree, Essex which was carried out on 29th November 2016. The work was commissioned by Susan Bell on behalf of The Tabor Group, in advance of the construction of a new replacement barn, and 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 Fennes Estate comprises a 19th-century, Grade II listed house (NHLE no. 1275812) with associated outbuildings and landscape features, many of which are also listed. The remains of a moat to the north of the house may also indicate settlement activity during the medieval period (EHER 6259). Documentary evidence for a house named the 'Fennes' can be traced back to c 1400 and John atte Fen is recorded as living in a house on the site in 1327.

South of the Fennes Estate the EHER refers to earthwork evidence indicating a possible deserted medieval village (EHER 6260) which may have been associated with this manorial site.

North-west of the estate the EHER refers to the cropmarks of a possible rectangular enclosure (EHER 17072).

## 4 Results (Figs 2-4)

A single L-shaped trial-trench was excavated within the footprint of the barn, measuring 15m and 5m long by 1.8m wide (36m<sup>2</sup>). The trench was machine excavated under archaeological supervision.

Three layers were identified. Modern crush/make-up (L1, c 200-250mm thick) sealed a late post-medieval/modern layer of consolidation (L2, c 250-270mm thick), which sealed natural clays.

Surface F1, c 300mm thick, sealed natural at the western end of the trench. It consisted of a hard and compacted black bitumen with small-medium sized stones. It was probably associated with the construction of the demolished barn which dated from the mid-20th century (*pers com* Fennes staff). Posthole F2 contained the remains of a 20th-century telegraph pole and a metal water pipe was also identified along the eastern end of the trench.



**Photograph 1** Trench shot, looking SW

## 5 Finds

A single brick was recovered from L2. It was a frogged brick stamped 'ALLEN / BALLINGDON', measured 230mm long, 100mm wide and 70mm deep, and was of 19th century date.

The Ballingdon Brickworks, Suffolk, were owned by Robert Allen and his descendants from 1812-1939. They produced Suffolk White, red facing, and ornamental bricks which were used in buildings like the Royal Albert Hall, the South Kensington Museums in London and the maltings at Mistley, Essex. Bricks were transported by barge along the River Stour to Mistley Quay where they were transferred onto larger coasters or Thames sailing barges for onward transit to London. In 1859, the Allen family were operating a fleet of twenty-two barges, and in the year 1863-4 nearly three and a half million bricks were transported along the river Stour (Historic England).

## 6 Discussion

No significant archaeological features or horizons were identified within the evaluation trench. The 20th century bitumen surface, telegraph pole and water pipe were all probably associated with the demolished barn (built in the mid-20th century, *pers com* Fennes staff) and surrounding buildings.

## 7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Susan Bell and The Tabor Group for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway and A Wade. Figures are by BH and E Holloway The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor.

## 9 References

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

CAT	2014	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2016	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation on land at The Fennes Estate, Fennes Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 5PL</i>
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological 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>
ECC	2016	<i>Brief for Archaeological Trial Trench evaluation on land at The Fennes Estate, Fennes Road, Braintree</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).</i>
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)</i>
Historic England		<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1351355">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1351355</a>

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
ECCHEA	Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor
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

## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** none retained

### **Paper and digital record**

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1043)

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

## 12 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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The Tabor Group

ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



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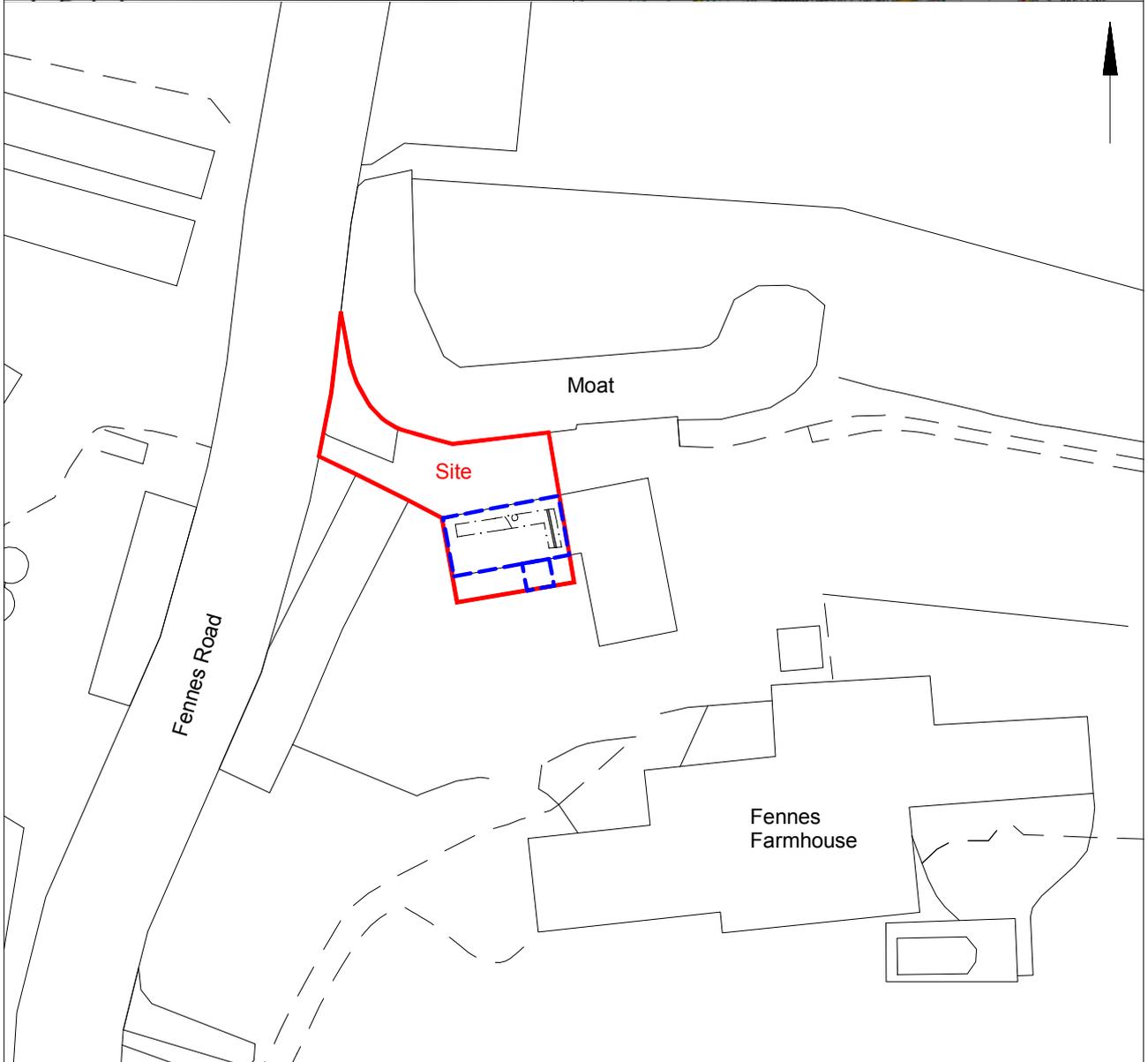
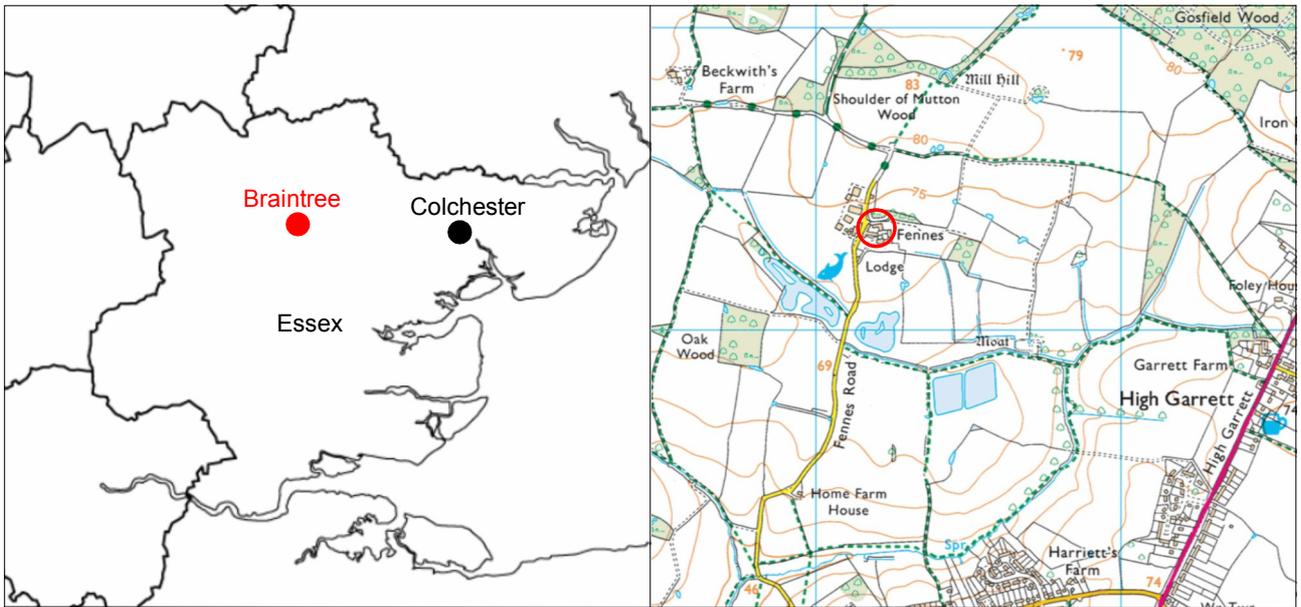
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Fig 1 Site location with proposed barn dashed blue



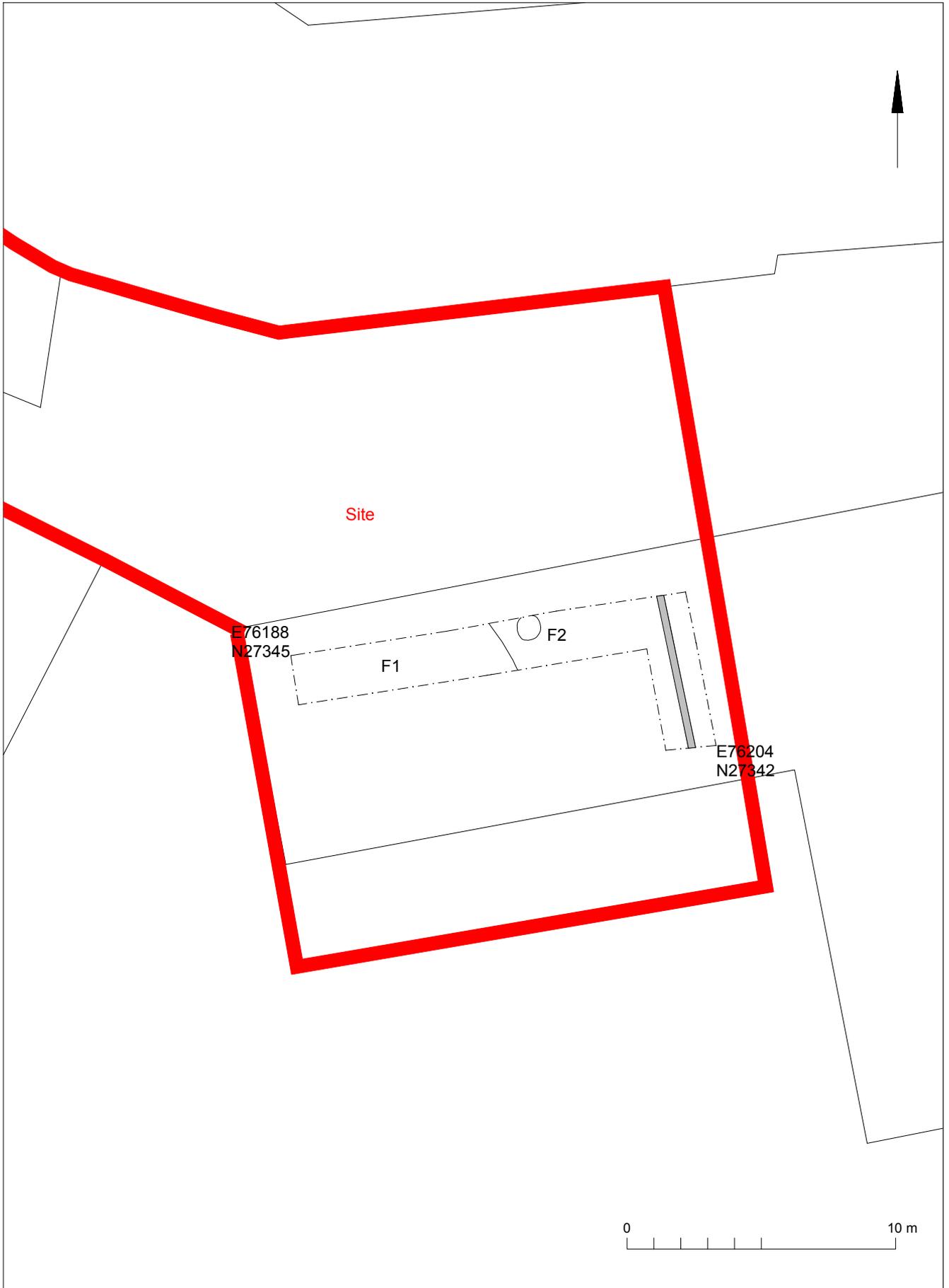


Fig 2 Results

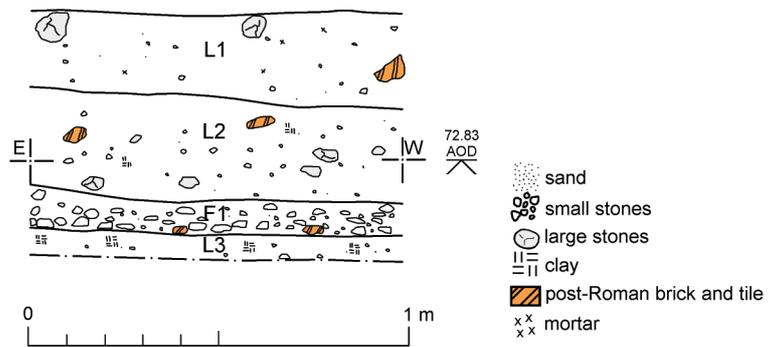


Fig 3 T1: representative trench section.

# Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

## Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> The Fennes Estate, Fennes Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 5PL	
<b>Parish:</b> Braintree	<b>District:</b> Braintree
<b>NGR:</b> TL 79196 27350 (centre)	<b>Site code:</b> CAT project code: 16/08m ECC project code: BTFE16 OASIS project ID: colchest3-260804
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 29th November 2016	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 0.06ha; one trench totalling 20m long by 1.8m wide (36m <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Braintree Museum accession code: <a href="#">requested</a>	<b>Funding source:</b> developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> Not known	<b>Related EHER number:</b> EHER 6259, 6260, 17072
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 1043	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Modern	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> An archaeological evaluation (one trial-trench) was carried out on land at The Fennes Estate, Fennes Road, Braintree, Essex in advance of the construction of new replacement barn. The estate comprises a 19th-century Grade II listed house with evidence of settlement activity going back to the medieval period. However, only a 20th-century bitumen surface, telegraph pole and water pipe were present.	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b>	
<b>Keywords:</b> –	<b>Significance:</b> –
<b>Author of summary:</b> Laura Pooley	<b>Date of summary:</b> December 2016