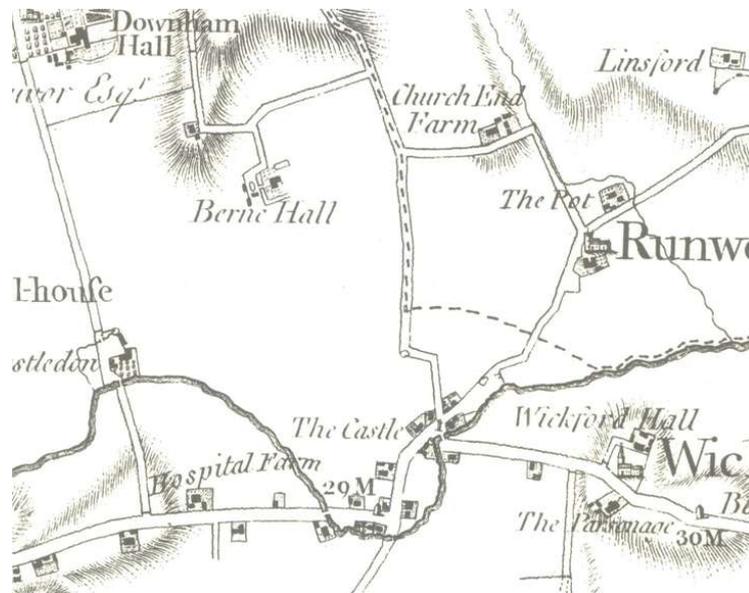


# Archaeological evaluation on land at Edas Wickford Centre, Alderney Gardens, Wickford, Essex, SS11 7JZ

September 2020



by **Dr Elliott Hicks**

figures by Chris Lister, Mark Baister and Emma Holloway

fieldwork by Ben Holloway with Nicholas Pryke, Ziya Eksen and Matthew Perou

**commissioned by Daniel Borley (Kier Group)**

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**CAT Report 1596**  
October 2020

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (eleven trial-trenches) was carried out on land at Edas Wickford Centre, Alderney Gardens, Essex, in advance of the construction of a single-storey building with associated car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and groundworks. The site lies directly to the north of an area containing considerable prehistoric remains, east of two possible Roman roads, south of Barn Hall, which has its origins in the medieval period, and north of the site of a now-demolished medieval manor. Four features – three pits and a ditch – were uncovered. Only one pit produced any artefactual evidence, a single sherd of Bronze Age pottery and a heat-affected stone. It is likely that these remains represent an extension of prehistoric activity uncovered to the south.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land at Edas Wickford Centre, Alderney Gardens, Essex which was carried out during 1st-4th September 2020. The work was commissioned by Daniel Borley of Kier Group in advance of the construction of two dwellings and a detached garage, 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* (MHCLG 2019).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with an *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation and Excavation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa O'Connor (ECCPS 2020), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2020).

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* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014b).

## 3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the Brief and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessible to the public via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The development site formed part of a field system to the northwest of Wickford until the 20th century. During the 20th century, following the construction of the railway and a station adjacent to the site, a school was constructed here (ECCPS 2019). Part of the site has been developed, likely truncating or destroying any below ground archaeological deposits, but it is possible that other remains survive in undisturbed areas of the site.

An archaeological evaluation conducted by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land directly to the south of the development site revealed prehistoric remains (EHER 47535), including ditches, gullies, pits and a posthole. Artefacts recovered within this area include Iron Age pottery sherds (EHER 7643, 7645, 7646, 7568). Two Bronze Age hoards have been found, one to the west (EHER 7558) and the other to the north-west (EHER 7589). Both have been identified as founder's hoards.

Two possible Roman roads lie to the west of the site (EHER 7564, 7661). Roman material has been found on and around the road area, including pottery and a coin (EHER 7669).

North of the proposed development is Barn Hall, also referred to as Berne Hall. Archaeological evaluation at the hall has revealed two features with medieval pottery (EHER 18478) while earlier trenching across the homestead moat (EHER 7515) revealed post-medieval coins, one of which dated to the Elizabethan period (EHER 7516). Roman pottery and coins have also been found at this site (EHER 7514).

To the south of the site was a medieval manor. This manor was demolished in 1730 (EHER 46456) and the site is now occupied by a late 18th- or early 19th-century house. Excavations here revealed two parallel gullies, one of which contained 12th- to 14th-century greyware indicating that the manorial site had its origins in this period.

The site of a post-medieval brickworks (EHER 15921) is located to the southwest. Medieval and post-medieval brick, tile and pottery have been recovered in this area (EHER 7567, 7566).

In 2013 CAT carried out an evaluation at 'Bo Peep', Station Road, approximately 300m north of the current development site. A single evaluation trench was excavated but no significant archaeological deposits were observed (CAT Report 688).

#### **4 Aim**

The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to record the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits, and to assess the archaeological potential of the site to allow the ECCHEA to determine if further investigation is required.

#### **5 Results (Figs 2-3)**

Eleven trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trenches T2, T3, T4, T6, T7, T8, T10 and T11 were 30m long and 1.8m wide, and trenches T1, T5 and T9 were 20m long and 1.8m wide.

Six layers were recorded. Trenches T5, T7b, T8, T9, T10 and T11, within the southeastern part of the site, were cut through modern ploughsoil (L1, c 0.24-0.39m thick) onto natural (L2). Trench T2, in the northwestern corner of the site, and trench T6, at its centre, were excavated through L1 (c 0.12-0.26m thick) and modern makeup (L3, c 0.5-0.61m thick) onto L2 (encountered at a depth of 0.63-0.75m below current ground level [bcgl]). Trenches T1, T4 and T7a, located within the eastern half of the site, were cut through modern tarmac (L4, c 0.05-0.1m thick) and modern makeup (L5, c 0.11-0.19m thick) onto L2 (encountered at a depth of 0.18-0.46m bcgl). In the northeastern corner of the site, trench T3 was excavated through modern concrete (L6, c 0.14-0.15m thick) and L5 (c 0.25-0.3m thick) onto L2 (encountered at a depth of 0.4-0.45m bcgl). Sondages were excavated in trenches T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T7, T8 and T10 to ensure the identification of L2 as natural.

There were no archaeological remains in trenches T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T7a, T7b, T9, T10, or T11.

##### **Trench 4 (T4): 30m by 1.8m**

Undatable pits F3 and F4 lay at the southern end of the trench, and measured 0.49m in diameter and 0.17m deep and 0.38m in diameter and 0.15m deep, respectively.



**Photograph 1** T4 trench shot – looking south

**Trench 8 (T8): 30m by 1.8m**

Late Bronze Age pit F1 was located at the southern end of the trench. It was 0.67m in diameter and 0.11m deep.

Undatable ditch F2 lay to the south of pit F1. It was aligned ENE-WSW and was 0.95m wide and 0.1m deep.



**Photograph 2** T8 trench shot – looking north

## 6 Finds

### 6.1 Pottery and ceramic building material

*by Dr Matthew Loughton*

The evaluation only produced two sherds of prehistoric pottery with a weight of 8g. This material came from the following features:

F1 (1) circular pit: One sherd of handmade flint tempered pottery (HMF) with a weight of 3g. The external surface is oxidized and orange coloured, while the core is darker. This sherd possibly dates to the Late Bronze Age.

L1 T9 (2) ploughsoil: one sherd of handmade sand tempered pottery (HMS) with a weight of 5g. This sherd possibly dates to the Early or Middle Iron Age.

### 6.2 Burnt stone

*by Laura Pooley*

A single piece of burnt flint (4.6g) came from F1 (finds no.1). The piece was cracked, crazed and burnt grey. It has been discarded.

## 7 Conclusion

Four features were uncovered during this evaluation: three pits and a ditch. These remains lay within the southern half of the site. Finds were scarce, and only one of the features – a pit – could be dated, with a sherd of pottery indicating it originated in the Bronze Age. This feature also yielded a heat-affected stone. In addition, one sherd of Early or Middle Iron Age pottery was recovered from the ploughsoil. The deposits uncovered during this investigation likely represent an extension of the prehistoric activity previously uncovered to the south.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Daniel Borley of Kier Group for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway with N Pryke, Z Eksen and M Perou. Figures are by C Lister, M Baister 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>

Brown, N & Glazebrook, J	2000	<i>Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper <b>8</b> (EAA <b>8</b> )
CAT	2020	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 688	2013	<i>Archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at 'Bo Peep', Station Road, Wickford, Essex, March 2013</i> , by Ben Holloway
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
ECCPS	2019	<i>Wickford PRU, Alderney Gardens, Wickford Archaeologic Desk-based Assessment</i> , by Katie Lee-Smith
ECCPS	2020	<i>Brief for archaeological evaluation on land at Edas Wickford Centre, Alderney Gardens, Wickford</i> , by Teresa O'Connor
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers <b>14</b> (EAA <b>14</b> )
Historic England (HE)	2016	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers <b>24</b> (EAA <b>24</b> )
MHCLG	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
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'
Iron Age	period from 700 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity

NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, <a href="http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main">http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main</a>
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
prehistoric	pre-Roman
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
wsj	written scheme of investigation

## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** part of one box (pottery)

### **Paper record**

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1596)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Original site record (trench sheets, sections)

Site digital photos and log

Inked sections

### **Digital record**

The report (CAT Report 1596)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log

Graphic files

Survey data

## 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 Southend Museum under project ref. WKDWC20

**Distribution list:**

Daniel Borley, Kier Group  
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor  
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

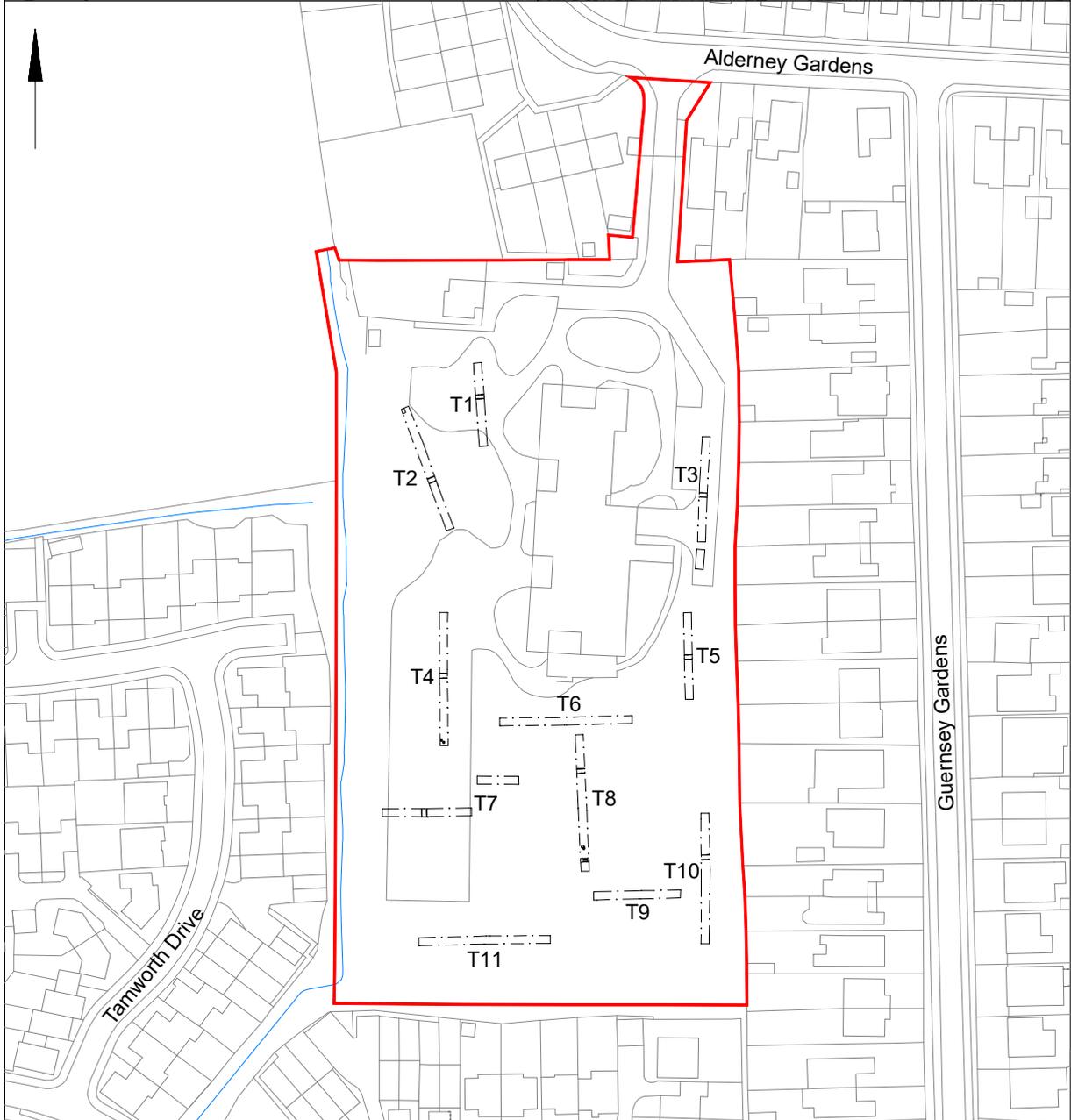
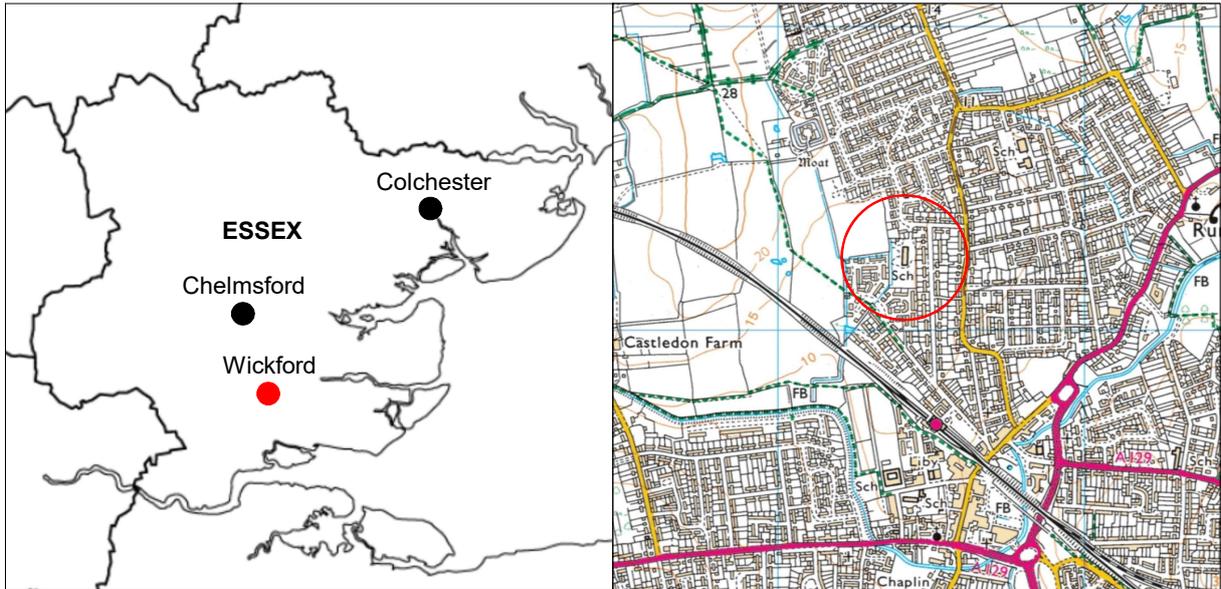


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Checked by: Philip Crummy  
Date: 16.10.2020



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Fig 1 Site location.



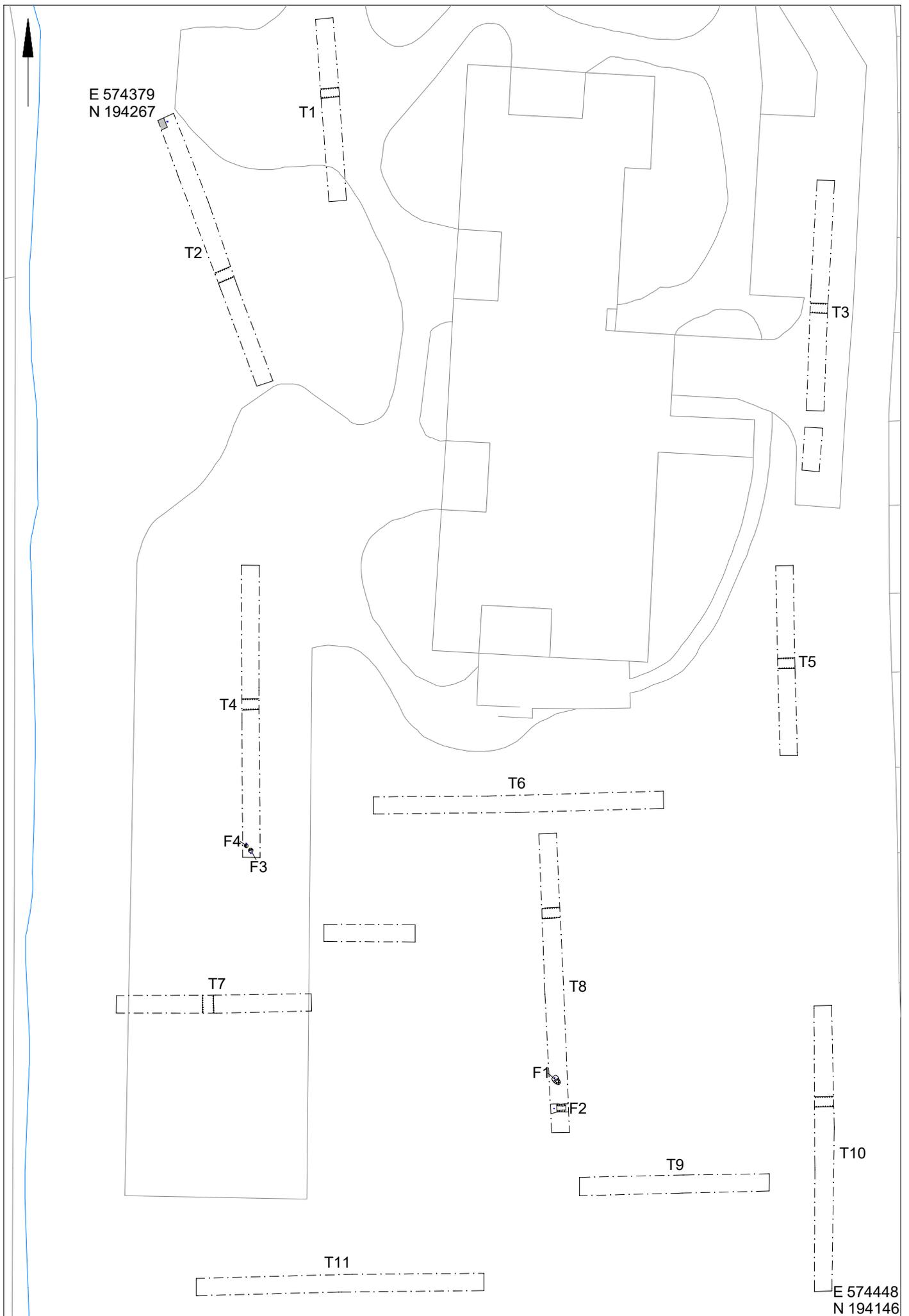


Fig 2 Evaluation results.

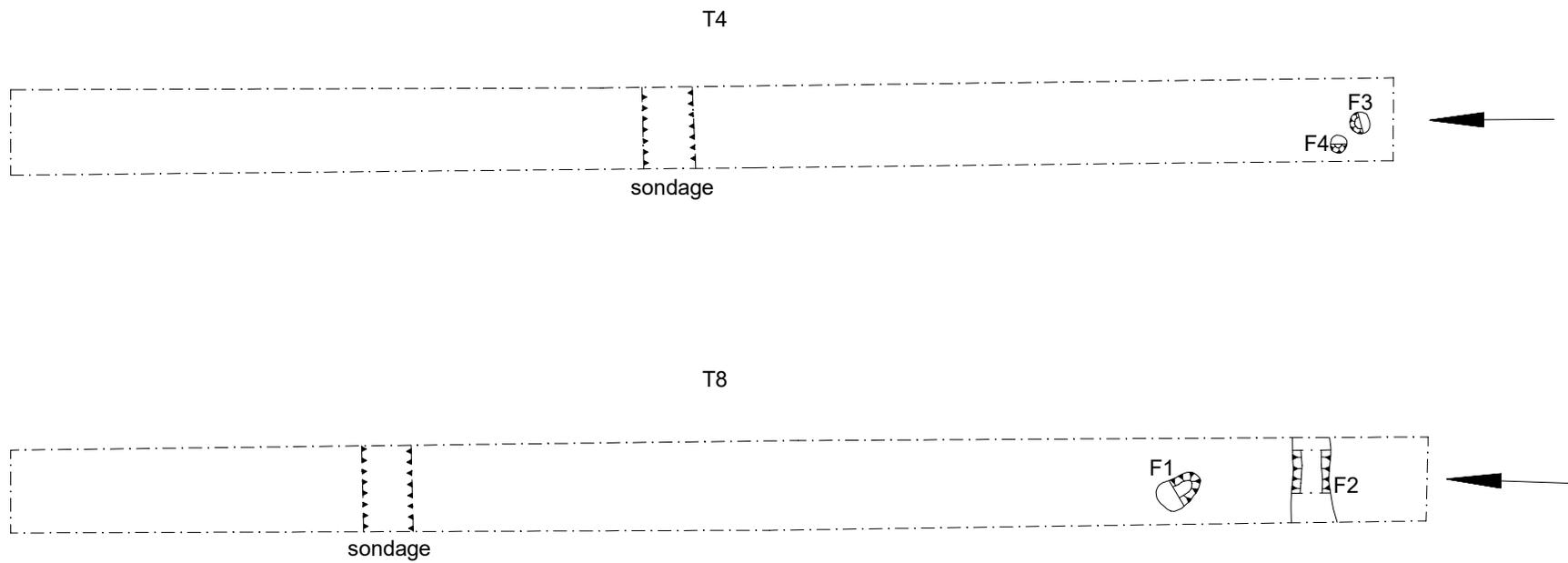


Fig 3 Detailed trench plans of T4 and T8.



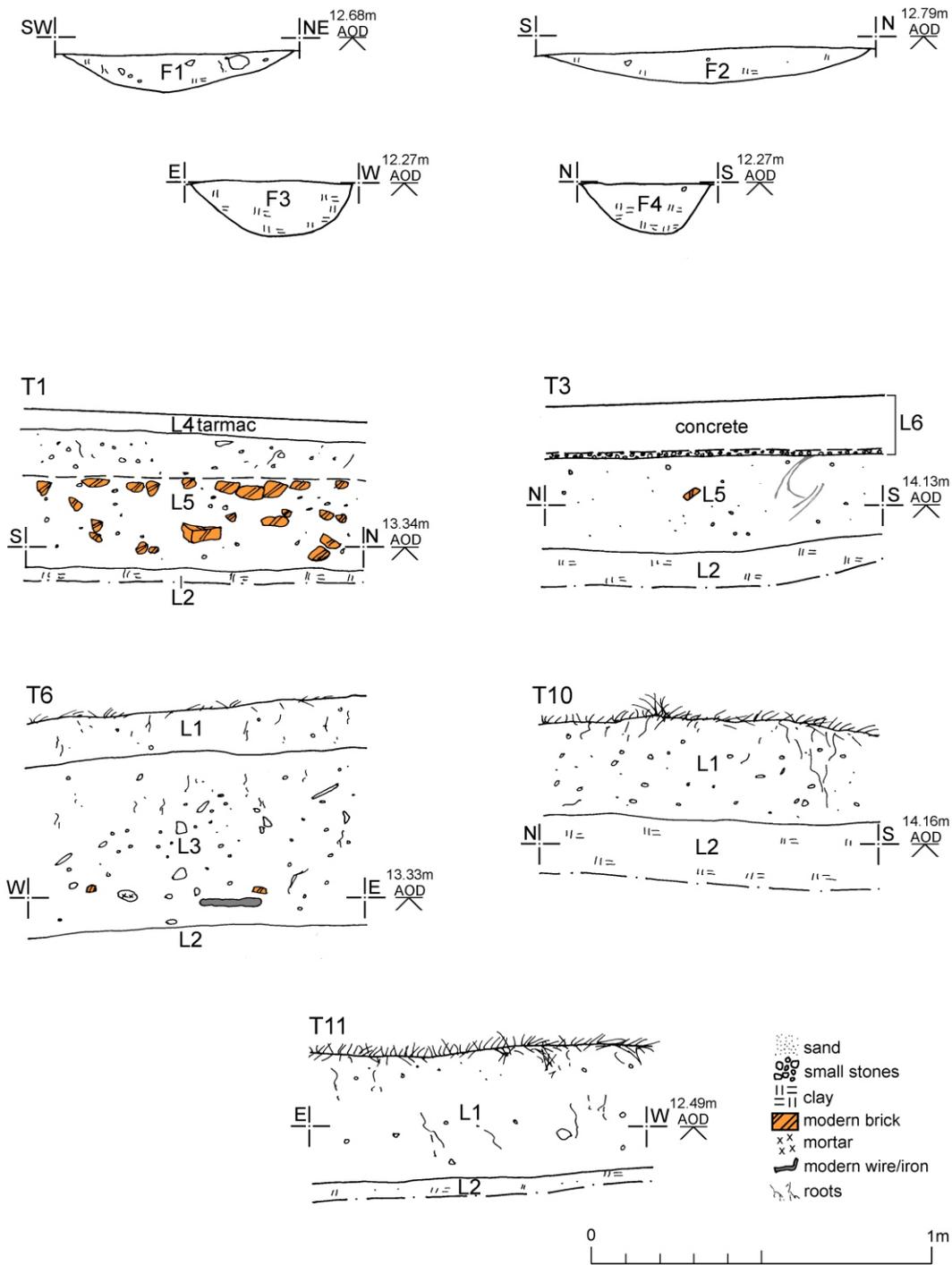


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

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**OASIS ID: colchest3-400929**

## Project details

Project name	Land at Edas Wickford Centre, Alderney Gardens, Wickford
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (eleven trial-trenches) was carried out on land at Edas Wickford Centre, Alderney, Essex, in advance of the construction of a single-storey building with associated car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and groundworks. The site lies directly to the north of an area containing considerable prehistoric remains, east of two possible Roman roads, south of Barn Hall, which has its origins in the medieval period, and north of the site of a now-demolished medieval manor. Four features - three pits and a ditch - were uncovered. Only one pit produced any artefactual evidence, a single sherd of Bronze Age pottery and a heat-affected stone. It is likely that these remains represent an extension of prehistoric activity uncovered to the south.
Project dates	Start: 01-09-2020 End: 04-09-2020
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	2020/08c - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	WKDWC20 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	colchest3-400929 - OASIS form ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Monument type	PIT Late Bronze Age
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Late Bronze Age
Significant Finds	POTTERY Early Iron Age
Significant Finds	POTTERY Middle Iron Age
Significant Finds	BURNT STONE Late Prehistoric

## Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX BASILDON WICKFORD Land at Edas Wickford Centre, Alderney Gardens, Wickford
Postcode	SS11 7JZ
Study area	1.58 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 7441 9421 51.619131878806 0.519655914941 51 37 08 N 000 31 10 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 12.27m Max: 14.25m

## Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	HEM Team Officer, ECC
Project design originator	Sarah Carter
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Ben Holloway
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

## Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Southend
Physical Archive ID	WKDWC20
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Southend Museum

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"  
Paper Archive recipient Southend Museum  
Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Report", "Section"

**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)  
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