

Archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of 12-26 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7JQ

December 2020



by Sarah Carter

With contributions by Matthew Loughton and Laura Pooley
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**commissioned by Matt Gowers (Chignal Building Ltd)
On behalf of Chignal Building Ltd**

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CAT Report 1620
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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (four trial-trenches) was carried out on land to the rear 12-26 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, Essex, in advance of the demolition of the existing industrial units and construction of two three-storey apartment blocks. The site is located adjacent to the medieval town of Rayleigh. Eleven features were excavated, six modern in date, four undated and one natural.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land to the rear of 12-26 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, Essex which was carried out during 9th-11th September 2020. The work was commissioned by Matt Gowers on behalf of Chignal Building Ltd in advance of the demolition of the existing industrial units and the construction of two three-storey blocks of apartments. It was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Alison Bennett 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 a *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation on Land rear of 12-26 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Alison Bennett (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 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2015) 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 area lies adjacent to the medieval town of Rayleigh (EHER 13575). The Domesday Book demonstrates that there was a village at Rayleigh at the end of the Saxon period. Swein of Essex built his castle there at some point between 1066 and 1086, making it one of the earliest Norman castles in the country (Rumble, 1983, EHER 13586-7). There is still a substantial motte and bailey on the site and the outer bailey was still visible within this century. The castle is located approximately 400m north of the development site. It has been suggested that there was a hundredal market at Rayleigh market (Eddy & Petchey, 1983), and there are also references to a market and fair dating to 1227. Unlike other Essex towns attached to castles, there is no evidence that there was ever a town enclosure, although it is possible that the outer bailey served a defensive function for the townsfolk.

There are two possible interpretations for the town morphology; either the market-place was a cigar-shaped widening of the High Street or that it was sited in the area between Bellingham Lane, London Hill and Church Street, forming an infilled elongated triangular market-place.

The location of Holy Trinity Church, which contains 12th-century elements, is on the eastern edge of the town (c 480m north east of the development site), possibly marking the location of the original settlement (EHER 16330). The castle was abandoned in the 14th century, and the land used first as part of the royal stud and then in the 17th century as a farmyard (EHER 135867). The town appears to have remained as a small market town with a small but stable population until the beginning of the 20th century when the introduction of the railway led to its growth as a commuter town for London.

For a full archaeological and historical background around the development site see the Desk Based Assessment by Archaeology Collective (Vallance 1999). Further detailed information on Rayleigh can be gained from the Historic Towns Report (Medlycott 1999).

4 Aims

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 2-4)

Four trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. A full context list can be found in Appendix 1.

A total of four layers were recorded. Trenches T1, T2 and T4 were excavated through a modern yard surface (L1, c 0.14m thick tarmac over c. 0.11-0.14m of crush) which overlaid a substantial deposit of soil (L2, c 0.22-0.64), which in turn sealed the natural clay (L3, encountered at a depth of between 0.38-0.89m below current ground level [bcgl]). T3 was cut through a concrete slab (L4, c 0.12m of concrete over c 0.10m of crush), followed by L2 and L3.



Photograph 1 T1 trench shot – looking north-west

On the 1955 OS map the development area was occupied by a factory. From earlier editions of OS mapping it can be surmised it was constructed somewhere between 1948 and 1955. From the stratigraphy present it is likely the site had been previously stripped and then built-up, probably due to decontamination and demolition of the 1950's factory, which took place sometime in the late 20th century.



Map 1 Extract of the 1955 OS Map, site in red.

Baulks were left in T1, T2 and T4 due to the locations of modern services.

Trench 1 (T1): 22.5m by 1.8m

Pit/natural features F1 and F2 were not fully defined since they extended beyond the edges of the trench. F1 was the most substantial feature found on the site. It was at least 3.34m long and 0.35 m deep. The excavated area of F2 was 0.45m by 0.51m and 0.32m deep.

Modern concrete was recovered (and not retained) from post-hole F3. The diameter of F3 was 0.31m and the depth 0.03m.

F4 was a large poorly defined feature (2.86m by 0.58m and 0.25m deep). Its shape and fill (which appeared to have been L2) strongly suggested this was a particularly deep machine bucket scoop made when the contaminated soils were being removed mechanically from the site. When this process was complete, the resultant excavation was backfilled with L2, hence the latter's presence in F4.

Trench 2 (T2): 20m by 1.8m

Modern post-hole F5 produced fragments of frogged red brick (not retained). F5 was about 0.22m across and 0.04m deep.

A modern iron object (not retained) was recovered from post-hole F6. The post-hole was 0.25m by 0.18m and 0.04m deep.

Pit/post-hole F7 can be dated to the 19th or 20th century from the small assemblage of finds recovered. The exposed area was 0.66m by 0.50m and 0.41m deep.

F8 was a patch of oil-stained natural which had not been removed when the site was decontaminated.

Trench 3 (T3): 15m by 1.8m

Two NE/SW aligned undated linear features were excavated in T3. F9 had a steep U-shaped profile that was 0.50 wide and 0.27m deep and was cut through L2. F10 had a wide U-shaped profile that was 0.35m wide and 0.05m deep.



Photograph 2 F9 and T3 rep sx – looking north-east

Trench 4 (T4): 22.5m by 1.8m (L-shaped)

Large areas of modern disturbance were recorded in the trench along with natural feature F11.

6 Finds

6.1 Pottery and ceramic building material

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation uncovered four sherds of pottery and ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) with a weight of 69g (Table 1). This material was recovered from two features (Table 2).

Ceramic material	Qt.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
Pottery	1	1	1
CBM	3	68	23
All	4	69	17

Table 1 Details on the main types of ceramics and pottery

Context	Description	Qt.	Weight/g	MSW/g
F4	?Machine scoop?	1	25	25
F7	Pit/posthole	3	44	15
Total		4	69	17

Table 2 Quantities of pottery and CBM from specific features and contexts

The ?machine scoop F4 contained one sherd of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile with a weight of 25g. The pit or posthole F7 contained a small sherd of 19th-20th century Staffordshire-type white earthenwares (fabric F48D) transfer printed pottery, one sherd of peg-tile with a weight of 37g, and a small fragment (6g) of brick.

6.2 Other finds

By Laura Pooley

A fragment of 19th- to 20th-century window glass (4.8g) and a piece of post-medieval clay pipe stem (1.7g) came from F7 (finds no.2).

7 Conclusion

The 1955 OS map (map 1) shows the development area to be the location of factory, which has subsequently demolished. It is likely that most of the features excavated pre-dated the factory and when the site was stripped large portions of the features were removed. This would explain why only a shallow profiles of the features were excavated. The finds recovered are likely to have been left behind during the stripping of the site.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Matt Gowers (Chignal Building Ltd) for commissioning and to Chignal Building Ltd for funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by M Baister with R Mathieson and A Wade. Figures are by C Lister, M Baister and S Carter. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Alison Bennett.

9 References

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

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|---|
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| ClfA | 2014b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> |
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Rayleigh. Archaeology Collective

10 Abbreviations and glossary

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
EHER	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 (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, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
ws	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1620)

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 1620)

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. RL12.

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Distribution list:

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Checked by: Philip Crummy
Date: 18/12/2020

Appendix 1 Context list

Context number	Trench number	Finds number	Feature type	Description	Date
L1	T1, T2, T4	-	Yard surface	Tarmac with hard dry/moist dark yellow sandy silt and inclusions of: tile/brick 5%	Modern
L2	All	-	Levelling layer	Firm moist/wet dark grey/brown silty clay with brick flecks	Modern
L3	All	-	Natural	Firm dark green/grey/brown silty clay	Post-glacial
L4	T3	-	Concrete slab	Concrete over a crush layer	Modern
F1	1	-	Pit/natural feature	Soft moist medium grey clayey silt	Undated
F2	1	-	Pit/natural feature	Soft moist light grey clayey silt	Undated
F3	1	-	Post-hole	Soft moist light grey silty clay	Modern
F4	1	1	?Machine scoop	Soft moist medicine grey/brown clayey silt	Modern
F5	2	-	?Post-hole	Friable/firm moist medium grey/brown silty clay and inclusions of: tile/brick 2%	Modern
F6	2	-	Post-hole	Friable/firm moist dark orange/grey/brown silty clay	Modern
F7	2	2	Pit/post-hole	Soft moist medium orange/grey clayey silt	19th-20th century
F8	2	-	Hydrocarbon staining	Soft moist medium orange/grey clay	Modern
F9	3	-	Linear	Soft moist medicine grey/brown clayey silt	Undated
F10	3	-	Linear	Soft moist light grey clayey silt	Undated
F11	4	-	Natural feature	Soft dry/moist very light grey silty clay	Post-glacial

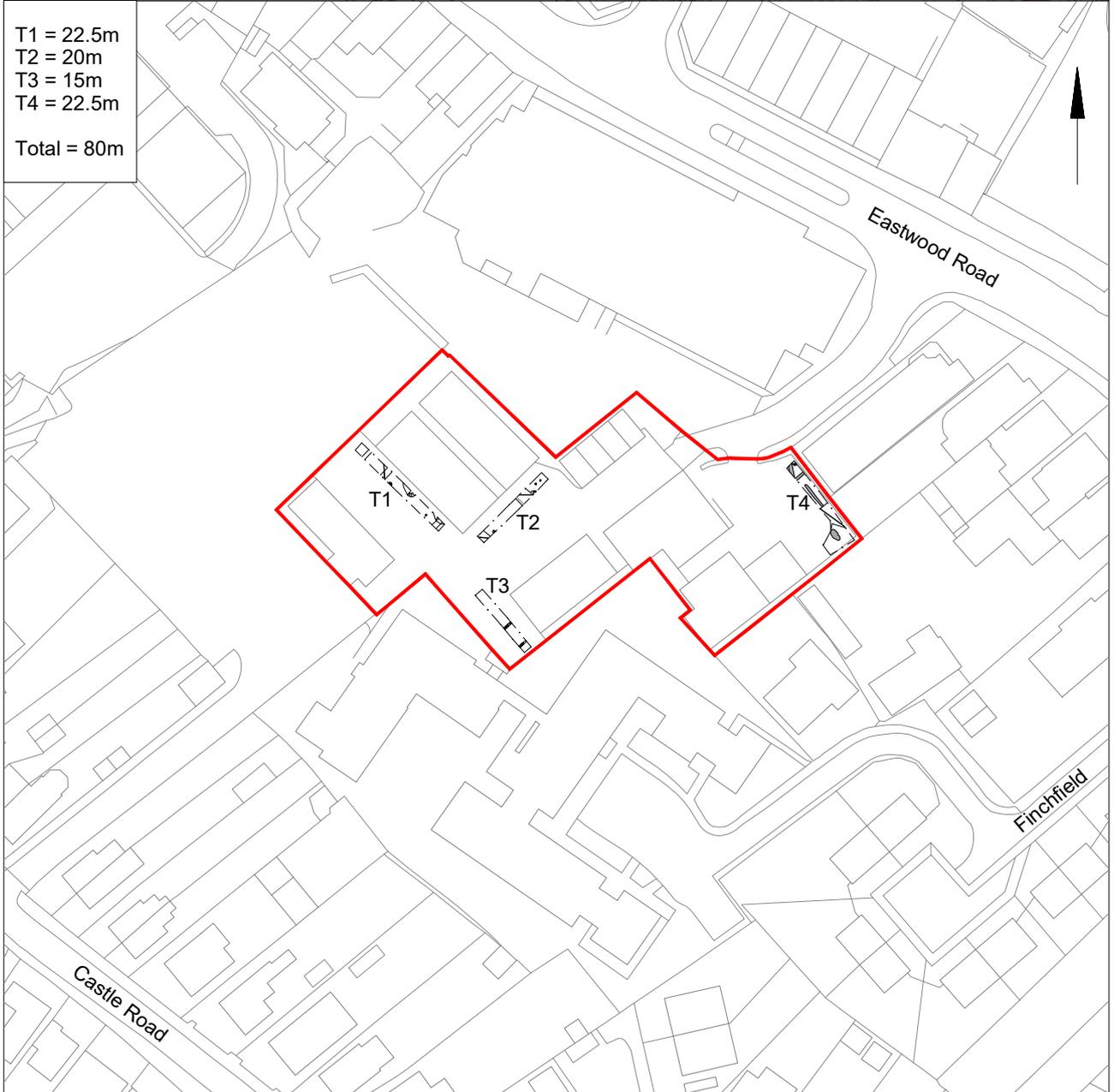
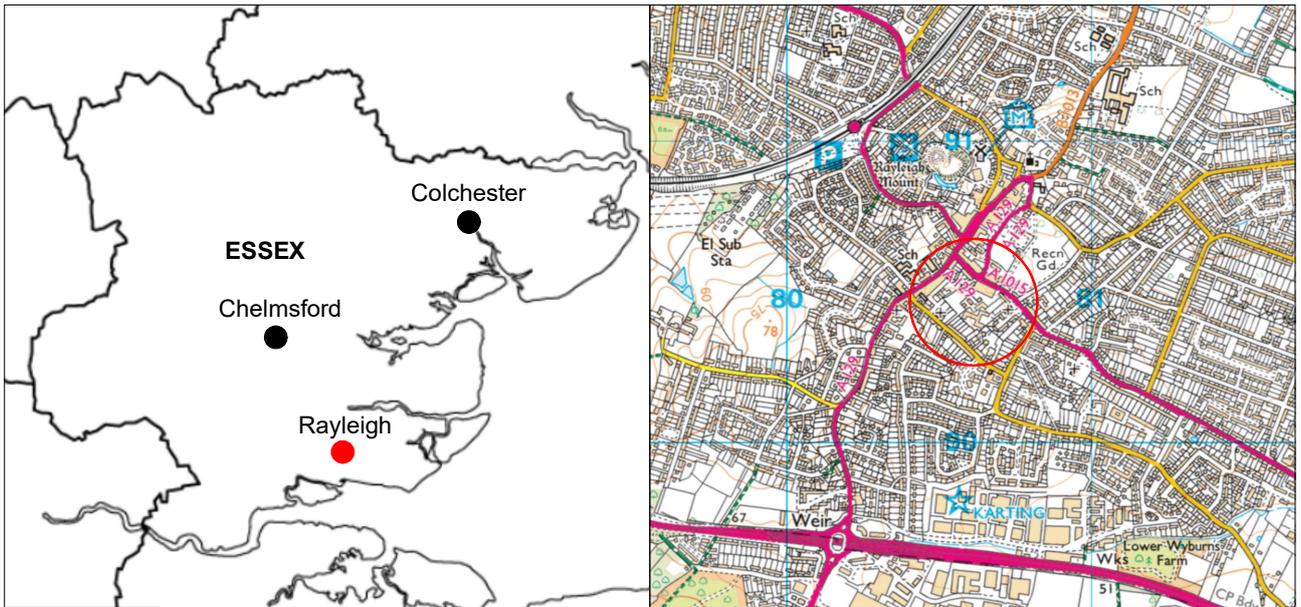


Fig 1 Site location and trench locations.

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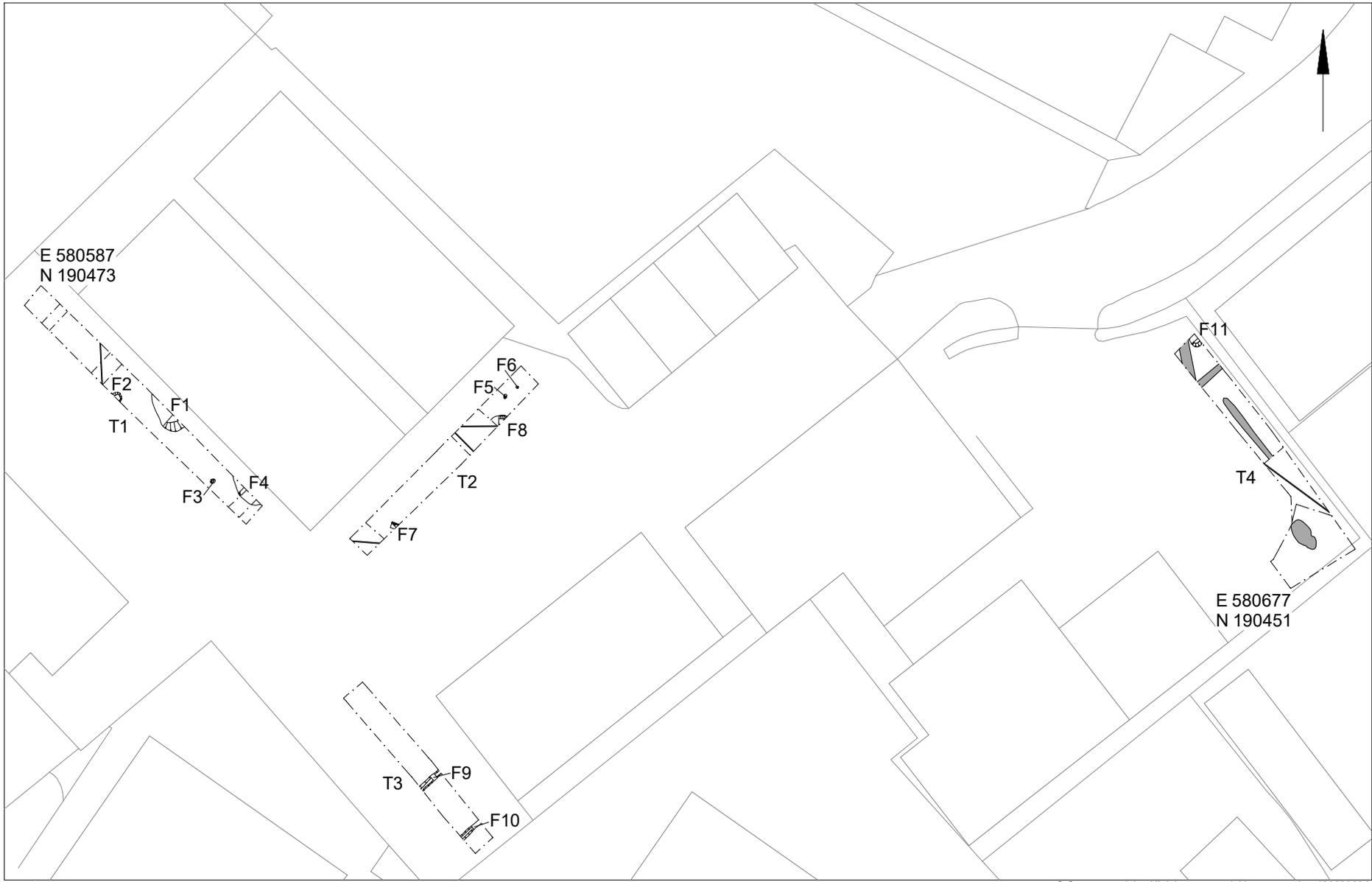


Fig 2 Evaluation results.

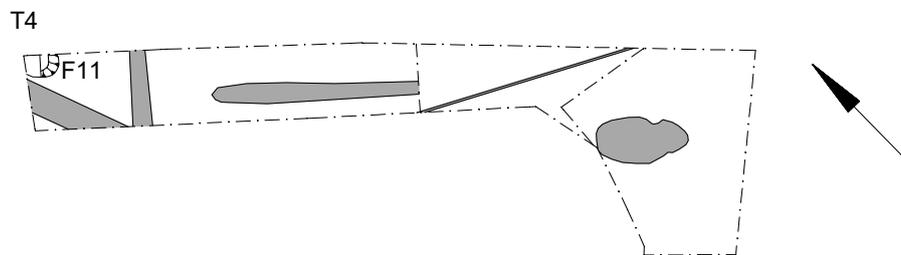
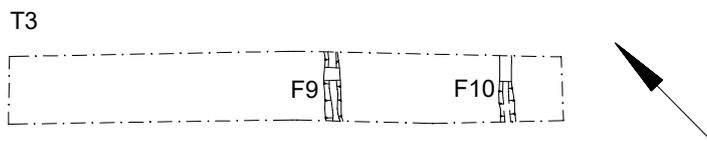
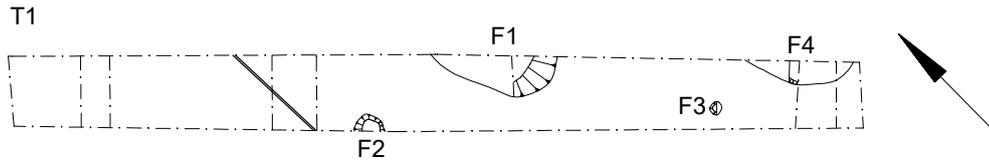


Fig 3 Detailed trench plans.
Modern services and disturbance in grey.



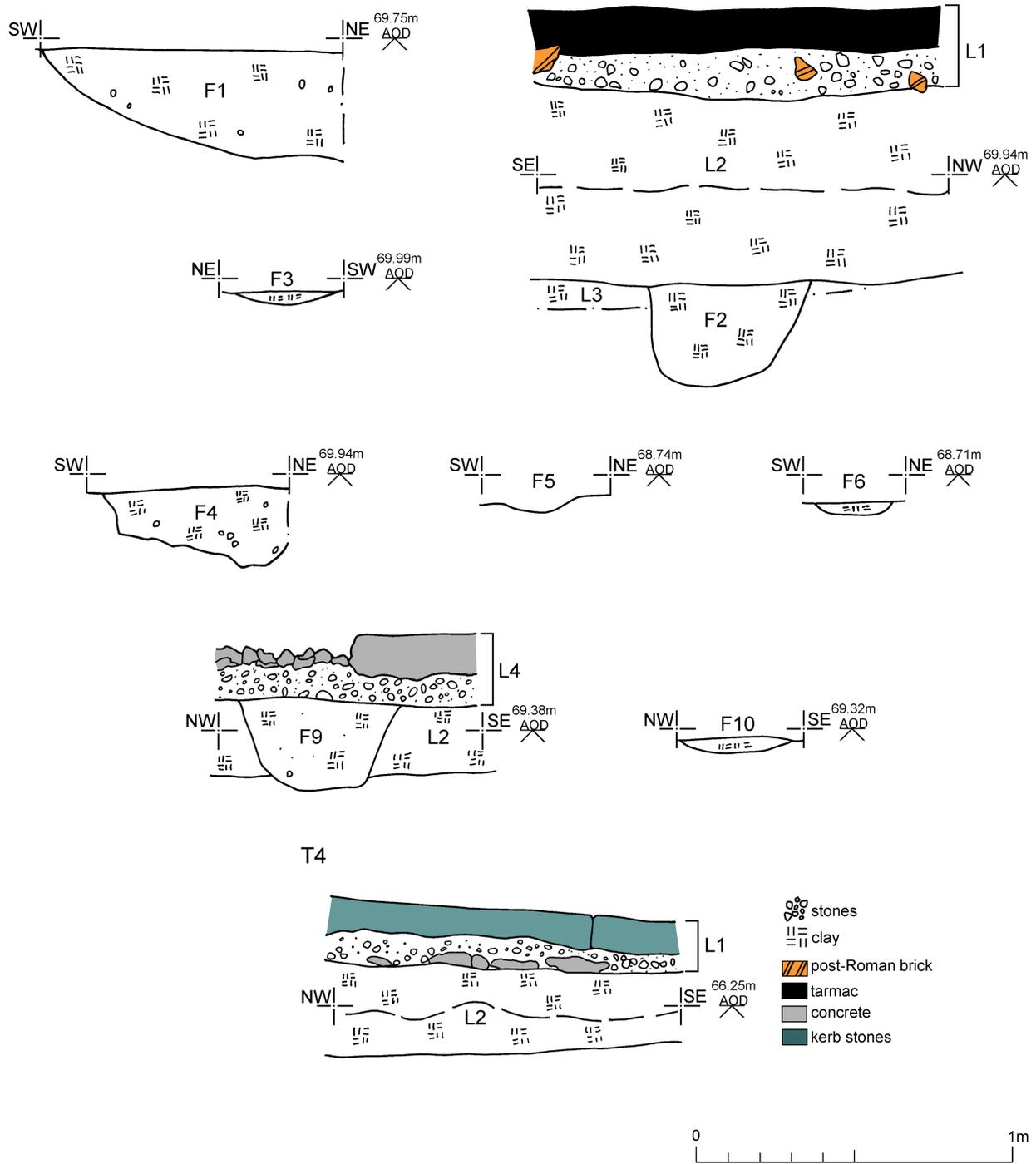


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

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Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land to the rear of 12-26 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7JQ.
Project dates	Start: 09-12-2020 End: 11-12-2020
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	17/00488/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	2020/12b - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	POST-HOLE Modern
Monument type	PIT Modern
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX ROCHFORD RAYLEIGH land to the rear of 12-26 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh
Postcode	SS6 7JQ
Study area	0.37 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 806 905 51.583845625044 0.607072807191 51 35 01 N 000 36 25 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 66.14m Max: 69m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	HEM Team Officer, ECC
Project design originator	Emma Holloway
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Mark Baister
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Chignal Building Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Archaeological Data Service
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Database", "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

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