

Archaeological evaluation at Gosfield Tennis Club, Braintree Road, Gosfield, Braintree, CO9 1PR

January 2021



by Sarah Carter

figures by Chris Lister, Ben Holloway and Emma Holloway
fieldwork by Ben Holloway with Matthew Perou, Megan Seehra and Bronagh Quinn

commissioned by **Jeremy Runicles**
on behalf of **Balkerne Gate Developments**
(Essex and Suffolk) Ltd

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CAT Report 1623
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1 Summary

A four-trench archaeological evaluation was carried out at Gosfield Tennis Club in advance of the construction of five new dwellings with access and car parking for the tennis club. The site was located along the Chelmsford-Braintree-Long Melford Roman road, to the south of the historic settlement of Gosfield. Despite the location no archaeological remains or material were encountered.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at Gosfield Tennis Club, Braintree Road, Gosfield, Braintree, Essex which was carried out on the 4th January 2021. The work was commissioned by Jeremy Runicles on behalf of Balcerne Gate Developments (Essex and Suffolk) Ltd in advance of the construction of five new dwellings, including parking, utilities and access and car parking for the tennis club. 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* (MHCLG 2019).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for trial-trenching evaluation at Gosfield Tennis Club, Braintree Rd, Gosfield, Braintree*, 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 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* (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 draws on the brief and the Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessible to the public via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The proposed development site lies along the Chelmsford-Braintree-Long Melford Roman road (EHER 6057), close to the crossing point of the Bourne Brook. Roman tile has been recorded from close to the crossing point (EHER 6488). The road runs parallel to the London-Dunmow Roman road with a seven mile gap between them. An evaluation in 1995 along the path of the A131 Great Leighs Bypass, confirmed the presence of the Roman road at several points along its course, notably in trench C, where metallurgy survived, but more generally through identifying its road-side ditches (Lavender 1995).

The Chapman and André map of 177 shows a mill to the north of the site (EHER 6458), the site of Biggs (which subsequently became Gosfield place) (EHER 47682) to the north-east and Bluegates to the south. The Tithe Map identifies the parcel of land as Bluegate pasture which suggests an association with the property identified on the Chapman and André map. The southern boundary of the site may have formed a continuation of a tree lined avenue leading to Gosfield Place, whose gardens were

designed by Humphrey Repton in 1811. Cropmark evidence for watermeadows lies to the rear of the site which may be medieval in origin (EHER 14259).



Map 1 Extract of Chapman and André 1777 map. Site location in red.

To the north-west of the development site a series of cropmarks have been identified. Mainly extraction pits and linear features (EHER 14272, EHER 14273, EHER 17219), many of which are former field boundaries marked on the 1st edition OS map.

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 2-3)

Four trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trenches 1, 2 and 3 measured 20m long and 1.8m wide and Trench 4 5m long and 1.8m wide.

Three layers were recorded. Topsoil (L1, c 0.20-0.52m thick, friable moist dark grey/brown silty clay) sealed subsoil (L2, c 0.21-0.36m thick, friable moist medium yellow/orange/brown silty clay with brick flecks), beneath which lay natural (L3, firm, moist medium yellow/orange/brown clay with frequent stones), encountered at a depth of 0.55-0.72m below current ground level.

A sondage was excavated in the centre of T2 to confirm the identification of the natural.



Photograph 1 T1 trench shot – facing southeast



Photograph 2 T2 Trench shot – facing southwest



Photograph 3 T3 trench shot – facing northwest



Photograph 4 T4 trench shot – facing northeast

No archaeological remains or material were encountered.

6 Finds

There were no finds.

7 Conclusion

Despite being located in an archaeologically-sensitive area, no archaeological remains or material were encountered.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Jeremy Runicles for commissioning and Balkerne Gate Developments (Essex and Suffolk) Ltd for funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister with fieldwork carried out by B Holloway with M Perou, M Seehra and B Quinn. Figures are by C Lister, B Holloway 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 8 (EAA 8)
CAT	2020	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2020	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at Gosfield Tennis Club, Braintree Road, Gosfield, Braintree, CO9 1PR</i> by S Carter
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	2020	<i>Brief for Historic trial-trenching evaluation at Gosfield Tennis Club, Braintree Road, Gosfield, Braintree</i> by T O'Connor
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14)
Historic England (HE)	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Historic England (HE)	2018	<i>The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project</i> , by S Mays, M Brickley and J Sidell
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)
MHCLG	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
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
EHF	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
Mesolithic	period from c 10,000 – 4000BC
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	O nline A ccess to the I ndex of A rchaeological I nvestigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
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
wsi written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: None

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1623)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Original site record (feature and layer sheets, finds record, plans)

Site digital photos and log

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1623)

CBC 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 Braintree Museum.

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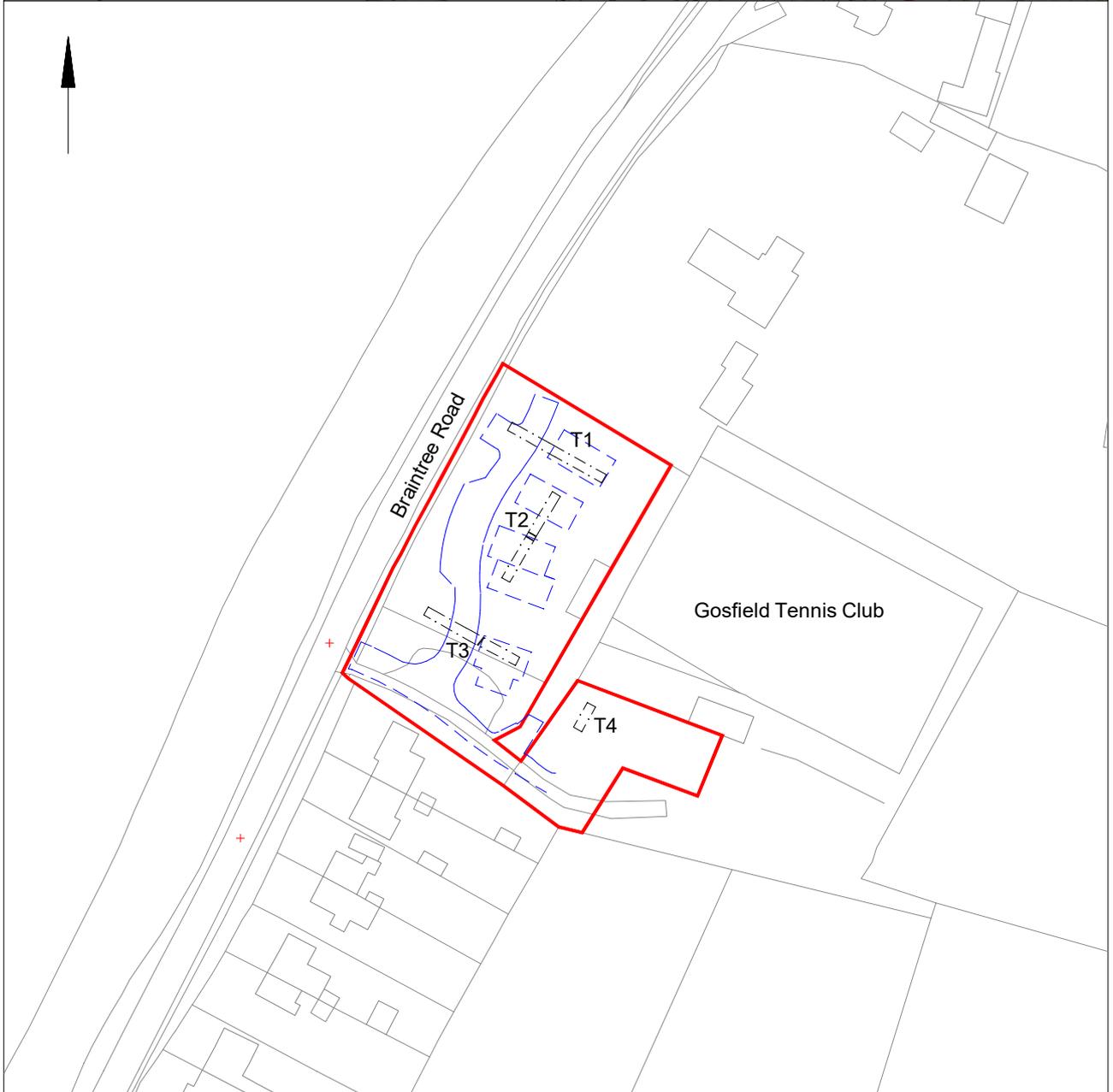
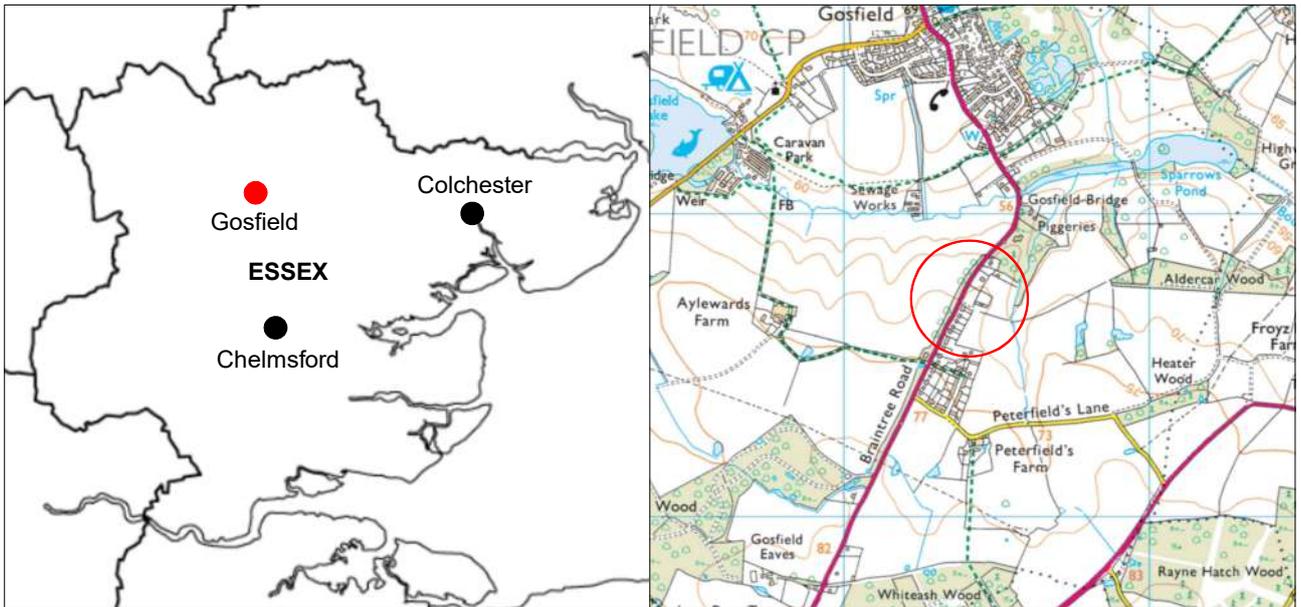
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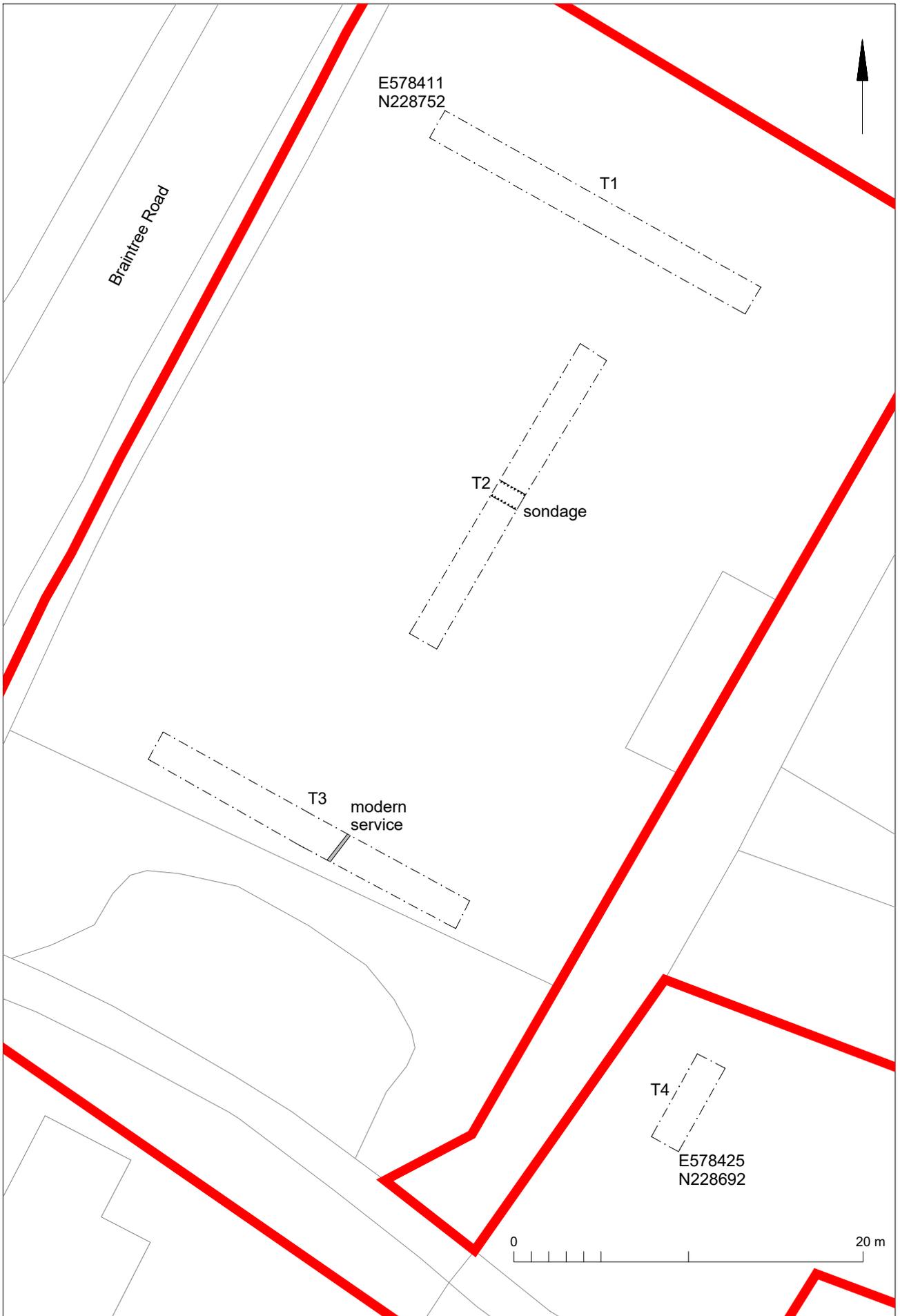
Date: 15/01/21



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Fig 1 Site location (red) and trench layout in relation to proposed development (blue).





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Fig 2 Results.

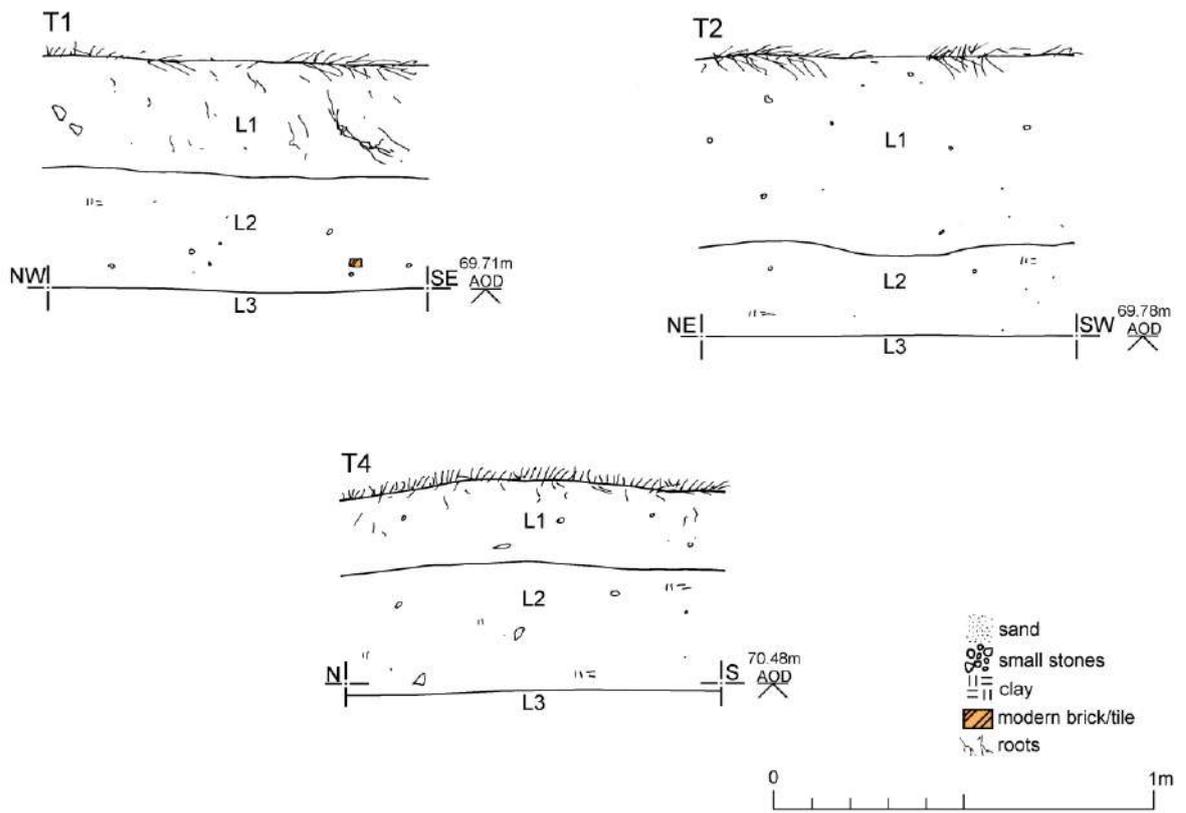


Fig 3 Representative sections.

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OASIS ID: colchest3-410496

Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation at Gosfield Tennis Club, Braintree Road, Gosfield, Braintree, CO9 1PR
Short description of the project	A four-trench archaeological evaluation was carried out at Gosfield Tennis Club in advance of the construction of five new dwellings with access and car parking for the tennis club. The site was located along the Chelmsford-Braintree-Long Melford Roman, to the south of the historic settlement of Gosfield. Despite the location no archaeological remains or material were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 04-01-2021 End: 04-01-2021
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	2020/12a - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	GFBR20 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	""Sample Trenches""
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, 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 BRAINTREE GOSFIELD Gosfield Tennis Club, Braintree Road
Postcode	CO9 1PR
Study area	0.3 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 78410 28726 51.927926235505 0.59511497444 51 55 40 N 000 35 42 E Point

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 Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Archaeological Data Service

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media available "Database","Images vector","Survey","Text"

Paper Archive recipient Colchester Museum

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

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