

**Archaeological evaluation  
by trial-trenching on land adjacent to White Ash  
House, Braintree Road, Gosfield, Braintree,  
CM7 5PA**

**February 2021**



**by Mark Baister**

figures by Mark Baister and Emma Holloway  
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**commissioned by Andy Cameron  
on behalf of Jenny Garvey**

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ECC code: GFBR21  
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**CAT Report 1641**  
March 2021

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (three trenches) was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust on land adjacent to White Ash House, Gosfield, in advance of the construction of two new dwellings with associated driveways and garages. The site was located along the Chelmsford-Braintree-Long Melford Roman road, to the south of the historic settlement of Gosfield. Despite this, no features or finds of a Roman date were encountered. Three features were identified during the evaluation, but they were all post-medieval/modern in origin.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land adjacent to White Ash House, Braintree Road, Gosfield, Braintree, Essex which was carried out on the 22nd February 2021. The work was commissioned by Andy Cameron on behalf of Jenny Garvey in advance of the construction of two new dwellings, along with associated garages and access. The work was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation, the Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor (ECCHEA) Teresa O'Connor advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant was 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 on land adjacent to White Ash House, Braintree Rd, Gosfield, Braintree*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa O'Connor (ECCHEA 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 Historic England's *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* (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). The road runs parallel to the London-Dunmow Roman Road with a 7 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 metalling survived, but more generally through identifying its road-side ditches (Lavender 1995).

A Bronze Age barbed and tanged flint arrowhead (EHER 6541) and an early medieval/medieval mount (EHER 51428) have been recovered from the surrounding fields close to the development site.

The Chapman and André map of 1777 depicts an access road adjacent to White Ash House leading to a large wood, known as Whiteash wood on the historic maps, remnants of which survive. The road indicates that the wood was being accessed for its resources in the post-medieval period and probably earlier.



**Map 1** Extract of Plate VIII, 1777 Chapman and André map, showing site location (red).

### 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)

Three trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trench 1 was located in the location of the proposed access road on the west side of the site. It was a 1.8m wide 'T'-shaped trench, measuring 10m long north-east/south-west and 5m long north-west/south-east. Trenches 2 and 3 were both located over the footprints of the proposed dwellings. Both measured 10m long by 1.8m wide and were aligned north-west/south-east.

The evaluation trenches were excavated through three layers. Topsoil (L1, c 0.39-0.41m thick, firm moist light/medium grey/brown clayey silt) sealed subsoil (L2, c 0.20-0.22m thick, firm moist light grey/brown clayey silt), beneath which lay natural (L3, firm, moist, light yellow/orange clay), encountered at a depth of 0.59-0.63m below current ground level.



**Photograph 1** Representative section of T3.  
Photograph taken facing north-east.

A sondage was excavated in the west end of T3 to confirm the identification of the natural.

Three features were encountered, all located with T1. F1 was a shallow post-medieval/modern pit in the west end of the trench, measuring 0.86m x 0.69m and 0.03m in depth. Adjacent to this was F2, a north-east/south-west aligned modern boundary ditch, measuring 1.85m wide and 0.66m deep. The section through this feature was machine excavated. Finally, in the northern part of the trench was F3, a north/south aligned modern linear/service run, measuring between 0.68-1.00m in width. F3 was excavated to a depth of 0.16m before modern plastic was recovered from its fill and excavation was halted.



**Photograph 2** Post-medieval/modern pit F1.  
Photograph taken facing east.



**Photograph 3** Modern ditch F2 section.  
Photograph taken facing south-west.

Also present with T1 was a land drain and a modern service (Fig 2).

No features were encountered within T2 or T3.



**Photograph 4** T2 long shot.  
Photograph taken facing north-west.

## 6 Finds

### 6.1 The post-medieval and modern pottery, fired clay, and brick

by Howard Brooks

#### Introduction

This is a group of eleven post-medieval and modern sherds (376g), and approximately 0.7kg of brick and fired clay, all from three contexts. The post-medieval pottery classification is based on John Cotter's 2000 classification in *Colchester Archaeological Report 7*.

#### Pottery descriptions

Context	Finds no.	Sherd count	Sherd weight	Description	Provisional date
F1	1	1	6	plain body sherd of fabric 40 post-medieval red earthenware (PMRE).	17th-18th
F2	2	3	230	three fragments, including two bases from modern stoneware (Fabric 45m) jars. One has the stamped lettering: L <sup>TD</sup> CO-OPERATIVE	19th or 20th
F2	2	6	130	sherds of PMRE. Apart from the one handle fragment and one body sherd, the other four are very robust (10-12mm thick) sherds from large ? storage vessel(s).	17th-19th
F3	3	1	10	plain body sherd of fabric 40 post-medieval red earthenware (PMRE).	17th-18th

#### Fired clay and brick descriptions

Context	Finds no.	Quant	Weight	Description
F1	1	3	19	pieces of undiagnostic fired clay (from brick?)
F2	2	3	410	Three pieces of mostly unspectacular post-medieval brick, 65mm thick, 52mm thick, and one special, 30mm thick and with a chamfered edge - a decorative piece.
F2	2	2	335	Two pieces from 'Suffolk White'-type brick (though not n - pale brown fabric with some orange clay marbled into the core. Probably floor bricks (pavers) - the thicker (55mm thick) definitely has a worn surface, the thinner (45mm) possibly so. Post-medieval.
F3	3	1	40	edge fragment from post-medieval brick, no measurable dimensions.

### Comment

This is a small group of post-medieval/modern finds, probably not deserving of a fuller discussion. The source of the pottery, wall bricks and floor bricks may not be too far away - White Ash House to the north, and/or Iron Pear Tree Farm across the road.

### Finds retention

It is not recommended that any of this material should be retained.

## 6.2 Miscellaneous modern finds

by Laura Pooley

Modern, 20th-century, finds from F2 and F3 included fragments of glass, and a copper-alloy ferrule and machinery part. The finds have been recorded below and discarded.

Context	Finds no.	Description
F2	2	<b>Glass:</b> Fragment of bottle glass, greenish-tinge, 21.3g, 19th-20th century. <b>Copper-alloy:</b> Two 20th-century metal finds: 1) Damaged ferrule, c 27mm diameter, 12.7g; 2) copper-alloy rod with ? rubber bung, a machinery part, 9.7g. <b>Iron:</b> Nail, shape largely obscured within corrosion, tip probably missing, 72.2g.
F3	3	<b>Glass:</b> Three fragments of 20th-century glass: 1) bottle fragment, greenish tinge, 17.2g; 2) bottle fragment, brown, 2.2g; 3) vessel fragment, opaque pale green, 0.5g. <b>Coal/coke:</b> Fragment, 2.4g.

## 7 Conclusion

Although some post-medieval pottery and CBM was recovered during this evaluation, the presence of 20th-century finds within the same contexts leaves little doubt that the features uncovered here are modern in origin. The only exception may be F1, from which only a single sherd of post-medieval red earthenware was recovered, perhaps suggesting it is of a slightly earlier date.

Crucially, no evidence was uncovered relating to the route of the Roman road directly to the west, nor to any of the Bronze Age or Medieval finds recovered in the vicinity.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Andy Cameron for commissioning and Jenny Garvey for funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister with fieldwork carried out by M Baister with M Seehra and B Quinn. Figures are by M Baister and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECC by Teresa O'Connor. The report writing process was overseen by Philip Crummy, Director of CAT.

## 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> )
CAR 7	2020	<i>Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971-1985.</i> Colchester Archaeological Report <b>7</b> , by John Cotter
CAT	2020	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land adjacent to White Ash House, Braintree Road, Gosfield, Essex, CM7 5PA.</i> by E Holloway
CAT	2020	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation</i>
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
ECCHEA	2020	<i>Brief for trial trenching evaluation on land adjacent to White Ash House, Braintree Rd, Gosfield, Braintree</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)	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Lavender, N J	1995	<i>A131 Great Leighs Bypass, Essex, Archaeological evaluation trial trenching.</i> Essex County Council Report
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

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
CIfA	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 (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	<b>O</b> nline <b>A</b> ccess to the <b>I</b> ndex of <b>A</b> rchaeological <b>I</b> nvestigations, <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
ws	written scheme of investigation

## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** None retained

### **Paper and digital record**

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1641)

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 1641)

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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### **Distribution list:**

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Teresa O'Connor, ECC Historic Environment Advisor

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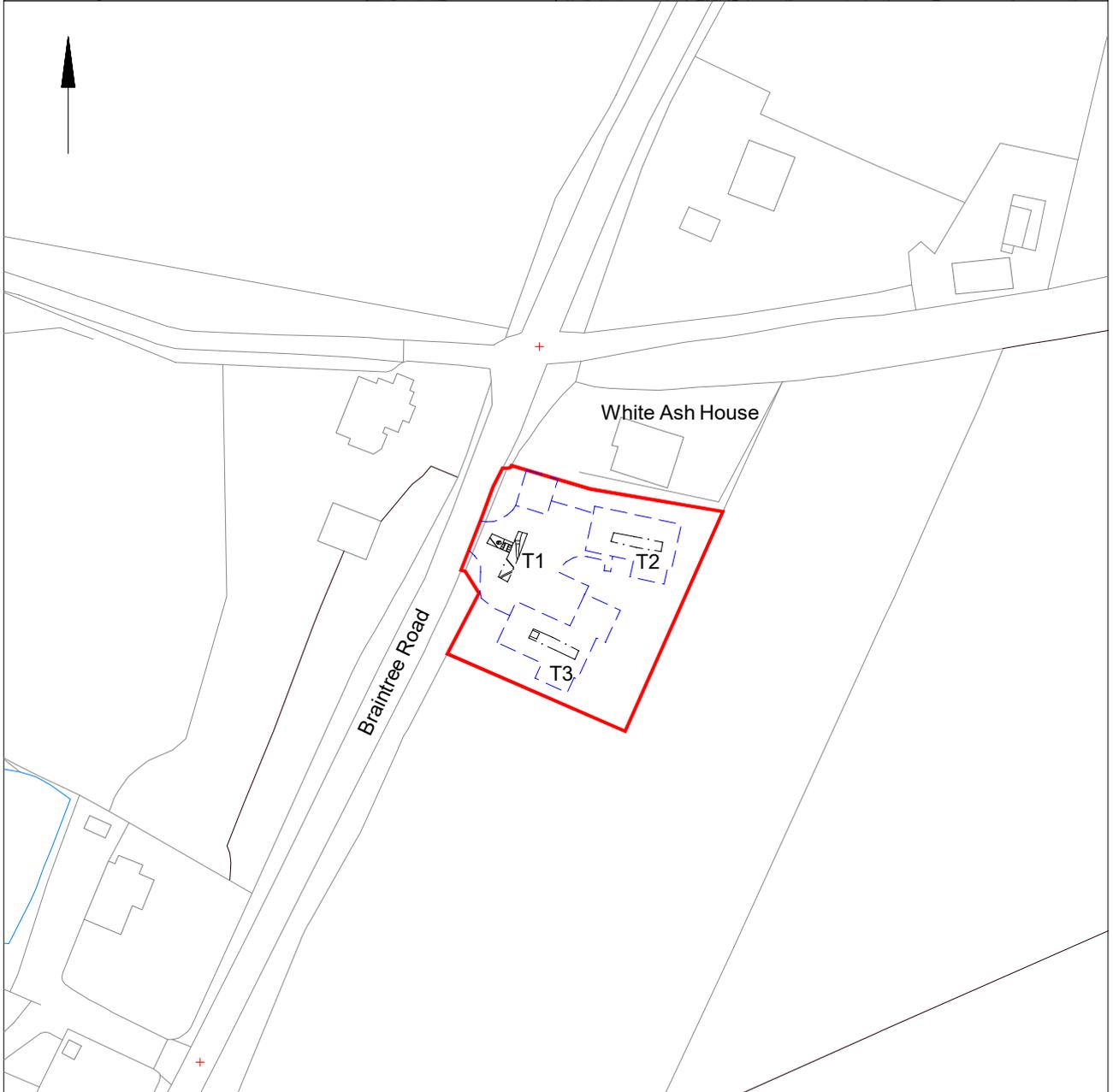
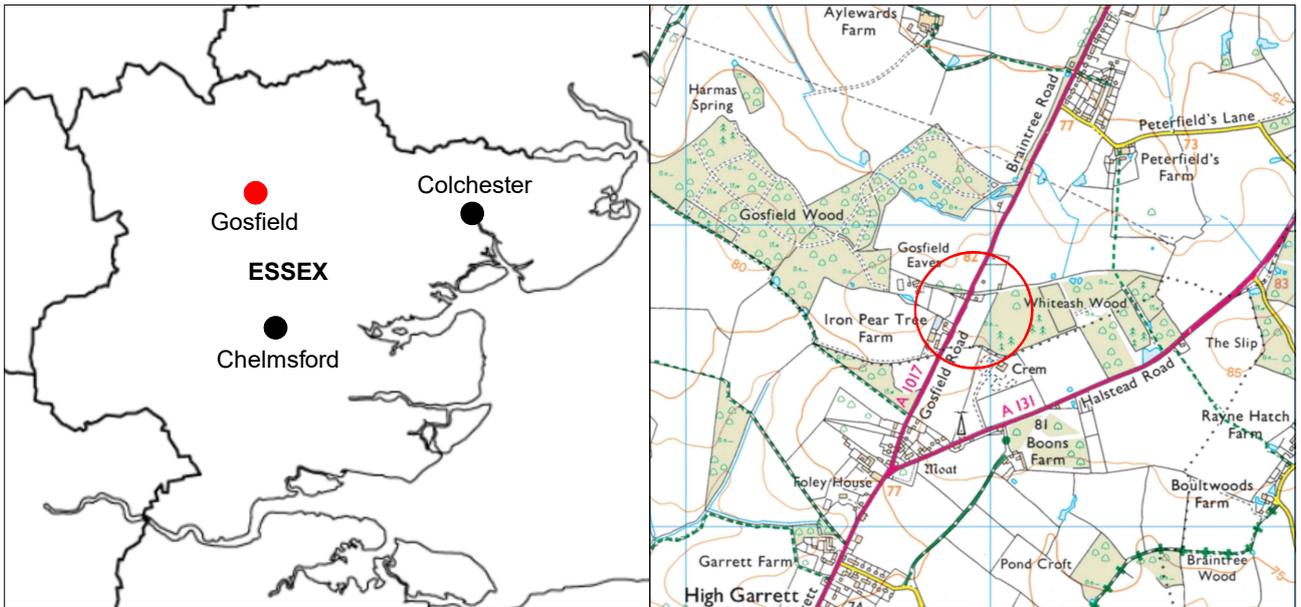
email: [mb@catuk.org](mailto:mb@catuk.org)

Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 07/04/21

## Appendix 1 Context list

Context number	Trench number	Finds number	Context type	Fill description	Date
L1	whole site	-	Topsoil	firm moist light/medium grey/brown clayey silt	modern
L2	whole site	-	Subsoil	firm moist light grey/brown clayey silt	undated
L3	whole site	-	Natural	firm, moist, light yellow/orange clay	post-glacial
F1	T1	1	Shallow pit	friable, mixed, moist dark grey/black clayey silt	post-medieval/ modern
F2	T1	2	Boundary ditch	friable, moist dark grey/black clayey silt with CBM flecks	modern
F3	T1	3	linear/service	friable, mixed, moist dark grey/brown clayey silt	modern



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Fig 1 Site location and trench layout in relation to proposed development (indicated by the dashed blue lines).

0 50 m

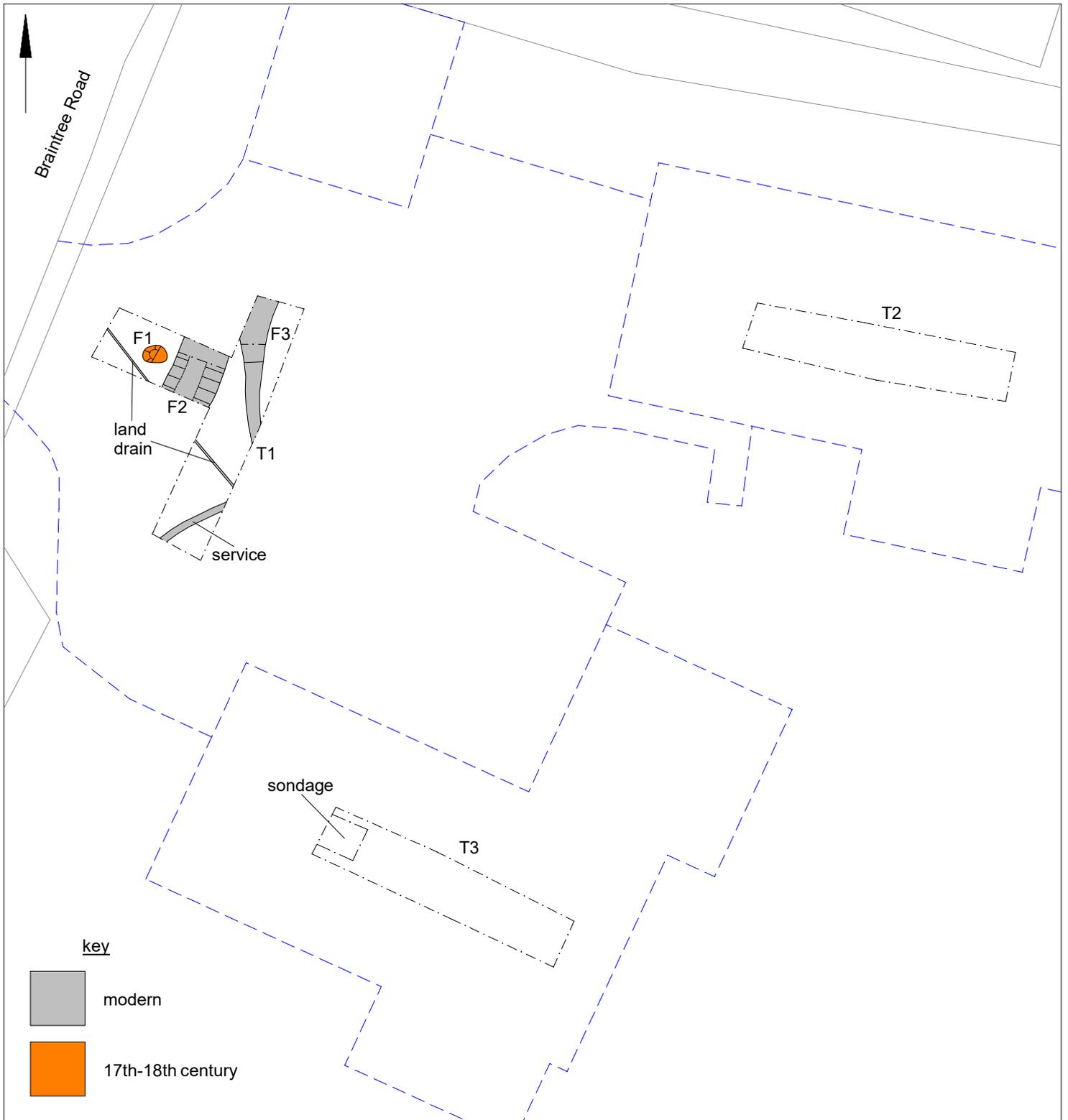


Fig 2 Evaluation results in relation to proposed development (indicated by the dashed blue lines)

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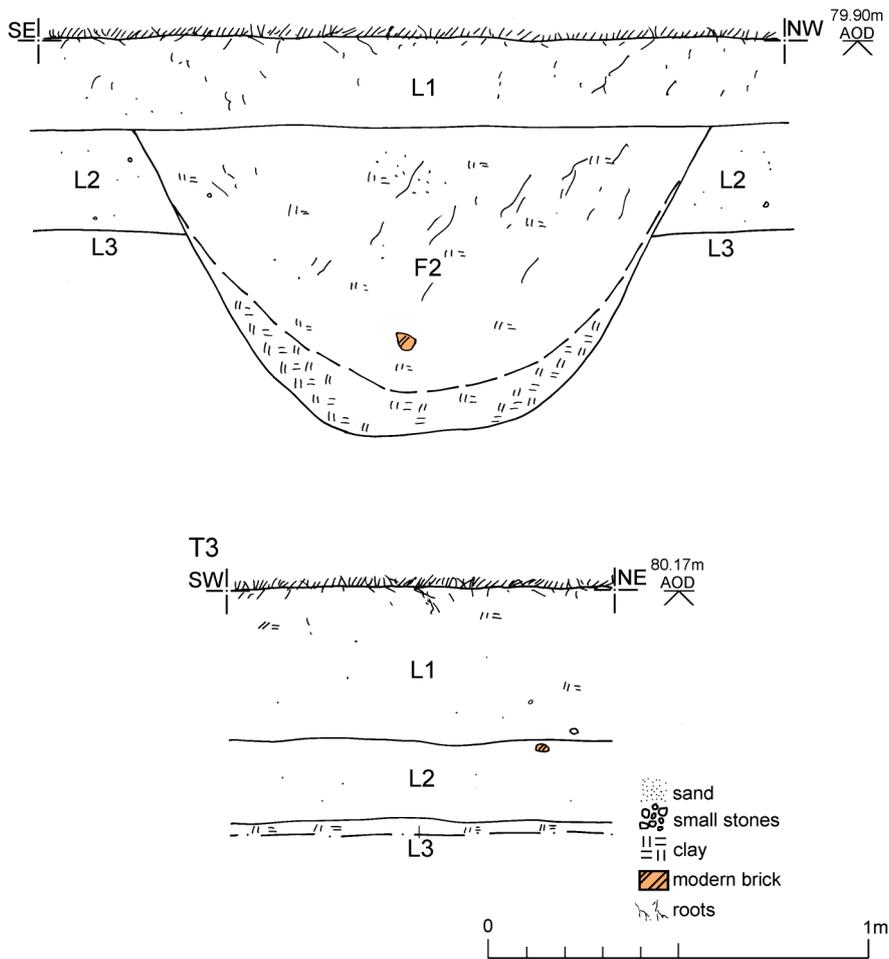


Fig 3 Feature and representative sections.

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**OASIS ID: colchest3-405208**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land adjacent to White Ash house, Braintree Road, Gosfield, Essex, CM7 5
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (three trenches) was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust on land adjacent to White Ash House, Gosfield, in advance of the construction of two new dwellings with associated driveways and garages. The site was located along the Chelmsford-Braintree-Long Melford Roman road, to the south of the historic settlement of Gosfield. Despite this, no features or finds of a Roman date were encountered. Three features were identified during the evaluation, but they were all post-medieval/modern in origin.
Project dates	Start: 22-02-2021 End: 07-04-2021
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	19/01931/OUT - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	20/00002/REF - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	2020/09g - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	GFBR21 - Related HER No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed
Monument type	DITCH Modern
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POT Modern
Methods & techniques	""Sample Trenches""
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After outline determination (eg. As a reserved matter)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX BRAINTREE GOSFIELD land adjacent to White Ash house, Braintree Road, Gosfield, Essex
Postcode	CM7 5PA

Study area 63 Square metres  
 Site coordinates TL 77942 27731 51.919138896511 0.587800690151 51 55 08 N 000 35 16 E Point  
 Height OD / Depth Min: 0.59m Max: 0.63m

### 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 Landowner  
 Name of sponsor/funding body Jenny Garvey

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No  
 Digital Archive recipient Braintree Museum  
 Digital Archive ID GFBR21  
 Digital Contents "none"  
 Digital Media available "Survey","Text"  
 Paper Archive recipient Braintree Museum  
 Paper Archive ID GFBR21  
 Paper Contents "none"  
 Paper Media available "Photograph","Plan","Report","Survey "

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)  
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