

# Archaeological monitoring at Michaelstowe Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex, CO12 5EW

June 2021-February 2022



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**commissioned by Bryan Courtney, ABC City Ltd**

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**CAT Report 1782**

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## 1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out on the site of the former post-medieval Michaelstowe Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex during groundworks for a new housing development. The monitoring took place after a historic building recording and evaluation. Primarily walls and a yard area related to the demolished post-medieval farm buildings were uncovered, as well as a post-medieval pit and a modern post-hole. However, two sections of wall foundations showed evidence of an earlier building and boundary wall visible on the 1840 tithe map.

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for archaeological monitoring carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at Michaelstowe Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex between 24th June 2021 and 2nd February 2022. The work was commissioned by Bryan Courtney of ABC City Ltd during groundworks for a new housing development.

Based on the results of an evaluation by CAT in November 2018 and in consultation with Essex County Council Place Services Historic Environment Advisor, Teresa O'Connor, it was advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a further scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).

Alterations were made to the layout of the dwellings after the evaluation phase but before the monitoring started, a revised application to Tendring District Council covered this (20/00134/FUL).

A *Brief for Programme of Archaeological Monitoring* was produced by Teresa O'Connor detailing the required archaeological work (ECCPS 2021), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by CAT in response to the requirement for archaeological monitoring (CAT 2021), and was approved by ECCHEA in advance of the groundworks.

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 2016), 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 watching briefs* (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 CAT Report archive and the Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The site is located in an area associated with a medieval manorial site of Dovercourt known as Michaelstow (EHER 19340). The manor house lay on the opposite side of the road next to the 12th-century Church of St Michael (EHER 3412). Michaelstow Hall is depicted on the 1777 Chapman and André map as a large residence, possibly moated, surrounded by what appears to be landscaped parkland (Map 1). It's proximity to Ramsey Church (c 330m east of the church) is typical of Essex church/hall complexes.

Prior to Michaelstow Farm's construction, the site was occupied by a large garden and cottage associated with the manor at Michaelstow Hall. The site boundaries were altered and the farm was constructed sometime between 1825 and 1840. The development site is located within a complex of buildings within the farm.



**Map 1** Extract of Chapman and André Map of 1777 Plate X showing the location of Michaelstow Hall.



**Map 2** 1840 Dovercourt tithe map (ERO D/CT 117). Site location in red.

In 2018 CAT undertook a historic building recording on these buildings prior to demolition (CAT Report 1369). It was found that the threshing barn, cow house and lean-tos were constructed using a significant amount of reused timber, from an earlier (possibly medieval) building. The cart lodge and a barn extension added in the first half of the 20th century.

In the same year, a 5% archaeological evaluation was also undertaken (CAT Report 1354). The evaluation uncovered a post-medieval wall foundation which may have represented the remains of a boundary wall or building which previously stood at the site, as well as a ditch related to this earlier phase of activity. The yard of the 19th-century farmstead and a layer of hoggin which may form the remains of a concrete surface were detected. Two modern features, a depression and a post pipe, presumably relate to agricultural activity at the site during this period. Seven undatable features (six pits and a posthole) were also uncovered.

#### 4 Aim

The aim of the archaeological monitoring was to identify, excavate and record any archaeological remains revealed during groundworks.

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

As per the brief and wsi, monitoring was carried out on Plots 1-4 and 6 of the development:

##### **Foundation trenching for Plot 1, 18m long, 13.2m wide, 1m deep**

Seven layers were recorded. The northern section of the Plot 1 foundation trenching was cut through a modern brick rubble surface (L1, c 0.24-0.3m thick), a modern layer of crush (L2, c 0.12-0.15m thick), an undatable make-up layer (L3, c 0.17-0.18m thick) and a further undatable make-up layer (L4, c 0.13-0.18m thick) into natural (L5, encountered at a depth of 0.71-0.77m below current ground level [bcgl]).

Post-hole F3 was uncovered within the area of the porch. F3 was 0.32m wide and 0.9m deep. The fill contained modern brick.



**Photograph 1** Plot 1 porch area showing post-hole F3, looking south-southeast.

**Foundation trenching for Plot 2**, 10m long, 15.1m wide, 1m deep  
Plot 2 was cut through L2 (c 0.39-0.5m thick) and L4 (c 0.34-0.39m thick) into L5 (encountered at a depth of 0.69-0.89m bcgl).



**Photograph 2** Plot 2 in the foreground with Plot 1 behind, looking northeast.

**Foundation trenching for Plot 3**, 10m long, 15.1m wide, 1m deep  
Plot 3 was excavated through a modern layer of crush (L2, c 0.09-0.14 thick), a yard surface L6 (0.28-0.32m thick) and an undatable make-up layer (L7, c 0.31-0.59m thick) into L5 (encountered at a depth of 0.74-0.8m bcgl). The yard surface was recorded in the evaluation phase as L4. The extent of the yard surface seen during the monitoring is marked on Fig 2.

Pit F4 was uncovered in the western part of Plot 3. It was 2.25m wide and 0.81m deep and contained a few fragments of post-medieval pottery. The large pit was sealed by yard surface L6.



**Photograph 3** Plot 3, looking north. Completed access road on the left.



**Photograph 4** Plot 3, looking northwest.

### Foundation trenching for Plots 4 and 6

The stratigraphic sequence in the area of Plots 4 and 6 was not recorded. Very poor weather conditions caused the edges to collapse. Spoil heaps were examined but no datable material was seen. No features were observed during the strip of these areas.

### Access road

The access road was completed prior to the watching brief commencing.

### Farm wall foundations

Most of the features recorded within the stripped areas were wall foundations, often with the lowest few courses of the wall surviving. F1 and F2 are approximately 0.6m wide at the base and survive up to seven courses high along the eastern edge of Plot 1. The walls were constructed of red unfrogged brick set in white mortar. These walls correspond to external walls of the former cow house noted in the historic building recording.

Wall foundations F5 and F7-F8 all measured c 0.6m wide at the base. They are all constructed of red unfrogged brick set in white mortar. These are all located within the former threshing barn and form part of barn external walls.

F6 is also located within the former threshing barn but does not correspond to expected wall locations recorded in the historic building recording. The wall is comprised of red unfrogged brick and white mortar and is c 0.4m wide.



Photograph 5 F8 within Plot 2, looking west-southwest.



Photograph 6 F6 within Plot 2, looking west-southwest.

## 6 Finds

*by Dr Matthew Loughton*

Monitoring uncovered five sherds of pottery and three pieces of ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) from four features (Tables 1-2).

Ceramic material	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
Pottery	2	50	25
CBM	3	6,282	2,094
<b>All</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6,332</b>	<b>1,266</b>

Table 1 Summary of the pottery and CBM

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
F1	wall foundation	1	2,740	2,740
F4	pit	2	50	25
F5	wall foundation	1	1,674	1,674
F6	wall foundation	1	1,868	1,868
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>6,332</b>	<b>1,266</b>

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

Two sherds (50g) of post-medieval red earthenware (fabric F40) pottery dating to c 1500-19th/20th century was recovered from pit F4. All the CBM consists of un-frogged brick fragments including one complete example from brick wall F1, with dimensions of 220mm x 110mm x 70mm, which dates to the 19th century.

Table 3 provides a summary the dating evidence for the features which contained dateable pottery and ceramics. Pit F4 dates from the post-medieval period onwards while wall foundations F1, F5 and F6 date to the 19th century.

Context	Description	Post-Roman pottery	CBM	Date (approximate)
F1	wall foundation	-	BR un-frogged	19th century
F4	pit	F40		c 1500-19th/20th century
F5	wall foundation	-	BR un-frogged	19th century
F6	wall foundation	-	BR un-frogged	19th century

**Table 3** Approximate dates for the features.

## 7 Conclusion

Monitoring of the northern part of the development area revealed layers of loose silt, crushed brick and the remains of several unfrogged brick wall foundations from the demolished farm buildings (recorded during the earlier historic building recording). The extent of the farm yard surface (L4/L6) was plotted, which sealed a post-medieval pit (F4). The only other feature was a modern post-hole (F1).

The now demolished farm buildings correlate with buildings visible on early OS mapping. However, wall foundation F6 did not match expected wall locations within the former threshing barn. There are two buildings visible on the Dovercourt 1840 tithe map within the site. The building on tithe map plot 405 is in the location of the threshing barn but is different in shape. Overlaying the results with the tithe map (see Fig 3) shows F6 is likely the only *in situ* remains of this earlier building. Wall foundation F8 recorded during the evaluation phase also aligns with a boundary between tithe plots marked on this map.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Bryan Courtney of ABC City Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, A Wightman and L Pooley and fieldwork was carried out by A Wightman, M Seehra and A Smith. Figures are by 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	2021a	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2021b	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological monitoring at Michaelstow Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, CO12 5EW,</i> by S Veasey
CAT Report 1369	2018	<i>Historic Building Recording at Michaelstow Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex, CO12 5EW: November 2018,</i> by M Baister
CAT Report 1354	2018	<i>Archaeological evaluation at Michaelstow Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex: November 2018,</i> by E Hicks
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs</i>
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
CIfA	2014c	<i>Code of conduct.</i> Revised Oct 2022.
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	2015b	<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	2021	<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
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> nvestigation <b>S</b> , <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
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
ws	written scheme of investigation

## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** not retained

### Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1782)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Site data (context data, sections, section log)

Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log

Graphic files

Survey data

## 12 Archive deposition

The 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 Archaeology Data Service under accession number RPMF21.

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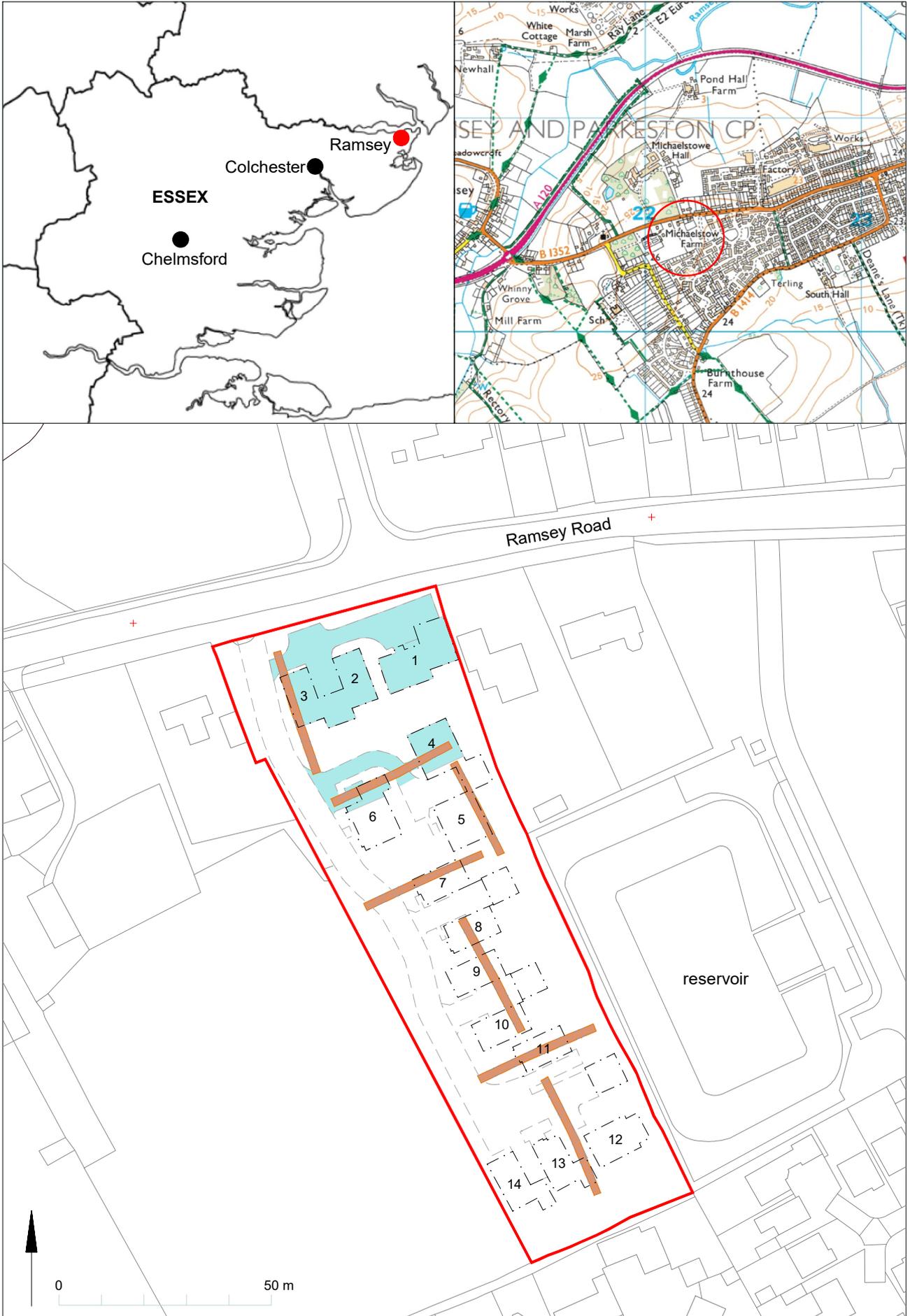
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Checked by: Philip Crummy  
Date: 20.07.2022

## Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Finds no.	Interpretation	Description	Period
L1	-	Crush	Moist loose medium grey-brown silty clay with abundant brick rubble with some patchy lime/chalk and common stones.	Modern
L2	-	Crush	Moist, soft medium brown silt with common brick fragments, common small stones and occasional fragment of coal and concrete	Modern
L3	-	Make-up	Firm moist dark grey silty clay with occasional charcoal fleck and small sub-rounded stones	Modern
L4	-	Subsoil	Firm moist medium brown clay silt with common small sub-rounded stones	Undated
L5	-	Natural	Moist yellow sand with mottled patches of grey clay and common small sub-rounded stones	Post-glacial
L6	-	Yard surface (same as Evaluation L4)	Moist, soft medium silt with yellow/orange sand and abundant brick fragments	Post-medieval
L7	-	Subsoil	Moist, firm medium grey/brown clay silt with common brick flecks and small sub-rounded stones	Post-medieval
F1	1	Wall foundation of former cow house	Up to seven courses deep along the western boundary of plot 1. Approximately 0.7m wide	Modern
F2	-	Wall foundation of former cow house	Up to three courses surviving. Approximately 0.6m wide running NNE-SSW	Modern
F3	-	Post-hole	Moist dark grey silt with modern brick fragments	Modern
F4	2	Pit	Firm moist medium/dark grey-brown clay silt with unfrogged brick fragments	Post-medieval
F5	3	Wall foundation of former threshing barn	Up to six courses of brick surviving. Width is c 0.6m at the base, c 0.4m at base of wall	Post-medieval
F6	4	Wall foundation/pads within former threshing barn	Up to six courses of brick surviving. Width is c 0.4m wide	Post-medieval
F7	-	Wall foundation of former threshing barn	Up to eight courses of brick surviving. Width is c 0.6m at the base, c 0.4m at base of wall	Post-medieval
F8	-	Wall foundation of former threshing barn	Up to seven courses of brick surviving. Width is c 0.6m at the base, c 0.4m at base of wall	Post-medieval



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Fig 1 Site location, with house plot numbers and areas monitored (blue), in relation to the 2018 evaluation trenches (orange).



Fig 2 Monitoring results in relation to the former farm buildings (pink) and the evaluation trenches (in orange).



Fig 3 Monitoring results in relation to buildings visible on the 1840 Dovercourt tithe map (brown).

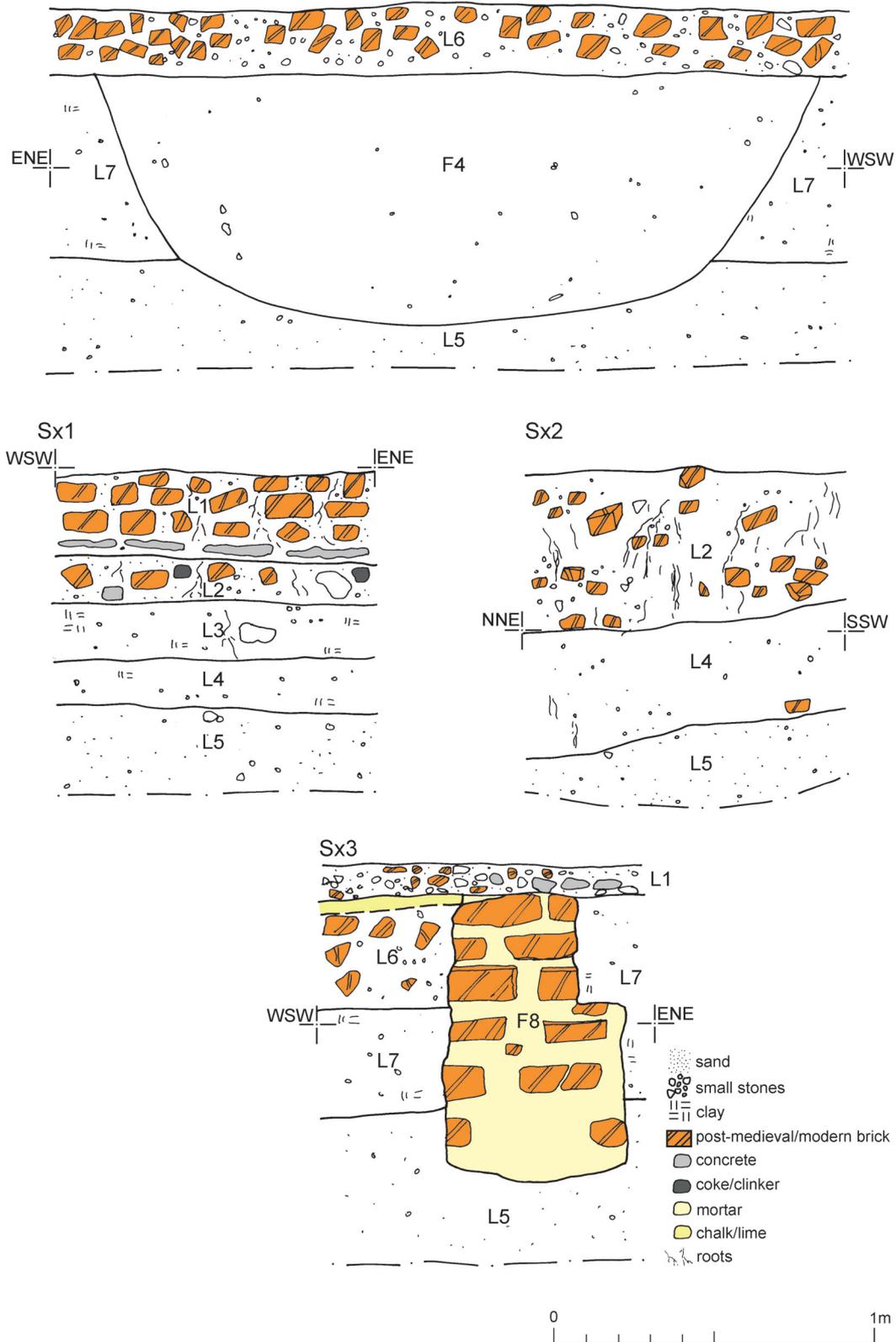


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

## Summary for colchest3-422420

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-422420
Project Name	Archaeological monitoring at Michaelstowe Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, CO12 5EW
Sitename	Michaelstowe Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex, CO12 5EW
Activity type	WATCHING BRIEF
Project Identifier(s)	2021/05n
Planning Id	17/00872/OUT, 20/00134/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	24-Jun-2021 - 01-Feb-2022
Location	Michaelstowe Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex, CO12 5EW NGR : TM 22176 30451 LL : 51.9282090840026, 1.23007229913096 12 Fig : 622176,230451
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Tendring Parish : Harwich
Project Methodology	<p>Based on the results of an evaluation by CAT in November 2018 and in consultation with Essex County Council Place Services Historic Environment Advisor, Teresa O'Connor, it was advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a further scheme of archaeological investigation. Monitoring of all the groundworks of the northern quarter of the site was undertaken.</p> <p>The work was undertaken in accordance with a brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (Historic England 2016), 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 watching briefs (ClfA 2014a) and Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (ClfA 2014b).</p>
Project Results	Archaeological monitoring was carried out on the site of the former post-medieval Michaelstowe Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex during groundworks for a new housing development. The monitoring took place after a historic building recording and evaluation. Primarily walls and a yard area related to the demolished post-medieval farm buildings were uncovered, as well as a post-medieval pit and a modern post-hole. However, two sections of wall foundations showed evidence of an earlier building and boundary wall visible on the 1840 tithe map.
Keywords	Agricultural Building - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Pit - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD

Person Responsible for work	E, Holloway
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - RPMF21
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;