

Archaeological evaluation on land north of Rolphs Cottage, Blasford Hill, Little Waltham, Essex, CM65 3TB

March 2022



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**commissioned by Neville Rice
on behalf of Blasford Hill Fisheries**

NGR: TL 70737 11796 (centre)

Planning ref.: CHL/21/02140/FUL

CAT project ref.: 2022/02h

ECC code: LWNRC22

Chelmsford Museum accession code: [tbc](#)

OASIS ref.: colchest3-504794



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CAT Report 1785

March 2022

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land north of Rolphs Cottage, Little Waltham, Essex in advance of the construction of a fisherman's lodge. There are several nearby archaeological sites including a Roman settlement to the south-east and a multiperiod settlement and scheduled monument to the north. However, no archaeological remains were revealed by the evaluation.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land north of Rolphs Cottage, Blasford Hill, Little Waltham, Essex which was carried out on the 4th March 2022. The work was commissioned by Neville Rice on behalf of Blasford Hill Fisheries in advance of the construction of a fisherman's lodge with associated parking and landscaping.

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Mark Baister 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 Programme of Archaeological evaluation and excavation at site North of Rolphs Cottages, Blasford Hill, Little Waltham* (ECCPS 2021), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2021).

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 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 includes extracts of the ECC brief and the Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The development site is located within an area of Roman settlement remains uncovered during excavations in the 1950s. Substantial amounts of Roman pottery were recovered, along with evidence for a timber-framed building with a gravel floor (EHER 6088). The settlement was dated to the 2nd century AD and postulated to be extensive. The site is also directly adjacent to the route of the Chelmsford-Braintree-Long Melford Roman road (EHER 6057).

Some 900m to the north north-west is "Settlement site at Ash Tree Corner", a Scheduled Monument (NHLE no 1002140). Excavations in the vicinity of the monument, during work for the Little Waltham bypass in the 1970s, uncovered an extensive multi-period landscape ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the 14th century (EHERs 6182, 6183, 6184, 6185, 6186, 6187, 6188). Remains included evidence of prehistoric and Roman buildings, the Chelmsford-Braintree Roman road, cremation burials, a 2nd-/3rd-century well, and a substantial Iron Age settlement with at least three major occupation phases.

An excavation c 400m to the south of the site in 1995 uncovered a Late Bronze Age sub-rectangular enclosure containing the remains of a farmstead (EHER 6142). The presence of multiple cropmark concentrations to the east and north-east of the development site (EHERs

7345, 8942, 8942) suggests that the multi-period landscape uncovered during these previous investigations extends into the surrounding fields.

An archaeological evaluation and excavation c 175m north-west of the current was site carried out by CAT in November 2021 (CAT Report 1746) and February 2022 (CAT Report 1786 in preparation). The site can be summarised as a series of pits and ditches dating from the Late Iron Age to the early Roman period with significant features including the corner of an enclosure ditch, a substantial possible roadside ditch and trackway.

Additionally, 15th- and 17th-/18th-century timber-framed houses (EHERs 30675, 30681, 30677, 30678, 30679), a 17th-century malthouse (EHERs 15017, 48532) and a listed post-medieval red brick house (EHER 30680) are located to the south of the development site.

4 Aims

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were 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)

Two evaluation trenches were machine excavated through the footprint of the proposed dwelling under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Laid out in a T-shape, the trenches measured 7.5m and 8.5m long by 1.8m wide, and were cut through modern topsoil (L1, 0.22m thick) and subsoil (L2, 0.35m thick) into natural (L3, identified at a depth of 0.46-0.55m below current ground level). There were no archaeological remains in either trench.



Photograph 1 Trench 2 – view east



Photograph 2 Trench 1 – view north



Photograph 3 Representative section – view north

6 Conclusion

Despite being located immediately east of a proposed Roman road and just south of Late Iron Age and Roman remains at land north-west of Montpellier Villa, both trenches were devoid of archaeological remains. The location of the development site in conjunction to the nearby works to the north-west showed that we are still very much in a farming landscape during the Roman period whereby archaeology is witnessed in a ‘feast or famine’ context. The inconsistency in archaeological remains becomes apparent on rural sites and generally across rural landscapes.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Neville Rice and Blasford Hill Fisheriers for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister and A Wightman, with fieldwork carried out by H Furniss and O Windridge. Figures were compiled by C Lister, H Furniss and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Mark Baister.

8 References

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

CAT	2021	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2022	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation on land north of Rolphs Cottages, Blasford Hill Fisheries, Blasford Hill, Little Waltham, Essex, CM6 3TB</i> , by S Veasey
CAT Report 1746	2021	<i>Archaeological evaluation and monitoring on land north-west of Montpellier Villa, Blasford Hill, Little Waltham, CM3 3PG</i> , by S Veasey
CAT Report 1786	2022	<i>Archaeological excavation on land north-west of Montpellier Villa, Blasford Hill, Little Waltham, CM3 3PG</i> (in preparation)
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> . Updated Oct 2020
ECCPS	2022	<i>Brief for Archaeological Evaluation and Excavation at Site North Of Rolphs Cottages, Blasford Hill, Little Waltham</i> , by M Baister
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Historic England	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 24 (EAA 24)
MHCLG	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

9 Abbreviations and glossary

Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC
Bronze Age (Late)	Late Bronze Age, period from c 1000 – 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
CifA	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
evaluation	a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork, which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area. This may take the form of an intrusive investigation of a percentage of the site, geophysical or topographical survey. The results of this investigation will establish the requirements for any further work.
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
Iron Age (Early)	Early Iron Age, period from c 600 – 400BC
Iron Age (Late)	Late Iron Age (LIA), period from c 100 – 50 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43

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	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
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

10 Contents of archive

Finds: None

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1785)

ECCPS brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Original site records

Site digital photos and log

Inked sections

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1785)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log

Graphic files

Site data

Survey data

11 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 Chelmsford Museum under accession code [tbc](#).

Distribution list:

Blasford Hill Fisheries
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust

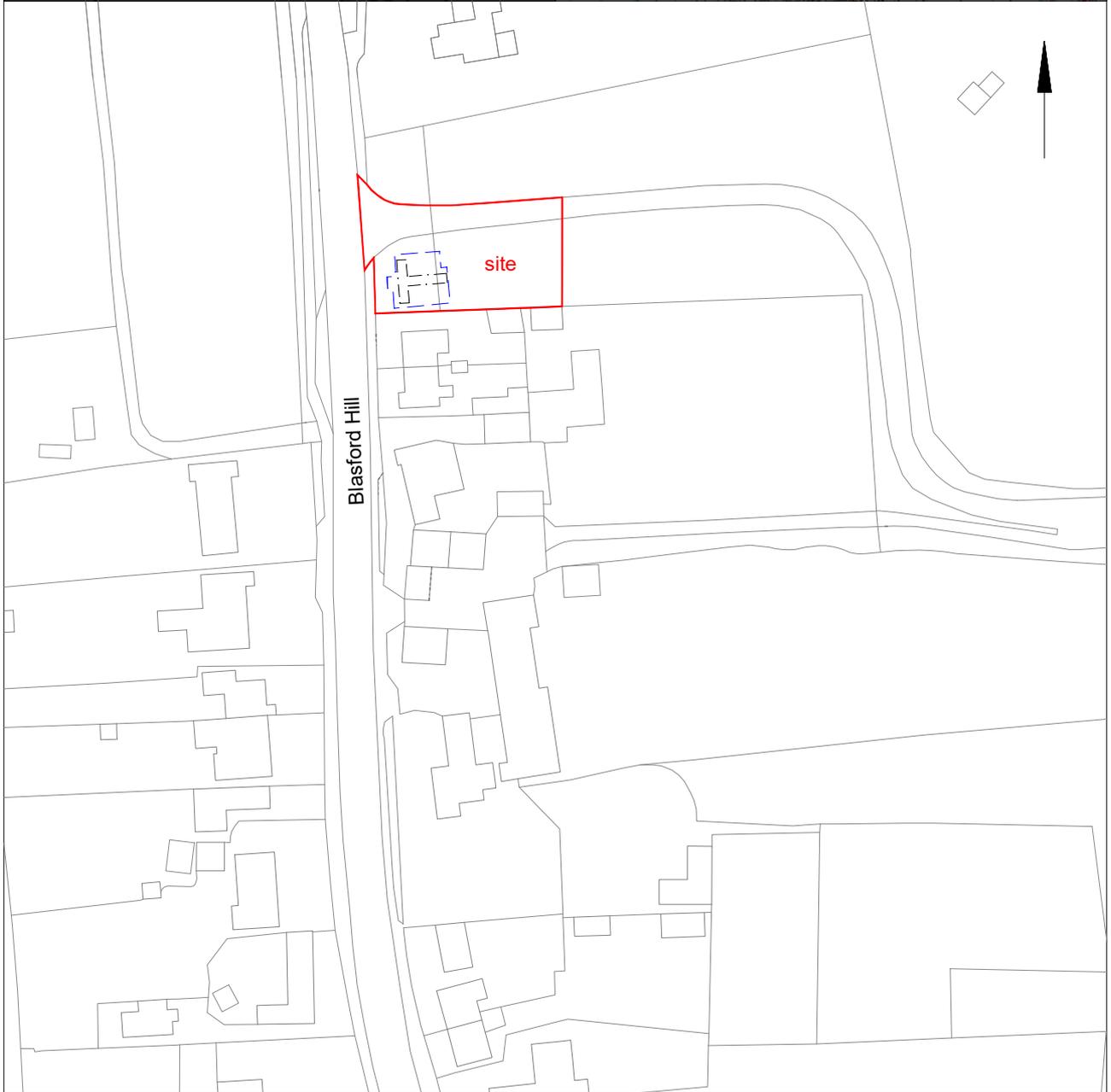
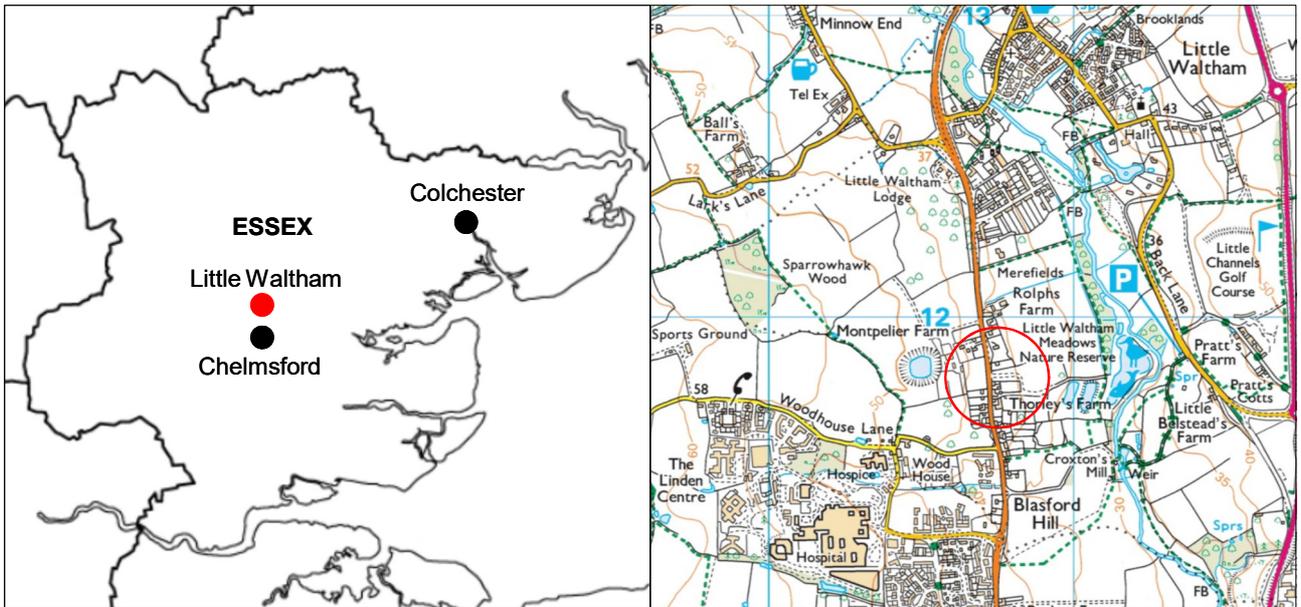
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Appendix 1 Context list

Trench no.	Context	Finds no.	Context type	Description	Date
All	L1	-	Topsoil	Friable, moist, medium greyish-brown sandy silt with small rounded stone inclusions and rooting	Modern
All	L2	-	Subsoil	Friable, moist, medium brown sandy silt with occasional small rounded stone inclusions and rooting	Undated
All	L3	-	Natural	Firm moist medium orange/brown sandy gravel with regular small to medium stone inclusions	Post-glacial



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Fig 1 Site location (proposed development dashed blue)



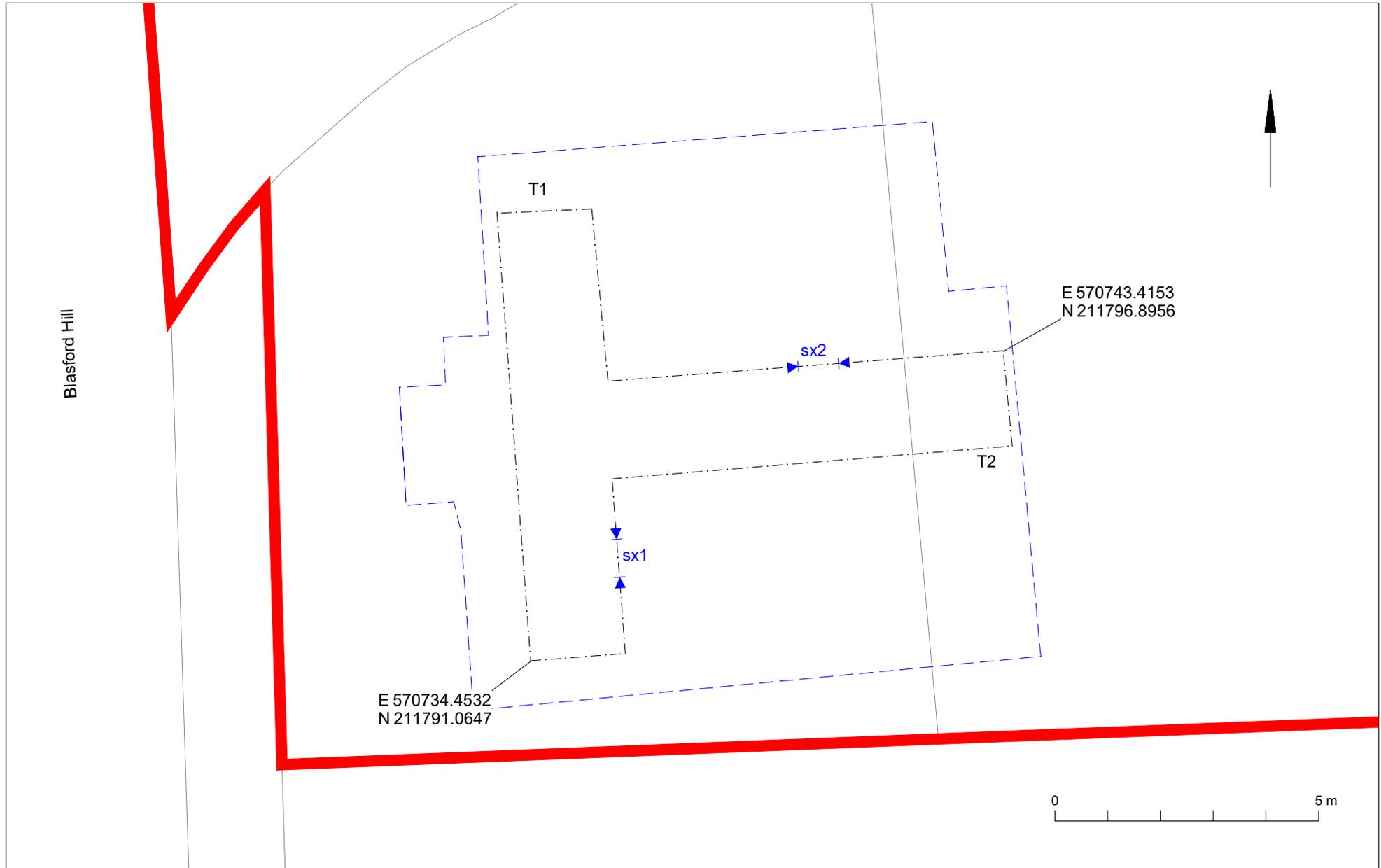


Fig 2 Results.

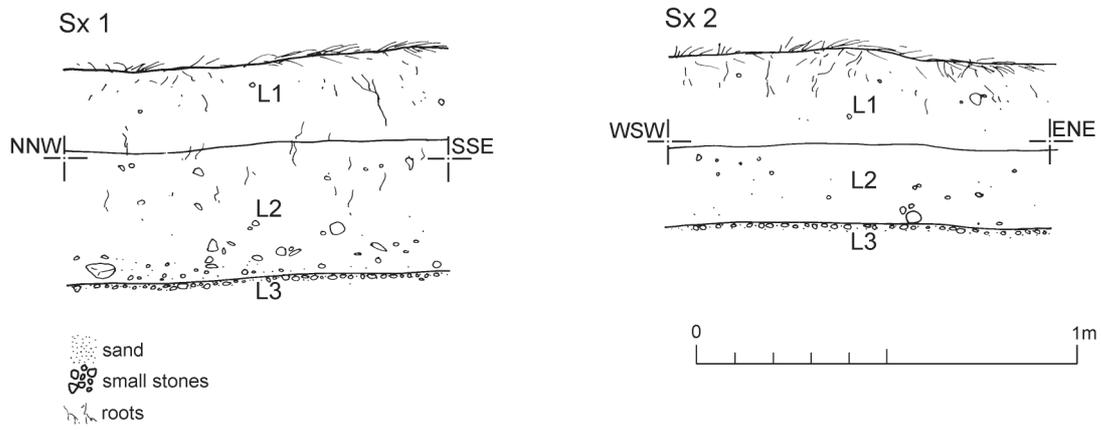


Fig 3 Representative sections.

Summary for colchest3-504794

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-504794
Project Name	Evaluation at land north of Rolphs Cottages, Blasford Hill Fisheries, Blasford Hill, Little Waltham
Sitename	
Activity type	Evaluation
Project Identifier(s)	2022/02h
Planning Id	CHL/12/02140/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	04-Mar-2022 - 04-Mar-2022
Location	land north of Rolphs Cottages, Blasford Hill Fisheries, Blasford Hill, Little Waltham NGR : TL 70737 11796 LL : 51.7787848425192, 0.473569158241218 12 Fig : 570737,211796
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Chelmsford Parish : Little Waltham
Project Methodology	A single T-shaped trench was to be evaluated within the footprint of a proposed fisherman's lodge. The trench was made up of two 8m long and 1.8m wide trenches. All work carried out by CAT will be in accordance with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its Code of Conduct (CIfA 2014a, b) • East of England Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011) and the recent review updates on https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/ • relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2021) • the Project Brief issued by ECC Historic Environment Advisor (ECCPS 2022)
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land north of Rolphs Cottage, Little Waltham, Essex in advance of the construction of a fisherman's lodge. There are several nearby archaeological sites including a Roman settlement to the south-east and a multiperiod settlement and scheduled monument to the north. However, no archaeological remains were revealed by the evaluation.
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Harvey, Furniss
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - LWNRC22
Archives	Documentary Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with Chelmsford Museum Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive