

Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1848
Re-issued October 2022**

**Archaeological Monitoring at
Castle Hill Tennis Club, Museum Street,
Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1BN:
March – September 2022**



**CAT project ref.: 2021/12c
ECC code: SWTC21**

**Archaeological monitoring at
Castle Hill Tennis Club, Museum Street,
Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1BN:
March – September 2022**

NGR: TL 5386 3868 (centre)

Planning ref.: UTT/22/0044/FUL

**CAT project ref.: 2021/12c
CAT Report 1848**

**Scheduled Monument Number: 1009307
Historic England Scheduled Monument consent number:
S00242417**

**ECC code: SWTC21
OASIS id: colchest3-503371**

**report prepared by
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**commissioned by Frank Palmer
on behalf of Castle Hill Tennis Club**

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Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aims	2
5	Results	2
6	Finds	4
7	Conclusion	4
8	Acknowledgements	5
9	References	5
10	Abbreviations and glossary	5
11	Contents of archive	5
12	Archive deposition	6
	Appendix 1 Context list	7

Figures after p7

OASIS Summary

List of photographs and figures

Cover: Hard surfaced tennis court looking out towards Bury Hill castle, looking north

Photograph 1	Post hole, looking south-east	3
Photograph 2	Post hole, looking north-west	3
Photograph 3	Post hole, looking south-east	3
Photograph 4	Post hole, looking south-east	3
Photograph 5	Working shot of net post pits being dug, looking south-east	4
Photograph 6	Section of net post pit, looking south-east	4

Fig 1	Site location
Fig 2	Hard surface tennis court results
Fig 3	Boundary fence and net post pit results
Fig 4	Representative sections

1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken at Castle Hill Tennis Club, Museum Street, Saffron Walden during the replacement of fencing around the hard surfaced tennis court, the replacement of fencing along the Bury Hill boundary line and the relocation of the grass court adjacent to this. Despite being located within the inner bailey of the scheduled monument of Bury Hill (HA 1009307), no archaeological remains were uncovered.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for archaeological monitoring at Castle Hill Tennis Club, Museum Street, Saffron Walden which was carried out on 22nd March, 12th and 14th September 2022. The work was commissioned by Frank Palmer on behalf of Castle Hill Tennis Club as part of their project to replace a fence around the hard surfaced tennis court, replace the fencing along the Bury Hill boundary line and the relocation of the northern-most grass tennis court.

As the site lies within the inner bailey of the scheduled monument of Bury Hill (HA 1009307), an archaeological condition was recommended by both the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments Jess Tipper and the Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS) Historical Environment Advisor Katie Lee-Smith. Their recommendation was for an archaeological monitoring to be undertaken based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with scheduled monument consent (S00242417) and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT and agreed with Historic England and ECCPS (CAT 2022).

In addition to the Scheduled Monument Consent 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* (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 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 site is located within the inner bailey of the highly sensitive scheduled monument of Bury Hill (HA 1009307), a motte and bailey castle west of Castle Lane and Zone 1 of the Saffron Walden Conservation Area.

Saffron Walden is sited in the north of Uttlesford district. It lies about 2km to the east of the River Cam at the point where the important Lea/Stort/Cam river route cuts a gap through the East Anglian Heights (a chalk ridge). The castle is located at the highest point, 68m OD, on the top of the chalk promontory known as Bury Hill. This promontory is flanked on either side by the streams known as The Kings Ditch and the Madgate Slade; these converge to the west of the town to form the Slade (ECC 1999, 3). After the Norman Conquest Saffron Walden was granted to the de Mandevilles, becoming the centre of their Essex and Suffolk estates. They had the castle built in the late 11th century (EHER 411).

The Castle comprises of three distinct units (EHER 411): the keep which consists of a large square tower of at least three storeys with clasping buttresses; the inner bailey, an ovoid area encompassing c 1.25ha enclosing the keep and domestic buildings; and the

outer bailey, an elongated oval area which enclosed the inner bailey and the rest of Bury Hill promontory which contained the town. The church was laid out on the axis of the enclosing banks (St Mary the Virgin EHER 511). Various excavations have taken place on both the defences and town interior (EHER 408).

In the late medieval period Saffron Walden became the second richest town in Essex, becoming the major English centre for the production of the Saffron Crocus used to produce dyestuffs. The first market was apparently located immediately east of the High Street, between Church Street and Castle Street and probably extended a little to the west of the High Street, its limits being probably extended by Myddylton Place. The market probably remained here until the enlargement of the town.

Previous archaeological work at the tennis club includes archaeological monitoring carried out during groundworks for the construction of a new toilet, septic tank, and drainage system in 2011. Although the groundworks were relatively small-scale they have still provided a useful window into the western half of the inner bailey and have shown that potential medieval and post-medieval strata survive intact in places to a depth exceeding 1m. The discovery of the robbed foundation of a building of probable medieval date is particularly important as few remains of other contemporary buildings have so far been identified within the castle other than the keep itself (Ennis 2011). In 2020 Archaeological Solutions Ltd carried out an evaluation prior to the construction of a new hard tennis court. Robber trenches equating to the projected walls were recorded in Trenches 1 and 2. The depth of the cuts for the robber trenches was shallow: 400mm and 310mm. Trench 3 contained no archaeological features or finds. There was no explanation for an area of ground disturbance detected by the geophysical survey. Post-medieval CBM was present within the made ground deposits and also robber trench F1009 (T2), and struck flint possibly derived from historic wall dressing was found with made ground L1001 and robber trench F1009.

For a full background on Saffron Walden see the *Saffron Walden – Historic Town Assessment Report* (ECC 1999) and Saffron Walden see *Saffron Walden: excavations and research 1972-80* (Bassett 1982).

4 Aims

The aims of the archaeological monitoring were to look for any surviving structural archaeological remains associated with the Bury Hill (HA 1009307) castle and assess whether any other archaeological deposits were present in the area.

5 Results (Figs 3-4)

In total sixty-three fence posts and two new net post pits were excavated by hand under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist.

Hard surfaced tennis court

Around the hard surfaced tennis court forty-eight fence posts were dug, of which nine were new. The post-holes varied between 0.9-3.48m apart, they all measured c 0.3m² and were c 0.7-0.8m deep except for those in the corners which were c 0.4m² and c 0.7-0.9m deep. The post-holes cut through a layer of topsoil (L1, c 0.1m thick) and a makeup layer (L2, c 0.5m thick) which sealed natural geology (L3). L1 produced fragments of post-medieval peg-tile and L2 produced peg-tile, brick and animal bone. None of these finds were retained for post-excavation analysis.



Photograph 1 Post-hole, looking south-east



Photograph 2 Post-hole, looking north-west

Bury Hill boundary line

In order to move the boundary fence away from trees a new fence line was put in running parallel to the old fence and was c 1.0m away. Fifteen post-holes were dug for this new fence line, varying between 0.9-3.9m apart. The fence posts all measured between 0.3 and 0.5m² and were all c 0.7m deep. They cut through topsoil (L1 c.0.28m thick) which sealed a chalk ?natural (L4). L1 produced post-medieval peg-tile which was not retained.



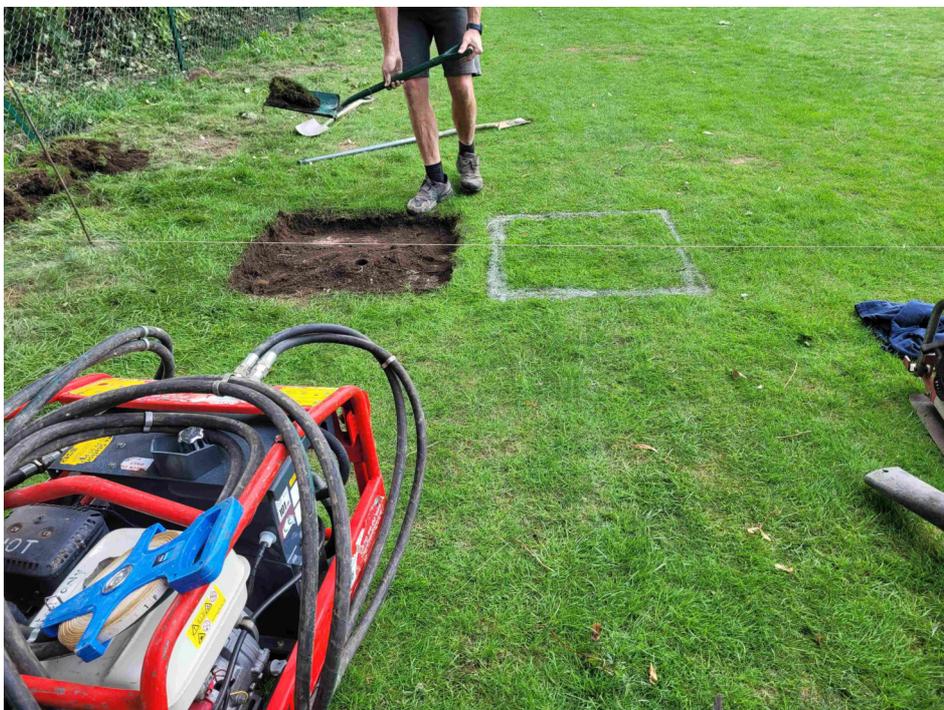
Photograph 3 Post-hole, looking south-east



Photograph 4 Post-hole, looking south-east

Net post-pits

The old net post-pits of the northern-most tennis court were removed and new ones dug c 1m southwest of their original location. Each post-pit was 0.9m² and c 0.7m deep, and was dug through L1 (c 0.18m) and L2 (c 0.23m) onto L3. L1 contained some fragments of post-medieval peg-tile, building slate, clay tobacco pipe and animal bone which was not retained.



Photograph 5 Working shot of net post-pits being dug, looking south-east



Photograph 6 Section of net post-pit, looking south-east

6 Finds

Finds from L1 and L2 across the whole site include post-medieval peg-tile, building slate, animal bone and clay tobacco pipe, none of which was retained for post-excavation analysis.

7 Conclusion

Despite being within the scheduled monument of Bury Hill, no archaeological remains were uncovered in any of the areas monitored.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Frank Palmer and the Castle Hill Tennis Club for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, A Wightman and L Pooley. Fieldwork was carried out by S Veasey and B Quinn. Figures are by S Veasey. The project was monitored for Essex County Council Place Services by Katie Lee-Smith and Historic England by Jess Tipper.

9 References

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

Bassett, S R	1982	<i>Saffron Walden: excavations and research 1972-80</i> . Chelmsford Archaeological Trust. CBA Research Report 45
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	2022	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2022	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological monitoring at Castle Hill Tennis Club, Museum Street, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1BN</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>
CIfA	2014c	<i>Code of Conduct</i> . Revised October 2022
ECC	1999	<i>Saffron Walden – Historic Town Assessment Report</i>
Ennis, T	2011	<i>Archaeological monitoring at Castle Hill Tennis Club, Saffron Walden</i> . Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit Report 1967
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	2021	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CBCAA	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
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 section wsi	from c AD 1500 to c 1800 (abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: n/a

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1848)

CAT written scheme of investigation

Site digital photographs, photographic thumbnails and log

Scans of original site records (sections)

Graphic files

Site data

Survey data

12 Archive deposition

The archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex but will be permanently deposited with the Archaeological Data Service.

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Distribution list:

Frank Palmer, Castle Hill Tennis Club

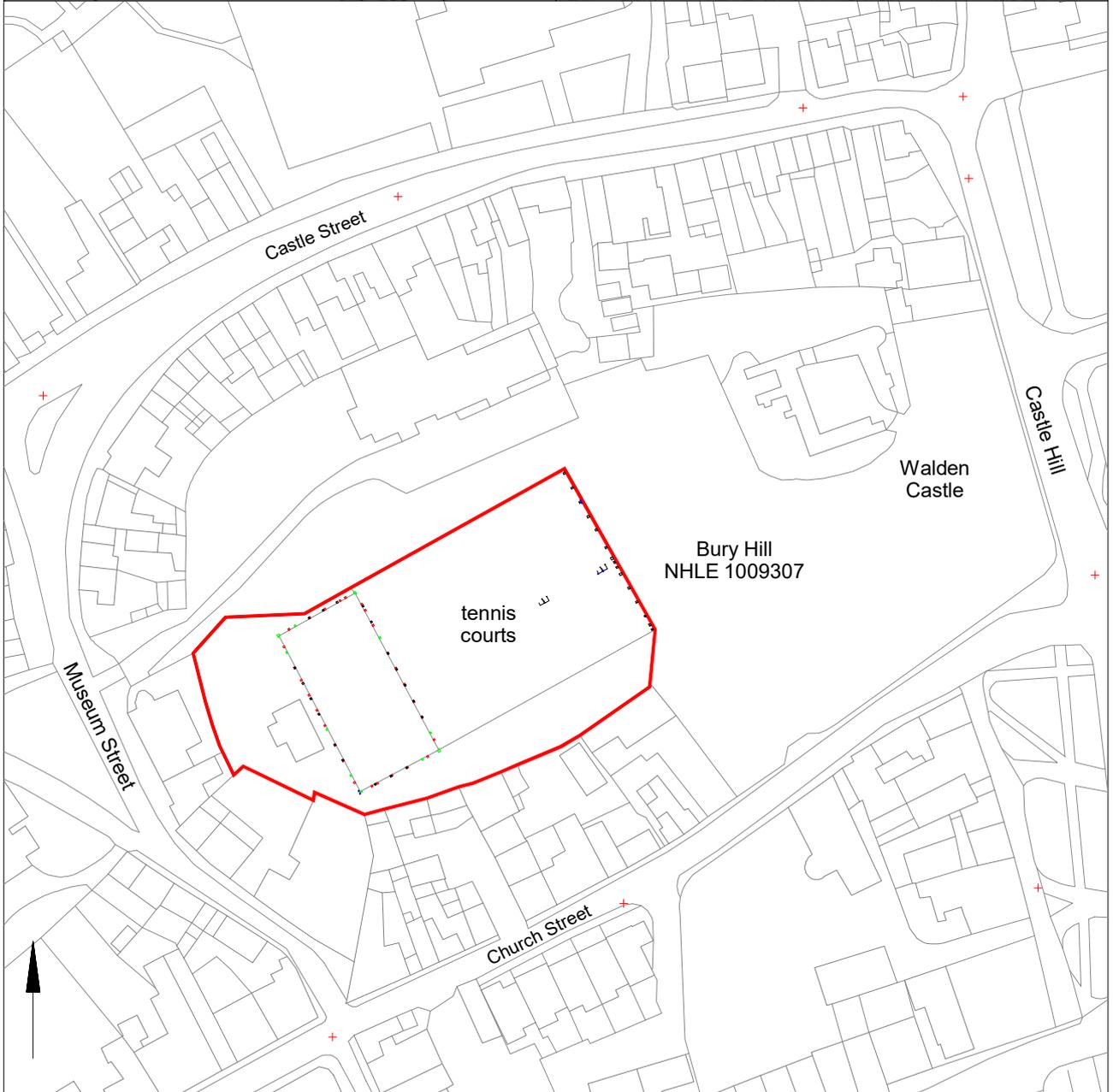
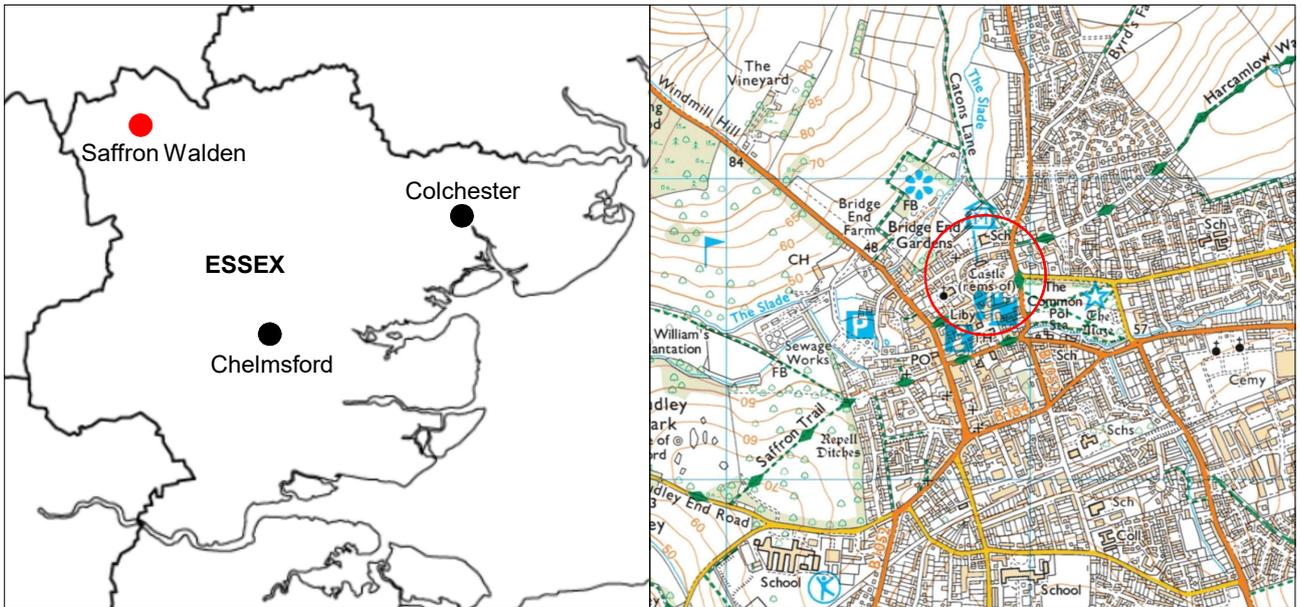
Katie Lee-Smith, Essex County Council Place Services

Jess Tipper, Historic England

Essex Historic Environment Record

Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Finds no.	Context type	Description	Date
L1	-	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown clayey silt	Modern
L2	-	Makeup	Mid grey-brown silty clay with inclusions of chalk	Post-medieval
L3	-	Natural geology	Orange-brown chalky clay	Post-glacial
L4	-	?Natural geology	White chalk layer with large flint nodules	Post-glacial



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Fig 1 Site location.



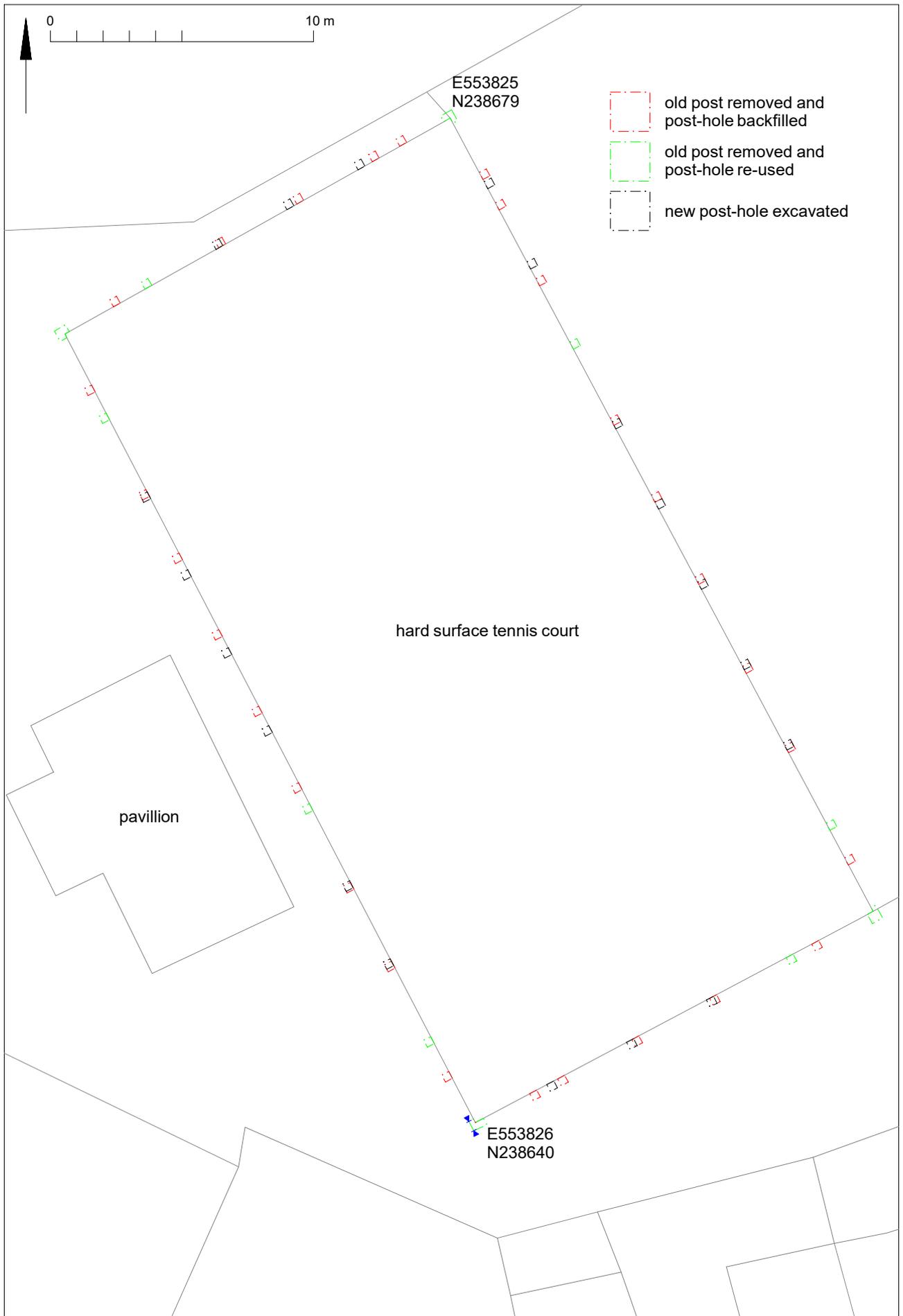


Fig 2 Hard surface tennis court results.

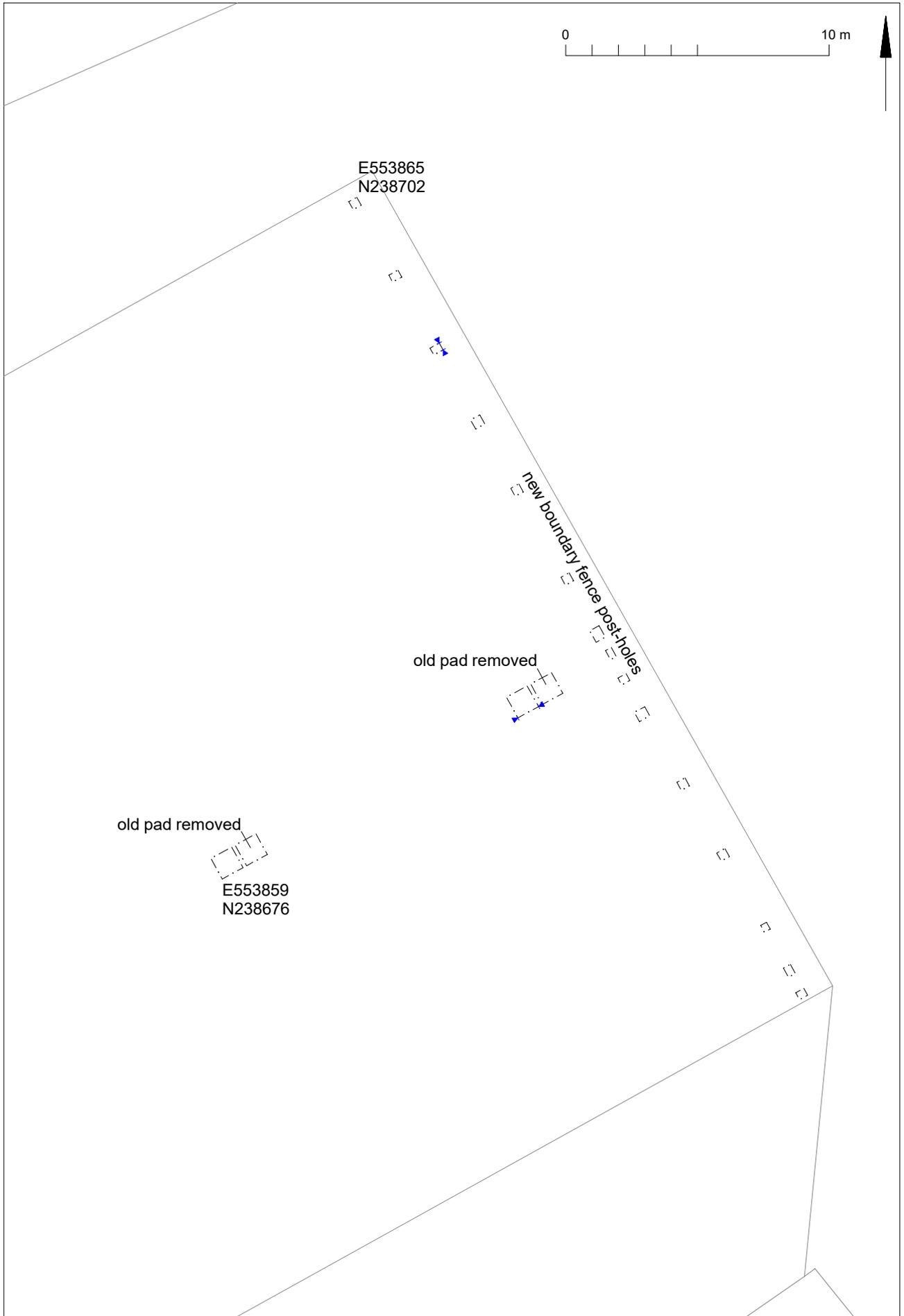
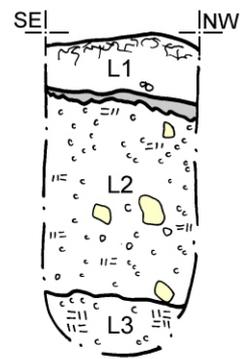
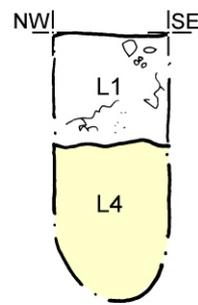


Fig 3 Boundary fence and net post pit results.

Hard surface
tennis court



Boundary fence



Net post pit

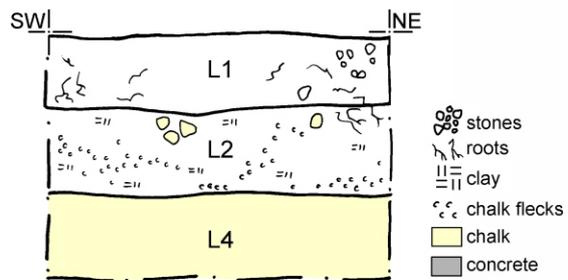


Fig 4 Representative sections.

Summary for colchest3-503371

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-503371
Project Name	Field Observation (Monitoring) at Castle Hill Tennis Club, Museum Street, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1JL
Sitename	Castle Hill Tennis Club, Museum Street, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1JL
Activity type	Field Observation (Monitoring)
Project Identifier(s)	2021/12c
Planning Id	
Reason For Investigation	Scheduled monument consent
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	22-Mar-2022 - 14-Sep-2022
Location	Castle Hill Tennis Club, Museum Street, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1JL NGR : TL 53860 38680 LL : 52.0252011196768, 0.241126083074384 12 Fig : 553860,238680
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Uttlesford Parish : Saffron Walden
Project Methodology	Archaeological monitoring was undertaken at Castle Hill Tennis Club, Museum Street, Saffron Walden during the replacement of fencing: Hard surfaced tennis court Around the hard surfaced tennis court forty-eight fence posts were dug, of which nine were new. Bury Hill boundary line In order to move the boundary fence away from trees a new fence line was put in running parallel to the old fence and was c 1.0m away. Net post-pits The old net post-pits of the northern-most tennis court were removed and new ones dug c 1m southwest of their original location. Work was carried out following a WSI, Brief, SM consent and following Historic England and ClfA guidelines and policies
Project Results	Despite being located within the inner bailey of the scheduled monument of Bury Hill (HA 1009307), no archaeological remains were uncovered.
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD Historic England review - rev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	B, Quinn
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - SWTC21

Archives

Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service
Archive;