

# Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1965  
issued August 2023**

**Archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to  
Wadhurst, New Road, Little Burstead, Billericay,  
Essex, CM12 9TS: July 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2023/07i  
ECC code: BLNR23**

**Archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to  
Wadhurst, New Road, Little Burstead, Billericay,  
Essex, CM12 9TS: July 2023**

**NGR: TQ 67430 91008 (centre)**

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CAT Report 1965**

**ECC code: BLNR23  
OASIS id: colchest3-517604**

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**commissioned by Shaun Johnson,  
John Sime & Associates  
on behalf of JP & MD Properties Ltd**

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (four trial-trenches) was carried out on land adjacent to Wadhurst, New Road, Little Burstead, Billericay, Essex, in advance of the construction of three bungalows with associated landscaping. Human remains and Roman finds have previously been found to the south-east of site, with cropmarks identified to the north and west. Evaluation revealed three/four modern features, one of which may be a backfilled pond, but there were no significant archaeological remains.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land adjacent to Wadhurst, New Road, Little Burstead, Billericay, Essex on 20th-21st July 2023. The work was commissioned by Shaun Johnson of John Sime & Associates on behalf of JP & MD Properties Ltd, and took place in advance of the construction of three bungalows with associated landscaping.

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), the Historic Environment Advisor 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 2021).

Due to a misinterpretation of the planning conditions, groundworks were started on site without the execution of the required archaeological investigation. Upon realisation, all groundworks ceased and Historic Environment Advisor Teresa O'Connor advised that an archaeological evaluation should take place immediately. CAT prepared a written scheme of investigation (WSI) (CAT 2023) which was agreed with Teresa O'Connor in advance of the evaluation taking place. A brief was not issued.

In addition to the 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 Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The proposed development site is located in the village of Little Burstead in south Essex. The parish church, the Church of St. Mary the Virgin (NHLE No. 1170867, EHER 26785), was originally constructed in the 12th century and is located approximately 800m to the north-west.

On five different occasions, human remains have been found in an area of land lying roughly 100m to the south-east (EHER 16073). Other finds at this site include Roman pottery sherds and a spindle-whorl fashioned from a sherd of Roman greyware pottery. A small quantity of human bone, some possible hobnails and sherds of Roman pottery have also been recovered at a site to the south-west (EHER 5520).

Cropmarks have been identified on land roughly 350m to the west of the site at Peggy Farm (EHER 47728), and 750m to the north at Broomfills Farm House (EHER 47729). Both indicate the presence of field-systems, with the latter being interpreted as an enclosure. Both sets of the cropmarks correspond to ditches depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey map.

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale<sup>1</sup>) shows the bedrock geology of the site is London Clay Formation (clay, silt and sand) with superficial deposits of Head (clay, silt, sand and gravel).

#### 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)

Four trial trenches were machine excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. As groundworks had already commenced on the site before the evaluation took place, some of the trenches proposed in the WSI had to be altered or moved. Where this happened it is mentioned below. A full context list with soil descriptions and dimensions can be found in Appendix 1.

##### **Trench 1 (19m long by 1.8m wide)**

Trench 1 was changed from a T-shaped trench to an L-shaped trench to better fit around the piles which had already been drilled into the ground. A layer of modern tarmac and two layers of modern crush (0.4-0.45m deep) sealed subsoil (L2, 0.2m thick) with natural beneath (L3, identified at a depth of 0.6-0.65m below current ground level (bcgl)). There were no archaeological remains in Trench 1.

##### **Trench 2 (20m long by 1.8m wide)**

Trench 2 was moved 7.5m to the east as building materials had been placed in its proposed location. A thick layer of modern crush (0.4m thick) sealed natural (L3). Pit F4 was large at 5.74m across but relatively shallow at 0.34m deep, and produced a fragment of peg-tile and modern brick.

##### **Trench 3a & 3b (both 10m long by 1.8m wide)**

Trench 3 was divided into two and moved to the south and south-east, as the foundations of the new property had already been excavated and the concrete poured. A thin layer of modern topsoil (L1, 0.06-0.15m thick) sealed a modern buried topsoil (L2, 0.27-0.36m thick) with natural beneath (L3, identified at a depth of c 0.5m bcgl).

Features F1 and F2 were similar irregular features with a grey/brown organic silty-clay fill and scarce finds. They were given two separate numbers but could be part of the same pit or possibly even a backfilled pond (there are three other ponds in very close proximity). Alternatively F1 may be a tree-throw on the edge of F2. Pottery from F1 was identified on site as post-medieval/modern, but it was lost before post-excavation analysis could be completed. A small fragment of modern glass was recovered from F2.

##### **Trench 4 (23m long by 1.8m wide)**

Trench 4 was only moved slightly to better fit around the piles which had already been drilled into the ground. Modern topsoil (L1, 0.15m thick) sealed a modern buried topsoil (L2, c 0.42m thick) over natural (L3, identified at a depth of c 0.57m bcgl). Irregular pit F3 was 0.97m long and 0.93m wide but shallow at 0.07m deep, and produced two fragments of peg-tile along with a piece of modern brick and floor tile.

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<sup>1</sup> British Geological Survey – <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>



**Photograph 1** Trench 1, looking east-north-east.



**Photograph 2** Trench 2, looking south-south-east.



**Photograph 3** Trench 3a, looking east-north-east.



**Photograph 4** Trench 4, looking south-south-east.

## 6 Finds

### 6.1 Pottery and ceramic building material

by Dr Matthew Loughton

Thirteen sherds of pottery (293g, EVE 1.06) and six fragments of ceramic building material (261g) were recovered from pits F3 and F4 and buried topsoil L2 (Table 1). All were of a modern (19th-20th century) date.

#### Post-medieval and modern pottery

Pottery was recorded according to the fabric groups from CAR 7 (Cotter 2000) while the number of vessels was determined by rim EVE (estimated vessel equivalent). All of the pottery came from buried topsoil layer L2. There were 12 sherds (235g) of modern Staffordshire-type white earthenwares (fabric F48D; EVE 0.71) and one Staffordshire brownware teapot lid (58g, EVE:0.35), which dates from the late 18th century onwards.

#### Ceramic building material (CBM)

Fragments of peg-tile (36g) along with pieces of 19th- to 20th-century brick (211g) and floor tile (14g) came from pits F3 and F4.

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
F3	Pit (peg-tile x2, floor tile, brick)	4	72	18
F4	Pit (peg-tile, brick)	2	189	95
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>44</b>

**Table 1** Quantities of CBM from F3 and F4.

### 6.2 Glass

by Laura Pooley

A small fragment (1.1g) of pale blue vessel glass from F2 (finds no. 2) is of modern (19th-20th century) date.

### 6.3 Animal bone

by Adam Wightman

A small fragment (1.8g) of axial animal bone was recovered from F3 (finds no. 3).

## 7 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Wadhurst, New Road, Little Burstead revealed two modern pits in trenches 2 and 4. The remains in trench 3 could be part of a single modern pit or possibly even a backfilled pond, or the smaller feature could be a tree-throw. There are three ponds in close proximity to the development site and the remains in trench 4 could be the site of a fourth. The pond to the north of the development site is on the first edition 6-inch OS map of 1895, but those to the west are not on the 1895 or 1938 maps, suggesting a later 20th century date. If a pond, F1/F2 could be of a similar 20th century date. In summary, the evaluation revealed three modern features but no significant archaeological remains.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Shaun Johnson of John Sime & Associates and JP & MD Properties Ltd for commissioning and funding the project. The project was managed by C Lister, A Wightman and L Pooley, with fieldwork carried out by N Rayner with R Mathieson and M Perou. Figures were compiled by R Mathieson and S Veasey. 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 <b>8</b> (EAA <b>8</b> )
CAT	2023	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2023	<i>Written scheme of investigation for an archaeological evaluation and excavation on land adjacent to Wadhurst, New Road, Little Burstead, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9TS</i>
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation.</i> Revised October 2020
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.</i> Revised October 2020
CIfA	2014c	<i>Code of Conduct.</i> Revised October 2022
Cotter, JP	2000	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85.</i> Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust Ltd.
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	2015	<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
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	a single unit of excavation, which is often referred to numerically, and can be any feature, layer or find
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	period from c AD 1500 to c 1800
Roman	period from AD 43 to 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 retained

**Digital data:**

CAT Report 1965

CAT written scheme of investigation

Digital photographs

Survey data

Site 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 the Archaeology Data Service.

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### **Distribution list:**

Shaun Johnson, John Sime & Associates  
JP & MD Properties Ltd  
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor  
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

## Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Trench no.	Finds no.	Interpretation	Soil description	Period
L1	All	-	Topsoil	Firm, moist dark grey/brown clayey-loam with charcoal and CBM flecks	Modern
L2	All	4	Buried soil layer	Firm, moist medium/dark orange/grey/brown silty-clay	Modern, 19th-20th century
L3	All	-	Natural	Soft, medium yellow/orange/brown clay	Post-glacial
F1	T4a	1	Part of F2 or a tree-throw	Firm, moist dark orange/grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks and 1% stones. >3.5m x >1.8m x 0.46m deep.	Probably modern
F2	T4a	2	Pit or backfilled pond	Firm moist medium/dark grey/brown silty-clay. c 4m x 1.53m x 0.25m deep.	Modern, 19th-20th century
F3	T3	3	Pit	Firm, dry light grey clay. 0.97m x 0.93m wide x 0.07m deep.	Modern, 19th-20th century
F4	T2	5	Pit	Firm, moist/wet medium yellow/grey/brown silty-clay with 2% stones. 5.8m x >1.8m x 0.34m deep.	Modern, 19th-20th century

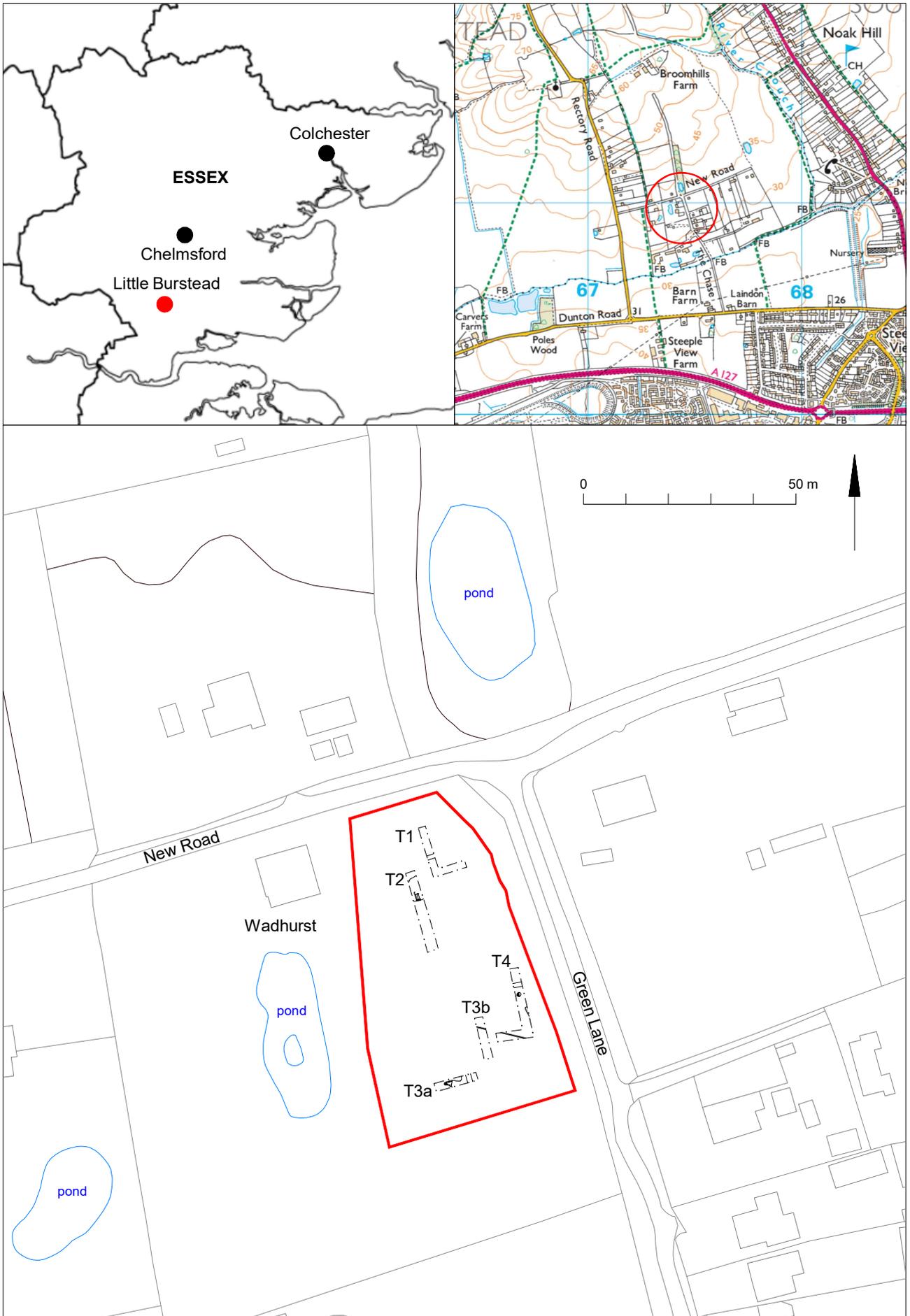


Fig 1 Site location.

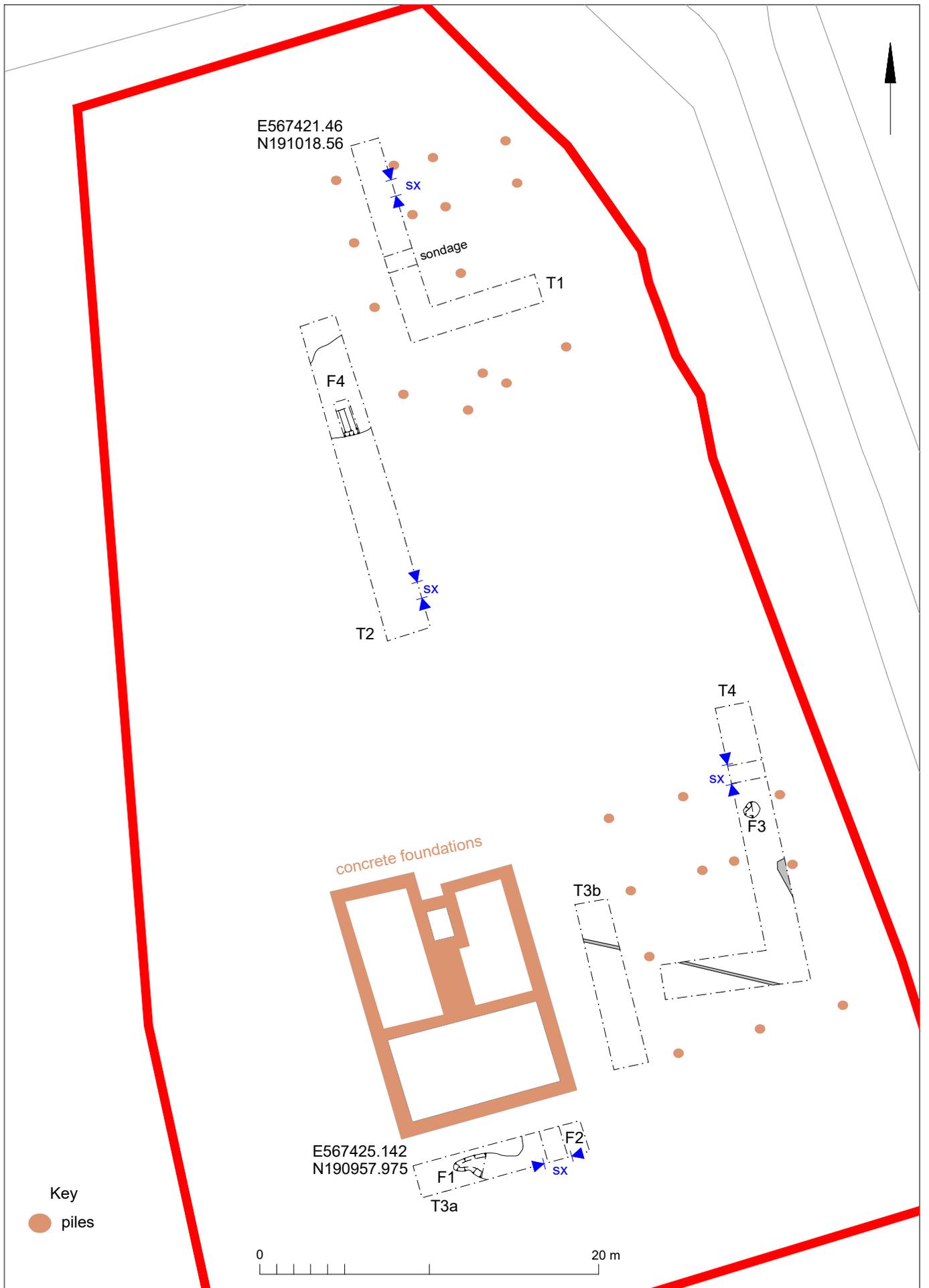


Fig 2 Results (modern services in grey).

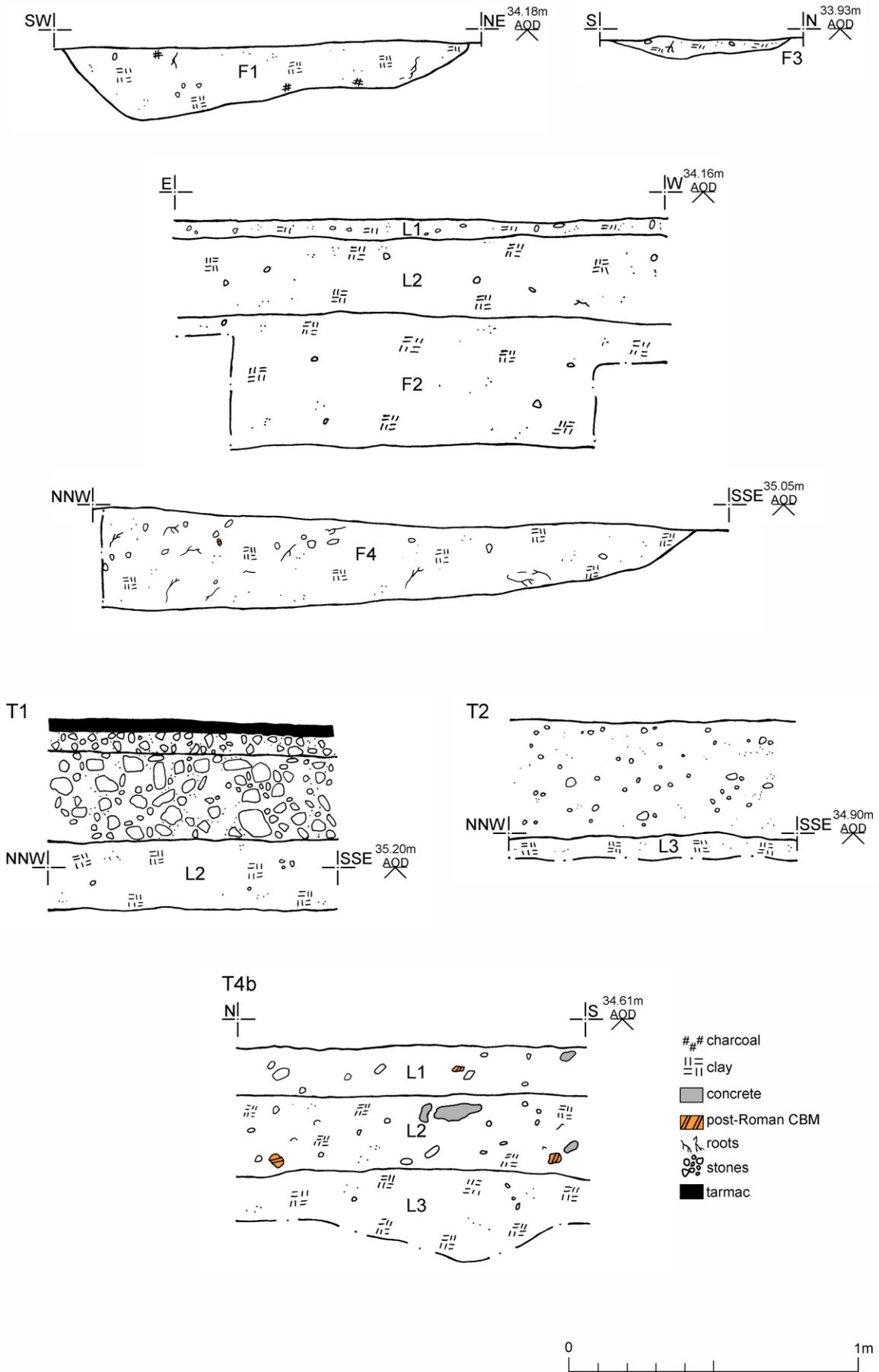


Fig 3 Feature and representative sections.

# OASIS Summary for colchest3-517604

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-517604
Project Name	Archaeological evaluation at land adjacent Wadhurst, New Road, Little Burstead, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9TS: July 2023
Sitename	land adjacent Wadhurst, New Road, Little Burstead, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9TS
Sitecode	BLNR23
Project Identifier(s)	2023/07i
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	20/01313/FUL, 21/01162/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	20-Jul-2023 - 21-Jul-2023
Location	land adjacent Wadhurst, New Road, Little Burstead, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9TS NGR : TQ 67430 91008 LL : 51.59304148533712, 0.415714158020172 12 Fig : 567430,191008
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Basildon Parish : Little Burstead
Project Methodology	Archaeological evaluation (four trial-trenches) carried out as specified in the project brief and wsi.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (four trial-trenches) was carried out on land adjacent to Wadhurst, New Road, Little Burstead, Billericay, Essex, in advance of the construction of three bungalows with associated landscaping. Human remains and Roman finds have previously been found to the south-east of site, with cropmarks identified to the north and west. Evaluation revealed three/four modern features, one of which may be a backfilled pond, but there were no significant archaeological remains.
Keywords	
Funder	Private or public corporation developer
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Adam Wightman, Chris Lister
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - BLNR23
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;