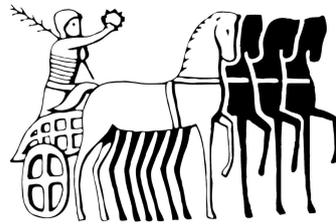


# Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1990  
issued November 2023**

**Archaeological evaluation at 30a Straight Road,  
Boxted, Essex, CO4 5HN:  
October 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2023/08c  
ECC code: ECC4820**

**Archaeological evaluation at 30a Straight Road,  
Boxted, Essex, CO4 5HN:  
October 2023**

**NGR: TL 99336 30087**

**Planning ref.: 222803**

**CAT project ref.: 2023/08c  
CAT Report 1990**

**ECC code: ECC4820  
OASIS id: colchest3-518241**

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Charlie Hodges**

**commissioned by Jake Wilson (Wincer Kievenaar)  
on behalf of Baahn Developments**

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<b>Issued:</b>	21/11/2023	

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EHER summary sheet

CAT WSI

OASIS summary

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (8 trial-trenches) was carried out at 30a Straight Road, Boxted, Essex in advance of the construction of 23 business units. The site lies in an area in which previous archaeological investigations have uncovered numerous charcoal-rich pits that are the product of a charcoal-production industry that existed here from at least the Early Iron Age to the post-medieval period. It is also located in the midst of a number of cropmark complexes. Excavations here revealed a pit, two gullies or pipe trenches and a posthole, all of which were modern, and two pits and a charcoal-rich pit which could not be dated.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at 30a Straight Road, Boxted, Essex during 9th-11th October 2023. The work was commissioned by Jake Wilson of Wincer Kievenaar on behalf of Baahn Developments and took place in advance of the construction of 23 business units.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the EHER/CHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Colchester City Council Archaeological Advisor (CCCAA). This recommendation was for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching and was based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation at Classic Pot Emporium, 30a Straight Road, Boxted, Colchester* written by Dr Richard Hoggett and detailing the required archaeological work (CCCPS 2023), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2023).

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* (CIfA 2020a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2020b).

## 3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive and the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER/ECC/MCC numbers, which is accessible via Colchester Heritage Explorer (<https://colchesterheritage.co.uk/map>)).

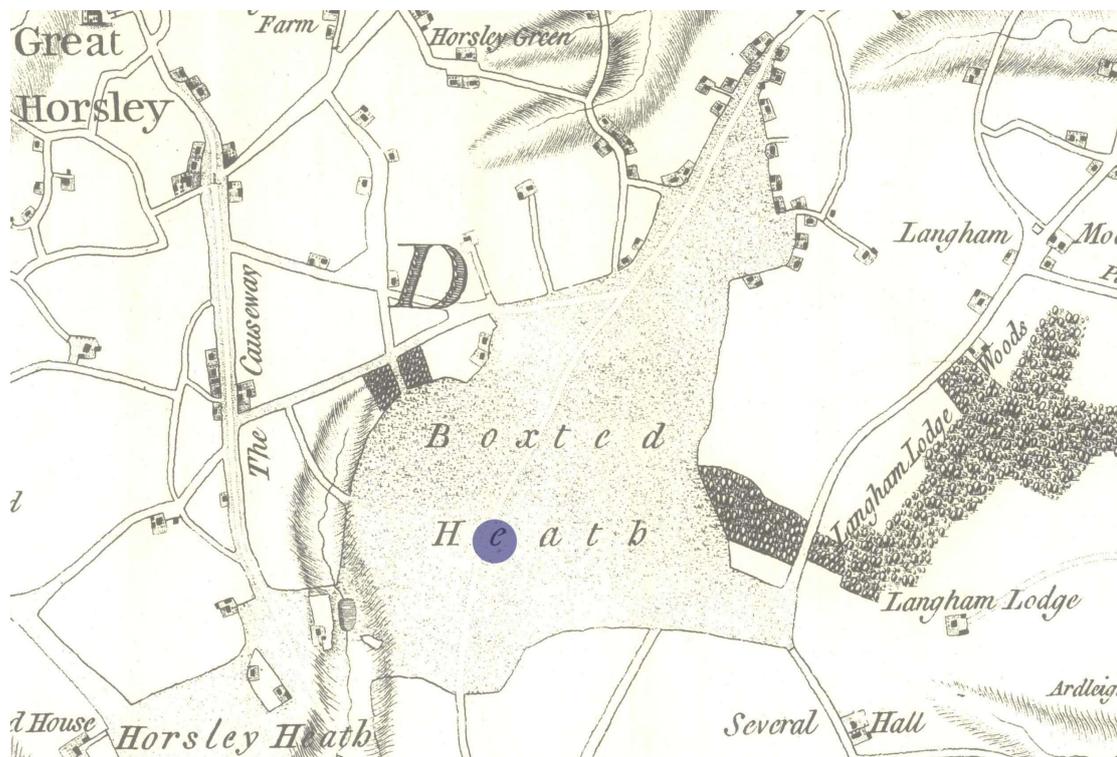
The proposed development site is located within Boxted Heath (MCC9149). The heath likely has its origins in the medieval period and is depicted on Chapman and André's map of Essex, published in 1777 (Map 1).

Located just to the south of the development site is the postulated route of an earthwork dyke (MCC10067). The dyke is thought to follow the line of Salary Brook and Black Brook but is only known from references in accounts of two 17th-century perambulations, and no archaeological evidence of its existence has ever been uncovered.

Archaeological work prior to the construction of the Park and Ride (c 700m to the south) revealed a wide scatter of charcoal-rich pits, many of which exhibited evidence of in-situ burning. Finds were scarce but included a single worked flint and Roman pottery (CAT Report 159; ASE Report 2015045).

On the land adjacent to Colchester Park and Ride, CAT has undertaken a series of archaeological investigations, including large-scale trial-trenching and excavations. These

investigations uncovered further charcoal pits with scarce finds, mirroring the results of the Park and Ride excavations (CAT Reports 1219 & 1479).



**Map 1** Extract from Chapman and André's map of Essex (1777). The approximate location of the development site highlighted in blue

A number of cropmarks have been identified in the areas around the proposed site. Roughly 800m east south-east are a series of ditch cropmarks (MCC9121), 1km to the north-west is a cropmark complex that includes ring ditches, field boundaries, linear features, pits and a trackway (MCC7125) and 1km to the south-west is a linear cropmark (MCC8633).

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale<sup>1</sup>) shows the bedrock geology of the site to be of the Thames Group (clay, silt and sand) with superficial Cover Sand deposits (clay, silt and sand).

#### 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 CCCAA to determine if further investigation is required.

#### 5 Results (Appendix 1 and figs 2-4)

Eight trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trench T1 was 40m long and 1.8m wide, trench T2 was 30m long and 1.8m wide, trench T7 was 25m long and 1.8m wide, and trenches T3, T4, T5, T6 and T8 were 20m long and 1.8m wide.

Trenches T1-T6 were cut through modern hardstanding (L1, c 0.02-0.06m thick), a modern make-up layer (L2, c 0.16-0.37m thick) and a buried soil layer (L3, c 0.11-0.3m thick) onto natural (L4, encountered at a depth of 0.49-0.55m below current ground level [bcgl]). Trenches T7 and T8 were cut through L2 (0.32-0.39m thick) and L3 (0.9-0.12m thick) onto L4

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

(encountered at a depth of 0.42-0.5m bcgl). Sondages were excavated in trenches T1, T4, T7 and T8 to confirm the identification of L4 as natural.

Due to on-site constraints, trenches T5, T6, T7 and T8 were repositioned with the approval of the CCCAA.

There were no archaeological remains in trenches T3, T4, T5 or T6.

#### **Trench 1**

Gullies or pipe trenches F1 and F2 passed through the centre of the trench on a north north-east/south south-west alignment. The former feature was 0.32m wide and 0.14m deep and the latter 0.33m wide and 0.11m deep, and both had U-shaped profiles. Modern CBM and pottery was observed on the surfaces of the features.

Posthole F3 was uncovered at the southern end of the trench. The feature was sub-oval in plan and was 0.24m by 0.3m and 0.08m deep with a shallow, highly-irregular profile. The feature produced no artefactual evidence but appeared to be modern.

Pit F4 lay to the south of F3. It was sub-oval in plan and was 0.63m by 0.9m and 0.14m deep with a slightly irregular U-shaped profile. The feature contained large amounts of modern iron and lead objects.



**Photograph 1** T1 trench shot – looking north

#### **Trench 2**

Pit F5 was uncovered in the western half of the trench. It was sub-oval in plan and 0.62m by 0.86m and 0.09m deep with a U-shaped profile. The feature contained no dating evidence.

**Trench 7**

Pit F6 was located in the western half of the trench. It was sub-oval in plan, 0.3m by 0.45m and 0.1m deep with a slightly irregular V-shaped profile. No artefactual evidence was recovered from this feature.

**Trench 8**

Undatable charcoal-rich pit F7 was uncovered in the southern half of the trench. It was sub-round in plan and was 1.18 by 1.24m and 0.1m deep with a shallow, slightly irregular U-shaped profile. The feature yielded no dating evidence.



**Photograph 2** T8 trench shot – looking north



**Photograph 3** F7 sx – looking north

## 6 Finds

There were no finds.

## 7 Environmental assessment

*by Bronagh Rae-Quinn*

Two samples were taken during the evaluation at 30a Straight Road, Boxted. Both samples were taken from undated pit F7.

Sample	Context No.	Feature Type	% Sampled	Provisional Date	Sample Volume (L.)
1	F7	Pit	40	Undated	40
2	F7	Pit	50	Undated	40

**Table 1** Sample information

### Sampling and processing methods

All samples were floated by a trained member of CAT staff and analysed by the author. Nomenclature for all plant remains is taken from Stace (2010). All samples were processed using a serif-style flotation device which produced a flot and a larger residue, both of which were analysed by the author. Flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh and scanned using a microscope (magnification x10), while the larger residues were scanned by eye and any charcoal/charred wood removed by hand.

### Results

All samples produced only charcoal in high densities with no further environmental remains (Table 3).

Sample No.	1	2
Context No.	F18	F7
Charcoal >10mm	xxx	xxxx
Charcoal 4-10mm	xxxxx	xxxxx
Charcoal <4mm	xxxxx	xxxxx
<b>Sample volume (litres)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Volume of flot (litres)</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.7</b>
<b>% flot sorted</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2** Volume of flots

Sample No.	1	2
Context No.	F7	F7
Charcoal >10mm	xxxx	xxx
Charcoal 4-10mm	xxxxx	xxxxx

**Table 3** Amount of charcoal recovered from residues**Key to tables 2-3**

x	0-10
xx	10-25
xxx	25-50
xxxx	50-100
xxxxx	100+

**Potential, significance and recommendations**

The samples taken from the evaluation at 30a Straight Road, Boxted produced a high density of environmental remains with minimal significance to the overall interpretation of the site. It would be possible to identify the charcoal further, however as the feature is undated it is not recommended in this instance. Although the environmental potential of the current assemblage is limited, further works on the site could produce additional plant macrofossil evidence. It is recommended that any future works continue to take soil samples in line with the CAT environmental policies outlined in the WSI.

**8 Conclusion**

Excavations at this site revealed seven features: a charcoal-rich pit, two pits, two gullies or pipe trenches and a posthole. Several of these features were determined to be modern in date either due to the presence of modern detritus or the consistency of their fills. Historical mapping of the area compiled in the late 19th century depicts the site as lying in a network of fields and it is likely that these remains are related to agricultural activity.

The discovery of a charcoal-rich pit perhaps mirrors the results of archaeological investigations across northern Colchester over previous years, during which many such features have been uncovered. Historical cartography shows that this area was heavily wooded during the post-medieval period and presumably earlier, and these features have been interpreted as being related to a charcoal-producing industry located in this area from the Early Iron Age to the post-medieval period (CAT Reports 159, 1219 & 1479). This feature appears quite isolated, however, and it is possible that it too is the product of agricultural activity in the late 19th or early 20th centuries.

## 9 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Jake Wilson (Wincer Kievenaar) and Baahn Developments for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister and A Wightman, and fieldwork was carried out by R Mathieson with M Beale and C Hodges. Figures are by C Lister, E Hicks, and S Veasey. The project was monitored for Colchester Borough Council by Dr Richard Hoggett.

## 10 References

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

ASE Report 2015045	2015	<i>Cuckoo Farm Park and Ride, Myland, Colchester, Essex: Post-excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design Report</i> , by A Dyson
Brown, D	2011	<i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i>
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	2023	<i>Health and Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2023	<i>Written scheme of investigation for archaeological evaluation at 30a Straight Road, Boxted, Essex, CO4 5HN</i>
CAT Report 159	2001	<i>An archaeological evaluation on the route for Colchester Northern Approach Road Phase 3 (Severalls Hospital/Cuckoo Farm), Colchester, Essex: September-October 2001</i> , by C Crossan
CAT Report 1219	2018	<i>Archaeological evaluation at Colchester Northern Gateway Sports Hub, Plots 2-3, east of Colchester Park and Ride, Mile End, Colchester, Essex, CO4 5JA: November-December 2017</i> , by L Pooley
CAT Report 1479	2020	<i>Archaeological excavation, evaluation and monitoring at Colchester Northern Gateway Sports Hub, Plots 2-3, east of Colchester Park and Ride, Mile End, Colchester, Essex, CO4 5JA: July 2018-June 2019</i> , by L Pooley
CCC	2023	<i>Brief for Archaeological Evaluation at Classic Pot Emporium, 30a Straight Road, Boxted, Colchester, CO4 5HN</i> , by Dr R Hoggett
CifA	2020a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i> . Published 2014; revised June 2020
CifA	2020b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> . Published 2014; revised October 2020
CifA	2022	<i>Code of Conduct</i> . Published 2014; revised October 2022
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.
Stace, C	2010 (3rd ed.)	<i>New Flora of the British Isles</i>

## 11 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
CCC	Colchester City Council
CCC&A	Colchester City Council Archaeological Advisor
CCCPS	Colchester City Council Planning Services
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record
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.
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
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
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, <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
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	written scheme of investigation

## 12 Contents of digital archive

CAT Report 1990  
CAT written scheme of investigation, CCC brief  
Digital photographs  
Site data  
Survey data

## 13 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.

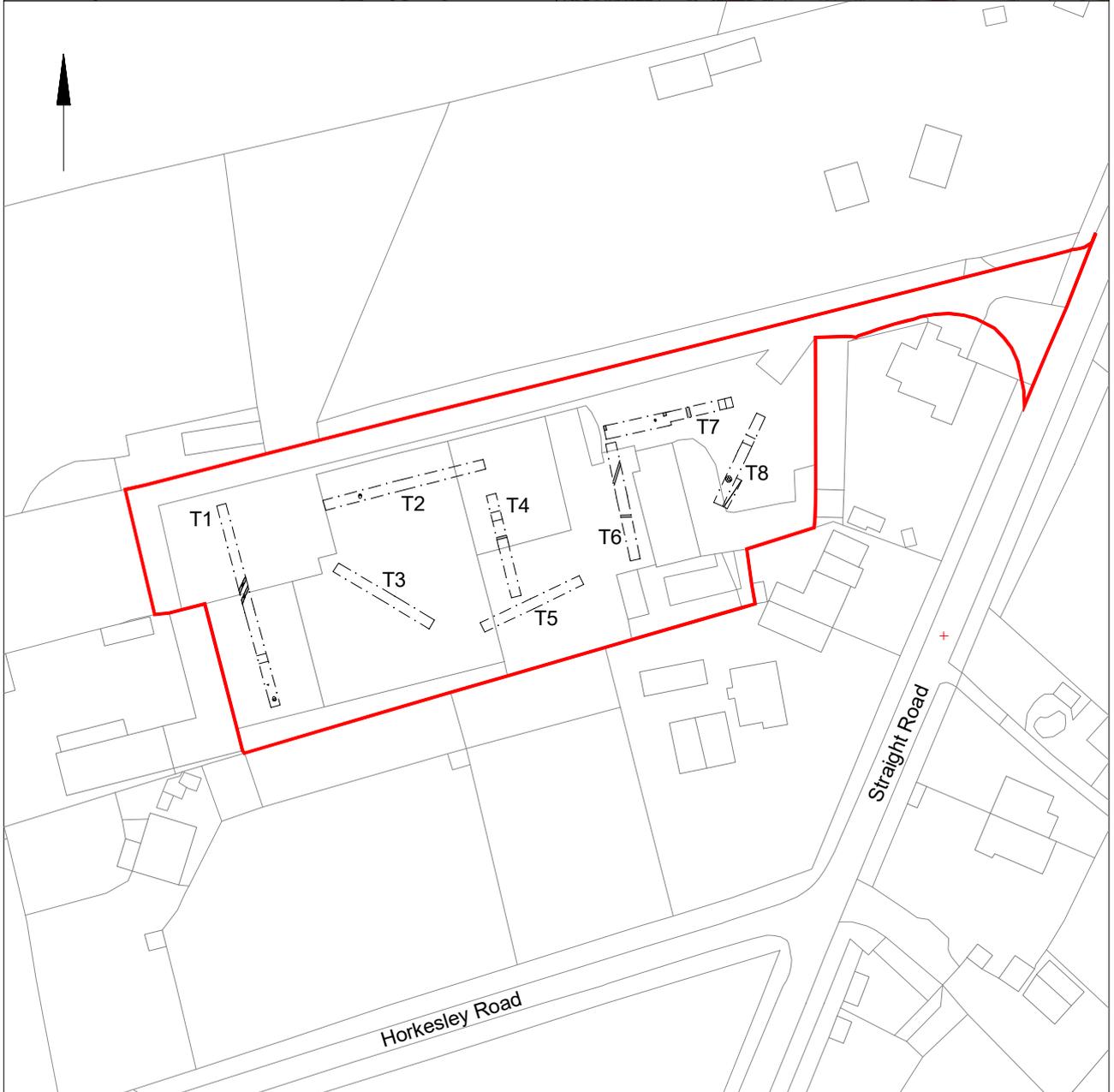
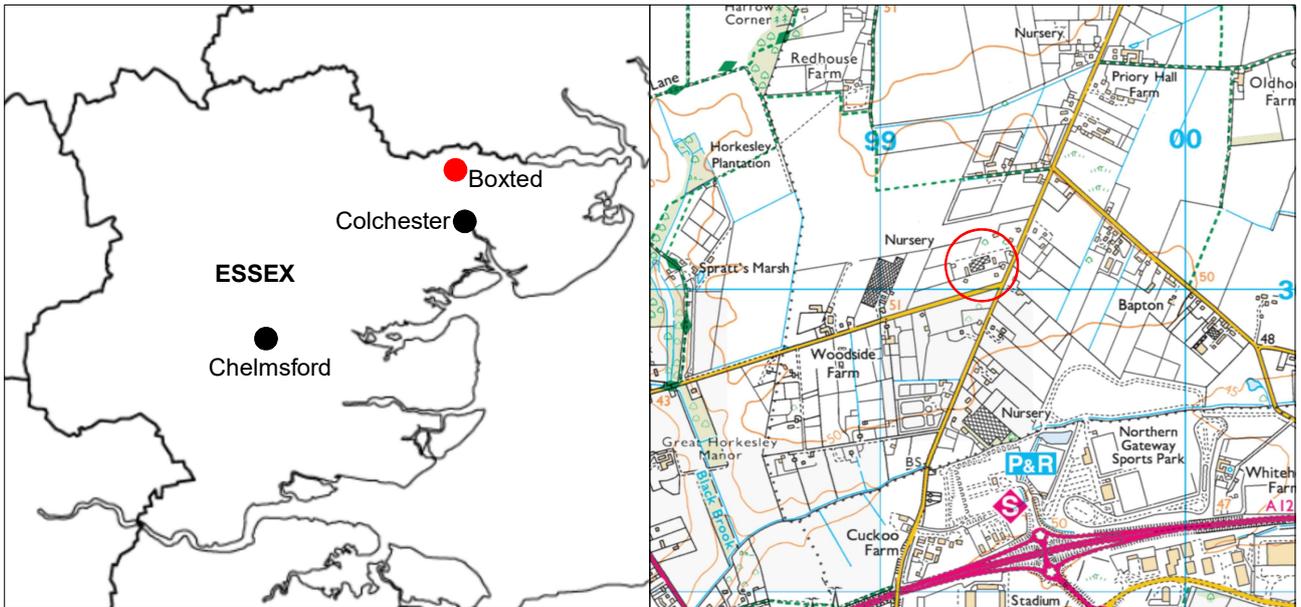
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### Distribution list:

Jake Wilson (Wincer Kievenaar)  
Baahn Developments  
Dr Richard Hoggett, Colchester City Council Planning Services  
Essex Historic Environment Record

**Appendix 1 Context list**

Context	Trench no.	Finds no.	Interpretation	Soil description	Period
L1	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5 and T6	-	Hardstanding	Mixed concrete, tarmac and CBM	Modern
L2	All	-	Make-up layer	Firm/hard, dry light/medium orange/grey/brown sandy-clayey-silt with 1% stones	Modern
L3	All	-	Buried soil layer	Firm, moist light/medium grey/brown silty-clay	Undated
L4	All	-	Natural	Friable, dry/moist medium yellow/orange/grey clayey-silt	Post-glacial
F1	1	-	Gully/pipe trench	Soft, dry/moist light/medium grey sandy-silt	Modern
F2	1	-	Gully/pipe trench	Soft, dry/moist medium/dark grey sandy-silt with charcoal flecks	Modern
F3	1	-	Posthole	Soft, dry medium/dark grey/brown sandy-silt	Modern
F4	1	-	Pit	Friable, dry light orange/grey sandy-silt	Modern
F5	2	-	Pit	Friable, dry light orange/grey sandy-silt with charcoal flecks	Undated
F6	7	-	Pit	Friable, dry light grey silty-sand	Undated
F7	8	<1>, <2>	Charcoal-rich pit	Friable, dry medium grey/black silty-sand with charcoal flecks	Modern



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Fig 1 Site location.



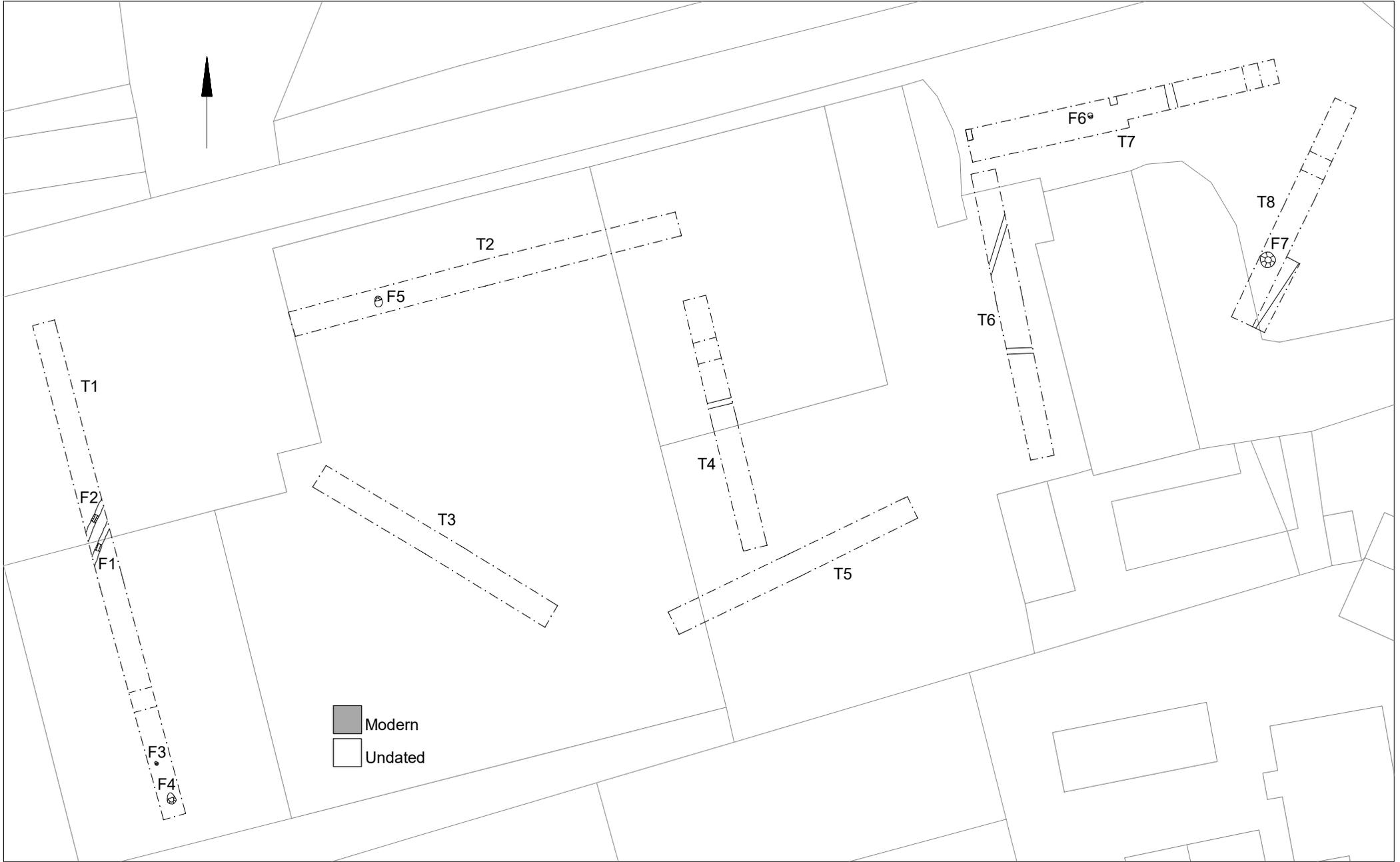


Fig 2 Results

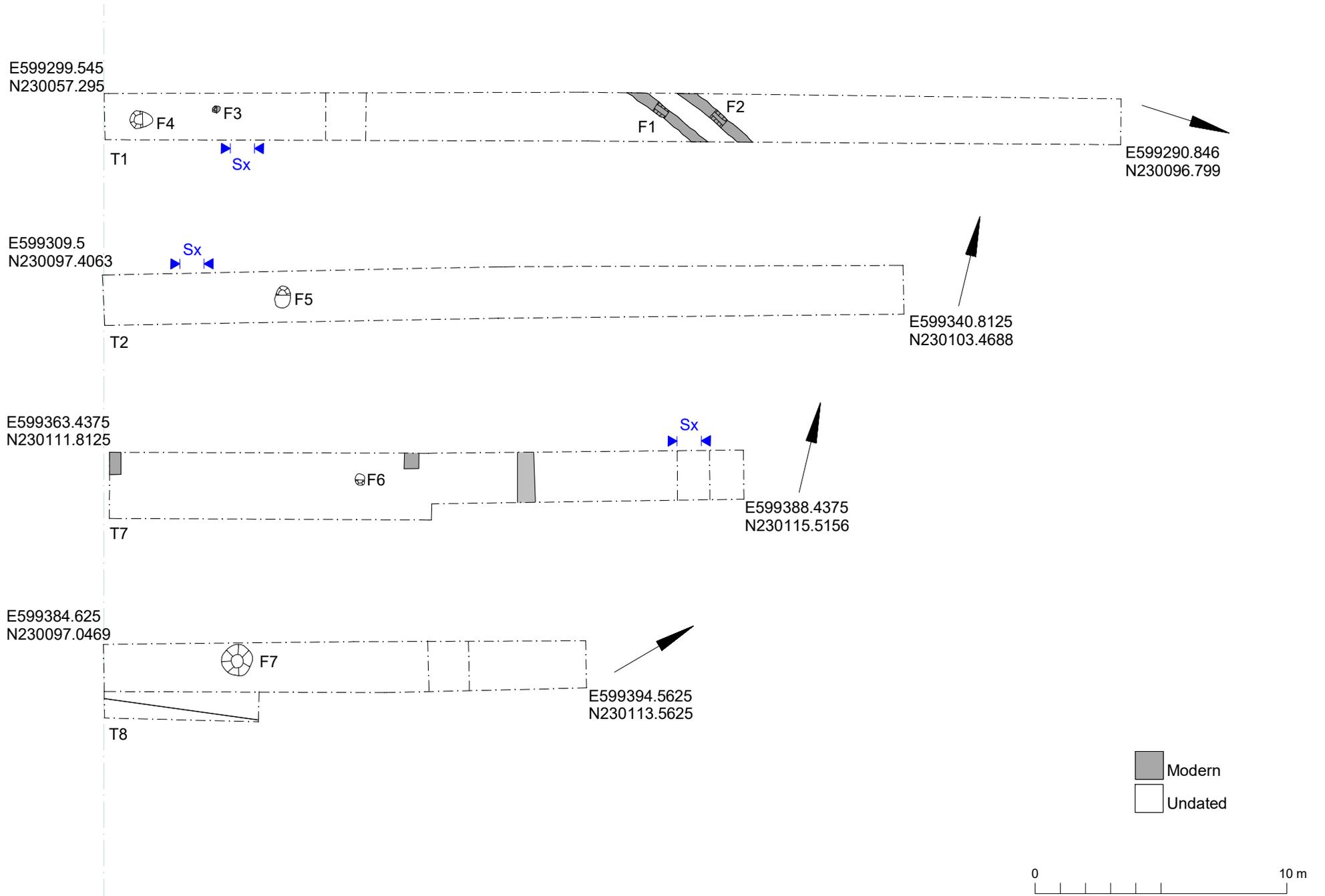


Fig 3 Trench results

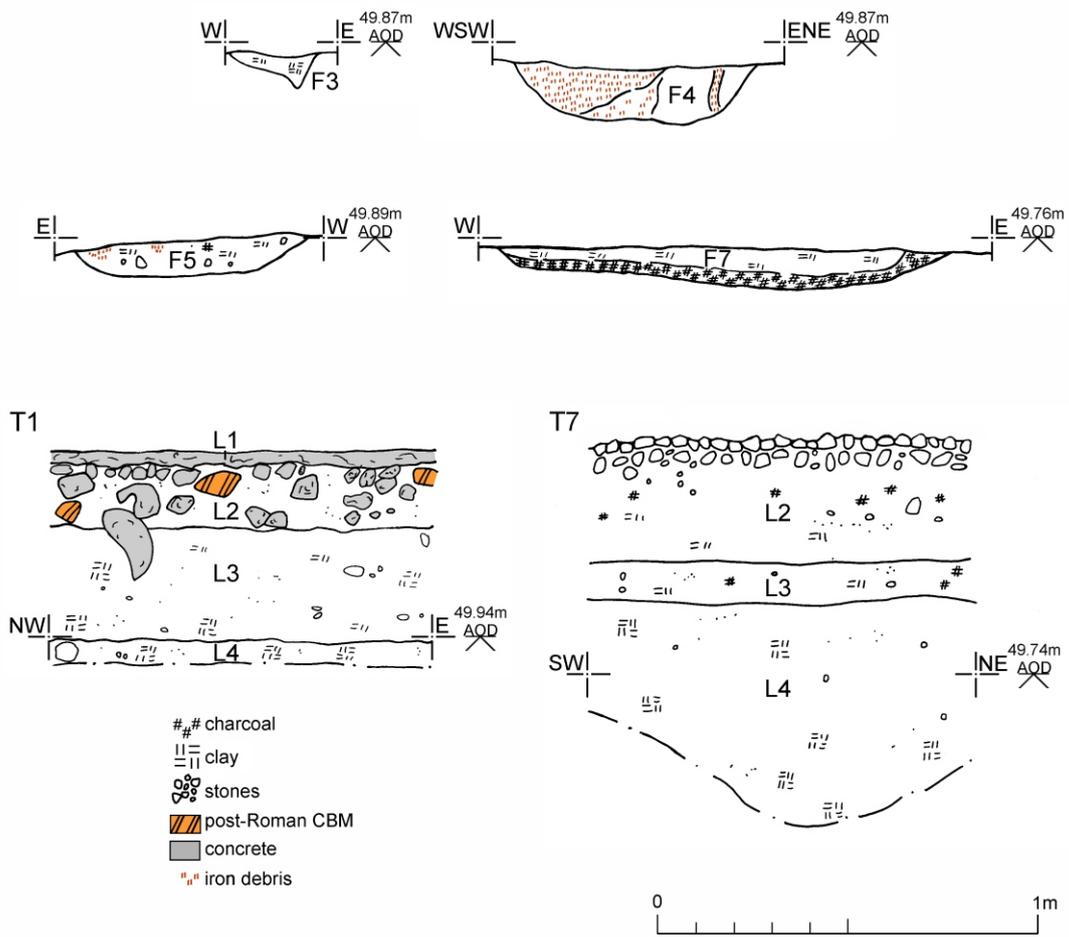


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

# Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

## Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> 30a Straight Road, Boxted, Essex, CO4 5HN	
<b>Parish:</b> Boxted	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TL 99336 30087 (centre)	<b>Site code:</b> CAT project ref.: 2023/08c CHER ref.: ECC4820 OASIS ref.: colchest3-518241
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 9th-11th October 2023	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 0.71 ha
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Archaeology Data Service	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related CHER/SMR number:</b> CHER MCC7125, MCC8633, MCC9121, MCC9149, MCC10067
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 1990	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Modern	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>  <i>An archaeological evaluation (8 trial-trenches) was carried out at 30a Straight Road, Boxted, Essex in advance of the construction of 23 business units. The site lies in an area in which previous archaeological investigations have uncovered numerous charcoal-rich pits that are the product of a charcoal-production industry that existed here from at least the Early Iron Age to the post-medieval period. It is also located in the midst of a number of cropmark complexes. Excavations here revealed a pit, two gullies or pipe trenches and a posthole, all of which were modern, and two pits and a charcoal-rich pit which could not be dated.</i></p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> -	
<b>CCC monitor:</b> Dr Richard Hoggett	
<b>Keywords:</b> -	<b>Significance:</b>
<b>Author of summary:</b> Dr Elliott Hicks	<b>Date of summary:</b> November 2023

# OASIS Summary for colchest3-518241

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-518241
Project Name	Archaeological evaluation at 30a Straight Road, Boxted, Essex, CO4 5HN: October 2023
Sitename	30a Straight Road, Boxted, Essex
Sitecode	
Project Identifier(s)	2023/08c
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	222803
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	09-Oct-2023 - 11-Oct-2023
Location	30a Straight Road, Boxted, Essex NGR : TL 99336 30087 LL : 51.93358188419397, 0.898146343613771 12 Fig : 599336,230087
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Essex Local Authority District : Colchester Parish : Boxted
Project Methodology	Archaeological evaluation was carried out as per the brief and WSI.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (8 trial-trenches) was carried out at 30a Straight Road, Boxted, Essex in advance of the construction of 23 business units. The site lies in an area in which previous archaeological investigations have uncovered numerous charcoal-rich pits that are the product of a charcoal-production industry that existed here from at least the Early Iron Age to the post-medieval period. It is also located in the midst of a number of cropmark complexes. Excavations here revealed a pit, two gullies or pipe trenches and a posthole, all of which were modern, and two pits and a charcoal-rich pit which could not be dated.
Keywords	Gully - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Post Hole - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Pit - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Fire Pit - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Pit - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Private or public corporation Baahn Developments
HER	Colchester Borough Council - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	A Wightman
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - ECC4820
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Colchester & Ipswich Museum Service (Colchester Collection);