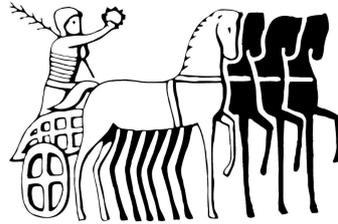


# Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1994  
issued December 2023**

**Archaeological monitoring at 3 Romans Place,  
Writtle, Chelmsford, CM1 3JD: October 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2023/09b  
ECC code: WRRP23**

**Archaeological monitoring at 3 Romans Place,  
Writtle, Chelmsford, CM1 3JD: October 2023**

**NGR: TL 67830 06174 (centre)**

**Planning ref.: 23/01177/FUL**

**CAT project ref.: 2023/09b  
CAT Report 1994**

**ECC code: WRRP23  
OASIS id: colchest3-519031**

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**with contributions from  
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**commissioned by the homeowner**

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<b>Issued:</b>	06/12/2023	

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## 1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring took place at 3 Romans Place, Writtle, Chelmsford, ahead of the construction of a rear single-storey extension. The property itself is an 18th-century timber-framed Grade II listed building, and is located within the Writtle Conservation Area. Likely early features of the property, a soakaway and brick structure – possibly a well – were identified, as well as a medieval/post-medieval pit.

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at 3 Romans Place, Writtle on 26th October 2023. The work was commissioned by the homeowner and took place during groundworks for a single-storey rear extension and associated groundworks.

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), the Essex Historic Environment Advisor (EHEA), 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 2023).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Mark Baister (CBCPS 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 brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2015), 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 brief* (ClfA 2020a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2020b).

## 3 Archaeological background (Fig 2)

The following archaeological background draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER/ECC numbers; accessible via Heritage Gateway (<https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/>)).

The proposed site is based in Writtle which has historic significance as, at the time of Domesday in AD1086, the manor of Writtle was the largest settlement in the area with 194 households. Writtle was a royal manor and the collapse of the Roman bridges over the Can and Chelmer meant that the main route from London to Colchester detoured via Writtle, both factors which influenced its growth and prosperity (ECC 2017, 10).

The site, 3 Romans Place, is a timber-framed house with an 18th-century brick front (SMR 30961). It is part of a group of Grade II listed buildings with the adjacent 1 and 2 Romans Place (NHLE 1237230). Romans Place is located within the Writtle Conservation Area, which seeks to protect areas of historic interest. For more information on the area see the *Chelmsford Borough Characterisation Project* (ECC 2017).

In 2010, a test pit (Test pit 7) was excavated in the rear of the garden of 1 Romans Place (SMR 48816). This was a part of a larger programme run by Access Cambridge Archaeology (ACA) out of the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, which oversaw the excavation of a total of 63.1m<sup>2</sup> archaeological test pits by 200 local secondary school children. Test pit 7 revealed pottery dating to the Victorian period, and a single sherd of medieval Cistercian Ware and some post-medieval pottery was recorded in context 5 (Collins 2017). CAT undertook monitoring at 1 Romans Place in 2022, revealing features associated

with the 18th-century house. This included a thick layer of terracing make-up as well as a garden path, cobbled yard, culvert and well (CAT Report 1874 2022).

South of the proposed site are the boundary walls of the Writtle Bowling Club that are Grade II listed (NHLE 1072609) as they are formerly the walled garden of the vicarage and date to AD 1656 (EHER 39274). Two Roman cremation urns were uncovered at Writtle Bowling Club in 1840 (EHER 711).

The site is located approximately 60m east-north-east of All Saints Church. The church originally dates from the 12th century, with later additions and alterations (SMR 705). Excavation to the immediate east of the churchyard in 1953 revealed Roman brick fragments and pottery. Roman brick and *septaria* can be seen in the make-up of the church.

#### 4 Aims

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which were exposed by the groundworks.

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

A trench for the footings of the extension was monitored, measuring approximately 9.8m<sup>2</sup>. It was between 0.6-0.7m wide and excavated to a depth of 1-1.2m.

Three horizons were noted. A garden topsoil (L1, c. 0.25m thick) covered the entire site. This covered a make-up layer (L2, c 0.5m thick), which sealed clayey natural (L3, from c. 0.8m below current ground level).



**Photograph 1** General shot of completed trench, view south-east.

Three features were recorded during monitoring. The first (F1) was a large pit, measuring 1.7m long, at least 0.7m wide and at least 0.5m deep. The base of the feature was not reached at the required depth of the trench. Flecks of CBM were seen throughout, and a layer of oyster shell was noted in the lower half of F1. These were not retained for post-excavation analysis. The CBM flecks seen were not diagnostic in nature, but were noted on site to likely be medieval/

post-medieval in date. Feature F2 was a disused soakaway, backfilled with red brick and similar material. The full extent was not exposed, but measured at least 1.9m wide, 1.6m long, and 1m deep. The third feature was a brick structure of unknown function (F3). Only a small portion of the feature was seen, but was around 0.5m wide and at least two courses high. The structure may have been rounded in shape and appeared post-medieval/modern in date.

At least six service cables or pipes of varying types were noted during the excavation of the trench. These included gas pipes and disused ceramic drainage pipes.



**Photograph 2** South-facing representative section including a section of F1, view north.



**Photograph 3** Northern section of F2, view north-west.



**Photograph 4** F2 during excavation, showing brick backfilled into feature, view north-west.



**Photograph 5** General shot of F3, view north.



**Photograph 6** Some of the service cables and pipes uncovered at south-west end, view south.

## 6 Finds

*by Dr Matthew Loughton and Alec Wade*

Soakaway F2 produced a fragment (414g) of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile, four sherds (221g) of modern Staffordshire-type white earthenwares (fabric F48D) from a bowl (EVE:0.13), and a piece (60g) of cattle/horse rib that had been sawn at one end. All of this material has been discarded.

## 7 Conclusion

Archaeological monitoring undertaken at 3 Romans Place identified a pit of probable medieval/post-medieval date. The oyster shell in the pit possibly suggests a date prior to the post-medieval period, and the CBM flecks were thought to be medieval/post-medieval in date. Also uncovered were a post-medieval/modern soakaway and unidentified brick structure associated with the 18th-century property. Similar brick features were also found during archaeological monitoring at 1 Romans Place, dating to the 18th-19th century (CAT Report 1874). This included a well, which may provide a clue to the identification of the brick structure. Made ground was noted to be from 0.74m deep and natural from 0.93m bcgl at 1 Romans Place, akin to the current site. Their similarities are to be expected, as the properties are within close proximity, and contemporary to each other.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks the homeowner for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister and A Wightman and carried out by A Smith. Figures were prepared by E Holloway, A Smith and M Beale. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Mark Baister.

## 9 References

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

CAT Report 1874	2022	<i>Archaeological Monitoring at 1 Romans Place, Writtle, Essex, CM1 3JD: November 2022</i> , by B Quinn
ECCPS	2023	<i>Brief for Archaeological Monitoring at 3 Romans Place, Writtle</i> , by M Baister
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 June 2020
Collins, C	2017	<i>Archaeological Test Pit Excavations in Writtle, Essex: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014</i> . Access Cambridge Archaeology
ECC	2017	<i>Chelmsford Borough Historic Environment Characterisation Project</i> . Essex County Council Historic Environment
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14)
Historic England	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (MoRPHE)
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	2023	<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	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHEA	Essex Historic Environment Advisor
EHES	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, <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
prehistoric	pre-Roman
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
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**

CAT Report 1994

ECC brief

CAT WSI

Digital photographs

Graphics files

Site data (including scans of original plans/sections)

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 the Archaeology Data Service.

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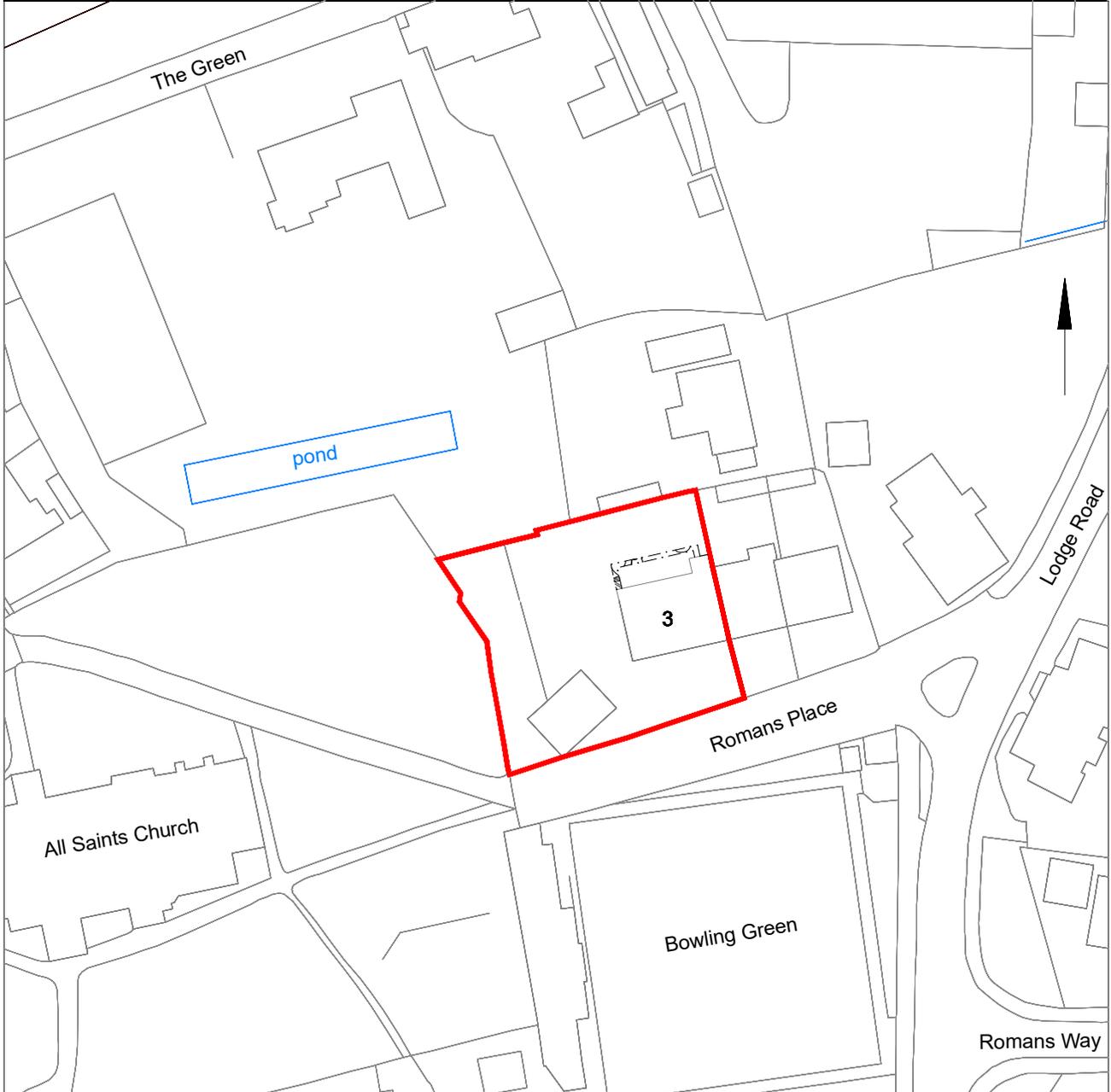
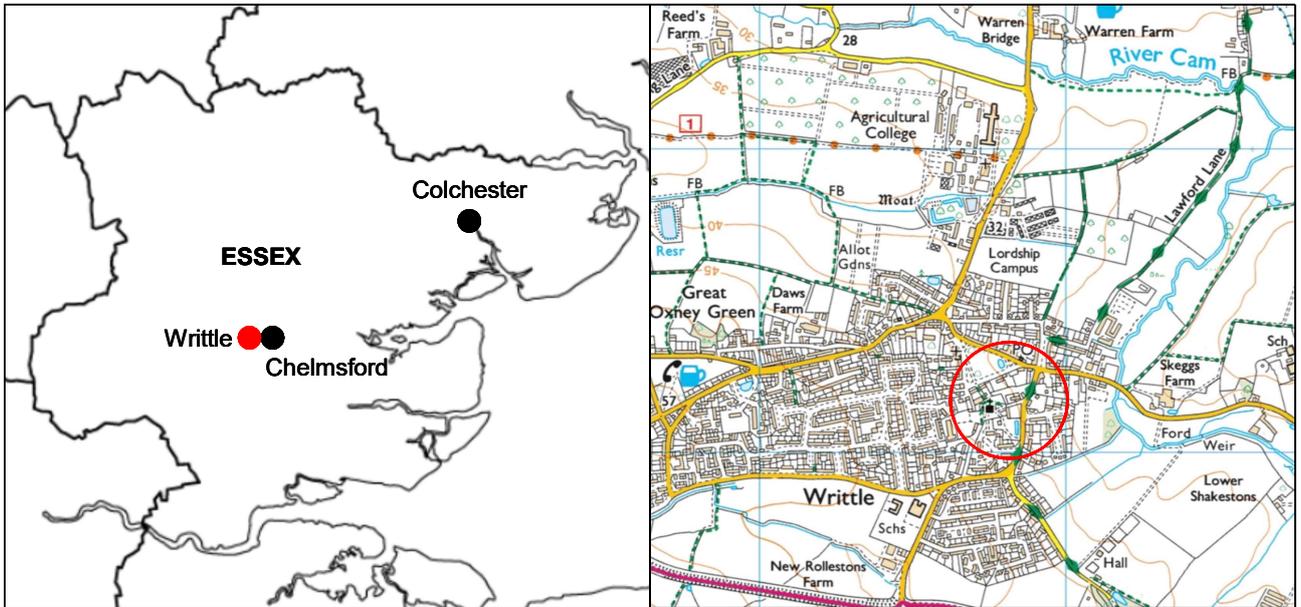
### **Distribution list**

The homeowner

Mark Baister, Essex Historic Environment Officer  
Essex Historic Environment Record

## Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Finds no.	Context type	Description	Date
L1	-	Topsoil	Friable moist dark grey/brown silt and inclusions of: stone 1%	Modern
L2	-	Makeup	Friable moist medium grey/brown silt and inclusions of: stone 1%	Post-medieval/modern
L3	-	Natural	Firm moist medium yellow/orange clay and inclusions of: stone 1%	Post-glacial
F1	-	Pit	Friable moist dark grey/brown clay silt and inclusions of: stone 2%	Undated; probably medieval/post-medieval
F2	1	Soakaway	Friable moist dark grey/brown clayey silt and inclusions of: tile/brick 60%	Post-medieval/modern
F3	-	Brick structure	Red brick and mortar	Post-medieval/modern



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Fig 1 Site location.



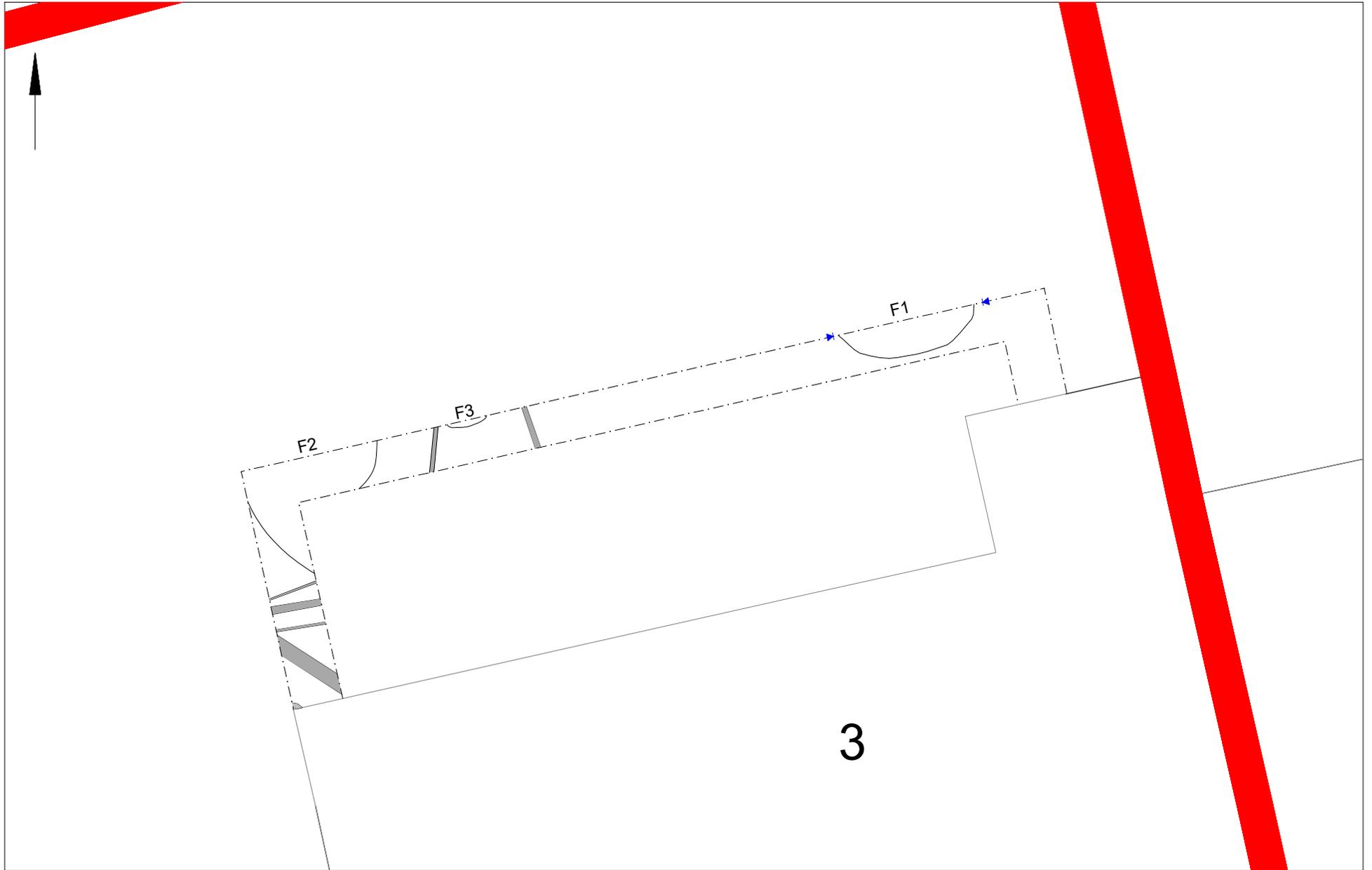


Fig 2 Results.  
Modern services are in grey.



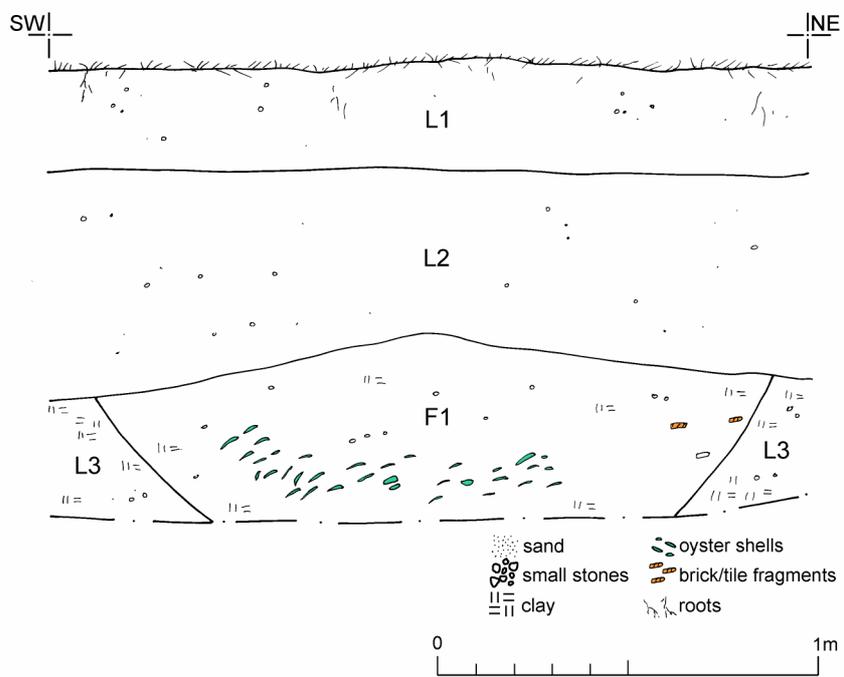


Fig 3 Section.

# OASIS Summary for colchest3-519031

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-519031
Project Name	Archaeological monitoring at 3 Romans Place, Writtle, Chelmsford, CM1 3JD: October 2023
Sitename	3 Romans Place, Writtle, Chelmsford CM1 3JD
Sitecode	
Project Identifier(s)	2023/09b
Activity type	Watching Brief
Planning Id	23/01177/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	26-Oct-2023 - 26-Oct-2023
Location	3 Romans Place, Writtle, Chelmsford CM1 3JD NGR : TL 67830 06174 LL : 51.72916110884161, 0.42875931474982 12 Fig : 567830,206174
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Essex Local Authority District : Chelmsford Parish : Writtle
Project Methodology	Archaeological monitoring took place at 3 Romans Place, Writtle ahead of the construction of a single-storey rear extension and associated groundworks. All work was carried out in accordance with the Brief and WSI.
Project Results	Archaeological monitoring took place at 3 Romans Place, Writtle, Chelmsford, ahead of the construction of a rear single-storey extension. The property itself is an 18th-century timber-framed Grade II listed building, and is located within the Writtle Conservation Area. Likely early features of the property, a soakaway and brick structure – possibly a well – were identified, as well as a medieval/post-medieval pit.
Keywords	Rubbish Pit - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Soakaway - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Private individual
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Chris Lister, Adam Wightman
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;