

**An archaeological evaluation at
11 Maldon Road, Colchester, Essex
March 2006**

**report prepared by
Howard Brooks**

**on behalf of
Harding Homes (Essex) Ltd**

CAT project ref: 06/3b
Colchester Museums accession code: 2006.26
NGR: TL 99135 24875



Colchester Archaeological Trust
12 Lexden Road,
Colchester,
Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051
tel./fax: (01206) 500124
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

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Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aim	2
5	Results	2
6	Finds	2
7	Discussion	4
8	Archive deposition	5
9	Acknowledgements	5
10	References	5
11	Glossary	6
12	Context list	6

Figures after p 7

EHER summary sheet

List of figures

Fig 1 Site location, showing trench position.

Fig 2 Trench plan.

Fig 3 Sections.

List of tables

Table 1 Quantification of bone.

Table 2 Catalogue of the faunal remains listed
in order of feature number.

Table 3 Other finds.

1 Summary

Eighteen Roman burials and the remains of a Roman building were found 40m north of this site in 1971, and other burials have been recorded in this area. An evaluation trench in the garden to the rear of the property revealed 0.8m-1.0m of post-medieval topsoils sealing three post-medieval pits, the largest of which may have been a quarry-pit. Roman pottery and tile was found in a residual context in later features, but there was no evidence of Roman burials (presumably because of destruction caused by the post-medieval quarrying).

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological evaluation carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at no 11 Maldon Road, Colchester, Essex. The work was commissioned by Roy Grimwade Architects on behalf of Harding Homes (Essex) Ltd.
- 2.2 Planning consent has been sought for the erection of 12 flats on the site (application no F/COL/06/0031). An archaeological evaluation was requested by Martin Winter, the Colchester Borough Council Archaeology Officer (CBCAO), with the aim of providing information on the impact of the proposed work on any surviving archaeological remains on the site.
- 2.3 Site work took place between the 9th and 13th March 2006. Post-excavation work was carried out between the 20th March and 7th April 2006.
- 2.4 The development site lies on the western side of Colchester, at the junction between Maldon Road and Southway (centred at National Grid Reference or NGR TL 99135 24875).
- 2.5 This report mirrors standards and practices contained in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines for the standards and practice of archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CM 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (CM 2003), the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IFA 1999) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2), and *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment* (EAA 3), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (EAA 8), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) was also followed.

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The site lies to the south-west of the Roman and medieval town. There are two principal areas of archaeological interest here. First, the extensive areas of Roman cemeteries which are known to spread along the southern fringe of the Roman town have been excavated at several points close to the site. Immediately to the north of 11 Maldon Road, prior to the construction of the Southern Relief Road (now Southway), eighteen Roman burials and the remains of a Roman building were excavated in 1971 (UAD no 3018, *CAR 9*, 237-44). There were more extensive excavations on the site now occupied by the Police HQ on Butt Road, where more than 700 Roman burials were excavated in the 1970s, and a church associated with the cemetery is now on display beside the Police HQ (*CAR 9*, 6-192).
- 3.2 As well as the Roman remains, it is possible that the precinct of the Crouched Friars friary extended as far south as the present site (*CAR 9*, 245-57). This important but little understood medieval friary still survives in place names such as Crouch Street and Crouched Friars, but the friary buildings have all disappeared. Excavations at 42 Crouch Street in 1988 identified medieval burials and part of a building which was probably part of the friary (*CAR 9*, 245-57).

4 Aim

The aim of the evaluation was to identify and record any surviving archaeological remains, and to assess their quality, extent, date and importance.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

The removal of Layer or L1, a dark, modern topsoil up to 0.65m deep, revealed a lower and slightly less dark brown soil horizon (L2), itself up to 0.45m thick. This sequence of soils is typical in Colchester, and is normally interpreted as a dark and very modern topsoil lying over an earlier, post-medieval topsoil. Much of the depth of the upper layer (L1) may be due to the recent dumping of soil against the garden retaining wall, and the growth of this topsoil will have been encouraged by the rotting down of garden plants in the normal cycle of gardening life.

Underneath the garden soil layers (L1, L2) were three cut features. The largest was Feature or F1. This was at least 2.6m wide, with only its west edge in the evaluation trench, and a maximum of 0.75m deep below the archaeological level (ie the bottom of L2). Finds in F1 (particularly the pottery) indicate a 17th- or 18th-century date for its infilling, and it is unlikely to have been dug out much before that date. It is reasonable to suggest that this was a sand quarry-pit, given the presence of quarry-pits in the area, at Butt Road (CAR 9, 5) and Alexandra Road (CAT Report 187).

Parts of two other features (F2 and F3) were observed in the corner of the trench. To judge by their depth and the curve of their sides, these were much smaller than F1. Only F2 had finds, and these were the same type and date as those in F1, ie 17th- to 18th-century pottery and clay pipes. Both F1 and F2 had residual Roman material, a roof tile (*tegula*) in F2, and two potsherds in F1.

The features F1-F3 (and perhaps the lower topsoil L2?) represent activity on this site before the construction of the Victorian house at 11 Maldon Road. The accumulation of soil layer L1 took place in the garden to the rear of 11 Maldon Road over the 19th and 20th centuries.

6 Finds

6.1 The faunal remains

by Julie Curl

Summary

A total of 1.253 kg of faunal remains was recovered from two features during excavations at 11 Maldon Road, Colchester, Essex. All the remains were from domesticated food mammals (cattle and sheep/goat); no human remains were identified in this assemblage.

Methodology

All the bone was examined, primarily to determine species present, types of bones and any butchering that has occurred. Ages of the animals were estimated where possible from the fusion of the bones and the wear on the teeth. Bone was quantified by counting the total number of pieces in each context, the number of measurable and countable bones following guidelines supplied by English Heritage (Davis 1992), and the number of bones identified for each species. Bone was also weighed for each context. All of the information was recorded on the faunal remains recording sheets and the information input into an Excel database for analysis. A table giving a summary of the information is included with this report (Table 2).

Results and discussion

A total of 1.253kg of faunal remains were recovered (see Table 1); all of the bone is of a post-medieval date and sealed by post-medieval garden soils. The remains were all of butchered cattle and sheep/goat. All of the bone had been chopped from dismemberment of the carcass and the bones showed fine knife-cuts from removal

of the meat. Canid gnawing was noted on cattle bone from F2 (Find no 3); this bone is probably from waste meat/bones given to domestic dogs for food, but the gnawing may be as a result of scavenger activity.

Table 1 Quantification of bone.

Feature no	Quantity/weight	Total
1	Total quantity	23
	Total weight (g)	658
2	Total quantity	4
	Total weight (g)	595
Total quantity		27
Total weight (g)		1,253

Table 2 Catalogue of the faunal remains listed in order of feature number.

F/L no	Find no	Date	Total qty	Wt (g)	Species	Species qty	Age	Butchering	Comments
1	2	post-medieval	23	658	cattle	7	range	cut/chopped	humerus, pelvis, molar, vertebrae +
1	2	post-medieval			sheep/goat	6	adult	cut/chopped	sheep skull fragment, molar, humeri, scapula
1	2	post - medieval			mammal	10		butchered	fragments of large mammal (?cattle)
2	3	post - medieval	4	595	cattle	4	adult	cut/chopped	femur, metapodials, tibia; gnawed

The cattle bone from F1, Find no 2, included both adult and juvenile remains, all of which and been butchered. The cattle molar (Find no 2) showed very high calculus deposits and evidence of gum disease, which would have caused discomfort and probable further infection to the animal.

The sheep/goat remains in F1 (Find no 2) were all of adults. Of the skull fragment, the shape of the coronal suture line shows that this fragment of skull is from a sheep, rather than from goat. The other sheep/goat remains (Find no 2) include two humeri, a scapula fragment and tibia shaft, all of which had been butchered. Slight arthritic disease was observed on the distal end of one of the sheep/goat humeri, suggesting an older animal.

All the bone from F2 (Find no 3) belonged to adult cattle, and this bone had been butchered for meat; fine knife-cuts were also seen on a metapodial. These would have occurred when the animal was skinned. Canid gnawing was also recorded on the chopped and cut femur; this bone had almost certainly been given to a large domestic dog once the meat had been removed.

Conclusions

This assemblage is derived from the butchering and food waste from domesticated animals (cattle and sheep/goat). The gnawing present suggests meat waste that was given to a domestic or possibly a working dog.

Recommendations for further work

No further work is needed on this assemblage.

6.2 Other finds

Roman pottery fabrics are after *CAR 10*. Post-Roman pottery fabric numbers are after *CAR 7* and Cunningham 1985. Stephen Benfield (CAT) identified the Roman pottery.

Table 3: other finds.

Find no	Context	Quantity	Weight (in g)	Description	Date
2	F1	10	560	clay tobacco-pipe stem fragments	post-medieval
2	F1	4	352	clay tobacco-pipe foot or bowl fragments; one foot is unstamped, the other bears a slightly smudged stamp of W or M - bowl shapes are 17th-century type? Bores are between 2mm and 3mm; a recent study of bore sizes (Clarke 2001) suggests that bores in that size range would date between AD 1650 and AD 1775	post-medieval
2	F1	7	199	PMRE (Fabric 40) sherds including 2 rims	17th-18th century
2	F1	4	120	Border ware (Fabric 42)	17th century
2	F1	2	56	stoneware (Fabric 45); one looks like a late Frechen, maybe 17th century, the other is a tankard base in the Westerwald style but with a Raeren colouring, 17th-18th century	17th-18th century
2	F1	1	7	Fabric 13 sherd (residual)	12th century
2	F1	2	18	glass sherds: one from base of ?goblet, second from brown glass vessel - goblets commonest in later 16th-18th centuries (Willmott 2002, 118-21)	post-medieval
2	F1	2	63	Roman sherds: Fabric GX sandy grey ware (Roman date); the other is from a large storage jar, Fabric GX or HZ, late 1st to 2nd/3rd century (both residual)	Roman
3	F2	1	46	peg-tile, 11mm thick	medieval or post-medieval
3	F2	2	41	Colchester-type ware (Fabric 21a) with slight glaze	15th-16th century
3	F2	1	543	Roman <i>tegula</i> fragment with flange (residual)	Roman
3	F2	1	441	Tudor brick, 55mm thick	17th-18th century
3	F2	1	8	clay tobacco-pipe stem fragment, bore approx 2.25mm	18th century
3	F2	1	95	PMRE (Fabric 40) glazed pancheon rim fragment	17th-18th century

7 Discussion

Previous archaeological study in this area has shown two principal types of activity: Roman cemeteries and post-medieval sand quarrying. Both were evident on the site of the present Butt Road Police headquarters (150m to the east-south-east of the currently site), where excavations in the 1970s recovered over 700 Roman burials next to a large quarry pit which must have destroyed hundreds (if not thousands) of others (CAR 9, 4-202). Similarly, an evaluation at 2, Alexandra Road (200m south-east) also showed evidence of Roman cemeteries destroyed by recent quarry pits (CAT Report 187). The three features on the current site, while not exactly on the

scale of large quarry pits, do seem to be within the same tradition of post-medieval pits in this area.

The discovery of eighteen Roman burials and part of a Roman building only 40m to the north during the construction of Southway in the early 1970s (CAR 9, 236-244) shows that there are Roman burials in the immediate vicinity of this site. It is therefore surprising that no Roman burials (or even loose bones) were found, but the two Roman sherds and a Roman tile found in residual contexts in the later soil layers do reinforce the presence of Roman remains in this area.

The site of the medieval hospital and house of the Crossed (Crouched) Friars lies 80m to the north of the site, on the south side of Crouch Street (named after the priory). Beyond a single medieval sherd, there was no evidence of general medieval activity at 11 Maldon Road, or of any activity specifically connected with the Priory.

8 Archive deposition

The finds and the paper and digital archive are held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but both will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museums under accession code 2006.26.

9 Acknowledgements

CAT is grateful to Harding Developments Ltd for commissioning and funding the work, and for allowing access to the site. The fieldwork was carried out by CAT staff supervised by Ben Holloway. The project was monitored by Martin Winter, Colchester Borough Council Archaeology Officer.

10 References

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|-----------------|------|--|
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IFA	1999	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
IFA	2001	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
MAP 2	1991	<i>Management of archaeological projects</i> , 2nd edition (English Heritage)
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11 Glossary

CM	Colchester Museums
context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c AD 1500
modern	period from the 20th century onwards to the present
NGR	National Grid Reference
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
pancheon	large bowl
PMRE	post-medieval red earthenware
post-med	post-medieval, the period from c 1500 to c 1900
residual	an early find in a later context (eg a Roman coin in a Victorian pit).
Roman	the period from AD 43 to AD 410 approximately
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database, maintained by CM
U/S	unstratified, ie no context

12 Context list

Context	Description	Cuts/seals	Finds nos and description	Context date
F1	Pit	L3	2 (post-medieval pottery, unfrogged PM brick, peg tile, mortar, clay tobacco pipe)	post-medieval
F2	Pit	L3	3 (post-medieval pottery, Roman tile, unfrogged post-medieval brick, peg-tile, clay tobacco pipe)	post-medieval
F3	Pit	L3	-	post-medieval
L1	Topsoil	L2	-	modern
L2	Subsoil	L3	1 (post-medieval pottery, unfrogged post-medieval brick, peg-tile, mortar, clay tobacco pipe)	post-medieval
L3	Natural	-	-	-

Distribution list:

Harding Homes (Essex) Ltd

Roy Grimwade Architects

Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust

12 Lexden Road,

Colchester,

Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051

tel./fax: (01206) 500124

email: archaeologists@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 20.04.06

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Fig 1 Site location, showing trench position.

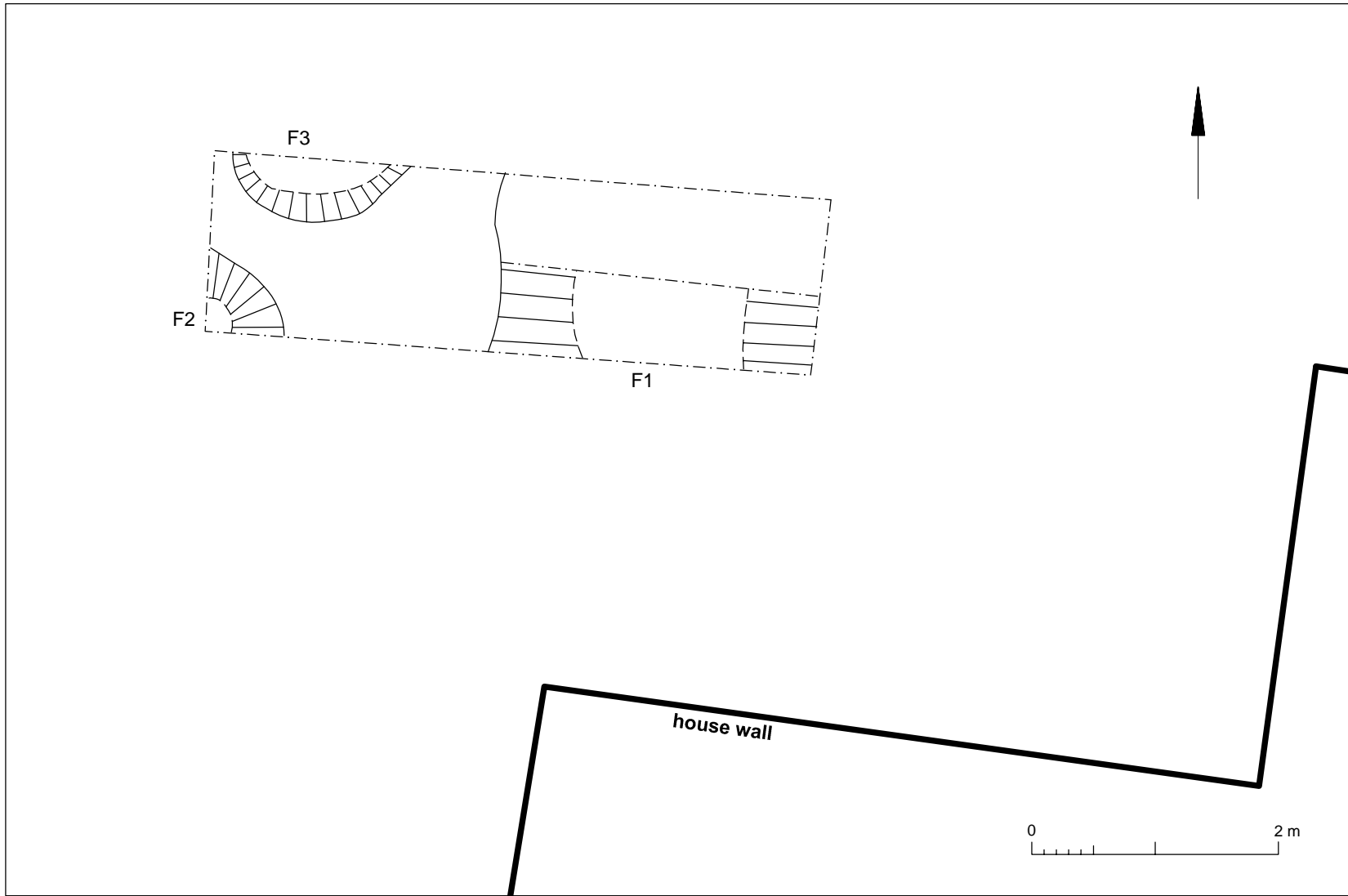
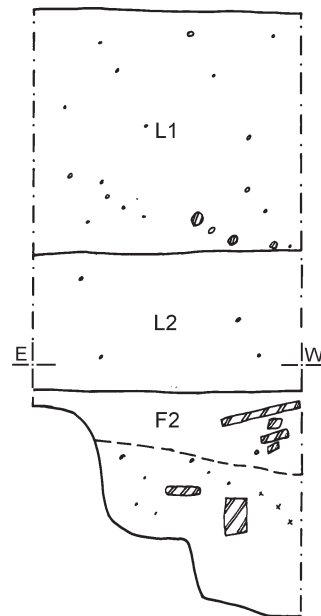
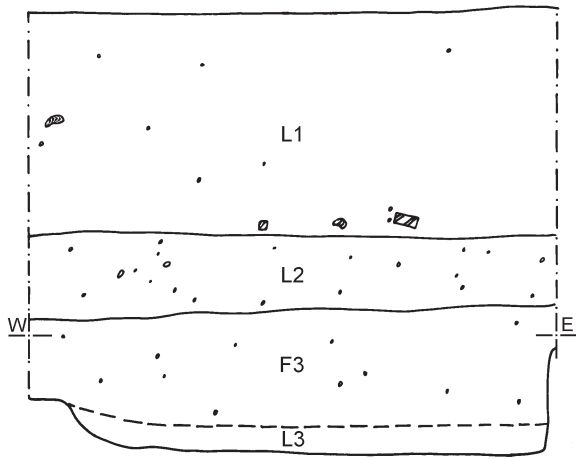
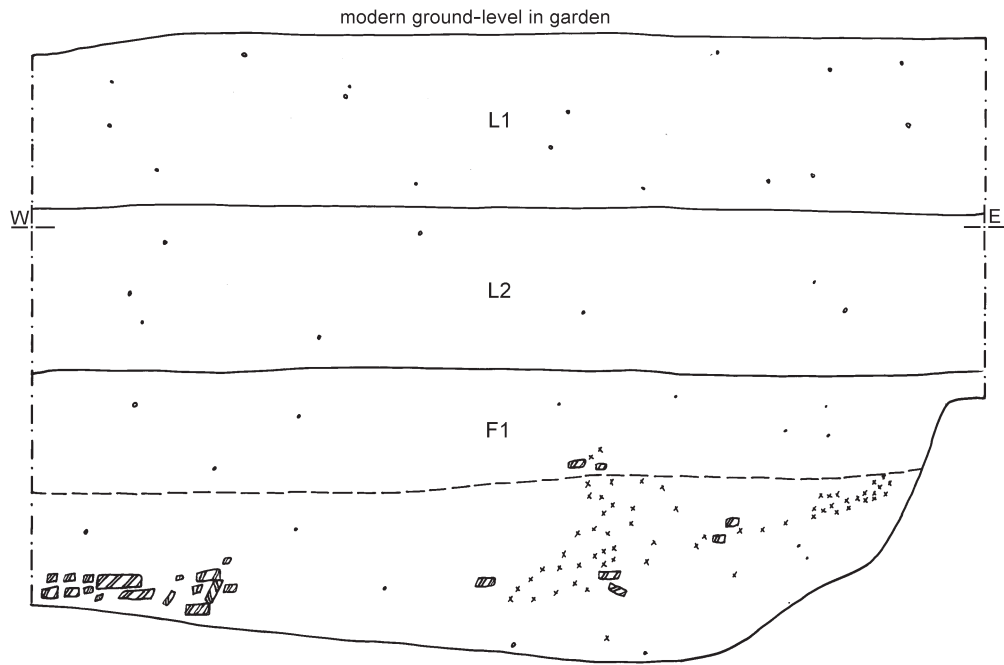


Fig 2 Trench plan.



Key




-  stone
-  post-Roman CBM
-  mortar flecking

Fig 3 Sections.

**Essex Historic Environment Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

Site address: 11 Maldon Road, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester Borough
NGR: TL 99135 24875	Site code: Museum accession code 2006.26
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: August 2004-April 2005	Size of area investigated: 1 trench 5 x 1.5m
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER/UAD nos: UAD no 3018
Final report: CAT Report 359 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: post-medieval, modern	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Eighteen Roman burials and the remains of a Roman building were found 40m north of this site in 1971, and other burials have been recorded in this area. An evaluation trench in the garden to the rear of the property revealed 0.8m-1.0m of post-medieval topsoils sealing three post-medieval pits, the largest of which may have been a quarry-pit. Roman pottery and tile was found in a residual context in later features, but there was no evidence of Roman burials (presumably because of destruction caused by the post-medieval quarrying).</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Howard Brooks	Date of summary: April 2006