

**Archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching
on land adjacent to 32 Albert Road, Witham,
Essex, CM8 2BS**

November 2015



**by Laura Pooley
with contributions by Stephen Benfield
illustrations by Chris Lister and Emma Holloway**

**on behalf of Robert Clarke,
agent Andrew Stevenson Associates**

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Braintree Museum accession code: pending
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Colchester Archaeological Trust
Roman Circus House,
Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex CO2 7GZ
tel.: 07436 273 304
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

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EHER Summary Sheet

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out in advance of the construction of a single dwelling with associated landscaping and access on land adjacent to 32 Albert Road, Witham. It lies within the historic site known as Chipping Hill Camp, an Iron Age hillfort refortified in the Anglo-Saxon period with evidence of continuous occupation.

Five Iron Age features were excavated (four pits and a post-hole). Located on the projected outer edge of the Chipping Hill earthwork, they are likely to be associated with small-scale domestic/settlement activity taking place on the periphery of the hillfort.

A single medieval/post-medieval roadside ditch was also recorded running parallel to Albert Road.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial-trench on land adjacent to 32 Albert Road, Witham, Essex which was carried out on the 3rd November 2015. The work was commissioned by Andrew Stevenson Associates, the agent for Robert Clarke, in advance of the construction of a single dwelling with associated landscaping, modification of existing access and creation of new vehicular access, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Historic England and Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Teresa O'Connor recommended 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* (DCLG 2012).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa O'Connor (ECCPS 2014), and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2015).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (English Heritage 2006), 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.

The proposed development site lies adjacent to the remains of a prehistoric site known as Chipping Hill Camp (EHER 8106-8109) which now lies underneath Witham. The site is thought to have been enclosed by two concentric earthwork defences that surrounded a settlement. Excavation has shown that the inner earthwork is in fact a univallate Iron Age hillfort, the western part of which was refortified in Anglo-Saxon times. Occupation of the site is shown to be continuous by the number of times the defences have been remodelled. Evidence for settlement has also been found outside of the defensive earthworks. The development site lies along the projected route of the outer defensive earthwork, and evidence relating to the construction or settlement of the earthworks may be impacted upon by the proposed development.

4 Results (Figs 2-3)

An L-shaped trial-trench was excavated across the footprint of the new dwelling. It was located to avoid an existing sewer and the foundations of the proposed development. In total the trench measured 10m long by 1.8m wide (18m²). At the request of Historic Environment Advisor Teresa O'Connor, after the features had been sectioned and planned they were all 100% excavated.

Three layers were identified: modern topsoil (L1, 37mm thick) sealing a silty-clay subsoil (L2, 7mm thick), sealing natural silty-clay (L3). The development site, the former garden of 32 Albert Road, sits c.200mm higher than ground level at No 32. It is likely that the site was artificially raised by dumped topsoil when No 32 was built, accounting for the thick deposit of L1.

Seven archaeological features were identified. All of the recorded features were sealed by L2 and cut into L3. F1 was a medieval/post-medieval roadside ditch running east-west parallel to Albert Road. It was recorded for a distance of 3.6m and measured 0.44m deep.

To the north of F1 were five Iron Age features and one undated/natural feature. Four were sub-circular or elongated pits measuring between 0.13m-0.35m deep (F2, F3, F4 and F5). Pit F3 cut pit F4 and pit F5 cut post-hole F6, a small round feature 0.35m in diameter and 0.18m deep. The final sub-circular feature, F7, was 0.20m deep and empty, and could be either a pit or a natural tree-throw.



Photograph 1 General trench shot looking north



Photograph 2 F1 and representative section



Photograph 3 F5 and F6

5 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

A small quantity of finds was recovered from five features (F1-5). The finds consist of pottery sherds of later prehistoric (Late Bronze Age/Iron Age & Iron Age) and medieval date, together with struck flints and heat altered stones (HAS). All of the finds are listed and described by context in Table 2 together with a spot date. The pottery fabrics are listed in Table 1. The medieval pottery fabric refers to the Essex post-Roman pottery fabric series as presented in *CAR 7*.

| Fabric codes | Fabric name |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Prehistoric:</i> | |
| HMF | hand-made, flint-tempered |
| HMQ | hand-made, prominent quartz-temper |
| HMS | hand-made, sand-tempered |
| <i>Medieval:</i> | |
| 20 | Medieval greywares (general) |

Table 1 Pottery fabrics

Small sherds of hand-made flint, quartz and sand-tempered pottery are associated with features F2, F3 & F4. These sherds can be fairly confidently dated to the later prehistoric period (Late Bronze Age-Iron Age) and an Iron Age date (c 750- 25 BC) appears most likely. One sand-tempered sherd from F4 is probably of Middle Iron Age date (c 350-25 BC). Pieces of burnt flint of probable prehistoric date were also recovered from F2. A small quantity of roughly struck flints from F5 (with large striking platforms and utilising rounded stones probably from local surface gravels or a water course) are also likely to be of later prehistoric (later Bronze Age-Iron Age) date. A single very abraded sandy sherd from F5 is not closely dated but a Late Iron Age or Roman date appears to be more likely than a prehistoric or later one. Activity in the Medieval period is represented by a rim from a bowl dating to the period centering on the 13th-14th century recovered from F1. Two small fragments of medieval pottery also recovered from the same feature are probably of similar date.

| Ctxt | Find no. | Find Type | Form/ description | No. | Wt/ g | spot date |
|------|----------|-----------|--|-----|-------|-------------------|
| F1 | 1 | pot | <i>Medieval :</i> Fabric 20 bowl rim (8 g), squared rim curving sides, similar to CAR 7 fig 61 no 30 but with flat rim top, red sandy fabric with grey surfaces (dated 13-14C). Two other small sherds in medieval greyware fabric (Fabric 20), slightly abraded (3 g) | 1 | 11 | 13-14C |
| F2 | 2 | pot | <i>prehistoric:</i> Fabric HMQ, three body sherds from the same pot, sandy with prominent quartz temper and rare flint, oxidised surface, some vegetable fragment voids on interior surface, grey-brown fabric and interior, burnt residue on interior surface (dated Iron Age) | 3 | 11 | Iron Age |
| F2 | 2 | HAS | Two pieces of heat altered (burnt) stone (HAS), both flint (dated as probably prehistoric) | 2 | 20 | prehistoric |
| F3 | 3 | pot | <i>prehistoric:</i> Fabric HMF, small body sherd with common fine-medium flint temper, grey smoothed surface, red-brown fabric and surface(1 g), two other tiny fragments (dated Late Bronze Age-Early/Middle Iron Age) | 1 | 1 | LBA-E/MIA |
| F4 | 4 | pot | <i>prehistoric:</i> Fabric HMS, small sherd, abraded, sand-tempered, some fine burnt (black) organic fagments in fabric, grey surface, grey-brown fabric, one surface abraded away (dated probably Middle Iron Age); one other similar small fragment | 1 | 1 | MIA(?) |
| F5 | 5 | pot | pottery sherd, probably from the base edge of a moderatly large pot, heavily abraded, pale red-brown moderately fine sandy fabric, sllightly powdery (not closely dated as possibly Roman) | 1 | 4 | Roman(?) |
| F5 | 5 | flint | Three flint flakes, one secondary cortex piece from a flint pebble, large striking platform, previous flake removal with slight hinge fracture, some damage or modification (possiby steep retouch) on one edge near distal end; second small flake with cortex, broad striking platform and earlier flake removal; small, irregular, thin flake piece with ends broken away (dated later prehistoric) | 3 | 14 | later prehistoric |

Table 2 Finds by context

6 Discussion

Seven archaeological features were excavated, including one undated/natural feature.

The earliest features on the site are four Iron Age pits and a posthole. Located on the projected outer edge of the Chipping Hill earthwork (Fig 4), they are likely to be associated with small-scale domestic/settlement activity taking place on the periphery of the hillfort. This activity was between the outermost earthwork known from excavation and the projected line of a hypothesised outer earthwork,

The latest feature was a roadside ditch forming a field boundary that ran parallel to Albert Road. Albert Road, then called Hill Lane, appears in the 2nd edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1895 (Map 1) and medieval pottery found in the ditch suggests that it had been in existence long before this date. By the New Series 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1923 (Map 2) a row of houses had been built along Albert Road.



Map 1 Location of Hill Lane, later known as Albert Road, on the 2nd edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1895. The development site is located between the 'L' and 'a' of Lane.



Map 2 Location of Albert Road and the Albert Road houses on the New Series 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1923.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Andrew Stevenson Associates (agent) and Robert Clarke (client) for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister and fieldwork was carried out by CL and F Whymark. Site plans were prepared by CL and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECC by Teresa O'Connor.

8 References

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

| | | |
|------------------|-------|---|
| CAR 7 | 2000 | <i>Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85, Colchester Archaeological Report 7, by John Cotter</i> |
| CAT | 2015 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land adjacent to 32 Albert Road, Witham</i> |
| CifA | 2014a | <i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i> |
| CifA | 2014b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> |
| DCLG | 2012 | <i>National Planning Policy Framework. Dept of Communities and Local Government.</i> |
| EAA 14 | 2003 | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England, East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14. Ed. D Gurney</i> |
| EAA 24 | 2011 | <i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24, by Maria Medlycott</i> |
| ECCPS | 2015 | <i>Brief for Archaeological Trial Trench evaluation on land adjacent to 32 Albert Road, Witham</i> |
| English Heritage | 2006 | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (English Heritage)</i> |

| | | |
|---|------|--|
| FAU | 2005 | <i>No 32a Avenue Road, Witham, Essex - Archaeological Evaluation & Monitoring</i> (Field Archaeology Unit, Essex CC report 1495) |
| John Newman Archaeological Services | 2014 | <i>Eckard House, Easton Road, Witham, Essex: Archaeological Monitoring Report</i> |
| Rodwell, W | 1993 | <i>The origins and early development of Witham, Essex</i> (Oxbow monograph 26) |

9 Abbreviations and glossary

| | |
|---------------|---|
| CAT | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| CIfA | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists |
| context | specific location of finds on an archaeological site |
| ECCPS | Essex County Council Place Services |
| 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 of soil |
| medieval | period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII |
| modern | period from c AD 1800 to the present |
| natural | geological deposit undisturbed by human activity |
| post-medieval | from Henry VIII to c AD 1800 |
| Roman | period from AD 43 to around AD 430 |
| WSI | Written Scheme of Investigation |

10 Contents of archive

Finds: Six small bags

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 890)

ECC Evaluation Brief, CAT Written Scheme of Investigation

Original site record (Feature and layer sheets, Finds record, plans)

Site digital photos and log, Architectural plans, Attendance register, Risk assessment

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital 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 Braintree Museum under accession code: pending

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Distribution list

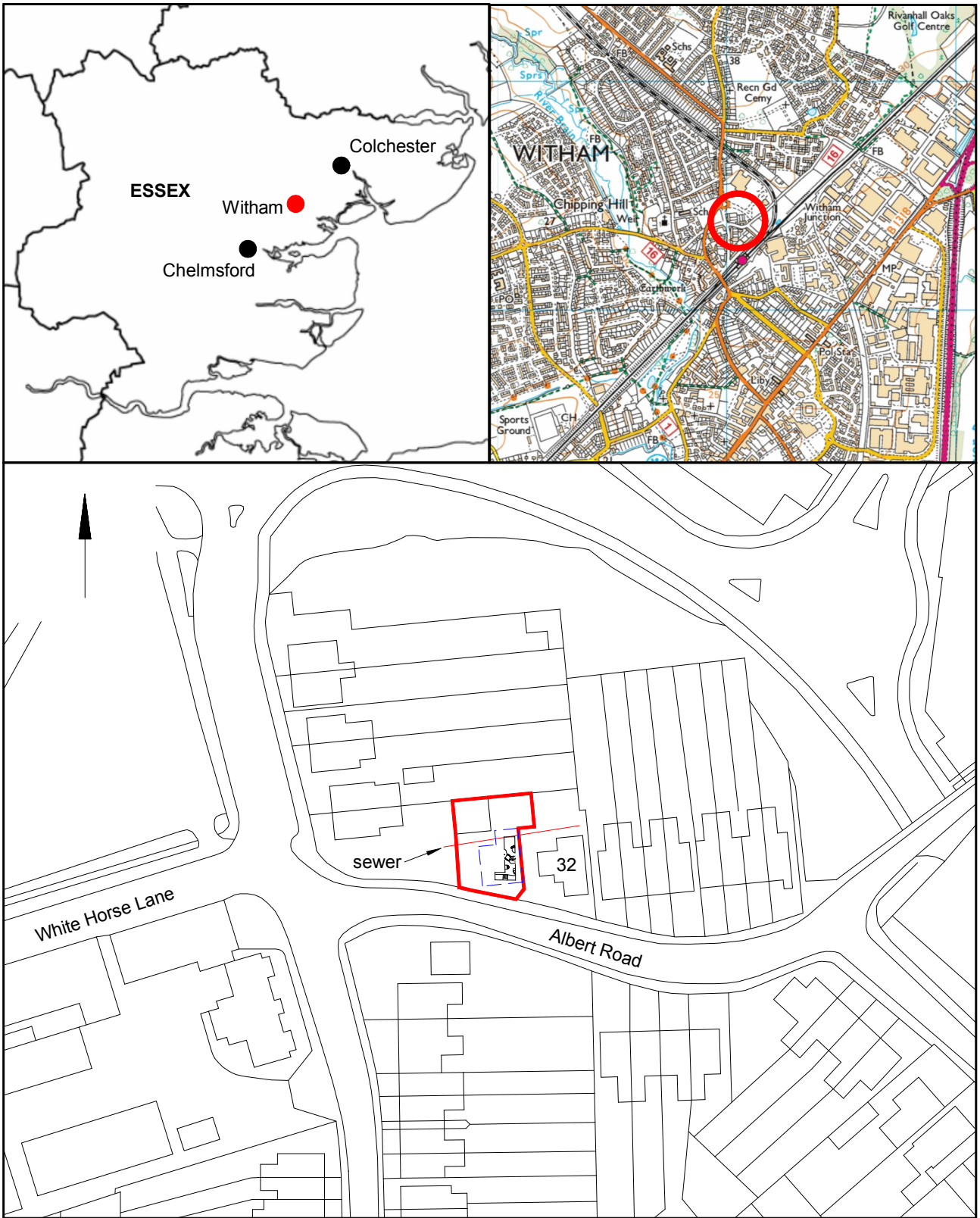
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Teresa O'Connor, Essex County Council
EHER



Colchester Archaeological Trust
Roman Circus House
Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex CO2 7GZ

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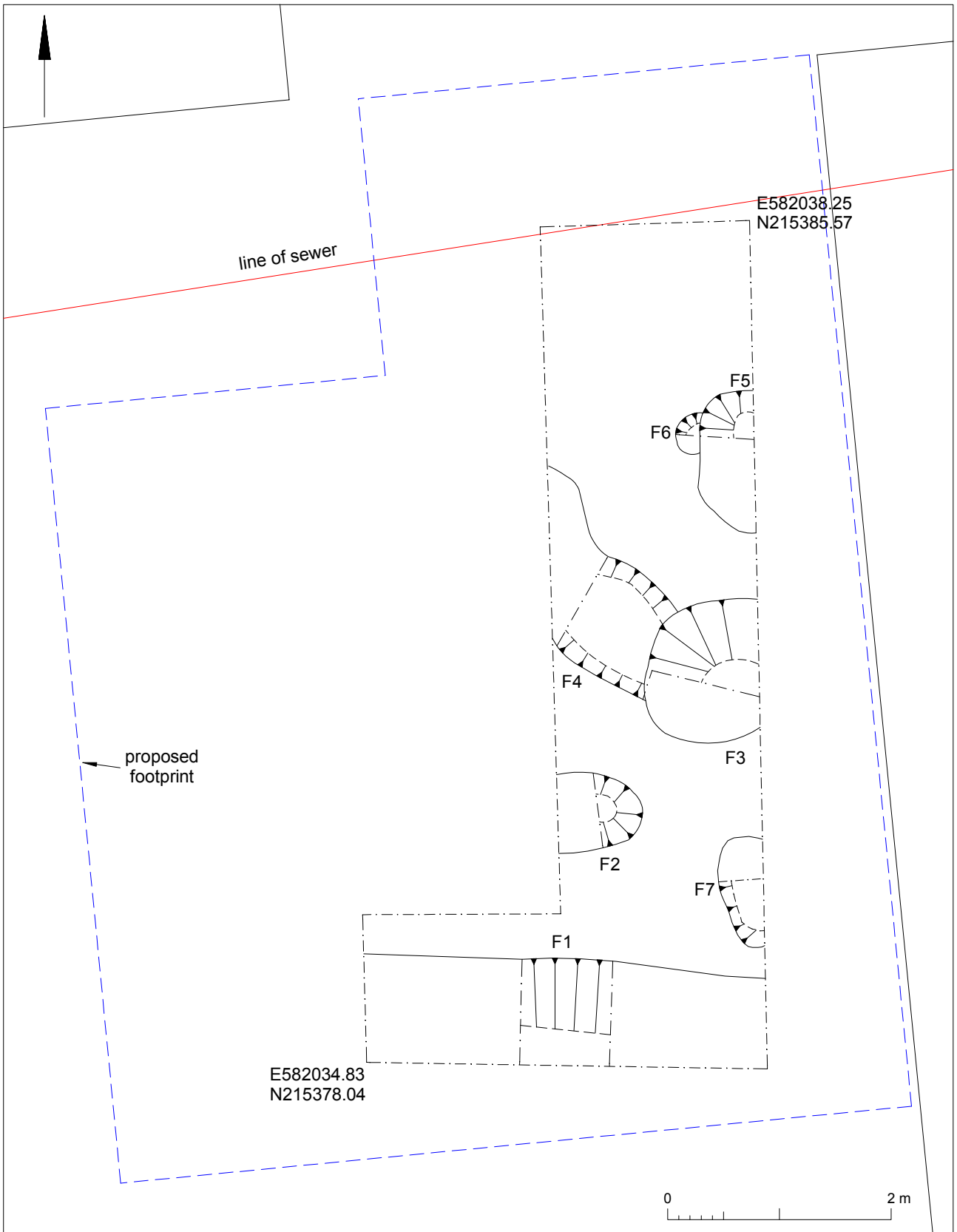
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Fig 1 Site location showing the position of the trench in relation to the proposed development.

0 50 m



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Fig 2 Trench results.

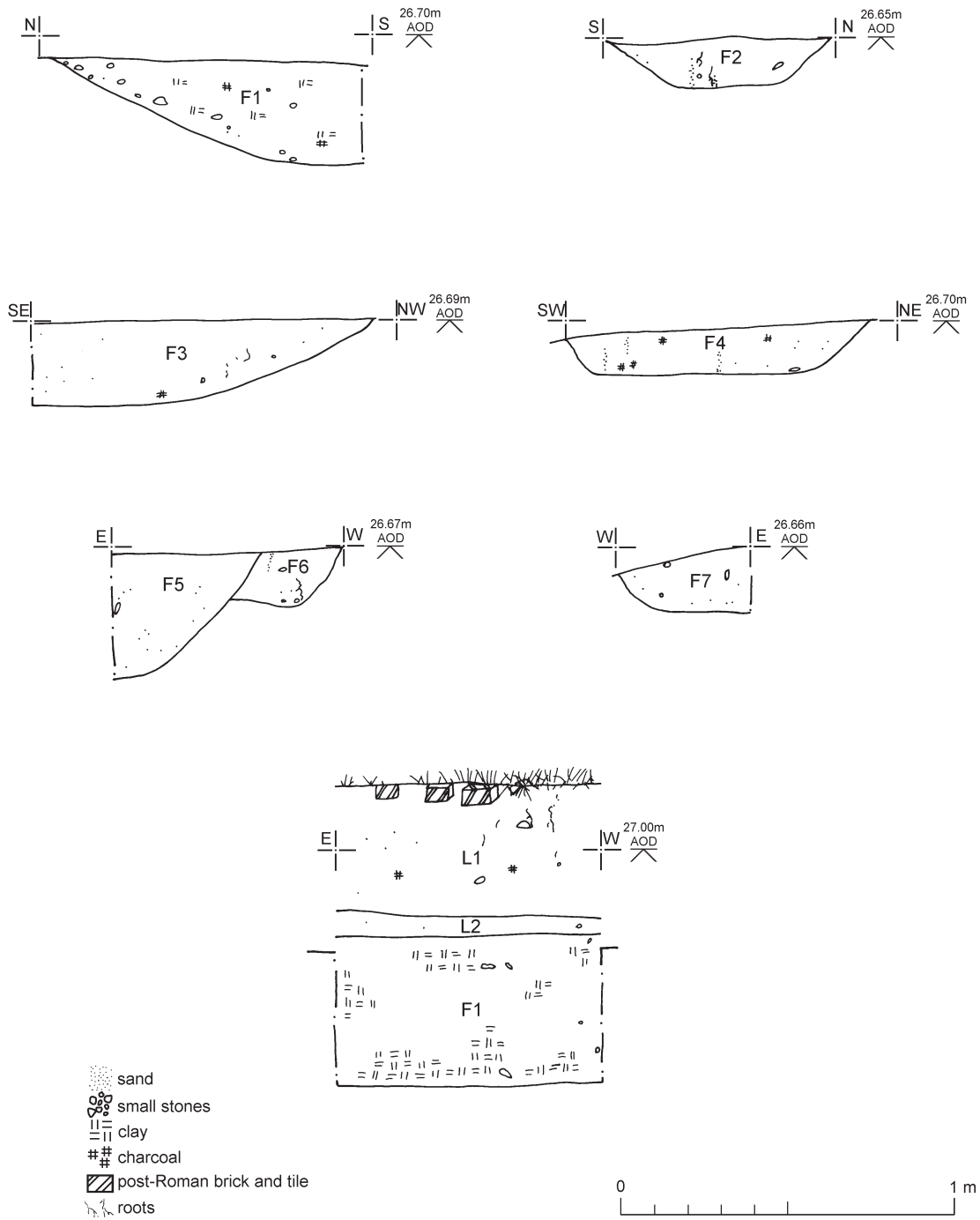


Fig 3 Feature sections (F1-7) and representative section.



Fig 4 The evaluation site (in red) and the probable extent of Chipping Hill Fort (in yellow) (after Rodwell, 1993; FAU, Essex CC, 2005; and John Newman Archaeological Services, 2014).

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

| | |
|--|---|
| Address: 32 Albert Road, Witham, Essex, CM8 2BS (land adjacent to) | |
| Parish: Braintree | District: Witham |
| NGR: TL 82036 15387 (c) | Site code: CAT project ref.: 15/10a ECC project code: WHAR15 OASIS ref: colchest3-228193 |
| Type of work: Evaluation | Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Date of work: 3rd November 2015 | Size of area investigated: <i>1 L-shaped trench totalling 10m by 1.8m (18m²)</i> |
| Location of curating museum: Braintree museum accession code: pending | Funding source: Owner |
| Further seasons anticipated? no | Related UAD/SMR number: EHER 8106-8109 |
| Final report: CAT Report 890 | |
| Periods represented: Iron Age, medieval/post-medieval | |
| <p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p><i>An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out in advance of the construction of a single dwelling with associated landscaping and access on land adjacent to 32 Albert Road, Witham. It lies within the historic site known as Chipping Hill Camp, an Iron Age hillfort refortified in the Anglo-Saxon period with evidence of continuous occupation.</i></p> <p><i>Five Iron Age features were excavated (four pits and a post-hole). Located on the projected outer edge of the Chipping Hill earthwork, they are likely to be associated with small-scale domestic/settlement activity taking place on the periphery of the hillfort.</i></p> <p><i>A single medieval/post-medieval roadside ditch was also recorded running parallel to Albert Road.</i></p> | |
| Previous summaries/reports: None | |
| CBC monitor: Teresa O'Connor | |
| Keywords: Iron Age, hillfort, Chipping Hill | Significance: * |
| Author of summary: Laura Pooley | Date of summary: November 2015 |