Archaeological monitoring and recording at 1 Church Hill, Earls Colne, Essex, CO6 2RG

April-June 2016

by Laura Pooley
with contributions by Stephen Benfield
figures by Robin Mathieson and Emma Holloway

fieldwork by Robin Mathieson and Mark Baister

**commissioned by Mandy Sexton
on behalf of Mr & Mrs Rice**

NGR: TL 8615 2885 (centre)
planning ref.: 14/01417/FUL
CAT project ref.: 16/02c
ECC Project code: EC5
Oasis project ID: colchest3-242125
Braintree Museum accession code: requested

Contents

List of photographs, tables and figures

Cover: general site shot

1 Summary

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks for extensions
and alterations to the existing property at 1 Church Hill, Earls Colne, Braintree. A post-
medieval/modern pit and ditch terminal were recorded along with two modern features.*

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological monitoring and recording (a watching
brief) at 1 Church Hill, Earls Colne, Braintree, Essex which was carried out between
26th April and 9th June 2016. The work was commissioned by Mandy Sexton on behalf
of Mr & Mrs Rice in advance of extensions and alterations to the existing property, and
was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

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

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological
monitoring and excavation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa
O'Connor (ECCPS 2015), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by
CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2016).

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
watching briefs* (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 utilises the Essex Historic Environment
Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford.

The EHER shows that the site lies within the extent of the historic town of Earls Colne.
Earls Colne first appears in the documentary record in AD950 as a small settlement,
and it is probable that it has been occupied continuously since that date (EHER 18469).
The proposed development is located between the 14th century church and the
remains of the Benedictine Priory built in 1101-7, the remains of which are scheduled
(monument 1009434).

Archaeological investigation nearby at Church Hill has revealed evidence for 16th/17th
occupation with remains of domestic and industrial activities, including several ditches
and gullies, pits and graveled surfaces, as well as a ?stoke hole for an oven or kiln.
Finds included evidence for antler-working (EHER 46711) (CAT Report 435).

There is the potential for surviving archaeological features and deposits relating to the
origins and subsequent development of the town, any such deposits are fragile and
likely to be disturbed/destroyed in the course of development on site.

4   Results (Figs 2-4)

Area 1 (11.4m x 7.3m)
Area 1 was stripped to natural. Four layers were identified. Modern topsoil (L1, *c* 340mm thick) sealed either a post-medieval subsoil (L2, *c* 360mm thick) to the south or a modern subsoil (L4) to the north. Layers L2 and L4 sealed natural clay (L3, identified *c* 700mm below current ground level). A modern linear feature (F2) and pit (F3) were identified close to the current house along with a modern service trench that ran across the area.

Photograph 1 Area 1 strip, looking NW

Area 2 (8.3m x 7.3m)
Area 2 was stripped to natural. Three layers were identified. Modern topsoil (L1, c 340mm thick) sealed post-medieval subsoil (L2, c 360mm thick), which sealed natural clay (L3, identified *c* 700mm below current ground level). The terminal of a post-medieval/modern ditch (F4) was identified along the southern edge. It was aligned east to west and measured approximately 1m wide by 0.38m deep.

Photograph 2 Area 2 strip, looking NE

Service trench (72.1m long by 0.5m wide)
The service trench was excavated to a depth of 0.6-0.7m. Three layers were identified.
Modern topsoil (L1, *c* 250mm thick) or modern concrete (L5, *c* 150mm thick), sealed
post-medieval subsoil (L2). A post-medieval/modern pit (F1) was identified measuring
approximately 5m wide by 1.1m deep. Animal bone, peg-tile, slate and oyster shell
were all identified in the fill of the pit (none retained for post-excavation analysis).

Photograph 3-4 Service trench, looking E (left) and N (right) with F1 in centre

5 Finds
by Stephen Benfield

A small quantity of finds dating to the post-medieval and modern period were recovered. These consist of pottery, ceramic building material (CBM) and a pieces of animal bone that probably represent butchery/food waste. The more closely dated finds (pottery & CBM) are of late 17th/18th-19th century date. All of the finds are listed and described by context in Table 2 and an overall spot date for the finds from each context is also provided. The pottery fabrics referred to follow the Essex post-Roman fabric series (Cunningham 1985 & *CAR* **7**) and are listed in Table 1. Dating of the brick CBM broadly follows Ryan (1996).

Fabric code	Fabric name
40	Post-medieval (glazed) red earthenware (general)
45	English stoneware (17th-18th century types)
47	Staffordshire-type white stonewares
48E	Yellow ware

Table 1 Pottery fabrics

Context & find no.	Form / description	spot date
F2, (1)	**Modern pottery:** three large joining sherds from a yellow-ware bowl (Fabric 48E) with blue 'mocha' design around body; post-Roman pottery (dated late 18th/19th-early 20th century). **Animal bone:** section of a cow long-bone cut (sawn) through at both ends, presumed butchery cuts	L18/19-E20C
F3, (3)	**Modern pottery:** Fabric 47 (2) joining sherd from a bowl with a flat, flange rim (c 18C). **CBM:** Brick (BR) sandy red with rare small stone (flint) inclusions (105 x 55 mm) (c 17-18C). **Animal bone:** (1) part of a cow mandible, roughly broken at both ends, short, deep cut on one side of mandible, presumed butchery piece	c18C
F4, (4)	**Post-medieval/modern pottery:** Fabric 40 (4) includes rim sherds (flat-topped, splayed) from a bowl with all over 'orange' glaze and base sherd from a large jar(?) (underside not glazed) (L17-M19C); Fabric 45 (1) cup or small-bowl in thin stoneware with a small footring and blue glazed exterior (L17/18-19C). **CBM:** Peg-tile (PT) (3) (medieval-post-medieval/modern); Brick (BR) sandy, moderately soft red, not frogged (100 x 45 mm) (c L17-18C); BR piece, orange red with brown ironstone(?) inclusions approx. 35 mm thick, thickness suggests a flooring brick (c L17-19C).	L17/18-19C probably 18 – E19C

Table 2 Finds by context and find number

6 Discussion
Monitoring revealed a post-medieval/modern pit and ditch terminal along with two other modern features. The *c* 16th- to 17th-century occupation evidence identified 25-30m to the south (CAT Report 435) does not appear to have continued into the development site.

7 Acknowledgements

8   References

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

CAR 7	2000	*Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85,* by J Cotter
CAT	2014	*Health and Safety Policy*
CAT	2015	*Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological monitoring and excavation at 1 Church Hill, Earls Colne, Braintree, Essex, CO6 2RG*
CAT Report 435	2008	*An archaeological watching brief at Church Hill, Earls Colne, Essex: July-September 2007*
CIfA	2014a	*Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*
CIfA	2014b	*Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*
Cunningham, C	1985	'A typology for post-Roman pottery in Essex' in Cunningham, C., & Drury, P., *Post-medieval sites and their pottery: Moulsham Street, Chelmsford,* CBA Research Report **54**
DCLG	2012	*National Planning Policy Framework.* Dept of Communities and Local Government.
EAA **14**	2003	*Standards for field archaeology in the East of England,* East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, **14**. Ed. D Gurney
EAA **24**	2011	*Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England,* East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers **24**, by Maria Medlycott
ECCPS	2015	*Brief for Archaeological Trial Trench evaluation at 157 Coggeshall Road, Braintree, CM7 9EW*
English Heritage	2006	*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (English Heritage)
Ryan, P	1996	*Brick in Essex, from the Roman conquest to the reformation*

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'
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
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	from Henry VIII to *c* AD 1800
residual	something out of its original context, eg a Roman coin in a modern pit
Roman	the period from AD 43 to *c* AD 410
Section	(abbreviation sc or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

10   Contents of archive

Finds: none retained
Paper and digital record
One A4 document wallet containing:
The report (CAT Report 972)
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: requested

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Distribution list:
Mandy Sexton
Mr & Mrs Rice
Teresa O'Connor, Essex County Council Place Services
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

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

tel.:   01206 501785
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

*Checked by:* Howard Brooks
Date: 3.7.2016
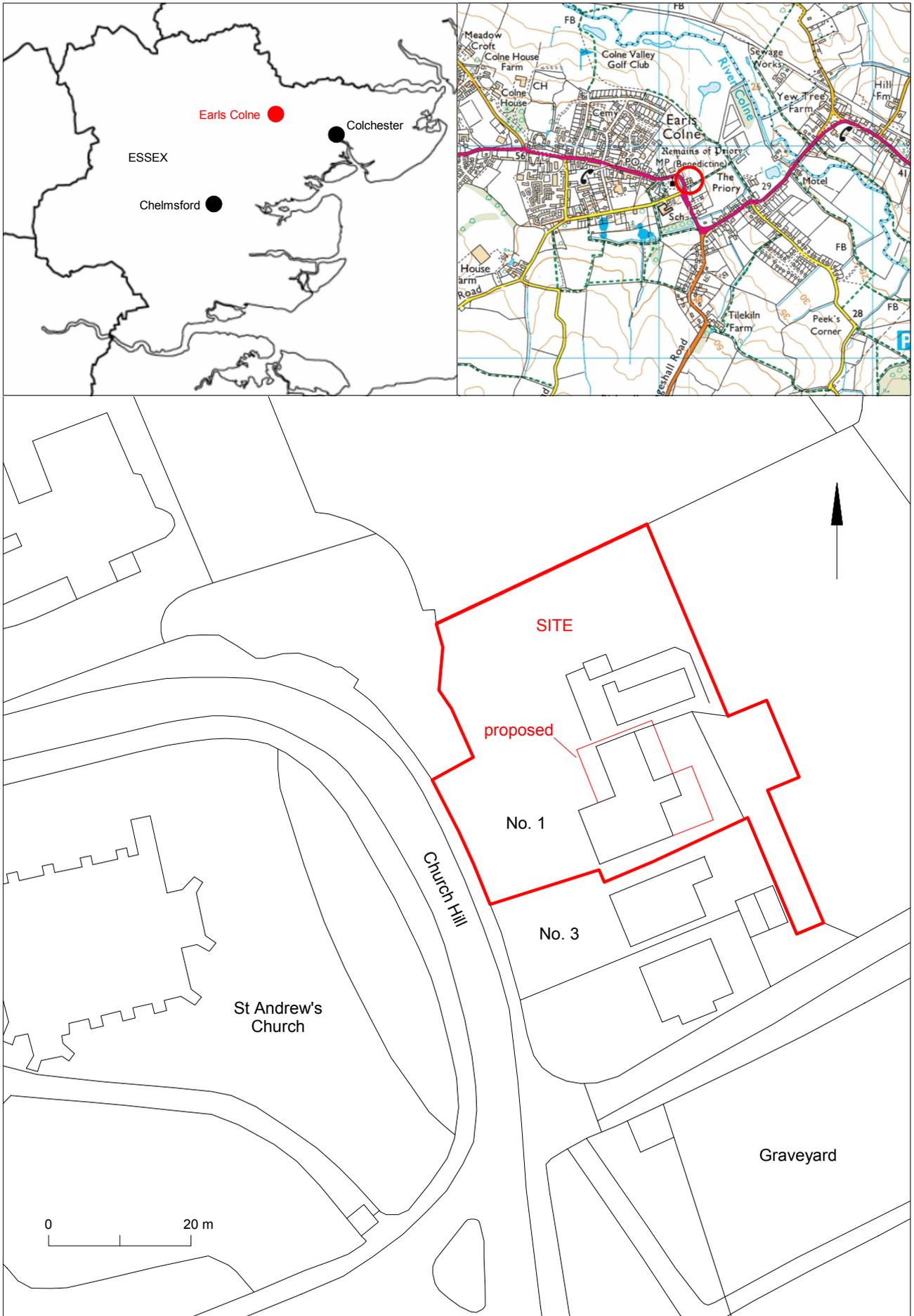
Fig 1 Site location.
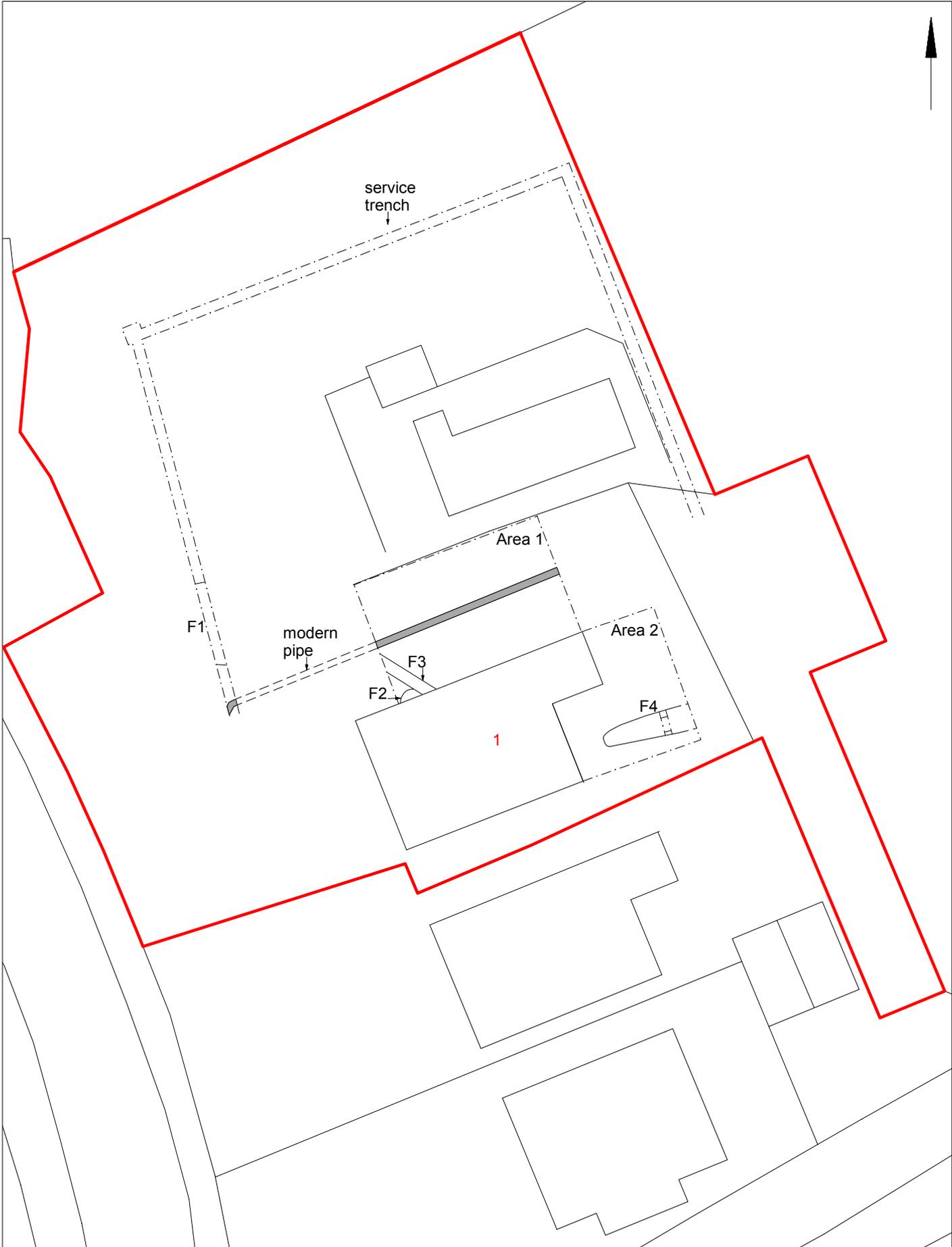
service
trench

Area 1

Area 2

F1

modern
pipe

F3

F2

F4

1

Fig 2 Results.

0

20 m

S

L1

L2

F1

L3

pt

pt

oy

oy

pt

N   S

F4

N

L1

pt

pt

F1

L2

L3

sand

small stones

large stones

clay

post-Roman brick and tile

peg-tile

oyster shell

concrete

roots

pt

oy
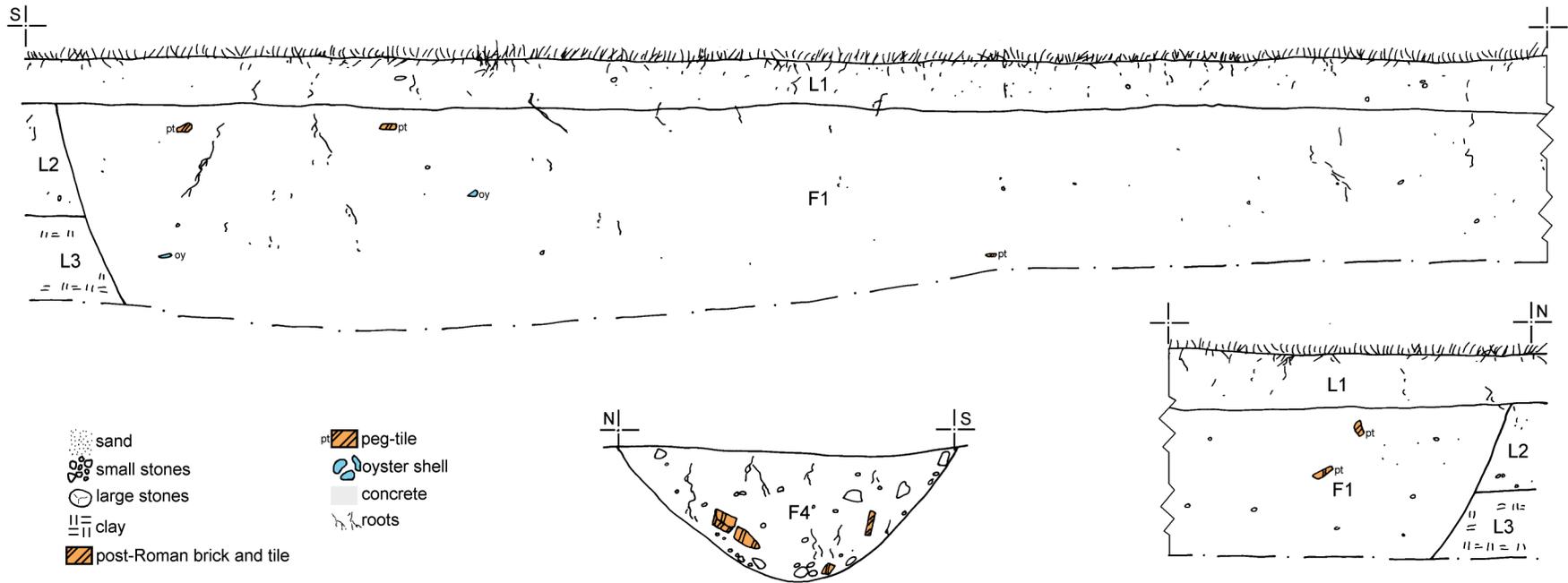
basement/extension strip

E   W

L1

L2

L3

service trench 1

N   S

L1

L2

service trench 2

E   W

L5

L2

0   1 m
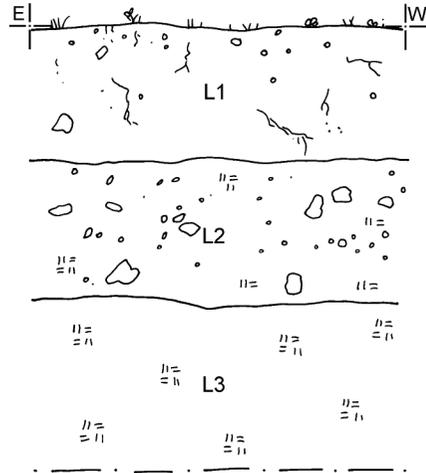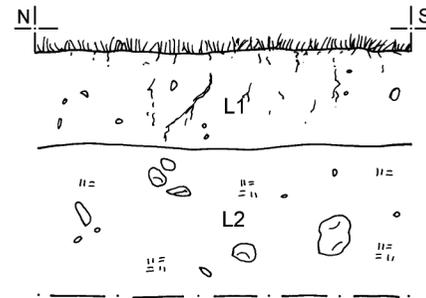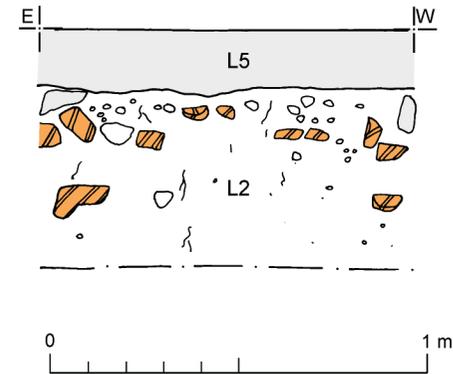
Fig 3 Feature (F1 and F4) and representative sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/
Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: 1 Church Hill, Earls Colne, Essex, CO6 2RG	
Parish: Earls Colne	***District:*** Braintree
NGR: TL 8615 2885 (centre)	***Site code:*** CAT project code: 16/02c ECC project code: EC5 OASIS project ID: colchest3-242125
Type of work: Watching brief	***Site director/group:*** Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 26th April – 9th June 2016	***Size of area investigated:*** Two area strips and service trenches (totalling 179.86m²)
Location of curating museum: Braintree Museum accession code: requested	***Funding source:*** Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	***Related EHER number:*** EHER 18469, 46711
Final report: CAT Report 972	
Periods represented: post-medieval/modern, modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks for extensions and alterations to the existing property at 1 Church Hill, Earls Colne, Braintree. A post-medieval/modern pit and ditch terminal were recorded along with two modern features.	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Report 435	
Keywords: -	***Significance:*** *
Author of summary: Laura Pooley	***Date of summary:*** July 2016