

# Archaeological excavation on Phase 2 land at Westrope Haulage Yard, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex, CO9 4BB

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## 1 Summary

An archaeological excavation was carried out on land at Westrope Haulage Yard, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex in advance of the construction of new offices/light industrial units as part of 'Phase 2' development work. Located close to a Roman cemetery and opposite Wixoe small Roman town on the other side of the River Stour, the excavation targeted an area 60m<sup>2</sup> where a Roman pit and oven were revealed during archaeological evaluation in 2016. Three further Roman features (a possible well or gravel pit, pit and ditch) and an undated pit were excavated. This small but significant cluster of Roman features and finds is indicative of Roman domestic/settlement activity within the hinterland of the Roman town.

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for a small archaeological excavation at Westrope Haulage Yard, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex which was carried out on 6th-8th March 2017. The work was commissioned by Jill Bell, SBW Planning on behalf of Mason Corp Properties, in advance of the construction of new offices/light industrial units as part of the Phase 2 development work, 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 Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT 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 excavation* (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 development site lies within an area of considerable archaeological potential. Approximately 480m to the NNW, on the eastern bank of the River Stour, is Wixoe Roman small town. Evaluations and excavations in 2009-2011 (Oxford Archaeology East, Report No. 1283) revealed features dating from the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age to the end of the Roman period. Ten prehistoric features consisted of a Beaker pit, several Late Bronze Age to possibly Middle Iron Age pits and a ditch, representing probable sporadic occupation/ use in these periods.

The town appears to have been established (at least within this excavated area) in the mid or late 1st century AD, continuing until the very early 5th century. It lay at the junction of the River Stour, and on the route of at least two major Roman Roads, one running from Leicester, through Cambridge to Wixoe and then to Colchester, and a second probable road from Great Chesterford to Wixoe and then Long Melford.

The excavation indicated that the town was divided into areas of different use (domestic, industrial, pits etc.). The range of features uncovered included three roads

(probably the road to Long Melford, one heading towards Icklingham and a minor internal one), parts of two cobbled courtyards, at least seven post-hole and/or beam slot domestic buildings (several surviving with good plans), a 4th century town boundary ditch, and several industrial ovens and hearths (some with structures around them) with evidence for copper, iron and lead working. There were also two human burials with grave goods in addition to a few animal burials, a large number of pits (for quarrying, storage and probably latrine pits) and significant quantities of domestic and other refuse.

A number of related features have also been found on the western and southern banks of the River Stour, connected to the town by a ford across the river. A Roman cemetery (EHER 6964) was discovered to the east of the site in the late 18th century. In 1779 two skeletons are reported to have been 7' down with two urns. 'They lay arm in arm, each clasping an urn, the right leg of one laid across the left leg of the other, the lower urn being placed between their hips'. In 1792, one skeleton with two empty urns was uncovered with several other urns being found nearby. More human remains were discovered to the south (at the road junction) in 1863 (EHER 6963) with another cemetery containing 14 undated inhumations further to the southeast (EHER 6965).

An earthwork enclosure at Watsoe Bridge, on the suspected line of the Colchester to Cambridge Roman Road and immediately to the west of the development site, was also recorded in 1803 and interpreted as a possible Roman military camp. However, recent investigations have failed to identify the date or function of the site (EHER 6958).

A number of cropmarks are known to surround the site to the south of the river including linear features and field boundaries (HER 17131, 18347-8), and a ring-ditch (HER 7030). Significant quantities of metal detected finds have also been made on both sides of the river dating mainly to the Roman period.

Five evaluation trenches were excavated on Phase 1 land of the development site in April 2013 (CAT Report 698). Roman pottery and prehistoric worked flints were recovered from the spoil of the trenches within the former agricultural field. However, there was no evidence of any archaeological activity from the trial-trenches within the former haulage yard and allotment area. The trenches revealed that much of the site was composed of built up modern layers relating to the recent land-use and industrial history of the site. The site had a previous industrial history and has been used as a haulage yard for the last 50+ years.

A further four evaluation trenches were excavated on Phase 2 land in October 2016 (CAT Report 1030). There were no significant archaeological remains in three of the trenches. The fourth trench contained the partial remains of a Roman clay-lined oven and a Roman pit. Two Mesolithic flint microliths were also found residually.

#### **4 Results** (Figs 2-5)

An area measuring 10m long by 6m wide was mechanically excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. The excavation area was located to specifically targeting the Roman features in 2016 evaluation trench T2, during which the remains of a Roman oven (F1) were partially revealed together with a small oval-shaped Roman pit (F2) measuring 0.7m by 0.6m and 0.3m deep. Although containing Roman finds neither feature could be firmly dated.

The excavation area was stripped through modern hardstanding (L1, c 0.35-0.42m thick) onto a dark grey silty subsoil (L3, c 0.3-0.39m thick) which sealed natural silty-sands and gravel (L4).

Within the excavation area were two Roman pits (F4-F5) and an undated but probably contemporary pit (F6). The largest (F5) measured over 2m in length/width and was excavated to 1.5m deep but was not bottomed. It contained a quantity of Roman material in the backfill (pottery, animal bone, lava quern). The size, shape and depth of pit F5 might suggest that the feature is either a well or a gravel pit. The smallest (F6) measured 0.58m long by 0.4m wide by 0.19m deep, and did not contain any finds.

In the southwest corner was a Roman ditch (F3) of early 2nd to 3rd century date. It was aligned northwest/southeast and measured 0.8m wide by 0.36m deep. This ditch was not identified further to the northwest within 2016 evaluation trench T2, suggesting that it may have either terminated or turned westwards close to the excavation area.

The excavation also revealed the full extent of the Roman oven (F1). It was an oval, clay-lined feature measuring 1.35m long by 0.88m wide and 0.24m deep (Fig 4). It had a broadly bowl-shaped cross-section which flattened out onto a probable small rake-out pit on its northern edge, but the edge of this pit could only be tentatively projected. Much of the southern half of the oven appears to have been disturbed, with the clay-lining absent or slumped in places.

An initial layer of clay-lining, heat-affected and burnt pink internally, encompassed the bowl-like cut of the main oven. Two rows of Roman heat-affected brick probably formed part of the structure leading to the rake-out pit although, due to the later disturbance, it is unclear whether these bricks continued around the whole feature. None of the bricks appeared to be whole when used and probably represent the reuse of materials. At a later date, a second flat layer of clay was added to the base of the oven, presumably to repair heat-damage to the clay floor. The oven was probably roofed, most-likely with turves, which would have had to have been removed before the second layer of clay-lining was added. Both the clay-lining and bricks showed evidence of having been subjected to very high temperatures, but these were not extreme enough to cause the distortion or vitrification of the bricks.

Typically a fire would have been set within the centre of the oven and the ash raked-out once the desired temperature was reached. Once the food was inserted, the oven would have been sealed and left to cook. Being quite small this oven probably represents small-scale domestic use.

A single sherd of possible 2nd-3rd century Roman pottery was recovered from the backfill of F1 along with a single piece of animal bone and oyster shell. All were presumably backfilled into the feature once it had gone out of use.



**Photograph 1** General site shot, looking south



**Photograph 2** Oven F1, looking S

## 5 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

### Introduction

A moderate quantity of finds was recovered from five contexts – oven F1, ditch F3, pits F4 and F5 and from the subsoil (L3). All of the datable finds are Roman. The more closely dated of these broadly span the mid/late 1st-3rd century, although the majority could be accommodated within a date range of 2nd-early/mid 3rd century. All of the finds are listed and described by context in Appendix 2.

### Pottery

A total of 79 sherds of Roman pottery was recovered with a combined weight of 2378g (EVE 1.18). The pottery was recorded using the Chelmsford fabric series (Going 1987), commonly used for recording pottery in Essex, supplemented by fabrics recorded in Suffolk relating to pottery with a distinctly micaceous fabric. The fabrics and the quantity of pottery for each fabric type are listed in Table 1. Pottery forms were recorded using the Chelmsford form series (Going 1987) and the Colchester Camulodunum (Cam) form series (Hull, 1958).

Fabric code	Fabric name	No	Wt/g	EVE
SASG	South Gaulish samian	1	8	0.04
SACG	Central Gaulish samian	10	84	0.09
1	Colchester colour-coat	2	10	0.25
31	Unspecified buff wares	1	48	0.07
41	Black-Burnished 2	6	74	0.2
44	Storage jar fabrics	7	462	0
47	Sandy grey wares (general)	35	358	0.4
BSW	Black surfaces wares	3	16	0
GMB	Black surfaces micaceous wares	8	152	0.11
GMB	Grey micaceous wares	1	4	0.02
55	South Spanish amphora	5	1162	
	<i>Totals</i>	79	2378	1.18

**Table 1** Roman pottery fabrics

The pottery includes imported fine and coarsewares (samian and Spanish oil amphorae), regional fine and coarsewares (colour-coated pottery, black-burnished wares) among which a small group of micaceous wares and a mortarium should be included, as well as unsourced local or regional coarsewares. The great majority of the pottery recovered came from the fill of a single pit F5, which produced a total of 61 sherds weighing 1936g (EVE 1.18). This amounts to 77% of the pottery by count (number), 81% weight and 100% of the EVEs recorded.

The samian includes sherds from several vessels, all recovered from F5. There is one sherd of South Gaulish origin (SASG) which is the rim of a Dr 18 dish which appears to have been affected by heat/scorching, but the fabric and coat suggest a probable late 1st century date rather than earlier. The remainder is Central Gaulish (SACG). This includes a small sherd from a Dr 37 decorated bowl, but is mostly made up of sherds from a minimum of two, probably three, plain ware pots. One is a form Dr 36 dish, another is a rouletted base, probably from a form Dr 31 bowl. These suggest a late 2nd century date (Dr 36 is more common in the late 2nd century than earlier and Dr 31 is also a form that appears in the late 2nd century).

Sherds of amphora in Spanish fabric (55) which can be identified as form Dressel 20 were also recovered from F5. These large pots are typically bulk shipping containers for olive oil and broadly date to the period of the mid 1st-early 3rd century. The nature of the sherds suggest that they come from three different pots. One large sherd (902g) is discoloured grey by heat at one edge and there is a black, tarry deposit on the broken edge.

Pottery from regionally significant industries includes sherds of colour-coated wares probably of Colchester origin (1) and sherds of black-burnished ware (41) probably from the same source. The colour-coated sherds (F3 and F5) include the beaker form H 27.2 (Cam 392) of late 2nd-3rd century date (F5) and the sherds of black-burnished ware (F3 and F5) include the form B 4.2 (Cam 37B) also of late 2nd-3rd century. Of interest are several sherds in distinctly micaceous fabrics (GMB & GMG) (F5) which are similar to micaceous fabrics among Roman assemblages in East Anglia that are attributed to the Wattisfield industry in the Waveney Valley (Moore *et. al.* 1988). These include a bowl with a small bead-rim (form B 4.1/B 4.2) and a flange rim dish/bowl corresponding to form C 2/C 5. A small section of a broad, rounded flange rim from a mortarium in a pale buff/cream coloured fabric (31) was also recovered from F5 and is likely to be a product of a regional industry pottery.

Sherds of unsourced coarsewares (BSW and 47) of local or regional origin and heavily-tempered large storage jars (44) were recovered among the large quantity of pottery from F5 and as single or a few finds from most of the features. Recognisable forms consist of two examples corresponding to bowl form B 4.2 (broadly Cam 37A-type) dating to the period of the early 2nd-early 3rd/3rd century (F5).

#### *Discussion*

The more closely datable pottery could be encompassed within the period of the late 1st/early 2nd-early/mid 3rd century. While some sherds might be of mid-late 1st century date, the only closely dated 1st century pottery is the single example of a Dr 18 dish. It appears likely that a proportion of the pottery originated in the Colchester potteries, including forms of late 2nd-3rd century date. These might date to the earlier part of that period as it was noted at Chelmsford that the supply of pottery from Colchester declined significantly in the first half of the 3rd century (Going 1987, 113), indicating a decline in the regional significance of Colchester pottery over that time. The absence of any pottery that can be attributed to the major late Roman pottery industries supplying the southeast – Nene Valley, Hadham, Oxford and South Midlands shell-tempered ware – suggests that the activity here did not extend into the period of the late 3rd/early 4th century.

A small number of sherds in micaceous fabric might well originate in the Wattisfield pottery industry of the Waveney Valley. A study of the distribution of the pottery indicates that it extends south and southwest to around 40km (25 miles) from the kilns, roughly to the area of the River Stour on the Essex-Suffolk border (Steven Rippon *pers. comm.*). The site at Birdbrook would be close to the edge of this distribution area. However, it should be noted that some pottery in a micaceous fabric is also considered to have probably been produced at Colchester (CAR 10, Fabric WA), although commonly in pale grey fabric there.

The quantity and range of pottery here contrasts markedly with the evaluation when just a single Roman sherd was recovered (CAT Report 1030). An earlier adjacent evaluation also produced just a few sherds (CAT Report 698). The lack of pottery suggested at that time that the site was peripheral to an area of Roman occupation centred elsewhere. By contrast, the larger quantity of pottery from the excavation (mostly associated with pit F5) would suggest that the site is adjacent to significant Roman occupation. Further, the range of pottery, including a significant proportion of imported samian (including a decorated bowl) and the presence of a mortarium, would indicate occupants with at least a moderate level of wealth/status above that of the poorer farm sites in the rural areas. The range of sources of the pottery (continental imported, Colchester and probably Wattisfield in Suffolk) might also indicate ready access to local and regional markets.

#### **Ceramic building material (CBM)**

A total of 18 pieces of Roman tile were recovered (total weight 3376g). The fabric of these is generally orange/red with fine-medium sand; some pieces are slightly more



silty. The impression is that the clay has (as appears common with Roman CBM) been well cleaned/refined before use. Although one piece (F3) has medium-coarse sand inclusions, none of the fabrics are particularly visually distinct from one another.

The larger pieces of CBM are from Roman brick(s) associated with the oven F1 and include seven pieces that join together to make much of one end of a brick – although assembled together the pieces do not make a complete half and some pieces are clearly missing from this portion of the brick. The centre part of this brick appears to have been affected by heat to the point of discolouring the tile and weakening the structure so that it has fissured/cracked and broken. This might also indicate repeated heating and cooling. The complete surviving end of the brick has a length (corner-corner) of 280mm and the broken portion of the body survives to a length of 190mm. The brick body is c 38-40mm thick. This suggests it is probably one end of a *Lydion*-type brick. A number of pieces of Roman brick were also recovered from this feature (F1) during the evaluation (CAT Report 1030). The fabric of these had inclusions of chalk contrasting with the tile pieces here and showing that the pieces that have been recovered from this feature come from more than one brick. As noted in the evaluation report, although clearly heat affected, this does not appear to have resulted from exposure to extreme temperatures sufficient to cause distortion or vitrification of the bricks.

Apart from one or two small pieces of Roman brick and brick/tile (F3 and F5), single pieces of Roman CBM from ditch F3 and pit F5 can be identified as from *tegula* roof tiles.

The small quantity of CBM is not necessarily an indication of any well appointed buildings close by – ie having tiled roofs or with brick elements – and could be consistent with an assemblage of salvage pieces brought from elsewhere, the main elements being used as structural pieces in the oven (F1).

### **Animal Bone**

Only a small amount of animal bone was recovered. In all there are 37 pieces (weighing 476g) most of which comes from pit F5 (27 pieces, weighing 320g). Overall the condition of the bone is fair-good.

The more closely identifiable bone from F5 is: cattle/cow (7 pieces), including part of a metacarpal bone and large rib bones (almost certainly cow) some with knife butchery cut marks; sheep (9 pieces), including one tooth; and pig, represented by a single bone. There is also one piece of quite degraded/worn and abraded horn core (sheep/cow). A small quantity of bone (9 pieces) was also recovered from ditch F3. This consists of part of a cow mandible (teeth and bone both represented). A single section of animal rib bone from a medium size mammal came from the fill of the hearth/oven F1.

The bone represents all three main domesticates. There is little comment to add to the listing of the bone other than it can be associated with occupation here in the period of the 2nd-3rd century. The strong representation of sheep, usually not so common as cow and pig on Roman period sites, might reflect the rural nature of the site (Maltby 2017, 195). However, in this instance this not particularly significant and necessarily at all representative of the proportions of species more generally around the site at this time as the assemblage is small and essentially comes from just two features.

### **Other finds**

A small, abraded piece of imported lava quernstone (12g), almost certainly from the quarries at Mayen in Germany, was recovered from the fill of pit F5. As was a single piece of iron ?plate/strip (SF1) (length 55mm, width 30mm). The more closely dated finds from the pit indicate a late 2nd/early-mid 3rd century date for the context.

A small quantity of oyster shell was recovered from pit F5 and a single shell from the fill of the hearth/oven F1. The small group of shells from F5 (122g) consists of four curving top shells and three corresponding, smaller, thinner, flat (basal) shells from these bivalves. Almost undoubtedly this represents seafood imported from the coast for consumption at the settlement associated with the activity here.

## 6 Environmental results

by Lisa Gray, MSc MA ACIfA Archaeobotanist

### Introduction – aims and objectives

Two samples were presented for assessment. The author has previously carried out an assessment on a sample from the part-excavated clay-line oven (F1) exposed during the evaluation stage (CAT Report 1030). The aims of this assessment are to determine the significance and potential of the plant macro-remains in the samples, consider their use in providing information about diet, craft, medicine, crop-husbandry, feature function and environment.

### Sampling and processing methods

Samples were taken and processed by Colchester Archaeological Trust (Appendix 3). All samples were processed using a Siraf-type flotation device. Flot was collected in a 300-micron mesh sieve then dried. 40 litres of soil were sampled.

Once with the author the flots were scanned under a low powered stereo-microscope with a magnification range of 10 to 40x. The whole flots were examined. The abundance, diversity and state of preservation of eco- and artefacts in each sample were recorded. A magnet was passed across each flot to record the presence or absence of magnetised material or hammscale.

Identifications were made using uncharred reference material (author's own and the Northern European Seed Reference Collection at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London) and reference manuals (such as Beijerinck 1947; Cappers et al. 2006; Charles 1984; Fuller 2007; Hillman 1976; Jacomet 2006). Nomenclature for plants is taken from Stace (Stace 2010). Latin names are given once and the common names used thereafter.

At this stage, to allow comparison between samples, numbers have also been estimated but where only a very low number of items are present they have been counted. Identifiable charred wood >4mm in diameter has been separate from charred wood flecks. Fragments this size are easier to break to reveal the cross-sections and diagnostic features necessary for identification, and are less likely to be blown or unintentionally moved around the site (Asouti 2006, 31; Smart and Hoffman, 1988, 178-179). Charred wood flecks <4mm diameter have been quantified but not recommended for further analysis unless twigs or roundwood fragments larger than 2mmØ were present.

### Results (Appendix 3)

#### **The plant remains**

Both samples contained abundant flecks of charcoal and uncharred/modern root/rhizome fragments. Sample <2> (F5 large Roman pit) contained one spelt (*Triticum spelta*) grain. Sample <3> (F1 Roman oven) contained nothing other than charcoal and uncharred rootlets.

#### **Fauna**

*Ceciliodes acicula* (Müller) snails were found in both samples. This snail burrows well below the ground surface (Kerney & Cameron 1979, 149) and can be indicative of

bioturbation and oxygenation of the soil. Earthworm cocoons were found in sample <3>.

#### ***Inorganic remains***

A magnet was passed through each flot and no magnetic material was found. No other artefacts or non-geological inorganic remains were found.

### **Discussion**

#### ***Biases in recovery, residuality, contamination***

No information about contamination or stratigraphic integrity were given at the time of writing. The abundance of modern rootlets and shells of *Ceciliodes acicula* in these samples does suggest the possibility of bioturbation. It is also possible that the low number of charred plant remains are also intrusive. It is difficult to be sure that a charred plant remains is of the age of the dated context unless radiocarbon dating is carried out, or unless the items came from a well-sealed deposit or an assemblage that was numerous relative to the quantity of soil sampled.

#### ***Quality and type of preservation***

The plant remains in these samples were preserved by charring. Charring of plant macrofossils occurs when plant material is heated under ‘...reducing conditions...’ where oxygen is largely excluded (Boardman and Jones 1990, 2) leaving a carbon skeleton resistant to biological and chemical decay (English Heritage 2011, 17). These conditions can occur in a charcoal clamp, the centre of a bonfire or pit or in an oven or when a building burns down with the roof excluding the oxygen from the fire (Reynolds, 1979, 57).

Charred plant remains are very resilient, survive changing preservation conditions and being moved around in the soil. The charred plant remains in these samples are well-preserved enough to be identifiable but the number of charred items per litre of sampled soils is very low meaning that these plant remains are more likely to be general background waste than associated with a feature.

#### ***Potential of these samples to provide information about food, crop-processing, craft, medicine, trade, feature function and environment***

The quantity of charred plant remains relative to the bulk sample sizes is small. It is possible that these are general background waste rather than indicative of original feature use. They could have moved from their original context by bioturbation and reworking. As concluded about the fragment of grass/cereal stem in the evaluation oven sample (Gray 2016) it is possible that they are contemporary with the dated feature but it is difficult to tell unless the charred plant remains are radiocarbon dated (Pelling *et al.* 2015, 96).

Therefore, it is not wise to assume that the context in which the plant macro-remains were found during excavation were the contexts in which they were originally deposited, especially when the preservation of the plant remains is poor and numbers are very low relative to the amount of soil sampled.

#### ***Significance of the samples and recommendations for further work***

No further archaeobotanical work is recommended on these samples.

## **7 Discussion**

Evaluation and excavation at Westrope Haulage Yard revealed a small but significant cluster of Roman features. The oven, well/gravel pit, pits, ditch and finds suggest small-scale domestic/settlement activity dating to c 2nd-early/mid 3rd century. This would make it contemporary with Wixoe Roman town. Although the town was primarily situated on the northern/eastern bank of the River Stour, Roman features and finds,

and particularly burials, have been recorded on the opposite side of the river. The excavation at Westrope indicates that people were living on this opposing bank, albeit probably on a much smaller-scale. Perhaps this should be viewed as being part of the 'hinterland' of the Roman town, possibly associated with a villa or farmstead, or the 'earthwork enclosure' reportedly discovered at Watsoe Bridge in 1803. The quantity and range of pottery from these few features at Westrope would certainly suggest that the occupants had at least a moderate level of wealth/status, with access to the markets and trading opportunities offered at Wixoe.

A number of Roman ovens/hearths were also recorded during the excavations at Wixoe. These were directly associated with or within 2-5m of post-hole or beam structures (OAE Report No. 1283). No structural evidence was recorded at Westrope but it would seem likely that an associated structure should be located close-by. If ditch F3 acted as a southwestern boundary then this structure is likely to be located just outside the excavation area to the north, northeast or east. The fact that, aside from T2, none of the 2013/2016 evaluation trenches contained Roman features, would further suggest that any focus of domestic/settlement activity is likely to be located between T2 and the bank of the River Stour to the north/northwest.

## 8 Acknowledgements

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

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## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
ECCHEA	Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHHER	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
Mesolithic	period from c 9600 – 4000BC
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
residual	something out of its original context, eg a Roman coin in a modern pit

Roman section wsi	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410 (abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s written scheme of investigation
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## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** One box (finds from the evaluation and excavation)

### **Paper and digital record**

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1080)

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

## 12 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: [tbc](#)

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### **Distribution list**

Jill Bell (SBW Planning)

Mason Corp Properties

ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



### **Colchester Archaeological Trust**

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Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 20.3.2017

revised: 5.4.2017

## **Appendix 1 Context list**

(s) = environmental sample

<b>Context number</b>	<b>Finds no.</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
F1	10, 13(s)	Oven	Clay-lined oven (also see CAT Report 1030)	Roman (?2nd-3rd century)
F2		Pit	Loose, dry, dark brown sandy-silt with common stone (also see CAT Report 1030)	Roman
F3	6	Ditch	Firm, moist, medium grey/brown silt with charcoal flecks	Roman, E2nd-E3rd/3rd century
F4	7	Pit	Firm, moist, medium grey/brown silt with charcoal flecks	Roman
F5	8, 11, 12, 14 (s)	Possible well or gravel pit	Firm, moist, dark grey/brown silt with charcoal flecks	Roman, L2nd-3rd century
F6		Pit	Firm, moist, medium grey/brown silt with charcoal flecks	Undated
L1		Hardstanding	Layers of modern hardstanding consisting of tarmac, concrete and sand	Modern
L2		Build-up	Build-up layer underneath the modern hardstanding	Modern
L3	9	Subsoil	Firm, dark grey silt with 10% stone	-
L4		Natural	Natural sands and gravels	Natural

**Appendix 2 Finds list**

OR=orange-red; FS=fine sand; F-Ms=fine-medium sand

Cntxt	Type	Find no.	Find type	Fabric	Description	Form	No	Wt/g	EVE (100=1 EVE)	Ab/Bu	Spot date
F1	oven	0	Animal bone		Rib bone section, medium size mammal		1	2			
			Pot	47	Body sherd with grouped burnished lines	Jar/bowl	1	12			Rom (?2-3C)
			CBM	OR FS/Silt	Four pieces circa 40mm thick, one of these appears damaged by heating/scotching cracking the tile (these join with the three main pieces)	RB	4	880			Rom
			CBM	OR FS/Silt	3 joining pieces from the end/side of a Roman brick (tile) making complete edge of brick – length 280mm (surviving width 190mm+) thick circa 38mm – possibly one end of a lydion-type brick	RB	3	1786			Rom
			CBM	OR FS/Silt	One piece circa 30 mm thick	RB	1	158			Rom
			Shell		Complete small (half) shell		1	14			
F3	ditch	6	Animal bone		Cattle teeth and part of mandible, moderate condition, some bone softening		9	154			Rom
			CBM	OR F-MS	Common fine-medium sand – part of LCA, angled cut (Warry Type not discernable from this piece) base thickness 20 mm	RT	1	40			Rom
			CBM	OR M-CS	Edge piece, moderate sand content, brick 40 mm thick	RB	1	226		(A)	Rom
			Pot	41			2	6			E2-3C
			Pot	BSW (47)			3	16			Rom
			Pot	44	Grey sandy fabric		1	12			Rom
			Pot	47	Misc body sherds, mostly small		8	56			Rom
			Pot	1	Buff fabric with dark brown cc	Beaker	1	2		A	E2-E3/3C
F4	pit	7	Pot	47	Sandy fabric, recently broken sherd, surfaces abraded		1	26		A	Rom
F5	Pit/well	11	Quern	Lava stone	Small piece, rounded, abraded piece from a lava quern		1	12		A	Rom
		8	Animal bone		Animal bones: Cow (7 bone pieces) large ribs bone pieces (probably cow) butchery cut marks on ribs; cow metacarpal; Sheep: (9 bone pieces) long bone pieces bones, one tooth; Pig (1 bone piece); Misc abraded hore core piece		27	320			
		CBM	OR FS/silt	Misc pieces, one pieces 20 mm thick probably <i>tegula</i>	RBT	7	132			Rom	
		CBM	OR FS/silt	Teg flange piece (base broken away)	RT	1	154			Rom	
		Pot	47	Misc sherds in Cam 37A-type rim, jar rims, one small jar/bowl rim sherd similar to medieval forms, either Roman or intrusive	Bowl B4 (x2), jar rims	26	290	40		Rom (E2-3C)	
		Pot	44			4	112			M1-2/3C	
Pot	GMG (47)	Micaceous coarsewares, similar to greyware products of the	C2/C5	1	4	2		L1-E2C?			



Cntxt	Type	Find no.	Find type	Fabric	Description	Form	No	Wt/g	EVE (100=1 EVE)	Ab/Bu	Spot date
					Wattisfield, Waveney Valley (Suffolk fabric GMG) Small rim sherd, flange rim bowl, abraded, some black tarry material on surface						
			Pot	GMB (47)	Micaceous coarsewares, similar to black surface products of the Wattisfield, Waveney Valley (Suffolk fabric GMB)	B4	8	152	11		2-3C
			Pot	41	Bowl form Cam 37B rims and bowl base sherd	B4 (Cam 37B)	4	68	20		L2-3C
			Pot	31	Fine cream-buff fabric, fine-medium moderate sand, some red inclusions – flanged mortaria rim, moderately broad flange Nene Valley?		1	48	7		L1-2C
			Pot	1	Beaker (Cam 392)	H 27.2	1	8	25		L2-3C
			Pot	SASG	Heat affected/scorched	Dr 18	1	8	4		
			Pot	SACG	Sherd decorated with human figure (part of legs) and animal (hand part with tail)	Dr 37	1	2			2C
			Pot	SACG	Including large rim sherd from Dr 36 dish, sherds probably from minimum of two other vessels including a rouletted base	Dr 36	9	82	9		2C
			Pot	55	Hard sandy grey fabric with brown-buff surface	D 20	1	92			M1-2/E3C
			Pot	55	Pinkish-red fabric buff surface	D 20	1	72			M1-2/E3C
			Pot	55	Brown sandy, coarse fabric, large sherd burnt at one side, sooted over break, used as oven?	D 20	3	998			M1-2/E3C
			Shell		Complete – four shells and three flat lid shells		7	122			Rom
		12	Fe		Flat corroded piece of iron plate/strip? (SF1) (length 55mm, width 30mm)		1				Rom
L3	Sub-soil	9	Pot	44			2	338			Rom M1-2/3C

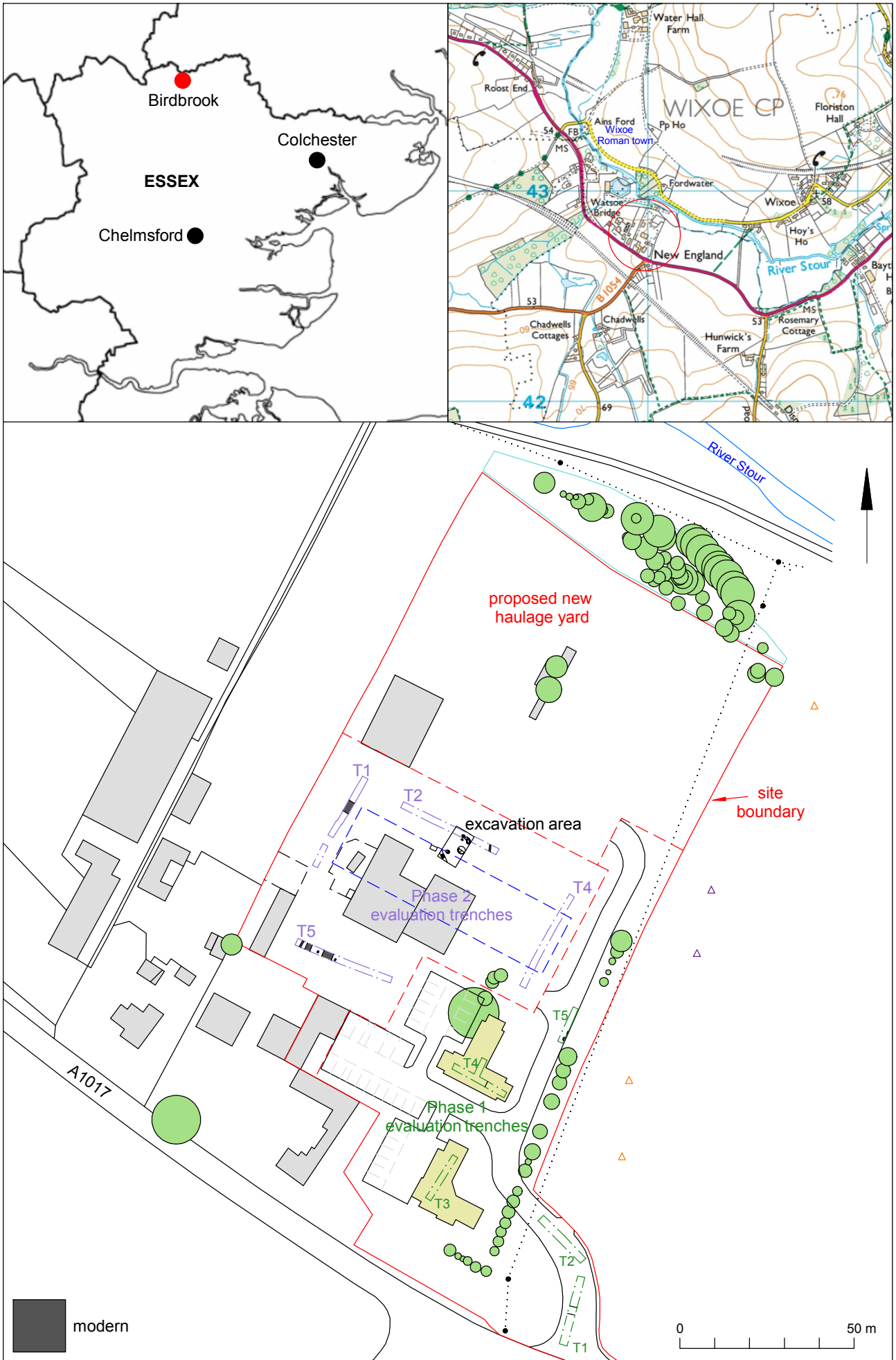
### Appendix 3 Environmental results

Sample	Finds No.	Sample description	Bulk sample volume (L)	Flot volume (ml)	Charred grains			Grain tissue	Charred seeds				Charred chaff			Charred wood >4mmØ	Charred wood <4mmØ	Charred plant tissue	Dried waterlogged seeds				Modern root/rhizomes	Worm cocoons	Terrestrial mollusca	<i>Ceciliodes acicula</i>
2	14	F5 Roman well/quarry pit	30	20	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	1			
3	13	F1 Roman oven	10	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	1			

Key: a = abundance [1 = occasional 1-10, 2 = moderate 11-100 and 3 = abundant >100]

d = diversity [1 = low 1-4 taxa types, 2 = moderate 5-10, 3 = high]

p = preservation [1 = poor (family level only), 2 = moderate (genus), 3 = good (species identification possible)]



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Fig 1 Site location in relation to previous archaeological work and the proposed development (dashed blue)

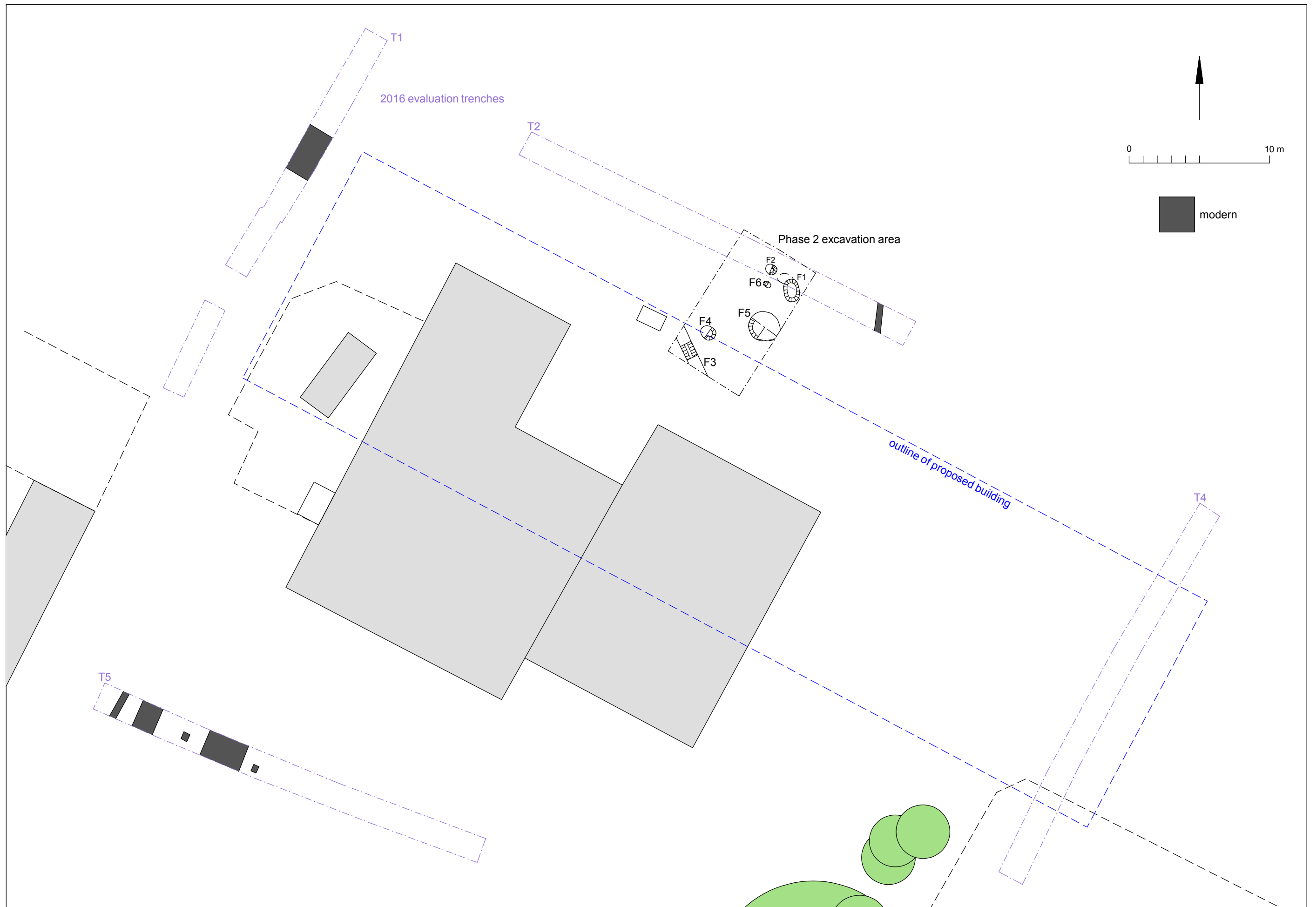


Fig 2 Results in relation to the 2016 evaluation trenches

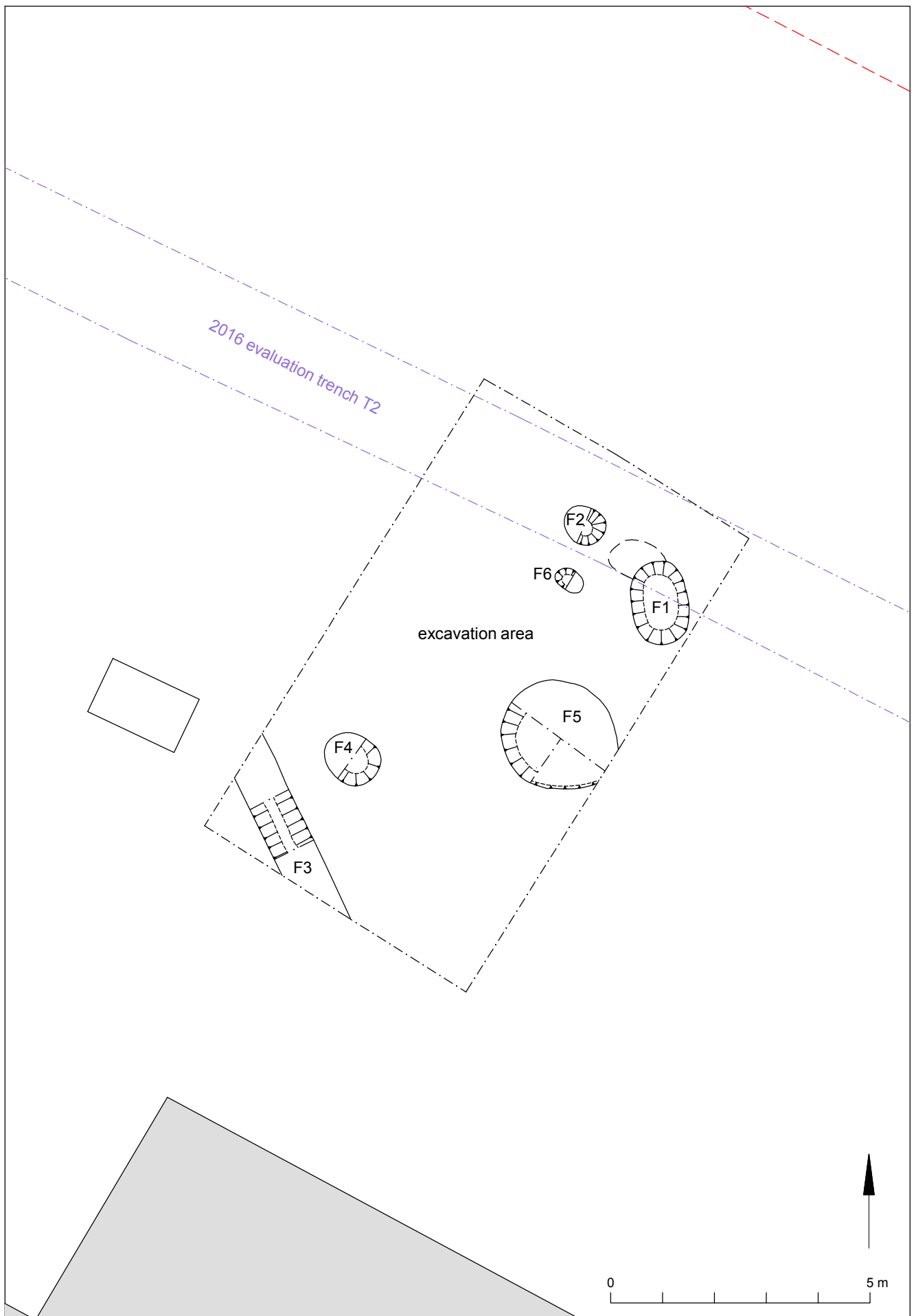


Fig 3 Detailed results

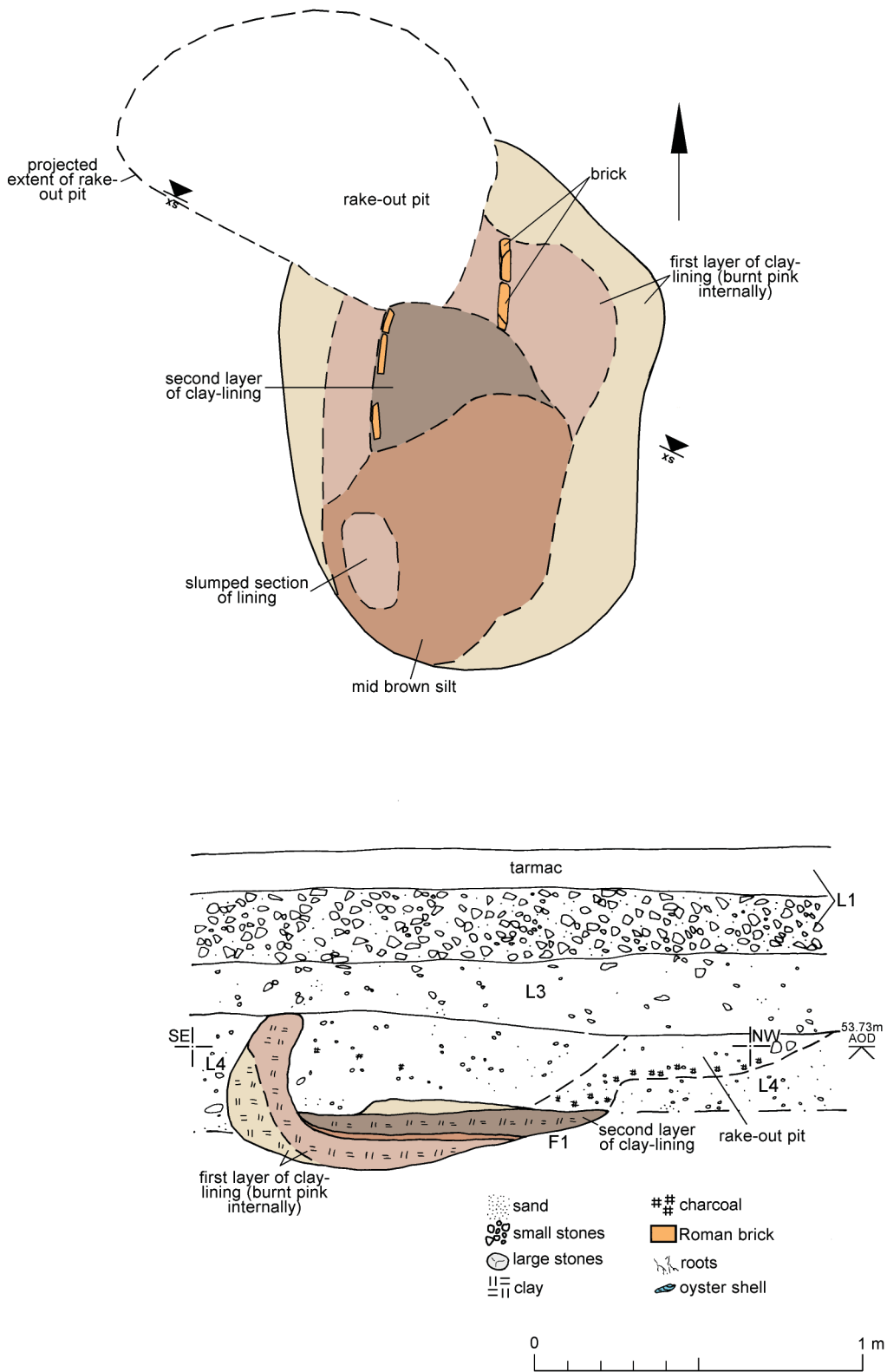


Fig 4 F1: mid-excavation plan and section.

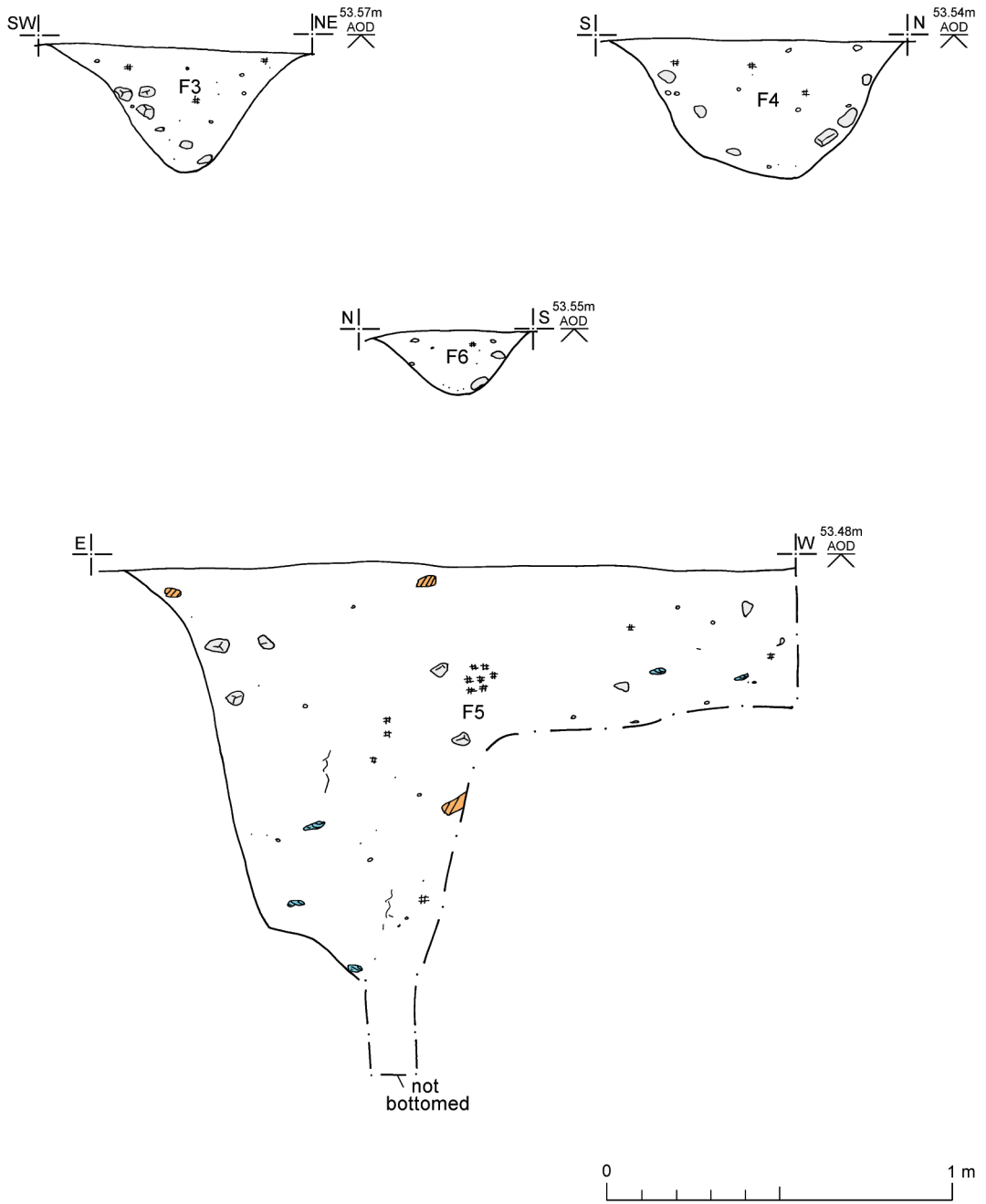


Fig 5 Feature sections.

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## Printable version

**OASIS ID: colchest3-277775**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological excavation at Westrope Haulage Yard, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex, CO9 4BB
Short description of the project	An archaeological excavation was carried out on land at Westrope Haulage Yard, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex in advance of the construction of new offices/light industrial units as part of 'Phase 2' development work. Located close to a Roman cemetery and opposite Wixoe small Roman town on the other side of the River Stour, the excavation targeted an area 60m <sup>2</sup> where a Roman pit and oven were revealed during archaeological evaluation in 2016. Three further Roman features (a possible well or gravel pit, pit and ditch) and an undated pit were excavated. This small but significant cluster of Roman features and finds is indicative of Roman domestic/ settlement activity within the hinterland of the Roman town.
Project dates	Start: 06-03-2017 End: 08-03-2017
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	17/02I - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	11/01169/OUT - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	BKSR17 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	OVEN Roman
Monument type	WELL OR GRAVEL PIT Roman
Monument type	PITS Roman
Monument type	DITCH Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL Roman
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Roman
Significant Finds	SHELL Roman
Significant Finds	LAVA QUERN Roman
Investigation type	""Open-area excavation""
Prompt	Planning condition



## Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX BRAINTREE BIRDBROOK Westrope Haulage Yard
Postcode	CO9 4BB
Study area	2.01 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 70980 42788 52.056588493969 0.49416545138 52 03 23 N 000 29 39 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 53.28m Max: 53.6m

## Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	HEM Team Officer, ECC
Project design originator	Laura Pooley
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Ben Holloway
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

## Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Braintree Museum
Physical Archive ID	requested
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones", "Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Braintree Museum
Digital Archive ID	requested
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic", "Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Braintree Museum
Paper Archive ID	requested
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic", "Survey"
Paper Media available	"Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Context sheet"

## Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological excavation on Phase 2 land at Westrope Haulage Yard, Sturmer Road, Birdbrook, Essex, CO9 4BB: March 2017
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