

# Archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of Windy Ridge, Colne Road, Bures Hamlet, Essex, CO8 5DH

July-August 2017



**by Dr Elliott Hicks**

figures by Sarah Carter and Harvey Furniss

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and Harvey Furniss

**commissioned by David Syrett  
on behalf of Balkerne Gate Developments (Southeast) Ltd**

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**CAT Report 1145**

August 2017

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (five trial-trenches) was carried out at land to the rear of Windy Ridge, Colne Road, Bures Hamlet, Essex in advance of the construction of nine new detached dwellings. The evaluation revealed four undated ditches, a probable post-medieval ditch and an undated natural feature/treethrow.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land to the rear of Windy Ridge, Colne Road, Bures Hamlet, Essex which was carried out on 31st July to 1st August 2017. The work was commissioned by Davis Syrett on behalf of Balkerne Gate Developments (Southeast) Ltd in advance of the construction of nine detached dwellings, and was carried out 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 trial-trenching and excavation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa O'Connor (ECCPS 2017), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2017).

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* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b).

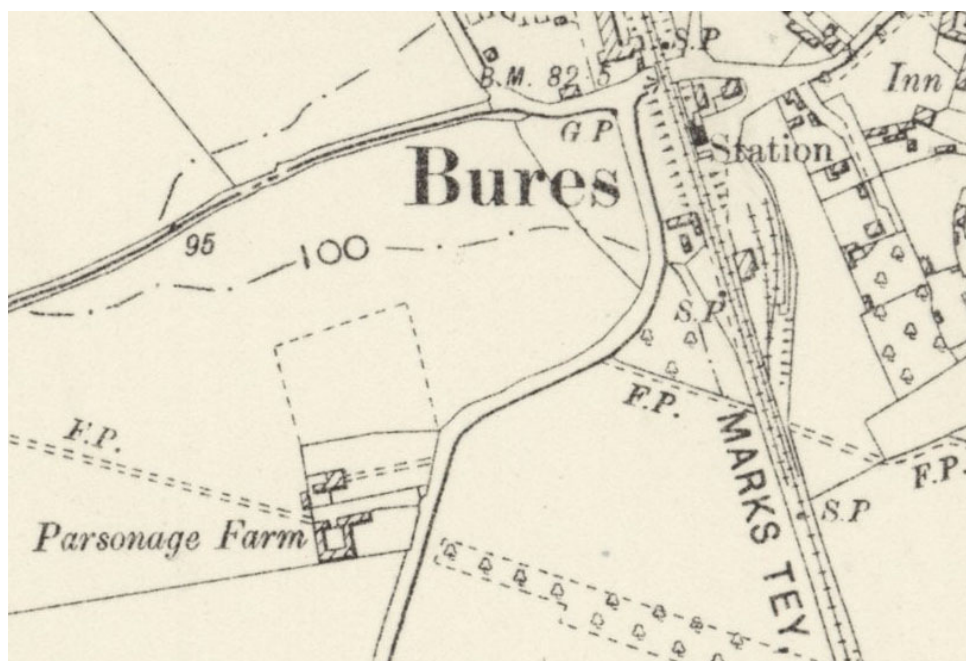
## 3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex.

The EHER shows that the development site lies within a landscape containing a number of cropmark features that are suggestive of prehistoric burial features. Ring-ditches are known to occur along the margins of the River Colne and these areas are thought to have been significant in prehistoric burial practices. Cropmarks occur 300-400m to the SW (EHER 9281 and 9480, two ring-ditches and linear features), c 500m to the SE/SSE (EHER 9191, three ring-ditches) and 640m SSW (EHER 9838, linear and curvilinear cropmarks).

To the north lies the historic settlement of Bures which originated in the medieval period and less than 200m directly west lies Parsonage Farm, a 15th-century hall house which is a Grade II\* listed building. The house would have probably been built on the site of the medieval manor.

A significant number of finds from all periods has been recovered from fields surrounding the historic settlement. The railway appears on the 1st edition map along the eastern boundary of the site and goods sheds and associated railway buildings were erected along the line adjacent to the station. A footpath, depicted on the 1st edition OS crossed the railway line and formed the northern boundary of the site. The route may have been in use prior to the surveying and publication of this map.



**Map 1** 1st edition OS map (ESSEX XVIII.NW), revised 1896, published 1905.

#### **4 Results** (Figs 2-3)

Five trial-trenches were excavated within the development site. Three layers were recorded. Modern topsoil (L1, c 0.05-0.25m thick, soft moist dark grey/brown sandy-loam with charcoal, fleck and tile fleck inclusions and frequent stones) sealed accumulated subsoil (L2, c 0.06-0.27m thick, firm dry medium yellow-grey-brown sandy-silt with charcoal, brick, tile and manganese fleck inclusions and occasional stones). This layer sealed naturally-deposited sands and soils (L3, of firm dry light-to-dark yellow-orange-brown sandy-silty-clay, encountered at a depth of c 0.15-0.48m below current ground level).

##### **Trench 1 (T1): 30m long by 1.8m wide**

No significant archaeological remains were uncovered within this trench.

##### **Trench 2 (T2): 30m long by 1.8m wide**

Undated ditch F3 was aligned northwest-southeast and measured 0.58m in width and 0.1m in depth. The feature probably continues to the southeast as ditch F4 in T4. Possible post-medieval ditch F5 was also uncovered. It was aligned northwest-southeast, measured 1.33m in width and 0.42m in depth. It cut through undated ditch F6 which was also aligned northwest-southeast, and measured 1.12m in width and 0.35m in depth.

##### **Trench 3 (T3): 30m long by 1.8m wide**

Undated natural feature or tree-throw F2 was uncovered. It measured 0.72m in width and 0.1m in depth.

##### **Trench 4 (T4): 30m long by 1.8m wide**

Undated ditch F4 was aligned northwest-southeast and measured 0.45m in width and 0.1m in depth. It probably continues to the northwest as ditch F3 in T2.

##### **Trench 5 (T5): 30m long by 1.8m wide**

Undated ditch F1 was aligned northeast-southwest and measured 1.2m in width and 0.12m in depth.





**Photograph 1** T2 trench shot – looking south



**Photograph 2** T3 trench shot – looking east northeast

## 5 Finds

*by Stephen Benfield*

The only finds came from the fill of F5 (1) in T2. The most closely-dated is a broken piece from the end of a post-medieval pottery land drain of arched shape with an open base (192 g). A small abraded piece of fired clay (62 g) was also recovered from the feature. This has a fine sand fabric with dark grey core and oxidised surfaces. It is not closely-datable but is likely to be residual. A natural piece (flake) of flint with mottled

patinated surfaces and an unpatinated area of rough damage on one face was also retrieved from the fill.

## 6 Discussion

Archaeological evaluation at this site revealed four undated ditches, a probable post-medieval ditch, and an undated natural feature/tree-throw. It is possible that the ditches represent the remains of old field boundaries, though none are indicated in historic maps of the site.

## 7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks David Syrett and Balcerne Gate Developments (Southeast) Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by N Rayner with S Carter, E Hicks, A Wade, B Holloway and H Furniss. Figures are by S Carter and H Furniss. The project was monitored for Essex County Council 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>

CAT	2014	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological 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</i>
ECCPS	2016	<i>Brief for archaeological trial trenching evaluation on land to the rear of Windy Ridge, Colne Rd, Bures Hamlet</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Gurney, David	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA <b>14</b> ).
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA <b>24</b> )

## 9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
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
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, <a href="http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main">http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main</a>
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
prehistoric	pre-Roman
residual	something out of its original context, eg a Roman coin in a modern pit
section	(abbreviation sx 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 1145)

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:**

David Syrett

Balkerne Gate Developments (Southeast) Ltd

Teresa O'Connor, Essex County Council Place Services

Essex Historic Environment Record



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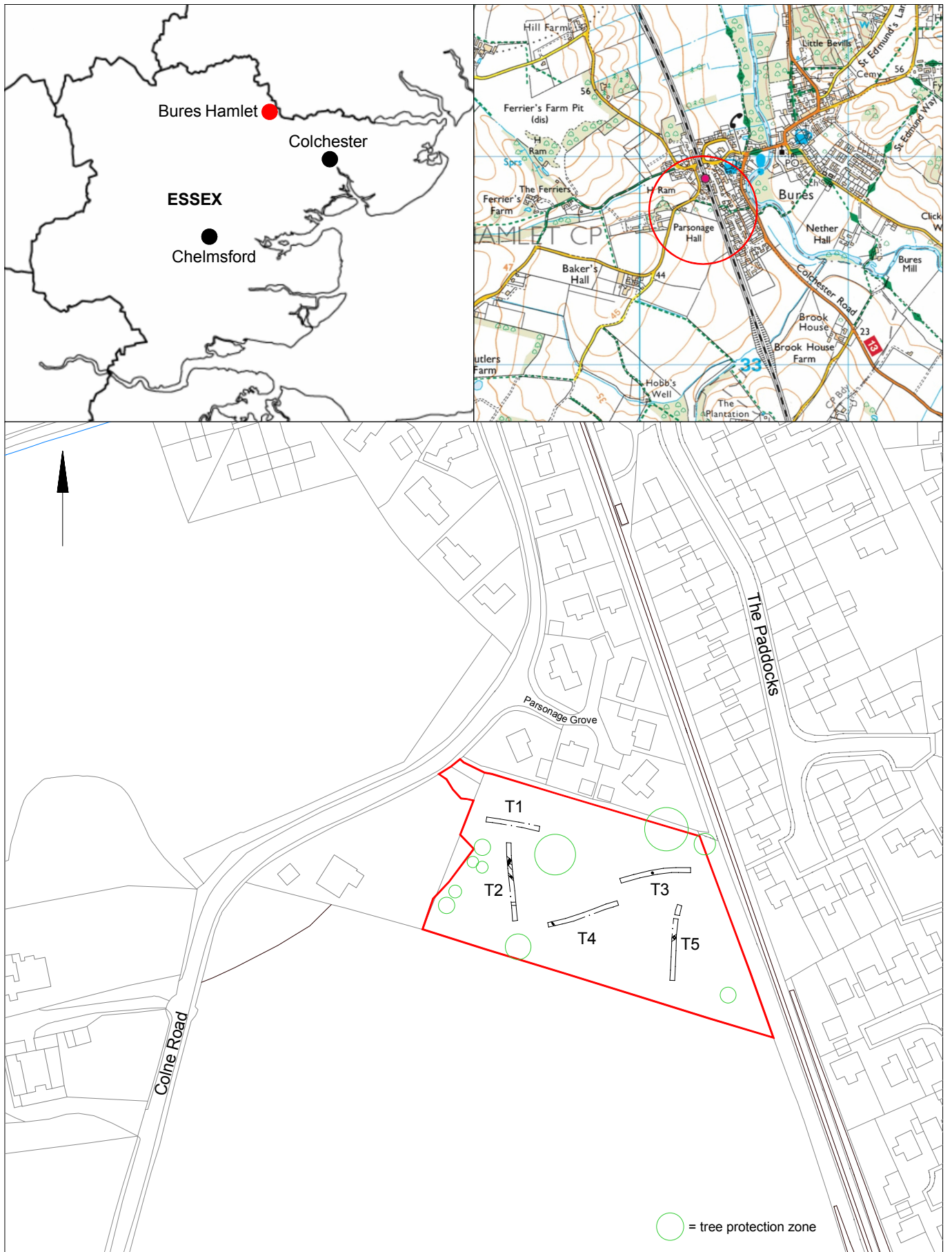
Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 8.8.2017

**Appendix 1 Context list**

<b>Context Number</b>	<b>Finds Number</b>	<b>Feature Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
F1	-	Ditch	Firm moist light-to-medium grey/brown silty-clay with manganese fleck inclusions	Undatable
F2	-	Natural feature / tree-throw	Firm moist light grey/brown silty-clay with manganese fleck inclusions	Undatable
F3	-	Linear feature	Firm moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal, daub and manganese fleck inclusions	Undatable
F4	-	Ditch	Firm dry medium yellow/orange/brown sandy-silt with brick and manganese fleck inclusions and occasional stones	Undatable
F5	1	Ditch	Firm dry medium grey/brown silty-clay with rare charcoal, daub and manganese inclusions and rare stones	?Post-medieval
F6	-	Ditch	Firm dry medium mottled grey/brown silty-clay with rare charcoal and manganese fleck inclusions	Undatable
L1	-	Topsoil	Soft moist dark grey/brown sandy-loam with charcoal, brick and tile fleck inclusions and common stones	Modern
L2	-	Subsoil	Firm dry medium yellow/grey/brown sandy-silt with charcoal, brick, tile and manganese inclusions and occasional stones	Undatable
L3	-	Natural geological deposits	Firm dry light-to-dark yellow/orange/brown sandy-silty-clay with commons stones	Post-glacial





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Fig 1 Site location.



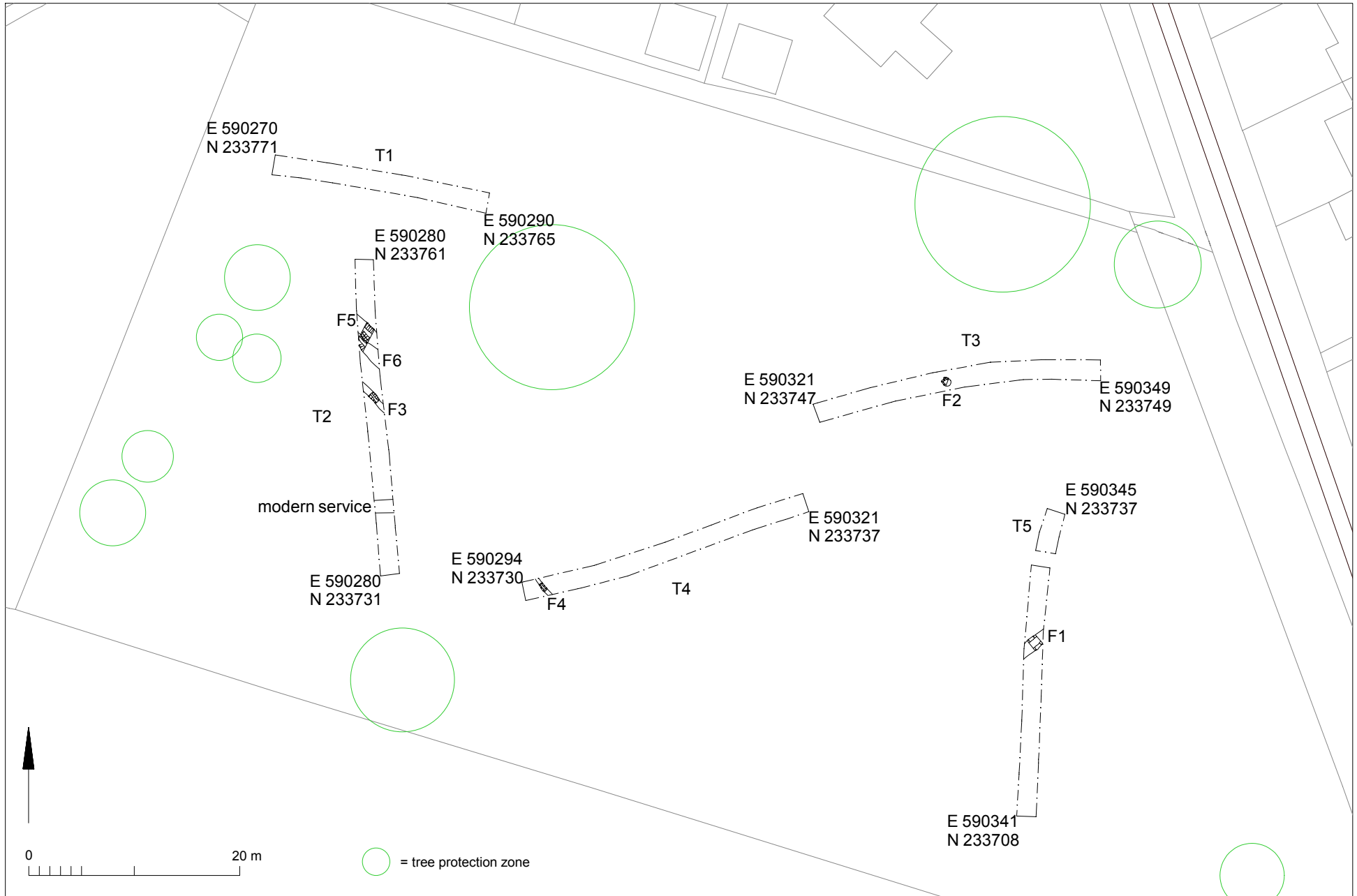


Fig 2 Results

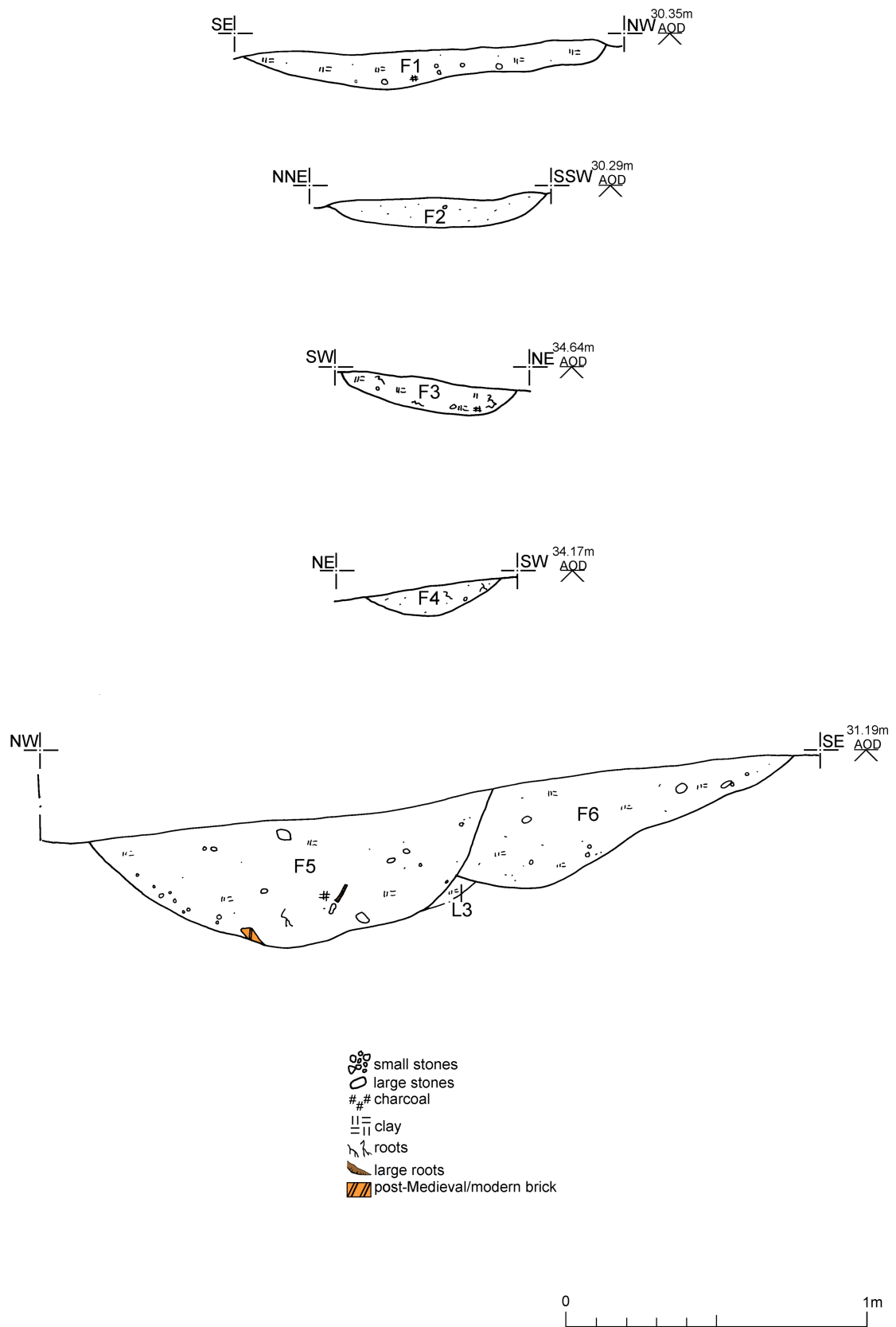


Fig 3 Feature sections

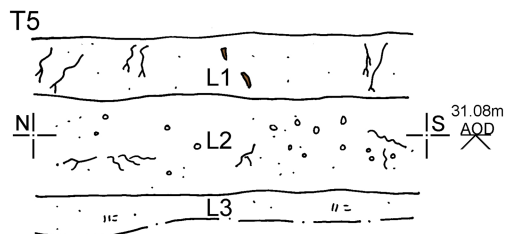
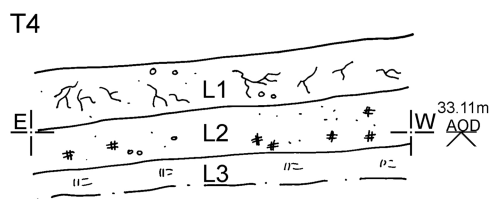
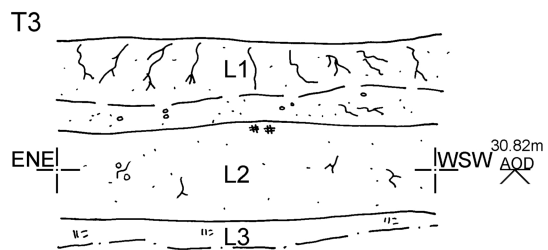
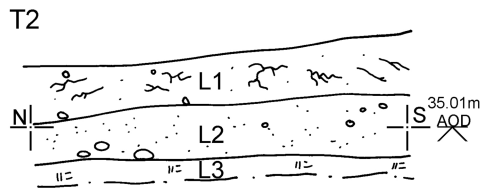
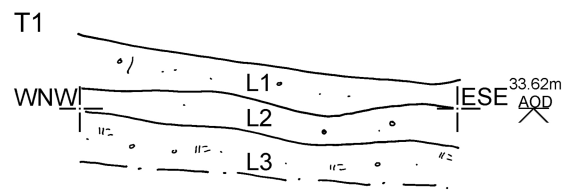


Fig 4 Representative sections

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**OASIS ID: colchest3-289089**

## Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of Windy Ridge, Colne Road, Bures Hamlet, Essex, CO8 5DH
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (five trial-trenches) was carried out at land to the rear of Windy Ridge, Colne Road, Bures Hamlet, Essex in advance of the construction of nine new detached dwellings. The evaluation revealed four undated ditches, a probable post-medieval ditch and an undated natural feature/tree-throw.
Project dates	Start: 31-07-2017 End: 01-08-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	17/06I - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	17/00582/OUT - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	BHWR17 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	DITCHES Uncertain
Monument type	TREE-THROW Uncertain
Significant Finds	CERAMIC Modern
Significant Finds	FIRE CLAY Uncertain
Methods & techniques	""Sample Trenches""
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

## Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX BRAINTREE BURES HAMLET land to the rear of Windy Ridge, Colne Road
Postcode	CO8 5DH
Study area	0.74 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 90309 33741 51.969010514201 0.770760438859 51 58 08 N 000 46 14 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 30.17m Max: 34.94m

## 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	Nigel Rayner
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

## Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Braintree Museum
Digital Archive ID	requested
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Digital Media	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey"



available  
Paper Archive recipient Braintree Museum  
Paper Archive ID requested  
Paper Contents "Stratigraphic"  
Paper Media available "Context sheet","Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

**Project  
bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)  
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