

Archaeological evaluation on land to the west of Church Road, Elmstead Market, Essex, CO7 7AW

January 2018



by Dr Elliott Hicks and Laura Pooley

with contributions by Stephen Benfield and Adam Wightman
figures by Ben Holloway and Sarah Carter

fieldwork by Nigel Rayner with Sarah Carter, Ben Holloway,
Adam Tuffey and Alec Wade

**commissioned by Mr Gus Newell
on behalf of Newell Home Ltd**

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (twenty-four trial-trenches) was carried out on land to the west of Church Road, Elmstead Market in advance of the construction of a residential development. Evaluation revealed seven ditches, two of modern date including a field boundary ditch visible on OS maps, a ditch of Roman or medieval date, and four undated ditches. Other features were an undated ditch/pit, a tree-throw, animal burrow and two natural features.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land west of Church Road, Elmstead Market, Essex which was carried out from 8th to the 10th January 2018. The work was commissioned by Mr Gus Newell on behalf of Newell Homes Ltd in advance of the construction of a residential development, community hall, green infrastructure open space including sports pitches and allotments, new vehicular and pedestrian access, parking, servicing, landscaping and utilities infrastructure, 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 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* (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, Essex.

The EHER shows that the development site lies within an area which has substantial archaeological evidence as recorded by aerial photography and seen in cropmark features. These include settlement enclosures of probable prehistoric date, a Bronze Age barrow cemetery, isolated ring-ditches, multi-period trackways and field-systems and possible Roman farmsteads. It is likely that similar activity may extend into the proposed development site and may be damaged or destroyed by the proposed development.

4 Aims

The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to determine whether the extensive prehistoric and Roman archaeological remains existing within the vicinity extend into the proposed development area, and to ascertain the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits that may exist on site more broadly, in order to determine whether further investigations were required.

5 Results (Figs 2-6)

Twenty-four trial-trenches, all 30m long by 1.8m wide, were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist.

Two layers were recorded. Modern ploughsoil (L1, c 0.26-0.41m thick, dark grey/brown silty-clay) sealed naturally-deposited sands (L2, encountered at a depth of 0.26-0.41m bcgl). Sondages were excavated in T4, T5, T17, T18 and T21 to ensure that natural had been reached.

No significant archaeological remains were identified in trenches T1, T2, T3, T6, T8, T11, T13, T15, T16, T17, T18, T22 or T23.

Trench 4 (T4):

Undated tree-throw F9 measured 1.72m in width and 0.25m in depth.

Trench 5 (T5):

Modern ditch F8 was aligned NW-SE and measured 1.6m in width and 0.51m in depth. It is also recorded as F3 in T12, F16 in T19 and F6 in T24.

Trench 7 (T7):

Undated ditch F13 was aligned NNW-SSE and measured 0.94m in width and 0.2m in depth. It is also recorded as F1 in T14 and F17 in T21.

Undated ditch F10 terminated in the evaluation trench. It was aligned NE-SW and measured 0.39m in width and 0.1m in depth.

Trench 9 (T9):

Ditch F12 was aligned WSW-ENE, measured 0.55m in width and 0.14m in depth, and contained a pottery sherd of Roman or medieval date. It was also recorded as F15 in T10.

Irregular natural feature F11 was also excavated.

Trench 10 (T10):

Modern ditch F14 was aligned NW-SE but was not excavated. It did not appear to continue into T4 to the NW.

Undated ditch F15 was aligned ENE-WSW and measured 0.67m in width and 0.19m in depth. It was also recorded as F12 in T9.

Trench 12 (T12):

Modern ditch F3 was aligned NW-SE and measured 0.86m in width 0.19m in depth. It is also recorded as F8 in T5, F16 in T19 and F6 in T24.

Trench 14 (T14):

Undated ditch F1 was aligned NNW-SSE and measured 0.83m in width and 0.28m in depth. It is also recorded as F13 in T7 and F17 in T21.

Trench 19 (T19):

Unexcavated modern ditch F16 was aligned NW-SE. It is also recorded as F8 in T5, F3 in T12 and F6 in T24. Animal burrow F7 was excavated.

Trench 20 (T20):

Undated gully F4 was aligned NE-SW and measured 0.44m in width and 0.09m in depth. It did not appear to continue into T14 to the NE or T23 to the SW. Irregular natural feature F5 was also excavated.



Photograph 1 T10, looking SSE



Photograph 2 T20, looking NNW

Trench 21 (T21):

Undated ditch terminus or pit F2 was aligned N-S and measured 0.46m in width and 0.1m in depth.

Undated ditch F17 was aligned NW-SE and measured 0.86m in width and 0.2m in depth. It is also recorded as F13 in T7 and F1 in T14.

Trench 24 (T24):

Modern ditch F6 was aligned N-S and measured 1.88 in width and 0.62m in depth. It is also recorded as F8 in T5, F3 in T12 and F16 in T19.

6 Finds

by Stephen Benfield with Adam Wightman

There are just three finds from the evaluation. These were recovered from one feature, ditch F12 in Trench 9, and topsoil layer L1 in Trench 5. The finds are described below.

Pottery

F12 T9 (4) single small greyware body sherd (weight >1 g) abraded, light grey sandy fabric, not particularly diagnostic and could be Roman or medieval in date.

Flints

F12 T9 (5) segment from a very thin, soft hammer produced blade, probably snapped, with possible retouch or use wear on the right lateral edge. The piece could be Mesolithic or Early Neolithic in date.

L1 T5 (1) retouched blade or possibly a long blade-like flake, with semi-abrupt retouch along the right lateral edge on the dorsal face and a retouched notch on the left lateral face (also dorsal face retouch). Later prehistoric (Neolithic-Bronze Age).

7 Environmental assessment

by Lisa Gray MSc MA ACIfA Archaeobotanist

Introduction – aims and objectives

Three samples were presented for assessment. Samples <2> and <4> were taken from an undated ditch. Sample <3> was taken from a Roman or medieval ditch.

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

Sixty litres of soil was sampled and processed by Colchester Archaeological Trust. It was processed using a Siraf-type flotation device. Flot was collected in a 300-micron mesh sieve then dried.

Once with the author the flot was 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 hammerscale.

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 (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 separated from charcoal 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). Charcoal flecks <4mm diameter have been quantified but not recommended for further analysis unless twigs or roundwood fragments larger than 2mmØ were present.

Results (Table 1)

The plant remains

Charred and dried waterlogged plant remains were present. No charcoal fragments of identifiable size were recovered in any sample. Sample <3> did contain one poorly preserved charred wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grain and one charred blackberry/raspberry (*Rubus fruticosus/idaeus*) seed. Uncharred plant remains consisted of seeds of seeds of orache (*Atriplex* sp.) in samples <3> and <4>.

Fauna and artefactual remains

No remains were found.

Sample	Finds No.	Sample description	Bulk sample volume (L)	Flot volume (ml)	Charred Grains			Charred Seeds			Charcoal <4mmØ	Dried waterlogged Seeds			Modern root/rhizomes
					a	b	c	a	b	c		a	d	p	
2	3	F10 undated ditch	20	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1
3	6	F12 Roman or medieval ditch	20	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	3
4	7	F13 undated ditch	20	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	3	1

Table 1 Environmental assessment results

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)]

Recommendations

No further work is recommended on these samples. All contents have been recorded in this report.

8 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation revealed a modern ditch (F3/F6/F8/F16) seen on the earliest OS maps until at least the 1960s. An undated ditch (F1/F13/F17) on the same alignment as the first might be associated with it, but pre-dates the 1870s as it is not on the earliest OS map of 1874/5 or any subsequent maps. Ditch F14 is also modern, but ditch F12/F15 may be Roman or medieval. Two further undated ditches, F4 and F10, are both aligned NE-SW and may be related to each other. See Fig 7 for ditch

projections. There is no evidence that any of the nearby cropmarks, the nearest being located 420m to the SE, continue into the development site.

The only other features excavated were ditch/pit F2, tree-throw F9, animal burrow F9 and natural features F5 and F11. Two pieces of residual worked flint suggest some activity on the development site in the prehistoric period.

9 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Gus Newell and Newll Homes Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister with fieldwork carried out by N Rayner with S Carter, B Holloway, A Tuffey and A Wade. Figures are by B Holloway and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor.

10 References

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

- | | | |
|---|-------|---|
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| 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 trial trenching and excavation at land to west of Church Road, Elmstead Market</i> |
| English Heritage | 2006 | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i> |
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11 Abbreviations and glossary

Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC
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
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
Mesolithic	period from c 10,000 – 4000BC
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
Neolithic	period from c 4000 – 2500 BC
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
prehistoric	pre-Roman
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 sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
wsi	written scheme of investigation

12 Contents of archive

Finds: small bag

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1214)

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

13 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 Colchester Museum under accession code: COLEM 2017.110.

Distribution list:

Mr Gus Newell, Newell Homes Ltd
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust

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

tel.: 01206 501785

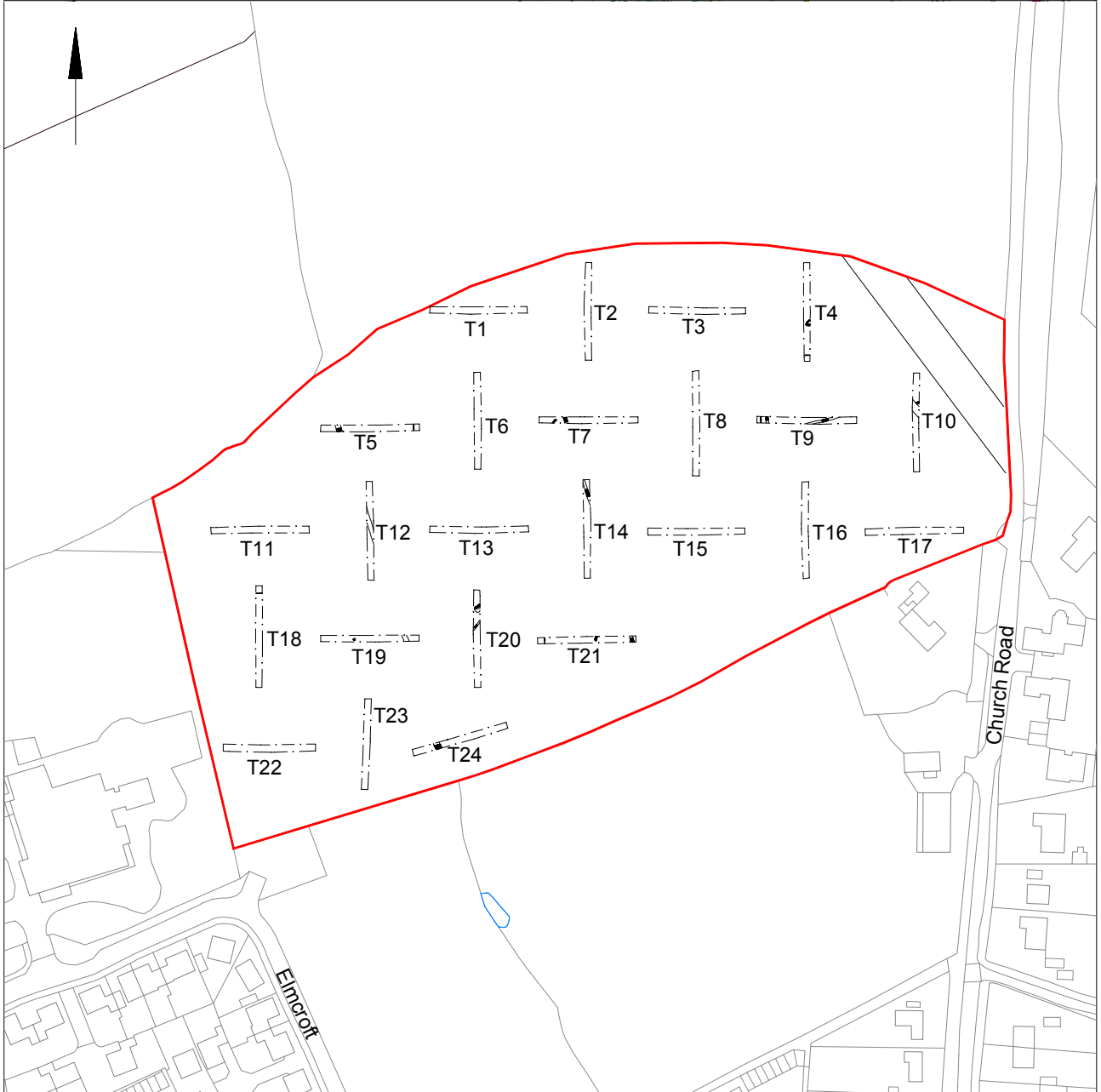
email: lp@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 1.2.2018

Appendix 1 Context list

Context number	Trench no.	Finds no.	Context type	Description	Date
F1	T4	-	Ditch (part of F13 & F17)	Very soft, moist to wet light grey/brown clayey-silt with CBM fleck inclusions and <2% stone piece inclusions	Undatable
F2	T21	-	Ditch terminus or pit	Very soft, moist to wet light grey/brown silty-clay	Undatable
F3	T12	-	Field boundary ditch (part of F6, F8 & F16)	Friable, dry to moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with <4% stone piece inclusions	Modern
F4	T20	-	Gully	Soft, moist light grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal fleck inclusions and >2% stone piece inclusions	Undatable
F5	T20	-	Natural feature	Soft, moist light grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal fleck inclusions	Post-glacial
F6	T24	-	Field boundary ditch (part of F3, F8 & F16)	Soft to friable, dry medium brown clayey-silt with CBM fleck inclusions	Modern
F7	T19	2	Animal burrow	Soft, moist medium grey silt with >15% charcoal fleck inclusions	Undatable
F8	T5	-	Field boundary ditch (part of F3, F6 & F16)	Friable, dry medium to dark brown clayey-silt	Modern
F9	T4	-	Tree-throw	Very soft, moist light to medium grey/brown silty-clay with <2% gravel and <2% stone piece inclusions	Undatable
F10	T7	3	Ditch	Soft, moist light grey/brown silty-clay with manganese fleck inclusions	Undatable
F11	T9	-	Natural feature	Soft to friable, dry medium grey clay with <2% gravel and <5% stone piece inclusions	Post-glacial
F12		4, 5, 6	Ditch (part of F15)	Very soft, moist light to medium grey/brown clayey-silt with <6% stone piece inclusions	Roman or medieval
F13	T7	7	Ditch (part of F1 & F17)	Soft, moist light to dark mottled orange/grey/brown silty-clay	Undatable
F14	T10	-	Ditch	Not excavated	Modern
F15	T10	-	Ditch (part of F12)	Medium grey/brown silty-clay	Roman or medieval
F16	T19	-	Field boundary ditch (part of F3, F6 & F8)	Not excavated	Modern
F17	T21	-	Ditch (part of F1 & F13)	Not excavated	Undatable
L1	All	1	Ploughsoil	Friable, moist, dark grey/brown silty-clay	Modern
L2		-	Natural	Medium orange/brown silty-clay	Post-glacial



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Fig 1 Site location



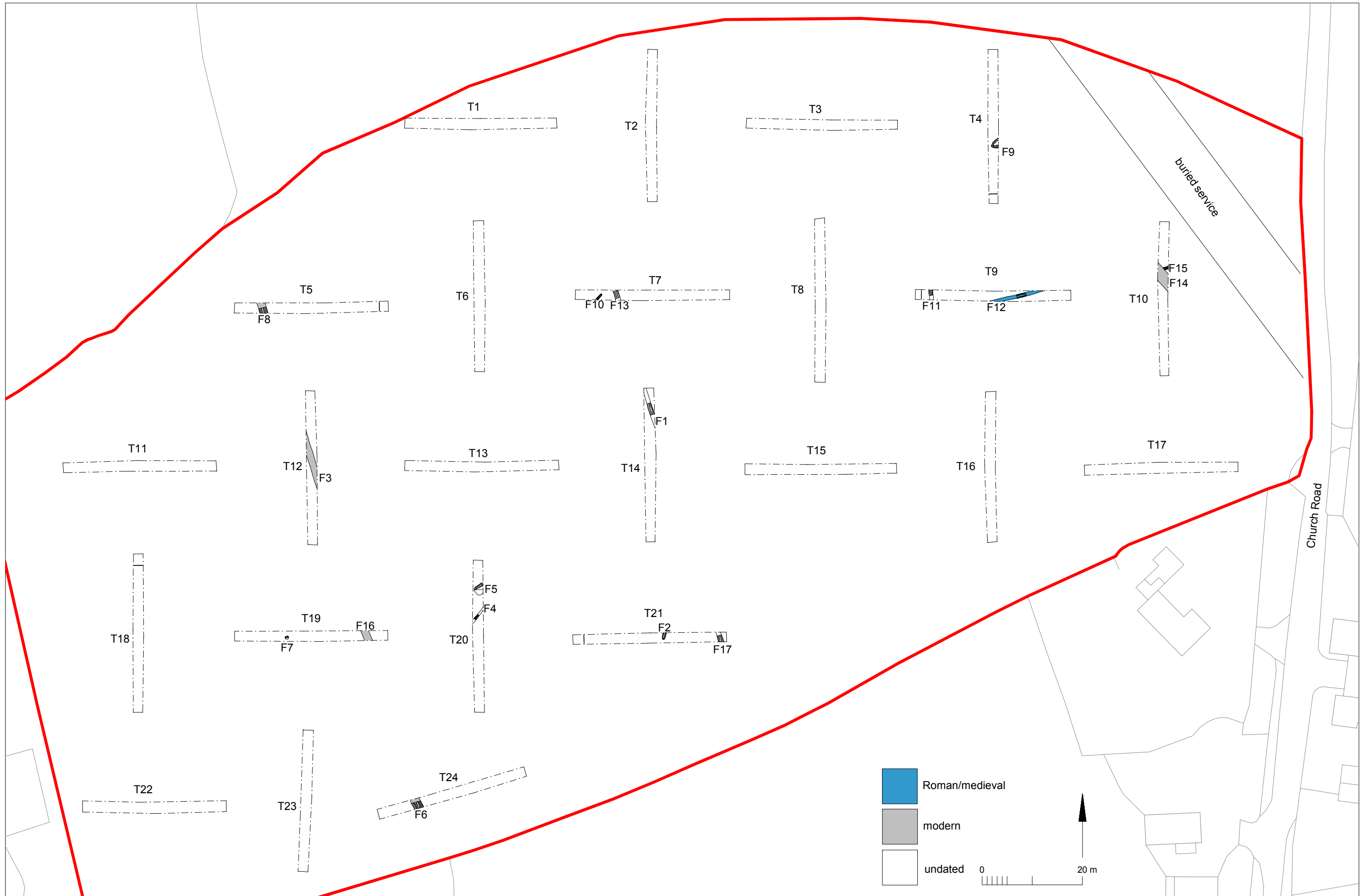


Fig 2 Results

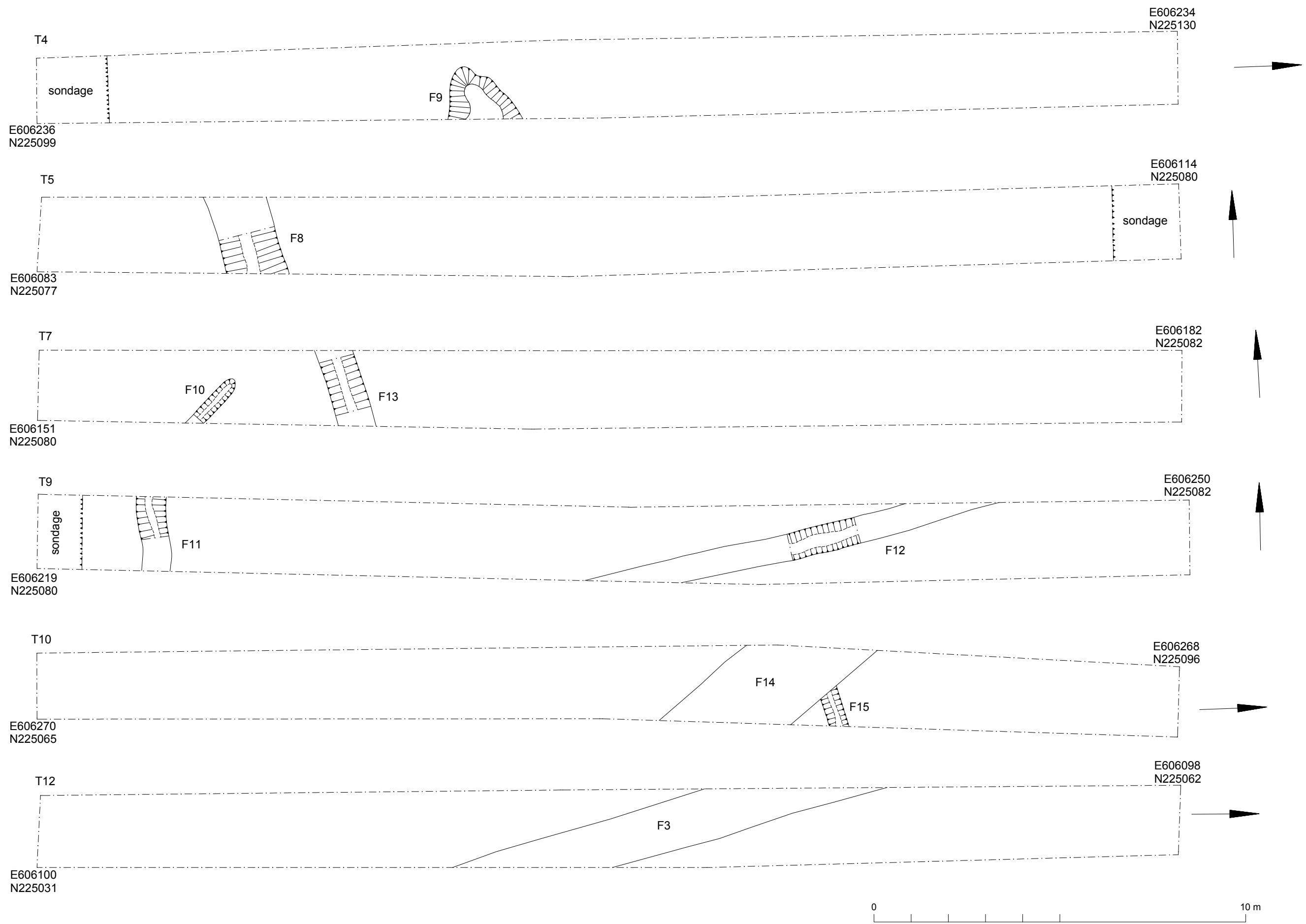


Fig 3 Trench plans: T4, T5, T7, T9, T10 and T12

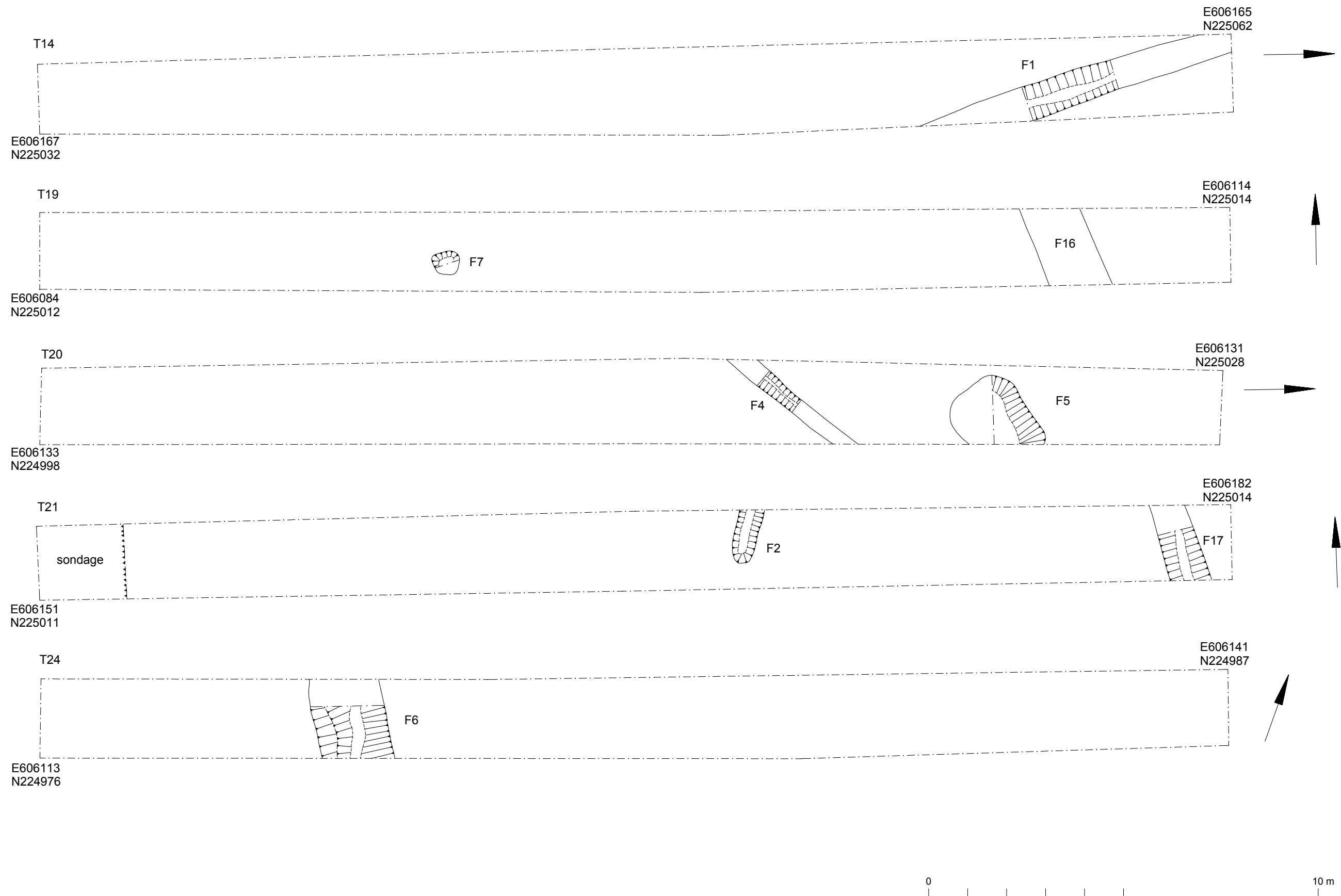


Fig 4 Trench plans: T14, T19, T20, T21 and T24

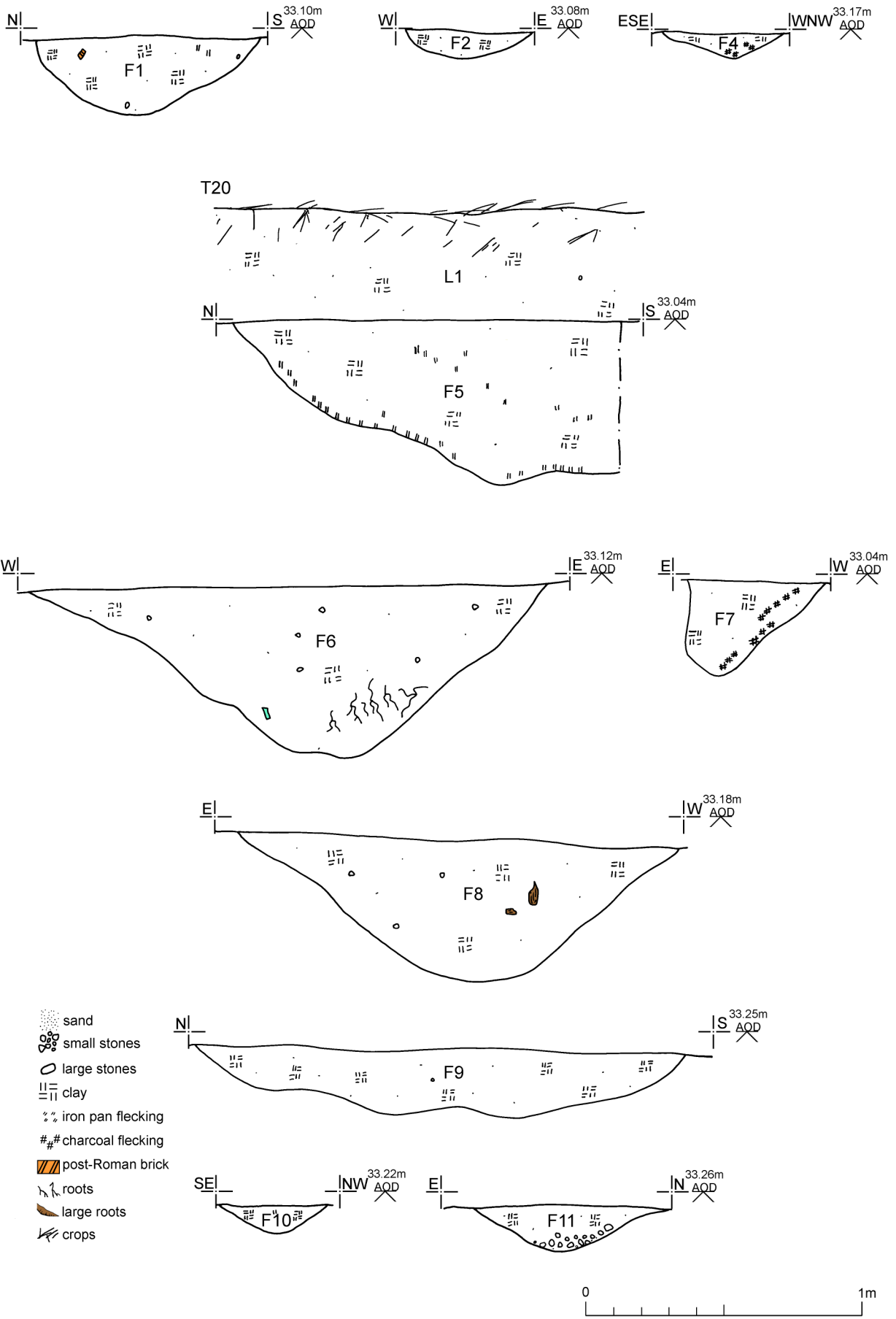


Fig 5 Feature sections.

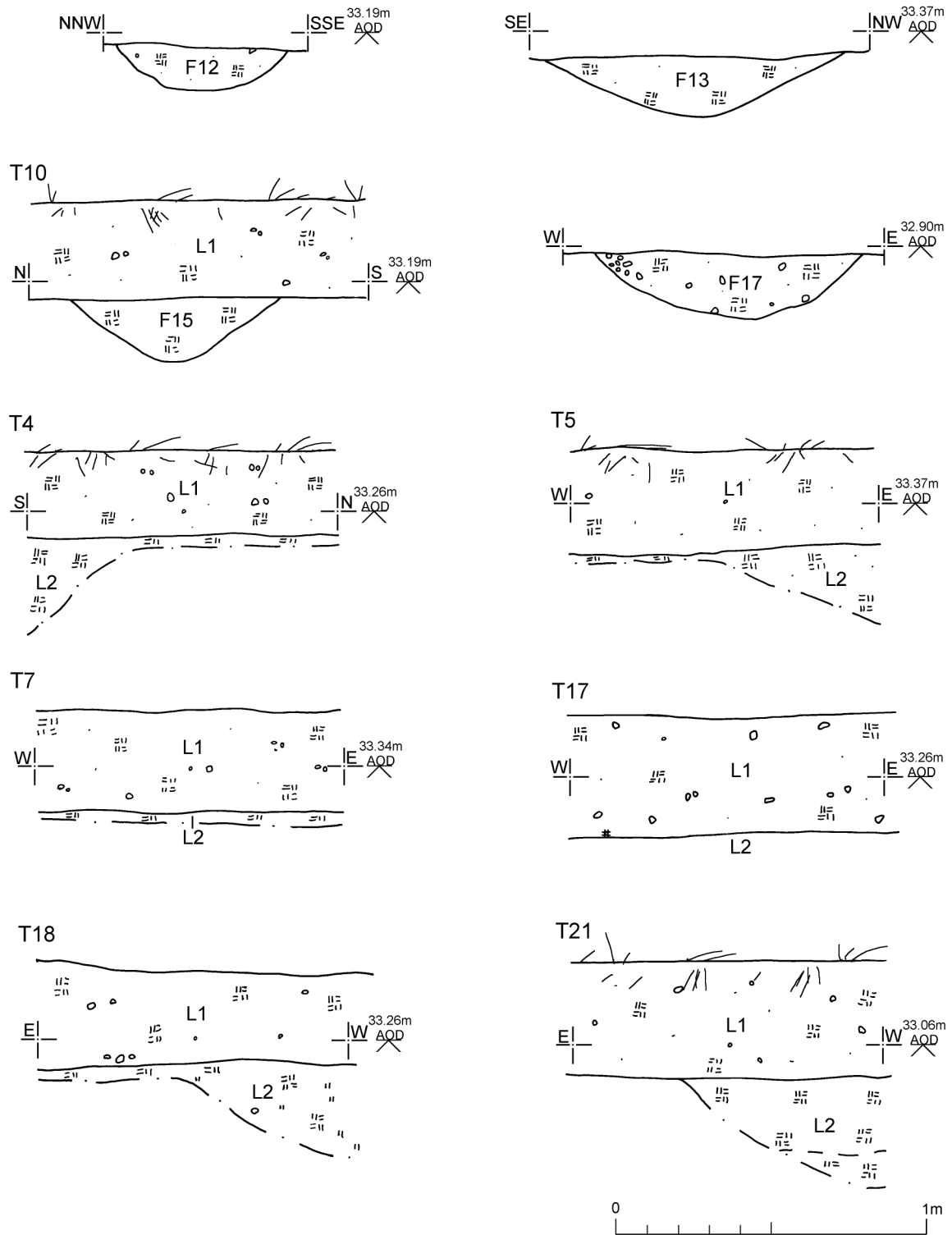


Fig 6 Feature and representative sections.

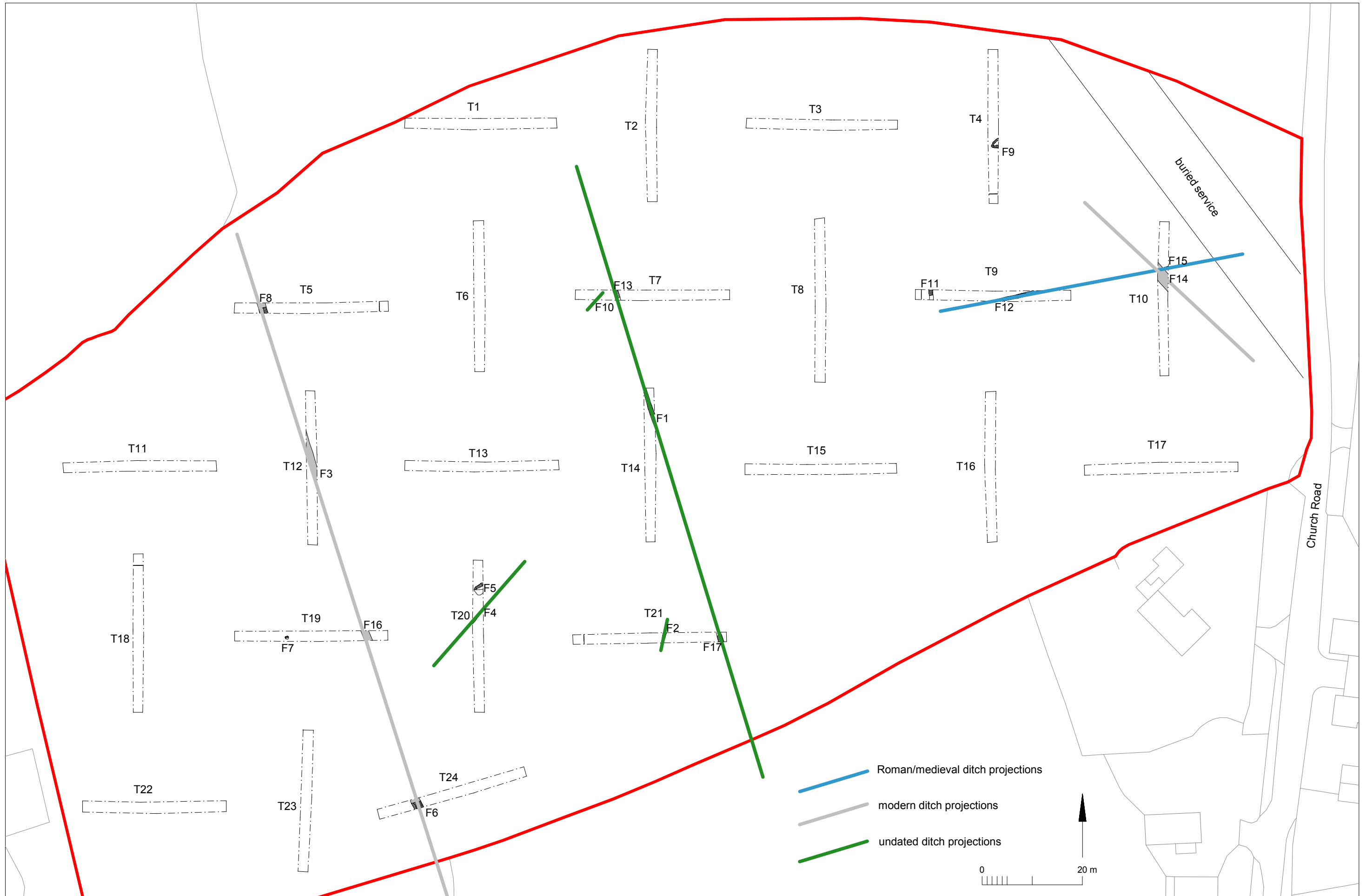


Fig 7 Ditch projections

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OASIS ID: colchest3-292135

Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation on land west of Church Road, Elmstead Market, Essex, CO7 7AW
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (twenty-four trial-trenches) was carried out on land to the west of Church Road, Elmstead Market in advance of the construction of a residential development. Evaluation revealed seven ditches, two of modern date including a field boundary ditch visible on OS maps, a ditch of Roman or medieval date, and four undated ditches. Other features were an undated ditch/pit, a tree-throw, animal burrow and two natural features.
Project dates	Start: 08-01-2018 End: 10-01-2018
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	14/01292/OUT - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	17/08c - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	ESCR17 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM: 2017.110 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Monument type	DITCH Roman
Monument type	DITCH Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Modern
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	LITHICS Early Prehistoric
Significant Finds	LITHICS Late Prehistoric
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After outline determination (eg. As a reserved matter)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX TENDRING ELMSTEAD land to the west of Church Road
Postcode	CO7 7AW
Study area	3.3 Hectares
Site coordinates	TM 06176 25053 51.885312137193 0.996239719986 51 53 07 N 000 59 46 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 32.95m Max: 33.3m

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 recipient Colchester Museum

Physical Archive ID COLEM: 2017.110

Physical Contents "Ceramics","Worked stone/lithics"

Digital Archive recipient Colchester Museum

Digital Archive ID COLEM: 2017.110

Digital Contents "Stratigraphic","Survey"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Survey"

Paper Archive recipient Colchester Museum

Paper Archive ID COLEM: 2017.110

Paper Contents "Stratigraphic","Survey"

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

Entered by Laura Pooley (lp@catuk.org)

Entered on 2 February 2018

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