

Archaeological evaluation on land at former car park off Ravensdale, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 4QH

October 2018



by Dr Elliott Hicks

with contributions by Dr Matthew Loughton, Laura Pooley and Alec Wade
figures by Chris Lister, Ben Holloway and Emma Holloway

fieldwork by Ben Holloway with Sarah Carter, Robin Mathieson and Nicholas Pryke

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Colchester Archaeological Trust

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

tel.: 01206 501785

email: eh2@catuk.org

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation of two trial-trenches was carried out on the former car park off Ravensdale, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex in advance of the construction of nine almshouse-type two bed dwellings, together with associated access, surface water drainage and other associated groundworks. Excavations revealed three ?medieval inhumations, a wall either associated with the church of St John the Baptist or the Great Clacton Hall which formerly stood at this site, a post-medieval wall foundation and yard surface related to Great Clacton Hall, and a number of pits of predominantly post-medieval date which were also likely the product of domestic activity linked to the Hall.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on the former car park off Ravensdale, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, which was carried out during 3rd-29th October 2018. The work was commissioned by Steve Norman of Benferri Developments Ltd in advance of the construction of nine almshouse-type dwellings, together with associated access, surface water drainage and other associated groundworks. The work 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* (MHCLG 2018).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a brief detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa O'Connor (ECCPS 2018), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2018).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with Historic England's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)*, 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)*, *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 proposed development is situated within the grounds of the former Great Clacton Hall (EHER 2884), which is depicted on the Chapman and André map and must therefore predate 1777. The current hall, which dates to the 18th century, lies to the southwest. Cartographic evidence shows a number of buildings in this location, likely the historic farm buildings and ranges associated with the hall, evidence of which may be preserved below ground and which may provide information on the date, function and use of the buildings as well as possible earlier remains for the manorial site.

The 12th-century parish church of St John the Baptist lies directly to the south of the development (EHER 2846). Parts of the church building itself contain examples of Roman brick and tile, although much of the church exterior has been remodelled.

Further Roman remains have been discovered in the form of a Denarius of Septimus Severus, unearthed 162m southwest of the site. To the east (180m) are cropmarks of undated square enclosures (EHER 1914) and excavations conducted to the west

(120m) during the 19th century uncovered the remnants of an Anglo-Saxon barrow and an associated inhumation. However, an excavation adjacent to the site carried out by the Essex Field Archaeology Unit in 2010 yielded little in the way of significant archaeological remains.



Map 1 Chapman and André map of 1777 showing the location of Great Clacton Hall.

4 Aim

Archaeological evaluation was undertaken at this site to ascertain the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits that may exist on site.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

Two archaeological trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trench 1 (T1) was 45m long and 1.8m wide; Trench 2 (T2), a T-shaped trench, was 15m long and 1.8m wide. Both trenches were excavated to natural.

The trenches were excavated through a modern levelling layer (L1, c 0.28-0.4m thick, loose/firm, dry, mixed medium yellow/orange sandy-gravel and dark brown/black silty-clay with 15% stone and CBM and concrete pieces) onto natural (L2, firm, moist medium yellow/orange clayey-sand).

Trench 1 (T1):

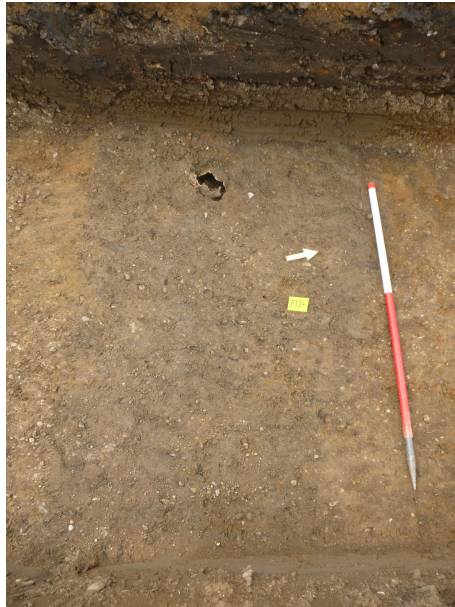
Considerable disturbance by modern services was apparent in T1.

Undatable pit F1 extended beyond the limit of excavation, but its exposed extent was 0.9m wide and 0.16m deep.

Trench 2 (T2):

Again, modern services and concrete footings were present in several parts of T2. A bulk was left in place due to the presence of a drainage run.

A group of three ?medieval burial inhumations, F12, F13 and F14, all aligned E-W, were clustered together at the southern end of the trench. As per the WSI, all of these burials were left unexcavated and the remains left *in situ*.



Photograph 1 ?Medieval inhumation F12, looking west northwest



Photograph 2 ?Medieval inhumation F14, looking west

Structural remains were also present in the evaluation trench. Just to the north of the inhumation burials lay undatable wall foundation F10. The foundation was aligned E-W and was composed of septaria and mortar. This feature was sealed by ?post-medieval robbing cut or pit F9, which was 2.49m wide and 0.62m deep. Another wall foundation, F5, which was of post-medieval date, extended across the northern end of the trench. It was constructed from unfrogged, mortared bricks and was aligned E-W. ?Post-medieval cobbled yard surface F2 lay to the south of F5, and was possibly related to this structure.



Photograph 3 wall foundation F10 and ?post-medieval robbing cut / demolition layer F9, looking west northwest



Photograph 4 Post-medieval yard surface F2, looking south

There were two post-medieval pits, F3 and F7, and two undatable pits, F8 and F11, which were 0.26-1.92m wide and 0.18-0.41m deep. F7 was cut by modern posthole/pit F6. This feature was not bottomed but was 0.49m wide.

Natural feature/tree-throw F4 was 0.99m wide and 0.33m deep.

6 Finds

6.1 Ceramic and pottery finds

by Dr Matthew Loughton

There was a small assemblage of ceramics and pottery with 20 sherds with a weight of just over 1 kg (Table 1). The vast majority of this consists of ceramic building material (CBM) with a small assemblage of post-Roman pottery (Table 1). Only the pit F3, pit F7 and the ?robbing-cut / pit (F9), produced ceramic material, most however came from the feature F9 (Table 2).

Ceramic material	No.	%	Weight (g)	%	MSW/g	Rim EVE	Rim EVREP
Medieval-Post Medieval (fabric 20)	6	30	130	12	22	0.16	1
Ceramic Building Material (CBM)	14	70	928	88	66	-	-
All	20		1,058		53	0.16	1

Table 1 Details on the main types of ceramics and pottery

Feature	Post-Roman		MSW/g	CBM		MSW/g	Total		MSW/g
	no.	Weight (g)		no.	Weight (g)		no.	Weight (g)	
F3	0	0	0	2	66	33	2	66	33
F7	0	0	0	3	160	53	3	160	53
F9	6	130	22	12	862	72	18	992	55

Table 2 Main types of ceramics and pottery via feature

Post-Roman pottery

The post-Roman pottery was recorded by sherd count, the number of rims, handles and bases, and weight, via the fabric groups from CAR 7 (Cotter 2000) and Cunningham (1985). The number of vessels was determined by rim EVREP (estimated vessel representation) and rim EVE (estimated vessel equivalent).

Six sherds with a weight of 130g from one medieval sandy greyware (fabric 20) cooking pot were recovered from F9 (?robbing-cut / pit) (Table 1) (CAR 7, 91-96 figs. 58-59). This material is relatively fresh and unabraded, and also includes one relatively large-sized rim-shoulder sherd. The rim and upper neck/shoulder of this vessel is wheel-made (or wheel-finished) while the body was handmade. This is typical of the earlier vessels (group A), dating to 1175-1250/1275, manufactured in this ware (CAR 7, 106-107 fig. 68). There are also traces of black sooting on the top and outer-face of the rim, and on the shoulder outer face. Similar marks have been previously noted on greyware cooking vessels from Colchester and it has been suggested that they were produced when a ceramic pot was placed in a metal vessel full of boiling water, over a fire (CAR 7, 97).

Ceramic building material (CBM)

CBM accounts for the majority of the ceramic finds from the evaluation with 14 fragments weighing 928g (Table 1). The majority of the CBM is of peg-tiles with a few pieces of brick and is of post-medieval date (Table 3). Most of this material came from F9 (Table 2).

CBM type	No.	Weight (g)	MSW/g
Peg-tile	11	488	41
Modern brick?	3	440	147
Total	14	928	66

Table 3 CBM by type

Dating summary

The relatively well-preserved medieval cooking pot sherds from F9 suggests an initial date during the 13th century for this feature with post-medieval disturbance. The CBM from pit F3 and pit F7 suggests a post-medieval date for these features.

Feature	Pottery	CBM	Overall date
F3	-	Post-medieval	Post-medieval
F7	-	Post-medieval	Post-medieval
F9	Fabric 20 (1175-1250/1275)	Post-medieval	13th century & post-medieval disturbance

Table 4 Dating summary

6.2 Other finds

by Laura Pooley and Alec Wade

All non-ceramic finds are listed in Table 4 below. All of the finds will be discarded once the report has been approved.

Context no.	Description
F3, 1	Clay pipe: Clay pipe stem, 2g. Animal bone: 27 pieces, 188g, the assemblage included sheep or goat (x6), bird (x6), small mammal (x1) and fragments of medium to large-sized mammal (x10). Signs of dog gnawing (x4) and saw marks associated with butchery (x2) were noted on the sheep/goat and medium to large mammal bone.
F4, 3	Iron: Fragment of iron nail shank, head and tip missing, 4g.
F9, 5	Animal bone: 1 deer metatarsal (fallow deer size), 64g, Shell: 5 pieces of oyster shell, 120g. Stone: Two large fragments of limestone and one smaller chip (now in two joining pieces), totalling 2.5kg, presumably once pieces of building stone but not obviously worked. Slate: Two fragments of slate, 94g.

Table 5 Non-ceramic finds by context.

7 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation uncovered significant remains. Three inhumations were found at the southern extremity of T2, demonstrating that the graveyard attached to the parish church of St John the Baptist originally extended at least 10m further to the north beyond its present location (see Figure 2).

Wall foundation F10, located just to the north of the inhumations, might have represented the remains of a boundary wall of the cemetery demolished during the post-medieval period, possibly during the construction of the Great Clacton Hall around the 18th century. However, this interpretation is complicated by the fact that this feature corresponds to a wall within the courtyard of the Great Clacton Hall shown on OS mapping of the area compiled during the late 19th century (see Figure 4). Two possibilities therefore present themselves: that the remains of the graveyard boundary wall were utilised as a foundation for this wall, or that this wall was entirely unrelated to the church and was contemporary in date to the construction of the Hall.

Further remains associated with the former Great Clacton Hall were also found. Wall foundation F5, at the northern end of T2, appears to represent the remains of the northernmost E-W aligned wall of the northern building of the hall, and yard surface F2 those of a cobbled courtyard enclosed by the two main buildings of the hall (see Figure 4). It is likely too that the numerous post-medieval pits were the product of domestic activity associated with this building.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Steve Norman of Benferri Developments Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway with S Carter, R Mathieson and N Pryke. Figures are by C Lister, B Holloway and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor.

9 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in PDF format at

<http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

CAR 7	2000	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by P Crummy
CAT	2014	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2018	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation and monitoring at former car park off Ravensdale, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 4QH</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>
Cunningham, CM	1985	'A typology for post-Roman pottery in Essex' in <i>Post-medieval sites and their pottery: Moulsham Street, Chelmsford AD 1450-1750</i> , eds. CM Cunningham and PJ Drury
ECCPS	2018	<i>Archaeological trial-trenching on land at former car park off Ravensdale, Clacton on Sea</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)
MHCLG	2018	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

10 Abbreviations and glossary

Anglo-Saxon	period from c 500 – 1066
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
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
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 (layer) of material
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	O nline A ccess to the I ndex of A rchaeological I nvestigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
peg-tile	rectangular thin tile with peg-hole(s) used mainly for roofing, first appeared c AD1200 and continued in use to present day, but commonly post-medieval to modern
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
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

11 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1338)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Original site record (feature and layer sheets, finds record, sections)

Site digital photos and log

Inked section drawings

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1338)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Graphics

Site digital photos and log

Survey data

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 Colchester Museum under accession code COLEM 2018.80.

Distribution list:

Steve Norman, Benferri Developments Ltd
Teresa O'Connor, ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisors
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust

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

tel.: 01206 501785

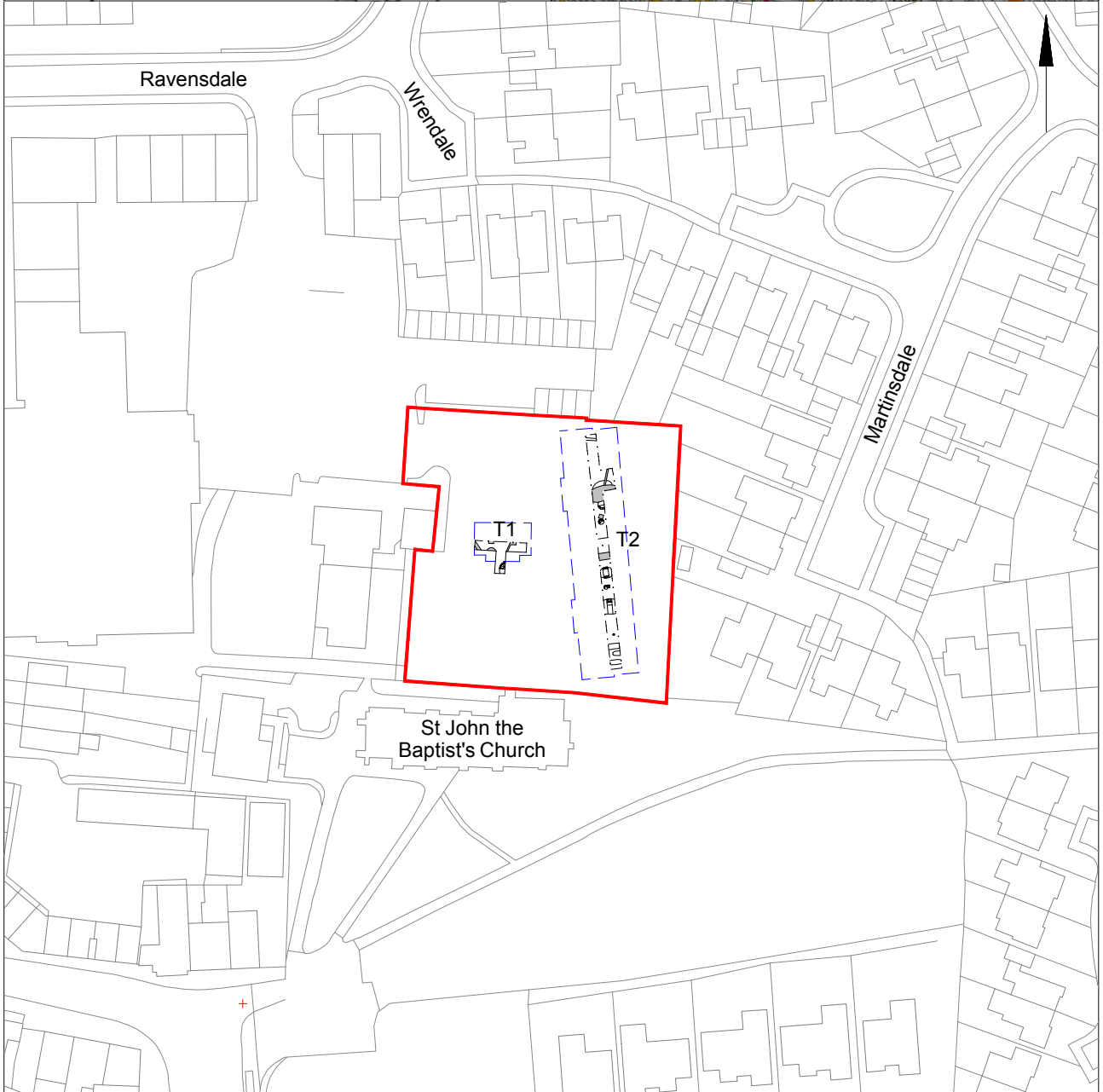
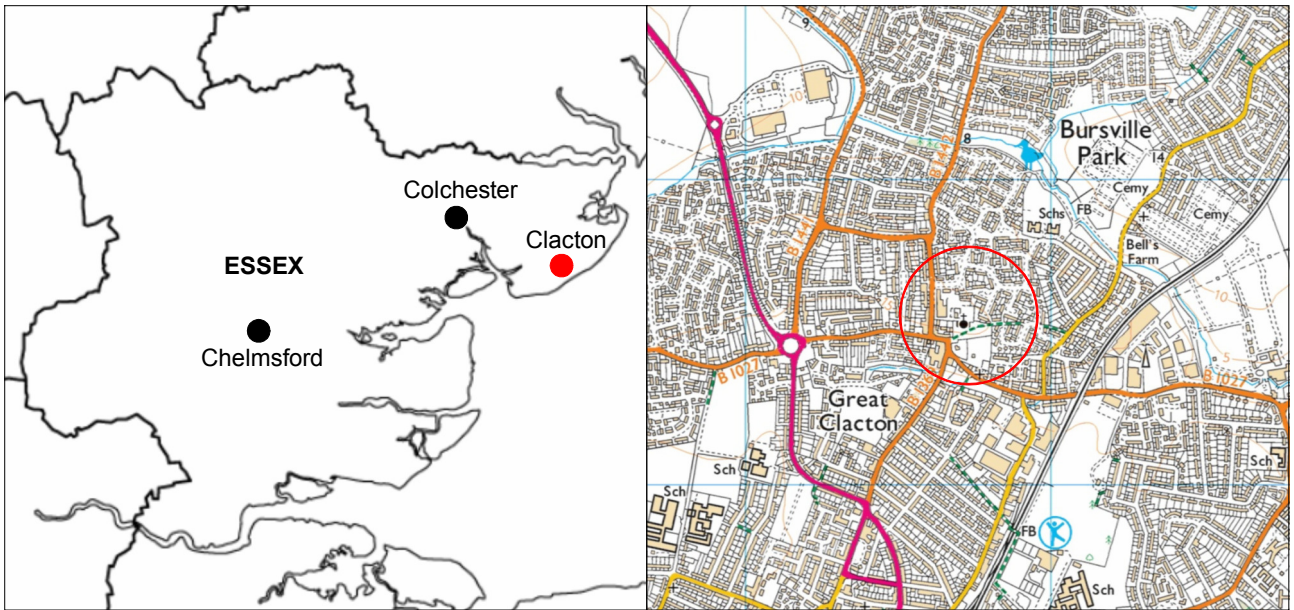
email: eh2@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy
Date: 21.11.2018

Appendix 1 Context list

Context Number	Finds Number	Feature / layer type	Description	Date
L1	-	Make-up layer	Loose/firm, dry medium/dark yellow/orange/brown/black sandy-silty-clay with 15% stones	Modern
L2	-	Natural	Firm, moist, medium yellow/orange sandy-clay	Post-glacial
F1	-	Natural feature	Soft, moist, light yellow/beige silty-clay	Undatable
F2	-	Yard surface	Granite/mudstone cobbled yard surface	?Post-medieval
F3	1	Pit	Firm, dry/moist, medium grey sandy-silt with charcoal and oyster flecks and 3% stones	Post-medieval
F4	3 ¹	Tree throw	Soft, moist light grey/black silty-clay	Undatable
F5	2	Foundation wall	Unfrogged, mortared brick wall; soft, moist, medium green/grey silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Post-medieval
F6	-	?Posthole	Loose/soft, moist, dark brown/black sandy-silt with charcoal and CBM flecks and 3% stones	Modern
F7	4	Pit	Soft, moist medium grey silty-clay with charcoal and CBM flecks	Post-medieval
F8	-	Pit	Firm, dry/moist, dark grey silty-sand with CBM flecks	Post-medieval
F9	5	?Robbing cut / pit	Firm, moist, medium grey/brown sandy-silt with charcoal flecks	?Post-medieval
F10	-	Wall foundation	Septaria and mortar wall	Undatable
F11	-	Posthole	Firm, moist, dark grey/brown sandy-silt	?Post-medieval?
F12	-	Inhumation burial	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silt	?Medieval
F13	-	Inhumation burial	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silt	?Medieval
F14	-	Inhumation burial	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silt	?Medieval

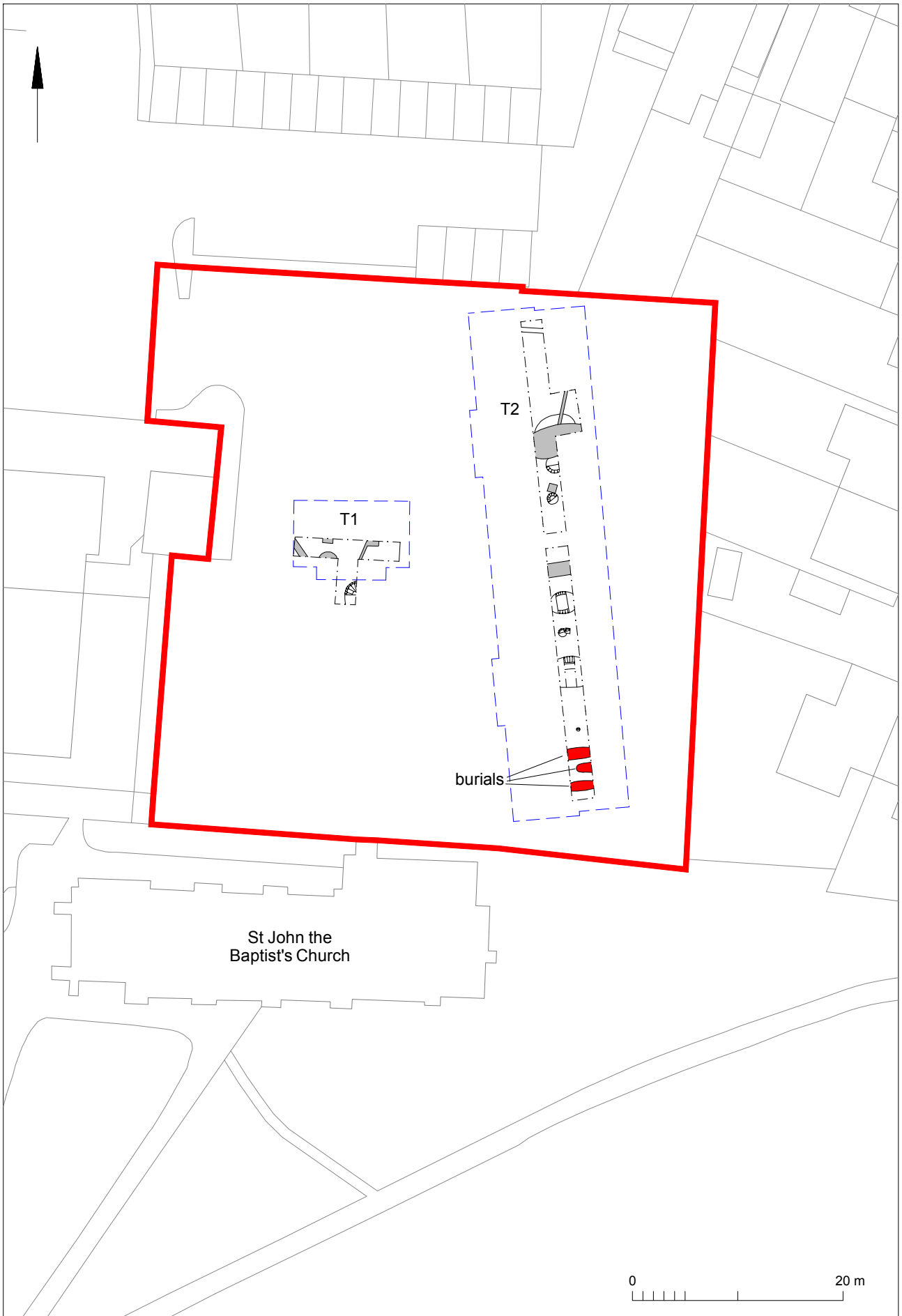
¹ The finds retrieved from this feature were lost.



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Fig 1 Site location with trench layout in relation to proposed development (indicated by dashed blue lines).



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Fig 2 Evaluation results (modern features in grey)

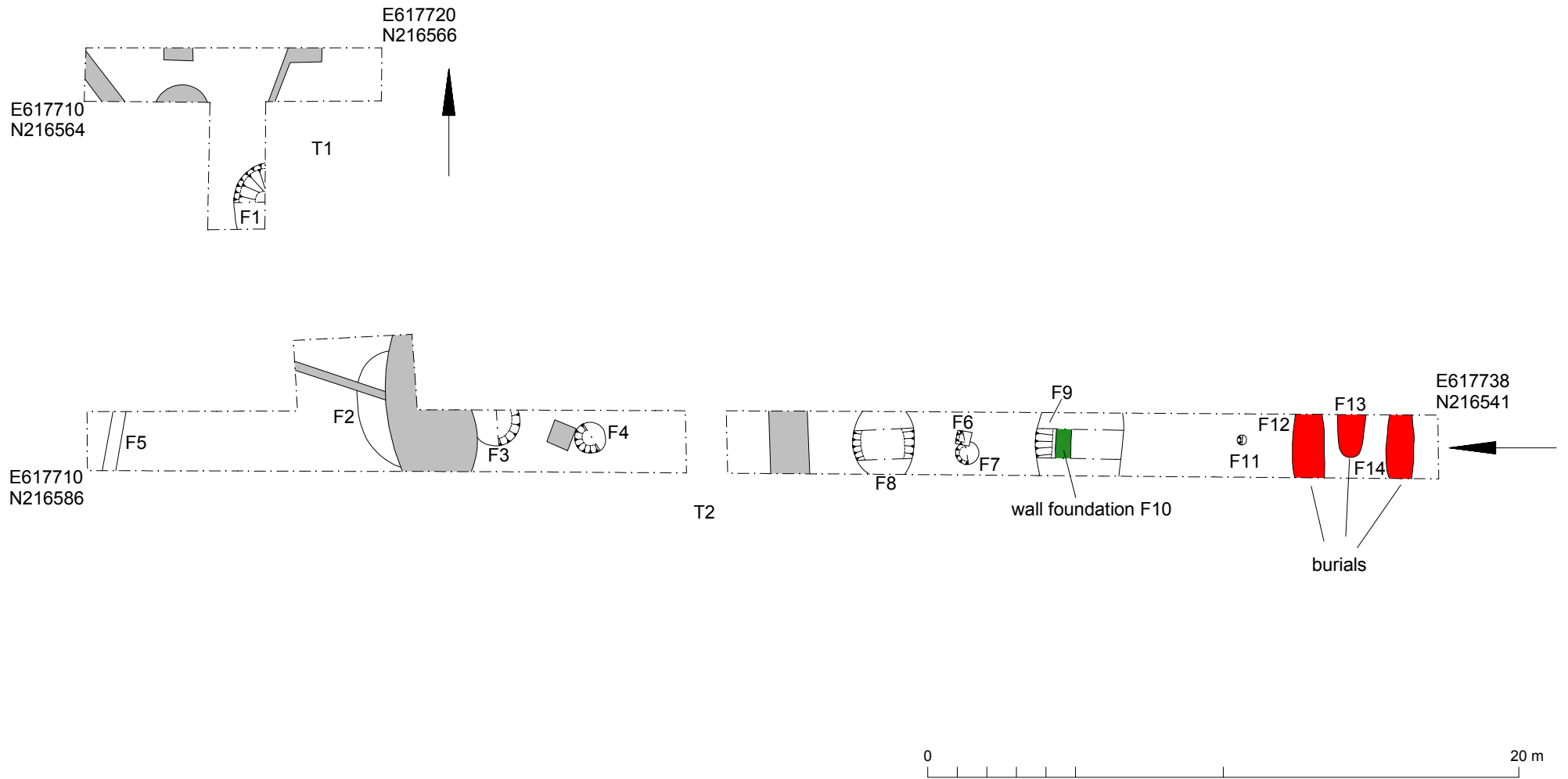


Fig 3 Trench plans (modern features in grey)

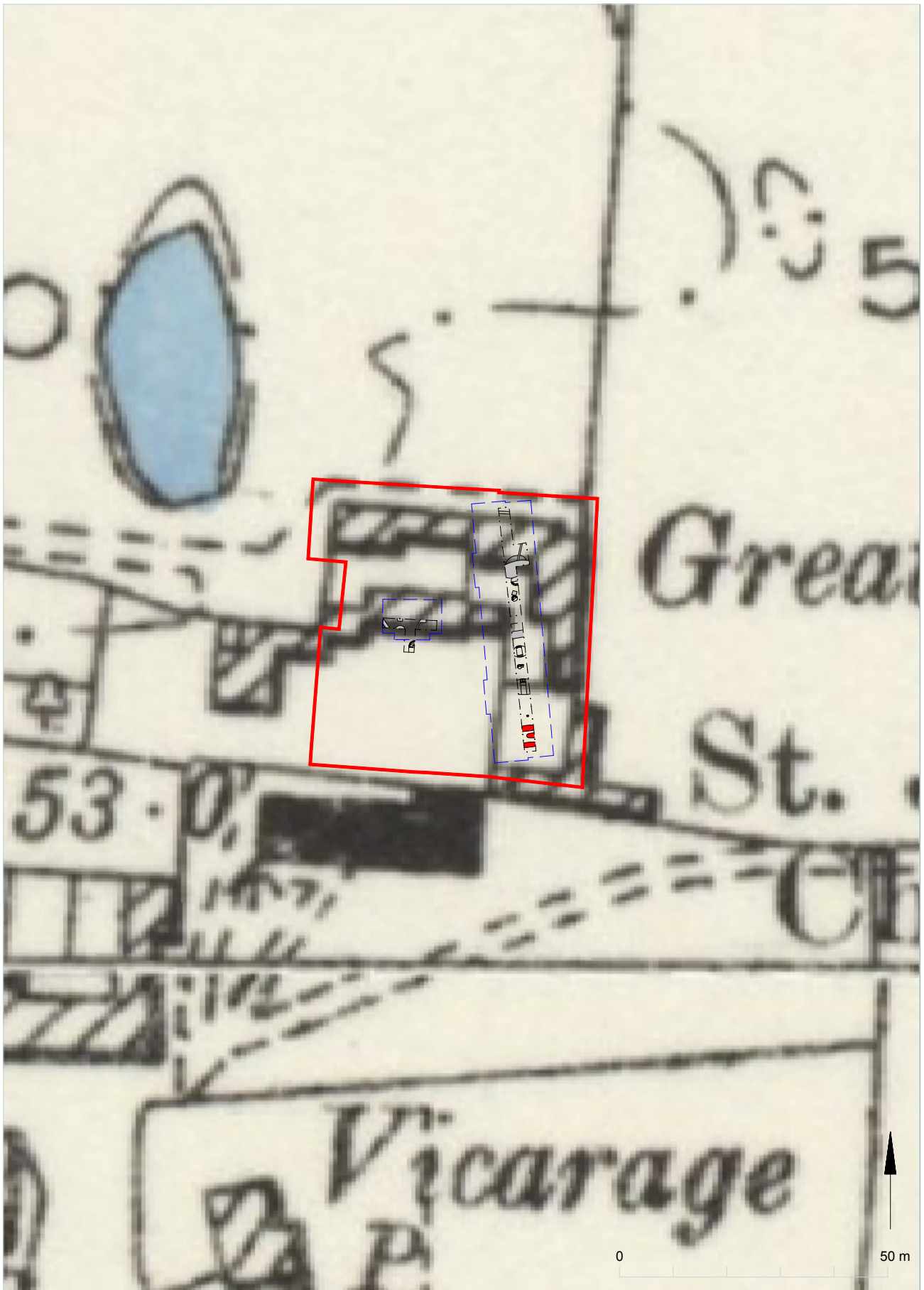


Fig 4 Development site and trenches overlaid on the 6-inch map of Essex XLVIII.SE (revised: 1896, published: 1898).

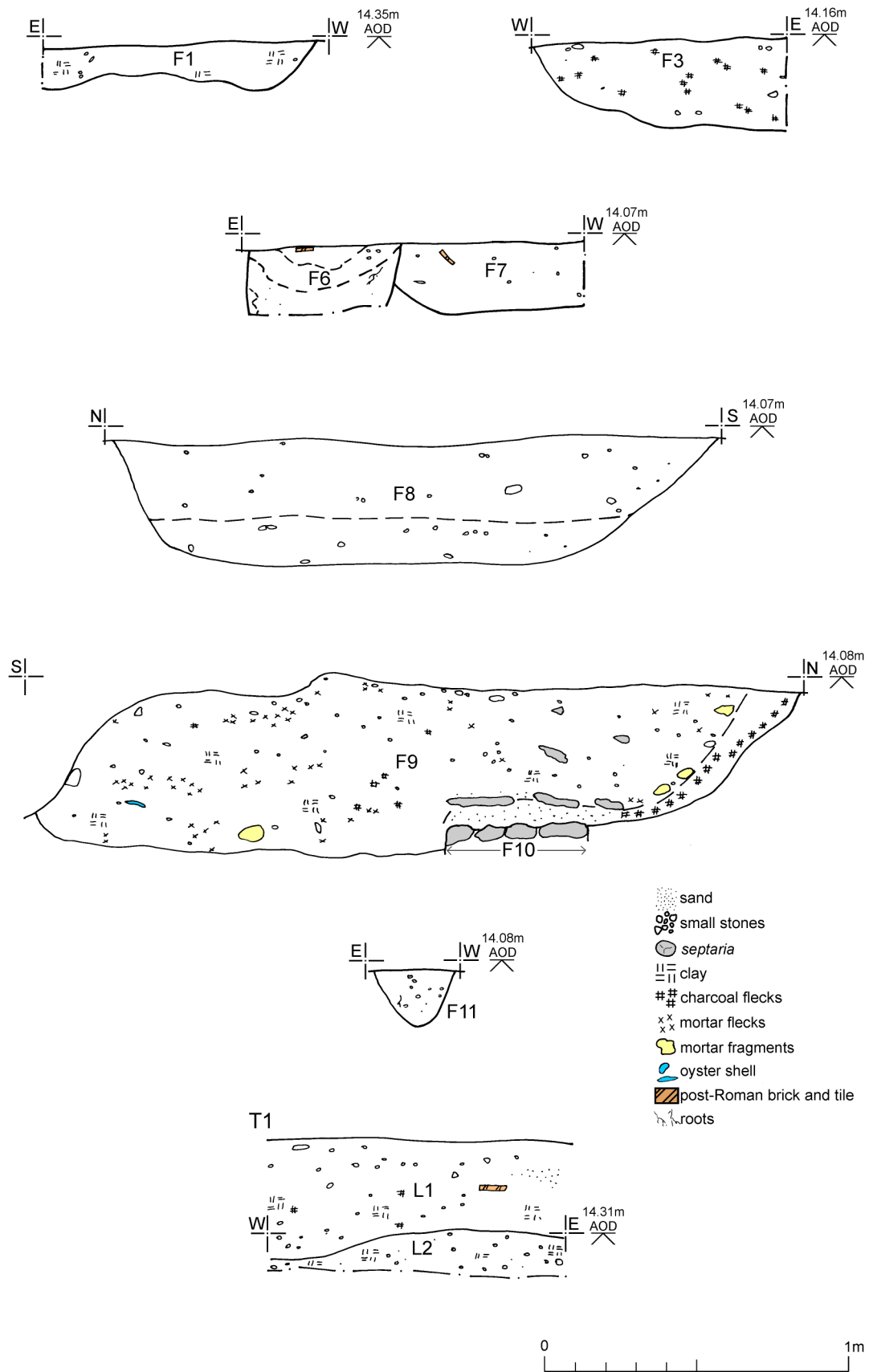


Fig 5 Feature and representative sections.

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OASIS ID: colchest3-327362

Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation and monitoring on land at former car park, Ravensdale, Clacton, Essex, CO15 4QH
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation of two trial-trenches was carried out on the former car park off Ravensdale, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex in advance of the construction of nine almshouse-type two bed dwellings, together with associated access, surface water drainage and other associated groundworks. Excavations revealed three ?medieval inhumations, a wall either associated with the church of St John the Baptist or the Great Clacton Hall which formerly stood at this site, a post-medieval wall foundation and yard surface related to Great Clacton Hall, and a number of pits of predominantly post-medieval date which were also likely the product of domestic activity linked to the Hall.
Project dates	Start: 03-10-2018 End: 29-10-2018
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	18/09a - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	17/01708/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM 2018.80 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	CSR18 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	NATURAL FEATURE Uncertain
Monument type	YARD SURFACE Post Medieval
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	TREETHROW Uncertain
Monument type	WALL FOUNDATION Post Medieval

Monument type	POSTHOLE Modern
Monument type	ROBBING CUT/PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	WALL FOUNDATION Uncertain
Monument type	POSTHOLE Post Medieval
Monument type	INHUMATION Medieval
Significant Finds	CLAY PIPE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Uncertain
Significant Finds	IRON NAIL Uncertain
Significant Finds	STONE Uncertain
Significant Finds	SLATE Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX TENDRING CLACTON ON SEA Land at former car park, Ravensdale
Postcode	CO15 4QH
Study area	0.26 Hectares
Site coordinates	TM 17729 16572 51.804753142272 1.158525425527 51 48 17 N 001 09 30 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 13.51m Max: 14.34m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	HEM Team Officer, ECC
Project design originator	Adam Tuffey
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Nigel Rayner
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
	Colchester Museum

Digital Archive recipient	
Digital Archive ID	COLEM 2018.80
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	COLEM 2018.80
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

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