

# Archaeological evaluation and excavation on land at Croft End, Molehill Green, Takeley, Essex, CM22 6PH

April 2019



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**commissioned by James Emmerson (100 Acres Ltd)**

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**CAT Report 1405**

May 2019

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (four trial-trenches) and subsequent excavation (41m<sup>2</sup>) was carried out on land at Croft End, Molehill Green, Takeley, Essex in advance of the construction of four new dwellings with associated garaging, amenities and groundworks. Two pits and a natural feature were excavated. Pottery retrieved from the larger pit was of a possible Bronze Age date.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land at Croft End, Molehill Green, Takeley, Essex, which was carried out 2nd-23rd April 2019. The work was commissioned by James Emmerson of 100 Acres Ltd in advance of the construction of four new dwellings with associated garaging, amenities and groundworks. The work was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Richard Havis 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 for archaeological trial trenching*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Richard Havis (ECCPS 2018). A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was subsequently 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 (CIfA 2014a)*, *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (CIfA 2014b)*.

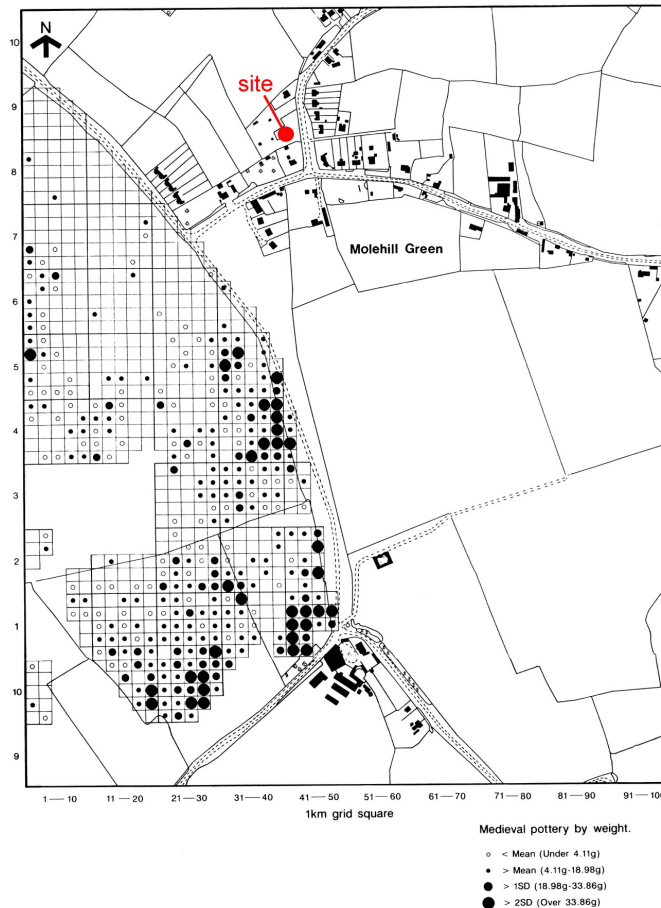
## 3 Archaeological background

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

Molehill Green is an historic hamlet. Of particular note are archaeological deposits found to the southwest of the site at Stansted airport. The airport has been the site of a number of phases of archaeological work as it has evolved and expanded beginning in 1985 once Stansted became classed as a London airport. Between 1985 and 1991, a major fieldwalking programme was conducted, followed by small- to large-scale excavations (EAA 107, 1-2). Of particular note in relation to our site is fieldwalking project Area X, located in the northeast corner of Stansted, along the edge of Molehill Green (see Map 1). Map 1 below shows the distribution of pottery across Area X.

Three small excavation areas were located to target areas with high concentrations of medieval pottery recorded during the fieldwalking. Closest to our site is MGS Area A, a 20m by 25m excavation area that revealed a small 'D'-shaped enclosure, defined by a series of rectilinear and curvilinear gullies. The gullies were quite shallow (ranging from 0.1-0.3m in depth) and hard to interpret (EAA, 107, 2, 375-6; EHER no 6719). MGS Area B was initially a 20m by 15m area, but was later extended. The site was dominated by three linear gullies, two of which lay parallel. It was suggested that these may be the remains of a building with the gullies forming the foundation trenches of the structure. Other key features included two areas of burnt stones, interpreted as being the sites of hearths (EAA, 107, 2, 376; EHER no 6720). MGS Area C had evidence of a

broader range of occupation, as identified by a series of linear gullies, pits and post-holes dating to the 12th-13th centuries, a series of linear gullies dating to the 14th-15th centuries and a backfilled moat dating to the 16th century. Although artefacts recovered from the moat date to the 16th century, these are only indicative of when it went out of use, and the origins of the moat are thought to lie in the 13th century (EAA 107, 2, 379; EHER no 6721).



**Map 1** EAA 107, 2, fig 235 showing the current site (in red) in relation to Stansted fieldwalking Area X.

A trench excavated by the Essex Field Archaeology Unit on land on the southern side of School Road in 1979 found an area of burnt clay slabs, thought to be possibly part of a brick kiln, and two raised platforms formed by ditches parallel to the site boundary (EAH 11, 70; EHER no 4711). These were interpreted as toft sites, abandoned in the 19th century when the hamlet may have downsized. However, an evaluation by CAT on land south of School Road in 2019 found no archaeological deposits (CAT Report 1379).

Also of note within the hamlet are the Three Horseshoes Public House, an English Heritage Grade II listed 15th-century timber-framed building incorporated into a 17th-century house (EHER no 37458) and Yew Tree Cottage, an English Heritage Grade II listed 18th-century timber-framed house (EHER no 37463).

#### 4 Aims

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to record the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits and to assess the archaeological potential of the site to allow the ECCHEA to determine if further investigation is required.

## 5 Results (Figs 2-3)

### 5.1 Evaluation results

Four archaeological trial-trenches were machine excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. T1 was 24m long and 1.8m wide, T2 was 20m long and 1.8m wide, T3 was 14m long and 1.8m wide and T4 was 15m long and 1.8m wide.

The trenches were excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 0.11-0.33m thick) and subsoil (L2, c 0.21-0.25m thick) onto natural (L3, encountered at a depth of 0.38-0.86m below current ground level). In the area of T1, an L-shaped trench, L3 was sealed by a further layer of subsoil (L4, c 0.55-0.58m thick). A sondage was excavated in T2, to a depth of 0.8m below current ground level, to ensure that the natural had been reached.

No archaeological features were encountered in T2, T3 or T4.

#### **Trench 1 (T1): 24m long by 1.8m wide**

?Bronze Age pit F1 was located at the eastern end of the trench. It extended beyond the limit of excavation and so its full dimensions could not be determined, but its exposed extent was 3.1m wide.

Undatable pit F2 was 0.64m wide and 0.28m deep.



**Photograph 1** T1 trench shot – looking east northeast

### 5.2 Excavation results

An area measuring 41m<sup>2</sup> was located over the eastern end of T1 and machine excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. It was excavated through L1 (c 0.28-0.34m thick) and L4 (0.55-0.58m thick) onto L3 (encountered at a depth of 0.84-0.96m bcgl).

?Bronze Age pit F1, identified during the evaluation stage, was further excavated. It was 2.98m wide and 0.79m deep.

Natural feature F3 was 0.95m wide and 0.45m deep.



**Photograph 2** F1 and F3 – looking south

## 6 Finds

### 6.1 Pottery and ceramic building material

*by Dr Matthew Loughton*

The evaluation only produced seven sherds of pottery and ceramic building material with a weight of 56g. Pit F1 (finds nos. 1 & 3) produced six small sherds of sand- and flint-tempered handmade pottery with a weight of 12g. One sherd is decorated with two (?) incised lines and is possibly of Bronze Age date.

Finally, L4 (2) produced one piece of medieval / post-medieval peg-tile with a weight of 44g.

### 6.2 Iron object and other finds

*by Laura Pooley (flint identified by Adam Wightman)*

A piece of burnt flint (5.6g, burnt red) and a natural piece of flint came from F1 (finds no. 3). Both have been discarded.

A strip of corroded iron came from L4 (finds no. 2). The strip is flat, expanded at one end and rounded at the other. It measured 63mm long, 10-15mm wide, 6mm thick and 15.8g. It is unidentified and undated, but is probably a piece of agricultural ironwork originally from the topsoil. Discarded.

## 7 Discussion

Archaeological evaluation was undertaken at this site due to the extensive medieval remains which have been found in the vicinity. Beyond a single fragment of peg-tile, the investigation did not detect any evidence of medieval or later activity at this site. Rather, a large pit and a linear feature, which lay adjacent to one another, as well as a smaller pit, were uncovered. The larger pit yielded several sherds of pottery. Only one of these sherds was closely-datable, giving a possible Bronze Age date for this feature. A small number of features of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date were recorded during the 1986-91 archaeological work at Stansted airport. Consisting mainly of pits and

postholes, and including three possible post-built structures, they were found 3-5km to the southwest/south-southwest of Molehill Green (on sites BLS, CIS, LBSb and SCS) (EAA 107, 13-24). It is possible that the pits excavated on the current development site are related to the prehistoric activity identified at the airport.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks James Emmerson of 100 Acres Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by M Baister with A Wightman, E Hicks, A Tuffey and B Quinn. Figures are by C Lister, B Holloway and S Carter. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Richard Havis.

## 9 References

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

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

Brown, N & Glazebrook, J	2000	<i>Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8 (EAA 8)
CAT	2018	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2019	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological trial-trenching and excavation on land at Croft End, Molehill Green, Takeley, Essex, CM22 6PH</i>
CAT Report 1379	2019	<i>Archaeological evaluation on land south of School Lane, Molehill Green, Takeley, Essex – February 2019</i> , by E Holloway
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>
EAA 107, 1	2004	<i>Excavations at Stansted Airport, 1986-91 Volume 1: Prehistoric and Romano-British</i> , by R Havis and H Brooks
EAA 107, 2	2004	<i>Excavations at Stansted Airport, 1986-91 Volume 2: Saxon, medieval and post-medieval; Discussion</i> , by R Havis and H Brooks
EAH Vol 11	1979	<i>Essex Archaeology and History 11</i> Section 29 p70 by C Crouchman
ECCPS	2019	<i>Brief for archaeological trial-trenching and excavation on Land at Croft End, Molehill Green</i> , by R Havis
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Historic England (HE)	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
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

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
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>
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
Roman section	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410 (abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** part of a box (pottery only)

### **Paper record**

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1405)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Original site record (feature and layer sheets, sections)

Site digital photos and log

Inked section drawings

### **Digital record**

The report (CAT Report 1405)

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 Saffron Walden Museum under accession code SAFWM: 2019.17.



**Distribution list:**

James Emmerson, 100 Acres Ltd  
Richard Havis, ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisors  
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



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Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 17.5.2019

**Appendix 1 Context list**

<b>Context number</b>	<b>Finds number</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
L1	-	Topsoil	Firm, moist medium brown clayey-loam	Modern
L2	-	Subsoil	Firm, moist medium grey/brown loamy-clay	Undated
L3	-	Natural	Firm, moist light orange/grey clay	-
L4	2	Subsoil	Soft/friable, dry/moist medium brown silty-clay	Post-medieval / modern
F1	1, 3	Pit	Friable/firm, moist, medium grey/brown clayey-silt with flecks of charcoal, daub and chalk	?Bronze Age
F2	-	Pit	Friable/firm, moist, orange/grey clayey-silt	Undated
F3	-	Natural feature	Friable/firm, medium grey/brown clayey-silt.	Post-glacial

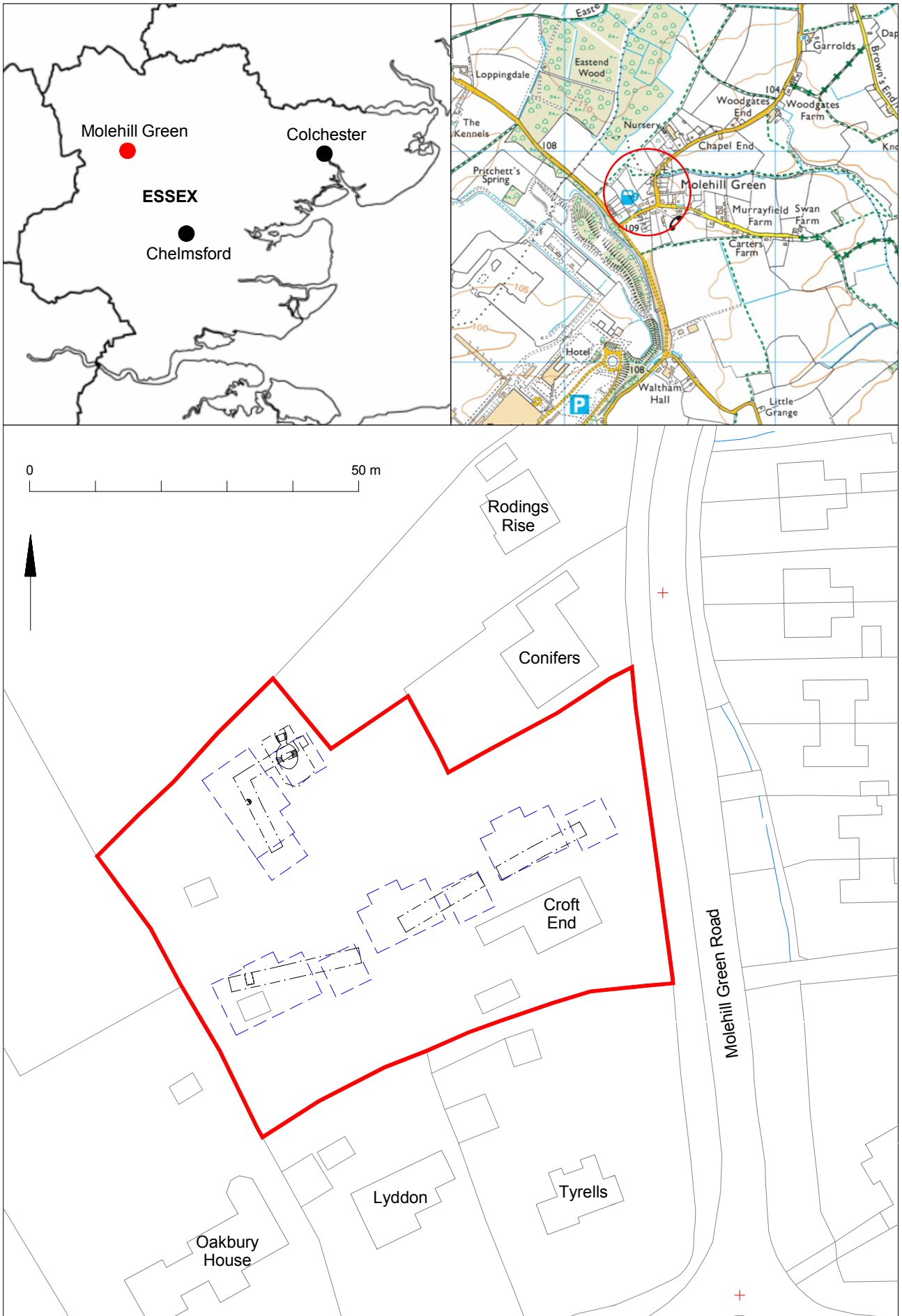


Fig 1 Site location in relation to the proposed development (dashed blue).

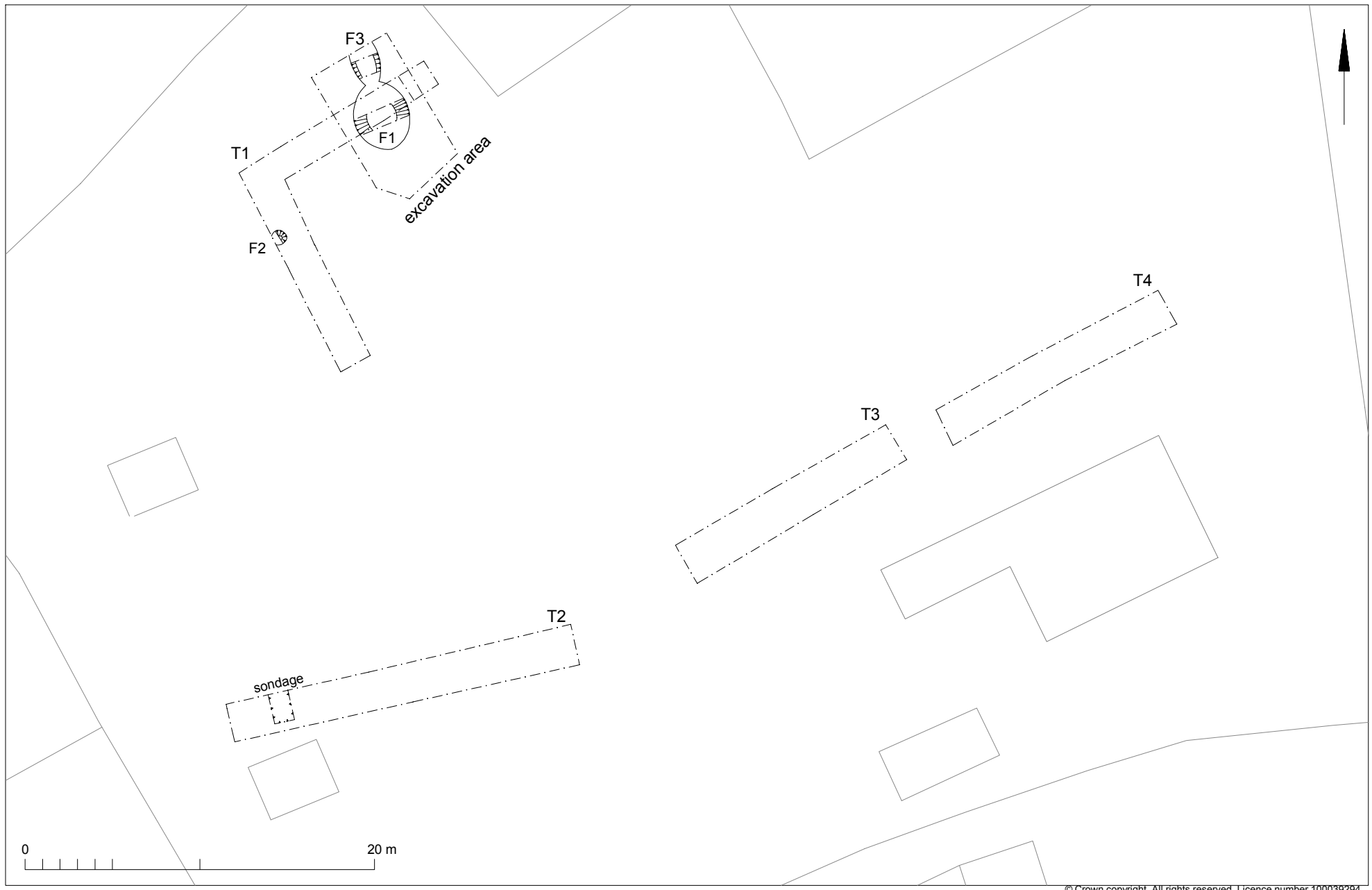


Fig 2 Results

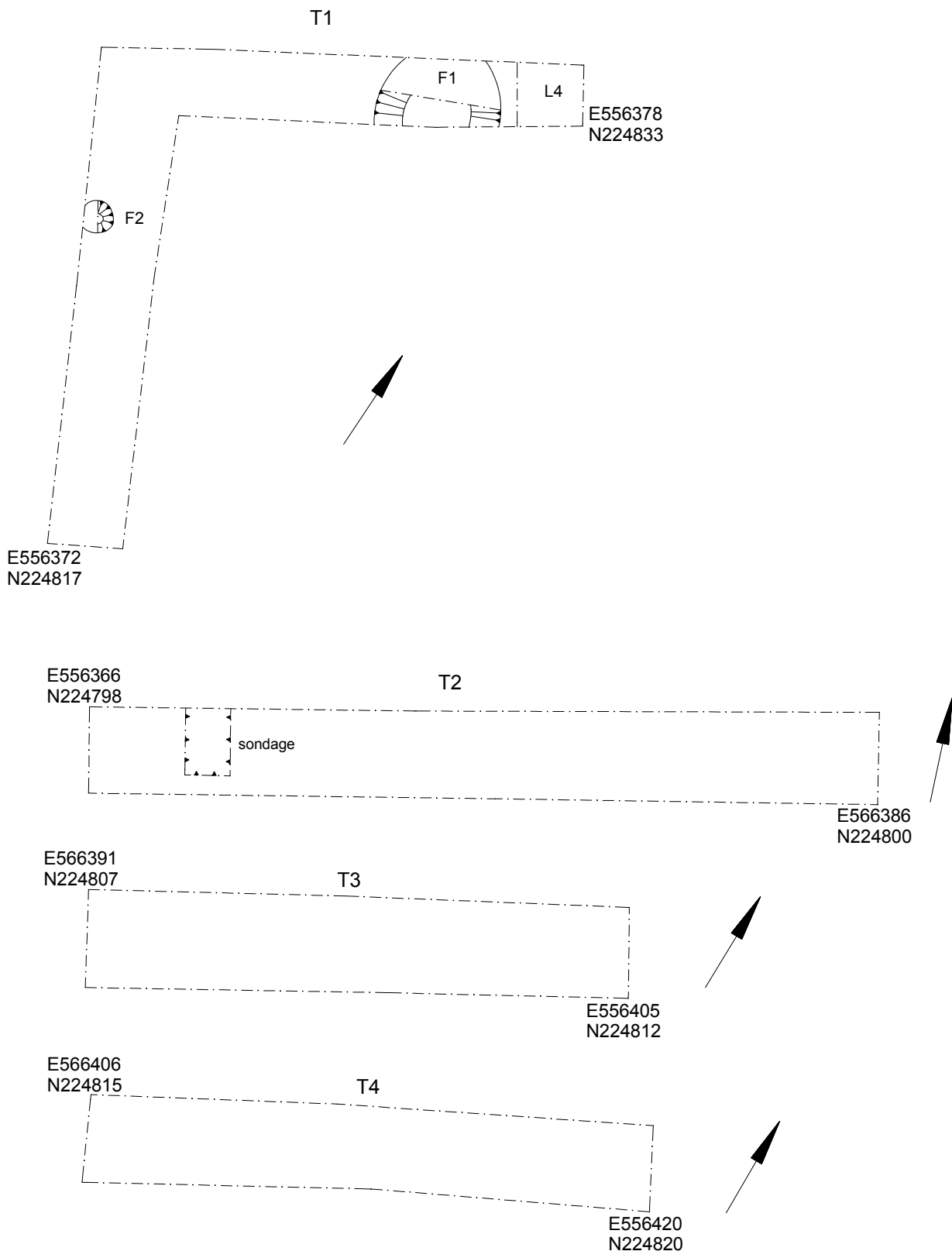


Fig 3 Trench plans



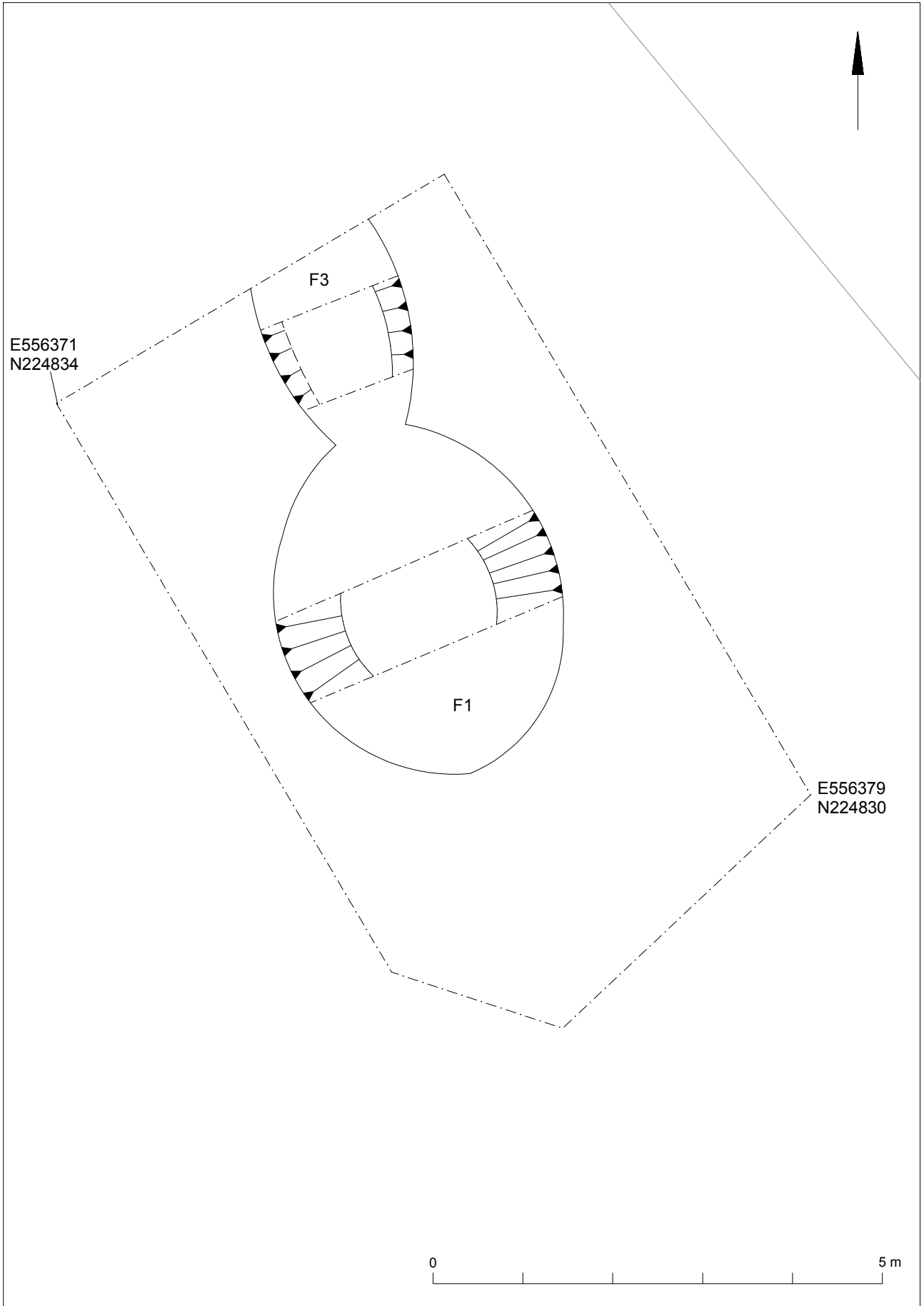


Fig 4 Excavation area

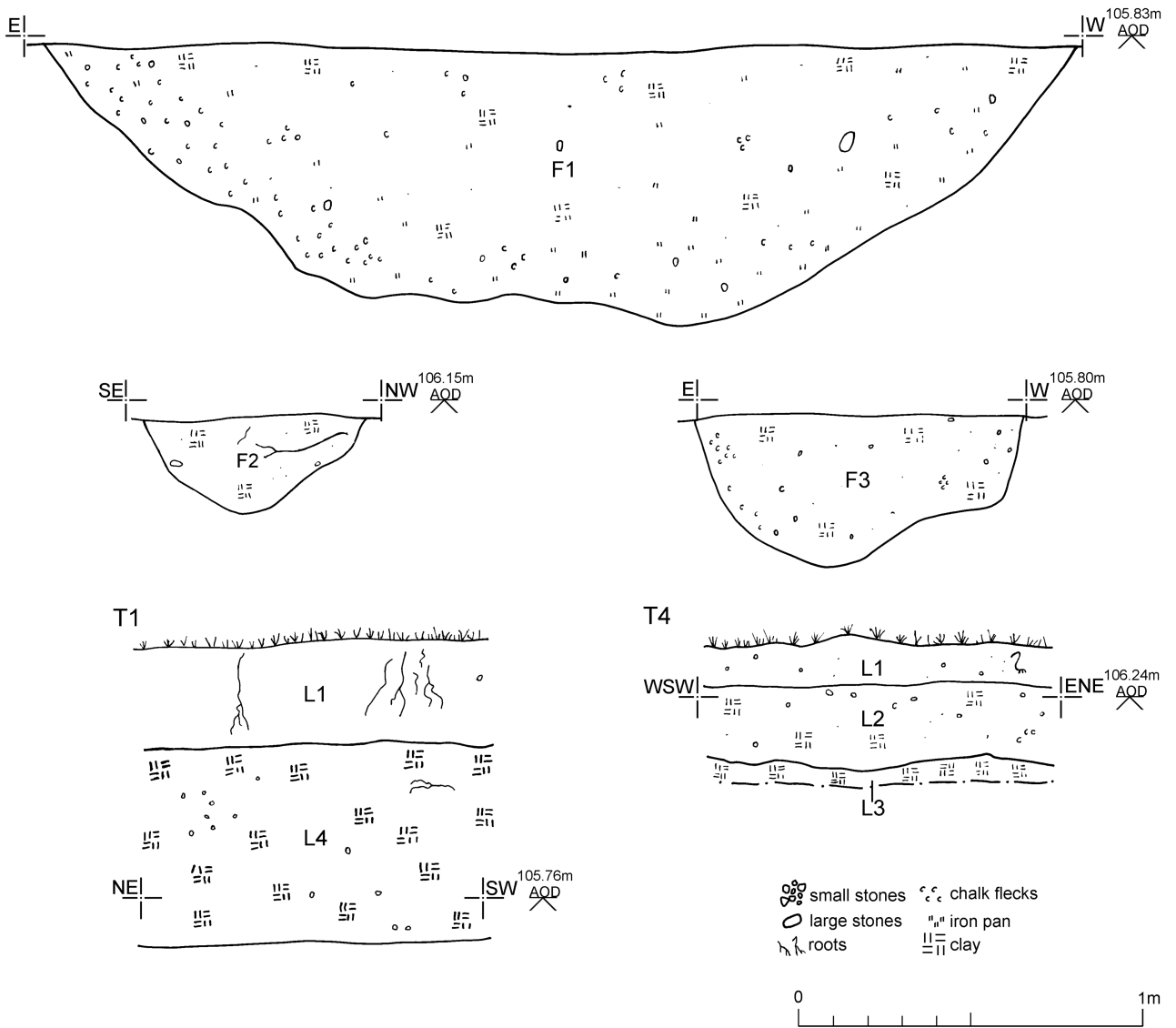


Fig 5 Feature and representative sections.

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**OASIS ID: colchest3-346785**

## Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation and excavation on land at Croft End, Molehill Green, Takeley, Essex, CM22 6PH
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (four trial-trenches) and subsequent excavation (41m <sup>2</sup> ) was carried out on land at Croft End, Molehill Green, Takeley, Essex in advance of the construction of four new dwellings with associated garaging, amenities and groundworks. Two pits and a natural feature were excavated. Pottery retrieved from the larger pit was of a possible Bronze Age date.
Project dates	Start: 02-04-2019 End: 23-04-2019
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	UTT/17/3675/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	2019/03n - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	TACE19 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	SAFWM: 2019.17 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	PIT Bronze Age
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Bronze Age
Significant Finds	PEG-TILE Post Medieval
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 UTTLESFORD TAKELEY land at Croft End, Molehill Green
Postcode	CM22 6PH
Study area	0.37 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 56415 24808 51.899362365619 0.273691926377 51 53 57 N 000 16 25 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 105.8m Max: 106.56m

## Project creators

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

## Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Saffron Walden Museum
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Physical Archive ID	SAFWM: 2019.17
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Saffron Walden Museum
Digital Archive ID	SAFWM: 2019.17
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Saffron Walden Museum
Paper Archive ID	SAFWM: 2019.17
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological evaluation and excavation on land at Croft End, Molehill Green, Takeley, Essex, CM22 6PH: April 2019
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Pooley, L.
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