

**Archaeological evaluation at
Bambers Green Riding School, Frogs Hall,
Bambers Green Road, Takeley, Essex,
CM22 6PE**

November 2019



by Dr Elliott Hicks

with contributions by Dr Matthew Loughton
figures by Chris Lister, Mark Baister and Sarah Carter

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**commissioned by Mariana Aguiar (3bd Architecture and
Design)
on behalf of Jonathan Crick and Marnie Manning**

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Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aim	3
5	Results	3
6	Finds	4
7	Conclusion	5
8	Acknowledgements	5
9	References	5
10	Abbreviations and glossary	6
11	Contents of archive	6
12	Archive deposition	7
	Appendix 1 Context list	8
	Appendix 2 Pottery list	9
	Appendix 3 CBM list	10

Figures after p10

OASIS summary sheet

List of photographs, maps, tables and figures

Cover: site shot

Map 1	Extract of Chapman and André map of Essex (1777)	2
Map 2	Extract of 6-inch OS map of England and Wales (1881)	2
Photograph 1	T1 trench shot, looking southeast	4
Table 1	Animal bone by context	5
Fig 1	Site location and trench plan in relation to proposed development	
Fig 2	Evaluation results	
Fig 3	Feature and representative sections	

1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out at Bambers Green Riding School, Frogs Hall, Bambers Green Road, Takeley, Essex, in advance of the demolition of the existing dwelling and its replacement with a new five-bedroomed dwelling. The site lies within the complex of Frogs Hall, originally built in the early 17th century. A drainage ditch and a land drain, both of likely 19th-century date, a modern pit, an undated pit and a ditch or pit were recorded. A small assemblage of medieval pottery dating from the 13th to the 16th century was also recovered, indicating that the remains of a late medieval or early post-medieval building lie in the vicinity.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at Bambers Green Riding School, Frogs Hall, Bambers Green Road, Takeley, Essex which was carried out during the 26th and 27th November 2019. The work was commissioned by Mariana Aguiar of 3bd Architecture & Design on behalf of Jonathan Crick and Marnie Manning in advance of the demolition of the existing dwelling and its replacement with a new five-bedroomed dwelling, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Katie Lee-Smith 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 2019).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for archaeological trial trench evaluation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Katie Lee-Smith (ECCPS 2019), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2019).

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 brief and the Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessible to the public via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The site is located within the historic complex of Frogs Hall, to the north of the main house. The main house at Frogs Hall is timber-framed, dates to the early 17th century with later additions (EHER37436) and is Grade II listed (no. 1112188). The complex first appears on historic mapping in 1777 (see map 1 below).



Map 1 Extract of Chapman and André map of Essex (1777) showing the location of Frogs Hall

The building proposed for demolition is evident on the Ordnance Survey map issued in 1881. At this point two cottages stood at the site, just north of the complex, originally named 'Mortivals', and later renamed Frogs Hall (see map 2).



Map 2 Extract of the 6-inch OS map of England and Wales (1881) showing the current site located in red

A fieldwalking survey and evaluation to the west of the site in 1997 uncovered archaeological remains of Late Iron Age and Roman date. Some 230 flints were recovered during the fieldwalking survey (EHER 18044). During the subsequent evaluation features included curvilinear ditches, identified as ring-ditches associated with settlement activity alongside structures thought to be corn dryers and truncated Roman cremations (EHER18851).

Excavations on the A120 to the southeast of Frogs Hall identified medieval remains including a moated site of 13th-century date and kilns (EHER 46761).

The site is surrounded by a number of historic buildings, largely dating to the 16th and 17th century. Countryside (EHER 37433), Elder Cottage (EHER 34737), Burys Farm (EHER 37438), Walnut Tree Cottage (EHER 37441), Sheering Hall (EHER 37435), The

Hoppit (EHER 37431), Old Thatch (EHER 37434), and Pitchcombe (EHER 37432) lie to the north, while Little Canfield Hall (EHER 4593) is located to the east.

In 2014 CAT investigated Little Canfield Hall, a moated manorial site situated to the east of the current site. The moat is particularly substantial compared to others recorded within Essex and surrounds both the house (Hall) and all of the early farm buildings. The site comprises a range of surviving farm buildings including a Grade II listed house of 16th-century date (EHER 4592), a large Essex barn, listed Grade II and dated to the 14th century (EHER 37962) and a number of later barns and outbuildings. A historic building recording was carried out in advance of a conversion and subdivision of the hall (CAT Report 983). A small number of features of no archaeological significance were observed during monitoring of foundation trenching. However, a few worked flints of Early Neolithic to Early Bronze Age date were recovered from the north of the site, although this assemblage would indicate only limited activity in the area during this period. Sherds of a late 12th- to 13th-century cooking pot were also recovered. While this vessel appears to be associated with activity at the site, a significant quantity of medieval pottery of similar date was found among recently imported soil on a different area of the site (CAT Report 798).

4 Aim

The aim of the archaeological evaluation was 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)

Two trial-trenches, one measuring 14m long by 1.8m wide, the other 8m by 1.8m, were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist.

Five layers were recorded. Modern topsoil (L1, c 0.02-0.07m thick, soft moist dark brown/black sandy-silt) sealed a modern make-up layer (L2, c 0.03-0.12m thick, loose/soft moist light orange/brown sandy-silt with 50% gravel). Beneath L2 was a layer of buried topsoil (L3, 0.14-0.22m thick, soft moist dark brown/black sandy-silt) which overlay a layer of buried subsoil (L4, c 0.12-0.24m thick, firm/hard moist medium grey/brown silty-clay). Natural silt and clay, sealed beneath L4, was identified at a depth of 0.45-0.57m bcgl (L5, firm/hard medium orange/brown silty-clay).

Trench 1 (T1): 14m by 1.8m

Ditch F1 lay on a NW-SE alignment. The feature extended beyond the limit of excavation (LOE) and so its width could not be determined but it was 0.44m deep.

F4 was located directly to the south of F1. The feature could not be fully excavated as it abutted a bulk left in place due to the presence of an electrical cable. It was unclear, therefore, whether the feature was a N-S aligned ditch or a pit. The full width of the feature could not be ascertained but it was 0.37m deep. While one feature cut the other, the relationship between F4 and F1 could not be determined.

Pits F2 and F3 were 0.35m wide and 0.1m deep and 0.37m wide and 0.07m deep, respectively. F3 was modern, and while no dating evidence was recovered from F2, it was cut into F1, meaning in was of 19th-century date at the earliest.



Photograph 1 T1 trench shot – looking southeast

Trench 2 (T2): 8m by 1.8m

Ditch F5, which was of 19th-century date, extended beyond the LOE and so its full dimensions could not be determined, but its exposed extent was approximately 0.2m wide and 0.05m deep. It lay on a WNW-ESE alignment.

6 Finds

6.1 Pottery and ceramic finds

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation produced a small collection of medieval and post-medieval pottery and ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) with eleven sherds with a weight of 222g (Appendix 2). There were nine sherds of medieval (c 1200-1550) Colchester-type ware (fabric 21) pottery with a weight of 69g. This came from drainage ditch F1 and ditch F4 and included part of a storage jar (EVE: 0.06) dating to c 1450-1550 (CAR 7, 136 fig. 88 no. 97).

The CBM, which all came from drainage ditch F1, consisted of a sherd of peg-tile (102g) and fragment of brick (51g).

6.2 Animal bone

by Alec Wade

The evaluation produced four fragments of animal bone weighing a total of 20g. All the pieces were from a single feature, modern drainage ditch F1.

The surface condition of the bone was poor, and all the pieces are likely to be diaphysis fragments from a cow's metacarpal or more likely radius.

Context	Type	Finds no.	No. pieces	Weight (g)	Comments
F1	Modern ditch	2	4	20	Fragments of a cows metacarpal or radius.

Table 1 Animal bone by context

7 Conclusion

Five features were uncovered in the course of the evaluation. However, dating evidence was only recovered from drainage ditch F1 and ditch or pit F4, which yielded a small assemblage of medieval and post-medieval pottery and CBM. However, a clay land drain of probable 19th-century date was uncovered in the base of F1, indicating that the finds recovered from this feature, and perhaps F4, were residual in later contexts. This land drain indicates that these features relate to agricultural activity at the site during the 19th century, before the construction of the building scheduled to be demolished. The presence of pottery dating to the 13th to the 16th century, however, suggests that the site of a late medieval or early post-medieval building lies nearby.

Two modern pits were also uncovered. One of these produced a sherd of modern ceramic material and contained a large deposit of charcoal, suggesting it was used for waste disposal.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Mariana Aguiar of 3bd Architecture & Design and Jonathan Crick and Marnie Manning for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by M Baister with Z Eksen. Figures are by C Lister, M Baister and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Katie Lee-Smith.

9 References

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

Brown, N & Glazenbrook, 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)
CAR 7	2000	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by J Cotter
CAT	2018	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 798	2014	<i>An archaeological watching brief at Little Canfield Hall, Little Canfield, Dunmow, Essex: October 2014</i> , by S Benfield
CAT Report 983	2018	<i>Historic building recording at Little Canfield Hall, Little Canfield, Essex, CM6 1SP: October 2014</i> , by M Baister
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures</i>
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Digital Curation Centre (DCC)	2013	<i>Checklist for Data Management Plan</i> , v 4.0
ECCPS	2019	<i>Brief for a programme of archaeological work at Bampers Green Riding School, Frogs Hall, Bampers Green Road, Takeley</i> , by K Lee-Smith
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14 (EAA 14)
Historic England	2016	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>

Historic England	2018	<i>Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice</i>
Historic England	2018	<i>The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project</i> , by S Mays, M Brickley & J Sidell
Medlycott, M	2011a	<i>Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24 (EAA 24)
MHCLG	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>
RCHME	1996 (3rd ed.)	<i>Recording historic buildings, a descriptive specification</i>

10 Abbreviations and glossary

Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC
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
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'
Iron Age	period from 700 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43
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
Neolithic	period from c 4000 – 2500 BC
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
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

11 Contents of archive

Finds: part of one box

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1500)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

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

Site digital photos and log

Inked sections

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1500)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log

Graphic files

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: 2019.83.

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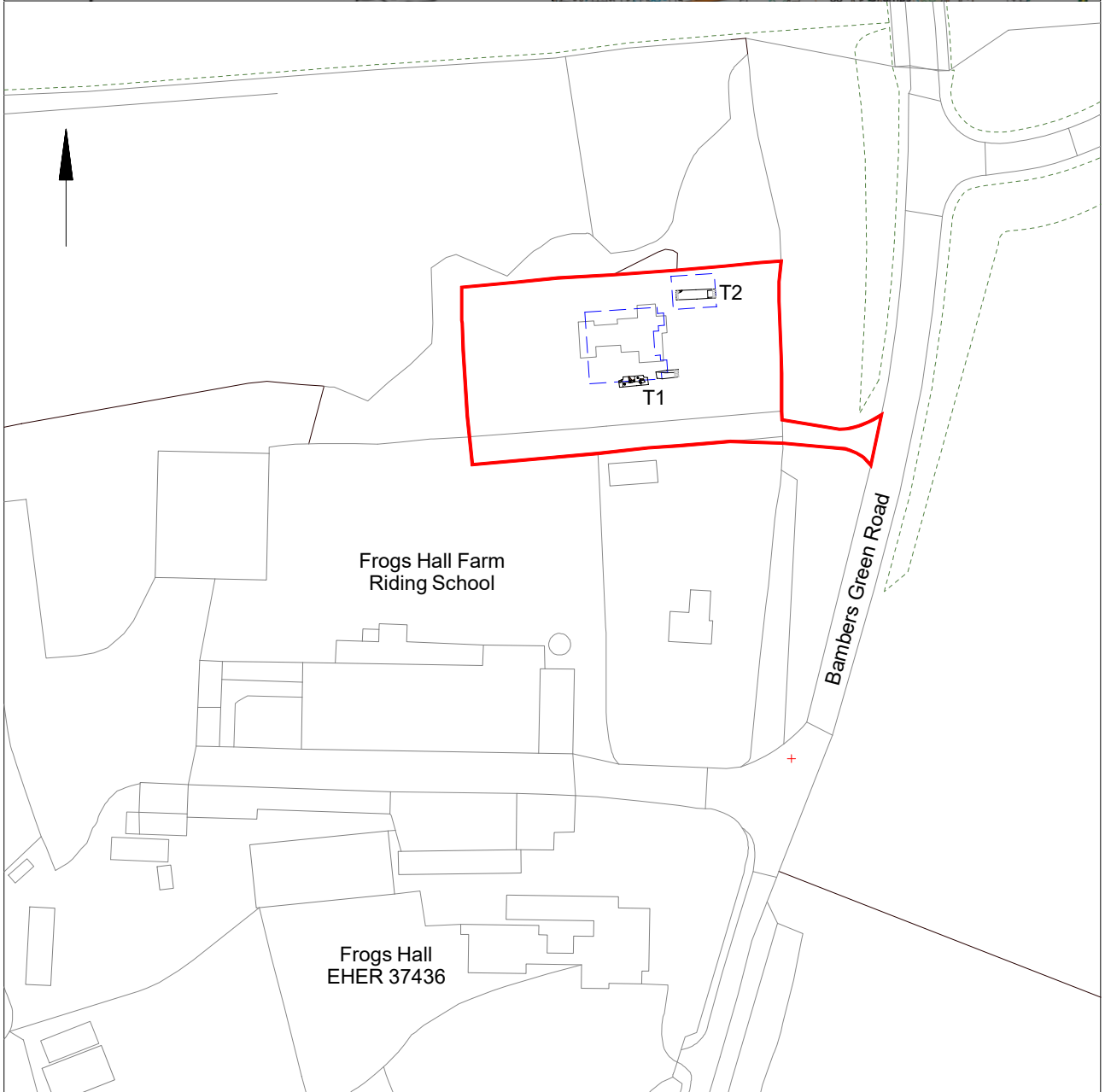
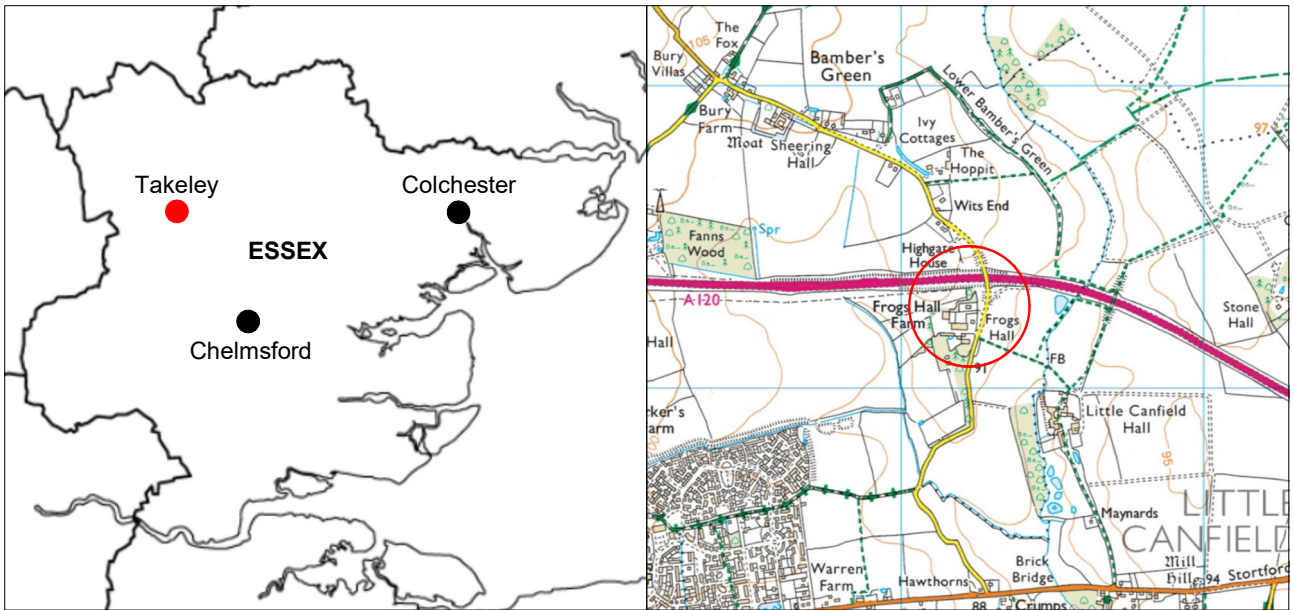
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Date: 05.02.2020

Appendix 1 Context list

Context no.	Trench number	Finds number	Context	Description	Date
L1	All	-	Topsoil	Soft, moist dark brown/black sandy-silt	Modern
L2	All	-	Make-up layer	Loose/soft, moist light orange/brown sandy-silt with 50% gravel	Modern
L3	All	-	Buried topsoil	Soft, moist dark brown/black sandy-silt	Undatable
L4	All	-	Subsoil	Firm/hard, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay	Undatable
L5	All	-	Natural	Firm/hard, medium orange/brown silty-clay	Post-glacial
F1	T1	1, 2	Ditch	Firm/hard, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay	?19th century
F2	T1	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clayey-loam	Undatable
F3	T1	-	Pit	Soft, moist dark brown/black sandy-silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Undatable
F4	T1	3	Ditch	Friable, moist medium grey/brown clayey-silt	?19th century
F5	T2	-	?Ditch / disturbance	Soft, moist/wet medium grey/brown clayey-silt	Undatable



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



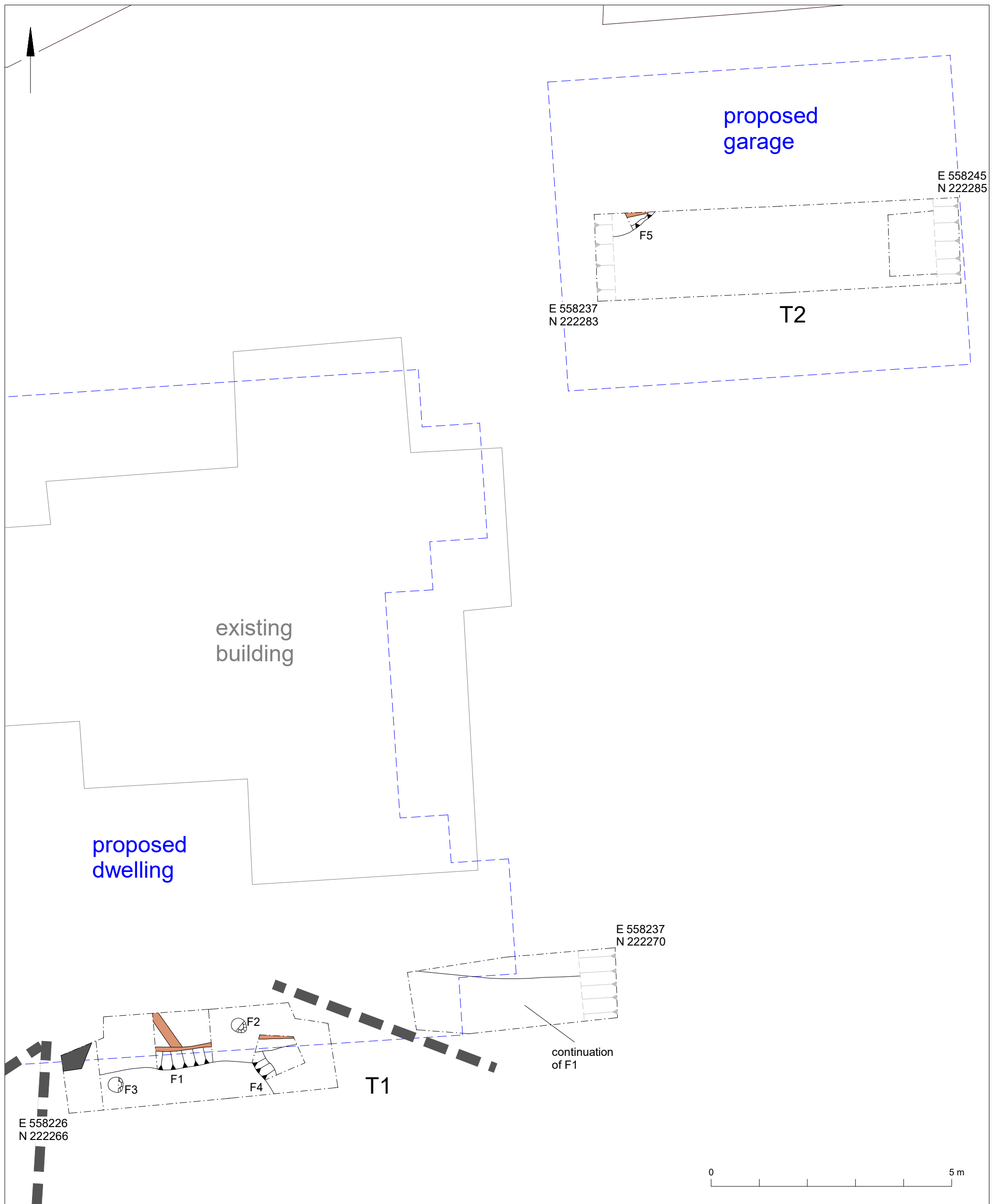
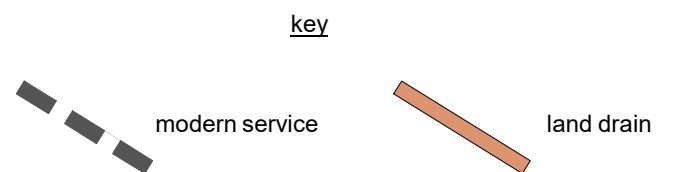


Fig 2 Evaluation results.



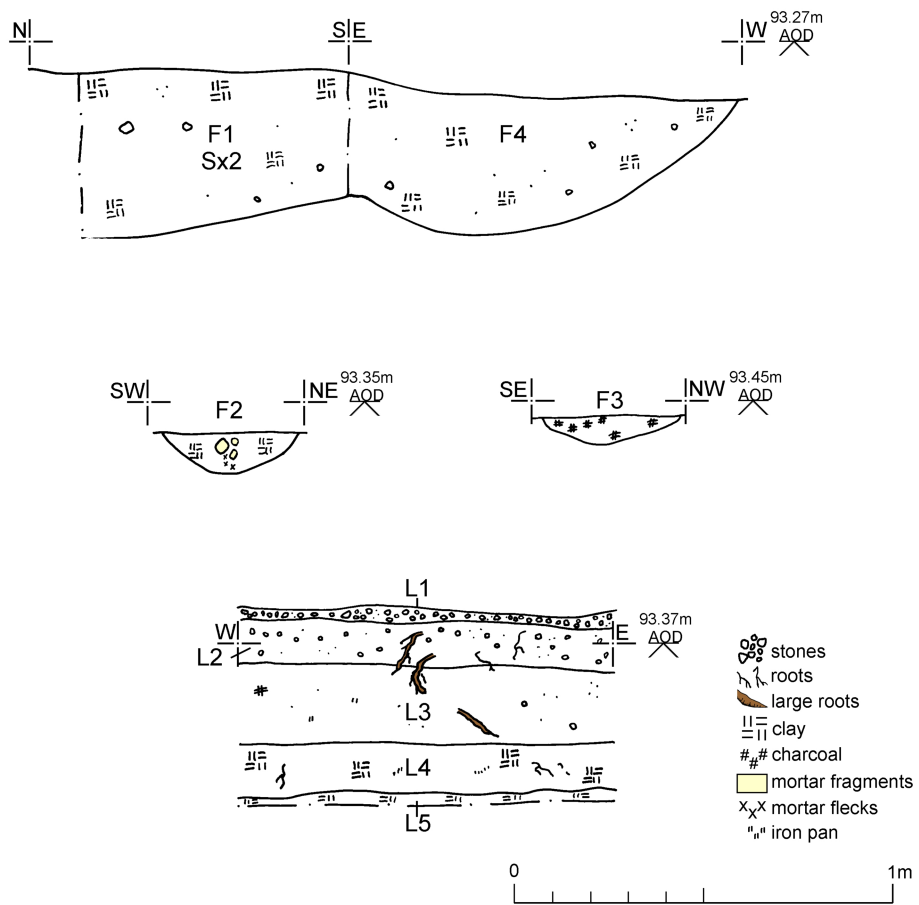


Fig 3 Feature and representative sections.

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OASIS ID: colchest3-373179

Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at Bambers Green Riding School, Frogs Hall, Bambers Green Road, Takeley, Es
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out at Bambers Green Riding School, Frogs Hall, Bambers Green Road, Takeley, Essex, in advance of the demolition of the existing dwelling and its replacement with a new five-bedroomed dwelling. The site lies within the complex of Frogs Hall, originally built in the early 17th century. A drainage ditch and a land drain, both of likely 19th-century date, a modern pit, an undated pit and a ditch or pit were recorded. A small assemblage of medieval pottery dating from the 13th to the 16th century was also recovered, indicating that the remains of a late medieval or early post-medieval building lie in the vicinity.
Project dates	Start: 26-11-2020 End: 27-11-2020
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	2019/11c - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	UTT/19/1773/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	TAFH19 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Monument type	PIT/DISTURBANCE Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Uncertain

Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX UTTLESFORD TAKELEY Bambers Green Riding School, Frogs Hall, Bambers Green Road, Takeley, Essex
Postcode	CM22 6PE
Study area	0.22 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 58236 22241 51.875783121289 0.298961989936 51 52 32 N 000 17 56 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 92.77m Max: 93.41m

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	Owner
Name of sponsor/funding body	J Crick & M Manning

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Saffron Walden Museum
Physical Archive ID	TAFH19
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Saffron Walden Museum
Digital Archive ID	TAFH19
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Saffron Walden Museum
Paper Archive ID	TAFH19
Paper Media available	"Photograph","Report","Section"

**Project
bibliography 1**

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