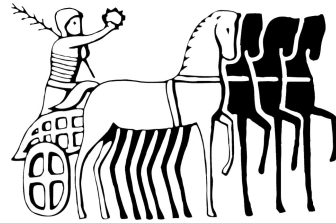


Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1873
issued December 2022**

**Archaeological evaluation at Porters Hall,
Porters Hall Road, Stebbing, Essex
CM6 3TB: November 2022**



**CAT project ref.: 2022/051
ECC code: STPH22
Scheduled monument consent: S00240340**

**Archaeological evaluation at Porters Hall,
Porters Hall Road, Stebbing, Essex
CM6 3TB: November 2022**

NGR: TL 67781 23644

Planning ref.: UTT/21/1479/FUL

**CAT project ref.: 2022/05I
CAT Report 1873**

**Scheduled monument consent: S00240340
ECC code: STPH22
OASIS id: colchest3-507590**

**report prepared by
Ben Holloway**

fieldwork by Ben Holloway with Chloe Hill

**commissioned by Jonathan Bell,
Design & Conservation Ltd
on behalf of the landowner**

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Issued:	14/12/2022	

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (three trial-trenches) was carried out at Porters Hall, Porters Hall Road, Stebbing, Essex in advance of the construction of a new driveway, associated parking and loading area. The site lies within the boundary of the scheduled Porters Hall moated site and in an area containing numerous listed buildings dating from the 15th to the 17th century. No archaeological remains were encountered during the evaluation but, as excavation ceased at formation level and natural was not exposed, archaeological deposits may still be preserved on the site.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at Porters Hall, Porters Hall Road, Stebbing, Essex on 15th November 2022. The work was commissioned by Jonathan Bell on behalf of the landowner, and took place in advance of the construction of a new driveway with associated parking and a loading area.

As the site lies within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (NHLE 1008701), the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments (HEIAM) and the Historic Environment Advisor (HEA) at Essex County Council Place Services recommended 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 2021).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the scheduled monument consent (no. S00240340) and a *Brief for programme of archaeological investigation at Porters Hall, Porters Hall Road, Stebbing* written by Katie Lee-Smith and detailing the required archaeological work (ECCPS 2022), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT (2022b) in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS in advance of the work.

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2016), 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 includes extracts of the ECC brief and the Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The development site is located within an area of known sensitive archaeological deposits and heritage assets at Porters Hall and within its associated grounds (EHER 1236). Porters Hall is part of an important medieval moated complex with an associated farmstead which is a Scheduled Monument (NHLE 1008701). As stated in the list entry, the site includes a rectangular moated area which measures 110m NW-SE by 65m NE-SW. The arms are between 12m and 6m in width and are water-filled, except to the south-west where they have dried out. The eastern corner has an irregular extension which measures 30m NE-SW by 20m NW-SE. The southern corner has also been extended along the same line as the south-western arm for a further 32m. Along the southern edge of this arm is a slight bank, 3.5m in width and about 0.4m high which is considered to have been used as a garden terrace. An outlet channel leads from the southern corner of the moat to the road. Access to the island is across a modern brick-built bridge on the north-eastern arm which replaced a wooden drawbridge. This section of the arm was in-filled during the construction of the brick bridge.

The complex contains four listed buildings, 1) Grade II* listed 16th-century Porters Hall (NHLE 1322338), 2) Grade II listed 17th-century Porters Hall Barn to the north of the scheduled area (NHLE 1112730), 3) Grade II 16th-/17th-century Porters Hall outbuilding to the east of the hall (NHLE 1306802), and 4) Grade II 15th-/16th century Porters Hall outbuilding at the rear and to the west of Porters Hall (NHLE 1112731). This last structure, the northernmost of the two outbuildings, has been used as a dovecote but was originally a dwelling which probably incorporated a small section of an earlier hall.

The earthworks and undulations of the island indicate the presence of surviving below-ground features, particularly to the north-west where the foundations of the original house are located.

Porter's Hall moated site is considered to be associated with the family of Henry Le Portir in 1284 and is recorded in historical sources from 1398 (EHER 1236). Additional buildings no longer extant on the site are shown on the Chapman & André map of 1777 (Map 1).



Map 1 Extract of the 1777 Chapman & André map

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)

Three trial-trenches, each 10m long and 1.8m wide, were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist to a depth of c 0.35-0.4m, which is the formation level required for the new driveway and parking area.

Trenches 1 and 2 were cut through modern topsoil (L1, 0.15-0.25m thick, a firm, moist dark grey/brown silty-loam with occasional CBM fragments and 1% stones) and into a layer of sub-soil (L2, 0.15-0.2m thick, firm, moist medium grey/brown clayey-silt with 1% stones). Natural geology (L3) was only observed in the south of T1 because elsewhere excavation did not penetrate L2.

Trench 3 was excavated through a modern hardstanding (L3, modern tarmac and its associated sand and hoggin sub-base 0.1-0.15m thick) and two layers of made-ground (L4, a compact grey

silt which contained fragments of crushed brick and peg-tile, 0.15m thick, and L5 compact orange/grey hoggin, 0.15m thick).



Photograph 1 Trench 3 showing well, looking south-east



Photograph 2 Trench 1, looking south-west

At the western end of T3 was a concrete-lined well with brick-built manhole access (see foreground of Photograph 1). The size of the well could not be determined but was at least 2.8m across with the manhole 0.7m by 0.5m. A modern drain with brick silt trap was also encountered in T3 (see background of Photograph 1), likely associated with a wash down area in front of the old stable block.

No archaeological remains were encountered in any of the trenches but excavation did stop at formation level and archaeological remains could still be preserved beneath this level.

6 Finds

A few fragments of bottle glass, modern brick and peg-tile were found in topsoil L1 and in made-ground L4. None of this material was retained.

7 Conclusion

No archaeological remains were encountered during the evaluation but, as excavation ceased at formation level and natural was not exposed, archaeological deposits may still be preserved on the site. Interestingly, the 1:2500 Epoch 1 (143-93) OS Map shows a pump (P.) in roughly the same location at the well in Trench 3.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Jonathan Bell and the landowner for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, A Wightman and L Pooley, with fieldwork carried out by B Holloway with C Hill. Figures were compiled by B Holloway and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Katie Lee-Smith and Historic England by Dr Jess Tipper.

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	2022a	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2022b	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching and monitoring at Porters Hall, Porters Hall Road, Stebbing, Essex, CM6 3TB</i>
CifA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation.</i> Revised October 2020.
CifA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.</i> Revised October 2020.
CifA	2014c	<i>Code of Conduct.</i> Revised October 2021 .
ECCPS	2022	<i>Brief for programme of archaeological investigation at Porters Hall, Porters Hall Road, Stebbing,</i> by K Lee-Smith
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14)
Historic England Medlycott, M	2015 2011	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i> <i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)
MHCLG	2021	<i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CifA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
ECC	Essex County Council
ECCHEA	Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
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**,
 <http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>
section (abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
wsi written scheme of investigation

11 Archive deposition

This project falls within the ClfA definition of a sterile project (<https://www.archaeologists.net/selection-toolkit/sterile-projects>) and therefore the preserved archive will take the form of a single digital document that incorporates all the relevant elements from the project. This document will be uploaded to OASIS and released into the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) library, from where it will be curated by the ADS. The single digital document will include the report, brief, WSI, photographs, and original site data (eg context sheets, section drawings).

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Distribution list:

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Landowner
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor
Dr Jess Tipper, Historic England
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

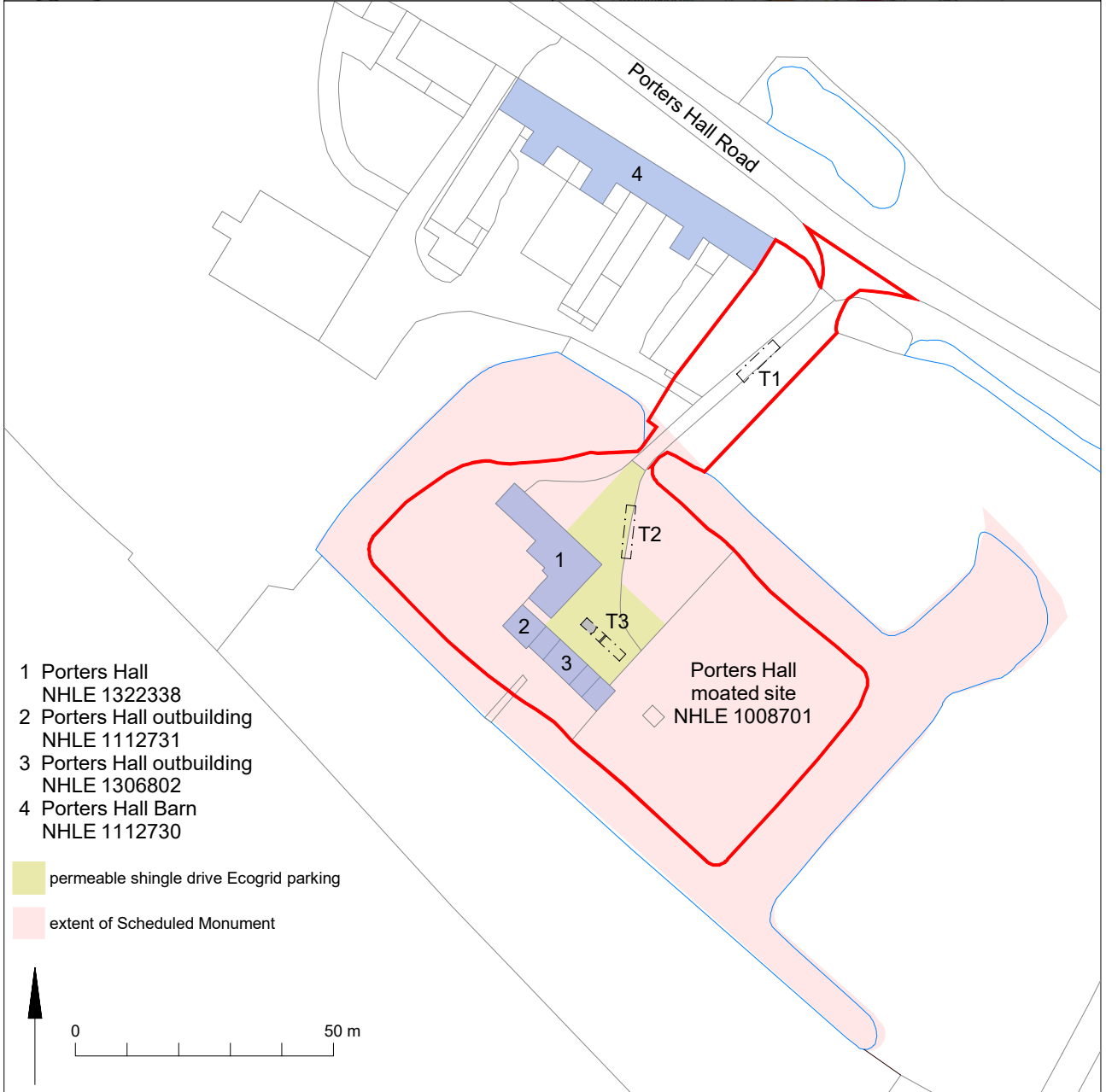
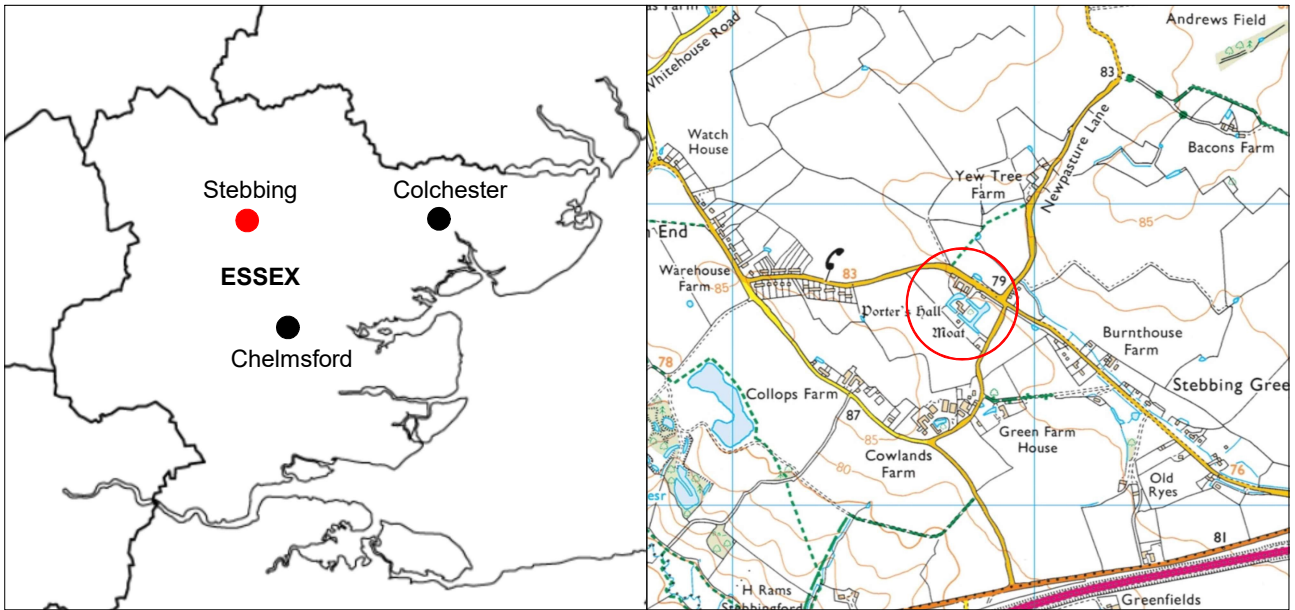


Fig 1 Site location.

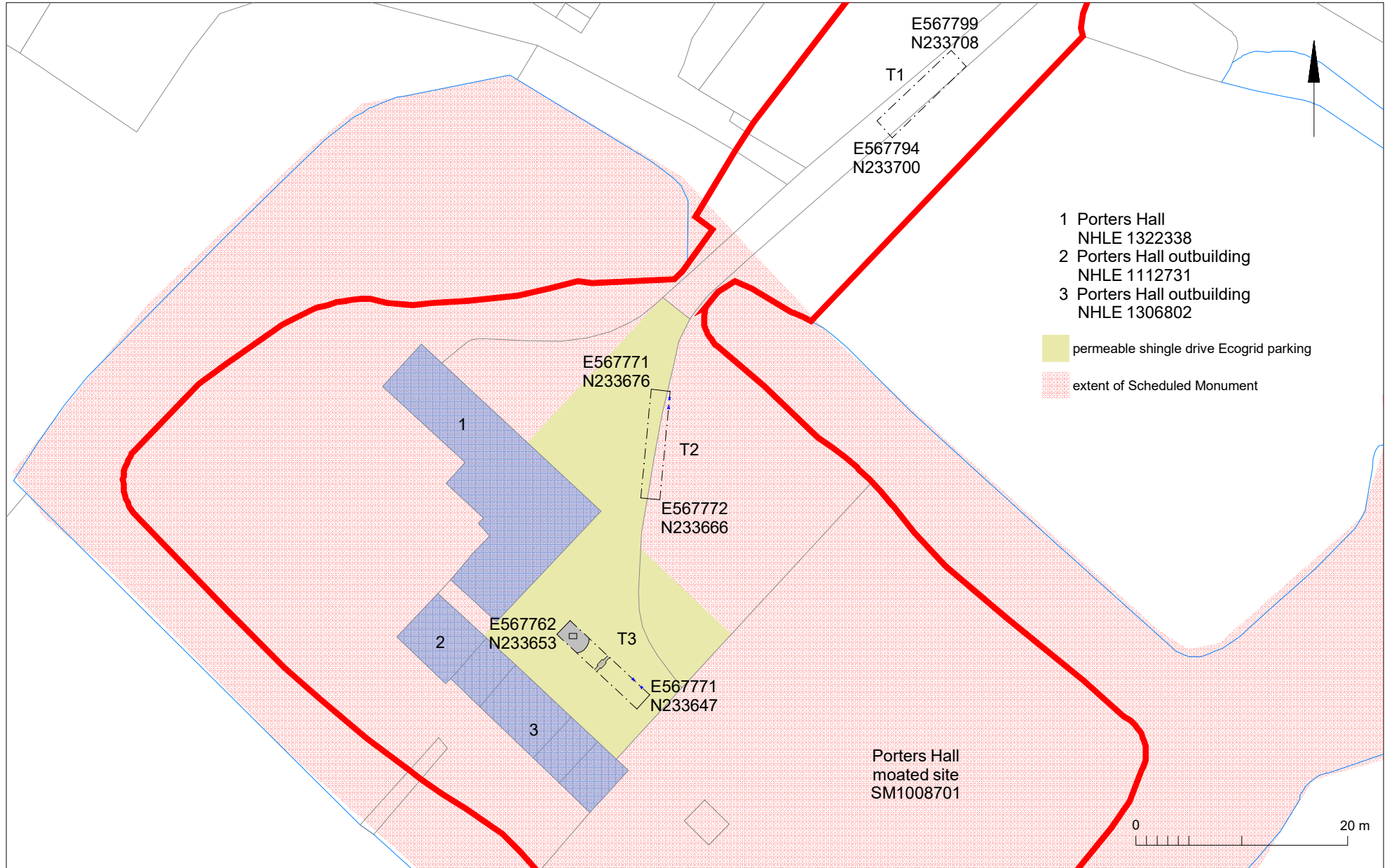


Fig 2 Evaluation results.

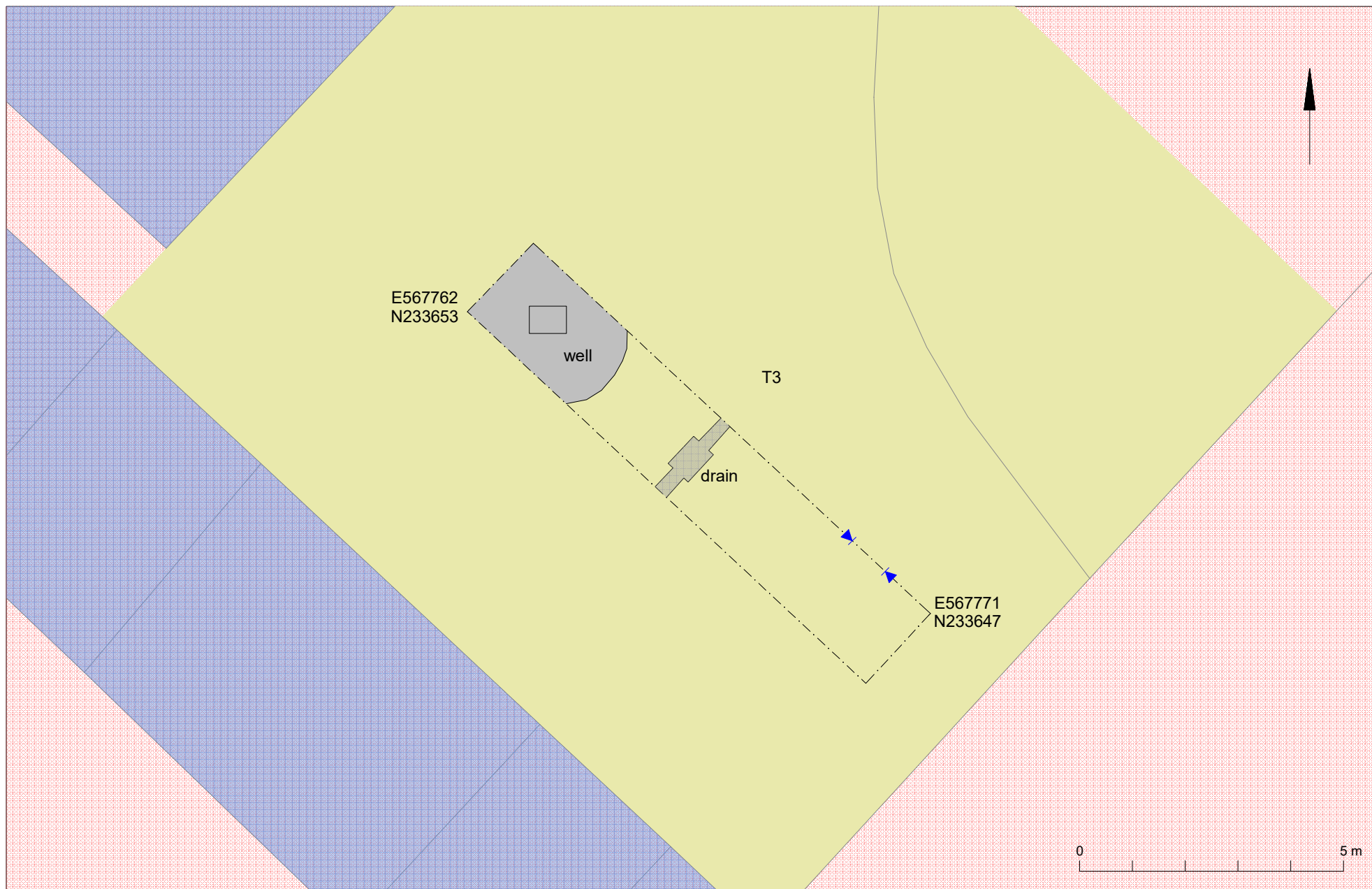


Fig 3 Trench 3 results.

- permeable shingle drive Ecogrid parking
- extent of Scheduled Monument

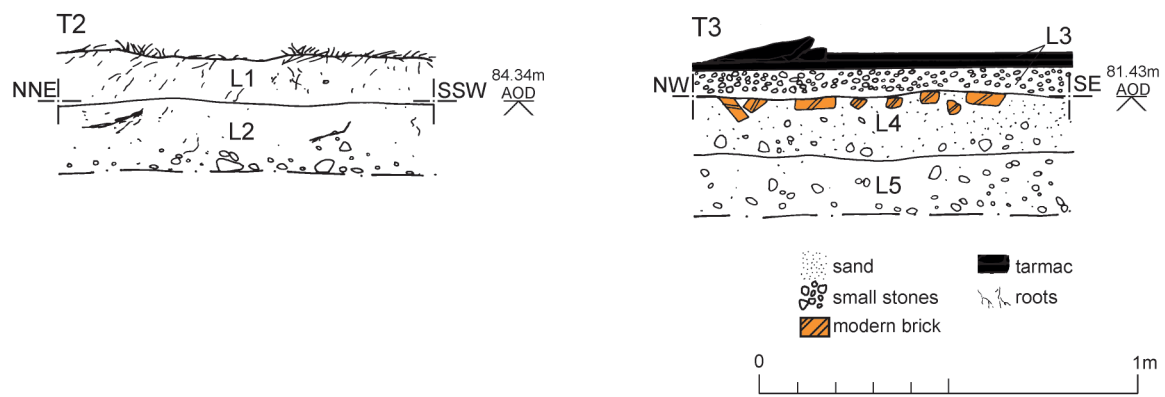


Fig 4 Representative sections.

Summary for colchest3-507590

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-507590
Project Name	Evaluation at Porters Hall, Porters Hall Road, Stebbing, Essex, CM6 3TB
Sitename	Porters Hall, Porters Hall Road, Stebbing, Essex, CM6 3TB
Activity type	Evaluation
Project Identifier(s)	2022/05L
Planning Id	UTT/21/1479/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	15-Nov-2022 - 15-Nov-2022
Location	Porters Hall, Porters Hall Road, Stebbing, Essex, CM6 3TB NGR : TL 67781 23644 LL : 51.8861067317781, 0.436500901880886 12 Fig : 567781,223644
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Uttlesford Parish : Stebbing
Project Methodology	Archaeological evaluation of three trial-trenches carried out as per the archaeological brief, scheduled monument consent (no. S00240340) and WSI.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (three trial-trenches) was carried out at Porters Hall, Porters Hall Road, Stebbing, Essex in advance of the construction of a new driveway, associated parking and loading area. The site lies within the boundary of the scheduled Porters Hall moated site and in an area containing numerous listed buildings dating from the 15th to the 17th century. No archaeological remains were encountered during the evaluation but, as excavation ceased at formation level and natural was not exposed, archaeological deposits may still be preserved on the site.
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	Scheduled Monument Casework - unRev - STANDARD Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	B, Holloway
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - STPH22
Archives	