

Colchester Archaeological Trust



CAT Report 1879
issued December 2022

**Archaeological evaluation on land at Cox's Yard,
Rayne Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 2QH:
November-December 2022**



CAT project ref.: 2022/11h
ECC code: BT57

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NGR: TL 75588 23249

Planning ref.: 18/01273/FUL

**CAT project ref.: 2022/11h
CAT Report 1879**

**ECC code: BT57
OASIS id: colchest3-511180**

report prepared by Dr Elliott Hicks

**fieldwork by Ben Holloway
with Elliott Hicks, Chloe Hill, Matthew Perou and
George Williams**

**commissioned by Andrew Stevenson
on behalf of Brian Martin Ltd**

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Issued:	7/12/2022	

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (3 trial-trenches) was carried out on land at Cox's Yard, Rayne Road, Braintree, Essex in advance of the construction of a new residential development. The site lies within the historic core of Braintree, a town which has its origins in the Roman period, and previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity have uncovered substantial Roman occupation remains, along with deposits of medieval and post-medieval date. Despite lying in an archaeologically-sensitive area, the only remains uncovered were a possible cellar of modern date and a modern wall, both of which represent part of a building depicted on late 19th-century mapping of the area, as well as a modern foundation and two modern pits.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land at Cox's Yard, Rayne Road, Braintree, Essex on 30th November to 1st December 2022. The work was commissioned by Andrew Stevenson on behalf of Brian Martin Ltd, and took place in advance of the construction of a new residential development.

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), the Historic Environment Advisor stipulated 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 a *Brief for a trial trenching evaluation and excavation on Land at Cox's Yard, Rayne Road, Braintree* written by Teresa O'Connor and detailing the required archaeological work (ECCPS 2021), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2022).

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* (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 includes extracts of the ECC Brief (ECCPS 2021) and Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale¹) shows the bedrock geology of the site to be London clay formation (clay, silt and sand) with superficial deposits of Lowestoft formation (diamiction, a chalky till characterised by its chalk and flint content).

Braintree lies on a clay and brickearth capped ridge between the Rivers Brain and Blackwater (Pant). Braintree (*Branchetreu*) is first referenced in the historical record in 1086, but it was also known as Great Rayne (Medlycott 1999, 3). Braintree is recorded in the Domesday Book in 1066 and 1086 (Rumble 1983).

The Roman town grew up in a triangular area between the contemporary roads of Stane Street (now Rayne Road) and another road between Sudbury and Chelmsford (now London Road). During the 1st century AD, the town was centred around the present-day area of Pierrefitte Way, to the west of the development site (ECC 1999, 3-4). Evidence from archaeological excavations suggests the deliberate planning of the town, with its minor roads and main boundaries standing at right angles to London Road, forming parallel blocks. The town appears to have expanded

¹ British Geological Survey – <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>

into the Rayne Road/George Yard area and the street morphology of the area was possibly reorganised (ECCPS 2021).

Archaeological investigations along the southern side of Rayne Road have uncovered considerable remains dating to the Late Iron Age and Roman periods, including roadside ditches and buildings fronting on to what was then Stane Street, as well as those relating to medieval occupation and post-medieval redevelopment. Investigations in the vicinity of the site include:

- At 65 Rayne Road, a ditch containing Roman pottery and an Iron Age loomweight was recorded (EHER 16356). A 12th-century boundary ditch passed through the southern part of the site (EHER 16357).
- At 51-57 Rayne Road, excavations conducted in 1973, to the south-west of the site, revealed evidence of Roman occupation. A medieval ditch indicated that the site was used for agriculture from the medieval period and possibly earlier times (EHER 6368-6372).
- In 1976 trial trenches were dug on land adjacent to 51-57 Rayne Road. The bottom of an undated ditch was uncovered, while elsewhere on this site extensive levelling and disturbance removed any other features which may have existed here (EHER 16385).
- During the demolition of the Methodist Church in 1989, four extensively-truncated Roman and post-medieval features, including a substantial ditch, were observed (EHER 16337-8).
- Excavations carried out at 13-17 Bank Street revealed that the frontage buildings, which were mostly 18th- and 19th-century in date, were underlain by extensive 17th-century cellars. Archaeological deposits included a medieval building, a well, pits, post-holes and a boundary ditch. The medieval structure was demolished and the boundary ditch in-filled in the 17th century when the plot was subdivided. Residual prehistoric flint flakes, Late Iron Age pottery, and 17th-century pottery was recorded (EHER 6373-7).
- Trenches excavated within the Sandpit Road car park area revealed Roman occupation evidence including large quantities of domestic rubbish, a well and part of a cobbled road with roadside ditches (EHER 16367). The intersection of two ditches, probably field boundaries, was recorded (EHER 6290), as were many post-medieval features (EHER 16368).
- Excavations at 47 High Street revealed evidence of Roman occupation extending over four phases, including evidence of timber buildings, cobbled floors and rubbish pits (EHER 6298).

Adjacent buildings along Rayne Road dating from the 16th to the 18th centuries evidence the expansion of the town in this area during this time. There are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity. The Horse and Groom public house (Grade II listed, EHER 28088) lies directly next to the site, with further listed buildings surrounding it on the corner of Panfield Lane to the east and to the rear of the site along Panfield Lane to the north. Braintree was still an important cloth town at the beginning of the post-medieval period and, by the early 16th century, the town specialised in the manufacture of bays and says (Medlycott 1999, 16). Historic mapping reveals a number of buildings within the site that are no longer extant, the origin and function of which are unknown (see map 1).



Map 1 Extract of the 1st OS map of England and Wales, Essex Sheet XXV, showing the site highlighted red

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 2-4)

Three trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trench T1, which was arranged in an L-shape, was 24m long and 1.8m wide; trench T2 was 12m long and 1.8m wide; and trench T3 was 20m long and 1.8m wide.

Trench 1

Trench T1 was cut through modern topsoil (L1, 0.16-0.23m thick) a modern yard surface (L2, 0.14-0.16m thick), a modern dump layer (L3, 0.21-0.26m thick) and a further dump or make-up layer (L4, 0.15-0.2m thick) onto natural (L5, encountered at a depth of 0.75-0.81m below current ground level [bcgl]).

Modern ?cellar F2 was situated at the western end of the trench. It consisted of three walls constructed with red frogged bricks bonded with mortar, one aligned NNW-SSE, two aligned ENE-WSW.



Photograph 1 T1 trench shot – looking north northwest

Trench 2

Trench T2 was cut through L1 (0.19-0.21m thick), L2 (0.29-0.33m thick) and L3 (0.2-0.24m thick) onto L5 (encountered at a depth of 0.72-0.74m bcgl).

Modern wall F1 extended through the eastern half of the trench on an ENE-WSW alignment before turning to the north northwest and passing beyond the limit of excavation (LOE). It was formed out of frogged red bricks bonded with mortar and laid on a base of crushed CBM.



Photograph 2 T2 trench shot – looking west southwest

Trench 3

Trench 3 was cut through L2 (0.17-0.2m thick), L3 (0.21-0.24m thick) and L4 (0.35-0.38m thick) onto L5 (encountered at a depth of 0.99-1.01m bcgl).

Modern pit F3 lay at the northern end of the trench. The full dimensions of the feature could not be ascertained as it extended beyond the LOE and could not be fully excavated due to the need to stay within safe working depths, but its exposed extent was 1.5m wide.

Modern concrete foundation F4 was located in the centre of the trench.

Modern pit F5 was situated at the southern end of the trench. It too extended beyond the LOE and could not be fully excavated due to the depth of the trench, but it was at least 0.7m wide.

6 Finds

6.1 Ceramic finds

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation uncovered six sherds of pottery and ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) with a weight of 5.7 kg and EVE of 1.48 (Table 1). The mean sherd weight is high at 944g. This material was recovered from three features (Table 2).

Ceramic material	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
Pottery	2	909	455	1.48
CBM	4	4,757	2,724	-
All	6	5,666	944	1.48

Table 1 Summary of the pottery and ceramic building material

Sherds of pottery and ceramics were recovered from two features and one layer (Table 2).

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
F2	?Cellar	1	2,724	2,724
F3	Pit	3	1,230	410
F5	Pit	2	1,712	856
Total		6	5,666	944

Table 2 Quantities of pottery and CBM from specific contexts

Post-Roman pottery

This was limited to two sherds of modern English stoneware (fabric 45M) pottery dating to the 19th-20th century, and included a bottle (EVE:0.48) from pit F5 and a jar (EVE:1.00) from pit F3.

Ceramic building material (CBM)

A frogged brick (230 mm x 110 mm x 70 mm) was recovered from ?cellar F2 while an unfrogged brick (? mm x 115 mm x 65 mm), dating to the 19th century, came from pit F5. A fragment of pan-tile, dating from the 17th century onwards, came from pit F3.

Conclusion

Table 3 summarizes the dating evidence for the features and layer which contained dateable pottery and ceramics. All the contexts are modern and none of the finds were retained.

Context	Description	Post-Roman	CBM	Date Approx.
F2	?Cellar	-	BR (Frogged)	Mid-19th-20th century
F3	Pit	F45M (Jar)	Pan tile BR	19th-20th century
F5	Pit	F45M (Bottle)	BR (Un-frogged)	19th-20th century

Table 3 Approximate dates for the individual features

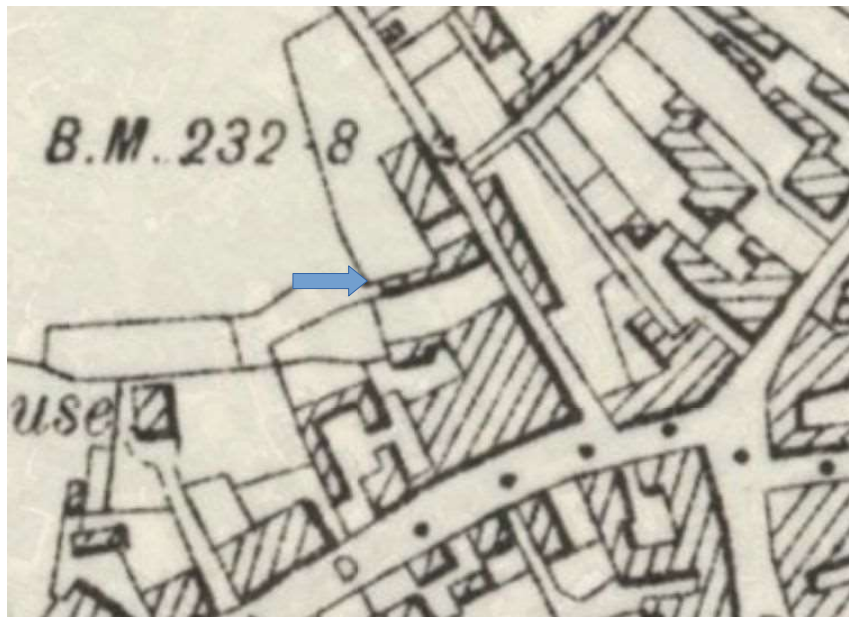
6.2 Miscellaneous finds

by Laura Pooley

A fragment of oyster shell (6.3g) came from F3 (finds no.2) with six fragments of iron sheet (0.8g) from F5 (finds no.3). These have been discarded.

7 Conclusion

Excavations at this site uncovered a possible cellar, a wall, a foundation, two pits and a yard surface, all of which dated to the modern period. The first two features in this list formed parts of an outbuilding which stood to the rear of a structure formerly lining this section of Rayne Road (see Map 2 below). The remaining features were likely the product of contemporary activity at the site and were overlain by the yard surface, which was constructed during the early or mid 20th century.



Map 2 Extract of the Essex XXV.SE, rev. 1896; pub. 1898, structure indicated by blue arrow

8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Andrew Stevenson and Brian Martin Ltd 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 E Hicks, C Hill, M Perou and G Williams. Figures were compiled 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>

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)
CAR 7	2000	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85,</i> by J Cotter
CAT	2022	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2022	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for an evaluation by trial-trenching on land at Cox's Yard, Rayne Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 2QH</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 2022
ECCPS	2021	<i>Brief for trial trenching evaluation and excavation at Cox's Yard, Rayne Road, Braintree,</i> by T O'Connor
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14)
Historic England	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Medlycott, M	1999	<i>Braintree Historic Town Assessment Report.</i> Essex County Council
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	2021	<i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Rumble, A (ed.)	1983	<i>Domesday Book - Essex</i>
Ryan, P	1996	<i>Brick in Essex from the Roman Conquest to the Reformation</i>

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	a single unit of excavation, which is often referred to numerically, and can be any feature, layer or find
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'
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
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	O nline A cces S to the I ndex of A rchaeological I nvestigati S , http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
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
ws	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1879)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation
Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log
Graphic files
Survey data
Site data

12 Archive deposition

The 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 the Archaeological Data Service.

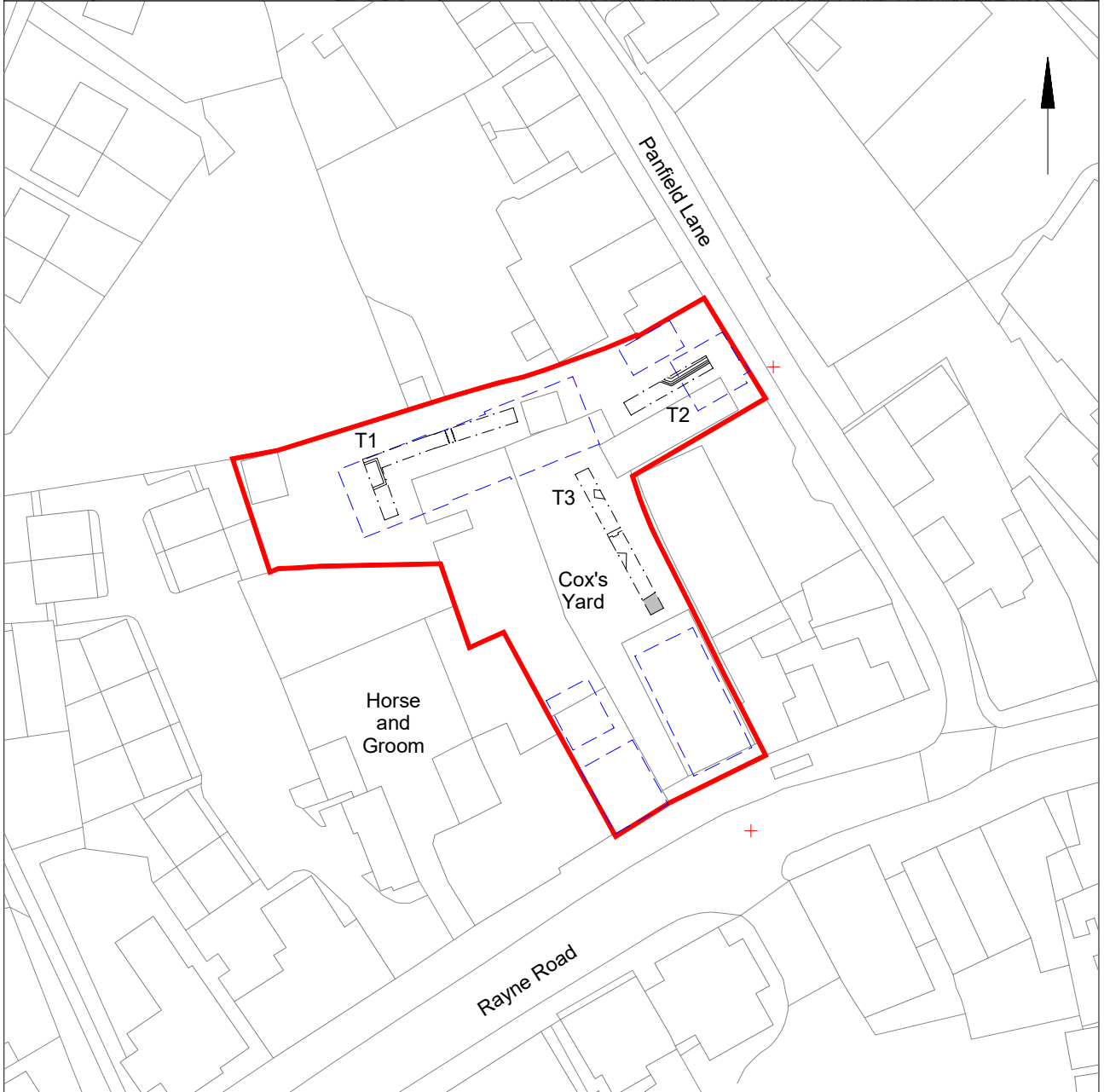
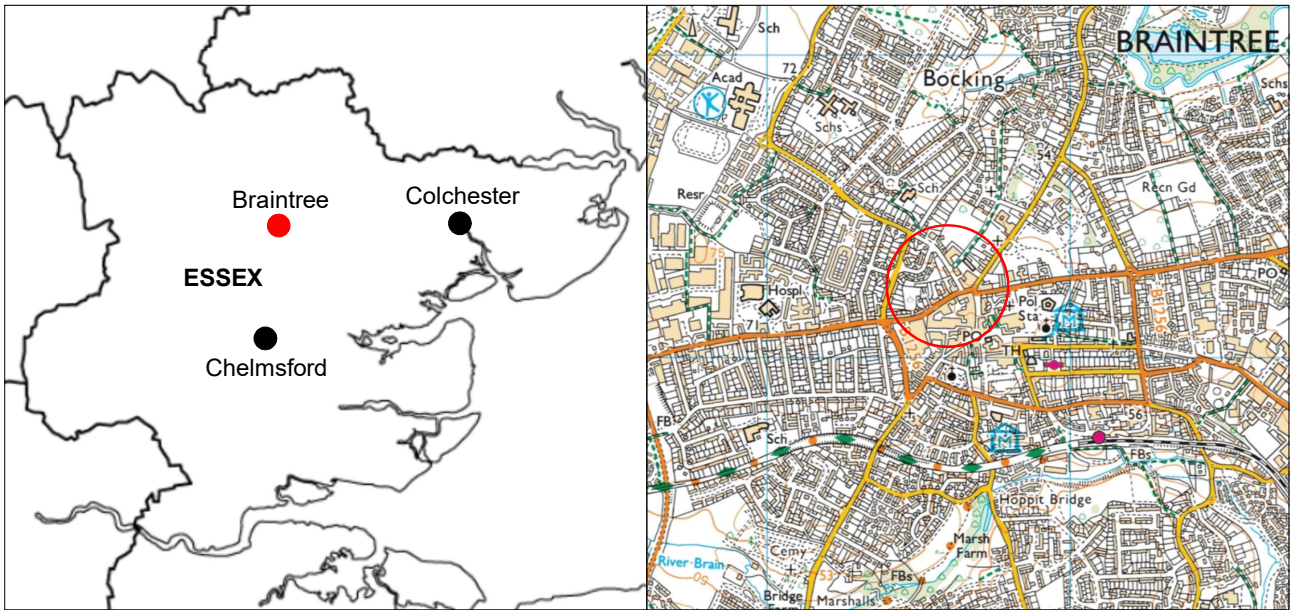
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Distribution list:

Andrew Stevenson
Brian Martin Ltd
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

Appendix 1 Context list

Context Number	Trench number	Finds Number	Feature / layer type	Description	Date
L1	T1, T2	-	Topsoil	soft moist dark brown/black loam	Modern
L2	All	-	Yard surface	Constructed out of asphalt	Modern
L3	All	-	Dump layer	Hard, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silt with 10% stones and 85% CBM pieces	Modern
L4	T1, T3	-	Dump/make-up layer	Firm, moist dark grey/brown clay with occasional CBM pieces and 10% stones	Modern
L5	All	-	Natural	Firm, moist light yellow/grey/brown clay with 2% stones	Post-glacial
F1	T2	-	Wall	Constructed out of frogged red bricks bonded with mortar laid on a crush foundation	Modern
F2	T1	1	?Cellar	Constructed out of frogged red bricks bonded with mortar	Modern
F3	T3	2	Pit	Firm, moist dark grey/black silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Modern
F4	T3	-	Foundation	Concrete foundation with steel stanchion	Modern
F5	T3	3	Pit	Firm, moist dark grey/black silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Modern



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



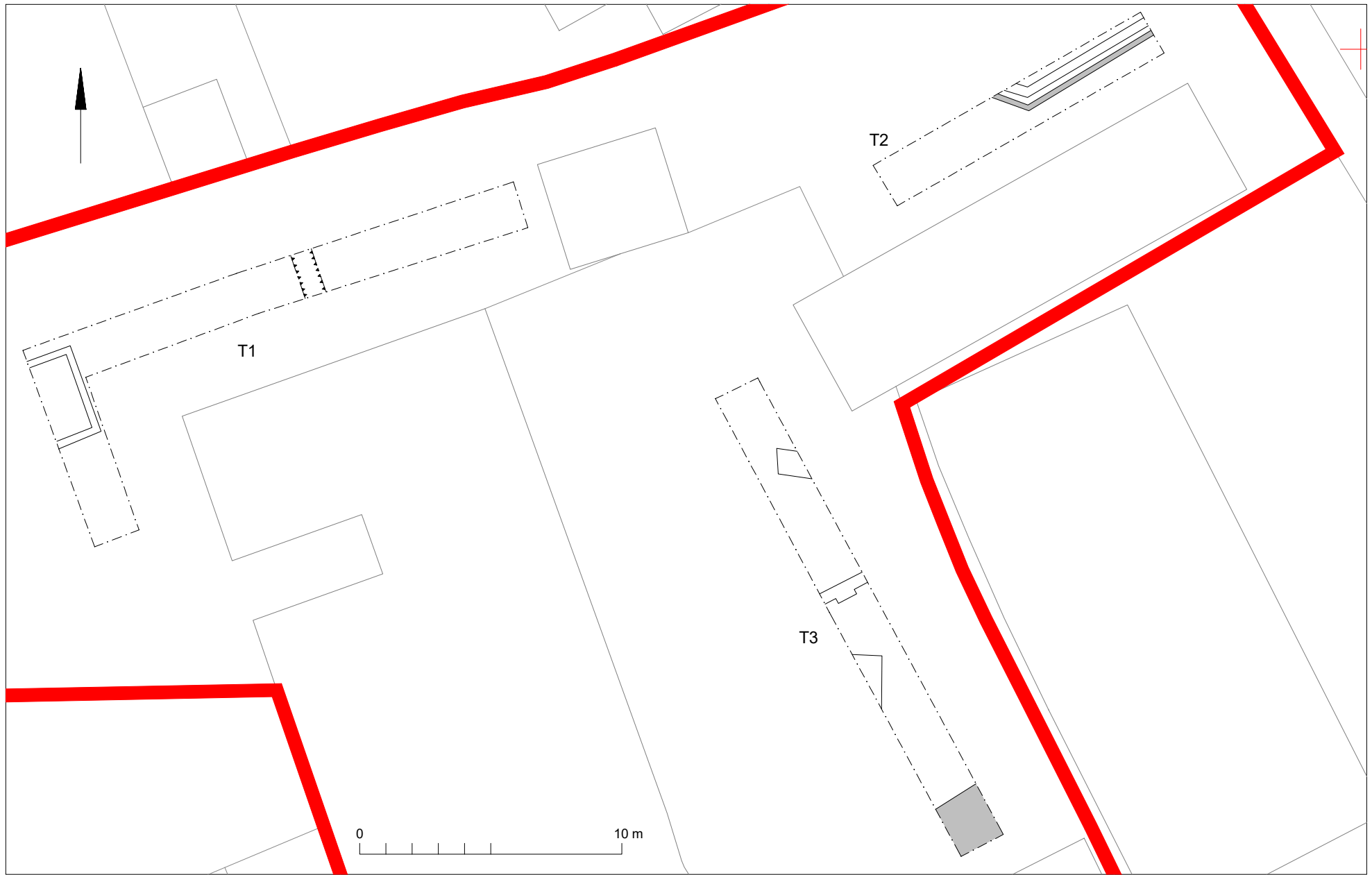


Fig 2 Results (modern services in grey).

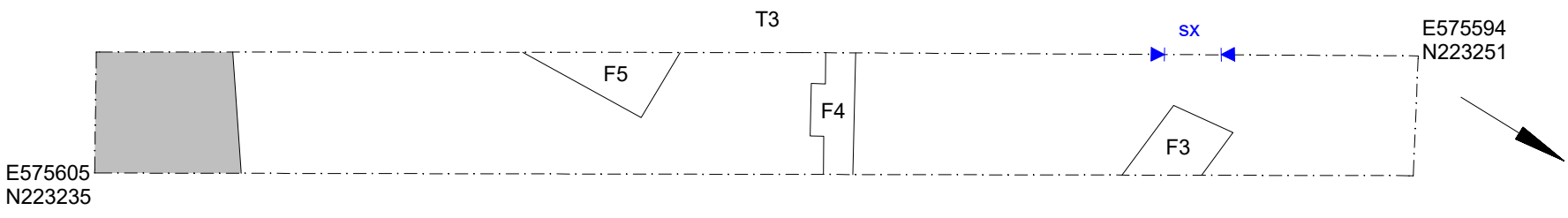
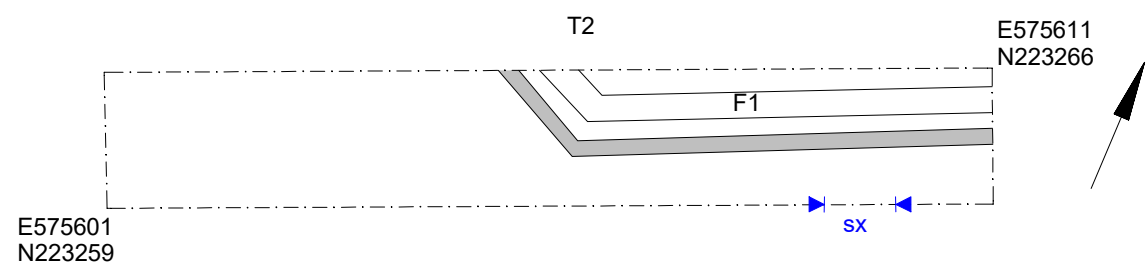
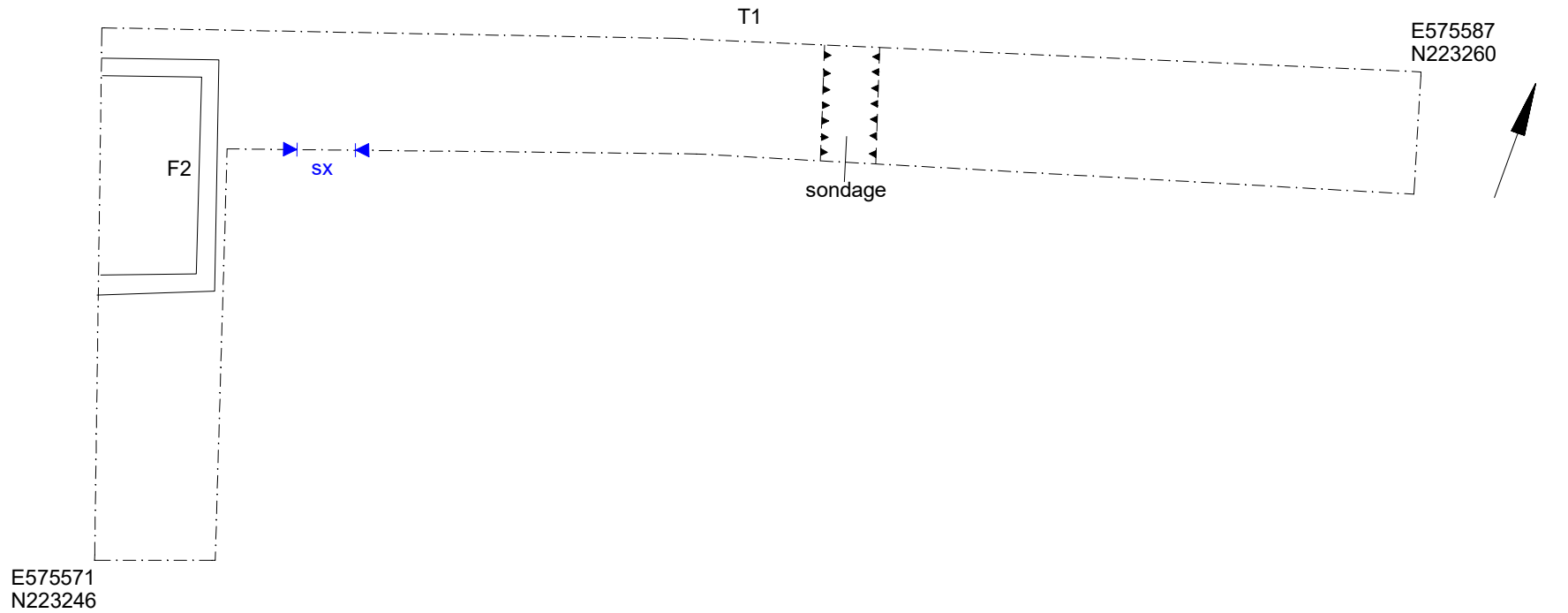


Fig 3 Detailed trench plans (modern services in grey)



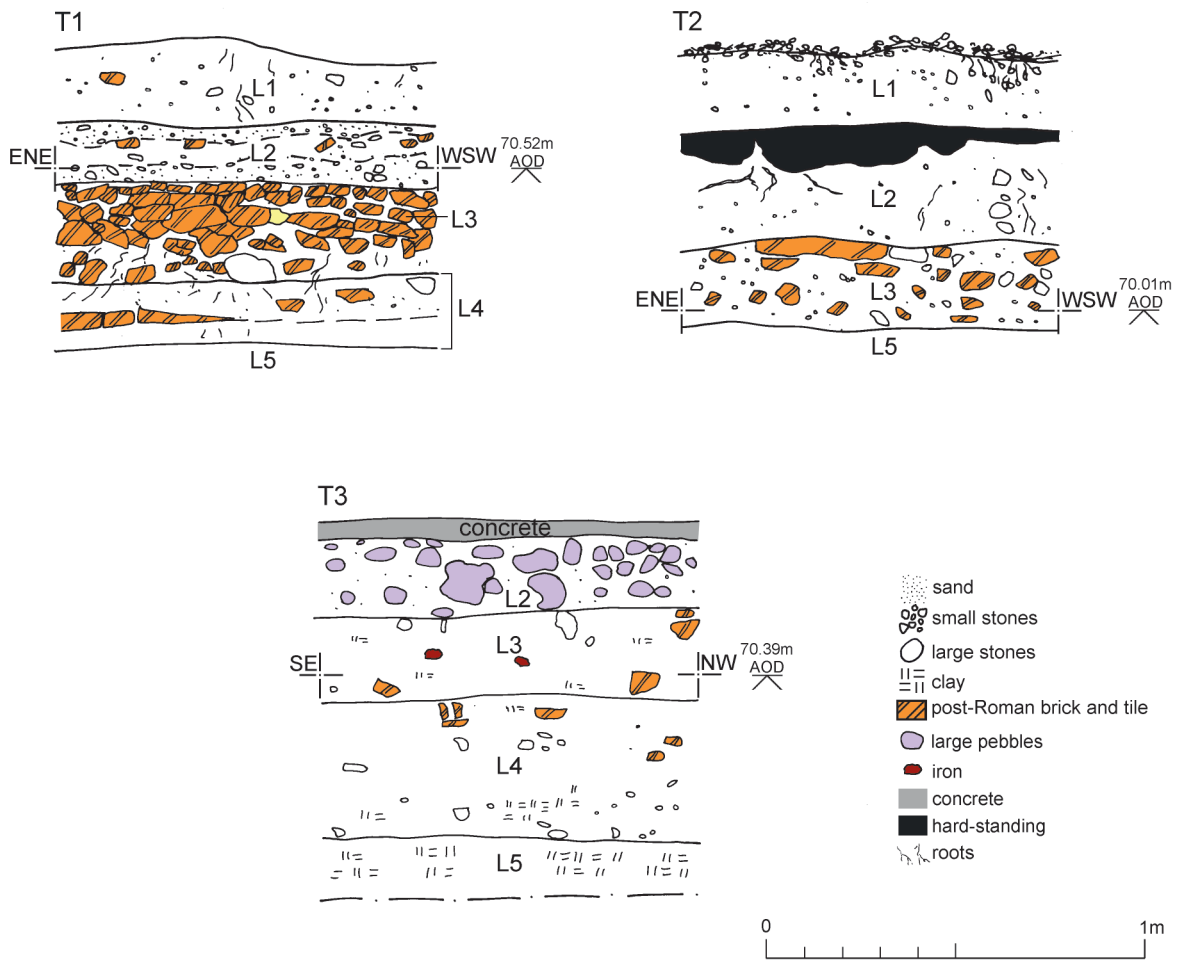


Fig 4 Representative sections.

Summary for colchest3-511180

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-511180
Project Name	Trial Trench at Land at Cox's Yard, Rayne Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 2QH.
Sitename	Land at Cox's Yard, Rayne Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 2QH.
Activity type	Trial Trench
Project Identifier(s)	2022/11h
Planning Id	18/01273/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	30-Nov-2022 - 01-Dec-2022
Location	Land at Cox's Yard, Rayne Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 2QH. NGR : TL 75588 23249 LL : 51.88015683235, 0.549619498861074 12 Fig : 575588,223249
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Braintree Parish : Braintree, unparished area
Project Methodology	Trial-trenched evaluation carried out as per the brief and WSI.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (3 trial-trenches) was carried out on land at Cox's Yard, Rayne Road, Braintree, Essex in advance of the construction of a new residential development. The site lies within the historic core of Braintree, a town which has its origins in the Roman period, and previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity have uncovered substantial Roman occupation remains, along with deposits of medieval and post-medieval date. Despite lying in an archaeologically-sensitive area, the only remains uncovered were a possible cellar of modern date and a modern wall, both of which represent part of a building depicted on late 19th-century mapping of the area, as well as a modern foundation and two modern pits.
Keywords	Wall - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Cellar - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Pit - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Building - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Sherd - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Sherd - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Brick - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Pantile - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Pantile - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus
Funder	
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	E, Hicks
HER Identifiers	

Archives

Documentary Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with Braintree District Museum;