

Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1883
issued January 2023**

**Archaeological evaluation on land north-west of
Napier Close and Fairlop Gardens, Barstable,
Basildon, Essex: December 2022**



**CAT project ref.: 2022/11d
ECC code: BANC22**

**Archaeological evaluation on land north-west of
Napier Close and Fairlop Gardens, Barstable,
Basildon, Essex: December 2022**

NGR: TQ 71519 88938 (centre)

Planning ref.: 21/00702/FUL

**CAT project ref.: 2022/11d
CAT Report 1883**

**ECC code: BANC22
OASIS id: colchest3-510767**

**report prepared by Adam Ronn
with contributions by Dr Matthew Loughton
and Alec Wade**

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client: Sempra Homes

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
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| Issued: | 05/01/2023 | |

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (six trial-trenches) was carried out on land north-west of Napier Close and Fairlop Gardens, Barstable, Basildon, Essex in advance of the construction of a new residential development. Although there is little evidence of prehistoric to medieval activity in the area, this is largely because fieldwork has been limited within the town. The only feature of significance revealed by the evaluation was a possible quarry pit which produced an assemblage of Late Iron Age to early Roman pottery and animal bone, indicating occupation in the vicinity in this period. A modern pit, undated post-hole and two undated pit/tree-throws were also excavated, and seven other modern features were recorded but not excavated.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land north-west of Napier Close and Fairlop Gardens, Barstable, Basildon, Essex on 5th to 9th December 2022. Commissioned by Harry Moorhouse of Calfordseaden LLP on behalf of Semptra Homes, the proposed development comprises of the demolition of old garages (on the Fairlop site) to then be followed by the construction (across both areas) of 35 new dwellings (20 two-storey houses and a three-storey block containing 15 flats) and associated access, parking areas, landscaping, utilities (including a new substation) and associated groundworks.

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), the Historic Environment Consultant 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 archaeological evaluation on land lying North West of Napier Close and North West of Fairlop Gardens Napier Close Barstable Basildon*, detailing the required archaeological work (ECCPS 2022), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT (2022) in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS.

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 Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

During the Domesday survey in 1086 Basildon was known as Beleduna. It was a small hamlet until it was combined with Laindon, Langdon Hills, Pitsea and Vange to create a new town. Basildon was the largest of the New Towns created in the post-War period to absorb the expanding population of London (ECC 2012, 42).

There is little evidence of prehistoric to medieval activity in the area, largely because limited fieldwork has been carried out within the town. The clay soil conditions are also not conducive for showing cropmarks so there is also limited non-intrusive evidence for the area. The area was formerly agricultural land, with a historic fieldscape comprised of the grid-like system, with areas of relatively sparse settlement, characteristic of much of south and east Essex, which is of ancient, possibly Middle-Saxon origin.

Agricultural depression in the late 19th to early 20th centuries resulted in many farms being abandoned, especially those in heavy clay areas which is harder to work. Entrepreneurs brought up these farms cheaply and divided them into smaller individual plots known as 'Plotlands'. Plotlands were attractive to people living in cramped conditions in London's East End (ECC 2012, 40). The historic mapping featured in the desk-based assessment for the site shows that by the 3rd edition OS map of England and Wales (c 1920) the site had begun to be developed into plotlands (Oksman Sword 2021).

For more information specific to the area of the site, see the desk-based assessment (Oksman Sword 2021) and for Basildon in general, see the Basildon Borough Characterisation Project (ECC 2012).

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)

Six trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist, each 30m long by 2-2.3m wide. All of the trenches were cut through modern topsoil (L1, 0.22-0.33m thick) onto natural (L2, encountered at a depth of 0.3-0.45m below current modern ground). A sondage was cut in the middle of Trench 5 to confirm that L2 had been correctly identified as natural.

Trench 1

Modern pits F6, F7 and F8 were recorded but not excavated as they all contained asbestos.



Photograph 1 Trench 1, looking north

Trench 3

Trench 3 contained modern pits F3, F4 and F5 which were recorded but not excavated due to the presence of asbestos. Fragments of modern glass, nails, coal and brick were also present on the surface of the features.

Trench 4

Modern pit/spread F12 was also unexcavated as asbestos, bricks and concrete were visible on the surface. To the south, pit F11 was excavated and included modern flecks of CBM in the fill.

Trench 5

Pit/tree-throws F9 and F10 were excavated but did not produce any dating evidence. F9 was 1.1m wide by 0.3m deep, F10 had been truncated by a modern service but was 0.6m wide and 0.3m deep.



Photograph 2 Trench 5, looking west

Trench 6

F1 and F2 were located within the northern end of Trench 1. F1 was identified as the base of a post-hole, c 0.23m diameter by 0.05m deep. No datable evidence was recovered but CBM flecks were present. Possible quarry pit F2 (>2.3m by 3.4m) was the only notable feature from this evaluation, which produced a significant assemblage of Late Iron Age to early Roman pottery as well as several pieces of animal bone. The depth of F2 was not fully determined due to the thickness of the clay and the frozen ground conditions at the time of excavation.



Photograph 3 Trench 6, looking north



Photograph 4 Quarry pit F2, looking north-east

6 Finds

6.1 Pottery

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation uncovered an assemblage of 101 pottery sherds with a weight of 1,043g and EVE of 0.80 (Table 1) all from one just one feature, quarry pit F2 (finds no.1). Included amongst the assemblage was one sherd (2g) of flint-tempered handmade (HMF) prehistoric pottery.

The Late Iron Age-Roman pottery was recorded using the fabric groups created for the Stanway (Benfield 2007) and Colchester 'Institute' (Loughton in prep.) assemblages alongside the fabric groups outlined in CAR 10 (Symonds & Wade 1999). The Late Iron Age and Roman vessel types were classified via the Colchester (*Camulodunum*), henceforth Cam, type series (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull 1958; CAR 10, Bidwell & Croom 1999, 468-487). The pottery was recorded by sherd count, the number of rims, handles and bases, and weight, for each fabric group. The number of vessels was determined by rim EVE (estimated vessel equivalent).

The pottery assemblage consists of Late Iron Age grog-tempered (GTW) and various transitional Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery fabrics (Table 1), dating the quarry pit to the Late Iron Age/early Roman period. All the diagnostic vessels also date from the Late Iron Age to the early Roman period and include examples of the Cam 221 bowl (EVE:0.51) in fabric RCW 1, a Cam 258 (0.08) jar in fabric HD, and a Cam 259 jar (0.13) in fabric FSW/EGW. The assemblage shows a bias towards cooking pots and jars, although the small size of the EVE makes any further detailed analysis of questionable value. The absence of imported fine wares, such as Samian and Gallo-Belgic pottery, might suggest that we are dealing with kitchen/domestic waste but again this could be explained by the small size of the pottery assemblage and that it comes from just one context. Furthermore, it is worth noting that there is one sherd of fine oxidised ware (fabric DZ) which could possibly be from a finer drinking vessel, such as a cup or beaker.

| Fabric Group | Fabric description | No. | Weight (g) | MSW (g) | EVE |
|--------------|---|------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| CSOW | Coarse sandy oxidized ware | 1 | 64 | 64 | 0.00 |
| DZ | Fine oxidised wares | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| FSOW | Fine sandy oxidized ware | 15 | 113 | 8 | 0.00 |
| FSW/EGW | Fine sandy ware/early Grey ware | 2 | 26 | 13 | 0.13 |
| GTW | Grog-tempered ware | 32 | 563 | 18 | 0.00 |
| HD | Shell-tempered and calcite-gritted wares | 4 | 53 | 13 | 0.08 |
| HZ | Large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares | 1 | 19 | 19 | 0.00 |
| RCW 1 | Romanising coarse wares | 2 | 10 | 5 | 0.00 |
| RCW 1 | Romanising coarse wares 1 (Black surface ware) | 35 | 175 | 5 | 0.59 |
| ROW | Romanising Oxidized ware | 7 | 16 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Total | | 100 | 1,041 | 10 | 0.80 |

Table 1 Late Iron Age-early Roman pottery listed by fabric

6.2 Animal bone

by Alec Wade

The evaluation produced a small assemblage of animal bone amounting to 16 fragments weighing a total of 112g. All of the material derived from a single feature, quarry pit F2 (finds no.1) which dated to the Late Iron Age/early Roman period. The condition of the bone was fair with moderate loss of surface detail and some brownish discolouration.

The assemblage was fairly uniform as regards fragment size (ranging from 23mm to 66mm) suggesting deliberate breakage, possibly for marrow extraction. One fragment had also been dog gnawed. Two species were positively identified, cattle (two pieces) and sheep/goat (one piece). Most of the remaining material was not closely identifiable but is very likely to also be cattle. No cut marks or pathology were noted.

| No. of pieces | Weight (g) | Species | Comments |
|---------------|------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 2 | 26 | Bos (cattle) | (2) Pelvic fragments |
| 11 | 80 | Large-sized mammal (cattle or horse) | (1) Pelvic fragment (1) Vertebra fragments (3) Tibia diaphysis fragments (6) Diaphysis fragments |
| 1 | 2 | Ovis/capra (sheep or goat) | (1) Metatarsal diaphysis fragment that has been dog gnawed. |
| 2 | 4 | Unidentified | (1) Skull fragment? (1) Unidentified |
| 16 | 112 | TOTAL | |

Table 2 Animal bone from F2 (finds no.1)

7 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation on the development site revealed seven modern features that were contaminated with asbestos and not excavated. Of the five features excavated pit F11 was of modern date, and post-hole F1 along with pit/tree-throws F9 and F10 were all undated. The only feature of archaeological significance was possible clay quarry pit F2, which produced an assemblage of Late Iron Age to early Roman pottery and animal bone, indicating domestic occupation somewhere in the vicinity in this period. The nearest comparable material is located over 2km to the south-west of the development site where a Late Iron Age/early Roman field system and pits were identified during a 2006 evaluation with additional finds suggestive of domestic occupation (CAT Report 375). Later Roman contexts were also identified there and at an adjacent site (EHER 49502) indicating continuity of land-use. The identification of the quarry pit during this evaluation not only expands our knowledge of the extent of settlement in the Basildon area in the Late Iron Age/early Roman period, but also shows that, despite the high level of modern truncation, significant archaeological remains do survive in this area.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Harry Moorhouse and Sempra Homes 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, T Lawrence, M Perou and A Ronn. 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>

- | | | |
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| 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 10 | 1999 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in</i> |

| | | |
|------------------------|-------|---|
| CAT | 2022 | <i>Colchester, 1971-86.</i> Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust Ltd. <i>Written scheme of investigation for an evaluation by trial-trenching on land north-west of Napier Close and north-west of Fairlop Gardens, Barstable, Basildon, Essex.</i> |
| CAT Report 395 | 2026 | <i>An archaeological evaluation at Dry Street, Basildon, Essex: May-June 2006</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 |
| ECC | 2012 | <i>Basildon Borough Historic Environment Characterisation project 2010-2011.</i> Essex County Council Historic Environment Team |
| ECCPS | 2022 | <i>Brief for archaeological evaluation on land lying North West Of Napier Close And North West Of Fairlop Gardens Napier Close Barstable Basildon,</i> by T O'Connor |
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| MHCLG | 2021 | <i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government |
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10 Abbreviations and glossary

| | |
|---------------|--|
| CAT | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| CIfA | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists |
| ECC | Essex County Council |
| ECCHCEC | Essex County Council Historic Environment Consultant |
| 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 | Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main |
| 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 |
| ws | written scheme of investigation |

11 Contents of archive

Finds: part of one box (pottery/animal bone)
Digital record
 CAT Report 1883

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation
Site digital photographs
Digital site data
Survey 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 Southend Museum under project ref. BANC22 and with the Archaeological Data Service.

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Distribution list:

Harry Moorhouse, calfordseaden LLP
Sempra Homes
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Consultant
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

Appendix 1 Context list

| Context | Trench number | Finds number | Feature / layer type | Description | Date |
|---------|---------------|--------------|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| L1 | All | - | Topsoil | friable moist dark brown silt | Modern |
| L2 | All | - | Natural | firm moist medium yellow/brown clay and inclusions of: gravel 10% | Post-glacial |
| | | | | | |
| F1 | 6 | - | Post-hole | soft moist medium grey/brown silty clay and inclusions of: stone 5% | Undated |
| F2 | 6 | 1 | Quarry pit | firm/hard dry medium grey/brown clayey with charcoal flecks and inclusions of: pot 5% | Late Iron Age/ early Roman |
| F3 | 3 | - | Pit | firm dry dark orange/black silt with charcoal flecks, brick flecks | Modern |
| F4 | 3 | - | Pit | firm dry dark orange/brown silt with charcoal flecks and inclusions of: tile/brick 20% | Modern |
| F5 | 3 | - | Pit | firm moist medium orange/brown silty clay and inclusions of: tile/brick 20% | Modern |
| F6 | 1 | - | Pit | firm medium brown silty clay with charcoal flecks, brick flecks | Modern |
| F7 | 1 | - | Pit | firm moist medium brown silty clay with charcoal flecks, brick flecks | Modern |
| F8 | 1 | - | Pit | firm moist dark brown silty clay with charcoal flecks | Modern |
| F9 | 5 | - | Pit/tree-throw | firm moist medium grey/brown silty clay | Undated |
| F10 | 6 | - | Pit/tree-throw | firm moist medium grey/brown silty clay | Undated |
| F11 | 4 | - | Pit | firm dry dark grey/brown silty clay with charcoal flecks, brick flecks | Modern |
| F12 | 4 | - | Pit/spread | soft/friable moist dark grey/brown silty clay with charcoal flecks, brick flecks, tile flecks and inclusions of: stone 5% | Modern |

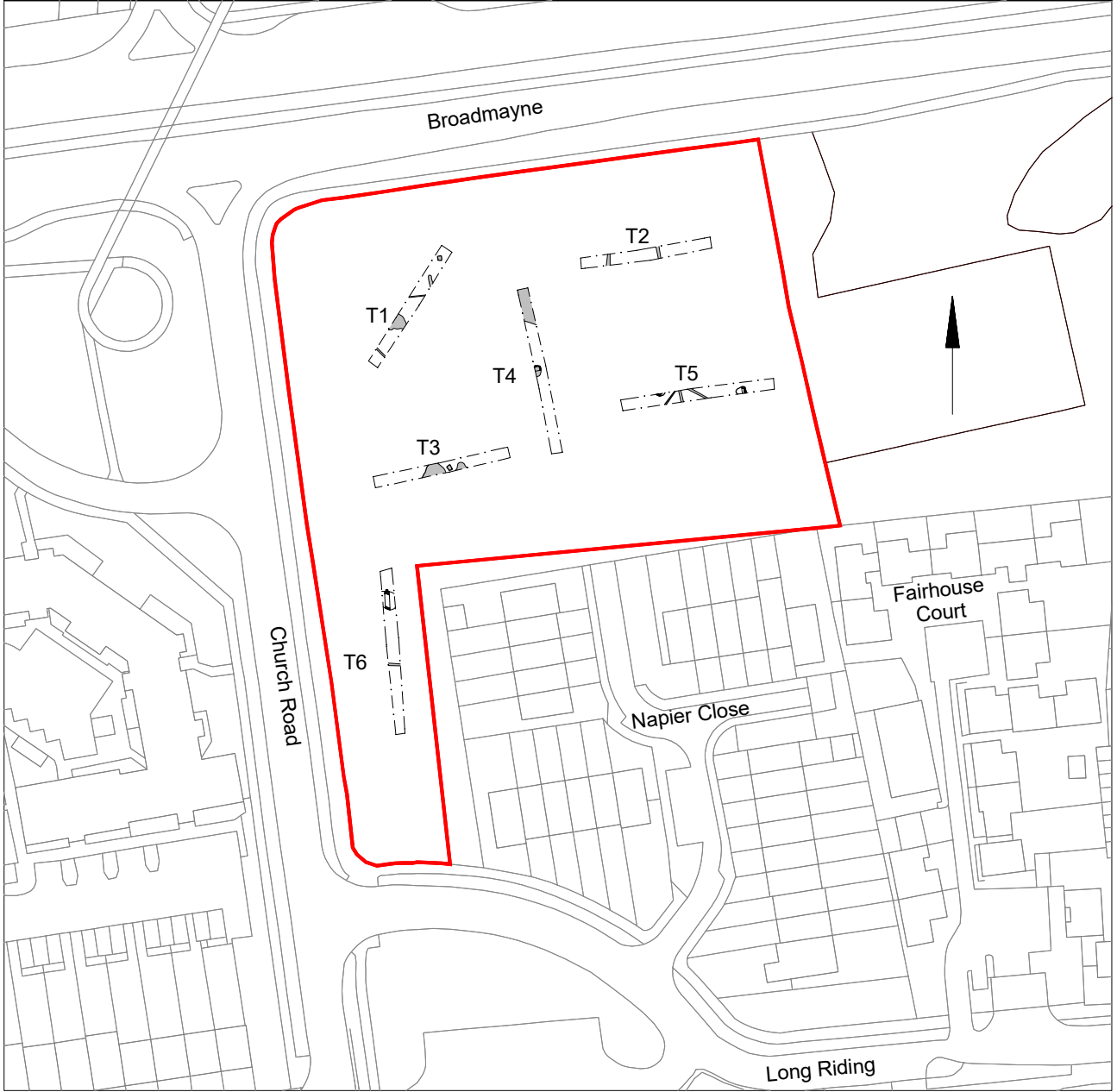


Fig 1 Site location

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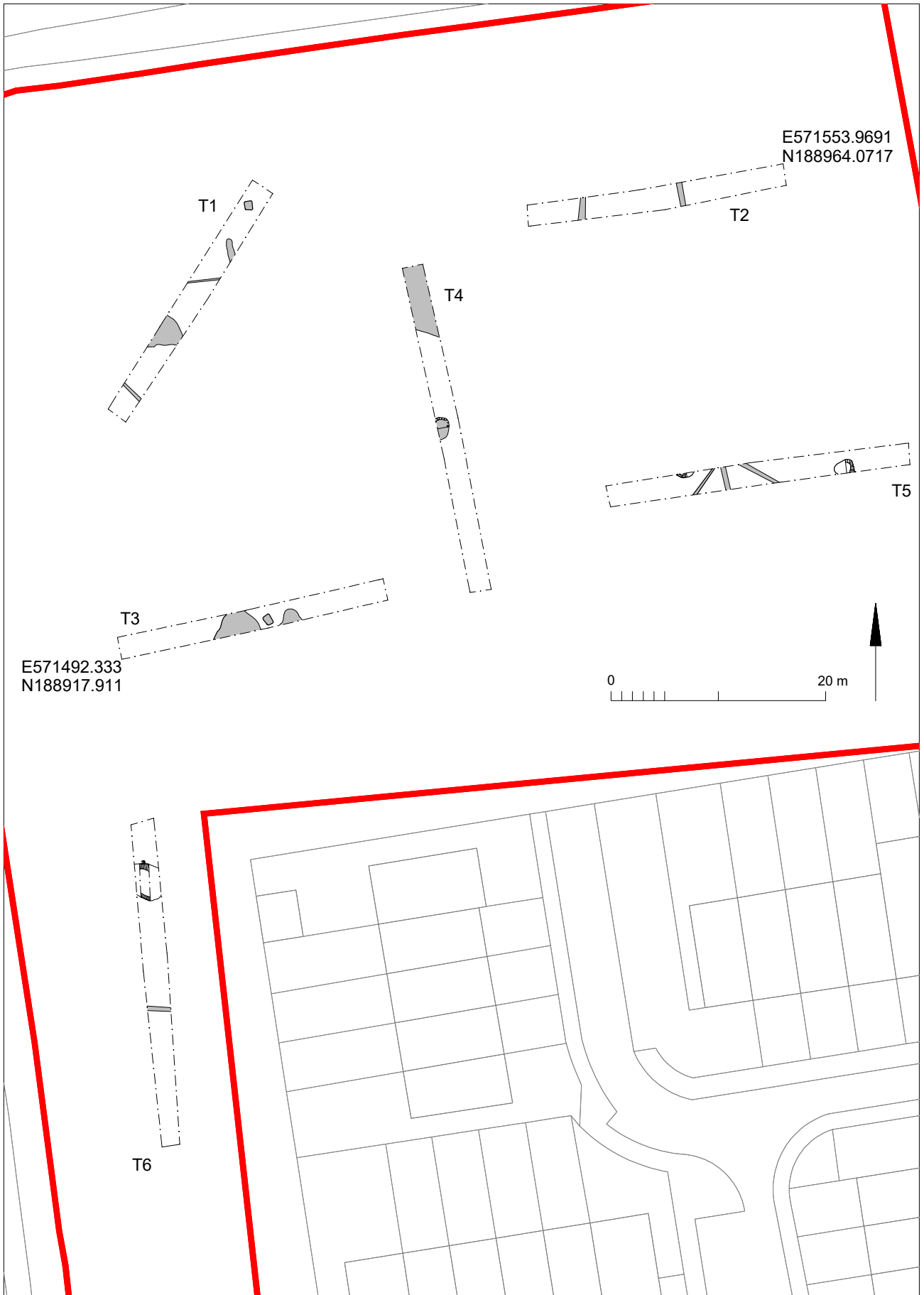


Fig 2 Results

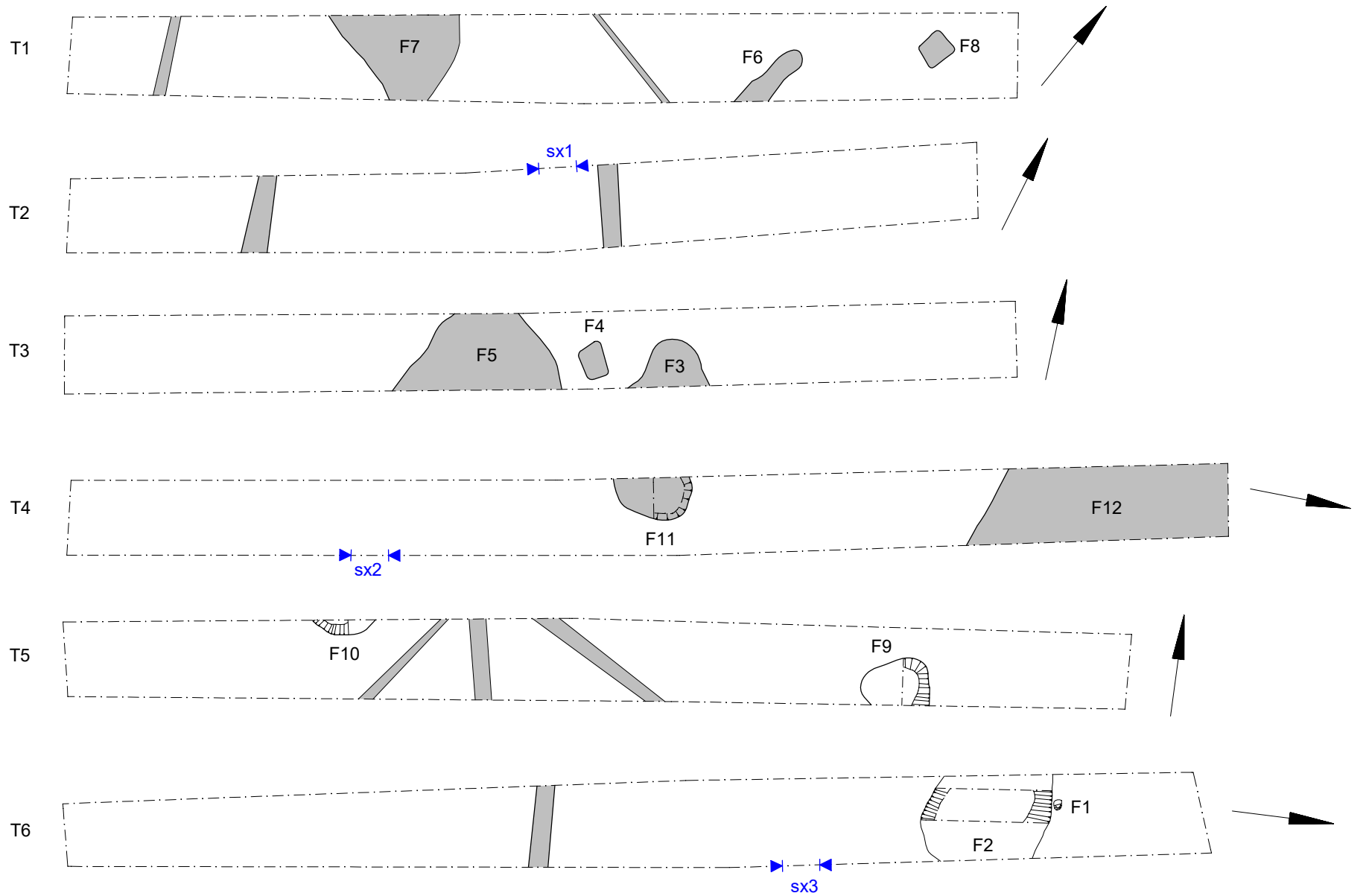
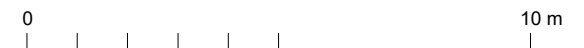


Fig 3 Trench plans



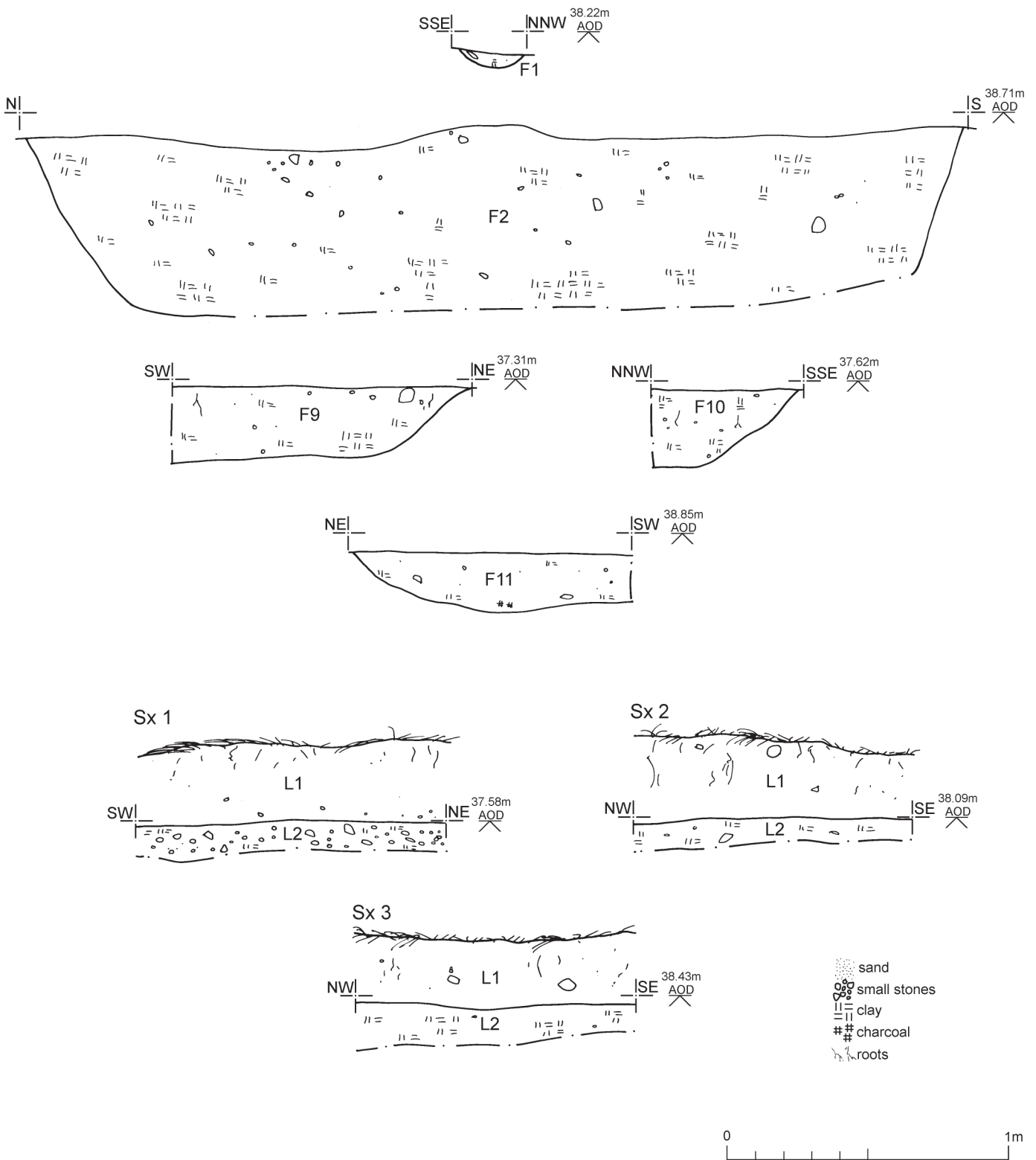


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

Summary for colchest3-510767

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| OASIS ID (UID) | colchest3-510767 |
| Project Name | Archaeological evaluation on land north-west of Napier Close and Fairlop Gardens, Barstable, Basildon, Essex |
| Sitename | land north-west of Napier Close, Barstable, Basildon |
| Activity type | Evaluation |
| Project Identifier(s) | 2022/11d |
| Planning Id | 21/00645/FULL |
| Reason For Investigation | Planning: Post determination |
| Organisation Responsible for work | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Project Dates | 05-Dec-2022 - 09-Dec-2022 |
| Location | land north-west of Napier Close, Barstable, Basildon NGR : TQ 71519 88938 LL : 51.5732177926224, 0.47367621802843 12 Fig : 571519,188938 |
| Administrative Areas | Country : England County : Essex District : Basildon Parish : Basildon, unparished area |
| Project Methodology | Archaeological evaluation of six trial-trenches carried out as specified in the Project Brief and WSI. |
| Project Results | An archaeological evaluation (six trial-trenches) was carried out on land north-west of Napier Close and Fairlop Gardens, Barstable, Basildon, Essex in advance of the construction of a new residential development. Although there is little evidence of prehistoric to medieval activity in the area, this is largely because fieldwork has been limited within the town. The only feature of significance revealed by the evaluation was a possible quarry pit which produced an assemblage of Late Iron Age to early Roman pottery and animal bone, indicating occupation in the vicinity in this period. A modern pit, undated post-hole and two undated pit/tree-throws were also excavated, and seven other modern features were recorded but not excavated. |
| Keywords | Clay Pit - ROMAN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Cooking Vessel - LATE IRON AGE - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Cooking Vessel - ROMAN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus |
| Funder | |
| HER | Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD |
| Person Responsible for work | A, Ronn |
| HER Identifiers | HER Event No - BANC22 |
| Archives | Physical Archive - to be deposited with Southend-on-Sea Museums Service; Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive; |