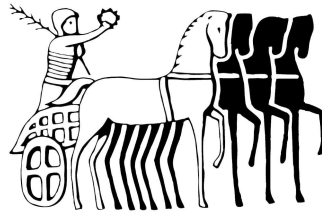
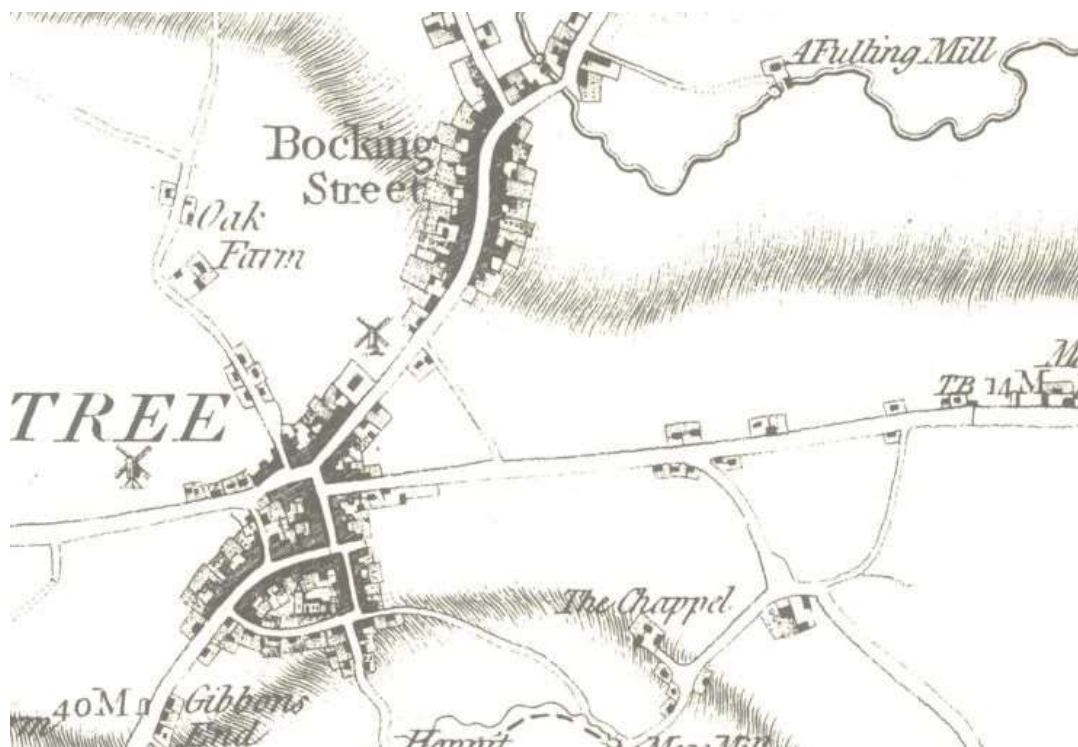


Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 2019
issued January 2024**

**Archaeological evaluation at 31a Julien Court Road,
Braintree, Essex, CM7 9BN: January 2024**



**CAT project ref.: 2023/12c
ECC code: BT58**

**Archaeological evaluation at 31a Julien Court Road,
Braintree, Essex, CM7 9BN: January 2024**

NGR: TL 76328 23711 (centre)

Planning ref.: 22/00450/FUL

**CAT project ref.: 2023/12c
CAT Report 2019**

**ECC code: BT58
OASIS id: colchest3-521630**

**report prepared by Dr Elliott Hicks
with contributions by Dr Matthew Loughton**

**fieldwork by Nigel Rayner with Matthew Perou and
Charlie Hodges**

**commissioned by Steven Higgon, HGN Design Ltd
on behalf of Task Force Developments Ltd**

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Issued:	8/11/2023	

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (four trial-trenches) was carried out at 31a Julien Court Road, Braintree, Essex, in advance of the construction of three new bungalows. The site lies east of the Roman road which ran from Chelmsford to Braintree, and west of the site of a tile-built Roman kiln. An Early Bronze Age stone hammer and a Bronze Age pit have also been found in the vicinity. Excavations at the site uncovered a pit or tree-throw, two gullies and a ditch. Only one of these features produced any finds, a gully, which was dated to the medieval or post-medieval periods.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at 31a Julien Court Road, Braintree, Essex on 10th-11th January 2024. The work was commissioned by Steven Higgon of HGN Design Ltd on behalf of Task Force Developments Ltd, and took place in advance of the construction of three new bungalows.

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), the Historic Environment Advisor 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 2023).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for a trial trenching evaluation and excavation at 31a Julien Court Road, Braintree* written by Teresa O'Connor (ECCPS 2023). A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2023).

In addition to the project Brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was undertaken in accordance with:

- *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2015),
- Professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2020a-b, 2022, 2023a-b),
- East of England standards and frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Brown & Glazebrook 2000, Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011) and the recent review updates on <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>
- Relevant health and safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2023).

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>).

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale¹) indicates that most of the site has bedrock geology of London clay formation (clay, silt and sand, comprised of bioturbated or poorly laminated, blue-grey or grey-brown, slightly calcareous, silty to very silty clay, clayey silt and sometimes silt, with some layers of sandy clay), with superficial deposits of Head (clay, silt, sand and gravel including poorly sorted and poorly stratified, angular rock debris and/or clayey hill-wash and soil creep, mantling a hillslope and deposited by solifluction and gelifluction processes). On the southern edge of the site the superficial deposits are of Kesgrove Catchment subgroup (sand and gravel, the gravel is characterised by quartz and quartzite).

The site is located on a slope overlooking the valley of the River Blackwater. The site lies above a natural spring which feed into a series of ponds towards the River Blackwater. In the southern part of the site, borehole data recorded 0.9m of organic silt deposits below topsoil (Exposem

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

2023), which may indicate the presence of waterlogged deposits which could contain palaeoenvironmental evidence.

Approximately 300m west of the site, extending along the line of the current Bradford Street, is the route of a Roman road which ran from Chelmsford to Long Melford via Braintree (EHER 6057). The remains of a Roman tile-built kiln were uncovered to the east of the site in 1966 during the construction of a housing estate (EHER 6477).

To the east of the site, a stone hammer dating to the Early Bronze Age was found during building work on a property at the junction of Bedford Close and Marlborough Road (EHER 19529). A Bronze Age pit containing pottery and charcoal was also found nearby in 1977 (EHER 19528).

The adjacent property, 33 Julien Court Road, known as Thorpe Lodge, is a Grade II-listed timber-framed farmhouse, built in the mid 17th century and re-fronted in the 19th century (EHER 39248).

To the immediate east of the site, at 39 Julien Court Road, the former Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECCFAU) carried out an evaluation prior to a residential development. A small undated pit and a linear feature were recorded. The only find recovered was an undiagnostic struck flint (Sparrow 2009; EHER 47191).

Other archaeological work carried out in the vicinity includes an evaluation undertaken by ECCFAU in 1996 at Great Bradfords County Infant and Junior School. Four post-holes and a stake-hole were uncovered. All of these features were undated. A couple of sherds of abraded Roman pottery and fragments of Roman tile were recovered from modern contexts (Germany 1996; EHER 17286). A subsequent excavation did not reveal any features or finds. Fragments of tar or asphalt were found embedded in the natural soil, suggesting that ground reduction was carried out at the site during the construction of the school in the 1970s (Germany 2007).

To the north-east of the site, cropmarks indicate the presence of channels in the river valley which are thought to be part of a historic water meadow drainage system (EHER 14229).

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 2-5)

Four trial-trenches were excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trench T1 was 15m long and 1.8m wide, trench T2 was 17m long and 1.8m wide, trench T3 was 22m long and 1.8m wide, and trench T4 was 8m long and 1.8m wide. To avoid on-site constraints and waterlogged areas, trench T2 was moved and excavated in an L-shape, and trench T3 was moved and excavated in a T-shape.

Trenches T1 and T2 were cut through modern topsoil (L1, c 0.09-0.19m thick) and subsoil (L2, c 0.15-0.27m thick) onto natural (L3, encountered at a depth of 0.28-0.45m below current ground level [bcgl]). Trenches T3 and T4 were cut through L1 (c 0.21-0.44m thick) onto L3. A sondage was excavated in trench T1 to confirm the identification of L3 as natural.

There were no archaeological remains in trench T1. A full context list with soil descriptions and dimensions can be found in Appendix 1.

Trench 2

Pit or tree-throw F1 was uncovered in the southern part of the trench. No finds were recovered from this feature.

Trench 3

Gully F4 passed through the eastern half of the trench on a north-north-west/south-south-east alignment. It produced a sherd of medieval or post-medieval peg-tile.



Photograph 1 T3 trench shot – looking west

Trench 4

Gully F2 passed through the western half of the trench on a north-west/south-east alignment and ditch F3 extended through the eastern half of the trench on a north-north-west/south-south-east alignment. Neither feature contained any dating evidence.



Photograph 2 T4 trench shot – looking west

6 Finds

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation uncovered one fragment (12g) of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile from gully F4. It was not retained.

7 Conclusion

Four features were uncovered during this evaluation: a pit or tree-throw, two gullies and a ditch. Only one of these features, a gully, produced any dating evidence, placing its origins in the medieval or post-medieval periods. It should be noted that while the borehole survey conducted prior to this investigation revealed a deposit of organic silt some 0.9m thick in the southern part of the site, trenching here uncovered a topsoil layer a maximum of 0.44m in thickness overlying natural geology. It may be that the borehole survey encountered a feature which was not exposed by the trenching.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Steven Higgon of HGN Design Ltd and Task Force Developments Ltd for commissioning and funding the project. The project was managed by C Lister and A Wightman, with fieldwork carried out by N Rayner with M Perou and C Hodges. Figures were compiled by C Lister, B Holloway and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor and Mark Baister.

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 | 2023 | <i>Health & Safety Policy.</i> Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| CAT | 2023 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation by trial-</i> |

		<i>trenching and excavation at 31a Julien Court Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9BN</i>
ClfA	2020a	<i>Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives.</i> ClfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists; published 2014, revised 2020
ClfA	2020b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.</i> ClfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists; published 2014, revised 2020
ClfA	2022	<i>Code of Conduct.</i> ClfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists; published 2014, revised 2022
ClfA	2023a	<i>Standard for archaeological field evaluation.</i> ClfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
ClfA	2023b	<i>Universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation.</i> ClfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
ECCPS	2023	<i>Brief for trial trenching evaluation and excavation at 31A Julien Court, Braintree,</i> by T O'Connor
Expossem	2023	<i>Bore-hole survey at 31A Julien Court Road, Braintree, Essex.</i> Expossem Site Investigations Ltd
Germany, M	1996	<i>Great Bradfords County Infant And Junior School, Marlborough Road, Braintree, Essex. Archaeological Evaluation Report.</i> Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit
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	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)
MHCLG	2023	<i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
Sparrow, P	2009	<i>Land to the rear of 39 Julien Court Road, Braintree, Essex, archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching.</i> Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit

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	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'
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
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
WSI	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained

Digital:

CAT Report 2019

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Site digital photographs

Graphic files

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 the Archaeology Data Service.

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Distribution list:

Landowner
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Trench no.	Finds no.	Interpretation	Context information	Period
L1	All	-	Topsoil	Very soft, moist/wet very dark brown loam. 0.09-0.44m thick.	Modern
L2	T1, T2	-	Subsoil	Soft, moist/wet medium grey/brown silty-clay. 0.15-0.27m thick.	Undated
L3	All	-	Natural	Soft, wet dark brown/light blue-grey clay. Encountered at a depth of 0.21-0.45m below current ground level.	Post-glacial
F1	T2	-	Pit/tree-throw	Firm, wet dark brown silty-clay with 1% stones. Irregular profile. Extended beyond LOE; exposed extent 0.55m by 1.57m and 0.21m deep.	Undated
F2	T4	-	Gully	Soft, wet medium orange/blue/grey silty-clay. Feature not drawn.	Modern
F3	T4	-	Ditch	Soft, wet medium orange/blue/grey silty-clay. U-shaped profile with flat base. 1.21m wide and 0.31m deep.	Modern
F4	T3	1	Gully	Firm, moist medium/dark grey/brown sandy-silt. Irregular profile. 0.37m wide and 0.17m deep.	Medieval/ post-medieval

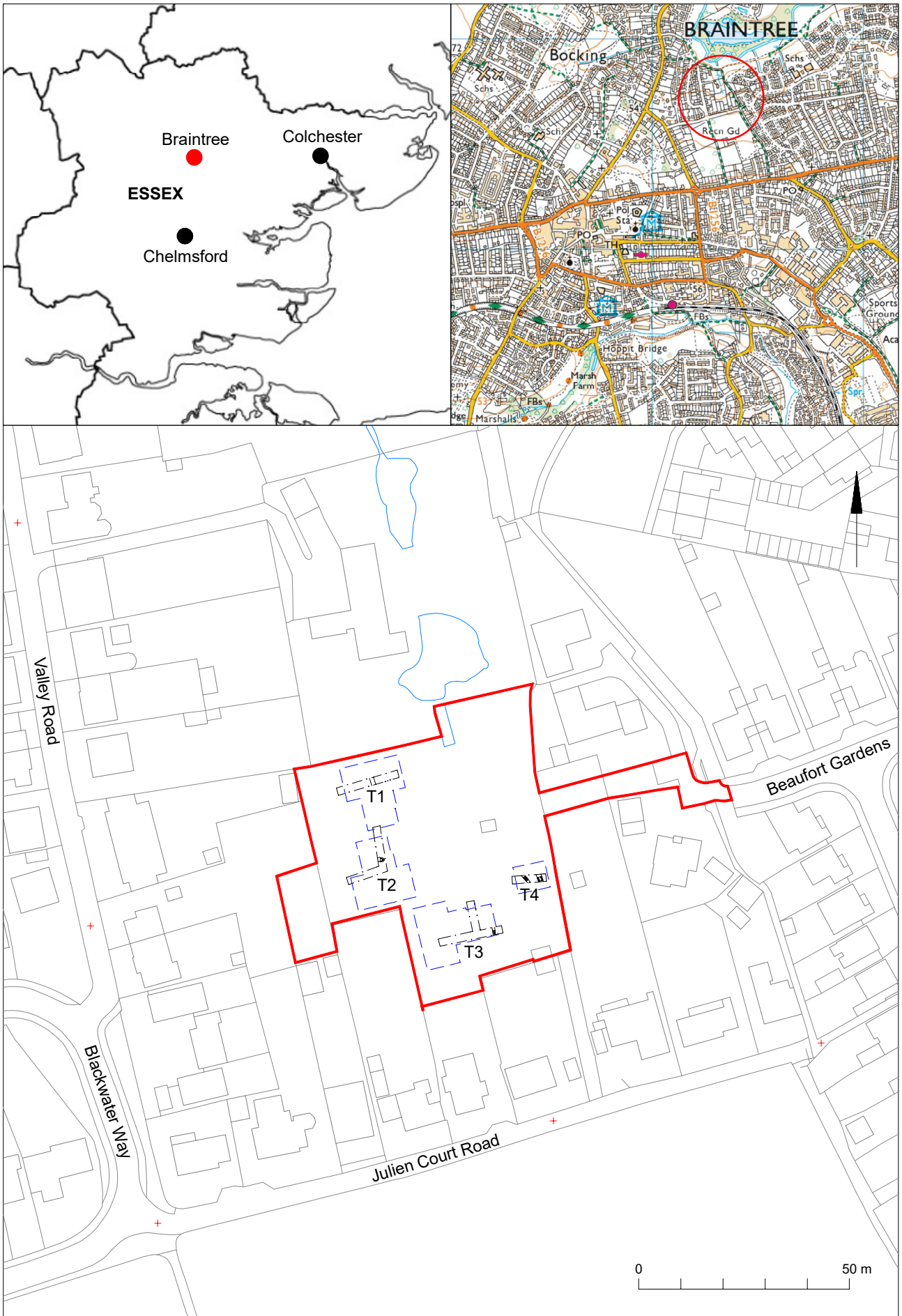


Fig 1 Site location and trench layout in relation to proposed development (dashed blue lines).

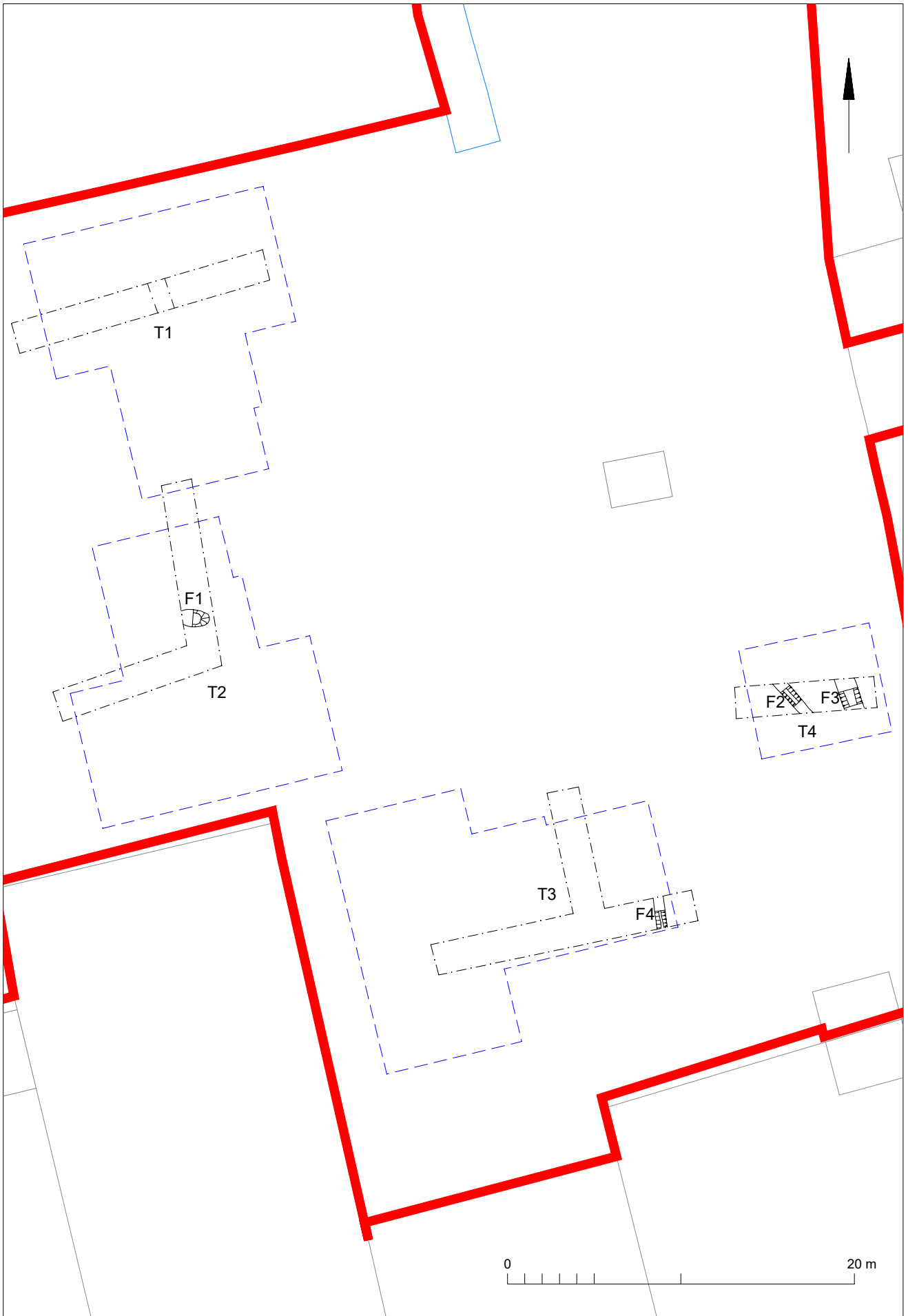


Fig 2 Evaluation results.

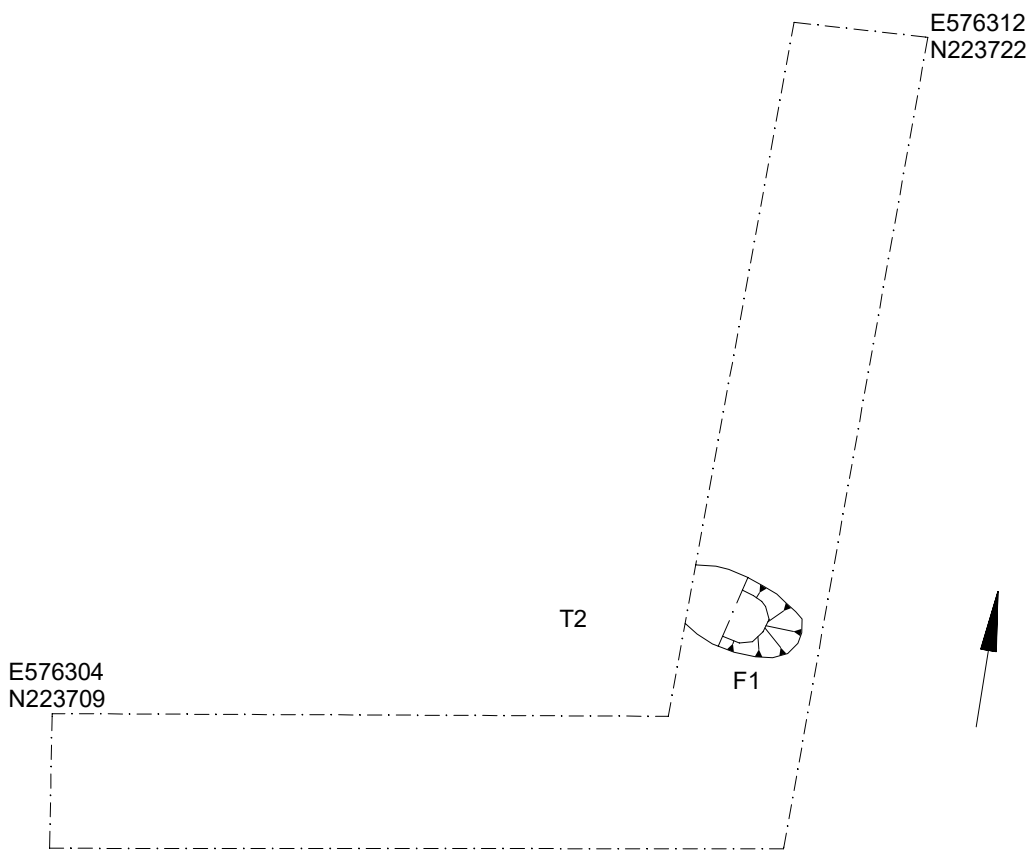
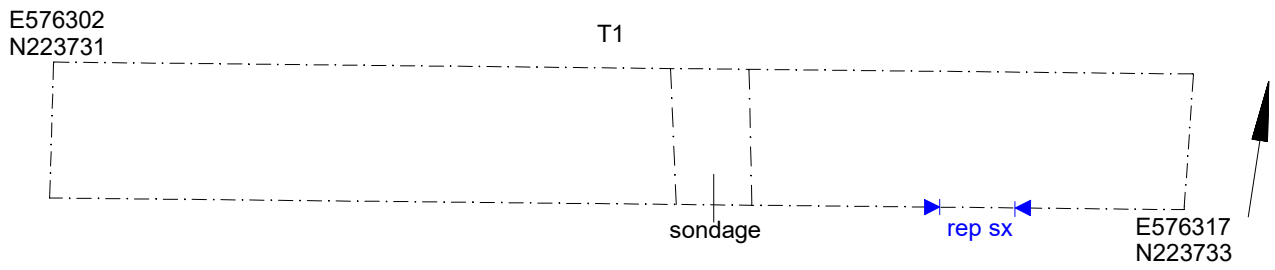


Fig 3 Trench results.

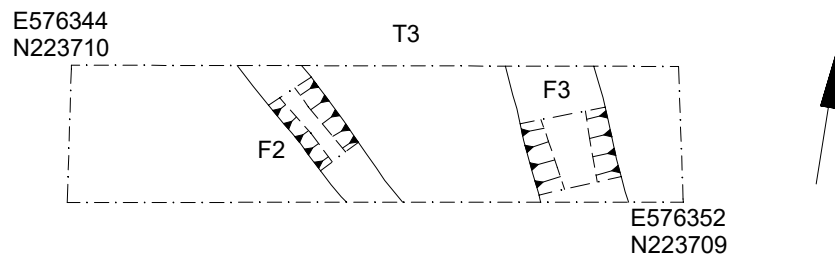
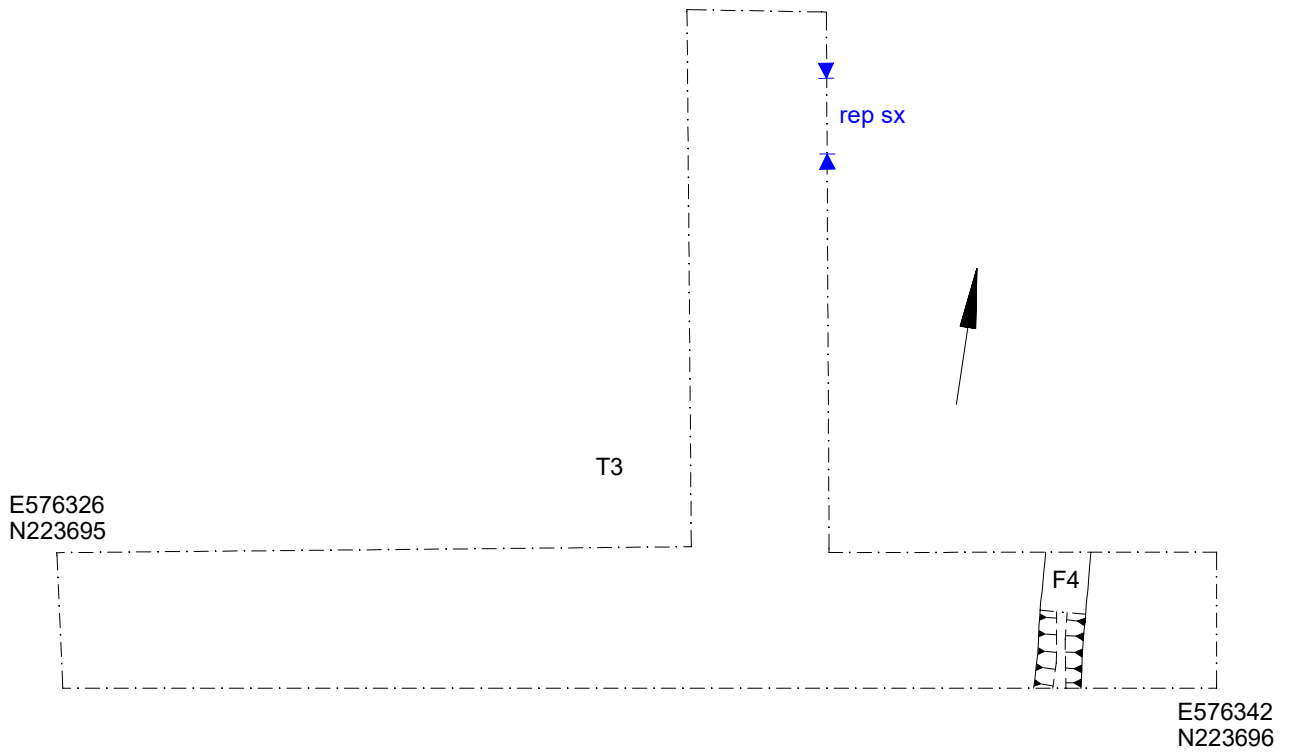


Fig 4 Trench results.

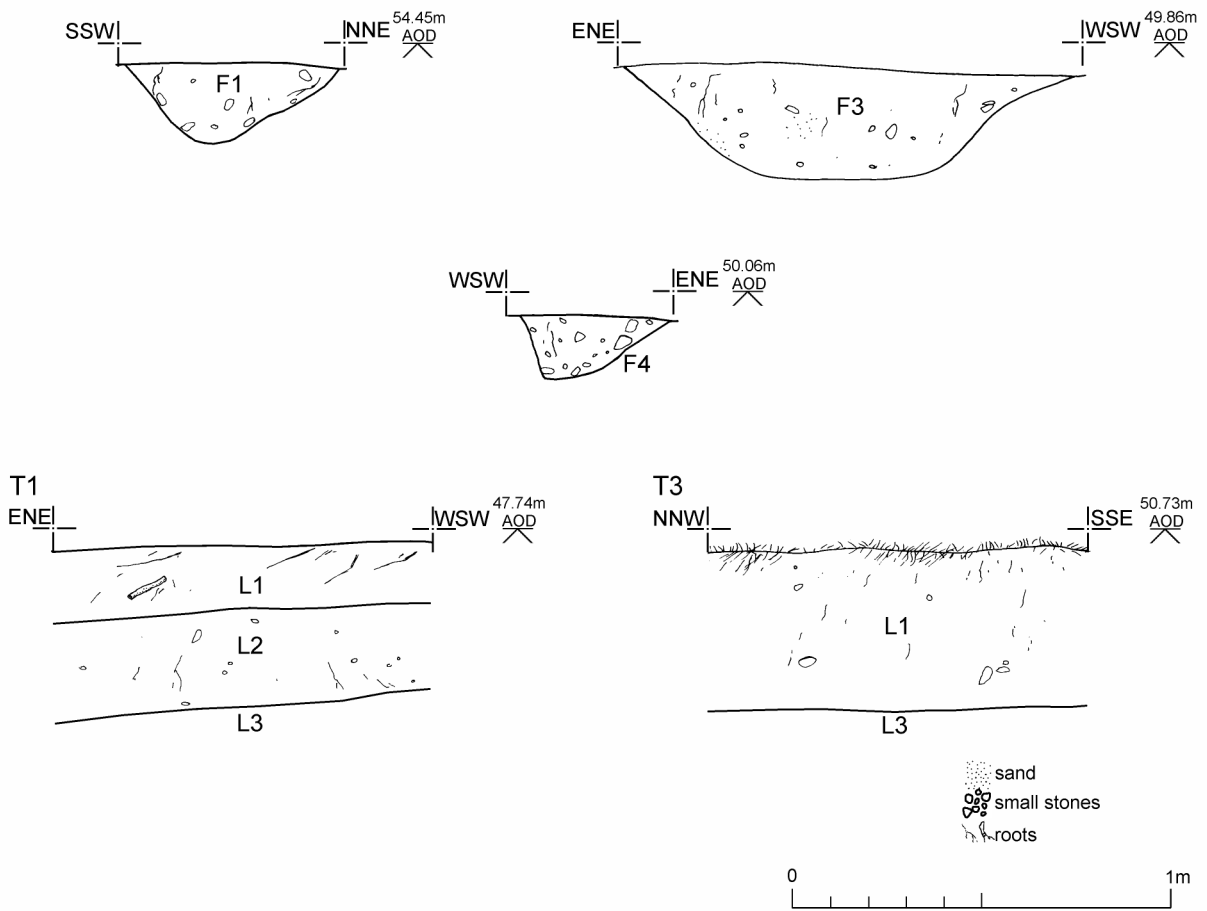


Fig 5 Feature and representative sections.

OASIS Summary for colchest3-521630

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-521630
Project Name	Evaluation at 31A Julien Court Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9BN
Sitename	31A Julien Court Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9BN
Sitecode	
Project Identifier(s)	2023/12c
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	22/00450/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	10-Jan-2024 - 11-Jan-2024
Location	31A Julien Court Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9BN NGR : TL 76328 23711 LL : 51.884073151380605, 0.560594923077694 12 Fig : 576328,223711
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Essex Local Authority District : Braintree Parish : Braintree, unparished area
Project Methodology	Archaeological evaluation was carried out as per the brief and WSI.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (four trial-trenches) was carried out at 31a Julien Court Road, Braintree, Essex, in advance of the construction of three new bungalows. The site lies east of the Roman road which ran from Chelmsford to Braintree, and west of the site of a tile-built Roman kiln. An Early Bronze Age stone hammer and a Bronze Age pit have also been found in the vicinity. Excavations at the site uncovered a pit or tree-throw, two gullies and a ditch. Only one of these features produced any finds, a gully, which was dated to the medieval or post-medieval periods.
Keywords	Pit - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Tree Throw - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Gully - MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Gully - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Gully - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Ditch - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Ditch - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Peg Tile - MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Peg Tile - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus
Funder	Private or public corporation Task Force Developments Ltd
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	A Wightman
HER Identifiers	
Archives	

