

Introduction

This report describes the results from two boreholes and a pit dug by engineers to test ground conditions in advance of a proposed extension to the east side of the vestry at St Botolph's Church. The work took place between the 10th and 14th January 2000 and follows on from a small evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust in July 1999 (CAT Report 39; archive code 1999-102).

Results

The pit and borehole locations are shown in Figure 1.

The boreholes

The boreholes were 150mm in diameter and are understood to have penetrated to overall depths of between 15 and 20 metres. For archaeological purposes only the uppermost levels were noted.

Borehole 1 (BH1)

Ground surface	to	0.2m	Topsoil, deposited 1991.
0.2m	to	0.5m	Black soil with occasional very small brick fragments.
0.5m	to	1.2m	Black soil with traces of ash, also occasional minute brick or tile fragments.
1.2m	to	2.7m	Brown to grey silty clay.
2.7m	to	5.2m	Grey silt.

Borehole 2 (BH2)

Ground surface	to	0.1m	Tarmac.
0.1m	to	0.4m	Stone and brick rubble.
0.4m	to	1.0m	Brick structure and rubble.
1.0m	to	2.2m	Brick structure.
2.2m	to	4.4m	Soft very dark greyish brown sandy silt with occasional gravel. Distinct organic content, also occasional shell frags. A leather offcut was recovered from this material (see below).
4.4m	to	6m	Stiff bluish grey silty clay loam with occasional gravel.

There are limitations to the archaeological interpretation of borehole results. In this instance (and taking into account investigations previously carried out in the vicinity), it seems likely that relatively modern deposits occupy Borehole 1 to a depth of, or approaching, 1.2m. In Borehole 2 such late material may extend to 2.2m. Beneath lie deposits of potential archaeological value, perhaps extending to 2.7m in BH1 and probably as far as 4.4m in BH2.

Test-pit (Fig1: Trench 1)

The test-pit was dug against the east side of the vestry, which stands on ground approximately 1.5m higher than the area to the east of the modern church. At its widest the pit was 1m x 0.3m, narrowing to 0.4m x 0.3m at its maximum depth of 1.6m. The archived record includes drawings of the resultant sections: these contained only modern infill, most of which appeared to be associated with the construction of the vestry.

Finds

The borehole work produced one noteworthy item: a piece of leather (described below) which was found among silty material withdrawn from a depth of 4.2m in Borehole 2. The borehole's location is likely to be close to the course of a stream shown on John Speed's 1610 map of Colchester, and this may account for the unusual depth of organic material encountered here.

Note on leather fragment

by Nina Crummy

SF 1. (3). Offcut of leather, very narrow for most of its length, but widening out at one end and defining a curve on each side. These are the size and shape of adult shoe heels, suggesting that this piece may be from shoe-making or cobbling. It is not diagnostic of any particular date. Length 182 mm, maximum width 51 mm.

Archive

The fieldwork records and finds will be deposited with Colchester Museums under cover of their accession code 2000-3.

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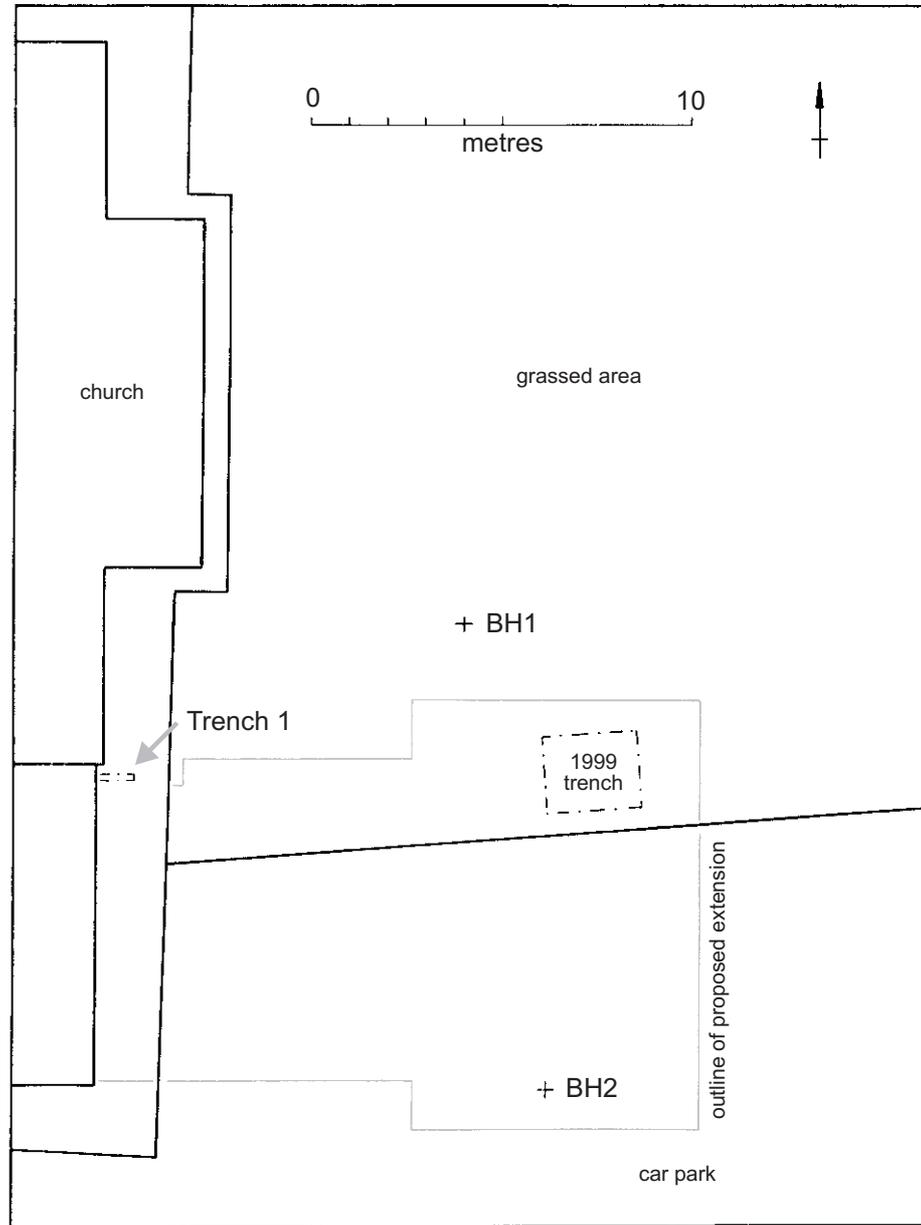


Fig 1 Location.