
Watching Brief: 4A East Hill, Colchester

NGR: TL 0020 2523

Reason for Watching Brief: Test pits (prior to construction of two houses)

Architect: - Contractor: - Owner: Malcolm Hunt

Fieldwork By: C.Crossan

Report By: C.Crossan

Date: 9th June 2000

Summary: Negative

Report:

This property lies between *The Ship* pub (the late Rex Hull's local) and 3 East Hill, 30 metres beyond the site of the East Gate. In August 1990, four evaluation trenches failed to reveal any archaeologically significant features (CAT Project 1990/8b, copy of archive note attached).

At the time of the visit three engineers test pits were open and a fourth (Trench 1) was partly backfilled. Observation conditions were less than ideal since the trench sides were smeared with sand and roots were abundant in the upper levels. The trench depths and unstable sides prevented section cleaning.

The trench stratigraphy was as follows:

Trench 1

2.5m x 0.6m x c.1.5m deep (bottom and eastern end backfilled)

L1. Mixed deposit of modern rubbish (i.e. rags, plastic bags) and topsoil. Approximately 20cm thick. This lay directly on top of natural sand.

Trench 2.

1.8m x 0.6m x 2.1m deep

L1. Same as L1 in Trench 1. Modern, 25cm thick.

L2. A very dark brown topsoil, 45cm thick. This layer displayed a sharp interface with the underlying natural sand and appeared to be composed largely of redeposited material.

L3. Natural sand.

The east end of the trench partly exposed brick foundations for the west wall of *The Ship*. The brickwork in the north-east corner consisted of regular courses of solid c.19th century red brick which extended to a depth of at least 2m. At the south-east corner of the trench the brick foundation was largely obscured, but appeared to be less regular and constructed from large fragments of thinner red brick.

The site is part-terraced, with most of the front more or less at street level. At a point 5.5m from the frontage the level steps up approximately 1.8m and continues to rise in a southerly direction. Two trenches were dug from this higher level:

Trench 3.

2.5m x 0.6m x 2.5m deep

L1. A mixed, mainly modern, topsoil with recent dumped rubbish in places. A concrete slab occupied part of the west side of the trench. 40cm thick.

L2. Dark brown sandy loam, approximately 70cm thick. This deposit was extensively cut on the west half of the trench by 19th and 20th century intrusions, including drain and lead pipe trenches.

L3. Natural sand.

Trench 4.

2m x 0.6m x 2.6m deep

Overall stratigraphy:

L1. Modern topsoil, 35cm deep. Same as L1 in Trench 3.

L2. Dark brown sandy loam with occasional small oyster shell fragments. 85cm thick.

Same as L2 in Trench 3.

L3. Natural sand.

The eastern end was roughly dug against the boundary wall with The Ship. Here, L1 sealed a 20cm thick layer of red brick rubble. The section beneath this was heavily obscured by sand, but in spots revealed part of the boundary wall in the form of small projections of mortar and stone continuing as far as the bottom of the trench. In the western part of the trench a possible pit (F1) extended to an overall depth of 1.6m. Its fill was identical to L2 but the section was too smeared to display a clear outline of the feature.

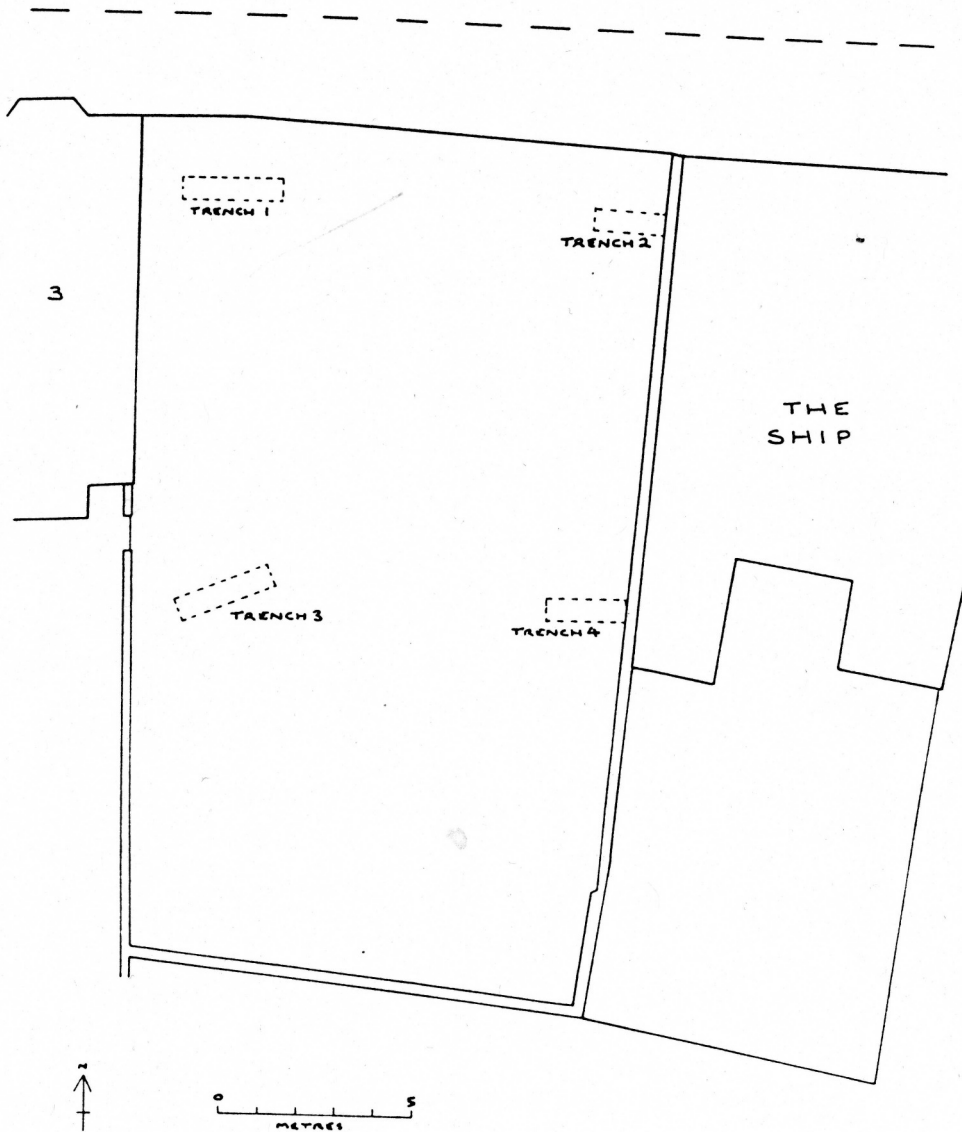
Surface stripping is due to take place in about one month's time.

Appended: Location plan, sketch section of Trench 4. Copy of CAT archive report 1990/8b.

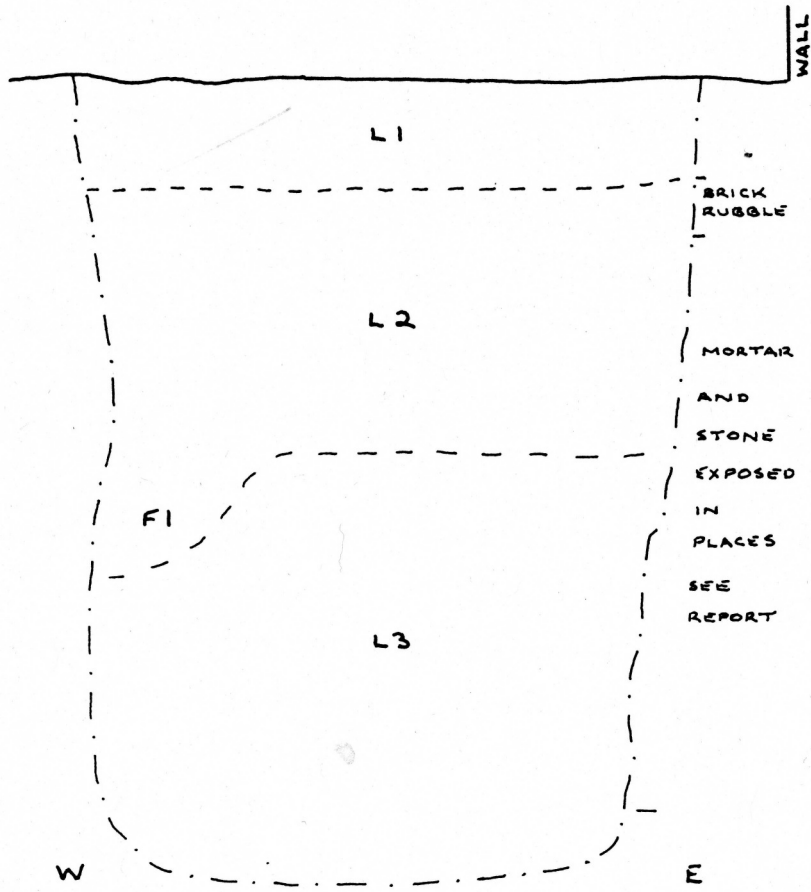
Finds: none

Photographs: none

EAST HILL



LOCATION PLAN



TRENCH 4 SECTION

8/906

(42)

Between the former Ship Public House and no 3
East Hill. (17th August 1990)

The owner of the land made available a J.C.B. to the trust for the purpose of evaluating the archaeological potential of the site. A wall could be seen at the bottom of the modern wall at the southern end of the site. This was seen from the south side only (see plan), this may be the wall that Hull refers to in Roman Colchester. Trench 1 was dug to examine the extent of this wall. However no trace of it was seen and it is now assumed to be the remains of a ?16-18th century footing for a timber-framed building of reused Roman material and peg-tile. The natural sand in trench 1 was approx. 2m below present ground level. Trenches 2 and 3 were dug in the centre of the site but showed no archaeological features. The natural sand in trench 2 was 1m and in trench 3 1.5m below present ground level. The material in the sections down to natural sand in these three trenches showed no distinct layers being mainly dark brown sandy loam with occasional mortar and brick fragments. Very little pottery or bone was seen and no Roman pottery ~~or tile was found~~ and only the occasional Roman tile frag was found.

The fourth trench was dug at the north end of the site. This part of the site (approx. 6m from pavement) was approx. 1.5m lower than the southern part. The sections of trench 4 revealed natural sand only a few centimeters below ground level cut by a trench or pit (see sketch-section). Both sections were very similar. Matching on southern

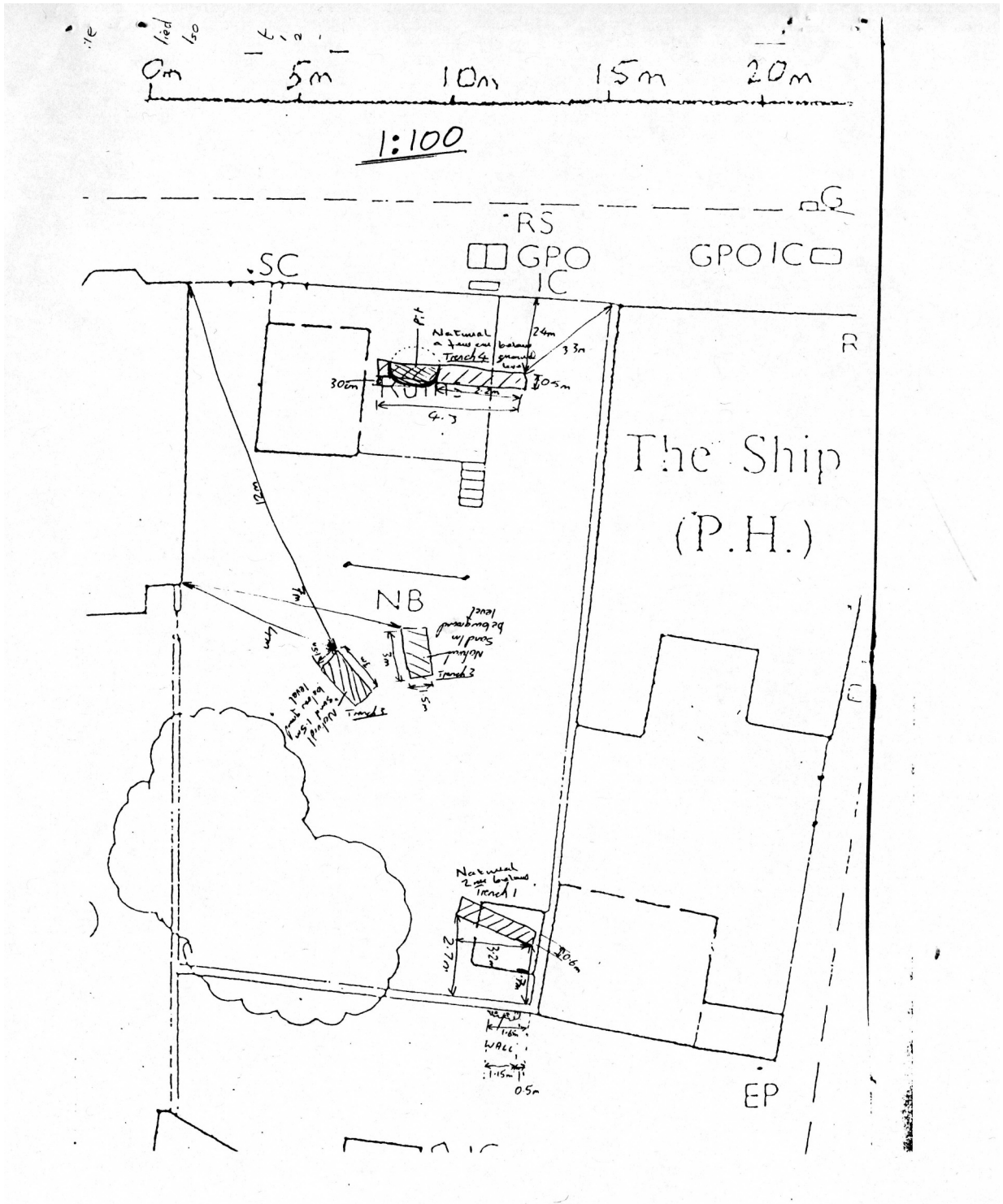
8/90 B (43)

edge of this trench confirmed that it was a pit. No pottery could be found in this pit. There were a few tile fragment including peg-tile. The peg-tile was however high in the fill.

A sherd of samian with a stamp was recovered from this area but was unstratified (). An unstratified clay pipe fragment with a stamp on the heel was also kept.

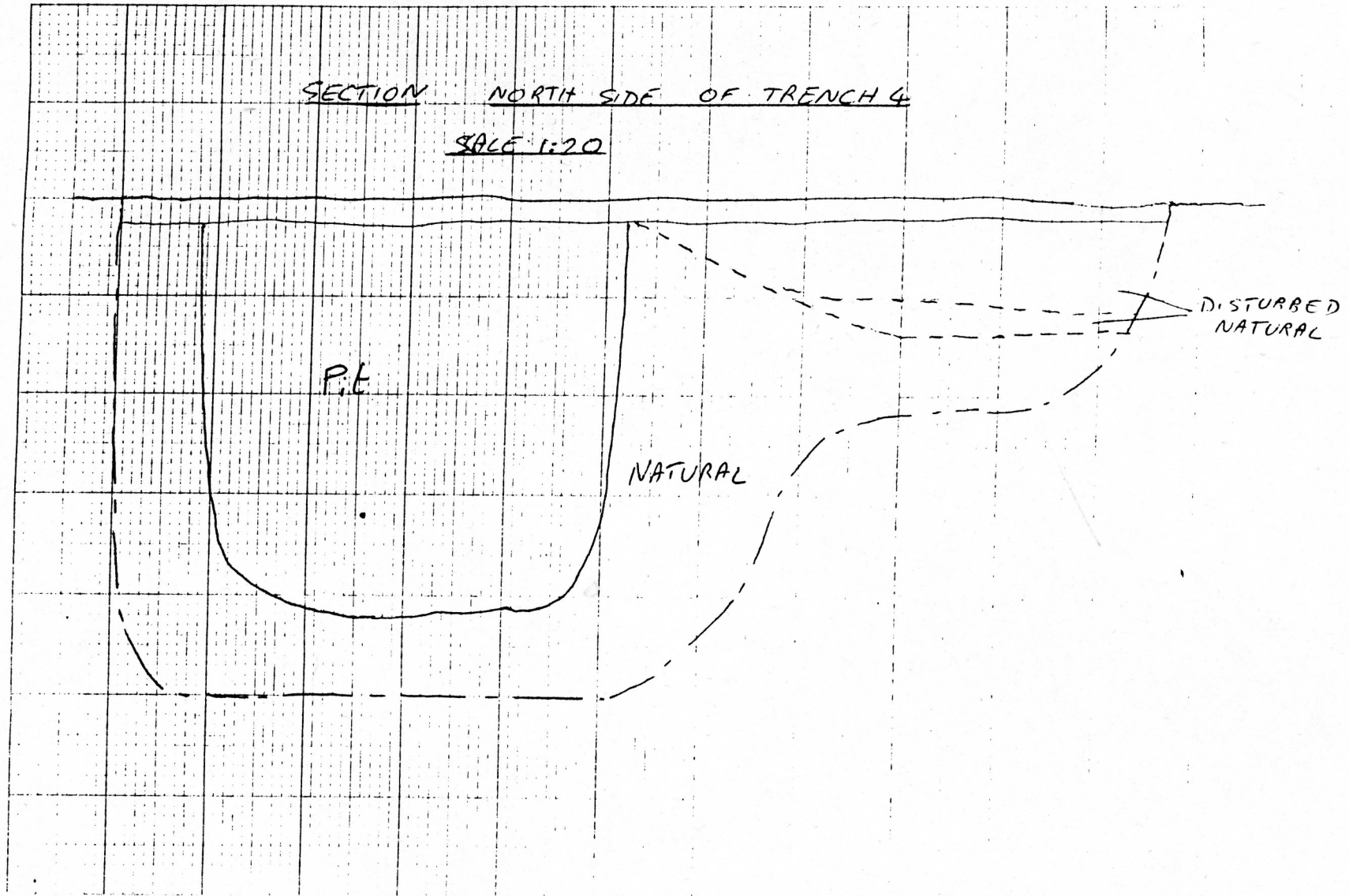
From the evidence of the four trenches it can be assumed that the site contains no significant archaeological features. Any Roman occupation on the site has been destroyed probably by pits or terracing. See also photographic record.

SG



SECTION NORTH SIDE OF TRENCH 4

SCALE 1:20



8/903