

**An archaeological  
watching brief/excavation  
on an Anglian Water pipeline  
from Chichester Hall, Wickford  
to Rawreth, Essex**

**June 2001**

**on behalf of  
Anglian Water**

CAT project ref.: 01/6D  
Site code: RLCH.01  
NGR: TQ 7788 9270-TQ 7830 9330  
Southend Museum accession code: SOUMS:A2001.6



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**CAT Report 147**

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## 1 Summary

*Observations were made during topsoil-stripping for a 0.7km-long Anglian Water pipeline for sewerage improvements from Chichester Hall to Rawreth in Essex. Between 50mm and 400mm of topsoil was stripped, and no finds or features of archaeological significance were exposed.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) over three days between the 27th June and the 11th July 2001 along the line of a new pipeline. The pipeline starts from Chichester Hall, Wickford (NGR TQ 7788 9270) and extends to the junction of Church Road and Chelmsford Road in Rawreth (NGR TQ 7830 9330). Topsoil-stripping followed by the laying of the new pipeline was carried out by contractors. The works were given permission with the condition for an archaeological watching brief to be carried out.
- 2.2 The new pipeline is situated in the Upper Crouch Valley on land sloping gently from 13.7m OD in the north (Rawreth) to approximately 5m OD in the south (Chichester Hall). The most southerly field (Field 1) was cropped with maize. The middle field (Field 2) was cropped with wheat and the northern field (field 3) was under grass. A river separates Fields 1 and Field 2.
- 2.3 This report follows the standards set out in the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1999).

## 3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The pipeline affects two medieval moated sites. It starts at Chichester Hall (EHCR 7521-7522) and runs 200m in a north-easterly direction to the west of Moat Farm, another moated site (EHCR 7523). A scatter of medieval and Roman pottery has previously been recorded to the west of the pipeline. Prehistoric pottery has also been found in the vicinity. A Romano-British cremation cemetery was recorded from Raymond's Farm in the mid 19th century (Drury 1977), just to the south-east of Chichester Hall. Other medieval material has been found in the vicinity (EHCR 7633-7634, 7631-7632, 7637).
- 3.2 Rescue excavations by Paul Drury along the line of the A129 in 1968 (Drury 1977), approximately 400m to the west, revealed a multi-period site with a Middle Bronze Age cremation, a probable early Iron Age round-house possibly lying on the eastern extremity of a larger settlement, a Romano-British farmstead, possible Saxon ceramics, and an early medieval water mill (EHCR 9042-9047).

## 4 Aims and objectives

The aim of the watching brief was to determine the location, extent, character, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains relating to the occupation of the site. Any archaeological deposits identified within the pipeline strip and within the area of disturbance were to be excavated and recorded prior to the pipeline construction.

## 5 Methods

- 5.1 The fieldwork was carried out by Kate Orr of CAT who carried out an intensive watching brief according to a brief written by the HAMP group of Essex County Council and a Written Scheme of Investigation by CAT. The actual total length of the areas stripped was 635m and the width varied between 4.5m and 7m. 100% of the topsoil-stripping was monitored. The contractor's excavations were at various depths from 50mm to 400mm. The surface of the ploughed fields was scanned for artefacts before being stripped.
- 5.2 Any archaeological features or deposits exposed during the contractor's earth-moving operations were recorded, and in addition excavated if running along the line of the actual pipe cut.

- 5.3** Individual records of contexts were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets and are listed in section 6. Registers were compiled of finds and samples. Finds were washed, weighed and bagged according to context, and those that were not discarded were marked with the site code and context.
- 5.4** A record of the position of the site excavations was made which has been reproduced as Figure 1.

## **6 Results**

### **Field 1**

A length of 360m was stripped from the Chichester Hall Hotel to the northern end of the field using a toothless ditching bucket. The width of the stripped area varied between 6m and 7m. The southern end was stripped to a depth of 400mm. The northern end was only stripped of 50mm and so Layer 3 and Layer 4 (L3 and L4) were not observed here.

L1 - All over the field, the topsoil consists of small balls of baked clay of a light grey colour. In the south this topsoil is only 100mm thick and contains abundant peg-tile. In the middle and north of the field, there is only 50mm of topsoil and it becomes mixed with ash and contains less peg-tile but does contain occasional gun cartridges.

L2 - Over the whole field, the topsoil sits on top of a layer of hard grey/brown clay containing some peg-tile fragments. The thickness of this layer varies between 200mm and 300mm.

L3 - In the southern end of the field, L2 sits on top of a layer of yellow/brown clay which contains occasional peg-tile. In the middle of the field, this layer becomes less yellow in colour and wetter.

L4 - In the middle of the field there are lines of blue-grey, wet clay cut into L3. These are on the same alignment as the lines of maize and are interpreted as being disturbed natural which the plough has brought up. This layer also contains some peg-tile.

Only one feature was observed (Feature or F1), a 2.7m-wide ditch running diagonally across the stripped area at the extreme southern end. It runs for 40m before meeting the baulk. The ditch cuts L3 and is sealed by L2. It is filled by darker looser clayey soil. At the request of the CAT officer, the digger-driver took a small scoop out of it; it proved to be only 150mm deep. No dating evidence was retrieved from it. This feature is interpreted as being a probable old field drain.

The majority of finds consisted of medieval or post-medieval peg-tile. There were no earlier artefacts. One iron spur was found (see appendix).

Natural ground was not reached.

### **Field 3**

In the northern field, 125m was stripped to a depth of 250-400mm and a width of 4.5m from south to north. The ground was too hard to scrape off with a toothless ditching bucket, and therefore the top was taken off with a toothed bucket and then the bottom was taken off with a toothless bucket. The following soil-profile was observed:

L5 - Turf and topsoil is made up of hard mid-brown clay with occasional stones. This layer contains peg-tile, though not as much as the other fields as the surface could not be scanned as easily due to grass cover. This layer varied from 250mm to 400mm in thickness.

L6 - The stripping came down onto a lighter brown clay with a few charcoal flecks and stones. There were hardly any finds from this layer.

No archaeological features were exposed. Natural ground was not reached. Post-medieval pottery and medieval to post-medieval peg-tile were the principal finds.

## Field 2

A length of 150m was stripped from the middle field from south to north, using a toothless ditching bucket. The depth of topsoil stripped was 200-250mm. The following soil-profile was observed:

L7 - 200-250mm of light brown clay topsoil. The top 40mm is comprised of small clay balls similar to L1, while the lower level comes off in larger chunks.

L8 - lighter brown/yellow clay topsoil similar to L2 but mottled with a grey-brown clay. This layer contains some peg-tile and modern pottery.

L9 - In some areas natural ground was possibly exposed at 250mm - a clean yellowy grey clay, below the ploughsoil.

A line of gravel was recorded, probably a field drain, 12.4m from the southern edge of the stripped area of the easement (F2). This was cut into L8 and sealed by L7. No archaeological features were exposed.

Peg-tile was the most abundant find and there were also some sherds of post-medieval pottery.

## 7 Discussion

- 7.1 The investigation did not produce any finds or features of archaeological significance. This may well be because the soil-stripping did not reach subsoil and thus features may not have been exposed. However, if there were buried remains which were out of reach of the soil-stripping, one would expect some pottery to have been ploughed up and be visible in the topsoil. This was not the case.
- 7.2 It is unusual, given the medieval occupation at Chichester Hall and Rawreth village, that no definitely medieval pottery was found. If the fields had been used for arable farming, then one would expect an amount of medieval pottery to have been spread on the fields as a result of manuring. It may be that the clay soil was too hard to plough and that these fields were just used as pasture in the Middle Ages.
- 7.3 Peg-tile which could date from the Norman period to the post-medieval period was by far the most abundant find. It was found in each layer on all three fields but in no obvious concentrations. Less was found in the northern field (Field 3), but this was because the turf cover prevented finds being seen on the surface.

## 8 Archive deposition

- 8.1 A copy of this report and the full archive will be deposited at Southend Museum under accession code SOUMS:A2001.6 within 12 months of completion of the final report on the project, and confirmed to HAMP. All requirements for archive storage will follow the UKIC's *Guidelines for the presentation of excavation archives for long-term storage* (1990).
- 8.2 Finds will be bagged and boxed in the manner recommended by Southend Museum.
- 8.3 Copy disks of material held on computers will be presented to Southend Museum, along with bound copies of print-outs.
- 8.4 A summary of the contents of the archive shall be supplied to HAMP at the time of deposition at the museum.
- 8.5 The results will be submitted for publication, at least at a summary level, in *Essex Archaeology and History* in the year following the work. An allowance will be made for full publication of results if justified.

## 9 Acknowledgements

The Colchester Archaeological Trust is grateful to the following for their help and co-operation:

Anglian Water  
Pat Connell, Archaeological Officer for HAMP Group of Essex County Council  
Ken Crowe, Southend Museum  
Keith Largent, Orwell Construction Ltd

## 10 References

Drury, P J, 1977 'Excavations at Rawreth, 1968', *Essex Archaeology and History*, **9**, 20-47

*Kate Orr, August 2001*

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### Distribution list:

Anglian Water  
Heritage Advice, Management and Promotion Group, Essex County Council  
Essex Heritage Conservation Record, Essex County Council



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athlon c:/reports/chichesterhall/rep147.doc

## Appendix: finds list with context dating

All pottery fabrics after John Cotter in *Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971-85*, Colchester Archaeological Report 7 (2000).

Bag no	Context	Qt	Wt (g)	Description	Discard	Date	Group date
1	L1, Field 1 1-30m from southern end of field	3	94	Peg-tile fragments	✓	med/post-med	med/post-med
2	L1, Field 1, 30-60m from southern end of field	13	622	Peg-tile fragments	✓	med/post-med	med/post-med
2	L1, Field 1 30-60m from southern end of field	1	41	Fe spur		post-med	med/post-med
4	L1, Field 1 60-90m from southern end of field	5	158	Peg-tile fragments	✓	med/post-med	med/post-med
4	L1, Field 1 60-90m from southern end of field	1	29	Curious sherd from unidentified vessel - white fabric applied over orange, with green glaze - handle? - glaze looks like Border ware	✓	med/post-med	med/post-med
6	L1, Field 1 90-120m from southern end of field	4	187	Peg-tile fragments	✓	med/post-med	med/post-med
8	L1, Field 1 120-150m from southern end of field	3	90	Peg-tile fragments	✓	med/post-med	19th-20th cent
8	L1, Field 1 120-150m from southern end of field	1	11	Fabric 51a late slipped kitchenware		19th-20th cent	19th-20th cent
8	L1, Field 1 120-150m from southern end of field	1	6	Clay tobacco-pipe stem fragment		med/post-med	19th-20th cent
9	L1, Field 1 248m from southern end of field	1	22	Animal bone	✓	?	modern
9	L1, Field 1 248m from southern end of field	1	60	Green glass bottle with plastic pourer top		modern	modern
7	L2, Field 1 90-120m from southern end of field	1	40	Peg-tile fragments	✓	med/post-med	17th-18th cent
7	L2, Field 1 90-120m from southern end of field	1	15	Indeterminate brick lump	✓	med/post-med	17th-18th cent
7	L2, Field 1 90-120m from southern end of field	1	11	Sherd of fabric 40 PMRE		17th-18th cent	17th-18th cent

3	L3, Field 1 30-60m from southern end of field	3	225	Peg-tile fragments	✓	med/post-med	med/post-med
5	L4, Field 1 80m from southern end of field	3	230	Peg-tile fragments	✓	med/post-med	med/post-med
10	L5, Field 3	2	60	Peg-tile fragments	✓	med/post-med	19th-20th cent
10	L5, Field 3	1	10	Sherd of fabric 40 PMRE	✓	17th-18th cent	19th-20th cent
10	L5, Field 3	1	3	Sherd of flowerpot, fabric 51b	✓	19th-20th cent	19th-20th cent
10	L5, Field 3	3	55	Sherds fabric 48d, one with transfer "TH'S BISHOPSGATE STREET"		19th-20th cent	19th-20th cent
10	L5, Field 3	1	56	Fragment of ceramic drain	✓	post-med	19th-20th cent
10	L5, Field 3	1	1	Clay tobacco-pipe stem fragment		post-med	19th-20th cent
10	L5, Field 3	1	110	Fragment of ceramic field drain	✓	post-med +	19th-20th cent
10	L5, Field 3	1	262	Fe plough tine		post-med +	19th-20th cent
10	L5, Field 3	15	600	Peg-tile fragments	✓	med/post-med	19th-20th cent
11	L6, Field 2	1	4	Fabric 22 Hedingham ware		13th-14th cent	med/post-med
11	L6, Field 2	1	3	Fe nail fragment		med/post-med	med/post-med
12	L7, Field 2	13	457	Peg-tile fragments (1 with hole)	✓	med/post-med	17th-18th cent
12	L7, Field 2	1	69	Indeterminate brick lump	✓	med/post-med	17th-18th cent
12	L7, Field 2	1	30	Sherd fabric 40 PMRE		17th-18th cent	17th-18th cent
14	L7, Field 2	9	331	Peg-tile fragments	✓	med/post-med	19th-20th cent
14	L7, Field 2	1	27	Sherd modern stoneware		19th-20th cent	19th-20th cent
14	L7, Field 2	1	4	Orange ware fabric 21 or 40		13th-16th cent+	19th-20th cent
15	L7, Field 2	1	50	Peg-tile fragment	✓	med/post-med	med/post-med
16	L7, Field 2	4	178	Peg-tile fragments	✓	med/post-med	med/post-med
13	L8, Field 2	3	17	Sherds of fabric 48d		17th-18th cent	17th-18th cent
13	L8, Field 2	1	5	Clay tobacco-pipe stem fragment		med/post-med	17th-18th cent
13	L8, Field 2	1	3	Fe nail shaft fragment		med/post-med	17th-18th cent
13	L8, Field 2	1	72	Indeterminate brick lump	✓	med/post-med	17th-18th cent
13	L8, Field 2	5	200	Peg-tile fragments (1 with hole)	✓	med/post-med	17th-18th cent

### The iron spur by N Crummy

(2) L1. Surface topsoil. Iron spur with long neck of lozenge-shaped section projecting from the heel of the curved sides, the arms of which taper towards the ends, both of which are broken. One has been pushed inwards at the tip. The other appears to have been pulled outwards slightly, with some metal loss at the point of stress. The end of the neck shows a slight curve, and is broken at that point. Length 105 mm, width 56 mm.

The length of the neck and its section suggest that this is part of an angle-neck rowel spur. An example from Sandal Castle has a neck 60 mm in length before turning downwards to form a box for the rowel. The damage on the piece from Chichester Hall suggests it was of similar form.

The Sandal Castle spur is dated to the first half of the 17th century and is typical of the period (Ellis 1983, 254, fig 11, 4).

### Reference

Ellis, B, 1983 'Spurs', in *Sandal Castle excavations 1964-73*, by P Mayes and L A S Butler

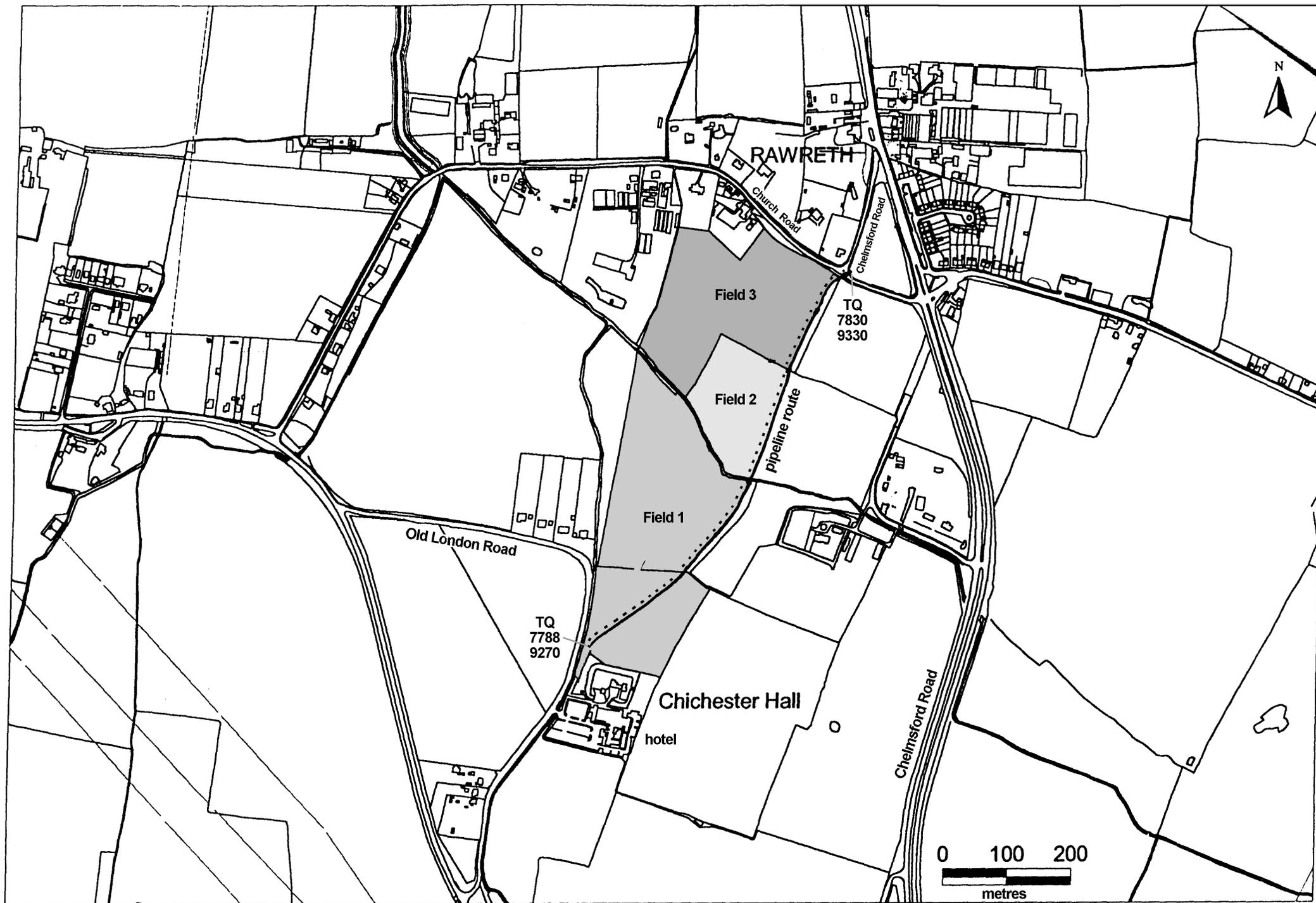


Fig 1 Pipeline route.

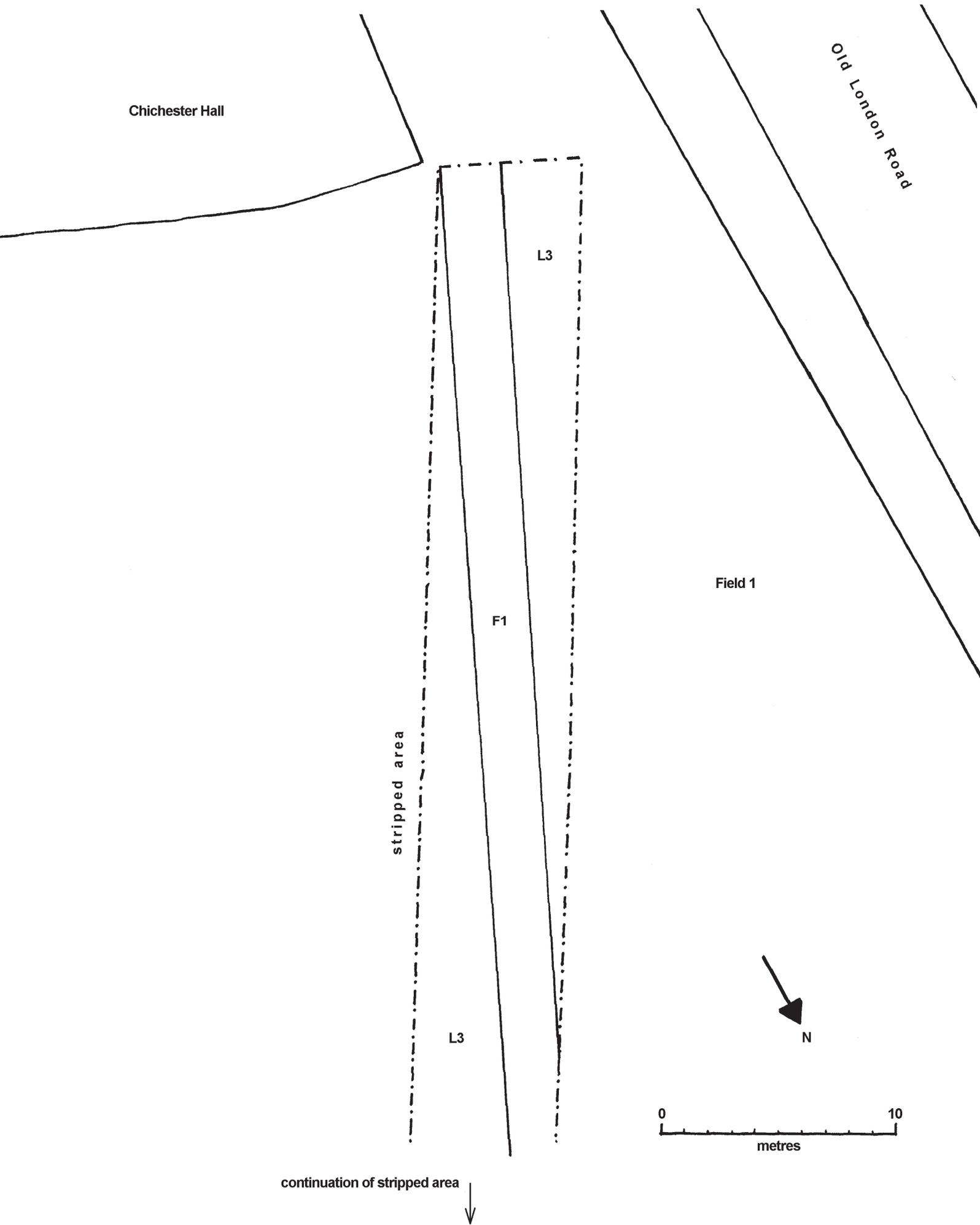


Fig 2 Plan of F1, scale 1:200.

**Essex Heritage Conservation Record/  
Essex Archaeology and History**

**Summary sheet**

<b>Site name/address:</b> pipeline from Chichester Hall to Rawreth, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b>	<b>District:</b> Rochford
<b>NGR:</b> TQ 7788 9270-TQ 7830 9330	<b>Site code:</b> RLCH.01
<b>Type of work:</b> Watching brief/excavation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> June-July 2001	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 635m
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Braintree Museum	<b>Funding source:</b> Anglian Water
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHCR nos:</b> 7521-7522, 7523, 7633-7634, 7631-7632, 7637, 9042-9047
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 147 and summary in <i>Essex Archaeology and History</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Post-medieval and modern	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> Observations were made during topsoil-stripping for a 0.7km-long Anglian Water pipeline from Chichester Hall to Rawreth. Between 50mm and 400mm of topsoil was stripped, and no finds or features of archaeological significance were exposed. The stripping did not generally reach the subsoil and therefore buried features may not have been exposed. However, there was very little post-medieval pottery and no earlier pottery in the ploughsoil as one would expect if buried features were surviving.	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> Drury 1977	
<b>Author of summary:</b> Kate Orr	<b>Date of summary:</b> August 2001