

An archaeological evaluation on Colchester Royal Grammar School playing fields (off Athelstan Road), Colchester, Essex

February 2002



on behalf of
Tim Snow Architects

CAT project code: 02/2d
Museum accession code: 2002.43
NGR: TL 9826 2438



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EHCR summary sheet

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Front cover: the evaluation trench, view south.

1 Summary

A single evaluation trench was excavated across the footprint of a new sports-block building on the Colchester Royal Grammar School playing fields. The object of the evaluation was to establish the nature and condition of any archaeological remains that were present on the site, and to assess how they would be affected by the construction of the new sports block. The trench was excavated to the natural subsoil, but no archaeological remains or features were exposed.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is an archive report on an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at the Colchester Royal Grammar School playing fields (off Athelstan Road), Colchester, Essex. The evaluation trench was located at NGR TL 9826 2438 (Fig 1).
- 2.2 The evaluation trench was excavated in front of the existing groundsman's building by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on 13th of February 2002 (Fig 2).
- 2.3 All fieldwork was done in accordance with a specification agreed with the Archaeology Officer of Colchester Borough Council.
- 2.4 This report mirrors standards and practices contained in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines for the standards and practice of archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

The development site is situated outside the historic Roman town wall and would have been on the periphery of the western cemetery area of the Roman town. There have been previous archaeological discoveries in the immediate area. The principal archaeological site consists of a substantial Roman temple complex which was partly excavated in 1947 (Essex Heritage Conservation Record or EHCR 13128). During the excavations at the temple complex, the natural gravel was found to be present at a level no deeper than 1m. Records of the work carried out on the temple complex site can be found in *Roman Colchester* (Hull 1958).

4 Aim

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the nature and condition of any archaeological remains that survive in the area which is to be affected by the construction of the new sports-block building on the site.

5 The evaluation trench

A single evaluation trench was dug, located 4.70m north of the west end of the existing groundsman's building. The trench measured 4m x 1.80m and was cut by a mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. The trench was excavated to the natural subsoil at a depth of 60cm. The sides and the bottom of the trench were cleaned by hand. There were three contexts in the trench (Fig 3):

Layer or L1 – turf; this extended to a depth of 10cm, where it interfaced with the topsoil L2.

L2 – a yellow/brown sandy soil with frequent small stones and peg-tile flecks; L2 continued to a depth of 50cm where the topsoil interfaced with the natural subsoil L3.

L3 – an orange/brown sandy gravel; the first 10cm of this was removed as the trench was excavated (to expose clean natural).

No archaeological remains or features were exposed in the trench after the initial excavation or after the trench was cleaned by hand (Fig 4).

6 Finds

No finds were recovered from the evaluation trench.

7 Discussion and interpretation

No archaeological features or finds were revealed by this evaluation.

8 Acknowledgments

The project was managed by Howard Brooks and the site work was carried out by Ben Holloway and Nigel Rayner. The project was monitored by Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council.

The Trust would like to thank Mr Peter Stebbings, Bursar of Colchester Royal Grammar School, for his assistance and for providing access to the site, and to Tim Snow Architects for commissioning the work.

9 Reference

Hull, M R, 1958 *Roman Colchester*, Society of Antiquaries Research Committee Report, **XX**

10 Glossary

context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
SMR	Sites & Monuments Record
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
NGR	National Grid Reference
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
Roman	the period from AD 43 to around AD 430

11 Archive deposition

The paper archive is held at Colchester Archaeological Trust, 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited at Colchester Museum, under accession code 2002.43.

12 Site data

12.1 Site context list

Trench	Context	Description	Context date
T1	L1	Turf	Modern
T1	L2	Topsoil	Modern
T1	L3	Natural	Glacial/post-glacial

12.2 Soil descriptions

Trench	Context	Description
T1	L1	Turf, grey brown sandy loam contains occasional small stones.
T1	L2	Dark yellowish brown sandy loam, contains common small stones and occasional traces of peg-tile flecks.
T1	L3	Orange brown silty clay natural.

Ben Holloway, March 2002

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Distribution list:

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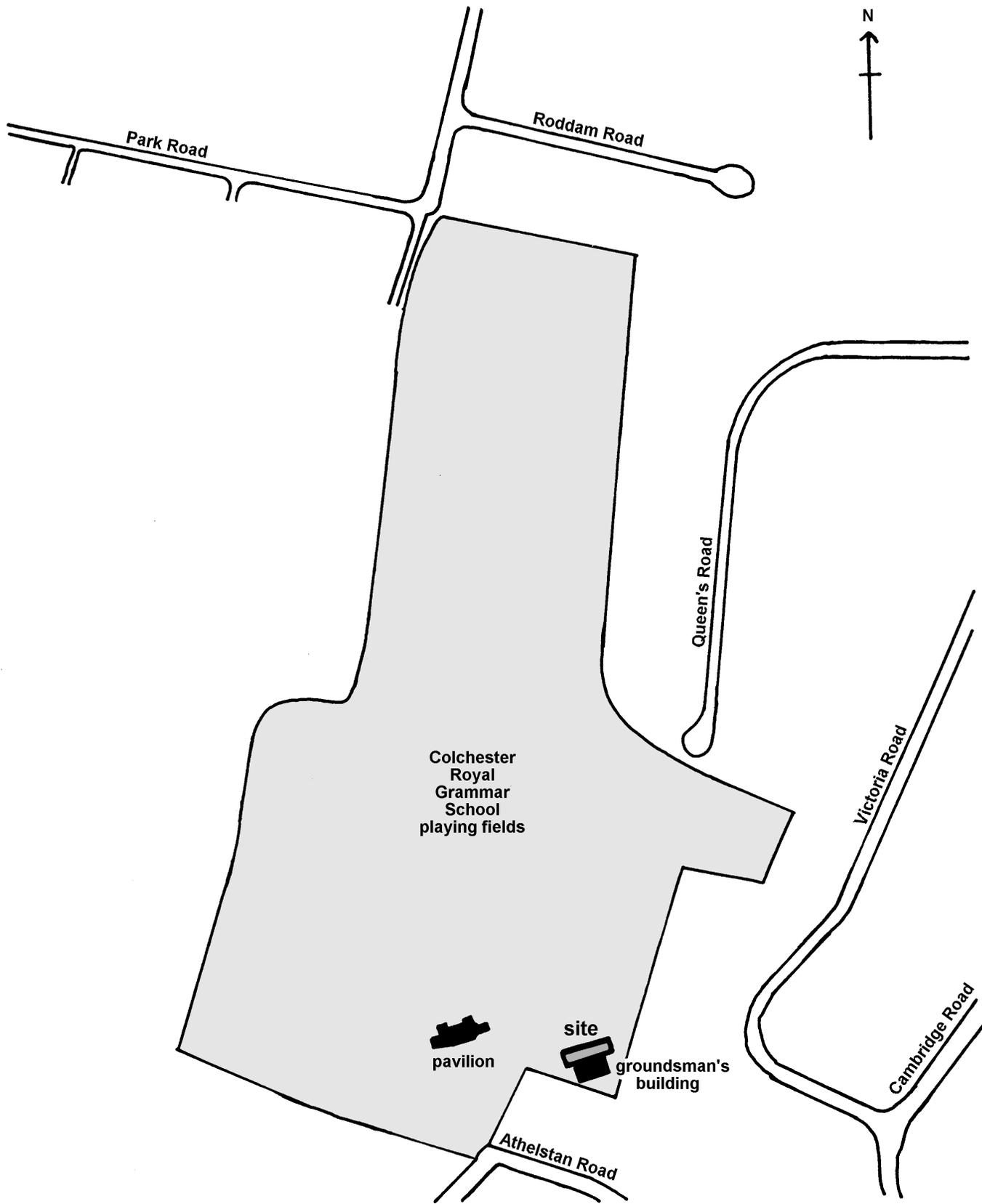


Fig 1 Site location.

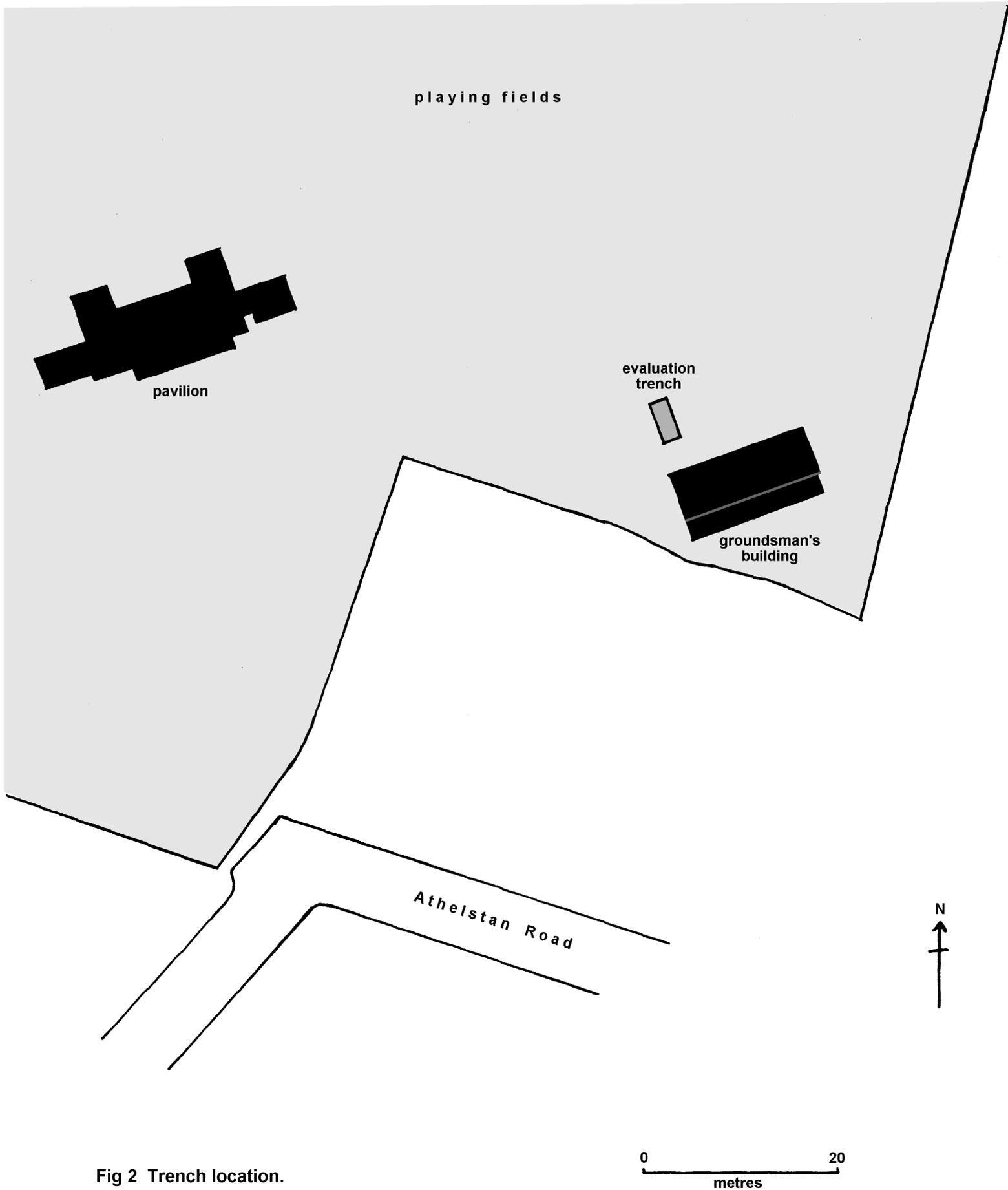
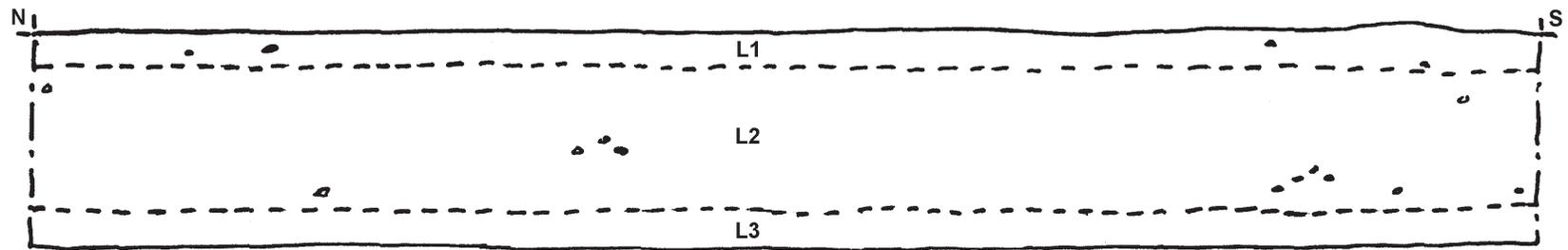


Fig 2 Trench location.



- L1 turf, topsoil - grey/brown sandy loam with occasional small stones
- L2 dark yellowish brown sandy loam with common small stones and occasional peg-tile
- L3 orange/brown silty clay natural



Fig 3 Trench section.

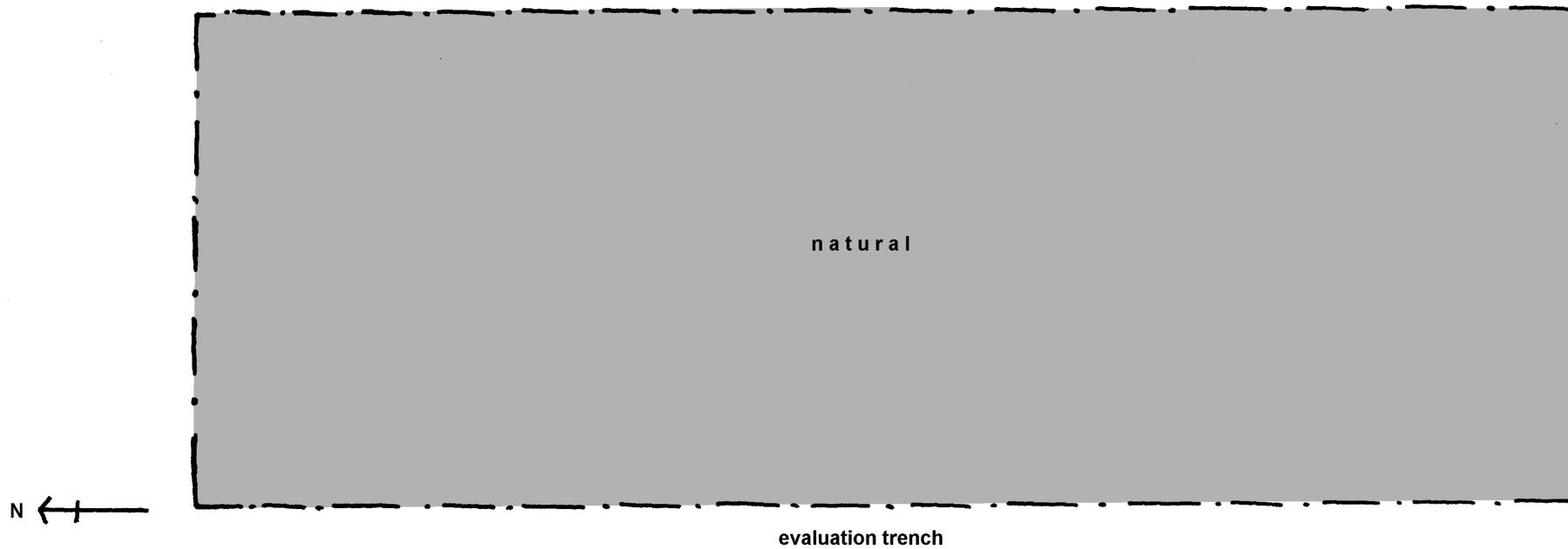


Fig 4 Trench plan; scale 1:20.



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

Summary sheet

Site address: Colchester Royal Grammar School playing fields (off Athelstan Road), Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9826 2438	Site code: Museum accession code 2002.43
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of Work: February 2002	Size of area investigated: 1 small trench
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related SMR nos: 13128
Final report: CAT Report 180 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: None	
Summary of fieldwork results: A single evaluation trench was excavated across the footprint of a new sports-block building on the Colchester Royal Grammar School playing fields. The object of the evaluation was to establish the nature and condition of any archaeological remains that were present on the site, and to assess how they would be affected by the construction of the new sports block. The trench was excavated to the natural subsoil, but no archaeological remains or features were exposed.	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Ben Holloway	Date of summary: 6th March 2002