

**An archaeological watching
brief along an
Anglian Water pipeline
at White Notley, Essex**
(Phase 2 of the Black Notley
sewerage improvements scheme)

May 2002

**commissioned by
Anglian Water Services Ltd**

CAT project code: 02/5b
ECC HAMP site code: BNAW01
NGR: TL 7875 1845-TL 7895 1843
Braintree Museum accession code: BRNTM 2002.8



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CAT Report 199
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1 Summary

During an archaeological watching brief on groundworks for a length of new Anglian Water sewer pipeline at White Notley in Essex, no finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at White Notley in Essex on behalf of Anglian Water Services Ltd. The work was necessitated by Anglian Water sewerage improvements, Phase 1 of which started at Black Notley in 2001 (CAT Report 145). The watching brief for Phase 2 took place on the 22nd and 23rd May 2002. The length of pipeline monitored for Phase 2 is situated in a meadow between Station Road and the sewage works at National Grid Reference or NGR TL 7875 1845-TL 7895 1843 (Fig 1).
- 2.2 The site is located along the northern side of the River Brain. The field used to be under arable cultivation but has recently been left overgrown. It is bordered by hedges and trees and crossed by pylons.
- 2.3 All fieldwork was done in accordance with a specification agreed with the Archaeology Officer of the Heritage Advice, Management and Promotion (HAMP) group of Essex County Council (ECC) who recommended archaeological monitoring on this part of the pipeline due to the archaeological potential of the site.
- 2.4 This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

Roman sites are located on the upper slopes of the Brain Valley in the Black Notley area. On the western side an extensive scatter of Roman pottery and tile has been identified (Essex Heritage Conservation Record or EHCR no 14020). It is possible that Roman occupation extended down the slope towards the river. On the eastern side a further scatter of material has been identified, again consisting of Roman pottery and tile (EHCR no 14150).

4 Aims

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.

5 Methods

- 5.1 The watching brief was carried out by Kate Orr of CAT. 25m of topsoil was stripped off at the western end of the field prior to the digging of the trench. Further on it was decided by the contractors to dig the trench without stripping the topsoil first. The trench was dug with a toothless ditching bucket to a width of 450mm and a depth of 1.4m. The total length of trench monitored was 108m. Spoil heaps were checked for artefacts.
- 5.2 Individual records of layers and features were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.3 Section drawings of features and layers were made at a scale of 1:10.
- 5.4 Finds were registered on CAT record sheets and assigned find numbers according to context. Finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context.

6 Results

- 6.1 At the western end, ploughsoil (Layer or L1) of mid brown silty loam with frequent small rounded and angular stones was removed to reveal a thin layer of light brown silty clay subsoil (L2). Underneath this was natural clay starting at 300mm below ground-level (L5). Cutting into L5 was what appeared to be a very large pit (Feature or F2; Fig 2). This feature was 24m wide at the top and extended below the limit of excavation. It was filled by mid brown clayey silt with modern or post-medieval brick and tile. After talking to the occupier of the property at the western end of the field, it was apparent that this was a natural depression in the field that the farmer had filled in to level it out.
- 6.2 Further to the east, the subsoil changed to a mid brown clayey silt loam mottled with orange clayey sand (L6). Underneath this was natural pale-coloured sand (L4). Towards the eastern end of the field, the natural became more gravelly but at one point this changed to a light brown orangey sandy clay (L5) which was directly underneath the topsoil.
- 6.3 At the eastern end of the field, the topsoil became very gravelly as did the subsoil (L3) which was indistinguishable from the topsoil. Natural sand and gravel started between 600mm and 800mm below ground-level. Cut into layers L3 and L4 was a shallow pit (F1; Fig 1) filled with dark grey brown silty clay and pebbles. There were no finds and it was not possible to enter the trench to inspect it further. The pit was 1m wide and 750mm deep.
- 6.4 One sherd of medieval pottery was found on the spoil heap at the western end of the trench, but there was a sparsity of artefacts and the ground appeared to be fairly undisturbed. One piece of Roman tile was found (in the topsoil). No Roman pottery was found during the watching brief, which is hard to explain as Roman pottery has been found in the garden of the property at the western end of the field.

7 Discussion and interpretation

The watching brief was largely negative. No features, finds or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the watching brief on the groundworks for the pipeline.

8 Acknowledgments

CAT would like to thank Anglian Water Services Ltd for commissioning the work, Richard Havis of the ECC HAMP group for monitoring the work, and AMEC the contractors for giving access to the site.

9 References

- CAT Report 145 An archaeological watching brief on sewerage improvements at Bulford Lane, Black Notley, Essex, by Kate Orr, 2001
- Cotter, John P, 2000 *Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85*, Colchester Archaeological Report 7

10 Glossary

context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
EHCR	Essex Heritage Conservation Record held at Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
medieval	the period from 1066 to c 1500
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 by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited with Braintree Museum under accession code 2002.8

12 Site data

12.1 Site context list

Table 1: List of contexts.

Context	Description	Context date
F1	Shallow pit filled with dark grey brown silty clay and small stones	undated
F2	Very large pit or depression, 24m long and at least 1.4m deep, filled with mid brown clayey silt with tile flecks and modern brick fragments; possibly a natural depression levelled off with recent material	modern
L1	Grass and mid brown silty loam topsoil with frequent small rounded and angular stones, occasional fragments of peg-tile; very gravelly at the eastern end of the pipeline trench	modern
L2	Subsoil-thin layer of light brown silty clay subsoil, western end of trench only	undated
L3	Subsoil-mid brown sandy loam subsoil with abundant gravel - eastern end of pipeline trench only	undated
L4	Natural sand and gravel	
L5	Natural clay	
L6	Subsoil-mid brown clayey silt loam mottled with orange clayey sand	undated

12.2 Finds list

Table 2: List of finds by context.

Find no	Context	Description and date	Weight in g
1	L1	1 Roman tile	45
1	L1	2 peg-tiles - medieval or post-medieval	60
2	U/S, western end of trench	1 sherd of sandy orange ware (Fabric 21) - 13th-16th centuries	7
3	F2	3 fragments of brick - post-medieval?	440
3	F2	2 peg-tile fragments - medieval or post-medieval	40
3	F2	3 thick tile fragments	200

Fabric codes after Cotter 2000.

Kate Orr, September 2002

Distribution list:

Anglian Water Services Ltd
Richard Havis, Archaeology Officer for the ECC HAMP group
Essex Heritage Conservation Record, Essex County Council

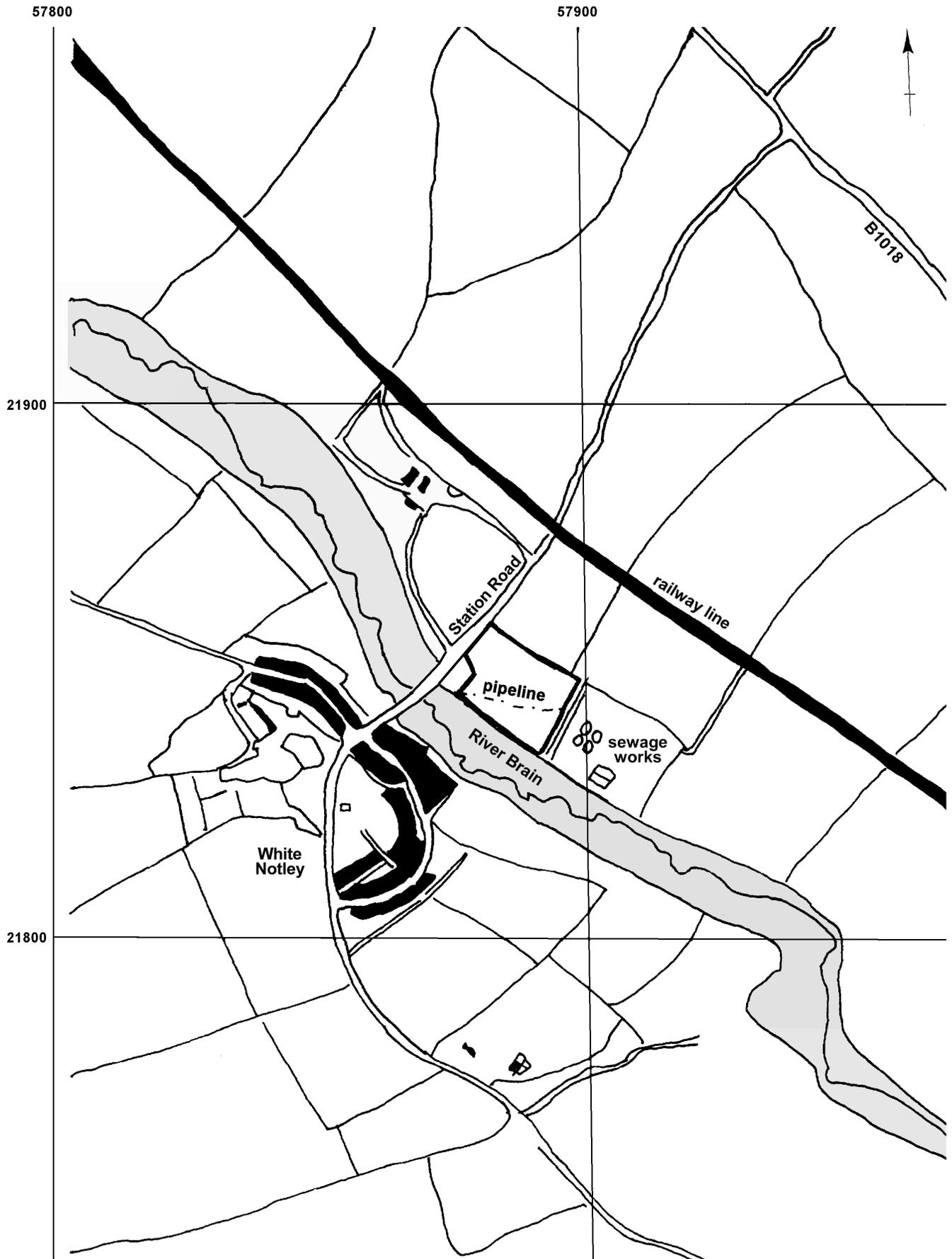


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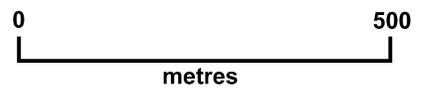
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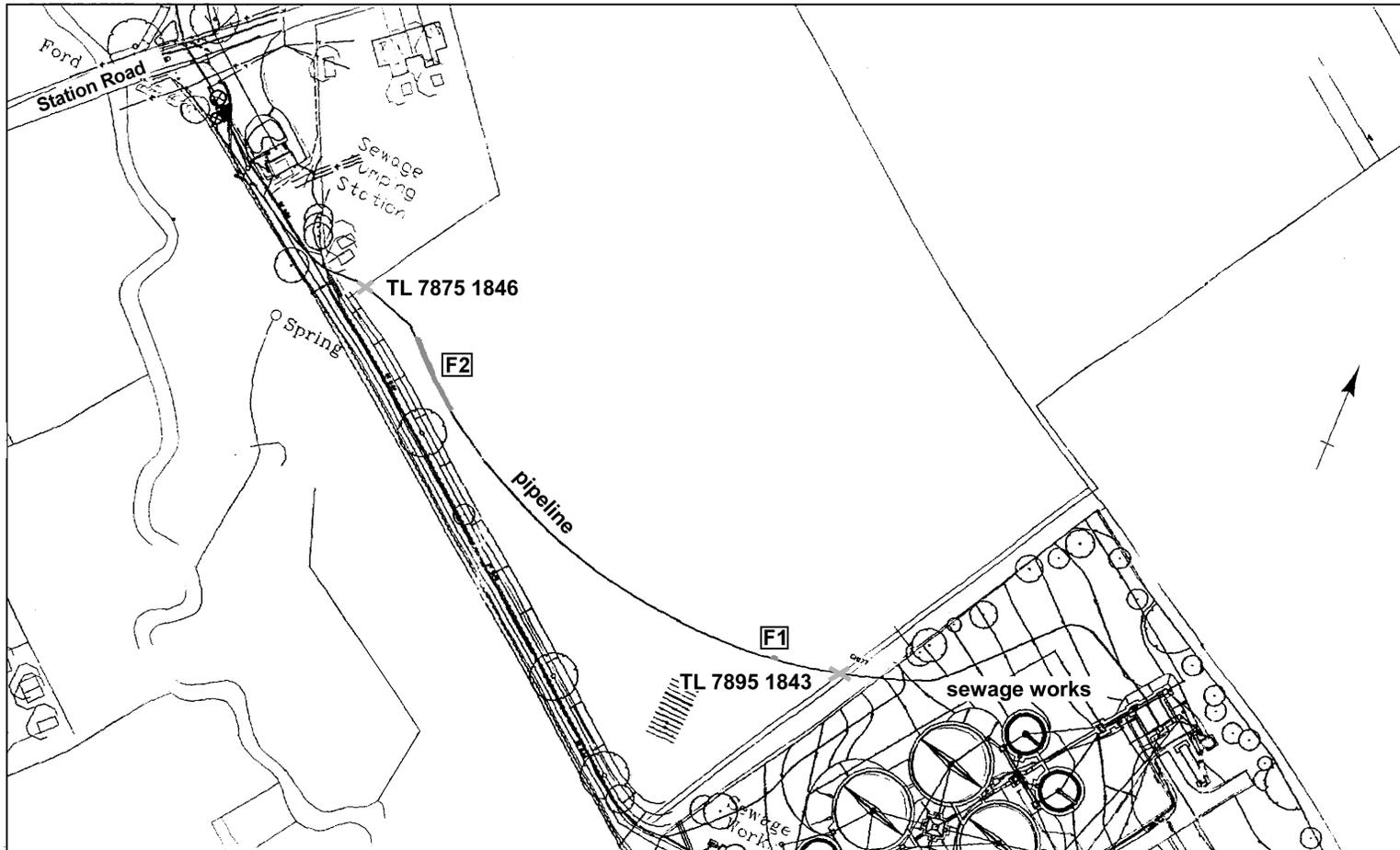
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Fig 1 Site location, scale 1:10,000.





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Fig 2 Site plan, scale 1:2000.

0 100
metres

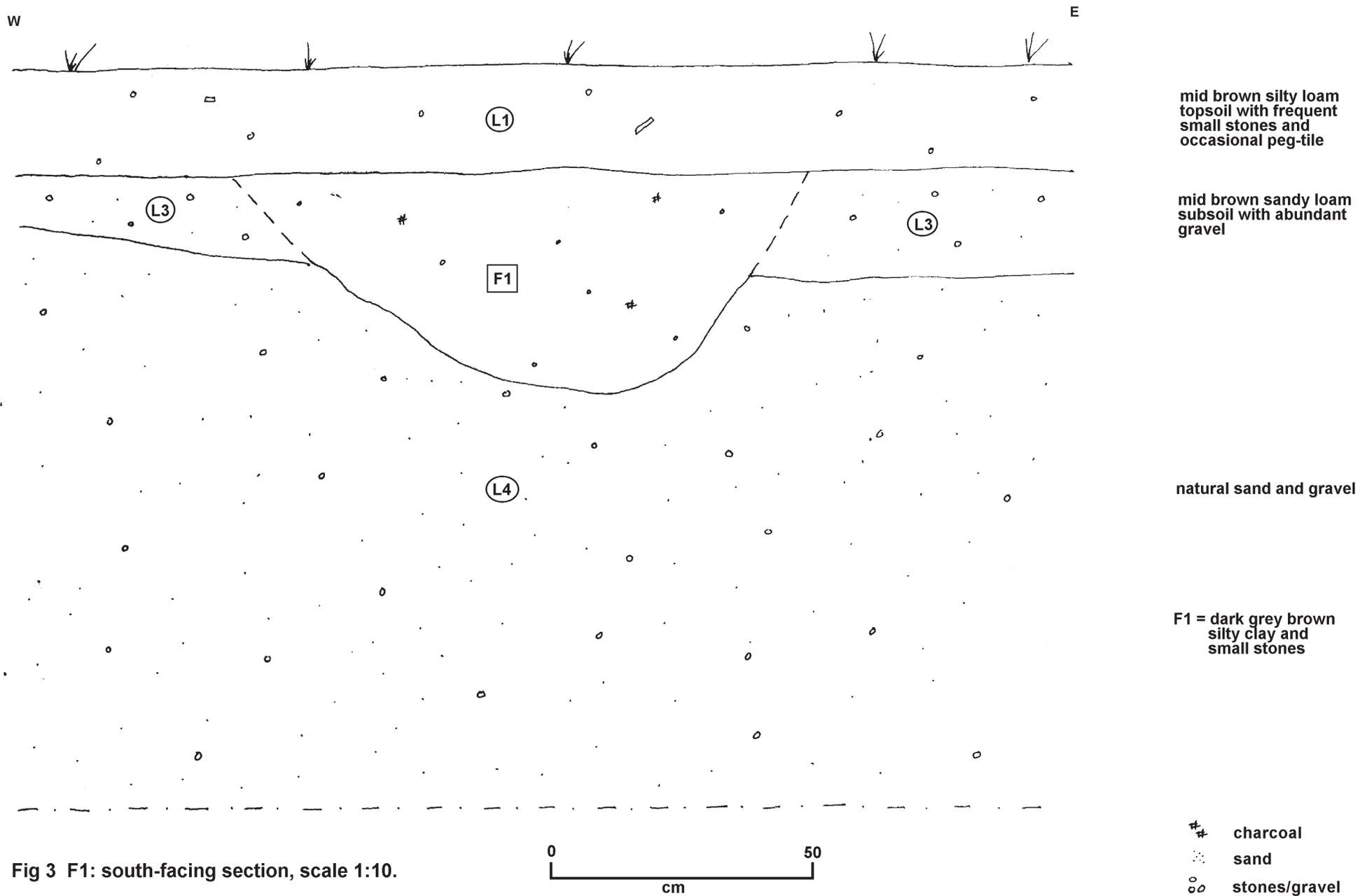


Fig 3 F1: south-facing section, scale 1:10.

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

Summary sheet

Site address: Anglian Water pipeline at White Notley, Essex (Phase 2 of the Black Notley sewerage improvements scheme)	
Parish: White Notley	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 78751845-TL 78951843	Site code: BNAW01
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: May 2002	Size of area investigated: 108m
Location of finds/curating museum: Braintree Museum	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHCR nos: 14020, 14150
Final report: CAT Report 199 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: None	
Summary of fieldwork results: No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the watching brief.	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Report 145	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: September 2002