

**An archaeological evaluation at
23 St Julian Grove,
Colchester, Essex
October 2002**

**on behalf of
Englplus Property Co Ltd**

**report prepared by
Kate Orr**

NGR: TM 00061 24946
CAT project ref.: 02/10a
Planning application number F/COL/02/0992
Colchester Museums accession code: 2002.173



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CAT Report 215
October 2002

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EHCR summary sheet

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1 Summary

Three trial-trenches were excavated at 23 St Julian Grove, Colchester, Essex in an archaeological evaluation, during which silty deposits containing peg-tile to a depth of 2m were observed. This is interpreted as being hillwash, which has accumulated over the centuries. No features relating to St Botolph's priory were observed.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological evaluation at 23 St Julian Grove, Colchester, Essex. Three trial-trenches were excavated by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the 3rd October 2002.
- 2.2 The development site is located in the south-eastern corner of the town centre, on the south side of St Julian Grove, at National Grid Reference or NGR TM 00061 24946 (Fig 1). The land is situated at the bottom of a south-facing slope. Formerly the land was a garden to no 23 and subsequently it was used as a workshop where buses were repaired (Roger Hollington pers comm). Currently the land is overgrown and fenced. The area, which is 19m x 30m, is flat and lies at 12m OD.
- 2.3 The investigation was prompted by a planning application for residential development on the site (planning application number F/COL/02/0992).
- 2.4 All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation agreed with the Archaeology Officer of Colchester Borough Council.
- 2.5 This report follows the standards set out in the Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1999, updated 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996, updated 2002), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological evaluation* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The development site lies 18m east of the boundary to the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) of St Botolph's priory (SAM no 26301), the earliest house of Augustinian canons in England. Most of the main church building is still standing. The priory precinct is thought to be large (Crummy 1981, 74) and may include the development site. Human burials have been found nearby (Urban Archaeological Database or UAD no 1035) and could have been encountered during the evaluation.
- 3.2 In 2000, CAT undertook a watching brief on two boreholes and a test-pit on the site of the new St Botolph's Church extension. One of the boreholes disturbed deposits of potential archaeological value. A piece of leather probably from a shoe was found at 4.4m depth (Crossan 2000a). Later in 2000, a watching brief was carried out during the construction of a fence enclosing the church and priory grounds (Fig 2). Residual human remains were found, but the majority of the pits did not penetrate beyond post-medieval levels (Crossan 2000b). These investigations show that well-preserved water-logged remains survive near the development site, but at a great depth.
- 3.3 The development site is located outside the Roman town walls, within a suburb of the Roman town. In 1991, exploratory excavations to establish the ground-plan of the demolished eastern end of the priory church revealed a part of a Roman building underlying the church at its eastern end (*the Colchester archaeologist* magazine no 5; UAD no 3174).

4 Aim

The aim of the archaeological work was to locate, identify and assess the quality and extent of any surviving archaeological remains prior to the determination of the planning application. This information would then enable an informed decision to be taken on the preservation or otherwise of any deposits and the need for further work and/or mitigation.

5 Methods

- 5.1** Four per cent of the site was excavated by opening up three trenches of 1.5m width and between 5.4m and 6.8m length. These were dug by the contractor using a mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision.
- 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. Plans of the trenches were made at a scale of 1:20.
- 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.
- 5.5** Colour photographs of features were taken with a 35mm transparency camera.
- 5.6** Levels OD of the top and bottom of each trench were taken with a dumpy level.
- 5.7** Metal-detecting was not carried out on the spoil heaps as it would have been hindered by the large amount of modern ferrous material from the site's past use as a workshop.

6 Results

6.1 Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 6)

This trench (T1) was dug to a length of 6.8m. Layer 1 (L1) consisted of 350-400mm of dark brown silty loam topsoil with rare small stones. Modern pottery and peg-tile were abundant. The underlying subsoil (L2) of dark grey/brown sandy silt with rare medium-sized stones was of similar thickness to L1 and contained animal bone, peg-tile and Roman pottery. This sealed a light grey/brown silty subsoil with coarse sand and shingle and charcoal flecks (L4). This layer had a greenish hue. Peg-tile, oystershells, Roman tile, animal bone and modern pottery were abundant, and the peg-tile extended to the bottom of the trench at 1.2m below ground-level. Cut into this layer was an old drain (Feature or F1) consisting of coarse sand with large stones, tile and flowerpot. This extended diagonally across the trench from NE to SW. It was removed by the machine. Natural ground was not reached in T1.

6.2 Trench 2 (Figs 4 and 7)

This trench (T2) was dug to a length of 5.4m. L5 consisted of 350-400mm of dark brown silty loam topsoil with rare small stones. Animal bone, peg-tile and slate were common as well as tree roots and charcoal flecks. The stripping of L5 revealed more of a dark/grey brown sandy silt subsoil with rare medium-sized stones, peg-tile, and modern and medieval pot (L6). The bottom layer which continued to the base of the trench was a dark grey/brown sandy silt subsoil, similar to L4 but without the shingle (L7). This layer contained Roman tile, peg-tile and bone. The trench was dug to a depth of 1.2m and water started to seep into the bottom. Two sondages were dug to test the depth of L7 and the natural ground. The deeper sondage, dug halfway along the trench, exposed natural greenish clay at a depth of 2m. There were no features of archaeological significance.

6.3 Trench 3 (Figs 5 and 8)

This trench (T3) was dug to a length of 5.7m. L8 consisted of 400mm of dark brown silty loam topsoil with frequent small angular stones and brick and tile flecks which sealed a mid-dark brown sandy silt subsoil with common small stones, sandy patches, bone, Roman tile and peg-tile (L9). Underneath was a dark grey/brown sandy silt with frequent stones (L10). This continued to 1.2m below ground-level, the limit of excavation in the eastern half of the trench. Water rapidly seeped into the bottom of the trench, and therefore the western half was only dug to 850mm below ground-level. Natural ground was not reached in this trench. There were no features of archaeological significance.

7 Finds

Pottery was identified by Howard Brooks of CAT; fabric codes are after Cotter 2000.

Table 1: List of finds by context (all peg-tile was discarded).

Find no	Context	Description	Date	Weight in g
1	T1, L1	Peg-tile	post -medieval or modern	86
1	T1, L1	1 sherd of a modern stoneware pot (Fabric 45M)	19th-20th century	104
1	T1, L1	Clay-pipe bowl	17th century or later	11
1	T1, L1	Pig bones	undated	30
2	T1, L3	Peg-tile	post-medieval or modern	368
2	T1, L3	Fragment of bowl and stem of a clay pipe	18th or 19th century	8
2	T1, L3	Cow bone and rib	undated	163
2	T1, L3	Roman brick and tile	Roman	664
2	T1, L3	Oystershell	undated	11
2	T1, L3	Glass	post-medieval	3
2	T1, L3	Slag	undated	49
2	T1, L3	2 pieces of ironstone pottery (Fabric 48D)	19th-20th century	22
3	T1, L4	Roman tile	Roman	756
3	T1, L4	Peg-tile	post-medieval or modern	93
3	T1, L4	Oystershell	undated	22
3	T1, L4	Pig bone	undated	61
3	T1, L4	One sherd of modern stoneware (Fabric 45M)	19th-20th century	48
3	T1, L4	1 piece of ironstone pot (Fabric 48D)	modern	15
3	T1, L4	Modern brick fragment, 55mm thick	modern	280
4	T2, L5	1 sheep or goat bone and one bone of a cow	undated	81
4	T2, L5	Slate	modern	45
4	T2, L5	Peg-tile	post-medieval or modern	78
5	T2, L6	Peg-tile	post-medieval or modern	193
5	T2, L6	Pot, Colchester ware (Fabric 21A)	15th-16th century	17
5	T2, L6	Pot, ironstone (Fabric 48D)	19th-20th century	37
6	T2, L7	Oystershell	undated	32
6	T2, L7	Animal bone	undated	19
6	T2, L7	<i>Tessera</i>	Roman	14
6	T2, L7	Roman tile	Roman	272
6	T2, L7	Peg-tile	post-medieval or modern	146
7	T3, L9	Cow bone	undated	190
7	T3, L9	Roman tile	Roman	33
7	T3, L9	Peg-tile	post-medieval or modern	25

The finds were unremarkable, the most common artefact being peg-tile which occurred in most layers. This was in use from the medieval period up to the present day; however, it is more likely that the peg-tile is post-medieval or modern in date rather than medieval. This is borne out by the modern and post-medieval pottery which was found with it. Roman tile was also intermixed with most of the later finds, which is to be expected given the close proximity of a Roman building (*the Colchester archaeologist* magazine no 5) and also the re-use of Roman building material in later buildings. Layers L1, L3, L4, L5 and L6 contained finds of definite modern date. Only one piece of medieval pottery was retrieved (from L6).

8 Discussion and interpretation

- 8.1 Peg-tile extended down to the base of two the three trenches (T1 and T2). The trenches therefore did not impinge on any archaeological deposits earlier than the post-medieval period. This accords with what was found at investigations at St Botolph's priory where there was a great depth of post-medieval material. The difference between the watching brief and other work at St Botolph's priory and that at 23 St Julian Grove is that here there were no layers which could be definitely ascribed to the medieval period. A subsoil very similar in appearance to what was above, but lacking in peg-tile, was observed in the sondage in T2 extending to 2m below ground-level. This was the depth at which natural clay was reached. As the site is at the bottom of a hill, the deposits are likely to have been formed by hill wash which accumulated over the centuries. The meagre amount of pottery present and the lack of differentiation between the layers confirms this.
- 8.2 Features relating to St Botolph's priory were expected on the site, but no features of archaeological interest were observed during the evaluation.

9 Acknowledgements

The Trust would like to thank Roger Hollington and Simon Hollington from Englplus Property Co Ltd for funding the work.

The project was managed by Kate Orr who also carried out the fieldwork with Laura Pooley. The project was monitored by Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council.

10 References

- Colchester Archaeological Trust, 1991-2 *The Colchester archaeologist* magazine, 5, 6-10
- Cotter, J, 2000 *Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85*, Colchester Archaeological Report 7
- Crossan, C, 2000a *Engineers' trial work in St Botolph's Priory grounds*, CAT Report 71
- Crossan, C, 2000b *A watching brief on the erection of a gate and railings in St Botolph's Priory grounds*, CAT Report 117
- Crummy, P, 1981 *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester*, Colchester Archaeological Report 1

11 Glossary

context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made, eg a feature or layer
EHCR	Essex Heritage Conservation Record, Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
medieval	the period from c AD 1066 to 1500
modern	the period from c AD 1700 to the present day
post-medieval	the period from c AD 1500 to 1700
Roman	the period from AD 43 to 430
sondage	a modern exploratory hole
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database, held by Colchester Museums, Colchester Borough Council

12 Archive deposition

The archive is held at Colchester Archaeological Trust, 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museums under accession code 2002.173.

13 Site data

Table 2: List of contexts.

Trench	Context	Description	Context date
1	L1	Dark brown silty sandy loam topsoil with rare small stones; contains modern pottery, peg-tile and a clay-pipe stem	modern
1	L2	Dark grey/brown sandy silt subsoil with rare medium-sized stones	modern
1	L4	Light grey/brown silty subsoil with coarse sand and shingle; greenish hue, contains peg-tile and oystershell, Roman tile and modern pottery	modern
2	L5	Dark brown silty sandy loam topsoil with rare small stones; contains, bone, slate and peg-tile	modern
2	L6	Dark grey/brown sandy silt subsoil with rare medium-sized stones	modern
2	L7	Dark grey/brown sandy silt subsoil	post-medieval or modern
3	L8	Dark brown silty sandy loam topsoil with frequent small angular stones and flecks of brick and tile	modern
3	L9	Mid-dark brown sandy silt subsoil with common small stones and patches of sand; contains peg-tile and Roman tile	post-medieval or modern
3	L10	Dark grey/brown sandy silt with frequent stones, very wet	post-medieval?
1	F1	Old drain consisting of sand with peg-tile and stones	modern

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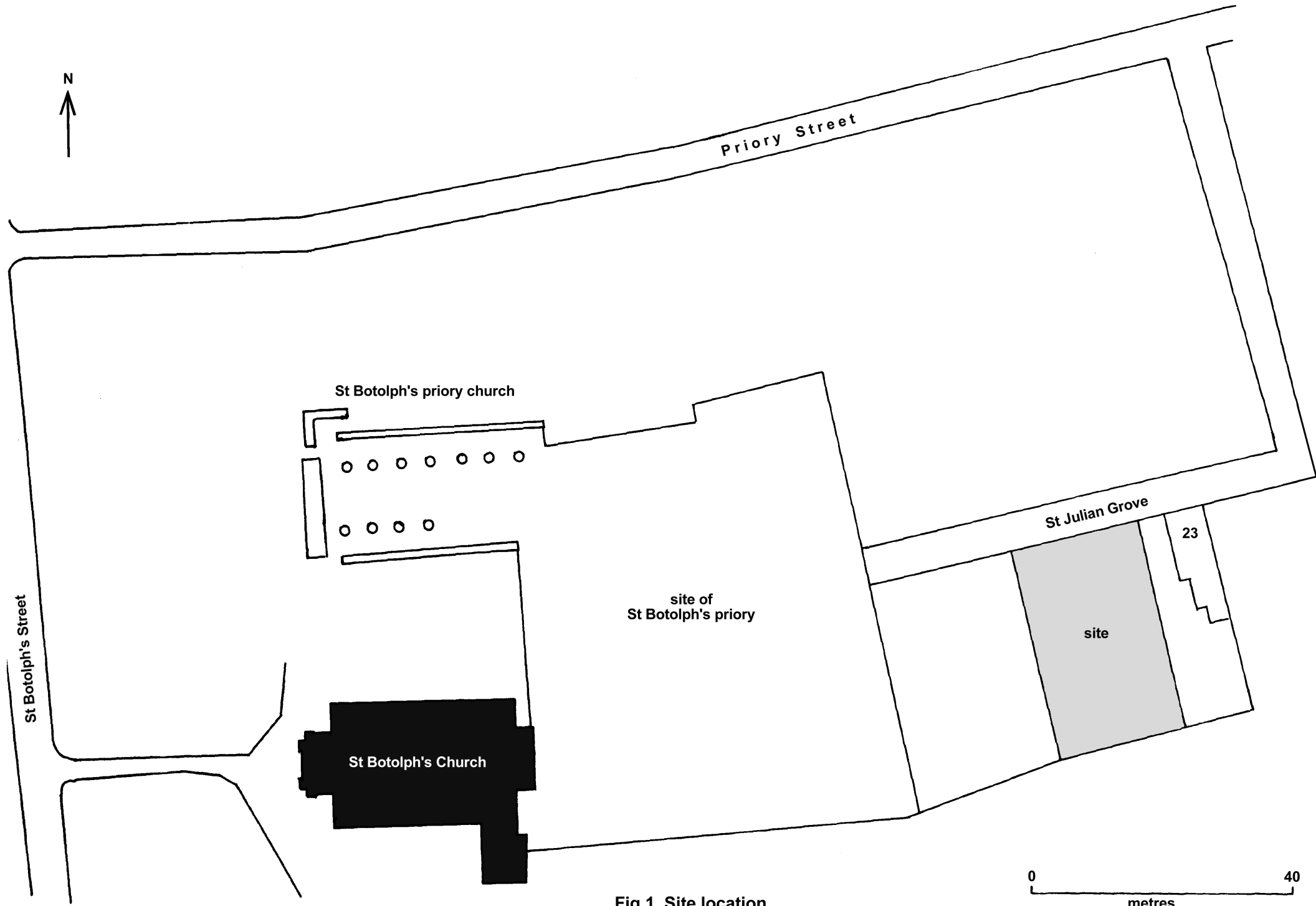


Fig 1 Site location.

0 40
metres

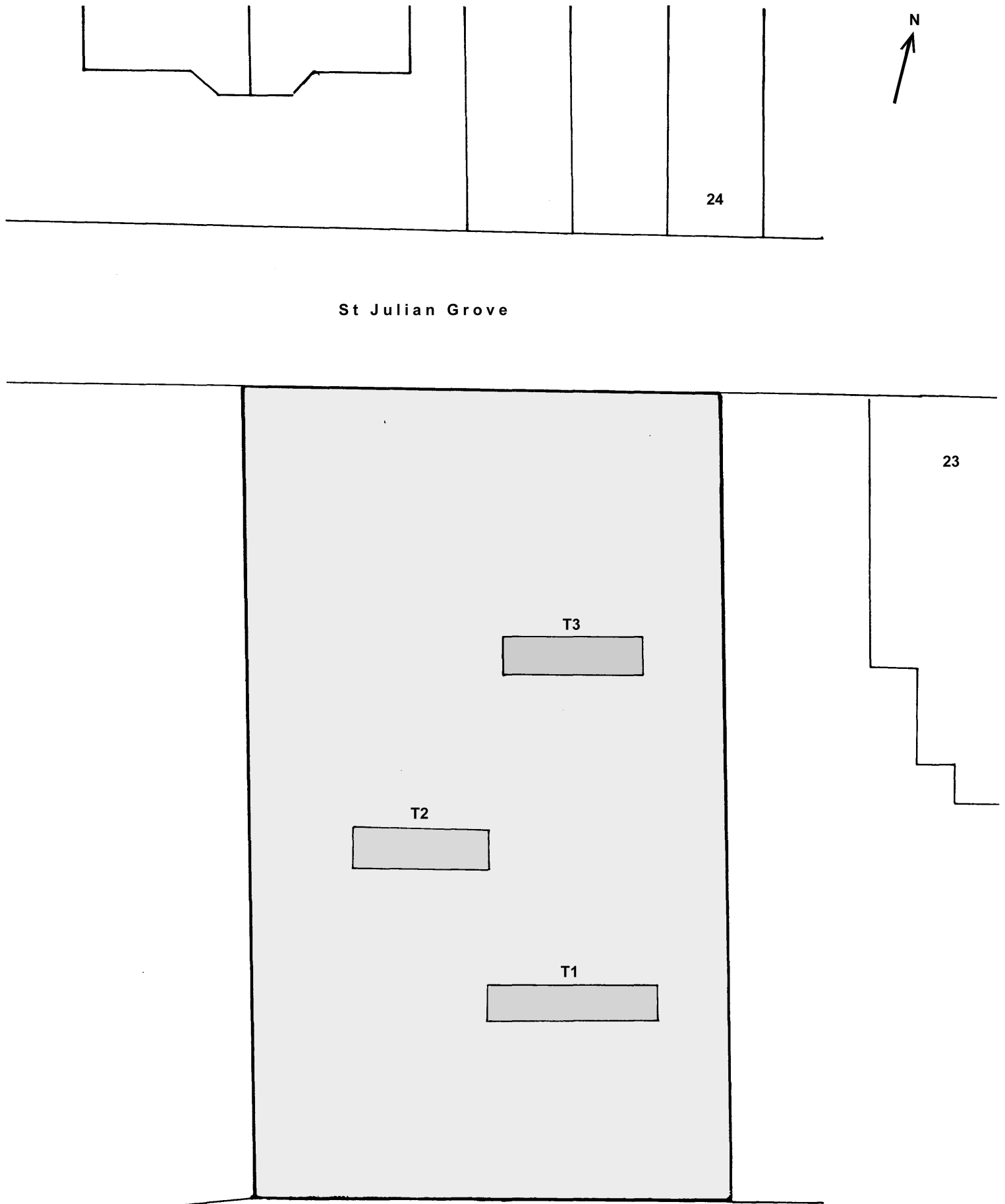
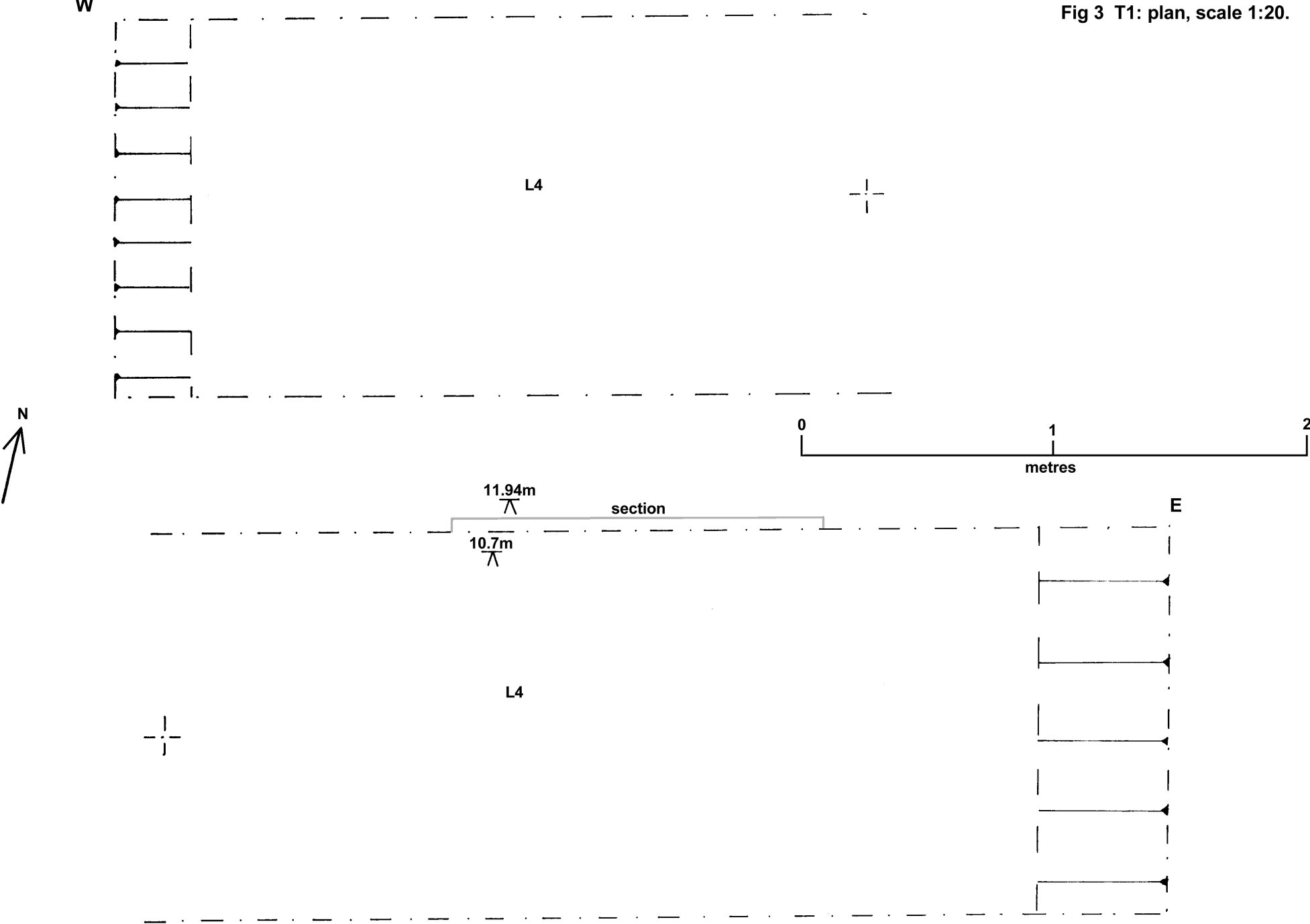


Fig 2 Plan of the site, showing trench locations; scale 1:200.

Fig 3 T1: plan, scale 1:20.



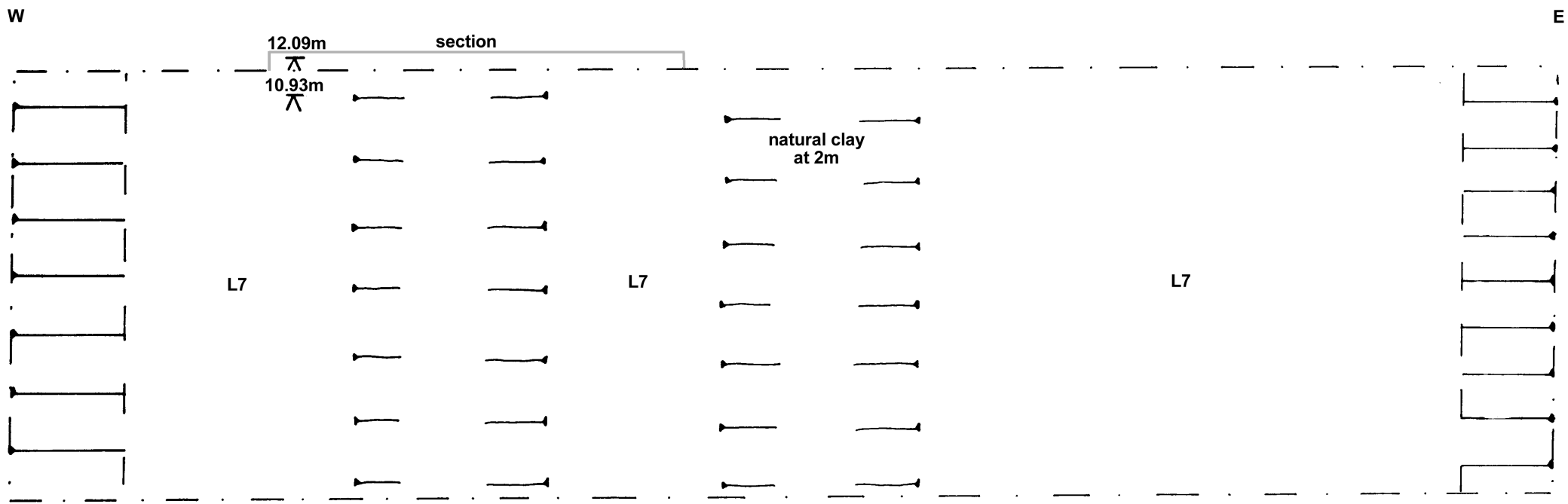
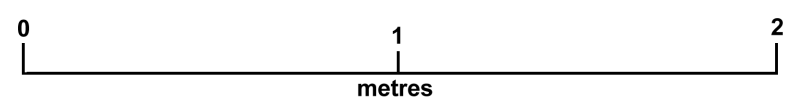


Fig 4 T2: plan, scale 1:20.



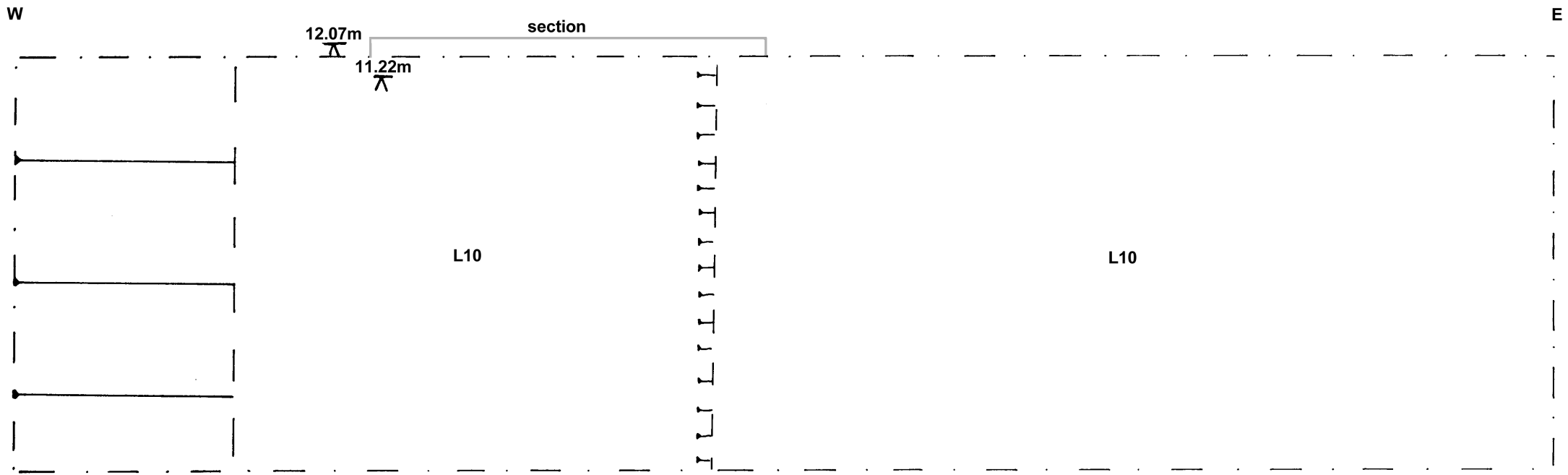
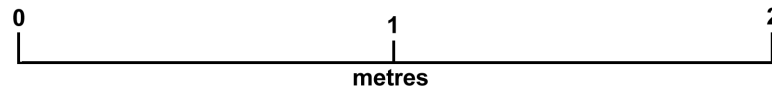


Fig 5 T3: plan, scale 1:20.



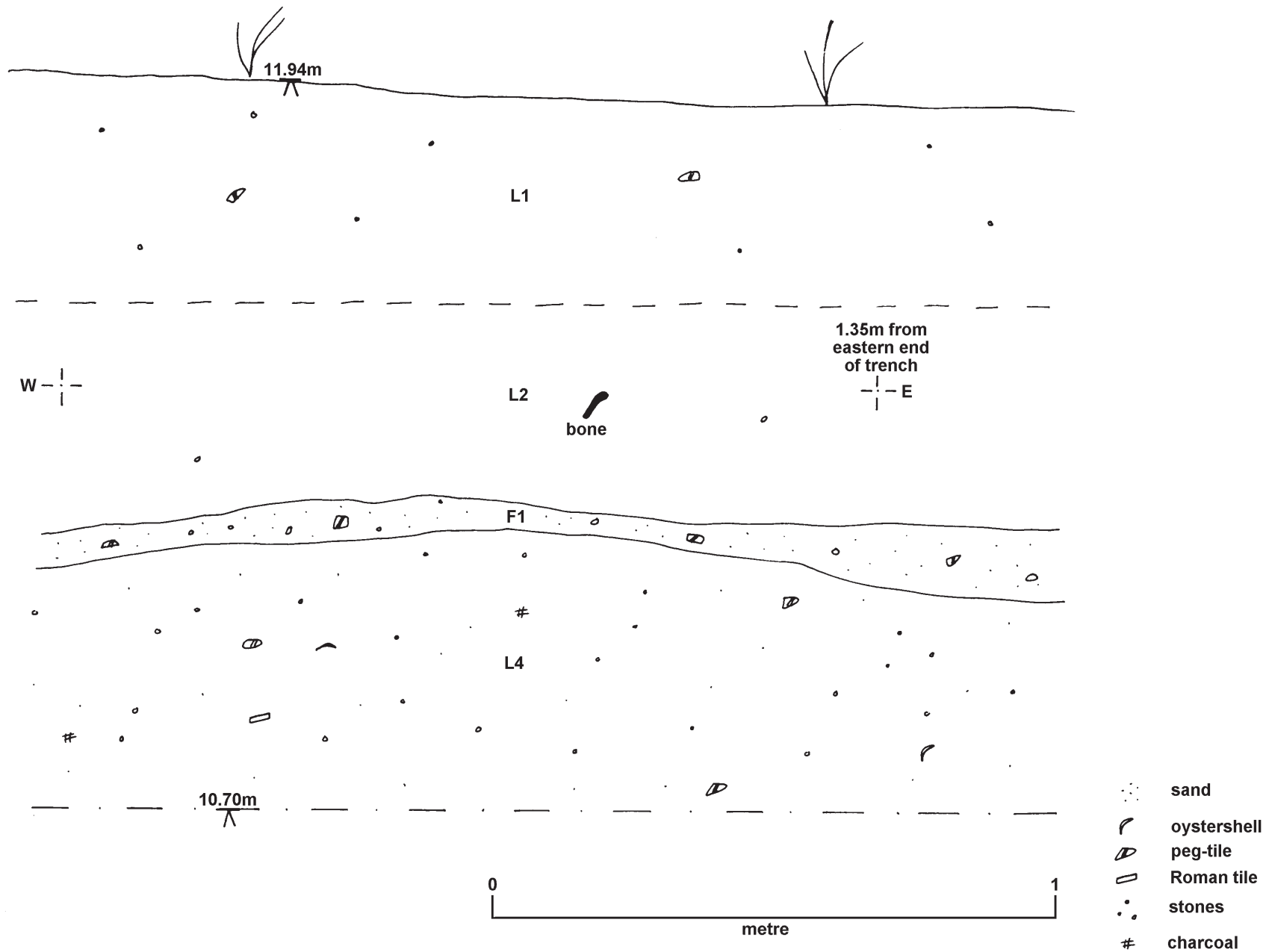


Fig 6 T1: representative south-facing section, scale 1:10.

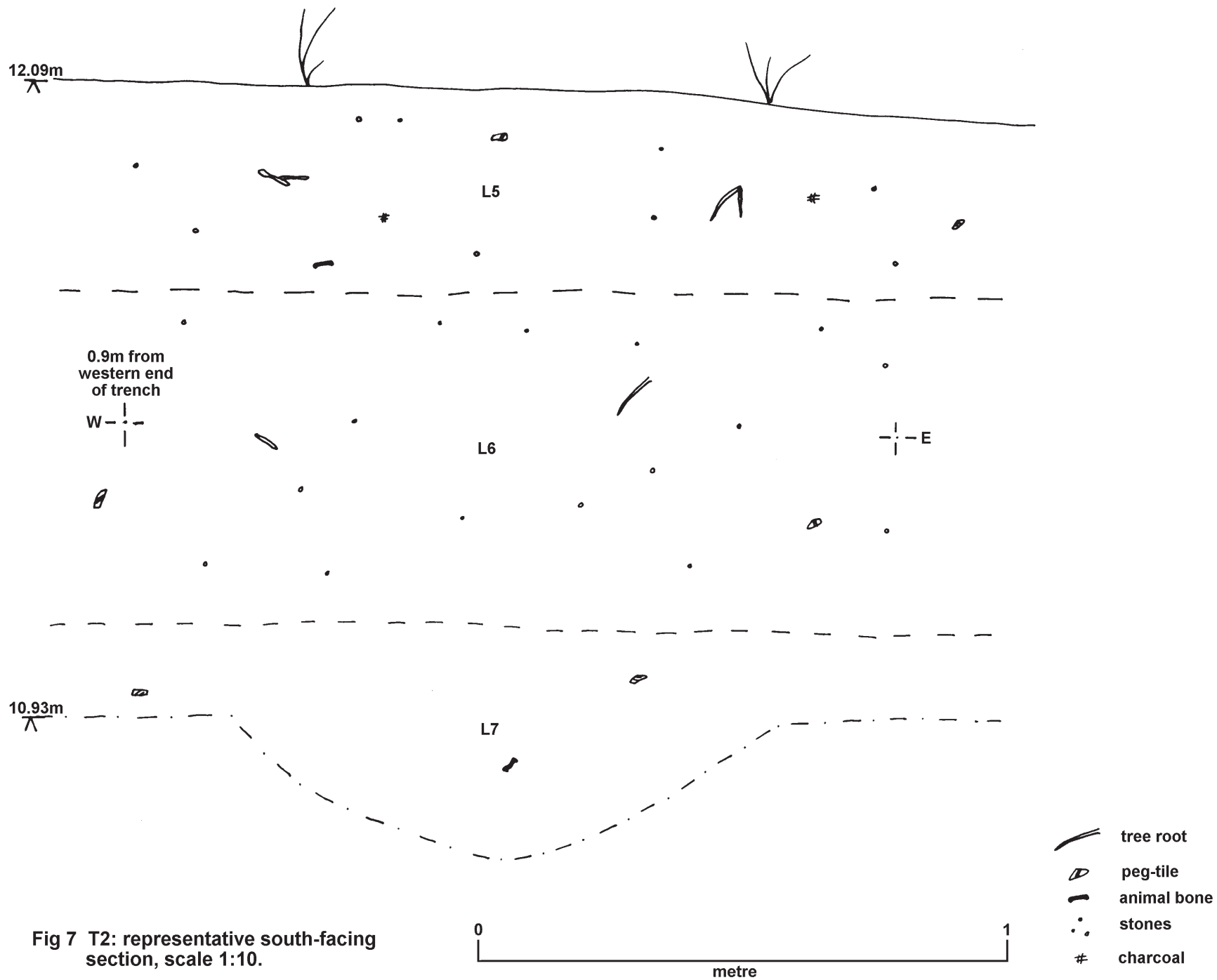


Fig 7 T2: representative south-facing section, scale 1:10.

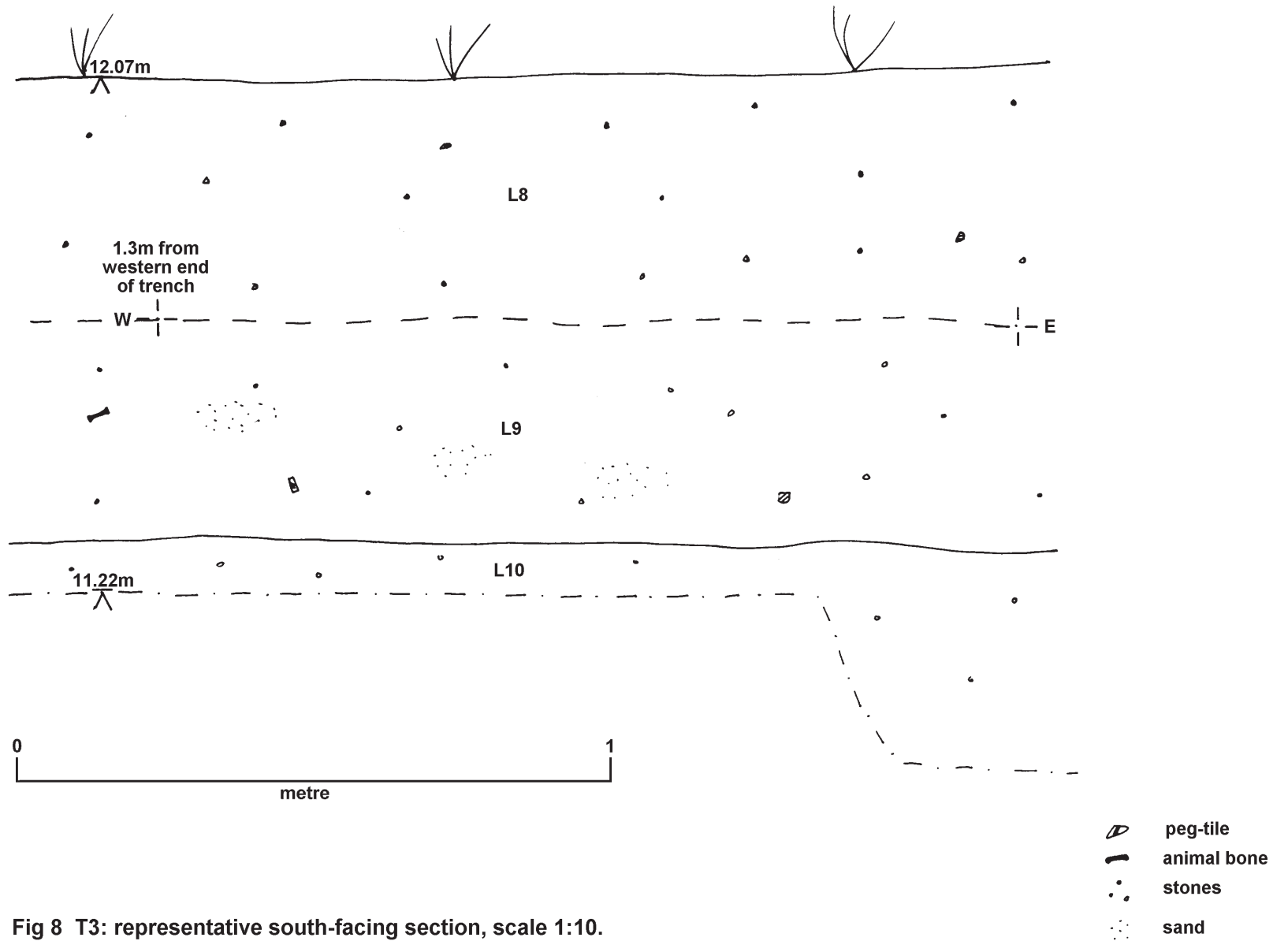


Fig 8 T3: representative south-facing section, scale 1:10.

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

Summary sheet

Site address: 23 St Julian Grove, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TM 00061 24946	Site code: Museum accession code 2002.173
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: October 2002	Size of area investigated: 19m x 30m
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHCR nos:
Final report: CAT Report 215 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: Post-medieval and modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: Three trial-trenches were excavated at 23 St Julian Grove, Colchester, Essex in an archaeological evaluation, during which silty deposits containing peg-tile to a depth of 2m were observed. This is interpreted as being hillwash, which has accumulated over the centuries. No features relating to St Botolph's priory were observed.	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: October 2002