

**An archaeological  
watching brief and recording  
at Villa Farm Quarry,  
Alresford, Essex  
April-September 2004**

**report prepared by  
Kate Orr**

**on behalf of  
Brett Aggregates**

CAT project ref.: 04/4a  
Colchester Museums accession code: 2004.347  
HAMP site code: ALVF 04  
NGR: TM 0564 2185 (centre)



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

12 Lexden Road,  
Colchester,  
Essex CO3 3NF

*tel.:* (01206) 541051  
*tel./fax:* (01206) 500124  
*email:* [archaeologists@catuk.org](mailto:archaeologists@catuk.org)

**CAT Report 287**  
October 2004

## **Contents**

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aims and objectives	1
5	Methodology	1
6	Results	2
7	Conclusion	2
8	Archive deposition	2
9	Acknowledgements	2

Figures after p 3

EHCR summary sheet

## **List of figures**

- Fig 1 Location of Villa Farm Quarry, Alresford.
- Fig 2 Plan of all excavated archaeological features.

## 1 Summary

*A watching brief was carried out after an area to the west of Cockaynes Wood had been stripped of topsoil and subsoil, prior to quarrying. During the watching brief, one possible prehistoric pit and two long, undated ditches, which may have been field boundaries, were recorded.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological monitoring and recording project at Villa Farm Quarry, Alresford, Essex (National Grid Reference TM 0564 2185 (centre)). An area measuring 126m by 50m was stripped of topsoil and subsoil in advance of quarrying works.
- 2.2 The site is located 1km to the west of Alresford village, to the north of the railway line. The field is on the western side of the quarry, in a field that was formerly ploughed. To the east is Cockaynes Wood, part of which has been cleared and is currently being quarried.
- 2.3 The work was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the 6th April 2004 and between the 8th and 24th September 2004, on behalf of Brett Aggregates. A brief was supplied by the Essex County Council (ECC) Archaeology Advisory Group (now Heritage Advice, Management and Promotion or HAMP group) in 1993; however, this was only supplied after fieldwork had been completed.
- 2.4 The project was monitored by the ECC HAMP group.
- 2.5 This report follows the standards set out in *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (2003) and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1999). The guidance contained in the document *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA Occasional Paper, 14, 2003) was also followed.

## 3 Archaeological background

There are a number of archaeological sites in the vicinity. These include cropmark sites (EHCR nos 2361 and 2589-2591); among these are several ring-ditches, which, together with the find of a Bronze Age cinerary urn at Alresford Grange (EHCR no 2606), indicate that finds of prehistoric burials are particularly likely in the area.

## 4 Aims and objectives

The aim of the archaeological project was to identify, excavate and record any archaeological features or deposits exposed in the topsoil strip to enable their date, importance and condition to be assessed.

## 5 Methodology

- 5.1 The soil-stripped area was examined by detailed walkover. Where archaeological features were visible, they were marked and then examined by excavation. This involved half-sections of the pit and sections across the ditches. All digging was by hand.
- 5.2 Features were recorded on standard CAT pro-forma sheets and photographs were taken with a digital camera. No section drawings of features were made. A plan was made using a total station.

## **6 Results (Fig 2)**

- 6.1** 300mm of topsoil and subsoil had been stripped off to expose natural sands and gravels. Some topsoil may have been stripped off previously. Two ditches and one pit-like feature were exposed near the northern end of the site.
- 6.2** The first ditch (Feature or F1) could be clearly seen at the northern end of the field. It extended in a north-west to south-east direction for 65m. It was 1.3m wide and at least 260mm deep but the feature was not bottomed. It was filled by light brown sandy silt. There were no finds from this feature and therefore it is not possible to assign a date to it.
- 6.3** The second ditch (F3) followed a roughly east to west alignment and intersected F1. F3 was a shallow U-shaped feature, 1m wide and 280mm deep with a light brown sandy fill. A narrow section was taken across it, but no finds were retrieved.
- 6.4** The only other feature was an irregular, shallow pit-like feature (F2) near the intersection of F1 and F3. One struck flint was found on its surface. The feature was filled by mid brown sandy silt and was 160mm deep. A small section was taken out of the feature but no further finds were retrieved. The feature may be prehistoric, judging by the flint. It was not planned using the total station because contractors later dumped spoil over it, thereby obscuring it.

## **7 Conclusion**

Nothing of archaeological significance was observed during the soil-stripping. Three features were recorded, ie one possible prehistoric pit and two undated ditches. Given the cropmarks in the vicinity, it is possible that these are prehistoric field ditches or boundaries.

## **8 Archive deposition**

A copy of this report and the archive will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museums under the accession code 2004.347.

## **9 Acknowledgements**

The Colchester Archaeological Trust is grateful to Brett Aggregates for funding the work and Mineral Services Ltd for commissioning it. Site work was carried out by Laura Pooley and Kate Orr.

© Colchester Archaeological Trust 2004

### **Distribution list:**

Brett Aggregates  
Peter Orrock, Mineral Services Ltd  
Pat Connell, Archaeological Officer, ECC HAMP group  
Essex Heritage Conservation Record, Essex County Council



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

12 Lexden Road,  
Colchester,  
Essex CO3 3NF

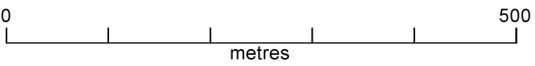
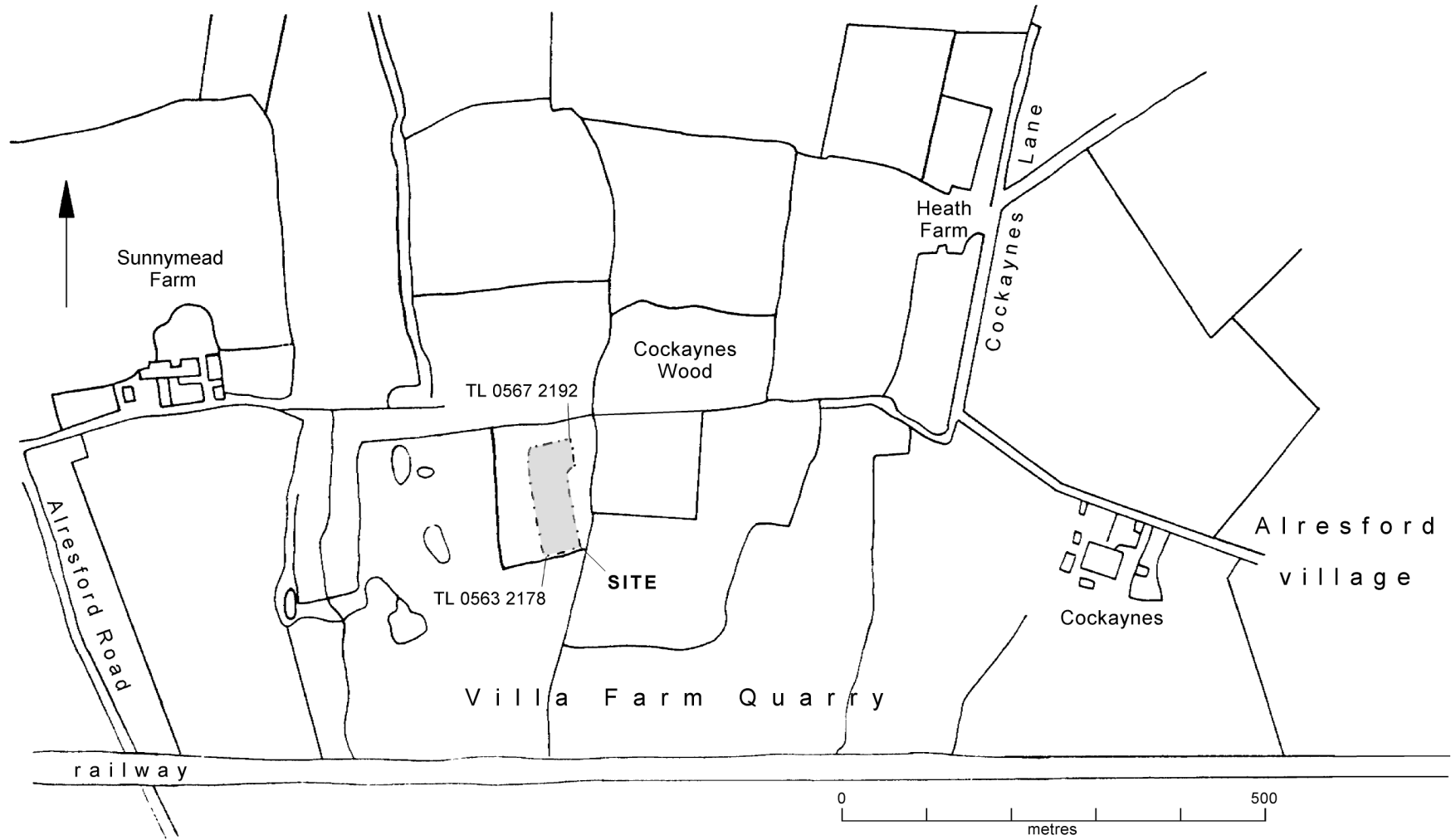
*tel.:* (01206) 541051

*tel./fax:* (01206) 500124

*email:* [archaeologists@catuk.org](mailto:archaeologists@catuk.org)

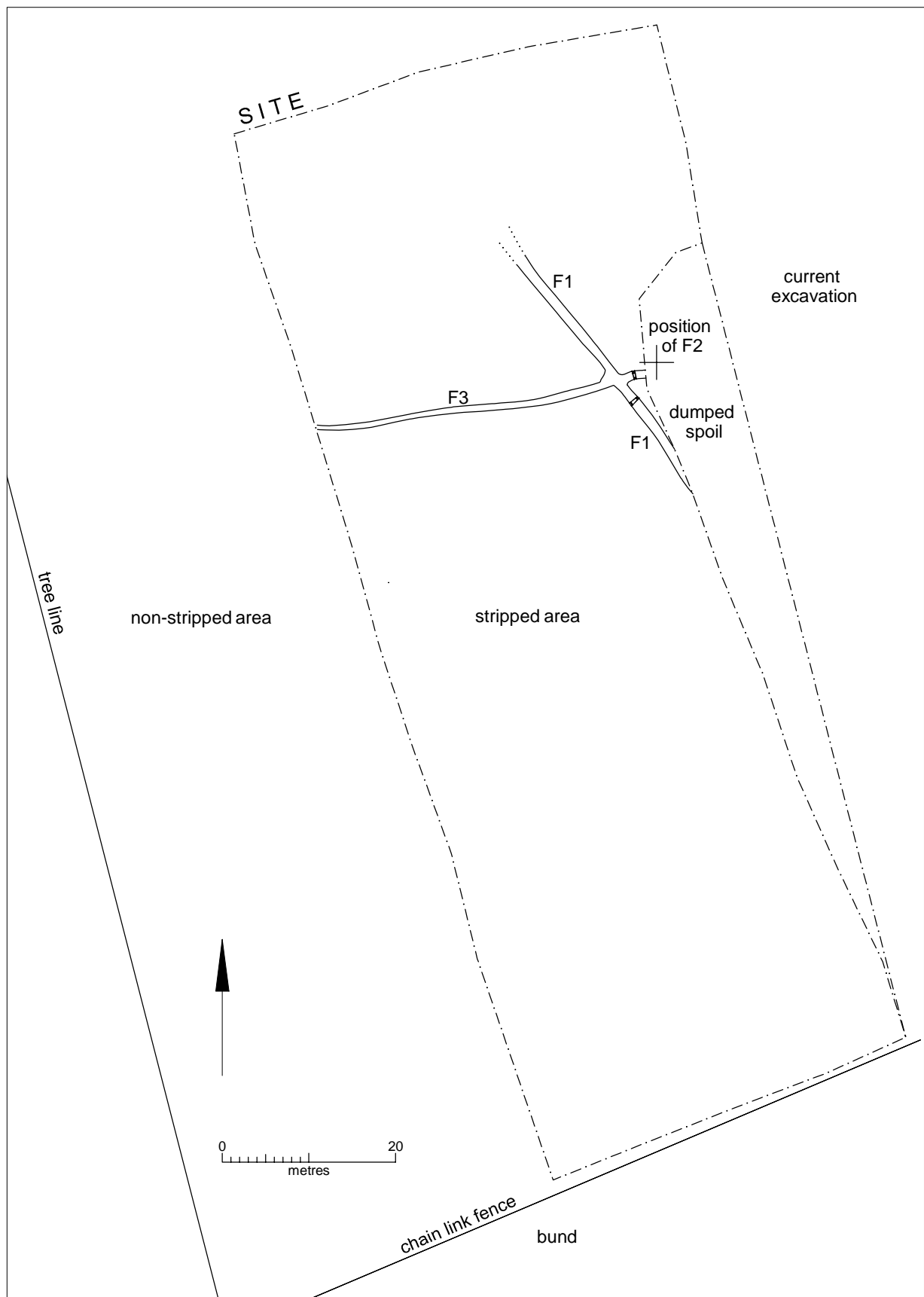
*checked by:* Philip Crummy  
*date:* 15.10.04

*Adams c:/reports04/villa farm/report287.doc*



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100039294.

Fig 1 Location of Villa Farm Quarry, Alresford.



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100039294.

Fig 2 Plan of all excavated archaeological features.

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

**Summary sheet**

<b>Site address:</b> Villa Farm Quarry, Alresford, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Alresford	<b>District:</b> Tendring
<b>NGR:</b> TM 0564 2185 (centre)	<b>Site code:</b> Museum accession code 2004.347 HAMP site code ALVF 04
<b>Type of work:</b> Watching brief and recording	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> April-September 2004	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 126m x 50m
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Colchester Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> Brett Aggregates
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> Uncertain	<b>Related EHCR nos:</b> 2361, 2589-2591, 2605
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 287 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> ?Prehistoric	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> <i>A watching brief was carried out after an area to the west of Cockaynes Wood had been stripped of topsoil and subsoil, prior to quarrying. During the watching brief, one possible prehistoric pit and two long, undated ditches, which may have been field boundaries, were recorded.</i>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> CAT Report 166	
<b>Author of summary:</b> Kate Orr	<b>Date of summary:</b> October 2004