

**An archaeological watching brief
and evaluation at
Great Notley business park,
near Braintree, Essex
June-September 2005**

**report prepared by
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**commissioned by
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on behalf of
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EHER summary sheet

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Plate 1 (front cover) – view of the site looking east, showing evaluation trenches and contractors' groundworks.

1 Summary

An archaeological watching brief and an evaluation consisting of 1400m of trenches were carried out between June and September 2005. Features were found to be spread very thinly over the site and were almost all linear cuts resembling ditches or gullies, with a few pit-like features. The north and west areas of the site were particularly quiet archaeologically. Only nine of the 41 features recorded produced any finds. Of those features without finds, most were natural in appearance and may have been the result of natural processes occurring during the last Ice Age or of more recent activity such as the felling of trees. Ditches containing Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery at the south-western corner of the site indicate that the land is on the edge of a Late Iron Age settlement which continued in use until the 1st century AD. The scarcity of features from the rest of the site suggests that most of the land here was not inhabited or used for arable farming, and it has been suggested that it was heathland.

2 Introduction (Figs 1-2)

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological watching brief and an evaluation by trial-trenching carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT). The investigations took place on the western part of the site of the planned business park at Great Notley, near Braintree, Essex.
- 2.2 The watching brief and evaluation site is centred on NGR TL 73665 21719. It is situated north-west of Great Notley Garden Village, and east of Great Notley Discovery Centre, between the A120 and the A131.
- 2.3 The archaeological investigations were undertaken in relation to a planning application (no BTE/2303/04) for a new business park. This is subject to a unilateral undertaking requiring a programme of archaeological work to be implemented due to the archaeological sensitivity of the site.
- 2.4 The work was carried out by CAT between the 29th June and the 6th September 2005.
- 2.5 All fieldwork was done in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) submitted by CAT which followed a brief which was supplied by the Essex County Council Heritage and Environment Management (ECC HEM) group. The project was monitored by Vanessa Clarke of the ECC HEM group.
- 2.6 This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines for the standards and practice of archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CM 2002) and *Guidelines for the deposition of archaeological archives with Colchester Museums* (CM 2003), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IFA 1999a), *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999b), and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001). Other sources are *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2), and *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment* (EAA 3), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (EAA 8), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14).

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The development site is located near a series of cropmarks of former field boundaries (EHER no 14171) and possible ditched trackways (EHER nos 9993 and 6501).
- 3.2 The site is south of the line of a Roman road which leads from Colchester to Braughing (Hertfordshire). This road may be regarded with some confidence as a British track which was straightened and metalled by Roman engineers. The road is called Stane Street in records from AD 1181 (EHER no 6502).

- 3.3** The current site and part of the site of the Great Notley Garden Village were fieldwalked. The survey did not record any particular concentrations of finds (Brooks 1994).
- 3.4** A further archaeological fieldwalking survey was carried out on another part of the site of the Great Notley Garden Village (EHER no 17766). The survey produced little evidence of substantial archaeological remains but three concentrations of burnt flint were recorded at NGR TL 7410 2064, TL 7410 2066 and at TL 7416 2072, which may indicate prehistoric activity (Garwood 1997).

4 Aim

The aim of the fieldwork was to establish and record the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains likely to be affected by the construction of the business park.

5 Methods (Figs 1-2)

- 5.1** The work was carried out in two phases. The first phase was a watching brief of the stripping of the new access road. The sewer and foul-drain trenches dug within this stripped area were also monitored. The evaluation trenches constituted the second phase. Thirty-four trenches (Trenches 1-34 or T1-T34), each 1.6m wide, were excavated by machine, approximating to 1400 m of trenching. This equated to 2% of the 10.4 hectare site. Firstly, a 200m-long trench (T1) was dug along the remainder of the line of the sewer and foul drains. Subsequently, the 33 other trenches (37m long unless otherwise stated) were opened up across the site, positioned to achieve an even spread.
- 5.2** There was some deviation from the original trench layout to avoid tree saplings, the temporary haul road and other obstructions. It was not possible to evaluate the extreme eastern end of the site due to the presence of the contractors' compound, spoil heaps, and stores of machinery and pipes.
- 5.3** A large mechanical excavator was used to strip off the topsoil for the access road and to dig the sewer and foul-drain trenches. A smaller mechanical excavator was used for the evaluation trenches, excavating off the topsoil and subsoil to expose archaeological features. Work was carried out under archaeological supervision and liaison was maintained with the ECC HEM group monitoring officer (Vanessa Clarke) to maintain an appropriate strategy to investigate deposits on the site.
- 5.4** All exposed subsoil features, archaeological deposits or negative features were photographed and examined in sufficient detail to allow their nature, date and importance to be assessed.
- 5.5** Each trench and any features located within it were planned using a total station, and a plan of the trenches and the surrounding boundaries was also made using the total station.
- 5.6** Individual records of features were entered on CAT pro-forma recording sheets. Section drawings of layers were made at a scale of 1:10.
- 5.7** Finds were registered on CAT pro-forma record sheets and assigned find numbers according to context. Finds were washed, marked with the site code number, and bagged according to context. Prehistoric and Roman pottery was identified by CAT archaeologist Stephen Benfield; post-medieval and modern pottery was identified by CAT archaeologist Howard Brooks.
- 5.8** Colour photographs of the main features, sections, and the site environs were taken with a digital camera.
- 5.9** Metal-detecting of the spoil heaps was conducted during the watching brief on the service trenches.

6 Results (Figs 2-6)

6.1 Watching brief

A watching brief was maintained on the topsoil-stripping for the new access road and on the trenches dug for the sewer and foul drain within this stripped area. This was carried out between the 30th June and the 29th July. The topsoil-stripping of the new access road was undertaken with a mechanical excavator mainly using a toothed bucket. Natural ground was not reached, meaning that early archaeological features were not exposed. One modern feature (Feature or F1) was recorded, a wide ditch which narrowed to 1m width at the base. This contained one piece of modern china and occasional peg-tile. Its fill was dark and modern in appearance.

Almost half (180m) of the length of sewer and foul-drain trenches were monitored under the watching brief, ie the stretch from the eastern end of the site to the western side of the copse of trees. These trenches were dug in sections and were boxed immediately, making it difficult to view the sides of the trench. The trenches were too deep to enter. The sewer trench was 1.1m wide, plus wider manholes, and it was 4-5m deep. It was dug using a toothed bucket. The foul drain was dug parallel to the sewer trench and to the north of it. It was 2m wide, with wider manholes, and was at least 5m deep. It was dug with a toothless ditching bucket. No features were observed in either trench. There was a depth of made-up ground (L4) consisting of material redeposited from the Great Notley Garden Village development (see section 6.2, T1).

The spoil heaps were checked visually and using a metal detector and nothing of archaeological significance was retrieved.

Fence posts for the hoarding erected around the copse of trees were inspected. These were cut by a mechanical excavator and were 1m x 200mm wide. Nothing was observed here.

A small amount of Roman pottery and one possible *tessera* cube were retrieved from the topsoil-stripping at the western end of the new access road and the area of the new roundabout. The remainder of the topsoil-stripping only produced occasional peg-tile and post-medieval/modern pottery.

6.2 Evaluation

Trench 1: summary

Within the area stripped of topsoil for the new access road, a 200m-long trench (T1) was excavated. It was decided that digging an evaluation trench along the remainder of the course of the service trenches would be a more effective and faster method of recording archaeological features than carrying on the watching brief in this area. Topsoil (Layer or L3) had already been stripped off. At the eastern end of T1, near the copse of trees, topsoil sealed a yellowish brown clay layer (L4) which merged with the chalky subsoil (L1) below. Below L1, natural chalky boulder clay (L2) was encountered at between 800mm and 900mm below ground-level. L4 was originally interpreted as being subsoil. However, contractors informed us that this was material from the development at Great Notley Garden Village to the south, which had been deposited on the eastern half of the evaluation site in order to fill in a natural depression and level out the site. Further west, this layer of redeposited clay became thinner and gradually disappeared, and natural boulder clay (L2) became shallower. Thus at the western end of the trench natural was reached at 400mm below ground-level.

Seventeen cut features were observed in this trench. Most of them were linears or were curved and appeared to be ditches or gullies cutting into natural. Upon excavation, none produced any finds and only F2 contained any charcoal. A few may be archaeological features, but F10, F11 and F12 had the appearance of natural periglacial features (formed by melting ice wedges) due their irregular profiles and uneven edges.

Trench 2: summary

This trench was in the centre of the site was dug to a depth of 540mm. Topsoil (L3) overlaid chalky flinty subsoil (L1) which in turn sealed natural boulder clay (L2). One small, steep-sided linear (F18), which was east-west aligned, was exposed. This did not produce any artefacts. There was a variation in the natural towards the northern end of the trench which was given a feature number (F24) as it contained some

charcoal pieces. A broad line of dark clay dipped underneath a broad band of dark yellow sand. Two other natural features were recorded but not given feature numbers.

Trench 3: summary

T3 was located near T2, and was dug to a depth of 810mm. Two cut linear features with sandy clay fills were observed but there were no finds. F19 was narrow and shallow. To the east of F19 was a wider and deeper feature (F20). As with most features in the evaluation, they were cut into natural (L2).

Trench 4: summary

T4 was located near the A120 on the northern part of the site. There was over 1m depth of subsoil or redeposited material in this trench, and thus it was deeper (1m) than most of the others. No features were recorded.

Trench 5: summary

T5 was situated to the south of the area which was stripped for the new roundabout, and its depth was 600mm. This was an area where Roman pottery and a *tessera* cube had been picked up during the watching brief. Two wide ditches were recorded (F21 and F22), which were both on an east-south-east to west-north-west alignment. F21 had a dark brown brown fill which gave it the appearance of a post-medieval field boundary. Its upper fill (F21a) contained some animal bone, an iron object and some peg-tile. However, the lower fill (F21b) contained a few sherds of Late Iron Age and Roman pottery and some small tile or daub fragments. This pottery, being only a small quantity, may have been residual or it may indicate an ancient ditch which was open for a long period and filled up over time, or alternatively had been re-cut. F22 contained Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery throughout and animal bone was present in its upper fill. One sherd of probable Bronze Age pottery was a residual find. The fill of F22 was a light brown silty clay with orange patches. Two other natural features were observed in the trench.

Trench 6: summary

T6 was located near the centre of the site. The only feature in this trench was F23, a probable natural linear feature which was very steep-sided and 950mm deep.

Trench 7: summary

T7 was located near T6. There was 1m depth of subsoil or redeposited material in this trench and thus it was deeper than most of the others (1m). No features were recorded in this trench.

Trench 8: summary

T8 was located to the west of the copse of trees. There was 1m depth of subsoil or redeposited material in this trench and thus it was deeper than most of the others (1m). No archaeological features were exposed, but one natural-looking feature was recorded at the northern end.

Trench 9: summary

T9 was situated near T3. Natural ground was a brown clay rather than chalky boulder clay in this area. The depth of the trench was 790mm. What appeared to be a north-east to south-west-aligned ditch was seen in the southern part of the trench (F25). F25 was 1.85m wide and filled by a homogeneous sandy clay with a few flecks of manganese but without any finds. Its fill seemed to undercut the natural and there was not a clear edge to the feature; therefore it is unlikely to be man-made and more likely to be a variation in the natural ground.

Trench 10: summary

T10 occupied the northern part of the site, near the A120. The trench was between 1m and 1.1m deep due to a depth of material dumped on the land, presumably from the construction of the A120. No archaeological features were observed in this trench.

Trench 11: summary

T11 was also situated near the A120 and was dug to between 1.3m and 1.45m depth. Boulder clay was not reached but instead a soft clean brown clay containing manganese, which was presumed to be natural in origin. The trench soon filled up with water due to a high water table. A small amount of Roman tile and Roman pottery was retrieved from near the base of the trench. One linear feature (F26) was recorded at the southern end; however, its fill was dark blue-black clay and modern in appearance and contained modern pieces of wood. The feature was not excavated because the trench kept filling up with water.

Trench 12: summary

This trench was placed near T5, and was dug to a depth of 770mm. It was hoped that F22 in T5 (a ditch with Roman pottery) would continue into this trench but no trace of it was seen. At the eastern end of the trench, a ditch-like feature (F27) was recorded. This was not fully excavated as it appeared to be a natural feature. There was also a natural-looking, possibly periglacial feature at the western end of the trench.

Trench 13: summary

T13 was placed to the north of T12 and east of T5, and was dug to a depth of 900mm. A 800mm-deep ditch (F28) was cut into natural at the western end of the trench. Its width was not determined because the feature extended under the western baulk of the trench and the trench could not be excavated further. The silty clay fill contained pieces of charcoal and Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery from its middle and lower fills. Of particular interest was part of a rim and shoulder of a storage jar which was found upright at the base of the trench. F28 was a substantial feature on a north-west to south-east alignment but it was not observed in T1 or in T12.

Trench 14: summary

T14 was situated near T11 and also filled up with water over a few days. Its depth varied from 900mm to 1.2m. Topsoil sealed a thick clean layer of soft brown clay which extended to 1.2m depth in the western end of the trench. Natural sand was reached at the eastern end of the trench at 900mm. No features were recorded.

Trench 15: summary

T15 was dug in the western part of the site and was between 1.1m and 1.2m deep. Natural ground varied along the length of the trench from a moist mid brown clay (similar to T14) to sand to chalky boulder clay. No archaeological features were recorded in this trench.

Trench 16: summary

This trench was positioned near the A120 in the north-western part of the site and was up to 1.4m deep. No archaeological features were recorded in this trench.

Trench 17: summary

This trench was positioned near the A120 in the north-western part of the site and was 750mm deep. No archaeological features were recorded in this trench.

Trench 18: summary

This trench was positioned near the A120 in the north-western part of the site and was 410mm deep. No archaeological features were recorded in this trench.

Trench 19: summary

This trench was positioned in the north-western part of the site and was 770mm deep. A 1.25m-wide linear feature was sectioned (F19), which proved to be of probable natural origin. A second, natural feature was left unexcavated.

Trench 20: summary

T20 was placed on the western side of the site and was dug to a depth of 480mm. Two small circular burnt patches (F30 and F31) clearly showed within the subsoil (L1). Both were half-sectioned but there were no traces of cremated bone or pottery or any other finds to indicate that they were anything other than the remains of fires.

Trench 21: summary

T21 was positioned in the south-western corner of the site and was dug to a depth of 680mm. A 1.3m-wide linear on a north to south alignment (F32) was found to be shallow and without finds.

Trench 22: summary

T22 was 18.5m in length and situated in the south-western part of the site. The depth of the trench was 1.05m, and no archaeological features were recorded in this trench.

Trench 23: summary

T23 was situated in the south-western part of the site and was excavated to a depth of 1m. A 1.2m-wide, V-shaped linear in the centre of the trench was sectioned. Its irregular profile and lack of finds indicated that it was not man-made.

Trench 24: summary

T24 was positioned to the north of T23 and was dug to up to 820mm depth. After a few centimetres of L1 subsoil had been stripped off, a ditch (F34) was observed which was cut into L1 and L2. The upper fill contained abundant charcoal flecks. There was a differentiation of fills; the sides and base of the trench were filled by a yellowish brown clay with charcoal flecks (F34b) and the central and upper fill was greyish clay with more abundant charcoal flecks (F34a). A large quantity of fragments of Late Iron Age and early Roman coarse ware pottery was present throughout. The ditch was probably dug in the Late Iron Age and there would have been a gradual silting up of the sides and base, with the ditch finally being filled in the early Roman period.

Trench 25: summary

T25 was placed in the southern part of the site, and was dug to a depth of 750mm. One natural feature was excavated but its irregular section and lack of finds makes it unlikely that it is archaeological.

Trench 26: summary

T26 was positioned at the southern part of the site and was dug to a depth of 900mm. Two linear features were excavated (F38 and F39) plus one other which was not given a feature number. F38 was narrow and contained one sherd of late Iron Age pottery. F29, upon excavation, appeared more like a gully and did not contain any finds.

Trench 27: summary

T27 was located in the southern part of the site, near the A131. The trench was 670mm deep. A ditch (F35) containing animal bone and part of a gun cartridge in its upper fill was recorded at the eastern end of the trench.

Trench 28: summary

T28 was parallel to T27 and was 680mm deep. A ditch (F40), possibly a continuation of F35, was excavated. It contained peg-tile, animal bone and post-medieval pottery.

Trench 29: summary

This 620mm-deep trench was placed to the north of T25. One narrow linear feature was excavated but did not produce any finds.

Trench 30: summary

T30 was placed near the A131 and was dug to 670mm depth. A natural feature of unusual shape was excavated. One pit-like feature (F37) was half-sectioned, but with a lack of finds it is impossible to say with any certainty whether it was of archaeological or natural origin.

Trench 31: summary

This trench was positioned next to T30, on the southern side of the site, and it was 800mm deep. A feature which appeared to be a ditch (F36) was excavated; it was found to be very shallow and probably just subsoil filling a dip in the natural.

Trench 32: summary

The trench was placed towards the eastern side of the site and was 980mm deep. Three irregular-shaped features were recorded. One was given a feature number (F41) but was found to be very shallow.

Trench 33: summary

This trench was 20m long and 680mm deep. It was placed between T24 and T5 to intersect any Roman ditches. However, no archaeological features were recorded in this trench.

Trench 34: summary

The last trench was 17m long and was positioned at the eastern end of the site, by the A131. A hard concrete surface was encountered at 650mm depth which could not be removed and so excavation was stopped prematurely.

6.3 Summary table of contexts

Table 1: summary of contexts by trench number and associated finds.

Trenches or works	Feature or layer	Context type	Comments	Associated finds	Context dated as
all trenches	L1	subsoil	Yellowy brown clay, with chalk flecks and flint; hard to differentiate from L4	Roman tile, Roman pottery, Late Iron Age pottery, <i>tessera</i> ?	Roman to post-medieval
all trenches	L2	natural – usually chalky boulder clay	Most features are cut into L2	-	glacial
all trenches except where already stripped off	L3	topsoil	Dark brown loam	-	post-medieval to modern
eastern side of site	L4	imported clay material	Imported from Great Notley Garden Village development and spread on eastern part of site	1 piece of Roman tile	modern
access road strip	F1	ditch, probably field boundary, may have held water at the base	Upper fill – hard-medium brown silty loamy clay Middle fill – dark grey brown silty clay Lower fill – greyish clay with manganese or iron pan and one small shell	1 piece china from middle fill	post-medieval?

Trenches or works	Feature or layer	Context type	Comments	Associated finds	Context dated as
T1	F2	linear		Contained one area of charcoal	?
T1	F3	field drain	Held a narrow ceramic pipe	Fragment of tile	post-medieval or modern
T1	F4	linear	Round-bottomed and filled by mid brown silty clay with patches of grey; pockets of red sand	No finds	?
T1	F5	linear	Fairly shallow with clayey fill with chalk flecks and flint	No finds	?
T1	F6	linear	Fairly shallow filled by slightly chalky brown silty clay with grey flecks, flint	No finds	?
T1	F7	linear	V-shaped but rounded base, filled by mid brown silty clay with patches of grey	No finds	?
T1	F8	linear	Soft orangey brown silty clay with grey patches and manganese; occasional flint; round-bottomed; cut by F14	No finds	?
T1	F9	linear	Irregular profile, filled by mid orangey brown slightly silty clay with areas of grey clay; flint and chalk inclusions	No finds	?
T1	F10	natural irregular sub-linear feature	Curves round; similar to F11 and F12; profile is irregular; filled by yellowish brown silty clay with grey patches and chalk flecks	No finds	periglacial?
T1	F11	natural irregular sub-linear feature	Curves round; similar to F11 and F12, profile is irregular; filled by yellowish brown silty clay with grey patches and chalk flecks	No finds	periglacial?
T1	F12	natural irregular sub-linear feature	Curves round. Similar to F11 and F12. Profile is irregular. Filled by yellowish brown silty clay with grey patches and chalk flecks	No finds	periglacial?
T1	F13	shallow pit, probably natural	Filled by medium brown silty sandy clay, iron pan at the base	No finds	-
T1	F14	narrow linear feature	Filled by yellowish brown silty clay with grey patches; feature not bottomed; cuts F8; slightly curving	No finds	?
T1	F15	circular, curving narrow feature	Medium orangey brown silty clay with grey patches; shallow	No finds	?
T1	F16	shallow linear	Filled by dry mottled orangey brown clay, occasional flint	Brick flecks	?

Trenches or works	Feature or layer	Context type	Comments	Associated finds	Context dated as
T1	F17	shallow pit-like feature	Filled by dry mottled orangey brown clay, occasional flint, rare flint, chalk fragments	Brick flecks	?
T2	F18	narrow, steep-sided linear	Light brown/orangey clay with smudges of grey silt	No finds	?
T3	F19	fairly shallow linear	Light brown/orange sandy clay with areas of grey clay; probably natural as one side seems to dive under natural L2	No finds	?
T3	F20	linear	Filled by light brown/orange sandy clay with smudges of grey silt; feature not bottomed	No finds	?
T5	F21	ditch	Upper fill (F21a) – mid brown silty clay Lower fill (F21b) – dark brown clay silt	Peg-tile, Fe obj and animal bone in upper fill Late Iron Age and Roman pottery residual in lower fill	post-medieval?
T5	F22	ditch	Filled by light brown silty clay with orange patches; feature not bottomed	Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery, animal bone	Late Iron Age to early Roman
T6	F23	linear	Appeared to be a gully in section – probably natural	No finds	-
T2	F24	wide linear	Dark clay diving under sand; contains charcoal pieces but is probably a variation in the natural	Charcoal pieces	?
T9	F25	wide, straight-sided linear	Filled by light brown/orange sandy clay with smudges of grey clay; flint; feature not bottomed; fill appears to undercut natural ground – a natural feature?	No finds	?
T11	F26	wide linear	Wide feature filled by blackish blue clay – not excavated	Modern wood fragments	modern
T12	F27	wide linear	Filled by brown/orange silty clay	No finds	?
T13	F28	ditch	800mm deep, filled by moist grey clay silt mixed with yellowish brown clay silt; rare chalk fleck and flint; charcoal pieces and flecks	Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery	Late Iron Age to early Roman
T19	F29	linear	Yellowish brown silty clay with chalk flecks	No finds	?
T20	F30	burnt circular patch	Charcoal fill with band of reddened clay – probably remains of a fire	No finds	?

Trenches or works	Feature or layer	Context type	Comments	Associated finds	Context dated as
			Feature cuts L1		
T20	F31	burnt circular patch	Charcoal fill with band of reddened clay – probably remains of a fire Feature cuts L1	No finds	?
T21	F32	shallow linear	Filled by dark yellowish brown silty clay, similar to L1 above – may be a depression in natural ground	No finds	?
T23	F33	deep linear – V-shaped	Filled by light brown/orange sandy clay with smudges of grey silt	No finds	?
T24	F34	ditch – round-bottomed	Upper and inner fill (F34a) – dark grey clayey silt flecked with orange; charcoal flecks and patches; flint Lower and outer fill (F34b) – orangey brown clay, less charcoal; flint	Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery in both fills	Late Iron Age to early Roman
T27	F35	narrow ditch – round-bottomed	Filled by a dark brown sandy clay with chalk flecks	Iron nail in lower fill; gun cartridge and animal bone in upper fill	post-medieval?
T31	F36	linear	Very shallow and filled by L1 material – probably a depression in the natural	No finds	?
T30	F37	pit-like feature	Filled by a orange and buff-coloured silty clay, becoming more orange towards the base; flecks of manganese; flint	No finds	?
T26	F38	narrow linear	Filled by light brown/orange heavy clay	One fragment of Late Iron Age pottery	Late Iron Age?
T26	F39	linear	Narrows to a steep-sided gully, filled by light brown/orange clay with smudges of grey silt	No finds	?
T28	F40	ditch – round-bottomed	Filled by medium brown/yellow sandy clay with some red flecking	Post-medieval pottery, 1 piece animal bone, 1 fragment of CBM; possibly continuation of F35	post-medieval?
T32	F41	very shallow linear	Filled by dark yellowish brown silty clay with chalk flecks	No finds	?

7 List of finds

Table 2: list of finds by contexts.

(Pottery fabric codes after CAR 7 and CAR 10.)

Find no	Context	Trench or location	Description	Date	Weight (in g)
1	L1	Access road (WB)	Fragment of possibly Roman tile	Roman?	20.0
2	F1 – upper fill	Access road (WB)	2 fragments of possibly Roman tile	Roman, residually in context	18.0
3	F1	Access road (WB)	1 fragment of ironstone pottery	19th-20th century	3.0
4	L1	Access road (WB) – west	Possible worked flint	prehistoric?	5.2
4	L1	Access road (WB) – west	1 fragment of pottery	undated	3.0
5	L1	Access road (WB) – roundabout	1 possible <i>tessera</i> cube but without any mortar	Roman	6.0
6	L1	Roundabout (WB)	Pottery	early Roman	70.0
7	L1	Roundabout (WB)	2 pottery sherds	Late Iron Age or early Roman	5.0
8	U/S	Access road (WB)	Roman pottery	Roman	70.0
9	F3	T1	Fragment of tile – possibly Roman	Roman?	15.0
10	L1/L4	T1	Late Iron Age pottery	Late Iron Age	20.0
11	L1	T5	Late Iron Age or early Roman pottery	Late Iron Age or Early Roman	60.0
12	F22	T5	Roman and Late Iron Age pottery	Late Iron Age and Roman	129.0
13	L1	T2	Mortar	undated	33.0
14	F24	T2	Charcoal	undated	3.0
15	L4	T11	1 fragment of Roman roof tile (<i>imbrex</i>)	Roman	60.0
16	F22 – top fill	T5	Animal bone	undated	13.8
16	F22 – upper fill	T5	2 fragments of burnt clay	undated	5.0
17	F22 – top fill	T5	Roman pottery	early Roman	100.0
17	F22 – upper fill	T3	2 fragments of tile	?	1.0
18	F22 – 50mm down	T5	Late Iron Age and Roman pottery	Late Iron Age and Roman	12.0
19	F22 – 70mm down	T5	Roman pottery	Roman	8.0
19	F22 – 70mm down	T5	Bronze Age sherd	Bronze Age residual in context	2.0
20	F22 – 300mm down	T5	2 Late Iron Age sherds	Late Iron Age	10.0
21	F21 – upper fill	T5	Animal bone	undated	5.0
21	F21 – upper fill	T5	Iron objects	undated	1.5

22	F1 – middle fill	T5	Peg-tile	medieval to modern	23.6
23	F21 – lower fill	T5	Roman pottery	Roman	83.0
23	F21 – lower fill	T5	2 fragments of tile, 2 fragments of tile or daub	?	3.0
24	F22 – 250mm down	T5	Roman pottery	Roman	15.4
25	F28	T13	Roman pottery	Roman	21.0
25	F28	T13	Flint – struck?	?	8.0
26	U/S near T13	-	1 sherd of Late Iron Age grog-tempered ware (fabric GTW) 1 sherd of Roman grey ware pottery (Fabric GX)	early Roman with residual Late Iron Age	8.0
27	F34	T24	Roman pottery	Roman	105.0
28	F28	T13	Late Iron Age and Roman pottery	Late Iron Age and early Roman	330.0
29	F28, middle fill	T13	2 sherds of Late Iron Age pottery	Late Iron Age	1.0
30	F38	T26	Pottery sherd	Late Iron Age	2.0
31	F40 – upper fill	T28	Animal bone	undated	
31	F40 – upper fill	T28	1 fragment of post-medieval red earthenware pottery (Fabric 40)	17th-18th century	3.0
31	F40 – upper fill	T28	1 fragment of peg-tile and one fragment of ?tile	medieval to modern	3.0
32	F35 – upper fill	T27	Animal bone	undated	25.0
32	F35 – upper fill	T27	Top of a gun cartridge	modern	7.4
32	F35 – upper fill	T27	Broken belamite fossil	undated	2.2
33	F35 – lower fill	T27	Iron nail	undated	4.8
34	F34 – upper fill	T24	Animal teeth	undated	4.5
34	F34 – upper fill	T24	Late Iron Age and Roman pottery	Late Iron Age and Roman	460.0
35	F34 – middle fill	T24	Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery	Late Iron Age and early Roman	760.0
36	F34 – lower fill	T24	Pottery	Roman	50.3

8 Discussion

8.1 Summary

Features were found to be spread very thinly over the site and were almost all cut linear features resembling ditches or gullies, with a few pit-like features. The north and west areas of the site were particularly quiet archaeologically. Only nine of the

41 features recorded produced any finds. Of these nine, four are thought to be Late Iron Age or Roman ditches or gullies (F22, F28, F34, F38). Another one of the nine was a post-medieval or modern field drain (F3). Four are likely to be post-medieval or modern field-boundary ditches (F1, F21, F35, F40). Of those features without finds, most were natural in appearance and may have been the result of natural processes occurring during the last Ice Age or of more recent activity such as the felling of trees.

8.2 Late Iron Age and Roman features

The main focus of Late Iron Age and early Roman activity was an 80m x 35m area at the western end of the access road. This was where a small amount of Late Iron Age and Roman pottery was found under the topsoil during the watching brief and where ditches containing Late Iron Age (c 70 BC-AD 43) and early Roman (1st-century AD) pottery were recorded in trenches T5, T13 and T24. Strangely, no features of this date were found in adjoining trenches T12, T23, T25, T29 or T33. This is also the area where cropmarks on aerial photographs show ditches.

In T5, two wide ditches were recorded (F21 and F22), which were both on an east-south-east to west-north-west alignment. F21 had a dark brown fill which gave it the appearance of a post-medieval field boundary. Its upper fill contained some animal bone, an iron object and some peg-tile. However, the lower fill contained a few sherds of Late Iron Age and Roman pottery and some small tile or daub fragments. The presence of early pottery in its lower fill may signify that F21 was originally dug in the Late Iron Age. However, an alternative and more likely explanation is that F21 was a post-medieval field-boundary ditch containing residual early pottery. F22 contained Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery (289g) throughout and animal bone was present in its upper fill. There was no charcoal, however. One sherd of probable Bronze Age pottery in its fill was a residual find. The fill of F22 was very different from that of F21, ie a light brown silty clay with orange patches.

In T13, a deep ditch (F28) was cut into natural at the western end of the trench. The silty clay fill contained pieces of charcoal and Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery (351g) from its middle and lower fills. Of particular interest was part of a rim and shoulder of a storage jar which was found upright at the base of the trench. F28 was a substantial feature on a north-west to south-east alignment but strangely was not seen to continue into T1 or T12. Either the feature curved around, or it was actually a large pit and therefore would not have been observed in the adjoining trenches. The width of F28 could not be established because the trench could not be extended any further due to obstructions.

In T24, a smaller ditch (F34) was recorded on a north-east to south-west alignment. A significant quantity (1.38kg) of Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery, mainly fragments of cooking and storage jars, came from both fills of the feature. Charcoal was abundant, especially in the upper fill.

In T26, a narrow cut linear feature (F38) was recorded and its clayey fill found to contain one piece of daub and one piece of Late Iron Age pottery. Its fill did not contain any charcoal. The absence of any later artefacts leads to the conclusion that the feature is a Late Iron Age ditch.

The quantity of pottery and the presence of charcoal in some of the ditches indicates that they surrounded a settlement rather than formed a field system. No structural remains, hearths nor rubbish-pits were recorded but it is possible that such settlement features would be exposed on further excavation. Some of the ditches may show up as cropmarks on aerial photographs.

8.3 Conclusion

The south-western corner of the site appears to be on the edge of a Late Iron Age settlement which continued in use until the 1st century AD. This may have not been observed by the fieldwalking surveys carried out on the site in previous years because pottery in ditches would remain out of reach of the plough and therefore would not necessarily be brought to the surface. The scarcity of features from the rest of the site suggests that most of the land here was not inhabited or used for arable farming, and it has been suggested that it was heathland.

9 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but will be permanently deposited with Braintree Museum under accession code BRNTM 2005.8.

10 Acknowledgements

The Trust would like to thank Andrew Martin Associates Ltd for commissioning the work, Countryside Properties Ltd for funding the work, and Ardmore Contractors for allowing access and for their assistance on site. The fieldwork was carried out by Howard Brooks, Jess Dorman, Nicky Garland, Brian Hurrell, Chris Lister, Kate Orr, Laura Pooley, David Ross, and Emma Sandford.

11 Abbreviations

CAR	Colchester Archaeological Report
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CM	Colchester Museums
EAA	East Anglian Archaeology
ECC	Essex County Council
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
HEM	Historic Environment Management
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
NGR	National Grid Reference
WB	watching brief

12 References

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|--|
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| CAR 7 | 2000 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-1985</i> , by John Cotter |
| CAR 10 | 1999 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-1986</i> , by R P Symonds and S Wade, ed by P Bidwell and A Croom |
| CM | 2002 | <i>Guidelines for the standards and practice of archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i> |
| CM | 2003 | <i>Guidelines for deposition of archaeological archives with Colchester Museums</i> |
| EAA 3 | 1997 | <i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 3, ed by J Glazebrook |
| EAA 8 | 2000 | <i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 8, ed by N Brown & J Glazebrook |
| EAA 14 | 2003 | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14, by D Gurney |
| Garwood, A | 1997 | Land at Great Notley Garden Village, Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit unpublished report |
| Hawkes, C F C,
& Hull, M R | 1947 | <i>Camulodunum</i> , RRCSAL, 14 |
| Hull, M R | 1958 | <i>Roman Colchester</i> , RRCSAL, 20 |

IFA	1999a	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
IFA	1999b	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological evaluation</i>
IFA	2001	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
MAP 2	1991	<i>Management of archaeological projects</i> , 2nd edition (English Heritage)
Niblett, R	1985	<i>Sheepen: a Roman industrial site at Camulodunum</i> , CBA, Research Report, 57

13 Glossary

context	either a feature, layer or a complex of layers/features
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
Late Iron Age	the period immediately prior to the Roman invasion, ie c 70 BC-AD 43
layer	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
post-medieval	after Henry VIII to around the late 18th century
Roman	period from AD 43 to c AD 410
U/S	unstratified (without a clear archaeological context)

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Appendix: the Roman pottery

by Stephen Benfield

Introduction

In this report on the late Iron Age and Roman pottery, vessel form numbers follow those of the Camulodunum (Cam) Roman pottery type series (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull 1958). Late Iron Age and Roman pottery fabrics used in this report (Table 3) follow those devised for CAR 10 with the addition of the fabric Late Iron Age grog-tempered ware which has been given the letter code GTW by the author.

Table 3: Late Iron Age and Roman pottery fabric codes and the corresponding fabric name used in this report.

Fabric code	Fabric name
DJ	coarse oxidised and related wares
GTW	Late Iron Age grog-tempered ware
GX	Other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares
HZ	large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares

The pottery was looked at by numbered find bag. For each bag the pottery was sorted into fabric types, the number of sherds noted, and an overall weight of pottery for each find bag recorded (Table 4).

About 2.3 kg of pottery was recovered from five features, with significant quantities of pottery from features F22 (T5) and F34 (T24).

The condition of the pottery appeared to be slightly abraded, though in general this may be an effect of soil conditions and significant abrasion was only noted in a few instances, most notably a sherd from F34 (find no 27) and a single sherd from F38 (find no 30).

Only four fabric types were found to be present, ie Fabrics DJ, GTW, GX and HZ. Of these fabrics, in addition to the sherds of Late Iron Age grog-tempered ware, some of the sherds from large storage jars (Fabric HZ) also contained grog temper, and none were hard-fired wares. Also the grey ware sherds (Fabric GX) contained black material, probably organic temper, and were relatively soft fabrics, none being hard-fired sandy grey wares. The small quantity of sherds in Fabric DJ, while not displaying any temper other than sand, were also rather soft and the sherds were moderately thick.

Most of the pottery consisted of small to medium-sized body sherds, though there were a small number of rims and one or two bases. The only pottery forms which could be identified to a numbered vessel type were a Cam 229 ripple-shouldered bowl from F22 (find no 12), and storage jars of form type Cam 271 from F28 (find no 28) and Cam 270 or 271 from L1 (find no 6).

Discussion

The Late Iron Age and Roman pottery from the site forms a small but interesting assemblage. The grog-tempered ware of fabric GTW is of Late Iron Age date. Though the number of sherds of fabric GTW in relation to the Roman Fabric GX were not recorded except in four bags with only a few sherds, the proportion of grog-tempered wares in the larger groups of sherds from F34 was about 20%-30% of the total number of sherds present, so that the Late Iron Age pottery is a significant part of the assemblage. Also some of the sherds of Fabric HZ which are grog-tempered may also date from the Late Iron Age. Given that the Late Iron Age pottery assemblage from the site consists almost entirely of body sherds, it can only be dated to the accepted date range for grog-tempered wares in the Late Iron Age, that is c 70 BC-AD 43. However, it can be noted that the ripple-shouldered bowl form Cam 229 appears at the Sheepen site at Colchester, and thus may be current as a form to at least c 5 AD (Niblett 1985, pp 1-3).

Much of the pottery of post-conquest Roman date consisted of body sherds, together with a few bases and rims, from jars or bowls, in soft fabric tempered with sand and black organic matter, possibly dung. Some grog may also be present in some of these sherds. This has been recorded under Fabric GX, and is essentially a transitional or Romanising fabric. None of the sherds were of hard-fired typical Roman sandy grey ware. At least some of the large storage jars (Fabric HZ) are also of Roman date as the typical rough

organic temper is only supplemented with sand and no grog is present. It is not clear if the few small sherds of coarse oxidised ware (Fabric DJ) are Roman, but they are not grog-tempered and are probably part of the Roman assemblage. No form types other than a storage jar of form Cam 271 (F28, find no 28) could be positively identified, though the bowl rim in Fabric GX from F34 (find no 35) is of 1st-century type. Overall, the absence of sandy grey wares and the few indications of pottery forms suggest that the Roman pottery is probably all of 1st-century date.

Table 4: Bronze Age, Late Iron Age and Roman pottery by fabric and sherd count.

Context	Trench	Find no	Description (fabric code)	Weight (in g)	Spot date for Roman pottery in the context
L1/L4	1	10	1 thick sherd with a coarse fabric, with some grog temper	20	?Late Iron Age
F22 – upper fill	5	17	11 sherds of locally produced grey wares (Fabric GX) 3 sherds of coarse oxidised ware (Fabric DJ)	100	Roman (?1st century)
F22 – 70mm down	5	19	2 sherds of locally produced grey wares (Fabric GX)	8	Roman (?1st century)
F22 – 70mm down	5	19	1 prehistoric sherd, flint tempered	2	?Bronze Age (residual in context)
F22 – 300mm down	5	20	4 sherds grog-tempered ware (fabric GTW), 2 sherds of which fine grog temper	10	Late Iron Age
F22 – 250mm down	5	24	1 sherd of grog-tempered ware (fabric GTW)	12	Late Iron Age
F22 – upper fill	5	16	2 fragments of burnt clay	5	-
F22 – 50 mm down	5	18	1 sherd of Late Iron Age grog-tempered ware (fabric GTW) 1 sherd of Roman grey ware with organic temper (Fabric GX)	12	early Roman?
F22	5	12	2 sherds of a large grog-tempered storage jar (Fabric HZ) 2 sherds of Late Iron Age ripple-shouldered bowl, grog-tempered, Cam 229 (fabric GTW) 2 sherds of orange sandy fabric (Fabric DJ)	140	Late Iron Age- ?early Roman
F21 – lower fill	5	23	3 sherds of grey ware storage jar (Fabric HZ) 2 sherds of grey ware with organic temper and ? fine grog (fabric GTW); jar or beaker rim with body sherd	90	early Roman
L1	5	11	2 sherds from large storage jar, coarse fabric with some grog (Fabric HZ)	60	Late Iron Age to early Roman
F28 – middle fill- 50mm down	13	29	2 sherds grog-tempered ware, (fabric GTW)	1	Late Iron Age
F28 – lower fill -80mm down	13	28	2 sherds – body and rim of large storage jar (Fabric HZ) with bead rim Cam 271 2 sherds of grog-tempered ware (fabric GTW)	330	Late Iron Age/early Roman

Context	Trench	Find no	Description (fabric code)	Weight (in g)	Spot date for Roman pottery in the context
F28	13	25	1 sherd of grog-tempered ware (fabric GTW) and 1 sherd of locally produced grey ware (Fabric GX)	20	early Roman with residual Late Iron Age
F34 – middle fill	24	35	Approx 100 sherds of which 70% are grey ware (Fabric GX) inc rim from a bowl, and the rest are grog-tempered ware (fabric GTW)	760	early Roman with some residual Late Iron Age
F34 – upper fill	24	34	Approx 60 sherds of which approx 80% are grey ware (Fabric GX) inc body sherd from a wide mouthed bowl and a rim of a large jar or bowl. The remainder are grog-tempered, inc 4 sherds from one large storage jar (Fabric HZ)	460	early Roman with some residual Late Iron Age
F34 - lower fill and sides	24	36	1 sherd of Late Iron Age grog-tempered ware (fabric GTW) (different vessel to find no 34) 1 sherd of Roman grey ware (Fabric GX)	55	early Roman with residual Late Iron Age
F34	24	27	1 sherd of large storage jar (Fabric HZ), abraded	105	Roman (1st-2nd/3rd century)
F38	26	30	1 sherd grog-tempered sherd (fabric GTW) very abraded	2	Late Iron Age
U/S	near T13	26	1 sherd of Late Iron Age grog-tempered ware (fabric GTW) 1 sherd of Roman grey ware (Fabric GX)	8	early Roman with residual Late Iron Age
L1	Roundabout strip	7	1 sherd of coarse organic tempered fabric (Fabric HZ)	5	?Late Iron Age or Roman (1st-?2nd/3rd century)
L1	Roundabout strip	6	1 sherd of coarse organic tempered rim of a large storage jar (Fabric HZ) Cam 270 or 271	70	Roman (1st-2nd/3rd century)
U/S	Access road WB	8	1 sherd grog-tempered (Fabric HZ)	70	Roman (?1st century)
				2,345	

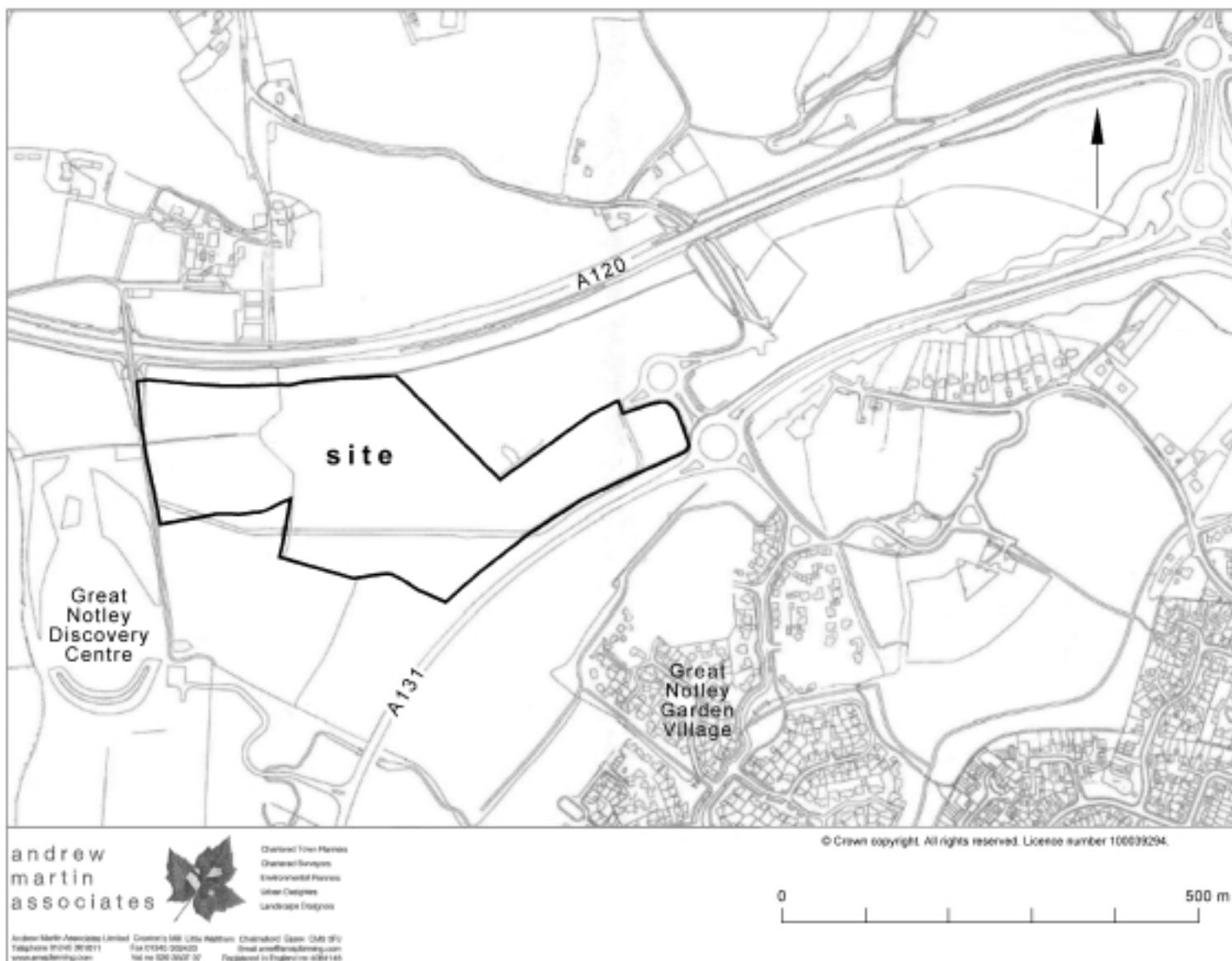


Fig 1 Site location.

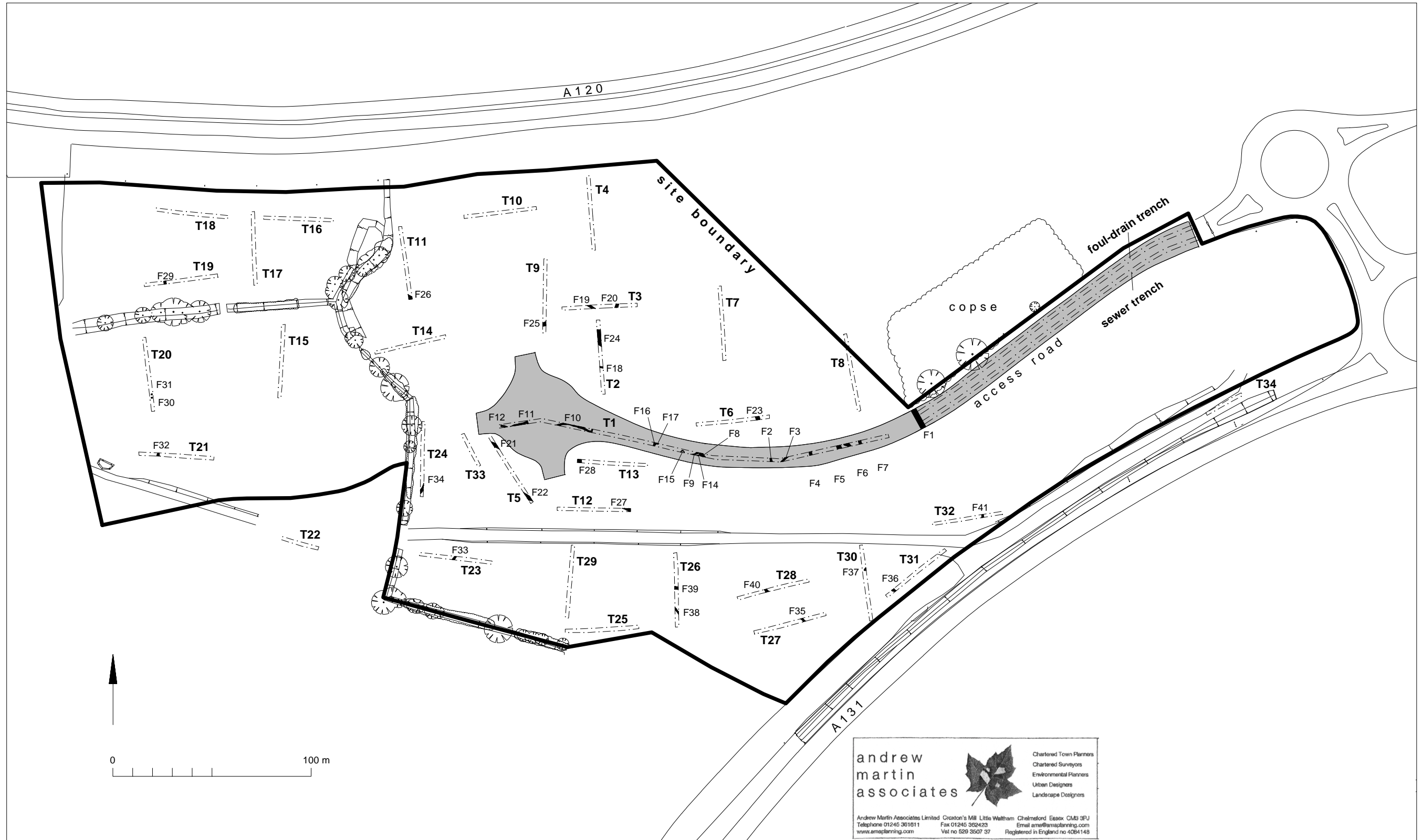
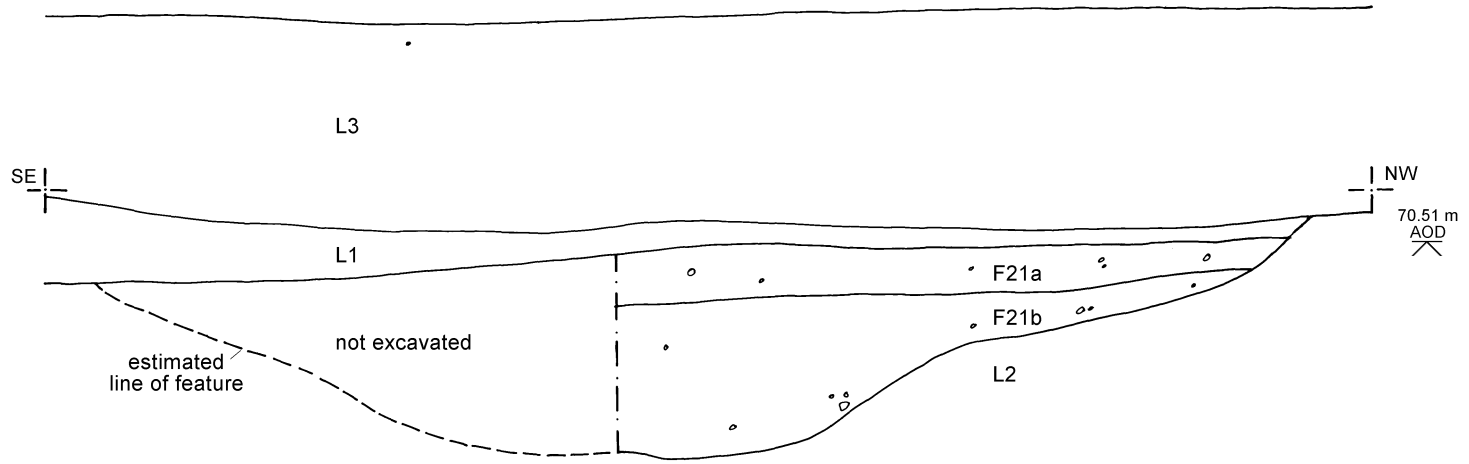


Fig 2 Plan of evaluation trenches and features, also showing the access road strip covered by the watching brief.

F21: north-east-facing section



F22: north-east-facing section

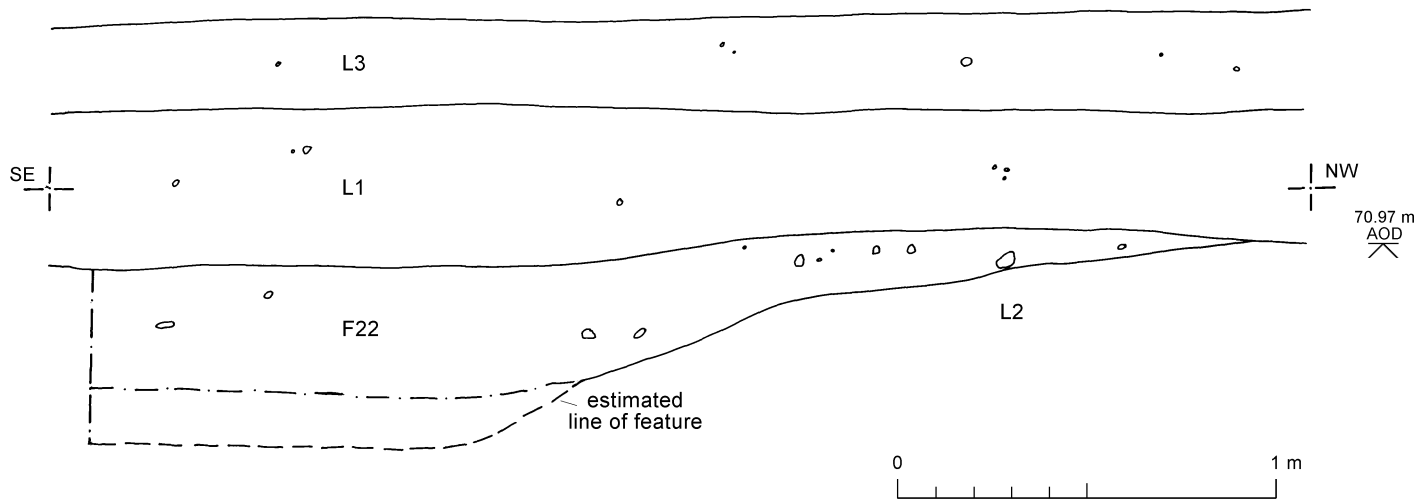
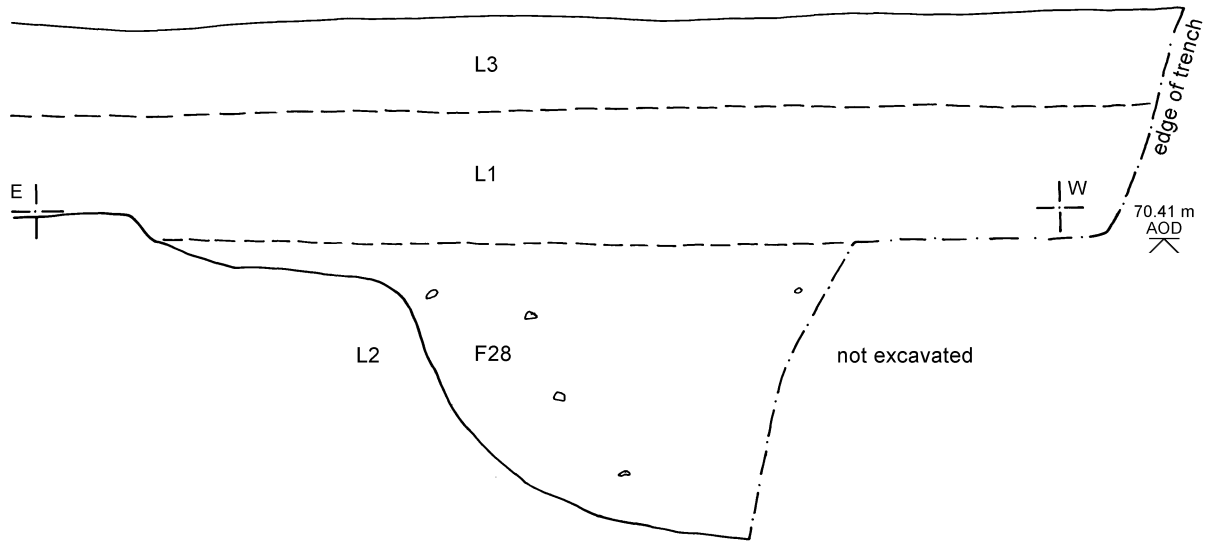


Fig 3 F21 and F22: section drawings.

F28: north-facing section



F34: south-facing section

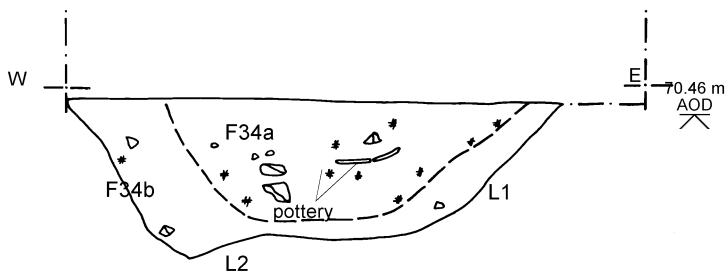


Fig 4 F28 and F34: section drawings.

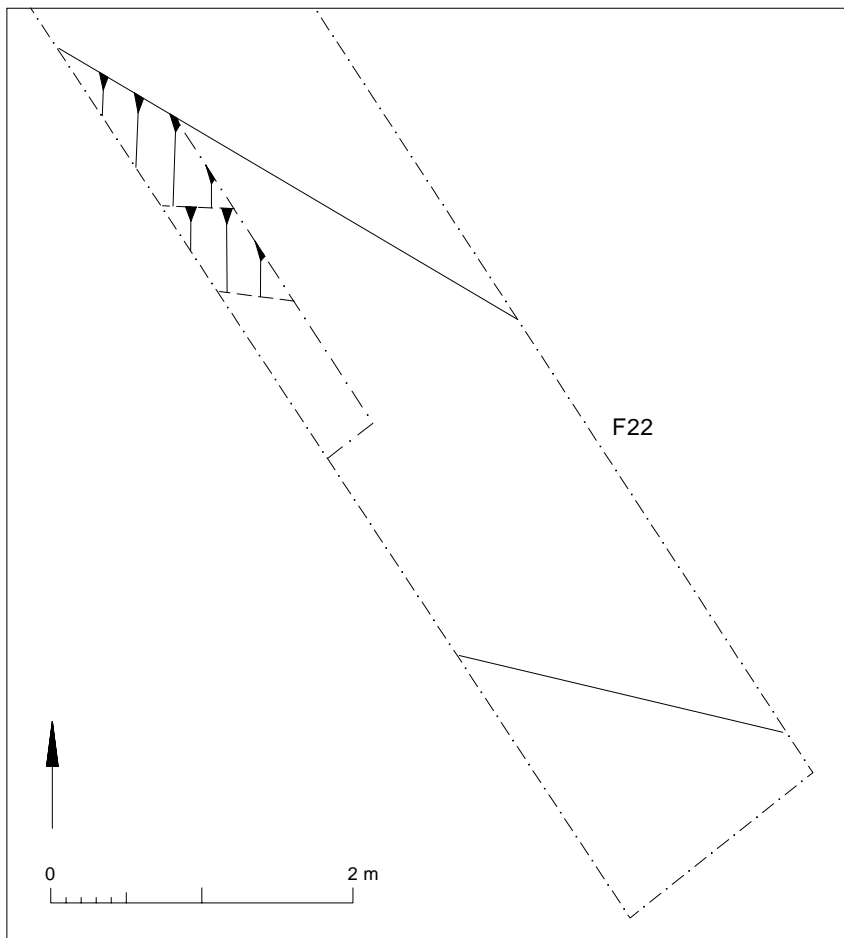
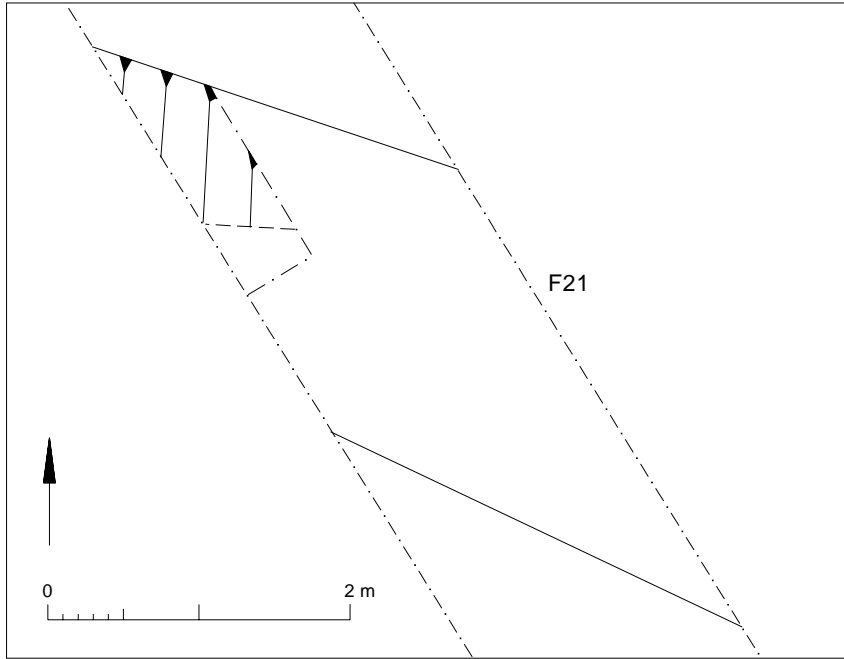


Fig 5 F21 and F22: plans.

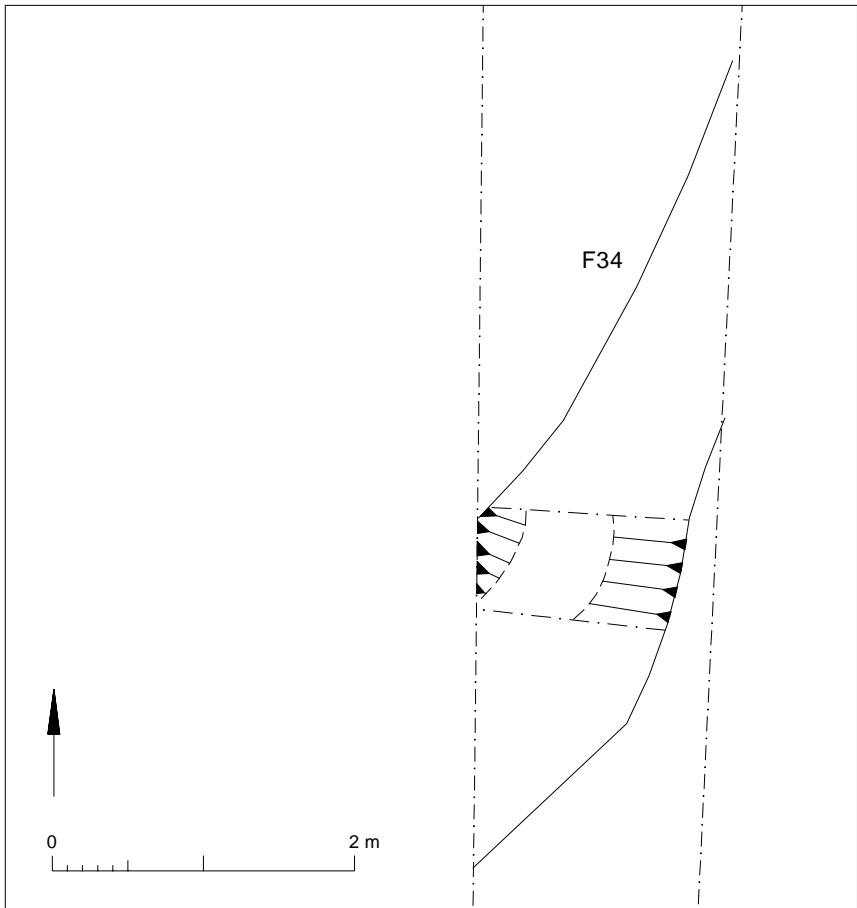
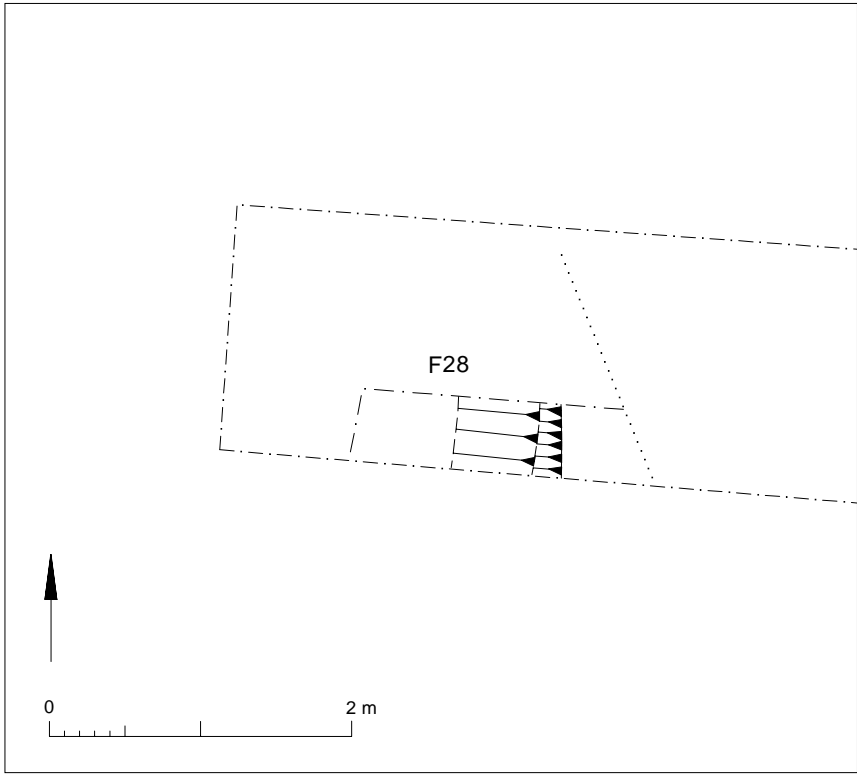


Fig 6 F28 and F34: plans.

**Essex Historic Environment Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

Site address: Great Notley business park, near Braintree, Essex	
Parish: Black Notley	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 73665 21719 (c)	Site code: ECC site code GNBPO5
Type of work: watching brief and evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: June-September 2005	Size of area investigated: 10.4 hectares
Location of finds/curating museum: Braintree Museum (accession code BRNTM 2005.8)	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? Possibly	Related EHER nos: 14171, 9993, 6501, 6502, 17766
Final report: CAT Report 337 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: Late Iron Age, Roman, post-medieval	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>An archaeological watching brief and an evaluation consisting of 1,400m of trenches were carried out. Features were found to be spread very thinly over the site and were almost all linear cuts resembling ditches or gullies, with a few pit-like features. The north and west areas of the site were particularly quiet archaeologically. Only nine of the 41 features recorded produced any finds. Of those features without finds, most were natural in appearance and may have been the result of natural processes occurring during the last Ice Age or of more recent activity such as the felling of trees. Ditches containing Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery at the south-western corner of the site indicate that the land is on the edge of a Late Iron Age settlement which continued in use until the 1st century AD. The scarcity of features from the rest of the site suggests that most of the land here was not inhabited or used for arable farming, and it has been suggested that it was heathland.</i></p>	
<p>Previous summaries/reports: fieldwalking report (Brooks 1994) and ECC FAU fieldwalking report (Garwood 1997)</p>	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: October 2005