

**An archaeological evaluation
at Jarmin Road, Colchester, Essex
January 2007**

**report prepared by
Laura Pooley**

**on behalf of
Knight Developments Ltd**

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Colchester Museums accession code: 2007.6
NGR: TL 9980 2595 (c)



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CAT Report 409
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1 Summary

Seven evaluation trenches (totalling 117m long and each 1.8m wide) were located within the old Jarmin Road depot in advance of construction works on the site. In total, 20 features were recorded: seven modern; four Roman; four undated (but which may be Roman); four natural; and one dated to the post-Roman period. The Roman features consisted of at least two ditches and a small number of pits, each containing domestic waste dating from the early Roman or possibly Late Iron Age period through to the early 2nd century. No evidence associated with the late 4th-century kiln previously known in the area was identified, but one piece of cremated human bone may derive from a nearby disturbed Roman burial.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report on an archaeological evaluation carried out at Jarmin Road, Colchester, Essex. The evaluation was carried out in the now-disused Jarmin Road depot, off Catchpool Road, in advance of new construction works on the site. The site is centred on National Grid Reference TL 9980 2595.

The evaluation was carried out to establish the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains and deposits likely to be affected by groundworks associated with the new construction.

The evaluation was commissioned by Knight Developments Ltd and carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) from 31st January to 9th February 2007.

All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) agreed with the Archaeology Officer of Colchester Borough Council. This report mirrors standards and practices contained in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CM 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (CM 2003), and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2), *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) was also followed.

3 Aims and objectives

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains and deposits likely to be affected by groundworks associated with the redevelopment of the site.

4 Archaeological background

A Roman pottery kiln is known to have been located on the site of the Jarmin Road depot (recorded on the Urban Archaeological Database or UAD, maintained by Colchester Museums; UAD event no 3757; Hull 1963, Kiln 33, fig 1). It lay near to the west gate of the depot and was recorded at some point before the depot was built in 1959. It is uncertain whether the kiln was destroyed or damaged during these groundworks, or whether any more were located on the site.

As well as the kiln, UAD records also show that several Roman burials have been recorded nearby. A Roman burial urn was recorded along the south side of Serpentine Walk, and records show considerable numbers of Roman burials

spreading from Serpentine Walk northwards, up the east side of North Station Road. Also, several spreads of Roman pottery have been recorded, at Frinton Lodge in Catchpool Road and at the Fire Station site.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

In total, seven evaluation trenches were dug at the Jarmin Road depot, totalling 118m in length, with each at a width of approximately 1.8m. Most of the site was covered with concrete which had to be broken out. Once broken out, a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket was used to excavate the trenches down to an archaeologically significant layer. Further excavation was then carried out by hand.

Trench 1

T1 was 11m in length and dug to a depth of 1.00m (ground-level 6.20m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 5.20m AOD). It was dug through approximately 0.15m of tarmac/reinforced concrete (L1), 0.38m of modern topsoil (L2), 0.30m of a buried post-medieval soil layer (L3), and down onto natural (L4). Three features were recorded within this trench. Linear features F2 and F3 were both modern in date, and were sealed by L2 and cut through L3. Linear feature F1 was sealed by L3, and appears to be a Roman ditch aligned north-east to south-west. It measured 1m wide and 0.20m deep, and contained a quantity of Roman material, along with a single piece of intrusive post-Roman glass. The majority of the Roman pottery recorded from the site was found in these three features.

Trench 2

T2 was 9m in length and dug to a depth of 0.80m (ground-level 5.65m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 4.85m AOD). It was dug through approximately 0.10m of L1, 0.35m of L2, 0.27m of L3, 0.08m of a natural silt wash (L5), and down onto natural. Six features were identified within this trench, each of which was sealed by L3 and cut into L5. The features consisted of one single undated linear feature/ditch (F6), three undated pits (F4, F5, F14), and two gullies (F12 and F13) which have been identified as natural water-cut channels. F14 did not produce any finds, but F4, F5 and F6 contained a small amount of daub, some burnt stone, and, in F14, there was an undated fragment of tile. Although uncertain, it is possible that all or some of these features may be Roman in date.

Trench 3

T3 was 12m in length and dug to a depth of 0.80m (ground-level 5.20m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 4.40m AOD). It was dug through approximately 0.17m of L1, 0.37m of L2, 0.25m of L3, and down onto natural. A single east-west Roman ditch (F19) was recorded in this trench. It was sealed by L3, and measured 0.90m in width and 0.16m in depth. A single sherd of Roman pottery, dated to the early Roman period, was also identified within this ditch.

Trench 4

T4 was 14m in length and dug to a depth of 1.00m (ground-level 5.60m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 4.60m AOD). It was dug through approximately 0.10m of L1, 0.32m of modern demolition (L6), 0.21m of L2, 0.38m of L3, and down onto natural. Three features were recorded within the trench. The first feature recorded was a modern post-hole (F15) which was sealed by L1 and cut through L2 and L3. The remaining two features were both sealed by L3. Ditch F16 was aligned east-west and appears to have been a continuation of F19 (in T3). It measured at least 0.65m in width and 0.14m in depth. No finds were recovered from the ditch, but, if it is a continuation of F19, it is likely to be Roman in date. Pit F18 produced no finds, but it did appear to cut F16, which would make it post-Roman in date.

Trench 5

T5 was 38m in length and dug to a depth of 0.80m (ground-level 5.90m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 5.10m AOD). Only 38m of this trench was dug due to an asbestos dump at the southern end. It was dug through approximately 0.10m of L1, 0.30m of L6, 0.21m of L2, 0.19m of L3, and down onto natural. Part of a post-medieval demolition layer (L7) was also identified, extending down the eastern side of the trench. Five features were recorded in total. The remains of robbed-out modern wall footings (F17) were recorded, sealed beneath L6 in the southern half of the trench, as was a modern pit (F20) in the middle of the trench. Beneath these features, sealed by L2, were two parallel linear features with irregular depressions (F9 and F10), probably representing modern wheel-ruts from a tractor or similar mechanical excavator. Lastly, within the northern half of the trench, there was a large feature, which is possibly a Roman pit (F8).

Trench 6

T6 was 34m in length and dug to a depth of 0.70m (ground-level 5.40m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 4.70m AOD). It was dug through approximately 0.10m of L1, 0.34m of L2, 0.26m of L3, and down onto natural. Two features were recorded within this trench (F7 and F11), but both have been identified as natural features.

Trench 7

T7 was 17m in length and dug to a depth of 1.00m (ground-level 6.00m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 5.00m AOD). It was dug through approximately 0.17m of L1, 0.39m of L2, 0.32m of L3, and down onto natural. No archaeological features were recorded within this trench.

6 Finds

6.1 The Roman pottery

by S Benfield

Introduction

The evaluation produced a small quantity (565 g) of Roman pottery. The pottery was recorded using the Roman pottery fabric type series devised for *CAR 10*, in which all the fabrics are recorded as two-letter codes (Table 1). In addition, a fabric code has been included for grog-tempered wares of Late Iron Age potting tradition (Fabric GTW). This additional fabric type is described below. Where appropriate, reference has been made to the corresponding fabric types described in the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber & Dore 1998). The vessel forms were recorded using the Camulodunum (Cam) Roman pottery form type series (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull 1958). The pottery fabrics and the vessel forms present in each site context were recorded for each finds number (Table 2, in the archive). The number of sherds was recorded for each fabric, and the identifiable pottery forms present in each fabric type. The total weight of pottery and an overall spot date was recorded for each finds number.

Fabric descriptions other than fabrics contained in *CAR 10*:

Fabric GTW Grog-tempered wares

Generally thick sherds with patchy or mottled red-brown to dark-brown surfaces. The fabric contains various quantities of crushed fired clay (grog) and is commonly grey to brown in colour.

Table 1: Roman pottery fabric codes and fabric names used in this report (after CAR 10).

Fabric code	Fabric name	National Roman Fabric Reference Collection fabric
AJ	amphoras, Dressel 20	
DJ	coarse oxidised and related wares	COL WH
EC	early Colchester colour-coated ware	COL CC1
GTW	Late Iron Age grog-tempered ware	SOB GT
GX	other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares	
TZ	mortaria, Colchester and mortaria imported from the Continent	COL WH

Discussion

It should be noted that the remains of a Roman pottery kiln are known from the depot site (Kiln 33 in Hull 1963, fig 1, location C and p 174). The recorded location of the kiln places it just inside the evaluation site, immediately south of the west gate of the depot (UAD event no 3757). The pottery from this kiln, consisting mostly of mortarium sherds, was considered to be some of the latest associated with Roman pottery kilns at Colchester and was provisionally dated to the early 4th century (Hull 1963, p 174 and fig 100). None of the pottery recovered during the current evaluation appears to be kiln waste, or of similar date to that attributed to the pottery associated with the kiln. Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery (dated c AD 5-60) has, however, been previously recorded on the site of the Fire Station (UAD event no 967), which is just to the north of the evaluation site.

Almost all of the pottery recovered came from three features (F1-F3) in one trench, ie T1. Only one other sherd was recovered and this came from F19 in T3. The pottery mostly consists of small- to medium-sized sherds. While some of the pottery can only be dated as Roman, much can be more closely dated to the 1st-2nd/3rd century, and all of the identifiable closely-dated form types are of 1st- to early 2nd-century date. One sherd can be dated to the Late Iron Age, and two others may be pre-Flavian (AD 43-69). Many of the sherds are soft, which is due in part to soil conditions on the site. All the sherds in Fabric DJ are degraded or abraded, with joining sherds not fitting closely as the broken edges have become rounded. However, the softness of some of the sherds may also be related to the date of the pottery, as some Roman fabrics were not highly fired in the 1st-early 2nd centuries.

The earliest-dated pottery is a sherd in grog-tempered ware (Fabric GTW) which is of Late Iron Age or just possibly early Roman date. This came from F1 (T1, finds no 1) and is either the rim of a platter or dish, or possibly a rim from a lid. The sherd can be dated to the late 1st century BC or more probably the first half of the 1st century AD. Also of possible early date (within the Roman period) are a sherd from a beaker or possibly a thin-walled small jar, and a sherd which appears to be from a mortarium flange. Both sherds are from F3 (T1, finds no 2). The fabric and form of the beaker or small jar suggest that it may be of early Colchester colour-coated ware (Fabric EC), datable to the pre-Flavian (AD 43-69) period. However, the fabric could not be positively identified as the sherd is abraded and no trace of any original surface coating now remains. The sherd which is possibly from a mortarium flange is also abraded and the fabric surface that remains is oxidised red-brown (Fabric TZ). If it is from a mortarium, the shape of the flange suggests that it is probably of form Cam 192, dated as Neronian (Hull 1963, 182).

The remainder of the closely-datable pottery consists primarily of a few identifiable vessel forms. Among the sherds from F1 (T1, finds no 1) are a Cam 108 (Fabric GX), dated 1st-early 2nd century, and a small jar with an internally thickened bead rim (Fabric GX) which should also date from the 1st-early 2nd century. From F3 (T1, finds no 2) there is a rim from a necked jar or bowl (Fabric GX), of early Roman (1st- to early 2nd-century date), which is possibly from a jar of form Cam 266. The single sherd (Fabric GX) from F19 (T3, finds no 12) can also be suggested to

be of early Roman date as the fabric is soft with some dark inclusions from burnt organic matter.

Although no specific form types could be identified, many of the sherds of coarse oxidised ware (Fabric DJ) are probably from flagons. A handle sherd from F1 (T1, finds no 1) is certainly from a flagon, and the joining base sherds from F3 (T1, finds no 2) are almost certainly so. All of these sherds can probably be dated to the 1st-2nd/early 3rd century. There are also two sherds from large storage jars (Fabric HZ) from F3 (T1, finds no 2) which can be dated as 1st-2nd/3rd century, and one sherd from an amphora that is almost certainly of form Dressel 20 (Fabric AJ), dated 1st-early 3rd century, from F1 (T1, finds no 1).

6.2 The post-Roman pottery

by H Brooks

Description of pottery

Fabrics present are as follows (*CAR 7*): Colchester-type ware (Fabric 21a); modern stoneware (Fabric 45m); and modern ironstone (Fabric 48d).

Finds no 3, T1, F2: Fabric 21a; Fabric 45m; Fabric 48d, 19th-20th century.

Finds no 2, T1, F3: Fabric 21a; Fabric 48d, 19th-20th century.

Finds no 4, T5, F9: Fabric 48d, 19th-20th century.

Finds no 11, T4, F15: Fabric 48d, 19th-20th century.

This is a small group of material (nine sherds, weighing 65 grammes). All the above contexts date to the 19th or 20th centuries. The only earlier post-Roman material is a sherd of Colchester-type ware from F2 in T1.

6.3 Small finds and miscellaneous bulk finds

by Nina Crummy

This small but very diverse assemblage, taking all materials together, ranges in date from Late Iron Age or very early Roman to modern. The earliest pieces that can be dated are loomweight fragments and part of a Roman ceramic lamp.

Small finds

SF 1. T1. (2) F3. Linear feature. Fragment of iron strip. 52 by 28 mm.

SF 2. T1. (1) F1. Ditch. Rim fragment of a ceramic picture lamp. The fabric is buff and no traces of slip survive; possibly a local product. Diameter approximately 70 mm. Date range c AD 45-60/75.

SF 3. T5. (17) L2. Graphite pencil fragment. Length 31 mm. 19th-early 20th century.

Iron nails

T1. (1) F1. Ditch. Four Manning type 1b nails with slightly convex head (Manning 1985, 134) and one nail shank fragment. Lengths 84, 45, 35, 30 and 72 mm. Roman.

T1. (2) F3. Linear feature. Manning type 1b nail and two shank fragments. Lengths 33, 74 and 56 mm.

T2. (10) F13. Gully. Manning type 1b nail. Length 60 mm. Roman.

T5. (16) L7. Demolition debris. Nail with flat round head. Length 49 mm. Medieval or later.

Clay tobacco pipe

T1. (3) F2. Linear feature. Plain stem fragment. Bore diameter 3 mm. Probably late 17th to 18th century.

T5. (4) F9. Wheel rut. Plain stem fragment with the beginning of the curve to the foot. Bore diameter 3 mm. Late 17th to 18th century.

T5. (13) F10. Wheel rut. Plain stem fragment. Bore diameter 3 mm. Probably late 17th to 18th century.

Loomweight

T1. (1) F1. Ditch. Five small fragments from one or more triangular loomweights. One piece is from a corner, and another may be. The fabric is sandy and hard-fired, with fine flint grits and some small pebbles. Weight 90 g. The form is long-lived, originating in the Middle Iron Age and continuing in use into the early decades of the Roman period. In this context a Late Iron Age or very early Roman date is likely.

Daub

T2. (7) F5. Pit. Two fragments, both featureless. Weight 6 g.

T2. (6) F6. Ditch. Ten fragments, all featureless. Weight 75 g.

T2. (9) F12. Gully. Thirteen fragments, all featureless. Weight 195 g.

T5. (4) F9. Wheel rut. Eight fragments, one with original surface and wattle void. Weight 129 g.

T5. (16) L7. Demolition debris. Seventy-six fragments. A few small pieces have an original flat plain surface, and there are no wattle voids, pointing to the material deriving from daub blocks rather than wattle-and-daub walls. Weight 3.097 kg.

6.4 Bulk material

A quantity of Roman and post-Roman brick and tile was recorded from many of the features and layers, along with much smaller amounts of animal bone, burnt stone, cremated bone, Roman and modern glass, slate, charcoal and clinker (see archive report for full details).

7 Discussion

Most of the features and layers identified within the evaluation trenches were of post-medieval or modern date. However, several features and finds were identified which date to the Roman period. In particular, two ditches and a pit appear to be Roman in date and a further three undated pits and a ditch may also date to this period. Finds evidence dates this activity from the early Roman or possibly Late Iron Age period through to the early 2nd century, and consists mainly of domestic waste. No evidence associated with the 4th-century Roman kiln was identified on the site, but one piece of cremated bone may have been disturbed from a nearby Roman burial.

8 Acknowledgements

The Trust would like to thank Knight Developments Ltd for commissioning the work, and Martin Winter for monitoring the work. The fieldwork was carried out by S Benfield, L Driver, B Holloway, C Lister, A Nelson, P Skippins, S Tyler, and A Wrightman.

9 References

- | | | |
|--------|------|---|
| CAR 7 | 2000 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-1985</i> , by J Cotter |
| CAR 10 | 1991 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86</i> , by R Symonds and S Wade, ed by P Bidwell and A Croom |
| CM | 2002 | <i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i> |
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| 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 , ed by D Gurney
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Hull, M R,	1958	<i>Roman Colchester</i> , RRCSAL, 20
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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)
Tomber, R, & Dore, J,	1998	<i>The National Roman Fabric Reference Collection, A handbook</i> , MoLAS, Monograph, 2

10 Glossary

AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CM	Colchester Museums
context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
medieval	c AD 1066 to c AD 1500
modern	c 1800 to the present day
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	c AD 1500 to AD 1800
Roman	the period from AD 43 to around AD 430
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database, Colchester Museums

11 Archive deposition

The finds, paper and digital archive are held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museums under accession code COLEM 2007.6.

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Distribution list:

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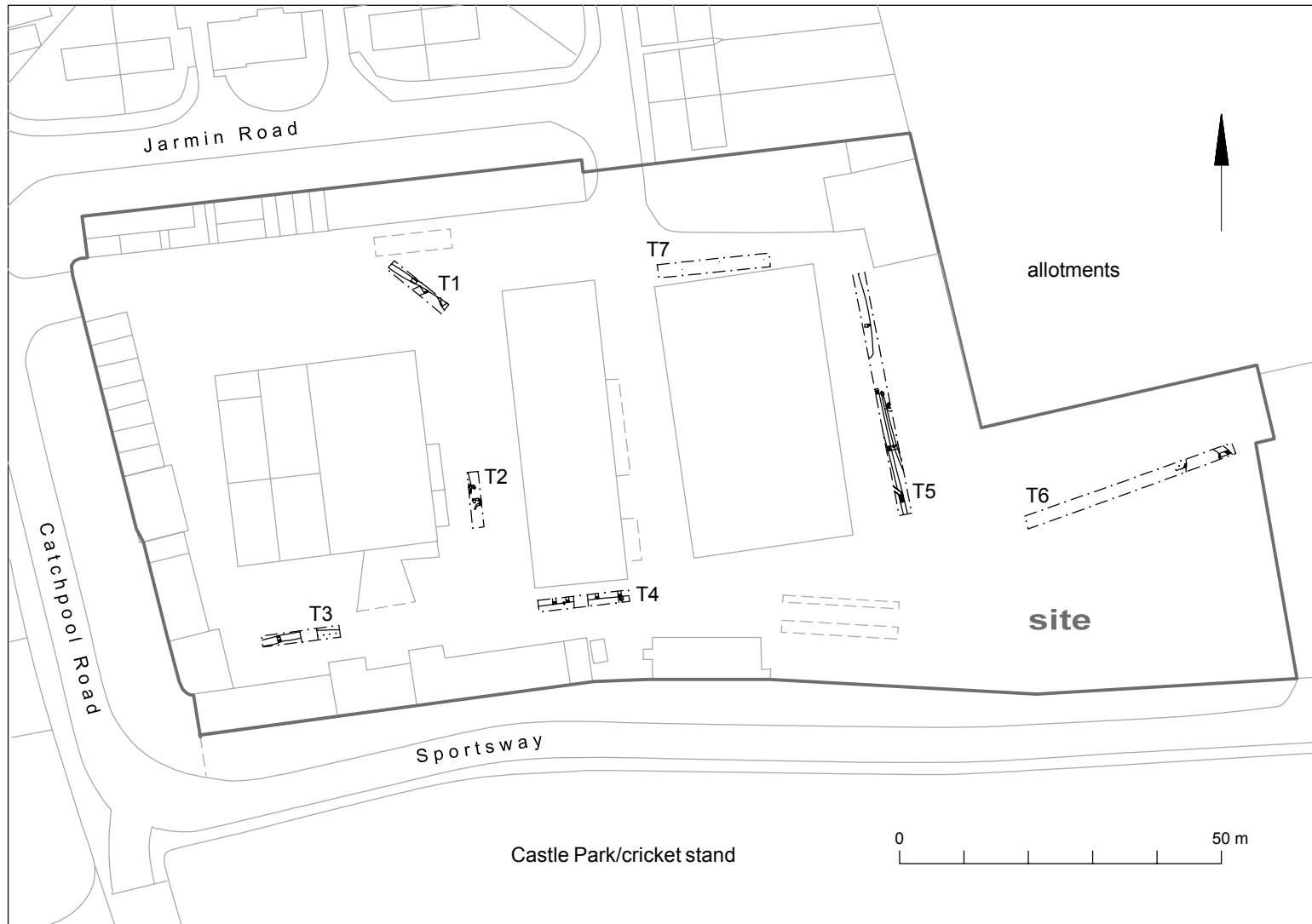


Fig 1 Site and trench locations.

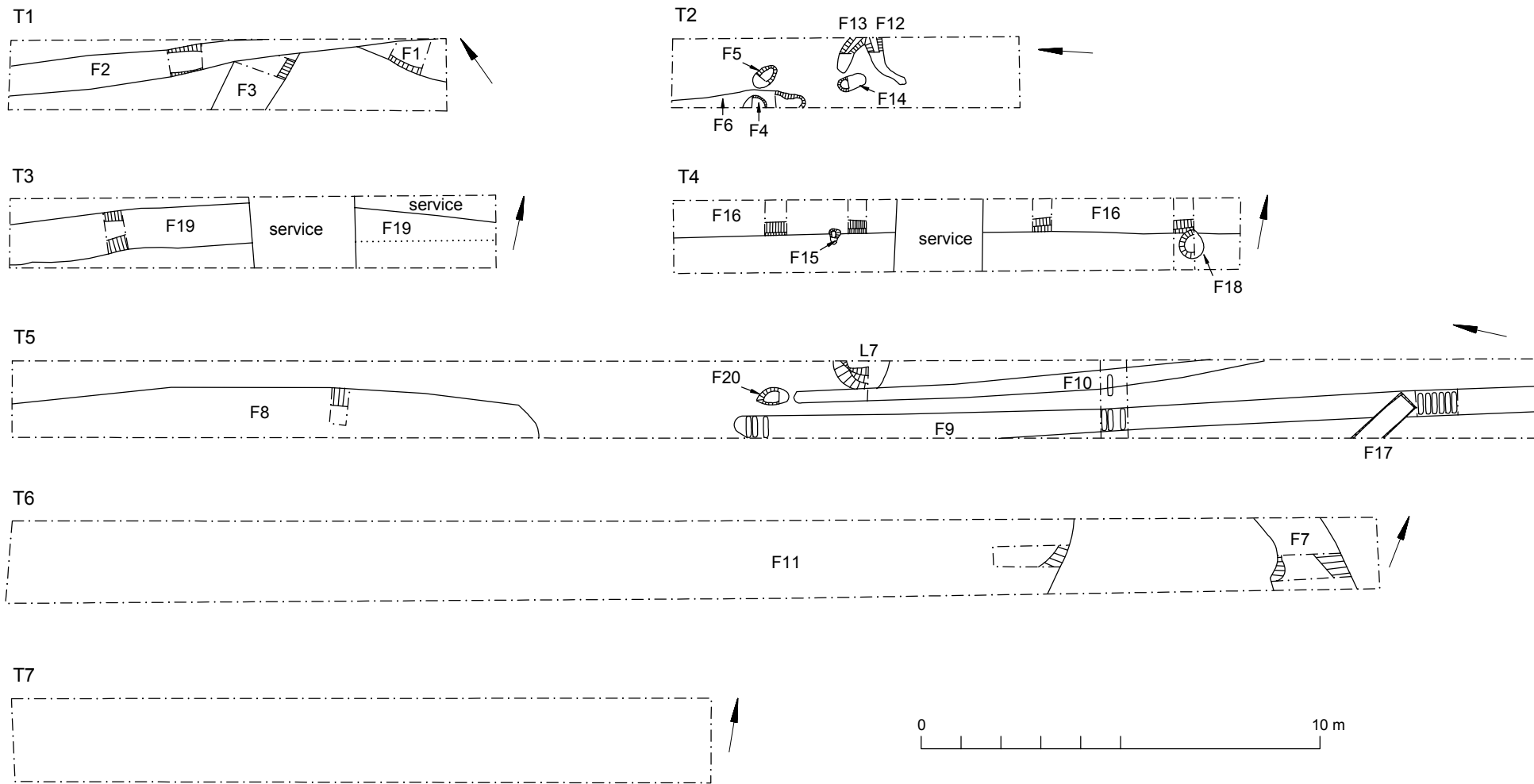


Fig 2 T1-T7: plans.

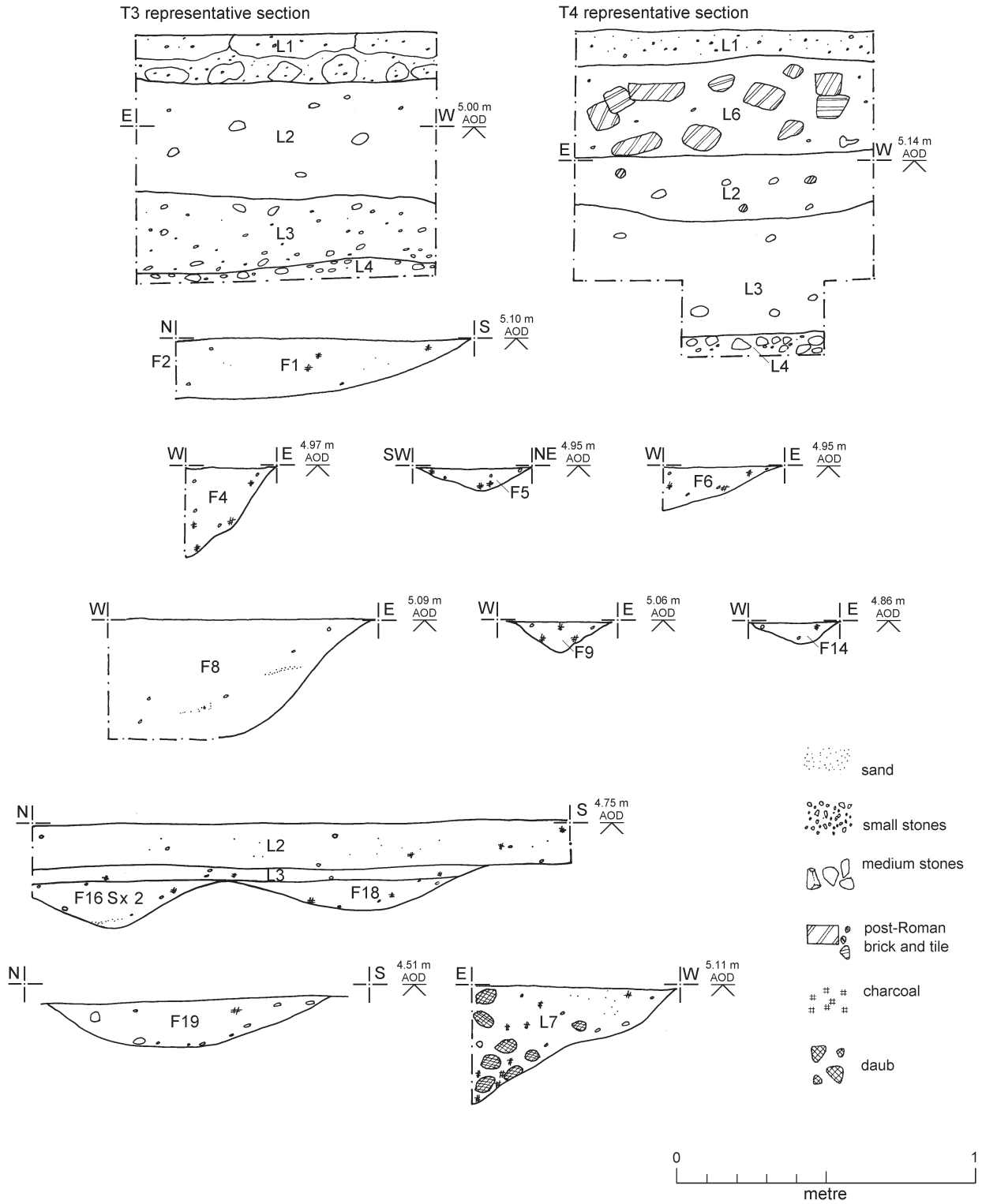


Fig 3 Sections: T3, T4, F1, F4, F5, F6, F8, F9, F14, F16 and F18, F19, L7.

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

Summary sheet

Site address: Jarmin Road, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9980 2595 (c)	Site code: Museum accession code COLEM 2007.6
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 31st January-9th February 2007	Size of area investigated: Seven trenches, totalling 117m long and each 1.8m wide
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER and UAD nos: UAD nos 3757, 967
Final report: CAT Report 409 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: Roman, post-medieval, modern	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Seven evaluation trenches (totalling 117m long and each 1.8m wide) were located within the old Jarmin Road depot in advance of construction works on the site. In total, 20 features were recorded: seven modern; four Roman; four undated (but which may be Roman); four natural; and one dated to the post-Roman period. The Roman features consisted of at least two ditches and a small number of pits, each containing domestic waste dating from the early Roman or possibly Late Iron Age period through to the early 2nd century. No evidence associated with the late 4th-century kiln was identified, but one piece of cremated human bone may derive from a nearby disturbed Roman burial.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Laura Pooley	Date of summary: February 2007