

## Report on negative evaluation

**Site address:** Farthings, Rectory Road, Orsett, Essex  
**Date of fieldwork:** 13th-14th December 2007  
**NGR:** TQ 6459 8182  
**CBC brief?:** brief from Richard Havis, ECC HEM team officer  
**Plan attached?:** yes (Figs 1-2)  
**Site code:** THFO 07  
**CAT report no:** CAT Report 454

### Archaeological background

To the immediate east of the site there is an area of at least 90 hectares containing a significant number of cropmarks (Essex Heritage Environment Record or EHER no 5191), including at least three different superimposed field systems, groups of annular and pen-annular gullies and at least three rectangular enclosures. With only cropmark evidence, it is difficult to interpret these systems, especially when the area seems to have been extensively exploited from the prehistoric period through to the present day. The site is also in close proximity to the church of St Giles. The church originally dates to the 12th century, with a three-bay north aisle. Various medieval and post-medieval alterations include the addition of a north chapel in the 13th century. Two Iron Age pots recovered from Orsett are recorded as being retained within the church (EHER no 5199), indicating that evidence of occupation of this date is likely to be found in the immediate area.

### Brief report

The proposed development in the east of Orsett, close to the core of the historic village, is located on the premises of Farthings on Rectory Road (Fig 1). The site was the subject of an evaluation in advance of the construction of a proposed new four-bedroom house, a separate double garage, and a new driveway, and an extension to the existing house (Fig 2). A total of 24m of trenching was excavated under archaeological supervision using a 360-degree mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Three 1.6m-wide trenches were excavated (T1-T3), with T1 being 10m long, T2 being 9m long and T3 being 5m long (Fig 2). The trenches were excavated through three horizons: topsoil (L1), subsoil (L2), and natural sand (L3). The sandy loam topsoil contained modern building material and domestic waste across the site and was between 210mm and 300mm in depth. Peg-tile and modern china were observed in the sandy silt subsoil layer which was between 170mm and 200mm in depth. The trenches were excavated onto the natural sand at depths of between 480mm and 530mm. Confirmation that this was indeed the level of the natural geology was provided by the two exploratory holes which had been dug to depths of over 1m by the agent prior to the archaeologist's arrival at the site (Fig 2). Two features were identified and excavated (F1 and F2). F1 was a shallow post-hole in the eastern end of T1 which contained a fill very similar to the topsoil and no finds, and F2 was a pit in the western end of T3 which contained modern pottery, coal, peg-tile, clay pipe, animal bone and a large piece of corroded iron (none of which were retained). Both features are believed to be modern and no archaeological deposits were found which relate to the cropmark complex or the development of the historic settlement of Orsett.

### Finds:

None.

### References:

Havis, R, 2007 *Archaeological trenching and excavation on land at Farthings, Rectory Road, Orsett*, Essex County Council brief

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**Report date:** February 2008

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**Distribution list:**

Rosestone Properties

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Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



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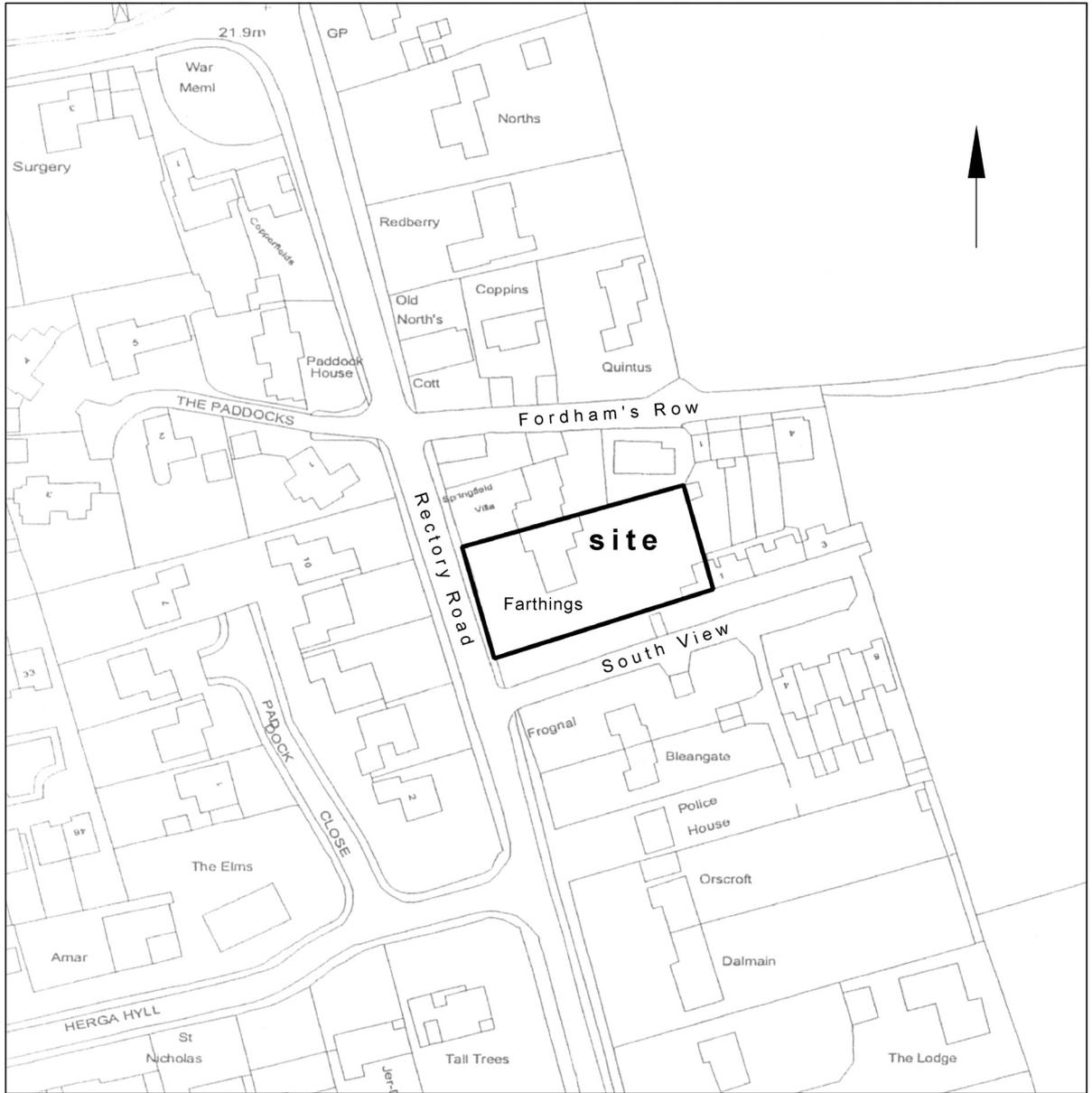
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Fig 1 Site location.

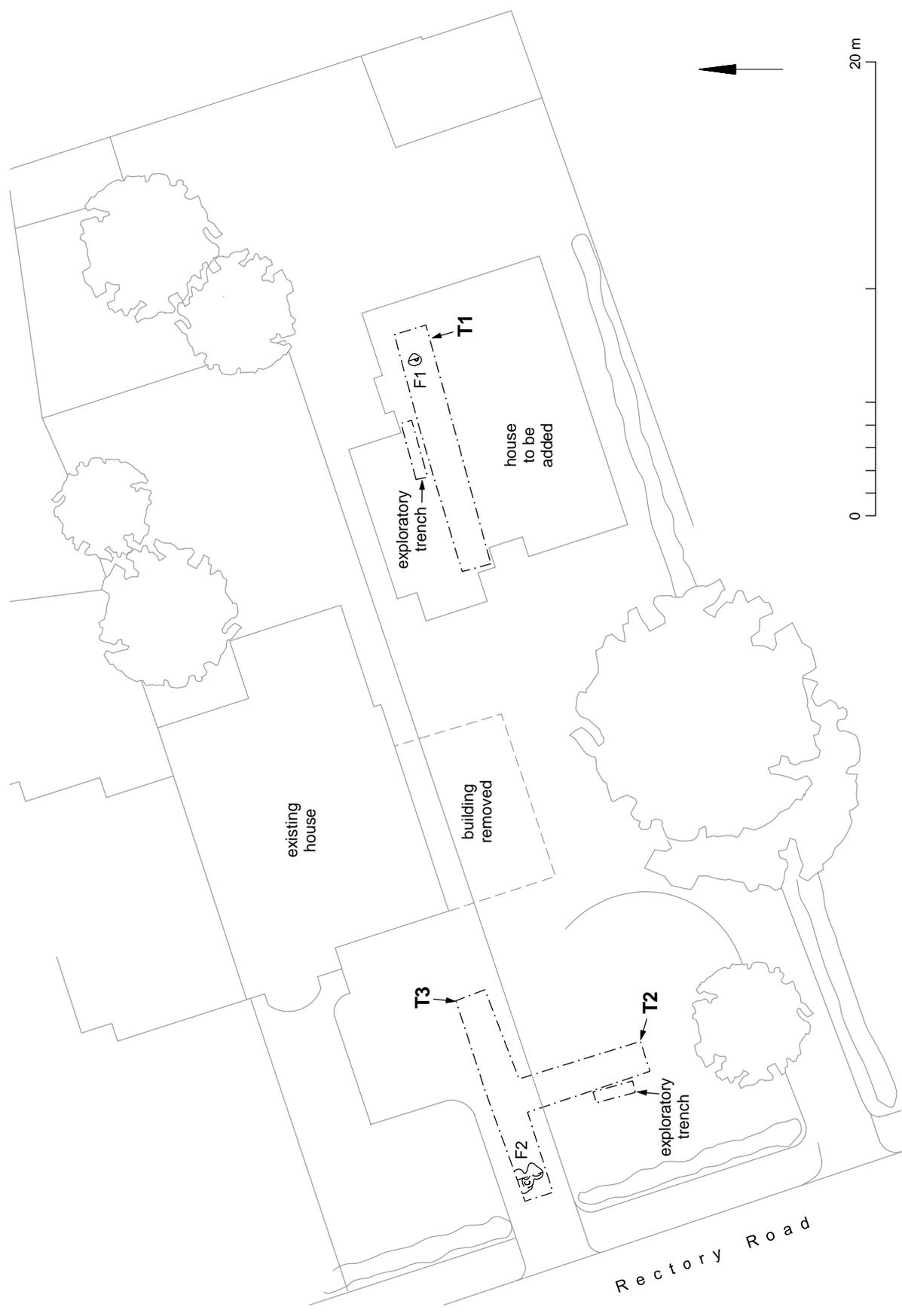


Fig 2 Plan of trenches.

# Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

## Summary sheet

<b>Site address:</b> Farthings, Rectory Road, Orsett, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Orsett	<b>District:</b> Thurrock
<b>NGR:</b> TQ 6459 8182	<b>Site code:</b> THFO 07
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 13th-14th December 2007	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 38.4m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Not applicable	<b>Funding source:</b> Owner
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHER and UAD nos:</b> 5191, 5199
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 454	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Modern	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>  <i>The three trenches were excavated through three horizons: topsoil (L1), subsoil (L2), and natural sand (L3). The sandy loam topsoil contained modern building material and domestic waste across the site. Peg-tile and modern china were observed in the sandy silt subsoil layer. The trenches were excavated onto the natural sand at depths of between 480mm and 530mm. Two features were identified: a shallow post-hole in the eastern end of T1 (F1) which contained a fill very similar to the topsoil and no finds, and a pit in the western end of T3 (F2) which contained modern pottery, coal, peg-tile, clay pipe, animal bone and a large piece of corroded iron (none of which were retained). Both features are believed to be modern and no archaeological deposits were found which relate to the cropmark complex or the development of the historic settlement of Orsett.</i></p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of summary:</b> Adam Wightman	<b>Date of summary:</b> February 2008