

Archaeological trial-trenching evaluation rear of The Stag Inn, Hatfield Heath, Essex



December 2013

report prepared by Ben Holloway and Howard Brooks

on behalf of Mascall Homes

Planning ref: UTT/13/2387/FUL, UTT/13/2390/LB

CAT project ref.: 13/12b

HER project ref: HFSI13

NGR: TL 5243 1500

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1 Summary

Located in the historic core of Hatfield Heath, this site was formerly the car park and beer garden of the Stag Inn. Three evaluation trenches 35m in length were positioned within the footprints of two proposed new buildings and their access road.

There were five archaeological features: a late medieval pit, and modern ditches and pits. The modern features are probably associated with the modern housing development to the north of the site, and the late medieval pit provides only slight evidence for late medieval activity here. A modern gully may be a former plot boundary.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report on the archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on a site to the rear of the former Stag Inn, Hatfield Heath, on 16th December 2013. The work was commissioned by Tim Mascall of Mascall Homes. Post-excavation work was carried out in December 2013 and January 2014.

At the time of the evaluation the site was grass and hardstanding in the car park and beer garden of the former Stag Inn. Proposed development is four new dwellings and associated infrastructure.

Site centre is NGR TL 5243 1500.

The brief for this job also included historic building recording (ECC 2013). A separate report on this will follow in due course.

3 Archaeological background

This section is based on records held by EHER. The proposed development lies within the historic core of Hatfield Heath. The Stag Inn is grade II listed (HER 38108). The listed building description states;

'Public House. Late C18/early C19. Timber framed with painted brick front and flanks. Two storeys with gabled peg tile roofs, gable end stacks and off-centre ridgeline stack. Front has 4 double hung sash windows with small panes and a string course over 3 tripartite double hung sash windows with small panes and 2 entrance doors. One of these has a flat hood on brackets. Single storey later extension on west end with gabled peg tile roof and decorative ridge. Painted brickwork with central tripartite double hung sash window. The rear has a slate roofed red brick lean-to extension and mid 19th-century cast iron yard pump against the wall.'



Plate 1: extract from Chapman and André map of 1777.

The 1777 Chapman and André map (above) shows buildings in the area of the Stag fronting onto a large green at the main road junction. The 1st edition OS shows buildings to the rear of the Inn in 1875. It is probable that occupation in this area extends back into the medieval period. There was therefore a high potential for finding medieval occupation to the rear of the present building.

4 Methodology

Place Services of Essex County Council (ECCPS) were consulted by Uttlesford District Council in August 2013 for planning applications (UTT/13/2387/FUL and (UTT/13/2390/LB). In response to consultation, ECCPS made the following recommendation to the LPA in line with advice given in *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012):

" L2 Implementation of Archaeological Fieldwork Programme

No development including any site clearance or groundworks of any kind shall take place within the site until the applicant or their agents; the owner of the site or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work from an accredited archaeological contractor in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in a manner that accommodates the approved programme of archaeological work."

A brief detailing the required archaeological work (an evaluation by trial-trenching) was written by the Place Services officer (Richard Havis: ECC 2013). All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a WSI (Written Scheme of Investigation) produced by CAT in response to the Place Services brief and agreed with the Place Services officer (CAT 2013).

All fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with the recognised national standards as defined in IfA 2008a, IfA 2008b, EAA 14, and EAA 24.

5 Aim

The aim of the evaluation was to record the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any remains and deposits likely to be disturbed by the proposed works.

6 Results (Figs 1-3)

This section gives an archaeological summary of the evaluation trenches (T1-T3), with context and finds dating information.

The site occupies an area of open ground (grass and hardstanding of the Inn car park and beer garden). The evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator, through four layers: L1 - modern tarmac hardtop and sub-base (200mm thick); L3 - modern topsoil (300mm thick); L4 - an accumulation deposit (200mm thick); and L5 - a modern dump of building debris (150-300mm thick). Removal of these layers revealed L2 – natural boulder clay.

There were, in total, five archaeological features, all of late medieval or modern date.

Trench 1: summary

T1, located at the northern site edge, contained modern pits F4 and F5. F5 contained much modern building debris (plastic, concrete, brick) which probably results from the construction of the adjacent housing estate in the 1990s.

Context	Description	Date
F4	pit	modern
F5	pit	modern

Trench 2: summary

T2, located on the western site edge contained modern gully F2, and late medieval pit F3.

Context	Description	Date
F2	linear (gully)	modern
F3	pit	late medieval



Plate 2: T2 view south. Modern gully F2 is outlined.

Trench 3: summary

T3, located in the site centre, contained a modern pit (F1).

Context	Description	Date
F1	pit	modern



Plate 3: T3 view south. Modern pit F1 foreground.

7 Finds

by Stephen Benfield (06/01/14)

Introduction

A small quantity of bulk finds was recovered from four contexts (F2, F3 F4 & L4) in two trenches (T1 & T2). The more closely-dated finds are of medieval, post-medieval and modern date. The types of finds are listed by material in Table 1. The pottery was recorded using the Essex post-Roman fabric series (Cunningham 1985 & CAR 7) and the fabrics recorded are listed in Table 2. All finds are listed and described by context in Table 3.

Finds type	quantity	weight (g)
Pottery	5	45
Ceramic building material (CBM)	1	8
Clay pipe	1	5
Bone	2	2
Iron	1	6

Table 1. Type and quantities of finds

Fabric code	Fabric name
21	Medieval sandy orange wares (general)
21d	Medieval/transitional Harlow ware
40a	Metropolitan slipwares
48b	English porcelain
48d	Staffordshire-type white earthenwares

Table 2. Pottery fabrics list

context	context type	finds no	description of finds	finds spot dating
T2 F2	linear (gully)	001	Pottery: Post-Roman (1@ 1 g) Fabric 48D (19-20C) CBM (1@ 8 g) Small irregular fragment of red brick, coarse sandy fabric, slightly abraded; there appears to be part of a pre-firing hole though it which might indicate it is peg-tile, but at greater than 19 mm thick this appears unlikely and the hole may be illusory	19-20C
T2 F3	pit	002	Pottery: Post-Roman (1@ 5 g) Fabric 21 rim sherd from a jar, simple, slightly expanded, upright rim with flay top, sandy oxidised fabric, burnt externally (M13-15C) Bone (2@ 2 g) two small fragments of animal bone Iron (1@ 6 g) small piece of corroded iron with adhering soil mixed with corrosion products and fired clay	M13-15C
T1 F4	Pit	003	Pottery(?) (1@3 g) white with glassy surface, part of transfer floral pattern, translucent, china (Fabric 48B) possibly white pyrex (glass), modern (20C) Clay pipe (1@ 5 g) stem piece, bore 2 mm dia. suggests it is possibly 18th century (Harley 1963, 24)	20C
T1 L4	accumulation	004	Pottery: Post-Roman (2@ 36 g) Fabric 21D (1@ 34 g) rim, probably from a bowl, oxidised sandy fabric, some abrasion (15-16C); Fabric 40A (1@ 2 g) small rim sherd with dark glaze and small fragment of white (pale yellow) slip (17-18C)	17-18C

Table 3 Types of finds by context and find number

Finds discussion

The finds (pottery, CBM, clay pipe, bone & iron) consist of a few small pieces suggesting they are residual or have some depositional history prior to entering the contexts from which they were recovered.

The earliest dated finds are pottery of medieval and late medieval/post-medieval (transitional) date. A small oxidised rim from F3 (2), probably from a jar, can be broadly dated to the later medieval period (c 13th-15th century). Discoloration on the external surface is possibly from use in cooking. An oxidised rim from L4 (4) is probably from a flared bowl and is similar to products of this type from the Harlow potteries in the late medieval transitional period (c 15th-16th century) (Davey & Walker, 2009, 31). A small sherd of Metropolitan slipware, dated to the 17th-18th century was also recovered from the same layer.

Modern pottery, including a small sherd which may be white pyrex (glass) was associated with two contexts F2 (1) & F4 (3).

8 Discussion

Evaluation trenching at the Stag Inn has produced little of archaeological significance. Most of the features were modern, and probably associated with the modern housing estate built in the 1990s along the northern site boundary. The only pre-modern feature was the late medieval pit F3. At face value, this does not support the idea of much late medieval activity here. In contrast, gully F2 may have been a plot boundary to the rear of the Stag Inn. This is especially so because its alignment matches that of the plot boundaries to the rear of the properties east of the Inn. Strictly speaking, as F2 contains modern finds, it must be a modern feature, but it is tempting to ask whether it started life as an earlier (post-medieval?) plot boundary which was maintained through to the 19th century. No boundary is seen in this position on the early OS maps, so if it did exist, it had disappeared before 1875.

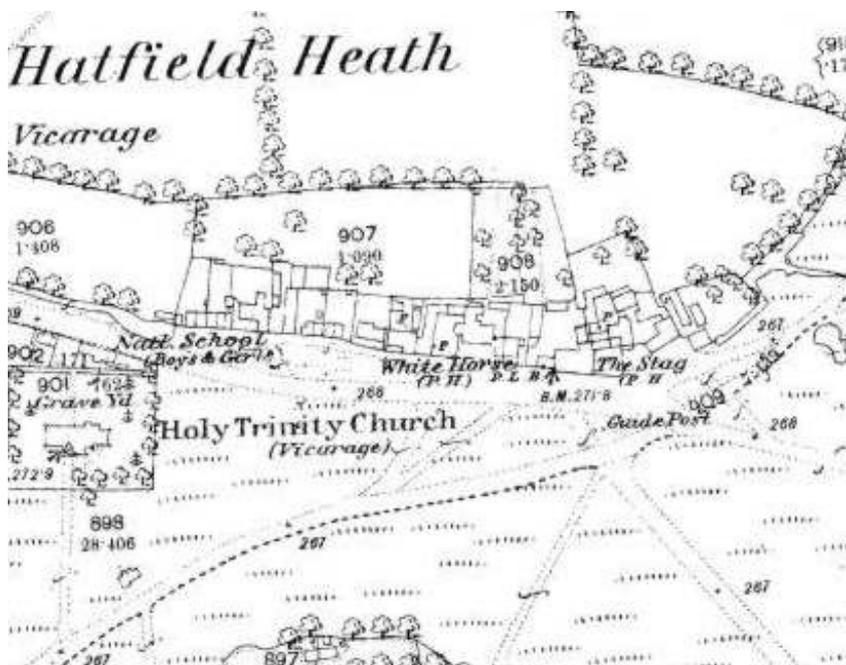


Plate 4: extract from OS of 1875 © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100039294.

9 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Mr Tim Mascall of Mascall Homes for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by B Holloway, fieldwork carried out by BH and M Baister. The project was monitored for ECC Place Services by R Havis. Figures 1-2 are by MB, and Fig 3 by Emma Holloway.

10 References

Note: all CAT fieldwork reports are available online in .pdf format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

CAR 7	2000	Cotter, J., <i>Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971-85</i> , Colchester Archaeological Report 7
CAT	2013	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological building recording, trial trenching and excavation at the Stag Inn, The Heath, Hatfield Heath, Essex.</i> December 2013
Cunningham, C	1985	'A typology for post-Roman pottery in Essex' in Cunningham, C., & Drury, P., <i>Post-medieval sites and their pottery: Moulsham Street, Chelmsford</i> , CBA Research Report 54, 1-16
Davey, W, & Walker, H	2009	<i>The Harlow pottery industries</i> , Medieval Pottery Research Group, Occasional paper 3
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> , Department for Communities and Local Government
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14, ed by D Gurney
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 24, by Maria Medlycott
ECC	2013	<i>Brief for archaeological building recording, Trial trenching and excavation at the Stag Inn, The Heath, Hatfield Heath, Bishop Stortford</i>
Harley, L	1963	<i>The clay tobacco-pipe in Britain</i> , Essex Field Club Memoirs, Volume VIII (reprinted 1976)
IfA	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation</i>
IfA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>

11 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material (brick, tile, etc)
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
fill	the soil filling up a hole such as a pit or ditch
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
modern	from 1800 to nowadays
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	from around 1530 to 1800 AD

12 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by CAT at Roman Circus House, Circular Road North, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Saffron Walden Museum (accession SAFFWM 2013.88).

13 Contents of archive

Finds: it is not the intention to retain the finds. However, they will not be discarded until the archive is deposited at Saffron Walden.

Paper record: One A4 wallet containing

Copy of this report
ECC Brief
CAT WSI
Original site record (feature, layer, trench and finds sheets)
Section drawings
Sundries
Photo log and photos on CD

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Distribution list:

Mascall Homes (Tim Mascall)
Richard Havis, Essex County Council Place Services
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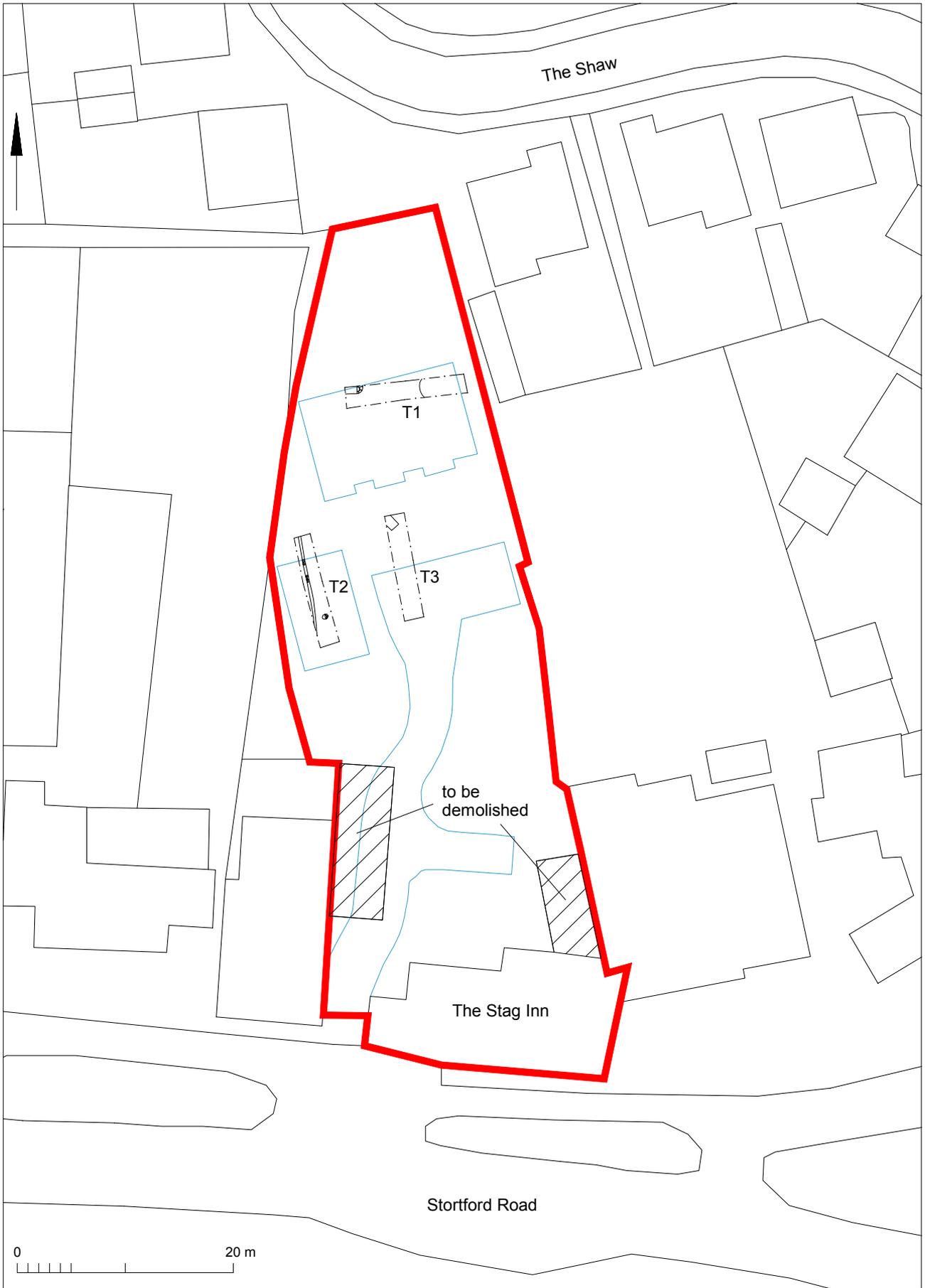
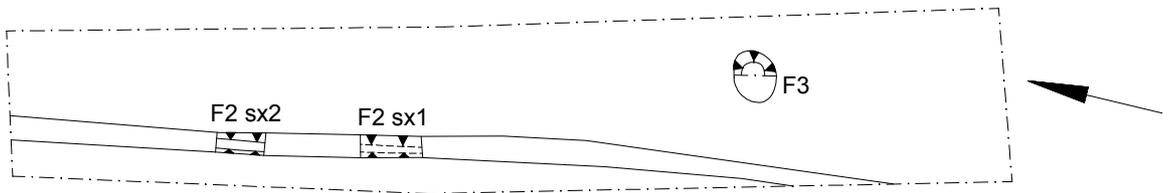


Fig 1 Evaluation results. Proposed development shown in blue.



T1



T2



T3



Fig 2 Detailed trench plans.

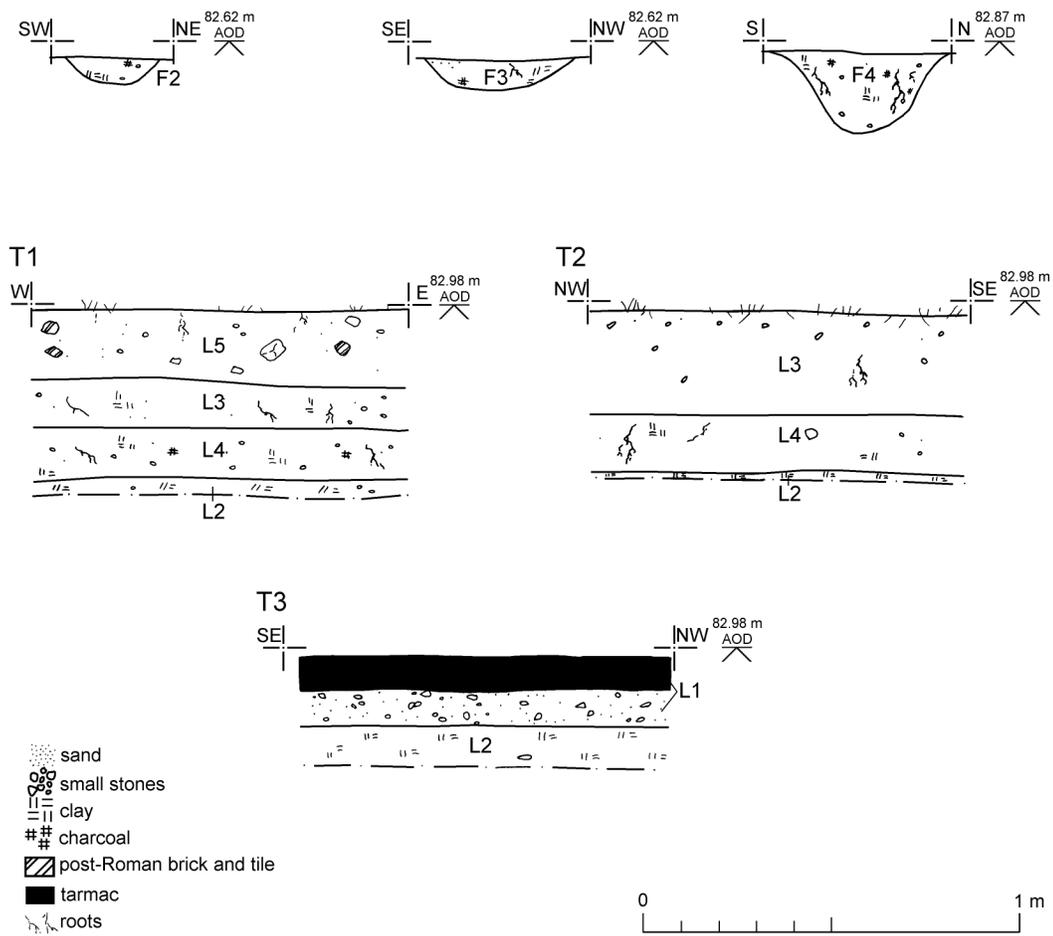


Fig 3 Feature sections (F2-4) and representative trench sections (T1-3)

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

Summary sheet

Address: rear of Stag Inn, The Heath, Hatfield Heath, Essex	
Parish: Hatfield Heath	District: Uttlesford
NGR: TL 5243 1500	Site code: CAT project code – 13/12b
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 16th December 2013	Size of area investigated: 35m (linear)
Location of curating museum: Saffron Walden Museum accession code : 2013.88	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER number: 38108 --
Final report: CAT Report 746 and summary in EAH	
Periods represented: post-medieval/modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Located in the historic core of Hatfield Heath, this site was formerly the car park and beer garden of the Stag Inn. Three evaluation trenches 35m in length were positioned within the footprints of two proposed new buildings and their access road. There were five archaeological features: a late medieval pit, and modern ditches and pits. The modern features are probably associated with the modern housing development to the north of the site, and the late medieval pit provides only slight evidence for late medieval activity here. A modern gully may be a former plot boundary.</i>	
Previous summaries/reports: -	
ECC Place Services officer: Richard Havis	
Keywords: --	Significance: *
Author of summary: Ben Holloway	Date of summary: January 2014