

Archaeological evaluation at 101 Laindon Road, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9LG

August 2016



by Laura Pooley

with contributions by Stephen Benfield
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**commissioned by Andy Tyrrell, Dusek Design Associates Ltd
on behalf of Kingfisher Prestige Developments Ltd**

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CAT Report 1006
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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out at 101 Laindon Road, Essex in advance of the construction of two new dwellings. The evaluation revealed that the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement, identified underneath the adjacent school in the 1970s, continues to the southwest into the development site. Four Roman features were excavated (a ditch, two pits and a pit/posthole) and a small selection of Roman finds from a rural settlement of probable 1st to mid/late 3rd century date recorded. Ditch F2 may have been part of a boundary and the pits contained a range of relatively low status domestic refuse. The ceramic building material may even suggest the presence of unmortared structures nearby.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at 101 Laindon Road, Essex which was carried out on 26th August 2016. The work was commissioned by Andy Tyrrell, Dusek Design Associates Ltd, on behalf of Kingfisher Prestige Development Ltd in advance of the construction of two new dwellings. The work was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Teresa O'Connor advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for archaeological trial-trenching*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa O'Connor (ECCPS 2016), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2016).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006), and with *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14 and 24). This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b).

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background utilises the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford.

The EHER shows that Roman material has been recovered to the immediate east of the development area. Rescue excavations in advance of the construction of the adjacent school in the 1970s revealed Late Iron Age and Roman settlement on both sides of a Roman road that curved east-west to the south of the school. The settlement probably originated as a ditched enclosure of Late Iron Age date and grew into a village, covering an area of approximately 8 hectares, in the Roman period. Cremation burials were found throughout the area, but the main cemetery focus appears to have been around the edges of the settlement, to the north-east and south. Other features include post-holes, gullies, ditches and gravel spreads, and it is probable that some of these at least represent timber dwellings. Two, possibly three, pottery kilns and two corn-dryers have been found, providing some evidence for the local economy.

Archaeological remains identified at 81 Laindon Road are believed to be a continuation of the Roman settlement to the west. The Roman features consisted of a rubbish pit, a

pebble surface probably forming part of a yard or track, and an overlying layer. Finds from the pit included several large pieces of slag/clinker that indicate that metalworking was taking place in the vicinity.

An investigation to the north of 81 Laindon Road also revealed further evidence that the Roman settlement previously excavated at the School continues west at least as far as Laindon Road.

4 Results (Figs 2-3)

Three trial-trenches were machine excavated across the development site under archaeological supervision.

Three layers were identified. Modern topsoil (L1, c 200-550mm thick) sealed a post-medieval silty-sand subsoil (L2, c 270-370mm thick), which sealed natural yellow-orange sand (L3).

Trench 1 (T1) – 9m long by 1.8m wide

Two Roman pits were excavated (F1 and F3). Both were steep sided features. Pit F1 measured 820mm in diameter and 210mm deep, and pit F3 830mm in diameter and 620mm deep. A modern drain was also recorded in the centre of the trench.

Trench 2 (T2) – 4m long by 1.8m wide

No significant archaeological horizons were identified.

Trench 3 (T3) – T-shaped, 12m and 7m long by 1.8m wide

Two modern soakaways were recorded at the north end of the trench. To the south two Roman features were excavated (F2 and F4). Ditch F2 was recorded for a distance of 1.8m and was aligned northeast to southwest. It was a V-shaped ditch 950mm wide and 400mm deep. Pit F4 was a small pit/posthole 370mm in diameter and 240mm deep.



Photograph 1 T1, looking SE



Photograph 2 T2, looking SW



Photograph 3 T3, looking SE



Photograph 4 T3, looking NE

5 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

Quantities of finds of Roman date, primarily pottery and ceramic building material (CBM), were recovered from several features. There are also two grog-tempered pottery sherds of Late Iron Age type. The features consist of two pits (F1 and F3), a small pit or post-hole (F4) and a ditch (F2). The types of finds and the quantity of each type is listed in Table 1 and all of the finds are listed and described by context in the finds appendix (Appendix 1). The pottery was recorded using the Chelmsford fabric and form series, commonly used for recording pottery in Essex (Going 1987), supplemented in part by the National Roman fabric collection (Tomber & Dore 1998). The pottery is listed by fabric in Table 2.

Finds type	No.	Wt/g.
Pottery	71	1260
CBM	19	1232
Fired clay	7	118
Burnt stones (flint)	1	24
Nails (iron)	1	18
Quern (lava)	6	200

Table 1 Types and quantities of bulk finds

Fabric code	Fabric name	No.	Wt/g.
GTW	Grog-tempered ware ('Belgic' LIA-type)	2	12
SACG	Central Gaulish samian	2	88
2	Nene Valley colour-coated ware	1	2
21	Miscellaneous oxidised red wares	4	16
39	Fine grey wares	2	14
40	Black-burnished ware 1	2	30
42	Unspecified Black-burnished 2	6	76
44	Storage jar fabrics	4	360
45	Romanising coarseware	2	28
47	Sandy grey wares	45	628
UPC FR	Upchurch fine reduced ware	1	6
	<i>Total</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>1260</i>

Table 2 LIA and Roman pottery fabrics and quantity of pottery by fabric type

Discussion

Pottery

The most closely dated of the finds is the pottery. Probably the earliest of the pottery recovered are two sherds of Late Iron Age-type grog-tempered ware, broadly dating to the period of the late 1st century BC to mid 1st century AD or slightly later. A single piece of burnt flint (F1) could be of prehistoric date (being commonly found on prehistoric sites) and this might be likely as it comes from what is probably a Roman context; however, of itself it is not closely dated. The two sherds of grog-tempered ware are abraded indicating they are probably of some age in the contexts from which they were recovered (F2 and F3). While these sherds could date to the early post-conquest period, all of the other pottery is of post-conquest date, or likely to be so, and can be accommodated within a date range of mid 1st-3rd century. The assemblage includes two sherds in a Romanising coarseware fabric (Fabric 45) which should date no later than the early 2nd century. Other pottery that can be closely dated to the early-mid Roman period is an abraded sherd from a panel-dot beaker of late 1st-2nd century date (F1) and a sherd from flange rim bowl (Form C16) that has a thickened rim edge indicating an early-mid 2nd century date (F4). Two necked, shouldered jars are also present (Form G24) and are probably of mid 1st-early 2nd century date (both from F1). Some pottery is clearly of mid Roman (2nd-3rd century) date. This includes base pieces from two Central Gaulish bowls of Form Dr 31 dating the second half of the 2nd century (F1 and F2) and sherds from coarsewares in black-burnished ware forms consisting of sherds from two bead-rimmed bowls (Form B4) (F1 and F3) and a lattice

decorated jar of probable black-burnished ware-type (Form G9) (F3). These are broadly of early 2nd-mid 3rd century date, although the rounded bead on one bowl (F1) is more probably of late 2nd-3rd century date. The sherds from black-burnished ware vessel forms are predominantly in a reddish-brown coloured fabric (either with fine sand or heavily sanded) with dark-grey margins and similar dark surfaces that have a relatively dull finish. Another black-burnished ware-type pot is represented by a rim sherd from a dish (Form B3) which has a red-brown and grey banded fabric that is most typical of the Upchurch potteries (Fabric UPC FR) on the North Kent coast (F3). A small colour-coated sherd with a pale fabric is possibly from the Nene Valley potteries and (if so) is likely to date to at least the early 3rd century (F1). It can be noted that sherds from storage jars are present but there are no sherds from mortaria.

One of the two sherds of Central Gaulish samian recovered (both are base sherds from Form Dr 31) has been cut down around the edge of the base and the edge ground smooth (F1 (1)) (Photograph 5). This had not been carried out in a very even way, as a small part of the wall remains attached (see photo) or had not been completed; although the latter seems unlikely as (where it remains) the cut down edge has been smoothed. While only a single piece, this appears to be typical of the recycling of samian which generally became more common from the 3rd century following the end of the large scale import of samian into Britain (Wild 2016). Where reworked from damaged original pots, these were cut down and fashioned into smaller objects – small dishes, lids or palettes. This type of reworking could be carried out on individual basis, but it appears likely that it was also undertaken at the level of a workshop industry as seems to be represented by the large quantity of repaired and reworked samian recovered from a pit at Kempston Church End, Bedfordshire (Wild 2016).



Photograph 5 Samian base from feature F1 (1) showing area of cut down and smoothed base edge

Also of interest is a rim sherd from small beaker/jar, recovered from pit F3 (5), that has been used for holding pigment/paint (paint pot?). The pot has a simple (curving) everted rim and rounded (ovoid) body which has a lattice pattern decoration similar to black-burnished wares. There are traces of a brownish-red deposit internally that extends on to the rim and also some traces of this same deposit on that external body.

This deposit has not been analysed. The lower internal wall surface has also been blackened, presumably by heating.

Ceramic building material (CBM)

The second largest group of finds material from the site is ceramic building material (CBM) all of which can be dated to the Roman period. All are in orange-red fine sand fabrics and most are quite broken-up. Pieces of CBM were recovered from all of the features, although the largest quantity from any one feature is from pit F3. Most of the pieces are of relatively undiagnostic Roman flat brick/tile (RBT). Pieces in excess of 30mm thick can be assumed to be from bricks or construction tiles. One piece from F4 and others from F2 and F3 are relatively thin (17mm, 15-16mm and 19mm thick respectively) and while not at all certain, these are possibly from the base of *tegula* roof tiles rather than from bricks or construction tiles. If so the thickness recorded could suggest that they date to the 2nd century or later, rather than to the 1st century when there is some indication that roof tile were in general greater than 20mm thick. However, no flanged *tegula* pieces were present among this small assemblage and neither were any pieces able to be identified as *imbrex* roof tiles so the nature of the flat tile pieces is questionable. There are also two small pieces of box-flue tiles(s) (RFT) from F3. These are designed to duct hot air from a hypocaust. One is a plain piece from an end corner, the other has an intensively, rather neatly, scored face.

Other miscellaneous finds

The only other finds are a small quantity of pieces of imported German lava stone from a Roman quern (F3), a small quantity of fired clay (F1) and an iron nail, presumed to be Roman (Manning 1985, Type 1b) (F4).

Significance of the finds

The finds assemblage is small from just a few features. If assumed to be a reasonable reflection of the site as a whole, the finds would indicate that the site lies on, or is adjacent to, a Roman rural settlement of the 1st-mid/late 3rd century, possibly with a Late Iron Age background in the late 1st century BC/early-mid 1st century AD; although it is also possible that the settlement is entirely post-conquest in origin. The range of finds do not indicate any significant wealth or affluence and the imported samian could indicate recycling of this pottery. The paint(?) pot (the coloured deposit material has not been analysed) could also be from an industrial use rather than wall painting. The brick and tile, composed mainly of flat pieces and lacking *tegula* flanges or *imbrex*, might reflect its having been brought to the site as salvage for use in unmortared structures rather than reflecting a tile roofed building or hypocaust room(s). The absence of any metal finds may simply reflect the small size of the finds assemblage. Among the finds recovered there is no clear indication of any occupation or significant activity on the site from the mid-late Roman period onwards.

6 Discussion

The features and finds identified during the evaluation appear to correspond to the Roman activity identified underneath the adjacent school in the 1970s, revealing that the Roman settlement continues to the southwest of the school and into the development site. Ditch F2 may have been part of a boundary with the pits containing a range of relatively low status domestic refuse. The ceramic building material may even suggest the presence of unmortared structures nearby and the pit/posthole may also be structural.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Andy Tyrrell (Dusek Design Associates Ltd) and Kingfisher Prestige Development Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by N Rayner, R Mathieson, C Platts and B

Watson. Figures are by Chris Lister and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor.

8 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in PDF format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

CAT	2014	<i>Health and Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2015	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation at 101 Laindon Road, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9LG</i>
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Dept of 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. 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
ECCPS	2015	<i>Brief for Archaeological trial trenching on land at 101 Laindon Road, Billericay</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (English Heritage)
Going, C	1987	<i>The mansio and other sites in the south-eastern sector of Caesaromagus, the Roman pottery</i> , CBA Research Report 62
Manning, W	1985	<i>Catalogue of the Romano-British iron tools, fittings and weapons in the British Museum</i>
Medlycott, M	1999	<i>Billericay: Historic Towns in Essex</i> , ECC
Tomber, R and Dore, J	1998	<i>The National Roman fabric reference collection, a handbook</i> , MoLAS Monograph 2
Wild, F	2016	'Samian ware' in Luke, M., <i>Close to the Loop, landscape and settlement evolution beside the Biddenham Loop, west of Bedford</i> , EAA 156 - specialist report on CD

9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECCHEA	Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
Late Iron Age(LIA)	period from c 100-50 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
post-medieval	from Henry VIII to c AD 1800
residual	something out of its original context, eg a Roman coin in a modern pit
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
Section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

10 Contents of archive

Finds: half a box

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:
The report (CAT Report 1006)
ECC Evaluation Brief, CAT Written Scheme of Investigation
Original site record (Feature and layer sheets, Finds record, plans)
Site digital photos and log, Architectural plans, Attendance register, Risk assessment

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Chelmsford Museum under accession code CHMRE: 2016.107

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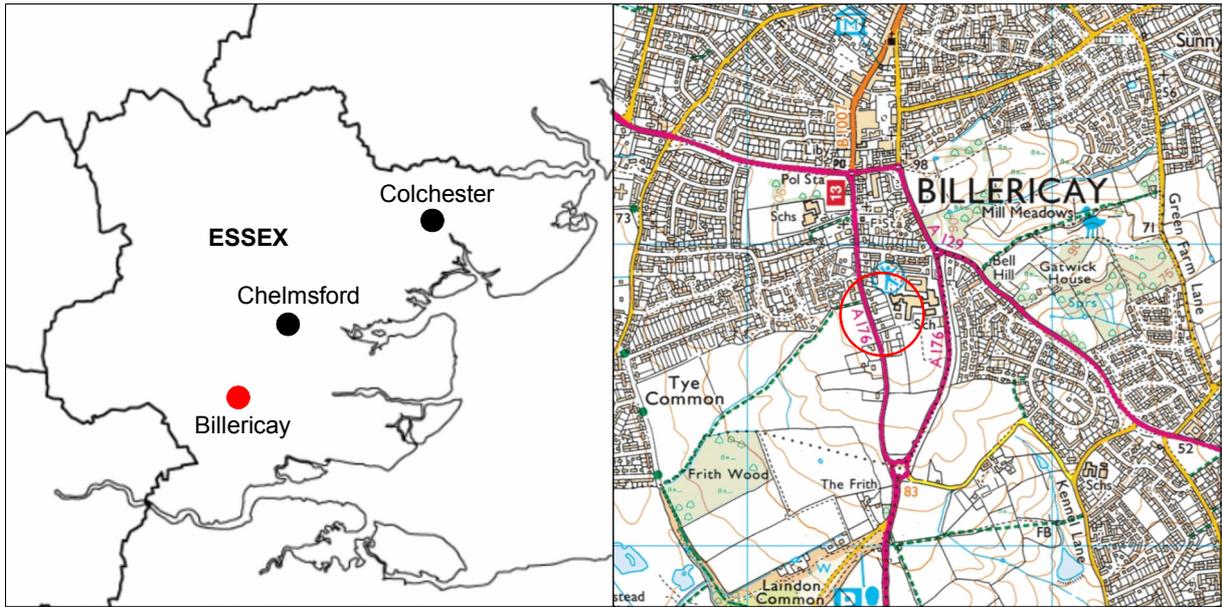
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Date: 12.09.2016



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Fig 1 Site location and trenches in relation to the proposed development (dashed blue lines).



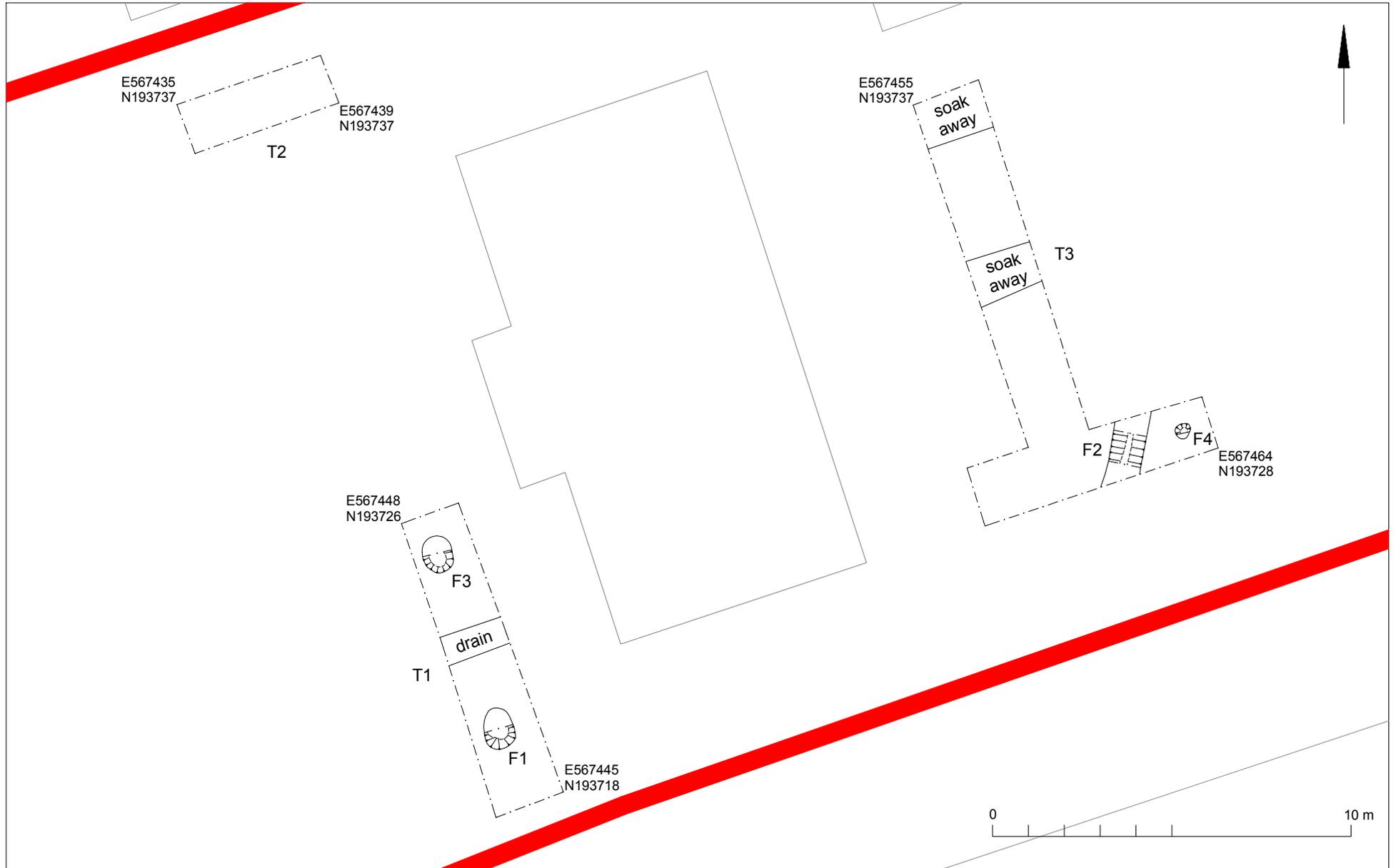


Fig 2 Results.

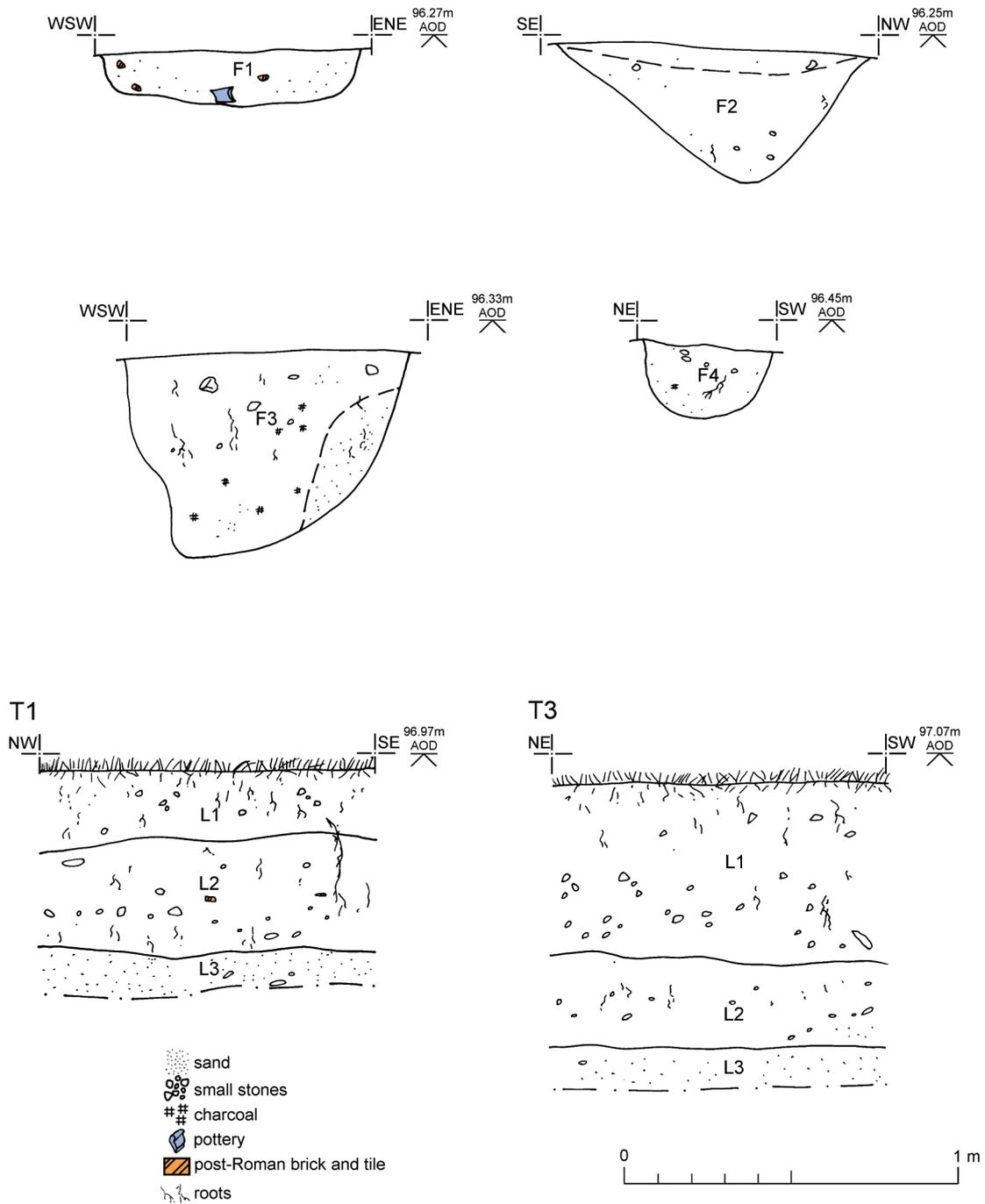


Fig 3 Feature (F1-4) and representative trench sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: 101 Laindon Road, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9LG	
Parish: Billericay	District: Chelmsford
NGR: TQ 67448 93729 (centre)	Site code: CAT project code: 16/08h ECC project code: BLLR16 OASIS project ID: colchest3-259981
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 26th August 2016	Size of area investigated: Three trenches (totalling 57.6m ²)
Location of curating museum: Chelmsford Museum accession code CHMRE: 2016.107	Funding source: developer
Further seasons anticipated? Not known	Related EHER number:
Final report: CAT Report 1006	
Periods represented: Roman	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out at 101 Laindon Road, Essex in advance of the construction of two new dwellings. The evaluation revealed that the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement, identified underneath the adjacent school in the 1970s, continues to the southwest into the development site. Four Roman features were excavated (a ditch, two pits and a pit/posthole) and a small selection of Roman finds from a rural settlement of probable 1st to mid/late 3rd century date recorded. Ditch F2 may have been part of a boundary and the pits contained a range of relatively low status domestic refuse. The ceramic building material may even suggest the presence of unmortared structures nearby.</p>	
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