

Archaeological evaluation on land east of 78 Harwich Road, Little Oakley, Essex, CO12 5JA

October 2017



by Dr Elliott Hicks

with contributions by Stephen Benfield and Lisa Gray
figures by Ben Holloway and Sarah Carter

fieldwork by Nigel Rayner with Jane Roberts, Sarah Carter and Ziya Eksen

commissioned by Mr and Mrs Cullen

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (four trial-trenches) was carried out on land east of 78 Harwich Road, Little Oakley, Essex in advance of the construction of up to three new dwellings. The evaluation revealed a Bronze Age pit and prehistoric, Roman and Medieval pottery, indicating multi-period activity or occupation at this site which reflects the findings of archaeological investigations previously conducted within the area.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land east of 78 Harwich Road, Little Oakley, Essex which was carried out on 2nd-3rd October 2017. The work was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Cullen in advance of the construction of up to three new dwellings, and 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 2017), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2017).

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* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014b).

3 Archaeological background

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

The proposed development lies near to a multi-period site which included the remains of a Roman villa, burials and Saxon settlement evidence. Piecemeal excavations were undertaken in advance of the Seaview Estate (Barford 2002). The site produced evidence for early Neolithic occupation (flintwork) but the earliest pottery dates from the Late Bronze Age and large assemblages of this period and the Early Iron Age were recovered. The site has also produced a little Middle and Late Iron Age pottery.

In the mid-2nd century a timber-framed villa building was replaced by a stone aisled building, later divided by cross-walls to form a corridor villa. The villa was both sizable and opulent. It included a bath suite, including a hypocaust room with an adjacent plunge bath and piped water supply. The structure had mosaic and tessellated floors, walls with painted plaster imitating marble sheet, fragments of Purbeck marble veneer were also found. In the late 4th or early 5th century the villa was dismantled and some of the rubble used to form foundations for timber-framed buildings.

The site was replaced by an early Saxon settlement, indicated by an oven and a series of large pits with a substantial spread of pottery and finds. The finding of an inhumation burial may indicate a small cemetery nearby. The focus of settlement seems to have

shifted, perhaps towards the medieval church, and only a little Middle Saxon pottery (shell-tempered) was found. A single pit contained Saxo-Norman pottery of the 11th century which may relate to the Domesday Manor of Foulton Hall.

In addition, the development is located within an area where significant Pleistocene interglacial deposits have been identified and mapped within a relict channel. These deposits have not yet yielded Palaeolithic archaeological remains, however they may contain well preserved faunal and floral remains that provide palaeo-environmental information.

4 Aims

Archaeological evaluation was undertaken to determine whether archaeological deposits existed on the site and whether further investigations are required.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

Two L-shaped archaeological trial-trenches were machine excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist.

Trench 1 (T1): 16m long by 1.8m wide

Trench 1 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, 0.06-0.1m thick) and post-medieval/modern subsoil (L2, 0.28-0.34m thick) onto natural clay (L3).

A pit, F1, was uncovered. It measured 0.34m in width and 0.2m in depth. Pottery sherds recovered from the feature enable us to date it to the Middle Bronze Age.



Photograph 1 T1 trench shot – looking south

Trench 2 (T2): 16m long by 1.8m wide

Trench 2 was excavated through L1 (c 0.1-0.12m thick) and L2 (c 0.15-0.25m thick), onto L3.

No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.

6 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

A small quantity of finds was recovered from Trench 1 (T1). These divide into two groups. One group is made up of a few finds from the topsoil (L1) and subsoil (L2). The other group consists of a small number of finds of Middle Bronze Age pottery sherds, fired clay and charcoal, which come from the fill of a small pit (F1).

The finds from pit F1 are the more significant of the two groups. There are three joining sherds from the rim of a thick-walled, bucket-like pot that has a coarse (ill-sorted) flint-tempered fabric. It is decorated with finger-tip impressions lightly pressed into the simple, flat-topped rim. The pot is typical of Middle Bronze Age urns within the broad Deverel Rimbury tradition (Gibson and Woods 1997, 142-145) and can be widely paralleled by a number of plain and decorated urns. For example, despite the recognised differences between the Middle Bronze Age pottery assemblages of north and south Essex (Wymer and Brown 1995, 155) pots of near identical appearance to that here can be seen associated both with burials at Ardleigh in north Essex (Brown 1999, see fig 69 no. 119 and fig 80 no. 183) and with an area of settlement at Shoebury in South Essex (Wymer and Brown 1995, see fig 62 nos. 14 and 18). A second pot is represented by a single sherd in a similar coarse fabric but with an oxidised surface. A small quantity of fired clay and a single piece of charcoal were also recovered from this feature. A rather poor worked flint, possibly a utilised core piece, recovered from the topsoil/subsoil (L1/L2), might also belong with the Bronze Age activity here.

It can be noted that previous excavation at the Little Oakley Roman villa site (adjacent to the site here) showed only limited evidence for activity prior to the Late Bronze Age, while settlement of Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age date was well represented by a significant assemblage of pottery (Barford, 2002).

Pottery from the topsoil (L1) consists of two small sherds; one a very abraded Roman sherd, the other a sherd from a Colchester-type ware pot decorated with slip painted lines that can be dated to the period of the 15th to early 16th century.

Feature & finds nos.	Type/ description	Finds spot date
F1, 1 small pit	Fired clay: (6 pieces, 18g) abraded small pieces, silt/fine sand fabric, primarily pale orange, few dark grey pieces/fragments. Not closely dated (possibly Bronze Age - see find nos. 2 and 4).	(possibly Bronze Age)
F1, 2 small pit	Prehistoric pottery: (2 sherds, 20g) one sherd in dark, flint-tempered fabric (joins with rim sherds from find no. 4) (Middle Bronze Age); body sherd coarse flint-temper, oxidised surface (probably Bronze Age). Fired clay: (7 pieces, 40g) abraded, one medium size piece several smaller pieces and fragments, silty/fine sand and slightly harder fine sand fabrics, larger piece has a firm sandy fabric with a dark-grey fabric core oxidised brownish-orange surface, other smaller pieces vary from orange to grey (not closely-dated, presumed Bronze Age).	Middle Bronze Age (c 1500-1000 BC)
F1, 4 small pit	Prehistoric pottery: (2 sherds, 36g) joining sherds, from the rim of a coarse (ill-sorted) flint-tempered, large, tub-like pot (urn), close-spaced fingertip indentations in flat rim top, dark fabric and surfaces, slightly abraded (body sherd from find no. 2 joins with this). Rim diameter appears to be about 290mm. Typical of Middle Bronze Age pottery of the late 2nd millennium BC (c 1500-1000 BC). Charcoal: single small piece of charcoal.	Middle Bronze Age (c 1500-1000 BC)
L1/L2, 5 topsoil/subsoil	Flint: Thick piece in dark flint with cortex on two edges, some probable deliberate flake removals on one face and a small notch on one edge which may have been further worked or is possibly worn from use – possibly a utilised	Prehistoric, later prehistoric?

Feature & finds nos.	Type/ description	Finds spot date
	core piece, and probably worked but not clear	
L1, 6 topsoil	Roman pottery: (1 sherd, 2g) very abraded sandy, pale grey fabric with buff surface (Roman). Medieval pottery: (1 sherd, 2g) Fabric 21/21A small sherd with cream slip paint decoration and clear glaze over, typical of products of the late period Colchester industry (c 15th-early 16th century)	Medieval (c 15th-early 16th century)

Table 1 Catalogue of finds by context

7 Environmental results

by Lisa Gray MSc MA ACIfA Archaeobotanist

Introduction – aims and objectives

One sample was presented for assessment from bronze age pit F1. The aims of this assessment are to determine the significance and potential of the plant macro-remains in the samples, consider their use in providing information about diet, craft, medicine, crop-husbandry, feature function and environment.

Sampling and processing methods

A 15 litre sample was taken and processed by Colchester Archaeological Trust. It was processed using a Siraf-type flotation device. Flot was collected in a 300-micron mesh sieve then dried.

Once with the author the flot was scanned under a low powered stereo-microscope with a magnification range of 10 to 40x. The whole flots were examined. The abundance, diversity and state of preservation of eco- and artefacts in each sample were recorded. A magnet was passed across each flot to record the presence or absence of magnetised material or hammerscale.

Identifications were made using uncharred reference material (author's own and the Northern European Seed Reference Collection at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London) and reference manuals (such as Beijerinck 1947; Cappers *et al.* 2006; Charles 1984; Fuller 2007; Hillman 1976; Jacomet 2006). Nomenclature for plants is taken from Stace (Stace 2010). Latin names are given once and the common names used thereafter.

At this stage, to allow comparison between samples, numbers have also been estimated but where only a very low number of items are present they have been counted. Identifiable charred wood >4mm in diameter has been separated from charcoal flecks. Fragments this size are easier to break to reveal the cross-sections and diagnostic features necessary for identification and are less likely to be blown or unintentionally moved around the site (Asouti 2006, 31; Smart and Hoffman, 1988, 178-179). Charcoal flecks <4mm diameter have been quantified but not recommended for further analysis unless twigs or roundwood fragments larger than 2mmØ were present.

Results

The plant remains

This 15ml flot produced only very low numbers of charcoal flecks too small to identify and abundant uncharred rootlet fragments.

Fauna and artefactual remains

No remains were present.

Recommendations

This flot was very unproductive so no further archaeobotanical work is recommended.

8 Discussion

Archaeological evaluation on land east of 78 Harwich Road, Little Oakley, uncovered a single Middle Bronze Age pit, indicating activity in the area during this period. This adds to evidence of early Neolithic, Late Bronze Age and Iron Age activity discovered during excavations at the nearby Seaview Estate, suggesting a greater continuity of human occupation and activity in the vicinity. The Roman pottery sherds recovered from the topsoil in the site might be related to the Roman villa which was uncovered some 220m south of the site. This area also produced some evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlement: the retrieval of pottery sherds originating from the Medieval period from topsoil shows that human activity and occupation continued here beyond the Anglo-Saxon period. The results of archaeological evaluation at this site are therefore reflective of the multi-period historic landscape revealed by earlier work in the surrounding area.

9 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Mr and Mrs Cullen for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by N Rayner with J Roberts, S Carter and Z Eksen. Figures are by S Carter and B Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor

10 References

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

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| CIfA | 2014b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> |
| DCLG | 2012 | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> |
| ECCPS | 2017 | <i>Archaeological trial trenching on land east of 78 Harwich Road, Little Oakley</i> |
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11 Abbreviations and glossary

Anglo-Saxon	period from c 500 – 1066
Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
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'
Iron Age	period from 700 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
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 c AD 1500 to c 1800
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
ws	written scheme of investigation

12 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained.

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1178)

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

13 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 Colchester Museum under accession code COLEM: 2017.128.

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Distribution list:

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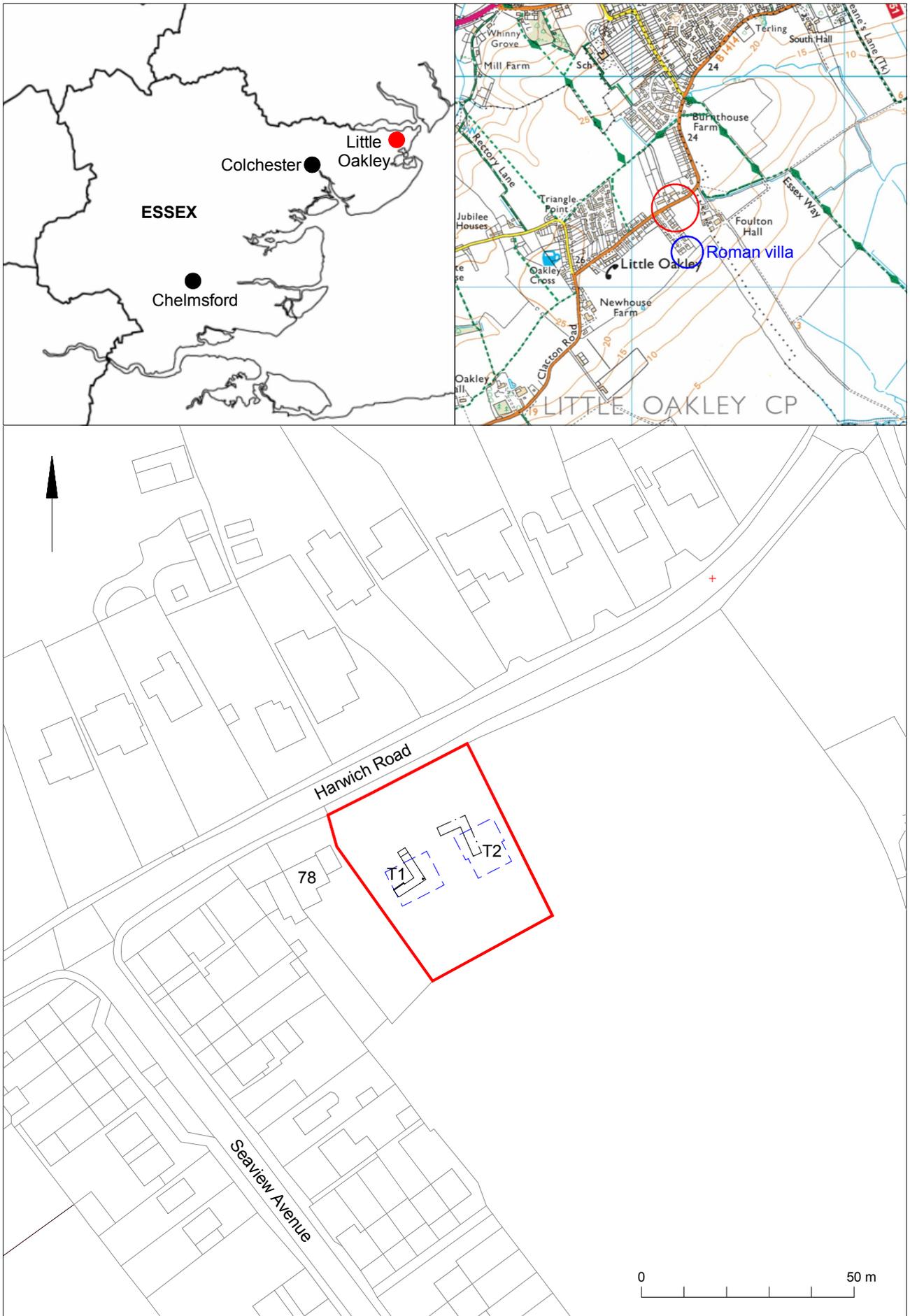
email: lp@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 18.10.2017

Appendix 1 Context list

Context Number	Finds Number	Feature Type	Description	Date
L1	5, 6	Topsoil	Loose to soft, moist grey/brown silty-loam.	Modern
L2	5	Subsoil	Firm, moist, medium grey/brown silty-loam with charcoal and daub fleck inclusions and occasional small stone piece inclusions.	Post-medieval / modern
L3		Natural	Firm, moist yellow/orange/brown clay with charcoal and manganese fleck inclusions and occasional stone piece inclusions.	Post-glacial
F1	1, 2, 3, 4	Pit	Soft to friable, moist, medium grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal and manganese fleck inclusions and occasional stone piece inclusions.	Bronze Age



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Fig 1 Site location (proposed development dashed blue)

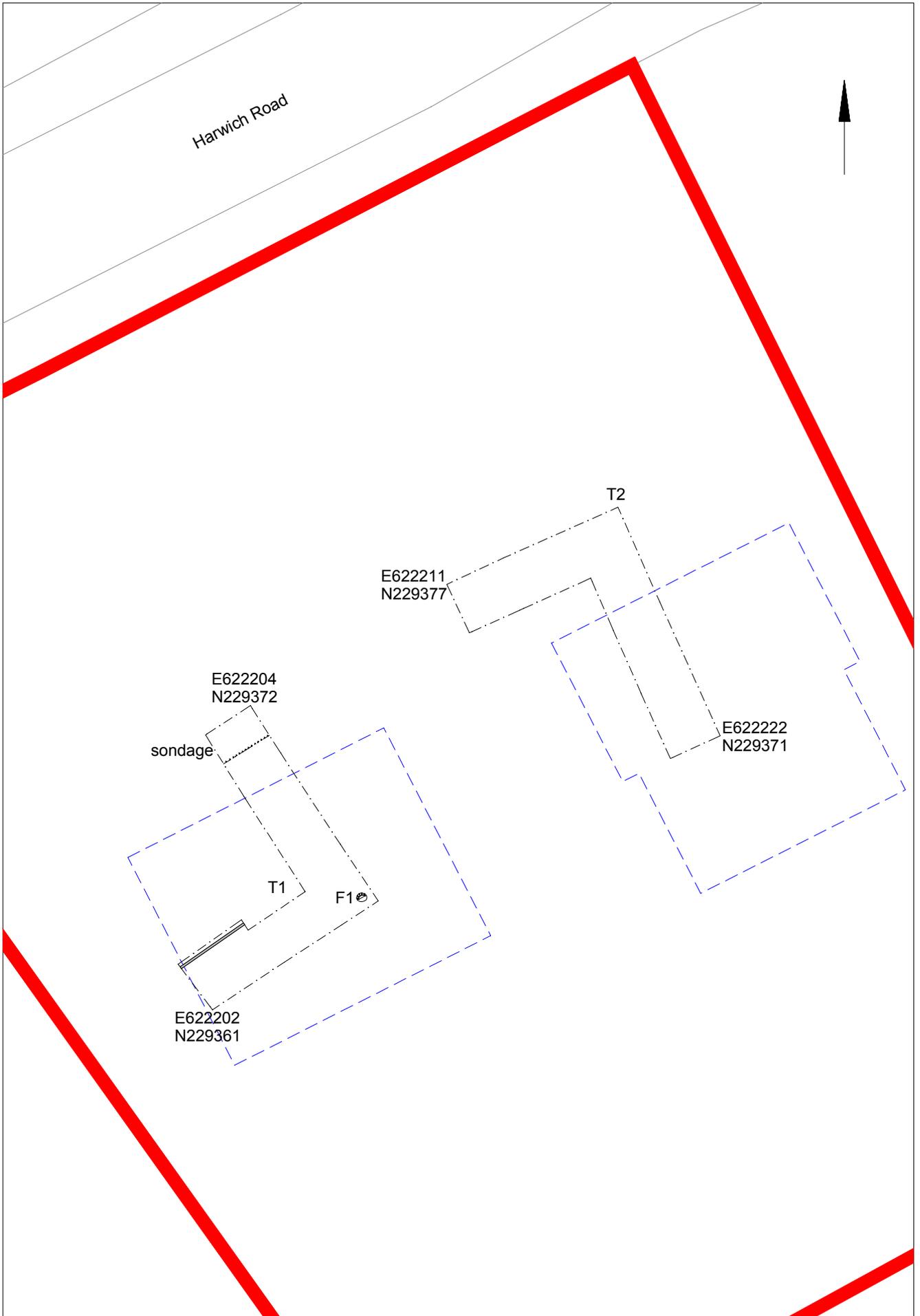
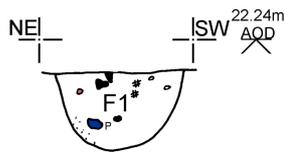
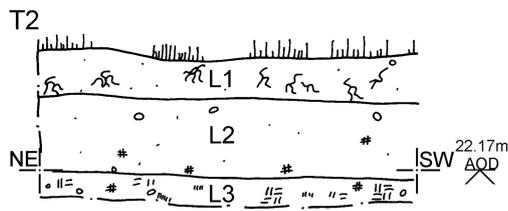
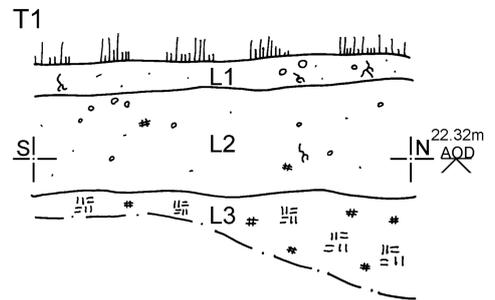
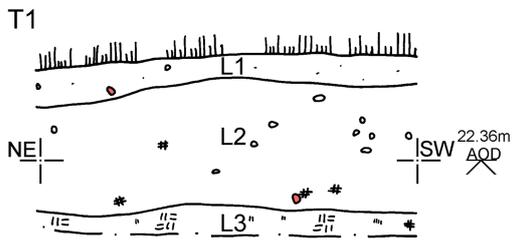


Fig 2 Results (proposed development dashed blue)



- small stones
- large stones
- roots
- clay
- charcoal
- thick charcoal
- pottery sherds
- "n" iron pan
- fired clay



Fig 3 Representative and feature sections

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OASIS ID: colchest3-296582

Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation on land east of 78 Harwich Road, Little Oakley, Essex, CO12 5JA
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (four trial-trenches) was carried out on land east of 78 Harwich Road, Little Oakley, Essex in advance of the construction of up to three new dwellings. The evaluation revealed a Bronze Age pit and prehistoric, Roman and Medieval pottery, indicating multi-period activity or occupation at this site which reflects the findings of archaeological investigations previously conducted within the area.
Project dates	Start: 02-10-2017 End: 03-10-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	17/09p - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	16/01310/OUT - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM: 2017.128 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	LOHR17 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Monument type	PIT Middle Bronze Age
Significant Finds	CLAY Bronze Age
Significant Finds	POTTERY Middle Bronze Age
Significant Finds	FLINT Late Prehistoric
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"

Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After outline determination (eg. As a reserved matter)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX TENDRING LITTLE OAKLEY land east of 78 Harwich Road
Postcode	CO12 5JA
Study area	0.16 Hectares
Site coordinates	TM 22206 29369 51.917867614009 1.231591734692 51 55 04 N 001 13 53 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 21.94m Max: 22.24m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	HEM Team Officer, ECC
Project design originator	Laura Pooley
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Nigel Rayner
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	COLEM: 2017.128
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	COLEM: 2017.128
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Report"

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