

**Archaeological evaluation at  
Elizabeth Cottage, 4 High Street, Billericay,  
Essex, CM12 9BQ**

**August 2018**



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with contributions by Howard Brooks  
figures by Sarah Carter and Ben Holloway

fieldwork by Ben Holloway with Sarah Carter

**commissioned by John Dawson  
on behalf of Dawson Developments Ltd**

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**CAT Report 1312**

August 2018

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (one trial-trench) was carried out at Elizabeth Cottage, 4 High Street, Billericay, Essex, in advance of the construction of a rear extension. The development site is located within the core of the historic town, with Elizabeth Cottage shown on the first edition 6-inch OS maps of c 1870. Evaluation revealed the remains of a modern extension which was never completed, along with two 19th- to 20th-century pits and a post-medieval/modern pit, all likely associated with Elizabeth Cottage. Evidence of earlier activity consisted of a 17th- to 18th-century pit.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at Elizabeth Cottage, 4 High Street, Billericay, Essex which was carried out on 13th August 2018. The work was commissioned by John Dawson on behalf of Dawson Developments Ltd in advance of the construction of a rear extension, 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 trench evaluation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa O'Connor (ECCPS 2018), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2018).

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

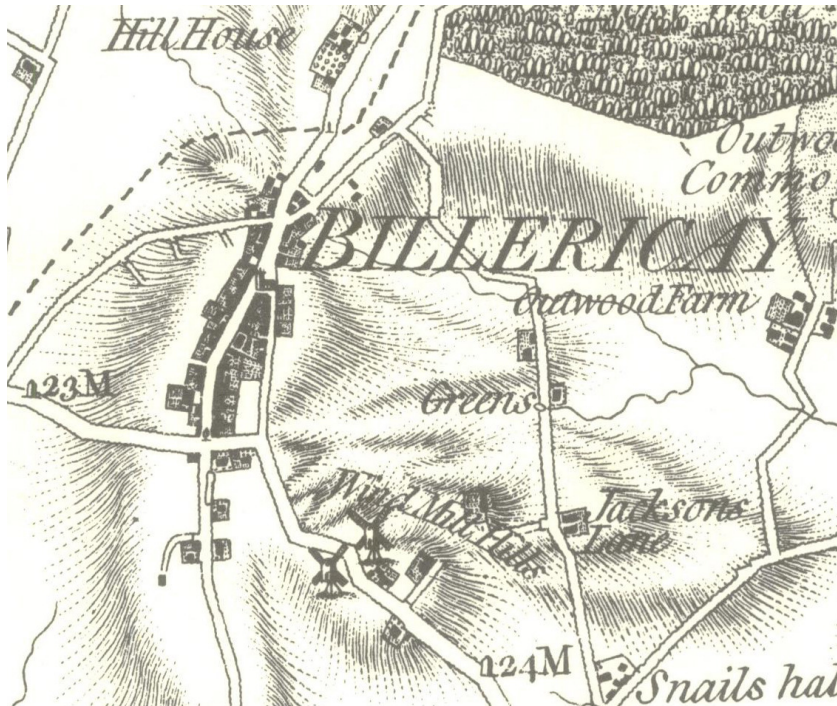
The following archaeological background utilises the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford.

Medieval Billericay (HER 5410) is a 13th-century creation by the Cistercian monks of Stratford Langthorne Abbey. The name itself is not recorded until 1291, although there may well have been a market on the site since 1253 (HER 18415). Billericay was built on waste-land, where the Mountnessing and Great Burstead parish boundaries met, and the urban area incorporated land from several manors. In 1345 a chapel was built in Billericay (HER 5411-2).

The proposed development is located at the junction of High Street close to a Grade II\* 14th-/15th-century building (HER 25934; NHLE 1338399) and within the core of the earliest settlement of the town. The site lies within an area of the town which is shown on the Chapman & André map of 1777 as built up (Map 1). Cartographic evidence depicts a large rectangular building on this site from at least c 1870 which is likely to be the building known as Elizabeth Cottage (Map 2). The exact age and function of this building is unknown. However its size and location along the High Street suggest it may have had a commercial or social function. By 1903 the building is known as Elizabeth Cottage and the building appears to be in use as a domestic property. Within

the garden of the house the historic maps depict a long rectangular outbuilding which predates c 1870 and is no longer extant (Map 2).

The Historic Town survey (Medlycott 1999) provides further information on the development of the town.



**Map 1** Chapman and André map of 1777 showing the built-up area of Billericay



**Map 2** First edition 6-inch OS map, surveyed 1866-1874, published 1881, showing Elizabeth Cottage and the outbuilding to the rear of the property.



Evidence for Roman settlement and activity has been revealed to the north of the site within the railway cuttings and there is significant prehistoric activity within Norsey Wood. The main focus of the Roman settlement was to the south of the High Street near Billericay School.

A site visit by ECC to observe a test-pit dug through an existing concrete slab showed a 'layer' or deposit containing archaeological material above the natural geology. This was observed both within the area of the slab and outside the area of the slab. There is the potential for further deposits relating to the urban development of the High Street as well as potentially earlier features surviving below the layer.

#### **4 Aims**

Archaeological evaluation was undertaken at this site to excavate and record any surviving archaeological deposits on the development site, specifically to determine the level of disturbance from previous developments, to identify any remains associated with the existing or earlier buildings along the High Street, and to identify any evidence of earlier settlement and/or activity.

#### **5 Results (Figs 2-3)**

A single trial-trench was machine excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist, measuring 15m long by 1.2m wide.

The first 4m of trenching was located within the footprint of Elizabeth Cottage after the raised floor (beams supported on brick plinths) was removed. It was excavated through a modern layer associated with the demolition of the rear of the building (L1, c 0.15m thick) into natural sand (L3). A small sondage was excavated into L3 to check that it was natural and not a levelling layer.



**Photograph 1** First 4m of trenching, looking southeast

The remaining trench was excavated through L1 (c 0.15-0.3m thick) and a layer of modern accumulation (L2, c 0.2-0.3m thick, seals 19th- to 20th century pit F3) into natural sand (L3).

The rear wall foundation of Elizabeth Cottage was identified in the evaluation trench, along with other sections of a brick wall laid on concrete foundations (all numbered F1). The developer believes these to be the remains of an extension from c 10 years ago that was never built. A number of modern services were also present. It is possible that modern accumulation layer L2 is associated with the construction of the extension.

Large modern pit F2 cut L2, finds were collected from the surface but the pit was not excavated. Sealed by L2 and cut into L3 were three smaller pits. Pit F3 dated from the 19th to 20th century, pit F5 from the 17th to 18th century, and pit F4 was of post-medieval/modern date. Pits F2, F4 and F5 had all been cut by wall foundations F1. Pits F4 and F5 were also very shallow, suggesting that they were truncated by later activity, probably when foundations F1 were built.



**Photograph 2** Wall foundations (F1), pits F2-F4, looking southeast

## 6 Finds

*by Laura Pooley, pottery identified by Howard Brooks*

A small quantity of finds of a post-medieval and modern date were recovered from pits F2, F3, F4 and F5, including pottery sherds, ceramic building material (CBM), glass and clay pipe. A fragment of a stone hone was the only find from soil layer L2, although fragments of post-medieval/modern CBM and pottery were noted on site but not retained for analysis.

All of the finds are listed and described in Table 1 and will be discarded once the report has been approved. The post-Roman fabrics refer to the Colchester post-Roman fabric series (CAR 7). Brick identification is based on Ryan (1996).

Context no.	Finds no.	Description	Context date
F2	1	<b>Modern pottery:</b> five sherds of Staffordshire-type white earthenware (Fabric 48D), including a handle and teapot lid (118g). <b>Modern tile:</b> one corner fragment (146g), 12mm thick, fine reddish-orange fabric with grey core. <i>Modern concrete fragments were noted on site but not retained for post-excavation analysis.</i>	Modern, 19th to 20th century
F3	3	<b>Post-medieval/modern pottery:</b> three sherds (54g) of post-medieval red earthenware (Fabric 40), 17th-18th century; one sherd (6g) of German stoneware (Fabric 45), probably 18th-19th century; seven sherds of Staffordshire-type white earthenwares (Fabric 48D), 19th-20th century. <b>Ceramic building material:</b> six fragments of peg-tile (224g), 12-14mm thick; four fragments of pantile (716g); incomplete red brick (1.37kg), 175mm long (incomplete), 110mm wide (complete), 50mm thick (complete), late 17th to early 18th century; white flooring brick (1.51kg), 155mm long (incomplete), 105mm wide, 47mm thick, 19th century; fragment of brick (48g). <b>Clay pipe:</b> six stem fragments (12g). <b>Glass:</b> two fragments of olive green post-medieval bottle glass (36g); one complete glass bottle (24g), 54mm high, 22mm diameter, probably a medicine bottle, mid 19th century +. <b>Slate:</b> fragment of burnt slate (12g). <b>Animal bone:</b> two fragments (12g).	Modern, 19th to 20th century
F4	4	<b>Post-medieval/modern CBM:</b> two fragments (106g), one probably a tile with semi-circular indentation on surviving edge, other possibly a fragment of brick.	Post-medieval / modern
F5	5	<b>Post-medieval pottery:</b> Two sherds (8g) of post-medieval red earthenware (Fabric 40), 17th-18th century	Post-medieval, 17th to 18th century
L2	2	<b>Worked stone:</b> Fragment of sandstone hone, tapering rectangular shape with rectangular cross-section, worn and smoothed on one side, broken at both ends, possible point sharpening grooves on edges, undated. <i>Post-medieval/modern CBM fragments and pottery sherds were noted on site but not retained for post-excavation analysis.</i>	-

**Table 1** All finds by context

## 7 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation at Elizabeth Cottage revealed the remains of a modern extension which was never completed, two 19th- to 20th-century pits (F2-F3), a 17th- to 18th-century pit (F5) and a fourth pit of post-medieval/modern date (F4). Evidence shows that the construction of the (aborted) extension has disturbed the archaeological remains in this part of the development site, with the wall foundations cutting many of the earlier pits.

As per the aims set out in section 4, the evaluation revealed that the construction of the (aborted) extension has disturbed the archaeological remains in this part of the

development site, with the wall foundations cutting many of the earlier pits. However, some archaeological remains of a post-medieval and modern date have survived. If Elizabeth Cottage does date from at least c 1870, then pits F2-F3 and probably F4 are likely to be contemporary with this building. The evaluation revealed no trace of the outbuilding also depicted on the early OS maps, suggesting it was either located closer to the northeastern boundary of the plot or has left no visible remains. Pit F5 was the only feature present that probably represents an earlier phase of 17th to 18th century activity on the development site.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks John Dawson and Dawson Developments Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway with S Carter. Figures are by S Carter and B Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor.

## 9 References

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

Brown and Glazenbrook	2000	<i>Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2 – Research Agenda and Strategy</i> . East Anglian Archaeology
CAR 7	1999	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by J Cotter
CAT	2014	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2018	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation at Elizabeth Cottage, 4 High Street, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9BQ</i>
Cifa	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation</i>
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>Brief for archaeological trial trench evaluation at Elizabeth Cottage, 4 High Street, Billericay</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Medycott, M	2011	<i>Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)
Ryan, P	1996	<i>Brick in Essex from the Roman Conquest to the Reformation</i> .

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Cifa	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'
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	<b>O</b> nline <b>A</b> ccess to the Index of Archaeological Investigation <b>S</b> , <a href="http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main">http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main</a>
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800



residual section wsi something out of its original context, eg a Roman coin in a modern pit (abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s written scheme of investigation

## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** none retained

### **Paper record**

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1312)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Original site record (feature and layer sheets, finds record, sections)

Site digital photos and log

Inked sections

### **Digital record**

The report (CAT Report 1312)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log

Graphic files

Survey data

## 12 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: 2018.017

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### **Distribution list:**

John Dawson, Dawson Developments Ltd  
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor  
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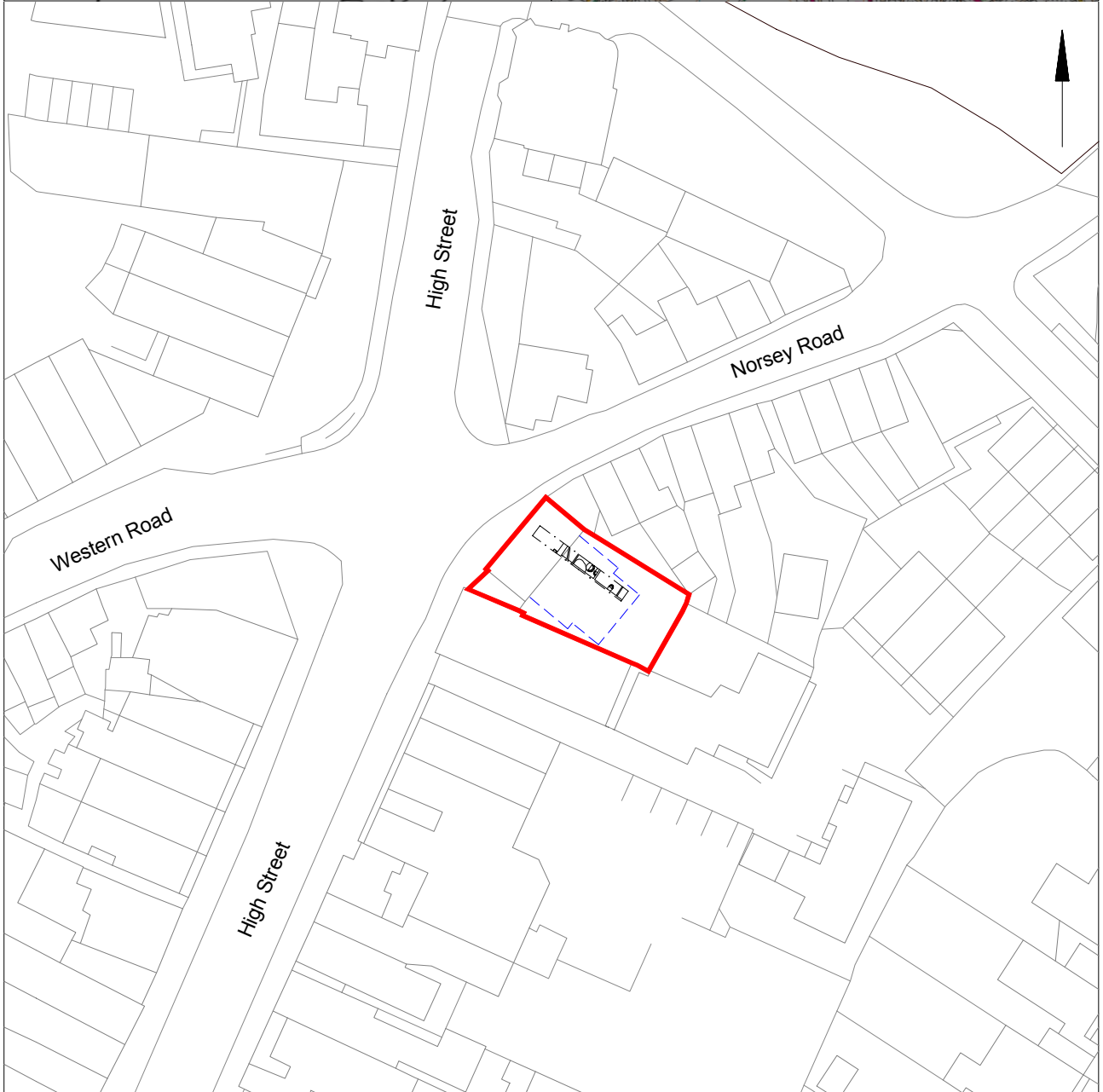
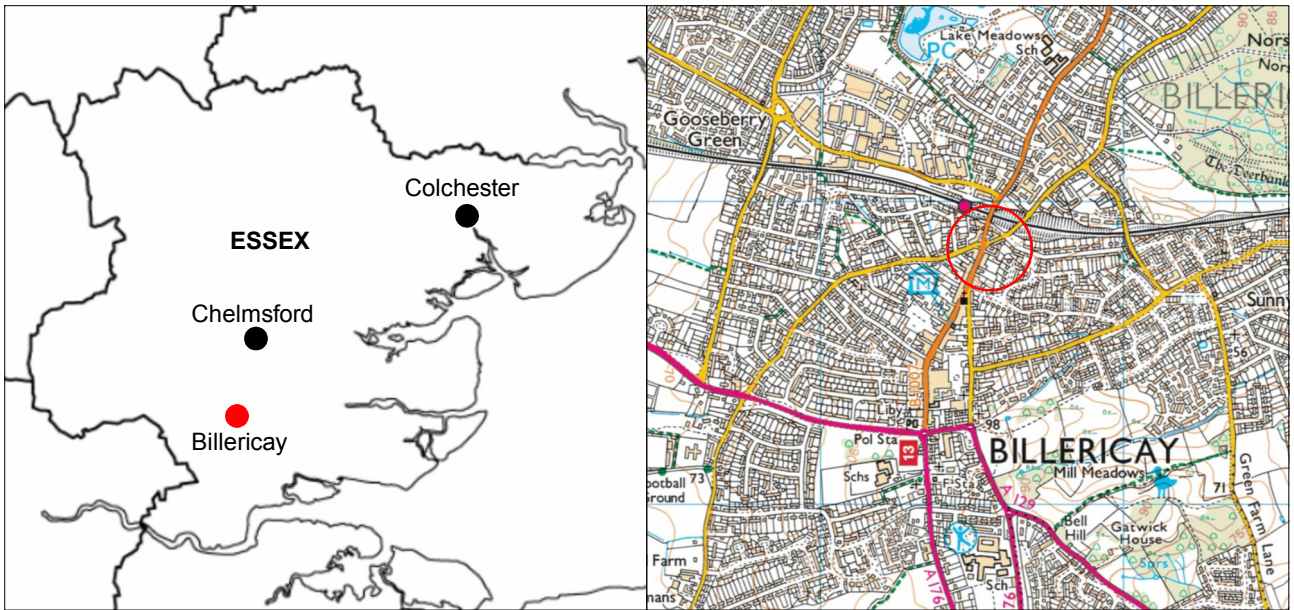
email: [lp@catuk.org](mailto:lp@catuk.org)

Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 21.8.2018

**Appendix 1 Context list**

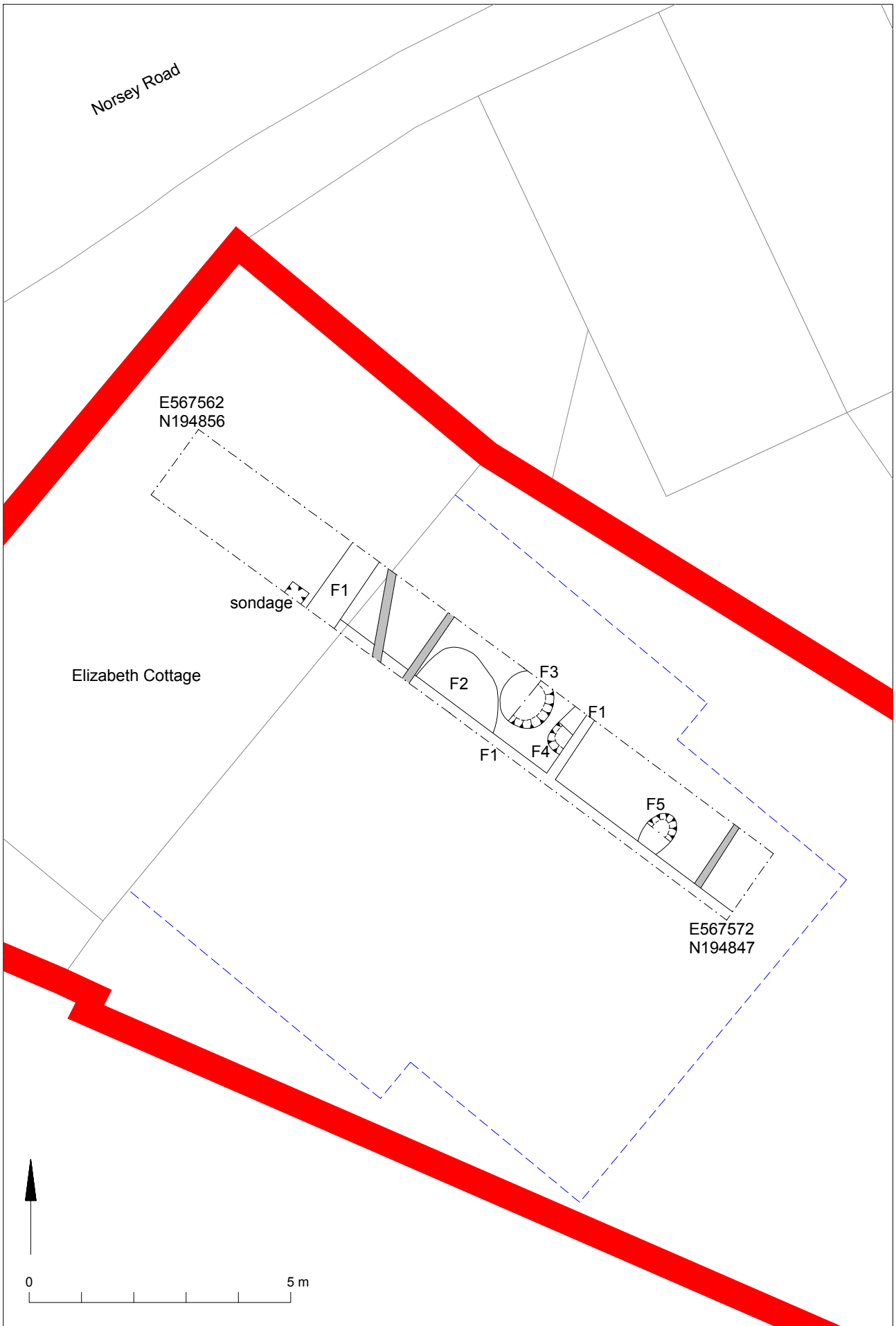
<b>Context Number</b>	<b>Finds Number</b>	<b>Feature Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
F1	-	Brick wall foundation	a) Rear brick wall foundation of Elizabeth Cottage b) Modern brick wall foundation for an extension to Elizabeth Cottage	Modern
F2	1	Pit	Firm, moist, dark brown/black silt containing fragments of brick, peg-tile, china and concrete.	Modern, 19th to 20th century
F3	3	Pit	Firm, moist, medium grey/brown silt.	Modern, 19th to 20th century
F4	4	Pit	Firm, moist, medium grey/brown silt.	Post-medieval/modern
F5	5	Pit	Firm, moist, medium grey/brown silt.	Post-medieval, 18th to 18th century
L1	-	Demolition	Friable, moist, medium grey sandy-silt. Modern brick, tile and concrete not retained.	Modern
L2	2	Accumulation	Firm, moist medium grey/brown silt, brick/tile fragments not retained.	Modern
L3	-	Natural	Firm, moist, medium yellow/orange sand	Post-glacial



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Fig 1 Site location and trench layout in relation to the proposed development (dashed blue line).





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Fig 2 Results (modern services in grey, proposed development dashed blue)



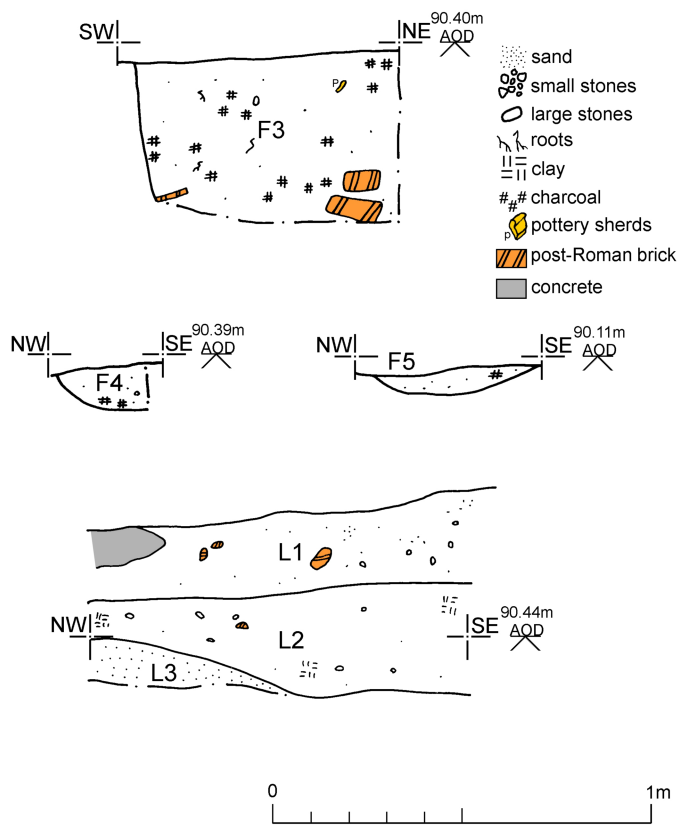


Fig 3 Feature and representative sections

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**OASIS ID: colchest3-322547**

## Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation at Elizabeth Cottage, 4 High Street, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9BQ
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (one trial-trench) was carried out at Elizabeth Cottage, 4 High Street, Billericay, Essex, in advance of the construction of a rear extension. The development site is located within the core of the historic town, with Elizabeth Cottage shown on the first edition 6-inch OS maps of c 1870. Evaluation revealed the remains of a modern extension which was never completed, along with two 19th- to 20th-century pits and a post-medieval/modern pit, all likely associated with Elizabeth Cottage. Evidence of earlier activity consisted of a 17th- to 18th-century pit.
Project dates	Start: 13-08-2018 End: 13-08-2018
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	18/07f - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	17/00477/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	BL24 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	CHMRE: 2018.017 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	N/A None
Significant Finds	N/A None
Methods & techniques	""Sample Trenches""
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

## Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX BASILDON BILLERICAY Elizabeth Cottage, 4 High Street
Postcode	CM12 9BQ
Study area	0.03 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 67567 94850 51.626968023984 0.421199948737 51 37 37 N 000 25 16 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 90.13m Max: 90.56m

## 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	Ben Holloway
Type of sponsor/funding body	Owner

## Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Chelmsford Museum

Digital Archive ID	CHMRE: 2018.017
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Chelmsford Museum
Paper Archive ID	CHMRE: 2018.017
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

### Project bibliography 1

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Entered on	21 August 2018

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