

Colchester  
Archaeological  
Trust

<b>CAT Report 1543</b>	<b>Parish:</b> Colchester
<b>Archaeological monitoring at Balkerne Gate, Colchester Essex, CO1 1PT: March 2020</b>	<b>Planning reference:</b> N/A
	<b>CHER Event no.:</b> ECC4476
	<b>CAT project code:</b> 20/04c
	<b>OASIS ref.:</b> colchest3-392217
	<b>Grid Reference:</b> TL 99250 25188
	<b>Number of site visits:</b> 1
	<b>Date of visit:</b> 13th March 2020

**Nature of the work:** Observation of emergency trench for electrical mains repair.

**Reason for condition:** The site lies in extremely close proximity to Balkerne Gate, part of Colchester's Roman town wall and a Historic England Grade I listed building (NHLE no. 1123668m and CHER no. DCC18).

**% of total seen:** 100% of the trench, after its excavation.

**Results:** CAT were called to observe and record an emergency electrical service repair trench, 6m long, 1.5m wide and 0.8m-1m deep, that had been excavated immediately adjacent to Balkerne Gate in Colchester, Essex. CAT attended the site in response to a request by UK Power Networks after discussions with Will Fletcher of Historic England.



**Photograph 1** Trench after excavation and repair of service. Photograph taken facing south-east.

The trench penetrated three layers. The current ground surface (tarmac and stone blocks), including the concrete and sub-base beneath it, were collectively recorded as L1 (c 0.30-0.50m thick) and overlay modern build-up (or possibly buried topsoil) L2 (c 0.18-0.24m thick, friable, dry dark black/brown sandy-silt). L2 sealed a layer of post-medieval subsoil/backfill (L3, friable, dry medium grey/brown sandy-silt with CBM flecks) which was encountered at a depth of c 0.48-0.64m below current ground level and the bottom of which was not reached within the trench. L3 was probably part of the backfill of an early 19th-century reservoir known to have existed in this location

(see Figs 1 and 2).

Two features were observed in the sections of the trench. Neither were bottomed. F1 was visible on the north-facing section of the trench, sealed by L2, and was a small oval pit, 0.4m wide, with a distinct layer of oyster shell. F2 was sealed by L1 on the south-facing section of the trench, and was an irregular pit, containing large amounts of brick and concrete within its fill, some of which may have been *in situ*. No finds were recovered from these features, but the fact that they both cut modern or post-medieval layers suggest they are of limited archaeological interest.



**Photograph 2** South-facing section of trench, with F2 in the centre. Photograph taken facing north.



**Photograph 3** North-facing section of trench, showing F1. Photograph taken facing south.



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

Roman Circus House,  
Roman Circus Walk,  
Colchester,  
Essex, CO2 7GZ

*tel.:* 01206 501785

*email:* [mb@catuk.org](mailto:mb@catuk.org)

*Checked by:* Philip Crummy

*Date:* 17.04.2020

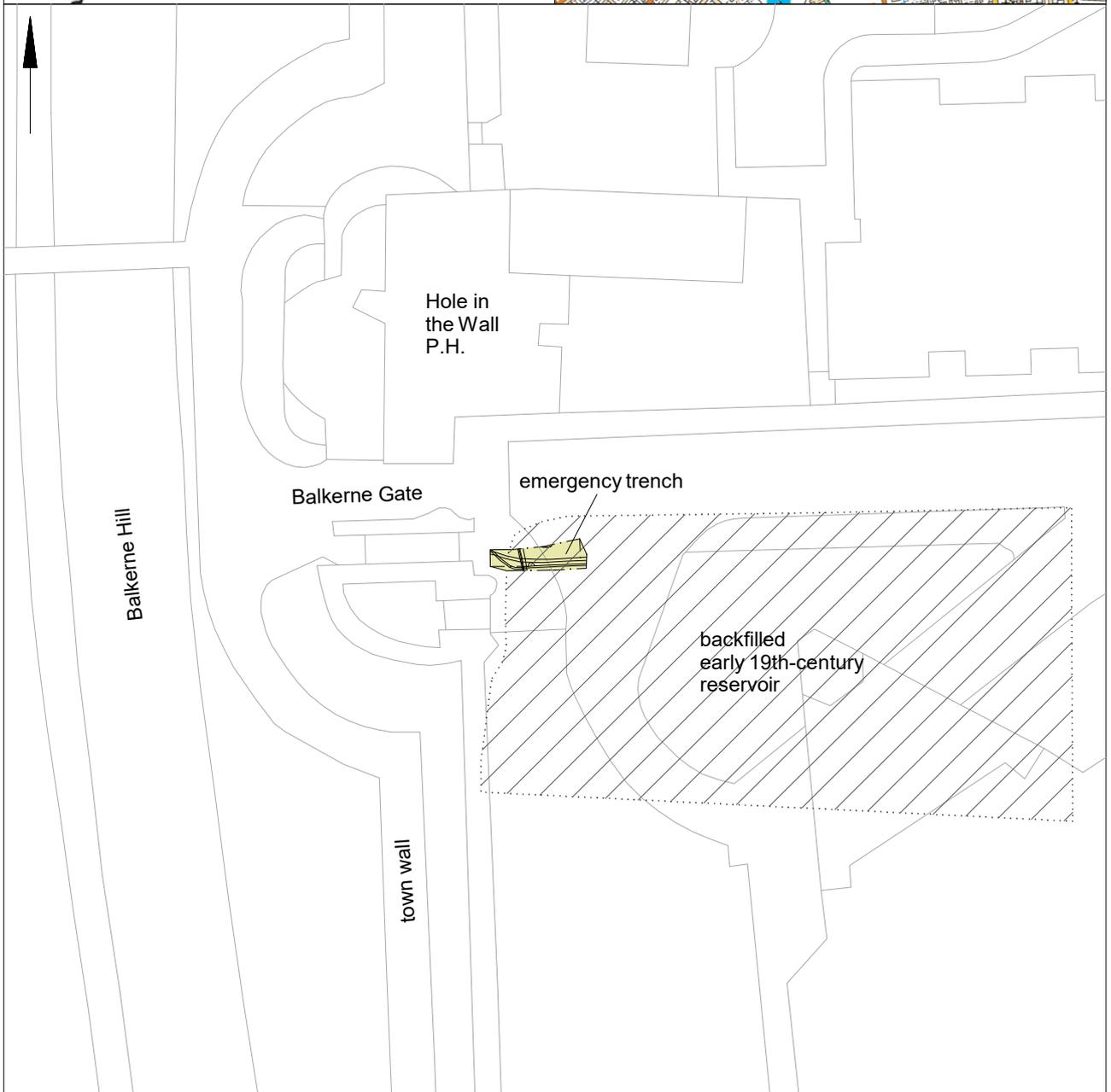
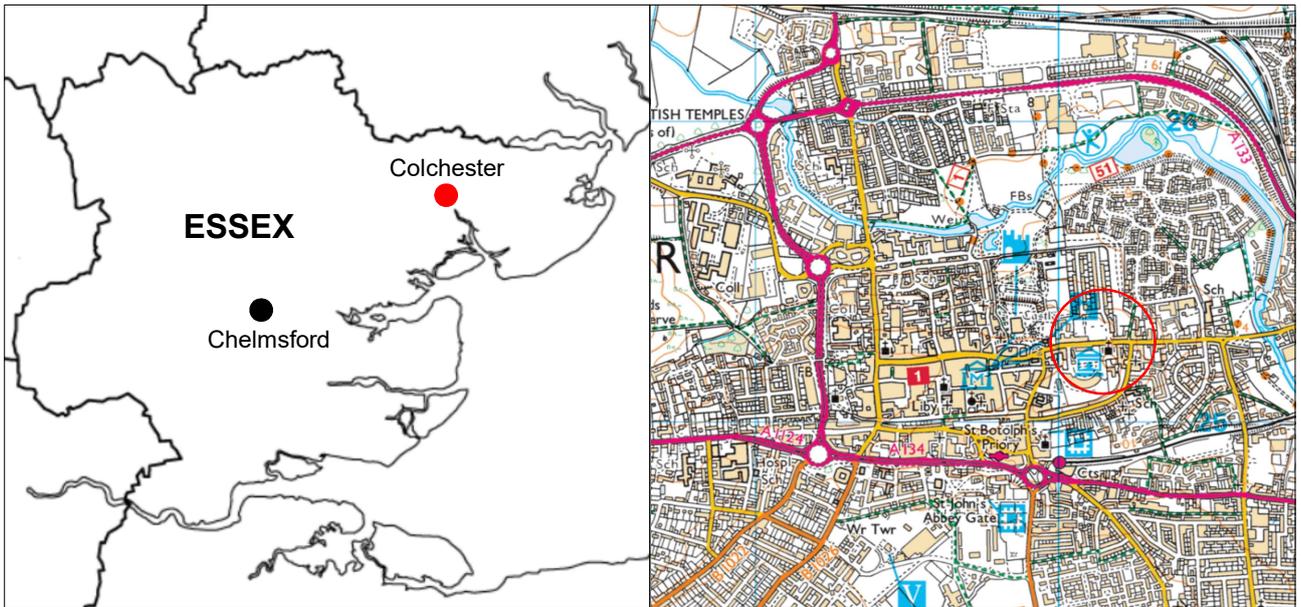


Fig 1 Site location

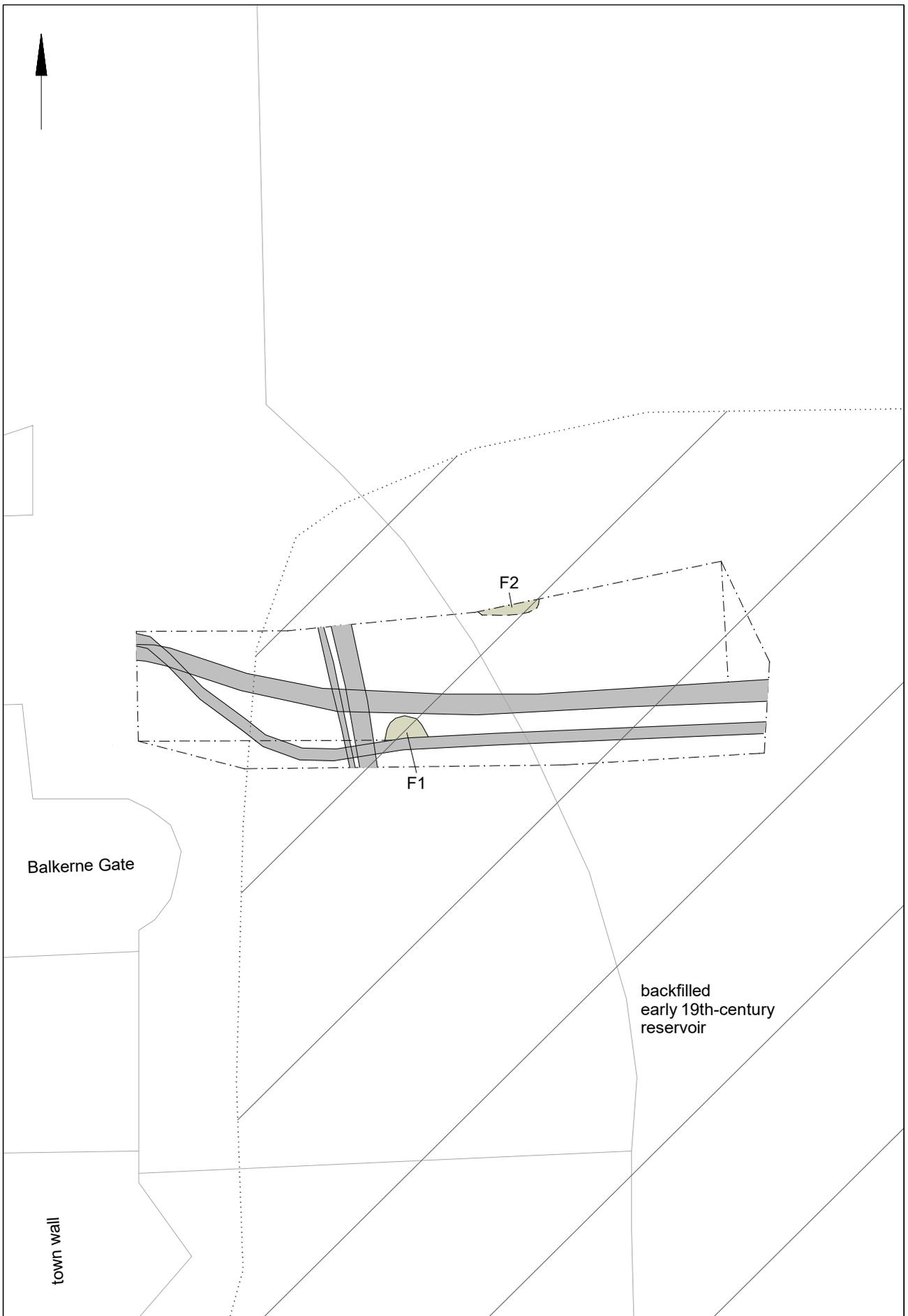
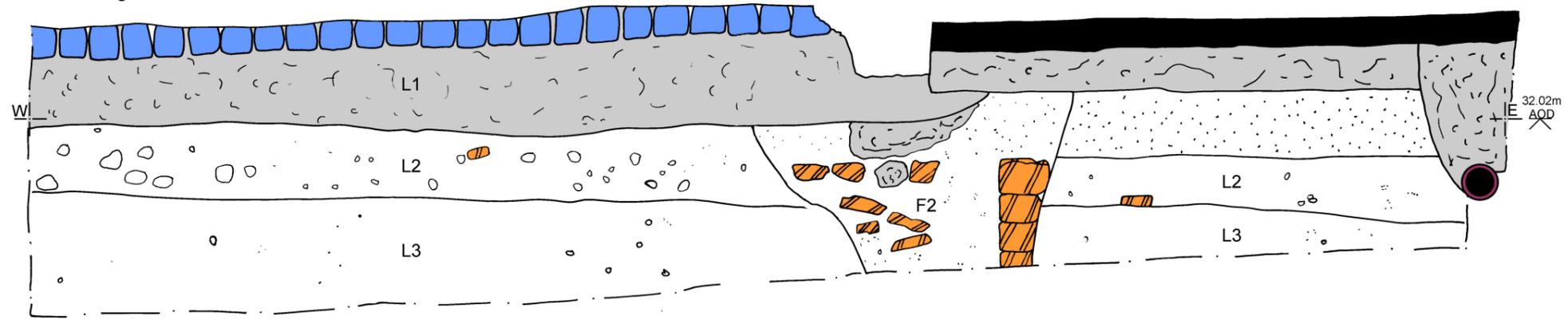


Fig 2 Monitoring results, showing modern services in grey.

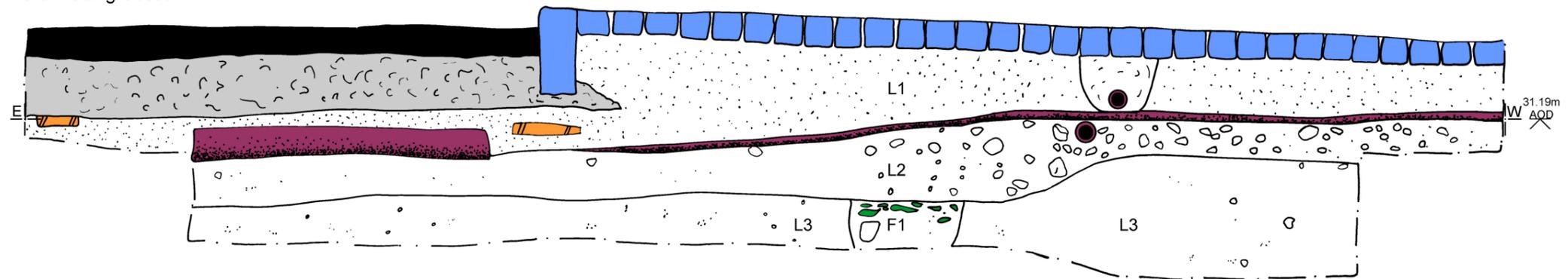
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South Facing Section.



North Facing Section.



-  stones
-  sand
-  oyster shell
-  post-Roman brick
-  concrete
-  modern service
-  paving blocks and kerb stones



Fig 3 Representative sections.