

# Archaeological evaluation on land south of Grove Hall, Blind Lane, Tolleshunt Knights, Essex, CM9 8EW

August 2020



**by Dr Elliott Hicks**

with contributions by Dr Matthew Loughton, Laura Pooley and Alec Wade  
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fieldwork by Ben Holloway with Ziya Eksen and Alexander Smith

**commissioned by Natalie Winspear (Brooks Leney)  
on behalf of Robert Ashcroft**

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**CAT Report 1591**  
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OASIS summary sheet

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out on land south of Grove Hall, Blind Lane, Tolleshunt Knights, Essex, in advance of the construction of two agricultural buildings and an area of hardstanding. The site lies within a farmstead located to the south of the hall, which is a listed timber-framed building dating to the 17th century. Excavations revealed a post-medieval area of hardstanding and a ditch and pit dating to the medieval or post-medieval periods, all of which are likely associated with agricultural activity at the farm.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land at south of Grove Hall, Blind Lane, Tolleshunt Knights Essex which was carried out on 13th August 2020. The work was commissioned by Natalie Winspear of Brooks Leney on behalf of Robert Ashcroft in advance of the construction of two agricultural buildings and an area of hard standing, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Maria Medlycott 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* (MHCLG 2019).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with an *Archaeological Brief for Trial Trenching and Excavation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Maria Medlycott (ECCPS 2020), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2020).

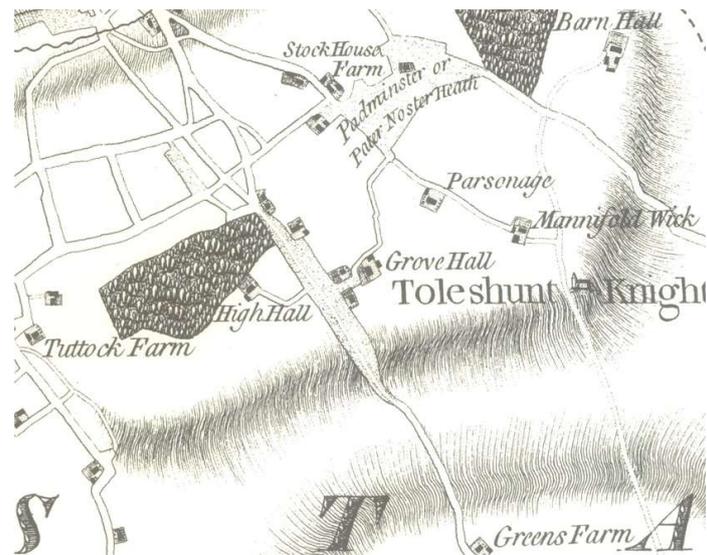
In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006), and with *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14 and 24). This report mirrors 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 draws on the Brief and the Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessible to the public via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The proposed development site is located in the village of Tolleshunt Knights, an area potentially containing significant medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains. Grove Hall is a 17th-century timber-framed listed building (NHLE 1121933, EHER 39204). The Chapman and André map of 1777 depicts the hall as part of a complex of buildings set within a network of lanes and linear greens (see Map 1 below). A medieval harness fitting (EHER 51432), a selection of medieval or post-medieval buckles, a jetton and a purse (EHER 54479, 53528), a seal, a plaque of the crucifixion and hammered silver coins (EHER 49506), and a post-medieval finger-ring (EHER 54480) have been found within the vicinity of the hall.

The church of all saints (NHLE 1121928, EHER 11492) lies c 900m east of Grove Hall. The church has its origins in the 12th century with additions made in the 15th and 19th centuries. Just northeast of the church is the possible site of a Roman villa, and Roman tile and a tessellated floor have been uncovered at Barn Hall, approximately 1.6km northeast (EHER 11494).



**Map 1** extract from Chapman and André's map of Essex, 1777

A series of cropmarks lies some 1km southeast of the development (EHER 47756). The remains indicated by these cropmarks are probably of prehistoric date, and include a rectangular enclosure, a north-south aligned trackway and associated field boundaries.

Several listed buildings are located to the southwest of the site. These include Oxley House Cottage, a pair of 18th-century timber-framed cottages now combined to form one dwelling (NHLE 1122619, EHER 39191), Oxley House, an early 19th-century house (NHLE 1142519, EHER 39190) and High Hall Farmhouse, a 17th-century timber-framed farmhouse (NHLE 1122631, EHER39193).

Artefacts recovered within the surrounding area also include post-medieval coins (EHER 54481, 54483), medieval coins (EHER 52729, 52730, 53243, 54477), Roman tile (EHER 11498) and a Bronze Age palstave (EHER 11539).

#### **4 Aims**

The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to record the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits, and to assess the archaeological potential of the site to allow the ECCHEA to determine if further investigation is required.

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

Two trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trench T1 was 30m long and 1.8m wide; trench T2 was 50m long and 1.8m wide. The two trenches were arranged to form a cross.

The trenches were cut through modern ploughsoil (L1, c 0.25-0.33m thick, soft friable moist medium brown sandy-silt ) onto natural (L2, firm moist orange/brown clay).

##### **Trench 1 (T1): 30m long by 1.8m wide**

Medieval/post-medieval ditch F1 was aligned ENE-WSW and was 1.1m wide and 0.24m deep.



**Photograph 1** T1 trench shot – looking north northwest

**Trench 2 (T2): 50m long by 1.8m wide**

Post-medieval hardstanding F2 was uncovered at the western end of the trench. The feature was 0.07-0.11m deep. It extended beyond the limit of excavation, but its exposed extent was approximately 4.5m across.

Medieval/post-medieval pit F3 extended beyond the LOE, and so its full dimensions could not be ascertained, but its exposed extent was 0.67m wide and 0.22m deep.



**Photograph 2** T2 trench shot – looking west southwest

## 6 Finds

### 6.1 Ceramic finds

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation produced a small assemblage of ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) and pottery with 24 sherds with a weight of 1.6 kg (Table 1).

Ceramic material	no.	weight/g	MSW/g	Rim EVE
Pottery	4	41	10	0.00
CBM	20	1,566	78	-
<b>All</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1,607</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>0.00</b>

**Table 1** Details on the main types of ceramics and pottery

This material was recovered from three contexts:

F1 ditch: seven sherds of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile with a weight of 769g and one sherd of medieval sandy greyware pottery (fabric F20) with a weight of 12g dating to c 1150-1375/1400.

F2 Hardstanding: eleven sherds of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile with a weight of 691g and two sherds of post-medieval red earthenware pottery with a weight of 23g dating to c 1500-19th/20th century.

F3 Pit: two sherds of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile with a weight of 106g and one sherd of Roman coarse oxidised and related wares with a weight of 6g.

All of these features can be dated to the post-medieval period.

### 6.2 Small finds and other miscellaneous metalwork

by Laura Pooley

Several metal objects were found with a metal detector in ploughsoil L1. The first was an incomplete copper-alloy crotal bell (SF1) likely dating from the mid 16th to the 17th century. The upper hemisphere included an integral pointed suspension loop with drilled hole and was decorated with a plain sunburst design. Although little remains of the lower hemisphere it appears to be decorated with radiating leaves or feathers.

An iron hinge pivot (SF2) used to hang doors, shutters or windows, and possible metalworking tools resembling a hot chisel (SF3) and punch (SF4) were also recovered along with a tapering iron strip/tool (SF5). Interestingly, two fragments of what could be ironworking debris/waste were also found in L1 (finds no.7; 28.9g). Similar examples of the hinge pivot, hot chisel and punch have been published in Goodall (2011), but the finds from this site could be of medieval or post-medieval date. A fragment of lava quernstone (SF6) also came from L1 in T2.

Other undated metal finds from L1 (finds nos. 6-7) included a fragment of iron horseshoe (81.6g), three iron nails (32.0g) and a fragment of scrap lead (3.5g). These five finds have been discarded.

**Fig 4.1** SF1, L1, finds no. 5. Incomplete copper-alloy crotal bell with most of the lower hemisphere missing. The upper hemisphere has two sound holes (both incomplete), an integral pointed suspension loop with drilled hole, and is decorated with a plain sunburst design. Little remains of the lower hemisphere which appears to be decorated with radiating leaves or feathers. 33.5mm long, 25.8mm diameter and 15.7g.

**Fig 4.2** SF2, L1, finds no. 7. Hinge pivot. Iron, L-shaped with a long tapering iron shank of rectangular cross-section and a short circular-sectioned arm. 76.7mm and 39.1mm long, 12.7mm wide (max.), 9.7mm thick, 43.8g.

**Fig 4.3** SF3, L1, finds no. 7. Hot chisel. Iron bar, rectangular in cross-section, expanded in the centre, tapering to a flat rounded head at one end and a short blade (broken) at the other. 73.8mm long, 12.7mm wide, 11.9mm thick, 29.1g.

**Fig 4.4** SF4, L1, finds no. 7. Punch. Iron bar, square in cross-section, slightly expanded in the centre, tapering to a flat head at one end and a point at the other. 58.4mm long, 11.1mm wide, 9.1mm thick, 13.0g.

**Fig 4.5** SF5, L1, finds no. 7. Flat iron strip, rectangular in cross-section, flat at one end at tapering to a point. 69.2mm long, 4.6-12.2mm wide, 5.1mm thick, 7.1g.

SF6, L1, finds no. 4. Lava quernstone, fragment, includes one original flat surface but other surface and sides broken and abraded. 255mm long, 124mm wide, 43mm thick, 1.45kg.

### **6.3 Animal bone** *by Alec Wade*

The evaluation at Grove Hall, Tolleshunt Knights, produced just five pieces of animal bone weighing a total of 56g from a single context dating to the post-medieval period (hardstanding F2 in T2).

These were part of the mandibular hinge of a sheep or goat and multiple joining fragments of a cow's metacarpal that had been heavily dog gnawed.

## **7 Conclusion**

Excavations at this site revealed three features. An area of hardstanding lay at the far western end of the site. Dating to the post-medieval period, it is likely that it was related to animal husbandry at the farm. A pit and a ditch were also uncovered. Both produced fragments of peg-tile, placing their origins in the medieval or post-medieval eras, but they probably date to the same period as the area of hardstanding, and are also related to historic activity at the farm.

A particularly rich collection of artefacts hinting at historic activities at the hall and its associated farmstead was recovered from the ploughsoil. A 16th- or 17th-century crotal bell was probably lost during ploughing within this field. A fragment of lava quernstone was also recovered, indicating domestic activity in the vicinity. Additionally, a number of possible metal-working tools, as well as a number of other metal objects including two fragments of ironworking waste were also retrieved, suggesting that metal-working had also occurred in this area. This domestic and metal-working activity may also have occurred during the post-medieval period, but it is possible that they formed part of an earlier phase of activity at the site.

## **8 Acknowledgements**

CAT thanks Kevin Swayne for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway with Z Eksen and A Smith. Figures are by C Lister, B Holloway and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Maria Medlycott.

## 9 References

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

Brown, N & Glazebrook, J	2000	<i>Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper <b>8</b> (EAA <b>8</b> )
CAT	2020	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
ECCPS	2020	<i>Brief for archaeological trial-trenching and excavation on land south of Grove Hall, Blind Lane, Tolleshunt Knights</i> , by M Medlycott
Goodall, I	2011	<i>Ironwork in Medieval Britain: An Archaeological Study</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers <b>14</b> (EAA <b>14</b> )
Historic England (HE)	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers <b>24</b> (EAA <b>24</b> )
MHCLG	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
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'
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 <b>I</b> ndex of <b>A</b> rchaeological <b>I</b> nvestigations, <a href="http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main">http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main</a>
peg-tile	rectangular thin tile with peg-hole(s) used mainly for roofing, first appeared c AD1200 and continued in use to present day, but commonly post-medieval to modern
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
prehistoric	pre-Roman
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

## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** part of one box (metal objects)

### **Paper record**

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1591)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Original site record (trench sheets, sections)

Site digital photos and log

Inked sections

### **Digital record**

The report (CAT Report 1591)  
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 Colchester Museum under project ref. TOKGH20

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Checked by: Philip Crummy  
Date: 03.09.2020

**Appendix 1 Pottery list**

Cxt	Feature type	Find no.	TR	NR	GR	M SW	Discard	Rim	Handle	Base	Dec.	Stamp	Graf Pre-F	Graf Post-F	Wind	Soot	Pitting	Burn	Overfired	Residue	Abraded	Modif.	Mark	Repair hole	Hole	Disc	Polishing	Fabric Grp	Typology	Vessel function	EVE	Diam.	Vessel H.	Comments	Date
F1	Ditch	1		1	12	12	X																				F20								c.1150-1375/1400
F2	Handstanding	2		2	23	12	X																				F40								c.1500-19th/20th century
F3	Pit	3		1	6	0																					DJ								Roman



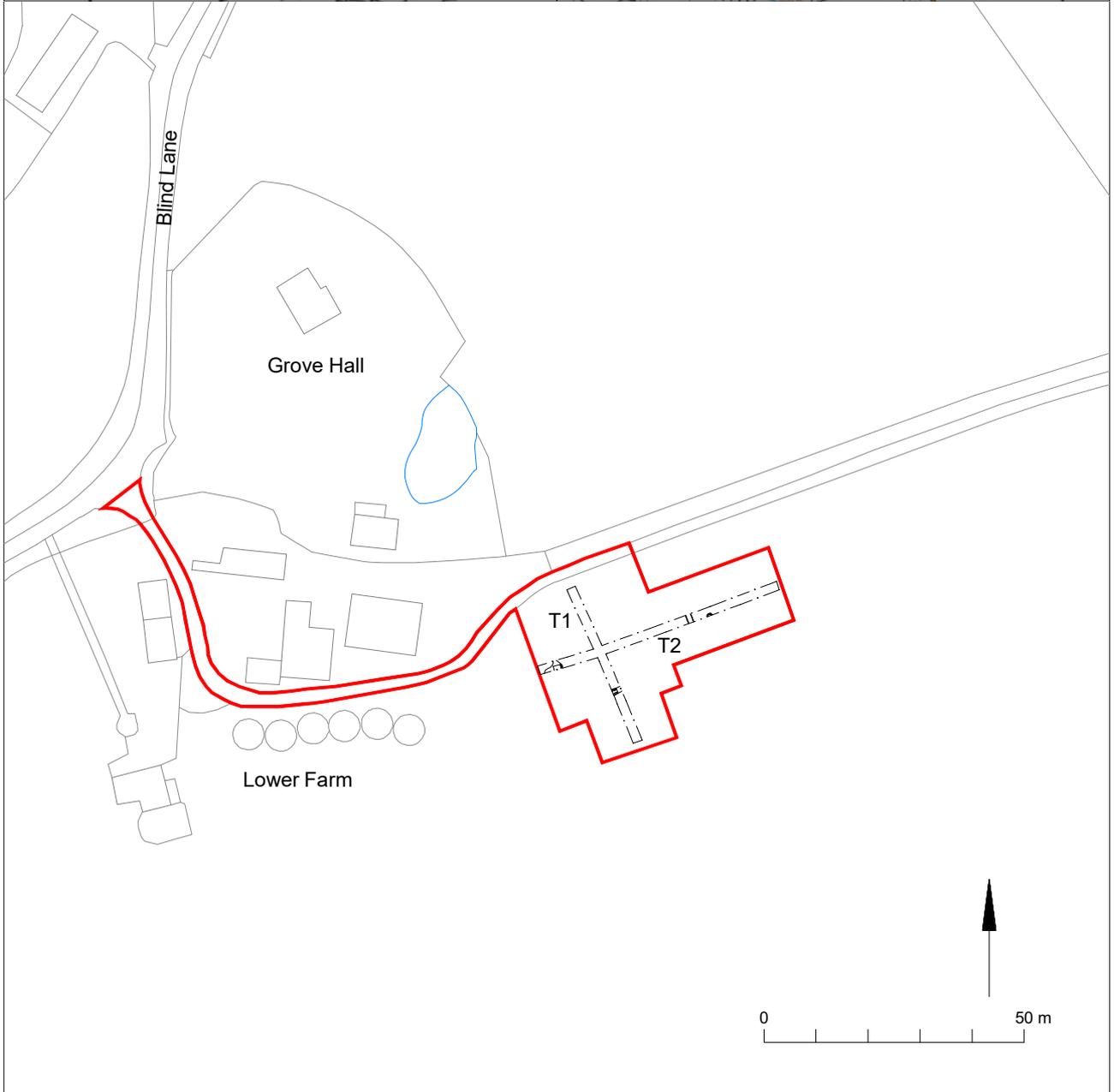
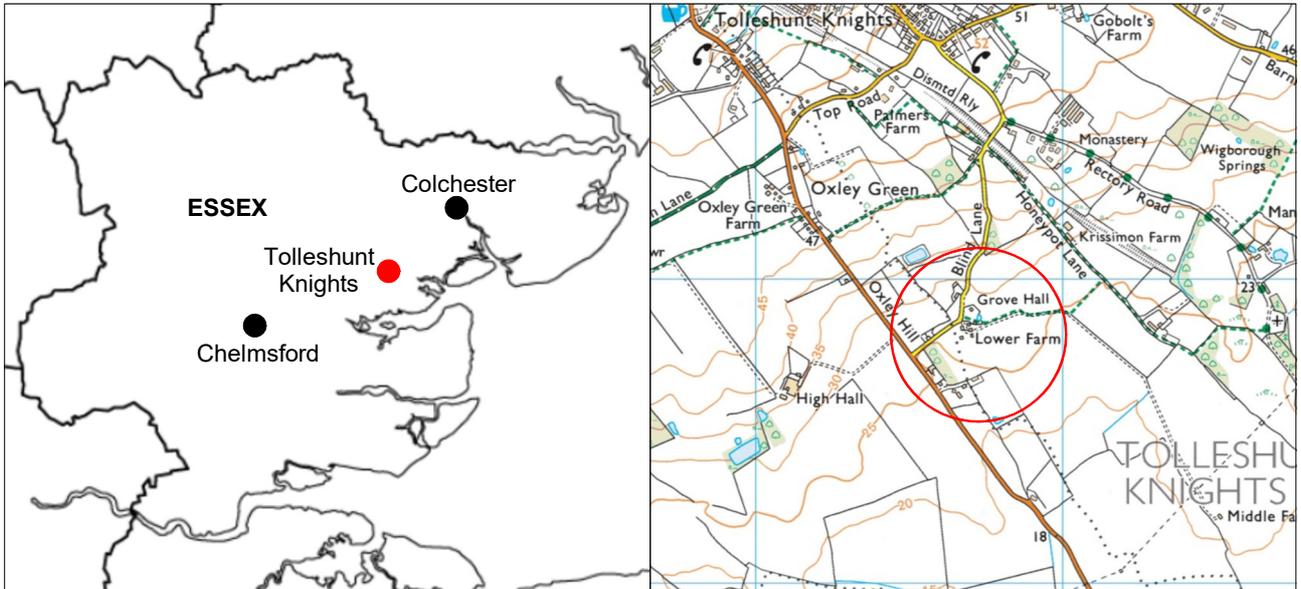


Fig 1 Site location and trench proposal.

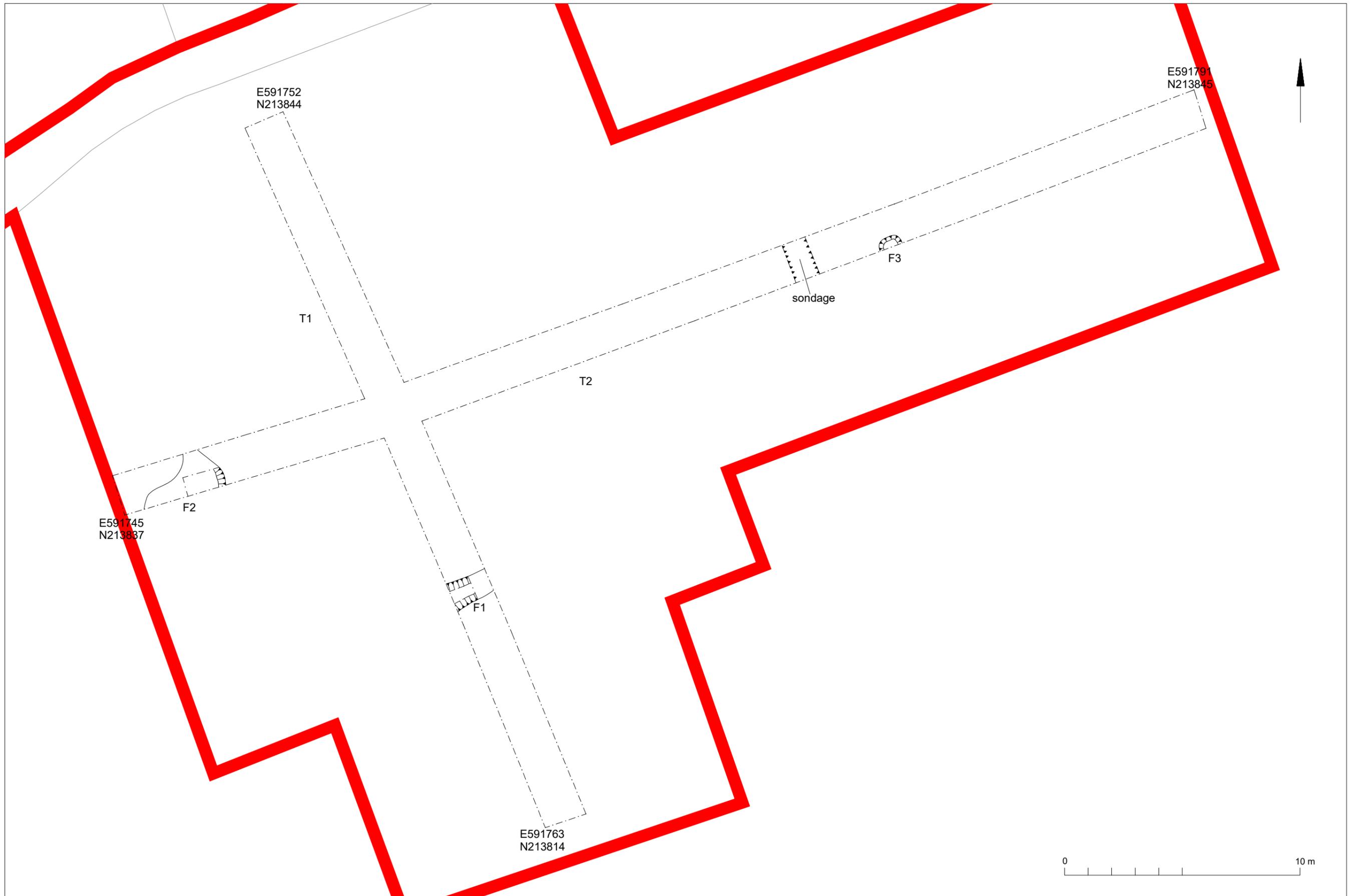


Fig 2 Evaluation results.

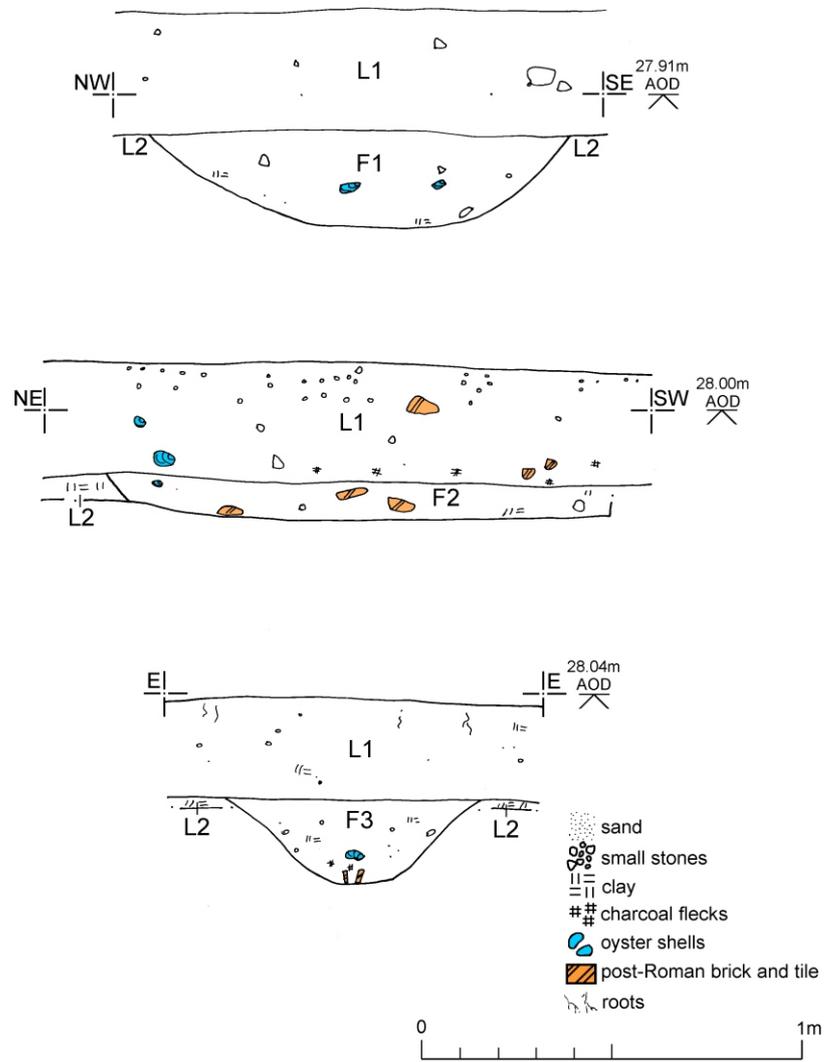


Fig 3 Sections.



Fig 4 Small finds: copper-alloy (1) and iron (2-5).

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## Printable version

**OASIS ID: colchest3-400440**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation on land south of Grove Hall, Blind Lane, Tolleshunt Knights, Essex, CM9 8EW: August 2020
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out on land south of Grove Hall, Blind Lane, Tolleshunt Knights, Essex, in advance of the construction of two agricultural buildings and an area of hardstanding. The site lies within a farmstead located to the south of the hall, which is a listed timber-framed building dating to the 17th century. Excavations revealed a post-medieval area of hardstanding and a ditch and pit dating to the medieval or post-medieval periods, all of which are likely associated with agricultural activity at the farm.
Project dates	Start: 13-08-2020 End: 13-08-2020
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	2020/08a - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	TOKGH20 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	colchest3-400440 - OASIS form ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 2 - Operations to a depth less than 0.25m
Monument type	DITCH Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	PIT Medieval
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	HARDSTANDING Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	METAL OBJECT Medieval
Significant Finds	METAL OBJECT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	METAL OBJECT Uncertain
Significant Finds	QUERNSTONE Uncertain

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX MALDON TOLLESHUNT KNIGHTS Land south of Grove Hall, Blind Lane
Postcode	CM6 8EW
Study area	0.16 Hectares
Height OD / Depth	Min: 27.76m Max: 27.85m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	HEM Team Officer, ECC

Project design originator Sarah Carter  
 Project director/manager Chris Lister  
 Project supervisor Ben Holloway  
 Type of sponsor/funding body Owner

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Colchester Museum  
 Physical Archive ID TOKGH20  
 Physical Contents "Metal"  
 Digital Archive recipient Colchester Museum  
 Digital Archive ID TOKGH20  
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Text"  
 Paper Archive recipient Colchester Museum  
 Paper Archive ID TOKGH20  
 Paper Media available "Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Report","Section"

### Project bibliography 1

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