

Archaeological evaluation at Osea Island Resort Manor House, The Chase, Osea Island, Maldon, Essex, CM9 8UH

June 2021



by Emma Holloway

figures by Ben Holloway and Emma Holloway

fieldwork by Ben Holloway with Matt Perou and Nik Pryke

**commissioned by Karen Fardell (Plaiter Claiborne)
on behalf of Osea Island Ltd**

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Planning ref.: FUL/MAL/20/00575
CAT project ref.: 2021/05p
ECC code: HYOI21
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CAT Report 1691
July 2021

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (three trial-trenches) was carried out at Osea Island Resort Manor House, The Chase, Osea Island, Essex, in advance of groundworks associated with the construction of several new buildings. Although being in an area of considerable archaeological potential, particularly for prehistoric settlement related to The Stumble, the evaluation only revealed two natural silt patches and no finds.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at Osea Island Resort Manor House, The Chase, Osea Island, Essex which was carried out on 15th June 2021. The work was commissioned by Karen Fardell of Plaiter Claiborne on behalf of Osea Island Ltd in advance of the erection of a barn, laundry and housekeeping rooms and a vehicle/plant repair workshop with access and operational areas. The work 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 2021), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2021).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England, 2015), 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 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>).

Osea Island sits within the Blackwater Estuary and is approximately 1.5km² in size. The proposed development site is located on the south of the island. There is considerable evidence for the occupation of the area around Osea Island during the prehistoric period. The Stumble (EHER 13658-13665, EHER 48182) is a nationally important multiple period site located immediately northwest of Osea. It would have been terrestrial during the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods and appears to have supported hunting and gathering activities during the later Mesolithic period (Wilkinson *et al.* 2012). Excavations have revealed mounds of burnt flint, flint, pottery scatters and footprints of buildings thought to date to the Neolithic period. Similar scatters of flint and pottery have been found on Osea (EHER 49172), although it was thought this area was wooden at the time and the Neolithic activity represent clearing of the area (O'Connor 2007).

It is thought that by the Bronze Age rising sea levels have restricted access to Osea Island. Although, finds evidence suggests it was inhabited by the Roman period, probably for agricultural use or coastal related activities. A Red Hill (EHER 13153) was excavated in 1985 on the northern coast of the island. It consisted of two oyster pits

and red earth. It is postulated that the Romans built the causeway and knew the island as *Uvesia*. Find spots on Osea Island include Roman pottery (EHER 12102) and a Roman Jews Harp (EHER 12160).

The island contains one settlement at Osea Farm. Historically a single farm was located on the island in the medieval period. The historic landscape comprises rectangular fields and much of its medieval and post medieval landscape is well preserved.

In the early 1900's the Island was bought by the Charrington Family and established it as a 'home for inebriates' (EHER 46206). Many of the buildings surviving today on the island were built by Nicholas Charrington. The island was used in both World Wars as a naval base and a number of structures relating to military activity were constructed. In WWI the island was used as a Coastal Motor Boat Base (EHER 20138) and was home to nearly 700 military personnel. Two pill boxes were constructed on the eastern coastline (EHER 13804, EHER 10716).

For a full archaeological background see the desk-based assessment of the site (CAT Report 1657)

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 2-4)

Three trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trenches T1 and T2 were 20m long. T3 was 10m long. All were 1.8m wide.

The trenches were cut through modern topsoil (L1, c 0.12-0.26m), subsoil (L2, c 0.14-0.33m) which sealed natural (L3). Sondages were excavated in all three trenches to confirm L3 was natural.

There were two natural silt patches, one the eastern edge of the centre of T1 (F2, 1.34m long, 0.11m deep and extended into the baulk) and the other at the northern end of T2 (F1, 0.45m long, 0.42m wide and 0.15m deep). There were no features in T3.



Photograph 1 Trench 1 – looking north



Photograph 2 F2 section – looking north



Photograph 3 Trench 2 with F1 and sondage in the foreground – looking South

6 Finds

There were no archaeological finds.

7 Conclusion

The evaluation only revealed two shallow post-glacial natural silt patches.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Karen Fardell of Plaiter Claiborne for commissioning the work on behalf of Osea Island Ltd. The project was managed by C Lister and A Wightman, post-excavation by L Pooley. Fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway with M Perou and N Pryke. Figures are by 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 8 (EAA 8) |
| CAT | 2020 | <i>Health & Safety Policy</i> |
| CAT | 2021 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching and excavation at Osea Island Resort Manor House, The Chase, Osea Island, Maldon, Essex, CM9 8UH.</i> By S Veasey |
| CAT Report | 2021 | <i>Desk-Based Assessment of Osea Island, Essex. April 2021.</i> |

1657		By P Parmenter
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>
CIfA	2019	<i>Code of conduct</i> . Published 2014, revised 2019.
ECCPS	2021	<i>Brief for archaeological trial-trenching and excavation at Osea Island Resort Manor House, The Chase, Osea Island, CM9 8UH</i> . By M Medlycott
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14)
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 24 (EAA 24)
MHCLG	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
O'Connor, T	2007	<i>Heybridge: Historic Settlement Assessment</i>
Wilkinson, T J et al.	2012	<i>The archaeology of the Essex Coast Part II: excavations at the prehistoric site of the Stumble</i> . EAA 144

10 Abbreviations and glossary

Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
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	O nline A ccess to the I ndex of A rchaeological I nvestigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
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: none

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:
 The report (CAT Report 1691)
 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 1691)
ECC evaluation brief,
CAT written scheme of investigation
Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log
Graphic files
Survey data
Metadata

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. HYOI21

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Distribution list:

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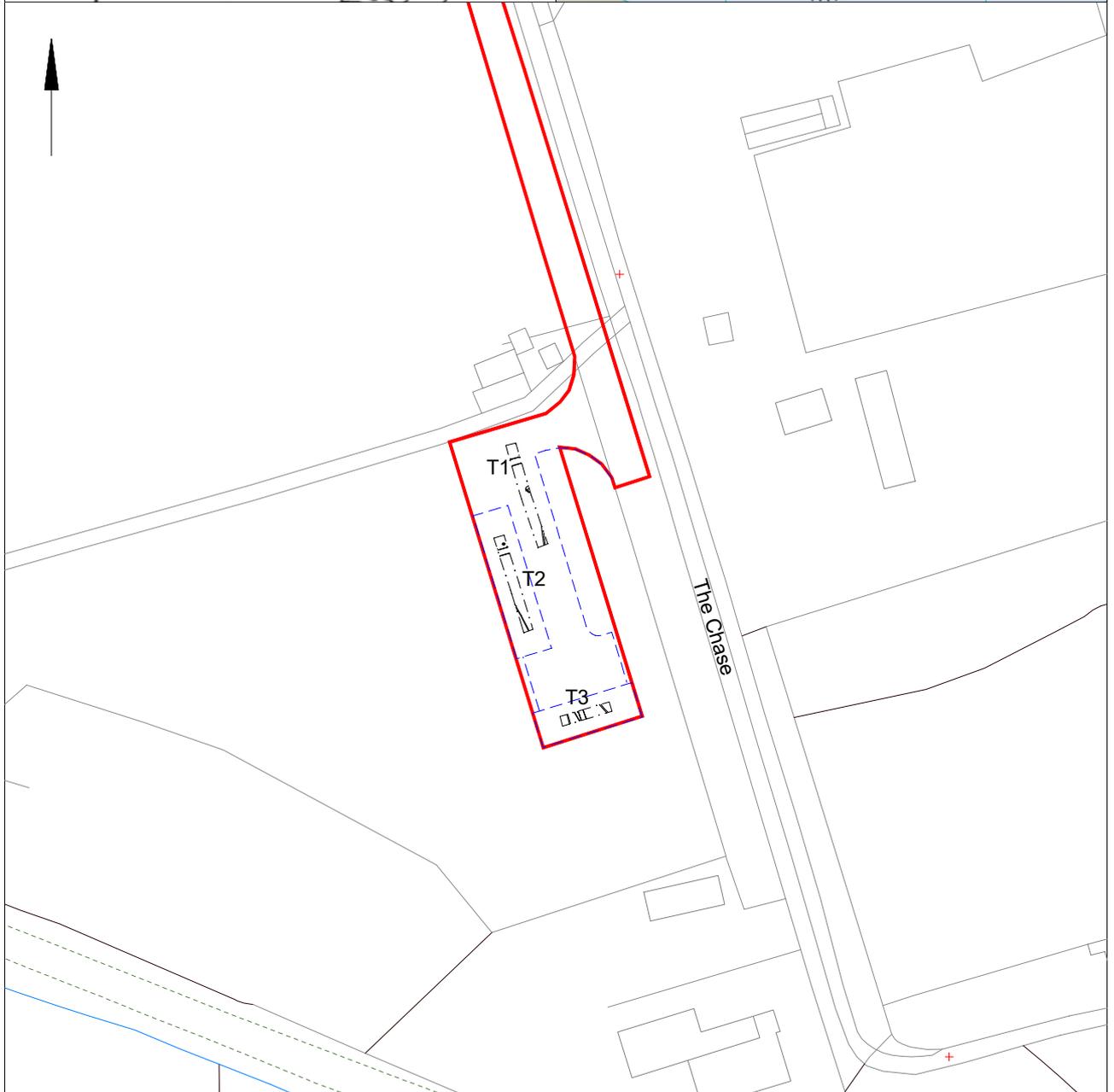
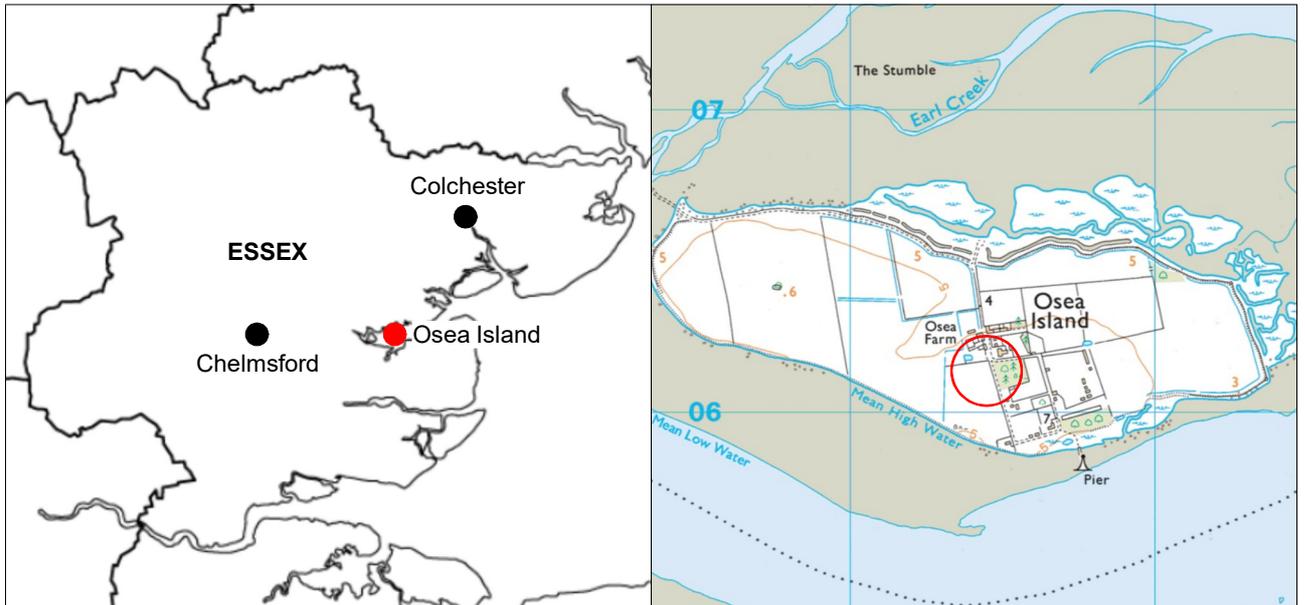
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Checked by: Philip Crummy
Date: 16.07.2021

Appendix 1 Context list

Context Number	Trench number	Interpretation	Soil Description	Finds	Date
L1	All	Topsoil	Firm, dry, dark grey/brown silty clay	-	Modern
L2	All	Subsoil	Hard, dry, medium grey/brown silty clay	-	Undated
L3	All	Natural geological horizon	Hard, dry, medium yellow/orange sandy clay and inclusions of: gravel 25%	-	Post-glacial
F1	T2	Natural silt patch	Firm, dry, medium orange/brown silty clay	-	Post-glacial
F2	T1	Natural silt patch	Hard, dry, light grey/brown silty clay	-	Post-glacial



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



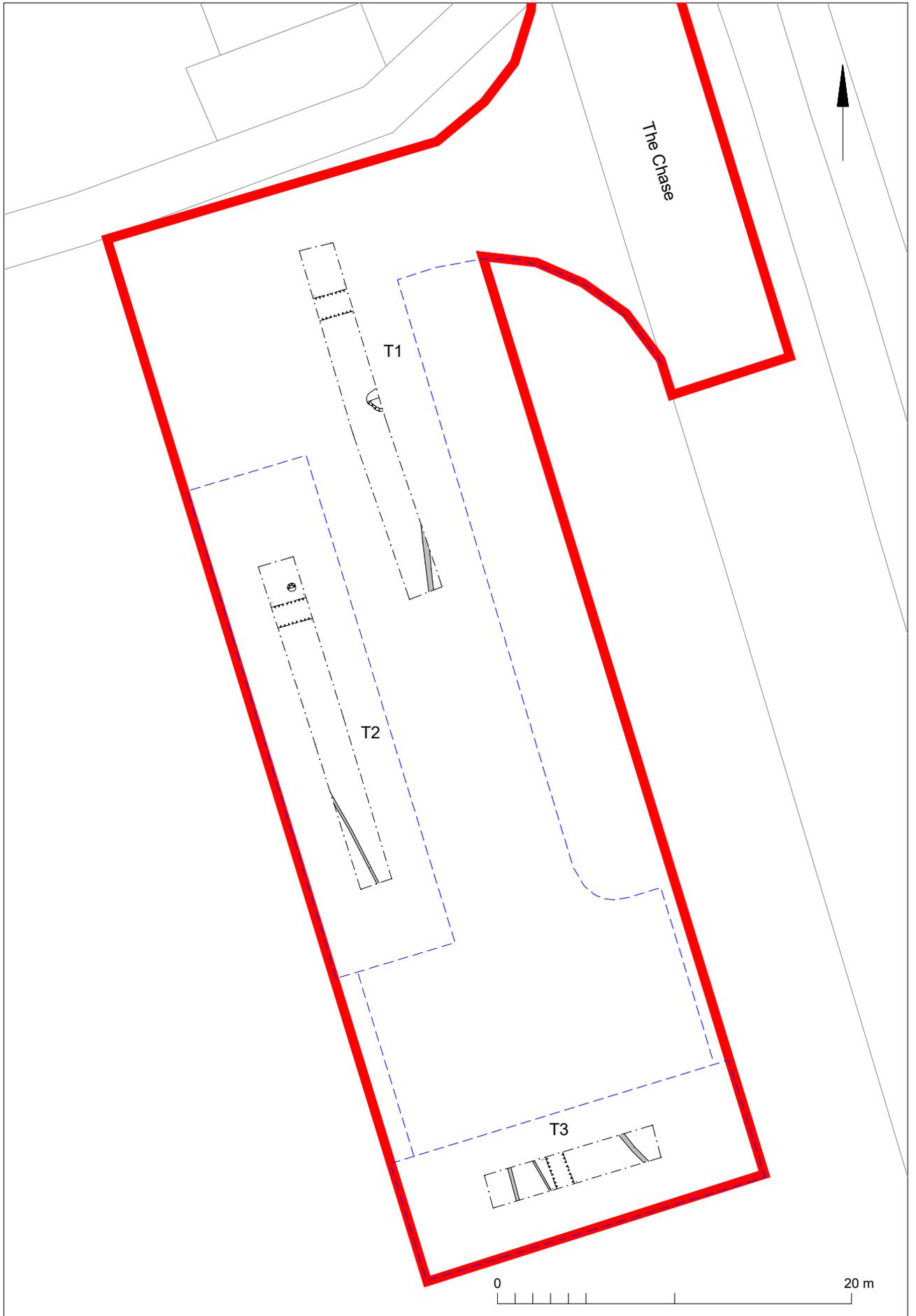


Fig 2 Results.

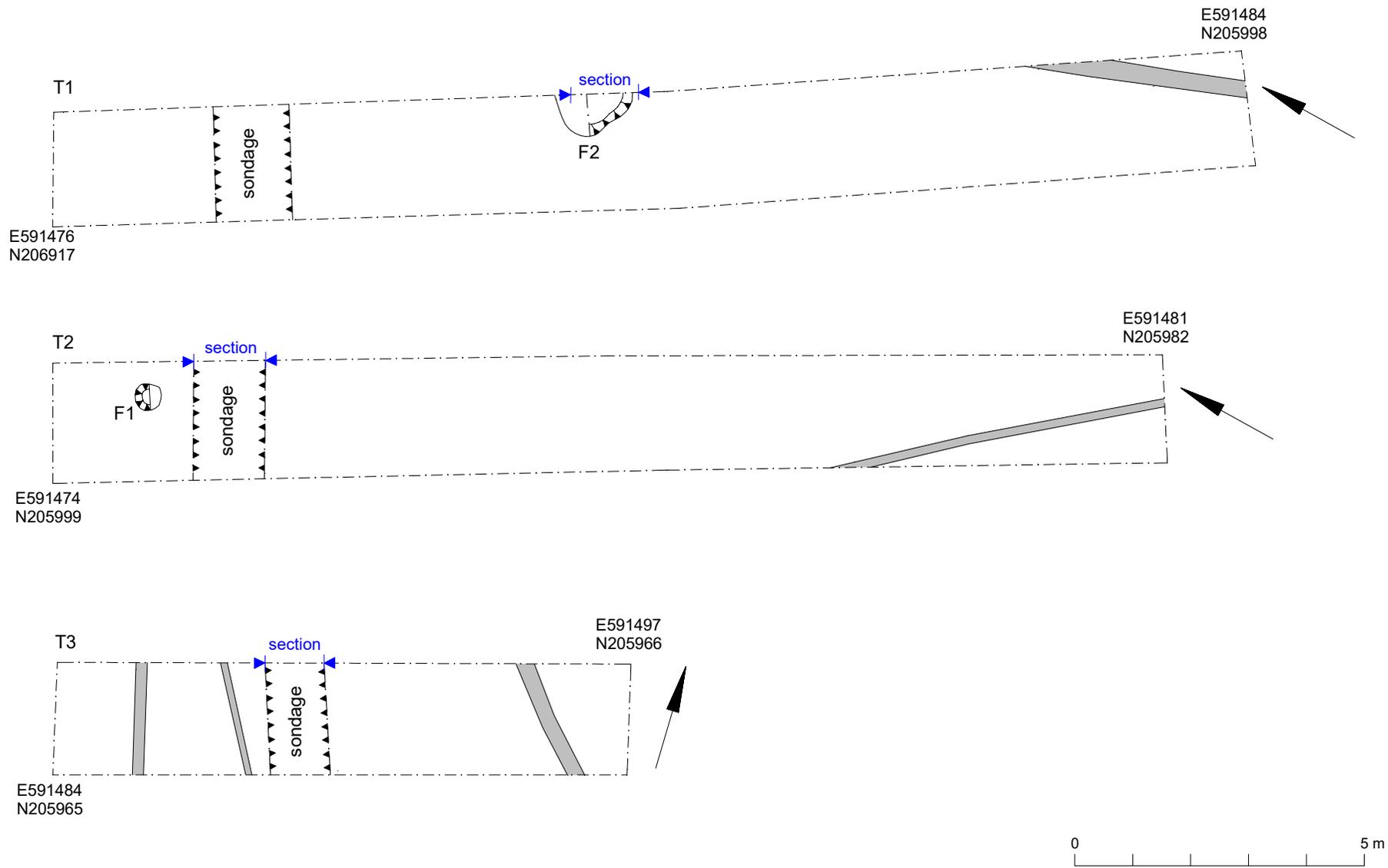


Fig 3 Detailed trench results (modern land drains and plough scars in grey).

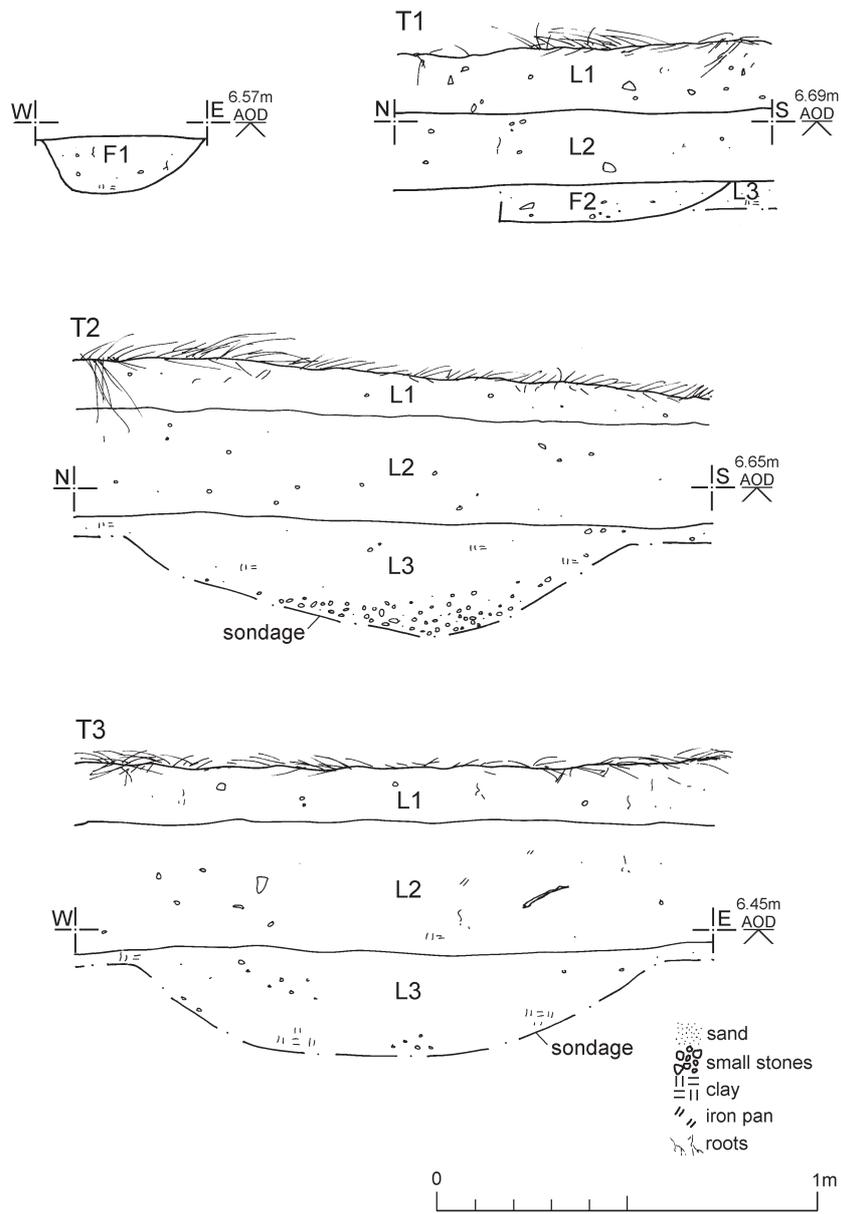


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

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OASIS ID: colchest3-422772

Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation at Osea Island Resort Manor House, The Chase, Osea Island, Maldon, Essex, CM9 8UH
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (three trial-trenches) was carried out at Osea Island Resort Manor House, The Chase, Osea Island, Essex, in advance of groundworks associated with the construction of several new buildings. Although being in an area of considerable archaeological potential, particularly for prehistoric settlement related to The Stumble, the evaluation only revealed two natural silt patches and no finds.
Project dates	Start: 15-06-2021 End: 15-06-2021
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	FUL/MAL/20/00575 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	2021/05p - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	HYOI21 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Farm infrastructure (e.g. barns, grain stores, equipment stores, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX MALDON HEYBRIDGE Osea Island Resort Manor House, The Chase, Osea Island, Maldon, Essex
Postcode	CM9 8UH
Study area	0.17 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 91667 05951 51.718951651265 0.77510478235 51 43 08 N 000 46 30 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 6.36m Max: 6.54m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Colchester Archaeological Trust

Project brief originator HEM Team Officer, ECC

Project design originator Sarah Veasey

Project director/manager Chris Lister

Project director/manager Adam Wightman

Project supervisor Ben Holloway

Type of sponsor/funding body Landowner

Name of sponsor/funding body Osea Island Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Archaeological Data Service

Digital Archive ID HYOI21

Digital Contents "other"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector", "Survey", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient Colchester Museum

Paper Archive ID HYOI21

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Map", "Plan", "Report"

Project bibliography 1

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