

Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1867
issued November 2022**

**Archaeological evaluation on land north of
48 Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury, Essex
CM9 8SE: October-November 2022**



**CAT project ref.: 2022/09e
ECC code: TOWR22**

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NGR: TL 96290 10634

Planning ref.: 21/00702/FUL

**CAT project ref.: 2022/09e
CAT Report 1867**

**ECC code: TOWR22
OASIS id: colchest3-509730**

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**commissioned by Richard Hoggett Heritage
on behalf of Lewis & Scott Retirement Living**

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Issued:	25/11/2022	

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (13 trial-trenches) was carried out on land north of 48 Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury, Essex in advance of the construction of a new residential development. The site lies to the north of Woodrolfe Road, a medieval road linking Tollesbury with Woodrolfe Creek and the nearby marshes, and southwest of a series of Late Iron Age or Roman 'red hills'. Excavations at the site revealed a medieval ditch which was likely the product of agricultural activity, and which also produced a small amount of Late Iron Age and Roman pottery. A modern posthole, an undatable pit and a natural feature were also uncovered.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land north of 48 Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury, Essex on 31st October to 3rd November 2022. The work was commissioned by Richard Hoggett Heritage on behalf of Lewis & Scott Retirement Living Limited, and took place in advance of the construction of a new residential development.

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), the Historic Environment Advisor stipulated 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 2021).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological trial-trenching and excavation on land north of 48 Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury* written by Maria Medlycott and detailing the required archaeological work (ECCPS 2020), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2022).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2016), 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 includes extracts of the ECC brief and the Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

Tollesbury is a large fishing village located on a small peninsula at the mouth of the River Blackwater, c 9 miles northeast of Maldon. There is evidence of human activity in the Tollesbury area dating back to the prehistoric period, but the village itself has its origins in the medieval period. The name derives from a large Anglo-Saxon estate belonging to 'Toll', which included Tollesbury as well as the surrounding villages of Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Tolleshunt Knights and Tolleshunt Major (ECC 2005, 6). The medieval village was centred on the market place with the Church of St Mary at its southern edge. The church is early medieval in date, but is thought to have originated in the Anglo-Saxon period (EHER 45657). Woodrolfe Road itself is the historic thoroughfare linking the settlement of Tollesbury with Woodrolfe Creek and the marshes.

To the northeast of the proposed development lies a line of 'red hills' following along the edge before the marsh (EHER 11507, 11535-6, 11549, 13634 and 16832-3). Red hills are the remnants of Late Iron Age and Roman salt production industries and are usually located close to tidal waters so that sea water is deposited into brine tanks. They are most commonly identified by mounds of red soil filled with fragments of briquetage, fired clay and debris from fire

pits. Some of the red hills lying near Tollesbury have been excavated, most recently in 1994 by the Essex Field Archaeological Unit (Germany 1994).

Tollesbury was one of the richest medieval parishes in the east of Essex due to its dry land and marine resources. Arable land surrounds the village and to the east of the site the salt-marshes were used for sheep grazing (EHER 48466). Post-medieval mapping indicates the presence of oyster pits within the nearby marshes from at least this period and likely earlier (EHER 16708 and 16718). Other historic buildings nearby include a granary or store (EHER 39165) and a group of sail lofts, utilised for the storage of yachts below areas used to dry out sails and nets (EHER 39164 and 11510).

The western edge of the site is bordered by the now disused railway route of the Kelvedon-Tiptree-Tollesbury light railway. The railway line was in use between 1904-51 (EHER 45184). A late post-medieval brickworks was located along this railway line (EHER 15486).

For more information about the local area see the *Maldon District Historic Characterisation Project* (ECC 2008).

4 Aims

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were 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)

Thirteen trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trenches T2-T7, T9 and T11 were 30m long and 1.8m wide; trench T1 was 21m long and 1.8m wide; trench T8 was 40m long and 1.8m wide; trench T10 was 25m long and 1.8m wide; and trenches T12 and T13 were 7m long and 1.8m wide. Trenches T7 and T11 were excavated in two sections to avoid a sewage pipe and trench T10 was positioned slightly differently from the trench plan proposed in the WSI due to the presence of trees. Trenches T12 and T13, as well as an extension some 5m long on the western side of trench T8, were excavated to uncover more of ditch F4/F5/F6/F7, at the direction of the ECC archaeological monitor.

All of the trenches were cut through modern topsoil (L1, 0.12-0.29m thick) and subsoil (L2, 0.12-0.46m thick) onto natural (L3, encountered at a depth of 0.3-0.64m below current ground level) apart from trench T11, which was cut through L1 (0.28-0.31m thick) onto L3. Sondages were excavated in trenches T2, T3, T6 and T9 to confirm the identification of L3 as natural.

There were no archaeological remains in trenches T1, T2, T5, T6, T7, T9, T10 and T11.

Trench 3

Undatable pit F1 was situated at the western end of the trench. The feature extended beyond the limit of excavation (LOE), and so its full dimensions could not be ascertained, but its exposed extent was 0.38m wide and 0.09m deep. It had a shallow, U-shaped profile.

Trench 4

Ditch F7, which produced pottery dating from the mid 12th to the early 13th century, was located at the southern end of the trench. It was aligned WNW-ESE, was 0.51m wide and 0.07m deep, and had a shallow U-shaped profile. The feature continued on to T8, T12 and T13, to the ESE, where it was recorded as F4, F5 and F6, respectively.

Posthole F2 lay at the northern end of the trench. Modern detritus was visible on the surface of the feature and so it was not excavated.

Natural feature F3 was also excavated.



Photograph 1 T4 trench shot – looking south

Trench 8

Ditch F4 extended through the centre of the trench on a WNW-ESE alignment. The feature was 0.61m wide and 0.1m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile. The feature represented a continuation of F7 in T4 and F6 in T13, to the WNW, and continued on to T12, to the ESE, where it was recorded as F5. It produced two sherds of pottery dating from the Late Iron Age to the late 3rd century AD, as well as four further pottery sherds dating from the 11th to the early 13th century.

Trench 12

Ditch F5 was uncovered within the southern half of the trench. It was aligned WNW-ESE, was 0.64m wide and 0.2m deep and had a shallow V-shaped profile. It represented a continuation of F4 in T8, F6 in T13 and F7 in T4, to the WNW. This section produced no dating evidence.



Photograph 2 T12 trench shot – looking north

Trench 13

Ditch F6 extended through the southern half of the trench on a WNW-ESE alignment. It was 0.54m wide and 0.11m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile. The feature represented a continuation of F7 in T4, to the WNW, and continued on to T8 and T12, to the ESE, where it was

recorded as F4 and F5, respectively. This section yielded a single mid 12th- to late 14th-century pottery sherd.

6 Finds

by Dr Matthew Loughton

A small assemblage of seven sherds, weighing of 60g, was recovered from ditches F4 and F6. Ditch F4 sx 2 produced two sherds (40g) of large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered oxidised wares (fabric HZ OX), dating from the Late Iron Age to AD 200/300. Four sherds (15g) of early medieval sandy wares, dating from the 11th to the early 13th century, were also recovered from F4 sx1. Ditch F6 contained one sherd (5g) of medieval sandy greyware pottery dating to c 1150-1375/1400. Ditches F4 and F6 date to the medieval period (c 1000-1375/1400).

7 Conclusion

Excavations at this site revealed a modest number of features: a pit, a posthole, a ditch and a natural feature. Aside from the pit, which was located to the north, these remains were concentrated around the centre of the site. Only one feature produced dating evidence, while another was identified as modern due to its appearance.

The predominating feature was ditch F4/F5/F6/F7, which extended through the centre of the site on a WNW-ESE alignment. It produced four sherds of pottery dating from the 11th to the 13th century, as well as a single sherd of pottery dating from the mid 12th to the late 14th century, giving an approximate date range of the mid 12th to the late 13th century for this feature. It is likely that this feature is a field ditch, the product of agricultural activity in an area bordering the medieval thoroughfare of Woodrolfe Road. Two residual sherds of Late Iron Age to Roman storage jars were also recovered from this feature, evidencing occupation in this area during these earlier periods too. The ditch is not shown on historical mapping of the area.

A modern posthole, F2, was also uncovered, to the north of the abovementioned ditch. Ordnance Survey mapping of the area compiled in the late 19th century depicts the site lying within a network of fields bordering Tollesbury, and presumably this feature is related to agricultural activity.

An undatable pit and a natural feature were also excavated.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Richard Hoggett Heritage and Lewis & Scott Retirement Living Limited for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, A Wightman and L Pooley, with fieldwork carried out by N Rayner and H Furniss with K Davies, C Hill, Z Eksen, G Smith. Figures were compiled by C Lister, L Pooley and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Maria Medlycott and Mark Baister.

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) |
| CAR 7 | 2000 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85,</i> by J Cotter |
| CAT | 2022 | <i>Health & Safety Policy</i> |
| CAT | 2022 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land north of 48 Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury, Essex, CM9 8SE</i> |
| CIfA | 2014a | <i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation.</i> Revised October 2020 |

CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> . Revised October 2020
CIfA	2014c	<i>Code of Conduct</i> . Revised October 2021
ECC	2005	<i>Tollesbury Conservation Area Review and Character Appraisal</i> , by P Colchester & M Hurst. Updated 2016
ECC	2008	<i>Maldon District Historic Characterisation Project</i> . Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch
ECCPS	2020	<i>Brief for archaeological trial-trenching and excavation at Land north of 48 Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury</i> , by M Medlycott
Germany, M	1994	<i>Tollesbury Creek, Tollesbury, Essex, Archaeological Evaluation, Trial trenching</i> . Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14)
Historic England	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	2021	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

10 Abbreviations and glossary

Anglo-Saxon	period from c 500 – 1066
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
ECC	Essex County Council
ECCHEA	Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHER	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	O nline A ccess to the I ndex of A rchaeological I nvestigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
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 (pottery)

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1867)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Original site record (trench sheets, sections)

Site digital photos and log

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1867)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log

Graphic files

Survey data

Site data

12 Archive deposition

The 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. TOWR22 and with the Archaeological Data Service.

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Distribution list:

Richard Hoggett Heritage
Lewis & Scott Retirement Living Limited
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

Appendix 1 Context list

Context Number	Trench number	Finds Number	Feature / layer type	Description	Date
L1	All	-	Topsoil	Soft/friable, moist medium grey/brown loam with 1% stones	Modern
L2	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T12 and T13	-	Subsoil	Friable/firm, dry light/medium orange/brown clayey-silt with 1% stones	Undatable
L3	All	-	Natural	Firm, moist medium orange/brown clay with 5% stones	Post-glacial
F1	3	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay	Undatable
F2	4	-	Posthole	Firm, moist dark grey/brown black silty-clay with abundant charcoal	Modern
F3	4	-	Natural feature	Firm/hard, moist light/medium orange/grey/brown silty-clay with 3% gravel	Post-glacial
F4	8	1, 3	Ditch	Firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with 1% stones	Mid 12th to early 13th century
F5	12	-	Ditch	Soft, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks and 1% stones	Mid 12th to early 13th century
F6	13	2	Ditch	Soft, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with 1% stones	Mid 12th to early 13th century
F7	4	-	Ditch	Soft, moist medium yellow/grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks and 1% stones	Mid 12th to early 13th century

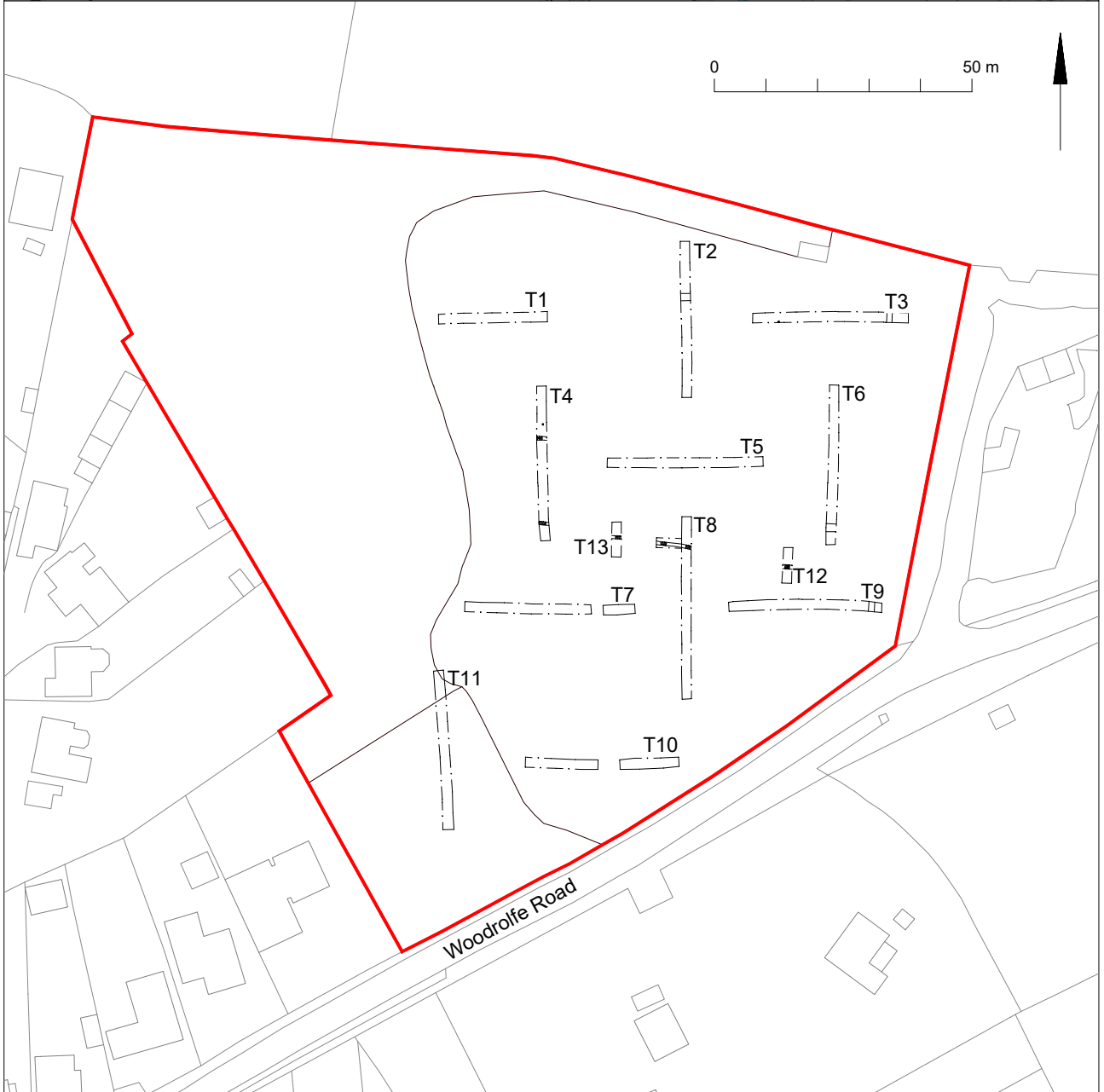


Fig 1 Site location.

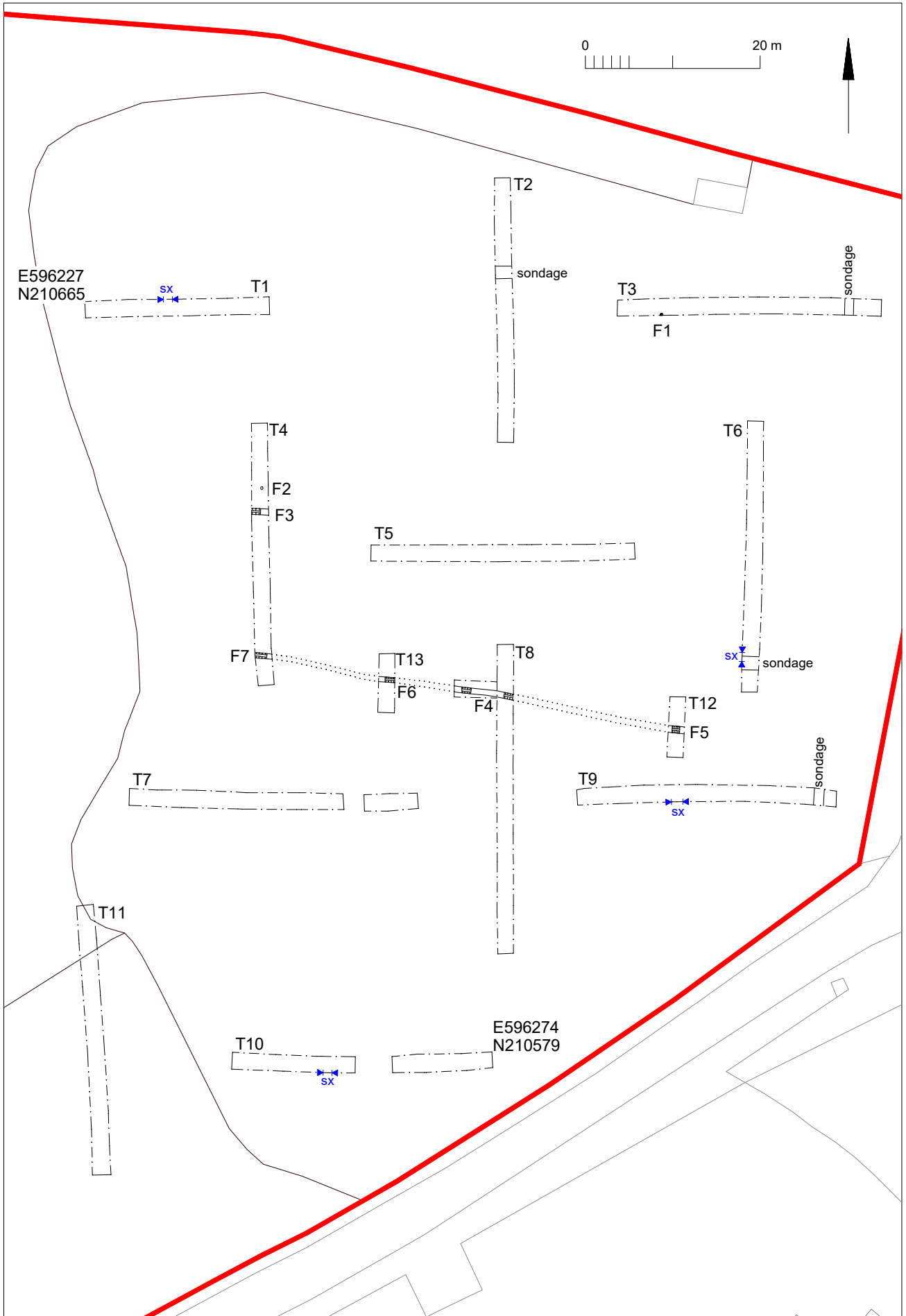


Fig 2 Results.

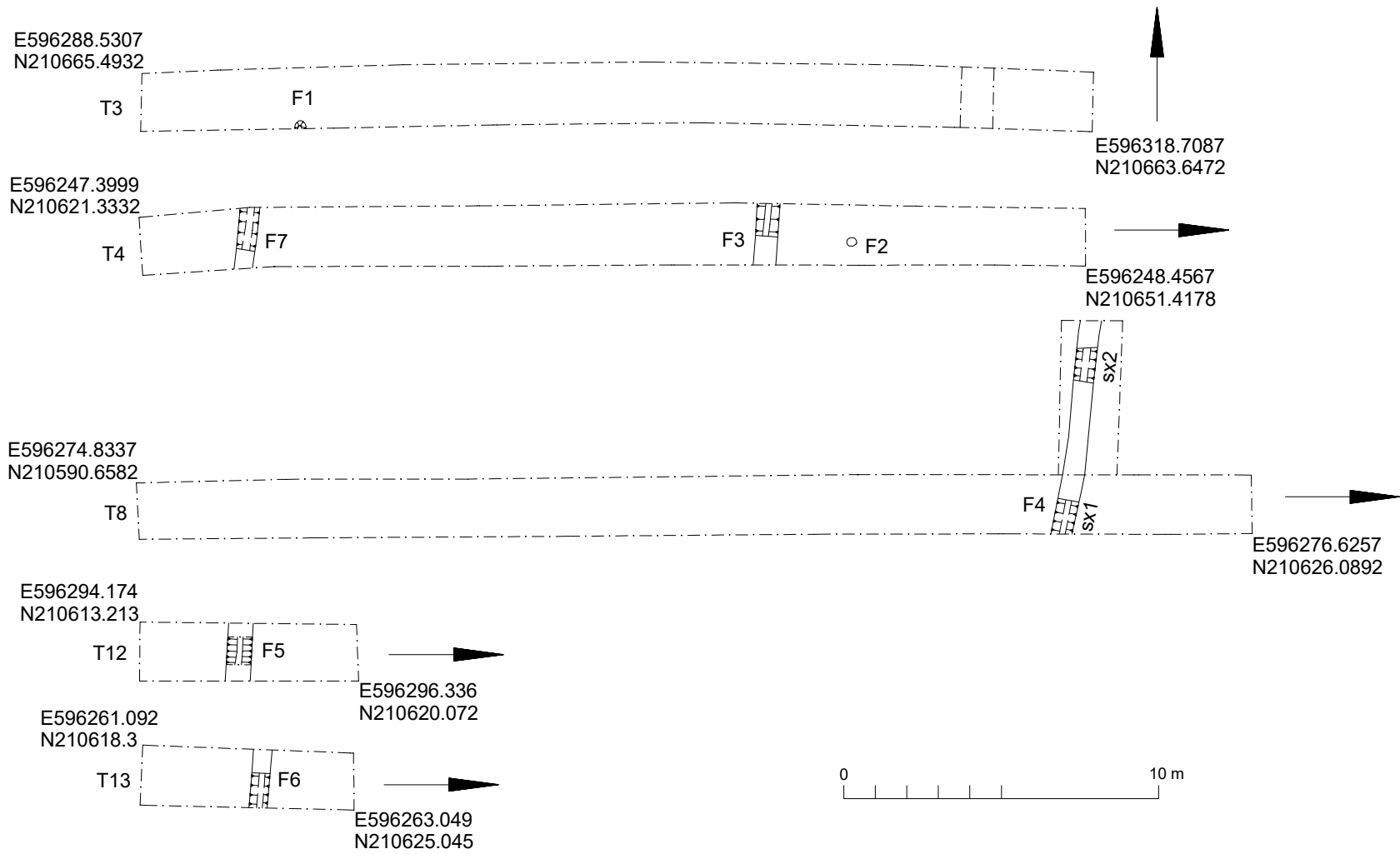


Fig 3 Detailed trench plans.

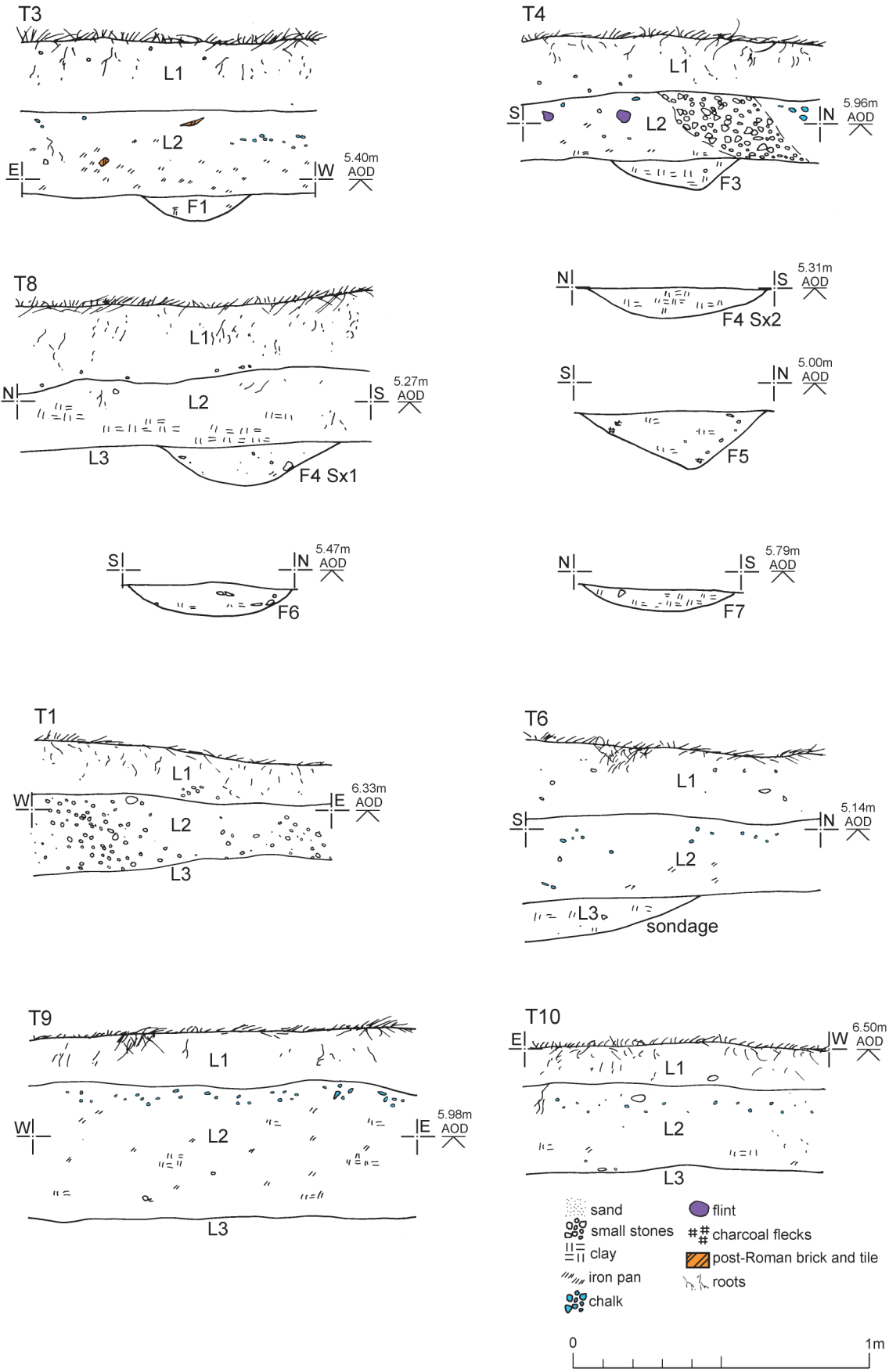


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

Summary for colchest3-509730

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-509730
Project Name	Trial Trench at Land north of 48 Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury, Essex, CM9 8SE
Sitename	Land north of 48 Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury, Essex, CM9 8SE
Activity type	Trial Trench
Project Identifier(s)	2022/09e
Planning Id	MAL/14/01202
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	31-Oct-2022 - 03-Nov-2022
Location	Land north of 48 Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury, Essex, CM9 8SE NGR : TL 96290 10634 LL : 51.7599793453272, 0.842864741215529 12 Fig : 596290,210634
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Maldon Parish : Tollesbury
Project Methodology	Evaluation was carried out as per the brief and the WSI
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (13 trial-trenches) was carried out on land north of 48 Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury, Essex in advance of the construction of a new residential development. The site lies to the north of Woodrolfe Road, a medieval road linking Tollesbury with Woodrolfe Creek and the nearby marshes, and southwest of a series of Late Iron Age or Roman 'red hills'. Excavations at the site revealed a medieval ditch which was likely the product of agricultural activity, and which also produced a small amount of Late Iron Age and Roman pottery. A modern posthole, an undatable pit and a natural feature were also uncovered.
Keywords	Pit - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Post Hole - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Natural Feature - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Ditch - MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Sherd - LATE IRON AGE - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Sherd - ROMAN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Sherd - MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus
Funder	
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	E, Hicks
HER Identifiers	
Archives	