

# Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1893  
January 2023**

**Archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to  
167 Chelmsford Road, Shenfield, Essex  
CM15 8SA: January 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2022/11p  
ECC code: BWCR23**

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167 Chelmsford Road, Shenfield, Essex  
CM15 8SA: January 2023**

**NGR: TQ 61660 96254**

**Planning ref.: 22/00453/FUL**

**CAT project ref.: 2022/11p  
CAT Report 1893**

**ECC code: BWCR23  
OASIS id: colchest3-511430**

**report prepared by  
Dr Elliott Hicks**

**fieldwork by Nigel Rayner with Robin Mathieson,  
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**commissioned by Matt Driscoll (MJD Planning)  
on behalf of Stowmarket Atallon Homes Ltd**

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<b>Issued:</b>	19/1/2022	

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OASIS summary sheet

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (five trial-trenches) was carried out on land adjacent to 167 Chelmsford Road, Shenfield, Essex in advance of the construction of a residential development. The site lies to the northeast of the historical settlement of Brentwood, which has its origins in the medieval period, and on the southern edge of Chelmsford Road, which follows the course of the Roman road linking Chelmsford and London. Despite lying in an archaeologically-sensitive area only an undatable ditch or gully, a possible tree throw and a natural feature were uncovered, although a sherd of the 11th to early 13th century was recovered from the buried soil layer overlying the site, indicating fleeting activity here during this period.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land adjacent to 167 Chelmsford Road, Shenfield, Essex on 4th January 2023. The work was commissioned by Matt Driscoll of MJD Planning on behalf of Stowmarket Atallon Homes Ltd, 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 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 2021).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Brief for archaeological trial trenching and excavation at land adjacent to 167 Chelmsford Road, Shenfield* written by Mark Baister and detailing the required archaeological work (ECCPS 2022) 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 (ECCPS 2022), CAT report archives and Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale<sup>1</sup>) shows the bedrock geology of the site to be London clay formation (bioturbated or poorly laminated blue-grey or grey-brown slightly calcareous, silty to very silty clay) on the western half, and claygate member (comprising of dark grey clays with thin layers of sand) on the eastern half, with superficial deposits of Head (poorly sorted angular rock debris and/or clayey hillwash and soil creep).

The site lies to the northeast of Brentwood. The latter was founded on marginal and probably wooded land at the edge of South Weald parish. It was first noted in the historical record in 1176, when the monks of St Osyth were authorised to assart (enclose woodland) at Brentwood. The name Brentwood derives from 'Burnt wood', indicating woodland clearance activity in the area at this time (Medlycott 1999, 4). Brentwood developed over the medieval period as a ribbon settlement extending along the main road between London and Chelmsford.

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<sup>1</sup> British Geological Survey – <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>

The site is located on the southern side of Chelmsford Road, a thoroughfare originating during the Roman period, when it linked Caesaromagnus (Chelmsford) and Londinium (London) (EHER 5428).

To the immediate east of the site is a Second World War era bomb crater recorded on aerial photographs taken in 1946. An evaluation was carried out on this site in 2015 but no significant archaeological remains were encountered (EHER 18149).

The site forms part of a large parcel of land allocated as site R03 (Land north of Shenfield) in the adopted Local Plan. For a full background, see the desk-based assessment for this site (Barker 2019). For a general background of the area, see the Brentwood Historic Town Assessment report (Medlycott 1999).

#### 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)

Five trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trenches T2, T4 and T5 were 30m long and 1.8m wide; trench T1 was 12m long and 1.8m wide; and trench T3 was 40m long and 1.8m wide. Due to the presence of demolition debris on the site, trench T1 was only partially excavated (offset by an extension of trench T3), while trench T2 was positioned differently from that indicated on trenching plan proposed on the WSI.

The trenches were cut through modern topsoil (L1, 0.07-0.23m thick) and a buried soil (L2, 0.14-0.38m thick) onto natural (L3, encountered at a depth of 0.28-0.53m below current ground level).

There were no archaeological remains in trenches T1, T2 or T4.

##### Trench 3

Undatable ditch or gully F3 extended into the southern end of the trench from the north on a N-S alignment for a short distance before terminating. The feature was 0.55m wide and 0.2m deep with an irregular U-shaped profile. It may have been natural in origin.

Natural feature F2 was also excavated.



Photograph 1 T3 trench shot – looking southeast

## Trench 5

Undatable tree throw F1 was excavated.



**Photograph 2** T5 trench shot – looking southeast

## 6 Finds

by Dr Matthew Loughton

Accumulation layer L2 produced one small sherd (1g) of possible medieval sandy ware (F13) dating from the 11th to the early 13th centuries. The sherd was not retained.

## 7 Conclusion

Despite lying in an archaeologically-sensitive area, excavations only revealed an undatable ditch or gully, a possible treethrow and a natural feature. However, a single sherd of 11th- to early 13th-pottery was recovered from buried soil L2, however, attesting to at least a fleeting presence at the site during this period.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Matt Driscoll, MJD Planning and Stowmarket Atallon Homes Ltd 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 with R Mathieson, K Davies and M Perou. Figures were compiled by C Lister, R Mathieson and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Mark Baister.

## 9 References

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

- |                          |      |  |
|--------------------------|------|--|
| Barker, J                | 2019 | <i>Land north of Shenfield (Officer's Meadow), Shenfield, Essex: desk-based heritage assessment.</i> Albion Archaeology document 2019/27                   |
| 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 | Health & Safety Policy   |
| CAT                      | 2022 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for an evaluation by trial-trenching on land adjacent to 167 Chelmsford Road, Shenfield, Essex, CM15 8SA</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 2022
ECCPS	2022	<i>Brief for archaeological trial trenching and excavation at land adjacent to 167 Chelmsford Road, Shenfield</i> , by M Baister
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	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (MoRPHE).
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	2021	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	a single unit of excavation, which is often referred to numerically, and can be any feature, layer or find
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	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, <a href="http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main">http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main</a>
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 Archive deposition

This project falls within the CIfA definition of a sterile project (<https://www.archaeologists.net/selection-toolkit/sterile-projects>), and as such the preserved archaeological archive will take the form of a single digital document that incorporates all the relevant elements from the project archive. This document will be uploaded to OASIS and released into the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) library, from where it will be curated by the ADS. The single digital document will include the report, brief, wsi, photographs, and original site data (for example context sheets, section drawings).

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### Distribution list:

Matt Driscoll (MJD Planning)  
Stowmarket Atallon Homes Ltd  
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor  
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

**Appendix 1 Context list**

<b>Context Number</b>	<b>Trench number</b>	<b>Finds Number</b>	<b>Feature / layer type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
L1	All	-	Topsoil	Soft, moist medium/dark grey/brown clayey-silt with charcoal and CBM flecks	Modern
L2	All	1	Accumulation layer	soft moist light/medium yellow/orange/brown clayey-silt	Undatable
L3	All	-	Natural	Soft, moist light/medium orange/brown silty-clay	Post-glacial
F1	5	-	?Treethrow	Soft, moist light grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Undatable
F2	3	-	Natural feature	Soft, moist light orange/grey clayey-silt	Undatable
F3	3	-	Ditch/gully	Soft, moist light yellow/grey/brown silty-clay with 1% stones	Undatable



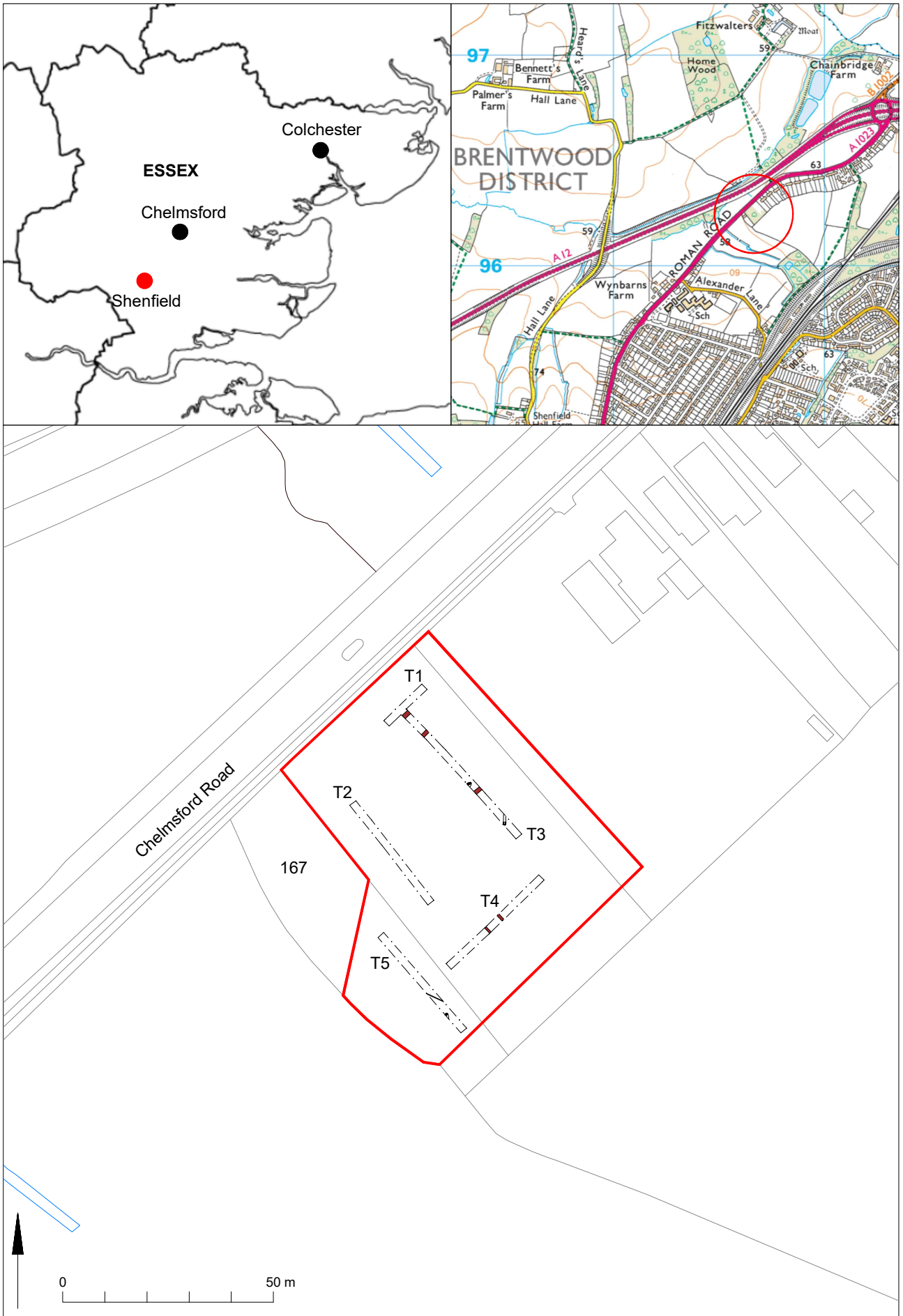


Fig 1 Site location

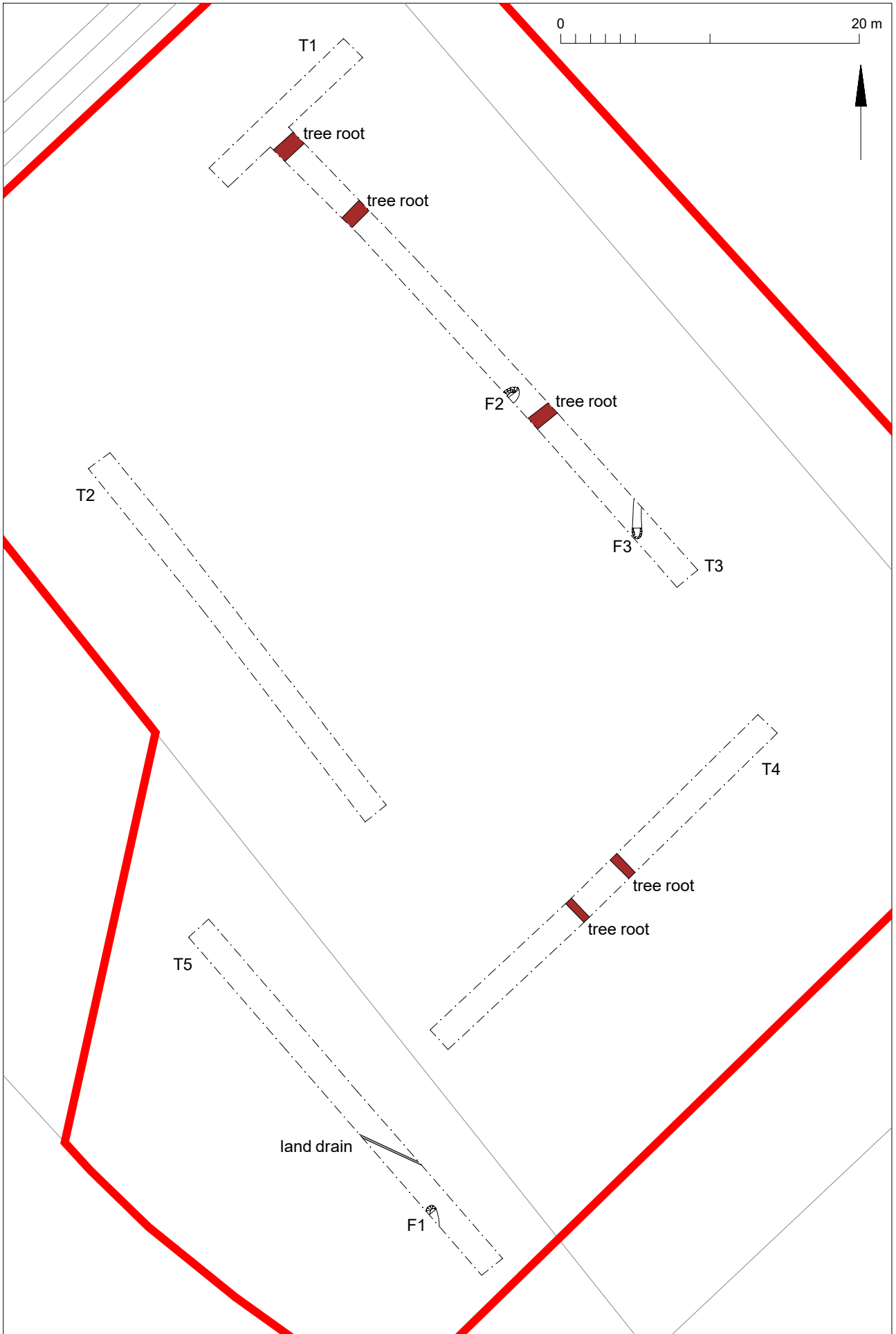


Fig 2 Results

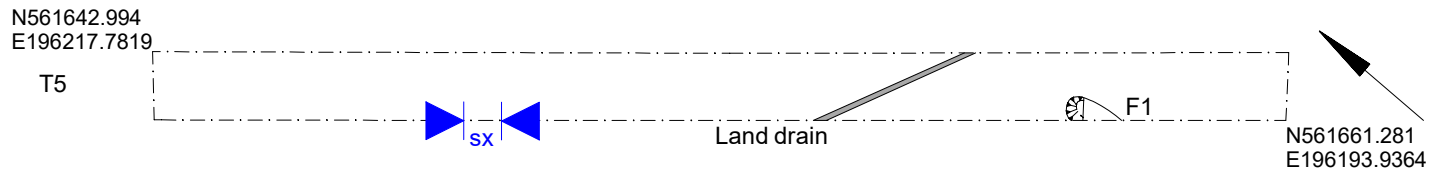
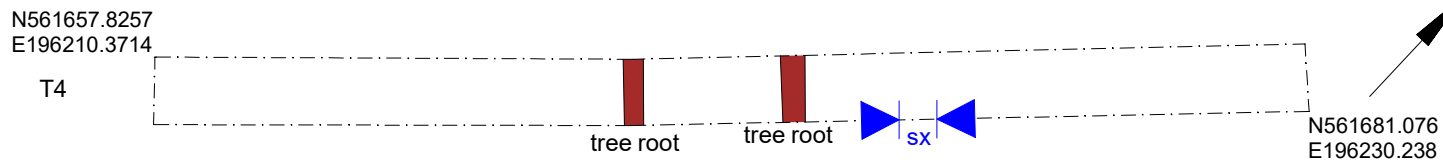
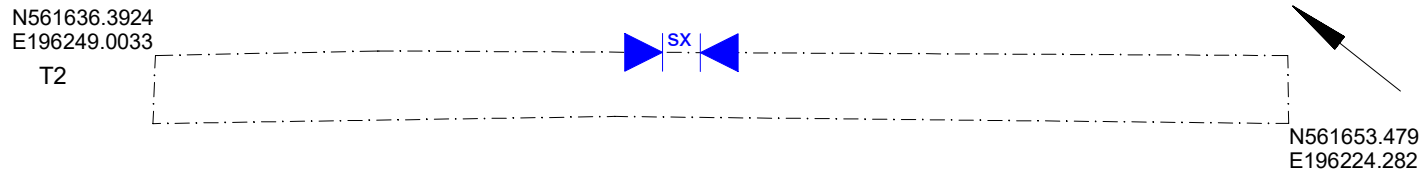
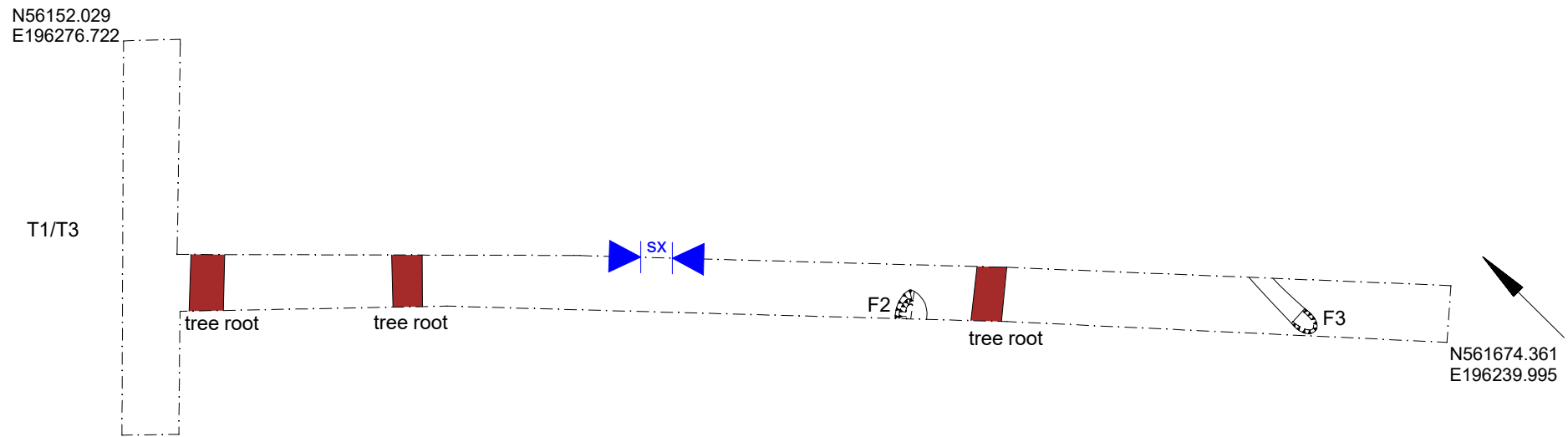


Fig 3 Detailed trench plans

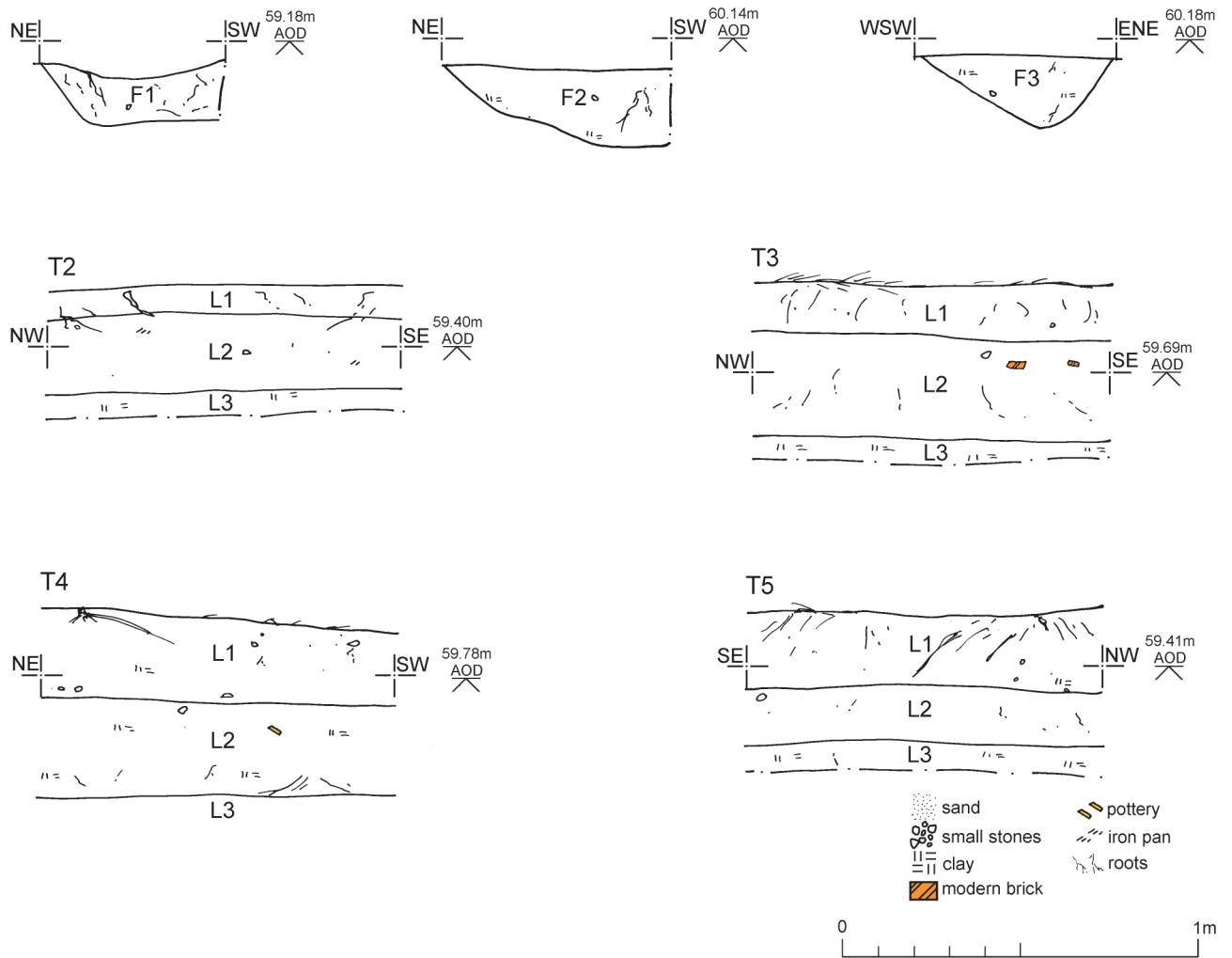


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

## Summary for colchest3-511430

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-511430
Project Name	Trial Trench at Land adjacent to 167 Chelmsford Road, Shenfield, Essex, CM15 8SA.
Sitename	Land adjacent to 167 Chelmsford Road, Shenfield, Essex, CM15 8SA.
Activity type	Trial Trench
Project Identifier(s)	2022/11p
Planning Id	22/00453/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	04-Jan-2023 - 04-Jan-2023
Location	Land adjacent to 167 Chelmsford Road, Shenfield, Essex, CM15 8SA. NGR : TQ 61660 96254 LL : 51.641854476206, 0.33490920578641 12 Fig : 561660,196254
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Brentwood Parish : Brentwood, unparished area
Project Methodology	Evaluation was carried out as per the brief and WSI.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (five trial-trenches) was carried out on land adjacent to 167 Chelmsford Road, Shenfield, Essex in advance of the construction of a residential development. The site lies to the northeast of the historical settlement of Brentwood, which has its origins in the medieval period, and on the southern edge of Chelmsford Road, which follows the course of the Roman road linking Chelmsford and London. Despite lying in an archaeologically-sensitive area only an undatable ditch or gully, a possible tree throw and a natural feature were uncovered, although a sherd of the 11th to early 13th century was recovered from the buried soil layer overlying the site, indicating fleeting activity here during this period.
Keywords	Tree Throw - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Natural Feature - None - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Ditch - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Gully - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Sherd - MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus
Funder	
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	E, Hicks
HER Identifiers	
Archives	