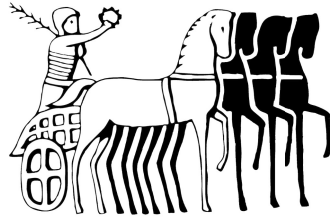


Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1963
issued August 2023**

**Archaeological evaluation on land east of Freelands,
Thorpe Road, Weeley, Essex, CO16 9JH:
July 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2022/11k
ECC code: WETR23**

**Archaeological evaluation on land east of Freelands,
Thorpe Road, Weeley, Essex, CO16 9JH:
July 2023**

NGR: TM 15169 22491 (centre)

Planning ref.: 21/01935/OUT

**CAT project ref.: 2022/11k
CAT Report 1963**

**ECC code: WETR23
OASIS id: colchest3-511358**

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**commissioned by Paul Copeland
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Issued:	17/08/2023	

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out on land east of Freelands, Thorpe Road, Weeley, Essex in advance of a new residential development. Archaeological investigations in the area have previously identified Palaeolithic, prehistoric, Roman, medieval, post-medieval and modern remains. This evaluation revealed a post-medieval/modern ditch, modern ditch and three tree-throws, with a very small scatter of medieval pottery from the site.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the 18th and 19th July 2023 on land east of Freelands, Thorpe Road, Weeley, Essex. The work was commissioned by Paul Copeland on behalf of Stowmarket Mill Lane Development Limited and took place in advance of the construction of four new houses.

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 a *Brief for Programme of Archaeological Evaluation on Land East of Freelands, Thorpe Road, Weeley* (ECCPS 2022) and a Written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by 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* (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 includes extracts of the ECC Brief (ECCPS 2022) 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 scale¹) shows the bedrock geology of the site to be Thames Group (clay, silt and sand) with superficial deposits of Kesgrave catchment sub-group (sand and gravel).

The Clacton and Weeley areas lie at the point of confluence of the Thames and Medway rivers some c 500,000 years ago, and the gravel strata here have a high geoarchaeological potential (Allen 2016). Significant findings in this area include: interglacial pollen, plant microfossils, insect remains and two artefacts recovered at Wivenhoe Gravel Pit, some 9km to the west (Bridgland 1994); an assemblage of six hand axes, 21 cores and 56 flakes from a sandy-gravel overlain by sands in Dakings Pit, 1km to the north-east (Wymer 1985); and unprocessed interglacial deposits from a cutting during the construction of the A133 bypass near Gutteridge Hall, 1km to the south-east (Bridgland 1999).

In 2016, CAT carried out an evaluation on land east of St Andrew's Road during which several Roman features, as well as some silt-filled hollows, were uncovered. Some geoarchaeological test-pits were also excavated, but these did not reveal any gravel deposits likely to contain artefacts (CAT Report 982; EHER 49021). A subsequent excavation revealed a Mesolithic or Early Neolithic pit or tree-throw and a Neolithic pit, as well as some residual Neolithic pottery sherds and worked flints. Two phases of activity over the Late Iron Age and the Roman period were also identified. The first extended from the mid 1st century BC to the mid to late 1st or 2nd

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

century AD, when a number of ditches and gullies, and pits, post and stakeholes indicate that the site was divided into at least one semi-circular enclosure with surrounding field boundaries. During the second phase of activity, this earlier field system was replaced by a rectilinear system defining up to six fields. Artefactual evidence, including loomweights, quernstones and pottery vessels, indicates a settlement in the vicinity during this period. A large metalled ground hollow dating to the 13th or 14th centuries was interpreted as a watering hole for livestock, suggesting that a medieval farmstead had stood nearby (CAT Report 1161).

In 2021, Oxford Archaeology carried out a large trial-trenched evaluation on land immediately to the south-west of the current site (Haskins 2021). An area of potentially Early Neolithic activity, consisting of several small pits, was identified to the north-west of the evaluation area. Further evidence of late Mesolithic or Neolithic activity included a small quantity of struck and burnt flint recovered from the surface of natural deposits lying on the edge of the first river terrace in the southern half of the site. In northwestern and northern part of the site, a small number of ditches and pits producing small quantities of finds of Iron Age or Roman date, suggested that this area stood at the edge of a settlement, and that the ditches potentially represented associated field systems. The western area of the site contained a large number of post-medieval and modern features primarily associated with the military camp which existed at Weeley during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. These remains included brick footings and potential building construction cuts. Deposits which were possibly the remains of a camp kitchen were also uncovered. There were also several large extraction pits or cess pits. Artefacts dating to this period included several military buttons, including one embossed with the insignia of the 11th Light Dragoons. Several gunflints from either 'Brown Bess' muskets or dragoon carbines were also recovered, along with other post-medieval or modern finds including pottery and clay pipe. A number of geoarchaeological test-pits were also excavated during this investigation, and several flint flakes were recovered.

Oxford Archaeology returned to the site in 2021-2 to excavate seven areas highlighted in the evaluation as containing significant archaeological remains (Cox 2023). The northernmost excavation areas included scattered Late Bronze Age features and a series of Roman ditches. The southernmost areas included a Late Bronze Age ring-ditch, two Middle Iron Age rectangular enclosures (one with a second ring-ditch inside) and more Roman ditches and other features. A significant part of the Napoleonic barracks, dating from 1803-1815, was also excavated with at least 17 buildings identified.

For more information on the potential of Palaeolithic remains in the area see the *Managing the Essex Pleistocene, Final Project Report* (O'Connor 2015). For the general background of the area see the *Tending District Characterisation Project* report (Medlycott 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 2-3)

Two trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. The trenches were 20m long and 1.8m wide with modern topsoil (L1, c 0.07-0.2m thick) and a layer of buried topsoil (L2, c 0.19-0.22m thick) sealing natural (L3, encountered at a depth of 0.28-0.4m below current ground level).

Trench 1

Ditch/gully F2 was aligned north-west to south-east. Shallow with a slightly irregular U-shaped profile, it was c 0.59m wide by 0.14m deep. It produced medieval and post-medieval pottery along with small fragments of post-medieval/modern brick. Two tree-throws F1 (0.65m x 0.42m x 0.14m deep) and F2 (0.62m x 0.46m x 0.14m deep) were also excavated, with a small sherd of medieval pottery (5g) recovered from F1.



Photograph 1 Trench 1 with ditch F3 in the foreground, looking south-east.

Trench 2

Modern ditch F5 was aligned north to south. With gently-sloping sides and a flat base, it was 1.84m wide and 0.6m deep, and produced a fragment of modern pan tile, post-medieval/modern glass, animal bone, slate and a lump of iron. Tree-throw F4 (0.82m x 0.69m x 0.15m deep) was also excavated.



Photograph 2 Trench 2 with ditch F5 in the foreground, looking north-east.

6 Finds

6.1 Pottery and ceramic building material

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation uncovered a small assemblage of pottery (31 sherds weighing 160g with a EVE of 0.28) and ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) (nine fragments weighing 292g) (Table 1). This material came from three features and one layer, although the majority of the assemblage came from topsoil L1 (Table 2).

Ceramic material	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
Pottery	31	160	5	0.28
CBM	9	292	32	-
Total	40	452	11	0.28

Table 1 Summary of the pottery and CBM.

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
F1	Pit	1	5	5
F3	Ditch	7	40	6
F5	Ditch	6	281	47
L1	Topsoil	26	126	5
	Total	40	452	11

Table 2 Quantities of pottery and CBM from specific contexts.

Pottery

Medieval, post-medieval and modern pottery was recorded according to the fabric groups from *CAR 7* (Cotter 2000) (Table 3), while the number of vessels was determined by rim EVE (estimated vessel equivalent). The small assemblage of pottery came from two features and one layer, although the majority of the material came from the topsoil L1 (Table 5). The majority of the pottery consists of sherds of modern Staffordshire-type white earthenwares (fabric F48D) (Table 4) which all came from the L1. One sherd of Frechen stoneware also came from L1 (Table 4). A sherd of Medieval sandy greyware (fabric F20) pottery came from pit F1, while three sherds of medieval Colchester-type ware (fabric F21), including a thumbled base from a jug, came from ditch F3 (Table 4). Finally, F3 also produced one sherd of post-medieval red earthenware (fabric F40).

Fabric code	Fabric description	Fabric date range guide
F20	Medieval sandy greywares	c 1150-1375/1400
F21	Colchester-type ware	c 1200-1550
F40	Post-medieval red earthenwares	c 1500-19th/20th century
F45D	Frechen stoneware	Late 16th-17th century
F48D	Staffordshire-type white earthenwares	19th-20th century

Table 3 Pottery fabrics recorded (*CAR 7*).

Fabric code	Fabric description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
F20	Medieval sandy greywares	1	5	5	0.00
F21	Colchester-type ware	3	26	9	0.00
F40	Post-medieval red earthenwares	1	3	3	0.00
F45D	Frechen stoneware	1	7	7	0.00
F48D	Staffordshire-type white earthenwares	25	119	5	0.28
	Total	31	160	5	0.28

Table 4 Summary of the pottery.

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
F1	Pit	1	5	5	0.00
F3	Ditch	4	29	7	0.00
L1	Topsoil	26	126	5	0.28
Total		31	160	5	0.28

Table 5 Quantities of pottery from specific contexts.

Ceramic building material (CBM)

There was a small assemblage of nine fragments of CBM weighing 292g, with a mean sherd weight of only 32g (Table 6). Three small brick fragments (11g) came from ditch F3, while ditch F5 produced five sherds of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile and one pan tile fragment which looks modern.

CBM code	CBM type	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
PT	Peg-tile	5	153	31
PANT	Pan tile	1	128	128
BR	Brick	3	11	4
Total		9	292	32

Table 6 CBM by type.

Conclusion

Table 7 summarizes the dating evidence for contexts which contained dateable pottery and CBM. All of the finds have been discarded.

Context	Description	Post-Roman	CBM	Date Approx.
F1	Pit	F20	-	Medieval?
F3	Ditch	F21 (Jug), F40	BR	Post-medieval/modern
F5	Ditch	-	PT, PANT	Modern
L1	Topsoil		-	Modern

Table 7 Approximate dates for the individual features and layers.

6.2 All other finds

by Laura Pooley (animal bone identified by Adam Wightman)

Post-medieval/modern finds from the evaluation included two pieces of clay pipe stem and three fragments of bottle glass, along with a sheep metacarpal, piece of slate, shotgun cartridge and two unidentifiable pieces of iron. All of the finds have been recorded in Table 8 below and discarded.

Trench	Context	Finds no.	Description
T1	L1/L2	2	Clay tobacco pipe: Stem fragment, 1.5g, post-medieval. Glass: Two fragments of glass vessel, both 19th/20th century. 1) Body fragment, olive green bottle glass, 4.8g. 2) Rim fragment from a pale green jar, 15.9g.
T1	L1/L2	4	Iron: Unidentifiable iron lump, 113.1g. Shotgun cartridge: With military headstamp KN C VI , 11.4g. KN stands for the Kings Norton Metal Company, initially a mint, it shifted to ammunitions and weapons manufacture at the outbreak of WWI. Early 20th century.
T2	L1/L2	5	Clay tobacco pipe: Stem fragment, 6.7g, post-medieval.
T2	F5	6	Glass: Base of a dark olive green wine bottle, 345.9g, post-medieval/modern. Animal bone: Sheep metacarpal with chop-mark, 16.2g. Slate: Fragment, 11.5g. Iron: Unidentifiable iron lump, 69.3g.

Table 8 All other finds listed by context.

7 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation on land east of Freelands, Thorpe Road, Weeley revealed a post-medieval/modern ditch, modern ditch and three tree-throws, all of which are probably agricultural. It does not appear as though the prehistoric or Iron Age/Romano-British remains previously identified to the south-east continue into the development site. The only find of note is a very small quantity of medieval pottery likely originating from the historic village of Weeley to the west of the site.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Paul Copeland and Stowmarket Mill Lance Development 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 with R Mathieson, G Smith and A Parker. Figures were compiled by C Lister, R Mathieson and S Veasey. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor.

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

- | | | |
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10 Abbreviations and glossary

Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CBCAA	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
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
Mesolithic	period from c 10,000 – 4000BC
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
Neolithic	period from c 4000 – 2500 BC
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	O nline A cces S to the Index of Archaeological Investigation S , http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
Palaeolithic	period c 800,000 BC to c 10,000BC
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
prehistoric	pre-Roman
residual	something out of its original context, e.g a Roman coin in a modern pit
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 retained.

Digital record

CAT Report 1963

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Digital photographs

Site data (feature and layer sheets, finds record, sections)

Survey 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 the Archaeology Data Service.

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Distribution list:

Paul Copeland, Stowmarket Mill Lane Development Limited

Teresa O'Connor, Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor

Essex Historic Environment Record

Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Trench	Finds no.	Interpretation	Soil description	Period
L1	All	2, 4, 5	Topsoil	Firm, dry medium grey/brown sandy-silty-loam with charcoal, oyster shell and CBM flecks	Modern
L2	All	-	Buried topsoil	Firm/hard, dry medium/dark grey/brown sandy-silty-loam with charcoal, oyster shell and CBM flecks	Post-medieval/modern
L3	All	-	Natural	Firm/hard, dry light yellow/brown sandy-silt	Post-glacial
F1	T1	1	Tree-throw	Firm, dry light/medium grey sandy-silt with 25% stones	Undated (no earlier than medieval)
F2	T1	-	Tree-throw	Loose/soft, moist very light yellow/orange clay	Undated
F3	T1	3	Ditch	Soft, dry medium/dark grey/brown silt	Post-medieval/modern
F4	T2	-	Tree-throw	Soft, moist dark brown clay	Undated
F5	T2	6	Ditch	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay with charcoal and CBM flecks and 1% stones	Modern



Fig 1 Site location (proposed development dashed blue).

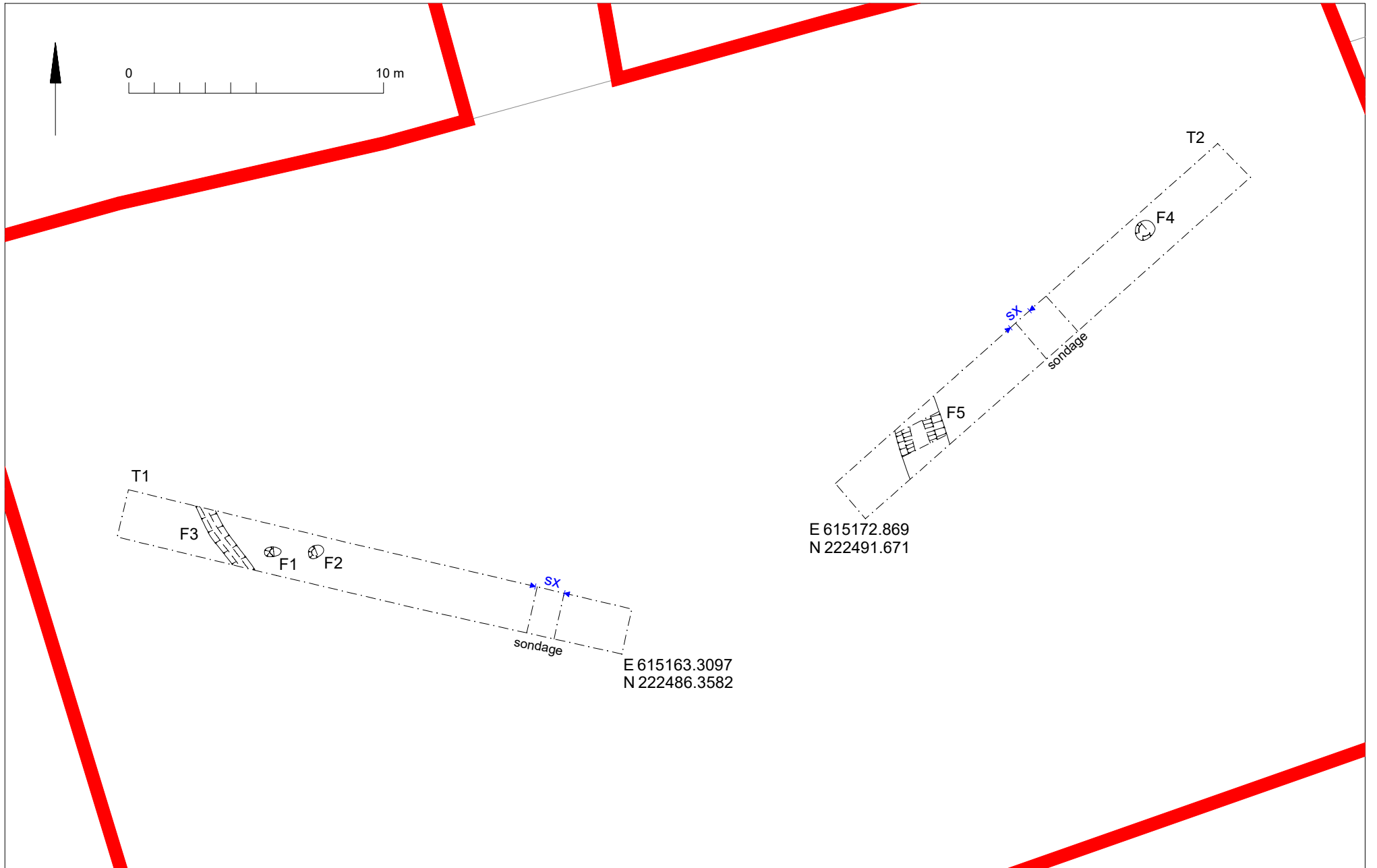


Fig 2 Results.

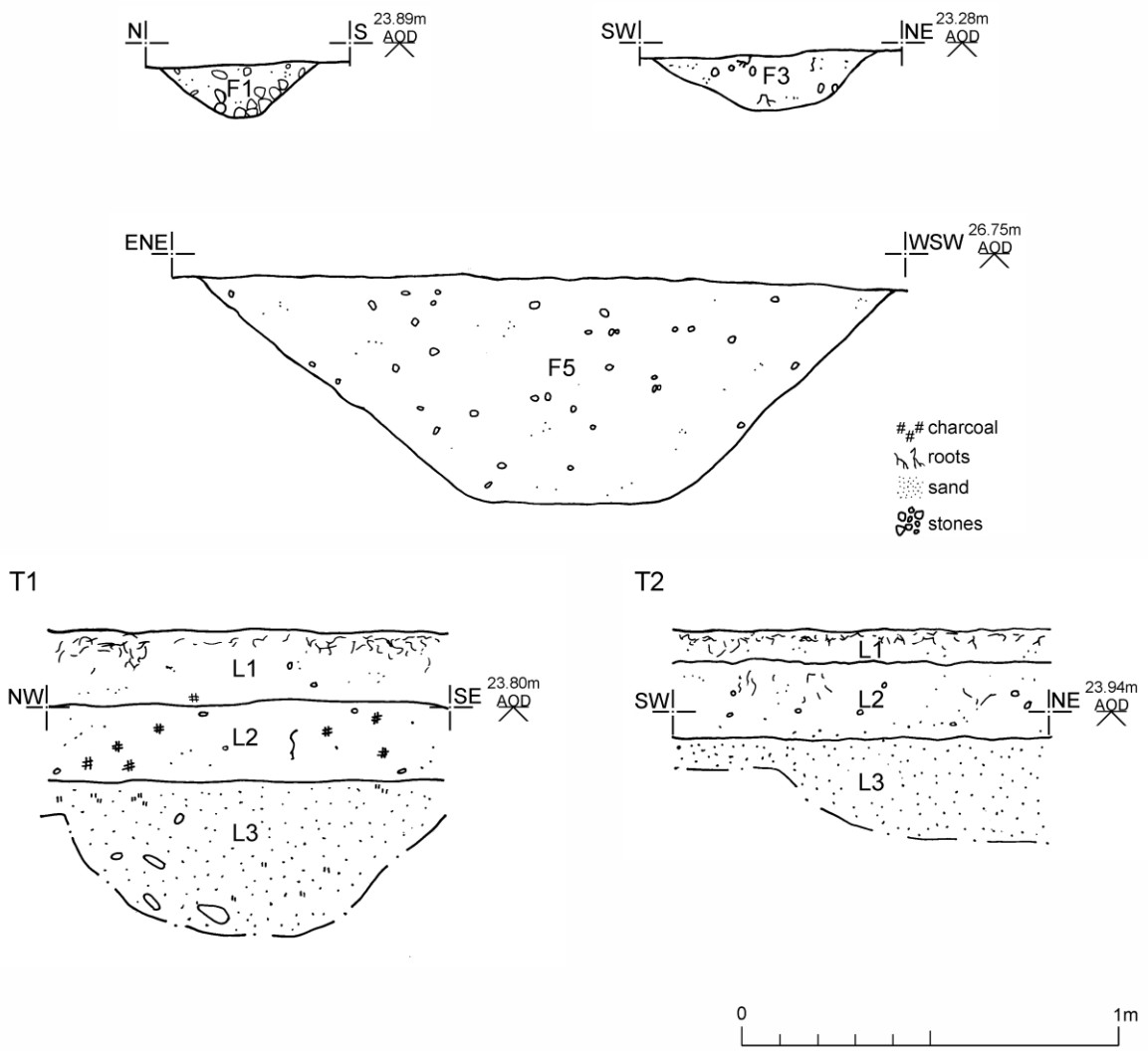


Fig 3 Feature and representative sections.

OASIS Summary for colchest3-511358

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-511358
Project Name	Archaeological evaluation on land east of Freelands, Thorpe Road, Weeley, Essex, CO16 9JH: July 2023
Sitename	Land east of Freelands, Thorpe Road, Weeley, Essex, CO16 9JH
Sitecode	WETR23
Project Identifier(s)	2022/11k
Activity type	Trial Trench, Evaluation
Planning Id	21/01935/OUT
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Between application and determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	18-Jul-2023 - 19-Jul-2023
Location	Land east of Freelands, Thorpe Road, Weeley, Essex, CO16 9JH NGR : TM 15169 22491 LL : 51.8594987438061, 1.12336142345207 12 Fig : 615169,222491
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Tendring Parish : Weeley
Project Methodology	Archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) carried out as specified in the project brief and wsi.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out on land east of Freelands, Thorpe Road, Weeley, Essex in advance of a new residential development. Archaeological investigations in the area have previously identified Palaeolithic, prehistoric, Roman, medieval, post-medieval and modern remains. This evaluation revealed a post-medieval/modern ditch, modern ditch and three tree-throws, with a very small scatter of medieval pottery from the site.
Keywords	
Funder	Private or public corporation developer
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Chris Lister, Adam Wightman
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - WETR23
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;