

# Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 2009  
issued December 2023**

**Archaeological excavation on land opposite  
St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road,  
Woodham Mortimer, Essex, CM9 6SN:  
November 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2023/10d  
ECC code: WOMC23**

**Archaeological excavation on land opposite  
St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road,  
Woodham Mortimer, Essex, CM9 6SN:  
November 2023**

**NGR: TL 82096 04993 (centre)**

**Planning ref.: 21/01276/FUL**

**CAT project ref.: 2023/10d  
CAT Report 2009**

**ECC code: WOMC23  
OASIS id: colchest3-520131**

**report prepared by Ben Holloway**

**fieldwork by Ben Holloway with Ziya Esken**

**commissioned by David Loudfoot, Elegy Ltd  
on behalf of Maldon Fields Ltd**

<b>Prepared by:</b>	Ben Holloway	Project Officer
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Laura Pooley	Post Excavation Manager
<b>Reviewed and approved by:</b>	Howard Brooks	Interim Director of Archaeology
<b>Issued:</b>	12/12/23	

**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

Roman Circus House,  
Roman Circus Walk,  
Colchester,  
Essex CO2 7GZ

*tel.:* 01206 501785

*email:* [services@catuk.org](mailto:services@catuk.org)

*web:* [www.catuk.org](http://www.catuk.org)

## Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological and geological background	1
4	Aims	2
5	Results	2
6	Finds	5
7	Conclusion	5
8	Acknowledgements	5
9	References	5
10	Abbreviations and glossary	5
11	Contents of archive	6
12	Archive deposition	6
	Appendix 1 Context list	7
	Figures	after p7
	OASIS summary sheet	

## List of photographs and figures

Cover: site shot

Photograph 1	Excavation area – view north-west.	3
Photograph 2	Pit F4 – view north-east.	3
Photograph 3	Pit F5 – view west.	4
Photograph 4	Pit cluster F2, F4 and F5 – view north-west.	4

Fig 1	Site location excavation area shown in blue.
Fig 2	Results, modern land drains in grey.
Fig 3	Feature and representative sections.

## 1 Summary

An archaeological excavation was carried out on land opposite St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road, Woodham Mortimer, Essex, in advance of the construction of a new crematorium. Archaeological evaluation on the site earlier in the year had revealed a possible Late Bronze Age pit in the eastern end Trench 17, and during current works a small excavation area was targetted over this pit. Two additional pits were identified. Although no further pottery was recovered, the proximity suggest that they could be contemporary. This is further indication of some small-scale pre-historic activity.

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological excavation carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land opposite St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road, Woodham Mortimer, Essex, on the 13th November 2023. The work was commissioned by David Loudfoot of Eley Ltd, on behalf of Maldon Fields Ltd, in advance of the construction of a crematorium with a ceremony hall and memorial arboretum as well as associated infrastructure and landscaping.

In September 2023, CAT carried out an archaeological evaluation on the development site in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021), a *Brief* issued by Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS 2023), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT (CAT 2023a). As significant archaeological remains were identified during the evaluation (see below), the Historic Environment Advisor at ECCPS advised that a scheme of archaeological excavation would also be required. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by CAT and agreed with ECCPS in advance of the excavation taking place (CAT 2023b).

In addition to the project WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was undertaken in accordance with:

- *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2015),
- Professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2020a-d, 2022),
- East of England standards and frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011) and the recent review updates on <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>
- Relevant health and safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2023c).

## 3 Archaeological and geological background

The following archaeological background includes extracts of the ECC Brief 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 (clay, silt and sand, comprised of bioturbated or poorly laminated, blue-grey or grey-brown, slightly calcareous, silty to very silty clay) with superficial Glaciofluvial deposits (sand and gravel). London clay is not conducive to cropmark formation and little archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken in this area.

Woodham Mortimer is a small village located to the south-west of Maldon, on the Dengie peninsula. Early written sources list the village as 'Wudeham', around 975, though during the Norman Conquest the parish changed hands to Ralph Peverell and was subsequently known as 'Little Woodham'. The parish was then granted to Robert de Mortimer during the reign of Henry II, and the village acquired its present name.

Little is known of the archaeological deposits within the vicinity of the proposed development site. There are two parallel linear cropmarks running north to south in the northeastern corner of

---

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

the development site (Fig 1). These appear to correlate with the layout of Woodham Mortimer Hall, and may indicate a former approach or avenue to the estate (EHER 7842). To the north-east of the site further cropmarks indicate the possible presence of a ring-ditch and associated linear features (EHER 8975).

The development area has been identified as the possible site of a deserted or shrunken medieval village (EHER 7843) likely associated with Woodham Mortimer Hall (NHLE 1146860, EHER 7846-7) and St Margaret's Church (NHLE 1146833, EHER 7844-5). St Margaret's Church is a Grade II-listed building. The church has been largely rebuilt, with the exception of the southern wall of the nave which dates to the early 12th century. Woodham Mortimer Hall is also Grade II-listed. Its rear block was originally part of a 15th-century hall-house, while the front block was added in the early 17th century and includes four curvilinear 'Dutch' gables. The Woodham Mortimer Hall estate also includes an 18th-century barn and 19th-century granary, both of which are also Grade II-listed (EHER 39071, 39072).

Located within the boundary of the development area is a Grade II-listed obelisk dated to 1825 (NHLE No. 1110995). It was erected in memory of William Alexander Esquire of Woodham Mortimer Hall by the Cooper Company, to whom he gifted the estate for the benefit of the poor.

To the north of the site is the purported route of a reputed Roman road running north-east to south-west between Woodham Mortimer and Maldon (EHER 7940).

Evaluation trenching carried out by CAT in September 2023 (CAT Report 1985) identified a small number of landscape features across the development site, including a possible bronze age pit in the east end of T17. It is around this feature that the targeted excavation is based.

#### **4 Aims**

The aims of the archaeological excavation were to investigate the area around possible Late Bronze Age pit F2 from the evaluation, and to preserve by record the nature and extent of any surviving archaeological deposits prior to their removal as part of the development plan.

#### **5 Results** (Appendix 1; Figs 2-4)

An area 14m by 10m was machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Site stratigraphy was modern ploughsoil (L1, c 0.30m thick) sealing natural (L2). A context list with soil descriptions and feature dimensions is available as Appendix 1.

During the excavation, both the east end of T17 and Bronze Age pit F2 were identified with F2 fully re-excavated. Two further pits were identified in close proximity to F2, F4 (0.89m diameter and 0.25m deep) and F5 (0.92m diameter and 0.35m deep). Neither of the two pits contained any closely-datable material, although a fragment of burnt flint was recovered from the fill of F4.





**Photograph 1** Excavation area – view north-west.



**Photograph 2** Pit F4 – view north-east.





**Photograph 3** Pit F5 – view west.



**Photograph 4** Pit cluster F2, F4 and F5 – view north-west.



## 6 Finds

A single fragment of heat-affected flint was recovered from the fill of pit F4. Weighing 2g the fragment was crazed and had grey-pink colouration due to its exposure to heat. It has been discarded.

## 7 Conclusion

Archaeological excavation on land opposite St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road, Woodham Mortimer was centred on possible Late Bronze Age pit (F2). The excavation produced a further two pits (F4 and F5). Although undated the proximity of the pits to F2, suggest that they could be contemporary. This is further indication of some small-scale activity on the development site associated with the Late Bronze Age.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank David Loudfoot of Elegy Ltd and Maldon Fields Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by A Wightman and L Pooley, with fieldwork carried out by B Holloway with Z Esken. Figures were compiled 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 <b>8</b> (EAA <b>8</b> )           |
| CAT                      | 2023a | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation at land opposite St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road, Woodham Mortimer, Essex, CM9 6SN,</i> by Sarah Veasey |
| CAT                      | 2023b | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological excavation at land opposite St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road, Woodham Mortimer, Essex, CM9 6SN,</i> by Sarah Veasey |
| CAT                      | 2023c | <i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>   |
| CAT                      | 2023  | CAT Report 1985 <i>Archaeological evaluation on land opposite St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road, Woodham Mortimer, Essex CM9 6SN: September 2023</i>                                |
| CIfA                     | 2020a | <i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation.</i> Published 2014; revised October 2020  |
| CIfA                     | 2020b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.</i> Published 2014; revised October 2020                         |
| CIfA                     | 2022  | <i>Code of Conduct.</i> Published 2014; revised 2022.   |
| ECCPS                    | 2023  | <i>Brief for trial trenching and excavation: Land opposite St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road, Woodham Mortimer, Maldon, CM9 6SN,</i> by M Medlycott                                 |
| 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         | 2016  | <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                    | 2021  | <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
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
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, or a drain: can contain 'contexts'
Late Bronze Age	period from c 1000 – 700 BC
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
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>
prehistoric	pre-Roman
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	written scheme of investigation

## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** Discarded

### **Digital record**

CAT Report 1985

CAT WSI

Digital photographs

Site data (including scans of original 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 (digital archive).

© Colchester Archaeological Trust 2023

### **Distribution list:**

David Loudfoot, Elegy Ltd

Maldon Fields Ltd

ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

**Appendix 1 Context list**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Finds no.</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
L1	-	Ploughsoil	Firm, dark greyish-brown sandy silt with occasional stone and flint inclusions	Modern
L2	-	Natural	Compact, mid orangey-brown clays and gravels	Post-glacial
F4	3	Pit	Firm, dry mid to dark greyish-brown silty sand with small rounded stone inclusions.	Undated
F5	-	Pit	Friable, mid grey-brown sandy silt with frequent small rounded stone inclusions.	Undated

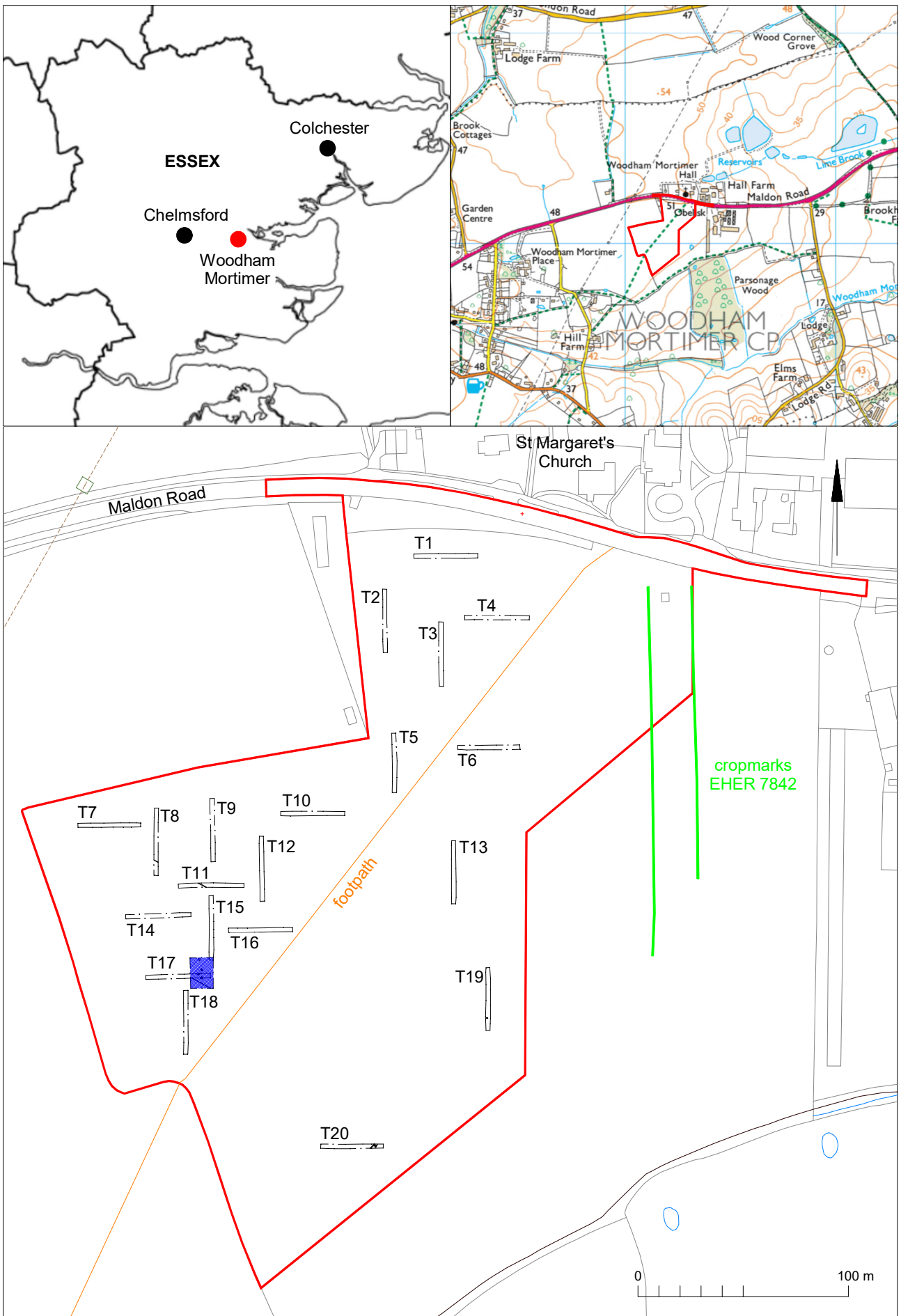


Fig 1 Site location, excavation area shown in blue.



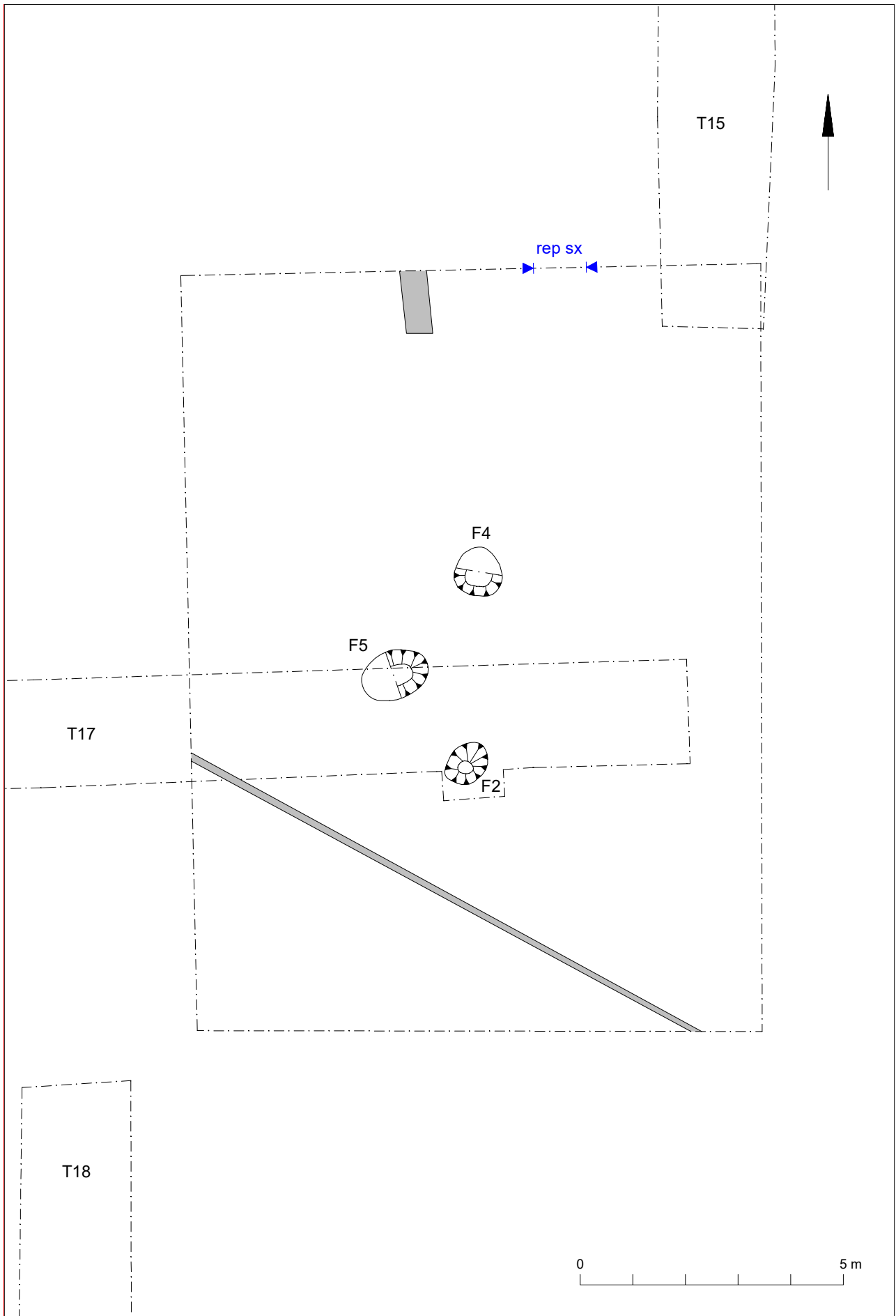


Fig 2 Results, modern land drains in grey.

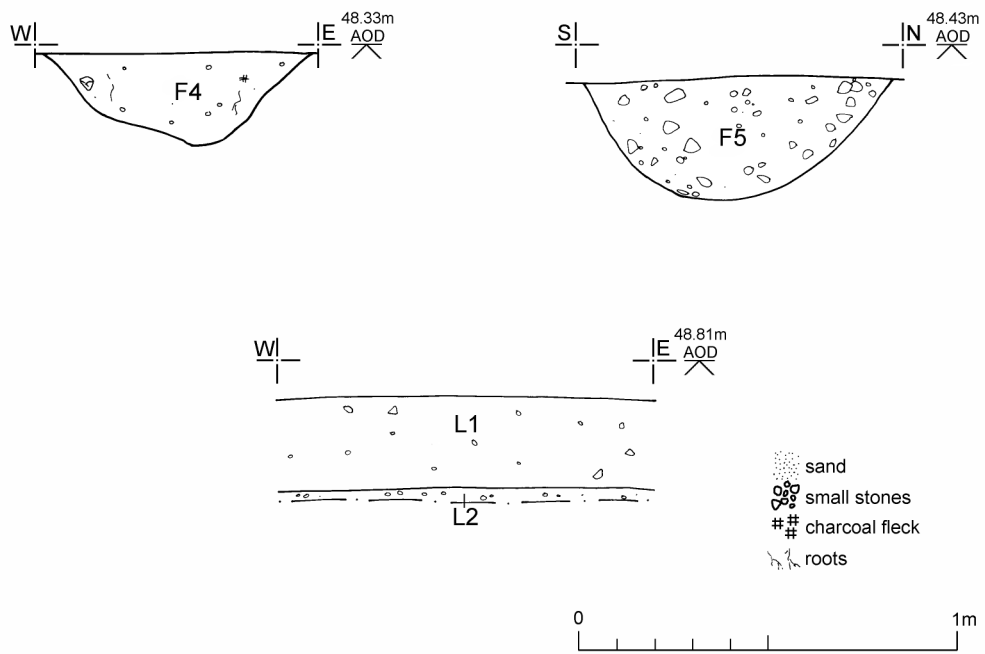


Fig 3 Feature and representative sections.

# OASIS Summary for colchest3-520131

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-520131
Project Name	Open Area Excavation at Land opposite St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road, Woodham Mortimer, CM9 6SN
Sitename	Land opposite St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road, Woodham Mortimer, CM9 6SN
Sitecode	WOMC23
Project Identifier(s)	2023/10d
Activity type	Open Area Excavation
Planning Id	21/01276/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	13-Nov-2023 - 13-Nov-2023
Location	Land opposite St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road, Woodham Mortimer, CM9 6SN NGR : TL 82096 04993 LL : 51.71410584181944, 0.634486301435594 12 Fig : 582096,204993
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Essex Local Authority District : Maldon Parish : Woodham Mortimer
Project Methodology	Open area excavation as set out in the project brief and according to approved wsi.
Project Results	An archaeological excavation was carried out on land opposite St Margaret's Church, Maldon Road, Woodham Mortimer, Essex, in advance of the construction of a new crematorium. Archaeological evaluation on the site earlier in the year had revealed a possible Late Bronze Age pit in the eastern end Trench 17, and during current works a small excavation area was targeted over this pit. Two additional pits were identified. Although no further pottery was recovered, the proximity suggest that they could be contemporary. This is further indication of some small-scale pre-historic activity.
Keywords	Rubbish Pit - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Private or public corporation developer
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	C Lister, L Pooley, A Wightman
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - WOMC23
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;