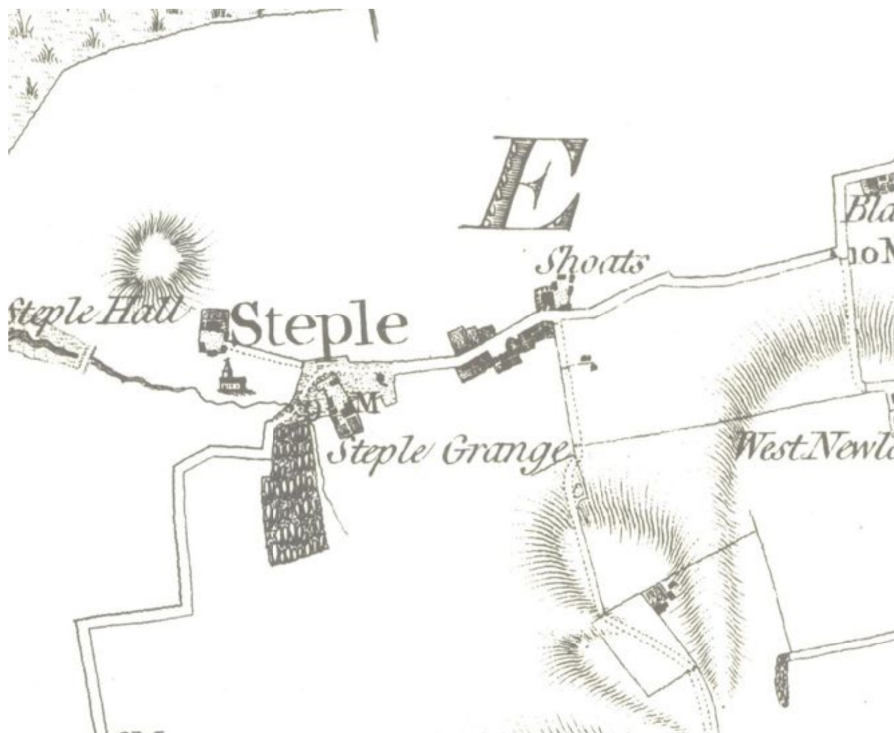


Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 2031
issued March 2024**

**Archaeological evaluation at The Sun and Anchor,
The Street, Steple, Essex, CM0 7RH:
February 2024**



**CAT project ref.: 2024/02h
ECC code: STPSA24**

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The Street, Steeple, Essex, CM0 7RH:
February 2024**

NGR: TL 93580 02987 (centre)

Planning ref.: FUL/MAL/19/01163

**CAT project ref.: 2024/02h
CAT Report 2031**

**ECC code: STPSA24
OASIS id: colchest3-522813**

**report prepared by Dr Elliott Hicks
with contributions by Dr Matthew Loughton &
Laura Pooley**

**fieldwork by Nigel Rayner
with Matthew Perou & Ziya Eksen**

**commissioned by E&M Design Partnership
on behalf of Lauren Nicole Homes Ltd**

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Issued:	18/03/2024	

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (five trial-trenches) was carried out at The Sun and Anchor, The Street, Steeple, Essex, in advance of the construction of a new residential development. The site lies in the midst of numerous historic buildings and west of two Late Iron Age or Roman ‘red hills’ and the purported location of a medieval castle. Excavations at the site revealed a Bronze Age or Early Iron Age tree-throw, the foundations of an 18th- or 19th-century building depicted on late 19th-century Ordnance Survey mapping of the area, and two ditches and a pit, all of which were modern and likely the product of agricultural activity.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at The Sun and Anchor, The Street, Steeple, Essex during 20th-21st February 2024. The work was commissioned by E&M Design Partnership on behalf of Lauren Nicole 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, 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 2023).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for trial trenching and excavation at The Sun and Anchor, The Street, Steeple* written by Maria Medlycott (ECCPS 2023). A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2024).

In addition to the project Brief and 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-b, 2022, 2023a-b),
- East of England standards and frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Brown & Glazebrook 2000, Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011) and the recent review updates on <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>
- Relevant health and safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2024).

3 Archaeological 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 proposed development site is located in the village of Steeple, a historic settlement located approximately 3km to the south of the River Blackwater.

Immediately east of the site is a pair of Grade II listed buildings, Sun Cottage and Anchor Cottage (NHLE No. 1237576, EHER 38711). The timber-framed cottages are late 17th-century in date, with later alterations. Prior to the construction of the modern building, the Sun and Anchor pub was housed in Sun Cottage. Further listed buildings within the vicinity of the proposed development site include an 18th-century cottage (NHLE No. 1247905, EHER 387112), a 19th-century cottage (NHLE No. 1237560, EHER 38704) and a 20th-century pump house with adjoining 18th- or 19th-century cottages (NHLE No. 1237561, EHER 38705, 38706) and a cast iron wheel pump (NHLE No. 1237572). Due to the site's proximity to these historic buildings, there is the possibility of archaeological remains associated with the early development of the village to be identified, especially along the road frontage.

Roughly 100m to the west is the village church of St Lawrence and All Saints (NHLE No. 1237575, EHER 12097). The church was built in 1882, by renowned Essex architect Frederic Chancellor. It was constructed using materials from an earlier church, which was originally built in the 12th century.

Late Iron Age or Roman 'red hills' have been recorded lying in a field some 615m west of the site (EHER 12047). A medieval castle was purportedly located here also (EHER 12046).

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale¹) shows the site has a bedrock geology of London Clay Formation (clay, silt and sand).

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 2-5)

Five trial-trenches were excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. All trenches were 10m long and 1.8m wide except for trench T2, an L-shaped trench which was 20m long and 1.8m wide.

Trench T5 was cut through modern cobbles and crush (L1, c 0.45-0.55m thick), topsoil (L2, c 0.19-0.3m thick) and subsoil (L3, c 0.24-0.25m thick) onto natural (L4, encountered at a depth of 0.99m below current ground level [bcgl]). Trench T1 was cut through L2 (c 0.28-0.31m thick) onto L4. The remainder of the trenches were cut through L2 (0.2-0.51m thick) and L3 (0.21-0.3m thick) onto L4 (encountered at a depth of 0.43-0.8m bcgl).

There were no archaeological remains in trench T1. A full context list with soil descriptions and dimensions can be found in Appendix 1.

Trench 2

Tree-throw F9 and pit or tree-throw F10 were uncovered in the middle of the north north-west/south south-east aligned branch of the trench. It is likely that they are the same feature. F9 contained two sherds of Bronze Age or Early Iron Age pottery.

Trench 3

Ditch F7 extended along the length of the trench on an east north-east/west south-west alignment. It produced two sherds of mid-12th- to late 14th-century pottery and one sherd of modern pottery. Ditch F8 passed through the western end of the trench on a north-west/south-east alignment, cutting F7. It produced no finds but was modern in date.

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



Photograph 1 T2 trench shot – looking west south-west.



Photograph 2 T3 trench shot – looking east north-east.

Trench 4

Pit F5 lay in the southern half of the trench. The feature yielded no finds. Modern pit F6 occupied the entire northern half of the trench. Natural features F3 and F4 were also excavated.

Trench 5

Two brick wall foundations – F1 and F2 – were uncovered. F1 passed through the southern end of the trench on a north north-west/south south-east alignment; F2 entered the northern end of the trench from the west on an east north-east/west south-west alignment, turning south south-east and passing beyond its eastern limit of excavation. The wall foundations were constructed from soft red unfrogged bricks set in white mortar and dated from the early 18th to the mid-19th century.



Photograph 3 T5 trench shot – looking south south-west.

6 Finds

6.1 Pottery and CBM

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation uncovered a small assemblage of pottery and ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) consisting of 11 sherds with a weight of 6.7kg (Table 1). The mean sherd weight is high at 613g, and this reflects the recovery of two complete bricks.

Ceramic material	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
Pottery	5	46	9
CBM	6	6,702	1,117
All	11	6,748	613

Table 1 Summary of the pottery and CBM.

Prehistoric pottery

Two sherds (29g) of oxidised (orange to brown coloured) flint-tempered handmade pottery were recovered from tree-throw F9. This material probably dates to the Bronze Age or Early Iron Age.

Medieval and modern pottery

Post-Roman pottery was recorded according to the fabric groups from CAR 7 (2000). Two small (3g) sherds of medieval sandy greyware (fabric F20) pottery dating to c 1150-1375/1400 came from ditch F7, along with a sherd of modern stoneware (fabric F45M) pottery (14g).

Ceramic building material (CBM)

The CBM consists of one fragment (78g) of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile from ditch F7. Two complete unfrogged bricks with dimensions of 225/220 mm x 110 mm x 65 mm, dating from the 18th to the early/mid-19th century came from wall foundations F1 and F2. Finally, two (99g) probably modern brick fragments came from ditch F7.

Conclusion

Table 2 summarizes the dating evidence for the contexts which contained dateable pottery and CBM.

Context	Description	Prehistoric	Post-Roman	CBM	Date Approx.
F1	Wall foundation	-	-	BR (unfrogged)	1700/1780-1825/1850
F2	Wall foundation	-	-	BR (unfrogged)	1700/1780-1825/1850
F7	Ditch	-	F20, F45M	BR, PT	Modern
F9	Treethrow	HMF			Bronze Age/Early Iron Age

Table 2 Approximate dates for the individual features.

6.2 Codd bottle

by Laura Pooley

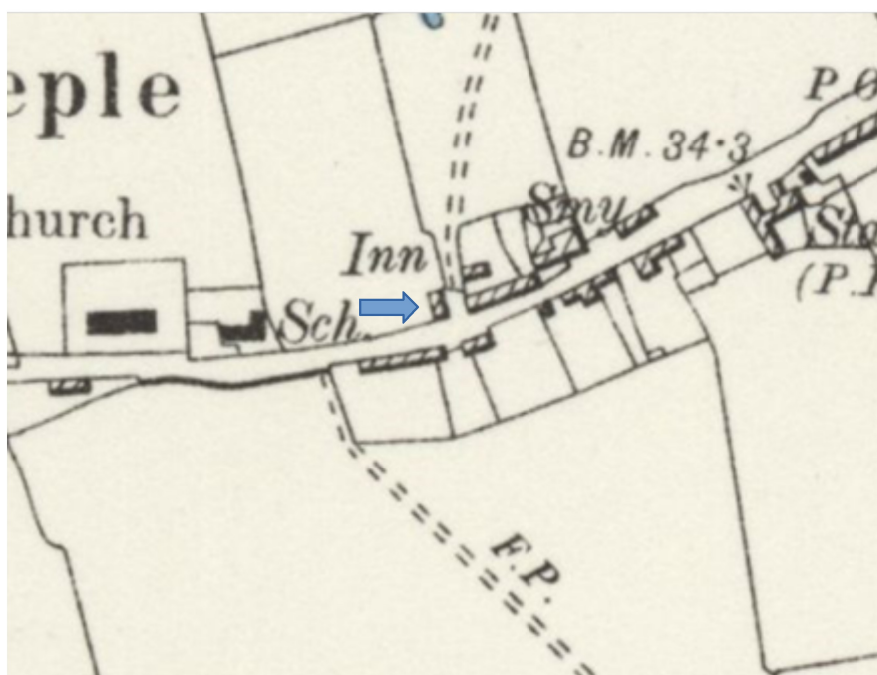
A complete Codd bottle was recovered from L1 (finds no. 1). In pale blue/green, it is embossed MARKHAM / W.S.M / MALDON, and measures 192mm high, 58mm diameter and 446.0g. Codd bottles date from the late 19th to the early 20th century.



Photograph 4 Codd bottle from L1

Conclusion

Excavations at this site revealed two wall foundations, two ditches, two pits, a pit or tree-throw, a tree-throw and two natural features. Of these remains, the most significant was tree-throw F9 in trench T2, which contained two sherds of Bronze Age or Early Iron Age pottery, indicating some activity (including possible land clearance) in the vicinity of the site during that period. In trench T5, in the south-eastern corner of the site, two early 18th- to mid-19th-century wall foundations were uncovered. These represent the remains of a structure depicted on Ordnance Survey maps of the area compiled in the late 19th century, which was possibly associated with the Sun and Anchor Inn to the east (see Map 1). The remaining datable features were two modern ditches and a modern pit that were likely the product of agricultural activity.



Map 1 Extract from Essex LXIII.NW, rev. 1895; pub. 1898
(building indicated by blue arrow)

Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank E&M Design Partnership and Lauren Nicole Homes Ltd for commissioning and funding the project. The project was managed by C Lister and A Wightman, with fieldwork carried out by N Rayner with Z Eksen and M Perou. Figures were compiled by C Lister, Z Eksen and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Maria Medlycott.

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 | 2024 | <i>Health & Safety Policy</i> |
| CIfA | 2020a | <i>Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives.</i> CIfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists; published 2014, revised 2020 |
| CIfA | 2020b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.</i> CIfA Chartered Institute for |

		Archaeologists; published 2014, revised 2020
CIfA	2022	<i>Code of Conduct</i> . CIfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists; published 2014, revised 2022
CIfA	2023a	<i>Standard for archaeological field evaluation</i> . CIfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
CIfA	2023b	<i>Universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i> . CIfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
ECC	2008	<i>Tending District Historic Environment Characterisation Project</i>
ECCPS	2023	<i>Brief for trial trenching and excavation at The Sun and Anchor, The Street, Steeple</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	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 24 (EAA 24)
MHCLG	2023	<i>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</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
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'
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	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, 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

12 Contents of archive

Finds: tbc after discussion with Colchester Museum

Digital:

CAT Report 2031

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Digital photographs

Site data

Survey data

13 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 (finds archive) and the Archaeology Data Service (digital archive).

Distribution list:

E&M Design Partnership

Lauren Nicole Homes Ltd

ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Trench no.	Finds no.	Interpretation	Context information	Period
L1	T5	1	Cobbled and crush surface	Firm, moist, medium/dark grey/brown sandy-silty-clay with frequent CBM and mortar pieces with chalk flecks and 1% stones. 0.45-0.55m thick.	19th to early 20th century
L2	T5	-	Topsoil	Loose/soft, moist/wet dark grey/brown loam with charcoal and CBM flecks. 0.19-0.51m thick.	Undated
L3	T5	-	Subsoil	Soft, moist/wet medium grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal, oyster shell and CBM flecks. 0.21-0.3m.	Undated
L4	All	-	Natural	Soft, wet medium yellow/grey/brown clay. Encountered at a depth of 0.28-0.99m bcgl.	Post-glacial
<hr/>					
F1	T5	4	Wall foundation	Unfrogged red bricks set in white mortar.	Early 18th to mid-19th century
F2	T5	5	Wall foundation	Unfrogged red bricks set in white mortar.	Early 18th to mid-19th century
F3	T4	-	Natural feature	Soft, moist/wet medium grey/brown silty-clay with 1% stones. Shallow, slightly irregular U-shaped profile. 0.7m wide and 0.1m deep.	Post-glacial
F4	T4	-	?Natural feature	Soft, wet medium grey/brown silty-clay with 1% stones. Slightly irregular U-shaped profile. Extends beyond limit of excavation (LOE); exposed extent 0.53m wide and 0.14m deep.	Post-glacial
F5	T4	-	Pit	Firm, wet medium grey/brown silty-clay with 1% stones. U-shaped profile. 0.5m wide and 0.15m deep.	Undated
F6	T4	-	Pit	Loose/soft, wet medium yellow/orange/grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal and CBM flecks. Feature extended beyond the limit of excavation; 7.69m by 1.8m and 0.84m deep.	Modern
F7	T3	2	Ditch	Firm, wet medium brown silty-clay with CBM flecks and 1% stones. Shallow U-shaped profile. 0.8m wide and 0.15m deep. Cut by F8.	Modern
F8	T3	-	Ditch	Soft, moist very dark grey/brown clay with 1% stones. Irregular U-shaped profile. 0.7m wide and 0.16m deep. Cuts F7.	Modern
F9	T2	3	Tree-throw	Firm, wet medium grey/brown silty-clay with 1% stones. Shallow, irregular profile. Extends beyond LOE; exposed extent 1.28m wide and 0.2m deep.	Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age
F10	T2	-	Pit/tree-throw	Firm, moist grey/brown silty-clay with 1% stones. U-shaped profile. 0.69m wide and 0.12m deep.	Undated

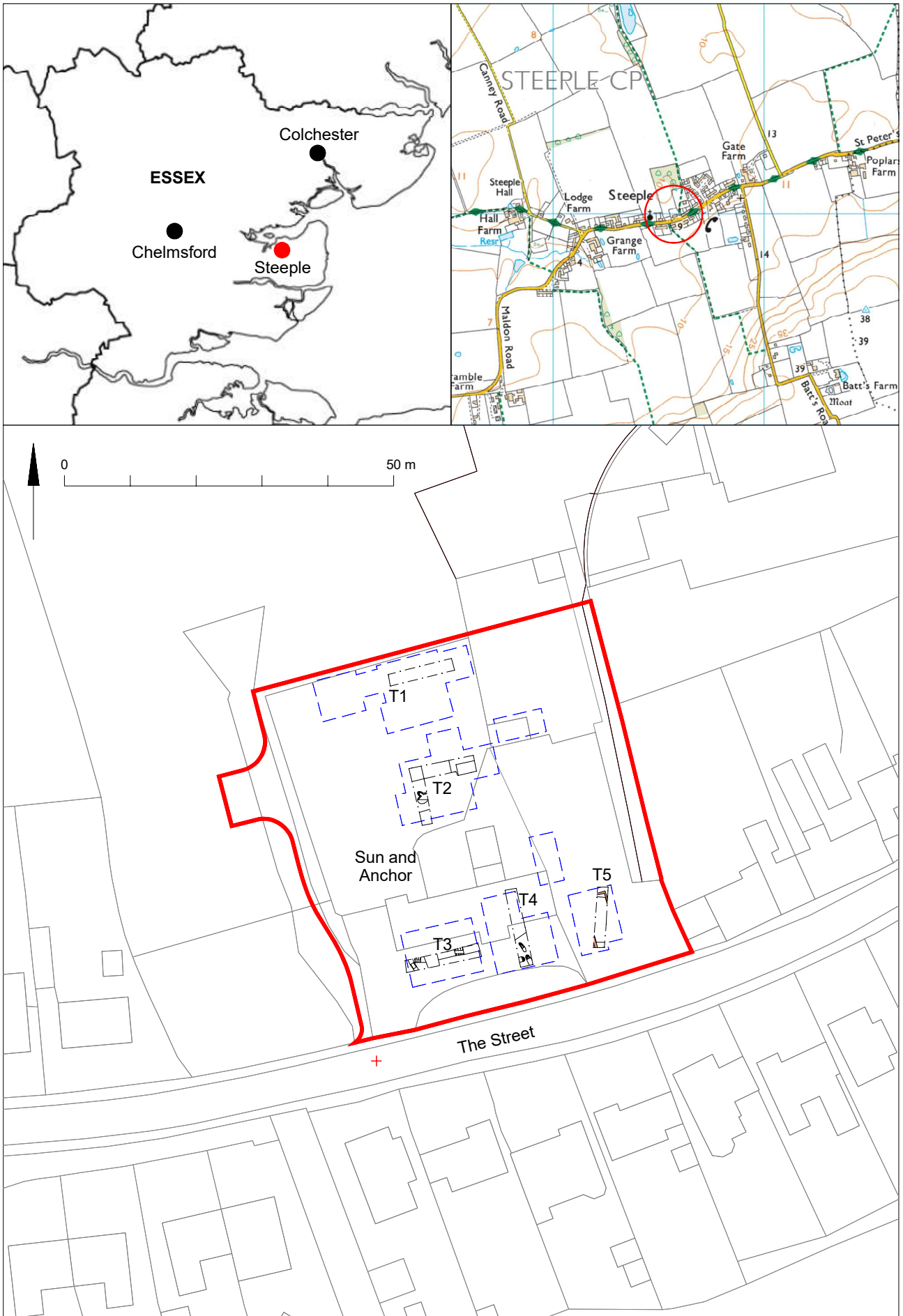


Fig 1 Site location and trench layout in relation to proposed development (dashed blue lines).

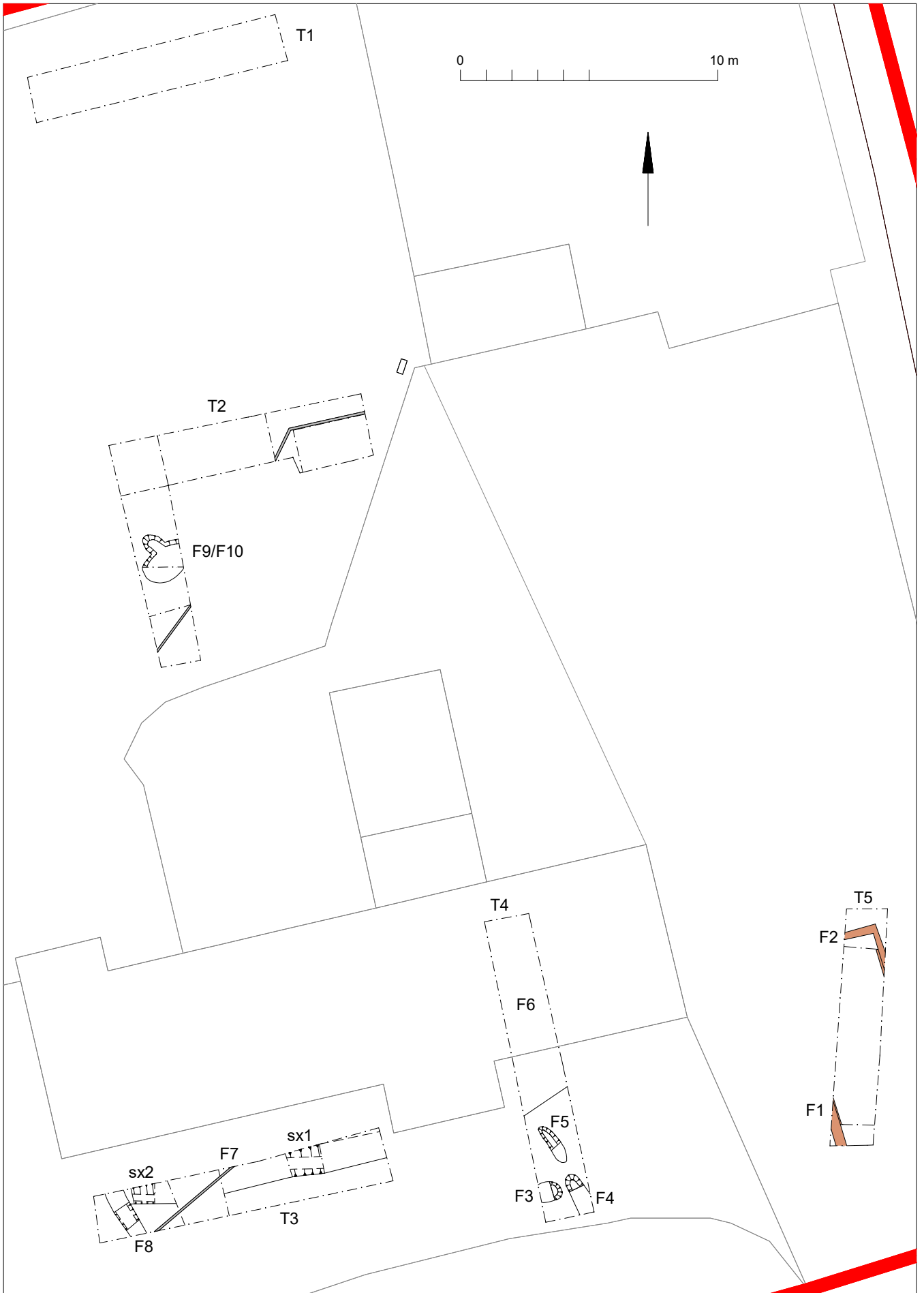


Fig 2 Results

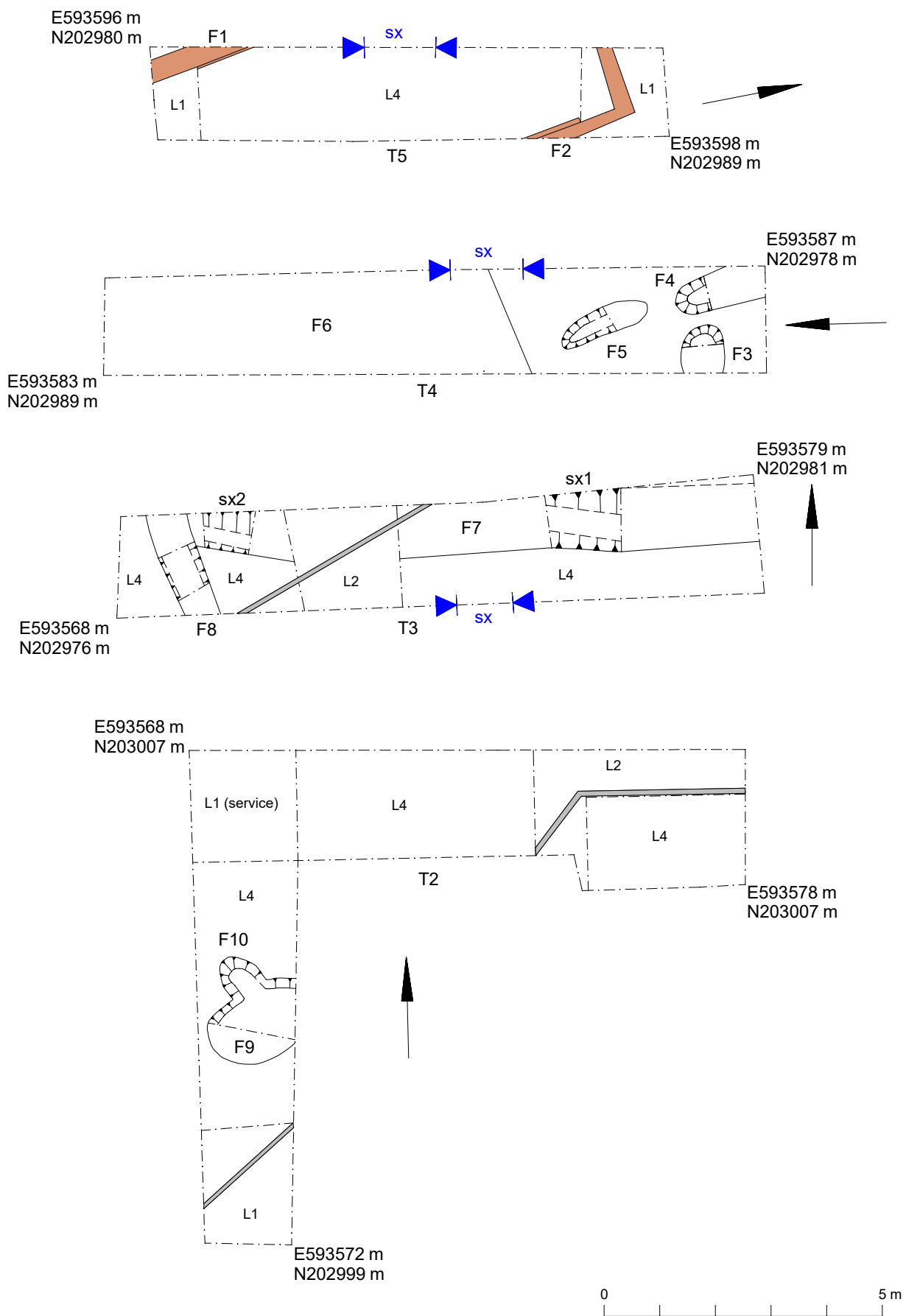


Fig 3 Trench results

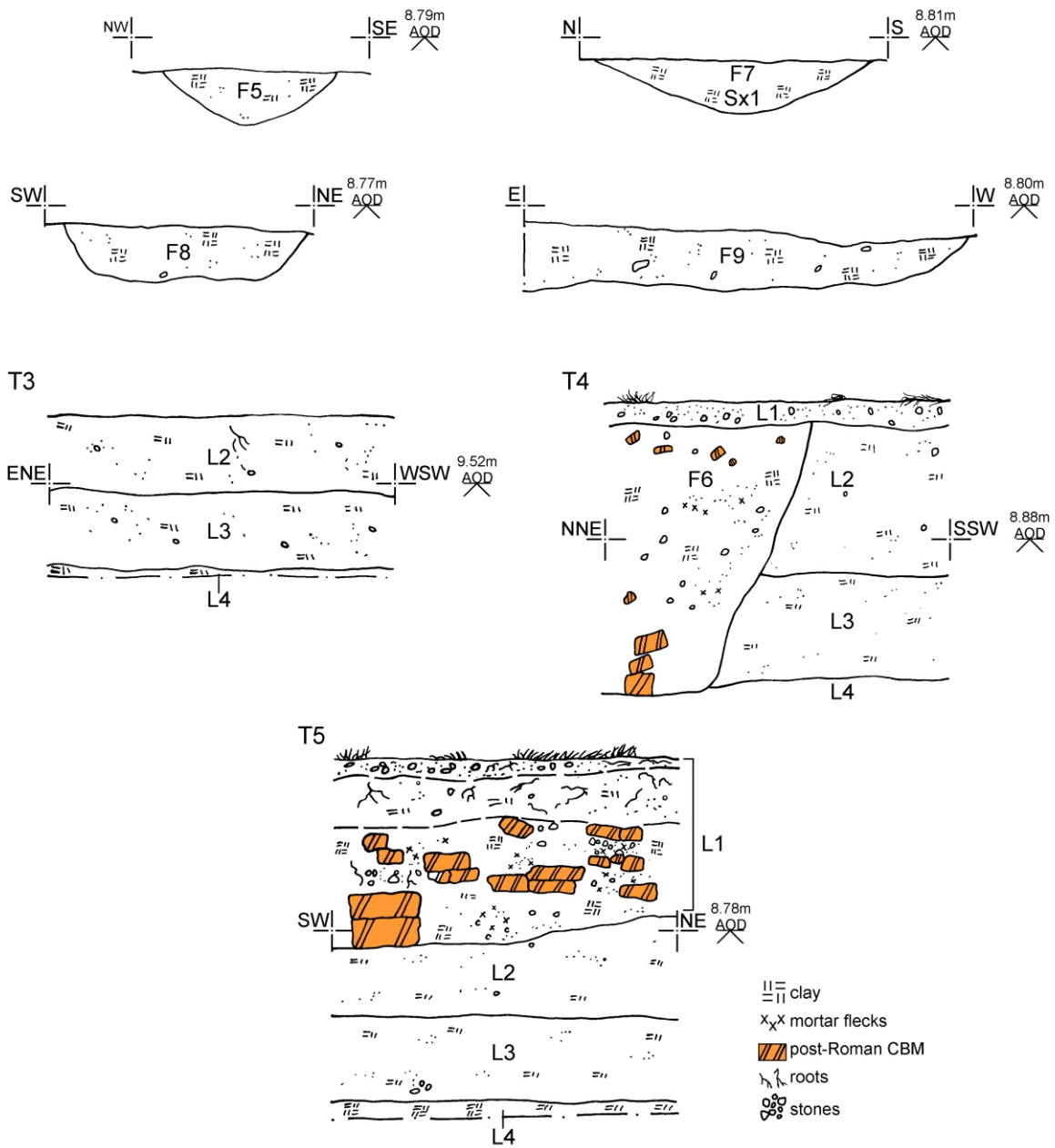


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

OASIS Summary for colchest3-522813

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-522813
Project Name	Archaeological evaluation at The Sun and Anchor, The Street, Steeple, Essex, CM0 7RH: February 2024
Sitename	The Sun and Anchor, The Street, Steeple, Essex, CM0 7RH
Sitecode	
Project Identifier(s)	2024/02k
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	FUL/MAL/19/01163
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	20-Feb-2024 - 21-Feb-2024
Location	The Sun and Anchor, The Street, Steeple, Essex, CM0 7RH NGR : TL 93580 02987 LL : 51.69224906271352, 0.79939981815767 12 Fig : 593580,202987
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Essex Local Authority District : Maldon Parish : Steeple
Project Methodology	Archaeological evaluation was carried out as per the brief and WSI.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (five trial-trenches) was carried out at The Sun and Anchor, The Street, Steeple, Essex, in advance of the construction of a new residential development. The site lies in the midst of numerous historic buildings and west of two Late Iron Age or Roman 'red hills' and the purported location of a medieval castle. Excavations at the site revealed a Bronze Age or Early Iron Age tree-throw, the foundations of an 18th- or 19th-century building depicted on late 19th-century Ordnance Survey mapping of the area, and two ditches and a pit, all of which were modern and likely the product of agricultural activity.

Keywords	<p>Wall - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Natural Feature - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Pit - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Pit - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Pit - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Ditch - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Ditch - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Tree Throw - BRONZE AGE - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Tree Throw - EARLY IRON AGE - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Tree Throw - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Sherd - BRONZE AGE - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Sherd - EARLY IRON AGE - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Sherd - MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Sherd - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Sherd - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Peg Tile - MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Peg Tile - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Brick - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Brick - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Bottle - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Bottle - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p>
Funder	Private or public corporation Lauren Nicole Homes Ltd
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	A Wightman
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - STPSA24
Archives	Physical Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with Colchester & Ipswich Museum Sevice (Colchester Collection);