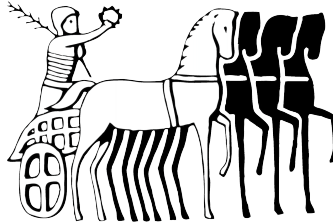


Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 2066
issued July 2024**

**Archaeological monitoring and recording at
Thrift Farm, Moulsham Thrift, Chelmsford, Essex,
CM2 8BP: November 2023 – June 2024**



**CAT project ref.: 2022/08h
ECC code: EEX60031**

**Archaeological monitoring and recording at
Thrift Farm, Moulsham Thrift, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2
8BP: November 2023 – June 2024**

NGR: TL 70050 04567 (centre)

**Planning district.: Chelmsford
Planning reference: 20/00688/FUL**

**CAT project ref.: 2022/08h
CAT Report 2066**

**ECC code: EEX60031
OASIS id: colchest3-508938**

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1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at Thrift Farm, Moulsham Thrift, Chelmsford, Essex during groundworks to convert a barn and single-storey blocks into a dwelling. Thrift Farm was constructed between 1865 and 1867, and gradually extended over the following decades. Current groundworks consisted of a service trench which did not encounter any archaeological remains, and ground reduction over a small area after the demolition of two modern structures. Found underneath one of these structures (Store 8), was a brick wall foundation constructed out of unfrogged bricks. The store had been built to replace a small outbuilding (probably a stable) which was part of the original 1860s farm complex, and the brick wall foundation is likely all that remains of this earlier structure.

2 Introduction

This is the report for archaeological monitoring and recording carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at Thrift Farm, Moulsham Thrift, Chelmsford, Essex on 28th November 2023 and 6th June 2024. The work was commissioned by Faberdean BK Ltd and took place during groundworks associated with the conversion of a barn and single-storey blocks into a new dwelling.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the EHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Essex County Council Place Services Historic Environment Advisor. This recommendation was for a programme of archaeological monitoring and was based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Building Recording at Land at Thrift Farm, Moulsham Thrift, Chelmsford* (ECCPS 2022) and a *Written scheme of investigation (WSI)* prepared by CAT (2022).

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 2023/4).

3 Historic and archaeological background

The following historic and 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>).

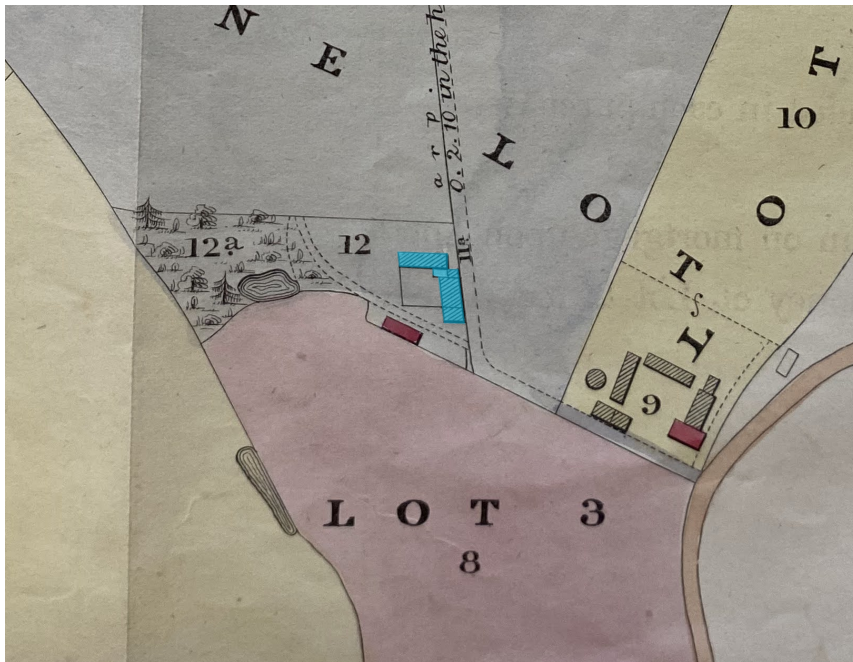
Historic background

See CAT Report 1888 for a detailed Historic Building Record (HBR) of Thrift Farm. In summary, the EHER lists Thrift Farm as a model farm designed by Frederic Chancellor. This listing was based on an 1865 plan of a model farm designed by Frederic Chancellor held by the ERO (D/F 8/595), which an English Heritage survey in 1997 misinterpreted as a plan of Thrift Farm. The plan actually shows Bexfield Farm, located to the south, with Thrift Farm yet to be constructed.

Thrift Farm is first depicted on a map when it was listed for sale in 1867 as part of the sale of Bexfield Farm and associated arable land. This places the construction of Thrift Farm between 1865 and 1867. The sales catalogue lists it as a homestead, surrounded by arable land, woodland, and plantation wood. The map included in the sales catalogue shows the threshing barn, cart-lodge and a small outbuilding (probably a stable).

The southern wing of the building was added between 1867 and 1881 creating a C-shaped complex, with multiple buildings added throughout the later 19th and early 20th centuries.

The current monitoring and recording specifically takes place to the west of the 19th-century Threshing Barn, and within the footprints of buildings designated Store 7 and 8 in the HBR. The HBR states that Store 7 does not appear on historic mapping so must have been constructed after 1947, and Store 8 appears to have replaced a small stable which was part of the original complex of buildings.



Map 1 An extract from the 1867 sales catalogue (ERO SALE/B4847). The farm buildings of Thrift Farm highlighted blue.



Map 2 An extract from the 1881 Ordnance Survey map showing the location of the farm (highlighted in blue).

Archaeological background

According to the British Geology Viewer (<https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>) the site is situated within an area of London Clay Formation bedrock geology with superficial deposits of Head (clay, silt and sand).

Cropmarks to the south of the site indicate the presence of an enclosure or ring-ditch (EHER 47380).

The historic settlement pattern of the area was that of dispersed farmsteads, with some of the settlement being focused on commons, which lay along the highest ground. The field system consists of many small fields of ancient origin, both grid-like co-axial and irregular in shape. There are several small areas of ancient woodland, with some secondary woodland developed on former common land (Bennett 2006, 30).

To the west of the farm is the site of an ancient woodland which traces its origins to the medieval period at the latest. The wood was referenced as 'Molesham Frith' in 1291 and 1591 (EHER 824). Chapman and André's map of Essex, published in 1777, depicts it as 'Thrift Wood', while the Ordnance Survey map published in 1881 refers to it as 'Moulsham Thrift Wood'.

To the north of the site lies part of the Napoleonic defences of Chelmsford which were constructed in 1803 due to fear of an invasion. The bastion (ditch and rampart) extended for some 2.8 km between Star Fort at Widford and artillery fort at Galleywood. The defences were dismantled by 1813 (EHER 8931).

For more information on the general background of the area see the Chelmsford Borough Historic Environment Characterisation Project (Bennett 2006).

4 Aim

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which were exposed by the groundworks.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

A drainage trench, 15.5m long, 0.6m wide and c 0.9m deep, was excavated to the west of the old threshing barn. It was excavated through modern concrete (L1, 0.06-0.07m thick), modern topsoil (L2, 0.42-0.44m thick) and subsoil (L3, 0.34-0.36m thick) into natural (L4, encountered at a depth of 0.84-0.86m below current ground level). No archaeological remains were encountered.

An area measuring 18.1m² was stripped to a depth of 0.38m through a modern make-up layer (L5, up to 0.38m thick) onto L4. This area was located within the footprint of two demolished buildings, designated Store 7 and 8 in the HBR (CAT Report 1888). Excavation revealed post-medieval/modern brick wall F1 within the footprint of Store 8. The wall was 2.51m long by 0.35m wide, aligned west-north-west/east-south-east and was constructed from unfrogged soft red bricks bonded with white mortar.



Photograph 1 Drainage trench, looking south-south-west.



Photograph 2 Stripped area, looking east-south-east.



Photograph 3 Brick wall foundation F1, looking east-south-east.

6 Finds

There were no finds.

7 Conclusion

Groundworks at Thrift Farm revealed a brick wall foundation. Specifically, this feature was uncovered during the demolition of the building designated as Store 8 during the HBR of the farm complex (CAT Report 1888). This study determined that the farm was constructed between 1865 and 1867, but that Store 8 itself was a later addition which replaced a small outbuilding (probably a stable) which had been part of the original 1860s complex. Therefore, the brick wall foundation appears to be all that remains of this outbuilding.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Faberdean BK Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, A Wightman and L Pooley, fieldwork was carried out by Z Eksen. Figures are by C Lister, E Hicks and C Hill. 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>

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)
Bennett, A	2006	<i>Chelmsford Borough Historic Land Characterisation Project.</i> Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch
CAT	2022	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a historic building recording and archaeological monitoring and recording on land adjacent to Thrift Farm, Moulsham Thrift, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8BP,</i> by Emma Holloway. Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust.
CAT	2023/4	<i>Health & Safety Policy.</i> Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust.
CAT Report 1888	2023	<i>Historic building recording at Thrift Farm, Moulsham Thrift, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8BP: October 2022,</i> by S Veasey. Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust.
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 monitoring and recording.</i> CifA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.
CifA	2023b	<i>Universal guidance for archaeological monitoring and recording.</i> CifA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.
ECCPS	2022	<i>Brief for Historic Building recording and archaeological monitoring at Land at Thrift Farm, Moulsham Thrift, Chelmsford,</i> by M Baister
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>
Livemore	2021	<i>Planning Heritage Statement.</i> Red House, High Street, Great Oakley, CO12 5AQ. The Livemore Partnership LLP
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.</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
EHER	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, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
post-medieval	period from c AD 1500 to c 1800
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
ws_i	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of digital archive

CAT Report 2066
ECCPS brief, CAT WSI
Digital photographs
Site data
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:

Faberdean BK Ltd
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Finds no.	Interpretation	Soil description	Period
L1	-	Concrete	0.06-0.07m thick.	Modern
L2	-	Topsoil	Soft, moist dark brown sandy-silt with 1% stones. 0.42-0.44m thick.	Modern
L3	-	Subsoil	Soft, moist medium yellow/brown silty-clay with 1% stones. 0.34-0.36m thick.	Undated
L4	-	Natural	Firm, moist light/medium yellow/brown clay. Encountered at a depth of 0.38-0.86m below current ground level.	Post-glacial
L5	-	Make-up layer	Soft, moist medium yellow/brown silty-clay with CBM pieces and 1% stones. Up to 0.38m thick.	Modern
F1	-	Wall	Constructed from soft, red unfrogged bricks bonded in white mortar.	Post-medieval/ modern

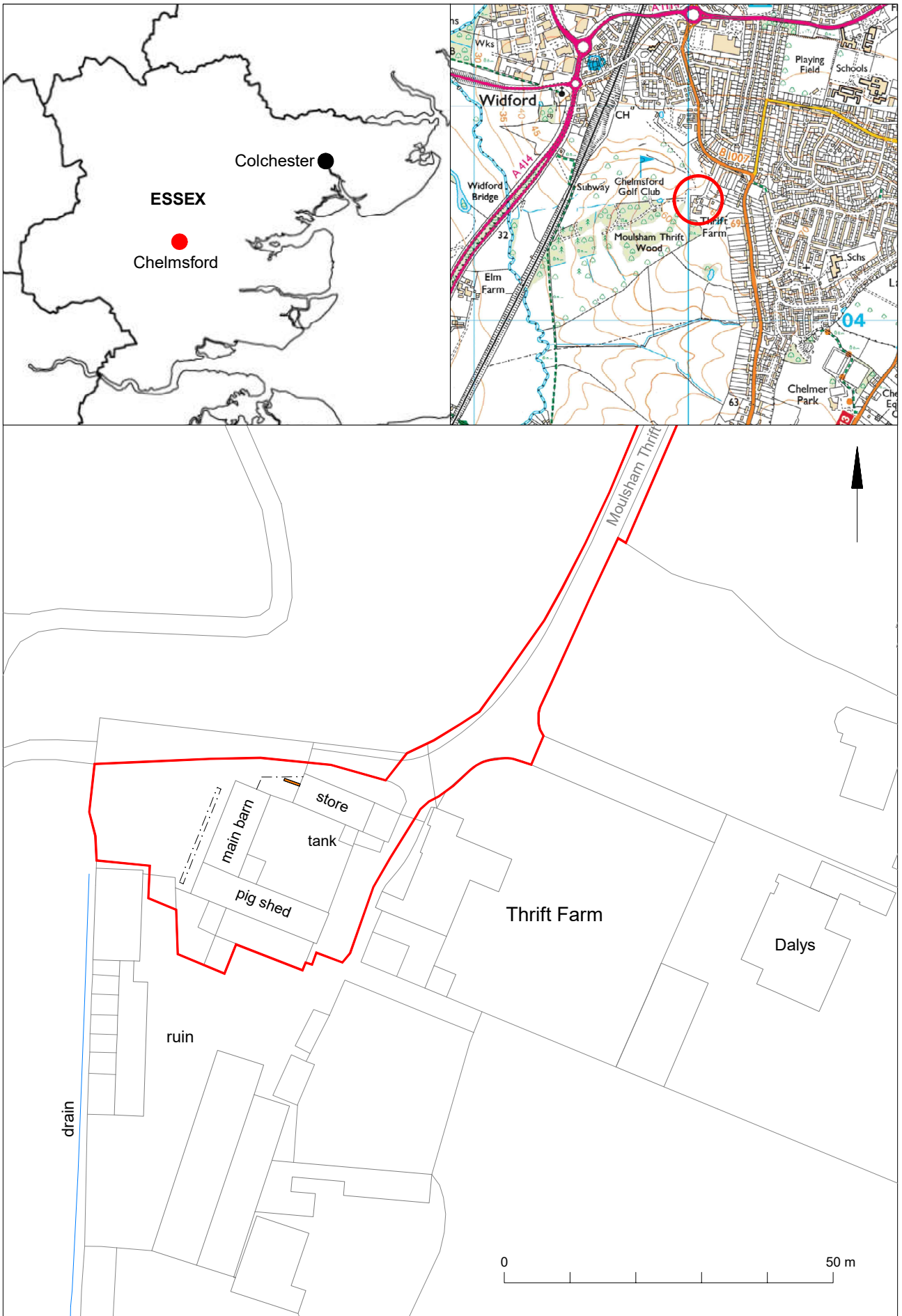


Fig 1 Site location.

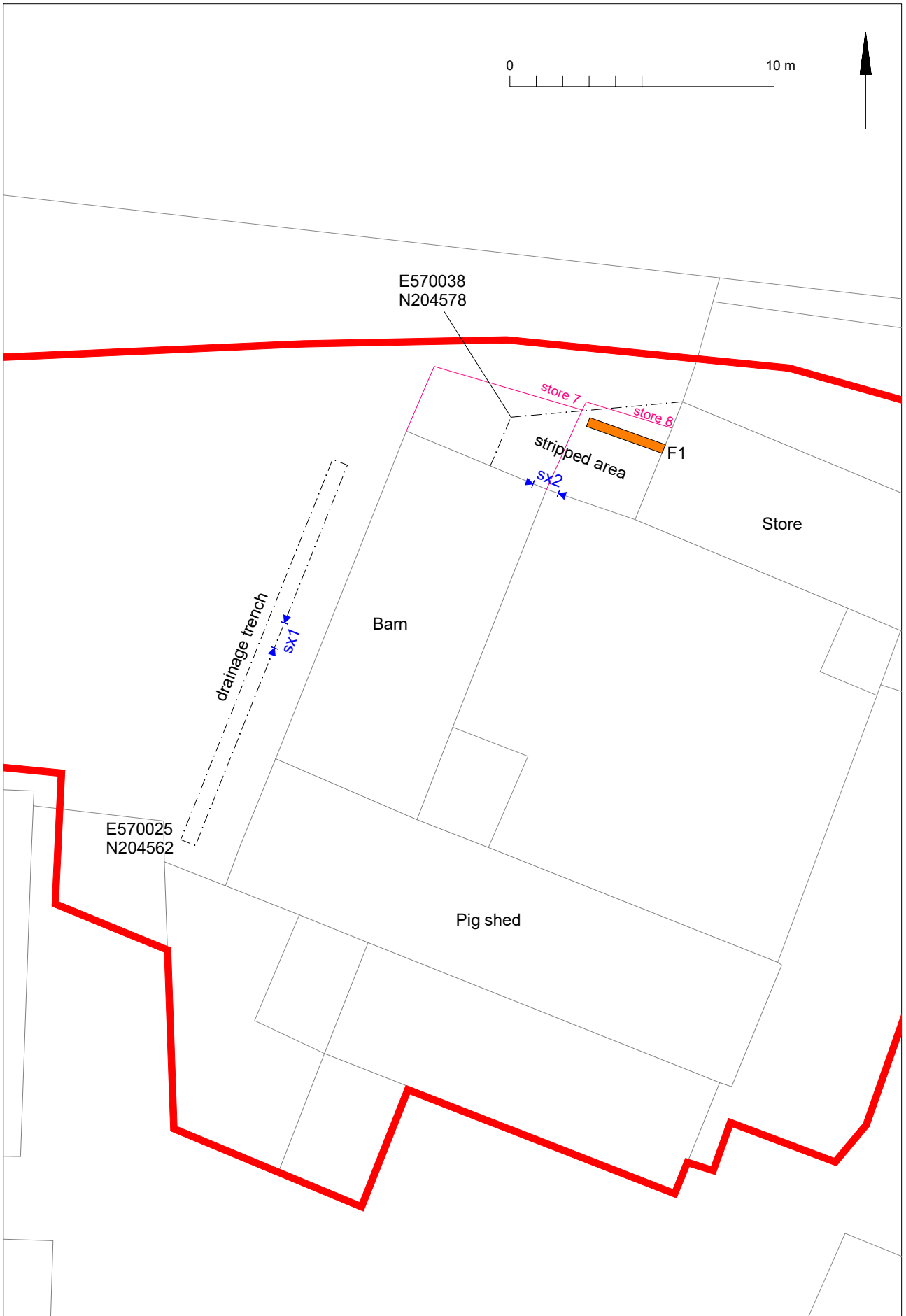


Fig 2 Results

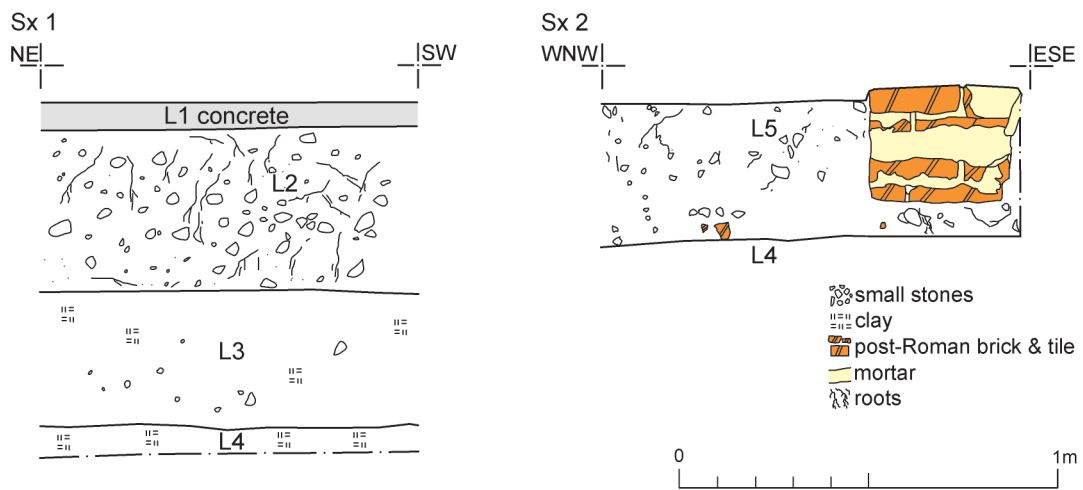


Fig 3 Representative sections.

OASIS Summary for colchest3-508938

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-508938
Project Name	Archaeological monitoring and recording at Thrift Farm, Moulsham Thrift, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8BP: November 2023-June 2024
Sitename	Land adjacent to Thrift Farm, Moulsham Thrift, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8BP
Sitecode	EEX60031
Project Identifier(s)	2022/08h
Activity type	Watching Brief
Planning Id	20/00688/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	28-Nov-2023 - 06-Jun-2024
Location	Land adjacent to Thrift Farm, Moulsham Thrift, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8BP NGR : TL 70050 04567 LL : 51.7140573288102, 0.460088971397802 12 Fig : 570050,204567
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Essex Local Authority District : Chelmsford Parish : Chelmsford, unparished area
Project Methodology	Archaeological monitoring and recording of all groundworks as specified in the project brief and wsi.
Project Results	Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at Thrift Farm, Moulsham Thrift, Chelmsford, Essex during groundworks to convert a barn and single-storey blocks into a dwelling. Thrift Farm was constructed between 1865 and 1867, and gradually extended over the following decades. Current groundworks consisted of a service trench which did not encounter any archaeological remains, and ground reduction over a small area after the demolition of two modern structures. Found underneath one of these structures (Store 8), was a brick wall foundation constructed out of unfrogged bricks. The store had been built to replace a small outbuilding (probably a stable) which was part of the original 1860s farm complex, and the brick wall foundation is likely all that remains of this earlier structure.
Keywords	Building - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Private or public corporation developer
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Chris Lister, Adam Wightman
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - EEX60031
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;