

**An archaeological watching brief at  
St Peter ad Vincula Church,  
Coggeshall, Essex**

**July 2001-June 2002**

**on behalf of  
St Peter ad Vincula  
Parochial Church Council**

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Fig 1 Site location, showing previous archaeological excavations near the church of St Peter ad Vincula; scale 1:2000.

Fig 2 Plan, showing location of burials, finds and one feature from extension area, scale 1:50.

Fig 3 Drawing of south-facing section of part of the northern edge of the extension area, scale 1:10.

Fig 4 Drawing of gravestone F1, facing east; scale 1:7.

## 1 Summary

Observations were made during a watching brief on groundworks for a new extension on the north side of St Peter ad Vincula Church and for new drains dug through the churchyard. Burials dating from the late 17th to the 19th century, some of which had been previously disturbed by a WW2 bomb, were recorded and reburied. The presence of residual Roman pottery and tile reinforces the suggestion that Roman remains, possibly of high-status structures, exist very close by.

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between July 2001 and June 2002 on the topsoil-stripping, ground-reduction and excavation of ground-beam trenches for a new extension as well as a drain-trench at St Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall, Essex. The works were given Faculty by the Bishop of Chelmsford. As a condition of the Faculty, all archaeological work had to be carried out according to a brief from the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor (DAA). A specification based on that brief was agreed with the Essex County Heritage Advice, Management and Promotion (HAMP) group and the DAA.
- 2.2 St Peter ad Vincula Church is located in the centre of Coggeshall, which is 15km south-west of Colchester and 9km east of Braintree, at National Grid Reference or NGR TL 8534 2302 (Fig 1). The new extension is on the north side of the church which was a grassy area, with trees, still in use as a graveyard.
- 2.3 This report follows the standards set out in the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1999).

## 3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 There are a few records of prehistoric settlement at Coggeshall, mainly stray finds spanning the Mesolithic to Iron Age periods. A possible prehistoric focus of occupation was revealed by an evaluation at Barnatt's Yard (Essex Heritage Conservation Record or EHCR 17580), where a number of features of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date were found. Bronze Age features were also observed during excavations at the site of the new St Peter's School in 1984-5 (Clarke 1988). This work also revealed a substantial Roman enclosure whose north and south sides were postulated to pass south of St Peter ad Vincula Church and along East Street respectively. No buildings were discovered, but a large amount of building debris led to suggestions that a large Roman structure might be located approximately 100m south of the church. Finds of Roman building material have been reported previously from this same area (VCH 1963, 89).

Excavations in 1989-93 on 'The Lawns' site west of St Peter's School and due south of the church produced evidence of a robbed-out Roman masonry structure, and the high number of box flue-tiles suggests that it was or included a bath-house with hypocausts (Isserlin 1995).

Anglo-Saxon Coggeshall is poorly understood, although finds of Saxon pottery did come from the ditch fills at The Lawns (Isserlin 1995) and a Saxon finger-ring was found in 1851 (EHCR 8735).

The record of a priest at the time of the Domesday Survey indicates that there was a church in Coggeshall at that time. Its precise location is unknown, but it was probably on the site of the later medieval church of St Peter ad Vincula. Repair work at the church in the 19th century revealed evidence of at least one phase of building before the existing 15th-century structure, and it is at least theoretically possible that one of these phases represents the early Saxo-Norman church.

The church site can be assumed to date from the 12th century, if not earlier. The present structure, built between 1404 and 1426 in the Perpendicular style, is one of very few with the dedication of St Peter ad Vincula. The early medieval settlement

was probably focused around the church, and in the later medieval period the settlement focus shifted downslope to the area of the market-place just north of Stane Street. This shift may have coincided with the granting of a market charter in the year 1256 (ECC Planning 1999, 9).

- 3.2 The church was bombed in WW2 and the tower destroyed. It and the north nave were rebuilt by Dykes Bower. Previous investigations had suggested that the church wall was underpinned in places. The bomb blast caused much disturbance to the ground to the north of the church and, it is said, brought some of the burials nearer to the surface.
- 3.3 CAT carried out an archaeological evaluation in 2000 which consisted of the excavation of one trial-trench through the centre of the extension area (Brooks 2000). Grave cuts were located at between 400mm and 700mm below ground-level; these were sealed by a layer of disturbed soil. A considerable amount of residual Roman material was found during the evaluation.

#### **4 Aims and objectives**

The aim of the watching brief was to determine the location, extent, character, condition and quality of any archaeological remains surviving on the site.

#### **5 Methods**

- 5.1 The fieldwork was carried out by Stephen Benfield, Kate Orr and Karly Weller of CAT between July 2001 and June 2002. For the extension, an area of 10.5m x 9m was stripped and reduced to between 600mm and 850mm below ground-level using a mini-digger with a toothless ditching bucket. Ground-beam trenches of 700mm width were then dug within this area. Their depth was between 400mm and 600mm below this reduced level, ie to up to 1.25m below ground-level. All of this groundworking was monitored. Subsequently a drain-trench was dug around the perimeter of the extension, within the reduced area, using a toothed ditching bucket. It then continued to the south-west across the graveyard and into the modern cemetery area. It was dug to a depth of between 1.4 and 2m below actual ground-level and to a width of between 350mm and 600mm. The digging of the drain-trench was monitored in stages.
- 5.2 A metal detector was used to check the reduced ground area and the spoil.
- 5.3 Individual records of excavated contexts was entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets and are listed in section 6. Registers were compiled of finds which are listed in the appendices. All the human bones were boxed and handed over to the incumbent for reburial within the churchyard. Other finds were washed, weighed, marked with the site code and context, and bagged.
- 5.4 Section drawings of the reduced ground-levels and the ground-beam trenches were made, one of which has been reproduced as Figure 3.
- 5.5 General shots (Plates 1 and 2) and shots of burials were taken on 35mm film.
- 5.6 A record of the location of the site excavations and position of burials and finds was made (Fig 2).

#### **6 Results**

##### **6.1 The ground-reduction stage**

###### **6.1.1 Soil profile (Fig 3)**

On the southern side of the site, near the church, ie to the south of the modern drains, 200mm of dark brown loam topsoil (Layer or L1), containing modern brick, overlaid a sandy layer (L2) which was 100mm thick. L2 contained tile, brick, oystershells, human bone, and Roman flue tile and grey ware pottery. Under this was a thin (50mm thick) layer of light brown clay containing unfroged small bricks and tile (L3). Adjacent to L3 was a light brown clay loam layer with flint, modern brick,

human bone, peg-tile and other modern debris from the rebuilding of the church (see section 3.2). Drains running east to west and a manhole were cut through this layer at 500mm below ground-level. Apart from the modern drains, which run from east to west, the only feature on the southern side was a prepared mortar/stone surface jutting against the church door and sealed by L2; this is the Feature or F3 recorded during the 2000 evaluation (Brooks 2000).

To the north of the drains, the same dark loam topsoil (L1) containing some brick, tree roots and areas of burning overlaid L4, a disturbed dark brown loam layer of between 50 and 100mm thickness with abundant brick, mortar and stones. Under this was up to one metre of disturbed grey brown loam (L6) with clay patches, containing most of the human bone as well as flint, peg-tile, coffin furniture, mortar flecks, and Roman tile and *tesserae* (Fig 3). The 2000 evaluation report concluded that this layer must have been redeposited over the WW2 bomb crater to restore the original ground-level (Brooks 2000). Natural ground was not reached during groundworks for the extension.

### 6.1.2 Features and burials (Fig 2)

#### Burial 1

Disarticulated human remains were exposed at the north-eastern edge of the extension area. Most of a fragmented skull was found at 300-400mm below ground-level, within L6. Leg bones were also protruding from the section plus a pelvis and the base of a spine. The presence of so many leg bones indicates that more than one individual was represented. The fact that the bones were so shallow and mixed up suggests that they had been reburied, perhaps after the WW2 bomb blast. However, a metal plate above the skull and one nail provides evidence for a coffin.

#### Gravestone F1 (Fig 4)

The eastern edge of the reduced area exposed an upright gravestone in three pieces, dated 1760. This was located 1.5m south of Burial 1 and was standing upright, just below the ground surface. A holly bush had grown round the gravestone, which was 700mm wide and 770mm high. The top of the gravestone was missing. This gravestone appears to be on the same east-west alignment as two others in the graveyard which would indicate that it was found *in situ*. Although bones were found on either side of the gravestone (Burials 2 and 4), they were considered to be too shallow to belong to the gravestone. Its burial may well be below the limit of the excavation.

#### Burial 2

Next to the gravestone, to its west, were more fragments of disarticulated human bone, 300-400mm below ground-level, within L6. These were above the base of the gravestone and are therefore not thought to belong to it. A nearly complete human skull was found in the digger bucket and may have come from this area. Tile and a small lump of coke were found near this burial.

#### Burial 3

The only articulated burial found during the ground-reduction stage was that of an infant. This was in the southern central part of the reduced area, aligned east to west. The burial was shallow, at 400mm below ground-level. Although not complete, what was remaining was *in situ*; ie most vertebrae, part of the pelvis, part of the scapula, skull fragments, some ribs, two femurs, a humerus, tibia and fibula, some finger and toe bones, and five iron nails. The nails indicate that the infant was buried in a coffin. One sherd of post-medieval pottery, one sherd of Roman pottery and some Roman tile were near the infant burial.

#### Burial 4

Once the gravestone had been removed, the area of ground to be reduced was extended to the east. Next to the gravestone to the east, a course of three unfrogged red bricks with some paler bricks above was exposed. Mixed in with the soil were skull fragments and a leg bone. These may represent the remains of a disturbed brick-lined grave. The remains were found at approximately 650mm below ground-level, ie above the base of the headstone.

### **Burial 5**

The almost complete skull of a child, in two pieces, was found along the western baulk, 2.4m north of the church. It was located in a disturbed area under the brickwork for the old manhole, 500-700mm below ground-level, within L6.

### **Burial 6**

Two pieces of an adult skull and a lower jawbone were found further north, along the western baulk at 850mm below ground-level, within L6.

### **Burial 7**

Part of another child's skull was found further north along the western baulk at 500mm below ground-level, within L6.

### **Burial 8**

Near Burial 7, a large spread of skull fragments and other human bones was retrieved from 400mm below ground-level, within L6. These bones represent several individuals. Coffin handles were also retrieved.

### **Elsewhere**

Over the rest of the site, disarticulated human remains were prevalent, particularly in the west where the WW2 bomb had landed. Most were found within L6, but some were within upper layers. As much of the bone as possible was collected for later reburial within the churchyard, and this amounted to three regular-sized museum boxes and two smaller boxes.

None of the bones, except for Burial 3, were *in situ* burials. The WW2 bomb blast and the subsequent reburial of the remains accounts for the shallow depth of the burials and their disarticulation. Even Burial 3 had clearly been subjected to some disturbance, as it was not complete and some Roman material had become mixed in with the remains.

## **6.1.3 Finds**

The main finds from the ground-reduction, except for human bone, consisted of modern material from the bombed church, grave furniture such as nails and coffin handles, one piece of post-medieval pottery, and Roman pottery and tile.

## **6.2 Ground-beam trenches**

### **6.2.1 Soil profile**

Over most of the site, including the area around the church, a disturbed dark grey brown loam (L6) continued [down] to the base of the trenches, containing abundant human bone, small stones, brick fragments, mortar flecks, and some oystershells. In the northern area, this layer was interspersed with patches of orange brown clay (L7; Fig 3).

### **6.2.2 Features and burials**

Twenty more burials were found in L6, mostly disarticulated. These burials were found in all the trenches and included several skulls. Some were under other burials found during the ground-reduction stage and may be part of the same group. A skull and vertebra (find no 30) were observed in the eastern section of the eastern ground-beam trench and may be the burial marked by the gravestone F1. As before, all human remains were immediately handed over for reburial and several boxfuls were collected. No other features were recorded.

### **6.2.3 Finds**

Interspersed with the human bone was Roman pottery, Roman tile, *tesserae*, one piece of post-medieval pottery, and post-medieval peg-tile, coffin handles and back-plates, hinges, nails, a key, glass and oystershells.

## **6.3 Drain-trenches (Fig 1)**

A narrow trench was dug by machine around the perimeter of the extension, a further 500-600mm below the reduced ground-level. It then continued to the south-west through the graveyard into the new cemetery area. Another trench was dug through the pathway to join up with this trench. The depth of the drain-trenches here was between 1.4m and 2m below actual ground-level and their width was 400-600mm. A dark brown loamy topsoil with peg-tile (L1) merged into a lighter brown

clay with chalk flecks (L8). The soil profile showed ground-disturbance in the form of peg-tile and fragments of human bone to between 1.6m and 1.8m below ground-level with two clear grave cuts showing. The course of one of the trenches had to be redirected to avoid brick tombs in the south-west.

Seven visits were made between the 8th and 10th June 2002 as the trench was dug in stages. Four boxfuls of loose bones were picked off the spoil heaps and handed over for reburial. Modern brick and tile was noted but not retrieved. Nothing of archaeological significance was observed.

#### **6.4 The reburial of the human bone (Fig 1)**

A hole approximately 1.2m deep was dug outside the church at its eastern end to re-bury the human bone. More human bone was encountered. The new grave was marked with a stone slab and an old headstone from the graveyard.

## **7 Discussion**

- 7.1** The burials in the churchyard which were exposed by the groundworks were recorded. No human bone was analysed as it was handed over immediately for reburial, and therefore it is not possible here to state the age or many other details of the individuals buried. Both adult and child remains were found including those of one infant. A possible unmarked brick-lined grave was exposed in the extension area and several definite unmarked brick-lined graves along the line of the drain-trench.
- 7.2** Many of the burials occurred 300-400mm below ground-level, which is not as deep as they would have been buried originally. Most of the bones were disarticulated. This can be explained by the bomb dropped on the church in WW2, which would have disturbed the burials and brought them closer to the surface. The infant skeleton (Burial 3) appeared to be less disturbed than most of the other burials, although found at the same depth; this may be explained by the fact that infants were often buried in shallow graves.
- 7.3** The burials found were unmarked but they may have been marked originally and the gravestones removed at a later date, possibly due to WW2 bomb damage or subsequent reparation work. The inhumations were placed in coffins judging from the iron coffin furniture.
- 7.4** The date of the burials could range from the late 17th century to the 19th century. The gravestone F1 is dated 1760. The only two pieces of pottery other than Roman date to the 17th to 18th century, plus two pieces of medieval or post-medieval peg-tile. The coffin furniture is similar to that found at St Giles' church in Colchester which was dated to the second half of the 17th century to the early 19th century (see Appendix C).
- 7.5** Residual Roman flue tile and roof-tile plus *tesserae* and pottery were common finds during the watching brief, in the extension area. This corresponds with what was found at the St Peter's School and The Lawns excavations, ie evidence of a nearby high-status Roman building (see section 3). The pottery is likely to be in close proximity to its original point of deposition and indicates a relatively high state of Romanisation (see Appendix 1).

## **8 Archive deposition**

A copy of this report and the full archive will be deposited with Braintree Museum under accession code BRNTM 2001.10 within two months of completion of final publication report on the project, and confirmed to the ECC HAMP group. All requirements for archive storage will follow the guidelines required by Braintree Museum. The human remains will not form part of the archive, as they have been reburied in accordance with the law.

## 9 Acknowledgements

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Richard Havis, Archaeological Officer for HAMP group of Essex County Council  
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## 11 Glossary

BRNTM	Braintree Museum
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
ECC	Essex County Council
EHCR	Essex Heritage Conservation Record
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
HAMP	Heritage Advice Management and Promotion group
intrusive	early material out of place in a later context (eg a Coke bottle in a Roman pit)
medieval	from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
NGR	National Grid Reference
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
post-medieval	after Henry VIII and up to Victorian
residual	an earlier object out of place in a later context (eg a Roman coin in a Victorian pit)
Roman	period from AD 43 to around AD 430
Anglo-Saxon	after Roman and up to AD 1066
septaria	local mudstone used as building stone by Romans
tessera	Roman floor cube (plain mosaic)
U/S	unstratified (no context)



Kate Orr, September 2002

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## Appendix A: the Roman pottery

by Stephen Benfield of CAT

There was approximately 0.4kg of Roman pottery from the 2002 watching brief (411g). Six of the sherds (54g) are from fine ware vessels which consist of imported plain samian of probable Central and possibly East Gaulish origin, and colour-coat wares which are probably Colchester products. The coarse wares are dominated by reduced grey wares of indeterminate though certainly local origin. Amongst these are a few sherds from vessels in black-burnished ware forms, some of which may be Colchester black-burnished ware type 2 products, and there is one mortaria sherd which is probably also a Colchester product. The edges of one of the grey ware sherds (finds group number 43) have been deliberately rounded off, and though it is slightly irregular in shape this sherd almost certainly represents a pottery counter. The most closely-dated vessels are mostly confined to the fine wares which are of AD 2nd- to mid 3rd-century date (though the white-slipped or painted vessel could be later). All of the datable coarse ware vessels, which are the black-burnished ware types, are of early to mid 2nd-century AD date or later, though one bowl can be more closely dated to the early to mid 2nd-mid 3rd century AD. Overall the indications are that the majority of the Roman pottery recovered is probably of 2nd- to 3rd-century AD date. Though it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from such a small unstratified group of pottery, the sherd sizes and condition indicate close proximity to their original point of disposal, that is close to or within the settlement area from which they originated, and the high incidence of fine ware, especially samian (with four different vessels represented), indicates reasonably high status or a high level of Romanisation.

**Table 1 Roman pottery by context.**

Find no	Context	Fabric	Description/comments/ date	Sherds	Weight in g
1	L2	GX	Grey ware sherd	1	5
2	L6	?CG	Samian form 33 rim (date range 1st-2nd century, probably 2nd century AD)	1	4
8	L6, Burial 3	DJ	Oxidised ware body sherd	1	4
10	L6	CG/EG	Samian form 18/31 rim (earlier 2nd century AD), body sherd from second vessel form 18/31 (earlier 2nd century AD)	2	37
10	L6	GX	Small group of sherds, includes rim from cam 279 type jar (2nd century+ AD) and part of bowl with chamfered base (2nd century+ AD)	10	82
16	L6	GX	Rim from Cam 37A (earlier 2nd-late 2nd or early 3rd century AD)	2	39
16	L6	MQ	Oxidised rim sherd with traces of white slip or paint	1	7
21	L6	GX	Rim sherd of hook rim jar Cam 270B (pre-conquest , 2nd-3rd century AD)	1	25
35	L6	HZ	Body sherd	1	67
38	L6	GX	One sherd possibly black-burnished ware (BB) type form, rather a micaceous fabric, possibly Colchester fabric group WA (probably 2nd century+ AD)	4	29
40	L6	CG	Samian sherd (2nd century AD)	1	2
40	L6	?GB	Two sherds from probable BB ware or BB type from (2nd century+ AD)	2	10
43	L6	GX	One sherd is probably a pottery counter, possibly broken along one edge	3	35
45	L6	GX		1	12
47	L6	CZ	Body sherd (early-mid 2nd to mid 3rd century AD)	1	4
47	L6	GX		2	15
51	L6	TZ	White ware mortaria body sherd	1	30
51	L6	GX		1	4

Roman fabric codes after Symonds & Wade 1999.

*Fine wares*

samian: CG Central Gaulish samian, EG East Gaulish samian

CZ Later Colchester and other red colour-coat wares

MQ white slipped fine wares and parchment wares

*Coarse wares*

TZ Colchester mortaria and mortaria imported from the Continent

GB black-burnished ware type 2

DJ coarse oxidised and related wares

GX other coarse wares principally locally-produced grey wares

HZ large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares

Samian form numbers refer to Dragendorff form types, Cam numbers refer to the Camulodunum Roman pottery form type series (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull 1958). All pottery has been retained as part of the archive.

## Appendix B: list of other finds by context

All human bone was handed over for reburial. A selection of Roman tile and brick and coffin furniture was retained for the archive. The possible flint flake was also retained. The rest of the finds (except for pottery) were discarded.

**Table 2 Other finds by context.**

Find no	Context	Description	Weight in g	Date
<i>Ground-reduction stage</i>				
1	L2, south side	human bone scatter		post-medieval or modern
1	L2, south side	oystershells	51	undated
1	L2, south side	tile inc combed tile	486	Roman
2	U/S	roof-tile and box flue tile	1172	Roman
2	U/S	iron ring or washer	26	post-medieval or modern
3	L3	tile	380	Roman
4	L6	human bone scatter		post-medieval or modern
4	L6	tile inc roof-tile	597	Roman
5	L6, west side	human bone scatter		post-medieval or modern
6	L6, Burial 1	disarticulated human bone inc skull leg bones, pelvis and some vertebrae		post-medieval or modern
7	L6, Burial 2	disarticulated human bone inc a skull		post-medieval or modern
7	L6, Burial 2	small lump of coke or slag-like substance, slightly magnetic	9	post-medieval or modern
7	L6 with Burial 2	tile	155	Roman
8	L6, Burial 3	articulated human bone (infant)		post-medieval or modern
8	L6 with Burial 3	5 Fe nails	24	post-medieval or modern
8	L6 with Burial 3	post-medieval red earthenware (Fabric 40; CAR7, 189) pottery fragment	34	17th-18th century
9	L6, Burial 4	disarticulated human bone - skull fragments and a leg bone		post-medieval or modern

10	L6	Fe coffin handle, back-plate and nail	341	post-medieval or modern
10	L6	Roman roof-tile inc burnt roof-tile	1263	Roman
10	L6	oyster	10	undated
53	L6, Burial 5	human bone - child's skull		post-medieval or modern
54	L6, Burial 6	human bone - adult skull		post-medieval or modern
55	L6, Burial 7	human bone - child's skull		post-medieval or modern
56	L6, Burial 8	scatter of human bone inc skull fragments		post-medieval or modern
<i>Ground-beam trenches</i>				
11	L6, Burial 11	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
12	L6, Burial 12	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
13	L6, Burial 13	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
14	L6, Burial 14	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
15	L6, Burial 15	human bone		post-medieval or modern
16	L6	brick and tile	167	Roman
17	L6	Fe coffin handles	470	post-medieval or modern
18	L6	brick	139	Roman
18	L6	oyster	8	undated
18	L6	Fe coffin handle	?	post-medieval or modern
20	L6, Burial 20	disarticulated human bone inc infant skull		post-medieval or modern
21	L6	brick	270	Roman
21	L6	oystershells	24	undated
22	L6, Burial 22	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
23	L6, Burial 23	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
24	L6,	<i>opus signinum</i> mortar	184	Roman
24	L6	brick and roof-tile	590	Roman
25	L6	brick and tile fragments	320	Roman
25	L6	Fe coffin handle, back-plate and nail	400	post-medieval or modern
26	L6, Burial 26	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
27	L6, Burial 27	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
28	L6	Fe coffin handle	28	post-medieval or modern
28	L6	brick	143	Roman
29	L6	4 Fe nails	83	post-medieval or modern
30	L6, Burial 30	human bone, articulated burial including skull and neck vertebra		post-medieval or modern
31	L6	Fe coffin lock-plate and two nails	57	post-medieval or modern
31	L6	brick	207	Roman
31	L6	slate	41	
32	L6, with Burial 33	shank of a copper-alloy dress pin	1	post-medieval or modern?
33	L6, Burial 33	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
34	L6, Burial 34	disarticulated human bone inc a skull		post-medieval or modern
35	L6	Fe coffin handles and back-plates	1328	post-medieval or modern
35	L6	brick and tile inc roof-tile and burnt brick	1735	Roman
35	L6	<i>opus signinum</i> mortar	102	Roman

36	L6	copper-alloy object	1	undated
37	L6, Burial 37	human bone, partially articulated inc pelvis and and leg bones		post-medieval or modern
38	L6	post-medieval red earthenware (Fabric 40; CAR 7, 189) pottery fragment	10	17th-18th century
38	L6	brick and tile, inc roof-tile and re-used box flue tile and burnt brick	1642	Roman
38	L6	possible flint flake	3	undated
38	L6	oystershells	38	undated
38	L6	Fe coffin handles	630	post-medieval or modern
39	L6, Burial 39	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
40	L6	oystershells	90	undated
40	L6	brick and tile	960	Roman
40	L6	Fe coffin handles and back-plates	762	post-medieval or modern
41	L6	Fe key	49	post-medieval or modern
42	L6, Burial 42	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
43	L6	brick and roof-tile	760	Roman
44	L6, Burial 44	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
45	L6	brick and tile	265	Roman
46	L6	piece of green glass, possibly from a burial with glass chippings	1	modern
47	L6	brick and roof-tile	2108	Roman
47	L6	peg-tile	93	post-medieval
47	L6	Fe coffin back-plate, nail	154	post-medieval or modern
48	L6, Burial 48	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
49	L6, Burial 49	human bone, crushed skull		post-medieval or modern
50	L6, Burial 50	disarticulated human bone		post-medieval or modern
51	L6	iron bar fragment, probably a nail or bolt	69	post-medieval or modern
51	L6	tile fragments and <i>tesserae</i>	108	Roman
52	L6	glass	6	modern

## Appendix C: the metal work and other coffin material

by Nina Crummy

### CG15

The coffin-fittings consist primarily of drop-handles, both angular and curved. The former are associated with back-plates, the latter not. Similar angular and curved handles were found at St Giles's Church, Colchester, though the latter were decorated and the Coggeshall examples appear to be plain. The St Giles's coffin-fittings were dated to a period running from the second half of the 17th century into the early 19th (CAR 5, 86).

### Copper-alloy

(32). Shank of a small copper-alloy dress pin. Length 14 mm.

## Iron

- (2). Unstratified. Flat wide iron ring or washer. Diameter 36 mm.
- (8). Five iron nail shank fragments. Lengths 44, 50, 25, 26, and 22 mm.
- (10) L4.
- 1) Iron back-plate, probably from the drop-handle no 2, more or less ansate in shape, with stumps of the nails for attachment. See (38) and (40). Length 206 mm.
  - 2) Iron angular drop-handle, as *CAR 5*, fig 93, 3279. Length of main section 113 mm.
  - 3) Fragment of an iron nail shank. Length 60 mm.
- (17). Unstratified.
- 1) Iron angular drop-handle, as *CAR 5*, fig 93, 3279, with part of the back-plate. Length of straight section 104 mm.
  - 2) Iron angular drop-handle, as 1, corroded onto its back-plate, which is in two pieces and bent at one end. Maximum length of whole item 208 mm.
  - 3) Curved plain iron drop-handle, as (28). Length 127 mm.
- (18). Fragment of a curved iron drop-handle, with one terminal surviving, and part of the nail or split-pin for attaching it *in situ*. In form similar to *CAR 5*, fig 93, 3273, and therefore possibly decorated, though see (28), a plain curved example. Length 105 mm.
- (25).
- 1) Iron angular drop-handle, as *CAR 5*, fig 93, 3279, corroded onto its back-plate, which is partly missing. Also a fragment probably from the same plate. Length of whole item 161 mm.
  - 2) Curved iron drop-handle, probably plain. Length 132 mm.
  - 3) Iron nail, length 52 mm.
- (28). Curved iron drop-handle, with fragments of the attachment nails in the terminals. Length 93 mm.
- (29). Four iron nail shank fragments, one embedded in mineral-replaced wood, and one nail. Lengths 48, 31, 44, 47, and 57 mm.
- (31).
- 1) Subsquares iron lock-plate or fragment of a coffin-fitting, with a central perforation. There is mineral-replaced wood at the top of one face. Maximum dimensions 57 by 58 mm.
  - 2) Fragments of two nail shanks. Lengths 38 and 43 mm.
- (35).
- 1) Iron angular drop-handle, as *CAR 5*, fig 93, 3279, corroded onto its back-plate, which is partly missing. Length of whole item 175 mm.
  - 2) Fragment of a back-plate with nail for attachment. Maximum dimensions 45 by 89 mm.
  - 3) Fragment of an angular drop-handle. Length of straight section 98 mm.
  - 4) Nail fragment, length 40 mm.
- (38).
- 1) Fragment of a more or less ansate iron back-plate, as (10) and (40). Length 187 mm.
  - 2) Fragment of an angular iron drop-handle and part of its back-plate, as (25). Length 119 mm.
  - 3-4). Curved plain iron drop-handles, Lengths 138 and 142 mm. One may be decorated.
  - 5). Iron nail, length 65 mm.
  - 6) Iron nail shank fragment, length 46 mm.
- (40).
- 1) Iron angular drop-handle, as *CAR 5*, fig 93, 3279, corroded onto its back-plate, which is partly missing. Length of whole item 165 mm.

- 2) Similar drop-handle, corroded onto a fragment of a more or less ansate-shaped back-plate, as (10) and (38). Surviving length 163 mm.
  - 3) Fragment of back-plate, with nail for attachment. Maximum dimensions 77 by 64 mm.
  - 4-5). Two curved drop-handles, as *CAR 5*, fig 93, 3273. Corroded, possibly decorated. Lengths 119 and 130 mm.
- (47).
- 1) Fragment of iron coffin-fitting, probably the back-plate for a handle, with aprt of a nail for attachment. Maximum dimensions 60 by 60 mm.
  - 2) Iron sheet fragment, probably part of 1. Maximum dimensions 87 by 27 mm.
  - 3) Iron nail, length 45 mm.
- (51). Iron bar fragment, probably a stout nail or bolt, or perhaps the bar of a drop-handle. Length 100 mm.

#### **Other material**

The majority of these pieces are probably from decayed and/or burnt coffins.

- (7). Burial 2. Small lump of coke- or slag-like substance, slightly magnetic. Weight 9 g.
- (25). Lump of coke- or slag-like material, slightly magnetic. Weight 156 g.
- (35). Two large lumps of a coke- or slag-like substance, Weight 885 g.
- (40). Fragment of black ligneous substance, brittle, and breaking to show a glassy surface. Probably debris from a wood fire. Weight 19 g.
- (47). Two fragments of a coke- or slag-like material, with iron sheet embedded within it. Weight 97 g.



**Plate 1** General shot of site during ground-reduction, looking east.



**Plate 2** General shot of site after ground-reduction, looking west.



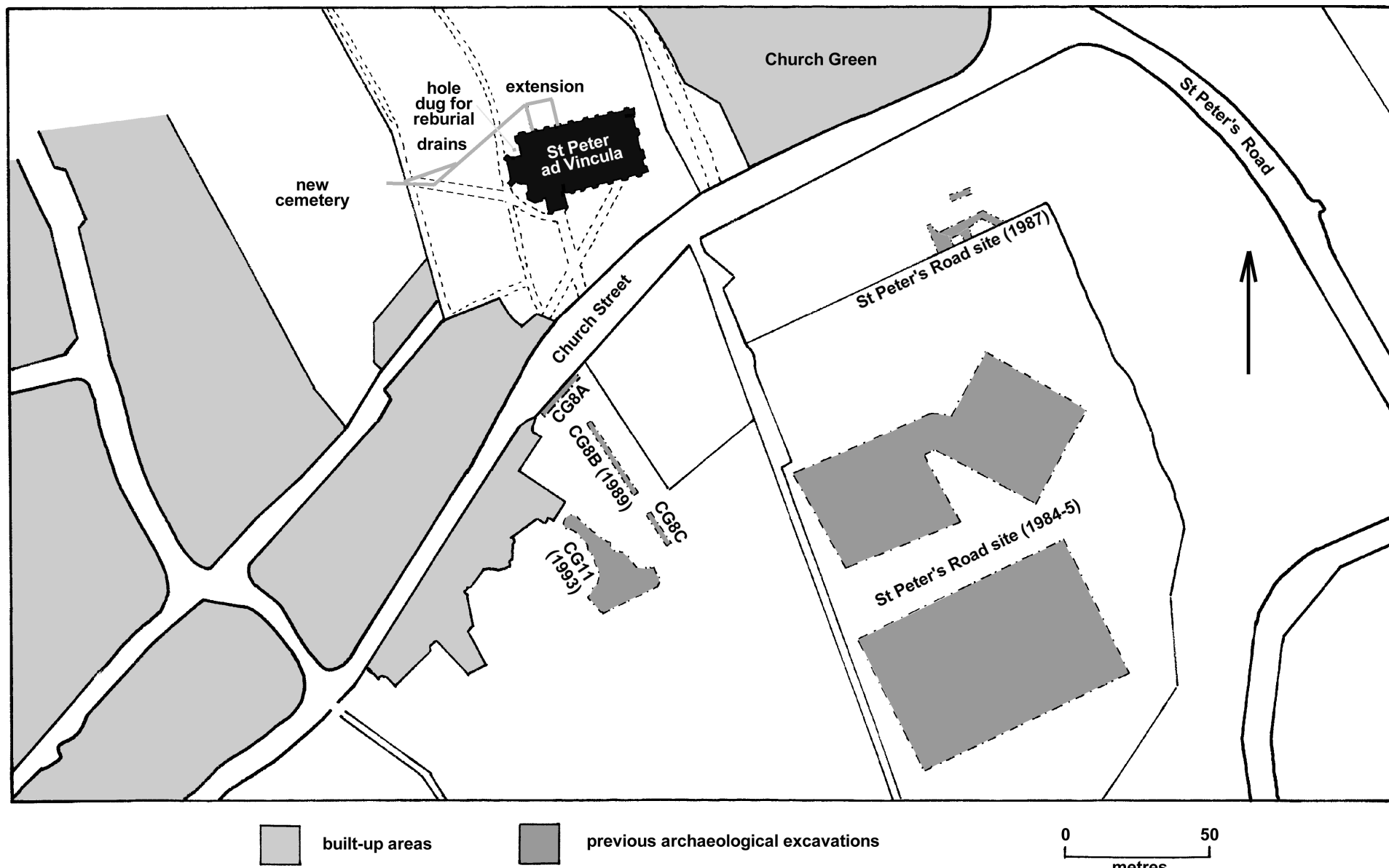


Fig 1 Site location, showing previous excavations near the church of St Peter ad Vincula; scale 1:2000. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 10039294.

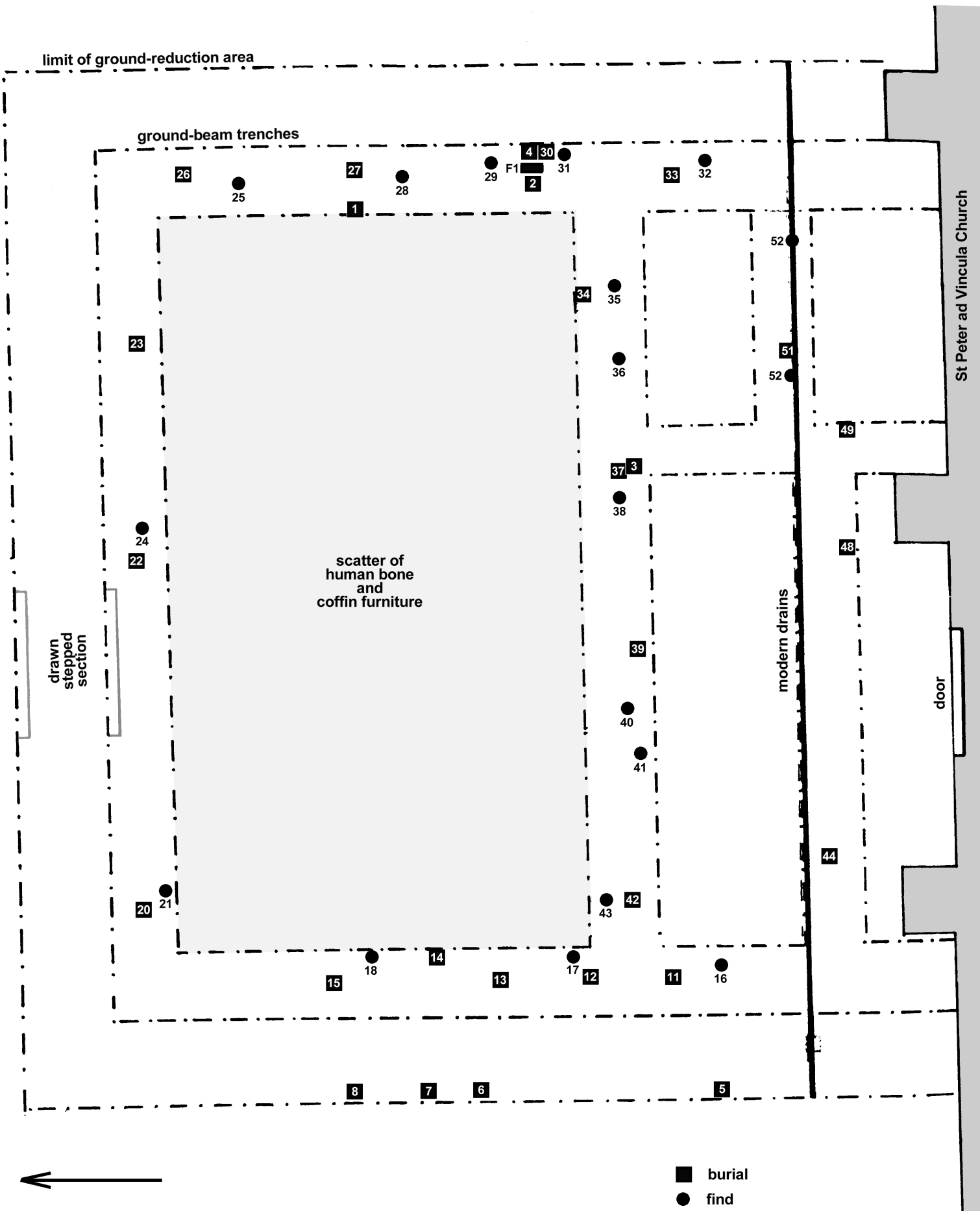


Fig 2 Plan, showing location of burials, finds and one feature from extension area; scale 1:50.

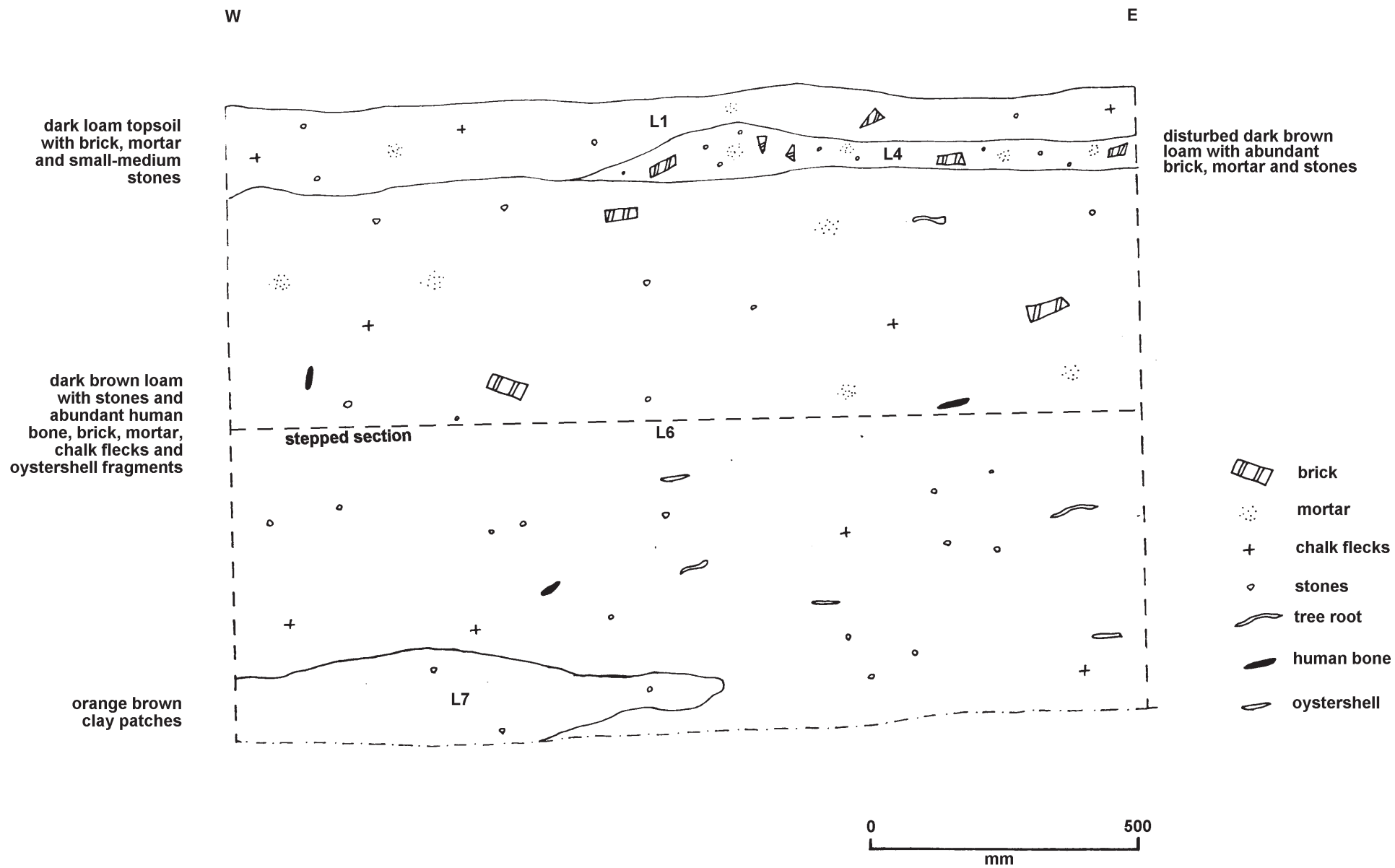


Fig 3 Drawing of south-facing section of part of the northern edge of the extension area, scale 1:10.

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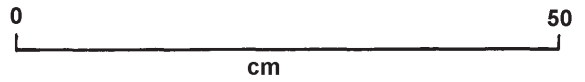
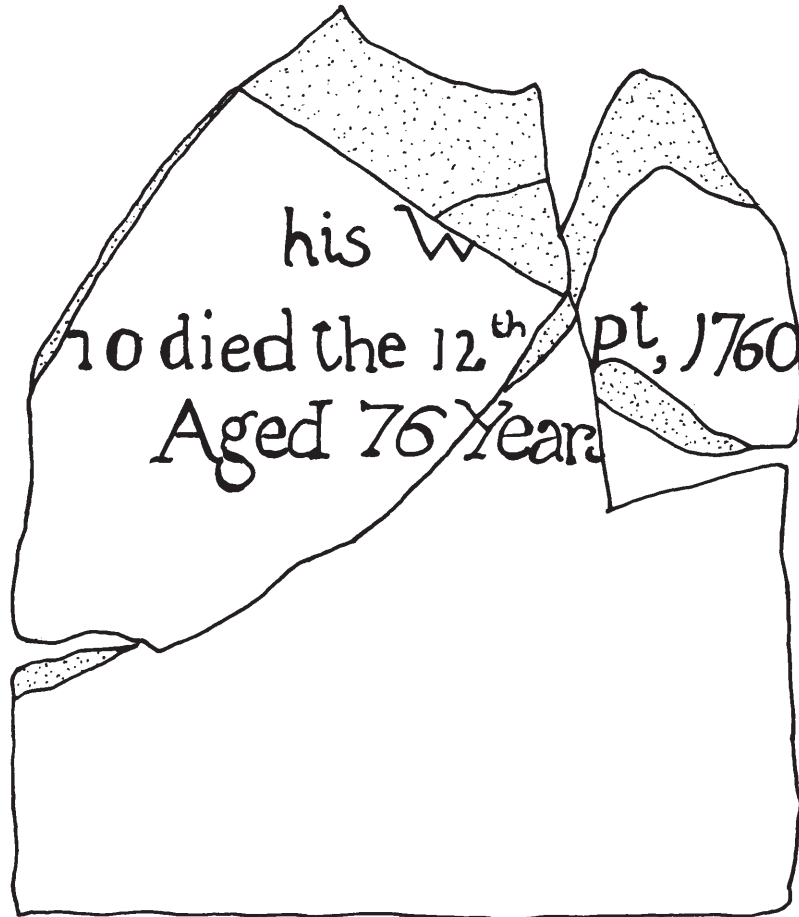


Fig 4 Drawing of gravestone F1, facing east, scale 1:7.

**Essex Heritage Conservation Record/  
Essex Archaeology and History**

**Summary sheet**

<b>Site name/address:</b> St Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Coggeshall	<b>District:</b> Braintree
<b>NGR:</b> TL 8534 2302	<b>Site code:</b> CG15
<b>Type of work:</b> Watching brief	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> July 2001-June 2002	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 10.5m x 9m plus drain-trenches
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Braintree Museum	<b>Funding source:</b> St Peter ad Vincula Parochial Church Council
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHCR nos:</b> 17580, 8735
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 151 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Roman, post-medieval and modern	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>            Observations were made during groundworks for a new extension on the north side of St Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall, Essex. Burials dating from the late 17th to 19th centuries, which had been previously been disturbed by a WW2 bomb, were recorded and reburied. The presence of residual Roman pottery and tile reinforces the suggestion that Roman remains exist very close to the church.</p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> CAT Report 76	
<b>Author of summary:</b> Kate Orr	<b>Date of summary:</b> September 2002