

# An archaeological evaluation at 11 Oaks Drive, Colchester, Essex

September 2002

on behalf of  
**Mr Ahmet**

CAT project code: 02/9a  
Museum accession code: 2002.168  
NGR: TL 98685 25107



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**CAT Report 209**  
September 2002

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EHCR summary sheet

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## 1 Summary

*A single trial trench was excavated in the garden of 11 Oaks Drive which is within the scheduled monument area of Sheepen. The excavations did not expose any features or finds of archaeological significance. There was evidence of a large-scale dumping of sand, which was possibly left over from the building of the house in the 1970s or was brought in deliberately to raise the level of the garden.*

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological evaluation at 11 Oaks Drive, Colchester, Essex. The site lies 1km west of the town centre on the northern side of Lexden Road, at National Grid Reference TL 98685 25107. The trench was excavated in the rear garden of the house, which is on a north-facing slope, the bottom of which is 800mm higher than the patio level of the existing conservatory (fig 2). There is a small grass-covered earth mound in the south western corner of the garden.
- 2.2 Proposed work is the demolition of the existing conservatory to the rear of the property, and the construction of a new 6.5m x 5m conservatory. The project was given consent under planning application no F/COL/02/1244 with a condition for a watching brief. As the property lies within the curtilage of a scheduled ancient monument, scheduled monument consent was given with a similar condition attached. However extensive groundworks to reduce the garden to the level of the patio have been disclosed and English Heritage have now advised that an archaeological evaluation is required.
- 2.3 A single trial trench was excavated by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the 16th and 17th of September 2002.
- 2.4 All fieldwork was done in accordance with a specification agreed with the Archaeology Officer of Colchester Borough Council (CBCAO) and Deborah Priddy of English Heritage.
- 2.5 This report follows the standards set out in the Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1999, updated 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996, updated 2002), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological evaluation* (1999).

## 3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The site lies just within the scheduled ancient monument of Sheepen, a late Iron Age settlement which was continued in use in the years after the Roman conquest (Scheduled Ancient Monument no 46). Extensive excavations in the 1930s and smaller-scale work in 1970 and later have produced evidence of workshops engaged in a range of industrial activities including metal-working, enameling, pottery-making and leatherworking in the areas to the west of the site (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Niblett 1985).
- 3.2 Pottery and tile-making took place in the area as is clear from the numerous kilns found in Oaks Drive. Earlier discoveries can be found in Hull 1958. In 1973 three Roman kilns were found under Oaks Drive when workmen were laying the road. (Essex Heritage Conservation Record no 12534: *CAR 6*, 338-41). A Roman kiln and road were recorded at 7 Oaks Drive (Urban Archaeological Database nos 3074 and 3079).
- 3.3 The site also lies within the Western Cemetery of the Roman town.

## 4 Aim

The evaluation was designed to locate, identify and assess the quality of surviving archaeological remains prior to a decision being taken on the preservation or otherwise of deposits and the need for further work and/or mitigation.

## **5 Methods**

- 5.1 The trench was excavated to a width of between 1.2m and 1.5m and a length of 4.7m, using a mini-digger with a toothless ditching bucket. It was dug on an east to west alignment and was placed to investigate the mound in the south-west corner of the garden (fig 2).
- 5.2 Individual records of layers were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.3 A section drawing of layers was made at a scale of 1:10. A plan of the trench was made at 1:20
- 5.4 Finds were registered on CAT record sheets and assigned find numbers according to context. Finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context.
- 5.5 Colour photographs of the trench were taken with a digital camera and a slide camera.
- 5.6 The spoil heap was metal detected for finds.

## **6 Results (figs 2 and 3)**

- 6.1 The trench was dug so that the western side cut through the mound referred to in sections 2 and 5, at 34.51m OD. Ground level at the eastern end of the trench was 34.13m OD. Between 200mm and 250mm of turf and grey brown sandy loam topsoil was stripped off (L1). Modern brick and pottery was present in the topsoil as well as a sherd of Roman pottery. Below topsoil was a band of coarse greyish yellow sand with abundant small angular and rounded stones and shingle (L2). This was seen to be the layer which formed the mound as there was more of it in the western part of the trench. Below this at 33.77m OD started a deep layer of clean yellow coarse sand with very infrequent small stones (L3). One part of the trench was dug to 1.7m below ground level (32.96m OD) to test the depth of the sand and it was seen to carry on beyond this depth. There were no artefacts or any material in layers 2 and 3. It is not clear whether L3 is natural or modern sand. It had the appearance of modern sand and at 900mm below ground level there was some organic matter within it which would not be expected if the sand was a natural geological deposit. However the depth of the sand would suggest that it was natural. There were no features within the trench.
- 6.2 The sand continued well below the level to which the garden is going to be levelled. The sand also continued to the east and could be seen in section next to the patio, where the ground had been lowered.

## **7 Discussion and interpretation**

The results of the evaluation were negative. No archaeological features of significance were exposed. There was evidence of a large-scale dumping of sand, which was possibly left over from the building of the house in the 1970s or was brought in deliberately to raise the level of the garden.

## **8 Acknowledgments**

The project was managed by Kate Orr and the site work was carried out by Kate Orr and Laura Pooley. The project was monitored by Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council.

The Trust would like to thank Mr and Mrs Ahmet for funding the work and allowing access to the site and Deborah Priddy of English Heritage for her advice.

## 9 References

- Cotter, J 2000 Post Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971-85, *Colchester Archaeological Report*, **7**
- Crummy, P 1992 Excavations at Culver Street, the Gilbert School, and other sites in Colchester 1971-85, *Colchester Archaeological Report*, **6**
- Hawkes, CFC & Hull, MR 1947 *Camulodunum*
- Hull, M R 1958 *Roman Colchester*, Society of Antiquaries Research Committee Report, **XX**
- Niblett, R 1985 Sheepen: an early Roman industrial site at Camulodunum, CBA Research Report, **57**
- Symonds, R P & Wade, S 1999 Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971-1986, *Colchester Archaeological Report*, **10**

## 10 Glossary

context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
EHCR	Essex Heritage Conservation Record, Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable entity such as a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 425

## 11 Archive deposition

The archive is held at Colchester Archaeological Trust, 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited at Colchester Museum, under accession code 2002.168.

## 12 Site Data

Table 1 list of finds

Find no	Context	Description and Date	Date	Weight
1	L1	1 rim of a Black Burnished type Ware bowl, fabric GB and CAM 37	Roman	24g
1	L1	1 rim of a glazed ironstone vessel, fabric 48d	Modern	27g
1	L1	Possible part of manhole cover	Modern	187g
1	L1	Brick fragments	Modern	161g
1	L1	Coal	undated	8g
1	L1	2 sherds of post medieval red earthenware, fabric 40	Post - medieval	35g
1	L1	2 pieces of peg tile	Medieval-modern	39g
1	L1	2 sherds of flowerpot	Modern	28g

Finds identified by Howard Brooks of CAT. Roman pottery fabrics are from Symonds and Wade 1999 and Cotter 2000. The CAM no is from Hull 1958. All finds apart from the pottery were discarded.

Table 2 list of contexts

Context	Description	Date
L1	Greyish brown sandy silt topsoil	Modern
L2	Course greyish yellow sand with abundant shingle and small angular and rounded stones	Modern
L3	Clean course yellow sand with very few small stones	Unknown

*Kate Orr September 2002*

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**Distribution list:**

Mr and Mrs Ahmet  
Deborah Priddy, English Heritage  
Essex Heritage Conservation Record, Essex County Council  
Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council



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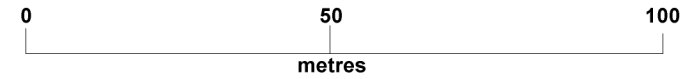
Checked by: Philip Crummy  
Date: 19 September 2002

*adams/reports02/11oaksdrive*



**Fig 1 Site location, scale 1:1250.**

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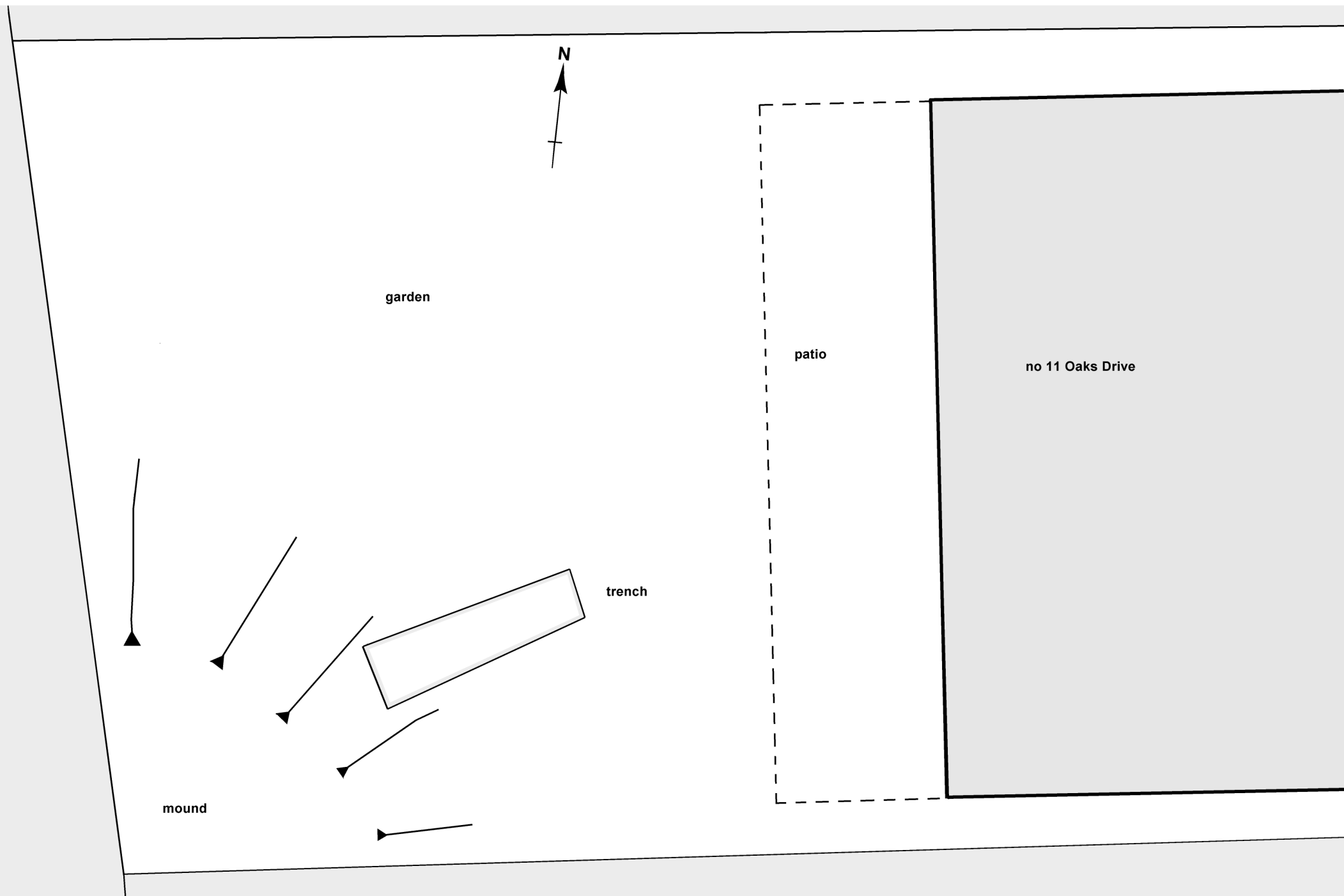
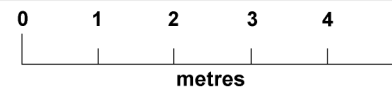


Fig 2 Site Plan, scale 1.100.





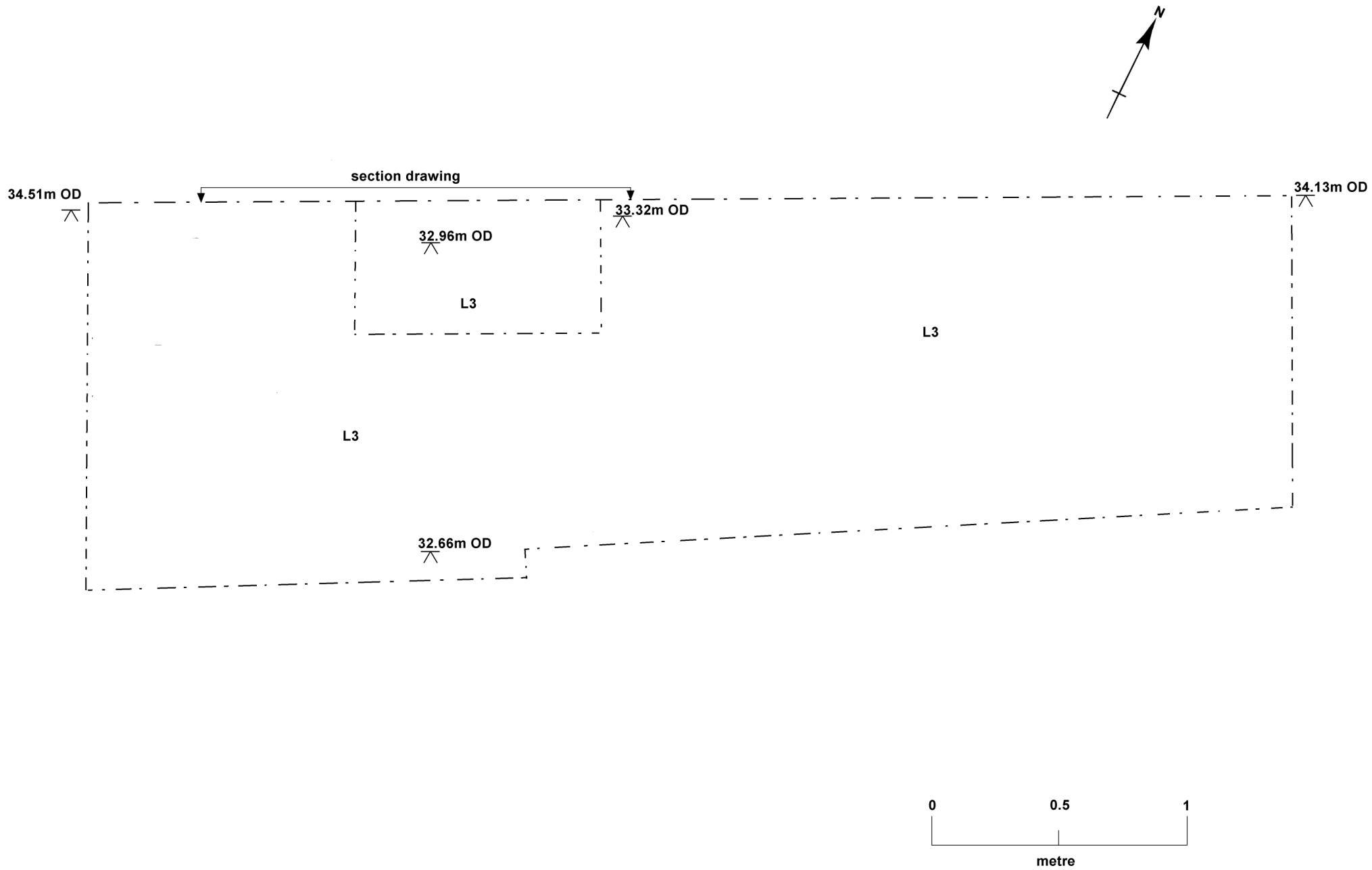


Fig 3 Plan of trench, scale 1:20.

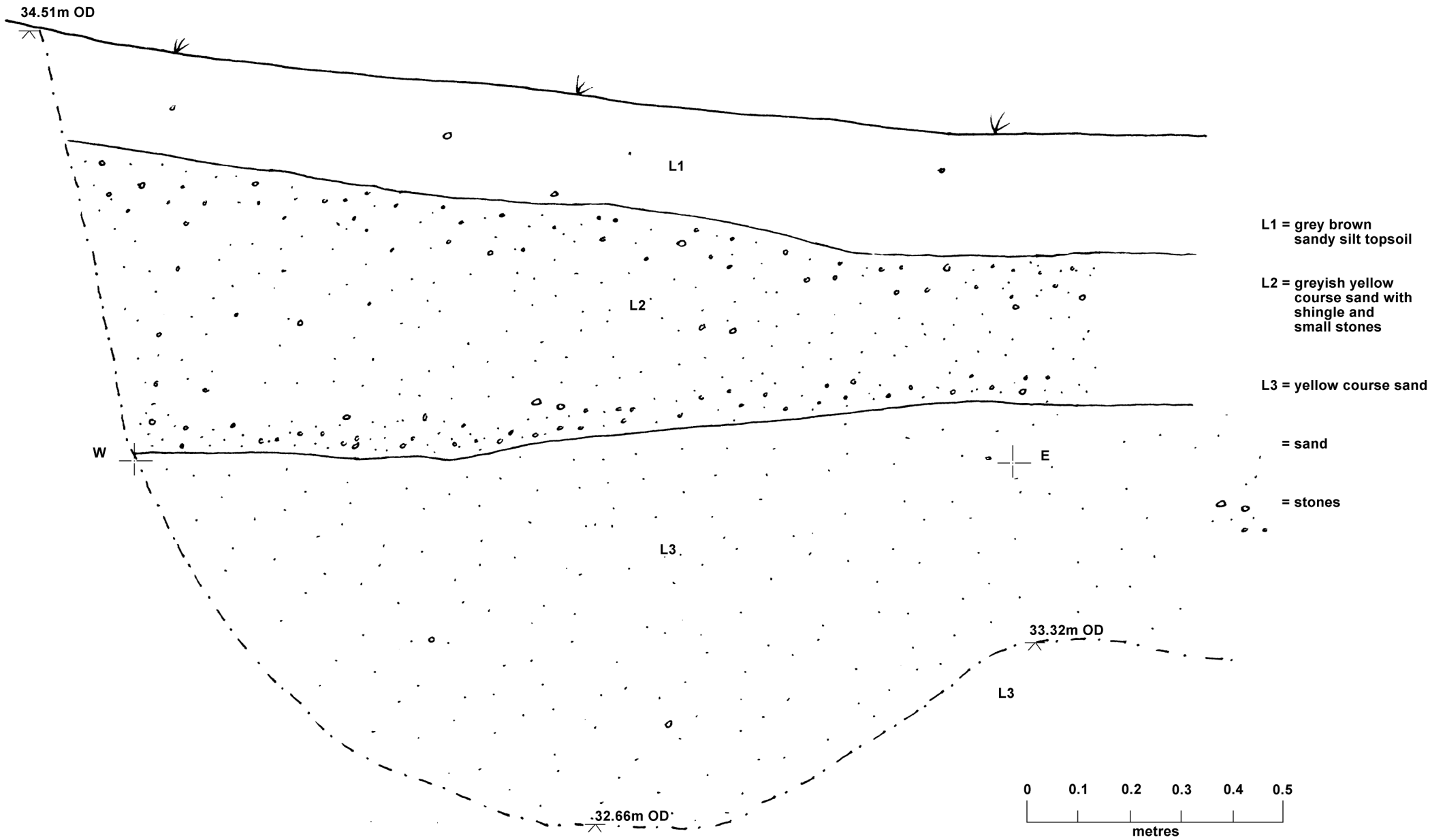


Fig 4 South facing section of trench, scale 1:10.

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

**Summary sheet**

<b>Site address:</b> 11 Oaks Drive, Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TL 98685 25107.	<b>Site code:</b> 2002.168
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of Work:</b> September 2002	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 1 small trench
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Colchester Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> House owner
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHCR nos:</b> 12534
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 209 and summary in EAH	
<b>Periods represented:</b> None	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b></p> <p>A single trial trench was excavated in the garden of 11 Oaks Drive which is within the scheduled ancient monument (no 46) of Sheepen. The evaluation did not expose any features or finds of archaeological significance. There was evidence of a large scale dumping of sand, which was possibly left over from the building of the house in the 1970s or was brought in deliberately to raise the level of the garden.</p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of summary:</b> Kate Orr	<b>Date of summary:</b> September 2002