An archaeological evaluation at 1-2 East Hill, Colchester, Essex February 2003

**report prepared by
Ben Holloway**

**on behalf of
B D W**

Contents

List of figures

1   Summary

An evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out at 1-2 East Hill, Colchester, Essex. Five trenches were dug, but little archaeological material was recorded and all features on the site were post-medieval and modern in date.

2   Introduction

2.1   This is the archive report on an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at 1-2 East Hill, Colchester, Essex between the 20th and 21st February 2003.

2.2   Five trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision with a mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were excavated by layer, and any archaeological features observed were investigated and recorded before the next layer was removed

2.3   All fieldwork was done in accordance with a specification agreed with the Archaeology Officer of Colchester Borough Council.

2.4   This report mirrors standards and practices contained in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines for the standards and practice of archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1999, updated 2002) and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation* (1999).

3   Archaeological background

The development site lies immediately adjacent to and outside the Roman town wall and East Gate, the site of the main entrance to the historic walled town, which fell down in 1651 (Hull 1958, 43-5; Fig 1). An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust in 1994 at the Foyer, 62 Priory Street (project 8/94b; unnumbered report). A cellar was recorded in Trench 2 in this evaluation, within the area of the current application site, to the Priory Street frontage. All features were found to be post-medieval or modern in date. Roman burials have been recorded on the opposite side of Priory Street (UAD no 1077).

4   Aim

The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to locate, record and assess the depth, condition, date, importance and state of preservation of any archaeological finds, features or deposits.

5   The trenches (Figs 3-5)

Each of the five trenches measured 4 x 1.5m. The positions of Trenches 1-5 (T1-T5) are shown on the trench location plan (Fig 2). In all five trenches, the natural sand was dug into to make sure that it was geological and not a dump deposit or material imported for building or levelling purposes.

5.1   Trench 1

Trench 1 was located at the northern edge of the site behind the cellars of nos 1 and 2 East Hill. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 600mm at the southern end of the trench, through between 50mm and 150mm of overburden (Layer or L1) before the natural geological sand (L2) was encountered. One feature was observed in the trench, a modern service-trench containing a disused drainage/ sewer-pipe (Feature or F1). No finds were recovered from the feature.

5.2   Trench 2

Trench 2 was located on the eastern edge of the site against the boundary wall. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 800mm. As in Trench 1, there was

between 50mm and 300mm of overburden (L1) before natural sand (L2) was encountered. One feature was recorded in the trench, a post-medieval brick- and rubble-built soakaway (F2). No finds were recovered from the feature.

5.3   Trench 3

Trench 3 was located on the south-east edge of the site. As with Trench 2, it was located against the boundary wall of the site. Trench 3 was excavated to a maximum depth of 500mm. As in the previous trenches, there was between 50mm and 150mm of overburden (L1) before natural sand (L2) was encountered. Five archaeological features were observed in the trench; these were a series of pits which date to the post-medieval period (F4, F6-F9). Finds included tile, pot and bone.

5.4   Trench 4

Trench 4 was located on the northern edge of the evaluation site against the base of the town wall by St James' Church. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 500mm. As in the previous trenches, there was between 50mm and 150mm of overburden (L1) before natural sand (L2) was encountered. One archaeological feature was recorded in the trench, a pit which appeared to be post-medieval in date (F5), although no finds were recovered from the feature.

5.5   Trench 5

Trench 5 was located on the extreme south-east of the site behind suspected back-filled cellars on the frontage of Priory Street. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 800mm and as before, in the other trenches, between 50mm and 150mm of overburden (L1) was removed before natural sand (L2) was encountered. One archaeological feature was recorded in the trench, a rubbish-pit dating to the post-medieval period (F3). Large amounts of pottery were recovered along with bottle glass, animal bone and clay pipe.

6   Finds

6.1   Finds list

Finds no	Context	Description	Period	Weight (g)
1	F5	pot	post-medieval	-
1	F5	glass	post-medieval	1101
1	F5	clay pipe	post-medieval	125
1	F5	tile/brick	post-medieval	257
2	F5	pot	post-medieval	-
3	F5	whole 'onion bottle'	post-medieval	999
4	F4	pot	post-medieval	-
4	F4	bone	post-medieval	325
4	F4	tile/brick	post-medieval	731
6	F6	pot	post-medieval	-
6	F6	teeth	post-medieval	41
6	F6	tile/brick	post-medieval	73
7	F8	bone	post-medieval	27
7	F8	tile/brick	post-medieval	174
8	F7	bone	post-medieval	2

6.2   Post-Roman pottery

by Howard Brooks

6.2.1   Introduction

This is the report on the post-Roman pottery from the evaluation at 1-2 East Hill (Colchester Museums accession code 2003.65).

6.2.2   Source

The material is from the following trenches and contexts: F3 in Trench 3, and F5 and F8 in Trench 5.

6.2.3 Description of pottery

Fabrics present are as follows (after Cotter 2000): Fabric 21a (Colchester-type ware); Fabric 40 (post-medieval red earthenware); Fabric 40bl (black-glazed fabric 40); Fabric 42 (Surrey-Hants Border Ware); and Fabric 45f (Westerwald stoneware). These are summarised in the table below (full details in archive).

Table: weight of fabric types per bag and context (stratified material only).

		Fabrics									
		21a	21a	40	40 wt	42	42	40bl	40bl	45m qt	45m wt	Group date
Bag	**Con**											
1	F5			40	3071	3	112	1	8			17th-18th cent
2	F5									34	1203	late 17th-18th cent
4	F3	1	65									15th-16th cent
7	F8	3	30									15th-16th cent
Total quant		4	0	40	0	3	0	1	0	34	0	82
Total wt			95	0	3071	0	112	0	8	0	1203	4489

6.2.4 Discussion

This small group consists overwhelmingly of post-medieval red earthenwares (Fabric 40: 71% of the total pottery group by weight). Identifiable vessels include small storage jars similar to Cotter 2000 (figs 142.103-4), and a jug similar to Cotter 2000 (fig 145.137). These, and indeed all the Fabric 40 sherds from F5, are dated to the 17th-18th centuries. The largest individual vessel is a superb, fragmentary Westerwald stoneware jug, very similar to Cotter 2000 (fig 1996.2). This dates to the later 17th or 18th century.

The only other vessel of interest is an attractive tripod strainer in Surrey-Hampshire Border ware (Fabric 42).

The material from F5 has a group date of 17th-18th, possibly later 17th to 18th, century. The Colchester-type sherds from F3 and F8 should date a little earlier, possibly the 15th to 16th century.

6.3 Post-Roman glass
by Howard Brooks

6.3.1 Introduction
This is the report on the post-Roman glass from the evaluation at 1-2 East Hill (Colchester Museums accession code 2003.65).

6.3.2 Source
The material is all from F5 in Trench 5.

6.3.3 Description of pottery
The metal is a high-quality translucent green. The quality suggests it is mass-produced factory glass, rather than local forest glass. Further detail in archive.

6.3.4 Discussion
Wilmott dates this bottle type to after AD 1650 (Wilmott 2002, 88-9). Judging by the relatively short neck, these bottles would date some time after the start date, an impression confirmed by the good quality of the metal. These glass bottles are from a pit which contains a good group of pottery dating to 17th-18th, perhaps late 17th-18th, century. There is no reason to suspect that the glass is not of precisely the same date.

6.4 Small finds report
by Nina Crummy

SF1.(5) F4. Post-medieval pit.
Strip of folded copper-alloy sheet, possibly a flattened tube. One end is rough, the other has been cut into two pointed tabs, one of which is bent over and partly missing. Length 44mm, width 12mm.

7 Discussion and interpretation
Features
Of the nine features observed in the five trenches, only seven are of interest, the remaining two features being a modern service-trench and a modern/ post-medieval soakaway. The archaeological features consist of a series of post-medieval pits, dated by the large amount of pottery that was recovered from the site, the bulk of which came from the rubbish-pit F5. The type of deposits that were found during the course of the evaluation are typical of material which would be associated with yard and garden deposits of the post-medieval periods. The material appears to be of a domestic nature, ie broken pots, bottles and animal bone, and to fit with the use of the surrounding buildings with frontages on both East Hill and Priory Street.

There is, however, no evidence of any activity before the post-medieval period. There is also very little evidence of any remaining topsoil anywhere on the site. This lack of topsoil and any trace of earlier activity may be the result of terracing of the site to create a level building surface during the post-medieval period. This terracing may have occurred when the gradient of East Hill was reduced (Hull 1958, 11), and, as a result, all deposits that pre-date this terracing have been removed.

8 Acknowledgments
The project was managed by Howard Brooks and the site work was carried out by Ben Holloway and Alex Farnell. The project was monitored by Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council.

9 References
Hull, M R, 1958   *Roman Colchester*, Report of the Research Committee of the
    Society of Antiquaries of London, **XX**
Cotter, J, 2000   *Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-1985*,
    Colchester Archaeological Report, **7**
Wilmott, Hugh, 2002   *Post-medieval glass from England*, Council for British
    Archaeology Research Report, **123**

10 Glossary
context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry the VIII
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
NGR	National Grid Reference
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
post-medieval	after Henry VIII to around the late 18th century

11   Archive deposition

The finds and paper archive are held at Colchester Archaeological Trust, 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but both will be permanently deposited at Colchester Museums under accession code 2003.65.

12   Site data

12.1   Site context list

Trench	Context	Description	Context date
Trenches 1-5	L1	overburden (modern demolition debris)	modern
Trenches 1-5	L2	natural sand	Glacial/post-Glacial

12.2   Soil descriptions

Trench	Context	Description
Trenches 1-5	L1	mid brown sand, mixed with building demolition material and some remaining topsoil.
Trenches 1-5	L2	yellow/orange sand, contains occasional small stones

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Essex Heritage Conservation Record/
Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Site address: 1-2 East Hill, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	*District:* Colchester
NGR: TM 0020 2522	*Site code:* Museum accession code 2003.65
Type of work: Evaluation	*Site director/group:* Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of Work: February 2003	*Size of area investigated:* 30m square
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	*Funding source:* Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	*Related EHCR nos:*
Final report: CAT Report 226 and summary in *EAH*	
Periods represented: Post-medieval/modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: An evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out at 1-2 East Hill, Colchester, Essex. Five trenches were dug, but little archaeological material was recorded, and all features on the site were post-medieval and modern in date.	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Ben Holloway	*Date of summary:* 1st May 2003

17.1m

East Hill

cellars

T1

T2

T4

T3

site of 1-2
East Hill

T5

cellars

Priory Street

BM 19.89m

18.9m

0   10   20

metres

Fig 1 Site location.

T1

L1

F1

T4

F5

L2

T2

F2

L2

T5

concrete

F3

gravel/sand

L2

L2

L2

T3

F7

F9

not fully
excavated

F4

F6

F8

0

2

metres
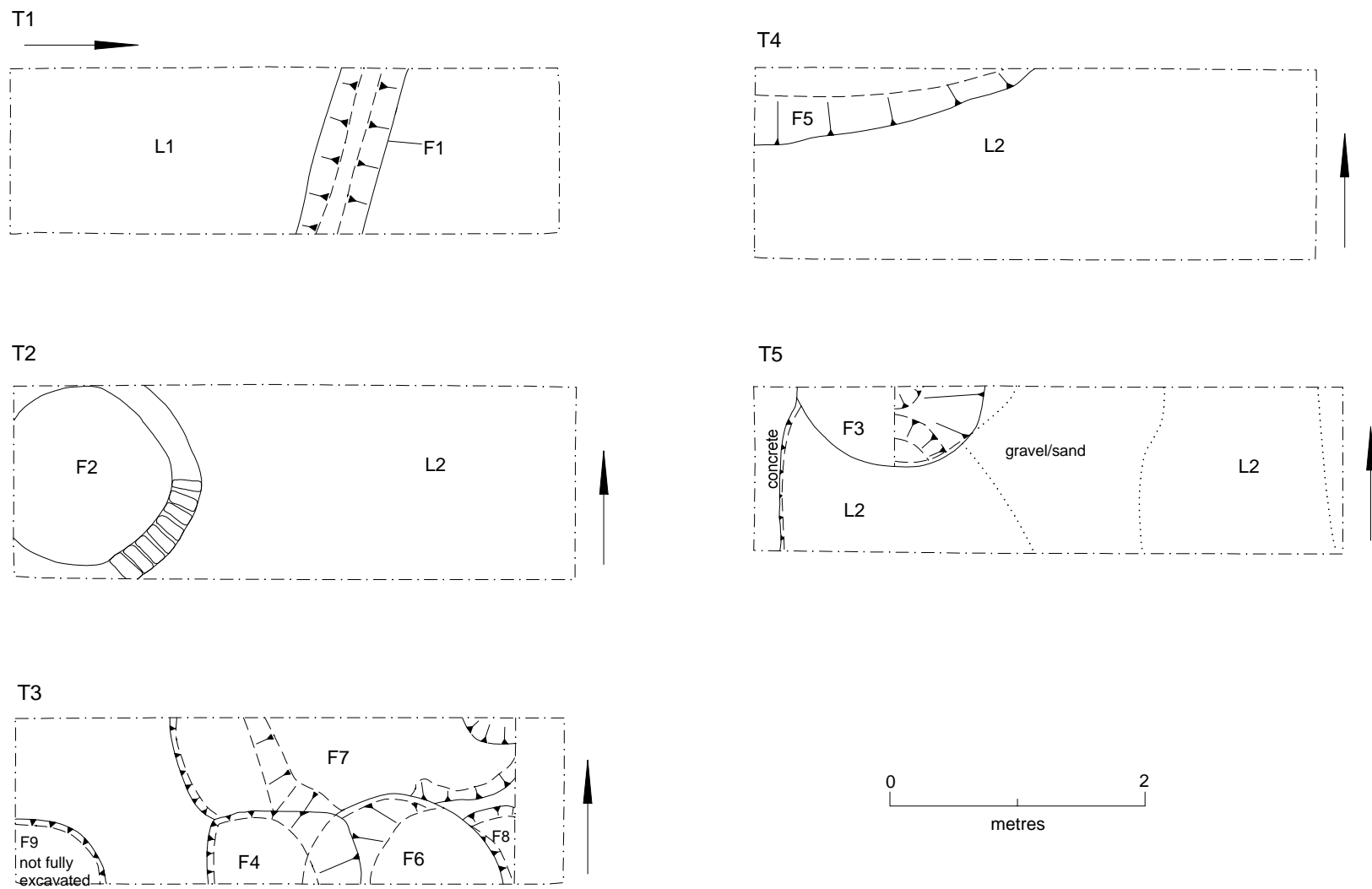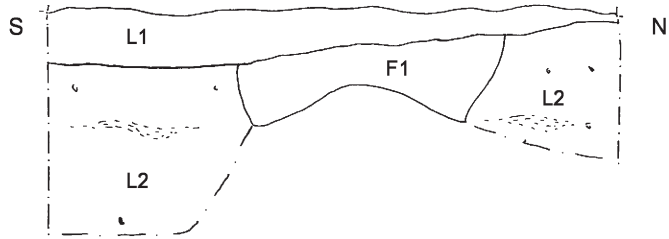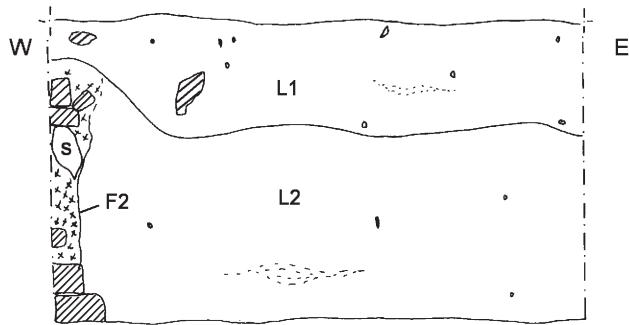
Fig 2 Trench plans.

T1: east-facing section

S L1   N

L1

F1

L2

L2

T2: south-facing section

W   E

L1

s

L2

F2

key:

brick

s   stone

0   0.5

metres
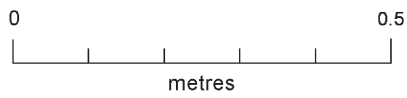
Fig 3 Section sheet 1: T1 & T2.

T3: north-facing section

E

L1

W

F8

F9

F6

F4

key:

▨ brick

⬡ sand

T3: south-facing section

W

E

L1

L2

F7

0   0.5

metres
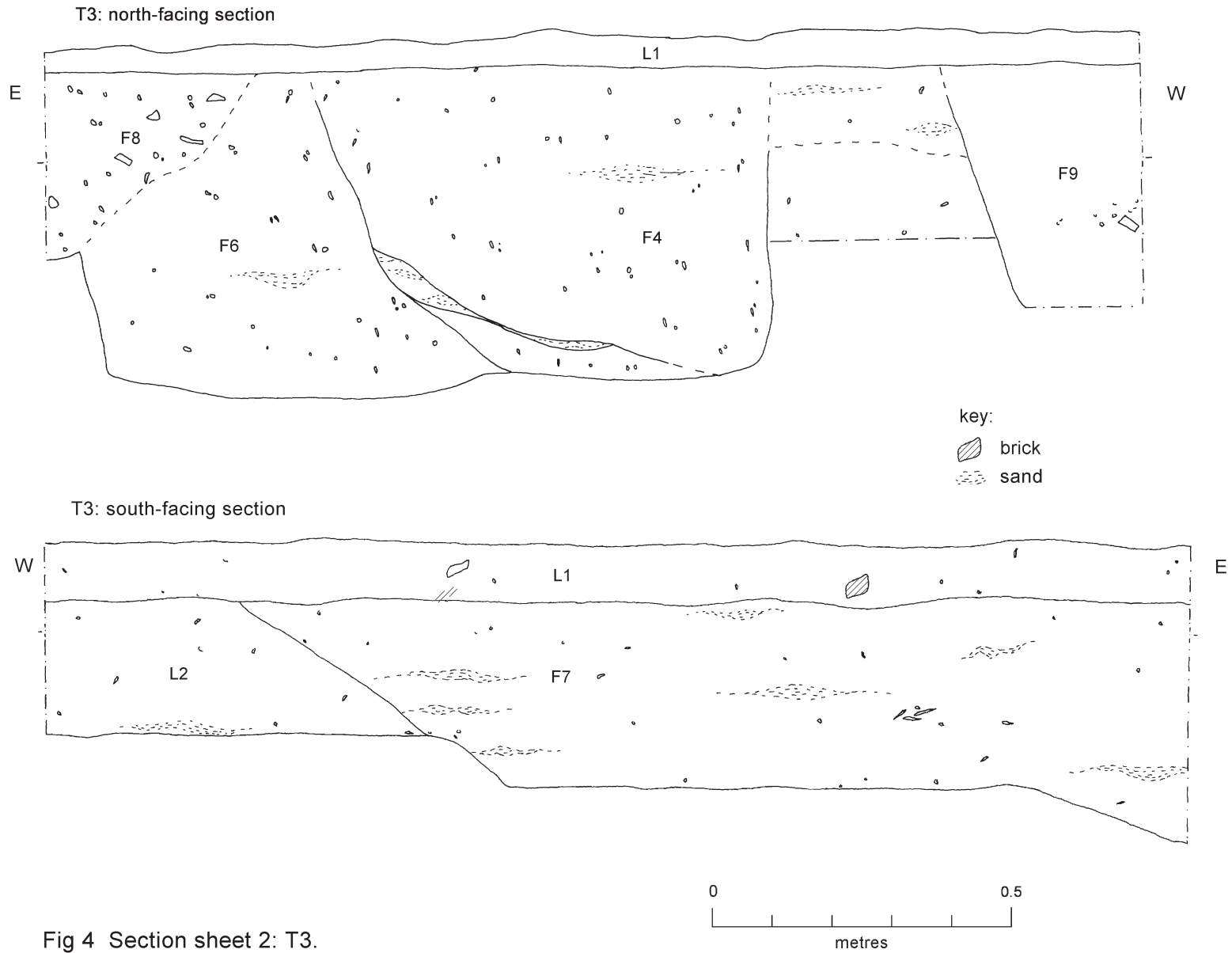
Fig 4 Section sheet 2: T3.

T4: south-facing section

W L2 F3 L1 F3 F3 L2 E

T5: south-facing section

W L1 E

F5

glass

pottery

L2

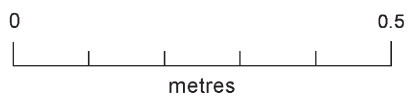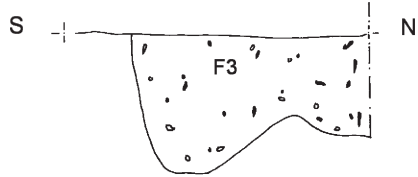oyster

pottery
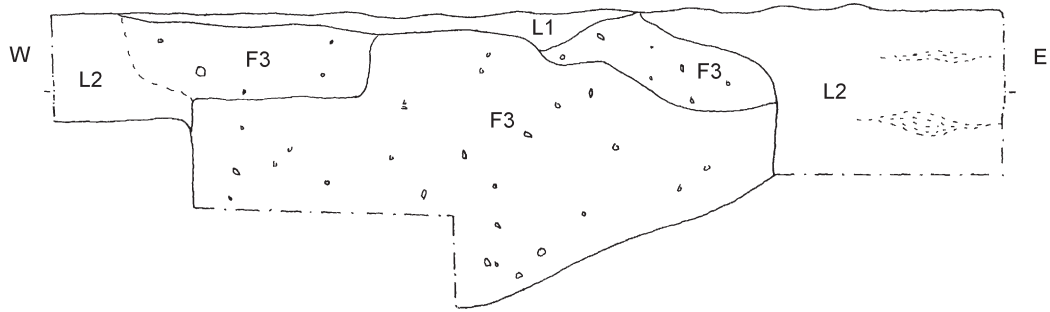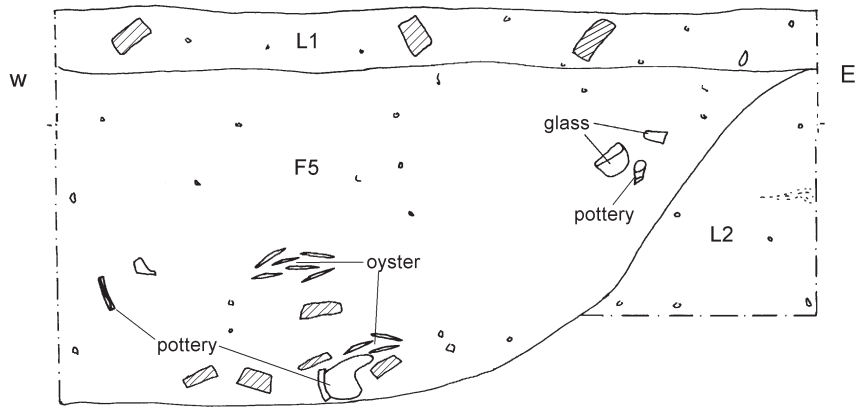
key:

brick

T5: east-facing section

S F3 N

0   0.5

metres

Fig 5 Section sheet 3: T4 & T5.