

**An archaeological evaluation at  
16 Seaview Road, Brightlingsea, Essex  
February 2004**

**report prepared by  
Kate Orr**

**on behalf of  
Highfield Homes**

NGR: TM 086 174 (c)  
CAT project ref.: 04/2b  
ECC HAMP group site code: BGSV04  
Colchester Museums accession code: 2004.140



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EHCR summary sheet

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## 1 Summary

*An evaluation was carried out in February 2004 on a plot of land to the rear of 16 Seaview Road, Brightlingsea, Essex. The three trenches did not produce any features or finds of archaeological significance. A linear feature, possibly an old field boundary of post-medieval date, was discovered, as well as two undated cut features. Several trees have been recently felled on the site which have left their mark as tree bowls and disturbance. The absence of features and significant finds in the topsoil indicate that the site is devoid of significant archaeological remains.*

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1** This is the archive report on an evaluation carried out at 16 Seaview Road, Brightlingsea, Essex by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the 16th and 18th February 2004. Highfield Homes submitted a planning application for a residential development of eight houses (planning application no 03/02287/FUL). The archaeological evaluation was necessary in order to assess any surviving archaeological remains that may be affected by the development.
- 2.2** Brightlingsea is located 1.2 km south-east of Colchester, where Brightlingsea Creek flows into the River Colne (Fig 1). The evaluation site is situated to the north of Brightlingsea town centre, on the eastern side of Seaview Road (at NGR TM 086 174). The site currently consists of the bungalow and the rear garden of 16 Seaview Road, as well as part of the garden of the adjacent no 14. The level of the site varies between 17.5m and 18.6m AOD. To the north, east and south, the site is bounded by fences, walls or hedges which separate the property from those adjacent to it. To the west is Seaview Road.
- 2.3** All fieldwork was done in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Heritage Advice Management and Promotion (HAMP) group officer of Essex County Council.
- 2.4** This report follows the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation* (1999).

## 3 Archaeological background

- 3.1** Evidence of probable Bronze Age and later prehistoric activity can be seen on aerial photographs of the area. On the fringes of the town, cropmarks of a group of ring-ditches surrounding a rectilinear enclosure have been recorded (Essex Heritage Conservation Record or EHCR 2234). Another rectilinear enclosure with other cropmarks is visible on the northern side of the town (EHCR 2141).  
Finds of flint tools within the town indicate that this prehistoric activity may have extended further towards the development site (EHCR 2233; EHCR 2158).
- 3.2** Previous discoveries in the vicinity of the site include substantial quantities of Roman building material (*tesserae*, roof tiles and flue tiles), and Roman and Belgic pottery (EHCR 2132; EHCR 2133). Situated 500m to the west is the site of a Roman building.

## 4 Aim

The aim of the fieldwork was to establish and record the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains likely to be affected by the development.

## 5 Methods

- 5.1 Three trenches (T1-T3) were excavated, equating to nearly 5% of the 0.3 hectare area. All trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator with a toothless 1.2m-wide ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision. The machine digging was stopped at the first archaeological features. Where there were no features, the trench was machine dug to natural level.
- 5.2 Individual records of layers and features were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.3 Section drawings of features and layers were made at a scale of 1:10. Plans of features were 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 features were taken with a digital camera and a 35mm slide camera.

## 6 Results (Figs 2-3)

A similar soil profile was observed in all three trenches. Mid to dark brown loose sandy loam topsoil with occasional stones (Layer or L1) overlaid a mid reddish brown silty sand subsoil (L2). At between 700mm and 750mm below modern ground-level, natural ground was encountered (L3).

### 6.1 T1

An east to west-aligned trench (T1) was excavated along the northern side of the site, measuring 54m in length. One feature was recorded in this trench; F1, a 750mm-wide, long shallow linear cut. F1 was filled by mid brown sandy loam with rare to infrequent small stones. The feature contained peg-tile, post-medieval brick and post-medieval and modern pottery in its fill. It was cut into L3 and was aligned north-west to south-east. It was originally interpreted as being a sewer trench, but on excavation it was found to be void of any pipes.

In the centre of T1 was a disturbed area with various amorphous features, probably tree bowls. These were cleaned but not excavated.

Except for these features, the trench did not show signs of any disturbance. One fragment of possible Roman roof tile was retrieved from the topsoil as well as a few pieces of peg-tile and modern china. Tree-root activity was evident throughout. Natural ground consisted of loose, orange-coloured sand.

### 6.2 T2

The second trench (T2) was aligned north to south and placed at the eastern end of the garden, measuring 25.4m in length. It was placed in an area where 300mm of topsoil had already been scraped off by the house builder. A linear feature (F3), on the same alignment as F1 and probably a continuation of it, was recorded at the northern end of the trench. This feature had the same fill and was also sealed by L1 and L2. It is interpreted as having been a field boundary ditch.

At the southern end of the trench, another linear feature was recorded, on a north to south alignment (F2). This was filled by mid brown sandy loam with common small stones but this produced no dating evidence. F2 was sealed by L1 and L2. It appeared to be cut into L3; however, it could be a natural dip. The feature extended beyond the limit of the trench so its width could not be established.

Natural ground in T2 was clayey at the northern end of the trench. It then became sandy, with gravel patches appearing at the southern end.

### 6.3 T3

T3 was placed in the southern area of the plot (the former garden of 14 Seaview Road), in an area which had been stripped of 300mm of topsoil. It was 30m in length. After L2 subsoil had been stripped off, a pit (F4) was exposed at the southern end of the trench. This was filled by mid brown sandy loam with occasional small to medium stones. The feature, which cut natural sand L3, is undated.

## 7 Finds

Post-medieval and modern pottery was identified by Howard Brooks of CAT. Fabric codes refer to Cotter 2000.

**Table: list of finds by context.**

Find no	Context	Weight in g	Description	Date
1	L1, T1	136	Peg-tile	medieval to modern
1	L1, T1	4	Modern ironstone pottery (Fabric 48d)	19th/20th century
2	L1/L2, T1	66	'Tudor' brick fragment	17th/18th century
2	L1/L2, T1	60	Either a modern ceramic pipe fragment or fragment of Roman <i>imbrex</i> (roof tile)	modern or Roman
2	L1/L2, T1	6	Oyster-shell fragment	undated
2	L1/L2, T1	2	Charcoal	undated
3	L2 or F1, T1	70	Peg-tile	medieval to modern
4	F1, T1	113	Peg-tile	medieval to modern
4	F1, T1	406	'Tudor' brick fragments	17th/18th century
4	F1, T1	1	Modern ironstone pottery (Fabric 48d)	19th/20th century
4	F1, T1	2	Coal	modern
4	F1, T1	19	Post-medieval earthenware pottery (Fabric 40bl)	17th century

## 8 Discussion

The three trenches did not produce anything of archaeological interest. The linear features F1 and F3 appear to be the remains of a field boundary of possible post-medieval date, as prior to the land being developed for housing along Seaview Road it was an agricultural field. Several trees have been recently felled within the site which have left their mark as tree bowls and disturbance, observed in T1. F2 and F4 were not datable as they contained no finds. These were the only features. There was no evidence of Roman buildings, nor was there any Roman material in the topsoil which would indicate the presence on the site of such remains. The site was largely undisturbed, and therefore it is the opinion of the author that archaeological remains are absent rather than having been destroyed.

## 9 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Highfield Homes for funding the work and for assistance on site. The site work was carried out by the author and Chris Lister. The project was monitored by Pat Connell, the HAMP group officer.

## 10 References

- Cotter, J                    2000        *Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85*, Colchester Archaeological Report 7
- IFA  
(Institute of  
Field  
Archaeologists)            1999        *Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation*

## 11 Glossary

Bronze Age	the period between c 2500 BC and 700 BC
context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
cropmarks	ancient features which show as lines and other marks in crops due to differential growth of plants according to presence or absence of archaeological features
EHCR	Essex Heritage Conservation Record, Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
HAMP	Heritage Advice Management and Promotion group, Essex County Council
NGR	National Grid Reference
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
Roman	the period from AD 43-AD 410

## 12 Archive deposition

The archive is held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museums under accession code 2004.140.

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### Distribution list:

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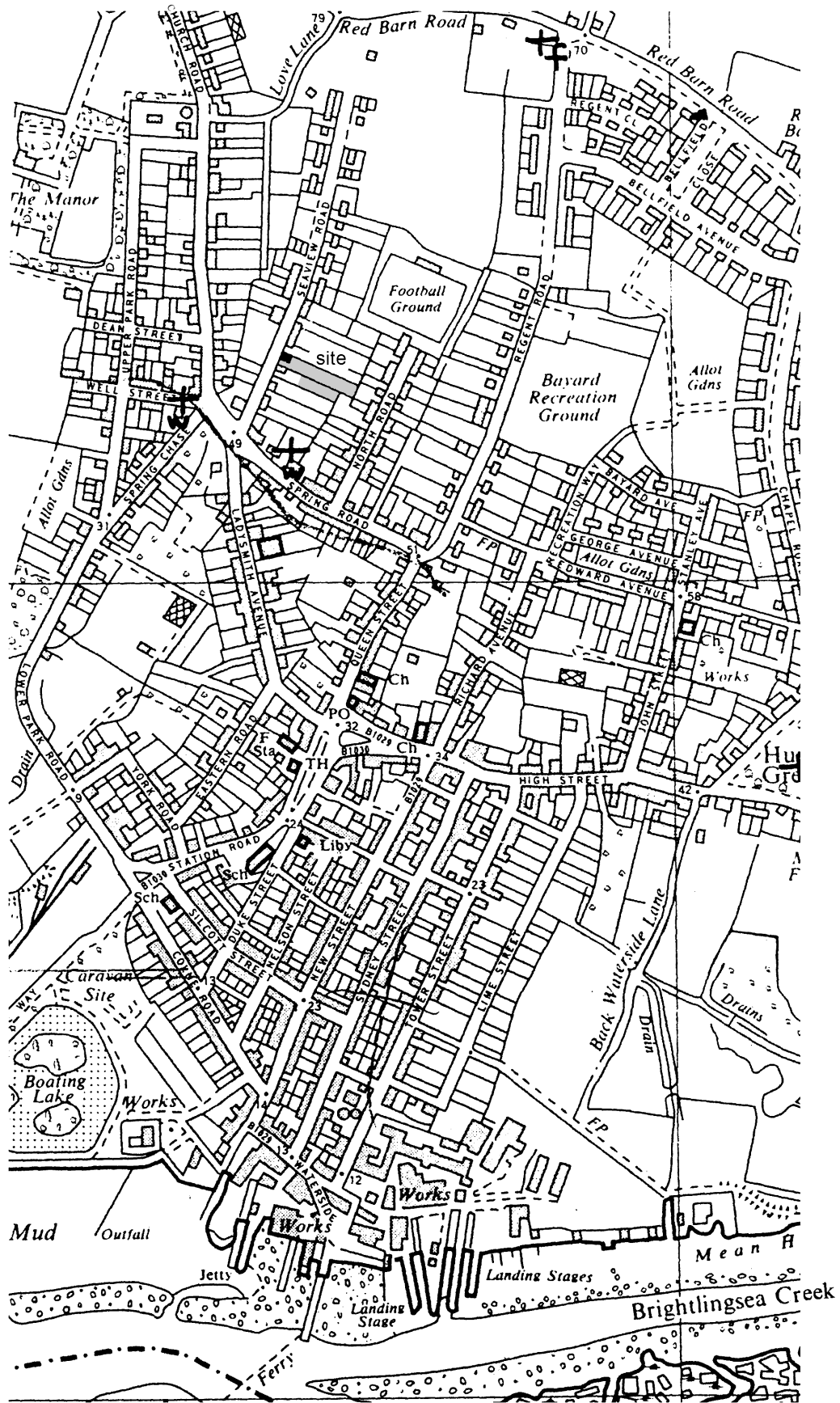


Fig 1 Site location.



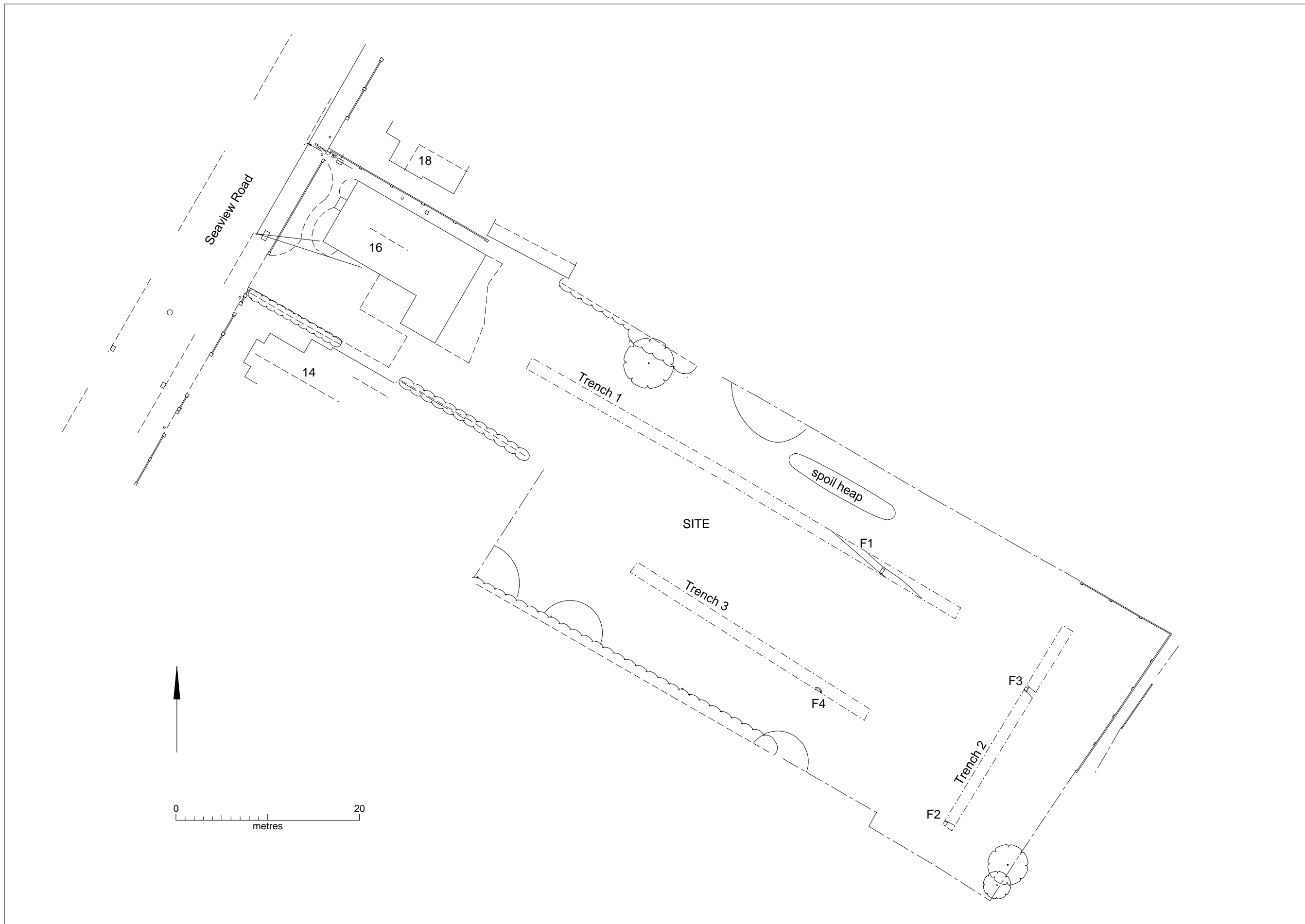


Fig 2 Plan of trenches, showing features. Reproduced with permission of A & B Surveys.

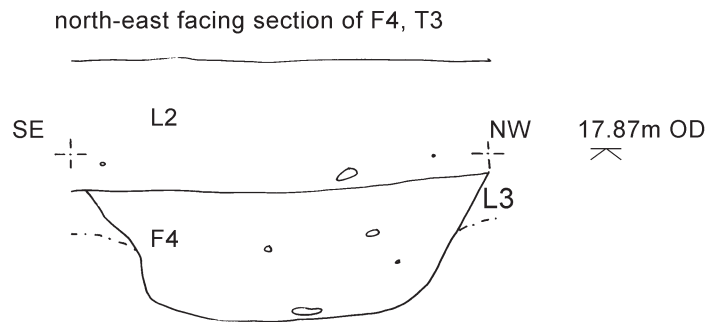
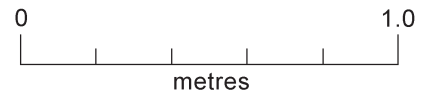
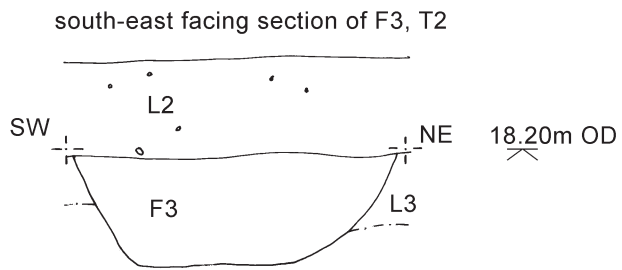
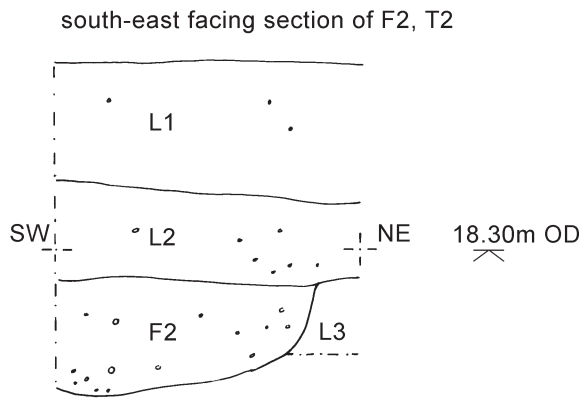
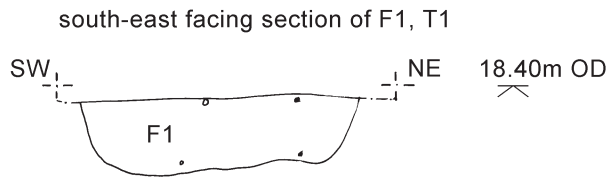


Fig 3 Feature sections.

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

**Summary sheet**

<b>Site name/address:</b> 16 Seaview Road, Brightlingsea, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Brightlingsea	<b>District:</b> Tendring
<b>NGR:</b> TM 086 174 (c)	<b>ECC HAMP group site code:</b>
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 16th and 18th February 2004	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 0.3 hectares
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Colchester Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHCR nos:</b> 2132, 2133, 2141, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2162, 2233, 2234, 2310
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 263	
<b>Periods represented:</b> None	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>  <i>An evaluation was carried out in February 2004 on a plot of land to the rear of 16 Seaview Road, Brightlingsea, Essex. The three trenches did not produce any features or finds of archaeological significance. A linear feature, possibly an old field boundary of post-medieval date, was located as well as two undated cut features. Several trees have been recently felled on the site which have left their mark as tree bowls and disturbance. The absence of features and significant finds in the topsoil indicate that the site is devoid of archaeological remains.</i></p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of summary:</b> K Orr	<b>Date of summary:</b> March 2004