

An archaeological watching brief at 10/10a East Street, Coggeshall, Essex April 2005

report prepared by
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on behalf of
Mr John Wardrop



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1 Summary

A watching brief was carried out on groundworks for the construction of a small dwelling in the garden at the rear of the property at 10/10a East Street, Coggeshall, Essex. The new dwelling replaces a store building which occupied the area. The property is situated on the south side of the main road through the town (which follows the line of a Roman road) and is close to the medieval centre of the town located around Market Hill. The garden of the property slopes down toward the edge of the flood-plain of the River Blackwater. The west side of the footprint of the new dwelling was found to have been disturbed by modern services, and the south side by the remains of a former swimming-pool. Within the construction trenches over the central and north-eastern parts of the footprint of the new dwelling were the remains of a gravel surface and several clay-packed post-holes which represent a previous out-building. These features were encountered at a depth of approximately 0.7 m below the present ground-level. The poor quality of the gravel surface suggests a yard, although, in conjunction with the post-holes, it may represent a covered surface belonging to the out-building. Peg-tiles sealing the gravel surface possibly originate from demolition of the roof of the out-building supported by the post-holes. Although the majority of the pottery finds securely associated with the surface are of the medieval period (13th-14th century to 15th century), pieces of bricks recovered from the surface suggest that it is almost certainly of post-medieval (17th- to 18th-century) date.

2 Introduction (Figs 1-2, Plate 1)

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological watching brief carried out in the garden of 10/10a East Street, Coggeshall, Essex (Plate 1).
- 2.2 The watching brief was prompted by the proposal for demolition of an existing store building and its replacement with a small dwelling.
- 2.3 The property is located on the south side of East Street (NGR TL 8507 2256) and is situated close to the centre of the medieval town focused around Market Hill. The garden of the property consists of a series of structured terraces descending the gentle slope down to the edge of the flood-plain of the River Blackwater to the south. The new dwelling is located at the south end of the garden.
- 2.4 The monitoring was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the 13th and 14th of April 2005. A brief was supplied by Essex County Council (ECC) Historic Environment Management (HEM) group.
- 2.5 The project was monitored by the Essex County Council HEM group.
- 2.6 This report follows the standards set out in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CM 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (CM 2003), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IFA 1999) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment* (EAA 3), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (EAA 8), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) was also followed.

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The historic and archaeological record for Coggeshall is summarised in *Coggeshall: historic town project assessment report* (Medlycott 1999) on which this summary is based.

- 3.2** There is evidence of activity in the immediate area of Coggeshall from the Mesolithic period onwards. The main road running east-west through the town follows the line of the Roman Stane Street, and a Roman settlement is known to have occupied the east side of the present town in the area of St Peter's School, south of the church. Pottery finds indicate that it is possible that there was early Anglo-Saxon settlement close to the church, and it is thought that late Anglo-Saxon and early medieval settlement at Coggeshall was focused on the higher ground around the church.
- 3.3** Later in the medieval period, a settlement focus grew up on the lower areas west of the church, around the area of Market Hill which is the present centre of the town. In the late medieval and early post-medieval periods, Coggeshall became an important and wealthy centre of the cloth industry. The number and quality of surviving 14th- to 17th-century buildings reflects this wealth.
- 3.4** There are no previous archaeological records relating directly to the property at 10/10a East Street. However, in relation to the potential survival of archaeological deposits on the site, it is known that a swimming-pool (now back-filled) had been built at the south end of the garden. The building work would almost certainly have caused the removal of any archaeological deposits within its footprint.

4 Aim

The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any archaeological remains exposed during the construction of the new dwelling.

5 Methods

- 5.1** The method of investigation was that of a watching brief, whereby an archaeologist monitors the groundworks, though provision was made for hand excavation of any potentially significant archaeological deposits that might be encountered.
- 5.2** The archaeologically monitored groundworks consisted of the machine-excavated trenches for ground-beams. The ground-beams, when completed, were to rest on piles which had already been driven into place prior to the archaeological monitoring. Each of the ground-beam trenches was 60 cm in width and was required to be excavated to a depth of approximately 80 cm below the present construction surface level.
- 5.3** Liaison was maintained with the Essex County Council HEM group monitoring officer and the contractors to maintain an appropriate strategy to investigate deposits on the site.
- 5.4** Two site visits to monitor the excavation of the ground-beam trenches were made by a CAT archaeologist.
- 5.5** Individual records of features were entered on CAT pro-forma recording sheets. Section drawings of layers were made at a scale of 1:10 together with written descriptions of layers. A plan of the archaeological remains was made at a scale of 1:20.
- 5.6** Finds were registered on CAT pro-forma record sheets and assigned find numbers according to context. Finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context.
- 5.7** Colour photographs of main features, sections, the general site and the site environs were taken with a digital camera.

6 Results of the archaeological observations

(Figs 3a-3b and Plates 2-3)

- 6.1** The west side of the footprint of the new dwelling was found to be disturbed to below the depth of the base of the ground-beam trench (B) by deep modern trenches for services. The modern service-trench fill was predominantly a soft dark clay loam.

- 6.2** In the south ground-beam trench (I) of the new dwelling, the remains of the back-filled swimming-pool (section 3.4) were encountered. This consisted of a mixed fill with concrete fragments. The feature had removed all archaeological deposits to below the level of the base of the ground-beam trench.
- 6.3** Archaeological deposits survived in the central and north-east trenches (A, C, D, E, G) of the footprint of the new dwelling, and the sequence of soil layers and archaeological deposits encountered was relatively consistent in all of the ground-beam trenches observed in this area. Other than the large modern features in the west and south trenches (B and I) of the footprint of the new dwelling (sections 6.1 & 6.2), no cut features, such as pits, were observed within the exposed sections, and the recorded sequence of layers appeared to cleanly seal one another without obvious later disturbance.
- 6.4** The present construction surface level over the footprint of the new dwelling was covered by a layer of stones and sand about 10 cm thick (Layer or L1). This is the remnants of modern make-up for the floor of the former store building or garden terracing and had been imported onto the site.
- 6.5** Between approximately 10 cm and 40 cm below the present ground-level, and sealed by the L1 make-up, was a very dark clay loam soil (L2). This contained moderately common fragments of peg-tiles, small patches of degraded pale brown sandy mortar, small stones, charcoal, oyster shell and occasional brick fragments. This represents a disturbed post-medieval or modern soil accumulation. Though it produced no datable finds (a few small fragments of brick were observed during machining and in exposed sections), it can be dated to at least the 17th-18th century as it seals archaeological contexts with clear associations of finds of that date.
- 6.6** The dark soil sealed a lighter-coloured (medium brown) silty clay (L3). This contained moderate to common peg-tile fragments, occasional small stones, chalk and charcoal flecks. Although, on the central part of the footprint of the new dwelling, this layer sealed earlier archaeological deposits (L4), where these were absent it appeared to extend to at least the base of the ground-beam trenches (approximately 80 cm below the present ground-level) without apparent change. Finds from L3 were few in number, and most were collected when hand excavating at the base of the layer. The finds are predominantly of late medieval or earlier post-medieval date. However, they include a small pottery sherd of Fabric 40 (dated late 16th-18th century) and a pottery sherd of Fabric 48d (dated 19th-20th century).
- 6.7** Towards the central part of the footprint of the new dwelling, and sealed by L3, was a spread of peg-tile pieces and fragments (L4). The soil matrix surrounding them was indistinguishable in appearance from L3. No datable finds were recovered from this tile spread. Although some of the peg-tile pieces were quite large (representing most of a tile), they graded in size down to small fragments, and none of the tiles were whole. All the tile pieces observed appeared to be of the usual, relatively thin, probably medieval/post-medieval peg-tile type. Almost all were lying flat, although, despite this, they did not give the appearance of being a laid surface as they were frequently found to overlap in small groups or heaps, and appeared to represent dumped demolition material, presumably from a roof.
- 6.8** At the north end of the footprint of the new dwelling, L3 and L4 sealed a rough patchy surface (F2) formed primarily of small stones, with some peg-tile fragments and pieces, and very rare cobble-sized stones (Plate 2). This surface was only clearly present in the north ground-beam trench (A) and in the north end of the east central ground-beam trench (D). It can be noted that on top of this surface were a number of fragments of animal bone which appeared to be comparatively rare finds from other contexts on the site. The area of the surface was roughly planned, and then removed by hand to recover finds for dating. The small quantity of pottery recovered was all of medieval (13th- to 14th-century) or late medieval (15th- to 16th-century) date. There were also a few fragments from thick peg-tiles which are also possibly of medieval date. However, a number of brick pieces from within the make-up of the surface (ie 7, Table 1, F2, bag 6), although not necessarily individually precisely datable, collectively strongly suggest that

the surface is of post-medieval (17th- to 18th-century) date. There was no indication that these post-medieval bricks were intrusive to the surface.

- 6.9** In the central length of the north ground-beam trench (A), an area of the surface appeared to be particularly thin or absent. This was investigated as a potential feature (Feature or F3), possibly a pit. However, on excavation it proved not to have any significant distinct identity from the general spread of material forming the surface F2, and may simply represent a worn or thin area in the surface. A fragment of Tudor brick (15th-16th century) and a rim of a large pottery storage jar or cistern of 17th- to 18th-century date came from this feature.
- 6.10** Three post-holes (F1, F4, F5), and possibly a fourth (F6), were located. Each of the post-holes was sub-rectangular with a packing of clean pale yellow-brown clay which contained fragments of chalk and occasional charcoal flecks (Plate 3). This clay was only associated with the post-holes, so that the edge of a clay patch seen in one of the ground-beam trenches (F6) almost certainly represents a fourth post-hole. Within the clay packing, the post-pipes of the former wooden posts could be clearly seen, so that the posts had not been removed and the lower parts of the posts must have rotted *in situ*. The post-pipes of F4 and F5 were square, while that for F1 was slightly more rounded. Only one of the post-holes (F1) was investigated, and only the post-pipe of this was excavated. The post-pipe in F1 was 270 mm deep, and no finds were found within its fill. The base of the post had penetrated a medium brown silty clay below the post-pipe. It is not known if the soil glimpsed in the base of the post-pipe was archaeological or was undisturbed natural subsoil. It appears that the post-holes can be associated with the gravel surface F2 as they were also sealed by L3, and the gravel surface could not be traced on the east edge of the footprint of the new dwelling beyond the post-holes F1 and F4. It appears, therefore, that F1 and F4 correspond to the eastern extent of the surface.



Plate 2 North ground-beam trench (A) with ?disturbance F3 in foreground, surface F2 in middle and post-hole F1 at the far end of the trench, looking south-east.



Plate 3 East end of north ground-beam trench (A) with surface F2 and post-hole F1 with excavated post-pipe, looking east.

7 Finds

- 7.1 The finds (listed in Table 1) represent all of the pottery collected from the site, also all of the animal bone and metal (other than nails). A selection of the ceramic building material (brick and peg-tile) was made on site.
- 7.2 The finds collected from the site were identified and listed by Howard Brooks of CAT. The pottery fabrics follow the Essex post-Roman pottery codes used in *CAR 7*.

Table 1: list of finds by context.

context	finds context	bag	Qt	Wt	description	date / comments
L3	removal	1	2	76.0	Animal bones	
L3	removal	1	2	53.0	Peg-tile fragments	
L3	cleaning over F2	3	1	0.5	CuA lace-end, Crummy Type 1 (<i>CAR 2</i> , 13)	on Colchester sites, these date from c AD 1375 to 1550/75
L3	cleaning over F2	3	1	2.4	Fabric 48d sherd	19th-20th century
L3	cleaning over F2	3	1	17.0	Animal bone	
L3	cleaning over F2	4	3	257.0	Peg-tile fragments 1-2) 12-13mm thick 3) 18mm thick – early piece?	mixture of early (ie medieval) peg-tile and normal medieval/post-medieval peg-tiles
L3	cleaning over F2	4	7	96.0	Animal bone	

context	finds context	bag	Qt	Wt	description	date / comments
L3	cleaning over F2	4	1	6.0	Oyster shell	
L3	cleaning over F2	4	1	4.0	Fe nail shank fragment	
L3	cleaning over F2	4	2	14.0	Sherds of Colchester-type ware (Fabric 21a), probably later type	15th-16th century
L3	cleaning over F2	4	2	2.7	Post-medieval red earthenware (Fabric 40) body sherd with very good, clear glaze	anywhere from late 16th to 18th century
L3	cleaning over F2	4	2	5.4	Unidentified sherd, possibly Roman, more likely medieval white ware fabric (Fabric 23)	probably 13th-14th century though possibly Roman
F3	fill	2	1	433.0	Fragment of Tudor brick: 112 x ? x 50mm	'Tudor' type of 15th- to 16th-century date (Ryan & Andrews 1993, 100-101)
F3	fill	2	1	39.0	Rim of large storage jar or cistern in Colchester-type ware (Fabric 21a); sparsely glazed, flat-topped, almost triangular section rim, external rim diameter 22cm	no close parallels for rim form in <i>CAR 7</i> , though the diameter matches a range of large storage jars and cisterns (<i>CAR 7</i> , 202-5), which generally date to the 17th or 18th century
F3	fill	2	1	23.0	Animal bone	
F2	removed from F2	5	4	15.0	Grey ware sherds, almost certainly all Colchester-type ware (Fabric 21a)	15th-16th century
F2	removal of F2	6	1	375.0	Frogless red brick: ? x ? x 63mm, sandy gritty fabric	this brick is thicker than the normal 'Tudor' type, which was intended to be 2" thick (ie 50mm). Although bricks of this thickness are commonest in a 17th- or 18th-century context (Ryan & Andrews 1993, 102-3), bricks of this thickness are known from a number of Essex sites in the late 15th and early 16th centuries (<i>ibid</i> , 100-101). The absence of a frog would put it pre-c 1850. The date is therefore possibly as early as the later 15th century, but is more likely to be later
F2	removal of F2	6	1	574.0	Pale brown brick: ? x 65 x ? mm?; some wear on surface may suggest it is a floor brick	this is either a stock brick of 17th-century date, or a floor brick, in which case it is probably not pre-18th century (Ryan & Andrews 1993, 96-8)

context	finds context	bag	Qt	Wt	description	date / comments
F2	removal of F2	6	2	640.0	Peg-tile fragments 1) 12-13 mm thick 2) 18-19 mm thick – possibly early medieval?	medieval/post-medieval
F2	removal of F2	6	4	72.0	Animal bones	
F2	removal of F2	6	1	80.0	Red brick scrap	post-medieval?
F2	removal of F2	6	3	28.6	Sherds of Colchester-type ware (Fabric 21a): 1) plain sherd 2) green-glazed body sherd (13th-14th) 3) rilled base of baluster jug (13th-14th century: CAR 7, 179)	13th-14th century
F2	removal of F2	6	1	8.3	Oyster shell	

8 Discussion

Despite hand excavation of the gravel surface F2 (section 6.8) which was exposed in the ground-beam trenches, the date when it was originally laid remains obscure, though a post-medieval (17th- to 18th-century) date appears most likely.

All of the small quantity of pottery retrieved from the intact areas of the surface is of medieval (13th- to 14th-century and 15th- to 16th-century) date (Table 1).

However, hand excavation of the surface produced two well-stratified brick pieces of different types and small fragment of brick (Table 1). The two brick pieces, given the limitations of dating pieces of ceramic building materials, are probably both at least of 17th-century date, and one piece is possibly at least as late as the 18th century. The small brick fragment is probably post-medieval.

While there was no indication that the post-medieval brick pieces were intrusive in the gravel surface, the possibility remains that they could represent material used in later undetected patching or repair. The possibly disturbed area F3 (section 6.9), which contained a large pottery rim sherd of 17th- or 18th-century date, could indicate that later repairs may have been made to an earlier existing surface.

On present evidence, it would appear that the gravel surface is probably of post-medieval date, probably laid out in the 17th-18th century, but an earlier date cannot be entirely excluded. The clay-packed post-holes, F1 and F4-F6 (section 6.10), are undated. The post-holes were encountered at the same stratigraphical level as the gravel surface. Also the gravel surface could not be traced beyond the two most easterly post-holes F1 and F4 (section 6.10). This suggests that they are approximately contemporary and possibly related.

The post-holes clearly relate to a structure or out-building, and the peg-tiles of L4 (section 6.7) which were encountered on top of the gravel surface could originate from its roof after demolition. A structure that was still standing when the gravel surface went out of use suggests that it should date to the post-medieval period of the 17th-18th century. Given its location at the rear of the property, a structure here would probably have been an out-building or covered area used as a store or workshop.

It can be noted that, while the number of finds from the site is not great, much of the pottery, some of the peg-tile fragments, and the one datable small find (a copper-alloy lace-end) are of medieval date. The earliest dated pottery is of the 13th-14th century, and this suggests occupation within this area of the town from that date.

9 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited with Braintree Museum under accession code BRNTM 2005.1.

10 Acknowledgements

The Trust would like to thank the current owner of the property, Mr J Wardrop, for commissioning and funding the work. The fieldwork was carried out by Stephen Benfield.

11 Abbreviations

CAR 5	1988	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 5: The post-Roman small finds from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by N Crummy
CAR 7	2000	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by John Cotter

12 References

Andrews, D D (ed)	1993	<i>Cressing Temple: a Templar and Hospitaller Manor in Essex</i> (Essex County Council Planning Department)
CM	2002	<i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i>
CM	2003	<i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums</i>
EAA 3	1997	<i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 3 , ed by J Glazebrook
EAA 8	2000	<i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 8 , ed by N Brown & J Glazebrook
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14 , by D Gurney
IFA	1999	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
IFA	2001	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
MAP 2	1991	<i>Management of archaeological projects</i> , 2nd edition (English Heritage)
Medlycott, M	1999	<i>Coggeshall: historic town project assessment report</i> (ECC internal document)
Ryan, Pat, & Andrews, D D	1993	'A brick typology for Cressing Temple', 93-104 in Andrews 1993

13 Glossary

feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
lace-end	small metal wraps fitted to laces which prevent the ends from fraying
layer	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
NGR	National Grid Reference
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
peg-tile	rectangular thin tile with peg-hole(s) used mainly for roofing, first appear c 1200 and continue to present day, but commonly post-medieval to modern
post-medieval	after Henry VIII to around the late 18th century
post-packing	distinct material packed around a post in a pit to hold the post fast
post-pipe	identifiable trace of the lower part of a post within the fill of a post-pit

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Distribution list:

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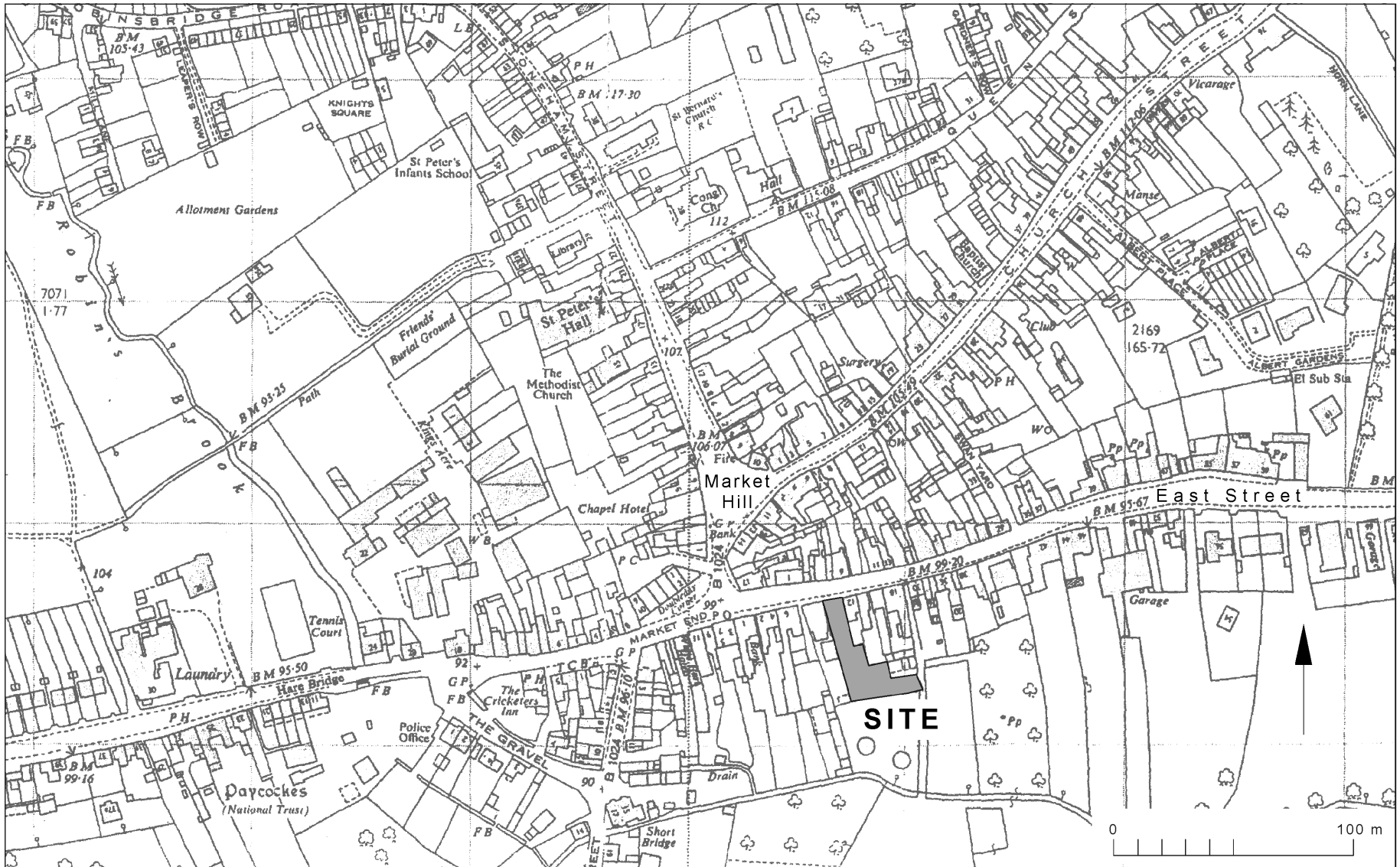


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Fig 1 Site location.

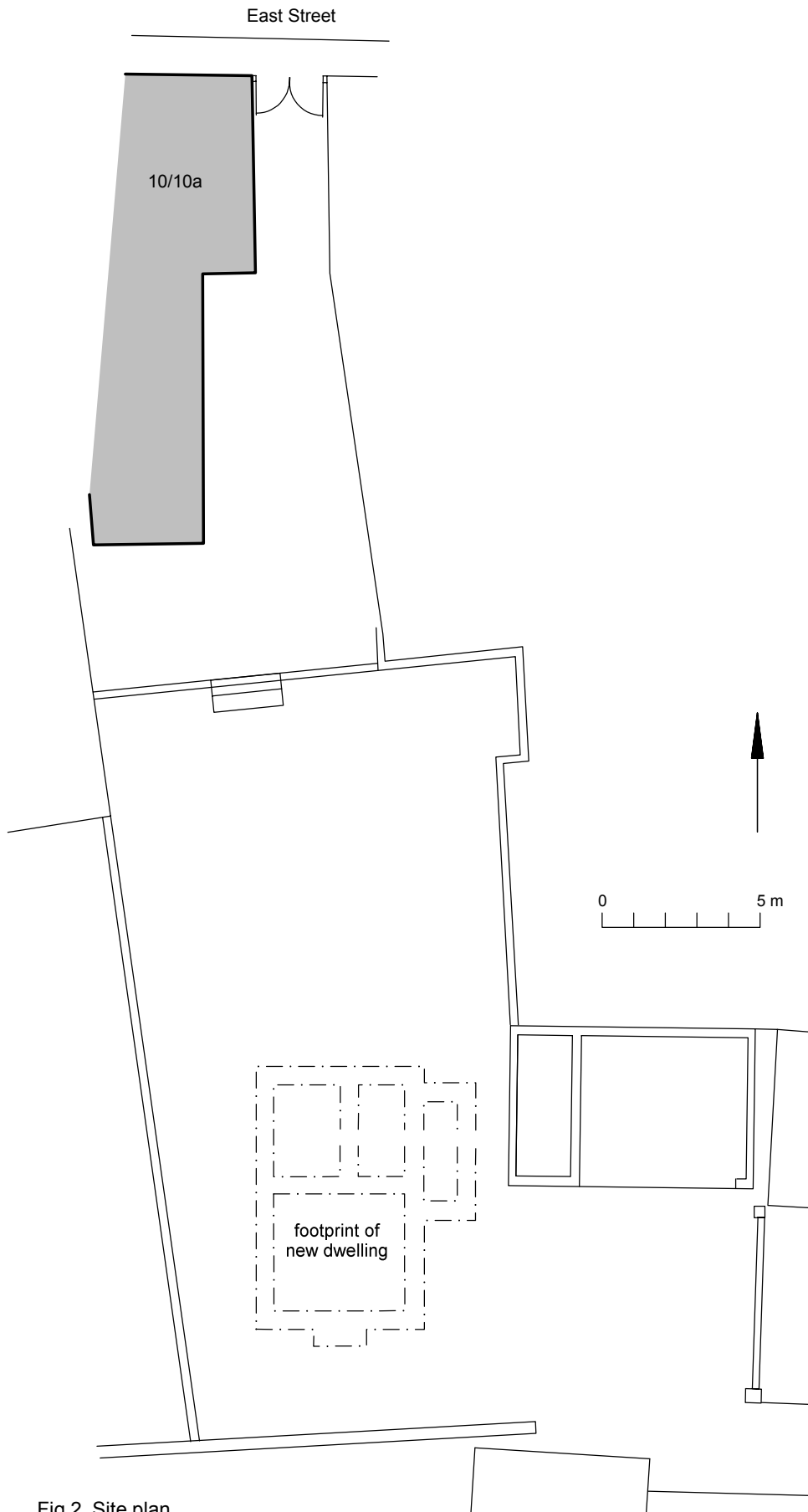


Fig 2 Site plan.

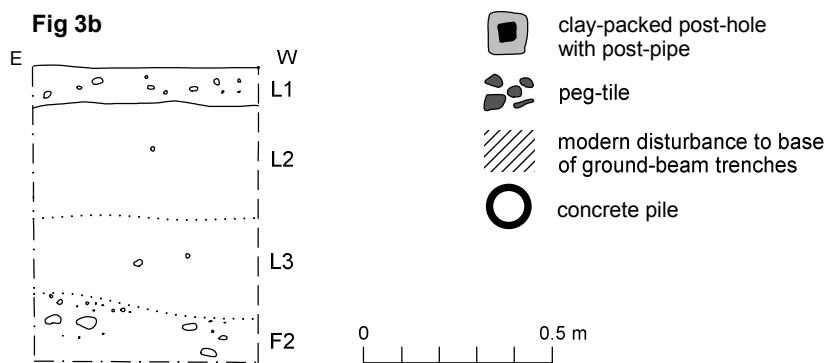
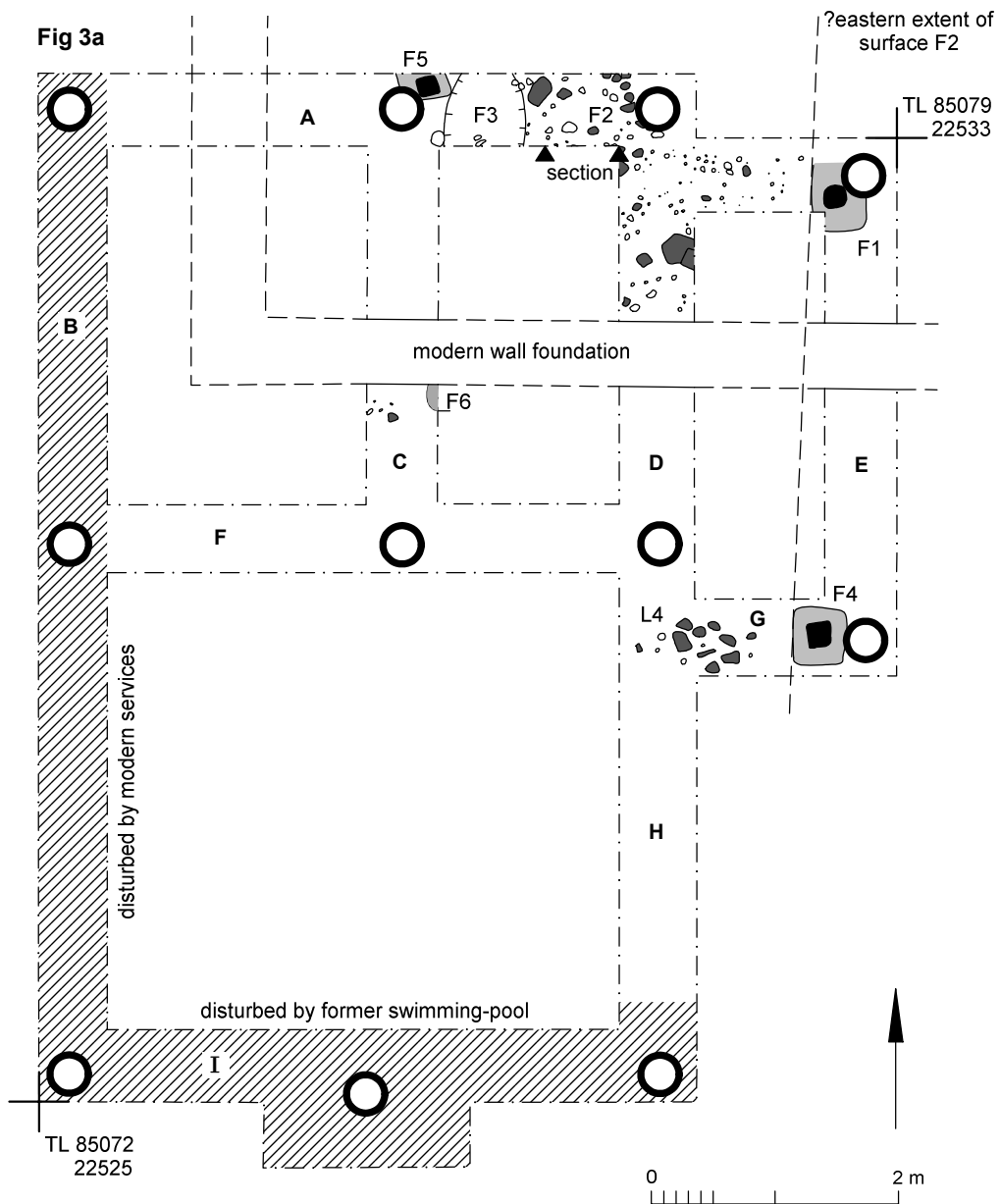


Fig 3a Plan of site showing all features and location of recorded section.

Fig 3b Section.

**Essex Historic Environment Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

Site address: 10/10a East Street, Coggeshall, Essex	
Parish: Coggeshall	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 8507 2256	Site code: Museum accession code BRNTM 2005.1
Type of work: Watching brief and recording	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: April 2005	Size of area investigated: 7m x 8m
Location of finds/curating museum: Braintree Museum	Funding source: Private
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER nos:
Final report: CAT Report 321 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: medieval, post-medieval, modern	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>A watching brief was carried out on groundworks for the construction of a small dwelling in the garden at the rear of the property at 10/10a East Street, Coggeshall, Essex. The new dwelling replaces a store building which occupied the area. The property is situated on the south side of the main road through the town (which follows the line of a Roman road) and is close to the medieval centre of the town located around Market Hill. The garden of the property slopes down toward the edge of the flood-plain of the River Blackwater. The west side of the footprint of the new dwelling was found to have been disturbed by modern services, and the south side by the remains of a former swimming-pool. Within the construction trenches over the central and north-eastern parts of the footprint of the new dwelling were the remains of a gravel surface and several clay-packed post-holes which represent a previous out-building. These features were encountered at a depth of approximately 0.7 m below the present ground-level. The poor quality of the gravel surface suggests a yard, although, in conjunction with the post-holes, it may represent a covered surface belonging to the out-building. Peg-tiles sealing the gravel surface possibly originate from demolition of the roof of the out-building supported by the post-holes. Although the majority of the pottery finds securely associated with the surface are of the medieval period (13th-14th century to 15th century), pieces of bricks recovered from the surface suggest that it is almost certainly of post-medieval (17th- to 18th-century) date.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
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