An archaeological excavation of test-holes at St Barnabas' Church, Alphamstone, Essex March and May 2007

report prepared by Kate Orr

commissioned by David Whymark Building Design and Conservation on behalf of the Friends of St Barnabas', Alphamstone

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1 Summary

Three test-holes dug by CAT at the northern side of the nave encountered features and layers, some pre-dating the construction of the nave. Of principal interest was an east-west aligned inhumation burial, of probable Anglo-Saxon or Norman date. A Roman layer or feature fill in one of the test-holes may be associated with the nearby villa. The nave foundation was seen to extend to between 400 and 500mm below ground-level and to be of unmortared stone and earth construction.

2 Introduction (Figs 1-2)

2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological excavation of three test-holes at St Barnabas' Church, Alphamstone, Essex. The investigation was carried out on the 12th and 13th March and the 22nd May 2007 by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT), on behalf of the Friends of St Barnabas', Alphamstone.

2.2 The village of Alphamstone is located to the south of Sudbury and the church lies close to the junction of Goulds Road and Lamarsh Road at National Grid Reference TL 8788 3545. The test-holes were dug by CAT at the exterior of the church, along the north side.

2.3 Movement in the chancel arch of the church prompted this initial structural investigation. The test-holes were dug so that engineers could bore holes through the bottom in order to investigate the ground. The results of the investigation are to be used to inform either a faculty application or a planning application for repair work.

2.4 A brief for the project was written by Vanessa Clarke the ECC Historic Environment Management (HEM) team officer. CAT submitted a written scheme of investigation for the project which received approval from the ECC HEM officer.

2.5 This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the 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 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (IFA 1999) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001). Other sources used are *Management of research projects in the historic environment* (MoRPHE), and *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**).

3 Aim

The aim of the investigation was to record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains. Particular attention was paid to the potential for:

- Evidence of Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman or later occupation
- Evidence of earlier phases of the church, including the possible Anglo-Saxon minster
- Evidence of grave cuts.

4 Archaeological background (Figs 1-2 and Plate 1)

4.1 Of the church building standing today, most elements date from the medieval period. The nave is thought to be the earliest surviving element, being Anglo-Saxon or Norman in date. The south aisle and chancel are 14th century. The west tower is the replacement for the original tower which was demolished (Rodwell & Rodwell 1977, 94). At the centre of the north wall, a pocket of the face of the wall is made up with

skulls and long bones at ground-level (EHER nos 9321-9324 and 28558). The reasons for suggesting that the church may be pre-conquest (ie Anglo-Saxon) are as follows:

- The 880mm-thick nave walls which are unusually wide.
- The Roman brick quoins in the nave which indicate an Anglo-Saxon or Norman construction. In the later medieval period, Roman brick and tile was used only as random rubble (Rodwell & Rodwell 1977, 91).
- The church is adjacent to the site of a Roman villa. Continuity between Roman estates and Anglo-Saxon churches has been observed in Essex, for example, SS Peter and Paul in West Mersea, St Peter's in Bradwell-juxta-Mare, and St Mary and All Saints' in Rivenhall are all churches with Anglo-Saxon origins which have all been built on the site of Roman buildings.

4.2 Rodwell and Rodwell cite St Barnabas' Church as a prime site for an Anglo-Saxon minster church (Rodwell & Rodwell 1977, 94). Minsters were monastic churches founded by the early Christian missionaries from the 7th century and were operating into the 11th century. The word is simply the Anglo-Saxon translation of the Latin *monasterium.* These were staffed by a team of peripatetic clergy, primarily Celtic monks, who used the minsters as bases from which to travel into their area to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments. One minster church would serve a wide area and the changeover to the present-day parochial system happened gradually over time.

4.3 The churchyard stands as a raised area above the surrounding fields and has yielded Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman pottery. The Roman pottery is mostly 1st century in date, and includes a fragment of a dish in a Belgic technique but of Gallo-Belgic form. A bronze needle and two Roman coins have also been recorded from the churchyard. The south edge of the churchyard is on the line of a rubble and mortar wall believed to be Roman in date. This undoubtedly forms part of the scheduled Roman villa complex immediately to the south of the churchyard (SAM no 24872). The villa was identified through a surface scatter of building material and pottery within the ploughsoil, marking the site of buried wall foundations, pits and ditches (Essex Historic Environment Record or EHER nos 9317-9318).

4.4 Many Bronze Age urns have been discovered in and around the churchyard and in a field to the west. They are thought to form part of a Bronze Age cemetery (EHER no 9319). Rodwell and Rodwell, writing about churches in Essex (1977, 74), comment that prehistoric sites may have retained their sanctity into the Christian Anglo-Saxon period and there is a probability that the sanctity of burials was respected by the church builders if only out of sheer superstition. Alternatively, the establishment of the church building here may have been a deliberate attempt to Christianise a pagan site (see section 4.5).

4.5 Many sarsen stones have been gathered to the area and are distributed in and about the churchyard which has led to speculation that they once formed part of a prehistoric stone circle (EHER no 9320). Stone circles are a phenomenon of the Neolithic and Bronze Age and are often surrounded by Bronze Age burials. Two large sarsens have actually been incorporated into the church foundations and can be seen in the interior of the church projecting from the west wall of the nave. This suggests that the building of the church on this site was a deliberate attempt to Christianise a pagan site.

4.6 As an archaeological complex, the church and churchyard at Alphamstone must rank amongst the most important in Essex (Rodwell & Rodwell 1977, 94).

5 Methods (Fig 2 and Plate 1)

5.1 Three test-holes (Test-holes 1-3) were hand-dug at the exterior of the church, along the north wall of the nave, to the level of the base of the nave foundation.

5.2 All features and layers or other significant deposits revealed were planned, and their profiles or sections recorded. The normal scale was for site plans at 1:20 and sections at 1:10.

5.3 Individual records of features were entered on CAT pro-forma recording sheets.

5.4 Finds were registered on CAT pro-forma record sheets and assigned finds numbers according to context. Finds were washed, marked with the site code number, and bagged according to context. Roman pottery and medieval pottery was examined by CAT archaeologists Stephen Benfield and Howard Brooks.

5.5 Colour photographs of the main features, sections, the general site and the site environs were taken with a digital camera.

6 Results

6.1 **Test-hole 1** (Figs 2-3 and Plate 2)

Test-hole 1 was positioned at the east corner of the nave where the nave joins the chancel. A trial-hole was dug here in 2006 and Test-hole 1 was deliberately positioned on the site of the backfilled trial-hole. Test-hole 1 was 1.2m long by 800mm wide. It was dug into a south-facing slope, ie the north end of the hole was 1m deep and the south end was 550mm deep.

Most of the test-hole was dug through loose medium brown silty clay, the modern backfill of the 2006 trial-hole which included modern finds (F7). However, at the northern end of the test-hole, which extended beyond the 2006 trial-hole, topsoil (L1) was encountered. L1 was similar to F7 but more compact and without modern finds. L1 topsoil was encountered in all three test-holes and consisted of medium dark brown silty clay with flecks of charcoal, tile and mortar with some root activity. In this test-hole, L1 was 550mm to 1m thick and came down onto natural clay (L2). It was a fairly homogeneous layer. However, pockets of clay lower down could be redeposited natural. The foundation of the nave was exposed at the southern edge of the test-hole (F1). The foundation was shallow, extending to only 500mm below ground-level. It consisted of nodules of flint and other stone including chalk. The stones were not mortared together but were loosely bound by a mid-orange brown sandy silt with some gravel, mortar and pockets of sand. The foundation projected out 30mm from the nave wall. It was capped by a 50mm-thick layer of flint nodules bonded with mortar. This layer was visible above ground, below the render of the wall.

Cut into the natural clay were three cut features, ie F4, F5 and F6. F5 was on the northern side of the test-hole. Its shape and its apparent east-west alignment gave it the appearance of a grave cut. F5 was left unexcavated. A stake hole (F6) to the south of F5 was excavated but is of unknown date.

The most interesting feature within Test-hole 1 was a cut feature at the southern edge (F4). Excavation of F4 revealed some tile, pottery, flint, flecks of charcoal, oystershell and tile in its fill. The ends of two human tibia were seen near the base of F4 projecting out of the east-facing section, 700mm below ground-level. F4 is interpreted as being the eastern terminal of a grave cut. In May 2007, the test-hole was extended by 440mm to the west so that more of this presumed burial could be exposed. This extra work revealed the lower end of an articulated skeleton lying parallel to the foundation, ie a pair of tibia and fibulae plus a pair of femurs. The entire skeleton was not exposed because extending the trench further might have undermined the nave foundation. The burial was aligned with the head end to the west. One of the fibulae was out of place, indicating some disturbance, but it was otherwise well preserved. Interestingly, the cut for F4 continued underneath the foundation, implying that the burial pre-dates the nave foundation. Some Roman tile and small fragments of Roman pottery were found at the same level as the bone. One piece of possible Anglo-Saxon pottery was also present near the bone. The burial was left *in situ.*

Plate 2: burial F4 and foundation F1 in Test-hole 1, view south-west.

6.2 Test-hole 2 (Figs 2 and 4)

Test-hole 2 was dug at the north-west corner of the church, between the north porch and the north-west buttress. The hole was 1.2m long by 650mm wide and 650mm deep. A 550mm-thick layer of compact topsoil (L1) was removed. This contained Roman pottery, Roman tile, peg-tile, daub, flint and human bone and a copper-alloy shoe buckle of late medieval to early post-medieval date. The nave foundation (F1) was found to extend to 500mm below ground-level and to be of the same loose stone and earth mix as seen in Test-holes 1 and 3. Also, as in Test-hole 1, the stone and earth foundation was capped by a layer of hard mortar with very large flint nodules. The foundation to the nave (F1) projected out between 60mm and 80mm from the church wall.

A large tree root that was growing around the foundation was left undisturbed. Below the level of the foundation and merging into topsoil (L1) was a layer of dark brown clayey silt with flecks of mortar, oystershell, tile and charcoal (L3). This layer contained frequent clay patches. It also contained more Roman pottery and human bone than L1. The human bone was largely disarticulated and seemed to represent more than one individual. There were no obvious grave cuts. Unlike Test-holes 1 and 3, the nave foundation observed in this test-hole appeared to be built onto L3 and not on natural clay. There is a possibility that L3 was not a layer but the fill of a large pit or ditch; however, in such a small trench it was not possible to verify this. The date of the pottery from L3 was early 2nd to late 2nd/early 3rd century. Whether L3 is a pit or a layer, it can be dated as Roman and thus pre-dates the church. The excavation of the test-hole was stopped at a depth of 650mm because the base of the foundation had been reached.

6.3 Test-hole 3 (Figs 2 and 5)

Test-hole 3 was located at the centre of the north nave wall, just east of the north porch, but was positioned to miss the known area of human bones set into the face of the wall. The hole was 1.2m long and 600mm wide and between 800mm and 850mm deep. A layer 800mm thick, of compact topsoil (L1), was removed. This contained flecks of mortar and charcoal, clay patches, some Roman tile, peg-tile, Roman pottery and one sherd of 12th- to 13th-century pottery. Tree-root activity was also recorded. Fragments of human bone were also present in L1.

The nave foundation (F1) projected out between 120mm and 160mm from the nave wall. The base of the foundation was 400mm below ground-level. As seen in the other two test-holes, the foundation consisted of nodules of stone (mainly flint), with some chalk and occasional tile, within a loose earth matrix. It was capped by between 250mm and 300mm of hard mortar with large flint nodules, which, as in the other two test-holes, was visible above ground. There was a tree root growing into the foundation.

Below topsoil, the natural clay (L2) was encountered, cut by two features. F2 was a small pit which extended underneath the foundation. Its fill was similar to topsoil, ie a dark brown silty clay with occasional flecks of mortar and tile but mixed with light brown clay patches. The pit was 400mm deep and did not contain any datable finds. The north side of the test-hole featured a cut feature (F3) which may have been an east-west aligned grave cut, but this was not excavated. There was no cut visible in the sections, but a bone projecting out of the east-facing section may have been part of a burial. Alternatively, it may just be a piece of disarticulated human bone within the topsoil and F3 may be a non-burial feature such as a pit.

7 The finds

7.1 The Roman pottery

by Stephen Benfield

Introduction

The test-holes produced a small quantity (489 g) of Roman pottery sherds. The pottery was recorded using the Roman pottery fabric type series devised for *CAR* **10** in which all of the fabrics are recorded as two-letter codes (Table 1). Where appropriate, reference has been made to the corresponding fabric types described in the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber & Dore 1998). The vessel forms were recorded using the Camulodunum (Cam) Roman pottery form type series (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull 1958). The pottery fabrics and the vessel forms present in each site context were recorded for each finds number. The number of sherds and the identifiable pottery forms were recorded for each fabric. The total weight of pottery and an overall spot date was recorded for each finds number. This information is set out in the catalogue of Roman pottery below.

Table 1: Roman pottery fabric codes and fabric names used in this report (after *CAR* 10).

Fabric code	Fabric name	National Roman Fabric Reference Collection fabric
DJ	coarse oxidised and related wares	COL WH
GB	BB2: black-burnished ware, category 2	COL BB2
GX	other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares	
HZ	large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares	
KX	black-burnished ware (BB2) types in pale grey ware	

Discussion

Sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from all of the test-holes. The pottery consists entirely of sherds of coarse ware fabrics. Some of the sherds are slightly abraded. The sherds are mostly of coarse grey ware (Fabric GX). There are also some sherds in a white oxidised ware (Fabric DJ), black-burnished ware category 2 (BB2; Fabric GB) together with a possible black-burnished ware vessel type in grey ware fabric (Fabric KX), and some thick coarse-tempered sherds (Fabric HZ). Only one numbered vessel form type could be identified among the sherds. This is a chamfered bowl decorated with sloping burnished lines (Test-hole 1, finds no 6). The

decoration suggests that this is form Cam 37A and it can be dated to the early 2nd-late 2nd/early 3rd century. However, other general vessel types can be recognised. The oxidised sherds are probably from a flagon, and the sherds in Fabric HZ are from two large storage jars. The sherds in grey ware (Fabric GX) are predominantly from jars or bowls, although one thick grey ware sherd is probably from a storage jar, and a base sherd with a small footring possibly represents a grey ware beaker. While much of the pottery can only be dated as Roman, the more closely datable fabrics and forms are of 1st- to 2nd-/3rd-century date.

Catalogue of Roman pottery

Test-hole 1

F1

Finds no 10 (3 g); Fabric GX?, 1 sherd. Abraded grey ware sherd with partly oxidised surface, probably Roman.

F4

Finds no 8 (9 g); Fabric GX, 1 sherd, Roman.
Finds no 12 (21 g); Fabric GX?, 4 sherds, Roman.

L1

Finds no 9 (20 g); Fabric DJ, 1 sherd, 1st-2nd/3rd century; Fabric GX, 1 sherd, Roman. Both sherds abraded.

Test-hole 2

L1

Finds no 3 (107 g); Fabric GX, 8 sherds. 6 body sherds in gritty grey ware, 1 abraded sherd from a jar or bowl base that is mostly oxidised red-brown, 1 abraded sherd possibly of Fabric KX.
Pottery dated Roman, ?2nd-3rd century.

L3

Finds no 6 (44 g); Fabric GB, 1 sherd from a chamfered bowl decorated with angled burnished lines, probably of form Cam 37A, dated early 2nd-late 2nd/early 3rd century; Fabric GX, 6 sherds, Roman.
Pottery dated early 2nd to late 2nd/early 3rd century.

Test-hole 3

L1

Finds no 2 (306 g); Fabric DJ, 1 sherd, 1st-2nd/3rd century; Fabric GX, 6 sherds, includes a sherd from a large jar and a base sherd with a small footring possibly part of a beaker, Roman; Fabric HZ, 4 sherds from 2 large storage jars, 1st-2nd/3rd century.
Pottery dated Roman, probably 1st-2nd/3rd century.

7.2 The post-Roman pottery

by Howard Brooks

Description of pottery

Fabrics present are as follows (after Cunningham 1985 and *CAR* **7**): possible Fabric 1, Saxon vegetable-tempered ware; Fabric 13, early medieval sandy ware; and Fabric 22, Hedingham fine ware.

Catalogue of post-Roman pottery

Test-hole 1

L1

Finds no 9, one Hedingham fine ware body sherd, 2g. Date: mid 12th to 13th century.

F7

Finds no 10, one type C1 beaded rim of cooking pot with thumbed rim, in early medieval sandy ware. Too small to measure diameter, but probably close to *CAR* **7** figure 23.25. Date: late 11th century.

F4
Finds no 12, one sherd of gritless dark grey pottery, oxidised on the exterior; shows signs of possible grass or chaff temper, 4g – could be a Saxon vegetable-tempered ware sherd dating to the mid Anglo-Saxon period, or equally it could be Roman grey ware.

Test-hole 3
L1
Finds no 2, one Hedingham fine ware body sherd with decorated glaze, 3g. Date: mid 12th to 13th century.

Comment
This is a very small group of medieval sherds. Although the sherd of early medieval sandy ware could be contemporary with the early phases of this church, and the high-status Hedingham fine ware does suggest some kind of medieval activity here, it is also possible that these sherds have come from a nearby domestic building and are not actually church-related at all. The Saxon sherd is only a 'possible' and may be Roman grey ware.

7.3 The metalwork

by Nina Crummy

The only object in the assemblage that can be dated reasonably well is a fragment of a shoe buckle that belongs within a range from the 14th-16th or early 17th century. The remaining objects are all nails, of which the one from L1 is probably post-medieval. A well-preserved example with round flat head from L3 may also be post-medieval.

Catalogue

SF 1. (5) L1. Topsoil. Fragment of a copper-alloy shoe buckle with five grooves at the centre of the outer edge of the frame. Length 13.5 mm, width 16 mm. Date range: late medieval to early post-medieval.

(9) L1. Topsoil. Iron nail with damaged square head, tip of shank missing. Length 50 mm.

(6) L3. Layer. Two iron nails. a) With round flat head and curved shank. Length 32 mm. b) With round convex head, tip of shank missing. Length 45 mm.

(10) F7. Pit. Iron nail with ?rectangular head. Length 39 mm.

7.4 Other finds

Table 2: list of all finds.

finds no	test-hole	context	description	date	weight (in g)
Human bone					
1	Test-hole 3	L1	Human bone inc skull fragments	undated	86.0
2	Test-hole 3	L1	Human bone fragments	undated	34.0
3	Test-hole 2	L1	Human bone fragments	undated	29.8
4	Test-hole 2	L1	Human bone inc fragments of skull, arm bone (from a child?), ?femur, ribs, fingers and toes? (more than one individual)	undated	1,120.0
6	Test-hole 2	L3	Human bone - fragments of ?arm	undated	37.8
7	Test-hole 2	L3	Human bone inc ribs, fragment of femur, and pelvis	undated	354.0
9	Test-hole 1	L1	Human bone inc fragments of arm, leg and finger	undated	133.0

8	Test-hole 1	F4	Human bone inc ?hand bone, fragments of ball sockets from an arm?	undated	118.0
Animal bone					
6	Test-hole 2	L3	tooth	undated	4.0
Roman CBM					
2	Test-hole 3	L1	Roman tile, some showing signs of re-use, plus daub	Roman	2,343.0
3	Test-hole 2	L1	Roman tile and daub	Roman	1,911.6
6	Test-hole 2	L3	Roman tile and 2 *tesserae*	Roman	273.1
9	Test-hole 1	L1	Roman tile, some showing signs of re-use	Roman	1,595.0
10	Test-hole 1	F7	Roman tile including one white tile	Roman	1,369.9
8	Test-hole 1	F4		Roman	92.1
11	Test-hole 1	F4	Roman tile	Roman	195.0
12	Test-hole 1	F4	Roman tile	Roman	101.0
Peg-tile and pantile					
2	Test-hole 3	L1	Peg-tile	medieval to modern	20.5
3	Test-hole 2	L1	Peg-tile	medieval to modern	97.3
10	Test-hole 1	F7	Pantile	medieval to modern	1,240.0
Pottery					
2	Test-hole 3	L1	Mainly Roman pottery, one sherd of medieval pottery	Roman and 12th-13th century	310.0
3	Test-hole 2	L1	Roman pottery		107.0
6	Test-hole 2	L3	Roman pottery	Roman	47.2
8	Test-hole 1	F4	Roman pottery	Roman	9.8
9	Test-hole 1	L1	Roman and medieval pottery	Roman and 12th-13th century	56.3
10	Test-hole 1	F7	Roman and medieval pottery	Roman and late 11th century	19.9
12	Test-hole 1	F4	Roman grey ware and one sherd of possible mid Anglo-Saxon	Roman and possibly mid Anglo-Saxon	25.0
Oystershell					
3	Test-hole 2	L1	Fragment of oystershell	undated	20.8
6	Test-hole 2	L3	Fragment of oystershell	undated	4.9
Stone					
2	Test-hole 3	L1	Flint nodule	undated	561.1
3	Test-hole 2	L1	Flint nodule	undated	416.3
8	Test-hole 1	F4	Chalk and flint nodule	undated	136.4
10	Test-hole 1	F7	Flint nodule	undated	605.2
Metal objects					
6	Test-hole 2	L3	Two iron nails, 45mm and 32mm long	undated	
9	Test-hole 1	L1	One iron nail, 50mm long	post-medieval	
10	Test-hole 1	F7	One iron nail, 39mm long	undated	
5	Test-hole 2	L1	One copper-alloy object – shoe buckle	14th-16th or early 17th century	

8 Discussion (Fig 3)

The Roman layer in Test-hole 2 may have been part of a large pit or ditch, perhaps a rubbish-pit associated with the nearby villa. Residual Roman pottery and tile was also found in later layers.

The nave foundation (F1) in all three test-holes was of unmortared stone, mainly flint, in a sandy soil matrix with occasional tile. Because of the lack of mortar, tree roots were growing in between the stones. The foundation extended to between 400mm and 500mm below ground-level. As well as being shallow, the foundation did not have a pronounced step out, making it somewhat insubstantial for its purpose. Added to this was the fact that the foundation had not been dug through undisturbed natural clay. In each of the three test-holes, the foundation was sitting on top of cut features or a layer. In Test-hole 1, a grave cut extended underneath the foundation. In Test-hole 2, the foundation was not sitting on natural but on a Roman layer or feature fill. In Test-hole 3, a small pit was seen under the foundation. All these features/layers obviously pre-date the construction of the nave which is Norman or earlier.

The orientation of the human remains in the grave cut by Test-hole 1 suggests that the deceased was a Christian. The burial pre-dates the building of the nave which is Norman or earlier. The site of the Roman villa nearby, the Roman finds from the churchyard and the exposed Roman layer in Test-hole 2 make it possible that the burial is late Roman. However, a Roman burial under a church would be unusual, and it is more likely to be of late Anglo-Saxon or Norman date. If the burial is Anglo-Saxon or Norman, then it supports the argument for an earlier church on the site. The individual may originally have been buried outside the nave, and either the nave replaced an earlier, smaller church or the nave could have been extended to the east. The burial was left *in situ* and may have to be re-excavated if remedial works will disturb it. Two other possible grave cuts were exposed in Test-holes 1 and 3. These were not excavated and so remain uncertain. The other feature recorded was an undated stake hole in Test-hole 1.

The investigation did not produce any evidence for Bronze Age burials.

9 Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by David Whymark Building and Design Conservation and funded by the Friends of St Barnabas', Alphamstone. The Trust would like to thank Mark Maley of St Barnabas' Parochial Church Council, the church wardens and Ed Morton for their assistance. The fieldwork was carried out by Kate Orr and David Ross.

10 References

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CAR **10**	1991	*Colchester Archaeological Report* **10**: *Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86*, by R P Symonds and S Wade, ed by P Bidwell and A Croom
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11 Glossary and abbreviations

Anglo-Saxon	the period from *c* AD 410 to the Norman conquest of AD 1066
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum, ie height above sea level
Bronze Age	the period following characterized by the use of Bronze, ie *c* 2,500 BC-700 BC
CBM	ceramic building material; mainly brick, tile and daub
context	specific location on an archaeological site, usually a feature or layer
ECC	Essex County Council
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, ECC
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor
HEM	Historic Environment Management team, ECC
medieval	the period from 1066 to *c* 1500
modern	the period from the mid 19th century to the present
Neolithic	the new stone age *c* 4,000-*c* 2,500 BC
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
Norman	dating from the Norman conquest of 1066 to the mid 12th century
post-medieval	period from *c* 1500 to the mid 19th century
Roman	the period from AD 43 to *c* AD 410
sarsen	sandstone boulder
tesserae	small clay cubes used in a Roman mosaic or tessellated floor
villa	a Roman farmhouse and its associated land and buildings

12 Archive deposition

The finds and the digital and paper archive are held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but both will be permanently deposited with Braintree Museum under accession code BRNTM 2007.121.

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checked by: *Philip Crummy*
date: *31.05.07*

Adams c:/reports07/alphamstone/report417.doc

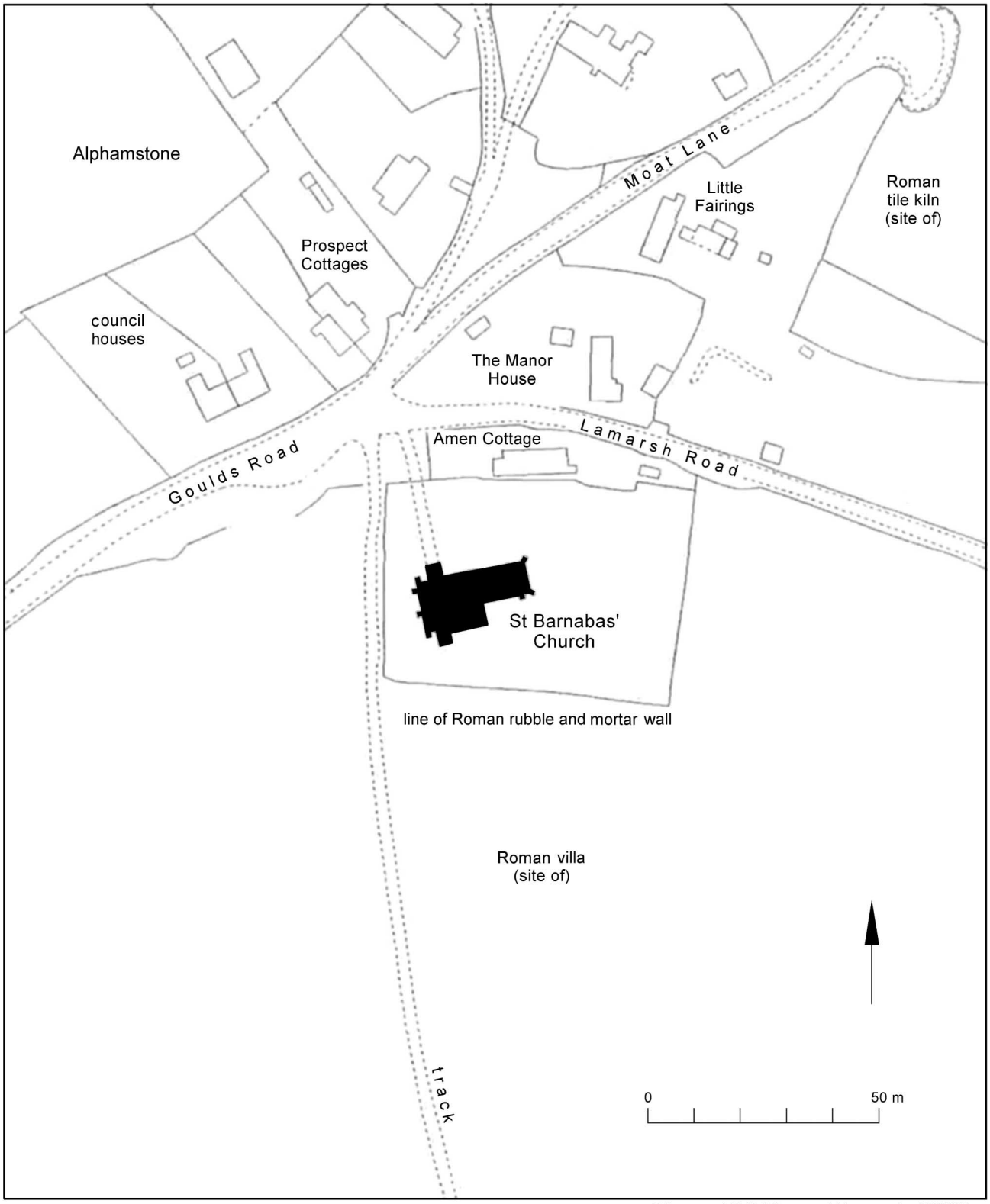


Fig 1 Site location.

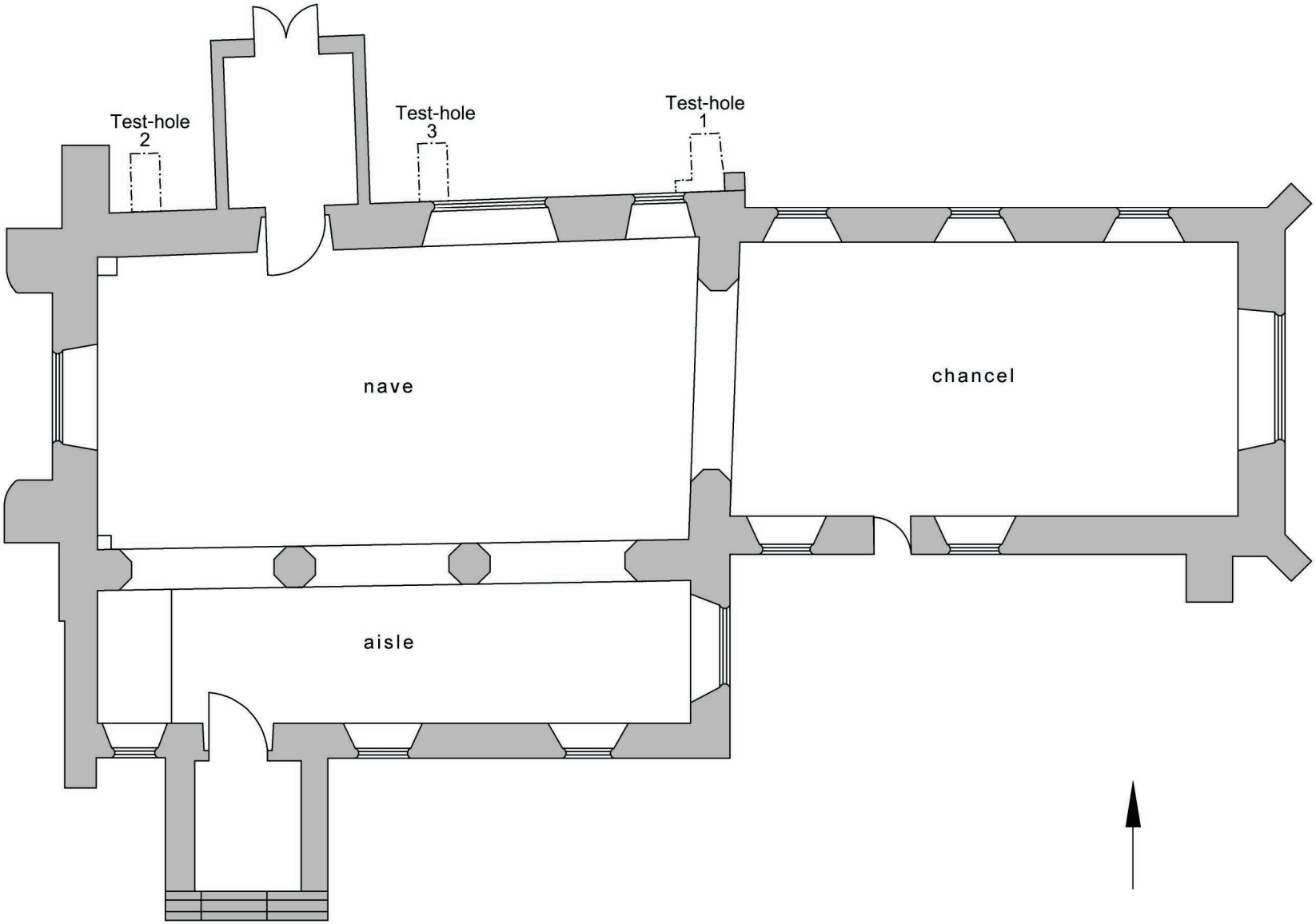
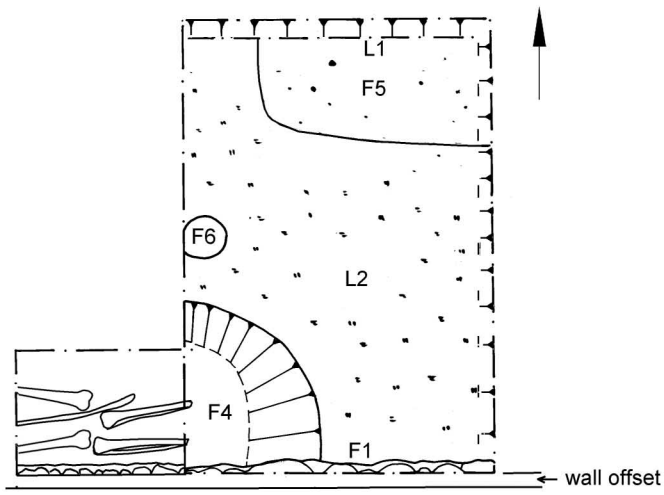
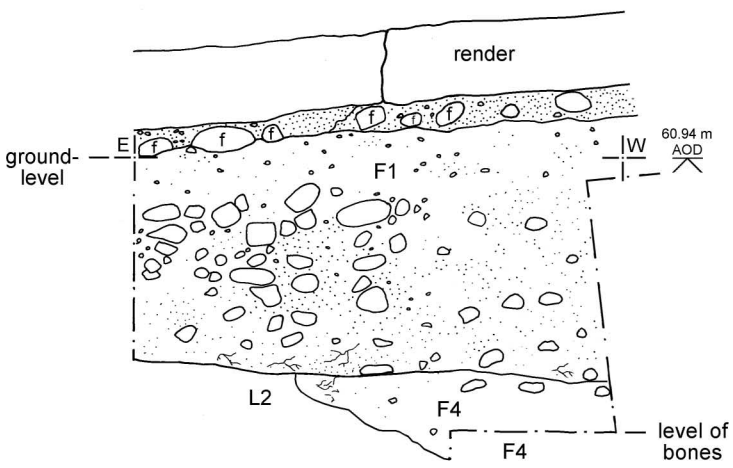
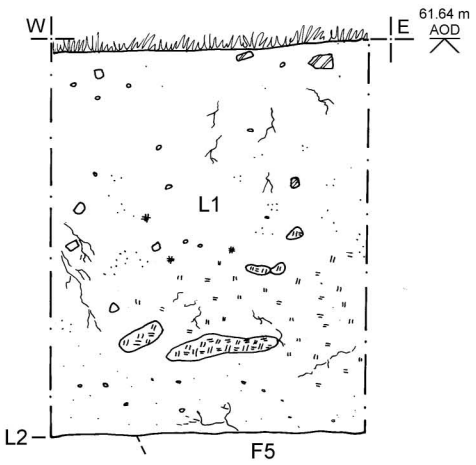
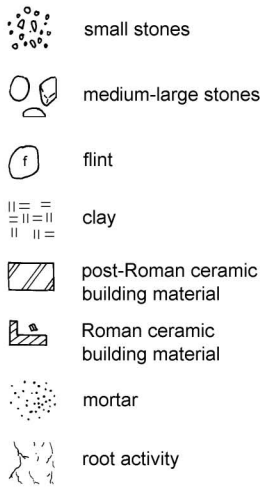


Fig 2 Ground plan of St Barnabas' Church, showing location of test-holes.









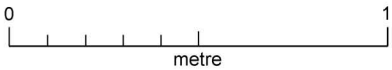


Fig 3 Test-hole 1: plan and sections.

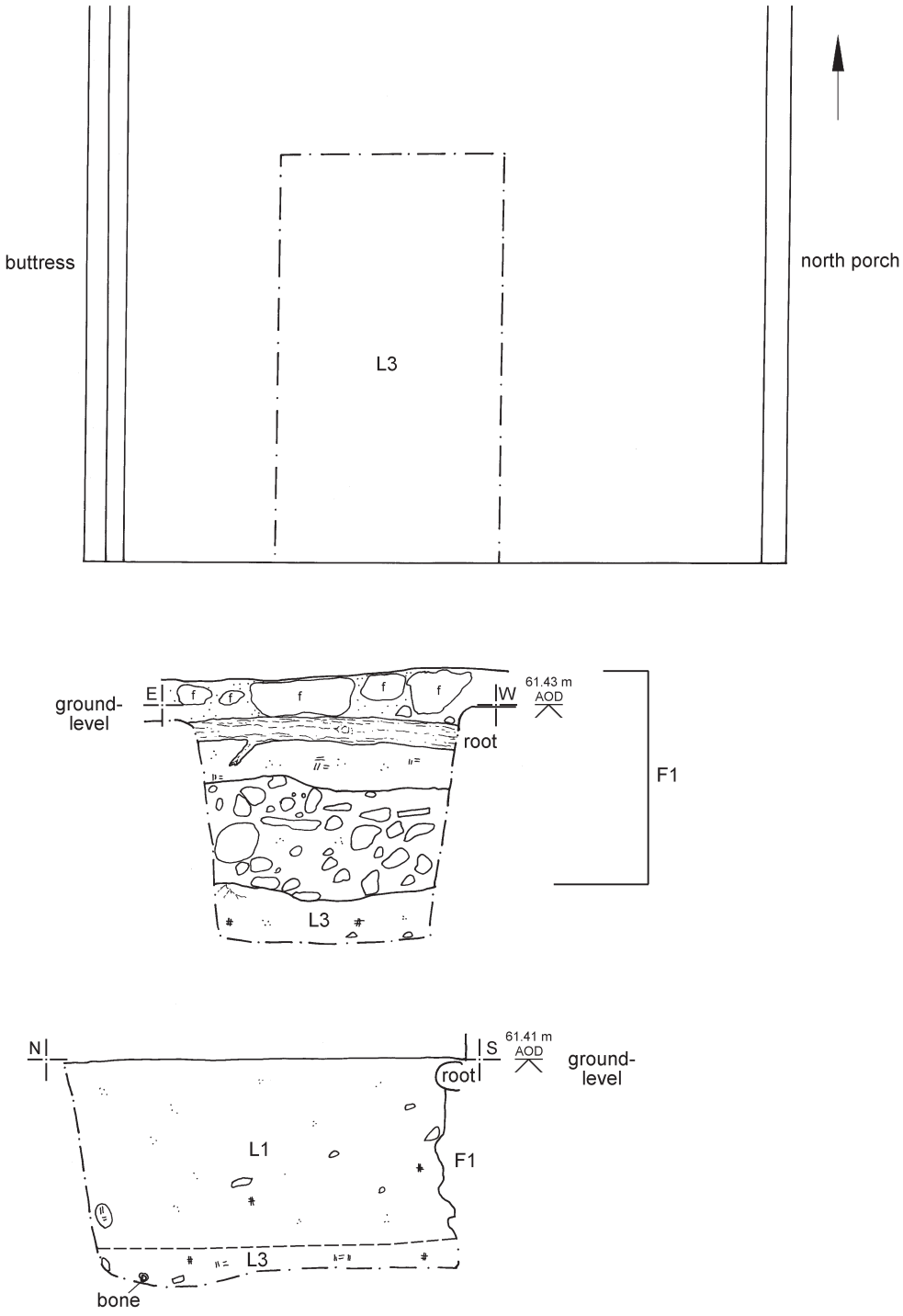
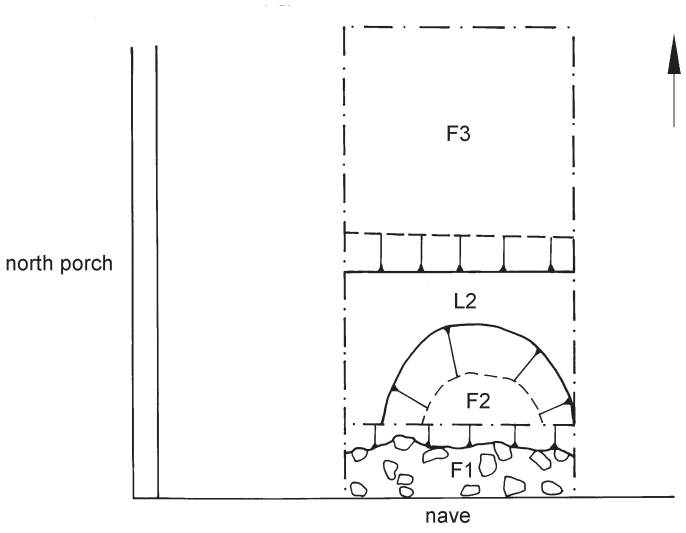
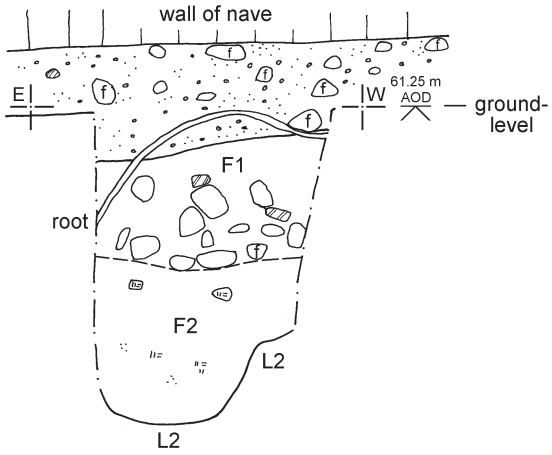
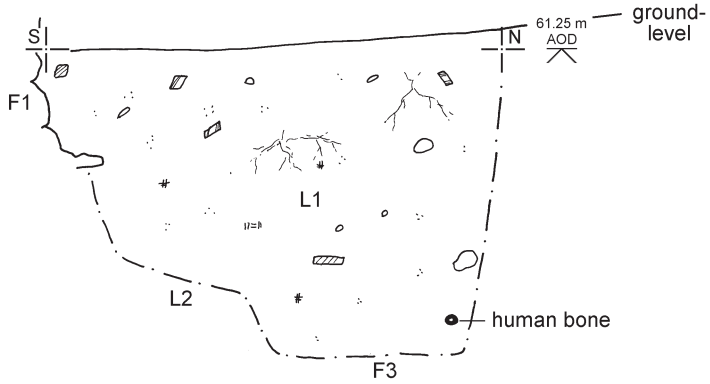


Fig 4 Test-hole 2: plan and sections.







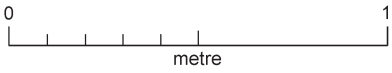


Fig 5 Test-hole 3: plan and sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/
Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Site address: St Barnabas' Church, Alphamstone, Essex	
Parish: Alphamstone	***District:*** Braintree
NGR: TL 8788 3545	***Site code:*** HEM site code APSB07; accession code BRNTM 2007.121
Type of work: Excavation of test-holes	***Site director/group:*** Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: March and May 2007	***Size of area investigated:*** 3 test-holes 800mm x 1.2m wide
Location of finds/curating museum: Braintree Museum	***Funding source:*** the Friends of St Barnabas', Alphamstone
Further seasons anticipated? Yes	***Related EHER nos:*** 9317-9324, 28558
Final report: CAT Report 417 and summary in *EAH*	
Periods represented: Roman, ?Anglo-Saxon, ?Norman	
Summary of fieldwork results: *Three test-holes dug by CAT at the northern side of the nave encountered features and layers, some pre-dating the construction of the nave. Of principal interest was an east-west aligned inhumation burial, of probable Anglo-Saxon or Norman date. A Roman layer or feature fill in one of the test-holes may be associated with the nearby villa. The nave foundation was seen to extend to between 400 and 500mm below ground-level and to be of unmortared stone and earth construction.*	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	***Date of summary:*** May 2007