

**An archaeological evaluation  
at Rawstorn Road (adjacent to Topfield),  
Colchester, Essex  
June 2007**

**report prepared by  
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**on behalf of  
Albermarle Developments**

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## 1 Summary

Two trial-trenches were excavated to evaluate an area currently used as garages next to Topfield, Rawstorn Road in June 2007. The investigation was carried out to evaluate the site of a known Roman inhumation cemetery; however, no burials were exposed by the evaluation trenches. Roman features were present in the form of small pits of uncertain function in Trench 1 and one large pit in Trench 2. Also in Trench 1 was an area of compact gravel that could possibly be interpreted as a metalled trackway or road of presumed Roman date.

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at a site on Rawstorn Road (adjacent to Topfield), Colchester, Essex.
- 2.2 The site is located to the south-west of the St Mary's hospital site (now occupied by the Balkerne Heights residential development), and immediately west of Pope's Lane and north of Rawstorn Road. The site is mainly bounded by residential areas and is located at national grid reference TL 96041 27053. The area is a triangular-shaped parcel of land currently occupied by about 28 garages in a mix of concrete hard standing, rough ground and a tarmac access road. The land slopes down from south-east to north-west.
- 2.3 A planning application for the demolition of the existing garages and construction of a terrace of five houses and two garage blocks was submitted to the local planning authority on 30/03/2007. Due to the site's archaeological sensitivity, an archaeological evaluation was required.
- 2.4 The archaeological work was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between the 4th and 8th June 2007, on behalf of Albermarle Developments.
- 2.5 All fieldwork was done in accordance with a specification agreed with the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer (CBCAO), who also monitored the project. This report conforms to standards and practices contained in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001), and 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). 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 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The site lies approximately 250m west of the Roman town wall. An archaeological trial-trenching evaluation was carried out at the adjacent 'Topfield' in 2001 (CAT Report 134). The evaluation demonstrated that, in the central and south-eastern areas of the site, there are Roman ditches and pits dug possibly for rubbish-disposal and quarrying. At least two inhumations (at 1.0m and 1.1m below ground-level) and further possible grave cuts were found on the east side of the site nearest to the St Mary's hospital site, where other Roman burials have been recorded. All features in the trenches were shallow and sealed by at least 800mm of topsoil.  
In 2006 and 2007, a watching brief was carried out on the same site during groundworks for a residential development which resulted in two further Roman burials being recorded, both at 1m below ground-level (CAT Report 423).
- 3.2 Extra-mural Roman occupation on this side of the town wall has been subject to archaeological excavation at Balkerne Lane (CAR 3) and the former St Mary's hospital site (CAT report in prep). At Balkerne Lane, buildings and property plots fronting the Roman road leading west from the Balkerne Gate were recorded.

Evidence of further buildings and activities including horticulture and sand-quarrying was recorded on areas away from the road frontage.

At the St Mary's hospital site, excavations in 2001-3 uncovered early Roman houses destroyed in the Boudican revolt of AD 60/61. The suburb was rebuilt and a road leading to Sheepen to the north-west was created, plus smaller lanes connecting the houses. By the 4th century AD, settlement had moved back inside the town walls and the area was turned over to use as a cemetery. In all, 86 Roman burials were excavated, mainly from the north and eastern areas of the site.

- 3.3** Earlier recorded finds from the area of the former St Mary's hospital include a small group of Roman burials, mostly inhumations with a few cremations in lead urns, known as the 'Union Cemetery' (Hull 1958, 254-5; CAR 9, 261-2). There have also been several individual finds of objects, mostly of Roman date, but which include a few prehistoric artefacts, eg a Mesolithic flint axe (Essex Historic Environment Record or EHER no 12372) and fragments of a Late Bronze Age bucket urn (EHER no 12367).
- 3.4** To the north-west and west of the site, evidence of concentrations of Late Iron Age and Roman occupation, and Roman industrial activity, has been recorded. Approximately 400m to the north-west is the important late Iron Age and Roman site at Sheepen, the main period of occupation of which is c AD 5-60 (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Niblett 1985), though Bronze Age occupation is also attested there (CAR 11, 132-3). Approximately 400m to the west is a concentration of Roman kilns, the majority of which were in use during the 2nd-3rd centuries (Hull 1963).

## **4 Aims**

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the extent, depth and complexity of the archaeological deposits within the proposed development area. Particular attention was paid to the potential for Roman inhumation burials.

## **5 Methods**

- 5.1** Two 12m-long trenches were dug using a mechanical excavator with toothless ditching bucket.
- 5.2** Potential archaeological deposits which were exposed were cleaned by hand and excavated where it was safe to do so. Individual records of layers were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.3** Section drawings were made at a scale of 1:10. Features were planned at a scale of 1:20.
- 5.4** Finds were registered on CAT pro-forma record sheets and assigned finds numbers according to context. Finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context.
- 5.5** Colour photographs of the trenches and features were taken with a digital camera.
- 5.6** A complete list of finds and a complete list of contexts can be found in Tables 4 and 5 respectively.

## **6 Results (Figs 2-5)**

### **6.1 Trench 1**

T1 was situated on the western side of the site, on a slight north-facing slope, between two rows of garages. The trench was 12m long and 1.5m wide. The trench was initially machine-dug to between 950mm and 1m depth. 250mm of asphalt car-park surface and sub-base (L1 and L2) was removed to expose a 500- to 600mm-thick layer of post-Roman dark earth (L3). At approximately 750mm below ground-level, the dark earth gave way to a mid to dark greyish brown silty sand mottled with yellow sand (L4). The mottling may have come about through root action in the past. Flecks of charcoal and tile were seen in L4 as were larger fragments of Roman tile and pottery, plus some animal bone. The layer became thinner further north, giving the impression of hill-wash. This possible post-Roman hill-wash layer sealed a loose

light yellowish brown sand mottled with dark grey silty sand (L5). L5 was quite prominent at the southern end of the trench and subsequent machine-digging revealed the layer to be approximately 250mm thick here. However, at the northern end of the trench, L5 thinned out and became more orange in colour. Like L4, therefore, L5 could be interpreted as hill-wash.

In the southern half of the trench, cut into L5 and sealed by L4, were three seemingly Roman features, ie F1, F3 and F4. A Roman date for these features would date L5 to the Roman period or earlier. F1 was an irregular-shaped, straight-sided pit with a sandy fill and brown discolouration around the edges. It contained one piece of mortar, an animal bone and an iron nail. One piece of Roman pottery on the surface of the feature is the only dating evidence. F3 was a very small shallow pit with a charcoally upper fill, containing two sherds of Roman pottery. F4 was a somewhat isolated feature in the middle of the trench, a small sub-square pit with lenses of chocolate brown clay. One sherd of Roman grey ware is the only datable find from it.

At the northern end of the trench, sealed by L4, a patch of gravel was noted (F5). The top of the gravel was at the same level as L5 (between 920mm and 1m below ground-level). Up to 150mm of L5 was removed by hand to expose more of F5 and it was seen to extend to the south-east. It consisted of compact pea grit and gravel up to 6cm in size. A slight camber and a straight edge on the north-eastern side gave F5 the resemblance of a metalled road or trackway running in a north-west to south-east direction. There was also a semblance of a narrow gully running along the north-eastern edge (F9). However, on its southern side, the edge of F5 was aligned east-west edge (shown as a solid line on Fig 2). Either the gravel represents a metalled trackway whose south-western edge had been eroded away or it is a natural patch of glacial gravel which merely has the appearance of a man-made feature. The mechanical excavator was brought back to attempt to answer the question of whether F5 was natural or man-made. It was used to remove more of L5 to the south to see if an edge on the same alignment as the north-eastern edge of F5 could be found. Such an edge was found (shown as a dotted line on Fig 2); however, it consisted of a very thin layer of gravel and may merely be natural. The gravel F5 was not excavated; only the surface was cleaned. There were no finds from the surface; however, one piece of Roman pottery was found in the layer above (L5). A depression in the gravel (F10) was originally interpreted as a gully but may equally be a natural depression.

There were two modern features in T1. In the southern end of the trench, a rectangular, straight-sided pit (F2) was encountered. It was cut through L3, L4 and L5 and was sealed by the car-park layers L1 and L2. Its upper fill was similar to the dark earth that it cut but contained brick rubble. Its lower fill was dark brown to black silty sand and contained a small quantity of Roman pottery, tile and animal bone. The difference between the lower and upper fills was pronounced and led at first to the interpretation that F2 was a Roman feature and the upper fill was a separate later feature. However, after a later review of the section, it was decided that they were the same feature. The only other feature was a brick soakaway at the northern end of the trench, seen in the west-facing section (F12).

Before the trench was backfilled, the southern end was taken down to natural (L6) with the mechanical excavator. This involved the removal of L5 and the features cut into it. The aim was to expose the rest of the possible trackway F5 (see above) and to check for any burials which may have been masked by L5. No burials were exposed.

In the northern end of the trench, natural ground consisted of an orange silty clay (L12) which was encountered at 1m below ground-level. At the southern end of the trench, once L5 had been stripped off, natural yellow sand (L6) was encountered at between 1m and 1.1m below ground-level.

## 6.2 Trench 2

T2 was situated to the west of T1 and on a north-west-facing slope. It was 12m long, 1.5m wide and, like T1, dug through tarmac. After the car-park surfaces (L7 and L8) had been removed, a post-Roman accumulation layer or 'dark earth' was encountered. This was a dark brown sandy silt containing occasional Roman tile, pottery and animal bone (L9), becoming slightly lighter further down (L10). These

layers of 'dark earth' were thicker than that found in T1. At the eastern end of the trench, the dark earth was 1.1m thick but deepened to 1.45m thick at the western end of the trench. The trench was initially dug to a depth of 1.5m in the eastern end and 1.75m at the western end. At this level, a dark yellowish brown silty sand mottled with dark brown silty sand was encountered (L11). L11 contained much Roman pottery, brick and tile and some animal bone. The layer contained patches of slightly darker material without clear edges. Noticeable at the western end of the trench was a large spread of charcoal (F8) which was thought to be a pit cut into L11. On excavation of F8, the charcoal fill gave way to a yellowish brown silty material with a seam of oyster shell. Much Roman pottery, animal bone and some Roman brick and tile was retrieved from F8. No edges or base to the feature could be found. In the centre of the trench, a patch of oyster shell (F7) was noted. Before backfilling the trench, a scoop was taken out of the eastern end of the trench with the mechanical excavator to investigate L11. L11 was found to be 440mm thick and to seal a lens of charcoal (L14). L14 gave way to a sandy fill containing Roman pottery, oyster shell and tile (L13). At 2.4m below ground-level, natural ground had still not been reached. It was concluded that L11, L13, L14, F7 and F8 were not separate layers and features but were all fills of a large quarry-pit, occupying the whole length of the trench (F11).

## 7 Finds

### 7.1 The Roman pottery

*by Stephen Benfield*

A quantity of Roman pottery (6,080 g) was recovered during the watching brief. This 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). Samian vessels were recorded using Dragendorff (Dr) form numbers or other common form type references following those used in Webster 1996. 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 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
AA	amphoras, all excluding Dressel 20 and Brockley Hill/Verulamium region amphoras	BAT AM 1, BAT AM 3
AJ	amphoras, Dressel 20	BAT AM 1
BA	plain samian	
BA(SG)	South Gaulish plain samian	
BA(CG)	Central Gaulish plain samian	
BA(EG)	East Gaulish plain samian	
BX	decorated samian	
BX(SG)	South Gaulish decorated samian	
BX(CG)	Central Gaulish decorated samian	
BPW	butt-beaker parchment ware	NOG WH3
CB	Colchester red colour-coated roughcast ware	COL CC2
CS	Pompeian-red ware	
DJ	coarse oxidised and related wares	COL WH

Fabric code	Fabric name	National Roman Fabric Reference Collection fabric
DZ	fine oxidised wares	
EZ	other fine colour-coated wares, mostly white/buff	
Koln	Cologne (lower Rhineland) ware	KOL CC
FJ	Brockley Hill/Verulamium region oxidised ware	VER WH
GB	BB2: black-burnished ware, category 2	COL BB2
GX	other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares	
KX	black-burnished ware (BB2) types in pale grey ware	
HD	shell-tempered and calcite-gritted wares	
HZ	large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares	
TD	Verulamium region mortaria	
TZ	mortaria, Colchester and mortaria imported from the continent	
WA	silvery micaceous grey wares	
WC	miscellaneous grey and pale grey wares	
WPW	white pipe clay ware	NOG WH1

## Discussion

The range of pottery fabrics represented is quite extensive and includes sherds that are imports and regional (British) imports to Colchester of the 1st-mid 3rd century.

Most of the closely-datable pottery is of 1st- to 3rd-century date. No Late Iron Age sherds were present. A few sherds can be dated to the mid 3rd-4th century (T2: L3, L10). The two sherds of shell-tempered ware (Fabric HD) from T2 (L10 and unstratified finds no 9) could date to the late 4th century. Shell-tempered wares are more common in the late 4th century, although they appear in assemblages throughout the Roman period (CAR 10, 458). There is also a sherd of Nene Valley colour-coated ware from T2 (L10) that can only be dated to the early-mid 3rd or 4th century. Only one sherd is definitely of late 3rd- to 4th-century date, ie a Cam 305 flanged bowl from T1 (L3). Some of the sherds from excavated contexts are probably of pre-Flavian date (c AD 43-69). These are a sherd of Pompeian-red ware (Fabric CS) from T1 (L4), and sherds of South Gaulish samian (Fabric BA(SG)) of form Dr 15/17 and White Parchment Ware (Fabric WPW) from T2 (F8). However, none of the groups of pottery from any of the contexts are clearly pre-Flavian. There are also a few unstratified sherds from T2 (finds no 9) that are probably pre-Flavian. These are a sherd of Butt-beaker Parchment Ware (Fabric BPW), probably from a Cam 113 butt-beaker, and a sherd of fine oxidised ware (Fabric DJ) that is probably from a pre-Flavian fine ware vessel.

It should be noted that, apart from L3 and L4, very little pottery was recovered from the excavated contexts in T1. Two groups of pottery, L4 (T1) and F8 (T2), could be of pre-Flavian date, but can only be more broadly dated to the 1st or 1st-early 2nd century. Several contexts in T2 contained pottery of 2nd- to 3rd-century date; these are F7, L10 and L11, although the shell-tempered sherd from L10 could date to the late 4th century. Overall, the unstratified pottery from T2 dates to no later than the 3rd century, although (as with L10) the sherd of shell-tempered ware could be of late 4th-century date. Only the pottery from L3 (T1) can be certainly dated to the period of the late 3rd or 4th century.

## Catalogue of pottery

### T1

#### F2

Finds no 4 (82 g):

Fabric AA, 1 sherd - 1st-mid 2nd century

Fabric BX(CG), 1 sherd - Dr 37, 2nd century

Fabric GX, 3 sherds - Roman.

Pottery dated: 2nd century

**F3**

Finds no 6 (5 g):  
Fabric GX, 1 sherd - Roman.

**F4**

Finds no 7 (3 g):  
Fabric GX, 1 sherd - Roman.

**L3**

Finds no 1 (231 g):  
Fabric AJ, 1 sherd - 1st-2nd/early 3rd century  
Fabric GX, 3 sherds - Roman  
Fabric KX 1 sherd - Cam 305, late 3rd-4th century.  
Pottery dated: late 3rd-4th century.

**L4**

Finds no 2 (82 g):  
Fabric AA, 1 sherd - 1st-mid 3rd century  
Fabric CS, 1 sherd - probably pre-Flavian  
Fabric DJ, 1 sherd - 1st-2nd/3rd century  
Fabric GX, 3 sherds - Cam 218, 1st-early 2nd century.  
Pottery dated: probably 1st century.

**L5 (upper fill)**

Finds no 14 (2 g):  
Fabric DJ, 1 sherd - 1st-2nd/3rd century.

**T2**

**F7**

Finds no 15 (403 g):  
Fabric BX(SG), 1 sherd - Dr 37, late 1st century, panel with lion running to right  
Fabric DJ, 4 sherds - Cam 156, early 2nd-early 3rd century  
Fabric CB, 1 sherd - Cam 391, early 2nd-early 3rd century  
Fabric GB, 1 sherd - Cam ?37A, early 2nd-early 3rd century  
Fabric GX, 6 sherds - Roman  
Fabric KX 1 sherd - Cam 278, early 2nd to mid-late 3rd century  
Fabric TZ, 2 sherds - 1st-3rd century  
Fabric WA, 1 sherd - Cam 278, early 2nd to mid-late 3rd century, note: this form is not usual in this fabric type.  
Pottery dated: 2nd-early 3rd/3rd century.

**F8 (upper-mid fill)**

Finds no 12 (969 g):  
Fabric AJ, 2 sherds - 1st-2nd/early 3rd century  
Fabric BA(SG), 4 sherds - Dr 15/17, 1st century  
Fabric DJ, 1 sherd - 1st-2nd/3rd century  
Fabric GX, 20 sherds - Cam 108, 1st-early 2nd century; Cam 218, 1st-early 2nd century  
Fabric HZ, 12 sherds - 1st-2nd/3rd century  
Fabric WPW, 1 sherd - pre-Flavian.  
Fabric WC 1 sherd - Roman.  
Pottery dated: 1st-early 2nd century, ?pre-Flavian.

**L10**

Finds no 11 (1,982 g):  
Fabric AJ, 5 sherds - 1st-2nd/early 3rd century  
Fabric BA(?EG), 2 sherds - Dr 31, mid 2nd-mid 3rd century; Dr 45, mid-late 2nd to mid 3rd century  
Fabric CZ, 1 sherd - early 2nd to mid-late 3rd century  
Fabric DJ, 9 sherds - 1st-2nd/3rd century  
Fabric EA, 1 sherd - early-mid 3rd-4th century  
Fabric GB, 3 sherds - Cam 37B, late 2nd to mid-late 3rd century; Cam 40A, early 2nd to mid-late 3rd century; Cam 278, early 2nd to mid-late 3rd century  
Fabric GX, 11 sherds - Roman  
Fabric HD, 1 sherd - Roman, possibly late 4th century  
Fabric TD, 1 sherd - Cam 195, 1st-early/mid 2nd century  
Fabric TZ, 3 sherds - Cam 195, 1st-early 2nd century.  
Pottery dated: late 2nd-3rd century, possibly late 4th century.

## L11

Finds no 10 (654 g):  
Fabric AA, 1 sherd - 1st-early 2nd century  
BA(SG) 1 sherd - Dr 27, 1st century  
Fabric DJ, 11 sherds - Cam 156, early 2nd-early 3rd century, lid  
Fabric CB, 1 sherd - early 2nd-mid 3rd century  
Fabric EZ(Koln) 1 sherd - Cam 391, 2nd century  
Fabric GB, 2 sherds - Cam 40B, Cam 278, early 2nd to mid-late 3rd century  
Fabric GX, 17 sherds - Cam ?119, Roman; Cam 243-244/246, 1st-early 2nd century;  
Cam ?268, early/mid 2nd-late 3rd/early 4th century  
Fabric HZ, 1 sherd - 1st-2nd/3rd century.  
Pottery dated: early 2nd to mid-late 3rd century.

## Unstratified pottery from T2

Finds no 9 (225 g):  
Fabric BPW, 1 sherd - ?Cam 113, pre-Flavian  
Fabric DJ, 2 sherds - 1st-2nd/3rd century  
Fabric DZ, 1 sherd - ?pre-Flavian fine ware  
Fabric GB, 2 sherds - early 2nd-mid-late 3rd century  
Fabric GX, 6 sherds - Cam 108, 1st-early 2nd century.  
Pottery dated: early 2nd-mid-late 3rd century, with residual 1st century/pre-Flavian.

Finds no 13 (1,442 g):  
Fabric AJ, 2 sherds - 1st-2nd/early 3rd century  
Fabric BA(SG) 2 sherds - Dr 36, late 1st century  
Fabric BA(CG), 3 sherds - Dr 31, mid-late 2nd century; Dr 36, 2nd/?late 2nd century  
Fabric BX(SG), 2 sherds - Dr 29, 1st century; Dr 37, late 1st century  
Fabric CZ, 1 sherd - early 2nd to mid-late 3rd century  
Fabric DJ, 10 sherds - Cam 154/155, 1st to early-mid 2nd century; Cam 389, Flavian-3rd century  
Fabric FJ, 1 sherd - 1st-mid 2nd century  
Fabric GB, 2 sherds - Cam 37B, late 2nd to mid-late 3rd century  
Fabric GX, 15 sherds - Cam 218, 1st-early 2nd century, Roman  
Fabric HD, 1 sherd - Roman, possibly late 4th century  
Fabric HZ, 1 sherd - 1st-2nd/3rd century  
Fabric TZ, 4 sherds - Cam ?195, 1st-?early 2nd century.  
Pottery dated: late 2nd-3rd century, possibly late 4th century.

## 7.2 The faunal remains

*by Julie Curl*

### Methodology

All the animal bone was examined primarily to determine range of species and elements present and the amount of material that could produce measurable, ageable bone; bone was scanned to determine if evidence of bone-, horn- or antler-working was present in the assemblage. Evidence of butchering and any indications of skinning, horn-working and other modifications were recorded. Where possible, a record was made of ages and any other relevant information, such as pathologies. Counts and weights were taken and recorded for each context (Table 2) and counts taken for the number of bones for each species identified (Table 3). Due to the small size of the assemblage, measurements were not taken as there would have been too little data for any meaningful interpretation. All information was input directly into an Excel database for analysis. The analysis was carried out following a modified version of guidelines by English Heritage (Davis 1992). A catalogue made of the assemblage is not included in this report but forms part of the archive.

### The assemblage

A total of 1.669kg of faunal remains, consisting of 66 pieces, was recovered from the evaluation trenches. Remains were produced from ten contexts, mainly fills of a Roman date, although some material was recovered from fills of a modern date with the probability of being redeposited Roman material. Twenty-one per cent of the assemblage was derived from unstratified features.

The greatest single quantity of bone was produced from the Roman pit fill F8 (12) in T2, while the greatest variety of bone was yielded from the Roman quarry-pit fill L11 (10) in T2 which produced the remains of butchered domestic and wild species.

The assemblage is in reasonable condition, although fragmentary due to butchering and wear. Some canid gnawing was noted throughout the assemblage, indicating that some of the butchering and food waste had been given to domestic or working dogs or that the remains had been available to scavengers before burial.

**Table 2: weights of faunal remains from each feature/layer.**

Feature/Layer number	Total weight (kg)
F2	0.011
F8	0.412
L10	0.219
L11	0.208
L3	0.044
L4	0.063
L9	0.343
U/S	0.369
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.669</b>

### Species, butchering and uses

Six species were identified in the assemblage, which included both domestic animals and wild species. Over half of the remains identified to species were derived from cattle, which comprised skinning, butchering and food waste from adult animals.

The second most frequent species in this assemblage is pig, and only three bones from sheep were recorded. Both pig and sheep were represented by adults and juveniles, suggesting possible breeding on or near to site during the Roman period. All remains of these species had been butchered with skinning and quality meat waste present.

Roe and Red Deer were produced from T2, L11 (10). The Red Deer proximal phalanges exhibited several knife cuts at the rear of the bone as a result of skinning. The Roe Deer bone is a chopped metacarpal with knife cuts from skinning. The waste from the deer is certainly indicative of an interest in the deer hides, as the meat from the deer may have been eaten elsewhere. Both of the deer are British natives that depend on heavily wooded areas for survival.

An equid phalange was found in T2 (13) from a pony-sized animal. The proximal phalange showed a cut indicating skinning, and the bone, which showed canid teeth marks, had also been chopped which suggests that the animal was dismembered for meat.

**Table 3: quantities of bones identified to species for each period (NB: the remains identified as 'mammal' were not included in percentages mentioned in the text).**

Species	Feature/Layer number								Total
	F2	F8	L10	L11	L3	L4	L9	U/S	
Cattle		8	2	3		2	2	3	20
Deer - Red				1					1
Deer - Roe				1					1
Equid								2	2
Mammal	3	8	6	4	3			7	31
Pig		2	3	1	1			1	8
Sheep		2	1						3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>66</b>

### **Conclusions and comparisons with other assemblages**

The assemblage is small with relatively little data forthcoming. The remains appear to be from primary and secondary butchering; the fairly high number of primary waste bones present possibly indicates more processing in this area of Colchester than consumption.

Wild species were only represented by deer at this site, and, as with the domestic stock, this was primary butchering waste. At 29-39 Head Street, Colchester a greater range of deer elements were present (Curl 2004); although deer are found in relatively low numbers (CAR 12, 98-9), the remains of red and roe deer are regularly recorded in Roman contexts from Colchester, showing the availability of these species around the woods and forests of Colchester during the Roman period.

### **7.3 The ironwork and iron-working waste**

*by Nina Crummy*

The ironwork consists only of nails from a variety of Roman and later contexts. The iron-working waste consists of tap slag and undiagnostic slag. Only three fragments were recovered, but they are comparatively large and are all stratified in Roman contexts. Tap slag is produced during bloomery smelting, and, as the only iron ore available locally is nodules of haematite gathered by surface collection, it is comparatively rare in Roman Colchester. The two fragments of undiagnostic slag may also have been produced during smelting but could also be evidence for smithing.

T1. (finds no 1). L3. Dark earth. Post-Roman. Iron nail shank fragment with clenched tip. Length 42 mm.

T1. (finds no 5). F1. Pit. Roman? Clenched iron nail with round flat head. Length 44 mm.

T2. (finds no 10). L11. Fill of ?quarry-pit F11. Roman. Iron nail with round flat head, lower part of shank missing. Length 29 mm.

T2. (finds no 15). F7. Dump of oyster shells fill of ?quarry-pit F11. Roman. Two iron nail shank fragments. Lengths 32 and 33 mm.

T2. (finds no 13). Unstratified. Three iron nails, with round flat heads. Lengths 83, 74 and 56 mm. Two have a thick layer of corrosion typical of Roman period nails, the third (the shortest) is much less corroded and is probably post-medieval to modern.

T2. (finds no 11). L10. Dark earth. Roman. Two fragments of slag from iron working. a) Vesicular and light, with some coal-like inclusions, weight 124 g. b) Dense and heavy, with patches of vitrification on the surface, weight 317 g.

T2. (finds no 15). F7. Dump of oyster shells fill of ?quarry-pit F11. Roman. Tap slag from iron-working. Weight 168 g.

### **7.4 The box flue tile**

*by E Black*

Finds no 11, T2, L11

a) Face, max dimensions approx 100 x 140mm. Thickness approx 18mm. Keyed with parts of two impressions of die 8 (relief-patterned keying). No trace of mortar.

b) Adjoining face and side.

Face, max dimension approx 40 x 77mm. Outer surface partly destroyed but sufficient survives to show part of an impression of die 8 (relief-patterned keying). Thickness approx 17mm. No trace of mortar.

Unkeyed side, max dimensions approx 31 x 77mm. The edge of a rectangular cutaway surviving for approx 59mm is present approx 31mm from the junction with the keyed face. Thickness approx 19mm.

Finds no 15, T2, F7

c) Adjoining face and side.

Face, max dimensions approx 78 x 70mm. Thickness approx 18mm. Keyed with a band of straight combing parallel to the junction with the side. Traces of a second band of straight combing which lies diagonally to the first but does not cross it on the surviving portion of the tile.

Unkeyed side, max dimensions approx 29 x 75mm. Thickness up to approx 20mm. The edge of a cutaway is present. This does not cut the side of the tile at 90° as normal but cuts it diagonally so that its inner side almost meets the inner surface of the keyed face. No trace of mortar.

d) Keyed face of tile broken at junction with the side. Max dimensions approx 110 x 85mm. Thickness approx 17-19mm. The keying comprises three sets of straight combing which overlap and fill the whole surviving surface. There are traces of mortar on this.

Finds no 12, T2, F8

e) Adjoining face and side.

Face, max dimensions approx 40 x 90mm, with part of a band of straight combing. Thickness estimated at approx 16-17mm.

Unkeyed side, max dimensions approx 90 x 54mm. Thickness approx 18mm. One edge of a rectangular cutaway has a surviving length of approx 75mm, at approx 54mm from the junctions with the face. No mortar present.

f) Adjoining face and side.

Face, max dimensions approx 105 x 125mm. Thickness approx 17mm. One band of wavy combing present.

Unkeyed side, approx 32 x 125mm. Thickness approx 15-17mm. Part of the edge of a rectangular cutaway survives for approx 65mm at approx 32mm from junction with the face. No mortar is present.

Finds no 11, T2, L10

g) Adjoining face and side.

Face, max dimensions approx 74 x 37mm. Thickness estimated at approx 22mm. One band of straight combing parallel to the junction with the side.

Unkeyed side, max dimensions approx 52 x 81mm. Thickness approx 20-22mm. Part of a rectangular cutaway survives for approx 44mm at approx 43mm from the junction with the face. No mortar traces.

h) Side of box-tile, max dimensions approx 85 x 64mm. Thickness approx 15-16mm. Parts of the two sides of a rectangular cutaway, surviving approx 60 x 9mm. Traces of burning around the surviving angle of the cutaway.

## Discussion

The distribution of the tiles keyed with die 8 includes four sites in London, Kenchester (Herefordshire), and four sites in Essex (Alresford [villa], Chelmsford [*mansio*], Gosbecks Farm [temple complex], and Lewis's Gardens in Colchester). The use of tiles keyed with die 8 at Chelmsford is dated before c AD 130-150, but die 16 which was also used in the *mansio* bath-house is dated much more closely to c AD 120/125-130 and this date can presumably be applied to die 8 as well (Betts *et al* 1997, 76 and 88). The Chelmsford *mansio* may well have been administered by the authorities of the colony of Colchester. The use of die 8 tiles in (unexcavated) baths at Gosbecks Farm close to Colchester is likely to have been associated with the well-known sanctuary, and this was probably under the control of officials of the colony. At Lewis's Gardens, Colchester (Insula 39, House V), the construction of the house is dated to the late 2nd century or later (Richardson 1968, 15), so that the tiles (from a heated room rather than baths) must have been re-used; the die 8 tiles from Lewis's Gardens were associated with die 46 and both these dies are represented in the assemblage from the *mansio* baths at Chelmsford. It is likely that the Lewis's Gardens tiles and those from Rawstorn Road derive from public baths or *mansio* baths in Colchester itself. Private bath-buildings in towns are rare or unknown in the first half of the 2nd century, though they occur in rural villas (like Alresford and Great Tey near Colchester). Modifications to these Colchester baths must have been carried out at some stage for the die 8 and die 46 (and no doubt other) box-tiles to have become available for re-use or to be redeposited.

## 7.5 Complete list of finds

Table 4: list of all finds.

Finds no	Context	Trench	Description	Weight (in g)
1	L3	T1	Iron nail	
1	L3	T1	Animal bone	41.0
1	L3	T1	Roman tile	37.0
1	L3	T1	Roman pottery	
2	L4	T1	Roman pottery	
2	L4	T1	Roman brick and tile including large piece of <i>imbrex</i> , one brick showing signs of re-use	3,091.0
2	L4	T1	Post-medieval brick?	240.0
2	L4	T1	Animal bone	60.0
4	F2	T1	Flint flake	9.7
4	F2	T1	Roman pottery	82.0
4	F2	T1	Roman tile fragments	30.0
4	F2	T1	Animal bone	11.2
5	F1	T1	Mortar	57.0
5	F1	T1	Iron nail	
5	F1	T1	Animal bone	8.0
6	F3	T1	<i>Tesserae</i> cube	21.7
6	F3	T1	Roman pottery	5.0
7	F4	T1	Roman pottery	3.0
7	F4	T1	Roman tile	80.0
8			no 8	
9	U/S spoil	T2	Roman pottery	225.0
9	U/S spoil	T2	Roman roof tile with cutaway	464.0
9	U/S spoil	T2	Animal bone	188.0
9	U/S spoil	T2	Animal bone	85.0
10	L11	T2	Roman pottery	654.0
10	L11	T2	Roman tile	372.0
10	L11	T2	Animal bone	207.0
10	L11	T2	1 iron nail	
11	L10	T2	Roman pottery	1,982.0
11	L10	T2	Roman brick and tile including roof tile, one re-used piece of brick and flue tile with combing and two pieces of flue tile with rolled pattern	375.0
11	L10	T2	Animal bone	215.0
11	L10	T2	Septaria	340.0
11	L10	T2	2 lumps of slag	442.0
12	F8 - upper and middle fill	T2	Roman pottery	969.0
12	F8 - upper and middle fill	T2	Roman tile including roof tile and flue tile	1,945.0
12	F8 - upper and middle fill	T2	Daub/structural clay	350.0
12	F8 - upper and middle fill	T2	Animal bone	750.0
12	F8 - upper and middle fill	T2	Oyster shells	5.3
12	F8 - upper and middle fill	T2	Charcoal	4.9
13	U/S	T2	Roman tile	647.0
13	U/S	T2	Roman pottery	1,442.0
13	U/S	T2	Animal bone inc one horn-core	96.0
13	U/S	T2	3 iron nails - 2 Roman, 1 post-medieval or modern	
14	L5 above F5	T1	1 Roman pottery sherd	2.0
15	F7	T2	Roman pottery	403.0
15	F7	T2	Roman roof tile and flue tile	640.0
15	F7	T2	1 lump of slag	169.0
15	F7	T2	Animal bone	111.0
15	F7	T2	Oyster shells	50.0
15	F7	T2	2 iron nail shanks	

## 8 Discussion

The investigation was carried out to evaluate the site of a known Roman inhumation cemetery; however, no burials were exposed by the evaluation trenches. Roman features were present in the form of small pits of uncertain function in T1 (F1, F3, F4) and one large pit (F11) in T2. Also in T1 was an area of compact gravel (F5) that could be interpreted as a metalled trackway or road of presumed Roman date. The gravel did appear to have a camber and one straight edge and a possible drainage gully on the north-east side. However, there are several problems with its interpretation as a trackway or road. Firstly, it was sealed by a Roman hill-wash layer which had Roman features cut into it. This suggests that the gravel is earlier than Roman, probably glacial in origin. Secondly, there were no artefacts from the gravel. Thirdly, its south-eastern edge was not clearly defined. Fourthly, it does not line up with any other known Roman roads, for example, the two Roman roads excavated at the St Mary's hospital and the Colchester Institute sites (CAT report forthcoming a; CAT report forthcoming b).

T2 featured a greater depth of post-Roman 'dark earth' than T1 (between 1.1m and 1.3m). The layers and features sealed by the 'dark earth' in T2 are considered to be upper layers of one large quarry-pit which had been used as a rubbish-pit later in the Roman period (F11). This pit took up the entire length of the trench and contained abundant Roman pottery, Roman ceramic building material including two pieces of roller-stamped flue tile, and oyster shell, slag, animal bone and lenses of charcoal. The edges of the pit were not seen within the evaluation trench, so therefore it must have been large. It was not bottomed but was at least 1.1m deep (2.4m below ground-level). Ten metres away, at the Topfield site, natural sand was encountered at 1m below ground-level (CAT Report 134). The difference in depth of natural can only be accounted for by the presence of a large pit having been cut through natural sand. Roller-stamped flue tile from this large pit hint at a connection with a public bath-house but not necessarily on the site. Slag within the pit suggests metal-working in the vicinity.

## 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 Colchester and Ipswich Museums under accession code COLEM 2007.70.

## 10 Acknowledgements

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The fieldwork was carried out by W Clarke, C Lister, K Orr and D Ross.

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- |  |      |   |
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IFA	2001	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
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## 12 Abbreviations

AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
CBM	Ceramic Building Material
NGR	National Grid Reference
U/S	unstratified, ie without any context

## 13 Glossary

feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
layer	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c AD 1500
metalling	a road or surface paved with stone
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to around the late 18th century
post-Roman	period after c AD 410
Roman	period of assimilation of Britain as part of the Roman Empire, c AD 43-410
<i>tessera</i>	a small ceramic cube used to make up a tessellated floor or mosaic

## 14 Site data

Table 5: list of contexts.

Context	Trench	Description	Findings	Date of context
F1	T1	Irregular-shaped pit with straight sides and brown discolouration around the edges. Upper fill (a) white sand with silty greyish lenses; lower/main fill (b) light greyish yellow sand; N-W fill (c) yellow sand - cut into L5 and natural L6, sealed by L4	Iron nail, slag? Fragment, from lower fill (b). 1 Roman pot sherd from surface (a)	Roman?
F2	T1	Rectangular, straight-sided pit. Upper fill (a) removed by machine and not drawn - similar to L3 but with brick rubble; lower fill (b) dark brown to black silty sand - cut L3, L4 and L5, sealed by L1 and L2	Roman pottery and tile, animal bone from lower fill (b)	modern
F3	T1	Small circular, shallow pit. Upper fill (a) sandy silt discoloured by charcoal staining; lower fill (b) yellow silty sand - cut L5, sealed by L4	2 fragments of Roman pot from upper fill (a)	Roman?
F4	T1	Small sub-square pit. Upper fill (a) dark brown sandy silt with occasional Roman CBM fragments; middle fill (b) chocolate brown clay in lenses; lower fill (c) yellow silty sand - cut into L5, sealed by L4	2 fragments of tile, 1 iron object and 1 sherd of grey ware	Roman?
F5	T1	Compact layer of gravel, possibly a metalled surface consisting of pea grit and gravel up to 6cm in size; aligned NW-SE; sat on top of natural silty clay (L12) - sealed by L5	none	Roman or possibly a spread of natural glacial gravel
no F6				
F7	T2	Oyster shells-filled patch or pit within L11, now thought to be a dump of oyster shells within a large quarry-pit (F11)	Roman pottery and tile, slag, animal bone	Roman

F8	T2	Charcoal-filled 'pit' at western end of trench starting at 1.7m below ground-level; charcoal in the upper fill, yellowish silty material lower down with a seam of oyster shells; edges and depth not determined - may be one fill of a much larger quarry-pit (F11)	Much Roman pottery, some Roman tile, daub, animal bone, oyster shells	Roman
F9	T1	Natural depression or possibly a drainage gully on north-eastern side of possible road/trackway (F5)		Roman or natural
F10	T1	Probable natural depression in gravel F5		Roman or natural
F11	T2	Large ?quarry-pit taking up the whole of T2; L11, L13, L14, F7 and F8 may be fills of this pit	Roman pottery, Roman CBM including roller-stamped flue tile, oyster shell, animal bone and slag	Roman
F12	T1	Brick soakaway send in the west-facing section of the trench, at the northern end		modern
L1	T1	Asphalt car-park surface		modern
L2	T1	Sand hoggin, brick, stone and concrete rubble sub-base for car-park		modern
L3	T1	'Dark earth': dark brown sandy silt with frequent small stones	Roman pottery and tile	post-Roman
L4	T1	Mid to dark greyish brown silty sand mottled (by root action?) with yellow sand; hill-wash?; the layer became thinner further north; contained flecks of charcoal and CBM - sealed by L3, sealed F1, F3 and F4	Roman pottery and tile, animal bone?	Roman?
L5	T1	Loose light yellowish brown sand mottled (by root action?) with dark grey patches; became more orange in colour at the north end of the trench; hill-wash? - sealed by L4 and sealed F5, F9, F10 and natural L6/L12	1 piece of Roman pottery from near F5	Roman
L6	T1	Natural light brown sand in southern end of trench, started 1m -1.1m below ground-level		glacial
L7	T2	Asphalt car-park surface		modern
L8	T2	Sand hoggin, brick, stone and concrete rubble - sub-base for car-park		
L9	T2	Dark brown sandy silt - 'dark earth' over 1m thick in eastern end becoming 1.3m thick at western end - sealed L10	Roman tile and pottery, animal bone	post-Roman
L10	T2	Medium brown sandy silt, 'dark earth' merging with L9 above. 200mm thick - sealed by L9, sealed L11/F11	Roman tile and pottery, animal bone, slag	Roman
L11	T2	Dark yellowish brown silty sand mottled with dark brown silty sand, 440mm thick at eastern end of trench - upper fill of a possible large quarry-pit (F11)	Much Roman pot, CBM including roller-stamped flue tile, animal bone	Roman

L12	T1	Natural orange silty clay, seen in the northern part of the trench, under L5		glacial
L13	T2	Sandy layer under L11, starting 1.74m below ground-level in the eastern part of the trench. Probably a fill of a large quarry-pit (F11)	Roman pot, tile, oyster shells	Roman
L14	T2	Sandy layer below L13 with abundant charcoal, carrying on to 2.4m below ground-level - probably a fill of a large quarry-pit (F11)	Oyster shells	Roman

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**Distribution list:**

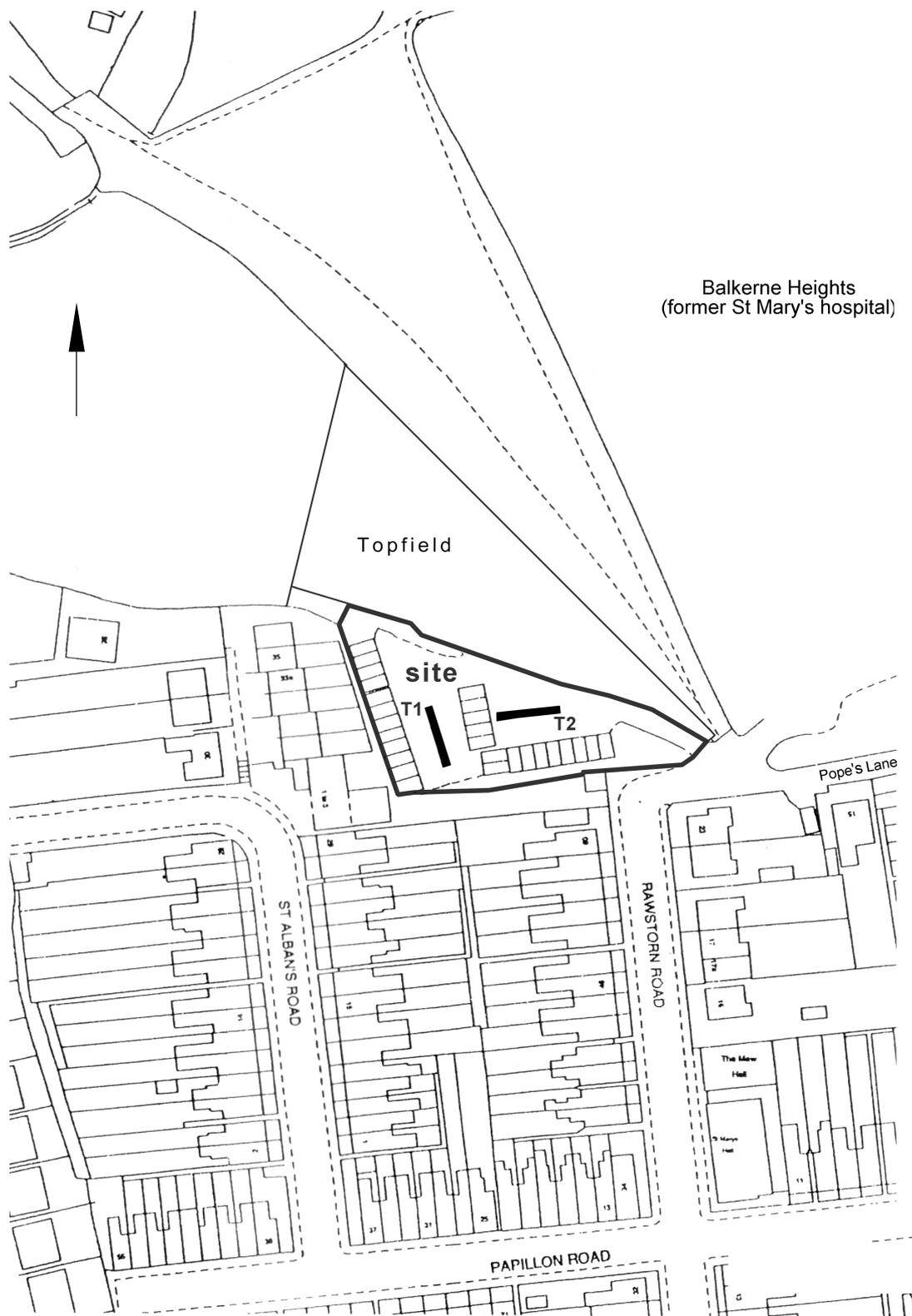
Les Levine, Albermarle Developments  
Martin Winter, Colchester Borough Council Archaeology Officer  
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Date: 06.08.07



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Fig 1 Site location, showing trenches.

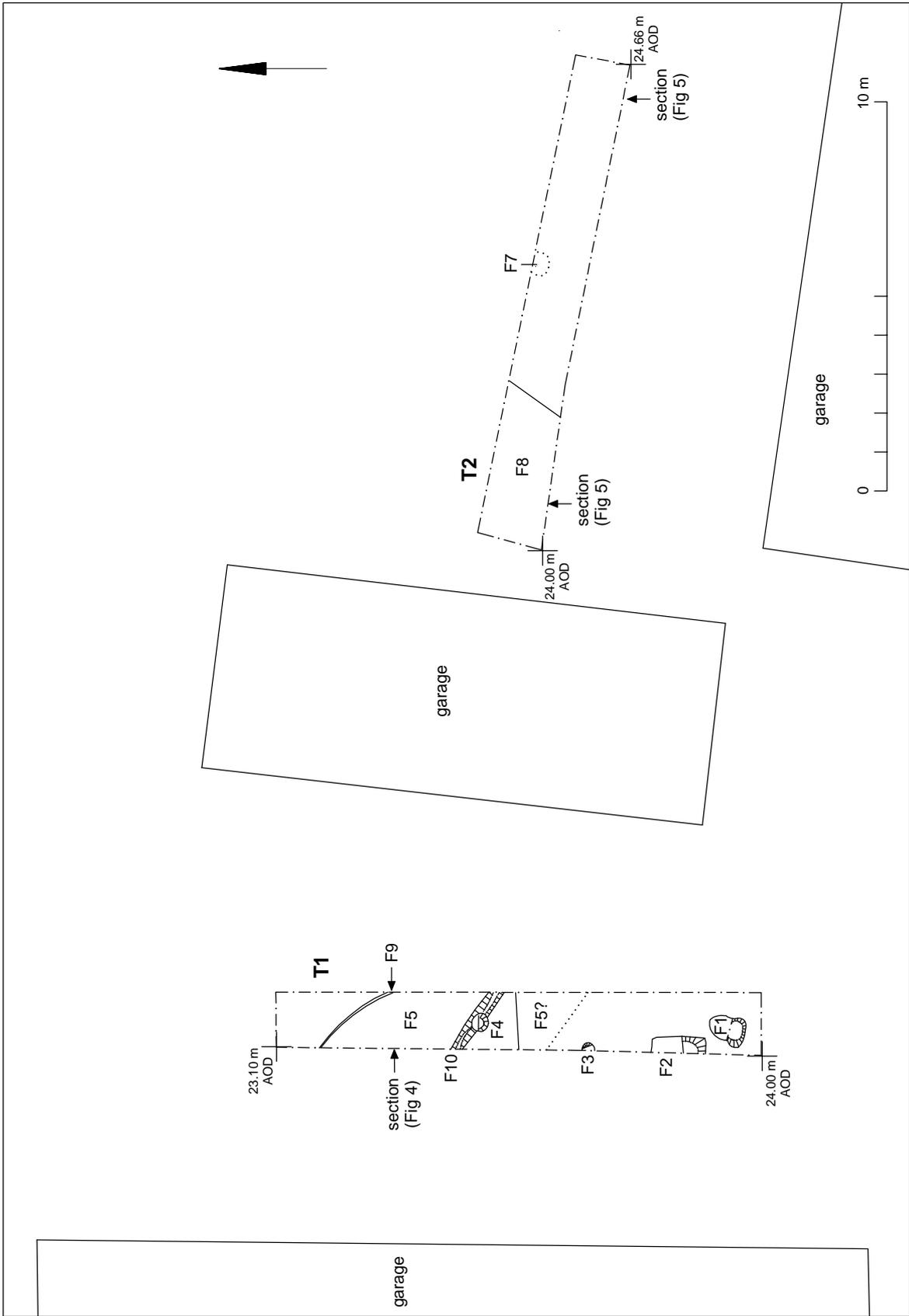


Fig 2 Plan of trenches.

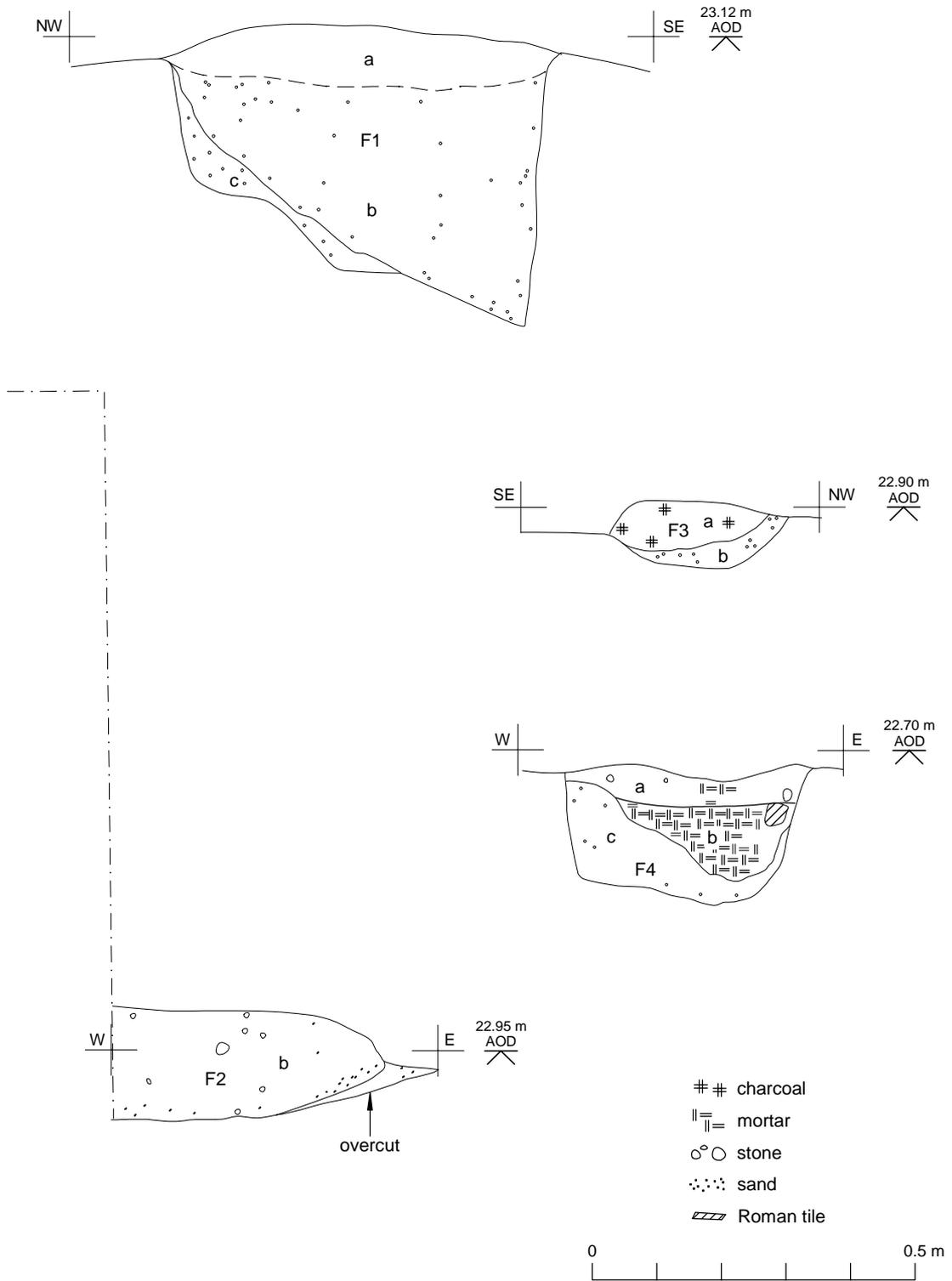


Fig 3 T1: F1-F4; sections.

east-facing section of F5, F9 and F10

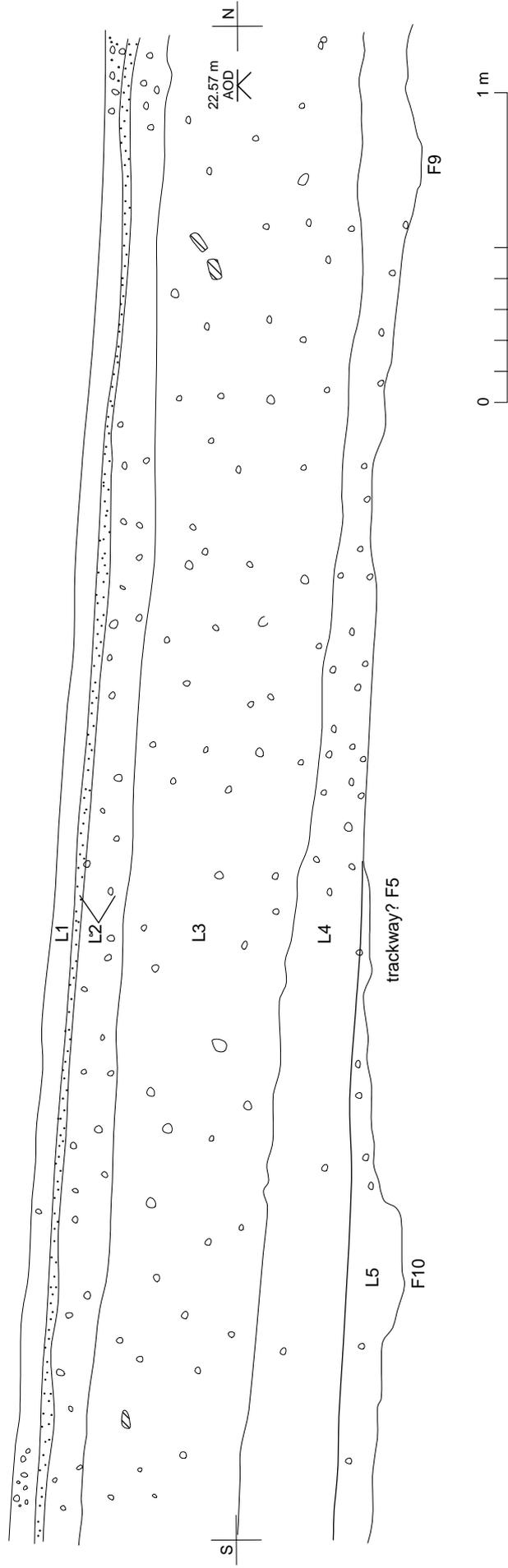


Fig 4 T1: section.

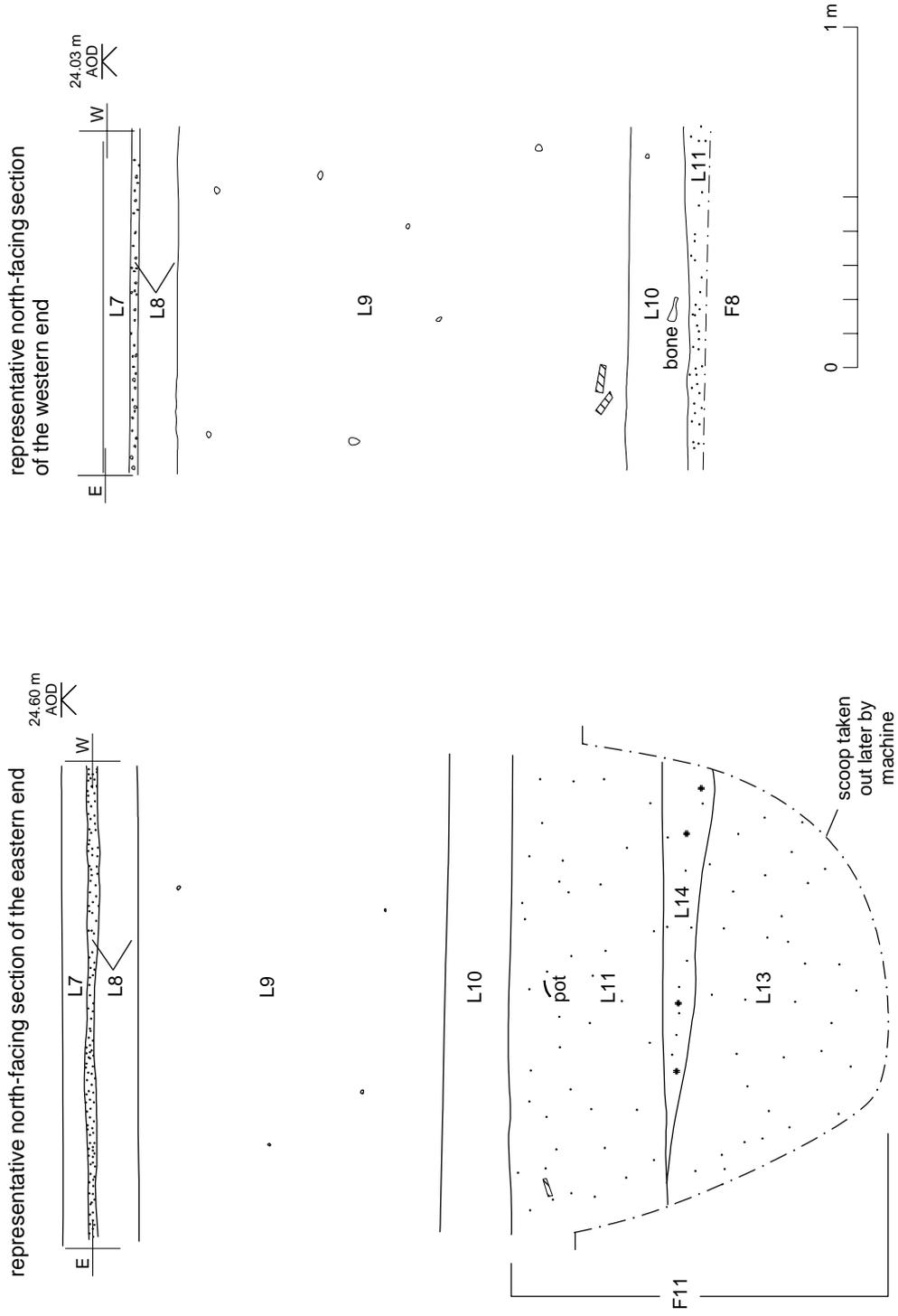


Fig 5 T2: sections.

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

**Summary sheet**

<b>Site address:</b> Rawstorn Road (adjacent to Topfield), Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester Borough
<b>NGR:</b> TL 96041 27053	<b>Site code:</b> COLEM accession code 2007.70
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> June 2007	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 0.12 hectares approximately
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> Albermarle Developments
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> Yes	<b>Related EHER nos:</b> 11682, 12372, 12367
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 429 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Roman	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>  <i>Two trial-trenches were excavated to evaluate an area currently used as garages next to Topfield, Rawstorn Road in June 2007. The investigation was carried out to evaluate the site of a known Roman inhumation cemetery; however, no burials were exposed by the evaluation trenches. Roman features were present in the form of small pits of uncertain function in Trench 1 and one large pit in Trench 2. Also in Trench 1 was an area of compact gravel that could possibly be interpreted as a metalled trackway or road of presumed Roman date.</i></p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> CAT Reports 134 and 423	
<b>Author of summary:</b> Kate Orr	<b>Date of summary:</b> August 2007