

**An archaeological evaluation
at the site of a new medical centre,
Maldon Road, Danbury, Essex
February 2009**

**report prepared by
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**commissioned by
Trinity Construction Consultancy Ltd**

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HEM project code: DYMR 09
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EHER summary sheet

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1 Summary

This site is located 800m east of Danbury church and the partially-scheduled remains of an Iron Age hill fort.

An evaluation by fourteen trenches revealed a post-medieval or modern field boundary, and two pits and a post-hole which probably relate to the site's recent use as a paddock for horses. There were no finds.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1** This is the archive report on an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at the site of a new medical centre in Maldon Road, Danbury, Essex carried out on behalf of Trinity Construction Consultancy Ltd by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between the 9th February and the 11th February 2009.
- 2.2** The site, located on the eastern edge of Danbury, consists of 0.6ha of enclosed open ground currently under pasture and until recently used as a paddock for horses. The site is triangular in shape, measures approximately 90m x 180m, and is surrounded by hedges.
- 2.3** Site centre is NGR TL 7876 0506.
- 2.4** A planning application was submitted to Chelmsford Borough Council in April 2008, but was subsequently withdrawn. A new application will be made. Because the site is in a location with a significant archaeological potential, Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (HEM) team advised that a full archaeological condition be attached to any planning consent. This advice followed the guidance given in *Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning* (DoE 1990).
- 2.5** Recommended work (a trial-trenching evaluation) was described in a HEM team brief written in April 2008 and entitled *Archaeological investigation, new medical centre, Maldon Road, Danbury, Chelmsford* (O'Connor 2008). In response to the HEM team brief, CAT prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which was approved by the HEM team.
- 2.6** This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008b). Other sources used are *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14).

3 Archaeological background

This section is based on records held by the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) and on *The historic environment characterisation report for Chelmsford Borough* (Chelmsford Borough Council 2006).

Approximately 700m to the west of the site lie the partial earthwork remains of an Early Iron Age fort that is protected by scheduling (SM 79; EHER no 5608).

Excavations have revealed that the site was used as a defended enclosure and settlement from the Early Iron Age (EHER no 5608). Occupation may have continued through to Roman times (EHER no 5609). The line of a Roman road runs east-west past the northern boundary of the fort. The development site lies along this Roman road which ran from Chelmsford past Danbury. As such, the potential for roadside settlement and/or activity is high.

In medieval times, a church was built on the site of the defended enclosure and a medieval settlement would have been located close by. The church of St John the Baptist dates from the 13th century (EHER no 30315). To the north of the church and approximately 400m to the north-west of the site, the remains of a medieval tile kiln have been excavated. The remains are scheduled monuments (SM 188; EHER no 5628) and represent an organised industry which is thought to have operated from c 1275 to 1335.

The historic environment characterisation report for Chelmsford Borough (Chelmsford Borough Council 2006) includes the proposed site within the former

extent of Danbury Common (HECRBC, 5.7). The report states that, 'The woodland and common are likely to preserve earthworks and below-ground deposits of pre-medieval date'.

Earlier prehistoric flint tools have been recovered at the Iron Age fort and kiln sites (EHER nos 5627, 5607), indicating settlement or activity from at least the Bronze Age. Documentary and cartographic evidence shows that two windmills dating from before 1777 existed close by, to the immediate east of the site (EHER nos 5666, 5723). The mill house for one of the mills is extant (EHER no 30351) and dates from the 16th-17th century. Due to the historic land use of the proposed site, there is a high potential for the survival of well-preserved archaeological deposits of prehistoric to post-medieval date.

4 Aim

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains and deposits likely to be affected by development. Special attention was to be paid to evidence for: In particular:

- any surviving evidence associated with its position along the Roman road
- the possible continuation of medieval industrial and/or settlement evidence
- possible prehistoric activity.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

Summary of archaeological fieldwork

Fourteen evaluation trenches (T1-T14), with a total length of 400m, were excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator. In all trenches, two layers were removed by machine: a thick humic topsoil (L1) and a slightly silty clay subsoil (L2). This process exposed the natural sands and gravels with occasional very fine hill-wash silts and minor clay inclusions (L3) in which the archaeological features were visible (Fig 3).

Only eight archaeological features were revealed, concentrated in the north-western part of the site. These were: four undated ditches (presumed to be of post-medieval or modern date; two undated pits (presumed to be modern); one natural linear feature; and one undated post-hole (presumed to be post-medieval or modern).

An archaeological summary of each evaluation trench with a tabulation of context and finds dating information is given below.

Trench 1: summary

T1 was located in the north-western corner of the evaluation site. It contained no archaeological features.

Trench 2: summary

T2 was located on the northern edge of the site. An unnumbered linear feature at the north end of the trench was not excavated due to flooding. However, the same feature was intercepted in both T3 and T5 (as F5 and F1 respectively).

Trench 2 – context and dating.

Feature or layer no	Type	Dated finds	Phase
Unnumbered	ditch	-	undated

Trench 3: summary

T3 was located on the north edge of the evaluation site. It contained two linear features (F3, F5) and a pit (F4).

Linear feature F3 was aligned north-east/south-west. Its slightly irregular nature indicates a natural origin. F5 at the west end of the trench appeared to be the terminal end of a ditch, and its alignment suggests that it was a continuation of ditches intercepted in T2 and T5.

Pit F4 was located at the eastern end of the trench, adjacent to the natural linear F3. Its dark silty fill and regular profile indicate that the pit is not natural, and is probably post-medieval or modern (Fig 3).

No finds were associated with F4 or F5.

Trench 3 – contexts and dating.

Feature or layer no	Type	Dated finds	Phase
F3	linear feature (natural)	-	natural
F4	pit	-	undated, ?modern
F5	ditch	-	undated, ?modern

Trench 4: summary

T4 was located in the north-eastern corner of the evaluation site. It contained no archaeological features.

Trench 5: summary

Located on the western edge of the evaluation site, T5 contained two linear features (F1, F2).

F1 was aligned north-east to south-west, and had a shallow, even profile. It was not found in any other evaluation trenches. Its dark fill suggest that it is of post-medieval or modern date.

F2, in the northern end of the trench, was probably a continuation of the ditches intercepted in T2 and T3. It contained no finds, but its dark fill may be indicative of a post-medieval or modern date.

Trench 5 – contexts and dating.

Feature or layer no	Type	Dated finds	Phase
F1	ditch	-	undated, post-medieval/modern?
F2	ditch	-	undated, post-medieval/modern?

Trench 6: summary

Located in the centre of the evaluation site, T6 contained no archaeological features.

Trench 7: summary

Located in the centre of the evaluation site, T7 contained a pit (F8), the regular profile and dark silty fill of which indicate that it was probably not post-medieval or modern in origin. No finds were associated with F8.

Trench 7 – context and dating.

Feature or layer no	Type	Dated finds	Phase
F8	pit	-	undated, post-medieval/modern?

Trench 8: summary

Located on the eastern edge of the evaluation site, T8 contained no archaeological features.

Trench 9: summary

Located on the western edge of the evaluation site, T9 contained no archaeological features.

Trench 10: summary

T10 was located in the south-western corner of the evaluation site. It contained a post-hole (F7; Fig 3), the very dark fill of which indicates a modern date. The fact that the site has, until very recently, been used as a paddock suggests that this represents an old fence line which has been removed in the recent past. No finds were associated with F7.

Trench 10 – context and dating.

Feature or layer no	Type	Dated finds	Phase
F7	post-hole	-	?modern

Trenches 11-13: summary

T11-T13 were located on the western edge of the evaluation site. They contained no archaeological features.

Trench 14: summary

T14 was located on the southern edge of the evaluation site. It contained a linear feature, the very dark fill of which indicates a post-medieval or modern date. A large quantity of gravel mixed into the fill may indicate that the feature was designed for drainage. No finds were associated with F6.

Trench 14 – context and dating.

Feature or layer no	Type	Dated finds	Phase
F6	linear feature (ditch)	-	undated, post-medieval/modern?

6 Finds

There were no finds.

7 Discussion

Very little material of archaeological significance was found on the site of the new medical centre at Danbury.

The only feature of significance which could be interpreted with any certainty was a ditch line comprising ditch fragments F2 (in T5) and F5 (in T3). The ditch, although undated, was probably a post-medieval field boundary.

The other features were either of natural (geological) origin; a modern drain (F6 in T14); or a post-hole relating to the previous use of the site as a paddock for horses (F7 in T10).

8 Archive deposition

The paper archive is currently held by CAT at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex, but will be permanently deposited with Chelmsford Museum under accession code CHELM 2009.006.

9 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank the Trinity Construction Consultancy Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. Site work and EDM plots by A Wightman and C Lister.

The project was monitored by Teresa O'Connor for the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team.

10 References

DoE	1990	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning</i>
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14 , ed by D Gurney
HECRCBC	2006	<i>Historic Environment Characterisation Report for Chelmsford Borough Council</i>
IfA	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation</i>
IfA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
MAP 2	1991	<i>Management of archaeological projects</i> , second edition (English Heritage)
O'Connor, T	2008	<i>Archaeological investigation, new medical centre, Maldon Road, Danbury, Chelmsford</i> , Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team brief

11 Glossary

context	on an excavation site, a specific location (especially of finds)
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, maintained by Essex County Council
feature	something excavated, ie a wall, a floor, a pit, a ditch, etc
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c AD 1500
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National grid reference
post-medieval	after c AD 1500 to c AD 1800

12 Context list

Context	Trench	Description	Associated finds	Context date
F1	T5	ditch	none	undated – post-medieval or modern?
F2	T5	ditch	none	-
F3	T3	natural linear	none	
F4	T3	pit	none	undated – ?modern
F5	T3	ditch	none	undated – ?modern
F6	T14	ditch	none	undated – post-medieval or modern?
F7	T10	post-hole	none	undated – ?modern
F8	T7	pit	none	undated – ?modern

L1	all	topsoil	none	modern
L2	all	accumulated horizon	none	post-medieval/modern
L3	all	natural	none	-

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Distribution list:

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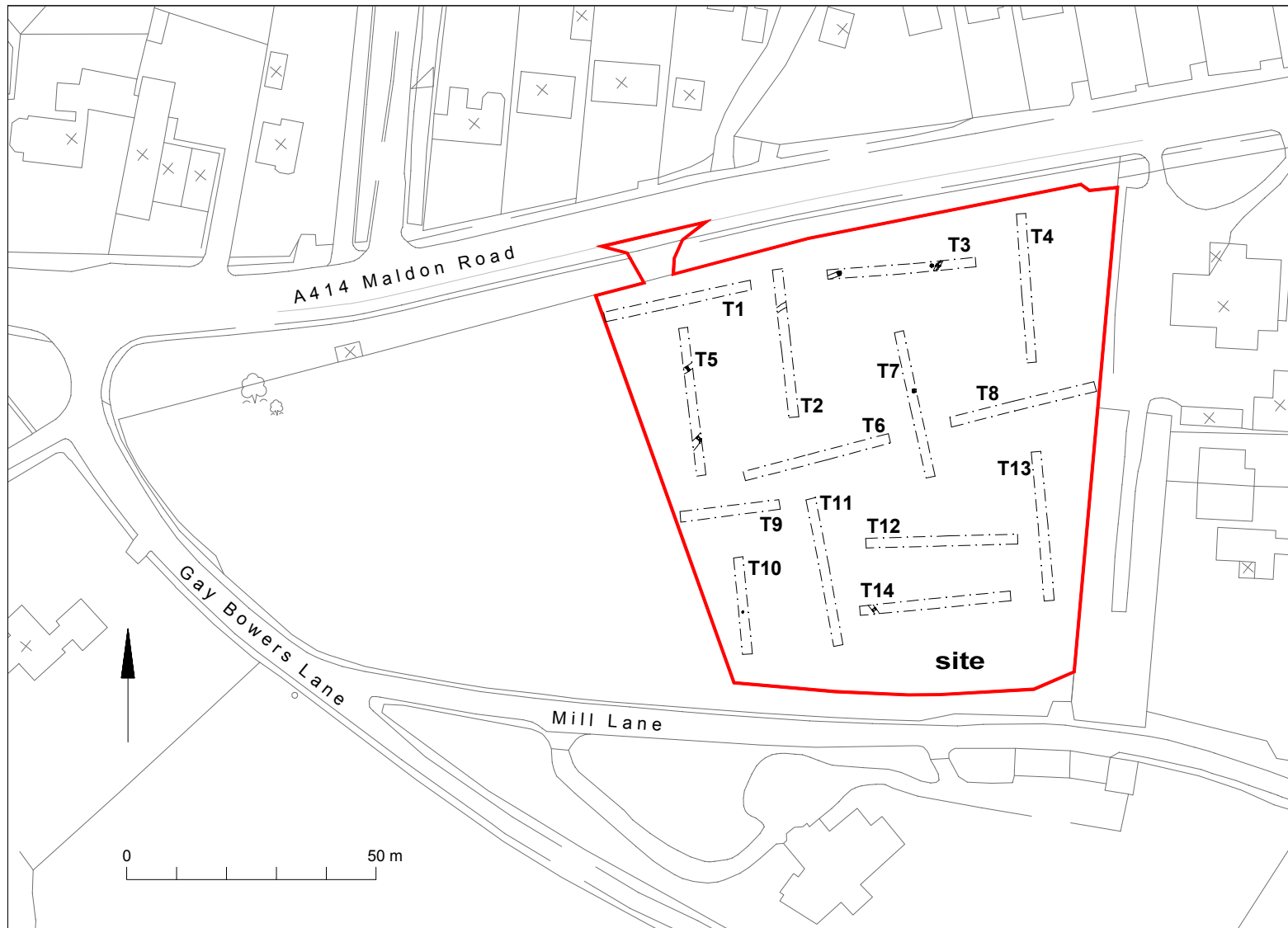


Fig 1 Site location.

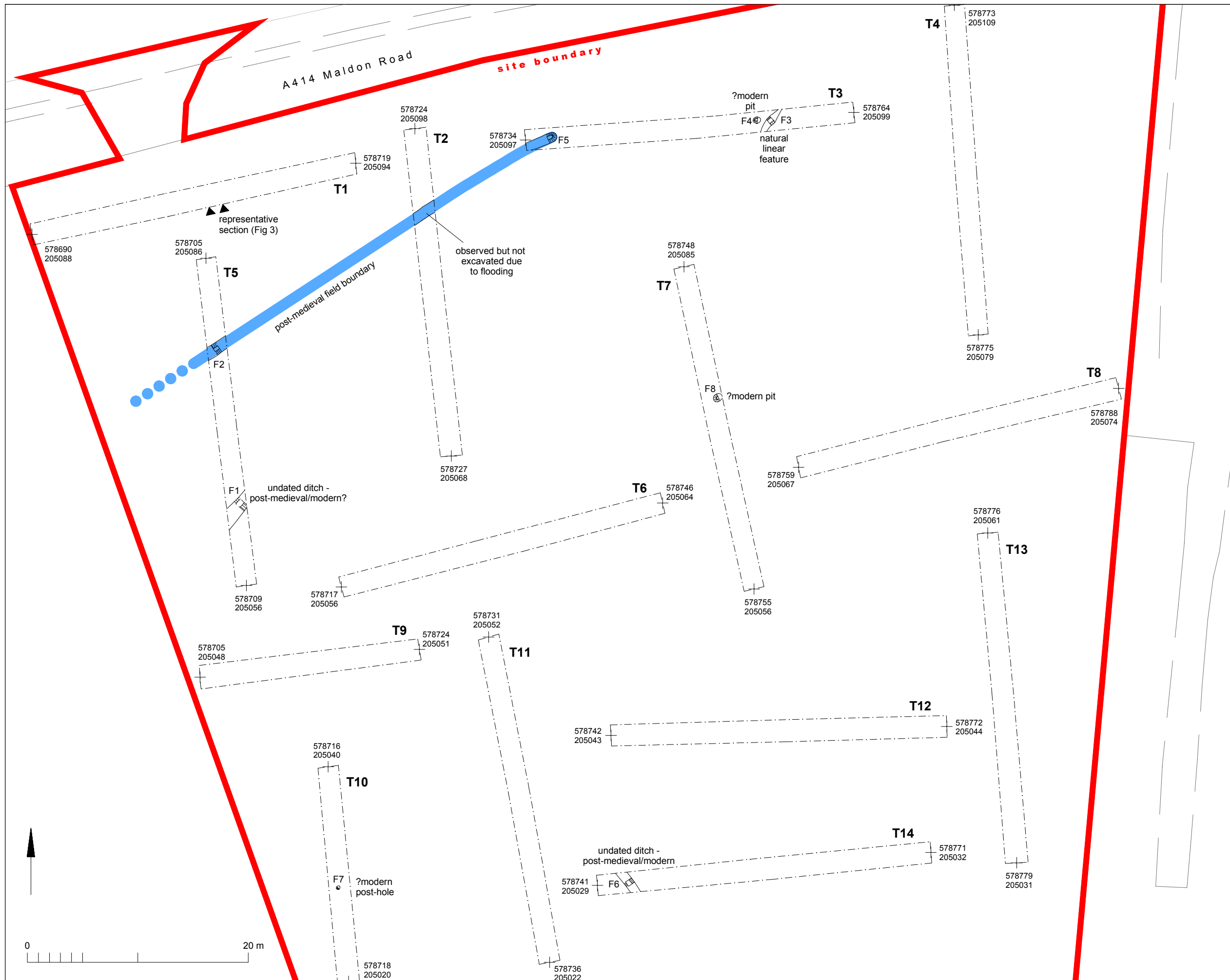
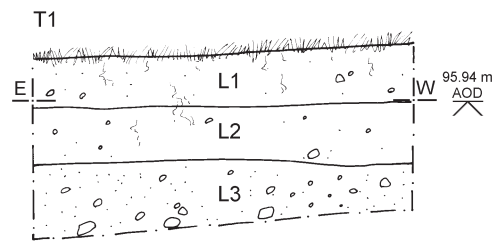
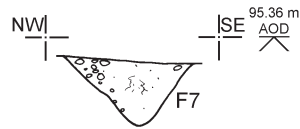
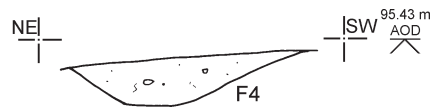
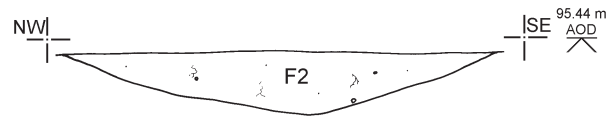





Fig 2 T1-T14: plans.



-  sand
-  small stones
-  roots

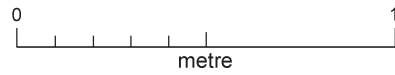


Fig 3 Sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Site address: Medical centre, Maldon Road, Danbury, Essex	
Parish: Danbury	District: Chelmsford Borough
NGR: TL 7876 0506 (c)	Site code: CAT project code - 09/1c HEM project code - DYMR 09 accession code - CHELM 2009.006
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: February 2009	Size of area investigated: Approximately 0.6 ha
Curating museum: Chelmsford Museum	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER nos: 5608-5609, 5628, 5666, 5723, 30315, 30351
Final report: CAT Report 503	
Periods represented: post-medieval and modern	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>This site is located 800m east of Danbury church and the partially-scheduled remains of an Iron Age hill fort.</i> <i>An evaluation by fourteen trenches revealed a post-medieval or modern field boundary, and two pits and a post-hole which probably relate to the site's recent use as a paddock for horses. There were no finds.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Keywords: -	Significance: neg
Author of summary: Howard Brooks	Date of summary: March 2008