

# Archaeological trial-trenching evaluation at Chappel Farm, Little Totham, Essex

**April 2013**



**report prepared by  
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**commissioned by Tim Harbord Associates  
on behalf of Mr Tom Howie**

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**CAT Report 696**  
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## Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction, archaeological & planning background	1
3	Aim	2
4	Evaluation results	2
5	Finds	5
6	Discussion	6
7	Acknowledgements	7
8	References	7
9	Glossary and abbreviations	7
10	Archive deposition	8
11	Contents of archive	8

Figures after p 8

EHER summary sheet

## List of figures

- Fig 1 Trench location plan
- Fig 2 T1 and T2: detailed plans
- Fig 3 Sections

## List of plates

- Cover View of evaluation site
- Plate 1 Site location
- Plate 2 T1, and F1 section, view north-east
- Plate 3 T2 view north. F1 foreground, F2 behind.
- Plate 4 F2 section, view south-west
- Plate 5 Prehistoric pits F3 and F4 sections, view south-west
- Plate 6 T5, view east
- Plate 7 OS 1980 map showing trackway detected as F1 and F2

## 1 Summary

The site lies in an extensive cropmark landscape dating from the Neolithic to the post-medieval period. To the south-west is Rook Hall, where excavations produced evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age onwards.

In advance of the erection of pig-rearing sheds and associated works, an evaluation by six trenches (total length 112m) revealed four archaeological features: two prehistoric pits, and two trackway ditches infilled in the late 20th century. The two pits indicate that this site was on the margins of an area of more intensive prehistoric activity based on Rook Hall and Chigborough Farm to the south and west.

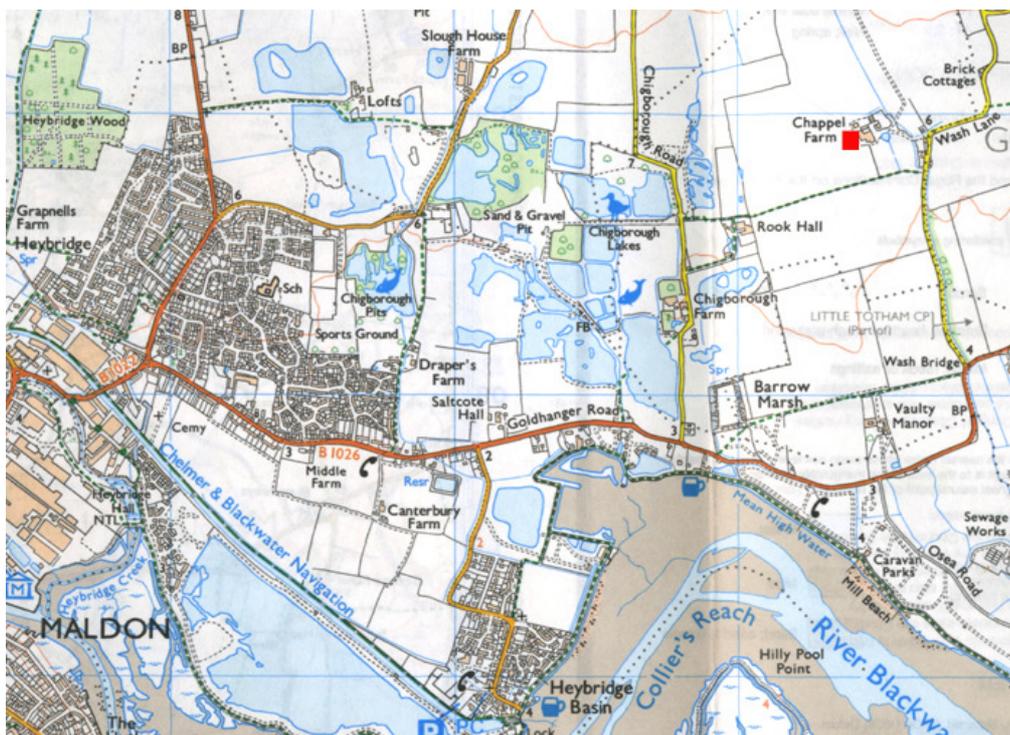


Plate 1: site location (red square)

## 2 Introduction, archaeology and planning background (Plate 1)

This is the report on the archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at Chappel Farm, Wash Lane, Little Totham, Essex. The site is on the south-western edge of the farm (site centre TL 8837 0891). Proposed work was the construction of two new pig-rearing sheds with associated feed bins and hard-standings.

The site lies in an extensive cropmark landscape (EHER 7909, 7928). This includes ring-ditches, enclosures and field-systems dating from the Neolithic to the post-medieval period. To the north-west is the Rook Hall site (EHER 7910-21), where excavations produced evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age onwards. Chappel Farm itself is of historic interest. It is named after the medieval chapel of Little Totham and includes a listed C16/17 farmhouse, C18 granary, and C18/19 barn (EHER 38947-9). There was therefore the potential for significant archaeological remains to be disturbed by the development.

Maldon District Council consulted ECC Historic Environment Management (HEM) in January 2013 in relation to planning application MAL/00859/12. HEM made the following recommendation, after *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012):

" L2 Implementation of Archaeological Fieldwork Programme

No development including any site clearance or groundworks of any kind shall take place within the site until the applicant or their agents; the owner of the site or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work from an

*accredited archaeological contractor in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in a manner that accommodates the approved programme of archaeological work."*

HEM officer Maria Medlycott wrote a brief detailing the required archaeological work (an evaluation by trial-trenching: HEM 2013), and Tim Harbord Associates commissioned CAT to carry out the specified evaluation on behalf of Tom Howie. The evaluation was carried out the 9th of April 2013 in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* produced by CAT in response to the HEM brief and agreed with HEM (CAT 2013). Post-excavation work was carried out in April 2013. In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was carried out in accordance with standard policies and procedures as outlined in CAT 2012, IfA 2008a, IfA 2008b, MoRPHE, EAA 14, and EAA 24.

### 3 Aim

The aim of the evaluation was to record and establish the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any remains and deposits likely to be disturbed by the proposed works.

### 4 Evaluation results (Figs 1-3)

To fulfil the requirements of the brief (5% evaluation), six evaluation trenches (total length 112m) were excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator. Two layers were removed: modern topsoil 250mm thick (L1), and silt/clay accumulation 150mm thick (L2). L2 sealed natural boulder clay with occasional gravel patches (L3). Four archaeological features were identified: two post-medieval ditches (F1, F2) and two prehistoric pits (F3, F4). This section gives an archaeological summary of evaluation trenches T1-T6, with context and finds dating information.

#### Trench 1: summary

A ditch F1 was exposed along the whole length of T1. This proved to be an infilled section of a field ditch which is still extant to the west. It contained pottery, brick flecks, and modern agricultural ironwork (not retained).

#### Trench 1 – contexts and dating.

Context no	type	dated finds	date
F1	ditch, also in T2	pottery, CBM, modern agricultural ironwork (not kept)	post-medieval



Plate 2: T1 and F1 section, view NE

**Trench 2: summary**

T2 contained four archaeological features: ditch F2 (the continuation of ditch F1 from T1), and pits F3 and F4. F1 and F2 were the side ditches of a trackway infilled in the later 20th century. Finds, though not plentiful, confirmed this date. The pits contained prehistoric LBA/EIA pottery, prehistoric flints, daub and charcoal flecks.

**Trench 2 – archaeology.**

Context no	type	dated finds	date
F1	ditch, also in T1	pottery, CBM	post-medieval
F2	ditch	pottery, CBM	post-medieval
F3	pit	pottery, daub	prehistoric LBA/EIA?
F4	pit	pottery, daub	prehistoric LBA/EIA?



Plate 3: T2 view N. F1 foreground, F2 behind



Plate 4: F2 section, view SW



**Plate 5: Prehistoric pits F3 and F4 sections, view SW**

**Trenches 3-6: summary**

T3-6, in the northern half of the site, contained no archaeological features or finds.



**Plate 6: T5 view E**

## 5 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

### Introduction

A small quantity of bulk finds was recovered from four contexts (F1-4) in two trenches (T1 & T2). The more closely-dated finds are of later prehistoric date (probably Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age) and medieval-post-medieval/modern date. Finds are listed by material in Table 1, and are described by context in Table 2.

Finds type	no.	wt (g)
Pottery	3	20
Ceramic building material (CBM)	2	59
Worked flint	2	9
Burnt flint	1	5
Fired clay	6	40

**Table 1. Type and quantities of finds**

Trench	context	finds no	description of finds	finds spot dating
1	ditch F1	4	<b>pottery prehistoric</b> (1@ 10 g) tempered with moderate-common small-medium flint, more flint visible on interior surface, dark brownish grey and grey surfaces (6-7 mm thick), probably post-Deverel-Rimbury (LBA-EIA) <b>CBM medieval-modern</b> (1@ 22 g) peg-tile piece, red sandy fabric, 12mm thick, prob 13C-14C+	medieval-post-medieval/modern (residual prehistoric Neolithic- Iron Age, probably LBA-EIA)
2	ditch F2	2	<b>CBM medieval-modern</b> (1@ 37 g) peg-tile piece, red sandy fabric (thickness 10 mm) (prob 13C-14C+)	medieval-post-medieval/modern
2	pit F3	1	<b>pottery prehistoric</b> (2@ 10 g) joining sherds (recently broken), tempered with moderate-common small-medium flint and occasional larger flint inclusion, more flint visible on interior surface, grey surfaces (5-6 mm thick) probably post-Deverel-Rimbury (LBA-EIA) <b>fired clay</b> (3@ 24 g) abraded, pale orange/buff pieces <b>worked flint</b> (2@9 g) broken tertiary flake with two parallel scars from previous flake/broad blade removal, small area of retouch along one edge, made primarily from the dorsal face, and small secondary flake/spall <b>burnt flint</b> (1@5 g)	prehistoric (Neolithic- Iron Age) probably LBA-EIA
2	pit F4	3	<b>fired clay</b> (3@ 16 g) small abraded pieces of sandy fired clay, fabric appears to have a orange (oxidised) layer at or close to the surface and a grey-brown interior	prehistoric?

**Table 2 Finds by context and find number**

### Finds discussion

The earliest dated finds can be confidently dated to the broad period encompassing the Neolithic-Early Iron Age (c 4000-400 BC). The closely-dated prehistoric finds consist of sherds of hand-made, flint-tempered pottery, which was most commonly in use during this period, and two worked flints (one a small flint flake/spall) which are likely to date to the Neolithic-Bronze Age (c 4000-700 BC). One of the potsherds was residual in F1 (T1). The other pottery and flints were from F3 (T2) together with a burnt flint and a few pieces of fired clay. The absence of any later dated finds from F3 indicates that these less closely-dated finds (burnt flint and fired clay) are likely to be contemporary and of prehistoric date. This also suggests that the small quantity of fired clay from F4 (T2),

which is not closely dated but was the only find from that feature, is also most likely to be of prehistoric date.

Lacking diagnostic pieces, the prehistoric finds are difficult to date more closely within this broad period, although the appearance of the pottery sherds, with moderate-common quantities of fine-medium flint inclusions, suggests they may be date to the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age (c 1000-400 BC) rather than any earlier.

Two pieces of peg-tile came from F1 (T1) & F2 (T2). These are not closely dated, but probably date to the 14th century or later, because peg-tiles were probably not common in Essex prior to that date (Ryan & Andrews 1993).

## 6 Discussion

Archaeological features were absent in the northern half of the site (the area covered by T3-T8). In the southern half of the site, a ditch F1, running WSW-ENE, was intercepted at the southern end of T2 and running most of the length of T1. Running parallel with it was ditch F2, in T2. These ditches are evidently the flanking ditches of the trackway seen running WSW from Chappel Farm towards Rook Hall on OS coverage from 1880 to 1975. The 1980 OS 1:2500 shows the trackway in broken lines, indicating that it was going out of use (Plate 7). This is in keeping with information from the farmer that this boundary was removed to create a larger field to increase yields in the later 20th century. The date of finds from both F1 and F2 supports a modern date for their infilling, but the ditches may well be earlier in origin, perhaps even medieval.

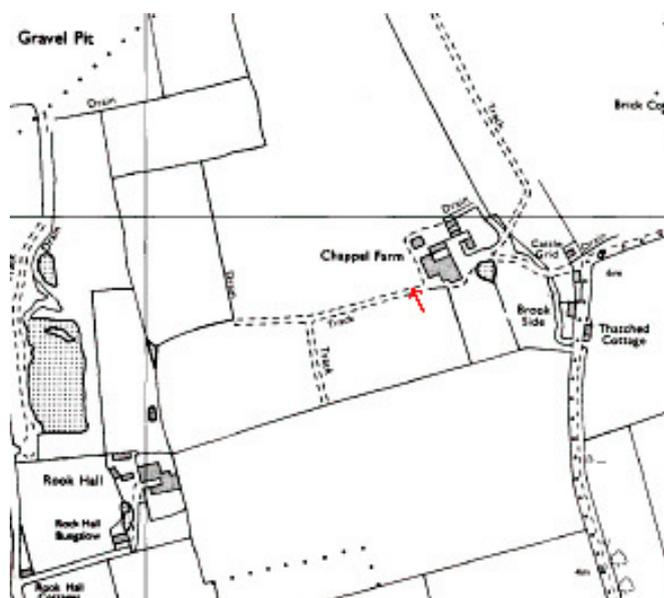


Plate 7: 1980 OS 1:2500 map showing trackway detected as F1 and F2.

Apart from the trackway ditches, the two other features were pits F3 and F4. Whereas F3 is dated by LBA/EIA potsherds (it also has residual flint and burnt flint), F4 contained only daub. However, given the date of the adjacent F3, F4 is almost certainly of the same date.

It cannot be said that these two pits demonstrate intensive prehistoric activity here, but they probably indicate that the site is on the periphery of an area of prehistoric activity based on Rook Hall to the south-west. A similar conclusion was reached in connection with the excavation of agricultural reservoirs to the south of Chappel Farm (Mrs Howie pers comm).

The remaining trenches contained evidence of modern agricultural activity in the form of plough-scarring and clinker-filled land drains.

## 7 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Tim Harbord Associates for commissioning the work on behalf of Mr Howie. The project was managed by B Holloway, fieldwork carried out by B Holloway and M Baister. The project was monitored for ECC HEM by Maria Medlycott.

## 8 References

- |                       |       |   |
|-----------------------|-------|---|
| CAT                   | 2012  | <i>Policies and procedures</i>  |
| CAT                   | 2013  | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological investigation at Chappel Farm, Wash Lane, Little Totham, Essex. April 2013</i>                       |
| DCLG                  | 2012  | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Department of Communities and Local Government  |
| EAA 14                | 2003  | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, by David Gurney (editor)                         |
| EAA 24                | 2011  | <i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeological Occasional Papers 24, by Maria Medlycott |
| English Heritage      | 2006  | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (MoRPHE)   |
| HEM                   | 2013  | <i>Archaeological Investigation at Chappel Farm, Wash Lane, Little Totham</i> . Essex County Council Brief, by Maria Medlycott                                |
| IfA                   | 2008a | <i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>  |
| IfA                   | 2008b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>   |
| Ryan, P, & Andrews, D | 1993  | 'A brick and tile typology for Cressing Temple' in Andrews, D, <i>Cressing Temple. A Templar and Hospitaller Manor in Essex</i> , 93-99                       |

## 9 Abbreviations and glossary

Bronze Age	period from 2,500 to 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building materials (brick, tile, tessera).
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by Essex County Council
EIA	early Iron Age (700-400 BC)
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
fill	the soil filling up a hole such as a pit or ditch
HEM	Historic Environment Management
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
Iron Age	period from 700 BC to the Roman invasion of AD 43
LBA	late Bronze Age (1000-700 BC)
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
Neolithic	period from 4,500 to 2,500 BC
NGR	National Grid Reference
Roman	the period from AD 43 to around AD 430

## 10 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Circular Road North, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museum under accession code COLEM 2013.17.

## 11 Contents of archive

### Finds archive

1 polybag with all retained finds (pottery, flints)

### Paper archive

1 A4 wallet containing:  
this report  
original site record (context and finds sheets)  
section drawings  
trench sheets  
digital photo log  
attendance record  
sundry papers  
digital photos on disc

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### Distribution list:

Tim Harbord Associates  
Maria Medlycott Essex County Council Historic Environment Management Team  
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Date: 25.04.13

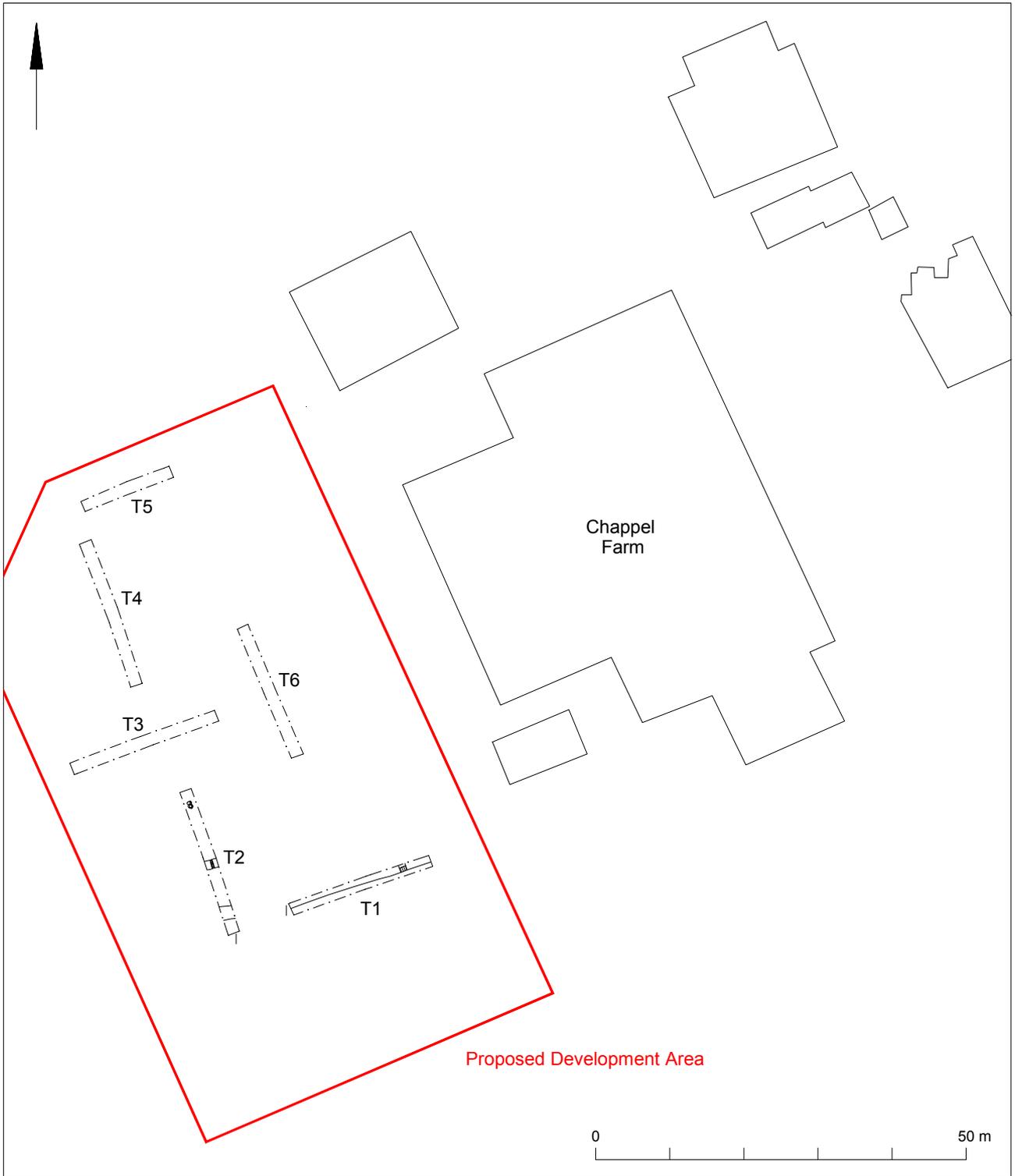


Fig 1 Trench location plans.

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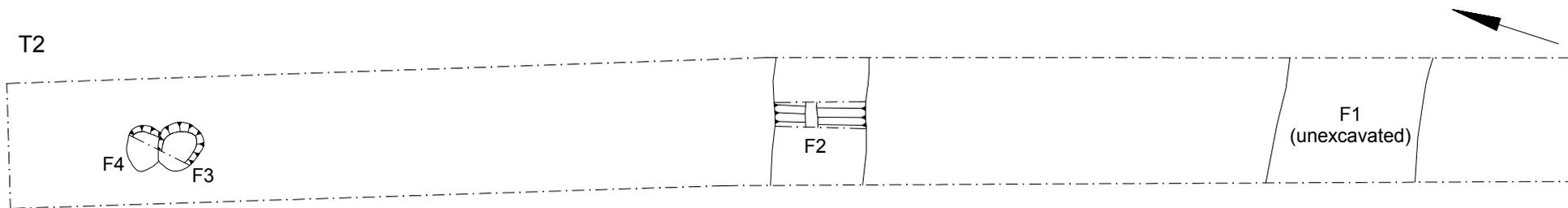
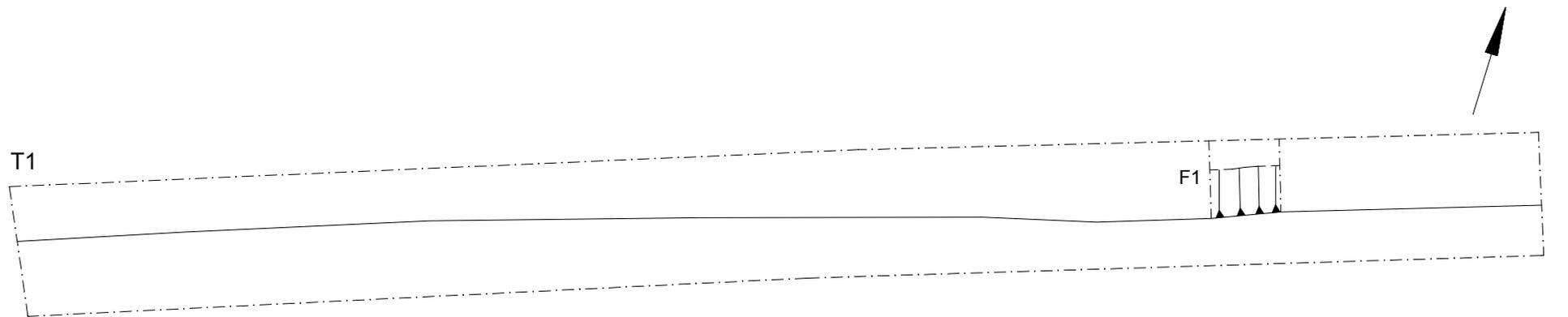


Fig 2 Trenches 1 and 2: detailed plans.

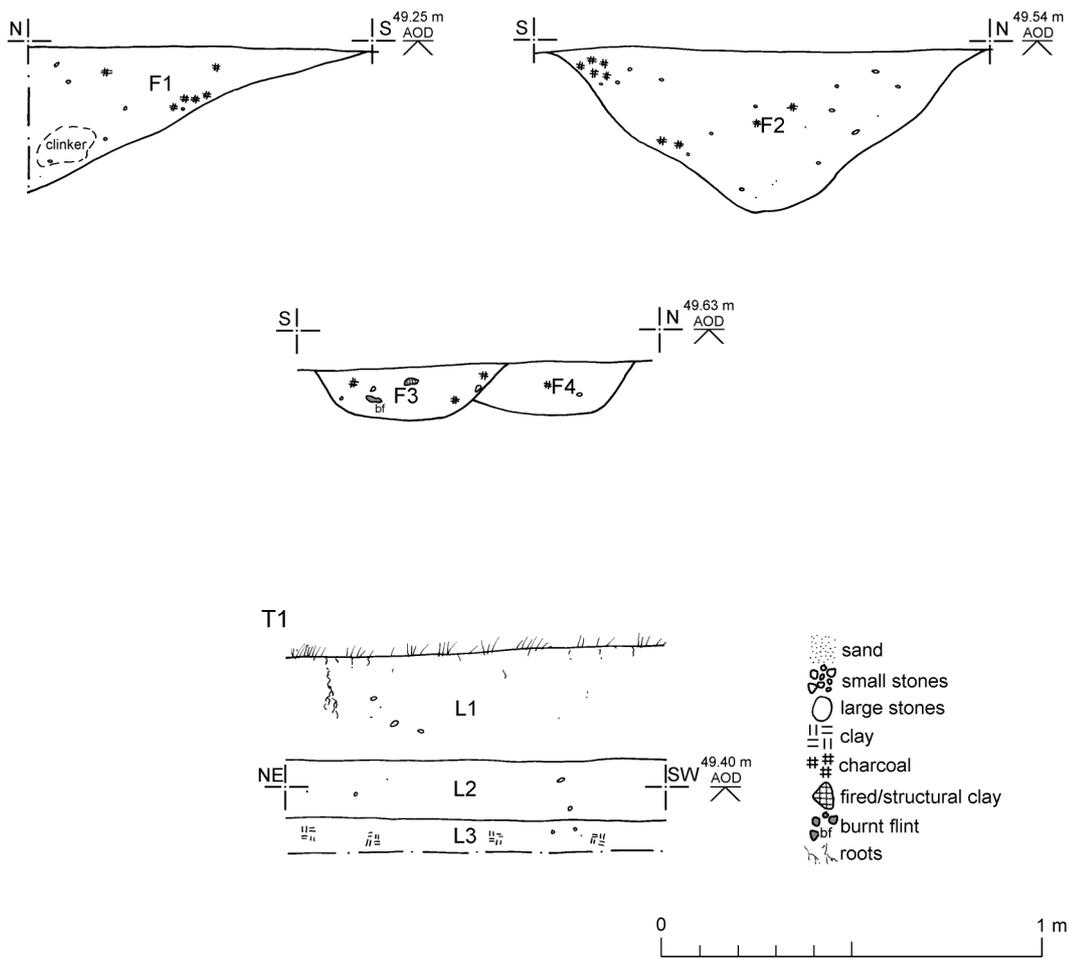


Fig 3 Sections (F1-4) and representative trench section (T1).

# Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

## Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> Chappel Farm, Wash Lane, Little Totham	
<b>Parish:</b> Little Totham	<b>District:</b> Maldon
<b>NGR:</b> TL 8837 0819	<b>Site code:</b> CAT project code – 13/03d HEM Code – LTCF13
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 9th April 2013	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 112m of trenches
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museum accession code : 2013.17	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHER number:</b> 7909-21, 7928, 38947-9
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 696 and summary in EAH	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Prehistoric (LBA/EIA?), post-medieval/modern	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b></p> <p><i>The site lies in an extensive cropmark landscape dating from the Neolithic to the post-medieval period. To the south-west is Rook Hall, where excavations produced evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age onwards.</i></p> <p><i>In advance of the erection of pig-rearing sheds and associated works, an evaluation by six trenches (total length 112m) revealed four archaeological features: two prehistoric pits, and two trackway ditches infilled in the late 20th century. The two pits indicate that this site was on the margins of an area of more intensive prehistoric activity based on Rook Hall and Chigborough Farm to the south and west.</i></p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>ECC Monitor:</b> Maria Medlycott	
<b>Keywords:</b> --	<b>Significance:</b> *
<b>Author of summary:</b> Ben Holloway	<b>Date of summary:</b> April 2013