

**An archaeological watching brief  
at Playgolf Colchester,  
Bakers Lane, Colchester, Essex  
January-August 2013**

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**commissioned by  
Mr Stephen Belchem, ADP Ltd,  
on behalf of Playgolf Colchester**

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## 1 Summary

Parts of two Late Iron Age or early Roman burials or burial-related features were uncovered during an archaeological watching brief at Playgolf Colchester, Bakers Lane, Colchester, Essex. They were found during groundwork in advance of the construction of an extension to the clubhouse. The features lay within a large funerary enclosure, initially known from cropmarks. One of the burial features was a Late Iron Age or early Roman unurned cremation burial, from which were recovered an amphora and some worked bone, as well as a quantity of cremated human bone. Nearby, another feature was partially uncovered. From this came fragments of at least five iron spearheads, a couple of sherds of Late Iron Age or early Roman imported pottery, and a small quantity of cremated human bone. The ditch, which formed the western side of the enclosure, was recorded as it crossed the footprint of the extension. The funerary enclosure and the features within it are comparable to the ditched enclosures excavated by CAT at the Stanway gravel quarry between 1987 and 1997. Elsewhere on the Playgolf site, machine-stripping took place for extensions to the car park. These lay outside the enclosure, and the stripping did not go deep enough to reveal any significant archaeological features.

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief took place at Playgolf Colchester, Bakers Lane, Colchester, Essex, during groundwork in advance of redevelopment. The archaeological work was commissioned by Stephen Belchem of ADP Ltd, on behalf of Playgolf Colchester, and was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between January and August 2013.
- 2.2 The site is located approximately 2 km to the north-west of the walled area of Colchester town centre. It is situated on the north side of the River Colne, adjacent to Westhouse Farm, a Grade II listed property. It is accessed off Bakers Lane. The site lies on a slight south-facing slope at approximately 20 m AOD, and the NGR is centred at TL 973 261.
- 2.3 The redevelopment included the construction of a large extension to the clubhouse to accommodate a coffeehouse and other improved facilities. The extension covered an area of approximately 900 sq m. Also, the car parks were enlarged. An additional car parking area was laid out to the south-east of the existing car park and covered an area of approximately 1,120 sq m. Another parking area was laid out to the north-west of the coffeehouse site and covered an area of approximately 1,375 sq m.
- 2.4 The watching brief followed an archaeological evaluation on the site by CAT in May 2012 (CAT Report 647). The excavation and recording methods used during the watching brief were outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation for the site, which was produced by CAT in November 2012 (WSI 2012). The WSI also set out proposals for post-excavation work, the production of a report, an archive and (if necessary) publication texts. It followed a brief written by Colchester Borough Council's Archaeological Officer (CBCAO) in November 2012 (CBC 2012).
- 2.5 This report follows the standards set out in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CIMS 2008a), and also those in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008b). The guidance contained in English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE 2006), and in the documents *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), *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14), and *Research and archaeology revisited: a revised framework for the Eastern Counties. Research agenda and strategy* (EAA 24), was also followed.

## 3 Archaeological background (Figs 1 & 8)

- 3.1 Moat Farm Dyke, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Essex SAM 10; EHER 11627), extends along the eastern edge of the golf course. This dyke formed part of the

extensive and complex earthwork defensive system of pre-Roman Colchester (CAR 11, 34). The coffeehouse site lies approximately 190 m to the west of Moat Farm Dyke.

- 3.2** An enclosure (EHER 11842) is known in the vicinity of the coffeehouse site. The enclosure was initially identified as a cropmark. It is roughly square-shaped and measures approximately 85 m across. In 1952 Lieutenant-Colonel R J Appleby cut an exploratory trench across the cropmark in a field immediately to the east of Westhouse Farm (CMR 1954, 13; EHER 12761). The 1952 trench located the ditch forming the southern side of the enclosure. The ditch was recorded as 16 feet (4.9 m) wide and 4 feet (1.2 m) deep. It contained pottery (now lost), provisionally dated to between the 8th century and c 50 BC (CAR 11, 137). The car park to the south of the coffeehouse now overlies the site of the 1952 trench.
- 3.3** Between 1999 and 2002, CAT carried out a series of archaeological investigations in response to redevelopments at the golf course. This included a desk-based assessment (CAT Report 47) in 1999, an evaluation including a geophysical survey in 2000 (CAT Report 59), and two watching briefs in 2001 and 2002 (CAT Reports 167 & 182). These confirmed the position of the enclosure and uncovered scatters of prehistoric and Roman pottery, and burnt daub.
- 3.4** In May 2012, in advance of the current redevelopment, CAT conducted an archaeological evaluation at the site, consisting of two trial-trenches (CAT Report 647). One of these (T1) was situated within the footprint of the coffeehouse and located the ditch forming the western side of the enclosure. This produced a small quantity of finds, including potsherds dating to the Bronze Age and Iron Age. The other trial-trench (T2) was located further south, outside the enclosure, within a proposed extension to the car park. In this trial-trench, a probable Roman field boundary ditch was recorded on a similar alignment to, and 9 m to the south of, the ditch forming the southern side of the enclosure.

## **4 Aims**

The aims of the watching brief were to record the depth and extent of any archaeological remains uncovered during the redevelopment, and to assess the date and significance of these remains.

## **5 Methods** (Figs 1 & 2)

- 5.1** The archaeological monitoring commenced on 8th January 2013, when the contractors dug a series of small test pits on the coffeehouse site. The archaeological watching brief resumed when groundwork started at the end of January 2013, and continued intermittently until 21st August 2013.
- 5.2** Seven small test pits were dug by the contractors on the coffeehouse site on 8th January 2013 in order to investigate ground conditions (TP1-7). The test pits varied in size from approximately 1.1 m to 1.6 m long and 0.7 m to 1.45 m wide. One of the test pits (TP3), in the south-east corner of the site, had to be resited and was smaller than the others, due to the presence of modern services. The test pits were initially dug between approximately 600 mm and 1 m deep, using a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. The modern surfaces (L4) had already been removed over most of the site and a layer of rubble make-up (L5), up to 250 mm thick, had been laid down.

Deposits of archaeological significance were observed only in TP7 (Fig 2), and these were investigated and recorded. In the other test pits (TP1-6; plan in the site archive), machining continued into the top of the natural subsoil (Layer or L3). Subsequently, machine excavation of the natural subsoil continued in most of the test pits, under the supervision of the structural engineer, to a depth of approximately 2 m.

- 5.3** The trenches for the foundations of the coffeehouse were dug from the end of January 2013 to the middle of February 2013 (Fig 2). Around the edges of the coffeehouse, the foundations consisted of a series of pads linked by a narrow continuous trench, approximately 700 mm wide. There was also a series of large, squarish trenches for pad foundations down the middle of the coffeehouse. The foundation trenches were approximately 700 mm deep, measured from the contractors working surface. The latter was roughly 300 mm lower than the modern ground level (ie the ground level before redevelopment started and which survived around the edges of the site).

Among the other trenches that were dug were a series of small holes for pad foundations along the northern side of the coffeehouse. These were for the western part of the driving range, which was rebuilt. A number of narrow, shallow trenches for services were also dug.

- 5.4** The various trenches on the coffeehouse site were dug using a mechanical excavator with a toothless trenching or ditching bucket. All the machine-dug trenches were inspected by CAT staff, who were given time by the contractors to investigate and record any archaeological remains uncovered, and to collect up the finds unearthed. Archaeologically significant features were only found in the eastern part of the site, and the main trenches in this area are shown in Fig 2. It did not prove possible to plot in detail all of the contractor's trenches, notably those which did not contain any significant archaeological remains. Further details are available in the site archive.
- 5.5** Machine-stripping for the extensions to the car parking areas started at the end of February 2013 in a field to the south-east of the existing car park (Fig 1). This involved the removal of the turf, followed by the stripping of the modern topsoil (L1) and roughly 100-150 mm of the underlying deposits. In all, the ground level was reduced by approximately 300-400 mm, although this varied slightly across the site. The stripping was carried out using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. The ground reduction was monitored by CAT staff during intermittent site visits. A metal detector was used to examine spoil heaps and finds recovered.
- 5.6** Towards the end of March 2013, machine-stripping started on another extension to the car park in an area to the north-west of the coffeehouse site. The method of working was similar to that outlined in section 5.5. A couple of metres to the east of this car parking area, a trench was dug to house a LPG tank. This trench measured 5.6 m east-west by 2.7 m north-south, and was 1.6 m deep. A narrow pipe trench, approximately 600 mm deep, was dug between the gas tank and the clubhouse to the south.
- 5.7** Individual records of archaeological contexts, such as layers or features, as well as finds, were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets. Site plans were drawn at 1:20 and sections were drawn at 1:10. Standard record photographs of the site and of individual contexts were taken on a digital camera. Further details of the recording methods used can be found in the WSI, and in the CAT document *Policies and procedures* (CAT 2006). Detailed notes on the stratigraphy in the test pits, the foundation trenches, and the stripped areas are available in the site archive.

## **6 Results**

- 6.1** The natural subsoil (Layer or L3) consisted of brownish-yellow gravelly sand. This was capped in places by shallow pockets of pale brown cover loam. On the coffeehouse site, the top of the natural subsoil lay approximately 450-650 mm below the modern ground level (ie in places where no significant archaeological or modern features were present). During machine-stripping for the extensions to the car park, the natural subsoil L3 was revealed in only a few places, at a depth of approximately 400-450 mm below the modern ground level.

In the test pits on the coffeehouse site, in January 2013, it was observed that the water table lay approximately 1.8-2.0 m below the modern ground level.

### **6.2 Prehistoric finds**

- 6.2.1** Some prehistoric pottery was recovered during machine-stripping for the extension to the car park to the south-east of the coffeehouse site. In addition, a few fired clay fragments and a piece of burnt stone were found, and were probably also of prehistoric date. These finds are discussed in section 7.3.1 and listed in Table 4 in Appendix 2.
- 6.2.2** The prehistoric finds mostly came from a brownish layer (L2), approximately 150-300 mm thick, which sealed the natural subsoil (L3). This layer probably consisted mainly of subsoil, reworked and redeposited as a result of post-Roman activity such as cultivation (see also sections 6.6.1- 6.6.2). Many of these prehistoric finds were found in scatters. One such finds scatter (finds number 12) came from the southern end of the stripped area, while another (16) was from the north-eastern part of the area (Fig 1). The sherds in both these scatters were probably of Middle Iron Age date. The finds from the latter (16) included some fired clay fragments, one of which is structural daub with voids from wooden wattles.

**6.2.3** Elsewhere in this area, a few prehistoric pottery sherds (finds numbers (13) and (15)) were recovered from machine-spoil and were thus unstratified. These sherds were more varied in date, ranging from Late Bronze Age to Late Iron Age, or possibly Roman.

### **6.3 Late Iron Age/early Roman enclosure ditch** (Figs 1, 2 & 3)

**6.3.1** The ditch, which formed the western side of the enclosure, extended roughly south-west to north-east across the coffeehouse site. During the watching brief, this ditch (Feature or F1) was uncovered in several places. Its eastern edge was revealed in a test pit at the southern edge of the site (TP7), and also in one of the large square trenches for a pad foundation. A section was excavated by hand across F1 in the foundation trench for the north wall of the coffeehouse (Figs 2 & 3). The ditch F1 was also revealed in a narrow east-west service trench, which was dug down the middle of the coffeehouse site. In the foundation trench for the south wall of the coffeehouse, the ditch F1 was observed briefly during machining. It was not possible to record F1 in detail here, mainly because the trench had to be shuttered.

**6.3.2** The enclosure ditch (F1) survived approximately 2.45 m wide and 700 mm deep in the excavated section in the northern part of the coffeehouse site. Further south it appeared to widen out. In Trench 1 of the 2012 archaeological evaluation, which extended across the middle of the coffeehouse site, the ditch was approximately 3.5 m wide by 1.15 m deep (CAT Report 647, 2). The ditch F1 had a greyish-brown fill, with occasional charcoal flecks. The upper part of the fill was slightly clayey, while the lower part was more gravelly. This was similar to the stratigraphy observed in the 2012 archaeological evaluation, although the sequence was reversed in Appleby's excavation (*ibid*, 4). In the narrow east-west service trench across the coffeehouse site, a charcoal-rich deposit, containing patches of burnt daub, was observed towards the eastern edge of F1, but in the lower part of its fill. Finds from F1 were very sparse, although a fired clay fragment and a prehistoric flint flake were recovered from the excavated section in the northern part of the site.

### **6.4 Late Iron Age/early Roman burials**

**6.4.1 F3** unurned cremation burial (Figs 2, 4 & 5)

*Description:* During the machine-digging of a foundation trench along the southern edge of the coffeehouse site, part of a burial (F3) was uncovered. It lay on the western side of the Late Iron Age/early Roman enclosure, roughly 7 m east of the enclosure ditch (F1). The cremated remains and grave goods had been placed in a pit, which was flat-bottomed and survived approximately 650 mm deep. The floor of the pit lay about 1 m below the modern ground level around the edges of the site. Only the southern half of the burial was trenched, and this was largely dug out by the contractors. The size and shape of the burial pit were not definitely established. It probably measured approximately 2 m east-west, although its north-south measurement remained unclear.

*Cremated human bone:* A quantity of cremated human bone (finds number 5) lay in a pile on the floor of the pit. This pile appeared to be centrally-placed within the pit, although this could not be confirmed as the full extent of the pit was not determined. A few more fragments of cremated bone, finds numbers (3) and (4), were recovered from elsewhere in the pitfill. In all, a total of 350 g was recovered, which analysis revealed was from a young person under 18 years of age of indeterminate sex.

*Burial goods:* An amphora (F3.1) was recovered from F3. It was dislodged by the machine, but was probably placed upright in the south-eastern corner of the burial pit. A bone object (F3.2) and two small joining fragments of worked bone (F3.3) were found during the processing of the deposit containing the main cluster of cremated bone (5). An iron nail fragment was found in the pitfill.

*Date:* 1st century AD

#### *Pottery*

by Stephen Benfield

**F3.1** (Illustrated Fig 5). (1) F3. Beltrán I (Dressel 7-11) amphora, complete (whole) body and spike (recently broken from body, but probably cracked at this point, post-deposition, at an earlier date); truncated at base of neck and handles (neck and handles not recovered). The weight is not available, as not all the soil that filled the pot has been removed. Presumed to have been buried as a complete vessel and truncated by later disturbance. Sandy fabric with cream surfaces and pale red core showing at neck, Fabric CAD AM (Tomber & Dore 1998). Although the sparse iron ore inclusions common to this fabric type are not readily apparent, the fabric can be identified as part of the Cadiz fabric group (Peacock 1971, 168-69), rather than the less common

Baetican fabric also associated with this form (Tomber & Dore 1998, 84). Late Iron Age-early Roman (1st century AD).

Beltrán I amphorae are principally associated with an origin on the southern Spanish (Iberian) coast. They are described as *salazones*, as *tituli picti* (painted inscriptions) on them commonly identify the contents as a salted fish product - either fish sauce or salted fish; although a few inscriptions identify wine or *defrutum* (a boiled-down wine product) in the later dated, closely related form Beltrán II (Sealey 2009). Complete amphorae of various types have been recovered from a number of Late Iron Age and early Roman burials in north Gaul and Britain. The lack of any evidence for seals in necks of any of these vessels suggests that the contents had been removed (decanted) before burial. Beltrán I amphorae have been recorded with four burials in Britain (Sealey 2009). Two amphorae of this type were recovered from a rich Iron Age burial at Snailwell, Cambridgeshire, dated c 25-50 AD. Another (closely identified as Dressel 8) was recovered from the Doctor's burial at Stanway dated to c AD 40-50/55 (Crummy *et al* 2007, 215). Sherds of this amphora type were also recovered from two graves at King Harry Lane, Verulamium (St Albans) - Grave 117 (dated AD 35-40/45) and Grave 206 (dated 10 BC-AD 30).

#### *Other objects*

Nina Crummy writes:

Two burnt bone objects came from this burial. One is of unusual form but can probably be identified as a toggle from clothing (**F3.2**; Fig 5 (18)). Although no direct parallel for it has so far been found, it is similar in size and general style to other turned toggles from the La Tène world, particularly three bone pieces of double baluster form from the Magdalensberg, two of which are from pre-Roman contexts dated to the end of the 1st century BC (Gostenčnik 2005, 450, Taf. 23, 7-9). A more distant association may also be drawn with the single dumb-bell buttons in metal, glass, bone and horn that occur in Britain in Iron Age and Roman contexts (MacGregor 1976, 134, fig. 8, 13-19).

The other fragment is a small part of a hollow turned cylinder (**F3.3**). No attempt has been made to estimate the diameter of the piece as bone can distort when burnt, but it would be too great for this to be a second toggle. It is probably part of a small handle or piece of cladding from the leg of a small piece of furniture, although the idiosyncratic belt composed of small unturned bone tubes from Grave 270 at King Harry Lane, Verulamium, is some indication of a wider range of possibilities (Stead & Rigby 1989, fig. 142).

**F3.2** Fig 5. SF 12. (18) F3. Turned and slightly tapering burnt bone ?toggle, with a central shank and two pairs of discs, the two innermost set closer to the end discs than to each other. Slight ribbing on the edges of the discs and the shank are probably the result of shrinkage of the bone when it was burnt. Scars from trimmed away projections used to attach the piece to a lathe remain on each end disc. Length 23 mm, diameter 7-7.5 mm.

**F3.3** Fig 5. SF 11. (19) F3. Turned terminal fragment (in two pieces) of a hollow burnt bone cylindrical object. The end of the terminal is neatly moulded and has a double cordon above that defines a wider moulding. Length 20 mm, maximum surviving width 9 mm.

Iron nail:

(2), iron nail head with the top part of the shank, corroded, oval flat head, length 22 mm (3 g). Probably Roman.

#### **6.4.2 F4** cremation burial or burial-related feature (Figs 2, 6 & 7; Plates 1 & 2)

*Description:* Part of a large pit (F4) was revealed during the machine-digging of foundation trenches in the south-eastern corner of the coffeehouse site. It lay on the western side of the Late Iron Age/early Roman funerary enclosure, roughly 12 m east of the enclosure ditch (F1) and 4 m south-east of F3. The pit was flat-bottomed and steep-sided. It survived approximately 1.1 m deep. The floor of the pit lay approximately 1.65 m below the modern ground level around the edges of the site. Only part of the north-western corner of F4 was trenched. This was largely dug out by the contractors, initially by machine and subsequently by hand during the shuttering of the trench. The length, width and shape of F4 remained unclear.

The backfill of F4 consisted of two distinct deposits (Sx 3, Fig 6; Plate 1). Around the edges of the pit, there was a pale yellowish-brown sandy layer. This contained moderate-abundant gravels and pale brown silty patches. It was probably redeposited natural subsoil. This deposit was sealed by the main backfill, which consisted of a brownish, slightly clayey deposit, with sparse charcoal flecks and moderate gravels. Away from the edges, this extended down to or just above the floor of the pit. On the floor of the pit were traces of a thin, charcoal-enriched lens with sparse fragments of cremated bone.

*Cremated human bone:* A small quantity of cremated bone was recovered from the charcoal-enriched lens on the floor of the pit. In total, 4 g of cremated bone was extracted

from a soil sample, which was taken from the section (finds number 8; Sx 3, Fig 6). The bone was probably human, but of indeterminate age and sex.

**Burial goods:** Two potsherds (F4.1) and a series of corroded iron fragments from at least five spear- or lanceheads (F4.2-6), as well as several iron nail fragments, were recovered from the lower part of the main backfill of F4. It was not possible to record the positions of these finds in detail in the ground.

**Date:** c AD 25-60



**Plate 1 F4: section, viewed from the west**

### *Pottery*

by Stephen Benfield

**F4.1** Terra rubra potsherds (Illustrated Fig 7). Finds number: (7), 2 sherds, 14 g. Fabric TR2 (GAB TR2 Tomber & Dore 1998), platter form Cam 7/8 (with straight wall). Late Iron Age-early Roman (c AD 25-60).

Rigby notes this as a relatively uncommon platter form, although it is recorded from a number of sites in Britain (Stead & Rigby 1989, 124). From cemetery sites and burials, it is rare at King Harry Lane (1 vessel), but there are several examples from Stanway, Colchester; Chamber BF6 (4 vessels), the Warrior's burial (1 vessel) and Doctor's grave (2 vessels) (Crummy *et al* 2007). All of these burials are dated to the period c AD 25-60.

### *Other objects*

Nina Crummy writes:

A minimum of five socketed spear- or lanceheads came from F4; detached blade tips point to at least one more weapon having been present.

All five spears have narrow blades that taper gently to the point. A thin but distinct mid-rib is visible on the X-radiographs of some fragments; the sections are thus more or less lenticular, but in some cases have been distorted by voids forming within the iron. They are very close in form, particularly in blade length and in one case also in overall length, to the conquest-period lancehead from the warrior burial at Stanway (Crummy *et al* 2007, 181, 183-4, fig. 86, BF64.24a). This similarity may provide an indication of date for the group, as well as local manufacture and a local preference for the form connected to its purpose and use. With low shoulders and very long points, they have a length of entry of 300 mm or more (the distance from the point to the shoulders, the widest part of the blade). They were designed for deep penetration, which in the context of warfare would allow them to pierce through armour or protective leather clothing and reach vital internal organs, while short wide blades were designed to slow the enemy down by causing maximum blood loss (Manning 1985, fig. 33; Bishop & Coulston 2006, 76).

Both Iron Age and Roman spearheads are very varied in shape and do not fall readily into narrow formal types, making it difficult to determine date, cultural or ethnic attribution, and even the method of use (Vouga 1923, 49; Collis 1973; Feugère 2002, 131; Bishop &



Coulston 2006, 76). A number of statistical approaches have been attempted for Roman weapons, none of which has been successful (Orton 1980, 38-9, 56-64).

The Stanway and Playgolf spears can be dated to the Late Iron Age and interpreted as weapons of the Catuvellauni on the basis of their contexts. A possible ceremonial use was suggested for the Stanway lancehead on the basis of its length, slenderness and funerary context (Crummy *et al* 2007, 181), but the recovery of the five blades from the Playgolf site makes the Stanway lance more likely to have been a practical weapon and goes some way towards defining both the preferred form for spears among the Catuvellauni and their fighting or hunting style. Table 1 summarises the features of all six blades.

**Table 1: summary of the features of the spearheads from Stanway and Playgolf**

Spear	Total length (mm)	Blade length (mm)	Maximum blade width (mm)	Features
Stanway	510	320	37	low angular shoulders, short solid shank above a long closed socket
Playgolf 1	520	365	36	?low shoulders, short solid shank above a closed socket
Playgolf 2	>292 (>390)	>180	33	low rounded shoulders, short solid shank above a closed socket, securing pin in socket
Playgolf 3	425	310	42	low shoulders, short solid shank above a closed socket, securing pin in socket
Playgolf 4	>328	>185	40	low shoulders, short solid shank above a long closed socket
Playgolf 5	>230	>140	35	low slightly angular shoulders, solid shank above a closed socket

Playgolf spearheads 1 (F4.2) and 3 (F4.4) and the Stanway spear are best defined as lances (thrusting weapons for a mounted warrior), although spearhead 3 has a shorter socket. Spearheads 4 (F4.5) and 5 (F4.6) have lost much of the blade, but both are wide enough at the surviving upper end to have developed into long narrow tips. A disassociated socket fragment may be part of spearhead 4, giving it a socket length approaching that of the Stanway spear. Only spearhead 2 (F4.3) appears definitely to have been short, as its broken end is much narrower than the rest at the same point. Given the unknown length of the shafts, it cannot be established with any certainty if these weapons were designed for throwing or for close combat, the former perhaps offering a link to the British use of war-chariots, so that we might posit that the Playgolf weapons represent a suite of spears of which those with the longest blades were used for thrusting from a moving chariot or from horseback and those with the shortest blades for throwing (javelins) or for closer fighting (Caesar, *de bello Gallico*, V.15-17, 19). At a later date and referring presumably to Britons north of Hadrian's Wall, one of the Vindolanda tablets records that '...nor do the wretched Britons mount in order to throw javelins' (Bowman & Thomas 1994, 106-8). In terms of using the weapons for hunting rather than fighting, a similar method and sequence of use would be appropriate, particularly if wild boar were the quarry. Strabo noted that Gaulish domestic pigs were exceptionally tall, fierce and fast, and that it was unwise for the inexperienced to approach them, and wild boars were sure to have been even more aggressive (Strabo, *Geographia*, IV.4, 3).

La Tène lances are in general longer and narrower than Roman examples and the Stanway spear is among the longest recovered (Crummy *et al* 2007, 181), now joined by spearhead 1 from the Playgolf site, making blade length, slenderness, and a length of entry maximised by setting the shoulders very low the defining characteristics of the Catuvellaunian lance. Substantial numbers of La Tène lances and other weapons are recorded from Alésia (Mont-Auxois, Alise-Sainte-Reine, Côte d'Or), the site of Caesar's defeat of the Gauls under Vercingetorix in 52 BC, but few of the lances even come close to the Catuvellaunian weapons in length (Sievers 2001, 176, pls 55-8). Rather more ambiguous in terms of attribution to British or Roman weaponry is a group of long spear-

or lanceheads from the hillfort of Hod Hill in Dorset, where *Legio II Augusta* under Vespasian defeated the Durotriges in AD 43. It is often assumed that the Durotriges surrendered without putting up much opposition, and that all the spearheads from Hod Hill derive from the later Roman fort, even those of Groups IV A-B that resemble La Tène lances (Manning 1985, 167), but as Group IV differ from the Catuvellaunian spearheads only in having a more prominent midrib and in never quite achieving the same length, it is possible that they represent the equivalent preferred Durotrigan form and should be re-interpreted as indigenous artefacts. The same point regarding cultural assignment of ironwork from Hod Hill has already been noted with regard to knives similar to that found in the Stanway doctor's medical kit (Jackson 2007, 245).

The spearheads from Camulodunum are not closely matched by any of the seven spearheads of probable conquest-period date from Orsett Cock, Essex, some of which may be of Roman origin (Major 1998, figs. 53-4; cf. Manning 1985, pls 76-8, 81). One, defined as a 'pike', does have a long almost straight-sided blade but it lacks the shoulders and solid shank of the Camulodunum weapons (Major 1998, fig. 54, 6). The spearhead from the Kelvedon warrior burial, dated to c 75-25 BC, is again not a close match. Although the blade is very long, it has rounded shoulders and a very marked midrib, lacks a solid shank, and the hollow of the socket extends up into the midrib. It does, though, have a length of entry well in excess of 300 mm (Sealey 2007, 8-9).

The Playgolf spearheads were probably broken during machining and are now not complete. Voids formed within the shank of spearhead 1 (**F4.2**) caused it to break away from the socket while it was being X-rayed. There is little if any evidence from the broken edges on any of the spearheads that they had been deliberately broken before deposition and scattered throughout the fill of the pit as was the case with objects from the Stanway chamber burials, the Lexden Tumulus and the Folly Lane chamber at Verulamium (Crummy *et al* 2007, 101-57, 424-6, 447-8; Foster 1986, 166-9; Niblett 1999). The socket of spearhead 5 (**F4.6**) appears to be incomplete, but spearheads 3 (**F4.4**) and 4 (**F4.5**) were so closely associated during deposition that they are still corroded together. Given the lack of substantive evidence for damage in antiquity, a number of interpretations for this group of weapons may be put forward. They may be among the furnishings in a warrior grave, placed in the burial in a bundle. They may have been deposited as unbroken and unburnt secondary deposits in a funerary feature such as a chamber or a satellite pit for a chamber. They may be a votive weapon-hoard, with or without funerary significance, or they may be a weapon-hoard buried within the enclosure for safe-keeping when the native British élite were disarmed after the conquest of this area in AD 43. Given the proximity of cremation burial F3 and the location of F4 within an enclosure, the first interpretation is perhaps the most likely. Given the number of spears involved, the wider importance of such a warrior burial cannot be overstressed.

**F4.2** Fig 7. SF 1. (6) F4. Spearhead 1; complete but fragmentary. There are no marked shoulders at the base of the blade, as on the Stanway lancehead, but the edges are not well-preserved and they may have been lost to corrosion. The socket has split at the lower end and is filled with mineral-replaced wood that has lost its structure. A pin secured the shaft within the lower end of the socket. Total length 520 mm, blade length 365 mm, maximum width 36 mm. There are traces of mineral-replaced organics on the surfaces.

**F4.3** Fig 7. SF 2. (6) F4. Spearhead 2; incomplete, fragmentary. There are slight shoulders at the base of the blade. A pin secured the shaft within the lower end of the socket, which is filled with mineral-replaced wood that has lost its structure. Surviving length 292 mm, blade length >180 mm, maximum width 33 mm. Mineral-replaced wood is present on most of the surviving length of one face, and traces of mineral-replaced organics on the other. Probably much shorter than Lancehead 1 as the broken end of the blade is narrower than at the equivalent point on 1. Either Fragment 1 or Fragment 2 may be the detached tip for this blade, but neither is a precise fit; both would give an approximate total length of about 390+ mm.

**F4.4** Fig 7. SF 3. (6) F4. Spearhead 3, fused to 4 by corrosion; complete but fragmentary. The base of the blade has rounded shoulders. A pin was used to secure the shaft within the lower end of the socket, which is filled with mineral-replaced wood. The upper end of the shaft is visible within the socket. Total length 425 mm, blade length 310 mm, maximum width 42 mm. Mineral-replaced wood is present on the surfaces.

**F4.5** Fig 7. SF 4. (6) F4. Spearhead 4, fused to 3 by corrosion; incomplete, fragmentary. The base of the blade has rounded shoulders. The lower end of the socket is now detached. Fragment 4 below may also be part of this socket. Minimum surviving length 328 mm, blade length >185 mm, maximum width 40 mm. There are some traces of mineral-replaced organic material on the surfaces.

**F4.6** Fig 7. SF 5. (6) F4. Spearhead 5; incomplete, fragmentary. The base of the blade has rounded shoulders. There is a long solid shank between the blade and the socket, which is incomplete. The top of the wooden shaft can be seen within the socket. Surviving length 230 mm, blade length >140 mm, maximum width 35 mm. Mineral-replaced wood and other organic material is present on the surfaces.

SF 7. (6) F4. Fragment 1. Tip. Length 59 mm, maximum width 16 mm.

SF 8. (6) F4. Fragment 2. Tip. Length 55 mm, maximum width 16 mm.

SF 9. (6) F4. Fragment 3. Tip. Length 35 mm, maximum width 13 mm.

SF 6. (6) F4. Fragment 4. Socket fragment, recently broken and possibly part of spearhead 4, which would extend the length of its socket considerably and make it comparable in length to the socket of the Stanway spear. Length 39 mm.



**Plate 2 Spearheads 1-5, numbered from left to right.**

(Spearheads 3 & 4 are corroded together. Spearhead 1 is 520 mm long.)

Iron nail fragments:

(6), nail shank fragment with transverse wood grain along its length. The section is square-/ lozenge-shaped. Length 15 mm.

(20), 3 fragments of corroded iron nail shaft, probably part of the same nail; one fragment may preserve a small head or part of the nail head. Lengths 18 mm, 14 mm & 12 mm. Probably Roman.

**6.5 Other possible Iron Age and/or Roman features (Figs 1, 2 & 3)**

**6.5.1** A narrow ditch (F5) was excavated in the trench for the foundation of the north wall of the coffeehouse. The ditch was approximately 1.2 m wide and 300 mm deep. It was aligned from south-west to north-east. The fill was a greyish-brown, slightly clayey deposit, with

occasional charcoal flecks. Finds from F5 were sparse, but included a few sherds of Roman grey ware pottery and a lump of fired clay. In the foundation trench for the north wall of the coffeehouse, F5 lay approximately 1.1 m east of the Late Iron Age/early Roman enclosure ditch F1. Further south, F5 was not definitely located and its stratigraphic relationship to F1 was not established.

The presence of the Roman sherds suggests that F5 was later in date than the enclosure ditch F1. Aerial photographs show a linear feature as a cropmark to the south of the coffeehouse site. This extended to the south-west of the western enclosure ditch, but at a slightly different angle to it (Fig 1). It is possible that this was the same linear feature as F5. If this was so, then F5 should cross F1 at some point on or near the coffeehouse site. However, no evidence was observed, in either the 2012 evaluation trench or in the recent work, that F1 was cut by F5. An alternative explanation is that the ditch F5 was cut and destroyed by F1. The presence of the Roman sherds could perhaps be explained if the remaining part of ditch F5 had not fully silted-up by Roman times.

- 6.5.2** Another large pit (F2; Fig 2) was uncovered near the eastern edge of the coffeehouse site. It was observed in two separate trenches for pad foundations; these trenches were 700-750 mm deep, measured from the contractor's working surface. It was also recorded in a shallow east-west service trench, approximately 500 mm deep, immediately to the south of the foundation trenches. These exposures almost certainly belonged to the northern part of a single feature. It measured approximately 3.4 m across from east to west, although its north-south measurement remained unclear.

The pit was fairly steep-sided and had a greyish-brown, slightly clayey fill. The bottom of F2 was not reached, as it extended below the bottom of the trenches. The pit F2 survived at least 600 mm deep, and was sealed by up to 150 mm of modern make-up (L5). The top of the pit survived approximately 450 mm below the modern ground level around the edges of the site. No finds were recovered from F2, and thus it remained undated. It lay within the western part of the Late Iron Age/early Roman funerary enclosure, approximately 8 m north-east of F3 and F4. It could be broadly contemporary with these features, although equally it could be post-Roman in date.

- 6.5.3** No significant archaeological features were observed outside the Late Iron Age/early Roman funerary enclosure during the watching brief. On the coffeehouse site, a clayey patch, approximately 1.3 m across, was uncovered in a shallow east-west service trench (Fig 2). It lay approximately 10 m west of the enclosure ditch (F1), but was probably natural in origin.

The machine-stripping for the extensions to the car park was not generally deep enough to reveal archaeological features. In the extension to the car park to the south-east of the existing car park, the natural subsoil (L3) was exposed in only a few places. In the south-eastern corner of this area, a pale brown clayey patch, approximately 1.85 m across, cut L3 (Fig 1). This feature was probably natural in origin.

## **6.6 Post-Roman deposits** (Figs 2 & 3)

- 6.6.1** Across large parts of the site, the natural subsoil (L3) was sealed by a brownish layer (L2), approximately 150-300 mm thick. This layer probably consisted mainly of subsoil, reworked and redeposited as a result of post-Roman activity such as cultivation. It survived in particular across the areas where machine-stripping took place for the extensions to the car park. However, over much of the coffeehouse site, L2 had already been stripped off in modern times, although it did survive in places across the northern part of the site. Here, L2 was observed to seal the archaeological features, including F1 and F5 (Sx 1, Fig 3).

- 6.6.2** During machine-stripping for the extensions to the car park, in most places only the upper part of L2 was removed. Any surviving ancient archaeological features were therefore 'masked' by the remaining part of L2. For example, in the extension to the car park to the south-east of the existing car park, the probable Roman field boundary ditch, that was sectioned during the 2012 evaluation (CAT Report 647, 2, 4-5), was not exposed (Fig 1). However, the 2012 evaluation trench (T2) itself was visible. Also, during machine-stripping for the car park to the north-west of the coffeehouse site, there was no trace of two probable ditches, which had been identified as cropmarks (Fig 1). A few Roman sherds (finds number 17) were recovered from this area during machining, and probably came from L2. Nothing of archaeological significance was visible in the trench for the LPG tank immediately to the east of this area.

During the machine-stripping in both car park extensions, a series of narrow ploughmarks, aligned roughly north-south, was observed in the surface of L2. These marks were probably modern in date.

- 6.6.3** Over much of the site, L2 was sealed by dark greyish-brown modern topsoil (L1), 150-250 mm thick, usually with a further 80-100 mm of turf. However, across most of the coffeehouse site, L1 had already been stripped off. A few small modern features were observed during the machine-stripping of L1 and L2 (details in site archive).
- 6.6.4** In some parts of the site, L1 was sealed by the modern surfaces (L4) that existed before building work began. These were largely of tarmac or concrete, with associated make-up, and were approximately 150 mm thick. However, over most of the coffeehouse site, the modern surfaces had already been stripped off. In this area, a layer of modern rubbly make-up (L5), 150-250 mm thick, had been dumped on the site to provide a working surface for the contractors.

## 7 Finds

### 7.1 Introduction

A quantity of finds was recovered during the archaeological watching brief. Where appropriate the finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context, in line with the recommendations in *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008b). The pottery fabric and form codes used are outlined in section 7.2. The finds from F3 and F4, including the small finds, are listed in sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 respectively. The other finds, including brief descriptions of the pottery, are listed by context in Table 4 in Appendix 2, and are discussed by Stephen Benfield in section 7.3. Further details are available in the site archive. The detailed report on the cremated bone by Julie Curl is given in section 7.4 and a summary catalogue is provided in Table 5 in Appendix 3.

### 7.2 Pottery fabric and form codes

(Identifications by Stephen Benfield)

The pottery fabrics recorded are listed in Table 2. The Roman pottery fabrics refer to the Colchester Roman pottery fabric series (*CAR 10*), supplemented by the National Roman Fabric reference collection (Tomber & Dore 1998). Vessel forms refer to the Camulodunum Roman pottery type series (Hawkes & Hull 1947). For a single *salazon* amphora the vessel form follows Beltrán, as referenced by Sealey (1985, 77).

**Table 2: list of pottery fabrics**

Fabric code	Fabric name
<i>Prehistoric</i>	
HMF	Hand-made flint-tempered
HMS	Hand-made sand-tempered
<i>Late Iron Age and Roman:</i>	
CAD AM	Cadiz amphorae
GX	other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares
TR2	Gallia-Belgica <i>terra rubra</i> 2 (Tomber & Dore 1998 Fabric GAB TR 2)

### 7.3 General finds

by Stephen Benfield

#### 7.3.1 Prehistoric

The earliest dated finds consist of two flint-tempered sherds (Fabric HMF) recovered from machine spoil (U/S (15)), during stripping for the extension to the car park to the south-east of the coffeehouse site. These are not closely dated, but they probably do not date later than the Early Iron Age and a Bronze Age-Early Iron Age date may be most likely. A small flint flake recovered from the enclosure ditch F1 (11) is also not closely dated, but is likely to be prehistoric and probably does not date later than the Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age period.

A small quantity of Middle Iron Age (MIA) pottery (Fabric HMS) was recovered from the south car park extension (L2 (12 & 16) & U/S (13 & 15)). In total there are thirty sherds

weighing 107 g. The pottery can be broadly dated to the period c 400/350-50 BC or slightly later. One sherd (3 g) from the same area is also probably MIA, but might possibly be abraded Roman pottery. Overall the average sherd size is quite small at 3.6 g, which could suggest this pottery consists mostly of old sherds, which have some previous depositional history, or that it has been further broken after initial deposition.

Three pieces of fired clay (101 g) were recovered with the MIA pottery from the south car-park extension (L2 (16)). One is structural daub with voids from wooden wattles. Although not closely dated, as the MIA pottery is the principal find from that area, a MIA date for the fired clay appears most likely.

A small lump of fired clay (23 g) from the enclosure ditch F1 (10), in the absence of any associated closely dated finds, might also be of prehistoric date, but a later date might also be possible.

A burnt flint (31 g), recovered from the south car park extension (L2 (16)), is also likely to be of prehistoric date.

### 7.3.2 Roman

A few sherds of Roman grey ware pottery (Fabric GX) were recovered from the ditch F5 and unstratified (U/S) from machine spoil in the north car park extension. The pottery from F5 (9) consists a large sherd recently broken into three pieces. The pottery from the area of the north car park extension (U/S (17)) is three sherds from the rim of a jar or deep bowl which appear to have been burnt or scorched. None of these sherds are more closely dated other than as Roman.

A small, abraded piece of fired clay (3 g) was recovered with Roman pottery from the ditch F5 (9). The association with Roman pottery might indicate it is Roman, but given the fired clay associated with MIA pottery (see above) and that the piece is abraded, it may be residual.

### 7.3.3 Post-Roman

There is a small quantity of pieces of tile which are, or appear to be, of post-Roman date. In total there are four pieces weighing 156 g. All are unstratified. Three fragments came from the area of the south car park extension (13) and one from the north car park extension (17). Two (13) can be identified as peg-tiles, which are probably either of late medieval or more probably post-medieval date. Two other pieces are thicker, suggesting they might possibly be Roman. However, one curved piece (13) appears to be from a post-medieval pan-tile, and based on its appearance, a post-Roman (post-medieval) date is also preferred for the other piece (17).

## 7.4 Cremated human bone

*by Julie Curl*

### 7.4.1 Introduction

This report examines the cremated bone recovered during a watching brief at Playgolf Colchester in 2013. The bone came from an unurned cremation burial (F3) and a cremation burial or burial-related feature (F4). Both features are of Late Iron Age/early Roman date.

### 7.4.2 Methodology

Four bags of cremated bone, recovered from four fills in two features, were submitted for recording and assessment. The contents were dry-sieved through a stack of 10, 5 and 1 mm sized mesh to ensure maximum recovery and assess the degree of fragmentation. Fragments measuring over 5 mm were manually separated for assessment; those below 1 mm were not sorted and examined in greater depth for this report. Material was recorded onto the cremation recording sheet. A summary catalogue of the material is provided in Table 5 in Appendix 3 and a full catalogue is available in the digital archive.

### 7.4.3 Quantification, provenance and preservation

A total of 354 g of cremated bone, consisting of 917 pieces, was recovered from the Playgolf site. The bone was recovered from two features, both of Late Iron Age to early Roman date. The majority (98.8% by weight) of the cremated bone was derived from three contexts in Feature 3; the remaining 1.2% of the burnt bone was found in one context in Feature 4. Quantification of the cremated by feature and fragment size can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3: quantification of the cremated remains by context and fragment size counts and weight.**

Context	Feature	Type	>10 mm	Wt (g)	5-9 mm	Wt (g)	2-4 mm	Wt (g)	<1 mm	Wt (g)	Total Ctxt Wt (g)	Total Count
3	F3	Burial	4	4.5	1	0.5					5	5
4	F3	Burial	1	1							1	1
5	F3	Burial	324	187	437	145	89	10	30+	2	344	880
8	F4	?Burial	3	1.5	2	0.5	24	2			4	29

All but one of the pieces of bone in this assemblage were burnt to a high degree, resulting in fully oxidised remains.

#### 7.4.4 Analysis results and discussion

##### *Size of cremations*

The size of a cremation depends on the individual (age, sex, body mass, bone density), the extent of bone recovery from the pyre site and during excavation, as well as on the rate of bone preservation (McKinley 1993).

The bone collected from burial/burial-related feature F4 produced a total of 4 g of bone, consisting of twenty-nine pieces. Burial F3 yielded a total of 350 g of bone, consisting of 886 fragments.

The weight of the cremated remains from both features in this assemblage is at the lower end of the weight range in comparison to other archaeological cremations (range: 57 – 3000 g) (McKinley 2000) and substantially incomplete in comparison to a modern cremation (1000 – 3600 g) (McKinley 2000). Cremations in containers are normally larger than cremations in pits, and finely-crushed cremations tend to be smaller due to poor preservation. The smaller size of these cremations may be due to a range of factors, including loss of the volatile portion of bone before burial, as well as post-depositional bone decay, possibly due to the remains not being interred in a vessel.

##### *Fragmentation*

The fragmentation of bone resulting from the cremation process may be increased by funerary practices such as raking and tending of the pyre, collection of bone at the pyre site, deliberate crushing prior to burial, as well as a result of post-depositional processes, excavation and processing (McKinley 1989).

Overall, the cremated bone in burial F3 has undergone a high degree of fragmentation, with just under 50% of fragments measuring 5-9 mm, 37% of the bone is 10 mm or over, 10% of the remains are 2-4 mm and over, and just over 3% of the bone is 1 mm or less. The maximum size (greater length) of fragment in F3 is 35 mm.

The bone in F4 has the majority (83%) of the bone fragmented to 2-4 mm in length, 10% of the fragments were 10 mm or larger and 7% of the remains in F4 were 5-9 mm.

The degree of bone fragmentation in both features is greater than that generally seen in archaeological cremations, where 50% of bone fragments are over 10 mm in size (McKinley 1994).

The remains in this assemblage may be from a heavily raked pyre or the clearing of the pyre and have undergone a greater degree of fragmentation as a result.

##### *Colour*

The colour of cremated bone depends on a range of factors, including the maximum temperature reached, the length of the cremation process, the type and amount of fuel, the quantity of oxygen, the amount of body fat, as well as on the degree of uniformity of exposure to the heat across the body. A correlation has been found between the temperature attained and colour changes. Cremated bone can exhibit a large range of heat-induced colour variation from normal coloured (unburnt), to black (charred: c 300 °C), through hues of blue and grey (incompletely incinerated: up to c 600 °C) to fully oxidised white (> c 600 °C) (McKinley 2004).

With the exception of one bone in F3, all of the bone from F3 and F4 were fully oxidised; ie exposed to a temperature in excess of c 600 °C. The proximal phalange from F3 (5), showed slightly less intense burning, which is common for extremities, which may not be exposed to the main heat.

### *Surface Changes*

Surface changes such as warping, cracking and fissuring were noted throughout. These are characteristics of cremated bone and are produced during the process of dehydration undergone by bone exposed to heat. The pattern of heat-induced bone changes in colour and texture can be exploited to infer the technological aspects of the ritual, the condition of the body at the time when the cremation process took place, and the nature of post-depositional disturbance (Shipman *et al* 1984).

### *Elements and species identified during the analysis*

The remains in F3 produced numerous pieces of skull, many of which include unfused sutures, indicating a young person under 18 years. A small, unfused cervical vertebrae was recorded, along with a root from a premolar, numerous limb fragments, with pieces of a radius and proximal phalange showing better preservation. It was not possible to determine the sex of the individual from any of the remains.

The bone in F4 is too highly fragmented to allow identification of species or elements, with remains only identifiable as 'mammal' and possibly human.

All of the identifiable elements are thought to be human and no diagnostic elements from animal remains were seen in this assemblage, although it is possible that animal bone (albeit residual) may be included in the smaller fragments.

## **7.4.5 Conclusions**

The remains in features F3 and F4 appear to consist of highly-fragmented cremated human remains. Given these individual assemblages are small compared to the average sizes of archaeological cremations (McKinley 2000), the remains in F4 do not appear to represent the complete cremation of one individual. It is likely that the cremated bone from F3 does represent one individual, who is less than 18 years old, but that the burning and raking of the pyre caused greater than normal fragmentation and it is possible that not all of the bone from this individual was collected.

The average size of most of the fragments was small to very small and none of these smaller fragments could be identified further at this stage. It is therefore not possible to say whether the majority of the smaller fragments of bone are human, animal or a mixture. The poorer preservation of these remains may, at least partially, be due to the cremated bone not being buried in a vessel, which would have given better protection.

It is possible that the remains in F3 represent bone cleared from a pyre area that has undergone extensive raking and disturbance of material, hence the greater degree of fragmentation. The remains may well consist of bone from more than one individual.

## **8 Discussion**

**8.1** A scatter of prehistoric finds of probable Bronze Age to Iron Age date was recovered during machine-stripping for the extension to the car park to the south-east of the coffeehouse site (Fig 1). This lay outside the Late Iron Age/early Roman funerary enclosure and the stripping was not deep enough to reveal any significant archaeological features. Finds of a similar date-range were recovered during earlier investigations elsewhere on the site. The potsherds recovered in 2013 were mainly of Middle Iron Age date. Several fragments of fired clay, one of which has clear evidence of wattle impressions, were found associated with some of the Middle Iron Age sherds. These finds provide slight evidence for prehistoric activity on the site pre-dating the enclosure. The structural daub suggests that this activity is related to a settlement site rather than a funerary one.

### **8.2 The Late Iron Age/early Roman funerary enclosure**

**8.2.1** The ditch (F1), which formed the western side of the enclosure, extended roughly south-west to north-east across the coffeehouse site. It was uncovered in several places, and appeared to vary somewhat in size. At the northern edge of the coffeehouse site, F1 was approximately 2.5 m wide and 0.7 m deep. Further south, this ditch had previously been sectioned in T1 during the 2012 archaeological evaluation, where it was 3.5 m wide and 1.15 m deep. Aerial photographs of the enclosure also suggest that some parts of the enclosure ditches are wider than others (CAT Report 647, 4), although to what extent this was due to later truncation was unclear. Finds from F1 were sparse, and did not provide any significant dating evidence to add to previous finds from the enclosure ditches.

**8.2.2** The discovery of two probable burials, F3 and F4, within the ditched area confirmed that it was a funerary enclosure, and not just, for example, a stock corral. It is likely that the



enclosure was laid out in the Late Iron Age, or possibly the early Roman, period. The 2013 discoveries help put into context previous finds on the site, such as two amphora sherds found approximately 22 m to the north-east of F3 in 2001 (CAT Report 167, 3). Also, two cropmarks, interpreted as large pits (CAT Report 47, 14), have been recorded in the north-western corner of the enclosure (Fig 1). These may turn out to be burial-related features.

**8.2.3** The Playgolf enclosure and the features within it are comparable to the enclosures excavated by CAT at the Stanway gravel quarry between 1987 and 1997 (Crummy *et al* 2007). The Stanway site lies a short distance to the west of Gryme's Dyke, on the fringe of the Late Iron Age *oppidum* of Camulodunum (Fig 8). It was in use during the period c 50 BC to AD 70, and thus dates back to the early years of Camulodunum. Moreover the enclosures continued to be used as a burial place for members of the British nobility for several decades following the Roman invasion. Among the discoveries at Stanway were the remarkable Doctor's grave, with its gaming board and surgical instruments, and the Warrior's grave, with a spear and possible shield. As well as several more burials, there was also a range of other funerary-related features, including chambers, pyre sites, mortuary enclosures, and pits with pyre debris.

### **8.3 The Late Iron Age/early Roman burial F3**

**8.3.1** The evidence recovered from F3 established that it was a Late Iron Age or early Roman burial, probably of an adolescent. The dead person was perhaps a member of an important British family. Only a limited part of the burial pit F3 was available for investigation, so it was not possible to be sure about its size and shape. However, the evidence from comparable burials, such as those at Stanway, suggests that it was probably squarish or sub-rectangular in shape. A couple of the burials at Stanway had an amphora placed upright in the corner of the pit (*ibid*, 172 & 212), just as in F3. The depth of the pit was probably in part determined by the height of the amphora placed in it (*ibid*, 427). The placing of the cremated bone in a pile on the floor of the burial pit in F3 was also paralleled at Stanway (*ibid*, 433). The burial is not closely dated, but the amphora indicates it is likely to date to the 1st century AD, and probably before c AD 70 (*ibid*, 299-300).

### **8.4 The Late Iron Age/early Roman ?burial F4**

**8.4.1** The interpretation of the burial or burial-related feature F4 is problematic, mainly because only a small part of it was available for investigation. As with F3, its size and shape was unclear, although it was probably squarish or sub-rectangular in shape. The discovery of the spearheads in F4 suggests that it was a warrior burial, perhaps comparable to the Warrior's grave at Stanway. This interpretation is reinforced by the position of F4 within the funerary enclosure. It is close to F3 on the western side of the enclosure, which was the usual place for burials at Stanway (*ibid*, 424). Many of the other features at Stanway, such as chambers and mortuary enclosures, were placed axially within the enclosures (*ibid*).

**8.4.2** Due to the circumstances of discovery, it was not possible to record in detail how the burial goods from F4 lay in the ground. The finds were picked out individually from the lower part of the main backfill, but this deposit had been disturbed by the contractors. It was therefore unclear whether the finds originally lay on the floor of the pit or in the lower part of the backfill. At the time of recovery, it was not thought that the spear- or lanceheads were deposited in a bundle or laid out neatly on the floor of the pit. However, two of the spear- or lanceheads (**F4.4** & **F4.5**) were corroded together, showing that these two at least were buried in close proximity to one another, as if carefully placed in this way.

Also, traces of mineral-replaced wood and other organic materials were identified on the surfaces of the spear- or lanceheads. This may indicate that materials, such as hay, straw or grass, had been strewn on the floor of the pit, and that the spear- or lanceheads were in contact with these. Similar organic materials were identified on the pit floor in the chamber BF6 at Stanway (*ibid*, 110), and also at the Lexden Tumulus (Foster 1986, 144) and the chamber at Folly Lane (Niblett 1999, 396). However, organic materials were also identified in the lower part of the backfill in features at Stanway (Crummy *et al* 2007, 117, 207).

**8.4.3** Two distinct types of deposit were observed in F4 (Sx 3, Fig 6; Plate 1). The light-coloured sandy layers around the edges of F4 were probably redeposited natural. Similar deposits were observed in the chambers at Stanway, where the evidence suggests that these

deposits were originally packing material between the sides of the pit and a wooden mortuary chamber, or perhaps simply the collapsed upper edges of the chamber pit. These deposits had slumped and slid forward gradually in a piecemeal fashion as the wooden chamber decayed and collapsed (*ibid*, 117, 145-6). The wooden mortuary chambers excavated at Stanway were large enough to accommodate a dead adult body surrounded by grave goods, prior to cremation (*ibid*, 101-157, 424-6). Although there was no definite evidence for a wooden mortuary chamber in F4, the similarities between the deposits in F4 and those in the chambers at Stanway raise the possibility that F4 may have been a Stanway-type chamber, rather than a warrior burial.

- 8.4.4** Other evidence casts doubt on the interpretation of F4 as a warrior burial. Thus, a couple of potsherds (**F4.1**) were recovered from F4 and these appeared to have been deliberately broken and incorporated into the lower part of the backfill. This is reminiscent of the fragmentary nature and deposition pattern of the finds from the chambers and some other non-burial contexts at Stanway (*ibid*, 425-6, 430-1). Also, the evidence from other comparable Late Iron Age warrior burials excavated in southern Britain suggests that the number of spears placed in a warrior burial was usually limited to one. Therefore the discovery of at least five spear- or lanceheads in F4 is very unusual if it was a burial.
- 8.4.5** In conclusion, while it is likely that the pit with the spearheads at Playgolf (F4) was a warrior burial, the possibility that it was some other kind of feature, such as a Stanway-type chamber, cannot be ruled out without further excavation. The ?burial F4 is more closely dated than the burial F3, due to the presence of the imported Gallo-Belgic sherds. These suggest a probable date-range of c AD 25-60 for F4. This is reinforced by the similarities between the Playgolf spear- or lanceheads, and that from the Warrior's grave at Stanway, which is dated c AD 40-55.
- 8.5** The Playgolf Colchester site is significant not just for the discovery of the burial features and the finds from them, but because they show that the enclosure they lay within was of the Stanway-type of funerary enclosure. These are rare in Britain (*ibid*, 447-51). Their characteristics, and the complex rituals practiced within them, are paralleled at Verulamium (St Albans). There also seems to be links with sites in northern Gaul (*ibid*, 451-5). These sites have provided a wealth of information about the Late Iron Age peoples who constructed and used them, and their relationships with the Roman invaders. The Playgolf site is therefore important for our understanding of how Camulodunum developed in the years leading up to the Roman invasion and beyond.

## 9 Abbreviations and glossary

amphora	large Roman pottery storage jar, used especially for oil and wine
AOD	above Ordnance Survey datum point based on mean sea level at Newlyn, Cornwall
BABAO	British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology
BAR	British Archaeological Report
Bronze Age	period from c 2000 BC to c 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CBCAO	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer
CIMS	Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service
context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made; usually a layer or a feature
cover loam	a natural, wind-blown deposit, probably formed towards the end of the last Ice Age
DBA	desk-based assessment
Early Iron Age	period from c 700 BC to c 300 BC
HER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford
feature	an identifiable context, such as a pit, a wall or a posthole
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
Late Bronze Age	period from c 1200 to c 700 BC
Late Iron Age	period from c 100 BC to AD 43
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c AD 1500
Middle Iron Age	period from c 300 BC to c 100 BC
modern	period from c 1850 onwards to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference

pan-tile	an S-shaped, post-medieval or later roofing tile, which overlaps with its neighbour
peg-tile	rectangular roof tile of medieval or later date; intact examples usually have two peg-holes
post-medieval	period from c 1500 to c 1850
residual	finds that were deposited earlier than the context in which they were found
RRC SAL	Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London
Roman	period from AD 43 to c AD 410
SAM	scheduled ancient monument
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database, maintained by Colchester and Ipswich Museums
U/S	unstratified, ie without a well-defined context
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

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CAT Report 647	2012	<i>An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at 'Playgolf', Bakers Lane, Westhouse Farm, Colchester, Essex: May 2012</i> , unpublished CAT archive report, by Chris Lister
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## 11 Acknowledgements

CAT is grateful to Playgolf Colchester for funding the archaeological watching brief, and to Steve Belchem, ADP Ltd, for commissioning the watching brief. We would also like to thank all those who assisted with the project, especially the following: the contractors, notably 4D Design and D A Cant, for their help on site; the finds specialists, Nina Crummy, Julie Curl and Stephen Benfield, for their contributions; Emma Hogarth of Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service for the X-rays of the spearheads; and Emma Holloway for the small finds drawings. The work was monitored by Martin Winter, Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer.

## 12 Archive deposition

The archive from the archaeological investigation, including the site records, photographs and finds, will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museums, under accession code COLEM 2013.1, in accordance with *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester & Ipswich Museums* (CIMS 2008b) and *Archaeological archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (IfA 2007).

## 13 Appendices

### Appendix 1: contents of archive

One A4 document wallet containing:

#### 1 Project management archive

- 1.1 Copy of the brief issued by CBCAO on paper and CD
- 1.2 Copy of the WSI produced by CAT on CD
- 1.3 Copy of 2012 evaluation report on CD (CAT Report 647)
- 1.4 Copies of other previous archaeological reports, on paper (CMR 1954) and CD (CAT Reports 47 & 59)
- 1.5 Site plans provided by the developer on paper and CD

#### 2 Site archive

- 2.1 Attendance register
- 2.2 Context sheets
- 2.3 Site plans/sections on 2 sheets of A3 drafting film
- 2.4 Site plans/sections on 6 sheets of A4 squared paper
- 2.5 Photographic record sheets
- 2.6 Site photographs on CD
- 2.7 Site diary/notes on 6 sheets of A4 paper
- 2.8 Sundry papers

#### 3 Research archive

- 3.1 Lists of finds, including small finds, on paper and CD
- 3.2 Copies of specialists reports on CD
- 3.3 Full catalogue of cremated bone as spreadsheet on CD
- 3.4 Finds photographs on CD
- 3.5 X-rays of iron small finds
- 3.6 Finds drawings
- 3.7 Copy of final report (CAT Report 709) on paper and CD

Not in wallet:

#### 4 Finds archive

- 4.1 One large plastic tub of small finds
- 4.2 One crate containing amphora F3.1 (loaned to Playgolf Colchester)
- 4.3 Several plastic bags containing the other finds; taking up roughly half a museum box

#### Appendix 2: list of finds by context

All weights are in grammes. Identifications and descriptions are by Stephen Benfield. For the pottery fabric and form codes, see section 7.2. Table 4 excludes the finds from unurned cremation burial F3 and ?burial F4; these are listed in sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 respectively.

**Table 4: list of finds by context**

Context	Finds no	Qty	Description	Wt (g)	Comments
F1	10	1	irregular fired clay lump	23	quite hard fired
	11	1	prehistoric flint flake	2	small, squat, irregular secondary flake
F5	9	3	Roman pottery sherds	7	Fabric GX, pale grey with dark grey core, abraded, recently broken single sherd
		1	fired clay fragment	3	abraded, with small area of surviving oxidised brownish surface; the soft fabric and similarity of the abraded back and edges suggest this is probably a piece of fired clay rather than Middle Iron Age pottery
L2	12	25	prehistoric pottery sherds	91	Illustrated, Fig 5. Fabric HMS, rim and body sherds, probably all from one pot; jar with simple upright rim, joining sherds from rim and shoulder, dark fine sand fabric, burnished on body, Middle Iron Age
	16	3	prehistoric pottery sherds	9	Fabric HMS, dark fine sand fabric; two small sherds (abraded) and one larger sherd with inclusions of burnt organic matter, Middle Iron Age
	3	3	fired clay fragments	101	one piece is structural daub, corner piece with two flat surfaces and with parts of two wattle voids at different angles to each other; also two other abraded, rounded pieces.
	1	1	burnt stone	31	heat-crazed flint, probably prehistoric
U/S	13	1	prehistoric pottery sherd	5	Fabric HMS, thick oxidised sandy sherd, quite abraded, medium-coarse sand, probably Middle-Late Iron Age
		3	post-Roman tile fragments	130	two probable peg-tile fragments; one probable pan-tile fragment
	15	4	prehistoric pottery sherds	22	Fabric HMF, two sherds (recent break), 17 g, common fine with some medium flint-temper, grey with some indication of patchy oxidised surface, probably later Bronze Age-Iron Age. Fabric HMS, 2 g, abraded, small rim sherd, sandy fabric with surface voids from burnt-out organic matter, Middle Iron Age. Fabric HMS(?), 3 g, small, simple rim sherd (abraded), sandy and appears to be hand-made suggesting an Iron Age date, but is quite abraded and might possibly be Roman
					3
	17	1	probable post-Roman tile fragment	26	abraded small piece of tile, quite thick for peg-tile at minimum of 14 mm, but probably medieval/post-medieval in date

### Appendix 3: summary catalogue of the cremated bone

**Key:**

>10mm/5-9mm/2-4mm/<1mm = count of the fragments in that size range

>10mm Wt = weight of fragments in that size range (in grammes)

Level: Level of burning; w = white

Comments: GL = greatest length

**Table 5: summary catalogue of the cremated bone from Playgolf Colchester**

Context	Feature	Ctxt wt	Count	>10mm	Wt	5-9mm	Wt	2-4mm	Wt	<1mm	Wt	Level	Warp	Crack	Species	Adult	Juv	Comments
3	F3	5	5	4	4.5	1	0.5					w	5	4	HSR		5	
4	F3	1	1	1	1							w			Mammal			
5	F3	344	880	324	187	437	145	89	10	30+	2	w	*	*	HSR		880	sutures not fused, unfused vertebrae. Phalange, tooth, limb bones. GL = 35mm.
8	F4	4	29	3	1.5	2	0.5	24	2			w			Mammal			small fragments and matrix

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Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 13.03.14

Adams x c:/reports14/Playgolf/report709.doc



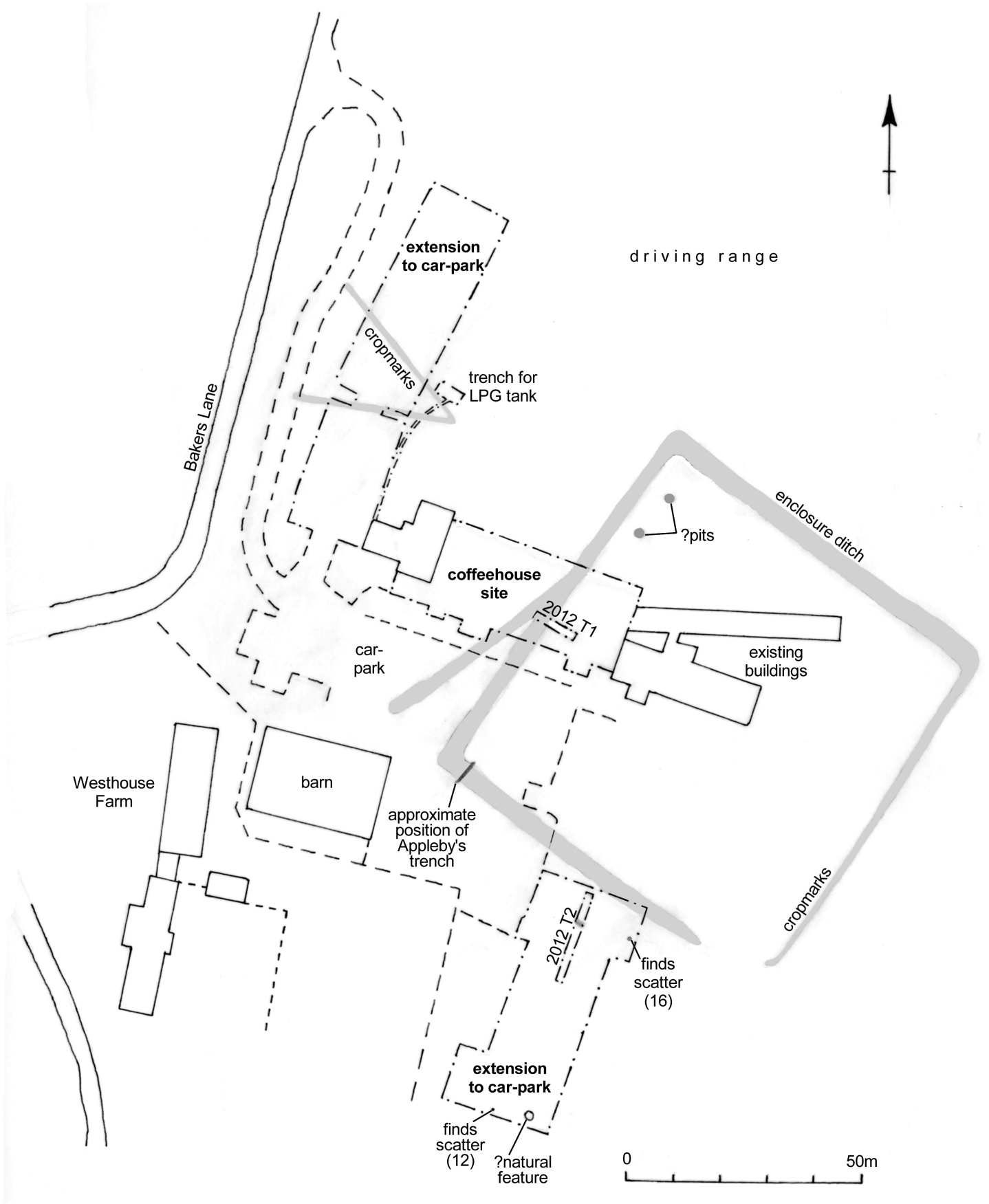


Fig 1 Site location plan, showing the positions of the coffeehouse site and the extensions to the car-park.

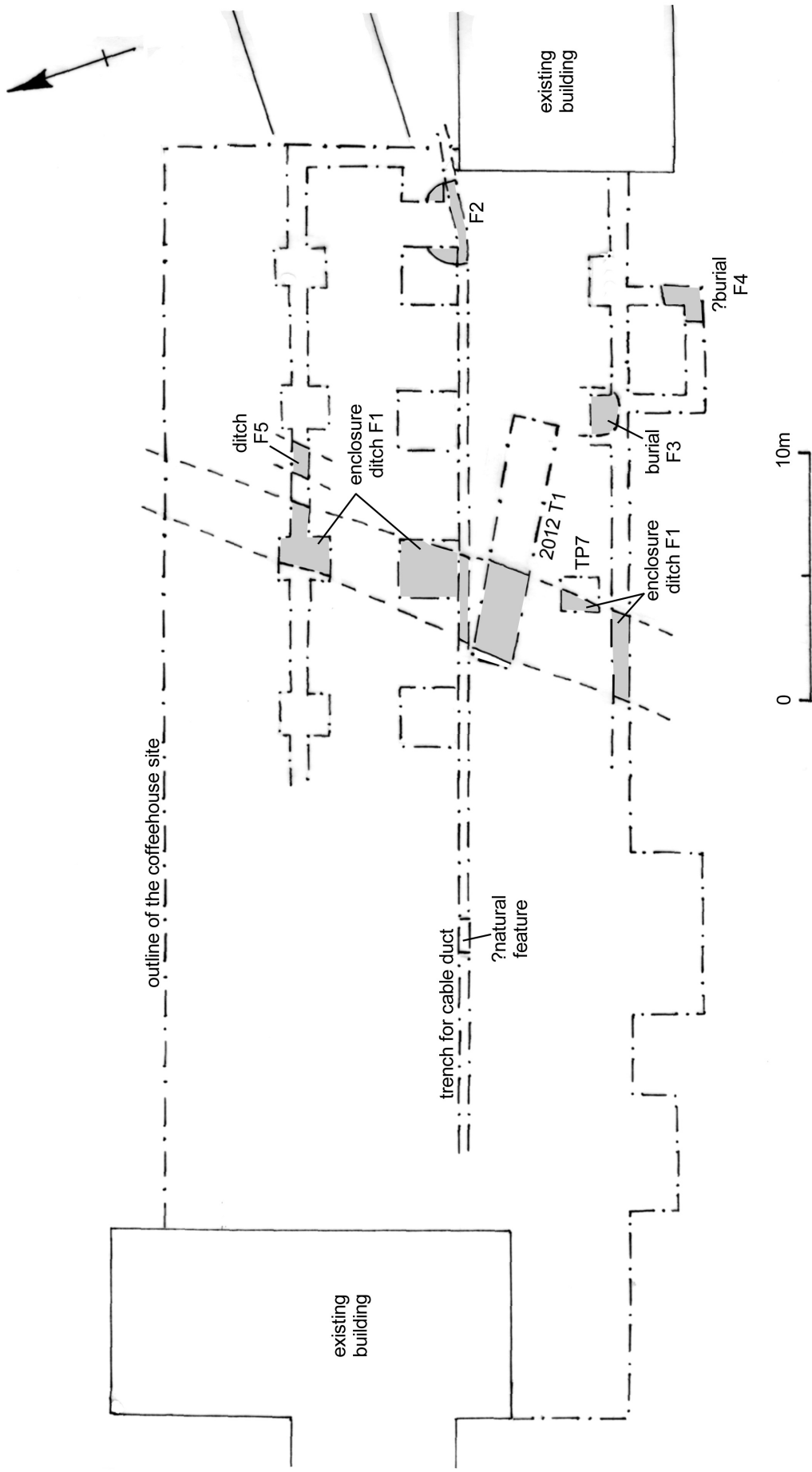


Fig 2 Plan of the coffeehouse site. (Not all the contractor's trenches are shown.)

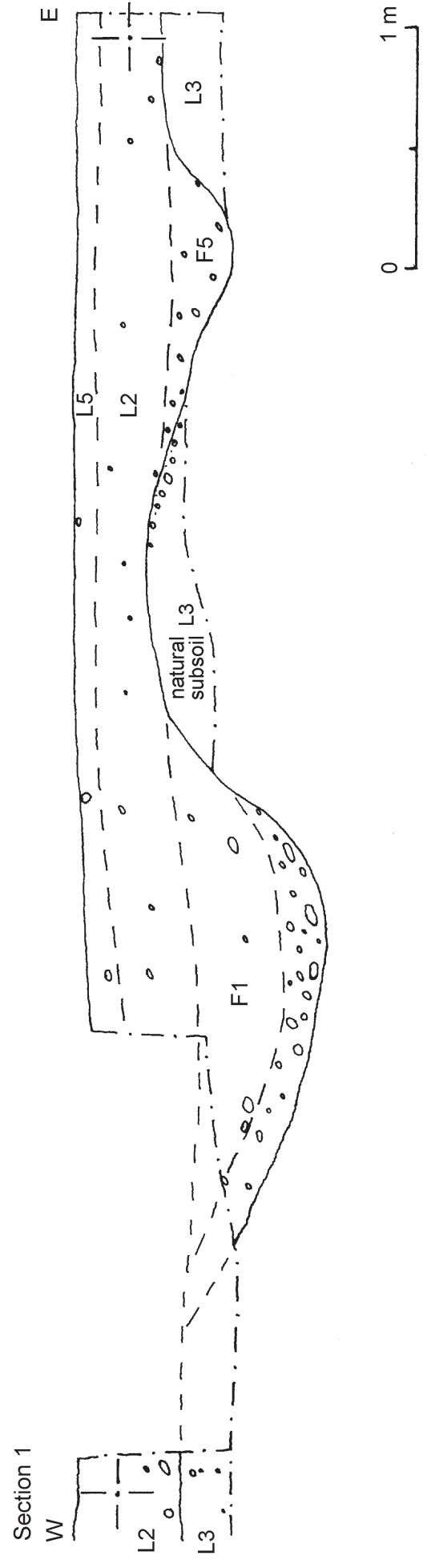
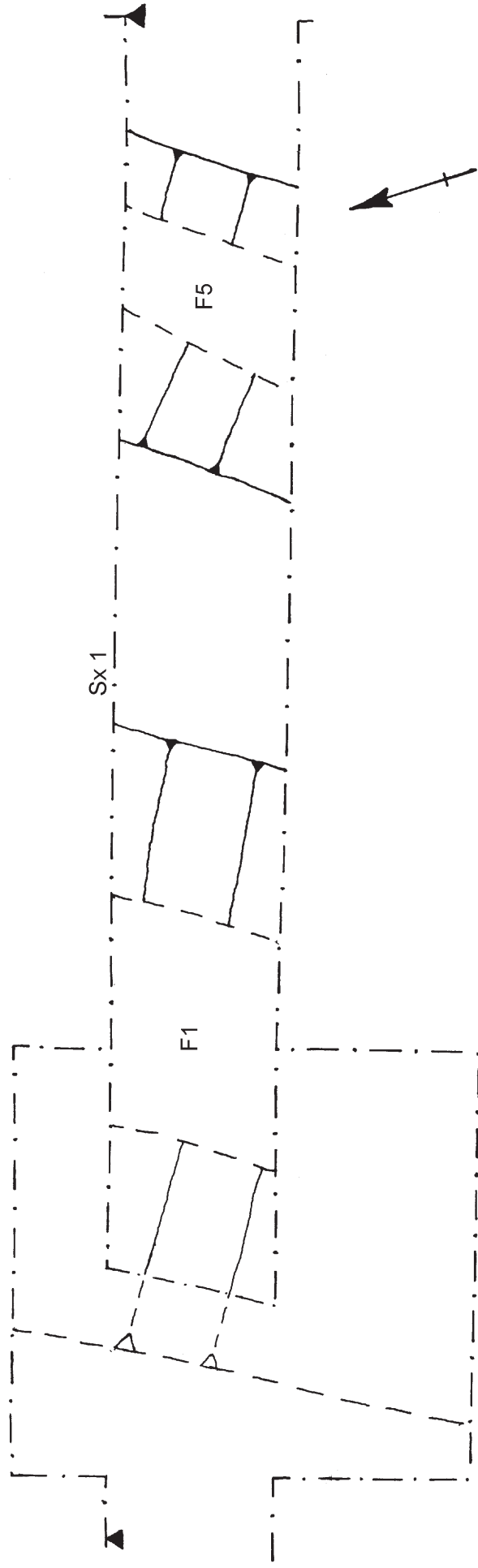


Fig 3 F1 and F5: plan and Section 1.

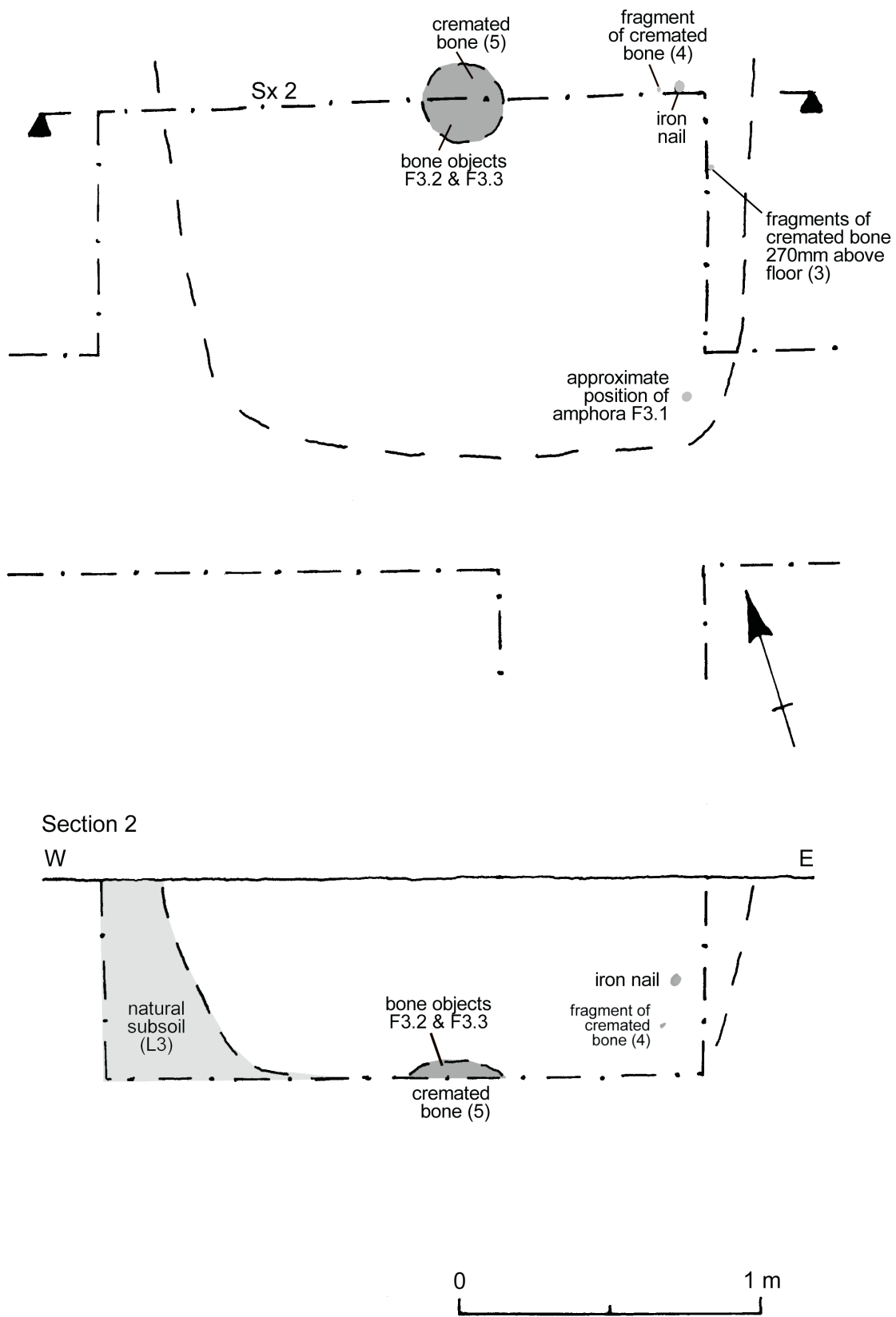


Fig 4 F3: plan and Section 2.

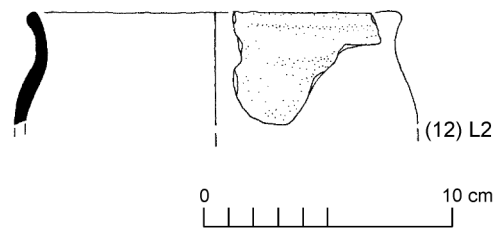
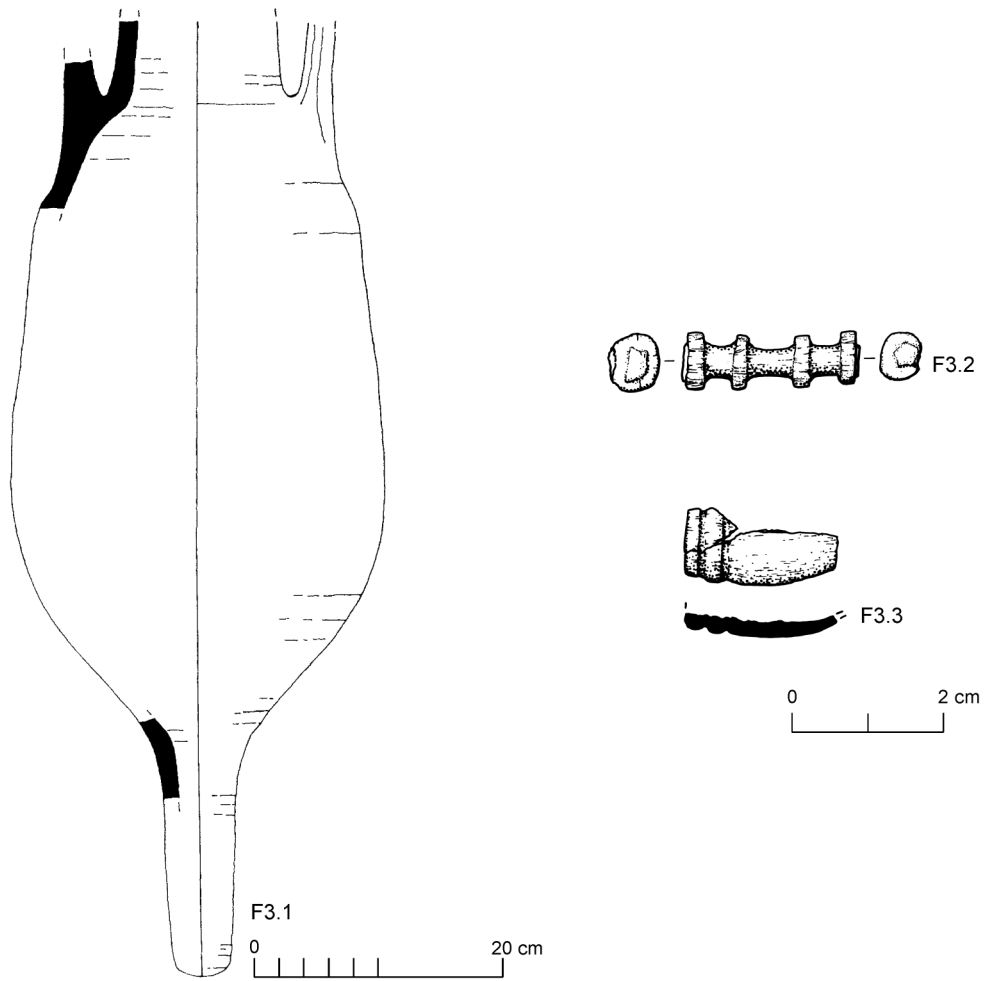


Fig 5 F3: finds, and prehistoric pottery (12) from L2.

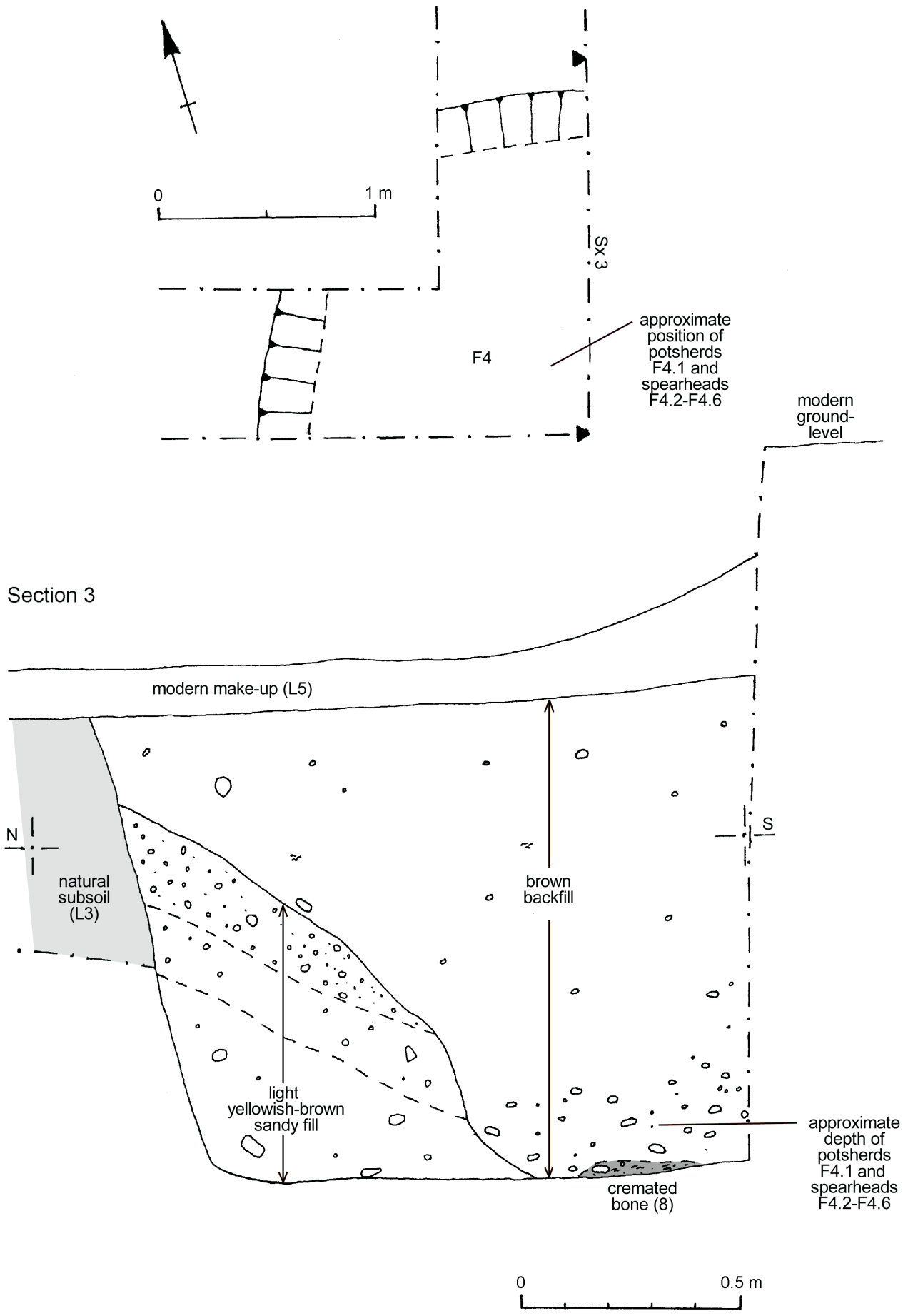


Fig 6 F4: plan and Section 3.

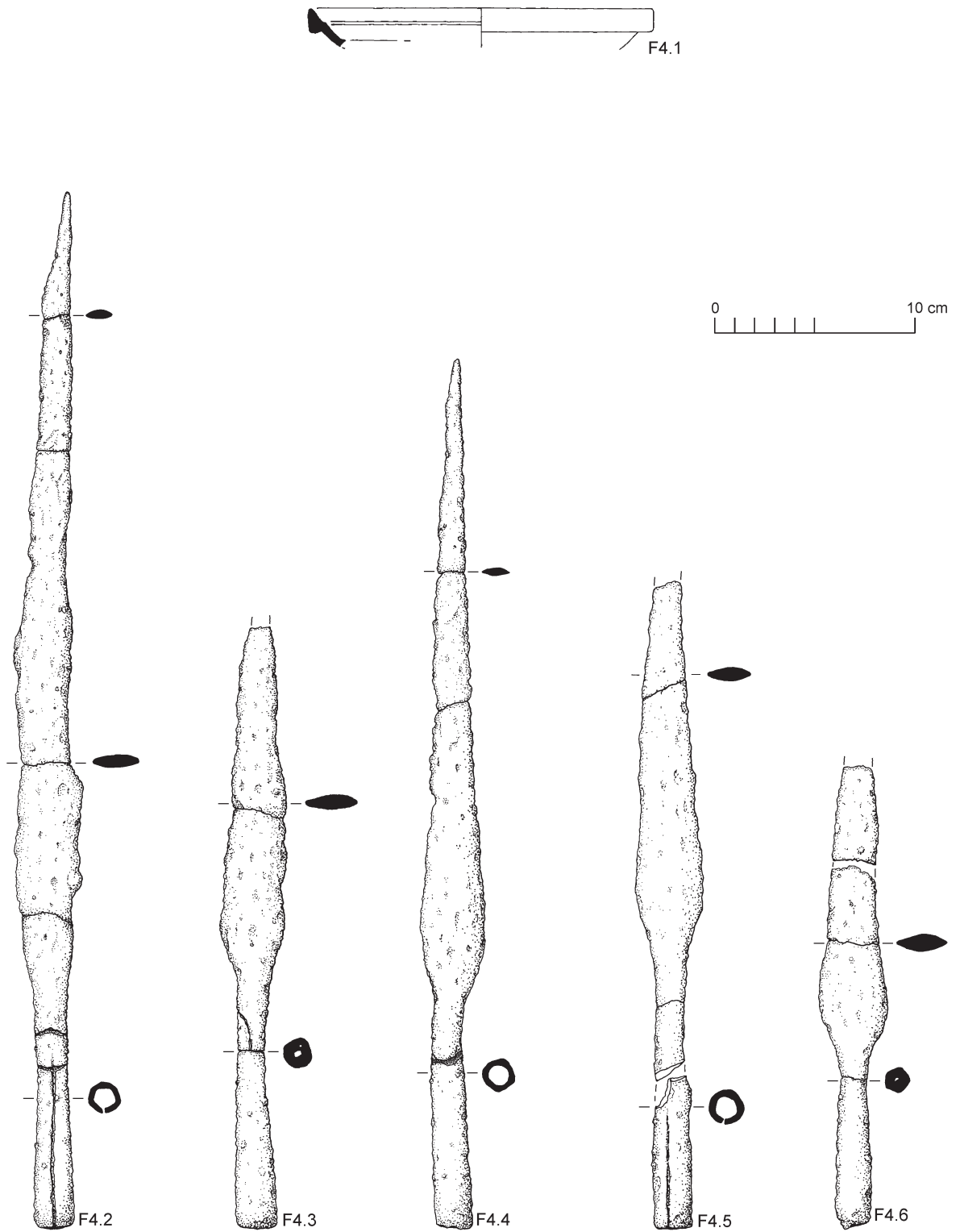


Fig 7 F4: finds.

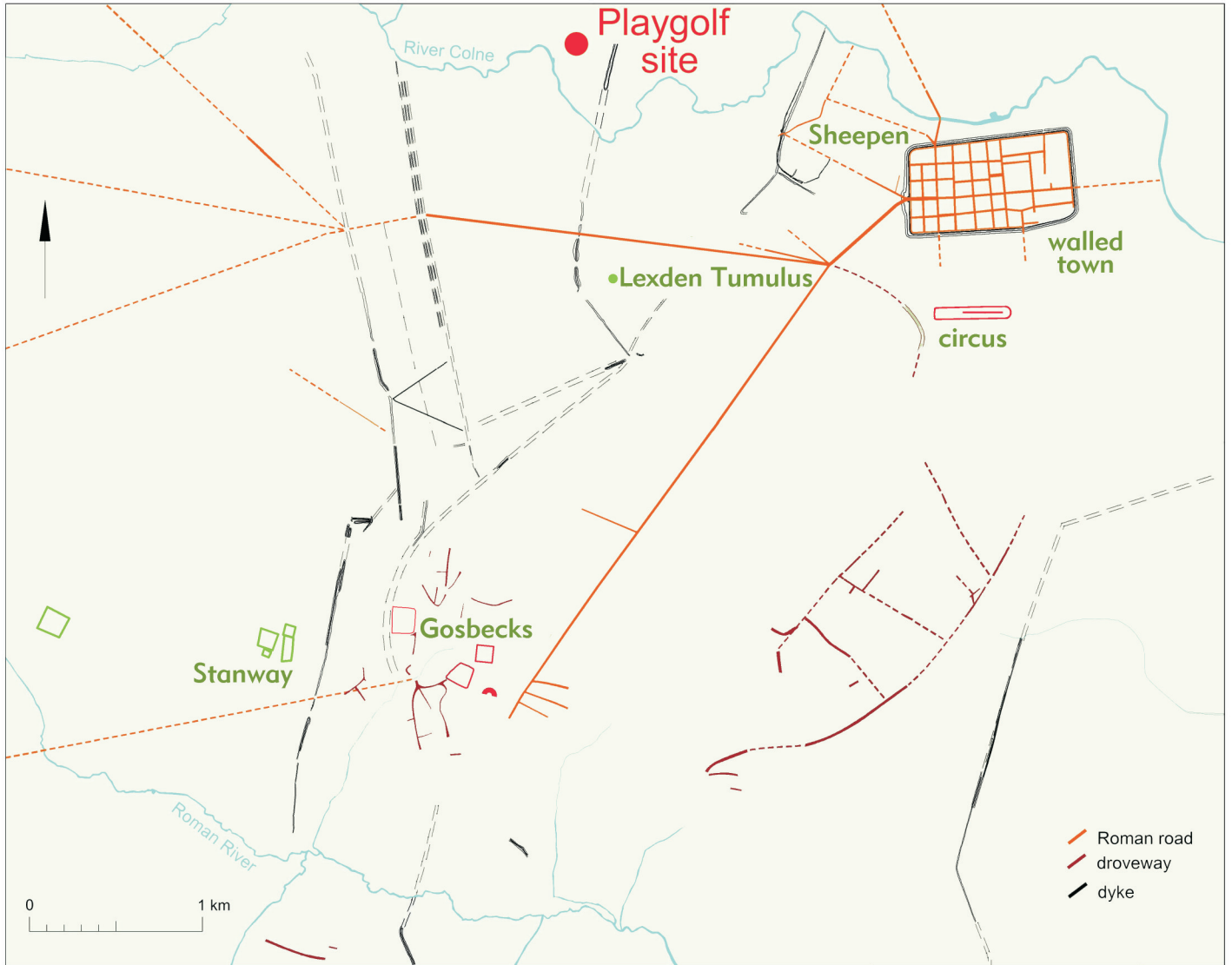


Fig 8 Plan of Camulodunum, showing the location of the Playgolf site.



# Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

## Summary sheet

<b>Site address:</b> Playgolf Colchester, Bakers Lane, Colchester	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester Borough
<b>NGR:</b> TL 973 261	<b>Site codes:</b> Museum accession code: COLEM 2013.1 CAT project code: 12/11d
<b>Type of work:</b> Watching brief	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> January-August 2013	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 3,400 sq m
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> Client
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> Not known	<b>Related EHER and UAD nos:</b> EHER 11627, EHER 11842, EHER 12761
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 709 and summary in EAH	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Late Iron Age/early Roman	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> <i>Parts of two Late Iron Age or early Roman burials or burial-related features were uncovered during an archaeological watching brief at Playgolf Colchester, Bakers Lane, Colchester, Essex. They were found during groundwork in advance of the construction of an extension to the clubhouse. The features lay within a large funerary enclosure, initially known from cropmarks. One of the burial features was a Late Iron Age or early Roman unurned cremation burial, from which were recovered an amphora and some worked bone, as well as a quantity of cremated human bone. Nearby, another feature was partially uncovered. From this came fragments of at least five iron spearheads, a couple of sherds of Late Iron Age or early Roman imported pottery, and a small quantity of cremated human bone. The ditch forming the western side of the funerary enclosure extended from south-west to north-east across the footprint of the extension. The enclosure and the features within it are comparable to the ditched funerary enclosures excavated by CAT at the Stanway gravel quarry between 1987 and 1997. Elsewhere on the Playgolf site, machine-stripping took place for extensions to the car park. These lay outside the enclosure, and the stripping did not go deep enough to reveal any significant archaeological features.</i></p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> CAT Reports 47, 59, 167 & 182	
<b>Keywords:</b> amphora, enclosure, burial, cremated human bone, iron spearhead, worked bone	<b>Significance:</b> **
<b>Author of summary:</b> Donald Shimmin	<b>Date of summary:</b> March 2014