

# Stage 2 archaeological evaluation at Colchester North, Colchester, Essex

August - September 2014



**Fieldwork directed by Ben Holloway**

**report prepared by Howard Brooks, with Stephen Benfield  
on behalf of Mersea Homes**

CAT project ref.: 14/08h  
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NGR: TL 985 285 (c)



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**CAT Report 786**

September 2014

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## 1 Summary

*The Stage 1 archaeological evaluation in advance of the proposed development of land at 'Colchester North' (previously referred to as the 'Northern Growth Area Urban Extension' - NGAUE) was carried out in 2011, and reported in Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) Report 627.*

*Some areas of land were unavailable for evaluation in 2011. Consequently, there was a continuing requirement for a Stage 2 evaluation to complete the coverage of the development area.*

*The Stage 2 evaluation was carried out in 2014 by means of thirty-four trial-trenches on the proposed sites of sports pitches and ponds along the northern site edge (along the southern edge of the A12 corridor) and on land close to Cants Rose Fields, off Nayland Road.*

*Very little of archaeological significance was found. There were only twelve archaeological features, mainly post-medieval and later field ditches and pits. The very small amount of medieval material (one feature, three sherds) shows that the medieval kilns which must be located somewhere close to this site were certainly not west of Nayland Road.*



**Trench 1, view north towards A12**

## 2 Introduction, aims, and methodology (Fig 1)

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological trial-trenching evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on behalf of Mersea Homes at Colchester North (previously the Northern Growth Area Urban Extension: NGAUE), Colchester, Essex between 28th August and 3rd September 2014.
- 2.2 The 110-hectare Colchester North site lies to the north of Colchester and almost entirely within the Borough of Colchester (a tiny slice lies in the parish of Great Horkesley), and is centred at NGR TL 985 285.

- 2.3 Colchester North (CN) was the subject of a Desk-Based Archaeological Assessment commissioned by Mersea Homes (CAT Report 583). This listed a number of archaeological sites within the CN boundaries.
- 2.4 At a meeting with Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer, Mr Martin Winter (CBCAO), it was agreed that a two-stage archaeological project was appropriate. The first stage to be implemented before granting of outline planning consent, and the second after granting of outline planning consent.
- 2.5 The first-stage archaeological evaluation consisted of fieldwalking, geophysical survey and trial-trenching. This was completed and reported on in 2011 (CAT 2011).
- 2.6 Some areas unavailable for evaluation in 2011 were evaluated in 2014 – the subject of this report.
- 2.7 It was agreed with CBCAO that the second-stage of archaeological work would consist of the area excavation of any archaeologically sensitive areas revealed by the evaluation. Thus, six sites remain to be excavated at the time when this report was prepared (see CAT Report 627 Fig 35 for site locations).
- 2.8 All stages of work are carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with CBCAO (CAT 2011) and were in keeping with national and local standards as detailed in CAT 2012, CIMS 2008a, CIMS 2008b, IfA 2008a, IfA 2008b, and EAA 14.

### **3 Archaeological background**

There is a full background in CAT Report 627, which should be referred to for more detail. A desk-based assessment written on behalf of Mersea Homes (CAT Report 583) listed thirteen archaeological sites within the 110-hectare North Colchester site (fig 1 of the DBA report). Regarding the area evaluated in 2014, by far the most important of these remains are in Area 1 (below).

#### **Area 1**

The most important site is the 1973 excavation site **9** (EHER 11845-7), which is on the line of the current A134 when it was diverted west off the ancient route. On this site Martin Petchey uncovered pits and ditches related to local production of medieval pottery. The kiln sites were not found, but the presence of 'wasters' from pottery production implies that the kilns should not be too far away. It should be noted that the map on the online EHER website shows this kiln site in the wrong place (in the field east of the A134, instead of under the A134).

### **4 Trial-trenching evaluation (Figs 1-5)**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This is the report on the trial-trenching evaluation of those areas unavailable in 2011, which took place between August and September 2014.

The areas evaluated are shown on Fig 1, and consist of the sites along the A12 corridor earmarked for ponds and sports pitches, and three areas around Cants Rose Fields

The thirty-four trenches were opened up under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator. In most cases, the trenches were excavated through a humic topsoil (L1) and into natural (L2: a coarse gravelly sand) in whose surface the archaeological features were visible.

## 4.2 Summary of evaluation results

Archaeological features were very thinly spread across the site. Only 10 of the 34 trenches contained archaeological features (ie, 29% of all trenches). In those 10 trenches were 12 archaeological features, of the following categories: one medieval ditch; 3 post-medieval ditches; 5 undated ditches; one post-medieval ditch; two undated pits.

## 4.3 Area 1 (Figs 1-4)

### Introduction

Area 1 covers 7.75ha, and has its western side along the eastern side of Nayland Road north of Chapman's Farm, and part of its eastern edge on the western side of Boxted Road.

In the Stage 1 evaluation, Trenches T1-17 and 249 were cut in Area 1. For details, see CAT Report 627 and fig 14.

In the Stage 2 evaluation (reported here), Trenches T17-T20 were cut on the sites of proposed sports pitches.

A summary of each evaluation trench with a tabulation of context and finds dating information follows here.

### T17

T17 contained an undated ditch F12 aligned SW-NE. No finds.

### T18-T21: Summary

T18-T21 contained no archaeological features.

## 4.4 Area 2 (Figs 1-4)

### Introduction

Area 2 had its eastern boundary along the western side of Nayland Road, its southern along Ford Lane, its western against Chesterwell Woods, and its northern approximately 100m SE of the A12. It is split into two parts by an unnamed track running SW off Nayland Road opposite Chapman's Farm, and then turning to the NW (trenches N of that track are T18-T50, and S are T51-T101).

In the Stage 1 evaluation, trenches 18-38, 41-2, 45, 50-65, 67-72, 76-83, 85-101 were cut in Area 2 (note: the gaps in the trench number sequence were left because some areas were unavailable in 2011, but those areas have now been covered by the Stage 2 evaluation).

A2 was the largest evaluation area (22.94ha, but Cants Rose Fields and a mustard crop made 3.55ha unavailable at the time of the survey). It is the evaluation of that 3.55 ha area which is reported on here (trenches 8-34).

### Trenches 8-12: summary

T8-12 contained no archaeological features.





**T12 view east**

**Trench 13: summary**

T19 contained a post-medieval ditch F8, aligned NW-SE.



**T13 view south, ditch F8 near centre**

**Trench 13: archaeological contexts and dating**

Feature	Description	Finds detail	Date
F8	ditch	post-medieval stoneware, L18/19-20C, post-medieval peg-tile	L18/19-20C

**Trench 14: summary**

T14 contained undated ditch F9, aligned SW-NE.



**T14 view east**

**T15: summary**

T15 contained undated ditch F10, aligned NW-SE.

**T16: summary**

T16 contained no archaeological features.

**T17: summary**

T17 contained undated ditch F12, aligned SW-NE.

**T18-T22: summary**

T18-T22 contained no archaeological features.

**Trench 23: summary**

T23 contained undated ditch terminal F4, aligned SW-NE.

**T24: summary**

T24 contained post-medieval ditch F3, aligned W-E.

**Trench 24: archaeological contexts and dating**

Feature	Description	Finds detail	Date
F3	ditch	medieval-modern peg-tile (1@ 90g)	post-medieval

**Trench 25: summary**

T25 contained no archaeological features.

**Trench 26: summary**

T26 contained undated ditch terminal F11, aligned NW-SE

**Trenches 27-31**

T27-31 contained no archaeological features.

**Trench 32: summary**

T32 contained a medieval ditch F1, aligned W-E.

**Trench 32: archaeological contexts and dating**

Feature	Description	Finds detail	Date
F1	ditch	medieval-post/medieval peg-tile (6@ 185g)	prob post-medieval



**T32 view north**

**Trench 33: summary**

T33 contained no archaeological features.

**Trench 34: summary**

T34 contained undated ditch F2, aligned SW-NE.



## 4.5 Area 4 (Figs 1-4)

### Introduction

Area 4, the westernmost evaluation area (3.56 ha), was not strongly related to paths or field boundaries, but its western edge was 100m east of the A12 Colchester northern bypass, and its eastern edge was 20m west of Chesterwell Woods. Area 4 was split into two blocks by the field boundary which runs west off the western end of Ford's Lane.

In the Stage 1 evaluation (2011), trenches T102-T114 were cut in Area 4. In 2014, T1-T7 were cut on the site of proposed ponds.

### Trenches 1-6: summary

T1-T6 contained no archaeological features

### Trench 7

T7 contained three archaeological features: post-medieval ditch F5, and undated pits F6, F7.



*T7 view south, post-medieval pits F6-7 middle distance*

Feature	Description	Finds detail	Date
F5	ditch	medieval-post/medieval peg-tile (6@ 185g)	prob post-medieval
F6	pit	none	undated
F7	pit	none	undated but probably post-medieval

## 5 Finds

by Stephen Benfield (10/09/2014)

### Introduction

A small quantity of bulk finds of pottery, ceramic building material (CBM) and one piece of heat affected stone (flint) were recovered from six features and one soil layer located in six trenches (T7, T13, T24, T26, T32 & T34). The types of finds are listed by material in Table 1 and are listed and described by context in Table 3 (below).

Finds type	no.	wt (g)
Pottery	5	34
Ceramic building material (CBM)	12	753
Heat affected stone	1	9

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

### Finds summary

The pottery recovered can be dated to the medieval and modern period. The medieval pottery consists of small sherds in two fabrics - Fabric 20 (dated late 12th-14th century & Fabric 21A (late) (dated mid 15th-16th century) - which indicate that the sherds are probably products of local kilns located at Mile End and Horkesley. The modern pottery, which came from F8 (T13), is a single medium-large sherd of Modern English stoneware – Fabric 45M (dated late 18th/19th-20th century).

The CBM is dominated by pieces of peg-tiles, which are broadly as medieval-post-medieval/modern, but probably not in common use until the 14th century (Ryan 1993). The pieces here are probably most likely to be associated with the known medieval tile production in the area. One of two pieces of brick recovered from F8 (T13) is of a size (thickness) and nature as is likely to date to the late 17th-early 18th century. The only other find of CBM appears to be part of a post-medieval land-drain tile (also from F8).

A single piece of heat affected (burnt) stone was the only find from one feature (F11 in T26). This is discoloured by heat rather than heavily 'burnt' and crazed. Burnt stone is commonly associated with prehistoric activity, but as a single piece and given the presence of kilns in this general area it is undated.

### Finds listing and spot dates

The pottery was recorded using the Essex post-Roman fabric series (CAR 7) and the fabrics recorded are listed in Table 2.

Fabric code	Fabric name
20	Medieval sandy grey wares (general)
21A	Colchester-type ware
45M	Modern English stoneware

**Table 2. Pottery fabrics list**

Trench	Ctxt	ctxt type	finds no	description of finds	finds spot dating
T32	F1	Linear feature	1	<b>CBM: medieval-Post-medieval/modern</b> Peg-tile (6@ 185 g) hard red sandy fabric with grey surfaces & red/grey sandwich core (2) orange-red, powdery, slit/fine sand fabric with grey core (4), one abraded, pieces 10-12 mm thick	Med (Prob 14C+) to post-med/mod
T34	F2	Linear feature	3	<b>Pottery: medieval</b> (total 3@ 5 g) very small body sherd (1 g) in sandy fabric with reddish-brown internal surface and burnt residue on exterior (Fabric	15-M16C

Trench	Ctxt	ctxt type	finds no	description of finds	finds spot dating
				20) (dated L12-14C); two small sherds (4 g) with grey surfaces and orange-red core, pimply surface feel due to sand inclusions, Colchester ware (Fabric 21A), as reduced sherds these are probably Late Colchester-type ware (dated 15-M16C) (CAR 7, 108)	
T24	F3	ditch	4	<b>CBM: medieval-Post-medieval/modern</b> Peg-tile (1@ 90 g) hard red sandy fabric with grey surfaces & red/grey sandwich core, round peg hole with burnt flint embedded at the side, piece is 10 mm thick	Med (Prob 14C+) to post-med/mod
T07	F5	ditch	5	<b>CBM: medieval-Post-medieval/modern</b> Peg-tile (1@ 27 g) hard red sandy fabric with grey upper surface & red/grey sandwich core, piece is 11 mm thick	Med (Prob 14C+) to post-med/mod
T13	F8	pit	6	<b>Pottery: post-medieval</b> (1@ 26 g) body sherd, probably from a bottle, English stoneware (Fabric 45M (dated L18/19-20C)) <b>CBM: medieval-Post-medieval/modern</b> (total 4@ 451 g) Peg-tile piece (130 g) hard red sandy fabric with grey upper surface & red/grey sandwich core, square peg-hole, piece is 11 mm thick; Brick (2@ 302 g) one large corner piece & one small fragment, larger piece 45 mm thick red sandy fabric with small voids and rare, small dark inclusions, faintly striated surface, probably unfrogged, larger piece suggest a L17-E18C date (Ryan 1996); Small piece of a curving tile (19 g) in a fine sand orange fabric, probably a piece of agricultural drain (dated post-medieval)	L18/19-20C
T26	F11	Pit/ ditch terminal (?)	7	<b>Heat affected stone</b> one small piece of flint (9 g) discoloured red-dark red (undated)	
T32	L2	natural	2	<b>Pottery: medieval</b> small body sherd (1@ 3g) in sandy fabric with reddish-brown surface (Fabric 20), burnt residue on internal surface, probably a product of the Colchester Mile End kilns (CAR 7, 92) but the vessel appears to have been used rather than being a waster or kiln discard	L12-14C

**Table 3 Types of finds by context and find number**

## 6 Discussion

### Prehistoric, Roman, Anglo-Saxon periods.

The 2014 evaluation produced no finds or features of these periods.

### Medieval period.

There was a small amount of medieval material. A narrow ditch F2 in trench 34 produced 3 tiny sherds (weight 5g) - one medieval (12th-14th century) and two late medieval (15th-16th century) sherds. This tiny quantity reinforces the impression gained by the 2011 evaluation that, whatever the location of the medieval kilns which produced the material excavated by Martin Petchey (Drury & Petchey 1975), it was not on this side of the Nayland Road. The ditch F3 is more or less at right angles to Nayland Road, and may be a relict medieval field boundary.

### Post-medieval period

There were three post-medieval ditches, dated principally by peg-tile. These belong to field systems now removed. F3 in T24 is aligned with, and may be a continuation of, the field ditch found in 2011 in T38.

### Undated

There were five undated ditches and two undated pits.

## 7 Acknowledgements

CAT is grateful to Mersea Homes for commissioning the archaeological work. The fieldwork was managed by Ben Holloway, assisted by Mark Baister, Pauline Skippins, Stefania Usai, Sarah Carter and Robin Mathieson. The project was monitored by Chris Lister for CBC.

## 8 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in .pdf format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

- |                |              |   |
|----------------|--------------|---|
| CAR 7          | 2000         | Colchester Archaeological Report 7: <i>Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by John Cotter  |
| CAT            | 2012         | <i>Policies and procedures</i>  |
| CAT            | 2011         | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation at the Northern Growth Area Urban Extension (NGAUE), Colchester, Essex</i> . On behalf of Mersea Homes Ltd , August 2011  |
| CAT Report     | forth-coming | Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon remains at the former Hyderabad Barracks, Mersea Road, Colchester: evaluation and excavation on the Colchester Garrison Alienated Land Area A1, 2010-2011.  |
| CAT Report 292 |              | The Colchester Garrison PFI project, Colchester, Essex: a report on the 2003 excavation of Areas 2, 6, 10, August-November 2003. Unpublished CAT client report prepared on behalf of MoD and RMPA Services by Howard Brooks and Robert Masefield, July 2005 |
| CAT Report 627 | 2012         | <i>An archaeological evaluation by fieldwalking, geophysical survey and trial-trenching of the Northern Growth Area Urban Extension (NGAUE), Colchester, Essex: September-December 2011</i> . By Howard Brooks, Ben Holloway, and Tim Dennis                |

CIMS	2008a	<i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i>
CIMS	2008b	<i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester and Ipswich Museums</i>
Drury, P J, and Petchey, M R	1975	'Medieval Potteries at Mile End and Great Horkesley, Near Colchester'. <i>Essex Archaeology &amp; History</i> 7, 33-60.
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14</i> , ed by D Gurney
IfA	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation</i>
IfA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Ryan, P	1996	<i>Brick in Essex, from the Roman conquest to the Reformation</i>
Ryan, P	1993	'Roof tile' in: Andrews, D, (ed) <i>Cressing Temple. A Templar and Hospitaller manor in Essex</i> , Essex County Council

## 9 Glossary and abbreviations

Anglo-Saxon	from around AD 430 to 1066
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCAO	Colchester Borough Council Archaeology Officer
CBM	ceramic building material, eg brick and tile
context	specific location (of finds) on an archaeological site
DBA	desk-based assessment
ECC	Essex County Council
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by ECC
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall; can contain 'contexts'
fill	the soil filling up a hole such as a pit or ditch
IfA	Institute for Field Archaeologists
medieval	from AD 1066 to around AD 1530
modern	19th-21st centuries
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	after around AD 1530 to around AD 1800
Roman	the period from AD 43 to around AD 430

## 10 Archive deposition

The finds, paper and digital archive are currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museum under accession code COLEM 2011.57.



## 11 Contents of archive

### Finds

1 Museum box (tbc)

### Paper archive

One A4 wallet containing:

- Copy of this report (CAT Report 786)
- Copy of the CAT WSI
- Original site record (Context sheets, Finds register)
- Site photographic record on CD
- Digital photo index
- Sundry plans and paper

## 12 Context list

Context	T	Area	context type	finds no	description of finds	finds spot dating
F01	T32	2	ditch	1	medieval-modern peg-tile (6@ 185 g)	Med (probably 14C+) to post-med/mod
F02	T34	2	ditch	3	Pottery: medieval and late medieval sherds (total 3@ 5 g), L12-14C), 15-M16C	15-M16C
F03	T24	2	ditch	4	medieval-modern peg-tile (1@ 90 g)	Med (probably 14C+) to post-med/mod
F04	T23	2	ditch terminal?		none	undated
F05	T07	4	ditch	5	medieval-Post-medieval/modern Peg-tile (1@ 27g)	Med (probably 14C+) to post-med/mod
F06	T07	4	pit		none	undated
F07	T07	4	pit		none	undated but probably post-medieval
F08	T13	2	pit	6	Pottery: post-medieval sherd, English stoneware, L18/19-20C (1@ 26g) medieval-modern peg-tile (total 4@ 451 g)	L18/19-20C
F09	T14	2	ditch		none	undated
F10	T15	2	ditch		none	undated
F11	T26	2	pit/ ditch terminal (?)	7	Heat affected stone one small piece of flint (9 g) discoloured red-dark red (undated)	undated – prehistoric?
F12	T17	1	ditch		none	undated
L1	-	all	ploughsoil	-	-	modern
L2	T32	2	natural	2	medieval sherd (1@ 3g) Fabric 20, burnt residue on internal surface	L12-14C

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Date: 23.09.14

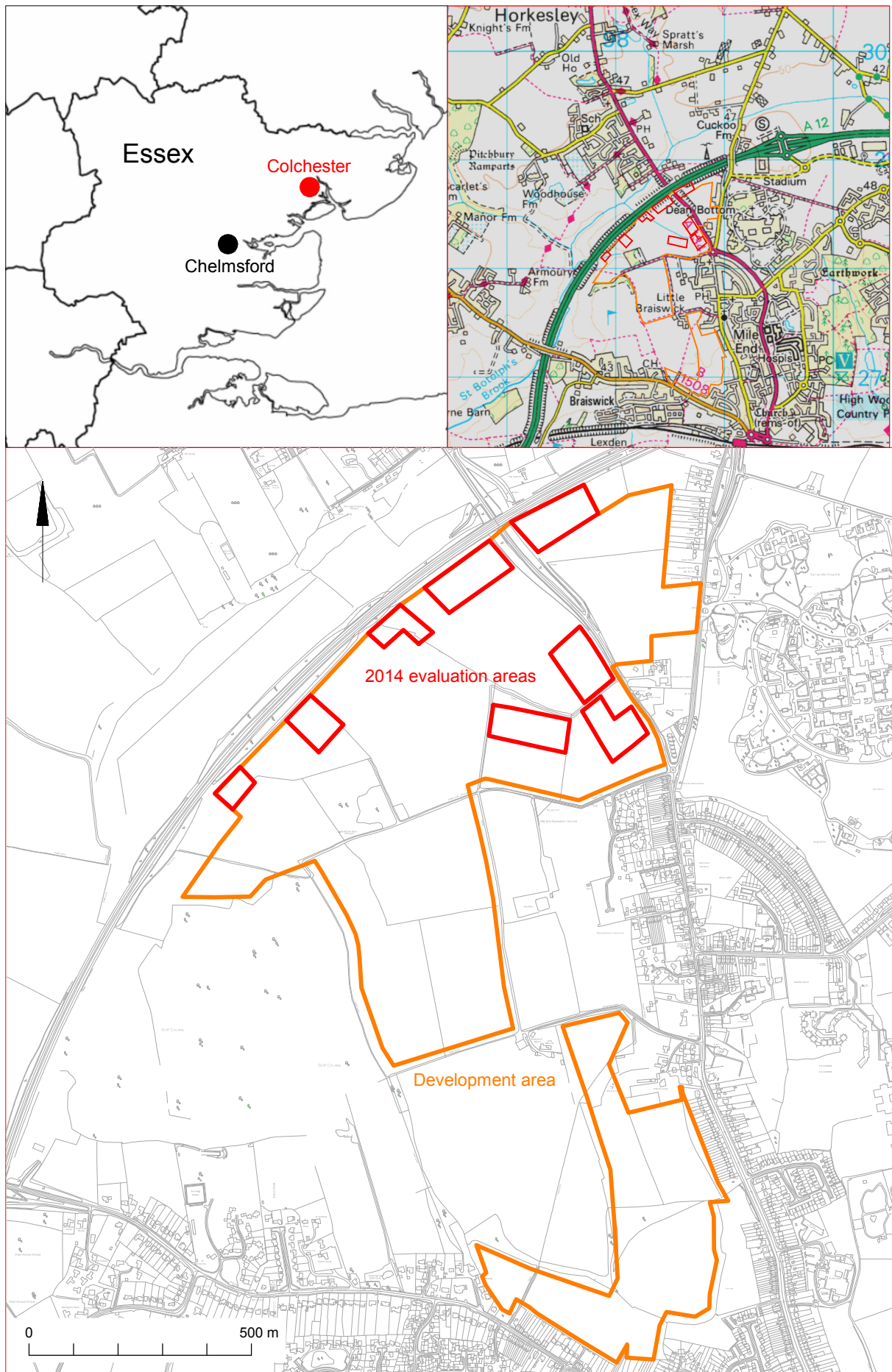
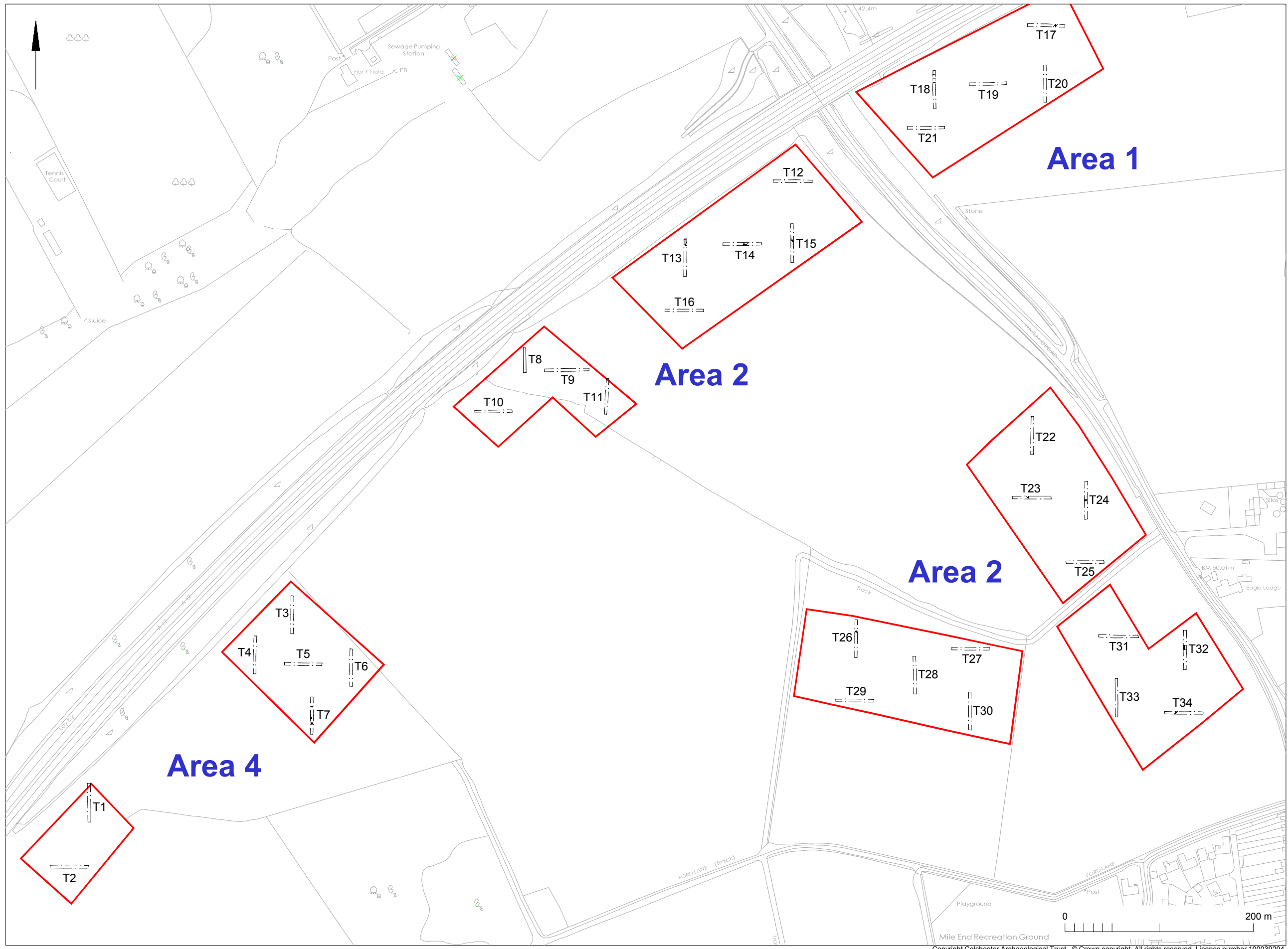


Fig 1 Site location.



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Fig 2 T1-T34: trench positions in relation to Project Areas (1-2, 4).

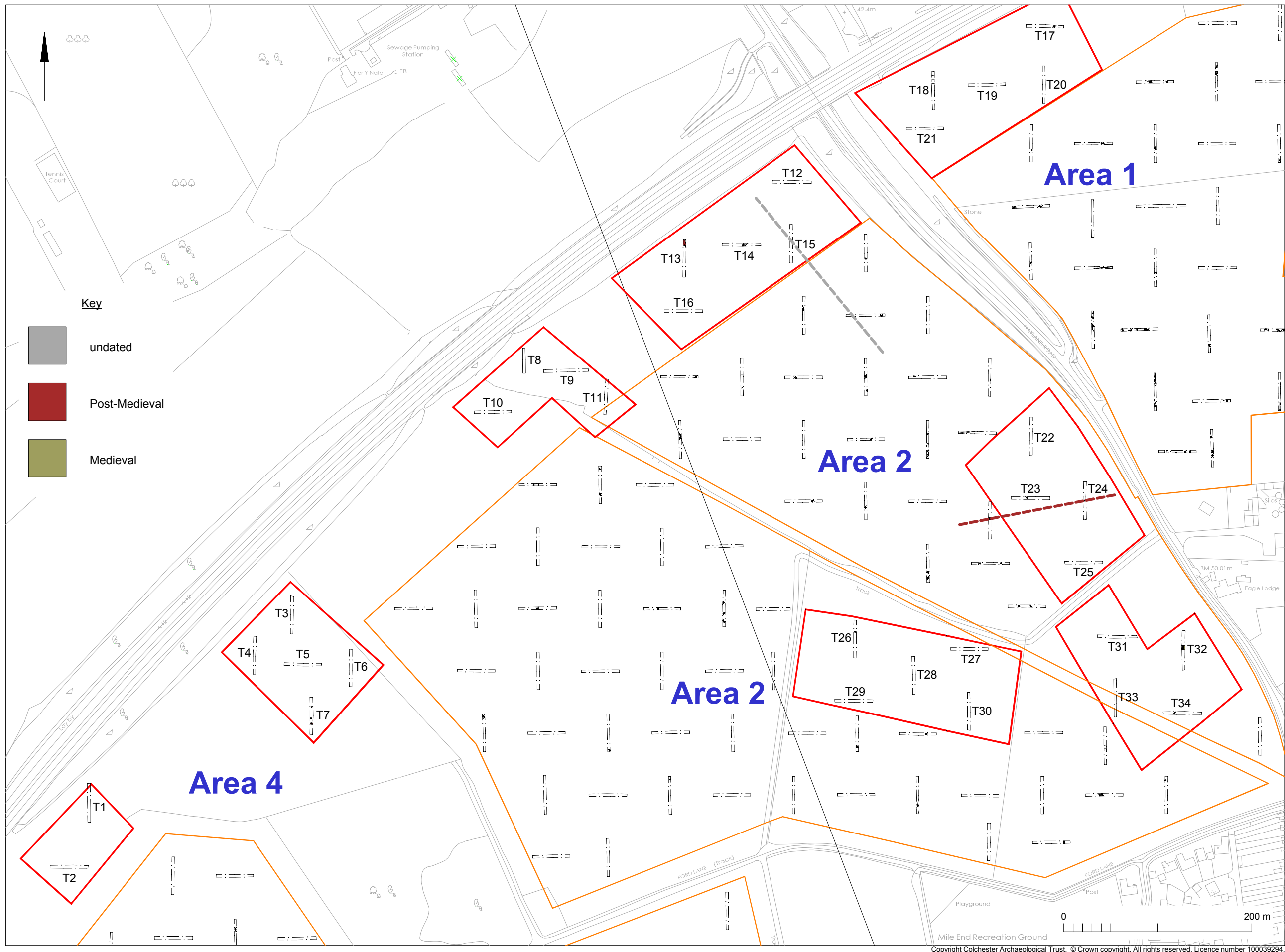


Fig 3 T1-34: trench positions, showing previous 2011 evaluation Areas (1, 2, 4) and possible continuation of ditches.



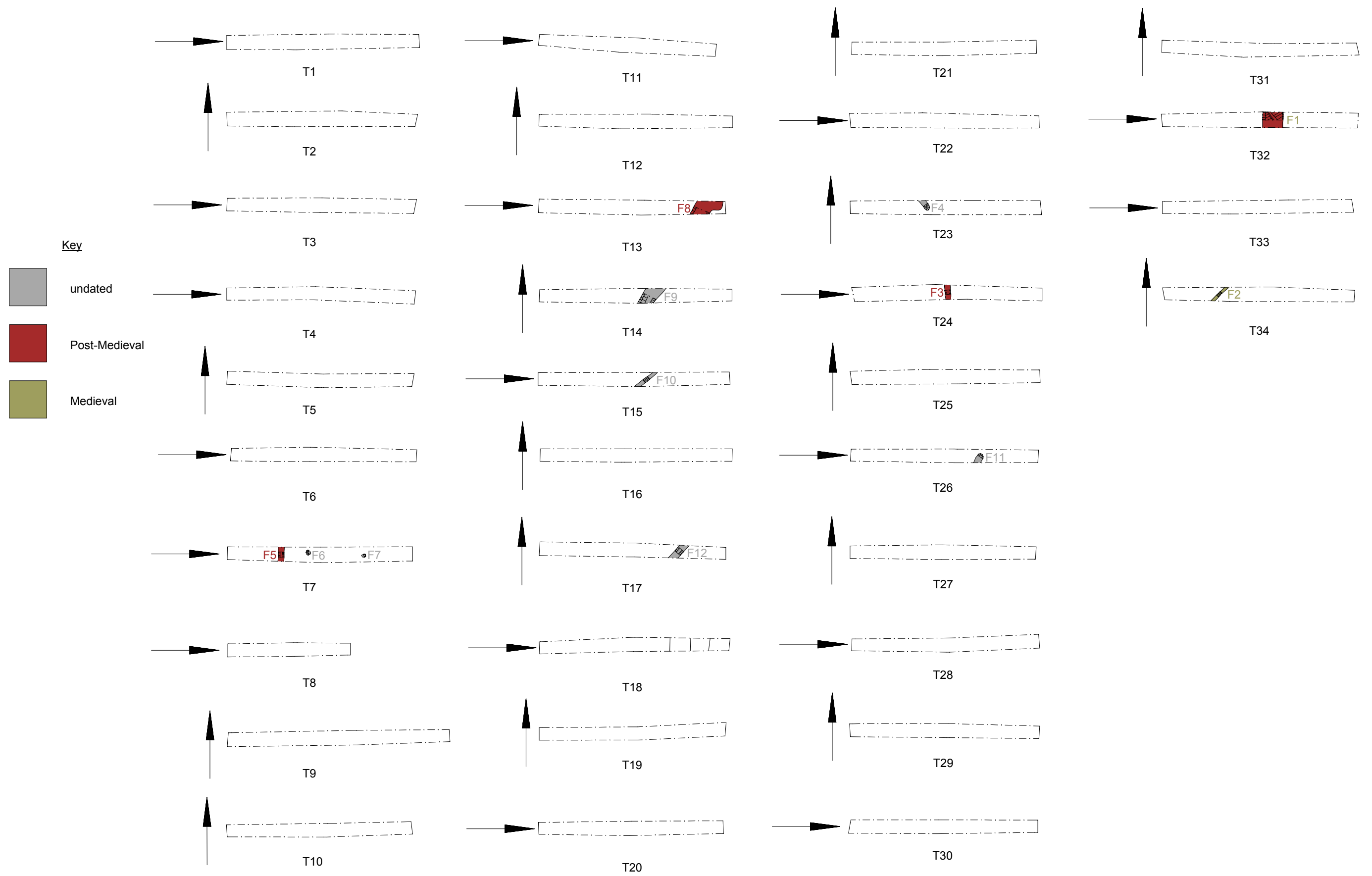


Fig 4 T1-T34: trench plans.

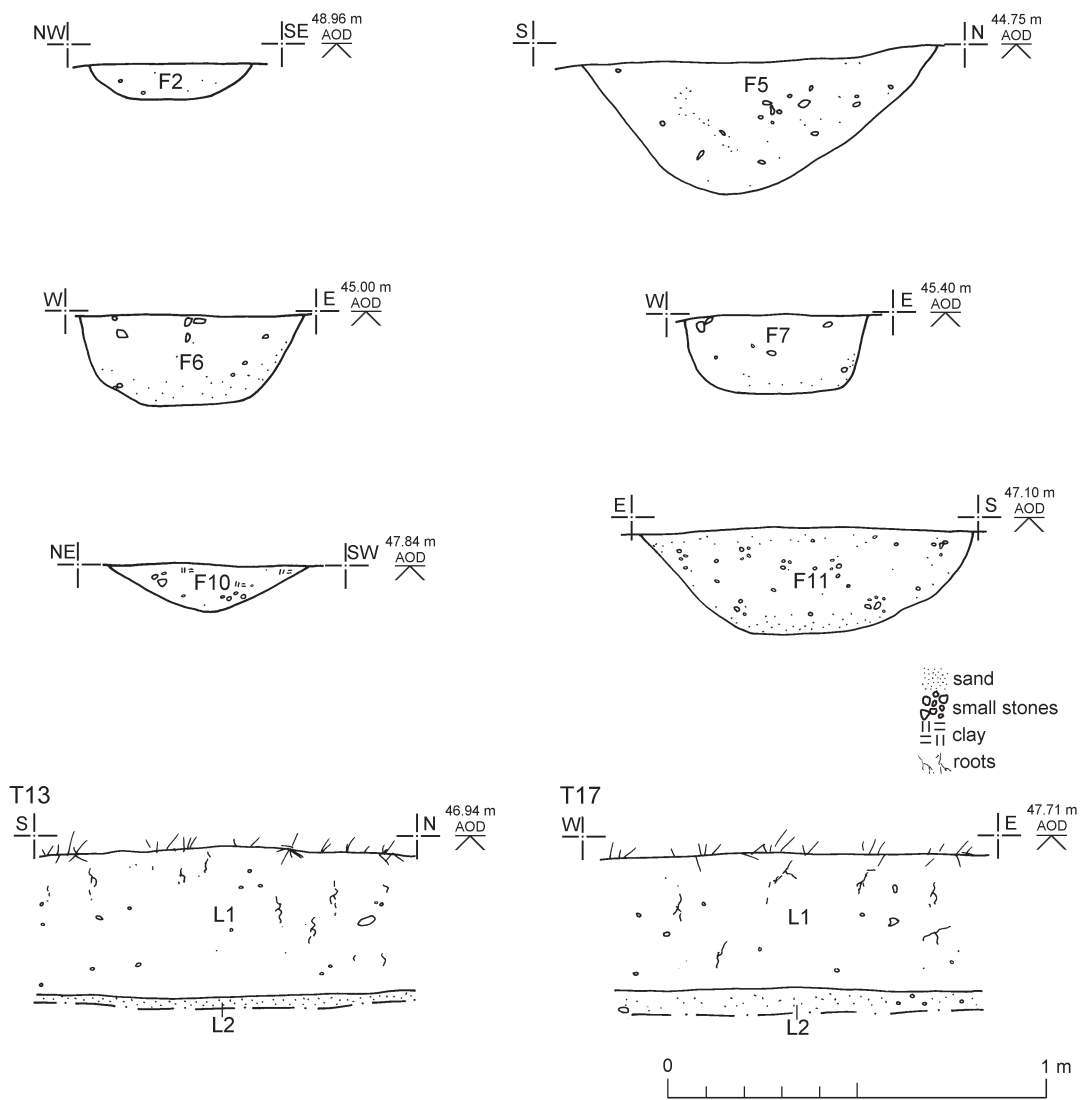


Fig 5 Feature sections (F2, F5-7 and F10-11), and representative trench sections (T13 and T17).

# Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

## Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> Colchester North (formerly Northern Growth Area Urban Extension), Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester, Great Horkesley	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TL 985 285 (c)	<b>Site codes:</b> CAT project – 14/08h
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> August-September 2014	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> approx 7ha
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museums: accession - COLEM 2011.57	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> Yes	<b>Related EHER numbers:</b> EHER 11845-7
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 786 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> post-medieval, modern	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>  <i>The Stage 1 archaeological evaluation in advance of the proposed development of land at 'Colchester North' (previously referred to as the 'Northern Growth Area Urban Extension' - NGAUE) was carried out in 2011, and reported in Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) Report 627.</i></p> <p><i>Some areas of land were unavailable for evaluation in 2011. Consequently, there was a continuing requirement for a Stage 2 evaluation to complete the coverage of the development area.</i></p> <p><i>The Stage 2 evaluation was carried out in 2014 by means of thirty-four trial-trenches on the proposed sites of sports pitches and ponds along the northern site edge (along the southern edge of the A12 corridor) and on land close to Cants Rose Fields, off Nayland Road.</i></p> <p><i>Very little of archaeological significance was found. There were only twelve archaeological features, mainly post-medieval and later field ditches and pits. The very small amount of medieval material (one feature, three sherds) shows that the medieval kilns which must be located somewhere close to this site were certainly not west of Nayland Road.</i></p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> CAT Report 627	
<b>CBC monitor:</b> C Lister	
<b>Keywords:</b> post-medieval tile kiln	<b>Significance:</b> *
<b>Author of summary:</b> H Brooks	<b>Date of summary:</b> September 2014