

An archaeological watching brief at 26 Melrose Road, West Mersea, Essex.

November 2014



report prepared by
Adam Wightman

on behalf of Emily Crooks

CAT project ref.: 14/11f
Colchester & Ipswich Museums accession code: COLEM 2014.115
NGR: TM 601185 212710



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CAT Report 805
December 2014

Summary

The Colchester Archaeological Trust undertook a watching brief during the construction of two extensions to the rear of 26 Melrose Road, West Mersea.

One probable pit containing a worked flint was identified in the foundation trenches. The pit did not contain any later dated finds or inclusions and is presumed to be prehistoric in date.

Introduction

This is the archive report on the archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on behalf of Emily Crooks at 26 Melrose Road, West Mersea, Essex (NGR TM 601185 212710) (Fig 1). The site is located in the southern central part of West Mersea within a residential area (Fig 1).

The archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches for two single storey extensions to the rear of the existing property (application No.145192). The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any surviving archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks.

Melrose Road is situated in an area of West Mersea that has high archaeological potential. A small assemblage of Roman pottery was found in a possible grave 70m northeast of the site (EHER 2215) and a stone wall foundation with evidence of occupation was found 215m west of the site. Remains of a round Roman building (Essex SAM 32) lie to the southwest.

All fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with CAT's *Policies and procedures* (CAT 2008), Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CIMS 2008a), *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester and Ipswich Museums* (CIMS 2008b), and 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 Revised: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (EAA 24) was also followed.

Results

The archaeological monitoring took place over a period of three days and consisted of two site visits. The excavation of the foundation trenches was carried out under continuous archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator equipped with a 600mm wide toothless bucket.

A modern topsoil (L1) overlay a medium brown loam (L2) which, in turn, overlay the natural sandy-clay (L3) (Fig 3). L1 contained modern brick and tile fragments, pottery sherds and iron objects (not retained). No finds or inclusions were observed in L2.

One archaeological feature (F1) was identified during the watching brief in the easternmost north-south foundation trench (Fig 2). The fill of F1 was a medium brown loam which was very similar to L2 and also contained very few inclusions (Fig 3). It is possible that F1 may have been a ditch which terminated before the western north-south foundation trench (Fig 2). However, it is more likely that F1 was a pit. One worked flint was recovered from the lower fill of F1. The worked flint is a thin, sharp flake (44mm x 22mm x 4mm) which exhibits evidence of having been used as a cutting tool. The flake was detached from the core using a soft hammer following an episode of platform preparation. This suggests that it is likely to date to the early Neolithic period. The absence of any later dating finds or inclusions in F1 supports a prehistoric date for this feature.



Plate 1 F1, facing north-east.

References

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

CAT	2008	<i>Policies and procedures</i>
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>
EAA3	1997	<i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 3 , ed by J Glazebrook
EAA 8	2000	<i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 8 , ed by N Brown & J Glazebrook
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14 , ed by D Gurney
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: a revised framework for the Eastern Counties. Research agenda and strategy</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 24 , ed by M Medlycott
IfA	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
IfA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
MoRPHE	2006	<i>Management of research projects in the historic environment</i> (English Heritage)

Acknowledgements

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Distribution list:

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Appendix 1: contents of archive

One A4 document wallet containing:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Risk assessment
- 1.2 Copy of the evaluation brief issued by ECC
- 1.3 Copy of the WSI produced by CAT
- 1.4 2 x A4 site plans

2 Site archive

- 2.1 Attendance register
- 2.2 Site digital photographic record
- 2.3 Context sheets (L1-L3, F1)
- 2.4 Finds register
- 2.5 Site photographic record on CD
- 2.6 1 x section drawing sheet

3 Research archive

- 3.1 Monitoring (client) report

Not in wallet

- 1 small bag



Fig 1 Site location

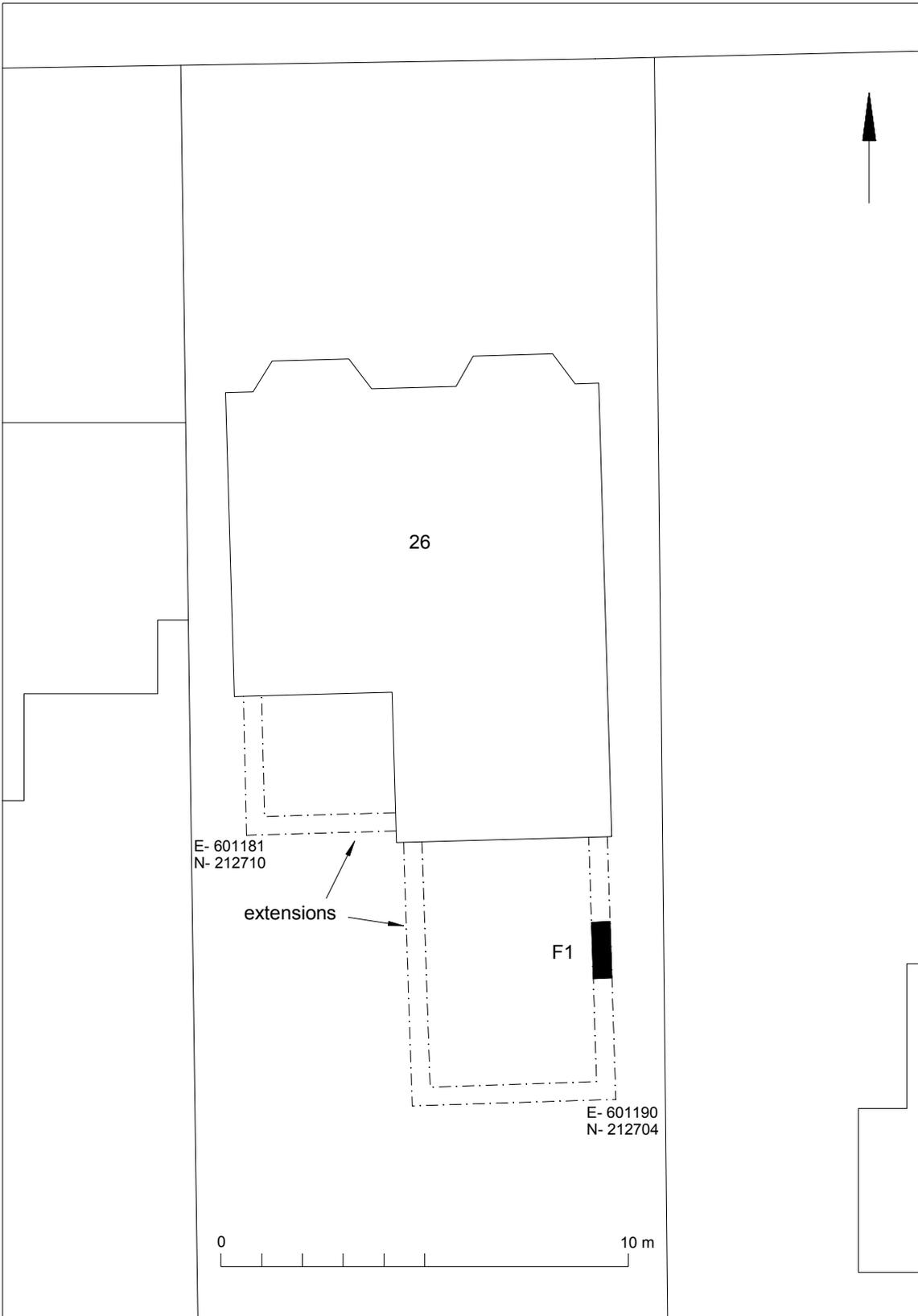


Fig 2 Results

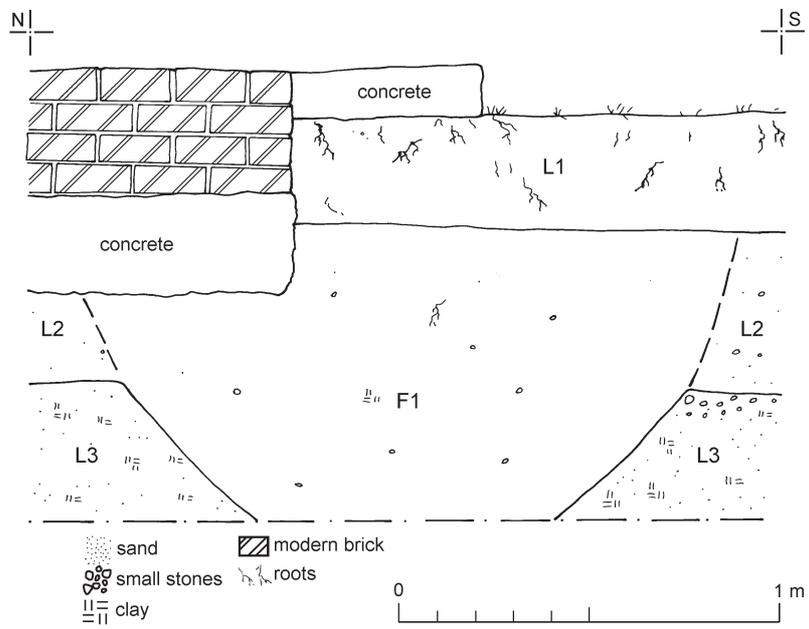


Fig 3 F1: section.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Site address: 26 Melrose Road, West Mersea, Essex	
Parish: West Mersea	District: Colchester
NGR: TM 601185 212710	Site codes: CAT Project - 14/11f Museum accession - COLEM 2014.115
Type of work: Archaeological watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 12-14th November 2014	Size of area investigated: 65 sq m
Location of curating museum: Colchester & Ipswich Museums	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related UAD/ EHER nos: HER 2215, Essex SAM 32
Final report: CAT Report 805	
Periods represented: ?Neolithic	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p><i>The Colchester Archaeological Trust undertook a watching brief during the construction of two extensions to the rear of 26 Melrose Road, West Mersea. One probable pit containing a worked flint was identified in the foundation trenches. The ?pit did not contain any later dated finds or inclusions and is presumed to be prehistoric in date.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Adam Wightman	Date of summary: December 2014