

Archaeological monitoring and excavation, Stage 7 and 8 western extension, Hanson Quarry, Maldon Road, Birch, Essex

Stage 7: November 2014 - January 2015

Stage 8: October - November 2015

on behalf of Hanson Aggregates



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1 Summary

Since the late 1990s, the expansion of the Hanson Birch Quarry has been preceded by archaeological monitoring and excavation on behalf of Hanson Aggregates. This has allowed us to explore a landscape containing a Bronze Age burial site, a late Iron Age and Roman enclosure, and a WWII air base.

This is the report on archaeological monitoring at Birch Pit in 2014 and 2015, during and after topsoil-stripping of the Stage 7 and Stage 8 western extensions of the quarry, next to areas investigated in 2004, 2008, and 2013. In the sequence of letter codes attributed to the various quarry areas, this is Area K.

Thirty archaeological features were excavated in 2014/15. Five features can be attributed to the WWII airfield, and three ditches are post-medieval field boundaries which are clear continuations of ditches excavated on adjacent Birch Pit sites. There are five undated pits, and a natural pit. Of the fifteen post-holes, twelve are convincingly arranged as three 'four-post' structures. Dated finds are rare, but five of the post-holes contain Early Iron Age pottery, and one contains a Roman sherd.

The majority of the site was disturbed by the construction and subsequent removal of the World War II airbase, particularly at the northern edge of the site.



Photo 1: the Stage 7 strip in 2014, view NW

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report on Stage 7 (November 2014-January 2015), and Stage 8 archaeological monitoring and excavation (October-November 2015) carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at Birch Pit, Maldon Road, Birch, on behalf of Hanson Aggregates.

Birch Pit is 6 km south-west of Colchester (Figs 1-2), north-east of Palmer's Farm, at NGR TL 9217 1937. It consists of approximately 19.6 hectares of land which was formerly part of a World War II United States Army Air Force base.

The requirement for archaeological work was prompted by a western extension of the existing quarry. In August 2014, Essex County Council Place Services were consulted by Essex County Council (ECC) on a continuation of a planning consent for mineral extraction first granted in 1995. Attached to the consent was the following condition:

'No development, or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work and recording in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the MPA.'



Photo 2: the Stage 7 strip in 2014. To the right (east) is the Stage 6 area, now a working quarry.

3 Archaeological background

This section is based on records held by the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, and the Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) held and maintained by Colchester Borough Council. All work listed below was carried out by CAT, unless otherwise credited.

Archaeology

The archaeological background of the area around Birch Pit has been extensively summarised in the many CAT Reports produced since the planning consent for mineral extraction was first granted in 1995.

Prior to the 1990s, little was known of the archaeology of the area immediately surrounding Birch Pit. The archaeological work followed an environmental impact assessment carried out in 1992 (CAT Report 8).

Aerial photographs show a large number of undated, but pre-modern, cropmarks representing activity north of Birch Pit. Some 0.8 km to the north-west is the cropmark complex of a large sub-rectangular enclosure with associated tracks or droveways and a system of fields (EHER 11548, 11577, 11582, 11924). Close to these sites, but within the boundaries of the permissible northern quarrying area, there are several smaller cropmark sites (CAT Report 8, appendix). Neolithic and early Mesolithic flints have also been recorded about 2 km to the east (Spencer & Dennis 1988).

The most significant archaeological remains identified by the 1992 assessment was two surface scatters of Roman finds to the northeast of Palmer's Farm (CAT Report 8, appendix). A small quantity of medieval pottery was also recovered. Further work in 1997 on one of the areas of Roman finds (CAT Report 8, 4 and fig 2) and in 1998, geophysical survey and trial-trenching in the same area of Roman finds revealed a number of features below the ploughsoil, containing Roman finds (CAT Report 23).

Other archaeological work undertaken in response to quarry expansion (Fig 2). In 1995, a small Roman oven was excavated on the east side of the quarry close to Brake's Farm (NGR TL 9333 2002; CAT excavation 1995 on Fig 2; CAT archive 6/95b). In 2001, evaluation trenching in advance of a northern extension to the quarry revealed features of Bronze Age and Roman date (CAT Report 141). Excavation on this area in 2003 revealed a Bronze Age cemetery - consisting of three ring-ditches associated with sixteen urned and unurned cremation burials - and part of a Roman field system (CAT excavation 2003 on Fig 2; CAT Report 289). In 2005 excavation at the Birch airfield compost site (on the former USAAF airbase) revealed features of Late Iron Age or early Roman, and Roman date (CAT Report 326; excavation 2005 on Fig 1). In 2004, again in 2005-6, 2007 and in 2008, excavation prior to extensions to the western side of the quarry (Fig 3; CAT Report 383, CAT Report 485, CAT Report 523) revealed features of prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date. The main period of activity was during the Late Iron Age, Roman, medieval and early post-medieval periods. No clear traces of any buildings were found, but the remains of ditches revealed enclosures divided by tracks or droveways. A Roman oven was situated within the area of one enclosure, and a small number of cremation burials situated to the east of the enclosures. A few features dated to the Late Bronze Age, including one large pit which was possibly a waterhole. In addition, there were a small number of features of post-medieval and modern date.

In 2012, monitoring and excavation during topsoil-stripping (Stage 5 western extension) adjacent to areas excavated in 2007 and 2008 revealed only two features - a post-hole containing potsherds dated to the Late Bronze Age or early Iron Age, and a post-medieval or modern ditch. Most of the stripped area was disturbed by the construction and removal of the World War II airbase (CAT Report 671).

In 2013, monitoring and excavation topsoil-stripping (Stage 6 western extension) adjacent to the Stage 5 area excavated in 2012 revealed twenty-two archaeological features. The significant remains included a 'placed deposit' (a Late Bronze Age jar without cremated bone) and seventeen pits and post-holes containing LBA sherds. Other features were mostly post-medieval field ditches which are shown extant on 19th-century Ordnance Survey maps. Much of the site had been disturbed by the construction and subsequent removal of a World War II airbase (CAT Report 738).

4 Aim

The aim of the monitoring and excavation was to record the character, extent, date and significance of any archaeological remains and deposits which would be removed by mineral extraction. Particular attention was paid to the survival of the remains mentioned in Section 3 above.

5 Report on monitoring and excavation (Figs 1-7)

Documentation

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CAT (CAT 2013) in response to a brief issued by and agreed with the ECC Place Services (Gascoyne 2012).

In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014b). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE: English Heritage 2006), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) and EAA 24 was also followed.

Site work

The topsoil strip for the Stage 7/8 extensions was carried out under archaeological supervision using a 360° mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. Stage 7 (2014) measured 1.582 ha, and Stage 8 (2015) 1.235 ha. Therefore the total area monitored in Stage 7/8 was 2.81 ha.

Although large areas of the Stage 7/8 extraction area (particularly to the north and west) had been substantially disturbed by the construction and subsequent dismantling of the airbase, there was limited survival of archaeological features. Specifically, eight ditches, five pits, fifteen postholes, one WWII road foundation, and one natural pit.

Despite only six of the features containing dated finds, four main periods are evident: prehistoric (Early Iron Age), Roman, post-medieval, and WWII. However, some of the undated features can be tentatively dated by association. For instance, there are two long ditches which are undated on this site, but are continuations of post-medieval ditches (field boundaries) seen on 2012 and 2013 site to the east of the Stage 7/8 site (CAT Reports 671, 738). Of the fifteen post-holes, twelve are convincingly distributed in what are commonly referred to as 'four-posters'. Three of those post-holes contain Early Iron Age pottery. Of the three isolated post-holes, one contains EIA pottery. Of the five pits, four are undated, and one contains EIA pottery. There are also a few pieces of burnt flint, which are generally (though not exclusively) prehistoric in date. A case can therefore be made that the majority of the undated pits and post-holes are also prehistoric in date, and perhaps specifically EIA.

The difficulty is with post-hole F25 - one of the 'four-poster' post-holes, which contains a Roman sherd. The EIA dating of at least one of the 'four-posters' (ie, F10-F13) is quite strong, so it is difficult to know what to make of the Roman sherd. Is it intrusive?

Contexts, including those with finds, are tabulated below. Dated contexts are shown in bold.

context no	description	locator	finds	period
F1	hoggin and clay base of airbase road	N	-	modern
F2	N/S ditch, continuation of ditch F1 on 2013 site to the east	NE	tile /drain (mod) concrete - not retained	modern
F3	shallow pit, with burnt stone	E	-	undated- prehistoric?
F4	E/W ditch, same as F8, continuation of ditch F15 on 2013 site to E	E	-	post-medieval

context no	description	locator	finds	period
F5	pit	E	-	undated - prehistoric?
F6	ditch	SW	cattle bone	good condition of cattle bone indicates context probably post-med
F7	pit	SW	EIA pottery, burnt stones (probably prehistoric)	EIA (c 700-350 BC)
F8	E/W ditch, same as F4, continuation of ditch F15 on 2013 site to E	W	-	
F9	ditch parallel to and cut by ditch F30. Probably an earlier cut of F30? Same ditch as F18?	NW	-	WWII
F10	post-hole, convincing 4-post group with F11-13	NW	-	undated, but probably EIA by association with F11-13
F11	post-hole, convincing 4-post group with F10, F12-13	W	EIA pottery	EIA
F12	post-hole, convincing 4-post group with F10-11, F13	W	EIA pottery, fired clay (probably prehistoric)	EIA
F13	post-hole, convincing 4-post group with F10-12	W	EIA pottery	EIA
F14	isolated post-hole, near F15	NW	-	undated - prehistoric?
F15	isolated post-hole, near F14	NW	-	undated - prehistoric?
F16	isolated post-hole, near F17	central	EIA pottery	EIA
F17	isolated post-hole, near F16	central	-	undated - prehistoric?
F18	ditch parallel to and cut by ditch F30. Probably an earlier cut of F30? Same ditch as F9?	SW	-	WWII
F19	natural pit	S central	-	
F20	pit with charcoal fill - hearth base?	S central	-	undated - prehistoric?
F21	pit with charcoal flecking	S central		undated - prehistoric?
F22	post-hole, convincing 4-post group with F23-25	NW	-	Roman by association with F25?
F23	post-hole, convincing 4-post group with F22, F24-25	NW	-	Roman by association with F25?
F24	post-hole, convincing 4-post group with F22-23, F25	NW	-	Roman by association with F25?
F25	post-hole, convincing 4-post group with F22-24	NW	Roman rim sherd, fired clay (probably prehistoric), burnt stones (probably prehistoric)	Roman
F26	post-hole, convincing 4-	NW		undated -

context no	description	locator	finds	period
	post group with F27-29			prehistoric?
F27	post-hole, convincing 4-post group with F26, F28-29	NW	-	undated - prehistoric?
F28	post-hole, convincing 4-post group with F26-27, F29	NW	-	undated - prehistoric?
F29	post-hole, convincing 4-post group with F26-28	NW	-	undated - prehistoric?
F30	modern ditch - parallel with F31 and aligned with WWII airfield. Cuts F8, F9 and F18	W	-	WWII
F31	modern ditch - parallel with F30 and aligned with WWII airfield.	W	-	WWII

Table 1: context list with dated finds

6 Finds (Fig 7)

by Stephen Benfield

Introduction

Finds of pottery, fired clay, heat altered (burnt) stone and animal bone were recovered from several features, most of which are identified as post-holes. A few sherds of pottery were also recovered from a soil layer. Almost all of the pottery is of prehistoric date and is considered as most probably belonging a post-Deverel-Rimbury assemblage dating to the period of the Late Bronze Age (LBA)-Early Iron Age (EIA) although some of the pottery may date earlier. There is also a single greyware sherd that is probably of Roman date. The other finds types consist of only a few pieces. All of the finds are listed by context in Table 3 at the end of the Finds report.

Prehistoric Pottery

Hand-made prehistoric (pre-'Belgic') pottery was recovered from post-holes **F11, F12, F13, and F16**, from pit **F7**, and from a soil layer L2. In total there are 84 sherds weighing 418g, with an average sherd weight of 4.9g. The pottery fabrics used in quantifying the assemblage (Table 2) broadly follow those commonly used for cataloguing prehistoric pottery in Essex (Brown 1988).

Fabric	Fabric description	No.	Wt/g.
B	Flint small-medium, common	4	13
C	Flint small-medium common, with occasional large flint	46	232
D	Flint medium-large, common	33	172
E	Flint and sand-tempered	1	1
	<i>Total</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>418</i>

Table 2 Prehistoric pottery by fabric type

The great majority of the prehistoric pottery consists of plain, flint-tempered body sherds that of themselves are not easily closely dated with any great confidence. However, despite the fact that a significant proportion have a fairly coarse flint-temper (Fabric D) the indications are that they probably date to the LBA-EIA rather than earlier and can be attributed to the post-Deverel-Rimbury (PDR) pottery tradition. In part this is indicated by one small rim sherd from F12 (Fig 7.2) that appears fairly typical of this period and by a number of sherds that have moderate or fine or fine-medium flint-temper (Fabric B & Fabric C) that is well embedded within the fabric. A LBA or EIA date would also be in keeping with other closely-dated prehistoric pottery from this part of the quarry (CAT Report 383, CAT Report 485, CAT Report 523, and CAT Report 738). It can be noted

that most of the flints recovered from this area of the quarry are also dated as Late Bronze Age-Iron Age rather than earlier, although a few are dated as Neolithic (CAT Report 523).

There are sherds from two, possibly three decorated pots. Of particular interest are sherds from a decorated bowl (Fig 7.1) that comes from post-hole F12. This consists of a number of body sherds with finger-tip impressions a section of the shoulder (composed of four joining sherds) where the finger-tipping can be seen to carry onto the neck. Internally the shoulder carination is defined by a distinct ledge. It is unfortunate that no certain rim sherds from this pot are present. The small rim sherd from this feature (Fig 7.2), although in a similar fabric, appears much too slight to be the rim from the pot. Extensive decoration across the body of a pot is uncommon among decorated PDR type assemblages. In flint-tempered fabrics it is more commonly associated with Middle Neolithic (Peterborough ware) and Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age pottery, although it is noted that on some Peterborough ware finger-tip impressions often form rows (Brown 2001) while the impressions here are rather more spaced and random in appearance. The sherds here are associated with other pottery that appears to be of probable LBA-EIA (PDR) date and the extensive decoration on the pot body can be broadly paralleled among the PDR pottery from Marks Warren in northeast London (Brudenell 2011, fig 14.14 & fig 16.23) and on Iron Age pottery at Valley Belt, Trowse on the Norwich Southern By-pass (Percival 2000, fig138.P92). At the Marks Warren site the decoration includes one sherd with finger-pinching across the pot body. The second decorated pot, represented by a single body sherd (Fig 7.3), comes from post-hole F11 (4) and has impressed, finger-tip impressions forming spaced, deep dimples. They appear to be part of a row rather than a more extensive pattern on the body, which is not uncommon among PDR assemblages. Another very small sherd from the same context appears to have finger tip or finger pinching on its surface and might represent a third decorated pot. The only other mark on any of the pottery is a small post-firing hole made through one sherd from pit F7 (2).

With reservations, the pottery is proposed as representing an assemblage of PDR type, although in that case the decoration would suggest an EIA date (c 700-350 BC) rather than the LBA date (c 1100-700 BC) that has been assigned to the PDR plainware previously recovered from this part of the quarry. While some of the pottery appears certainly to be of PDR type it is conceded that the finger-tip decorated sherds and by association some of the coarse flint-tempered pottery might possibly date earlier (Neolithic-Bronze Age); however, at present it is proposed that they are most likely to be part of the PDR assemblage.

Illustrated Fig 7.1 F12 (5), Body and shoulder sherds from a decorated bowl four joining shoulder sherds (illustrated) other small body sherds from the same pot, common small-large flint-temper, decorated with spaced finger-tip impressions across body and over shoulder (Fabric D)

Illustrated Fig 7.2 F12 (5) Small up-right or slightly flaring rim sherd with flat-top (Fabric D).

Illustrated Fig 7.3 F11 (4) Body sherd, common flint-temper small-large, decorated with impressed spaced indentations/dimples probably arranged as a single row (Fabric D)

Other finds

There are a few finds of fired clay and burnt flint stones that are likely to be of prehistoric date. Small pieces of fired clay were recovered from post-holes F12 & F25, that from F12 associated with pottery dated to the LBA-EIA. Single pieces of burnt flint stones come from a pit (F7) and from a post-hole (F25). One small pottery rim sherd from F25 is almost certainly of Roman date. A small group of animal bone from a large mammal(s), probably cattle bone, was recovered from linear feature F6 (Sx1). The moderately good condition of the bone suggests it may be likely to be post-medieval rather than earlier unstratified material (US) consisted of, one (1) is a small flint flake with about 60% cortex, removed from a flint stone or nodule. There is no indication of

any reworking and its archaeological significance is doubtful as this could be a waste flake (from flint working) or an incidental plough struck piece. The other (2) is a base sherd (25g) from a Roman greyware jar or deep bowl (Colchester Fabric GX) recovered from spoil. This has small surface voids from burnt out organic inclusions and sparse dark inclusions of grog or bunt organic matter in the fabric. An Early Roman date (mid 1st-2nd century) is more likely than a date later in the Roman period.

7 Discussion

Prehistory

The majority of the dated features on this site are prehistoric, and contain Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age pottery. Stephen Benfield takes the view that the pottery is more likely to be EIA (Early Iron Age - circa 700- 350 BCE).

Structures

There are three groups of four posts on the western edge of the Stage 8 area. These are interpreted as 'four-posters', and are described as Structures 1-3.

Structure 1: consisting of post-holes F10-13, is very securely dated to the Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age by virtue of having EIA pottery in three out of its four post-holes (F11-13). Structure 1 measures 2.6m E-W by 2.4m N-S (post centre to post centre). This is broadly similar to the smaller of the two four-posters from Stansted Airport, measuring 2.8 x 2.8m, post-centre to post-centre (Havis and Brooks 2004, 25-8).

Structure 2: north of Structure 1, consisting of post-holes F22-25, is undated, but presumed to be EIA by association with Structure 1.

Structure 3: north of Structure 2, consisting of post-holes F26-29, has a sherd of Roman pottery in one of its post-holes (F25). It is difficult to know what to make of this. Is it intrusive? The relatively large group of EIA pottery in Structure 1 (73 sherds, 290g) makes it uncomfortable to suggest that the EIA material is residual, and Structures 1-3 are actually Roman in date. It may be best to view the single Roman sherd as intrusive.

Other prehistoric features

Of the two adjacent post-holes in the centre of Stage 8 area, F16 contains 2 sherds of LBA/EIA pottery, and the other (F17) is undated. Likewise the two post-holes at the northern edge of Stage 8, east of Structures 1-3, are undated (F14-15).

There are five pits. F7 on the western site edge south of Structures 1-3 contains seven sherds of LBA/EIA pottery (105g). The other four (F3, F5, F20-1) are undated.

The view taken here is that, given the number of well-dated EIA contexts on this site, the undated post-holes and pits are probably EIA.

What is the function of the 'four-post' structures?. If they are close to enclosures or farms, such as the examples from the Stansted Airport CIS site (Havis and Brooks 2004, 25-8), they are interpreted as raised buildings where grain is stored over winter. In fact, they can also have a ritual use, or be domestic structures. As the Birch structures are so far from any contemporary site (ie, the Iron Age enclosure on the 2005-7 excavation sites, which is 200m to the east) it may be necessary to think of a ritual use for these structures. Are they exposure platforms, or boundary markers?



Photo 3: working on the four-post structures: Structure 1 foreground. View north. Scale is 1m long.

Roman

Evidence of Roman activity is limited to a single sherd of Roman pottery from one of the post-holes of Structure 2. There is also an unstratified Roman sherd from the topsoil strip. This is probably manure scatter from the Roman site excavated in 2005-7.

Anglo-Saxon and medieval

There are no finds or features of these periods.

Post medieval-modern

There are two categories of feature here. First, post-medieval ditches F2, F6, and F4/F8 are field boundaries. In the case of F2 and F4/F8, they are continuations of ditches excavated previously on Birch sites to the east, and they can be seen on the 1881 OS map.

As on previous Birch sites, particularly the recent western extensions, there is considerable evidence of disturbance caused by the construction and dismantling of the former airbase. This includes concrete/bitumen/brick debris from taxi ways and aircraft aprons, electric and communication cables, drainage runs. There are also wheel ruts from the construction and demolition phases of the airbase.

General

The intensity of archaeological activity on this site, and indeed on all the areas west of the Iron Age and Roman enclosure (the 2004, 2012, 2013 seasons) is at a much lower level than the Iron Age and Roman enclosure excavated 2005-7.

8 Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Alex Smiles of Hanson. Site work was managed by B Holloway. Fieldwork was carried out by BH, HB, A Wightman, E Sanford and F Whymark. The project was monitored for Essex County Council by Adrian Gascoyne.

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10 Glossary and abbreviations

Anglo-Saxon	(AS) period from circa AD 410 to AD 1066
BA	Bronze Age (2,000 - 700 BC)
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCAA	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
CIMS	Colchester and Ipswich Museums
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
EIA	Early Iron Age (<i>circa</i> 700-350 BC)
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
IA	Iron Age (<i>circa</i> 700 BC - AD 43)
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
LBA	Late Bronze Age (1,000- 700 BC)
LIA	Late Iron Age (100 BC - AD 43)
modern	period from <i>c</i> AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
post-medieval	from Henry VIII to <i>c</i> AD1800
prehistoric	pre-Roman
residual	something out of its original context - a Roman coin in a modern pit
Roman	period from AD 43 to <i>circa</i> AD 410/430
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds

1 museum box containing all finds.

Paper record

One A4 wallet containing: Brief and WSI. Copy of Report 807
Original site record sheets. Photo log. Attendance record
Disc with digital photographs. Sundry papers

12 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester & Ipswich Museum (accession 2014.20).

13 Bulk Finds list

by S Benfield. last update 20/11/2015

BS=heat altered (burnt) stone; FC=fired clay; AB=animal bone

Ctxt type	Ctxt no.	find no	Find type	Finds description	Period	Fabric code	No	Wt/g	Period/spot date
linear	F006 sx1	1	AB	large mammal, prob. cattle, inc. scapula piece(s)			5	90	
pit	F007	2	pot	7 body sherds, prob. from SV, some join, quite thick, inc. part of small bored hole at one sherd edge, slightly prominent flint, 4 small sherd frags (PDR) c 1200/1000-400/350 BC	LBA-EIA	HMF C	7	105	LBA-EIA
pit	F007	2	BS	burnt flint (calcinated white, crazed)	preh		1	30	preh
p-hole	F010	3	pot?	abraded small sand piece, appears to be pot but may poss. be natural?	preh		1	1	
p-hole	F011	4	pot	Fig 7.3 body sherd, common flint-temper small-large, decorated with impressed spaced dimples (PDR) c 1200/1000-400/350 BC, poss. EIA c 750-350 BC, second small sherd prob. decorated wth small finger-tip impression	EIA	HMF D	2	16	LBA-EIA EIA(?)
p-hole	F011	4	pot	smalll body sherds and frags. (PDR), 17 sherds with 6 small frags.	EIA	HMF D	17	33	LBA-EIA
p-hole	F012	5	pot	Fig 7.1 decorated bowl, body sherds, common small-large flint-temper, decorated with spaced finger-tip impressions across body and over carinated shoulder (see Lyons 2011 fig 14.14 & fig 16.23), prob. all one pot, inc. small flat-top rim sherd in same fabric that is possibly the rim, prob. Earliest IA c 750-500 BC,	EIA(?)	HMF D	11	101	prob. EIA
p-hole	F012	5	pot	Fig 7.2 small flat-top rim sherd in same fabric that is possibly the P1 rim, prob. (PDR)	LBA-EIA	HMF D	1	3	LBA-EIA
p-hole	F012	5	pot	body sherd (PDR) with dense flint-temper	LBA-EIA	HMF C	1	3	LBA-EIA
p-hole	F012	5	pot	misc. body sherds (PDR)	LBA-EIA	HMF C	8	11	LBA-EIA
p-	F012	5	pot	misc. body sherds (PDR)	LBA-	HMF B	3	5	LBA-

Ctxt type	Ctxt no.	find no	Find type	Finds description	Period	Fabric code	No	Wt/g	Period/spot date
hole				slightly sandy	EIA				EIA
p-hole	F012	5	FC	abraded rounded frags. reddish-buff medium sand fabric	preh	B MS	3	3	
p-hole	F013	6	pot	body sherd, prominent flint, probable rim, flat rop, top damaged	EIA	HMF D	1	13	LBA-EIA
p-hole	F013	6	pot	misc. body sherds, some prominent flint, rather coarse, 2 sherds join,	EIA	HMF C	28	104	LBA-EIA
p-hole	F015	7	FC	abraded sandy & powdery with some flint & quartz temper, prob FC	preh		1	4	preh
p-hole	F016	8	pot	moderate fine flint, well embedded, smooth surfaces, sherd recently broken in two (PDR)	LBA-EIA	HMF B	1	8	LBA-EIA
p-hole	F016	8	pot	sandy with sparse flint/quartz (PDR)	LBA-EIA	HMF E	1	1	LBA-EIA
p-hole (4 post)	F025	9	BS	burnt flint (calcinated white)	preh		1	74	preh
p-hole (4 post)	F025	9	pot	small rim sherd, balck surface, red-brown fabric, prob. Roman		GX	1	1	Rom(?)
	L002	10	Pot	2 small body sherds & one small frag., common flint-temper (PDR) c 1200/1000-400/350 BC. Abraded	LBA-EIA	HMF C	2	9	LBA-EIA
	L002	10	Pot	small body sherd, common flint-temper (PDR) c 1200/1000-400/350 BC	LBA-EIA	HMF D	1	6	LBA-EIA

Lyons, A., 2011, 'High living at Marks Warren, a Northeast London landscape from the Mesolithic to the modern period' in ESAH Vol 2, 3-57

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Distribution list:

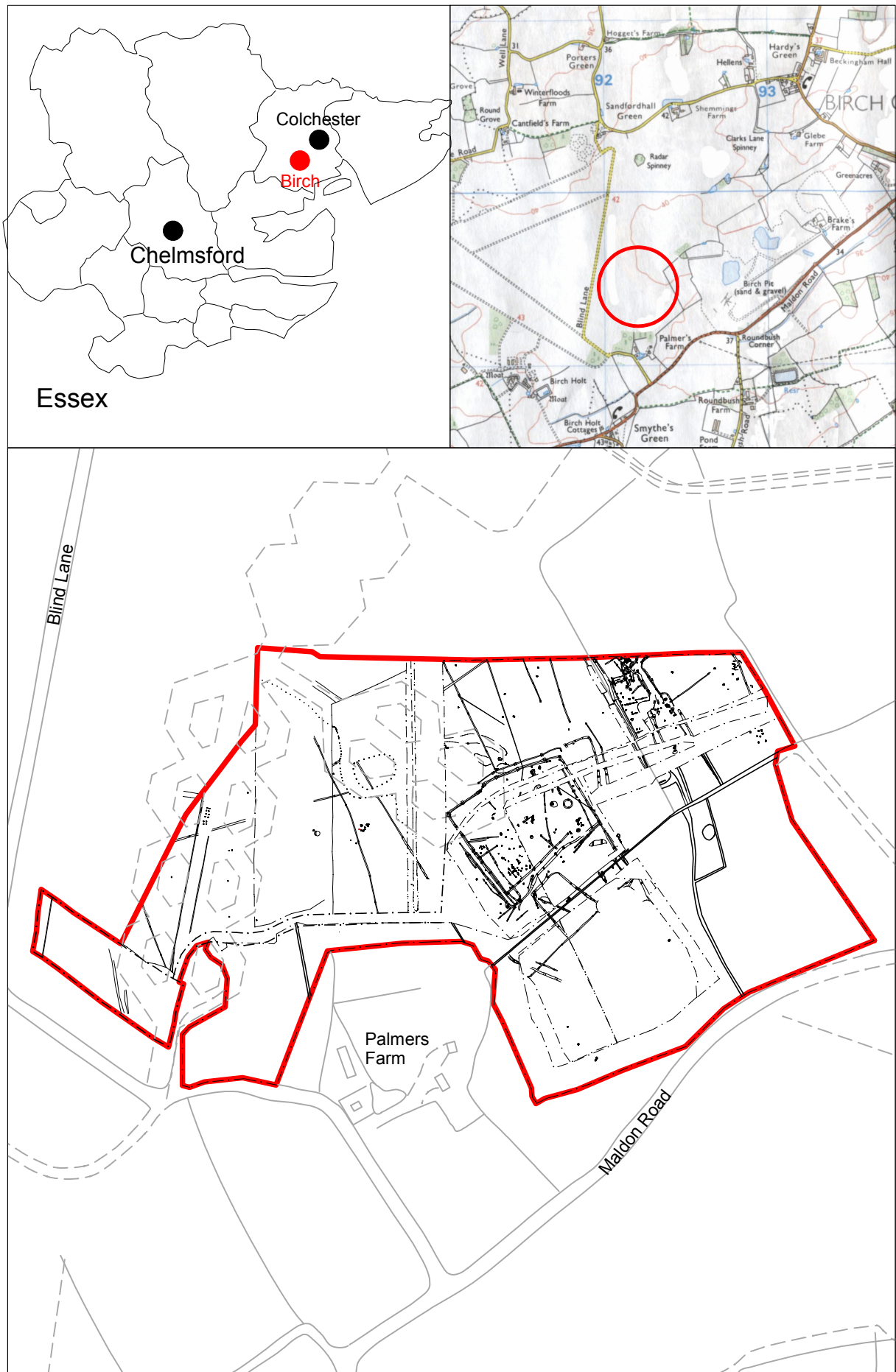
Alex Smiles, Hanson Group
Adrian Gascoyne, ECC HEM officer
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



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Checked by: Philip Crummy
Date: 22.04.16



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Fig 1 Site location.

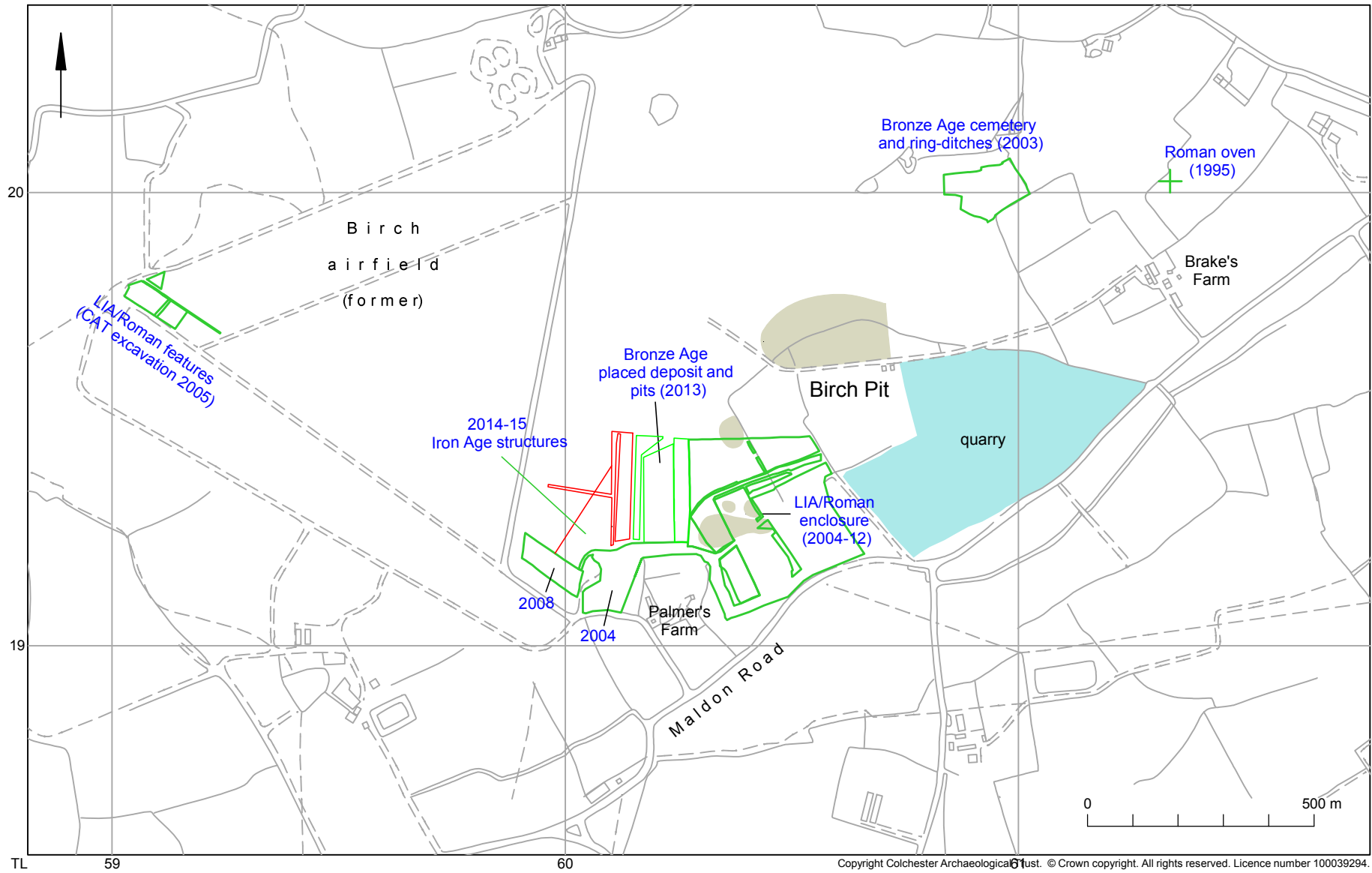
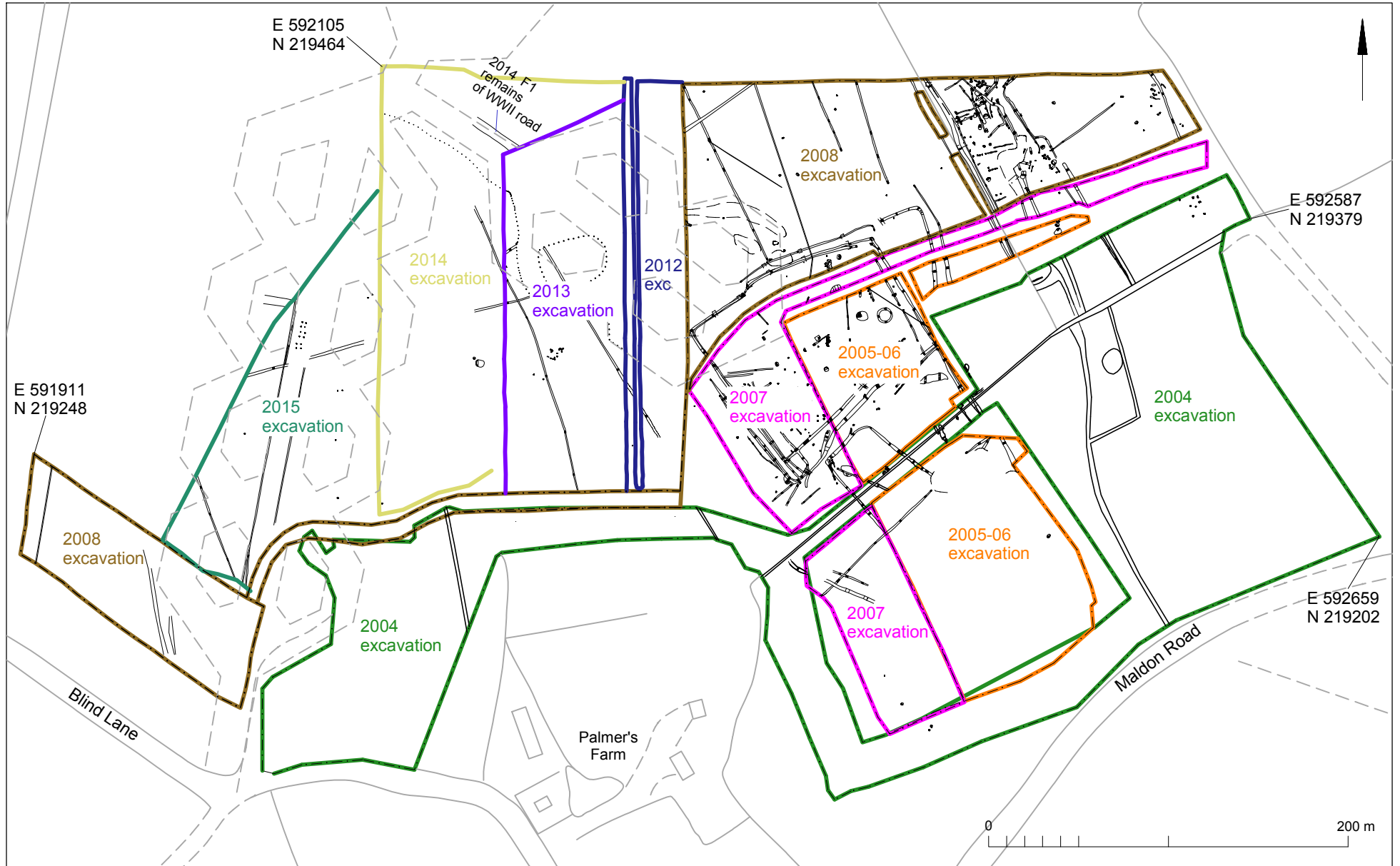


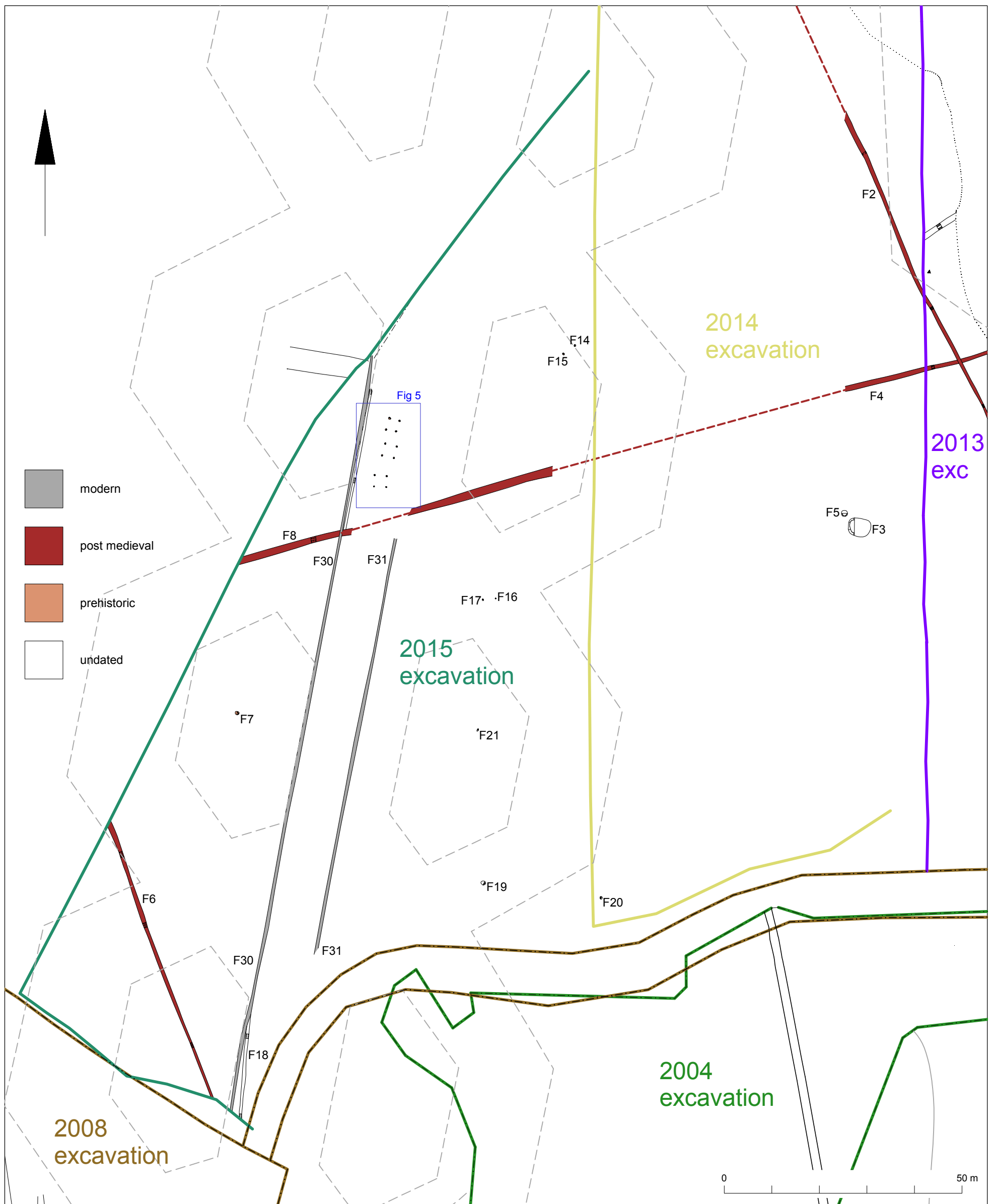
Fig 2 2014-15 Site location (red), showing previous CAT excavations

concentrations of Roman surface finds



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Fig 3 Location of 2014/15 monitoring, showing previous archaeological work.



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Fig 4 2014/15 monitoring and excavation site plan. For detail of four-post structures, see Fig 5

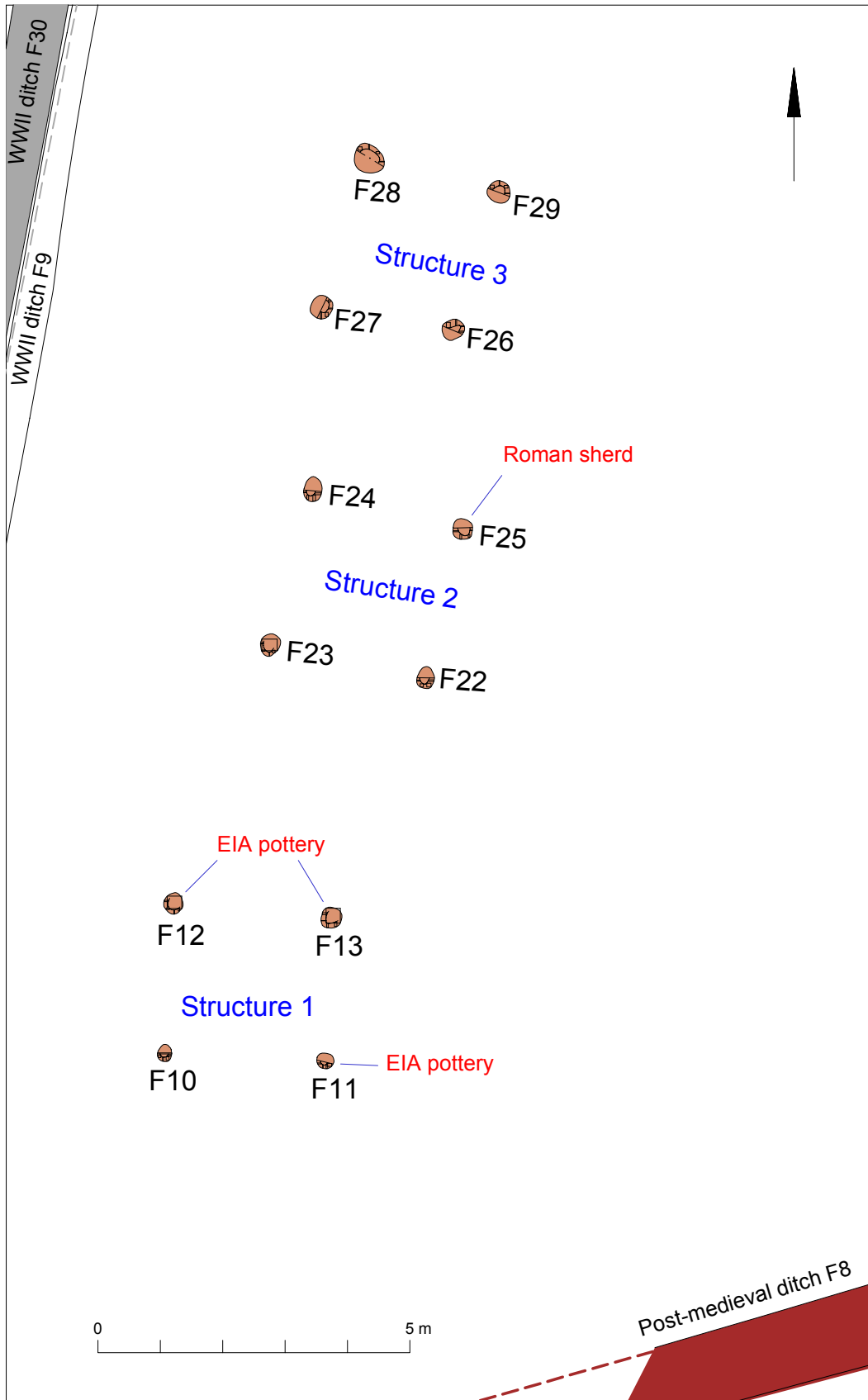


Fig 5 Details of four-post structures

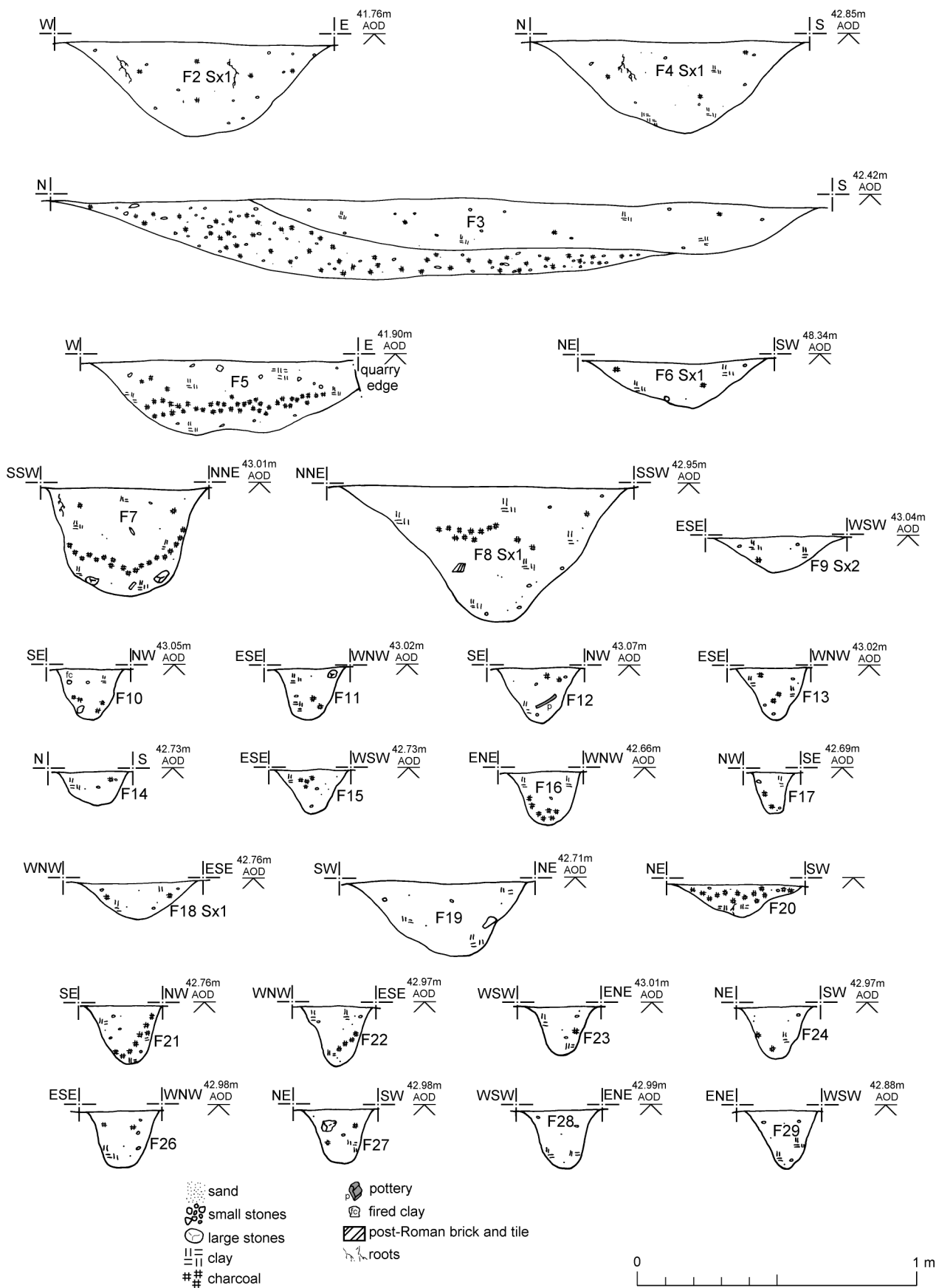


Fig 6 Sections.

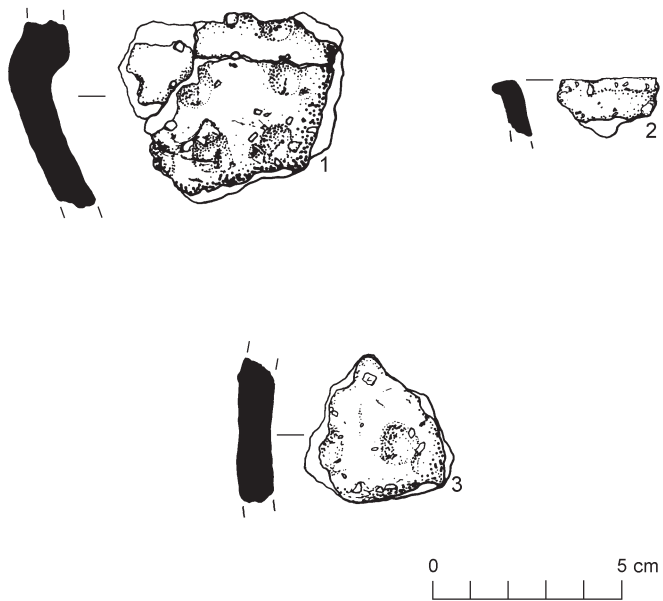


Fig 7 Prehistoric pottery.

Essex Historic Environment Record

Summary sheet

Address: Birch Pit (Hanson), Maldon Road, Birch	
Parish: Birch	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9225 1935 (c)	Site codes: CAT project – 14/10j HEM code BIBP14
Type of work: Monitoring and excavation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: November 2014-January 2015 (Stage 7), October-Nov 2015 (Stage 8)	Size of area investigated: Stage 7 - 1.582 ha Stage 8 - 1.235 ha
Location of curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museums accession – 2014.117	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? Not known	Related EHER number: 11548, 11577, 11582, 11924
Final report: CAT Report 807	
Periods represented: Iron Age, Roman, post-medieval, modern	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p><i>Since the late 1990s, the expansion of the Hanson Birch Quarry has been preceded by archaeological monitoring and excavation which has allowed us to explore a landscape containing a Bronze Age burial site, a late Iron Age and Roman enclosure, and a WWII air base.</i></p> <p><i>This is the report on archaeological monitoring at Birch Pit in 2014 and 2015, during and after topsoil-stripping of the Stage 7 and Stage 8 western quarry extensions, next to areas investigated in 2004, 2008, and 2013. In the sequence of letter codes given to various quarry areas, this is Area K.</i></p> <p><i>Thirty archaeological features were excavated in 2014/15. Five features can be attributed to the WWII airfield, and three ditches are post-medieval field boundaries which are clear continuations of ditches excavated on adjacent Birch Pit sites. There are five undated pits, and a natural pit. Of the fifteen post-holes, twelve are convincingly arranged as three 'four-post' structures. Dated finds are rare, but five of the post-holes contain Early Iron Age pottery, and one contains a Roman sherd.</i></p> <p>The majority of the site was disturbed by the construction and subsequent removal of the World War II airbase, particularly at the northern site edge.</p>	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Reports 523, 671, 738	
ECC monitor: Adrian Gascoyne	
Keywords: EIA four post-structures	Significance: *
Author of summary: Howard Brooks	Date of summary: April 2016