

Archaeological evaluation at New Hall School, Boreham, Essex, CM3 3HS

August 2016



by Laura Pooley

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on behalf of Nigel Floyd, New Hall School Trust

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CAT Report 1003
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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out at New Hall School, The Avenue, Boreham, Essex in advance of the construction of new all-weather sports pitches. Despite being located within the grounds of the medieval New Hall manor and close to a number of important archaeological sites, no significant archaeological horizons were identified.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at New Hall School, The Avenue, Boreham, Essex which was carried out on 10th-11th August 2016. The work was commissioned by Nigel Floyd of New Hall School Trust in advance of the construction of new all-weather sports pitches, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Alison Bennett advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for archaeological trial-trenching and excavation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Alison Bennett (ECCPS 2016), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2016).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006), and with *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14 and 24). This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b).

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background utilises the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford.

New Hall School is a Grade I listed building (EHER 30269; NHLE no. 1338404) that originated in Tudor times, built as a 'palace' for Henry VIII on the site of an earlier, medieval manor (EHER 6040-1). New Hall was one of the six manors of Boreham parish granted in 1062 by Earl Howard to the Dean and Secular Canons of the College he founded in Waltham. New Hall became the summer residence of the Lord Abbot in 1177. The Canons moved closer to Waltham in 1350 and New Hall was held by a series of wealthy secular landowners until 1450 when it became the Crown property under Henry VI. Henry VIII acquired New Hall from the father of Anne Boleyn in 1517. After considerable rebuilding he renamed it Beaulieu. Part of the palace was demolished in 1737 and the building turned into a more modest residence. This became a nunnery in 1798. Since 1799, the site has been used as a Catholic School and nunnery, there have been numerous extensions and developments.

Previously, groundworks for modern extensions to the school have uncovered an earth floor and a cobblestone floor, possibly from the medieval manor. In addition Tudor remains of the formerly more extensive palace have also been revealed (Burgess & Rance (eds) 1988).

The gardens surrounding the building are part of the registered park and garden (NHLE

no. 1000207). The gardens were improved significantly when the Duke of Buckingham bought the house and employed John Tradescant the Elder to supervise and possibly design the grounds. There are references to the fish ponds (to the east of the development area) from at least 1628. There was a later phase of garden activity in the 18th century. Parts of the moats and ponds survive. Some of the outbuildings and walls in the east of the gardens may be as early as 16th/17th century in date (EHER 8572).

To the north of the proposed development site recent excavations prior to the Countryside Zest development (Oxford Archaeology East Report No. 1309) have revealed new archaeological features contemporary with New Hall, possibly associated with deer management and hunting activity.

The proposed development also lies close to an area which contains prehistoric remains. To the north and west are cropmarks of undated and prehistoric enclosures and other features (EHER 5763, 5796). The Boreham to Springfield Link Main revealed three undated ditches. Along the line of this link main Early Neolithic and Late Neolithic/Bronze Age worked flints were found (EHER 47632). To the west and south-west of the school, recent excavations prior to the Countryside Zest development have revealed new archaeological features contemporary with New Hall, and remains of Iron Age settlement (EHER 47635).

A CAT evaluation in 2015 (CAT Report 851) within the easement for a new access road across arable land to the south of the school and north west of the A12 Boreham Interchange revealed no significant archaeological horizons.

A CAT watching brief in February 2016 (CAT Report 952) within the north quad courtyard revealed five post-medieval brick walls and a brick floor, all probably associated with the Tudor palace. Two walls and the floor dated from the 15th to the early 17th century. One wall was possibly part of a boundary. The other wall and associated floor were probably part of a previously unknown room or set of rooms to the north of the surviving north wing. A third wall dating from the 17th to the early 18th century, along with two other later post-medieval walls, may represent later additions or repairs.

The development site itself appears to be located within the parkland of the New Hall estate.

4 Results (Figs 2-4)

Twelve trial-trenches were excavated across the development site. All of the trenches were dug by mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision. All of the modern land drains mentioned below were made of plastic.

Trench 1 (T1) – 30m long by 1.8m wide

Trench T1 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 210-250mm thick) sealing modern subsoil (L2, c 80-105mm thick), which sealed natural silty-clay (L3). Three modern land drains were identified and a single modern pit (F1) excavated.

Trench 2 (T2) – 30m long by 1.8m wide

Trench T2 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 180-200mm thick) sealing modern subsoil (L2, c 140-150mm thick), which sealed natural silty-clay (L3). Two modern land drains were identified.

Trench 3 (T3) – 30m long by 1.8m wide

Trench T3 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 100-150mm thick) sealing modern subsoil (L2, c 420-470mm thick), which sealed natural silty-clay (L3). Three modern land drains were identified and a single modern pit (F2; containing slate, brick and concrete – not retained) excavated.

Trench 4 (T4) – 30m long by 1.8m wide

Trench T4 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 100-150mm thick) sealing modern make-up (L4, c 280mm thick) and redeposited topsoil/subsoil (L5, c 280-300mm thick). Beneath L5 was a thin layer of subsoil (L2, c 60-70mm thick), which sealed natural silty-clay (L3). Two modern land drains were identified.

Trench 5 (T5) – 30m long by 1.8m wide

Trench T5 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 60-80mm thick) sealing subsoil (L2, c 220-240mm thick) and modern make-up (L4, c 400-420mm thick). Natural silty-clay (L3) was sealed beneath L4. Three modern land drains and a red-brick drainage culvert capped with a concrete slab (F3) were identified.

Trench 6 (T6) – 20m long by 1.8m wide

Trench T6 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 150-180mm thick) sealing a thick layer of modern make-up (L4, c 970-1000mm thick). Natural silty-clay (L3) was sealed beneath L4. Two modern land drains were identified.

Trench 7 (T7) – 30m long by 1.8m wide

Trench T7 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 140-150mm thick) sealing subsoil (L2, c 80-110mm thick) and modern make-up (L4, c 330-360mm thick). Natural silty-clay (L3) was sealed beneath L4. Three modern land drains were identified.

Trench 8 (T8) – 20m long by 1.8m wide

Trench T8 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 250-260mm thick) sealing modern subsoil (L2, c 300-360mm thick), which sealed natural silty-clay (L3).

Trench 9 (T9) – 30m long by 1.8m wide

Trench T9 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 140-300mm thick) sealing modern subsoil (L2, c 100-160mm thick), which sealed natural silty-clay (L3). Three modern land drains were identified.

Trench 10 (T10) – 30m long by 1.8m wide

Trench T10 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 180-200mm thick) sealing natural silty-clay (L3). Three modern land drains were identified.

Trench 11 (T11) – 30m long by 1.8m wide

Trench T11 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 160-250mm thick) sealing natural silty-clay (L3). Three modern land drains were identified along with what appeared to be bulldozer tracks.

Trench 12 (T12) – 30m long by 1.8m wide

Trench T11 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 190-300mm thick) sealing natural silty-clay (L3). Three modern land drains were identified.



Photograph 1 T1, excavation of F1, looking W



Photograph 2 T6, looking S



Photograph 3 T11, during machining, looking NNE

5 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

Two pieces of ceramic building material were recovered from F1 (finds no. 1). These consist of a piece of peg-tile and a piece of a red brick. Peg-tiles are current over a long time period from the medieval to post-medieval/modern period, but are probably not in common use prior to the 13th-14th century. The nature and dimensions (65mm thick) of the piece of red brick show that, although it is not frogged, it is of modern (late 18th-19th century) date. Both pieces have patches of a very similar white, lime mortar on their surfaces and were probably used in the same structure.

6 Discussion

Despite being located within the grounds of the medieval New Hall manor and close to a number of important archaeological sites, no significant archaeological horizons were identified during the evaluation. The entire site appears to have been disturbed in recent times, possibly when the sixth form was built immediately to the south.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Nigel Floyd, New Hall School Trust for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway, E Holloway and N Rayner. Figures are by R Mathieson and EH. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Alison Bennett.

8 References

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

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------|---|
| Burgess, E & Rance, M | 1988 | <i>Boreham: History, Tales and Memories of an Essex Village</i> |
| CAT | 2014 | <i>Health & Safety Policy</i> |
| CAT | 2016 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation at New Hall School, The Avenue, Boreham, Essex,</i> |

		<i>CM3 3HS</i>
CAT Report 851	2015	<i>Archaeological trial-trenching evaluation: New Hall School, The Avenue, Boreham, Essex: July 2015.</i>
CAT Report 952	2016	<i>Archaeological monitoring and recording at New Hall School, The Avenue, Boreham, Essex, CM3 3HS: February 2016.</i>
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological evaluation</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>
ECC	2016	Brief for Archaeological Trial-Trenching and Excavation at New Hall School, The Avenue, Boreham
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).</i>
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)</i>
Oxford Archaeology East Report 1309	2011	<i>Prehistoric and Roman remains at Beaulieu Park, Chelmsford</i>

9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	from Henry VIII to c AD 1800
residual	something out of its original context, eg a Roman coin in a modern pit
Section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

10 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1003)

ECC Evaluation Brief, CAT Written Scheme of Investigation

Original site record (Feature and layer sheets, Finds record, plans)

Site digital photos and log, Architectural plans, Attendance register, Risk assessment

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Chelmsford Museum under accession code CHMRE: 2016.093.

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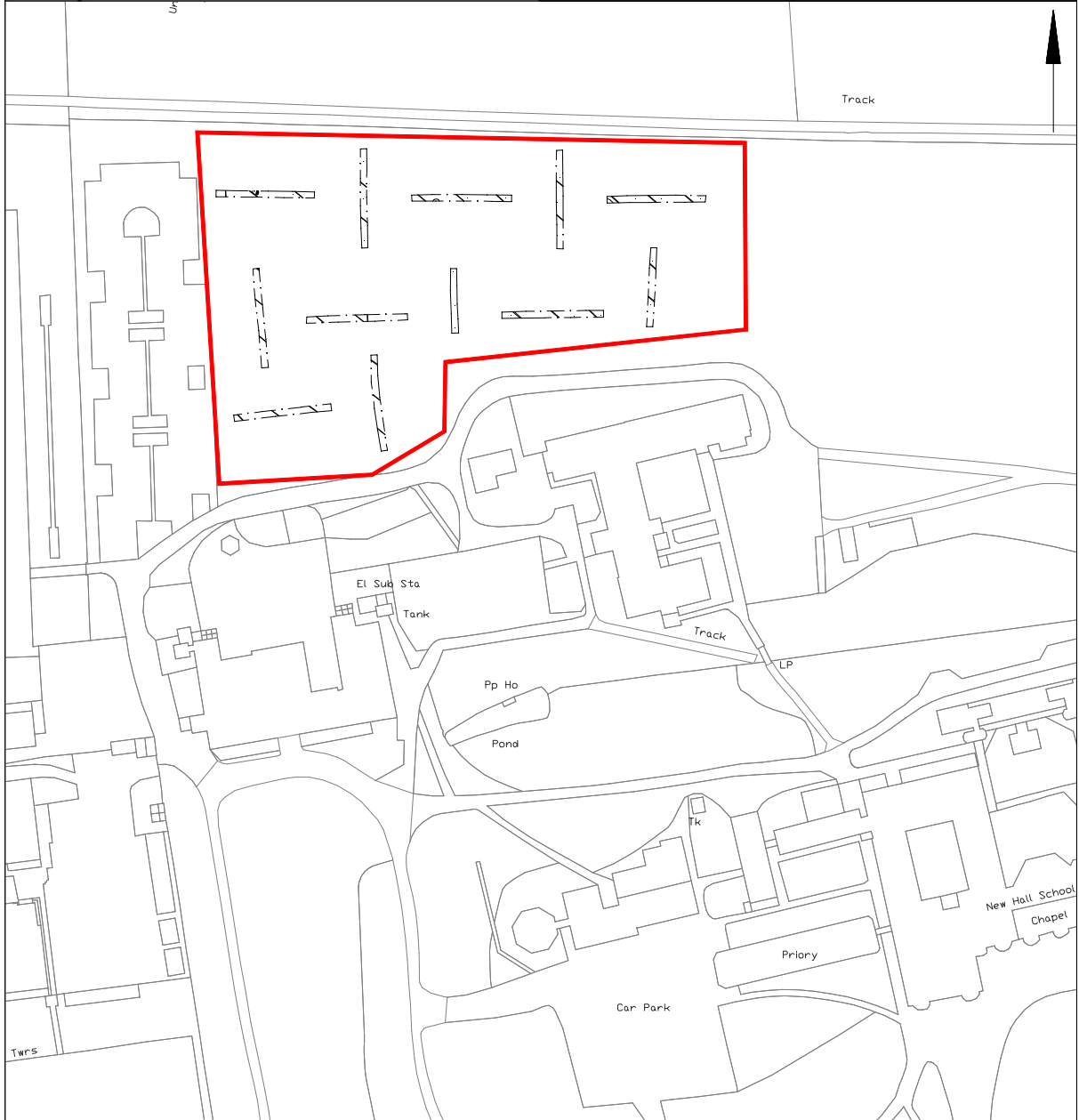
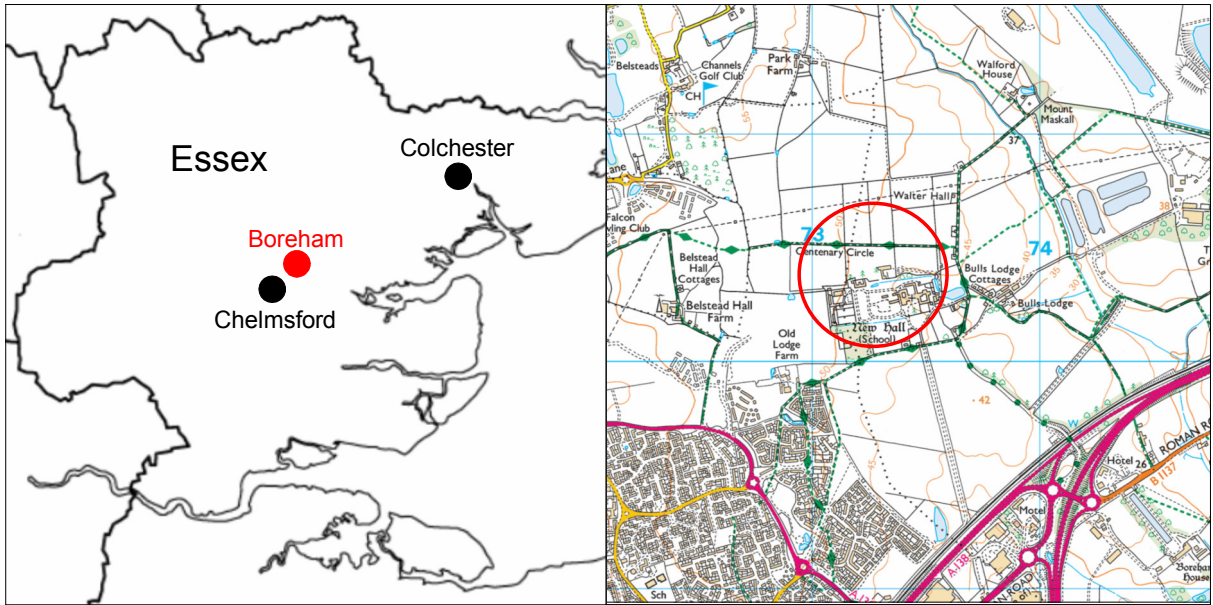
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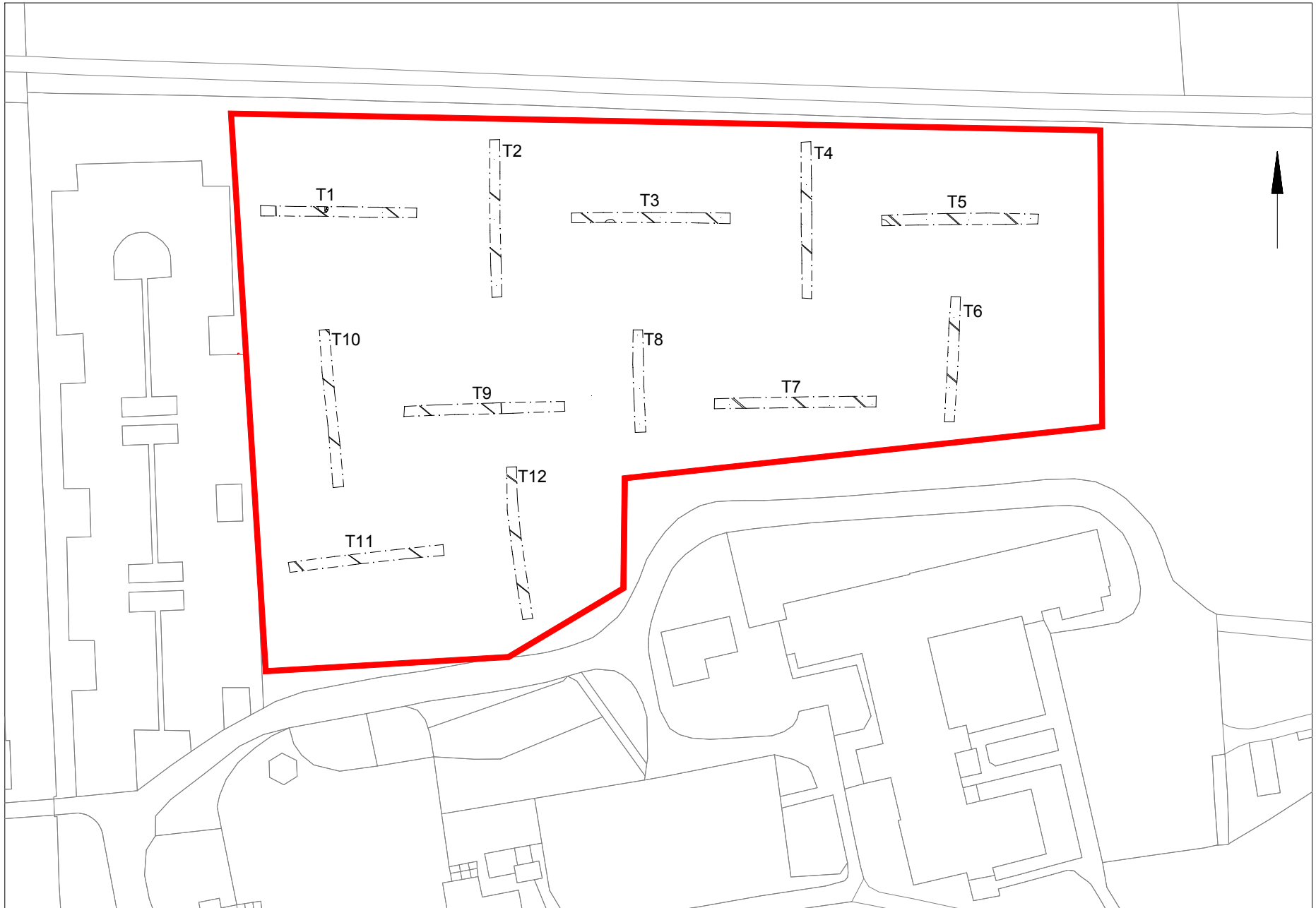
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Fig 1 Site location showing trenches





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Fig 2 Results.

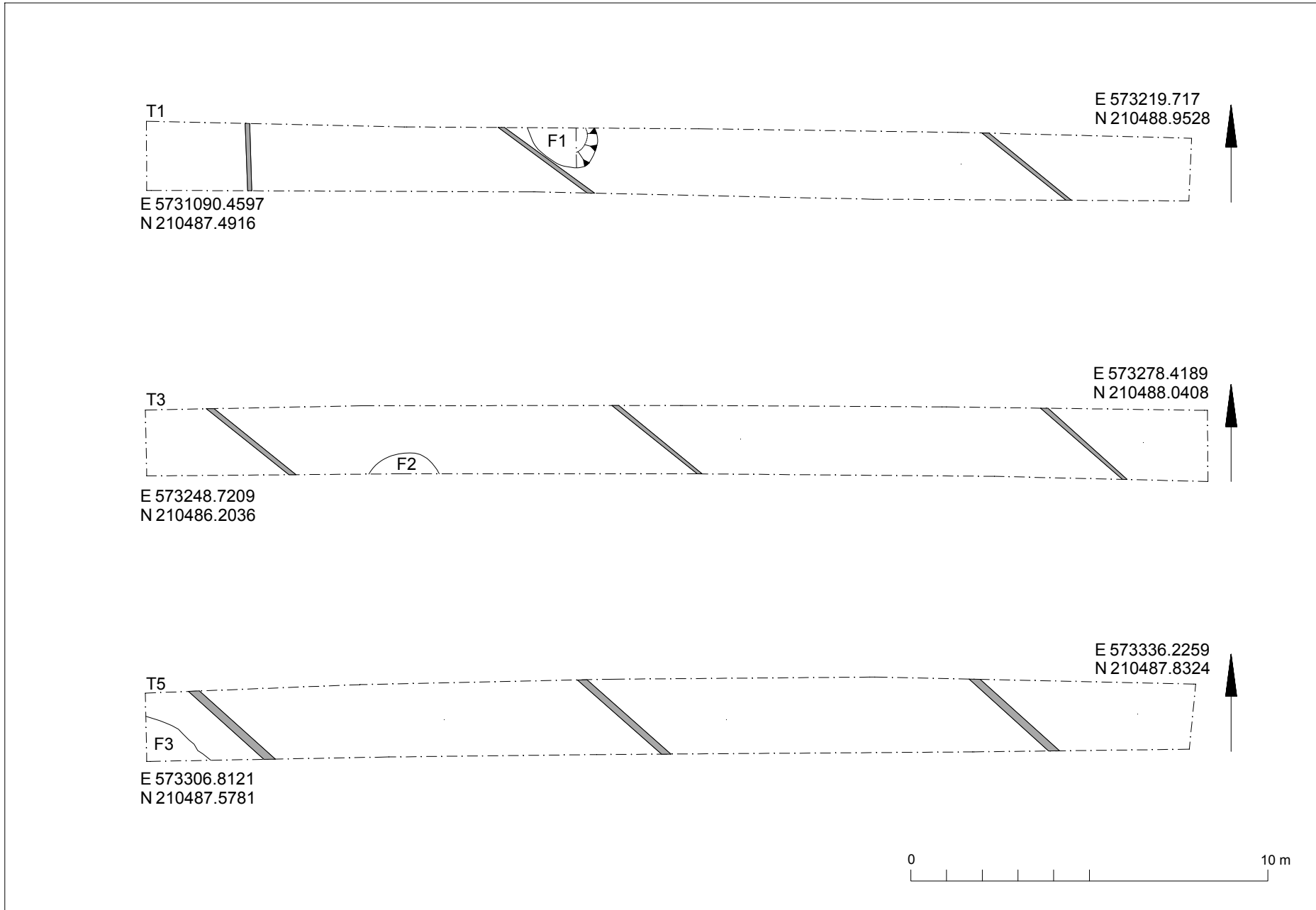


Fig 3 Trenches.

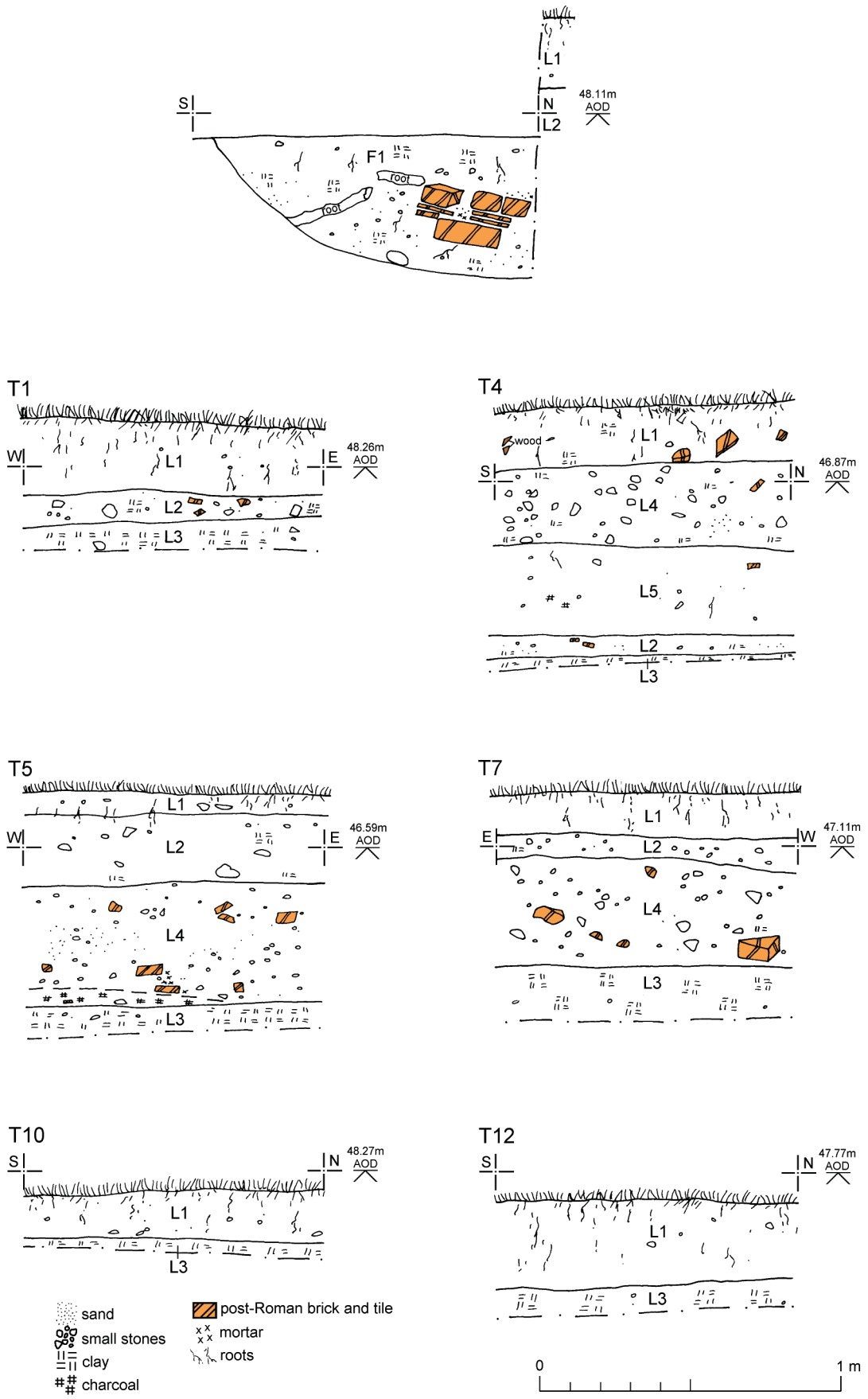


Fig 4 Feature (F1) and representative trench sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: New Hall School, The Avenue, Boreham, Essex, CM3 3HS	
Parish: Boreham	District: Chelmsford
NGR: TL 7323 1045 (centre)	Site code: CAT project code: 16/07k ECC project code: BORHSP16 OASIS project ID: colchest3-258026
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 10th-11th August 2016	Size of area investigated: Twelve trenches totalling 340m long by 1.8m wide (612m ²)
Location of curating museum: Chelmsford Museum accession code CHMRE: 2016.093	Funding source: school
Further seasons anticipated? Not known	Related EHER number: EHER 5763, 5796, 6040-1, 8572, 30269, 47632, 47635
Final report: CAT Report 1003	
Periods represented: modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out at New Hall School, The Avenue, Boreham, Essex in advance of the construction of new all-weather sports pitches. Despite being located within the grounds of the medieval New Hall manor and close to a number of important archaeological sites, no significant archaeological horizons were identified.	
Previous summaries/reports: –	
Keywords: –	Significance: –
Author of summary: Laura Pooley	Date of summary: August 2016