

Archaeological monitoring and recording at Cottawright, Common Road, Great Wakering, Essex, SS3 0AG

August 2017



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Commissioned by Andrew Boniface

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1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at Cottawright, Common Road, Great Wakering in advance of the construction of an outbuilding in the garden of the property for use as a gym. The development site lies near to the 12th century St Nicholas Church, which, it is believed, is located on the site of an Anglo-Saxon minster church built c 7th-9th century. Two medieval or post-medieval ditches were uncovered, although residual Roman and Anglo-Saxon finds in them suggest activity at this site at some time between the 5th and 8th centuries.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring and recording at Cottawright, Common Road, Great Wakering, which was carried out on the 7th-8th August 2017. The work was commissioned by Andrew Boniface, in advance of the construction of an outbuilding in the garden of the property for use as a gym, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Essex County 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 paragraphs 128, 129 and 132 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring at Cottawright, Common Road, Great Wakering*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Alison Bennett (ECCPS 2017), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2017).

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 watching briefs* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b).

3 Archaeological background

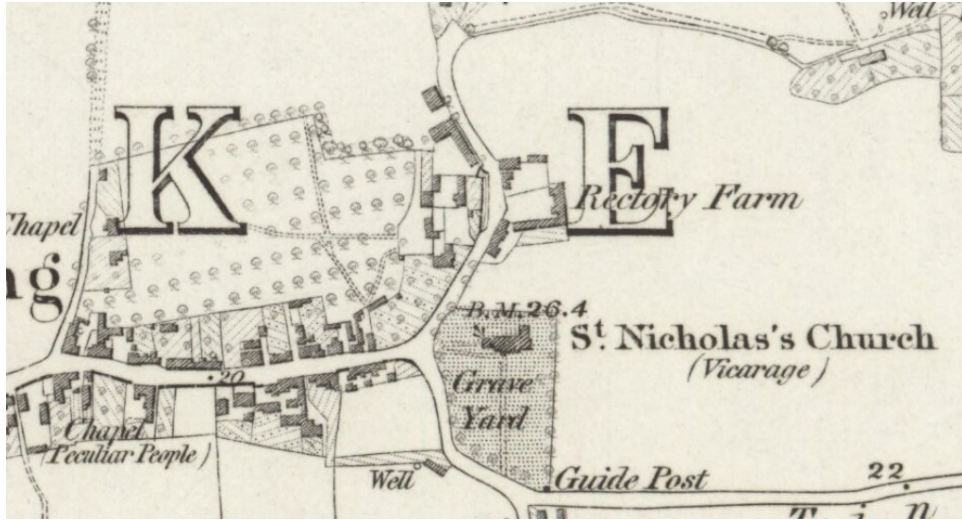
The following archaeological background draws on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex.

In the early Anglo-Saxon period, Great Wakering became the site of a minster church. These were the core of the organisation of the Christian Church in England in the 7th to 9th centuries AD. The presence of a minster means that there certainly was a religious community living within the minster enclosure (Gem 1995). In addition there was probably also a lay community working for the minster on their agricultural holdings. Anglo-Saxon finds and features have been found in the brickfields to the north and south of the village, and excavation to the east of the church has revealed features relating to the minster, including the minster boundary ditch. It is thought that the 12th century church is built on the site of the minster church itself.

Examination of older maps of the village shows a system of narrow strip fields running back from the properties facing on to the High Street. These are strongly suggestive of a planned settlement, comprising crofts facing on to the High Street with long narrow tofts behind them. It is suggested that this planned settlement, which forms a part of a much wider planned landscape covering much of the Rochford peninsula, may have its

origins in either the Middle to Late Anglo-Saxon period or in the late-11th to mid-12th centuries during the area's control by Swein and his family (Rippon 1991).

Full details of the archaeological background can be found in the Historic Settlement Assessment (Medlycott 2003).



Map 1 6-inch OS map of 1873 showing development site.

4 Results (Figs 2-3)

Approximately 56m of foundation trenches were dug under archaeological supervision to the rear of the house. The trenches measured 0.5m wide by 1.38-1.81m deep.

The foundation trench was excavated through three layers. Modern topsoil (L1, c 0.1-0.19m thick) sealed a layer of subsoil (L2, c 0.34-0.38m thick). Beneath L2 sat a layer of possible alluvially-deposited soils (L3, c 0.4-1.21m thick). L3 sealed a natural sand and gravel terrace (L4).



Photograph 1 Overview of finished trenches – looking southeast

Ditch F1 was aligned NNE-SSW and measured 2.1m in width and 0.64m in depth. The only dating evidence recovered from it was a single piece of Roman brick/tile but it cut F2 and so must be of a later date.

Probable post-medieval ditch F2 was aligned NNE-SSW and ran parallel with F1. The dimensions of the feature could not be determined as it extended beyond the limit of excavation and was too deep to excavate fully.

5 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

A small quantity of finds was recovered from two ditches (F1 and F2). All the finds are recorded as from the mid fill of each feature. The closely-datable finds include pieces of quite broken and damaged Roman brick/tile (F1 and F2), a few sherds from the base of a hand-made, chaff-tempered pot that is almost certainly Anglo-Saxon (F2) and broadly dated to the 5th-8/9th century and a piece of peg-tile of medieval, or more probably post-medieval date (F2). Other finds consist of pieces of hard fired clay (F1 and F2) animal bone (F2) and oyster shells (F2). All the finds are listed and described in Table 1.

The presence of the damaged Roman tile pieces and the absence of Roman pottery suggests the tile may originally have been brought to the site for reuse. The few sherds of pottery dated as Anglo-Saxon indicate activity here in that period and might provide a context for the Roman tile as this type of material was often salvaged for reuse from Roman sites. However, most of this early material is, or appears likely to be, residual in the features, certainly in F2 as this also contained a piece of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile.

Ctxt	Find no	Context type	Type/ description	Spot date
F1	3	Ditch	CBM Roman: (1, 262 g) piece from a Roman brick/tile, surfaces missing, c 30 mm thick.	Roman
F1	4	Ditch	Fired clay Piece of very hard fired clay, buff/pale red fabric with some white chalk fragment inclusions, gently concave surface with wipe marks (not closely dated)	Not closely dated
F2	1	Ditch	CBM Roman: (1, 66 g) piece from the upper part of a brick/tile with some white mortar extending over breaks (reused). Post-Roman: Peg-tile (1, 108 g) relatively fine fabric, medieval (after c 1300) -post-medieval. Unidentified, probably fired clay: small fragment of brick or brick-hard fired clay (16 g), pale orange-buff brown fabric, uneven surface, not closely dated - see F1 (3) Animal bone Cattle humerus	Probably post-medieval (with residual Roman)
F2	2	Ditch	Pottery Saxon: (3 sherds, 32 g) thick sherds from the base edge of a hand-made pot, probably a moderately large vessel although not at all clear, flat base, rounded edge, exterior margin oxidised with thin grey-brown surface, most of fabric and interior surface dark grey, common voids from small chaff fragments, probably Anglo-Saxon c mid 5th-8/9thth century AD. CBM Roman: (1, 50 g) piece from a Roman brick/tile, surfaces missing Animal bone Small piece from as medium-large mammal bone Shell Oyster: (3, 58 g) large broken shell pieces	Anglo-Saxon (with residual Roman)

Table 1 Finds by feature and find number

6 Discussion

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken at Cottawright, Common Road, Great Wakering due to its proximity to the site of an Anglo-Saxon minster church built c 7th-9th century. Excavations uncovered two probable post-medieval ditches. The presence within these features of Roman brick and tile, probably scavenged for re-use during the Anglo-Saxon period, and sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery, do, however, indicate activity at the site during this earlier era, which was likely related to the minster church or the lay community which grew up around it.

It is possible that the ditches themselves comprise part of the system of narrow strip fields running back from properties fronting on to the High Street believed to have originated in either the middle to late Anglo-Saxon period or the 11th or 12th centuries. As this thoroughfare is aligned roughly WNW-ESE, the NNE-SSW alignment of the ditches indicates that these features might form part of this broader historic landscape. The features also coincide with the course of a boundary ditch located to the rear of St Nicholas' Church, and therefore might equally represent a continuation of this ditch.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Mr and Mrs Boniface for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister and carried out by A Tuffey. Figures were prepared by AT and S Carter. The project was monitored for the 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>

Brown and Glazenbrook	2000	<i>Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2 – Research Agenda and Strategy</i> . East Anglian Archaeology
CAT	2014	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2017	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological monitoring at Cottawright, Common Road, Great Wakering, Essex, SS3 0AG</i>
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs</i>
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>
ECCPS	2017	<i>Brief for archaeological monitoring at Cottawright, Common Road, Great Wakering</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Gem, R	1995	'Anglo-Saxon Minsters of the Thames Estuary' in <i>Thames Gateway: Recording Historic Buildings and Landscapes on the Thames Estuary</i> , RCHME
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)
Medlycott, M	2003	<i>Great Wakering Historic Settlement Assessment Report</i> , ECC
Rippon, S	1991	'Early planned landscapes in south-east Essex', <i>Essex Archaeology and History</i> 22, p. 46-60

9 Abbreviations and glossary

Anglo-Saxon	period from c 500 – 1066
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	brick/tile (ceramic building material)
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council

ECCHEA	Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHES	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 (layer) of material
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
peg-tile	rectangular thin tiles with peg-hole(s) used mainly for roofing, first appeared c AD1200 and continued in use to present day, but commonly post-medieval to modern
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c AD 1800
residual	something out of its original context, eg a Roman coin in a modern pit
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
Section	(abbreviation sc or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
ws	written scheme of investigation

10 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1159)

ECCPS 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 Southend Museum under accession code: [tbc](#)

Distribution list

Mr and Mrs Boniface
Alison Bennett, Essex County Council Place Services
Essex Historic Environment Record



Colchester Archaeological Trust

Roman Circus House
Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785

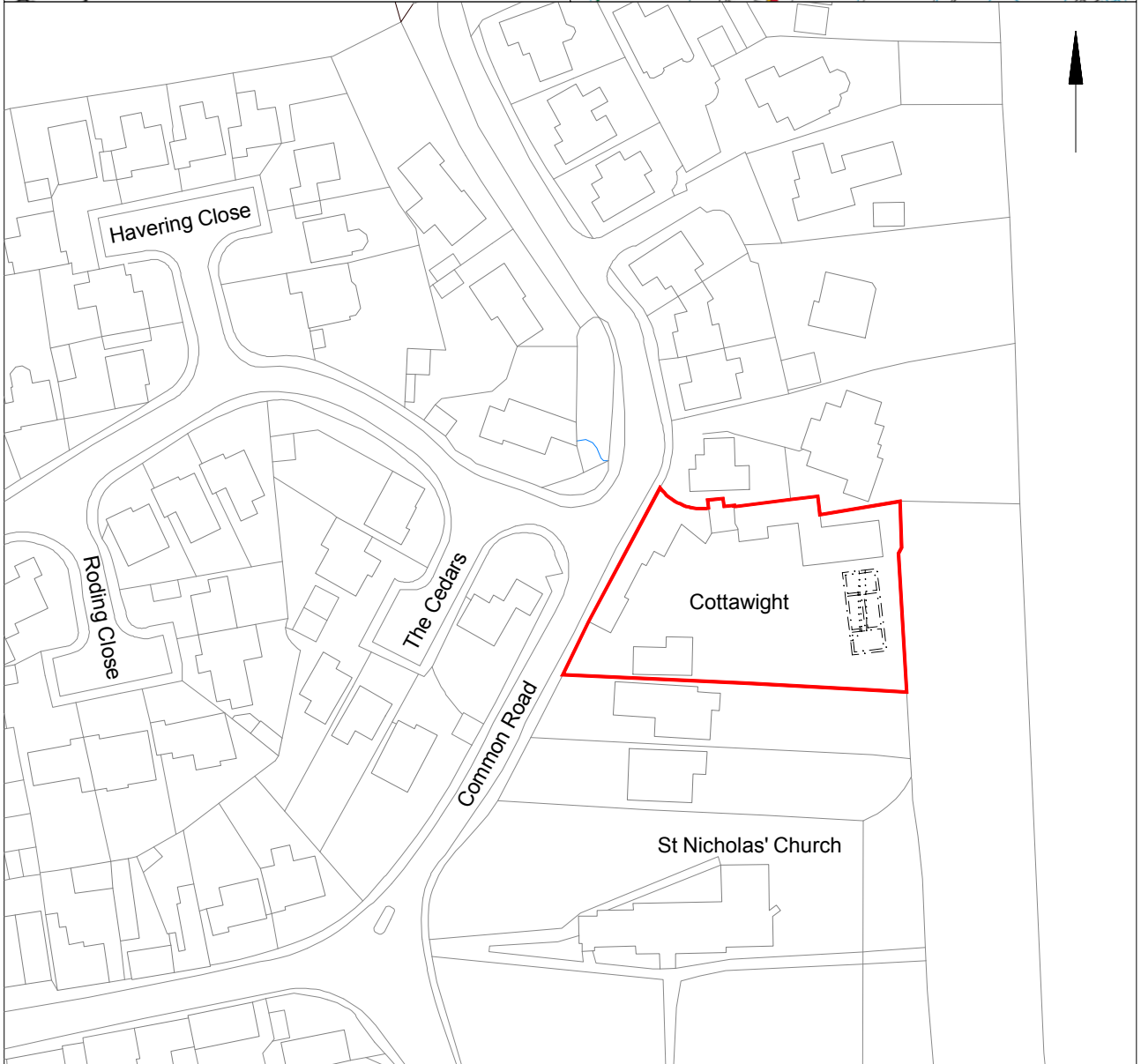
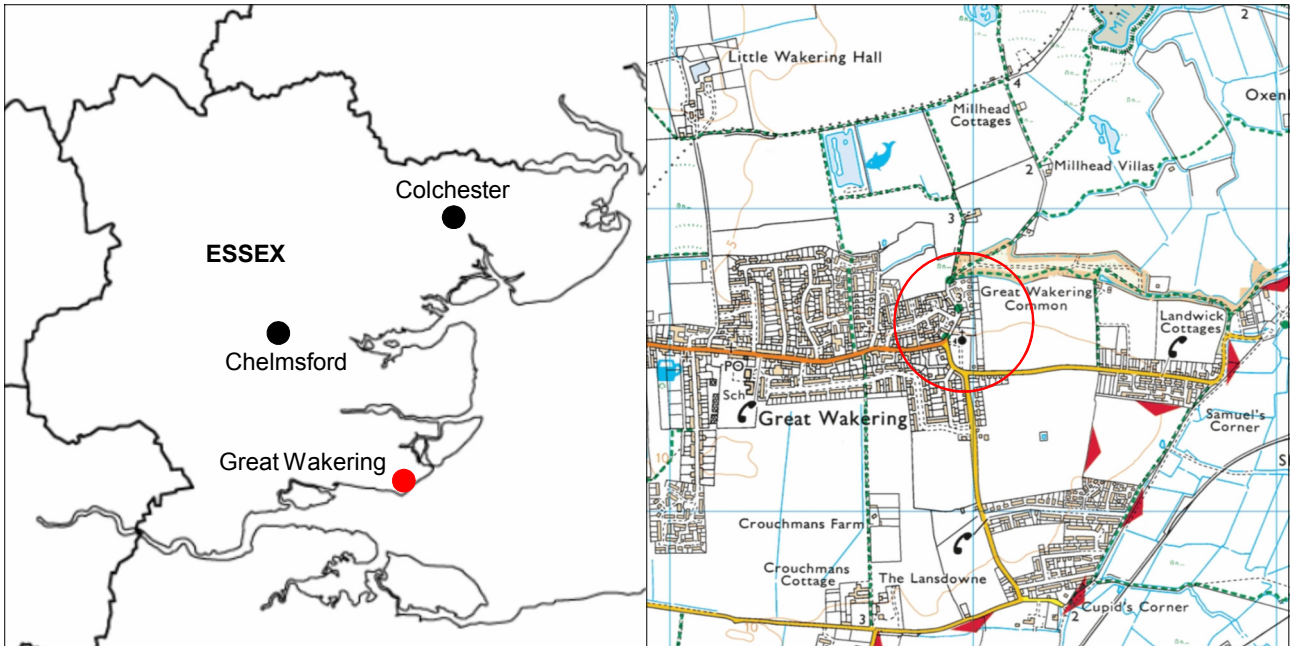
email: lp@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 6.9.2017

Appendix 1 Context list

Context Number	Finds Number	Feature / layer type	Description	Date
L1	-	Topsoil	Friable, firm dry medium to dark grey/brown silty-clay	Modern
L2	-	Subsoil	Firm, dry light red/brown silty-clay	Undatable
L3	-	Alluvial deposit	Firm to hard, dry, light yellow/grey silty-clay	Post-glacial
L4	-	Natural	Very soft yellow/orange sand and gravels	Post-glacial
F1	3, 4	Ditch	Friable, dry medium brown/black silty-clay	Probably post-medieval
F2	1, 2	Ditch	Friable, dry medium brown/black silty-clay with some loam	Probably post-medieval



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Fig 1 Site location.



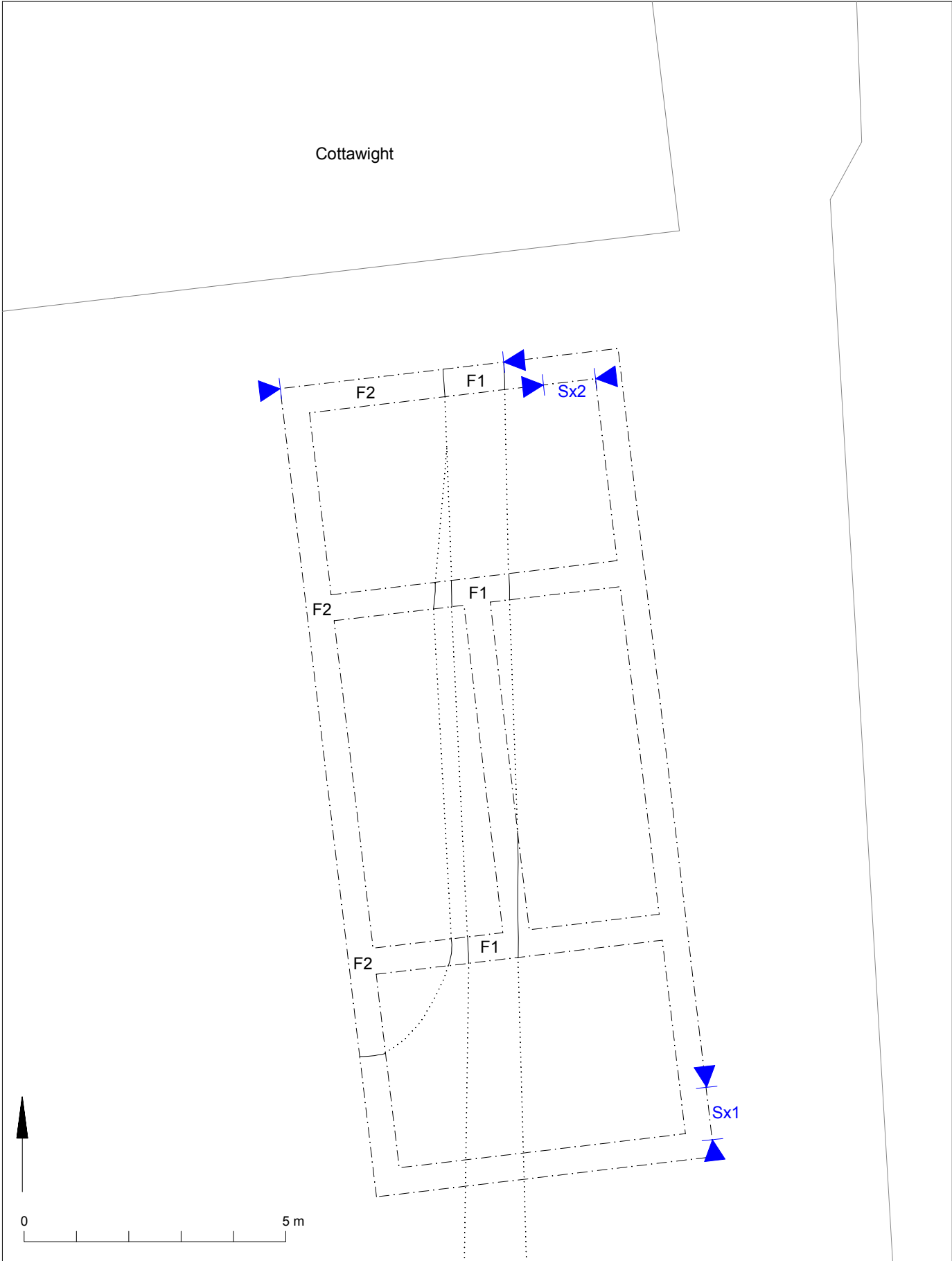
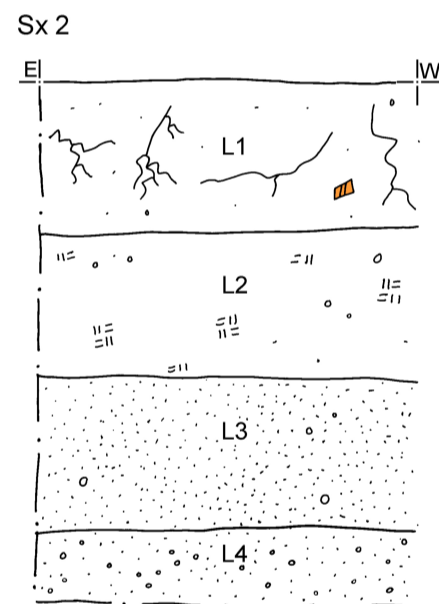
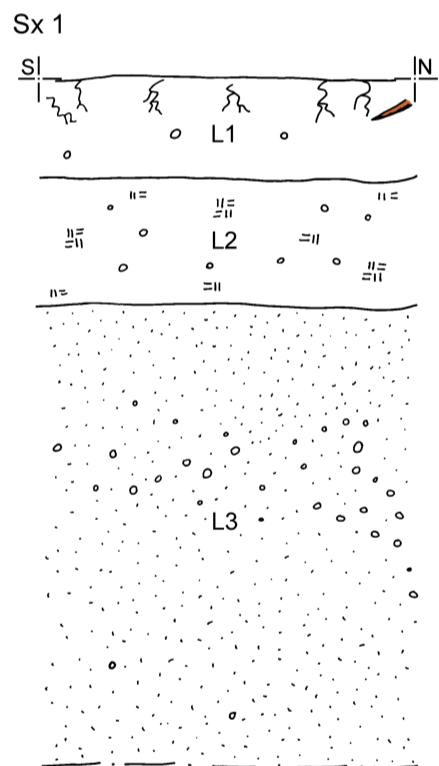


Fig 2 Results



- sand
- small stones
- large stones
- √ roots
- √ large roots
- ||| clay
- oyster shell
- ▨ post-Medieval/Modern brick



Fig 3 Feature and representative sections

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OASIS ID: colchest3-278852

Project details

Project name	Archaeological monitoring and recording at Cottawright, Common Road, Great Wakering, Essex, SS3 0AG
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at Cottawright, Common Road, Great Wakering in advance of the construction of an outbuilding in the garden of the property for use as a gym. The development site is lies near to the 12th century St Nicholas Church, which, it is believed, is located on the site of an Anglo-Saxon minster church built c 7th-9th century. Two medieval or post-medieval ditches were uncovered, although residual Roman and Anglo-Saxon finds in them suggest activity at this site at some time between the 5th and 8th centuries.
Project dates	Start: 07-08-2017 End: 08-08-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	17/03e - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	16/00915/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	GWCW17 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Roman
Significant Finds	FIRED CLAY Uncertain
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Early Medieval
Significant Finds	OYSTER SHELL Uncertain
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX ROCHFORD GREAT WAKERING Cottawight, Common Road
Postcode	SS3 0AG
Study area	0.18 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 9498 8762 51.553167640848 0.81279978285 51 33 11 N 000 48 46 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	HEM Team Officer, ECC
Project design originator	Laura Pooley
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Ben Holloway
Type of sponsor/funding body	Owner

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Southend Museum
Digital Archive ID	GWCW17
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Southend Museum
Paper Archive ID	GWCW17
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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