

Archaeological evaluation on land at White Court, Braintree Road, Shalford, Essex, CM7 5HF

January 2018



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**commissioned by Steve Wheelhouse,
Jenny Moody Properties Ltd**

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Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aim	2
5	Results	2
6	Finds	3
7	Conclusion	4
8	Acknowledgements	4
9	References	4
10	Abbreviations and glossary	5
11	Contents of archive	5
12	Archive deposition	5
	Appendix 1 Context list	7
	Figures	after p7
	OASIS summary sheet	

List of photographs, tables and figures

Cover: site shot

Photograph 1	T2 trench shot, looking east north-east	2
Table 1	Finds by context	3
Fig 1	Site location and trench layout in relation to proposed development	
Fig 2	Site plan	
Fig 3	Detailed view of T2 showing F1	
Fig 4	Representative sections	

1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (seven trial-trenches) was carried out on land at White Court, Braintree Road, Shalford, Essex in advance of the construction of a new residential development of four detached dwellings with associated garages, car-parking, landscaping and external works. The evaluation revealed an undatable possible quarry pit.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land at White Court, Braintree Road, Salford, Essex which was carried out on 24th-25th January 2018. The work was commissioned by Steve Wheelhouse of Jenny Moody Properties in advance of the construction of a new residential development of four detached dwellings with associated garages, car-parking, landscaping and external works, and was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Teresa O'Connor 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*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa O'Connor (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 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 draws on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex.

The proposed development site lies within the historic settlement of Shalford and the probable medieval settlement of Church End. Archaeological investigations directly opposite and to the west of the proposed site revealed multi-period activity and settlement including a Bronze Age cremation, prehistoric flints, Roman agricultural activity and medieval roadside settlement (EHER 47392-4). The Roman linear features have the same alignment as the cropmark features recorded by aerial photography in the adjacent field and may be part of a more extensive area of Roman enclosures that may be associated with a farmstead of villa within the area (EHER 16247). The agricultural medieval features are on a similar alignment to the Roman field system which is largely NE-SW in direction, and cultivation marks close to Nichols Farm to the northeast (EHER 14163) are recorded running in the same direction and possible indicate that a remnant of the medieval landscape survives above as well as below ground. Nichols Farmhouse and barn are listed buildings (EHER 28150-1; NHLE no. 1147667 and 1123375 respectively) which are medieval in origin.

4 Aim

Archaeological evaluation was undertaken to ascertain the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits that may exist on site.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

Seven trial-trenches totalling 72m were machine excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Due to a significant number of obstructions on the site, the layouts of most of these trenches had to be altered. An eighth trench was not excavated due to the presence of these obstructions.

No significant archaeological remains were identified in T1, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7. They were excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 0.12-0.36m thick) and subsoil (L2, c 0.16-0.39m thick) onto natural (L3, encountered at a depth of c 0.49-0.64m below current ground level [bcgl]).

Trench 2 (T2): 17.75m long by 1.8m wide

T2, an L-shaped trench, was excavated through four layers. L1 (c 0.11-0.2m thick) sat above L2 (c 0.16-0.23m thick). Beneath L2 was a layer of slumping or water-deposited soil (L4, c 0.1-0.23m thick) which sealed a deposited layer (L5, encountered at a depth of 0.44-0.62m bcgl) and, at the southern extremity of the N-S branch of the trench, L3 (encountered at a depth of c 0.4-0.45m bcgl).



Photograph 1 T2 trench shot – looking east north-east

Undatable possible quarry pit F1 extended across the northern part of the trench. The exact dimensions and shape of the feature could not be precisely determined. Only part of the southern edge of the feature was exposed, and that was in the N-S branch of the trench. The E-W branch of the trench, originally measuring c 7m, was extended a further c 6.5m to locate the western edge of the feature, and whilst this was possibly detected, this finding was inconclusive. The feature measured at least 5.5m north to south and at least 13.8m east to west. Several sondages were excavated in the feature

to find its base. The base of one sondage dug to a depth of 1.15m bcgl was augered for a further 1m; however, the base of the feature was not found.

6 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

A small quantity of finds was recovered from two layers (L4 and L5) and the fill of a large pit (F1) located in T2. The only finds that are certainly archaeological are two small sherds of very abraded Roman pottery (L4) and a piece of animal bone (F1). The other finds consist of a collection of flints, some with partly or entirely patinated surfaces and other pieces (both lumps and irregular flakes) of dark flint. There is also one pale red coloured flint which was presumably collected as a possible burnt stone. All of the finds are listed and described in Table 1.

The two Roman pottery sherds, recovered from L4, are clearly part of a larger broken sherd. The fabric and thickness suggest they are probably from a storage jar. The surfaces, apart from broken edges are very abraded and they are clearly old in this context. They are not easily closely-dated within the Roman period. The single piece of animal bone from pit F1 is probably cattle. It is slightly abraded and again is probably of some age in the context.

The small collection of flint appears to be mostly, if not entirely natural or to result from accidental breakage. There are two irregular, core-like pieces. One (from L4) is probably a large shatter piece with chips to the edges and one or two random, incidental small flake removals. The other (from F1) is similarly stone broken from a larger piece with slightly chipped and battered edges. Other flints from F1 are irregular, unmodified natural stones with part or completely patinated white surfaces. Among the pieces from F1 there is a small, thick, unmodified, hard struck flake and a thin flake with pronounced ripples, both of which could have been deliberately struck and result from flint working. However, there is no evidence of any earlier flake removal on the dorsal face of the small flake and given the other broken flints the status of these two pieces is uncertain.

Overall the small collection of flints appears to be a mix of natural stones, broken pieces and incidental flake pieces. One or two pieces could result from prehistoric flint working but given the broken material and in the absence of any rather more certain examples of deliberately worked flint this is unclear. The single piece of possible burnt (heat altered) flint recovered is almost certainly just a natural coloured stone.

Trench	Ctxt	Ctxt type	Find no	Type/ description	Finds Spot date
T2	L4	Slump in F1?	1	Pottery Roman: (2 sherds, 12 g) thick greyware, very abraded, probably from a storage jar (Fabric 44 - see Going 1987) Flint: irregular lump, some random small flake removal and edge damage, probably just a shatter piece with impacts/later damage	Roman+
T2	L5	Disturbed fill of F1?	2	Flint: (3 stones) small thick irregular shatter piece, one partly patinated natural flint, flat flake-like piece again probably natural Stone: single, rounded flint stone, grey patinated surface, pale red interior, not clear if heat affected, but probably just a natural flint (probably just a shatter piece with impacts/later damage).	(natural finds - undated)
T2	F1	Quarry pit?	3	Flint: (5 pieces) small, squat, thick flake, large striking platform, irregular dorsal face with no evidence of earlier flaking. Small	Animal bone with natural(?)

Trench	Ctxt	Ctxt type	Find no	Type/ description	Finds Spot date
				thin flake with pronounced ripples on ventral surface, edges exhibit wear/damage. Irregular core-like piece, large plunge fracture, one small flake removed. Also patinated, irregular, thick flake-like piece small natural stone with part cortex and patination Animal bone: single piece from a large mammal long bone, slightly abraded	broken flint pieces (not closely dated)

Table 1 Finds by context

7 Conclusion

The only archaeological feature found during evaluation was a large pit, possibly a quarry pit. The absence of datable finds recovered from this feature preclude its confident dating. Sherds of pottery broadly dated to the Roman period retrieved from a layer sealing this feature permit its tentative dating as prehistoric or Roman, but it is quite possible that these artefacts are residual finds in a later context, and that the feature itself is post-Roman in date. In the absence of accurate dating evidence, it is not possible to speculate on the relationship of this feature to the multi-period historic landscape of the wider area.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Steve Wheelhouse and Jenny Moody Properties Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by N Rayner with A Tuffey, S Carter, A Wade and R Mathieson. Figures are by B Holloway and E Holloway. The project was monitored for Essex County Council by Teresa O'Connor.

9 References

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

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------|--|
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| CAT | 2014 | <i>Health & Safety Policy</i> |
| CAT | 2018 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation on land at White Court, Braintree Road, Shalford, Essex, CM7 5HF</i> |
| ClfA | 2014 | <i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation a</i> |
| ClfA | 2014 | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials b</i> |
| DCLG | 2012 | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> |
| ECCPS | 2017 | <i>Brief for archaeological trial trenching evaluation on land at White Court, Braintree Road, Shalford, CM7 5HF</i> |
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| 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) |

10 Abbreviations and glossary

Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
ClfA	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
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 (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	O nline A ccess to the I ndex of A rchaeological I nvestigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
prehistoric	pre-Roman
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 sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
ws	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: None retained

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1223)

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

12 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 Braintree Museum under accession code: tbc

Distribution list:

Steve Wheelhouse
Jenny Moody Properties
Teresa O'Connor, Essex County Council Place Services
Essex Historic Environment Record



Colchester Archaeological Trust

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

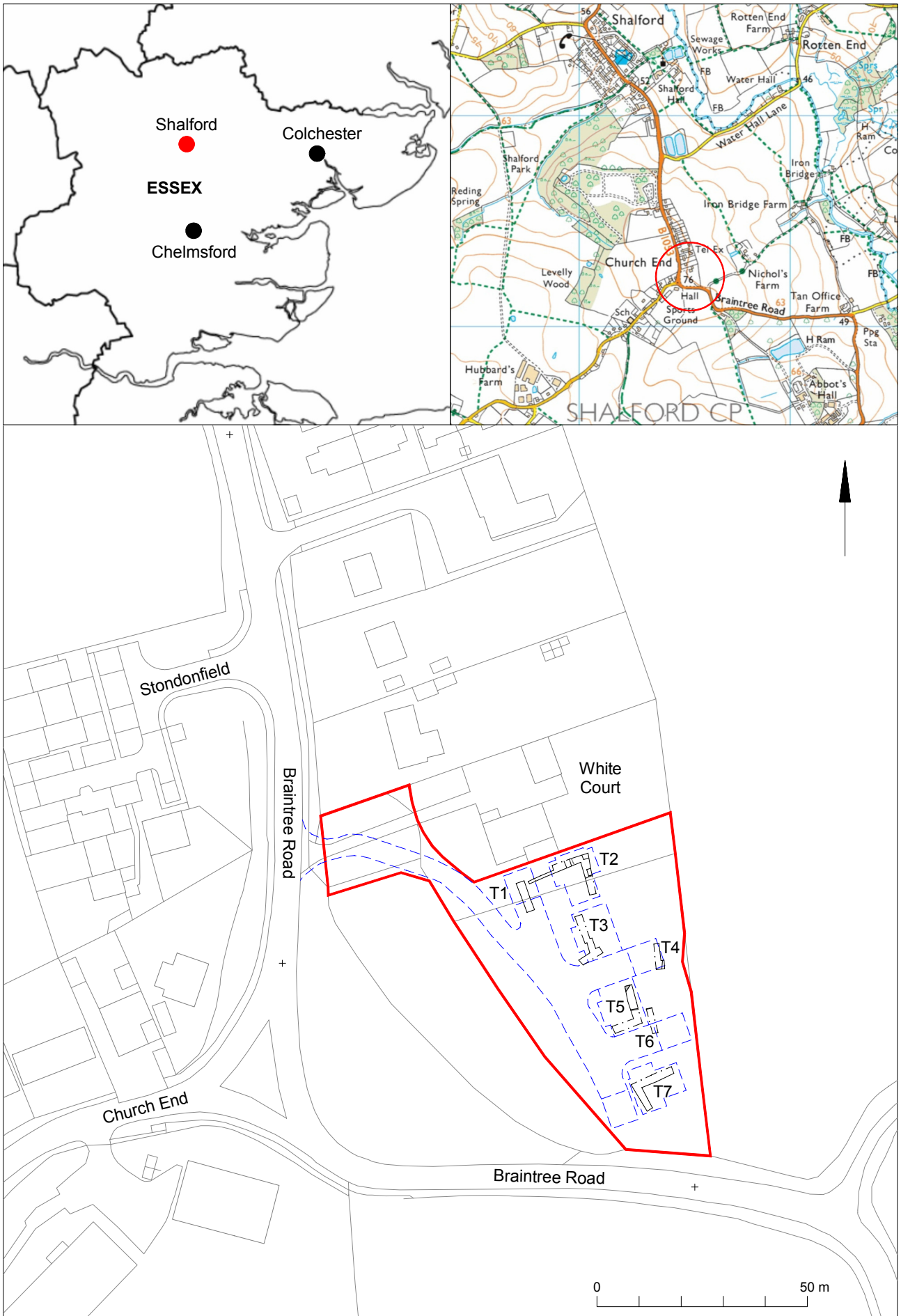
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email: lp@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy
Date: 14.02.2018

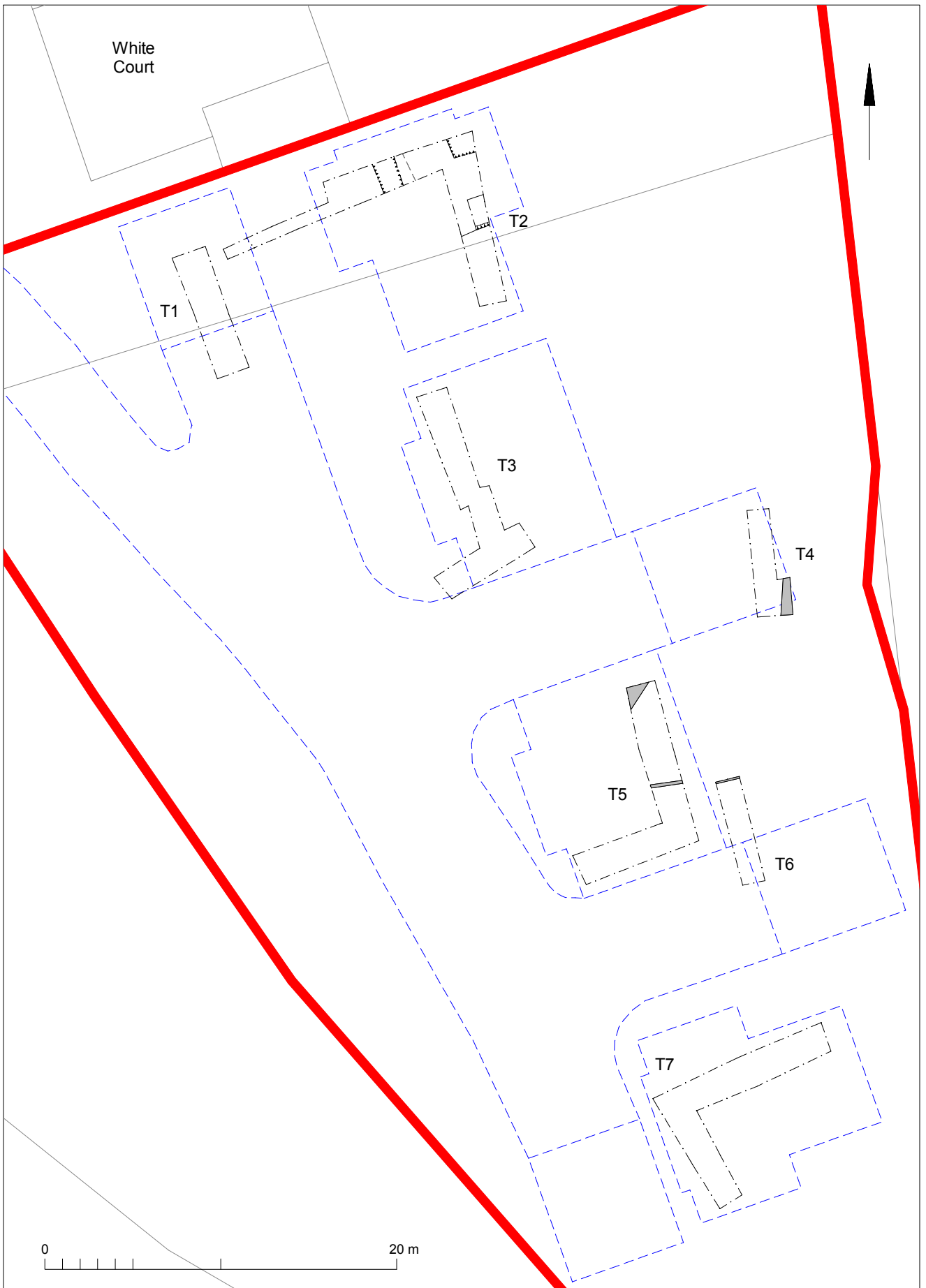
Appendix 1 Context list

Context Number	Finds Number	Feature Type	Description	Date
F1	3	? Quarry pit	Firm, moist, medium yellow/ grey/brown silty-clay	Undatable
L1		Topsoil	Friable, dry medium/dark brown silty-clay	Modern
L2	-	Subsoil	Friable/firm, dry medium brown silty-clay	Undatable
L3	-	Natural	Firm, dry medium yellow/brown clay with <5% stone piece inclusions	Post-glacial
L4	1	?Slumping / water deposited layer above F1	Firm moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with rare orange clay fleck inclusions and 2% stone piece inclusions	Undatable
L5	2	?Deposited layer	Firm, moist medium orange/grey/brown silty-clay	Undatable



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Fig 1 Site location and trench layout in relation to proposed development (dashed blue lines).



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Fig 2 Site plan (proposed development in blue).

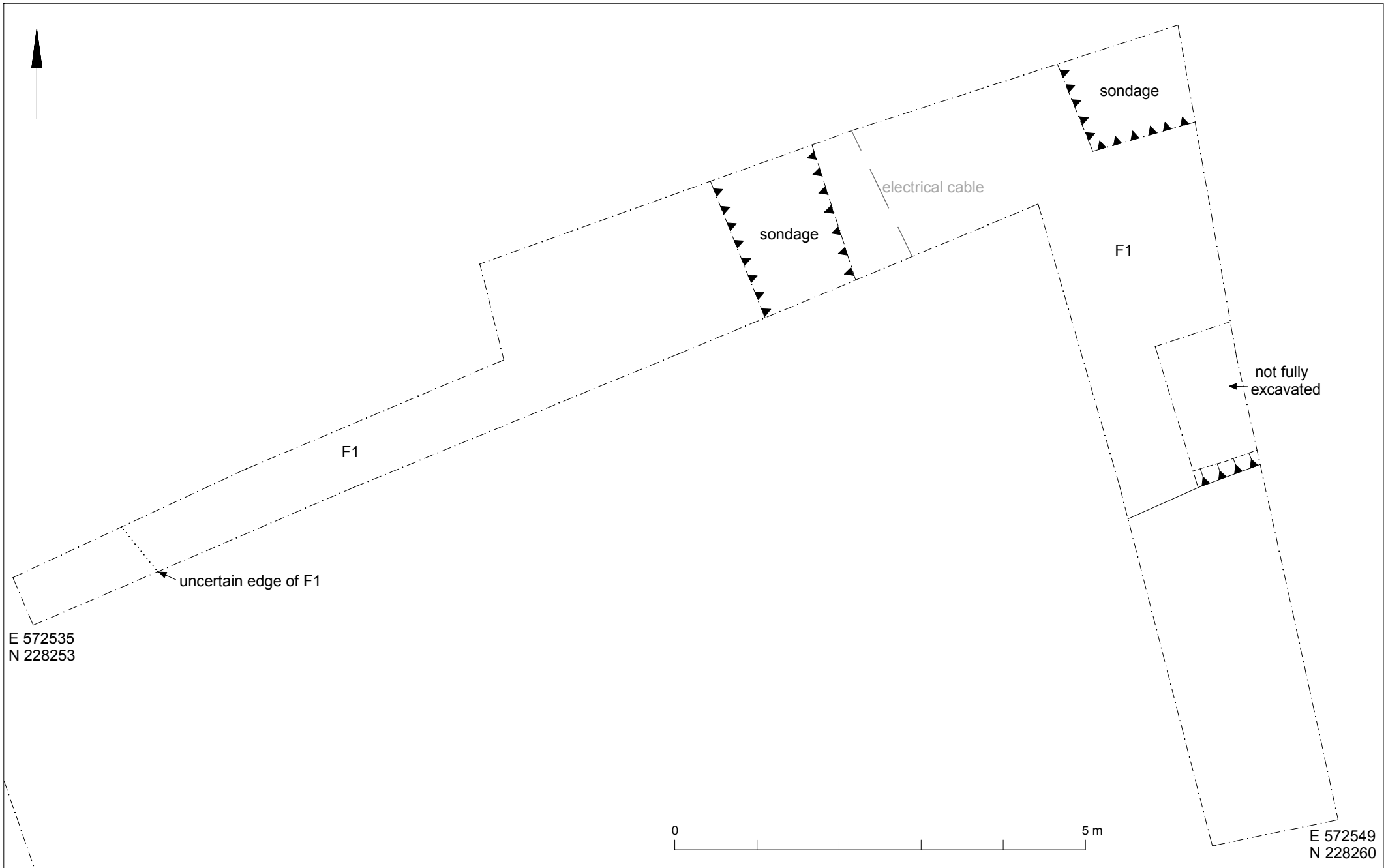


Fig 3 Detailed view of T2 showing F1.

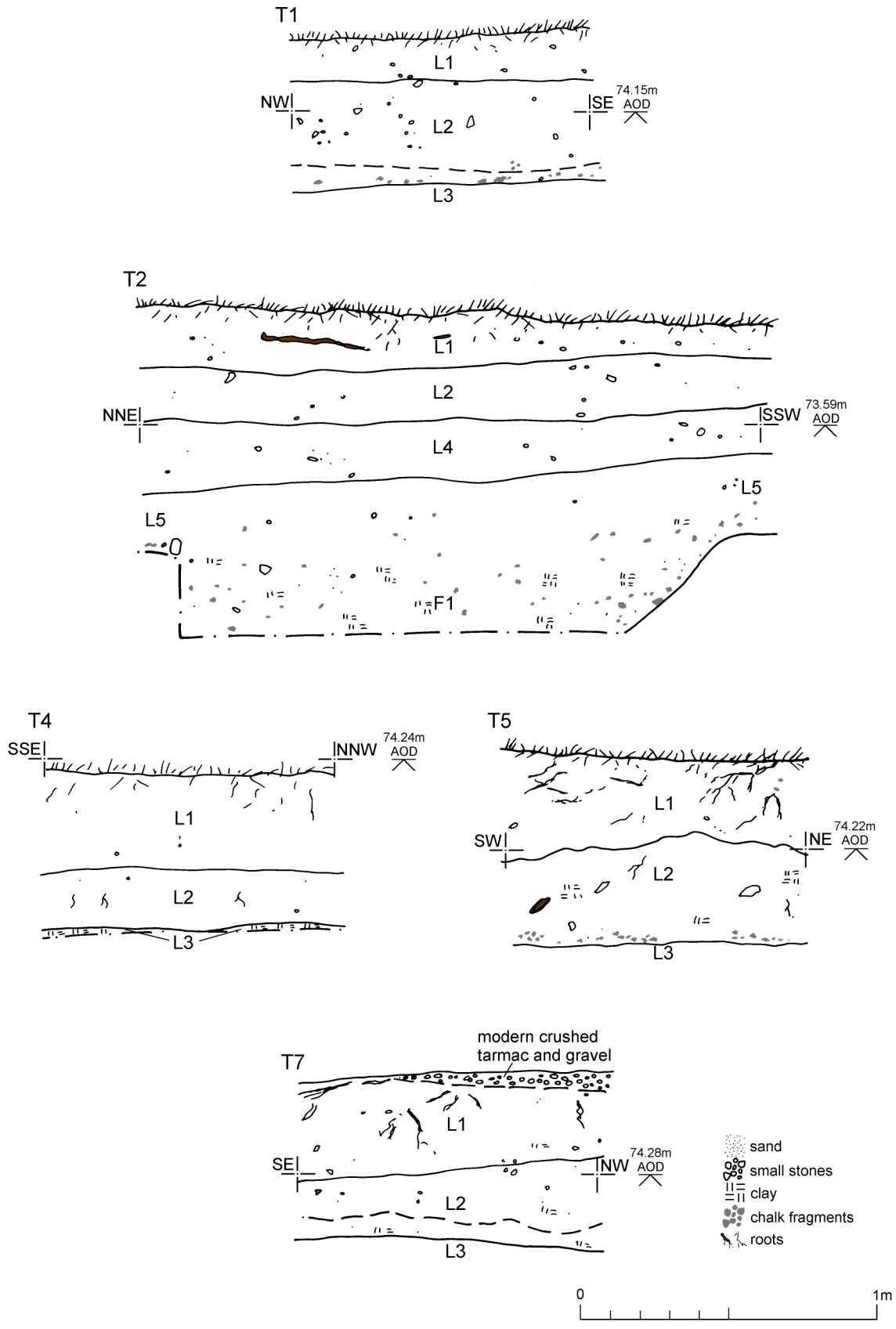


Fig 4 Representative sections.

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OASIS ID: colchest3-305893

Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation on land at White Court, Braintree Road, Shalford, Essex, CM7 5HF
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (seven trial-trenches) was carried out on land at White Court, Braintree Road, Shalford, Essex in advance of the construction of a new residential development of four detached dwellings with associated garages, car-parking, landscaping and external works. The evaluation revealed an undatable possible quarry pit.
Project dates	Start: 24-01-2018 End: 25-01-2018
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	18/01b - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	15/01117/OUT - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	SFBR18 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	FLINT Uncertain
Significant Finds	STONE Uncertain
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Uncertain
Methods & techniques	""Sample Trenches""
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After outline determination (eg. As a reserved matter)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX BRAINTREE SHALFORD land at White Court, Braintree Road
Postcode	CM7 5HF
Study area	0.35 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 72553 28229 51.92531490562 0.509760790153 51 55 31 N 000 30 35 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 73.68m Max: 74.08m

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 Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body Jenny Moody Properties Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Braintree Museum

Digital Archive ID TBC

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Survey"

Paper Archive recipient Braintree Museum

Paper Archive ID TBC

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Report"

Project bibliography 1

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