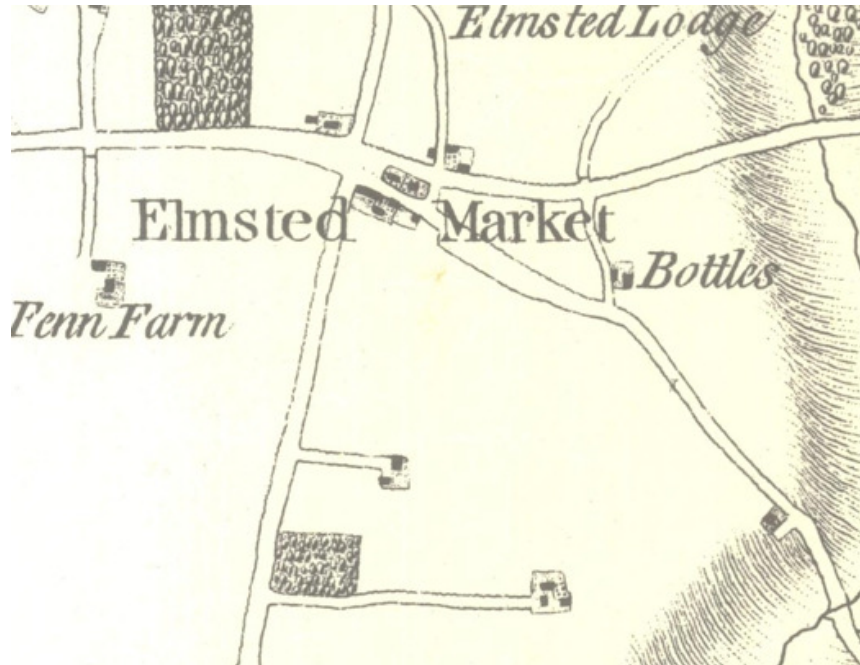


# Archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Market Field School, Elmstead Market, Essex, CO7 7ET

August 2018



**by Dr Elliott Hicks**

with contributions by Howard Brooks and Lisa Gray  
figures by Chris Lister, Sarah Carter and Ben Holloway

fieldwork by Nigel Rayner with Adam Tuffey, Robin Mathieson and Sarah Carter

**commissioned by Stephen Williams, Hills Residential**

NGR: TM 06357 24227 (centre)

Planning ref.: 16/01797/OUT

CAT project code: 18/05n

ECC code: ESSR18

Colchester Museum accession code: COLEM 2018.66

OASIS ref.: colchest3-321724



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**CAT Report 1320**

September 2018

## Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aim	2
5	Results	2
6	Finds	3
7	Environmental assessment	4
8	Conclusion	6
9	Acknowledgements	6
10	References	6
11	Abbreviations and glossary	7
12	Contents of archive	8
13	Archive deposition	8
	Appendix 1 Context list	9
	Figures	after p9
	OASIS summary sheet	

## List of photographs, tables and figures

Cover: extract from Chapman and André's map of Essex, 1777

Photograph 1	F11 sx, looking west	3
Photograph 2	F10 sx, looking south	3
Photograph 3	F8 sx, looking north	3
Table 1	All finds by context	3
Table 2	Sample details	4
Table 3	Results	5
Fig 1	Site location	
Fig 2	Trench results in relation to cropmarks	
Fig 3	Trench results	
Fig 4	Feature and representative sections	

## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation of thirty-three trial-trenches was carried out on land adjacent to Market Field School, School Road, Elmstead Market, Essex in advance of the construction of a new housing development. Although the intention of the evaluation was to investigate a number of cropmarks located in the north and east of the site, no corresponding features were uncovered. Rather, excavations found a possible Roman quarry pit, a post-medieval pit, two post-medieval ditches, one of which represents the remains of a field boundary shown on 19th-century OS mapping, an undated pit and four undated ditches.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land adjacent to Market Field School, School Road, Elmstead Market, Essex, which was carried out on 13th-17th August 2018. The work was commissioned by Stephen Williams of Hills Residential in advance of the construction of sixty-two dwellings with associated garaging, parking, a swale/pond and associated groundworks. The work was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisors Teresa O'Connor and Richard Havis 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* (MHCLG 2018).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for archaeological trial trenching*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Richard Havis (ECCPS 2018), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2018).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with Historic England's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)*, 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)*, *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 (accessible via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The EHER shows that the development site lies within an area which has substantial archaeological evidence recorded by aerial photography and seen as cropmarks. Specifically, cropmarks to the northeast suggest a possible ring-ditch and pits (EHER 2596). To the east of the site cropmarks suggest a rectilinear enclosure (EHER 2665). And to the west of the site further cropmarks show possible pits and a potential small ring-ditch (EHER 2610).

The Colchester Road to the north of the site is a Roman road (EHER 2534) which leads directly from the Roman town of Colchester (Camulodunum) to the west of Elmstead Market.

Historic buildings dating from the 15th century survive within the historic core of Elmstead Market; the expansion of the village along Colchester Road occurred later,

during the 17th and 18th centuries. The development site lies within agricultural fields which have a distinct regular field pattern and which surround the historic settlement.

To the immediate south and southwest of the site are a number of findspots including objects ranging in date from prehistoric axes (EHER 2353-4) to a post-medieval seal (EHER 54639).

CAT has recently undertaken a number of evaluations in the vicinity of the present site, at Blue Barn Farm (CAT Report 1094), west of Church Road (CAT Report 1214), and north of Meadow Close (CAT Report 1257). These investigations have uncovered parts of an historic landscape featuring remains dating to the Roman, medieval, and modern periods.

#### 4 **Aim**

Archaeological evaluation was undertaken at this site due to its proximity to a complex of cropmarks to the east and northeast and to the Roman road leading to Colchester. The aim was to ascertain the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits that may exist on site.

#### 5 **Results** (Figs 2-3)

Thirty-three archaeological trial-trenches were machine excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. All trenches measured 30m long by 1.8m wide, aside T6 which measured 29m long, T7 which measured 9.5m long, T30 which measured 36m long, and T31 which measured 24m long. All trenches were excavated to natural. Sondages were excavated in T1, T3, T16, and T29 to ensure that natural had been reached.

The trenches were excavated through ploughsoil (L1, c 0.27-0.44m thick, loose, moist medium grey/brown loam) onto natural (L2, firm, dry medium orange silty-clay).

There were no archaeological features in T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T12, T13, T14, T15, T17, T18, T19, T20, T24, T25, T26, T27, T28, T30, T31, or T32.

**Trench 11 (T11):** Post-medieval quarry pit/backfilled pond F5 was uncovered. The full dimensions of the feature could not be determined as it extended beyond the limit of excavation (LOE) and was not bottomed.

**Trench 16 (T16):** Post-medieval ditch F7 was located at the northern end of the trench. It was aligned NNW-SSE and measured 1.19m in width and 0.17m in depth.

Undatable pit F4 was located towards the southern end of the trench. It measured 0.6m in width and 0.2m in depth.

**Trench 21 (T21):** Roman well/quarry pit F11, situated at the eastern extremity of the trench, extended beyond the LOE and so its full width could not be determined, but its exposed width measured 1.2m. The feature was excavated to a depth of 0.49m and augured to a depth of 0.6m at which point natural was encountered, giving an approximate minimum depth of 1.09m.

Two undatable ditches, F9 and F10, were also uncovered. F9 was aligned N-S and measured 1.58m in width and 0.25m in depth. F10 was aligned NNE-SSW and measured 1.12m in width and 0.14m in depth.



**Photograph 1** F11 sx, looking west



**Photograph 2** F10 sx, looking south

**Trench 22 (T22):** Post-medieval ditch F1 was located at the mid-point of the trench. It was aligned WNW-ESE and measured 1.52m in width and 0.26m in depth.

**Trench 23 (T23):** Post-medieval ditch F3 was uncovered at the western extremity of the trench. It represented a continuation of ditch F1 in T22 to the west and lay on the same NNW-SSE alignment. The feature extended beyond the LOE but its exposed extent measured 1.08m in width and 0.32m in depth.

?Post-medieval pit F2, to the east, measured 0.58m in width and 0.14m in depth.

**Trench 29 (T29):** Undatable ditch F6 was located in the western half of the trench. It was aligned WNW-ESE and measured 0.79m in width and 0.17m in depth.

**Trench 33 (T33):** Undatable ditch F8 was uncovered at the mid-point of the trench, and possibly represented a continuation of ditch F9 or ditch F10 in T21 to the north. It was aligned N-S and measured 1.3m in width and 0.26m in depth.



**Photograph 3** F8 sx, looking north

## 6 Finds

by Howard Brooks

There is a group of Roman and post-medieval finds. These are listed and described by context in Table 1, together with an overall spot date for the finds.

Context	Find s no	Trench	Description	Context date
F1	1	T22	Two peg-tile fragments (90g), 12-13mm thick. No peg-holes. One with slight curve and smoother base may be from a ceramic pipe? Post-medieval	Post-medieval
F2	3	T23	Five small bits of a crushed CBM object without any surfaces (12g). Probably fired clay rather than	?Post-medieval

			brick. Post-med?	
F3	2	T23	Two peg-tile fragments (58g). No peg-holes. Post-medieval	Post-medieval
F5	6	T11	Peg-tile fragment (108g). No peg-holes. Post-medieval	Post-medieval
F5	7	T11	Fragment of granular fabric post-medieval brick (38g).	Post-medieval
F5	7	T11	Four pieces from a floor brick (662g). Pale brown almost cream fabric with some black sand-sized inclusions. 30 x 120mm x 110mm (+). Some wear to upper surface. These are typically from the floors of churches, barns or larger domestic structures.	Post-medieval
F7	8	T16	Partial post-medieval brick (1028g). Pale orange fabric with prominent black inclusions up to 3mm. 53 x 82 x 130 (+). Unfrogged. C17th-18th?	Post-medieval
F11	9	T21	Two Roman grey-ware body sherds (12g). No diagnostic features	Roman

**Table 1** Finds by context

This is a fairly consistent group of post-medieval finds, only unusual in that there is no post-medieval pottery here, only CBM. This may indicate that there were no nearby domestic sites. It is possible that this material came from a post-medieval farm.

The only feature which is not post-medieval is possible well F11, which contained two sherds of Roman grey ware. Although it is not possible to entirely rule out the possibility that the finds are residual in a later feature, in all likelihood this is a Roman feature.

## 7 Environmental assessment

by Lisa Gray MSc MA ACIfA Archaeobotanist

### Introduction

Three flots from three samples were presented for assessment. The aims of this assessment are to determine the significance and potential of the plant macro-remains in the samples, and consider their use in providing information about diet, craft, medicine, crop-husbandry, feature function and environment.

Sample	Finds No.	Feature No.	Feature	Date	Volume (L)
1	4	F2	pit	?Post-medieval	40
2	5	F4	pit/tree throw	Undated	20
3	10	F11	well/quarry	?Roman	40

**Table 2** Sample details

### Sampling and processing methods

A total of 100 litres of soil was sample and processed by Colchester Archaeological Trust. All samples were processed using a Siraf-type flotation device. Flot was collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve then dried.

Once with the author the flots were scanned under a low powered stereo-microscope with a magnification range of 10 to 40x. The whole flots were examined. The abundance, diversity and state of preservation of eco- and artefacts in each sample were recorded. A magnet was passed across each flot to record the presence or absence of magnetised material or hammerscale.

Identifications were made using uncharred reference material (author's own and the Northern European Seed Reference Collection at the Institute of Archaeology,

University College London) and reference manuals (such as Beijerinck 1947; Cappers *et al.* 2006; Charles 1984; Fuller 2007; Jacomet 2006). Nomenclature for plants is taken from Stace (Stace 2010). Latin names are given once and the common names used thereafter. Low numbers of non-charcoal charred plant macro-remains were counted. Uncharred plant remains, fauna and magnetic fragments were given estimated levels of abundance unless, in the case of seeds, numbers are very low in which case they were counted.

At this stage numbers given are estimates but where only one item is present that has been noted. Identifiable charred wood >4mm in diameter has been described as that. Charred wood <4mm diameter are described as 'flecks'. Samples this size are easier to break to reveal the cross-sections and diagnostic features necessary for identification and are less likely to be blown or unintentionally moved around the site (Asouti 2006, 31; Smart and Hoffman, 1988, 178-179). Fragments smaller than this and larger than 2mmØ were scanned in case any fragments of twig or roundwood survived.

## Results

### **The plant remains**

The most significant items in these samples were the charcoal fragments, especially the large number of fragments in samples 1 and 2. Uncharred, probably modern, root/rhizome fragments were abundant in each sample. Low numbers of dried waterlogged/possibly intrusive fat hen (*Chenopodium album* L.) seeds were found in sample 1.

Sample	Flot volume (L)	Charcoal		Uncharred			Earthworm cocoons	
		>4mm Ø	<4mm Ø	Seeds				Root/Rhizomes
		a	a	a	d	p		a
1	0.150	3	3	1	1	3	3	-
2	0.150	3	3	-	-	-	3	-
3	0.010	1	-	-	-	-	1	1

**Table 3** Results

Key to Table 3:

a = abundance [1 = occasional 1-10; 2 = moderate 11-100; and 3 = abundant >100];

d = diversity [1 = low 1-4 taxa types; 2 = moderate 5-10; 3 = high];

p = preservation [1 = poor (family level only); 2 = moderate (genus); 3 = good (species identification possible)]

### **Fauna**

A low number of earthworm cocoons were found in sample 3.

### **Inorganic remains**

No artefactual inorganic remains were found in any of the samples.

## Discussion

### **Biases in recovery, residuality, contamination**

Nothing with regards biases in recovery, residuality or contamination was highlighted for any of these samples at the time of writing. Uncharred root/rhizome fragments and earthworm cocoons can indicate that bioturbation is possible. Worm action can carry small items such as seeds and small stones up to a metre down into the soil (Canti 2003, 143).



### Quality and type of preservation

The plant remains in these samples were preserved by charring. Charring of plant macrofossils occurs when plant material is heated under ‘...reducing conditions...’ where oxygen is largely excluded (Boardman and Jones 1990, 2) leaving a carbon skeleton resistant to biological and chemical decay (Campbell *et al.* 2011, 17). These conditions can occur in a charcoal clamp, the centre of a bonfire or pit or in an oven or when a building burns down with the roof excluding the oxygen from the fire (Reynolds, 1979, 57).

### Potential, significance and recommendations

If the charcoal fragments are identified they have the potential to provide taxa suitable for radiocarbon dating and possibly add information about wood used as fuel.

## 8 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation was primarily undertaken at this site due to the presence of several cropmarks which extend into its eastern half. The investigation did not uncover any archaeological features corresponding with these cropmarks, and it is possible that they are geological in origin. A number of features of probable Roman and post-medieval date were found, however. Towards the eastern end of the site lay a well or quarry pit. Artefacts retrieved from this feature give a likely Roman date, indicating some activity around this area during this period, though it is possible that these were residual finds in a later context. The majority of features detected dated to the post-medieval period. A post-medieval quarry pit or back-filled pond was located in the northeastern corner of the site, and two ditches dating to this period were uncovered in the centre and at the western end of the site, the latter of which corresponds to a field boundary ditch shown on OS maps of the area compiled in the late 19th century. The absence of pottery within these features indicates that the site was used for agricultural rather than domestic purposes during the post-medieval period. A number of undatable features, namely a pit and four ditches, were also found.

## 9 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Stephen Williams of Hills Residential for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by N Rayner with A Tuffey, R Mathieson, and S Carter. Figures are by C Lister, B Holloway, and S Carter. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor and Richard Havis.

## 10 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 Report 1094	2017	<i>Archaeological evaluation at Blue Barn Farm, Clacton Road, Elmstead Market, Essex, CO7 7DF: April 2017, by L Pooley</i>
CAT Report 1214	2018	<i>Archaeological evaluation on land to the west of Church Road, Elmstead Market, Essex, CO7 7AW: January 2018, by E Hicks and L Pooley</i>
CAT Report 1257	2018	<i>Archaeological evaluation on land north of Meadow Close, Elmstead Market, Essex, CO7 7HR: April 2018, by L Pooley</i>
Charles, M	1984	'Introductory remarks on the cereals', in <i>Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture</i> 1, 17-31.
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
ECCPS	2018	<i>Archaeological Brief for Trial Trenching and excavation on Land adjacent to Market Field School, School Road, Elmstead Market by R Havis</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Fuller, D	2007	'Cereal Chaff and Wheat Evolution' Retrieved on 12th February 2010 from World Wide Web: <a href="http://www.homepages.ucl.ac.uk/~tcrndfu/archaeobotany.htm">http://www.homepages.ucl.ac.uk/~tcrndfu/archaeobotany.htm</a>
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Smart, T L & Hoffman, E S	1988	'Environmental Interpretation of Archaeological Charcoal', in C A Hastorf & V S Popper <i>Current Palaeobotany</i> . Chicago and London. University of Chicago Press.
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## 11 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
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
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	<b>O</b> nline <b>A</b> ccess to the <b>I</b> ndex of <b>A</b> rchaeological <b>I</b> nvestigations, <a href="http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main">http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main</a>
peg-tile	rectangular thin tile 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 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 sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

## 12 Contents of archive

**Finds:** none retained

### **Paper record**

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1320)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Original site record (feature and layer sheets, finds record, sections)

Site digital photos and log

Inked section drawings

### **Digital record**

The report (CAT Report 1320)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Graphics

Site digital photos and log

Survey data

## 13 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 Colchester Museum under accession code COLEM: 2018.66.

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### **Distribution list:**

Stephen Williams, Hills Residential

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Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 12.09.2018

### **Appendix 1 Context list**

<b>Trench</b>	<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Finds no.</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
All	L1	-	Plough soil	Loose, moist medium grey/brown loam	Modern
All	L2	-	Natural	Firm, dry medium orange silty-clay	Post-glacial
T22	F1	1	Ditch	Friable, dry medium grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal fleck inclusions	Post-medieval
T23	F2	3	Pit	Friable, medium grey/brown silty clay with charcoal and daub fleck inclusions	?Post-medieval
T23	F3	2	Ditch	Friable, dry medium grey/brown loam	Post-medieval
T16	F4	5	Pit	Firm, dry light grey silty-clay with charcoal fleck inclusions and 3% stone piece inclusions	Undatable
T11	F5	6, 7	?Quarry pit / back-filled pond	Firm, dry light/medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay with <5% stone and <5% gravel piece inclusions	Post-medieval
T29	F6	-	Ditch	Friable, dry light yellow/brown sandy-silt with rare stone piece inclusions	Undatable
T16	F7	8	Ditch	Hard, dry medium yellow/grey/brown sandy-silt	Post-medieval
T33	F8	-	Ditch	Hard, dry medium yellow/grey/brown sandy-silt with rare stone piece inclusions	Undatable
T21	F9	-	Ditch	Friable/firm, moist medium grey/brown clay wit <2% stone piece inclusions	Undatable
T21	F10	-	Ditch	Friable, moist medium grey/brown clayey-silt with <4% stone piece inclusions	Undatable
T21	F11	9, 10	?Well / quarry pit	Friable/firm, moist medium grey clayey-silt with <1% charcoal fleck inclusions and <4% stone piece inclusions	?Roman

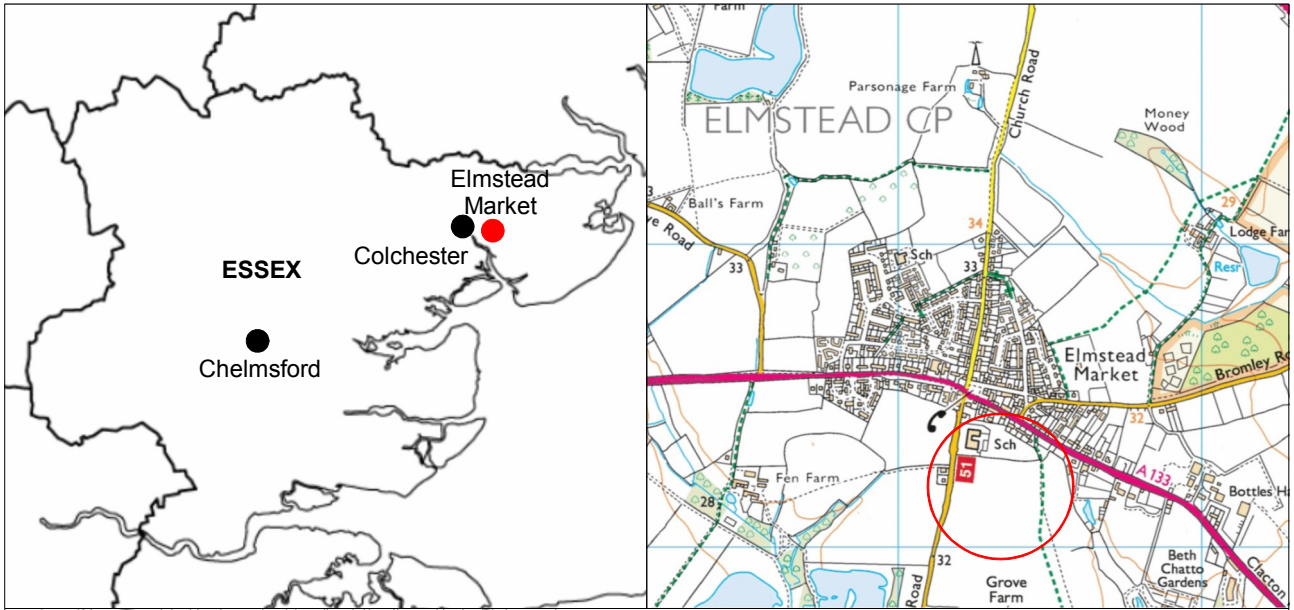


Fig 1 Site location.



Fig 2 Trench results in relation to cropmarks.

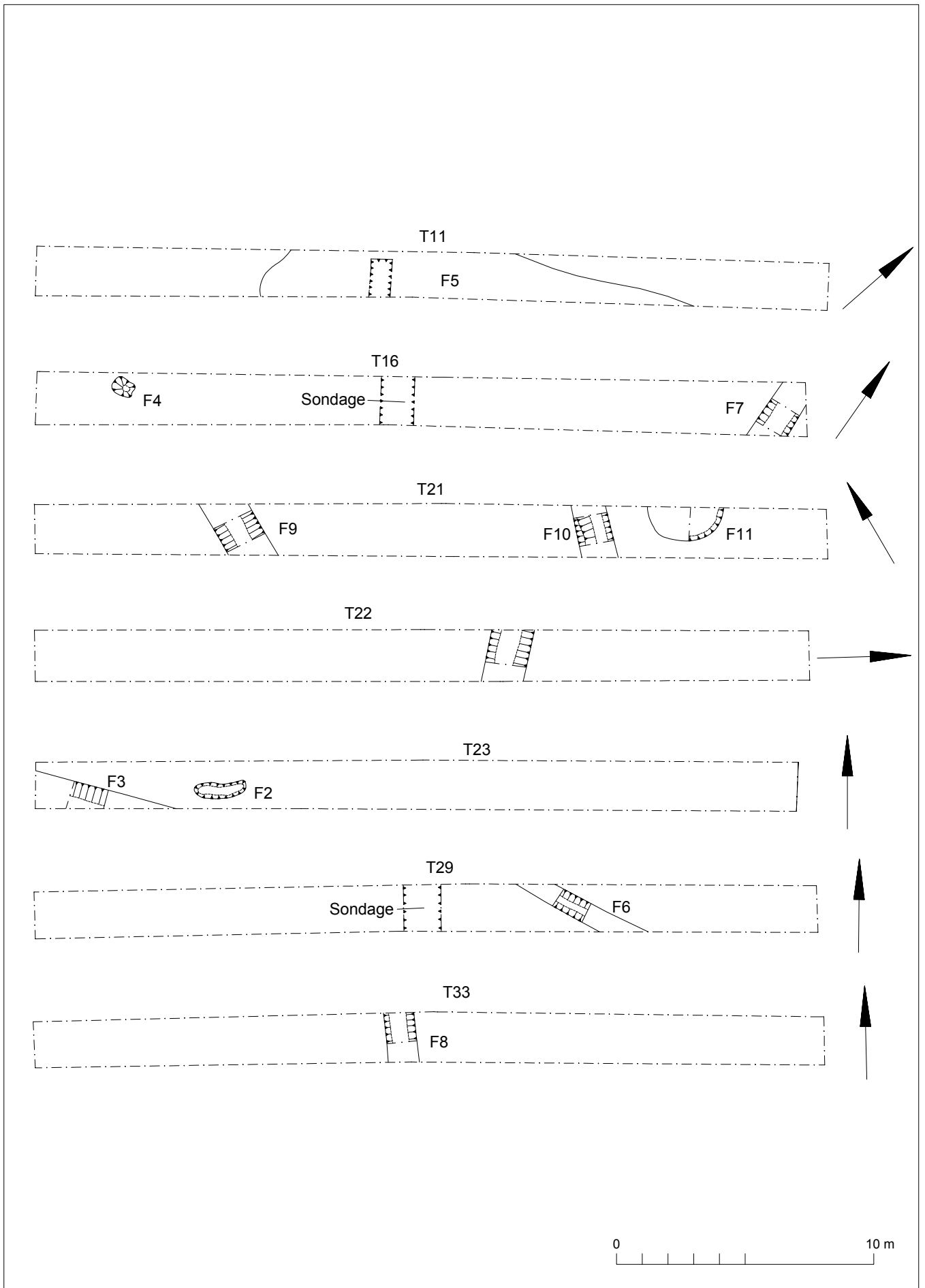


Fig 3 Trench results.

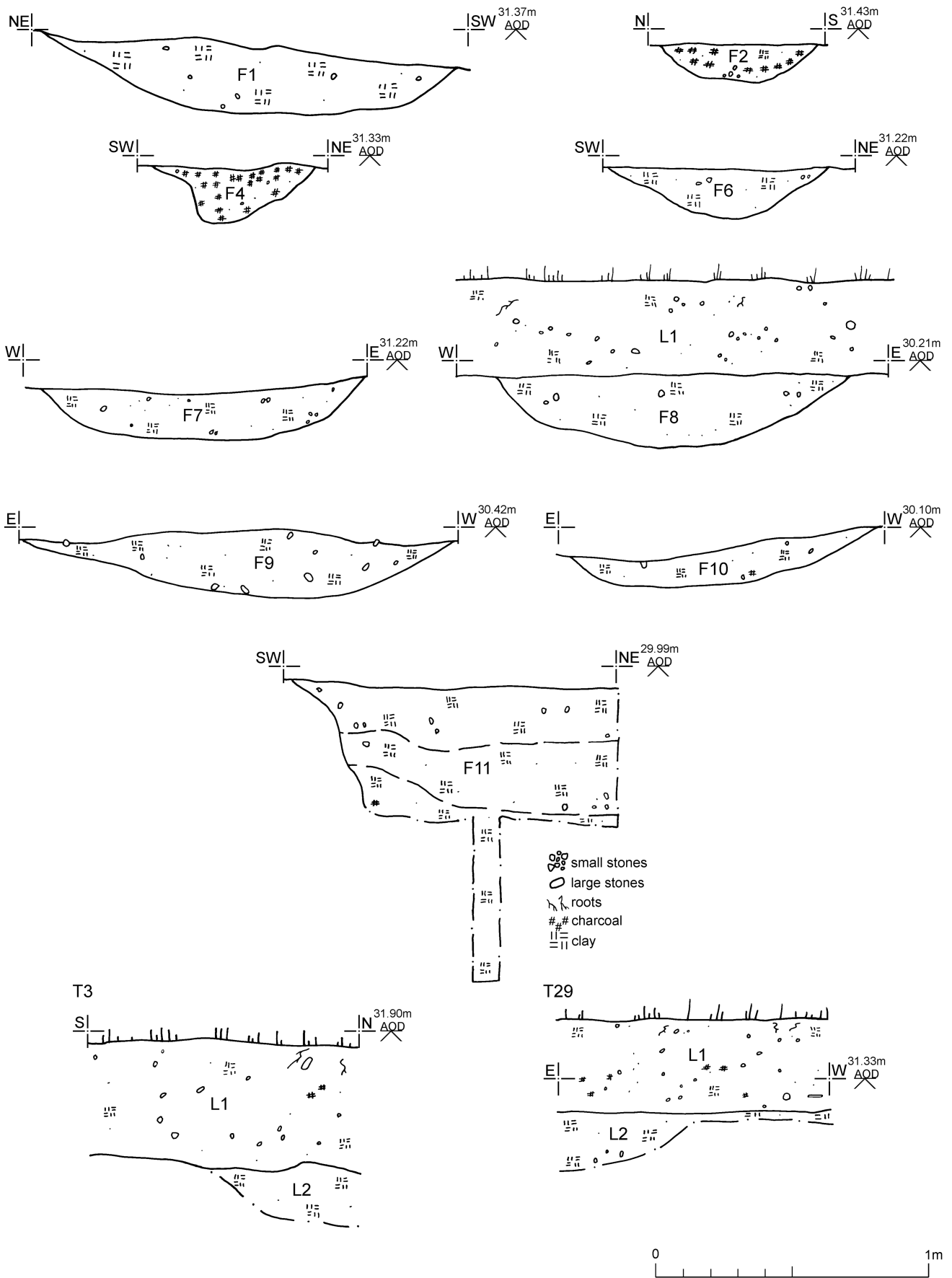


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.



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## Printable version

**OASIS ID: colchest3-321724**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching and excavation on land adjacent to Market Field School, School Road, Elmste
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation of thirty-three trial-trenches was carried out on land adjacent to Market Field School, School Road, Elmstead Market, Essex in advance of the construction of a new housing development. Although the intention of the evaluation was to investigate a number of cropmarks located in the north and east of the site, no corresponding features were uncovered. Rather, excavations found a possible Roman quarry pit, a post-medieval pit, two post-medieval ditches, one of which represents the remains of a field boundary shown on 19th-century OS mapping, an undated pit and four undated ditches.
Project dates	Start: 13-08-2018 End: 17-08-2018
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	16/01797/OUT - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	ESSR18 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	2018/05n - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM 2018.66 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Monument type	QUARRY PIT/POND Post Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Monument type	QUARRY PIT/WELL Roman
Significant Finds	PEG-TILE Post Medieval

Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BRICK Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX TENDRING ELMSTEAD Land adjacent to Market Field School, School Road
Postcode	CO7 7ET
Study area	4.37 Hectares
Site coordinates	TM 06357 24227 51.877827763753 0.998372275618 51 52 40 N 000 59 54 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 29.9m Max: 31.47m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	HEM Team Officer, ECC
Project design originator	Emma Holloway
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Hills Residential

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	COLEM 2018.66
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	COLEM 2018.66
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Photograph", "Report", "Section"

## Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Market Field School, Elmstead Market, Essex, CO7 7ET: August 2018
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Hicks, E.
Other bibliographic details	CAT Report 1320
Date	2018
Issuer or publisher	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Place of issue or publication	Colchester
Description	A4 loose-leaf ringbound
URL	<a href="http://cat.essex.ac.uk">http://cat.essex.ac.uk</a>
Entered by	Elliott Hicks (eh2@catuk.org)
Entered on	13 September 2018

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Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm?id=328384> for this page

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