

Archaeological evaluation at Michaelstow Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex, CO12 5EW

November 2018



by Dr Elliott Hicks

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fieldwork by Ben Holloway with Sarah Carter, Jim Keeble, Adam Tuffey and Nicholas
Pryke

**commissioned by Bryan Courtney
on behalf of ABC City Ltd**

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CAT Report 1354
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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (seven trial-trenches) was carried out at Michaelstow Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey in advance of the construction of fourteen dwellings with associated parking facilities, access and groundworks. The evaluation uncovered a post-medieval wall foundation which may represent the remains of a boundary wall or building which previously stood at the site, as well as a ditch related to this earlier phase of activity at the site. The yard of the 19th-century farmstead and a layer of hoggin which may form the remains of a concrete surface were detected. Two modern features, a depression and a post pipe, presumably relate to agricultural activity at the site during this period. Seven undatable features – six pits and a posthole – were also detected.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at Michaelstow Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex which was carried out on 21st-22nd November 2018. The work was commissioned by Bryan Courtney on behalf of ABC City Ltd in advance of the erection of fourteen dwellings with associated parking facilities, access and groundworks and was undertaken 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* (MHCLG 2018).

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 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 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 EHER shows that the development sites lies within an area of archaeological potential.

The proposed development will impact on surviving historic buildings and a historic site which is known to have been associated with a medieval manorial site of Dovercourt known as Michaelstow (EHER SMR no 19340). The manor house lay on the opposite side of the road next to the 12th-century Church of St Michael (EHER SMR no 3412). Michaelstow Hall is depicted on the 1777 Chapman and André map as a large residence, possibly moated, surrounded by what appears to be landscaped parkland (see Map 1 below). Its proximity to Ramsey church (c 330m east of the church) is typical of Essex church/hall complexes. Michaelstow Farm site is likely to have been the farmstead associated with the Hall and may be medieval in origin; it is depicted on the Chapman and André map opposite the entrance to the Hall. At least one of the

surviving buildings is depicted on the 1st edition OS map and so predates c 1870 (see Maps 2 and 3 below), the age and origin of the surviving buildings is unknown and a record should be made prior to their demolition or conversion. In addition below-ground remains associated with the historic farm may survive below ground which may inform on the age and nature of the buildings that are no longer extant.



Map 1 Extract of Chapman and André Map of 1777 Plate X showing the location of Michaelstow Hall



Map 2 1881 6-inch OS map of England and Wales, extract showing the proposed site



Map 3 1898 6-inch OS map of England and Wales, extract showing the proposed site

4 Aim

The aim was to ascertain the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits that may exist on site, in order to determine whether further investigations would be required.

5 Results (Figs 2-6)

Seven trial-trenches, all 30m long and 1.8m wide, were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist.

Five layers were recorded. To the south of the site, T4, T5, T6 and T7 were excavated through topsoil (L1, c 0.09-0.22m thick) and subsoil (L2, c 0.12-0.27m thick) onto natural (L3, encountered at a depth of 0.28-0.42m below current ground level [bcgl]). In the northern part of the site, T1 and T3 were excavated through L1 (c 0.06-0.23m thick) and a post-medieval yard surface (L4, c 0.31-0.48m thick) onto L3 (encountered at a depth of 0.68-0.74m bcgl). At the western end of T2, L1 (c 0.14-0.18m thick) sealed a post-medieval layer of hoggin (L5). Elsewhere in T2, L1 was situated above L4 (c 0.31-0.39 thick). L4 and L5 sealed L3 (encountered at a depth of 0.54-0.57m bcgl).

There were no significant archaeological remains in T3 or T6.

Trench 1 (T1):

Undatable pit F11 extended beyond the limit of excavation (LOE) but its exposed extent was 0.49m wide and 0.3m deep.

14th- to 17th-century ditch F12 was aligned ENE-WSW and was 1.39m wide and 0.32m deep.

Trench 2 (T2):

Post-medieval brick wall F8 and accompanying construction cut F7 were uncovered in the western half of the trench. F8 was aligned ENE-WSW and was composed of unfrogged bricks with concrete rendering on its south-facing side.

Undatable pit F9 extended beyond the LOE but its exposed extent was 0.56m wide and 0.16m deep. Just adjacent to this feature lay 19th- to 20th-century pit F10, which was 0.51m wide and 0.36m deep.



Photograph 1 Wall foundation F8 and sondage into L5 – looking NNW

Trench 4 (T4):

Undatable depression F6 extended beyond the LOE but its exposed extent was 0.45m wide and 0.04m deep.

Trench 5 (T5):

Undatable pit F5 was 0.79m wide and 0.13m deep.

Trench 7 (T7):

Three undatable pits – F1, F2 and F4 – were uncovered within the southern half of T7 and measured 0.36-0.5m wide and 0.07-0.16m deep. Undatable posthole F3 was situated at the southern end of the trench and was 0.34m wide and 0.07m deep.

6 Finds

6.1 Pottery and ceramic finds

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation produced a small quantity of ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) and four sherds of post-Roman pottery (Table 1).

Ceramic material	No.	Weight (g)	MSW/g
Medieval/post-medieval pottery	4	110	28
Ceramic Building Material (CBM)	11	7,596	69
All	15	7,712	514

Table 1 Details on the main types of ceramics and pottery

Post-Roman pottery

The post-Roman pottery was recorded using the fabric groups from CAR 7 (Cotter 2000) and Cunningham (1985). There were only four sherds:

F10 (5): A sherd of modern stoneware (Fabric 45M) with a weight of 2g dating from the 19th to early 20th century (CAR 7, 254) and a handle from a Staffordshire-type white earthenware (Fabric F48D) vessel dating to the late 18th to 20th century (CAR 7, 253-254).

F12 (7): Base sherd from a Colchester-type ware (Fabric 21, sandy orange ware) with a weight of 74g. The interior is covered with a pale yellow/green lead or copper slip, the surface of which is slightly pitted/freckled. This ware is dated from around 1200 until the mid-16th century. However it is possible that this sherd is from the earlier products (Fabric 21A) as later vessels were rarely slipped, and, as such, dates to c 1200-1375/1400 (CAR 7, 107-109).

L4 (3): Base sherd from a modern stoneware vessel (Fabric 45M) with a weight of 32g dating from the 19th to the early 20th century (CAR 7, 254).

Ceramic building material (CBM)

There were 11 fragments of CBM with a weight of 7,596kg (Table 2). There were seven pieces of peg-tile ranging in thickness from 10 to 14mm, two of which had nail-holes with diameters of 10-11mm and 14mm. The earliest use of peg-tile dates to around the late 12th century and they remained in use until the 16th century (McComish 2015, 33). In southeast England, they became widespread by the start of the 14th century and replaced the earlier nib tile (Drury 1981, 130-131).

There were four bricks, all are unfrosted and so are pre-modern (McComish 2015, 43), and could date to the 19th century or even slightly earlier. Three bricks, one from F8 (8), and two from L4 (3), are all in a fine orange coloured fabric with surface cracking, with similar dimensions: 230mm x 115mm x 70mm, ? x 110mm x 60mm and ? x 106mm x 65mm. These bricks are possibly of late post-medieval date (16th-18th century) and perhaps towards the later part of this period. In contrast, the brick from F12 (7) is possibly earlier and it is worth noting that it was associated with some sherds of peg-tile (Table 3). This brick is a deep red/brown coloured fabric, with some occasional coarse quartz pebbles and flint, while the surfaces are covered with fine sand. This brick is also slightly smaller with dimensions of ? x 95mm x 52mm. A date during the late post-medieval period (17th century) is possible.

CBM code	CBM type	No.	Weight (g)	MSW/g
Post-Roman				
PT	Peg tile	7	212	30
BR	Brick	4	3,684	921
Total		11	7,596	691

Table 2 CBM by period and type

Feature	Feature Type	CBM type	No.	Weight (g)	MSW/g
F8	Wall	BR	1	3,000	3,000
F10	Post pipe	PT	1	28	28
F12	Ditch	PT	5	134	134
		BR	1	700	700
L4	Yard surface	PT	1	50	50
		BR	2	3,684	1,842
Total			11	7,596	691

Table 3 Quantities of CBM by feature

Stone

Feature F12 (7) also contained one large stone (sedimentary rock?) with a weight of 1,802g.

Summary

The limited finds of pottery and CBM indicate activity dating to the later post-medieval and modern periods (Table 4).

Feature	Feature Type	M-PM pottery	CBM	Overall date approx.
F8	Wall	-	BR	18th century
F10	Post pipe	18th/19th-20th century	PT	19th-20th century
F12	Ditch	c 1200-1375/1400	PT BR	14th-17th century
L4	Yard surface	19th-early 20th century	PT BR	19th-20th century

Table 4 Feature dating summary

6.2 Animal bone

by Alec Wade

Eleven fragments of pelvis, femur, tibia and tarsal (182g) from pit F5 (2) appear to have all come from the rear left leg and pelvis of a juvenile cow. The bone is in a very poor condition.

6.3 Iron horseshoe

by Laura Pooley

Half of a large iron horseshoe (382g) with toe caulk came from modern yard surface L4 (4). Overall length of horseshoe: 170mm long; surviving width: 125mm. Modern, 19th-20th century.

7 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation investigated a 5% sample of this site, and uncovered some significant remains. The most notable of these was a concrete-rendered post-medieval wall foundation located close to the farm complex. Accurately dating this feature and determining its purpose has been difficult. While the wall foundation was composed of unfrogged bricks dating to the 16th-18th century, the practice of concrete rendering did not exist prior to 1824 (Brunskill, 1990, 60) meaning the wall must have been built subsequent to this date. The relation of this feature to Michaelstow Farm is unclear. Historic building recording of the farm has tentatively traced its origins to 1839. All of the farm buildings constructed at this point were timber-framed, however, and would not therefore have possessed brick foundations such as this (CAT Report, forthcoming). Mapping of the area compiled in 1751 (Map 4) shows that, prior to the construction of the farm, a building and what appears to be a boundary wall enclosing a garden stood at what is now the northern part of the present site. A further map drawn up in 1825 show that the property was still extant at this point (Map 5). It is possible that the wall foundation is part of a later boundary wall surrounding this property which was built after 1824 but prior to the construction of the farm. The depth of the foundation does imply, however, that it supported a building rather than a wall. Another possibility is that this is the original wall, and the rendering represents some attempt t renovation, though this is unlikely. The nature of this feature therefore remains open to question. A ditch uncovered near to the wall foundation, dated to the c 17th century, was also related to this earlier phase of occupation at this site, and possibly represents a drainage channel or evidence of horticultural activity, although the amount of material present in this feature suggests that it might form a means of refuse disposal.

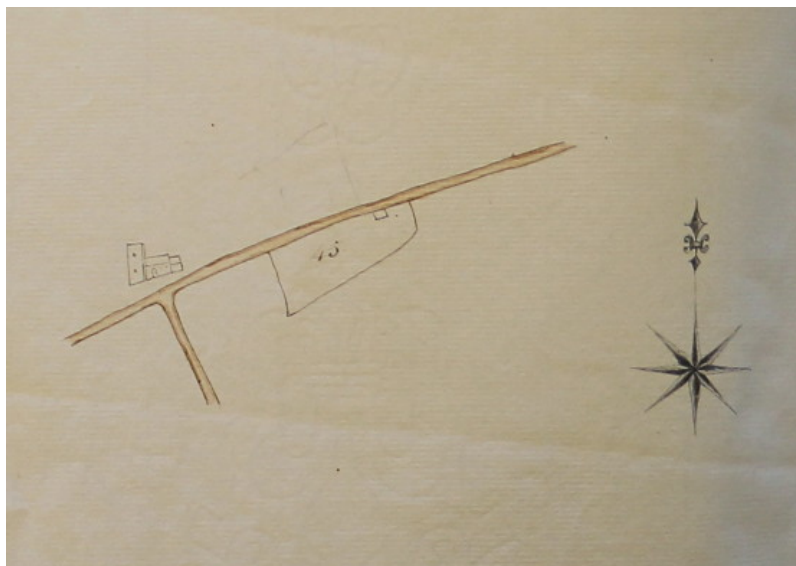
Other remains associated with Michaelstow Farm were also uncovered. To the north of the site, the farm's yard surface was detected. This surface was much thicker in the area in front of the barn, suggesting it was reconsolidated at some point due to wear. A layer of hoggin uncovered just to the south of the yard surface may represent the remains of a separate concrete surface. Two modern features, a post pipe and a shallow depression, were almost certainly related to agricultural activity at the site during the 19th or early 20th century. Seven other features – six pits and a posthole – were fairly evenly-distributed across the southern part of the site. The absence of

artefacts retrieved from them means their date cannot be determined, but the presence of animal bone in one (F5) suggests that at least some were used for domestic waste disposal.

The retrieval of a single sherd of pottery dated to the 13th to the 15th century from ditch F12 towards the north of the site suggests that further medieval archaeological deposits might potentially be located somewhere towards the street frontage, perhaps associated with the medieval manorial site of Michaelstow.



Map 4 Essex Record Office [ERO], D/DU 2590/1/1: 'Map of estate of Nathaniel Garland in Dovercourt, Ramsey and Wrabness' (1751). Property indicated by blue arrow.



Map 5 ERO, D/DLy M105: 'Copyhold estates in the parishes of Dovercourt, Ramsey and Wrabness' (1825) showing the property indicated above.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Bryan Courtney and ABC City Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister with fieldwork carried out by B Holloway with S

Carter, J Keeble, A Tuffey and N Pryke. Figures are by C Lister, B Holloway and S Carter. The project was monitored for ECCPS 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>

Brown, N and Glazenbrook, J	2000	<i>Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2 – Research Agenda and Strategy</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8
Brunskill, RW CAR 7	1990 2000	<i>Brick Building in Britain</i> <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by J Cotter
CAT	2018	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT	forthco- ming	<i>Historic building recording at Michaelstow Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex, CO12 5EW</i>
CAT	2018	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for historic building recording and trial trenching at Michaelstow Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex, CO12 5EW</i>
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation</i>
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Cunningham, CM	1985	'A typology for post-Roman pottery in Essex', in Cunningham, CM and Dury, PJ (eds.), <i>Post-medieval sites and their pottery: Moulsham Street, Chelmsford AD 1450-1750</i> , London: Council for British Archaeology, 1-16.
Drury, PJ	1981	'The production of brick and tile in medieval England', in Crossley, DW (ed.), <i>Medieval Industry</i> , York: Council for British Archaeology, 126-142.
ECCPS	2018	<i>Historic building recording and trial trenching at Michaelstow Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey</i> , by T O'Connor
English Heritage	2006	<i>Recording historic buildings, a descriptive specification</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.
Historic England	2016	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
McComish, JM	2015	<i>A Guide to Ceramic Building Materials: An Insight Report</i> , York: York Archaeological Trust for Excavation and Research
Medlycott, M	2011a	<i>Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24.
MHCLG	2018	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>
RCHME	1996	<i>Recording historic buildings, a descriptive specification</i>

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
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
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	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigation S , http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
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
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

11 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1354)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

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

Site digital photos and log

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 Colchester Museum under accession code COLEM: 2018.104.

Distribution list:

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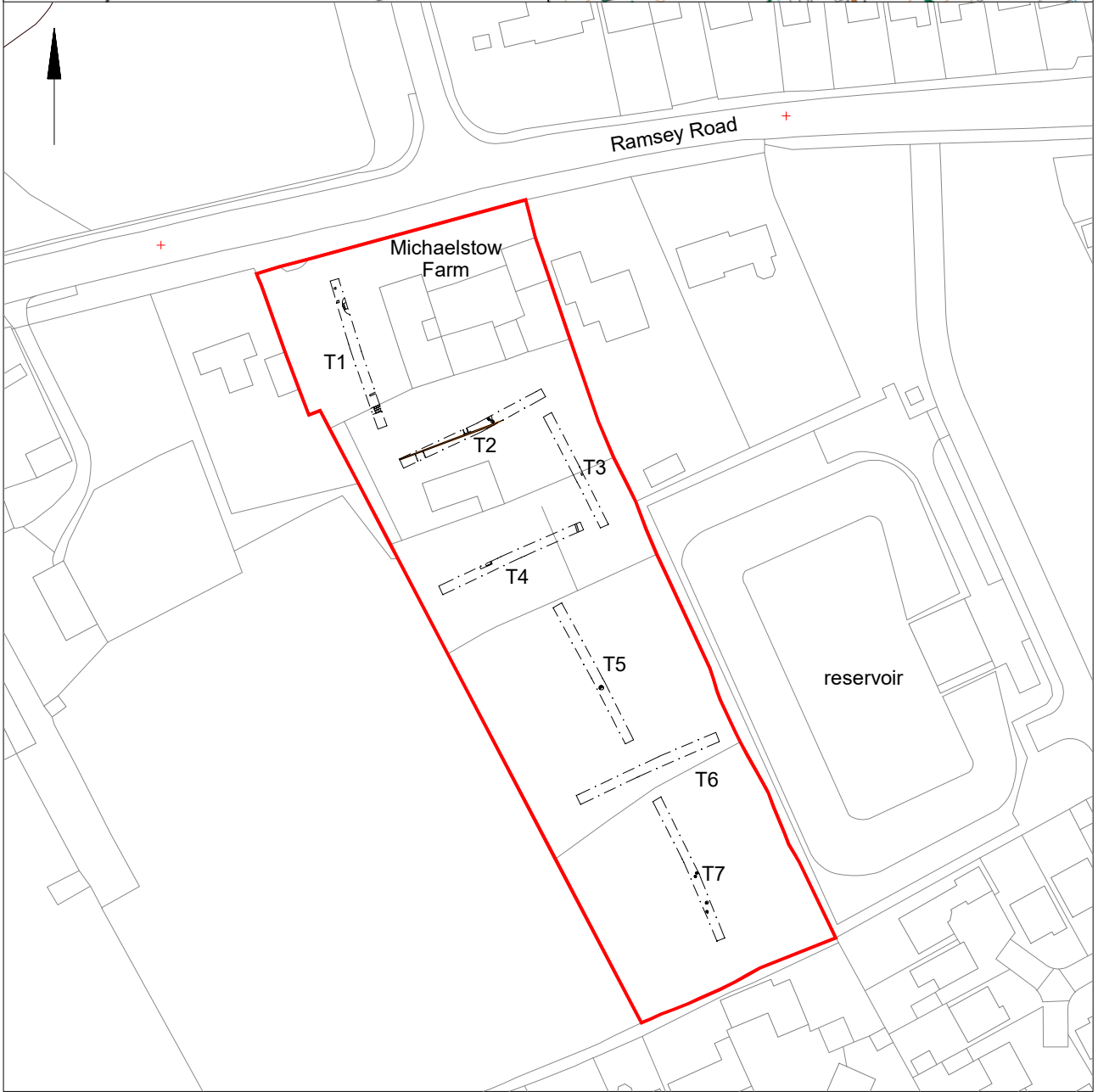
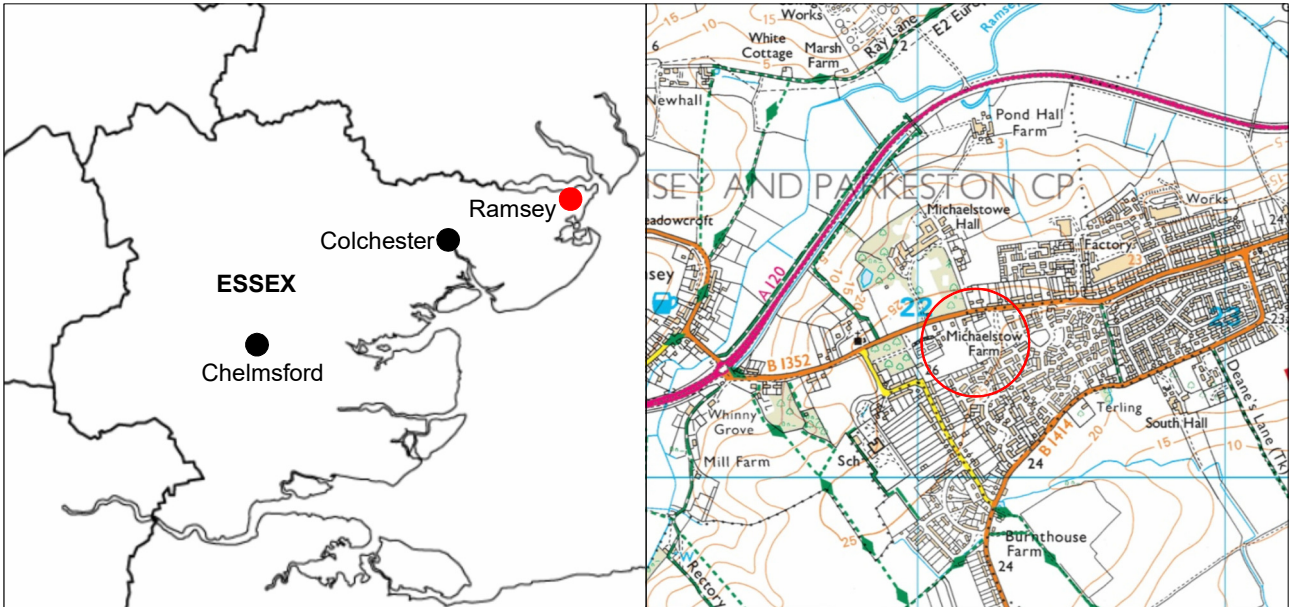
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Appendix 1 Context list

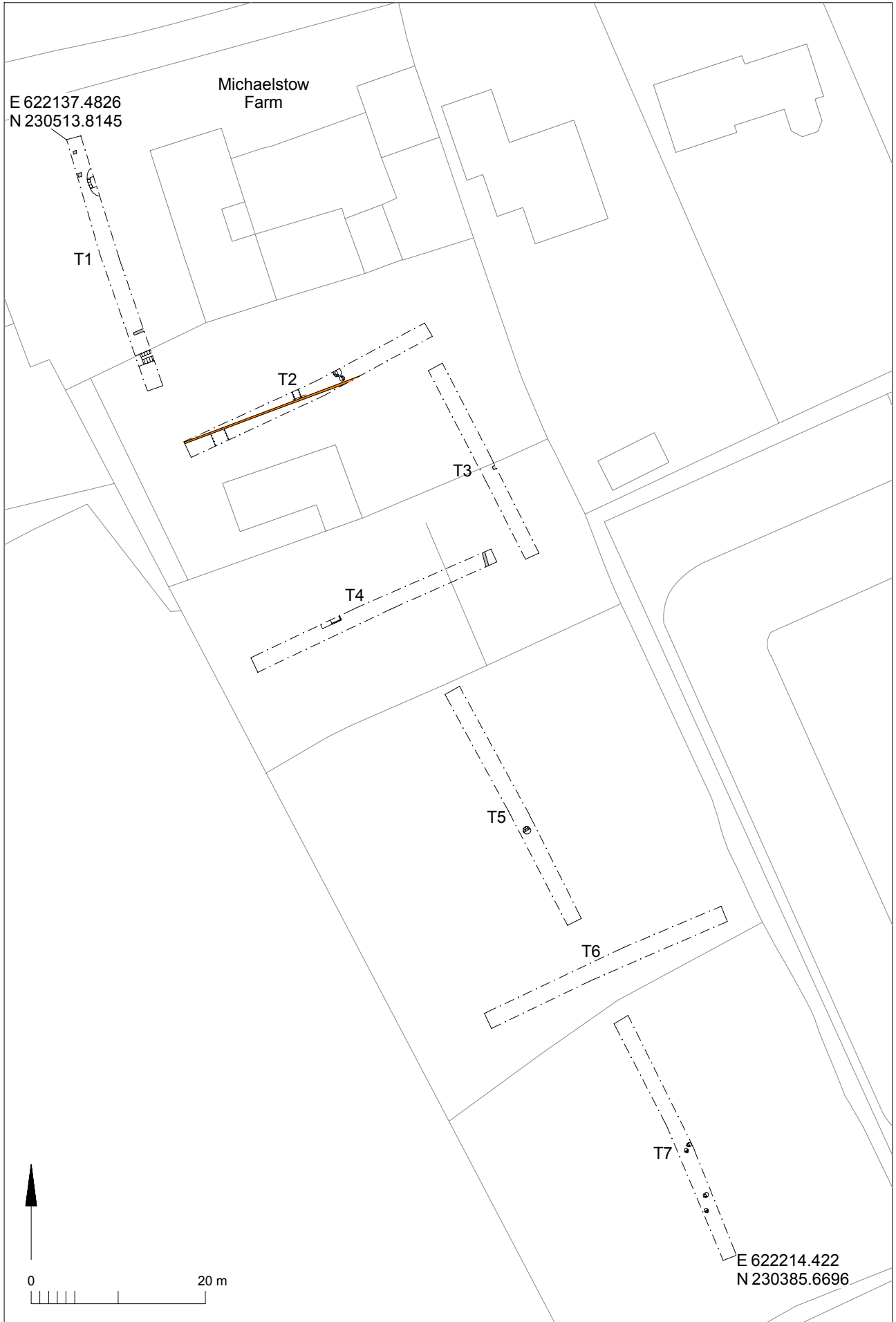
Context Number	Trench Number	Finds Number	Feature / layer type	Description	Date
L1	All	-	Topsoil	Friable, dry/moist medium/dark brown silty-loam with 8% stones	Modern
L2	T1, T3, T4, T5, T6 and T7	-	Subsoil	Friable, dry/moist medium yellow/brown silty-clay	Undatable
L3	All	-	Natural	Firm, dry light/medium yellow/grey/brown silty-clay	Post-glacial
L4	T1, T2 and T3	3, 4	Yard surface	Yard surface composed of a layer of chalk (c 0.05m thick), a layer of medium-sized stones (c 0.1m thick) and a layer of brick crush (c 0.1m thick) set in a layer of grey/brown clay (c 0.15m thick)	19th-20th century
L5	T2	-	Hoggin	Sandy hoggin layer with a hard concrete layer	Post-medieval
F1	T7	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium orange/brown sandy-clay with charcoal flecks and 1% stones	Undatable
F2	T7	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium orange/brown sandy-clay with charcoal flecks	Undatable
F3	T7	-	Posthole	Firm, dry, medium grey/brown silty-clay	Undatable
F4	T7	1	Pit	Firm, dry medium orange sand	Undatable
F5	T5	2	Pit	Hard, dry light grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal and CBM flecks and 5% gravel, 10% stones and 2% CBM pieces	Undatable
F6	T4	-	Depression	Firm/hard, dry medium grey silt	Modern
F7	T2	-	Construction cut	Construction cut for 18th-century wall F8	Post-medieval
F8	T2	8	Wall	One brick wide, composed of unfrogged bricks with concrete rendering on southern side	18th century
F9	T2	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium brown/black silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Undatable
F10	T2	5	Post pipe	Loose, dry medium grey/black silty-clay with CBM flecks, 10% CBM pieces and 3% pottery pieces	19th-20th century
F11	T1	6	Pit	Firm, moist dark grey/brown silt with charcoal flecks	Undatable
F12	T1	7	Ditch	Friable, dry medium grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal and CBM flecks, 10% stone, 25% CBM and 10% pottery pieces	c 17th century



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Fig 1 Site location.





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Fig 2 Results

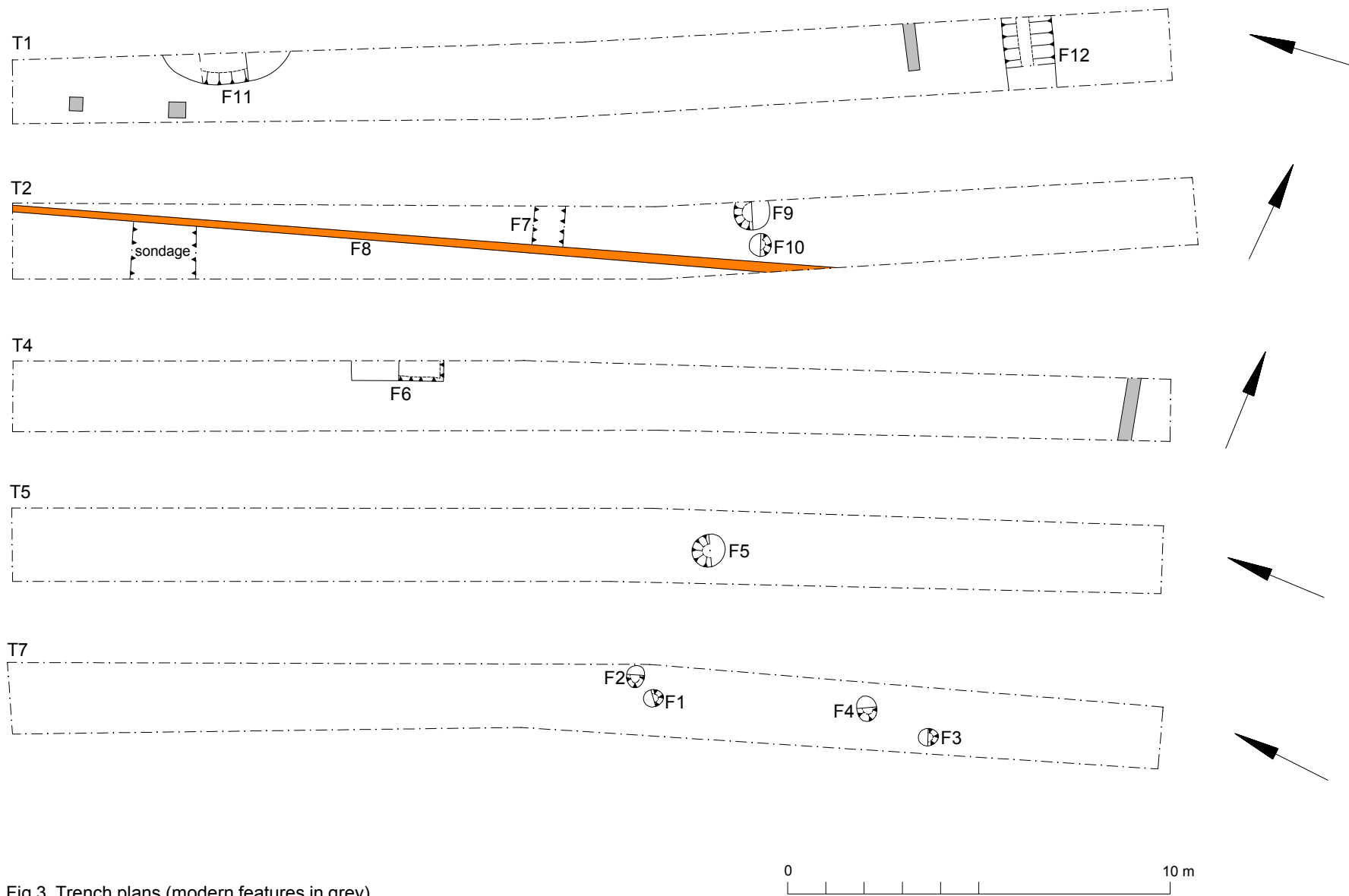


Fig 3 Trench plans (modern features in grey)

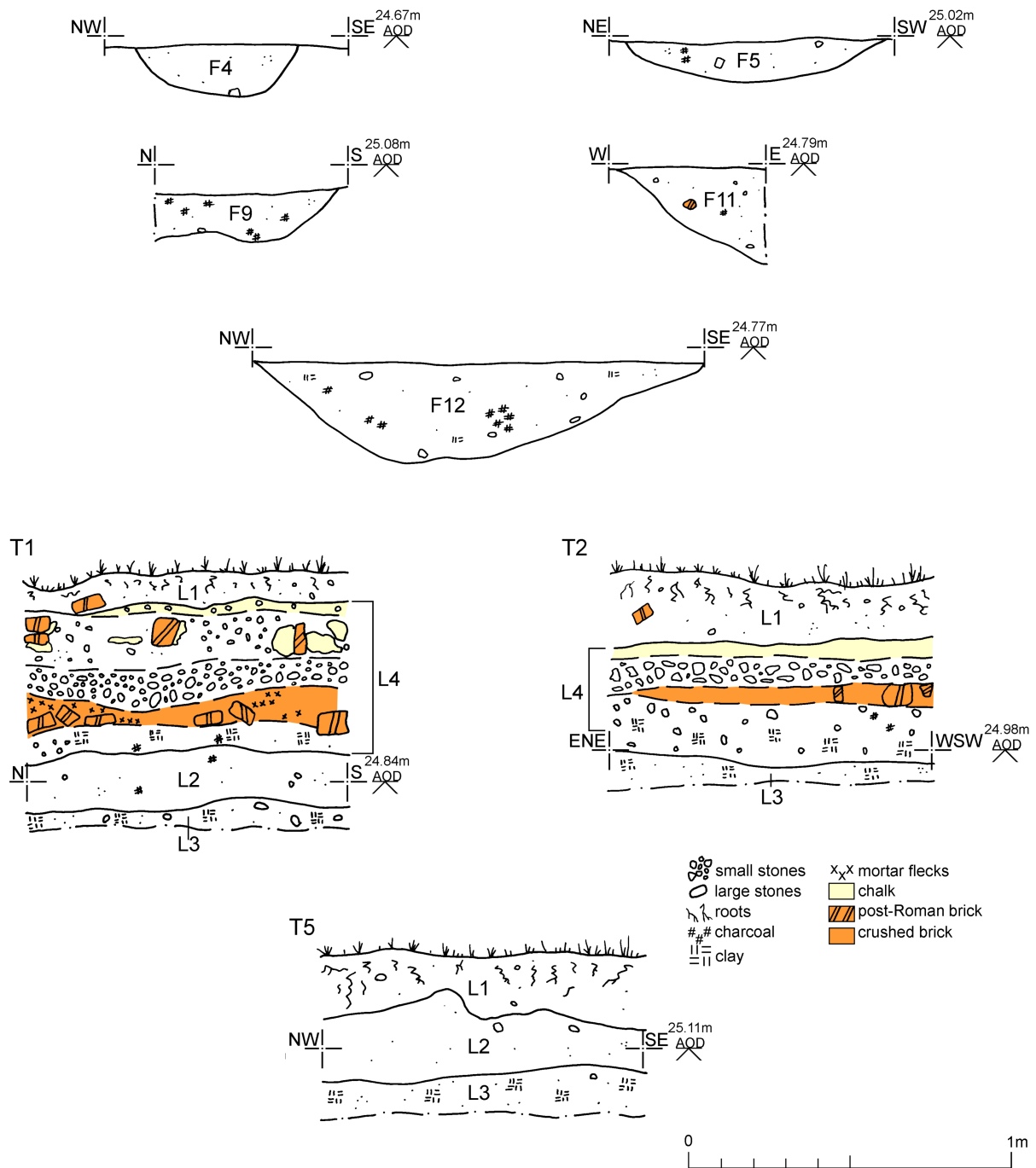


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

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OASIS ID: colchest3-331329

Project details

Project name	Trial trenching at Michaelstowe Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Essex, CO12 5EW.
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (seven trial-trenches) was carried out at Michaelstow Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey in advance of the construction of fourteen dwellings with associated parking facilities, access and groundworks. The evaluation uncovered a post-medieval wall foundation which may represent the remains of a boundary wall or building which previously stood at the site, as well as a ditch related to this earlier phase of activity at the site. The yard of the 19th-century farmstead and a layer of hoggin which may form the remains of a concrete surface were detected. Two modern features, a depression and a post pipe, presumably relate to agricultural activity at the site during this period. Seven undatable features - six pits and a posthole - were also detected.
Project dates	Start: 21-11-2018 End: 22-11-2018
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	2018/10f - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	17/00872/OUT - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM: 2018.104 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	RPMF18 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Monument type	POSTHOLE Uncertain
Monument type	DEPRESSION Modern

Monument type	CONSTRUCTION CUT Post Medieval
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Monument type	POSTPIPE Post Medieval
Monument type	POSTPIPE Modern
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Modern
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	PEG-TILE Medieval
Significant Finds	PEG-TILE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BRICK Post Medieval
Significant Finds	STONE Uncertain
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Uncertain
Significant Finds	IRON OBJECT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	IRON OBJECT Modern
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 RAMSEY AND PARKESTON Michaelstowe Farm, Ramsey Road, Ramsey
Postcode	CO12 5EW
Study area	0.73 Hectares
Site coordinates	TM 22176 30451 51.927593222047 1.231854431026 51 55 39 N 001 13 54 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 24.41m Max: 25.06m

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
Project supervisor	Ben Holloway

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
	Colchester Museum

Digital Archive recipient	
Digital Archive ID	COLEM: 2018.104
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	COLEM: 2018.104
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Other bibliographic details	CAT Report 1354
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