

Archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to St Anns, Southminster Road, Asheldham, Southminster, Essex, CM0 7DZ

September 2019



by Dr Elliott Hicks

figures by Chris Lister, Ben Holloway and Sarah Carter

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commissioned by Mr R Pond

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CAT Report 1473
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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	3
8	Acknowledgements	3
9	References	4
10	Abbreviations and glossary	4
11	Contents of archive	4
12	Archive deposition	5

Figures after p5

OASIS summary sheet

List of photographs and figures

Cover: working shot

Photograph 1 T3 trench shot, looking south 3

Fig 1 Site location

Fig 2 Evaluation results

Fig 3 Representative sections

1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (three trial-trenches) was carried out on land adjacent to St Anns, Southminster Road, Asheldham, Southminster, Essex, in advance of the construction of two chalet-style bungalows. Despite being located in an archaeologically-sensitive area, the only feature recorded was a modern foundation trench.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land adjacent to St Anns, Southminster Road, Asheldham, Southminster, Essex which was carried out on 4th September 2019. The work was commissioned by Mr R Pond in advance of the construction of two chalet-style bungalows, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Maria Medlycott 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 2019).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for archaeological trial trench evaluation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Maria Medlycott (ECCPS 2019), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2019).

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* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 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 site is located on the western side of the village of Asheldham in the Dengie Peninsular. The area is characterised by small isolated farms scattered throughout flat open fields, the result of reclamation of the Dengie and Tillingham marshes in the 19th century. The development area lies within an area of known archaeological potential. It is in the midst of a number of known archaeological sites, including Asheldham Camp, an Iron Age fort located on a plateau setting. Investigations around the fort yielded scatters of Neolithic to Bronze Age flint waste flakes and blades. Archaeological monitoring during gravel extraction has recorded evidence of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Saxon remains, especially pottery. Some Roman and a sherd of medieval pottery have also been recorded. During the construction of a water supply for Southminster in 1900 evidence of a possible entrance to the camp was observed. Finds found during construction included a Viking axe-head and knife, Iron Age and Roman pottery bought by Colchester Museum (EHER 12051-12060, Scheduled Monument reference 1014142).

The site is located within an area of multiple cropmarks recorded through aerial photography. These suggest complexes of features covering multiple periods. Gravel extraction around the village has meant that some of these cropmarks have been investigated and confirmed as archaeological features. For example, an area of

cropmarks northwest of Asheldham Hall was excavated, revealing pits, post-holes, a possible beamslot and metalled surfacing. The features were predominantly Roman in date, with clusters dating to the Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age, and one ditch which contained a sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery (EHER 12183). The investigation of cropmarks on the south side of the nature reserve yielded Iron Age pottery and one pit contained Neolithic pottery (EHER 12185).

To the north of the site and over the Southminster Road are the cropmarks of a ring-ditch (burial mound) and various linear features (probably field boundaries) (EHER 16003). To the immediate east and southeast, prehistoric and Roman finds have been recovered from the riding stables and Oaklands Farm (EHER 12127-30).

To the east of the site is the church of St Lawrence. Archaeological work at the church in 1976 found evidence that it was constructed in nine phases. The church was thought to have originally been a timber structure, located slightly to the north of the current location and built in the Anglo-Saxon period. In the early 14th century the church was completely rebuilt from septaria with some Roman brick and dressed limestone. A number of alterations and additions were added in the 14th and 15th centuries with restoration work in the 19th century. In the churchyard, a Roman ditch which had been re-cut multiple times was uncovered, along with the remains of a medieval stone dwelling for the priest alongside burials (EHER 12150-7).

Cropmarks on land south of the church (southwest of Asheldham Hall) show a large rectilinear enclosure with another smaller rectilinear enclosure in one corner, as well as a number of linear features and pits (EHER 12184). Road names and early mapping suggest this may also be the area of a possible deserted medieval village (EHER 12088). During archaeological monitoring of the construction of a new crop storage building at Dengie Crops Ltd, part of a known cropmark which crossed the site was observed, and yielded pottery of Early Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon date (EHER 48921).

In 2015, CAT carried out a watching brief at the adjacent St Anns Farm, observing the strip of a slab foundation for a new agricultural equipment store (CAT Report 818). Formation depth was 0.4m below modern ground level. No archaeological features or materials were recorded, although substantial deposits of modern building material were observed across the excavated foundation. This material consisted of modern roofing slate, brick and tile fragments and concrete. The modern material was thought added by the previous owner of the site who had used the area to dispose of material associated with their roofing business (confirmed by the current site owner pers. comm.).

4 Aim

The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to record the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits, and to assess the archaeological potential of the site to allow the ECCHEA to determine if further investigation is required.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

Three trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trench T1 was 25m long by 1.8m wide, and T2 and T3 were 10m long by 1.8m wide.

The trenching was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, c 0.08-0.13m thick, firm, dry dark grey/brown sandy-silt) and accumulated subsoil (L2, c 0.22-0.26m thick, firm, dry, medium grey/brown silt) onto natural (L3, firm, light yellow/grey sandy-silt, encountered at a depth of 0.31-0.37m below current ground level). Sondages were excavated in T1 and T2 to ensure that the natural had been reached.

There were no significant archaeological remains in T2.

Trench 1 (T1): 25m long by 1.8m wide

Modern foundation trench F1 extended through the trench on a NNE-SSW alignment. The feature continued on to the south southwest to T3. The feature was not excavated.

Trench 3 (T3): 10m long by 1.8m wide

Modern foundation trench F1 extended through the northern half of T3 on a NNE-SSW alignment before changing course to a WNW-ESE alignment.



Photograph 1 T3 trench shot – looking south

6 Finds

There were no finds.

7 Conclusion

Despite being located within an archaeologically-sensitive area, only a modern foundation trench was uncovered. This feature represented the remains of a chicken coop or run which previously stood at the site according to the landowner (pers. comm.).

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Mr R Pond for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway with B Quinn and A Smith. Figures are by C Lister, B Holloway and S Carter. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Maria Medlycott.

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 (EAA 8)
CAT	2018	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 818	2015	<i>Archaeological attendance and recording (watching brief) at St Ann's Farm, Southminster Road, Asheldham, Essex</i> , by B Holloway
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>
ECCPS	2019	<i>Brief for Archaeological trial-trenching and excavation on Land adjacent to St Anns, Southminster Road, Asheldham</i> , by M Medlycott
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14 (EAA 14)
Historic England	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Historic England	2018	<i>The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project</i> , by S Mays, M Brickley and J Sidell
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24 (EAA 24)
MHCLG	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>

10 Abbreviations and glossary

Anglo-Saxon	period from c 500 – 1066
Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
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'
Iron Age	period from 700 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43
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
Neolithic	period from c 4000 – 2500 BC
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, 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: n/a

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1473)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Original site record (trench sheets, sections)
Site digital photos and log
Inked sections
Digital record
The report (CAT Report 1473)
ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation
Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log
Graphic files
Survey data

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.

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Distribution list:

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ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor
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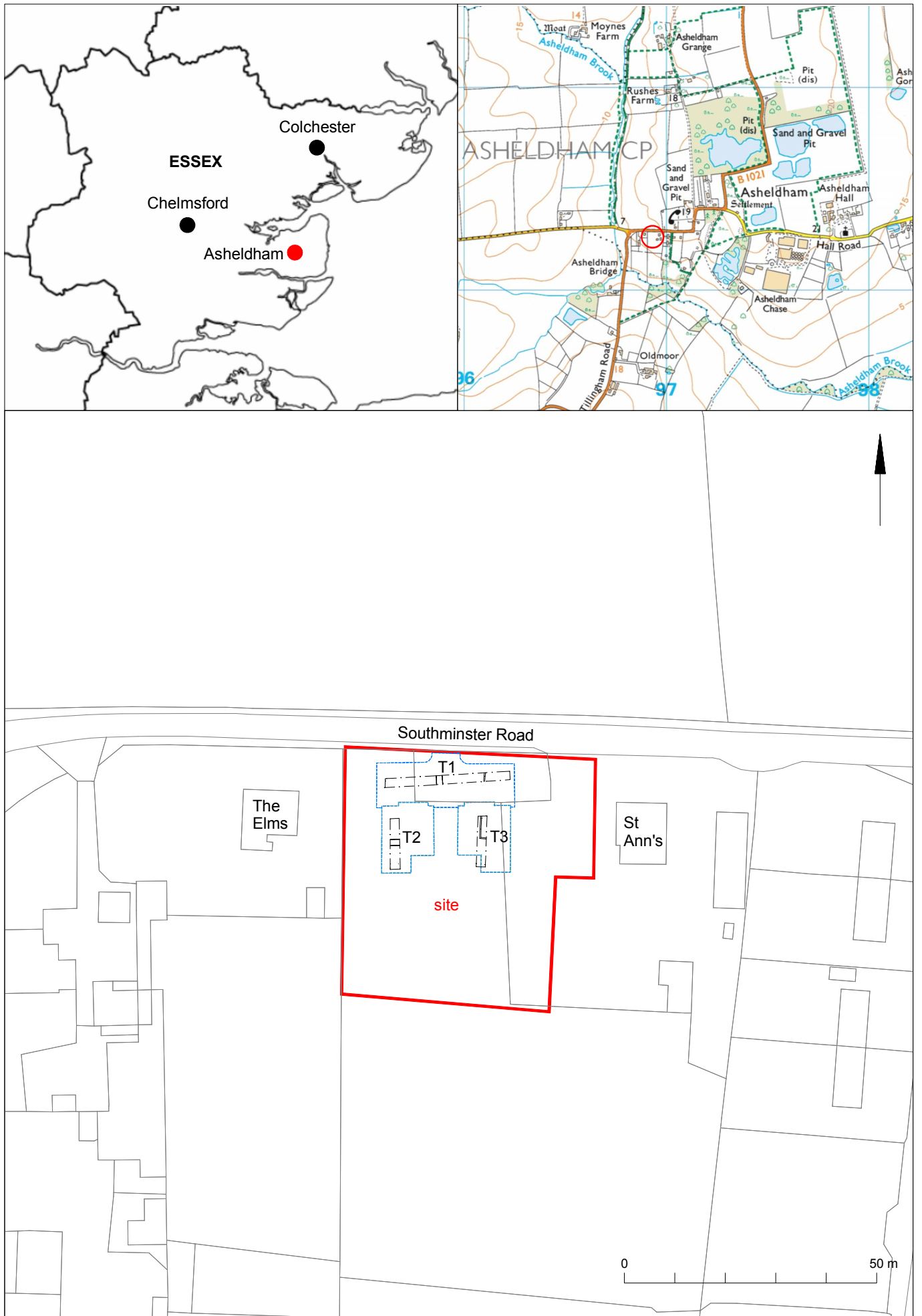
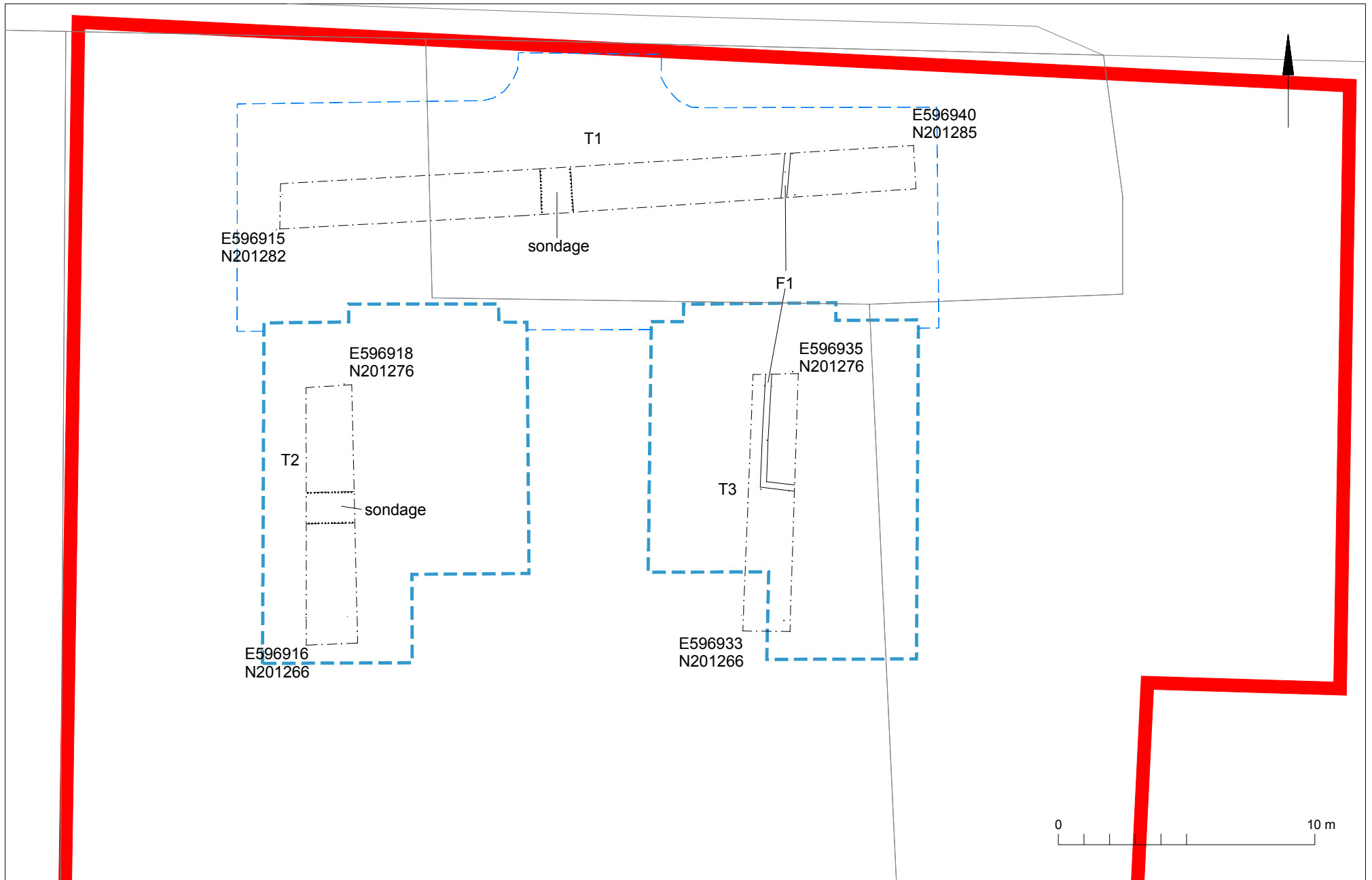


Fig 1 Site location (proposed development dashed blue)



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Fig 2 Evaluation results (proposed development dashed blue)

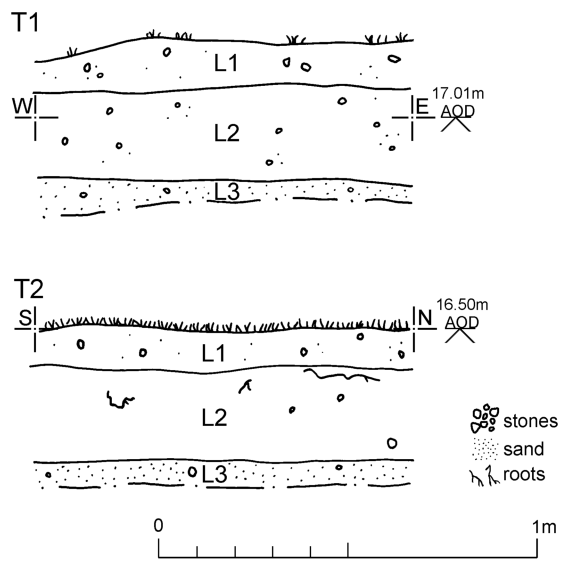


Fig 3 Representative sections.

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OASIS ID: colchest3-363570

Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching and excavation on land adjacent to St Anns, Southminster Road, Asheldham, S
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (three trial-trenches) was carried out on land adjacent to St Anns, Southminster Road, Asheldham, Southminster, Essex, in advance of the construction of two chalet-style bungalows. Despite being located in an archaeologically-sensitive area, the only feature recorded was a modern foundation trench.
Project dates	Start: 04-09-2019 End: 04-09-2019
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	MAL/17/00926 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	2019/08h - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	AMSA19 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	FOUNDATION Modern
Methods & techniques	""Targeted 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 MALDON ASHELDHAM land adjacent to St Anns, Southminster Road, Asheldham

Postcode	CM0 7DZ
Study area	0.23 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 96929 01266 51.675044627221 0.848546877784 51 40 30 N 000 50 54 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 16.17m Max: 16.86m

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
Type of sponsor/funding body	Owner
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr R Pond

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	AMSA19
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	AMSA19
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Report"

Project bibliography

1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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