

Archaeological trial-trenching evaluation and excavation at Spaynes Hall, Cherry Lane, Great Yeldham, CO9 4HH

April 2021



by Mark Baister

figures by Mark Baister and Sarah Carter
fieldwork by Mark Baister with Nicholas Pryke

**commissioned by Kenneth McAndrew
on behalf of Mr Wesley Mercer**

NGR: TL 76288 38149 (centre)
Planning ref.: 20/02226/HH
CAT project ref.: 2021/03h
ECC code: MD66
OASIS ref.: colchest3-417555



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CAT Report 1651
April 2021

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (one trench) was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust at Spaynes Hall, Great Yeldham in advance of the construction of a swimming pool. Despite being located in close proximity to the grade II listed Spaynes Hall and within its historic estate, nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered. Judging from the surrounding ground-levels and the stratigraphy of the trench, the area has been substantially terraced in the recent past.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at Spaynes Hall, Cherry Lane, Great Yeldham, Essex which was carried out on the 6th April 2021. The work was commissioned by Kenneth McAndrew on behalf of Mr Wesley Mercer in advance of the construction of a swimming pool. The work was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation, the Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor (ECCHEA) Teresa O'Connor advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant was 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 a trial trenching evaluation and excavation on land at Spaynes Hall, Cherry Lane, Great Yeldham, Braintree*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa O'Connor (ECCHEA 2021), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with the ECCHEA (CAT 2021).

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)* (Historic England 2015), 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 brief and the Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessible to the public via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The proposed development lies within the grounds of the Spaynes Hall (NHLE 1123009, EHER 28332), a grade II listed 16th-century timber-framed building. The site is medieval in origin and was a manorial site, possibly known as *Gerham* in the Domesday Book. In the 13th century it belonged to the De Ispania family who gave their name to several Spain's Halls within the county, the most famous of which is in Finchingfield approximately 9km to the south-west.

The location of any earlier houses is unknown, but the current hall is shown on the Chapman and André map of 1777 (as 'Spains Hall') with buildings lying to the south. By the time of the 1842 1st edition OS map the estate contained a much larger complex of buildings and is now referred to as Spayne's Hall.



Maps 1 and 2 Extracts of the 1777 Chapman and André map (left) and the 1842 1st edition OS map (right) showing the site.

Approximately 750m south-east of Spaynes Hall several undated cropmarks are recorded in the EHER. South of Butlers Farm (EHER 14413) is a crop-mark of a field boundary and Butlers Grove (EHER 16241) includes a rectangular enclosure and other linear features.

In 1996 Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook a trial-trenching evaluation on the west side of Great Yeldham High Street (EHER 17285), around 300m west of Spaynes Hall. Only two small pits were uncovered, one of which contained two pieces of worked flint (Northampton Archaeology 1996).

4 Aims

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)

One trial-trench was machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. The trench was 1.8m wide by 11m long, located in the location of the proposed swimming pool.

The evaluation trench was excavated through two layers. Modern crush (L1, c 0.28-0.34m thick, soft/friable dry dark grey/black silty sand with large amounts of modern brick fragments and concrete) sealed the natural (L2, firm/hard, dry, light grey clay with common chalk inclusions).

A sondage was excavated in the north-west end of the trench to confirm the identification of the natural.

A shallow modern ?linear was excavated in the southern end of the trench, backfilled entirely with builder's sand. This feature probably originates from the terracing of the site (see conclusion below)

No archaeological features were identified.



Photograph 1 Shot of T1. Photograph taken facing south-east.

6 Finds

No finds were recovered.

7 Conclusion

The lack of any topsoil or subsoil layers within the trench, and the presence of modern crush directly overlaying the natural clay, suggests that the site has been extensively terraced in the relatively recent past.

Judging from the ground-levels in the immediate vicinity it appears that originally the farmyard would have sloped more gradually from the north-east down to the south-west (towards Spayne's Hall). Some recent groundworks to the north-east show this change in ground-level clearly (Photograph 2).



Photograph 2 Recent groundworks to north-east of trench showing extent of terracing. Photograph taken facing north-east.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Kenneth McAndrew for commissioning and Mr Wesley Mercer for funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister with fieldwork carried out by M Baister with N Pryke. Figures are by M Baister and S Carter. The project was monitored for ECC 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 & Glazebrook, 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	2021	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological trial trenching evaluation and excavation at Spaynes Hall, Cherry Lane, Great Yeldham, CO9 4HH</i> by S Carter
CAT	2020	<i>Health & Safety Policy</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>
ECCHEA	2021	<i>Brief for trial trenching evaluation and excavation at Spaynes Hall, Cherry Lane, Great Yeldham</i> by Teresa O'Connor
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14)
Historic England (HE)	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
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)
MHCLG	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Northampton Archaeology	1996	<i>High Street, Great Yeldham, Essex Archaeological Evaluation</i> by S Parry

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 Investigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
prehistoric	pre-Roman
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

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1651)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

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

Site digital photos and log

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1651)

CBC 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 Braintree Museum.

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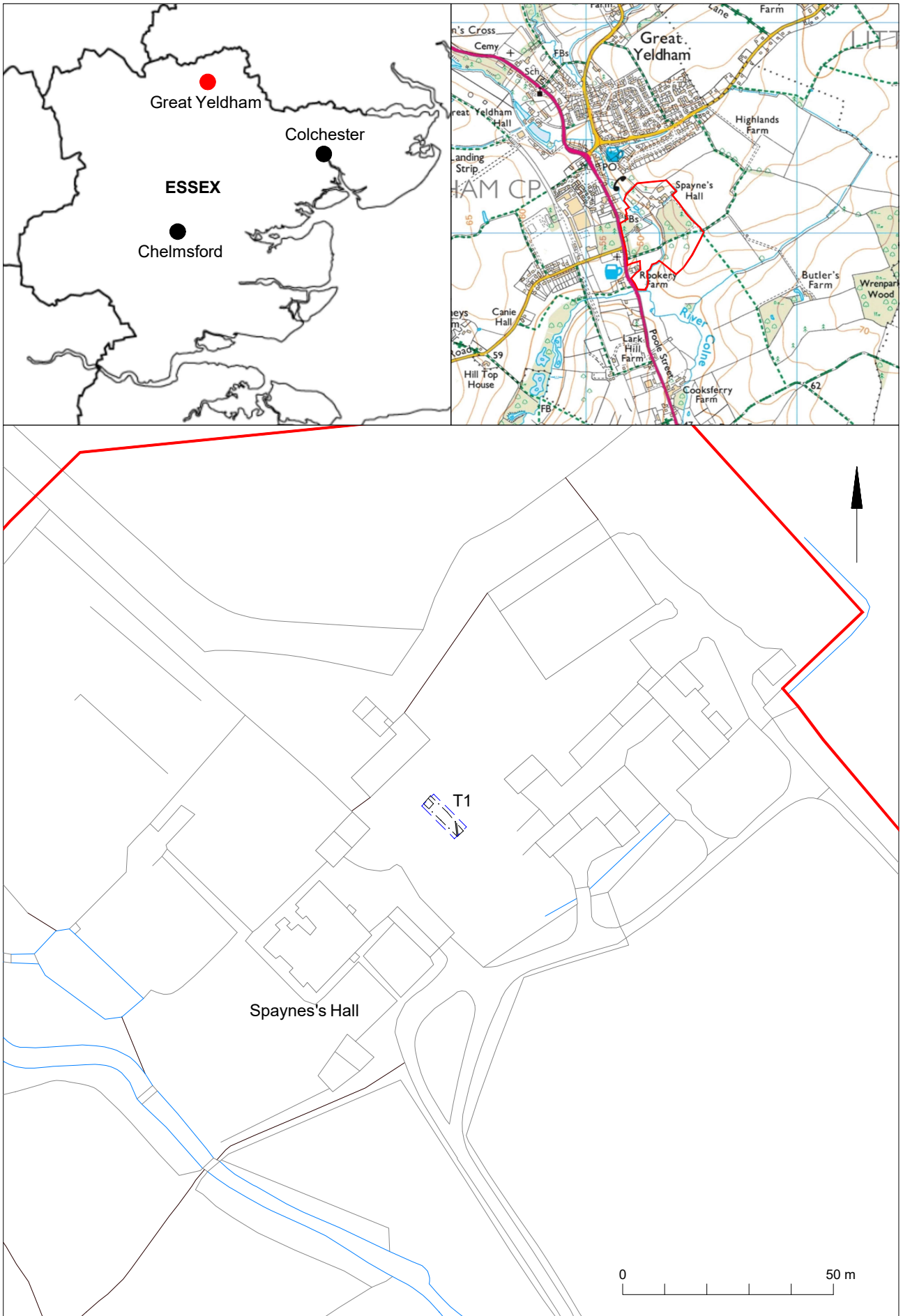
email: mb@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 05/05/21

Appendix 1 Context list

Context number	Trench number	Finds number	Context type	Fill description	Date
L1	whole site	-	modern crush	soft/friable dry dark grey/black silty sand with large amounts of modern brick fragments and concrete	modern
L2	whole site	-	natural	firm/hard, dry, light grey clay with common chalk inclusions	post-glacial



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Fig 1 Site location and trench layout in relation to proposed swimming pool (indicated by the dashed blue line).

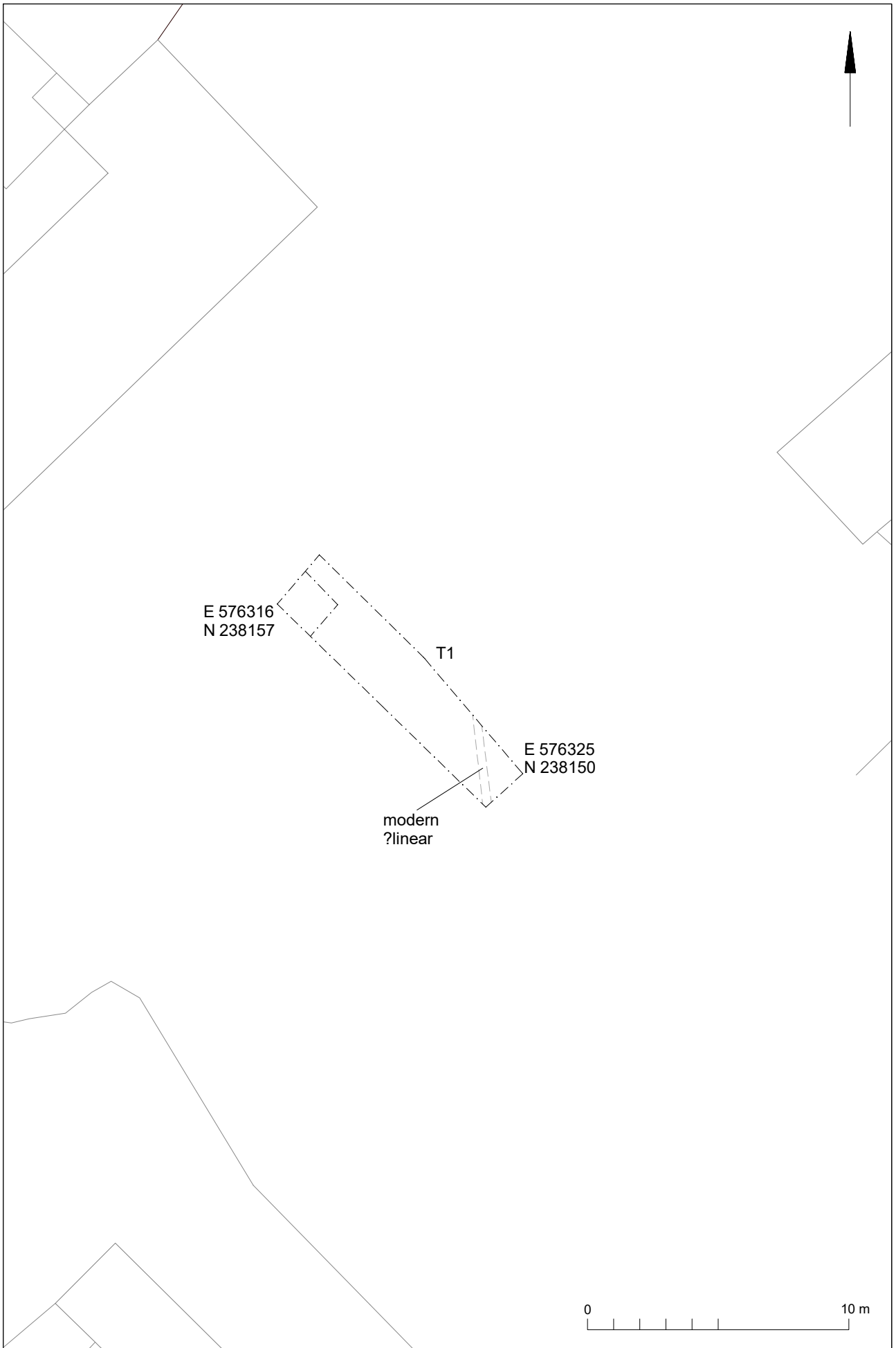


Fig 2 Evaluation results.

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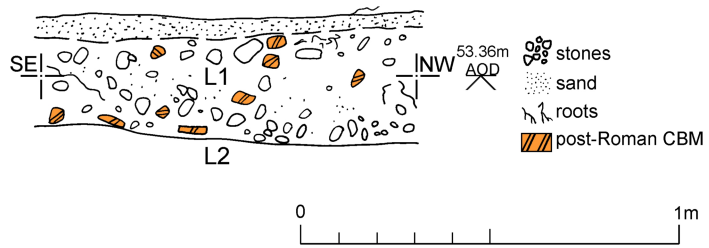


Fig 3 Representative section.

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OASIS ID: colchest3-417555

Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation at Spaynes Hall, Cherry Lane, Great Yeldham
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (one trench) was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust at Spaynes Hall, Great Yeldham in advance of the construction of a swimming pool. Despite being located in close proximity to the grade II listed Spaynes Hall and within its historic estate, nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered. Judging from the surrounding ground-levels and the stratigraphy of the trench, the area has been substantially terraced in the recent past.
Project dates	Start: 06-04-2021 End: 05-05-2021
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	20/02226/HH - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	2021/03h - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	MD66 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	- None
Significant Finds	- None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
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 BRAINTREE GREAT YELDHAM Spaynes Hall, Cherry Lane, Great Yeldham
Postcode	CO9 4HH
Study area	19.8 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 76288 38149 52.013248898645 0.569121578728 52 00 47 N 000 34 08 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 53.26m Max: 53.28m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	HEM Team Officer, ECC
Project design originator	Sarah Carter
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Mark Baister
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Braintree Museum
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Braintree Museum
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological trial-trenching evaluation and excavation at Spaynes Hall, Cherry Lane, Great Yeldham, CO9 4HH
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Baister, M
Other bibliographic details	CAT Report 1651
Date	2021
Issuer or publisher	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Place of issue or publication	Colchester
Description	A4 bound report with clear plastic front and opaque black cardboard back.
URL	http://cat.essex.ac.uk/summaries/CAT-1651.html
Entered by	Mark Baister (mb@catuk.org)
Entered on	5 May 2021

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