Archaeological strip, map and record excavation on land at Dawes Lane, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8HJ

November-December 2021

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commissioned by Brad Davies (Mersea Homes)

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Contents

List of photographs, tables and figures

Cover: Working shot

1 Summary

An archaeological excavation was carried out on land at Dawes Lane, West Mersea, Essex in advance of the construction of a new residential development. Surrounded by cropmarks, previous archaeological work on the site includes fieldwalking, metal-detecting and geophysical surveys along with a trial-trenching evaluation. Fieldwalking produced small scatters of prehistoric, Roman and medieval material along with post-Roman tile/brick and post-medieval/ modern pottery. Post-medieval/modern agricultural ironwork and modern waste material came from the metal-detecting survey, and the geophysical survey identified natural linear features, historic field boundaries and drainage gullies. The trial-trenching evaluation revealed a possible prehistoric ditch, a Roman pit, a medieval/post-medieval pit, five post-medieval/ modern field boundary ditches, six drainage gullies and fifteen undated features.

During the excavation 63 features were identified: three ditches, 41 pits, two pit/tree-throws, a pit/post-hole, seven post-holes, a post-hole/tree-throw, three tree-throws, a plough scar and four natural features. Three periods were represented by a small quantity of features: the Bronze Age, medieval and post-medieval/modern. Most of the features were, however, undated.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological strip, map and record excavation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land at Dawes Lane, West Mersea, Essex from 15th November to 9th December 2021. The work was commissioned by Brad Davies of Mersea Homes in advance of the construction of a new residential development.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the CHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA). This recommendation was for an archaeological excavation and was based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2019).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation*, written by Dr Simon Wood and detailing the required archaeological work (CBCAA 2021), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT (2021) in response to the brief and agreed in advance with CBCAA.

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (*MoRPHE*) (Historic England 2016), and with *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003; Medlycott 2011). This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (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 Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive, the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) accessed via the Colchester Heritage Explorer (www.colchesterheritage.co.uk):

The site lies within an area that has seen little archaeological investigation. It is, however, located within an area surrounded by fields with cropmarks recorded through aerial photography. The majority of these cropmarks indicate the presence of linear features and trackways which likely represent either Roman ditches or historic agricultural boundaries. On land to the east and north of Wellhouse Farm, immediately to the north, are the cropmarks of a ring-ditch and three rectangular pits, thought possibly to be part of an Anglo-Saxon sunken-floored building (SFB), as well as a number of historic field boundaries (MCC8813). Find spots within this area include those of an Iron Age coin (MCC4894), a Roman coin (MCC8776) and

some Roman objects including a brooch, coin and tessera cube (MCC8779). To the immediate north-east of the site at Barrow Hill, cropmarks of trackways and linear features are noted, although there are geological deposits which may be masking evidence of archaeology (MCC4746). To the immediate east of the site are further cropmarks of a possible building of unknown date (MCC8930).

The site is located approximately 450m south of Mersea Barrow (MCC6928, Scheduled Ancient Monument No: SM 32425; NHLE no. 1019019). The barrow was excavated in 1912. The excavation consisted of a trench dug from the eastern side of the barrow into its centre, where a larger central shaft was opened out. A Roman cremation burial was located near the centre of the barrow, lying within a chamber constructed out of Roman roof tiles (tegulae) set in mortar. The chamber contained a lead casket inside which was a glass urn containing the cremated human remains. In 1912 the barrow was approximately 33.5 m in diameter and 6.9 m high. No trace was discovered in 1912 of a ditch around the barrow (Warren 1913). The 1912 excavation trench was subsequently roofed over and concreted to form a tunnel to allow visitors access to the burial chamber from the eastern side of the barrow. The burial was dated in the original site report to the late 1st century (*ibid*, 138). The origins of the burial and barrow were subsequently reassessed by Hull to lie within the period AD 100-120 (*VCHE* 3, 160). More recently, it has been suggested that it was constructed during the mid 2nd century (Benfield & Black 2014, 67, 72). The cremated human remains were re-examined in 2012-3 by Jacqueline McKinley of Wessex Archaeology. The bones were the remains of a male aged between 35 and 45. There is evidence of spinal lesions and excessive bony growths, indicating that he suffered from diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis (DISH). This is a disease of the joints that today is found mainly in men over 50 (McKinley 2014). The presence of exotic items was also detected, including pine resin and frankincense (Brettell et al 2014). These were probably added to the bone after cremation and suggest that an elaborate funerary ritual accompanied their internment.

CAT carried out watching briefs at Mersea Barrow in 2014 and 2016 during works to improve visitor access and amenities. No significant archaeological deposits were uncovered, although a small quantity of Roman roof tile fragments was recovered from the modern topsoil at its eastern side (CAT Report 992). There is an unconfirmed report that two Roman rings and fragments of a tessellated pavement were found fairly close to the Mersea Barrow in nearby Bower Hall Lane (J.W.M. Read to D.T-D Clarke, 28 August 1980; Howlett 2012, 66, 76).

For this development, a programme of archaeological fieldwalking, metal-detecting and geophysical surveys plus a trial-trenching evaluation (36 trenches) were carried out by CAT in 2019 (CAT Report 1499). The fieldwalking survey revealed very small scatters of prehistoric, Roman and medieval material, with post-Roman tile and brick and post-medieval and modern pottery dominating the assemblage. Similarly, the metal-detecting survey only produced post-medieval/modern agricultural ironwork and modern waste material. The geophysical survey identified natural linear features, historic field boundaries and drainage gullies. Five post-medieval/modern field boundary ditches and six drainage gullies were excavated during the trial-trenching evaluation along with a medieval/post-medieval pit, a possible Roman pit, a possible prehistoric ditch and fifteen undated features (seven tree-throws, four pits, two gullies and two ditches).

For a full archaeological background, *see* the desk-based assessment of the site by Oxford Archaeology (2019).

4 Aims

The aim of this investigation was to excavate and record all archaeological horizons due to be destroyed by the development.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

Feature, layer and finds numbers used during the current investigation follow on from numbers assigned during the evaluation stage of this investigation (CAT Report 1499). A full context list can be found as Appendix 1.

An area measuring 0.79ha centred over the area of evaluation trenches T21, T22, T23, T28, T29 and T30 was stripped under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. It was cut through modern topsoil (L1, 0.12-0.15m thick) and subsoil (L2, 0.24-0.27m thick) onto natural (L3, encountered at a depth of 0.37-0.41m below current ground level).

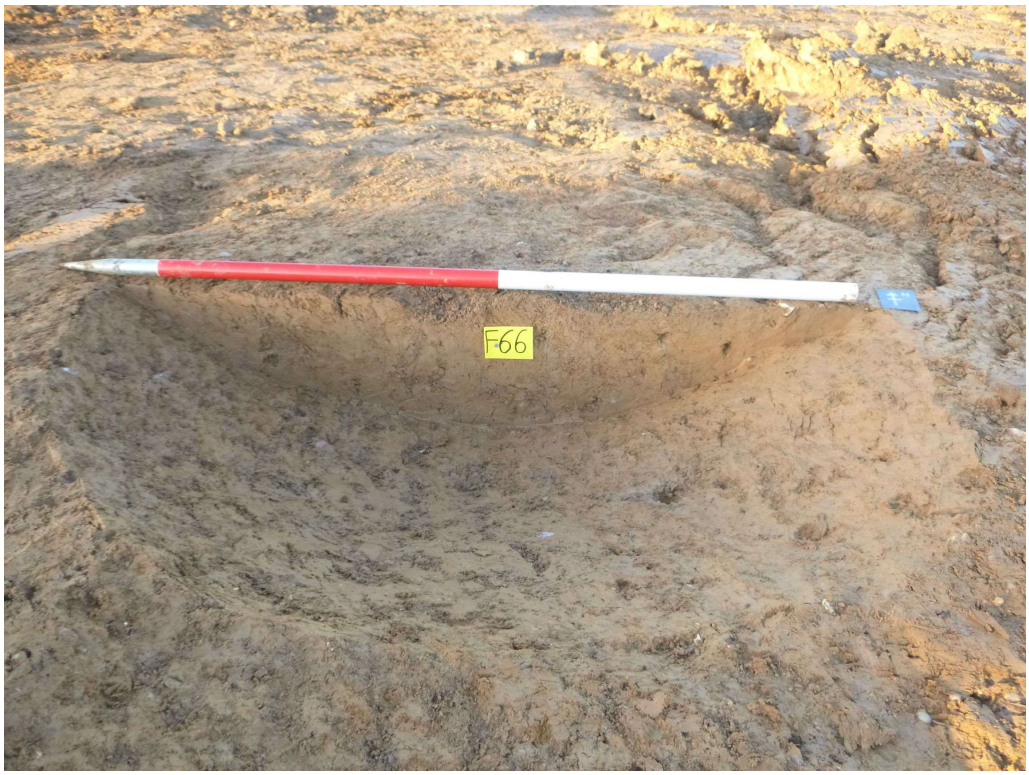
Prehistoric

Three pits and a pit/post-hole dating to the Bronze Age were located in the east of the excavation area. Pit/post-hole F90 (*c* 0.32m in diameter and 0.20m deep) and pit F82 (F82 0.98m by 1.67m and 0.34m deep) produced the two largest assemblages of pottery, 84 sherds and 75 respectively. They both dated to the Middle Bronze Age. Pit F72 (0.72m by 0.99m and 0.13m deep) produced a single sherd of Bronze Age pottery, while pit F81 (1.11m by 1.32m and 0.21m deep) produced six sherds dating to the Late Bronze Age.

Photograph 1 F90 sx – view west

Also located in the eastern side of the excavation were seven prehistoric pits. Pits F66 (1.11m by 1.32m and 0.21m deep), F70 (0.99m by 1.36m and 0.25m deep), F71 (0.16m by 1.01m and 0.18m deep), F76 (0.67m by 0.83m and 0.27m deep), F87 (1.40m by 1.07m and 0.26m deep) and F88 (1.14m by 0.91m and 0.10m deep) all produced small assemblages of 10 or fewer pottery sherds. A larger quantity of 22 sherds of pottery was recovered from pit F75 (0.94m by 1.00m and 0.12m deep).

Photograph 2 F72 sx – view north



Photograph 3 F66 sx – view north

Medieval

Two features produced finds dating to the medieval period, pit F56 and ditch F73. Pit F56 was 1.12m by 0.91m and 0.25m deep and produced a small quantity of pottery and baked clay.

Ditch F73 was 75.70m long, 0.47-0.89m wide and 0.13-0.20m deep. It was on a north north-west/south south-east alignment with a U-shaped profile. A single pottery sherd and fragment of baked clay were recovered from the fill.

Photograph 4 F73 sx4 – view south south-east

Photograph 5 F39 plan – view north-west

Post-medieval/modern
Two post-medieval ditches were identified. Ditch F39 was on a north-east/south-west alignment with a V-shaped profile. A small quantity of pottery, peg-tile, glass, clay pipe and iron was recovered from six sections. At the southern end ditch F39 was truncated by a modern land drain.

Ditch F43 was 116.13m long, 0.35m wide and 0.45m deep with a deep U-shaped profile. It was on a north-east/south-west alignment and contained a land drain. It truncated ditches F39 and F73.

Three pits were dated to the post-medieval or modern period, F57 (0.50m by 0.80m and 0.08m deep), F62 (1.98m by 1.53m and 0.18m deep) and F63 (0.70m by 1.05m and 0.22m deep).

Undated
Twenty-seven undated pits (F37, F38, F41, F46, F47, F58, F59, F61, F64, F65, F67, F68, F69, F74, F78, F79, F80, F83, F84, F85, F86, F89, F91, F92, F93, F94, F96) were scattered across the excavation area. They were a variety of shapes and sizes, the largest being F94 at 2.10m by 0.88m and 0.33m deep and the smallest F68 *c* 0.15m diameter and 0.09m deep.

Pit F68 produced a small quantity of burnt bone, less than 4g in total. It is uncertain as to whether this represents human or animal bone although, due to the small quantity, the latter is most likely.

The base of an undated briquetage vessel was recovered from pit F38 (*c* 0.80m in diameter and 0.60m deep). Fragments of daub and baked clay were recovered from pits F69 (1.87m by 1.52m and 0.25m deep), F78 (*c* 0.80m in diameter and 0.09m deep), F92 (1.11m by 1.31m and 0.20m deep), F93 (0.54m by 0.65m and 0.13m) and F94. Animal bone fragments were also recovered from pit F94.

Photograph 6 F38 sx – view north-east

Photograph 7 F48, F49, F50 and F51 plan – view north-east

Undated post-holes F48 (*c* 0.5m in diameter and 0.09m deep), F49 (*c* 0.37m in diameter and 0.05m deep), F50 (*c* 0.45m in diameter and 0.07m deep) and F51 (0.30m by 0.51m and 0.06m deep) could possibly form a small four-post structure. The post-holes were arranged in a rough rectangle approximately 3m apart.

Three more undated post-holes were excavated, F52 (0.65m by 0.60m and 0.10m deep), F53 (*c* 0.45m in diameter and 0.05m deep) and F54 (0.30m by 0.37m and 0.05m deep).

Two undated pit/tree-throws, F33 (0.69m by 1.25m and 0.14m deep) and F45 (1.24m by 1.86m and 0.35m deep), and an undated post-hole/tree-throw, F34 (*c* 0.40m in diameter and 0.10m deep), were located in the north-west of the excavation area.

Three undated tree-throws, F42, F60 and F77, were also identified. The largest was 1.43m by 2.62m and 0.24m deep and the smallest 1.49m by 0.85m and 0.14m deep.

Four natural features (F35, F36, F44 and F95) were also excavated.

Evaluation features

The excavation area was centred over trenches T21-23 and T28-30 from the evaluation. Four features (F3, F7, F14 and F17) from the evaluation were reinvestigated during the current work. Originally thought to be gullies/ditches, they have now been identified as elongated tree-throws (F3, F14 and F17) and a pit (F7).

Photograph 8 Site shot

6 Finds

6.1 Ceramic and pottery

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The excavation uncovered 259 sherds of pottery and ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) weighing just over 1kg with an EVE of 0.58 (Table 1). The mean sherd weight is low at 4g and the assemblage is heavily fragmented.

Ceramic material	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
Pottery	207	690	3	0.58
CBM	52	397	8	-
All	**258**	**1,086**	**4**	**0.58**

Table 1 Details on the main types of ceramics and pottery.

Sherds of pottery and ceramics were recovered from 23 features although most produced small-sized assemblages with 10 or fewer sherds (Table 2). The largest assemblage is the 84 sherds (280g) from post-hole/pit F90, followed by pit F82 at 75 sherds (248g) (Table 2).

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
F38	Pit	1	77	77
F39	Ditch	5	18	4
F43	Ditch	4	95	24
F56	Pit	3	17	6
F62	Pit	13	68	5
F63	Pit	1	4	4
F66	Pit	3	9	3
F67	Pit	1	9	9
F69	Pit	2	25	13
F70	Pit	1	6	6
F71	Pit	4	33	8

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
F72	Pit	2	30	15
F73	Ditch	2	7	4
F75	Pit	22	31	1
F76	Pit	5	52	10
F78	Pit	1	3	3
F81	Pit	6	11	2
F82	Pit	75	248	3
F87	Pit	10	7	1
F88	Pit	8	42	5
F90	Pit/post-hole	84	280	3
F92	Pit	4	11	3
F93	Pit	1	3	3
F94	?Pit	1	1	1
	Total	**258**	**1,086**	**4**

Table 2 Quantities of pottery and CBM from specific features.

Prehistoric pottery

There was a small assemblage of handmade prehistoric pottery at 202 sherds weighing 617g with an EVE of 0.51 (Table 3). This material was recovered from 14 features although most of the prehistoric pottery came from post-hole/pit F90 and pit F82 (Table 3). The prehistoric pottery is in a very fragmentary condition with a mean sherd weight of only 3g while there is also very little in the way of dateable diagnostic material. The majority of this material belongs to pottery which was tempered with flint (HMF) or grog (HMG) (Table 4). The flint-tempered pottery is typically in orange to brown coloured fabrics with common medium- to-coarse sized flint. The bias towards flint-tempered pottery might suggest an earlier prehistoric and Bronze Age date for most of this material and this is true of the small quantity of diagnostic material. For example, the post-hole/pit F90 contained several small bucket urns (EVE: 0.15) in handmade grog-tempered fabrics (HMG) which were decorated with fingertip and fingernail impressions along the top of the rim. There was also a sherd of handmade grog-tempered pottery (HMG) with an applied finger-impressed cordon. The handmade flint-tempered (HMF) urn from pit F82 is decorated with a line of pre-firing holes below the rim (some are blind and not completely pierced through the vessel wall). Similar decorative designs (lines of decorative holes, fingertip/fingernail impressions, cordons with impressed decoration) are typical of the Middle Bronze Age 'Deverel-Rimbury' pottery from Ardleigh and so too is the use of handmade grog-tempered fabrics (Brown 1999, 76-116). Pit F81 contained a handmade sand-and-flint tempered (HMSF) cup (EVE: 0.08) which is typical of Late Bronze Age 'post-Deverel-Rimbury' pottery in Essex (Peachey 2020, 79-80).

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
F39	Ditch	1	2	2	0.00
F56	Pit	1	1	1	0.00
F62	Pit	12	25	2	0.00
F66	Pit	3	9	3	0.00
F70	Pit	1	6	6	0.00
F71	Pit	1	18	18	0.00
F72	Pit	2	30	15	0.03
F75	Pit	22	31	1	0.00
F76	Pit	1	1	1	0.00
F81	Pit	2	6	3	0.08
F82	Pit	54	159	3	0.16
F87	Pit	10	7	1	0.00
F88	Pit	8	42	5	0.06

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
F90	Pit/post-hole	84	280	3	0.18
	Total	**202**	**617**	**3**	**0.51**

Table 3 Quantities of prehistoric pottery from specific features.

Fabric Group	Fabric description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
HMF	Handmade flint-tempered	109	354	3	0.25
HMFG	Handmade flint & grog-tempered	28	90	3	0.00
HMSF	Handmade sand & flint tempered	3	8	3	0.08
HMG	Handmade grog-tempered	53	156	3	0.18
HM CRUMB	Unidentifiable handmade pottery including from soil samples	8	4	0.5	0.00
	Total	**202**	**617**	**3**	**0.51**

Table 4 Details on the prehistoric pottery.

Post-Roman pottery

The post-Roman pottery was recorded according to the fabric groups from *CAR* **7** (Cotter 2000) (Table 5), while the number of vessels was determined by rim EVE (estimated vessel equivalent). There was only five sherds of post-Roman pottery with a weight of 73g and EVE of 0.07 (Table 6). This material was recovered from four features (Table 7). Diagnostic sherds included a cooking pot with a flanged and upright rim (AD 1150/1175-1225) in early medieval sandy ware (fabric F13) from ditch F13 and a large bowl/pancheon in post-medieval red earthenwares (fabric F40) dating to *c* 1500-19th/20th century from pit F62. There was also a sherd from a Staffordshire-type slipware (fabric F50) press-moulded dish from the linear F39 which dates to AD 1650-1800.

Fabric code	Fabric description	Fabric date range guide
F13	Early Medieval sandy wares	11th-early 13th century
F40	Post-medieval red earthenwares	*c* 1500-19th/20th century
F50	Staffordshire-type slipware	1650-1800

Table 5 Post-Roman pottery fabrics recorded.

Fabric Group	Fabric description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
F13	Early Medieval sandy wares	2	19	10	0.03
F40	Post-medieval red earthenwares	2	46	23	0.04
F50	Staffordshire-type slipware	1	8	8	0.00
	Total	**5**	**73**	**15**	**0.07**

Table 6 Details on the post-Roman pottery.

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
F39	Ditch	2	11	6	0.00
F56	Pit	1	15	15	0.00
F62	Pit	1	43	43	0.04
F73	Ditch	1	4	4	0.03
	Total	**5**	**73**	**15**	**0.07**

Table 7 Quantities of post-Roman pottery from specific features.

Ceramic building material (CBM)

There were 51 sherds of CBM weighing only 396g with a mean sherd weight of 8g (Table 8). Small quantities of CBM was recovered from 15 features (Table 9). Baked clay and daub accounts for the majority of this material alongside a small quantity of post-Roman brick and peg-tile. There was also a base from a briquetage vessel which came from the pit F38.

CBM code	CBM type	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
Post-Roman				
PT	Peg-tile	4	94	24
BR	Brick	1	3	3
Undated				
	Baked clay	45	209	5
	Briquetage	1	77	77
	Daub	1	14	14
	Total	**52**	**396**	**8**

Table 8 Building material by period and type.

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
F38	Pit	1	77	77
F39	Ditch	2	5	3
F43	Ditch	4	95	24
F56	Pit	1	1	1
F63	Pit	1	4	4
F67	Pit	1	9	9
F69	Pit	2	25	13
F71	Pit	3	15	5
F73	Ditch	1	3	3
F76	Pit	4	51	13
F78	Pit	1	3	3
F81	Pit	4	5	1
F82	Pit	21	89	4
F92	Pit	4	11	3
F93	Pit	1	3	3
F94	?Pit	1	1	1
	Total	**51**	**396**	**8**

Table 9 Quantities of CBM from specific features and contexts.

Conclusion

Table 10 summarizes the dating evidence for the features which produced dateable pottery and ceramics. Most features date to the prehistoric period, with some identifiable to the Middle and Late Bronze Age. Pit F56 and ditch F73 are medieval, while ditches F39 and F43 are post-medieval. Finally, pit F62 is post-medieval or modern.

Context	Description	Prehistoric pottery	Post-Roman pottery	CBM	Date approx.
F39	Ditch	HMG	F40, F50 (press-moulded dish)	PT	AD 1650-1800
F43	Ditch	-	-	BR, PT	Post Medieval
F56	Pit	HMF	F13	-	11th-early 13th century
F62	Pit	HMF	F40 (large bowl/pancheon)	-	*c* 1500-19th/20th century
F66	Pit	HMF	-	-	Prehistoric
F70	Pit	HMF	-	-	Prehistoric
F71	Pti	HMF	-	-	Prehistoric
F72	Pit	HMF (urn)			Bronze Age
F73	Ditch	-	F13 (cooking pot)	-	1150/1175-1225
F75	Pit	HMF	-	-	Prehistoric
F76	Pit	HMF	-	-	Prehistoric

Context	Description	Prehistoric pottery	Post-Roman pottery	CBM	Date approx.
F81	Pit	HMSF (cup)	-	-	Late Bronze Age
F82	Pit	HMF (urn), HMSF, HMS	-	-	Middle Bronze Age
F87	Pit	HMF	-	-	Prehistoric
F88	Pit	HMF	-	--	Prehistoric
F90	Pit/post-hole	HMF, HMF, HMFG,HMG (urn)	-	-	Middle Bronze Age

Table 10 Approximate dates for the individual features.

6.2 Miscellanous finds

by Laura Pooley

Two fragments of metal-working debris came from prehistoric pit F71 (finds no. 38). Three fragments of burnt flint also came from Late Bronze Age pit F81 and Middle Bronze Age pit/post-hole F90.

Post-medieval/modern finds included fragments of clay tobacco pipe, glass (bottle and window), agricultural ironwork, clinker/coke and a piece of burnt flint from two ditches (F39 and F43) and three pits (F57, F63, F66).

All of the finds are listed below by context in Table 11, and all have been discarded except where indicated.

Context	Finds no.	Description
F39 sx2	21	**Glass:** Fragment of post-medieval bottle glass covered in thick iridescence, 5.8g
F39 sx4	26	**Clay tobacco pipe:** Stem fragment, post-medieval, 13.9g. **Clinker/coke:** Four fragments, 2.2g.
F39 sx5	27	**Iron:** 1) Fragment of nail shank, clenched at 45°, 4.6g; 2) Fragment of iron sheet, 34.1mm by 29.5mm and 4.4mm thick, 6.8g. Probably agricultural, post-medieval/modern.
F39 sx6	28	**Clay tobacco pipe:** Stem fragment, post-medieval, 1.0g.
F43 sx3	31	**Iron:** Strip, rectangular in cross-section, appears to taper to a point which is bent at 45°, the other send is broken, 51.8mm long, 17.6mm wide, 8.6mm thick, 14.3g. Probably agricultural, post-medieval/modern.
F57	32	**Coke/clinker:** Fragment, 8.0g.
F63	34	**Glass:** Fragment of window glass, post-medieval, 11.7g.
F66	35	**Glass:** Fragment of modern glass, 0.6g.
F71	38	**Metal-working debris:** Two fragments, 25.0g (retained in the finds archive).
F81	45	**Burnt flint:** Fragment, cracked, burnt red, 11.4g.
F90	50	**Burnt flint:** Two fragments, cracked and crazed, and burnt various shades of grey and white, 74.8g.

Table 11 Miscellaneous finds listed by context.

6.3 Lithics

by Adam Wightman

Five struck flints were recovered from two pits during the archaeological investigations. The distal end of a broken flake was recovered from pit F63. The flake has no typologically diagnostic characteristics and can only be broadly dated to the later prehistoric period (Mesolithic-Bronze Age).

Four struck flints were recovered from pit F82. One of the flints is a small soft-hammer flake which could be a waste piece from the production of a Neolithic axe. The other three flints from F82 are a small waste flake, a secondary flake with evidence of use-wear or edge-damage on one lateral edge, and a broken retouched flake (with a possible retouched notch). None of these flints are closely datable, but are most likely to date to the Neolithic or Bronze Age.

Context	Find no.	Type	Cortext %	Hard/soft hammer	Platform prep	Notes
F63	34	flake	10	-	-	broken, proximal end removed
F82	10	flake	5	hard	no	edge-damage or use-wear right lateral
		flake/waste piece	10	hard	no	
		waste flake or axe-thinning flake	10	soft	no	very small, thin flake
		retouched ?flake	5	-	-	broken, proximal end removed, retouched on right lateral edge – one length of straight retouch and one shallow, concave length (?notch)

Table 12 Struck flint by context

6.4 Burnt Bone

by Megan Seehra

A very small quantity (3.18g) of highly fragmented burnt bone was found in pit F68. A total of 29 fragments were between 3-5mm in size and weighed 1.31g. Fragments under 2mm were not counted. All bone recovered was white or greyish-white in colour, indicating the temperature of this cremation reached temperatures of 700-1000°C (McKinley, 2000).

6.5 Animal Bone

by Alec Wade

Undated pit F94 produced 90 pieces of animal bone weighing 226g. The material was very fragmentary and in poor condition. Two species were positively identified, dog and pig.

Most of the identifiable bone was likely from the burial of a single dog. Though very poorly preserved, most areas of the animal's body were represented by some (albeit) fragmentary remains including parts of the head region, neck, front and rear legs and feet. The surface of some pieces displayed surface erosion characteristic of exposure to weathering. The fusion of the proximal epiphysis on the left and right ulna fragments gives the dog an age of greater than 1.25 years old. It is possible that there is a horizontal cut through the diaphysis of the right radius (immediately below the proximal joint) but this determination is somewhat unreliable due to the poor condition of the material.

Other skull, vertebrae and rib fragments were recovered but these were not closely identifiable and at least one piece (a calcaneus) was identified as pig.

Species	No. of pieces	Weight (g)	Comments
Canis familiaris (dog)	20	140	**Tooth** (1, canine tooth, possibly from a mandible). **Epistropheus** (1). **Radius fragments**, proximal (2, both left and right, right example with a possible cut through the diaphysis?). **Ulna fragments**, proximal (3, including both left and right). Fused proximal epiphyses give a tabulated age of > 1.25 years old. **Humerus fragments**, proximal (1), distal (2, left). Fused proximal epiphysis gives a tabulated age of > 1 year old. **Femur diaphysis fragments** (2, both left and right legs?). Fragments display signs of weathering. **Tibia fragment,** proximal (1, left?). **Metacarpal fragments** (3, all left foot). **Metapodials** fragments (3). **1st phalange** fragment (1).
Sus (pig)	1	4	**Calcaneus** (1, left, possibly dog gnawed?). State of epiphyseal fusion not clear.
Unidentified	69	82	**Skull** fragments (2)

(Probably also dog?)			**Vertebrae** (10) **Ribs** (5) **Diaphysis fragments** (11) **Unidentifiable fragments** (41).
	90	**226g**	

Table 13 Animal bone from pit F94 (finds no. 53).

7 Environmental assessment

by Lisa Gray MSc MA ACIfA Archaeobotanist

Introduction

Environmental samples were taken from a total of 12 features but only three (samples 6, 8 and 17) produced any archaebotanical remains.

Sample	Context	Feature type	% sampled	Provisional date	Sample Volume (L.)	Flot present?
6	F41	Pit	100	Undated	10	No
8	F67	Pit	30	Undated	10	No
17	F94	Pit	25	Undated	20	Yes

Table 14 Samples presented for assessment.

Sampling and processing methods

Samples were taken and processed by staff from Colchester Archaeological Trust. Once with the author, the flots were scanned under a low powered stereo-microscope with a magnification range of 10 to 45x. The whole flot was examined. The abundance, diversity, and state of preservation of eco- and artefacts in the sample was recorded.

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; Jacomet 2006). Nomenclature for plants is taken from Stace (2010). Latin names are given once, and the common names used thereafter. Quantities were estimated using the DAFOR scale (see below):

D – Dominant – >200 (items)
A – Abundant – 51-200 (items)
F – Frequent – 16-50 (items)
O – Occasional – 6-15 (items)
R – Rare – 5 or fewer (items)

The quantity of Identifiable charred wood >4mm in diameter has been noted separately from the quantity of charred wood flecks (<4mm diameter). Fragments 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 & Hoffman, 1988, 178-179). Charred wood flecks <4mm diameter have been quantified but not recommended for further analysis unless twigs or roundwood fragments larger than 2mmØ were present.

Results (Table 15)

The plant remains in these samples were preserved by charring. Charring occurs when plant material is heated under reducing conditions where oxygen is largely excluded leaving a carbon skeleton resistant to decay (Boardman & Jones 1990, 2; Campbell *et al.* 2011, 17). The soil type is Soilscape 8, 'slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage' (Cranfield University 2020). This type of soil can provide preservation conditions suitable for the survival of charred plant remains and possibly pollen (Campbell *et al.* 2011, 5-6).

Charcoal was the most frequent plant macro-remain in these samples and each sample contained fragments of identifiable size. Two bread/club/rivet wheat grains were found in pit F94 (sample 17).

Sample	**6**	**8**	**17**
Context number	**F41**	**F67**	**F94**
Feature type	Pit	Pit	Pit
Provisional date	undated	undated	undated
Sample volume (l)	10	10	20
Flot volume (ml)	N/A	N/A	75
General preservation*	Good	Good	Good
Sufficient for AMS?**	Maybe	Maybe	Maybe
Full analysis recommended?	No	No	No
Charred Cereal Remains			
Bread/Club/rivet wheat (*Triticum aestivum/durum/turgidum*)	-	-	R
Charred Miscellaneous			
Charcoal >4mm Qty.	5	51-200	16-50
Charcoal <4mm	-	F	F
Uncharred Seeds			
Orache (*Atriplex* sp.)	-	-	R
Wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum* L.)	-	-	R
Other Items			
Modern roots	-	-	R

Table 15 Flot contents.
*General Preservation: Good = Species or Genus identification possible; moderate = Family identification possible; poor = too poorly preserved to identify.
** consultation with dating laboratory recommended.

Discussion

Biases in recovery, residuality, contamination

No biases in recovery or contamination were reported. The only sample that contained evidence of possible flora bioturbation was the from pit F94 (sample 17) that was contained low numbers of modern root fragments. This sample also contained low numbers of uncharred seeds of ruderal plants that have been interpreted as intrusive due to the presence of modern rootlets and no evidence of waterlogged preservation during sampling or in the flots.

Potential, significance and recommendations

Only three of the samples taken at this site produced environmental remains so one can conclude that preservation conditions for archaeobotanical remains was very poor. These three samples contain charred plant macro-remains that are very resilient and can survive being transported about a site in backfill or from plough damage or other activities that move sediments and soils.

Due to the evidence of poor preservation conditions across the site and the low density of plant macro-remains in these samples no further work is recommended unless charcoal identification is required to select fragments for radiocarbon dating.

8 Conclusion

The excavation at Dawes Lane, West Mersea revealed 58 archaeological features: three ditches, 41 pits, two pit/tree-throws, a pit/post-hole, seven post-holes, a post-hole/tree-throw and three tree-throws.

While the vast majority of features were undated, there was limited evidence of three periods present: prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval/modern.

Eleven pits produced prehistoric finds, one of which was more closely-dated to the Bronze Age, two to the Middle Bronze Age and one to the Late Bronze Age. It is likely all the prehistoric

features are Bronze Age in date, an indication of some Bronze Age activity with the proximity of the development site. These features were confined to the eastern side of the excavation area. Pits F75 and F82 and pit/post-hole F90 produced the sites three largest assemblages of pottery, the rest of the prehistoric features all produced small assemblages (12 sherds or less).

The presence of briquetage (recovered from undated pit F38) is unsurprising as Mersea is a known area of historic salt production via the controlled evaporation of sea water. Briquetage itself is the term given to the fired-clay containers and other secondary items used to crystalize and dry salt.

This find is, however, quite isolated. Briquetage is usually of a Late Iron Age or Roman date, and archaeological material of this date was very limited on this site there being only a few sherds of pottery from the evaluation phase. Striking visible evidence of the salt-making industry takes the form of 'red hills', small mounds reddish colour found in the coastal and tidal river areas of East Anglia and Essex.

The possible four-post structure located in the west of the excavation area is likely associated with agriculture practices and could represent a small grain store.

Two features, a pit and a ditch were dated to the medieval period and five features, three pits and two ditches were post-medieval or modern in date. None of the ditches present appear on early OS mapping indicating they must have been backfilled by the late 19th century. Ditch F39 aligns with ditch F31 in T3 from the evaluation.

9 Acknowledgements

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11 Abbreviations and glossary

Bronze Age	period from *c* 2500 – 700 BC
Bronze Age (Middle)	Middle Bronze Age, period from *c* 1500 – 1000 BC
Bronze Age (Late)	Late Bronze Age, period from *c* 1000 – 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CBCAA	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
cropmark	an archaeological site no longer visible on the ground due to the removal of upstanding remains (often by ploughing). The sites are recorded from aerial photographs by differential crop growth over buried features such as pits, ditches and walls
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
fieldwalking	a form of evaluation that provides details of surface features visible during a physical

	search of the site area and is a systematic observation of the ground surface during. The recovery of artefacts that may indicate periods of occupation is also an important part of this evaluation.
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
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	**O**nline **A**cces**S** to the **I**ndex of Archaeological Investigation**S**, 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
wsi	written scheme of investigation

12 Contents of archive

Finds: one box

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:
The report (CAT Report 1760)
Site digital photos and log
Site data (section drawings)

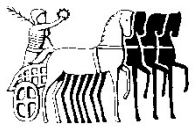
Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1760)
CBC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation
Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log
Graphic files
Site data
Survey data

13 Archive deposition

The 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 project ref. ECC4680 and with the Archaeological Data Service.

Distribution list:
Brad Davies (Mersea Homes)
Dr Simon Wood, Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
Essex Historic Environment Record



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Date: 17/02/2022

Appendix 1 Context list

Context Number	Trench number	Finds Number	Feature / layer type	Description	Date
L1	All	8, 11, 20	Topsoil	Soft, moist dark grey/brown sandy-silt	Modern
L2	All	-	Subsoil	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay with occasional small stones	Subsoil
L3	All	-	Natural	Hard, moist medium orange/brown clay	Natural
Evaluation					
F1	T32	-	Tree-throw	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silt	Undated
F2	T32	1	Field boundary ditch	Hard, dry medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay with CBM flecks and occasional CBM fragments	Post-medieval/ modern
F3	T29	-	Gully	Soft, moist light yellow/grey/brown silty-clay with daub flecks and 1% stones	Undated
F4	T35	-	Tree-throw	Firm, moist light/medium grey/brown clay	Undated
F5	T34	2	Tree-throw	Firm/hard, moist light/medium orange/grey/brown silty-clay	Undated
F6	T28	3	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay	?Roman
F7	T30	4, <1>	Gully	Hard dry/moist medium grey/brown silty-clay	?Prehistoric
F8	T27	5	Ditch / gully	Firm, dry/moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks and 3% stones	Uncertain
F9	T34	6	Tree-throw	Firm, moist light/medium grey/brown silty-clay with daub flecks	Undated
F10	T35	-	Tree-throw	Firm, moist light yellow/grey clayey-silt	Undated
F11	T24	7	Pit / depression	Firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with daub flecks	Undated
F12	T30	9	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silt	Undated
F13	T22	-	Tree-throw	Firm, moist medium orange/grey/brown clayey-silt	Undated
F14	T21	-	Gully	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay	Undated
F15	T26	10	Pit	Firm, moist light grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal and daub flecks and 3% stones	Undated
F16	T19		Gully	Soft, light orange/grey clayey-silt	Post-medieval
F17	T23	<3>	Ditch	Firm/hard, moist medium grey/brown siltyclay	Undated
F18	T15	<2>	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silt with charcoal flecks	Undated
F19	T6	-	Tree-throw	Light/medium, grey/brown clayey-silt	Undated
F20	T7	<4>	Gully	Friable, moist medium orange/grey/brown clayey-silt	?Post-medieval
F21	T7	-	Gully	Firm, moist light yellow/orange/brown clayey-silt	?Post-medieval
F22	T12	12	Field boundary ditch	Firm/hard, dry/moist medium green/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Post-medieval/ modern
F23	T18	13, 14	Field boundary ditch	Hard, dry light grey/brown sandy-silty-clay with charcoal and CBM flecks and 5% stones	Post-medieval
F24	T18	15	Field boundary ditch	Firm/hard, dry medium grey/brown sandy silty-clayey-loam	Post-medieval/ modern
F25	T5	17	?Gully	Firm moist medium grey/brown clayey-silt	Post-medieval/ modern

F26	T11	-	Gully	Soft, moist light yellow/grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal and daub flecks and 2% stones	Post-medieval/ modern
F27	T4	16	Field boundary ditch	Firm, moist medium green/brown silty-clay	Post-medieval
F28	T1	-	Natural feature	Firm, moist light grey/brown silty-clay and 1% stones	Post-glacial
F29	T2	<5>	Linear depression	Firm, moist light grey/brown sandy-silty-clay	Undated
F30	T5	18	Pit	Firm, moist medium/dark grey/brown clayey-silt	Medieval/ post-medieval
F31	T3	19	Gully	Firm, moist medium/dark grey/brown silty-clay	Post-medieval/ modern
F32	T6	-	?Natural feature	Firm moist light grey/brown sandy-silty-clay	Post-glacial
Excavation					
F33	-	-	Pit/tree-throw	Firm, moist light/medium grey/brown silty-clay	Undated
F34	-	-	Post-hole/tree-throw	Firm, moist light/medium grey/brown silty-clay	Undated
F35	-	-	Natural feature	Firm, moist light/medium grey/brown silty-clay	Post glacial
F36	-	-	Natural feature	Friable, moist light/medium grey/brown silty-clay	Post glacial
F37	-	-	Pit	Firm, moist light/medium orange/grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Undated
F38	-	22	Pit	Firm, moist medium orange/brown clay with charcoal flecks	Undated
F39	-	21, 25, 26, 27, 28	Ditch	Firm/hard, dry medium grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Post-medieval, 1650-1800
F40	-	-	Plough scar	Friable, moist medium orange/grey silty-clay	Undated
F41	-	<6>	Pit	Firm, moist medium/dark orange/grey clay with charcoal flecks	Undated
F42	-	-	Tree-throw	Friable, moist medium orange/grey silty-clay with 5% stones	Undated
F43	-	23, 24, 31	Ditch	Firm, moist orange/grey/brown silty-clay	Post-medieval
F44	-	-	Natural feature	Firm, moist orange/grey/brown silty-clay	Post-glacial
F45	-	-	Pit/tree-throw	Firm, moist medium brown clay with 2% stones	Undated
F46	-	-	Pit	Firm, moist light grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks and 1% stones	Undated
F47	-	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium brown clay with 1% stones	Undated
F48	-	-	Post-hole	Firm, moist medium grey/brown clay	Undated
F49	-	-	Post-hole	Firm, moist medium grey/brown clay	Undated
F50	-	-	Post-hole	Firm, moist medium grey/brown clay	Undated
F51	-	-	Post-hole	Firm, moist medium grey/brown clay	Undated
F52	-	-	Post-hole	Firm, moist medium grey/brown clay	Undated
F53	-	-	Post-hole	Firm, moist dark grey/brown silty-clay	Undated
F54	-	-	Post-hole	Firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay	Undated
F55	-	-	-	-	-
F56	-	30	Pit	Soft, moist light medium grey silty-clay with	Medieval, 11th-

				charcoal flecks	13th century
F57	-	32	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay	Post-medieval
F58	-	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Undated
F59	-	-	Pit	Friable, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay	Undated
F60	-	-	Tree-throw	Firm, moist medium grey/brown/yellow silty-clay	Undated
F61	-	-	Pit	Friable, moist medium orange/grey silt with charcoal flecks	Undated
F62	-	33	Pit	Firm, moist medium brown clay with charcoal flecks and 2% stones	Post-medieval/ modern
F63	-	34	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown clay with 2% stones	Post-medieval/ modern
F64	-	-	Pit	Hard, dry medium orange/grey clay	Undated
F65	-	-	Pit	Friable, moist light grey silt with charcoal flecks	Undated
F66	-	35	Pit	Firm, moist medium orange/grey silty clay with charcoal flecks and 5% stones	Prehistoric
F67	-	<8>	Pit	Soft, moist medium grey silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Undated
F68	-	<9>	Pit	Friable, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks and 10% stones	Undated
F69	-	36	Pit	Firm, moist/wet medium grey/brown clay with charcoal flecks and 4% stones	Undated
F70	-	37	Pit	Firm, moist medium brown clay with charcoal flecks and 2% stones	Prehistoric
F71	-	38	Pit	Firm, moist medium orange/grey silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Prehistoric
F72	-	39	Pit	Friable, moist medium orange/grey silty-clay with 3% stones	Bronze Age
F73	-	40, 41	Ditch	Firm, moist medium orange/grey clay with charcoal flecks	Medieval, 1150/1750-1225
F74	-	<11>	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown clay with charcoal flecks and 2% stones	Undated
F75	-	42	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay	Prehistoric
F76	-	43	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay	Prehistoric
F77	-	-	Tree-throw	Friable/firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay	Undated
F78	-	44	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Undated
F79	-	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay with 5% stones	Undated
F80	-	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay	Undated
F81	-	45	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay	Late Bronze Age
F82	-	46, <10>	Pit	Firm, wet dark grey/brown clay with charcoal flecks and 4% stones	Middle Bronze Age
F83	-	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay	Undated
F84	-	-	Pit	Friable, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay	Undated
F85	-	-	Pit	Firm, wet medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay	Undated
F86	-	-	Pit	Firm, wet medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay	Undated

				with 10% stones	
F87	-	48	Pit	Firm, wet medium grey/brown clay with charcoal flecks and 5% stones	Prehistoric
F88	-	49	Pit	Firm, moist medium brown silty-clay with 5% stones	Prehistoric
F89	-	-	Pit	Soft, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay	Undated
F90	-	50, <14>	Pit/post-hole	Friable, moist medium grey silty-clay	Middle Bronze Age
F91	-	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay	Undated
F92	-	51	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silty-clay with 10% stones	Undated
F93	-	52	Pit	Firm, moist medium/dark grey/brown silty-clay	Undated
F94	-	53, <17>	?Pit	Firm, moist medium orange/grey/brown silty-clay with charcoal flecks	Undated
F95	-	-	Natural feature	Firm, moist light/medium grey/brown silt	Post-glacial
F96	-	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown sandy-silty-loam	Undated

Appendix 2 Pottery list

Cxt	Feature type	Find no.	Soil S no.	NR	GR.	*MSW*	Discard	Rim	Handle	Base	Wmd	Soot	Pitting	Burn	Overifred	Kiln second	Residue	Resin Lin.	Gritted	Abraded	Modif.	Mark	Repair hole	Hole	Hole diam.	Disc	Disc diam.	Polishing	Fabric Grp	Typology	EVE	Diam.	Comments	Date
F39	LINEAR	21		1	3	*3*	X													X									F40				GLAZE	c.1500-19th/20th century
F39	LINEAR	26		1	2	*2*																							HMG				BR SURF, BLACK GROG, SPRSE FL, S & VOIDS	PREHISTORIC
F39	LINEAR	26		1	8	*8*		0	0	1																			F50	PRESS-MOULDED DISH				AD 1650-1800
F56	PIT	30		1	1	*1*																							HMF				GREY, BL CORE, V SPARSE F FL	PREHISTORIC
F56	PIT	30		1	15	*15*																							F13					11th-early 13th century
F62	PIT	33		1	1	*1*																							HM CRUMB					PREHISTORIC
F62	PIT	33		1	43	*43*		1	0	0										X									F40	LARGE BOWL/PANCHEON	0.04	560	GLAZE MOSTLY WORN OF	c.1500-19th/20th century
F62	PIT	33		11	24	*2*																							HMF				OR COMMON C & VC FL	PREHISTORIC
F66	PIT	35		3	9	*3*																							HMF				BR DARK BR, SPARSE C FL, SMOOTH SURF	PREHISTORIC
F70	PIT	37		1	6	*6*																							HMF				OR SPARSE C FL & FL PEBBPES	PREHISTORIC
F73	LINEAR	41		1	4	*4*		1	0	0																			F13	COOKING POT	0.03	?	FLANGED & UPRIGHT NECH	1150/1175-1225
F75	PIT	42		22	31	*1*																							HMF				OR V OXID, COMMON M-C FL	PREHISTORIC
F76	PIT	43		1	1	*1*																							HMF				BR, BL CORE, COMMON F-M-C FL	PREHISTORIC
F81	PIT	45		2	6	*3*		1	0	0				X															HMSF	BOWL	0.08	90	BUFF/OR SPARSE VC FL, COMMON S	PREHISTORIC
F82	PIT	46		1	6	*6*																							HMF				OR/BR, COMMON F-M FL, SPARSE C FL	PREHISTORIC
F82	PIT	46		7	15	*2*																							HMF				BR BL CORE, COMMON F-M FL	PREHISTORIC
F82	PIT	46		1	2	*2*																							HMSF				BL, BR CORE, COMMON F S	PREHISTORIC
F82	PIT	46		6	4	*1*		1	0	0																			HMF	?	0.03	?	BLACK SPARSE C FL	PREHISTORIC
F82	PIT	46		19	75	*4*		1	0	0																			HMF	URN	0.03	?	LINE OF SEVERAL HOLES, SOME BLIND , DEC ON VESSEL SIDE	BRONZE AGE
F82	PIT		10	1	2	*2*																							HMF				OR, COMMON F-M FL	PREHISTORIC
F82	PIT		10	10	29	*3*		1	0	0																			HMF	?	0.03	?	BR BL CORE, SPARSE C FL,HOLE PIERCED THROUGH VESSEL	BRONZE AGE
F82	PIT		10	2	5	*3*																							HMF				LIGTH BR BL CORE, COMMON BADLY SORTED FL	PREHISTORIC
F82	PIT		10	1	5	*5*																							HMS				SMOOTH SURF, BR/DARK BR, SAND	PREHISTORIC
F82	PIT		10	2	6	*3*																							HMF				OR/BR SPARSE C FL	PREHISTORIC
F82	PIT		10	1	1	*1*																							HMF				DARK BR, SMOOTH SURF, COM-MON F FL	PREHISTORIC
F82	PIT		10	1	5	*5*		1	0	0																			HMF	?	0.05	150	BLACK COMMON C FL	PREHISTORIC
F82	PIT		10	1	1	*1*																							HM CRUMB				BR/BL	PREHISTORIC
F82	PIT		10	1	3	*3*		1	0	0																			HMF	?	0.02	?	BR/DARK BR, COMMON F FL, HOLE BELOW RIM	BRONZE AGE

Cxt	Feature type	Find no.	Soil S no.	NR	GR.	*MSW*	Discard	Rim	Handle	Base	Wnd	Soot	Pitting	Burn	Overifred	Kiln second	Residue	Resin Lin.	Gritted	Abraded	Modif.	Mark	Repair hole	Hole	Hole diam.	Disc	Disc diam.	Polishing	Fabric Grp	Typology	EVE	Diam.	Comments	Date
F87	PIT	48		1	1	*1*								X														HM CRUMB					PREHISTORIC
F87	PIT	48		5	1	*0.2*																						HM CRUMB					PREHISTORIC
F87	PIT	48		4	5	*1*																						HMF				BR/OR, BLACK CORE, SPARSE F-M FL	PREHISTORIC
F88	PIT	49		4	32	*8*		2	0	0				X														HMF	URN	0.06	270	OR, AB CV & C FL	BRONZE AGE
F88	PIT	49		2	5	*3*								X														HMF				OR, BLACK COMMON M-C FL	PREHISTORIC
F88	PIT	49		1	4	*4*								X														HMF				BR, BL CORE, COMMON VC FL	PREHISTORIC
F88	PIT	49		1	1	*1*								X														HMF				BR COMMON F-M FL	PREHISTORIC
F90	POST-HOLE/PIT	50		1	7	*7*																						HMF				OR BLACK INT, COMMON F-M-C FL	PREHISTORIC
F90	POST-HOLE/PIT	50		13	74	*6*		0	0	5		X																HMFG				OR, BLACK INT, SPARSE C FL & GROG	PREHISTORIC
F90	POST-HOLE/PIT	50		1	26	*26*		0	0	1																		HMF				BLACK SPARSE M-C FL	PREHISTORIC
F90	POST-HOLE/PIT	50		46	145	*3*		3	0	0																		HMG	URN	0.04	120	BR-BL COMMON GROG, CORDON WITH CIRCULAR IMP-FINGNER NAIL ALONG TOP RIM	BRONZE AGE
F90	POST-HOLE/PIT	50																										HMG	URN	0.11	135	FINGER-NAIL IMP ALONG TOP RIM	BRONZE AGE
F90	POST-HOLE/PIT		15	1	2	*2*																						HMF				OR, SPARSE M FL	PREHISTORIC
F90	POST-HOLE/PIT		15	1	1	*1*																						HMF				BR SPARSE M FL	PREHISTORIC
F90	POST-HOLE/PIT		15	15	16	*1*		0	0	1																		HMFG				BL DARK BR, SPARSE GROG & C FL	PREHISTORIC
F90	POST-HOLE/PIT		15	5	7	*1*																						HMG				BL SLIGHTLY SMOOTH SURF, GROG, SOFT	PREHISTORIC
F90	POST-HOLE/PIT		15	1	2	*2*		1	0	0																		HMG	URN	0.03	?	BR, SOFT, FINGERNAIL IMP TOP RIM	BRONZE AGE

Appendix 3 CBM list

Cxt	Feature type	Find no.	Soil S no.	NR	GR.	*MSW*	Discard	Typology	FL CORN.	MNI	FL H.	FL W.	FL TH.	LCA	LCA L.	UCA	UCA L.	Stamp	Sign.	Tally	Graf PF	Animal	Shoe	Scored	Comb.	Roller	Circ. Vt.	Rect. Vt.	Bi. vt.	PH R	PH SQ	2 Phs	Blind	L.	BR.	TH.	Frog. L	Frog. Width	Mortar	Burnt	Overfired	Abraded	Modif.	Comments	Date
F38	PIT	22		1	77	77		Briquetage		0																																		BASE FROM VES-SEL?	?
F39	LINEAR	25		1	2	2	X	PT		0																																				?
F39	LINEAR	26		1	3	*3*		Baked clay		0																																				?
F43	LINEAR	23		1	19	*19*	X	PT		0																																				MEDIEVAL-POST MEDIEVAL
F43	LINEAR	24		1	29	*29*	X	PT		0																																				MEDIEVAL-POST MEDIEVAL
F43	LINEAR	31		1	44	*44*	X	PT		0																																				MEDIEVAL-POST MEDIEVAL
F43	LINEAR	31		1	3	*3*	X	BR		0																																				POST-MEDIEVAL-MODERN

Cxt	Feature type	Find no.	Soil S no.	NR	GR.	*MSW*	Discard	Typology	FL CORN.	MNI	FL H.	FL W.	FL TH.	LCA	LCA L.	UCA	UCA L.	Stamp	Sign.	Tally	Graf PF	Animal	Shoe	Scored	Comb.	Roller	Circ. Vt.	Rect. Vt.	Bl. vt.	PH R	PH SQ	2 Phs	Blind	L.	BR.	TH.	Frog. L	Frog. Width	Mortar	Burnt	Overfired	Abraded	Modif.	Comments	Date
F56	PIT	30		1	1	*1*		Baked clay		0																																			?
F63	PIT	34		1	4	*4*		Baked clay		0																																					?
F67	PIT		8	1	9	*9*		Baked clay																																							?
F69	PIT	36		1	14	*14*		Daub		0																																					?
F69	PIT	36		1	11	*11*		Baked clay		0																																	X				?
F71	PIT	38		3	15	*5*		Baked clay																																							?
F73	LINEAR	40		1	3	*3*		Baked clay		0																																					?
F76	PIT	43		3	50	*17*		Baked clay		0																																	X				OBJECT?	?
F76	PIT	43		1	1	*1*		Baked clay		0																																					?
F78	PIT	44		1	3	*3*	X	Baked clay		0																																					?
F81	PIT	45		3	4	*1*		Baked clay		0																																					?
F81	PIT	45		1	1	*1*		Baked clay		0																																					?
F82	PIT	46		3	3	*1*		Baked clay		0																																	X				?
F82	PIT	46		1	3	*3*		Baked clay		0																																	X				?
F82	PIT	46		1	4	*4*		Baked clay		0																																	X				?
F82	PIT	46		1	2	*2*		Baked clay		0																																	X				?
F82	PIT		10	15	77			Baked clay																																						?
F92	PIT	51		4	11	*3*		Baked clay		0																																					?
F93	PIT	52		1	3	*3*		Baked clay		0																																					?
F94	?PIT		17	1	1	1		Baked clay																																							?

Fig 1 Site location.

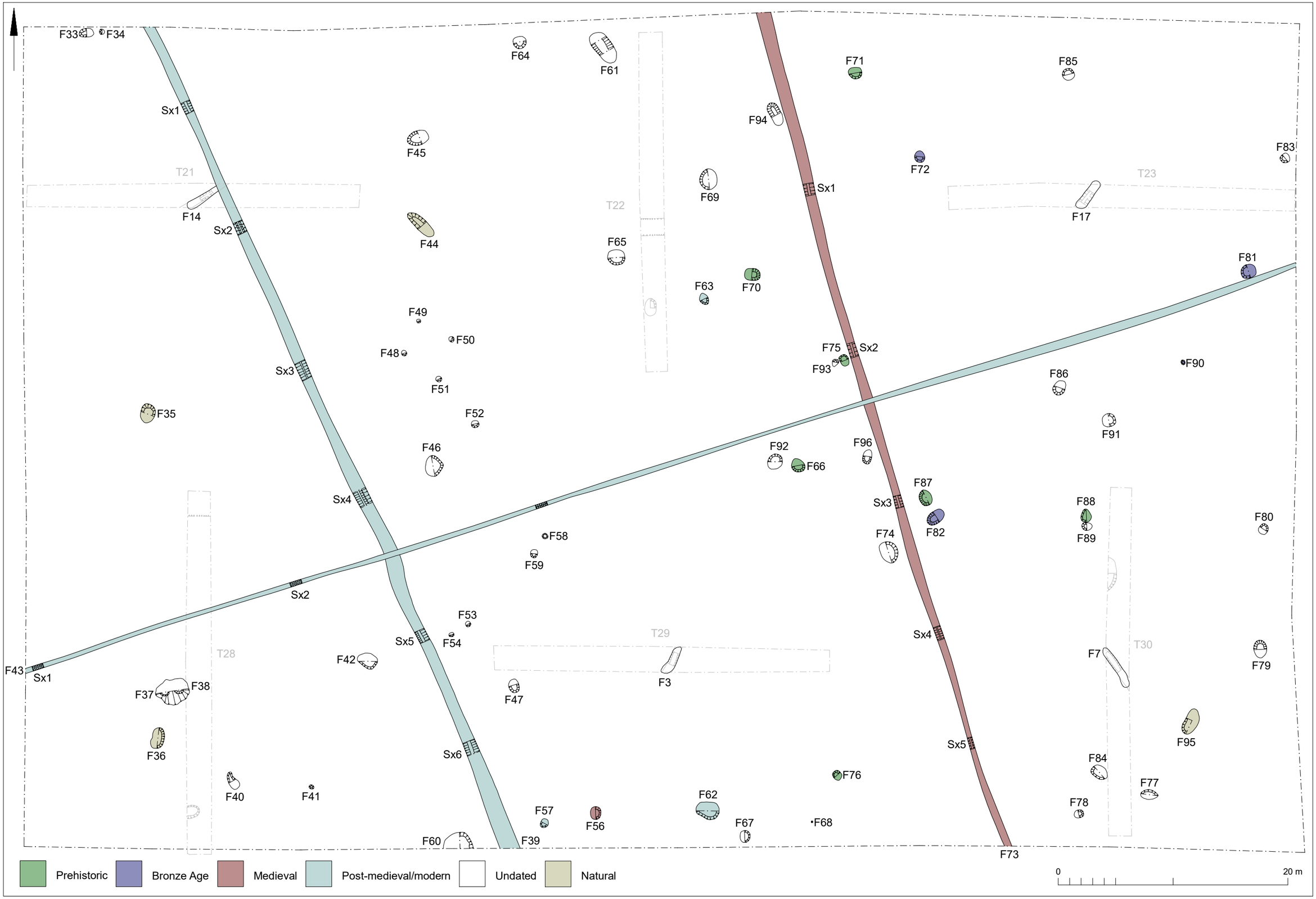

Fig 2 Excavation results. Evaluation trenches in grey.

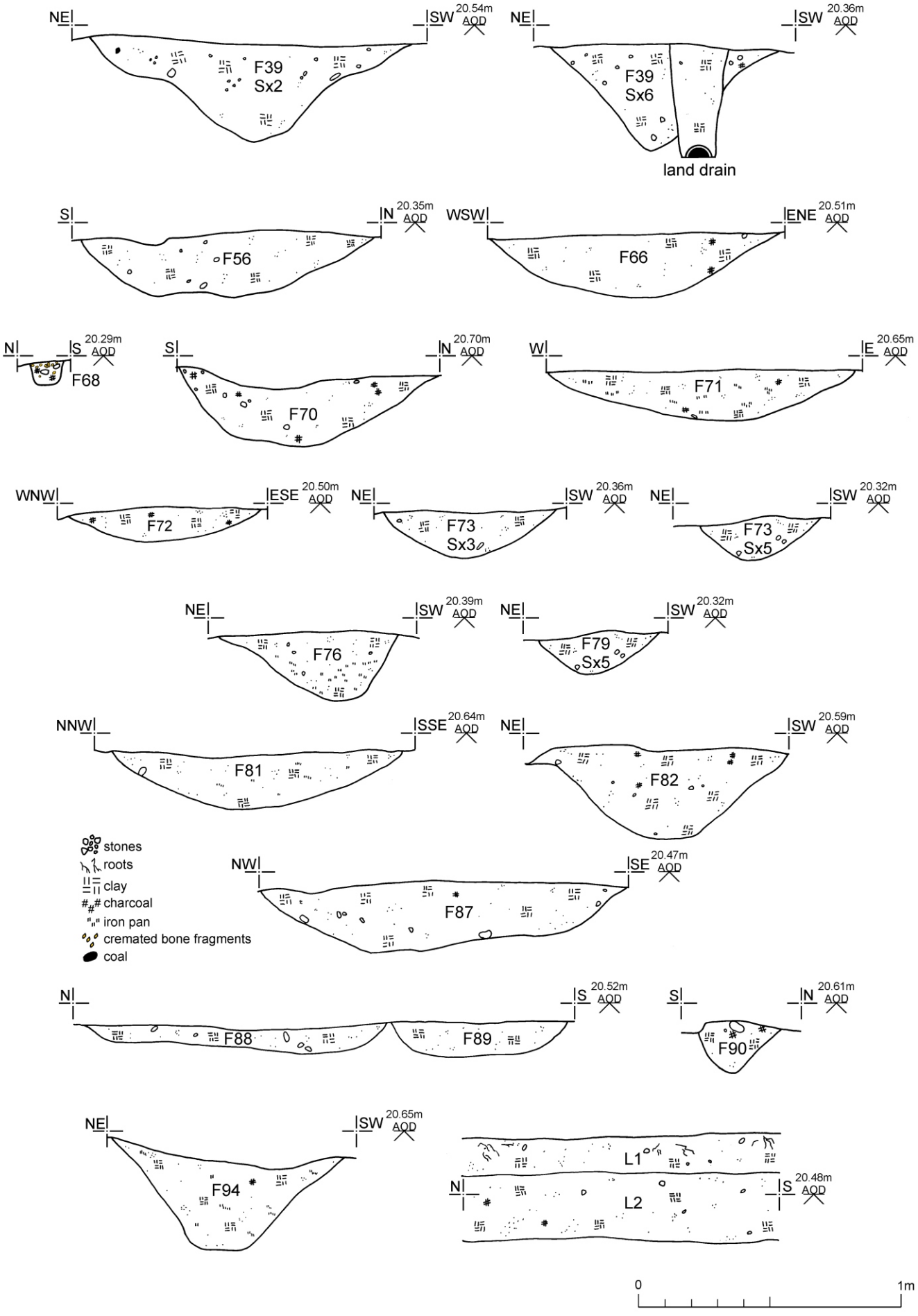

Fig 3 Feature and representative sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/
Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: **Land at Dawes Lane, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8HJ**	
Parish: Colchester	***District:*** Colchester
NGR: TM 0224 1366 (centre)	***Site code:*** CAT project ref.: 2021/10f CHER ref: ECC4680 OASIS ref: colchest3-433744
Type of work: Strip, map and record excavation	***Site director/group:*** Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 15th November – 19th December 2021	***Size of area investigated:*** 0.80 ha
Location of curating museum: Colchester museum	**Funding source:** Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	***Related CHER/SMR number:*** CHER MCC4746, MCC4894, MCC6928, MCC8813, MCC8776, MCC8779, MCC8930
Final report: CAT Report 1760	
Periods represented: Prehistoric, Bronze Age, medieval, post-medieval, modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: *An archaeological excavation was carried out on land at Dawes Lane, West Mersea, Essex in advance of the construction of a new residential development. Surrounded by cropmarks, previous archaeological work on the site includes fieldwalking, metal-detecting and geophysical surveys along with a trial-trenching evaluation. Fieldwalking produced small scatters of prehistoric, Roman and medieval material along with post-Roman tile/brick and post-medieval/ modern pottery. Post-medieval/modern agricultural ironwork and modern waste material came from the metal-detecting survey, and the geophysical survey identified natural linear features, historic field boundaries and drainage gullies. The trial-trenching evaluation revealed a possible prehistoric ditch, a Roman pit, a medieval/post-medieval pit, five post-medieval/ modern field boundary ditches, six drainage gullies and fifteen undated features.* *During the excavation 63 features were identified: three ditches, 41 pits, two pit/tree-throws, a pit/post-hole, seven post-holes, a post-hole/tree-throw, three tree-throws, a plough scar and four natural features. Three periods were represented by a small quantity of features: the Bronze Age, medieval and post-medieval/modern. Most of the features were, however, undated.*	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Report 1499	
CBC monitor: Dr Simon Wood	
Keywords: -	***Significance:*** *
Author of summary: Sarah Veasey	***Date of summary:*** February 2022

Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological strip, map and record excavation on land at Dawes Lane, West Mersea, Essex, CO2 9GE

District: Colchester
Parish: West Mersea
NGR: TM 0224 1366 (centre)

Planning reference: 200351

Commissioned by: Brad Davies (Mersea Homes Ltd)
On behalf of: Mersea Homes Ltd

Curating museum: Colchester

CHER project code: tbc
CAT project code: 2021/10f
Oasis project ID: colchest3-433744

Fieldwork Manager: Adam Wightman
Contracts Manager: Chris Lister

CBC monitor: Simon Wood

This WSI written: 02.11.2021

COLCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST,
Roman Circus House,
Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex, CO2 7GZ

tel: 01206 501785
email: eh@catuk.org

Site location and description (Fig 1)

The proposed development site is located on the eastern edge of West Mersea, almost at the centre of the island, approximately 11.8km south-southeast of the main historic core of Colchester on land to the west of Dawes Lane, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8GJ (Fig 1). The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TM 0224 1366. The field is currently agricultural land used for growing crops.

Proposed work

The development comprises the construction of 100 residential dwellings with vehicular access and parking, a sustainable drainage system, landscaping, areas of public open space and for community use and any other associated groundworks.

Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive, the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) accessed via the Colchester Heritage Explorer (www.colchesterheritage.co.uk):

The site is lies within an area that has seen little archaeological investigation, however, it is located within an area surrounded by fields with cropmarks recorded through aerial photography. The majority of features interpreted are linear features and trackways which likely represent either Roman ditches or historic agricultural boundaries. Land to the east and north of Wellhouse Farm, immediately to the north include a ring-ditch, three rectangular pits, thought to possibly be part of an Anglo-Saxon sunken-floored building (SFB) and a number of historic field boundaries (MCC8813). Find spots noted in this area include an Iron Age coin (MCC4894), Roman coin (MCC8776) and some Roman objects including a brooch, coin and tessera cube (MCC8779). To the immediate northeast of the site on cropmarks at Barrow Hill trackways and linear features are noted, however, a large amount of geological deposits which may be masking evidence of archaeology (MCC4746). To the immediate east of the site cropmarks show evidence of a possible undated building (MCC8930).

The site is located approximately 450m south of Mersea Barrow (MCC6928, Scheduled Ancient Monument No: SM 32425; NHLE no. 1019019). The barrow was excavated in 1912 (Warren 1913). The excavation consisted of a trench dug from the eastern side of the barrow into its centre, where a larger central shaft was opened out. A Roman cremation burial was located near the centre of the barrow. It lay within a chamber constructed of Roman roof tiles (tegulae) set in mortar. The chamber contained a lead casket inside which was a glass urn containing the cremated human remains. In 1912 the barrow survived approximately 33.5 m in diameter and 6.9 m high. No trace was discovered in 1912 of a ditch around the barrow. The 1912 excavation trench was subsequently roofed over and concreted to form a tunnel to allow visitors access to the burial chamber from the eastern side of the barrow. The burial was dated in the original site report to the late 1st century (Warren 1913, 138). The date of the burial and barrow was subsequently reassessed by Hull to AD 100-120 (VCHE 3, 160). More recently, it has been suggested that a mid-2nd century date is more likely for the construction of the barrow (Benfield and Black 2014, 67 & 72). The cremated human remains were re-examined in 2012-3 by Jacqueline McKinley of Wessex Archaeology (McKinley 2014). The bone came from a male aged between 35 and 45. There is evidence of spinal lesions and excessive bony growths, indicating that he suffered from diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis (DISH). This is a disease of the joints that today is found mainly in men over 50. The presence was also detected of exotic items, including pine resin and frankincense (Brettell et al 2014). These were probably added to the bone after cremation, and suggest an elaborate funerary ritual.

CAT carried out watching briefs at Mersea Barrow in 2014 and 2016 during works to improve visitor access and amenities. No significant archaeological deposits were uncovered, although a small quantity of Roman roof tile fragments was recovered from the modern topsoil on the eastern side of the barrow (CAT Report 992).

There is an unconfirmed report that two Roman rings and fragments of a tessellated pavement were found fairly close to the Mersea Barrow in nearby Bower Hall Lane (unpublished letter to D.T-D Clarke dated 28.8.1980 from Mrs J W M Read; Howlett 2012, 66 & 76).

For this development a programme of archaeological fieldwalking, metal-detecting and geophysical surveys plus a trial-trenching evaluation (36 trenches) were carried out by CAT in 2019. The fieldwalking survey revealed very small scatters of prehistoric, Roman and medieval material, with post-Roman tile/brick and post-medieval and modern pottery dominating the assemblage. Similarly, the metal-detecting survey only produced post-medieval/modern agricultural ironwork and modern waste material. The geophysical survey identified natural linears, historic field boundaries and drainage gullies. Five post-medieval/ modern field boundary ditches and six drainage gullies were excavated during the trial-trenching evaluation along with a medieval/post-medieval pit, a possible Roman pit, a possible prehistoric ditch and 15 undated features (seven tree-throws, four pits, two gullies and two ditches) (CAT Report 1499).

For a full archaeological background see the desk-based assessment of the site by Oxford Archaeology (August 2019)

Planning background

A planning application (200351) was submitted to Colchester Borough Council in February 2020 proposing *outline planning application for 100 dwellings and land for community uses, public open space and landscaping; and access from Dawes Lane*.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the CHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA). The recommended archaeological condition is based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2019.

The archaeological evaluation was carried out by CAT in October to November 2019 (CAT Report 1499), during which a ditch of possible prehistoric ditch and Roman pit were uncovered, along with post-medieval/modern agricultural features. As these could be indicative of an area of potential archaeological interest the CBCAA requested further investigation.

Requirement for work (Fig 2)

The archaeological requirement is for a strip, map and record excavation over part of the site to investigate the potential for further prehistoric and Roman remains. Details are given in a Project Brief written by CBCAA (CBC 2021).

Specifically, an area measuring *c* 7,920 square metres will be stripped with archaeological remains within that area recorded and excavated (Fig 3). The area specifically targets the possible prehistoric ditch and Roman pit, as well as three undated gullies/ditches and an undated pit.

The aims of the strip, map and excavate are to:

- determine the date of the possible prehistoric and undated ditches
- determine if other prehistoric and Roman features are present on the development site

If unusual, significant or unexpected remains are encountered the CBCAA will be informed immediately. Should significant archaeological remains continue outside of the stripped area expansion of the excavation area may be required.

Amendments to the brief, and this WSI, may be required to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

General methodology

All work carried out by CAT will be in accordance with:

- Professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a-c)
- Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011) and the recent review updates on https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/
- Relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2021)
- The Project Brief issued by CBCAA (2021)

Professional CAT field archaeologists will undertake all specified archaeological work, for which they will be suitably experienced and qualified.

Notification of the supervisor/project manager's name and the start date for the project will be provided to CBCAA one week before start of work.

Unless it is the responsibility of other site contractors, CAT will study mains service locations and avoid damage to these.

At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/ will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. At the end of the project all parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). This will include an uploaded .PDF version of the entire report.

A unique HER event number will be obtained from the CBCAA prior to the commencement of fieldwork. The curating museum will be notified of the details of the project and the event code, which will be used to identify the project archive when depositing at the end of the project.

Staffing

The number of field staff for this project is estimated as follows: One supervisor plus four archaeologists for twenty days.
In charge of day-to-day site work: Ben Holloway/Harvey Furniss/Nigel Rayner

Strip, map and record excvation methodology

Where appropriate, modern overburden and any topsoil stripping/levelling will be performed using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision and to the satisfaction of a professional archaeologist. If no archaeologically significant deposits are exposed, machine excavation will continue until natural subsoil is reached.

Where necessary, areas will be cleaned by hand to ensure the visibility of archaeological deposits.

If archaeological features or deposits are uncovered, time will be allowed for these to be excavated, planned and recorded.

There will be sufficient excavation to give clear evidence for the period, depth and nature of any archaeological deposit. For linear features 1m wide sections will be excavated across their width to a total of at least 10% of the overall length. Discrete features, such as pits, will have 50% of their fills excavated, although certain features may be fully excavated.

Complex archaeological structures such as walls, kilns, ovens or burials will be carefully cleaned, planned and fully recorded, but where possible left *in situ*. Only if it can be demonstrated that the complex structure/feature is likely to be destroyed by groundworks, and only then after discussion with the CBCAA, will it be removed.

Fast hand-excavation techniques involving (for instance) picks, forks and mattocks will not be used on complex stratigraphy.

The use of a hand held auger (or a power auger where appropriate) will be used where necessary to gain information from very deep deposits/features.

A metal detector will be used to scan all trenches both before and during excavation. This will be carried out by trained CAT staff under the supervision of project manager/supervisors Adam Wightman, Nigel Rayner or Ben Holloway who have over 5 years experience of metal detecting on archaeological sites. Experienced metal detectorist Geoff Lunn will be available for advice and support throughout the project. Geoff has 4 years experience and has worked with CAT to recover finds from recent excavations at the Mercury Theatre and Essex County Hospital sites in Colchester, and who has also worked with the Colchester Archaeological Group, Suffolk Archaeology, Access Cambridge Archaeology, The Citizan Project (MOLA) and others. If considered necessary, Geoff will be employed by CAT for to assist with the metal detecting. All finds will have their location recorded via GPS or with the Total Station. All spoil heaps will also be scanned and finds recovered.

Individual records of excavated contexts, layers, features or deposits will be entered on proforma record sheets. Registers will be compiled of finds, small finds and soil samples.

All features and layers or other significant deposits will be planned, and their profiles or sections recorded. A representative section will be drawn to include ground level and the depth of machining. The normal scale will be site plans at 1:20 and sections at 1:10, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be appropriate.

The photographic record will consist of general site shots, and shots of all archaeological features and deposits. A photographic scale (including north arrow) shall be included in the case of detailed photographs. Standard “record” shots of contexts will be taken on a digital camera. A photographic register will accompany the photographic record. This will detail as a minimum feature number, location, and direction of shot.

Site surveying

The excavation area and any features will be surveyed by Total Station or GPS, unless the particulars of the features indicate that manual planning techniques should be employed. Normal scale for archaeological site plans and sections is 1:20 and 1:10 respectively, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be more appropriate.

The site grid will be tied into the National Grid. Corners of excavation areas will be located by NGR coordinates.

Environmental sampling policy

The number and range of samples collected will be adequate to determine the potential of the site, with particular focus on palaeoenvironmental remains including both biological remains (e.g. plants, small vertebrates) and small sized artefacts (e.g. smithing debris). Samples will be collected for potential micromorphical and other pedological sedimentological analysis. Environmental bulk samples will be 40 litres in size (assuming context is large enough).

CAT has an arrangement with Val Fryer/Lisa Gray whereby any potentially rich environmental layers or features will be appropriately sampled as a matter of course. CAT staff will process samples (unless of a complex nature) and the flots will be sent to VF/LG for reporting.

Sampling strategies will address questions of:

- the range of preservation types (charred, mineral-replaced, waterlogged) and their quality
- concentrations of macro-remains
- and differences in remains from undated and dated features
- variation between different feature types and areas of site

Provision will be included (where necessary) for column or core samples to be taken, for the assessment and/or full analysis of those samples, and for absolute dating of the sequence.

Provision will also be made (where necessary) for the identification and absolute dating of suitable deposits of charred remains. Should VF/LG make a recommendation that suitable samples not datable by other means (ie associated finds) be submitted for absolute dating, then these samples will be sent to the SUERC Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory at Glasgow University for analysis.

Should any complex, or otherwise outstanding deposits be encountered, VF/LG will be asked onto site to advise. Waterlogged 'organic' features will always be sampled. In all cases, the advice of VF and/or the Historic England Regional Advisor in Archaeological Science (East of England) on sampling strategies for complex or waterlogged deposits will be followed, including the taking of monolith samples.

Human remains

CAT follows the policy of leaving human remains *in situ* unless there is a clear indication that the remains are in danger of being compromised as a result of their exposure or unless advised to do so by the project osteologist or CBCAA.

CBCAA will be notified immediately if any human remains are encountered during the excavation.

If circumstances indicated it were prudent or necessary to remove remains from the site during the excavation, the following criteria would be applied; if it is clear from their position, context, depth, or other factors that the remains are ancient, then normal procedure is to apply to the Department of Justice for a licence to remove them and seek advice from the project osteologist. Human remains removed from site for analysis this may involve radiocarbon dating (see finds section).

If it cannot be demonstrated that future ground works are able to avoid impacting them, burials will be fully excavated. However, following HE guidance (HE 2018) if the human remains are not to be lifted, the project osteologist should be available to record the human remain *in situ* (i.e. a site visit). Conditions laid down by the DoJ license will be followed. If it seems that the remains are not ancient, then the coroner, the client, and the CBCAA will be informed, and any advice and/or instruction from the coroner will be followed.

Photographic record

Will include both general and feature-specific photographs, the latter with scale and north arrow. A photo register giving context number, details, and direction of shot will be prepared on site, and included in site archive. Digital site photographs will be supplied as both a jpeg and in raw uncompressed format (TIFF), with metadata will be embedded into the raw file as per Historic England guidelines (2015a).

Finds

All significant finds will be retained.

All finds, where appropriate, will be washed and marked with site code and context number.

CAT may use local volunteers to assist the CAT Finds Officer with this task.

Most of our finds reports are written internally by CAT Staff under the supervision and direction of Philip Crummy (Director) and Laura Pooley (Post-excavation Manager). This includes specialist subjects such as:

ceramic finds (pottery and ceramic building material): Matthew Loughton
animal bones: Alec Wade (or Adam Wightman, small groups only)
small finds, metalwork, coins, etc: Laura Pooley
non-ceramic bulk finds: Laura Pooley
flints: Adam Wightman
environmental processing: Bronagh Quinn
project osteologist (human remains): Meghan Seehra

or to outside specialists:

animal and human bone: Julie Curl (*Sylvanus*)
environmental assessment and analysis: Val Fryer / Lisa Gray
archaeometallurgy: David Dungworth
radiocarbon dating: SUERC Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, Glasgow
conservation/x-ray: Laura Ratcliffe (LR Conservation) / Norfolk Museums Service, Conservation and Design Services

Other specialists whose opinion can be sought on large or complex groups include:

flint: Hazel Martingell
prehistoric pottery: Stephen Benfield / Nigel Brown / Paul Sealey
Roman pottery: Stephen Benfield / Paul Sealey / Jo Mills / Gwladys Monteil
Roman brick/tile: Ian Betts (MOLA)
Roman glass: Hilary Cool
small finds: Nina Crummy
other: EH Regional Adviser in Archaeological Science (East of England).

All finds of potential treasure will be removed to a safe place, and the coroner informed immediately, in accordance with the rules of the Treasure Act 1996. The definition of treasure is given in pages 3-5 of the Code of Practice of the above act. This refers primarily to gold or silver objects.

Requirements for conservation and storage of finds will be agreed with the appropriate museum prior to the start of work, and confirmed to CBCAA.

A contingency will be made in the budget for scientific assessment/analysis. This can include soil micromorphological assessment, absolute dating in the event that archaeomagnetic and/or (more probably) radiocarbon dating is required, if burning is encountered or human remains (in which case it might be necessary to lift a small sample for absolute dating). The Historic England Regional Science Advisor will be consulted for advice on this.

Post-excavation assessment

Once fieldwork has finished the need for a post-excavation assessment will be discussed and agreed with CBCAA. This may include discussion as to whether there is a need for and extent of radiocarbon dating of appropriate contexts and/or further detailed scientific analysis of other aspects of the project.

If a post-excavation assessment is required by CBCAA, it will be normally be submitted within 2 months of the end of fieldwork, or as quickly as is reasonably practicable and at a time agreed with CBCAA. It will be a clear and concise assessment of the archaeological value and significance of the results, and will identify the research potential in the context of the Regional Research Framework. It will include an Updated Project Design, with a timetable, for analysis, dissemination and archive deposition.

Where archaeological results do not warrant a post-excavation assessment, preparation of the normal site report will begin.

Results

Notification will be given to CBCAA when the fieldwork has been completed.

An appropriate archive will be prepared to minimum acceptable standards outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (Historic England 2015b).

The report will be submitted within 6 months of the end of fieldwork, with a copy supplied to CBCAA as a PDF.

The report will contain:

- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the archaeological project.
- Location plan of the excavation area in relation to the proposed development. At least two corners of the area will be given 10 figure grid references.
- A section drawing showing depth of deposits from present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale (if this can be safely done)
- Archaeological methodology and detailed results including a suitable conclusion and discussion and results referring to Regional Research Frameworks (Medlycott 2011 and https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/).
- All specialist reports or assessments
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results.

An EHER summary sheet will also be completed within four weeks and supplied to CBCAA.

Results will be published, to at least a summary level (i.e. round-up in *Essex Archaeology & History*) in the year following the archaeological field work. An allowance will be made in the project costs for the report to be published in an adequately peer reviewed journal or monograph series

Archive deposition

It is a policy of Colchester Borough Council that the integrity of the site archive be maintained (i.e. all finds and records should be properly curated by a single organisation), with the archive available for public consultation. To achieve this desired aim it is assumed that the full archive will be deposited in Colchester Museums *unless otherwise agreed in advance*. (A full *copy* of the archive shall in any case be deposited).

By accepting this WSI, the client agrees to deposit the archive, including all artefacts, at Colchester & Ipswich Museum.

The requirements for archive storage will be agreed with the curating museum.

If the finds are to remain with the landowner, a full copy of the archive will be housed with the curating museum.

The archive will be deposited with Colchester & Ipswich Museum within 3 months of the completion of the final publication report, with a summary of the contents of the archive supplied to CBCAA.

A digital / vector drawing of the site be given to the CBCAA for integration into the HER.

Monitoring

CBCAA will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project, and will be kept regularly informed during fieldwork, post-excavation and publication stages.

Notification of the start of work will be given to CBCAA one week in advance of its commencement.

Any variations in this WSI will be agreed with CBCAA prior to them being carried out.

CBCAA will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

The involvement of CBCAA shall be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

References

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

Benfield, S & Black, E	2014	*'The West Mersea Roman Barrow (Mersea Mount)', in Essex Archaeology and History, 4, Fourth series (2013), 59-73*
Brettell, R C, Stern, B & Heron, C P	2014	*'Mersea Island Barrow: molecular evidence for frankincense', in Essex Archaeology and History, 4, Fourth series (2013), 81-7*
Brown, D	2011	*Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. 2nd edition.
CAT	2021	*Health & Safety Policy*
CAT Report 992	2016	*Archaeological watching briefs at Mersea Barrow, Barrow Hill Farm, East Mersea Road, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8SL: July & September 2014 & July 2016*. By D Shimmin
CAT Report 1499	2019	*Archaeological fieldwalking, metal-detecting and geophysical surveys plus trial-trenching on land to the west of Dawes Lane, West Mersea, Essex – October-November 2019,* by L Pooley
CBCAA	2021	*Brief for archaeological strip, map and record excavation at land at Dawes Lane, West Mersea,* by Simon Wood
CIfA	2014a	*Standard and Guidance for an archaeological excavation.* Updated October 2020
CIfA	2014b	*Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives.* Updated October 2020
CIfA	2014c	*Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.* Updated October 2020
Gurney, D	2003	*Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.* East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA **14**).
Historic England	2015a	*Digital Image capture and File Storage: Guidelines for best practice. By.* S Cole & P Backhouse
Historic England	2015b	*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)*
Historic England	2018	*The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project*. By S Mays, M Brickley and J Sidell
Howlett, S	2012	The Secrets of the Mound, Mersea Barrow 1912-2012, Mersea Island Museum Publications
McKinley, JI	2014	'Mersea Island Barrow: the cremated bone and aspects of the mortuary rite', in Essex Archaeology and History, 4, Fourth series (2013), 74-80
Medlycott, M	2011	*Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA **24**)
MHCLG	2019	*National Planning Policy Framework. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.*
Oxford Archaeology	2019	*Land off Dawes Lane, West Mersea*: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment. By R Pridmore
Warren, SH	1913	'The Opening of the Romano-British Barrow on Mersea Island, Essex', in TEAS, n.s., 13, 116-40
VCHE **3**	1963	A history of the County of Essex, 3: Roman Essex, ed by W R Powell, The Victoria History of the Counties of England

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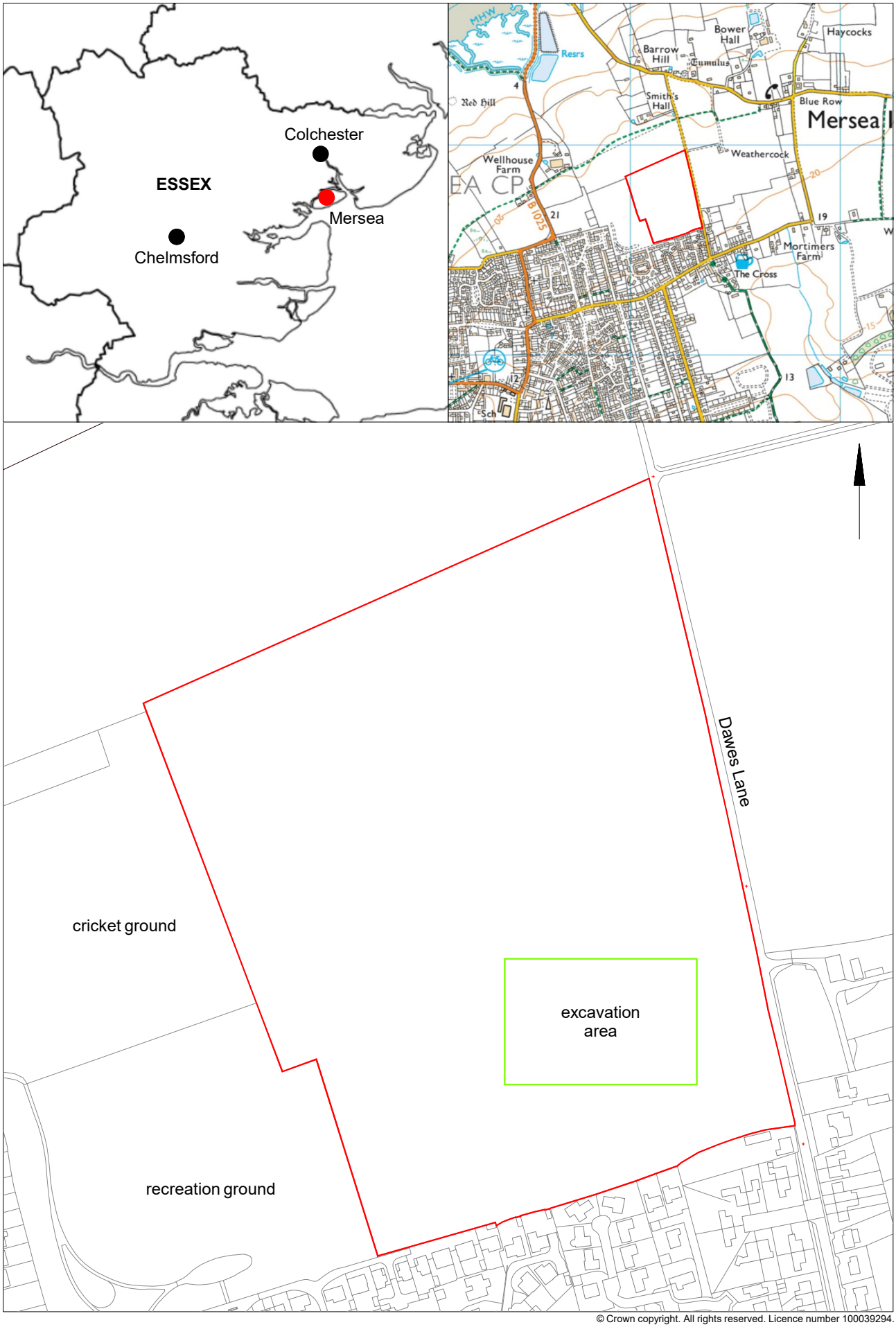

Fig 1 Site location and proposed excavation area.

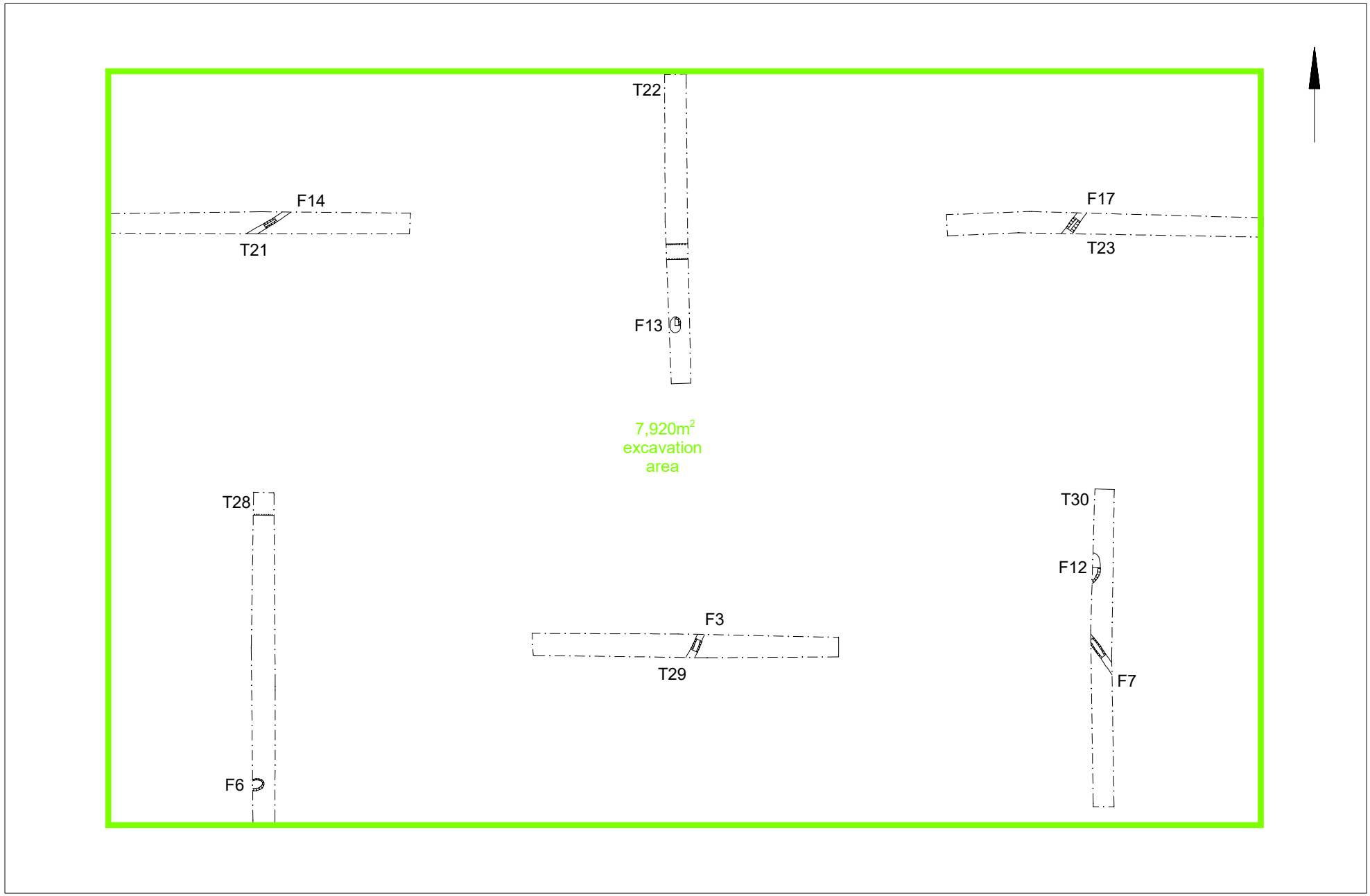

Fig 2 Excavation area in relation to the results of the trial-trenching.

Summary for colchest3-433744

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-433744
Project Name	Archaeological strip, map and record excavation on land at Dawes Lane, West Mersea, Essex, CO2 9GE
Activity type	EXCAVATION
Project Identifier(s)	2021/10f
Planning Id	200351
Reason For Investigation	Planning requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	15-Nov-2021 - 09-Dec-2021
Location	land at Dawes Lane, West Mersea, Essex NGR : TM 02240 13660 LL : 51.7850354082358, 0.930721949237696 12 Fig : 602240,213660
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Colchester Parish : West Mersea
Project Methodology	An area measuring 0.79ha centred over the area of evaluation trenches T21, T22, T23, T28, T29 and T30 (CAT Report 1499) was mechanically-stripped under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist.
Project Results	An archaeological excavation was carried out on land at Dawes Lane, West Mersea, Essex in advance of the construction of a new residential development. Surrounded by cropmarks, previous archaeological work on the site includes fieldwalking, metal-detecting and geophysical surveys along with a trial-trenching evaluation. Fieldwalking produced small scatters of prehistoric, Roman and medieval material along with post-Roman tile/brick and post-medieval/ modern pottery. Post-medieval/modern agricultural ironwork and modern waste material came from the metal-detecting survey, and the geophysical survey identified natural linear features, historic field boundaries and drainage gullies. The trial-trenching evaluation revealed a possible prehistoric ditch, a Roman pit, a medieval/post-medieval pit, five post-medieval/ modern field boundary ditches, six drainage gullies and fifteen undated features. During the excavation 63 features were identified: three ditches, 41 pits, two pit/tree-throws, a pit/post-hole, seven post-holes, a post-hole/tree-throw, three tree-throws, a plough scar and four natural features. Three periods were represented by a small quantity of features: the Bronze Age, medieval and post-medieval/modern. Most of the features were, however, undated.

Keywords	Pit - BRONZE AGE - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Ditch - MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Pit - MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Ditch - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Pot - LATE BRONZE AGE - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Pot - MIDDLE BRONZE AGE - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Pot - BRONZE AGE - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Briquetage - ROMAN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Pot - MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus
HER	Colchester Borough Council - unRev - STANDARD
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - ECC4680
Archives	Physical Archive, Documentary Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with Colchester & Ipswich Museum Sevice (Colchester Collection)