

# Archaeological evaluation at Kings Acre, Third Avenue, Harlow, Essex, CM18 6YL

August 2022



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**commissioned by Bidwells  
on behalf of WDP Services Ltd**

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**CAT Report 1845**  
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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out on land at Kings Acre, Third Avenue, Harlow, Essex in advance of the construction of a new rehabilitation centre. The site is adjacent to the medieval moated site of Passmores (Scheduled Ancient Monument 1019276), which includes an extant early 18th-century Grade II listed Georgian manor.*

*Evaluation revealed a brick wall foundation to the north of the site associated with a layer of demolition debris presumably from the same building. When overlaid onto OS maps of the area, the foundation is in alignment with the southern wall of a building visible on mapping from 1880 until at least 1947. To the south of the development site, the evaluation revealed the remains of a pond backfilled in the post-medieval period.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at Kings Acre, Third Avenue, Harlow, Essex on 16th August 2022. The work was commissioned by Bidwells on behalf of WDP Services Ltd, and took place in advance of the construction of a new rehabilitation centre and associated groundworks.

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), the Historic Environment Advisor advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Trial Trenching and Excavation at Kings Acre, Third Avenue, Harlow* written by Katie Lee-Smith and detailing the required archaeological work (ECCPS 2022), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2022).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2016), and with *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14 and 24). This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014b).

## 3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background includes extracts of the ECC brief and the Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The geology of the area is Thames Group clay, silt, and sand. The sedimentary bedrock is marine in origin. It is detrital and comprises coarse- to fine-grained slurries. It was formed approximately 48 to 56 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period, when the local environment was dominated by deep seas. Superficial deposits are also clay, silt and sand, which were formed up to 3 million years ago in the quaternary period when the area was dominated by subaerial slopes.

There are no known prehistoric features within the site, but find spots of prehistoric material are located within the wider area: Neolithic pottery sherds, a sherd of grooved ware, a flint implement and a sherd of Iron Age pottery located c 1km north of the site (EHER 3831-2); a hand axe was found during the excavation of a floor within Passmores House (EHER 3718); and a Bronze Age hoard came from a gravel pit at Parndon (EHER 3750).

The site is adjacent to the medieval moated site of Passmores (EHER 18396), which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (NHLE 1019276). It is thought that the origins of Passmores as a

manorial site dates back to the just after the Norman Conquest, when a settlement in the same area was granted to Baron Ranulph (English Heritage 2000). The manor was transferred to Southwark Priory in the 12th century. A document relating to land in the parish, dating to 1199, names it as “Passemers”. It is thought to have been retained by the Passemer family for almost 300 years. During this time a large 15th-/16th-century manor was constructed.

Passmores passed to Jonathan Nunn in the early 18th century, and it was he who was responsible for the construction of the extant Grade II listed Georgian Manor, which is visible on Chapman and André’s map of 1777. Two bodies of water can be seen to the south and west of the house but no clear indication of a moat.

Historic maps show an interesting progression for the site, from isolated rural manor to a manor within the heart of a modern town. The area surrounding the site does not change dramatically throughout the post-medieval period, but the wider landscape does in the second half of the 20th century.

The 1880 Ordnance Survey Map shows the site was rather less densely surrounded by trees and hedgerows than it is in the present day. In fact, it seems as though the northern part of the site was open and contained large buildings that were likely to have been associated with what remained of the manorial complex just to the north-east. The moat is labelled on this map, and another large body of water is visible to the north of Passmores, seemingly an enlarged part of Todd Brook. The extent of the moat is not fully known.

The 1897 OS Map shows that these large buildings are still present, and that they dominate the northern part of the site. They look like they possibly formed some sort of yard or stable area. These buildings are also visible on the 1923 and 1947 Ordnance Survey maps.

For more information see the desk-based assessment for the site (CAT Report 1804). For a general background on Harlow see the Historic Town Assessment Report (ECC 1999).

#### **4 Aims**

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were 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 2-5)

Two trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. A full context list with soil descriptions and measurements can be found in Appendix 1.

##### **Trench 1 (T1): 22m long by 1.8m wide**

In the northern end of T1 the stratigraphy was as follows:

- a layer of topsoil (L1, c 0.12-0.24m thick) sealing
- natural clay (L2, encountered c 0.12-0.41m below current ground level [bcgl]).

To the south:

- L1 (0.2-0.23m thick) sealed
- a layer of demolition material (L8, c 0.11-0.17m thick) which overlay
- L2 (encountered c 0.35-0.4m bcgl).

Brick-wall foundation F3 was found at the southern end of the trench, aligned north-east/south-west it was constructed of red brick, and demolition material L8 likely represents debris from the destruction of this building. When overlaid onto the 1st edition OS map, foundation F3 aligns with the southern wall of a building on the map (see Fig 4).





**Photograph 1** Trench 1 showing brick wall foundation F3 in the foreground, looking north-north-west.

**Trench 2 (T2): 26m long (in total) and 1.8m wide**

Trench 2 was crossed by a number of modern services so several bulks were left in place.

The stratigraphy of T2 was:

- A modern driveway (L3, c 0.17-0.35m thick) sealed
- layers of mixed buried topsoil/make-up (L4, c 0.1-0.4m thick over L6, c 0.06-0.36m thick) which overlay
- natural clay and gravels (L2/L5, encountered c 0.5-0.65m bcgl).

Sealed by L4/L6, and extending across most of the trench, was a large backfilled pond (F1/L7) which was c 0.62m deep. Cut into the top of the backfilled pond was a small ditch/gully or drain (F2), 0.25m wide by 0.11m deep. Finds dating from c 1500 to 19th/20th century were recovered from both features.





**Photograph 2** Trench 2 showing the partial excavation of F1, looking north-west.



**Photograph 3** Trench 2 and F1, looking north-east.





**Photograph 4** Trench 2 and F1, looking south-east.



**Photograph 5** Trench 2, looking south-west.





**Photograph 6** Trench 2, F2, looking north-north-west.

## 6 Finds

### 6.1 Pottery and ceramic building material

*by Dr Matthew Loughton*

The evaluation uncovered a small assemblage of pottery and ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) at 58 sherds weighing 1.3 kg with an EVE of 0.03 (Table 1). Sherds of pottery and ceramics were recovered from two features although most of the material came from F2 (Table 2).

Ceramic material	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
Pottery	24	358	15	0.03
CBM	34	979	29	-
<b>All</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>1,337</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0.03</b>

**Table 1** Summary of pottery and ceramic building material.

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
F1 (from sample 1)	Pond infill	2	20	10	0.00
F2 (finds no. 1)	Ditch	56	1,317	24	0.03
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b>	<b>1,337</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0.03</b>

**Table 2** Quantities of pottery and CBM from specific features.



**Post-medieval pottery**

All the pottery consists of sherds of post-medieval red earthenwares (c 1500-19th/20th century) including a large bowl/pancheon (EVE: 0.03).

**Ceramic building material (CBM)**

Most of the CBM consisted of pieces of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile (27 fragments at 748g), alongside five fragments of post-medieval/modern brick (81g) and two pieces of Roman imbrex (150g).

**Conclusion**

Both features date to the post-medieval/modern period.

Context	Post-medieval pottery	CBM	Date Approx.
F1	F40	PT	c 1500-19th/20th century
F2	F40 (large bowl/pancheon)	BR, PT, RI	c 1500-19th/20th century

**Table 3** Approximate dates for the individual features.

**6.2 Glass**

*by Laura Pooley*

A fragment (9.8g) of post-medieval/modern bottle glass (olive green) came from F2 (finds no. 2).

**6.3 Animal bone**

*by Alec Wade*

Eight pieces of animal bone weighing 96g was hand collected from F2. The surface condition of the bone was fairly abraded with a dark brownish discolouration often indicative of fragments that have been in waterlogged conditions. Sheep or goat was the only positively identified species in the assemblage, with no distinction made between the two species due to a lack of diagnostic features. This identification was from tooth and mandible fragments that are likely to be from the same jaw. Also recovered was a very abraded vertebrae fragment that is probably cattle. This may have cut/chop marks associated with butchery but its abraded condition makes this difficult to determine.

No. of pieces	Weight (g)	Species	Comments
4	18	Sheep/goat	Two very worn mandibular teeth (possibly p4 and M1) and two mandible fragments.
1	72	Large sized mammal – probably cattle	Lumbar vertebrae fragment, possibly chopped/split medially? Proximal and distal epiphyses are both unfused.
3	6	Unidentified	Includes two small diaphysis fragments.

**Table 4** Summary of the animal bone from F2, finds no. 1.

**6.4 Worked flint**

*by Adam Wightman*

A broken tertiary flake was found within the environmental sample taken from F1. The flake was soft-hammer struck and of later prehistoric date (Mesolithic to Bronze Age).

**6.5 Environmental sample**

*by Laura Pooley*

An environmental sample of 40L was taken from F1. The flot produced modern twigs/roots and what appeared to be modern seeds. On consultation with Maria Medlycott, it was agreed that the flot would not be sent for environmental assessment but would be retained until it has been determined whether more archaeological work will take place on the development site or not.

## 7 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation at Kings Acre revealed a brick wall foundation to the north of the site associated with a layer of demolition debris presumably from the same building. Map regression (see CAT Report 1804) shows a building in this location on the first edition OS map of 1880, a building which is on mapping until at least 1947. Overlaying the results of the evaluation onto OS maps shows that brick wall foundation F3 is the southern wall of the building. There was no evidence that the moat to the east of Trench 1 continues into the development site.

Pond F1/L7 to the south of the site was backfilled within the post-medieval period, and before 1880 as it is not visible on any of the OS maps. The OS maps do show access to the site from the south-east which passes over the pond, perhaps explaining why it was backfilled.

The evaluation did not allow the construction date of either the building or the pond to be established.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Bidwells and WDP Services Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, A Wightman and L Pooley, with fieldwork carried out by N Rayner with K Davies and S Veasey. Figures were compiled by C Lister and S Veasey. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Maria Medlycott.

## 9 References

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

- |                          |       |   |
|--------------------------|-------|---|
| Baker, P & Worley, F     | 2019  | <i>Animal bones and archaeology: recovery to archive</i> . Swindon: Historic England.   |
| 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                      | 2022  | <i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>   |
| CAT                      | 2022  | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at Land North of Michael Wright Way, Admirals Green, Great Bentley, Essex, CO7 8GH</i> |
| CAT Report 1804          | 2022  | <i>An archaeological desk-based assessment of land at Passmores House, Third Avenue, Harlow, CM18 6YL</i> , by P Parmenter  |
| CIfA                     | 2014a | <i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation</i> . Revised October 2020   |
| CIfA                     | 2014b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> . Revised October 2020  |
| CIfA                     | 2014c | <i>Code of Conduct</i> . Revised October 2021   |
| ECC                      | 1999  | <i>Historic Towns in Essex – Harlow: Historic Town Assessment Report</i> . Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch   |
| ECCPS                    | 2021  | <i>Brief for trial trenching and excavation at Kings Acre, Third Avenue, Harlow</i> , by K Lee-Smith  |
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| 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.  |
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## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
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
Neolithic	period from c 4000 – 2500 BC
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, <a href="http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main">http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main</a>
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 digital archive

**Finds:** None retained

**Digital record:**

The report (CAT Report 1845)  
ECC brief & CAT written scheme of investigation  
Site digital photographs and photographic log  
Scans of original site data (section drawings)  
Graphic files  
Site data  
Survey data

## 12 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 the Archaeological Data Service.

**Distribution list:**

WDP Services Ltd  
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor  
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



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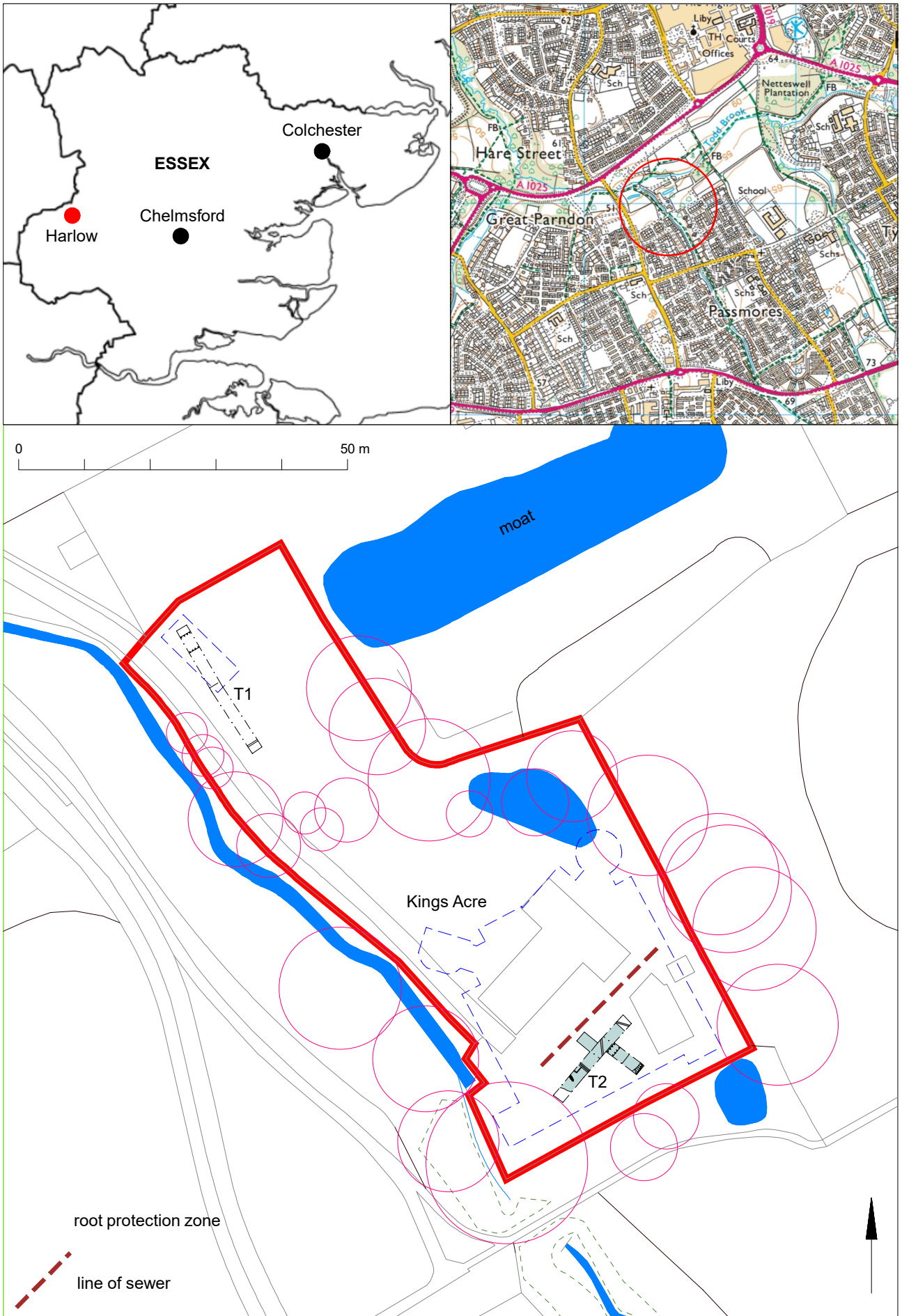
Checked by: Philip Crummy  
Date: 02/09/2022



### Appendix 1 Context list

Trench no.	Context	Finds no.	Context type	Description	Date
T1	L1	-	Topsoil	Firm dry/moist medium grey/brown silty loam with brick flecks	Modern
T1	L2	-	Natural	Hard dry/moist medium orange/brown silty clay	Post-glacial
T2	L3	-	Driveway	Type 1, Type 2 and hardcore sub-base	Modern
T2	L4	-	Mixed burial topsoil and make-up	Soft moist medium/dark grey/brown clayey loam with brick flecks, tile flecks	Post-medieval/modern
T2	L5	-	Natural	Firm wet dark grey/brown/black silt and inclusions of: stone 80%	Post-glacial
T2	L6	-	Mixed burial topsoil and make-up	Firm moist medium grey silty clay	Post-medieval/modern
T2	L7	-	?Fill of F1	Soft moist medium/dark grey/brown silty clay and inclusions of: stone 1%	Post-medieval
T1	L8	-	Demolition layer	Soft moist medium grey/brown clay with brick flecks, tile flecks and inclusions of: tile/brick 10%	Post-medieval
T2	F1	<1>	Backfilled pond	Soft moist medium grey/brown silty clay	Post-medieval
T2	F2	1	Ditch, gully or drain	Soft moist medium yellow/grey clay with brick flecks, tile flecks and inclusions of: stone 1%	Post-medieval/modern
T1	F3	-	Wall foundation	Red bricks	?Post-medieval

<1> = sample number (finds were retrieved from the environmental sample)



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Fig 1 Site location and trench layout in relation to proposed development (dashed blue lines) and site constraints.



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Fig 2 Results

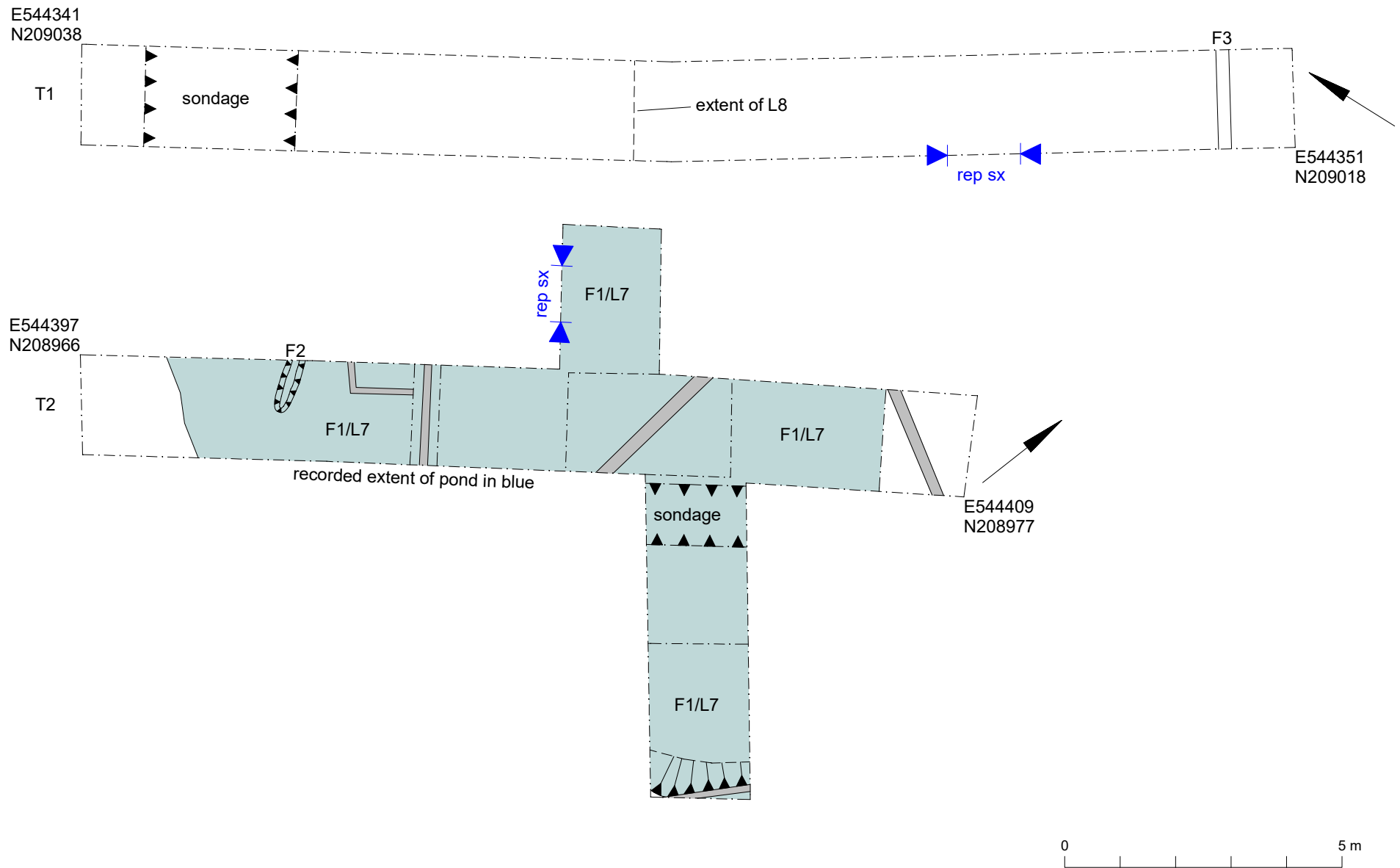
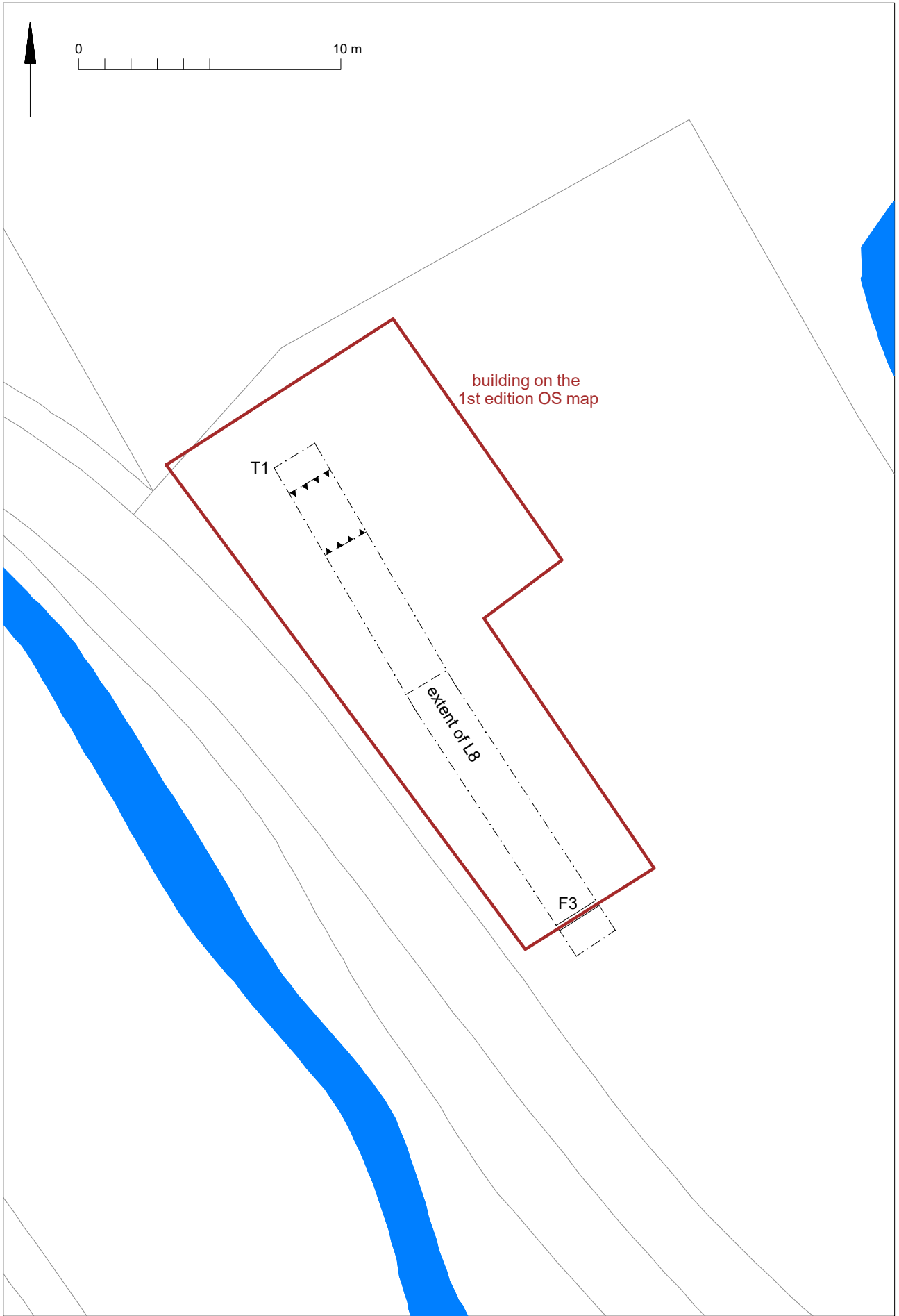


Fig 3 Detailed trench plans. Modern services in grey.





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Fig 4 Trench 1 shown in relation a building on the 1st edition OS map, the southern end of which corresponds with brick wall foundation F3

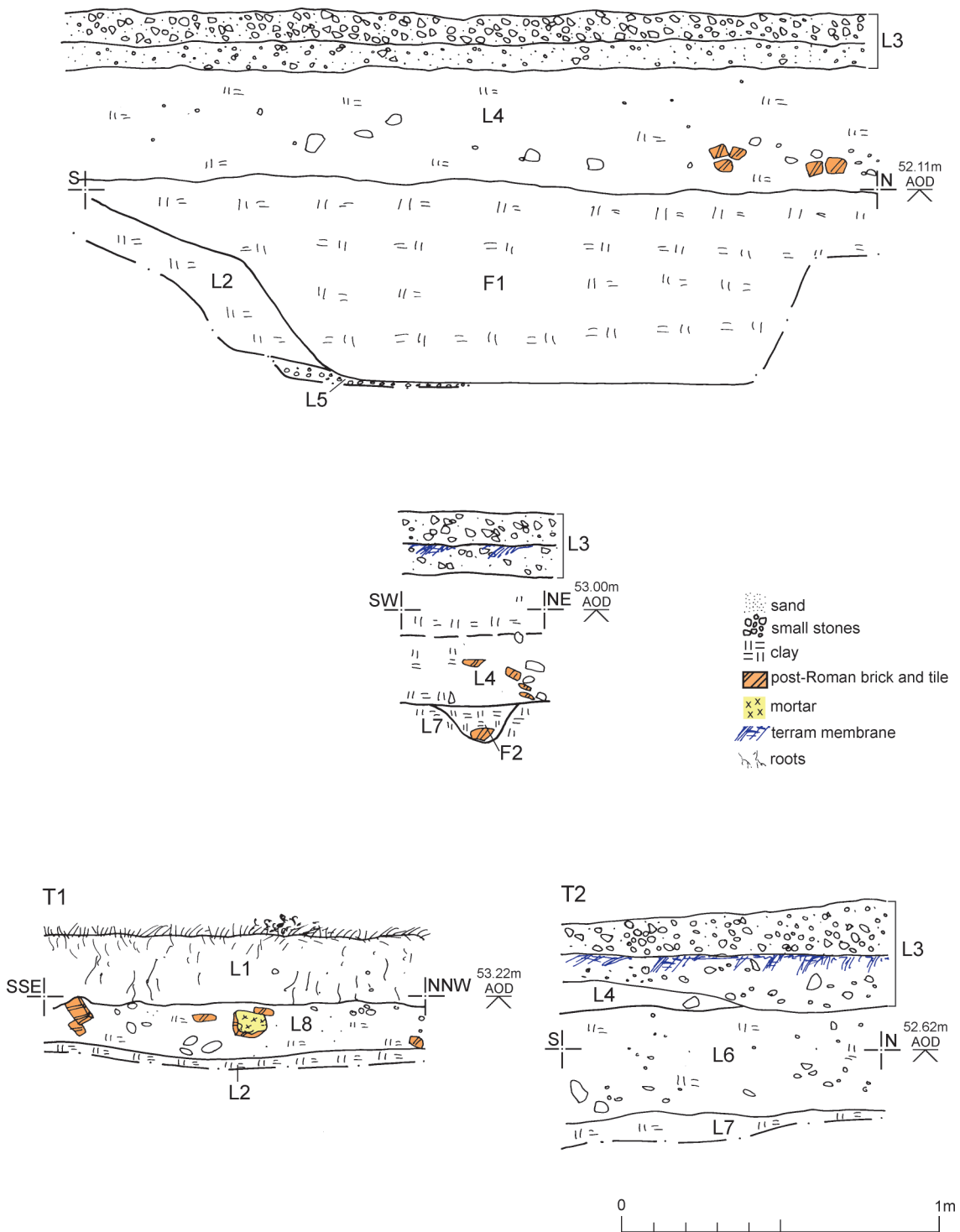


Fig 5 Feature and representative sections.

# Summary for colchest3-507615

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-507615
Project Name	Evaluation at Kings Acre, Third Avenue, Harlow, Essex, CM18 6YL
Sitename	Kings Acre, Third Avenue, Harlow, Essex, CM18 6YL
Activity type	Evaluation
Project Identifier(s)	2022/05b
Planning Id	HW/FUL/20/00036
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	16-Aug-2022 - 16-Aug-2022
Location	Kings Acre, Third Avenue, Harlow, Essex, CM18 6YL NGR : TL 44401 09005 LL : 51.7611169984838, 0.090947380024972 12 Fig : 544401,209005
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Harlow Parish : Harlow, unparished area
Project Methodology	Archaeological evaluation of two trial-trenches as per the Brief and WSI.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out on land at Kings Acre, Third Avenue, Harlow, Essex in advance of the construction of a new rehabilitation centre. The site is adjacent to the medieval moated site of Passmores (Scheduled Ancient Monument 1019276), which includes an extant early 18th-century Grade II listed Georgian manor.  Evaluation revealed a brick wall foundation to the north of the site associated with a layer of demolition debris presumably from the same building. When overlaid onto OS maps of the area, the foundation is in alignment with the southern wall of a building visible on mapping from 1880 until at least 1947. To the south of the development site, the evaluation revealed the remains of a pond backfilled in the post-medieval period.
Keywords	Building - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Pond - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	L, Pooley, S, Veasey
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;