

Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1881
Issued October 2023**

**Archaeological Monitoring at
13 St John's Green, Writtle, Chelmsford,
Essex, CM1 3DZ: November 2022-September 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2022/10h
ECC code: WRSJG23**

**Archaeological Monitoring at
13 St John's Green, Writtle, Chelmsford,
Essex, CM1 3DZ: November 2022-September 2023**

NGR: TL67904 06374 (centre)

Planning ref.: 21/01604/FUL

**CAT project ref.: 2022/10h
CAT Report 1881**

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fieldwork by Adam Ronn and Alexander Smith

commissioned by the homeowner

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1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 13 St John's Green, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex during groundworks for the construction of a two storey side extension, a single storey rear extension and associated services. Groundworks uncovered a large pit and an old soakaway.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for archaeological monitoring at 13 St John's Green, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex which was carried out between 30th November 2022 and 21st September 2023. The work was commissioned by the Homeowner and was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) during groundworks for the construction of a two storey side extension, a single storey rear extension and associated services.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the EHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Essex County Council Place Services Historic Environment Advisor. This recommendation was for an archaeological excavation and was based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Mark Baister (ECCPS 2021), 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 watching briefs* (ClfA 2020a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2020b).

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological 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 Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale¹) shows site is comprised of bedrock geology of the site as an area of London clay formation (clay, silt and sand) with superficial deposits of Head (clay, silt, sand and gravel).

The village is located on a raised area of land above a flood plain at the confluence of the Rivers Can and Wid, making it an ideal location for settlement. At the time of Domesday in 1086, the manor of Writtle was the largest settlement in the area with 194 households. Writtle was a royal manor and the collapse of the Roman bridges over the Can and Chelmer meant that the main route from London to Colchester detoured via Writtle, both factors which influenced its growth and prosperity (ECC 2006, 10).

On The Green, immediately south of the development, lies a number of listed buildings (EHER 30926- 30933) reflecting its historic location. Test-pits dug between 2009-2013 recovered evidence for medieval and post-medieval occupation to the east, south and west of the site (EHER 48702, 48703, 48810, 48826, 48827, 48828, 48831, 48892). The closest test-pit was TP4 in in the garden of 12 St John's Green. Medieval and post-medieval pottery came from layers within the test-pit.

¹ British Geological Survey – <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>

Approximately 110m to the north-east lies the cropmark of a circular enclosure (EHER 18180) and the supposed site of a camp (EHER 18584). All Saints Church (EHER 705) is located 254m to the south-east. The church dates to the 13th century, with later additions and alterations (EHER 705). Excavation to the immediate east of the churchyard in 1953 revealed Roman brick fragments and pottery.

An archaeological evaluation in 2018 by CAT on land west of 18 St John's Road revealed a modern pit that also contained four sherds of residual medieval pottery (CAT Report 1331).

For more information on the area see the *Chelmsford Borough Characterisation Project* (ECC 2006).

4 Aims

The aim of the archaeological monitoring was to identify, excavate and record any archaeological contexts revealed during groundworks.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

A full context list can be found in Appendix 1.

The foundation trench

Approximately 19.3m of foundation trench was machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. The trench was c 0.40m wide, c 0.60m deep, and was cut through modern topsoil (L1, c 0.21-0.6m thick) which overlay a subsoil (L2, c 0.09-0.17m thick) onto natural clay (L3). Natural was encountered at a depth of c 0.3-0.77m below current ground level (bcgl).

A large pit F1 (c 4.7m wide, only excavated to a depth of 0.4m), was identified in the southeastern extent of the foundation trenches. A sherd of early medieval shelly ware (fabric 12A), dating to c 1000-1200, and a piece of 19th-century clay pipe were recovered from F1.

In the central area of the foundations a modern soakaway was identified. It contained frogged bricks (not retained) and was not excavated.

Service trenches and soakaway

Approximately 23m of service trenches measuring 0.4m wide by 0.4m deep and a soakaway measuring 2.3m long, 1.3m wide and 1.1m deep were machine excavated through L1, L2 and L3. Both the pit feature F1 and the modern soakaway were identified during these works.



Photograph 1 Foundation trench, looking east-south-east.



Photograph 2 Pit/pond F1, looking west-north-east.



Photograph 3 Modern soakaway, looking south-south-west.



Photograph 4 Service trenches, looking east-south-east.



Photograph 5 New soakaway, looking south.

6 Finds

6.1 Ceramic and Pottery

Dr. Matthew Loughton

The watching brief uncovered one (10g) sherd of early medieval shelly ware without sand (fabric 12A), dating to c 1000-1200, which came from pit F1. Topsoil L1 produced one sherd (8g) of Staffordshire-type white earthenwares (fabric F48D) dating to the 19th-20th century and one sherd (39g) of post-medieval red earthenwares (fabric F40) dating to c 1500-19th/20th century.

6.2 Animal Bone

by Adam Wightman

Four pieces of animal bone were recovered: two fragments from a sheep/goat and a single large mammal fragment from L1 and a large mammal rib fragment from F1.

Context	Find number	No. of pieces	Weight (g)	Species	Comments
F1	1	1	8.6	Large mammal	Rib fragment
L1	2	3	64.8	Sheep/goat	Femur fragment, proximal end, unfused (younger than 2.5-3 years of age), chop marks and sawn
				Sheep/goat	Radius fragment, proximal end, fused (older than 10 months), possible teeth marks from canid gnawing, sawn
				Medium mammal	Long bone fragment with iron adhering to surface

Table 1 Animal bone by context.

6.3 Clay tobacco pipe

by Laura Pooley

A fragment (6.4g) of clay pipe bowl and stem came from F1 (finds no.1). Most of the bowl is missing but includes a plain rib on the facing seam. The bowl dates to the 19th century.

7 Conclusion

Despite being located in an area of archaeological potential, only a post-medieval pit and modern soakaway were identified during the groundworks.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks the Homeowner for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, L Pooley and A Wightman, fieldwork was carried out by A Ronn and A Smith. Figures are by E Holloway and B Quinn. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Mark Baister.

9 References

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

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|--|
| Brown, N & Glazebrook, J | 2000 | <i>Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8 (EAA 8) |
| CAT | 2023 | <i>Health & Safety Policy</i> |
| CAT | 2022 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological monitoring at 13 St John's Green, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 3DZ</i> |
| CAT Report 1331 | 2018 | <i>Archaeological evaluation on land west of 18 St John's Road, Writtle, Essex, CM1 3YA</i> by Laura Pooley |
| CIfA | 2020a | <i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs.</i> Published 2014, updated 2020. |
| CIfA | 2020b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.</i> Published 2014, updated 2020. |
| Cotter, J P | 2007 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> |
| ECC | 2006 | <i>Chelmsford Borough Historic Environment Characterisation Project.</i> Essex County Council Historic Environment |
| ECCPS | 2021 | <i>Brief for archaeological monitoring at 13 St John's Green, Writtle, Chelmsford</i> by M Baister |
| Gurney, D | 2003 | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14) |
| Historic England | 2016 | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i> |
| Medlycott, M | 2011 | <i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24) |
| MHCLG | 2021 | <i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government |

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
ECCHEA	Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference

OASIS **Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations**,
<http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>
post-medieval from c AD 1500 to c 1800
section (abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
wsi written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1881)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Site records (context sheets, plans)

Site digital photos and log

Inked sections

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1881)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log

Graphic files

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 Chelmsford Museum under reference number WRSJG23.

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Distribution list:

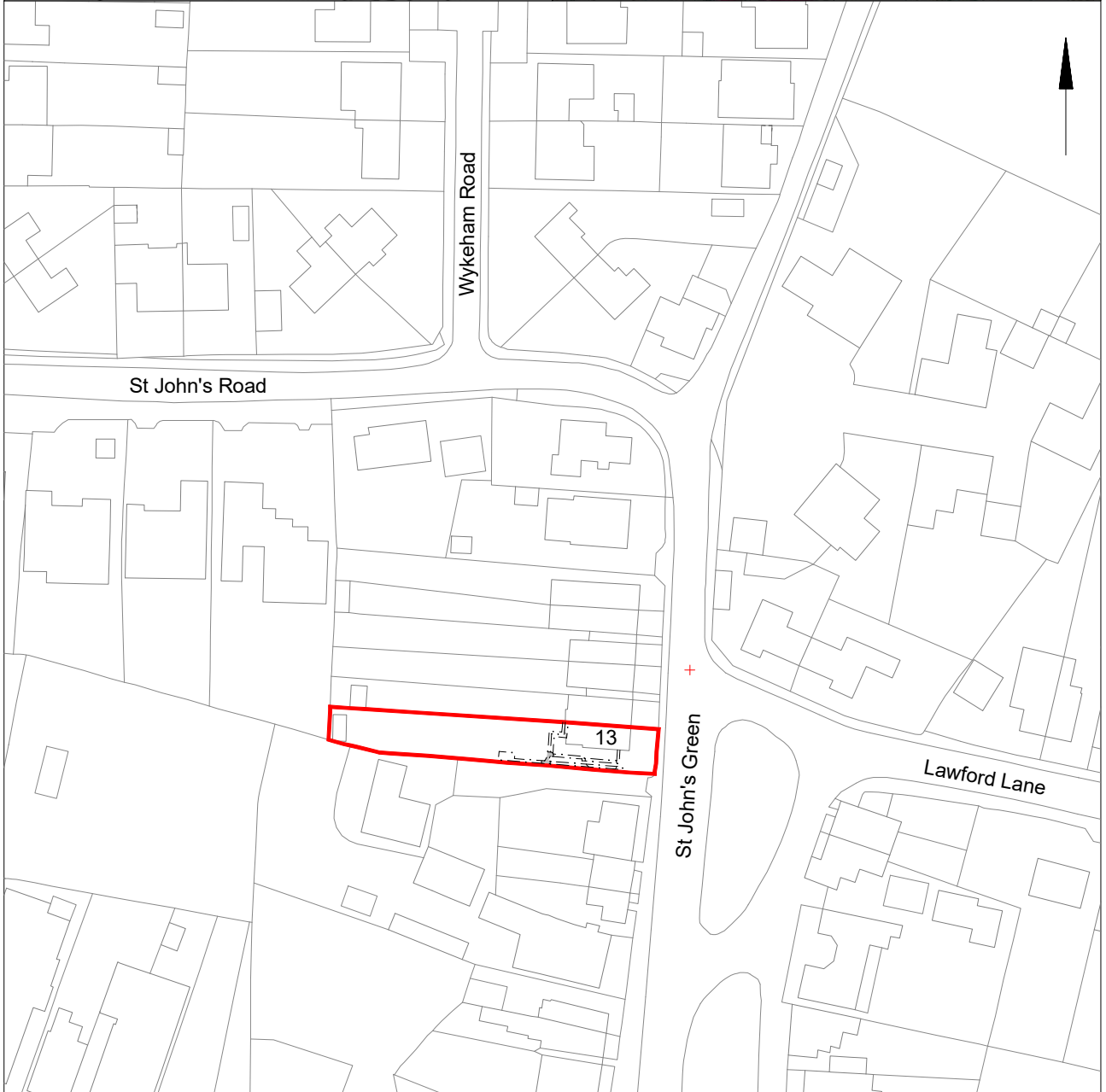
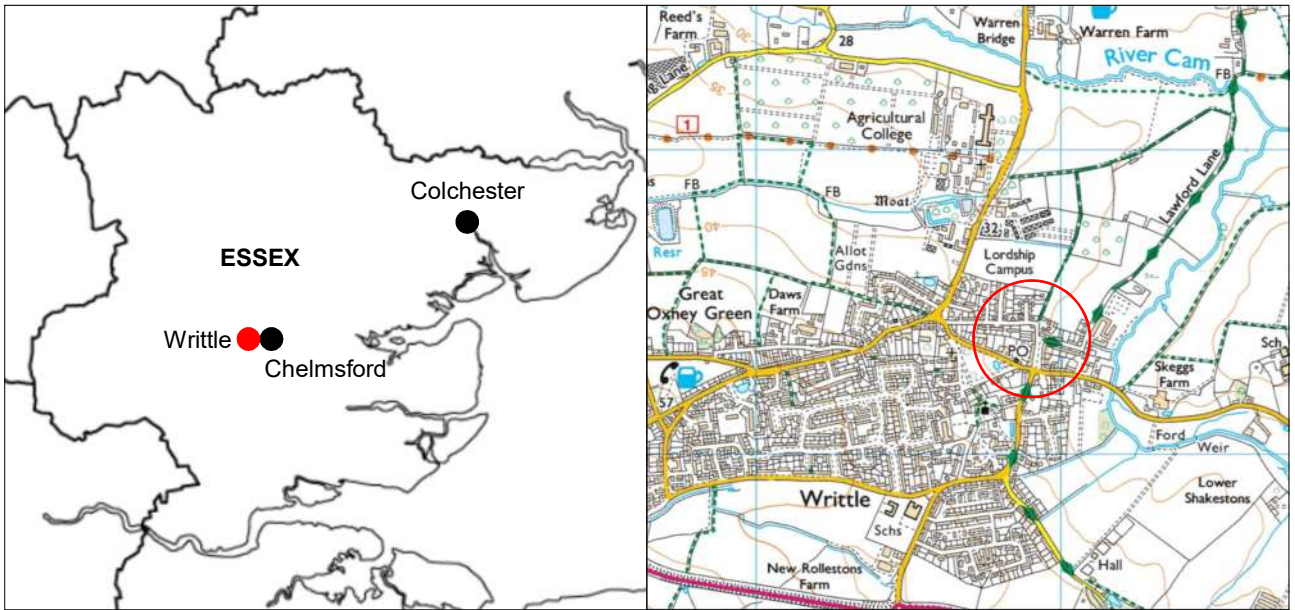
Homeowner

Mark Baister, ECCPS

Essex Historic Environment Record

Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Finds No.	Context type	Description	Date
L1		Topsoil	Friable, moist dark grey-brown sandy silt with inclusions of: 2% stone	Modern
L2	2	Subsoil	Friable, moist medium dark grey-brown sandy silt with inclusions of: 1% stone	Modern
L3		Natural	Firm, moist medium brown-orange clay with inclusions of: stone 4%	Post-glacial
F1	1	Pit	Firm/hard, wet medium grey-brown silty clay with oyster flecking and inclusions of: stone 25%	Modern



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Fig 1 Site location.

0 50 m



Fig 2 Results.

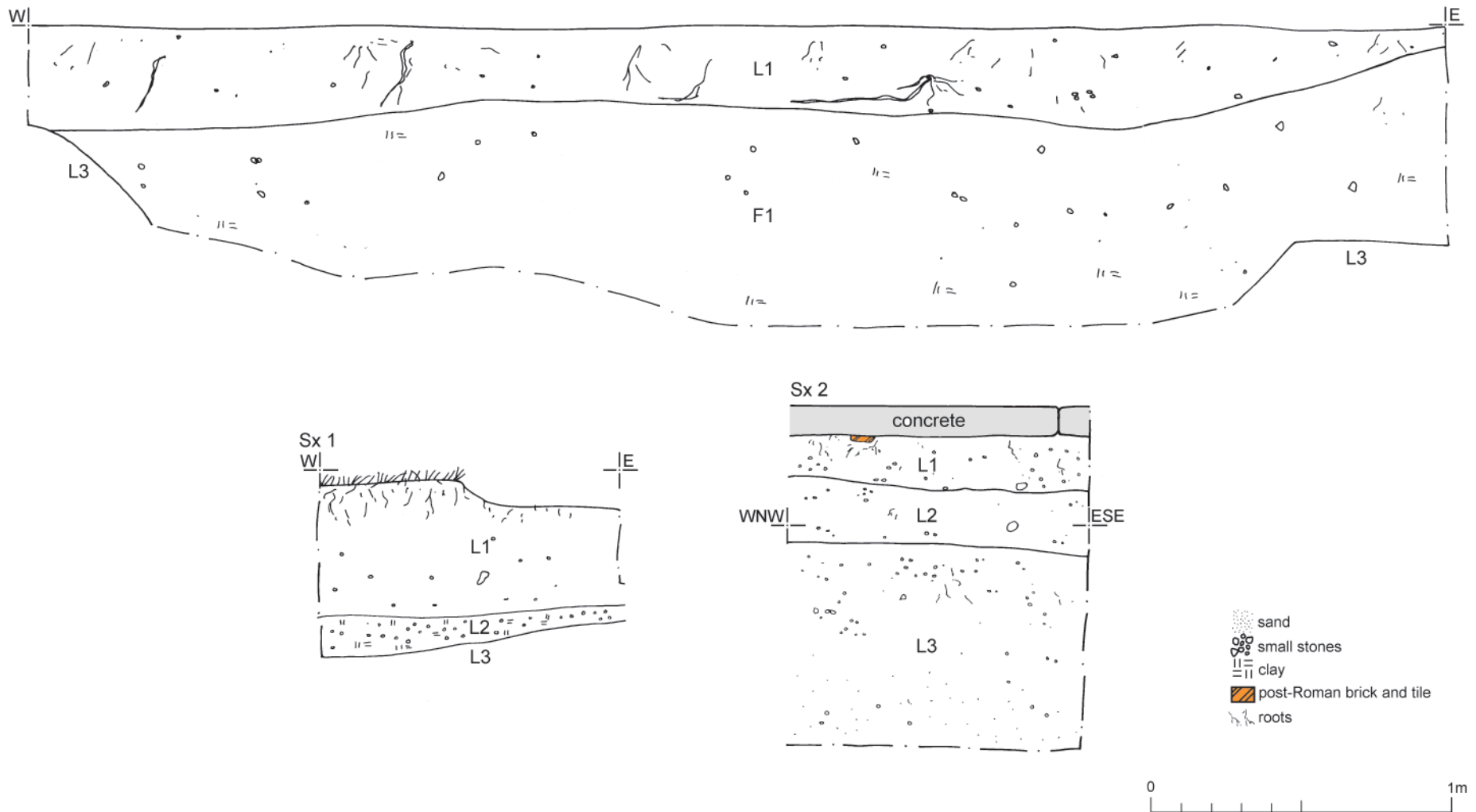


Fig 3 Feature and representative sections.

OASIS Summary for colchest3-510319

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-510319
Project Name	Archaeological monitoring at 13 St Johns Green, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 3DZ
Sitename	13 St Johns Green, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 3DZ
Sitecode	
Project Identifier(s)	2022/10h
Activity type	WATCHING BRIEF
Planning Id	21/01604/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	30-Nov-2022 - 21-Sep-2023
Location	13 St Johns Green, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 3DZ NGR : TL 67904 06374 LL : 51.7309355812924, 0.429926124778411 12 Fig : 567904,206374
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Essex Local Authority District : Chelmsford Parish : Writtle
Project Methodology	Approximately 19.3m of foundation trench was machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. The trench was c 0.40m wide and 0.60m deep. Approximately 23m of service trenches measuring 0.4m wide by 0.4m deep and a soakaway measuring 2.3m long, 1.3m wide and 1.1m deep were machine excavated.
Project Results	Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 13 St John's Green, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex during groundworks for the construction of a two storey side extension, a single storey rear extension and associated services. Groundworks uncovered a large pit and an old soakaway.
Keywords	
Funder	Private individual
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	C Lister, A Wightman, L Pooley
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - WRSJG23
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;