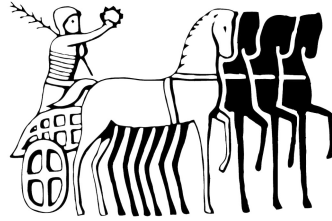


# Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1913  
issued April 2023**

**Archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of  
Stranger's Way, Church Road, Brightlingsea,  
Essex, CO7 0QT: March 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2023/02e  
ECC code: BGSW23**

**Archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of  
Stranger's Way, Church Road, Brightlingsea,  
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**NGR: TM 07983 17907**

**Planning ref.: 21/00208/FUL**

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CAT Report 1913**

**ECC code: BGSW23  
OASIS id: colchest3-513347**

**report prepared by Ben Holloway and Laura Pooley  
with contributions by Adam Wightman**

**fieldwork by Ben Holloway with Ziya Eksen  
and Alice Parker**

**commissioned by Tony Osbourn,  
Flying Trade Group**

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<b>Issued:</b>	21/04/2023	

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (three trial-trenches) was carried out on land to the rear of Stranger's Way, Church Road, Brightlingsea, Essex in advance of the construction of five new residential dwellings. The site is located c 380m west/north-west of a large multi-period archaeological site at Brightlingsea Quarry which provided evidence for occupation from the Early Neolithic to the Late Anglo-Saxon period. Features encountered during the evaluation included three undated ditches and a gully, a pit/tree-throw, a modern rubbish pit and eight modern tree-throws.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on 8th-9th March 2023 on land to the rear of Stranger's Way, Church Road, Brightlingsea, Essex. The work was commissioned by Tony Osbourn of the Flying Trade Group in advance of the construction of five new residential dwellings and associated amenity space.

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 Archaeological Evaluation and Excavation at Land to the rear of Stranger's Way, Church Road, Brightlingsea* written by Teresa O'Connor and detailing the required archaeological work (ECCPS 2023), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2023).

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* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b).

## 3 Archaeological background

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

The site is located within a large area of multi-period archaeological remains which were initially defined by cropmarks, recorded by aerial photography (EHER 2234). Approximately 380m west/north-west of the site a large multi-period site was excavated by CAT in 2013-5 at Brightlingsea Quarry prior to mineral extraction (CAT Report 1097). The excavation provided evidence for occupation on or near the site, on the ridge overlooking the River Colne estuary, from the Early Neolithic to the Late Anglo-Saxon period (over 5000 years).

There was a small number of features on the Brightlingsea Quarry site dating to the Early Neolithic, including a pit containing sweepings from a fire and a significant assemblage of worked flints. A substantial number of the features excavated were tree-throws. Based on the pottery recovered from their fills, and their stratigraphic relationships, they are probably the result of deforestation in the Late Neolithic. Some pit scatters around the site belong to the Late Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age periods. A small group of these pits to the south contained two possible cremations of a Late Neolithic date. Also dating to this period was a cremation in a collared urn. The Bronze Age saw the start of a combined agricultural and ritual landscape, with the excavation of a field system and a substantial Bronze Age ring-ditch. No burial was found

within the ring-ditch, but it did encircle a ring of post-holes. It probably contained a barrow, although this is not certain and it may instead be an unknown form of ritual monument.

Also excavated was a field system of Late Iron Age to Early Roman date, with a grouping of nine LIA/ER burials clustered around one of the entrances. During the mid Roman period, a trackway was laid out that cut across the site. It heads off outside the excavation area, presumably to Roman settlements elsewhere on the ridge. From one of the ditches in this trackway, a leaded-bronze foot in the shape of a harpy was recovered. It dates from the 1st century AD and was made in Campania, southern Italy. Also from the mid Roman period were three cremations in the south of the site, probably associated with any nearby settlements. The southern half of the site was dominated by an Anglo-Saxon settlement. Large numbers of finds were recovered from pits and structural features, including at least ten sunken featured buildings (Grubenhäuser) and two post-built structures.

To the north of the 2013-15 site, CAT carried out monitoring and excavation work in 2002-4 which exposed substantial prehistoric landscape features (CAT Reports 214, 252 and 280). Multiple field boundaries were observed during this monitoring and some were interpreted as remnants of a Neolithic field system that was maintained into the Roman period.

To the immediate west of the CAT 2013-15 excavation area was the site of an extensive Middle Bronze Age burial complex excavated in 1989-90 by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (EAA **126** 2008, EHER 2142). This exposed 31 ring-ditches and 48 cremation burials, 34 of which were urned (EAA **126**, 10). Also observed were three boundary ditches and several post-holes and pits of unknown dates. The only dated feature outside of the ring-ditches and cremations was a pit in the south-west of the site which was radiocarbon dated to the Anglo-Saxon period (EAA **126**, 15).

#### **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 2-4)

Three trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trenches T1 and T2 were 20m long and trench T3 30m long, all 1.8m wide.

Across all the trenches, modern topsoil (L1, 0.2-0.25m thick) sealed a buried soil layer (L2, 0.25-0.30m thick) with natural beneath (L3, encountered at a depth of 0.50-0.55m below current ground level).

##### **Trench 1**

Parallel ditches F13 and F14 were aligned north to south and c 5.4m apart. Ditch F13 was 0.88m wide and 0.14m deep with ditch F14 a similar 0.91m wide and 0.19m deep. No finds were recovered from either feature. If continuing on the same alignment, ditch F14 should have passed through trench T2, but as there was no trace the ditch likely either terminates or changes alignment between the two trenches.

##### **Trench 2**

Modern pit F4 was not excavated as a large quantity of modern finds, including fragments of a cast iron range/stove, were visible in the surface of the feature. Six tree-throws (F2-F3, F5-F8) for sizes see Appendix 1) had significant rooting throughout their fill, and are likely to have been of relatively modern date.



**Photograph 1** Trench T1, facing north-east.



**Photograph 2** Trench T2, facing north-east.

### Trench 3

Ditch F9 was aligned north-east to south-west. U-shaped with gentle sloping sides, it measured 0.96m wide by 0.19m deep. Gully F11 was aligned north-north-east by south-south-west and was smaller at 0.57m wide and only 0.07m deep. No finds were recovered from either feature.

Pit/tree-throw F1 (1.22m by >0.79m, 0.21m deep) at the north-west end of the trench was the only excavated feature to produce dating evidence, namely a piece of worked flint of Mesolithic or Early Neolithic date. However, the feature also had rooting throughout the fill and may actually be a tree-throw of relatively modern date rather than a pit of prehistoric date.

Two tree-throws (F10, F12, for sizes see Appendix 1) had significant rooting throughout their fill, and are likely to have been of relatively modern date.



**Photograph 3** Trench T3, facing north-west.

## 6 Finds

*by Adam Wightman*

Pit F1 (finds no. 1) – A retouched hard-hammer flake with no cortex on the dorsal surface. Retouch on the left lateral edge (ventral face) and distal end (dorsal face) form a wide point which is rectangular in cross-section and may have been used as an awl. There is other evidence on the piece of edge-wear or use-damage. The flake has been struck from the edge of a blade core and may have been removed to rejuvenate the core. The piece is likely to date to the Mesolithic or Early Neolithic based on the characteristics of the core from which it was removed which are evident on its dorsal surface.

## 7 Conclusion

Evaluation on land to the rear of Stranger's Way, Brightlingsea revealed 14 features. Included were a modern rubbish pit and eight tree-throws, all of which are likely to be of relatively modern date, probably the remains of garden trees/shrubs. There were three undated ditches and a smaller undated gully, none of which appear on OS mapping of the area and may predate the late 19th century. One pit/tree-throw produced a piece of worked flint of Mesolithic or Early Neolithic date. The feature could be a prehistoric pit but is perhaps more likely to be a modern tree-throw with residual flint. In either case, the presence of the flint does attest to some, probably small-scale and transient, human activity on the development site in the Mesolithic or Early Neolithic period. Excavations c 380m west/north-west of the development site at Brightlingsea Quarry have previously identified a small number of Early Neolithic features, including a pit containing sweepings from a fire and a significant assemblage of worked flints (CAT Report 1097), and the flint found during this excavation could be associated with the remains discovered there.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Tony Osbourn and the Fly Trade Group for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, A Wightman and L Pooley, with fieldwork carried out by B Holloway with Z Eksen and A Parker. Figures were compiled by B Holloway and S Veasey. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Conner.

## 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 &amp; Safety Policy</i>   |
| CAT Report 214                   | 2002         | <i>An archaeological watching brief and recording at Brightlingsea Quarry, Moverons Lane, Brightlingsea, Essex: March-April 2002</i> , by H Brooks  |
| CAT Report 252                   | 2003         | <i>An archaeological watching brief and recording at Brightlingsea Quarry, Moverons Lane, Brightlingsea, Essex: October 2003</i> , by H Brooks  |
| CAT Report 280                   | 2004         | <i>An archaeological watching brief and recording at Brightlingsea Quarry, Moverons Lane, Brightlingsea, Essex: June-July 2004</i> , by L Pooley  |
| CAT Report 1097                  | 2017         | <i>Archaeological monitoring and excavation at Brightlingsea Quarry, Moverons Lane, Brightlingsea, Essex: June 2013-April 2015</i> , by M Baister   |
| 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   |
| EAA 126                          | 2008         | <i>An Early Neolithic Ring-ditch and Middle Bronze Age Cemetery: excavation and survey at Brightlingsea, Essex</i> , East Anglian Archaeology 126, by Clarke, C P and Lavender, N J   |
| ECCPS                            | 2023         | <i>Brief for a Programme of Archaeological evaluation at on land rear of Strangers Way, Church Road, Brightlingsea</i> , by T O'Connor  |
| Gurney, D                        | 2003         | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).  |
| Historic England<br>Medlycott, M | 2016<br>2011 | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i><br><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.   |
| 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)  |

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

Anglo-Saxon	period from c 500 – 1066
Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC



CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	a single unit of excavation, which is often referred to numerically, and can be any feature, layer or find.
ECC	Essex County Council
ECCHEA	Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
Iron Age	period from 700 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
Mesolithic	period from c 10,000 – 4000BC
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>
prehistoric	pre-Roman
residual	something out of its original context, e.g a Roman coin in a modern pit
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	written scheme of investigation

## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** One flint

**Digital record**

CAT Report 1913

ECCPS Brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Digital photographs

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 Brightlingsea Museum (finds) and the Archaeological Data Service (digital files).

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**Distribution list:**

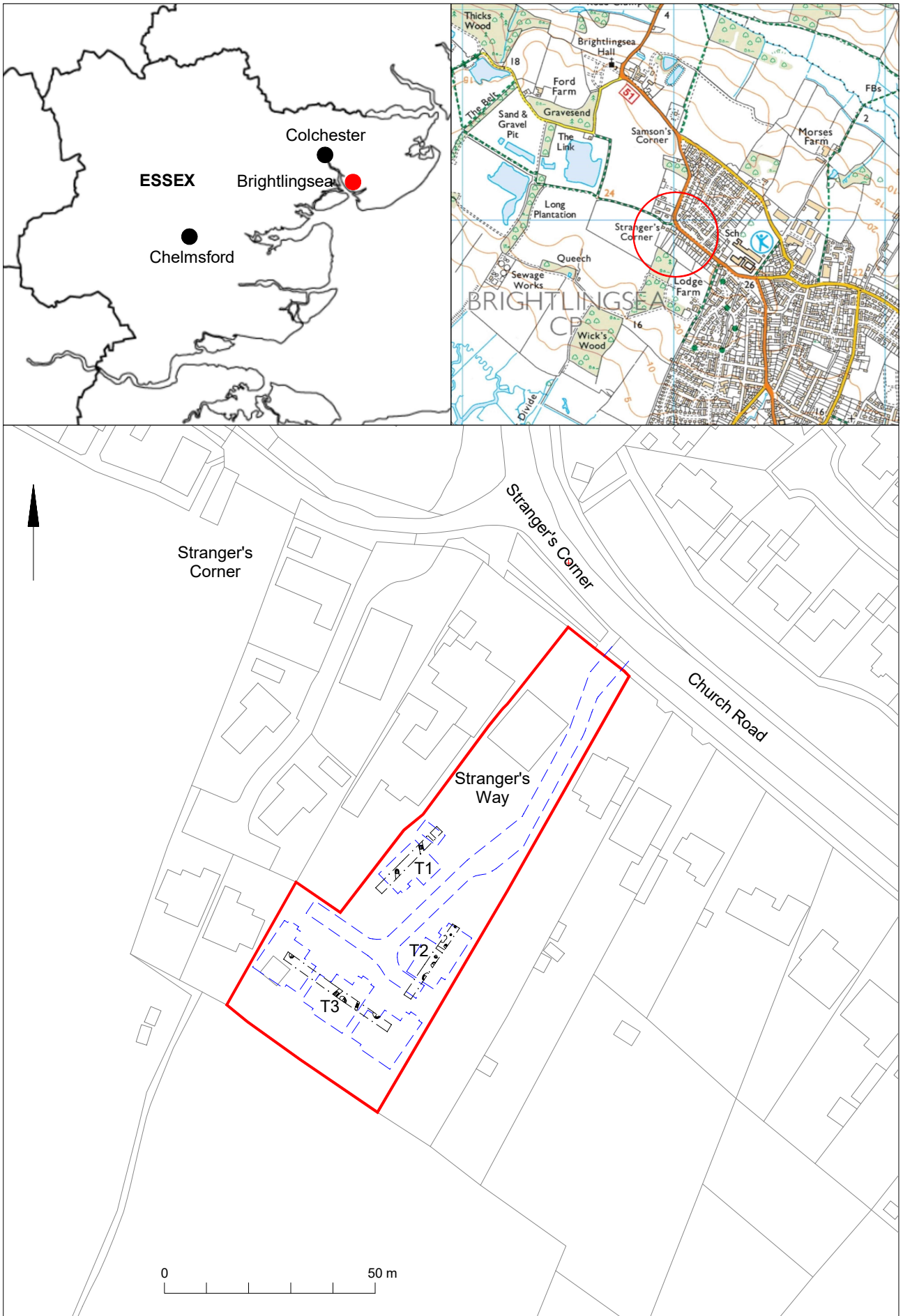
Tony Osbourn, Flying Trade Group

Teresa O'Connor, Essex County Council Planning Services

Essex Historic Environment Record

## Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Trench	Finds no.	Identification	Description	Date
L1	All	-	Topsoil	Firm moist dark grey/brown sandy silt	Modern
L2	All	-	Subsoil	Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt with charcoal flecks	Undated
L3	All	-	Natural	Firm moist medium yellow/orange sand and inclusions of: gravel 25%	Post-glacial
F1	T3	1	Pit/tree-throw	Firm moist medium brown sandy silt. 1.22m by >0.79m and 0.21m deep.	?Prehistoric
F2	T2	-	Tree-throw	Loose/soft medium grey/brown sandy silt. 0.45m diameter, 0.26m deep.	Undated
F3	T2	-	Tree-throw	Loose/soft moist medium grey/brown sandy silt. >0.52m by 0.46m and 0.09m deep.	Undated
F4	T2	-	Pit	Friable moist dark brown/black sandy silt. Not excavated, 1.9m by 0.47m.	Modern
F5	T2	-	Tree-throw	Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt. 0.88m by >0.65m and 0.14m deep.	Undated
F6	T2	-	Tree-throw	Friable moist dark grey/brown sandy silt. 0.73m by 0.68m and 0.13m deep	Undated
F7	T2	-	Tree-throw	Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt. 1.28m by >0.61m and 0.23m deep.	Undated
F8	T2	-	Tree-throw	Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt. 1.9m by 0.75m and 0.1m deep.	Undated
F9	T3	-	Ditch	Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt with charcoal flecks. U-shaped with gentle sloping sides, 0.96m wide by 0.19m deep.	Undated
F10	T3	-	Tree-throw	Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt. 1.73m by >1.0m and 0.4m deep.	Undated
F11	T3	-	Gully	Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt. 0.57m wide by 0.07m deep.	Undated
F12	T3	-	Tree-throw	Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt. 1.84m by >0.84m and 0.19m deep.	Undated
F13	T1	-	Ditch	Loose/soft moist medium grey sandy silt. U-shaped with gentle sloping sides, 0.88m wide by 0.13m deep.	Undated
F14	T1	-	Ditch	Loose/soft moist light/medium grey sandy silt. U-shaped with gentle sloping sides, 0.91m wide by 0.19m deep.	Undated



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Fig 1 Site location, proposed development dashed blue.

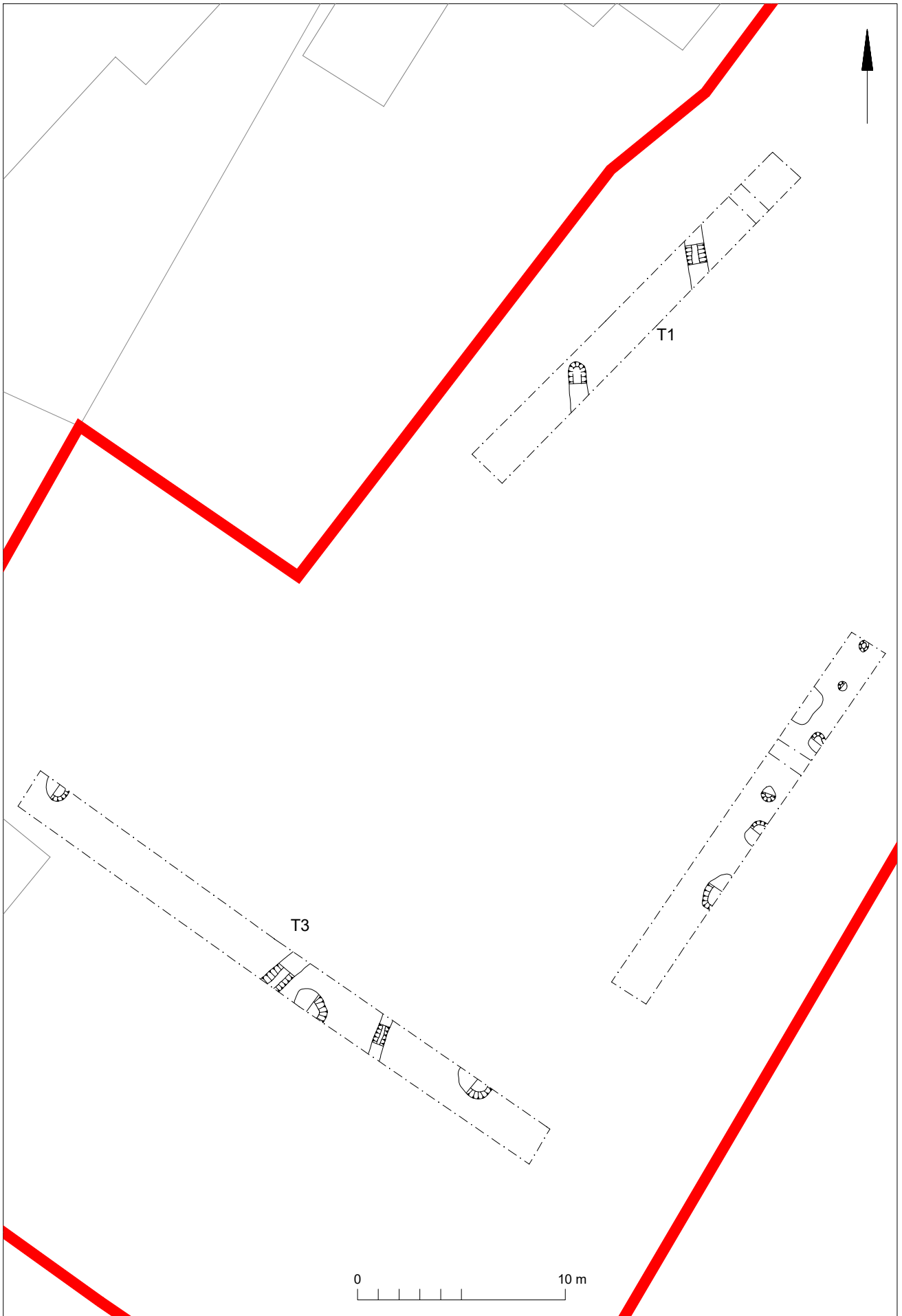


Fig 2 Results.

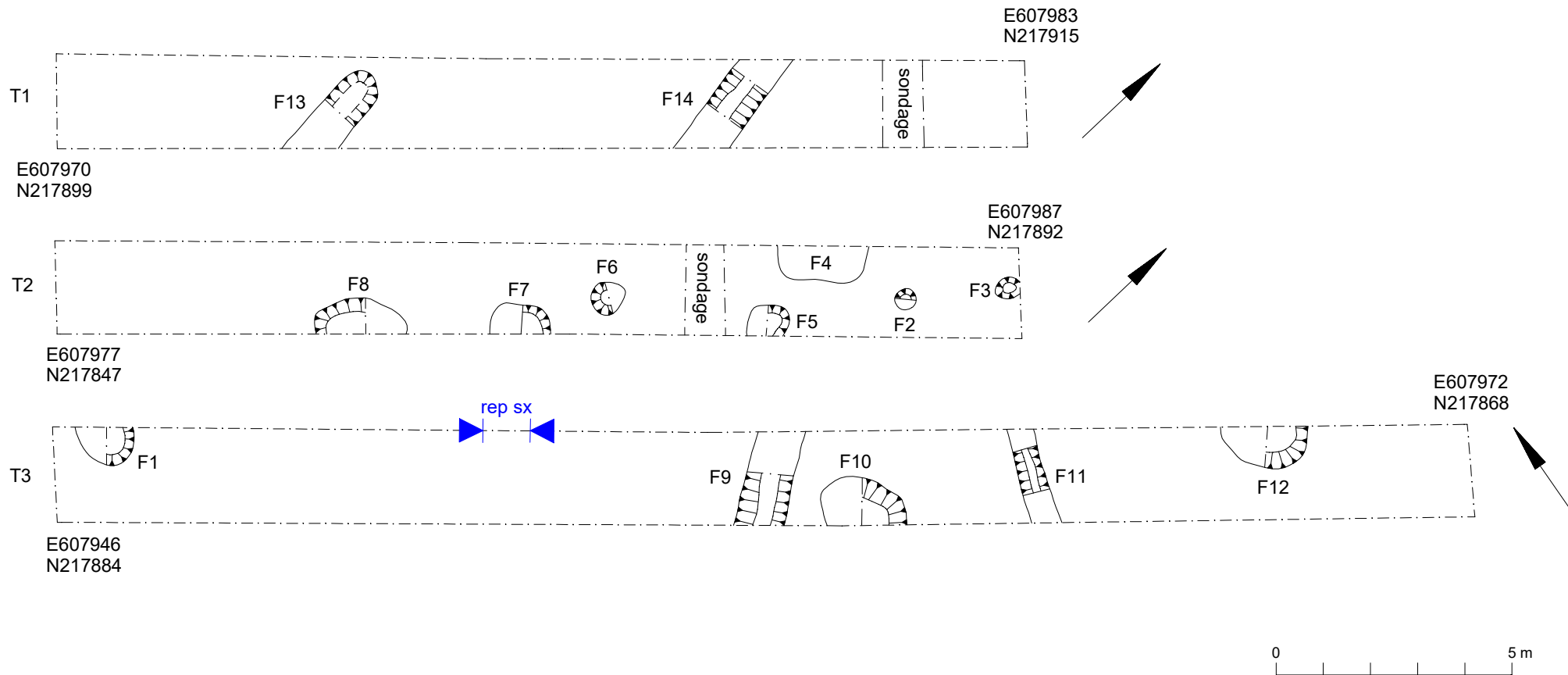


Fig 3 Detailed trench plans.

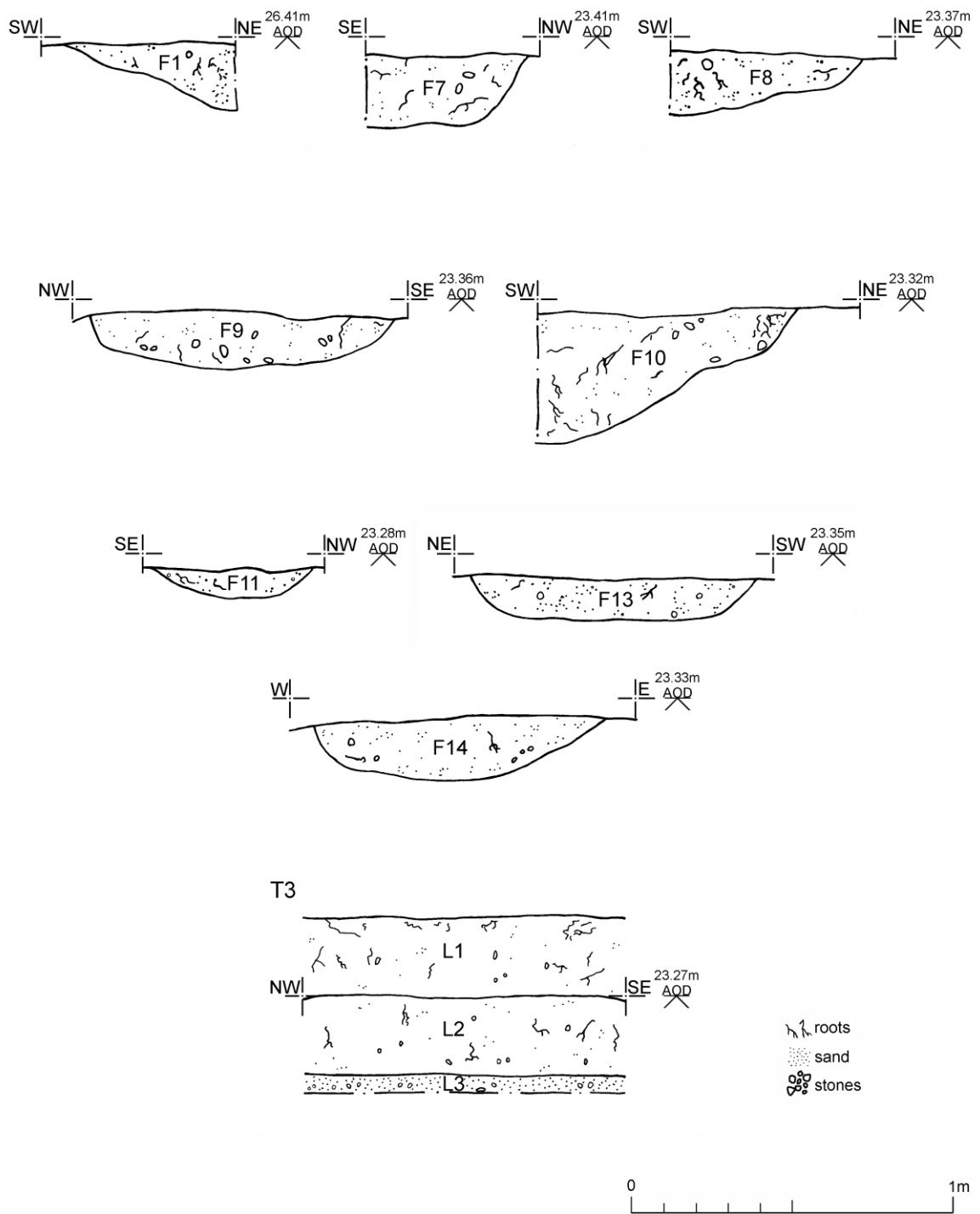


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

## Summary for colchest3-513347

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-513347
Project Name	Archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of Stranger's Way, Church Road, Brightlingsea, Essex, CO7 0QT
Sitename	Land to the rear of Stranger's Way, Church Road, Brightlingsea, Essex, CO7 0QT.
Activity type	Evaluation
Project Identifier(s)	2023/02e
Planning Id	21/00208/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	08-Mar-2023 - 09-Mar-2023
Location	Land to the rear of Stranger's Way, Church Road, Brightlingsea, Essex, CO7 0QT. NGR : TM 07983 17907 LL : 51.8210638376156, 1.01640857821107 12 Fig : 607983,217907
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Tendring Parish : Brightlingsea
Project Methodology	Archaeological evaluation (three trial-trenches) carried out as specified in the project brief and wsi.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (three trial-trenches) was carried out on land to the rear of Stranger's Way, Church Road, Brightlingsea, Essex in advance of the construction of five new residential dwellings. The site is located c 380m west/north-west of a large multi-period archaeological site at Brightlingsea Quarry which provided evidence for occupation from the Early Neolithic to the Late Anglo-Saxon period. Features encountered during the evaluation included three undated ditches and a gully, a pit/tree-throw, a modern rubbish pit and eight modern tree-throws.
Keywords	Retouched Flake - EARLY NEOLITHIC - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus
Funder	
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	L, Pooley, B, Holloway
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - BGSW23
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;