

Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1941
issued June 2023**

**Archaeological evaluation at 111-115 Newland Street,
Witham, Essex, CM8 1BG: May 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2023/04e
ECC code: WH27**

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Witham, Essex, CM8 1BG: May 2023**

NGR: TL 82037 14314 (centre)

**Planning ref.: 20/00808/FUL
Appeal reference: APP/Z1510/W22/3293210**

**CAT project ref.: 2023/04e
CAT Report 1941**

**ECC code: WH27
OASIS id: colchest3-514957**

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

**commissioned by Tony Dalton,
East of England Co-Operative Society**

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Issued:	09/06/2023	

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Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aims	3
5	Results	3
6	Finds	6
7	Conclusion	6
8	Acknowledgements	7
9	References	7
10	Abbreviations and glossary	8
11	Contents of archive	8
12	Archive deposition	8
	Appendix 1 Context list	9
	Figures	after p9
	OASIS summary sheet	

List of maps, photographs and figures

Cover: working site shot

Map 1	Extract of the 1839 Tithe map	2
Photograph 1	T1 trench shot – looking north southeast	3
Photograph 2	T2 trench shot – looking south	4
Photograph 3	T2 rep sx – looking east	5
Photograph 4	T2 brick floor F5 – looking east	5
Photograph 5	T2 brick floor F5 working shot – looking southeast	6
Fig 1	Site location, development dashed blue	
Fig 2	Evaluation results	
Fig 3	Trench results	
Fig 4	Feature and representative sections	
Fig 5	Evaluation results overlay 1888 OS mapping	

1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out at 111-115 Newland Street, Witham, Essex in advance of a new residential development. The Newland Street site is located within an archaeologically sensitive area. Primarily to the south east of the Roman Road from Colchester to London. Recent investigations to the south of the area has identified activity ranging from the Bronze age to the medieval period. A 19th-20th century building was identified during the evaluation, which included modern brick wall foundations and associated brick and mortar floors. Also present were an undated ditch and utility supplies and drainage.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between 4th-5th of May 2023 at 111-115 Newland Street, Witham, Essex. The work was commissioned by Tony Dolton of the East Of England Co-operative Society, and took place in advance of the demolition of an existing outbuilding and the construction of seven residential dwellings (houses & flats) and an 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 by trial trenching at 111-115 Newland Street, Witham* 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 (ECCPS 2023) and 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 the bedrock geology of the site to be London clay formation (bioturbated or poorly laminated blue-grey or grey-brown slightly calcareous, silty to very silty clay) with superficial River Terrace Deposits (sand and gravel with subsidiary clay and silt).

The proposed development site is located within the Witham conservation area, the focus of which surrounds Newland Street. Newland Street follows the line of the Roman road from Colchester to London, and is associated with a number of significant Late Iron Age and Roman sites.

Between 2020 and 2021 Archaeology South East (ASE) undertook an evaluation and excavation on the land to the south of the proposed development. The earliest remains identified were two Late Bronze Age cremation burials, both in inverted urns. The most significant remains were from the later Roman period and comprised five pottery kilns sited around the terminus of a ditch, the remains of a possible enclosure and post-holes forming a

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

possible structure. A series of post-medieval quarry pits were also identified (ASE Report 2002198).

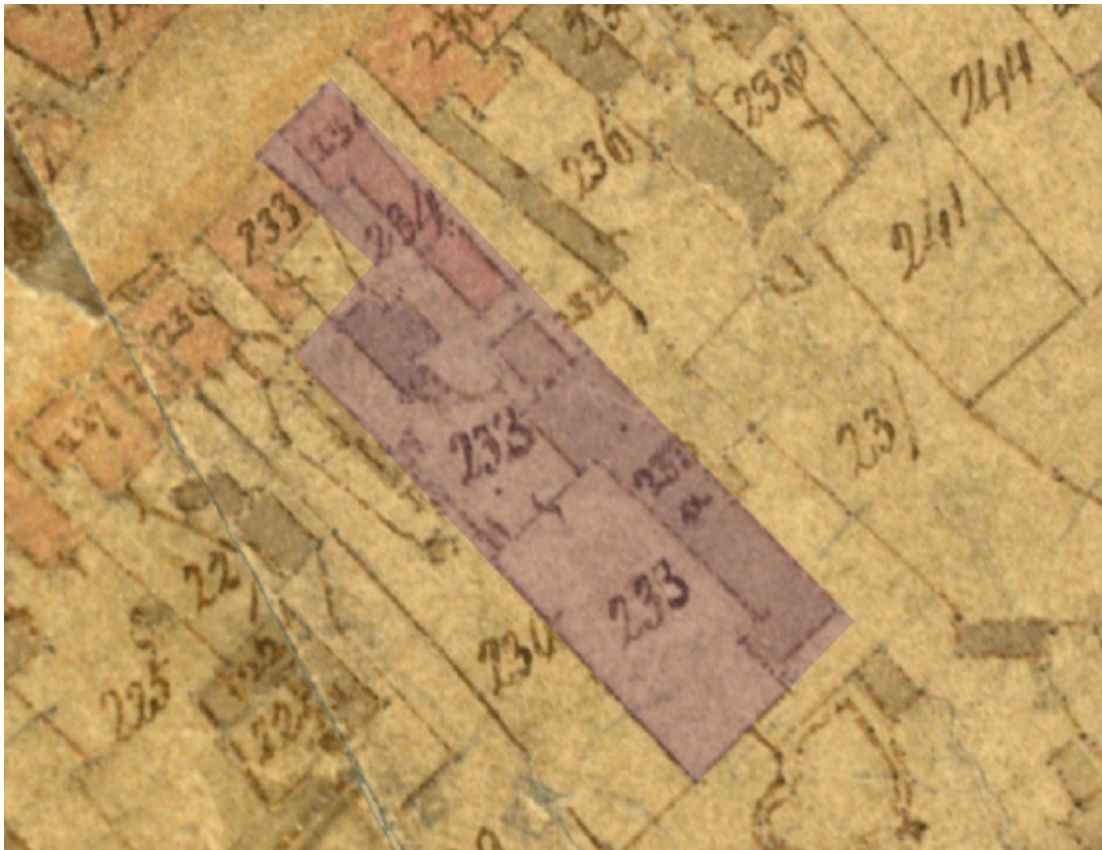
Approximately 900m to the south-west of the development site discoveries include an enclosed Iron Age settlement (EHER 14044, 14039) and a Roman religious complex (EHER 14040, 14043). Saxon pottery has also been identified in this area (EHER 14041).

In the Domesday book, Witham is recorded as a royal holding with a mill and a large number of households. In c 1147, the manor of Witham was granted to the Knights Templar and in 1212 a settlement founded along the Roman road. Initially known as Wulversford, the area quickly adopted the name of Newland Street, Witham.

In the post-medieval period, Witham continued to expand, principally in response to the development of the cloth trade in the 17th century. This expansion can be evidenced by the large number of listed post-medieval buildings that front on to Newland Street.

The Conservation Area Appraisal (Fielder 2007) states that 113 Newland Street dates to roughly 1840 and that numbers 111 to 115 were, at one time, all part of the Witham Co-operative Wholesale Society store. On historic mapping, a series of outbuildings can be seen to the rear of the street. Although these buildings are no longer extant, it is possible they may have been incorporated into the outbuilding proposed for demolition.

For a full background on the history of Witham, see the Witham Historic Towns Project Assessment Report (Medlycott 1998) and the Braintree District Historic Environment Characterisation Project (ECC 2010).



Map 1 Extract of the 1839 Tithe Map, the development site highlight in purple.

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)

Two trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. The trenches were cut through modern concrete hardstanding (L1, 0.15-0.2m thick), in places reinforced with steel re-bar, and a deposit of modern made ground (L2, 0.25-0.30m thick). In Trench 1 this material sealed a deposit of sub-soil (L5, 0.3m thick) above natural (L6, encountered at a depth of 0.7-0.75m below current ground level). In Trench 2, made ground deposit L2 sealed two demolition deposits (L3, 0.1m thick and consisting of a large quantity of crushed peg-tile above mortar layer L4, 0.15-0.2m thick). Beneath L4, sub-soil L5 sealed natural L6 (encountered at a depth of 1m below current ground level).

Trench 1 (5m long by 1.8m wide)

Ditch F1 was located at the eastern end of the trench. The north-east/south-west aligned feature was found to be 0.5m wide and 0.2m deep. There was no datable material from the feature.

Wall foundation F2 was located at the west end of T1. Aligned north-east/south-west, it was recorded for a length of 1.6m and was 0.3m wide and 0.25m deep. The foundation was constructed of half bricks in three courses. The bricks were frogged suggesting a mid-late 19th century date.



Photograph 1 Trench 1, F3 facing south-east.

Trench 2 (15m long by 1.8m wide)

Structural remains in this trench consisted of three wall foundations and two floors that appear to be part of the same building. All of the remains were c 0.2-0.4m below current ground level.

Wall foundation F3 was aligned north-west/south-east along the western half of the trench. It was uncovered over a distance of 4.9m and was 0.45m wide and 0.6m deep. The foundation was constructed of red brick in six courses. The substantial nature of the foundation suggests that it is part of an external wall. Wall foundations F4 and F6 were aligned north-east/south-west, 0.3m wide and constructed of red brick of which two observed courses were seen. The size and alignment of these foundations suggest they were internal walls.

Between wall foundations F4 and F6 was brick floor F5. Measuring 3.6m by >1.9m, the floor was made of a single course of red bricks set longways on edge-. To the south-east of F6 was floor F7, This was >3.7m by >1.9m, which was made of crushed brick and mortar.

Unfrogged brick samples date to the 19th century, with bricks from both F4 and F6 being of similar dimensions. Brick from F3 appear to be slightly earlier (17th-18th century)



Photograph 2 Trench 2, facing south.



Photograph 3 Trench 2 representative section, facing east



Photograph 4 Trench 2, F5 facing east.



Photograph 5 Trench 2, F5 working shot, facing south-east.

6 Finds

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation uncovered six pieces of ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) with a weight of 6,646g. The mean sherd weight is high at 1,108 gr. This material was recovered from three contexts (Table 1). Five of the pieces are unfroged bricks of 19th-century date, including a complete example with dimensions of 230 mm x 80 mm x 55 mm from brick floor F5. The unfroged brick from wall foundation F3, with dimensions of 245 mm x 120 mm x 55 mm, is earlier dating to the 17th-18th century.

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
F2	Brick wall foundation	2	2,351	1,176
F3	Brick wall foundation	1	2,556	2,556
F5	Brick floor	3	1,739	580
Total		6	6,646	1,108

Table 1 Quantities of brick from specific features.

7 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation at 111-115 Newland Street, Witham revealed an undated ditch and six structural features (four wall foundations and two floors). The 1839 Tithe Map (see Map 1 above) and early OS maps show a building on the development site. By overlaying the results of the evaluation on these maps (see Fig 5), it is evident that the structural features found here are part of this building. Wall foundations F2 and F3 both appear to be part of external walls, with foundations F4 and F6 being internal walls at the southeastern end of the building. The wall foundations and floors reveal that this southeastern end was divided into at least two rooms, one with a brick floor and another of crushed brick and mortar. Bricks from wall foundation F3

have been dated to the 17th-18th century suggesting that the building may have earlier origins or at least incorporated earlier bricks. Bricks from the rest of the building are dated to the 19th century. However, as the building is on the 1839 Tithe Map, it must be of early 19th-century date. Interestingly, part of this historic building is still standing as it appears that at least two of its outer walls were incorporated into the modern outbuilding which is to the north-east the site of Trench 1 (CAT Report 1938). Can this be shown graphically. The building is recorded on the Tithe Map as Plot 233a, owned by William Henry Patterson, occupied by Henry Lawshall White, and consist of a stable and yard. The adjacent Plot 233 is recorded as the house, yard, garden and premises of owner and occupier Thomas Belcher.
(<https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>)

At 0.2-0.4m below current ground level and in a good state of preservation, any further groundworks on the development site are likely to impact on the *in situ* remains of the 19th-century building which may have earlier origins. Further archaeological investigation/monitoring of the site would allow the footprint, internal arrangement, date and function of the building to be more precisely recorded. Groundworks to the south-west of the building may also impact on any archaeological remains in the adjoining garden/yard and any earlier archaeological remains present.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Tony Dolton and the East of England Co-operative Society 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 E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor.

9 References

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

ASE Report No. 2022198	2022	<i>Archaeological investigation: Land at River View, Witham, Essex Post-Excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design</i> by A Dyson
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	2023	<i>Written Scheme of investigation for historic building recording and archaeological evaluation at 111-115 Newland Street, Witham, Essex,</i> by S Veasey
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological Monitoring.</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 2022.
ECCPS	2022	<i>Brief for historic building recording and trial trenching evaluation at 111-115 Newland Street Witham</i> by T O'Connor
Fielder, K	2007	<i>Witham Town Centre Newland Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Historic England	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE).</i>
Medlycott, M	1998	<i>Witham Historic Town Assessment Report</i>
Ryan, P	1996	<i>Brick in Essex from the Roman Conquest to the Reformation.</i> Chelmsford: Pat Ryan.

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
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
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
prehistoric	pre-Roman
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of digital archive

CAT Report 1941
ECC Brief, CAT written scheme of investigation
Digital photographs
Survey data
Site 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.

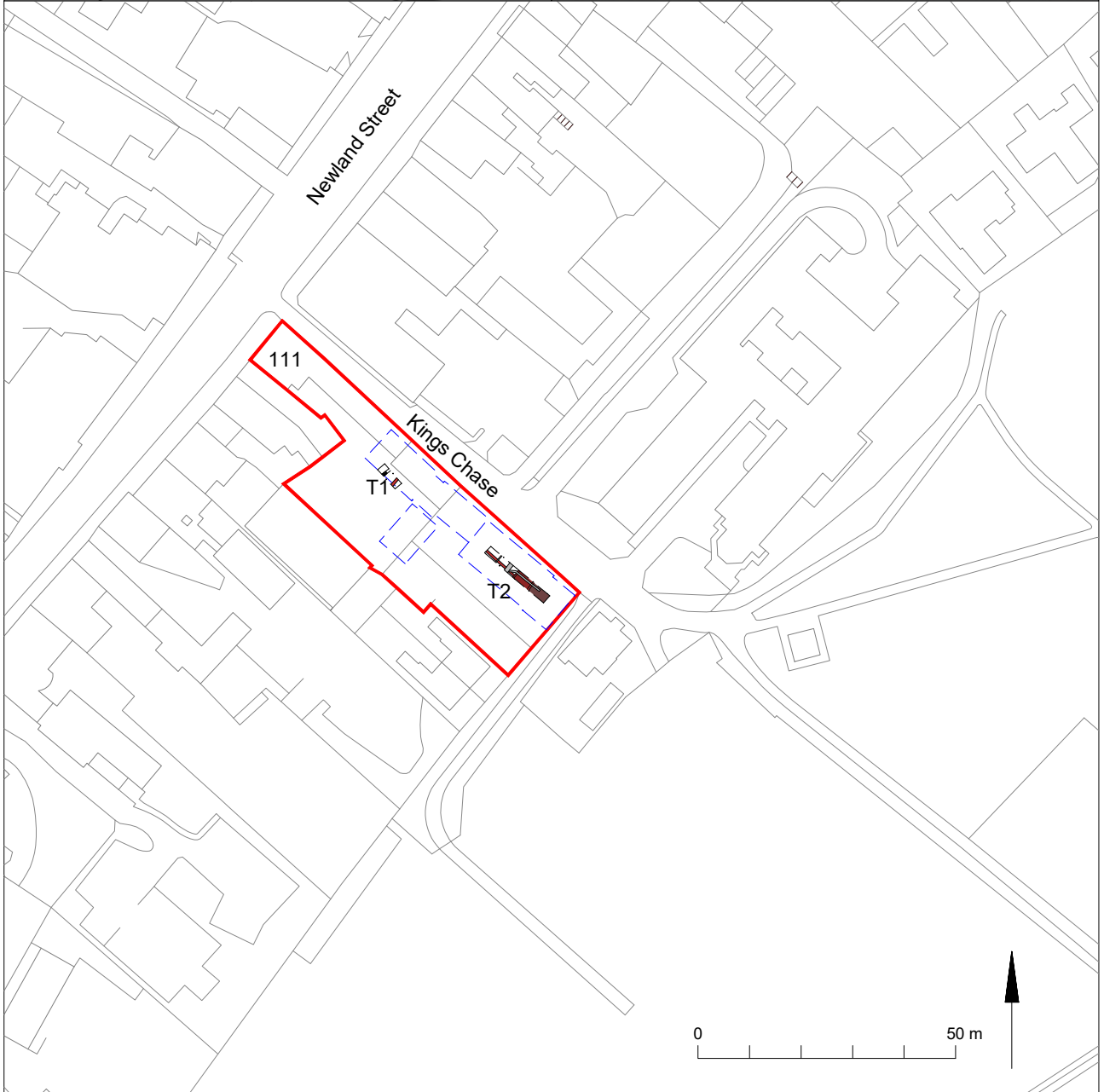
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Distribution list:

Tony Dalton, East of England Co-operative Society
Teresa O'Connor, Essex County Council Planning Services
Essex Historic Environment Record

Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Trench no.	Finds no.	Identification	Description	Date
L1	T1-T2	-	Hard standing	Poured concrete re-enforced with steel re-bar in places 0.15-0.2m thick.	Modern
L2	T1-T2	-	Made ground	Firm moist dark grey/brown sandy silt. 0.2-0.3m thick	Modern
L3	T2	-	Demolition deposit	Firm yellow mortar and crushed pegtile 0.15m thick	Modern
L4	T2	-	Demolition deposit	Firm yellow mortar. 0.2m thick	Modern
L5	T1-T2	1	Sub-soil	Firm moist grey/brown silty clay 0.2-0.3m thick	Post-Med
L6	T1-T2	-	Natural	Firm, moist yellow/grey sandy clay 0.05-0.1m thick (observed)	
F1	T1	-	Ditch	firm moist medium brown silt. 1.9m (L) x >.0.5m (W) x 0.2m (D) Feature extending beyond the limit of excavation.	Undated
F2	T2	2	Foundation	Red brick construction, three courses. 1.9m (L) x >.0.3m (W) x 0.25m (D) Feature extending beyond the limit of excavation	Modern
F3	T2	3	Foundation	Red brick construction, six courses. 4.9m (L) x >.0.5m (W) x 0.6m (D) Feature extending beyond the limit of excavation	Modern
F4	T2	-	Foundation	Red brick construction, two (observed) courses. 1.9m (L) x >.0.3m (W). Feature extending beyond the limit of excavation	Modern
F5	T2	4	Floor	Red brick construction, set on edge in a single thickness. 1.9m (L) x >3.6m (W). Feature extending beyond the limit of excavation	Modern
F6	T2	-	Foundation	Red brick construction, two (observed) courses. 1.9m (L) x >.0.3m (W). Feature extending beyond the limit of excavation	Modern
F7	T2	-	Floor	Crushed brick and Mortar construction. 1.9m (L) x >3.7m (W). Feature extending beyond the limit of excavation	Modern



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

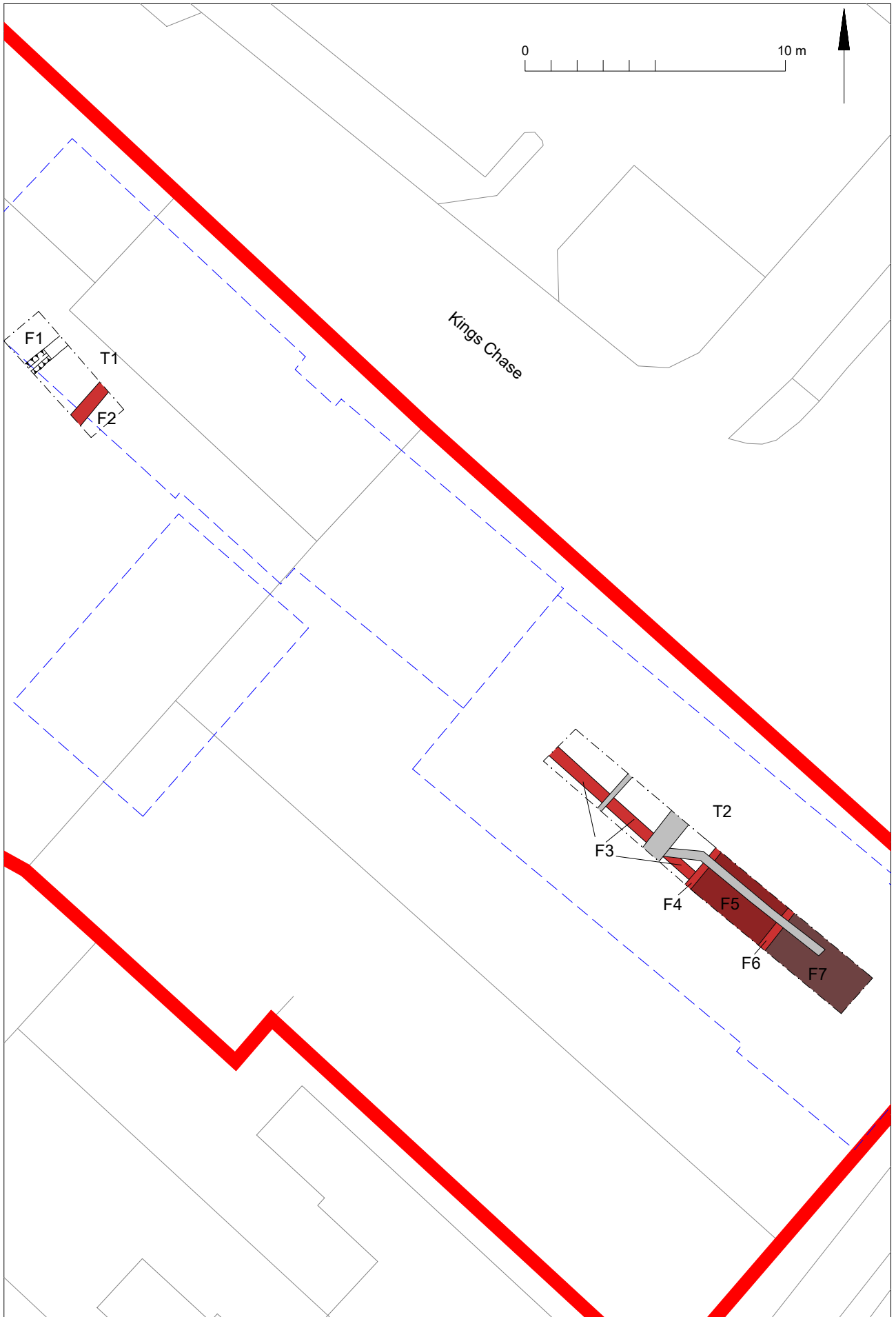
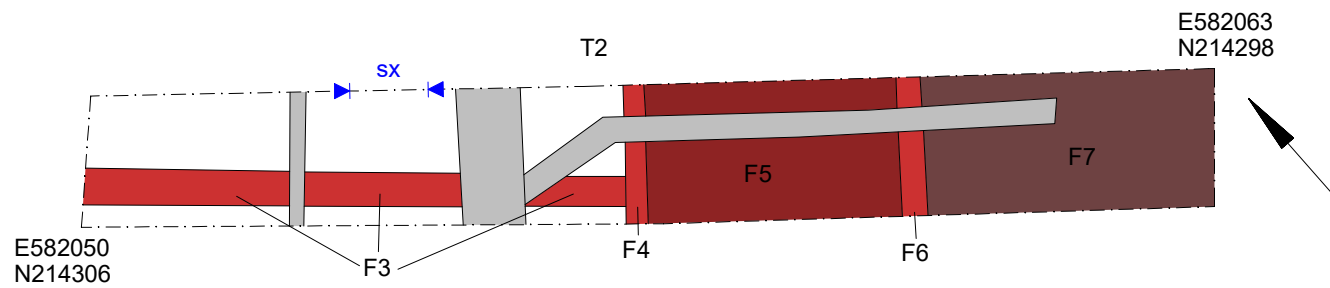
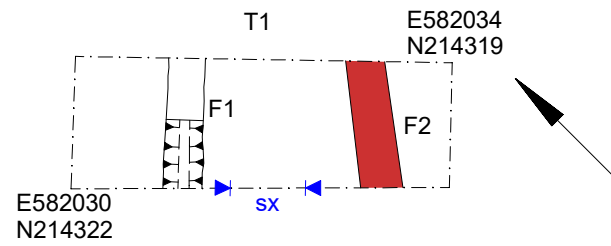


Fig 2 Evaluation results (see Fig 3 for key).



- Brick foundation.
- Brick floor.
- Crushed brick/mortar floor.
- Modern service.



Fig 3 Detailed trench plans.

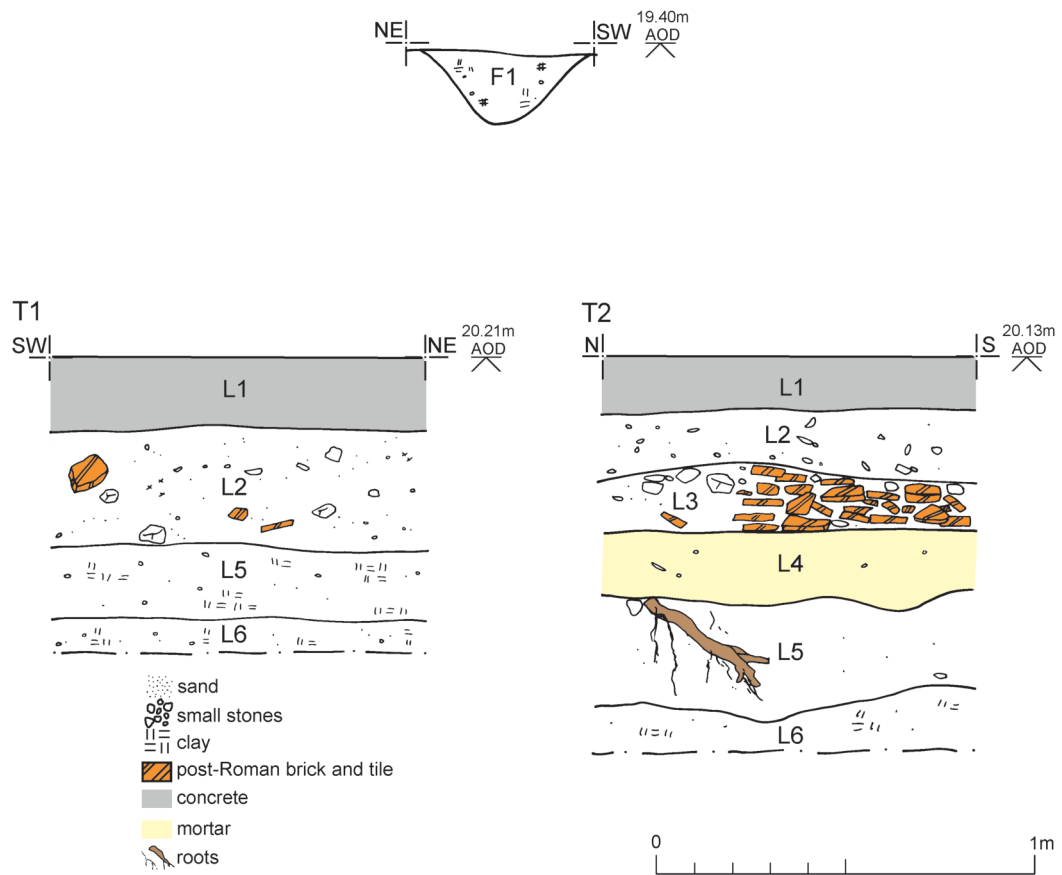


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

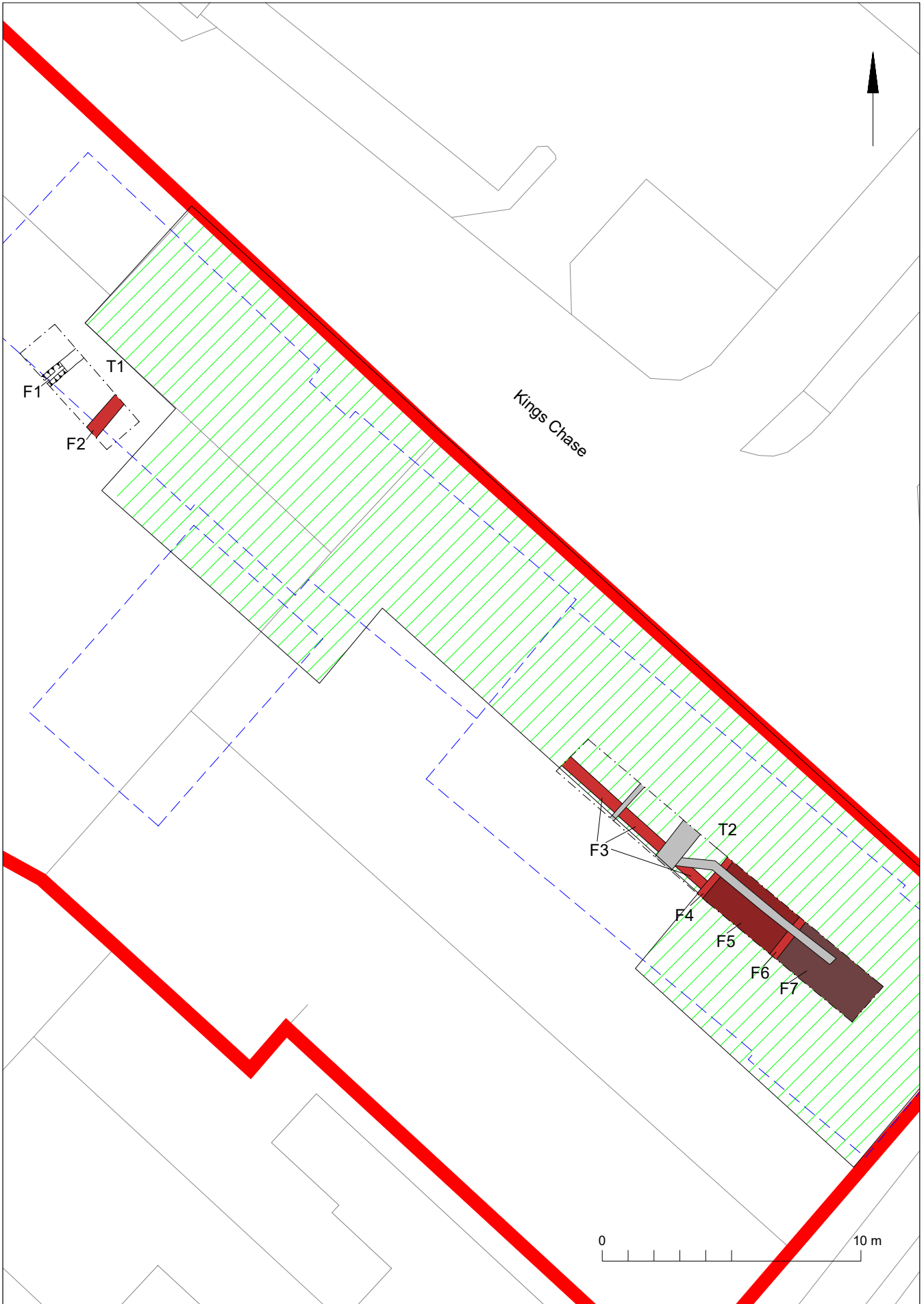


Fig 5 Evaluation results overlaid 1888-1913 OS map (shaded green)

Summary for colchest3-514957

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-514957
Project Name	Archaeological evaluation at 111-115 Newland Street, Witham, Essex, CM8 1BG
Sitename	111-115 Newland Street, Witham, Essex
Activity type	Evaluation
Project Identifier(s)	2023/04e
Planning Id	20/00808/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	04-May-2023 - 05-May-2023
Location	111-115 Newland Street, Witham, Essex NGR : TL 82037 14314 LL : 51.79784197351582, 0.638510434734221 12 Fig : 582037,214314
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Braintree Parish : Witham
Project Methodology	Archaeological evaluation (2 trial trenches) carried out as specified in the project brief and wsi.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out at 111-115 Newland Street, Witham, Essex in advance of a new residential development. The Newland Street site is located within an archaeologically sensitive area. Primarily to the south east of the Roman Road from Colchester to London. Recent investigations to the south of the area has identified activity ranging from the Bronze age to the medieval period. A 19th-20th century building was identified during the evaluation, which included modern brick wall foundations and associated brick and mortar floors. Also present were an undated ditch and utility supplies and drainage.
Keywords	Building - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	B, Holloway
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - WH27
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;