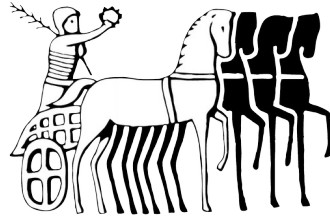


# Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1948  
issued June 2023**

**Archaeological evaluation on land south to the  
south of Michael Wright Way, Great Bentley,  
Essex, CO7 8RS: May 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2023/05f  
ECC code: GBEMW23**

**Archaeological evaluation on land to the south of  
Michael Wright Way, Great Bentley, Essex,  
CO7 8RS: May 2023**

**NGR: TM 1114 2219 (centre)**

**Planning district: Tendring  
Planning ref.: 21/01560/FUL &  
APP/P1560/W/22/3297669**

**CAT project ref.: 2023/05f  
CAT Report 1948**

**ECC code: GBEMW23  
OASIS id: colchest3-515655**

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Matt Perou**

**commissioned by Stephen Williams  
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<b>Issued:</b>	20/06/2023	

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological evaluation (six trial-trenches) was carried out on land to the south of Michael Wright Way, Great Bentley, Essex in advance of the construction of six new dwellings. The site is located within the proximity of several previous archaeological investigations, including a large excavation that uncovered evidence of a Late Iron Age/early Roman settlement. However, the evaluation revealed only one shallow, undated ditch and a natural silt patch.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land to the south of Michael Wright Way, Great Bentley, Essex on the 22nd-23rd May 2023. The work was commissioned by Stephen Williams on behalf of Hills Group, and took place in advance of the construction of six new dwellings.

As the site lies in an area of potential archaeological sensitivity, the Historic Environment Advisor (HEA) at Essex County Council Place Services recommended 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 Special Archaeology Advice written by ECCPS in 2021 (no project brief was issued), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by CAT (2023) and agreed with ECCPS in advance of the work.

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 (Fig 2)

The following archaeological background includes extracts of the ECC Brief (ECCPS 2022) 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 scale<sup>1</sup>) shows the bedrock geology of the site to be Thames Group (clay, silt and sand) with superficial deposits of cover sand (clay silt and sand). Cover sands are periglacial blanket deposits of lowland areas comprising fine- to very fine-grained sand.

Great Bentley is a large village centred around the (reputably) largest village green in England (Medlycott 2008, 68). The development site lies immediately north of the historic settlement at Green Corner. Green Corner appears as a small hamlet that grew up at the junction of Heckfords Road and the northern edge of Bentley Green which is likely to be medieval in origin. The tithe map of c 1840 gives the field name Brewhouse Field, which may indicate that there was a structure relating to brewing within the vicinity.

The site is located within an area of cropmark complexes. North-east of the site is the cropmark of a ring-ditch with several linear features (EHER 3176). To the north of the ring-ditch at The Grange is evidence of a curvilinear enclosure, a possible rectilinear enclosure and probable field boundaries (EHER 17253).

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

In 2016, CAT carried out an evaluation to the immediate east of the site, at Admirals Farm. Thirty-four trial trenches were excavated, which uncovered ten modern features, ten tree-throws, eighteen undated pits and ditches and a medieval or post-medieval pit and ditch (CAT Report 1031, EHER 49600).

In 2021, CAT carried out a further evaluation and subsequent excavation on land east of Heckfords, to the immediate north of the Admirals Farm site. A total of 287 features were uncovered. The main phase of activity at the site occurred during the Late Iron Age and early Roman periods, with a further subsequent phase of activity during the medieval and post-medieval periods. Evidence points to a thriving settlement that produced both textiles and metalwork in an agricultural landscape. A series of irregular field boundaries, possibly delineating seven fields, were identified, indicating an area which witnessed sustained activity over a few hundred years. Most of the finds recovered were pottery sherds, although a pyramidal loomweight was also discovered. This site is the first in the Great Bentley area that provides evidence for settlement in the Late Iron Age to the early Roman periods (CAT Report 1740, EHER 49607).

To the north-east of the development site, an evaluation carried out by CAT on land north of Michael Wright Way revealed a small concentration of seven features (one pit, four tree throws and two ditches). Most of these features were undated, although one produced two late prehistoric worked flints and another a sherd of Roman grey ware pottery (CAT Report 1829).

In December 2022, CAT carried out an evaluation to the south-east of the current site at Moorlands Farm. Excavations revealed evidence of limited and sporadic activity at the site during the prehistoric period, in the form of a pit containing a Mesolithic or Early Neolithic flint blade and a ditch which produced three sherds of prehistoric pottery. A series of medieval ditches considered to be part of a field system were also uncovered (CAT Report 1896). A subsequent excavation was undertaken, which focused around trenches 7 and 8 of the evaluation (CAT Report 1920). The excavation results are very similar to those of the evaluation, with minimal finds evidence, limited prehistoric activity and a medieval/post-medieval field system.

#### **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 3-5)**

Six trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Measurements of all trenches can be seen below. Four layers were present but were not consistently found in every trench. Topsoil (L1, 0.25-0.4m thick) was present in T1 and T2, which covered made-ground (L2, 0.2m thick) in T1 only. A modern crush layer (L4, 0.2-0.35m thick) had replaced topsoil in trenches 3-6 (the compound area). Natural L3 was encountered at 0.2-0.4m below current ground level in all six trenches, covered by either L1 (T1), L2 (T1), or L4 (T3-6). Sondages were dug in trenches 1-4 to ensure the natural ground level had been reached. A full context list can be found in Appendix 1.

##### **Trench 1 (T1)**

T1 was 30m long, 1.8m wide and c 0.43m deep. One shallow ditch (F1), orientated north-west to south-east, was present at the south end of the trench. It was 0.54m wide and 0.08m deep. No finds were recovered from the feature. A sondage, 0.15m deep, was dug at the north end of the trench.

##### **Trench 2 (T2)**

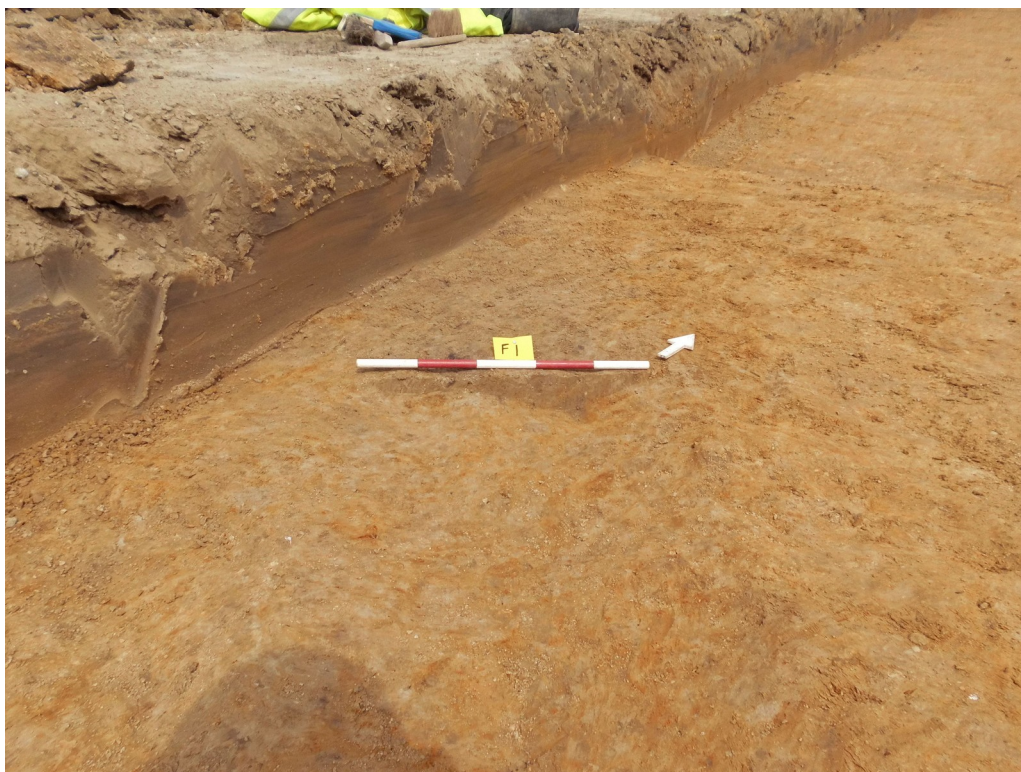
T2 was 20m in length, 1.8m wide and 0.45-0.6m deep. No archaeological features were present, but a shallow geological silt patch (F2) was excavated at the west end of the trench. It



was 1.5m long, at least 0.85m wide and 0.17m deep. A sondage, 0.15m deep, was dug mid-trench.



**Photograph 1** Trench 1, looking north.



**Photograph 2** F1, looking north-west.



**Trench 3 (T3)**

T3 was 10m long, 1.8m wide and 0.30m deep. There were no archaeological features. A sondage 0.15m deep was dug at the north end of the trench.

**Trench 4 (T4)**

T4 was 10m in length, 1.8m wide and 0.4m deep. There were no archaeological features. A sondage 0.18m deep was dug at the north end of the trench.

**Trench 5 (T5)**

T5 was 11m in length, 1.8m wide and 0.45m deep. There were no archaeological features.

**Trench 6 (T6)**

T6 was 11m in length, 1.8m wide and 0.4m deep. There were no archaeological features.



**Photograph 3** Trench 2, looking west.





**Photograph 4** F2, looking west.



**Photograph 5** Trench 3, looking south.





**Photograph 6** Trench 4, looking north-west.



**Photograph 7** Trench 5, looking north-west.



**Photograph 8** Trench 6, looking south-east.

## **6 Pottery**

*by Dr Matthew Loughton*

Layer L2 produced a small sherd (5g) of Colchester-type ware (fabric F21A) dating to c 1200-1550. This sherd was not retained.

## **7 Conclusion**

Archaeological evaluation on land to the south of Michael Wright Way, Great Bentley revealed an undated ditch (F1) and a natural silt patch (F2). Although undated, the ditch may relate to field systems found during previous excavations surrounding the site (see Archaeological Background and Fig 2). These features dated largely from the Late Iron Age/early Roman through to the medieval and post-medieval periods. The scarcity of remains from this site suggests that it is located away from the main focus of activity.

## **8 Acknowledgements**

CAT would like to thank Stephen Williams and Hill Group 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 Z Eksen and M Perou. Figures were compiled by L Pooley 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>

CAT	2023	<i>Written scheme of investigation for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on land to the south of Michael Wright Way, Great Bentley, Essex, CO7 8RS</i> by E Holloway
CAT Report 1031	2014	<i>Archaeological evaluation on land at Admirals Farm, Heckfords Road, Great Bentley, Essex, CO7 8RS: September-October 2016</i> , by L Pooley
CAT Report 1740	2021	<i>Archaeological evaluation on land at Admirals Farm, Heckfords Road, Great Bentley, Essex, CO7 8RS: September-October 2016</i> , by L Pooley
CAT Report 1829	2022	<i>Archaeological evaluation on land north of Michael Wright Way, Admirals Green, Great Bentley, Essex – July 2022</i> , by Z Eksen & L Pooley
CAT Report 1896	2023	<i>Archaeological evaluation on land at Moorlands Farm, Michael Wright Way, Great Bentley, Essex, CO7 8RS: December 2022</i> , by S Veasey
CAT Report 1920	2023	<i>An archaeological excavation at Moorlands Farm, Great Bentley, Essex, CO7 8RS: February-March 2023</i> by S Veasey
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
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	Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)
MHCLG	2021	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
Medlycott, M	2008	<i>Tendring District Historic Environment Characterisation Project</i> . Essex County Council
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)

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

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
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
Late Iron Age	period from c 100 – 50 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
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	<b>O</b> nline <b>A</b> cces <b>S</b> to the Index of Archaeological Investigation <b>S</b> , <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
WSI	written scheme of investigation

## **11 Contents of digital archive**

CAT Report 1948  
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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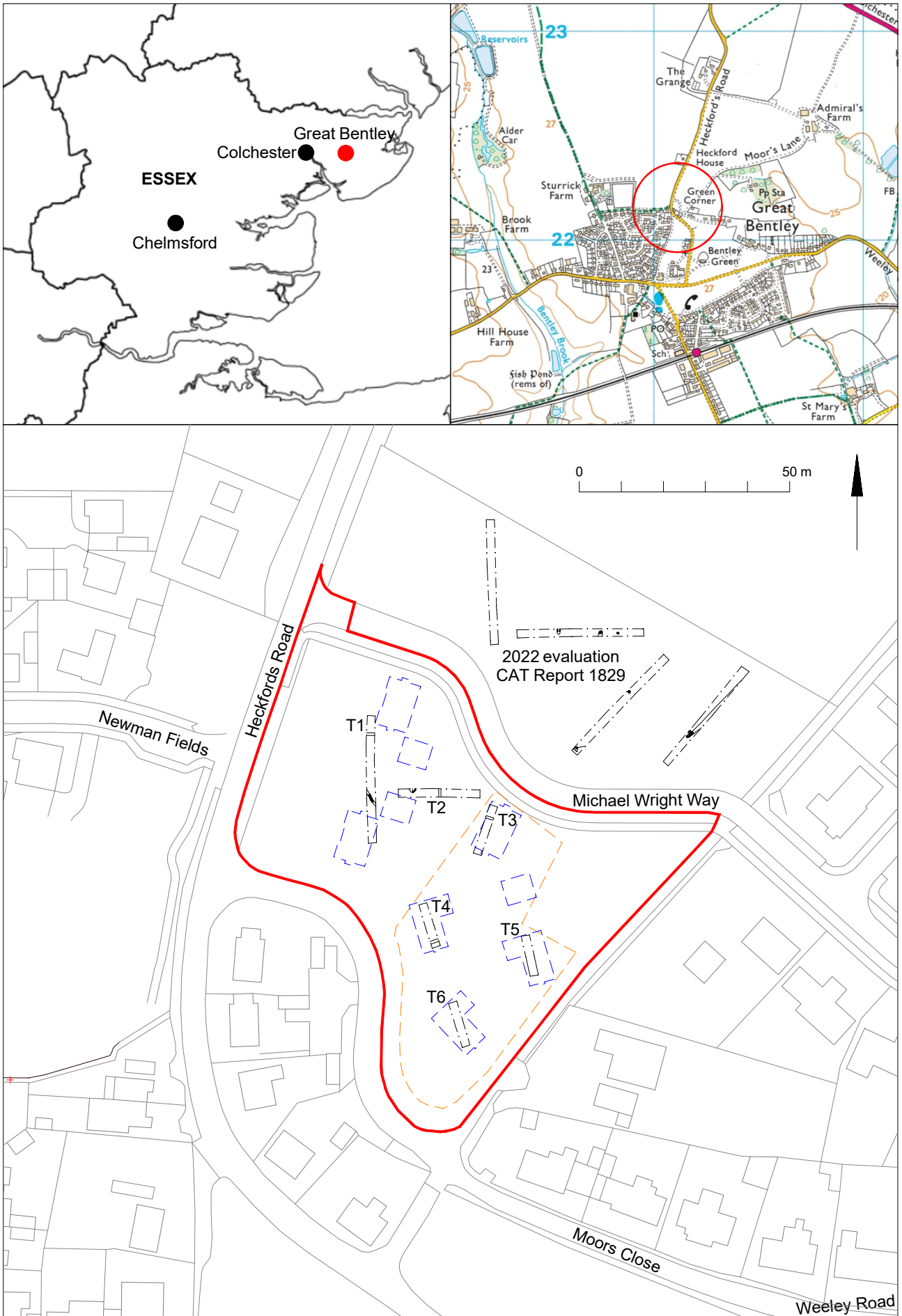
### **Distribution list:**

Stephen Williams, Hills Group  
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor  
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



### Appendix 1 Context List

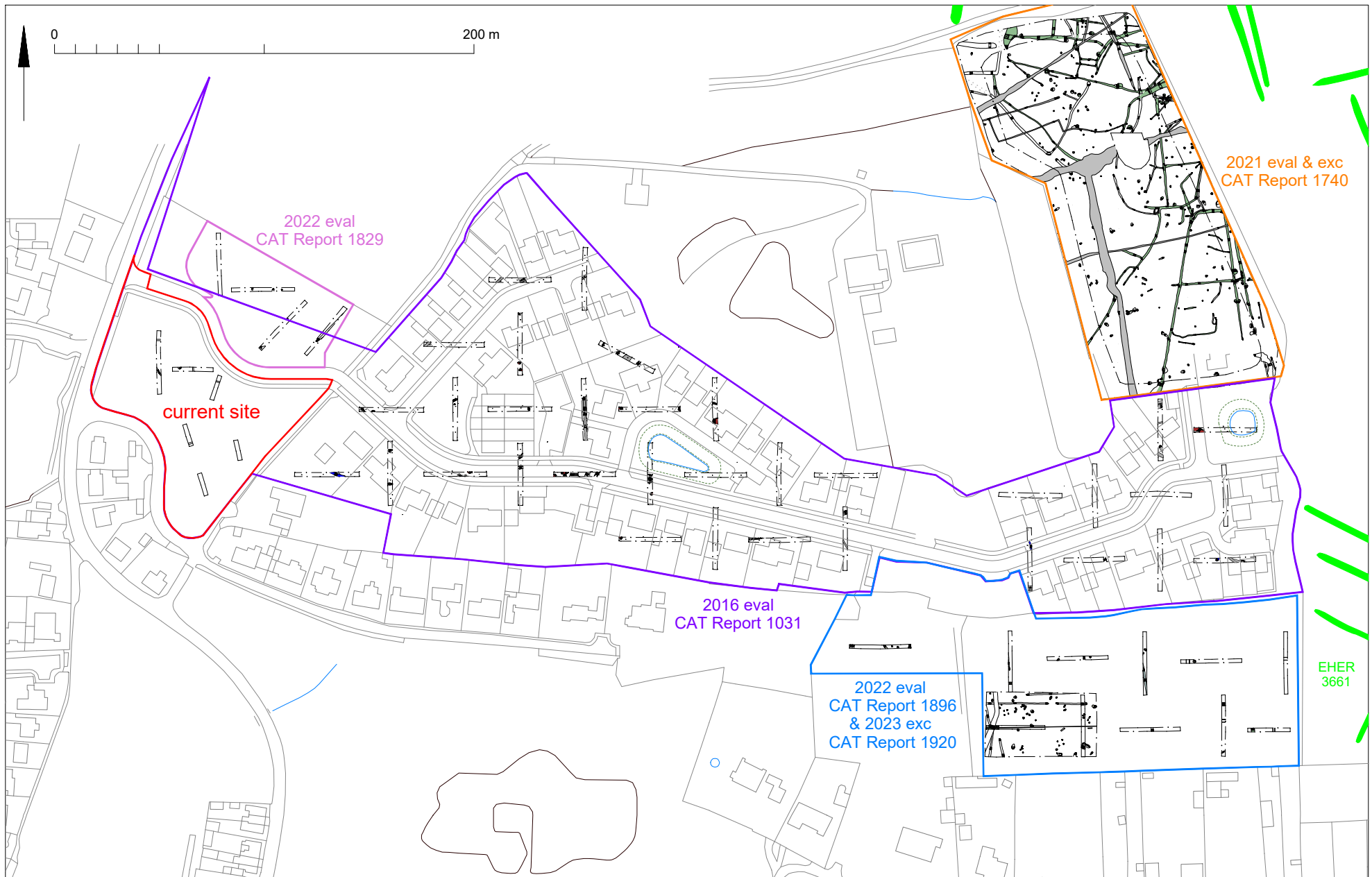
Trench no.	Context	Finds no.	Context type	Description	Date
T1, T2	L1	-	Topsoil	Firm moist medium/dark grey/brown sandy silty loam with brick and tile flecks	Modern
T1	L2	1	Subsoil	Firm light/medium grey/brown silty clay sand	Undated
All	L3	-	Natural	Firm medium orange clay	Post-glacial
T3-T6	L4	-	Crush	Concrete and CBM laying on landscaping fabric	Modern
T1	F1	-	Ditch	Firm dry medium grey/brown sandy silt and inclusions of: stone 1%	Undated
T2	F2	-	Natural silt patch	Firm dry light orange/grey silt	Post-glacial



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





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Fig 2 Site in relation to nearby archaeological projects and cropmarks (green).

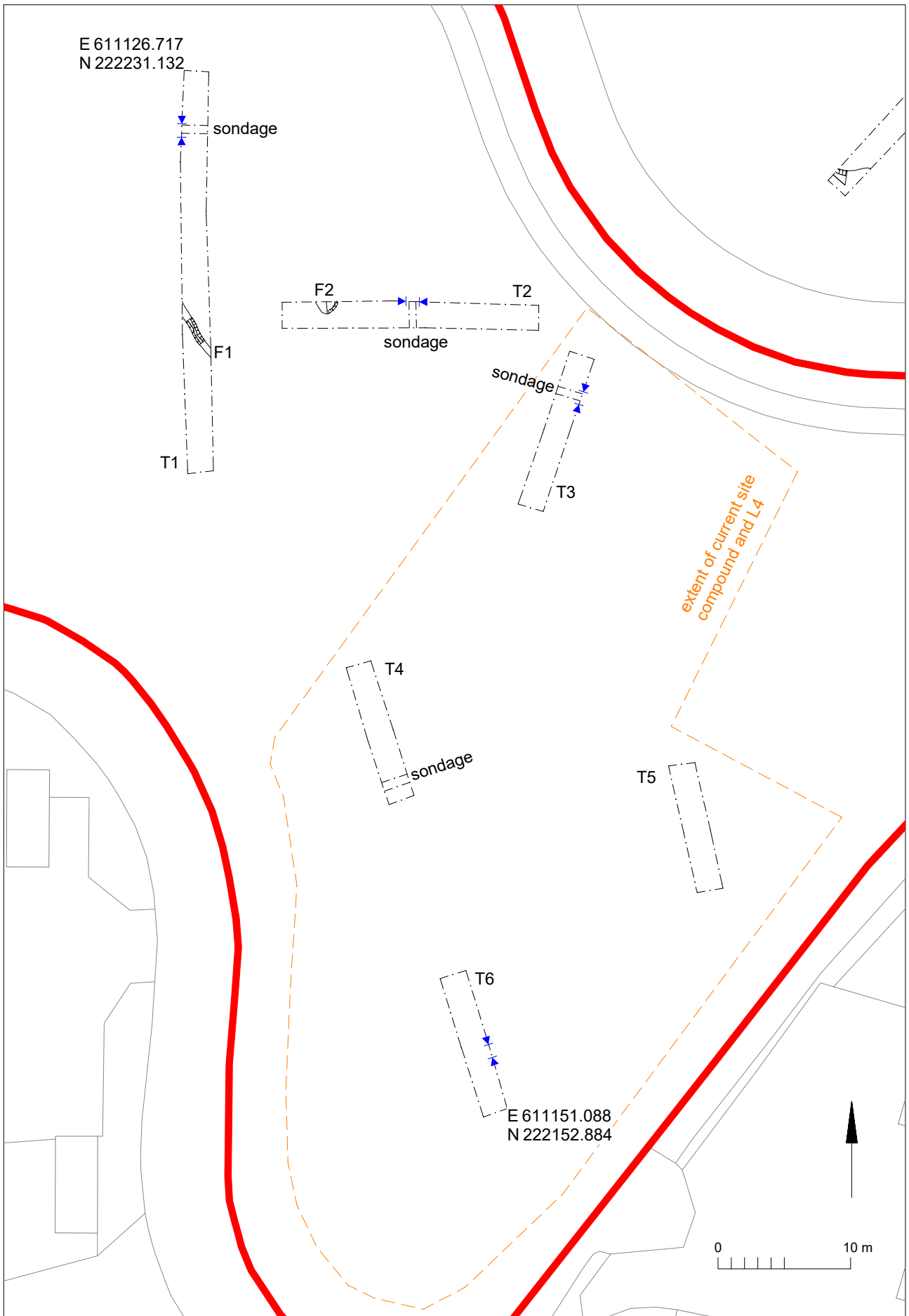
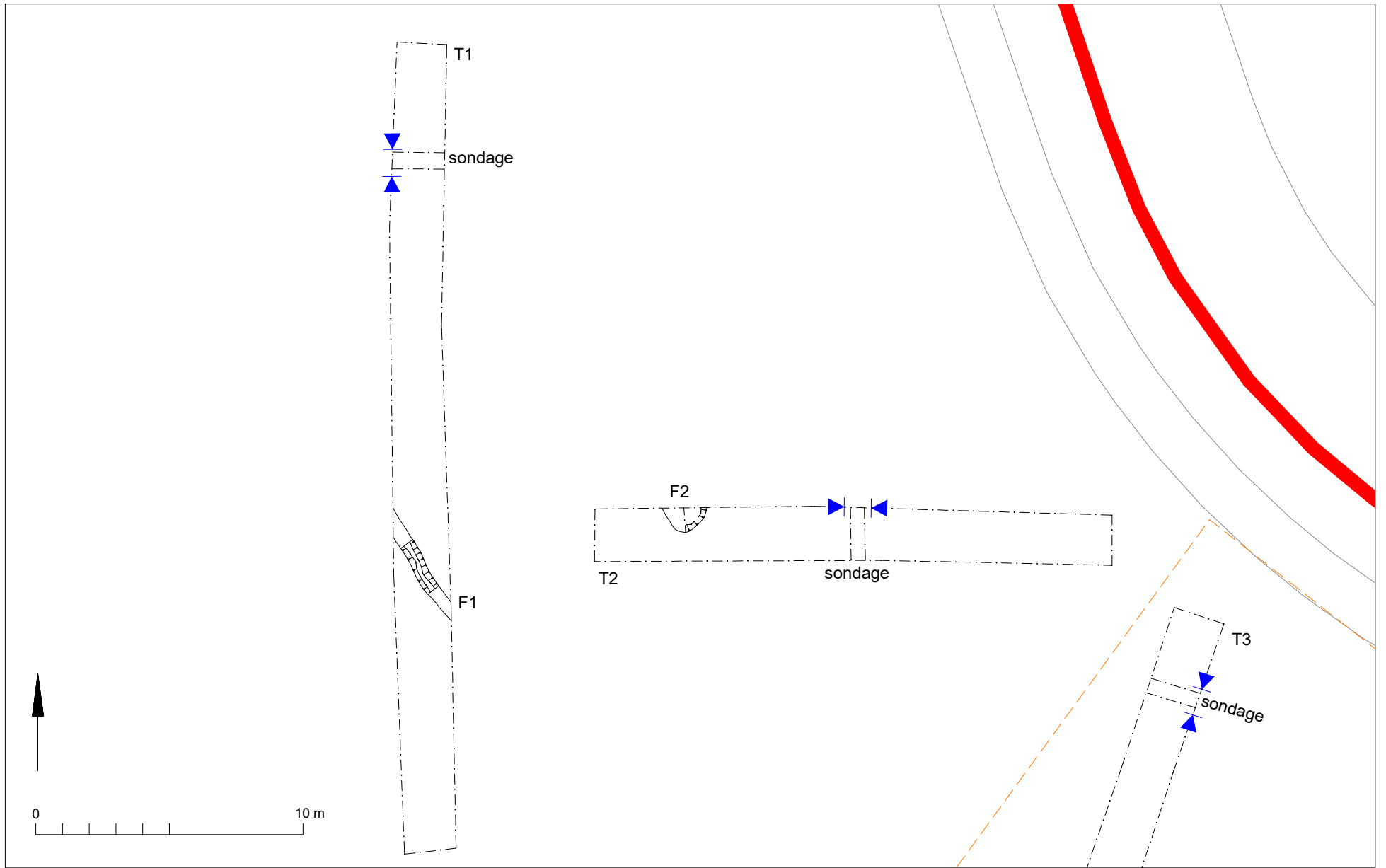


Fig 3 Results



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Fig 4 Close-up plan of trenches T1 and T2.



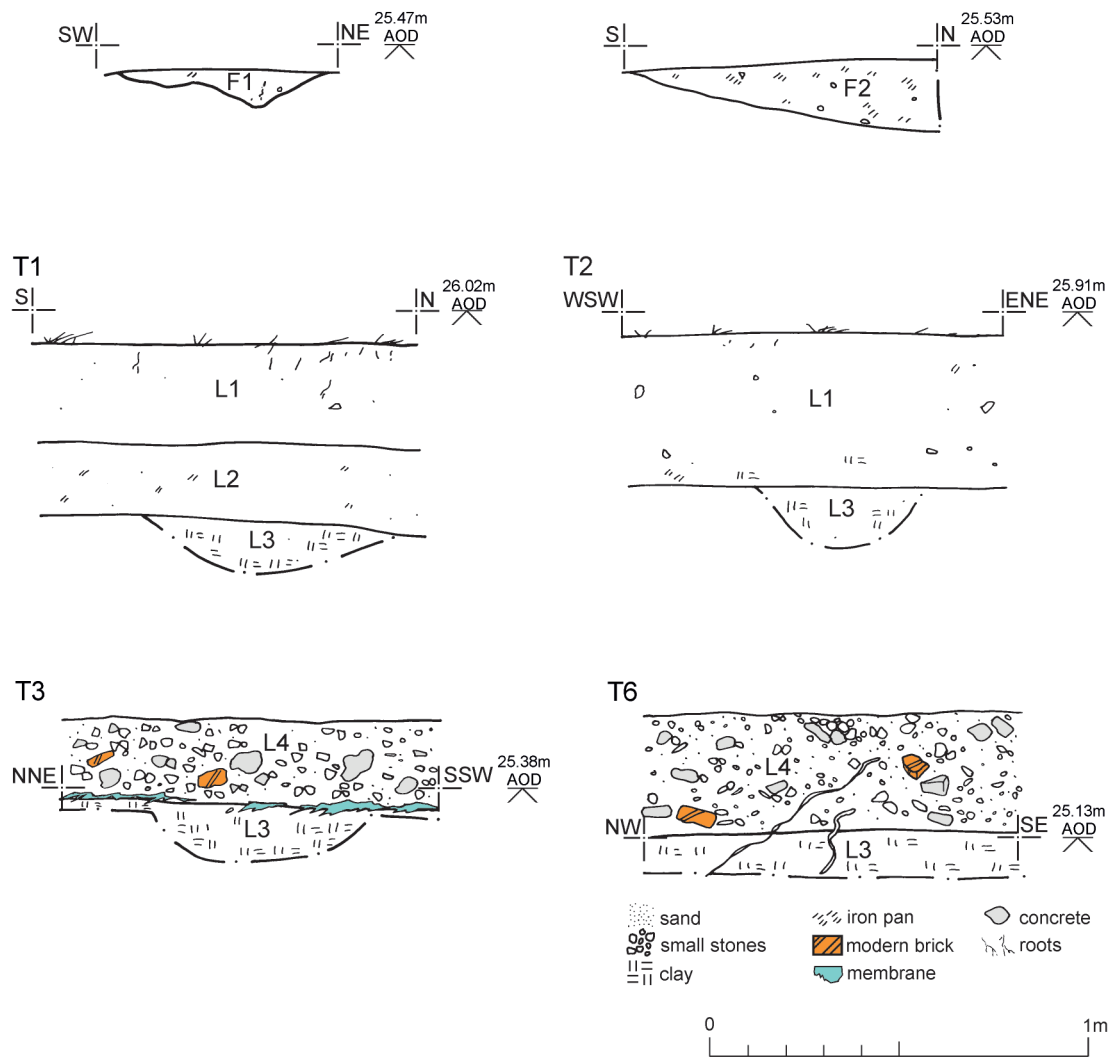


Fig 5 Feature and representative sections.

## Summary for colchest3-515655

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-515655
Project Name	Archaeological evaluation on land to the south of Michael Wright Way, Great Bentley, Essex, CO7 8RS: May 2023
Sitename	Land to the south of Michael Wright Way, Great Bentley, Essex, CO7 8RS
Activity type	Evaluation
Project Identifier(s)	2023/05f
Planning Id	APP/P1560/W/22/3297669, 21/01560/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	22-May-2023 - 23-May-2023
Location	Land to the south of Michael Wright Way, Great Bentley, Essex, CO7 8RS NGR : TM 11140 22190 LL : 51.85833404716537, 1.064758221917121 12 Fig : 611140,222190
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Tendring Parish : Great Bentley
Project Methodology	Six trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. All work was carried out in accordance with the Brief and WSI.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (six trial-trenches) was carried out on land to the south of Michael Wright Way, Great Bentley, Essex in advance of the construction of six new dwellings. The site is located within the proximity of several previous archaeological investigations, including a large excavation that uncovered evidence of a Late Iron Age/early Roman settlement. However, the evaluation revealed only one shallow, undated ditch and a natural silt patch.
Keywords	Ditch - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	M, Beale
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - GBEMW23
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;