

Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1970
issued August 2023**

**Archaeological monitoring at Old Riffhams,
Riffhams Chase, Little Baddow, Essex, CM3 4AU:
April-July 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2023/01b
ECC code: LBOR23**

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Riffhams Chase, Little Baddow, Essex, CM3 4AU:
April-July 2023**

NGR: TL 77701 06578 (centre)

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commissioned by the homeowner

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1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at Old Riffhams, Riffhams Chase, Little Baddow, Essex during groundworks to install a new boiler plant and other works. Old Riffhams is a Grade II listed timber-framed building dating back to the mid 16th century, possibly with an earlier core. Archaeological monitoring did not reveal any significant archaeological remains. The only features uncovered were modern brick and concrete foundations associated with an old oil drum on the site.

2 Introduction

This is the report for archaeological monitoring carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at Old Riffhams, Riffhams Chase, Little Baddow, Essex, from the 26th April to the 4th July 2023. Commissioned by the homeowner, groundworks took place during the installation of a new boiler plant, with associated trenching, to feed the main house, plus other works.

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 (ECCHEA). This recommendation was for a programme of archaeological monitoring 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 at Old Riffhams, Riffhams Chase, Little Baddow* (ECCPS 2022) and a *Written scheme of investigation (WSI)* (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 excavation* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b).

3 Archaeological background

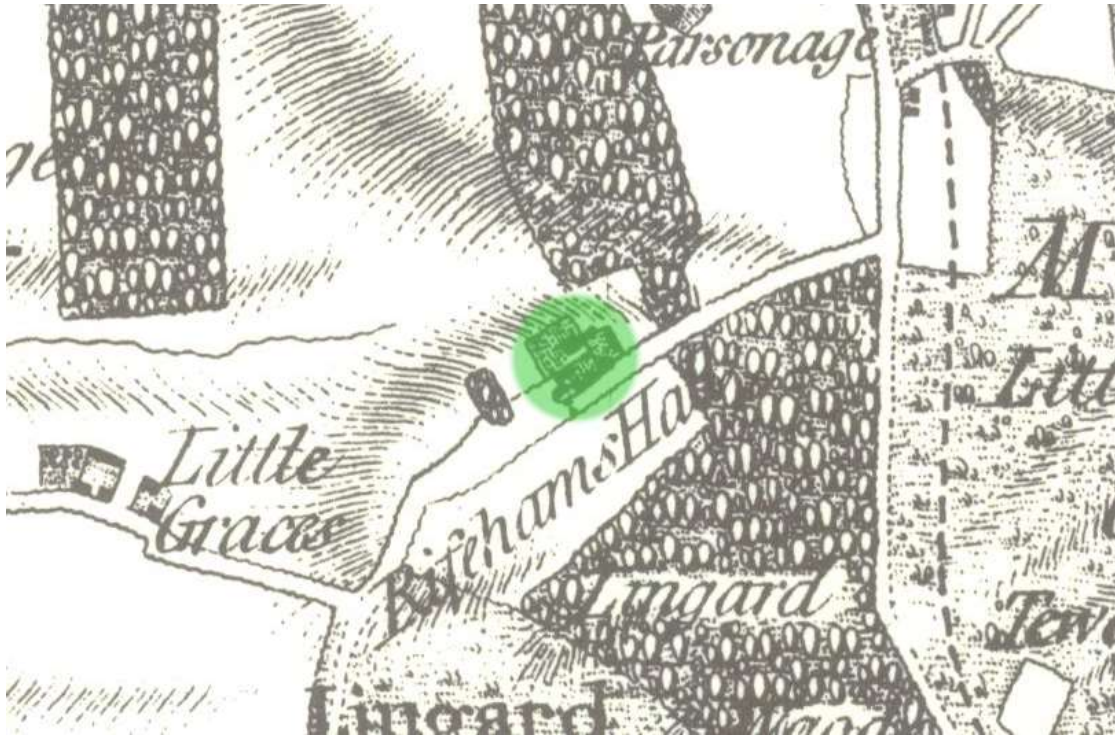
The following archaeological background includes extracts of the ECC brief (ECCPS 2022) and Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

Old Riffhams is a Grade II listed timber-framed building (NHLE 1122037, EHER 30644). It is built on a half H-plan and is of three storeys. While the building is said to have origins in the mid 16th century, the listing entry proposes it may have an earlier core. It has 17th- and 18th-century additions, including being almost completely refaced in red brick and a parapet added. Although there have been considerable later alterations, many of the 16th, 17th and 18th century features have been preserved.

The EHER records that medieval pottery, tiles and a horseshoe were found on land at Old Riffhams in 1927. More medieval pottery was recovered in 1949 (EHER 5597).

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale¹) shows the bedrock geology of the site to be London clay formation (clay, silt and sand) with superficial glaciofluvial deposits (sand and gravel).

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



Map 1 Extract of the Chapman and André map of Essex (1777). Old Riffhams is highlighted in green and labelled as 'Rifehams Hall'.

4 Aim

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which were exposed by the groundworks.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

All of the groundworks were machine-excavated and monitored by a CAT archaeologist. A full context list can be found in Appendix 1.

Two trial-pits were excavated close to the front of the building in advance of the excavation of lantern traps. This was carried out to identify the depth and configuration of the foundation associated with the front steps. The trial-pits were 0.5m square and excavated to a depth of 0.5-0.6m below current ground level (bcgl). Modern topsoil (L1, 0.3-0.4m thick) sealed a deposit of modern made-ground (L2). Modern building debris including brick, concrete and roof tile was present in L1, with mortar and tile fragments from L2 (none being retained for post-excavation analysis).

An area covering approximately 41 square metres was excavated during groundworks for the new plant room and associated trenching. Close to the house, modern topsoil L1 (c 0.25m thick) sealed made-ground L2 (c 0.11m thick) above natural L3 (identified at a depth of 0.35m bcgl). Further from the house, L1 (c 0.12m thick) sealed subsoil L4 (0.13m thick) above natural L3 (c 0.25m bcgl). Brick and concrete foundations were uncovered close to the boundary wall of the site, with both belonging to an old oil drum installation that was removed prior to groundworks beginning.



Photograph 1 Trial-pit 2 to south-west of front stairs, looking north-east.



Photograph 2 Trench adjoining house, looking north-west.



Photograph 3 Ground reduction area along boundary wall, looking south-west.



Photograph 4 Close-up of brick and concrete foundations, looking south-east.



Photograph 5 Foundation trenches within ground reduction area, looking south-west.



Photograph 6 Trench connecting the new plant room to the house, looking north-east.

6 Finds

There were no archaeological finds.

7 Conclusion

Archaeological monitoring at Old Riffhams, Riffhams Chase, Little Baddow, Essex did not reveal any significant archaeological remains. The only features uncovered were modern brick and concrete foundations associated with an old oil drum on the site that was dismantled just before groundworks began.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks the homeowner for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister and A Wightman, fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway, Z Eksen and A Smith. Figures are by C Lister, A Smith and S Veasey. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Mark Baister.

9 References

Note: all CAT reports can be downloaded from 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	2023	<i>Written scheme of investigation for archaeological monitoring at Old Riffhams, Riffhams Chase, Little Baddow, Essex, CM3 4AU.</i>
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 2020
ECCPS	2022	<i>Brief for archaeological monitoring at Old Riffhams, Riffhams Chase, Little Baddow,</i> by M Baister
Gurney, D	2003	Standards for field archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14)
Hillson, S	2016	<i>Mammal bones and teeth: an introductory guide to methods of identification.</i> Abingdon: Routledge.
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	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'
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
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	period from c AD 1500 to c 1800

Roman section wsi	period form AD 43 to 410. (abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s written scheme of investigation
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11 Archive deposition

Digital record: This project falls within the ClfA definition of a sterile project (<https://www.archaeologists.net/selection-toolkit/sterile-projects>), and as such the preserved archaeological archive will take the form of a single digital document that incorporates all the relevant elements from the project archive. This document will be uploaded to OASIS and released into the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) library, from where it will be curated by the ADS. The single digital document will include the report, brief, wsi, photographs and original site data (for example context sheets, section drawings).

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Distribution list:

Homeowner
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Finds no.	Interpretation	Soil description	Period
L1	-	Topsoil	Firm dry medium/dark grey/brown sandy silt and inclusions of: stone 5%.	Modern
L2	-	Made-ground	Firm dry medium grey/brown silty-clay, occasional fragments of CBM and small stones.	Post-medieval/ modern
L3	-	Natural	Hard dry orange/brown silty sand and inclusions of: stone 2%.	Post-glacial
L4	-	Subsoil	Firm dry grey/brown sandy-silt and inclusions of: stone 2%.	Undated



Fig 1 Site location.

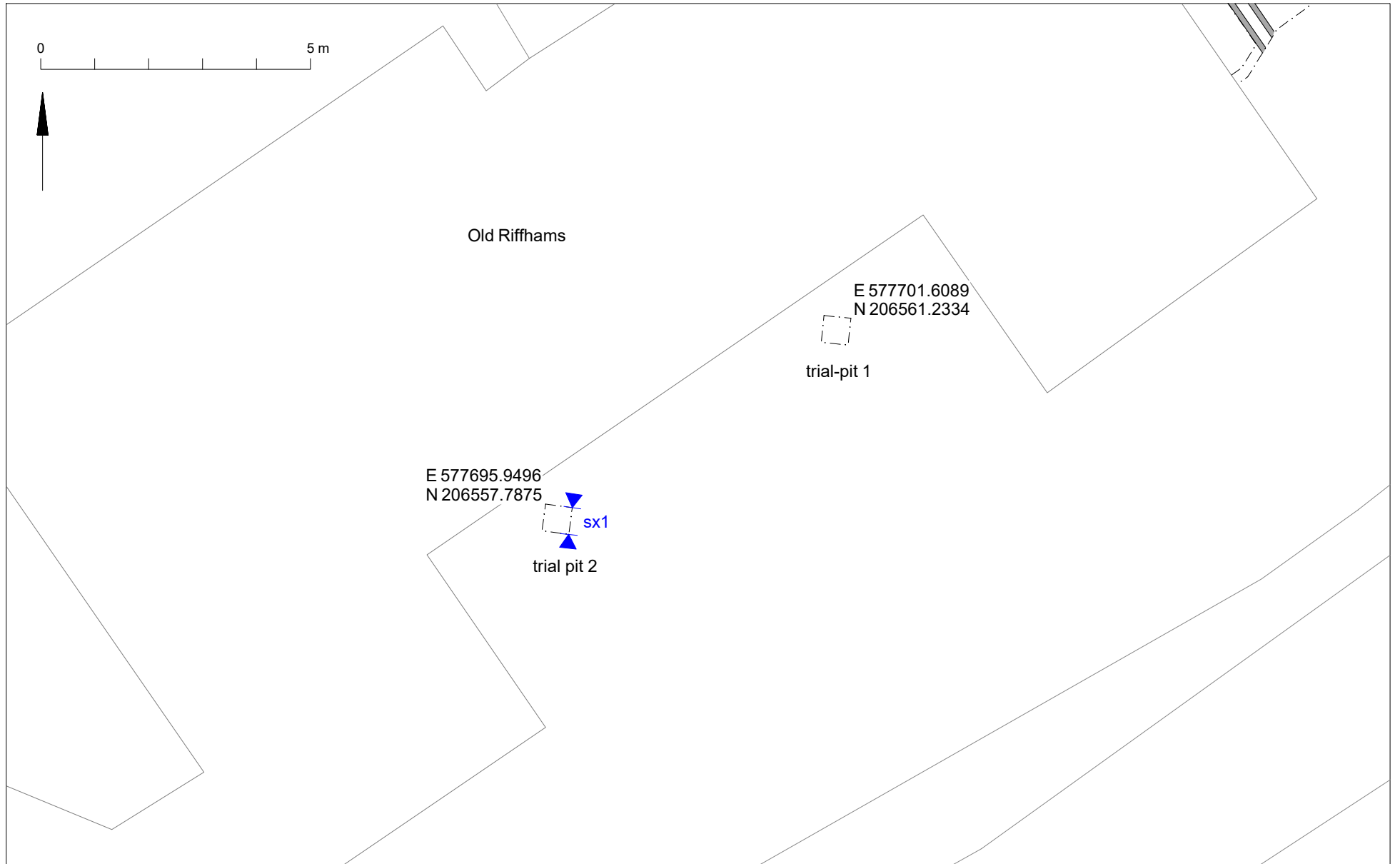


Fig 2 Trial-pits to the front of the house.

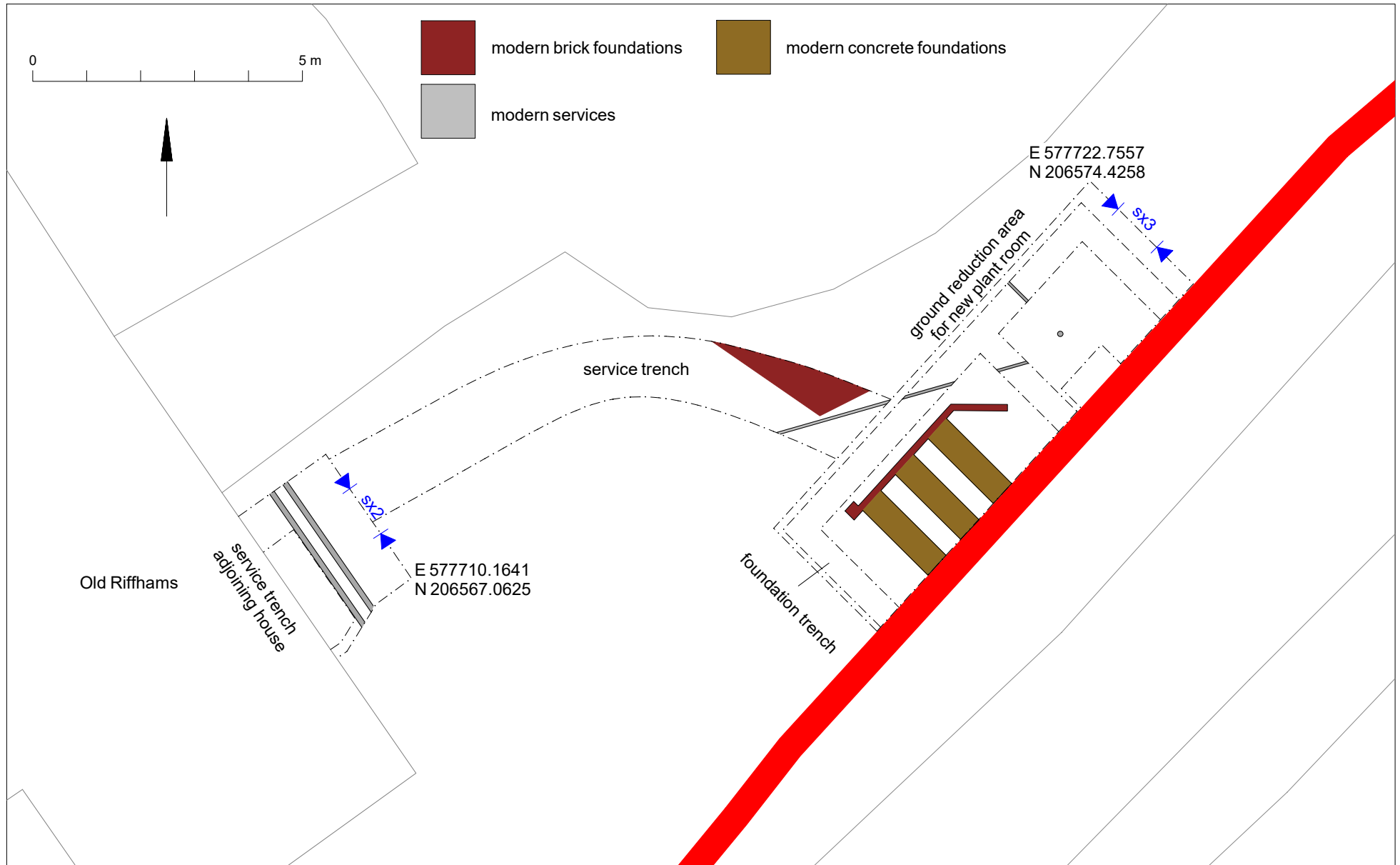


Fig 3 Ground reduction area, foundation trench and service trenches for new plant room, showing the modern brick and concrete foundations.

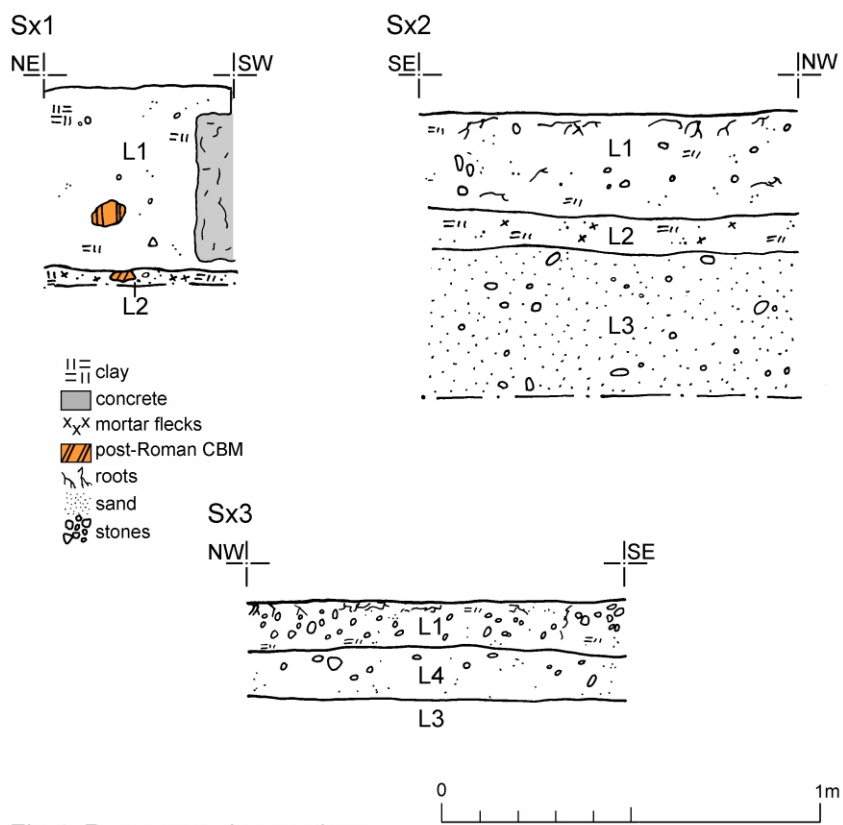


Fig 4 Representative sections.

OASIS Summary for colchest3-512161

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-512161
Project Name	Archaeological monitoring at Old Riffhams, Riffhams Chase, Little Baddow, Essex, CM3 4AU: April-July 2023
Sitename	Old Riffhams, Riffhams Chase, Little Baddow, Essex
Sitecode	LBOR23
Project Identifier(s)	2023/01b
Activity type	Watching Brief
Planning Id	22/01889/LBC, 22/00019/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	26-Apr-2023 - 04-Jul-2023
Location	Old Riffhams, Riffhams Chase, Little Baddow, Essex NGR : TL 77701 06578 LL : 51.7297507785907, 0.571745415957223 12 Fig : 577701,206578
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Chelmsford Parish : Little Baddow
Project Methodology	Archaeological monitoring of all groundworks as specified in the project brief and wsi.
Project Results	Archaeological monitoring was carried out at Old Riffhams, Riffhams Chase, Little Baddow, Essex during groundworks to install a new boiler plant and other works. Old Riffhams is a Grade II listed timber-framed building dating back to the mid 16th century, possibly with an earlier core. Archaeological monitoring did not reveal any significant archaeological remains. The only features uncovered were modern brick and concrete foundations associated with an old oil drum on the site.
Keywords	
Funder	Private individual
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Chris Lister, Adam Wightman
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - LBOR23
Archives	