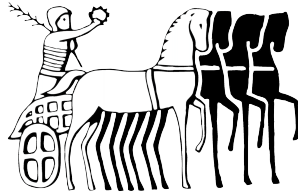


Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 2240
issued January 2026**

**Archaeological evaluation at 5 The Street, Sheering,
Harlow, Essex, CM22 7LS: December 2025**



**CAT project ref.: 2025/11j
ECC code: EEX62517**

**Archaeological evaluation at 5 The Street, Sheering,
Harlow, Essex, CM22 7LS: December 2025**

NGR: TL 50920 14018 (centre)

**Planning district: Epping Forest
Planning ref.: EPF/0809/25**

**CAT project ref.: 2025/11j
CAT Report 2240**

**ECC code: EEX62517
OASIS id: colchest3-538610**

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commissioned by and on behalf of Chelsteen Homes

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (three trial-trenches) was carried out at 5 The Street, Sheering, Harlow, Essex, in advance of the demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of two detached dwellings as the site is located within the historic settlement of Sheering. The evaluation revealed three pits, pottery from two of the pits has been dated to the medieval period (13th to the 15th centuries).

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at 5 The Street, Sheering, Harlow, Essex on 22nd December 2025. Work was commissioned by Bill Poulton on behalf of Chelsteen Homes and took place in advance of the construction of two detached dwellings with access, parking, gardens and infrastructure.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) as having a high potential for archaeological remains an archaeological condition was recommended by the Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor. This follows the guidelines given in *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2025).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Trial Trenching at 5 The Street, Sheering, Harlow* (ECCPS 2025) and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) prepared by CAT (2025a) in response to the brief.

In addition to the project brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was undertaken in accordance with:

- *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2015),
- Professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2020a-b, 2023a-b, 2025),
- East of England standards and frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Brown & Glazebrook 2000; Gurney 2003; Medlycott 2011) and the recent review updates on <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>
- Relevant health and safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2025b).

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 (accessible via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) shows that the application area is located within the historic settlement of Sheering. Sheering is first recorded in the Domesday Book, where meadow, woodland, a mill and livestock are mentioned as the settlement's assets. The historic cartographic evidence suggests that the site is located within a former linear green, of probable medieval origin. There are a number of Listed Buildings of 16th and 17th centuries date in the immediate vicinity of the site, attesting to the historic origins of this part of Sheering, listed below:

- 45m south is Crown House (EHER 33901), an early 17th-century Grade II listed timber-framed house with later extensions,
- 100m north-west is Daubneys Farmhouse (EHER 33895), a Grade II* timber-framed house dating from the mid-16th century with 19th and 20th extensions. Associated with the farm is a Grade II timber-framed barn (EHER 33896), dating from the late 16th century to early 17th century,
- 50m south-west and west of the site are two moated enclosures near Daubneys Farm (EHER 4339), most likely of a medieval date,
- 170m south-west of the site is The Cock Public House, a Grade II listed timber-framed house from the 17th century (EHER 33903),
- Approximately 140m east of the site are two cast iron pumps from the 19th century (EHER 33894, 33899),
- A further 285m east of the site there is an 18th-century domestic building Little Thatches (EHER 33900).

St Mary's Church is a Norman church located 340m south-west of the proposed site. Two additional medieval moated enclosures are recorded further down The Street, 50m west of the development site (EHER 4473, 4474). Several cropmarks of field boundaries are located 285m north of the development site and west of Hatfield Heath. Most of these are shown on 1st edition OS sheet (EHER 19405).

In 2017 Archaeological Solutions carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land west of Church Lane, 440m south-west of the current site. The evaluation revealed two undated pits and a furrow, the latter containing fragments of modern ceramic building material (AS 2017).

In 1990 a watching brief, for a new church hall near Church Lane, 195m south-west of the current site revealed two pits, four shallow ditches, three narrow slots and a possible post-hole (EHER 9128).

Dating was limited but some Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery was found (Gilman and Bennett 1990).

330m south-west of the site, archaeological monitoring at Greenacres, The Street revealed only a single post-medieval pit.

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 deposits of Lowestoft Formation (chalky till, together with outwash sands and gravels, silts and clays).

4 Aims

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to record the location, extent, character and significance 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.

Specific project aims were to record:

- Evidence relating to the medieval green.
- Evidence of medieval to post-medieval settlement activity.
- Evidence relating to earlier settlement and occupational activity.

5 Results (Figs 2-4)

Three trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. The trenches were all 1.8m wide. Trench 1 (T1) was 13m long. Trenches 2 (T2) and 3 (T3) were planned to be L-shaped, however T3 was moved eastwards to avoid a large tree stump, T2 measured 10m long and T3 12m long.

All trenches were excavated through a modern layer of topsoil (L1, c 0.25-0.53m thick), followed by a layer of subsoil (L2, c 0.45-0.0.70m thick), into the natural geology (L3, encountered at a depth of 0.45m-0.70m). Subsoil L2 produced an assemblage of pottery consisting of medieval sandy greyware and a fragment of grinding stone with a possible medieval date.

Trench 1

To the west end of the trench was medieval pit F3 (5.20m in length, 1.30m wide and 0.90m deep), steep edges on southern side. Base of feature was not determined due to water-logging and health and safety concerns. F3 produced an assemblage of pottery consisting of Colchester-type ware.

¹ <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>

Trench 2

To the west end of the trench was medieval pit F1 (1.54m in length, 1.10m wide and 0.63m deep), a sub-circular feature with steep sides and slightly flat base. It produced an assemblage of pottery consisting of Colchester-type ware, along with animal bone.

Trench 3

To the southern end of the trench was a large modern pit F2 (2.38m in length and over 2m wide), this feature was not excavated.



Photograph 1 Trench 1 and pit F3 in foreground, looking east.



Photograph 2 Pit F3 in trench 1, looking east.



Photograph 3 Trench 2, looking east.



Photograph 4 Pit F1 in trench 2, looking north.



Photograph 5 Representative section in trench 2, looking south.



Photograph 6 Trench 3, looking south.



Photograph 7 Modern pit F2 in trench 3, looking north.

6 Finds

6.1 Pottery

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation produced a small assemblage of medieval pottery which was recorded according to the fabric groups from *CAR 7* (Cotter 2000) (Table 1) while the number of vessels was determined by rim EVE (estimated vessel equivalent). The assemblage consists of twenty-seven sherds with a weight of 600g and EVE of 0.11 (Table 2). The mean sherd weight (MSW) is 22.2g. This material was recovered from two features and one layer (Table 3). The majority of the assemblage consists of sherds of Colchester-type ware (fabric F21) including a large bowl/pancheon (EVE:0.05), typically dating to c 1450-1550 (Cotter 2000, 143-149), from pit F3. Subsoil L2 produced a cooking pot (EVE:0.06) of type H1 (squared rim) with a thumbled strip in Medieval sandy greyware (fabric F20) dating from 1150/1175 onwards.

Fabric code	Fabric description	Fabric date range guide
F20	Medieval sandy greyware	c 1150-1375/1400
F21	Colchester-type ware	c 1200-1550

Table 1 Summary of the medieval pottery fabrics recorded.

Fabric Group	Fabric description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
F20	Medieval sandy greyware	1	102	102.0	0.06
F21	Colchester-type ware	26	498	19.2	0.05
Total		27	600	22.2	0.11

Table 2 Summary on the medieval pottery recorded.

Context	Feature type	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
F1	Pit	10	296	29.6	0.00
F3	Pit	14	92	6.6	0.05
L2	Subsoil	3	212	70.7	0.06
Total		27	600	22.2	0.11

Table 3 Quantities of medieval pottery from specific contexts.

Conclusion

Table 4 summarizes the dating evidence for the features and layers with dateable pottery and CBM. The assemblages date from the 13th to the mid/late 15th century.

Context	Description	Medieval pottery	Date Approx.
F1	Pit	F21	13th century
F3	Pit	F21 (large bowl/pancheon)	mid-15th century

Context	Description	Medieval pottery	Date Approx.
L2	Subsoil	F20 (cooking pot H1), F21	13th century

Table 4 Approximate dates for the individual features.

6.2 Small finds

by Laura Pooley

A fragment of grinding stone came from L2 and would have been used on a wheel to sharpen knives and other tools. The fragment included part of the rounded grinding surface and a very small section of the central spindle hole. The stone is estimated to be 130mm in diameter. Given the presence of medieval pottery on the development site, it is possible that this grinding stone is also of a medieval date.

Fig 4 SF1, L2, finds no.1. Fragment of grinding stone made from a medium-grained sandstone. Totals 116.2mm long, 50.5mm wide, 496g. Thickness from the grinding surface to the central spindle varies from c 36.7mm to 44.7mm.

6.3 Animal bone

by Alec Wade

A single equid metatarsal, likely from a horse, was recovered from mid/late 13th-century pit F1 in T2. The bone was in fair condition, with the distal end destroyed by dog gnawing, indicating it was residual before burial.

Bone condition	Taxon	No. of pieces	Weight (g)	Comments
Surface condition fair, natural colouring and dog gnawed.	Equid	1	150	Left metatarsus, nearly complete; distal end lost to dog gnawing with additional excavation damage on the posterior shaft.

Table 5 Animal bone from F1 (finds no.2).

7 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation at 5 The Street, Sheering, Harlow, Essex revealed three pits. A small assemblage of pottery was recovered from two of the pits (F1 and F3) consisting of Colchester-type ware, dating to the medieval period. A small assemblage of pottery and fragment of grinding stone was also recovered from the subsoil (L2) consisting of Medieval sandy greyware. Although the evidence recovered from the evaluation is limited, it does reveal medieval activity on the development site.

Modern pit F2 was also recorded.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Chelsteen Homes for commissioning and funding the project. The project was managed by A Wightman and C Lister, with fieldwork carried out by N Rayner with Z Eksen. Figures were compiled by L Pooley and C Hill. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Robin Mathieson.

9 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in PDF format at <https://catuk.org/online-reports/>

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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 1540
modern	period from AD 1901 to present day
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	period from AD 1540 to 1901
Roman	period from AD 43 to 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: Part of one box

Digital:

CAT Report 2239

ECC evaluation 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 but will be permanently deposited with Epping Forest District Museum (finds) and the Archaeology Data Service (digital).

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Distribution list:

Chelsteen Homes

ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Trench no.	Finds no.	Interpretation	Description	Date
L1	All	-	Topsoil	Soft, moist, dark grey/ brown sandy loam and inclusions of: stone 5%	Modern
L2	All	1, 3	Subsoil	Firm, moist, medium grey/brown silty clay and inclusions of: stone 5%	Medieval
L3	All	-	Natural	Firm, moist, medium orange/ brown silty clay and inclusions of: stone 5%	Post-glacial
F1	2	2	Pit	Over 1m wide and 0.63m deep Firm, moist, medium grey/ brown silty clay and inclusions of: stone 10%	Medieval, c 1450-1550
F2	3	-	Pit	Over 2.5m wide Loose/ soft, moist, dark grey/ brown/ black silty loam with brick flecks, tiles flecks and inclusions of: stone 5%, tile/ brick 10% and pottery 5%	Undated
F3	1	4	Pit	0.90m wide and 0.90m deep Friable, hard, moist, medium orange/ grey/ brown silty clay with charcoal flecks and inclusions of: stone 5%	Medieval, c 1450-1550

Appendix 2 Pottery list

Context	Feature type	Find no.	Quantity	Weight (g)	Mean sherd weight (g)	Rim	Handle	Base	RBH	Sooting (ext)	Abraison	Fabric Group	Typology	Function	EVE	Diam	Comments	Start Date	End Date
F1	PIT	2	1	94	94.0	0	0	1	1			F21					THUMBED BASE, FINER FABRIC W-SLIP	1200	1550
F1	PIT	2	1	83	83.0	0	0	1	1	X		F21					SOOTING EXT, GLAZE INT	1200	1550
F1	PIT	2	2	5	2.5				0			F21					W-SLIP & GLAZE	1200	1550
F1	PIT	2	2	30	15.0				0	X		F21						1200	1550
F1	PIT	2	1	24	24.0	0	0	1	1			F21					THUMBED BASE	1200	1500
F1	PIT	2	3	60	20.0	0	0	1	1			F21					GLAZE SPLASHES	1200	1500
F3	PIT	4	6	27	4.5	0	0	3	3			F21					THUMBED BASE	1200	1550
F3	PIT	4	2	19	9.5	1	0	0	1	X		F21	LARGE BOWL/ PANCHEON	BOWL/ PANCHEON	0.05	200	SOOTING UNDERSIDE RIM (COTTER 2000, 146)	1450	1550
F3	PIT	4	3	21	7.0				0			F21					GREY CORE, W-SLIP CLEAR GLAZE	1200	1550
F3	PIT	4	3	25	8.3	0	0	3	3			F21						1200	1550
L2	SUBSOIL	3	1	12	12.0				0			F21						1200	1500
L2	SUBSOIL	3	1	98	98.0	0	1	0	1		X	F21						1200	1500
L2	SUBSOIL	3	1	102	102.0	1	0	0	1			F20	COOKING POT H1	COOKING POT	0.06	300	OXID BR, GREY CORE, SAND & SOME SHELL, THUMBED STRIP ON SHOULDER	1150/1175	1375/1400



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Fig 1 Site location.

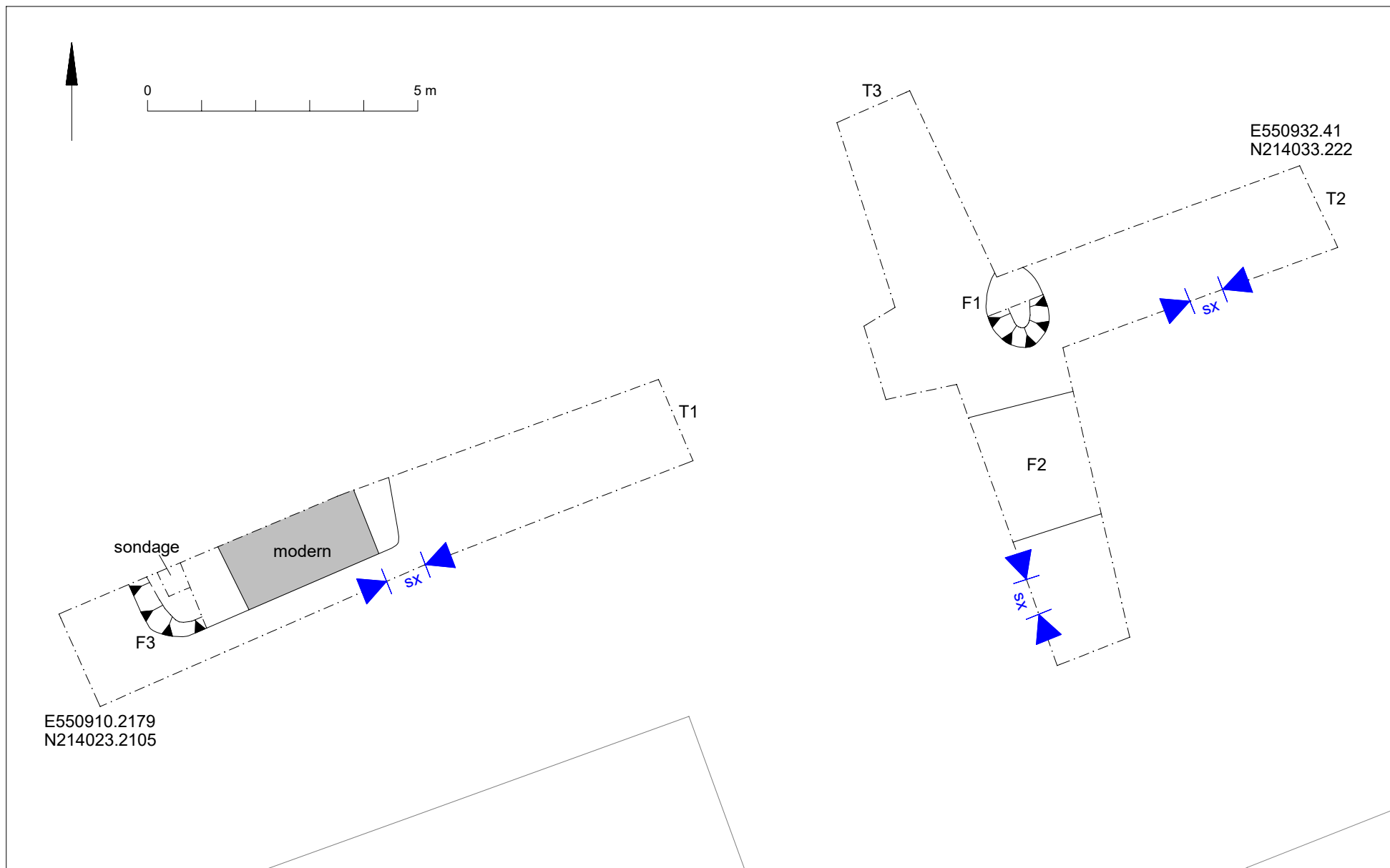


Fig 2 Results.

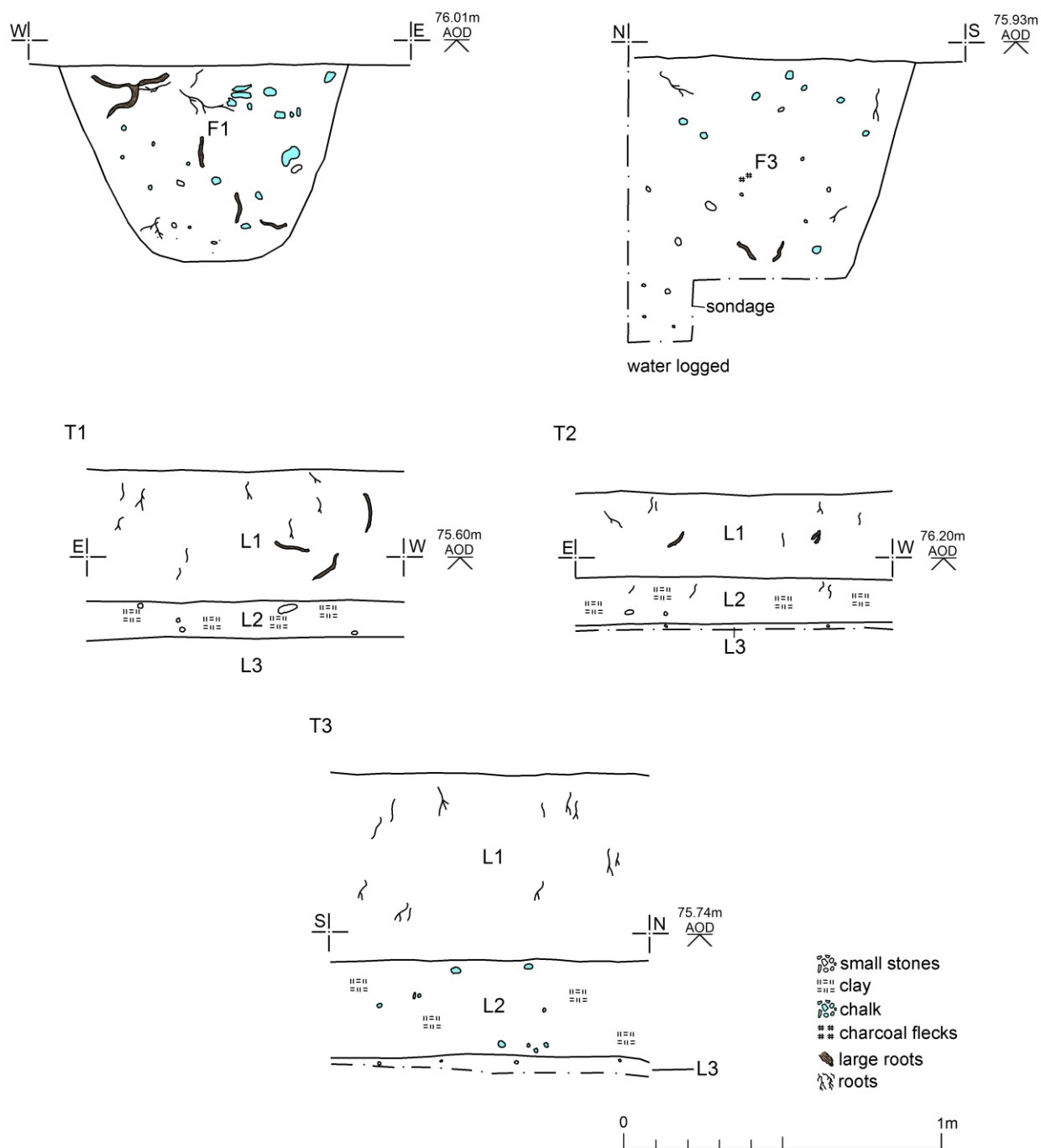


Fig 3 Feature and representative sections.



Fig 4 Fragment of grinding stone from L2.

OASIS Summary for colchest3-538610

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-538610
Project Name	Evaluation at 5, The Street, Sheering, Harlow, Essex
Sitename	5, The Street, Sheering, Harlow, Essex
Sitecode	
Project Identifier(s)	2025/11j
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	EPF/0809/25
Reason For Investigation	Planning requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	22-Dec-2025 - 22-Dec-2025
Location	5, The Street, Sheering, Harlow, Essex NGR : TL 50920 14018 LL : 51.804438847912934, 0.187512116221773 12 Fig : 550920,214018
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Essex Local Authority District : Epping Forest Parish : Sheering
Project Methodology	An archaeological evaluation (three trial-trenches) was carried out at 5 The Street, Sheering, Harlow, Essex, in advance of the demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of two detached dwellings as the site is located within the historic settlement of Sheering. The evaluation revealed three pits, pottery from two of the pits has been dated to the medieval period (13th to the 15th centuries).
Project Results	Archaeological evaluation at 5 The Street, Sheering, Harlow, Essex revealed three pits. A small assemblage of pottery was recovered from two of the pits (F1 and F3) consisting of Colchester-type ware, dating to the medieval period. A small assemblage of pottery and fragment of grinding stone was also recovered from the subsoil (L2) consisting of Medieval sandy greyware. Although the evidence recovered from the evaluation is limited, it does reveal medieval activity on the development site. Modern pit F2 was also recorded.
Keywords	Pit - MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Private individual
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Chris Lister, Adam Wightman
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - EEX62517
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive; Physical Archive - to be deposited with Epping Forest District Museum;