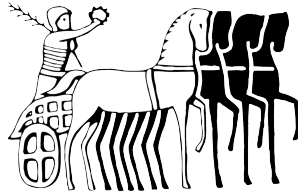


Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 2248
issued February 2026**

**Archaeological evaluation at Rolph's Farm, Main Road,
Little Waltham, Essex, CM3 3QQ: January 2026**



**CAT project ref.: 2025/10a
ECC code: EEX62215**

**Archaeological evaluation at Rolph's Farm, Main Road,
Little Waltham, Essex, CM3 3QQ: January 2026**

NGR: TL 70744 12040 (centre)

**Planning district.: Chelmsford
Planning ref.: 25/01007/FUL**

**CAT project ref.: 2025/10a
CAT Report 2248**

**ECC code: EEX62215
OASIS id: colchest3-537416**

report prepared by Xander Smith

fieldwork by Sarah Veasey with Billy Coble

**commissioned by Steve Smith
on behalf of Rebel Construction Ltd**

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Issued:	02/02/2026	

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

Fig 2 Results.

Fig 3 Feature and representative sections.

1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out at Rolph's Farm, Main Road, Little Waltham, Essex in advance of the construction of a new dwelling. Despite being in an area highlighted as having archaeological potential, the evaluation did not reveal any significant archaeological remains uncovering only a single undated ditch.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at Rolph's Farm, Main Road, Little Waltham, Essex on 16th January 2026. Work was commissioned by Steve Smith on behalf of Rebel Construction Ltd and took place in advance of the construction of a new dwelling.

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 Historic Environment Consultant at Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS). This follows the guidelines given in *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2025).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Trial Trenching and Excavation at Site At Rolphs Farm, Main Road, Little Waltham*, written by Mark Baister (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 EHER held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessible via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The EHER shows that the proposed development lies within an area with a high potential for archaeological remains. Main Road follows the route of a Roman Road leading from Chelmsford to Long Melford in Suffolk (EHER 6057).

The development is located 600m to the south of the major Middle Iron Age enclosed round-house village excavated by Paul Drury in 1970-1, at the junction of the B1008 and Chelmsford Road (Drury 1978).

Recently completed archaeological investigations immediately opposite the proposed development site (c 70-500m west), on the western side of Main Road, have exposed an extensive and busy landscape of Late Iron Age/Roman settlement activity adjacent to this historic routeway, including roadside buildings, metalled trackways, burials, agricultural deposits and industrial activity (EHER 49809). Similar investigations on land north-west of Montpelier Villa (c 130m south-west) revealed a Late Iron Age to early Roman enclosure in the north-west corner of the site with additional ditches forming a coaxial field system (CAT Report 1748 and 1820).

It is likely that this archaeological activity continues onto the eastern side of Main Road, and cropmarks, identified by aerial photography immediately east of the site, have been interpreted as showing linear features, a trackway and pits (EHER 7345). Further south (c 240m) of the proposed development, Roman pottery and building debris were identified in the late 1950s (EHER 6088). However, an archaeological evaluation on land north of Rolphs Cottage (240m south) failed to reveal any archaeological remains (CAT Report 1785).

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 Head clay (clay, silt, sand and gravel).

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.

Specific project aims were to look for:

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

- Evidence relating to the Iron Age/Roman activity on the western side of Main Road.
- Evidence relating to the cropmarks identified in the vicinity.
- Evidence relating to any other settlement activity.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

Two trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist, both were 10m long and 1.8m wide. The trenches cut through modern concrete and made ground (L1, c 0.1-0.46m thick) covering a subsoil (L2, c 0.24-0.6m thick; hard moist dark grey/black silty clay) which sealed natural (L3, encountered at a depth of c 0.55-1.05m below current ground level; firm moist medium yellow/orange/brown clayey sand and inclusions of: stone 15%). The natural was heavily stained with hydrocarbons across much of both trenches.

A single ditch (F1, 0.73m wide and 0.09m deep; firm moist medium/dark grey/brown silty clayey loam with brick flecks and inclusions of: stone 2%) was identified in trench 2. It was aligned roughly north-east by south-west, with a flatfish concave base and gradual sides, no finds were recovered.



Photograph 1 Trench 1, looking east-north-east.



Photograph 2 Trench 2, looking north-west.



Photograph 3 Section of F1, looking south-west.



Photograph 4 Representative section of trench 1, looking south-east.

6 Conclusion

Despite being located in an area highlighted as having high archaeological potential, the archaeological evaluation at Rolph's Farm, Main Road, Little Waltham, Essex did not reveal any significant archaeological remains. The single ditch encountered remains undated.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Steve Smith and Rebel Construction Ltd for commissioning and funding the project. The project was managed by A Wightman and C Lister, with fieldwork carried out by S Veasey and B Coble. Figures were compiled by S Veasey and C Hill. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Mark Baister.

8 References

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

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9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
ClfA	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
ECCHEC	Essex County Council Historic Environment Consultant
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'
Iron Age	period from 800 BC to AD 43 AD
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	O nline A ccess to the I ndex of A rchaeological I nvestigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
post-medieval	from AD 1540 to 1901
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

10 Archive deposition

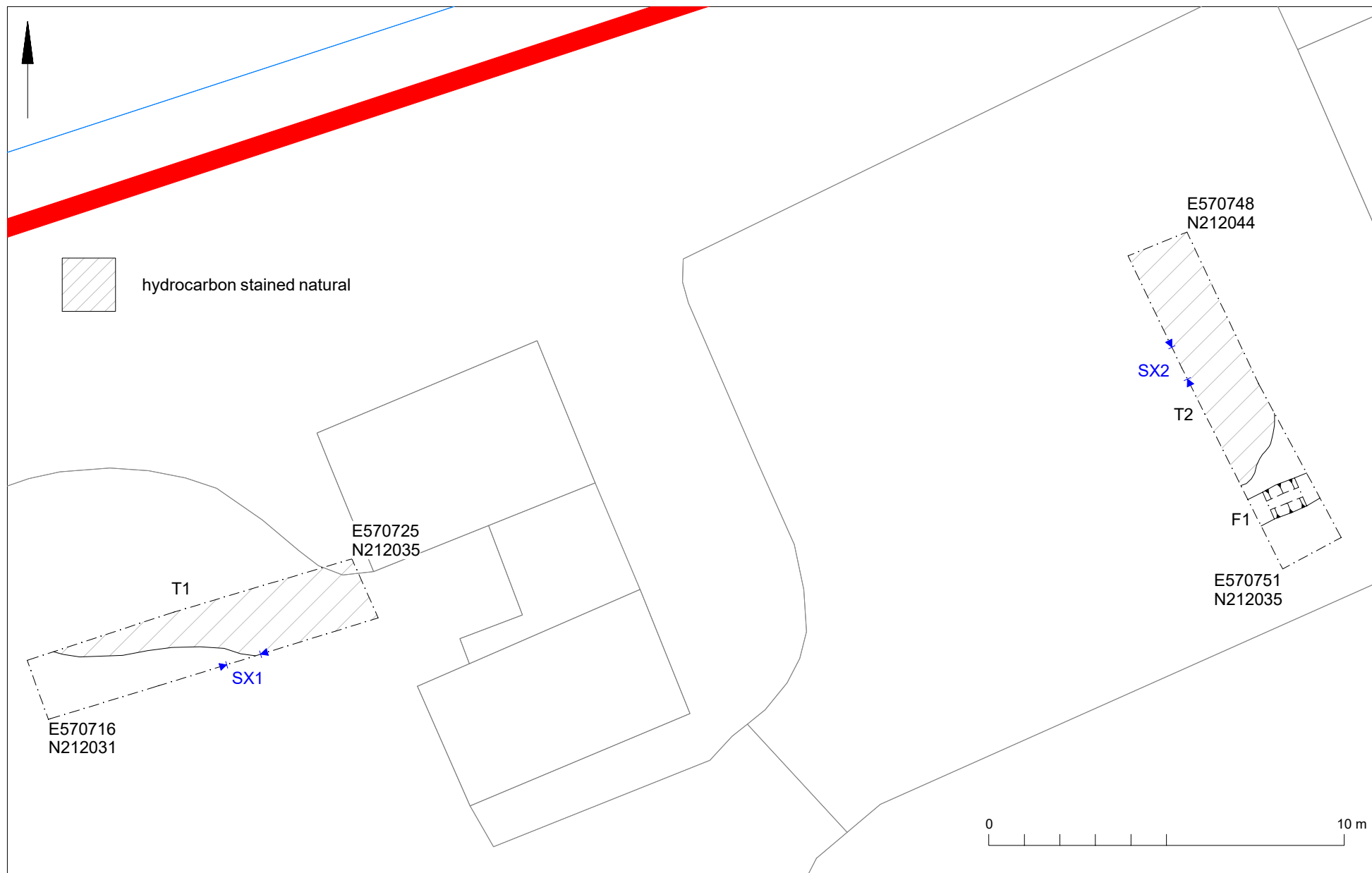
Digital record: This project falls within the ClfA definition of a sterile project

(<https://www.archaeologists.net/work/toolkits/archives/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 Archaeological 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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ECC Place Services Historic Environment Consultant
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



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Fig 2 Results.

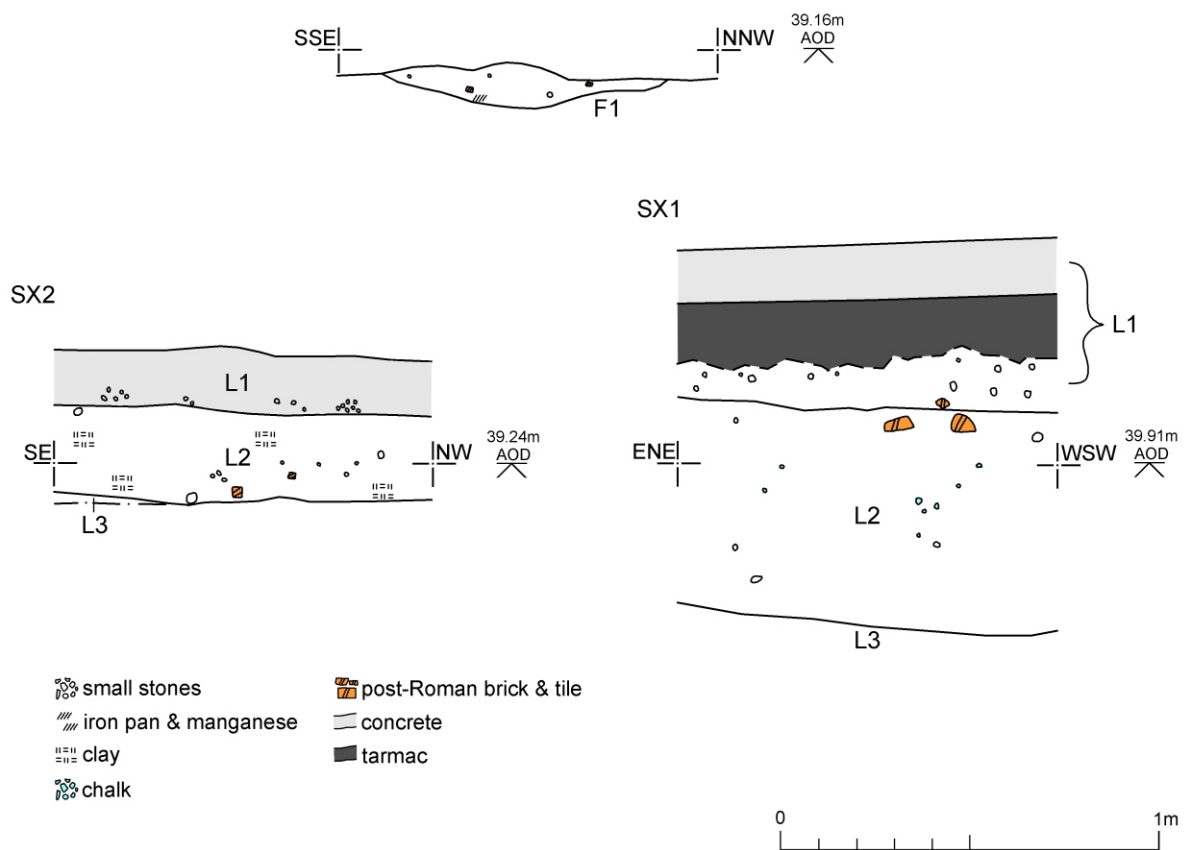


Fig 3 Feature and representative sections.

OASIS Summary for colchest3-537416

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-537416
Project Name	Archaeological evaluation at Rolph's Farm, Main Road, Little Waltham, Essex, CM3 3QQ: January 2026
Sitename	Land at Rolphs Farm, Main Road, Little Waltham, Essex, CM3 3QQ
Sitecode	EEX62215
Project Identifier(s)	2025/10a
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	25/01007/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	16-Jan-2026 - 16-Jan-2026
Location	Land at Rolphs Farm, Main Road, Little Waltham, Essex, CM3 3QQ NGR : TL 70744 12040 LL : 51.78097446743499, 0.473790485961615 12 Fig : 570744,212040
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Essex Local Authority District : Chelmsford Parish : Little Waltham
Project Methodology	Archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) carried out as specified in the project brief and WSI.
Project Results	An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) was carried out at Rolph's Farm, Main Road, Little Waltham, Essex in advance of the construction of a new dwelling. Despite being in an area highlighted as having high archaeological potential, the evaluation did not reveal any significant archaeological remains uncovering only a single undated ditch.
Keywords	Ditch - UNCERTAIN - 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 - EEX62215
Archives	