

**A watching brief at  
The Lindens,  
139 Lexden Road, Colchester  
(Phase 2)**

**2000**

**on behalf of  
Lexden Restorations Ltd**



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

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## **CAT Report 116**

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CAT Report 116  
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## **Introduction**

In March 1999, Lexden Restorations Ltd commissioned the Colchester Archaeological Trust to maintain an archaeological watching brief on redevelopment at The Lindens, 139 Lexden Road, Colchester.

The redevelopment was carried out in two phases. The results from Phase 1, in the southern half of the site, were the subject of CAT Archive Report 48, a copy of which is included in the appendix. This report covers Phase 2, which involved the construction of four houses and garages on the northern half of the site.

The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the requirements detailed in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1996a) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996b).

## **Background**

The site lies approximately 2km west of Colchester town centre. A short distance to the south is the probable route of an east-west Roman road and in the vicinity are burials and earthworks dating to the late Iron Age and Roman periods. In Phase 1 of the development, foundation and services trenches for five new houses revealed a ditch and at least eighteen early pits. Associated pottery indicated that most, or possibly all, of the features belonged within the late Iron Age-early Roman period.

## **Results**

Site inspections took place from October 1999 to June 2000. All house foundations were watched, also two garage blocks, boundary walls, drain trenches and a broad cutting along the Sanders Drive frontage. Foundation works for the double garage between plots 7 and 8 were not observed since the ground at that spot was already known to have been disturbed previously by a large basement for the original house called The Lindens. The deep ground disturbance extended east as far as the south-western corner of house plot 8, with shallower but widespread disturbance also affecting the western half of the plot. Significant levels of ground disturbance and modern make-up were found at the northern and eastern fringes of

plot 9. Elsewhere, modern disturbance was minimal and limited to the occasional service trench.

## Stratigraphy

The overall sequence of soils was similar to that noted in the Phase 1 area to the south, with small variations in the depths of deposits. These are as follows:

- L1 Modern topsoil, in places mixed with recent demolition debris. 20cm-30cm.
- L2 Dark to mid-brown sandy loam/loamy sand. 40-50cm. This material, which appeared to be a long-term accumulation, tended to become sandier with depth.
- L3 Reddish-brown sand and loamy sand with varying amounts of gravel. Natural.

The natural sand (L3) appeared at depths of between 60cm to 80cm and on plot 9 lay at about the same level as the surface of the adjacent Sanders Drive.

## Features

The seven features noted below are possibly early, but their origins are indeterminate since none produced dating evidence.

Feature no	Description
F32	A pit, 1.1m deep overall. Mid-brown loamy sand fill. Section: Fig 2.
F35	A pit, 1.05m deep overall, with a fill of mid to dark brown sandy loam. Section: Fig 2.
F36	A pit of unknown depth. Mid to dark brown sandy loam fill. Section: Fig 3.
F40	A pit of unknown depth. Mid-brown sandy loam fill, becoming sandier with increasing depth. Section: Fig 3.
F50	A pit, 0.8m deep overall. Greyish-brown sandy loam fill. Section: Fig 4.
F51	A pit, 0.85m deep overall. Mid-brown sandy loam fill. Section: Fig 4.
F52	A flat-bottomed pit, 0.8m deep and 0.9m wide. The fill was mainly a dark greyish brown sandy loam, with darker grey lenses and occasional charcoal flecks in the lowest 15cm. Section: Fig 4.

## Finds

Only two finds of any antiquity were recovered from this phase of the development, finds no 47 and no 48.

### Tile

Find no 48, from loose soil at the frontage between house plot 9 and Sanders Drive - a heavily abraded 184g fragment of 21mm-thick tile, probably Roman.

## **Pottery**

*by Stephen Benfield*

Find no 47, from topsoil (L1) at the northern side of house plot 6 - this sherd is part of the footring and base from a samian dish or bowl and much of the surface is quite abraded. It has a slightly micaceous orange-brown fabric and a dull brownish-red slip, suggesting that it is probably a product of Lezoux in central Gaul and can be dated to the 2nd century.

## **Discussion**

This phase of the groundworks revealed, at most, seven features of possible antiquity. In the absence of associated finds, none of these features can be satisfactorily dated. Although the conditions for observation of development phases one and two were similar, the sparse results from Phase 2 contrast strongly with the Phase 1 area to the south, where at least eighteen early pits were revealed, together with a substantial quantities of pottery pointing to activity in the late Iron Age-early Roman period. Even allowing for a greater degree of modern ground disturbance which affected one garage block and half of one house plot in the northern area, there were relatively few features and a greatly reduced recovery rate of residual finds. This suggests that the early activity described in the Phase 1 report was biased strongly toward the Lexden Road region of the site.

## **Archive**

The fieldwork archive, consisting of site records and processing data, plans, photographs and finds, will be deposited with Colchester Museum for permanent retention under cover of museum accession code 1999-46.

## **Acknowledgements**

The Trust is grateful to the site developer, Lexden Restorations Ltd (Mr J Frank) and contractor, Vaughan and Blyth Ltd (Mr K Wareham, Mr S Rouse and Mr G Page) for their interest and co-operation in the course of the fieldwork. Thanks are also due to Colchester Museum (Mr M Winter and Mr D Radford) for their involvement at various stages of the project.

*Carl Crossan  
November 2000*

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## **Appendix**

Colchester Archaeological Trust

**Report 48**

**A watching brief at The Lindens, 139 Lexden Road (Phase 1)**

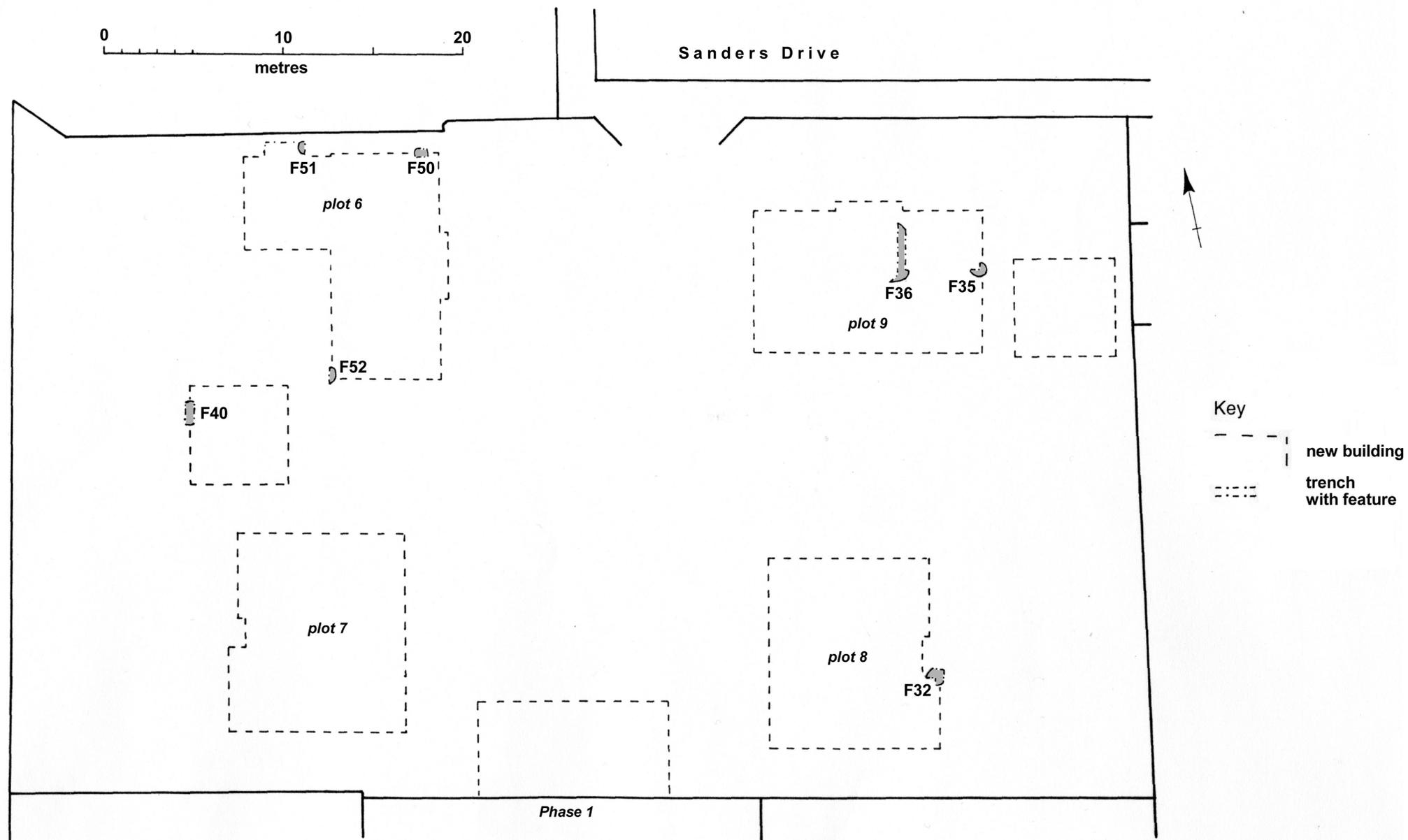
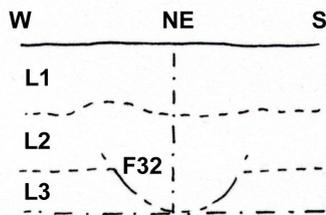
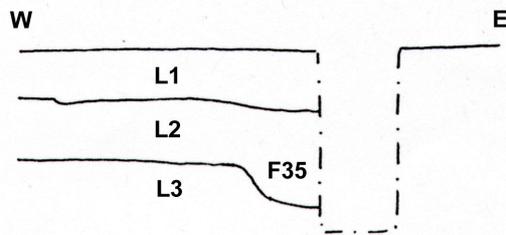


Fig 1 The Lindens, Phase 2: site plan.



Feature 32



Feature 35

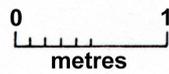


Fig 2 Sections: F32, F35.

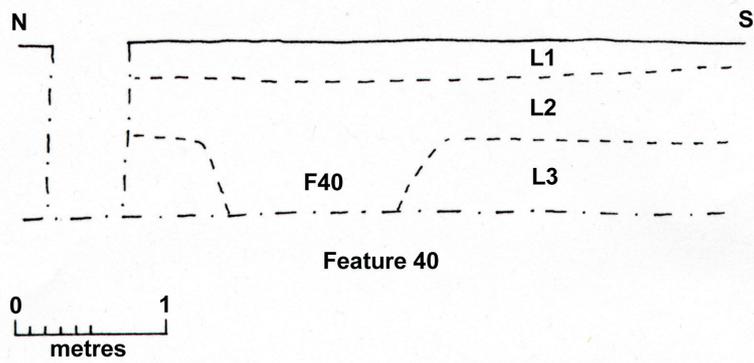
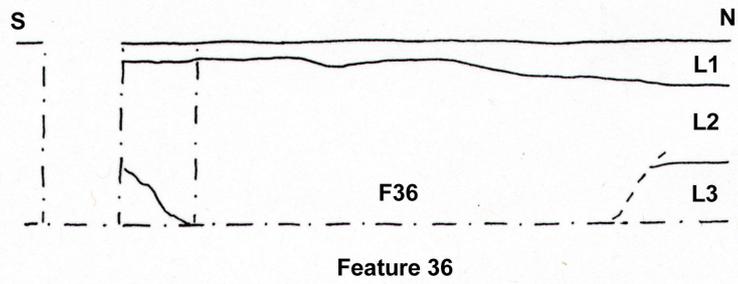
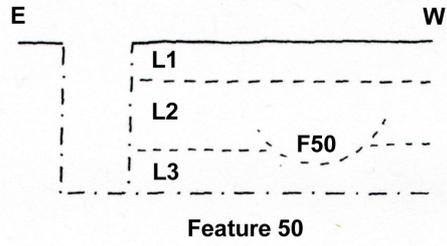
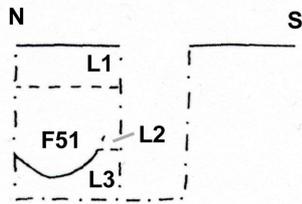


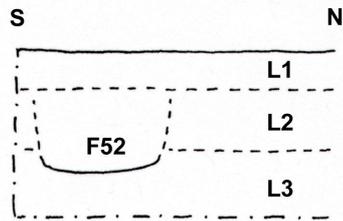
Fig 3 Sections: F36, F40.



Feature 50



Feature 51



Feature 52

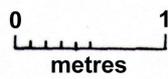


Fig 4 Sections: F50, F51, F52.