

**An archaeological watching brief at
Cheviot residential care home,
11 Park Road,
Colchester, Essex
August-September 2002**

**report prepared by
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**commissioned by
RMP
on behalf of the
Balkerne Gardens Trust Ltd**

CAT project code: 02/8a
Colchester Museums accession code: 2002.163
NGR: TL 9813 2483 (c)



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Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aim	1
5	Methods	2
6	Results	2
7	Discussion and interpretation	2
8	Acknowledgements	2
9	References	3
10	Glossary	3
11	Archive deposition	3
	Figure	after p 3
	EHCR summary sheet	

List of figures

Fig 1 Site location, scale 1:1250.

1 Summary

A watching brief was carried out during works to extend the accommodation at Cheviot residential care home. The groundworks did not impact on any archaeological remains. The excavation of the footings and service-trench exposed between 0.85m and 1.6m of modern made-up ground which probably derives from infilling of the ground to level the garden in the recent past.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at Cheviot residential care home, 11 Park Road, Colchester, Essex. The site is located 1km west of the town centre, to the south of Lexden Road at National Grid Reference TL 9813 2483 (c).
- 2.2 The groundworks consisted of a service-trench at the front of the building and footings for three small extensions to the northern side and rear of the building (Fig 1). Four visits were made by a CAT archaeologist between the 8th of August and the 30th of September 2002.
- 2.3 This report follows the standards set out in the Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1999, updated 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996, updated 2002), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 A Late Bronze Age leaf-shaped spearhead has been recorded from the Colchester County High School For Girls, which is in the vicinity of Cheviot (Essex Heritage Conservation Record or EHCR 12625).
- 3.2 Ditches from a Roman dyke (the 'Triple Dyke') were discovered in 1955 at the Colchester County High School for Girls (EHCR 12630-12631; Hawkes & Crummy 1995, 127).
- 3.3 A Roman grave (EHCR 11881) was found to the west of Altnacealgach House which is opposite Cheviot and is now used as offices by Essex County Council. This is probably an outlying grave to the Roman cemetery which flanked the Roman western approach roads to the Roman town. One of these Roman roads is Stane Street, the line of which extends just to the north of Cheviot (EHCR 11705).
- 3.4 In 1956, a small excavation was carried out to the south of Altnacealgach House and east of the Colchester County High School for Girls. A palisade trench with three related post-holes and part of a wattle and daub structure were recorded as well as gullies and post-holes. This was interpreted as having been a wooden structure, which was briefly occupied during the Roman period (Hawkes & Crummy 1995, 124-6).
- 3.5 In 1998, a watching brief and excavation were carried out by CAT on the site of the former maternity hospital (now Sovereign Crescent). These were preceded by an evaluation in 1997. Pits and ditches dating to the Roman period were recorded. Some of the pits may have been cremation burials (CAT Report 46).
- 3.6 A ditched enclosure of a Roman fort lies 60m to the south-west of Cheviot (Hawkes & Crummy 1995, 62-3).
- 3.7 A bronze statue of 'Jupiter Conservator' was found on what is now the playing field of the County High School for Girls in 1844 (Hull 1958, 292).

4 Aim

The aim of the fieldwork was to record any archaeological finds, features or deposits disturbed by the groundworks.

5 Methods

- 5.1** The service-trench and foundation trenches were dug by contractors using a mechanical excavator with a toothed bucket. An archaeologist was not present all the time but intermittent visits were made to examine the trenches and inspect spoil heaps for artefacts. No finds were retrieved.
- 5.2** Individual records of layers and features were made.
- 5.3** Sketch section drawings of layers within the trenches were made at a scale of 1:10.

6 Results

08/08/02

A visit was made after an east-west service-trench had been excavated at the front of the main building, in the driveway. This was 450mm wide and 850mm deep. The top layers consisted of tarmac, concrete and brick rubble. Underlying this was sandy silt topsoil with stones and fragments of peg-tile. Natural ground was not reached. No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

16/08/02

Foundations for a new relatives' room were monitored, to the rear of the boiler room which is to the north-east of the main building. These trenches were excavated to a depth of 1.85m and were too deep to enter. Underneath 1.15m of topsoil was 600mm of modern sand hogging which in turn sealed natural sand. Foundations for a new bedroom were monitored, to the rear of existing offices in the main building. Modern made-up ground over 1m deep was again observed here.

03/09/02

Foundations for a new laundry, next to the existing laundry in the north-western corner of the site, were monitored. The trenches were dug to 1.35m depth. 200mm of modern sand overlaid 750mm of grey brown silty loam topsoil with stones and modern brick. Natural light brown silt and gravel was reached at 950mm depth. No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

30/09/02

A visit was made but no groundworks were in progress.

The work for the new bedrooms was not monitored as modern deposits had been observed at various points over the site, and it was considered unlikely that any remains of archaeological significance were going to be disturbed.

7 Discussion and interpretation

No finds, features or deposits of archaeological interest were recorded during the watching brief on the groundworks at Cheviot. An unusually deep topsoil horizon containing modern brick was recorded across the site. It would appear that topsoil had been imported in to level out the ground in the recent past.

8 Acknowledgments

The fieldwork was carried out by the author and monitored by Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council.

The Trust would like to thank the Balkerne Gardens Trust Ltd for funding the work and Huttons Builders and RMP for their help.

9 References

- CAT Report 46 A watching brief and excavation at Sovereign Crescent, Colchester (formerly Colchester maternity hospital), 1998, unpublished archive report, by Carl Crossan
- Hawkes, C F C, & Crummy, P, 1995 *Camulodunum 2*, Colchester Archaeological Report 11
- Hull, M R, 1958 *Roman Colchester*, RRCSAL, 14

10 Glossary

Bronze Age	the period of prehistory from c 2500-700 BC
EHCR	Essex Heritage Conservation Record, Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
NGR	National Grid Reference
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
Roman	the period from AD 43 to around AD 430

11 Archive deposition

The archive is held by Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museums under accession code 2002.163.

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Distribution list:

the Balcerne Gardens Trust Ltd
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Fig 1 Site location, scale 1:1250.

Essex Heritage Conservation Record/ *Essex Archaeology and History*

Summary sheet

Site address: Cheviot residential care home, 11 Park Road, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9813 2483 (c)	Site code: Museum accession code 2002.163
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: August-September 2002	Size of area investigated: 53m x 33m
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: Balcerne Gardens Trust Ltd
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHCR nos: 11705, 11881, 12625, 12630, 12631
Final report: CAT Report 237 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: None	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: A watching brief was carried out during works to extend the accommodation at Cheviot residential care home. The groundworks did not impact on any archaeological remains. The excavation of the footings and service-trench exposed between 0.85m and 1.6m of modern made-up ground which probably derives from infilling of the ground to level the garden in the recent past.</p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: July 2003