

# An archaeological watching brief at 17 West Lodge Road, Colchester, Essex August 2012



report prepared by  
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Colchester Museum accession code: COLEM 2012.48  
NGR: TL 98546 24806 (c)



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**CAT Report 665**  
October 2012

## An archaeological watching brief at 17 West Lodge Road.

This is the summary report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) during the construction of an extension to the rear of 17 West lodge Road, Colchester, Essex (NGR TL 98546 24806 (c); Fig 1). The site is located 700m to the west of the walled town, within an extensive Roman cemetery area which flanks the main Roman approach road to the west of the town (Hull 1958; *CAR 9*, fig 8.2).

The foundation trenches were excavated to a depth of c 1m using a tracked excavator equipped with either a 450mm or 600mm wide bucket (Fig 2). Numerous services were encountered both above and below the base of the trenches (Fig 2). Approximately 400-500mm of turf and dark grey/brown sandy-silt topsoil (L1) overlaid a lighter brown silty-sand with abundant angular and round stones (L2). The orange/red natural sand and gravel (L3) with frequent angular and round stones was encountered at a depth of 700mm below modern ground level.

A pit for a soakaway was excavated to the south-east of the new extension (Fig 2). The pit was 1.35m deep and the natural sand and gravel (L3) was not reached until a depth of 1.1m below modern ground level due to the deposition of topsoil over this area during the construction of the adjacent swimming pool (Fig 2). The pipe linking the building to the soakaway was excavated into the topsoil at a depth of 300mm deep near the new building and 700mm deep in the area of the soakaway.

The excavation of a trench for the installation for new services to the north of the existing house was also monitored. Numerous services were encountered and the ground throughout the trench appeared to have been previously excavated.

Two groups of pottery were recovered during the watching brief (Group 1 and Group 2, Table 1) (Fig 2). Group 1 consists of the lower part of a jar or bowl (find no. 2) which was associated with a piece of cremated bone (presumed to be human). These finds are likely to represent a disturbed cremation, probably of mid 1st- to 2nd-century date. Although most of the pottery breaks are recent (the base and wall sherds join together), the presence of an old break and the absence of the other pieces suggest that the burial had already been disturbed. The possible 'egg-shell' ware pottery fragments from Group 2 were located in a charcoal rich cut at a depth of 600mm below modern ground level. Roman pottery fragments were also recovered from the soil layers L1 & L2.

The discovery of a disturbed Roman urned cremation burial during the groundworks confirms that the site is within the known Roman cemetery area. Compared to the findings from the Handford House and 21 West Lodge Road sites, there was far less pottery recovered and no *in situ* burials. This is probably because most of the ground in this area had been previously excavated during the construction of the house and the swimming pool.

**Table 1 Finds by context and find number**

*The Roman pottery was recorded using the Colchester Roman pottery fabric series, listed in CAR 10. The pottery fabrics are listed in Table 2. Vessel forms refer to the Camulodunum (Cam) series for Roman pottery (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull 1958).*

context	finds no.	finds
L1	1	<b>Pottery Roman</b> 2@ 55 g; Fabric CZ, small base from a beaker? (dated E/M2-M3C); Fabric GX, shoulder from a jar/bowl, probably form Cam 266 (dated M1-E2C).
(Group 1)	2	<b>Pottery Roman</b> 7@ 202 g; Fabric GX, sherds from complete base and lower part of a jar/bowl, fresh/recent breaks with several large joining sherds, the fabric suggests an early Roman (possible M1-2C date) for this pot. Cremated bone 1@2 g, presumed human (Note: appears probably to be a disturbed cremation burial)
(Group 2)	3	<b>Pottery Roman</b> 2@ 55 g; Fabric DZ, fine, thin sherds I white fabric, possibly an 'eggshell' ware (probably M1-2C)

**Table 2 Roman pottery fabrics**

Fabric	Description
<i>Roman:</i>	
CZ	Colchester and other red colour-coated ware
DZ	fine oxidised wares
GX	other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares

## References

**Note: all CAT fieldwork reports are available online in .pdf format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>**

- |                            |      |  |
|----------------------------|------|--|
| CAR 9                      | 1993 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 9: Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-88</i> , by N Crummy, P Crummy and C Crossan |
| CAR 10                     | 1999 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86</i> , by R P Symonds and S Wade, ed by P Bidwell and A Croom                     |
| Hawkes, C F C, & Hull, M R | 1947 | <i>Camulodunum, first report on the excavations at Colchester 1930-39</i> , RRCSAL, <b>14</b>  |
| Hull, M R                  | 1958 | <i>Roman Colchester</i> , RRCSAL, <b>20</b>  |

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## **Appendix 1: contents of archive**

One A4 document wallet containing:

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 1 x A3 site plans provided by developer
- 1.2 1 x A4 site plans provided by developer

### **2 Site archive**

- 2.1 Site digital photographic record
- 2.2 Attendance register
- 2.3 Site photographic record on CD

### **3 Research archive**

- 3.1 Monitoring (client) report

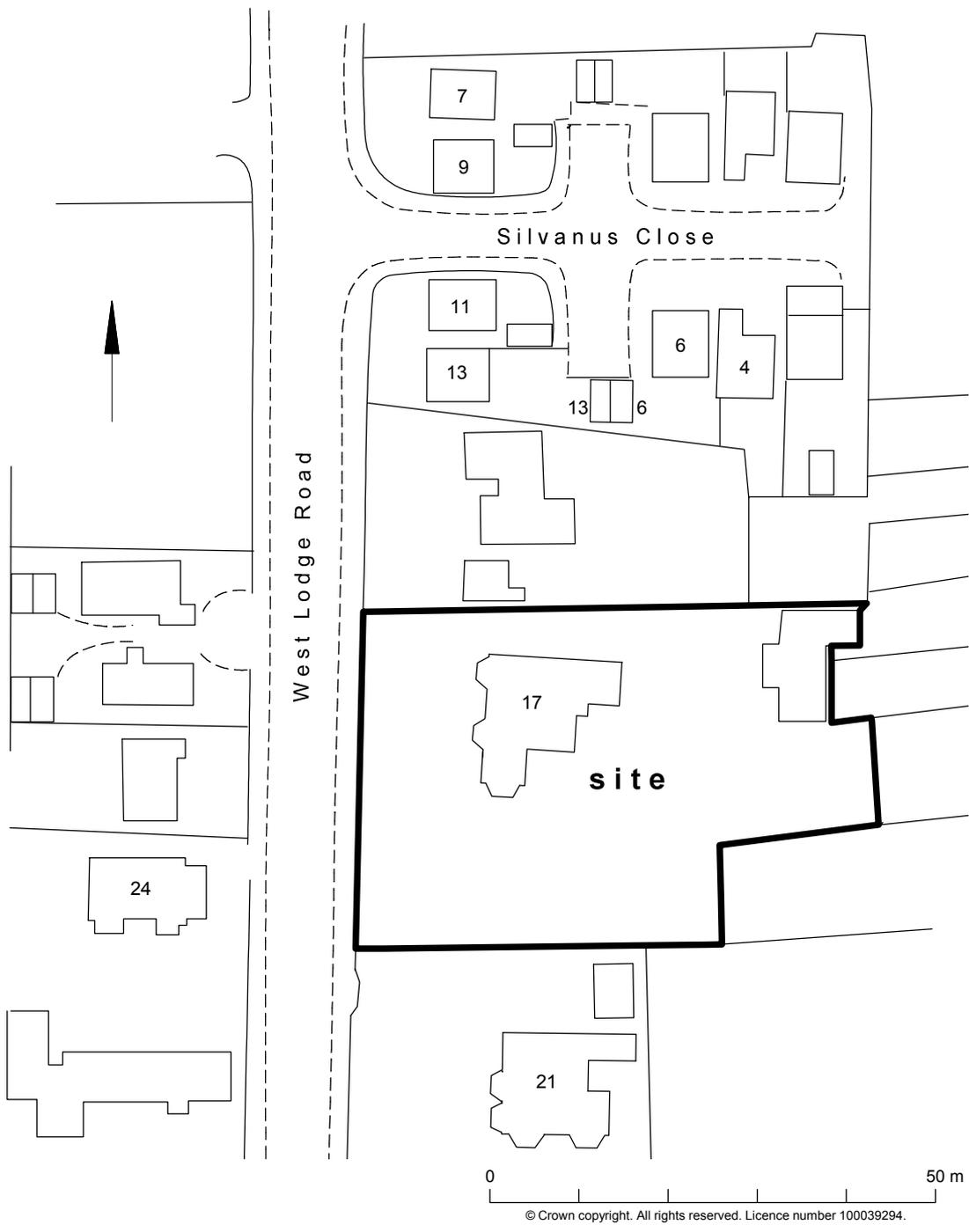
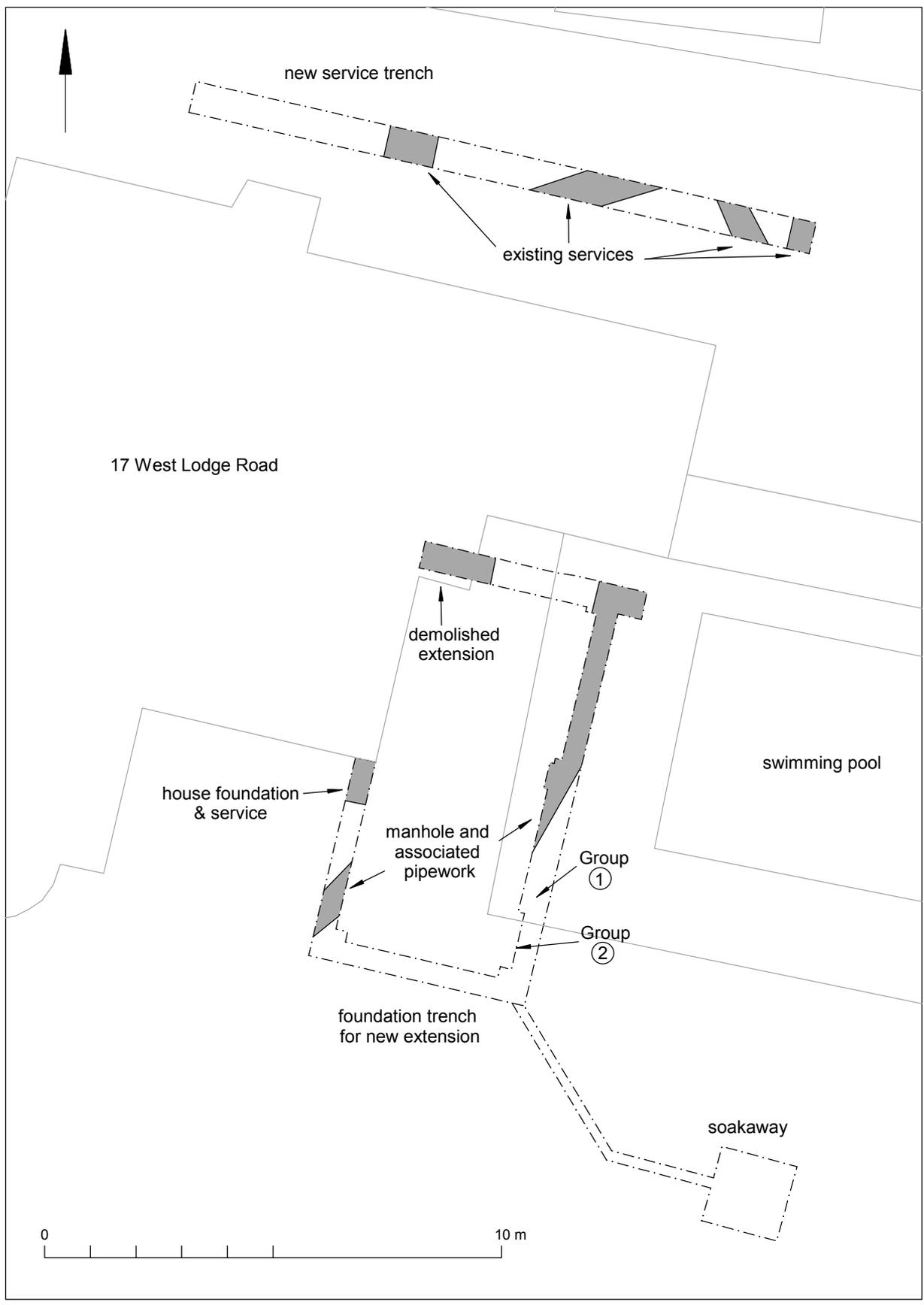


Fig 1 Site location.



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Fig 2 Results.

## Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

### Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> An archaeological watching brief at 17 West Lodge Road, Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Lexden	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TL 98546 24806 (c)	<b>Site codes:</b> CAT project code - 12/08e
<b>Type of work:</b> Watching brief	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 23rd-29th August 2012	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> c 0.4ha
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museum accession code COLEM 2012.48	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHER numbers:</b> 11852, 11853
<b>Final report:</b>	CAT Report 665
<b>Periods represented:</b>	Roman, modern
<p><b>Summary:</b>  <i>Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches, service trenches and the pit for a soakaway.</i>  <i>Two groups of Roman pottery were recovered, one of them was associated with a piece of cremated bone and is likely to be a disturbed urned cremation, probably of mid 1st- to 2nd-century date.</i>  <i>No complete Roman burials were encountered. This is probably because most of the ground in this area had been previously excavated during the construction of the house and adjacent swimming pool.</i></p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b>	CAT Reports 80, 82, 142, 293, 318, 323
<b>Keywords:</b> Roman pottery, urned cremation	<b>Significance:</b> *
<b>Author of summary:</b> Adam Wightman	<b>Date of summary:</b> October 2012