

Archaeological monitoring and recording at Balkerne Hill, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AD

June 2017



by Dr Elliott Hicks
figures by Laura Pooley

fieldwork by Sarah Carter

on behalf of Philip Wise, Colchester Borough Council

NGR: TL 99239 25057 (centre)

Planning reference: n/a

CAT project ref.: 17/05q

Colchester Museum accession code: COLEM: 2017.93

CHER ref: ECC4013

OASIS reference: colchest3-287858



Colchester Archaeological Trust

Roman Circus House,
Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex, CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785

email: lp@catuk.org

CAT Report 1117

June 2017

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Appendix 1 OASIS Summary

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Photograph 1 Post hole, looking NE 2

Fig 1 Site location

Fig 2 Results

1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at Balcerne Hill, Colchester adjacent to the Roman Town Wall (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1003772) during the erection of an interpretation panel. The area excavated to accommodate the concrete base of the panel measured 0.6m by 1.2m, and 0.15m deep. The hole excavated to accommodate the column of the panel measured 0.3m by 0.5m and 0.7m deep, and was dug through modern layers of topsoil, backfill and sand. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring and recording adjacent to the Roman Town Wall at Balcerne Hill, Colchester, Essex which was carried out on the 14th June 2017. The work was commissioned by Philip Wise, Colchester Borough Council in advance of the installation of a new interpretation panel, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Colchester Borough Council Planning Services (CBCPS), Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor Jess Tipper advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with paragraphs 128, 129 and 132 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

All fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006), and with *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England (EAA 14 and 24)*. This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching brief (ClfA 2014a)* and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (ClfA 2014b)*.

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the major published sources for Colchester archaeology (listed below), and also on Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER).

The proposed development is near the south-western corner of the Roman town of *Colonia Claudia Victricensis* and immediately outside the Town Wall (Scheduled Monument NHLE no. 1003772).

The wall was built around the town in the later 1st century AD following the revolt led by Boudicca. It is constructed of a core of layered septaria and mortar faced with coursed septaria and tile. A recent study has concluded that the wall has an average width of 2.67m (including offsets) which is equivalent to precisely nine Roman feet (pedes Monetales). A hypothetical cross-section of the wall shows the foundations as being 3.77m wide (Crummy 2003). Some previous work shows that the wall foundations were surprisingly shallow at 600mm deep (Hull 1958, 25-6). Work by CAT at the Sixth Form College in 2005 shows the stone foundations to be 1.2m deep with wooden piles below (CAT report 347), although, being water-logged, ground conditions here presumably explain their exceptional depth. Trial-holes confirmed that survival of the foundations varies. Where they have not been robbed away, the foundations extend 2.1m from the existing face of the wall and are in a sound state of preservation. Above ground, the survival of the wall is very patchy. Up to 2.4m width of wall has been lost and nothing of the original exterior facing of the wall survives, only the core. The majority of what is standing has been refaced in brick or stone or completely rebuilt in brick.

The proposed development site is located to the south of Balcerne Gate, a Scheduled Monument (NHLE no.1002187). The Balcerne Gate is the main west gate of the Roman town and is the best preserved of any Roman gateway in Britain. It was originally built as a freestanding monumental arch (probably in the AD 50s) before being incorporated into a gateway when the Roman town wall was built later in the 2nd century.

4 **Results** (Figs 2-3)

All excavations were carried out by contractors under archaeological supervision. A rectangular area measuring 0.6m by 1.2m, and 0.15m deep was dug through modern topsoil (L1). A hole measuring 0.3m x 0.5m and a further 0.7m deep was then excavated. This hole was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, 0.2m thick in total, loose dry medium grey/brown silt) onto a layer of modern backfill (L2, 0.22m thick, firm dry grey/brown silt with frequent concrete, brick, tile, stone and charcoal inclusions) which sealed a modern layer of sand (L3, soft dry medium yellow/orange and covering a service).



Photograph 1 Excavated hole, looking northeast

5 **Finds**

No finds were recovered.

6 **Discussion**

No significant archaeological horizons were identified during monitoring as groundworks only occurred through 0.85m of modern layers.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Philip Wise, Colchester Borough Council for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister. Fieldwork was carried out by S Carter. Figures were prepared by L Pooley. The project was monitored for the CBCPS by Jess Tipper.

8 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in PDF format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

CAT Report 347	2009	<i>Roman buildings, the rear face of the Roman town wall and archaeological investigations in Insulas 1a, 1b, 9a and 9b, at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex: April 2005-March 2006</i>
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Crummy, P	1997	<i>City of Victory: the story of Colchester – Britain's first Roman town</i>
Crummy, P	2003	'Colchester's town wall' in <i>The archaeology of Roman towns: studies in honour of John S Wacher</i> , ed by P Wilson
David Gurney	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)
Hawkes, C and Hull, M	1947	<i>Camulodunum, first report on the excavations at Colchester 1930-39</i> , RRC SAL 14

9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCPS	Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record (previously UAD, Urban Archaeological Database)
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
NGR	National Grid Reference
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
section	(abbreviation sc or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
ws	written scheme of investigation

10 Contents of archive

Finds: n/a

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1117)

Original site record (feature and layer sheets, finds record, plans)

Site digital photos and log, attendance register

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museum under accession code: COLEM: 2017.93

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Distribution list

Philip Wise, Colchester Borough Council
Jess Tipper, Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
Essex Historic Environment Record



Colchester Archaeological Trust

Roman Circus House,
Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex, CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785
email: lp@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy
Date: 21.6.2017

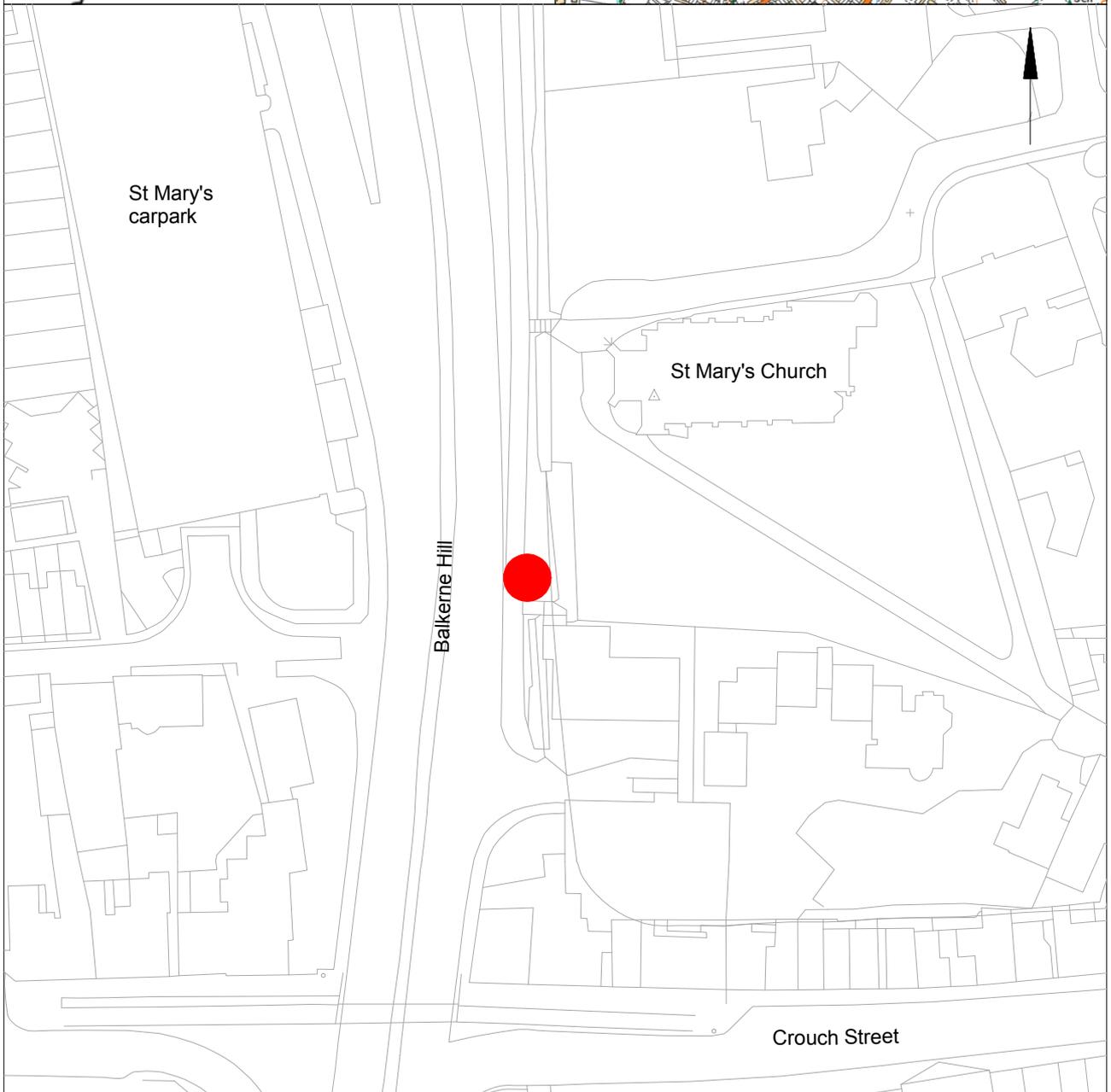
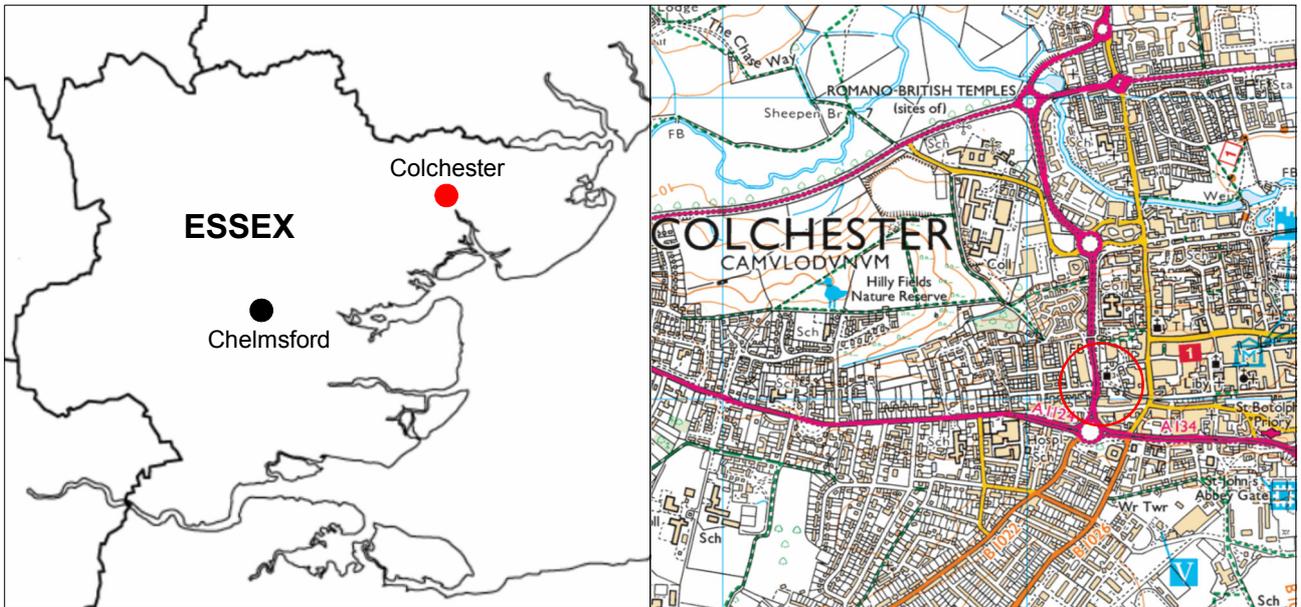


Fig 1 Site location (red circle).

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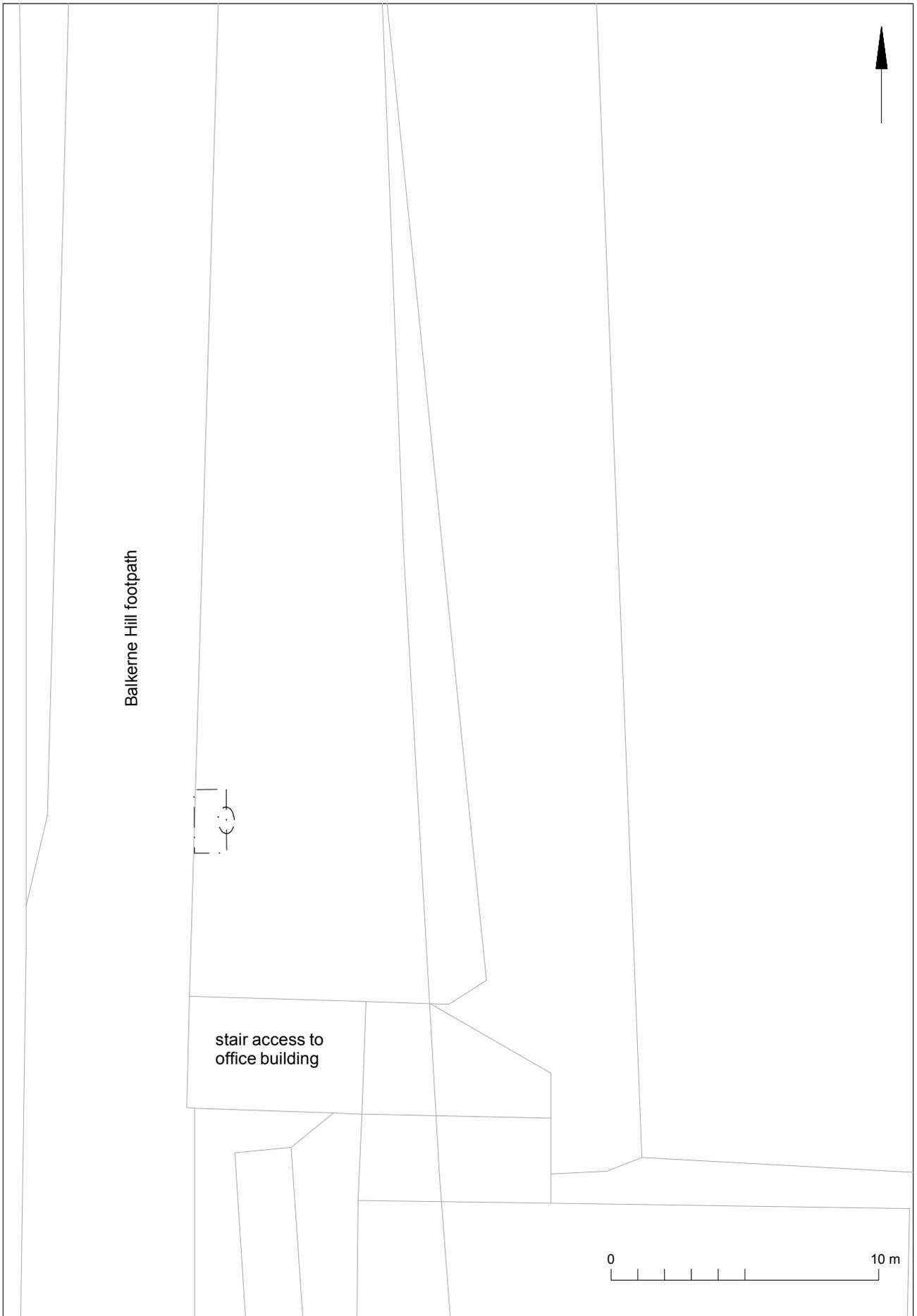


Fig 2 Results

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Balkerne Hill, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AD	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TM 99239 25057 (centre)	Site code: CAT project ref.: 17/05q CHER ref: ECC4013 OASIS ref: colchest3-287858
Type of work: Monitoring and recording	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 14th June 2017	Size of area investigated: 0.72m ²
Location of curating museum: Colchester museum accession code: COLEM: 2017.93	Funding source: Borough Council
Further seasons anticipated? no	Related CHER/SMR numbers: -
Final report: CAT Report 1117	
Periods represented: modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at Balkerne Hill, Colchester adjacent to the Roman Town Wall (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1003772) during the erection of an interpretation panel. The area excavated to accommodate the concrete base of the panel measured 0.6m by 1.2m, and 0.15m deep. The hole excavated to accommodate the column of the panel measured 0.3m by 0.5m and a further 0.7m, and was dug through modern layers of topsoil, backfill and sand. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
CBC monitor: Jess Tipper	
Keywords: -	Significance: -
Author of summary: Dr Elliott Hicks	Date of summary: June 2017

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: colchest3-287858

Project details

Project name	Archaeological monitoring and recording at Balkerne Hill, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AD
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at Balkerne Hill, Colchester adjacent to the Roman Town Wall (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1003772) during the erection of an interpretation panel. The area excavated to accommodate the concrete base of the panel measured 0.6m by 1.2m, and 0.15m deep. The hole excavated to accommodate the column of the panel measured 0.3m by 0.5m and a further 0.7m, and was dug through modern layers of topsoil, backfill and sand. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.
Project dates	Start: 14-06-2017 End: 14-06-2017
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	17/05q - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	ECC4013 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM: 2017.93 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 8 - Land dedicated to the display of a monument
Monument type	N/A None
Significant Finds	N/A None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER Balkerne Hill
Postcode	CO3 3AD
Study area	0.72 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 99239 25057 51.88788272417 0.895571806818 51 53 16 N 000 53 44 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	none
Project design originator	none
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Sarah Carter
Type of sponsor/funding body	Borough Council

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	COLEM: 2017.93
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	COLEM: 2017.93
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Paper Media available	"Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

**Project
bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title Archaeological monitoring and recording at Balkeine Hill, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AD: June 2017
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