

Archaeological monitoring at The Colchester Officers' Club, 25 St John's Green, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7EZ

February-March 2018



by Dr Elliott Hicks
with contributions by Stephen Benfield
figures by Ben Holloway and Sarah Carter

fieldwork by Nigel Rayner

**Commissioned by Mark Walker (JWF Metalworkers Limited)
on behalf of Christopher Highfield**

NGR: TL 9981 2475 (centre)
Planning reference: 172149
Scheduled monument consent ref.: S00170483
CAT project ref.: 17/12f
Colchester Museum accession code: COLEM 2018.37
CHER ref: ECC4178
OASIS reference: colchest3-304066



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

tel.: 01206 501785

email: lp@catuk.org

CAT Report 1243
May 2018

Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aim	2
5	Results	2
6	Finds	3
7	Conclusion	4
8	Acknowledgements	4
9	References	4
10	Abbreviations and glossary	4
11	Contents of archive	5
12	Archive deposition	5

Figures after p6

CAT WSI

OASIS Summary sheet

List of photographs, tables and figures

Cover: general site shot

Photograph 1 Site shot 3

Table 1 Finds by context and finds type 3

Fig 1 Site location

Fig 2 Monitoring results

1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at The Colchester Officers' Club, 25 St John's Green, Colchester, during the installation of railings. The development site is located within the Scheduled Monument of St John's Abbey precinct (SM 26307; NHLE no. 1015015). Previous archaeological investigations carried out at this site have uncovered remains of the abbey and several inhumation burials. No significant archaeological remains were identified during monitoring, although a number of residual finds dating to the Roman and medieval periods were retrieved.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring at The Colchester Officers' Club, 25 St John's Green, Colchester, Essex which was carried out between 26th February to 9th March 2018. The work was commissioned by Mark Walker of JWF Metalworkers Limited, on behalf of Mr Christopher Highfield, during the installation of railings, 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), the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER).

The development site is located within the Scheduled Monument of St John's Abbey precinct (NHLE no. 1015015). St John's Abbey was built by the Benedictine Order by 1115, burnt down in 1133 and was rebuilt in the early 13th century. The cruciform-shaped church stood in the north of the abbey precinct and has been located during an archaeological evaluation (CAT Report 601) and geophysical survey. Human remains, certainly medieval burials associated with the abbey, have been recorded several times in the area (CAR 1, 203-221). To the north of the church were the cloister, chapel house and domestic buildings. Some of the domestic buildings were said to have been moved to the south side of the church after 1133 and this has been backed up by archaeological evidence (CAR 1, 28-30).

The abbey and St Giles' Church were surrounded by a precinct wall with towers. The wall dates from before the 13th century and was refaced in parts in the 16th century. It was partly demolished during the construction of St Botolph's roundabout in the early 1970s, but was recorded before its destruction (CAR 9, 219). Surviving stretches (some refaced in brick) can still be seen in various places.

The surviving abbey gatehouse (35m east) was built in the 15th century as the main gatehouse, giving access to the town. The upper storey was blown up during the Siege

of Colchester in 1648 and was rebuilt, probably in the 1840s. The building is Grade 1 Listed and is also scheduled. It is possible that there was a second gatehouse, in the Flagstaff House area. The abbey was dissolved in 1538 and started to fall down or be demolished at this time

Following the Dissolution the site passed to various individuals and was eventually acquired by the Lucas family who constructed a mansion and resided there until the mid-17th century. During the Siege of Colchester in 1648, the former abbey was used as a royalist stronghold and sustained considerable damage in the fighting. With the exception of the extant but restored gatehouse, the remaining abbey buildings seem to have been demolished in the 1660s. The abbey site was bought by the War Office in 1860 from the Baring family and stayed in military ownership until very recently (VCH 9).

No plan of the monastery has survived, the nearest being what was shown on John Speed's map of Colchester published in 1611-12. This shows a number of buildings huddled together inside the abbey's defensive wall labelled 'St John's Abbey' and what appears to be the church's central tower still standing in isolation.

In 1988, CAT excavations during an extension to the east side of the clubhouse revealed a stone wall foundation believed to have been part of the abbey church (CHER MCC1774). An evaluation carried out by CAT in 2007 to the west of the Officers' Club uncovered a few sections of monastic foundations, as well as Roman, medieval and post-medieval deposits buried beneath deep soil deposits (CAT Report 405). The abbey church itself was identified during an archaeological evaluation undertaken by CAT in 2011 (CAT Report 601) and subsequent monitoring in 2012/2013 (CAT Report 718 pending). Further monitoring at the Garrison Officer's Club revealed more robbed-out foundations of the abbey church and human remains (CAT Report 737). Excavations and monitoring within the abbey precinct have recently been carried out as part of the Garrison 'Flagstaff House' redevelopments (CAT Report pending).

4 Aim

The principal aim of archaeological monitoring at this site was to ascertain whether remains of the former abbey were located in the area under development, and to determine whether the construction work would impact on any inhumation burials which might have lain in the vicinity.

5 Results (Fig 2)

A CAT archaeologist monitored the excavation by hand of 25 holes measuring 0.25m by 0.25m and 0.6m in depth to accommodate railings, and two holes measuring 0.4m by 0.4m and 1m in depth to accommodate gateposts.

Excavations occurred through a layer of modern tarmac (L1, c 0.1-0.15m thick), modern topsoil (L2, c 0.1-0.2m thick, soft, moist dark grey/brown sandy-clay with charcoal, oyster, brick and tile fleck inclusions and common gravel and stone inclusions) onto an accumulation layer (L3, soft, moist dark yellow/brown loamy-sand with charcoal, oyster, brick and tile fleck inclusions and common gravel and stone inclusions).

No significant archaeological features were encountered.



Photograph 1 Site shot

6 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

The finds were all recovered from L3. There were a few sherds of Roman greyware (Fabric GX) and a sherd from a large Roman storage jar (Fabric HZ). A single rim sherd from a medieval cooking pot of c late 13th to 14th century date was also recovered. With these are a flange piece broken from a Roman *tegula* (roof) tile and a small piece of undiagnostic animal bone. All of the finds are listed and described in Table 1. The pottery fabrics refer to the published fabric series in *CAR 7* (post-Roman) and *CAR 10* (Roman).

Ctxt	Ctxt type	Find no	Type/ description	Finds Spot date
L3	accumulation	1	Pottery: Roman Fabric GX (5 sherds, 44 g) inc rim top from jar/bowl and one sherd with internal water scale CBM: Roman <i>Tegula</i> flange piece (144 g) orange/red fine sand fabric	Roman
L3	accumulation	2	Pottery: medieval Fabric 20, neckless cooking pot rim 920 g)	L13-14C
L3	accumulation	3	Pottery: Roman Fabric GX (1 sherd, 18 g), Fabric HZ (1 sherd, 54 g) Animal bone: single, small bone piece from a medium or, more probably, large mammal (10 g)	Roman

Table 1 Finds by context and find type

7 Conclusion

No remains associated with the former abbey, nor any inhumations were uncovered during the archaeological monitoring of construction work at the Officers' Club. A number of residual finds dating to the Roman and medieval periods were recovered, however, indicating the existence of domestic occupation and activity at this site during these periods.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Mark Walker of JWF Metalworkers Limited and Christopher Highfield for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister and carried out by N Rayner. Figures were prepared by S Carter. The project was monitored for the CBCPS by Jess Tipper.

9 References

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

CAR 1	1981	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 1: Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester</i> , by P Crummy.
CAR 7	1999	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by J Cotter
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 Symonds and S Wade
CAT	2014	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 405	2007	<i>Stage 1b archaeological evaluation, Alienated Land Area B1a, Colchester Garrison, Colchester, Essex: January 2007.</i>
CAT Report 601	2011	<i>St John's Abbey church: An evaluation at the Garrison Officers' Club, St John's Green, Colchester, Essex: February -March 2011</i>
CAT Report 718	Forth-coming	<i>St John's Abbey church: An evaluation and watching brief at the Garrison Officers' Club, St John's Green, Colchester, Essex: February 2011-June 2013.</i>
CAT Report 737	2013	<i>Archaeological monitoring during the installation of floodlights at the Colchester Garrison Officer's Club, St John's Green, Colchester, Essex: October 2013</i>
CifA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological excavation</i>
CifA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives</i>
CifA	2014c	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).</i>
VCH 9	1990	<i>Victoria County History of Essex: Vol 9, the Borough of Colchester.</i>

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCAA	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor
CBCPS	Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record (previously UAD, Urban Archaeological Database)
CifA	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
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
residual	something out of its original context, eg a Roman coin in a modern pit
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
wsj	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained.

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1243)

CBCPS evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

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

Site digital photos and log, architectural plans, attendance register, risk assessment

12 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 2018.37.

Distribution list

Mark Walker, JWF Metalworkers Limited

Christopher Highfield

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: 03.05.2018

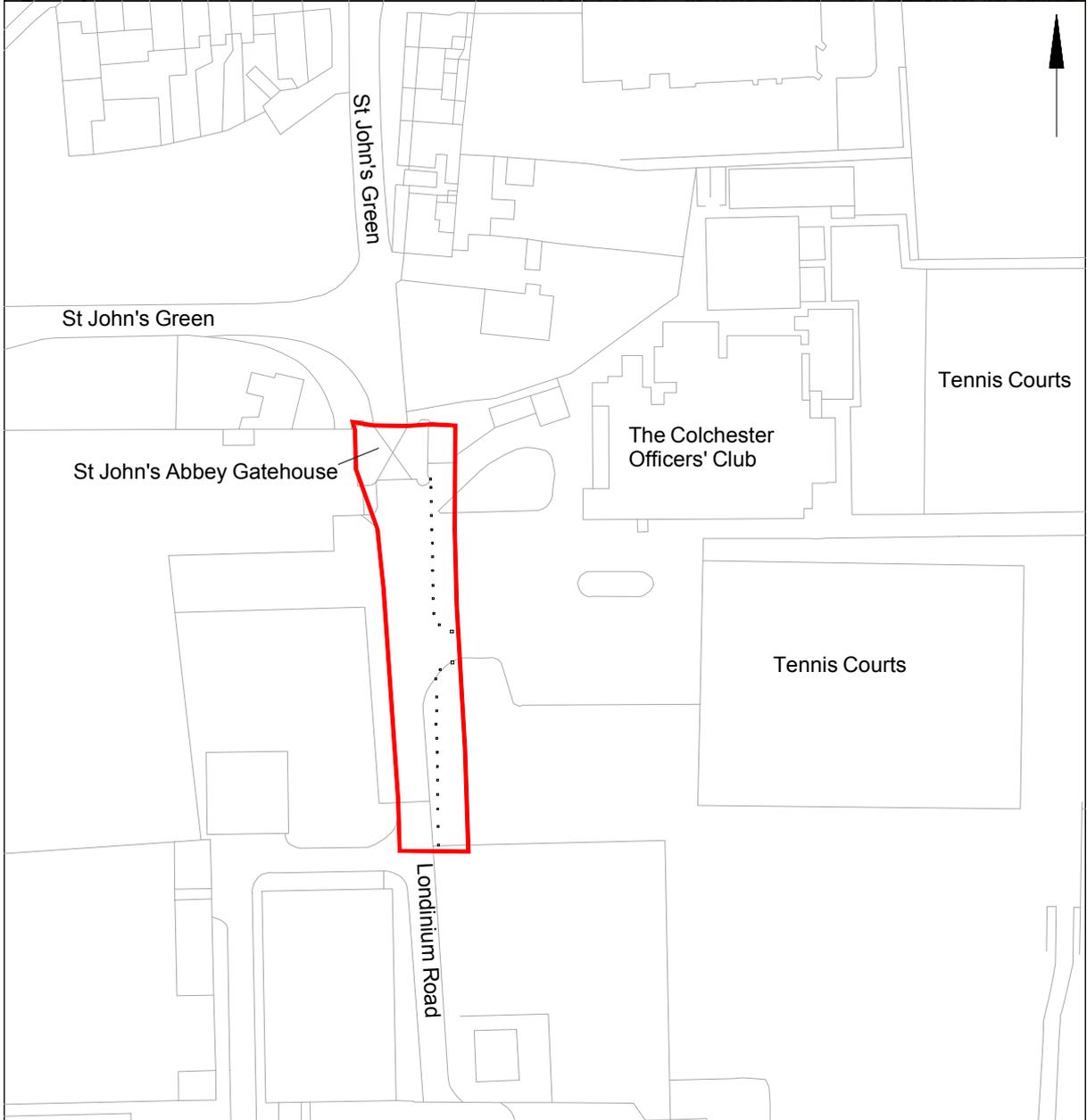
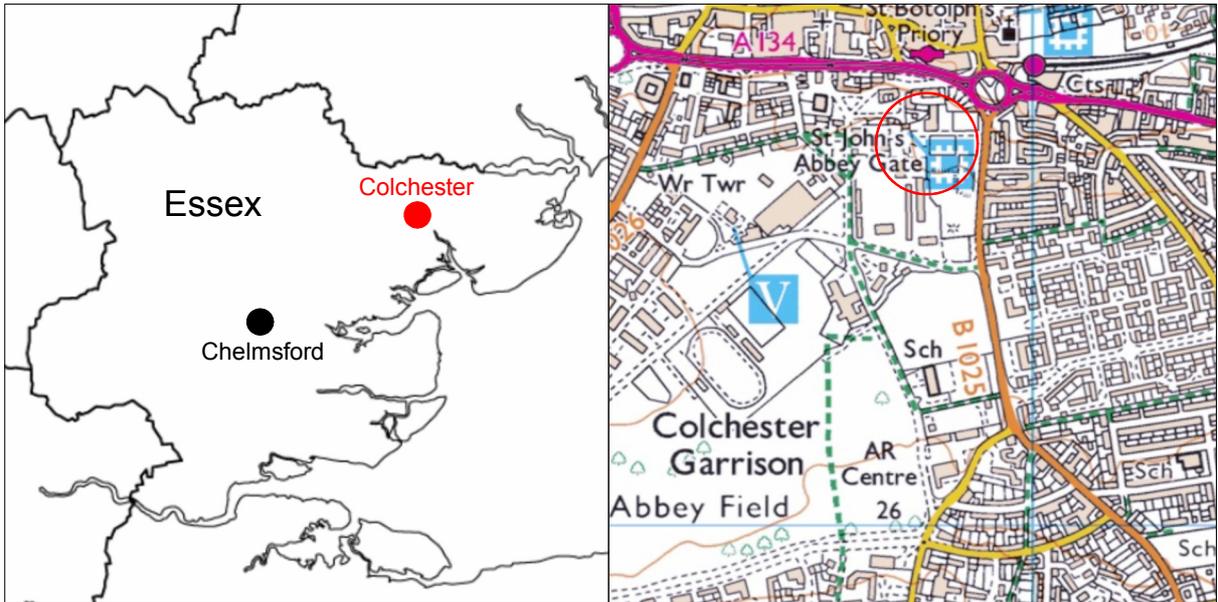


Fig 1 Site location.

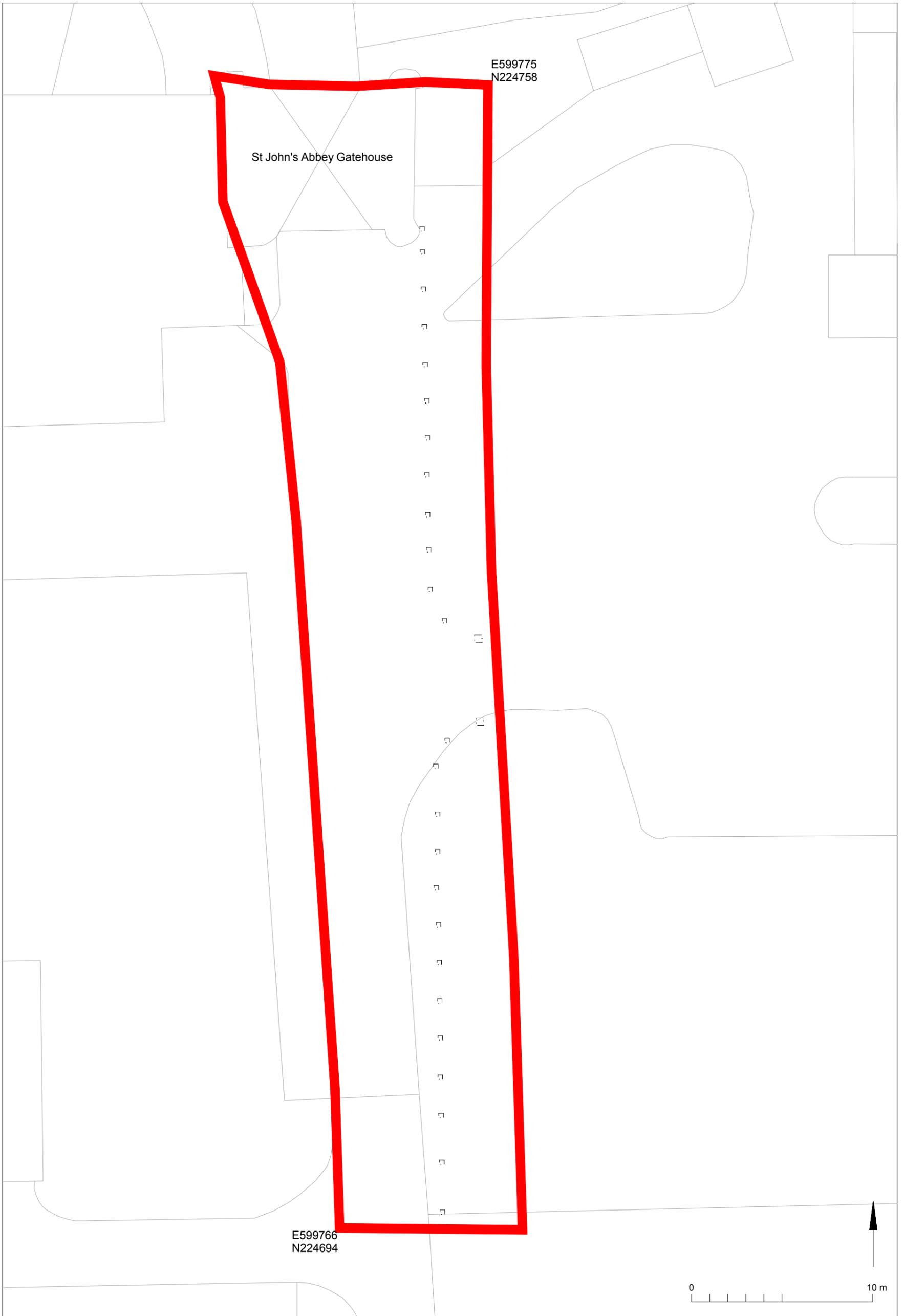


Fig 2 Monitoring results.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: The Colchester Officers' Club, 25 St John's Green, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7EZ	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9981 2475 (centre)	Site code: CAT project ref.: 17/12f CHER ref: ECC4178 OASIS ref: colchest3-304066
Type of work: Monitoring and recording	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 26th February – 9th March 2018	Size of area investigated: 0.075ha
Location of curating museum: Colchester museum accession code COLEM: 2018.37	Funding source: Owner
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related CHER/EHER number: MCC1774
Final report: CAT Report 1243	
Periods represented: Modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at The Colchester Officers' Club, 25 St John's Green, Colchester, during the installation of railings. The development site is located within the Scheduled Monument of St John's Abbey precinct (NHLE no. 1015015). Previous archaeological investigations carried out at this site have uncovered remains of the abbey and several inhumation burials. No significant archaeological remains were identified during monitoring, although a number of residual finds dating to the Roman and medieval periods were retrieved.</i>	
Previous summaries/reports: -	
CBC monitor: Jess Tipper	
Keywords: -	Significance: none
Author of summary: Dr Elliott Hicks	Date of summary: April 2018

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

[Printable version](#)

OASIS ID: colchest3-304066

Project details

Project name	Archaeological monitoring and recording at Colchester Officers' Club
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at The Colchester Officers' Club, 25 St John's Green, Colchester, during the installation of railings. The development site is located within the Scheduled Monument of St John's Abbey precinct (NHLE no. 1015015). Previous archaeological investigations carried out at this site have uncovered remains of the abbey and several inhumation burials. No significant archaeological remains were identified during monitoring, although a number of residual finds dating to the Roman and medieval periods were retrieved.
Project dates	Start: 26-02-2018 End: 09-03-2018
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	17/12f - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	CBM Roman
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER Colchester Officers' Club
Postcode	CO2 7EZ
Study area	0.08 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 9981 2475 51.884920442525 0.903680950613 51 53 05 N 000 54 13
E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Colchester Archaeological Trust

Project brief originator none

Project design originator none

Project director/manager Ben Holloway

Project supervisor Chris Lister

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body JWF Metalworkers Limited

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Colchester Museum

Digital Archive ID COLEM 2018.37

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"

Paper Archive recipient Colchester Museum

Paper Archive ID COLEM 2018.37

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Archaeological monitoring at The Colchester Officers' Club, 25 St John's Green, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7EZ: February-March 2018

Author(s)/Editor(s) Hicks, E.

Other bibliographic details CAT Report 1243

Date 2018

Issuer or publisher Colchester Archaeological Trust

Place of issue or publication Colchester

Description A4 loose-leaf ringbound

URL	http://cat.essex.ac.uk/
Entered by	Elliott Hicks (lp@catuk.org)
Entered on	3 May 2018

OASIS:

Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

© ADS 1996-2012 Created by [Jo Gilham](#) and [Jen Mitcham](#), [email](#) Last modified Wednesday 9 May 2012

Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm?id=316240> for this page