



Colchester  
Archaeological  
Trust

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

<b>CAT Report 1505</b>	<b>Parish:</b> West Mersea
<b>Tides Reach, 92 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex, CO5 8BS</b>	<b>Planning reference:</b> 181692
	<b>CHER Event no.:</b> ECC4362
	<b>OASIS ref.:</b> colchest3-361940
<b>Address:</b> Tides Reach 92 Fairhaven Avenue West Mersea Colchester Essex CO5 8BS	<b>Grid Reference:</b> TM 02258 12527
	<b>Number of site visits:</b> 2
	<b>Dates of visits:</b> 13th and 20th November 2019
<b>Nature of the work:</b> Observation of groundworks for an extension.	
<b>Reason for condition:</b> The site lies in a known area of Roman occupation, evidenced by numerous wall foundations. Four Late Iron Age cremation urns have been found along Fairhaven Avenue, and a Red Hill was recorded on the beach some 500m to the south. Medieval remains associated with the church and priory are also present in the vicinity.	
<b>% of total seen:</b> 100% of the groundworks.	
<b>Results:</b> The groundworks for the extension were archaeologically monitored in response to a Brief set by Jess Tipper of Colchester Borough Council Planning Services.	
<p>A CAT archaeologist supervised the stripping of an area of approximately 245m<sup>2</sup> by up to 0.48m to formation level. Pits for piling mats and service trenching were then excavated in the stripped area.</p>	
	
<p><b>Photograph 1</b> Site photograph – looking southeast</p>	
<p>Groundworks penetrated three layers. Modern topsoil (L1, c 0.1-0.13m thick, soft friable dry/moist dark black loam) sealed subsoil (L2, c 0.12-0.14m thick, friable moist medium grey/brown clayey-silt and 1% stones), beneath which lay natural (L3, friable moist light/medium yellow/brown clay, encountered at a depth of 0.22-0.25m below current ground level).</p>	

No significant archaeological remains were encountered. A modern pit was observed but was not excavated.

**Recorded by:** Dr Elliott Hicks

**Date:** 13th December 2019



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

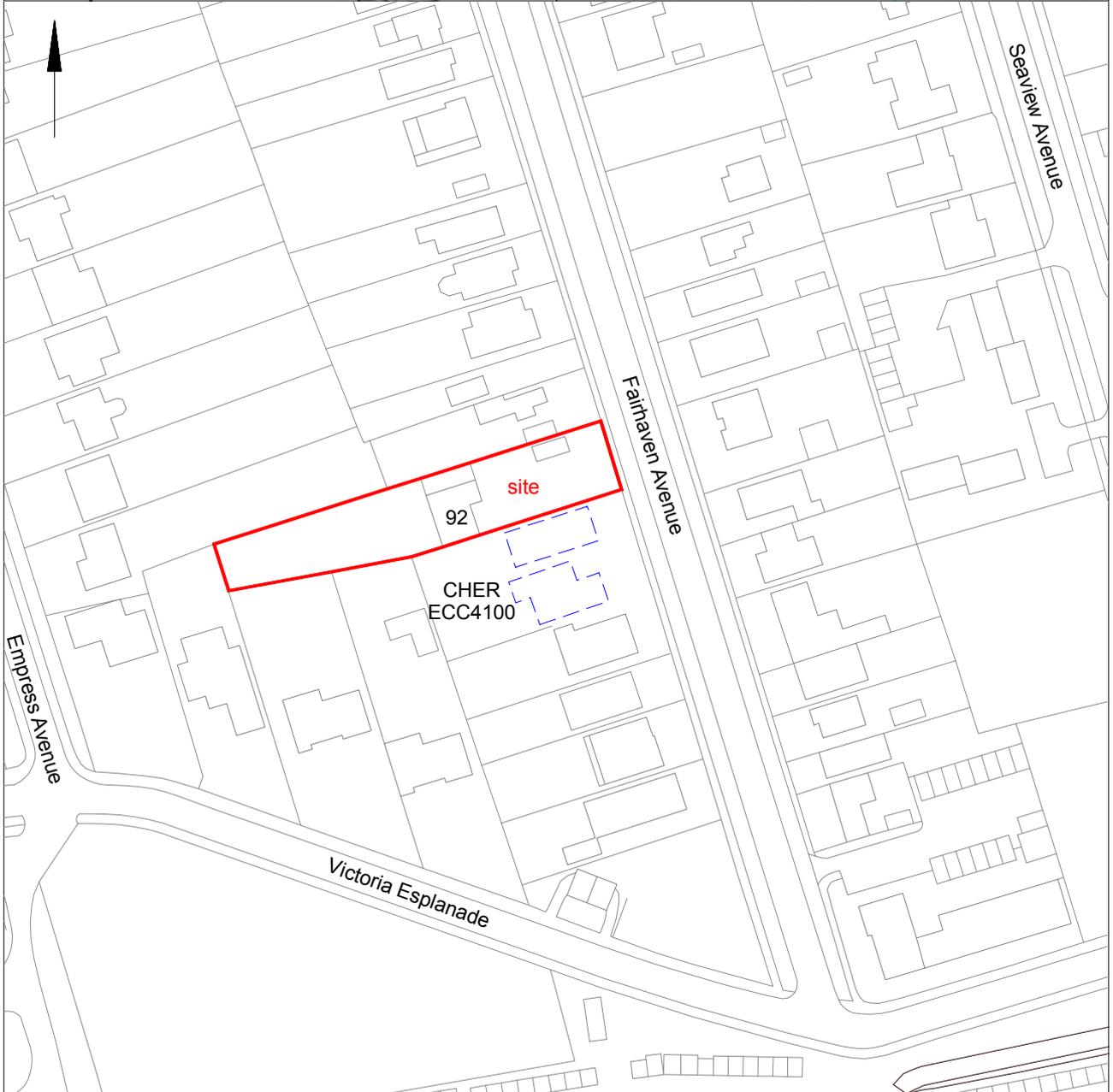
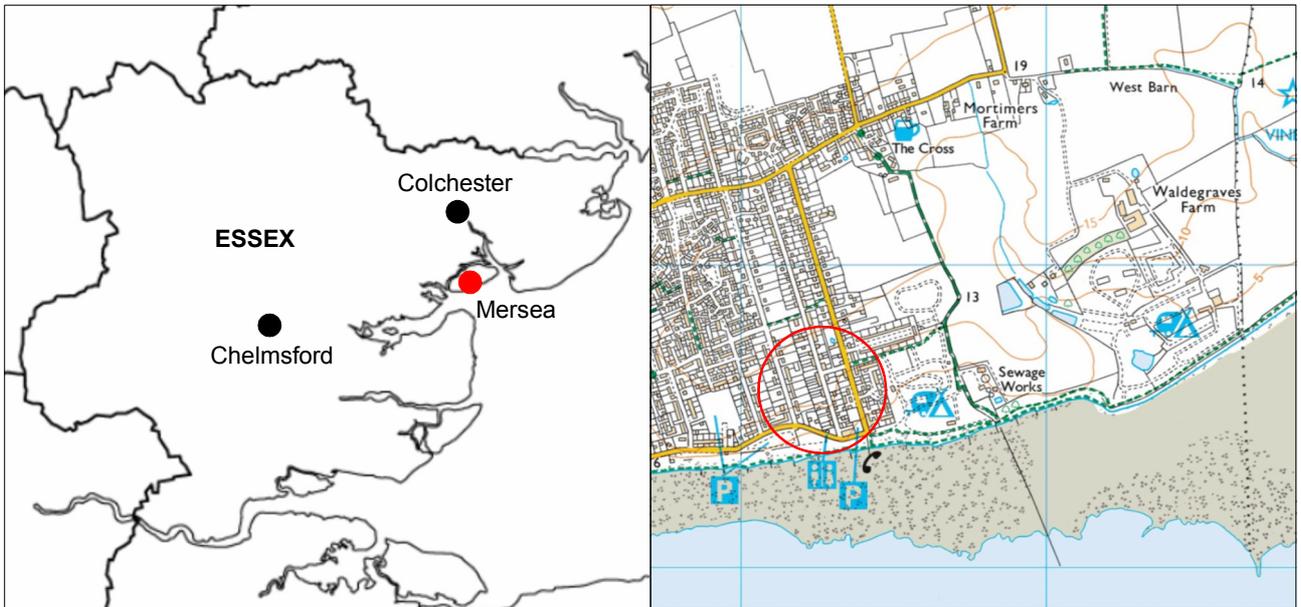
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*Checked by:* Philip Crummy

*Date:* 06.01.2019



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Fig 1 Site location.



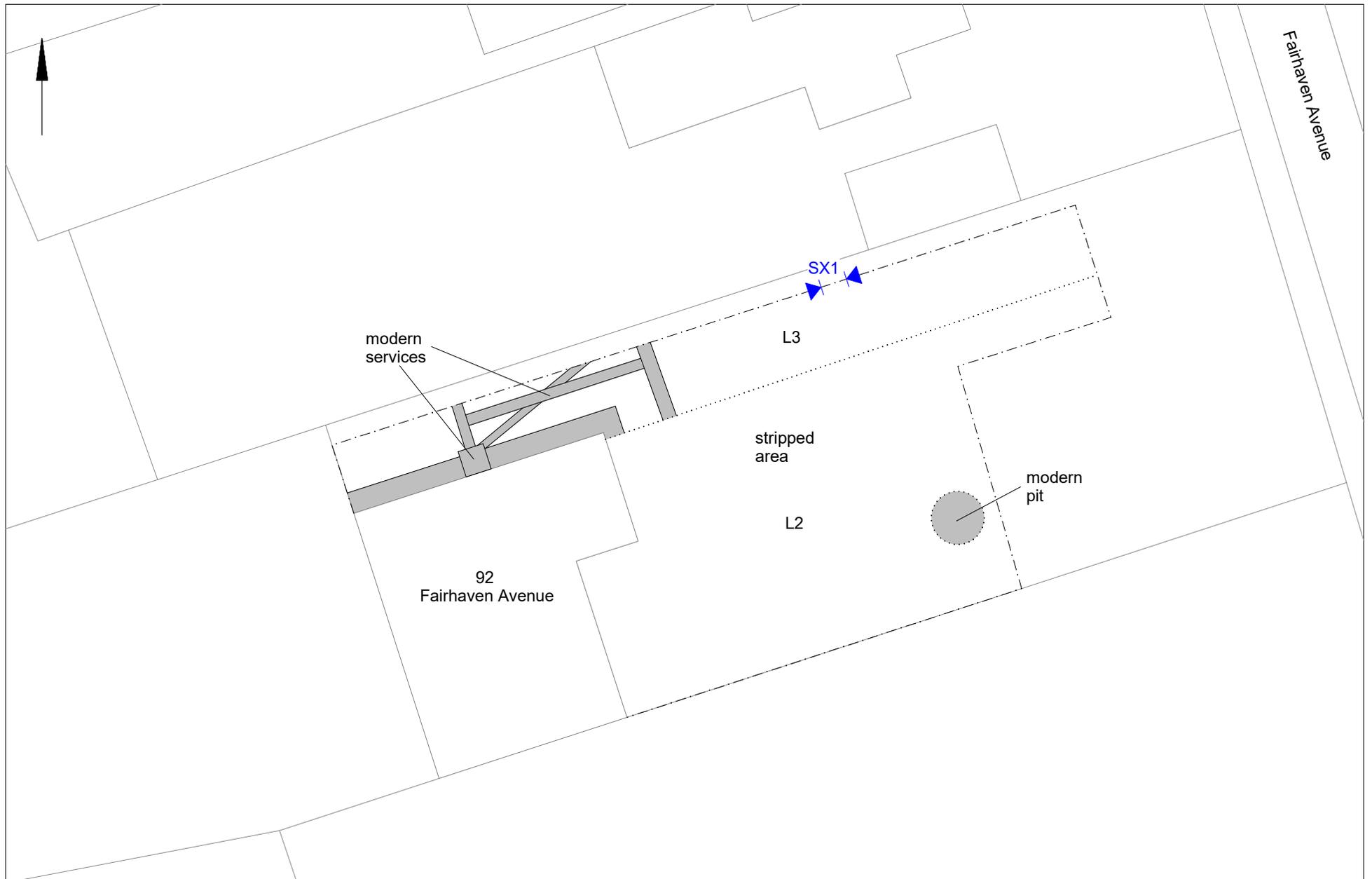


Fig 2 Monitoring results.

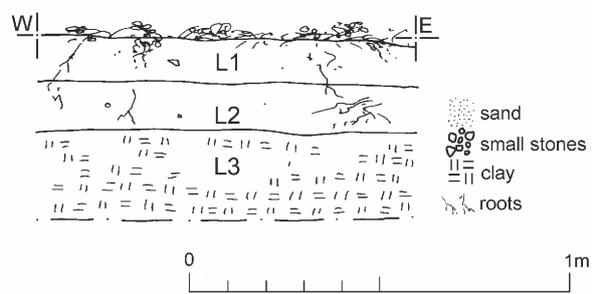


Fig 3 Representative section.

**Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)  
for an archaeological investigation at  
Tides Reach, 92 Fairhaven Avenue, West  
Mersea, Colchester, Essex, CO5 8BS.**

**NGR:** TM 02258 12527 (centre)

**Parish:** West Mersea

**Planning references:** 181692

**Commissioned by and on behalf of:** Mr & Mrs Harrison

**Curating museum:** Colchester

**CHER number:** [TBC](#)

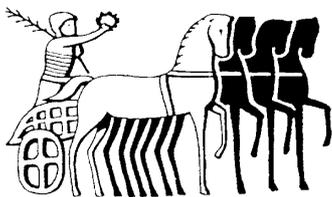
**CAT project code:** 2019/08a

**OASIS project number:** colchest3-361940

**Site manager:** Chris Lister

**CBC monitor:** Jess Tipper

**This WSI written:** 01/08/2019



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## Site location and description

The proposed development site is located on the south-western edge of Mersea Island at Tides Reach, 92 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8BS (Fig 1). The site is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) TM 02258 12527.

## Proposed work

The development comprises the enlargement and extension of an existing bungalow and any associated groundworks.

## Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the major published sources for Colchester archaeology and the Colchester Historic Environment Record (accessed via Colchester Heritage Explorer (<https://colchesterheritage.co.uk/map>)).

The proposed development lies within an area of high archaeological potential, specifically, within an area of Roman occupation, revealed by multiple sightings of wall foundations and floors and medieval remains related to the nearby church and priory.

Four Late Iron Age cremation urns were discovered at 42 Fairhaven Avenue (CHER MCC8263) and a Red Hill has also been documented on the beach near the end of Seaview Avenue (CHER MCC8873) 500m to the south of the site.

Development along the High Street, to the west of the site, have included a small excavation at Bonheur in 1922, which revealed a Roman stone wall set in *opus signinum* (CHER MCC8837). Further work by Hull in 1927 revealed Roman pottery, a bone pin and an iron knife (CHER ECC3540, **VCH** vol 3 p161). Approximately 1.5km west of the site, on land between the High Street and Captains Road, a possible Roman wall was recorded (CHER MCC8860). Adjacent to this in 2016 a Roman ditch was recorded during a watching brief by Britannia Archaeology (CHER MCC10065). A University of Cambridge Higher Education Field Academy outreach project in the area involved a series 1m<sup>2</sup> test pits (TPs) in open spaces (mostly private gardens). At 5 Mersea Avenue, TP5 found a sherd of Roman and eight sherds of post-medieval pottery (MCC5729). TP3, at the rear of 32 St Peter's Road recovered Middle Iron Age and post-medieval pottery (MCC5727), both the west of the development site.

Approximately 1km to the southwest is West Mersea parish church (Church of St Peter and St Paul). The church is constructed of re-used Roman Kentish ragstone walls with Roman, and later brick. The earliest evidence (the lower part of the tower) appears to be 11th century in date (CHER MCC8909 & MCC4666). The area around the churchyard has had a number of sightings of finds. Cromwell Mortimer recorded seeing a mosaic and Roman remains in 1730 (**VCH** vol 3 p158-9). In 1896 Henry Laver observed a Roman wall (CHER MCC8858). CAT excavated three trial pits in 1991 prior to extensions to the church. Only some residual Roman finds were recorded (91/7b, CAT Report 1000).

To the west of the church is thought to be the location of a medieval priory. Although the exact location is uncertain, it was recorded to have been established in 1046 AD (CHER MCC8835). Within this area Roman pavement and tesserae have been noted on more than one occasion (CHER MCC8838, CHER MCC8858 & MCC8909). On the southern side of Coast Road a well is thought to relate to the priory (CHER MCC9356).

CAT carried out a series of work to the southwest at 20 Yorick Road. The rear of the property includes the location of a Roman *mausoleum* (CHER MCC8355 Scheduled Monument no. 1002195). An exploratory trench was undertaken to assess the exact location and condition of the *mausoleum* (CHER MCC2973, CAT Report 255). Followed by a watching brief exposing part of a Roman wall foundation (CHER MCC5406, CAT Report 330).

Archaeological work undertaken by CAT in the area have proven devoid of any archaeological features or finds, including an evaluation on the adjacent land at 94 Fairhaven

Avenue (CAT Report 1195), 63 Churchfields (CAT Report 1152), 6 High Street (CAT Report 576), 4 Meadow Lane (CHER MCC5553, CAT Report 420), 6 Meadow Lane (CAT Report 629), The Blackwater Hotel Church Road (CHER MCC5291, CAT Report 223), Howard's Cottage, 12a Church Road (CAT Report 1000 vol 3). It has been noted in some of these reports however that the land appeared to have comprised of made-up ground thought to be dated to the 1960s (8 High Street, CAT Report 118).

## **Planning background**

A planning application was made to Colchester Borough Council in July 2018 (application No. 181692) proposing *the extension and enlargement of the existing bungalow*.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the CHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA). The recommended archaeological condition is based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2019).

## **Requirement for work**

The required archaeological work is for an archaeological investigation of all groundworks. Details are given in a Project Brief written by CBCAA (CBC 2019).

Specifically:

The investigation is being undertaken to identify and record any surviving archaeological deposits that may exist on site.

If unexpected remains are encountered the CBCAA will be informed immediately and the CBCAA will decide if amendments to the brief are required to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

In the exceptional circumstances that important, well-preserved mosaic floors (or similar remains) are discovered, which cannot otherwise be avoided by the development (and satisfactorily preserved in situ), a contingency will be required for the block-lifting of these archaeological remains, e.g. well-preserved mosaic remains and/or exceptional burnt remains related to the Boudiccan destruction of AD 60/61, and for subsequent conservation and presentation. A decision about the need for conservation and lifting of important archaeological remains will be made in consultation with specialist stakeholders (e.g. Historic England, Colchester Museum and Norfolk Museums Service, Conservation and Design Services).

## **General methodology**

All work carried out by CAT will be in accordance with:

- professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014a, b)
- Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011)
- relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2019)
- the Project Brief issued by the CBCAA (CBC 2019).

Professional CAT field archaeologists will undertake all specified archaeological work, for which they will be suitably experienced and qualified.

Notification of the supervisor/project manager's name and the start date for the project will be provided to CBCAA one week before start of work.

Unless it is the responsibility of other site contractors, CAT will study mains service locations and avoid damage to these.

At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. At the end of the project all parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). This will include an uploaded .PDF version of the entire report.

A unique HER event number will be obtained from the CBCAA prior to the commencement of fieldwork. The curating museum will be notified of the details of the project and the event code, which will be used to identify the project archive when depositing at the end of the project.

## **Staffing**

The number of field staff for this project is estimated as follows: One CAT officer for the duration of the groundworks.

## **Investigation methodology**

There will be sufficient on-site attendance by CAT staff to maintain a watch on all contractors' ground works to record, excavate or sample (as necessary) any archaeological features or deposits. The investigation will involve monitoring of all groundworks and inspection of upcast soil.

All topsoil removal and ground reduction will be done with a toothless bucket.

If archaeological features or deposits are uncovered, time will be allowed for these to be planned and recorded.

If any features or deposits uncovered are to be destroyed by the proposed development, time will be allowed for these features to be excavated by hand. This includes a 50% sample of discrete features (pits, etc), 10% of linear features (ditches, etc) and 100% of all complex features and burials (see Human Remains policy below).

Fast hand-excavation techniques involving (for instance) picks, forks and mattocks will not be used on complex stratigraphy.

A metal detector will be used to examine spoil heaps, and the finds recovered.

Individual records of excavated contexts, layers, features or deposits will be entered on pro-forma record sheets. Registers will be compiled of finds, small finds and soil samples.

## **Site surveying**

Normal scale for archaeological site plans and sections is 1:20 and 1:10 respectively, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be more appropriate.

The site grid will be tied into the National Grid. Corners of excavation areas and trenches will be located by NGR coordinates.

## **Environmental sampling policy**

The number and range of samples collected will be adequate to determine the potential of the site, with particular focus on palaeoenvironmental remains including both biological remains (e.g. plants, small vertebrates) and small sized artefacts (e.g. smithing debris), and to provide information for sampling strategies on any future excavation. Samples will be collected for potential micromorphical and other pedological sedimentological analysis. Environmental bulk samples will be 40 litres in size (assuming the context is large enough).

Sampling strategies will address questions of:

- the range of preservation types (charred, mineral-replaced, waterlogged), and their quality
- concentrations of macro-remains
- and differences in remains from undated and dated features
- variation between different feature types and areas of site

CAT has an arrangement with Val Fryer / Lisa Gray whereby any potentially rich environmental layers or features will be appropriately sampled as a matter of course. Trained CAT staff will do any processing and the flots passed to Val Fryer / Lisa Gray for analysis and reporting.

Should any complex, or otherwise outstanding deposits be encountered, VF/LG will be asked onto site to advise. Waterlogged 'organic' features will always be sampled. In all cases, the advice of VF/LG and/or the Historic England Regional Advisor in Archaeological Science (East of England) on sampling strategies for complex or waterlogged deposits will be followed, including the taking of monolith samples.

## **Human remains**

CAT follows the policy of leaving human remains *in situ* unless there is a clear indication that the remains are in danger of being compromised as a result of their exposure or unless advised to do so by the project osteologist or CBCAA.

CBCAA will be notified immediately if any human remains are encountered during the investigation.

If circumstances indicated it were prudent or necessary to remove remains from the site during the investigation, the following criteria would be applied; if it is clear from their position, context, depth, or other factors that the remains are ancient, then normal procedure is to apply to the Department of Justice for a licence to remove them and seek advice from the project osteologist. Human remains removed from site for analysis this may involve radiocarbon dating (see finds section).

Following HE guidance (HE 2018) if the human remains are not to be lifted, the project osteologist should be available to record the human remain *in situ* (i.e. a site visit). Conditions laid down by the DoJ license will be followed. If it seems that the remains are not ancient, then the coroner, the client, and the CBCAA will be informed, and any advice and/or instruction from the coroner will be followed.

## **Photographic record**

Will include both general and feature-specific photographs, the latter with scale and north arrow. A photo register giving context number, details, and direction of shot will be prepared on site, and included in site archive. Digital site photographs will be taken and archived as per Historic England guidelines (HE 2015a)

## **Finds**

All significant finds will be retained.

All finds, where appropriate, will be washed and marked with site code and context number. CAT may use local volunteers to assist the CAT Finds Officer with this task.

Matthew Loughton (CAT) normally writes our finds reports. Some categories of finds are automatically referred to other CAT specialists:

small finds, metalwork, coins, etc: Laura Pooley

non-ceramic bulk finds: Laura Pooley

animal bones (small groups): Alec Wade / Adam Wightman  
flints: Adam Wightman  
or to outside specialists:  
animal bones (large groups)  
project osteologist (human remains): Julie Curl (*Sylvanus*)  
environmental processing and reporting: Val Fryer / Lisa Gray  
conservation of finds: staff at Norfolk Museums Service, Conservation and Design Services / Laura Ratcliffe (LR Conservation)

Other specialists whose opinion can be sought on large or complex groups include:  
Roman brick/tile: Ernest Black / Ian Betts (MOLA)  
Roman glass: Hilary Cool  
Prehistoric pottery: Stephen Benfield / Paul Sealey / Nigel Brown  
Other: EH Regional Adviser in Archaeological Science (East of England).

All finds of potential treasure will be removed to a safe place, and the coroner informed immediately, in accordance with the rules of the Treasure Act 1996. The definition of treasure is given in pages 3-5 of the Code of Practice of the above act. This refers primarily to gold or silver objects.

Requirements for conservation and storage of finds will be agreed with the appropriate museum prior to the start of work, and confirmed to CBCAA.

A contingency will be made in the budget for scientific assessment/analysis. This can include soil micromorphological assessment, absolute dating in the event that archaeomagnetic and/or (more probably) radiocarbon dating is required, if burning is encountered or human remains (in which case it might be necessary to lift a small sample for absolute dating). The Historic England Regional Science Advisor will be consulted for advice on this.

## Results

Notification will be given to CBCAA when the fieldwork has been completed.

An appropriate archive will be prepared to minimum acceptable standards outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (HE 2015b).

The report will be submitted within 6 months of the end of fieldwork, with a copy supplied to CBCAA as a PDF.

The report will contain:

- Location plan of the groundworks in relation to the proposed development. At least two corners of the site will be given 10 figure grid references.
- Section/s drawings showing depth of deposits from present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale.
- Archaeological methodology and detailed results including a suitable conclusion and discussion and results referring to Regional Research Frameworks (Medlycott 2011).
- All specialist reports or assessments
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results.

An EHER summary sheet will also be completed within four weeks and supplied to CBCAA.

Results will be published, to at least a summary level (i.e. round-up in *Essex Archaeology & History*) in the year following the archaeological field work. An allowance will be made in the project costs for the report to be published in an adequately peer reviewed journal or monograph series

## Archive deposition

It is a policy of Colchester Borough Council that the integrity of the site archive be maintained (i.e. all finds and records should be properly curated by a single organisation), with the archive available for public consultation. To achieve this desired aim it is assumed that the full archive will be deposited in Colchester Museums *unless otherwise agreed in advance*. (A full copy of the archive shall in any case be deposited).

**By accepting this WSI, the client agrees to deposit the archive, including all artefacts, at Colchester & Ipswich Museum.**

The requirements for archive storage will be agreed with the curating museum.

If the finds are to remain with the landowner, a full copy of the archive will be housed with the curating museum and provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration and analysis) as appropriate.

The archive will be deposited with Colchester & Ipswich Museum or an alternate repository (approved by COLEM and CBCAA) within 3 months of the completion of the final publication report, with a summary of the contents of the archive supplied to CBCAA. Digital archives will be curated with the Archaeology Data Service, or similar accredited digital archive repository, that safeguard the long-term curation of digital records.

The CBCAA will be notified of the archiving timetable throughout the project and once deposition has occurred.

A digital / vector drawing of the site be given to the CBCAA for integration into the HER.

## **Monitoring**

CBCAA will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project, and will be kept regularly informed during fieldwork, post-excavation and publication stages.

Notification of the start of work will be given to CBCAA one week in advance of its commencement.

Any variations in this WSI will be agreed with CBCAA prior to them being carried out.

CBCAA will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

The involvement of CBCAA shall be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

## **References**

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

Brown, D	2011	<i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i>
	2 <sup>nd</sup> ed	
CAT	2019	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 118	2001	<i>An archaeological watching brief at 8 High Street, West Mersea, Essex: December 2000.</i> By K Orr
CAT Report 223	2003	<i>An archaeological evaluation at the Blackwater Hotel, Church Road, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex: March 2003.</i> By L Pooley
CAT Report 255	2004	<i>An archaeological evaluation at 20 Yorick Road, West Mersea, Essex: November 2003.</i> By B Holloway
CAT Report 330	2005	<i>An archaeological watching brief at 20 Yorick Road, West Mersea, Essex: July 2005.</i> By B Holloway
CAT Report 596	2010	<i>An archaeological watching brief on land to the south of 'Serentivity' 6 High Street, West Mersea, Colchester: July 2010.</i> By A Wightman
CAT Report 629	2012	<i>Archaeological monitoring (watching brief) At 6 Meadow Lane, West Mersea, Essex September 2011 – February 2012.</i> By B Holloway
CAT Report 1000	forthcoming	<i>A miscellany of unpublished Colchester and Essex sites: 1984-2000 (sites not published in any Colchester Archaeological Report, or in the CAT Report Series from 1997).</i> By H Brooks
CAT Report 1152	2017	<i>Archaeological evaluation at 63 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8QN-August 2017.</i> By E Hicks
CAT Report 1195	2017	<i>Archaeological evaluation at 94 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8BS -November 2017.</i> By E Hicks

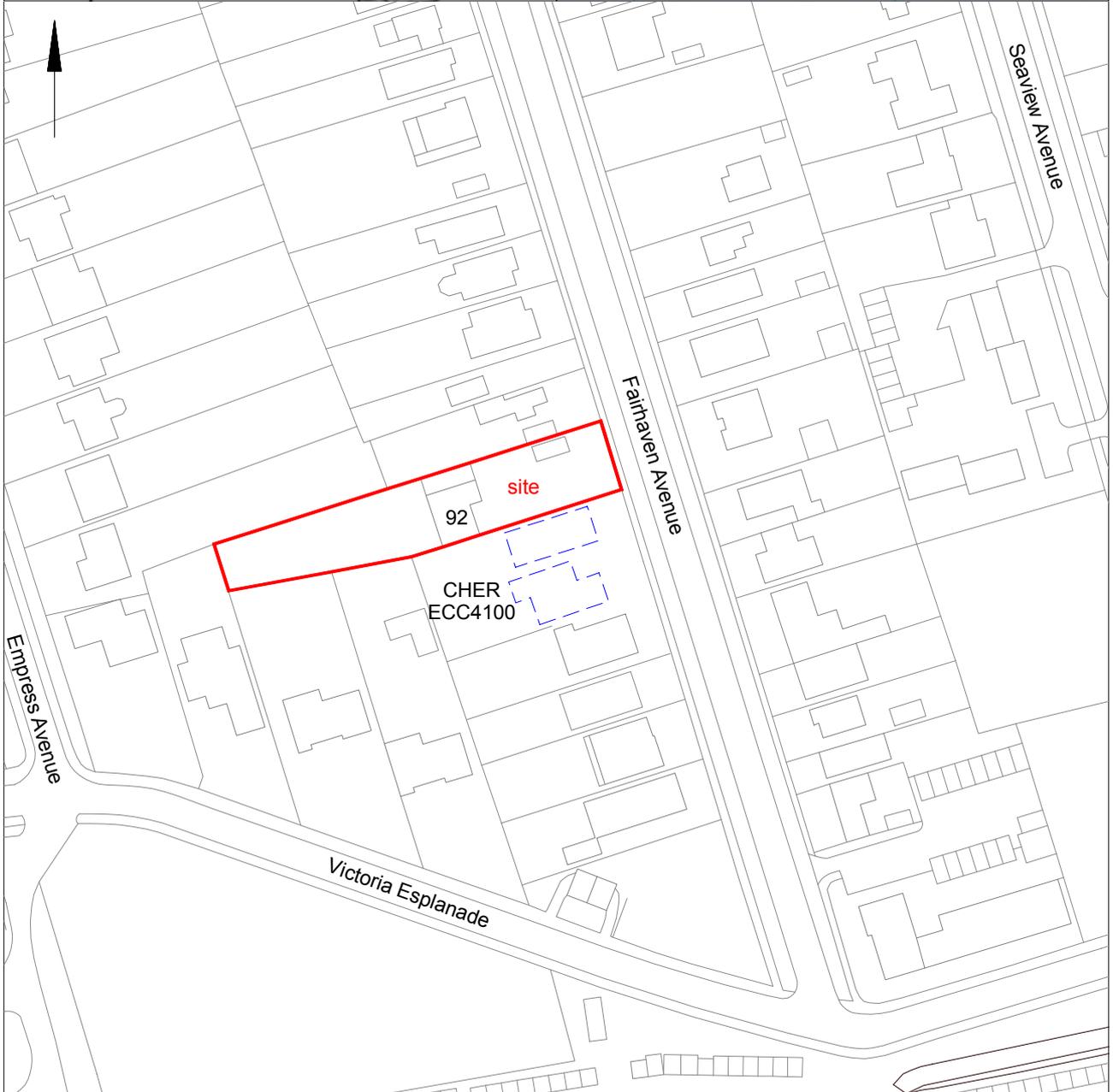
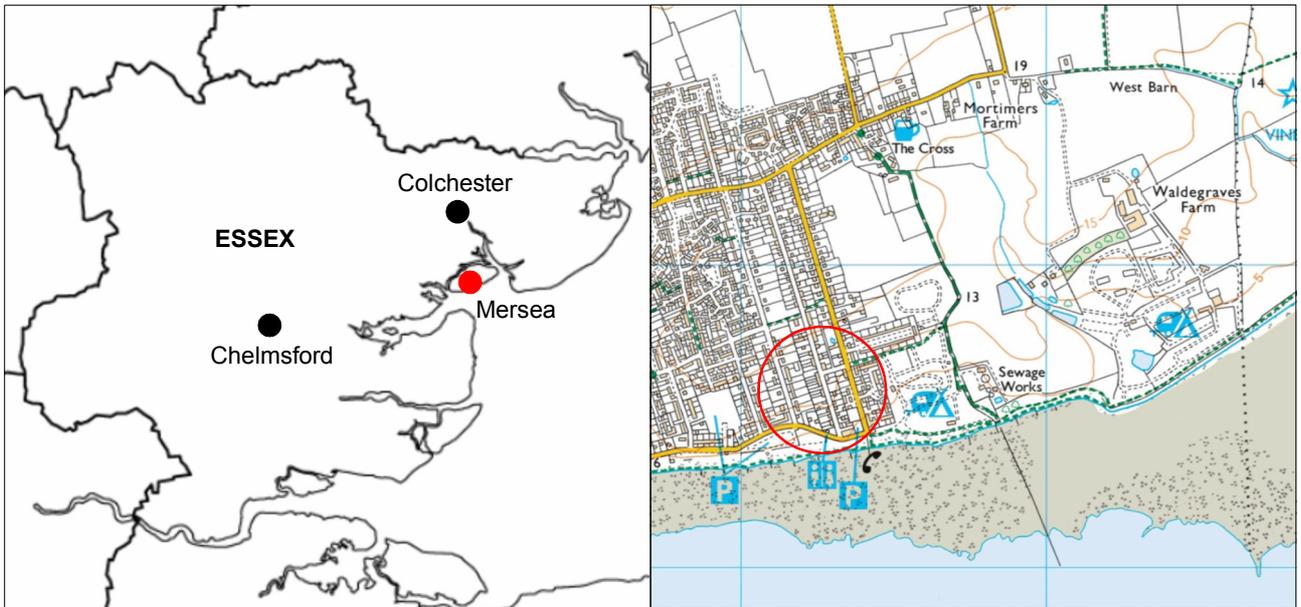
CBCAA	2019	<i>Brief for Continuous Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at Tides Reach, 92 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea.</i> By J Tipper
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA <b>14</b> ).
Historic England (HE)	2015a	<i>Digital Image capture and File Storage: Guidelines for best practice.</i> By S Cole & P Backhouse
Historic England (HE)	2015b	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Historic England (HE)	2018	<i>The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project.</i> By S Mays, M Brickley and J Sidell
Hull, M R	1958	<i>Roman Colchester, RRCSAL, 20</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 <b>24</b> )
MHCLG	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

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Fig 1 Site location.



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## Printable version

**OASIS ID: colchest3-361940**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological monitoring at Tides Reach, 92 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea CO5 8BS: November 2019
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 92 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea, Essex during groundworks for an extension. The site lies in a known area of Roman occupation, and medieval remains associated with the church and priory are present in the vicinity. Four Late Iron Age cremation urns have been found along Fairhaven Avenue, and a Red Hill was recorded on the beach some 500m to the south. Despite being located in an archaeologically-sensitive area, however, no significant archaeological remains were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 13-11-2019 End: 20-11-2019
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	19/08a - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	ECC4362 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	colchest3-361940 - OASIS form ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER WEST MERSEA 92 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea
Postcode	CO5 8BS
Study area	0.1 Hectares
Site coordinates	TM 02258 12527 51.774269692818 0.932063340403 51 46 27 N 000 55 55 E Point

**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	CBC Archaeological Officer
Project design originator	Sarah Carter
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Mark Baister
Type of sponsor/funding body	Owner

**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	ECC4362
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	ECC4362
Paper Media available	"Drawing", "Photograph", "Report", "Section"

**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological monitoring at Tides Reach, 92 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex, CO5 8BS: November 2019
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Hicks, E.
Other bibliographic details	CAT Report 1505
Date	2019
Issuer or publisher	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Place of issue or publication	Colchester
Description	A4 loose-leaf ring-bound
URL	<a href="http://cat.essex.ac.uk">http://cat.essex.ac.uk</a>
Entered by	Dr Elliott Hicks (eh2@catuk.org)
Entered on	6 January 2020

# OASIS:

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