

# Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1900  
issued March 2023**

**Archaeological monitoring at  
112 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0JN:  
January 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2022/12c  
ECC code: CFMS23**

**Archaeological monitoring at  
112 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0JN:  
January 2023**

**NGR: TL 70336 05830**

**Planning ref.: 21/02006/FUL**

**CAT project ref.: 2022/12c  
CAT Report 1903**

**ECC code: CFMS23  
OASIS id: colchest3-511511**

**report prepared by Alexander Smith**

**fieldwork by Alexander Smith**

**commissioned by the homeowner**

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<b>Issued:</b>	01/03/2023	

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OASIS summary sheet

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Fig 1 Site location.

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## 1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 112 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex during groundworks for the construction of an extension. Despite being located close to the route of the Roman road, no archaeological deposits were identified during the works.

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for archaeological monitoring carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at 112 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex, on the 24th to the 26th of January 2023. The work was commissioned by the homeowner during groundworks for the construction of a single-storey side extension.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the EHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Essex County Council Place Services Historic Environment Advisor. This recommendation was for an archaeological monitoring and was based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2019).

A *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring at 112 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford*, was produced by Mark Baister detailing the required archaeological work (ECCPS 2022), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS in advance of the groundworks (CAT 2022).

In addition to the brief and wsi, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2016), 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 field excavation* (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 includes extracts of the ECC Brief (ECCPS 2022), CAT report archives and Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale<sup>1</sup>) shows the bedrock geology of the site to be London clay formation (bioturbated or poorly laminated blue-grey or grey-brown slightly calcareous, silty to very silty clay), with superficial deposits of Head (poorly sorted angular rock debris and/or clayey hillwash and soil creep).

Chelmsford is situated at the confluence of the rivers Can and Chelmer, where they are crossed by the Roman road from London to Colchester. The town lies at the margin of the boulder clay plateau of north and west Essex, and is the optimum crossing point of the Chelmer and its tributaries, which flow into the Blackwater estuary 15km to the east (Medlycott 1999, 4).

Moulsham Street was the main road south of the Roman settlement of *Caesaromagus*. The Roman town developed from a fort dated to post AD 60. The core of the Roman town was surrounded by a defensive ditch and earth rampart. Excavations within the Roman core have revealed substantial remains of a *Mansio* and associated bathhouse (Bennett 2006, 47).

Roman burials recorded along Moulsham Street indicate the presence of extra-mural cemeteries (Bennett 2006, 8). Roman urns are noted on the EHER as having been found near the site in 1844 (EHER 5928) and Roman cremation urns were also recorded in 1914 during the construction of a new road across the Oaklands Estate (EHER 5539).

<sup>1</sup> British Geological Survey – <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/?>

Two trenches were evaluated at 116-7 Moulsham Street in advance of an extension in 2013. Roman features included a post-hole and a large pit. Roman pottery retrieved ranged in date from the 2nd-4th century AD (Ennis, 2013; EHER 49302).

For more background information see the Chelmsford Historic Town Assessment Report (Medlycott 1999).

#### 4 Aims

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which were exposed by the groundworks.

#### 5 Results (Figs 2-3)

Approximately 11m of foundation trench was machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. The trench varied from 0.5-0.63m wide and was c 1.4m deep with a thick layer of modern hardcore (L1, c 0.05m thick) sealing natural sand (L2). Prior to monitoring, a patio set on L1 was removed from the excavated area. Various modern services were observed across the foundation trenches. There were no archaeological remains.



**Photograph 1** Foundation trench, view north-east. Note patio tiles laying directly onto L1 to the left.



**Photograph 2** Foundation trench, view south-west.



**Photograph 3** Foundation trench, view south-east.



**Photograph 4** Foundation trench, view north-west.

## 6 Finds

No finds were uncovered during monitoring as no archaeological deposits were encountered.

## 7 Conclusion

Despite being located in an area of archaeological potential, no features or finds were uncovered during monitoring. Stratigraphy shows that the site had previously been stripped to natural, most likely during the construction of property, as the garden to the north-west is considerably higher. It is possible that any archaeological remains on the site were removed at this time.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks the homeowner for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, A Wightman and L Pooley, fieldwork was carried out by A Smith. Figures are by H Furniss and A Smith. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Mark Baister.

## 9 References

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

- |                          |      |  |
|--------------------------|------|--|
| Bennett, A               | 2006 | <i>Chelmsford Borough Historic Land Characterisation Project</i> . Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch  |
| Brown, N & Glazebrook, J | 2000 | <i>Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8 (EAA 8). |
| CAT                      | 2022 | <i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i> .  |

CAT	2022	<i>Written scheme of investigation for archaeological monitoring at 112 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0JN.</i>
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief.</i> Revised October 2021
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.</i> Revised October 2020.
CIfA	2014c	<i>Code of Conduct.</i> Revised October 2022.
ECCPS	2022	<i>Brief for Archaeological Monitoring at 112 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford,</i> by M Baister
Ennis, T	2013	<i>116-7 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex: Archaeological trial-trenching.</i> Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Historic England	2016	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE).</i>

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
ECC	Essex County Council
ECCHEA	Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
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
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, <a href="http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main">http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main</a>
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
wsj	written scheme of investigation

## 11 Archive deposition

**Digital record:** This project falls within the CIfA definition of a sterile project (<https://www.archaeologists.net/selection-toolkit/sterile-projects>), and as such the preserved archaeological archive will take the form of a single digital document that incorporates all the relevant elements from the project archive. This document will be uploaded to OASIS and released into the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) library, from where it will be curated by the ADS. The single digital document will include the report, brief, wsi, photographs, and original site data (for example context sheets, section drawings).

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### Distribution list:

Homeowner  
 ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor  
 Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

## Appendix 1 Context list

<b>Context</b>	<b>Finds no.</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
L1	-	Crush	Modern crush layer	Modern
L2	-	Natural clay	Moist medium brownish orange clay	Post-glacial

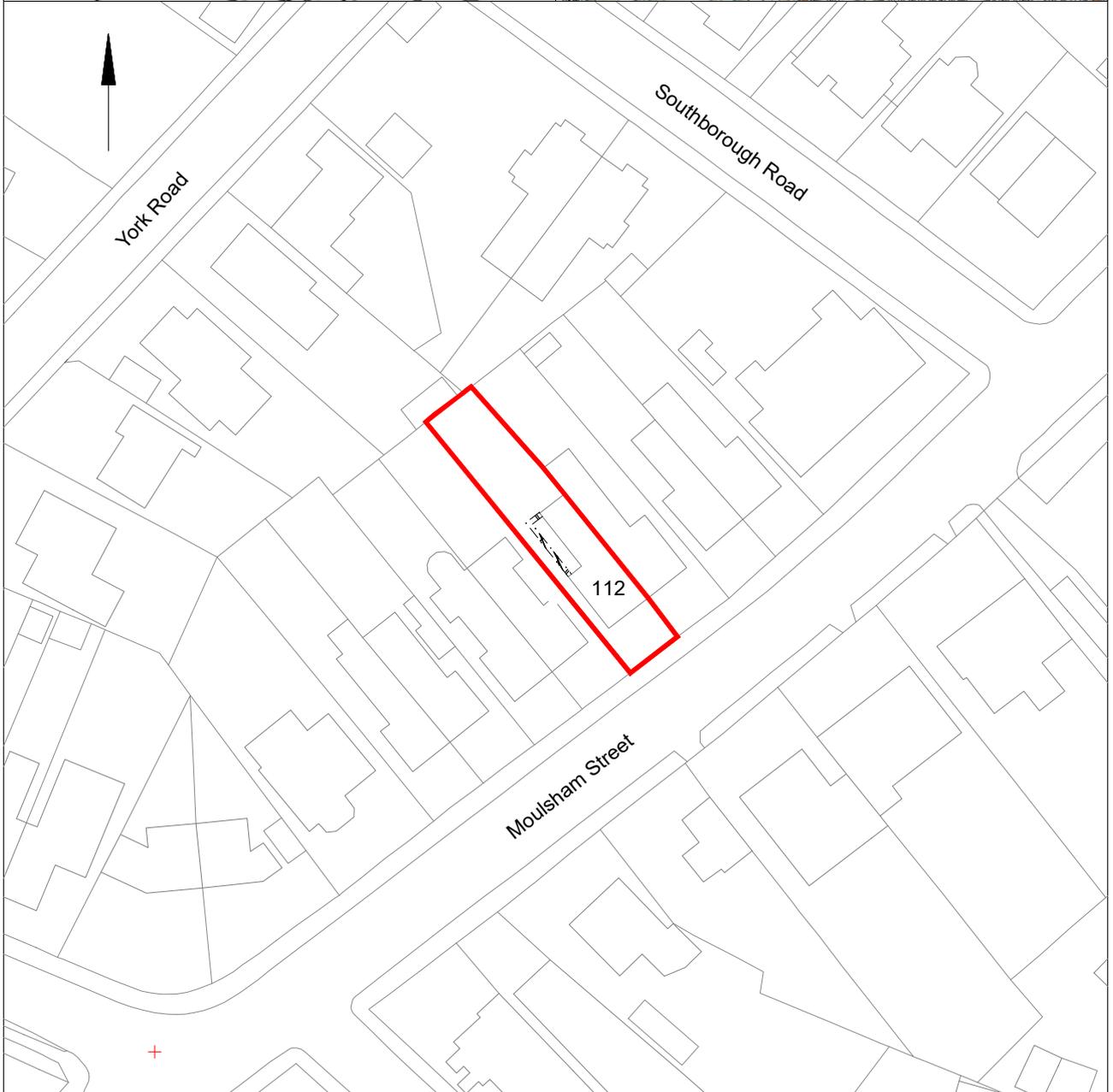
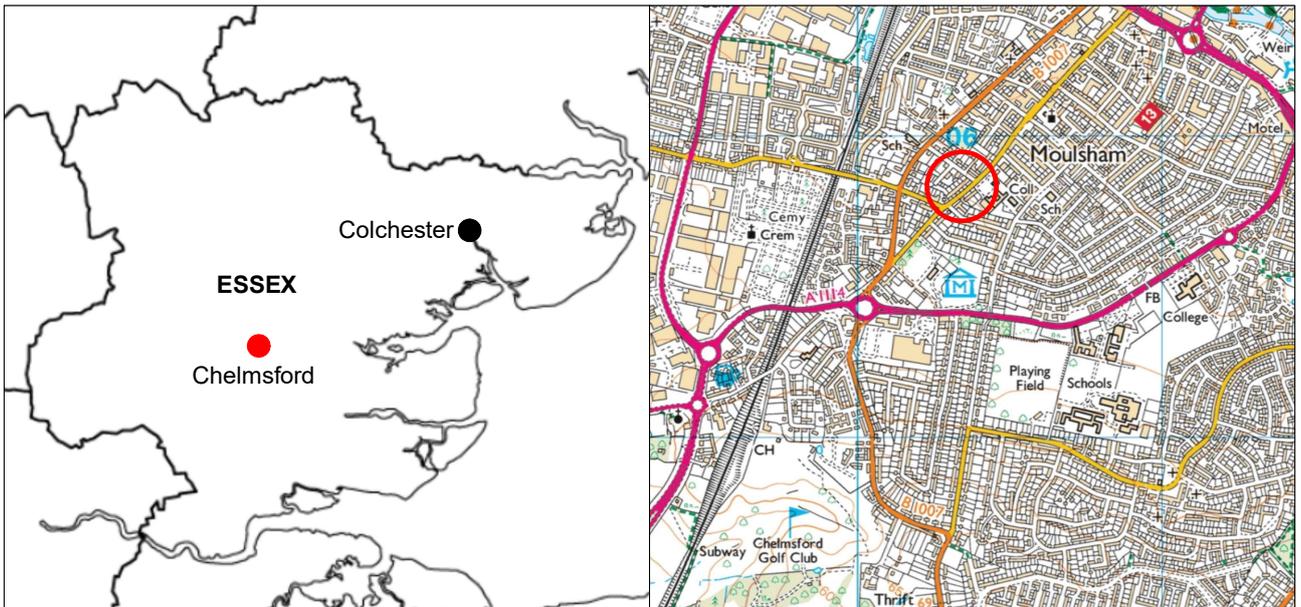


Fig 1 Site location.

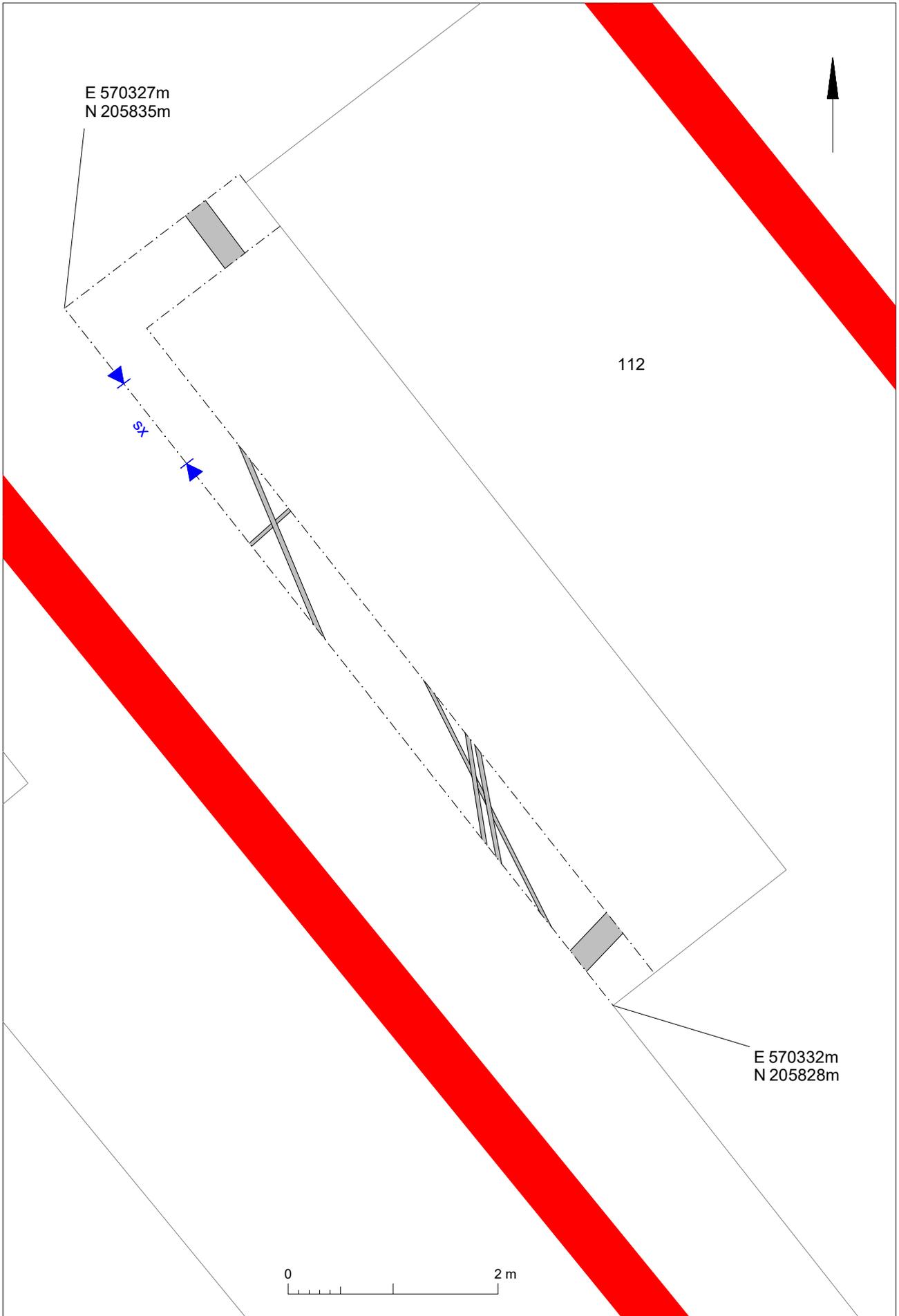


Fig 2 Results (modern services in grey).

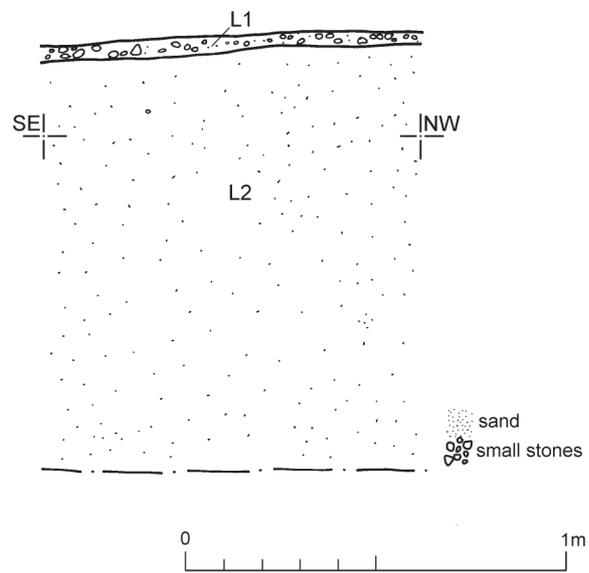


Fig 3 Representative section.

## Summary for colchest3-511511

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-511511
Project Name	Watching Brief at 112 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0JN
Sitename	112 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0JN
Activity type	Watching Brief
Project Identifier(s)	2022/12c
Planning Id	21/02006/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	24-Jan-2023 - 26-Jan-2023
Location	112 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0JN NGR : TL 70336 05830 LL : 51.7253159070033, 0.464841800942831 12 Fig : 570336,205830
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Chelmsford Parish : Chelmsford, unparished area
Project Methodology	Archaeological monitoring of all groundworks as specified in the project brief and wsi
Project Results	Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 112 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex during groundworks for the construction of an extension. Despite being located close to the route of the Roman road, no archaeological deposits were identified during the works.
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	A, Smith
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - CFMS23
Archives	