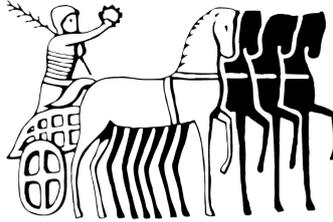


Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1902
issued March 2023**

**Archaeological monitoring at 'Valcot',
London Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8TF:
January 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2022/12e
ECC code: CFLR23**

**Archaeological monitoring at 'Valcot',
London Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8TF:
January 2023**

NGR: TL 69523 05171

Planning reference: 22/01624/FUL, 22/02077/FUL

**CAT project ref.: 2022/12c
CAT Report 1902**

**ECC code: CFLR23
OASIS id: colchest3-511535**

report prepared by Alexander Smith

fieldwork by Alexander Smith

commissioned by the homeowner

Prepared by:	Alexander Smith	Senior Site Assistant
Reviewed by:	Laura Pooley	Post Excavation Manager
Reviewed and approved by	Philip Crummy	Director of Archaeology
Issued:	01/03/2023	

Colchester Archaeological Trust

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

telephone: 01206 501785

email: lp@catuk.org

web: www.thecolchesterarchaeologist.co.uk

Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aims	2
5	Results	2
6	Finds	4
7	Conclusion	4
8	Acknowledgements	4
9	References	4
10	Abbreviations and glossary	5
11	Archive deposition	5
	Appendix 1 Context list	6
	Figures	after p6
	OASIS summary sheet	

List of photographs and figures

Cover: General site shot, view north-east.

Photograph 1	Foundation trench for the eastern extension, view south-east.	2
Photograph 2	Foundation trench for the eastern extension, view south-east.	3
Photograph 3	Foundation trench for the northern extension, view south-west.	3
Photograph 4	Foundation trench for the northern extension, view south-west.	4

Fig 1	Site location
Fig 2	Results
Fig 3	Representative sections

1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 'Valcot', London Road, Chelmsford, Essex during the construction of extensions to the property. Despite being located within an area of archaeological potential, 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 'Valcot', London Road, Chelmsford, Essex, on the 31st January 2023. The work was commissioned by the homeowner in advance of the construction of a single-storey rear extension and two-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 'Valcot', London Road, 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* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014b).

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background includes extracts of the ECC Brief (ECCPS 2022) and Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

The site is located in Widford, a former civil parish of Chelmsford. Widford was first recorded in 1216, as Witford, Wydiford and Wydeford, meaning the ford by the willows. In 1936 the parish was abolished and merged with Chelmsford.

The Historic Environment Record shows the site to be located within an area of known archaeological remains. In 1977-1978, Howard Young excavated a ditch (EHER 775) running across the rear of 78-82 Widford Road (a row of houses to the south of the site). The ditch was late medieval in date and produced a good assemblage of finds including a silver halfgroat of Edward IV, medieval pottery sherds, bricks, roof tiles, copper-alloy dress pins, iron nails, a tanged knife and animal bones. The earliest pottery recovered was 13th century in date but this appears to have been residual and the ditch backfilled sometime in the mid-16th century.

Located approximately 170m to the east of the development site is Widford Hall (NHLE No.: 1099143), a former moated site dating to the 18th century. The moat (EHER 717) has been infilled and destroyed by industrial development but the house is still standing.

During the Napoleonic wars, Chelmsford was a major military centre protecting London from attack from the north-east (Medlycott 1999). Barracks were erected around the city and, during an invasion scare of 1803-05, extensive earthworks linking forts at Widford and Galleywood were constructed (EHER 8931). The bastion trace ran for 2.8km and comprised a ditch and rampart. The defences were never utilised and were dismantled by 1813. Some of the rampart

still survives on Chelmsford golf course as hazards (500m to the south-east) but elsewhere most has been levelled. Some was traced through in aerial photographs c 300m south of the development area but this is now under a housing estate.

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale¹) shows the bedrock geology of the site to be London clay formation (clay, silt and sand) with superficial deposits of head (clay, silt and sand).

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 39m of foundation trench was machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. The trench for the eastern extension was 0.6-0.65m wide by c 1.25m deep and for the northern 0.65-0.7m wide by c 1.55m deep. All trenches cut through topsoil (L1, c 0.3-0.4m thick) and subsoil (L2, c 0.25-0.4m thick) into natural (L3, encountered at a depth of between c 0.58-0.80m). There were no archaeological remains. Two modern services were encountered in the northern trenches.



Photograph 1 Foundation trench for the eastern extension, view south-east.



Photograph 2 Foundation trench for the eastern extension, view south-east.



Photograph 3 Foundation trench for the northern extension, view south-west.



Photograph 4 Foundation trench for the northern extension, view south-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.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks the homeowner for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by A Smith. Figures are by 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>

- | | | |
|------|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CAT | 2022 | <i>Health & Safety Policy.</i> |
| CAT | 2022 | <i>Written scheme of investigation for archaeological monitoring at 'Valcot', London Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8TF.</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. Revised October 2022.</i>
ECCPS	2022	<i>Brief for archaeological monitoring at Valcot, London Road, Widford by M Baister.</i>
Historic England	2016	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE).</i>
Medlycott, M	1999	<i>Chelmsford Historic Town Assessment Report</i>
MHCLG	2021	<i>National Planning Policy Framework. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.</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
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
post-medieval	period from c AD 1500 to c 1800
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	O nline A cces S to the Index of Archaeological Investigation S , http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
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).

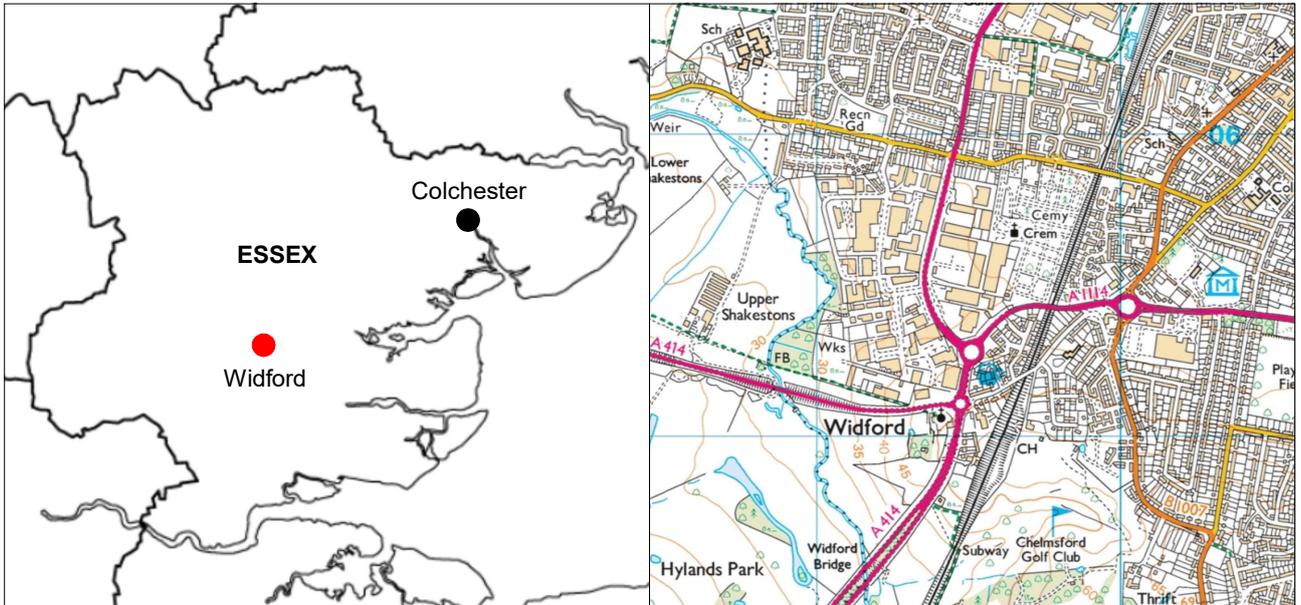
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Distribution list:

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

Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Finds no.	Context type	Description	Date
L1	-	Topsoil	Friable, moist, dark greyish brown, sandy silt.	Modern
L2	-	Subsoil	Friable/firm, moist, medium greyish brown, silty clay.	Undated
L3	-	Natural	Firm, moist, medium brownish orange, silty clay.	Post-glacial



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Fig 1 Site location.



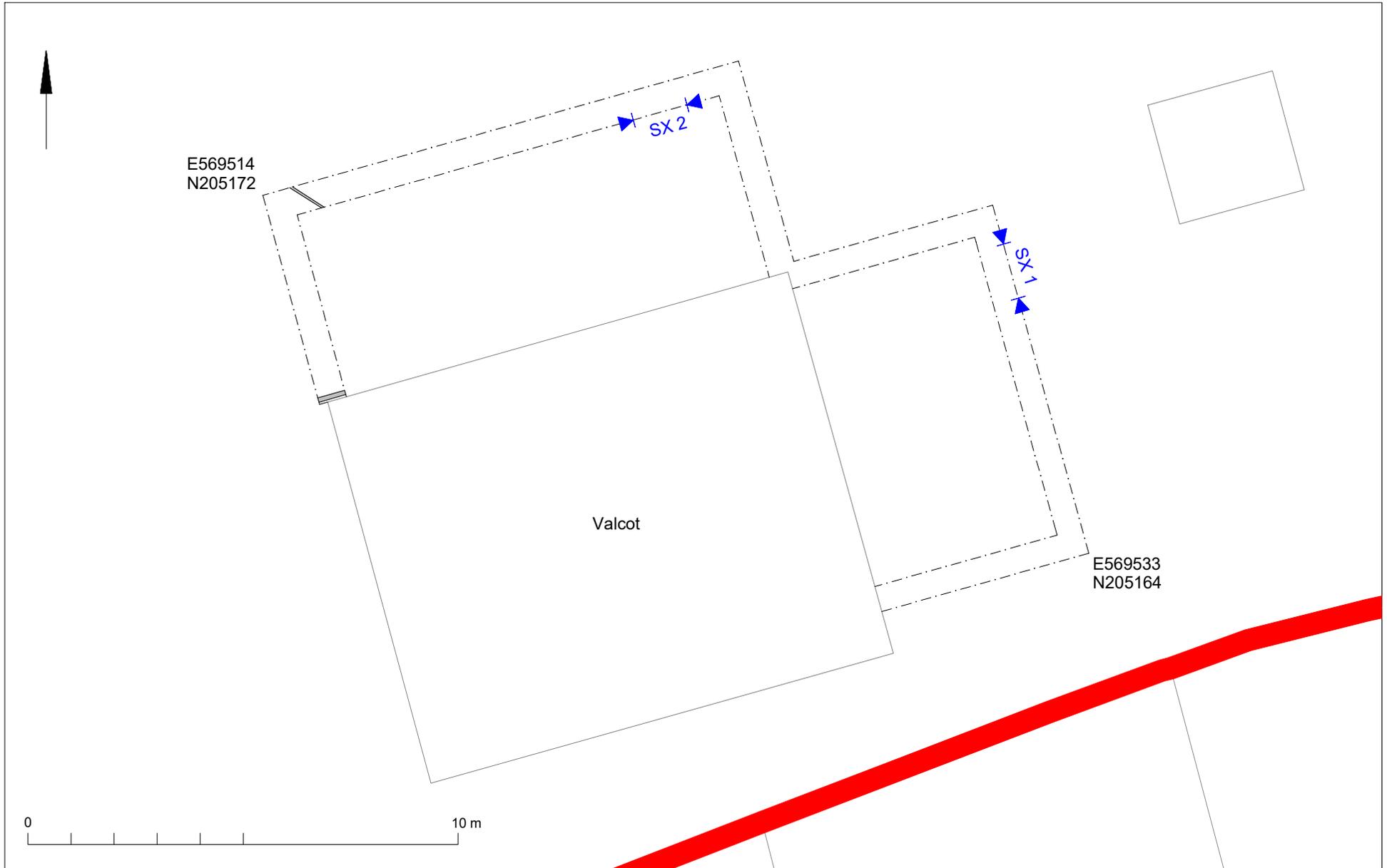


Fig 2 Results.

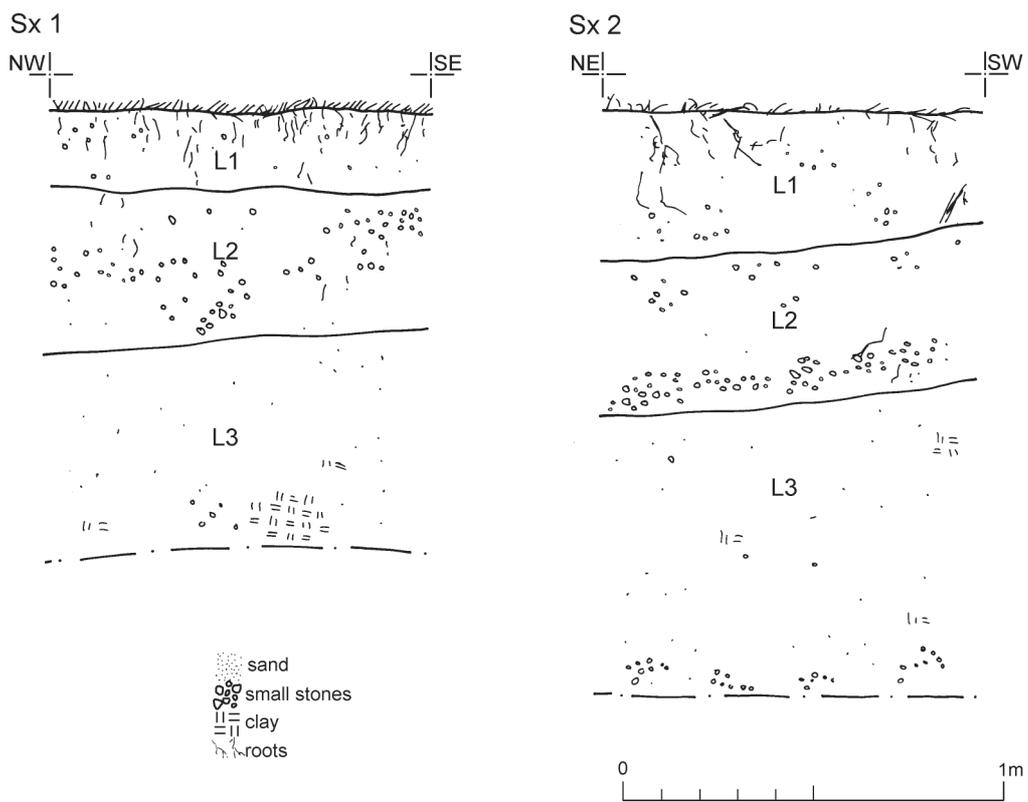


Fig 3 Representative sections.

Summary for colchest3-511535

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-511535
Project Name	Watching Brief at Valcot, London Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8TF
Sitename	Valcot, London Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8TF
Activity type	Watching Brief
Project Identifier(s)	2022/12e
Planning Id	22/02077/FUL, 22/01624/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Between application and determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	31-Jan-2023 - 31-Jan-2023
Location	Valcot, London Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8TF NGR : TL 69523 05171 LL : 51.7196423698451, 0.452761790059477 12 Fig : 569523,205171
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 'Valcot', London Road, Chelmsford, Essex during the construction of extensions to the property. Despite being located within an area of archaeological potential, 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 - CFLR23
Archives	