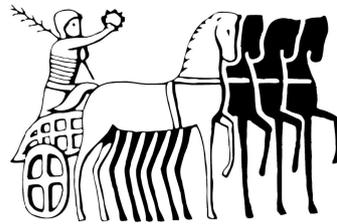
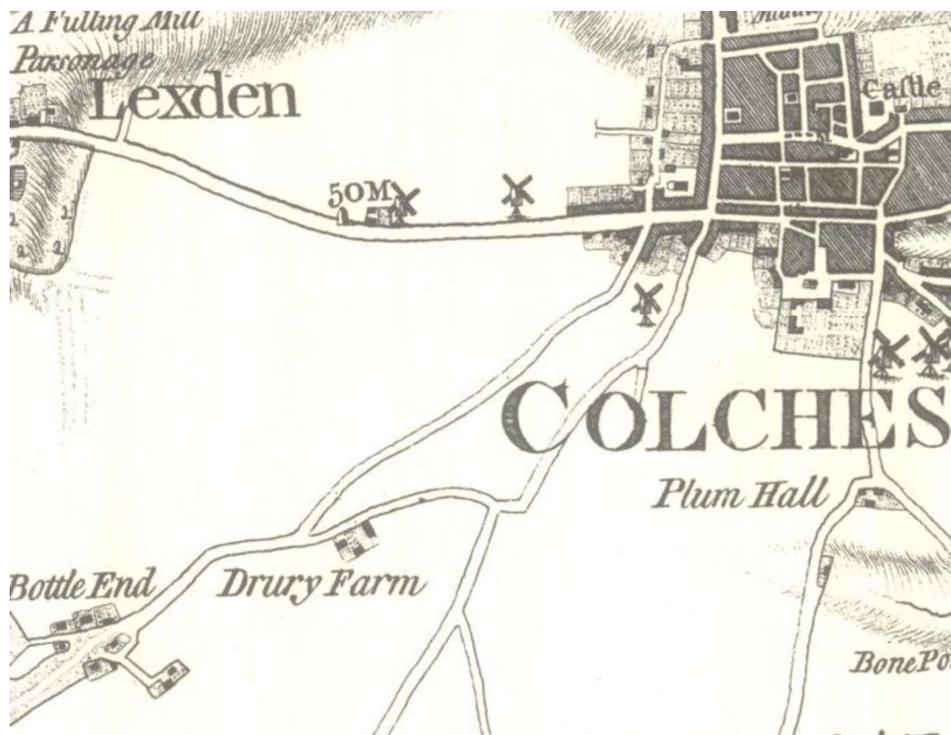


Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 2005
issued December 2023**

**Archaeological monitoring at Christ Church,
Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AT:
October-November 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2021/09h
ECC code: ECC4823**

**Archaeological monitoring at Christ Church,
Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AT:
October-November 2023**

NGR: TL 98558 24455 (centre)

Planning ref.: 231425

**CAT project ref.: 2021/09h
CAT Report 2005**

**ECC code: ECC4823
OASIS id: colchest3-431184**

report prepared by Dr Elliott Hicks

fieldwork by Sarah Veasey and Bronagh Rae-Quinn

commissioned by Karen Fardell, Plater Claiborne

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Issued:	6th December 2022	

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1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring took place at Christ Church, Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex during groundworks for two side extensions and a drainage run. The development site is located adjacent to a known area of Iron Age and Roman cemeteries known as the Lexden cemetery. Groundworks at the site revealed a pit and a possible ditch, although a lack of dating evidence meant that their relationship to the archaeological remains in the area is unclear.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at Christ Church, Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex during 26th October to 1st November 2023. The work was commissioned by Karen Fardell of Plaiter Claiborne and took place during groundworks for two side extensions.

In response to consultation with Colchester Borough Council Planning Services (CBCPS, later Colchester City Council Planning Services [CCCPS]), the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor Simon Wood 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 the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring at Christ Church, Ireton Road, Colchester*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Dr Simon Wood (CBCPS 2021), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with CCCPS (CAT 2023).

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 2015), 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 2020a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2020b).

3 Archaeological background (Fig 2)

The following archaeological background draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive and the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER/ECC numbers, which are accessible via Colchester Heritage Explorer (<https://colchesterheritage.co.uk/map>)).

The Geology of Britain viewer (1:50,000 scale¹) shows the bedrock geology of the site is comprised of Thames Group (clay, silt and sand) with superficial deposits of Cover Sand (clay, silt and sand).

The development site is situated within the Late Iron Age *oppidum* of Camulodunum, to the southwest of the Roman walled town and just outside of an area of Roman cemeteries termed 'the western cemetery' by Hull (1958), but more generally known as the Lexden cemetery (CHER MCC7525-9; MCC7647). The Lexden cemetery area encompasses a number of Iron Age and Roman burial grounds on both sides of Lexden Road (the main Roman road leading from the walled town towards London and Braughing) leading out of Balcerne Gate as far west as The Avenue (Hull 1958; CAR 11). A number of Roman cremations, inhumations and tombstones have been discovered in the immediate vicinity (Hull 1958), a full discussion of which can be found in CAR 9.

Of particular note is a high-status rectangular walled cemetery which lay immediately north of and adjacent to the Roman road (Hall 1946), and in 2005 CAT excavated the remains of a Roman temple tomb at the Colchester Royal Grammar School (CHER MCC2791; CAT Report

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

345). Roman burials were discovered in 1819-20 along with the famous 'Colchester Sphinx' when the Essex County Hospital was constructed (CAR 9, 258). A number of burials have been recorded along Wellesley Road (Hull 1958, 203-5), with eighteen Roman inhumation burials excavated in 1971 on the west side of the Maldon Road roundabout before the construction of Southway (CAR 9, 261). To the northeast, over 700 Roman inhumations were excavated during 1976-9 in advance of the construction of the Police station on Butt Road (CAR 9, 4-202; CHER MCC2799-MCC2801).

Roman cemeteries tend to cluster around the Roman roads radiating out of Colchester. One of these roads, linking the town to Gosbecks, runs along Cambridge Walk, immediately adjacent to the northwestern boundary of the site (MCC2529). A Roman cremation urn was found at the corner of Maldon Road and Constantine Road, in close proximity to the site (CHER MCC1505). Roman burials have also been uncovered in Honeywood Road (MCC2514), Beaconsfield Avenue (CHER MCC1901, MCC2436 and MCC2501), and on Errington Road (CHER MCC1451, MCC7686).

To the east of the site CAT has undertaken a series of watching briefs, evaluations and excavations over the last 18 years as part of the Colchester Garrison Urban Village development. These revealed hundreds of Roman burials to the northeast and east of the site (CAT Report 412 [Area J1 North CHER, MCC2765]; CAT Report 1033 [Area H, CHER MCC10199-MCC10200]). Burial features range from the 1st-4th century AD and include inhumations, urned and unurned cremations, *busta* and pyre sites, and evidence of at least one *mausoleum*. A Roman trackway bounded the cemetery area to the south, with the Roman circus (CHER MCC5549, Scheduled monument 35614, NHLE no.1021426) c 830m to the east.

Approximately 260m east of the site within the playing fields of the Colchester Royal Grammar School is a substantial Roman temple complex (Temple 6) which was partly excavated in 1947 (Hull 1958; MCC1959/MCC8407). Two votive plaques and a figurine of a stag found during excavations show that the temple was erected to Silvanus, god of war and hunting (Crummy 1997, 107).

CAT undertook a watching brief at the site in March 1977, prior to the construction of the church in 1978, but no archaeological features or finds were recorded (CAR 6, 389).

4 Aims

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

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

All groundworks were carried out by a mechanical excavator under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. The following groundworks were observed:

- a) foundation trenching for two separate extensions, 24m long, 0.7m wide and 0.5m deep;
- b) a drainage run, 36m long, 0.7-1.95m wide and 1m deep.

The drainage run was cut through modern tarmac and sub-base (L1, c 0.24-0.26m thick) and a layer of made ground (L2, c 0.22-0.26m thick) into natural (L3, encountered at a depth of 0.47-0.51m below current ground level). The foundation trenching was cut through L2 into L3.

Undated ?ditch F1 was uncovered in the westernmost section of the drainage run. The feature had been truncated by a drain; its exposed dimensions were 2.02m wide and 0.43m deep.

Undatable pit F2 was uncovered in the easternmost section of the foundation trenching. The dimensions of this feature were not recorded.



Photograph 1 Foundation trenching – looking south-west



Photograph 2 Drainage run – looking north-west



Photograph 3 F1 sx oblique view – looking north north-west

6 Finds

There were no finds.

7 Conclusion

Groundworks at this site revealed a possible ditch and a pit. The possible ditch is situated immediately adjacent to the projected route of a Roman road but seemingly lies on a different alignment, and does not appear to be related to it. Neither feature produced any finds, and so it is not possible to discern their possible relationships to the archaeological deposits within the area.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Karen Fardell of Plater Claiborne for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister and A Wightman and carried out by S Veasey and B Rae-Quinn. Figures were prepared by C Lister, E Hicks and E Holloway. The project was monitored for CCCPS by Dr Simon Wood and Dr Richard Hoggett.

9 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> |
| 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) |

CAR 6	1992	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 6: Excavations at Culver Street, the Gilbert School, and miscellaneous sites in Colchester 1971-1985</i> , by P Crummy (Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust Ltd.)
CAR 9	1993	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 9: Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by N Crummy, P Crummy & C Crossan (Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust Ltd.)
CAR 11	1995	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 11: Camunlodunum 2</i> , by C F C Hawkes and P Crummy (Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust Ltd.)
CAT	2023	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 345	2005	<i>A Roman temple-tomb at Colchester Royal Grammar School, Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex: August-September 2005</i> , by H Brooks
CAT Report 412	2011	<i>Report on the archaeological investigations carried out on Areas C1, C2, E, J1, O, Q and S1 of the Alienated Land, Colchester Garrison, including the Time Team trenches and the Alienated Land watching brief: May 2004-January 2005</i> , by L Pooley, P Crummy, D Shimmin, H Brooks, B Holloway & R Masefield
CAT Report 1033	2011	<i>Roman burials: Archaeological excavation (Stage 2) on Colchester Garrison 'Alienated Land' Area H, off Butt Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 2DL September 2012 – February 2013</i> , by L Pooley
CBC	2021	<i>Brief for Archaeological Monitoring at Christ Church, Ireton Road, Colchester</i> , by S Wood
CifA	2020a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i> . Revised June 2020
CifA	2020b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> . Revised October 2020
CifA	2022	<i>Code of Conduct</i> . Revised October 2022
Crummy, P	1997	<i>City of Victory. The Story of Colchester – Britain's first Roman town</i> Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust Ltd.
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14)
Hall, AF	1946	A Roman walled cemetery at Colchester', <i>Archaeological Journal</i> , C1
Historic England	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i> .
Hull, M R	1958	<i>Roman Colchester</i> , RRCSAL, 20
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)
MHCLG	2021	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CBCAA	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor
CBCPS	Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
CCC	Colchester City Council
CCCAA	Colchester City Council Archaeological Advisor
CCCPS	Colchester City Council Planning Services
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record
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'
Iron Age	period from 700 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43
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	O nline A cces S to the Index of Archaeological Investigations S , http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main

Roman section wsi	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410 (abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s written scheme of investigation
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11 Contents of archive

Finds: n/a

Digital record

CAT Report 2005

CBC brief

Digital photographs

Graphics files

Site data (including scans of original plans/sections)

Survey data

12 Archive deposition

The 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 the Archaeology Data Service.

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Distribution list

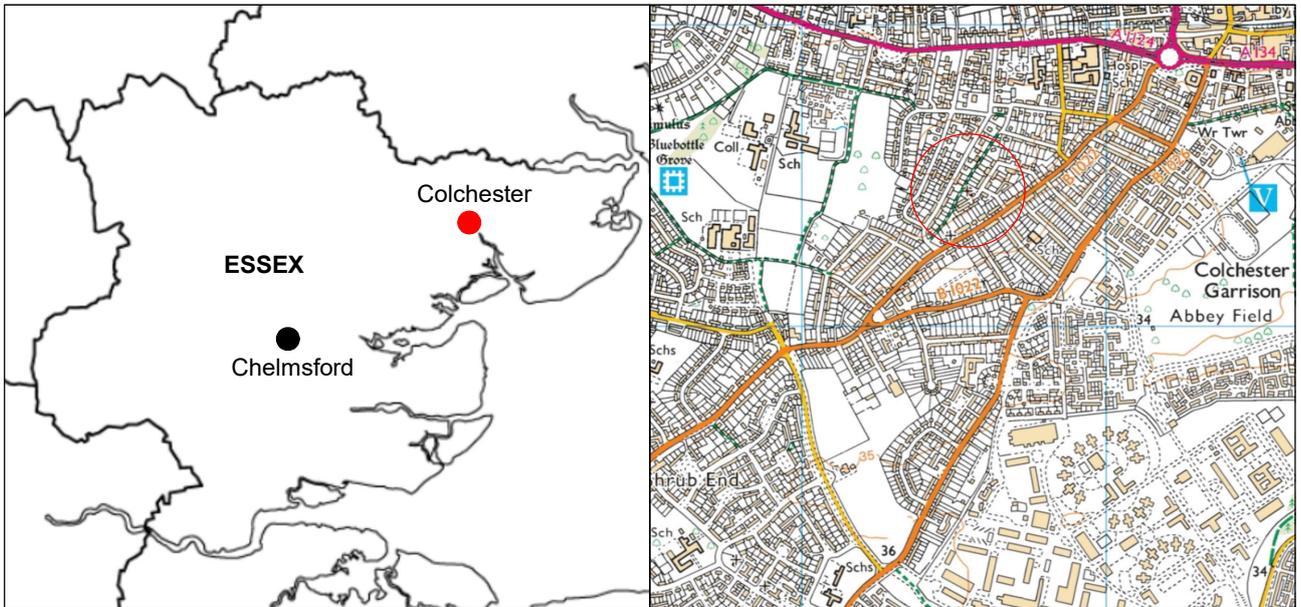
Karen Fardell (Plater Claiborne)

Dr Richard Hoggett, Colchester Borough Council Planning Services

Essex Historic Environment Record

Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Finds no.	Interpretation	Soil description	Period
L1	-	Tarmac surface	Tarmac surface overlying hard, dry medium yellow/orange sand with 30% gravel	Modern
L2	-	Make-up layer	Hard, dry dark grey/brown clayey-silt with 1% stones	Modern
L3	-	Natural	Firm, moist medium orange sand with 40% gravel	Post-glacial
F1	-	?Ditch	Firm, moist medium grey/brown clayey-silt with 1% stones	Undated
F2	-	Pit	Firm, moist medium grey/brown clayey-silt with 1% stones	Undated



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Fig 1 Site location.



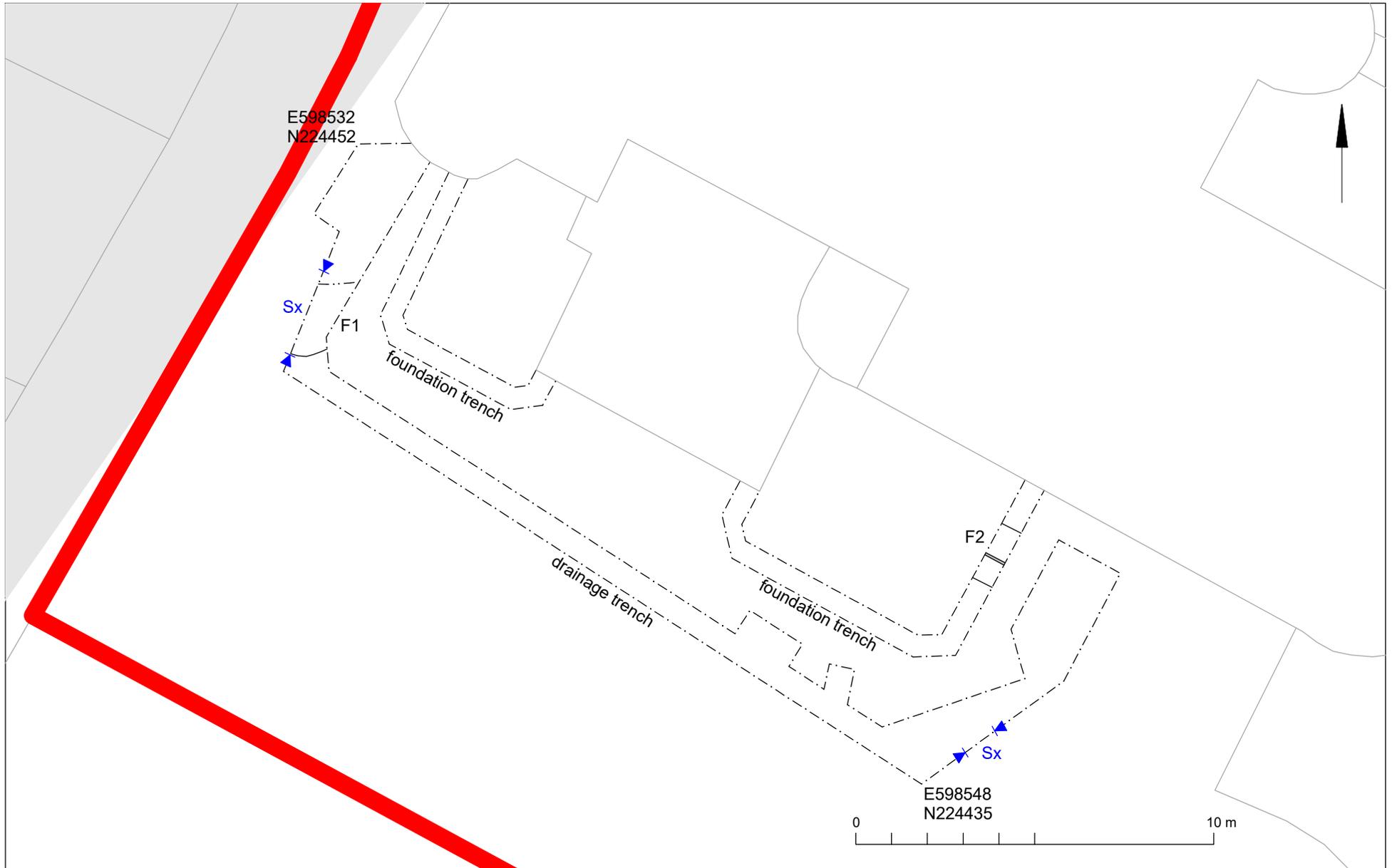


Fig 2 Results. Modern service in grey.

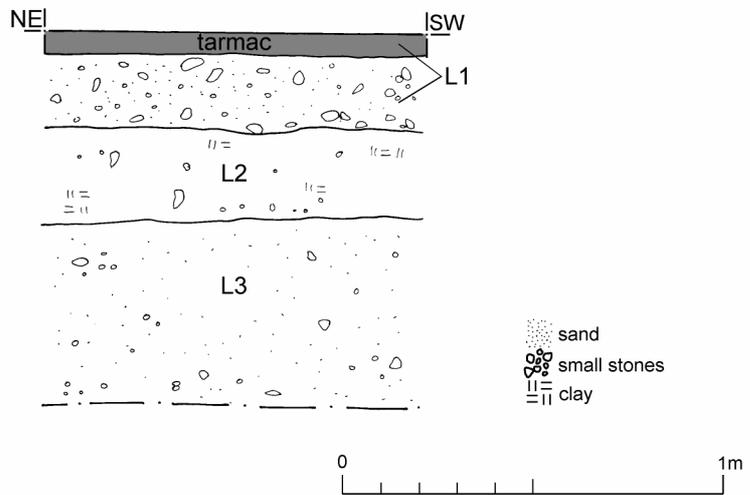
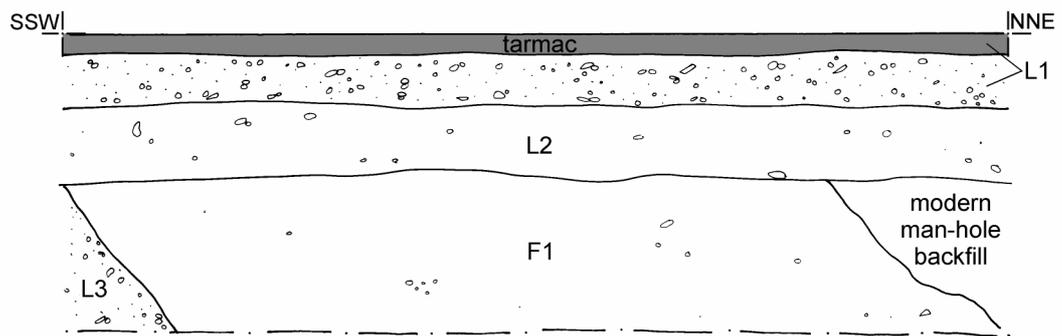


Fig 3 Feature and representative sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Christ Church, Ireton Road, Colchester, CO3 3AT	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 98558 24455 (centre)	Site code: CAT project ref.: 21/09h CHER ref: ECC4823 OASIS ref: colchest3-431184
Type of work: Monitoring	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 26th October-1st November 2023	Size of area investigated: 0.19ha
Location of curating museum: Colchester Museum	Funding source: Owner
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related CHER/SMR number: CHER MCC1451, MCC1505, MCC1901, MCC1959, MCC2436, MCC2501, MCC2514, MCC2529, MCC2765, MCC2791, MCC2799, MCC2800, MCC2801, MCC5549, MCC7525, MCC7526, MCC7527, MCC7528, MCC7529, MCC7647, MCC7686, MCC8407, MCC10199, MCC10200
Final report: CAT Report 2005	
Periods represented: -	
Summary of fieldwork results: Archaeological monitoring took place at Christ Church, Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex during groundworks for two side extensions and a drainage run. The development site is located adjacent to a known area of Iron Age and Roman cemeteries known as the Lexden cemetery. Groundworks at the site revealed a pit and a possible ditch, although a lack of dating evidence meant that their relationship to the archaeological remains in the area is unclear.	
Previous summaries/reports: -	
CCC monitors: Dr Simon Wood and Dr Richard Hoggett	
Keywords: -	Significance: -
Author of summary: Dr Elliott Hicks	Date of summary: December 2023

OASIS Summary for colchest3-431184

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-431184
Project Name	Archaeological monitoring at Christ Church, Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AT
Sitename	Christ Church, Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex
Sitecode	
Project Identifier(s)	2021/9h
Activity type	WATCHING BRIEF
Planning Id	200924
Reason For Investigation	Planning requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	26-Oct-2023 - 24-Nov-2023
Location	Christ Church, Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex NGR : TL 98558 24455 LL : 51.8832876247282, 0.883602035708004 12 Fig : 598558,224455
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Essex Local Authority District : Colchester Parish : Colchester, unparished area
Project Methodology	Monitoring was carried out as per the brief and WSI.
Project Results	This was not collected in OASIS IV when this record was originally created
Keywords	Pit - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Ditch - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Private or public corporation
HER	Colchester Borough Council - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Adam Wightman, Chris Lister
HER Identifiers	
Archives	