

**A watching brief and excavation at
Sovereign Crescent, Colchester
(formerly Colchester Maternity Hospital)
1998**

Archive report

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A Watching Brief and Excavation at Sovereign Crescent, Colchester
(formerly Colchester Maternity Hospital)
NGR: TL 9817 2492

Introduction

This 0.68ha site lies at the corner of Lexden Road and Park Road, about one km west of the walled town. Several Roman roads lie nearby; projections suggest that one route corresponds approximately to the course of Lexden Road at the site frontage and another may have lain at or near the site's southern boundary [CAR 9, 258-63]. Past discoveries in the surrounding area point to the presence of roadside cemeteries used principally for burial of cremated remains (ibid. 263-64).

Colchester Maternity Hospital formerly stood on the site. Following its closure, the land was redeveloped by Classic New Homes Ltd, a partnership between Lexden Restorations Ltd and Vaughan and Blyth Ltd, who commissioned the watching brief and excavations that are the subject of this report. The redevelopment involved complete demolition of the hospital buildings, followed by construction of a terraced crescent of 14 plots now known as Sovereign Crescent. As a result of an evaluation carried out prior to demolition [Shimmin 1997], the redevelopment was subject to an intensive watching brief from December 1977 which was to include a small-scale excavation at the eastern end of the crescent. At the same time an 800sq m plot at the south-east corner of the site was redeveloped separately for a detached house facing Park Road. A watching brief on foundation work for the house was sponsored by Colchester Borough Council.

Methods

The archaeological record was made under the following conditions:

Watching Brief: foundation and services trenches

The total length of observed trenching for new building foundations and deeper services approached one thousand metres. House and garage foundations involved machine excavation of 60cm or 45cm wide trenches dug to natural subsoil. The machining was watched continuously and features of archaeological significance were manually examined and recorded within the bounds of safety. Observation of service trenches was selective, focusing on those likely to reach the depth of archaeologically sensitive levels.

Excavation: 1, 2 and 3 Sovereign Crescent

While cutting back the irregular sides of a large construction pit originally dug for a hospital basement the contractor exposed stratigraphically early features. An area to the north of the

basement was machine-stripped down to the earlier level, revealing further features which were manually excavated in advance of trenching for nos. 1, 2 and 3 Sovereign Crescent.

1997 Evaluation

The main plan (Fig.1) incorporates the early features located in the initial 1997 site evaluation trenches. These are identified by the prefix *EF* to distinguish them from features revealed by the later watching brief and excavation, which are prefixed *F*. Individual features exposed on both occasions bear twin numbers (e.g. *EF10 / F47*). A copy of the original evaluation report is included in the appendix.

Results

Overall Stratigraphy

The overall stratigraphic sequence typically consisted of modern building debris and topsoil above a long-term accumulation of sandy loam to sandy silt loam, which in turn rested on natural gravelly sand. The stone content in the natural sand and the overlying deposits varied, but tended to be at its highest in the southern part of the site. In places, the modern deposits lay directly above natural sand.

The Features

Figure 1 shows the early features together with outlines of the new buildings and existing boundaries. Plans of the full trench layout may be found in the site archive.

In total, the fieldwork produced evidence of two, or possibly three, early ditches and at least thirty-two pits. All but two of the observations occurred in the northern half of the site, resulting in a distribution pattern that may well be unrepresentative since that is the area where most of the trenching took place. However, it is worth noting that intensive observation of the garage block foundation work in relatively undisturbed ground adjoining the southern boundary produced no early features.

The pits

Although some variation occurred the early pit fills were generally composed of greyish brown to dark greyish brown sandy loams with varying amounts of charcoal.

In the manually excavated area (Fig.2, house plots 1-3), only one feature (F12) was examined in its entirety and free from disturbance from later cuts. A 70cm deep pit with steep sides and a more or less flat bottom, F12 contained a sandy silt loam fill including charcoal-rich layers, occasional flecks of red-burnt daub and common oyster shell at its lowest level (Fig.3). Finds were distributed throughout the fill and included 18 kilos of 1st to early 2nd century pottery, also glass, a repaired brooch, copper-alloy tweezers and a scoop, nails and animal bone. Immediately west of F12 was a group of intercutting pits, F11, F17, F18, F19 and F20. Due to the similarity in their fills, the relationships between adjoining features could only be established with difficulty: F11 appeared to cut F20 which in turn cut F17; F18 cut F17 and F19. Uncertain finds contexts were given a group number, F15, which covers F17, F18 and F20. Large quantities of 1st to early 2nd century pottery were recovered from the pits, including a complete CAM 232 form found inverted against the southern side of F11. Other finds included a twisted gridiron in F17, two beads from fills in the F17/F18/F20 group; also animal bone, which was present in varying amounts in all the manually excavated pits. Small

quantities of burnt bone were found in F11, F12, F14, F17 and F18. The fragments from F11 and F12 were unidentifiable, as was most of the material from the other features. Instances of animal and probable animal bone were noted among the burnt bone from F14, F17, F18 and also a possible burnt fragment of human tarsal from the ditch, F14. Iron nails were recovered from F12, F13, F14 and F15. Pits F17, F18 and F20 had steep sides and flat bottoms, a characteristic shared with F12. All three were sub-rectangular and were cut to depths of from 1m to 1.1m. The other manually excavated features underlying plots 1-3 were less well preserved. Large parts of F10, F13 and F16 had been removed during construction of the hospital cellar, but their surviving parts produced 1st-2nd century pottery and animal bone. In outline, F11 bore some similarity to the F17/F18/F20 group, although its profile was more rounded.

The investigation of pits encountered during machine trenching was limited to the narrow confines of the individual trenches, hence the evidence for dating and interpretation is less complete than that recovered from the manually excavated area.

Beneath the new houses no finds were recovered from F2, F4, F9, F21, F22 and F23, but all contained fills consistent with those of the established Roman pits. The plans and profiles of F4 and F21, although fragmentary, resembled the F17/F18/F20 group. In the western area two pits were found to be unusually deep: F8 at 1.65m, and F7 which was excavated by machine to 2.1m but not bottomed. Both features evidently belong to later phases of Roman activity: pottery from F8 indicates it to be no earlier than late 2nd century and F7 is likely to be of 3rd-4th century date.

At the western end of a 1m deep water main trench spanning the front of the crescent a thick layer of topsoil extended almost to the bottom, sealing pits F48 and F49. Both contained Roman pottery, with the material in F49 of possible 1st-2nd century date. The course of the water main trench coincided with the locations of the earlier evaluation trenches in two places, revealing parts of F46/EF9, F47/EF10 and EF11. A small quantity of cremated bone was recovered from cleaning over EF10, also some 1st century pottery which may be residual since a 3rd century coin was also associated with the feature. Pottery from surface cleaning of EF11, situated three metres to the west, was mainly in the mid-2nd to 3rd century range, although possibly later in some instances.

In the eastern part of the trench, the pits F44 and F45 extended beyond the one metre depth of excavation. No finds were obtained from F44, but its distinctive charcoal-flecked fill was typical of that in the Roman pits to the east. Finds from F45 included Flavian to early 2nd century pottery together with earlier material. An existing cable trench cut F42, leaving part of the east side which contained a single sherd of 1st century samian.

Linear features

In the initial evaluation, a ditch (EF2) contained no finds but was suggested to be of Roman or earlier origin. Fifty metres to the north-west, excavation revealed part of a similarly orientated feature (F14), the fill of which contained 1st century pottery including pre-Flavian forms.

A short stretch of a probable ditch (F43) was revealed in the water main trench. In its upper fill were scattered fragments of an adult human skull including mandible and parietal bone. The fill contained charcoal but the bone fragments were unburnt.

Stoney deposits

Distinct stoney layers were noted in two areas. In the central part of the site, 65cm of modern material sealed 15cm of clean gravel (F1 and the nearby F3), which lay on natural sand. Although the original extent of the gravels could not be established as they were cut by deep modern features, they appeared to be fairly localised and did not occur in surrounding trenches less affected by modern disturbance. Further south, a boundary wall trench revealed a 25cm layer of densely-packed gravel within a greyish brown sandy loam resting on natural sand (F50). Sealed by 40cm of modern material, the gravel extended for approximately 5 metres along the trench but was cut by modern features at both ends.

Finds

In addition to the categories below, data relating to nails, animal bone, Roman tile and brick will be found in the site archive.

Roman pottery

by Stephen Benfield

The Maternity Hospital site produced just under 50 kg of Roman pottery from all contexts. The quantities of individual fabrics for all site contexts are presented in Table 1, which follows the classification used in CAR 10, though the samian has not been not sourced to individual production sites. CAM forms refer to Camulodunum Roman pottery types (Hawkes and Hull 1947, and Hull 1958).

pottery fabric type	weight in grms
<i>plain samian (BA):</i>	
South Gaul (1st century)	523
Central/East Gaul (2nd - 3rd century)	100
<i>decorated samian (BX):</i>	
South Gaul (1st century)	155
Central/east Gaul (2nd - 3rd century)	380
<i>amphorae:</i>	
Dressel 20 (AJ)	6320
other (AA)	780
<i>mortaria:</i>	
Colchester and imported (TZ)	450
<i>other British mortaria (TY):</i>	
Nene Valley white/buff ware, unslipped or with reddish wash (TE)	60
<i>fine wares:</i>	
<i>terra nigra-type wares (UR):</i>	
terra Rubra (TR)	45
terra Nigra (TN)	525
coarse terra nigra-type wares	330
Lyon colour coat ware (EB)	40
mica-gilt wares (ON)	5
glazed ware (SM)	5
fine oxidised wares (DZ)	41
Nene Valley colour coat ware (EA)	50
<i>coarse wares:</i>	
coarse oxidised and related wares (DJ)	2041

Brockley Hill/Verulamium region oxidised ware (FJ)	220
BB2: black burnished ware, category 2 (GB)	175
other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares (GX)	26016
large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares (HZ)	11645
shell-tempered and calcite gritted wares (HD)	20
Total (grms)	49926

Discussion

The Roman pottery from the Maternity Hospital can be divided into two distinct dated groups of material. There is a small quantity (2 kg) of pottery from features F5, F7 and F8 which contains material of later 2nd and 3rd-4th century date, while the bulk of the pottery (48 kg) from the remaining features can be dated to the 1st - early 2nd century, and is probably all of 1st century (possibly Claudian - Flavian) date.

The 1st - early 2nd century pottery

The pottery assemblage contains quantities of imported pre-Flavian fine wares: some terra rubra (circa pre AD 50/55) with larger amounts of terra nigra, and some Lyon ware. A single potter's stamp (catalogue S1) on a terra nigra plate is very abraded, though could possibly be read. There is also a small central Gaulish glazed ware beaker with barbotine vertical 'hairpin' decoration which again can be dated circa 43 - 70 AD (Greene 1979, type 13 p. 96). The samian appears to be all South Gaulish and 1st century in date apart from one small sherd, probably from one of the East Gaulish centres, which is of 2nd - earlier 3rd century date and clearly intrusive. Plain samian vessels include a Ritterling 12 (flanged bowl) which is probably pre-Flavian (or at latest early Flavian), other forms present are Dragendorff (Drag.) 18 and 15/17 plates, and 27g cups. The decorated vessels all appear to be of form Drag. 29, which date to before the mid 80's AD. The single samian potter's stamp (catalogue S3), on a fragment from a plate, appears to be of Primus who was active in the Neronian period. Other imported pottery in these contexts includes amphorae in Spanish fabric, and are dominated by the form Dressel 20, of which the one rim present is of Claudio-Neronian form. Other amphorae include one vessel possibly in an Italian fabric, and handle fragments from a Dressel 2-4. Other material of note includes a CAM 100 barbotine ring decorated beaker (Neronian - Flavian), a CAM 122 dot panel decorated beaker (Flavian - earlier 2nd century) and a CAM 195 mortaria with potter's stamp (catalogue S4). The stamp is one of the Sexti Valerii potters, and probably dates to the later 1st century after AD 60. There is also a single whole vessel of CAM 232, a large narrow necked vase, which were produced in the 1st and 2nd centuries.

Though there was little or no material in this assemblage which is necessarily of late Iron Age date, the small group of terra rubra, including CAM 3 platter which is mainly pre-conquest (Car 10 p.468), may well indicate a late Iron Age component. Also none of the pottery types need be later than the Flavian period, though it is clear that at least some of the material is of Flavian date. Features with material which can be dated as Flavian - early 2nd are F17 and F45, while the material from the Verulamium potteries, which is most frequent in Colchester in the Flavian - Trajanic period from F12 may also indicate a later 1st - early 2nd century date. The small quantity of definite Flavian material could suggest that the bulk of the pottery is of Claudio-Neronian - early Flavian date.

The later 2nd and 3rd - 4th century pottery

Three features, F5, F7 & F8, all produced pottery of late 2nd or 3rd - 4th century date, though the small quantities of material do not allow closer dating. The Roman pottery from F5 consists of a single sherd from a CAM 407, scale decorated funnel neck indented beaker, of

the Nene Valley potteries. This vessel can be dated to the 3rd century (Perrin 1999 p.94) and in Colchester should date later than the early-mid 3rd century (CAR 10 p.347). The pottery from F7 can also be dated to the 3rd - 4th century as this small group contained a CAM 500 reeded flange mortaria from the Nene Valley. Similar types are dated late 3rd - 4th century (Perrin 1999, fig 78 types 31 - 44 & p.132). Other pottery from F7 included a samian dish, form Drag. 31R from the Central Gaulish potteries, which is probably Antonine. The pottery from F8 need not date later than the 2nd century. The small group of Central Gaulish samian from this feature comprise Drag. forms 37, 35 and 31R, one of which is stamped by Borillus (catalogue S2) dated AD 150 - 80. There are also sherds from two BB2 bowls, one of CAM 37 a 2nd - mid 3rd century form.

Catalogue of potters stamps

Samian

S2 F8 (13) Drag. form 31R

BORILLIOF Borillus (CAR 10 S615) circa AD 150 - 80

S3 F15 (60)

PRIM[presumed Primus, probably Neronian

Mortaria

S4 F45 (131) CAM 195

SEX (S reversed) stamp of the Sexti Valerii group of potters (CAR 10 p.201) dated AD 60 - 90

Terra nigra

S1 F11 (110) CAM 16

Highly abraded stamp

Table of fabric weights by context and find no. (fabrics as per CAR 10 except for BA plain samian and BX decorated samian)

F/L	find	fabric	sherds	wt grms	forms	date
F005						
F005	2	EA	1	50	CAM 407	early-mid 3rd - 4th
F007						
F007	4	GX	1	20		Roman
F007	5	TE	1	60	CAM 500	early-mid 3rd - 4th
F007	8	GX	2	15		Roman
F007	9	GX	vsq	10		Roman
F007	10	BA	1	35	31R	CG Antonine
F007	10	GX	sq	45		
F007	10	GB	2	30		
F007	10	HZ	2	60		
F007	10	AJ	1	700		
F007	10	TZ	1	200	CAM 498	late 2nd - earlier 3rd
F008						
F008	11	GX	sq	30		
F008	11	GB	1	120	CAM 40A	early 2nd - 4th
F008	12	GB	1	25	CAM 37	early - late 2nd/early 3rd
F008	13	BA	vsq	260	31R stamp BORILLI.OF	AD 150 - 180
F008	13	DJ	1	15		
F008	14	BX	1	380	37 (repaired)	?CG 2nd
F008	15	BA	vsq	50	35 leaf decorated rim	CG 2nd
F008	17	GX	q	100	CAM 221	?1st - early 2nd
F010						
F010	17	HZ	1	5		
F010	20	DJ	1	15		
F010	20	GX	sq	20	CAM 259	?1st
F010	21	GX	vsq	45	CAM 221	1st
F010	21	UR	1	30	coarse grey fabric	1st
F010	18	GX	q	65		?Roman (but modern unident frag. present)
F011						
F011	18	HZ	1	5		
F011	19	GX	lq	290	CAM 221	?1st - early 2nd
F011	19	HZ	1	20		
F011	19	AA	1	70	?Italian fabric	
F011	22	AJ	1	230		
F011	22	UR	1	20	?CAM 28 coarse grey fabric	1st
F011	22	UR	1	5	TN platter	mid 1st
F011	22	GX	lq	180	CAM ?108	?1st
F011	22	HZ	2	75		
F011	22	DJ	1	5		
F011	23	GX	q	100		Roman
F011	24	GX	2	30	CAM 108	1st
F011	24	HZ	2	20		
F011	25	GX	q	355	CAM 266 (2) CAM ?221	1st - early 2nd
F011	26	GX	lq	620	CAM 243 - 246 CAM 108 CAM 221	1st - early 2nd
F011	27	GX	q	25		Roman
F011	27	AA	1	100		
F011	28	DJ	1	10		
F011	28	GX	lq	60	CAM 108 CAM 212 - 217	?1st
F011	29	GX	lq	400	CAM 221 CAM 218 CAM 108	1st - early 2nd
F011	30	GX	lq	700	CAM 266	1st - early 2nd
F011	32	GX	sq	170	CAM 266	1st
F011	33	GX	sq	260	CAM 218	1st
F011	34	DJ	sq	20		
F011	34	GX	q	240	CAM ?108	1st
F011	34	HZ	1	30		
F011	35	BA	1	15	29	SG 1st

F/L	find	fabric	sherds	wt grms	forms	date
F011	35	DJ	1	1		
F011	35	GX	lq	1000	CAM 243 - 246 CAM 218 CAM 108 CAM 266 CAM 221	1st - early 2nd
F011	35	HZ	2	50		
F011	36	AJ	1	30		
F011	36	DJ	vsq	15		
F011	36	GX	lq	640	CAM 108 CAM 266 CAM 218	1st
F011	36	HZ	1	5		
F011	38	GX	1	1000	whole pot CAM 231	1st - 2nd century
F011	58	1	BA	5	15/17	1st
F011	58	DJ	vsq	15	CAM 155	
F011	58	GX	lq	580	CAM 108	1st - ?early 2nd
F011	58	HZ	vsq	300		
F011	58	HD	2	10		
F011	59	DJ	1	5		
F011	59	GX	vsq	60		
F011	110	BA	q		18 27g Ritt12 15/17 24/25	SG 1st ?pre-Flavian
F011	110	AJ	q	1200	rim	Claudio-Neronian
F011	110	AA	1	75		
F011	110	UR	q	300	TN stamp CAM 16	pre-Flavian
F011	110	UR	2	30	coarse grey	1st
F011	110	EB	vsq	20		
F011	110	DJ	q	170		
F011	110	GX	vlq	5500	CAM 231 CAM 266 CAM 218 CAM 108	1st - early 2nd
F011	110	HZ	sq	1450	CAM 270 CAM 273	late 1st+
F012						
F012	-	GX	sq	70	CAM 266	Roman (?1st - early 2nd)
F012	40	GX	vsq	75	CAM ?266	Roman ?1st
F012	53	DJ	sq	60	CAM 326/331	mid 1st - early 2nd
F012	53	GX	q	600	CAM 108 CAM 234 - 246	?1st - early 2nd
F012	53	HZ	3	270		
F012	54	GX	sq	90		Roman
F012	55	DJ	2	5		
F012	55	GX	lq	320	CAM 108 CAM 266	? 1st
F012	55	HZ	3	60		
F012	56	DJ	3	260		
F012	56	FJ	1	5		later 1st - earlier 2nd
F012	56	GX	q	150		
F012	56	HZ	1	25		
F012	57	GX	vsq	50	CAM 231 - 232	1st - 2nd
F012	64	GX	q	60		Roman
F012	65	DJ	vsq	50		
F012	65	FJ	1	5		later 1st - earlier 2nd
F012	65	GX	lq	470	CAM 108	?1st
F012	65	HZ	q	1000		
F012	68	BA	1	5	18	1st
F012	68	FJ	2	20		later 1st - earlier 2nd
F012	68	GX	sq	90	CAM 231	1st - 2nd
F012	68	HZ	1	50		
F012	69	BA	1	5	18	1st
F012	69	AJ	1	40		
F012	69	DJ	1	20		
F012	69	GX	lq	340		
F012	69	HZ	1	470		
F012	70	DJ	vsq	50		
F012	70	GX	q	90		Roman
F012	71	AA	1	90		
F012	71	UR	1	20	coarse grey platter	1st
F012	71	DJ	vsq	25		
F012	71	GX	lq	300	CAM 108	?1st
F012	71	HZ	2	30		
F012	72	FJ	1	30		later 1st - earlier 2nd
F012	72	GX	q	230	CAM 108 CAM 243 - 246 CAM 218	?1st
F012	72	HZ	2	50		
F012	73	BA	1	10	18	1st

F/L	find	fabric	sherds	wt grms	forms	date
F012	73	BX	1	5	29	pre 80
F012	73	AA	1	10		
F012	73	DJ	2	20		
F012	73	FJ	1	15		later 1st - earlier 2nd
F012	73	GX	lq	290	CAM 108 CAM 243 - 246 CAM 266	?1st
F012	73	HZ	sq	250		
F012	74	AJ	1	100		
F012	74	AA	1	50		
F012	74	DJ	1	5		
F012	74	FJ	2	50		later 1st - earlier 2nd
F012	74	GX	lq	500	CAM 218 CAM 108 CAM 266	?1st
F012	74	HZ	sq	280	CAM 270	1st
F012	75	GX	sq	40	CAM 108	?1st
F012	79	BA	2	5	27	SG 1st
F012	79	AA	1	100	Dressel 2 - 4	
F012	79	GX	q	75		
F012	79	HZ	2	60		
F012	80	BA	1	20	27g	1st
F012	80	AJ	2	270		
F012	80	EB	1	5		pre-Flavian
F012	80	DJ	q	170		
F012	80	FJ	2	20		later 1st - earlier 2nd
F012	80	GX	lq	470	CAM 266	?1st
F012	80	HZ	vsq	60		
F012	81	BA	1	5		SG 1st
F012	81	DJ	sq	80		
F012	81	FJ	1	10		Later 1st - earlier 2nd
F012	81	GX	lq	1000	CAM 259 CAM 266 CAM 108 CAM 266	?1st
F012	81	HZ	2	60		
F012	104	AJ	2	120		
F012	104	AA	1	40		
F012	104	DJ	sq	100		
F012	104	GX	lq	400	CAM 68	?1st - early 2nd
F012	105	BA	1	10	15/17	1st
F012	105	UR	2	50	TN	pre-Flavian
F012	105	DJ	vsq	60		
F012	105	GX	lq	380	CAM 266	
F012	105	HZ	vsq	75		
F012	106	AJ	1	60		
F012	106	DJ	vsq	55	CAM 155	1st - earlier 2nd
F012	106	FJ	1	25		later 1st - earlier 2nd
F012	106	GX	lq	460	CAM 266 CAM 259	?1st
F012	106	HZ	sq	230	CAM 271	1st
F012	107	UR	1	20	TN CAM 14	pre-Flavian
F012	107	GX	lq	1000	CAM 221	1st - early 2nd
F012	107	HZ	vsq	220		
F012	108	EB	1	5		pre-Flavian
F012	108	SM	1	5	S/W SM type 26	pre-Flavian
F012	108	GX	lq	360	CAM 108	
F012	114	BX	1	10	29	pre 80
F012	114	AJ	2	230		
F012	114	UR	2	70	TN	pre-Flavian
F012	114	DJ	vsq	70	CAM 149	1st
F012	114	GX	lq	800		Roman 1st - 2nd
F012	114	HZ	sq	175		
F012	115	AJ	vsq	800		
F012	115	AA	1	120		
F012	115	UR	1	20	TN	pre-Flavian
F012	115	DJ	2	5		
F012	115	GX	q	190	CAM 242 - 246 CAM 259	?1st
F012	115	HZ	1	30		
F012	115		1	45	loomweight fragment (burnt)	daub
F012	116	BX	1	10	29	pre 80
F012	116	AJ	2	150		
F012	116	UR	1	20	?coarse grey	pre-Flavian
F012	116	GX	q	130		

F/L	find	fabric	sherds	wt grms	forms	date
F012	116	HZ	2	175		
F012	117	AJ	2	180		
F012	117	AA	1	25		
F012	117	DZ	1	1	CAM 100	Neronian - Flavian
F012	117	DJ	vsq	25		
F012	117	GX	q	320		
F012	117	HZ	2	225		
F012	118	BA	2	20	33 27	SG 1st
F012	118	UR	1	5	coarse grey	1st
F012	118	DJ	vsq	60		
F012	118	FJ	2	40		later 1st - earlier 2nd
F012	118	GX	lq	520	CAM 108	?1st
F012	125	BA	2	10	?31	?2nd
F012	125	UR	1	5	TN	pre-Flavian
F012	125	DJ	vsq	30		
F012	125	GX	lq	700	CAM 221 CAM 266	1st - early 2nd
F012	125	HZ	1	75		
F013						
F013	91	DJ	2	5		
F013	91	GX	q	70		Roman
F013	92	AJ	1	75		
F013	92	UR	1	5	coarse grey fabric	1st
F013	92	DJ	1	1		
F013	92	GX	q	140	CAM 266	?1st
F013	92	HZ	vsq	80		
F013	93	UR	1	5	TN	pre-Flavian
F013	93	DJ	1	5		
F013	93	GX	vsq	120	CAM 266	?1st
F013	98	GX	1	1		
F014						
F014	45	AJ	vsq	300		
F014	45	UR	2	15	TR (?burnt) CAM 3	pre-Flavian (LIA)
F014	45	DZ	2	15		
F014	45	GX	vlq	990	CAM 254 CAM 108 CAM 218 CAM 266 CAM 82 - 85 (pre-Flavian)	1st century
F014	45	HZ	q	1180	(also 1 piece of briquetage removed)	
F014	47	GX	vsq	130	CAM 259	LIA - late 1st
F014	66	DJ	1	60	CAM 161 - 162	LIA - pre-Flavian
F015						
F015	60	BA	2	5	stamp OFPRIM[...]	Neronian
F015	60	DJ	2	5		
F015	60	GX	lq	160	CAM 108 (3)	?1st
F015	60	HZ	sq	530		
F015	62	HZ	vsq	30		
F015	76	BA	3	55	18 27g ?24/25	1st
F015	76	BX	1	110	29	pre 80
F015	76	AJ	vsq	350		
F015	76	UR	1	25	TR platter	pre-Flavian
F015	76	ON	1	5	?mica gilt	
F015	76	DZ	1	20		
F015	76	DJ	q	220		
F015	76	GX	vlq	1300	CAM 221 CAM 266 CAM 108	?1st - early 2nd
F015	76	HZ	sq	270		
F015	85	BA	2	10	27	SG 1st
F015	85	DJ	2	20		
F015	85	GX	lq	550	CAM 221 CAM 108 CAM 266	?1st - early 2nd
F015	85	HZ	sq	170		
F015	85	HD	1	10		
F015/17						
F015/17	86	GX	sq	45		
F015/17	86	HZ	lq	1000	CAM 270	1st

F/L	find	fabric	sherds	wt grms	forms	date
F015/18						
F015/18	94	BA	2	15	18 ?30	1st
F015/18	94	DJ	1	5		
F015/18	94	GX	q	190	CAM 266	?1st
F015/18	94	HZ	sq	330	CAM 270	1st
F015/18	97	GX	q	200	CAM 218 CAM 221 CAM 71 - 77	1st - early 2nd
F015/18	97	HZ	lq	2000	CAM 270	1st
F015/18	99	BA	2	10	18	1st
F015/18	99	UR	vsq	130	coarse grey CAM 16	pre-Flavian
F015/18	99	GX	lq	300	CAM 218	1st - early 2nd
F016						
F016	63	AJ	sq	200		
F016	63	GX	q	75	CAM 108	?1st
F016	67	DJ	1	5		
F016	67	GX	lq	230	CAM 218	late 1st - early 2nd
F016						
F017						
F017	89	BA	1	5	18	1st
F017	89	DZ	vsq	5	CAM 122/123	late 1st - 2nd
F017	89	DJ	sq	20		
F017	89	GX	lq	360	CAM 221	1st - early 2nd
F017	89	HZ	1	40		
F017	102	BA	sq	100	18	1st
F017	102	AJ	1	120		
F017	102	UR	2	15	coarse grey & CAM 14	1st
F017	102	DJ	q	85	CAM 149	1st - earlier 2nd
F017	102	GX	lq	650	CAM 108 CAM 221 CAM 266	1st - early 2nd
F017	102	HZ	vsq	85		
F017	113	BA	vsq	10	18 27	1st
F017	113	DJ	2	45		
F017	113	GX	q	110	CAM 218 CAM 266	1st - early 2nd
F017	113	HZ	sq	170	CAM 271	mid 1st
F018						
F018	100	BA	2	5	18 (burnt)	1st
F018	100	GX	sq	60	CAM 108 CAM 266	1st - early 2nd
F018						
F019						
F019	128	BA	1	25	27g	1st
F019	128	GX	2	60		1st - 2nd
F020						
F020	126	BA	2	80	18	1st
F020	126	AJ	sq	800		
F020	126	UR	2	50	TN CAM 14	pre-Flavian
F020	123	EB	1	10		pre-Flavian
F020	126	GX	q	950	CAM 253 CAM 221 CAM 266	1st - early 2nd
F020	126	HZ	sq	275		
F020/17						
F020/17	127	BA	vsq	35	18 27	1st
F020/17	127	AJ	2	120		
F020/17	127	AA	1	100	Dressel 2 - 4	
F020/17	127	TZ	1	160		
F020/17	127	UR	1	65	very coarse copy & other	pre-Flavian - 1st
F020/17	127	DJ	2	30	CAM 155	1st - later 2nd
F020/17	127	GX	lq	460	CAM 221	1st - earlier 2nd
F020/17	127	HZ	sq	130		
F042						
F042	137	BX	1	10	30	SG 1st
F043						
F043	129	BA	2	40	15/17	prob. all SG 1st

F/L	find	fabric	sherds	wt grms	forms	date
F043	129	BX	1	5	29	pre 80
F043	129	GX	sq	70	CAM 259	
F043	129	HZ	1	30		
F045						
F045	131	BA	1	5	33	prob. EG 2nd - earlier 3rd
F045	131	TZ	1	90	CAM 195 stamp (SEX)	Neronian - Flavian
F045	131	GX	q	140	CAM 218 CAM 243 - 246	1st - early 2nd
F046						
F046	132	DJ	1	19	CAM 113	pre-Flavian
F046	132	GX	1	50		
F047						
F047	133	DJ	1	5		
F047	133	GX	sq	100		Roman
F047	133	fabric 40 glazed	1	1		post-Roman 16th+
F047	134	GX	1	120		Roman
F048						
F048	135	GX	sq	250		Roman
F048	136	GX	1	10		Roman
F049						
F049	138	GX	1	35		Roman ?1st - 2nd
L010						
L010	41	AJ	1	5		
L010	41	UR	1	5	?TR	pre 50
L010	41	DJ	vsq	15		
L010	41	GX	q	230		Roman 1st - 2nd
L010	41	HZ	vsq	330		
L010	43	AJ	1	80		
L010	43	GX	q	580	CAM 266 CAM 231	?1st
L010	43	HZ	1	5		
L010	49	UR	1	10	coarse grey	1st
L010	49	DJ	sq	70		
L010	49	GX	lq	600	CAM 108	?1st
L010	49	HZ	vsq	100		
L010	51	BX	1	5	29	pre 80
L010	51	AJ	1	160		
L010	51	DJ	1	5		
L010	51	GX	sq	30		
L010	52	GX	vsq	30		

Abbreviations

CAR 10, Robin Symonds and Sue Wade, Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971 - 86.

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The glass

by H.E.M.Cool

Amongst this small assemblage there is one fragment from the base of a cast emerald green vessel (no.1). Virtually no part of the side is preserved, but the tiny edge of the curve up to it suggests the fragment most likely came from a dish with splayed sides (Isings Form 5) such as those from a Claudian pit at Sheepen (Harden 1947, 301 no. 60, pl. 88) and a context of the second half of the 1st century at the Gilbert School (Cool and Price 1995, 35 no. 200, fig. 2.10). The possibility that it came from the cylindrical dish form of Isings Form 22 such as that from a pre-Flavian cremation at Sheepen (Charlesworth 1985; Mf 1:A6 no (f), fig. 15 no. 5) cannot, however, be ruled out. Whatever the precise form, the fragment can be dated to the mid third of the 1st century as such brightly coloured cast vessels had effectively disappeared by the Flavian period. The fact that this vessel is made of emerald green glass rather than any other of the bright colours is no surprise as the colour dominates the large assemblage of strongly coloured monochrome cast vessels known from Colchester (Cool and Price 1995, 34).

All of the other fragments are made of blue/green glass and are blown. There is one fragment of a jug or flask (no. 2) whose form cannot be more closely identified, a fragment from a tubular unguent bottle (no. 3), and a fragment from a prismatic bottle (no. 4). Tubular unguent bottles are a very common mid first century form which went out of use during the Flavian period (Cool and Price 1995, 159). Prismatic bottles (ibid 179) are known in the mid 1st century but are commonest from the later 1st to early 3rd century. The other body fragments cannot be assigned to particular forms, though no. 6 has large bubbles and shows a noticeable increase in thickness given it is a relatively small fragment. Both of these features are often noticed in the lower body fragments of tubular unguent bottles, so it is possible that no. 6 came from a second example.

Tubular unguent bottles are frequently found accompanying cremation burials, and so if these pit fills do derive from disturbed cremations it would not be surprising to find fragments from such vessels in the fill. It should be noted, however, that they are also very common site finds.

Catalogue

- 1 Base fragment of dish. Emerald green; cast; rotary polishing marks on both sides. Flat, retaining beginning of curve to side on one broken corner. Dimensions 40 x 23mm, base thickness 2.5mm. F11. (37)
- 2 Neck fragment of jug or flask. Blue/green with occasional sandy impurity. Cylindrical neck curving out to shoulder; light tooling marks at base of neck. Wall thickness 2.5mm; neck diameter c.30-35mm. F12. (105)
- 3 Lower body of tubular unguent bottle. Blue/green with dulled surfaces. Convex-curved side curving in to missing base. Maximum body diameter c.25-30mm, wall thickness 2-3mm. F12. (117)
- 4 Body fragment of prismatic bottle. Blue/green. Wall thickness 4mm. F15. (76)
- 5 Body fragment. Blue/green; convex-curved. Wall thickness 2.5mm. F12. (71)

- 6 Body fragment. Blue/green with large bubbles; convex-curved. Wall thickness 1-2mm. F12. (105)
- 7 Body fragment. Blue/green; convex-curved. Wall thickness 1mm. F12. (105)

References

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Harden, D.B., 1947. 'The glass' 287-307 in Hawkes, C.F.C & Hull, M.R. *Camulodunum. First report on the excavations at Colchester 1930-1939* RRCSAL XIV (Oxford), 287-307.

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The small finds

by Nina Crummy

This small assemblage contains two items of particular interest, a gridiron and a repaired Colchester brooch.

Gridirons are not common as site finds, perhaps because disassociated fragments would be difficult to recognise, but this is the third from Colchester. A plain square one came from a military pit dated *c* 43-49 at Lion Walk (*CAR* 2, fig 77, 2052), and at the Gilbert School an unusual elaborate three-legged semicircular gridiron was found *in situ* on a tile hearth in a building burnt during the Boudican uprising of 60/61 (*CAR* 6, fig 6.13, 135). Plain gridirons have also been found at Newstead (Curle 1911, 274, pl 53, 2) and Margidunum (Manning 1985, 100) and one was among the objects in the smith's hoard deposited in Carlingwark Loch (Piggot 1953, fig 10, C71). More elaborate examples are known from Silchester, Hampshire (Liversidge 1973, fig 65, d), and Icklingham, Suffolk (Manning 1985, pl 13). The Colchester brooch is a large example with ribbed side wings and an eight turn spring. The lower part of the catchplate has broken off, and a new catch formed by bending over the remaining strip of metal. The pin has been shortened to prevent it projecting beyond the bow. Closely similar brooches have been found at Bagendon, Puddle Hill near Dunstable, Waddon Hill, Maiden Castle, and Camulodunum. The Waddon Hill and Puddle Hill brooches are not from dated contexts, but the Bagendon brooch came from a context dated *c* AD 20/25 to 41 (Hull 1961, 185, fig 30, 4), and Wheeler dated the Maiden Castle brooch to *c* 25-50 (1943, 258, fig 83, 14). The two brooches from Camulodunum were found in contexts dated 50-60/5. They may be residual but may also be long-lived survivors, testifying to their solidity (Hawkes & Hull 1947, pl 90, 20-1). The repair to this example suggests that it too has survived for some years, perhaps being deposited in the late 40s or 50s AD.

Apart from the brooch there is nothing closely datable in the assemblage, though the melon beads and a possible fragment of an iron armlet suggest a date somewhere between the conquest and the mid 2nd century.

Fig 4. SF 18-19. (50) F17. Gridiron of simple form, with the crossbars inserted into the two legged side-pieces. In fairly poor condition, bent at one end and with several bars and three of the legs detached. Width approximately 300 mm, length approximately 260 mm, height 93 mm.

Fig 5. SF 7. (119) F12. Repaired copper-alloy Colchester brooch. Length 76.5 mm. The spring is of eight turns, and part of an axial bar remains in one side. A long forward hook retains the external chord. The side wings are ribbed. The bow is of oval section, slightly angular at the rear. Its tip is missing. The catchplate originally had at least two perforations, probably stepped, but now only the upper part remains, turned over to grip the pin, which has been shortened so that it does not project beyond the bow at this more acute angle.

Not illustrated. SF 1. (65) F12. Copper-alloy pin from a penannular brooch. Length 31.5 mm, giving a brooch hoop diameter of about 25-30 mm.

Not illustrated. SF 3. (82) F15. Turquoise frit melon bead. Length 12 mm, diameter 14 mm.

Not illustrated. SF 2. (78) F15. Fragment of a turquoise frit melon bead. Length 18 mm, diameter 19 mm.

Not illustrated. SF 14. (95) F11. Curved strip fragment, broken at one end, slightly tapering to the other, which appears to be original. Length 65 mm, width 15 mm. Possibly from a penannular armlet. An iron armlet was found on the wrist of a skeleton in the war cemetery, dated *c* AD 44, at Maiden Castle (Wheeler 1943, fig 92, 9), and several came from 1st to 2nd century cremations at Winchester (Crummy *et al* forthcoming).

Not illustrated. SF 8. (121) F12. Copper-alloy tweezers and small scoop, possibly from a toilet set, though the instruments from sets are usually much the same length (*eg* Potter & Trow 1988, 18), and here the tweezers are much larger than the very delicate scoop. The latter has a plain shaft, the suspension ring being formed by punching a hole through the flattened upper end, and the end of the cupped bowl is missing (length 33 mm). The tweezers have marginal grooves (length 42 mm). Neither tweezers nor scoops can be easily dated, being simple long-lived forms.

Not illustrated. SF 4. (83) F15. Fragment of a bone hinge unit, broken across the dowel hole. Length 25.5 mm, diameter approximately 28 mm. Diameter of dowel hole 8 mm.

Not illustrated. SF 15. (103) F11. Part of a tongue-ended iron strip from a loop-hinge, with the broken end bent back and to one side. There is a rivet hole in the surviving end. Length (bent) 51 mm, width 18 mm.

Not illustrated. SF 12. (76) F15. Narrow iron strip, broken at both ends, and slightly twisted at one. Possibly from a loop-hinge, though there are no visible rivet holes. However, a loop-hinge from Dragonby was of similar length between the loop and the first rivet (Manning & McDonald 1996, fig 11.40, 86). Length 105 mm, width 13 mm.

Not illustrated. SF 17. (124) F12. Iron staple, or possibly part of a swivel attachment (as Manning & McDonald 1996, fig 11.42, 140), broken across the top. Width 22 mm, length 37 mm.

Not illustrated. SF 16. (123) F12. Long narrow circular-section iron spike, with a small part of the top turned downwards. Length 80 mm. Possibly a nail of Manning's Type 5 (1985, 135).

Not illustrated. SF 11. (61) F15. Narrow circular-section shaft, broken across the top. Possibly the point of a stylus or the shaft of a Type 5 nail (*ibid*). Length 63.5 mm.

Not illustrated. SF 10 (48) F14. Fragment of sheet iron. Maximum dimensions 52 by 37 mm.

Not illustrated. SF 13. (84) F15. Two fragments of sheet iron. 1) Probably from a square or rectangular plaque, with two surviving contiguous edges. There is a rivet hole centred at 16.5 mm from the longest edge. Dimensions 44 (complete) by 34.5 (incomplete). 2) Corner from a similar plaque, with part of one surviving edge. Maximum dimensions 41 by 36 mm.

Not illustrated. SF 5. (96) F11. Amorphous mass of copper-alloy. The quality of the metal suggests that this may have been an object that was melted, then re-solidified within a irregular depression. Weight 29 g.

Not illustrated. SF 6. (109) F12. Nine thin amorphous fragments of copper-alloy, with very rough surfaces overlain with organic debris, some carbonised. The metal has clearly been melted and spread into a puddle.

Not illustrated. SF 9. (122) F12. Three small fragments of copper-alloy.

Abbreviations and references:

CAR 2 *The Roman small finds from excavations in Colchester 1971-9* by Nina Crummy, Colchester Archaeological Report **2**, 1983

CAR 6 *Excavations at Culver Street, the Gilbert School and other sites in Colchester 1971-85* by Philip Crummy, Colchester Archaeological Report **6**, 1992

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Burnt and Cremated Bone

by Alec Wade

The burnt and cremated bone from the excavation amounted to 58 pieces weighing a total of 45g. The bone was very fragmented and in poor to fair condition.

Most of the material was unidentifiable. However animal bone was present including that of sheep or goat in F15/18. No reliable identification of human bone was made although what may have been a small fragment of a damaged human tarsal was found in F14.

The small amount of burnt bone recovered and its overall condition suggests that the material was largely residual.

- F11 (111) Three pieces of bone weighing a total of 4g. All were either burnt white or bluish-white. None are clearly identifiable as human and include a possible skull fragment(?).
- F12 (53) One fragment of bone, unidentified, which was burnt white with a grey core, weighing 1g.
- F14 (44) Twenty-four pieces of bone weighing 14g. Some pieces were burnt white in colour while others show only localised areas of black or bluish/black burning. Most pieces were unidentifiable but at least one piece of animal bone was present and perhaps a part of a human tarsal bone.
- F15/18 (86) One fragment of animal bone, possibly a metapodial fragment which was burnt white with fissures weighing 2g,
- (90) Two fragments of animal bone weighing a total of 8g. One is part of the fused proximal end of a sheep or goat metatarsal. The other is an unidentified fragment of shaft, probably also a metapodial. Both pieces are burnt white.
- F17 (112) One fragment of limb bone shaft, burnt white, probably animal, weighing 2g. Also 1 fragment of rib (?), burnt white and weighing 1g, Species indeterminate but probably animal.
- F18 (101) Thirteen pieces of bone weighing 10g. Some pieces were burnt white or bluish-white. Included several fragments of medium and large sized animal rib bone.
- F47 (134) Eleven pieces of bone weighing a total of 2g. All were burnt white and were unidentifiable. One small piece appeared to be part of an articulation (perhaps a distal tibia?) which has been distorted by heat.

Roman Tile and Brick

by Ernest Black

All but two of the tile fragments examined came from early Roman features. The assemblage includes 24 identifiable fragments of brocks of various thicknesses, including one piece of brick keyed by scoring from F17, probably a pila tile. Tegula bases and flanges form the majority of identifiable items (67 fragments). Several of these came from tiles with thick bases (c.25-30mm: Fig6b). The only fragment with a thin base (c.14-16mm) was from F11 and this had a very substantial flange (Fig.6a). This accords with the first - early second century dating of the features producing the assemblage. Many of the fragments have been burned, some on all surfaces, others on one surface only. One brick fragment from F12 seems to have traces of vitrification.

Discussion

In the overall plan (Fig 1) early features are divided into two groups: 1st and early 2nd century; and later 2nd, 3rd - 4th century. In addition, there are ten features (F2, F4, F9, F21, F22, F23, F48, EF2, EF7 and EF14) which appear satisfactorily to be Roman but lack sufficient dating evidence to attribute to either group. Dateable finds indicate that the ditch fill in F14 and the majority of the pit fills in the eastern part of the site are no later than 2nd century in date, and may well be confined entirely to the Claudian-Flavian period. Later Roman features are more common to the west, where there is a cluster, F47/EF10, EF11 and the deeper pits, F7 and F8, with material of later 2nd and 3rd-4th century date.

The finds from F47/EF10 pose a question over the degree of finds residuality on the site since the pottery indicates a *c.* 1st century date, yet a 3rd century coin (the only coin to be recovered from the site) appears to be associated with the feature. Although the dating anomaly may be significant, the finds were recovered in less than ideal circumstances: from surface cleaning of EF10 in the case of the coin and 1st century pottery; and as a result of a machine cut across the backfilled evaluation trench which produced less closely dateable Roman pottery possibly from F47. The feature has been attributed to the later Roman period, but with reservations.

The purpose of the pits is unclear. Whilst some may be randomly-dug, others (e.g. F12, F17, F18 and F20) display a more angular shape which seems out of character with, for example, small-scale sand extraction or the casual disposal of rubbish. From the nature of the finds it seems possible that the subrectangular features might be cremation burials, but if so, it remains uncertain whether their contents were subsequently dug up and redeposited in their original pits, or are perhaps primary burials in which the remains and associated artefacts were deliberately broken prior to final interment.

Of the features that show any form of orientation, the group in the region of F17/F18/F20, F46/EF9 and the apparently later F47/EF10 all to some extent reflect the orientation of the ditches F14 and EF2. None observe the orientation of a conjectured Roman road across the south of the site, nor for that matter do any correspond to the road believed to underlie the stretch of Lexden Road at the site frontage, although it is possible that pits EF14 and EF6 and linear feature F43, all fragmentary observations, are somewhat closer to the Lexden Road line.

No conclusive observations of in-situ early road metalling were made. Gravels were present naturally to varying degrees in the site subsoil and early deposits on the southern part of the site tended to have a higher stoney content than those elsewhere. Of the three spots where strong stoney deposits were noted, F1 and F3 seem to be of limited extent and may be seams in the upper level of the natural sand. The third plot (F50) is unlikely to be natural but its extent and date of deposition is unknown.

Archive

The site and research archive is to be lodged with Colchester Museum under cover of museum accession code 1998-7. Material relating to the August 1997 site evaluation may be found under museum code 1997-47.

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Classic New Homes from whom the Trust would particularly like to thank Jonathan Frank (Lexden Restorations Ltd), Keith Wareham and

John Blomfield (Vaughan and Blyth) for their co-operation and constant interest in the progress of the fieldwork; also Colchester Borough Council for enabling a watch to be kept on the new house adjacent no.1 Park Road.

[XX- below collect and add abbs. and refs. from finds reports-XX]

Abbreviations:

CAR9 N.Crummy, P. Crummy, C.Crossan, *Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-88* (1993)

References:

Shimmin, D 1997 *Archaeological Evaluation at the Former Maternity Home, Lexden Road*. Colchester Archaeological Trust evaluation report (reproduced in Appendix A).

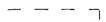


C.E.Crossan
Colchester Archaeological Trust Ltd

CAT Report 46
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APPENDIX

Report on the archaeological evaluation at Colchester Maternity Hospital, Lexden Road
September 1997

Key:

-  new building outline
-  trench outline
-  stony deposit

Roman features:

-  1st-early 2nd century
-  later 2nd, 3rd-4th century
-  Roman, otherwise indeterminate
- T1, T2 1997 evaluation trenches

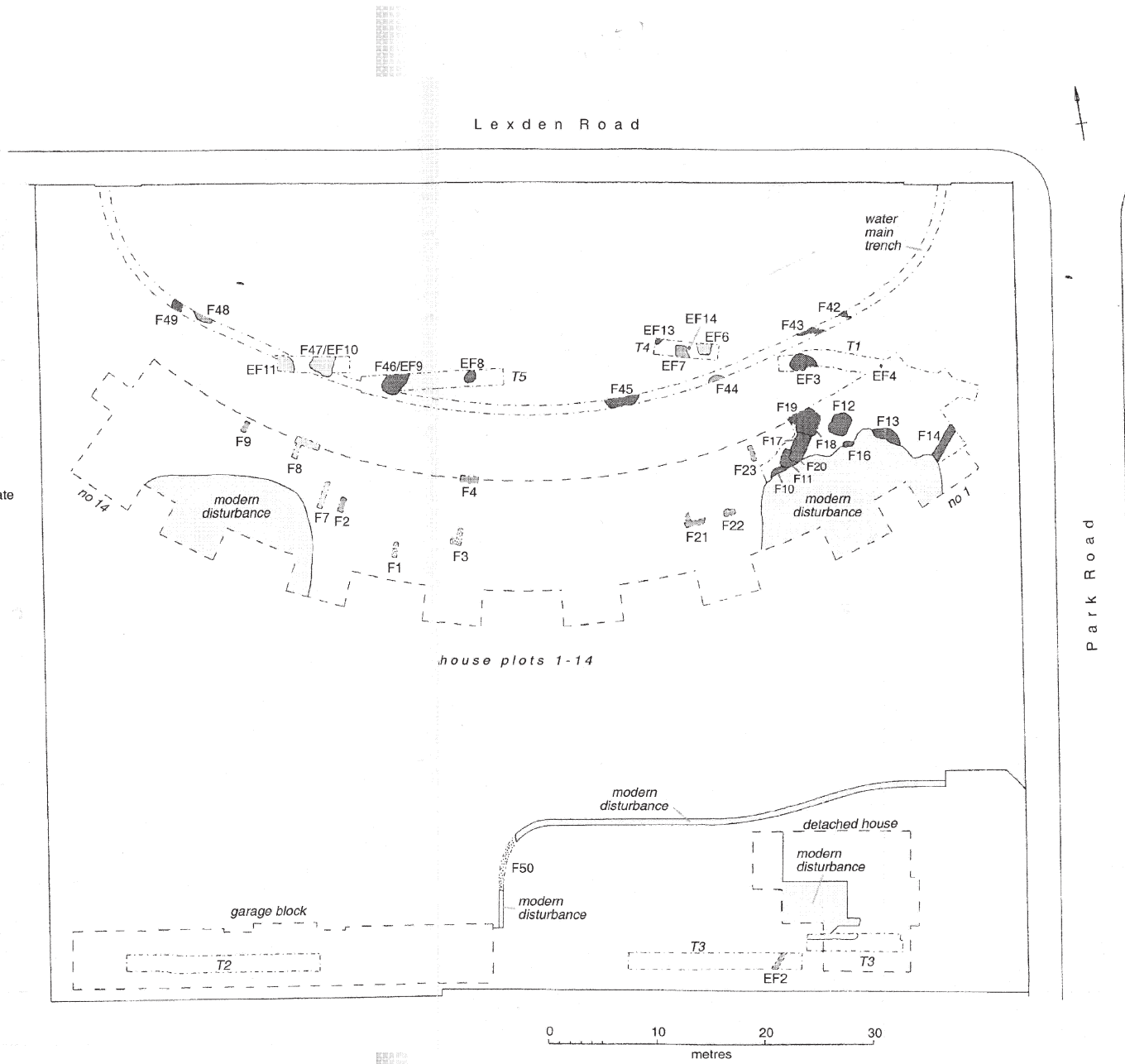


Fig 1 Roman features.

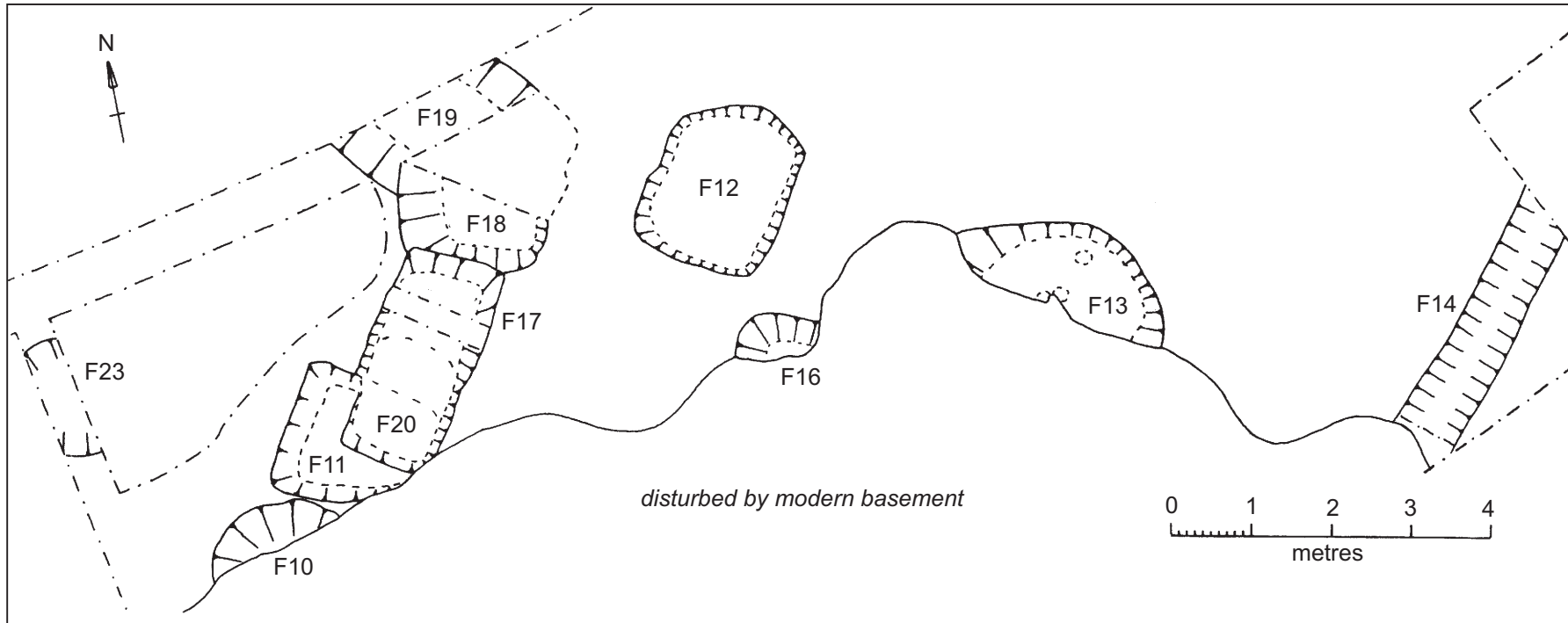
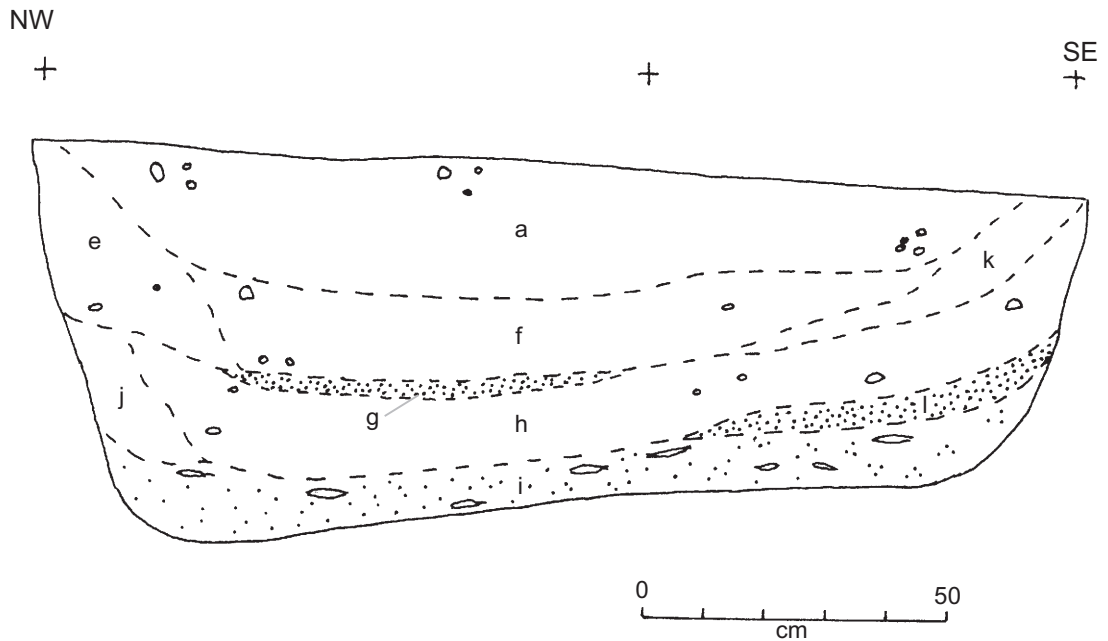


Fig 2 Excavated area plan. House plots 1-3, Sovereign Crescent.



F12 section

Layer descriptions:

- a) Dark brownish grey slightly sandy clay loam with rare rounded stones.
- e) Dark grey sandy clay loam.
- f) Mixed light brown/yellowish brown/dark grey sandy clay loam with occasional stones and charcoal.
- g) Charcoal with flecks of orange fired clay.
- h) Mid greyish brown sandy clay loam.
- i) Oyster shells in light grey sandy loam with common charcoal flecks and occasional stones.
- j) Reddish brown loamy sand.
- k) Red burnt material.
- l) Charcoal with flecks of orange fired clay.

Fig 3 F12 section.

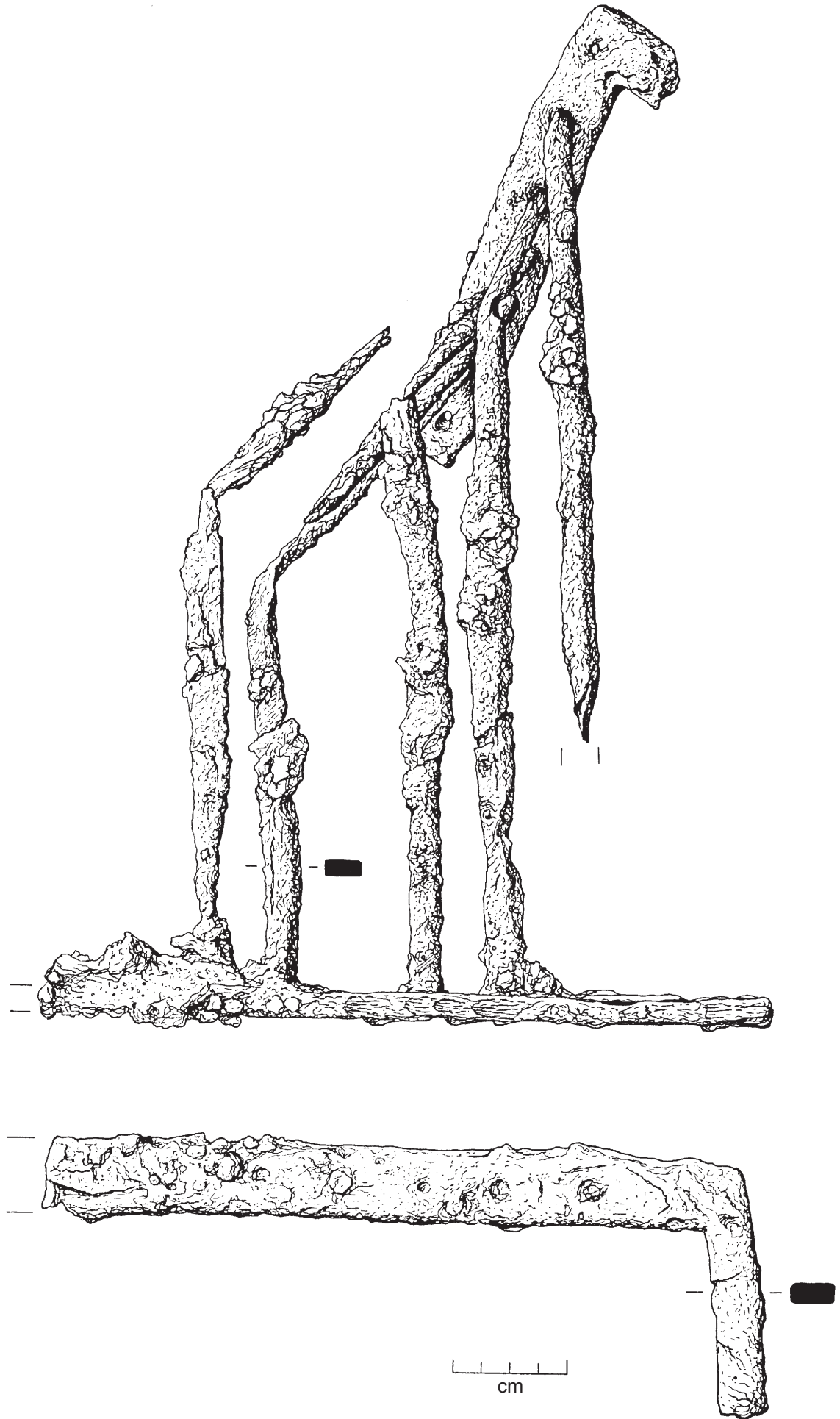


Fig 4 SF18: gridiron from F17.

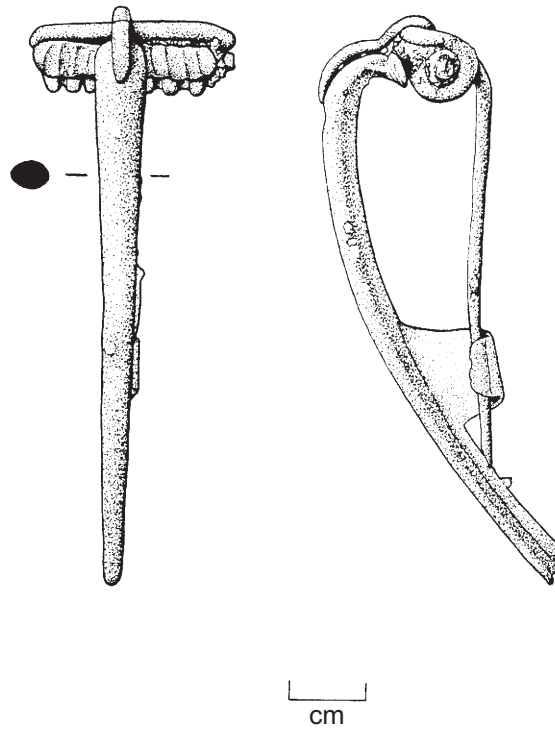
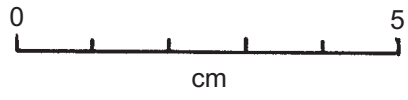
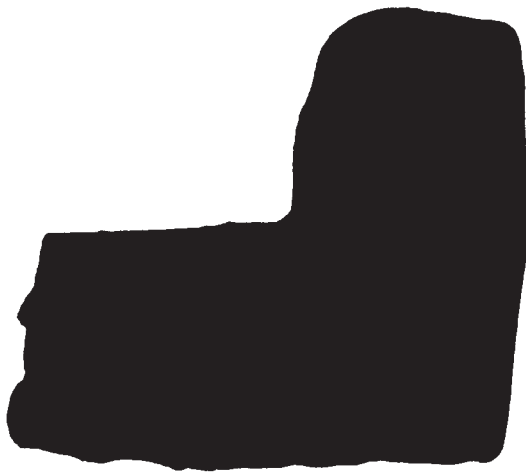


Fig 5 SF7: Colchester brooch from F12.



a: F11 (28)



b: F12 (70)

Fig 6 *Tegulae* profiles.