

# **An archaeological watching brief at Olivers Orchard, Olivers Lane, Colchester, Essex**

**February 2001**

**on behalf of  
Anglian Water**

CAT project reference: 01/2A  
Colchester Museum accession code: 2001.19  
NGR: TL 9687 2173



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## Plate and figure

Plate 1 The trench after the stand-pipe had been inserted, looking south-west.

Fig 1 Site location.

# 1 Summary

This is the report on a negative watching brief on the insertion of a stand-pipe by Anglian Water near the scheduled area of Gosbecks

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on 5th February 2001 on behalf of Anglian Water. The work was necessitated by the insertion of a stand-pipe. This required the excavation by machine of a trench 1.6m long and 1.1m deep.
- 2.2 The site is located approximately 4.5km to the south-west of Colchester town centre at National Grid Reference TL 9687 2173. The stand-pipe was inserted in a horse paddock to the east of Olivers Lane, to the south of some brick cottages, in what was formerly Olivers Orchard. It was sited 26.3m south-west of the field gate, adjacent to the hedge on the north-western side of the paddock. The benchmark on the brick cottages just to the north gives a height OD of 33.74m.
- 2.3 This report follows the standards set out in the Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1996) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an Archaeological watching brief* (1994).

## 3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The site lies at the southern edge of a complex of extensive late Iron Age and Roman cropmarks at Gosbecks. These cropmarks are enclosed by curving dykes and represent field systems, tracks, roads, and settlement enclosures (Essex County Council HAMP no 11650). Within this area a Roman temple, theatre (Essex County Council HAMP no 11647) and burials have been excavated. Due the area's archaeological significance, it has been given legal protection through scheduling (Scheduled Ancient Monument no 57).
- 3.2 Three large Roman coin hoards were found 200m to the north-east of the stand-pipe site in 1983 (Essex County Council HAMP no 11996). These are believed to have been deposited in AD 269, AD 271 and AD 274.

## **4 Aims and objectives**

The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any archaeological features, finds or deposits revealed by the groundworks.

## **5 Methods**

The machine excavation of the trench was observed by the author, and the spoil was checked as it was removed and artefacts retrieved. The sides of the trench were inspected for layers and features. A rough measured plan was made of the field. One digital photograph was taken.

## **6 Results**

The trench was dug by May Gurney Contractors using a mini-digger, and the following soil layers were observed:

Layer 1 Turf and mid brown sandy silt topsoil. 0-200mm.

Layer 2 Lighter brown silty sand with some small stones. Two fragments of modern brick and one small sherd of white china were retrieved from this layer (not retained). 200-700mm.

Layer 3 Natural orange sand and gravel surrounding the existing pipe. 700mm-1.1m.

There was no clear cut visible for the pipe trench. No archaeological features were observed.

## **7 Conclusion**

No archaeological features or finds were seen in the trench, which had already been disturbed by the excavation for the existing Anglian Water pipe down to over a metre below modern ground-level. Only modern items were retrieved from the trench. The negative results of this project do not necessarily indicate an absence of archaeological remains in the immediate area.

## **8 Archive deposition**

A copy of this report together with site notes will be deposited with Colchester Museum under accession code 2001.19.

## 9 Acknowledgements

Colchester Archaeological Trust is grateful to Anglian Water for commissioning the work; to Martin Winter, Colchester Borough Council Archaeology Officer; and to May Gurney Contractors for their co-operation on site.

*Kate Orr, February 2001*

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**Plate 1** The trench after the stand-pipe had been inserted, looking south-west.

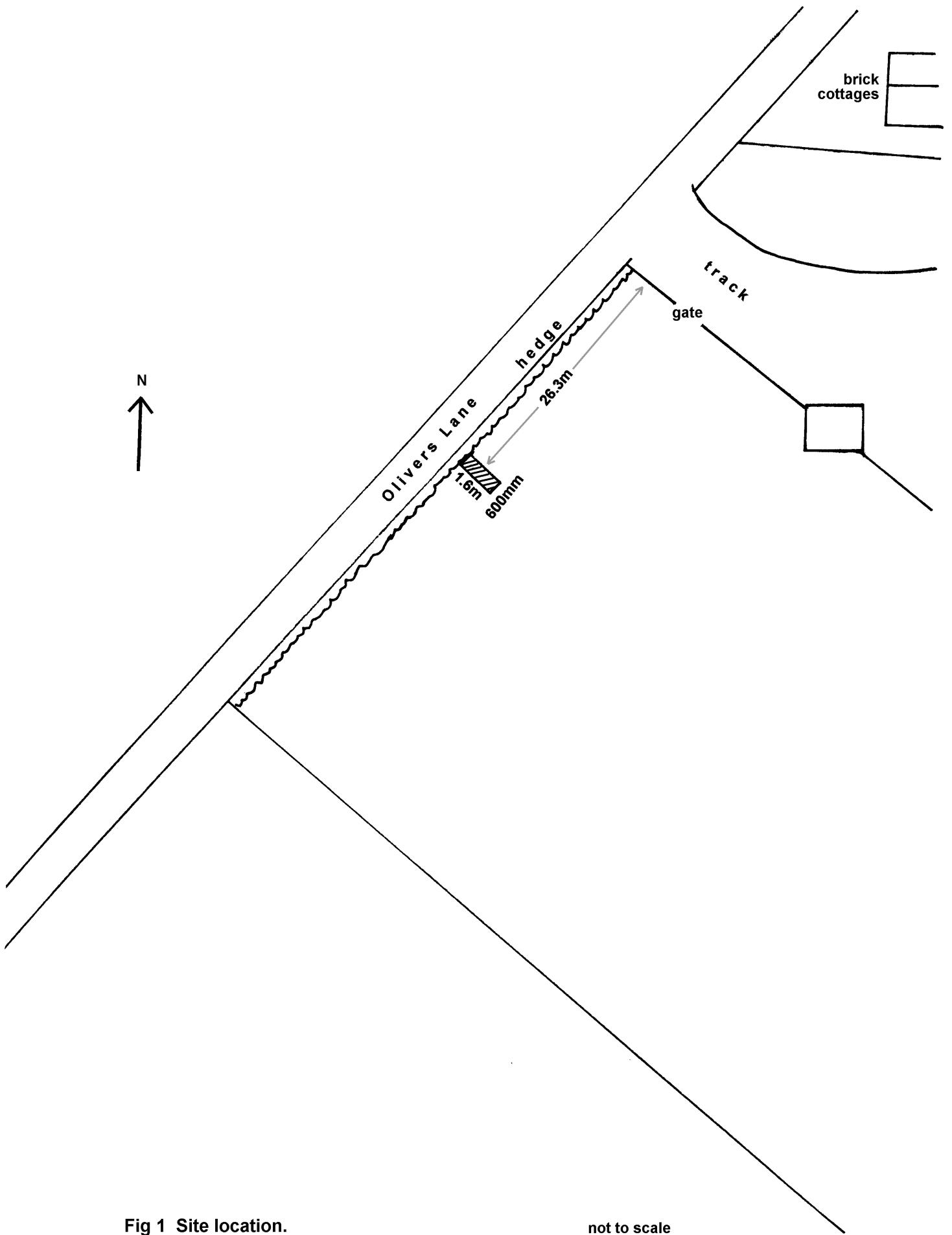


Fig 1 Site location.

not to scale

**ESSEX SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD/  
ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY**

**SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Site name/address:</b> Olivers Orchard, Olivers Lane, Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester Borough
<b>NGR:</b> TL 9687 2173	<b>Site code:</b> 2001.19
<b>Type of work:</b> A watching brief on an Anglian Water stand-pipe	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 05/02/01	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 1.6m x 600mm x 1.1m deep
<b>Location of finds/curating museum</b> Colchester Museum	<b>Funding source:</b> Anglian Water
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related SMR nos:</b> 11650, 11996, 11647, 11648
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 124	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Modern	
<p><b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b> Observations were made just outside the scheduled area of Gosbecks (Scheduled Monument no 57), during work to insert a stand-pipe by Anglian Water. The trench measured 1.6m x 600mm x 1.1m deep.</p> <p>The investigations showed that no archaeological features or finds were present within the trench. The trench had already been disturbed by the excavation for the existing Anglian Water pipe down to over a metre. Only modern items were retrieved from the trench. The negative results are due to the small size of the trench and the disturbance. It does not necessarily indicate an absence of archaeology in the immediate area.</p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> Kate Orr	<b>Date of summary:</b> February 2001