

An archaeological watching brief at 1a Park Road, Colchester, Essex

July 2001

on behalf of
Colchester Borough Council

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Colchester Museum accession code: 2001.124
Planning application no: F/COL/01/0549
NGR: TL 9820 2488



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CAT Report 146

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1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring of foundations for a new conservatory at 1a Park Road, Colchester, Essex did not record any finds or features of archaeological significance.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on 16th July 2001. The work was necessitated by the construction of a conservatory which was given planning permission under application number F/COL/01/0549.
- 2.2 The site is located 1km west of Colchester town centre, in the Lexden area, at National Grid Reference TL 9820 2488 (Fig 1). The conservatory is to be built in the garden of no 1a Park Road which is situated on the western side of the road. This house was built in the last three years. The plot was previously within the grounds of the Maternity Hospital on Lexden Road and was partially covered by its buildings.
- 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* (1999) 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* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 Many Roman burials have been found in the grounds of St Mary's Lodge, which is now Vint Crescent, just to the north-east of the site (Crummy 1992, 1039; EHCR 11980). These formed part of an extensive cemetery area which flanked the western approach roads to the Roman town. One of these Roman roads was Stane Street, which follows the line of Lexden Road in this area (EHCR 11705 and Crummy *et al* 1993, 258-62). Another road is projected to pass over or close to the site's southern edge (Crummy *et al* 1993, 263).
- 3.2 An archaeological evaluation at the Maternity Hospital, prior to the construction of Sovereign Crescent and no 1a Park Road, found that there was an absence of Roman finds and no definite Roman features from the site of no 1a Park Road. However, an undated gully may be of Roman or earlier date. An abundance of gravel below the topsoil may have derived from the street metalling of a Roman road which may have extended from east to west across the site (Shimmin 1997).
- 3.3 The ensuing excavation in 1998 recorded pits and ditches in the area of Sovereign Crescent, dated by the finds to the 1st-4th centuries AD (Crossan 1999).

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 fieldwork was carried out by a professional archaeologist from CAT who visited the site on 16th July. A record of the position of the site excavations was made which has been reproduced as Figure 2. The sections were examined, soil types were noted, and the spoil heap was checked. No finds were retrieved.

6 Results

Two foundation trenches were dug with a mini-digger, of 2.9m and 4.5m length respectively; they were both 550mm wide and 920mm deep. The drain was dug later into the top layer and so it was not monitored. The following soil profile was recorded from the foundation trenches:

Layer 1 or L1 - Patio and concrete sub-base, 0-250mm.

L2 - Dark brown sandy loam topsoil with stones and occasional modern pottery and brick, with pockets of reddish brown sand and gravel, 250mm-920mm.

L3 - Natural reddish brown sand and gravel, 920mm below ground-level.

In the south, the foundation trench encountered a filled-in cess-pit. In the west, the soil was more disturbed due to the presence of a drain (Fig 2). There were no finds or features of archaeological significance.

7 Conclusion

No finds or features of archaeological significance were disturbed by the groundworks. Modern brick and pottery was found in the topsoil. The area had been disturbed by the former Maternity Hospital buildings and also by the building of no 1a and the landscaping of its garden.

8 Archive deposition

A copy of this report will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museum under accession code 2001.124.

9 Acknowledgements

Colchester Archaeological Trust is grateful to the following for their help and co-operation:

Harvest Homes

Martin Winter, Archaeological Officer for Colchester Borough Council

10 References

Crossan, C, 1999 A watching brief and excavation at Sovereign Crescent, Colchester, 1998, CAT Report 46

Crummy, P, 1992 *Excavations at Culver Street, the Gilbert School, and miscellaneous sites in Colchester, 1971-85*, Colchester Archaeological Report **6**, 1039

Crummy, N, Crummy, P, & C Crossan, 1993 *Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-88*, Colchester Archaeological Report **9**, 258-62, 263

Shimmin, D, 1997 An archaeological evaluation at the former Maternity Home, Lexden Road, Colchester: summary report

Kate Orr, July 2001

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Fig 1 Site location.
Not to scale.

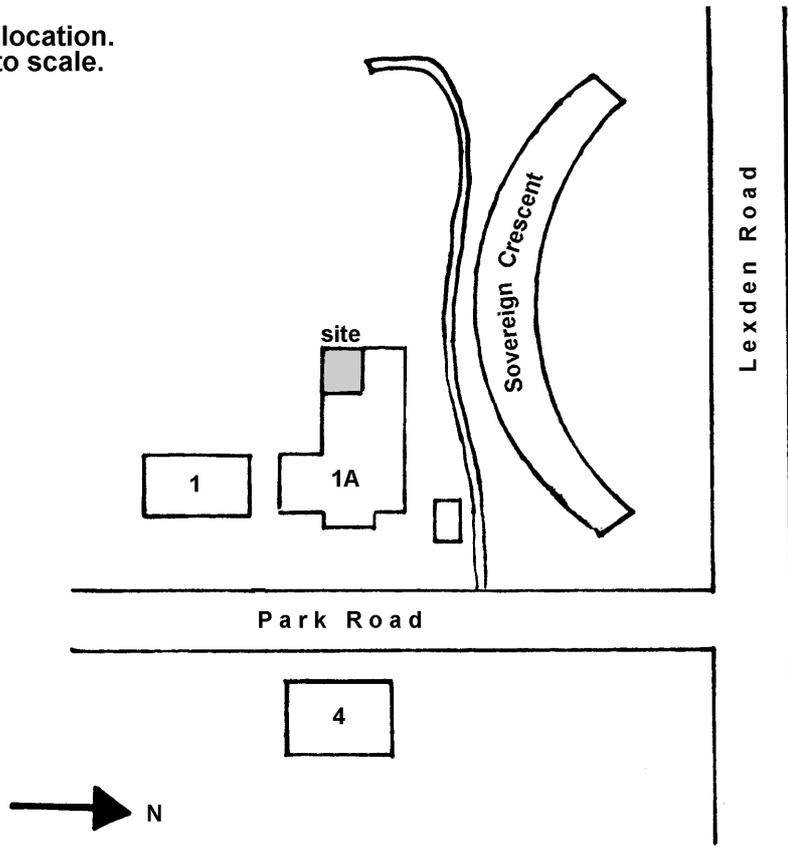
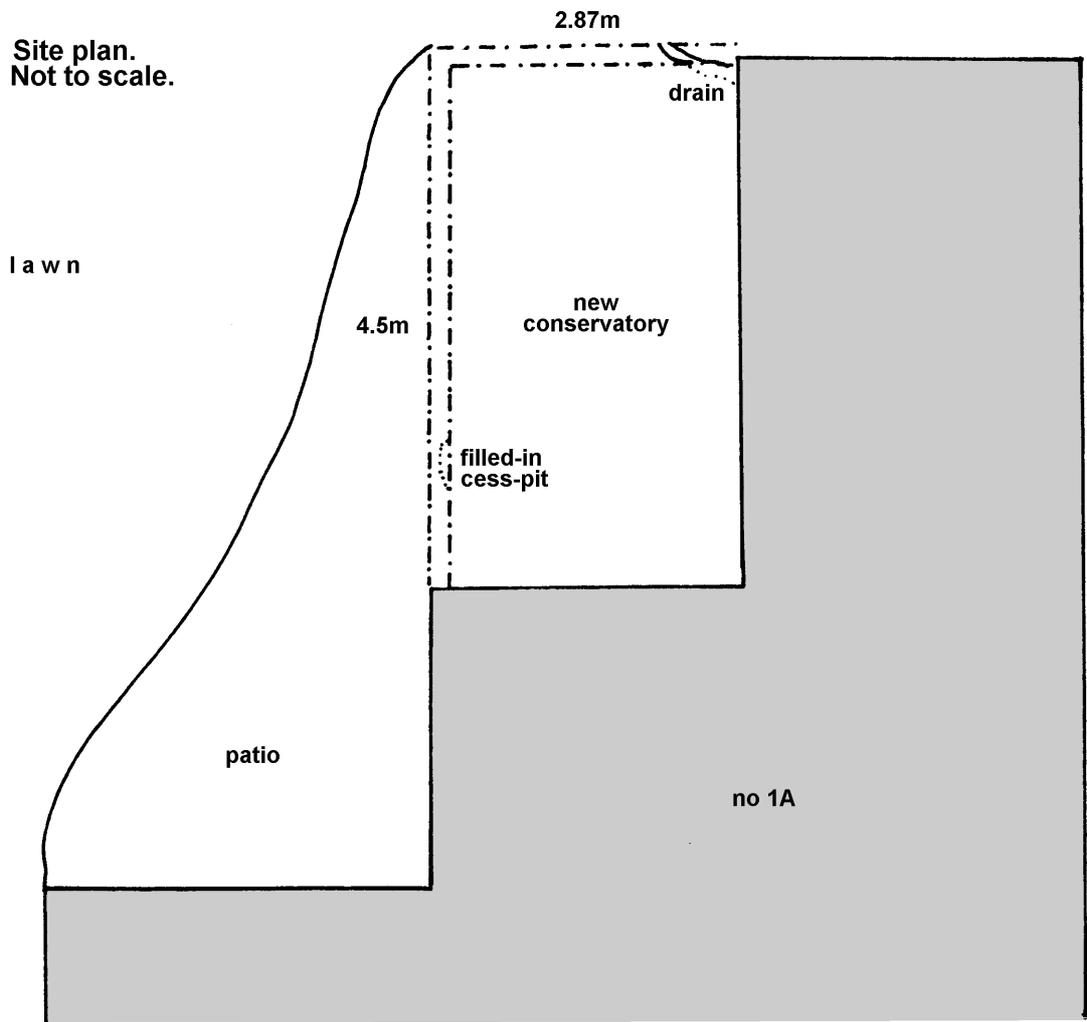


Fig 2 Site plan.
Not to scale.



**Essex Heritage Conservation Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

Site name/address: 1a Park Road, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester Borough
NGR: TL 9820 2488	Site code: 2001.124
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: July 2001	Size of area investigated: 2.87m x 4.5m
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museum	Funding source: Colchester Borough Council
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHCR nos: 11980 & 11705
Final report: CAT Report 146 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: None	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: No finds or features of archaeological significance were disturbed by the groundworks. Modern brick and pottery was found in the topsoil. The area had been disturbed by the former Maternity Hospital buildings and also by the building of no 1a and the landscaping of its garden.</p>	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Report 146	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: July 2001