

An archaeological watching brief at 24 Endsleigh Court, Colchester, Essex

July 2001 and February 2002

**on behalf of
Colchester Borough Council**

CAT project ref.: 01/7E
Colchester Museum accession code: 2001.127
NGR: TL 9830 2515



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CAT Report 174
March 2002

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1 Summary

Observations were made during groundworks for the construction of an extension and the installation of new services to the rear of 24 Endsleigh Court, Colchester, Essex. There was no indication of any archaeological activity.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the 19th July 2001 and the 27th February 2002. The work was necessitated by the construction of a small extension and services. Planning permission and Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent were given with the condition that an archaeological watching brief be carried out.
- 2.2 The site is located to the west of Colchester town centre just off Lexden Road, on the southern side of Endsleigh Court. It is centred on National Grid Reference TL 9830 2515 (Fig 1). The extension was built to the rear of no 24 Endsleigh Court, in the garden. To the south, the garden slopes down towards the boundary with St Mary's School.
- 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 The site occupies an area of Roman pottery- and tile-making, as is shown by the numerous kilns recorded. In 1877, Joslin excavated five Roman kilns just to the north-east of the site (Essex Heritage Conservation Record or EHCR 11693). One Roman kiln has also been found at Kingswode Hoe School nearby.
- 3.2 Occasional Roman burials have been found in this area. A burial in a lead coffin was found at another house on Endsleigh Court, under the porch (EHCR 12530).
- 3.3 The site lies just within the scheduled ancient monument area of Sheepen, a late Iron Age settlement and industrial centre established by the Trinovantes tribe and maintained in the years after the Roman conquest (Scheduled Ancient Monument no 46). Extensive excavations in the 1930s, plus smaller-scale work in 1970 and later, have produced evidence of workshops engaged in a range of industrial activities including metal-working, enamelling, pottery-making and leatherworking in the areas to the west of the site (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Niblett 1985).

4 Aims and objectives

The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any archaeological features, finds and deposits revealed by the groundworks. Particular attention was paid to the possible occurrence of Roman inhumations and kilns.

5 Methods

- 5.1 The fieldwork was carried out by a professional archaeologist from CAT. The foundations of the extension measured 7.8m x 5.3m. These were monitored, as well as two drains and the digging of a 1m-deep pit to bury an old manhole. The digging of a soakaway trench and the foundations for the garage were not monitored. The top 200mm of turf and topsoil had already been stripped off. Groundworks were carried out with a mini-digger with a toothed ditching bucket. Foundations were dug to a width of 560mm and to a depth varying between 900mm and 1m. The drains were dug to a depth of 500mm and a width of 400mm approximately.

- 5.2 A record of the position of the site excavations was made which has been reproduced as Figure 2. Soil types were noted and the spoil heap was also checked for finds.

6 Results

The foundation trenches for the extension were monitored in July 2001. There were no clear layers; however, the general soil profile was as follows:

Layer 1 or L1 - 0-350mm – mid brown sandy loam.

L2 - 350-500mm - lighter brown sandy layer with frequent stones.

L3 - 500-800mm - mottled sand with sandy loam.

L4 - 800mm to the bottom of the trench - mid brown sandy loam, almost indistinguishable from L3.

The soil was undisturbed apart from an old brick soakaway in the southern foundation trench and some old drain-pipes and concrete to the west (Fig 2).

There were no features or finds apart from one piece of pottery retrieved from the spoil heap.

The drain-trenches monitored in February 2002 were relatively shallow and revealed a similar brown sandy loam to that which had been observed in the foundation trenches in July 2001. A hole was dug to 1m depth to bury an old manhole. This was further down the slope, and the natural sand was not reached. A piece of brick was found at a depth of 1m and a sherd of 'willow pattern' pottery was found near the top.

7 Discussion

The site has not been heavily disturbed by modern building. However, there were no finds of pottery or archaeological features to indicate activity such as Roman kilns or burials.

8 References

Hawkes, C F C, & Hull, M R, 1947 *Camulodunum: first report on the excavations at Colchester 1930-1939*, RRCSAL, **14**

Niblett, R, 1985 *Sheepen: an early Roman industrial site at Camulodunum*, CBA Res Rep, **57**

9 Archive deposition

A copy of this report will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museum under accession code 2001.127.

9 Acknowledgements

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

the site owners for providing access

D J Sargent, the contractors

Mr Cherry, architect

Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council

Deborah Priddy, English Heritage Inspector

Kate Orr, February 2002

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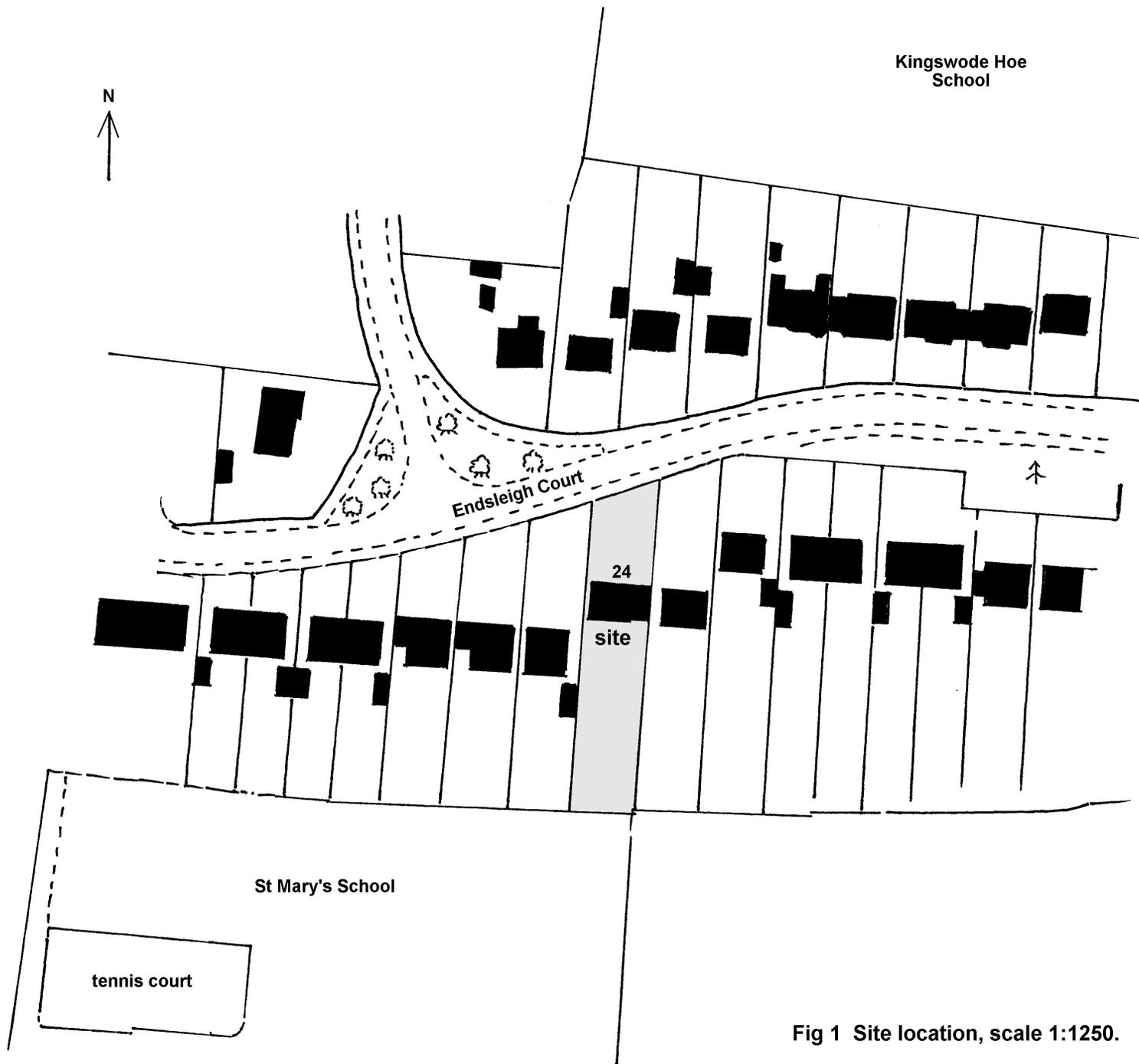


Fig 1 Site location, scale 1:1250.

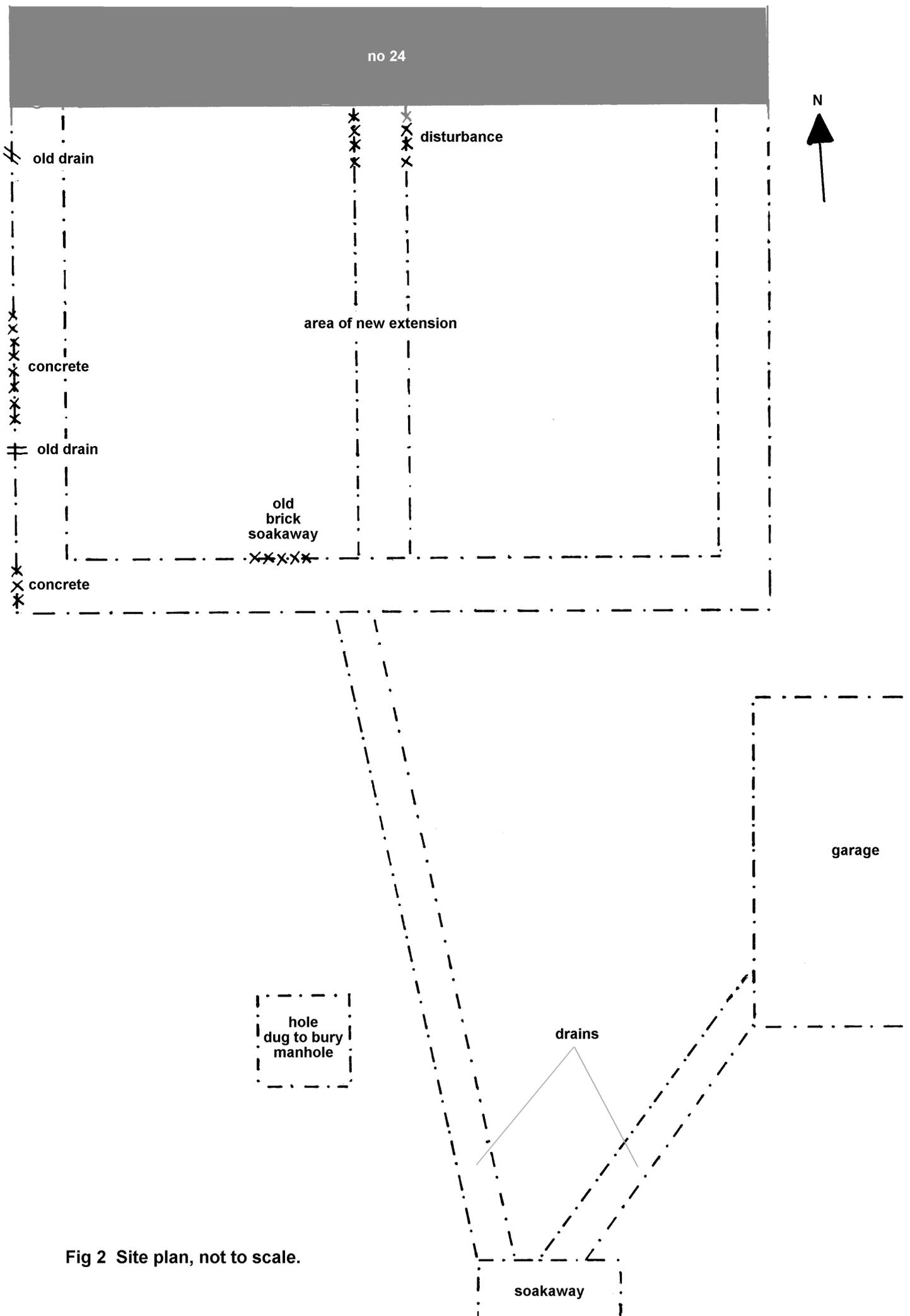


Fig 2 Site plan, not to scale.

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

Summary sheet

Site name/address: 24 Endsleigh Court, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester Borough
NGR: TL 9830 2515	Site code: 2001.127
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: July 2001 and February 2002	Size of area investigated: 5.3 x 7.8m plus drains
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museum	Funding source: Colchester Borough Council
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHCR nos: 12530 & 11693
Final report: CAT Report 174 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: Modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: Observations were made during groundworks for the construction of an extension and the installation of new services to the rear of 24 Endsleigh Court, Colchester, Essex. There was no indication of any archaeological activity.	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Reports 140 and 169	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: February 2002