

**An archaeological watching brief on an
extension to the driving range at
Lexden Wood Golf Club
(Westhouse Farm),
Colchester, Essex**

March 2002

**on behalf of
Nevill Developments**

CAT project ref.: 02/3c
Colchester Museum accession code: 2002.64
Planning application no: F/COL/01/0317
NGR: TL 973 261 (c)



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CAT Report 182
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Fig 2 Site plan, showing foundation pads 1-16 to extension to driving range.

1 Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on the building of an extension to the driving range at Lexden Wood Golf Club (Westhouse Farm), Colchester, Essex. No trace of the enclosure first identified through aerial photographs was observed. One piece of daub was found which may derive from a late prehistoric or Roman structure.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) prior to the building of a 47m x 5m extension to the driving range at Lexden Wood Golf Club (Westhouse Farm), Colchester, Essex.
- 2.2 The Golf Club is located 2.5km to the north-west of Colchester in the Lexden area at National Grid Reference TL 973 261 (c). The existing driving range and clubhouse are situated to the north of Bakers Lane. The extension, which was given planning permission under application no F/COL/01/0317, is to be built to the east. The site is flat and lies at approximately 60m OD. Although the site has been ploughed in the past, at the time of the work it was laid to grass.
- 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, updated 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996, updated 2002), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The site is situated only 200m west of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Moat Farm Dyke (Essex Heritage Conservation Record or EHCR 11627), which was part of the extensive and complex defensive system of earthworks of pre-Roman Colchester. In addition, the site is inside a rectangular enclosure which was first identified as a cropmark (EHCR 11842). An evaluation of the cropmark enclosure by means of a geophysical survey and a single trial-trench revealed a scatter of Roman and prehistoric pottery in January 2000 (Brooks & Austin 2000). The level at which archaeologically significant deposits were present was determined to be at 300mm below modern ground-level (the base of the ploughsoil horizon). No archaeological features were observed; however, the trial-trench was located within the area of the footprint of the proposed development and not over specific anomalies highlighted from the geophysical survey.
- 3.2 A watching brief was carried out last year during the digging of foundations for a new shop at Lexden Wood Golf Club (Orr 2001). No features were exposed, but two pieces of amphora may indicate Roman usage of the enclosure. As the proposed development lies within the enclosure, there is a potential for archaeological features such as pits to be present.
- 3.3 In September 1952, Lieutenant R J Appleby cut an exploratory trench across the ditch of the rectangular enclosure in the field immediately east of Westhouse Farm (NGR TL 9732 2608 - estimated). His trench was a few metres east of the south-west corner of the enclosure. The ditch, which lies under a blanket of ploughsoil 9-12 inches (200-300mm) thick, was 16 feet (4.9m) wide and 4 feet (1.2m) deep. The top fill of the ditch was described in notes on the excavation as *Gravelly Loam*, and the lower fill as *loam* (RCEM 1954). Large thick pieces of pottery were reported, and at the depths quoted they must have come from the lower (loam) fill. Appleby describes the pottery as *'thick coarse and friable'*, and it *'was thought to be Bronze Age'*. The published note on the excavation (in RCEM 1954, presumably written by Colchester Museum curator Rex Hull) describes the pottery in more detail as *'thick, soft, black ware with a rough drab surface'*, and the author remarks that this was *'quite different from anything found in Colchester before'*, and *'certainly not Roman nor yet of the period of Cunobeline, and it is unlikely to be Saxon'*. The upper fill of the ditch contained a fragment of Roman tile, which shows that the earthwork was not levelled before the Roman period. It seems unlikely that Rex Hull had never seen this type of pottery before (EHCR 12671).

- 3.4** The excavation report is enlarged upon by Crummy who estimates the ditch as being 3 feet 6 inches (1.1m) deep and 16 feet (4.9m) wide (Hawkes & Crummy 1995, 137). The upper fill of the ditch containing the Roman tile is probably the bank redeposited into the partially silted-up ditch. Crummy dates the pottery, which is now lost, to between the 8th century and *circa* 50 BC, and the earthwork to the early or middle Iron Age or earlier. This writer is of the opinion (*pace* Crummy and Appleby) that any pottery described as black and soft would immediately be assumed to be either late Iron Age or Saxon, similar fabrics having been produced in both periods. Against this must count the fact that Hull failed to recognise it, which he should have if it was late Iron Age. In an enclosure of this type, late Iron Age would, of course, be the most appropriate date. Further work is required to establish the date of this enclosure, and to identify the date and function of the internal features, ie whether they are pits.

4 Aims and objectives

The aim of the archaeological work was to record and excavate any surviving archaeological finds, features and deposits.

5 Methods

- 5.1** The work was carried out by a professional CAT archaeologist according to a brief written by Colchester Borough Council's Archaeological Officer. An intensive watching brief was maintained during the digging out of the sixteen pad foundations (nos 1-16) for the extension. These were each dug by mini-digger with a toothless ditching bucket to a length of 1.4m and width of 750mm. In accordance with the WSI (Written Scheme of Investigation), the removal of the first 500-600mm was monitored. Deeper excavation was not monitored as archaeological features were not expected at a depth below this.
- 5.2** A record of the position of the site excavations was made which has been reproduced as Figure 2. Soil types were noted.
- 5.3** Finds were retrieved, cleaned and bagged according to context.

6 Results

- 6.1** In all of the sixteen pad foundations, the top 350mm consisted of turf and mid brown silty loam topsoil containing abundant small rounded stones and no artefacts. Below this was a subsoil of reddish brown silt with occasional brick flecks and containing abundant medium to large angular and rounded stones. One piece of probable daub (weighing 11g) was found from this layer in pad foundation no 6. The daub is too small to say what sort of structure it comes from, but it is likely to be of late prehistoric or Roman date.
- 6.2** No features of archaeological significance were observed during the watching brief.

7 Discussion

The digging out of the pad foundations did not impinge on the enclosure ditch and no pits relating to the enclosure were uncovered. The ground was largely undisturbed with a surprisingly small amount of modern or other material.

8 Archive deposition

A copy of this report, digital data on disk and the paper archive will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museum under accession code 2002.64.

9 Acknowledgements

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

Dean Nevill of Nevill Developments for commissioning and funding the work
Martin Winter, Archaeological Officer for Colchester Borough Council

10 References

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Kate Orr, April 2002

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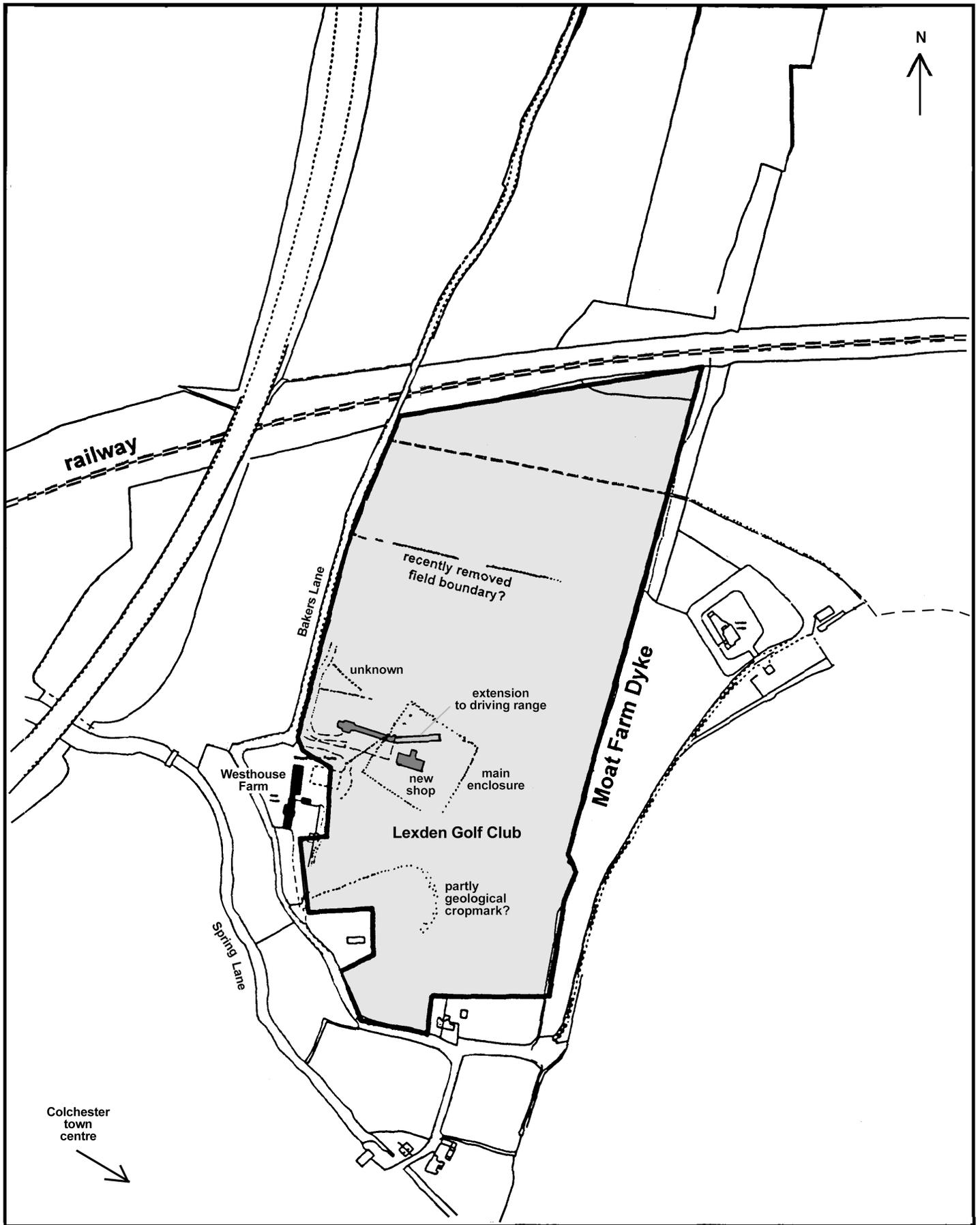


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Fig 1 Site location, showing cropmarks around Westhouse Farm; scale 1:5000.

..... cropmark

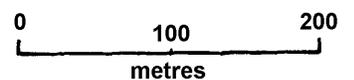




Fig 2 Site plan, showing foundation pads 1-16 to extension to driving range; scale 1:200.



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

Summary sheet

Site name/address: Lexden Wood Golf Club (Westhouse Farm), Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester Borough
NGR: TL 973 261 (c)	Site code: 2002.64
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 18th March 2002	Size of area investigated: 47m x 5m
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museum	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? Yes, during future building work	Related EHCR nos: 11627, 11842, 12671
Final report: CAT Report 182 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: 1 piece of late prehistoric or Roman daub	
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>An archaeological watching brief was carried out on the building of an extension to the driving range at Lexden Wood Golf Club (Westhouse Farm), Colchester, Essex. No trace of the enclosure first identified through aerial photographs was observed. One piece of daub was found which may derive from a late prehistoric or Roman structure.</i>	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Reports 47, 59 and 167	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: April 2002