

**An archaeological watching brief at
Rockingham's Farm,
Layer Marney, Essex
September 2002-July 2003**

**report prepared by
Kate Orr**

**on behalf of
Colchester Borough Council**

NGR: TL 92551 16465
CAT project code: 02/9b
Planning application no: COL/02/02/02
Colchester Museums accession code: 2002.176



Colchester Archaeological Trust
12 Lexden Road,
Colchester,
Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051
tel/fax: (01206) 500124
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

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Fig 1 Site location, scale 1:1000.

1 Summary

An archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a large pond at Rockingham's Farm produced negative results. During two visits, no archaeological features or finds were observed.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the excavation of a large pond at Rockingham's Farm, Layer Marney, Essex. The site is located at NGR TL 92551 16465. The farm is situated approximately 1km south-west of Layer Marney Tower. The 1.12ha pond is situated in a ploughed field to the east of the farm buildings and farmhouse (Fig 1).
- 2.2 The watching brief was carried out during the excavation of the pond (planning application number COL/02/02/02). Two visits were made by an archaeologist, in September 2002 and July 2003.
- 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 (Fig 1)

- 3.1 No archaeological features are known from the site itself; however, the site is close to several features of archaeological interest.
- 3.2 Remains of a possible Roman villa were found during deep ploughing at Rockingham's Farm in 1954, 700m north of the pond site. The finds consisted of Roman tile and pottery over a wide area but the site has never been excavated (Essex Heritage Conservation Record or EHCR no 11441).
- 3.3 Layer Marney Tower lies 1.2km to the north-east of the pond site. This is a gatehouse and wing of a house which was started in the early 16th century for Lord Marney but never completed (EHCR 11408). There was a deer park in existence here by 1266 and vestiges of it still survive around the building (EHCR 11409-11410). The church of St Mary the Virgin stands to the west of the building and dates to the early 16th century. It is likely to have been rebuilt by Lord Marney at the same time as the gatehouse was built. It replaced a Norman church of which virtually nothing is known. The church contains two major monuments to the Marney family dating from 1360 and 1523 (EHCR 11405-11406).
- 3.4 Earthworks exist to the north-east of the main building, including a substantial mound (EHCR 11404). From the evidence it would appear that the Marney family had a manor here from at least 1330 which included a church, deer park and presumably a manor house.

4 Aim

The aim of the fieldwork was to record any archaeological finds, features or deposits disturbed by the groundworks.

5 Methods

- 5.1 The topsoil and subsoil was stripped off using a mechanical excavator with a toothed ditching bucket. Two visits were made: the first during topsoil-stripping and the second when most of the subsoil had been removed.
- 5.2 The sections were checked for archaeological features and spoil heaps were checked for artefacts.

6 Results

19/09/02

The first visit was made during topsoil-stripping. Mid brown clayey loam topsoil overlaid light brown clay subsoil. No features or finds of archaeological significance were observed.

16/07/03

A further 0.5m-1m of soil had been removed to expose more of the light brown clay subsoil. The edges of the lake had been banked up so it was not possible to check the sections. However, the centre of the pond had not yet been excavated, so it was possible to examine the section of the baulk for archaeological features. The sections that had been exposed to the sun for a few days were hard baked, which may have obscured any features. In the freshly-dug sections, no archaeological features were observed and there was no sign of any disturbance. The spoil heap was too large to check all of it; however, no finds were observed on the parts that were checked.

7 Discussion

No evidence of any archaeological activity was observed on the site. However, it is possible that given the large scale of earthmoving and the intermittent nature of the monitoring, something may have been missed.

8 Acknowledgments

The fieldwork was carried out by Kate Orr. The project was monitored by Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council. The project was commissioned and funded by Colchester Borough Council.

The Trust would like to thank Mr Black of Rockingham's Farm for allowing access to the site.

9 Glossary

context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
EHCR	Essex Heritage Conservation Record, Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
NGR	National Grid Reference
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
Roman	the period from AD 43 to around AD 430

10 Archive deposition

The archive is held at Colchester Archaeological Trust, 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museums under accession code 2002.176.

Distribution list:

Mr Black, Rockingham's Farm
Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council
Essex Heritage Conservation Record, Essex County Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust

12 Lexden Road,
Colchester,
Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051
tel./fax: (01206) 500124
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy
Date: 24.07.03

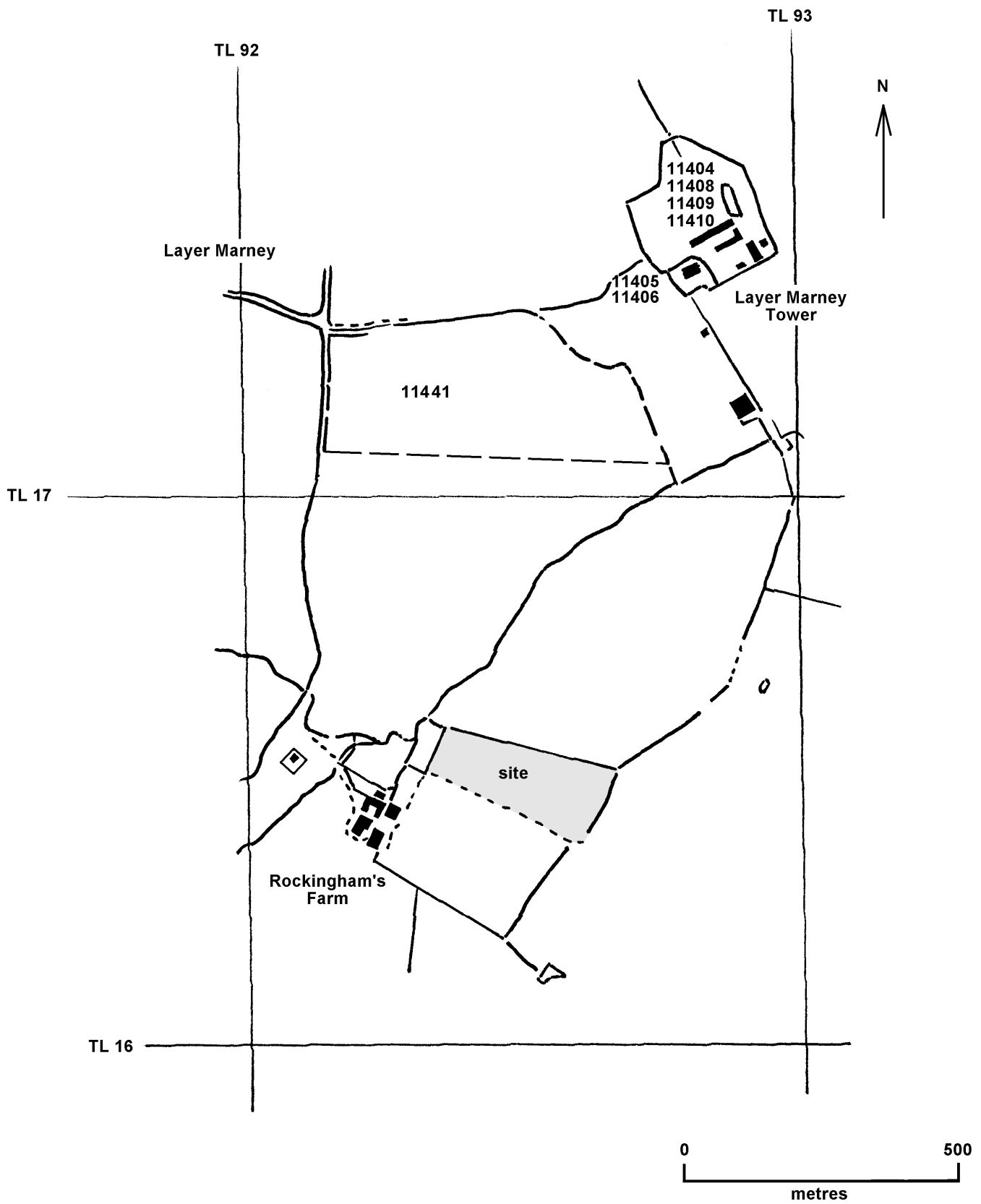


Fig 1 Site location, scale 1:1000.

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

Summary sheet

Site address: Rockingham's Farm, Layer Marney, Essex	
Parish: Layer Marney	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 92551 16465	Site code: Museum accession code 2002.176
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: September 2002- July 2002	Size of area investigated: 1.12ha
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: Colchester Borough Council
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHCR nos: 11404- 11406, 11408-11410; 11411
Final report: CAT Report 238 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: None	
Summary of fieldwork results: An archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a large pond at Rockingham's Farm produced negative results. During two visits no archaeological features or finds were observed.	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: July 2003