

**An archaeological evaluation at
30 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex
November 2003**

**report prepared by
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**on behalf of
Mr P Clarke**

CAT project ref.: 03/11g
NGR: TL 9741 2468 (centred)
Colchester Museums accession code: 2003.293



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EHCR summary sheet

1 Summary

During an archaeological evaluation carried out to the rear of 30 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex, no features of archaeological interest were recorded. Part of the site appears to have been disturbed by tree bowls.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an evaluation by trial-trenching carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT), at 30 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex.
- 2.2 The 0.47 hectare site is located 2km west of Colchester town centre, at the junction of St Clare Road and Fitzwalter Road, at National Grid Reference TL 9741 2468 (centred). The site is currently garden with some tree cover.
- 2.3 The investigation was prompted by a planning application (no F/COL/03/1410) to erect a single detached dwelling and garage (32 St Clare Road) in the garden of 30 St Clare Road. The archaeology officer of Colchester Borough Council recommended an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out prior to the determination of the application to assess any surviving archaeological remains which may be affected by the development.
- 2.4 All fieldwork was done in accordance with a specification submitted by CAT and approved by the archaeology officer.
- 2.5 This report mirrors standards and practices contained in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines for the standards and practice of archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1999, updated 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1999, updated 2003), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological evaluation* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The site lies within the Late Iron Age *oppidum* as defined by a system of defensive dykes, on the western side of Camulodunum. The line of one of these dykes (Lexden Dyke) traverses the southern end of the garden of 30 St Clare Road. This major defensive feature dates to the late Iron Age (Hawkes & Crummy 1995, 29-33).
- 3.2 The site occupies an area rich in archaeological remains, being situated on the southern side of the late Iron Age and Roman Lexden cemetery area. The cemetery area, which has never been fully published, was in use from the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD. Since the early 1900s, 27 vessels representing at least 10 late Iron Age grave groups have been identified from a small area approximately 75m across (Crummy *et al* 1993, 261, 265; Hawkes & Crummy 1995, 164-9). The cemetery lies about 200m north of 30 St Clare Road.
- 3.3 Approximately 65m to the east lies the Lexden Tumulus, a burial mound which was excavated in 1924, and produced a rich late Iron Age cremation dating to the late 1st century BC (Foster 1986).
- 3.4 Imported early Roman brooches have been found close to St Clare Drive and a Middle Bronze Age urn has been recorded in St Clare Road.

4 Aim

The evaluation was designed to locate, identify and assess the quality and extent of surviving archaeological remains prior to a decision being taken on the preservation or otherwise of deposits and the need for further work and/or mitigation.

5 Methods

- 5.1** Three trial-trenches were excavated, equating to 3% of the 0.47 hectare area. Trenches were sited within the footprint of the proposed buildings but avoiding trees. All trenches were excavated by Mr Clarke using a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket, under archaeological supervision.
- 5.2** Individual records of layers were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.3** Profile drawings of trenches were made at a scale of 1:10. Plans of the trenches were made at a scale of 1:50.
- 5.4** Finds were registered but discarded.
- 5.5** Colour photographs of features were taken with a digital camera.

6 Results (see Figs 1-2)

6.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was dug on a north-west to south-east alignment within the footprint of the proposed dwelling. It was dug to between 800mm and 1.1m deep, and was 10m x 1.5m. The following soil profile was observed:

Layer 1 or L1 - 250mm of mid brown silty loam topsoil with common small sub-angular stones.

L2 – 400mm of orangey-mid brown slightly sandy loam subsoil with abundant small sub-angular and rounded stones.

L3 – natural orange sand and gravel started at a depth of between 650mm and 720mm below ground-level and extended to the base of the trench.

6.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was dug on a north-north-east to south-south-west alignment within the footprint of the proposed dwelling. It was dug to between 1.1m and 1.2m deep, and was 5.3m x 1.5m. A similar soil profile to Trench 1 was observed, with natural ground occurring at a depth of 800mm below ground-level.

6.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was dug on a north-east to south-west alignment within the footprint of the proposed garage, to the south of the proposed dwelling. It was dug to between 1.2m and 1.5m deep, and was 5.4m x 1.5m. The following soil profile was observed:

L1 – 300mm of topsoil.

L2 – 700mm of subsoil.

L3 – natural sand and gravel occurred at a depth of between 1m and 1.1m below ground-level.

No features of archaeological significance were observed in any of the three trenches. All finds were either post-medieval or modern in date including brick fragments, peg-tile, a 20th-century button, table forks and iron objects.

7 Discussion

No features of archaeological significance were recorded during the evaluation. There was no trace of any whole cremation burials, and there were no Roman pottery or cremated bone fragments which might indicate disturbed cremations. The lack of Roman pottery and tile suggests that there were no centres of Roman occupation in the immediate vicinity. The difference in the depths of the top of the natural in Trench 3 and the other two trenches may be due to at least one tree bowl in Trench 3.

8 Acknowledgements

The Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank Mr Clarke for funding and facilitating the work, and Martin Winter, archaeology officer for Colchester Borough Council, for preparing the brief and monitoring the project. The fieldwork was carried out by Karly Weller.

9 References

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|-------------------------------------|------|--|
| Crummy, N, Crummy, P, & Crossan, C, | 1993 | <i>Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-88</i> , Colchester Archaeological Report 9 |
| Foster, J, | 1986 | <i>The Lexden tumulus: a reappraisal of an Iron Age burial from Colchester, Essex</i> , BAR, British Series, 156 |
| Hawkes, C F C, & Crummy, P, | 1995 | <i>Camulodunum 2</i> , Colchester Archaeological Report 11 |

10 Glossary

Bronze Age feature	the period from c 2500 BC to 700 BC an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain contexts
modern	period from the 19th century to the present
NGR	National Grid Reference
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
<i>oppidum</i>	a high-status Late Iron Age defended settlement
post-medieval	approximately AD 1500 to around the late 18th century
Roman	the period from AD 43 to around AD 410
tumulus	burial mound

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museums under accession code 2003.293.

Distribution list:

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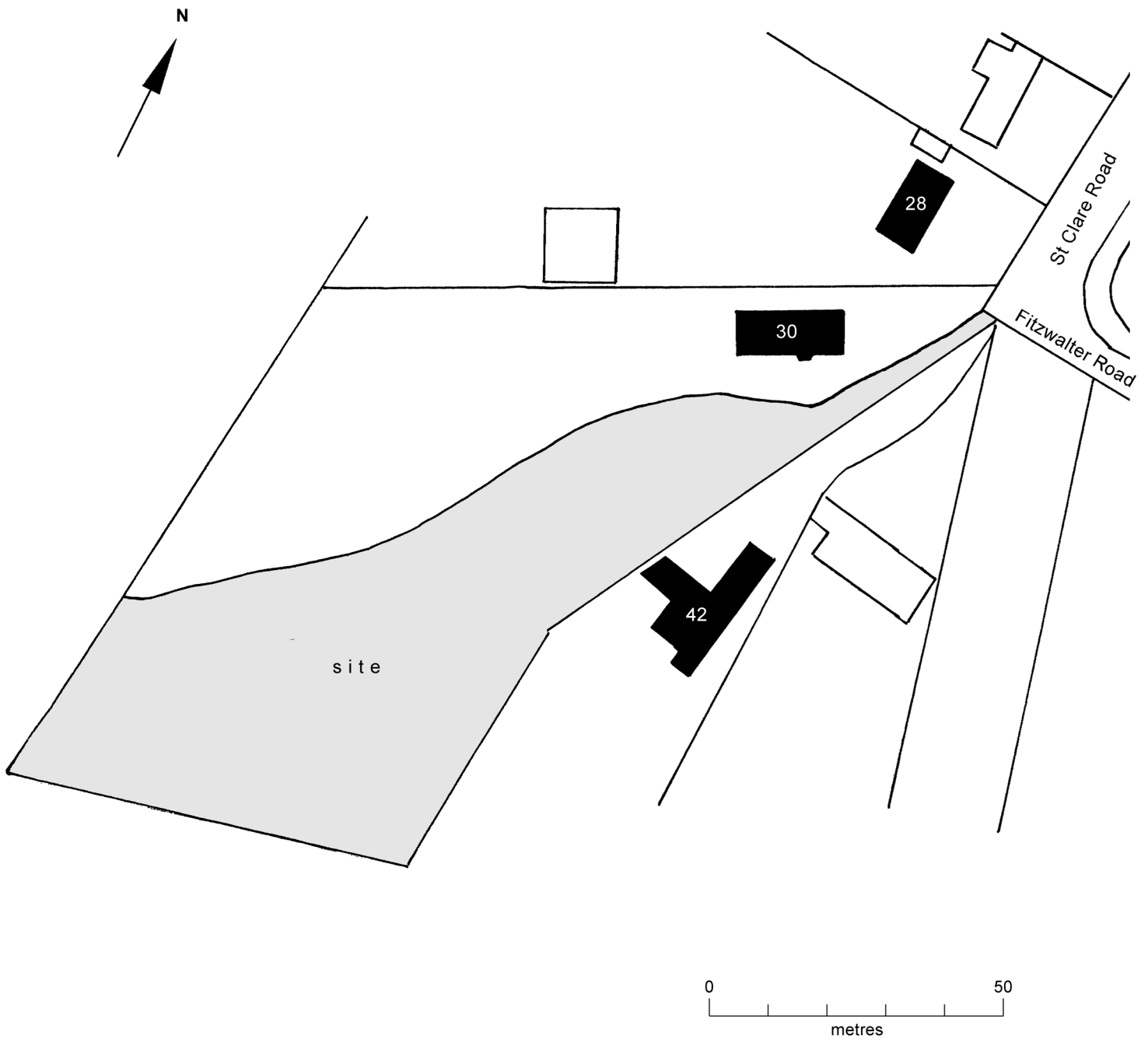


Fig 1 Site location.

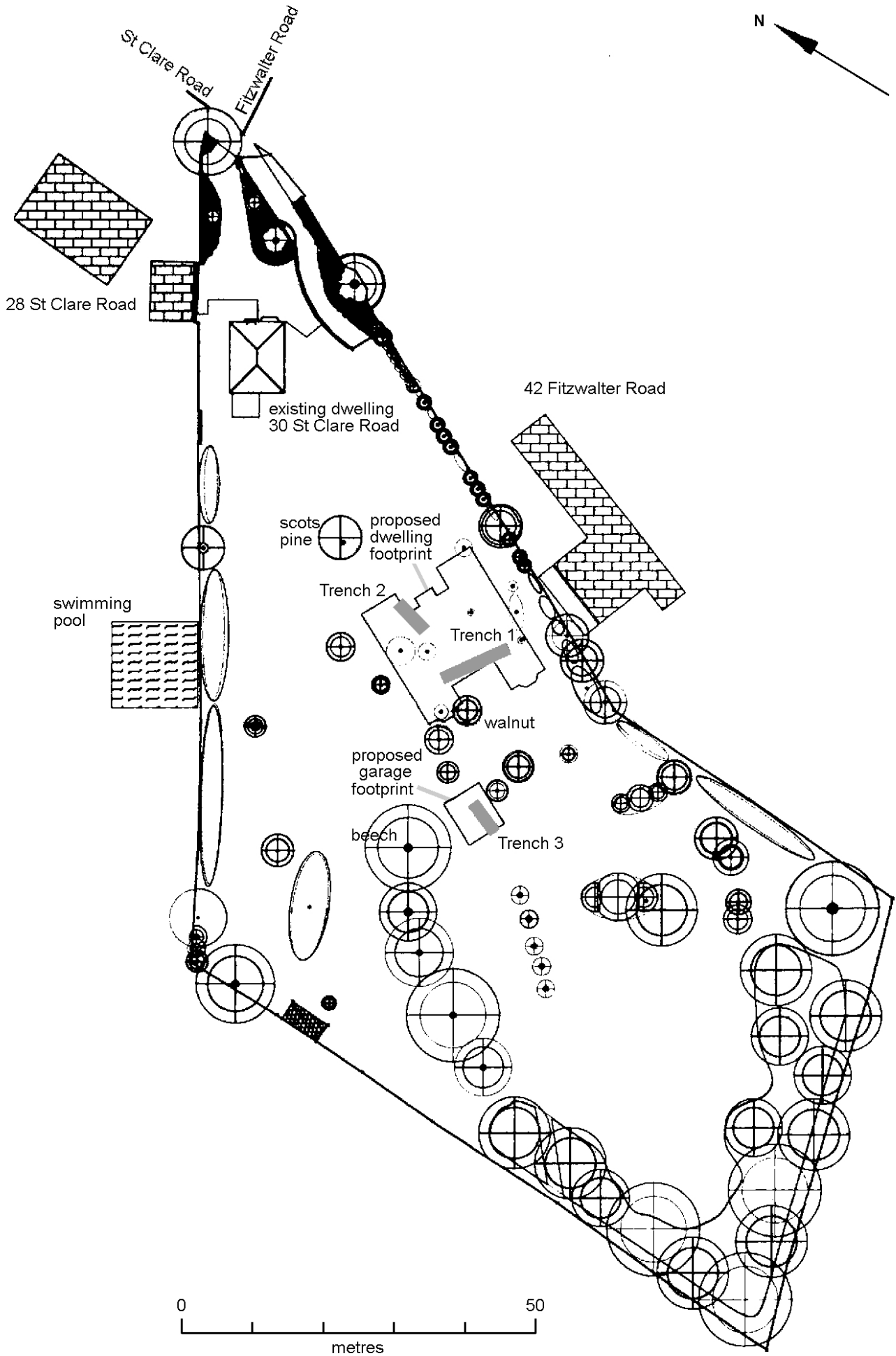


Fig 2 Trench location plan.

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

Summary sheet

Site name/address: 30 St Clare Road, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9741 2468 (centred)	Site code: 2003.293
Type of work: Evaluation – 3 trial-trenches	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 24th-28th November 2003	Size of area investigated: 0.47 hectares
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: House owner
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHCR nos:
Final report: CAT Report 250	
Periods represented: None	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: No features of archaeological significance were recorded during the evaluation. No trace of any whole cremation burials and no Roman pottery or cremated bone fragments which might indicate disturbed cremations were recorded. The lack of Roman pottery and tile suggests that there were no centres of Roman occupation in the immediate vicinity. The difference in the depths of the top of the natural between Trench 3 and the other two trenches may be due to tree bowls.</p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: January 2004