

An archaeological watching brief at the 'new garrison', Colchester, Essex January-March 2004

**report prepared by
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**on behalf of
Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd**

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EHCR summary sheet

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1 Summary

Observations were made during various preliminary groundworks relating to the construction of the 'new garrison' at Colchester. Nothing of archaeological significance was recorded during the monitoring of any of these works.

2 Introduction

- 2.1** This is a report on an archaeological watching brief carried out during groundworks associated with the construction of the new garrison at Colchester (see Fig 1 for a plan of the site of the new garrison).
- 2.2** The work was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) from 19th January 2004 to 31st March 2004 on behalf of Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd, according to the written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by RPS Planning, Transport and Environment in association with CAT on behalf of RMPA Services and the MoD.
- 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* (2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1999), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1** The archaeological and historical setting of the proposed new garrison development area has been comprehensively explored in a desk-based assessment of the Colchester Garrison PFI site (CAT Report 97).
- 3.2** Recent excavations in 2002-4 on the site have produced evidence of a detailed sequence and pattern of archaeological remains (CAT Report 270). The remains include evidence of Neolithic activity; late Bronze Age/iron Age settlement and field boundaries; middle Iron Age landscape boundaries, field systems and isolated pits; late Iron Age/early Romano-British curvilinear droeways, enclosures and settlement activity, farm and co-axial field systems; Berechurch Dyke; and WW1 and WW2 training and defensive features.

4 Aims and objectives

The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any archaeological features or finds that were disturbed by the groundworks.

5 Methodology

- 5.1** The groundworks were related to four separate projects. These were as follows:
 - a) the construction of part of a new security fence and lighting system on the southern side of Kirkee McMunn Barracks
 - b) a programme of tree-felling and root removal
 - c) the diversion of a gas-main and a water-main, and
 - d) the construction of soakaways at various locations across the site.
- 5.2** Individual records of excavated contexts, layers, features and deposits were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets and all works were planned at an appropriate scale.
- 5.3** A photographic record was kept consisting of general site shots and shots of all archaeological features and layers.

6 Groundworks

- 6.1** The groundworks were divided into four separate excavations carried out by different sub-contractors. All works were machine-excavated and monitored by an archaeologist.
- 6.2 New security fencing and lighting on the southern edge of Kirkee McMunn Barracks** (Chestnut Products Ltd) (Fig 2)
A 1m-wide area was stripped down approximately 20cm along the new fence-line. A trench, 60cm wide, was then dug down approximately another 30cm. Every 3m, a small hole (approximately 30cm x 30cm and 50cm down) was dug for the fence-posts.
A trench was dug 6m behind and parallel to the new security fence to run cables along for a new system of lamp-posts. The trench was approximately 60cm wide and 60-80cm deep. Holes for the lamp-posts were bored approximately every 20m.
- 6.3 Tree-felling and root removal** (Landsure Ltd) (Fig 1)
In several different areas across the site, trees were felled and their roots dug out.
- 6.4 Water- and gas-main diversion** (Anglian Water and Transco) (Fig 3)
Both a water- and a gas-main were diverted at the northern intersection of Berechurch Road and Roman Way. The trench for the water-main diversion, dug through Berechurch Road, was approximately 80cm wide and 1.2m deep. The trench for the gas-main diversion, dug through Berechurch Road and the fields on either side, was approximately 80cm wide and 2m deep.
- 6.5 Trial soakaway pits** (Flannery Ltd)
In total, 23 trial soakaway pits (funnel-shaped pits of Type A and rectangular straight-sided pits of Type B) were dug in numerous locations across the site of the new garrison. The funnel-shaped pits, at approximately 5m x 5m at the top and 1.5m x 1.5m at bottom, were dug to a depth of approximately 3m. Six of these pits were dug in Area G, four in Area M, one in Field P and one in Area R (east). The rectangular straight-sided pits, at approximately 2m x 1m, were dug to a depth of approximately 1.5m. Four of these pits were dug within Kirkee McMunn Barracks and seven in Area F/Area 6. A trench (approximately 5m long and 1m wide) was also dug across the north edge of Area F/Area 6 to locate an asbestos dump and a water-main. On consultation with Rob Masefield (RPS), none of the trial soakaway pits were planned.

7 Results

- 7.1 New security fencing and lighting on the southern edge of Kirkee McMunn Barracks**
- 7.1.1 The fencing**
Areas A, B (S) and C – trenches were dug through topsoil (Layer or L1 – a dark brown silty loam) and occasionally dug into subsoil (L2 – a lighter brown silty loam).
Area D – trenches were dug through a concrete and make-up layer (L3).
- 7.1.2 The lighting**
Areas A and C – trenches dug through L1, L2 and occasionally into natural (L4 – a yellow/orange sand).
Area B (N) – trench was dug through L3 and occasionally into L2.
Area D – trenches dug through L3.
- 7.1.3** Nothing of archaeological significance was recorded during any of the groundworks.
- 7.2 Tree-felling and root removal**
Nothing of archaeological significance was recorded during any of the groundworks.

7.3 Water- and gas-main diversion

The trench for the water-main diversion was dug through approximately 10-20cm of tarmac (L1), 40-50cm of make-up rubble (L2), 20-30cm of subsoil (L3 – a light brown silty loam) and into natural (L4 – a yellow/orange sand).

The trench for the gas-main diversion was dug through Berechurch Road (see water-main diversion above for description of layers) and through the fields on either side of the road – approximately 30-40cm of topsoil (L5 – a dark brown silt), 30-40cm of subsoil (L3) and into natural (L4).

Nothing of archaeological significance was recorded during any of the groundworks.

7.4 Trial soakaway pits

All funnel-shaped pits were dug through a dark brown silty topsoil (L1), a lighter brown silty subsoil (L2) and into a yellow/orange sand (natural) (L3).

All rectangular straight-sided pits were dug through L1 and L2 and into L3.

The trench was dug through backfill (L4) associated with the asbestos dump and water-main.

Nothing of archaeological significance was recorded during any of the groundworks.

8 Discussion

Nothing of archaeological significance was recorded during any of the groundworks.

9 Archive deposition

A copy of this report will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museums under accession code 2004.120.

10 Acknowledgements

The Colchester Archaeological Trust is grateful to Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd for funding the work, and especially to Tom Fawcett and Jason England of McAlpine for their help and co-operation.

11 References

- CAT Report 97 An archaeological desk-based assessment of the Colchester Garrison PFI site, unpublished CAT archive report, by Kate Orr, 2000
- CAT Report 270 Colchester Garrison PFI project stage 2: archaeological excavation assessment report, unpublished CAT archive report, by Howard Brooks, 2004

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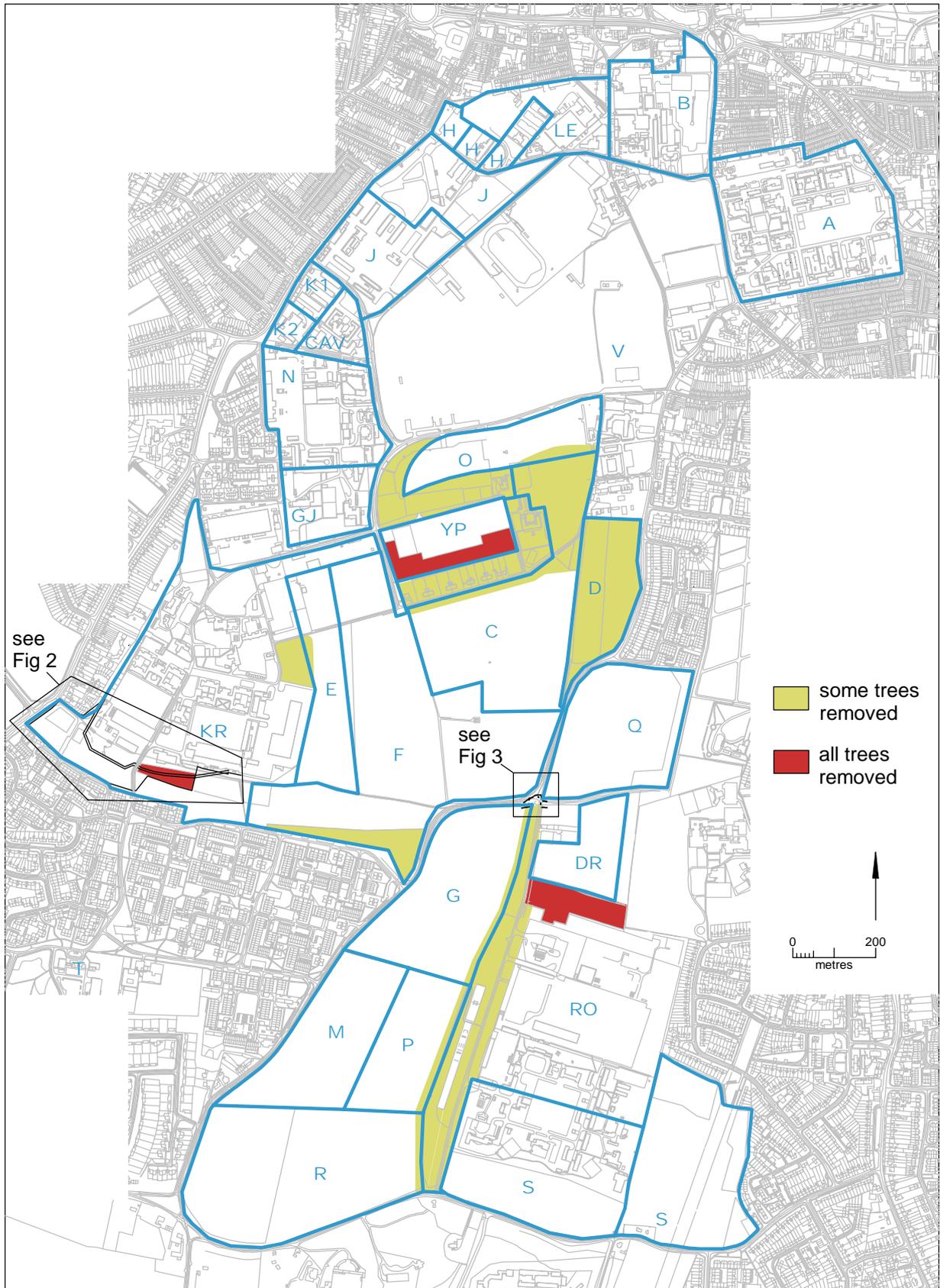
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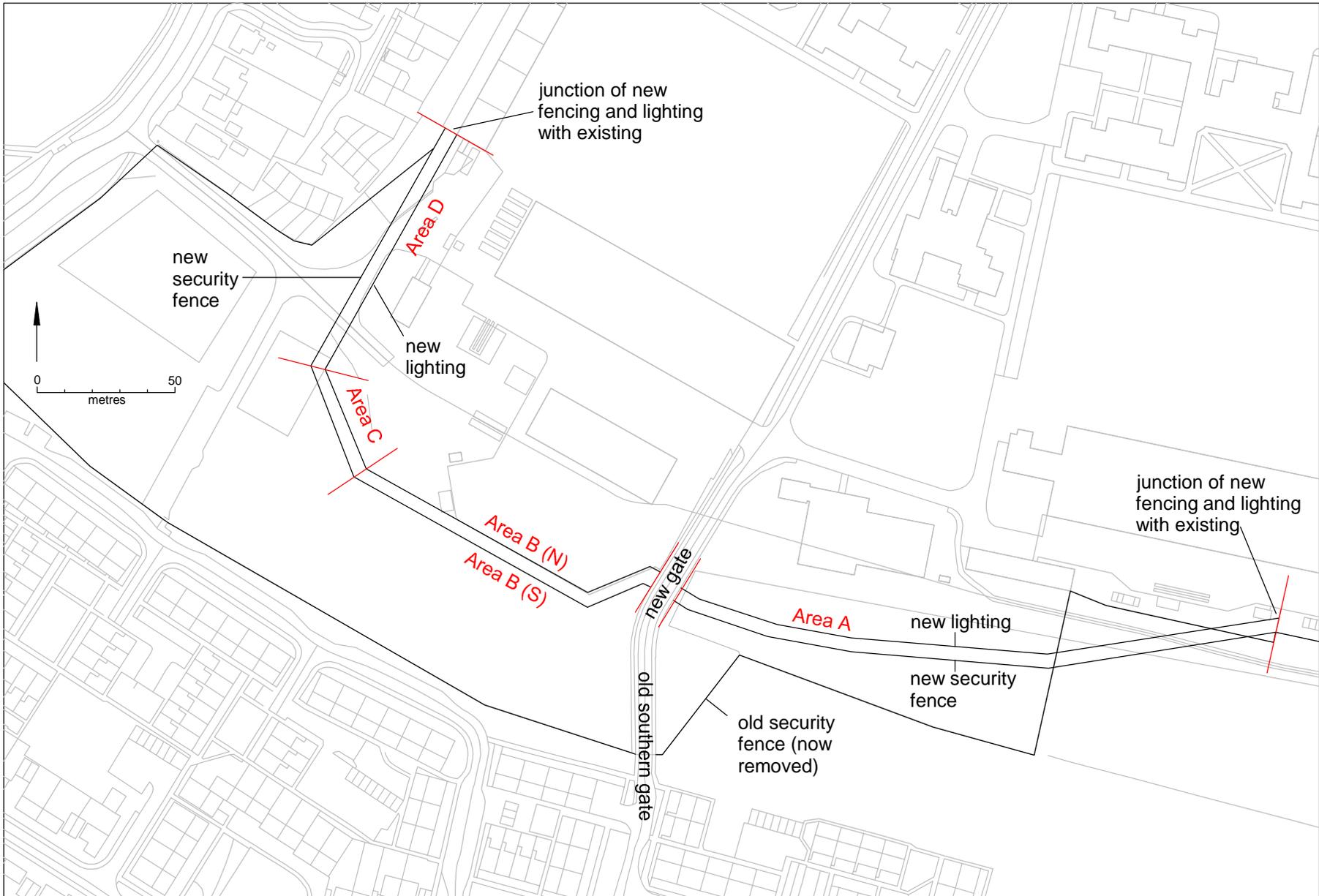
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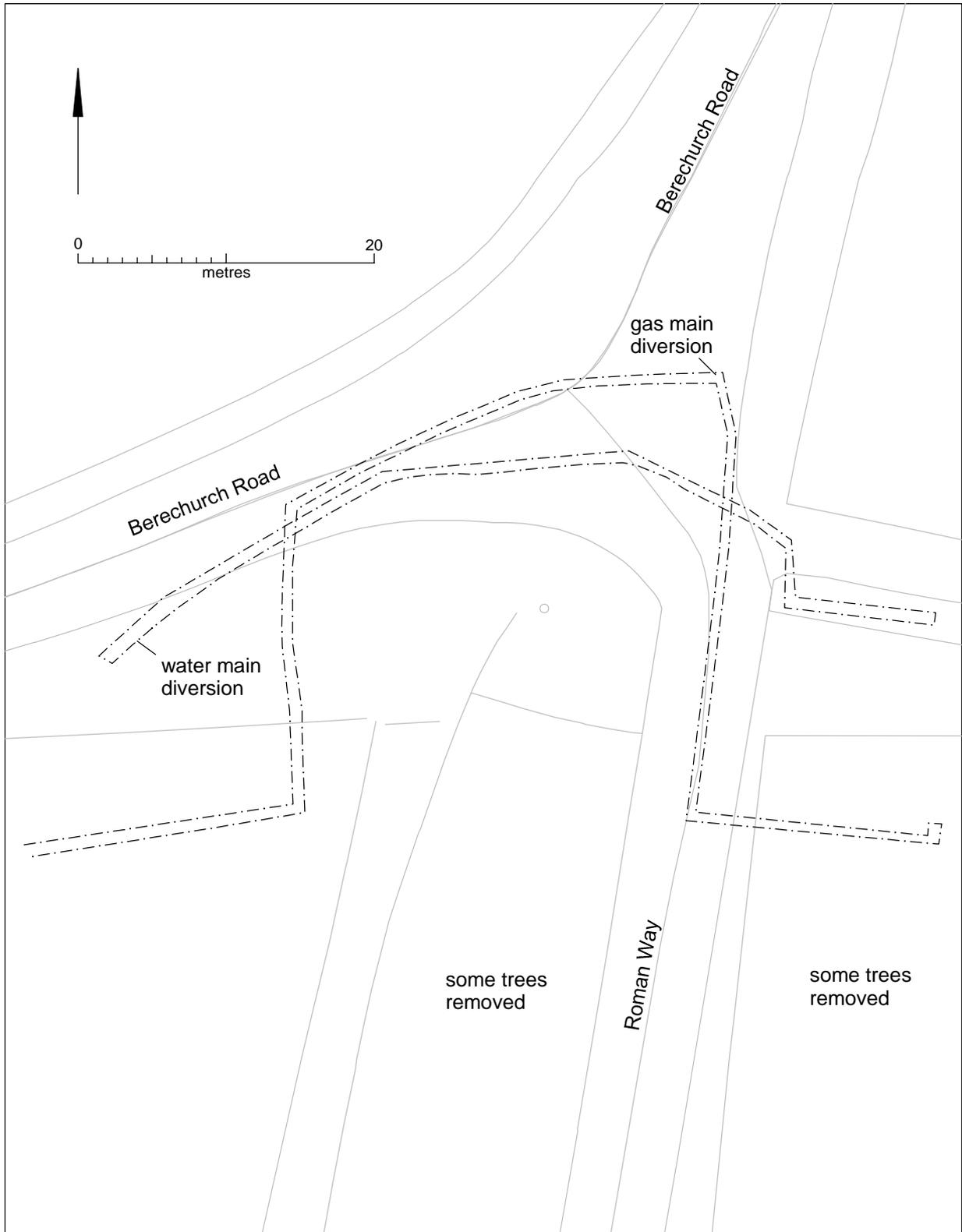
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Fig 1 Plan showing the extent of the Colchester Garrison development and the locations of the groundworks covered in this report.



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Fig 2 Plan of the new security fencing and lighting erected on the southern side of the Kirkee McMunn barracks.



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Fig 3 Plan of the water and gas main diversions at the junction of Berechurch Road and Roman Way.

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

Summary sheet

Site address: the site of the 'new garrison', Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9930 2300 (c)	Site code: Museum accession code 2004.120
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: January-March 2004	Size of area investigated: (Trenches for new security fencing and lighting, areas of tree felling and root removal, trenches for a water- and gas-main diversion, and 23 trial soakaway pits)
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHCR nos: N/A
Final report: CAT Report 276	
Periods represented: None	
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Observations were made during various preliminary groundworks relating to the construction of the 'new garrison' at Colchester. Nothing of archaeological significance was recorded during the monitoring of any of these works.</i>	
Previous summaries/reports: N/A	
Author of summary: Laura Pooley	Date of summary: July 2004