

**Stage 1b archaeological evaluation,
Alienated Land Area P1
(off Berechurch Road),
Colchester Garrison,
Colchester, Essex
December 2006**

**report prepared by
Howard Brooks and Ben Holloway
on behalf of
Taylor Woodrow**

CAT project code: 06/10d
Colchester Museums accession code: 2006.127
NGR: TL 9970 2380 (centre)



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1 Summary

Evaluation on a site previously occupied by the Colchester Garrison married quarters revealed modern foundations in two of the three trenches. The only significant archaeological feature was an undated but probably prehistoric or Roman ditch.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological trial-trenching evaluation on Taylor Woodrow's Alienated Land development Area P1, off Berechurch Road, Colchester Garrison, Colchester, Essex.
- 2.2 The site is currently occupied by an MoD administrative building with grassed and hardstanding areas to the east. The site is flanked by Berechurch Road to the east, Ypres Road to the west, Poperinghe Road to the south, and the Garrison military court to the north.
- 2.3 The site is centred on NGR TL 9970 2380 (Fig 1).
- 2.4 Although trial-trenching had previously been undertaken on behalf of RMPA Services in advance of outline planning permission in 2002 (Stage 1a) on most of the Taylor Woodrow land parcels, it was not possible to undertake trenching in this particular area. However, trial-trenching was conducted within adjacent Areas O and D, to the immediate west and to the south respectively. The results from these evaluations provide a degree of archaeological context for Area P1. The most significant archaeological sites are, however, slightly further away (see Section 3.4, below).
- 2.5 The archaeological strategy for the overall project requires the level of trenching to be 3% unless otherwise agreed with Colchester Borough Council (CBC). This has been achieved by the trenches described here. The information obtained from the combined Stage 1a evaluations of adjacent areas and Stage 1b evaluation will determine whether further mitigation (excavation, watching brief or avoidance strategies) will be required ahead of or during the construction phase.
- 2.6 An overall Archaeological Strategy has been provided for the project by RPS (RPS 2004). This provides an outline framework for the mitigation of the archaeological impacts on the Alienated Land.
- 2.7 A specific archaeological proposal (Written Scheme of Investigation) for Area P1 has been submitted to and approved by the CBC (RPS 2006).
- 2.8 The archaeological work was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on behalf of Taylor Woodrow in association with RPS Planning, Transport and Environment, between 18th and 21st December 2006. Post-excavation work was carried out between 21st December 2006 and 8th January 2007.
- 2.9 In addition to the Archaeological Strategy (RPS 2004) and the Area P1 WSI (RPS 2006), all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with the Colchester Archaeological Trust's *Policies and Procedures* (1999), Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines for the standards and practice of archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CM 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (CM 2003), the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2), and *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment* (EAA 3), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (EAA 8), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) was also followed.

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1** The archaeological and historical setting of the Garrison redevelopment area has already been comprehensively explored in CAT Report 97 (An archaeological desk-based assessment of the Colchester Garrison PFI site), with archaeological fieldwork ahead of the New Garrison development providing an opportunity for detailed archaeological fieldwork including 12km of trial-trenching and three excavations. The archaeological context of Area P1 has been further informed by the linked Alienated Land project which has included evaluations of nearby Areas E and O and on the attenuation pond site within the south-eastern corner of the Abbey Field.
- 3.2** The site, like much of the land to the south and south-west of Colchester's modern town centre, falls within the area of the pre-Roman *oppidum* of Camulodunum. The only above-ground traces of this *oppidum* are the linear banks and ditches of the defensive dyke system which surrounded it. The Garrison area occupies the eastern edge of the *oppidum*, and one of the defensive dykes (the Berechurch Dyke) crosses the extreme south-eastern edge of the Garrison, to the immediate east of Roman Barracks.
- 3.3** As understood at present, the *oppidum* had two main centres of activity: at modern Gosbecks Farm (2km south-west of the Garrison), which was a Late Iron Age and Roman rural farmstead (and possibly the home of Cunobelin); and Sheepen (2km north-west of the Garrison), which was the industrial and trading centre. Apart from these two large centres (above), it is likely that there were smaller domestic and farming sites in the *oppidum*. One of these was identified by the field boundaries paddocks and other features recorded at Kirkee and McMunn Barracks in 1994 (Shimmin 1998). In addition, cropmarks have been recorded over much of the southern part of the Garrison area. Geophysical survey ahead of the New Garrison development has confirmed and added to the pattern of linear cropmark features (CAT Report 184). The open area excavations conducted ahead of the construction phase for the New Garrison development (CAT/RPS Report 292) have established that they are, at the latest, Iron Age prehistoric/early-mid Romano-British in date. They represent the trackways, paddocks and field boundaries of a rural settlement of that period.
- 3.4** The other principal discovery from the wider area of the New Garrison is the remains of a late Middle Iron Age round-house within a ditched enclosure, south of the former Ypres Road and about 400m to the south-west of Area P1. This site appears to pre-date the *oppidum*, and, as such, demonstrates that the landscape was farmed and occupied by at least one relatively wealthy farm prior to the construction of the dyke system. Within the Taylor Woodrow development area, prehistoric features including a structure were found within Area Q about 700m to the south of Area P1, while the zone closest to the walled Roman town has produced a Roman building in Area E approximately 400m to the north of Area P1. In addition, two major clusters of Roman burials (Area C2 and Area J1) and a major Roman droveway (Area J1) are located in a band of activity which was located approximately 600m to the north and 400-500m south of the walled Roman town itself. Also within this zone, a monumental stone-built Roman circus, currently unique in Britain, has been discovered during excavations in Alienated Land Areas C1, C2 and J1 to the north-east of Area J2 in 2004 and 2005, with further walls and a monument base uncovered during service works at Napier Road in 2006 (CAT Report 361).
The circus was orientated east-west and was approximately 450m in length and 70m wide, with a central *spina* barrier. Elements identified to date include the seating *cavea* within internal and external walls, two entrance ways through the southern *cavea*, a lowered racetrack dirt surface, a segment of the semi-circular end of the circus, a fragment of the starting gates, and a monument base on the line of the *spina*. The Roman burial grounds which have been found in the vicinity flanked the circus and the droveway within Area J1.
- 3.5** The only find recorded on the Urban Archaeological Database in the vicinity of Area P1 relates to a Roman pot found at King George Road, opposite Area P1, in 1946 (UAD event no 968; TL 9998 2375). This pot could be related to a burial and, as such, there is some potential for finding Roman burials in this area. Evidence from the trial-trenching within New Garrison Areas C (N) and D and Alienated Land Area

O in 2002 and 2004 suggest a rural agricultural landscape throughout prehistory and the Roman period (CAT Reports 197, 206, 361). For example, a single Roman field ditch was identified within Area O while virtually no archaeology of any period was found within Area D. The area now occupied by Colchester Garrison has remained predominantly rural in character through the medieval, post-medieval and modern periods until the construction of the Garrison, and Sobraon Barracks to the immediate west of Area P1 in the late 19th century.

- 3.7** The 1876 1st Edition 1:10,560 scale Ordnance Survey map shows the area as open farmland. However, by the time of the 2nd Edition 1:2500 scale maps of 1893-c 1904, three former barrack blocks are shown occupying the currently grassed area in the eastern part of Area P1. In addition, the former military hospital is shown to the west of Area P1 (also identified via trial-trenches on Area C (N) in 2002). The 2nd Edition and earlier 20th-century Ordnance Survey maps also show further buildings adjacent to Berechurch Road. The evidence suggests that the area will be heavily disturbed by modern footings, although there is a possibility of undisturbed ground between the sites of the three barrack blocks.

4 Aims and strategy

- 4.1** The general aim of the evaluation was to recover sufficient evidence to characterise the nature, date, function and importance of the archaeological features within the affected area. The overarching research themes, as stated in the research design, are to:
- inform how the landscape was used and to what level of intensification, prior to the foundation of Camulodunum (are there further indications of late Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement?),
 - to elucidate the nature of spatial organisation within the *oppidum*,
 - to address the question of the effect of the establishment of the Roman town on the agricultural hinterland.
- 4.2** There was no Stage 1a evaluation, 3% trial-trenching is now required. This equates to 358m² or 199m of trenches at 1.8m wide. An MoD administrative block occupies the eastern part of Area P1 and, due to heavy disturbance by this building and by terracing, the 3% trenching was concentrated on the grassed area to the east of the building (immediately west of Berechurch Road). Nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps show this grassed area to have been occupied by barracks, but the trenches were positioned between the sites of these structures and to avoid services, so as to provide an indication of archaeological potential where modern disturbance would be slight.

5 Results of the evaluation (Figs 2-4)

This section gives an archaeological summary of each trench with a tabulation of context and finds dating information. The trench numbers for the 2006 evaluation work follow the sequencing used in the 2002 evaluation (CAT Reports 206 and 207).

Trench 1 (Figs 3-4)

T1 was excavated on the southern edge of the grassed area on the east side of Area P1 (west end of T1: NGR TL 99722 23778; east end of T1: TL 99751 23780). The archaeological sequence described here relates to all three trenches. The highest horizon was a layer of modern topsoil (L1), which was up to 0.23m deep. This lay over an 0.10m-deep layer of crushed brick and mortar (L2), which almost certainly derives from the demolition of the Army buildings which stood here. L2 sealed L3, a 0.30m-deep layer of buried topsoil, which in turn sealed L4, an older topsoil horizon. Natural subsoil L5 was exposed in this trench at 0.80m below modern ground-level (32.53m AOD).

The only significant archaeological feature was an undated linear feature (F1). The feature was aligned north-south, and contained charcoal flecks. It is stratigraphically earlier than the other features recorded here (F2 and F3), and is likely to be agricultural in origin. Pits F2 and F3 both contained modern brick and coal flecks, and were left unexcavated in accordance with the RPS EOD policy. They are likely to be associated with now-removed barrack huts which were similar to those still standing at the site of Sobraon Barracks on the Abbey Field.

Both F2 and F3 cut into earlier topsoil horizon L4. The earlier feature (F1) was sealed by L4.

Table 1: Trench 1 features and finds.

| Feature or layer no | Type | Dated finds | Phase |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| F1 | Linear feature (ditch) | none | undated |
| F2 | Pit | Brick, coal (not recovered) | modern |
| F3 | pit | Brick, coal (not recovered) | modern |

Trench 2 (Figs 3-4)

T2 was excavated in the centre of the grassed area on the east side of Area P1 (west end of T2: NGR TL 99719 23808; east end of T2: TL 99752 23810).

The trench contained two features, a modern pit (F4) and an extensive set of modern foundations (F5) which extended through the whole length of the evaluation trench. These foundations were made up of poured concrete and red brick. A plan of the mid 20th century shows buildings identified as married quarters on this site. There is no doubt that the foundations (F5) exposed here were part of these buildings. No finds were associated with F5.

Pit F4 was the same shape and date (modern) as pits F2 and F3 in T1, and was left unexcavated in accordance with the RPS EOD policy. The sequence of layers described for T1 applies here. Natural ground (L5) appeared at 0.74m below modern ground-level (32.20m AOD).

Table 2: Trench 2 features and finds.

| Feature or layer no | Type | Dated finds | Phase |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--------|
| F4 | Pit | Peg-tile, brick, coal (not recovered) | modern |
| F5 | Modern foundations (poured concrete and red brick) | - | modern |

Trench 3 (Figs 3-4)

T3 was excavated on the northern edge of the grassed area on the east side of Area P1 (west end of T3: NGR TL 99716 23834; east end of T3: TL 99755 23839).

The only recorded feature was an extensive set of modern foundations (F6). These must have been part of the same (now-demolished) building as the foundations exposed in T2.

A small amount of post-medieval and modern pottery, and a clay tobacco-pipe stem, were recovered during cleaning around the foundations prior to photographing and planning.

Table 3: Trench 3 features and finds.

| Feature or layer no | Type | Dated finds | Phase |
|---------------------|--|---|--------|
| F6 | Modern foundations (poured concrete and red brick) | Modern pottery, clay tobacco-pipe (see report, section 6 below) | modern |

6 Finds

The post-medieval pottery and clay tobacco-pipe

Finds number 1 – T3 F6

Two sherds of Fabric 40 post-medieval red earthenware (67g).

One sherd of Fabric 42 'Border ware' (14g).

One sherd of Fabric 48d modern ironstone (31g).

One piece of clay tobacco-pipe stem.

Group date for finds number 1: 20th century with some residual post-medieval material.

Other finds

A copper-alloy ring, diameter 24mm, thickness 2-3mm. At one edge, a ?flange shows that it may have been broken off a larger piece (or this could be casting 'flashing'). Post-medieval or modern.

7 Discussion

The only significant archaeological feature was the undated linear ditch F1 which was recorded in T1. Although this is undated, two factors point to its being early. First, its stratigraphical position, being sealed by L4; and second, the fact that it was not aligned with Berechurch Road to the east. This seems to indicate a date prior to the post-medieval period, with its position below L4 perhaps favouring a Roman or prehistoric date.

The other features were foundations of now-demolished Army buildings or small Army-related features which were left unexcavated.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT and RPS would like to thank Taylor Woodrow for commissioning and funding the work.

The project was managed by B Holloway, and the site work was carried out by W Clarke, B Hurrell, C Lister, and A Wrightman, with digital survey carried out by C Lister assisted by B Holloway.

The project was monitored for Colchester Borough Council by Martin Winter (Archaeology Officer) and for RPS by Rob Masefield.

9 References

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|----------------|--|
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| CAT Report 184 | An archaeological evaluation by fieldwalking and geophysical survey at Colchester Garrison PFI site, Colchester, Essex: January-March 2002, unpublished CAT archive report, by H Brooks, 2002 |
| CAT Report 197 | An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on Area C at Colchester Garrison PFI site, Colchester, Essex: May-September 2002, unpublished CAT archive report, by H Brooks, July 2002 |
| CAT Report 206 | An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching in Areas A, B, D, GJ, H, J, N, V and YP of the Colchester Garrison PFI site, Colchester, Essex: June-July 2002, unpublished CAT archive report, by H Brooks, August 2002 |
| CAT Report 207 | An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching on Areas DR, G, |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------|--|
| | | M, P, Q, R, RO, S, and T at Colchester Garrison PFI site, Colchester, Essex: May-September 2002, unpublished CAT archive report, by H Brooks, 2002 |
| CAT Report 274 | | An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at Area E of the Garrison Urban Village, Colchester, Essex: May 2004, unpublished CAT archive report, by B Holloway, 2004 |
| CAT/RPS Report 292 | | The Colchester Garrison PFI project, Colchester, Essex: a report on the 2003 excavation of Areas 2, 6, 10: August-November 2003, unpublished CAT archive report, by H Brooks, 2005 |
| CAT Report 361 | | Assessment report on the archaeological investigations carried out on Areas C1, C2, E, J1, O, Q, and S1 of the Alienated Land, Colchester Garrison, including the Time Team trenches and the Alienated Land watching brief, fieldwork dates 2004-2005, unpublished CAT archive report by L Pooley, B Holloway, P Crummy and R Masfield, 2006 |
| Colchester Archaeological Trust | 1999 | <i>Policies and Procedures</i> |
| CM | 2002 | <i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i> |
| CM | 2003 | <i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums</i> |
| EAA 3 | 1997 | <i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 3 , ed by J Glazebrook |
| EAA 8 | 2000 | <i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 8 , ed by N Brown and J Glazebrook |
| EAA 14 | 2003 | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14 , ed by D Gurney |
| IFA | 1999 | <i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i> |
| IFA | 2001 | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation, and research of archaeological materials</i> |
| MAP 2 | 1991 | <i>Management of archaeological projects</i> , second edition (English Heritage) |
| RPS | 2004 | <i>Research design for archaeological evaluations, excavations and watching briefs on Alienated Land, New Garrison, Colchester</i> |
| RPS | 2006 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for Stage 1b archaeological trial trenching evaluation, Area P1, Colchester Garrison, Colchester</i> |
| Shimmin, D | 1998 | 'A late Iron Age and Roman occupation site at Kirkee McMunn Barracks, Colchester, Essex', in <i>Essex Archaeology and History</i> , 29 , 260-69 |

10 Abbreviations and glossary

| | |
|----------|--|
| AOD | above Ordnance Datum |
| CAT | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| CBC | Colchester Borough Council |
| CBCAO | Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer |
| CM | Colchester Museums |
| context | specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made |
| EHHER | Essex Heritage Environment Record |
| EOD | explosive ordnance disposal |
| feature | an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts' |
| fill | the soil filling up a hole such as a pit or ditch |
| IFA | Institute of Field Archaeologists |
| Iron Age | period immediately before the Romans, dating from 700 BC to AD 43 |
| natural | geological deposit undisturbed by human activity |
| NGR | National Grid Reference |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| prehistoric | belonging to the Stone, Bronze or Iron Ages (before the Romans) |
| Roman | the period from AD 43 to around AD 430 |
| RPS | RPS Planning, Transport and Environment (project consultants) |
| UAD | Urban Archaeological Database held by CM |

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently 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 COLEM 2006.127.

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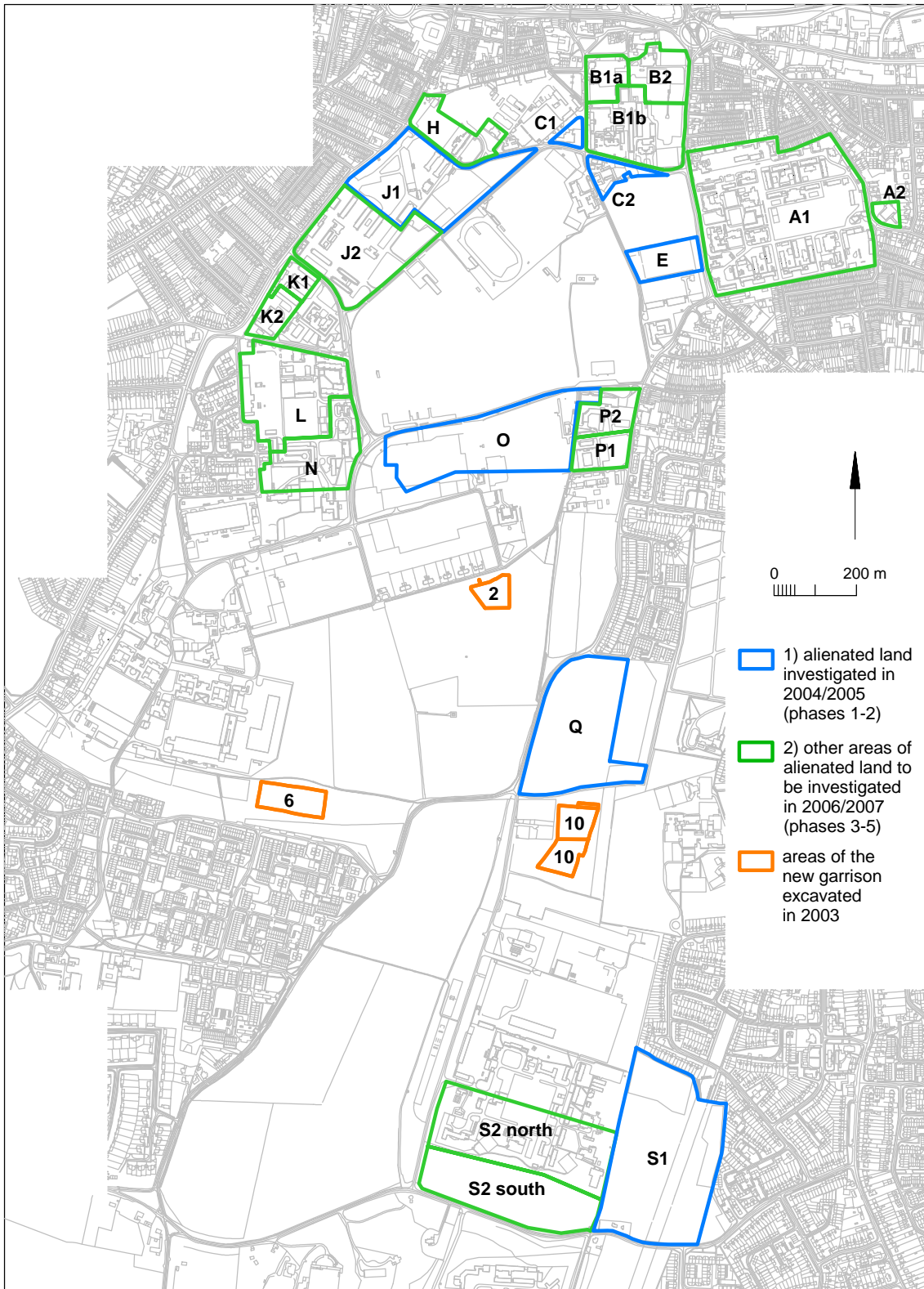
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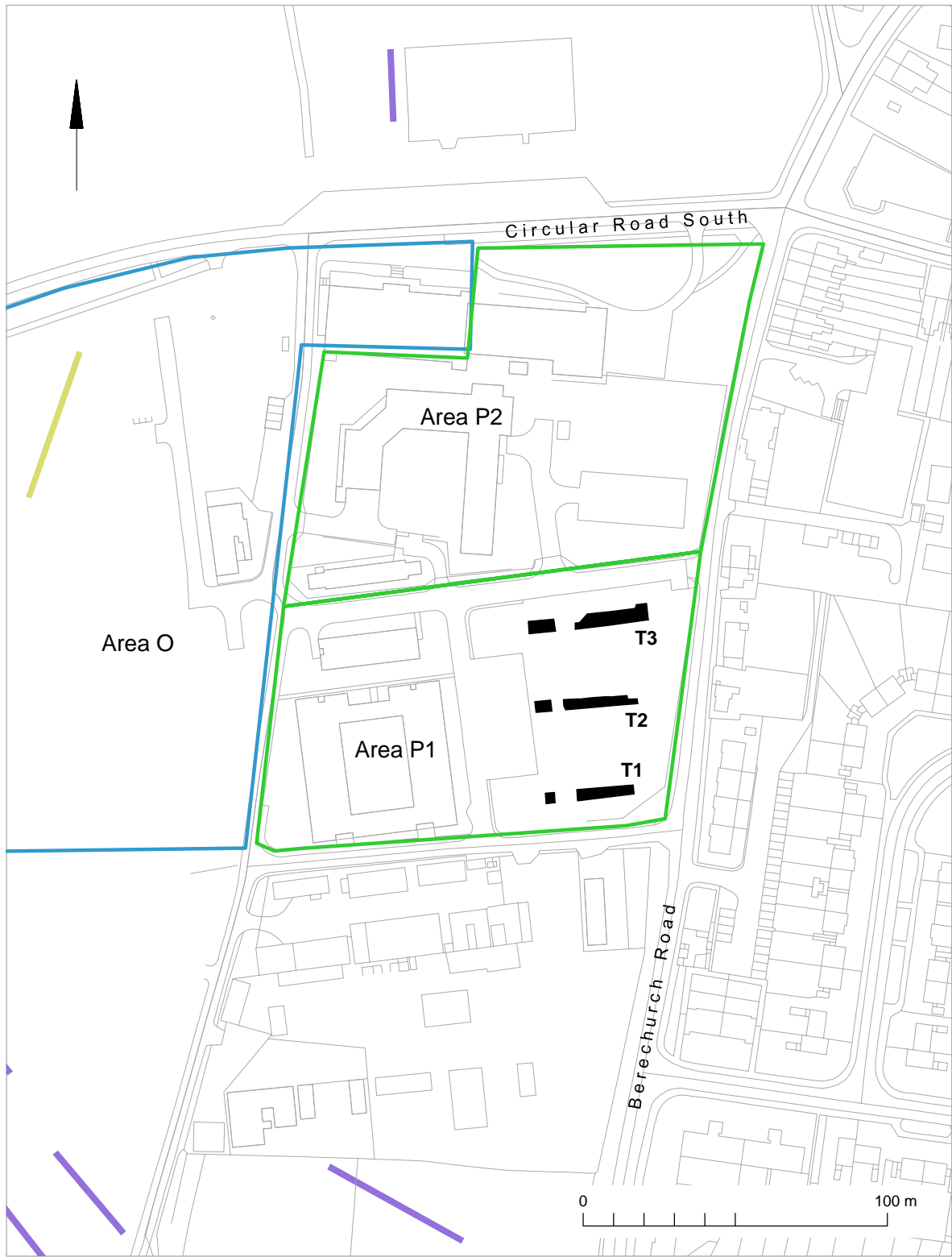
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Fig 1 Colchester Garrison, showing location of Alienated Land.



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2006 evaluation trench
 2004 evaluation trench
 2002 evaluation trench

Fig 2 Location of trenches, showing T1-T3.

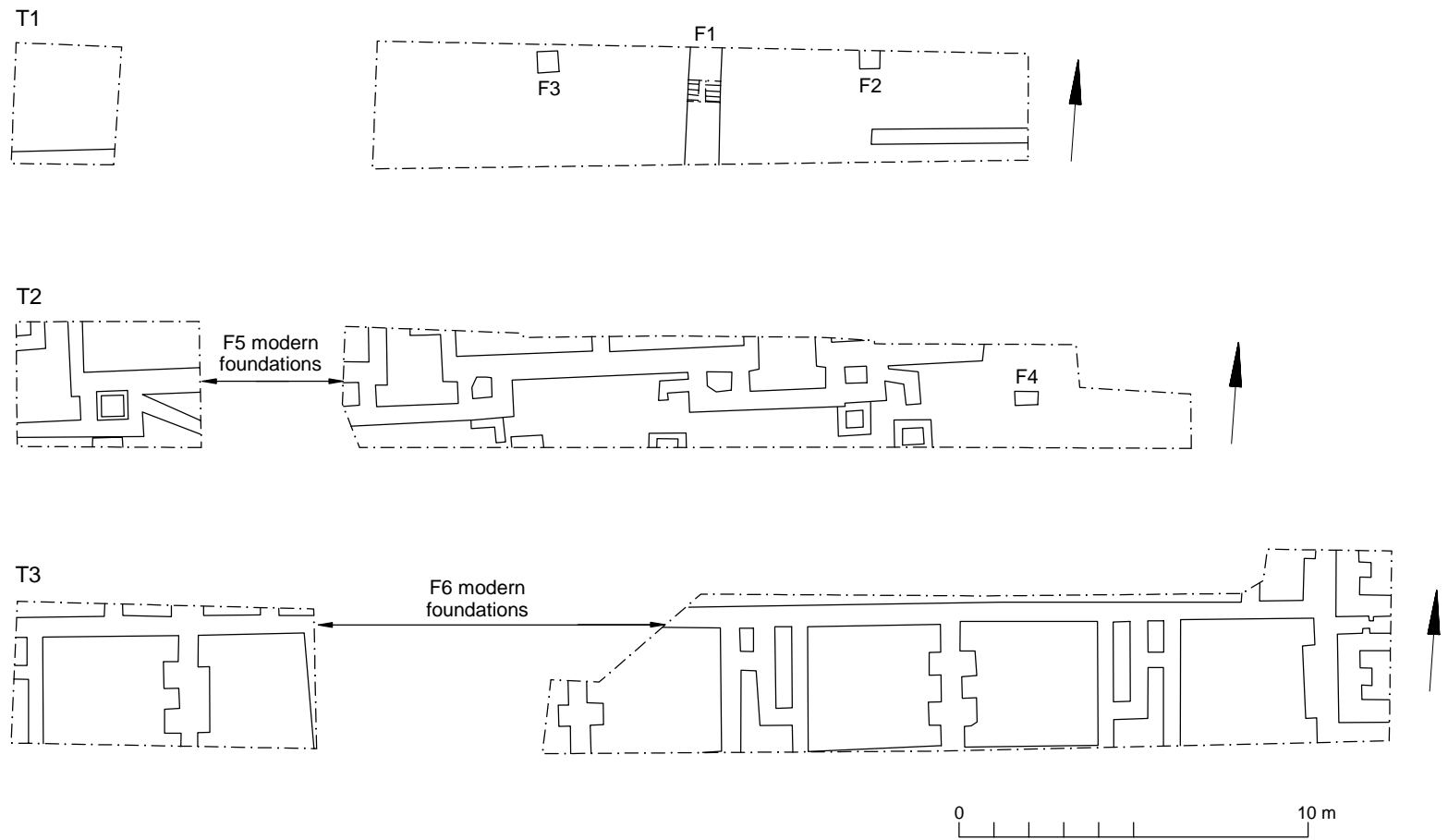
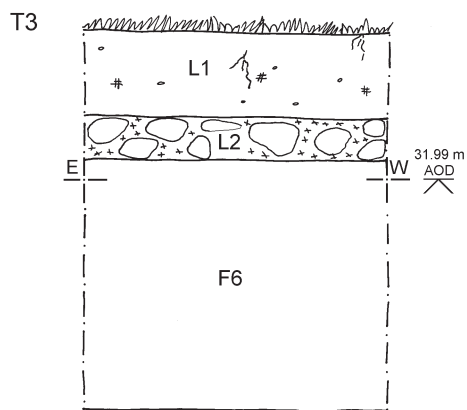
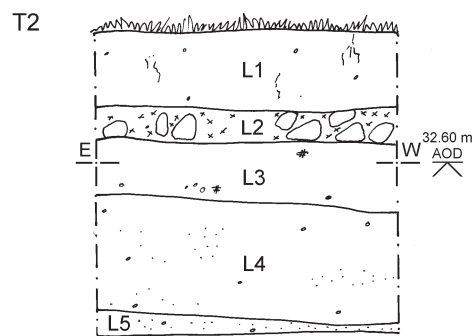
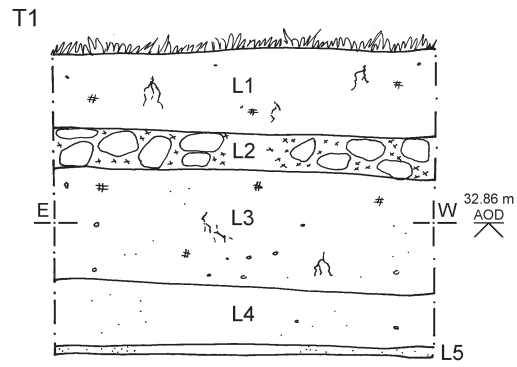






Fig 3 Trench plans.



-  sand
-  stone
-  charcoal
-  mortar

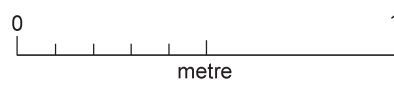
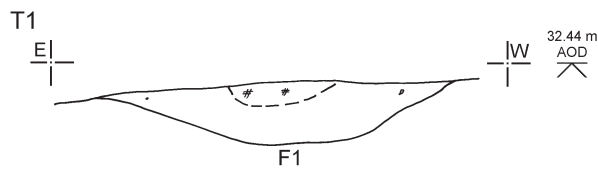


Fig 4 Sections.

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

Summary sheet

| | |
|---|--|
| Site address: Alienated Land Area P1 (off Berechurch Road), Colchester Garrison, Colchester, Essex | |
| Parish: Colchester | District: Colchester |
| NGR: TL 9970 2380 (c) | Site code: Museum accession code 2006.127 |
| Type of work: Evaluation | Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Date of work: December 2006 | Size of area investigated: 3 trenches, 85 x 130m in area |
| Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums | Funding source: Developer |
| Further seasons anticipated? Not known | Related UAD nos: UAD event no 968 |
| Final report: CAT Report 403 and summary in <i>EAH</i> | |
| Periods represented: ?prehistoric or Roman, post-medieval | |
| Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Evaluation on a site previously occupied by the Colchester Garrison married quarters revealed modern foundations in two of the three trenches. The only significant archaeological feature was an undated but probably prehistoric or Roman ditch.</i> | |
| Previous summaries/reports: None | |
| Author of summary: Howard Brooks and Ben Holloway | Date of summary: January 2007 |