

Report on a watching brief: CAT Report 430

Site address: car-park, Sixth Form College ('south site'), North Hill, Colchester, Essex
Date of fieldwork: 14th June 2007
NGR: TL 99308 25366 (c)
CBC brief?: No
Plans attached?: Yes (Figs 1-2)
Museum accession code: 2007.75
CAT project code: 07/6b

Results (Figs 1-2)

CAT were contacted by contractors carrying out groundworks at the 'south site' of the Sixth Form College. Work was being undertaken to install a ramp for wheelchair users in the car park. An area 13m long by 3.3m wide was stripped of tarmac at the eastern end of the car-park. Earlier in the college's history this was a tennis court. Two patches of Roman tessellated pavement, no more than 1.3m x 1.2m in total extent, had been exposed. The *tesserae* were of plain red tile. They had been set out east-west in rows on an *opus signinum* base. Part of the base had been exposed on the south-east side of the pavement where the *tesserae* had been removed. The pavement had no straight edges and had obviously extended in all directions. If it did continue much to the east, it would have been destroyed by the foundations of a modern building. To the west of the pavement were loose *tesserae* and a mortar-rich soil which may signify that the pavement continued to the west.

The tessellated pavement lay at 570mm below the level of the car-park surface at 21.1m Above Ordnance Datum. It was sealed by a modern topsoil and car-park make-up material.

The pavement was probably part of a Roman building, the remains of which do not appear to have been previously documented. The pavement lies within Insula 9a of the Roman town and is situated 6m west of the Roman street forming the east side of the *insula*. Floors and wall foundations of private town houses have been recorded to the north, in what is now the 'mid site' and 'north site' of the college (in Insula 1a), and to the south, on the site of the original college building (in Insula 9a). The dating from these and other such buildings found on the Sixth Form College site is mid-2nd to 3rd century AD and, as the tessellated pavement matches their alignment, they are likely to be contemporary.

The tessellated pavement is to be left *in situ*, preserved beneath the new wheelchair access ramp.

Finds

A large quantity of loose *tesserae* from the tessellated pavement

- 1 piece of slag
- 2 pieces of modern pottery
- 2 pieces of post-medieval pottery
- 1 piece of coal
- 1 fragment of septaria
- 1 fragment of tile

Most of the loose *tesserae* were given to the history department of the college at their request.

Reference

CAT Report 247 An archaeological desk-based assessment of the 'mid-site' and 'north-site phase 2' developments at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex: November 2003, by Kate Orr, 2003

Report author: Kate Orr
Report date: July 2007

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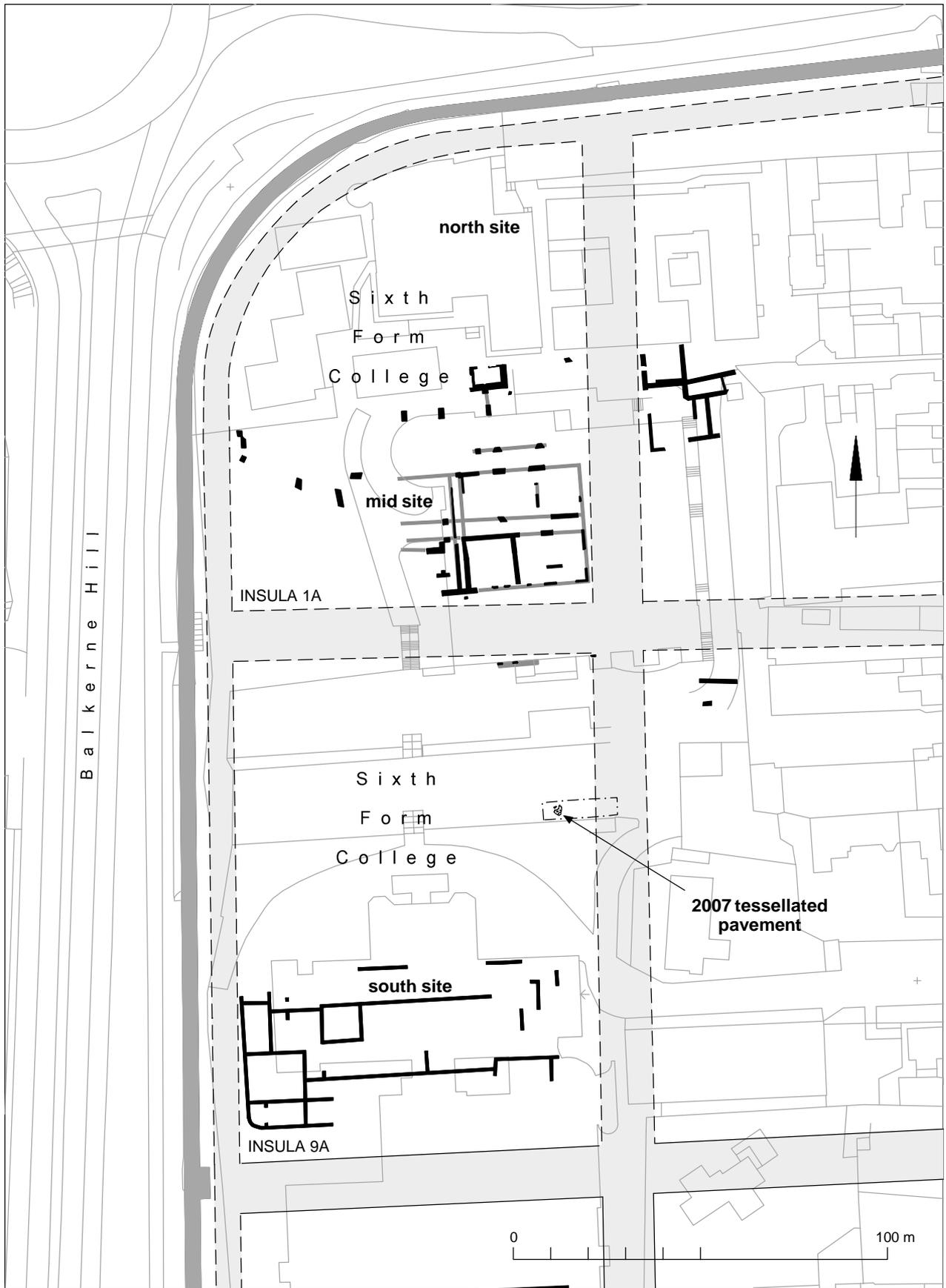
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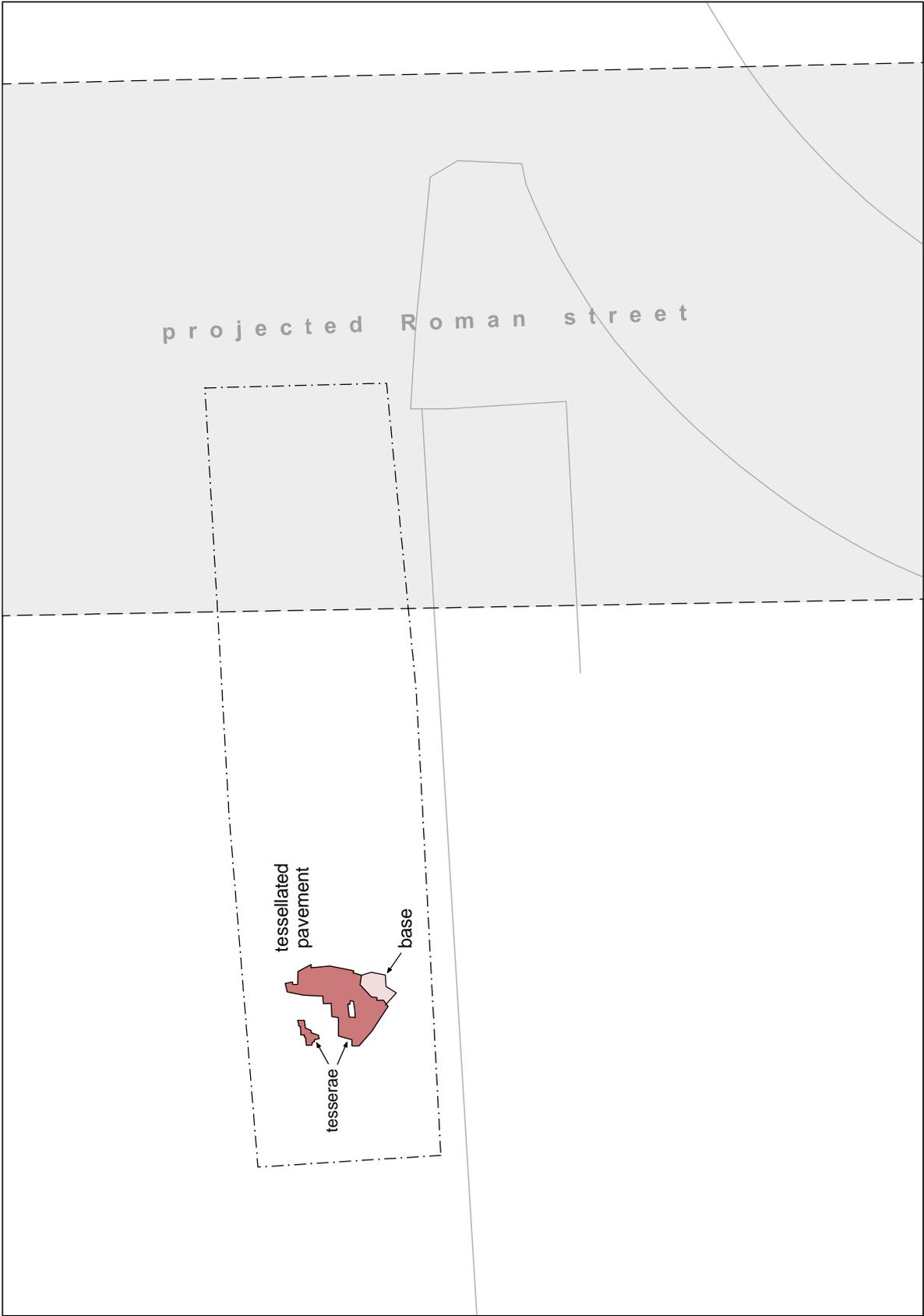
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Fig 1 Site location plan, showing the remains of Roman buildings in the vicinity.



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Fig 2 Plan of stripped area, showing tessellated pavement.

**Essex Historic Environment Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

Site address: car-park, the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 99308 25366 (c)	Site code: 2007.75
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 14th June 2007	Size of area investigated: 13m x 3.3m
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museums	Funding source: the Sixth Form College
Further seasons anticipated? Yes	Related EHER nos:
Final report: CAT Report 430 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: Roman	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>An area 13m long by 3.3m wide was stripped of tarmac at the eastern end of the car-park. Two patches of a Roman tessellated floor, no more than 1.3m x 1.2m in total extent, was exposed. The tesserae were of plain red tile. They had been set out east-west in rows on an opus signinum base. The floor had no straight edges and had obviously been larger originally but had been disturbed.</i></p> <p><i>The tessellated floor lay at 570mm below the level of the car-park surface at 21.1m Above Ordnance Datum. It was sealed by a modern topsoil and car-park make-up material.</i></p> <p><i>The floor was probably part of a Roman building, the remains of which do not appear to have been previously documented.</i></p> <p><i>The tessellated pavement is to be left in situ, preserved beneath the new wheelchair access ramp.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Reports 92, 148, 177, 247	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: July 2007