

# **Two archaeological evaluations by test pitting and an archaeological watching brief in Castle Park, Colchester, Essex.**

**November 2010 - February 2011**



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**on behalf of the Colchester Borough Council**

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## 1 Summary

*Two archaeological investigations were undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) in Castle Park, Colchester in October and November 2010. An archaeological watching brief took place during the installation of a series of information signs and four test-pits were hand excavated in Hollytrees Meadow along the proposed route of a new vehicular path.*

*The only significant archaeological deposit observed during the watching brief was a gravelled surface of probable Roman date. Roman archaeology was encountered in two of the four test-pits. The north-south street leading to the NE gate (Duncan's gate) was uncovered in Test-Pit 2, and the internal face of the eastern wall of the Roman drain was uncovered in Test-Pit 3. The uncovering of the drain wall confirmed that the north-south linear depression on Hollytrees Meadow has been caused by the compaction of loose modern backfill within the fully excavated Roman drain.*

*Roman archaeology was uncovered in four of the 2011 test-pits at depths of between 540mm and 590mm below modern ground level. The test-pits were mostly excavated through modern topsoil and post-Roman dark earth containing frequent Roman artefacts. The quantities of Roman tile, pottery and tesserae hint at Roman occupation features in the vicinity and below the limit of excavation.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 3.1 This is the report on three archaeological investigations in Colchester Castle Park undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on behalf of Colchester Borough Council in October/November 2010 and February 2011.
- 3.2 An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the installation of a series of information/notice boards and finger posts throughout the park.
- 3.3 An archaeological evaluation by test-pitting was undertaken in Hollytrees Meadow and on the former putting green in Upper Castle Park in November 2010 prior to the proposed construction of a new path to allow vehicular access to the nursery area near the Roman town wall.
- 3.4 A second archaeological evaluation by test-pitting was undertaken in the former putting green and the nursery area in 2011 prior to the installation of new pathways for vehicular access and new metal fencing.
- 3.5 Both evaluations were required to establish the depth of the Roman archaeological remains in order to inform construction methods.
- 3.6 The site is located at NGR TL 99922 25434 (centre of investigations).
- 3.7 This report follows the standards set out in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CIMS 2008a), and also those in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IFA 2008a), *Standard and guidance for an archaeological evaluation* (IFA 2008b) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2008c). The guidance contained in English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE 2006), and in the documents *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 (Fig 1-2)

The Castle Park is protected as a scheduled ancient monument (Essex SAM no 1) due to the wealth of its Roman and medieval archaeology. Its most significant archaeological monument is the Roman temple dedicated to the emperor Claudius, the foundations of which survive below the Norman castle keep.

The information signs were located around the park in Insulae 6, 7, 14, 15 and 22 of the Roman town, and one lay on the line of the ditch outside the Roman town wall. In terms of the medieval and later town the signs lay within, or just outside, the inner and outer baileys of Colchester Castle.

The test-pits were excavated within Insulae 7 and 15 of the Roman town. Within Insula 7 tessellated pavements of houses have been recorded as well as street metalling (Hull 1958; CAR 6). Within Insula 15 a building once interpreted as a Roman Mithraeum but now thought to have been a waterworks, survives below ground to the east of the play area (Hull 1958).

#### 4 Aim

The aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological finds, features or deposits disturbed by the excavation of the post-holes. The general aim of the evaluations was to locate, identify, and assess the quality of any surviving archaeological features, specifically to characterise and assess the depth and survival of any Roman buildings, Roman streets and the Roman drain. This information would then be used to enable an informed decision to be taken on the preservation or otherwise of any deposits and the need for further work and/or mitigation.

#### 5 Methods

The installation of 7 information/notice boards (NB1- NB7) and 2 finger posts (FP1- FP2) was monitored. A further 3 signs were put up outside of the scheduled area that were not observed. The information/notice boards required two post-holes each and these were approximately 600 mm deep. The finger posts had a single post-hole, approximately 700 mm deep. The post-holes were 0.2-0.25 m in diameter.

The 2010 test-pits (TP1-TP4) were located within, and adjacent to, the proposed route of the vehicular path on the eastern side of Hollytrees Meadow in Upper Castle Park (Fig 1). The test-pits were spread along the route of the proposed north-south path between 35m and 45m apart. All four test-pits were located on grass and excavated by hand. Test-pits 1, 2 and 4 were 500mm<sup>2</sup> in size and excavated to a depth of 500mm below modern ground level. Test-Pit 3 was 600mm long by 400mm wide and excavated to a depth of 750mm below modern ground level.

The 2011 test-pits (TP1-8) were located by employees of Colchester Borough Council along the routes of proposed vehicular pathways and new fence lines. All eight test-pits were located on grass and excavated by hand. The test-pits were 800mm long by 300mm wide and ranged in depth from 500mm-1000mm below modern ground level.

Archaeological deposits that were exposed were cleaned by hand and individual records of layers were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets. Section drawings were made at a scale of 1:10 and the test-pits were plotted using a total station. Finds and small finds were registered on CAT pro-forma record sheets and assigned finds numbers according to context. Finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context. Colour photographs of the test-pits and of individual post-holes, along with general shots of the site, were taken with a digital camera. Further details of the recording methods used can be found in the CAT document *Policies and procedures* (CAT 2006).

#### 6 Results (Figs 1-3)

The fills of the post-holes for the signs consisted mainly of dark greyish-brown modern topsoil (L1). Inclusions were sparse and included fragments of Roman and post-Roman brick and tile, oyster shell, animal bone, stone, and modern pottery and glass. A sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from FP1. In FP2, L1 sealed a gravelled surface (L2). The latter lay at a depth of approximately 550 mm below the modern ground level and was at least 150 mm thick. No dating evidence was recovered from L2.

**November 2010 test-pits;**

**Test-Pit 1 (TP1)**

Turf and a thin layer of modern topsoil (L1) sealed a dark grey/brown sandy silt (L4) similar to the overlying topsoil (L1). L4 contained notably more stones, brick, tile and pottery fragments than L1. A large block of concrete that continued outside of the test-pit was encountered within L4 at a depth of 200mm below modern ground level. The edge of the block was rough and 'rounded' suggesting it was poured concrete, perhaps for the base of a post. The artefacts recovered from the upper part of L4 are post-medieval to modern in date (spits 2 and 3), whereas the lower portion of the layer contained only Roman material (spit 4 and the upper part of spit 5). However, as L4 was homogenous and the concrete did not appear to have a cut, the layer is considered to be post-medieval to modern in date with residual Roman material. At a depth of 450mm below modern ground level a slightly lighter grey/brown sandy silt was uncovered (L5). This layer contained notably fewer inclusions than L4 and continued below the base of the test-pit. L5 could be a post-Roman dark earth containing residual Roman artefacts.

**Test-Pit 2 (TP2)**

The turf overlay a thick (200mm) layer of post-medieval to modern topsoil (L1). Beneath the topsoil was a dark grey/brown sandy silt similar to L1, which is probably post-Roman dark earth (L2). L2 contained frequent small-medium rounded and sub-rounded stones and occasional brick, tile and septaria fragments. The quantity of stones in L2 increased with depth. A thin layer of pea grit was encountered overlying a compacted gravel surface (L3). The incorporation of frequent stone in the post-Roman dark earth from the surface below suggests disturbance of the gravel surface or perhaps a post-Roman use of the street's course. Disturbance of the layer is also indicated by the recovery of a fragment of post-medieval to modern pottery in the spit directly overlying the road surface. The metalled surface sloped downwards from west to east (Fig 3). This may be due to the location of TP2 on the eastern edge of the street where the road would slope downwards to aid drainage. However, it is perhaps more of a decline than would be expected, and may have been caused by disturbance to the surface. Septaria nodules were identified amongst the flint gravels (Fig 3).

**Test-Pit 3 (TP3)**

TP3 was located within a north-south aligned linear depression potentially associated with a brick Roman drain that flanks the Roman street. The test-pit was situated in the base of this depression and the dimensions of the test-pit were altered to 400mm wide in a north-south direction and 600mm long in an east-west direction to increase the chance of locating the drain. Turf and modern topsoil (L1) overlay a layer of mixed topsoil and orange sand/gravel (L8) that sloped downwards towards the centre of the depression (Fig 3). Beneath L8 was a further dark soil deposit that contained frequent Roman pottery fragments and building materials as well as modern artefacts (L9). The presence of modern artefacts in L9 near the base of the test-pit indicated that the material was modern backfill. As such, excavation continued below 500mm to look for the Roman drain. At a depth of 670mm below modern ground level flat Roman bricks set in a white mortar were encountered in the eastern half of the test-pit (Fig 3). This was the eastern brick wall of the Roman drain. To the west of the bricks the topsoil material continued downwards into the drain becoming notably softer as depth increased. L9 and the overlying layers were all backfill material from a previous excavation of the drain. Excavations ceased 770mm below modern ground level.

**Test-Pit 4 (TP4)**

TP4 was located near the eastern edge of the former putting green within the proposed vehicular path and over the projection of the drain and the road. Beneath the turf and modern topsoil (L1) was another dark/grey brown topsoil deposit (L6) containing artefacts dating from the Roman period to modern times. L6 merged into another dark grey/brown soil (L7) containing frequent stones and patches of light grey sandy clay that contained frequent inclusions such as charcoal and daub

flecking. The grey sandy clay could be a disturbed Roman deposit, although L7 is probably a layer of modern make-up associated with the previous use of the former putting green as tennis courts. Alternatively, the location of the test-pit over the projection of the Roman drain could mean that all the deposits in TP4 are once again modern backfill material from the full excavation of the drain.

#### February 2011 test-pits;

##### Test-Pit 1 (TP1)

The turf overlay a dark grey/brown sandy silt with frequent small-medium stones. At a depth of 590mm below modern ground level, a probable metalled surface was uncovered. Rounded stones of varying sizes were pressed into a dark soil layer forming a compacted layer of metalling. Only Roman brick and tile were recovered from this test-pit.

##### Test-Pit 2 (TP2)

Beneath the turf, a modern layer of compact gravel 40mm thick overlay homogenous dark grey/brown soil. The soil was soft and loose and contained frequent Roman finds, in particular *tesserae*. At a depth of 610mm below modern ground level a large water pipe on an E-W alignment was encountered. The pipe was over 200mm wide prohibiting further significant investigation. A trowel-width channel was excavated down the side of the pipe to a depth of 850mm below modern ground level but the soil at this depth still appeared to be pipe-trench backfill material.

##### Test-Pit 3 (TP3)

A thick turf layer overlay dark grey/brown sandy silt with common small stones and pea grit. At a depth of 550mm below the modern ground level, a medium yellow/brown sandy silt layer containing frequent stones and oyster fragments was encountered. Roman pottery sherds and tile fragments were recovered from throughout the overlying soil. A Roman *tessera* and pottery sherd were recovered from the interface with the sandy silt layer.

##### Test-Pit 4 (TP4)

At a depth of 590mm below modern ground level, a layer of loose mortar with small stones and brick fragments was encountered. The overlying stratigraphy was the same as in TP3. There were numerous Roman artefacts in the overlying soil. The frequency of the artefacts increased as depth increased. A probable Roman coin and numerous *tesserae* were recovered. Two small *tesserae* were recovered from the interface with the mortar rich layer.

##### Test-Pit 5 (TP5)

Beneath the turf a dark grey/brown sandy silt layer (100mm thick) overlay orange/brown hoggin (50mm thick). These modern layers overlay the dark grey/brown sandy silt identified elsewhere. At a depth of 850mm below modern ground level, a dark yellow/brown sandy clay was encountered. Due to the small size of the trench and the depth of the layer, it was not possible to determine whether this was a Roman deposit or the natural geology.

##### Test-Pit 6 (TP6)

The same dark yellow/brown sandy clay identified in TP5 was uncovered in TP6 at a depth of 940mm below modern ground level. The overlying stratigraphy was also the same as in TP5. Few finds were recovered from the top 500mm of the dark soil. The frequency of artefacts markedly increased as depth increased.

##### Test-Pit 7 (TP7)

The turf overlay a deep deposit of dark grey/brown sandy silt. At a depth of 1m below modern ground level, no notable change in the stratigraphy had occurred and the dark soil continued below the limit of excavation. Of particular note was the recovery of a human pelvis from this test-pit at a depth of c.700mm below modern ground level.

### Test-Pit 8 (TP8)

At a depth of 540mm below modern ground level, a metalled surface was encountered. Quite large (roughly 60mm in diameter) rounded stones and fragments of Roman brick and tile were compacted into a dark soil to form a solid surface. A homogenous dark soil containing surprisingly few stones and pea grit overlay the surface, perhaps indicating that this area of metalled surfacing had been previously exposed. The metalled surface appeared to be sloping downwards to the north.

## 7 The Finds

by Stephen Benfield (*watching brief finds by Donald Shimmon*)

A small quantity of finds was retained from L1 in the course of the watching brief. Where appropriate these were cleaned, marked and bagged according to context. They included a Roman tessera (21 g) from NB6, and a Roman grey ware potsherd (18 g) and a fragment of post-Roman peg-tile (11 g) from FP1.

The finds recovered from the four test-pits excavated in 2010 are listed below by excavated spit for each test-pit. The finds from the 2011 excavations are listed by test-pit (TP1-8). The Roman and post-Roman pottery fabrics refer to the Colchester fabric series: *CAR 7* (post-Roman) and *CAR 10* (Roman). Numbered Roman pot forms were recorded using the Camulodunum (Cam) pottery form type series (Hull 1958).

Key: RBT = Roman brick and tile; Tess = Roman red tile *tesserae* cubes; p-tile = peg-tile; CBM = ceramic building material.

Notes: septaria is a locally occurring stone type

### 2010 test-pits

#### Test-Pit 1

spit	finds	spot date
1	RBT 3@119g; thin p-tile 2@41g; Iron (Fe) nail 1@20g; coke 1@11g	post-med/mod
2	Roman pottery 20g: Fabric AJ 1 sherd, Fabric GX 1 sherd; modern pottery 3g: Fabric 51B (flowerpot) 1 sherd. Other finds: RBT 11@484g; Tess 1@ 18g; p-tile 2@58g; septaria 1@41g	mod
3	RBT 7@460g; p-tile 2@47g	med/p-med -mod
4	Roman pottery 24g: Fabric GA 1 sherd (jar), Fabric GX 2 sherds. Other finds: RBT 4@ 374g; septaria 2@125g; animal bone 2@24g	Rom, E2C+
5	Roman pottery 45g: Fabric GX 1 sherd, Fabric TY(TK) 1 sherd (base). Other finds: RBT 5@ 789g	Rom, M/L3-4C

#### Test-Pit 2

spit	finds	spot date
1	Vessel glass: post-med & modern 2@61g; glass marble 1@ 6g; RBT 2@50g; p-tile 3@54g; fe nail 1@5g; fe sheet frag. 1@2g	mod
2	Medieval pottery 12g: Fabric 20 2 sherds (12th-14th C). Other finds: RBT 12@140g; p-tile 2@26g; Iron (Fe) loop (45 mm long) 4g; white lime mortar/plaster frag. <1g	med/ p-med
3	Roman pottery 36g: Fabric DJ 1 sherd, Fabric GX 3 sherds. Other finds: RBT 5@191g; Tess 1@ 20g; animal bone frag. <1g	Rom
4	Roman pottery 4g: Fabric GX 1 sherd; medieval pottery 10g: Fabric 40 1 sherd (17th-18th C). Other finds: septaria 3@129g; animal bone 5@13g	p-med/ mod

#### Test-Pit 3

spit	finds	spot date
1	RBT 2@167g; Iron (Fe) thin, round wire nail shaft 1@3g	mod
2	medieval pottery 7g: Fabric 20 1 sherd (12th-14th C) RBT 2@74g; Tess 2@37g	
3	Roman pottery 3g: Fabric GX 1 sherd.	post-med/

spot	finds	spot date
	Other finds: RBT 4@127g; ?p-tile 1@15g; septaria 1@345g; coal 1@7g; animal bone 1@5g	mod
4	Roman pottery 13g: Fabric CZ 1 sherd (Cam 392 L2-M3C), Fabric GX 2 sherds. Other finds: RBT 5@136g; mod tile 1@543g; mod mortar 1@69g; septaria 1@257g; limestone 1@262g; animal bone 1@4g	mod
5	Roman pottery 49g: Fabric AA 1 sherd, Fabric DJ 1 sherd, Fabric GX 1 sherd. Other finds: RBT 10@1259g; Tess 1@11g; Iron (Fe) object 1@11g; slate 1@6g; animal bone 5@137g	post-med/mod
6	Roman pottery 66g: Fabric AJ 1 sherd (handle scar), sherd fabric GX. Other finds: RBT 3@ 261g; Iron (Fe) nail 1@9g; animal bone 1@2g	Rom

#### Test-Pit 4

spot	finds	spot date
1	Roman pottery 4g: Fabric GX 1 sherd. other finds: RBT 3@52g; Tess 1@18g; ?p-tile (thin tile) 1@5g	med/p-med
2	RBT 2@196g; Tess 1@18g; septaria 1@556g. Small find: complete (flattened) copper-alloy end from a military swagger stick with insignia from Royal artillery on side, motto UBIQUE (everywhere) in scroll above cannon and QUOFAS ET GLORIA DUCUNT (where duty and glory lead) on scroll below cannon (18/19th-20th C) weight 22g, length 45mm.	mod
3	RBT 2@29g	Rom
4	Roman pottery 2g: Fabric CZ 1 sherd; medieval pottery 24g: Fabric 40 1 sherd (17th-18th C). Other finds: RBT 5@352g	p-med/mod
5	Roman pottery 12g: Fabric AA 1 sherd, Fabric GX 1 sherd. Other finds: RBT 2@434g	Rom

#### 2011 test-pits

TP no.	finds	spot dating summary
1	<b>CBM</b> Roman brick/tile 7@394g	Roman brick/tile
2	<b>Pottery</b> Roman: Fabric GB, 2@25g Cam 40B (M2-M3C) <b>CBM</b> Roman: <i>Imbrex</i> 2@127g; brick/tile 6@486g; <i>tesserae</i> (red) 14@362g <b>Stone</b> Septaria 2@94g <b>Other finds</b> Slate 1@15g (post-med/mod)	Roman pottery (M2-M3C) and Roman building material with one piece of post-med/modern slate
3	<b>Pottery</b> Roman: Fabric GX 1@4g (Rom); Fabric EA 1@5g (L3-4C); Medieval: Fabric 20 (13-14C) <b>CBM</b> Roman <i>tesserae</i> (red) 5@63g	Roman pottery (L3-4C) and Roman building material with one piece of medieval pottery (13-14C)
3	<b>Pottery</b> Roman: Fabric DJ, 1@6g (Rom); Fabric DZ, Cam 395 (M/L3-4C) Fabric GX, Cam 305B (L3-4C) <b>CBM</b> Roman: <i>Tegula</i> 1@99g; combed flue tile 1@68g (L1/E2-4C) brick/tile 8@539g	Roman pottery (L3-4C) and tile
4	<b>Pottery</b> Roman: Fabric BAEG 1@7g (M2-M3C); Fabric CZ 1@9g Cam 392? (L2-M3C), overfired?; Fabric EA 1@8g (L3-4C); Fabric GX 1@13g (Rom); Fabric HZ 1@121g (M1-2/3C). Post-Roman: Fabric 51B (flowerpot) (19-20C) <b>CBM</b> Roman: <i>Tegula</i> 1@131g; brick/tile 5@399g; <i>tesserae</i> (red) 4@78g, one made from a flue tile, 2 further <i>tesserae</i> @27g recovered from base of test-pit	Roman pottery (L3-4C), Roman building material and coin ?late Roman (c L3-4C) with small quantity of modern pottery

TP no.	finds	spot dating summary
	<b>Animal bone</b> 1 cow scapula (chop and cut marks)@57g	
	<b>Small finds</b> Small copper-alloy object (dia 8 mm), corroded, probably a late Roman coin, L3-4C ( <b>SF 1</b> )	
5	<b>CBM</b> Roman: <i>Tegula</i> 1@148g; brick/tile 16@1149g	Roman tile
6	<b>Pottery</b> Roman: Fabric GX 4@20g <b>CBM</b> Roman: brick/tile 4@685g; <i>tesserae</i> (red) 1@26g <b>Stone</b> Septaria 1@24g, small rounded limestone (chalk) lump 1@137g <b>Animal bone</b> 1cow phalanx III@32g	Roman pottery and Roman building material
7	<b>Pottery:</b> Roman: Fabric CH 1@3g (L3-4C) Fabric DJ 1@7g (M1-2/3C); Fabric DJ(I) coarse oxidised ware with abraded cream slip (Rom); Fabric GX 6@42g (Rom); Fabric TZ 1@73g double grooved upright rim above steeply down turned flange (3-4C) <b>CBM</b> Roman: <i>Imbrex</i> 1@35g; brick/tile 8@718g <b>Stone</b> Septaria 4@203g <b>Animal bone</b> 1 cow metatarsal@45.3g, 1 fragment of large mammal scapula@10.2g <b>Human bone</b> 2 fragments of pelvis@88.1g	Roman pottery (L3-4C) and Roman building material
8	<b>Pottery:</b> Medieval: Fabric 21, reduced surface (15-16C) <b>CBM</b> Roman brick/tile 1@36g <b>Stone</b> irregular greensand block 1@2700g <b>Animal bone</b> 1pig phalanx II@5g	Medieval pottery (15-16C) and Roman building material

## 8 Discussion

The only significant archaeological deposit observed during the watching brief for the new information signs was a gravelled surface of probable Roman date in FP2. It is probable that this is the same gravelled surface that was uncovered approximately 11 m to the north-east during a watching brief in 1983 (CAR 6, 371). This was associated with Roman foundations, and was perhaps a courtyard surface. Alternatively the gravelled surface may have belonged to a previously unrecognised Roman street.

Roman archaeology was encountered in two of the four 2010 test-pits. The north-south street leading to the NE gate (Duncan's gate) was encountered in TP2, and the Roman brick drain in TP3. The gravel metalling of the Roman street was located 390mm below modern ground level. However, as the test-pit was located near the eastern edge of the street, and as such potentially on a downward slope, it is possible that the street may not be as deep down in the centre of the street to the west. The post-Roman dark earth that overlay the surface appeared to have been disturbed in this area. The dark earth contained frequent artefacts.

The internal face of the eastern wall of the Roman drain was uncovered in TP3. The discovery of the drain in this location has confirmed that the linear depression running north-south down Hollytrees Meadow has been caused by the compaction of loose backfill within the fully excavated, and not vaulted, stretch of Roman drain. The following description of the drain is taken from Hull's *Roman Colchester* (1958).

The drain is constructed from two walls 430mm- 610mm apart and averaging 1.2m in height with a brick base. The drain is vaulted along the curved stretch from the so-called Mithraeum to the Roman street but open along the west side of the street until it approaches the NE gate (Duncan's gate). The walls are faced on one side only and constructed from bricks laid lengthways which measure

381mmx 279.4mm x 38.1mm. In Hull's opinion the walls were not very strong considering they act as retaining walls (Hull; 1859;88).

The drain was initially excavated by Dr P. M. Duncan in 1852 (published 1858). Duncan left two brick-built openings covered by grills that are still in place today (Fig 3). Duncan supposedly cleared the soil from the whole length of the drain. However, Hull notes that undisturbed material was excavated during the re-excavation of the drain in 1928/1929 (1985;89). As such, it is presumed that all of the material currently in the open stretch of the drain is modern backfill.

Test-pits 1 and 4 (2010) were each excavated through three layers of dark grey/brown soil. The lowest layer in TP1 may be undisturbed post-Roman dark earth at a depth of 450mm below ground level. All of the other layers in these test-pits have been disturbed or deposited in recent times. Previous test-pits excavated by CAT in April 2007 in the north-west corner of the putting green were excavated to a depth of 1m below modern ground level and did not encounter any Roman deposits or features (CAT Report 422).

Archaeological deposits were encountered in four of the eight 2011 test-pits. The E-W orientated Roman street between Insula 7 and Insula 15 was identified in TP8 at a depth of 540mm below modern ground level. In Test-Pit 1 another metalled surface was uncovered at a depth of 590mm below modern ground level. The stones were not as densely or as firmly bedded in this surface as they were in the Roman street surfaces identified in TP8. Probable Roman deposits were also identified in the two test-pits located near to Duncan's Gate. A light coloured sandy silt layer containing frequent stones and fragments of oyster shell was uncovered in TP3 (550mm below modern ground level) and a layer of mortar containing fragments of building materials was uncovered in TP4 (590mm below modern ground level). Both are presumed to be the upper layers of Roman deposits.

In TP5 and TP6 a dark yellow/brown sandy clay was identified at a depth that prohibited positive identification as an archaeological deposit (850mm and 940mm below modern ground level respectively). The sandy clay may be the natural geology. At a depth of 610mm below modern ground level a large water main was encountered in TP2. A notable number of *tesserae* were recovered from the backfill material of the pipe trench. The test-pit excavated on the former putting green (TP7) was excavated to a depth of 1m below modern ground level through dark soil. No archaeological deposits were encountered matching the findings of previous test-pits excavated on the former putting green (CAT Report 422).

All eight of the test-pits were excavated through a dark grey/brown sandy silt. This soil is considered to be a modern topsoil overlying a post-Roman dark earth. There is very little distinction between the two layers and in many locations the soil has been heavily disturbed.

Almost all of the finds recovered from the eight 2011 test-pits are of Roman date and include pottery sherds, fragments of roof tiles (*tegula* and *imbrex*), a piece from a combed flue tile (TP3) and notably a number of red tile *tesserae* from a tessellated floor surface (TP2, 3, 4 & 6). The *tesserae* range in size from approximately 15 to 25mm square. One (TP4) has been cut from a combed flue tile. Of interest is a small copper-alloy object (8mm in diameter) from TP4 which is almost certainly a coin (**SF 1**). The surface is corroded so the coin cannot be identified in its present condition but the size and the presence of late Roman pottery suggests it is probably a small late Roman coin of late 3rd-4th century date. Single sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from two of the test-pits (TP3 & 8) and post-medieval/modern artefacts were collected from TP4 and TP2. Of particular note is the presence of part of a human pelvis in TP7. Investigations at the time confirmed that the pelvis was not part of an articulated skeleton.

## 9 Conclusions

Roman archaeology was encountered in two of the four test-pits excavated in 2010. The north-south street leading to the NE gate (Duncan's Gate) was uncovered in TP2, and the internal face of the eastern wall of the Roman drain was uncovered in TP3. The Roman street was encountered at a depth of 390mm below modern

ground level. Post-Roman dark earth containing numerous artefacts is likely to cover most of the Roman street. The Roman drain was located 670mm below modern ground level. The uncovering of the drain wall confirmed that the north-south linear depression on Hollytrees Meadow has been caused by the compaction of loose modern backfill within the fully excavated drain. The loose backfill is unlikely to offer sufficient support to the brick walls, which, as Hull previously noted, may not be of particularly strong construction.

Roman archaeology was uncovered in four of the 2011 test-pits at depths of between 540mm and 590mm below modern ground level. The test-pits were mostly excavated through modern topsoil and post-Roman dark earth containing frequent Roman artefacts. The quantities of Roman tile, pottery and *tesserae* hint at Roman occupation features in the vicinity and below the limit of excavation.

## 10 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 and Ipswich Museums under the accession code COLIM 2010.82 in accordance with *Guidelines on the preparations and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester & Ipswich Museums* (CIMS 2008b).

## 11 Acknowledgements

The Trust would like to thank Colchester Borough Council for funding the work, and Ian Baalham, CBC Parks and Recreation Officer, and the Service Team of Colchester Borough Council for their assistance on site. The projects were monitored by Martin Winter of Colchester and Ipswich Museums.

## 12 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in .pdf format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

Brooks, H CAR 6	1996 1992	An historical study of Colchester Castle Park (CBC) <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 6: Excavations at Culver Street, the Gilberd School, and other sites in Colchester 1971-85</i> , by P Crummy
CAR 7	2000	<i>Post-Roman pottery from excavation in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , John Cotter
CAR 10	2000	<i>Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86</i> , Robin Symonds & Sue Wade
CAT	2006	Policies and procedures, Colchester Archaeological Trust
CAT	2007	An archaeological evaluation by test-pitting on the putting green and in the nursery, Upper Castle Park, Colchester, Essex April 2007, by Kate Orr
CIMS	2008a	<i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i> (CBC)
CIMS	2008b	<i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester &amp; Ipswich Museums</i> (CBC)
DoE	1990	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning</i>
Duncan, P M	1858	A survey of the Walls of Colchester, <i>Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society</i> , o.s i, 1 ff.
EAA3	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 & 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
Hull, M R IFA	1958 2008a	<i>Roman Colchester</i> , RRCSAL, 20 <i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>

IFA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>
IFA	2008c	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
MoRPHE	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (English Heritage)

## 13 Glossary

AOD context	Above Ordnance Datum specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
EHER feature	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by the ECC an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
<i>insula</i>	an area or block within the grid pattern of a Roman town (plural <i>insulae</i> )
layer	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
peg-tile	rectangular thin tile with peg-hole(s) used mainly for roofing, first appeared c AD 1200 and continued to present day, but commonly post-medieval to modern
post-medieval	after Henry VIII to around the late 18th century
Roman	period of assimilation of Britain as part of the Roman empire, c AD 43-410
<i>tesserae</i>	small ceramic cubes used for floors in Roman buildings
U/S	unstratified, i.e. without any context

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## Appendix 1: contents of archive

One A4 document wallet containing;

### 1 Introduction

- 3.1 Application for Scheduled Monument Consent.
- 3.2 Risk assessment

### 2 Site Archive

- 3.1 Digital photo record
- 3.2 Site notes
- 3.3 Attendance register
- 3.4 Finds register
- 3.5 Site photographic record on cd
- 3.6 Plan showing the location of survey points around Hollytrees Meadow.
- 3.7 Plan showing probable location of new road in relation to archaeology
- 3.8 Two plans showing archaeology in Hollytrees Meadows.

### 3 Research Archive

- 3.1 Monitoring (client) report
- 3.2 Finds reports

### Not in file

1 A3 section sheet

### The Finds

The finds occupy less than one box

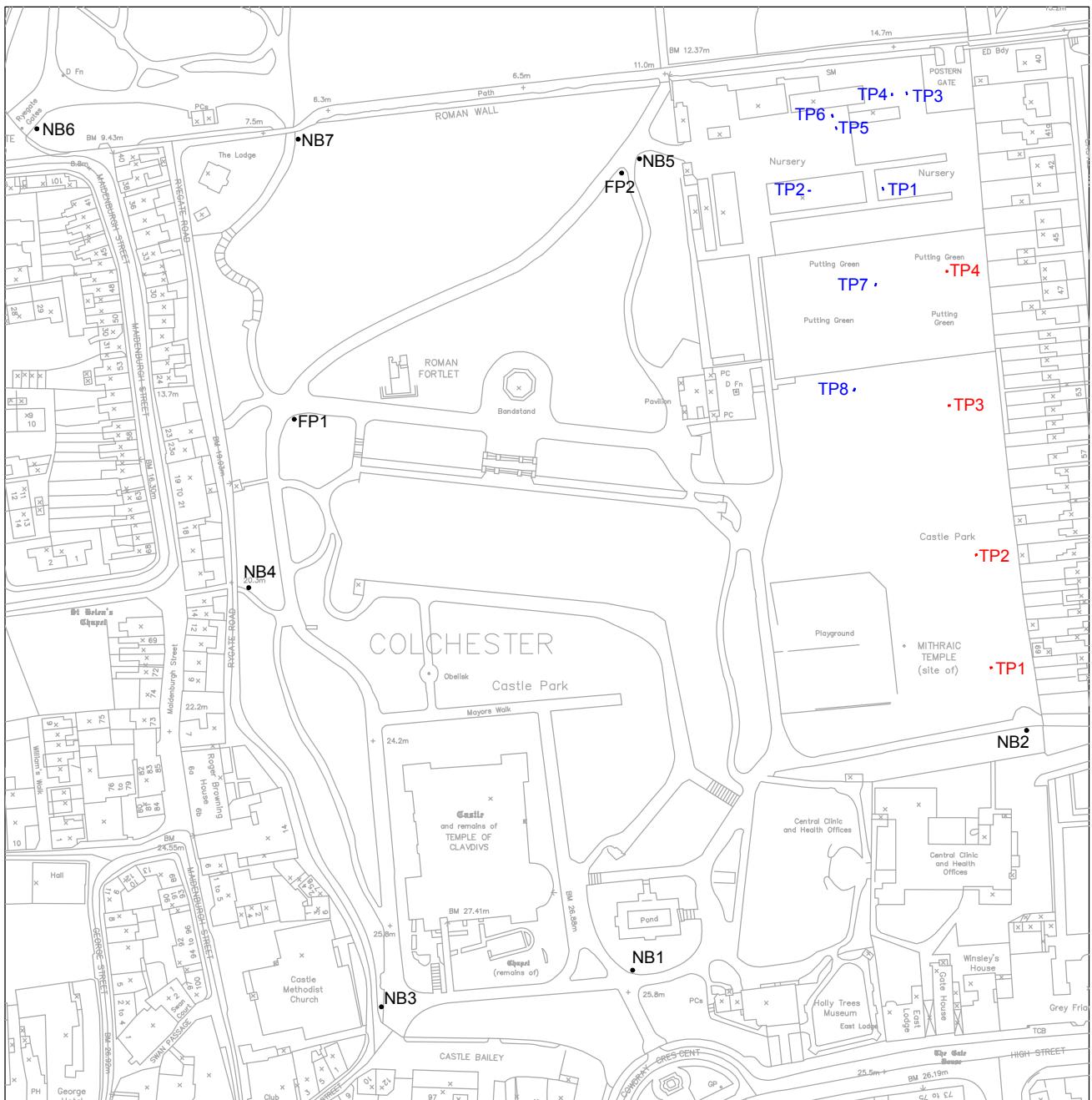


Fig 1 Location of the new notice boards (NB), finger posts (FP), the test pits excavated in 2010 (TP1-4 red) and the test pits excavated in 2011 (TP1-8 blue).

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0 100 m

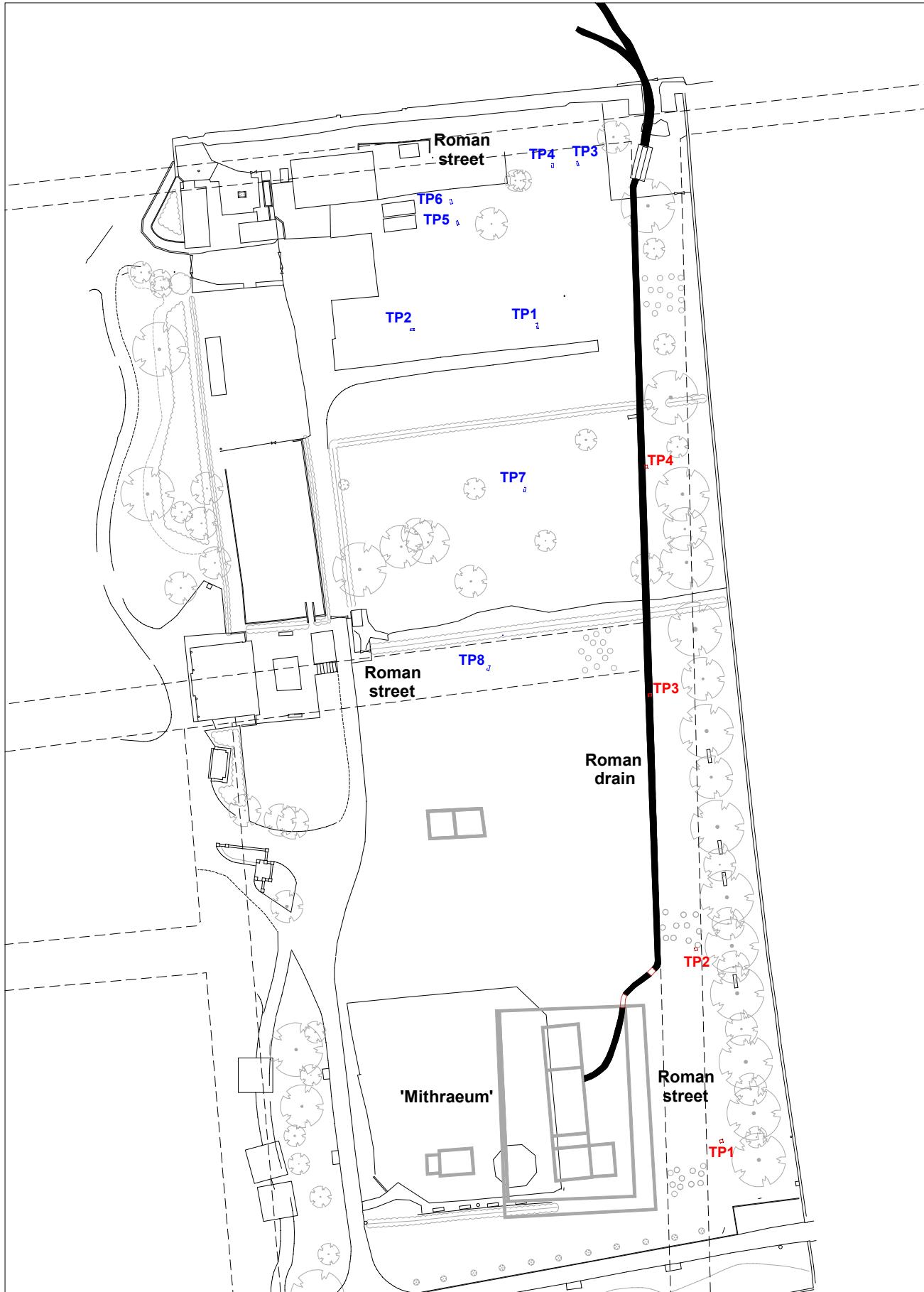


Fig 2 Location of the 2010 test pits (TP1-4 red) and the 2011 test pits (TP1-8 blue) in relation to the Roman streets and drain.

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0

50 m

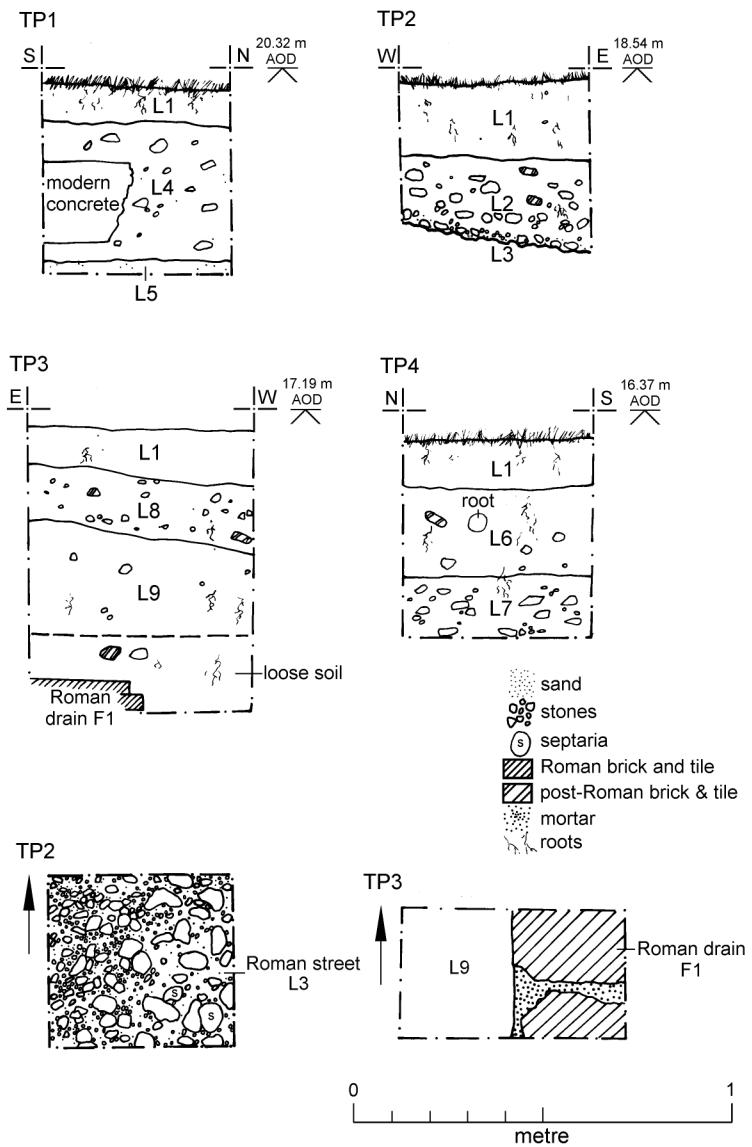


Fig 3 Representative sections (TP1-TP4) and plans (TP2-TP3).

# Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

## Summary sheet

<b>Site address:</b> Castle Park, Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester Borough
<b>NGR:</b> TL 99922 25434	<b>Site code:</b> CAT project – 10/10a & 10/11d
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation by test-pitting and a watching brief	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> October/November 2010 & February 2011	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 16 x 0.2m diameter post holes 3 x 0.5m <sup>2</sup> test pits 1 x 0.4m x 0.6m test pit 8 x 0.8m x 0.3m
<b>Curating museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museums accession: COLIM 2010.82	<b>Funding source:</b> Colchester Borough Council
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> yes	<b>Related EHER nos:</b>
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 575 and summary in EAH	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Roman, post medieval, modern	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> <i>Three archaeological investigations were undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) in Castle Park, Colchester between October 2010 and February 2011. An archaeological watching brief took place during the installation of a series of information signs (October 2010), four test-pits were hand excavated in Hollytrees Meadow along the proposed route of a new vehicular path (November 2010) and eight further test-pits were excavated prior to the installation of new pathways for vehicular access and new metal fencing in the nursery area and on the former putting green (February 2011).</i>	
<i>The only significant archaeological deposit observed during the watching brief was a gravelled surface of probable Roman date. Roman archaeology was encountered in two of the four test-pits excavated in 2010. The north-south street leading to the north-east gate (Duncan's gate) was uncovered in Test Pit 2, and the internal face of the eastern wall of the Roman drain was uncovered in Test Pit 3. The uncovering of the drain wall confirmed that the north-south linear depression on Hollytrees Meadow has been caused by the compaction of loose modern backfill within the fully excavated Roman drain.</i>	
<i>Roman archaeology was uncovered in four of the 2011 test-pits at depths of between 540mm and 590mm below modern ground level. The east-west orientated Roman street between Insula 7 and Insula 15 was identified in Test Pit 8. The test-pits were mostly excavated through modern topsoil and post-Roman dark earth containing frequent Roman artefacts. The quantities of Roman tile, pottery and tesserae hint at Roman occupation features in the vicinity and below the limit of excavation.</i>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> CAT Reports 102, 191, 286, 416, 422	
<b>Keywords:</b> Roman street, Roman drain, post-Roman dark earth	<b>Significance:</b> *
<b>Author of summary:</b> Adam Wightman	<b>Date of summary:</b> February 2011