

CAT Report 612: Archaeological monitoring along Gryme's Dyke, Colchester, during works for gas-mains: July 2011



**report prepared by
Adam Wightman and Mark Baister**

**on behalf of
AMEC Environment & Infrastructure UK Limited**

CAT project ref.: 11/7d
Colchester and Ipswich Museums accession code: COLEM 2011.51
NGR: TL 9604 2479-TL 9633 2442 (northern pipeline)
TL 9626 2339-TL 9631 2341 (southern pipeline)



Colchester Archaeological Trust
12 Lexden Road,
Colchester,
Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051
(01206) 500124
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

CAT Report 612
October 2011

Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Observations: the replacement main	
4	Observations: the new length of main at the south end of Gryme's Dyke Middle by Stanway Green	2
5	Pottery, <i>by S Benfield</i>	4
6	Conclusions	4
7	Archive deposition	4
8	Acknowledgements	4
9	References	4
10	Glossary and abbreviations	5
11	Appendices: contents of archive - 1	6
	Figures	after page 6
	EHER summary	after figures

List of figures

- Fig 1 Plan showing the location of the replacent main down the side of Gryme's Dyke and the new main from Stanway Green (both shown in blue).
- Fig 2 Replacement main: trench locations (T1-T6) (pipelines shown in blue).
- Fig 3 New main from Stanway Green.

1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust during some works for gas-mains along and across the scheduled monument of Gryme's Dyke. The bank and ditch of the dyke was cut in one place but little of archaeological significance was found.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1** This report describes the outcome of archaeological monitoring carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on behalf of AMEC Environment & Infrastructure UK Limited in July 2011. Two separate but linked projects were involved. Gryme's Dyke is a scheduled ancient monument and English Heritage consequently requested that the groundworks for both schemes be monitored by an archaeologist. The first project was the replacement of a gas main alongside part of Gryme's Dyke Middle (Section 3 below). The second project involved the digging of a long east-west trench which was to cut across part of the dyke elsewhere (Section 4 below).
- 2.2** Gryme's Dyke is the most westerly and longest of the nationally-important complex of dykes at Colchester. These were built in the Late Iron Age and early Roman periods to define and protect the important settlement centre of Camulodunum. The latest dykes appear to belong to the early Roman period which is probably when Gryme's Dyke was constructed (CAR 11, 109-116). Gryme's Dyke faced westwards and took the form of a deep V-shaped ditch with a steep earth bank behind it. The dyke can be divided into three distinct sections on topographical grounds, ie Gryme's Dyke North, South and Middle (CAR 11, 27-9) The dyke survives for much of its length as a visible but badly damaged and denuded earthwork. The gas-main a few metres to the west of the now heavily silted-up ditch.
- 2.3** All fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with CAT's *Policies and procedures* (CAT 2008), Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CIMS 2008a) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester and Ipswich Museums* (CIMS 2008b), and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an watching brief* (IfA 2008a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008b). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* by English Heritage (MoRPHE) and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) was also followed.

3 Observations: the replacement main (Figs 1-2)

- 3.1** The new main was inserted inside the existing one so that the ground disturbance was minimal and limited to the digging by the contractor of six small trenches (numbered T1 to T6 on Fig 2). These were dug to provide access into the existing pipeline so that the new plastic one could be slid along inside it.

Trench 1 (T1)

This was the initial trench from which the new plastic pipe was inserted into the existing main. T1 was 6m long by 2m wide, and 1.6m deep in the middle (so was stepped down to allow access). The fill was mixed and quite dirty,

but it appeared to be natural redeposited as backfill in the trench into which the existing gas-main had been laid. Conditions were difficult so it is possible that some at least of what was taken to be trench-fill could have been natural. T1 was almost certainly too far west to be within the ditch fill of the dyke.

Trench 2 (T2)

Trench 2 was approximately 2m long, 0.9m wide and 1.0m deep. The topsoil overlay an orangey-brown silty sand with abundant stones. Modern material was present throughout the latter including modern bricks towards the bottom of it. This material proved to be the backfill of the trench in which the original main had been laid. Elsewhere there was undisturbed natural showing that T2 was too far west to be within the ditch fill of the dyke, although probably only by a couple of metres.

Trench 3

The trench was only 450mm wide and less than 1m long. Like T2, the pit was clear of the dyke and cut only the backfill of the trench for the original main and natural.

Trench 4

This trench was only 450mm wide and less than 1m long. As with T2 and T3, the trench only cut into undisturbed natural and backfill of the trench for the original main.

Trench 5

This was a large T-shaped trench where there was a spur off the original main. The trench was approximately 3.5m long, 0.7m wide and 1.1m deep with a 0.6m long leg extending towards T6. As with T2, T3, and T4, the trench only cut into undisturbed natural and backfill of the trench for the original main.

Trench 6

This was a trench dug through a pavement in Clairmont Road over 150m to the east of Gryme's Dyke. Several other modern services were encountered. No finds were recovered and there was nothing of archaeological significance.

4 Observations: the new length of main at the south end of Gryme's Dyke Middle by Stanway Green (Fig 3)

- 4.1 A new length of gas main was laid in an open trench from Stanway Green. The trench crossed Gryme's Dyke Middle about 95m north of its southern end (Fig 3). It was 300m long, 800mm deep and aligned east-west. The trench was excavated with a toothless bucket.

For most of its length, the ditch was dug through a shallow topsoil and underlying natural sand and gravel. Nothing was found here of archaeological significance. However, the eastern end of the trench cut through the top of the fill of the ditch of the dyke and then further east into its bank. The western end of the ditch fill could not be precisely fixed because it had been destroyed when a north-south trench was dug some time ago for an electricity cable (Fig 3). It was impossible to tell where the east edge of the ditch met the west side of the bank because the material making up both was indistinguishable from each other presumably because part of the bank had eroded or had been pushed into the ditch.

The only find from the bank was a single prehistoric sherd which, to judge by its apparent date (see below), was residual. Nothing was found in the backfill of the ditch.

5 Pottery

by Stephen Benfield

A single sherd of prehistoric pottery, recently broken into three joining pieces, was recovered the bank of the dyke where it was cut by the trench for the new gas main (see Section 6.2). The weight of the sherd is 42 g. The sherd is about 14 mm thick with pale brown surfaces, and a dark grey fabric core. The external vessel surface of the sherd appears rather more abraded than the inner. The fabric contains a moderate-common quantity of small-medium sized crushed, calcinated flint-temper and some dark grog-temper. The sherd thickness and temper present suggest an Early-Middle Bronze Age date.

6 Conclusions

Trenches 1-5 were a few metres too far west to reveal anything of Gryme's Dyke and of course T6 was considerably too far to the east.

The trench excavated through the dyke from Stanway Green was more interesting as it had an impact on the monument although the similarity of the material in the bank and that making up the upper fill of its ditch meant that it was not possible to determine the width of the top of the ditch in this area. The single sherd of pottery recovered from the bank of the dyke, being probably Early to Middle Bronze Age in date, is almost certainly residual.

7 Archive deposition

The finds and paper archive are currently held by CAT at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museums under accession code COLEM 2011.51.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT is grateful to AMEC Environment & Infrastructure UK Limited for funding the watching brief. The latter was managed and undertaken by A Wightman assisted by C Lister.

9 References

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

CAR 11	1995	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 11: Camulodunum 2</i> , by C F C Hawkes & P Crummy
CAT	2008	<i>Policies and procedures</i>
CIMS	2008a	<i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester (CBC)</i>
CIMS	2008b	<i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester and Ipswich Museums (CBC)</i>
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	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
IfA	2008b	<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)

10 Glossary and abbreviations

AOD	above Ordnance Survey datum, based on mean sea level at Newlyn, Cornwall
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CIMS	Colchester and Ipswich Museums
context	specific location on an excavation, usually relates to finds
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
modern	19th century to the present
NGR	National Grid Reference

© Colchester Archaeological Trust 2011

Distribution list:

Steven Townend, AMEC Environment & Infrastructure UK Limited
Deborah Priddy, English Heritage
Martin Winter, Colchester Borough Council Archaeology Officer
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust
12 Lexden Road,
Colchester,
Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051
(01206) 500124
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy
Date: 14.10.11

Adamsx c:/reports 11/gryme's dyke/report612.doc

11 Appendix: contents of archive

One A4 document wallet containing:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 4 x A3 site plans provided by contractor

2 Site archive

- 2.1 Digital photo. record
- 2.2 Attendance register
- 2.3 Site photographic record on CD

3 Research archive

- 3.1 A copy of CAT report 612

Finds

The finds occupy less than one box.

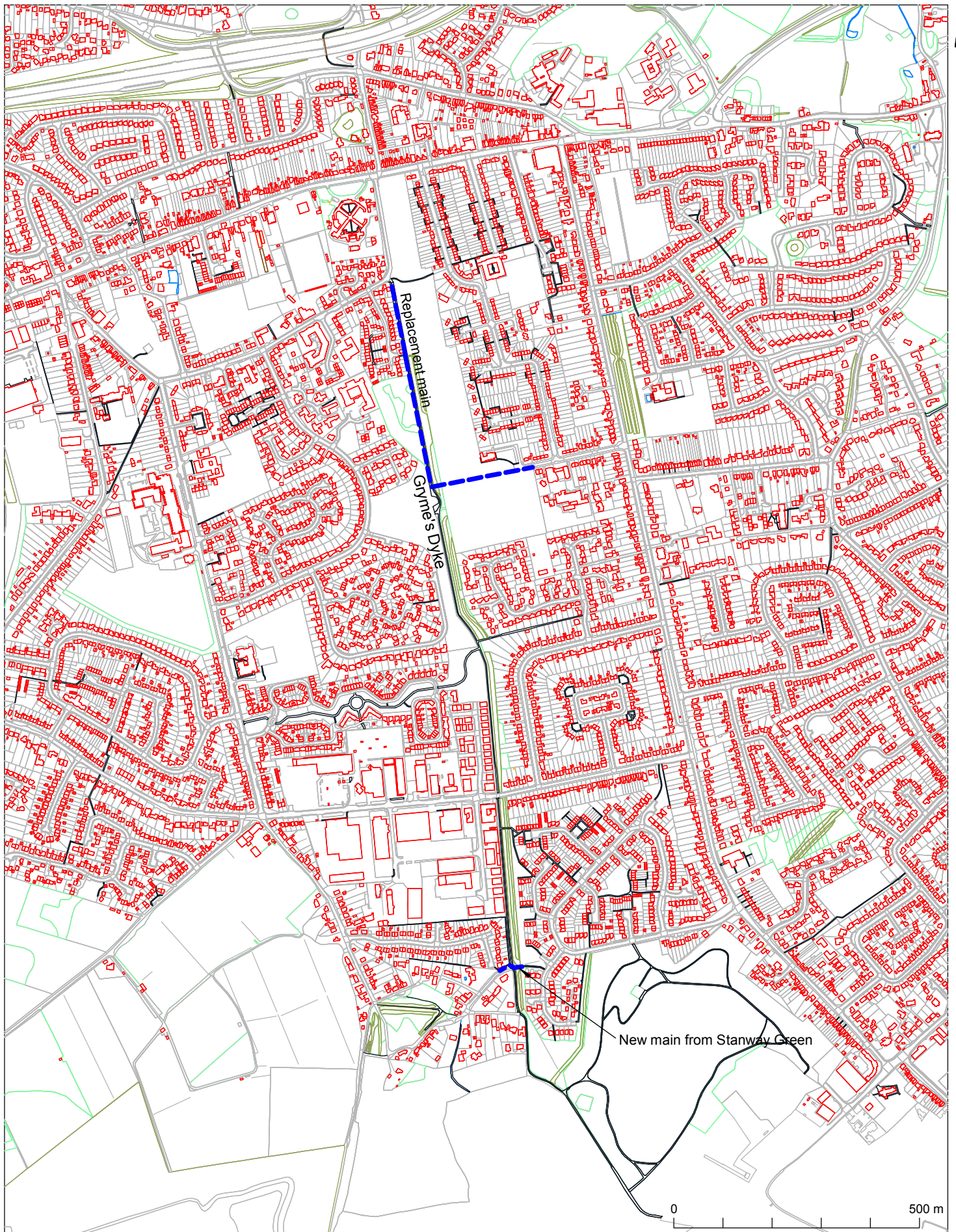
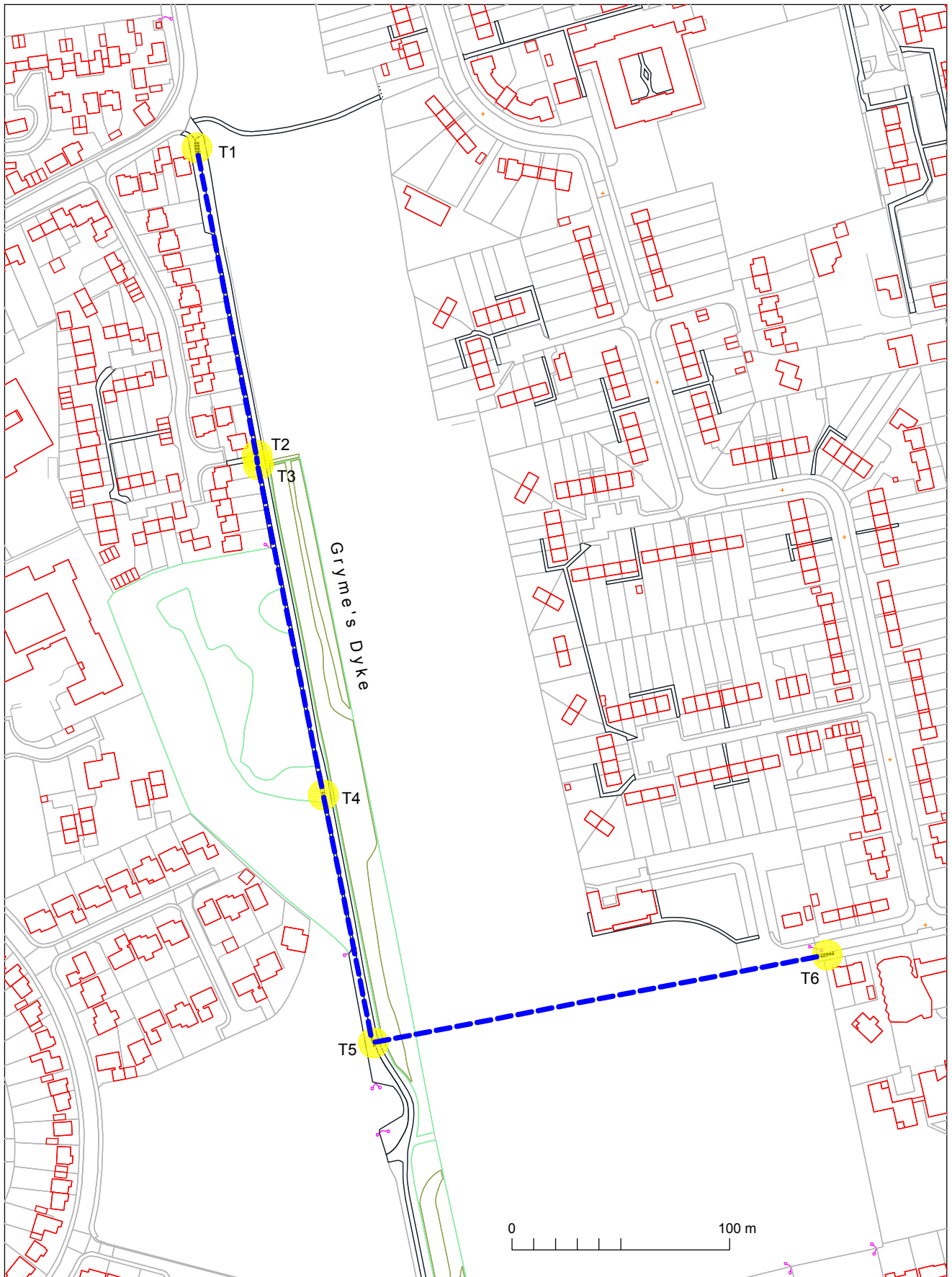
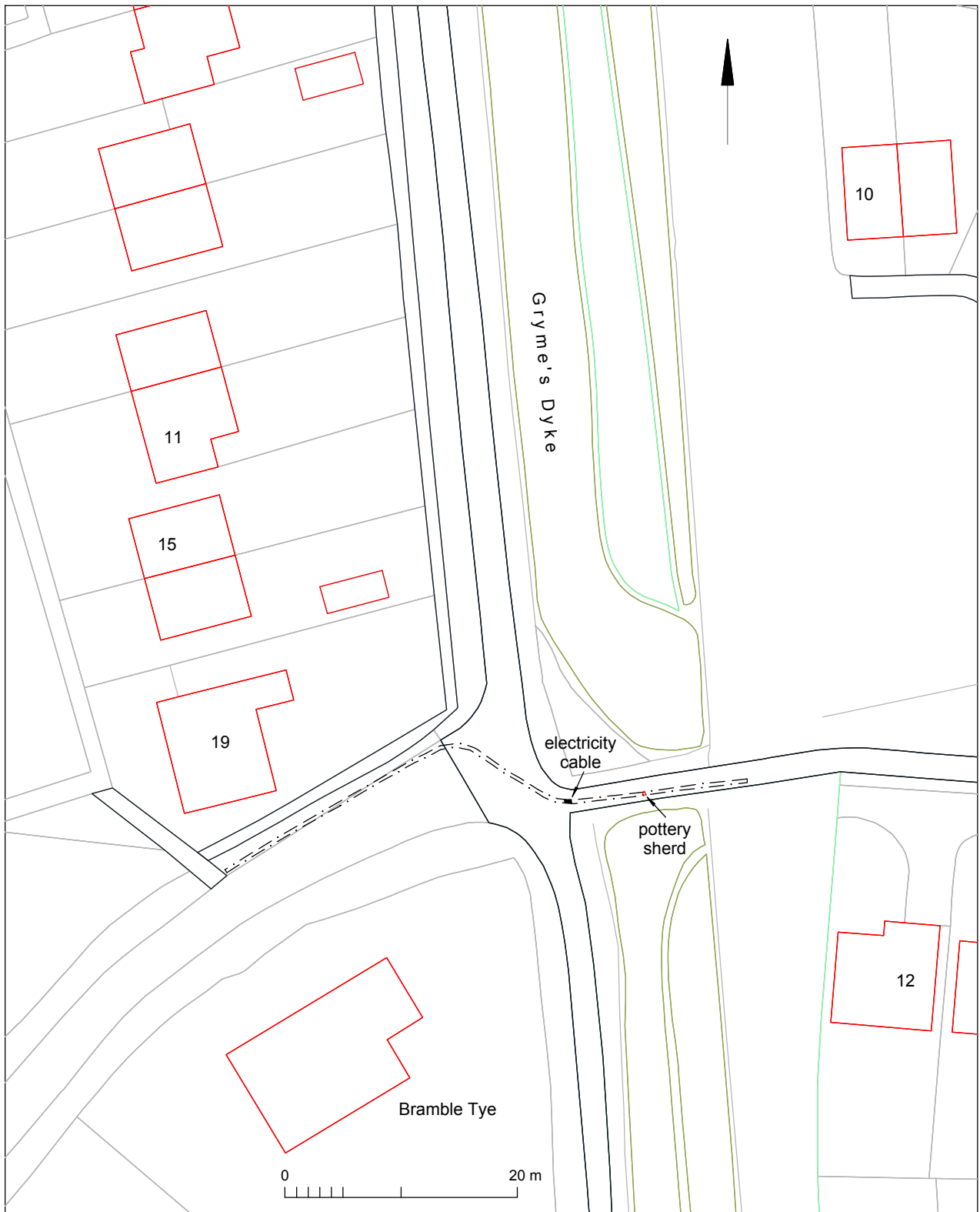


Fig 1 Plan showing the location of the replacment main down the side of Gryme's Dyke and the new main from Stanway Green (both shown in blue).



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100039294.

Fig 2 Replacement main: trench locations (T1-T6) (pipelines shown in blue).



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100039294.

Fig 3 New main from Stanway Green.

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

Summary sheet

Site address: Gryme's Dyke, Lexden/Stanway, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Lexden/Stanway	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 596086 224561 (c) (replacement main) & TL 596286 223409 [(c)] (new mian)	Site codes: CAT project - 11/7d Museum accession - COLEM 2011.51
Type of work: Watching Brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: July 2011	Size of area investigated: -
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museums	Funding source: AMEC Environment & Infrastructure UK Limited
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER and UAD nos:
Final report: CAT Report 612	
Periods represented: Roman	
Summary of fieldwork results: Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust during some works for gas-mains along and across the scheduled monument of Gryme's Dyke. The bank and ditch of the dyke was cut in one place but little of archaeological significance was found.	
Previous summaries/reports: -	
Keywords: dyke	Significance: *
Author of summary: Mark Baister	Date of summary: September 2011