An archaeological evaluation
at
135-137 New London Road,
Chelmsford, Essex.

April 2012

report prepared by
Ben Holloway

with contributions by
Stephen Benfield and Howard Brooks

on behalf of John Finch Partnership

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CAT project ref.: 12/3e
Chelmsford & Essex Museum accession code: CHMRE 2012.067
NGR: TL 7053 0622

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CAT Report 643
April 2012
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1 **Summary**

The site (located on the south side of New London Road, and to the east of the historic settlement of Chelmsford) consisted of an area of tarmac hardstanding used as car parking.

A single evaluation trench 8m in length positioned within the footprint of a proposed new extension revealed three archaeological features: a fragment of a post-medieval/modern wall foundation, an associated brick yard surface, and a post-medieval ditch.

These features relate to domestic activity in the properties fronting onto New London Road, and shed no light on the development of Roman or medieval Chelmsford.

2 **Introduction** (Fig 1)

This is the archive report on an archaeological trial-trenching evaluation at 135-137 New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex (TL 7053 0622).

The site is a rectangular area of open ground associated with the parking to the rear of offices at 135-137 New London road.

The Historic Environment Management (HEM) team of Essex County Council (ECC) were consulted by Chelmsford Borough Council in January 2012 for a planning application (11/01603/FUL) for the construction of a new three-storey rear extension at 135-137 New London Road, Chelmsford. In response to consultation, HEM made the following recommendation to the LPA in line with Planning Policy Statement 5:

No development, or preliminary groundworks, of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work and recording in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the planning authority.

A brief detailing the required archaeological work (an evaluation by trial-trenching) was written by HEM officer Richard Havis (HEM 2012). All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a WSI (Written Scheme of Investigation) produced by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) in response to the HEM team brief and agreed with the HEM team (CAT 2012).

The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Richard Horley of John Finch Partnership, and was carried out by CAT on April 4th 2012. Post-excavation work was carried out in April 2012.

In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with the Colchester Archaeological Trust’s Policies and procedures (CAT 2008), and the Institute of Field Archaeologists’ Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation (IIA 2008a) and Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (IIA 2008b). The guidance contained in the documents Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (English Heritage 2006: MoRPHE), Standards for field archaeology in the East of England (EAA 14) and Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England, East Anglian Archaeological Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24) were also followed.

3 **Archaeological background**

This section is based on records held by The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER), and in Medlycott 2011.

The modern town of Chelmsford grew from two separate foci, firstly a small Romano-British settlement to the south of the river (centred around what is now Moulsham Street) and, secondly, a medieval market town to the north of the river. The Roman settlement went out of use in the early part of the 5th century, and was re-occupied in the medieval period.
The site lies with an area of archaeological potential, to the east of the Roman town and outside the later 2nd-century town defences. Mesolithic and Neolithic worked flint and Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery have been found at a number of sites within the Roman town in a disturbed layer at the top of the natural brickearth. Roman Chelmsford or Caeseromagus was probably established around a fort constructed in the aftermath of the Boudican revolt of 60-61 AD. The civilian settlement developed along the London-Colchester Road (Moulsham Street) and a side road to the south-east that led to Heybridge and Wickford. The town included a mansio (government posting station), its bath-house, and a temple precinct. The mansio and bath-house were rebuilt on a larger scale in the mid-2nd century. In c160-75 substantial earthwork defences were constructed around the town’s core but the southern side of the circuit at least was abandoned by the mid 3rd century, and settlement continued to extend along the road frontages to the south and the east. Excavation within proximity of the Roman town has revealed that Roman deposits and features survive despite being built upon. The development site lies to the north of the major Roman road to London which has been found to have extensive occupation along it. Further to the east in Marlborough Road trial trenches failed to locate surviving archaeology (EHER 18936). Other finds of coins within Marlborough Road indicate the presence of occupation. The evaluation site also lies within the medieval and post medieval town.

4 Aim
The aim of the evaluation was to record and establish the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any remains and deposits likely to be disturbed by the proposed works, with particular attention to evidence of activity for the development of Roman Chelmsford.

5 Results of the evaluation (Figs 1-3)
This section gives an archaeological summary of the evaluation trench (T1), with context and finds dating information. The evaluation trench was excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator, through five layers: modern tarmac hard-standing 200mm thick (L1), a compacted base layer for the hard-standing consisting of crushed hardcore (L2), a remnant topsoil (L3), and an accumulation horizon (L4) which sealed natural brickearth deposits (L5).

An archaeological summary of each evaluation trench with a tabulation of context and finds dating information follows below.

T1: summary
T1, located in the centre of the site and within the footprint of the new extension, contained three archaeological features, a brick surface F1, abutting wall foundation F2. The wall foundation aligns with the property boundary that once divided no. 135 from no. 137. F2 appears to be a yard surface associated with the rear of number 137. Ditch F3 runs broadly parallel with New London Road, and is likely to represent an earlier boundary feature, possibly an agricultural feature.

Trench 1 – archaeological contexts and dating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature no</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Dated finds</th>
<th>Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>brick surface</td>
<td>brick</td>
<td>post-medieval/modern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>foundation</td>
<td>brick</td>
<td>Post-med/modern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>ditch</td>
<td>pot, peg-tile, clay tobacco-pipe, animal bone</td>
<td>post-medieval</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6 Finds
by Stephen Benfield

A small quantity of post-medieval and modern finds came from three contexts in T1. The finds consist of pottery, ceramic building material (CBM), clay pipe and animal bone, and are listed and described in Table 2. Individual pieces or types of finds are dated and an overall spot date is provided for the finds from each context finds number. The medieval and post-medieval pottery fabric types recorded refer to the Essex post-Roman fabric series (Cunningham & Drury 1985; CAR 7 2000) and are listed in Table 1. Bricks are dated with reference to the typology and system for describing Essex brick (Ryan 1996, Appendix 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fabric code</th>
<th>description</th>
<th>fabric period/common date range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>post-medieval red earthen wares (general)</td>
<td>16/17-18C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>German stone ware (general)</td>
<td>15/16-17C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Pottery fabrics recorded showing period/common date range

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ctxt no.</th>
<th>finds no</th>
<th>ctxt type</th>
<th>finds</th>
<th>spot date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>brick floor surface</td>
<td>CBM complete, White floor brick, 1944 g, (235 x 110 x 40 mm), slightly rounded edges to base, white, slightly powdery fabric (19C), slightly abraded surfaces; near complete, White floor brick, 1107 g, (220 x 110 x 33/25 mm) unusually the brick is thinner at one side than the other, white, slightly powdery fabric (19C), abraded surfaces; complete, White floor brick, 2348 g, (230 x 115 x 43 mm), hard pale white cream fabric, part of base rough (19C)</td>
<td>19C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>wall foundation</td>
<td>CBM brick, complete, 2566 g, London Stock brick (230 x 105 x 60 mm) pale yellow fabric with broad frog in base (L18-E20C), lime mortar on base of brick</td>
<td>L18-E20C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>ditch</td>
<td>Pottery Fabric 40 1@4 g, possibly Late medieval/early post-medieval Essex red ware (16-18C); Fabric 40(glazed) 1@8 g (16/17-18C); Fabric 45 1@3 g, almost certainly a German import (15/16-17C) possibly from Frechen, although the pale, slightly soft fabric might possibly allow an English (L17-18C) source CBM peg-tile 7@379 g (med post-med/mod); brick 3@187 g, consists of one small corner in red orange fine sand fabric with shape edges (18-19C) and two coarse sanded pieces (18-20C); unidentified brick/tile piece 1@24 g possibly from a curving (?) tile with part of a small, angled perforation or hole surviving at one end which does not penetrated the full thickness of the tile (18-19/20C) Clay pipe stem pieces 3@10 g, one bore 1-2 mm (burnt) other two bore 2-3 mm (17/18-19C) Animal bone 2@45 g, one end of long bone piece from medium-large mammal (shaft chopped through) and large mammal (cow) tooth</td>
<td>pottery 16/17-18C, some CBM dated 18-19/20C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7 **Discussion**
Evaluation trenching to the rear of 135-137, New London Road has not produced a great deal of archaeological significance. However, the excavated features are consistent with what would be expected to the rear of a post-medieval street frontage - the remains of yard areas and boundary features. The boundary feature represented by F1 was observed as a scar on the rear wall of the building, with the brick surfacing F2 abutting the wall foundation (bricks sampled from the foundation are frogged indicating a mid 19th century date). Ditch F3 was sealed by wall foundation F2 and yard surface F1. It contained 17th century pottery, indicating an earlier phase of activity when the ditch may have been an agricultural land boundary put out of use by the expanding Victorian suburbs of 19th-century Chelmsford.

8 **Acknowledgements**
The Trust would like to thank Mr Richard Horley of John Finch Partnership for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by B Holloway, fieldwork carried out by B Holloway and C Lister. The project was monitored for HEM team by Richard Havis.

9 **References**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAR 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971-1985, by J Cotter</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies and procedures</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation at 135-137 New London Road, Chelmsford</td>
<td>2102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-medieval sites and their pottery: Moulsam Street, Chelmsford, CBA Research Report 54</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological Investigation at 135-137 New London Road Chelmsford. Essex County Council Brief</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</td>
<td>2008a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</td>
<td>2008b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelmsford Historic Town Assessment: Essex County Council</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick in Essex, from the Roman conquest to the Reformation</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10 Abbreviations and glossary
CAT Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBA Council for British Archaeology
context specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC Essex County Council
EHER Essex Historic Environment Record, held by Essex County Council
feature an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain; can contain 'contexts’
fill the soil filling up a hole such as a pit or ditch
HEM Historic Environment Management
IfA Institute for Archaeologists
modern circa 1800 - now
natural geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR National Grid Reference
post-medieval circa 1530 - 1800
Roman the period from AD 43 to around AD 430

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 will be permanently deposited with Chelmsford Museum under accession code 2012.067.

12 Contents of archive
Finds
1 museum box containing all finds (pottery, clay pipe, animal bone, peg tile)

Paper record
One A4 wallet containing:

brief and WSI
copy of CAT Report 643
original site record sheets

photographic log
disk with digital photographs

attendance record

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Distribution list:
Mr Richard Horley John Finch Partnership
Richard Havis Essex County Council Historic Environment Management Team
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council
Fig 1 Site location.
Fig 2 Evaluation results.
Fig 3  Sections.
**Essex Historic Environment Record/Essex Archaeology and History**

**Summary sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Site address:</strong> 135-137 New London Rd, Chelmsford, Essex</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parish:</strong> Chelmsford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District:</strong> Chelmsford</td>
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<td><strong>NGR:</strong> TL 7053 0622 (c)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Type of work:</strong> Evaluation</td>
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<td><strong>Site director/group:</strong> Colchester Archaeological Trust</td>
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<td><strong>Date of work:</strong> April 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Size of area investigated:</strong> 1 trench (8m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location of finds/curating museum:</strong> Chelmsford &amp; Essex Museum: accession 2012.067</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Funding source:</strong> Developer</td>
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<td><strong>Further seasons anticipated?</strong> No</td>
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<td><strong>Related EHER no</strong> 18936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final report:</strong> CAT Report 643, summary in EAH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Periods represented:</strong> post-medieval, modern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of fieldwork results:**

A single evaluation trench 8m in length was positioned within the footprint of a proposed new extension. This revealed three archaeological features: a fragment of a post-medieval/modern wall foundation, an associated brick yard surface, and a post-medieval ditch. These features relate to domestic activity in the properties fronting onto New London Road, and shed no light on the development of Roman or medieval Chelmsford.

**Previous summaries/reports:** none

**Keywords:** post-medieval wall, brick floor, ditch

**Significance:** *;

**Author of summary:** Ben Holloway

**Date of summary:** April 2012

**ECC HEM Monitor:** Richard Havis