

Archaeological trial-trenching evaluation at 62-66 East Street, Coggeshall, Essex

March 2014



report prepared by Ben Holloway and Graham McKean
on behalf of East of England CO-OP

CAT project ref.: 11/7h

HET code: CG20

Planning reference: (Braintree) 11/00157/FUL

NGR: TL 8532 2259

Braintree Museum accession code: pending (requested March 2014)



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CAT Report 760
March 2014

1 Summary

This site, on the southern edge of the historic core of Coggeshall and south of East Street (formerly the Roman road 'Stane Street'), is inside the former Coggeshall cinema.

Two evaluation trenches (total length, 30m) were positioned within the footprint of a proposed new retail space.

There were no significant archaeological features, and only a single sherd of (residual) medieval pottery. Modern brick-built foundations at the southern end of T2 are likely to be tiered seating supports from the old cinema. Modern material imported into the southern part of the site indicates that the site has been levelled, which may account for the lack of archaeological material.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report on the archaeological trial-trenching evaluation at 62-66 East Street, Coggeshall, Essex. The site is inside the former Fleetshield workshops and the old Coggeshall cinema.

Proposed works involve the construction of a new retail space and associated infrastructure. Site centre is NGR TL 8532 2259.

Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS) were consulted by Braintree District Council in February 2011 (11/00157/FUL). In response to appeal and consultation, ECCPS made the following recommendation to BDC. This is in compliance with DCLG (2012):

"L2 Implementation of Archaeological Fieldwork Programme

No development including any site clearance or groundworks of any kind shall take place within the site until the applicant or their agents; the owner of the site or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work from an accredited archaeological contractor in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in a manner that accommodates the approved programme of archaeological work."

A brief detailing the required archaeological work (an evaluation by trial-trenching) was written by Teresa O'Connor, the Place Services officer (ECC 2014). All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), produced by CAT in response to the Place Services brief and agreed with the Place Services officer (CAT 2014).

The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Mark Potter of Hurley Porte & Duell Ltd on behalf of The East of England Co-op, and was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on 3rd March 2014. Post-excavation work was carried out in March and April 2014.

In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with the recognised national standards and guidance as defined in IfA 2008a, IfA 2008b MoRPHE, EAA 14 and EAA 24.

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background utilises the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford.

The site is in an area of high archaeological potential. EHER shows that the site is situated along the Roman Road 'Stane Street' (which ran east-west across Essex between Great Dunmow to Colchester) and a postulated minor road on the southern side of the later town linking Stane Street to Kelvedon (Medlycott, 1999).

Residual prehistoric pottery has been recovered from the surrounding area, as well as Neolithic waste flakes.

Excavations on the eastern edge of the historic town in advance of a new school have revealed at least two phases of Roman occupation on the eastern edge of a sizable settlement, possibly a town, probably rectangular in plan, north of Stane Street and opposite the proposed development site. There is some evidence in the form of pottery sherds, for an Early Saxon settlement at Coggeshall opposite the church. The Domesday Book records that at the end of the Saxon period there was a reasonably large, settled community with a church and one, possibly two, mills at Coggeshall. It is thought that the late Saxon and early medieval settlement was centred on the church, on the higher drier ground above the valley floor. In 1142 the abbey was founded, sited to the south of the river and town. Later in the medieval period the focus of settlement shifted down slope to the area around the market-place just to the north of Stane Street, a movement which may be associated with the granting of a market charter in 1256 to the abbey. In the late medieval period and early post-medieval period Coggeshall became an important centre of the cloth industry; in particular it was noted for a fine bay cloth known as Coggeshall White.

The size and quality of the early fifteenth century parish church and the numbers and quality of the surviving fourteenth- to seventeenth-century buildings reflect the wealth available within the town (Medlycott, 1999).

4 Aims

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.

5 Results of the evaluation (Figs 2-3)

This section gives an archaeological summary of the evaluation trenches (T1-T2), with context and finds dating information.

The evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator, through two layers: modern poured concrete floor 100mm thick (L1), and a remnant topsoil (L2) 200mm thick. L2 sealed an accumulation horizon 300mm thick (L3) which sealed natural geology (brickearth containing occasional patches of gravel: L4). At the southern end of T1 a modern layer (L5) had been imported as make-up for floor L1.

Trench 1: summary

T1, positioned on the eastern site edge contained no archaeological features. T1 was excavated through the modern floor (L1), topsoil (L2), accumulation horizon (L3) and on to natural geological horizons (L4). At the southern end of the trench a deposit of imported material (L5) had been used for levelling prior to the pouring of the concrete floor L1.

Trench 2: summary

T1, positioned on the western site edge and in the former cinema (client pers comm), contained no archaeological features. However, a series of modern brick-built foundations (F1), sealed by the modern floor (L1) appear to be part of the former cinema, possibly supports for tiered seating above. A concrete floor (L6) abutted the northern edge of foundation F1. This was presumably the original floor level.

Trench 2: Archaeology

Feature no	Type	Dated finds	Phase
F1	foundations	brick (not retained)	modern



Plate 1: view south along eastern part of the site

6 Finds

A single rim sherd (36g) from a late medieval transitional or early post-medieval lid-seated pot, probably a cooking pot, was recovered from T1 L3 (1). This is in the early, fine, mid Essex fabric variant of Fabric 40 (CAR 7, 192) and can be dated to the period of the 16th-early 17th century.

7 Discussion

No significant archaeological features or material were revealed by this evaluation. The presence of imported material L5 suggests that there has been some site levelling, presumably prior to the construction of the existing buildings. Foundations and floor levels in T2 (F1 and L6) appear to be associated with the older of the range of buildings on the western site edge - once Coggeshall's cinema (client pers comm). The foundations were found only in the southern part of the building, and may represent the base of tiered seating, with L6 representing the original floor level.

Despite the proximity to the known route of Stane Street, there was no evidence of the road itself or associated Roman or later settlement activity. It seems likely that the focus of Roman occupation was concentrated farther to the north where Roman material has been revealed by excavations near St Peter's School.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Mark Potter of Hurley Porte & Duell Ltd for commissioning the work on behalf of East of England Co-op, who funded it. The project was managed by B Holloway, and fieldwork was carried out by BH and M Baister. Site plans are by MB, and sections were prepared by E Holloway. The project was monitored for the ECC Place Services by Teresa O'Connor.

9 References

CAR 7	1999	<i>Post-Roman Pottery from Excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , Colchester Archaeological Report 7, by J Cotter
CAT	2014	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Trial Trenching at 62-66 East Street, Coggeshall, Braintree</i>
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> , Department for Communities and Local Government
ECC	2014	<i>Archaeological Trial Trenching at 62-66 East Street Coggeshall, Essex</i> . Essex County Council Brief, by Teresa O'Connor
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> East Anglian Archaeological, Occasional Papers, 14 , ed by D Gurney
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeological Occasional Papers, 24 , ed by M Medlycott
IfA	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>
IfA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Medlycott, M.	1999	<i>Historic Town Assessment for Coggeshall</i>
MoRPHE	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> , English Heritage

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
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 physical trait: a pit, a wall, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
HEM	Historic Environment Management
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
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 Roman Circus House, Circular Road North, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Braintree Museum under accession code: pending (requested March 2014).

12 Contents of Archive

Finds: none

Paper record: one A4 document wallet containing:
Original site record sheets (contexts, trench, finds)
ECC Brief
CAT WSI
CAT risk assessment
Site location maps
Site digital photographic record
Attendance Record Sheet

Distribution list:

Mr Mark Potter, Hurley Porte & Duell Ltd
Teresa O'Connor Essex County Council Place Services
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

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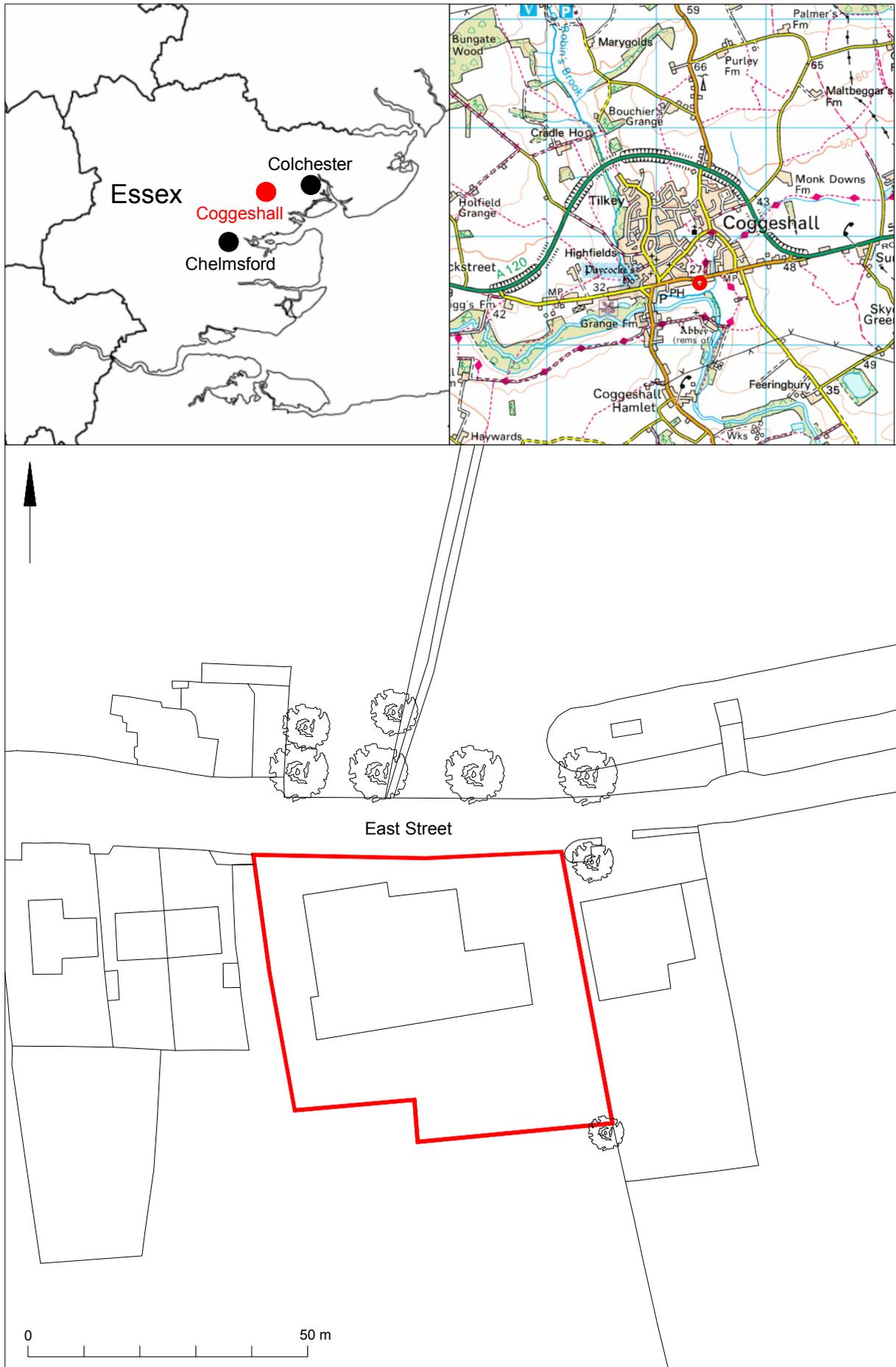


Fig 1 Site location.

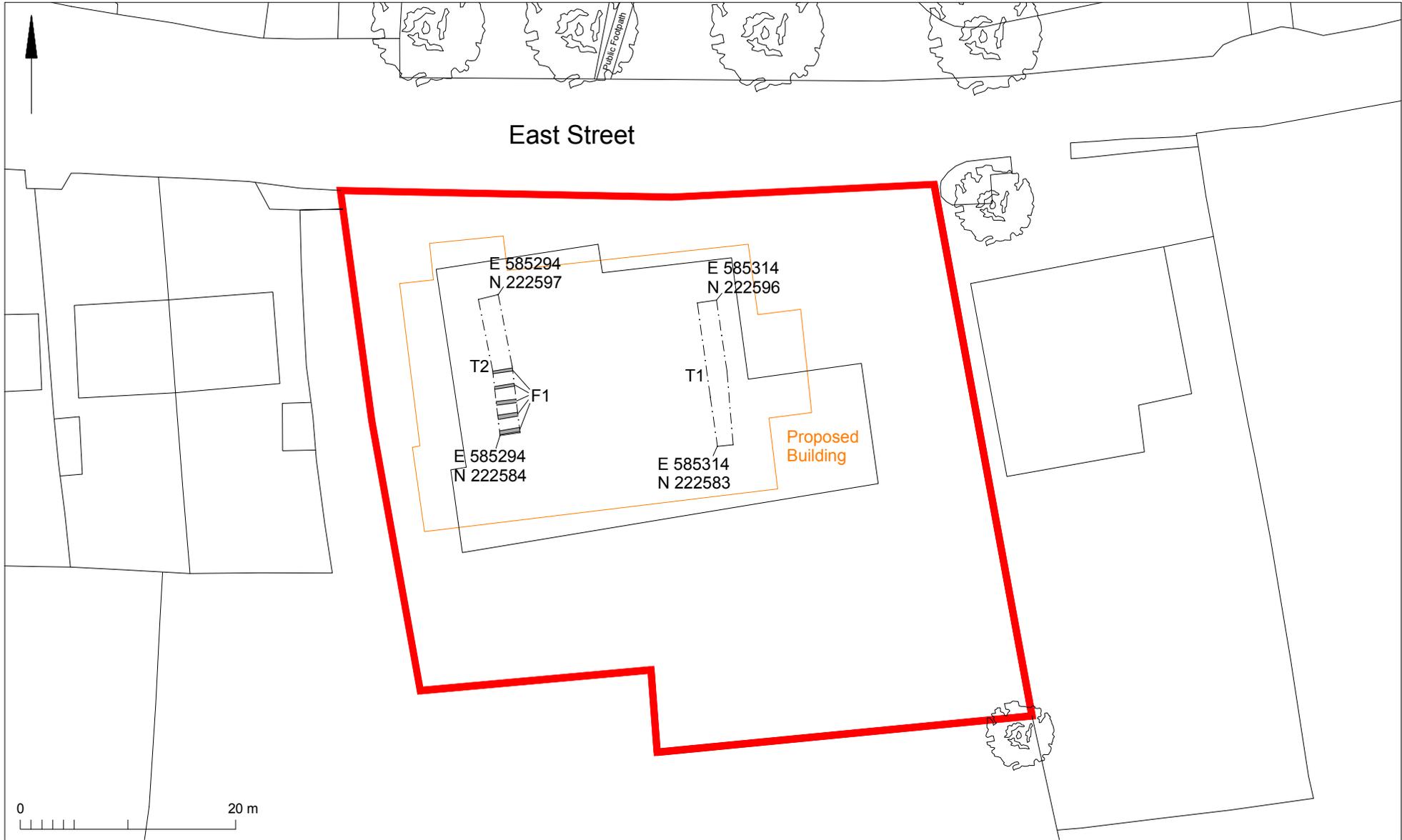


Fig 2 Evaluation results. Proposed development shown in orange.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: 62-66 East Street, Coggeshall, Essex	
Parish: Coggeshall	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 8532 2259	Site code: CAT project code – 11/7h HET Code – CG20
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 3rd March 2014	Size of area investigated: 30m (linear)
Location of curating museum: Braintree Museum accession code : Pending (requested March 2014)	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER number: --
Final report: CAT Report 760	
Periods represented: Modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: <p><i>This site, on the southern edge of the historic core of Coggeshall and south of East Street (formerly the Roman road 'Stane Street'), is inside the former Coggeshall cinema.</i></p> <p><i>Two evaluation trenches (total length, 30m) were positioned within the footprint of a proposed new retail space.</i></p> <p><i>There were no significant archaeological features, and only a single sherd of (residual) medieval pottery. Modern brick-built foundations at the southern end of T2 are likely to be tiered seating supports from the old cinema. Modern material imported into the southern part of the site indicates that the site has been levelled, which may account for the lack of archaeological material.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: --	
ECC monitor: Teresa O'Connor	
Keywords: --	Significance: neg
Author of summary: Ben Holloway	Date of summary: March 2014