

# Archaeological evaluation at the Onley Arms, The Street, Stisted, Essex

November 2014



report by **Pip Parmenter and Adam Wightman**

with a contribution from Stephen Benfield  
and illustrations by Emma Holloway

on behalf of **Brands Direct**

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SHER Event code: SSOA14  
NGR: TL 79983 24819



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

Roman Circus House,  
Roman Circus Walk,  
Colchester,  
Essex CO2 7GZ

tel.: 07436 273 304

email: [archaeologists@catuk.org](mailto:archaeologists@catuk.org)

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## 1 Summary

*An archaeological trial-trenching evaluation carried out at The Onley Arms in advance of demolition and subsequent construction of an extension revealed a post-medieval make-up layer and pit that are not thought to be of archaeological significance.*

## 2 Introduction

This is the report on the November 2014 archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at The Onley Arms, The Street, Stisted, Essex (Figs 1, 2). The work, along with historic building recording reported on elsewhere, was carried out on behalf of Brands Direct in advance of the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of a part two-storey part single storey extension, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

Essex County Council Historic Environment Officer Teresa O'Connor advised that as the proposed site lay on the High Street of medieval Stisted, evidence of earlier settlement may be disturbed by the proposed development, and that, in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with paragraphs 128, 129 and 132 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT and agreed with ECC (CAT 2014). In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14 and 24). This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b).

## 3 Archaeological background

The proposed development site was situated in the centre of medieval Stisted, and is within a 50m radius of eight listed buildings (EHER 30219, 30220, 30222 – 30227). It backs onto the historic landscaped gardens of Stisted Hall (EHER 30193). While the development site itself dates to the late 19th century, the nearby parish church has elements dating as far back as the 12th century and six Roman urns were found during the rebuilding of Stisted Hall in 1828 (EHER 6406) some 440m to the west of the development site.

## 4 Results (Figures 2 and 3)

The proposed evaluation trench was split into two (T1 & T2) due to the presence of a drain cover in the centre of the trench (Fig 2). In T1, three further services prevented the extension of the trench in any direction. In order to avoid these, the centre of the trench was hand-excavated down to the natural silty-sand (L4).

A thin tarmac surface covered in grass (L1) overlaid a thick layer of gravel, brick and tile (L2), which was possibly an earlier yard surface but more likely a make-up layer to raise the ground level in the yard area. L2 contained pottery and a clay-pipe stem, which both suggest that it dated to the 18th century. L2 also contained one residual medieval sherd. L2 sealed sandy-silt L3, which sealed natural L4. There were no finds in L3.

T2 was excavated down to the natural (L4) using the mechanical excavator. The tarmac (L1) overlaid a disturbed brick floor surface (L5), which may have covered the whole area at some time. This floor surface overlaid the same sandy-silt accumulation observed in T1 (L3). A pit (F1) in the north-western corner of T2 (cut through L3 and continued into the natural (L4). (Figs 2, 3). It contained post-medieval brick fragments, peg-tile and 16th-17th century pottery. It was unclear whether F1 cut the brick surface L5 but if it had, it would certainly date to the post-medieval/modern period.

## 5 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

### Introduction

A small quantity of bulk finds consisting of medieval and post-medieval pottery, pieces of ceramic building material (CBM) and clay pipe stem pieces was recovered from a make-up layer (L2) and pit F1. The quantities of finds are listed by type in Table 1.

Finds type	no	wt (g)
Pottery (from site contexts)	11	178
Ceramic building material (CBM)	3	203
Clay pipe	2	9

Table 1: Type and quantities of finds

### Bulk finds

The pottery was recorded using the Essex post-Roman fabric series (Cunningham 1985 & CAR 7). The pottery fabrics recorded are listed in Table 2 below. All of the finds are listed with a spot date in Table 3.

Fabric	Fabric description	Period
20	Medieval sandy greywares (general)	medieval
40	Post-medieval red earthenwares (general)	post-med
45f	Westerwald stoneware	post-med

Table 2: pottery fabrics

Ctxt	Find no	find type	Fabric	no	wt/g	Form/ description	Period	spot date
L002	1	pottery	20	1	13	Base sherd from a cooking pot, grey, fine sandy fabric with red core	med	13-14C
L002	1	pottery	45F	9	145	Rim, base & base sherds from a tankard, all from same vessel, decoration in blue on grey background	p.med	L17-E18C
L002	1	clay pipe		2	9	Bore 2 mm -2.5 mm	p.med	18-19C (?18C)
L002	1	CBM		1	117	Peg-tile, edge piece 12 mm- 13 mm thick	Med-p.med/mod	
F001	2	pottery	40	1	20	Fine orange-red fabric, external brown coloured glaze (early p.med)	pmed	L16-17C?
F001	2	CBM		2	86	Peg-tile, edge pieces, 10 mm – 12 mm thick	Med-p.med/mod	

Table 3: Finds by context

### Finds discussion

Almost all of the finds were recovered from the make-up layer L2. A few pieces of peg-tile came from the fill of pit F1. The earliest closely-dated find is a sherd of residual greyware pottery from L2. This is from the base edge of a pot in a fine, sandy greyware fabric (Fabric 20) and is almost certainly medieval in date, rather than Roman. The sherd is probably from a cooking pot, can be broadly dated to the 12th/13th-14th century.

Post-medieval pottery comprised sherds from a broken Westerwald stoneware (Fabric 45F) tankard. These were also recovered from L2, together with a single sherd in a fine orange-red fabric with an external brownish-coloured surface glaze. The stoneware tankard can be closely dated to the late 17th-early 18th century (CAR 7, 288). The glazed sherd is almost

certainly an early post-medieval glazed red earthenware (Fabric 40) and can be dated to the late 16th/17th century.

Two clay pipe stems from L2 could not be closely dated, but are post-medieval (18th-19th century). The bore diameter of the two stems (2-5mm) suggests a possible 18th or early 19th century date (Harley 1963, 24).

Pieces of broken peg-tile were recovered from both L2 and pit F1. These most likely date to after the late 12th-13th century (Ryan 1993) but otherwise can only be broadly dated as late medieval/post-medieval (15th/16th-18th century) to modern (19th/20th century).

## 6 Discussion (Figs 2 and 3)

Evaluation at The Onley Arms, The Street, Stisted, revealed a single post-medieval/modern pit, and a post-medieval/modern make-up layer, probably created in order to raise the ground level. The pit and make-up layer contained CBM, pottery and clay pipe. All of the finds, with the exception of one residual medieval sherd of a greyware cooking pot (12th/13th – 14th century), are thought to date to the post-medieval/modern period. Neither of the one of the features excavated are thought to have had any particular archaeological significance.

## 7 Acknowledgements

CAT is grateful to Brands Direct for commissioning this project. Site work was managed and undertaken by A Wightman. Figures are by E Holloway. The project was monitored by Teresa O'Connor for ECCPS.

## 8 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in PDF format at

<http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

- |                  |       |  |
|------------------|-------|--|
| CAR 7            | 2000  | <i>Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , Colchester Archaeological Report 7. By John Cotter   |
| CAT              | 2014  | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic building recording and archaeological evaluation at The Onley Arms, The Street, Stisted, Essex</i> . By C Lister and A Wightman, November 2014 |
| ClfA             | 2014a | <i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>   |
| ClfA             | 2014b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>  |
| Cunningham, C    | 1985  | 'A typology for post-Roman pottery in Essex' in Cunningham, C, & Drury, P., <i>Post-medieval sites and their pottery: Moulsham Street, Chelmsford</i> , CBA Research Report 54                 |
| DCLG             | 2012  | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Dept of Communities and Local Government.  |
| EAA 14           | 2003  | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14 (ed D Gurney)  |
| EAA 24           | 2011  | <i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24, by Maria Medlycott                                     |
| English Heritage | 2006  | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (English Heritage)  |
| Harley, L        | 1963  | <i>The clay tobacco-pipe in Britain, Essex Field Club Special Memoirs Vol VIII</i> (reprinted 197??)   |
| Ryan, P          | 1993  | 'Roof tile', in Andrews, D (ed) <i>Crossing Temple. A Templar and Hospitaller manor in Essex</i> , Essex County Council  |

## 9 Abbreviations and glossary

context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	from Henry VIII to c AD1800
residual	something out of its original context, e.g. a Roman coin in a modern pit
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

## 10 Contents of archive

### Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 827)

CAT Written Scheme of Investigation

Original site record (Feature and layer sheets, Finds record)

Trench record sheet; Finds register

Site digital photographic log; Site photographic record on CD

Attendance register, Benchmark data, Risk assessment

## 11 Archive deposition

The paper archive and finds are currently held by CAT at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex, but will be permanently deposited with Braintree Museum under project code SSOA14.

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### Distribution list:

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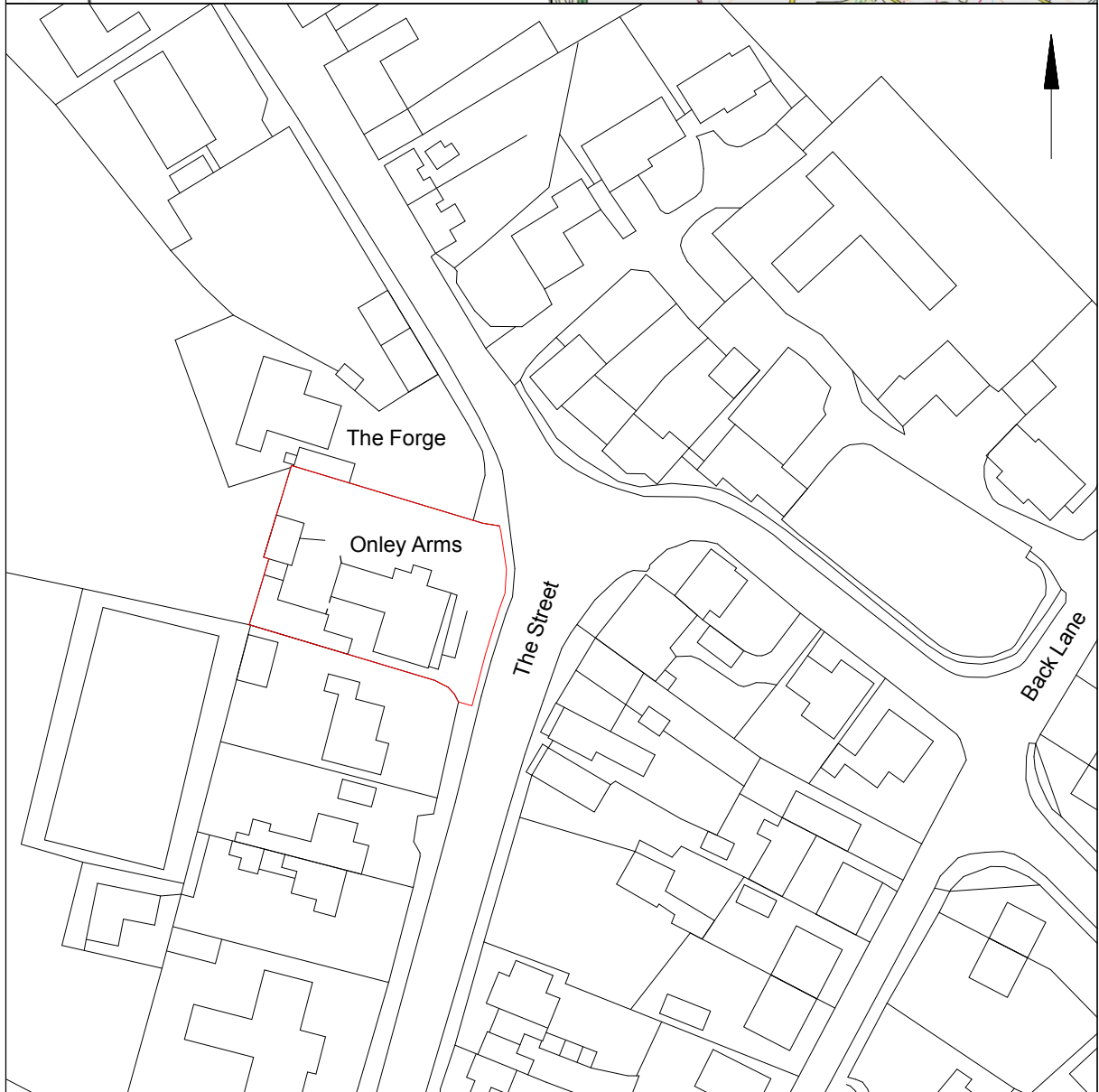
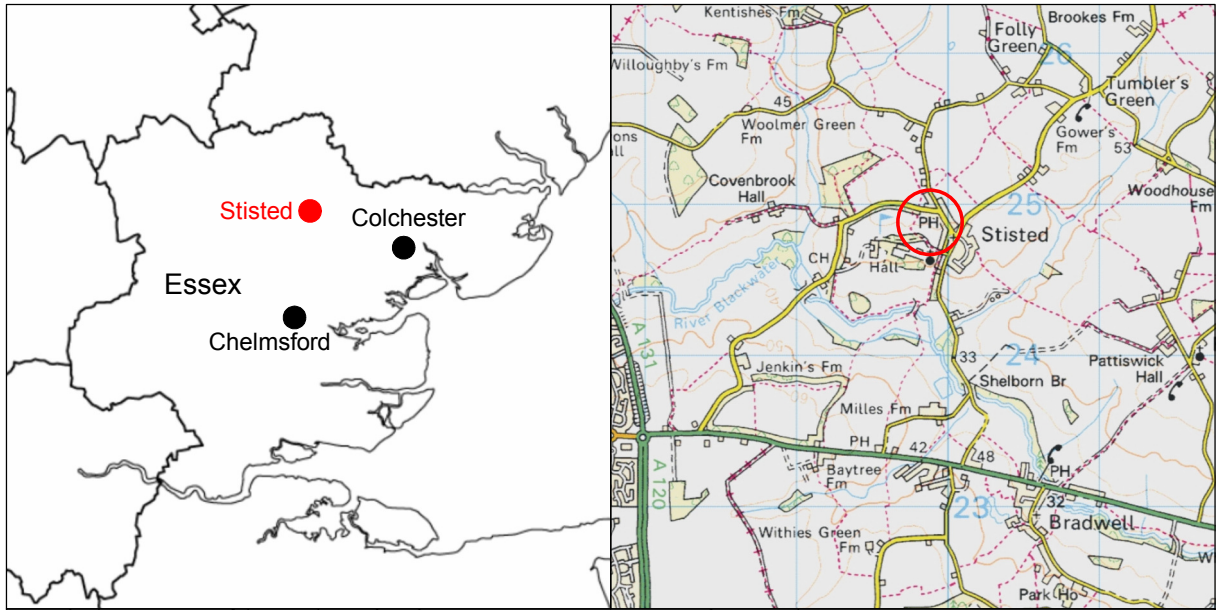
Essex CO2 7GZ

tel.: 07436 273 304

email: [archaeologists@catuk.org](mailto:archaeologists@catuk.org)

checked by: Howard Brooks

date: 14/04/15



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Fig 1 Site location.





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Fig 2 Results (modern services are shaded black).



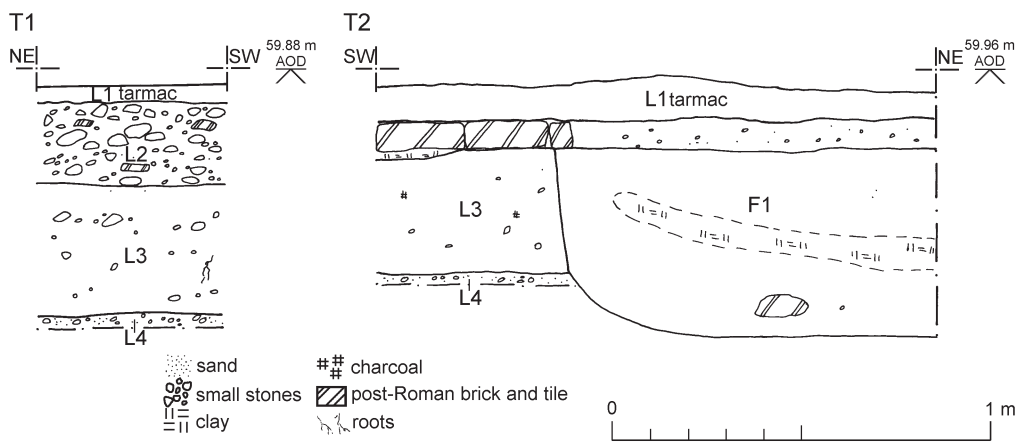


Fig 3 T1-2: sections.

## Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

### Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> Onley Arms, The Street, Stisted, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Stisted	<b>District:</b> Braintree
<b>NGR:</b> TL 99119 25515	<b>Site code:</b> CAT project code – 14/11c
<b>Type of work:</b> evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 11th November 2014	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> two trenches, each 1.6m x 2.5m
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Braintree Museum: SS0A14	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> no	<b>Related EHER numbers:</b> 6406, 30193
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 827	
<b>Periods represented:</b> post-medieval and modern	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>  <i>An archaeological trial-trenching evaluation carried out at The Onley Arms in advance of demolition and subsequent construction of an extension revealed a post-medieval make-up layer and pit that are not thought to be of archaeological significance.</i></p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>ECC monitor:</b> Teresa O'Connor	
<b>Keywords:</b>	<b>Significance:</b> neg
<b>Author of summary:</b> Howard Brooks	<b>Date of summary:</b> April 2015