

Part of a Roman building in Insula 1a of Roman Colchester: archaeological monitoring on the site of the Student Services Building, Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester

December 2014 to January 2015



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**commissioned by Plater Claiborne
on behalf of Sixth Form College**

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1 Summary

The site of a proposed Student Services Building at the Sixth Form College lies in Insula 1a of the Roman walled town. An evaluation in August 2014 showed that there was a horizon of modern overburden over a post-Roman topsoil. Collectively, these two horizons formed a 'safe dig-depth' of approximately 700m above the highest significant archaeological remains (Roman, in this case) on this part of the college site.

A monitoring and recording exercise in December 2014 and January 2015 observed ground reduction for the new building, largely within the post-Roman overburden. On the northern edge of the ground reduction area, engineering design required the removal of a greater depth of overburden than was intended. This exposed Roman demolition deposits overlying Roman floors, mainly tessellated pavement. There were also two robber trenches indicating the lines of robbed-out Roman walls.

The floors and (robbed-out) wall-lines uncovered in 2014-15 were probably part of the western side of the Roman building uncovered in 2005 (Building 211 in the numbered series of Colchester Buildings).

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report on archaeological monitoring and recording commissioned by Mr Simon Plater of Plater Claiborne Architecture + Design on behalf of the Sixth Form College and carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between December 2014 and January 2015 at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester.

The college site occupies a significant proportion of the north-western part of the walled Roman town, and the current site is in *insula* 1a. The site is one of the few remaining green spaces in the increasingly built-up Sixth Form College site. Proposed work is the construction of a Student Services Building. Site centre is at NGR TL 9926 2540.

This work follows an evaluation in August 2014 (CAT Report 784) which established the depths at which archaeological material would be encountered.

Archaeological monitoring was carried out throughout the relocation of service runs and the reduction of ground level. This was done in accordance with the *Brief for the evaluation stage* and with a WSI (Written Scheme of Investigation) produced by CAT (2014b) and agreed with the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer (CBCAO).

Post-excavation work was carried out in April and May 2015.

In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Guidance* (DCLG 2012), CAT's *Policies and Procedures* (CAT 2014a), Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practice for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CIMS 2008a), *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester and Ipswich Museums* (CIMS 2008b), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (English Heritage 2006), *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 on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) and the Urban Archaeological Database (UAD), maintained by Essex County Council and Colchester Borough Council respectively.

The Sixth Form College (formerly the Gilberd School) occupies a sizeable proportion of the north-west corner of the walled Roman town. Within the walled Roman town, metalled streets running north-south and west-east define a number of insulas (blocks). Modern scholars have numbered these Insulas 1-40, and they are often subdivided (eg, Insulas 1a, 1b: CAT Report 247).

In the college grounds, Roman streets pass north-south under the east edge of the old college building and through the centre of the 'mid-site' development, and west-east under the 'south-site'. Thus the college site straddles Insulas 1a, 1b, 9a and 9b, and 17 and 17b of the Roman town, and Insulas 1a and 9a are wholly within the college grounds (EHER 12341 and 13108).

The southern half of the college site also lies within the area of the Roman legionary fortress, founded *circa* AD 44 (CAR 3, EHER 3530, 12341). The northern edge of the fortress runs under the 'mid site' complex, with its rampart coinciding mainly with the grassy slope between the 'south-site' and 'mid site' buildings).

Normally, the insulas would be occupied by Roman buildings – usually town houses. In fact, a large part of a Roman building was discovered on the Technical College site in 1865 and 1910. This building had tessellated and possibly mosaic floors, and painted walls, and is likely to have been constructed in the 2nd or 3rd century AD (Hull 1958, 93-94: EHER 12433-12437).

In 1984-85, there was a major excavation on the site now occupied by the 'south-site' buildings. Parts of the *contubernia* (men's quarters) of a barrack block belonging to the Roman fortress were excavated (CAR 6, 134).

In January 2000, an evaluation by ECCFAU within the footprint of the proposed new computer block uncovered between 1.4m and 2m of topsoil covering a deposit probably derived from the demolition of an underlying Roman building (ECC FAU 2000).

In 2003, five evaluation trenches were dug in the college grounds in preparation for the proposed 'mid-site' development. These exposed Roman tessellated and mortar floors, as well as the robbed-out foundations of a large Roman building (probably a town-house) covered by between 0.6m and 1.1m of topsoil. The Roman buildings appear to have been demolished, and the site turned over to agricultural or horticultural use at the end of the Roman period (CAT Report 260). Evaluation in 2005 (CAT Report 309) in what was then the tennis court (now the 'mid-site' building) confirmed the earlier evaluation findings and gained useful data on the possible extent of the town-house identified in 2003 (CAT Report 260).

Archaeological investigation (August 2005 to March 2006) during groundworks for the 'mid site' development revealed a Roman metalled street surface between *Insulas* 1a and 1b, and two large Roman buildings (CAT Report 347). The first building, in *Insula* 1b, was a Roman town house with surviving *in situ* masonry wall foundations and *opus signinum* floor surfaces. The second building, in *Insula* 1a, was an extremely large and high-status building consisting of surviving *in situ* masonry wall foundations, robbed-out wall lines, and floors of mosaic, tessellation and *opus signinum*, and a well preserved room which appears to have been part of a bath complex. The size of this building, its high-status decoration consisting of large quantities of elaborate painted wall-plaster (some of which was designed to imitate imported marbles) and the presence of a bath complex suggest that this may well have been part of a *mansio*.

The most recent work in June 2011, was an evaluation by two trenches which identified the uppermost significant archaeological horizon (in this case, of Roman date) on the site of the proposed development adjacent to the 'north site' (a new languages facility). The highest Roman deposits - containing fragments of building material and pottery -

are demolition layers dating to the early-mid 3rd to 4th century, when a Roman building in this area was probably demolished. The Roman deposits were mostly sealed by a thick layer of late medieval or post-medieval topsoil, and are universally at a depth that would not be affected by that particular development (CAT Report 596).

The latest work has a direct connection with that reported on here. A trial-trenching evaluation in August 2014 had the specific aim of locating the highest significant archaeological material in order that the proposed Student Services Building could be engineered to avoid damaging the archaeological remains (CAT Report 784). Results were similar to those of the 2011 evaluation (above). A thick deposit of post-Roman topsoil (between 0.7 and 1.1m thick) sealed Roman demolition material containing fragments of box-tile and finely-painted wall-plaster from second-century high-status buildings.

A collective view from map evidence and excavations / evaluations is that there appears to have been very little in the way of post-Roman activity on the land now occupied by the Sixth Form College. Recent excavation and evaluation have shown that a substantial depth of topsoil accumulated over the college site in this period. The usual interpretation of this phenomenon, often found in Colchester, is that the land was left open and was probably used for small-scale agriculture or horticulture. Building work seems to have been confined in the medieval and post-medieval periods to the properties lining North Hill, many of which are still standing and are listed buildings.

4 Aim

The aim of the monitoring was to preserve by record the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any remains and deposits that would be damaged or removed by the ground reduction for the proposed building.

5 Results and discussion (Figs 1-3)

Monitoring took place in two stages. First, during the relocation of services (a water pipe and data cables). Second, during the reduction of the existing ground level to formation depth for the construction of the Student Services Building.



Plate 1: view south towards old College building, showing general level of ground reduction for Student Services building (scale is 1m long)

Service relocation trench

For the service relocation a new trench was excavated to a depth of 650mm through tarmac footpath (150mm thick) into post-Roman topsoil (L1). L1 contained mortar and *opus signinum* fragments as well as tile and other Roman building material. Excavation

did not go deeper than 650mm below modern ground level (bgl), where the top of Roman demolition horizon (L2) was seen. It can be seen (Fig 1, and Fig 3 section 1) that the old service trench (F1) was cut through the tessellated floor F4 (CAT Report 483).

Ground Level reduction

The general level of ground reduction can be seen in plate 1. Ground level reduction took place in two stages. First: modern imported topsoil or tarmac hard-standing was removed and the ground compacted. Once compacted, the level was reduced to the underslab formation level, a depth of 1m.

Ground reduction was mostly through a post-Roman topsoil L1 (previously seen in the 2014 evaluation) to a depth of 750mm, continuing down into a Roman demolition layer L2 on top of *in situ* Roman floors. As in the service trench, L2 contained mortar, *opus signinum*, painted wall-plaster, Roman tile and other building materials.

In two parts of the site, of the design of the building required ground reduction which penetrated the Roman demolition horizon (L2) and exposed *in situ* Roman floors. Specifically, in the northern part of the site, a quite sizeable part of a Roman building was exposed. On Fig 3, this is (from west to east), a lime mortar bedding layer which presumably supported a tessellated pavement (stripped off in antiquity?), a robber trench (F2) showing a wall-line which aligns well with a Roman wall footing found immediately to the north in the 2005-6 service trenches¹, a floor (L4) consisting of randomly-placed tessera cubes in a mortar bed (here called 'crazy tessellation'), a second robber trench (F3) defining the other side of the corridor whose floor is L4, and then another tessellated floor F4 overlain by demolition material L2. There are two points. First, the wall-lines implied by robber trenches F2 and F3 do not appear to be parallel. It is not clear whether this is due to surveying error, or whether (more likely) the walls are not parallel, or may actually be of different building phases not otherwise apparent from the data available to us at present. Second, the walls are sufficiently close to the large Roman building exposed in 2005 (ie Colchester Building 211: see Fig 1)) that it is probably safe to assume that they are part of that large structure. If future work shows this not to be the case, then another Building Number can be assigned at that time.



¹ CAT Report 347

Plate 2: view south showing (from east to west and left to right) tessellated floor F4, robber trench F3, crazy tessellated floor L4 cut by modern service trench F1, robber trench F2. For this area, see Fig 2.

In this northern part of the site the floor levels, once recorded, were removed to create the required formation level.



Plate 3: view east into eastern site edge showing tessellated floor F4, once L2 had been removed. The floor butted up to the Roman wall robbed out as F3 (foreground) and was cut by post-Roman pit F8 (right).

In the southern edge of the site a second area of tessellated floor F10 was identified. As in the case of F4, it was sealed by Roman demolition material L2. There were no nearby robber trenches, so it is difficult to know the arrangement of the room whose floor is F4. These remains have been left *in situ*, and have been being covered by protective material to protect them during the construction of the new building.

Both tessellated floors were cut by post-Roman features - F5-F7 in L4, F8 in F4, and F9, F11 and F12 in F10. There were no finds from these features. They are best described as either small pits or post-holes of unknown purpose.



Plate 4: view west along southern site edge showing removal of Roman demolition material L2 to reveal in situ tessellated pavement F10.



Plate 5: view east along southern site edge showing in situ tessellated pavement F10 after removal of Roman demolition material L2. Post-Roman features cutting F10 are (foreground to background) F11, F9, F12.

6 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

Introduction

A small quantity of pottery, ceramic building material (CBM), mortar and painted wall-plaster, iron nails, animal bone and shell was recovered from two features (F2 and F4) and from three layers (L1, L2 and L3). Almost all the closely-dated finds are of Roman date, although two of the potsherds are medieval. Pottery fabrics and forms refer to the Colchester Roman and post-Roman pottery type series (*CAR 7* and *CAR 10*). In addition four finds were individually recorded as small finds (SF) and these are listed separately.

Bulk finds

All 'bulk' finds are listed and described by finds number for each context in Table 1.

| ctxt no. | find no | Find type | Finds description | Fabric code | form | Eve | no | Wt/g | Period/spot date |
|----------|---------|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------|------|-----|----|------|------------------|
| F002 | | pot | | GX | | | 1 | 9 | Rom |
| F002 | | pot | highly burnished dark surface | UX | | | 1 | 35 | Rom (3/4-4C) |
| F002 | | pot | base sherd | 20 | | | 1 | 10 | 13-14C |

| ctxt no. | find no | Find type | Finds description | Fabric code | form | Eve | no | Wt/g | Period/spot date |
|----------|---------|-----------|---|-------------|--------|------|----|------|------------------|
| F002 | | CBM | combed flue tile | | | | 1 | 209 | Rom |
| F004 | 1 | CBM | tesserae, red tile cubes, some made from combed flue-tile, white mortar around bases (NR) | | | | 30 | 749 | Rom |
| F004 | 1 | BM | <i>opus signinum</i> (NR) | | | | 1 | 83 | Rom |
| L001 | 5 | pot | | GX | | | 2 | 54 | Rom |
| L001 | 5 | CBM | tegula (2), thin bases 17 mm | (red) | | | 2 | 645 | Rom |
| L001 | 5 | pot | probably post-dates c AD 160 | BACG | W 79 | 0.12 | 1 | 26 | M-L2C |
| L001 | 5 | pot | | GX | | | 1 | 9 | Rom |
| L001 | 5 | BM | <i>opus signinum</i> (2 + frags) (NR) | | | | 2 | 85 | Rom |
| L001 | 5 | BM | wall-plaster, painted surfaces - dirty yellow pieces (2), white with yellow-green strip (1), pink with red splash (2) – mixed pieces from different rooms or wall surface areas | | | | 5 | 70 | Rom |
| L002 | 3 | pot | rim, possibly from a BB type jar(?) | GX | | 0.07 | 2 | 6 | Rom (M2-3C?) |
| L002 | 3 | pot | cooking pot base sherd | 20 | | | 1 | 27 | 13-14C |
| L002 | 3 | CBM | tegula (2) thin base 15-17 mm, imbrex | (red) | | | 3 | 1017 | Rom - 2C+(?) |
| L002 | 9 | stone | small piece of purbeck marble, smooth face, probably from a veneer | | | | 1 | 54 | Rom |
| L002 | 10 | pot | bowl rim | GA | Cam 39 | 0.03 | 1 | 4 | E/M2-4C |
| L002 | 10 | pot | | DJ | | | 1 | 5 | Rom (M1-2C) |
| L002 | 10 | pot | jar/bowl sherds | GX | | 0.06 | 4 | 66 | Rom |
| L002 | 10 | pot | bowl sherds | GB | | | 3 | 32 | E/M2-3C |
| L002 | 10 | pot | pedestal base from a burnished, globular vessel | GX | | | 1 | 155 | Rom (3-4C) |
| L002 | 10 | shell | oyster shell (NR) | | | | 1 | 8 | |
| L002 | 10 | A bone | small quantity of bone from medium-large mammals | | | | 4 | 37 | |
| L002 | 10 | CBM | tegula (?) and imbrex | (red) | | | 2 | 189 | Rom |
| L002 | 10 | CBM | tesserae, red tile cubes, many made from combed flue-tile, white mortar around bases (NR) | (red) | | | 24 | 647 | Rom |
| L002 | 10 | iron | small piece, possibly a nail shaft | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| L002 | 10 | BM | wall-plaster, painted surfaces – yellow (1), yellow with green stripe (1), red with white stripe (1), red (3), pale red/orange with white | | | | 9 | 117 | Rom |

| ctxt no. | find no | Find type | Finds description | Fabric code | form | Eve | no | Wt/g | Period/spot date |
|----------|---------|-----------|---|-------------|---------|-----|----|------|------------------|
| | | | (3) – mixed pieces from different rooms or wall surface areas | | | | | | |
| L003 | 4 | pot | foot-ring indicates a large bowl, Dr 37 type | BXCG | Dr 37 | | 1 | 32 | E/M2-L2C |
| L003 | 4 | pot | pentice-moulded beaker | EA | Cam 395 | | 1 | 7 | M3-4C |
| L003 | 4 | pot | beaker | CZ | | | 1 | 11 | E/M2-3C |
| L003 | 4 | pot | miscellaneous body sherds | GX | | | 5 | 33 | Rom |
| L003 | 4 | pot | late shell-tempered ware | HD | | | 1 | 4 | 4/L4C |
| L003 | 4 | A bone | complete | | | | 1 | 14 | |

Table 1: Bulk finds by context (NR=not retained)

Small finds

Four small finds were recovered from layer 2 (L2). These are listed and described below. All can be either closely dated as Roman, or most probably of Roman date. The finds include a copper-alloy coin (SF1) which is a third century (c AD 271-283/84) radiate copy, although most of radiate copies in Britain are thought to have been produced between c AD 275-285 (Moorhead 2013, 144). A bone pin (SF3) can be dated to the mid-late Roman period (c AD 200-400). With these, a piece of Purbeck marble (SF4) is almost certainly Roman, and a small piece of copper-alloy (SF2) is also probably of Roman date.

L2 (7) **SF1** Copper-alloy coin. Radiate copy (barbarous radiate) derived from issues of the *Tetrici* (AD 271-74) obv. bust after Tetricus I, legend **IM TETRI CVS.A(G?)** rev. surfaces partly obscured with large letters **AG** to left of central design/motif (obscured), small section of coin missing from one edge, weight 2 g (broadly dated as radiate derived coinage to c AD 271-283/84 – after Davies 1987)

L2 (8) **SF2** Copper-alloy strip. Small section from a strip-like object in copper-alloy, folded with unsealed(?) edge. Possible edging strip(?) or possibly a section from a bracelet(?). Length 18 mm, weight 1 g.

L2 (11) **SF3** Bone pin. Head and part of shaft from small bone pin. Rounded head, swelling on shaft. Crumby Type 3 (*CAR 2 - Pins with more or less spherical heads*). Length 33 mm, weight 1 g. Roman, dated c AD 200-400

L2 (9) **SF4** Stone veneer. Purbeck marble piece, smooth face, probably from a Roman period veneer. Dimensions 50 x 40 x 12 mm, weight 54 g.

Finds discussion

Most of the finds can be dated to the Roman period. These include small quantities of building materials, the pieces of Roman roof tiles (*tegula and imbrex*), box flue tiles and painted wall-plaster probably representing demolition of buildings on the site. There is also a quantity of *tessera* cubes (F4 and L2) from a floor (set in a white mortar), many of which have been cut from combed box flue tiles. These might indicate an earlier hypocaust system in this area which had been either refurbished or demolished, although they might possibly have been brought from elsewhere. A few pieces of *opus signinum* mortar are also present. The more closely datable sherds of Roman pottery are of mid Roman and late Roman date. These includes two sherds of Central Gaulish samian dated to the 2nd century and sherds of Colchester colour-coated ware (Fabric CZ) and black-burnished ware (BB2) (Fabric GB) of 2nd-3rd century date. Of slightly later date is a sherd from a pentice-moulded beaker in Nene Valley colour-coated fabric which can be dated to the mid 3rd-4th century. The latest closely dated Roman pottery is a sherd of Late shell-tempered ware (Fabric HD) from layer 3 (L3) which can be

dated to the 4th century. Of interest are two burnished sherds. One (F2) is in a hard sandy fabric with a highly burnished black surface, the other (L2(10)) is a heavily burnished pedestal base from a round bodied pot. The sherd from F2 can be identified as Fabric UX (Romano-Saxon grey ware and types in similar fabric) which mostly is related to late Roman (4th century) pottery forms and the base from L2 is probably of similar (Late Roman) date. The few small finds recovered can also be dated to the Roman period (or are probably of Roman date) and include a late 3rd century coin (SF1) and a bone pin of mid-late Roman date (SF3).

Two medieval sherds were recovered, both in greyware (Fabric 20) broadly dating to the period of the 13th-14th century. One (L2(3)) is from the sagging base of a medieval cooking pot. The fabric of the other sherd (F2) is of similar appearance and is almost certainly medieval rather than Roman. It appears from the finds assemblage that most of the contexts recorded are likely to be of late Roman (late 3rd-4th century) or post-Roman date.

7 Discussion (Figs 1-3)

Although this was a fairly small-scale piece of work whose brief was only to excavate features to be removed by ground reduction for the new Student Facilities Building, the relationship between the 2014-15 find and earlier archaeological finds at the Sixth Form College needs to be discussed.

Finds

Although most of the finds came from the post-Roman soil layers removed during ground reduction and are not in Roman contexts, the general range of finds is consistent with high-status building being close by - Purbeck marble veneer fragment, painted wall-plaster, tesserae made from a hypocaust box-tile. This is entirely in keeping with the proximity of Building 211, which is a candidate for the Roman town's *mansio* (see discussion in CAT Report 347).

Walls, floors, and buildings

As noted above, the wall-lines and floors uncovered in this monitoring exercise are very close to the Roman structure exposed in 2005 and interpreted as a possible *mansio* or staging-post. This seems to be a good reason for assuming that the 2014-15 structure is the western edge of Building 211. If future work shows this is not the case, then a new Building Number can be issued.

The configuration of the floors and robber-trenches (Fig 3) suggests we have uncovered a corridor with 'irregular tessellation' flooring (this was the commonest floor type in Building 211 to the east). To the west is a room of unknown size with a mortar base (a robbed-out tessellated pavement?), and to the east is a room with a tessellated floor. The lack of wall-lines means it is difficult to know exactly where the tessellated floor on the southern edge of the site fits into the floor plan, but it may be the tessellated floor of a larger room to the south.

Generally speaking, the 2nd century AD saw the rebuilding of Roman houses with more substantial footings and tessellated or mosaic floors. Building 211 is of this period, with occupation deposits dating to the 2nd century and demolition deposits to between the early 2nd and the mid/late 3rd century (CAT Report 347). The floors found in the current project appear to correspond well with those first recorded in evaluation in 2005 and subsequently in the monitoring and excavation of the 'mid-site' redevelopment in 2006/7.

Demolition

Finds from L2 demolition material overlying the tessellated floors suggest that the building had gone out of use and was at least partially demolished by the 3rd century. The demolition debris contains pottery of 2nd-4th century date, but one sherd implies an earliest possible demolition date of 3rd/4th century. This is supported by a barbarous radiate coin dated AD 271-284. This 3rd-century demolition date for the part of the

building exposed in 2014-15 is consistent with the demolition date for other Roman buildings on this site. There is also a medieval sherd in L2 demolition debris. While it is not impossible that the building was robbed out as late as that, a medieval demolition date would be at variance with other evidence from the Roman town, and so this sherd is regarded as intrusive

A thick horizon of topsoil shows that the site was probably open ground for much of the post-Roman period and before the development of the technical collage (later the Gilberd School and VI Form) in the early 1900s. The only identifiable activity during that period was the robbing out of the Roman walls on either side of tessellated floor L4. Of the two robber-trenches, F2 and F4, the former dated to the 13th/14th century by a single sherd.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Simon Plater for commissioning the work on behalf of The Sixth Form College Colchester. The project was managed by B. Holloway, fieldwork carried out by BH, M Baister, H Brooks, S Carter, E Holloway and R Matthieson. Site plans by MB and sections by E Holloway. The project was monitored for CBC by Chris Lister.

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| English Heritage | 2006 | Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (English Heritage) |
| Hawkes, CFC, and Hull, MR | 1947 | Camulodunum, Report of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London, 14 |
| Hull, M R | 1958 | Roman Colchester, RRCSAL, 20 |
| Moorhead, S | 2013 | A history of Roman coinage in Britain |

10 Abbreviations and glossary

| | |
|---------------|---|
| CAT | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| CBCAO | Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer |
| CBCPD | Colchester Borough Council Planning Department |
| ClfA | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists |
| context | specific location of finds on an archaeological site |
| EHER | Essex Historic Environment Record |
| feature (F) | an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts' |
| 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 |
| prehistoric | pre-Roman |
| residual | something out of its original context, e.g. a Roman coin in a modern pit |
| Roman | the period from AD 43 to circa AD 430 |
| section | (abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s |
| WSI | Written Scheme of Investigation |

11 Contents of archive

Finds archive:

One Museum box with all finds

Paper and digital archive:

One A4 document wallet containing:

This report

Original site records and notes

Brief and WSI: Sundry papers: Photo index, and photos on CD

12 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by CAT at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museum under accession code COLEM 2014.77.

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Distribution list:

Plater Claiborne

Sixth Form College

Jess Tipper, CBC Archaeological Advisor

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust
Roman Circus House

Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex CO2 7GZ

tel.: 07436273304
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy
Date: 19.05.15

Appendices (following pages)

OASIS summary sheet

CAT WSI

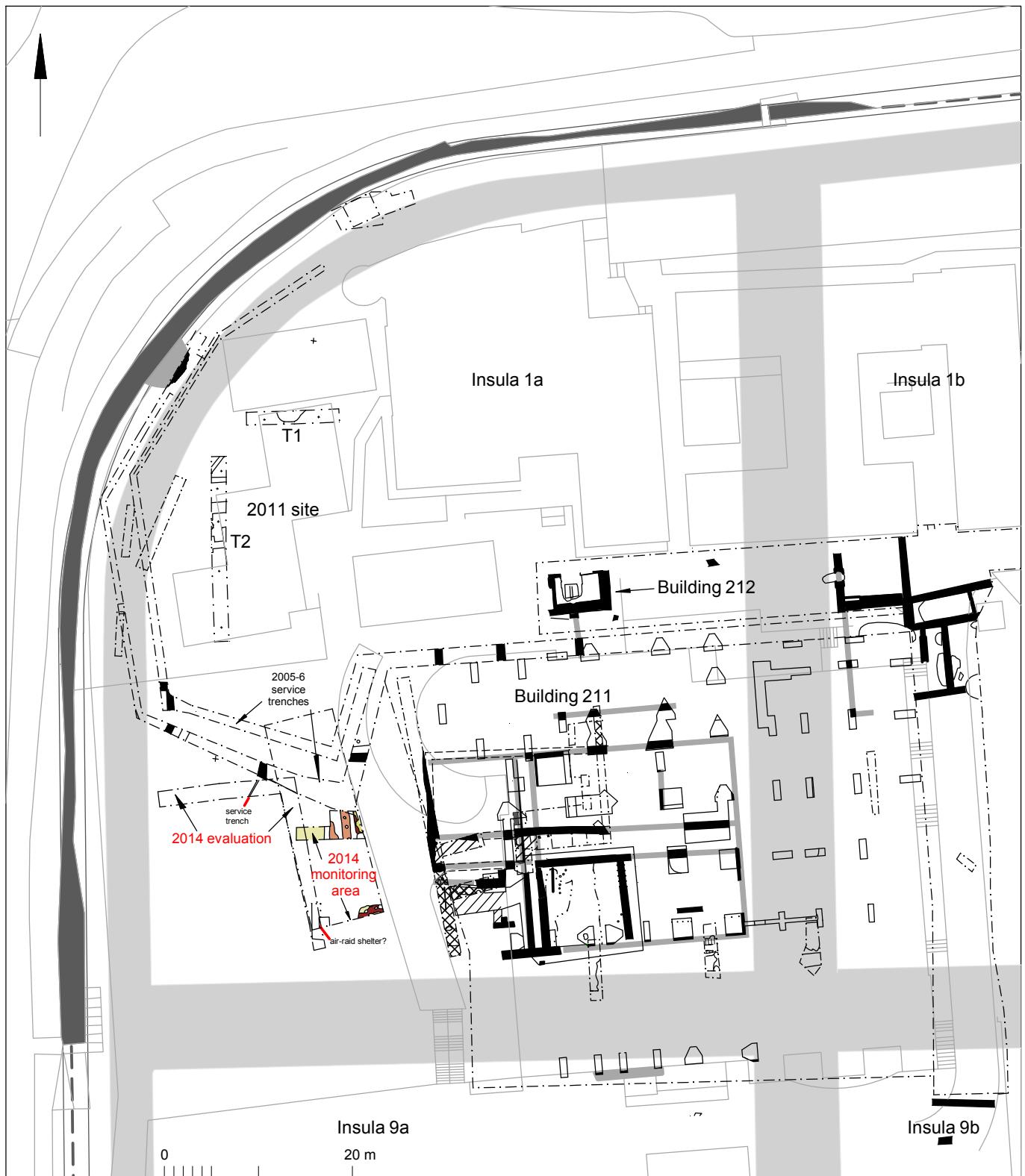


Fig 1 Site location, showing previous excavations, Roman streets (grey tone), and Roman buildings on college site.

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Roman house wall | (projected wall) | limit of excavation |
| town wall | Roman street | |

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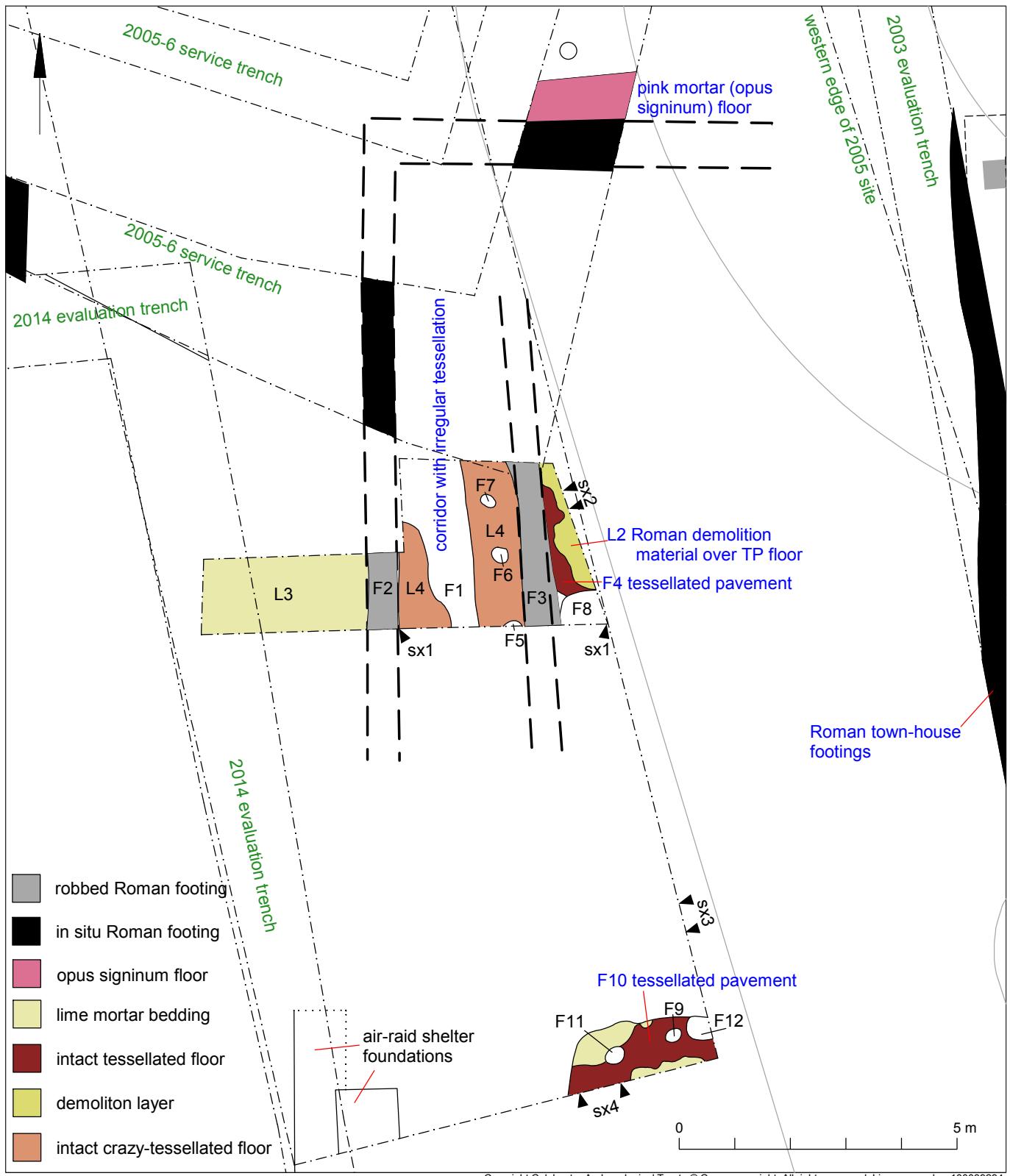


Fig 2 Site plan showing details of floors and wall-lines observed in 2014-15, in relation to floors and wall-lines recorded in previous archaeological work, particularly the town-house walls to the east (2003), and other wall-lines to the north (2005-6)

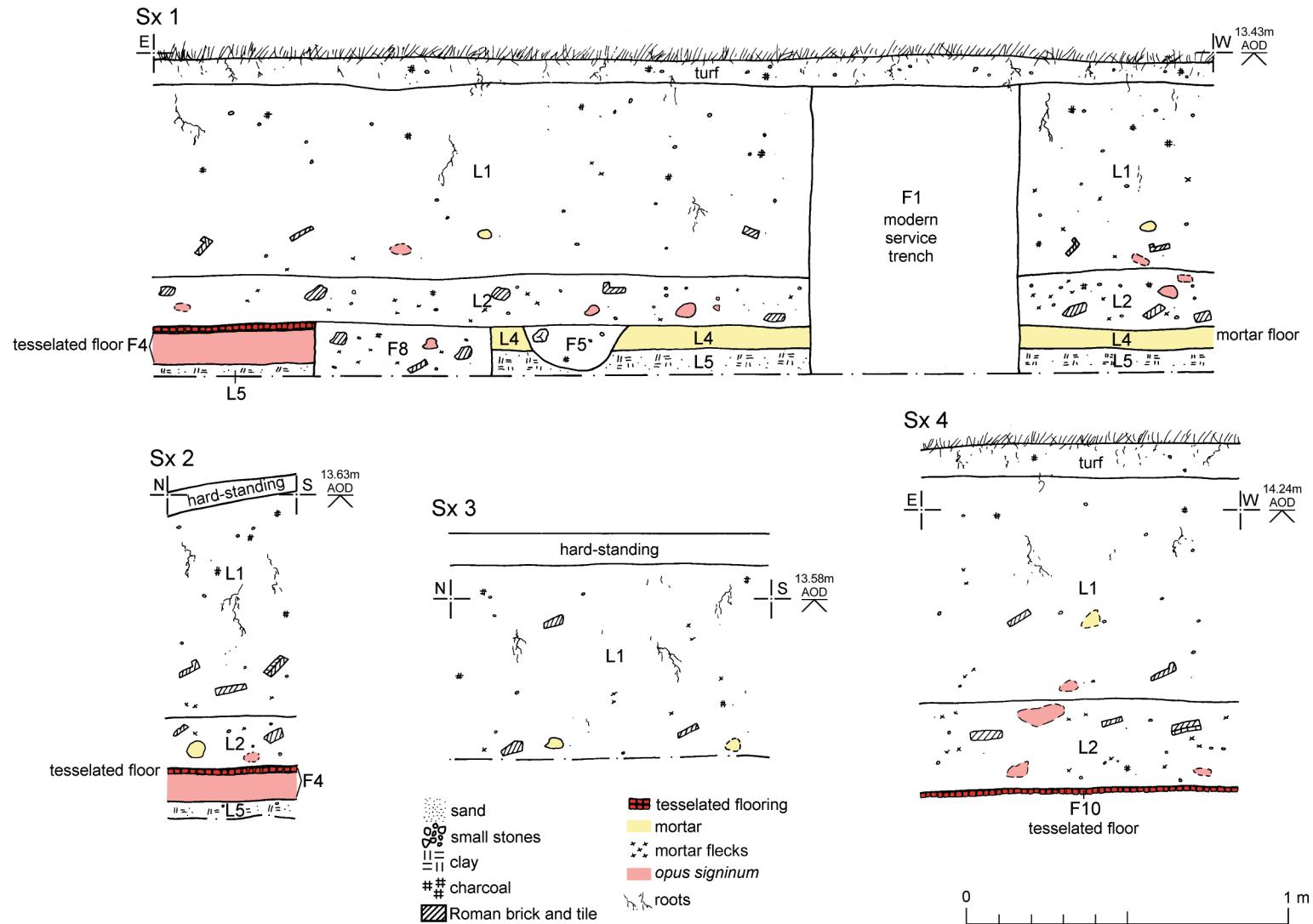


Fig 3 Representative sections.

**Written Scheme of Investigation for
Archaeological evaluation
At The Sixth Form College Colchester,
North Hill,
Colchester,
Essex**

NGR: TL 9794 2461 (centre)

February 2014



COLCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST,
ROMAN CIRCUS HOUSE,
CIRCULAR ROAD NORTH,
COLCHESTER,
ESSEX CO2 7GZ
Tel: 07436243304
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

1 Introduction

This is a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological investigation by trial trenching at Colchester VI Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex.

The site is currently open ground grassed and occasion trees. The site lies within the walls of the Roman town in the NW corner of *Insula* 1a. The proposed works involve the construction of new student facilities as part of the collage's ongoing development project.

The site lies to the west of Colchester town centre, located at NGR TL 9879 2577 (centre).

The trial trenching is required to establish the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains and deposits likely to be affected by ground works associated with the development.

This WSI sets out proposals for the trial trenching, the results of which will lead to subsequent post-excavation work and the production of archive and (if necessary) publication texts. Should significant deposits be revealed in the trenches further archaeological works may be required (see section 7).

The WSI follows a brief produced by the Colchester Borough Council Archaeology Officer (CBCAO). Any variations in this WSI will be agreed beforehand with CBCAO.

2 Archaeological background

This section is based on records held by The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, and the Urban Archaeological Database held at Colchester and Ipswich Museum.

The Sixth Form College (formerly the Gilberd School) occupies a sizeable proportion of the north-west corner of the walled Roman town. Within the walled Roman town, metalled streets running north-south and west-east define a number of insulas (blocks). Modern scholars have numbered these insulas 1-40, and they are often subdivided (eg, insulas 1a, 1b: CAT Report 247).

In the college grounds, Roman streets pass north-south under the east edge of the old college building and through the centre of the 'mid-site' development, and west-east under the 'south-site'. Thus the college site straddles insulas 1a, 1b, 9a and 9b, and 17 and 17b of the Roman town, and insulas 1a and 9a are wholly within the college grounds (EHER 12341 and 13108).

The southern half of the college site also lies within the area of the Roman legionary fortress, founded *circa* AD 44 (CAR 3, EHER 3530 and 12341). The northern edge of the fortress should run under the 'mid site' complex, with the fortress rampart to its south (coinciding mainly with the grassy slope between the 'south-site' and 'mid site' buildings).

Normally, the insulas would be occupied by Roman buildings – usually town houses. In fact, a large part of a Roman building was discovered on the Technical College site in 1865 and 1910. This building had tessellated and possibly mosaic floors, and painted walls, and is likely to have been constructed in the 2nd or 3rd century AD (Hull 1958, 93-94: EHER 12433-12437).

In 1984-85, there was a major excavation on the site now occupied by the 'south-site' buildings. Parts of the *contubernia* (men's quarters) of a barrack block belonging to the Roman fortress were excavated (CAR 6, 134).

In January 2000, an evaluation within the footprint of the proposed new computer block was conducted by ECCFAU. This uncovered between 1.4m and 2m of topsoil and covering a deposit probably derived from the demolition of an underlying Roman building (ECCFAU 2000).

In 2003, five evaluation trenches were dug in the college grounds in preparation for the proposed 'mid-site' development. These exposed Roman tessellated and mortar floors, as well as the robbed-out foundations of a large Roman building (probably a town-house) covered by between 0.6m and 1.1m of topsoil. The Roman buildings appear to have been demolished, and the site turned over to agricultural or horticultural use at the end of the Roman period (CAT Report 260).

Additional evaluation work in 2005 (CAT Report 309) in what was then the tennis court (now the 'mid-site' building) confirmed the earlier evaluation findings and gained useful data on the possible extent of the town-house identified in 2003 (CAT Report 260).

Archaeological work was conducted between August 2005 and March 2006 (CAT Report 347), during the groundworks associated with the 'mid site' complex. Investigation revealed a Roman metalled street surface, which divided *Insulas* 1a and 1b, and two large Roman buildings. The first building, in *Insula* 1b, was a Roman town house with surviving *in situ* masonry wall foundations and *opus signinum* floor surfaces. The second building, in *Insula* 1a, was an extremely large and high-status building consisting of surviving *in situ* masonry wall foundations, robbed-out wall lines, and floors of mosaic, tessellation and *opus signinum*, and a well preserved room which appears to have been part of a bath complex. The size of this building, its high-status decoration consisting of large quantities of elaborate painted wall plaster (some of which was designed to imitate imported marbles) and the presence of a bath complex suggest that this may well have been part of a *mansio*.

Most recently Trial trenching and watching brief work was carried out in advance of the construction of a new languages facility (June 2011 CAT Report 596). As has been observed in previous episodes of evaluation a thick deposit of topsoil (between 0.7 and 1.1m in thickness) sealed deposits of Roman demolition material. Material recovered from the demolition included flue tile and finely painted wall plaster further evidence of high status buildings of second century date.

There appears to have been very little in the way of post-Roman activity on the land now occupied by the Sixth Form College. Recent excavation and evaluation work has shown that a substantial depth of topsoil accumulated over the college site in this period. The usual interpretation of this phenomenon, often found in Colchester, is that the land was left open and was probably used for small-scale agriculture or horticulture. Building work seems to have been confined in the medieval and post-medieval periods to the properties lining North Hill, many of which are still standing and are listed buildings.

3 Aim

The aim of the evaluation is to establish the character, extent, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains and deposits likely to be affected by ground works associated with the proposed development. Specific attention shall be paid to the potential for archaeology mentioned in section 2 above.

4 General Methodology

All works will be undertaken by professional archaeologist(s) employed by CAT. The field officer(s) will have a level of experience appropriate to the work.

Prior to excavation, CAT will seek information about existing service locations from the developer.

All the latest Health and Safety guidelines will be followed on site. CAT has a standard Health and Safety policy, which will be adhered to (CAT 2014).

For purposes of deposition of the archive, a museum accession code will be obtained through Colchester and Ipswich Museum. All codes will be quoted in any reports arising from the work.

The relevant document of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) will be followed, i.e. *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (2008a), including its 'Code of Conduct'. Other guidelines followed are those published in EAA 3, EAA 8 and EAA 14, and EAA 24, as well as CBC's guidelines for standards of fieldwork (2008).

At the start of the work an OASIS online record will be initiated. Key fields will be completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.

5 Evaluation methodology

2 evaluation trenches at a total length of 30m x 1.8m will be investigated across the proposed development area. Trench positions are shown on the attached figure. Further excavation may be required should significant features/deposits be identified which cannot be preserved *in situ*. A decision will be made regarding further excavation by CBCAO (see Section 7).

A mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket will progressively strip the topsoil down to the uppermost surviving level of archaeological significance. All further investigation will be carried out by hand to an extent necessary to achieve the aims set out in section 3. This includes a 50% sample of discrete features (pits etc) and 10% of linear features (ditches etc).

Fast excavation techniques involving (for instance) picks, forks and mattocks will not be used on complex stratigraphy.

Individual records of excavated contexts, layers, features or deposits will be entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets. Registers will be compiled of finds and samples.

The normal recording scale will be feature plans at 1:20 and sections at 1:10.

A metal detector will be used to check spoil heaps and any suitable strata, and the finds recovered. This will not normally be done on demonstrably modern strata.

The photographic record will consist of general site shots, and shots of all archaeological features and deposits. Standard 'record' shots of contexts will be taken on a digital camera. Colour transparencies will be used for overall site shots and all important contexts.

The site boundary and features and site levels will be tied into Ordnance Datum.

The policy for environmental sampling will be as follows; any features, which appear to be organically rich, should be sampled, but only if they can be dated. If advice is required Zoe Outram the English Heritage regional science advisor will be consulted.

6 Finds

Environmental sampling policy. CAT has an arrangement with Val Fryer whereby any potentially rich environmental layers or features will be appropriately sampled as a matter of course, but only if they are datable. Any processing and reporting will be done by Val Fryer. If any complex or outstanding deposits are encountered VF will be asked onto site to advise. Zoe Outram of EH is available for further advice.

The policy with regard to human remains depends on how old they are. If it is clear, from their position, context, depth, or other factors that the remains are ancient, then normal procedure is to apply to the Department of Justice for a licence to remove them. In that case, conditions laid down by the license will be followed. If it seems that the remains are not ancient, then the coroner, the client, and CBCAO will be informed, and any advice and/or instruction from the coroner will be followed.

Note: As the relevant legislation is currently in a state of flux, advice will be sought from CBCAO and DoJ on best practice.

All finds of archaeological relevance will be retained. Policies for later disposal of any finds will be agreed with CBCAO and the site owner.

All finds, where appropriate, will be washed.

A policy of marking for pottery and other finds will be agreed with Colchester and Ipswich Museum. Marking will include the site code and context number.

The site archive will be presented to Colchester and Ipswich Museum in accordance with their requirements

All finds of potential treasure will be removed to a safe place, and the coroner informed immediately, in accordance with the rules of the Treasure Act 1996. The definition of treasure is given in pages 3-5 of the Code of Practice of the above act. This refers primarily to gold or silver objects.

Finds work will be to accepted professional standards as presented in *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008b).

A list of specialists available for consultation is given at the end of this WSI.

7 Results

Notification will be given to CBCAO when the fieldwork has been completed. The trial trenching will be followed by a single page summary report, which will either lead to further archaeological work in accordance with a further brief and WSI, or to the production of a report on the trial trenching alone.

An appropriate archive will be prepared to minimum acceptable standards outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE English Heritage 2006) will be submitted to the CBCAO within a length of time not exceeding 3 months from the end of fieldwork, with one copy supplied to EHER (with a digital copy) and one to Colchester and Ipswich Museum with the archive.

This report will include:

- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the evaluation.
- Location plan of the evaluation trench area, with 10-figure grid references at two points.
- A section drawing showing the depth of deposits including present ground level.
- The excavation methodology and results with a suitable conclusion and discussion.
- All specialist reports and assessments. Recommendations for further work will be kept separate from the results.
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results.

If, after discussion with CBCAO, the results are considered worthy of publication, a report (at least at a summary level) will be submitted to *Essex Archaeology and History*. An Oasis online form will be completed for submission to the EHER, which will include an uploaded .pdf version of the report.

8 Archive deposition

The full archive will be deposited at Colchester and Ipswich Museum within 6 months of completion of final publication report on the project, and confirmed to CBCAO. All requirements for archive storage as required by Colchester and Ipswich Museum.

Finds (and other retained materials) will be bagged and boxed in the manner recommended by Colchester and Ipswich Museum.

Plans will be presented on hanging strips to fit Colchester and Ipswich Museum storage systems.

The photographic archive is to be presented as follows: original digital data on disk and hard copies of selected digital photos on high-quality paper, or as otherwise requested by Colchester and Ipswich Museum.

A summary of the contents of the archive shall be supplied to CBCAO at the time of deposition at the museum.

9 Monitoring

CBCAO will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project, and will be kept regularly informed during fieldwork, post-excavation and publication stages.

Notification of the start of work will be given to CBCAO one week in advance of its commencement.

Any variations of the WSI shall be agreed with CBCAO in writing prior to them being carried out.

CBCAO will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

The involvement of CBCAO shall be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

10 References

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|------|---|
| Brown, N and Glazebrook, J. | 2000 | <i>Research and Archaeology: a frame work for the Eastern Counties 2 Research agenda and strategy</i> , East Anglian Archaeological, occasional papers 8 (EAA8) |
| CAR 6 | 1992 | <i>Excavations at Culver Street, the Gilberd School, and other sites in Colchester 1971-85</i> . Crummy, P. |
| CAR 11 | 1995 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 11: Camulodunum 2</i> Hawkes, CFC. & Crummy, P. |
| Colchester Archaeological Trust | 2014 | <i>Policies and procedures</i> . |
| Colchester Archaeological Trust | 2011 | <i>An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching and borehole watching brief at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex</i> . M.Baister CAT Report 596 |
| Colchester Archaeological Trust | 2009 | <i>Roman buildings, the rear face of the Roman town wall and archaeological investigations in Insulas 1a, 1b, 9a and 9b, at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex</i> . H. Brooks, L. Pooley CAT Report 347 |
| Colchester Archaeological | 2005 | <i>Archaeological monitoring and recording at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex</i> . H. Brooks |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|--|
| Trust | | CAT Report 309 |
| Colchester Archaeological Trust | 2004 | <i>An archaeological evaluation at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex.</i> B. Holloway CAT Report 260 |
| Colchester Archaeological Trust | 2003 | <i>An archaeological desk-based assessment of the 'mid-site' and 'north site phase 2' developments at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex.</i> K. Orr CAT Report 247 |
| Colchester Borough Council | 2008 | <i>Guidelines on standards and practice for Archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i> |
| Colchester Borough Council | 2008 | <i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of Archaeological archives to Colchester & Ipswich Museums</i> |
| English Heritage | 2006 | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (MoRPHE) |
| Glazebrook, J. | 1997 | <i>Research and Archaeology: a frame work for the Eastern Counties 1 resource assessment</i> , East Anglian Archaeological, occasional papers 3 (EAA3) |
| Gurney, D. | 2003 | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> East Anglian Archaeological, occasional papers 14 (EAA14) |
| Hawkes, CFC. & Hull, MR. | 1947 | <i>Camulodunum RRCSAL XIV</i> |
| Hull, MR. | 1958 | <i>Roman Colchester RRCSAL XX</i> |
| IFA | 2008a | <i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological field evaluation.</i> |
| IFA | 2008b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> |
| Medlycott, M. | 2011 | <i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeological Occasional Papers 24 (EAA24) |
| Winter, M. | 2014 | <i>Archaeological Evaluation at Colchester High School for Girls, Norman Way, Colchester, Essex.</i> Colchester Borough Council Museum Service brief |

Ben Holloway 20/05/15
bh@catuk.org

APPENDIX: TEAM STRUCTURE

List of team members

Site supervision and Recording

Ben Holloway

Assistants

TBC

Finds consultants

Stephen Benfield (CAT): LIA/Roman pottery, Roman and later CBM, Saxon and Med pottery

Hazel Martingell (Braintree): Lithics

Joanna Bird (Guildford): samian ware

Dr Hilary Cool (Nottingham): Roman glass

Nina Crummy (Colchester): small finds, coins

Julie Curl (Sylvanus): Human/animal bone

Val Fryer (UEA/Loddon): environmental

Valerie Rigby (British Museum): LIA ceramics

Dr Paul Sealey (Colchester Museums): Roman amphoras, prehistoric & Roman pottery

Graphics

E Holloway, G Adams

Report writing

Ben Holloway, Howard Brooks

Senior Site Staff

Ben Holloway BSc AIFA

Ben joined CAT staff in June 2000, a graduate in Archaeology from Bournemouth University. Ben has conducted fieldwork in Scotland and the Isle of Man. Since joining the Trust Ben has carried out extensive work in Colchester at various supervisory and project positions including evaluations and excavations at Colchester Garrison PFI (including the circus), St Marys Hospital and Colchester 6th Form College. His work in Essex includes the Sandon Park and Ride Site, Skyline 120 Business Park at Great Notley, Dry Street, Basildon and the Stanhope industrial park Stanford-le-hope.

Finds Specialists

Stephen Benfield BA, Cert Archaeol (Oxon) (CAT) Late Iron Age and Roman pottery

Steve's first involvement with Colchester archaeology was in 1985, working on a Manpower Services Commission sponsored project to assist in processing the enormous collection of Roman pottery from excavations in the town. He graduated from Reading University with a degree in archaeology and subsequently studied for his post-graduate Certificate in Archaeology at Oxford. Returning to CAT, he has since worked on many CAT projects at various supervisory and directorial positions, including the major projects at Stanway Iron Age burial site and Gosbecks Roman temple/theatre complex. Stephen has also, through much hands-on experience, built up a considerable working knowledge of LIA and Roman ceramics. He now completes ceramic assessments and full reports for CAT, drawing on the unrivalled catalogues provided by the standard Colchester works *Camulodunum* (Hawkes & Hull 1947), *Roman Colchester* (Hull 1958) and now *CAR 10*, and by examining the fabric series held at CAT headquarters.

Joanna Bird FSA (Guildford) Samian

Joanna is one of the country's top samian specialists. Among her large corpus of work is a contribution to the publication *Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971-1986*.

Howard Brooks BA, MIFA (CAT) Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery

Howard's involvement in Essex archaeology goes back to 1970 when he dug at Sheepen, Colchester with Rosalind Dunnett (now Niblett). He studied archaeology at the University of Wales, and graduated in 1975. He worked for Colchester Archaeological Trust between 1976 and 1981, and again in 1985, where he was involved at various levels of responsibility (up to Co-Director) in the excavation of deeply stratified urban remains in Roman Colchester and suburbs (*Colchester Archaeological Report 3* [1994]). Between 1986 and 1991 he worked for Essex County Archaeology Section, first in directing the fieldwalking and excavation project at Stansted Airport (*East Anglian Archaeology* 107, 2004), and then in Development Control. Howard then left ECC to set up and run HBAS, the county's smallest contracting team, in which capacity he carried out over twenty field projects and wrote a dozen consultancy reports. He rejoined CAT in 1997. He regularly contributes to *Essex Archaeology & History*, and teaches University evening classes on archaeology.

Dr Hilary Cool FSA MIFA (Nottingham) Roman glass

Another graduate of the University of Wales, Hilary is now a freelance glass and finds specialist, and has written many reports on glass from Colchester sites, including contributions to *Colchester Archaeological Report 6: Excavations at Culver Street, the Gilberd School, and other sites in Colchester 1971-85*, and *Colchester Archaeological Report 9: Excavations on Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester 1971-88* (1993). Among her major works is the internationally selling *Colchester Archaeological Report 8: Roman vessel glass from excavations in Colchester 1971-85*.

Nina Crummy FSA (Colchester) Small finds

Nina first worked in the early 1970s as finds assistant on the major urban excavations in Colchester for the Colchester Excavation Committee (later the Trust). Over the next twenty years she built up an unrivalled working knowledge of small finds of all types. She has collaborated in most of the *Colchester Archaeological Reports*, and was principal author of the best-selling *Colchester Archaeological Reports 2* (Roman small finds), 4 (*The coins from excavations in Colchester 1971-9*) and 5 (*The post-Roman small finds from excavations in Colchester 1971-85*). She recently worked for the Museum of London, and was instrumental in the recent transfer of and the massive improvement in accessibility to archaeological archives in London. She now works freelance on small finds reports for CAT, HBAS, and other bodies including Winchester Excavation Committee.

Julie Curl AIFA (Sylvanus: Archaeological, Natural History and Illustration Services)**Human and Animal Bone**

Julie has over 16 years of experience in archaeology and in particular finds for the Norfolk Archaeological Unit and Norfolk Museums Service. Currently working as a freelance specialist in both human and animal bone and illustration. She has been producing faunal and Human remains reports for many years and produces assessment and analysis reports for clients across the East Anglian region. She has her own extensive bone reference collection built up over many years. Her particular interests in faunal remains are animal husbandry and pathologies. She has also worked as a conservator, particularly on Pleistocene vertebrates and a wide variety of archaeology and natural history projects at the Norwich Castle Museum. Julie is also an extra-mural lecturer with the University of East Anglia, teaching Animal bones in Archaeology.

Val Fryer (Norfolk) Environmental Archaeologist BA, MIFA

Val has fifteen years experience in environmental archaeology, working for English Heritage, County Units and independent archaeological bodies across the United Kingdom and Southern Ireland. She has published reports in *East Anglian Archaeology* (including occasional papers), *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, *Medieval Archaeology* and *Norfolk Archaeology*. Specialist work for various police authorities across England and Northern Ireland. Val is a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists with special

accreditation for environmental archaeology and she is also a Member of the Association of Environmental Archaeologists.

Valerie Rigby (Hertfordshire) LIA ceramics

Formerly working for the British Museum, Val is one of the country's leading authorities on later prehistoric ceramics in general, and traded wares in particular. She has published widely. Her major works include *Baldock: the excavation of a Roman and pre-Roman settlement, 1968-72 (Britannia Monograph Series 7*, with Ian Stead). On a more local level, she has contributed to the magisterial *Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971-88*, and to Ros Niblett's *Sheepen: an early Roman industrial site at Camulodunum* (CBA Research Report 57, 1985).

Patricia Ryan (Chelmsford) Medieval and later brick and tile

Pat has for many years been examining excavated collections of brick and tile from Essex sites, and contributing reports which are usually consigned to the gloomier parts of archive reports, or as footnotes in published texts. Her regular contributions to Essex Archaeology & History , therefore, under-represent the devoted study which Pat has put in over the years. Nobody knows more about local brick and tile, except for David Andrews, with whom she collaborated on significant sections of *Cressing Temple: A Templar and Hospitaller Manor in Essex* (1993).

Dr Paul Sealey (Colchester Museum) Amphoras

Paul has worked at Colchester Museum since the late 1970s. His PhD specialism was Roman amphoras, a topic on which he writes specialist reports. His main areas of interest are prehistory and the Roman period, and he has developed a familiarity with those periods and their ceramics. He has published widely. His major works include *Amphoras from the 1970 excavations at Colchester Sheepen* (BAR 142, 1985), contributions to Ros Niblett's *Sheepen: an early Roman industrial site at Camulodunum* (CBA Res Rep 57, 1985). He regularly contributes to *Essex Archaeology & History*.

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: colchest3-211538

Project details

| | |
|--|--|
| Project name | Colchester Sixth Form College Student Services Building |
| Short description of the project | The site of a proposed Student Services Building at the Sixth Form College lies in Insula 1a of the Roman walled town. An evaluation in August 2014 showed that there was a horizon of modern overburden over a post-Roman topsoil. Collectively, these two horizons formed a 'safe dig-depth' of approximately 700m above the highest significant archaeological remains (Roman, in this case) on this part of the college site. A monitoring and recording exercise (December 2014 - January 2015) observed ground reduction for the new building, largely within the post-Roman overburden. On the northern edge of the ground reduction area, engineering design required the removal of a greater depth of overburden than was intended. This exposed Roman demolition deposits overlying Roman floors, mainly tessellated pavement. There were also two robber trenches indicating the lines of robbed-out Roman walls. The floors and (robbed-out) wall-lines uncovered in 2014-15 were probably part of the western side of the Roman building uncovered in 2005 (Building 211 in the numbered series of Colchester Buildings). |
| Project dates | Start: 01-12-2014 End: 07-01-2015 |
| Previous/future work | Yes / Not known |
| Any associated project reference codes | 14/07e - Contracting Unit No. |
| Any associated project reference codes | 2014.77 - Museum accession ID |
| Type of project | Recording project |
| Current Land use | Community Service 1 - Community Buildings |
| Monument type | TOWN HOUSE Roman |
| Significant Finds | POTTERY Roman |
| Significant Finds | TILE Roman |
| Significant Finds | COIN Roman |
| Investigation type | "Watching Brief" |
| Prompt | National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF |

Project location

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Country | England |
| Site location | ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER Sixth Form College, North Hill |
| Postcode | CO1 1SN |
| Study area | 130.00 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | TL 9926 2540 51.8909554371 0.896074730468 51 53 27 N 000 53 45 E Point |

Project creators

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Name of Organisation | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Project brief originator | Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body |
| Project design originator | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Project director/manager | Ben Holloway |
| Project supervisor | Ben Holloway |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | School |
| Name of sponsor/funding body | Sixth Form College |

Project archives

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Physical Archive recipient | Colchester Museum |
| Physical Archive ID | 2014.77 |
| Physical Contents | "Animal Bones", "Ceramics", "Metal", "Worked stone/lithics" |
| Digital Archive Exists? | No |
| Digital Archive recipient | Colchester Museum |
| Paper Archive recipient | Colchester Museum |
| Paper Archive ID | 2014.77 |
| Paper Contents | "Survey" |
| Paper Media available | "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section" |

Project bibliography 1

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Publication type | Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript) |
| Title | Part of a Roman building in Insula 1a of Roman Colchester: archaeological monitoring on the site of the Student Services Building, Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester |
| Author(s)/Editor(s) | Holloway, B, and Brooks, H |
| Other | CAT Report 834 |

bibliographic
details

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Issuer or publisher Colchester Archaeological Trust

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Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

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Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

| | |
|---|--|
| Address: Sixth Form College Colchester, North Hill, Colchester, Essex | |
| Parish: Colchester | District: Colchester |
| NGR: NGR: TL 9926 2540 | Site code: CAT project code – 14/7e |
| Type of work: Monitoring and recording | Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Date of work: December 2014 - January 2015 | Size of area investigated: 130m ² |
| Location of curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museum accession code : 2014.77 | Funding source: Developer |
| Further seasons anticipated? no | Related EHER numbers: 3530, 12341-7, 13108 |
| Final report: | CAT Report 834 |
| Periods represented: Roman, medieval, post-medieval, modern | |
| <p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>The site of a proposed Student Services Building at the Sixth Form College lies in Insula 1a of the Roman walled town. An evaluation in August 2014 showed that there was a horizon of modern overburden over a post-Roman topsoil. Collectively, these two horizons formed a 'safe dig-depth' of approximately 700m above the highest significant archaeological remains (Roman, in this case) on this part of the college site.</i></p> <p><i>A monitoring and recording exercise (December 2014 - January 2015) observed ground reduction for the new building, largely within the post-Roman overburden. On the northern edge of the ground reduction area, engineering design required the removal of a greater depth of overburden than was intended. This exposed Roman demolition deposits overlying Roman floors, mainly tessellated pavement. There were also two robber trenches indicating the lines of robbed-out Roman walls</i></p> <p><i>The floors and (robbed-out) wall-lines uncovered in 2014-15 were probably part of the western side of the Roman building uncovered in 2005 (Building 211 in the numbered series of Colchester Buildings).</i></p> | |
| Previous summaries/reports: CAT Rep 247, 260, 309, 596, 784 | |
| CBC Monitor: Chris Lister | |
| Keywords: Roman floors, walls, buildings | Significance: ** |
| Author of summary: Ben Holloway | Date of summary: May 2015 |