Archaeological evaluation at land to the rear of 284-300 Shrub End Road, Colchester Essex

May 2015



Report prepared by Mark Baister

on behalf of Balkerne Gate Developments Ltd

CAT project ref: 15/04e NGR: TL 969 230 COLEM accession code: 2015.41



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1. Summary

Five 15m trenches were excavated on land of a proposed housing development north of Gosbecks Archaeological Park. Nine features of natural origin were recorded (tree throws or silt patches), as well as one shallow undated ditch. Nothing else of archaeological interest was encountered.

2. Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report on trial-trenching carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land to the rear of 284-300 Shrub End Road, Colchester, Essex (TL 969 230), on the 7th May 2015. The work was commissioned by Balkerne Gate Developments Ltd following the direction of a brief (2015) prepared by the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA). The brief was issued in response to a planning application for the proposed development of the site, comprising the construction of five bungalows and garages, with associated parking and access (Planning Ref: 150478). Work proceeded in accordance with a WSI prepared by CAT (2015) in response to the above brief.

In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with local and national standards as detailed in CAT 2014, ClfA 2008a, ClfA 2008b, MoRPHE, EAA 8, EAA 14, and EAA 24.

3. Archaeological background (Fig 2)

The development lies 3.5km south of Colchester town centre, close to the scheduled ancient monument of Gosbecks Iron Age and Romano-British site (Essex SAM 57), which itself contains Gosbecks Archaeological Park (see Fig 2). The SAM covers an extensive area, and comprises nationally important archaeological remains of the late Iron Age and Roman including a temple, theatre, an early Roman fort and part of a large Iron Age field system. Also nearby is Heath Farm dyke, part of the extensive Iron Age earthworks surrounding Colchester. Fieldwalking and trial trenching carried out in the immediate area have defined late Iron Age and Roman occupation features, including a Roman water-main, droveways and pits, and a small number of Roman burials (both early cremations and later inhumations). An excavation in 1995-96 on the site of a new road exposed several droveways, large ditches and burials (CAT Report 127, see Fig 2).

As a result there was a high probability of archaeological remains dating to the Iron Age and Roman period being present in the development area, given the proximity to known remains.

Historic OS maps dating back to 1876 show no previous building present on the site (**Plates I-VI**, site shown in red). It appears to have been a field or garden for all of it's recent history.

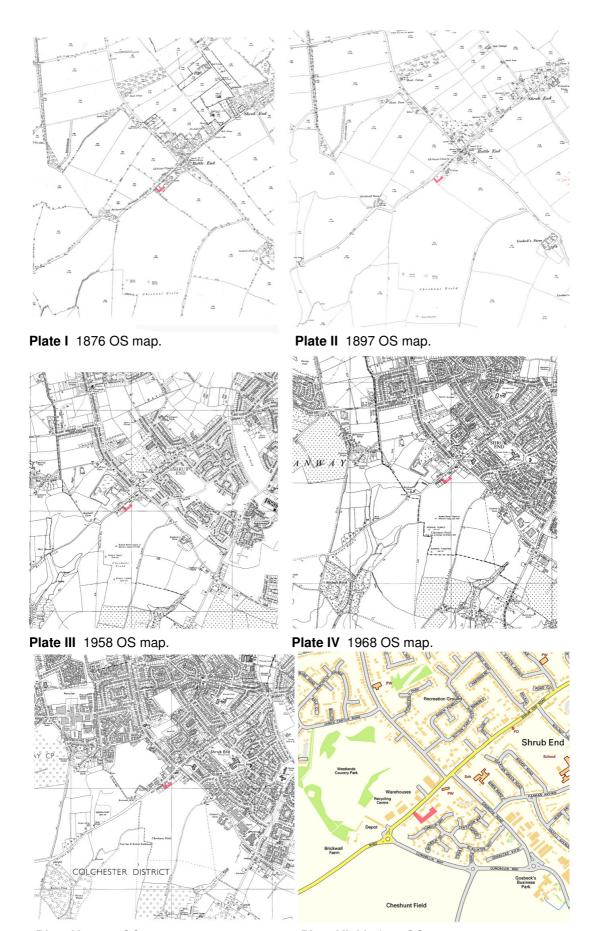


Plate V 1991 OS map.

Plate VI Modern OS map.

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, in particular with reference to any potential archaeological deposits relatable to the information provided in Section 3 above.

5. Methodology and Results (Fig 3-5)

This section provides an archaeological summary of the excavation of five trial trenches at a length of 15m, for a total of 75m of trenching. They were positioned to give coverage across the whole site, but two (T4 and T5) had to be moved to avoid a partially backfilled pond and large spoil heap (see Fig 3).

The trial-trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. Three layers were encountered across the site (Plate VII):

Layer	Description				
1	A modern grey/brown silty topsoil overlaying the whole site - approximately 200mm in				
	depth.				
2	A loose light grey/brown sandy subsoil – approximately 220mm thick.				
3	Compacted natural orange sand. Underlies whole site.				



Plate VII Representative section of T2, showing stratigraphy of site. Shot facing west.

Features

Within the five trenches, 12 features were uncovered. Two of these were modern ditches (F2 and F12). Their fill was dark and silty. As well as these two ditches, there was a large patch of modern disturbance and a service in T3 (see Fig 4).

Nine of the features were natural in origin, either tree throws or silt patches (F1 and F3-11). Their fills were light yellow/brown and very leached and compact. Upon excavation, they had uneven bases and irregular sides, often undermining the natural of L3. No finds were recovered from these features.

The only feature of archaeological interest was a narrow 270mm wide ditch aligned northeast/south-west in T4 (F13 – see Plate IIX and Fig 4). No finds were recovered from this feature,

and it was very shallow (with a depth of 120mm at its deepest). Very little can be said about this ditch, but the most likely interpretation would be a prehistoric landscape feature.



Plate IIX F13 section. Shot facing south-west.

6. Finds

The only finds from this site were fragments of modern metalwork, china and glass recovered from the modern ditches F2 and F12. In addition fragments of glass and frogged brick were observed during machining of L1 and L2 but not recovered.

7. Discussion

The very minimal amount of archaeological remains uncovered on this site suggests that it is not within an area of settlement or other activity associated with the nearby Gosbecks Archaeological Park. The partially backfilled pond on the site does not appear in any OS maps (**Plates I-VI**), so is likely a product of recent landscaping.

With only one very shallow undated ditch, the site contains almost nothing of archaeological interest.

8. Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank Balkerne Gate Developments Ltd for commissioning the project. The project was managed by M Baister, and the fieldwork was carried out by M Baister and S Carter. Figures by M Baister. The project was monitored for Colchester Borough Council by Jess Tipper.

9. References

CAT	2014	Policies and procedures
CAT	2015	Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological evaluation on land
		to the rear of 284-300 Shrub End Road, Colchester, Essex. April 2015
ClfA	2008a	Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation.
ClfA	2008b	Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.
EAA 8	2000	Research and Archaeology: a frame work for the Eastern Counties 2 Research agenda and strategy, East Anglian Archaeological Occasional Papers 8, ed. by Brown, N. and Glazenbrook, J.
EAA 14	2003	Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Paper 14, ed. by David Gurney
EAA 24	2011	Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24, ed. by Maria Medlycott
Tipper, J	2015	Brief for a Trenched Archaeological Evaluation at Land rear of, 284-300 Shrub End Road, Colchester CO3 4RL April 2015.
MoRPHE	2006	Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (English Heritage)

10. Abbreviations and glossary

CAT Colchester Archaeological Trust

CBM ceramic building material (brick, tile, tessera). 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 floor; can contain 'contexts'

fill the soil filling up a hole such as a pit or ditch

HEA Historic Environment Advisor IfA Institute for Archaeologists

layer an accumulation or deposition of archaeological material

post-medieval the period from AD 1500 to AD 1800 medieval the period from AD 1066 to AD 1500 modern the period from AD 1800 to present day

natural geological deposit undisturbed by human activity

NGR National Grid Reference
OS Ordnance Survey

11. Contents of the archive

Finds archive

No finds retained after report completed.

Paper archive

1 A4 wallet containing:

this report
original site record (context and finds sheets)
section drawings
digital photo log
attendance record
sundry papers
digital photos on disc

12. Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive are currently held by CAT at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex, C02 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museum (Accession code: 2015.41).

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Distribution list:

Balkerne Gate Developments Ltd Jess Tipper (CBCAA) EHER



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Fig 1 Site location.

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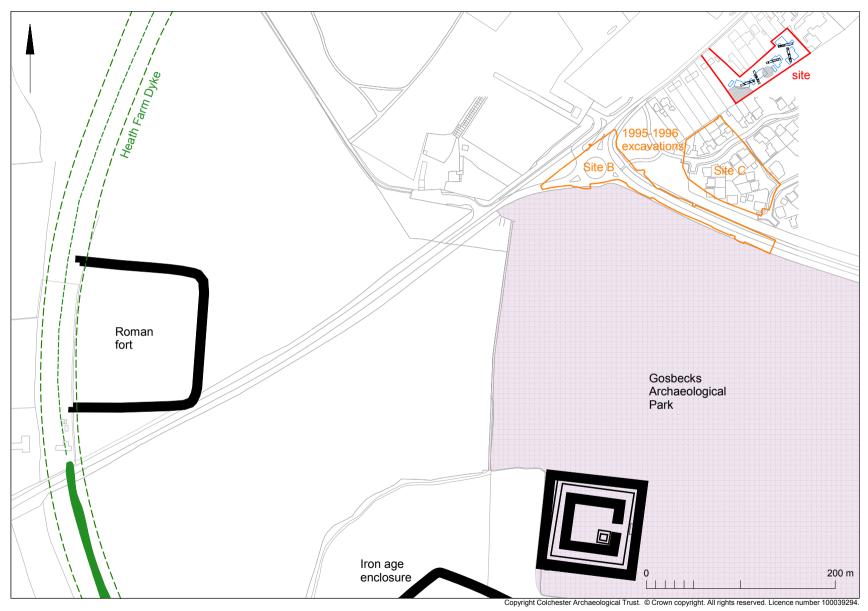


Fig 2 Evaluation site shown in context with Gosbecks Archaeological Park and other sites of interest.

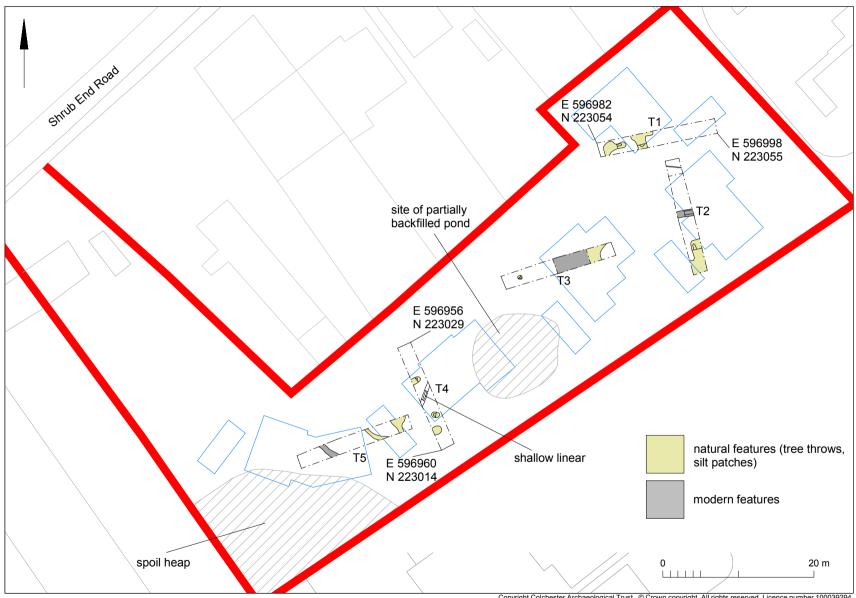
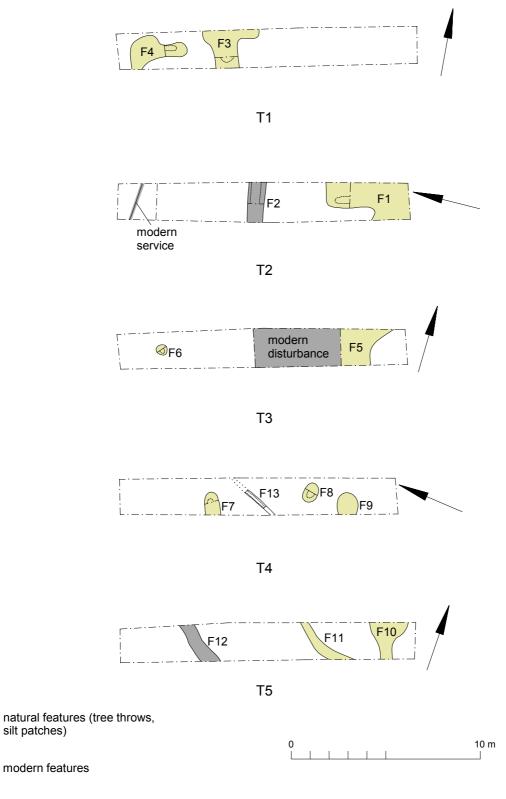


Fig 3 Evaluation results, with proposed buildings in blue.

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Fig 4 Detailed trench plans.

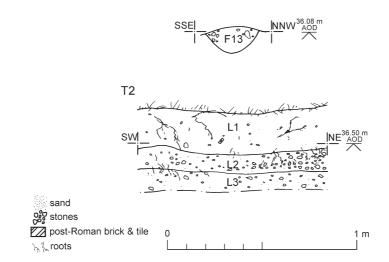


Fig 5 Feature section (F13) and representative trench section (T2).

Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of 284-300 Shrub End Road, Colchester, Essex

NGR: TL 969 230 (centre)

Planning reference: 150478

Client: Balkerne Gate Developments Ltd

Agent: Steve Norman

Curating Museum: Colchester

Museum accession code: 2015.41

ECC Project code: n/a CAT Project code: 15/04e

Site Manager: Mark Baister

CBC Monitor: Jess Tipper

This WSI written: 20 04 2015



COLCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST, Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk Colchester, Essex, C02 7GZ tel: 07436 273 304

email: archaeologists@catuk.org

Site Location and Description

The proposed development site lies to the southwest of Colchester 3.5 km from the town centre on the southern side of Shrub End Road. The site is currently a small parcel of undeveloped land laid to grass with trees around the edges and is centred at TL 969 230 (Fig 1).

Proposed work

The development comprises the construction of five bungalows, garages, parking and access.

Archaeological Background

The following archaeological background draws on CAT Report 257.

The development lies adjacent to the Gosbecks Archaeological Park, a scheduled ancient monument (Essex SAM no 57). The archaeological park covers an extensive area, and comprises nationally important archaeological remains of the late Iron Age and Roman periods including a temple, theatre, an early Roman fort, roads, and part of a major Iron Age field sysyem (Hull 1958; Hawkes & Crummy 1995; Crummy 1997).

Fieldwalking, trial-trenching and small evaluations have been carried out in the immediate area over the past few years, and late Iron Age and Roman occupation features (Benfield 1994; Benfield & Brooks 1994; CAT Report 30), a Roman water-main, droveways and pits, and a small number of early Roman cremations and later Roman inhumations (CAT Report 127) have been recorded.

CAT undertook an evaluation on the adjacent plot to this site in 2003 (CAT report 257) which yielded no features or finds of archaeological significance but cropmarks in Hawkes & Crummy 1995 Fig 6.1 and excavations at Gosbecks Park Area C in 1995-6 (CAT Report 127) show there are ditches, droveways and burials close to this site.

Planning Background

A planning application was submitted to Colchester Borough Council for the proposed work (above: Planning reference 150478). As the site lies within an area highlighted by the EHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, a full archaeological condition was recommended by Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA). The recommended archaeological condition is based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012) and states:

"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."

Requirement for Work

The required archaeological work involves undertaking an evaluation of linear trial trenches covering 5% of the site. The proposed trench layout includes five trenches 15m x 1.8m (see Fig 2). The mechanical stripping of the trenches will involve using a flat–edged ditching bucket whilst under constant archaeological supervision. Details are given in a Project Brief written by CBCAO (Brief for a trenched Archaeological Evaluation at land to the rear of 284-300 Shrub End Road, Colchester, Essex - CBC 2015). Once the strip is complete a meeting will be held on site with CBCAA, the developer and CAT to discuss what further work is needed.

It is anticipated that this work will comprise the complete excavation and recovery of any burials on the site and standard sample excavation of all other features.

Specific research aims are:

- Follow requirements as stated in section 3.2 of the Brief
- To identify the nature of Iron Age and Roman activity on the site and how this links to nearby Gosbecks Archaeological Park
- To preserve by record any archaeological remains that may be destroyed by the
- development.

General Methodology

All work carried out by CAT will be in accordance with:

- professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its Code of Conduct (CIfA 2014a-c)
- Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011)
- required standards of fieldwork in Colchester Borough (CM 2008a, b)
- relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2014)
- the Project Brief issued by CBCAA (CBC 2015)

Professional CAT field archaeologists will undertake all specified archaeological work, for which they will be suitably experienced and qualified.

Notification of the supervisor/project manager's name and the start date for the project will be provided to CBCAA one week before start of work.

Unless it is the responsibility of other site contractors, CAT will study mains service locations and avoid damage to these.

A project or site code will be sought from the curating museum, as appropriate to the project. This code will be used to identify the finds bags and boxes, and the project archive when it is deposited at the curating museum.

Written Scheme of Investigation

Prior to start of work, a Written Scheme of Investigation will be submitted to CBCAA. The WSI will describe in appropriate detail how the *Brief* from CBCAA will be implemented in fieldwork, post-excavation, reporting and publication stages.

The WSI shall be submitted to CBCAA, and fieldwork will not commence prior to approval of WSI from CBCAA.

The WSI will include a location plan of the development site showing area of proposed excavation or trench layout.

OASIS Record

At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/ will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.

At the end of the project all parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to CBCAA and EHER. This will include an uploaded .PDF version of the entire report.

Staffing

The number of field staff for this project is estimated as follows – one archaeologist to continually monitor the strip with an additional archaeologist for archaeological contexts that require excavation.

In charge of day-to-day site work: Mark Baister.

Strip and map / watching brief methodology

There will be sufficient on-site attendance by CAT staff to maintain a watch on all contractors' ground reduction, footings work, service trench digging, and all related works to record, excavate or sample (as necessary) any archaeological features or deposits.

All topsoil removal and ground reduction, which will be done with a toothless bucket.

If archaeological features or deposits are uncovered, time will be allowed for these to be planned and recorded.

If any features or deposits uncovered are to be destroyed by the proposed development, time will be allowed for these features to be excavated by hand. This includes a 50% sample of discrete features (pits, etc) and 10% of linear features (ditches, etc).

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

A metal detector will be used to examine the site, spoil heaps, and the finds recovered.

Individual records of excavated contexts, layers, features or deposits will be entered on proforma record sheets. Registers will be compiled of finds, small finds and soil samples.

All features and layers or other significant deposits will be planned, and their profiles or sections recorded. The normal scale will be site plans at 1:20 and sections at 1:10, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be appropriate.

Site surveying

Normal scale for archaeological site plans and sections is 1:20 and 1:10 respectively, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be more appropriate.

The site grid will be tied into the National Grid. Corners of excavation areas and trenches will be located by NGR coordinates.

Environmental sampling policy

The number and range of samples collected will be adequate to determine the potential of the site, with particular focus on palaeoenvironmental remains including both biological remains (e.g. plants, small vertebrates) and small sized artefacts (e.g. smithing debris), and to provide information for sampling strategies on any future excavation. Samples will be collected for potential micromorphical and other pedological sedimentological analysis. Environmental bulk samples will be 40 litres in size (assuming context is large enough)

Sampling strategies will address questions of:

- the range of preservation types (charred, mineral-replaced, waterlogged), and their quality
- concentrations of macro-remains
- and differences in remains from undated and dated features
- · variation between different feature types and areas of site

CAT has an arrangement with Val Fryer (Loddon) whereby any potentially rich environmental layers or features will be appropriately sampled as a matter of course. Val Fryer will do any processing and reporting.

Should any complex, or otherwise outstanding deposits be encountered, VF will be asked onto site to advise. Waterlogged 'organic' features will always be sampled. In all cases, the advice of VF and/or the English Heritage Regional Advisor in Archaeological Science (East of England) on sampling strategies for complex or waterlogged deposits will be followed, including the taking monolith samples.

Human remains

Policy depends on the age of the burial. 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 CBCAA will be informed, and any advice and/or instruction from the coroner will be followed.

Allowance will be made in the budget and timetable to allow a human bone specialist to visit site to advise on recording and lifting human remains (inhumations), and for an experienced conservator to visit site and advise on recording and lifting of fragile grave goods.

Photographic record

Will include both general and feature-specific photographs, the latter with scale and north arrow. A photo register giving context number, details, and direction of shot will be prepared on site, and included in site archive.

Post-excavation assessment

If a post-excavation assessment is required by CBCAA, it will be normally be submitted within 2 months of the end of fieldwork, or as quickly as is reasonably practicable and at a time agreed with CBCAA.

Where archaeological results do not warrant a post-excavation assessment, preparation of the normal site report will begin. This is usually a PDF report available as hard copy, and also published on the CAT website and on the OASiS website.

Finds

All significant finds will be retained.

All finds, where appropriate, will be washed and marked with site code and context number.

Stephen Benfield (CAT) normally writes our finds reports. Some categories of finds are automatically referred to other CAT specialists:

animal bones (small groups): Adam Wightman

flints: Adam Wightman

or to outside specialists:

small finds, metalwork, coins, etc: Nina Crummy.

animal bones (large groups) and human remains: Julie Curl (*Sylvanus*)

environmental processing and reporting: Val Fryer (Loddon)

conservation of finds: staff at Colchester Museum

Other specialists whose opinion can be sought on large or complex groups include:

Roman brick/tile: Ernest Black Roman glass: Hilary Cool Prehistoric pottery: Paul Sealey

Other: EH Regional Adviser in Archaeological Science (East of England).

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.

Requirements for conservation and storage of finds will be agreed with the appropriate museum prior to the start of work, and confirmed to CBCAA.

End of Fieldwork, and Report

Notification will be given to CBCAA when the fieldwork has been completed.

An appropriate report will be prepared to minimum acceptable standards outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (English Heritage 2006).

The draft report will be submitted within 6 months of the end of fieldwork for approval by CBCAA.

Final report will normally be submitted to CBCAA as PDF, but printed copy can be provided on request.

The report will contain:

- The aims and methodology adopted in the course of the archaeological project
- Location plan of site and excavated area in relation to the proposed development. At least two
 corners of each trench / excavated area will be given 10 figure grid references.
- A section/s drawings showing depth of deposits from present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale.
- Detailed archaeologists results including list of sites resulting from an EHER/UAD search, and historic maps to show changes and development of site, with a suitable conclusion and discussion and results referring to Regional Research Frameworks (Medlycott 2011).
- All specialist reports or assessments
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results.
- As Appendices, the OASIS entry and the WSI.

An EHER summary sheet will also be completed within four weeks and attached as Appendix to the site report, which will be emailed as PDF to CBCAA.

Results will be published, to at least a summary level (i.e. round-up in *Essex Archaeology & History*) in the year following the archaeological field work. An allowance will be made in the project costs for the report to be published in an adequately peer reviewed journal or monograph series

Archive Deposition

A site archive will be prepared to minimum acceptable standards given in CM 2008, CIfA 2014b, and MoRPHE (EH 2006).

The requirements for archive storage shall be agreed with the curating museum.

If the finds are to remain with the landowner, a full copy of the archive will be housed with the curating museum.

The archive will be deposited with the appropriate museum within 3 months of the completion of the final publication report, with a summary of the contents of the archive supplied to CBCAA.

A Drawing Interchange File (.dxf) will be supplied to for integration in the UAD/HER. AutoCAD files will also exported and saved into a format that can be can be imported into MapInfo.

Monitoring

CBCAA 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 CBCAA one week in advance of its commencement.

Any variations in this WSI will be agreed with CBCAA prior to them being carried out.

CBCAA will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

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

References

1994	Archaeological assessment at Gosbecks Farm, unpublished CAT		
	archive report		
1994	Gosbecks Farm, Colchester Stage 2: archaeological		
	evaluation (July/August 1994), unpublished CAT archive report		
2014	Health & Safety Policy		
1999	The Colchester archaeologist magazine, 12		
1998	Gosbecks Archaeological Park, Colchester: an archaeological		
	evaluation of the north-western area, 1998, unpublished CAT archive report by S Benfield		
2008	Excavations of Late Iron Age and Roman features and a Roman Road		
	north of Gosbecks Archaeological Park, Colchester, Essex 1995-1996.		
	Unpublished CAT archive report, by S Benfield (June 2008)		
2003	An Archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at 282 Shrub End Road,		
	Colchester, Essex. Unpublished CAT archive report, by B Holloway and L		
	Pooley (Dec 2003)		
2015	Brief for a trenched Archaeological Evaluation at land to the rear of		
	284-300 Shrub End Road, Colchester, Essex by J Tipper		
2014a	Standard and Guidance for an archaeological excavation		
2014b	Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and		
	deposition of archaeological archives		
2014c	Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and		
	research of archaeological materials		
2008	Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the		
	Borough of Colchester		
2008	Guidelines on the Preparation and Transfer of Archaeological Archives to		
	Colchester & Ipswich Museums		
	City of Victory		
2003	Standards for field archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian		
	Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).		
	National Planning Policy Framework		
2006	Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)		
1995	Camulodunum 2, Colchester Archaeological		
	Report 11		
	Roman Colchester, RRCSAL, 20		
2011	Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of		
	England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)		
	1994 2014 1999 1998 2008 2003 2015 2014a 2014b 2014c 2008 2008 1997 2003 2012 2006 1995 1958		

Emma Holloway



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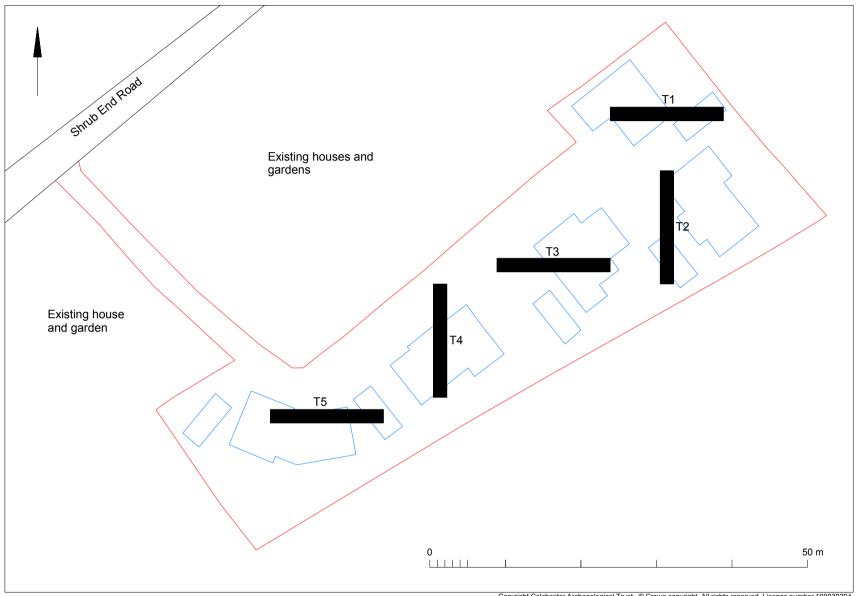


Fig 2 Proposed trench locations, with proposed buildings in blue.

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Printable version

OASIS ID: colchest3-209309

Project details

Project name Land to rear of 284-300 Shrub End Rd Colchester Eval

Short description of the

project

5% trial trenching evaluation

Project dates Start: 07-05-2015 End: 07-05-2015

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project

reference codes

15/04e - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project

reference codes

2015.41 - Museum accession ID

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed

Monument type N/A None
Significant Finds N/A None

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches"

Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Position in the planning

process

After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England

Site location ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER Land to the rear of 284-300

Shrub End Road, Colchester

Postcode CO3 4RL

Study area 0.39 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 969 230 51.8702445281 0.860451193819 51 52 12 N 000 51 37 E

Point

Project creators

1/2

Name of Organisation Colchester Archaeological Trust

Project brief originator CBC Archaeological Officer

Project design originator Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project director/manager Colchester Archaeological Trust

Project supervisor Mark Baister

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Colchester Museum

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"

Paper Archive recipient Colchester Museum

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Diary", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey"

Entered by Sarah Carter (EH@cat.org.uk)

Entered on 21 May 2015

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