

**Archaeological watching briefs
at Abbey House, St John's Green,
Colchester, Essex, CO2 7EZ
March 2013-June 2014**

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**commissioned by
Jonathan Frank, Lexden Restoration Ltd**

including watching briefs
on the edges of the Abbey House site,
commissioned by Rob Masefield, RPS Group,
on behalf of Taylor Wimpey

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1 Summary

Significant medieval and later remains were recorded in 2013-14 during the redevelopment of the Abbey House site, which lies to the south of St John's Green in Colchester. Little or no definite evidence for Roman deposits was identified during the watching brief, although a quantity of residual Roman finds was recovered from later contexts. Remains probably associated with St John's Abbey included the abbey precinct wall, several other building foundations, and a lime pit. During machine-trenching in the north-eastern corner of the site, approximately 70 pieces of stone were unearthed, many of which were carved and were probably derived from abbey buildings. Among the later remains uncovered were a post-medieval well and several Victorian brick features, including a soakaway, two storage tanks, and the foundations of a greenhouse. A Second World War air-raid shelter with a connecting corridor to Abbey House was also recorded.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1** An archaeological watching brief took place at Abbey House, St John's Green, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7EZ, during the redevelopment of the site. The watching brief was commissioned by Jonathan Frank, Lexden Restoration Ltd, and was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between March 2013 and June 2014.
- 2.2** The Abbey House site lies approximately 250 m south of the Roman and medieval walled town. It is located on the southern side of St John's Green, and to the east of Flagstaff Road. Most of the site lies within the St John's Abbey scheduled ancient monument (SAM 26307). Both the visible and buried remains of the Abbey are included within the SAM, as are any other buried archaeological remains. Scheduled monument consent was obtained for the works. The northern part of the site, including Abbey House, lies within a conservation area. Abbey House is on Colchester's local list of buildings of historical or architectural importance.

The site lies on the northern edge of a plateau to the south of the town. The modern ground level on the site slopes slightly from south to north; from approximately 32.8 m AOD at the southern end to approximately 29.8 m AOD at the northern end. The main vehicular access is from the west via Flagstaff Road, with some parking on the northern part of the site accessed from the St John's Green side.

- 2.3** During the redevelopment, Abbey House was retained largely intact, but with some internal and external alterations, as it was converted to form two dwelling units (Plots 1-2). In addition, five terraced houses (Plots 3-7) were constructed in the south-eastern part of the site, within the former garden of Abbey House. Some landscaping took place in the northern part of the garden. Services for the terraced houses were installed, and elsewhere the services were upgraded. The redevelopment site covers an area of approximately 0.5 hectares, and its NGR is centred at TL 9970 2472.

The relevant CBC planning application numbers for these works were 121424 and 121426. The archaeological investigations were carried out under Condition 47 of outline consent O/COL/01/0009.

- 2.4** As part of the redevelopment, several phases of work took place on the edges of the Abbey House site. A manhole was constructed at the western entrance to the site, off Flagstaff Road, in July 2013. Also, boundary walls were built along parts of the southern and eastern edges of the site in February-March 2014. The archaeological watching briefs that took place during these works were funded by Taylor Wimpey and coordinated by Rob Masefield, RPS Planning. The results are included in this report.
- 2.5** The excavation and recording methods used were outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation for the site, which was produced by RPS Planning in association with CAT in July 2012 (WSI 2012). An outline of the archaeological mitigation strategies for the site was provided in Appendix 1 of the WSI. These measures had been agreed with the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments and with CBCAO. The WSI also set out proposals for post-excavation work, the production of a report, an archive and (if necessary) publication texts.
- 2.6** This report follows the standards set out in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CIMS 2008a), and also those in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an 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 English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE 2006), and in the documents *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. resource assessment* (EAA 3), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. research agenda and strategy* (EAA 8), *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14), and *Research and archaeology revisited: a revised framework for the Eastern Counties. Research agenda and strategy* (EAA 24), was also followed.

3 Archaeological background (Figs 1 & 10)

3.1 The archaeological and historical setting of the Abbey House site was included in a desk-based assessment (CAT Report 97) that was produced by CAT in October 2000 in advance of the redevelopment of Colchester Garrison.

The archaeological context of the site was further clarified as a result of a series of evaluations undertaken by CAT since 2002, both on the site and in the adjacent areas. The site falls within the redevelopment area known as Garrison Alienated Land (GAL) Area B1a. Evaluations in or close to this area took place in 2002 (BT1-3; CAT Report 206), 2007 (T7-8; CAT Report 405) and 2011 (T9-10; CAT Report 630). A series of evaluation trenches was also dug by CAT immediately to the south in GAL Area B1b in 2007 (T9-33; CAT Report 438).

The more significant and relevant entries listed in CAT Report 97 and in the subsequent evaluation reports, as well as some other recent discoveries, are summarised briefly below.

3.2 No prehistoric finds were known from the site itself, although some prehistoric remains were recorded from the surrounding areas. A Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age beaker (UAD 1249) was noted from the vicinity of Flagstaff Road in 1930. Evidence of Late Neolithic occupation was observed in Area C1 on the western side of Flagstaff Road in 2004 (CAT Report 412, 19-20). A Late Bronze Age pit was excavated beneath Flagstaff Road during the installation of a storm-water drain in January 2006 (CAT Report 412, 72). A Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flint blade and some Late Bronze Age pottery were found during an excavation in 1972 in the north-eastern corner of St John's Abbey grounds (CAR 9, 205; UAD 3019).

3.3 The site lies approximately 250 m south of the walled area of the Roman town. Traces of Roman extra-mural occupation were uncovered in several of the archaeological evaluation trenches dug by CAT in GAL Area B1a since 2002. Two Roman ditches and a pit were uncovered in 2002 in BT2, which lay immediately to the east of the site (CAT Report 206, 14). There were also some residual Roman finds from BT1-BT3 including several coins. In 2007 some Roman pits and postholes were located in T8, towards the eastern side of the site (CAT Report 405, 3-4). A significant quantity of Roman finds, including pottery, brick/tile and painted wall-plaster, was recovered both from these features and as residual material in later contexts (CAT Report 405, 14). Roman pits and ditches, as well as more residual Roman finds, were discovered in 2011 in T9 and T10 at the northern end of the site, immediately north of the abbey precinct wall (CAT Report 630, 7 & 10-11).

A Roman road possibly extended from west to east across or close to the site (CAT Report 97, 17).

3.4 A Roman circus was discovered during archaeological evaluations and excavations in GAL Areas C1, C2 and J1 East in 2002, 2004 and 2005 (CAT Report 412). The size and location of the circus was confirmed by more recent work. This is the first Roman circus to be positively identified in Britain and its site is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM no 46327). The circus was aligned east-west and was approximately 450 m in length and 72-74 m wide. The circus lies about 120 m to the south of Abbey House site.

3.5 Although the site is located close to Roman cemetery areas (CAR 9, 258-64), no burials have been recorded from the site itself. Many Roman burials have been found to the south and west of the site, including around the southern, eastern and western sides of the Roman circus (*ibid*; CAT Report 412). Also, thirty-four Roman inhumations were excavated in 1972 in the north-eastern corner of the Abbey grounds (CAR 9, 205-13).

A Roman bronze plaque was found in 1891 within St John's Abbey grounds (Hull 1958, 240) and may indicate the location of a Roman temple in this area.

3.6 The evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity in GAL Area B1a was sparse. A Middle Saxon sherd, of probable 8th-9th century date, was recovered in 2002 from BT3 (CAT Report 206, 15 & 17). It was residual within a later context. A coin of Ethelred was reported from the Abbey grounds immediately to the east of Area B1a by Wire in 1852 (UAD 1181). The remains of the small Anglo-Saxon church of St John were excavated in 1972 in the north-eastern corner of the Abbey grounds (CAR 9, 213-5).

3.7 Most of the site lies within the precinct of St John's Abbey (SAM no 26307), which was built from AD 1096 (VCHE 9, 303). The magnificent 15th-century Abbey gatehouse (SAM no 12356), which is Grade 1 Listed, lies approximately 30 m to the east of the edge of the Abbey House site. Abbey House itself is situated in the north-western corner of the abbey precinct, approximately 75 m west of the gatehouse. The medieval precinct wall still survives above ground in places elsewhere. However, on the Abbey House site, the northern section of the precinct wall was rebuilt in brick in the 19th century and is not scheduled. Also, there was no definite evidence for the western section of the precinct wall, although it does survive above ground immediately to the south of the site.

The remainder of the Abbey is not visible above ground. The St John's Abbey church was discovered in 2011 (CAT Report 601) and lies approximately 70 m to the east of the edge of the Abbey House site. Some medieval burials were excavated to the north-east of the church in 1972 (CAR 1, 43-4; CAR 9, 215-18). The abbey cemetery lay close to the church; probably mainly to the east and north of it.

3.8 Little previous evidence had been found for Abbey-period archaeological remains on the Abbey House site. A large group of sherds of 15th- to 16th-century Colchester-type ware was found in BT1 in 2002 (CAT Report 206, 13 & 18). These sherds appeared to be residual in later pits, but were perhaps part of a pre-Dissolution dump of domestic rubbish from the Abbey. Several possible Abbey-period features were found in T7 in 2007, including a wall foundation, a robbed-out foundation, a pit, and a couple of ditches (CAT Report 405, 3-4 & 15). Also in 2007, some residual medieval potsherds were recovered from later contexts in T7 and T8.

3.9 The Abbey was dissolved in 1539, and demolition, robbing and alteration of the standing buildings probably started soon after. Many post-medieval and later features were uncovered during the evaluations carried out by CAT since 2002; especially those in 2002 and 2007.

The area around trench BT1, in the lawn east of Abbey House, was geophysically surveyed (Black 2002) and showed a wide arcing feature. Trench BT1 intercepted this ditch feature (BF101), but, due to the lack of firm dating evidence, it was not possible to confirm whether or not it was associated with the Siege of Colchester (CAT Report 206, 13). Several other probable post-medieval features were uncovered in BT1, and also in BT2, slightly to the east of the Abbey House site (CAT Report 206, 14).

In BT3, slightly to the south of the Abbey House site, many post-medieval and modern pits and postholes were encountered; most of which clearly post-dated the Siege of Colchester in 1648 (CAT Report 206, 14-15). It seems likely that a geophysical anomaly in this area (Black 2002) was caused by these features, some of which may mark the position of a timber structure of post-medieval date.

The evidence for post-medieval activity in evaluation trenches T7 and T8 in 2007 consisted mainly of pits and ditches, as well as a robber trench. However there was also an interesting structural feature; a foundation plinth (F22), in the eastern part of T7, immediately to the east of the Abbey House site (CAT Report 405, 3-4). This was aligned east-west; and was constructed of peg-tile and mortar. It was possibly part of a post-Dissolution building that is recorded on Speed's map of 1610, but had been demolished by the time of Morant's map of 1748 (CAT Report 405, 15). To the south of F22 was a tile surface (L7/L8). A late post-medieval/modern quarry pit (F3) was revealed in T9 in 2011 (CAT Report 630, 7).

3.11 Abbey House was probably built in the 1830's. It was constructed on the site of an earlier building, which is shown on post-medieval maps, such as that in Morant (Morant 1748; Fig 10 above), and also on Thomas Sparrow's map of Colchester in 1767, Chapman and André's map of 1777, and Cole and Roper's map of c 1805. Abbey House is shown on Monson's map of 1848, as well as on the OS map of 1876 and on later editions (eg Fig 10 below). Stable and carriage accommodation, as well as other outbuildings, survived on the south side of Abbey House, across a yard with a surface of Staffordshire blue block paving.

In the second half of the 19th century, perhaps in 1860, Abbey House was acquired by the War Office, and formed part of Colchester Garrison until c 2000. Over the years it has seen many changes of use, including housing senior Army officers and more recently the Royal Military Police. Further information about Abbey House and its associated buildings, which form a significant and attractive group, is given on the web-site of the Colchester Historic Buildings Forum

(<http://www.colchesterhistoricbuildingsforum.org.uk/drupal/node/1460>).

They were also discussed in a heritage statement produced in July 2012 (Balcombe 2012).

4 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to record the depth and extent of any archaeological remains uncovered during the redevelopment, and to assess the date and significance of these remains.

5 Methods (Figs 1, 2, 6 & 7)

- 5.1 The archaeological watching brief commenced on 22nd March 2013, when a shallow north-south trench was hand-dug in preparation for laying a hedge in the garden to the east of Abbey House. The watching brief resumed on 26th June 2013, when the main contractor, Yates Developers, began the groundwork in earnest. Archaeological monitoring continued intermittently until 11th June 2014.
- 5.2 The watching brief consisted mainly of CAT staff monitoring the machine-digging by the contractors of trenches for services and wall foundations. These trenches varied in size and depth. Where possible the services and foundations were installed above the archaeologically sensitive levels. Over most of the site these levels were estimated to lie at or deeper than 700 mm below the modern ground level (WSI 2012, Appendix 1). In the parking area at the northern end of the site, to the north of the SAM, they were taken to lie at or deeper than 600 mm below the modern ground level. The trenches were usually dug using a mini-digger with a toothless bucket. Many live and redundant services were encountered during the watching brief.
- 5.3 Initially, trenching was concentrated in the immediate vicinity of Abbey House (Plots 1-2). Prior to machine-trenching on the western side of Abbey House, between the house and Flagstaff Road, the ground level was reduced by up to 700 mm. The trenches varied in depth, but the deepest, for foul and surface water drains on the western side of Abbey House, were up to 3 m deep. On the eastern side of Abbey House, the trenches were up to 1.6 m in depth.
- 5.4 At the main west entrance to the redevelopment site, a trench for a manhole was dug in July 2013 (Fig 6). It formed a link between the Abbey House drains and a large manhole under the adjacent part of Flagstaff Road. This work was funded by Taylor Wimpey and the contractors were Anderson Group. The trench was approximately 1 m wide, 4 m long and 3 m deep.
- 5.5 In the yard area to the south of Abbey House (Fig 6), trenches for services were dug serving both Abbey House (Plots 1- 2) and the terraced houses (Plots 3-7). The trenches again varied in size, with those for drains being the deepest, at up to 2.6 m deep.
The outbuildings, including the former stable and carriage accommodation, on the south side of the paved yard, were renovated. One of the outbuildings was extended and converted into garages. This involved the digging of three small trenches, approximately 1.3 m long and up to 1 m deep, at its northern end. Subsequently a row of garages was built between the outbuildings and the terraced houses. Several small modern single-storey structures on the site were demolished.
- 5.6 Groundworks for the row of five terraced houses (Plots 3-7; Fig 7) started in February 2014. The houses were constructed on piled foundations, and the pile design and piling methodology were designed to minimise the impact on the archaeological deposits (WSI 2012, Appendix 1). These measures were agreed with the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments and with CBCAO. Initially, ground reduction by machine took place to a depth of between 300 and 600 mm over an area measuring approximately 40 m east-west by 15 m north-south. Before piling started, a piling mat, 400-700 mm thick, was laid down over the stripped area.

Subsequently, a number of service trenches were dug to the north and south of Plots 3-7. These were connected to the service trenches in the yard area to the west. The trenches varied in depth from approximately 800 mm to 1.4 m deep, the upper 400-500 mm of which consisted of modern make-up and the piling mat.

- 5.7 Work also started in February 2014 on the foundation trench for an east-west boundary wall along part of the southern edge of the site (Fig 7). The foundation trench was approximately 42 m in length, 900 mm wide, and 1.3-1.5 m deep. This work was funded by Taylor Wimpey and the contractors were Newton Brickworks and D A Cant Ltd.
- 5.8 In March 2014, the foundation trench for a north-south boundary wall was dug along part of the eastern edge of the site, to the west of the abbey gatehouse (Figs 1 & 2). This wall replaced a derelict and overgrown stretch of brick wall of probable 19th-century date. The derelict wall lay immediately to the east of a large mound of earth, approximately 1 m high. Initially the remains of the 19th-century brick wall were removed and the eastern edge of the mound was cut back by about a metre. Subsequently, ground reduction took place over a north-south strip several metres wide, to a depth of between 200 and 400 mm. The foundation trench was then dug into the stripped area, and was 900 mm wide, 1.5 m deep and 13.8 m long. This work was funded by Taylor Wimpey and the contractors were Newton Brickworks and D A Cant Ltd.
- 5.9 The groundwork was monitored by CAT staff during intermittent site visits. Machining of the deeper trenches in the more archaeologically sensitive areas was monitored continuously. The machining was carried out using a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket. CAT staff were given time by the contractors to investigate and record any archaeological remains uncovered, and to collect up the finds unearthed. On health and safety grounds, the recording of archaeological deposits in the deeper trenches had to be done from the modern ground level looking down into the trenches. Trenches where no significant archaeological remains were found are not usually shown on plan or mentioned in the text.
- 5.10 Individual records of archaeological contexts, such as layers or features, as well as finds, were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets. Site plans were usually drawn at 1:20 and sections at 1:10. Standard record shots of the site and of individual contexts were taken on a digital camera. Further details of the recording methods used can be found in the WSI (WSI 2012), and in the CAT document *Policies and procedures* (CAT 2014).

6 Results

- 6.1 The natural subsoil consisted of brownish-yellow gravelly sand (Layer or L4). This was capped in places by shallow pockets of pale brown cover loam. The depth of the natural subsoil varied across the site, from approximately 450 mm to 1.5 m below the modern ground level. Over the southern part of the site, the natural subsoil lay roughly 700 mm to 1 m below the modern ground level (Sx 2, Fig 3; Sx 6, Fig 9). In the central part of the site, it was approximately 1-1.12 m deep (Sx 3, Fig 9). In the north-eastern part of the site, prior to ground reduction, the natural subsoil lay 1.3 m to 1.5 m below the modern ground level (Sx 1, Fig 2). However, in the north-western corner of the site, outside the abbey precinct, the natural subsoil lay only 700 mm below the modern ground level. In general the natural subsoil seemed to be shallower along the western side of the site, in places only 450 mm deep, compared to the central and eastern parts of the site.

6.2 Roman remains

- 6.2.1 No definite pre-Roman or Roman features or layers were identified on the site during the watching brief. Some of the earliest deposits that were uncovered, such as a dump layer containing oyster shells (L7) just above the natural subsoil (L4) to the south-east of Abbey House, were largely undated. However it seems more likely that these early deposits were medieval rather than Roman in date, and are discussed as such below.
- 6.2.2 A quantity of residual Roman finds, including pottery and brick/tile, was recovered from post-Roman contexts.

6.3 Post-Roman topsoil (Figs 2, 3 & 9)

- 6.3.1 Extensive deposits of greyish-brown post-Roman topsoil were uncovered over much of the site. These deposits were probably comparable to the layers of 'dark earth' excavated

in Colchester town centre (CAR 3, 92). However, the post-Roman topsoil at Abbey House tended to be slightly lighter and browner in colour than the 'dark earth' in the town centre.

- 6.3.2** In the foundation trench dug by the contractors in the north-eastern corner of the site, a layer of brownish topsoil (L9; Sx 1, Fig 2) was uncovered. It sealed the natural subsoil (L4) and was approximately 300-400 mm thick. It was cut by probable medieval features F15 and F16, as well as by the abbey precinct wall F17. This layer was sandier than the post-Roman topsoil over most of the site. No dating evidence was recovered from L9, but it seems likely that it was post-Roman, and perhaps largely pre-Conquest, in date. It possibly equates with the lower part of the post-Roman topsoil (L5) encountered elsewhere on the site.
- 6.3.3** The deposits of post-Roman topsoil (L5) uncovered on the site varied in thickness, but were typically between 300 mm and 450 mm thick (Sx 1, Fig 2; Sx 2, Fig 3; Sxs 3 & 6, Fig 9). In a few places, L5 appeared to be up to about a metre thick, but this possibly included the backfill of post-Roman pits. The topsoil (L5) contained post-Roman finds, such as peg-tile. It probably accumulated throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods.
- 6.3.4** The post-Roman topsoil (L5) tended to be lighter and more brownish in colour than the modern topsoil (L1). In places, L5 and L1 merged into each other, while elsewhere they were separated by post-medieval and/or later deposits.

6.4 Abbey precinct wall (Figs 1, 2 & 4)

- 6.4.1** The probable remains of the foundations along both the northern and western sides of the former abbey precinct were exposed during the watching brief. In the north-eastern corner of the site, the inner face of the precinct wall was exposed in a contractor's trench (F17; Fig 2). This stretch of wall, along the northern side of the former abbey precinct, had largely been rebuilt in brick in the 19th century and is not scheduled. The brick wall rested on a rubble foundation, which was just over a metre deep. The upper 800 mm of the foundation consisted of a whitish mortar with fragments of stone and brick, and was probably 19th century in date. The lower 220 mm of the foundation was quite different. It was constructed of stone in a pale brownish mortar. No brick fragments were observed in this part, although it was not possible to examine the foundation in detail. It was perhaps the remains of the foundation for the medieval precinct wall.

A short distance to the east of the site, the north face of the former abbey precinct wall was exposed at the southern boundary of 33, St John's Green in 2010 (CAT Report 548). The probable foundation of the medieval precinct wall was identified beneath the later brick wall.

- 6.4.2** During machine-trenching close to the north-western corner of Abbey House, part of a north-south foundation (F3; Fig 4) was exposed. The foundation was uncovered in the side of a trench for a manhole, and only its western 400 mm or so was visible. It was traced for about a metre from north to south. The western edge of F3 lay approximately 1.6 m from the west wall of Abbey House, but its eastern edge lay beyond the limits of the trench. The top of F3 lay approximately 650-700 mm below the modern ground level. The bottom of F3 was not reached, but it was at least 1.35 m deep. That is, F3 extended down at least 2 m below the modern ground level.

The foundation was constructed of stone, mainly septaria, with some fragments of brick/tile, set in pale brown mortar. In the east section of the trench, up to three courses of brick/tile fragments were visible on the top of the foundation. These fragments were approximately 50 mm thick and looked like re-used Roman material. However it was not possible to examine any of the brick/tile closely. It could not therefore be confirmed whether it was all reused fragments of Roman brick/tile, or whether some was later in date.

The foundation F3 probably formed part of the abbey precinct wall extending along the western side of the abbey precinct. The exact position of this wall had not previously been recorded on the Abbey House site. The foundation F3 lines up fairly well with the western stretch of the precinct wall immediately to the south of the site (Fig 1).

6.5 ?Medieval foundations F15 and F16 (Figs 1-2; Photo 1)

- 6.5.1** In the north-south foundation trench that was dug by the contractors for a boundary wall in the north-eastern corner of the site, the remains of two possible medieval foundations (F15 & F16) were uncovered. Both features extended east-west, and they were adjacent

to one other. They lay approximately 850 mm below the modern ground level, after some initial ground reduction had taken place. Both cut through a layer of probable post-Roman topsoil (L9) into the natural subsoil L4. They were sealed by a layer containing demolition and/or robbing debris (L8). Due to the depth of the trench, and the proximity of a large mound immediately to the west, it was not possible to examine F15 and F16 in detail. The stratigraphical relationship between the two features was not clarified, although there were slight indications that F16 was earlier than F15.

- 6.5.2** The foundation F16 was approximately 450 mm wide and 300 mm deep. It consisted of a friable, whitish mortar with fragments of stone, which were mainly septaria. A few pieces of brick/tile were also observed, and these appeared to be reused Roman. This feature was probably the intact foundation of a medieval wall, although it remains a possibility that the friable mortar was compacted demolition and/or robbing debris.
- 6.5.3** The foundation F15 was approximately 1 m wide and lay immediately to the north of F16. It extended below the bottom of the trench, and was at least 600 mm deep. The lower fill was at least 400 mm thick and consisted of fragments of stone set in brownish-yellow loamy sand. The stone was mainly septaria and greensand, with the latter perhaps robbed from the Roman circus. A few pieces of reused Roman brick/tile were also observed.

The upper fill of F15 was approximately 200 mm thick and was more greyish-brown in colour than the lower fill. As well as pieces of stone and a few fragments of reused Roman brick/tile, the upper fill contained many lumps and flecks of mortar. There appeared to be a few small fragments of *opus signinum* among the mortar. Two roughly-faced blocks of stone were dislodged during machining, and possibly came from the upper fill of F15. They were similar to some of the other pieces of stone found at a higher level in the trench (see section 6.8.2).



Photo 1 Foundations F15 (right) and F16 (left), viewed from the east.

- 6.5.4** Even though the lower fill of F15 was unmortared, it probably formed part of a substantial medieval foundation. Foundations that were largely or partly unmortared are known from both pre-Conquest and post-Conquest contexts in Colchester. For example, foundations of alternating layers of sand and rubble were found at the small Anglo-Saxon church of St John excavated in 1972 in the north-eastern corner of the St John's Abbey grounds (CAR 1, 41-5; CAR 9, 213-5). Comparable post-Conquest examples were excavated at St Mary Magdalen's hospital in 1989 and 1995 (Crossan 2003, 98-111) and Crouched Friars in 2007 (CAT Report 434, 6-7).

The interpretation of the upper fill was not so straightforward. It was possibly a rubbly layer within the foundation, or even part of the wall superstructure that had sunk slightly. Alternatively, and perhaps more likely, it was largely demolition and/or robbing debris. In places, the upper fill of F15 appeared to seal the northern edge of F16.

- 6.5.5** No dating evidence was retrieved from F15 or from F16, and no floor deposits associated with them survived in the trench. The type of construction and stratigraphical context of F15 and F16 suggest that they were probably medieval in date and formed part of one or more buildings within St John's Abbey. They possibly belonged to two successive phases of building on the same site. Perhaps one or both of them formed part of a structure built up against the abbey precinct wall (F17).

Evidence for structures, which were probably associated with the abbey, was found a short distance to the west of F15 and F16 in an evaluation trench (T7 west) in 2007 (CAT Report 405, 3 & 15). This included a stone-and-mortar, north-south wall foundation (2007 F20) approximately 7.5 m to the west of the trench containing F15 and F16 (Fig 1). Also, an east-west robber trench (2007 F17) lay between 18 m and 26 m to the west of the trench with F15 and F16. These structures, as well as F15 and F16, were perhaps the remains of domestic buildings, workshops or associated buildings within the abbey (VCH 9, 303).

6.6 Medieval lime pit (Figs 3 & 7; Photo 2)

- 6.6.1** The remains of a medieval lime pit (F12) were uncovered in the south-eastern part of the site. Initially, the lime pit was exposed in an east-west trench, 900 mm wide, that was dug for the foundation of a boundary wall along the southern edge of the site. Subsequently, more of F12 was revealed in a service trench a couple of metres to the north of the boundary wall.

- 6.6.2** In the foundation trench, the burnt sides of F12 were reached at a depth of 650-700 mm below the modern ground level. The sides were intensely burnt to a reddish colour. The exposed upper edges of F12 in the trench were just over 3.6 m apart. Along the north side of the trench, CAT staff hand-dug a narrow section, 400 mm wide, across F12 (Fig 3; Photo 2). This section was excavated to a depth of approximately 1.5 m below the modern ground level, which was roughly the depth to which the contractors were machine-digging the foundation trench. The bottom of F12 was not reached at this level.

The lime pit was cut into the natural subsoil (L4), and thus the sides consisted mainly of burnt sand. The backfill inside the lime pit was yellowish brown in colour with a slight olive hue, and was fairly sandy. When recording of the narrow hand-dug trench was completed, the full width of the foundation trench was lowered by machine to the required depth.

- 6.6.3** A couple of metres to the north of the foundation trench, a service trench was dug for a drain, to the south of the row of terraced houses (Plots 3-7; Fig 7). The trench was approximately 400 mm wide and 1 m deep, and at a depth of just under 700 mm below the modern ground level, burning was exposed. A short length of burnt edge was also identified, and this probably formed part of the north side of the lime pit. However this could not be confirmed as only a small area was uncovered, and it is possible that the edge was the remains of a raking-out pit associated with F12 or some other feature.
- 6.6.4** A quantity of medieval pottery sherds was recovered from the backfill of F12. These were broadly dated to the 12th-13th century, and included some quite large fragments as well as a number of rim sherds. The more closely-dated sherds perhaps indicate that F12 went out of use in the late 12th or early 13th century. Among the other finds from F12 were a piece of peg-tile and some animal bone fragments. There were also small quantities of residual Roman pottery sherds and Roman brick/tile fragments. In addition a single residual hand-made Anglo-Saxon sherd, of probable 6th to 8th-century date, was found, and a post-medieval sherd that was probably intrusive.
- 6.6.5** Small quantities of mollusc shells were observed in the backfill of F12. Shells would have formed the raw material used in the roasting process (CAR 3, 30). A few shells were hand-picked on site, and more were recovered from a soil sample (15) taken from the backfill in the hand-dug section. The mollusc remains consisted mainly of oyster shells, although some other shells, including cockles, mussels and whelks, were also recorded. The identifiable shell fragments from the soil sample (15) were approximately 91% oyster shell by weight and 64% by fragment count (further details in Table 2 in Appendix 2). A few traces of lime were also observed in the backfill.

6.6.6 The lime pit was presumably dug during a phase of building or rebuilding at St John's Abbey. Lime pits have been found elsewhere within the grounds of St John's Abbey (CAR 1, 41-2; CAT Report 438, 12). It is possible that at least some of the lime pits within the grounds were in use during the rebuilding of the abbey after the major fire of AD 1133 (VCHE 9, 303; Crummy 2001, 149). Lime pits of 12th-13th century date have also been found on several sites within the walled area of medieval Colchester (eg CAR 3, 86-7; CAR 6, 123, 138-9).



Photo 2 Medieval lime pit F12, viewed from the south-east.

6.7 Other possible medieval deposits (Figs 4, 5, 6, 7 & 9)

6.7.1 A thin distinctive dump layer (L7; Figs 6 & 9) was observed in several service trenches in the area to the south-east of Abbey House. This deposit was characterised by the large number of oyster shells that it contained. It was approximately 100-200 mm thick, and was greyish-brown in colour, often with an olive hue. It lay at or near the bottom of the post-Roman topsoil (L5), and just above the natural subsoil (L4). The depth at which it was reached varied from approximately 800 mm to 1.2 m below the modern ground level (Sx 3, Fig 9).

The full extent of L7 was not established, but it was probably more extensive than is shown on Fig 6. It was traced up to about 9 m to the south-east of Abbey House (Plot 2). Immediately to the south of Abbey House, traces of an oyster-rich deposit similar to L7

were observed below the post-Roman topsoil (L5). No firm dating evidence was recovered from L7. Given its proximity to the natural subsoil (L4), L7 could possibly be Roman in date. However, it seems more likely that L7 was medieval. This is perhaps supported by the stratigraphy in the earlier evaluation trenches (eg CAT Report 206, 13-14 & Fig 21). Also, elsewhere in the area to the south and east of Abbey House (Plot 2), concentrations of oyster shells similar to L7 were observed clearly within the lower part of the post-Roman topsoil L5.

- 6.7.2** An olive-coloured layer with abundant oyster shells was also uncovered on the south side of the yard area. It was observed in a small trench that was dug during the conversion of an outbuilding into a garage (a on Fig 6). The oyster-rich deposit lay 650-800 mm below the modern ground level, and sealed a thin spread of charcoal. The natural subsoil L4 was reached in the trench at approximately 900 mm below the modern ground level. This oyster-rich deposit was undated, but it seems likely that it was the same as, or comparable to, L7.
- 6.7.3** A short length of probable stone-and-mortar foundation (F6) was uncovered in a trench for a drain on the eastern side of Abbey House (Fig 5). The foundation extended north-south and was exposed for approximately 600 mm in length. It was 450 mm wide, and was constructed of fragments of stone set in a brownish-yellow mortar. The top of F6 lay roughly 650 mm below the modern ground level, and it extended below the bottom of the trench, which lay at approximately 1 m below the modern ground level. It cut post-Roman topsoil (L5).

No dating evidence was recovered for F6. The absence of brick or peg-tile in the small part of F6 that was exposed perhaps suggests it was more likely to be medieval than post-medieval in date.

- 6.7.4** Traces of several possible foundations were observed in the yard area to the south-east of Abbey House. Part of a ?foundation (F8; Fig 6) was uncovered in the side of a trench close to the south-east corner of Abbey House (Plot 2). The fragment of F8 that was exposed was roughly 900 mm in length and appeared to be cut by later pits to the north. It probably extended north-south, but it was not possible to confirm this and its width was not established. The ?foundation was constructed of stone set in pale brown mortar, with sparse fragments of reused Roman brick/tile. The top of F8 lay roughly 400 mm below the modern ground level, while the bottom lay approximately 1.1 m below the modern ground level and was cut into natural sand (L4).

No dating evidence was recovered for F8, but it seemed likely to be medieval rather than later in date. It was perhaps on roughly the same alignment as F6 (Fig 5), which lay approximately 12.7 m to the north, and so they were possibly associated.

- 6.7.5** There was less convincing evidence for some other post-Roman ?foundations in the vicinity of F8. A couple of metres to the south-west of F8, a possible north-south foundation was uncovered in the bottom of a trench for a water pipe (b on Fig 6). It was approximately 600 mm wide and consisted of a deposit of pale brown mortar with some fragments of septaria and patches of sand. It lay approximately 1 m below the modern ground level. In the sections nearby, some fragments of mortar and stone were observed at a slightly higher level. It was unclear whether these exposures were the remains of foundations or were just patches of redeposited mortary rubble, and there was no firm dating evidence for them.

Another possible foundation or footing was seen in the south section of a trench for a drain, approximately 5.5 m to the south of F8 (c on Fig 6). It measured about 500 mm across, and consisted of a deposit of pale brown mortar and some fragments of stone. The top of this deposit lay approximately 400 mm below the modern ground level and it was only about 200 mm deep. Again, it was unclear if this was a footing/foundation or just a dump of rubble, and it remained undated.

- 6.7.6** A shallow pit (F2) was exposed during machine-trenching in the open tarmaced area to the north-west of Abbey House (Fig 4). The northern edge of the pit was initially uncovered in a 1.6 m square trench for a manhole, and more of F2 was observed as a 650 mm wide trench was dug southwards from the manhole. The pit F2 measured roughly 2 m across, from north to south, and was approximately 400 mm deep. In the bottom of the pit there was a light greyish-brown deposit, 100-150 mm thick, containing a large number of oyster shells, as well as some fragments of animal bone (Sx 4, Fig 9). This lower fill was sealed by a brownish-yellow sandy deposit, approximately 250-300 mm thick. This upper backfill was possibly largely redeposited natural sand, as the pit was cut

into the natural subsoil L4. The top of F2 lay approximately 700 mm below the modern ground level, and it was sealed by a thin layer of post-Roman topsoil (L5).

The pit lay just outside the precinct of St John's Abbey. This area had probably been terraced in recent times. No dating evidence was recovered from F2. Roman as well as later features have previously been found in this area (CAT Report 630). There appeared to be patches of post-Roman topsoil within the backfill of the pit, and it seems more likely that F2 was medieval or later, rather than Roman, in date.

- 6.7.7** In a service trench for drains, on the southern side of the row of terraced houses (Plots 3-7), part of a pit (F19) was uncovered (Fig 7). It had a dark greyish-brown fill containing many oyster shells, and was probably at least 1.5 m across east-west (Sx 5, Fig 9). The top of F19 lay approximately 700 mm below the modern ground level, and the bottom of F19 lay just below the base of the trench at approximately 1.35 m below the modern ground level.

A few finds were recovered from F19 during machining. They included a medieval potsherd, a small piece of ?peg-tile, and some Roman finds, as well as a modern glass shard that was probably intrusive. It seems likely that the Roman finds were residual, and that F19 was medieval or later in date.

6.8 Deposits and finds associated with the demolition of the medieval abbey (Figs 1-2; Photos 1, 3-8)

- 6.8.1** The probable medieval foundations (F15 & F16) in the north-eastern corner of the site were sealed by a greyish-brown deposit (L8; Sx 1, Fig 2; Photo 1) that contained some demolition debris. This included fragments and flecks of mortar, as well as pieces of stone, slate, peg-tile, and other fragments of brick/tile that were probably reused Roman. This layer was approximately 200-250 mm thick, and was fairly similar to the post-Roman topsoil (L5), but with more mortar fragments and other inclusions. It lay approximately 600 mm below the modern ground level, after some initial ground reduction had taken place.

Although L8 was not closely dated, it probably included debris from the post-Dissolution demolition and/or robbing of structures within the former St John's Abbey; notably the buildings associated with the foundations F15 and/or F16.

- 6.8.2** Also in the north-east corner of the site, approximately 70 pieces of stone, most of them worked, were retrieved during machine-trenching for the foundation of a boundary wall. Photographs of a selection of the stones are given below (Photos 3-7).



Photo 3 A selection of the stone fragments recovered during machine-trenching.

Because they were unearthed during machining, it was often difficult to attribute individual fragments to particular deposits. Before trenching started, the eastern edge of the large mound of earth, immediately to the west of the trench, was cut back by a metre

or so. During the earthmoving, some stone fragments were recovered from the base of the mound, where several had been used to form a low retaining wall. However most of the stone fragments came from the post-Roman topsoil (L1 & L5; Sx 1, Fig 2) in the upper 500-600 mm of the trench. A few fragments came from lower down in the trench, up to about a metre in depth. These pieces came from the layer containing demolition debris L8 and possibly from the upper fill of foundation F15.

The assemblage of stone fragments included some 20-25 carved pieces. Many of these were decorated with various types of moulding (Photos 4-5). One moulded piece of stone had a rectangular dowel hole in one side (Photo 4 left).



Photo 4 Examples of stones with carved mouldings.

Left: a dowel hole can be seen in the side of the lower stone.



Photo 5 Further pieces of stone with carved mouldings.

Among the other carved stones were several plain, rounded pieces, perhaps derived from engaged columns (Photo 6). There were also four large sections of guttering. These were approximately 600 mm long, 300 mm wide by 200-230 mm deep (Photo 7).



Photo 6 Rounded stone fragments, perhaps from engaged columns.



Photo 7 Four sections of stone guttering.

The remaining stones included approximately 10 rectangular setts. These looked as if they were possibly post-Dissolution, perhaps even Victorian or later, in date. Some of the stones were only lightly worked and others showed no clear evidence of working.

It was unclear how the stone fragments became incorporated into the post-medieval and later deposits in this part of the site. Many, including the carved pieces, probably originally derived from buildings in St John's Abbey. The discovery of foundations F15 and F16, as well as the remains found nearby in 2007, show that abbey buildings existed in this part of the site, and the stones possibly came from them. Alternatively they could have been selected from buildings elsewhere within the abbey precinct, such as the abbey church and/or the chapter house. It is possible that the stones had been reused in a post-medieval building. Remains of a post-Dissolution building were uncovered a short distance to the east in 2007 (CAT Report 405, 3-4). This building appears to be recorded on Speed's map of 1610, but is not shown on Morant's map of 1748. It is tempting to

suggest that it was demolished around the time of the Siege of Colchester in 1648 (CAT Report 405, 15). The stones possibly derived from this building and/or other structures damaged during the siege.

Some stone fragments had clearly been unearthed and moved in recent times, including those in the low retaining wall at the base of the large mound. Also, several fragments had been formed into a garden seat (Photo 8), presumably in modern times. The seat is situated on top of the mound to the west of the trench, and incorporates a section of stone guttering 1.3 m long, supported by two carved stone blocks.

It is hoped to prepare a separate, more detailed report on the stones in the garden, in conjunction with those found recently on the Flagstaff site to the south.



Photo 8 Carved stone fragments formed into a garden seat.

6.9 Post-medieval well (Figs 4 & 10; Photo 9)

6.9.1 The remains of a circular well (F1) were revealed in the area to the west of Abbey House (Plot 2). The well was initially uncovered during ground reduction, and was further exposed in two machine-cut service trenches. Overlying the remains of the well was an irregular layer of unfroged bricks, which were unmortared and loose.

The total external diameter of the well was approximately 2 m, with an internal diameter of roughly 1.5 m. The sides of the well were constructed of stone and tile set in a hard, pale brown mortar, and were approximately 250 mm wide. The tile was mainly peg-tile, although some fragments of reused Roman brick/tile were also observed. The stone was mainly septaria. The well was backfilled with dark greyish-brown soil. The remains of the well extended below the bottoms of the contractors trenches. The deeper of these trenches was dug to a depth of just under 3 m below the modern ground level, after the initial ground reduction had taken place. The deposits that the well was cut into consisted mainly of the natural subsoil (L4), although the upper half metre or so was post-Roman topsoil (L5). A possible construction trench was observed on the southern side of F1. It extended down about a metre below the top of F1, and appeared to be backfilled with redeposited natural sand and gravel.

6.9.2 An inscribed stone (Photo 9) is set into the west wall of Abbey House, adjacent to F1. It reads: '20 Feet in Front of this Stone is a Well 60 Feet deep which being in a decayed State was Arched over in the Year 1797'. The stone measures approximately 600 mm by 400 mm, and is at first floor level. 'Arched over' presumably refers to the practice of building a semi-circular brick dome over the mouth of a well. This technique offers a

relatively easy way of making a well safe without having to fill it in. The stone must have been removed from a previous structure on the site and then rebuilt into Abbey House. The well was possibly backfilled and consolidated around the time that Abbey House was built. The flimsy layer of bricks that overlay F1 perhaps derived from the 18th-century cap.

- 6.9.3** The well appears to be shown on the map published in Morant (Morant 1748; Fig 10 above), and possibly also on Chapman and André's map of 1777. It lay just outside the walled precinct of the former St John's Abbey. It was presumably a public well, serving the people living in the St John's Green area. Apart from the large number of peg-tile fragments used in its construction, no dating evidence was recovered from F1. The well was in a 'decayed state' in the late 18th century, but it was unclear when it was built and whether its origins go back into the medieval period.

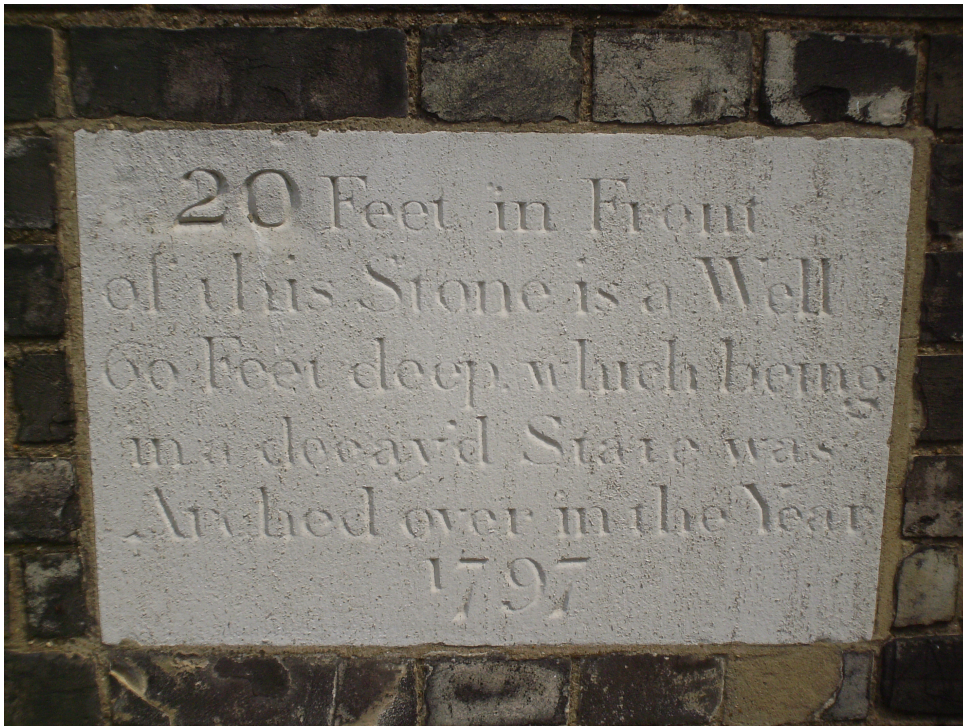


Photo 9 Inscribed stone in the west wall of Abbey House

6.10 Other possible post-medieval deposits (Figs 3, 4, 6, 7 & 9)

- 6.10.1** A number of pits were uncovered on the site that, although not closely dated, were probably post-medieval in date. At the main west entrance to the site on Flagstaff Road, part of a large post-Roman pit (F4; Fig 6) was uncovered during machine-trenching for a manhole. The fill of F4 was greyish-brown in colour, and was fairly similar to the post-Roman topsoil (L5). The north-eastern edge of the pit was identified near the western end of the trench, at approximately 800 mm below the modern ground level. The western side of F4 had probably been destroyed when a large modern manhole was constructed under the adjacent part of Flagstaff Road. It was only possible to briefly examine the upper level of the pit, before shuttering was added to the trench. Subsequently, some limited recording was possible from the modern ground level looking down into the trench as machining continued. The bottom of F4 appeared to be reached in the base of the trench at approximately 3 m below the modern ground level.

Some finds were recovered during machining and probably came from F4. They included pieces of peg-tile, a single sherd of residual Roman pottery, some fragments of animal bone and a few oyster shells.

- 6.10.2** In the south-eastern corner of the site, part of a large post-Roman pit (F11; Fig 7) was uncovered towards the eastern end of the foundation trench for the south boundary wall. During machining, the southern edge of the pit was observed extending down the middle of the trench. The edge was traced for approximately 8.4 m east-west, with most of F11 lying under the north section. The backfill of F11 was dark greyish-brown in colour, and was fairly similar to the overlying post-Roman topsoil (L5). Some oyster shells were

observed in F11. The top of the feature lay 650-700 mm below the modern ground level, and in the north section F11 extended down to about 1.3 m below the modern ground level. The trench was dug approximately 1.4 m deep, and F11 was cut into natural sand (L4).

A small quantity of pottery sherds was recovered from F11 during machining. These included a medieval jug handle, as well as several residual Roman sherds. The pit F11 lay immediately to the east of the medieval lime pit F12 (Fig 3). The stratigraphic relationship between F11 and F12 was not confirmed, but F11 was probably later. The medieval sherd possibly derived from F12. It is therefore unclear if F11 was medieval, post-medieval or later in date. Only a small part of F11 was observed, but it was possibly a large post-Roman quarry pit. Several post-Roman quarry pits have previously been found further to the south-east in area B1b (CAT Report 438, 10, 14-15, 18-20).

- 6.10.3** Another large post-Roman feature (F14) was uncovered in the south-eastern part of the site. This pit or ditch lay at the western end of the foundation trench for the boundary wall along the southern edge of this part of the site (Fig 7; Sx 6, Fig 9). The trench in this area was dug by the contractors to a depth of 1.35-1.45 m below the modern ground level. Some investigation by hand below this level was possible by CAT at the eastern edge of F14, but the bottom of the pit/ditch was not reached.

Where investigated, F14 had a greyish-brown, loamy lower fill. This was sealed by a layer of brownish-yellow sand with some greyish-brown patches. This sandy layer was 500-750 mm thick and was reached at a depth of 760-830 mm below the modern ground level. It was perhaps consolidation in the top of F14. A thin rubbly deposit, approximately 130 mm thick, was visible in the south section, sealing the sandy layer.

A small quantity of finds was recovered from the lower fill, including some residual Roman potsherds and pieces of Roman brick/tile, as well as fragments of slate and animal bone. A few oyster shells were also observed in the lower fill. A large number of post-medieval and modern pits and postholes were uncovered in 2002 in evaluation trench BT3 (CAT Report 206, 14-15), the north end of which lay only 5 m to the south of F14. Thus, although the pit/ditch F14 was not closely dated, a post-medieval or later date seems likely.

- 6.10.4** Between F11 and F14, a small, shallow pit (F13; Fig 7) extended into the north section of the foundation trench for the south boundary wall. It extended out from the north section by approximately 400 mm, and measured 840 mm across east-west. It was approximately 400 mm deep, and had a greyish-brown fill that was fairly similar to the overlying post-Roman topsoil (L5). A few oyster shells were observed in the fill. The top of F13 lay approximately 900 mm below the modern ground level, and it was cut into natural sand (L4). This small pit was undated, but, like F14, the presence of a large number of post-medieval and modern pits and postholes in an evaluation trench nearby (CAT Report 206, 14-15) suggests it is likely to be post-medieval or later in date.

- 6.10.5** Also in the south-eastern part of the site, a post-Roman pit (F18; Fig 7) was uncovered during machine-trenching for drains on the south side of the row of terraced houses (Plots 3-7). The pit measured roughly 1.5 m across from east to west, and its fill was dark greyish-brown in colour. The top of F18 lay 700-800 mm below the modern ground level, and the pit extended below the bottom of the trench at approximately 1.25 m below the modern ground level.

A few finds were recovered from F18 during machining. They included several Roman potsherds and a piece of Roman tile, as well as a small modern-looking glass shard. It seems likely that F18 was post-Roman in date, and that the Roman finds were residual. The glass shard was possibly intrusive.

- 6.10.6** A number of other possible pits were recorded on the site during the watching brief. These were not examined in detail and remained largely undated, but were probably post-Roman in date. They included a possible large pit that was observed in service trenches on the east side of Abbey House (Plot 2) (a on Fig 5). It had a greyish-brown backfill and extended below the bottom of the trench at approximately 1.8-1.9 m below the modern ground level. The fill was similar to the post-Roman topsoil (L5) and was possibly just a deeper area of L5.

Similarly, a possible pit or deeper area of post-Roman topsoil (L5) was observed in service trenches, close to the south-west corner of Abbey House (Plot 2) (d on Fig 6). Just under 3 m to the east of this, another probable pit was recorded (e on Fig 6). It had a greyish-brown fill with an olive hue and contained a few oyster shells. It was visible mainly

in the north section and in the bottom of the service trench, which here was at approximately 1.1 m below the modern ground level.

On the south side of the yard to the south of Abbey House, part of another possible pit was uncovered in a small trench that was dug during the conversion of an outbuilding into a garage (f on Fig 6). The pit lay at the southern end of the trench and its greyish-brown fill had an olive hue with a number of oyster shells. The top of the pit was reached at approximately half a metre below the modern ground level, and it extended below the bottom of the trench at 950 mm deep.

- 6.10.7** During the initial machine stripping on the western side of Abbey House, between the house and Flagstaff Road, a spread of whitish mortar fragments and flecks (L6; Fig 4) was uncovered. Only a small patch of L6 was exposed, measuring approximately 850 mm east-west by 400 mm north-south. It was approximately 100 mm thick, and lay roughly 700 mm below the modern ground level. The mortar spread was left *in situ* and was largely undamaged. Presumably it derived from an episode of building or demolition, but its depth suggested it predated the construction of Abbey House. It was perhaps associated with an earlier post-medieval building, or possibly with the demolition of the abbey precinct wall (F3).

6.11 Victorian features (Figs 4, 5, 6 & 7; Photo 10)

- 6.11.1** Part of a large circular brick soakaway (F7; Fig 5) was uncovered during machine-trenching for the foundation of a garden wall to the east of Abbey House (Plot 2). Only the dome-shaped brick capping of the soakaway was exposed and this extended into the west section of the trench. The trench was roughly 1.1 m deep, while the top of the capping was reached at approximately 700 mm below the modern ground level. The capping was constructed of mortared red bricks and was just over 300 mm high. The bricks in the capping measured approximately 225 x 120 x 70 mm and were unfrogged. A hole was knocked in the top of the brick capping by the contractors, and through this it was possible to make some limited observations on the interior of the soakaway.

The internal diameter of the soakaway was 1.6-1.65 m, although its total external diameter remained unclear. The soakaway was constructed of reddish bricks that appeared to be unmortared. They were lighter and more reddish-yellow in colour than the bricks in the capping. It was not possible to examine the soakaway bricks in detail, although they looked slightly longer and narrower than those in the capping. They were probably unfrogged, although it was not possible to confirm this. At the time of discovery, the soakaway was backfilled with a greyish-brown deposit containing brick and mortar fragments. The top of the backfill lay 2.7-2.9 m below the modern ground level.

To the south of F7, part of a linear brick feature was briefly exposed in the bottom of the contractor's trench. The bricks probably formed the top of a brick drain that extended from south-east to north-west into the top of the soakaway. The end of the drain was visible inside the soakaway, on its south-eastern side. The bricks that formed the top of the drain were laid flat with their long edges aligned in the direction of the drain, and they were not mortared together. They were red, unfrogged, and measured 230 mm long by 110 mm wide.

The soakaway and drain were left largely intact in the bottom of the contractor's trench. The bricks used in F7 and the drain were all probably unfrogged, and were perhaps mid-19th century or earlier in date. It seems likely that the soakaway and drain were constructed around the time that Abbey House was built, probably in the 1830s. As the bricks in the capping looked slightly different, it was possibly added some time later. The soakaway, capping and drain appeared to be sealed by a brick foundation (d on Fig 5; see section 6.11.4). This was probably the remains of a garden wall that was shown on later 19th-century OS maps (Fig 10 below).

- 6.11.2** During the digging of a shallow service trench on the eastern side of Abbey House (Plot 2), two brick-lined tanks (F9 & F10; Fig 5) were exposed. The tops of the brick tanks lay only about 200 mm below the modern ground surface. The two tanks were similar to each other, with F10 lying adjacent to and immediately to the south of F9. They were both rectangular in shape and had barrel-vaulted roofs. It was not possible to fully uncover them or to examine either of them in detail, and their external dimensions were not established.

They both had access holes in the roofs, at their western ends. The access hole into F9 was enlarged slightly by the contractors, and they also dislodged a large stone slab that covered it. The stone slab measured 820 x 630 x 90 mm and the damaged access

hole into F9 measured 1.2 m east-west by 600-650 mm north-south. The access hole into F10 remained intact and measured approximately 630 mm east-west by 500 mm north-south. Large stone blocks were set into the northern and southern sides of the access hole into F10. The inner edges of these blocks were bevelled, so that while their upper edges were 500 mm apart, their lower edges were only 380 mm apart. There was no evidence for similar stone blocks in F9. The western edges of the access holes were flush with the internal edges at the western ends of the tanks. These edges lay approximately 1.5 m east of the east wall of Abbey House (Plot 2).

From the access holes it was possible to take rough measurements of the internal dimensions of the tanks. The two tanks were similar in size; 1.9-1.93 m east-west by 1.4-1.45 m north-south. The internal wall surfaces in both F9 and F10 were stained with a thin blackish deposit. The roofs were approximately 250 mm (two brick courses) thick. From the upper surface of the roof to the floor, F9 was roughly 2.1 m deep. It was not possible to examine the floor, which was possibly of brick. There was a thin layer of modern rubble and some water covering the floor. It was less easy to get an accurate measurement for the depth of the floor in F10, but it was at least 1.85 m deep, measured from the upper surface of the roof. Water was visible in the bottom of F10.

A narrow pipe, probably made of lead, protruded slightly into F9, on its western side. It was situated near the top of the tank, by the north-western corner of the access hole. Another pipe, approximately 100 mm in diameter, protruded slightly into F9, on its southern side. This lay near the top of the tank, roughly half a metre from its western end. Inspection of the interior of F10 was more difficult, and no pipes were visible. However it is possible that the pipe visible in the southern side of F9 was an overflow pipe between F9 and F10.

The bricks used in the construction of both F9 and F10 were red and unfrosted, and they were set in whitish mortar. The bricks measured approximately 240 x 115 x 65 mm and were probably mid-19th century in date. The brick tanks were presumably contemporary with each other. Their access holes appear to be shown on an OS map published in 1878 (Fig 10 below), and the tanks were presumably still in use at this time. Whether they were constructed at the same time as Abbey House, or were a later addition, is unclear. It seems likely that the tanks were used to capture and store rainwater.



Photo 10 Access hole into brick tank F10, viewed from the east.

6.11.3 Immediately to the north-west of the row of terraced houses (Plots 3-7), the remains of a small brick structure (F20; Fig 7) were uncovered during the machine-digging of service

trenches. Several brick walls and foundations were exposed, some of which survived at least 750 mm high. The bricks in the walls/foundations were unfrogged, and measured roughly 225 x 110 x 68 mm. Part of a concrete floor was also exposed on the western side of the structure, at approximately 1.1 m below the modern ground level. It was sealed by a dark greyish-brown layer, containing brick rubble and mortar fragments. Some frogged bricks were noted among the rubble. This layer and the walls were sealed by modern topsoil (L1), approximately 200-300 mm thick.

The structure F20 was only partially uncovered, but it was probably rectangular in shape and measured approximately 6.5 m east-west by 4 m north-south. The concrete floor appeared to be sunken slightly below the contemporary ground level. The structure was probably a small outbuilding of Victorian date. A greenhouse is shown in this position on OS maps from the 1870s (Fig 10 below) through at least to the 1920s.

- 6.11.4** The remains of a number of other brick foundations, of probable 19th-century and 20th-century date, were revealed during the groundwork, notably on the eastern side of Abbey House (Fig 5). To the east of Plot 1 there were the remains of a north-south brick foundation (b on Fig 5) and an east-west foundation (c on Fig 5). These probably belonged to an earlier phase of Abbey House (Fig 10 below). Further south, during machine-trenching, a shallow north-south brick foundation was observed approximately 6.5 m to the east of Plot 2 (d on Fig 5). The brick foundation rested on a layer of gravel. It probably belonged to a former garden wall that is shown on later 19th-century OS maps (Fig 10 below).

Not all of the 19th-century and 20th-century foundations and other remains that were recorded during the watching brief are shown on plan or are mentioned in this report. Further details are available in the site archive.

- 6.11.5** A narrow east-west connecting trench was dug by the contractors for a water-pipe to the west of Abbey House (Plot 1). Part of a substantial rubble foundation (a on Fig 4) was exposed beneath the existing brick west wall of Abbey House. The upper 600 mm of the foundation was of hard stone-and-mortar construction. The lower part of the foundation consisted of stone fragments set in a looser, more sandy deposit. It was at least 400 mm deep, but continued below the bottom of the service trench. The stone was mainly septaria blocks. A piece of brick was observed in the lower part of the foundation. This was possibly a fragment of post-medieval brick.

It was unclear whether the rubble foundation was contemporary with the construction of Abbey House or was the remains of an earlier structure, that was perhaps reused during the building of Abbey House.

- 6.11.6** A feature (g on Fig 6) was observed in a trench close to the south-west corner of Abbey House (Plot 2). The feature consisted of a trench backfilled with reddish-yellow gravelly sand containing some large lumps of septaria. It extended north-south and was approximately 700 mm wide. The top of the feature lay only about 500 mm below the modern ground level, and it extended below the bottom of the trench at 1.1-1.2 m below the modern ground level. During machine-trenching it was unclear what this sand and stone-filled feature was, but its stratigraphic context indicated that it was probably fairly modern.

A similar deposit was uncovered approximately 10 m to the south, in the west section of a small trench that was dug during the conversion of an outbuilding into a garage (h on Fig 6). It consisted of reddish-yellow gravelly sand with large fragments of septaria and a few fragments of mortar. The deposit extended from 300 mm to 800 mm below the modern ground level. It was cut into post-Roman topsoil (L5) and natural subsoil (L4). This deposit was probably the foundation for the east wall of the existing store building immediately to the west of the trench.

This store building is shown on later 19th-century OS maps (eg Fig 10 below). They also show that the south end of Abbey House did not extend as far south as it does today, and that a short length of north-south perimeter wall formerly extended from its south-west corner. Perhaps the sand and stone-filled feature (g) was part of the foundation for this wall.

6.12 World War Two air-raid shelter (Figs 5 & 8; Photos 11-15)

- 6.12.1** A large modern concrete structure (F5) was investigated on the eastern side of Abbey House. Initially, what turned out to be part of a narrow corridor was exposed during the digging of a trench for a drain. The roof of the corridor was reached at a depth of only about 300 mm below the modern ground surface. It was necessary for the contractors to

break out part of the concrete roof and sides of the corridor (Photo 11), in order to lay the drain in the trench, which here was approximately 400 mm wide and up to 1.2 m deep. Through the hole that was broken-out by the contractors, it was possible for CAT staff to enter the corridor and investigate briefly the rest of the concrete structure F5, prior to the backfilling of the service trench.

6.12.2 The corridor was approximately 800 mm wide internally, and roughly 1.3 m wide externally. It measured approximately 2.4 m from the floor to the ceiling. The roof and sides were 250-300 mm thick and were constructed of reinforced concrete. The corridor extended from a blocked-up doorway in the cellar below Abbey House (Plot 1) for approximately 7 m in a south-easterly direction. It led into the south-western corner of a large rectangular chamber that was probably a Second World War air-raid shelter. A layer of rubble lay on the floor of the corridor (in addition to that derived from the breaking-out by the contractors). This rubble was thickest at the Abbey House end of the corridor.

Prior to the backfilling of the contractor's trench, it was possible to record what was probably the construction trench for the corridor (Fig 5). On the north side, the edge of the construction trench lay approximately 800 mm from the corridor, and parallel to it. On the south side, the edge lay about a metre from the corridor. The construction trench had a greyish-brown backfill and was cut into natural sand (L4). The latter lay at a depth of approximately 1.1 m below the modern ground level, and was sealed by post-Roman topsoil (L5). Further traces of the construction trench for F5 were subsequently observed in a couple of shallower service trenches that were dug by the contractors closer to Abbey House.



Photo 11 The corridor leading into the air-raid shelter, viewed from the north-west.

6.12.3 The large rectangular chamber was aligned from south-west to north-east and survived largely intact (Photo 12). It measured internally approximately 8.2 m by 4.5 m, and was the same height, 2.4 m, as the corridor. Like the corridor, it was constructed of concrete,

presumably reinforced. The internal surface of the concrete was fairly smooth, suggesting that fair-faced shuttering boards were used in its construction (Brown *et al* 1996, 18-19). On the ceiling, a concrete beam extended down the long axis of the chamber (Fig 8). It was squarish in profile, approximately 300 mm across. It was supported by two concrete columns, which were approximately 300 mm square. The columns were roughly 2.5 m apart, and it was a similar distance from each of the columns to the end walls.

As well as the entrance from the corridor in the south-western corner of the air-raid shelter, there was another entrance/exit in the north-eastern corner. This was choked with rubble and it was not possible to fully investigate it. It led off in a south-easterly direction for at least 2 m, presumably to steps leading up into the garden. The rubble blocking this entrance consisted mainly of lumps of concrete, which perhaps derived from the demolition of the outer end of the entrance. There was no clear evidence for the entrance in the garden, although a slight dip was observed in the surface of the lawn in its projected position.



Photo 12 The interior of the air-raid shelter, viewed from the south-west.

The concrete beam on the ceiling, with the supporting columns, and the blocked entrance in the north-east corner, are visible.

6.12.4 The remains of internal fittings survived inside F5, including narrow, rounded metal-trunking for electricity cables, along with junction boxes and light switches. Some of these survived *in situ*, while elsewhere they were damaged and not in place, although their original positions were visible as marks on the walls (eg Photos 13-14).

Also, the remains of wooden fittings survived on the floor of the chamber, as well as among the rubble in the corridor and the chamber. Much of the wood was decayed and not easily identifiable, but presumably included the remains of such things as benches, shelves, doors and door frames etc.

6.12.5 Inside the main chamber, graffiti were observed on the walls in several places. The graffiti includes both words and drawings, and are made in different colours, perhaps using crayons. The writing is faint and barely legible, and is written in German.

The graffiti was most noticeable on the long wall nearest Abbey House. One section, at the south-western end of this long wall, has a drawing showing a flight of thirteen steps, with what looks like a vertical post at the top (Photo 13). Above the steps is an inverted horseshoe with the number '13' written inside it. Adjacent to the steps are the German words 'Dreizehn Stufen Bar' ('thirteen steps bar').

There was more graffiti towards the middle of the long wall nearest Abbey House (Photo 14). It consists of the words 'Für jeden etwas', which means 'something for everyone'. Below this is some musical notation.

A possible explanation of these graffiti is given in section 8.10.



Photo 13 The '13 steps bar' graffiti inside the air-raid shelter.

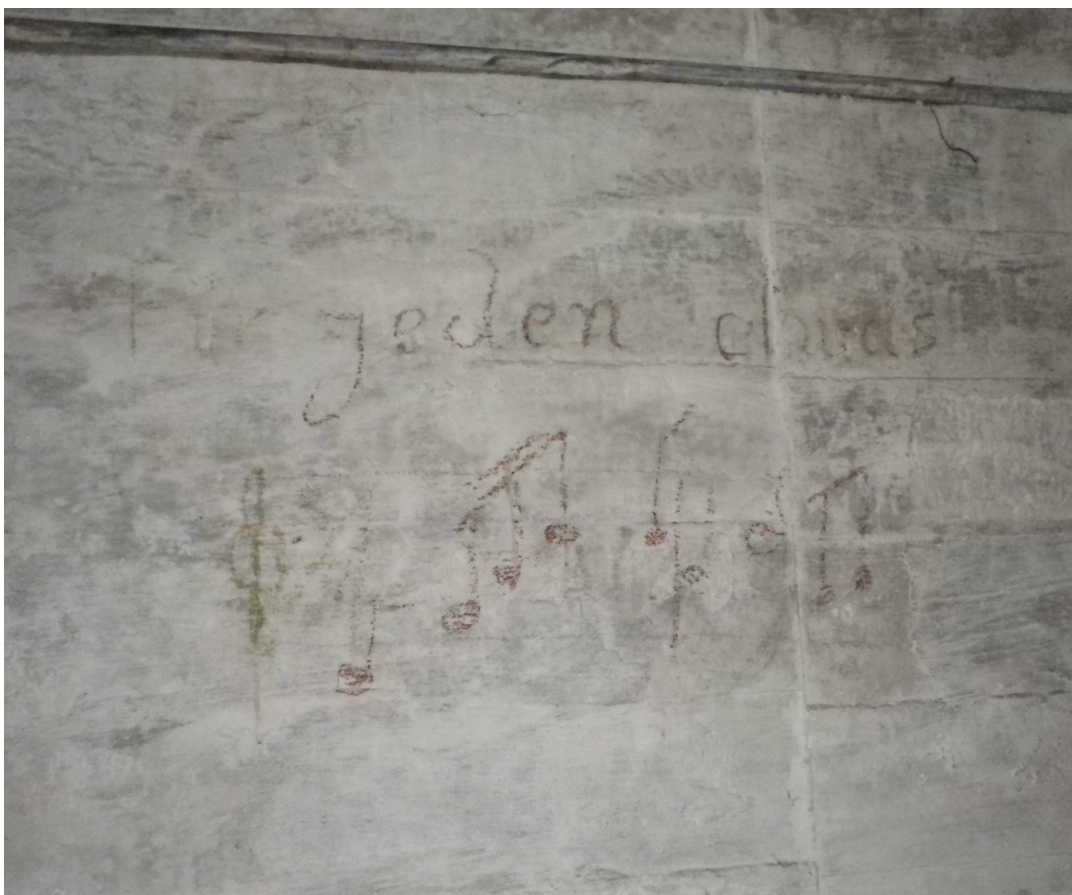


Photo 14 The 'something for everyone' graffiti inside the air-raid shelter.

There were also some symbols on the more northerly end wall of the air-raid shelter (Photos 12 & 15), although their significance is unclear.

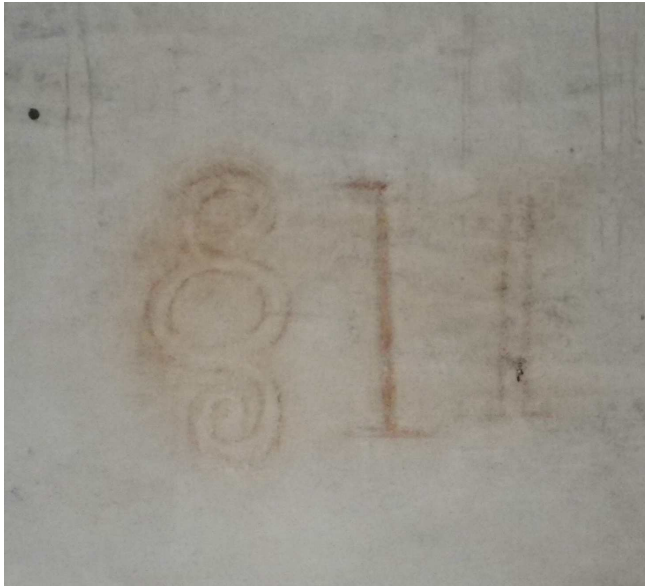


Photo 15
The graffiti on the northern end wall of the air-raid shelter

6.12.6 The air-raid shelter differed, in terms both of its size and its design, from other WW2 air-raid shelters recorded by CAT on former Colchester Garrison sites. These other air-raid shelters were narrower and were characterised by long rows of seating down either side (CAT Report 467). The air-raid shelter F5 was presumably built for the military personnel stationed in Abbey House, which included senior officers within the garrison. This perhaps explains why it was more spacious than the other recorded examples, which were built for soldiers of lower ranks, their families, and for civilian workers (CAT Report 467, 23-4). It is unclear at what point during the war F5 was built. When the entrance from the cellar below Abbey House was blocked up is also uncertain. The air-raid shelter is not shown on a detailed map of Colchester Garrison in 1949 (CAT Report 97, fig 35).

Apart from the breaking-out of part of the corridor by the contractors, the air-raid shelter was not further damaged during the redevelopment. In suitable conditions, the outlines of the air-raid shelter show up well as parch marks in the lawn. These are visible, for example, on recent aerial photographs, such as those available in Google Maps.

6.13 Other modern remains (Figs 2, 3 & 9)

6.13.1 Extensive deposits of dark greyish-brown modern topsoil (L1) were encountered on the site. These lay at, or close to, the modern ground level. Prior to the recent work starting, much of the eastern part of the site was laid to lawn, including the area on which the row of terraced houses (Plots 3-7) was subsequently built. The modern topsoil L1 varied in depth, but was typically 300-400 mm thick. It tended to be darker and more greyish in colour than the earlier deposits of post-Roman topsoil (L5) (Sx 1, Fig 2; Sx 2, Fig 3; Sx 6, Fig 9). In places, L1 and L5 merged into, or were indistinguishable from, each other. Elsewhere they were separated by post-medieval and/or later deposits.

6.13.2 Layers of modern dump and/or make-up (L3) were observed in a number of trenches across the site. These deposits varied in thickness from approximately 200 mm to 350 mm. They were mainly mixed, greyish-brown deposits, with abundant inclusions, such as fragments of brick, peg-tile, mortar, concrete and slate (Sx 3, Fig 9). Other modern dump/make-up layers consisted mainly of rubble, clay and/or gravel (Sx 4, Fig 9).

6.13.3 A variety of modern hard surfaces (L2) existed on the site before the redevelopment started. Most of these were of tarmac or concrete. There was a surface of Staffordshire blue block paving in the yard area to the south of Abbey House. The various modern surfaces were typically between 120 mm and 250 mm thick, including the associated underlying base layers, which were usually of gravel or brick rubble (Sxs 3-4, Fig 9).

7 Finds

7.1 Introduction

A quantity of finds was recovered during the archaeological watching brief. Where appropriate the finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context, in line with the recommendations in *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b). A small find is described in section 7.2. An explanation of the pottery fabric and form codes used is given in section 7.3. The other finds, as well as brief descriptions of the pottery, are listed by context in Table 2 in Appendix 2. Further details are available in the site archive.

7.2 Small find

by Stephen Benfield

SF 1 (8). Unstratified, from spoil heap. Lead ball. Slightly irregular sphere with three, deep linear gouges at different angles to each other. Presumed to be a firearm ball, but worn and lacking any indication of a mould line or sprue. Diameter approximately 17 mm, weight 30 g. Post-medieval.

The lead ball was found during the metal-detecting of a spoil heap. It is likely that the spoil derived from a trench on the eastern side of Abbey House. The ball was probably used as musket shot (CAR 5, 85). It perhaps dates from the Siege of Colchester in 1648, as its findspot was fairly close to St John's Abbey gatehouse, where action took place during the siege (CAT 1998).

7.3 Pottery fabric and form codes

(Identifications by Stephen Benfield)

The Roman pottery was recorded using the Colchester Roman fabric type series (CAR 10). Roman pottery vessel forms refer to the Colchester - *Camulodunum* (Cam) - pottery type series (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull 1958). The medieval and post-medieval pottery fabrics refer to Colchester post-Roman fabric type series (CAR 7). Brief descriptions of the pottery found are given in Table 2 in Appendix 2.

Table 1: list of pottery fabrics

| Fabric codes | Fabric name |
|--------------------|---|
| <i>Roman:</i> | |
| AJ | amphorae, Dressel 20 |
| BACG | Central Gaulish samian |
| DJ | coarse oxidised and related wares |
| EA | Nene Valley colour-coated ware |
| GA | BB1: Black-burnished ware, category 1 |
| GB | BB2: Black-burnished ware, category 2 |
| GX | other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares |
| HZ | large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares |
| KX | black-burnished ware (BB2) types in pale grey ware |
| TZ | Colchester mortaria and mortaria imported from the continent |
| <i>Post-Roman:</i> | |
| 1 | Saxon vegetable-tempered ware |
| 13 | Early medieval sandy wares |
| 13S | Shell-dusted sandy ware |
| 20 | Medieval sandy greywares (general) |
| 40 | Post-medieval red earthenware |
| 45 | Stonewares (general) |
| 45C | Raeren stoneware |
| 45M | English (modern) stoneware |

8 Discussion

8.1 The previous archaeological evaluation trenches in the Abbey House area had shown that Roman and medieval remains survived, although they were fairly deeply buried. The evaluation trenches also indicated that there were extensive post-medieval and modern remains on and near the site, but that these were of limited significance. A series of design mitigation strategies was agreed for the Abbey House site, in order to ensure that the impact of the redevelopment on the archaeologically sensitive levels was restricted (WSI 2012, Appendix 1). Where any possibility of damage to these levels remained, the groundworks were monitored by CAT. During the watching brief, significant and well-preserved archaeological remains, particularly of medieval and later date, were investigated and recorded by CAT staff. A quantity of finds was also recovered, although much of this was poorly stratified or unstratified.

8.2 No definite Roman remains were uncovered during the watching brief, although a quantity of residual Roman finds was recovered from post-Roman contexts. This confirmed the conclusions of previous work: that there was no evidence on the site for Roman burials, for substantial Roman buildings, or for a Roman road.

In the earlier evaluation trenches, a few Roman features such as pits, ditches and postholes were found. These, together with the residual finds, suggest that there may have been substantial Roman buildings not too far away, on the southern slope overlooking the Roman town. This 'settlement zone' was perhaps focused on the area to the south-east of the Abbey House site (CAT Report 438, 52 & fig 21). It may be significant that most of the residual Roman finds recovered during the watching brief came from the south-eastern part of the site. Also, a single residual hand-made Saxon sherd, of probable 6th to 8th-century date, was recovered from F12 in this same part of the site during the watching brief. Another hand-made Saxon sherd, of probable 8th or 9th century date, was found nearby in 2002 (CAT Report 206, 15 & 17).

8.3 Probable traces of the medieval foundations of the precinct wall of St John's Abbey were uncovered on both the northern and the western sides of the site. The abbey precinct wall along the northern side of the site was rebuilt in brick in the 19th century. However in a trench in the north-eastern corner of the site, the possible remains of the medieval foundation were observed below the later foundation. The precinct wall along the western side of the abbey grounds had not previously been recorded on the Abbey House site, although it survives above ground immediately to the south of the site. A large north-south foundation (F3), which was recorded close to the north-western corner of Abbey House during the watching brief, was probably the foundation of the precinct wall.

8.4 Also of probable medieval date were two east-west foundations (F15 & F16) that were uncovered in a trench in the north-eastern corner of the site. The larger of the two foundations (F15) was unusual in that it consisted mainly of stone set in sand. Foundations that were largely or partly unmortared are known from both pre-Conquest and early post-Conquest contexts in Colchester. For example, foundations of alternating layers of sand and rubble were found at the small Anglo-Saxon church of St John excavated in 1972 in the north-eastern corner of the St John's Abbey grounds (CAR 1, 41-5; CAR 9, 213-5). Comparable post-Conquest examples were excavated at St Mary Magdalen's hospital in 1989 and 1995 (Crossan 2003, 98-111) and Crouched Friars in 2007 (CAT Report 434, 6-7). It was unclear whether F15 and F16 were parts of one or two buildings, or whether they perhaps formed two successive phases of building on the same site.

In 2007, other building remains, including a foundation and a robber trench, were uncovered in an evaluation trench (T7 west) a short distance to the west of F15 and F16 (CAT Report 405, 3 & 15). The foundations F15 and F16, and the 2007 remains, probably belonged to abbey buildings that were constructed up against or close to the precinct wall. These were perhaps the remains of domestic buildings, workshops or other buildings within the abbey (VCHE 9, 303). Also, traces of foundations that possibly belonged to abbey buildings were uncovered during the watching brief close to Abbey House.

8.5 A medieval lime pit (F12) was partially uncovered in the south-eastern corner of the site. Its shape and depth were not fully established, but it probably conformed to the large circular lime pits found elsewhere in Colchester (eg CAR 3, 86-7; CAR 6, 123, 138-9). A quantity of medieval pottery sherds, of 12th- to 13th-century date, was recovered from the backfill of F12. The more closely-dated sherds perhaps indicate a late 12th- or early 13th-

century date for the abandonment of F12. This is consistent with the dating evidence from the lime pits at Lion Walk and elsewhere.

Other lime pits have been found within the grounds of St John's Abbey (eg *CAR 1*, 41-2; CAT Report 438, 12). They were probably in use during phases of building at the abbey, perhaps including the rebuilding after the major fire of AD 1133 (*VCHE 9*, 303; Crummy 2001, 149).

- 8.6** St John's Abbey was dissolved in 1539. The demolition of the abbey buildings and the robbing of building materials from them probably took place over many years. Only slight evidence for this was found during the watching brief, although some demolition debris was observed in the deposit (L8) that sealed the probable medieval foundations F15 and F16.

Also in the north-eastern corner of the site, an interesting collection of stone fragments was unearthed during machine-trenching. Many of the fragments had carved mouldings and probably originally derived from abbey buildings. It is unclear whether the stones came from buildings in the immediate vicinity of the trench or were selected from buildings elsewhere within the abbey grounds, such as the abbey church and/or the chapter house. Similarly, it is uncertain whether they had been reused in a post-medieval structure. A short distance to the east, the remains of a post-medieval building were uncovered in an evaluation trench (T7 east) in 2007 (CAT Report 405, 3-4, 15). This building appears to be recorded on Speed's map of 1610, but is not shown on Morant's map of 1748. It is tempting to suggest that it was demolished around the time of the Siege of Colchester in 1648 (CAT Report 405, 15). The stones possibly derived from this building and/or from other structures that were damaged during the siege.

During the watching brief, no features were found that were attributable to the Siege of Colchester. However, a lead musket ball was recovered from a spoil heap and possibly dates from the siege.

- 8.7** Among the post-medieval features uncovered during the watching brief was a well (F1), situated between Abbey House and Flagstaff Road. It lay just outside the former abbey precinct and was probably a public well. An inscribed stone, set into the west wall of Abbey House, commemorates the capping of the well in 1797. This stone was presumably removed from an earlier building on the site, and then rebuilt into Abbey House in the 19th century. Perhaps around the same time, the well was backfilled and consolidated. It was described on the inscribed stone as 'being in a decayed state' in 1797, but it is unclear when the well was made and whether its origins go back into the medieval period. The well appears to be shown on Morant's map of 1748, close to a building on the site of Abbey House (Fig 10 above).

Most of the area is shown as not built over on Morant's map and was probably gardens. This is confirmed on later maps, such as Thomas Sparrow's map of Colchester in 1767, Chapman and André's map of 1777, and Cole and Roper's map of c 1805.

- 8.8** Several brick-built features of probable Victorian date were observed during groundwork on the eastern side of Abbey House. They were perhaps constructed and in use during the early years of the house. They included a brick soakaway (F7), two rectangular brick tanks (F9 & F10), and a small brick outbuilding or greenhouse (F20). The access holes in the top of the tanks are shown on an OS map published in 1878 (Fig 10 below). It seems likely that the tanks were used to capture and store rainwater. The greenhouse is also shown on the 1878 map, as well as on early 20th-century OS maps. The remains of a number of other brick foundations, of probable 19th- and 20th-century date, were uncovered close to Abbey House. These foundations, together with an examination of early OS maps, show that Abbey House has been much altered over the years.

The early OS maps also show that much of the site, to the east of Abbey House and its outbuildings, continued to be occupied by gardens. However, the area to the south of the site (GAL Area B1b) was gradually built over, as buildings were constructed within the Flagstaff army compound from the 1860's onwards.

- 8.9** A previously unrecorded World War Two air-raid shelter (F5) was examined briefly by CAT staff on the eastern side of Abbey House. It was probably built for the senior army personnel stationed in Abbey House. In terms of its size and its design, it differed from the other WW2 air-raid shelters recorded by CAT on former Colchester Garrison sites. These other air-raid shelters were narrower and were characterised by long rows of seating down either side. They were built for soldiers of lower ranks, their families, and for civilian workers (CAT Report 467, 23-4), which perhaps explains why they were less spacious

than F5. Large underground shelters, such as F5, were comparatively rare, especially during the early years of the Second World War (Brown *et al* 1996, 71-3).

8.10 A possible explanation for the graffiti in the underground room *by Philip Crummy.*

We have recorded 32 air raid shelters as part of our work on the Colchester Garrison site (CAT Reports 467, 472 & 1033). The underground room at Abbey House doesn't resemble any of them. It also does not appear as one of at least 42 shelters shown on a map of the garrison prepared in 1949 (CAT Report 97, fig 35). Major Vic Freeman, who was billeted at Abbey House as part of the Garrison Headquarters Company, remembers seeing the outline of the buried room as a parch mark in the grass. He rejects the idea that the structure was a type of Cold War era bunker as these were not located at military installations. This accords with its absence on the 1949 map. Major Freeman also pointed out that the room could not have been a shelter for key local civic figures since this would have needed a suite of rooms including a generator room, living quarters and a means of communicating with the outside world. Drawing on his recollections from when he lived in Abbey House and from distant conversations with staff who had been present there during the war, he was confident that the room had been a wartime air-raid shelter for the people who lived and worked there.

Major Freeman suggested that the room was constructed after the outbreak of war rather than in the build-up and that it had been built by German POWs from Berechurch Hall Camp and other detention sites. Apparently POWs caught early in the war were often pacifists and deserters from the Wehrmacht and could be trusted outside of the camps. He could see no reason why the graffiti on the walls of the room could not be ascribed to these German prisoners. Frances Holloway (a German teacher) provided some support for this view when she judged the form of hand-writing to be native German/mainland European.

The piece of music notation on the wall appears to be a tiny fragment of a polka called 'Für jeden etwas' by Miloslav Křás. Katrina Brooks (a pianist and music teacher) believes it is indeed an extract from the score but thinks it was copied on to the wall by someone with limited understanding of musical notation.

So what might this all mean? Here follows a possible explanation. The underground room is a rather special place. It's a tiny time capsule. It seems to provide us with a snapshot of the end of World War 2 which captures a hot topic of the time - the Nuremberg Trials.

The presence of the cabling indicates that the room was not simply an air-raid shelter for the staff working in Abbey House. It was also somewhere, probably incidentally, where people spent periods of time. The flight of thirteen steps is part of a simple sketch showing a set of gallows, since this is the number of steps that they traditionally had. The significance of the number thirteen is emphasised by its appearance inside the inverted horseshoe above the steps and the adjacent somewhat opaque German words 'Dreizehn Stufen Bar' ('thirteen steps bar'). The inverted horseshoe was a talisman which, in the inverted position as here, was thought by some to confine evil spirits and stop them spreading. A variation of this belief, which may be relevant here, is that horseshoes nailed to the coffin of a supposed witch would stop her rising from the dead. In this case, the horseshoe was intended to ensure that people executed on these gallows would not return. The words 'Für jeden etwas' ('Something for everybody) form the title of a tune still played by Austrian brass bands. (It can be easily found on YouTube). The images and words were perhaps written on the walls by a German prisoner of war who was working in Abbey House near the end of World War 2.

So who did the writer have in mind for the gallows? One obvious answer is that it was the high-ranking Germans who were being tried or had just been tried at the first of the Nuremberg trials. These were held between 20 November 1945 and 1 October 1946 and ended with death sentences for ten of the accused. It looks as if he hoped all of them would be hanged when he wrote 'Für jeden etwas' on the wall with the short excerpt from the music underneath.

The trial was the subject of immense world-wide coverage and interest. Soldiers and staff working in the command centre at Colchester Garrison would no doubt have been keenly interested in the outcome. More so might have been pacifist German deserters put to work locally as prisoners of war. The manner in which any death sentences were to be fulfilled had been debated and decided months before the trial had even begun - hence the appearance of the gallows on the walls of the little underground room in Colchester. In the event, the sentences were not to be carried out by a firing squad in the traditional military manner but by hanging the convicted men from gallows. This distinctive means of execution was regarded by the German military as demeaning which is partly why it figured on the wall.

The following is an extract from a contemporary account of the executions written by journalist Kingsbury Smith and published in the *Daily News* on 16th October 1946 (<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/nazi-war-criminals-executed-nuremberg-trials-1946-article-1.2831066>).

Walked 13 Steps to Die.

Three black-painted wooden scaffolds stood inside the gymnasium. Two were used alternately to hang the condemned men individually, while the third was held in reserve.

The 10 once great men in Hitler's Reich that was to have lasted for a thousand years walked up 13 wood steps to a platform eight feet high which also was eight feet square.

Ropes were suspended from a crossbeam supported on two posts.

Only one of the condemned men was brought in at a time. The same procedure was adopted in each case and when the trap was sprung, the prisoners dropped into the interior of the scaffolding, which was boarded up with wood on three sides and shielded by a dark canvas curtain on the fourth.

There are two problems with this interpretation. One is minor and relates to the meaning of the word 'bar' in 'Dreizehn Stufen Bar'. Perhaps it is the crossbeam from which the men were hanged. One of the two posts which supported the beam seems to be shown at the top of the steps to the left.

More important is the date of 'Für jeden etwas'. The Czechoslovakian composer is apparently Miloslav Khás. I say 'apparently' because he was born in 1937 which would be too late for its appearance on a wall in the mid 1940s. Perhaps the explanation is that what we saw in the little underground room of Abbey House was an extract of an earlier version of this polka which Miloslav Khás merely re-arranged later. We have as yet been unable to find out if an earlier version does in fact exist.

9 Abbreviations and glossary

| | |
|------------------|--|
| amphora | large Roman pottery storage jar, used especially for oil and wine |
| AOD | above Ordnance Survey datum point based on mean sea level at Newlyn, Cornwall |
| Bronze Age | period from c 2300 BC to c 750 BC |
| CAT | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| CBC | Colchester Borough Council |
| CBCAA | Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor |
| CBCAO | Colchester Borough Council's Archaeological Officer |
| CIfA | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists |
| CIMS | Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service |
| circus | an arena in which chariot racing was held |
| context | specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made; usually a layer or a feature |
| cover loam | a natural, wind-blown deposit, probably formed towards the end of the last Ice Age |
| dark earth | post-Roman topsoil; probably the result of long-term cultivation, refuse disposal and pit-digging. |
| DBA | desk-based assessment |
| Early Bronze Age | period from c 2300 BC to c 1500 BC |
| Early Saxon | period from c AD 410 to c AD 650 |

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| EHER | Essex Historic Environment Record, held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford |
| feature | an identifiable context, such as a pit, a wall or a posthole |
| GAL | Garrison Alienated Land |
| greensand | a form of sandstone, also known as Kentish Ragstone, imported from south of the Thames |
| <i>imbrex</i> | curved Roman roof tile |
| <i>insula</i> | an area or block within the grid pattern of a Roman town (plural <i>insulae</i>) |
| Late Bronze Age | period from c 1000 BC to c 750 BC |
| Late Neolithic | period from c 3200 BC to c 2300 BC |
| medieval | period from AD 1066 to c AD 1500 |
| Middle Saxon | period from c AD 650 to c AD 850 |
| modern | period from c AD 1850 onwards to the present |
| <i>mortarium</i> | Roman mixing bowl, with grit-roughened interior (plural <i>mortaria</i>) |
| natural | geological deposit undisturbed by human activity |
| Neolithic | period from c 4200 BC to c 2300 BC |
| NGR | National Grid Reference |
| OASIS | Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS |
| <i>opus signinum</i> | Roman 'concrete' with a pinkish appearance due to the addition of brick/tile fragments |
| peg-tile | rectangular roof tile of medieval or later date; intact examples usually have two peg-holes |
| post-medieval | period from c 1500 to c 1850 |
| residual | finds that were deposited earlier than the context in which they were found |
| robber trench | a trench left after the robbing of building materials from a foundation; eg Roman foundations were often robbed in the medieval period |
| Roman | period from AD 43 to c AD 410 |
| RRCSAL | Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London |
| SAM | scheduled ancient monument |
| samian | glossy Roman fine reddish pottery, used mainly as tableware |
| septaria | calcareous, clay concretions found on the Essex and Suffolk coast |
| <i>tegula</i> | flanged Roman roof tile |
| <i>tessera</i> | small ceramic cube used to make Roman tessellated and mosaic floors (plural <i>tesserae</i>) |
| UAD | Urban Archaeological Database, maintained by Colchester and Ipswich Museums |
| U/S | unstratified, ie without a well-defined context |
| WSI | Written Scheme of Investigation |

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Note: all CAT reports (except DBAs) are available online in .pdf format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk/>

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| ClfA | 2014c | <i>Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives</i> |
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11 Acknowledgements

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12 Archive deposition

The archive from the archaeological investigation, including the site records, photographs and finds, will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museums, under accession code COLEM 2013.14, in accordance with *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester & Ipswich Museums* (GIMS 2008b) and *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014c).

13 Appendices

Appendix 1: contents of archive

One A4 document wallet containing:

1 Project management archive

- 1.1 Copy of the WSI produced by RPS on CD
- 1.2 Copy of the heritage statement produced by David Balcombe on CD
- 1.3 Copy of the risk assessment produced by CAT on paper & CD
- 1.4 Site plans provided by the developer on paper & CD

2 Site archive

- 2.1 Attendance register
- 2.2 Context sheets
- 2.3 Site plans/sections on 17 sheets of A4 paper
- 2.4 Site plans/sections on 2 sheet of A3 drafting film
- 2.5 Photographic record sheets
- 2.6 Site photographs on CD
- 2.7 Site diary/notes on 17 sheets of A4 paper
- 2.8 Sundry papers

3 Research archive

- 3.1 Lists of finds, including small finds, on paper & CD
- 3.2 Copies of final report (CAT Report 892) on paper & CD

Not in wallet:

4 Finds archive

- 4.1 One small plastic box containing the small find
- 4.2 One museum box containing the other finds

Appendix 2: list of finds by context

All weights are in grammes. For the pottery fabric and form codes, see section 7.3 (identifications by Stephen Benfield). The glass is clear, unless stated otherwise. The fabrics of the ceramic building materials are reddish in colour, unless stated otherwise.

Table 2: list of finds by context

| Context | Finds no | Qty | Description | Wt (g) | Comments |
|---------|----------|-----|--|--------|--|
| F1 | 3 | 6 | peg-tile fragments | 1,913 | all with mortar adhering; 3 joining fragments 166mm wide x 11mm thick; 1 large fragment 163mm wide x 11-2mm thick |
| F2 | 1 | 3 | animal bone fragments | 107 | |
| F4 | 4 | 1 | Roman pottery sherd | 7 | Fabric GX |
| | | 2 | peg-tile fragments | 135 | 1 with mortar adhering |
| | | 4 | animal bone fragments | 336 | |
| | | 4 | oyster shells | 47 | |
| F8 | 9 | 2 | Roman brick/tile fragments | 791 | with mortar adhering, 15mm & 20mm thick |
| F11 | 12 | 3 | Roman pottery sherds | 78 | Fabric GB: Cam 37A (mid 2nd-4th century); Fabric GX: 2 sherds (Roman). |
| | | 1 | medieval pottery sherd | 33 | Fabric 20: jug handle, oval with vertical slash decoration (c late 12th-13th century) |
| F12 | 13 | 9 | medieval pottery sherds | 396 | Fabric 13S: 4 sherds, part pot, cooking pot with applied thumb strip; Fabric 13: 4 rim sherds from at least 3 cooking pots (c late 12th-early 13th century); Fabric 20: cooking pot rim sherd (c late 12th-13th century) |
| | | 3 | Roman pottery sherds | 33 | ?Fabric AJ: thick oxidised sherd (possibly Fabric DJ) (mid 1st-2nd/3rd century); Fabric GX: 2 sherds (Roman). |
| | | 2 | Roman brick/tile fragments | 177 | 23mm & 21-2mm thick |
| | | 7 | animal bone fragments | 117 | |
| | | 1 | iron nail | 16 | corroded, 61mm long |
| | | 1 | oyster shell | 34 | |
| F12 | 14 | 1 | Saxon pottery sherd | 5 | Fabric 1: 1 small body sherd, dark grey/black fabric with brownish surface, common vegetable temper (chaff) & some sand inclusions, relatively hard. Saxon vegetable-tempered pottery is current from the 5th-7th/8th century (CAR 7, 24), although it appears to become a more significant part of assemblages after the 6th century. The sand inclusions and hardness of the fabric suggest this sherd can be classified as Fabric 1B, broadly dated as mid-Saxon, indicating a date range of c 6th-7th/8th century. |
| | | 5 | late medieval/early post-medieval pottery sherds | 147 | Medieval: Fabric 13: 1 sherd; Fabric 13S: 3 sherds, incl base of cooking pot (late 11th/12th-early 13th century); Post-medieval: Fabric 40 |

| | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|--|
| | | | | (standard fabric): 1 sherd (c late 16th-17th century) | |
| | | 6 | Roman pottery sherds | 72 | Fabric GA: 1 sherd (2nd-4th century); Fabric GB 1 sherd (2nd-3rd century); Fabric KX: 1 rim sherd, Cam 37/38 (2nd-3rd century); Fabric GX: 3 sherds (Roman). |
| | | 1 | <i>tegula</i> fragment | 442 | |
| | | 2 | Roman brick/tile fragments | 722 | 41-3mm & 21-3mm thick |
| | | 1 | peg-tile fragment | 88 | |
| | | 2 | animal bone fragments | 20 | |
| | | 1 | iron nail | | corroded, 2 joining fragments, 56mm long, rounded head |
| | | 3 | mollusc shells | 34 | 2 oyster shells & 1 whelk |
| F12 | 15 | 6 | Roman pottery sherds | 16 | from soil sample; Fabric GX: 1 rim sherd and 4 small body sherds (Roman); Fabric DJ: 1 base sherd (Roman). |
| | | 134 | mollusc shell fragments | 291 | approximate identifiable fragments from soil sample include: 86 oyster shell fragments (264g); 5 whelk fragments (11g); 37 cockle fragments (12g); 6 mussel fragments (4g) |
| | | 5 | animal bone fragments | 4 | |
| F12 | 18 | 1 | medieval pottery sherd | 10 | Fabric 13: sherd probably from cooking pot (c 11th-12th century) |
| | | 1 | Roman pottery sherd | 20 | Fabric HZ (mid 1st-2nd/3rd century). |
| F12 | 24 | 1 | Roman pottery sherd | 10 | Fabric EA: sherd from beaker (3rd-4th century) |
| | | 1 | mollusc shell | 1 | small ?cockle shell |
| F14 | 20 | 4 | Roman pottery sherds | 30 | Fabric DJ: 1 sherd (mid 1st-2nd/3rd century); Fabric GX: 2 sherds (Roman); Fabric HZ?: 1 sherd (2nd-3rd century) |
| | | 3 | Roman brick/tile fragments | 309 | 40mm, 36mm & 18mm thick |
| | | 2 | animal bone fragments | 9 | |
| | | 3 | slate fragments | 136 | |
| F18 | 26 | 3 | Roman pottery sherds | 23 | Fabric GA: 2 sherds, Cam 37A (mid 2nd-4th century); Fabric GX: 1 sherd (Roman) |
| | | 1 | modern glass shard | 4 | pale green glass |
| | | 1 | ? <i>imbrex</i> fragment | 107 | |
| | | 1 | animal bone fragment | 16 | |
| | | 1 | oyster shell fragment | 10 | |
| F19 | 27 | 1 | medieval pottery sherd | 2 | Fabric 13: 1 small sherd (11th-12th century) |
| | | 2 | Roman pottery sherds | 14 | Fabric GX: 2 sherds, including jar sherd, probably Cam 278-type (2nd-3rd century). |
| | | 1 | <i>tegula</i> fragment | 89 | |
| | | 2 | Roman brick/tile fragments | 93 | including one possible <i>tessera</i> |
| | | 1 | ?peg-tile fragment | 16 | |
| | | 1 | modern glass shard | 4 | brown glass |
| | | 3 | animal bone fragments | 52 | |
| | | 3 | oyster shells | 91 | |
| U/S | 2 | 1 | late medieval/early post-medieval pottery base | 220 | Fabric 21A: transitional late medieval/early post-medieval fabric, base of a flat-based, three handled, 'tyg' -type drinking pot, orange fabric, internal clear glaze, patchy on lower body exterior (probably 16th century; CAR 7, 150) |
| | | 1 | animal bone fragment | 250 | |
| U/S | 5 | 1 | Roman pottery sherd | 4 | Fabric BACG: rim sherd, Dr 27 (early-mid 2nd century) |
| | | 1 | late medieval/early post-medieval pottery sherd | 9 | Fabric 45, probably 45C (mid/late 15th-16th & 17th centuries, commonly late 15th-mid 16th century) |
| | | 1 | animal bone fragment | 150 | |
| U/S | 6 | 2 | Roman pottery sherds | 19 | Fabric GX: joining base sherds, internal surface burnished/slightly vitrified? (Roman) |
| U/S | 7 | 3 | animal bone fragments | 224 | |

| | | | | | |
|-----|----|----|--|-----|--|
| U/S | 10 | 1 | Roman pottery sherd | 31 | Fabric KX: rim sherd, Cam 37B (late 2nd-3rd century) |
| | | 1 | medieval pottery sherd | 41 | Fabric 13: rim sherd from cooking pot (late 12th-early 13th century) |
| | | 1 | <i>tegula</i> fragment | 418 | with cutaway |
| | | 1 | animal bone fragment | 78 | |
| U/S | 11 | 7 | Roman pottery sherds | 192 | Fabric EA: 1 body sherd, folded beaker (3rd-4th century); Fabric GB?: 1 body sherd, lattice-decorated jar, white deposit on surface (2nd-3rd century); Fabric GX: 4 sherds (Roman); Fabric TZ: 1 base sherd, (mid 1st-3rd century) |
| | | 1 | <i>tegula</i> fragment | 230 | |
| | | 1 | ? <i>imbrex</i> fragment | 214 | |
| | | 9 | animal bone fragments | 900 | |
| | | 1 | iron nail | 13 | corroded, 62mm long, rounded head |
| U/S | 16 | 11 | Roman pottery sherds | 623 | Fabric AJ: 1 body sherd (mid 1st-2nd/3rd century); Fabric BACG: 1 rouletted base sherd, Dr 31?, beginning of name stamp (fragment) RE () [(mid-late 2nd century); Fabric GX: 7 sherds (Roman); Fabric TZ: 1 rim sherd, Cam 498-type (early/mid 2nd-3rd century); Fabric HZ/GX: 1 sherd (Roman) |
| | | 3 | medieval pottery sherds | 44 | Fabric 13?: 2 sherds, coarse sand fabric, grey (11th-12th century); Fabric 13: 1 sherd (11th-12th century) |
| U/S | 17 | 2 | Roman pottery sherds | 30 | Fabric GA: 1 rim sherd, Cam 39 (mid 2nd-4th century); Fabric GX: 1 sherd (Roman) |
| | | 1 | medieval pottery sherd | 22 | Fabric 13: 1 cooking pot rim sherd (late 12th-early 13th century) |
| U/S | 19 | 1 | Roman pottery sherd | 12 | Fabric GX: 1 jar rim sherd (mid 1st/2nd-4th century) |
| | | 9 | animal bone fragments | 113 | |
| U/S | 21 | 1 | Roman pottery sherd | 3 | Fabric GX: (Roman) |
| | | 3 | late medieval/post-medieval pottery sherds | 206 | Fabric 21A: 1 storage jar or cistern rim sherd with handle, red with white paint (15th-16th century); Fabric 45: 1 sherd with handle, drinking mug, imported stoneware (16th-18th century); Fabric 45M: 1 sherd, English stoneware bottle (late 18th-19th/early 20th century) |
| | | 1 | peg-tile fragment | 81 | |
| U/S | 22 | 1 | Roman pottery sherd | 30 | Fabric GX: (Roman) |
| | | 1 | peg-tile fragment | 527 | 161mm wide, 12mm thick |
| U/S | 23 | 1 | Roman pottery sherd | 124 | Fabric HZ: sherd from large jar in coarse greyware fabric (mid 1st-2nd/3rd century) |
| | | 1 | animal bone fragment | 59 | |
| | | 3 | mollusc shell fragments | 46 | 2 oyster shells & 1 small fragment (?oyster) |
| U/S | 25 | 1 | Roman brick/tile fragment | 339 | 210-250mm thick |
| | | 2 | animal bone fragments | 141 | |

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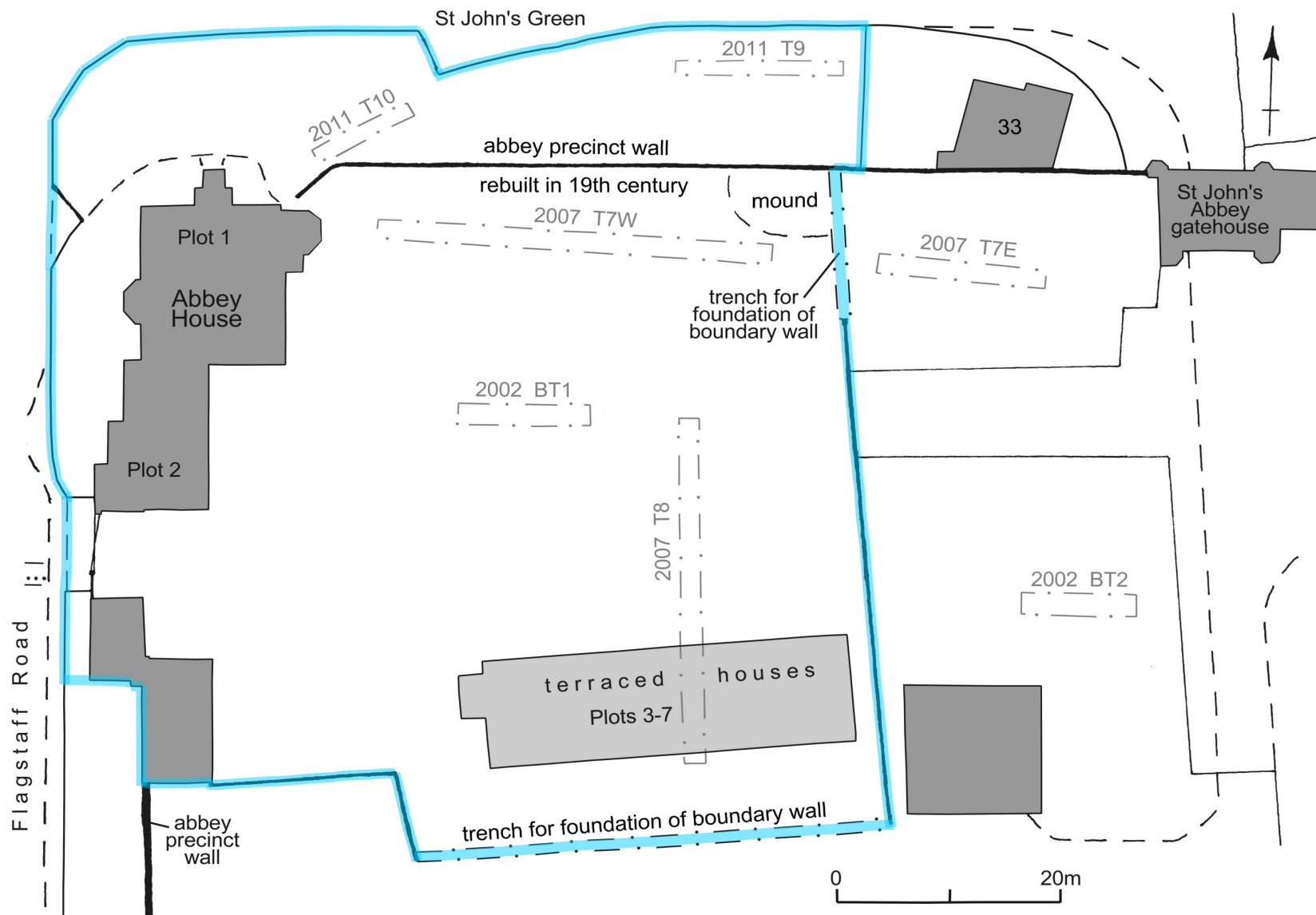


Fig 1 Site location plan, with the boundary of the Abbey House site outlined in blue. Previous archaeological evaluation trenches are shown in grey.

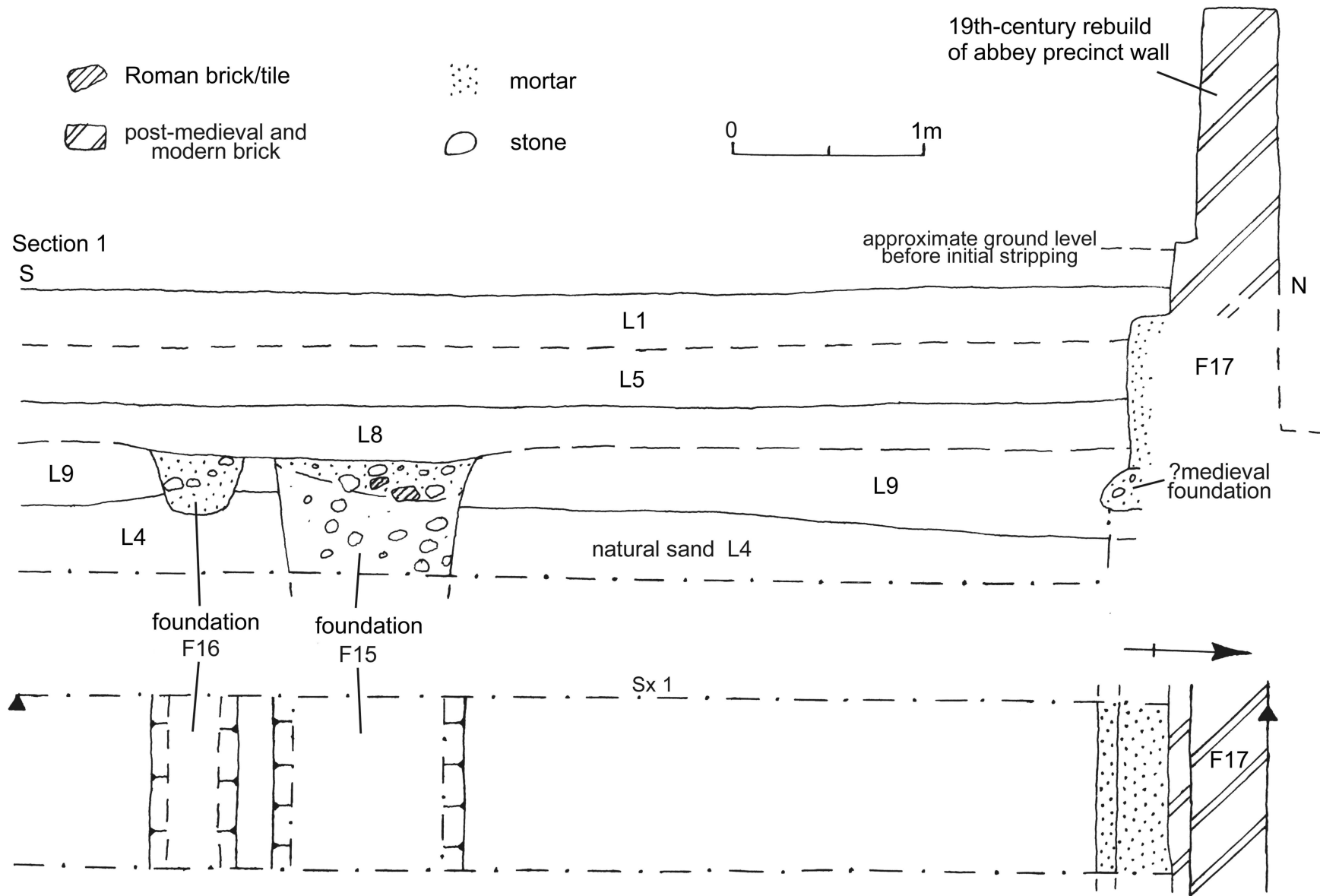


Fig 2 Foundations F15 and F16: plan and Section 1 (Sx 1).

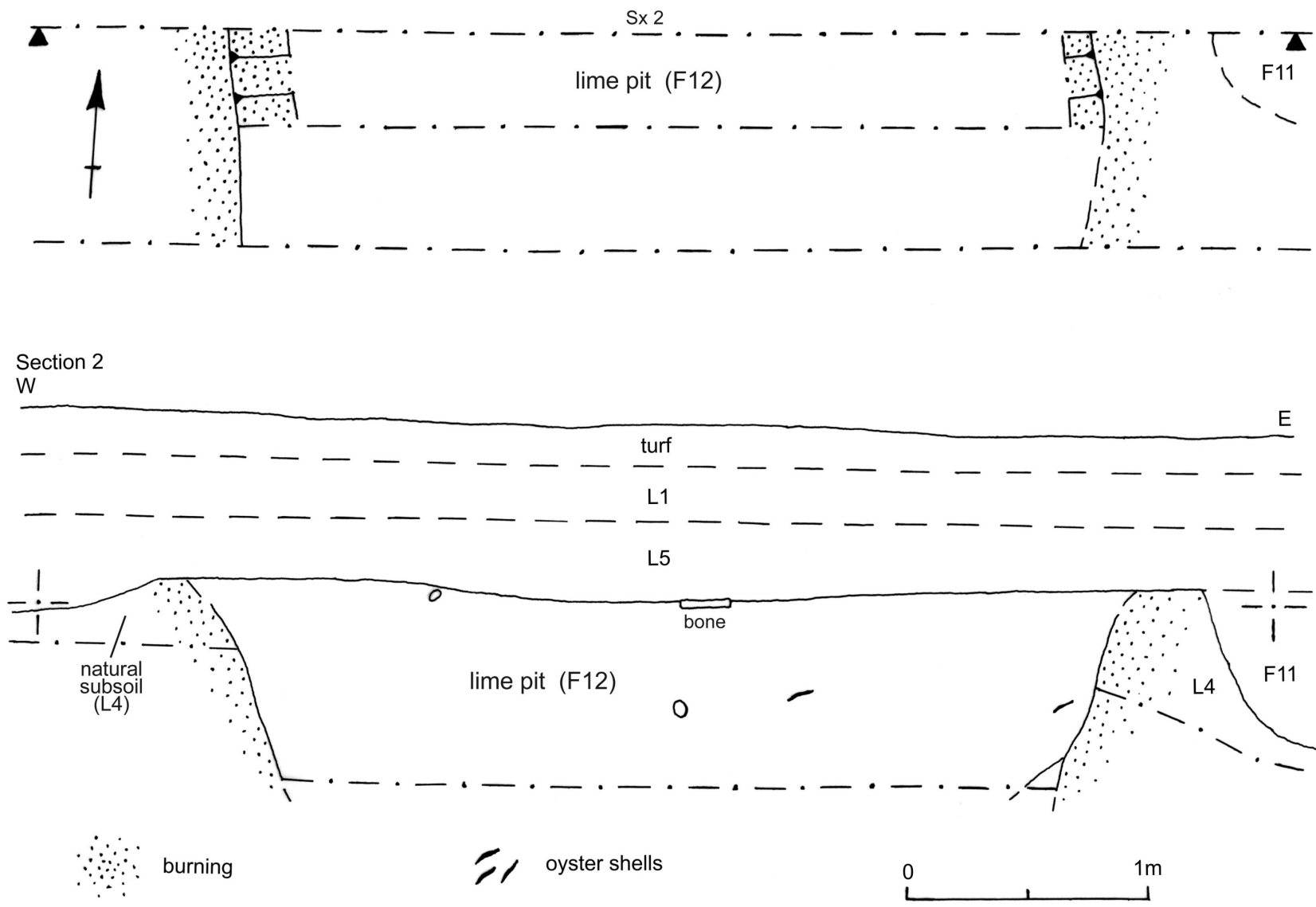


Fig 3 Medieval lime pit (F12): plan and Section 2 (Sx 2).

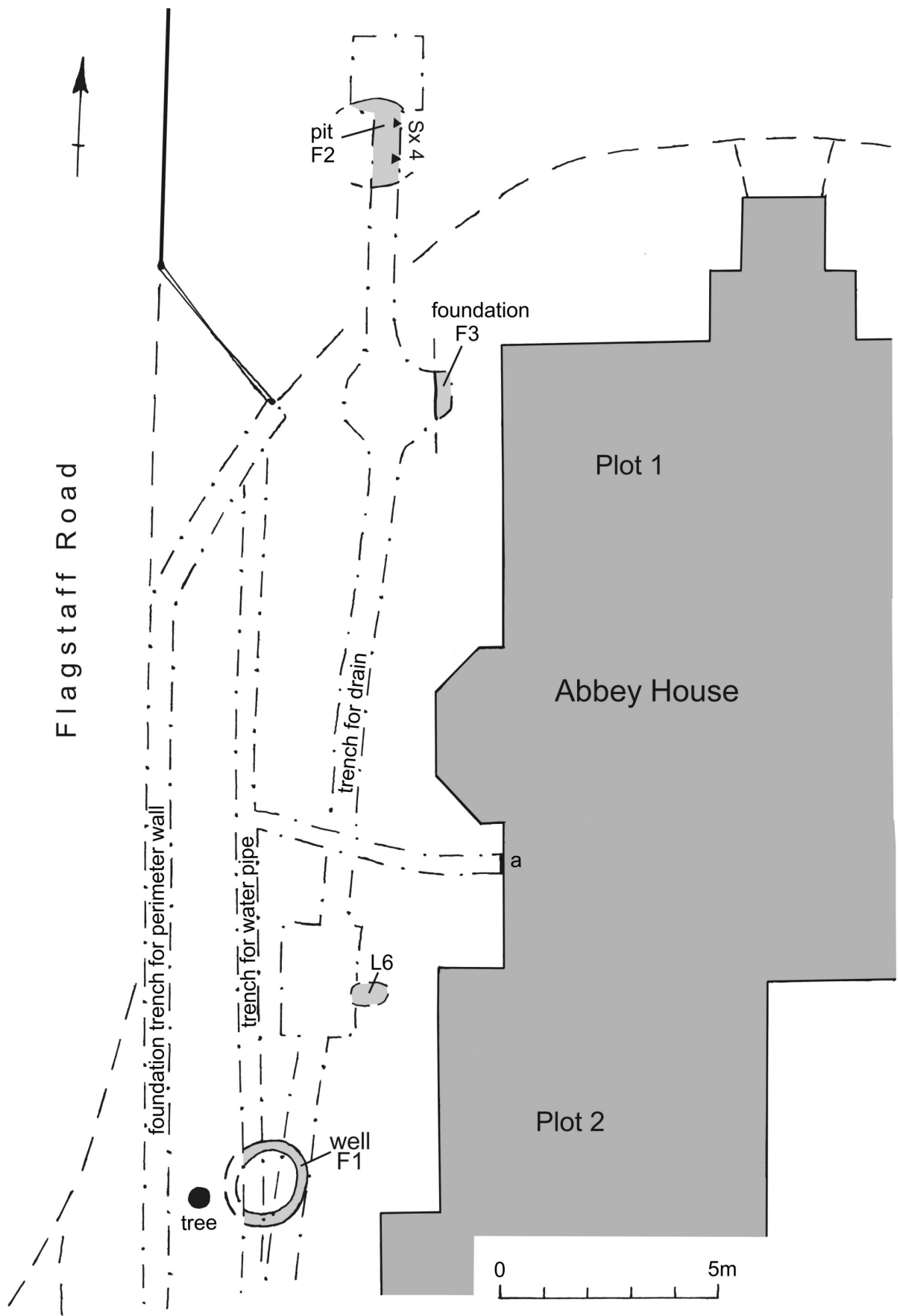


Fig 4 Plan of the area to the west of Abbey House.

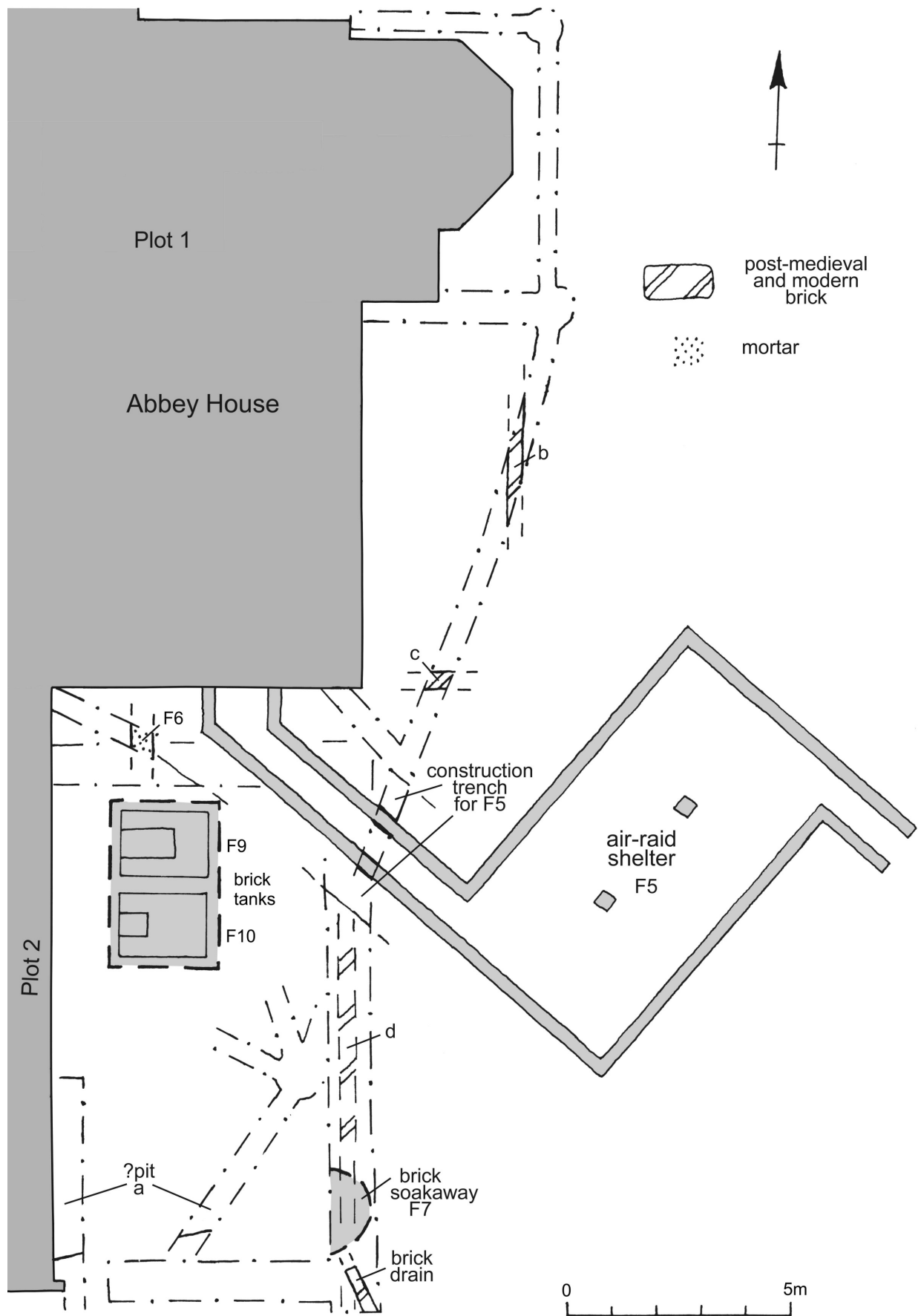


Fig 5 Plan of the area to the east of Abbey House.

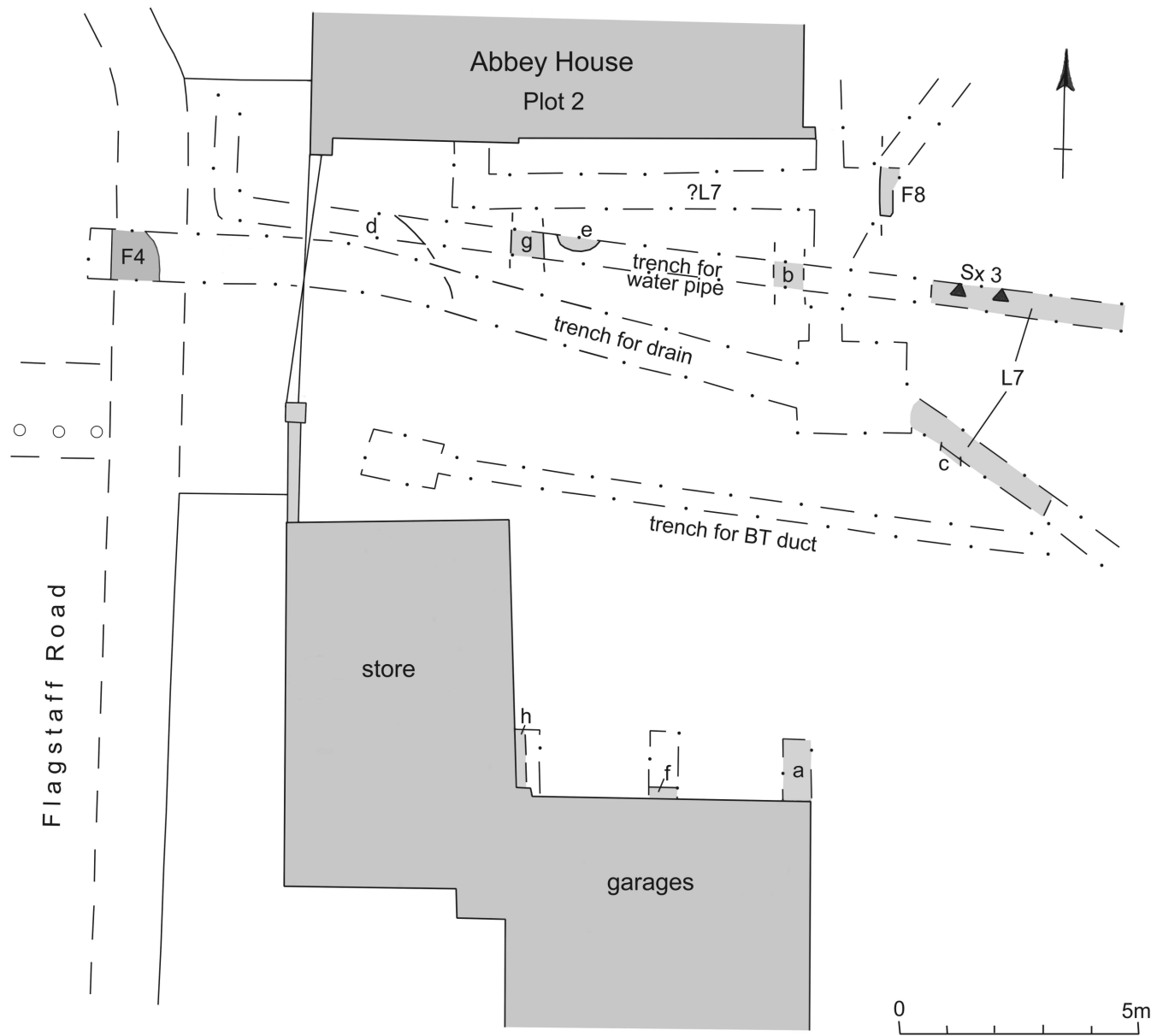


Fig 6 Plan of the yard area to the south of Abbey House.

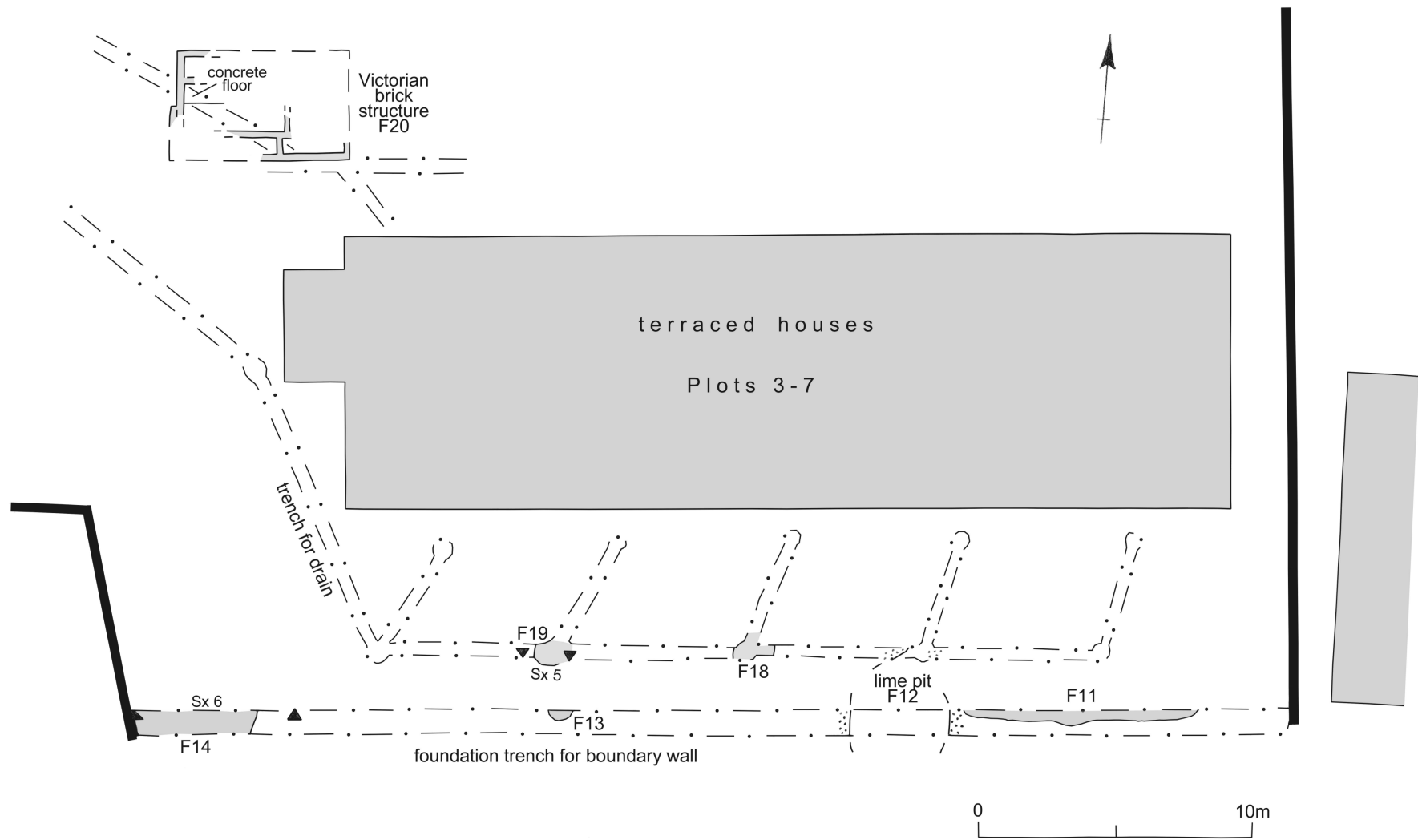


Fig 7 Plan of the south-eastern part of the site.

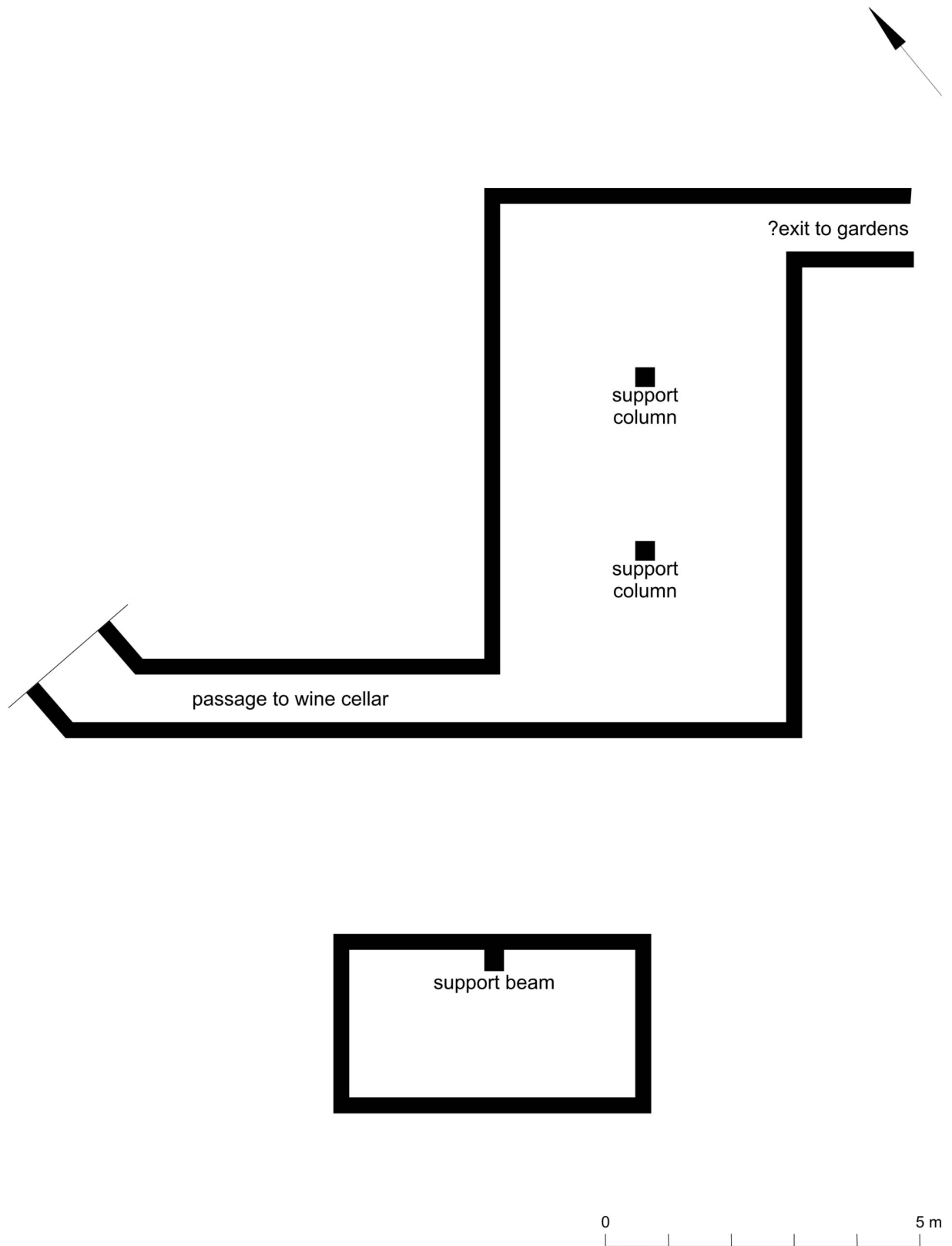


Fig 8 Plan and cross-section of WW2 air-raid shelter (F5).

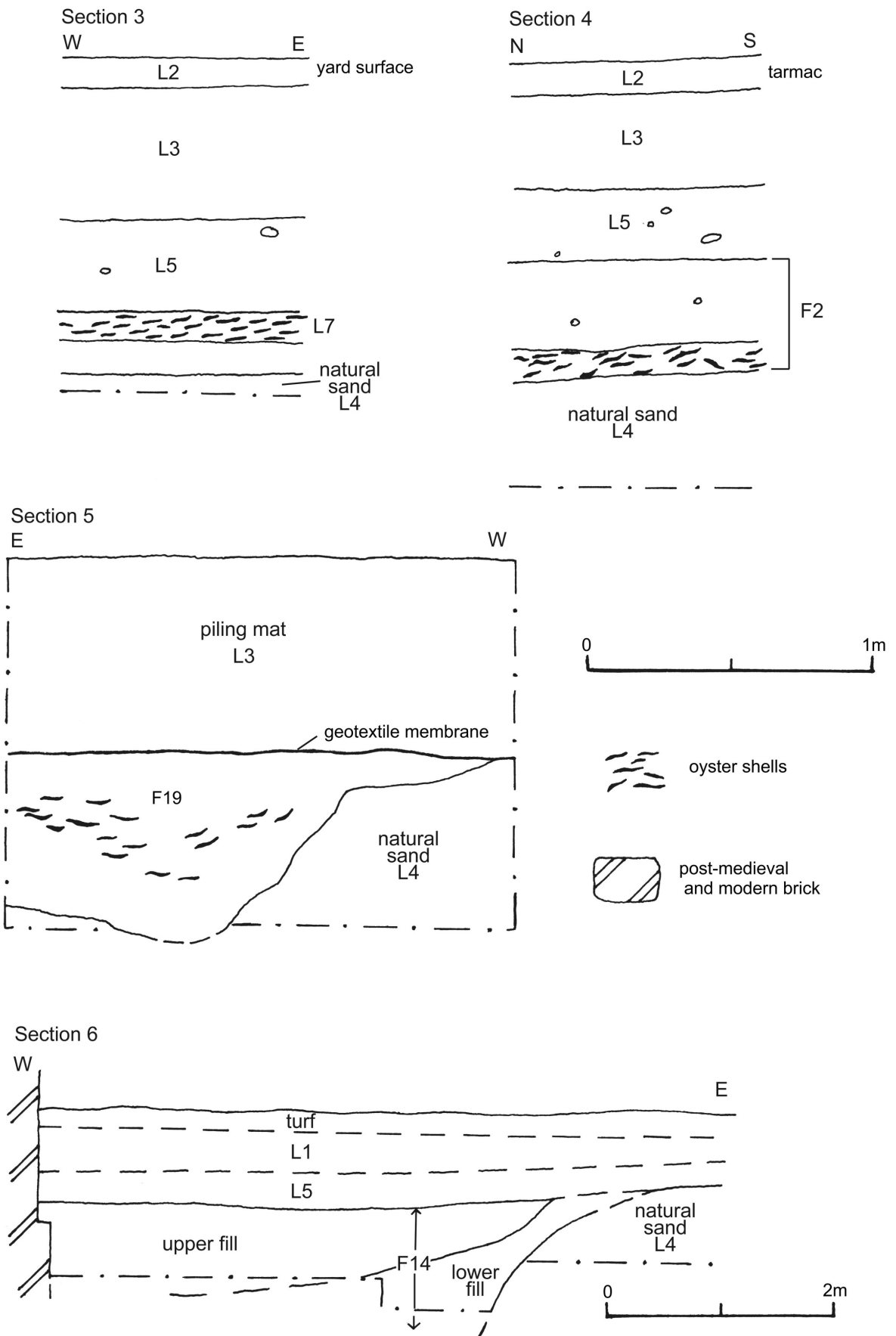


Fig 9 Sections 3-6

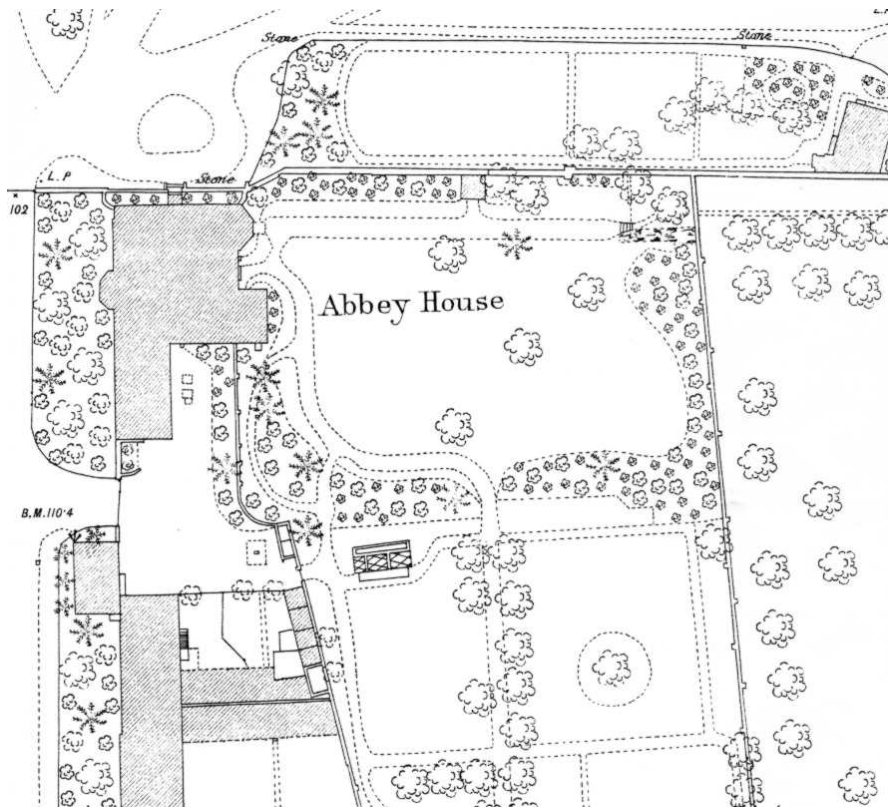
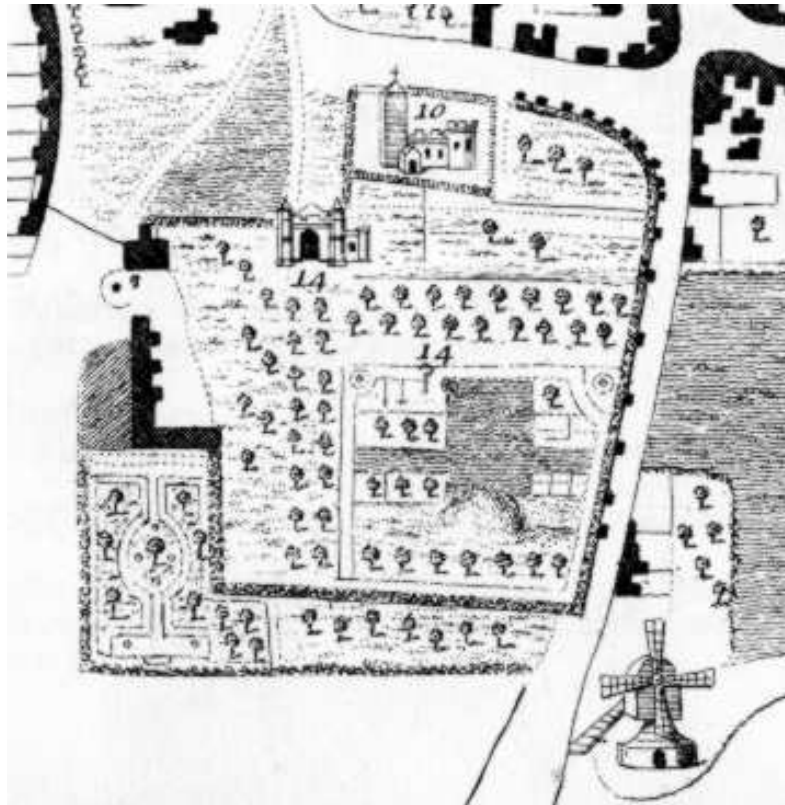


Fig 10 Above: detail of the map published in Morant (1748).
 St John's Abbey gatehouse is labelled 14 and St Giles's Church 10. A building is shown to the west of the gatehouse, on the site of Abbey House. The well (F1) appears to be shown as a circular feature immediately to the south-west of the building.
 Below: detail of an OS map published in 1878.

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|--|--|
| Project name | Abbey House, St John's Green, Colchester, Essex, watching brief 2013-14 |
| Short description of the project | Significant medieval and later remains were recorded in 2013-14 during the redevelopment of the Abbey House site, which lies to the south of St John's Green in Colchester. Little or no definite evidence for Roman deposits was identified during the watching brief, although a quantity of residual Roman finds was recovered from later contexts. Remains probably associated with St John's Abbey included the abbey precinct walls, several other building foundations, and a lime pit. During machine-trenching in the north-eastern corner of the site, approximately 70 pieces of stone were unearthed; many of which were carved and were probably derived from abbey buildings. Among the later remains uncovered were a post-medieval well and several Victorian brick features, including a soakaway, two storage tanks, and the foundations of a greenhouse. A Second World War air-raid shelter with a connecting corridor to Abbey House was also recorded. |
| Project dates | Start: 22-03-2013 End: 27-06-2014 |
| Previous/future work | Yes / Yes |
| Any associated project reference codes | 13/03c - Contracting Unit No. |
| Any associated project reference codes | COLEM 2013.14 - Museum accession ID |
| Any associated project reference codes | 13/07e - Contracting Unit No. |
| Any associated project reference codes | 14/02f - Contracting Unit No. |
| Type of project | Recording project |
| Site status | Conservation Area |
| Site status | Scheduled Monument (SM) |
| Current Land use | Other 5 - Garden |
| Current Land use | Residential 1 - General Residential |
| Monument type | PRECINCT WALL Medieval |
| Monument type | STORAGE TANK Post Medieval |
| Monument type | AIR-RAID SHELTER Modern |
| Monument type | LIME PIT Medieval |
| Monument type | BUILDING Medieval |
| Monument type | WELL Post Medieval |
| Monument type | SOAKAWAY Post Medieval |
| Monument type | OUTBUILDING Post Medieval |
| Significant Finds | POTTERY Roman |
| Significant Finds | POTTERY Medieval |

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Significant Finds | DRESSED STONE Medieval |
| Significant Finds | MUSKET BALL Post Medieval |
| Significant Finds | MOLLUSCA REMAINS Medieval |
| Investigation type | ""Watching Brief"" |
| Prompt | Scheduled Monument Consent |
| Prompt | Planning condition |

Project location

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Country | England |
| Site location | ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER Abbey House, St John's Green |
| Postcode | CO2 7EZ |
| Study area | 0.5 Hectares |
| Site coordinates | TL 9970 2472 51.884690632924 0.90206725579 51 53 04 N 000 54 07 E Point |

Project creators

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Name of Organisation | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Project brief originator | HISTORIC ENGLAND |
| Project design originator | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Project director/manager | Philip Crummy |
| Project supervisor | D Shimmin |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | Developer |

Project archives

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Physical Archive recipient | Colchester Museum |
| Physical Archive ID | COLEM 2013.14 |
| Physical Contents | "Environmental","Glass","Metal","Animal Bones","Ceramics" |
| Digital Archive recipient | Colchester Museum |
| Digital Archive ID | COLEM 2013.14 |
| Digital Contents | "Ceramics","Metal","other" |
| Digital Media available | "Database","Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text" |
| Paper Archive recipient | Colchester Museum |
| Paper Archive ID | COLEM 2013.14 |
| Paper Contents | "Ceramics","Stratigraphic","Survey","Worked stone/lithics","other" |
| Paper Media available | "Context sheet","Correspondence","Diary","Drawing","Map","Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey","Unpublished Text" |

Project bibliography 1

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Publication type | Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript) |
| Title | Archaeological watching briefs at Abbey House, St John's Green, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7EZ: March 2013- June 2014 |

Author(s)/Editor(s) Shimmin, D
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Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

| | |
|---|---|
| Site address: Abbey House, St John's Green, Colchester, CO2 7EZ | |
| Parish: Colchester | District: Colchester Borough |
| NGR: TL 9970 2472 | Site codes: Museum accession code: COLEM 2013.14 CAT project codes: 13/03c, 13/07e & 14/02f |
| Type of work: Watching brief | Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Date of work: March 2013-June 2014 | Size of area investigated: approximately 0.5 hectares |
| Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museums | Funding source: Client |
| Further seasons anticipated? Not known | Related EHER and UAD nos: UAD nos 1181,1249, 3019 |
| Final report: CAT Report 892 and summary in <i>EAH</i> | |
| Periods represented: Medieval, post-medieval & modern | |
| Summary of fieldwork results: Significant medieval and later remains were recorded in 2013-14 during the redevelopment of the Abbey House site, which lies to the south of St John's Green in Colchester. Little or no definite evidence for Roman deposits was identified during the watching brief, although a quantity of residual Roman finds was recovered from later contexts. Remains probably associated with St John's Abbey included traces of the abbey precinct walls, several other building foundations, and a lime pit. During machine-trenching in the north-eastern corner of the site, approximately 70 pieces of stone were unearthed, many of which were carved and were probably derived from abbey buildings. Among the later remains uncovered were a post-medieval well and several Victorian brick features, including a soakaway, two storage tanks, and the foundations of a greenhouse. A Second World War air-raid shelter with a connecting corridor to Abbey House was also recorded. | |
| Previous summaries/reports: CAT Reports 206, 405 & 630 | |
| Keywords: Roman pottery, medieval pottery, medieval lime pit, foundation, carved stone, well, brick soakaway, brick storage tank, air-raid shelter, graffiti | Significance: ** |
| Author of summary: Donald Shimmin | Date of summary: March 2017 |