

# Archaeological monitoring and recording at St Helena School Tennis Courts, Colchester, Essex

**April 2016**



**by Pip Parmenter**

**on behalf of St Helena School**

CAT project ref: 16/03m  
NGR: TL 9871 2584  
Colchester Museum accession code: 2016.46  
UAD ref: ECC3751  
OASIS ref: colchest3-250532



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

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**CAT Report 947**  
May 2016

## **Contents**

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Results	2
5	Discussion	2
6	Acknowledgements	2
7	References	3
8	Abbreviations and glossary	4
9	Contents of archive	4
10	Archive deposition	4

Figures after p5

EHER Summary Sheet

Appendix 1: CAT WSI

Appendix 2: OASIS Summary

## **List of plates, figures and tables**

Cover: General site shot

Plate 1 General site shot

Fig 1 Detailed site location

## 1 Summary

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the replacement of a fence around the tennis courts at St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex. The postholes for the fence were dug under observation. No archaeological features were encountered. One piece of unstratified possible kiln/oven material was recovered.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief at the St Helena School tennis courts, Colchester, Essex, which was carried out on between 29th March and 4th April 2016. The work was commissioned by St Helena School in advance of the replacement of a fence around the school's tennis courts and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Historic England (HE), Assistant Inspector of Historic Monuments Sarah Poppy advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with paragraphs 128, 129 and 132 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for archaeological evaluation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Sarah Poppy (HE 2016), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with HE (CAT 2016).

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

## 3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the extensive library of CAT archaeological interventions at St Helena, as reported on Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) and on the Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) created by Colchester Borough Council and now accessed via the *Heritage Gateway* website.

Sheepen has been reported in depth in the major published works on Colchester by CFC Hawkes and Rex Hull (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull 1958) and by Philip Crummy (Crummy 1980, 248-52; Crummy 1997; CAR 11 (with CFC Hawkes) 1995).

St Helena School is in an area of high archaeological importance - the enclosed *oppidum* of *Camulodunum*, specifically within the trading depot at Sheepen (a Scheduled Monument, SM EX 46). Sheepen is one of the two principal centres of the *oppidum*, the other being Gosbecks. In the 1930s, excavations prior to the construction of the Colchester Bypass (now the Avenue of Remembrance) showed that the area was an important focus of Late Iron Age settlement and early Roman military activity (Hawkes & Hull 1947). Within the school grounds are the remains of two Romano-British temples (Hull 1958). The tennis courts are 50m west of the *temenos* (enclosure wall) of Temple 2, and 60m south-west of isolated Temple 3.

There have been many recent evaluations, excavations and watching briefs in and around the school (CAT Reports 349, 351, 384, 414, 451, 544). Of relevance to this project is the 2002 watching brief on the installation of the floodlights around the same tennis courts which are the focus of the present project (CAT Report 188). The summary of that report states:

*Observations were made during an archaeological watching brief on the digging of cable trenches around the tennis courts at St Helena's School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex. The trenches were being dug for new floodlights and their power cables. Two features were observed in the trenches, only one of which was certainly archaeological. There was a large number of loose finds, principally Roman tile and late Iron Age/Roman pottery of a type which has been found in adjacent Sheepen excavations.*

#### **4 Results**

The site was continually monitored while the building contractors were removing and replacing fence posts. A total of 120 postholes were dug under observation. The majority of these were dug into existing postholes.

Spoil heaps were trowled and metal-detected but almost all finds recovered were modern and were not retained. Only one posthole (TP4/5) contained any archaeological material. This contained a small piece of kiln or oven material. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the postholes, no context was discernable for this material.



Plate 1: General site shot

#### **5 Discussion**

Very little material of archaeological interest was recovered during the monitoring of the excavation of postholes at St Helena School tennis courts – due largely to the fact that the majority of the postholes were dug into existing postholes and disturbed no *in situ* archaeological material. The only find of any interest was a piece of kiln/oven material recovered from TP4/5, however the potential of this material is severely limited by its lack of context

#### **6 Acknowledgements**

The Trust would like to thank St Helena School for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed and carried out by B Holloway and R Mathieson. Site plans and sections were prepared by R Mathieson. The project was monitored for the HE by Sarah Poppy.

## 7 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in PDF format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

CAR 11	1995	<i>Hawkes, C and Crummy, P Camulodunum 2. Colchester Archaeological Report 11.</i>
CAT	2016	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for continuous archaeological recording at St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex</i>
CAT Report 188	2002	<i>An archaeological watching brief on the installation of tennis court floodlights at St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex</i>
CAT Report 349	2005	<i>Report on a watching brief at St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex, October 2005, by K Orr</i>
CAT Report 351	2005	<i>An archaeological evaluation of St Helena School Drama Block, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex, November 2005, by K Orr</i>
CAT Report 384	2006	<i>An archaeological excavation of a foundation trench at the drama block, St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex, June 2006, by K Orr</i>
CAT Report 414	2007	<i>Archaeological evaluation at St Helena School, February 2007, by L Pooley</i>
CAT Report 451	2007	<i>An archaeological watching brief at St Helena School car-park, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex, July-August 2007, by K Orr</i>
CAT Report 544	2010	<i>An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at St Helena School, Colchester, Essex: March 2010, by B Holloway and H Brooks</i>
CifA	2014a	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>
CifA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Crummy, P	1980	<i>The temples of Roman Colchester', in Temples, Churches and Religion (Recent Research in Roman Britain, ed by Warwick Rodwell, BAR, British Series, 77, 242-83</i>
Crummy, P	1997	<i>City of Victory: Story of Colchester – Britain's First Roman Town. Colchester Archaeological Trust.</i>
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework. Dept of Communities and Local Government.</i>
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England, East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14. Ed. D Gurney</i>
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England, East</i>

		Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers <b>24</b> , by Maria Medlycott
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (English Heritage)
Hawkes, C and Hull, M	1947	<i>Camulodunum, first report on the excavations at Colchester 1930 – 39. Report of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London, 14.</i>
Historic England	2016	<i>Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex</i>
Hull, M	1958	<i>Roman Colchester, Report of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London, 20</i>

## 8 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCPS	Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
HE	Historic England
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
post-medieval	from Henry VIII to c AD1800
prehistoric	pre-Roman
residual	something out of its original context, e.g. a Roman coin in a modern pit
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

## 9 Contents of archive

### Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:  
 The report (CAT Report 947)  
 HE Brief  
 CAT Written Scheme of Investigation  
 Original site record (Feature and layer sheets, Finds record)  
 Site digital photographic log  
 Architectural Plans  
 Attendance register  
 Finds register  
 Original Plans  
 Risk assessment

## 10 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museum under accession code: 2016.46.

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**Distribution List**

EHER  
CBC UPD  
St Helena School  
Sarah Poppy, Historic England



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

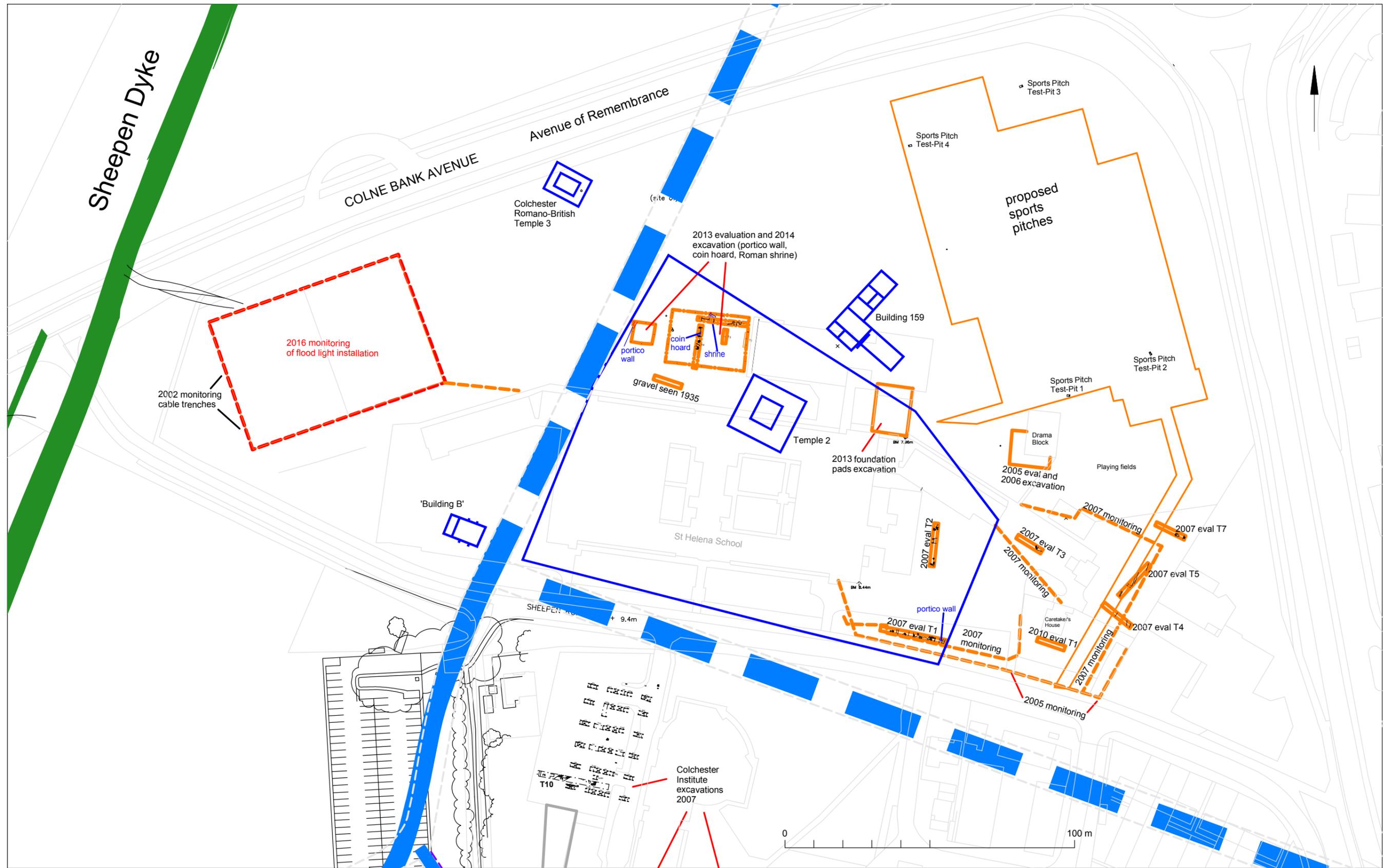
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*Checked by:* Philip Crummy

*Date:* May 2016



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Figure 1 St Helena School, showing monitoring (red outline), previous archaeological work (orange) and Roman temples, precinct, and associated buildings (blue)

# Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

## Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3LE	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TL 9871 2584	<b>Site code:</b> CAT project code 16/03m UAD ref: ECC3750 OASIS ref: colchest3-250532
<b>Type of work:</b> Monitoring and recording	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> April 2016	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 120 postholes
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museum accession code : COLEM 2016.45	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHER numbers:</b> EHER 11673, EHER11684, EHER 13126
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 947	
<b>Periods represented:</b> n/a	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the replacement of a fence around the tennis courts at St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex. The postholes for the fence were dug under observation. No archaeological features were encountered. One piece of unstratified possible kiln/oven material was recovered.	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> Hawkes and Hull 1947, Hull 1958, Crummy 1997, CAR 11, CAT Reports 699, 816, 825, 835, 916	
<b>Keywords:</b> Sheepen	<b>Significance:</b> -
<b>Author of summary:</b> Pip Parmenter	<b>Date of summary:</b> 25/05/2016

Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)  
for archaeological monitoring and recording.  
St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester,  
Essex

**NGR:** TL 9871 2584 (centre)

**Planning reference:**

**Client:** St Helena School

**Curating Museum:** Colchester

**Scheduled Monument number:** SM EX 46

**Museum accession code:** to be applied for if contract won

**ECC Project code:** to be applied for if contract won

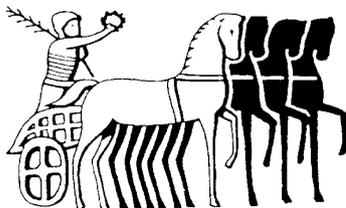
**CAT Project code:** to be assigned if contract won

**Site Manager:** Ben Holloway or Adam Wightman

**HE monitor:** Sarah Poppy

**This WSI written:** 24 03 2016

**revisions:**



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## Site Location and Description

The proposed development site is on the western side of the St Helena School grounds, north of Sheepen Road and south of the Avenue of Remembrance (ie, the old Colchester Bypass) Site centre is TL 9871 2584.

## Proposed work

The development comprises the replacement of the fence around the tennis courts.

## Archaeological Background

The following archaeological background draws on the extensive library of CAT archaeological interventions at St Helena, as reported on Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) and on the Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) created by Colchester Borough Council and now accessed via the *Heritage Gateway* website.

Sheepen has been reported in depth in the major published works on Colchester by CFC Hawkes and Rex Hull (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull 1958) and by Philip Crummy (Crummy 1980, 248-52; Crummy 1997; CAR 11 (with CFC Hawkes) 1995).

St Helena School is in an area of high archaeological importance - the enclosed *oppidum* of *Camulodunum*, specifically within the trading depot at Sheepen (a Scheduled Monument, SM EX 46). Sheepen is one of the two principal centres of the *oppidum*, the other being Gosbecks. In the 1930s, excavations prior to the construction of the Colchester Bypass (now the Avenue of Remembrance) showed that the area was an important focus of Late Iron Age settlement and early Roman military activity (Hawkes & Hull 1947). Within the school grounds are the remains of two Romano-British temples (Hull 1958). The tennis courts are 50m west of the *temenos* (enclosure wall) of Temple 2, and 60m south-west of isolated Temple 3.

There have been many recent evaluations, excavations and watching briefs in and around the school (CAT Reports 349, 351, 384, 414, 451, 544). Of relevance to this project is the 2002 watching brief on the installation of the floodlights around the same tennis courts which are the focus of the present project (CAT Report 188). The summary of that report states:

*Observations were made during an archaeological watching brief on the digging of cable trenches around the tennis courts at St Helena's School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex. The trenches were being dug for new floodlights and their power cables. Two features were observed in the trenches, only one of which was certainly archaeological. There was a large number of loose finds, principally Roman tile and late Iron Age/Roman pottery of a type which has been found in adjacent Sheepen excavations*

## Planning Background and requirement for work

Discussion with Historic England identified the need for archaeological monitoring. HE issued a *Brief* describing the required work. This WSI is written in response to the HE *Brief*.

The required archaeological work is monitor and record. Details are given in the HE Brief (HE 2016).

Specifically, the work will comprise:

Monitoring contractors removal of old fence, reinstatement of fence in original fence holes (if possible), or contactors digging (by hand) of new fence post-holes. The works comprise the excavation of footings for the fence panels (approx 350mm diameter, and 800mm deep). Where possible, holes from the existing fence posts will be reused. If mechanical excavation is required, a toothless ditching bucket shall be used. If archaeological remains are defined, adequate time shall be allowed for the full archaeological excavation and recording of the archaeological deposits.

## **General Methodology**

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

- professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its Code of Conduct (CIfA 2014a-c)
- Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011)
- required standards of fieldwork in Colchester Borough (CM 2008a, b)
- relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2014)
- the Project Brief issued by Historic England (HE 2016)

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

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

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

## **Written Scheme of Investigation**

Prior to start of work, a Written Scheme of Investigation will be submitted to Historic England (ie, this document). The WSI will describe in appropriate detail how the *Brief* from HE will be implemented in fieldwork, post-excavation, reporting and publication stages.

Fieldwork will not commence prior to approval of WSI from HE.

The WSI will include a location plan of the development site showing area of proposed work.

## **OASIS Record**

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

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

## **Staffing**

The number of field staff for this project is estimated as follows - 2 man days to monitor on-site work. In charge of day-to-day site work: one of Ben Holloway, Adam Wightman, Mark Baister, Robin Mathieson.

## **Monitoring methodology**

There will be sufficient on-site attendance by CAT staff to maintain a watch on all contractors' work to record, excavate or sample (as necessary) any archaeological features or deposits.

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

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

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

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

## **Site surveying**

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

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

### **Human remains**

Policy depends on the age of the burial. If it is clear from their position, context, depth, or other factors that the remains are ancient, then normal procedure is to apply to the Department of Justice for a licence to remove them. In that case, conditions laid down by the licence will be followed. If it seems that the remains are not ancient, then the coroner, the client, and CBCAA will be informed, and any advice and/or instruction from the coroner will be followed.

### **Photographic record**

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

### **Finds**

All significant finds will be retained.

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

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

animal bones (small groups): Adam Wightman

flints: Adam Wightman

or to outside specialists:

small finds, metalwork, coins, etc: Nina Crummy or Pip Parmenter

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

environmental processing and reporting: Val Fryer (Loddon)

conservation of finds: staff at Colchester Museum

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

Roman brick/tile: Ernest Black. Roman glass: Hilary Cool. Prehistoric pottery: Paul Sealey Other: EH Regional Adviser in Archaeological Science (East of England).

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

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

### **End of Fieldwork, and Report**

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

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

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

The report will contain:

- The aims and methodology adopted in the course of the archaeological project
- Location plan of observed fence and postholes. At least two corners of the site will be given 10 figure grid references.
- A section/s drawings showing depth of deposits from present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale.
- Detailed archaeological results, with a suitable conclusion and discussion.
- All specialist reports or assessments
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results.
- As Appendices, the OASIS entry and the WSI.

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

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

## Archive Deposition

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

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

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

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

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

## Monitoring

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

One week's prior notification of start of work will be given to HE.

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

HE will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

The involvement of HE will be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

## References

CAT	2014	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 188	2002	<i>An archaeological watching brief on the installation of tennis court floodlights at St Helena's School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex.</i> CAT client report, by Kate Orr
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives</i>
ClfA	2014c	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
CM	2008	<i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i>
CM	2008	<i>Guidelines on the Preparation and Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Colchester &amp; Ipswich Museums</i>
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Historic England	2016	Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording. St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester.
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)

H Brooks



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date: 24/03/2016

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## Printable version

**OASIS ID: colchest3-250532**

### Project details

Project name	St Helena School Tennis Court
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring and recording of replacement fence around tennis courts
Project dates	Start: 29-03-2016 End: 07-04-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	16/03m - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Monument type	N/A None
Significant Finds	N/A None
Methods & techniques	""Test Pits""
Development type	Building refurbishment/repairs/restoration
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER St Helena School Tennis Court
Postcode	CO3 3LE
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 9871 2584 51.895104077763 0.888345456412 51 53 42 N 000 53 18 E Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	CBCAO

Project design originator	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project director/manager	Ben Holloway
Project supervisor	Ben Holloway
Type of sponsor/funding body	School
Name of sponsor/funding body	St Helena School

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Notebook - Excavation"," Research"," General Notes","Report","Unpublished Text"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological monitoring and recording at St Helena Tennis Courts, Sheepen Road, Colchester
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Parmenter, P
Other bibliographic details	CAT Report 947
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	CAT
Place of issue or publication	CAT
Description	Archaeological monitoring and recording at St Helena Tennis Courts, Sheepen Road, Colchester
Entered by	Pip Parmenter (pp@catuk.org)
Entered on	10 May 2016