

# Archaeological monitoring at 116 The Commons, Colchester, Essex, CO3 4NP

August 2018



by **Dr Elliott Hicks**

figures by Chris Lister and Sarah Carter

fieldwork by Ben Holloway

**Commissioned by Brian Griffiths (BG Designs)**

NGR: TL 9723 2412 (centre)

Planning reference: 181544 (formerly 171434)

CAT project ref.: 17/08q

Colchester Museum accession code: COLEM 2017.119

CHER ref: ECC4055

OASIS reference: colchest3-294165



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**CAT Report 1316**

August 2018

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## 1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 116 The Commons during groundworks for a ground-floor extension to the side. Monitoring was carried out at this site due to its proximity to the Prettygate Dyke, which is projected to run through the southeastern part of the site. No trace of the dyke was encountered but the considerable thickness of the topsoil and subsoil deposits may be related to the site's proximity to it.

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring at 116 The Commons, Colchester, Essex, which was carried out on the 16th August 2018. The work was commissioned by Brian Griffiths of BG Designs in advance of the demolition of the existing conservatory and the construction of a ground-floor extension to the side and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Colchester Borough Council Planning Services (CBCPS), Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor Jess Tipper 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 Continuous Archaeological Recording*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Jess Tipper (CBCPS 2017), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with CBCPS (CAT 2017, rev. 2018).

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 watching briefs* (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 major published sources for Colchester archaeology (listed below), and also on the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER).

The development site is located in an area rich in archaeological remains. It lies within the Late Iron Age *oppidum* of Camulodunum, which was defined by a system of defensive dykes. Each dyke consisted of a V-shaped ditch with a simple bank behind, constructed so that the inner face of the ditch continued as the outer face of the bank (Crummy 1997, 14). Significantly Prettygate Dyke (CHER 11639, MCC1742) runs SW-NE across the southeastern corner of the development site. The 1km dyke runs from the Peartree (600m SW) through to the Prettygate (400m NE) junctions (CAR 11, 46-52) and several excavations have taken place over the length of the ditch (*ibid*). Approximately 100m to the south is Heath Farm Dyke.

## 4 Aims

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which were exposed by the groundworks.

## 5 Results (Figs 2-3)

On 16th August 2018, a CAT archaeologist attended the property at 116 The Commons, Colchester, where it was found that the foundation trenching for the proposed extension had been undertaken. The foundation trench measured approximately 13m in length, 0.5m in width, and was excavated to a depth of 2m.

The foundation trenching was excavated through three layers. Modern topsoil (L1, c 0.35-0.38m thick, firm, moist dark grey/brown sandy-silt) sealed subsoil (L2, c 0.49-0.5m thick, firm, moist medium grey/brown silt), which in turn sealed natural (L3, firm, moist medium orange sand, encountered at a depth of 0.83-0.87m below current ground level).

Modern services associated with the property were observed in the west of the foundation trenching and a modern sewer ran through the central part of the foundation.

No significant archaeological features were encountered.



**Photograph 1** N-S branch of foundation trenching, looking north

## 6 Finds

There were no archaeological finds.

## 7 Conclusion

Archaeological monitoring was primarily undertaken at 116 The Commons to investigate the relationship of the site to the Prettygate Dyke, which is projected to run on a SW-NE alignment through the southeastern corner of the development site. No

evidence of the earthwork was observed in the foundation trenching. It should be noted, however, that the course of the dyke is estimated from two points some distance apart, and it is therefore possible that it lies slightly south of this interpolated route. Both the topsoil and subsoil deposits were of significant depth, and this may be due to the possibility that the site lies upon the northern edge of the Prettygate Dyke.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Brian Griffiths of BG Designs for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister and carried out by B Holloway. Figures were prepared by C Lister and S Carter. The project was monitored for the CBCPS by Jess Tipper.

## 9 References

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

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

Brown, D	2007	<i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i>
CAR 11	1995	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 11: Camunlodunum 2</i> by C F C Hawkes and P Crummy
CAT	2014	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2017, rev. 2018	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for continuous archaeological monitoring and recording at 116 The Commons, Colchester, Essex, CO3 4NP</i>
CBCPS	2017	<i>Brief for continuous archaeological monitoring and recording at 116 The Commons, Colchester, CO3 4NP</i> , by J Tipper
Cifa	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
Cifa	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Crummy, P	1997	<i>City of Victory. The Story of Colchester – Britain's first Roman town</i>
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Gurney, G	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
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)

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCPS	Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record
Cifa	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
Iron Age	period from 700 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	<b>O</b> nline <b>A</b> ccess to the <b>I</b> ndex of <b>A</b> rchaeological <b>I</b> nvestigations, <a href="http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main">http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main</a>
ws	written scheme of investigation

## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** n/a

### Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:  
The report (CAT Report 1316)

CBCPS evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation  
Original site record (feature and layer sheets, finds record, plans)  
Site digital photos and log

## 12 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: COLEM 2017.119.

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### Distribution list

Brian Griffiths, BG Designs  
Jess Tipper, Colchester Borough Council Planning Services  
Essex Historic Environment Record



### Colchester Archaeological Trust

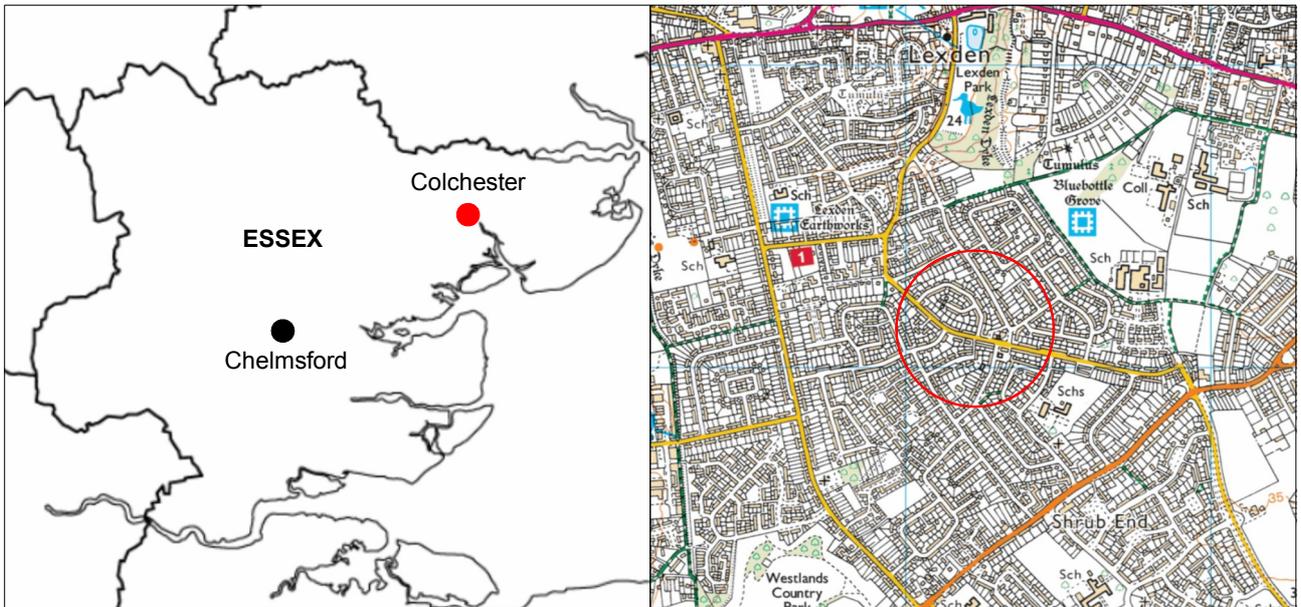
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Date: 29.08.2018



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Fig 1 Site location and projected route of Prettygate Dyke



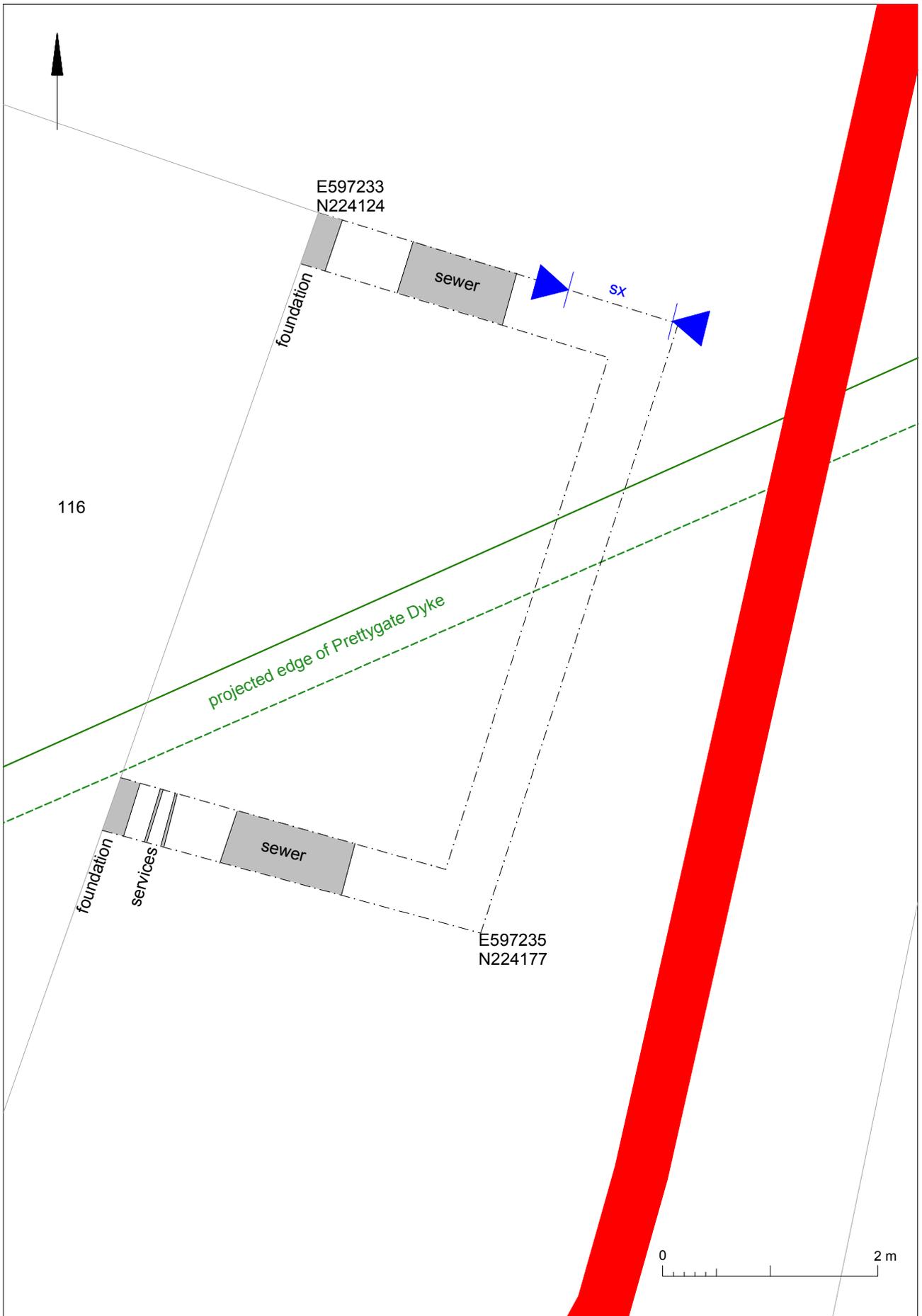


Fig 2 Monitoring results



## Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

### Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> 116 The Commons, Colchester, Essex, CO3 4NP	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TL 9723 2412 (centre)	<b>Site code:</b> CAT project ref.: 17/08q CHER ref: ECC4055 OASIS ref: colchest3-294165
<b>Type of work:</b> Monitoring	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 16th August 2018	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 0.036 ha
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Colchester museum accession code COLEM: 2017.119	<b>Funding source:</b> Owner
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> Not known	<b>Related CHER/SMR number:</b> CHER 11639; MCC1742
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 1316	
<b>Periods represented:</b> -	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> <i>Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 116 The Commons during the demolition of the existing conservatory and the construction of a ground-floor extension to the side. Monitoring was carried out at this site due to its proximity to the Prettygate Dyke, which is projected to run through the southeastern part of the site. No trace of the dyke was encountered but the considerable thickness of the topsoil and subsoil deposits may be related to the site's proximity to it.</i>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>CBC monitor:</b> Jess Tipper	
<b>Keywords:</b> -	<b>Significance:</b> -
<b>Author of summary:</b> Dr Elliott Hicks	<b>Date of summary:</b> August 2018

# **Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for continuous archaeological monitoring and recording at 116 The Commons, Colchester, Essex, CO3 4NP**

**NGR:** TL 9723 2412 (centre)

**Planning references:** 181544 (formerly 171434)

**Commissioned by:** Brian Griffiths, BG Designs

**On behalf of:** Ms Helen Hearn

**Curating museum:** Colchester

**Museum accession code:** 2017.119

**CHER event number:** ECC4055

**CAT project code:** 17/08q

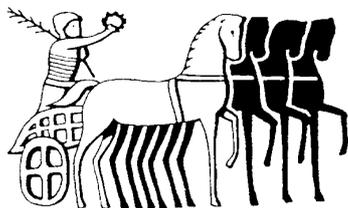
**OASIS project number:** colchest3-294165

**Site manager:** Chris Lister

**CBC monitor:** Jess Tipper

**This WSI written:** 25.08.2017

revised: 14.08.2018



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## Site location and description

The proposed development site lies approximately 2.8km to the southwest of Colchester town centre at 116 The Commons, on the junction of The Commons and Hills Crescent (Fig 1). Site centre is NGR TL 9723 2412.

## Proposed work

The development comprises the demolition of an existing conservatory and the construction of a ground floor extension to the side.

## Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the major published sources for Colchester archaeology (listed below), and also on the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER).

The development site is located in an area rich in archaeological remains. It lies within the Late Iron Age *oppidum* of Camulodunum, which was defined by a system of defensive dykes. Each dyke consisted of a V-shaped ditch with a simple bank behind, constructed so that the inner face of the ditch continued as the outer face of the bank (Crummy 1997, 14). Significantly Prettygate Dyke (HER 11639, MCC1742) runs SW-NE across the southeastern corner of the development site. The 1km dyke runs from the Peartree (600m SW) through to the Prettygate (400m NE) junctions (*CAR 11*, 46-52) and several excavations have taken place over the length of the ditch (*ibia*). Approximately 100m to the south is Heath Farm Dyke.

## Planning background

A planning application was made to Colchester Borough Council in June 2017 (application no. 171434) proposing a ground floor extension to the side and rear. This was subsequently withdrawn and a new planning application (181544) submitted in June 2018 for the demolition of an existing conservatory and the construction of a ground floor extension to the side.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the EHER / CHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA). The recommended archaeological condition is based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

## Requirement for work

The required archaeological work is for continuous archaeological monitoring and recording of all groundworks. Details are given in a Project Brief written by CBCAA (CBC 2017).

Specifically:

The monitoring and recording is being undertaken to identify and record any surviving archaeological deposits that may exist on site.

If unexpected archaeological remains are encountered the CBCAA will be informed immediately who may make amendments to the brief to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

## 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* (ClfA 2014a, b)

- Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011)
- relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2014)
- the Project Brief issued by the CBCAA (CBC 2017).

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

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

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

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 EHER. This will include an uploaded .PDF version of the entire report.

A project or site code will be sought from the curating museum. This code will be used to identify the project archive when it is deposited at the curating museum.

## **Staffing**

The number of field staff for this project is estimated as follows: One CAT officer for the duration of the groundworks.

## **Monitoring methodology**

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

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

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

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

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

A metal detector will be used to examine 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.

### **Environmental sampling policy**

CAT has an arrangement with Val Fryer / Lisa Gray whereby any potentially rich environmental layers or features will be appropriately sampled as a matter of course, but only if they are datable. Samples will be processed by trained CAT staff and the flots sent to Val Fryer / Lisa Gray for analysis and reporting. If any complex or outstanding deposits are encountered, VF/LG will be asked onto site to advise. EH Regional Adviser is available for further advice.

### **Human remains**

CAT follows the policy of leaving human remains *in situ* unless there is a clear indication that the remains are in danger of being compromised as a result of their exposure. If circumstances indicated it were prudent or necessary to remove remains from the site during the monitoring, the following criteria would be applied; if it is clear from their position, context, depth, or other factors that the remains are ancient, then normal procedure is to apply to the Department of Justice for a licence to remove them. In that case, conditions laid down by the license will be followed. If it seems that the remains are not ancient, then the coroner, the client, and CBCAA will be informed, and any advice and/or instruction from the coroner will be followed.

### **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:

small finds, metalwork, coins, etc: Pip Parmenter / Laura Pooley

animal bones (small groups): Pip Parmenter

flints: Adam Wightman

or to outside specialists:

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

environmental processing and reporting: Val Fryer / Lisa Gray

conservation of finds: staff at Colchester Museum / Laura Ratcliffe

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 5-18 of the Code of Practice of the above act. This refers primarily to gold or silver objects/coins, and other artefacts deliberately deposited with those items.

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

## Results

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

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

The report will be submitted within 6 months of the end of fieldwork, with a copy supplied to CBCAA as a PDF.

The report will contain:

- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the archaeological project
- Location plan of trenches in relation to the proposed development. At least two corners of each trench will be given 10 figure grid references.
- Section/s drawings showing depth of deposits from present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale.
- Archaeological methodology and detailed results including a suitable conclusion and discussion and results referring to Regional Research Frameworks (Medlycott 2011).
- All specialist reports or assessments
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results.

An EHER summary sheet will also be completed within four weeks and supplied to CBCAA.

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

## Archive Deposition

It is a policy of Colchester Borough Council that the integrity of the site archive be maintained (i.e. all finds and records should be properly curated by a single organisation), with the archive available for public consultation. To achieve this desired aim it is assumed that the full archive will be deposited in Colchester Museums *unless otherwise agreed in advance*. (A full copy of the archive shall in any case be deposited).

**By accepting this WSI, the client agrees to deposit the archive, including all artefacts, at Colchester & Ipswich Museum.**

The requirements for archive storage will 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 Colchester & Ipswich Museum within 3 months of the completion of the final publication report, with a summary of the contents of the archive supplied to CBCAA.

## Monitoring

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

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

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

CBCAA will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

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

## References

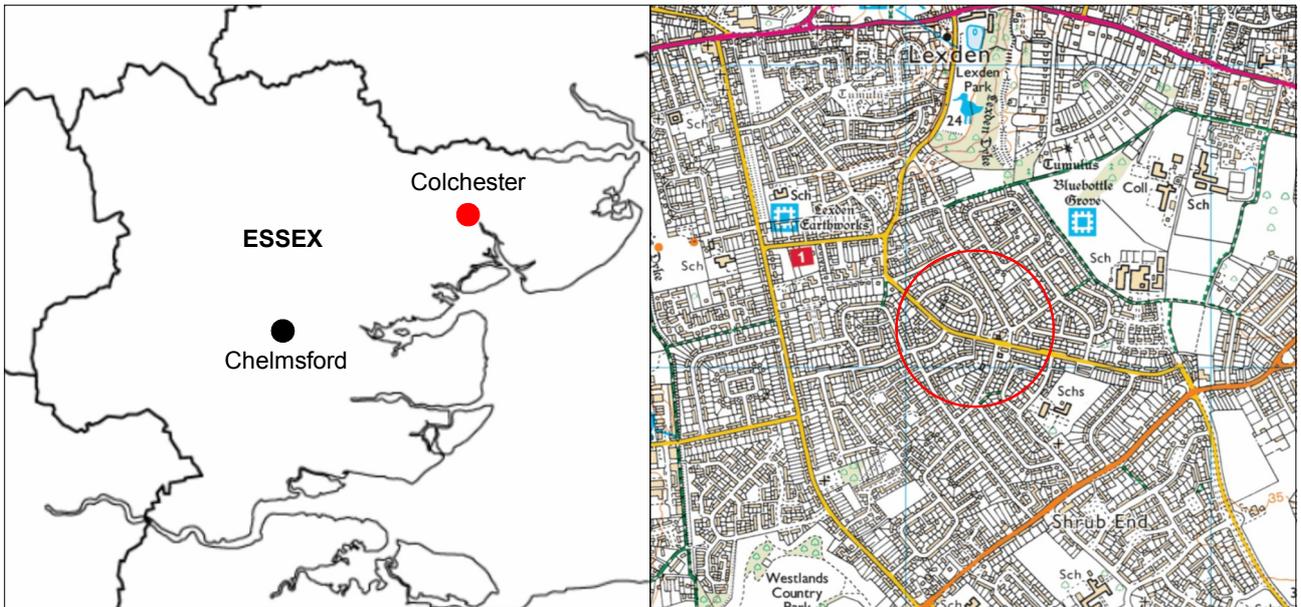
- |                  |       |  |
|------------------|-------|--|
| Brown, D         | 2007  | <i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i>                                       |
| CAR 11           | 1995  | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 11: Camunlodunum 2</i> by C F C Hawkes and P Crummy  |
| CAT              | 2014  | <i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>  |
| CBCPS            | 2017  | <i>Brief for continuous archaeological monitoring and recording at 116 The Commons, Colchester, CO3 4NP</i> , by J Tipper                      |
| ClfA             | 2014a | <i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>  |
| ClfA             | 2014b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>                          |
| Crummy, P        | 1997  | <i>City of Victory. The Story of Colchester – Britain's first Roman town</i>   |
| DCLG             | 2012  | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>  |
| English Heritage | 2006  | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>  |
| Gurney, G        | 2003  | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).</i>                         |
| Medlycott, M     | 2011  | <i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)</i> |

L Pooley



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Fig 1 Site location and route of Prettygate Dyke



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## Printable version

**OASIS ID: colchest3-294165**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological monitoring and recording at 116 The Commons, Colchester, Essex, CO3 4NP
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 116 The Commons during groundworks for a ground-floor extension to the side. Monitoring was carried out at this site due to its proximity to the Prettygate Dyke, which is projected to run through the southeastern part of the site. No trace of the dyke was encountered but the considerable thickness of the topsoil and subsoil deposits may be related to the site's proximity to it.
Project dates	Start: 16-08-2018 End: 16-08-2018
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	17/08q - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	171434 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM 2017.119 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	ECC4055 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER 116 The Commons
Postcode	CO3 4NP

Study area	0.04 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 9723 2412 51.880185677043 0.865878681732 51 52 48 N 000 51 57 E Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	CBC Archaeological Officer
Project design originator	Laura Pooley
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Ben Holloway
Type of sponsor/funding body	Owner

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	COLEM 2017.119
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	COLEM 2017.119
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Report"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological monitoring at 116 The Commons, Colchester, Essex, CO3 4NP: August 2018
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Hicks, E.
Other bibliographic details	CAT Report 1316
Date	2018
Issuer or publisher	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Place of issue or publication	Colchester
Description	A4 loose leaf ring-bound
URL	<a href="http://cat.essex.ac.uk">http://cat.essex.ac.uk</a>
Entered by	Elliott Hicks (eh2@catuk.org)

Entered on 29 August 2018

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