

Colchester Archaeological Trust

Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7GZ *Tel.:* 01206 501785 *Email.:* services@catuk.org

CAT Report 1671	Planning reference: 201531
	CHER Event no.: ECC4575
Archaeological monitoring at West	OASIS ref.: colchest3-407985
Mersea Rugby Club, The Glebe,	Grid Reference: TM 01970 13655 (centre)
	Number of site visits: 3
Colchester Road, West Mersea, Essex,	Dates of visits: 26th, 27th and 28th April
CO5 8RP: April 2021	2021

Nature of the work: Observation of groundworks for the installation of four floodlight masts and accompanying cable trenching.

Reason for condition: The site lies *c* 700m southwest of the 2nd-century Mersea Barrow and in the midst of a number of cropmark complexes indicating the possible presence of a ring-ditch, three Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings and several trackways.

% of total seen: 100% of the groundworks.

Results: All groundworks were monitored by a CAT archaeologist in response to a brief set by Dr Jess Tipper of Colchester Borough Council Planning Services.

The excavation of four pits to accommodate the floodlight masts, each approximately 1.3m by 1.3m and 1m in depth.

Two layers were recorded:

a) modern topsoil L1, hard, dry medium orange/grey/brown silty-clay, 0.32-0.55m thick; b) natural L2, medium yellow/orange clay.

No archaeological features or material were encountered.

As the associated cable trench was only 0.1m wide and excavated through 0.3m of modern topsoil it was not monitored.



Photograph 1 Floodlight mast pit – looking north

Recorded by: Dr Elliott Hicks (<u>eh2@catuk.org</u>)	Date: 25.05.2021
Checked by: Philip Crummy (pc@catuk.org)	Date: 14.06.2021

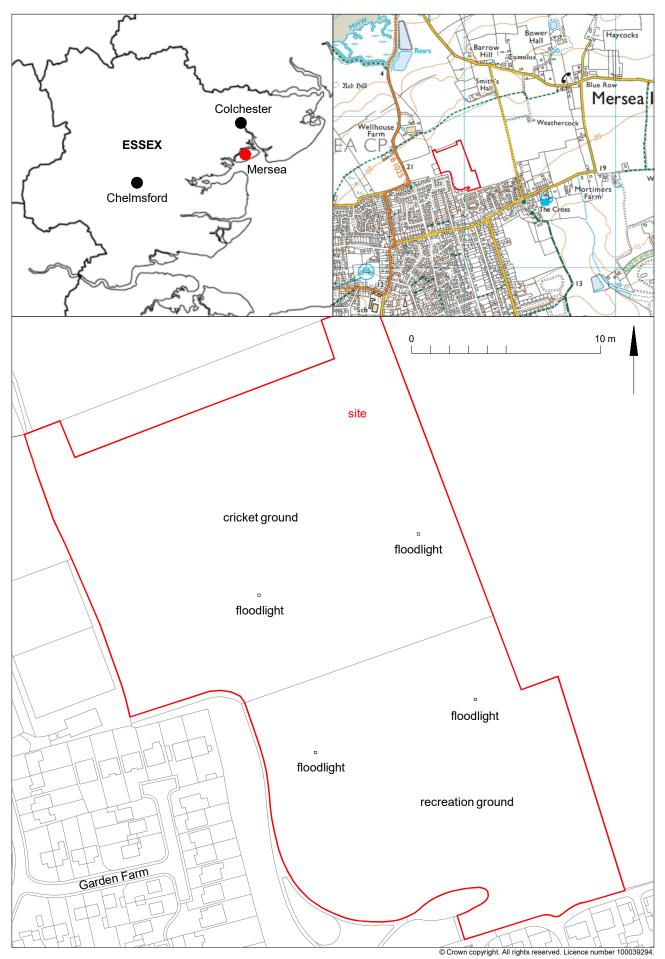


Fig 1 Site location

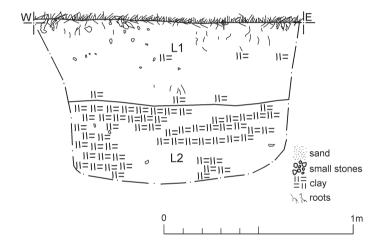


Fig 2 Representative section.

Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological investigation at West Mersea Rugby Club, The Glebe, Colchester Road, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8RP

NGR: TM 01970 13655 (centre) District: Colchester

Planning references: 201531

Commissioned by: Graham Marfleet (Marfleet & Blyth) **On behalf of:** West Mersea Rugby Club

Curating museum: Colchester CHER number: ECC4575

CAT project code: 2020/11e OASIS project number: colchest3-407985

Site manager: Chris Lister CBC monitor: Dr Richard Hoggett

This WSI written: 13/11/2020



COLCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST, Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7GZ

tel: 01206 501785 *email:* <u>mb@catuk.org</u>

Site location and description

The proposed development site lies at the northern end of the town of West Mersea, on the eastern side of Colchester Road at Mersea Rugby Club, Colchester CO5 8RS (Fig 1). The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TM 01966 13644.

Proposed work

The development comprises the installation of four floodlight masts along with associated groundworks.

Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive and the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER, ECC/MCC numbers) accessed via the Colchester Heritage Explorer (www.colchesterheritage.co.uk).

The site is located within an area of fields containing cropmarks recorded through aerial photography. The majority of these cropmarks have been interpreted as linear features and trackways which likely represent either Roman ditches or historic agricultural boundaries. Land to the east and north of Wellhouse Farm (immediately to the north of the Rugby Club) contain cropmarks interpreted as being of a ring-ditch, three rectangular pits (thought to represent Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings (SFBs)) and a number of historic field boundaries (MCC8813). Find spots in this area include an Iron Age coin (MCC4894), a Roman coin (MCC8776) and some Roman objects including a brooch, coin and tessera cube (MCC8779). To the north-east of the site at Barrow Hill cropmarks interpreted as trackways and linear features are present, as well as a large amount of geological deposits which may be masking evidence of further archaeology (MCC4746). Cropmarks to the east of the site at present to show evidence of a building of an unknown date (MCC8930). To the west of the Rugby Club are further linear cropmarks, perhaps indicating the location of a trackway (MCC8728).

The site is located approximately 700m to the south-west of Mersea Barrow (MCC6928, Scheduled Ancient Monument No: SM 32425; NHLE no. 1019019). The barrow was excavated in 1912 (Warren 1913). The excavation consisted of a trench dug from the eastern side of the barrow into its centre, where a large central shaft was excavated. A Roman cremation burial was located near the centre of the barrow. It lay within a chamber constructed of Roman roof tiles (*tegulae*) set in mortar. The chamber contained a lead casket, within which was a glass urn containing the cremated human remains. In 1912 the barrow survived to a size of approximately 33.5 m in diameter and 6.9 m high. No trace was discovered in 1912 of a ditch around the barrow. The 1912 excavation trench was subsequently roofed over and concreted to form a tunnel to allow visitors access to the burial chamber from the eastern side of the barrow.

The burial was dated in the original site report to the late 1st century (Warren 1913, 138). The date of the burial and barrow was subsequently reassessed by Hull to AD 100-120 (VCHE 3, 160). More recently, it has been suggested that a mid-2nd century date for the construction of the barrow is more likely (Benfield and Black 2014, 67 & 72).

The cremated human remains were re-examined in 2012-3 by Jacqueline McKinley of Wessex Archaeology (McKinley 2014). The bone came from a male aged between 35 and 45. There is evidence of spinal lesions and excessive bony growths, indicating that he suffered from diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis (DISH). This is a disease of the joints that today is found mainly in men over 50. The presence of exotic items, including pine resin and frankincense, was also detected (Brettell et al 2013). These were probably added to the bone after cremation, and suggest an elaborate funerary ritual.

CAT carried out watching briefs at Mersea Barrow in 2014 and 2016 during works to improve visitor access and amenities. No significant archaeological deposits were uncovered, although a small quantity of Roman roof tile fragments was recovered from the modern topsoil on the eastern side of the barrow (CAT Report 992).

There is an unconfirmed report that two Roman rings and fragments of a tessellated pavement were found fairly close to the Mersea Barrow in nearby Bower Hall Lane (unpublished letter to D.T-D Clarke dated 28.8.1980 from Mrs J W M Read; Howlett 2012, 66 & 76).

A programme of fieldwalking, metal-detecting and geophysical survey, along with a trailtrenched evaluation, was carried out on farmland immediately to the east of the Rugby Club in 2019 in advance of a residential development (CAT Report 1499). The trial-trenching exposed five post-medieval/modern field boundary ditches and six drainage gullies, along with a medieval/post-medieval pit, a possible Roman pit, a possible prehistoric ditch and 15 undated features (seven tree-throws, four pits, two gullies and two ditches).

Planning background

A planning application was made to Colchester Borough Council in July 2020 (application No. 201531) for the *installation of 4 x 15 meter masts complete with 8 x 2kw floodlights to achieve 100lux on the pitch as required by the RFU.*

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the 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* (MHCLG 2019).

Requirement for work

The required archaeological work is for an archaeological investigation of all groundworks (including any services and landscaping). Details are given in a Project Brief written by CBCAA (CBC 2020).

Specifically, the investigation is being undertaken to identify and record any surviving archaeological deposits that may exist on site.

If unexpected remains are encountered the CBCAA will be informed immediately and the CBCAA will decide if additional archaeological work is required to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

In the exceptional circumstances that important, well-preserved mosaic floors (or similar remains) are discovered, which cannot otherwise be avoided (and satisfactorily preserved in situ) by the development, a contingency will be required for the block-lifting of these archaeological remains, e.g. well-preserved mosaic remains, and for subsequent conservation and presentation. A decision about the need for conservation and lifting of important archaeological remains will be made in consultation with specialist stakeholders (e.g, Historic England, Colchester Museum and Norfolk Museums Service, Conservation and Design Services).

The method and form of development will also be monitored to ensure that it conforms to the previously agreed locations and techniques upon which the brief is based. Any variations will be discussed with the CBCAA immediately.

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, b)
- Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011)
- relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2020)

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 Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER). This will include an uploaded .PDF version of the entire report.

A unique HER event number will be obtained from the CBCAA prior to the commencement of fieldwork. The curating museum will be notified of the details of the project and the event code, which will be used to identify the project archive when depositing at the end of the project.

Staffing

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

Investigation methodology

There will be sufficient on-site attendance by CAT staff to maintain a watch on all contractors' groundworks to record, excavate or sample (as necessary) any archaeological features or deposits. The investigation will involve monitoring of all groundworks and inspection of upcast soil.

All topsoil removal and ground reduction will be under the supervision, and to the satisfaction, of a professional archaeologist. If a mechanical excavator is used it will be equipped with a toothless bucket. If no archaeologically significant deposits are exposed, excavation will continue until the required depth for the development has been reached.

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), 10% of linear features (ditches, etc) and 100% of all complex features and burials (see Human Remains policy below).

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 proforma record sheets. Registers will be compiled of finds, small finds and soil samples.

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 investigated areas will be located by NGR coordinates.

Environmental sampling policy

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

Sampling strategies will address questions of:

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

CAT has an arrangement with Val Fryer / Lisa Gray whereby any potentially rich environmental layers or features will be appropriately sampled as a matter of course. Trained CAT staff will do any processing and the flots passed to Val Fryer / Lisa Gray for analysis and reporting.

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

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 or unless advised to do so by the project osteologist or CBCAA.

CBCAA will be notified immediately if any human remains are encountered during the investigation.

If circumstances indicated it were prudent or necessary to remove remains from the site during the investigation, 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 and seek advice from the project osteologist. Human remains removed from site for analysis may be subject to radiocarbon dating (see finds section).

Following HE guidance (HE 2018) if the human remains are not to be lifted, the project osteologist should be available to record the human remain *in situ* (i.e. a site visit). Conditions laid down by the DoJ license will be followed. If it seems that the remains are not ancient, then the coroner, the client, and the 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. Digital site photographs will be taken and archived as per Historic England guidelines (HE 2015a)

Finds

All significant finds will be retained.

All finds, where appropriate, will be washed and marked with site code and context number. CAT may use local volunteers to assist the CAT Finds Officer with this task.

Most of our finds reports are written internally by CAT Staff under the supervision and direction of Philip Crummy (Director) and Howard Brooks (Deputy Director). This includes specialist subjects such as:

ceramic finds (pottery and ceramic building material): Matthew Loughton animal bones: Alec Wade (or Adam Wightman, small groups only) small finds, metalwork, coins, etc: Laura Pooley non-ceramic bulk finds: Laura Pooley flints: Adam Wightman environmental processing: Bronagh Quinn project osteologist (human remains): Meghan Seehra or to outside specialists: animal and human bone: Julie Curl (Sylvanus) environmental assessment and analysis: Val Fryer / Lisa Gray radiocarbon dating: SUERC Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, Glasgow conservation/x-ray: Laura Ratcliffe (LR Conservation) / Norfolk Museums Service, **Conservation and Design Services** Other specialists whose opinion can be sought on large or complex groups include: flint: Hazel Martingell prehistoric pottery: Stephen Benfield / Nigel Brown / Paul Sealey Roman pottery: Stephen Benfield / Paul Sealey / Jo Mills / Val Rigby / **Gwladys Monteil** Roman brick/tile: Ernest Black / Ian Betts (MOLA) Roman glass: Hilary Cool small finds: Nina Crummy 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.

A contingency will be made in the budget for scientific assessment/analysis. This can include soil micromorphological assessment, absolute dating in the event that archaeomagnetic and/or (more probably) radiocarbon dating is required, if burning is encountered or human remains (in which case it might be necessary to lift a small sample for absolute dating). The Historic England Regional Science Advisor will be consulted for advice on this.

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* (HE 2015b).

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:

- Location plan of the groundworks in relation to the proposed development. At least two corners of the site 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 with Colchester & Ipswich Museum *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 and provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration and analysis) as appropriate.

The archive will be deposited with Colchester & Ipswich Museum or an alternate repository (approved by COLEM and CBCAA) within 3 months of the completion of the final publication report, with a summary of the contents of the archive supplied to CBCAA. Digital archives will be curated with the Archaeology Data Service, or similar accredited digital archive repository, that safeguard the long-term curation of digital records. Prior to deposition CAT's data management plan (based on the official guidelines from the Digital Curation Centre [DCC 2013]) will ensure the integrity of the digital archive.

The CBCAA will be notified of the archiving timetable throughout the project and once deposition has occurred.

A digital / vector drawing of the site be given to the CBCAA for integration into the HER.

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

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

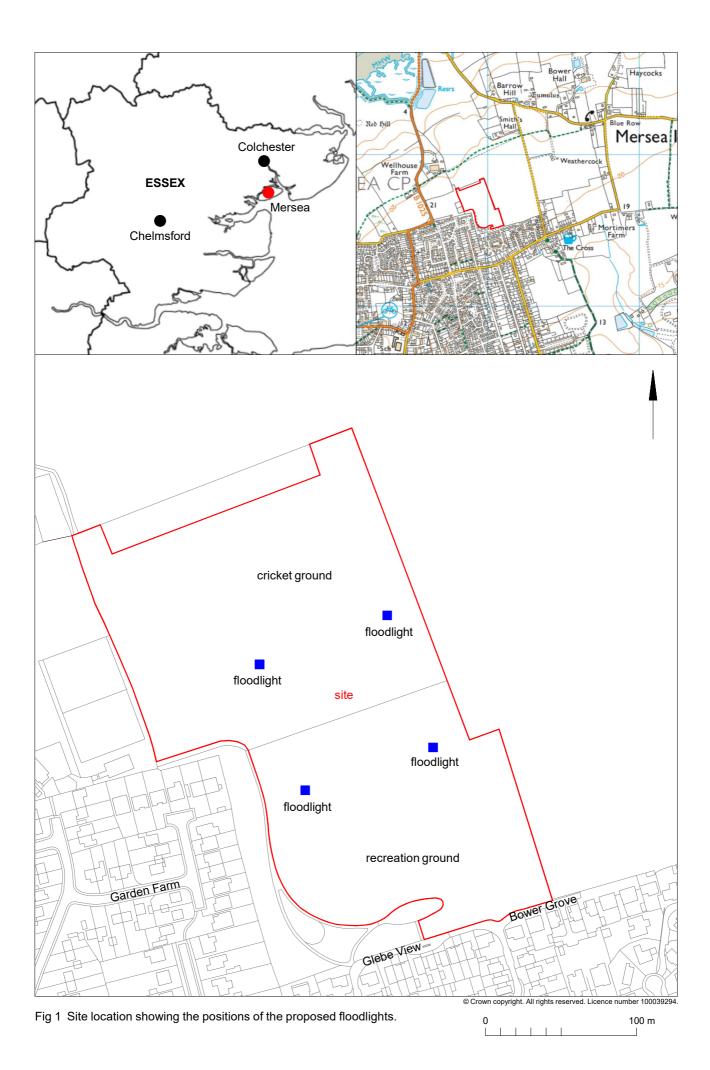
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Black, E	2010	Archaeology and History 4 (2013), 59-73
Brettell, R C, Stern, B & Heron, C P	2013	'Mersea Island Barrow: molecular evidence for frankincense', in Essex Archaeology and History 4 (2013), 81-7
Brown, D	2011	Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation. 2nd edition.
CAT	2020	Health & Safety Policy
CAT Report 1499	2019	Archaeological fieldwalking, metal-detecting and geophysical surveys plus a trial-trenching evaluation on land to the west of Dawes Lane, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8GJ: October-November 2019 By L Pooley
CBCAA	2020	Brief for Archaeological Investigation at West Mersea Rugby Club, The Glebe, Colchester Road, West Mersea, CO5 8RP By R Hoggett
CIfA	2014a	Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief
ClfA	2014b	Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials
Gurney, D	2003	Standards for field archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Historic England (HE)	2015a	Digital Image capture and File Storage: Guidelines for best practice. By S Cole & P Backhouse
Historic England (HE)	2015b	Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)
Historic England (HE)	2018	The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project. By S Mays, M Brickley and J Sidell
Howlett, S	2012	The Secrets of the Mound: Mersea Barrow, 1912-2012
McKinley, J I	2013	'Mersea Island Barrow: the cremated bone and aspects of the mortuary rite', in <i>Essex Archaeology and History</i> 4 , 74-80
Medlycott, M	2011	Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)
MHCLG	2019	National Planning Policy Framework. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
Warren, S H	1913	'The Opening of the Romano-British Barrow on Mersea Island, Essex' in <i>Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society</i> 13 , 116- 40
VCHE 3	1963	A history of the County of Essex, 3: Roman Essex, ed. WR Powell, The Victoria History of the Counties of England

M Baister



Colchester Archaeological Trust Roman Circus House Roman Circus Walk Colchester Essex CO2 2GZ

tel: 01206 501785 email: <u>mb@catuk.org</u>



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OASIS ID: colchest3-407985

Project details

Project name	Archaeological Investigation at West Mersea Rugby Club, The Glebe, Colchester Road, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8RP
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring was carried out at West Mersea Rugby Club, The Glebe, Colchester Road, West Mersea, Essex, during groundworks for four new floodlight masts. The site lies to the southwest of the 2nd-century Mersea Barrow and in the midst of a number of cropmark complexes indicating the possible presence of a ring-ditch, three Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings and several trackways. Despite lying in an archaeologically-sensitive area, however, no archaeological remains were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 26-04-2021 End: 28-04-2021
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	2020/11e - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	201531 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	ECC4575 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER WEST MERSEA West Mersea Rugby Club, The Glebe
Postcode	CO5 8RP
Study area	5.33 Hectares
Site coordinates	TM 01970 13655 51.78450389982 0.928550474114 51 47 04 N 000 55 42 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	CBC Archaeological Officer
Project design originator	Mark Baister
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Bronagh Quinn

15/06/2021

Type of	Developer
sponsor/funding	
body	

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	ECC4575
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	ECC4575
Paper Media available	"Miscellaneous Material","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Report","Section"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Title	Archaeological monitoring at West Mersea Rugby Club, The Glebe, Colchester Road, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8RP: April 2021
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Essex, CO5 8RP: April 2021
	Essex, CO5 8RP: April 2021
Author(s)/Editor(s) Other bibliographic	Essex, CO5 8RP: April 2021 Hicks, E.
Author(s)/Editor(s) Other bibliographic details	Essex, CO5 8RP: April 2021 Hicks, E. CAT Report 1671
Author(s)/Editor(s) Other bibliographic details Date Issuer or	Essex, CO5 8RP: April 2021 Hicks, E. CAT Report 1671 2021
Author(s)/Editor(s) Other bibliographic details Date Issuer or publisher Place of issue or	Essex, CO5 8RP: April 2021 Hicks, E. CAT Report 1671 2021 Colchester Archaeological Trust
Author(s)/Editor(s) Other bibliographic details Date Issuer or publisher Place of issue or publication	Essex, CO5 8RP: April 2021 Hicks, E. CAT Report 1671 2021 Colchester Archaeological Trust Colchester
Author(s)/Editor(s) Other bibliographic details Date Issuer or publisher Place of issue or publication Description	Essex, CO5 8RP: April 2021 Hicks, E. CAT Report 1671 2021 Colchester Archaeological Trust Colchester A4 loose-leaf ringbound

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