

Archaeological investigation at Alresford Hall, Ford Lane, Alresford, Essex, CO7 8AY

June 2021



by Laura Pooley

with contributions by Dr Matthew Loughton and Alec Wade
figures by Laura Pooley

fieldwork by Harvey Furniss and Matt Perou

**commissioned by Dawn Mercer, Rural Solutions
on behalf of WSM Farming**

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Colchester Archaeological Trust

Roman Circus House,
Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex, CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785

email: lp@catuk.org

CAT Report 1682

June 2021

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OASIS summary sheet

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1 Summary

An archaeological investigation took place at Alresford Hall, Ford Lane, Alresford, Essex following a retrospective planning application for the construction of a swimming pool. Alresford Hall is an early 18th-century Grade II listed building and the swimming pool was located within one of the mid 19th-century walled gardens. Spoil from the swimming pool was investigated for finds retrieval and contained material of later post-medieval/modern date, likely from activities within the walled garden and wider estate. There was no evidence within the spoil that any earlier archaeological remains had been truncated when the pool was built.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological investigation at Arlesford Hall, Ford Lane, Alresford, Essex which was carried out on 1st and 2nd June 2021. The work was commissioned by Dawn Mercer of Rural Solutions on behalf of WSM Farming, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In October 2020 an application was made to Tendring District Council (20/01523) for retrospective planning permission and listed building consent for a swimming pool in the walled gardens to the south of Alresford Hall. The hall is a Grade II Listed Building (NHLE 1111422) and the walls enclosing the garden are also listed at Grade II (NHLE 1168865).

As the swimming pool had already been constructed Teresa O'Connor, the Historic Environment Advisor for Essex County Council Place Services, advised that the spoil from the site should be investigated for archaeological material to determine if any significant archaeological contexts had been truncated during the groundworks.

All fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2015), 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 the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014a).

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological includes extracts of the ECC brief and the Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

Alresford Hall is a Grade II listed building (NHLE 1111422) 1.4km to the southeast of the village of Alresford. To the south of the hall are two rectangular walled gardens, with the walls of those gardens also listed at Grade II (NHLE 1168865). The swimming pool is located within the eastern walled garden, to the south of a single-storey brick outbuilding. The hall dates to the early 18th century but may have replaced an earlier structure, and the walled gardens were laid out sometime in the mid 19th-century as they do not appear on the Parish of Arlesford Tithe Map of 1839 but are on the 1874 OS map (Grahame 2020, 30-31). The historic background of the hall has been fully discussed in a Heritage Impact Assessment submitted with the current planning application (Grahame 2020).

Cropmarks in a field immediately to the east and southeast of the site included ring ditches, linear features and a trackway (EHER 2592). Evaluation on the field in 2020 located a number of the cropmarks though finds dating evidence was rare. One large ring-ditch produced sherds of early Neolithic and early Roman pottery, a rectilinear enclosure contained an isolated sherd of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age pottery, and the trackway revealed a sparse distribution of Late Iron Age to early Roman pottery (Monahan & Higgs 2020).

4 Aim

The aim of the investigation was to search the spoil heap for finds to determine if any significant archaeological remains had been truncated by the construction of the swimming pool

5 Results

The swimming pool is located within the eastern walled garden and measured 12m long by 6m wide and 1.7m deep (Fig 2). Spoil from the excavation of the pool had been retained on site, to the east of the walled garden, and a mechanical excavator was employed to spread the heap out over a wider area to assist with the search. The spoil was then dug through by hand by two CAT archaeologists for finds retrieval. A metal-detector was also used.



Photograph 1 Searching through the spoil heap

6 Finds

6.1 Pottery and building material

by Dr Matthew Loughton

Four sherds of pottery and six pieces of building material were recovered from the spoil heap. The pottery dates to the 20th century and included sherds from two stamped flower pots (fabric 51B) and a Staffordshire-type white earthenware (fabric F48D) bowl. The building material included two complete stamped (S[- -]P?) soft red bricks, with dimensions of 230 mm x 110 mm x 68 mm, which date to the 19th to 20th century. There was also sherd of pan-tile dating from the 17th century onwards, a piece of Roman imbrex, a piece of roofing slate, and a lump of modern mortar.

Ceramic material	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	Rim EVE
Pottery	4	113	29	0.32
Building material	6	5,877	980	-
Total	10	5,990	599	0.32

Table 1 The pottery and building material

6.2 Animal bone
by Alec Wade

Ten pieces of unstratified animal bone were recovered weighing a total of 830g. Two species were identified, horse and cattle. The horse bone was in visibly better condition than the cattle bone and could be assumed to have originated from a different context. It is also very likely that the pieces represent the remains of a single mature animal.

Species	No. of pieces	Weight (g)	Comments
Cattle	1	58	Metacarpal, almost complete but missing distal end.
Horse	4	548	Complete second phalange, distal metapodial fragment, (fused epiphysis), distal tibia fragment (fused epiphysis with oblique/transverse chop marks) and a complete incisor (upper third incisor) from a mature animal (15 – 20 years +).
Large mammal	5	224	One pelvic fragment, 3 pieces of rib and an unidentified fragment. <i>Large mammal could potentially be either cattle, horse, or larger species of deer.</i>
total	10	830	

Table 2 The animal bone

6.3 Ironwork

Several pieces of post-medieval/modern ironwork were found in the spoil heap with a metal-detector. These items were photographed (see below) and left on site.



Photograph 2 Post-medieval/modern ironwork from the spoil heap

7 Conclusion

Finds recovered from the spoil heap were largely of later post-medieval/modern date and most were probably associated with activities within the walled garden and wider estate. It is impossible to determine if this material was located within soil layers or if significant contexts associated with the hall and/or walled garden had been destroyed by the excavation of the swimming pool. There was however, no evidence amongst the finds that any significant earlier archaeological remains had been truncated.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Dawn Mercer of Rural Solutions and WSM Farming for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by H Furniss and M Perou. Figures are by L Pooley. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor.

9 References

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

Brown, N & Glazebrook, J	2000	<i>Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8 (EAA 8)
CAT	2021	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Code of conduct.</i> Updated 2019
Grahame, M	2020	Alresford Hall, Ford Lane, Alresford, Essex, CO7 8AY: Heritage Impact Assessment. M-Arc Heritage Ltd, report ref. 1136/AHC20
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14)
Historic England	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
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)
MHCLG	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Monahan, V & Higgs K	2020	<i>Alresford Hall, Ford Lane, Alresford, Essex, CO7 8AY: Archaeological Evaluation.</i> Archaeological Solutions Ltd, Report no. 6037

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
ECCHEA	Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
ws	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1682)

Site digital photos and log

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1682)

Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log

Graphic files

Survey data

12 Archive deposition

The 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 reference ALAH21.

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Distribution list:

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Colchester Archaeological Trust

Roman Circus House,

Roman Circus Walk,

Colchester,

Essex, CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785

email: lp@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy

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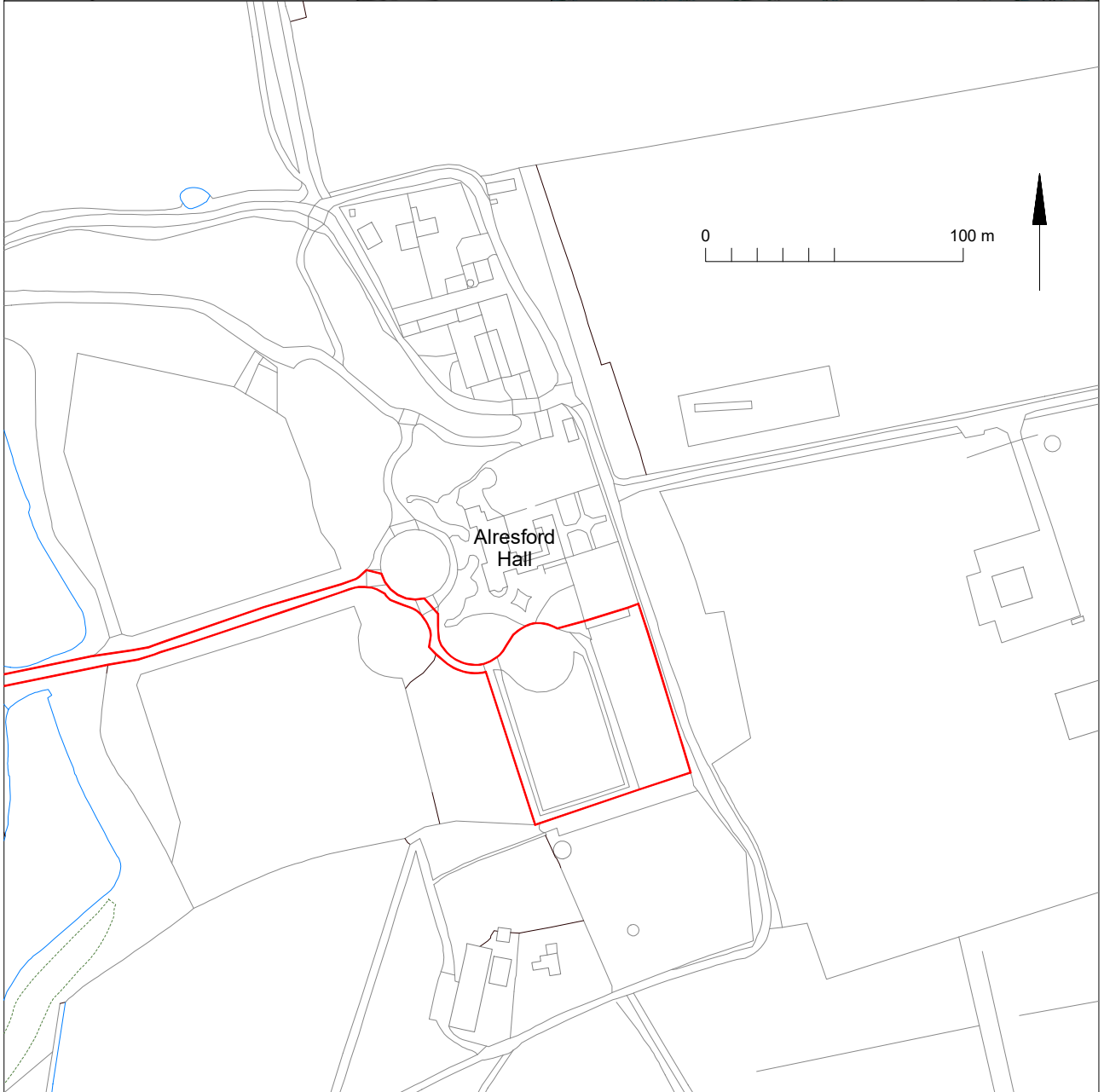
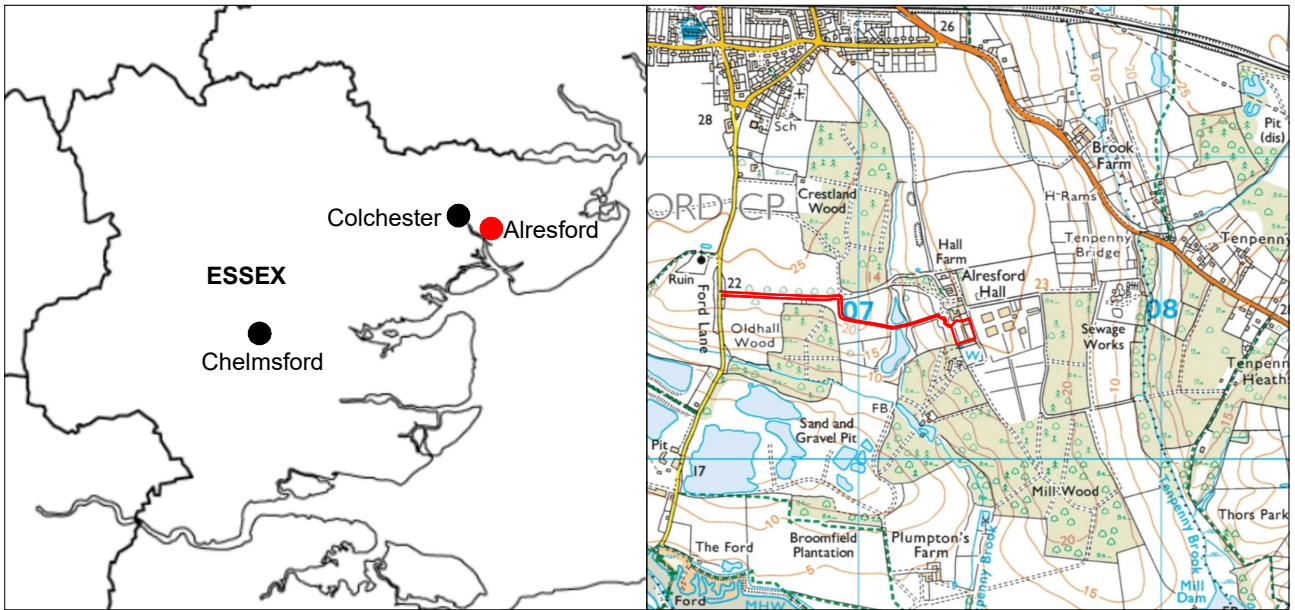


Fig 1 Site location.



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Fig 2 Plan showing location of swimming pool and spoil heap

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OASIS ID: colchest3-422419

Project details

Project name	Archaeological investigation at Alresford Hall, Ford Lane, Alresford, Essex, CO7 8AY
Short description of the project	An archaeological investigation took place at Alresford Hall, Ford Lane, Alresford, Essex following a retrospective planning application for the construction of a swimming pool. Alresford Hall is an early 18th-century Grade II listed building and the swimming pool was located within one of the mid 19th-century walled gardens. Spoil from the swimming pool was investigated for finds retrieval and contained material of later post-medieval/modern date, likely from activities within the walled garden and wider estate. There was no evidence within the spoil that any earlier archaeological remains had been truncated when the pool was built.
Project dates	Start: 01-06-2021 End: 02-06-2021
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	2021/05o - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	20/01523 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	ALAH21 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	N/A None
Significant Finds	N/A None
Investigation type	"Field observation"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX TENDRING ALRESFORD Alresford Hall, Ford Lane
Postcode	CO7 8AY
Study area	72 Square metres
Site coordinates	TM 07363 20451 51.843546397377 1.010701533534 51 50 36 N 001 00 38 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	HEM Team Officer, ECC
Project design originator	none
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Harvey Furniss
Type of sponsor/funding body	Owner

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	ALAH21
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	ALAH21

Paper Contents "other"
Paper Media available "Photograph","Report"

Project bibliography 1

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