

Archaeological monitoring at the White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8QD

November 2021



by **Megan Seehra**

with contributions by Matthew Loughton, Laura Pooley and Adam Wightman
figures by Sarah Veasey and Emma Holloway

fieldwork by Megan Seehra and Alexander Smith

commissioned by Howbeck Homes

NGR: TM 00909 12562 (centre)

Planning ref.: 202673

CAT project ref.: 2021/03q

ECC code: ECC4620

OASIS ref.: colchest3-420303



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CAT Report 1752

December 2021

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1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at the White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea, Essex during groundworks for the reconstruction of dilapidated extensions, and the construction of a new porch and rear extension. The White Hart Hotel is at least 200 years old, and lies within an area of Roman occupation. Several modern features – including those made of brick, associated with the White Hart – were uncovered.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at the White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea, Essex from 11th to 29th November 2021. The work was commissioned by Howbeck Homes and took place during groundworks for the reconstruction of dilapidated extensions, and the construction of a new porch and rear extension.

In response to consultation with Colchester Borough Council Planning Services (CBCPS), the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor Dr Richard Hoggett 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 the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2019).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Investigation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Dr Richard Hoggett (CBCPS 2021), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with CBCPS (CAT 2021).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2016), 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 brief* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b).

3 Archaeological background (Fig 2)

The following archaeological background includes extracts of CAT Report 1324 and draws on the major published sources for Colchester archaeology and the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER/ECC numbers; accessible via Colchester Heritage Explorer (<https://colchesterheritage.co.uk/map>)).

The White Hart is a prominent building on the High Street in the centre of West Mersea. The Historic building recording of the hotel (CAT Report 1324, ECC4246) show cartographic evidence that the White Hart has existed in some fashion from at least the late 18th/early 19th century. The earliest detailed cartographic evidence (1839 tithe map) shows the hotel with several extensions that are no longer present, having since been replaced with other structures. These later structures are the buildings still standing today, having been constructed around the nucleus of Structure A (CAT Report 1324 Fig 2), which, based on the cartographic evidence, seem to be the earliest surviving element of the building.

The photographic evidence shows that sometime in the early 20th century the largest building in the complex (Structure C) underwent significant alteration. The projecting south-eastern rendered frontage, along with its sash windows, was entirely removed. Also removed was an oriel window on the south-west elevation. Following this, the north-east, south-east and south-west elevations of the building were covered in faux timber-framing, which is still present today. These substantial exterior alterations probably also coincided with some interior alterations to the White Hart, evidence for which is mentioned in the descriptive record within CAT Report 1324.

Archaeological work on the site of the White Hart includes and an evaluation in 2019. The evaluation revealed post-medieval and modern layers sealing natural sands. A post-medieval brick-lined soakaway/cesspit, a 19th-century brick wall foundation and an undated pit were excavated and are likely to be associated with the existing building (CAT Report 1415, ECC4246).

High Street

The proposed development lies within an area of high archaeological potential, specifically within an area of Roman occupation revealed by multiple sightings of wall foundations and floors, and medieval remains related to the adjacent church and priory. Archaeological investigations along the High Street have included a small excavation at Bonheur in 1922, which revealed a Roman stone wall set in *opus signinum* (CHER MCC8837). Further work by Hull in 1927 revealed Roman pottery, a bone pin and an iron knife (CHER ECC3540, **VCH** vol 3 p161). A possible Roman wall was also found on land from the High Street to Captains Lane (CHER MCC8860). Adjacent to this in 2016, a Roman ditch was recorded during a watching brief by Britannia Archaeology (CHER MCC10065). CAT carried out a photographic survey of Hall Barn in 1985 prior to conversion into a country club (CAT Report 1000, vol 3).

Church Road

The site lies adjacent to West Mersea parish church (Church of St Peter and St Paul). The church is constructed of re-used Roman Kentish ragstone walls with Roman and later brick. The earliest evidence (the lower part of the tower) appears to be 11th century (CHER MCC8909 & MCC4666). Around the churchyard, Cromwell Mortimer recorded seeing a mosaic and Roman remains in 1730 (**VCH** vol 3 p158-9). In 1896 Henry Laver observed a Roman wall (CHER MCC8858). CAT also excavated three trial pits in 1991 prior to extensions to the church, but only residual Roman finds were recorded (CAT Report 1000, vol 3). To the west of the church is thought to be the location of a medieval priory. Although the exact location is uncertain, it was recorded to have been established in 1046 (CHER MCC8835). Within this area, Roman pavement and tesserae have been noted on more than one occasion (CHER MCC8858 & MCC8909). On the southern side of Coast Road, a well is thought to relate to the priory (CHER MCC9356). On land to the north of Church Road, CAT was called out by the curator of Mersea Museum to record human remains in a service trench for a new bungalow. Although the workmen had removed all the bone (?3 partial skulls, some limb and vertebrae bones) before the first visit, on the second visit the location of a human skull was recorded. The skeletal remains were interpreted as medieval in date. It was also noted fragments of daub as well as Roman tile/brick fragments were seen in the backfill (CAT Report 1000 vol 3). The bungalow is approximately 50m northwest of the White Hart.

Yorick Road

A Roman mausoleum (CHER MCC8355 scheduled monument no. 1002195) is located to the rear of 20 Yorick Road. An exploratory trench was undertaken in 2003 to assess the exact location and condition of the mausoleum (CHER MCC2973, CAT Report 255) and part of a Roman wall foundation was exposed during subsequent monitoring (CHER MCC5406, CAT Report 330).

Archaeological investigations at 6 High Street (CAT Report 576), 4 Meadow Lane (CHER MCC5553, CAT Report 420), 6 Meadow Lane (CAT Report 629), The Blackwater Hotel, Church Road (CHER MCC5291, CAT Report 223), Howard's Cottage, 12a Church Road (CAT Report 1000, vol 3) have not revealed any significant archaeological remains. It has been noted in some of these reports however that the land appeared to have comprised of made-up ground thought to be dated to the 1960s (8 High Street, CAT Report 118).

4 Aims

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

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

Footings and associated drainage trenching for three extensions to the existing property were machine-excavated, under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trenches for footings totalled c 71m of foundation trenches, 0.6-0.9m wide, 0.8-1.1m deep. Drainage trenches totalled c 9m in length, 0.6-0.8m wide, and 0.8-0/9m deep.

All excavations occurred through modern rubble make-up (L1, 0.20-0.65m thick) sealing a similar make-up layer (L2, 0.15-0.65m thick). Underlying this was an orange, sandy natural (L3, from c 1m). Concrete (L4) above L1 was mostly removed prior to excavation, and was only recorded in the south end of the restaurant footings, and the drainage trenches.



Photograph 1 Footings to the northeast of site, looking south.

A possible former soakaway-type structure was found in the north-western corner of the development site. It was not recorded, but is 1.2m in length, and is likely to be the same soakaway found in Test Pit 1 from the 2019 CAT evaluation (F1, CAT Report 1415).

A large feature (F1; Photograph 2) - possibly a northeast-southwest orientated linear - was partially excavated. Approximately 0.5m width was excavated, and the bottom of the feature was not reached. This was due to proximity to the building and narrowness of the trenches. This linear was at least 1m wide, and at least 0.4m deep. It appeared to continue under the building. The western edge excavated was fairly steep. Finds from F1 included Roman pottery and CBM, along with medieval/post-medieval peg-tile and post-medieval/modern brick. The continuation of F1 in the same orientation was seen continuing south-west into the next footings, but was left unexcavated.

The remains of a domed brick structure (F2 c 1m wide; possibly a soakaway) was noted northwest of the continuation of F1 (Photograph 3).



Photograph 2 F1 partially excavated, looking south.



Photograph 3 Possible brick soakaway (F2), looking roughly north.

Two shallow pits (F3, 0.5 x 0.5m, 0.2m deep; F4, 0.7 x 0.2m, 0.3m deep), both with oyster shell in the fill, were identified in the south and southeast area of site.

Two more shallow pits or tree throws – F5 (0.6 x 0.3m, 0.3m deep) and F6 (c 0.5m x 0.18m, 0.10m deep) – were found on the south edge of the footings. There were no finds recovered. F7 (banana-shaped feature, 0.2-0.4m wide, c 2.7m long), F8 (possible pit, 0.4m x 0.35m) and F9 (N-S linear, at least 1m long, 0.5m wide) (Photograph 4) were modern features containing with modern material in a dark fill. They were therefore left unexcavated.

A modern pit-like feature (F10, Photograph 5) was noted in the west end of site. Modern building material and rubble was noted in the top of the feature, so was also left unexcavated. It was c 0.6m wide.



Photograph 4 F7 and F8, looking southeast.



Photograph 5 F10, unexcavated, looking north.

A significant quantity of clay tobacco pipe fragments (finds no. 5) were recovered from a concentrated area on the surface, just north-west of F1. They are likely backfill from L2, possibly related to the construction of the building.



Photograph 6 Trenches at the northwest edge of site, looking roughly northeast.



Photograph 7 General view of trenches from west end of site, looking roughly east.



Photograph 8 Extra footings on the southwest edge of site; F9 is in the foreground (unlabelled), looking south-east.



Photograph 9 Trenches from the east corner of site, looking roughly west.

6 Finds

6.1 Ceramic finds

by Dr. Matthew Loughton

The watching brief uncovered 16 sherds of pottery and ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) weighing 898g with a pottery EVE of 0.05. CBM account for the bulk of this material by sherd count and by sherd weight.

| Context | Description | No. | Weight (g) | MSW (g) | EVE |
|--------------|----------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| F1 | Ditch | 15 | 858 | 57 | 0.05 |
| L1 | Modern make-up | 1 | 40 | 40 | 0.00 |
| Total | | 16 | 898 | 56 | 0.05 |

Table 1 Summary of the ceramics listed by context

Ditch F1 contained a Cam 259 jar (EVE: 0.05) in fabric HD (shell-tempered and calcite-gritted wares) which dates from the Late Iron Age until c AD 80. Also from the ditch were 14 fragments of Roman brick (RB) and tile (RT), medieval/post-medieval peg-tile and post-medieval/modern brick.

From modern make-up L1 was a sherd of Border ware (Fabric F42) dating to the 16th-17th century.

6.2 Miscellaneous finds

by Laura Pooley (animal bone identified by Adam Wightman)

Ninety-one fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recovered during monitoring which included four 'Colchester Type 9' bowls (CAR 5, 51-52), dated c 1700-1740. Three of the bowls and one fragment of foot included the maker's initials EB in relief on either side of the foot. EB has been identified in CAR 5 (p63) as Elizabeth Bland. Also recovered from the site were pieces of animal bone, including a butchered cow humerus, shell, window glass and iron nails. All of these finds have been recorded in the table below and discarded, except for the four clay pipe bowls and the additional foot fragment with the maker's mark.

| Context | Finds no. | Description |
|---------|-----------|---|
| L1 | 2 | Clay tobacco pipe: One fragment of stem and one fragment of bowl (too little surviving to allow for identification), 5.9g, post-medieval. Animal bone: Fragment of large mammal rib, 19.4g. Shell: Three oyster shells, 70.6g. |
| F1 | 1 | Iron nail: Incomplete (tip missing), round-sectioned shank clenched at 90°, flat round head, 9.4g. Animal bone: Fragment of medium-sized mammal long bone, 3.7g. |
| F3 | 3 | Shell: Eight fragments of oyster shell, 27.7g. |
| U/S ?L2 | 4 | Glass: Fragment of modern decorated window glass, 7.4g. |
| | 6 | Clay tobacco pipe: Four 'Colchester Type 9' bowls with missing or incomplete stems, dated c 1700-1740 (CAR 5, 51-52), 57.2g. The foot is missing on one of the bowls, all three of the others include the initials EB in relief on either side of the foot. One stem fragment with foot which also includes the initials EB, 10.1g; Three unidentifiable bowl fragments, 11.2g; Six mouth pieces (five cut and one rounded), 7.1g; Seventy-three plain stem fragments, 207.2g. Glass: Fragment of post-medieval/modern window glass, 6.5g. Nails: Two very corroded iron nails, 87.4g. Animal bone: Ten fragments, 258.6g: butchered cow humerus with a chopped |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | | distal end and cut marks; the distal end of a ?sheep tibia; a large mammal and two medium mammal rib fragments; two large mammal pelvis fragments; and three bird bones, possibly domestic fowl. Shell: Fragments of two winkle shells, 8.9g. |
| U/S | 5 | Clay tobacco pipe: Two fragments of stem, 7.2g, post-medieval. |

Table 2 Miscellaneous finds listed by context.

7 Conclusion

Monitoring at the White Hart Hotel revealed ten features, one of which was dated to the post-medieval/modern period, five were modern and four were undated. Modern structures, such as the brick soakaway (F2), are likely associated with activity at the White Hart Hotel, as noted in previous archaeological investigations at the development site. Finds from ?L2 potentially date to as early as AD 1700 confirming activity in or around the development site in the early 18th century. It is likely these finds were from L2, and if so, the concentration of the clay tobacco pipe fragments in a small area of the site suggests an area of dumping or mixed back-fill from developments of the White Hart Hotel.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Howbeck Homes for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister and A Wightman. Fieldwork was carried out by M Seehra and A Smith. Figures were prepared by E Holloway and S Veasey. The project was monitored for CBCPS by Dr Richard Hoggett and Dr Simon Wood.

9 References

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

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---|
| Brown, D | 2011 | <i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i> |
| CAT | 2021 | <i>Health & Safety Policy</i> |
| CAT | 2021 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological investigation at 23 Margaret Road, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1RZ.</i> By C Lister |
| CAT Report 118 | 2001 | <i>An archaeological watching brief at 8 High Street, West Mersea, Essex: December 2000.</i> By K Orr |
| CAT Report 223 | 2003 | <i>An archaeological evaluation at the Blackwater Hotel, Church Road, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex: March 2003.</i> By L Pooley |
| CAT Report 255 | 2004 | <i>An archaeological evaluation at 20 Yorick Road, West Mersea, Essex: November 2003.</i> By B Holloway |
| CAT Report 330 | 2005 | <i>An archaeological watching brief at 20 Yorick Road, West Mersea, Essex: July 2005.</i> By B Holloway |
| CAT Report 596 | 2010 | <i>An archaeological watching brief on land to the south of 'Serentiy' 6 High Street, West Mersea, Colchester: July 2010.</i> By A Wightman |
| CAT Report 629 | 2012 | <i>Archaeological monitoring (watching brief) At 6 Meadow Lane, West Mersea, Essex September 2011 – February 2012.</i> By B Holloway |
| CAT Report 1000 | forthcoming | <i>A miscellany of unpublished Colchester and Essex sites: 1984-2000 (sites not published in any Colchester Archaeological Report, or in the CAT Report Series from 1997): Volume 3: Projects beyond Colchester Borough (including X Series list).</i> Archive report by H Brooks |
| CAT Report 1324 | 2018 & revised 2020 | <i>Historic building recording at the White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea, Essex CO5 8QD, August 2018 and April 2019.</i> By M Baister |
| CAT Report 1415 | 2019 | <i>Archaeological evaluation at White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea, Essex – May 2019.</i> By L Pooley |
| CBCAA | 2021 | <i>Brief for Archaeological Investigation at The White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea.</i> By R Hoggett |
| CIfA | 2014a | <i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief.</i> Revised June 2020 |
| CIfA | 2014b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation,</i> |

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------|---|
| | | <i>conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> . Updated October 2020 |
| CIfA | 2014c | <i>Code of Conduct</i> . Revised October 2019 |
| Gurney, D | 2003 | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14) |
| Historic England (HE) | 2016 | <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. |
| Powell, WR | 1963 | <i>Victoria County History, Essex, Vol III (VCH)</i> . Vol 3, p161. |

10 Abbreviations and glossary

| | |
|---------------|--|
| CAT | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| CBC | Colchester Borough Council |
| CBCAA | Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor |
| 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' |
| 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 | O nline A cces S to the Index of Archaeological Investigation S , 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: One bag of clay pipe (all other finds discarded)

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1752)

CBC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Original site record (plan/sections)

Site digital photos and log

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1752)

CBC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

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 number ECC4620.

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Distribution list

Howbeck Homes

Dr Simon Wood, Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
Essex Historic Environment Record



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Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex, CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785

email: ms@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date:

Appendix 1 Context list

| Context | Finds no. | Context type | Description | Date |
|---------|-----------|----------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| L1 | 2 | Make-up with rubble | medium grey/brown sandy silt with brick flecks and inclusions of: gravel 2% stone 20% | Modern |
| L2 | - | Make-up | medium grey/brown sandy silt with oyster flecks and inclusions of: stone 10% | Post-medieval-Modern |
| L3 | - | Natural | friable/firm light/medium orange sand | Post-glacial |
| L4 | - | Concrete | - | Modern |
| F1 | 1 | Ditch | friable/firm moist light/medium yellow/grey/brown silty sand and inclusions of: stone 15% | Post-medieval-modern |
| F2 | - | Red brick soakaway | - | Modern |
| F3 | 3 | Pit/tree throw | soft medium grey/brown silty clay with oyster flecks and inclusions of: stone 5% | Undated |
| F4 | - | Pit | soft medium grey/brown sandy silt with charcoal flecks, oyster flecks and inclusions of: stone 20% | Undated |
| F5 | - | Pit | friable moist medium grey/brown sandy silt and inclusions of: stone 30% | Undated |
| F6 | - | Pit/tree throw | friable moist medium grey/brown sandy silt and inclusions of: stone 30% | Undated |
| F7 | 7 | ?Elongated pit/irregular feature | friable moist medium/dark grey/brown sandy silt and inclusions of: stone 20% | Modern |
| F8 | - | Pit | friable moist medium grey/brown sandy silt | Modern |
| F9 | - | Linear | friable moist medium/dark grey/brown sandy silt with oyster flecks, brick flecks and inclusions of: stone 30% | Modern |
| F10 | - | ?Pit | friable moist medium/dark grey/brown silt with brick flecks | Modern |

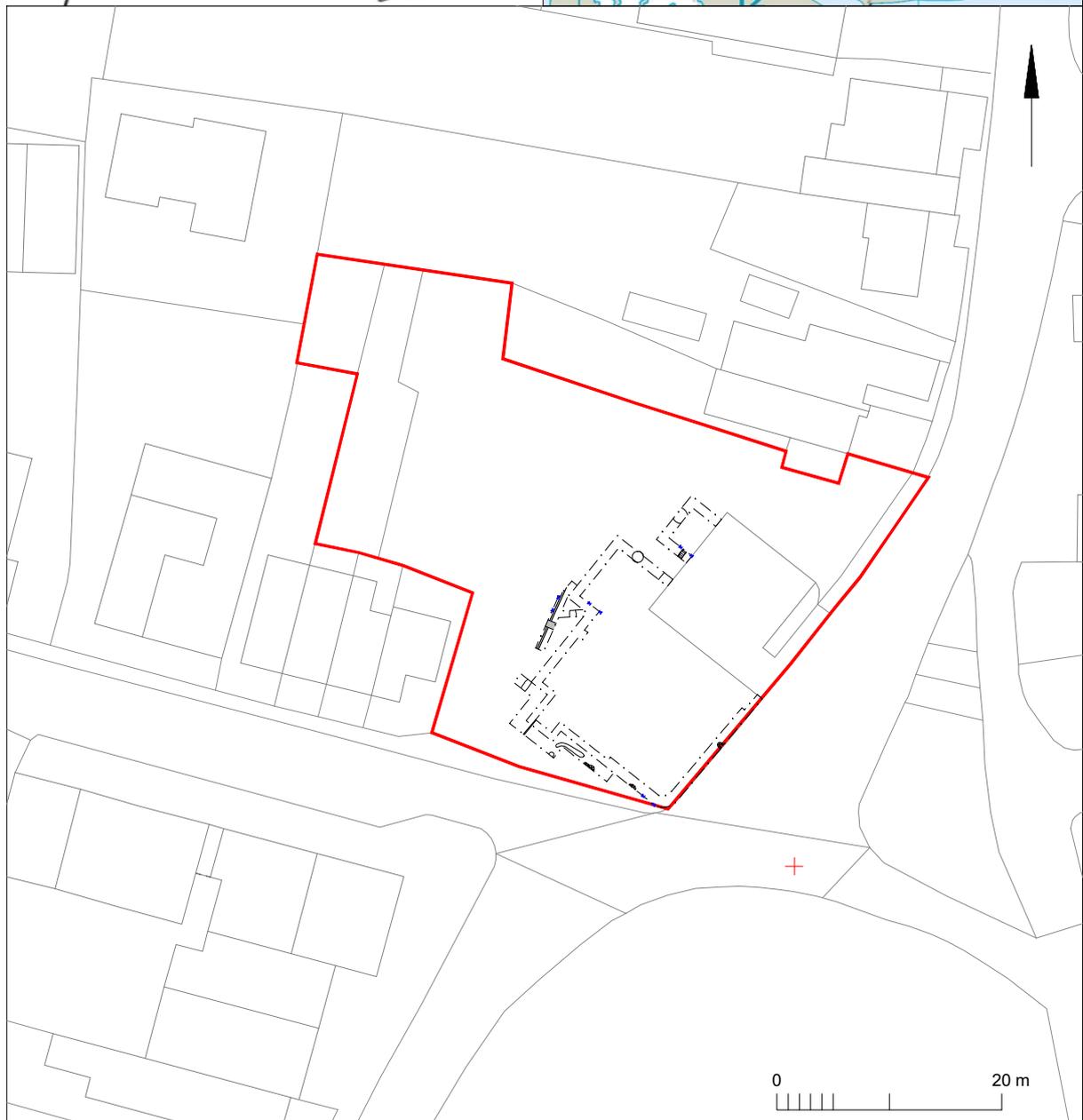
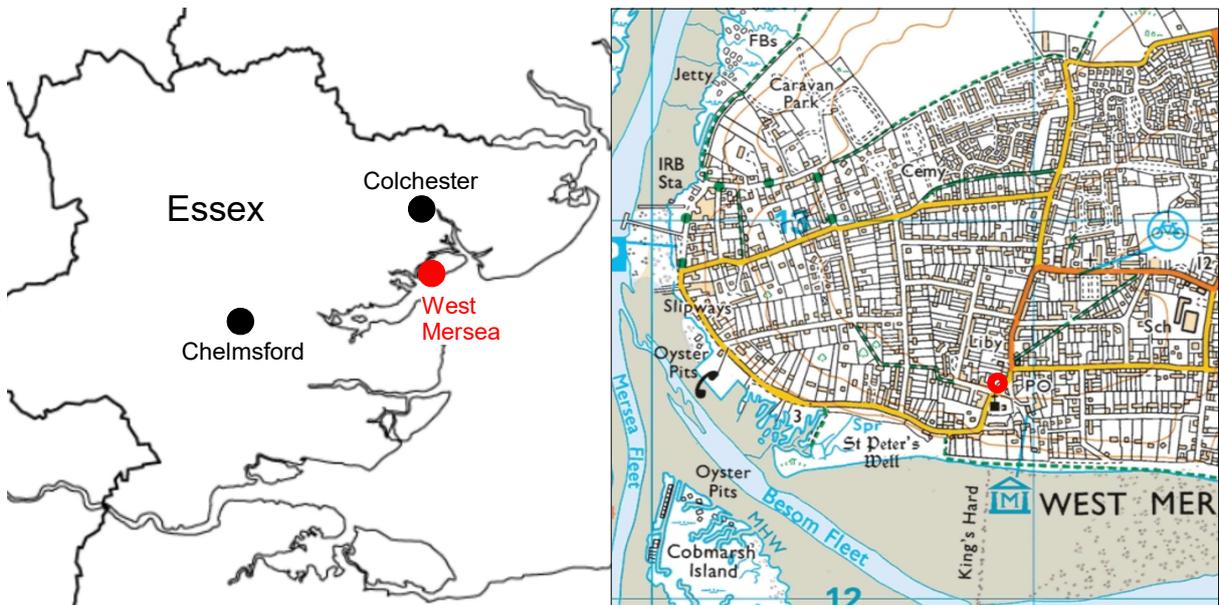
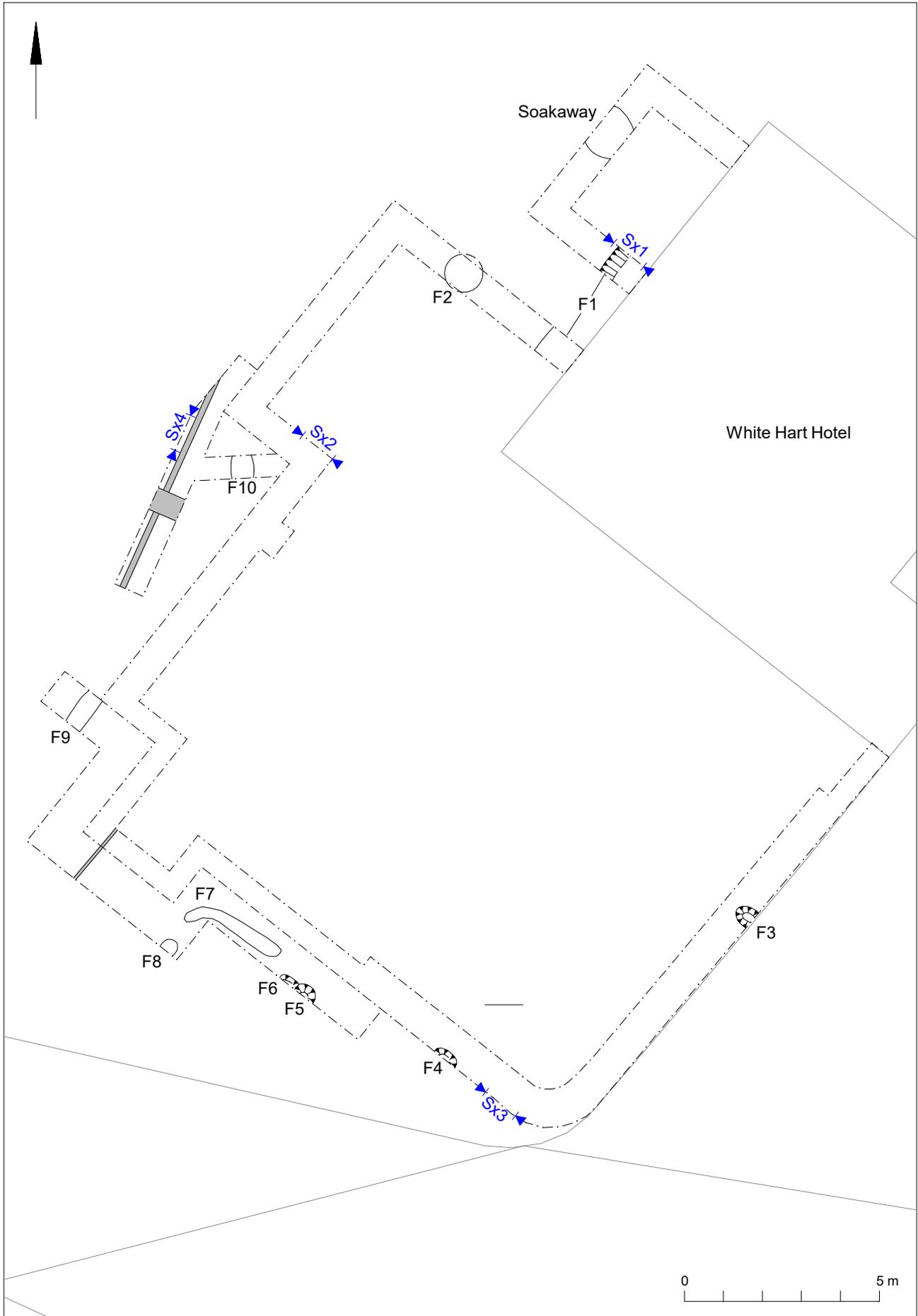


Fig 1 Site location.



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Fig 2 Results. Modern services in grey.

Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological investigation at White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea, CO5 8QD.

NGR: TM 00909 12562(centre)

District: Colchester

Parish: West Mersea

Planning reference: 202673

Commissioned by: Howbeck Homes

Curating museum: Colchester

CHER number: ECC4620

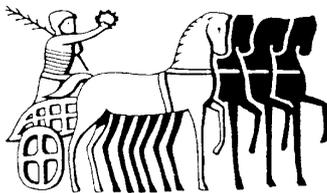
CAT project code: 2021/03q

OASIS project number: colchest3-420303

Site manager: Chris Lister

CBC monitor: Dr Richard Hoggett

This WSI written: 27/04/2021



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Site location and description

The proposed development site is located at White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8QD (Fig 1). The site is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) TM 00909 12562. The hotel was Locally Listed by the Local Plan Committee in August 2020 (DCC26130).

Proposed work

The proposed development comprises the refurbishment of the building including reconstruction of dilapidated extensions and construction of a new porch and rear extension.

Archaeological background

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The photographic evidence shows that sometime in the early 20th century the largest building in the complex (Structure C) underwent significant alteration. The projecting south-eastern rendered frontage, along with its sash windows, was entirely removed. Also removed was an oriel window on the south-west elevation. Following this, the north-east, south-east and south-west elevations of the building were covered in faux timber-framing, which is still present today (Photograph 7). These substantial exterior alterations probably also coincided with some interior alterations to the White Hart, evidence for which will be mentioned in the descriptive record within CAT Report 1324.

Archaeological work on the site of the White Hart includes an evaluation in 2019. The evaluation revealed post-medieval and modern layers sealing natural sands. A post-medieval brick-lined soakaway/cesspit, a 19th-century brick wall foundation and an undated pit were excavated and are likely to be associated with the existing building (CAT Report 1415, ECC4246).

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Church Road

The site lies adjacent to West Mersea parish church (Church of St Peter and St Paul). The church is constructed of re-used Roman Kentish ragstone walls with Roman and later brick. The earliest evidence (the lower part of the tower) appears to be 11th century (CHER MCC8909 & MCC4666). Around the churchyard, Cromwell Mortimer recorded seeing a

mosaic and Roman remains in 1730 (**VCH** vol 3 p158-9). In 1896 Henry Laver observed a Roman wall (CHER MCC8858). CAT also excavated three trial pits in 1991 prior to extensions to the church, but only residual Roman finds were recorded (CAT Report 1000, vol 3). To the west of the church is thought to be the location of a medieval priory. Although the exact location is uncertain, it was recorded to have been established in 1046 (CHER MCC8835). Within this area, Roman pavement and tesserae have been noted on more than one occasion (CHER MCC8858 & MCC8909). On the southern side of Coast Road, a well is thought to relate to the priory (CHER MCC9356). On land to the north of Church Road, CAT was called out by the curator of Mersea Museum to record human remains in a service trench for a new bungalow. Although the workmen had removed all the bone (?3 partial skulls, some limb and vertebrae bones) before the first visit, on the second visit the location of a human skull was recorded. The skeletal remains were interpreted as medieval in date. It was also noted fragments of daub as well as Roman tile/brick fragments were seen in the backfill (CAT Report 1000 vol 3). The bungalow is approximately 50m northwest of the White Hart.

Yorick Road

A Roman mausoleum (CHER MCC8355 scheduled monument no. 1002195) is located to the rear of 20 Yorick Road. An exploratory trench was undertaken in 2003 to assess the exact location and condition of the mausoleum (CHER MCC2973, CAT Report 255) and part of a Roman wall foundation was exposed during subsequent monitoring (CHER MCC5406, CAT Report 330).

Archaeological investigations at 6 High Street (CAT Report 576), 4 Meadow Lane (CHER MCC5553, CAT Report 420), 6 Meadow Lane (CAT Report 629), The Blackwater Hotel, Church Road (CHER MCC5291, CAT Report 223), Howard's Cottage, 12a Church Road (CAT Report 1000, vol 3) have not revealed any significant archaeological remains. It has been noted in some of these reports however that the land appeared to have comprised of made-up ground thought to be dated to the 1960s (8 High Street, CAT Report 118).

Planning background

A planning application was made to Colchester Borough Council in November 2020 (planning ref. 202673) proposing the *refurbishment of entire building including reconstruction of dilapidated extensions, new porch, new rear extension to form Restaurant and Bar with 6 Hotel Rooms.*

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 services and landscaping). Details are given in a Project Brief written by CBCAA (CBC 2021).

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 amendments to the brief are 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 by the development (and satisfactorily preserved in situ), 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-c)
- Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011)
- relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2020)
- the Project Brief issued by the CBCAA (CBC 2021).

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 Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). 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' ground works 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 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), 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 pro-forma 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 excavation areas and trenches 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 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 and seek advice from the

project osteologist. Human remains removed from site for analysis this may involve 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

archaeometallurgy: David Dungworth

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: 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 if suitable deposits are identified. This can include soil micromorphological and geochemical analysis of

floors and dark earth deposits and/or absolute dating (such as archaeomagnetic and radiocarbon). The Historic England Regional Science Advisor will be consulted for advice.

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.

A PDF copy of the full report will be uploaded by CAT to the OASIS website and the Colchester Archaeological Trust's Online Report Library (<http://cat.essex.ac.uk/>), both of which are publicly accessible.

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 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.

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>

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---|
| Brown, D | 2011 | <i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i> |
| | 2nd ed | |
| CAT | 2020 | <i>Health & Safety Policy</i> |
| CAT Report 118 | 2001 | An archaeological watching brief at 8 High Street, West Mersea, Essex: December 2000. By K Orr |
| CAT Report 223 | 2003 | An archaeological evaluation at the Blackwater Hotel, Church Road, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex: March 2003. By L Pooley |
| CAT Report 255 | 2004 | An archaeological evaluation at 20 Yorick Road, West Mersea, Essex: November 2003. By B Holloway |
| CAT Report 330 | 2005 | An archaeological watching brief at 20 Yorick Road, West Mersea, Essex: July 2005. By B Holloway |
| CAT Report 596 | 2010 | An archaeological watching brief on land to the south of 'Serenity' 6 High Street, West Mersea, Colchester: July 2010. By A Wightman |
| CAT Report 629 | 2012 | Archaeological monitoring (watching brief) At 6 Meadow Lane, West Mersea, Essex September 2011 – February 2012. By B Holloway |
| CAT Report 1000 | forthcoming | <i>A miscellany of unpublished Colchester and Essex sites: 1984-2000 (sites not published in any Colchester Archaeological Report, or in the CAT Report Series from 1997): Volume 3: Projects beyond Colchester Borough (including X Series list). Archive report by H Brooks</i> |
| CAT Report 1324 | 2018 & revised 2020 | <i>Historic building recording at the White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea, Essex CO5 8QD, August 2018 and April 2019. By M Baister</i> |
| CAT Report 1415 | 2019 | <i>Archaeological evaluation at White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea, Essex – May 2019. By L Pooley</i> |
| CBCAA | 2021 | <i>Brief for Archaeological Investigation at The White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea. By R Hoggett</i> |
| CifA | 2014a | <i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief. Revised June 2020</i> |
| CifA | 2014b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials. Updated Oct 2020</i> |
| CifA | 2014c | <i>Code of Conduct. Revised Oct 2019</i> |
| Gurney, D | 2003 | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).</i> |
| Historic England (HE) | 2015a | <i>Digital Image capture and File Storage: Guidelines for best practice. By S Cole & P Backhouse</i> |

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------|--|
| Historic England (HE) | 2015b | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i> |
| Historic England (HE) | 2018 | <i>The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project.</i> By S Mays, M Brickley and J Sidell |
| 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. |
| Powell, WR | 1963 | <i>Victoria County History, Essex, Vol III (VCH).</i> Vol 3, p161. |

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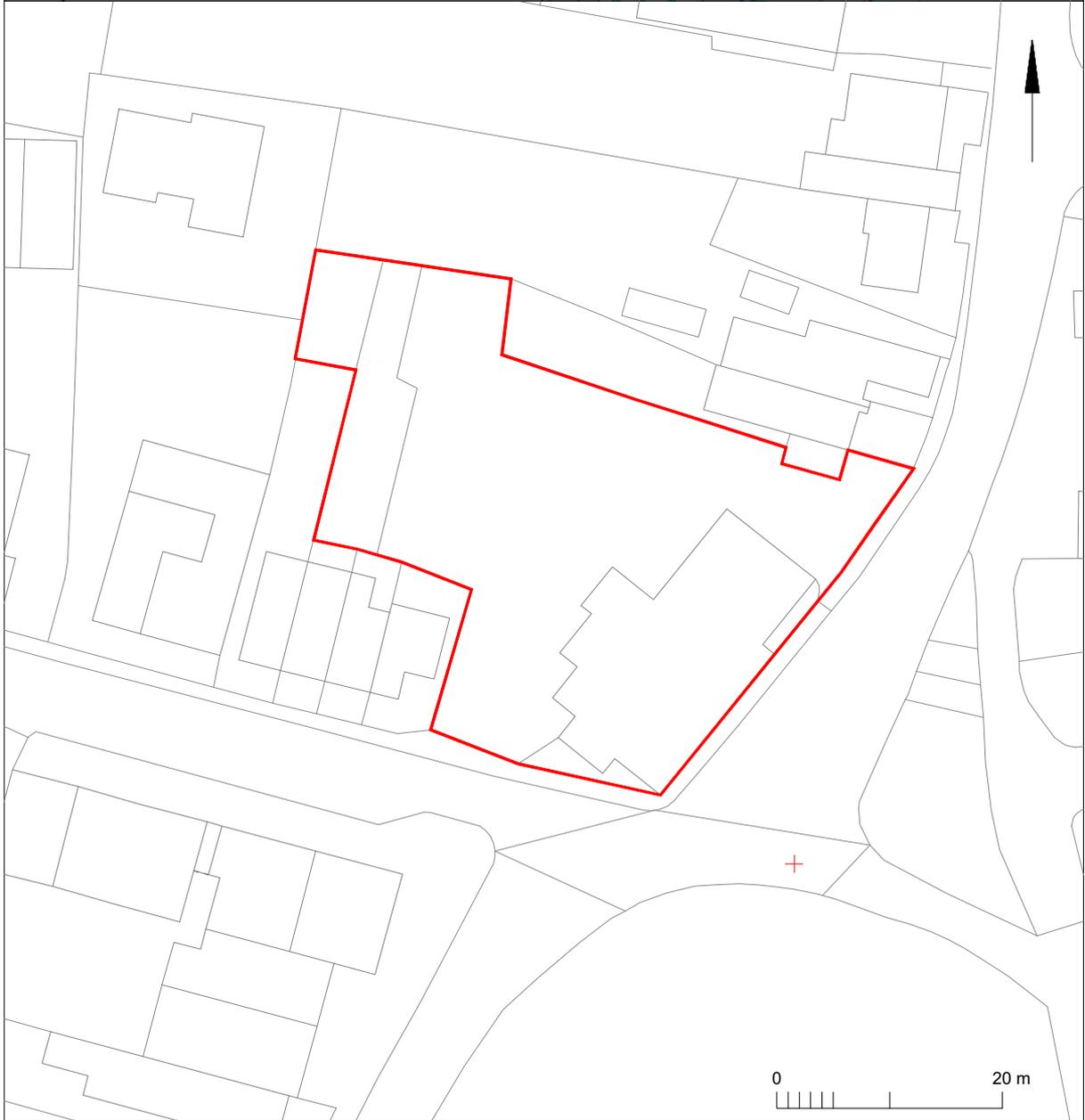
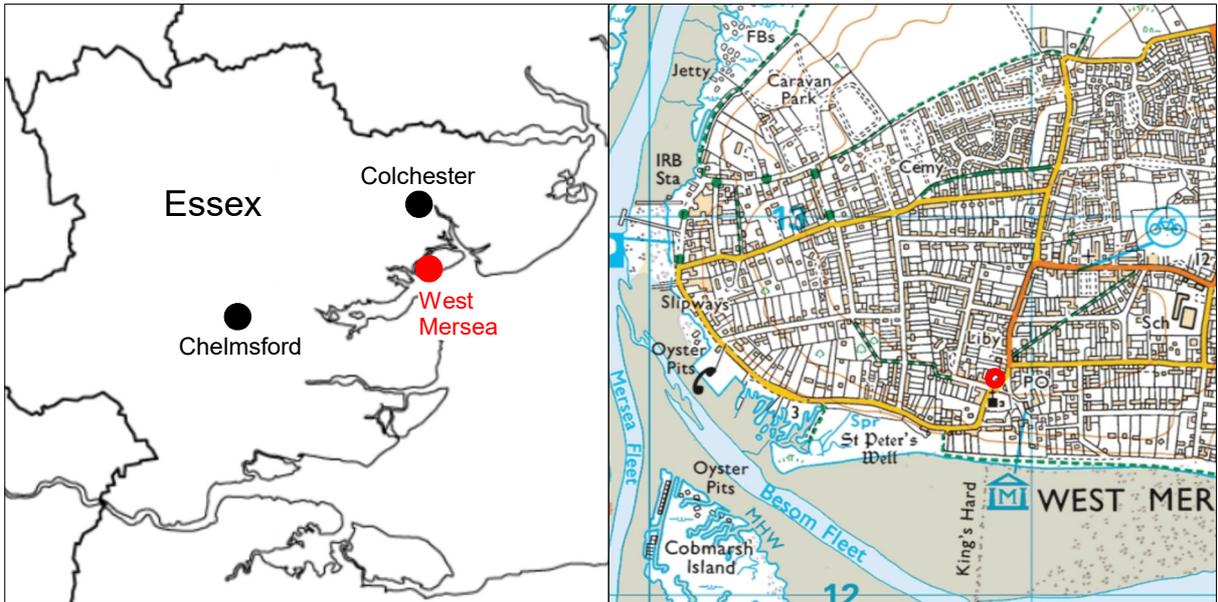


Fig 1 Site location.

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Summary for colchest3-420303

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| OASIS ID (UID) | colchest3-420303 |
| Project Name | Archaeological investigation at The White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea, CO5 8QD. |
| Activity type | WATCHING BRIEF |
| Project Identifier(s) | 2021/03q |
| Planning Id | 202673 |
| Reason For Investigation | Planning requirement |
| Organisation Responsible for work | Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Project Dates | 11-Nov-2021 - 29-Nov-2021 |
| Location | White Hart Hotel, 1 High Street, West Mersea NGR : TM 00909 12562 LL : 51.7756551162044, 0.910816754114682 12 Fig : 600909,212562 |
| Administrative Areas | Country : England County : Essex District : Colchester Parish : West Mersea |
| Project Methodology | Footings and associated drainage trenching for three extensions to the existing property were machine-excavated, under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trenches for footings totalled c 71m of foundation trenches, 0.6-0.9m wide, 0.8-1.1m deep. Drainage trenches totalled c 9m in length, 0.6-0.8m wide, and 0.8-0/9m deep. All excavations occurred through modern rubble make-up (L1, 0.20-0.65m thick) sealing a similar make-up layer (L2, 0.15-0.65m thick). Underlying this was an orange, sandy natural (L3, from c 1m). Concrete (L4) above L1 was mostly removed prior to excavation, and was only recorded in the south end of the restaurant footings, and the drainage trenches. |
| Project Results | This was not collected in OASIS IV when this record was originally created |
| Keywords | |
| HER | Colchester Borough Council - unRev - STANDARD |
| HER Identifiers | |
| Archives | Physical Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with Colchester & Ipswich Museum Sevice (Colchester Collection) |