

Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1853
issued September 2022**

**Archaeological monitoring at 61 & 63 New London
Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0ND:
August-September 2022**



**CAT project ref.: 2022/021
ECC code: CFNLR22b**

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Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0ND:
August-September 2022**

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**report prepared by
Sarah Veasey**

**fieldwork by Ziya Eksen, Bronagh Quinn and
Sarah Veasey**

**commissioned by Adam Leatherbarrow
on behalf of FINC Architects**

Prepared by:	Sarah Veasey	Junior Project Officer
Reviewed by:	Laura Pooley	Post Excavation Manager
Reviewed and approved by:	Howard Brooks	Deputy Director of Archaeology
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Colchester Archaeological Trust

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

tel.: 01206 501785

email: sv@catuk.org

web: www.thecolchesterarchaeologist.co.uk

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1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 61 & 63 New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex during groundworks for the construction of a single-storey rear extension. The site is located in an area of a known medieval Dominican Priory and at the rear of a Grade II listed building. The only potentially significant horizon encountered was a possible post-medieval demolition layer.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for archaeological monitoring carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at 61 & 63 New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex on 23rd August – 27th September 2022. The work was commissioned by Adam Leatherbarrow on behalf of the FINC Architects in advance of the demolition of the rear wing and the construction of a single-storey rear extension.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the EHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Essex County Council Place Services Historic Environment Advisor. This recommendation was for an archaeological monitoring and was based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).

A *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Building Recording at 61 & 63 New London Road, Chelmsford* was produced by Mark Baister detailing the required archaeological work (ECCPS 2022), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS in advance of the groundworks (CAT 2022).

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 field excavation* (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 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>).

The buildings proposed for development are part of a short terrace of four buildings constructed in 1848 (59-65 New London Road, NHLE No.1141347). They are built of gault bricks and are three-storeys high. The parapet has four open bays with circular stone balustrades. The front of the buildings have ten windows in total, two original door ways and two modern shop fronts. The windows have stucco architraves and the original door ways have stone surrounds with plastered decorative ceilings in the porch recesses.

The rear elevation in yellow stock brick has three round headed sash windows, 12 rectangular sash windows and five smaller rectangular windows. All four buildings have a single storey extension and the roofs are gabled.

The Historic Environment Record shows that this development is on the site of Chelmsford's medieval Dominican Priory (EHER 5875). In 1938, foundation trenches dug at 108 New London Road revealed masonry foundations for four walls. A stone coffin was found to be built into the walls, the position and condition of which suggested that it had been reused as part of a conduit. Many oyster shells were found together with fragments of two stone mortars. These finds and the evidence for a fresh water supply entering the building suggest that the priory kitchen occupied this north-west corner of the house.

In 1969 excavations defined the east of the building, it was constructed of flint rubble with limestone dressings and measured 30 feet by over 84 feet. The surviving wall courses are three

feet wide, and stand on flint and mortar foundations that are five feet wide and five feet deep. Further excavations in 1970 uncovered the foundations of the south transept, parts of the nave, south aisle and south-west corner of the choir. The west end of the church and buildings to the north of it have since been seen in contractors trenches.

Around twenty burials were found outside the church, east and south of the transept. A further seventy-nine were inside the church, including ten overlapping and to the west of the foundations of the earlier west wall. Parts of four burials were recovered from the cloister area.

In 1971, excavations inside the nave revealed the south side of the earlier west doorway and further human burials were recovered. To the north, the junction of the later west wall with the west cloister range was noted; other evidence here suggested a possible enlargement of the cloister and rebuilding of the west range in a more westerly position. In 1973 demolition of some 19th-century buildings allowed further excavation of the priory. The north-east corner of the main range was located, and much of the reredorter examined.

The Chelmsford Friars founded their church on the main route to London, on the Moulsham side of the river close to the bridge. The cloister was on the north, rather than the normal south face of the Church, enabling the south side of the complex to be used as an open preaching yard where the townsfolk could gather. The priory was founded between 1234 and 1277 and consisted of a long narrow flint-built preaching nave with a small attached chapel to the south. A walking space behind the altar divided this from the smaller heavily buttressed choir. In the mid-14th century the church was extended to the west and an aisle was added to the south with some remodelling of the cloisters.

In 1538, upon the dissolution of the monasteries on the orders of King Henry VIII, in common with most other monastic institutions, the priory was pulled down and the land sold. A map of Chelmsford drawn in 1591 by John Walker shows the site occupied by a half-timbered house and another structure, probably the retained monastic kitchen. The latter was also sketched by William Stukeley in 1751. These buildings formed part of the Moulsham School which was founded in 1551 and pulled down in the 18th century. The whole area was redeveloped in 1839 when the New London Road frontage was laid out running diagonally across the monastic precinct just touching the west wall of the church.

The development is also located within the area of the Roman Town of Caesaromagus, not far from the site of a 4th-century extra-mural Romano-Celtic temple (EHER 5865) and a Roman mansio bath house (EHER 5843). The town was probably established around a fort constructed in the aftermath of the Boudiccan revolt of 60-61 AD. It grew to its largest during the mid 2nd century and had earthwork defences constructed c 160-175 AD.

4 Aims

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

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

Approximately 36m of foundation trench was machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. A layer of modern concrete (L1, c 0.10m thick) was removed prior to this attendance. The trench varied from 0.50-0.70m wide and was between 1.50-1.60m deep. It was cut through a layer of made-ground (L2, c 0.40-0.47m thick, firm, dry light yellow brown sandy-silt), a possible demolition layer (L3, c 0.23-0.39m thick, firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with inclusions of charcoal, brick and peg-tile) and into another layer of made-ground (L4, encountered c 0.49-0.85m below current ground level [bcgl], firm, moist light-medium brown/grey silty clay with inclusions of charcoal and brick). Occasional patches of natural clay were identified in the base of the foundation trench (L5, encountered c 1.50-1.60m bcgl, moist, light-medium yellow/brown clay).



Photograph 1 Foundation trenches – view north.



Photograph 2 General site shot – view west.



Photograph 3 Manhole and drainage trench – view east.

Approximately 8.5m of drainage trenching was also machine-excavated. The trench was between 0.50 and 1.20m wide and 0.90-1.25m deep. It was excavated through a modern car park layer (L6, c 0.15m thick), L3 and into L4. The natural clay was not encountered.

6 Finds

Post-medieval peg-tile fragments were observed, but not collected, in L3.

7 Conclusion

The only potentially significant horizon encountered during the groundworks was a possible post-medieval demolition layer. This may be associated with the buildings present on the land prior to the construction of 61 & 63 New London Road.

A large house, labelled 'Little Water House', is visible in the approximate location of the site on the Chapman and André map (1777, Map 1), but by the time the 1839 Tithe Map was published this seems to have been demolished and the area divided into building plots (Map 2). The terrace that included 61 & 61 New London Road was then constructed in 1848.



Map 1 1777 Chapman and André map showing the approximate location of 61 & 63 New London Road.



Map 2 1839 Tithe Map showing approximate location the development site.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Adam Leatherbarrow and FINC Architects for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, A Wightman and L Pooley, fieldwork was carried out by Z Eksen, B Quinn and S Veasey. Figures are by S Veasey. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Mark Baister.

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	2022	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a historic building recording and archaeological monitoring and recording at 61-63 New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0ND</i> By S Veasey
CifA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation</i>
CifA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
ECCPS	2022	<i>Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Building Recording at 61 & 63 New London Road, Chelmsford,</i> by M Baister
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Historic England	2016	<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	2021	<i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CifA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	a single unit of excavation, which is often referred to numerically, and can be any feature, layer or find.
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	O nline A ccess to the I ndex of A rchaeological I nvestigation 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_i	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: n/a

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1853)

ECCPS brief and CAT wsi

Photographs and photographic log

Graphics files

Site data

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 the Archaeological Data Service.

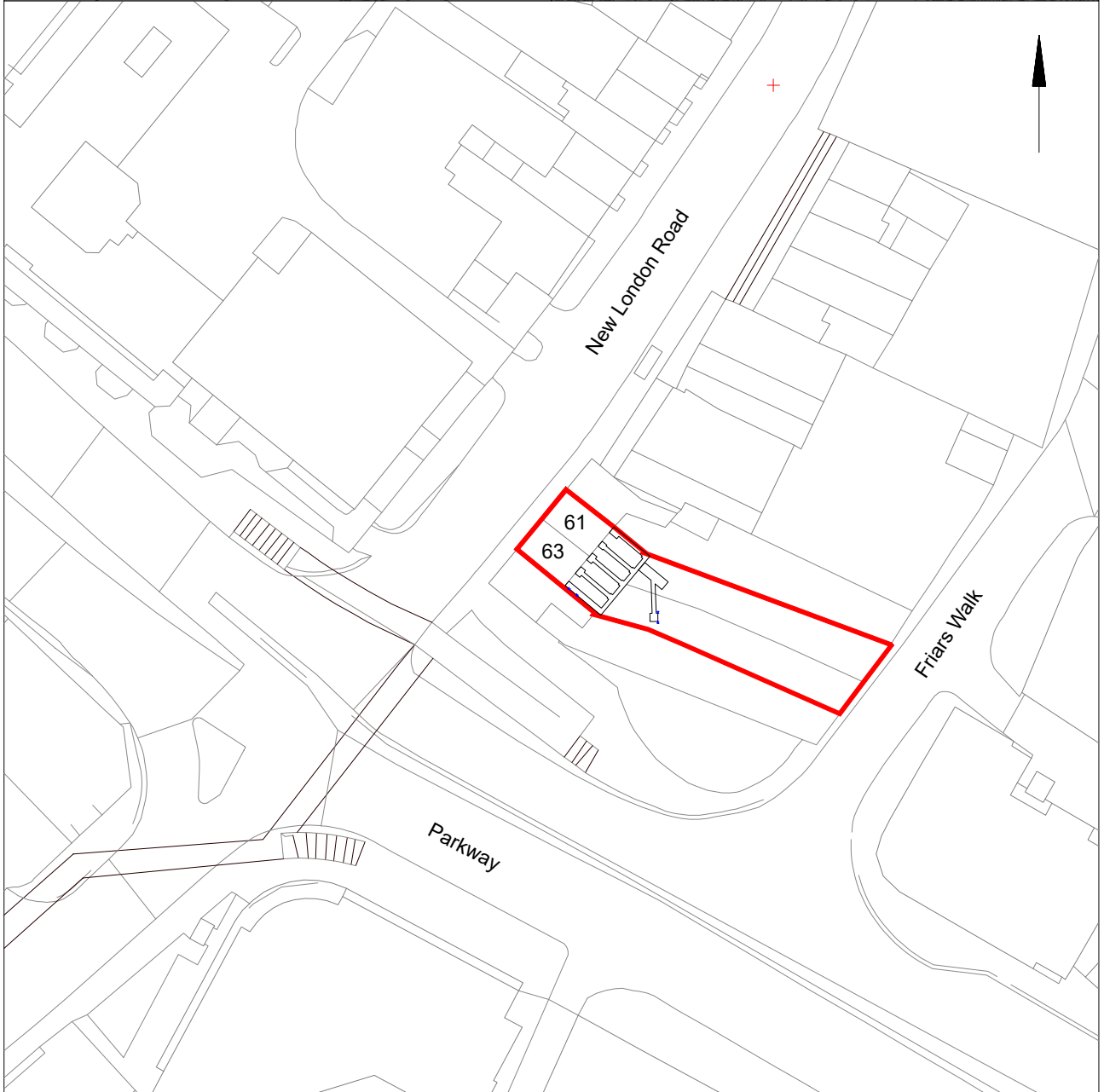
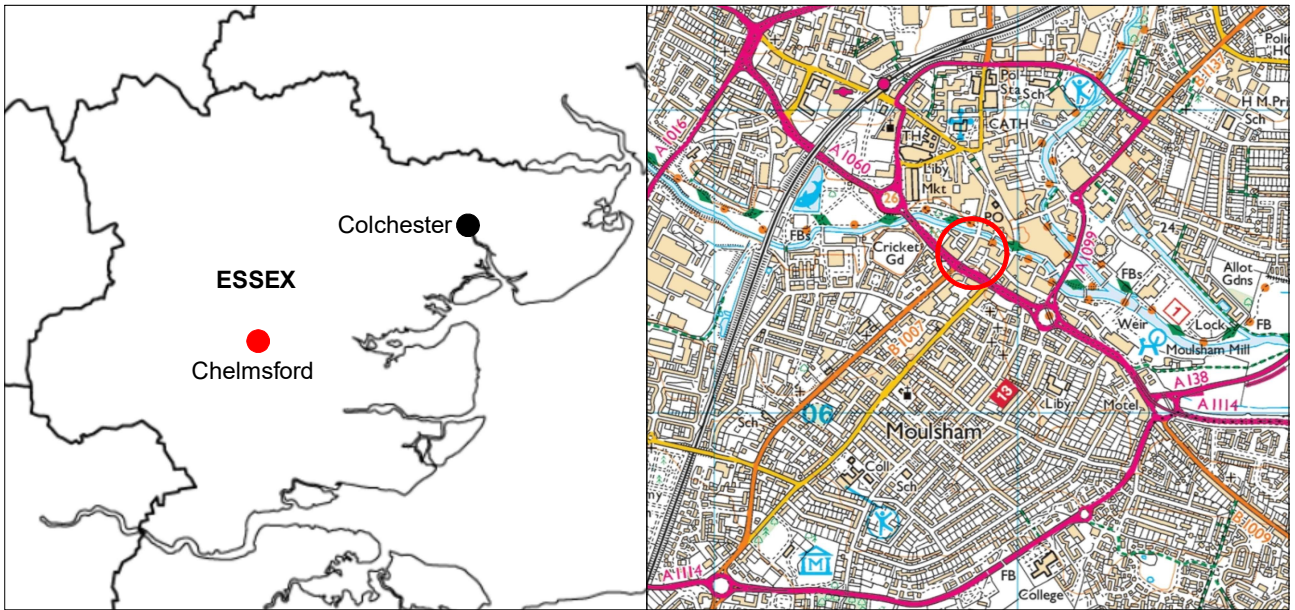
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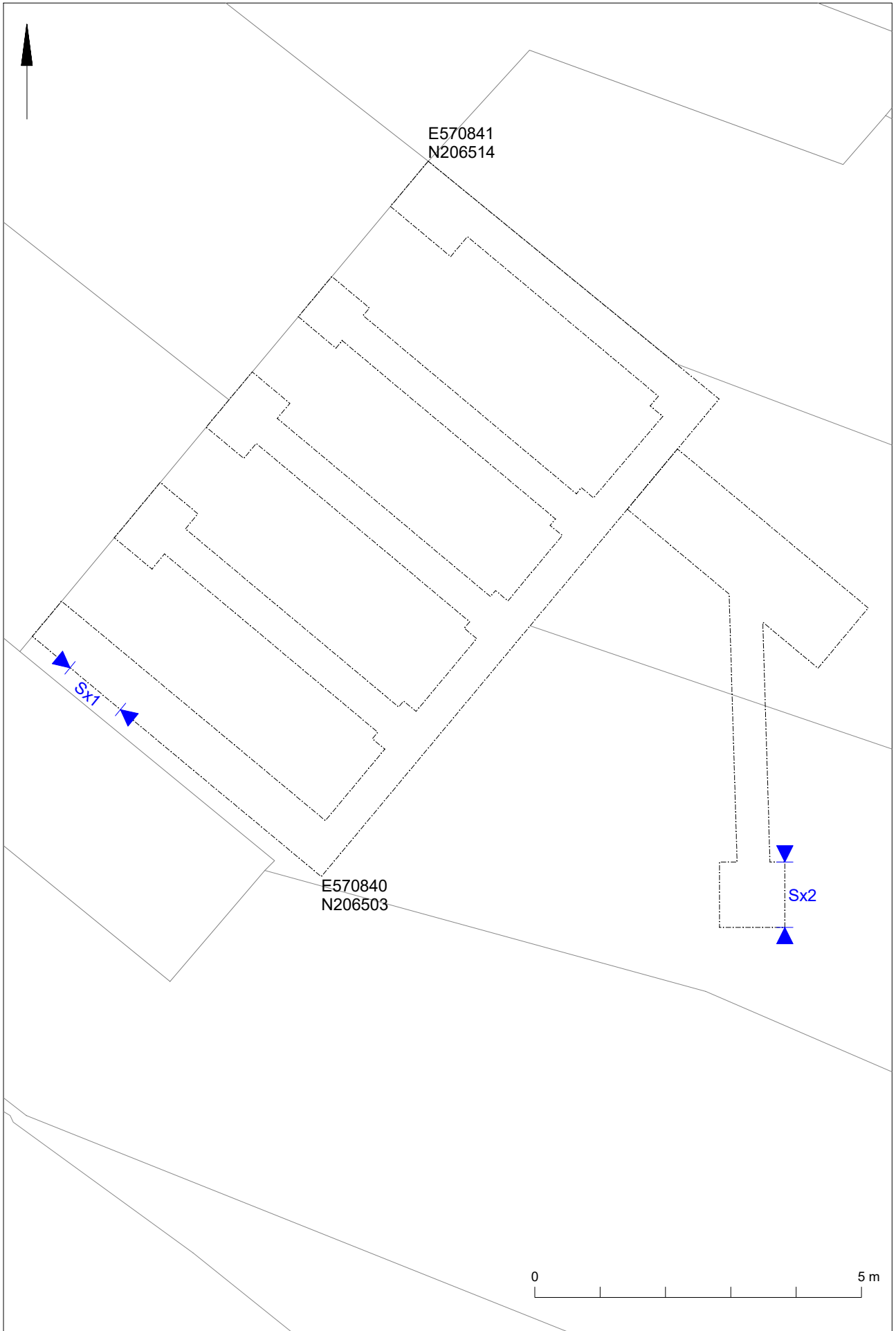
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



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Fig 1 Site location.





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Fig 2 Monitoring results.

Summary for colchest3-504840

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-504840
Project Name	Watching Brief at 61 & 63 New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex
Sitename	61 & 63 New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex
Activity type	Watching Brief
Project Identifier(s)	202202I
Planning Id	21/02529/FUL, 21/02530/LBC
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	23-Aug-2022 - 27-Sep-2022
Location	61 & 63 New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex NGR : TL 70840 06511 LL : 51.7312799477307, 0.472465623997492 12 Fig : 570840,206511
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Chelmsford Parish : Chelmsford, unparished area
Project Methodology	A Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Building Recording at 61 & 63 New London Road, Chelmsford was produced by Mark Baister detailing the required archaeological work (ECCPS 2022), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS in advance of the groundworks (CAT 2022). 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 field excavation (ClfA 2014a) and Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (ClfA 2014b).
Project Results	Approximately 36m of foundation trench was machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. A layer of modern concrete (L1, c 0.10m thick) was removed prior to this attendance. The trench varied from 0.50-0.70m wide and was between 1.50-1.60m deep. It was cut through a layer of made-ground (L2, c 0.40-0.47m thick, firm, dry light yellow brown sandy-silt), a possible demolition layer (L3, c 0.23-0.39m thick, firm, moist medium grey/brown silty-clay with inclusions of charcoal, brick and peg-tile) and into another layer of made-ground (L4, encountered c 0.49-0.85m below current ground level [bcgl], firm, moist light-medium brown/grey silty clay with inclusions of charcoal and brick). Occasional patches of natural clay were identified in the base of the foundation trench (L5, encountered c 1.50-1.60m bcgl, moist, light-medium yellow/brown clay). Approximately 8.5m of drainage trenching was also machine-excavated. The trench was between 0.50 and 1.20m wide and 0.90-1.25m deep. It was excavated through a modern car park layer (L6, c 0.15m thick), L3 and into L4. The natural clay was not encountered.
Keywords	
Funder	

HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Sarah, Veasey
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - CFNLR22b
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;