Colchester Archaeological Trust



CAT Report 1874 issued December 2022

Archaeological Monitoring at 1 Romans Place, Writtle, Essex, CM1 3JD: November 2022



CAT project ref.: 2022/02o ECC code: WRRP22

Archaeological Monitoring at 1 Romans Place, Writtle, Essex, CM1 3JD: November 2022

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fieldwork by Bronagh Quinn

Jon Bell of J Bell Design & Conservation Ltd on behalf of the homeowner

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Issued:	21/12/2022	

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1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 1 Romans Place, Writtle, Essex during groundworks for an extension to the rear of the existing property. 1 Romans Place is a Grade II listed timber-framed house with later additions and is located within the Writtle Conservation Area. Monitoring revealed a thick layer of terracing make-up as well as a garden path, cobbled yard, culvert and well.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for archaeological monitoring undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at 1 Romans Place, Writtle, Essex from 21st – 24th November 2022. The work was commissioned by Jon Bell (J Bell Design & Conservation Ltd) on behalf of the homeowner in advance of the construction of an extension to the rear of the property.

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 2019).

A *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring at 1 Romans Place, Writtle* 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 primarily includes extracts from the Brief and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessible to the public via http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk).

1 Romans Place is a timber-framed house with an 18th-century brick front with later alterations, especially to the rear of the property (EHER 30961). It is Grade II listed (NHLE 1237230) and forms part of a contemporary block with the adjacent 2 Romans Place. The dwelling sits among a group of listed buildings within the Writtle Conservation Area.

At the time of Domesday in 1086 the manor of Writtle was the largest settlement in the area with 194 households. Writtle was a royal manor and the collapse of the Roman bridges over the Can and Chelmer meant that the main route from London to Colchester detoured via Writtle, both factors which influenced its growth and prosperity (ECC 2017, 10).

The site is located approximately 90m east-north-east of All Saints Church. The church dates to the 13th century, with later additions and alterations (EHER 705). Excavation to the immediate east of the churchyard in 1953 revealed Roman brick fragments and pottery. Roman brick and *septaria* can be seen in the make-up of the church. There is some evidence that the church is an enlargement and reconstruction of a Norman church (ECC 2013, 141).

Two Roman cremation urns were uncovered in 1840 opposite the site at Writtle Bowling Club, formerly the walled garden of the vicarage (EHER 711).

Community test-pit excavations were undertaken in Writtle between 2009 and 2014. Test-pit 7 was excavated in the rear garden of 1 Romans Place. Excavated to a depth of 0.8m without reaching natural, the majority of the pottery recovered dated to the Victorian period and was mixed through all contexts. A single sherd of medieval Cistercian Ware and some post-medieval pottery were also recorded(Collins 2017; EHER 48816).

For more information on the area see the *Chelmsford Borough Characterisation Project* (ECC 2017).

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 10m of foundation trench was hand-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. A full context list can be found in Appendix 1.

The foundation trench was 0.6m wide, 1m deep and was cut through several different layers. An imported topsoil/turf layer (L1, c 0.13m thick) sat on top of a cobbled yard set in sand (L2, c 0.06m thick). The cobbled yard sealed of a thick layer of made-ground (L3, c 0.74m thick) which contained large amounts of metalwork, post-medieval pottery and butchered animal bone. Finds from L3 suggest a 20th century date. However, L3 continues underneath the existing property which suggests it is actually 18th century with a lot of modern intrusion, likely from groundworks within the garden. Natural (L4) was encountered at a depth of c 0.93m below current ground level but was rising slightly closer to the existing house. These results appear to be consistent with those of the 2010 test-pit excavated in the garden (Collins 2017). There is a noted height difference between the gardens of 1 Romans Place and the property immediately to the east. The homeowner mentioned a height difference of approximately 1.2-2m. Because of this, it is theorised that L3 identified within the foundation trenches acted as a form of terracing to increase the ground level before the property was built.

An early brick culvert (F1) and a possible well were identified. It is thought that the east-west oriented culvert could be associated with the well as an overflow drain. However, with the full extent of neither of these features being revealed, it is difficult to ascertain whether this is the case or not. The well itself was found by the groundworkers but was not exposed fully during the monitoring due to logistical issues. An early brick feature (F2) was uncovered and identified as an early garden path, likely original to the house itself. After some exploratory investigation, it was noted that F2 measured 0.6m wide and c 3.4m long leading to the back door. F2 was identified at 0.45m bcgl with no sign of the former yard surface L2 above it, so their relationship is unknown. A layer of material similar to L3 seals F2 (c 0.25m thick). Due to both L3 and L5 being similar the relation between them and therefore the relationship of L3 and F2 is unclear. However, it is likely that F2 seals L3. The path seemed to stop suddenly with no return being identified, suggesting that it would have led to an outbuilding of some kind. The homeowner was aware of a previous lean-to existing somewhere on the property which could be where this path ended (homeowner, pers comms).



Photograph 1 Culvert F1, looking east-north-east



Photograph 2 Path F2, looking south-south-east



Photograph 3 Working shot of trench, looking west-south-west



Photograph 4 Working shot of trench, south-south-east

6 Finds

6.1 Ceramic and Pottery finds

by Dr. Matthew Loughton

The watching brief uncovered 57 sherds of pottery and ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) with a weight of just over 7.3kg (Table 1). The mean sherd weight is high at 129g. There were rim sherds from 0.90 vessels (EVE) (Table 1).

Ceramic material	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
Pottery	38	994	26	0.90
СВМ	19	6,360	335	-
All	57	7,354	129	0.90

Table 1 Summary of the pottery and CBM.

Sherds of pottery and ceramics were recovered from two features and one layer (Table 2).

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
?F1		3	4,122	1,374
F2		10	1,522	152
L3		44	1,710	39
	Total	67	7,354	129

Table 2 Quantities of pottery and CBM from specific contexts.

Post-Roman pottery

The post-Roman pottery was recorded according to the fabric groups from *CAR* **7** (Cotter 2000) (Table 3) while the number of vessels was determined by rim EVE (estimated vessel equivalent). There was a small assemblage of post-Roman pottery at 38 sherds weighing 994g with an EVE of 0.90. (Table 4). All of this material was recovered from L3. The earliest is a sherd of Colchester-type ware (fabric F21) dating to *c* 1200-1550 followed by eight sherds of post-medieval red earthenwares (fabric F40) including a large storage jar (EVE:0.10). The remaining pottery included a variety of 18th-20th century material including a yellow ware (fabric F48E) mixing bowl (EVE: 0.23). There was also a sherd from a Staffordshire-type white earthenware (fabric F48D) plate with a transfer print of 'N.W.P. CO B The Cotton Plant' indicating that it is a product of the New Wharf Pottery Co, New St Burslem, Staffordshire which was active 1878-1894 (Godden 1991, no. 2884).

Fabric code	Fabric description	Fabric date range guide
F21	Colchester-type ware	c 1200-1550
F40	Post-medieval red earthenwares	c 1500-19th/20th century
F45M	Modern English Stoneware	19th-20th century
F47	Staffordshire-type white stoneware	1725-1775
F48D	Staffordshire-type white earthenwares	19th-20th century
F48E	Yellow ware	Late 18th-20th century

Table 3 Post-Roman pottery fabrics recorded.

Fabric Group	Fabric description		Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
F21	Colchester-type ware		15	15	0.00
F40	Post-medieval red earthenwares	8	272	34	0.00
F45M	Modern English Stoneware		121	40	0.00

F47	Staffordshire-type white stoneware	1	5	5	0.16
F48D	Staffordshire-type white earthenwares	21	387	184	0.41
F48E	Yellow ware	4	194	49	0.23
	Total	38	994	26	0.90

Table 4 Summary of the post-Roman pottery.

Ceramic building material (CBM)

There were only 19 sherds of CBM with a weight of 6.3kg at a mean sherd weight of 335g (Table 5). CBM was recovered from two features and one layer (Table 6). The CBM consists of sherds of medieval/post-medieval peg-tile and brick, including one complete unfrogged brick with dimensions of 230 mm x 110 mm x 74 mm which dates from the later 18th to the first half of the 19th century. Finally, there was one modern cement object (slab?).

CBM code	CBM type	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
Post-Roman				
PT	Peg-tile	7	1,331	190
BR	Brick	11	4,728	430
Cement Object		1	301	301
	Total	19	6,360	335

Table 5 Building material by period and type.

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
?F1		3	4,155	1,374
F2		10	1,522	152
L3		6	716	119
	Total	19	6,360	335

Table 6 Quantities of CBM from specific contexts.

Conclusion

Table 7 summarizes the dating evidence for the features and layer which contained dateable pottery and ceramics. All the contexts are modern.

Context	Post-Roman	СВМ	Date Approx.
?F1	-	PT, BR (unfrogged)	Late 18th-mid 19th century
F2	-	PT, BR	Late 18th-mid 19th century
L3	F21, F40 (large storage jar), F45M (bottle), F47 (mug/cup), F48D (bowl, plate), F48E (mixing bowl)	PT, cement object	20th century

Table 7 Approximate dates for the individual contexts.

6.2 Glass, clay tobacco pipe and iron objects

by Laura Pooley

Post-medieval/modern finds from L3 (finds no.1) included three fragments of glass, three pieces of clay pipe stem, 27 iron nails and three iron objects, one of which was a knife tang. The finds are recorded in the table below.

Description

Glass: Three fragments of post-medieval/modern glass.

1) Fragment, 67.1g, olive green, from the push-up base of a straight-sided wine bottle.

- 2) Fragment, 74.5g, lighter olive green, from a straight-sided wine bottle.
- 3) Round base with short stub of stem from a wine/spirit glass, 22.3g.

Clay tobacco pipe: Three fragments of clay pipe stem, 7.3g.

Iron objects:

- 1) 27 iron nails, complete and fragmentary, 380.1g.
- 2) Forked object with a ball end, both prongs broken, similar to a tuning fork but it has no stem between the prongs and end and the prongs are slightly curved, so more likely a decorative fitting, 99.7mm long, 100.2g (with stone attached).
- 3) Iron collar/ferrule, 36mm diameter, 38.5mm high, 110.4g.
- 4) Iron knife tang with blade missing, tang has a bone scale on each side (rectangular with rounded ends) held in place with small copper-alloy rivets, staining on one side would suggest that there was originally a copper-alloy strip along the centre of the scale, 109.8mm long, 15.4mm wide, 11.4mm thick, 37.3g, post-medieval/modern.

Table 8 Glass, clay tobacco pipe and iron objects from L3, finds no.1.

6.3 Animal Bone

by Alec Wade

All of the animal bone came from L3 (finds no.1), a thick deposit of made-ground, and represented a collection of general butchery waste. Seventy-four pieces of bone were recovered weighing a total of 0.8kg. Four species were identified in the assemblage including sheep or goat (eight pieces), cattle (seven), chicken (two) and cat (one). The unidentified material consisted mainly of bone fragments from large- and medium-sized mammals (probably more cattle and sheep or goat bone respectively). Unidentified bird bone may have included wild species such as pheasant or teal but positive identification was not possible due to the fragmentary nature of the material.

Several pieces of cattle and large mammal bone displayed signs of butchery including both chop and saw marks. The use of a saw is indicative of post-medieval butchery practice – in earlier periods this was a more specialised tool generally reserved for finer working. Evidence of dog gnawing was noted on two fragments suggesting the residual nature of the material. Prior to its deposition in the layer, the bone would have been collected from a location where scavenging dogs would have had easy access to it.

No. of	Weight	Species	Comments
pieces	(g)		
7	326	Bos (cattle)	(1) Upper molar (complete)
			(1) Incisor (broken)
			(1) Scapula fragment (proximal joint, chopped)
			(1) Radius fragment (proximal joint, chopped)
			(1) Ulna fragment (dog gnawed?)
			(1) Metacarpal fragment (distal, epiphysis fused)
			(1) 1 st phalanx (mostly complete, dog gnawed)
8	100	Ovis/capra	(1) Lower molar (complete)
		(sheep or goat)	(1) Scapula fragment (proximal)
			(1) Radius (distal end missing)
			(1) Ulna fragment
			(1) Femur fragment (distal, epiphysis fused)
			(1) Tibia fragment (distal, metaphysis unfused)
			(1) Astragalus (complete)
			(1) 1 st phalanx (metaphysis unfused)
1	1	Felis (cat)	(1) Tibia fragment (proximal joint)
2	2	Gallus	(1) Tibio-tarsus fragment (distal)
		(domestic fowl)	(1) Scapula fragment (proximal)
4	3	Bird	(1) Tibio-tarsus diaphysis fragment (possibly pheasant?)
		(indeterminate	(1) Tibio-tarsus fragment (proximal, teal sized?)
		species)	(1) Metatarsus fragment (distal, metaphysis unfused, chicken
			sized?)
			(1) Synsacrum fragment (large sized bird)

No. of pieces	Weight (g)	Species	Comments
6	174	Large-sized mammal	Most likely to be cow, but also possibly horse or pig: (1) Mandible fragmentary (1) Scapula fragment (with saw marks and also possibly chopped) (2) Pelvis fragments (one piece sawn through neck of ilium?) (2) Rib fragments (both with saw marks)
46	196	Unidentified mammal bone	Nearly all of the unidentified material is likely to be of sheep or goat based upon the general size and robustness suggested by the fragments. These include: (1) Mandible fragment (11) Rib fragments (one piece with saw marks and some having been dog gnawed) (8) Diaphysis fragments, including pieces of femur and tibia including two with cut or chop marks (1) Femur fragment (distal, metaphysis unfused) (7) Vertebra fragments, including an atlas fragment that has been chopped (2) Mandible fragments (3) Pelvic fragments (17) Unidentified fragments
74	802	TOTAL	-

Table 9 Animal bone from L3, finds no.1.

7 Conclusion

Archaeological monitoring undertaken at 1 Romans Place, Writtle, Essex produced garden features associated with the 18th-century house (a path, cobbled yard, culvert and well), as well as evidence of terracing before the property was built. Finds from the made-ground included medieval, post-medieval and modern pottery, peg-tile, glass, clay pipe, metalwork and animal bone with butchery marks.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks J Bell Design & Conservation Ltd and the homeowner for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, A Wightman and L Pooley, fieldwork was carried out by B Quinn. Figures are by L Pooley & E Holloway. 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

Baker, P & Worley, F	2019	Animal bones and archaeology: recovery to archive
Brown, N &	2000	Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2.
Glazebrook, J		Research agenda and strategy. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8 (EAA 8)
CAT	2022	Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological monitoring at 1
		Romans Place, Writtle, Essex, CM1 3JD
CAR 7	2007	Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations
		in Colchester, 1971-85, by J P Cotter
CIfA	2014a	Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation
CIfA	2014b	Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials
CIfA	2014c	Code of Conduct. Revised October 2021
Collins, C	2017	Archaeological Test Pit Excavations in Writtle, Essex: 2009, 2010, 2011,
		2012, 2013 and 2014. Access Cambridge Archaeology
ECC	2017	Chelmsford Borough Historic Environment Characterisation Project. Essex
		County Council Historic Environment
ECCPS	2022	Brief for Archaeological Monitoring at 1 Romans Place, Writtle, by

		M Baister
Godden, G A	1991	Encyclopaedia of British Pottery and Porcelain Marks
Gurney, D	2003	Standards for field archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Hillson, S	2016	Mammal bones and teeth: an introductory guide to methods of identification
Historic England	2016	Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)
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.
Ryan, P	1996	Brick in Essex from the Roman Conquest to the Reformation
Schmid, E	1972	Atlas of animal bones

Abbreviations and glossary

Colchester Archaeological Trust CAT ClfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

a single unit of excavation, which is often referred to numerically, and can be context

any feature, layer or find.

Essex County Council **ECC**

Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor Essex County Council Place Services ECCHEA

ECCPS Essex Historic Environment Record EHER

an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts' feature (F)

distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material layer (L)

period from AD 1066 to c 1500 medieval modern period from *c* AD 1800 to the present

natural geological deposit undisturbed by human activity

National Grid Reference NGR

Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS, **OASIS**

http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main

from c AD 1500 to c 1800 post-medieval

(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s section

written scheme of investigation wsi

11 Contents of archive

Finds: Returned to homeowner

Digital record CAT Report 1874

ECCPS Brief and CAT WSI

Digital photographs and photographic log

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

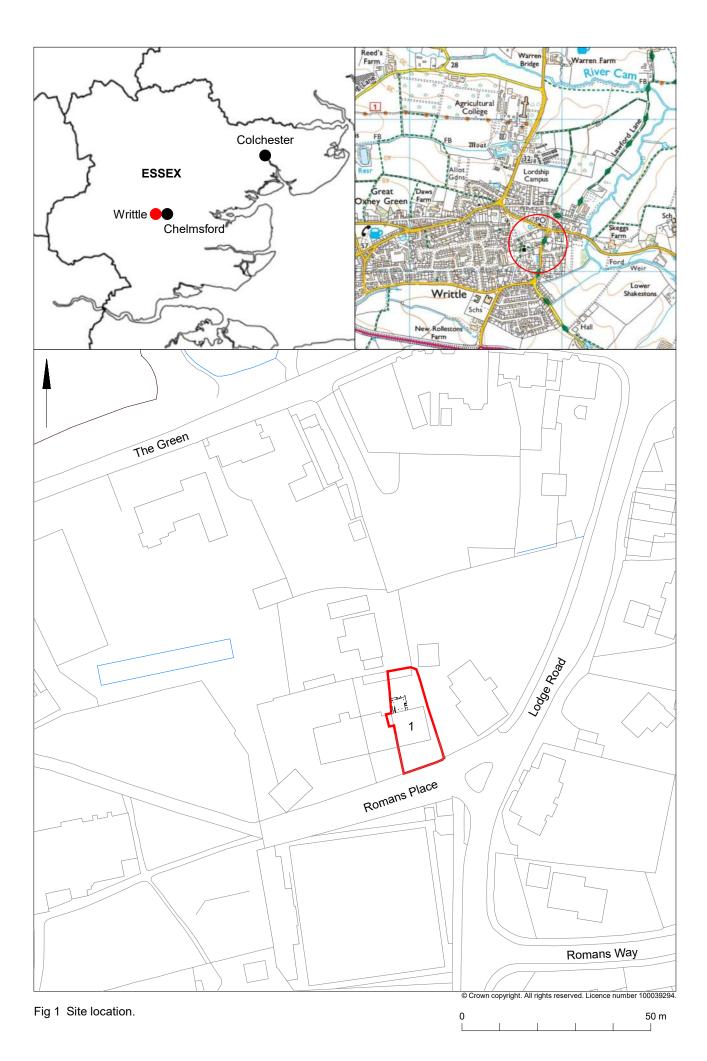
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Distribution list:

Jon Bell (J Bell Design & Conservation Ltd) Homeowner ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council

Appendix 1 Context list

Context	Finds no.	Context type	Description	Date
L1	-	Topsoil	Wet, dark grey-brown silty loam	Modern
L2	-	Cobbled yard	Yellow sand with cobbled stones inlaid	?Modern
L3	1	Made-ground	Wet, dark grey-brown silty clay	18th century
L4	-	Natural	Wet, yellow clay	Post-glacial
L5	-	Accumulation	Wet, dark grey-brown silty clay	?Modern
F1	2	Brick culvert	Brick culvert	18th-19th century
F2	3	Garden path	Garden path made of old bricks	18th-19th century



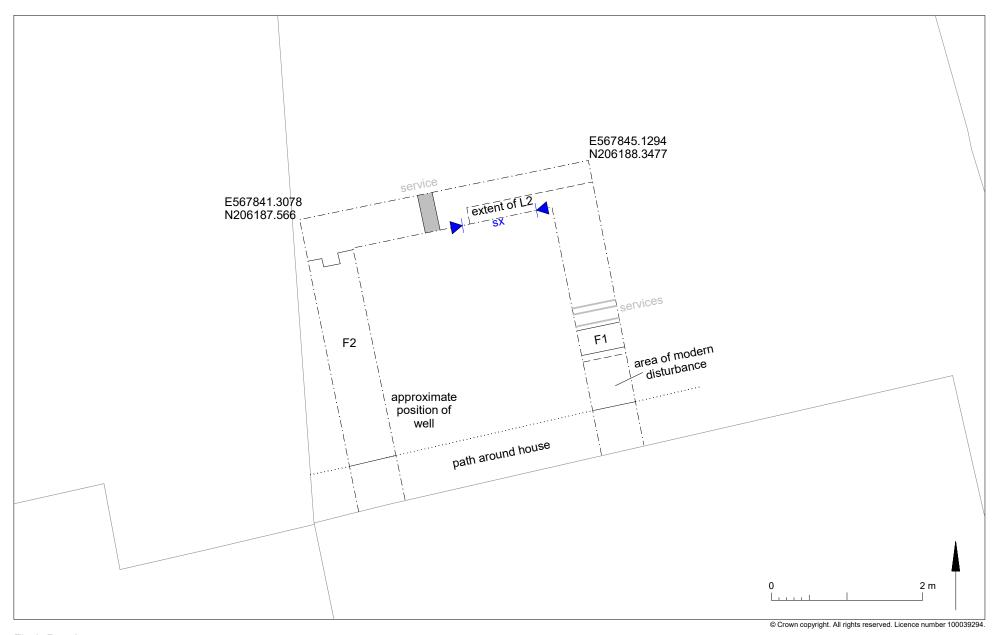


Fig 2 Results

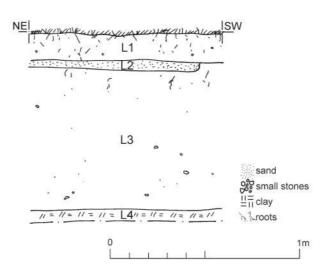


Fig 3 Representative section.

Summary for colchest3-504999

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-504999		
Project Name	Field Observation (Monitoring) at 1 Romans Place, Writtle, Essex, CM1 3JD		
Sitename	1 Romans Place, Writtle, Essex, CM1 3JD		
Activity type	Field Observation (Monitoring)		
Project Identifier(s)	2022/020		
Planning Id	CHL/21/02248/FUL		
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination		
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust		
Project Dates	21-Nov-2022 - 24-Nov-2022		
Location	1 Romans Place, Writtle, Essex, CM1 3JD		
	NGR : TL 67848 06183		
	LL: 51.7292365790547, 0.429023993689387		
	12 Fig : 567848,206183		
Administrative Areas	Country : England		
	County : Essex		
	District : Chelmsford		
	Parish : Writtle		
Project Methodology	All work was undertaken in accordance with the brief for archaeological monitoring and the written scheme of investigation.		
Project Results	Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 1 Romans Place, Writtle, Essex during groundworks for an extension to the rear of the existing property. 1 Romans Place is a Grade II listed timber-framed house with later additions and is located within the Writtle Conservation Area. Monitoring revealed a thick layer of terracing make-up as well as a garden path, cobbled yard, culvert and well.		
Keywords	Feature - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types		
	Footpath - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types		
	Culvert - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types		
	, ,		
Funder	Well - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types		
HER			
	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD		
Person Responsible for work	B, Quinn		
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - WRRP22		
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service		
	Archive;		