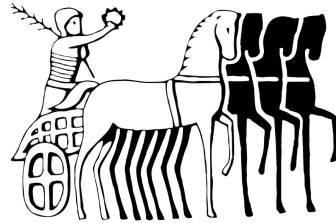


Colchester Archaeological Trust



**CAT Report 1917
issued April 2023**

**The Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road:
An archaeological excavation on land to the rear of
Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex, CO2 9DT –
March 2023**



**CAT project ref.: 2023/011
CHER code: ECC4765**

**The Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road:
An archaeological excavation on land to the rear
of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex, CO2 9DT –
March 2023**

NGR: TL 97538 23073

Planning ref.: 220150

**CAT project ref.: 2023/011
CAT Report 1917**

**ECC code: ECC4765
OASIS id: colchest3-509327**

**report prepared by Laura Pooley and Harvey Furniss
with contributions by Dr Matthew Loughton**

**figures by Harvey Furniss, Laura Pooley
and Emma Holloway**

**fieldwork by Harvey Furniss with Ziya Eksen,
Tabitha Gulliver-Lawrence, Alice Parker and
Alexander Smith**

**Commissioned by Caroline Kay
for Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd**

Prepared by:	Laura Pooley Harvey Furniss	Post-Excavation Manager Project Officer
Reviewed and approved by:	Philip Crummy	Director of Archaeology
Issued:	14/04/2023	

Colchester Archaeological Trust

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

tel.: 01206 501785

email: hf@catuk.org

web: www.thecolchesterarchaeologist.co.uk

Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aims	3
5	Results	3
6	Finds	7
7	Conclusion	7
8	Acknowledgements	8
9	References	8
10	Abbreviations and glossary	9
11	Contents of digital archive	9
12	Archive deposition	9
Appendix 1	Context List	10
Figures		after p10

EHER summary sheet

WSI

OASIS data collection form

List of photographs and figures

Cover: General site shot

Photograph 1	Site shot across the Roman road – view north	3
Photograph 2	Site shot across the Roman road – view south-west	4
Photograph 3	Ditch F1 sx5 – view north-east,	5
Photograph 4	Ditch F2 sx2 – view south-west	5
Photograph 5	Ditch F5 sx2 – view north-east	6
Photograph 6	Ditch F5 overall shot – view north-east	6
Photograph 7	Ditch F6 sx2 – view south-west	7

Fig 1 Site location.

Fig 2 Results, with the evaluation trenches in grey and ditch projections in pink.

Fig 3 Profile across the road and sections through the roadside ditches.

Fig 4 Alignment of the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road base on investigations at Colchester Royal Grammar School, 60 Creffield Road, 36 Cambridge Road, Alderman Blaxill School, Hedge Drive, Gosbecks and cropmarks/parchmarks at Shrub End sports ground and Gosbecks. Each of the red lines represents the approximate centre line one of the four ditches of the road.

1 Summary

An archaeological excavation was carried out on land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex in advance of the demolition of garages and the construction of three new properties. The projected route of the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road was already known to pass through the development site and the excavation area was positioned to uncover the location of the remains of the road as well as any other archaeological contexts.

The excavation successfully located the remains of the Roman road, which consisted of four ditches defining two narrow footways on either side of a wide central carriageway. The footways were c 2.6m wide and the central carriageway c 7.6m across. The roadside ditches were well-defined at 0.71-1.01m wide and 0.29-0.33m deep. The road surface had not survived.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological excavation carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex on the 14th-17th and 22nd of March 2023. The work was commissioned by Caroline Kay of Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd and took place in advance of the demolition of garages and the construction of three new properties.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the EHER/CHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA). This recommendation was for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching and was based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2019).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for an Archaeological Excavation at land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester* written by Dr Simon Wood and detailing the required archaeological work (CBCAA 2022), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2023).

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 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 draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive and the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER numbers) accessed via the Colchester Heritage Explorer (www.colchesterheritage.co.uk).

The development site is located within the *oppidum* of Camulodunum, close to the nationally-important Late Iron Age and Roman complex at Gosbecks (Scheduled Monument NHLE no. 100218, MCC7470) which is known from aerial photographs, geophysical surveys and excavations (Hull 1958, 259-71; *CAR* 11, 95-105; CAT Reports 30, 45 and 127). Archaeological remains at Gosbecks include: dykes, droveways and field systems; a large enclosure (MCC7044), possibly Cunobelin's farmstead (MCC7044); a small Roman fort of probable Claudian date (MCC7472); a Romano-British temple (MCC2849), surrounded by a monumental portico (MCC7043); a Roman theatre (MCC2831); a Roman watermain, possibly leading to a bath-house (MCC2903); and a Roman road leading to the walled Roman town of Colchester (MCC2529). Many of these remains are located within Gosbecks Archaeological Park, c 400m to the south-west of the development site.

The Roman road linking the Roman town of Colchester to Gosbecks (MCC2529) is projected to run through the development site. The course of the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road is

well known, originating from the major Roman road junction beneath the Colchester Royal Grammar School (2.14km north-east of the development site) and running to the east side of the market, religious and likely administrative complex at Gosbecks (c 400m south-west). Early aerial photographs had revealed a road consisting of four ditches, creating a main central carriageway with ancillary tracks to each side. Previous investigations had been carried out on the road at Rayners Farm in 1936 by Rex Hull (Hull 1958, fig 2.1; *CAR 11*, p138, no. 73) and at Gosbecks by the Colchester Archaeological Trust in 1989 (*CAR 11*, p121, no. 39). However, neither of these small excavations proved to be satisfactory in defining the road. Hull's section appeared to show all four ditches, but the overall road width defined by these is too narrow in comparison with the 1995 excavation (see below), and probably only three of them are part of the Roman road. The 1989 section was also confused by the presence of what was later revealed to be a post-medieval ditch (*CAR 11*, p121, no.39).

An excavation in advance of the construction of Cunobelin Way at Gosbecks in 1995 gave the first clear view of the road layout. It confirmed the aerial photographic evidence that the road consisted of four ditches set out as two pairs, defining narrower areas or footways, each just over 2m wide, on either side of a central carriageway which was about 7m across (*CAT Report 127*). Although little road metalling survived, there were distinct concentrations of stones across the road area at the base of the ploughsoil, especially in the top of the ditches and on the footways. The ditches themselves were slightly irregular, but were generally about 1m wide and between 0.6m and 0.7m deep, with steep sides and broad, slightly uneven bottoms (*CAT Report 127*).

Investigations at the former Alderman Blaxill School in 2017 revealed two parallel features which possibly represented one set of the (heavily truncated) parallel ditches flanking the carriageway (*CAT Report 1167*). Archaeological monitoring at 50 Cambridge Road in 2018 did not uncover any evidence of the road (*CAT Report 1228*), but monitoring at 36 Cambridge Road in 2019 revealed the remains of two ditches and a fragmentary metalled surface (*CAT Report 1469*).

Significant archaeological investigations at 60 Creffield Road in 2019-2021 revealed another section of the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road, aligned northeast to southwest, across the site (*CAT Report 1587*). Located only 120m south-west of the major Roman road junction beneath the Colchester Royal Grammar School, these investigations confirmed the precise route of the road leading from the town and revealed two distinct phases of development.

Phase 1 of the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road through 60 Creffield Road followed the layout of that identified in 1995 with a 7m wide central carriageway and ditch, 2m wide footway and second ditch on either side. Truncation of some of the features meant that only the two roadside ditches could be properly investigated which, compared to the 1995 ditches, were wider (at 1.17m and 2.3m) but slightly shallower (at 0.5-0.55m). There was no trace of any metalling on the carriageway or footways which were left as compacted dirt. Evidence suggested that Phase 1 dated to the early Roman period, from c AD 50 to 120.

Phase 2 of the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road through 60 Creffield Road saw the innermost ditches backfilled and the carriageway widen to c 10m and covered in metalling with two new roadside ditches at, on average, 1.12m wide by 0.44m deep. Phase 2 dated from the early 2nd century, perhaps as a result of increased use of the road into the Roman town. Phases of metalling revealed that the carriageway was being maintained and repaired, and likely continued in use into the later 4th century.

It is interesting to note that the two phases of development of the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road revealed during these investigations had not been apparent during any other archaeological work on the road in the past. However, of all the previous investigations, this was one of the most extensive and one of the closest to the Roman town and the major Roman road junction. It now seems most likely that the widening of the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road was fairly localised due to increased 'traffic' on the road around the town and around the junction, and such widening was not deemed necessary further to the south-west towards Gosbecks.

Archaeological evaluation on the development site late in 2022 successfully located the remains of the Roman road (CAT Report 1870). As seen elsewhere, the road consisted of four ditches defining two narrow footways on either side of a wider central carriageway. The footways were 2.1m and 2.6m wide, and the central carriageway c 6.2m across. The roadside ditches were well-defined at 1.05-1.45m wide and 0.28-0.44m deep. The road surface had not survived.

4 Aims

The aims of the archaeological excavation were to record the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits but specifically those associated with the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road and its alignment.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

An excavation area of c 201.25 square metres was machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. The excavation area was designed to provide a full profile across the Roman road while avoiding a number of modern services linking across site. All context numbers follow those already given out during the 2022 evaluation (CAT Report 1870).

A layer of modern concrete (0.12-0.25m thick), occasionally on a thin bed of modern sand (c 0.05m thick), covered the development site. Sealed beneath was a layer of cover loam (L1, 0.2-0.48m thick) which sealed natural (L2).

The Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road was aligned north-east to south-west across the development site. As seen elsewhere, the road consisted of four ditches defining two narrow footways, c 2.6m wide, on either side of a wider central carriageway which was about 7.6m across. All of the features associated with the road were cut into L1 and L2. The ditches were 100% excavated for finds retrieval except for a small central bulk in the middle of site.



Photograph 1 Site shot across the Roman road – view north.

F1

Ditch F1 was the westernmost ditch on the outside of the footway. A 6.96m length of ditch was present within the excavation area, c 1.01m wide and c 0.33m deep. It was u-shaped with moderate sloping sides and a concave base. No finds were recovered.

F2

Ditch F2 was located to the west of the central carriageway. A 10.7m length of ditch was present, c 0.71m wide and c 0.31m deep. It was u-shaped with moderate sloping sides and an unevenly concave base. No finds were recovered.

F5

Ditch F5 was the easternmost ditch on the outside of the footway. An 11.49m length of ditch was present, c 0.97m wide and c 0.29m deep. It was u-shaped with moderate sloping sides and a concave base. No finds were recovered.

F6

Ditch F6 was located to the east of the central carriageway. A 13.75m length of ditch was present, c 0.85m wide and c 0.31m deep. It was u-shaped with moderate sloping sides and a concave base. Four very small fragments of Roman pottery were recovered from the fill.

The excavation confirmed that the feature originally identified as ditch F4 in the evaluation was not in fact a feature but probably a patch of darker cover loam (L1) that was difficult to define at the end of evaluation trench 2. The feature originally identified as ditch F7 in evaluation trench 3 to the north-west of the excavation area is also not in alignment with eastern roadside ditches (see Fig 2). This may also have been a darker patch of cover loam as was similarly identified further to the east of the trench.



Photograph 2 Site shot across the road – view south-west.



Photograph 3 Ditch F1 sx5 – view north-east.



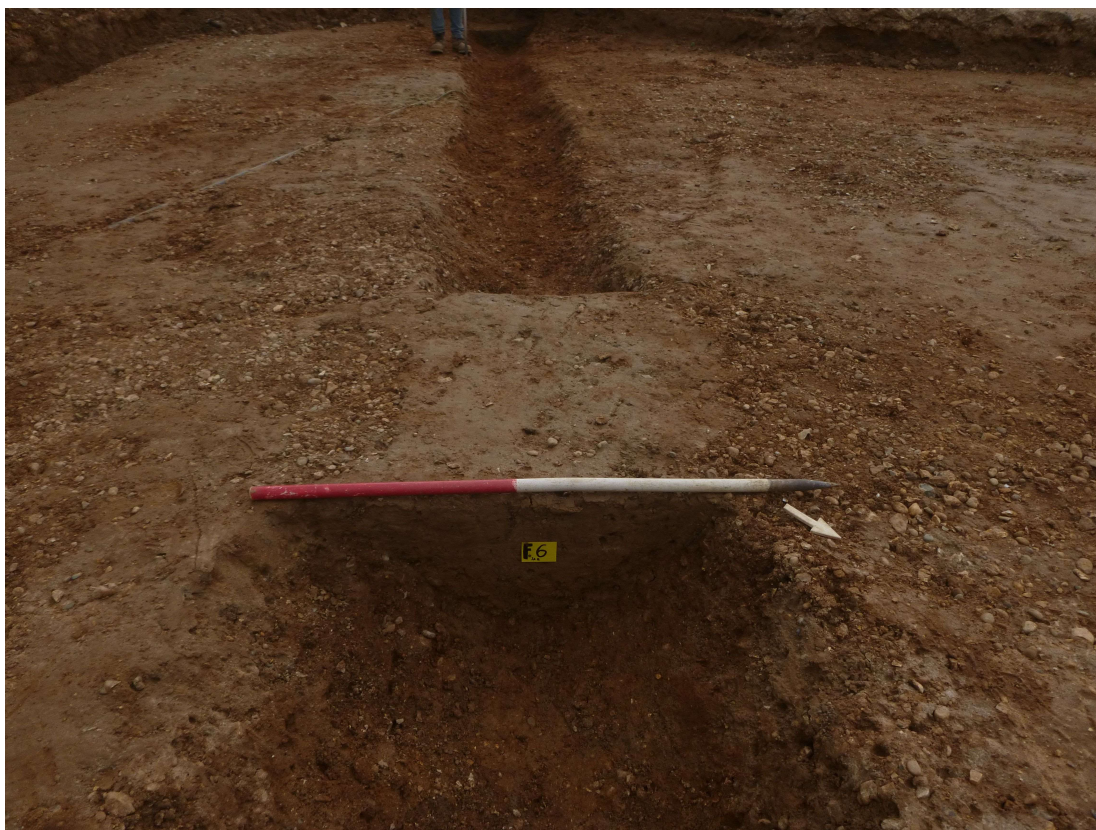
Photograph 4 Ditch F2 sx2 – view south-west.



Photograph 5 Ditch F5 sx2 – view north-east.



Photograph 6 Ditch F5 overall shot – view north-east.



Photograph 7 Ditch F6 sx2 – view south-west.

6 Finds

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The excavation produced four small sherds (4g) of Roman coarse oxidised (fabric DJ) pottery which came from ditch F6. This material was not retained.

7 Conclusion

Archaeological excavation work on land to the rear of Hedge Drive has reaffirmed that the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road does pass through the development site. As seen on previous archaeological investigations along the road, it consisted of four ditches set out as two pairs, defining narrow footways c 2.6m wide, on either side of a central carriageway which was c 7.6m across. The roadside ditches were well-defined at 0.71-1.01m wide and 0.29-0.33m deep, although the road surface had not survived. Unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered from three of the ditches with only four small sherds of Roman pottery from F6 that could not be further identified.

This excavation has allowed the precise alignment of the Roman road through the development site to be plotted. This has been used in Fig 4 to better project the route of the road between the nearest known fixed points to the south-west at Gosbecks (CAT Report 127) and sites to the north-east. This plot has shown that the two ditches identified at Alderman Blaxill School in 2017 (now Paxman's Academy; CAT Report 1167) are unlikely to have been part of the Roman road as they are approximately 9.5m further to the south-east than the projected route of the road between Hedge Drive and the parchmark on land to the east of Boadicea Way. Based on this refined plot of the Roman road, the roadside ditches should still have passed through three of the evaluation trenches at Alderman Blaxill, but no remains were determined in these areas. However, difficulty in identifying the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road is nothing new (see discussion in the Archaeological Background), and the road may have poorly survived at this

particular location. Being able to refine the complete route of the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road is important as it establishes where future development work may impact on this important monument.

This excavation is important as East of England Research Framework LIA-ROM 010 asks 'Can we map the development of Late Iron Age and Roman roads?', and here we can map the development of a significant Roman road which connected the town of Colchester to the market, religious and likely administrative complex at Gosbecks.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Caroline Kay and Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by A Wightman, and fieldwork was carried out by H Furniss with Z Eksen, T Gulliver-Lawrence, A Parker and A Smith. Figures are by H Furniss, L Pooley and E Holloway. The project was monitored for Colchester Borough Council by Dr Simon Wood and Dr Richard Hoggett.

9 References

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

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------|---|
| CAR 11 | 1995 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 11: Camunlodunum 2</i> by C F C Hawkes and P Crummy |
| CAT | 2022 | <i>Health & Safety Policy</i> |
| CAT | 2023 | <i>Written scheme of investigation (WSI) for an archaeological excavation on land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex, CO2 9DT</i> |
| CAT Report 30 | 1998 | <i>Gosbecks Archaeological Park, Colchester: an archaeological evaluation of the north-west area.</i> |
| CAT Report 45 | 1999 | <i>Excavation at Gosbecks Archaeological Park: July-August 1999.</i> |
| CAT Report 127 | 2008 | <i>Excavations of Late Iron Age and Roman features and a Roman road north of Gosbecks Archaeological Park, Colchester, Essex 1995-1996.</i> |
| CAT Report 345 | 2005 | <i>A Roman temple-tomb at Colchester Royal Grammar School, Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex: August-September 2005.</i> |
| CAT Report 1167 | 2017 | <i>Archaeological evaluation at Alderman Blaxill County Secondary School, Paxman Avenue, Colchester, Essex, CO2 9DQ: September 2017.</i> |
| CAT Report 1587 | 2022 | <i>Archaeological evaluation, excavation and monitoring at 60 Creffield Road, Colchester, Essex: December 2019-July 2021.</i> |
| CAT Report 1870 | 2022 | <i>The Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road: An Archaeological excavation on land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex: October 2022</i> |
| CBCAA | 2022 | <i>Brief for Archaeological Excavation at land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester.</i> By S Wood |
| CIfA | 2014a | <i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation.</i> Updated June 2020. |
| CIfA | 2014b | <i>Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives.</i> Updated June 2020. |
| CIfA | 2014c | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.</i> Updated October 2020. |
| CIfA | 2014c | <i>Code of Conduct.</i> Revised Oct 2022 |
| 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> |
| Hull, M R | 1958 | <i>Roman Colchester, RRCSAL, 20</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. |
| Symonds, R & Wade, S | 1999 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86.</i> Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust Ltd. |

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CBCAA	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record
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.
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
Late Iron Age	Period from c 100 – 50 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
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
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
WSI	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of digital archive

CAT Report 1917
CBC excavation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation
Digital photographs
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.

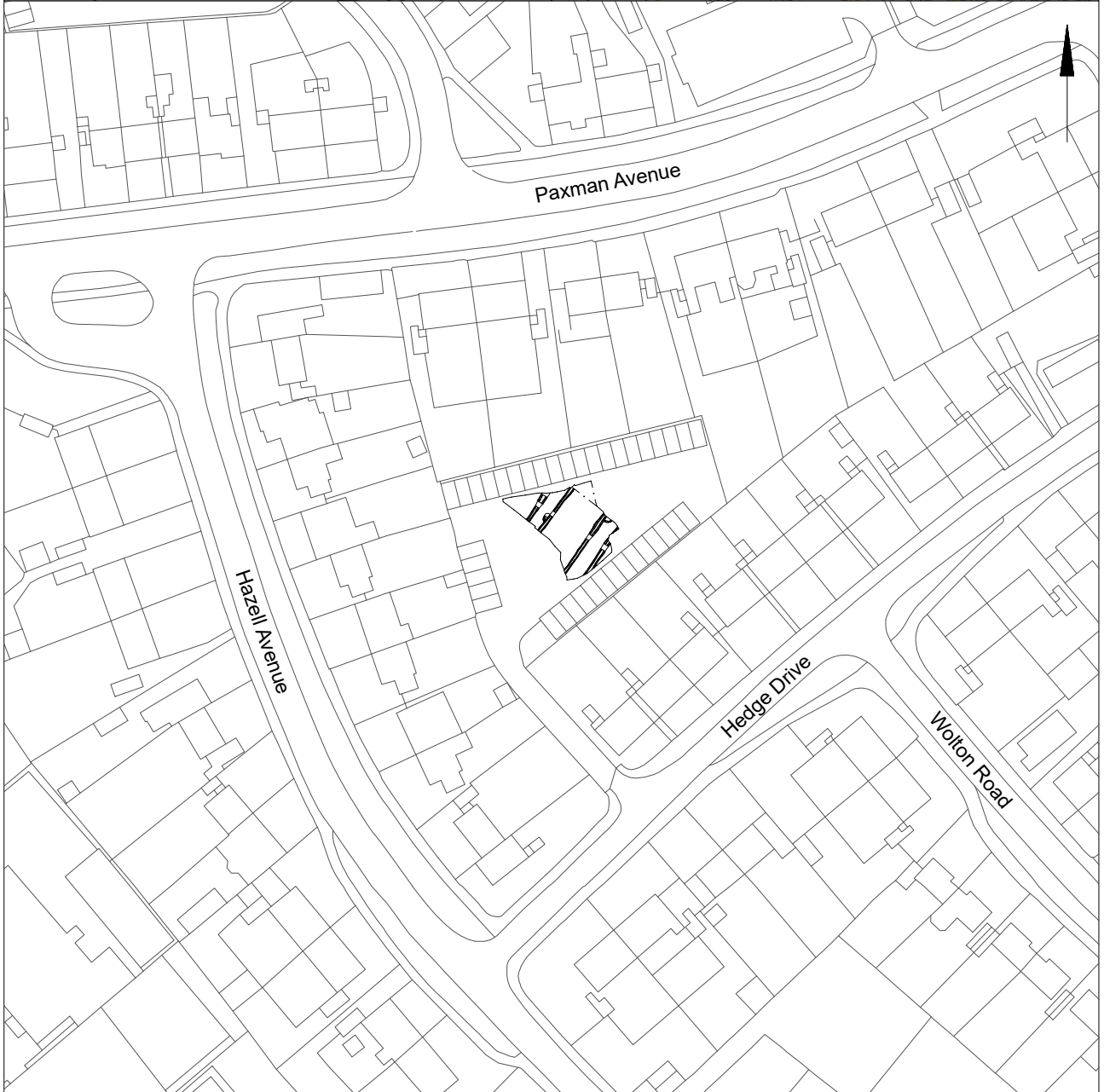
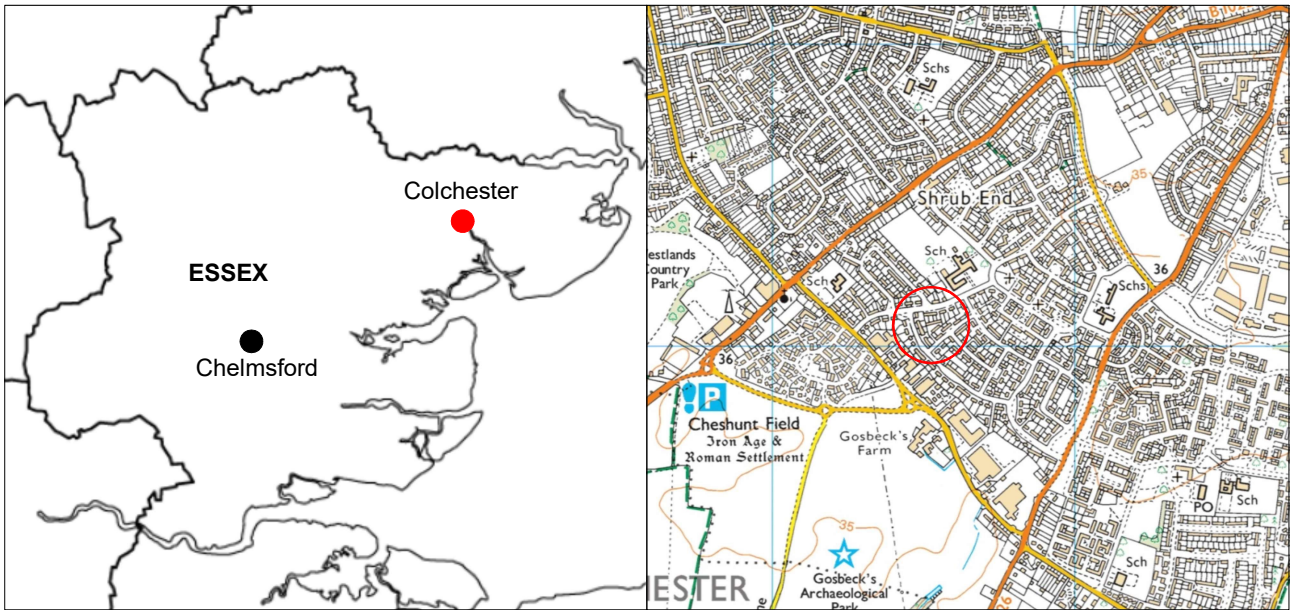
© Colchester Archaeological Trust 2023

Distribution list:

Caroline Kay, Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd
Dr Richard Hoggett, Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
Essex Historic Environment Record

Appendix 1 Context list

Context no.	Trench no.	Finds no.	Context type	Description	Date
L1	All	-	Cover loam	Friable/firm moist light grey/brown silty loam	Undated
L2	All	-	Natural	Compact, gravely and sandy clay.	Post-glacial
F1	T1	-	Ditch	Friable/firm moist light/medium orange/grey/brown sandy silt and inclusions of: gravel 25% stone 30%	Roman
F2	T1	-	Ditch	Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt with charcoal flecks and inclusions of: stone 5%	Roman
F3	T1	-	Natural feature	Firm moist light grey/brown sandy silt	Post-glacial
F4	T2	-	?Part of L1	Friable/firm moist light/medium grey/brown sandy silty loam and inclusions of: gravel 25% stone 20%	Undated
F5	T2	-	Ditch	Soft moist light grey clayey sand	Roman
F6	T2	1	Ditch	Friable/firm moist light/medium grey/brown sandy silty loam and inclusions of: gravel 20% stone 20%	Roman
F7	T3	-	?Part of L1	Firm moist medium grey/brown sandy silt	Undated
F8	T2	-	Natural feature	Firm moist light grey/brown sandy silt	Post-glacial



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100039294.

Fig 1 Site location.



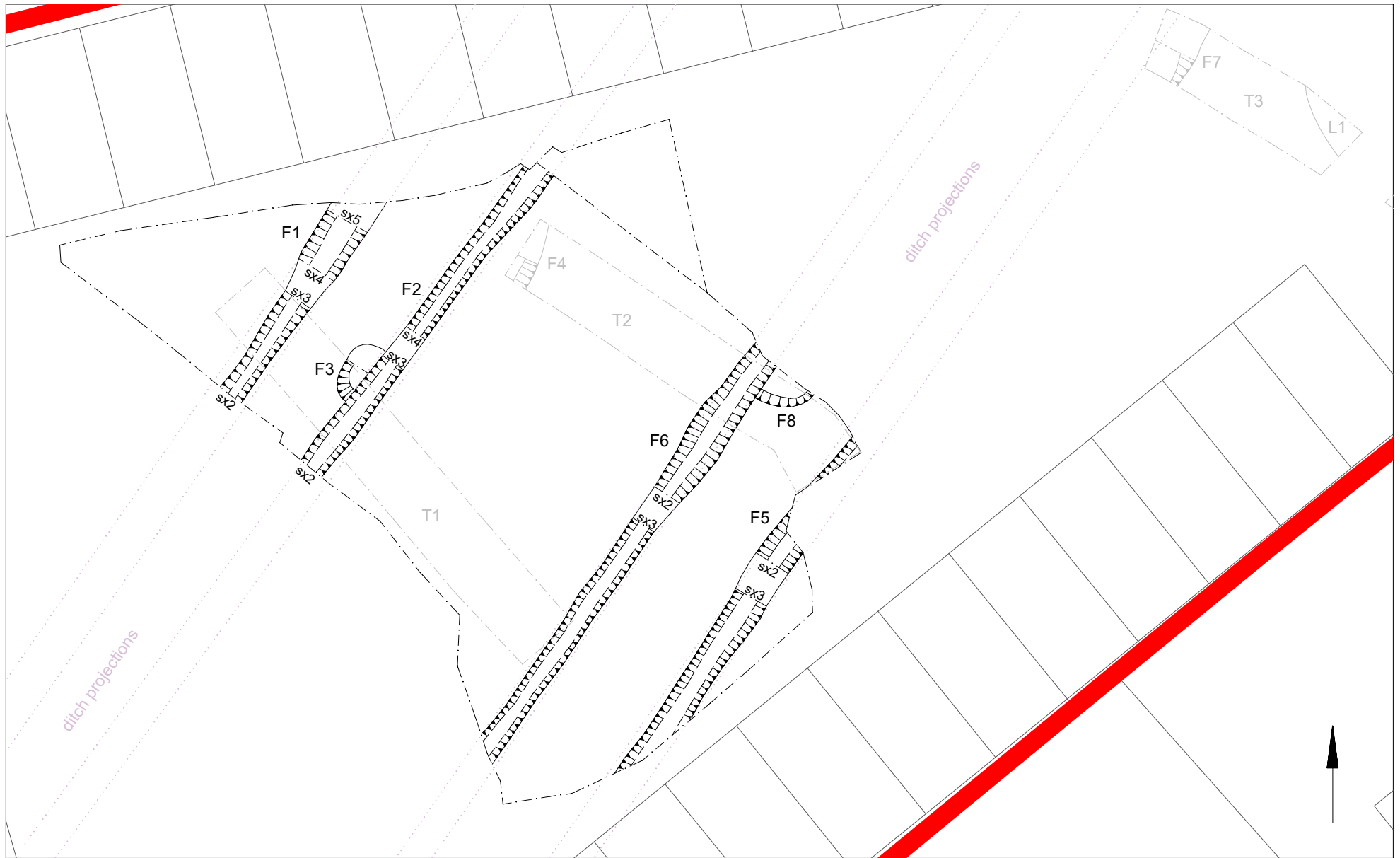


Fig 2 Results, with the evaluation trenches in grey and ditch projections in pink.

© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100039294.



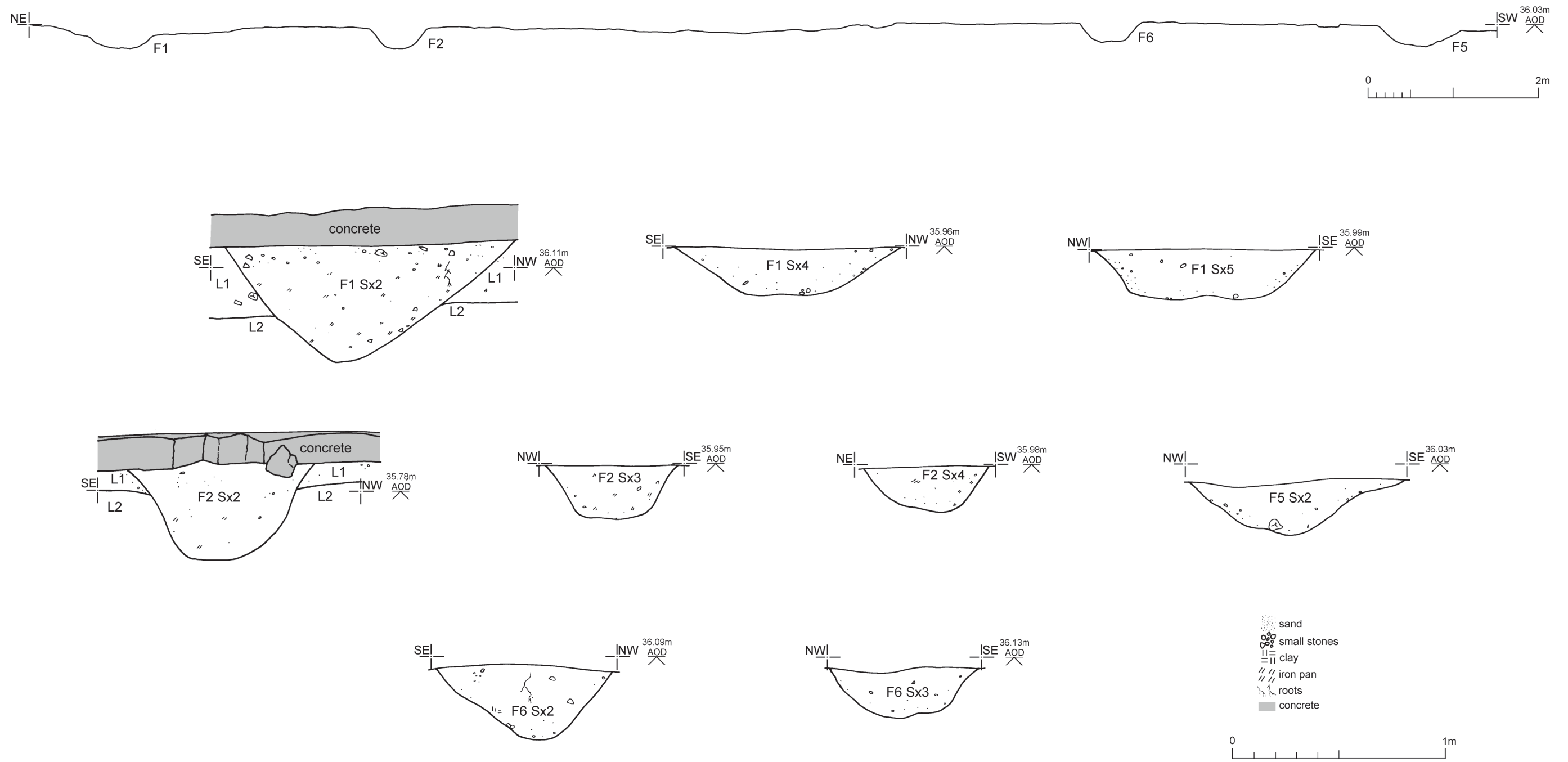
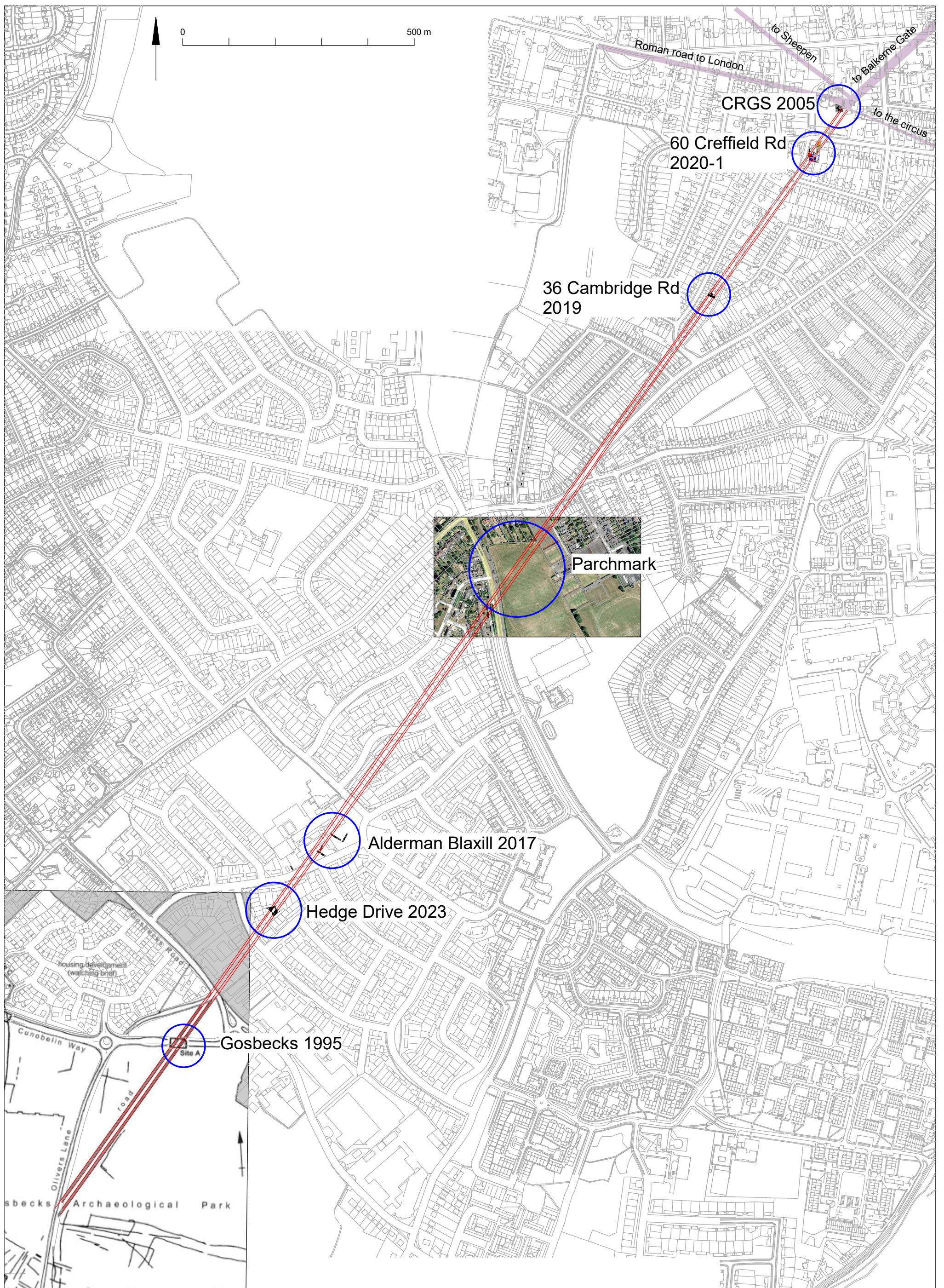


Fig 3 Profile across the road and sections through the roadside ditches.



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100039294.

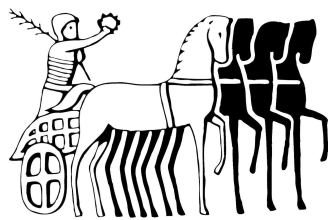
Fig 4 Alignment of the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road base on investigations at Colchester Royal Grammar School, 60 Creffield Road, 36 Cambridge Road, Alderman Blaxill School, Hedge Drive, Gosbecks and cropmarks/parchmarks at Shrub End sports ground and Gosbecks. Each of the red lines represents the approximate centre line one of the four ditches of the road.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex, CO2 9DT	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 97538 23073 (centre)	Site code: CAT project ref.: 2023/01L CHER ref.: ECC4765 OASIS ref.: colchest3-512395
Type of work: Excavation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 14th-17th and 22nd March 2023	Size of area investigated: 0.02h
Location of curating museum: Archaeological Data Service	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related CHER/SMR number: MCC2529
Final report: CAT Report 1917	
Periods represented: Romano-British	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: An archaeological excavation was carried out on land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex in advance of the demolition of garages and the construction of three new properties. The projected route of the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road was already known to pass through the development site and the excavation area was positioned to uncover the location of the remains of the road as well as any other archaeological contexts.</p> <p>The excavation successfully located the remains of the Roman road, which consisted of four ditches defining two narrow footways on either side of a wide central carriageway. The footways were c 2.6m wide and the central carriageway c 7.6m across. The roadside ditches were well-defined at 0.71-1.01m wide and 0.29-0.33m deep. The road surface had not survived.</p>	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Report 1870	
CBC monitor: Simon Wood and Richard Hoggett	
Keywords: Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road	Significance: ***
Author of summary: Harvey Furniss	Date of summary: April 2023

Colchester Archaeological Trust



**Written scheme of investigation
for excavation on land to the rear of
Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex,
CO2 9DT**

January 2023

**CAT project ref.: 2023/011
CHER code: pending**

**Written scheme of investigation for excavation on
land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex,
CO2 9DT**

January 2023

NGR: TL 97538 23073

**Planning district.: Colchester
Planning ref.: 220150**

CAT project ref.: 2023/011

**CHER code: pending
CCC monitor: Dr Simon Wood
OASIS id: colchest3-512395**

**WSI prepared by: Dr Elliott Hicks
Figures by: Chris Lister**

**Commissioned by: Caroline Kay
(Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd)**

Prepared by:	Dr Elliott Hicks	Junior Project Officer
Reviewed and approved by:	Chris Lister	Contracts Manager
Issued:	19/1/2023	

Colchester Archaeological Trust

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

tel.: 01206 501785

web: www.thecolchesterarchaeologist.co.uk
eh2@catuk.org

Site location and description

The proposed development site is located c 2.95km southwest of the historic core of Colchester City Centre and on land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex. The site is centred on national grid reference (NGR) TL 97538 23073. The site is irregular in shape, with no road frontage. It is bounded by residential development to all sides. Access to the site is gained off Hedge Drive in the southeastern corner of the site.

Proposed work

The development comprises the demolition of 39 garages and an area of hardstanding to be replaced with a pair of three-bedroom semi-detached houses and a two-bedroom bungalow with associated parking, landscaping and groundworks.

Archaeological background

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

The geology for the site area includes a bedrock of London clay formation (clay, silt and sand), with superficial deposits of cover sand (clay, silt and sand).¹

The site is located within the *oppidum* of Camulodunum. It lies in close proximity to the nationally important Late Iron Age and Roman complex at Gosbecks (Scheduled Monument NHLE no. 100218, MCC7470) which has been analysed in aerial photographs, geophysical surveys, and excavations (Hull 1958, 259-71; *CAR 11*, 95-105; CAT Reports 30, 45 and 127). Archaeological remains at Gosbecks include: dykes, droeways and field systems; a large enclosure (MCC7044), possibly Cunobelin's farmstead (MCC7044); a small Roman fort of probable Claudian date (MCC7472); a Romano-British temple (MCC2849), surrounded by a monumental portico (MCC7043); a Roman theatre (MCC2831); a Roman water main, possibly leading to a bath-house (MCC2903); and a road leading to the walled Roman town (MCC2529). Many of these remains are located within Gosbecks Archaeological Park.

A Roman road linking the town to Gosbecks (MCC2529) is projected to run through the site (see Fig 1). Sections were excavated through the road in 1936 (Hull 1958 and *CAR 11*; MCC7087) and by CAT in 1989 (*CAR 11*, 121; MCC8094), but neither investigation satisfactorily defined the road. However, an excavation carried out by CAT in 1995 established that the road consisted of four ditches set out in two pairs defining two footways c 2m wide bordering a main carriageway c 7m wide in the centre (CAT Report 127). The western roadside ditch and part of the metalling was also defined during excavations conducted in 2005 at the Colchester Royal Grammar School, at the point where several major roads intersect (CAT Report 345, MCC5229). To the north of this intersection, the road continues on towards Balcerne Gate (MCC475, MCC555).

Recent archaeological investigations at 60 Creffield Road identified the Colchester to Gosbecks Roman road passing across the centre of the development site on a northeast to southwest alignment. Two phases of road construction were identified, with the first phase dating to the Late Iron Age/Early Roman period, and the second to the early 2nd century. Numerous phases of metalling show that the carriageway was under maintenance and repairs, and it appeared that the carriageway was in use until the late 4th century, when a small number of gullies were cut into the surface. A series of pits dating from the mid/late 1st to the 2nd century were uncovered to the east of the road. Four of these probably contained pyre debris, as – while only one produced cremated human bone – all four showed evidence of scorching around the edges/base of the feature, and all produced burnt animal bone and pottery sherds. A large post-medieval or modern ditch or quarry pit was also excavated along with several gullies and pits of similar date (CAT Report 1587, ECC4448).

Alderman Blaxill School was demolished in 2017 and replaced by the Paxman Academy

¹ www.geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk

buildings. Prior to the demolition, Colchester Archaeological Trust undertook trial-trenching along Paxman Avenue in order to determine the location and state of preservation of the Gosbecks to Colchester Roman road. This evaluation identified mixed evidence to indicate the survival of the road and was interpreted as an indication that this section of the road had very little nearby settlement, if any. This may mean that this was a poorly-maintained and thus poorly-defined section of road which has proven difficult to identify (CAT Report 1167; ECC4075).

Planning background

A planning application (220150) was submitted to Colchester Borough Council (now Colchester City Council) in January 2022 proposing the demolition of the existing garages at the site and the construction of three new dwellings.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the CHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, specifically the Roman road leading from Gosbeck to Colchester, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Colchester City Council Archaeological Advisor (CCCAA). The recommended archaeological condition is based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).

The archaeological evaluation was carried out by CAT in October 2022 (CAT Report 1870). Excavations revealed the remains of the Colchester to Gosbecks Roman road, uncovering the four ditches which define the carriageway and its two adjoining footways. Due to the considerable archaeological significance of these remains, and in order to mitigate the impact of the proposed development upon them, CCCAA requested further investigation.

Requirement for work (fig 2)

The required archaeological work is for an archaeological excavation. Details are given in a Project Brief written by CCCAA (CCC 2022).

Specifically,

As per the brief, the required archaeological work is for an open area excavation to fully expose a section of the Colchester to Gosbecks Roman road. CAT proposes an excavation area measuring 226m², taking site constraints into account.

The work is required to enable the archaeological resource, both in quality and extent, to be accurately quantified. It is also required to:

- Identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit, together with its likely extent, localised depth and quality of preservation.
- Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking colluvial/alluvial deposits.
- Establish the potential for the survival, condition and significance of environmental evidence.
- Establish the potential for the survival and condition of environmental evidence.
- Establish an archaeological deposit model for below-ground archaeological remains across the site.
- Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.

Contingencies will be included for scientific analysis of significant deposits such as absolute dating, soil micromorphological and geochemical analysis of floor and dark earth deposits.

General methodology

All work carried out by CAT will be in accordance with:

- professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a, b & c)

- Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011) and the recent review updates on <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>
- relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2022)

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 CCCAA 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 (when the WSI is written) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed (Activity type, Location and Reviewers/Admin areas). At the end of the project all parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to EHER. This will include an uploaded .PDF version of the entire report.

A unique HER event number will be obtained from the CCCAA 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 and four archaeologists for five days.

In charge of day-to-day site work: Nigel Rayner/Harvey Furniss/Ben Holloway/Sarah Veasey

Excavation methodology

Where appropriate, modern overburden and any topsoil stripping/levelling will be performed using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision and to the satisfaction of a professional archaeologist. If no archaeologically significant deposits are exposed, machine excavation will continue until natural subsoil is reached.

Where necessary, areas will be cleaned by hand to ensure the visibility of archaeological deposits.

If archaeological features or deposits are uncovered time will be allowed for these to be excavated, planned and recorded.

All features or deposits will be excavated by hand by archaeologists. There will be sufficient excavation to give clear evidence for the period, depth and nature of any archaeological deposit. For linear features 1m wide sections will be excavated across their width to a total of 10% of the overall length. Discrete features, such as pits, will have 50% of their fills excavated, although certain features may be fully excavated. Complex archaeological structures such as walls, kilns, ovens or burials will be carefully cleaned, planned and fully recorded, but where possible left *in situ*. Only if it can be demonstrated that the complex structure/feature is likely to be destroyed by groundworks, and only then after discussion with the CCCAA, will it be removed.

Fast hand-excavation techniques involving (for instance) picks, forks and mattocks will not be used on complex stratigraphy.

A metal detector will be used to examine spoil heaps, and the finds recovered.

Individual records of excavated contexts, layers, features or deposits will be entered on proforma record sheets. Registers will be compiled of finds, small finds and soil samples.

All features and layers or other significant deposits will be planned, and their profiles or sections recorded. A representative section will be drawn to include ground level and the depth of machining. The normal scale will be site plans at 1:20 and sections at 1:10, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be appropriate.

The photographic record will consist of general site shots, and shots of all archaeological features and deposits. A photographic scale (including north arrow) shall be included in the case of detailed photographs. Standard "record" shots of contexts will be taken on a digital camera. A photographic register will accompany the photographic record. This will detail as a minimum feature number, location, and direction of shot.

Site surveying

The excavation area and any features will be surveyed by Total Station or GPS, unless the particulars of the features indicate that manual planning techniques should be employed. 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 the excavation area 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). Samples will be collected for potential micromorphological 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.

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.

Human remains

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

Burials, if encountered, will be left *in situ* at this evaluation stage. Following Historic England guidance (2018), if the human remains are not to be lifted the project osteologist will be available to record the human remains in the ground.

If circumstances indicated it were prudent or necessary to remove remains from the site, 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. 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 CCCAA will be informed, and any advice and/or instruction from the coroner will be followed.

Human remains removed from site for analysis may be sent for radiocarbon dating.

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 (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 Laura Pooley (Post-excavation Manager). This includes specialist subjects such as:

ceramic finds (pottery and ceramic building material): Matthew Loughton
animal bones: Alec Wade (or Adam Wightman/Pip Parmenter - 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): Megan 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: Tom Lawrence
prehistoric pottery: Stephen Benfield / Nigel Brown / Paul Sealey
Roman pottery: Stephen Benfield / Paul Sealey / Jo Mills / 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 CCCAA.

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 CCCAA 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* (Historic England 2015b).

The report will be submitted within three months of the end of fieldwork, with a copy supplied to CCCAA as a PDF.

The report will contain:

- Location plan of groundworks. At least two corners of which 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 and the recent review updates on <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>).
- 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 CCCAA.

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 City 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.

If finds are retained from the site 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). If there are no finds a full digital archive will be deposited with ADS Archaeology.

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 CCCAA) within 3 months of the completion of the final publication report, with a summary of the contents of the archive supplied to CCCAA. 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 CCCAA 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 CCCAA for integration into the HER.

Monitoring

CCCAA 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 CCCAA one week in advance of its commencement.

Any variations in this WSI will be agreed with CCCAA prior to them being carried out.

CCCAA will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

The involvement of CCCAA shall be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

Education and outreach

The CAT website (www.thecolchesterarchaeologist.co.uk) and social media sites are updated regularly with information on current sites. Copies of our reports (grey literature) can be viewed on the website and downloaded for free. Staff regularly give lectures to groups, societies and schools (a fee may apply). CAT also works in partnership with Colchester Archaeological Group (providing a venue for their lectures and library) and the local Young Archaeologists Club.

CAT archaeologists can be booked for lectures and information on fees can be obtained by contacting the office on 01206 501785 (option 1).

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	2022	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 30	1998	<i>Gosbecks Archaeological Park, Colchester: an archaeological evaluation of the north-west area</i> , by S Benfield
CAT Report 45	1999	<i>Excavation at Gosbecks Archaeological Park: July-August 1999</i> , by C Austin
CAT Report 127	2008	<i>Excavations of Late Iron Age and Roman features and a Roman road north of Gosbecks Archaeological Park, Colchester, Essex 1995-1996</i> , by S Benfield
CAT Report 345	2005	<i>A Roman temple-tomb at Colchester Royal Grammar School</i> ,

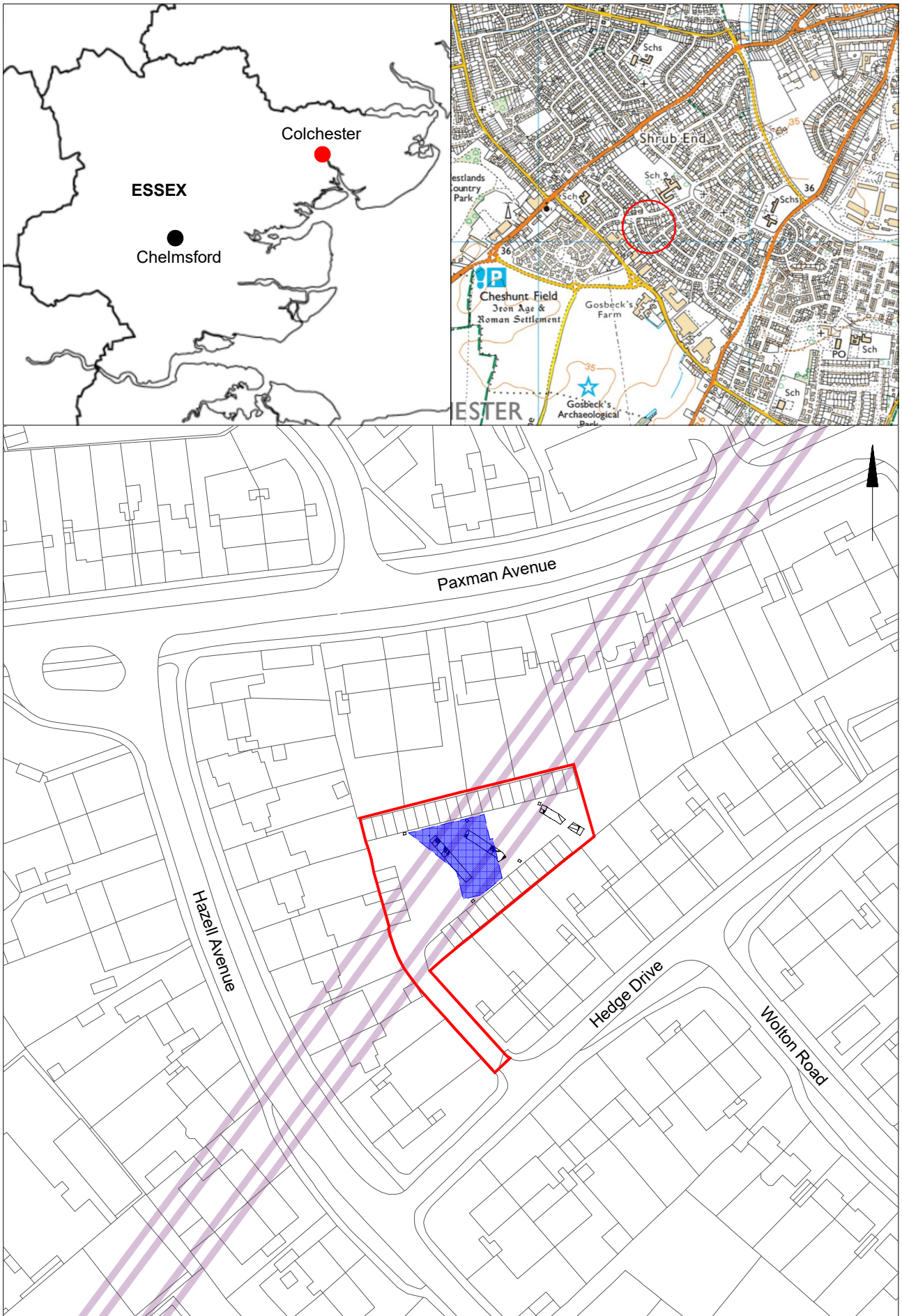
		<i>Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex: August-September 2005, by H Brooks</i>
CAT Report 1167	2017	<i>Archaeological evaluation at Alderman Blaxill County Secondary School, Paxman Avenue, Colchester, Essex, CO2 9DQ: September 2017, by E Hicks</i>
CAT Report 1587	2022	<i>Archaeological evaluation, excavation and monitoring at 60 Creffield Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HY: December 2019-July 2021, by L Pooley</i>
CAT Report 1870	2022	<i>The Colchester to Gosbecks Roman road: An archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex, CO2 9DT: October 2022, by L Pooley</i>
CifA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief. Revised Oct 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 2021</i>
Digital Curation Centre (DCC)	2013	<i>Checklist for Data Management Plan v. 4.0</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, by S Mays, M Brickley & J Sidell</i>
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)</i>
MHCLG	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</i>

E Hicks



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

tel: 01206 501785
email: eh2@catuk.org



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100039294.

Fig 1 Site location and excavation area in relation to the evaluation results and the projected route of the Roman road.

0 50 m

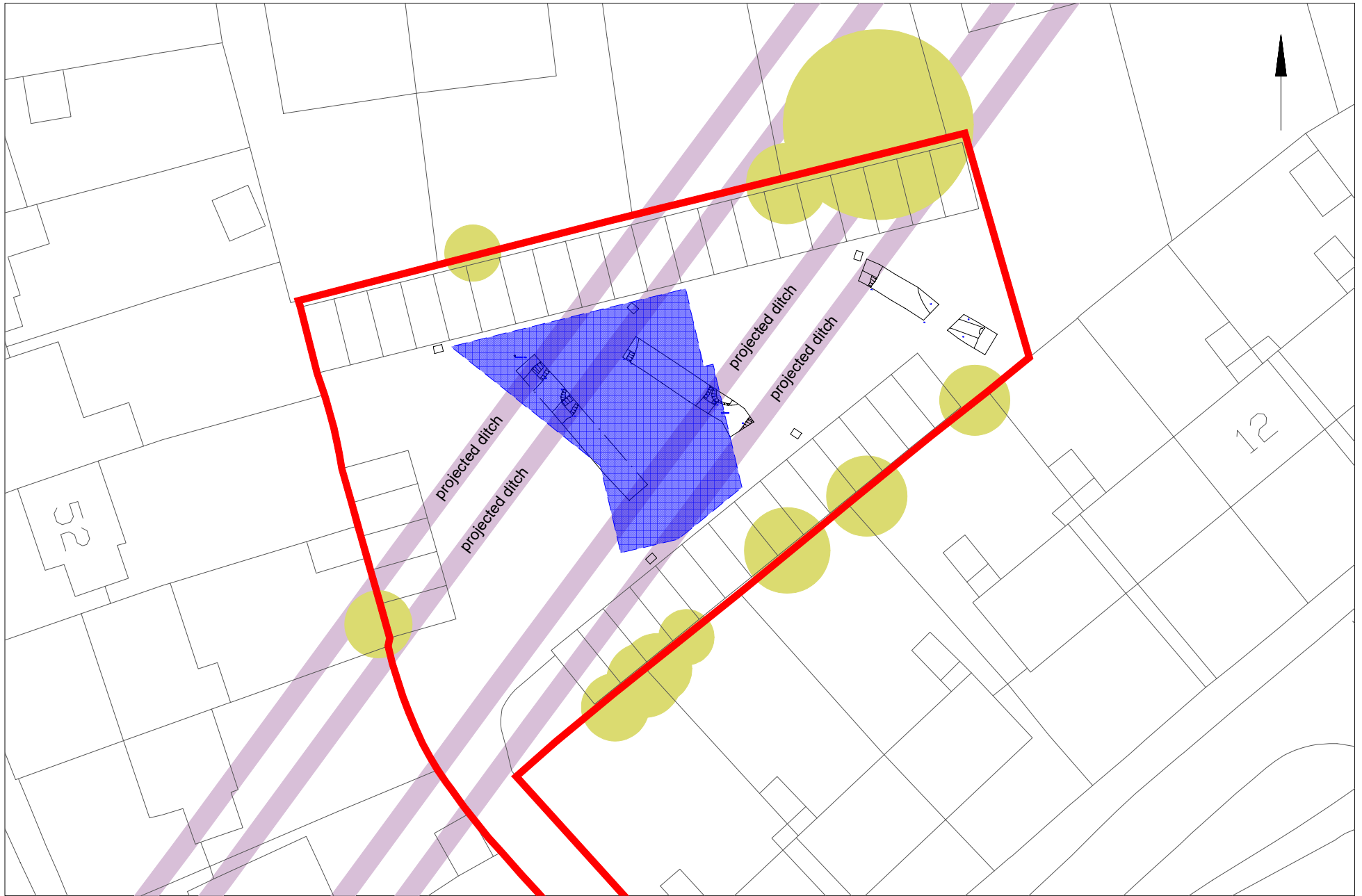


Fig 2 Proposed excavation area in relation to evaluation results and site constraints.

© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100039294.



Summary for colchest3-512395

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-512395
Project Name	Excavation at Land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex, CO2 9DT
Sitename	Land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex, CO2 9DT
Activity type	Excavation
Project Identifier(s)	2023/01L
Planning Id	220150
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	14-Mar-2023 - 22-Mar-2023
Location	Land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex, CO2 9DT NGR : TL 97538 23073 LL : 51.8712398115327, 0.868011492591025 12 Fig : 597538,223073
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Colchester Parish : Colchester, unparished area
Project Methodology	Archaeological excavation was carried out as per the conditions of the project brief and WSI.
Project Results	<p>An archaeological excavation was carried out on land to the rear of Hedge Drive, Colchester, Essex in advance of the demolition of garages and the construction of three new properties. The projected route of the Colchester-to-Gosbecks Roman road was already known to pass through the development site and the excavation area was positioned to uncover the location of the remains of the road as well as any other archaeological contexts.</p> <p>The excavation successfully located the remains of the Roman road, which consisted of four ditches defining two narrow footways on either side of a wide central carriageway. The footways were c 2.6m wide and the central carriageway c 7.6m across. The roadside ditches were well-defined at 0.71-1.01m wide and 0.29-0.33m deep. The road surface had not survived.</p>
Keywords	Road - ROMAN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	
HER	Colchester Borough Council - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Laura, Pooley, Harvey, Furniss
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - ECC4765
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;