

**Report on an
archaeological watching brief at
1a St Clare Road, Colchester
October 2000**

**on behalf of
Colchester Borough Council**

CAT Project Code: **00/10a**
Museum accession code: **2000.150**



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CAT Report 99

Reason for the work: new garage
Officer: Kate Orr
National Grid Reference: **TL 9750 2510**

Nature of work

A large garage 8.1m x 7.16m in size was being built on the site of a demolished smaller garage.

Background

The site lies between Lexden Road and St Clare Road. 1a St Clare Road is set back from Lexden Road, with gardens and swimming pool to the rear. The garage is situated to the rear of the swimming pool, approximately 8m from St Clare Road (see Fig 1).

A condition for an archaeological watching brief was put on the planning permission for a new garage because the site occupies an area of rich archaeology. The site is within the Lexden Roman cemetery, although its focus appears to be to the south. Approximately 400m to the south lies the Lexden tumulus, a late Iron Age burial mound. Lexden Dyke is projected to run 150m to the west of the site; this was also constructed in the late Iron Age. A late Iron Age 'C' vessel was found 40m to the north-east in 1925. Imported early Roman brooches have been found close to St Clare Drive and a middle Bronze Age urn has been found in St Clare Road.

Report

Two visits were made on the 10th of October 2000 and virtually all the footings were monitored. The previous garage had been removed, but the slab foundation on which it had been built was still *in situ* on the eastern side. The new garage was larger than the previous one, being 8.1m x 7.16m in size. Foundation trenches were dug to 450mm width. The depth was more than 1.2m in some places, making it impossible to get into the trench in these areas.

On the western side of the site the following soil profile was observed:

- Layer 1 - sandy wet dark silt with orange patches containing small stones and tree roots, 0-380mm.
- Layer 2 - light brown silt with tree roots and stones, 380mm-1.2m.
- Layer 3 - orange sand and gravels, 1.2m.

On the eastern side of the site, where the old garage had stood, the soil consisted of made-up ground:

Layer 1 - concrete slab 0-100mm.

Layer 2 - sand with tree roots, 100-280mm.

Layer 3 - sandy silt with tree roots and stones, contaminated with oil. 280-900mm.

Layer 4 - clayey sand and gravel 900mm-1m.

Two pieces of animal bone, one sherd of 19th- or 20th-century flowerpot, and one piece of medieval or post-medieval peg-tile were retrieved from this side but from no definite layer. These were the only finds retrieved from the site.

Conclusion

No features were observed nor finds other than modern pottery, peg-tile and animal bone. The soil in the eastern end had been heavily disturbed by the garage slab and tree-root activity. The soil on the western side had been less disturbed by building but roots extended down to 1m down.

Photographs

Two photographs were taken (see Figs 2 & 3).

Archive

The finds and this report will be deposited with Colchester Museum under accession number 2000.150.



Fig 2 View of foundation trenches looking south.



Fig 3 View of foundation trenches looking south-west.

Kate Orr
November 2000

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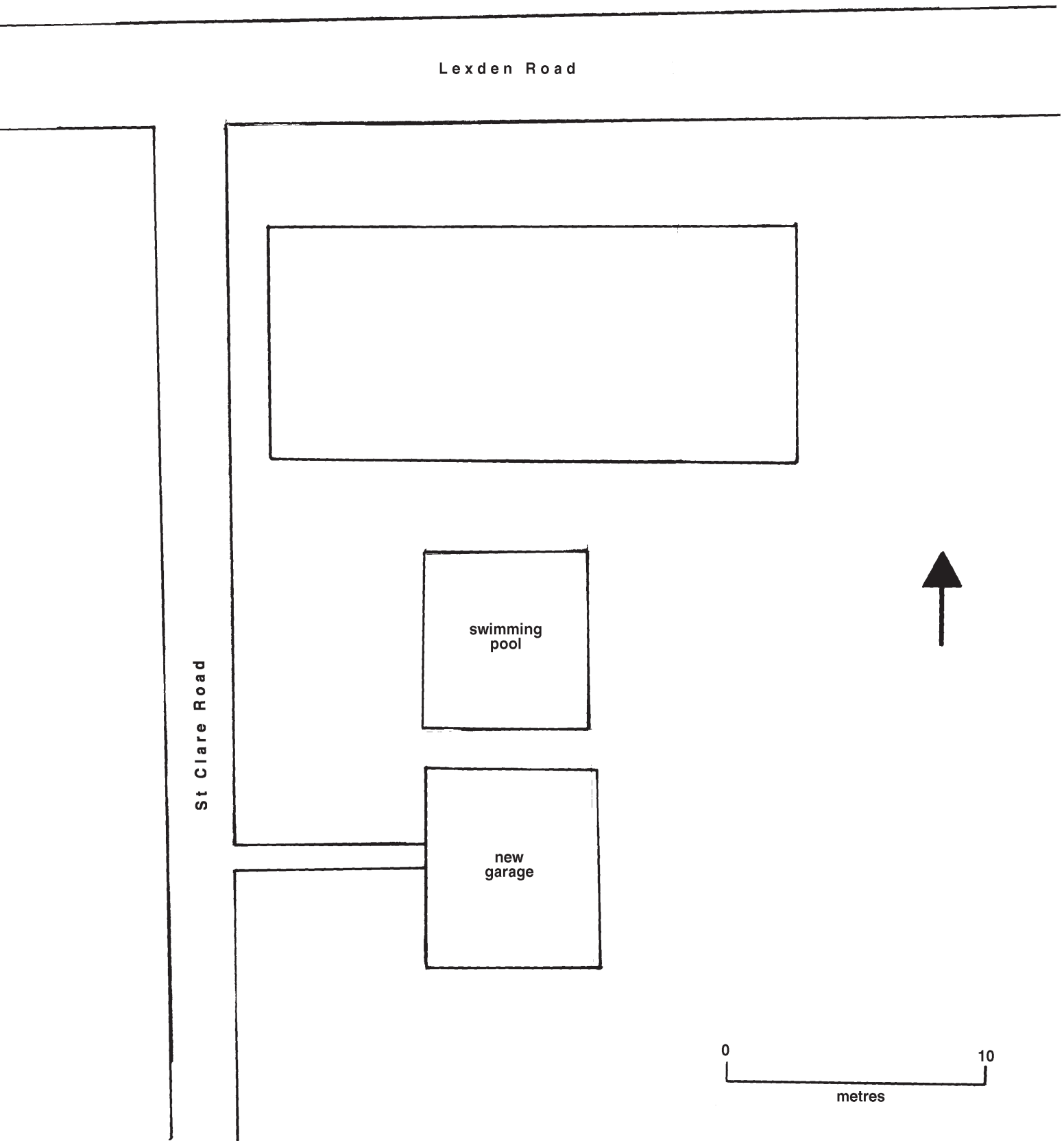


Fig 1 Location plan.