

An archaeological watching brief at 56 Shelley Road, Colchester, Essex

November 2001 and May 2002

**on behalf of
Colchester Borough Council**

CAT project ref.: 01/11c
Colchester Museums accession code: 2001.237
National Grid Reference: TL 9680 2460



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1 Summary

Observations were made during an archaeological watching brief on groundworks for a detached dwelling next to 56 Shelley Road, Colchester, Essex. No features or finds of archaeological significance were observed on the site. The subsoil appeared to be undisturbed with little or no tile or pottery within it.

2 Introduction (Figs 1-2)

2.1 This is the report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the 22nd November 2001 and the 13th May 2002 at the request of Colchester Borough Council. The work was necessitated by the construction of a detached house next to no 56 Shelley Road, Colchester, Essex.

2.2 The site is located at National Grid Reference TL 9680 2460 at the junction of Scotts Drive, Shelley Road and Shakespeare Road (Fig 1). It lies on a north-facing slope, so that the site's southern border with 2 Scotts Drive is over a metre higher than its northern border with Shelley Road. The site was previously a garden to 56 Shelley Road (Fig 2).

2.3 This report follows the standards set out in the Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1999, updated 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparations and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996b, updated 2002), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

3.1 Bronze Age pottery has been found in close proximity to the site, indicating settlement activity of that period nearby (Essex Heritage Conservation Record or EHCR 11611).

3.2 The development site is situated within the area of the Iron Age settlement of Camulodunum which was defended by a system of dykes. The site is nearest to Triple Dyke 40m to the west and Dugard Dyke 150m to the west. Camulodunum was flanked by a number of large linear earthwork dykes, most of which were built in the late Iron Age to define and protect this important settlement centre which was succeeded by Roman Colchester. However, some of the dykes can be dated to the early Roman period, which is probably when the Triple Dyke and Dugard Dyke were constructed (Hawkes & Crummy 1995, 26).

3.3 Lying 450m to the north of the site is the line of the main Roman road from Colchester to London.

4 Aims and objectives

The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any archaeological features, finds or deposits revealed by the groundworks.

5 Methods (Figs 2-3)

5.1 The fieldwork was carried out by the author during groundworks for foundations and services. The size of the plot was 13m x 10m. The trenches were dug using a mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. The width of the foundation trenches was 500mm and their depth up to 1.05m. The drain-trenches were dug to between 600mm and 700mm in depth.

5.2 A record of the position of the site excavations was made which has been reproduced as Figure 2. The sides of the trenches were checked for features and soil types were noted. A section drawing was made of one part of the northern foundation trench at scale 1:10 (Fig 3). The spoil heaps were checked for finds.

6 Results

6.1 Soil-stripping

The topsoil and some of the subsoil had already been stripped off the site by the time of the first visit. This stripping was not monitored archaeologically. Because of the sloping ground on site, more subsoil had to be stripped off from the southern side to level out the site, and natural was exposed.

6.2 Foundation trenches

In the northern (lower) part of the site, there was still a layer of subsoil for foundation trenches to be dug through before natural was reached. The following soil profile was reached in the most northerly trench:

Layer or L1 - grey/brown silty loam subsoil with abundant small stones and one tile fragment.

L2 - orangey/brown silty natural mottled with grey with occasional small stones.

Foundation trenches on the southern (higher) side of the plot cut through natural orangey sand only. No features or finds of archaeological significance were observed.

6.3 Drain-trenches

A second visit was made after the drain-trenches had been dug out. A similar soil profile was observed to that in the foundation trenches. No features or finds of archaeological significance were observed.

7 Discussion

No features or finds of archaeological significance were observed on the site. The subsoil appeared to be undisturbed with little or no tile or pottery within it. However, the stripping of the topsoil and some of the subsoil may have removed archaeological features without their being recorded as this work was not monitored.

8 Archive deposition

The archive consists of a copy of this report and the paper and digital records and will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museums under accession code 2001.237.

9 Acknowledgements

Colchester Archaeological Trust is grateful to the following for their help and co-operation:

Mr and Mrs Salmon, the owners of 56 Shelley Road
Martin Winter, Archaeological Officer for Colchester Borough Council

10 References

Hawkes, CFC, & Crummy, P, 1995

Camulodunum 2, Colchester Archaeological Report **11**

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Distribution list:

Martin Winter, Colchester Borough Council
Essex Heritage Conservation Record



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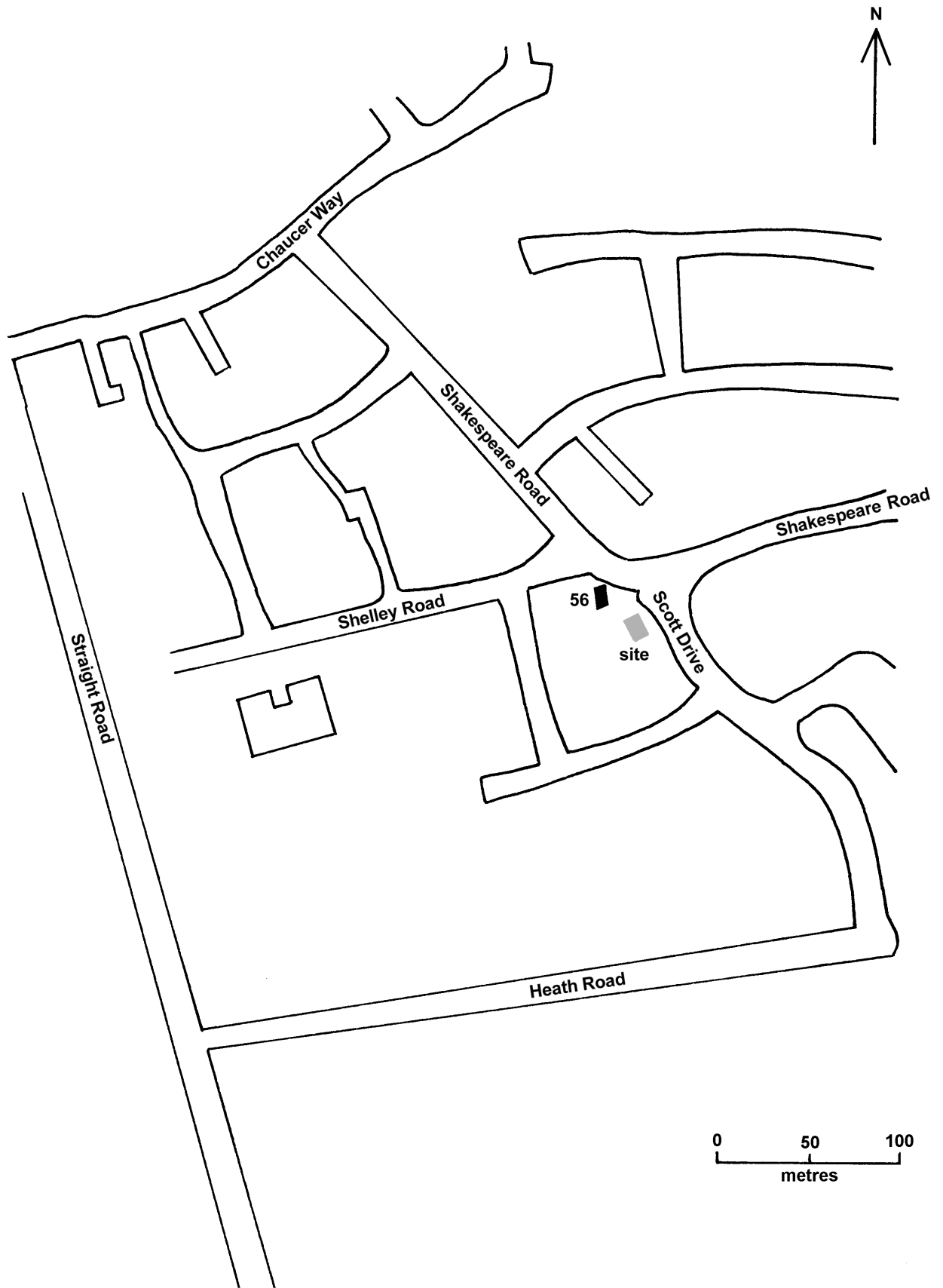


Fig 1 Site location, scale 1:300 approx.

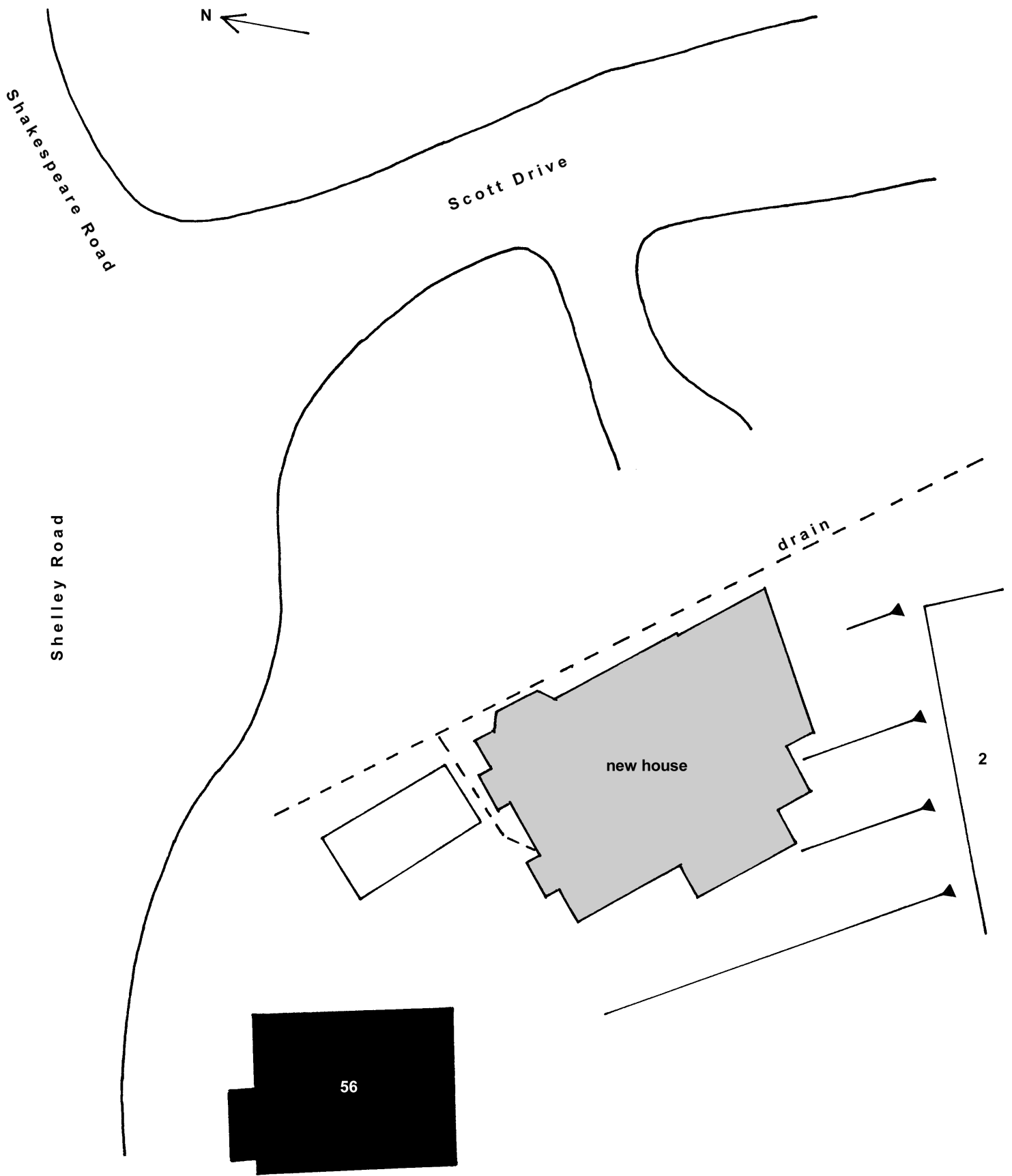


Fig 2 Site plan, not to scale.

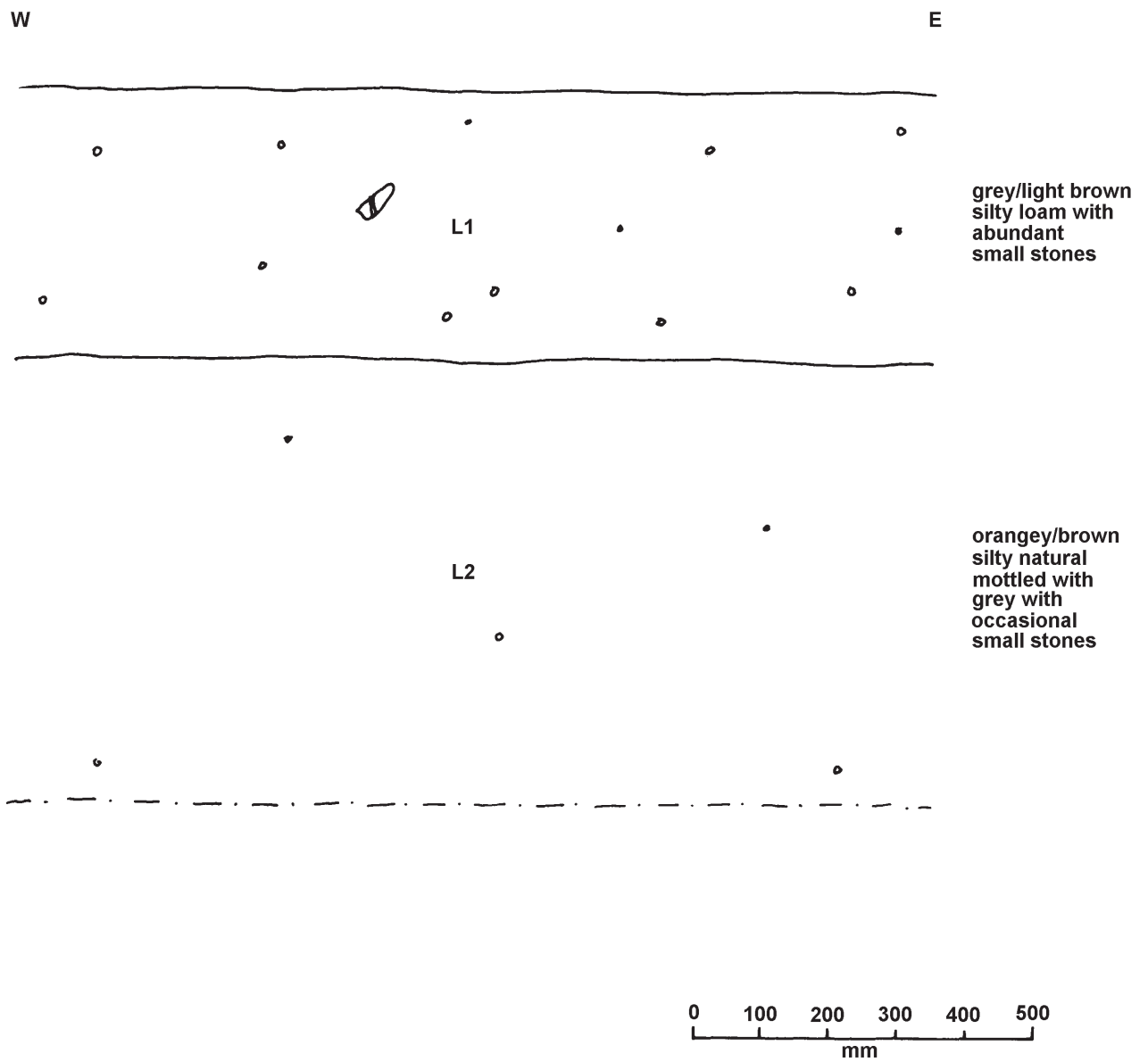


Fig 3 Foundation trench: south-facing section, scale 1:10.

**Essex Heritage Conservation Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

Site name/address: 56 Shelley Road, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester Borough
NGR: TL 9680 2460	Site code: 2001.237
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: November 2001 and May 2002	Size of area investigated: 13m x 10m plus services
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: Colchester Borough Council
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHCR nos: 11611
Final report: CAT Report 194 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: None	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Observations were made during an archaeological watching brief on groundworks for a detached dwelling next to 56 Shelley Road, Colchester, Essex. No features or finds of archaeological significance were observed on the site. The subsoil appeared to be undisturbed with little or no tile or pottery within it.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: June 2002