

**An archaeological evaluation at  
2 Sussex Lodge, Sussex Road,  
Colchester, Essex  
January 2003**

**on behalf of  
Mr M Yammine**

**report prepared by  
Carl Crossan**

Project ref.: 03/1c  
NGR: TL 98368 24951  
Colchester Museums accession code: 2003.22  
Planning application no: F/COL/02/1106



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**  
12 Lexden Road,  
Colchester,  
Essex CO3 3NF

*tel.:* (01206) 541051  
*tel./fax:* (01206) 500124  
*email:* [archaeologists@colchester-arch-trust.co.uk](mailto:archaeologists@colchester-arch-trust.co.uk)

**CAT Report 220**  
January 2003

## **Contents**

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aim	1
5	Methods	1
6	Results	2
7	Finds	2
8	Discussion	2
9	Acknowledgements	3
10	References	3
11	Glossary and abbreviations	3
12	Archive deposition	3
13	Site data	3

Figures after p 4

EHCR summary sheet

## **List of figures**

Fig 1 Trench location.

Fig 2 Trench section.

## 1 Summary

*A 4m x 1.6m evaluation trench was excavated in the rear garden of 2 Sussex Lodge, Sussex Road, Colchester, Essex. Modern deposits occupied the uppermost 0.7m, sealing a thick accumulation of dark soil that extended to the top of natural sand, which was exposed at an overall depth of 1.6m. No features of archaeological significance were observed within the sampled area.*

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching which was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at the rear of 2 Sussex Lodge, Sussex Road, Colchester, Essex, on 22nd January 2003.
- 2.2 This report follows a brief written by the Archaeological Officer for Colchester Borough Council in July 2002 and a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by CAT on 16th January 2003.
- 2.3 The site lies approximately 1km to the west of Colchester town centre, at the corner of Lexden Road and Sussex Road (NGR: TL 98368 24951). The property, formerly an old peoples' home, is currently vacant.
- 2.4 The evaluation was prompted by a proposal to construct a single-storey building in the rear garden fronting Sussex Road (planning application F/COL/02/1106).
- 2.5 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 preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996, updated 2002), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological evaluation* (1999).

## 3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The site is located within the area of the 'West Cemetery' of the Roman town, adjacent to the main route to London, which would have been lined with funerary monuments. This area has produced many of Colchester's more spectacular remains, ranging from early Roman military gravestones to the later cremations. Some 30m north of the development site, a Roman lead coffin was discovered in 1880 (UAD no 1051), and opposite and across Lexden Road a Roman cremation is recorded (UAD no 1010).
- 3.2 Nearby is the Scheduled Ancient Monument area of Sheepen, a late Iron Age settlement and industrial centre established by the Trinovantes tribe and maintained in the years after the Roman conquest (SAM no 46). Extensive excavations in the 1930s and smaller-scale work in 1970 and later have produced evidence of workshops engaged in a range of industrial activities including metalworking, enamelling, pottery making and leather-working in the areas to the west of the development site (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Niblett 1985).

## 4 Aim

The aim of the archaeological work was to locate, identify and assess the quality and extent of surviving archaeological remains prior to a decision being taken on the preservation or otherwise of deposits and the need for further work and/or mitigation.

## 5 Methods (location plan: Fig 1)

- 5.1 A single 4m x 1.6m trench was laid out within the footprint of the proposed building (location plan: Fig 1). The trench was excavated under archaeological supervision in a series of thin horizontal spits using a mechanical digger equipped with a toothless

digging bucket. As the excavation grew deeper, the northern end was extended by a further 1m within modern levels to form a step to permit access.

- 5.2 Individual layer and feature records were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.3 The section was drawn at a scale of 1:20.
- 5.4 Finds were registered on CAT record sheets and assigned numbers according to context. Finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context.
- 5.5 Ordnance Datum levels for the trench were measured using the 35.17m Ordnance Survey benchmark on the wall of 26 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex.
- 5.6 Colour archival photographs were taken with a digital camera.

## 6 Results (section: Fig 2)

The modern garden surface slopes down in a north-westerly direction with a fall of 130mm over the full 5m span of the trench. The soil stratigraphy is illustrated in Figure 2 and detailed below in section 13.

Modern garden turf and topsoil (Layer or L1 in the section illustration; Fig 2) sealed an east-west brick wall (Feature or F1) resting on a concrete footing, the machine removal of which resulted in local disturbance to the upper part of the trench section. L1 merged with the underlying L2, also modern and clearly dumped topsoil, which sealed a very mixed spread of material composed mainly of modern construction debris (L3). The combined modern deposits (L1, L2 and L3) occupied the uppermost 700mm-800mm of the trench. Beneath this level, a dark sandy loam (L4) which extended to close to the bottom of the trench was almost uniform in colour and texture. Peg-tile fragments occurred in the uppermost 20cm of this layer. Roman tile, although occasionally present at all levels below L2, tended to be more common in the lowest 20cm of L4. At 1.6m depth, L4 merged into a paler and sandier soil (L5) which is almost certainly the disturbed surface of natural sand. Excavation ceased at an overall depth of 1.7m.

## 7 Finds

Apart from fragments of Roman tile, no finds of archaeological significance were recovered from the trench.

## 8 Discussion

8.1 In terms of area, this trench represents a 10.3% sample of the soil stratigraphy within the ground-plan of the proposed building.

8.2 The exposed stratigraphy may be divided broadly into two phases.

### 8.2.1 Modern (19th-20th century)

This is represented by the spread of construction debris (L3), followed by topsoil deposition and garden cultivation (L1, L2). The brick wall (F1) may be contemporary with or perhaps later than the main building (2 Sussex Lodge) on the Lexden Road frontage. Both the main building construction and garden formation have involved terracing into the naturally sloping ground which here falls to the north-west. The modern garden level adjoining the trench is approximately 0.55m below the level of the Sussex Road pavement: judging from the surrounding properties, most of this difference in level is due to reduction in the garden plot, rather than make-up in Sussex Road.

### 8.2.2 Roman to post-medieval/modern

The distribution of datable tile within the 900mm-thick L4 (see section 6) suggests that this layer, which is provisionally assumed to be a long-term soil accumulation, spans a range of periods from Roman to post-medieval/modern. It seems likely that some loss of the later levels of this layer would have occurred as a result of 19th-century terracing prior to the deposition of L3.

8.3 No features of archaeological significance were observed within the sampled area.

## 9 Acknowledgements

The Trust would like to thank the site owner, Mr M Yammine, for commissioning and funding the work. The project was monitored by Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Museums.

## 10 References

Hawkes, CFC, & Hull, M R, 1947 *Camulodunum, first report on the excavations at Colchester 1930-1939*, RRCSAL, **14**

Niblett, Rosalind, 1985 *Sheepen, an early Roman industrial site at Camulodunum*, CBA Research Report 57

## 11 Glossary and abbreviations

context	specific location in the ground, especially where finds are concerned
modern	19th and 20th centuries
NGR	National Grid Reference
OD	Ordnance Datum: height above mean sea level mark established by the Ordnance Survey at Newlyn, Cornwall
residual	something out of its original context (eg a Roman coin in a Victorian pit)
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 430
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
septaria	local stone used as building material in the Roman period
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database

## 12 Archive deposition

The archive will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museums where it will be held under museum accession code 2003-22.

## 13 Site data

context	description	date
L1	Very dark greyish brown sandy loam with occasional very small brick fragments. Garden turf and topsoil.	modern
L2	Dark greyish brown sandy loam with occasional small fragments of mortar and red brick. Very slightly finer and siltier than L1. 19th-century (and possibly later) spread of topsoil.	modern
L3	Very mixed: generally a dark greyish brown sandy loam with extensive patches of reddish brown stoney sand, a high content of red brick dust, occasional peg-tile and crushed red brick. Construction debris, probably 19th century.	modern
L4	Dark brown sandy loam with a low content of small stones. Peg-tile fragments in uppermost 20cm. Occasional small fragment of Roman brick, more common with depth. Rare minute charcoal fleck. The lower horizon merges with L5. Devoid of features.	c Roman to post-medieval/modern
L5	Brown sandy loam/loamy sand with darker mottles. Intermediate material between underlying sand (probably natural) and overlying L4. Disturbed surface of natural sand.	disturbed natural
F1	East-west wall of unfrogged red brick, bonded with lime mortar.	modern

Carl Crossan, January 2003

© Colchester Archaeological Trust 2003

**Distribution list:**

Mr M Yammine

Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council  
Essex Heritage Conservation Record, Essex County Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust  
12 Lexden Road,  
Colchester,  
Essex CO3 3NF

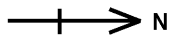
tel.: (01206) 541051

tel./fax: (01206) 500124

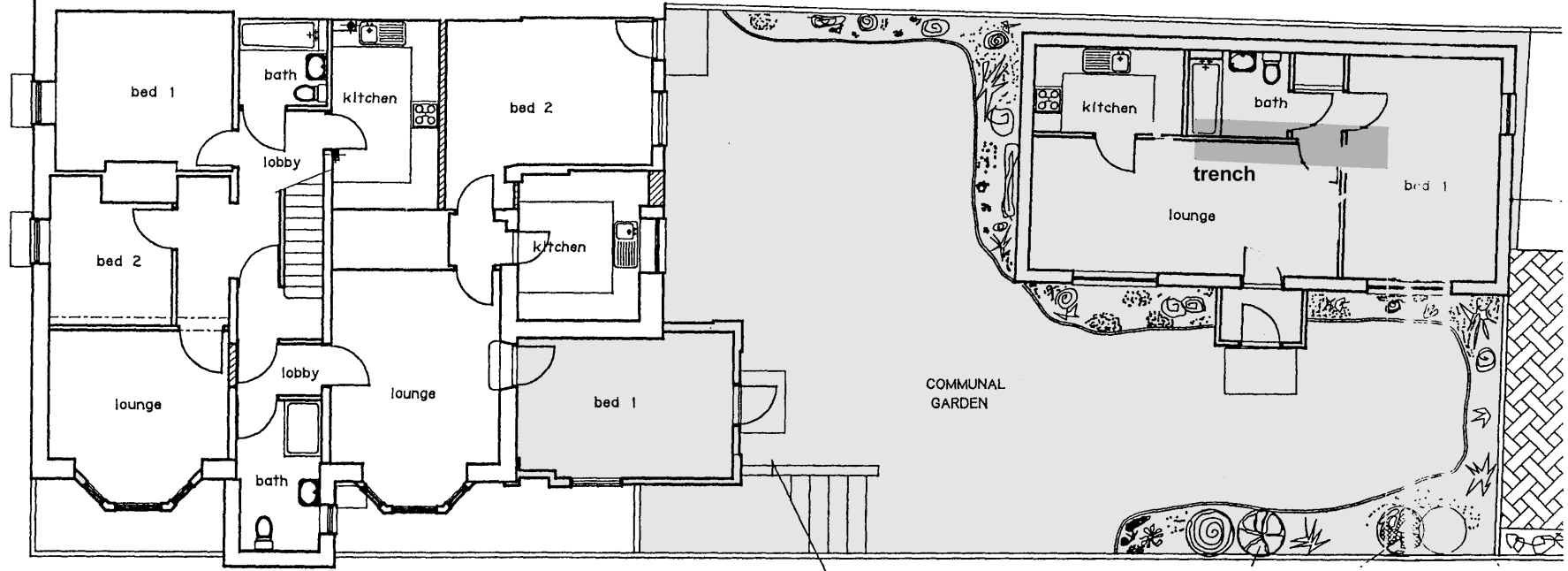
email: [archaeologists@colchester-arch-trust.co.uk](mailto:archaeologists@colchester-arch-trust.co.uk)

Checked by: *Howard Brooks*  
Date: *31.01.03*

Lexden Road



site



Sussex Road

Fig 1 Trench location.

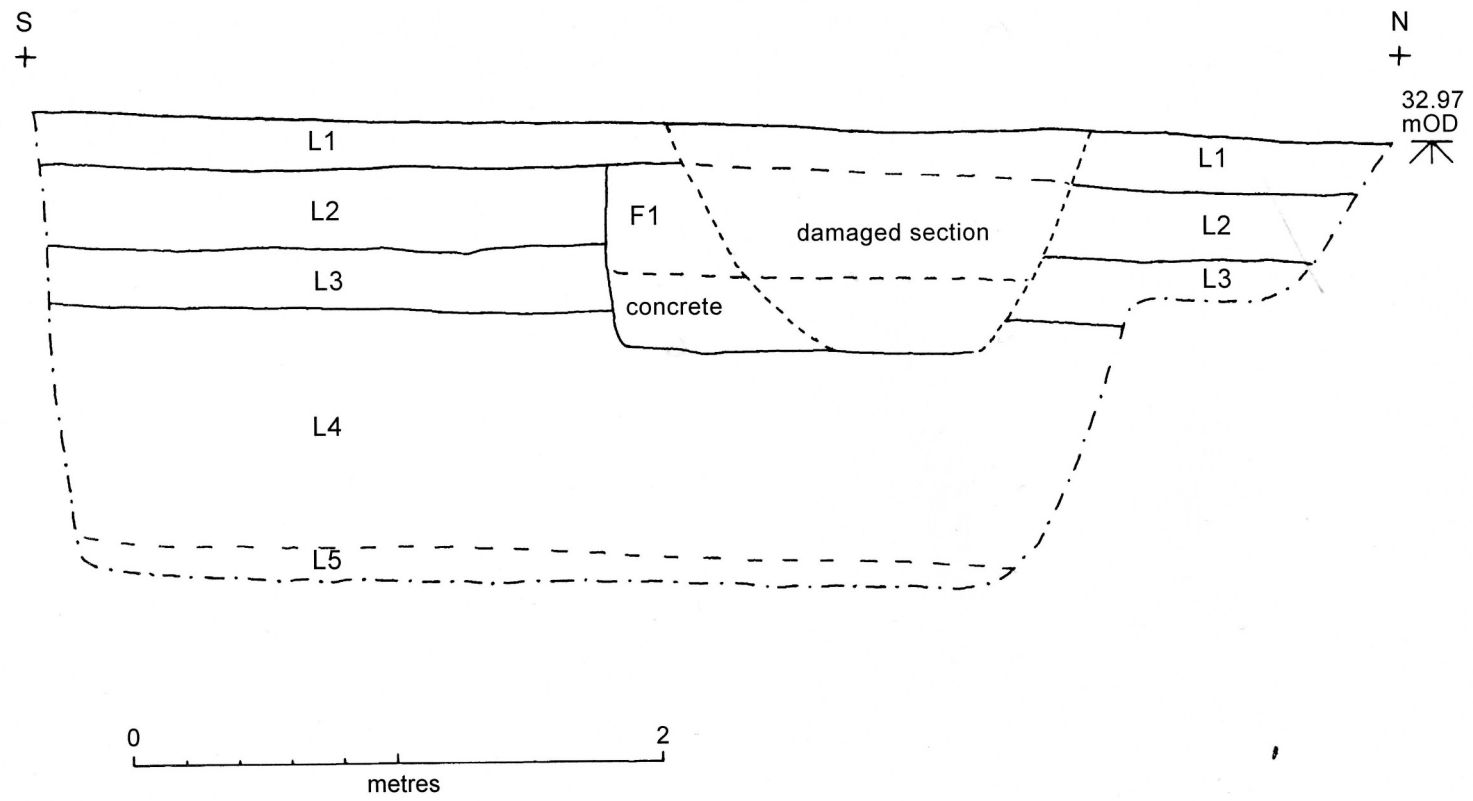


Fig 2 Trench section.



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

**Summary sheet**

<b>Site address:</b> 2 Sussex Lodge, Sussex Road, Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TL 98368 24951	<b>Site code:</b> Museum accession code 2003.22
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> January 2003	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 4m x 1.6m trench
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Colchester Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHCR nos:</b>
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 220 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Modern	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> A 4m x 1.6m evaluation trench was excavated in the rear garden of 2 Sussex Lodge, Sussex Road, Colchester, Essex. Modern deposits occupied the uppermost 0.7m, sealing a thick accumulation of dark soil that extended to the top of natural sand, which was exposed at an overall depth of 1.6m. No features of archaeological significance were observed within the sampled area.</p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of summary:</b> Carl Crossan	<b>Date of summary:</b> 31st January 2003