

**An archaeological watching brief on
an electricity cable-trench through the
North Countryman's Club gardens
and along the Church Street footpath,
Colchester, Essex
February 2003**

**report prepared by
Laura Pooley**

**on behalf of
24seven Utility Services Ltd**

CAT project ref.: 03/2b
NGR: TL 9933 2516 to TL 9928 2509
Colchester Museum accession code: 2003.60



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CAT Report 221
February 2003

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1 Summary

Observations were made during groundworks for the laying of an electricity cable through the North Countryman's Club gardens and along the Church Street footpath, Colchester, Essex. Nothing of archaeological significance was observed.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on a service-trench dug between the North Hill electricity sub-station and the former St Mary's church, now Colchester Arts Centre (National Grid Reference or NGR TL 9933 2516 to TL 9928 2509), through the North Countryman's Club gardens and along the Church Street footpath.
- 2.2 The work was carried out from the 10th to 13th February 2003 on behalf of 24seven Utility Services according to the brief set out by Martin Winters, archaeology officer for Colchester Borough Council.
- 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) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The site lies within the Roman town walls and within Insulas 25a and 33a of the Roman town (the Roman street dividing the *insulae* lies roughly along the line of Church Street). Numerous archaeological discoveries have been made in this area.
- 3.2 During excavations on the site of the Mercury Theatre in 1965 (Holbert 1966) and in 1997 by CAT (report in prep), Roman buildings, roads and a possible kiln as well as evidence of later Saxon occupation were observed.
- 3.3 During excavations on the site of the former Post Office in Head Street in 2000 (report in prep), evidence of intensive Roman occupation and later medieval and post-medieval activity were also observed.

4 Aims and objectives

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

5 Methodology

- 5.1 Trenches were dug from the existing North Hill electricity sub-station situated immediately adjacent to 'Jumbo', the former water tower, for a distance of approximately 110m to the former St Mary's church, now Colchester Arts Centre.
- 5.2 Sixty metres of trench were machine dug within the public highway footpath of Church Street. This trench followed an existing service-trench in the side of the footpath and only required intermittent monitoring by an archaeologist.
- 5.3 Fifty metres of trench were hand-dug within the grassed area of the North Countryman's Club gardens. As this trench was dug on undisturbed land, all of the groundworks were monitored by an archaeologist.
- 5.4 All trenching was approximately 300mm wide and 600mm deep.

- 5.5 Individual records of excavated contexts, layers, features and deposits were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.6 All features and layers were planned at 1:50 (through the North Countryman's Club gardens) and at 1:200 (along the Church Street footpath). Sections were recorded at 1:10.
- 5.7 A photographic record was kept consisting of general site shots and shots of all archaeological features and deposits.

6 Results

6.1 North Countryman's Club gardens

The cable-trench was dug to a depth of approximately 600mm through a mid-dark brown silty loam/topsoil (Layer or L1). Finds from L1 include a large amount of modern brick and building debris as well as a small quantity of earlier, probably residual, material:

Find no	Find description	Qt.	Wt. (g)	Date
1	Samian	2	28	Roman
1	Post-medieval pottery (Fabric 40)	1	20	16th-19th century
1	Flower pot (Fabric 51)	4	34	19th-20th century
1	Ironstone pottery (Fabric 48D)	1	15	19th-20th century
1	Roman tile	2	382	Roman
1	Post-medieval tile	1	162	post-medieval
1	Clay pipe	3	16	18th century
1	Oystershell	2	30	-

Only one feature was recorded; this was the remains of a modern brick wall (Feature or F1).

6.2 Church Street

The cable-trench was dug to a depth of approximately 600mm through a concrete and rubble layer (L2, approximately 300mm deep) into which the footpath slabs were set. Beneath L2 was a mid-dark brown silty subsoil (L3); this contained brick and other modern material. No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

7 Discussion

No features of archaeological significance were observed during the groundworks for the electricity cable. All the archaeological finds recovered represent material which was residual in later contexts.

8 Archive deposition

A copy of this report will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museums under the accession code 2003.60.

9 Acknowledgements

The Colchester Archaeological Trust is grateful to 24seven Utility Services Ltd for commissioning and funding the work.

10 References

Holbert, P R, 1966 *Final report on the excavations in the garden of St Mary's Rectory, Colchester, CAG Bulletin, 9, no 4, pp 45-51*

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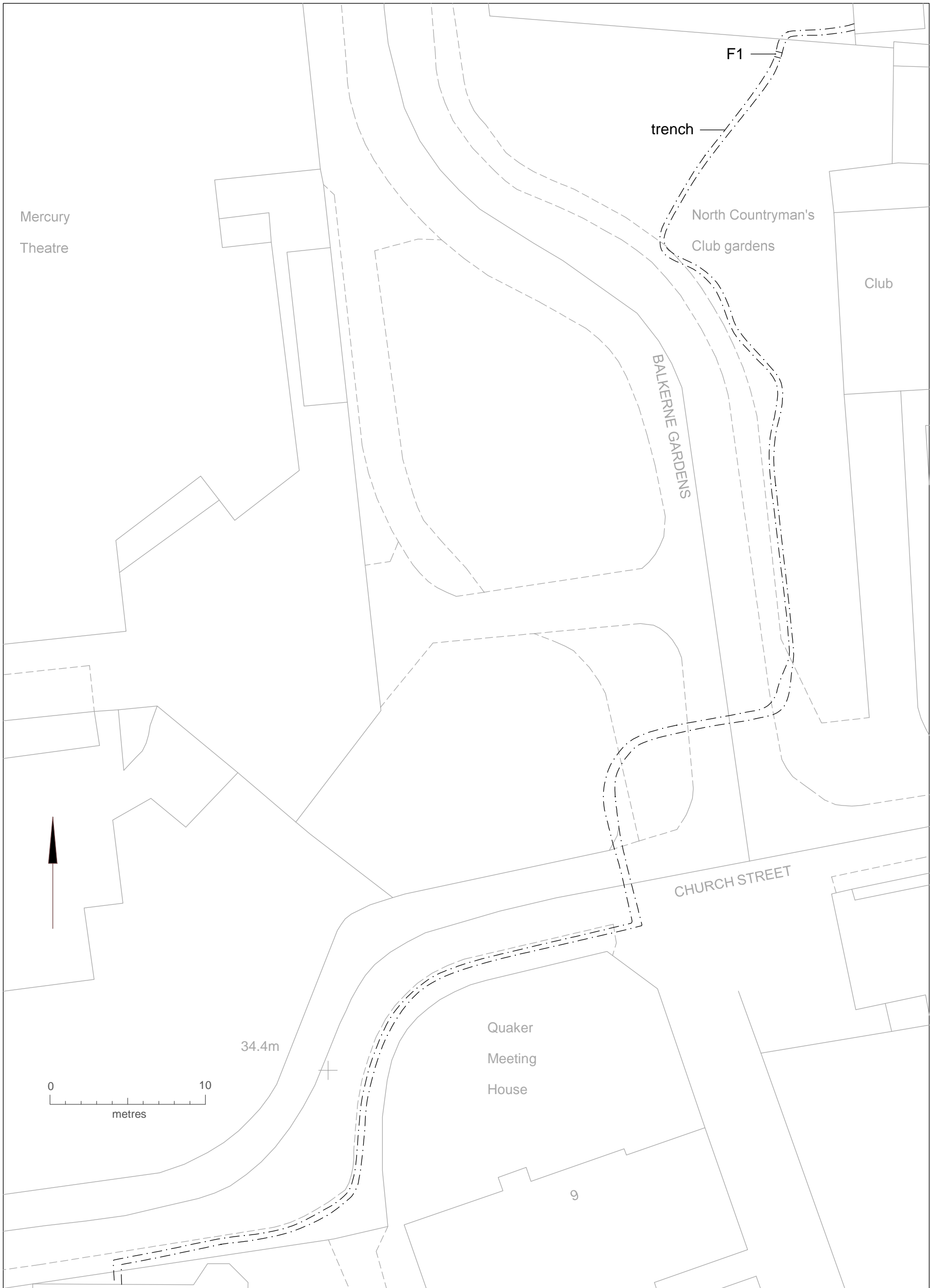
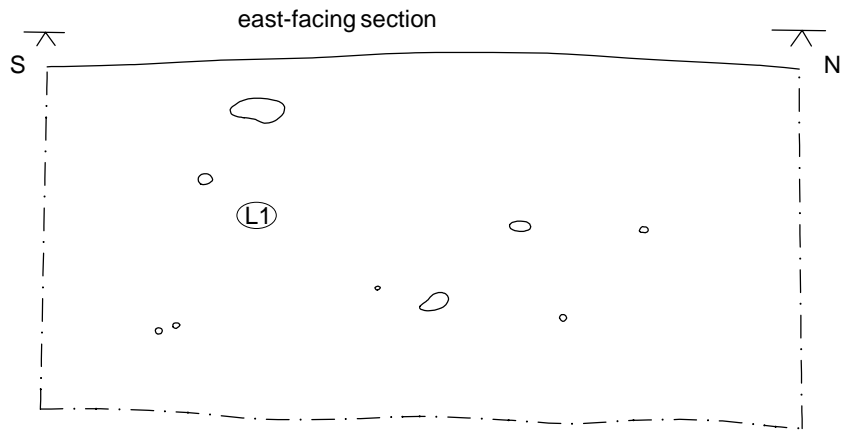
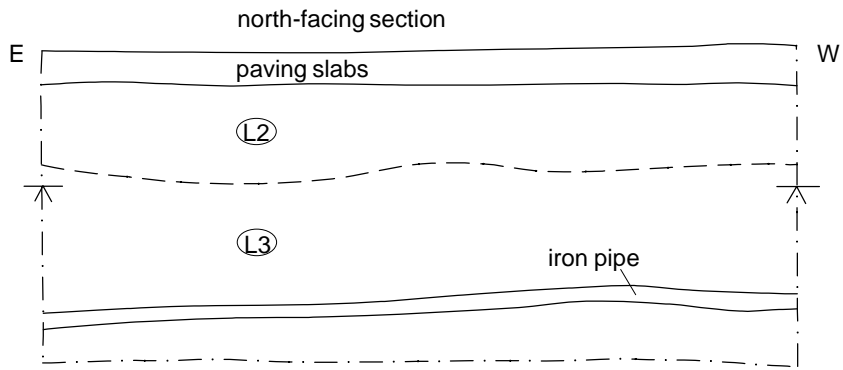


Fig 1 Trench location.



representative section through the cable-trench extending across the North Countryman's Club gardens



representative section through the cable-trench extending along the Church Street footpath

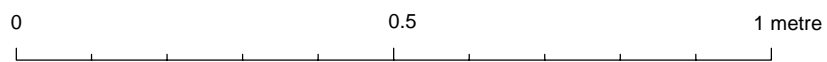


Fig 2 Section drawings.

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

Summary sheet

Site address: An electricity cable-trench through the North Countryman's Club gardens and along the Church Street footpath, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9933 2516 to TL 9928 2509	Site code: Museum accession code 2003.60
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: February 2003	Size of area investigated: Cable trench approximately 110m long, 300mm wide and 600mm deep
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: 24seven Utility Services Ltd
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHCR nos:
Final report: CAT Report 221 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: Modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: Observations were made during groundworks for the laying of an electricity cable through the North Countryman's Club gardens and along the Church Street footpath, Colchester, Essex. Nothing of archaeological significance was observed.	
Previous summaries/reports: N/A	
Author of summary: Laura Pooley	Date of summary: February 2003