

**An archaeological evaluation
at St Helena School,
February 2007**

**report prepared by
Laura Pooley**

**on behalf of
St Helena School**

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

tel.: (01206) 541051
(01206) 500124
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

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1 Summary

Six evaluation trenches (totalling 87m by 1.6m) were located within the St Helena School site in advance of plans to extend the school car-park. A total of 18 features were recorded: 10 Roman (seven pits, one wall foundation, one ditch and one metalled surface); one mid/late Bronze Age pit; one post-Medieval ditch; six undated features (four pits and two ditches); and one natural feature. Significantly, the Roman wall foundation appears to have been part of the precinct wall for the late 1st century Roman temple known to have been located on the site. A large quantity of Roman finds were also recorded including two coins which belong to the post-conquest pre-Boudican occupation of Sheepen, a brooch fragment and briquetage which may also date to before AD 60/1, and a number of pottery sherds dating primarily from the 1st to the early 2nd century.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report on an archaeological evaluation carried out at St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex. The evaluation was carried out in advance of plans to extend the school car-park and create an extra 55-60 places. The site is within the scheduled ancient monument area of Camulodunum (Essex monument no.46) and information from this evaluation will be used to apply for scheduled monument consent and for planning permission.

The site occupies a level block of land on the east side of St Helena School which is located approximately 1.5km to the north-west of Colchester town centre. The site is bounded by the adjacent commercial property, the school playing field, car-park and premises, and is centred on National Grid Reference TL 9898 2578. The site is currently grassed playing fields and waste ground.

The evaluation was commissioned by St Helena School and carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) from 13th-15th February 2007.

All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) agreed with the Archaeology Officer of Colchester Borough Council. This report mirrors standards and practices contained in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CM 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (CM 2003), and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment* (EAA 3), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (EAA 8), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) was also followed.

3 Aims and objectives

The aim of the evaluation was to locate, identify and assess the quality of any surviving archaeological features.

4 Archaeological background

The site lies on the eastern side of the important Late Iron Age and early Roman settlement of Sheepen (Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 46). Excavations and other smaller-scale work, from the 1930s onwards, have produced evidence of workshops engaged in a range of industrial activities including metal-working, enamelling, pottery-making and leather-working (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Niblett 1985).

A Roman temple was excavated by the Colchester Excavation Committee in 1935 on the site of St Helena School (Hull 1958, 224-34), and the outer 'temenos' wall of the temple precinct appears to lie underneath Sheepen Road. The date of

the temple is not known although Crummy (1980) suggests that it may have been demolished in the late 4th century.

In November 2005, an archaeological evaluation by three test pits was carried out at the drama block. This recorded several features including a ditch and a possible post hole. Associated pottery suggested a date in the 1st century AD for the features (CAT Report 351). An archaeological excavation and monitoring was subsequently carried out on footings for the extension to the drama block in June 2006. The investigation revealed pits, ditches and a gully all dating from AD 5-60 sealed by between 600-750mm of topsoil (CAT Report 384). The type of pottery and the presence of animal bone, slag, daub and Roman tile suggests domestic and industrial use similar to that identified as a result of the previous investigations at Sheepen.

5 Results (Figs 2-4)

In total, six evaluation trenches were dug at St Helena School totalling 87m in length, with each at a width of approximately 1.6m. Four of the trenches were dug through a grassed area and two were dug through an asphalt surface. A mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket was used to excavate each of the trenches down to an archaeologically significant layer. Further excavation was then carried out by hand.

Trench 1

T1 was 23m in length and was dug to a depth of 0.90m (ground-level 8.00m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 7.10m AOD). It was dug through approximately 0.17m of modern turf/topsoil (L1), 0.43m of post-medieval/modern buried topsoil (L2), and 0.29m of a buried post-Roman soil layer (L3) down onto natural (L4). Nine features and a layer were recorded within this trench, each sealed by L3. A single, partially robbed out, north-south Roman wall foundation (F1) was identified in the far eastern end of the trench. Immediately next to F1 was a modern service trench which had cut through a Roman metalled surface (L5). To the west of the service trench was a Roman ditch (F3) which appeared to contain a deposit of pyre debris (F12) in its upper fill. F12 was charcoal rich and contained a significant amount of burnt bone. Five pits (F2, F4, F11, F17 and F18) and one natural feature (F19) were also identified. F2 contained a large quantity of Roman pottery along with some Roman tile, animal bone and a fragment of lava quern. F4 contained a quantity of Roman pottery and animal bone; F11 was undated and contained no finds; F17 contained a small amount of animal bone but was undated; and F18 contained some animal bone along with a single sherd of Mid-Late Bronze Age pottery.

Trench 2

T2 was 15m in length and dug to a depth of 0.85m (ground-level 7.75m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 6.90m AOD). It was dug through approximately 0.10m of an asphalt surface (L6) and 0.17m of modern hardcore (L7). Beneath L7 was 0.50m of L2 and 0.23m of L3 which sealed natural (L4). Seven features were recorded within this trench, each sealed by L3. The features consisted of four Roman pits (F5, F6, F7, F10), a post-medieval ditch (F8 – dated to the 15/16th century), and two undated features (ditch F13 and pit F9). The post-medieval ditch was aligned east to west.

Trench 3

T3 was 10m in length and dug to a depth of 1.14m (ground level 8.04m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 6.90m AOD). It was dug through approximately 0.10m of L6, 0.15m of L7 and 0.14m of modern concrete (L8). Beneath L8 was 0.44m of L2 and 0.32m of L3 which sealed natural (L4). A single undated pit (F14) was identified in the south-eastern end of the trench.

Trench 4

T4 was 12m in length and dug to a depth of 1.15m (ground-level 7.9m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 6.75m AOD). It was dug through approximately 0.22m L1, 0.53m of L2, and 0.37m of L3 down onto natural (L4). Two modern service trenches were recorded but no archaeological features were identified.

Trench 5

T5 was 16m in length and dug to a depth of 0.70m (ground-level 7.60m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 6.90m AOD). It was dug through approximately 0.13m L1, 0.35m of L2, and 0.24m of L3 down onto natural (L4). Three modern service trenches and one modern wall foundation were recorded but no archaeological features were identified.

Trench 6

T6 was 11m in length and dug to a depth of 0.80m (ground-level 7.10m AOD; bottom of trench/natural ground-level 6.30m AOD). It was dug through approximately 0.15m L1, 0.42m of L2, and 0.25m of L3 down onto natural (L4). Two features were identified within this trench, each sealed by L3. These features consisted of a single Roman pit (F16 – containing Roman pottery and tile) and a single undated north-south ditch (F15).

6 Finds

6.1 The prehistoric pottery

by S Benfield

The prehistoric pottery fabrics used follow those devised for the recording of prehistoric pottery in Essex (Brown 1988, 263-64).

Only two sherds (26 g) of prehistoric (pre-Late Iron Age) pottery were recovered during the evaluation. Both are flint-tempered. One moderately thick sherd from F18 (Trench 1, finds no 16) is probably of Mid or Late Bronze Age date, the other sherd from F5 (Trench 2, finds no 1) is finer and probably of Late Bronze Age date. A Mid or Late Bronze Age date for these sherds is supported by pottery finds of Late Bronze Age date, or attributed to the Late Bronze Age, from previous archaeological excavations in and around this area (CAR 11 catalogue 66d; CAT Report 382, 11; CAT Report 384, 3).

Fabrics

Fabric C – flint-tempered, abundant small-medium flint with occasional large flint, 6-10 flint pieces per square cm.

Fabric V – flint-tempered, sparse small-medium flint, less than 6 flint pieces per square cm.

Catalogue of prehistoric pottery

Trench 1, F18, Finds no 16 (10 g): Fabric C, 1 sherd (9 mm thick), abraded red-brown surfaces with grey-brown core, dated Mid-Late Bronze Age.

Trench 2, F5, Finds no 1 (16 g): Fabric V, 1 sherd (6 mm thick), hand made sherd with dark surfaces and sparse flint temper, dated Late Bronze Age.

6.2 The Roman pottery

by S Benfield

Introduction

The evaluation produced just over 3 kg (3189 g) of Roman pottery. Where possible, pottery fabrics were recorded using the Roman pottery fabric type series devised for CAR 10 in which all the fabrics are recorded as two-letter codes (Table 1). Four

pottery fabrics have been used in addition to those of CAR 10. These are fabrics BA(AR), BPW, RCW and WPW. The additional fabrics are described below and full fabric names for each of the lettered fabric codes are given in Table 1. In addition, where possible, reference has been made to the fabric types described in the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber & Dore 1998). These have been included in the table of Roman pottery fabrics used in this report.

The vessel forms were recorded using the Camulodunum (Cam) Roman pottery form type series (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull 1958). Samian vessels were catalogued where possible using Dragendorff (Dr) form numbers or other common form type references following those used in Webster 1996 and Oswald & Pryce 1920. The pottery fabrics and the vessel forms present in each site context were recorded for each finds number. The number of sherds was recorded for each fabric together with the weight of pottery from each find number.

Fabrics additional to those used in CAR 10

Fabric BA(AR), Arretine (Italian and Italian style) samian, LOY SA, PIS SA. The fabric is pale pink-brown with a glossy re-brown slip.

Fabric BPW/NOG WH3 butt beaker parchment ware/North Gaulish (Gallo-Belgic) white ware 3. Fine white fabric with cream-yellowish surfaces and commonly with grey core (NRFRC, NOG WH 3)

Fabric RCW Romanising coarse wares. Sherd thickness is generally medium-thin. The fabric contains fragments of burnt organic matter and grog may also be present. It sometimes has a tendency to laminate. The fabric is generally grey-brown in colour with dark grey surfaces, although these can be pale brown to light grey, sometimes appearing abraded.

Fabric WPW/NOG WH1 white pipe clay ware/North Gaulish (Gallo-Belgic) white ware 1. The fabric is cream-white with slightly darker surfaces or pale pink margin (NRFRC, NOG WH 1)

Table 1: Roman pottery fabric codes and fabric names used in this report (after CAR 10 with additions), together with total weight in grams and the pottery forms recorded for each fabric type.

Fabric code	Fabric name	National Roman Fabric Reference Collection Fabric
AA	amphora, all excluding Dressel 20 and Brockley Hill/Verulamium region amphoras	
BA	plain samian forms	
AR	Arretine samian	LOY SA, PIS SA
SG	South Gaulish plain samian	LGF SA
BPW	butt-beaker parchment ware	NOG WH 3
CS	Pompeian-red wares	
DJ	coarse oxidised and related wares	
DZ	fine oxidised wares	
TR	<i>terra rubra</i>	
TR3	<i>terra rubra</i>	GAB TR 3
GB	BB2: black-burnished ware, category 2	COL BB2
GX	other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares	
HZ	large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares	
RCW	Romanising coarse ware	
UR	<i>terra nigra</i> -type wares	
TN1	Gallia-Belgica (Vesle Valley) <i>terra nigra</i> 1	GAB TN 1
LTC	<i>terra nigra</i> -type wares, local traded coarse wares	
WPW	white pipe-clay ware	NOG WH 1

Discussion

Most of the pottery recovered comes from one feature, F2 (Trench 1, finds no 7). The pottery from this feature (2565 g) makes up about 80% of all the pottery by weight, and the remaining features only produced small quantities of pottery (up to 220 g). The large quantity of pottery from F2 dominates the discussion of the pottery from the site. Almost all the pottery can be dated within the period of the 1st-early 2nd century so that the assemblage can be discussed as a whole.

In terms of date, almost all of the closely datable pottery fabrics and vessel form types associated with the features can be dated as Late Iron Age, pre-Flavian or 1st-early 2nd century. Only two sherds may be date to the period of the 2nd-3rd century. From F5 (Trench 2, Finds no 1), there is one sherd from a jar that is decorated with burnished lattice. This is probably from a black-burnished ware (fabric GB) jar of form Cam 278 jar and, if so, is of early 2nd to mid-late 3rd century date. There is also one sherd of samian from F1 (Trench 1, Finds no 5) that is not positively identified to source. The sherd is probably South Gaulish samian, and if so, would date to the 1st century. There is no mica visible in the fabric, thus the sherd is probably not Central Gaulish, although an East Gaulish source, dating from the early-mid 2nd to mid 3rd century, cannot be excluded.

No Late Iron Age grog-tempered ware was recognised among the assemblage. This suggests that the pottery dates to the post-conquest period, after *c* AD 43. However, the pottery does not reflect that from assemblages associated with the Roman fortress and early *colonia*, *c* AD 43-60. The imports and some of the vessel forms are instead types associated with assemblages from the Sheepen site, occupied from the Late Iron Age until the Boudican revolt, *c* AD 5-60 (Niblett 1985, 3). Imported fine wares are mainly represented by *terra nigra*, *terra rubra* and Gallo-Belgic white wares. There are also a few sherds of Arretine samian. The forms represented in these fabrics are Gallo-Belgic style platters, butt-beakers, a pedestal or girth beaker, a herringbone barbotine beaker and a *lagena* (a large two handled jug or flagon). Vessel form types recorded are the platter types Cam 8, Cam 14 and ?Cam 23; beaker types Cam 98/99, Cam 113, Cam 114 and Cam 119; with one *lagena* of form Cam 163A. These fabrics and form types are either rare, or not recorded at all, among the early Roman pottery assemblages from the fortress/early *colonia*, but are common among those from the Sheepen site. Of note is the absence of some pre-Flavian fine wares, especially early Colchester colour-coated ware which is one of the more common fine wares associated with the fortress/early *colonia*. The difference in the types of pottery in the early Roman period assemblages from the fortress/early *Colonia* and Sheepen sites has been noted and discussed previously (CAR 10, 488-93). It is suggested there, in the survey of pottery production and supply to Colchester, that these differences are the result of considerable quantities of residual Late Iron Age pottery in post-conquest features (CAR 10, 490-91).

Terra rubra is not current in assemblages post-dating *c* AD 50/55 as it is absent from stratified deposits in London where occupation is thought to date from the 50s AD (Davies *et al* 1994, 166). Apart from some major Late Iron Age centres, Arretine samian is very rare in Britain, and is very rare in all post-conquest assemblages (Tyres 1996, 111). Of fine wares that are common in the fortress/early *colonia*, there is a single provincial samian sherd, probably of South Gaulish origin and a cooking or baking platter in Pompeian-red ware.

The coarse wares are less informative in terms of the date ranges of the recorded form types, but the types of coarse ware fabrics present are more informative. The forms Cam 218, Cam 259, Cam 266, and ?Cam 271 occur in assemblages from both the fortress/early *Colonia* and at Sheepen in contexts of Late Iron Age and early Roman date. Apart from Cam 259, which is current until the late 1st century, these vessel forms are still current in the early 2nd century. The vessel form Cam 266 is considered to be primarily a post-conquest introduction, but with small numbers of similar vessels having been introduced in the Late Iron Age (CAR 10, 479 & 493). However, none of the coarse wares are in Late Iron Age grog-tempered fabric, although it can be noted that some vessels (examples of Cam 218, Cam 259 and Cam 266) are in Romanising coarse ware fabric (Fabric RCW), which is tempered with burnt organic matter. Romanising coarse ware is considered to be

a post-conquest adaptation to Roman potting techniques. A bowl of form Cam 243-244/246 should be an entirely post-conquest type. However the sherd from this bowl comes from the same feature (F5) as a sherd from a probable Cam 278 jar, so that the context is probably of early 2nd-3rd century date. Importantly sherds recorded as Roman grey wares (Fabric GX) were recovered from all contexts apart from F13 (Trench 2).

Almost all of the features contain sherds recorded as Roman grey wares (Fabric GX). The imported fine wares from F2 could suggest a Late Iron Age date. However, in light of the absence of other clear Late Iron Age pottery, the presence of Roman grey ware sherds, and given the quantities of probable residual fine ware pottery in early Roman features at Sheepen, the fine ware sherds from F2 are assumed to be probably, in part at least, residual. Assuming a post-conquest date, the latest pottery from F2 can be dated as pre-Flavian. The small quantities of pottery from most of the other features can only be dated within a range of 1st-early 2nd century. However, there is a possible 2nd-3rd century sherd among the pottery from F5 (Trench 2) and possibly also in F1 (Trench 1). The absence of any quantity of fabrics or forms that date from the early 2nd century or later suggests that most, if not all, of the pottery is of 1st century date.

Potter's stamp

There is on partial potter's stamp on one of two joining base sherds of a *terra nigra* (fabric UR(TN1)) platter from F2 (Trench 1, find no 7). The form type of the platter is not known, but there is no base foot-ring present on either of the sherds and it is possibly a bowl like form. The surviving part of the stamp is the end of a square or rectangular block die. Depending on reading, two or possibly three letters are present. There is the right half of what appears to be the letter T followed by a letter A cut as an inverted V shape in the die. The presence of the top of the T suggests that the die as read here is orientated correctly. The presence of a third letter is dubious and is probably the end of the die frame. However, the stroke extends beyond the top and bottom framing lines and could indicate the letter I. Stamp fragment reads (T) A or possibly (T) A I.

Catalogue of Roman pottery

Trench 1

F1

Finds no 5 (24 g); BA(?SG) 1 sherd, ?1st century (possibly 2nd-early 3rd century); GX, 3 sherds, Roman; RCW 1 sherd, 1st century.

Pottery spot date: ?1st century, possibly 2nd-early 3rd century.

F2

Finds no 7 (2565 g); AA, 3 sherds, 2 sherds are surface flakes, 1st-early 2nd century; BA(AR), 3 sherds, two, possibly all, from one platter of form Dr 17 (Oswald & Pryce 1920 plate XLII), probably Tiberio-Claudian; DJ, 1 sherd, 1st-2nd/3rd century; BPW, 2 sherds Cam 113, pre-Flavian; DZ, 10 sherds, two butt-beakers, Cam 112, and beaker Cam 114, one sherd rusticated ?Cam 98/99, pre-Flavian; DZ(TR3), 1 sherd, pedestal or girth beaker rim, pre-Flavian; GX, 32 sherds, includes pedestal base, butt beaker ?Cam 199, Roman, ?1st-2nd century, possibly pre-Flavian; HZ, 17 sherds, 1 vessel coomb decorated, 1st-?2nd century; RCW, 10 sherds, Cam 218, Cam 266, Cam 259, 1st century, HZ, 7 sherds, ?Cam 271, 1st-?2nd century; UR(TN1), 3 sherds, two sherds join and include a partial stamp (two or three letters) from end of rectangular stamp block reading (T) A or possibly (T) A I, pre-Flavian; UR(LTC), 2 sherds, ?Cam 23 small or miniature example with internal off-set just below lip, burnt, Cam 14, pre-Flavian; WPW, 3 sherds, rim sherd from a Cam 163A flagon, two base sherds from a flagon, pre-Flavian.

Pottery spot date: pre-Flavian.

F4

Finds no 6 (220 g); DZ, 1 sherd, 1st-2nd/3rd century; DZ(TR) 2 sherds, Cam 8, pre-Flavian; GX, 4 sherds, Roman, probably 1st-2nd century; HZ, 2 sherds, 1st-2nd century.

Pottery spot date: 1st-2nd century, ?pre-Flavian.

Trench 2

F5

Finds no 1 (217 g); CS, 1 sherd, pre-Flavian; DJ, 4 sherds, Cam 243-244/246 1st-early 2nd century; ?GB, 1 sherd, lattice decorated, probably Cam 278, early 2nd to mid-late 3rd century; GX, 7 sherds, Roman; HZ, 3 sherds, 1st-2nd/3rd century.

Pottery spot date: ?early 2nd to mid-late 3rd century.

F6

Finds no 2 (67 g); DJ, 6 sherds from 3 different vessels, 1st-2nd/3rd century; GX, 3 sherds, Roman.

Pottery spot date: probably 1st-2nd century.

F10

Finds no 11 (23 g); GX, 5 sherds, Roman, ?1st-2nd century.

F13

Finds no 12 (27 g); RCW, 1 sherd, 1st century.

Trench 6

F16

Finds no 13 (46 g); DZ, 1 sherd, 1st-2nd century; GX, 1 sherd, Roman; RCW 1 sherd, 1st century.

Pottery spot date: 1st-?2nd century.

6.3 The post-Roman pottery

by H Brooks

Description

Fabric present is as follows (after Cunningham 1985 and *CAR 7*): 21a (Colchester-type ware).

Find 4, F8 (T2)

Five sherds (243g) fabric 21a, rim and body fragments from a large (30cm diameter) storage jar with flat-topped rim. No close parallel in *CAR 7*. 15th/16th century

Comment

This is a tiny group which is not worth a detailed comment.

6.4 Small finds and miscellaneous bulk finds

by Nina Crummy

Two coins are both issues of Claudius I and belong to the post-conquest pre-Boudican occupation of Sheepen. A brooch fragment and four sherds from briquetage troughs may also date to before AD 60/1. A fragment of a quernstone and some nails cannot be closely dated, but querns of the same Mayen lava type were first imported by the Roman army *c* AD 43 and trade with the source in Germany was rapidly established.

One of the coins, a *sestertius* minted by Claudius in honour of his father, Nero Claudius Drusus, is unusual as a site find. The other is a very poor quality copy of an *as*. Its small size and weight group it with some small, light and crudely die-cut coins found at Sheepen during the excavations of the 1930s and also noted on other sites across southern Britain; they may have been deliberately made undersized and underweight to act as fractions of a full *as* (*CAR 4*, 38-9).

Made from coastal alluvium mixed with much chopped vegetable matter, large quantities of vessel briquetage are found at the Essex salt-production sites, red hills, together with settling tanks, hearths, and hearth furniture such as firebars and pedestals (Fawn *et al* 1990, 69). The peak period of salt-making activity on these sites is generally Late Iron Age to early Roman, and it has been argued that the *oppidum* of Camulodunum owed some of its pre-eminence to trade in this valuable commodity (Rodwell 1979, 159-60). The fabric of three of the St Helena briquetage sherds is typical of the Type A briquetage found in north-east Essex. Ranging from

19 to 23 mm thick, they have much vegetable tempering and one well oxidised surface but some reduction on the other face and in the core (Fawn *et al* 1990, 11; Rodwell 1979, 149-53). The fourth sherd has less vegetable tempering and is evenly oxidised throughout. It is only 14 mm thick and belongs to Type B, production of which centres on the red hills to the south of the county, around Canvey Island. It is rarely found in north-east Essex but one piece was found in an early Roman period context on the élite burial site at Stanway.

Other fragments of salt briquetage have been found at Sheepen. The river Colne was probably tidal that far upstream and it has been suggested that salt production took place not only along the coast but also within the *oppidum* itself (Hawkes & Hull 1947, 346-7; Niblett 1985, 23). However, fragments of both vessels and hearth furniture are increasingly being recognised on inland sites, making the Sheepen material less likely to be evidence of production. The inland finds have long been the subject of study, and the find spot most distant from the coast may be Baldock, Hertfordshire (Rodwell 1979; Rigby & Foster 1986, 188; Barford 1990, 79-80; Sealey 1995). Attempting to explain the inland finds, Rodwell suggested that salt may have been traded in the vessels in which it was made, or that salt production may have been a seasonal occupation, providing a link between inland and coastal sites and a means whereby hearth furniture might travel as well as vessels (Rodwell 1979, 159-60, 172). In discussing briquetage from Kelvedon, Eddy added that raw salt-cakes might be acquired at the coast to be refined inland (Eddy 1982, 26). It has also been proposed, to some extent based on the rural nature of many of the inland find-spots and the dearth of briquetage from inside the *colonia* at Colchester, that broken briquetage was traded in its own right, perhaps to be used as salt-licks for livestock (Barford 1990, 79), but this idea has been refuted by Sealey (1995, 68-9).

SF 2. (3) F7. Trench 2. Coin: Claudius I (AD 41-54), poor quality copy of an *as*, reverse Minerva advancing with shield and spear. The standard of copying is extremely poor, with the S (of SC) on the reverse retrograde set higher than the C, which is at an angle. This points to an illiterate copier. Nearly all the legend on the obverse is missing, either worn away or missing because the blank flan was struck with a die of larger diameter. Only D is visible at the start of the legend, instead of the usual T. Diameter 22 mm, weight 3.061 g.

SF 3. (19) F5. Trench 2. Coin: *sestertius* of Nero Claudius Drusus, struck by Claudius I (AD 41-54), his son. Obverse corroded, legend [NERO C]LAVDIVS DRV[S] [VS GERMANICVS IMP], bare head of Nero Drusus left. Reverse worn, legend TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG PM TRP IMP, Claudius seated on curule chair amidst arms; as *RIC* (1965), 157. Diameter 36 mm, weight 24.58 g.

SF 1. (9) F3. Trench 1. Bow and catchplate of a copper-alloy brooch. The bow is gently curved and tapers slightly to the foot. It has a pair of mouldings on each margin. The catchplate is small and solid. Length 60 mm. Probably from a Colchester B or BB derivative brooch, broadly dated *c* AD 50-85.

SF 4. (8) F2. Trench 1. Small fragment of Mayen lava from a broken quernstone; no original surfaces survive. Weight 47 g.

(10) F3. a) Two iron nails, Manning Type 1 b (1985, 134). Lengths 48 and 42 mm. b) Two iron nail shank fragments. Lengths 66 and 25 mm. c) Iron shank, curved and bent upwards at one end. The degree of taper and the thickness are not typical of a nail. Length (bent) 57 mm.

(1) F5. Trench 2. a) Iron nail, incomplete, Manning Type 1 b (1985, 134). Length 26 mm. b) Iron nail shank fragment. length 22 mm.

(18) F12. Trench 1. Two iron nails, Manning Type 1 b (1985, 134). Lengths 58 and 49 mm.

(10) F3. Trench 1. Four fragments from salt briquetage troughs. a) Type A fabric; a small length (19 mm) of the flat rim remains; maximum dimensions 78 by 73 mm, 19 mm thick; weight 93 g. b) Type A fabric; 40 by 38 mm, 23

mm thick; weight 30 g. c) Type A fabric; 42 by 34 mm, 23 mm thick; weight 22 g. d) Type B fabric; 42 by 22 mm, 14 mm thick; weight 10 g.

6.5 Bulk material

Archaeological finds were recorded from 13 of the archaeological features. These finds consisted of a quantity of Roman tile and imbrex (35 pieces at 2079g), animal bone (136 pieces at 2195g) and glass (2 at 17g), along with some stone (6 at 885g), burnt stone (4 at 300g) and slag (12 at 218g).

7 Discussion

A total of 18 archaeological features and a single layer were identified within the evaluation trenches. These consisted of 10 Roman features (seven pits, one wall foundation, one ditch and one metallised surface); one Mid-Late Bronze Age pit; one post-Medieval ditch; six undated features (four pits and two ditches); and one natural feature.

The majority of the features and finds recorded on the site were 1st to early 2nd century in date, including two coins which belong to the post-conquest pre-Boudican occupation of Sheepen. Significantly, wall foundation F1 appears to have made up part of the precinct wall for the late 1st century Roman temple known to be located on the site (Fig. 4) (Hull, 1958, 224-234). It is also likely that metallised surface L5 is associated with this structure, as may some of the other Roman features and finds recorded on the site.

8 Acknowledgements

The Trust would like to thank St Helena School for commissioning the work, and Martin Winter for monitoring the work. The fieldwork was carried out by Ben Holloway, Chris Lister, Adam Wrightman, Anna Nelson, Pauline Skippins, Laurie Driver and Will Clarke.

9 References and Abbreviations

Abbreviations

RIC Roman Imperial Coinage

References

- | | | |
|----------------|------|--|
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| CAT Report 351 | 2005 | An archaeological evaluation at St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex, by Kate Orr |
| CAT Report 382 | 2006 | Phase 2 of an archaeological evaluation at Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex, August 2006, by Kate Orr |
| CAT Report 384 | 2006 | An archaeological excavation of a foundation trench at the drama block, St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex, June 2006, by Kate Orr |
| CM | 2002 | <i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i> |
| CM | 2003 | <i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives</i> |

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10 Glossary

AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CM	Colchester Museums
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
medieval	c AD 1066 to c AD 1500
modern	c 1800 to the present day
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference

post-medieval c AD 1500 to AD 1800
Roman the period from AD 43 to around AD 430
UAD Urban Archaeological Database, Colchester Museums

11 Archive deposition

The finds, paper and digital archive are held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museums under accession code COLEM 2007.24.

Colchester Archaeological Trust 2007

Distribution list:

St Helena School
Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



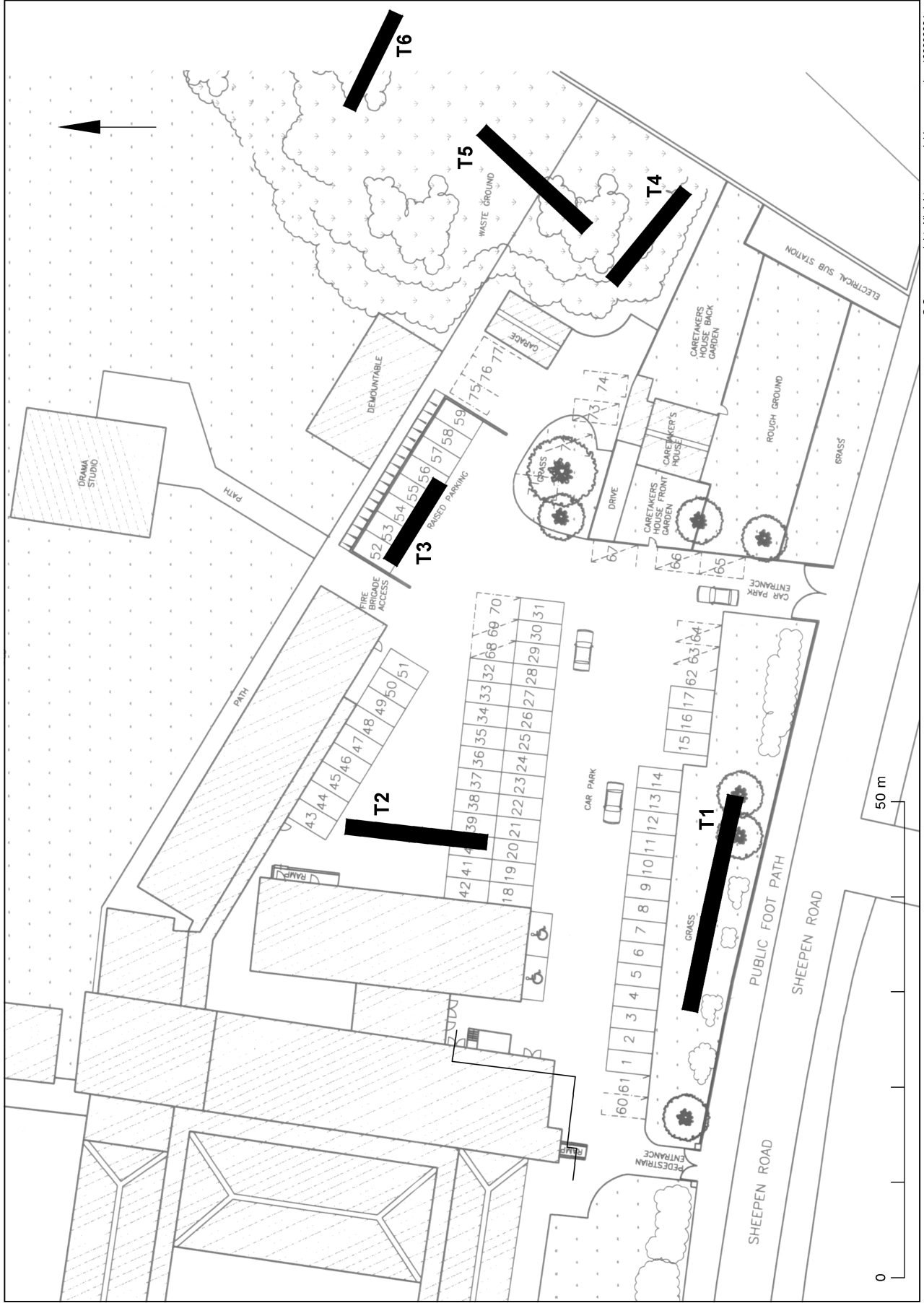
Colchester Archaeological Trust

12 Lexden Road,
Colchester,
Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051
(01206) 500124

email: archaeologists@catuk.org

Checked by: *Philip Crummy*
Date: 09/03/07



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Fig 1 Location plan.

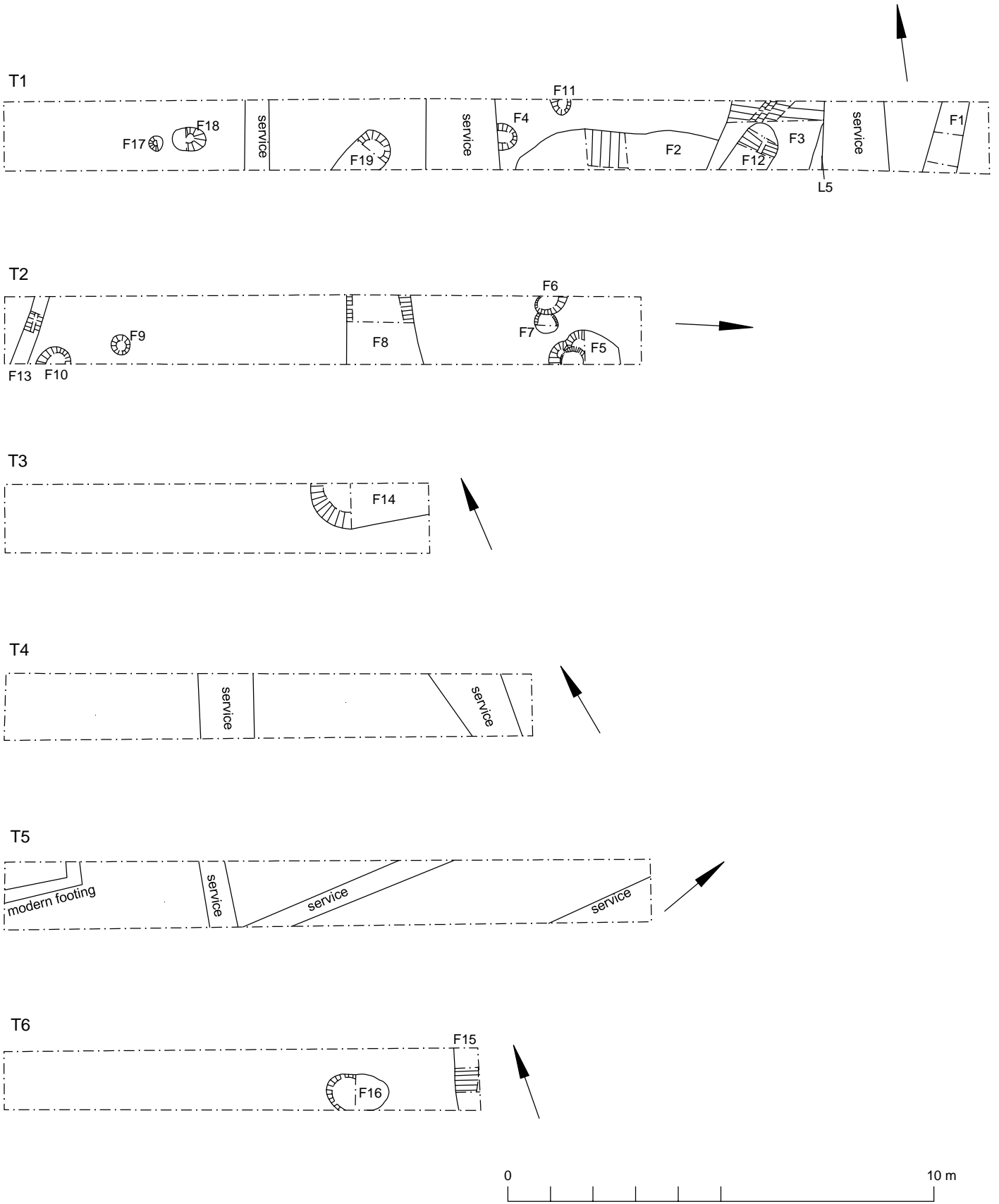


Fig 2 T1-T6: plans.

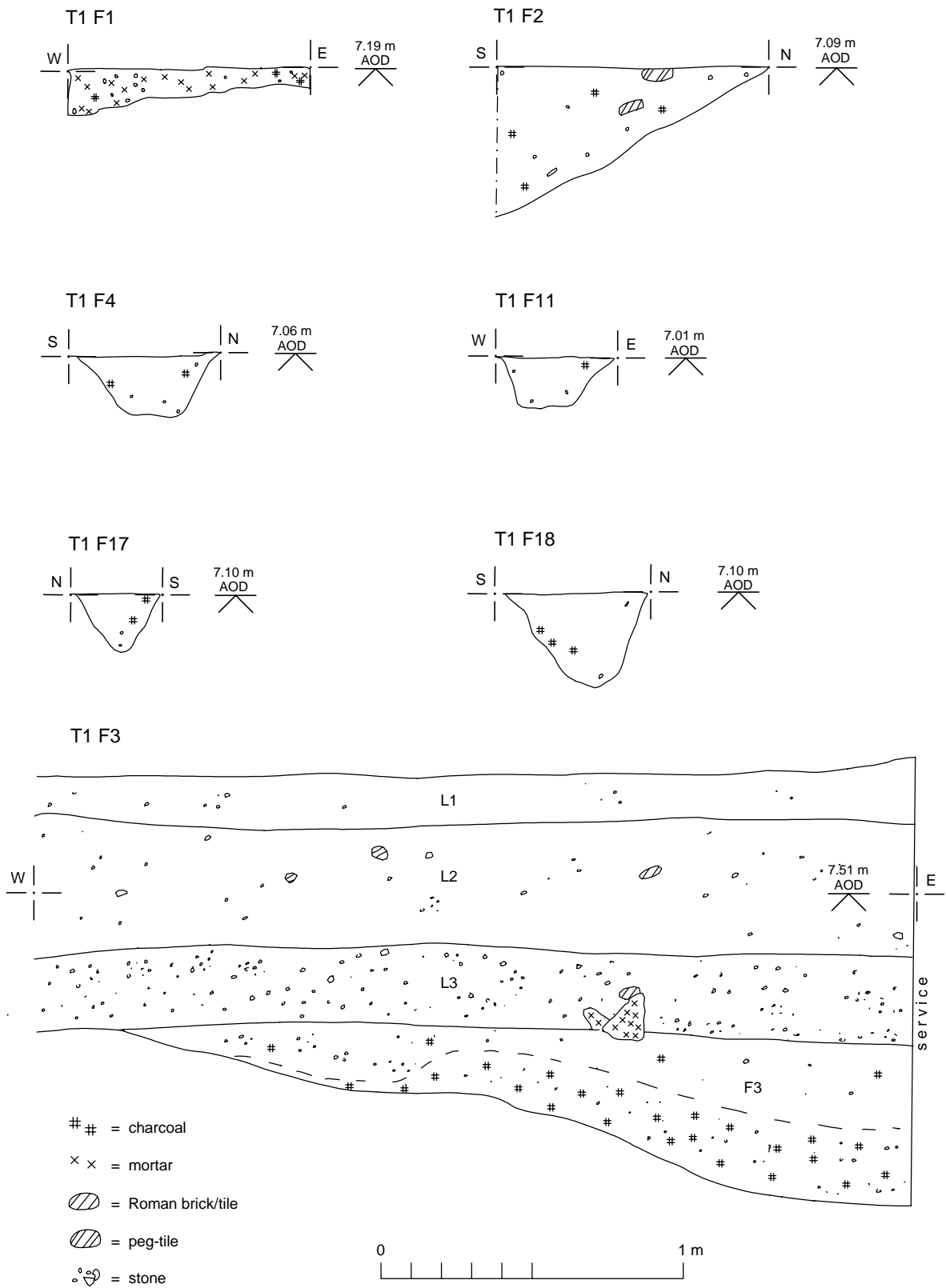


Fig 3 T1: sections.

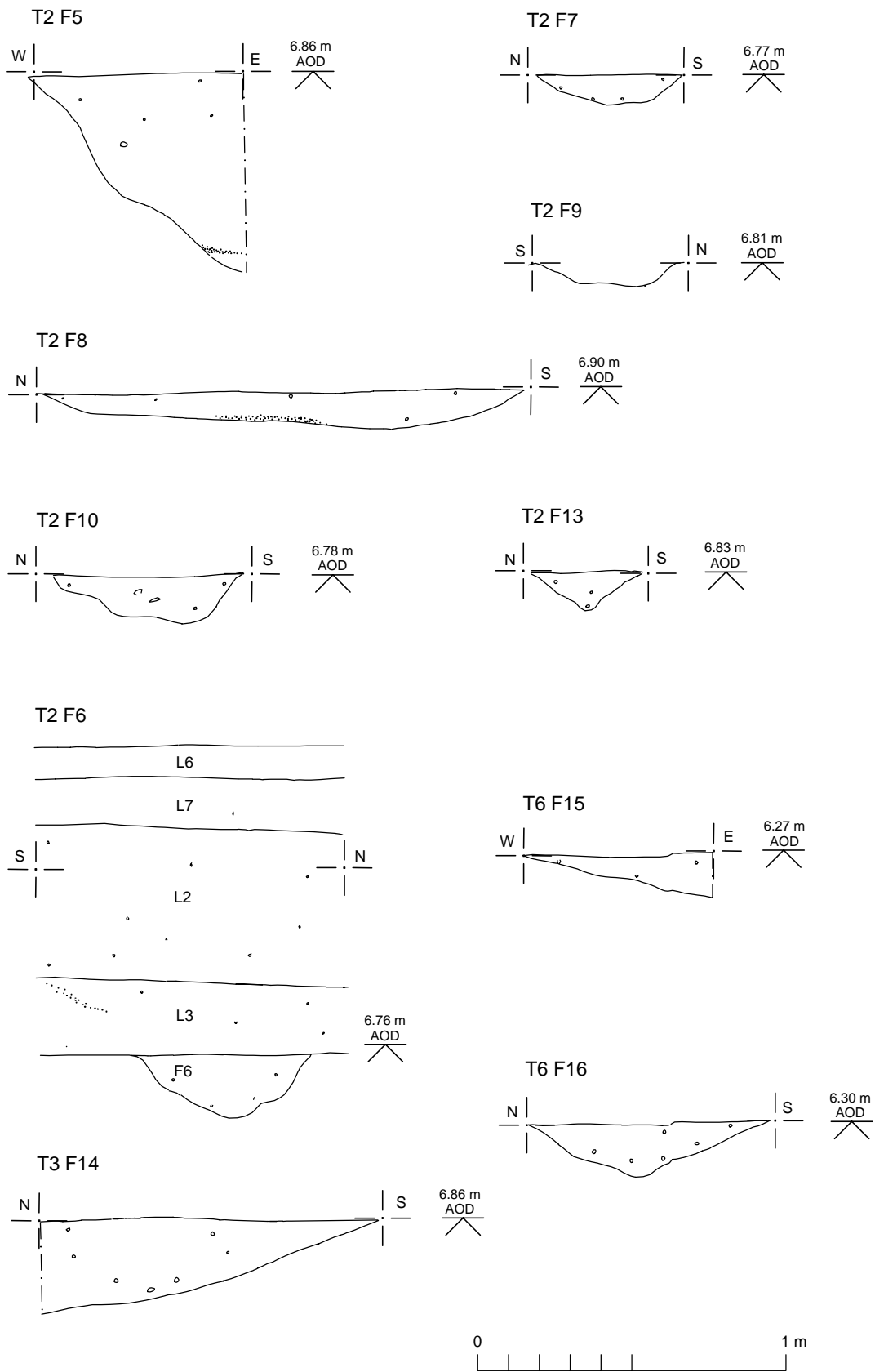


Fig 4 T2, T3 and T6: sections.

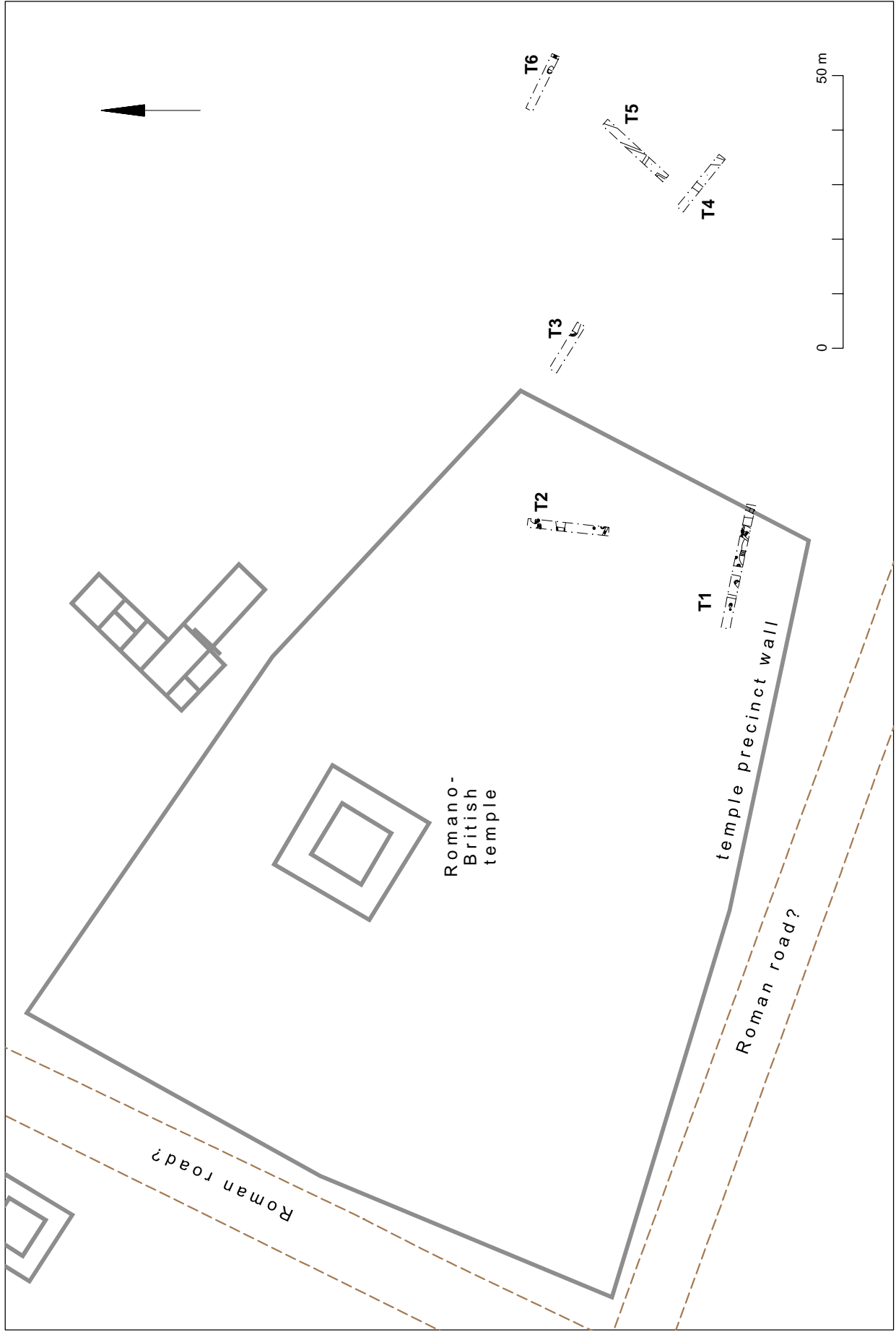


Fig 5 Location of T1-T6 in relation to Romano-British temple.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Site address: St Helena School, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9898 2578	Site code: Museum accession code COLEM 2007.24
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 12th-15th February 2007	Size of area investigated: Six trenches, totalling 87m long and each 1.6m wide
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER and UAD nos: 46
Final report: CAT Report and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: Bronze Age, Roman, post-medieval, modern	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: Six evaluation trenches (totalling 87m by 1.6m) were located within the St Helena School site in advance of plans to extend the school car-park. A total of 18 features were recorded: 10 Roman (seven pits, one wall foundation, one ditch and one metalled surface); one mid/late Bronze Age pit; one post-Medieval ditch; six undated features (four pits and two ditches); and one natural feature. Significantly, the Roman wall foundation appears to have been part of the precinct wall for the late 1st century Roman temple known to have been located on the site. A large quantity of Roman finds were also recorded including two coins which belong to the post-conquest pre-Boudican occupation of Sheepen, a brooch fragment and briquetage which may also date to before AD 60/1, and a number of pottery sherds dating primarily from the 1st to the early 2nd century.</p>	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Reports 188, 349, 351 and 384	
Author of summary: Laura Pooley	Date of summary: March 2007