

## Report on a negative watching brief: CAT Report 420

**Site address:** 4 Meadow Lane, West Mersea, Essex  
**Date of fieldwork:** 12th and 13th April 2007  
**NGR:** TM 01076 12469 (c)  
**CBC brief?:** Yes  
**Plans attached?:** Yes (Fig 1)  
**Museum accession code:** 2007.37  
**CAT project code:** 07/4a

### Archaeological background:

The site lies in an area which is rich in archaeology. The Church of St Peter and St Paul lies 145m to the north-west, as does the site of the hall where there have been numerous reports since the 18th century of Roman mosaics, tessellated floors and walls (Essex Historic Environment Record or EHER nos 2214 and 2274). West Mersea may well be the site of a small Roman town, and certainly that of an extensive villa complex. The site of a Benedictine priory also lies immediately west of the church and several skeletons have been found in this area (EHER no 2187).

At 20 Yorick Road, 32m to the north of 4 Meadow Lane, lie the below-ground remains of a circular mausoleum, first discovered in 1896 (EHER no 0038). A geophysical survey of the site was carried out by English Heritage in 1989 which pinpointed the building more precisely, showing it to extend into the rear gardens of nos 4 and 6 Beach Road. The monument has been protected by scheduling (Scheduled Ancient Monument no 32). It shows clearly on an aerial photograph of 1935 which was taken when the building was uncovered. Some time later it was backfilled, and nothing was seen of the building until 2003. At this time, CAT excavated an evaluation trench which exposed a section of the wall and found it to be intact, although a large amount of loose building material may indicate that the structure was damaged when it was backfilled (CAT Report 255).

### Results (Fig 1)

Planning permission was given to demolish the chalet on the site and to erect a three-bedroom house on its footprint (LPA no F/COL/06/1897). Two visits were made by an archaeologist while the groundworks were being carried out. These consisted of foundation trenches only. A mechanical excavator with a toothed bucket was used to excavate the trenches, all of which were between 1.2m and 1.5m deep. The foundations to the chalet had been removed and the new house was sited on its footprint. Existing services were re-used. Approximately 300mm of topsoil and subsoil had already been stripped from over most of the site. On the extreme western side of the site, where the topsoil had not been stripped off, the soil profile was as follows: 150mm of topsoil sealing 350mm of light brown silty sand subsoil, which in turn sealed 1m of orange brown natural sandy clay becoming sandier further down. Over the rest of the site, 200mm of subsoil sealed 1m of natural. There were no finds except for modern building debris and one iron object. There were no Roman burials, and the site was found to be blank in archaeological terms. This is unlikely to be explained by disturbance from the previous building as, except for the topsoil, the ground was largely undisturbed.

### Reference

CAT Report 255                      An archaeological evaluation at 20 Yorick Road, West Mersea, Essex, November 2003, by Ben Holloway, 2003

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**Report date:** June 2007

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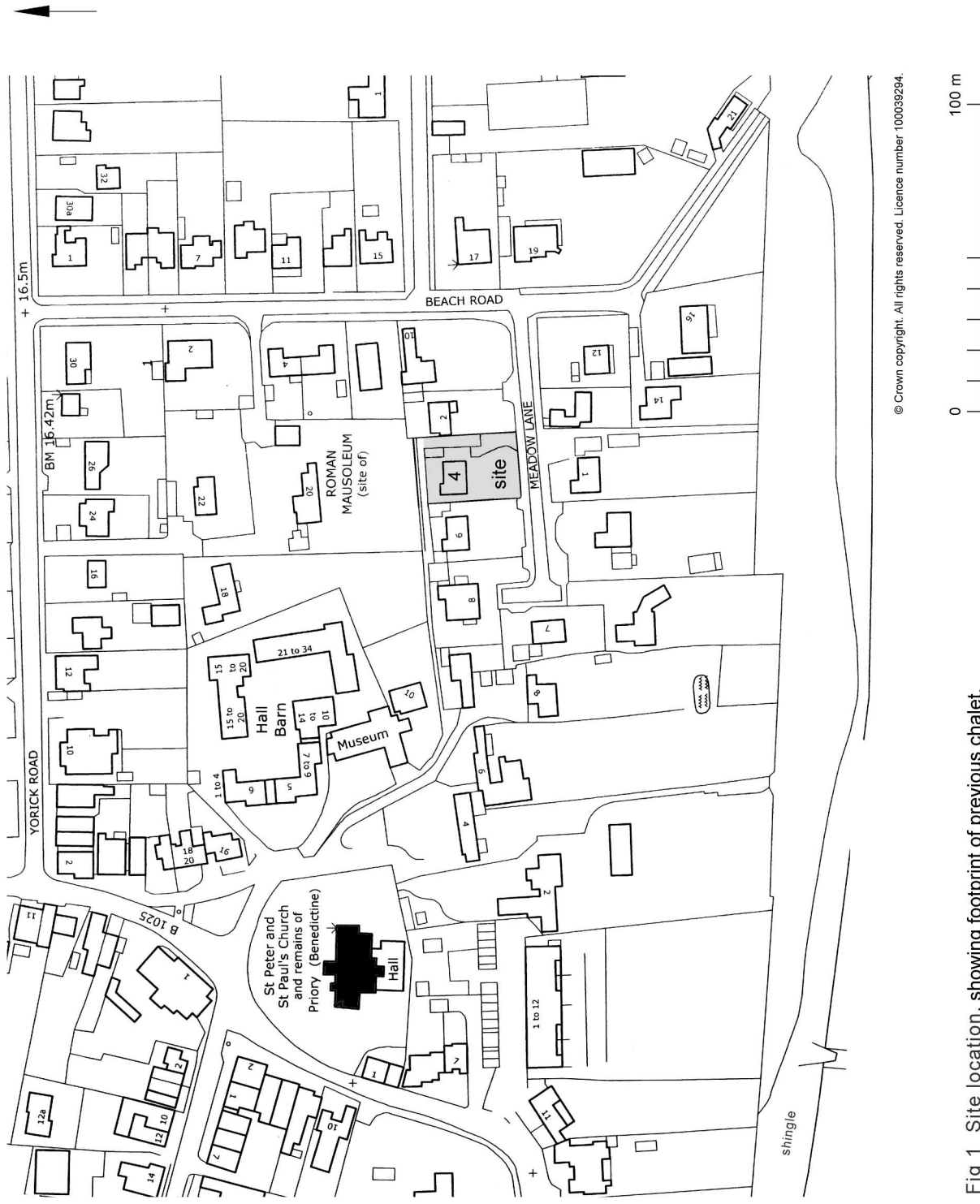


Fig 1 Site location, showing footprint of previous chalet.

**Essex Historic Environment Record/  
Essex Archaeology and History**

**Summary sheet**

<b>Site address:</b> 4 Meadow Lane, West Mersea, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> West Mersea	<b>District:</b> Colchester Borough
<b>NGR:</b> TM 01076 12469 (c)	<b>Site code:</b> Museum accession code 2007.37
<b>Type of work:</b> Watching brief	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> April 2007	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 21m x 33.3m, covering 0.07ha
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> House owner
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHER nos:</b> 0038, 2187, 2214, 2274
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 420	
<b>Periods represented:</b> None	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> <i>The foundation trenches for a new house were monitored. Nothing of archaeological significance was observed.</i>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> CAT Report 255	
<b>Author of summary:</b> Kate Orr	<b>Date of summary:</b> June 2007