

Report on a watching brief CAT Report 463

Site address: 37 Oaks Drive, Colchester, Essex
Date of fieldwork: 12th February 2008
NGR: TL 9882 2517
CBC brief?: No
Location plan attached?: Yes
CAT job ref: 08/2C
Museum accession code: Colchester and Ipswich museums 2008.9
Attached Figure: Figure 1 Location of F1 at the rear of the existing house

Brief archaeological background:

No archaeology has previously been recorded from within the existing property boundary, however, the surrounding area, especially to the north of the property, is rich in archaeological remains of national importance dating from the Bronze Age, late Iron Age and Roman period (Hawkes & Hull 1947, Hull 1963, Niblett 1985, *CAR* 11 131-36). Of especial importance is the Late Iron Age and early Roman site of Camulodunum-Sheepen, and a number of Roman pottery kilns a short distance north of the property.

Brief report:

The reason for the archaeological work being carried out, in the form of a watching brief, was the excavation of footing trenches for an extension to the rear of the existing house. A visit was made by an archaeologist from the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the afternoon of the 12th February 2008 when the excavation of the footing trenches had been completed.

Two footing trenches, about 0.5 m wide and about 1.6 m deep and joining at right-angles, were located to the rear of the house, at the southeast corner (Fig 1). The two footing trenches had been excavated into natural sand at their base. For most of their length the footing trenches had been cut through a large feature (F1) filled with medium-dark brown sandy loam. F1 extended to the west and north at least as far as the existing house. At the west end of the south footing trench the base of F1 approximately coincided with the base of the trench at 1.6 m deep. The south-western edge of F1 was located on the east side of the footing trenches where the natural sand rose up to the base of the garden topsoil.

The footing trenches were able to be entered and although finds material appeared to be quite sparse in the fill of F1, a small number of finds were recovered (see catalogue below). Apart from two pieces of modern brick, which came from disturbed soil at the base of the footing trench and which are certainly intrusive, all of the finds, where datable, are Roman. The most securely stratified finds were excavated from the undisturbed fill of F1 toward the north end of the east footing trench (F1, finds number 2). These secure finds consist of 3 sherds of Roman pottery, one of which is a large sherd datable to the 1st-2nd/3rd century, and one piece of animal bone which cannot be closely dated.

The size of the feature F1, the nature of the surrounding natural (sand), and the date of the finds recovered from the fill, suggest that F1 is a Roman sand quarry.

Finds: Roman pottery and other finds

The small quantity of finds recovered during the watching brief was recorded (see catalogue below) but not retained as part of the archive.

Catalogue of finds

F1, finds number 1

Roman brick and tile (117 g): 3 pieces/fragments, 1 is a piece of an *imbrex* tile.
modern brick (154 g): 2 pieces from the same brick.

F1, finds number 2

Roman pottery (75 g): Fabric DJ, 1 large sherd (69 g), traces of burning or sooting on interior and across one sherd break; Fabric GX, 2 sherds from two separate pots (6 g).
Pottery dated: Roman – ?1st-2nd/3rd century.

Animal bone (67 g): 1 piece, leg bone and joint from a large mammal, bone surface flaking, presumed to be of Roman date.

Note on the Roman pottery Fabrics and recording:

The pottery has been recorded using the Roman pottery fabric type series devised for *CAR 10* in which the Fabrics are recorded as two letter codes. These letter codes, together with the full Fabric name, are set out in Table 1. Where appropriate the fabric code for the national Roman fabric reference collection has been included (Tomber and Dore 1998). Dating of the pottery broadly follows the dating of pottery Fabric and forms in *CAR 10*.

Fabric code	Fabric name	National Roman fabric reference collection Fabric code
DJ	coarse oxidised and related wares	COL WH
GX	other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares	

Table 1: Roman pottery fabrics

References:

<i>CAR 10</i>	1991	Robin Symonds and Sue Wade, Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86, Colchester Archaeological Report 10
<i>CAR 11</i>	1995	C F C, Hawkes, and P, Crummy, Camulodunum 2, Colchester Archaeological Report 11
Hawkes, C F C, & Hull, M R,	1947	Camulodunum, first report on the excavations at Colchester 1930-39, RRCSAL, 14
Hull, M R,	1963	The Roman potters' kilns of Colchester, RRCSAL, 21
Niblett, R,	1985	Sheepen; an early Roman industrial site at Camulodunum, CBA Research Report 57
Tomber, R, & Dore, J,	1998	The National Roman Fabric Reference Collection, A Handbook, MoLAS Monograph 2

Report author: S Benfield

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Distribution list:

David Larond, 37 Oaks Drive, Colchester

Deborah Priddy, English Heritage, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge

Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust

12 Lexden Road,

Colchester,

Essex CO3 3NF

tel.: (01206) 541051

tel./fax: (01206) 500124

email: archaeologists@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy

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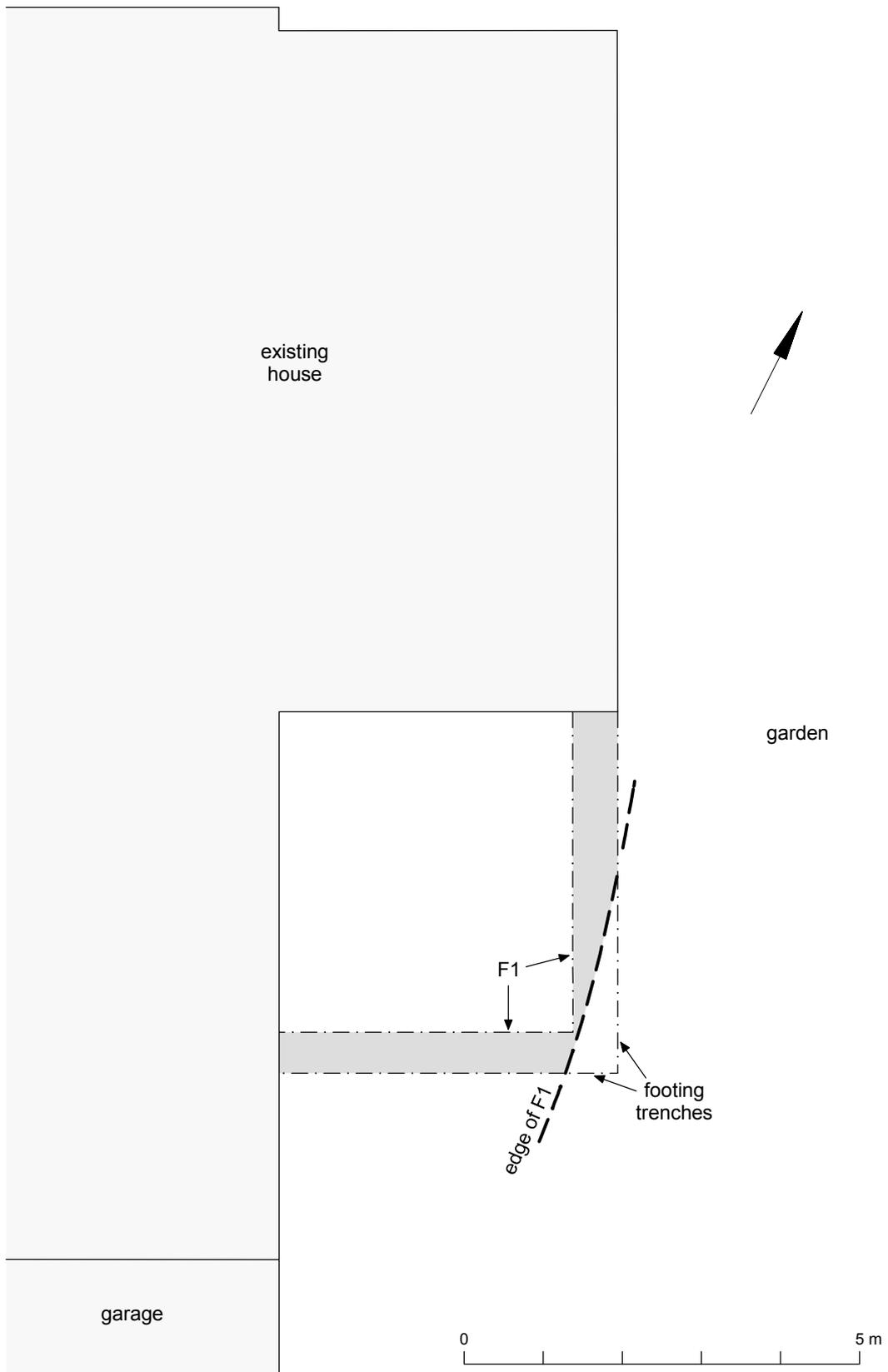


Fig 1 Location of F1 at rear of existing house.