

**Archaeological monitoring at
Northern Approach Road Phase III
Colchester, Essex
September-November 2013**



**report prepared by
Mark Baister**

**on behalf of
BAM Nuttall**

CAT project ref.: 13/08d
Historic Environment code: CCNR14
Colchester and Ipswich Museums accession code: 2014.70
Planning references: F/COL/01/1626
NGR: TL 9965 2846



Colchester Archaeological Trust
Roman Circus House,
Off Circular Road North,
Colchester,
Essex CO2 7GZ

tel.: 07436273304
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

CAT Report 728
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1 Summary

A watching brief was carried out during topsoil stripping for Phase III of Colchester's Northern Approach Road. Along the strip, a fragment of prehistoric pottery and a worked flint were recovered from the topsoil. Four post-medieval to modern, and eleven undated features were observed cut into the natural clay. Nothing else of archaeological interest was discovered.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report describes an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) from the period of September to November 2013 along the length of the third phase of the Northern Approach Road. The site (which is centred at NGR TL 9965 2846; see Fig 1) is located north of Colchester General Hospital, and runs from North Circular Road Phase II (see CAR Report 186 CAT 2002), around the old Severalls Hospital site to the south-east, and joins up with the roundabout between Axial Way and United Way, just south of junction 28 of the A12. The monitoring was carried out by professional archaeologists from CAT.

The road strip runs for approximately 1.2km (north to south), and goes through an area formally occupied by outbuildings of the old Severalls Hospital site. These were demolished prior to the beginning of this project. The rest of the route runs through agricultural land that until recently had been under arable cultivation.

BAM Nuttall commissioned CAT to carry out the specified archaeological monitoring. The monitoring was carried out between the 23rd September and the 4th November 2013 in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by CAT (CAT 2013). Post-excavation work was carried out in June 2014. In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was carried out in accordance with standard policies and procedures as outlined in CAT 2012, IfA 2008a, IfA 2008b, MoRPHE, EAA 14, and EAA 24.

3 Archaeological background

Previous phases of the Northern Approach road have been evaluated by CAT. The western route from Mill Road to Boxted Road was evaluated in 1996 (CAT 1997). The evaluation revealed two areas of significant archaeology of the Late Iron Age (LIA) and early Roman periods, both on the southern section of the new link road between Turner Road and Mill Road. To the west of the Colchester General Hospital, a ditch dating to the Roman period, and probably related to settlement of the same date, was located just below modern topsoil. There is a more substantial concentration of LIA to early Roman features along the new road section in the grounds of Turner Village Hospital. These consist of the truncated remains of several ditches and a number of smaller features, which can provisionally be interpreted as a trackway associated with a settlement site located somewhere to the north.

These LIA and early Roman features are important not only on their own merits, but also because they form part of a larger archaeological landscape which includes an extensive Roman cemetery (with 100 known burials) and a Roman road or trackway to the south of Turner Rise.

Phase III of the road scheme (for which this watching brief was commissioned) was evaluated in 2001 (CAT 2001). This also included evaluation of A12 Junction 28 adjacent to the Weston Homes stadium. Evaluation trenches examined a total area of 3400 square metres along the line of the road. Finds were sparse; features that did contain dating evidence were either post medieval or modern. Undated features included a deep clay-filled trench and a high number of charcoal-filled pits scattered over a large area. These pits are thought to be associated with a military encampment from the First World War. One aim of the monitoring was to determine whether this interpretation of the archaeology was accurate and if any further features of archaeological interest would be uncovered.

The groundworks for the Weston Homes Community Stadium, which lies to the north-west of the Northern Approach Road, were also monitored in 2001. A series of post-medieval/modern ditches were observed running across the site, but no significant archaeological deposits were identified.

4 Aim

The monitoring is intended to preserve by record the character, extent, date and significance of any archaeological remains and deposits as they are being removed by road and associated infrastructure construction.

5 Results (Fig 2)

The length of the road was stripped using mechanical excavators equipped with toothless buckets under archaeological supervision.

During the strip, two layers and fifteen features were encountered (Fig 2):

Context	Description	Finds	Date
L1	medium brown sandy silt topsoil, 250mm-300mm thick across whole site	peg tile, prehistoric pottery, worked flint	post-medieval/modern
L2	light yellow/grey clay	-	post-glacial
F1 (Plate 1)	burns pit with dark black charcoal fill	-	undated
F2	pit with medium grey/brown brick flecked sandy silt fill	-	undated
F3	pit with dark brown sandy silt fill	peg tile	post-medieval/modern
F4	linear with light/medium grey clayey silt fill	peg tile, modern pottery	post-medieval/modern
F5	pit with medium brown sandy silt fill	peg tile	post-medieval/modern
F6	burns pit with dark black charcoal fill	-	undated
F7	burns pit with dark black charcoal fill	-	undated
F8	shallow pit with dark grey sandy silt fill	-	undated
F9	shallow and indistinct pit with medium grey clayey silt fill	-	undated
F10	linear with medium grey/brown clayey silt fill	modern brick fragment	post-medieval/modern
F11	burns pit with dark black charcoal fill	-	undated
F12	very shallow pit with layer of clay sealing dark black charcoal fill	-	undated
F13	very shallow burns pit with dark black charcoal fill	-	undated

F14	burns pit with dark black charcoal fill	-	undated
F15	burns pit with dark black charcoal fill	-	undated



Plate 1 F1, shot facing north-west. Typical of undated burns pits uncovered during monitoring.

6 Conclusion

These results reinforce the conclusions of the previous evaluation along this route (CAT 2001). The finds are sparse, and the only datable features present are a series of post-medieval or modern linears and pits. The discovery of a number of undated charcoal filled pits mirrors the evaluation of 2001, although no further evidence was uncovered that could link them to the First World War.

Very little of archaeological interest was discovered on the site. All features uncovered had finds of either a recent date or no finds at all. The only two finds of interest were recovered, i.e. a residual prehistoric pottery sherd and worked flint. Both were found in topsoil. Beyond these finds, nothing of archaeological significance can be said about the site.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT would like to thank BAM Nuttall for commissioning the work. The project was managed and fieldwork carried out by B Holloway and M Baister. The project was monitored by ECC Historical Environment Advisor Adrian Gascoyne.

8 References

- | | | |
|------|------|---|
| CAT | 2012 | <i>Policies and procedures</i> |
| CAT | 1997 | <i>An archaeological evaluation of the line of the Colchester Northern Approaches road Stage 1L Turner Road to Boxted Road, Colchester, Essex</i> By Benfield, S |
| CAT | 2001 | <i>An archaeological evaluation on the route for Colchester Northern Approach Road Phase 3 (Severalls Hospital /Cuckoo Farm), Colchester, Essex</i> By Crossan, C |
| CAT | 2002 | <i>An archaeological watching brief on the line of the Northern Approaches Road Phase 2a and on land to the west of Colchester General Hospital, Colchester, Essex August 2001-March 2002</i> By Orr, K |
| CAT | 2013 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Monitoring and Excavation at Colchester Northern Approaches Phase 3 (NAR3), Colchester, Essex September 2013</i> |
| DCLG | 2012 | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Department of Communities and Local Government |

EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, by David Gurney (editor)
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the east of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeological Occasional Papers 24, by Maria Medlycott
ECC	2008	<i>Tendring District Historic Environment Characterisation Project</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (MoRPHE)
HET	2013	<i>Brief for detailed archaeological monitoring and recording on the Colchester Northern Approaches Road Phase 3 (NAR3), Colchester, Essex</i> , Essex County Council Brief, by Adrian Gascoyne
IfA	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i>
IfA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>

9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material (brick, tile, tessera).
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by Essex County Council
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
fill	the soil filling up a hole such as a pit or ditch
HET	Historic Environment Team
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
layer	an accumulation or deposition of archaeological material
medieval	the period from AD 1066 to AD 1500
modern	the period from AD 1800 to present day
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OS	Ordnance Survey
post-medieval	the period from AD 1500 to AD 1800

10 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Circular Road North, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museum (under accession code 2014.70).

11 Contents of archive

Finds archive

One finds bag containing a worked flint and a sherd of prehistoric pottery (all other finds discarded after report completed)

Paper archive

1 A4 wallet containing:
this report
original site record (context and finds sheets)
section drawings
digital photo log
attendance record
sundry papers
digital photos on disc

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Distribution list:

BAM Nuttall

Adrian Gascoyne, Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor

Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust

Roman Circus House

Circular Road North,

Colchester,

Essex CO2 7GZ

tel.: 07436273304

email: archaeologists@catuk.org

Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 23/06/2014

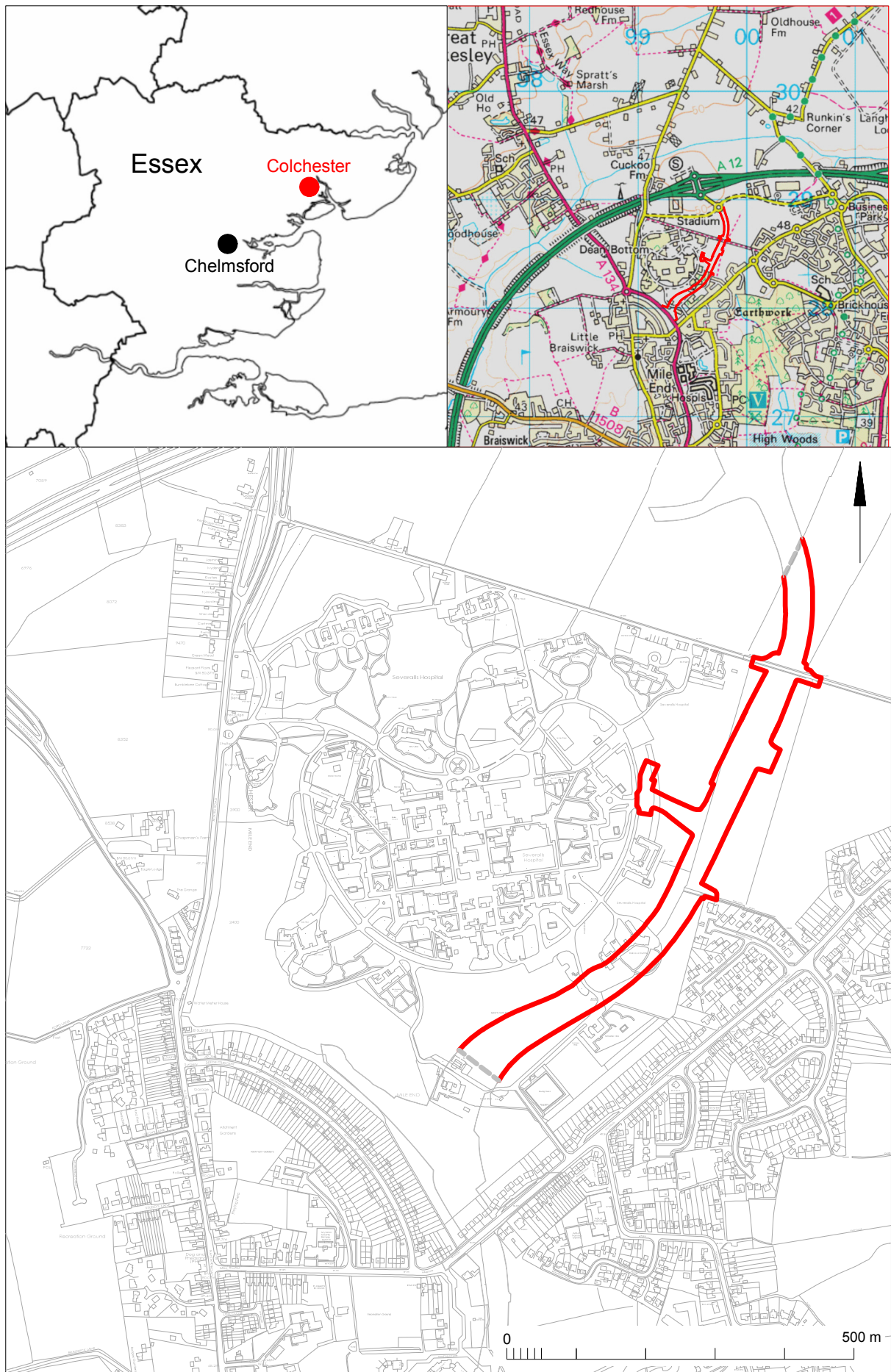


Fig 1 Site location

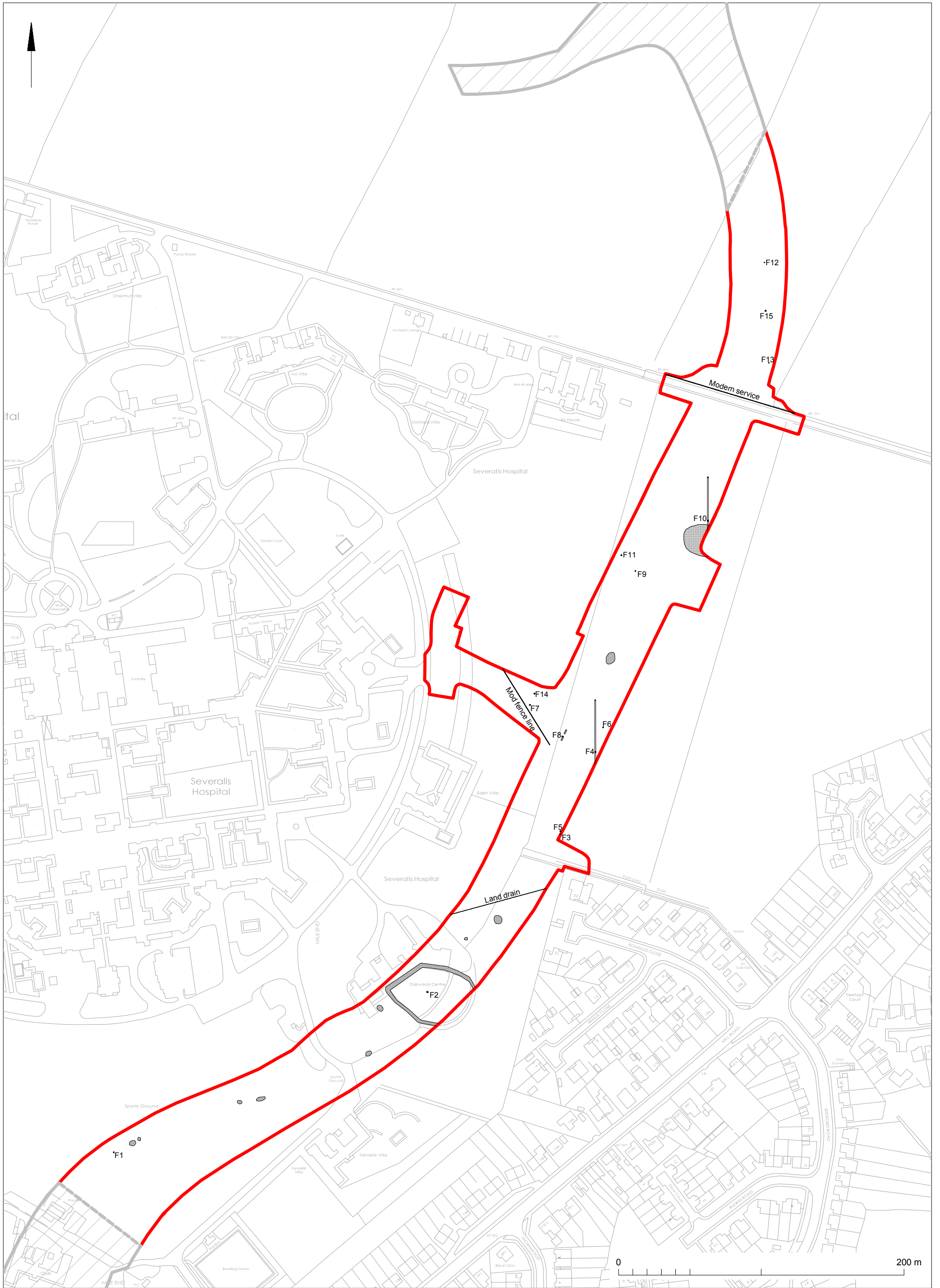


Fig 2 Monitoring results. Modern disturbance shown in grey.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Northern Approach Road Phase III, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9965, 2846 (centre)	Site codes: CAT project – 13/08d
Type of work: Archaeological monitoring	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: September 2013 to November 2013	Size of area investigated: 1.2km road strip (approx)
Location of curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museum Accession code: 2014.70	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER numbers: -
Final report: CAT Report 728	
Periods represented: post-medieval, modern	
<p>Summary:</p> <p><i>A watching brief was carried out during topsoil stripping for Phase III of Colchester's Northern Approach Road. Along the strip, a fragment of prehistoric pottery and a worked flint were recovered from the topsoil. Four post-medieval to modern, and eleven undated features were observed cut into the natural clay.</i></p> <p><i>No other features of archaeological interest were found.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Keywords: post-medieval, modern	Significance: *
Author of summary: Mark Baister	Date of summary: June 2014