

**Archaeological evaluation:
land to the rear of 41-45 Clare Road,
Braintree, Essex**

March 2014



commissioned by Mr Mark Plummer
report prepared by Ben Holloway and Howard Brooks

Planning reference: 13/000585/FUL, 13/00784/FUL
CAT project code: 13/8e
HEM code: BT 50
Braintree Museum accession code: pending
NGR: TL 7513 2278 (c)



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

tel.: 07436 273 304
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

CAT Report 770
June 2014

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EHER summary sheet

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Fig 1 Site location showing 2014 evaluation trenches in relation to 2012 evaluation and excavation.

Fig 2 Sections.

1 Summary

Archaeological evaluation by three trenches was carried out on land to the rear of 41-45 Clare Road, Braintree ahead of the construction of two new houses. This follows a 2012 archaeological evaluation and excavation immediately to the west which uncovered Late Iron Age and Roman pits and ditches, and a compacted Roman surface (then thought to be a Roman road leading towards the Roman town).

There were no significant archaeological features or finds in the three trenches (only a modern post-pit). Significantly, the postulated Roman road was not seen in the trench specifically positioned to intercept it. The compacted gravel surface found in 2012 may therefore be a Roman yard rather than a road.

2 Introduction (Figure 1)

- 2.1 This is the archive report on the archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching carried out on behalf of Mr Mark Plummer by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on land to the rear of 41-45 Clare Road, Braintree, Essex (site centre: NGR TL 7513 2278).
- 2.2 At the time of the evaluation the site was part of the gardens of 41-45 Clare Road. Proposed works involve the construction of two new dwellings and associated infrastructure. Site is centred on TL 7513 2278.
- 2.3 Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS) was consulted by Braintree District Council in August 2013, regarding planning applications 13/00585/FUL and 13/00784/FUL. In response to consultation, and given the results from the 2012 evaluation and excavation (CAT Reoprt 645) ECCPS made the following recommendation to the LPA in line with advice given in *National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012)*:

*"L2 Implementation of Archaeological Fieldwork Programme
No development including any site clearance or groundworks of any kind shall take place within the site until the applicant or their agents; the owner of the site or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work from an accredited archaeological contractor in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in a manner that accommodates the approved programme of archaeological work."*

- 2.4 A brief detailing the required archaeological work (an evaluation by trial-trenching) was written by ECC Place Services officer (Teresa O'Connor). All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a WSI (Written Scheme of Investigation) produced by CAT (CAT 2014) in response to the Place Services brief and agreed with the Place Services officer. This was in reference to the earlier Brief for Evaluation (ECC 2012).
- 2.5 The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Mark Plummer and was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) 31st of March 2014. Post-excavation work was carried out in April and June 2014.
- 2.6 In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was carried out in accordance with CAT's *Policies and procedures* (CAT 2012), the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008a), and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008b). The guidance contained in *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England (EAA 14)* was also followed.

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 This section is based on records from the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford.
- 3.2 The site lies on the western edge of the Roman town at Braintree, much of which appears to have been confined within a triangular area between the main Roman roads of Stane Street (Rayne Road) and the Sudbury to Chelmsford route (London Road). Within the area of the Roman town there appears to have been two phases

of development. The first century town was concentrated in the area of the modern Pierrefitte Way, and there is some suggestion of deliberate planning in the initial layout of the town with the minor roads and major boundary ditches running at right-angles to London Road, forming blocks approximately 145m apart. In the second and third centuries the town expanded into the Rayne Road and George Yard area, and there appears to have been a second phase of road building, which cut across the original layout. Burials have been found on the western edge of the built-up area (Medlycott 1988; Havis 1993).

- 3.3** Early antiquarian reports indicate finds of Late Iron Age and Roman date within close proximity to the development site. A large number of finds dating from the Late Iron Age to the Roman period were recovered from a ditch during gravel extraction at Hunnables Pit, less than 100m east of the development site. Cremation burials with possible grave goods and urns have been recovered from various locations including Hunnables Pit (EHER 6306), 8 Clare Road (EHER 6317) and 13 Grenville Road (EHER 6322), suggesting extensive burial areas.
- 3.4** Evidence for possible buildings and boundary ditches have been recovered from Grenville Road (EHER 17783-4) and College Road (EHER 16866) which possibly lie at the edge of the Roman town. Recent work to the south-west of the site on the former William Julien Courtauld Hospital has demonstrated the survival of Roman features in that area.

4 Aim

The aim of the investigation was to determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits, and to 'preserve by record' any remains which would be destroyed by the construction of the new buildings and associated groundworks.

5 Results (Figures 1-3)

5.1 Introduction

In fulfilment of the brief and WSI (ECC 2012; CAT 2014), three trenches totalling 50m in length (T1-T3) were excavated within the area of the proposed development (Fig 1). In relation to the earlier evaluation, the trenches were essentially to the west of the 2012 evaluation site.

Using the contractor's mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless bucket, the three trenches were dug under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. A summary of the trenches is given below.

Trenches 1-3: summary

The evaluation trenches measured 1.8m wide, were 50m long in total, and were arranged within the footprints of the proposed new builds. The trenches were cut through a garden topsoil horizon 350mm thick (L1) sealing an accumulation horizon 150mm thick (L2). This sealed natural geological material (L3). There was no indication of masking deposits, either made ground (ie, dumped soil), or alluvially or colluvially deposited.

There were no significant archaeological features in the evaluation trenches - a modern pit in T3 was probably part of a fence line.



T1 view south



T2 view north



T3 view north



T3 view west

6 Finds

None

7 Discussion

There were no archaeological features or finds (the only feature being a modern fence post). The most significant result is that the metallised surface should have been seen in T1, but was not there. This can only mean that it was a yard surface rather than a road. It may be remembered that there was no roadside ditch on the northern edge of the gravel, where it was exposed in the 2012 excavation. This makes sense now.

The majority of Roman-period finds in this area have been burial-related (from the gravel pit at Hunnables Pit, less than 150m east of the current site: EHER 6306), from 8 Clare Road (EHER 6317) and 13 Grenville Road (EHER 6322). These finds indicate that there were extensive Roman cemeteries west of Braintree. It may be that the 2012 metallised surface should be seen in this context, rather than as part of the Roman road network west of Braintree.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Mr Mark Plummer for commissioning and funding the excavation. The fieldwork was conducted by Ben Holloway and Chris Lister. Plans were produced by Chris Lister with illustrations by Emma Spurgeon. The project was monitored by Teresa O'Connor on behalf of Essex County Council Place Services.

9 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in .pdf format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

CAT	2012	<i>Policies and procedures</i>
CAT	2012a	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological trial-trenching at land to the rear of 37-45 Clare Road, Braintree, Essex.</i>
CAT	2012b	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological excavation at land to the rear of 37-45 Clare Road, Braintree, Essex.</i>
CAT	2014	<i>Written Scheme of investigation for archaeological evaluation on land rear of 37-43 Clare Road, Braintree, Essex.</i> By Ben Holloway
CAT Report 645	2012	<i>Archaeological evaluation and excavation at land to the rear of 37-45 Clare Road, Braintree, Essex.</i> March-May 2012
DCLG	2010	<i>Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.</i> Dept 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, ed by D Gurney
ECC	2012	Archaeological evaluation at land to the rear of 37-42 Clare Road, Braintree. Essex County Council brief by Teresa O'Connor
Havis, R	1993	<i>Roman Braintree: excavations 1984-90</i> , Essex Archaeology and History 24
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>
Medlycott, M	1998	<i>Braintree Historic Towns Project Assessment Report</i>

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by the ECC
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
layer	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by CAT at Roman Circus House, Circular Road North, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but it will be permanently deposited with Braintree Museum, accession code pending.

12 Contents of archive

Finds archive: none

Paper archive: One A4 document wallet containing:

- This report (CAT Report 770)
- Original site record: Context sheets (L1-3)
- Site photos on CD
- Digital photographic record
- ECC evaluation brief issued by HEM team
- CAT evaluation WSI
- Sundry papers

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Distribution list

Mr Mark Plummer
Teresa O'Connor, Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team officer
EHER

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HB/Current projects/2014/Braintree Clare Road/Report770.doc



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

tel.: 07436273304
email: archaeologists@catuk.org



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Fig 1 Site location showing the 2014 evaluation trenches (T1-3) in relation to the 2012 evaluation and excavation.

 2012 evaluation/excavation

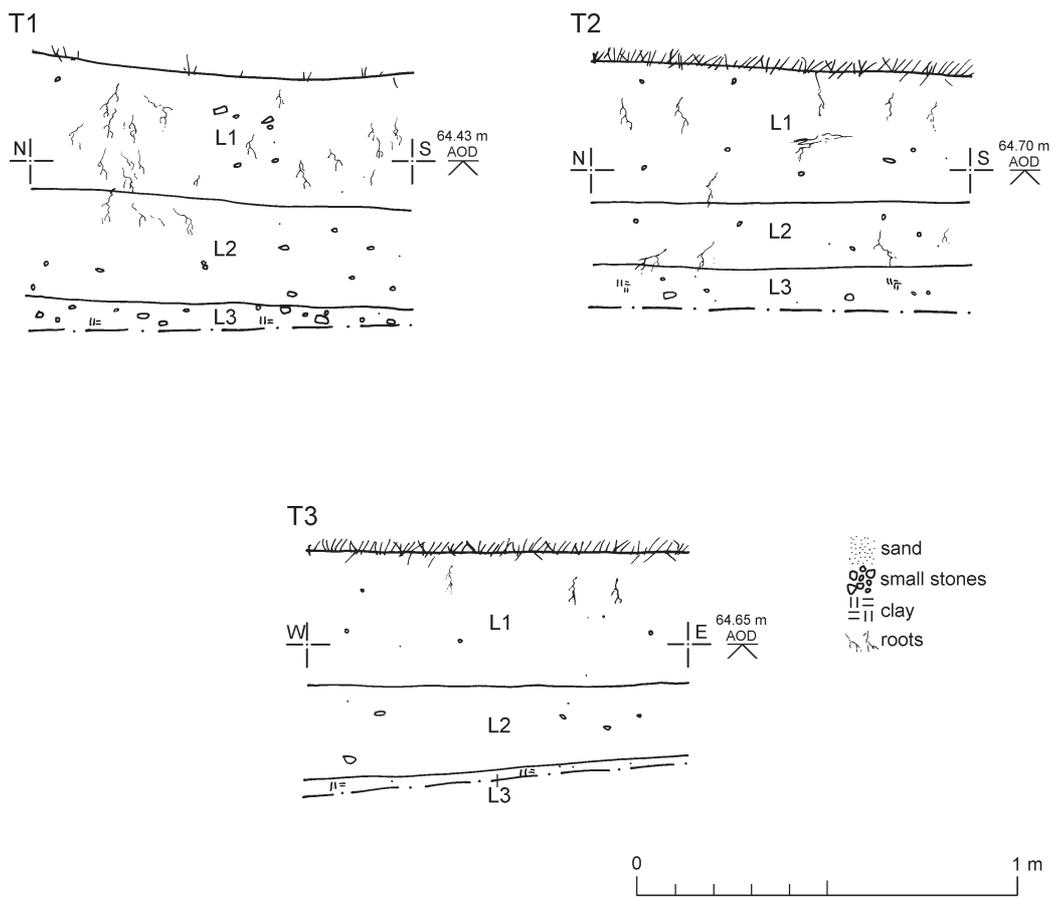


Fig 2 T1-3: Representative trench sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Land rear of 41-45 Clare Road, Braintree, Essex	
Parish: Braintree	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 7513 2278 (c)	Site codes: CAT project code – 13/8e ECC HEM code – BT50
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: March 2014	Size of area investigated: 50m of 1.8m-wide trenches.
Location of curating museum: Braintree Museum accession code pending requested March 2012	Funding source: developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER numbers: 6306, 6317, 6322, 16866, 17783-4,
Final report:	CAT Report 770, and summary in <i>EAH</i>
Periods represented:	modern
<p>Summary: Archaeological evaluation by three trenches was carried out on land to the rear of 41-45 Clare Road, Braintree ahead of the construction of two new houses. This follows a 2012 archaeological evaluation and excavation immediately to the west which uncovered Late Iron Age and Roman pits and ditches, and a compacted Roman surface (then thought to be a Roman road leading towards the Roman town).</p> <p>There were no significant archaeological features or finds in the three trenches (only a modern post-pit). Significantly, the postulated Roman road was not seen in the trench specifically positioned to intercept it. The compacted gravel surface found in 2012 may therefore be a Roman yard rather than a road.</p>	
Previous summaries/reports:	CAT Report 645
Monitored by:	Maria Medlycott and Teresa O'Connor, Essex CC Place Services
Keywords: -	Significance: -
Author of summary: Howard Brooks	Date of summary: June 2014