

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

**Archaeological attendance and recording
(watching brief) at
St Helena School, Sheepen Road,
Colchester, Essex**

CAT Report 816

Summary sheet

Address: St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 8836 5850 (centre)	Site code: CAT project code – 14/
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 16-17th February 2015	Size of area investigated: 7 x 98mm geo-technical boreholes
Location of curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museum accession code – 2015.	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER numbers: SAM (Essex no 57)
Final report: CAT Report 816	
Periods represented: modern	
SS	Summary of fieldwork results: The development site is located within an area of high archaeological potential within an extensive scheduled ancient monument. The site has been reported in depth in the major published works on Colchester by C F C Hawkes and Rex Hull (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull, 1958) and by Philip Crummy (Crummy 1980, 248-52; Crummy 1997; CAR 11 (with C F C Hawkes) 1995).
	The site is within the enclosed <i>oppidum</i> of Camulodunum, specifically within the trading depot at Sheepen (a Scheduled Monument, Listing 1002173), one of the two principal centres of the <i>oppidum</i> , the other being Gosbecks. In the 1930s, excavations prior to the construction of the Colchester Bypass (now the Avenue of Remembrance) showed that the area was an important focus of Late Iron Age settlement and early Roman military activity (Hawkes and Hull 1947). The school is located above the remains of two Romano-British temples (Hull 1958) and the proposed development is 20m north-west of one of the

temples and within its *temenos* (sacred precinct).

Evaluations and watching briefs in and around the school have revealed the survival of substantial Roman deposits (CAT Reports, 188, 349, 351, 384, 414, 451, 544).

An evaluation commissioned by Ingleton Wood in 2013 revealed three Roman pits, a compacted gravel surface and a dump of ceramic building material. One of the pits contained a group of five, low-denomination Roman coins dated to c AD 43-64 (CAT Report 699).

A watching brief was carried out in February 2015, on behalf of Mr Steve Bennett of Play Football. Observations were made during excavations of 7 geo-technical boreholes as part of a survey ahead of locating new sports facilities, with a view to mitigating any impact on archaeological deposits. Excavation was carried out through a modern topsoil (L1) and into an accumulation horizon (L2) on to natural deposits of hillwash or coluvium into deposits of glacial gravels. to a final depth of between 5-6m.

There were no archaeological features or distinct archaeological horizons identified during the excavation of the boreholes. Recovered finds were residual and came from post roman deposits (the topsoil L1 and the accumulation horizon L2). The recovered material was a mixture of modern and roman material including fragments of coal, pegtile and concrete as well as roman mortar tile and building stone. There was no evidence of LIA or Roman industrial activity. The lack of activity is probably due to the location of the site away from the main industrial focus to the south and the proximity of the roman temple (Colchester II) to the west. It is likely that the recovered roman building materials area associated with the temple scattered in the post-roman horizons once the temple had gone out of use in the 3rd century.

Previous summaries/reports: CAT Reports, 188, 349, 351, 384, 414, 451, 544, 699

Keywords: modern

Significance: neg

Author of summary:

Ben Holloway

Date of summary:

March 2015

CBC Monitor:

Jess Tipper