

Archaeological monitoring and recording at Colchester Castle Park, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1TJ

February 2016



by **Laura Pooley**

fieldwork by **Chris Lister**

**commissioned by Ian Baalham
on behalf of Colchester Borough Council**

Planning reference: n/a
CAT project ref.: 15/12a
NGR: TL 99864 25263 (centre)
Colchester Museum accession code: COLEM: 2016.23
UAD ref: ECC3720
OASIS reference: colchest3-241117



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CAT Report 919
February 2016

Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Results	3
5	Finds	5
6	Discussion	5
7	Acknowledgements	5
8	References	5
9	Abbreviations and glossary	6
10	Contents of archive	6
11	Archive deposition	6

Figures after p7

Appendix 1 CAT WSI

Appendix 2 OASIS Summary

List of photographs, figures and tables

Cover: general site shot

Photograph 1-2	Pre-excavation and mid-excavation shots, looking W	3
Photograph 3-4	Mid-excavation shots of both bench bases, looking N and NE	3
Photograph 5-6	Base slab laid and bench in new position, looking SE	4
Photograph 7-8	Pre-excavation shots, looking S and SE	4
Photograph 9-10	Mid-excavation shots, looking NE and SE	4
Photograph 11-12	New entrance completed, looking SE and SW	5

Fig 1 Site location

1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out in Upper Castle Park to the south of Colchester Castle (a Scheduled Monument, NHLE no. 1002217) during groundworks for the relocation of two park benches and the construction of a new access path from Castle Bailey into Castle Park through an existing gate that has been blocked for some time. The site is in an area of the highest archaeological importance, south of the Norman Castle, and south of the Roman Temple of Claudius in insula 22 of the Roman town. No archaeological horizons were identified as groundworks did not penetrate below modern topsoil.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring and recording at Colchester Castle Park, Colchester, Essex which was carried out on the 1st-3rd February 2016. The work was commissioned by Ian Baalham on behalf of Colchester Borough Council in advance of groundworks in Upper Castle Park, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT). Groundworks involved the relocation of two park benches and the construction of a new access path from Castle Bailey into Castle Park through an existing gate that has been blocked for some time.

In response to consultation with Colchester Borough Council Planning Services (CBCPS), Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor Jess Tipper advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with paragraphs 128, 129 and 132 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Jess Tipper (CBCPS 2015), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with CBCPS (CAT 2015).

In addition to the brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006), and with *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14 and 24). This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b).

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the major published sources for Colchester archaeology (listed below), and also on the Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) created by Colchester Borough Council, and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER).

The development site is located in Upper Castle Park to the south of Colchester Castle Museum and in an area of outstanding archaeological importance. It is within the Roman town, within the precincts of the Temple of Claudius, and within the grounds of the Norman Castle¹. The well-published archaeological background (see, for example, Hull 1958, Crummy 1997) need not be repeated here, but it will be useful to summarise the more relevant sites (below) by referring to the Colchester Urban Archaeological Database (UAD).

The temple of Claudius, and its precinct (UAD MONuments 785, 713).

¹ The site is a Scheduled Monument (EX 1, HA 1002217).

The Temple of Claudius, Insula 22. Founded in the AD50's (some debate whether it would have been built before or after the death of Claudius in AD54). The temple served as the centre of the Imperial cult in the province and dominated the eastern half of the city. It was surrounded by a large precinct. Much of the vaulted podium base of the temple has been preserved below Colchester castle, although none of the superstructure has survived. The base provides a clear indication of the scale of the building and based on the principles of Roman architect Vitruvius the building would have been over 20m high. The podium measures 32 x 23.5m.

The current site is only 23m south of the south face of the Temple of Claudius.

The Precinct and monuments within it (UAD MON 713)

A large walled precinct belonging to the Roman Temple of Claudius situated off the modern High Street and within the Castle Park. The current site is only 30m north of the northern edge of the southern precinct wall.

The arcade probably continued to stand until, in C11th it was demolished to provide material for the Norman castle and the foundation of the outer rampart. A watching brief during the excavation of trenches for an extension to NW corner of the Conservative Club revealed a N-S wall foundation (ELM1046) constructed mainly of mortared septaria with occasional tile fragments. To the east of the foundation was a thick clay loam deposit assumed to be makeup associated with the wall. The wall and clay deposit appear to be Roman and perhaps marks the W boundary of the temple precinct. The eastern part of the clayey deposit was possibly cut by the castle bailey ditch.

An abortive excavation (EVT3091) was undertaken by the Morant Club in search of the castle ditch and forum wall in 1921. A single trench was cut northwards from the north kerb of High Street, on the site of the War Memorial, opposite All Saints Church. This revealed a wall which Hull believed to be Roman.

The Norman Castle and its bailey ramparts (UAD MONs 679, 764).

MON 679 Norman ditch around the Castle bailey rampart, constructed in 11th century.

Antiquarian Philip Morant says *'The (castle) bailey was formerly encompassed on the south and west sides by a strong wall, in which were two gates. That on the south was the chief. This wall was taken down by Robt. Norfolk Esq. who erected in the room of it a range of houses now standing in the High Street. The west wall reached as far as the east side of St Helen's Lane. On the north and east sides the castle was secured by a deep ditch and strong rampart of earth... This rampart is thrown upon a wall that formerly encompassed either the Castle or Palace of Coel, on the site whereof the Castle is built; the buttress and other parts of which wall have lately been discovered'*. See also EVT3068, EVT3057, EVT3105 to do.

During the excavation of a pipe trench in 1983 (EVT3015), the inner bailey ditch was traced for a total of just over 100 metres. During excavations in 1950 (EVT3121) the ditch inner edge was located where it had removed the metalling of two Roman streets.

In September 1964, demolition of 5 Maidenburgh Street prior to use of the site as a car park made an area of 38mx 10 m available for excavation, which was undertaken for 6 weeks in September - October 1964 under the direction of BRK Niblett (Dunnett) for the Colchester Excavation Committee. Two trenches were cut across the line of the Norman rampart which crossed the east end of the site. Beneath 0.6 m of modern rubble and garden soil a series of tips of sand, gravel and Roman tile and mortar. The maximum thickness of the deposit was 0.6 m which represents the remnant of the rampart. Immediately in front of the rampart on the edge of the bailey ditch was an inhumation burial, possibly of Saxon date. Several loose bones indicated the possibility of other burials. Eastern lip of Norman bailey ditch was located, immediately in front of rampart.

In 1969 a warehouse at the S end of Ryegate Rd was demolished prior to the construction of the Methodist Church. Four trenches were excavated to a depth of 2 m, located so as not to affect the foundations. The east (inner) lip of the bailey trench was revealed as was the western edge. Part of the bailey rampart was also excavated. The lower levels of the rampart remained intact to a depth of up to 1 m.

Norman bailey rampart surrounding Colchester Castle (UAD MON 764)

Trenches were dug into the north side of the rampart in 1950 (EVT3121). The Norman bank was found to have been built over structural remains walls of the Roman Temple Precinct (MON713). These remains were covered by a thick level of debris containing occupation material and broken bricks/tile. It was on a layer of chalk which sealed these remains, that the rampart was built. The excavations also showed that the Norman bank had been added to in later medieval times.

4 Results (Fig 1)

All groundworks took place in Upper Castle Park, immediately to the south of Colchester Castle.

Bench relocation

Two park benches were relocated as part of the reinstatement of the former entrance. Two foundations were hand-dug by the contractors under archaeological supervision. They measured 3m long by 1m wide and were excavated through c 200mm of modern topsoil (L1). Residual fragments of Roman CBM were observed in the topsoil along with fragments of modern flowerpot, glass and coal/clinker (none retained).



Photograph 1-2 Pre-excitation and mid-excitation shots, looking W



Photograph 3-4 Mid-excitation shots of both bench bases, looking N and NE



Photograph 5-6 Base slab laid and bench in new position, looking SE

New access path between Castle Bailey and Castle Park

The new path was machine-dug under archaeological supervision. It measured 12.5m long by 3.8m wide. It was excavated through c 200mm of modern topsoil (L1). Residual fragments of Roman CBM, oyster shell and opus signinum was observed in the topsoil along with fragments of tarmac and modern brick.



Photograph 7-8 Pre-excavation shots, looking S and SE



Photograph 9-10 Mid-excavation shots, looking NE and SE



Photograph 11-12 New entrance completed, looking SE and SW

5 Finds

Residual fragments of Roman ceramic building material were identified within L1 along with fragments of modern flowerpot, brick, glass, coal/clinker and tarmac. None were retained.

6 Discussion

Despite being located in an area of the highest archaeological importance no archaeological horizons were identified as none of the groundworks penetrated below modern topsoil.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Colchester Borough Council for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed and carried out by C Lister. Site plans were prepared by CL. The project was monitored for CBCPS by Jess Tipper.

8 References

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

CAT	2014	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT	2015	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological monitoring and recording of the construction of a new entrance path to the south of Colchester Castle Museum</i>
CBCAA	2015	<i>Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at Castle Park, High Street, Colchester</i> by J Tipper
CifA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological excavation</i>
CifA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
CM	2008	<i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i>
CM	2008	<i>Guidelines on the Preparation and Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Colchester & Ipswich Museums</i>
Crummy, P	1997	<i>City of Victory: the story of Colchester – Britain's first Roman town</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Hull, M R	1958	<i>Roman Colchester</i> RRCSAL 20
Medlycott,	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of</i>

M	England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)
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9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCPS	Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
CBM	brick/tile (ceramic building material)
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
post-medieval	from Henry VIII to c AD 1800
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

10 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 919)

CBCPS Evaluation Brief, CAT Written Scheme of Investigation

Original site record (Feature and layer sheets, Finds record, plans)

Site digital photos and log, Architectural plans, Attendance register, Risk assessment

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museum under accession code: COLEM 2016.23.

Distribution list

Ian Baalham, Colchester Borough Council
Jess Tipper, Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
Essex Historic Environment Record



Colchester Archaeological Trust

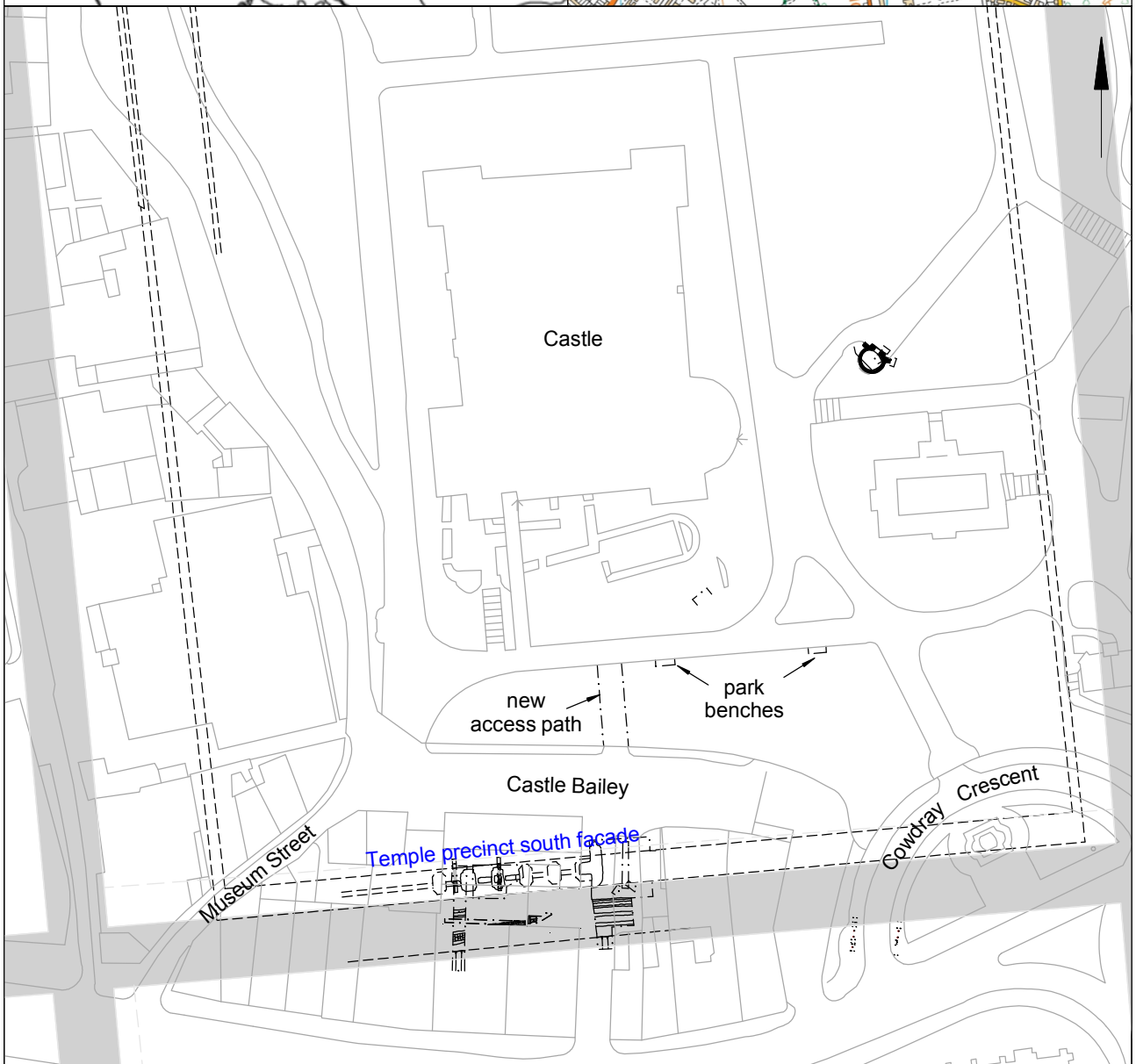
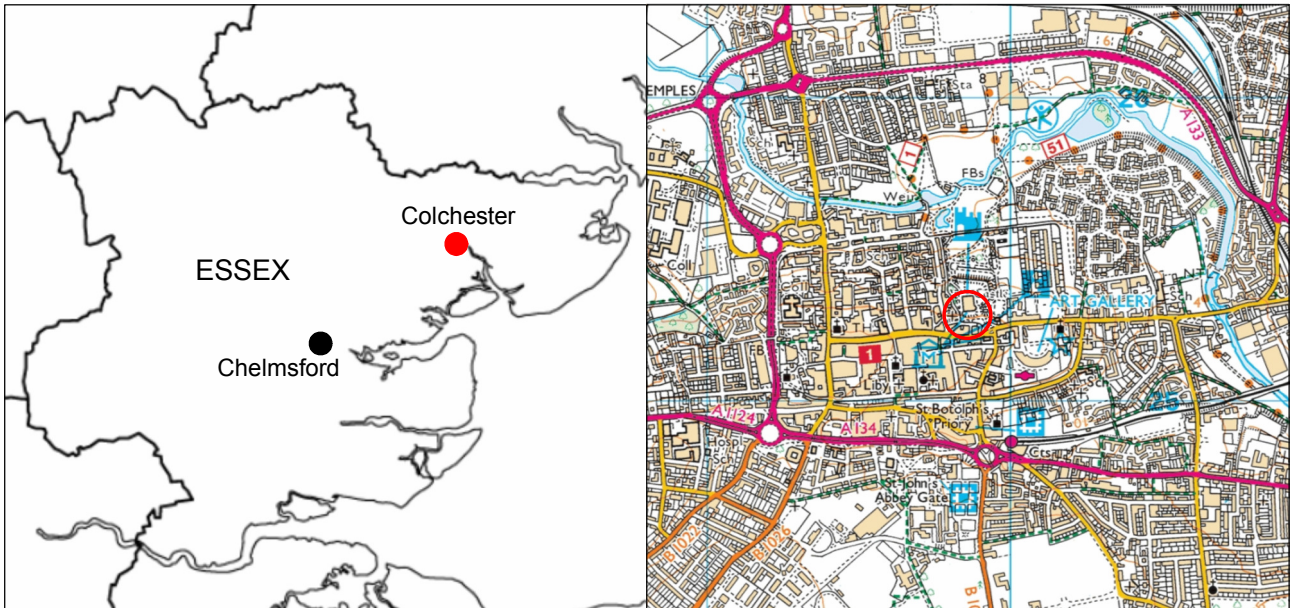
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Checked by: Howard Brooks

Date: 25/02/2016



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Fig 1 Site location.



Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Upper Castle Park, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1TJ	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 99864 25263 (centre)	Site code: CAT project ref.: 15/12a UAD ref: ECC3720 OASIS ref: colchest3-241117
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 1st-3rd February 2016	Size of area investigated: Groundworks totalled 53.5m ²
Location of curating museum: Colchester museum accession code COLEM: 2016.23	Funding source: Colchester Borough Council
Further seasons anticipated? no	Related UAD/SMR number:
Final report: CAT Report 919	
Periods represented: -	
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out in Upper Castle Park to the south of Colchester Castle (a Scheduled Monument, NHLE no. 1002217) during groundworks for the relocation of two park benches and the construction of a new access path from Castle Bailey into Castle Park through an existing gate that has been blocked for some time. The site is in an area of the highest archaeological importance, south of the Norman Castle, and south of the Roman Temple of Claudius in insula 22 of the Roman town. No archaeological horizons were identified as groundworks did not penetrate below modern topsoil.</i>	
Previous summaries/reports: -	
CBC monitor: Jess Tipper	
Keywords: -	Significance: -
Author of summary: Laura Pooley	Date of summary: February 2016



Written Scheme of Investigation

Monitoring and recording of the construction for a new entrance path to the south of Colchester Castle Museum (a Scheduled Monument, NHLE no. 1002217)

Aim

- To continuously monitor the groundworks for the construction of the new path.
- To record, as appropriate, any impact these groundworks have on the Scheduled Monument.
- To ensure that the agreed method statement is adhered to in full, and does not damage the Scheduled Monument.
- To report any damage to CBC and Historic England immediately, so that amendments can be made to the brief if required.

Method

CAT Staff will be in attendance at all times when the c 260mm ground reduction is undertaken by the contractor.

Work will be compliant with:

- the conditions laid down in the Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic England (HE 2015).
- the condition of *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording* (CBC 2015)
- *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a)
- *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CIMS 2008a)

Particular attention will be paid to:

- negotiating with CBC and the contractors, to ensure the programme is fully understood and can therefore be monitored.
- the potential for disturbance caused to buried archaeological remains.

Preparation

Prior discussion has been held with CBC (Mr Ian Baalham) about the approach to this project, and a site meeting on Day 1 of the groundworks will be an opportunity to clarify any outstanding issues.

In accordance with Historic England's conditions photographs of the site will be taken prior to the commencement of works. This will enable an assessment to be made of the effects of the path's construction.

A risk assessment will be carried out to minimise potential risks.

One week's notification of the start of work will be given to the CBC Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA).

Reporting

Reporting should be commensurate with results (degree to which the monument was affected by the installation of the new path). The report will contain, as appropriate: location (grid ref), planning application number, dates of visits, methodology, plan showing areas observed in relation to ground disturbance / proposed development (a digital vector plan when possible), depth of ground disturbance and soil profile in each area, observations as to land use history, etc.

Recording of any disturbance to consist of photographs, measured drawings, and written notes.

Results will be related to the relevant known archaeological information held in the Colchester Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) and Essex Heritage & Environment Record (EHER).

The written report will follow *East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers* 14 and 24 (2003 and 2011) as appropriate, and will be as agreed with CBCAA.

Archive

An accession number for the work will be sought from Colchester and Ipswich Museums' Documentation Officer.

An Event number will be obtained from CBCAA.

An archive of all records and finds will be prepared to the satisfaction of Colchester and Ipswich Museums' Store and will be in accordance with *Guidelines on the Preparation and Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Colchester & Ipswich Museums* (2008).

References:

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

CBC	2015	<i>Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at Castle Park, High Street, Colchester</i> , by Jess Tipper, October 2015
CifA	2014a	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
CifA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
CIMS	2008a	<i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i>
CIMS	2008b	<i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester and Ipswich Museums</i>
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14, ed by D Gurney
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: a revised framework for the Eastern Counties. Research agenda and strategy</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 24, ed by M Medlycott



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OASIS ID: colchest3-241117

Project details

Project name	Archaeological monitoring of the bailey access at Castle Park, Colchester: February 2016
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out in Upper Castle Park to the south of Colchester Castle (a Scheduled Monument, NHLE no. 1002217) during groundworks for the relocation of two park benches and the construction of a new access path from Castle Bailey into Castle Park through an existing gate that has been blocked for some time. The site is in an area of the highest archaeological importance, south of the Norman Castle, and south of the Roman Temple of Claudius in insula 22 of the Roman town. No archaeological horizons were identified as groundworks did not penetrate below modern topsoil.
Project dates	Start: 01-02-2016 End: 03-02-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	15/12a - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM: 2016.23 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	ECC3720 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

Project location

Country England

Site location ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER Castle Bailey to Castle Park access
 Postcode CO1 1TJ
 Study area 53.5 Square metres
 Site coordinates TL 99864 25263 51.889507871834 0.904761817257 51 53 22 N 000 54 17 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Colchester Archaeological Trust
 Project brief originator CBCAO
 Project design originator Chris Lister
 Project director/manager Chris Lister
 Project supervisor Chris Lister
 Type of sponsor/funding body Borough Council
 Name of sponsor/funding body Colchester Borough Council

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
 Digital Archive recipient Colchester Museum
 Digital Archive ID COLEM: 2016.23
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography"
 Paper Archive recipient Colchester Museum
 Paper Archive ID COLEM: 2016.23
 Paper Media available "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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