

**Archaeological recording at  
the lower bowling green,  
Castle Park, Colchester, Essex, CO1 2SD**

**June 2017**



**by Dr Elliott Hicks**

figures by Sarah Carter and Laura Pooley

fieldwork by Harvey Furness

**on behalf of Ian Baalham, Colchester Borough Council**

NGR: TL 99955 25707 (centre)

Planning reference: n/a

CAT project ref.: 17/05k

Colchester Museum accession code: COLEM: 2017.70

CHER ref: ECC4000

OASIS reference: colchest3-285626



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**CAT Report 1118**

June 2017

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## 1 Summary

*Archaeological recording was carried out at the lower bowling green in Lower Castle Park, Colchester (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1002217) near to the Roman Town Wall (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1003772) on two excavated trenches. Trenching totalling 68.1m in length, c 0.46-0.49m in width and 0.6m in depth was excavated through modern layers of topsoil and subsoil. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological recording at the lower bowling green, Lower Castle Park, Colchester, Essex which was carried out on the 18th May 2017. The work was commissioned by Ian Baalham, Colchester Borough Council after the excavation of the trenches, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to a request from the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor, Jess Tipper, a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with paragraphs 128, 129 and 132 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012) was undertaken in order to establish the archaeological implications of this work.

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 Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER).

The monitoring site is located within Lower Castle Park, an area of outstanding archaeological importance. Castle Park is protected as a scheduled ancient monument (NHLE no. 1002217) due to the wealth of its Roman and medieval archaeology. The most significant remains are of the Roman temple dedicated to the emperor Claudius, which survives in part below the Norman castle keep. The site is located just to the north of the precinct of the Temple of Claudius, and within the grounds of the Norman Castle (Scheduled Monument (EX 1, HA 1002217). The archaeological background of the site has been explored in depth (see, for example, Hull 1958, Brooks 1996, Crummy 1997).

The site lies in close proximity to the Roman town wall (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1003772) and Duncan's Gate. The Roman wall was built around the town in the later 1st century AD following the revolt led by Boudica. It is constructed of a core of layered septaria and mortar faced with coursed septaria and tile. A recent study has concluded that the wall has an average width of 2.67m (including offsets) which is equivalent to precisely nine Roman feet (pedes Monetales). A hypothetical cross-section of the wall shows the foundations as being 3.77m wide (Crummy 2003). Some previous work shows that the wall foundations were surprisingly shallow at 600mm deep (Hull 1958, 25-6). Work by CAT at the Sixth Form College in 2005 shows the stone foundations to be 1.2m deep with wooden piles below (CAT report 347), although, being water-logged, ground conditions here presumably explain their exceptional depth. Trial-holes confirmed that survival of the foundations varies. Where

they have not been robbed away, the foundations extend 2.1m from the existing face of the wall and are in a sound state of preservation.

Above ground, the survival of the wall is very patchy. Some sections are in relatively good condition, with large areas of intact facing surviving (such as around Balkerne Gate to the west of the town). The section of the wall around Duncan's Gate, however, has lost up to 2.4m in width and nothing of the original exterior face survives, only part of the core. The majority of what is standing has been refaced or completely rebuilt in brick and stone.

Duncan's Gate was discovered and excavated by Dr P M Duncan (after which it is named) in 1853. Further excavations were undertaken in 1927-9 by the Colchester Excavation Committee, overseen by M. R. Hull (Hull 1958, 36-41). A full summary of these investigations can be found in CAT Report 1022, carried out when a historic building record and test-pit evaluation was completed at the gate in 2016 in advance of conservation work.

#### **4 Results** (Figs 2-3)

Two trenches were excavated. Trench 1 (T1) measured 28m in length, 0.46m in width and 0.6m in depth. Trench 2 (T2) measured 32.1m in length, 0.49m in width and 0.6m in depth. All excavations were carried out by contractors without archaeological supervision and all recording and observations were undertaken subsequently.

##### **Trench 1 (T1)**

Trench T1 was excavated through modern topsoil (L1, loose moist medium grey/brown silty-sand, 0.15-0.25m thick), which sealed a layer of modern subsoil (L2, friable moist dark grey/brown silty-sand). No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.



**Photograph 1** T1 trench shot - looking north-east

##### **Trench 2 (T2)**

Trench T2 was excavated through L1 (0.25-0.3m thick), which sealed L2. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.



**Photograph 2** T2 trench shot - looking north-west

## 5 Finds

No significant finds were recovered.

## 6 Discussion

No significant archaeological horizons were identified during monitoring as groundworks only penetrated through 0.6m of modern layers.

## 7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Ian Baalham, Colchester Borough Council for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister. Fieldwork was carried out by H Furness. Figures were prepared by S Carter. 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>

- |                           |       |   |
|---------------------------|-------|---|
| Brooks, H                 | 1996  | <i>An historical study of Colchester Castle Park (CBC)</i>  |
| CAT Report<br><b>347</b>  | 2009  | <i>Roman buildings, the rear face of the Roman town wall and archaeological investigations in Insulas 1a, 1b, 9a and 9b, at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex: April 2005-March 2006.</i> |
| CAT Report<br><b>1022</b> | 2016  | <i>Historic building recording and test-pit evaluation at Duncan's Gate, Colchester, CO1 1UN: July 2016</i>   |
| ClfA                      | 2014a | <i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>   |
| ClfA                      | 2014b | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>   |
| Crummy, P                 | 1997  | <i>City of Victory: the story of Colchester – Britain's' first Roman town</i>   |
| Crummy, P                 | 2003  | 'Colchester's town wall', in <i>The archaeology of Roman towns: studies in honour of John S Wachter</i> , ed by P Wilson  |
| DCLG                      | 2012  | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>   |
| English<br>Heritage       | 2006  | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>   |
| Gurney, D                 | 2003  | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers <b>14</b> (EAA <b>14</b> ).  |
| Hull, M.R.                | 1958  | <i>Roman Colchester</i> RRCSAL <b>20</b>  |
| Medlycott, M              | 2011  | <i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers <b>24</b> (EAA <b>24</b> )  |

## 9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CBCPS	Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record (previously UAD, <b>Urban Archaeological Database</b> )
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
NGR	National Grid Reference
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
section	(abbreviation sc or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
wsi	written scheme of investigation

## 10 Contents of archive

**Finds:** n/a

### **Paper and digital record**

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1118)

Original site record (feature and layer sheets, finds record, plans)

Site digital photos and log, attendance register

## 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: 2017.70

**Distribution list**

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



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Checked by: Philip Crummy

Date: 22/06/2017

# Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

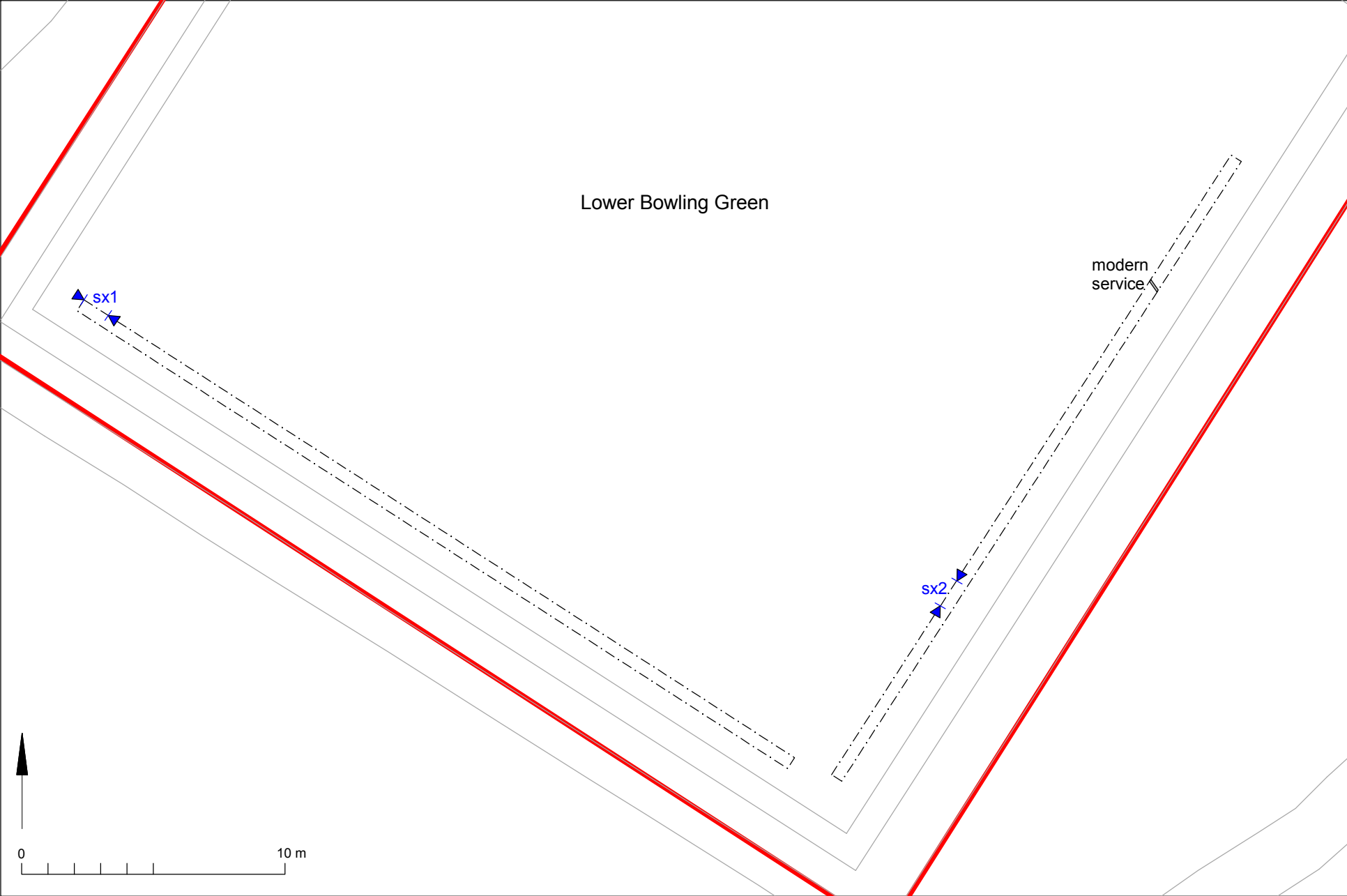
## Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> Lower Castle Park, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1UG	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TM 99955 25707 (centre)	<b>Site code:</b> CAT project ref.: 17/05k CHER ref: ECC4000 OASIS ref: colchest3-285626
<b>Type of work:</b> Recording	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 18th May 2017	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 0.16 ha
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Colchester museum accession code: COLEM: 2017.70	<b>Funding source:</b> Borough Council
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> no	<b>Related CHER/SMR numbers:</b> -
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 1118	
<b>Periods represented:</b> modern	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> <i>Archaeological recording was carried out at the lower bowling green in Lower Castle Park, Colchester (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1002217) near to the Roman Town Wall (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1003772) on two excavated trenches. Trenching totalling 68.1m in length, c 0.46-0.49m in width and 0.6m in depth was excavated through modern layers of topsoil and subsoil. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.</i>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>CBC monitor:</b> Jess Tipper	
<b>Keywords:</b> -	<b>Significance:</b> -
<b>Author of summary:</b> Dr Elliott Hicks	<b>Date of summary:</b> June 2017



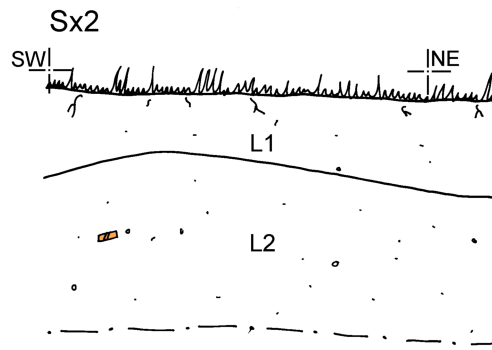
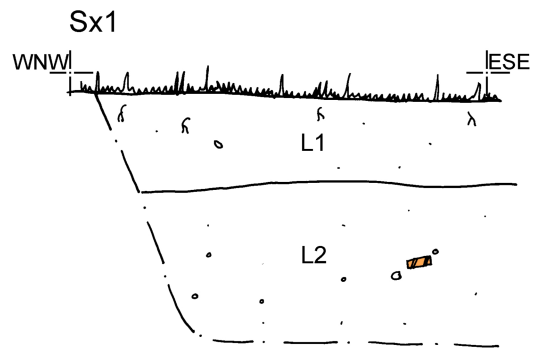


Fig 1 Site location.



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Fig 2 Results






-  small stones
-  roots
-  post-Roman brick and tile



Fig 3 Representative sections

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## Printable version

**OASIS ID: colchest3-285626**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological recording at the lower bowling green, Castle Park, Colchester, Essex, CO1 2SD
Short description of the project	Archaeological recording was carried out at the lower bowling green in Lower Castle Park, Colchester (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1002217) near to the Roman Town Wall (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1003772) on two excavated trenches. Trenching totalling 68.1m in length, c 0.46-0.49m in width and 0.6m in depth was excavated through modern layers of topsoil and subsoil. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.
Project dates	Start: 18-05-2017 End: 18-05-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	17/05k - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER Lower Castle Park Bowling Green
Postcode	CO1 2SD
Study area	0.16 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 99956 25707 51.89346195101 0.906354482524 51 53 36 N 000 54 22 E Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	none
Project design originator	none
Project director/manager	Chris Lister

Project supervisor Harvey Furness  
 Type of sponsor/funding body Owner  
 Name of sponsor/funding body Colchester Borough Council

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No  
 Digital Archive recipient Colchester Museum  
 Digital Archive ID COLEM: 2017.70  
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"  
 Paper Archive recipient Colchester Museum  
 Paper Archive ID COLEM: 2017.70  
 Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report"

### Project bibliography 1

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