

Archaeological evaluation at 63 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8QN

August 2017



by Dr Elliott Hicks

figures by Sarah Carter and Mark Baister

fieldwork by Mark Baister with Sarah Carter

commissioned by Jack Grogan

NGR: TM 00839 12830

Planning ref.: 171157

CAT project ref.: 17/08j

ECC code: ECC4045

Colchester Museum accession code: COLEM 2017.111

OASIS ref.: colchest3-292405



Colchester Archaeological Trust

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CAT Report 1152

August 2017

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1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation (one trial trench) was carried out at 63 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex in advance of the construction of two new dwellings with car parking and associated works. Despite being located in an area of archaeological interest, no archaeological remains were uncovered.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at 63 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex which was carried out on 17th August 2017. The work was commissioned by Jack Grogan in advance of the construction of two new dwellings with car parking and associated works, and was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the EHER/CHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA). This recommendation was for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching and was based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for a Trenched Archaeological Evaluation*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Jess Tipper (CBCAA 2017), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2017).

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 field evaluation* (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 Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive, the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) accessed via the Heritage Gateway:

The EHER shows that the development site lies less than 60m to the west of the remains of a possible Roman wall and ditch (EHER 2216; CHER MCC 8860). 250m to the south of the site is the medieval Church of St Peter and St Paul (EHER 2274; NHLE no. 1225167) built with ragstone walls containing Roman and later brick. It is thought that a small medieval Benedictine priory existed to the west of the church (EHER 2187), but little is known about it. Brick rubbish and burnt tile was seen by PG Laver in the area by 1906 (EHER 2188) and Roman pavements, tesserae, walls and pottery have also been found around the church (EHER 2122, 2191, 2214, 12501).

Groundworks near to the development site at 24 St Peter's Road (CAT Report 1100), 9 Beach Road (CAT Report 1090) and 36 Coast Road (CAT Report 1089) did not reveal any significant archaeological horizons. However, a inhumation recorded on Church Road (EHER 12546) may be associated with the priory.

4 Results (Figs 2-3)

One trial trench measuring 10m long and 1.8m wide was excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Three layers were recorded. Modern topsoil (L1, c 0.03-0.05m thick, soft, moist, medium brown-black silt) sealed accumulated subsoil

(L2, c 0.21-0.31m thick, soft, moist, medium grey-brown sandy-silt). This layer sealed a natural layer of firm, light yellow-orange-brown sandy-loam (L3, encountered at a depth of c 0.26-0.34m below current ground level).

No significant archaeological horizons were encountered.



Photo 1 T1 trench shot - looking north

5 Finds

No archaeological finds were recovered.

6 Discussion

Despite being located in an area of archaeological interest, no archaeological remains were uncovered.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Jack Grogan for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister, fieldwork was carried out by M Baister with S Carter. Figures are by S Carter and Mark Baister. The project was monitored for Colchester Borough Council 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>
CBCAA	2017	<i>Brief for a Trenched Archaeological Evaluation at 63 Churchfields,</i>

		<i>West Mersea, Colchester, CO5 8QN by J Tipper</i>
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological evaluation</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives</i>
ClfA	2014c	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>
English 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. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).</i>
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)</i>

9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCAA	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
wsj	written scheme of investigation

10 Contents of archive

Finds: n/a

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1152)

ECC 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 2017.111

Distribution list:

Jack Grogan

Jess Tipper, Colchester Borough Council Planning Services

Essex Historic Environment Record



Colchester Archaeological Trust

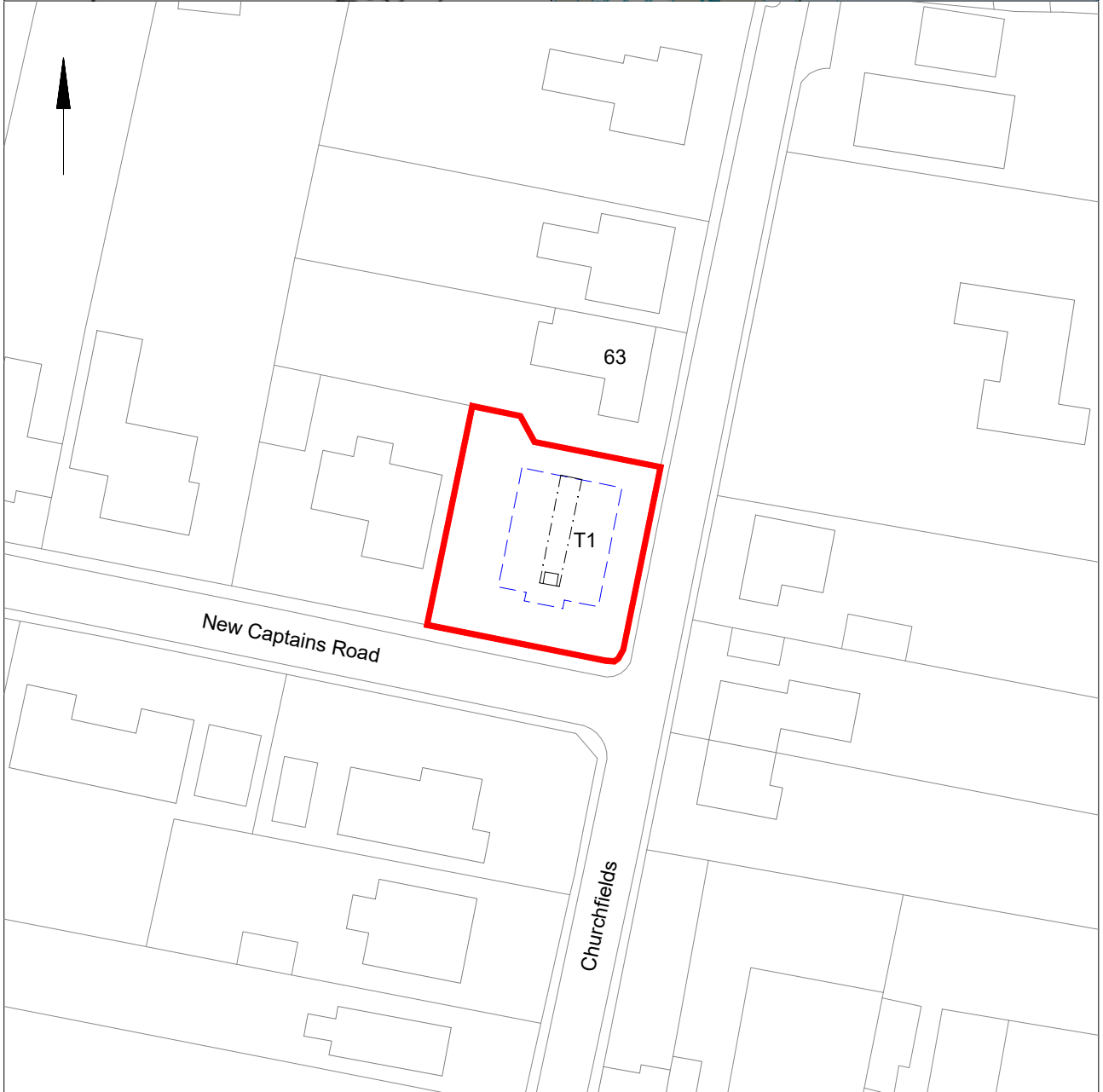
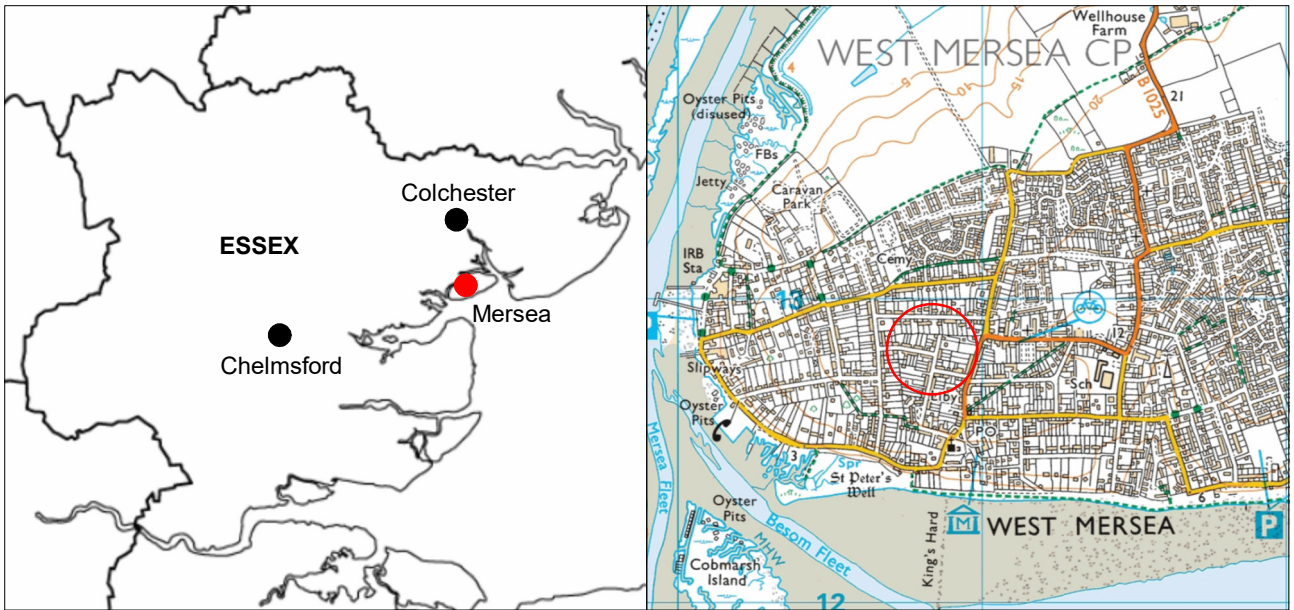
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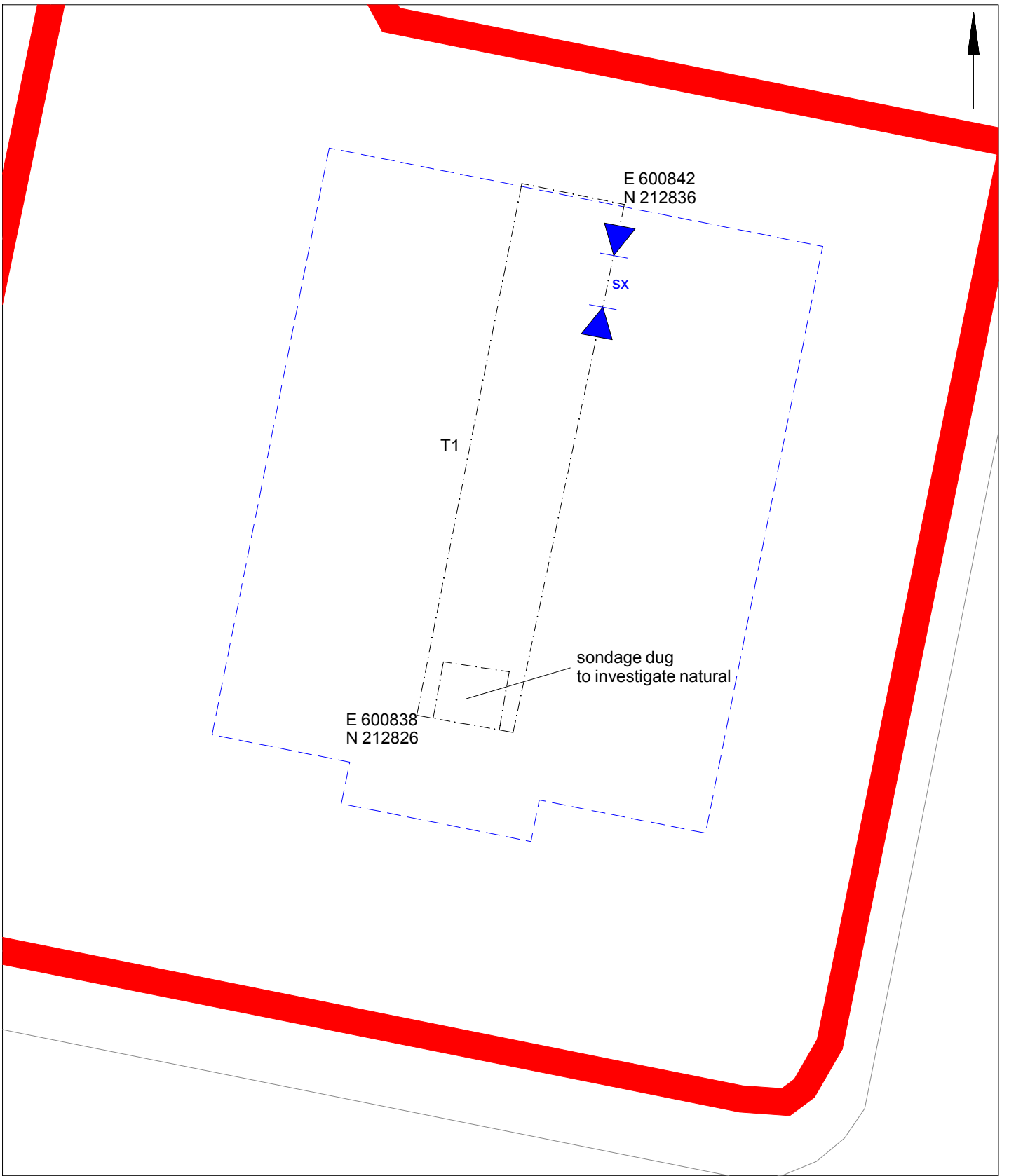
Date: 23.08.2017



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Fig 1 Site location showing trench in relation to proposed development (dashed blue line).

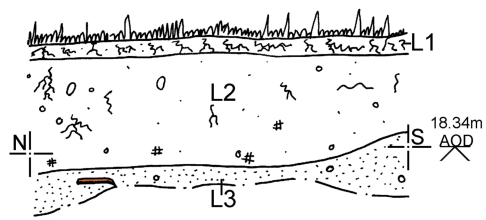




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Fig 2 Results





- sand
- small stones
- large stones
- √ roots
- large roots
- charcoal



Fig 3 Representative section

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: 63 Churchfields, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex, CO5 8QN	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TM 00839 12830	Site code: CAT project ref.: 17/08j CHER ref: ECC4045 OASIS ref: colchest3-292405
Type of work: Evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 17 August 2017	Size of area investigated: 0.03 ha
Location of curating museum: Colchester museum accession code COLEM 2017.111	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? no	Related CHER/SMR number: EHER 2122, 2188, 2191, 2214, 2216, 2274, 12501, 12546; CHER MCC 8860
Final report: CAT Report 1109	
Periods represented: -	
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>An archaeological evaluation (one trial trench) was carried out at 63 Churchfields, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex in advance of the construction of two new dwellings with car parking and associated works. Despite being located in an area of archaeological interest, no archaeological remains were uncovered.</i>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
ECC monitor: Jess Tipper	
Keywords: -	Significance: none
Author of summary: Dr Elliott Hicks	Date of summary: August 2017

**Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)
for an archaeological evaluation at
63 Churchfields, West Mersea, Colchester,
Essex, CO5 8QN**

NGR: TM 00839 12830

Planning reference: 171157

Client: Jack Grogan

Curating museum: Colchester

Museum accession code: [tbc](#)

CHER number: [tbc](#)

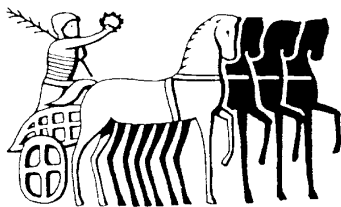
CAT project code: 17/08j

OASIS project id: colchest3-292405

Site manager: Chris Lister

CBC monitor: Jess Tipper

This WSI written: 9.8.2017



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Site location and description

The proposed development site is located at 63 Churchfields, West Mersea (Fig 1). The site is centred on NGR TM 00839 12830.

Proposed work

The development comprises of two new dwellings with car parking and associated works.

Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive, the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) accessed via the Heritage Gateway:

The EHER shows that the development site lies less than 60m to the west of the remains of a possible Roman wall and ditch (EHER 2216; CHER MC8860). 250m to the south of the site is the medieval Church of St Peter and St Paul (EHER 2274; NHLE no. 1225167) built with ragstone walls containing Roman and later brick. It is thought that a small medieval Benedictine priory existed to the west of the church (EHER 2187), but little is known about it. Brick rubbish and burnt tile was seen by PG Laver in the area by 1906 (EHER 2188) and Roman pavements, tesserae, walls and pottery have also been found around the church (EHER 2122, 2191, 2214, 12501).

Groundworks near to the development site at 24 St Peter's Road (CAT Report 1100), 9 Beach Road (CAT Report 1090) and 36 Coast Road (CAT Report 1089) did not reveal any significant archaeological horizons. However, a inhumation recorded on Church Road (EHER 12546) may be associated with the priory.

Planning background

A planning application was made to Colchester Borough Council in May 2017 (application No. 171157) proposing the development of two new dwellings.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the EHER / CHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA). This recommendation was for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching and was based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

Requirement for work

The required work is for a trenched archaeological evaluation to be carried out in advance of any groundworks to enable the archaeological resource, both in quality and extent, to be accurately quantified. Details are given in a Project Brief written by CBCAA (CBC 2017).

Specifically, one 10m linear trial trench will be excavated within the footprint of the proposed new development (Fig 1).

The trial-trenching is required to:

- Identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit, together with its likely extent, localised depth and quality of preservation.
- Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking colluvial/alluvial deposits.
- Establish the potential for the survival of environmental evidence
- Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.

If unexpected or unusual remains are encountered the CBCAA will be informed immediately. Further evaluation may be required by the CBCAA, which would be the subject of an additional brief and wsi.

General methodology

All work carried out by CAT will be in accordance with:

- Professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014a-c)
- Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011)
- Relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2014)
- The Project Brief issued by CBCAA (CBC 2017)

Professional CAT field archaeologists will undertake all specified archaeological work, for which they will be suitably experienced and qualified.

Notification of the supervisor/project manager's name and the start date for the project will be provided to CBCAA one week before start of work.

Unless it is the responsibility of other site contractors, CAT will study mains service locations and avoid damage to these.

A project or site code will be sought from the curating museum, as appropriate to the project. This code will be used to identify the finds bags and boxes, and the project archive when it is deposited at the curating museum.

Staffing

The number of field staff for this project is estimated as follows: one supervisor plus one archaeologist for one day.

In charge of day-to-day site work: Nigel Rayner

Evaluation methodology

All topsoil removal and ground reduction will be done with a toothless bucket under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist.

If archaeological features or deposits are uncovered, these will be excavated by hand, planned and recorded. This includes a 50% sample of discrete features (pits, etc) and 10% of linear features (ditches, etc) in 1m sections where this is possible.

Fast hand-excavation techniques involving (for instance) picks, forks and mattocks will not be used on complex stratigraphy.

A metal detector will be used to examine the site, spoil heaps, and the finds recovered.

Individual records of excavated contexts, layers, features or deposits will be entered on pro-forma record sheets. Registers will be compiled of finds, small finds and soil samples.

Samples will be taken based on the strategy requested by CBCAA (see 'Environmental Sampling Policy' below)

Site surveying

The evaluation trench and any features will be surveyed by Total Station, unless the particulars of the features indicate that manual planning techniques should be employed. Normal scale for archaeological site plans and sections is 1:20 and 1:10 respectively, unless

circumstances indicate that other scales would be more appropriate. Any significant features, ie burials, will be planned by hand.

The site grid will be tied into the National Grid. Corners of excavation areas will be located by NGR coordinates.

Environmental sampling policy

The number and range of samples collected will be adequate to determine the potential of the site, with particular focus on palaeoenvironmental remains including both biological remains (e.g. plants, small vertebrates) and small sized artefacts (e.g. smithing debris), and to provide information for sampling strategies on any future excavation. Samples will be collected for potential micromorphical and other pedological sedimentological analysis. Environmental bulk samples will be 40 litres in size (assuming context is large enough)

Sampling strategies will address questions of:

- the range of preservation types (charred, mineral-replaced, waterlogged), and their quality
- concentrations of macro-remains
- and differences in remains from undated and dated features
- variation between different feature types and areas of site

CAT has an arrangement with Val Fryer / Lisa Gray whereby any potentially rich environmental layers or features will be appropriately sampled as a matter of course. Trained CAT staff will do all processing with flots passed to Val Fryer / Lisa Gray for analysis and reporting.

Should any complex, or otherwise outstanding deposits be encountered, VF/LG will be asked onto site to advise. Waterlogged 'organic' features will always be sampled. In all cases, the advice of VF/LG and/or the Historic England Regional Advisor in Archaeological Science (East of England) on sampling strategies for complex or waterlogged deposits will be followed, including the taking of monolith samples.

Human remains

CAT follows the policy of leaving human remains *in situ* unless there is a clear indication that the remains are in danger of being compromised as a result of their exposure. As the requirement for work is for full excavation any human remains encountered on the site will be subject to the following criteria: if it is clear from their position, context, depth, or other factors that the remains are ancient, then normal procedure is to apply to the Ministry of Justice for a licence to remove them. In that case, conditions laid down by the license will be followed. If it seems that the remains are not ancient, then the coroner, the client, and CBCAA will be informed, and any advice and/or instruction from the coroner will be followed.

Photographic record

Will include both general and feature-specific photographs, the latter with scale and north arrow. A photo register giving context number, details, and direction of shot will be prepared on site, and included in site archive.

Finds

All significant finds will be retained.

All finds, where appropriate, will be washed and marked with site code and context number.

Stephen Benfield (CAT) normally writes our finds reports. Some categories of finds are automatically referred to other CAT specialists:

small finds, metalwork, coins, etc: Pip Parmenter / Laura Pooley

animal bones (small groups): Pip Parmenter

flints: Adam Wightman
or to outside specialists:
animal bones (large groups) and human remains: Julie Curl (*Sylvanus*)
environmental processing and reporting: Val Fryer / Lisa Gray
conservation of finds: staff at Colchester Museum / Laura Ratcliffe (LR Conservation)
Other specialists whose opinion can be sought on large or complex groups include:
Roman brick/tile: Ernest Black
Roman glass: Hilary Cool
Prehistoric pottery: Paul Sealey
Other: Historic England Regional Adviser in Archaeological Science (East of England).

All finds of potential treasure will be removed to a safe place, and the coroner informed immediately, in accordance with the rules of the Treasure Act 1996. The definition of treasure is given in pages 3-5 of the Code of Practice of the above act. This refers primarily to gold or silver objects.

Requirements for conservation and storage of finds will be agreed with the appropriate museum prior to the start of work, and confirmed to CBCAA.

Results

Notification will be given to CBCAA when the fieldwork has been completed.

An appropriate archive will be prepared to minimum acceptable standards outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (English Heritage 2006).

The report will be submitted within 6 months of the end of fieldwork, with a copy supplied to CBCAA as a PDF.

The report will contain:

- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the archaeological project.
- Location plan of the trenches in relation to the proposed development. At least two corners of each trench will be given 10 figure grid references.
- A section drawing showing depth of deposits from present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale (if this can be safely done)
- Archaeological methodology and detailed results including a suitable conclusion and discussion and results referring to Regional Research Frameworks (Medlycott 2011).
- All specialist reports or assessments
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results.

An EHER summary sheet will also be completed and supplied to CBCAA.

Results will be published, to at least a summary level (i.e. round-up in *Essex Archaeology & History*) in the year following the archaeological field work. An allowance will be made in the project costs for the report to be published in an adequately peer reviewed journal or monograph series

Archive deposition

It is a policy of Colchester Borough Council that the integrity of the site archive be maintained (i.e. all finds and records should be properly curated by a single organisation), with the archive available for public consultation. To achieve this desired aim it is assumed that the full archive will be deposited in Colchester Museums *unless otherwise agreed in advance*. (A full copy of the archive shall in any case be deposited).

By accepting this WSI, the client agrees to deposit the archive, including all artefacts, at Colchester & Ipswich Museum.

The requirements for archive storage will be agreed with the curating museum.

If the finds are to remain with the landowner, a full copy of the archive will be housed with the curating museum.

The archive will be deposited with Colchester & Ipswich Museum within 3 months of the completion of the final publication report, with a summary of the contents of the archive supplied to CBCAA.

Monitoring

CBCAA will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project, and will be kept regularly informed during fieldwork, post-excavation and publication stages.

Notification of the start of work will be given to CBCAA one week in advance of its commencement.

Any variations in this WSI will be agreed with CBCAA prior to them being carried out.

CBCAA will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

The involvement of CBCAA shall be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

References

- | | | |
|------------------|-------|--|
| CAT | 2014 | <i>Health & Safety Policy</i> |
| CBCAA | 2016 | <i>Brief for a Trenched Archaeological Evaluation at 63 Churchfields, West Mersea, Colchester, CO5 8QN by J Tipper</i> |
| CIfA | 2014a | <i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological evaluation</i> |
| CIfA | 2014b | <i>Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives</i> |
| CIfA | 2014c | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> |
| DCLG | 2012 | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> |
| English 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. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).</i> |
| Medlycott, M | 2011 | <i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)</i> |

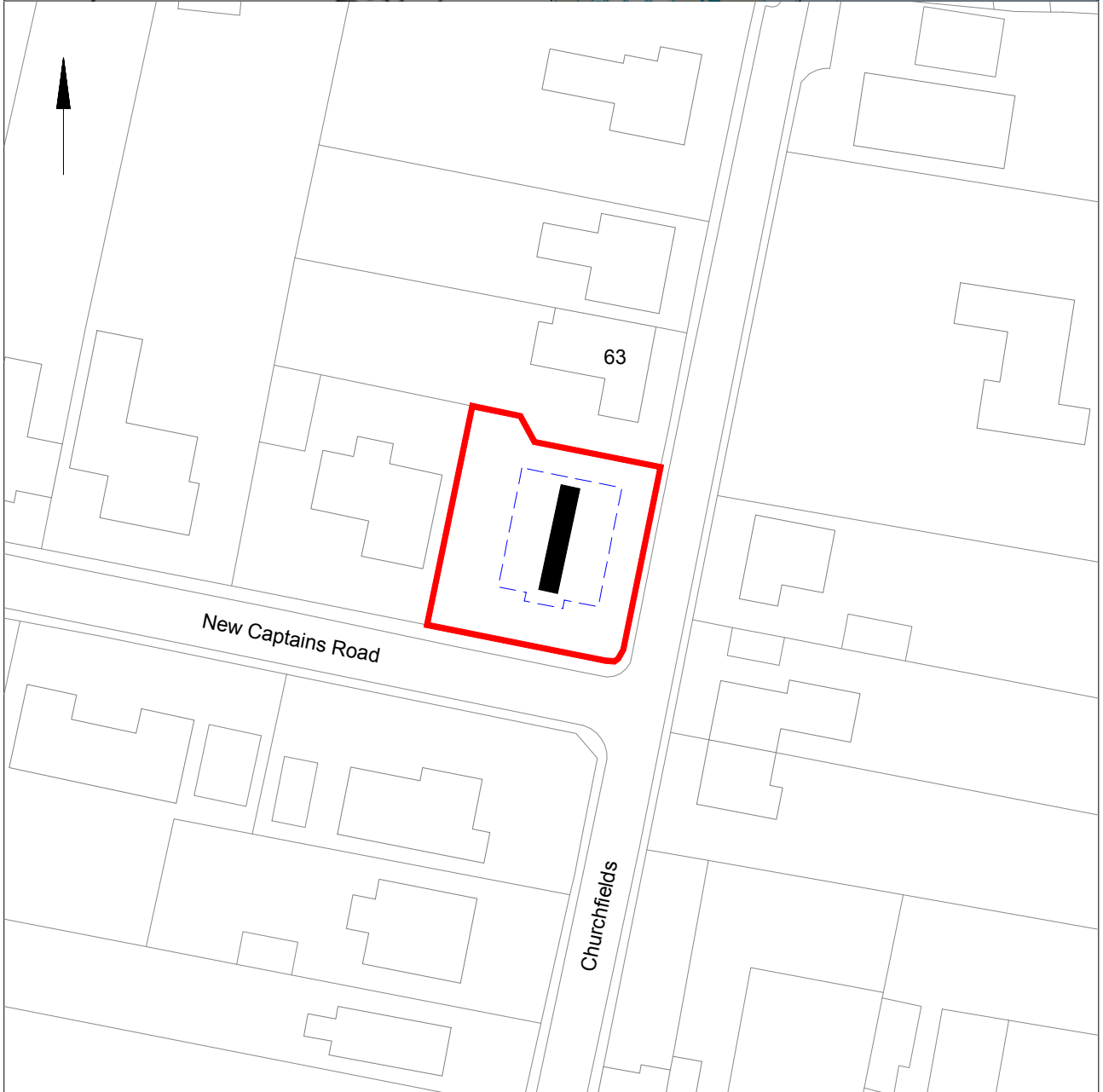
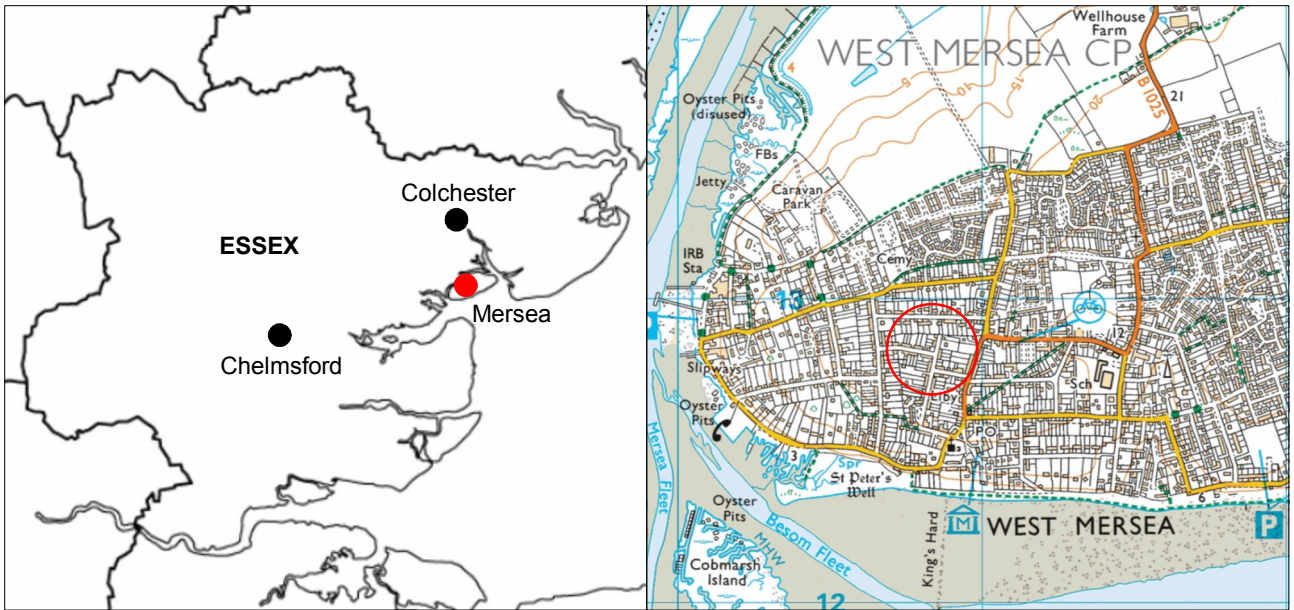
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Fig 1 Site location showing trench in relation to proposed development (dashed blue line).



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OASIS ID: colchest3-292405

Project details

Project name	Archaeological Evaluation at 63 Churchfields, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex, CO5 8QN
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (one trial trench) was carried out at 63 Churchfields, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex in advance of the construction of two new dwellings with car parking and associated works. Despite being located in an area of archaeological interest, no archaeological remains were uncovered.
Project dates	Start: 17-08-2017 End: 17-08-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	17/08j - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	171157 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM: 2017.111 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	ECC4045 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Methods & techniques	""Sample Trenches""
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER WEST MERSEA 63 Churchfields
Postcode	CO5 8QN
Study area	0.03 Hectares

Site coordinates TM 00839 12830 51.777504157553 0.911696584351 51 46 39 N 000 54 42 E Point
 Height OD / Depth Min: 18.18m Max: 18.26m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Colchester Archaeological Trust
 Project brief originator CBC Archaeological Officer
 Project design originator Sarah Carter
 Project director/manager Chris Lister
 Project supervisor Nigel Rayner
 Type of sponsor/funding body Owner

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
 Digital Archive recipient Colchester Museum
 Digital Archive ID COLEM: 2017.111
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Survey"
 Paper Archive recipient Colchester Museum
 Paper Archive ID COLEM: 2017.111
 Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Miscellaneous Material","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Report"

Project bibliography

1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
 Title Archaeological evaluation at 63 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex CO5 8QN: August 2017
 Author(s)/Editor(s) Hicks, E.
 Other bibliographic details CAT Report 1152
 Date 2017
 Issuer or publisher Colchester Archaeological Trust
 Place of issue or publication Colchester
 Description A-4 loose-leaf, ring-bound
 URL <http://cat.essex.ac.uk/>
 Entered by Elliott Hicks (lp@catuk.org)
 Entered on 23 August 2017

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