

Archaeological monitoring and recording at 2 Flagstaff Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7NP

December 2017



by **Emma Holloway**
figures by Laura Pooley

fieldwork by Ben Holloway

commissioned by Keith Hodgson

NGR: TL 599672 224730 (centre)
Scheduled Monument number: SM 26307, HA 1015015
Planning reference: 163176
CAT project ref.: 17/10g
Colchester Museum accession code: COLEM 2017.156
CHER ref: ECC4118
OASIS reference: colchest3-302877



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CAT Report 1208
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1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at 2 Flagstaff Road in advance of the conversion of the existing building into an annex and the excavation of a new drainage connection. The site lies within an area of significant archaeological interest, including a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The trench is quite shallow compared to previous archaeology found in the vicinity. No significant archaeological features or finds were uncovered.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring and recording at 2 Flagstaff Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7NP, which was carried out on the 5th-7th December 2017. The work was commissioned and funded by Mr K Hodgson, in advance of the conversion of the existing building into an annex. A new drainage connection is required as part of the conversion and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

As the site lies within a scheduled monument and has a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England (East of England Office) (HE) working in partnership with the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA). The recommended archaeological condition is based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

In addition to the written scheme of investigation (WSI) all fieldwork and reporting was undertaken 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 CAT Report 892, major published sources for Colchester archaeology (listed below), the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER, formerly the UAD) and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER).

The site is located adjacent to Abbey House. The archaeological and historical setting of the Abbey House site was included in a desk-based assessment (CAT Report 97) that was produced by CAT in October 2000 in advance of the redevelopment of Colchester Garrison. The archaeological context of the site was further clarified as a result of a series of evaluations undertaken by CAT since 2002, both on the site and in the adjacent areas. The site falls within the redevelopment area known as Garrison Alienated Land (GAL) Area B1a which is now called Arena Place. Evaluations in or close to this area took place in 2002 (BT1-3; CAT Report 206), 2007 (T7-8; CAT Report 405) and 2011 (T9-10; CAT Report 630). A series of evaluation trenches were dug by CAT immediately to the south in GAL Area B1b in 2007 (T9-33; CAT Report 438) and a series of excavation areas, evaluation trenches and monitoring and recording in 2015-2017 (CAT Report forthcoming).

The more significant and relevant entries listed in CAT Report 97 and in the subsequent evaluation reports, as well as some other recent discoveries, are summarised briefly below.

No prehistoric finds were known from the site itself, although some prehistoric remains were recorded from the surrounding areas. A Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age beaker (UAD 1249) was noted from the vicinity of Flagstaff Road in 1930. Evidence of Late Neolithic occupation was observed in Area C1 on the western side of Flagstaff Road in 2004 (CAT Report 412, 19-20). A Late Bronze Age pit was excavated beneath Flagstaff Road during the installation of a storm-water drain in January 2006 (CAT Report 412, 72). A Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flint blade and some Late Bronze Age pottery were found during an excavation in 1972 in the north-eastern corner of St John's Abbey grounds (CAR 9, 205; UAD 3019).

The site lies approximately 250m south of the walled area of the Roman town. Traces of Roman extra-mural occupation were uncovered in several of the archaeological evaluation trenches dug by CAT in GAL Area B1a since 2002. Two Roman ditches and a pit were uncovered in 2002 in BT2, which lay immediately to the east of the site (CAT Report 206, 14). There were also some residual Roman finds from BT1-BT3 including several coins. In 2007 some Roman pits and postholes were located in T8, towards the eastern side of the site (CAT Report 405, 3-4). A significant quantity of Roman finds, including pottery, brick/tile and painted wall-plaster, was recovered both from these features and as residual material in later contexts (CAT Report 405, 14). Roman pits and ditches, as well as more residual Roman finds, were discovered in 2011 in T9 and T10 at the northern end of the site, immediately north of the abbey precinct wall (CAT Report 630, 7 & 10-11). A Roman road possibly extended from west to east across or close to the site (CAT Report 97, 17).

A Roman circus was discovered during archaeological evaluations and excavations in GAL Areas C1, C2 and J1 East in 2002, 2004 and 2005 (CAT Report 412). The size and location of the circus was confirmed by more recent work. This is the first Roman circus to be positively identified in Britain and its site is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM no 46327). The circus was aligned east-west and was approximately 450m in length and 72-74m wide. The circus lies about 120m to the south of Abbey House site.

Although the site is located close to Roman cemetery areas (CAR 9, 258-64), no burials have been recorded from the site itself. Many Roman burials have been found to the south and west of the site, including around the southern, eastern and western sides of the Roman circus (*ibid*; CAT Report 412). Also, thirty-four Roman inhumations were excavated in 1972 in the north-eastern corner of the Abbey grounds (CAR 9, 205-13). A Roman bronze plaque was found in 1891 within St John's Abbey grounds (Hull 1958, 240) and may indicate the location of a Roman temple in this area.

Evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity in GAL Area B1a is sparse. A Middle Saxon sherd, of probable 8th-9th century date, was recovered in 2002 from BT3 (CAT Report 206, 15 & 17). It was residual within a later context. A coin of Ethelred was reported from the Abbey grounds immediately to the east of Area B1a by Wire in 1852 (UAD 1181). The remains of the small Anglo-Saxon church of St John were excavated in 1972 in the north-eastern corner of the Abbey grounds (CAR 9, 213-5).

Most of the site lies within the precinct of St John's Abbey (SAM no 26307), which was built from AD 1096 (VCHE 9, 303). The magnificent 15th-century Abbey gatehouse (SAM no 12356), which is Grade 1 Listed, lies approximately 30 m to the east of the edge of the Abbey House site. Abbey House itself is situated in the north-western corner of the abbey precinct, approximately 75 m west of the gatehouse. The medieval precinct wall still survives above ground in places elsewhere. However, on the Abbey House site, the northern section of the precinct wall was rebuilt in brick in the 19th century and is not scheduled. Also, there was no definite evidence for the western section of the precinct wall, although it does survive above ground immediately to the south of the site.

The remainder of the Abbey is not visible above ground. The St John's Abbey church was discovered in 2011 (CAT Report 601) and lies approximately 70 m to the east of the

edge of the Abbey House site. Some medieval burials were excavated to the north-east of the church in 1972 (CAR 1, 43-4; CAR 9, 215-18). The abbey cemetery lay close to the church; probably mainly to the east and north of it.

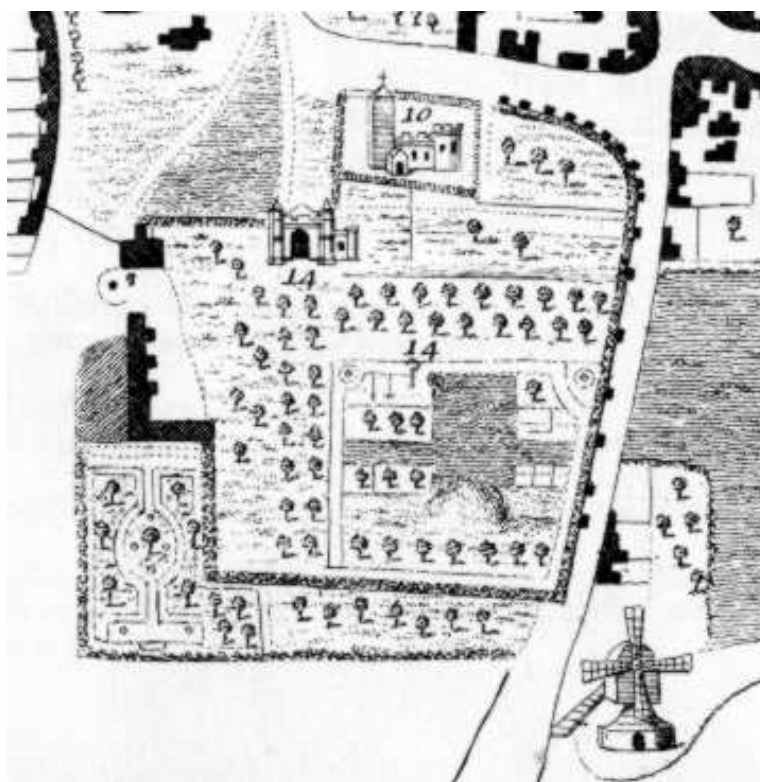
Little previous evidence had been found for Abbey-period archaeological remains on the Abbey House site. A large group of sherds of 15th- to 16th-century Colchester-type ware was found in BT1 in 2002 (CAT Report 206, 13 & 18). These sherds appeared to be residual in later pits, but were perhaps part of a pre-Dissolution dump of domestic rubbish from the Abbey. Several possible Abbey-period features were found in T7 in 2007, including a wall foundation, a robbed-out foundation, a pit, and a couple of ditches (CAT Report 405, 3-4 & 15). Also in 2007, some residual medieval potsherds were recovered from later contexts in T7 and T8.

The Abbey was dissolved in 1539, and demolition, robbing and alteration of the standing buildings probably started soon after. Many post-medieval and later features were uncovered during the evaluations carried out by CAT since 2002; especially those in 2002 and 2007.

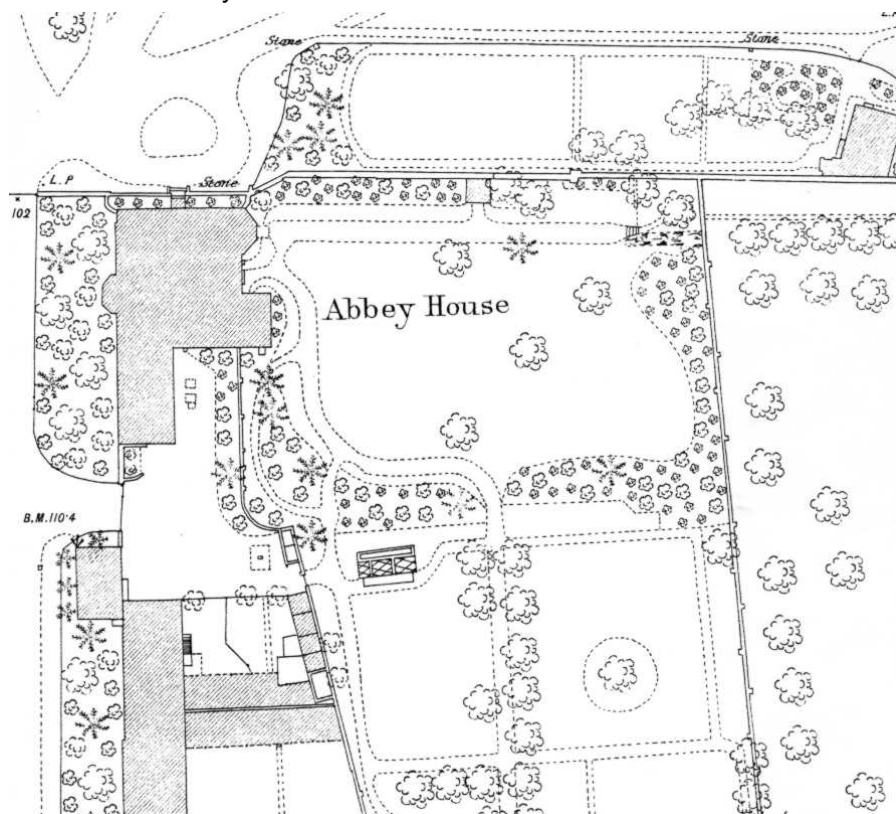
The area around trench BT1, in the lawn east of Abbey House, was geophysically surveyed (Black 2002) and showed a wide arcing feature. Trench BT1 intercepted this ditch feature (BF101), but, due to the lack of firm dating evidence, it was not possible to confirm whether or not it was associated with the Siege of Colchester (CAT Report 206, 13). Several other probable post-medieval features were uncovered in BT1, and also in BT2, slightly to the east of the Abbey House site (CAT Report 206, 14). In BT3, slightly to the south of the Abbey House site, many post-medieval and modern pits and postholes were encountered; most of which clearly post-dated the Siege of Colchester in 1648 (CAT Report 206, 14-15). It seems likely that a geophysical anomaly in this area (Black 2002) was caused by these features, some of which may mark the position of a timber structure of post-medieval date.

The evidence for post-medieval activity in evaluation trenches T7 and T8 in 2007 consisted mainly of pits and ditches, as well as a robber trench. However there was also an interesting structural feature; a foundation plinth (F22), in the eastern part of T7, immediately to the east of the Abbey House site (CAT Report 405, 3-4). This was aligned east-west; and was constructed of peg-tile and mortar. It was possibly part of a post-Dissolution building that is recorded on Speed's map of 1610, but had been demolished by the time of Morant's map of 1748 (CAT Report 405, 15). To the south of F22 was a tile surface (L7/L8). A late post-medieval/modern quarry pit (F3) was revealed in T9 in 2011 (CAT Report 630, 7).

Abbey House was probably built in the 1830's. It was constructed on the site of an earlier building, which is shown on post-medieval maps, such as that in Morant (Morant 1748; Map 1 below), and also on Thomas Sparrow's map of Colchester in 1767, Chapman and André's map of 1777, and Cole and Roper's map of c 1805. Abbey House is shown on Monson's map of 1848, as well as on the OS map of 1876 and on later editions (eg Map 2 below). Stable and carriage accommodation, as well as other outbuildings, survived on the south side of Abbey House, across a yard with a surface of Staffordshire blue block paving.



Map 1: detail of the map published in Morant (1748). St John's Abbey gatehouse is labelled 14 and St Giles's Church 10. A building is shown to the west of the gatehouse, on the site of Abbey House.



Map 2: detail of an OS map published in 1878

In the second half of the 19th century, perhaps in 1860, Abbey House was acquired by the War Office, and formed part of Colchester Garrison until c 2000. Over the years it has seen many changes of use, including housing senior Army officers and more recently the Royal Military Police. Further information about Abbey House and its associated buildings, which form a significant and attractive group, is given on the website of the Colchester Historic Buildings Forum (<http://www.colchesterhistoricbuildingsforum.org.uk/drupal/node/1460>).

4 Aims

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken to identify and record any surviving archaeological deposits that existed on the site, to record any such remains, and to identify the need for any further archaeological work.

5 Methodology

The single trench was hand-excavated by contractors under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist.

6 Results (Fig 2)

The trench measured 9m long by 0.3m wide. From modern ground level the trench depth ranged from 0.3m deep at the western end, to 0.7m deep at the eastern end. The trench cut through modern tarmac, block paving and associated sub-base (L1, c 0.16-0.18m) and modern made ground (L2, dry loose mid brown silt with modern frogged brick and plastic, c 0.13-0.5m thick). L2 was heavily disturbed by modern material, including two modern concrete foundations towards the centre of the trench. At the eastern end there were a series of modern services.



Photograph 1 Excavation of the service trench, view west

7 Finds

There were no archaeological finds.

8 Conclusion

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken at 2 Flagstaff Road due to the proximity to sites of substantial archaeological interest. The trench lies directly adjacent to garages renovated in 2014. During the renovation work CAT carried out a watching brief observing three small trenches being excavated along the front of the garage (CAT Report 892 Fig 6 labelled a, f and h). Our current trench should have crossed through these three trenches (Fig 2). The small trench labelled 'a' revealed a layer containing abundant oyster shells, which lay 0.65-0.8m below modern ground level. Our trench is therefore too shallow to reveal archaeological deposits below modern layers. L2 had a uniform fill and showed no sign of the earlier trenching. This would indicate that the area was cleared, then built over, during the earlier renovation work and creation of the car parking surface.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Keith Hodgson for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister with fieldwork undertaken out by B Holloway. Figures were prepared by L Pooley. The project was monitored for Historic England by Sarah Poppy and for the CBCPS by Jess Tipper.

9 References

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

- | | | |
|----------------|------|---|
| Black, A | 2002 | Geophysical Survey Report: The Benedictine Abbey of St John, unpublished report |
| Brown, D | 2007 | <i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i> |
| CAR 1 | 1981 | <i>Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester, Colchester Archaeological Report 1, CBA Research Report, 39 by P Crummy</i> |
| CAR 9 | 1993 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 9: Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-85 by N Crummy, P Crummy & C Crossan</i> |
| CAT | 2014 | Health & Safety Policy |
| CAT | 2017 | Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for continuous archaeological recording at 43 Constantine Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3DX. |
| CAT Report 97 | 2000 | <i>An archaeological desk-based assessment of the Colchester Garrison PFI site</i> , CAT archive report, by Kate Orr |
| CAT Report 206 | 2002 | An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching in Areas A, B, D, GJ, H, J, N, V and YP of the Colchester Garrison PFI site June-July 2002, CAT archive report, by Howard Brooks |
| CAT Report 405 | 2007 | Stage 1b archaeological evaluation, Alienated Land Area B1a, Colchester Garrison. Colchester, Essex. January 2007, CAT archive report, by L Pooley, H Brooks and B Holloway |
| CAT Report 412 | 2011 | <i>Archaeological investigations on the 'Alienated Land', Colchester Garrison, Colchester, Essex.</i> |
| CAT Report 434 | 2007 | Crouched Friars: the medieval church structure and its associated cemetery. 38-40 Crouch Street, Colchester: January-April 2007, CAT archive report, by Stephen Benfield and Howard Brooks |
| CAT Report 438 | 2008 | Stage 1b archaeological evaluation, Alienated Land Area B1b, Colchester Garrison, Colchester, Essex: July-September 2007, CAT archive report, by Howard Brooks, Ben Holloway and Robert Masefield |

CAT Report 601	2011	St Johns Abbey church: An evaluation at the Garrison Officers Club, St Johns Green, Colchester, Essex: February-March 2011, CAT archive report, by Adam Wightman
CAT Report 630	2012	An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land to the north of the abbey precinct wall, St John's Green, Colchester, Essex: December 2011, CAT archive report, by Howard Brooks, Ben Holloway and Robert Masefield
CAT Report 892	2017	CAT Report 892: Archaeological watching briefs at Abbey House, St John's Green, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7EZ: March 2013-June 2014, by D Shimmin
Cifa	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching briefs</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>
Crummy, P	2001	<i>City of Victory: the story of Colchester – Britain's first Roman town</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</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Hawkes, C.F.C., and Hull, M.R.	1947	<i>Camulodunum, first report on the excavations at Colchester 1930-39</i> , RRCSAL, 14
Hull, M R	1958	<i>Roman Colchester</i> , RRCSAL, 20
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)
Morant, P	1748	<i>The history and antiquities of the most ancient town and borough of Colchester</i>

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCPS	Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record
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'
Iron Age	period from 700 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
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
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c AD 1800
residual	something out of its original context, eg a Roman coin in a modern pit
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
Section	(abbreviation sc or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
ws	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: n/a

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1208)

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

Site digital photos and log, architectural plans, attendance register and miscellaneous correspondence

12 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 2017.156

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Distribution list

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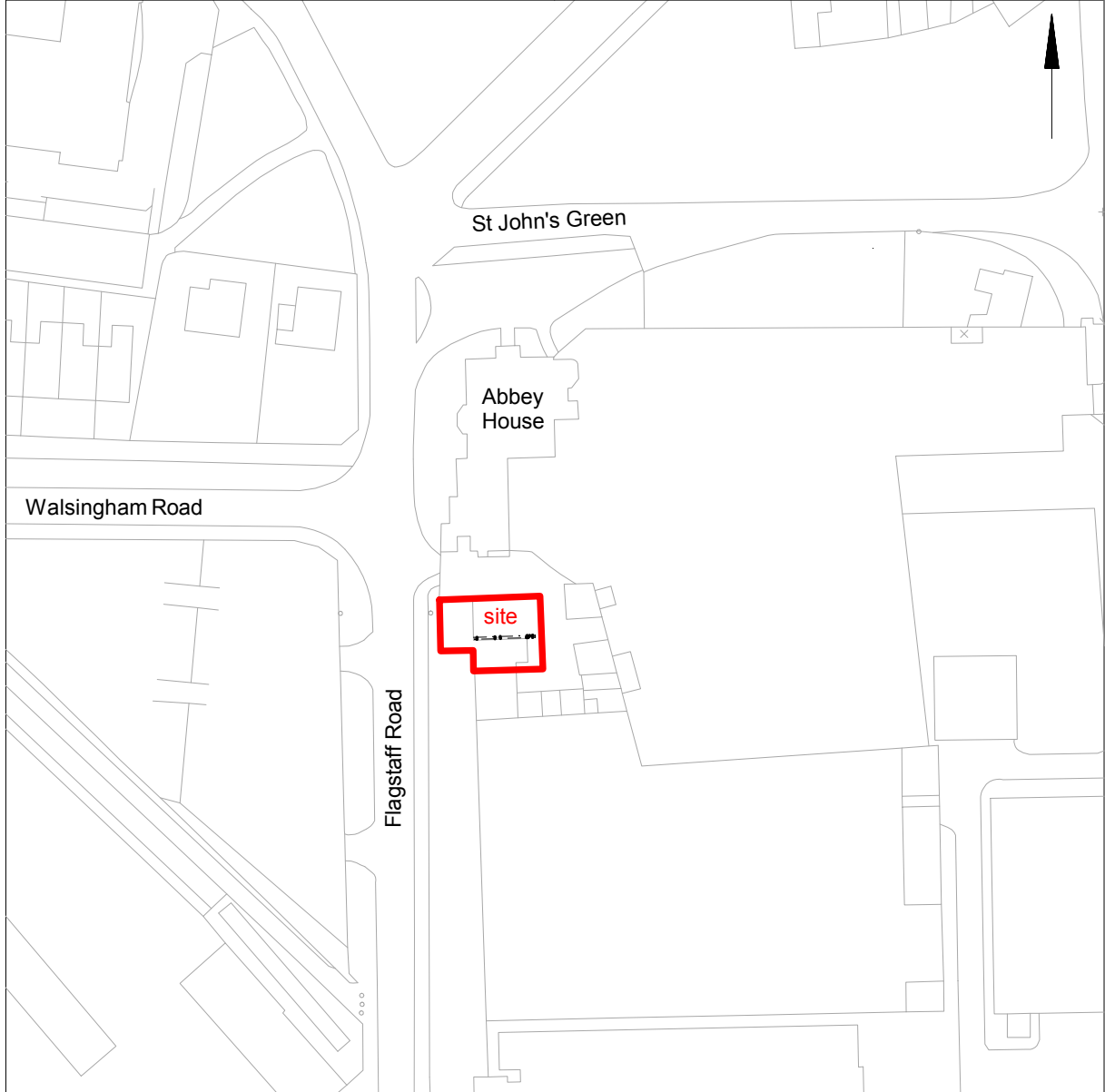
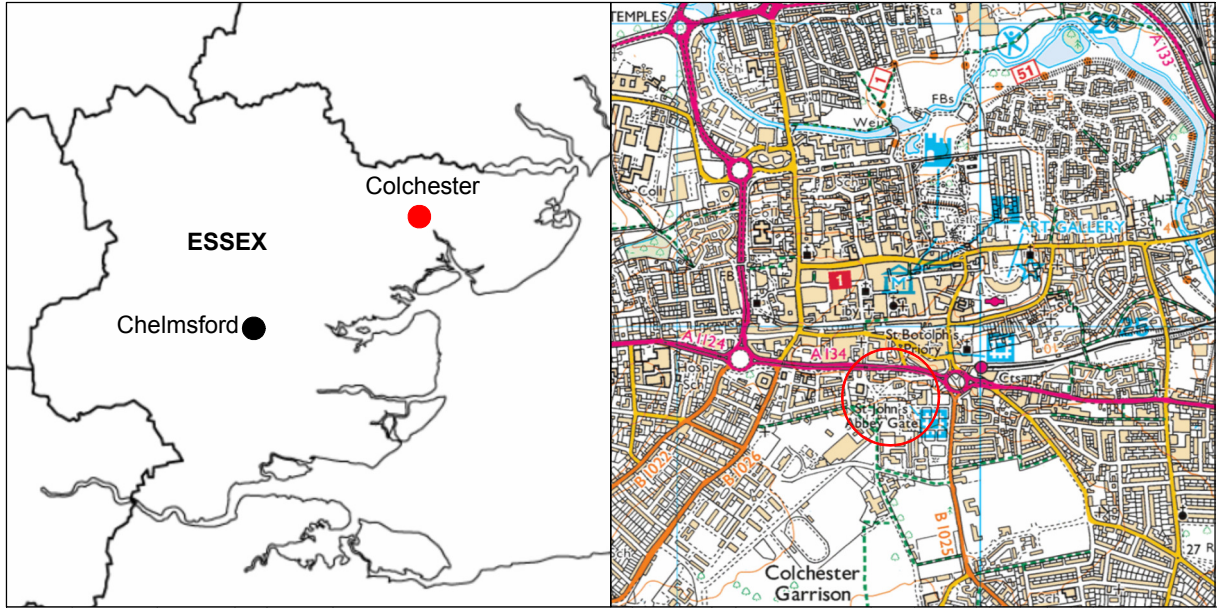


Fig 1 Site location

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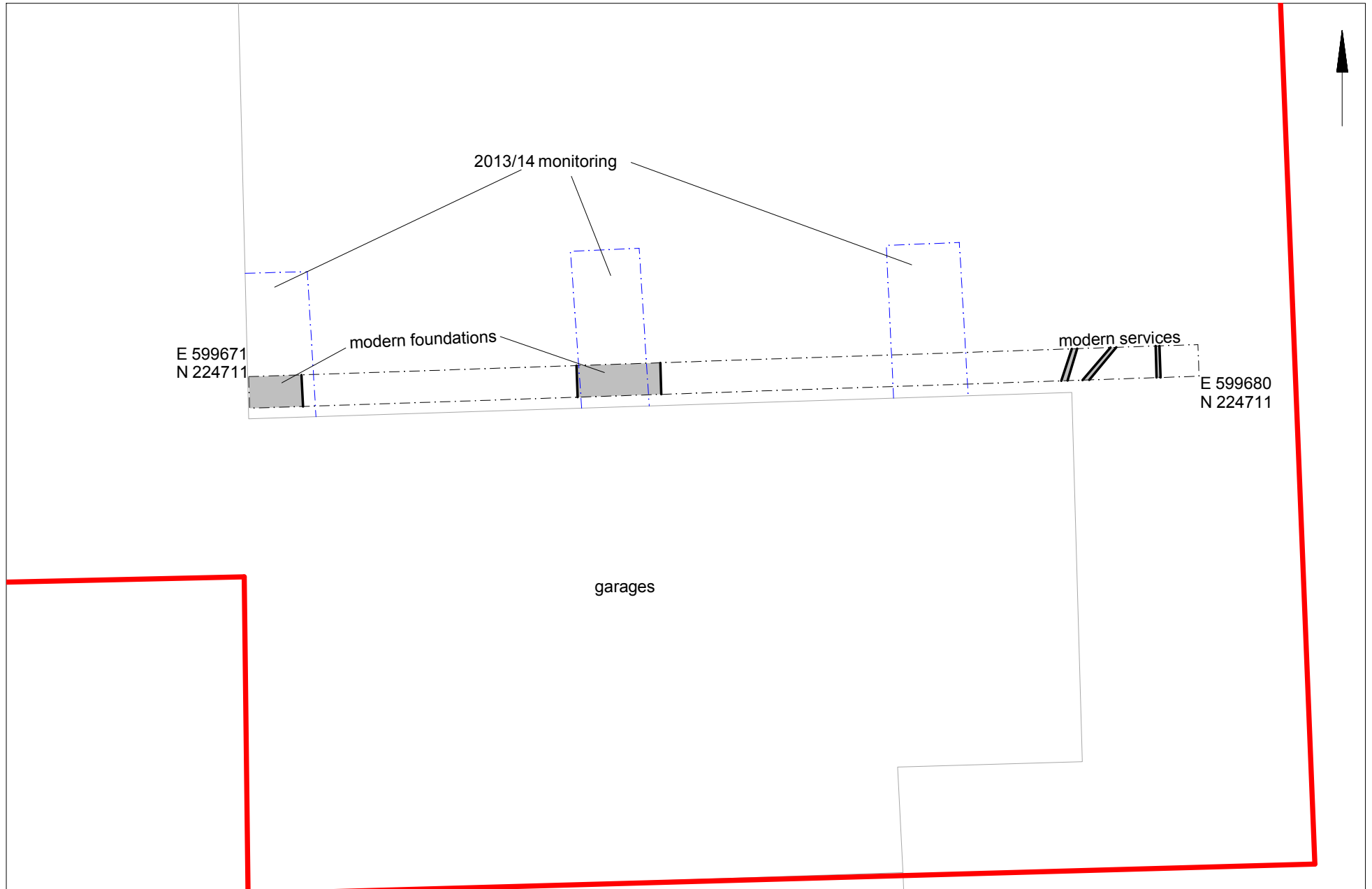


Fig 2 Results

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Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: 2 Flagstaff Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7NP	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 599672 224730 (centre)	Site code: CAT project ref.: 17/10g Scheduled Monument number: SM 26307, HA 1015015 CHER ref: ECC4118 OASIS ref: colchest3-302877
Type of work: Monitoring and recording	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 5th-7th December 2017	Size of area investigated: 0.14 hectares
Location of curating museum: Colchester museum accession code COLEM: 2017.156	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? Not known	Related CHER/EHER/SMR number: UAD 1181, UAD 1249, UAD 3019
Final report: CAT Report 1208	
Periods represented: Modern (20th century)	
Summary of fieldwork results: Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at 2 Flagstaff Road in advance of the conversion of the existing building into an annex and the excavation of a new drainage connection. The site lies within an area of significant archaeological interest, including a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The trench is quite shallow compared to previous archaeology found in the vicinity. No significant archaeological features or finds were uncovered.	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
CBC monitor: Jess Tipper	
Keywords: -	Significance: -
Author of summary: Emma Holloway	Date of summary: January 2018

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: colchest3-302877

Project details

Project name	Archaeological monitoring at 2 Flagstaff Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7NP
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out in advance of the conversion of the existing building into an annex and the excavation of a new drainage connection. The site lies within an area of significant archaeological interest, including a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The trench was quite shallow compared to previous archaeology found in the vicinity. No significant archaeological features or finds were uncovered.
Project dates	Start: 05-12-2017 End: 07-12-2017
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	17/10g - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	SM 26307, HA 1015015 - SM No.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM 2017.146 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	ECC4118 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	163176 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER 2 Flagstaff Road
Postcode	CO2 7NP

Study area 0.14 Hectares
Site coordinates TL 599672 224730 51.877372114656 0.324199385713 51 52 38 N 000 19 27 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Colchester Archaeological Trust

Project brief originator HISTORIC ENGLAND

Project design originator Chris Lister

Project director/manager Chris Lister

Project supervisor Ben Holloway

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body Mr K Hodgson

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Colchester Museum

Digital Archive ID COLEM 2017.156

Digital Contents "Survey"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography"

Paper Archive recipient Colchester Museum

Paper Archive ID COLEM 2017.156

Paper Contents "other"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Map", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Plan", "Report"

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