

Archaeological monitoring at Balkerne Hill, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AD

March 2018



by Ben Holloway
figures by Ben Holloway

fieldwork by Ben Holloway

on behalf of Philip Wise, Colchester Borough Council

NGR: TL 599248 225474 (centre)
Planning reference: n/a
CAT project ref.: 18/03b
Colchester Museum accession code: COLEM: 2018.20
CHER ref: ECC4150
OASIS reference: colchest3-310935



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CAT Report 1239
March 2018

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Appendix 1 OASIS Summary

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Cover: general site shot

Photograph 1 panel insert, looking SW 2

Fig 1 Site location

Fig 2 Results

1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at Balkerne Hill, Colchester adjacent to the Roman Town Wall (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1003772) during the erection of an interpretation panel. The area excavated to accommodate the concrete base of the panel measured 0.5m x 0.5m, and 0.65m deep. The hole for the panel was excavated through modern layers of topsoil, backfill and sand. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring and recording adjacent to the Roman Town Wall at Balkerne Hill, Colchester, Essex which was carried out on the 8th March 2018. The work was commissioned by Philip Wise, Colchester Borough Council in advance of the installation of a new interpretation panel, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

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 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 proposed development is near the north-western corner of the Roman town of *Colonia Claudia Victricensis* and immediately outside the Town Wall (Scheduled Monument NHLE no. 1003772).

The wall was built around the town in the later 1st century AD following the revolt led by Boudicca. 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. Up to 2.4m width of wall has been lost and nothing of the original exterior facing of the wall survives, only the core. The majority of what is standing has been refaced in brick or stone or completely rebuilt in brick.

The development site is located close a known suburb of the Roman and medieval town of Colchester. During excavations in 1978-9 on the site of the Royal London Insurance building (now The Octagon) (directly to the north of the site), evidence of several Roman houses, some with mosaic and tessellated floors and one with a hypocaust, were observed. There was also a Roman gravel road, timber wells, and kilns of Roman and medieval date (CAR 3, 155-209).

4 Results (Figs 2-3)

All excavations were carried out by contractors under archaeological supervision. A square hole measuring 0.5m x 0.5m and 0.65m deep was excavated through modern topsoil (L1 0.2m thick, loose dry medium grey/brown silt) onto a layer of modern backfill (L2 0.45m thick, firm dry grey/brown silt with frequent concrete, brick and tarmac inclusions).



Photograph 1 In-situ board, looking south west

5 Finds

Modern brick and concrete fragments were observed in L2, this material was not retained.

6 Discussion

No significant archaeological horizons were identified during monitoring as groundworks only occurred through 0.65m of modern horizons.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Philip Wise, Colchester Borough Council for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister. Fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway. Figures were prepared by B Holloway. The project was monitored for the 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 Report 347	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>
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>
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 Wacher</i> , ed by P Wilson
David Gurney	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>
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)
Hawkes, C and Hull, M	1947	<i>Camulodunum, first report on the excavations at Colchester 1930-39</i> , RRCSAL 14

9 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'
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material
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 1239)

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: 2018.20

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Distribution list

Philip Wise, Colchester Borough Council
Jess Tipper, Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
Essex Historic Environment Record



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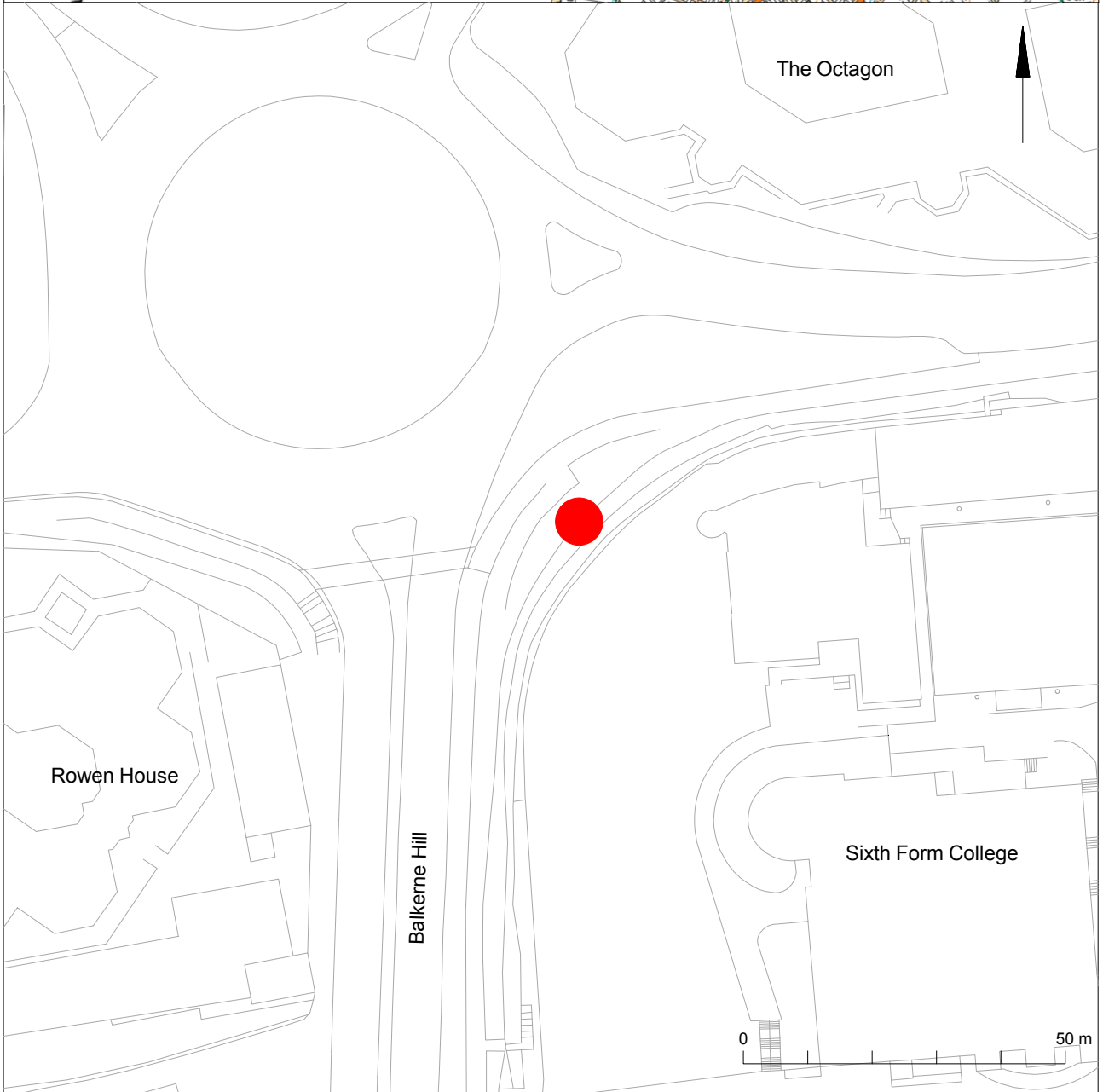
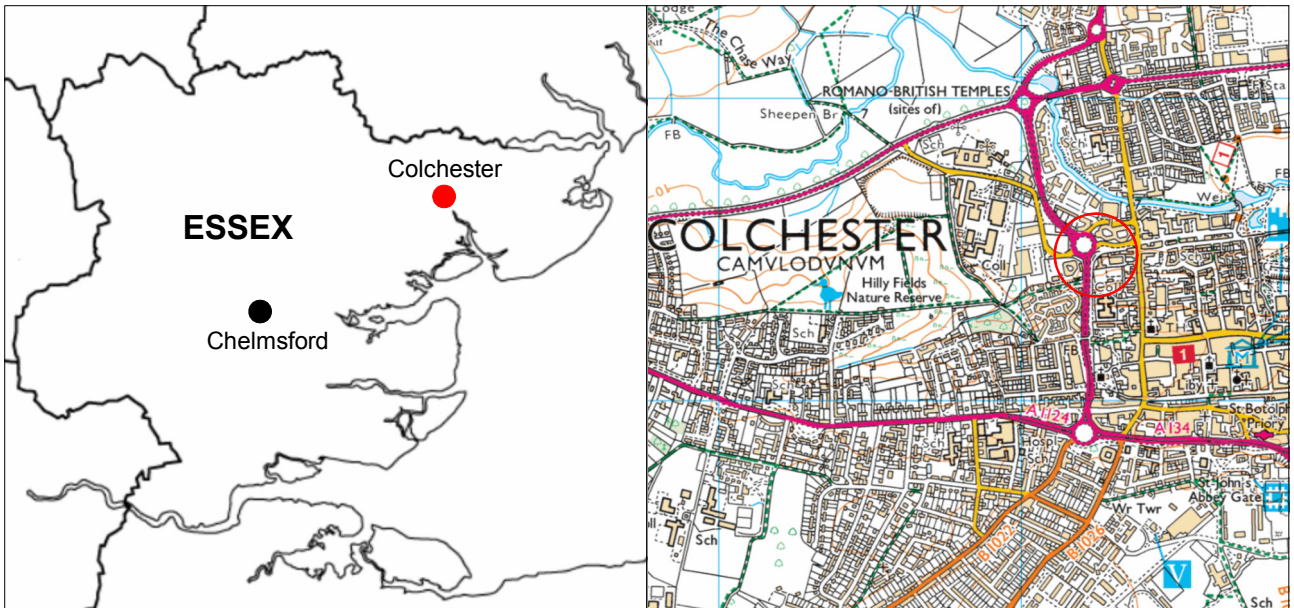


Fig 1 Site location (red circle).

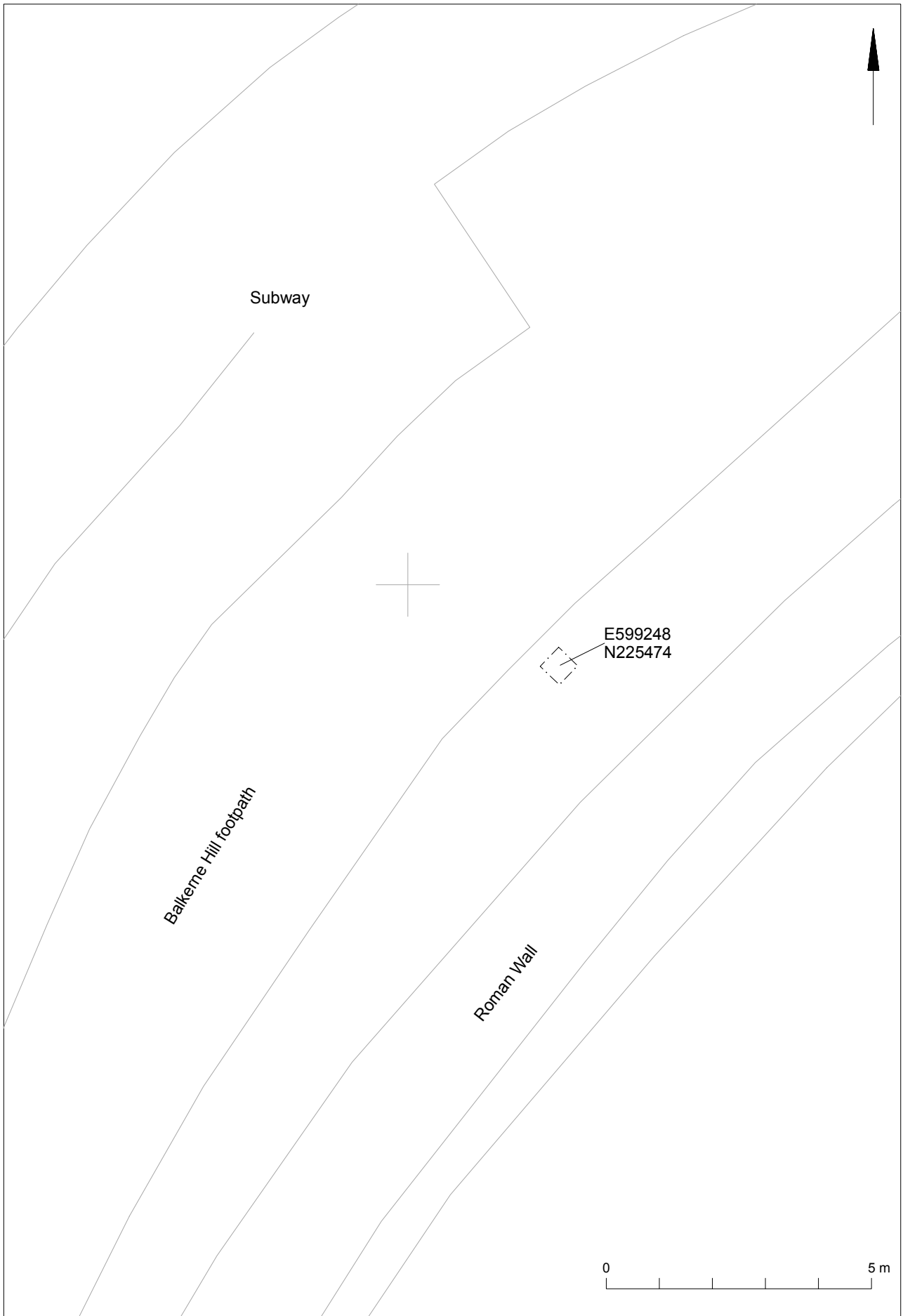


Fig 2 Results

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Balkerne Hill, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AD	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TM 599248 225074 (centre)	Site code: CAT project ref.: 18/03b CHER ref: ECC4150 OASIS ref: colchest3-310935
Type of work: Monitoring and recording	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 8th March 2018	Size of area investigated: 0.72m ²
Location of curating museum: Colchester museum accession code: COLEM: 2018.20	Funding source: Borough Council
Further seasons anticipated? no	Related CHER/SMR numbers: -
Final report: CAT Report 1239	
Periods represented: modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at Balkerne Hill, Colchester adjacent to the Roman Town Wall (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1003772) during the erection of an interpretation panel. The area excavated to accommodate the concrete base of the panel measured 0.5m x 0.5m, and 0.65m deep. The hole for the panel was excavated through modern layers of topsoil, backfill and sand. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
CBC monitor: Jess Tipper	
Keywords: -	Significance: -
Author of summary: Ben Holloway	Date of summary: March 2018

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OASIS ID: colchest3-310935

Project details

Project name	Archaeological Monitoring at Balkerne Hill, Colchester, Essex
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at Balkerne Hill, Colchester adjacent to the Roman Town Wall (a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1003772) during the erection of an interpretation panel. The area excavated to accommodate the concrete base of the panel measured 0.5m x 0.5m, and 0.65m deep. The hole for the panel was excavated through modern layers of topsoil, backfill and sand. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.
Project dates	Start: 08-03-2018 End: 08-03-2018
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	18/03b - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM:2018.20 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	ECC4150 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 11 - Thoroughfare
Monument type	N/A None
Significant Finds	N/A None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER Balkerne Hill footpath, Balkerne Hill, Colchester
Postcode	CO3 3AD
Study area	0.5 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 99247 25471 51.891597709651 0.895927064678 51 53 29 N 000 53 45 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
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Project brief originator	CBCAO
Project design originator	Emma Holloway
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Ben Holloway
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:2018.20
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	COLEM:2018.20
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Monitoring at Balkerne Hill, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AD: March 2018
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Holloway, B.
Other bibliographic details	CAT Report 1239
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