

# Archaeological excavation of trial-pits in advance of the installation of new lighting around the castle in Upper Castle Park, High Street, Colchester, Essex CO1 1UN

May 2019



by Adam Wightman

figures by Adam Wightman & Emma Holloway  
fieldwork by Adam Wightman & Adam Tuffey

**Commissioned by Mark Wicks  
on behalf of Colchester Borough Homes Ltd.**

NGR: TL 99847 25267 (centre)  
Historic England application reference: S00217492  
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OASIS reference: colchest3-350291



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**CAT Report 1408**  
May 2019

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Appendix 1 OASIS Summary

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Fig 1 Site location

Fig 2 Proposed trial-pit locations in relation to known structural remains and previous archaeological excavations

Fig 3 Trial-pit sections

## 1 Summary

*Four trial-pits were excavated by the Colchester Archaeological Trust immediately to the south of Colchester Castle in Upper Castle Park, High street, Colchester, Essex, to help inform on the feasibility of a proposed scheme to install new lighting around the castle.*

*Foundations belonging to the castle forebuilding were identified below the modern turf/topsoil in two of the trial-pits (TP2 and TP3). In TP2, the foundation was c 200mm below modern ground level (bmgl). This would allow for low voltage power cables to be buried in the modern topsoil above the forebuilding remains in this location. In TP3, the foundation below the doorway of the forebuilding was 140mm bmgl. However, 0.6m to the east, the top of the same foundation was level with the current ground surface. The proposed LED light in this location would need to be moved (ideally to the east within a backfilled archaeological trench excavated in 1977) and it would not be possible to bury the power cables beneath the existing topsoil.*

*Trial-pit 1 was located inside the forebuilding and was excavated through dark, sandy-silt soils containing 19th/20th-century finds, down to the maximum depth of 0.4m bmgl. It is likely that TP1 was located within a backfilled 20th-century archaeological investigation, possibly the 'shaft' sunk against the south face of the keep in 1932 to establish the nature of the castle foundations (Drury1982, 315).*

*In Trial-pit 4 to the east of the castle forebuilding, a 20th-century topsoil overlaid a layer of redeposited natural sand mixed with septaria and Roman brick and tile fragments. This deposit may correspond with the fill of a vertical-sided shaft or trench identified during archaeological investigation to the east in 1977, which was interpreted as part of J. T. Round's explorations in the 19th century (Drury 1982, 324).*

*A level survey was undertaken along the route of the proposed cable trench in front of the south side of the castle and the results compared to the levels at which significant archaeological deposits were encountered during previous excavations (Drury 1982). Deposits interpreted as belonging to the surface of the Roman temple precinct survive at a depth of 0.9m bmgl and deposits associated with the construction of the castle keep survive 0.4m bmgl. However, caution should be noted as further to the west during the recent installation of a new water pipe (2019) significant deposits were encountered at depths of only c 150-200mm bmgl (CAT Report 1382, forthcoming).*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of an archaeological trial-pit evaluation in Castle Park, Colchester, Essex which was carried out on Thursday 2nd May 2019. The work was commissioned by Martin Wicks on behalf of Colchester Borough Homes Ltd. The work took place to help inform on the feasibility of a proposed scheme to install new uplighting around the base of Colchester Castle.

Three of the elevations of the Castle would have new "white" LED lights and associated power cables installed along the route of an existing cable trench (Fig 1). The front (southern elevation) of the castle will have both white and colour LEDs installed in a new trench close to the southern face of the castle. The existing lighting at the front of the castle will then be decommissioned and removed. The new lights at the front of the castle will only require a low voltage power supply (24V DC) meaning that the new cables can be buried beneath as little as 150mm of soil.

As the site is located within a scheduled ancient monument (SM EX 1, HA 1002217), Debbie Priddy, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Historic England, advised that a scheme of archaeological investigation should be implemented with groundworks carried out by CAT archaeologists. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was

prepared by CAT and submitted prior to the work taking place (CAT 2019). All groundworks were undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In addition to the 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 Colchester Archaeological Trust report series (specifically CAT Reports 190, 850 and 1360) and the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) accessed via the Colchester Heritage Explorer ([www.colchesterheritage.co.uk](http://www.colchesterheritage.co.uk)):

The surface geology of the Castle Park area is a mix of Kesgrave sands and gravels and London clay. The south-western corner of the park is dominated by the 11th-century Norman castle keep and its associated earthwork defences (CHER MCC1732). The Castle Park grounds were landscaped by Charles Gray of Hollytrees in the early 18th century. This included the creation of a raised terrace on the north side of the castle ending in a wooden summerhouse in the form of a tetrastyle Greek temple (CHER MCC3224). The site was sold to Colchester Borough in 1892 for the creation of a public park laid out by Backhouse & Co. of York in the late 19th century. The war memorial is located on the northern side of the High Street at the entrance to the castle (CHER MCC5420). The majority of the park is a Scheduled Monument (SM EX 1, HA 1002217) and the park is a Registered historic park and garden.

Evidence for a number of Roman town houses (including CHER MCC852, MCC854 and MCC856), walls, tessellated pavements, metalled streets, masonry drains and a water works have been recorded within the park, much of this is summarised by Hull (1958), Crummy in *CAR 6* and Brooks (1997). Two rooms of one building have been left exposed and a drain near Duncan's Gate (CHER MCC1831) is visible, as are the collapsed remains of the gate itself. The park also contains the site of the Temple of Claudius and its forum (CHER MCC1830). The base of the temple is preserved beneath the Norman Castle. Through the centre of the park the town wall (CHER MCC859) is a dominant feature and a section of the town wall's inner rampart is visible.

Colchester Castle was built late in the 11th century and provided with defensive earthworks resulting in a diversion of the High Street. South of the Norman Castle is the site of a ?Late Anglo-Saxon chapel (CHER MCC2084) which was presumably replaced by a masonry chapel in the 11th or 12th century following its construction. In addition to the chapel, several stone-built buildings have been identified within the Castle's bailey (including CHER MCC2087). Much of the archaeological work immediately south of the castle was undertaken by P.G. Laver in 1931-32 and published in detail by Paul Drury (1982).

In 2001, CAT hand-excavated a series of cable trenches surrounding the Castle for new floodlights. Although a report for this work has never been produced, a useful summary can be found in CAT Report 850. The trenches, measuring 0.3m wide and 0.8m deep, were largely excavated through modern/post-medieval soil layers – probably the result of a combination of modern gardening activities, 1930s excavations at the front of the castle, and earthmoving in preparation for the opening of the extension to the Castle Park in 1929. In some places, only post-medieval topsoil was exposed. At the front of the castle, rubble layers probably contemporary with Weeley's demolition of the castle in the 1690s were identified at the bottom of the trench.

In 2002, CAT monitored the excavation of an additional cable trench near the south-eastern corner of the castle (CAT Report 190). This trench was excavated to a depth of 0.3-0.4m below modern ground level through either modern concrete/tarmac into post-medieval/modern layers of accumulation or through modern topsoil into the same layers.

In February 2019, CAT undertook an archaeological excavation in upper castle park as part of the emergency replacement of a lead water main (CAT report 1382 *forthcoming*). A series of deposits, located close to the castle forebuilding may have been related to the partial demolition of the castle by Weeley in the 1690s and/or the restoration of the castle in the 1760's. The foundation of the forebuilding wall itself was uncovered as well as an additional foundation further south which may have also been a part of the castle defences or perhaps a contemporary outbuilding. It may even be part of a structure which predates the castle.

#### **4 Aims**

The aim of the trial-pit evaluation was to assess the feasibility of installing new light boxes (250mm deep) and power cables (300mm-150mm deep) in trenches excavated within and around the remains of the castle forebuilding without damaging significant archaeological remains/deposits.

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

Four 0.5m x 0.5m trial-pits were excavated along the route of the proposed lighting cable trench (Fig 2). Two of the trial-pits (TPs) were positioned in the proposed locations of LED lights (TP1 & TP4) in areas which are not known to have been previously excavated (Fig 2). The other two trial-pits (TP2 & TP3) were located on the route of the cable trench where it passed over stone foundations belonging to the castle forebuilding.

The trial-pits were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m below modern ground level (bmgl) or the uppermost significant archaeological feature/deposit (whichever was highest). It was not necessary to excavate any deeper than 400mm as no element of the proposed lighting scheme south of the castle would require excavations below this depth.

##### **TP1**

Trial-pit 1 was located inside the castle forebuilding to the west of a 'shaft' excavated in 1932 (Drury 1982, 315). A layer of turf and modern topsoil (L1- 80mm thick) overlaid a layer of dark sandy-silt (L2) which continued below the base of the trial-pit (400mm bmgl). Plastic and metal objects dating to the 20th century were encountered in L1 and fragments of embossed bottle glass, salt-glazed stoneware bottle, white porcelain and window glass, all of which date to the 19th/20th century, were observed in L2.



**Photograph 1 TP1, facing south.**

#### **TP2**

Trial-pit 2 was located on the proposed route of the cable trench where the foundation of the castle forebuilding was likely to be buried just below the grass (Fig 2). The turf and 20th-century topsoil (L1) was 70mm thick and overlaid a layer of mid-grey sandy-silt (L3) with common small/medium nodules of septaria and occasional fragments of Roman brick, peg-tile and mortar. L3 covered the foundation of the forebuilding wall (F1) which was c 200mm bmgl. To the east of the forebuilding foundation, L3 continued below the base of the trial-pit (400mm bmgl).



**Photograph 2 TP2, facing south.**

### TP3

Trial-pit 3 was located in the remains of a doorway leading into the forebuilding from the east (Fig 2). The depth of the turf and topsoil (L1) varied significantly within the doorway area. To the east of the trial-pit, the septaria blocks of the foundation are visible on the surface and much of the doorway is only covered in a loose layer of soil less than 50mm thick. In the area of the trial-pit on the western edge of the doorway, the turf and topsoil was up to 140mm thick and directly overlaid the forebuilding foundation (F2). Beneath L1 to the west of the foundation, a layer of mid-grey sandy-silt with occasional small/medium nodules of septaria, fragments of Roman brick, peg-tile and mortar (L4) was identified. L4 could be comparable with L3 in TP2. L4 overlaid a medium orange/grey mixed sand and silt (L5) from which an Edward I-III long cross penny was recovered.



Photograph 3 TP3, facing south.

### TP4

Trial-pit 4 was located to the east of the castle forebuilding in the proposed location of one of the new LED lights. The turf and 20th-century topsoil (L1) was up to 180mm thick. The turf was 70mm thick (L1a) and the soil beneath contained lots of very small subrounded stones which may have derived from modern shingle (L1b). Beneath the modern topsoil was a layer of re-deposited natural sand and gravel mixed with grey silt soil (L6) which contained frequent septaria nodules and fragments of Roman brick and tile.



Photograph 4 TP4, facing south.

## 6 The Finds

identifications by Adam Wightman, Laura Pooley and Howard Brooks

The finds recovered from the four test pits are listed below by context;

**Table 1: finds by context (CBM = Ceramic building material)**

Context	Description
<b>TP1</b>	
L1 (1)	<b>Pottery</b> 19th/20thC stoneware teapot and bottle 1@108g <b>Glass</b> 19th/20thC embossed bottle 1@14g, window glass 1@12g <b>CBM</b> post-med/modern brick 2@23g <b>Animal bone</b> med mammal rib 1@2g (all discarded)
<b>TP2</b>	
L1 (3)	<b>Pottery</b> 19th/20thC; flowerpot 1@8g, post-med; Fabric 40 glazed (black) 1@2g, unglazed 1@6g, stoneware glazed (green) 1@2g, medieval; greyware 1@2g <b>Glass</b> post-med bottle glass 1@2g <b>Animal bone</b> sheep molar 1@8g (discarded) <b>Clay pipe</b> stem fragment 1@2g
L1 (3)	cu alloy rectangular shoe buckle (post-medieval)
L3 (4)	<b>Pottery</b> post-med; Fabric 40 unglazed 3@34g, medieval; greyware 2@6g <b>Glass</b> post-med bottle glass 1@2g <b>Animal bone</b> cow molar, 2 x med/lrg mammal frags 3@50g (discarded) <b>Clay pipe bowl</b> (partial) c17th/18thC 1@12g <b>CBM</b> peg-tile 5@252g (discarded)
<b>TP3</b>	
L5 (2)	silver Edward I-III long cross penny
L5 (7)	<b>Animal bone</b> cow incisor, lrg bird 2@10g (discarded)



TP4	
L1b (5)	<b>Pottery</b> post-med; unidentified (white fabric, glazed) 1@6g, medieval; greyware 2@14g <b>CBM</b> peg-tile 1@16g (discarded)
L6 (6)	<b>Worked flint</b> tertiary hard-hammer flake 1@2g

## 7 Discussion

Foundations belonging to the castle forebuilding were identified below the modern turf/topsoil in two of the trial-pits (TP2 and TP3). In TP2, the foundation was c 200mm below modern ground level (bmgl). In TP3, the foundation below the doorway of the forebuilding was 140mm bmgl. However, 0.6m to the east, the top of the same foundation was level with the current ground surface.

It is likely that TP1 was located within the backfill of a 'shaft' excavated against the south face of the keep in 1932 to establish the nature of the castle foundations (Drury 1982, 315). The western edge of the 'shaft' is recorded as being 0.5 to the east of TP1 (Drury 1982, 308), but it is probable that the excavation was wider than shown on the plan (Fig 2).

The layer of redeposited natural sand mixed with septaria and Roman brick and tile fragments in TP4 probably corresponds with the fill of a vertical-sided shaft or trench identified during archaeological investigation to the east (1977). The shaft/trench was interpreted as part of J. T. Round's explorations in the 19th century (Drury 1982, 324).

During the fieldwork, a level survey was undertaken along the route of the proposed cable trench in front of the south side of the castle and the results compared to the levels at which significant archaeological deposits were encountered during previous archaeological excavations in this area (Drury 1982). Deposits interpreted as belonging to the surface of the Roman temple precinct survive at a depth of 0.9m bmgl and deposits associated with the construction of the castle keep survive 0.4m bmgl. However, caution should be noted as further to the west during the recent installation of a new water pipe (2019) significant deposits were encountered at depths of only c 150-200mm bmgl (CAT Report 1382, forthcoming).

## 8 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the archaeological trial-pit evaluation and the previous archaeological investigations in front of the south side of the castle (Drury 1982 and CAT Report 1382 forthcoming), it can be concluded that;

- Some of the new lights and cable trenches in the central area of the castle will be located in the areas of backfilled archaeological investigations undertaken by the Rev. J. T. Round in 1845 (Hull 1958, 177), Dr P. G. Laver in 1932 (Drury 1982, 315) and by P. J. Drury himself (1982, 323). In these areas, deposits of archaeological significance have been fully excavated and it would be possible to bury the cables at the desired depth of 300mm bmgl.
- It would be possible to bury the low voltage power cables in the modern topsoil and above the forebuilding remains (at a depth of 200mm) where there is a visible gap in the inner forebuilding wall (location of TP2).
- The proposed light in the doorway on the eastern side of the forebuilding will need to be relocated (ideally to the east within the backfill of the 1977 trench) and it would not be possible to bury the power cables beneath the existing topsoil in this location (TP3).
- The western stretch of the cable trench is likely to encounter significant archaeological deposits at depths of only c 150-200mm bmgl, but will also

probably encounter further archaeological investigations and other service trenches (including the 2019 water main).

- The eastern stretch of the cable trench may encounter undisturbed archaeological deposits as the chapel area was 'not generally disturbed below the offset level of the walls (24.45m AOD) (Drury 1982, 330)'. However, some of the stretch will be within the investigations undertaken by J. T. Round in the mid-19th century and P. G. Laver in 1933-1934 (based on the location of section S3 in Drury (1982, 329)). Section S3 shows a series of deposits which are attributed to either Wheeley's activity in c 1683 or the backfill of the foundation trench of the castle keep (0.4m bmg) overlain by a 'turf line' and layers of destruction debris which could belong to the chapel itself (Drury 1982, 330).

It is the opinion of the author that the current lighting scheme is feasible, but that the following is recommended;

- The new lights are positioned to avoid known foundations and are placed in areas where previous archaeological investigations have taken place wherever possible (as archaeological deposits in these areas have already been excavated and recorded).
- The new cable trench is hand-excavated by professional archaeologists to a maximum depth of 300mm wherever demonstrably modern/post-medieval deposits are encountered, but the depth of the trench should decrease (to a minimum of 150mm) to avoid any deposits or remains of archaeological interest/significance.
- If a significant archaeological deposits or features are encountered within the upper 150mm, a decision should be made in conjunction with Historic England or their representative as to how best to proceed. Alternatively the depth of trench could be reduced further if agreeable with the lighting contractor.

## 9 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Martin Wicks, Colchester Borough Homes for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by A Wightman and carried out with the assistance of Adam Tuffey. The project was monitored for English Heritage by Debbie Priddy with the assistance of the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Officer Jess Tipper.

## 10 References

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

Brooks, H	1997	<i>An Historical Survey of Castle Park (Report for Council 1997)</i>
Brown, D	2007	<i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i>
CAR 5	1988	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 5: The post-Roman small finds from excavations in Colchester 1971-85</i> , by Nina Crummy
CAR 6	1992	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 6: Excavations at Culver Street, the Gilbert School, and other sites in Colchester 1971-85</i> , by Philip Crummy
CAT	2019	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 190	2002	<i>An archaeological watching brief on the laying of a cable pipeline at Colchester Castle Park, Essex: April 2002</i>
CAT Report 850	2015	<i>An archaeological assessment: Winter Wonderland, Castle Park, Colchester, Essex</i>
CAT Report 1382	forthcoming	<i>Archaeological excavation at Castle Park, Colchester, Essex – February 2019. By A Tuffey</i>
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>
Drury, P.J	1982	<i>Aspects of the origins and development of Colchester castle in the archaeological journal vol.139</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Historic England (HE)	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Historic England (HE)	2018	<i>The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project</i> . By S Mays, M Brickley and J Sidell
Historic England (HE)	2019	<i>Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended); Section 2 control of works. Application for Scheduled Monument Consent: Colchester Castle, Colchester</i> . By D Priddy
Hull, MR	1958	<i>Roman Colchester</i> , Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London Report <b>XX</b>
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)
MHCLG	2018	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

## 11 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
wsr	written scheme of investigation

## 12 Contents of archive

**Finds:** ¼ museum box  
**Paper and digital record**  
 One A4 document wallet containing:  
 The report (CAT Report 1382)  
 Original site record (wsr)  
 Site digital photos and log, attendance register

## 13 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.

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**Distribution list**

Mark Wicks, Colchester Borough Homes

Deborah Priddy, Historic England

Jess Tipper, Colchester Borough Council Planning Services

Essex Historic Environment Record



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

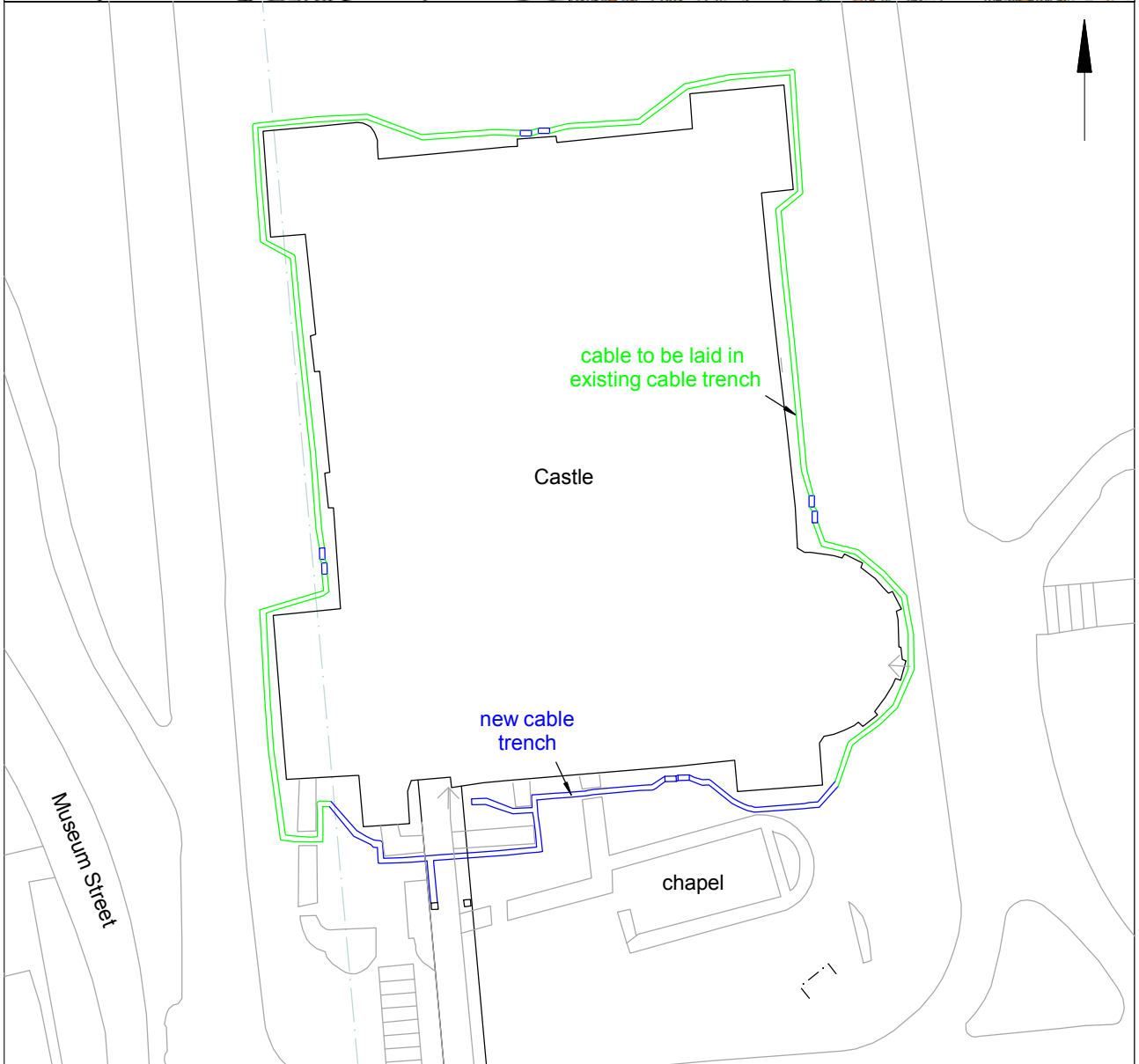
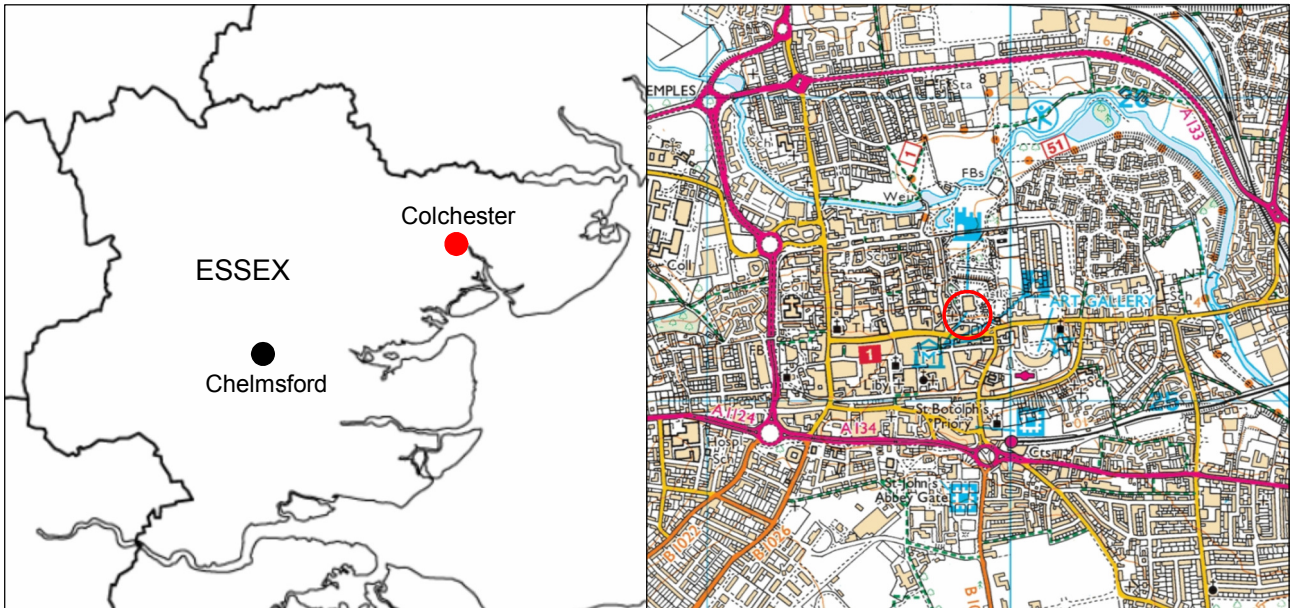
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Date: 13/05/2019



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Fig 1 Site location and proposed route of new cable trench.



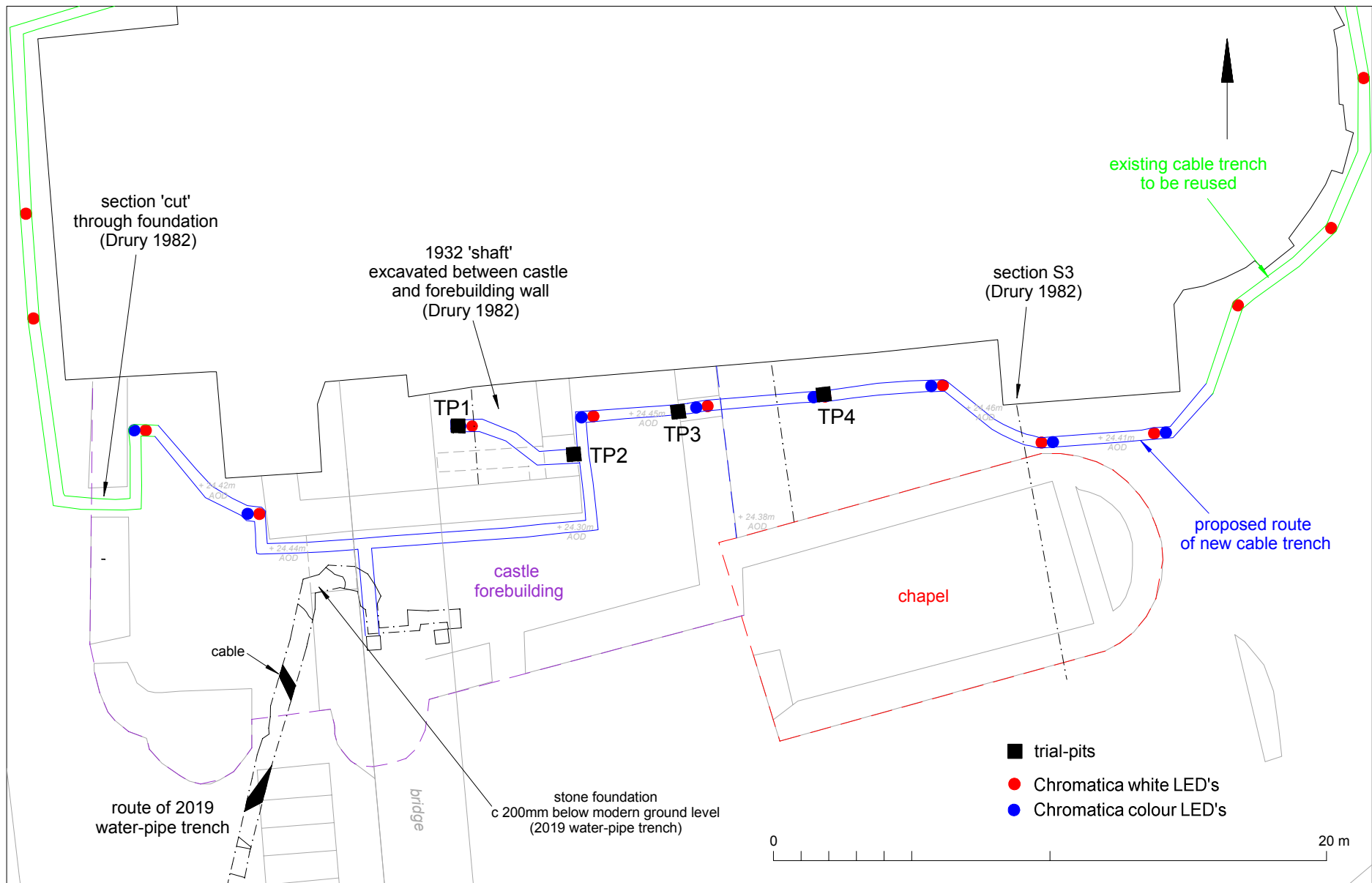


Fig 2 Proposed trial-pit locations in relation to known structural remains and previous archaeological excavations

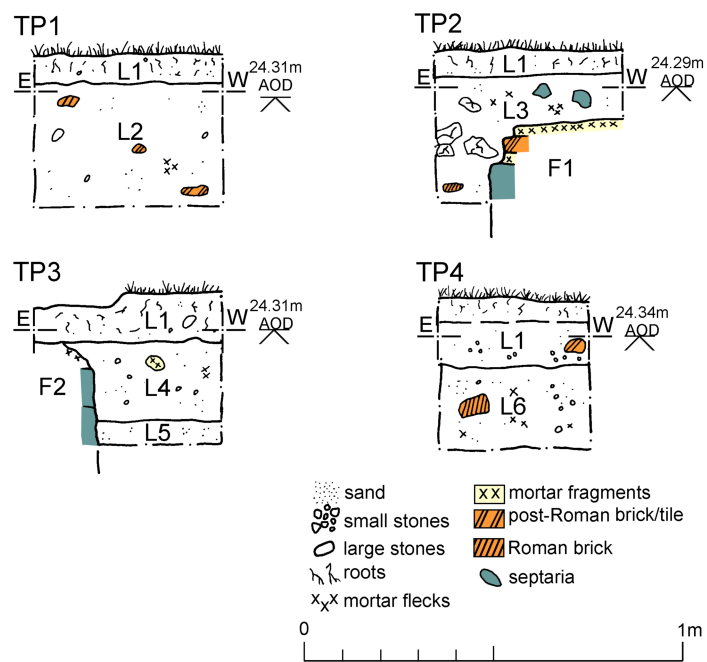


Fig 3 Trial-pit sections.

## Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

### Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> Colchester Castle, Upper Castle Park, High Street, Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TL 99847 25267 (centre)	<b>Site code:</b> CAT project ref.: 19/04h OASIS ref: colchest3-350291
<b>Type of work:</b> Archaeological trial-pit evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 2nd May 2019	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> Four 0.5m x 0.5m trial-pits
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Colchester museum	<b>Funding source:</b> Colchester Borough Council
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> yes	<b>Related CHER numbers:</b>
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 1408	
<b>Periods represented:</b> modern, post-medieval, medieval	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b></p> <p><i>Four trial-pits were excavated by the Colchester Archaeological Trust immediately to the south of Colchester Castle in Upper Castle Park, High street, Colchester, Essex, to help inform on the feasibility of a proposed scheme to install new lighting around the castle.</i></p> <p><i>Foundations belonging to the castle forebuilding were identified below the modern turf/topsoil in two of the trial-pits (TP2 and TP3). In TP2, the foundation was c 200mm below modern ground level (bmgl). This would allow for low voltage power cables to be buried in the modern topsoil above the forebuilding remains in this location. In TP3, the foundation below the doorway of the forebuilding was 140mm bmgl. However, 0.6m to the east, the top of the same foundation was level with the current ground surface. The proposed LED light in this location would need to be moved (ideally to the east within a backfilled archaeological trench excavated in 1977) and it would not be possible to bury the power cables beneath the existing topsoil.</i></p> <p><i>Trial-pit 1 was located inside the forebuilding and was excavated through dark, sandy-silt soils containing 19th/20th-century finds, down to the maximum depth of 0.4m bmgl. It is likely that TP1 was located within a backfilled 20th-century archaeological investigation, possibly the 'shaft' sunk against the south face of the keep in 1932 to establish the nature of the castle foundations (Drury1982,</i></p>	



315).

*In Trial-pit 4 to the east of the castle forebuilding, a 20th-century topsoil overlaid a layer of redeposited natural sand mixed with septaria and Roman brick and tile fragments. This deposit may correspond with the fill of a vertical-sided shaft or trench identified during archaeological investigation to the east in 1977, which was interpreted as part of J. T. Round's explorations in the 19th century (Drury 1982, 324).*

*A level survey was undertaken along the route of the proposed cable trench in front of the south side of the castle and the results compared to the levels at which significant archaeological deposits were encountered during previous excavations (Drury 1982). Deposits interpreted as belonging to the surface of the Roman temple precinct survive at a depth of 0.9m bmgl and deposits associated with the construction of the castle keep survive 0.4m bmgl. However, caution should be noted as further to the west during the recent installation of a new water pipe (2019) significant deposits were encountered at depths of only c 150-200mm bmgl (CAT Report 1382, forthcoming).*

**Previous summaries/reports:** none

**Keywords:** Castle forebuilding

**Significance:** \*

**Author of summary:**  
Adam Wightman

**Date of summary:**  
May 2019

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**OASIS ID: colchest3-350291**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological excavation of trial-pits prior to the installation of lighting around the castle in Upper Castle Park
Short description of the project	Four trial-pits were excavated by the Colchester Archaeological Trust immediately to the south of Colchester Castle in Upper Castle Park, High street, Colchester, Essex, to help inform on the feasibility of a proposed scheme to install new lighting around the castle.
Project dates	Start: 02-05-2019 End: 02-05-2019
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	SM EX 1, HA 10052217 - SM No.
Any associated project reference codes	19/04h - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings
Monument type	CASTLE FOREBUILDING Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	COIN Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BUCKLE Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Test-Pit Survey"
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER Heritage lighting project, Colchester Castle, Upper Castle Park, High Street, Colchester, Essex
Postcode	CO1 1UN
Site coordinates	TL 99847 25267 51.889549916871 0.904517404573 51 53 22 N 000 54 16 E Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	HISTORIC ENGLAND

Project design originator Emma Holloway  
 Project director/manager Chris Lister  
 Project supervisor Adam Wightman  
 Type of sponsor/funding body Borough Council  
 Name of sponsor/funding body Colchester Borough Homes Ltd

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Colchester Museum  
 Physical Contents "Ceramics", "other"  
 Digital Archive recipient Colchester Museum  
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"  
 Paper Archive recipient Colchester Museum  
 Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)  
 Title Archaeological excavation of trial-pits in advance of the installation of new lighting around the castle in Upper Castle Park, High Street, Colchester, Essex CO1 1UN  
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**Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)  
for the archaeological excavation of trial-pits  
prior to the installation of lighting around the  
castle in Upper Castle Park, High Street,  
Colchester, Essex, CO1 1UN.**

**NGR:** TL 99847 25267 (centre)

**Historic England application reference:** S00217492  
**Scheduled Monument number:** SM EX 1, HA 10052217

**Commissioned by:** Mark Wicks (Colchester Borough Homes)  
**On behalf of:** Colchester Borough Homes Ltd

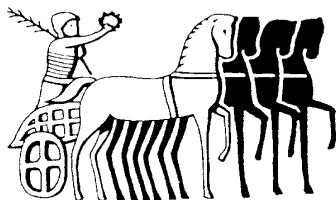
**Curating museum:** Colchester  
**CHER number:** tbc

**CAT project code:** 2019/04h  
**OASIS project number:** colchest3-350291

**Site manager:** Chris Lister

**Historic England advisor:** Debbie Priddy, Inspector of Ancient Monuments  
**CBC monitor:** Jess Tipper

**This WSI written:** 01/05/2019 (revised)



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## Site location and description

The proposed development site is located within the centre of the historic core of the town of Colchester, immediately in front of Colchester Castle in Upper Castle Park, High Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1UN (Fig 1). Castle Park is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM EX 1, HA 1002217) that sits within the town centre conservation zone. Site centre is National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 99847 25267.

## Proposed work

The proposed work involves adding uplighting to illuminate Colchester Castle. Three of the elevations of the Castle will have the luminaires installed into existing cable trenches. To the front facade of the Castle existing lighting will be decommissioned and a new cable trench added trying to minimise the impact of excavation as much as possible. New lighting will involve "white" LED luminaires and a power supply enclosure. The luminaires will operate on 24V DC removing the need for deep burial of cables, the maximum depth required is 150mm trench to allow for safe burial of the cables and ducting.

## Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive (specifically CAT Reports 190, 850 and 1360) and the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) accessed via the Colchester Heritage Explorer ([www.colchesterheritage.co.uk](http://www.colchesterheritage.co.uk)):

The surface geology of the park area is a mix of Kesgrave sands and gravels and London clay. The zone is dominated by the 11th-century Norman castle keep and its associated earthwork defences (CHER MCC1732). The Castle Park grounds were landscaped by Charles Gray of Hollytrees in the early 18th century. This included the creation of a raised terrace on the north side of the castle ending in a wooden summerhouse in the form of a tetrastyle Greek temple (CHER MCC3224). The site was sold to Colchester Borough in 1892 for the creation of a public park laid out by Backhouse & Co. of York in the late 19th century. The war memorial is located on the northern side of the High Street at the entrance to the castle (CHER MCC5420). The majority of the zone is a Scheduled Monument (SM EX 1, HA 1002217) and the park is a Registered historic park and garden. The whole of the zone falls within the town centre Conservation Area.

Evidence for a number of Roman town houses (including CHER MCC852, MCC854 and MCC856), walls, numerous tessellated pavements, metalled streets, masonry drains and a water works have been recorded within the park, much of this is summarised by Hull (1958), Crummy in *CAR 6* and Brooks (1997). Two rooms of one building have been left exposed and a drain near Duncan's Gate (CHER MCC1831) is visible, as are the collapsed remains of the gate itself. The zone also contains the site of the Temple of Claudius and its forum (CHER MCC1830). The base of the temple is preserved beneath the Norman Castle. Along the north edge of the zone, the town wall (CHER MCC859) is a dominant feature and a section of the town wall's inner rampart is visible. South of the Norman Castle is the site of a late Saxon chapel (CHER MCC2084) which was replaced by a masonry chapel in the 11th or 12th century following construction of the castle. Colchester Castle was built late in the 11th century and provided with defensive earthworks resulting in a diversion of the High Street. In addition to the chapel, several stone-built buildings have been identified within the Castle's bailey (including CHER MCC2087). A landscape park was developed in the 18th century in the grounds of the privately-owned castle. The public park was created in the 19th century.

In February 2019 CAT undertook an excavation of a trench at the front of the Castle as part of emergency replacement of a lead water main. The trench revealed c 0.15-0.45m of topsoil, subsoil, modern accumulation and Roman material (CAT report 1382). The water main which was replaced was located on the southwest corner of Colchester Castle, on the right-hand side of the Castle Park entrance, along flower beds, across a footpath, and along the west side of the Castle footbridge, where it connects to the underside of the bridge.

Howard Brook's 1997 *A Historical Survey of Castle Park, Colchester*, p95, provides a convenient summary of the depths of archaeology in the immediate area of the trial-pits. The

Castle Bailey is without doubt the most complex part of the whole site, with a very great depth of buried archaeological remains, and the exposed walls of the bailey chapel are a convenient starting point. Before the chapel was excavated in 1932 ground level was approximately 1m higher and at the same level as the present paths south of the chapel. Norman ground level is estimated to be located a further 1m below the top of the bailey chapel wall with Roman ground level (the floor level of the temple court) 0.85m below that. Therefore the total depth of archaeological deposits here (before the 1932 excavation) was 2.85m.

In 2001, CAT hand-excavated a series of cable trenches surrounding the Castle for new floodlights. Although a report for this work has never been produced, a useful summary can be found in CAT Report 850. The trenches, measuring 0.3m wide and 0.8m deep, were largely excavated through modern/post-medieval soil layers – probably the result of a combination of modern gardening activities, 1930s excavations at the front of the castle, and earthmoving in preparation for the opening of the extension to the Castle Park in 1929. In some places, only post-medieval topsoil was exposed. At the front of the castle, rubble layers probably contemporary with Weeley's demolition of the castle in the 1690s were identified at the bottom of the trench.

In 2002, monitoring of a cable trench on a similar alignment to the February 2019 water main was excavated to a depth of 0.3-0.4m below current ground level (CAT Report 190). This trench was excavated through either modern concrete/tarmac into post-medieval/modern layers of accumulation or through modern topsoil into the same layers of accumulation.

So, what can we conclude?

Excavation of the bailey chapel in 1932 revealed c 1m depth of modern and post-medieval soils over the surviving exposed walls, and service trenches excavated in 2001/2 revealed modern/post-medieval layers to a depth of at least 0.8m bcgl. Norman ground level is estimated at approximately 1m below the top of the bailey chapel wall, with the 2002 service trenches indicating at least 0.8m depth of post-medieval soil layers.

## **Planning background**

*As the site lies within a Scheduled Ancient Monument and therefore an area highlighted as having a high potential for archaeological remains the Historic England Inspector (HEI) granted permission for the work subject to the following archaeological conditions:*

*(a) The works to which this consent relates shall be carried out only by Adam Wightman and his nominated excavation team.*

*(b) A report on the archaeological recording shall be sent to the County Sites and Monuments Record/ Historic Environment Record and to Deborah Priddy at Historic England within 3 months of the completion of the works (or such other period as may be mutually agreed).*

*(c) The contractor shall complete and submit an entry on OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations - <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>) prior to project completion, and shall deposit any digital project report with the Archaeology Data Service, via the OASIS form, upon completion.*

## **Requirement for work**

The required work is for the archaeological excavation by hand of four 0.5m<sup>2</sup> trial-pits. Two are located in areas of the proposed cable trench not previously investigated (TP1 & TP4) and two are located on areas of stone foundations to gauge the depth of soil between modern ground level and the foundations (TP2-3). The trial pits are to be excavated to a maximum of 0.4m deep or the top of the uppermost significant archaeological deposit (whichever is highest).

If unexpected remains are encountered the HIA and CBCAA will be informed immediately and the HIA/CBCAA will decide if further work is required.

## **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, b)
- Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011)
- relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2019)
- the conditions in the Scheduled Monument Consent (HE 2019)

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 the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments (HEI) 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.

At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. At the end of the project all parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). This will include an uploaded .PDF version of the entire report.

A unique HER event number will be obtained from the CBCAA prior to the commencement of fieldwork. This code will be used to identify the project archive when it is deposited at the curating museum.

## **Staffing**

In charge of the fieldwork: Adam Wightman

## **Trial-pit excavation methodology**

As specified above (see Requirement for work), all topsoil removal and ground reduction will either be done by hand. Equipment and machinery shall not be used or operated in the scheduled area in conditions or in a manner likely to result in damage to the monument, or in ground disturbance other than that expressly authorised by the HEI.

If archaeological features or deposits are uncovered, time will be allowed for these to be planned and recorded.

If any features or deposits uncovered are to be destroyed by the proposed development, time will be allowed for these features to be excavated by hand, planned and recorded. This includes a 50% sample of discrete features (pits, etc), 10% of linear features (ditches, etc) and 100% of all complex features and burials (see Human Remains policy below).

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

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.

All features and layers or other significant deposits will be planned, and their profiles or sections recorded. The normal scale will be site plans at 1:20 and sections at 1:10, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be appropriate.

The photographic record will consist of general site shots, and shots of all archaeological features and deposits. A photographic scale (including north arrow) shall be included in the

case of detailed photographs. Standard “record” shots of contexts will be taken on a digital camera. A photographic register will accompany the photographic record. This will detail as a minimum feature number, location, and direction of shot.

### **Site surveying**

The trial-pits 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.

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

### **Environmental sampling policy**

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, but only if they are datable. Any processing and reporting will be done by VF/LG. If any complex or outstanding deposits are encountered, VF/LG will be asked onto site to advise. The HEI and Historic England Regional Science Adviser is available for further advice.

### **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 or unless advised to do so by the project osteologist the HEI. If circumstances indicated it were prudent or necessary to remove remains from the site during the monitoring, the following criteria would be applied; 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 Department of Justice for a licence to remove them and seek advice from the project osteologist. Following HE guidance (HE 2018) if the human remains are not to be lifted, the project osteologist should be available to record the human remain *in situ* (i.e. a site visit). Conditions laid down by the DoJ license will be followed. If it seems that the remains are not ancient, then the coroner, the client, and HEI 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.

Most of our finds reports are written internally by CAT Staff under the supervision and direction of Philip Crummy (Director) and Howard Brooks (Deputy Director). This includes specialist subjects such as:

prehistoric, Roman and post-Roman pottery and ceramics: Matthew Loughton

post-Roman pottery: Howard Brooks / Matthew Loughton

animal bones (small groups): Alec Wade / Adam Wightman

small finds, metalwork, coins, etc: Laura Pooley

flints: Adam Wightman

environmental processing: Robin Mathieson

or to outside specialists:

animal bones (large groups) and human remains: Julie Curl (*Sylvanus*)

environmental assessment and analysis: Val Fryer / Lisa Gray



conservation/x-ray: Laura Ratcliffe (LR Conservation) /

Norfolk Museums Service, Conservation and Design Services

Other specialists whose opinion can be sought on large or complex groups include:

prehistoric and Roman pottery: Stephen Benfield

Roman brick/tile: Ernest Black

Roman glass: Hilary Cool

Prehistoric pottery: Paul Sealey

Small finds: Nina Crummy

Other: EH 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 HEI.

A contingency will be made in the budget for absolute dating in the event that archaeomagnetic and/or (more probably) radiocarbon dating is required, if burning is encountered or human remains (in which case it might be necessary to lift a small sample for absolute dating).

## **Results**

Notification will be given to HEI and 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* (HE 2015).

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

The report will contain:

- Location plan of the groundworks. At least two corners of the site will be given 10 figure grid references.
- Section/s drawings showing depth of deposits from present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale.
- 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 within four weeks and supplied to HEI and 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 and provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration and analysis) as appropriate.

The archive will be deposited with Colchester & Ipswich Museum or an alternate repository (approved by COLEM, HEI and CBCAA) within 3 months of the completion of the final publication report, with a summary of the contents of the archive supplied to HEI and CBCAA.

A digital / vector drawing of the site be given to the CBCAA for integration into the HER.

## Monitoring

HEI or CBCAA on behalf of HEI 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 HEI and CBCAA one week in advance of its commencement.

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

HEI and CBCAA will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

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

## References

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

Brooks, H	1997	<i>An Historical Survey of Castle Park (Report for Council 1997)</i>
Brown, D	2007	<i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i>
CAR 6	1992	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 6: Excavations at Culver Street, the Gilbert School, and other sites in Colchester 1971-85</i> , by Philip Crummy
CAT	2019	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 190	2002	<i>An archaeological watching brief on the laying of a cable pipeline at Colchester Castle Park, Essex: April 2002</i>
CAT Report 850	2015	<i>An archaeological assessment: Winter Wonderland, Castle Park, Colchester, Essex</i>
CAT Report 1382	forthcoming	<i>Archaeological excavation at Castle Park, Colchester, Essex – February 2019. By A Tuffey</i>
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological excavation</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
Historic England (HE)	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Historic England (HE)	2018	<i>The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project</i> . By S Mays, M Brickley and J Sidell
Historic England (HE)	2019	<i>Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended); Section 2 control of works. Application for Scheduled Monument Consent: Colchester Castle, Colchester</i> . By D Priddy
Hull, MR	1958	<i>Roman Colchester</i> , Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London Report <b>XX</b>
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)
MHCLG	2018	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

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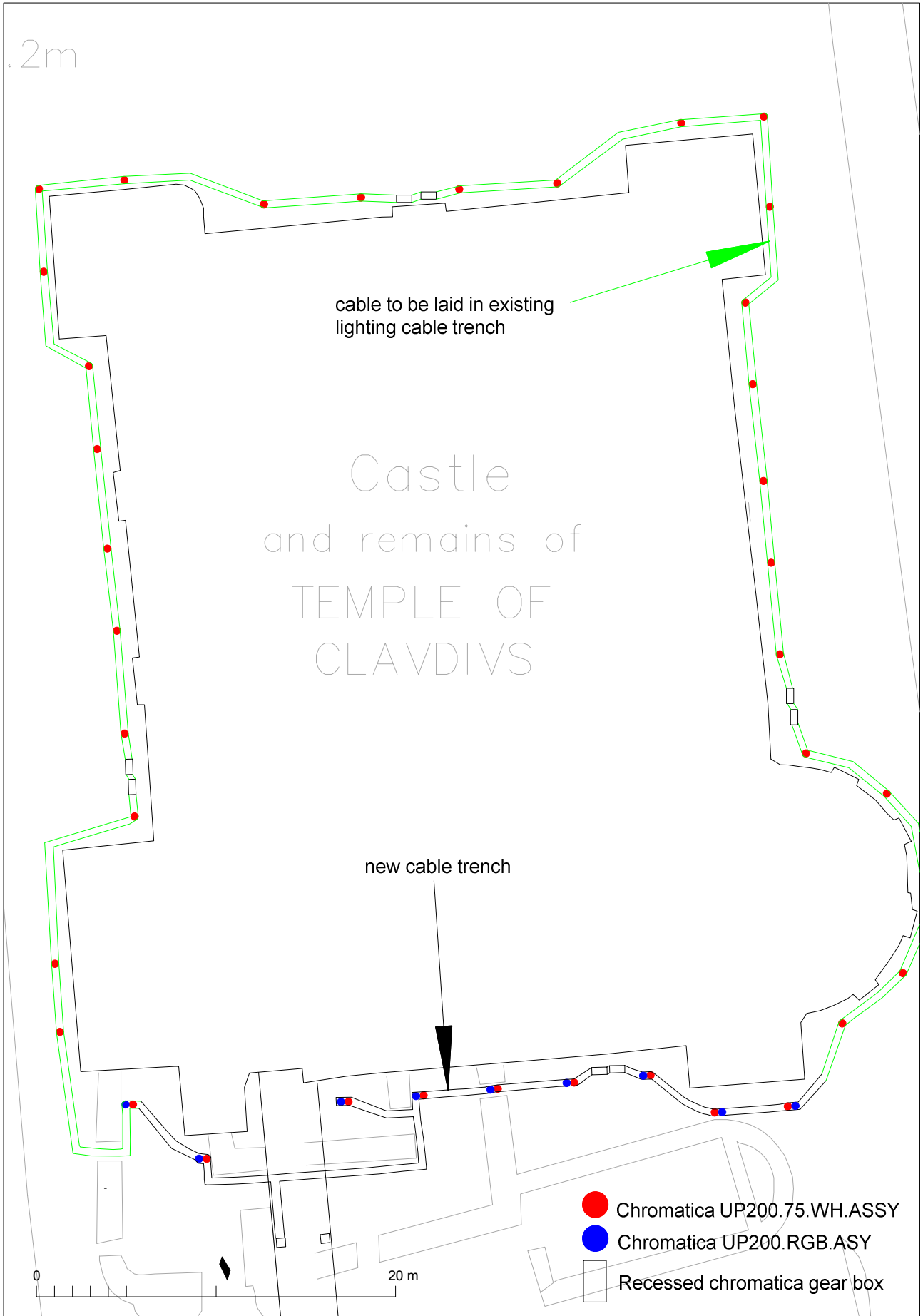


Fig 1 Proposed route of the new cable trench.

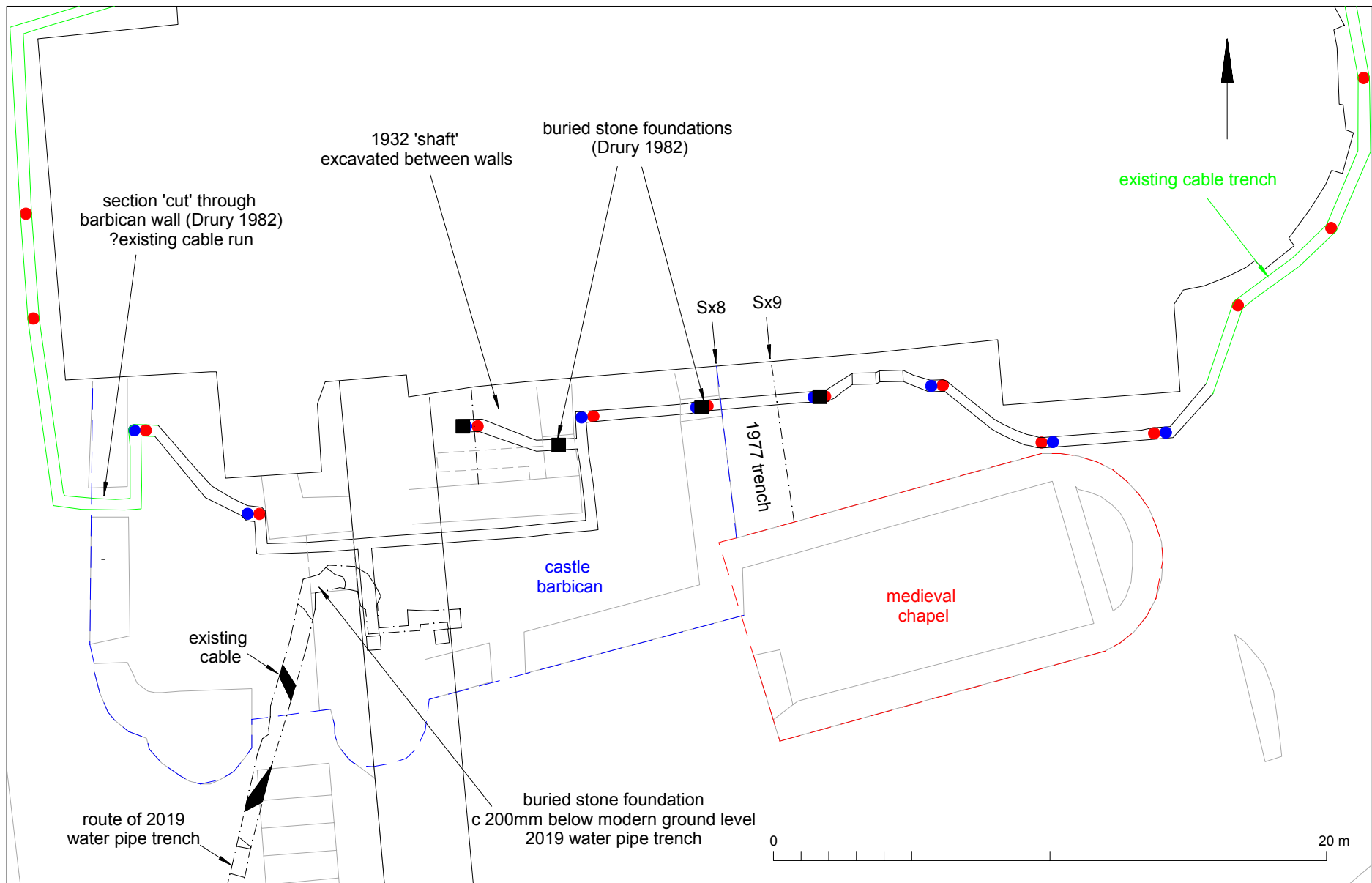


Fig 2 Proposed trial-pit locations in relation to known structural remains and previous archaeological excavations