

Archaeological monitoring at 99 High Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1TH

April 2020



by Dr Elliott Hicks & Donald Shimmin

with contributions by Laura Pooley and Adam Wightman
figures by Chris Lister and Emma Holloway

fieldwork by Chris Lister

**commissioned by Craig Woods (Purcell)
on behalf of Emmaus Colchester**

NGR: TL 99857 25241 (centre)

CAT project ref.: 20/04h

CHER ref: ECC4521

OASIS reference: colchest3-395059



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CAT Report 1553

May 2020

Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Archaeological background	1
4	Aim	2
5	Results	2
6	Finds	3
7	Conclusion	4
8	Acknowledgements	4
9	References	5
10	Abbreviations and glossary	5
11	Contents of archive	6
12	Archive deposition	6

Figures after p7

OASIS Summary

List of photographs, tables and figures

Cover: extract from Chapman and André's map of Essex

Photograph 1 F1 showing rep sx – looking east 3

Table 1 Catalogue of clay tobacco pipes from L4 3

Fig 1 Site location

Fig 2 Location of foundation pit

Fig 3 Manual plan and section showing foundation F1

1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 99 High Street, Colchester, Essex following the exposure of a foundation during the excavation of a pit for a foundation pad to support a new flight of stairs. The foundation was approximately late 17th-century in date and was oriented east-west, lying on a similar alignment to the High Street itself. It is likely that the foundation represents the remains of the 'Norfolk Houses', built in 1780-83, which formerly lined the thoroughfare. Previous excavations in the area have revealed large amounts of 17th- and 18th-century clay pipe fragments and possible fragmentary remains of a kiln, suggesting that a clay pipe kiln once stood nearby, and further clay pipe remains – some embossed with the same manufacturers' stamp – were also recovered.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring at 99 High Street, Colchester, Essex, which was carried out during 27th April 2020. The work was commissioned by Craig Woods (Purcell) on behalf of Emmaus Colchester, was undertaken following the exposure of archaeological remains by builders' groundworks, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

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 briefs (ClfA 2014a)* and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (ClfA 2014b)*.

3 Archaeological background

The site is located in an area of outstanding archaeological interest. In 1964, an excavation took place immediately to the north, revealing the well-preserved remains of a monumental arcade (Hebditch 1971). This extended along the south side of a large rectangular precinct within which stood the Temple of Claudius (CHER MCC1544). The south precinct wall was probably constructed in the years after the Boudiccan revolt of AD 60/1. Even after the depredations of Norman stone robbers, a 'foundation platform' some 15 feet wide (4.57 m) survived. It was surmounted by the remains of pier bases for a large arcaded screen, and also by a series of later Roman blocking walls (*ibid*, 122-3). The latter extended between the pier bases and probably date to some time after the late 2nd century (*ibid*, 129). That same year, a trench dug to the south of the precinct wall uncovered the remains of several phases of E-W aligned Roman drains beneath the present site (MCC1561). The well-preserved northern side of one of these drains, constructed of brick set in *opus signinum*, was exposed in 2006 during rebuilding work to the rear of the property (CAT Report 440).

The 1964 excavations confirmed the results of work carried out nearby in 1931 and 1953 (Hull 1955; Hull 1958, 169-75). The 1931 excavation revealed the remains of the western part of a monumental arch centrally-placed in the south precinct wall, which lie some 20m to the northeast of the site. Part of the archway was also uncovered by CAT in evaluation trenches at the rear of 95-96 High Street in 2006 (CAT Reports 360 & 380).

One of the reasons why the south precinct wall was so well-preserved was because it was 'insulated' by the Norman inner bailey rampart which was piled up on top of it. The rampart was surmounted by a curtain wall, which was probably built in the 12th century and replaced an earlier timber palisade (VCHE 9, 244; MCC1732). The digging of the inner bailey ditch to the south of the rampart necessitated the diversion of the line of the High Street southwards, and the

curve in the road is still visible today. As a result of later activity, the remains of the curtain wall and much of the rampart were destroyed, while the ditch was backfilled and built over (Hebditch 1971, 121; Drury 1983, 407-8).

In recent years, extensive excavations have been undertaken at no. 97 High Street, immediately to the north of the present site, during its redevelopment into Castle House. In March 2010, archaeologists monitored the machine-excavation of a series of test-pits at the site. The remains of the south precinct wall of the Temple of Claudius were again uncovered, close to the modern ground-level in the southern part of the site. Little of archaeological significance was reached in the northern part of the site, where the ground-level had been considerably made-up in modern times (CAT Report 587). An evaluation of two trial-trenches was subsequently carried out at the site by CAT, in 2012, in order to ascertain the position and depth of the south precinct wall. The northern edge of the precinct wall foundation was encountered in both trenches at a depth of c 1m below current ground level (bcgl). In one of the trenches, the remains of a pier base, which formed part of the monumental arcade, lay upon the foundation platform. In the other, the foundation platform was overlain by part of a later Roman blocking wall (CAT Report 701).

In 2014, two further trenches were dug in the northern part of the site, in an area immediately to the north of the arcade which remained largely unexcavated. In the more westerly trench, part of a Roman column which had formed part of the arcade was uncovered, lying within thick deposits of demolition debris dating from the 11th and/or 12th centuries. In the other trench, a gully and associated features yielded a quantity of pottery of probable 12th-century date, animal bone and shell. An inhumation burial of probable 16th- or 17th-century date was also uncovered, at the northern end of the more westerly trench. Excavations resumed in 2015 beneath the floor of Castle House, while construction work was still in progress. Approximately 12.7 m of the foundation platform that supported the Roman arcade was uncovered, and the remains of three piers and four revetting walls lying on top of the platform were also exposed. It was concluded that the arcade was probably built before the Boudiccan revolt of AD 61 (CAT Report 1092).

No. 99 High Street sits at the site of the so-called 'Norfolk Houses', built by Robert Norfolk between 1780 and 1783. The houses were constructed on the southern ditch of the castle bailey, the sections of which not already silted-up were presumably backfilled before building work commenced (P Crummy, pers. comm.).

4 Aim

Archaeological intervention was undertaken to record the archaeological deposits exposed by the groundworks.

5 Results (Figs 2-3)

CAT was informed by a builder working at 99 High Street, Colchester that they had uncovered a wall in a pit dug within the building to support a foundation for a new flight of stairs. After consultation with Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor Dr Jess Tipper, on 27th April 2020 a CAT archaeologist attended site to record the remains.

The foundation pad pit was 0.9m by 0.9m and was excavated to a depth of 0.75m. It was cut through a layer of modern concrete (L1, c 0.17-0.20m thick), a modern layer of crush (L2, c 0.1-0.12m thick, crushed CBM), and a post-medieval demolition layer (L3, c 0.10-0.18m thick, friable, dry medium/dark grey/brown silty-loam with charcoal, CBM and oyster shell flecks) into a late 17th-century ?accumulation layer (L4, soft, dry dark brown silty-loam with 10% CBM fragments, 5% clay pipe fragments and CBM flecks).

Post-medieval foundation F1 was observed. Constructed out of rubble set in lime mortar, it was 0.58m across and 0.25-0.32m high, and lay on an E-W alignment. The foundation was cut into late 17th-century ?accumulation layer L4.



Photograph 1 F1 showing rep sx – looking east

6 Finds

6.1 Ceramic building material

by Laura Pooley

A fragment of peg-tile (92.7g) and post-medieval brick (381.4g) came from accumulation layer L4 (finds no. 1).

6.2 Clay tobacco pipes

by Laura Pooley

Sixty-four fragments of clay tobacco pipe, weighing 461.6g, were recovered from accumulation layer L4 (finds no. 1). The fragments consisted of 51 stems and 13 bowls. Eleven of the bowls are of Colchester Type 7, dated to c 1670 to 1700 (CAR 5, 47). There was a single stamp on one of the heels: SN or NS in two concentric circles with three pellets above and below. This stamp was also found on a clay pipe from Balkerne Lane, Colchester in 1973-6 (CAR 5, ref. 2634).

Description
50 stem fragments, plain, 225.1g. Discarded.
One stem fragment with heel surviving, plain, 7/64" bore, 8.1g. Discarded.
Two incomplete bowl fragments with milled rims, 23.5g.
Eleven bowls of Colchester Type 7 (CAR 5, 49), c 1670-1700: 1) Complete bowl with heel and partial stem, milled rim around ¾ of bowl, 8/64" bore, 25.5g. 2) Virtually complete bowl (damage to rim) with heel and partial stem broken off but joining, milled rim and rouletted line across the base of the heel, 8/64" bore, 22.5g. 3) Incomplete bowl (half of rim missing) with heel and partial stem, milled rim, 7/64" bore, 19.7g. 4) Complete bowl with heel and partial stem, milled rim around all of bowl and two milled lines across the base of the heel, 7/64" bore, 21.6g. 5) Complete bowl with heel and partial stem, milled rim around all of bowl, 7/64" bore, 18.4g. 6) Complete bowl with heel (no stem surviving), milled rim on back half of bowl, 7/64" bore, 19.6g.

<p>7) Complete bowl with heel (no stem surviving), milled rim around most of bowl (two gaps), ? 6/64" bore, 17.7g. 8) Complete bowl with heel (no stem surviving), milled rim around most of bowl (two gaps) (poor quality), 7/64" bore, 17.1g. 9) Complete bowl with partial heel (no stem surviving), milled rim around ¾ of bowl (poor quality), 7/64" bore, 17.4g. 10) Incomplete bowl with heel and partial stem, rouletted rim, 7/64" bore, 13.2g. 11) Incomplete bowl with heel and partial stem, base of heel stamped in relief SN or NS in two concentric circles with three pellets above and below, stem milled close to brake, 7/64" bore, 12.2g. Similar example published in <i>CAR 5</i>, ref. 2634.</p>

Table 1 Catalogue of clay tobacco pipes from L4 (finds no. 1)

6.3 Animal bone by Adam Wightman

Cattle bone and bone from a medium-sized mammal was recovered from accumulation layer L4 (finds no. 1). The proximal end of an adult cattle tibia and the distal end of an adult cattle metacarpal were retrieved. Both had cut marks, suggesting the animal (or animals) had been butchered. An adult cattle humerus and the humerus of a medium-sized mammal were also recovered, the former with possible dog gnawing at its proximal end, the latter at its distal end.

7 Conclusion

Lying on a similar alignment to the High Street, the foundation uncovered by groundworks at this site probably represents the remains of the 'Norfolk Houses' which formerly lined this section of the thoroughfare. The foundation cut a deposit which yielded a significant quantity of clay-pipe fragments. Given the limited area exposed, it was not possible to ascertain whether this deposit was an accumulation layer or the fill of a pit. It is possible, however, that this deposit represents the uppermost fill of the castle bailey.

The clay-pipe remains are particularly interesting. Late 17th-century clay pipe fragments were found during excavations directly to the north in 1964, including three bowl fragments featuring the same SN/NS stamp as those recovered during this investigation, and several wasters. Large quantities of clay pipe remains were also uncovered during excavations undertaken in advance of the resurfacing of Museum Street, in 1986. These ranged in date from the mid 17th century to the mid 18th century, but were primarily of the same type and date as those found at the current site. Eight bowl fragments also carried the SN/NS stamp. Several fragments were wasters, and a piece of kiln lining and several sherds of vitrified brick were also recovered. These remains were particularly concentrated at the northern end of Museum Street, around the park gates, approximately 35m of no. 99 High Street, and it was surmised that one or more clay pipe kilns had once stood in the vicinity, possibly to the rear of what then remained of the castle bailey rampart (CAT Report 521). As in these previous investigations, given that all of the clay pipe fragments uncovered were of the same type and date, they were also clearly discarded by the artisans who worked these kilns.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Purcell and Emmaus Colchester for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed and carried out by C Lister. Figures were prepared by C Lister and E Holloway. The project was monitored 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>

Brown, D	2011	<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 N Crummy
CAT	2019	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 360	2006	<i>An archaeological evaluation rear of 95-96 High Street, Colchester, Essex: January 2006</i> , by H Brooks
CAT Report 380	2006	<i>Stage 2 of an archaeological evaluation at the rear of 95-96 High Street, Colchester, Essex: July 2006</i> , by D Shimmin
CAT Report 440	2008	<i>An archaeological watching brief at 99 High Street, Colchester, Essex, December 2006</i> , by D Shimmin
CAT Report 521	2011	<i>Archaeological investigations in Museum Street, Colchester, Essex: June-July 1986 and January-June 2010</i> , by D Shimmin
CAT Report 587	2011	<i>An archaeological watching brief at 97 High Street, Colchester, Essex: March 2010</i> , by D Shimmin
CAT Report 701	2012	<i>An archaeological evaluation at 97 High Street, Colchester, Essex: June 2012</i> , by D Shimmin
CAT Report 1092	2017	<i>Archaeological excavations at 97 High Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1TH: June-July 2014 & April-June and December 2015</i> , by D Shimmin
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Drury, P	1983	'Aspects of the origins and development of Colchester Castle', <i>Archaeological Journal</i> 139 , 302-419
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Hebditch, M	1971	'Excavations on the south side of the temple precinct at Colchester', <i>The Essex Archaeological Society</i> 3 (3rd series), part 1, 115-130
Historic England	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Hull, M R	1955	'The south wing of the Roman 'forum' at Colchester: recent discoveries', <i>The Essex Archaeological Society</i> 25 , Part 1, 24-61
Hull, M R	1958	<i>Roman Colchester, RRCSAL</i> 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)
VCHE 9	1994	<i>A history of the County of Essex 9: the Borough of Colchester</i> , ed. J Cooper

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CBCPS	Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record
ClfA	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
OASIS	O nline A ccess to the I ndex of A rchaeological I nvestigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
peg-tile	rectangular thin tile with peg-hole(s) used mainly for roofing, first appeared c AD1200 and continued in use to present day, but commonly post-medieval to modern

post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to c 1800
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
wsi	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: part of one box (tobacco pipe bowls)

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1553)

Original site record (layer sheets, feature sheet, finds sheet, sections)

Site digital photos and log

Inked section drawings

Digital record

The report (CAT Report 1533)

Graphics

Site digital photos and log

Survey data

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 the reference number ECC4521.

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Distribution list

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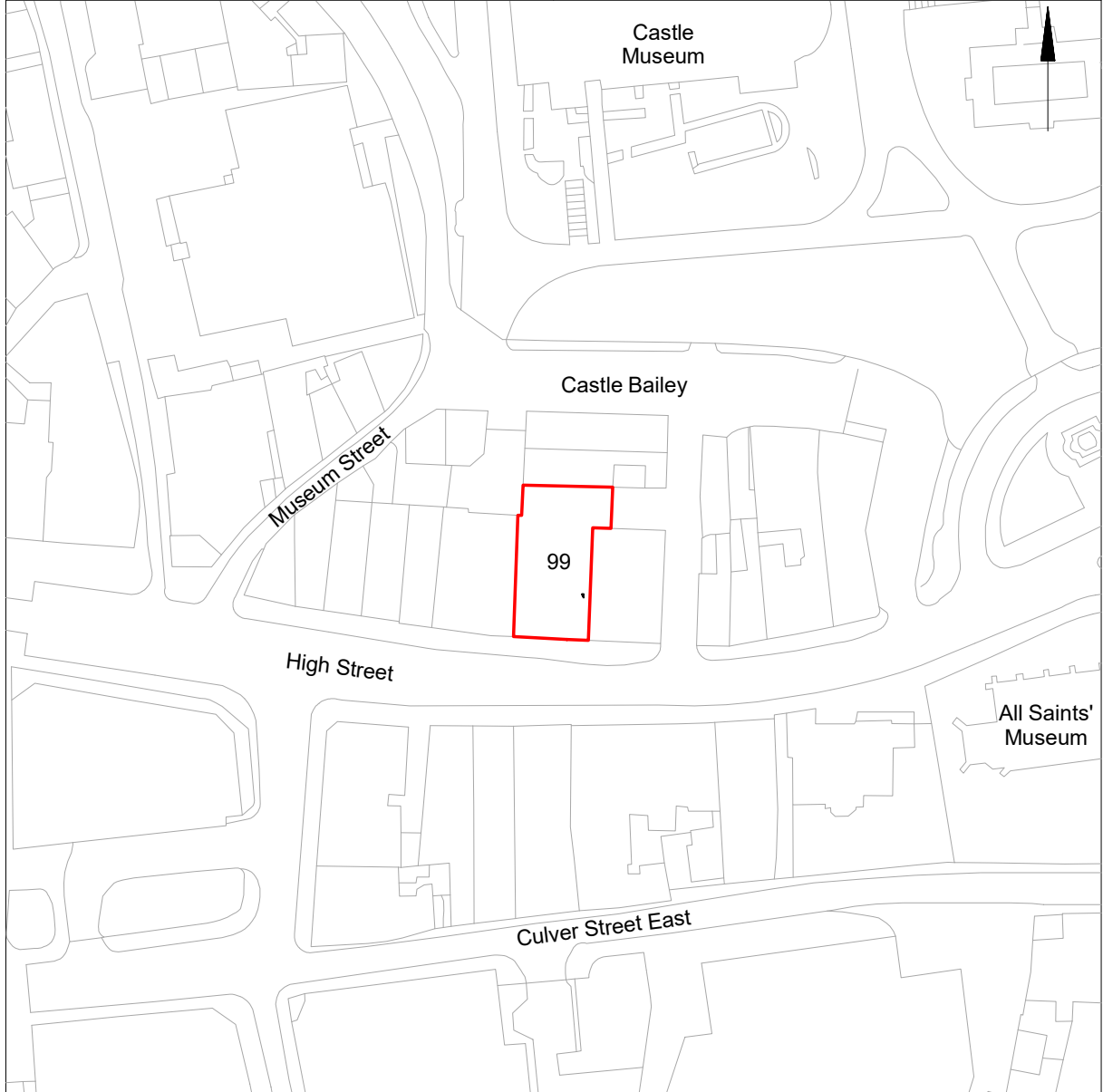
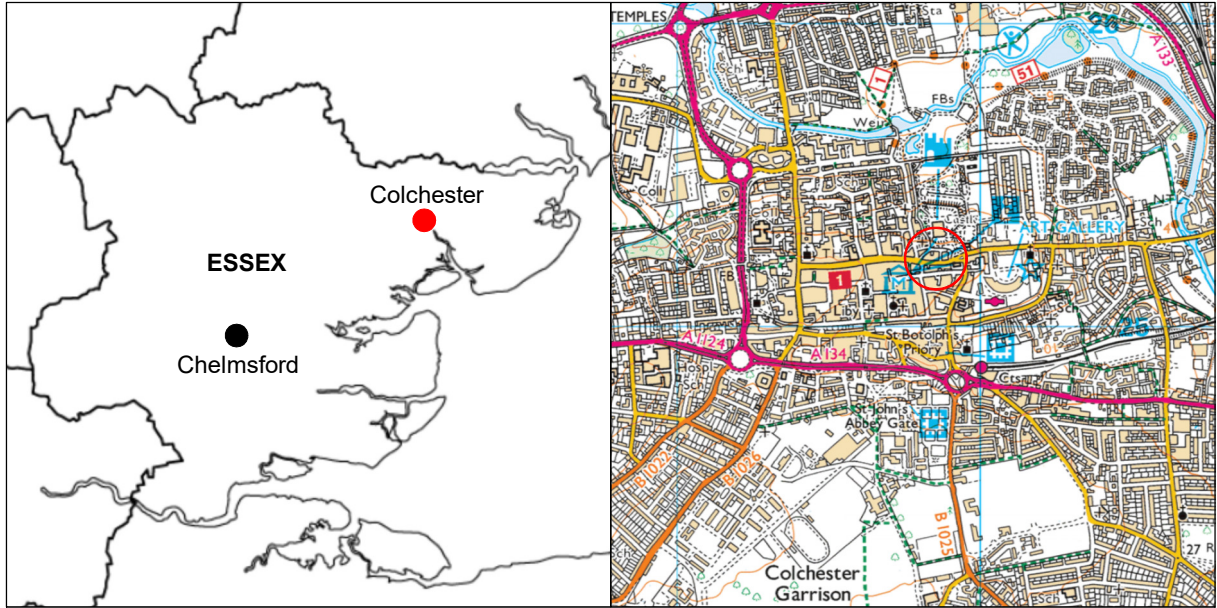
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Fig 1 Site location.



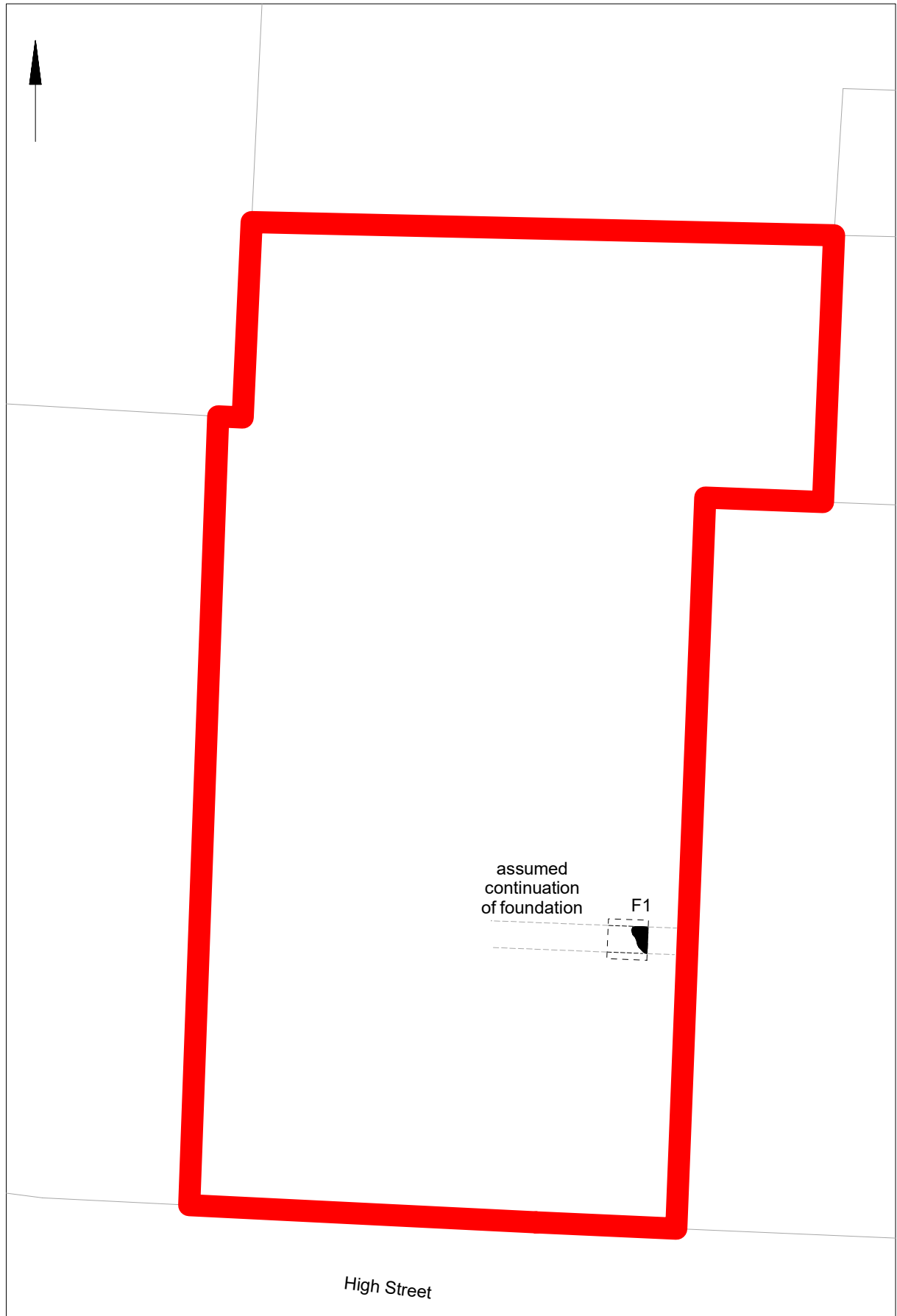


Fig 2 Location of foundation pit.

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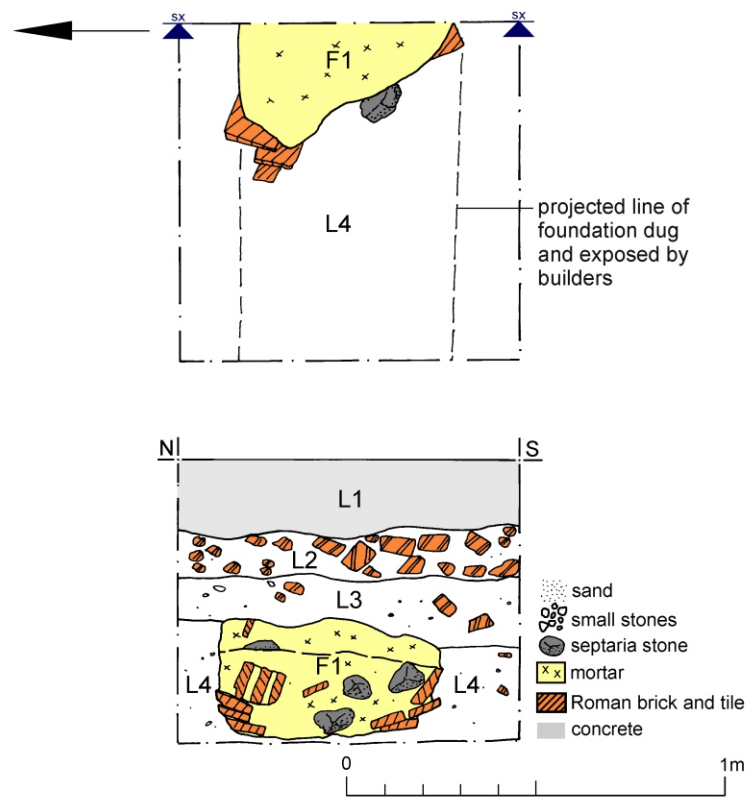


Fig 3 Manual plan and section showing foundation F1.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Archaeological monitoring at 99 High Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1TH	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 99857 25241 (centre)	Site code: CAT project ref.: 20/04h CHER ref: ECC4521 OASIS ref: colchest3-395059
Type of work: Monitoring	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 27th April 2020	Size of area investigated: 0.02ha
Location of curating museum: Colchester museum	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? no	Related CHER/SMR number: CHER MCC1544, MCC1561, MCC1732
Final report: CAT Report 1533	
Periods represented: Post-medieval	
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 99 High Street, Colchester, Essex following the exposure of a foundation during the excavation of a pit for a foundation pad to support a new flight of stairs. The foundation was approximately late 17th-century in date and was oriented east-west, lying on a similar alignment to the High Street itself. It is likely that the foundation represents the remains of the 'Norfolk Houses', built in 1780-83, which formerly lined the thoroughfare. Previous excavations in the area have revealed large amounts of 17th- and 18th-century clay pipe fragments and possible fragmentary remains of a kiln, suggesting that a clay pipe kiln once stood nearby, and further clay pipe remains – some embossed with the same manufacturers' stamp – were also recovered.</i>	
Previous summaries/reports: -	
CBC monitor: Jess Tipper	
Keywords: -	Significance: *
Author of summary: Dr Elliott Hicks	Date of summary: May 2020

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OASIS ID: colchest3-395059

Project details

Project name	Archaeological monitoring at 99 High Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1TH: April 2020
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 99 High Street, Colchester, Essex following the exposure of a foundation during the excavation of a pit for a foundation pad to support a new flight of stairs. The foundation was approximately late 17th-century in date and was oriented east-west, lying on a similar alignment to the High Street itself. It is likely that the foundation represents the remains of the 'Norfolk Houses', built in 1780-83, which formerly lined the thoroughfare. Previous excavations in the area have revealed large amounts of 17th- and 18th-century clay pipe fragments and possible fragmentary remains of a kiln, suggesting that a clay pipe kiln once stood nearby, and further clay pipe remains - some embossed with the same manufacturers' stamp - were also recovered.
Project dates	Start: 27-04-2020 End: 27-04-2020
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	2020/04h - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing
Monument type	FOUNDATION Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CLAY TOBACCO PIPE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Uncertain

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER 99 High Street, Colchester, Essex,
Postcode	CO1 1TH
Study area	0.81 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 99857 25241 51.889312827746 0.90464747521 51 53 21 N 000 54 16 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	none
Project design originator	Elliott Hicks
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Chris Lister
Type of sponsor/funding body	Owner

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Physical Archive ID	ECC4521
Physical Contents	"other"
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	ECC4521
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	ECC4521
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Photograph","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological monitoring at 99 High Street, Colchester, Essex: April 2020
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Hicks, E.
Other bibliographic details	CAT Report 1553
Date	2020
Issuer or publisher	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Place of issue or publication	Colchester
Description	A4 loose-leaf ring-bound
URL	http://cat.essex.ac.uk
Entered by	Dr Elliott Hicks (eh2@catuk.org)
Entered on	28 May 2020

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