



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7GZ

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**CAT Report 1780**

**Archaeological monitoring at 7  
Wellesley Road, Colchester, Essex,  
CO3 3HE: February 2022**

**Planning reference:** 212530

**CHER Event no.:** ECC4694

**OASIS ref.:** colchest3-502771

**Grid Reference:** TL 99043 24906 (centre)

**Number of site visits:** 1

**Dates of visit:** 14/02/2022

**Nature of the work:** Observation of groundworks for a rear single-storey extension.

**Reason for condition:** The development site is located immediately south-west of Colchester town centre within an area of Roman cemeteries known as the Lexden Cemetery (MCC7525).

**% of total seen:** 100% of the groundworks.

**Results:** The following groundworks were monitored by a CAT archaeologist in response to a brief set by Dr Simon Wood of Colchester Borough Council Planning Services.

Seven piles were drilled through a topsoil/subsoil layer (L1, c 1.20-1.50m thick, soft, moist, medium/dark yellow/grey/brown sandy loam) and into the natural sand (L2, c 1.20-1.50m below current ground level, soft moist light/medium yellow/orange/brown sand). The piles were 0.25m in diameter and drilled to a depth of approximately 10m.

No archaeological finds or features were encountered.



**Photograph 1** P5 – view east



**Photograph 2** Site shot – view north-east

**Recorded by:** Sarah Veasey ([sv@catuk.org](mailto:sv@catuk.org))

**Date:** 08/03/2022

**Checked by:** Philip Crummy ([pc@catuk.org](mailto:pc@catuk.org))

**Date:** 11/03/2022

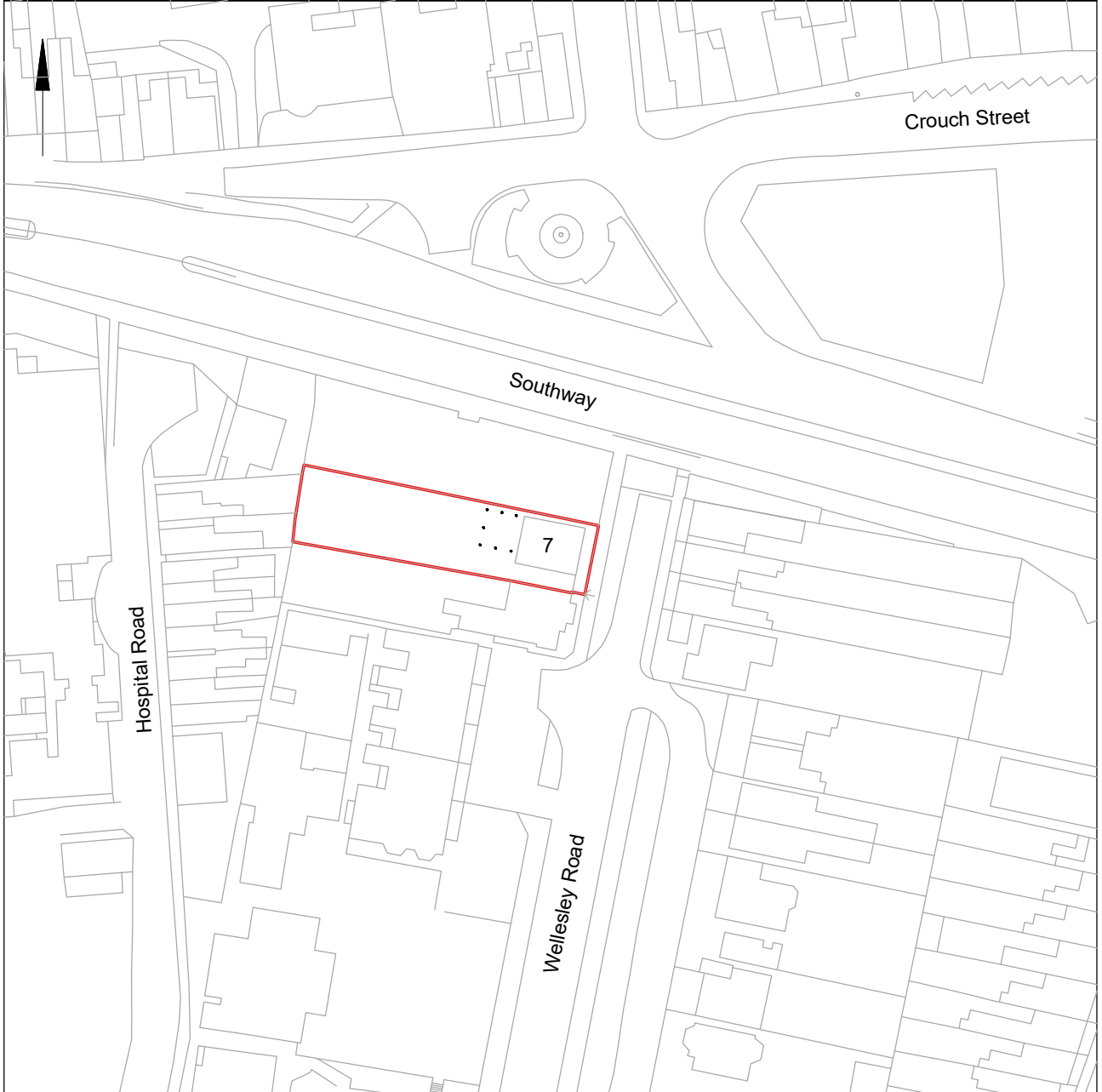
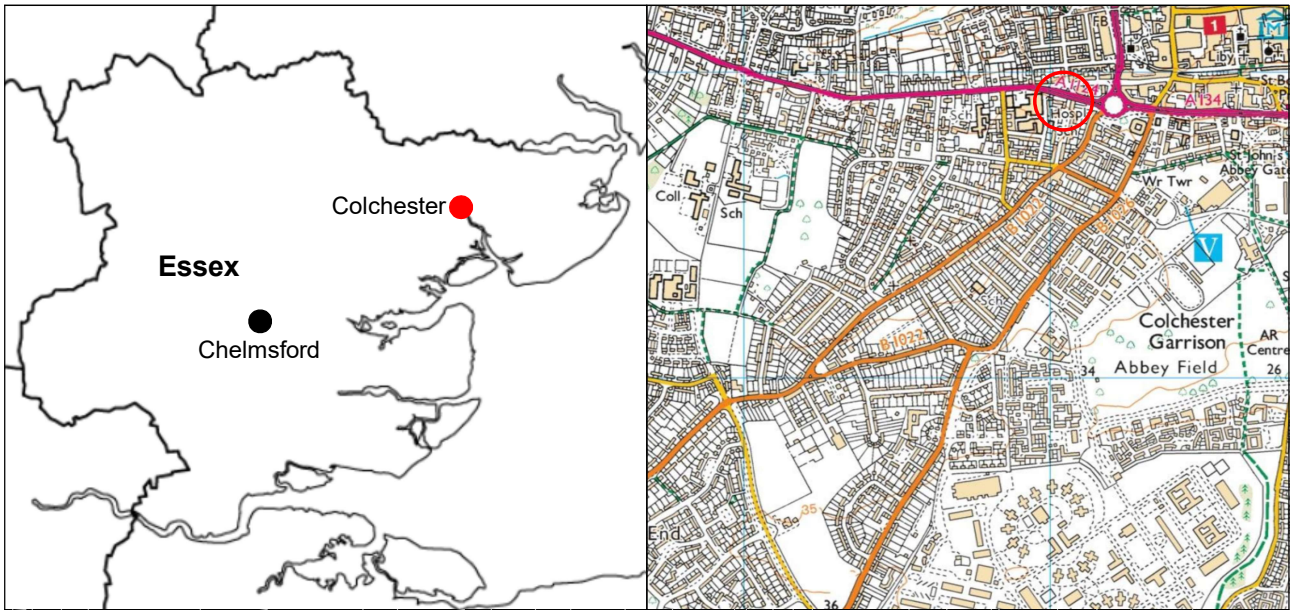
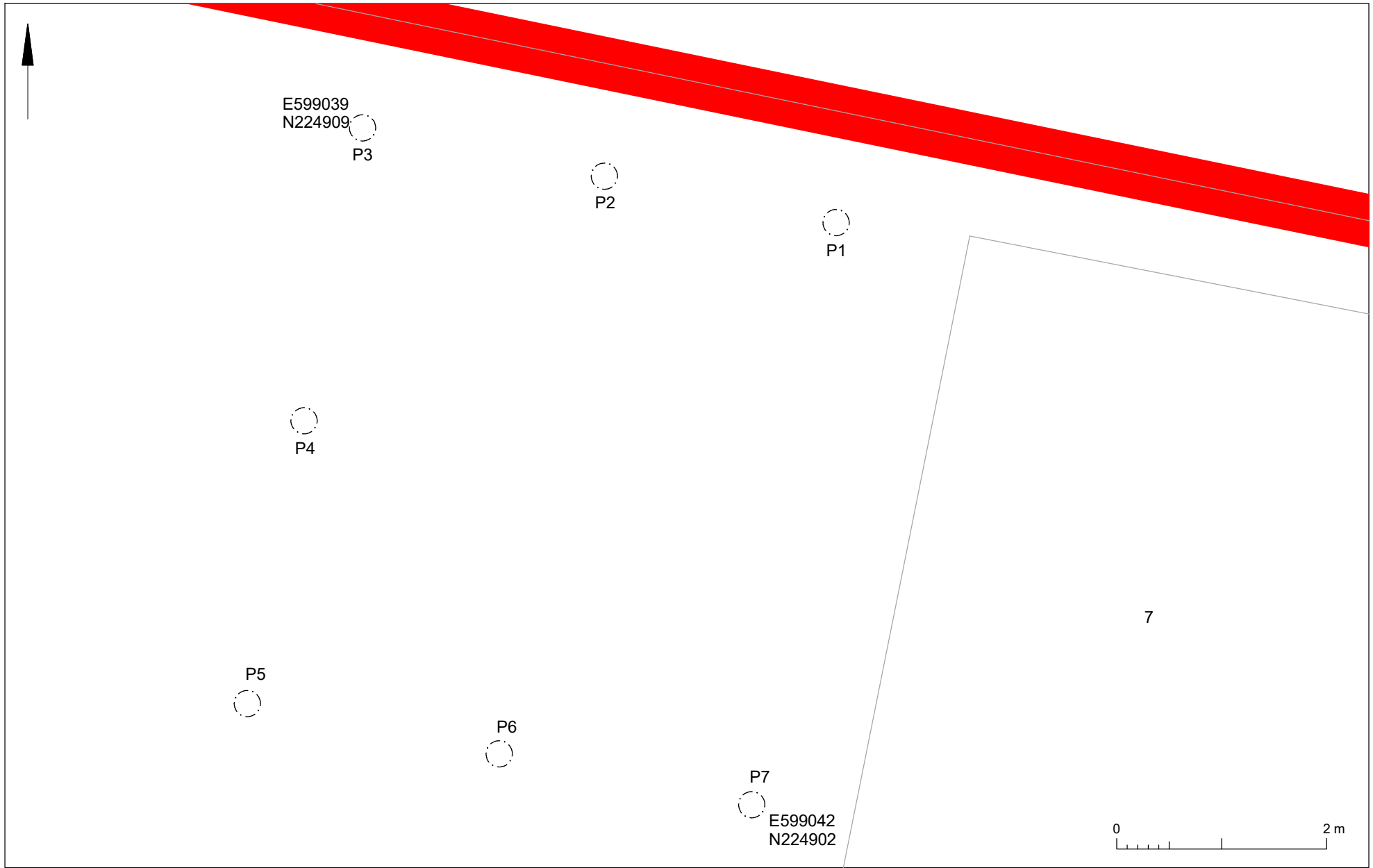


Fig 1 Site location.



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Fig 2 Results.

## Summary for colchest3-502771

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-502771
Project Name	Field Observation (Monitoring) at 7 Wellesley Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HE
Sitename	
Activity type	Field Observation (Monitoring)
Project Identifier(s)	2021/10o
Planning Id	212530
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	14-Feb-2022 - 14-Feb-2022
Location	7 Wellesley Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HE NGR : TL 99050 24902 LL : 51.887124, 0.890992 12 Fig : 599050,224902
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Colchester Parish : Colchester, unparished area
Project Methodology	Seven piles (25cm in diameter) were drilled under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist.
Project Results	Seven piles were drilled through a topsoil/subsoil layer (L1, c 1.20-1.50m thick, soft, moist, medium/dark yellow/grey/brown sandy loam) and into the natural sand (L2, c 1.20-1.50m below current ground level, soft moist light/medium yellow/orange/brown sand). The piles were 0.25m in diameter and drilled to a depth of approximately 10m.
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	Colchester Borough Council - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	S, Veasey
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - ECC4694
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive

# **Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological monitoring at 7 Wellesley Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HE**

**NGR:** TL 99043 24906 (centre)

**District:** Colchester

**Parish:** Colchester

**Planning reference:** 212530

**Client:** homeowner

**Curating museum:** Colchester

**CHER number:** tbc

**CAT project code:** 2021/10o

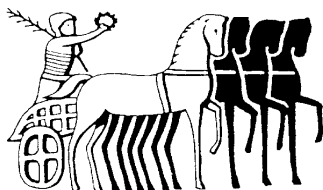
**OASIS project number:** colchest3-502771

**Contracts manager:** Chris Lister

**Fieldwork manager:** Adam Wightman

**CBC monitor:** Dr Simon Wood

**This WSI written:** 11.11.2021



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## Site location and description

The proposed development site is located to the immediate southwest of Colchester Town centre at 7 Wellesley Road, Colchester, Essex. (Fig 1). The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 99043 24906. The site is situated inside the Colchester-Lexden Road, The Avenue Conservation Area (DEX22988).

## Proposed work

The development comprises of the creation of a single storey extension to the rear of the existing dwelling and any associated groundworks.

## Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive and the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER/ECC numbers; accessible via Colchester Heritage Explorer (<https://colchesterheritage.co.uk/map>)).

The development site is located immediately to the southwest of Colchester town centre within the Late Iron Age *oppidum* of *Camulodunum*, to the southwest of the Roman walled town and within an area of Roman cemeteries termed 'the western cemetery' by Hull (1958), but more generally known as the Lexden cemetery (MCC7525). Extra mural cemeteries were quickly instigated from the mid to late 1st century AD in zones a few hundred metres beyond the town wall. These were initially focused either side of roads. The Lexden cemetery includes large concentrations of early to late Roman burials found adjacent to Lexden Road (the main Roman road leading from the walled town towards London and Braughing) leading out of Balcerne Gate as far west as The Avenue (Hull 1958 and CAR 11), including a high-status rectangular walled cemetery immediately north of and adjacent to the Roman road (Hall 1946). A number of Roman cremations, inhumations and tombstones have been discovered in the immediate vicinity (Hull 1958), a full discussion of which can be found in CAR 9.

At least 12 Roman burials have previously been found within the site of the former County Hospital. Inhumation graves (MCC1081; 2427) and cremations (MCC1081, 2498) along with high status tombstones (MCC1366; 2676) have also been found within the site during periods of hospital construction (CAR 9, 258). The main cluster of known burials were located at the Operating Theatre site. These were mainly urned cremations. However, several others have been found within the central northern area (northern car park) and the inference is that much of the site may have been associated with burial. Associated funerary sculpture from the site includes a famous stone sphinx and another bronze sphinx (MCC2133 and MCC7654) which were found in 1820/1 in the garden of the hospital, and are depicted on the 1876 Ordnance Survey map, just beyond the north-west corner of the hospital. These 'votive' sphinxes were probably associated with a high status mausoleum/tomb or shrine.

Over 700 Roman inhumations were excavated in the 1970s and 1980s in advance of the construction of the Police station on Butt Road (CAR 9, 4-202). Eighteen Roman inhumation burials were excavated in 1971 on the west side of the Maldon Road roundabout before the construction of Southway (CAR 9, 261). In 2005 CAT excavated the remains of a Roman temple-tomb at the Colchester Royal Grammar School (CAT Report 345).

There are also a number of burials recorded along Wellesley Road itself (Hull 1958, 203-5). These include a single Roman burial at 23 Wellesley Road (just to the south of the Colchester County High School), a Roman lead coffin from the west side of Wellesley Road (just north of the school), and a group of five Roman burials from the north-west corner of Wellesley Road. This last is also the reported find spot of the glass Colchester circus cup (CAR 8, 43-9). A find such as a glass cup would normally come from a cremation burial, so it would seem that the burials in and around Wellesley Road may include both Roman cremations and inhumations. In particular a cremation burial was recorded 20m southeast of the proposed development at the junction of Maldon Road and Beaconsfield Avenue.

An archaeological evaluation and subsequent excavation at the High School, 17 Wellesley Road revealed a fairly high level of activity. Evidence suggested the site may have been used as an open area for rubbish disposal during the Roman period. A large pit excavated during the evaluation phase included a number of cattle horn cores (CAT Report 352). Several patches of gravel were recorded that were thought to be a possible trackway leading to the Roman road junction under the Grammar School (CAT Report 373)

Following decanting of the former County Hospital, an archaeological excavation took place within the northern car park in 2020 (CAT Report forthcoming). Key results included a north-west/south-east alignment of linear Roman quarries through the disturbed north-western zone of the former car park. These appear to have been cut on the east side of the major Roman road leading to the Balkerne Gate, although no Roman metallurgy had survived the modern car park truncation. The quarries appear instead of a flanking roadside ditch and may have the source of gravels for the truncated away road agger. Perpendicular to the road alignment were a series of early phase Roman gullies that separated the central and south-western zones of the excavation into a series of plots – perhaps residential yard or garden plots. The most significant structure exposed took the form of square foundation (c 14m by 14m), with 0.8m wide foundations to a depth of c 1m in the south-east corner of the excavation between the Main Hospital and the Outpatients building. Internally part of the lower level of an opus signinum floor had survived truncation. The floor along with the large scale and substantial depth of the foundations has led CAT to suggest the building may have been of high status either as a two-storey temple tomb or a wing of a large town villa (the wings of which are sometimes interpreted as two-storey elements). Several other potential structures were noted within the central eastern area of the excavation. These were of two forms. The first are post-defined buildings, one of which appears to be square or rectangular formed of a series of quite large post-holes, whilst another to the south-east was comprised of smaller post-holes and is more problematic in terms of form. The other form are sunken-floored structures. A relatively low number of Roman burials (fourteen) were found during the excavation. Of these two were baby burials in pits, two pits contained pyre debris relating to cremations and ten were inhumation graves (two with coffin nails and hobnail shoes, four with coffin nails, two small graves with no nails, two with human bone surviving – including the prone burial). There other major component of the archaeological findings were a series of at least 17 Roman tile built features recorded as ovens within a clearly defined zone set back from and laid out parallel to the Roman Road (with one exception in the south-western area of the excavation). The form was generally rectangular with a long flue and a circular chamber (thirteen were brick/tile built examples of keyhole-shaped form, there was one larger brick/tile oven and three smaller, sub-round/square ovens, which were seemingly earlier than the larger, better constructed ovens).

Excavation of the Southern car park of the former County Hospital in 2021 identified 10 inhumations. A series of E-W ditches and a trackway were identified at the southern end of the southern block. The complex sequence of intercutting ditches identified to the north of the trackway (and beneath it), suggests that there was a long-lived boundary here in the Roman period. This may have taken the form of a driveway which was later metalled. A series of post-holes in the centre of the southern block indicated the presence of a probable post-built structure and two parallel fences lines. In addition, a number of pits, most of which were probably dug to extract sand and gravel for nearby trackways, were also recorded during the excavations (CAT Report forthcoming).

## **Planning background**

A planning application (212530) was made to Colchester Borough Council in September 2021 proposing the *single storey rear extension to create larger kitchen/dining/living space*.

As the site lies within an area highlighted by the CHER as having a high potential for archaeological deposits, an archaeological condition was recommended by the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA). The recommended archaeological condition is based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2019).



## **Requirement for work**

The required archaeological work is for an archaeological investigation of all groundworks (including services and landscaping). Details are given in a Project Brief written by CBCAA (CBC 2021).

Specifically:

The monitoring is being undertaken to identify and record any surviving archaeological deposits that may exist on site.

If unexpected remains are encountered the CBCAA will be informed immediately and the CBCAA will decide if amendments to the brief are required to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

In the exceptional circumstances that important, well-preserved mosaic floors (or similar remains) are discovered, which cannot otherwise be avoided by the development (and satisfactorily preserved in situ), a contingency will be required for the block-lifting of these archaeological remains, e.g. well-preserved mosaic remains and for subsequent conservation and presentation. A decision about the need for conservation and lifting of important archaeological remains will be made in consultation with specialist stakeholders (e.g. Historic England, Colchester Museum and Norfolk Museums Service, Conservation and Design Services).

The method and form of development will also be monitored to ensure that it conforms to the previously agreed locations and techniques upon which the brief is based. Any variations will be discussed with the CBCAA immediately.

## **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* (CIfA 2014a-c)
- East of England Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011) and the recent review updates on <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>
- relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2021)
- the Project Brief issued by the CBCAA (CBC 2021).

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

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

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

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. The curating museum will be notified of the details of the project and the event code, which will be used to identify the project archive when depositing at the end of the project.

## **Staffing**

The number of field staff for this project is estimated as follows: One CAT Officer for the duration of the groundworks.

## **Monitoring methodology**

There will be sufficient on-site attendance by CAT staff to maintain a watch on all contractors' ground works to record, excavate or sample (as necessary) any archaeological features or deposits. The investigation will involve monitoring of all groundworks and inspection of upcast soil.

All topsoil removal and ground reduction will be done with a toothless bucket.

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. 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.

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

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

## **Site surveying**

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**

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

Sampling strategies will address questions of:

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

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

Should any complex, or otherwise outstanding deposits be encountered, VF/LG will be asked

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

## Human remains

CAT follows the policy of leaving human remains *in situ* unless there is a clear indication that the remains are in danger of being compromised as a result of their exposure or unless advised to do so by the project osteologist or CBCAA.

CBCAA will be notified immediately if any human remains are encountered during the monitoring.

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. Human remains removed from site for analysis this may involve radiocarbon dating (see finds section).

Following Historic England guidance (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 the 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. Digital site photographs will be taken and archived as per Historic England guidelines (2015a).

## Finds

All significant finds will be retained.

All finds, where appropriate, will be washed and marked with site code and context number. CAT may use local volunteers to assist the CAT Finds Officer with this task.

Most of our finds reports are written internally by CAT Staff under the supervision and direction of Philip Crummy (Director) and Laura Pooley (Post-excavation Manager). This includes specialist subjects such as:

ceramic finds (pottery and ceramic building material): Matthew Loughton

animal bones: Alec Wade (or Adam Wightman, small groups only)

small finds, metalwork, coins, etc: Laura Pooley

non-ceramic bulk finds: Laura Pooley

flints: Adam Wightman

environmental processing: Bronagh Quinn

project osteologist (human remains): Meghan Seehra

or to outside specialists:

animal and human bone: Julie Curl (*Sylvanus*)

environmental assessment and analysis: Val Fryer / Lisa Gray

archaeometallurgy: David Dungworth

radiocarbon dating: SUERC Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, Glasgow

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:

flint: Hazel Martingell  
prehistoric pottery: Stephen Benfield / Nigel Brown / Paul Sealey  
Roman pottery: Stephen Benfield / Paul Sealey / Jo Mills / Gwladys Monteil  
Roman brick/tile: Ian Betts (MOLA)  
Roman glass: Hilary Cool  
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 CBCAA.

A contingency will be made in the budget for scientific assessment/analysis if suitable deposits are identified. This can include soil micromorphological and geochemical analysis of floors and dark earth deposits and/or absolute dating (such as archaeomagnetic and radiocarbon). The Historic England Regional Science Advisor will be consulted for advice.

## **Results**

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

An appropriate archive will be prepared to minimum acceptable standards outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (Historic England 2015b).

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

The report will contain:

- Location plan of the groundworks in relation to the proposed development. 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 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.

A PDF copy of the full report will be uploaded by CAT to the OASIS website and the Colchester Archaeological Trust's Online Report Library (<http://cat.essex.ac.uk/>), both of which are publicly accessible.

## **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 and CBCAA) within 3 months of the completion of the final publication report, with a summary of the contents of the archive supplied to CBCAA. Digital archives will be curated with the Archaeology Data Service, or similar accredited digital archive repository, that safeguard the long-term curation of digital records.

The CBCAA will be notified of the archiving timetable throughout the project and once deposition has occurred.

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

## **Monitoring**

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

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

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

CBCAA will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

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

## **References**

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 8	2nd ed 1995	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 8: Roman vessel glass from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by J Price
CAR 9	1993	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 9: Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by N Crummy, P Crummy & C Crossan
CAR 11	1995	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 11: Camunlodunum 2</i> by C F C Hawkes and P Crummy
CAT	2021	<i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 345	2006	<i>A Roman temple-tomb at Colchester Royal Grammar School, 6 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex: August-September 2005</i> , by H Brooks
CAT Report 352	2005	<i>An archaeological evaluation at Colchester High School, 17 Wellesley Road, Colchester, Essex: November-December 2005</i> , by K Orr
CAT Report 373	2006	<i>An archaeological excavation and watching brief at Colchester High School, 17 Wellesley Road, Colchester, Essex: February and May-June 2006</i> , by K Orr
CBCAA	2021	<i>Brief for Archaeological Monitoring at 7 Wellesley Road, Colchester</i> . By S Wood

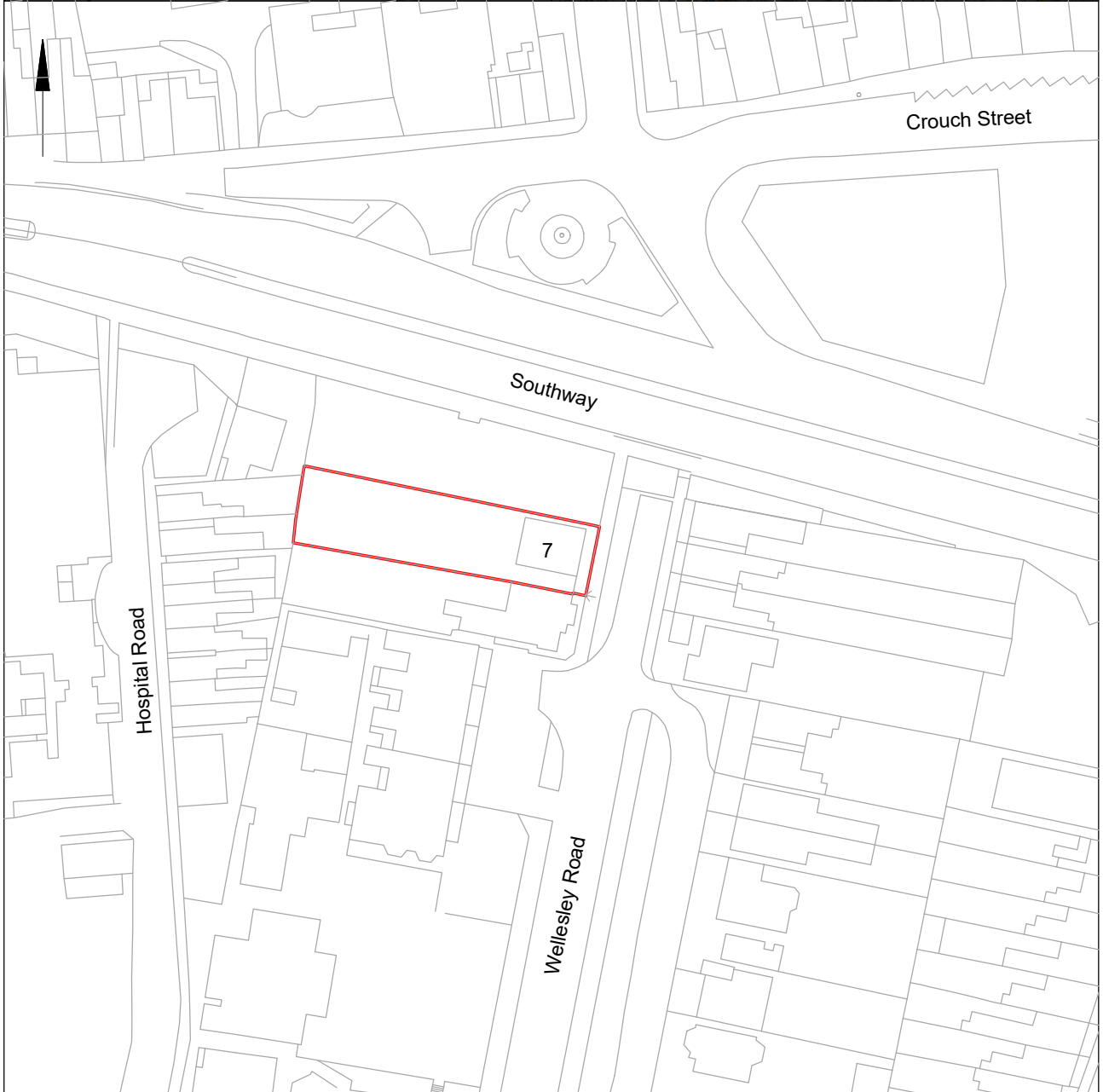
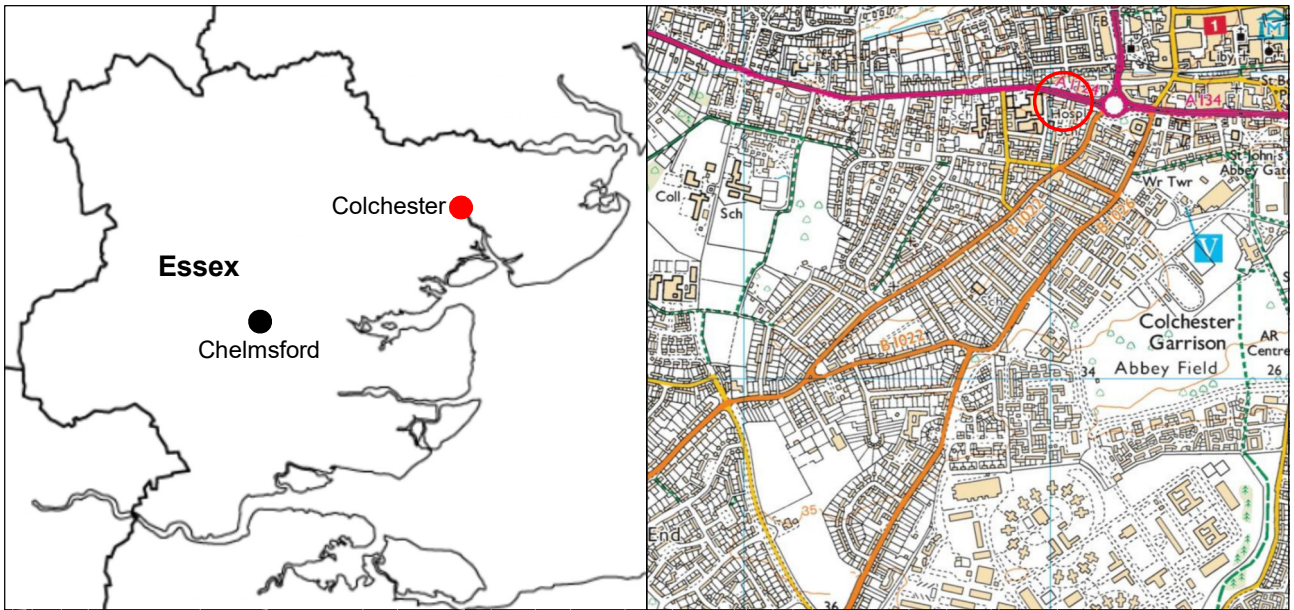
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief.</i> Revised October 2021
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.</i> Updated Oct 2020
CIfA	2014c	<i>Code of Conduct.</i> Revised Oct 2019
Crummy, P	1997	<i>City of Victory. The Story of Colchester – Britain's first Roman town</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA <b>14</b> ).
Hall, A F	1945	'A Roman walled cemetery at Colchester', in <i>Archaeological Journal</i> , 101 (1944), 69-90
Historic England	2015a	<i>Digital Image capture and File Storage: Guidelines for best practice.</i> By S Cole & P Backhouse
Historic England	2015b	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Historic England	2018	<i>The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project.</i> By S Mays, M Brickley and J Sidell
Hull, M R	1958	<i>Roman Colchester</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 <b>24</b> )
MHCLG	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework.</i> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

E Holloway



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Fig 1 Site location.

