

Colchester Archaeological Trust

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

Tel.: 01206 501785 Email.: services@catuk.org

CAT Report 1925

**Archaeological monitoring at
45 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex:
April 2023**

Planning reference: 182881

CHER Event no.: ECC4783

OASIS ref.: colchest3-515132

Grid Reference: TM 00884 12847 (centre)

Number of site visits: 3

Dates of visit: 11-13th April 2023

Nature of the work: Observation of groundworks for single-storey rear extension. Groundworks for the new garage took place in 2019 and were monitored by CAT (CAT Report 1776).

Reason for condition: The development is located within an area of known Roman occupation on Mersea Island.

% of total seen: 100% of the groundworks.

Results

The following groundworks were monitored by a CAT archaeologist in response to a brief originally set in 2019 by Dr Jess Tipper, formerly of Colchester Borough Council Planning Services.

The foundation trenches for the extension totalled 16.3m long, 0.45-0.6m wide and 1.2m deep. An area measuring 3.8m long, 0.6m wide and 0.35m deep was also excavated along the house wall to expose a service.

Two horizons were observed, a modern topsoil (L1, c 0.7m thick) sealed natural geological deposits (L2, identified at a depth of c 0.7m below current ground level).

L1 topsoil – soft, moist, dark grey/brown silty clay.

L2 natural – sand and gravel.

Nothing of archaeological significance was found, only modern services.



Photograph 1 Post-excavation site shot, looking south.



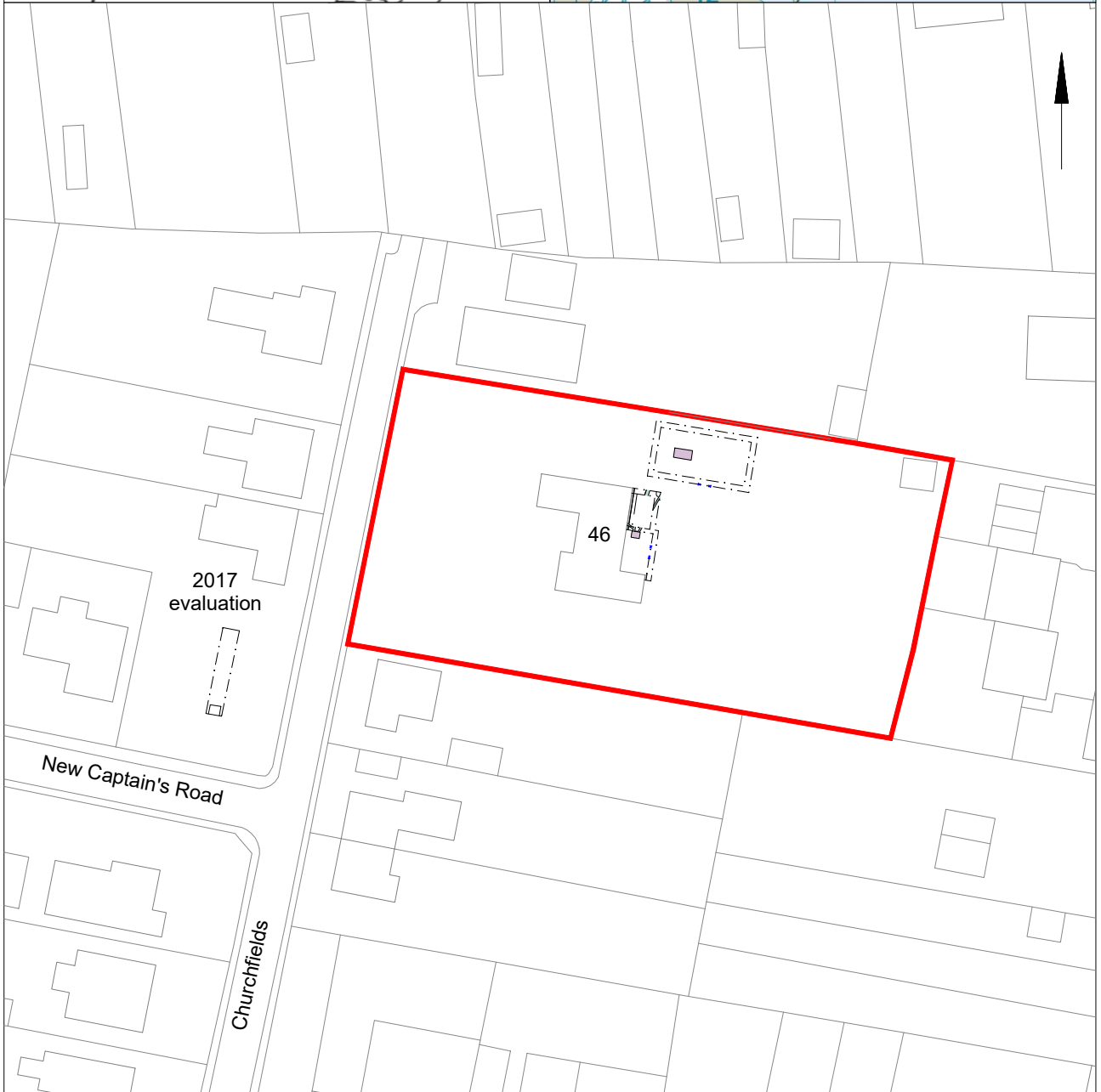
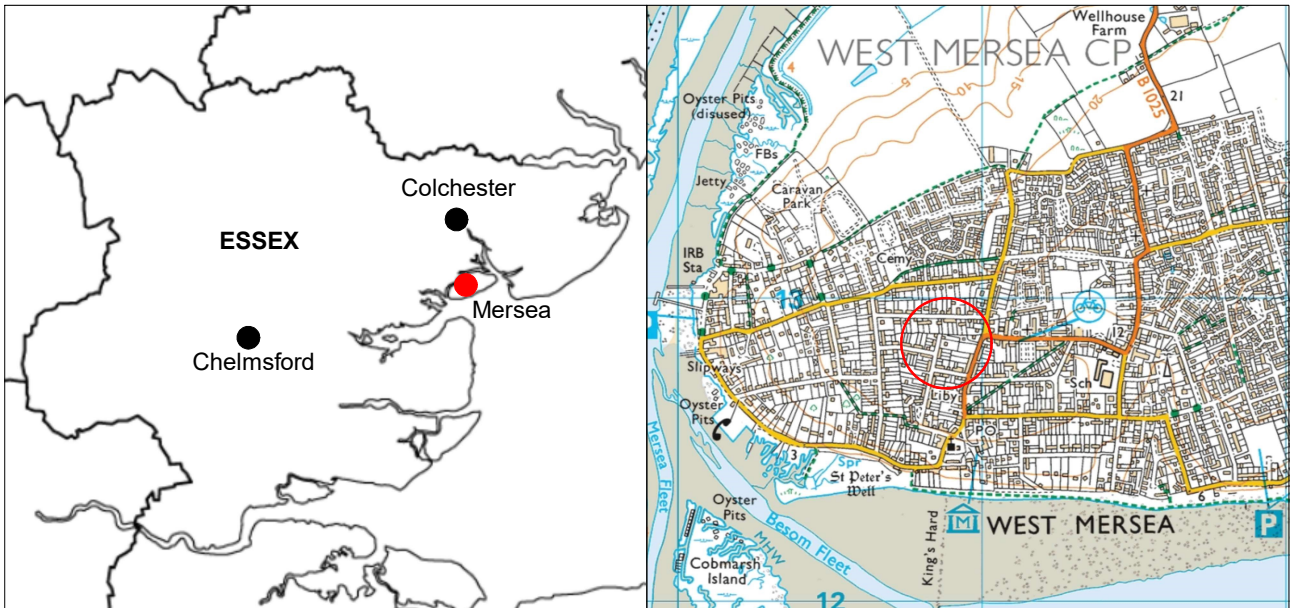
Photograph 2 Soakaway in north-eastern corner of foundation trenches.

Recorded by: Bronagh Quinn (bq@catuk.org)

Date: 17/04/2023

Checked by: Philip Crummy (pc@catuk.org)

Date: 10/5/2022



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Fig 1 Site location.

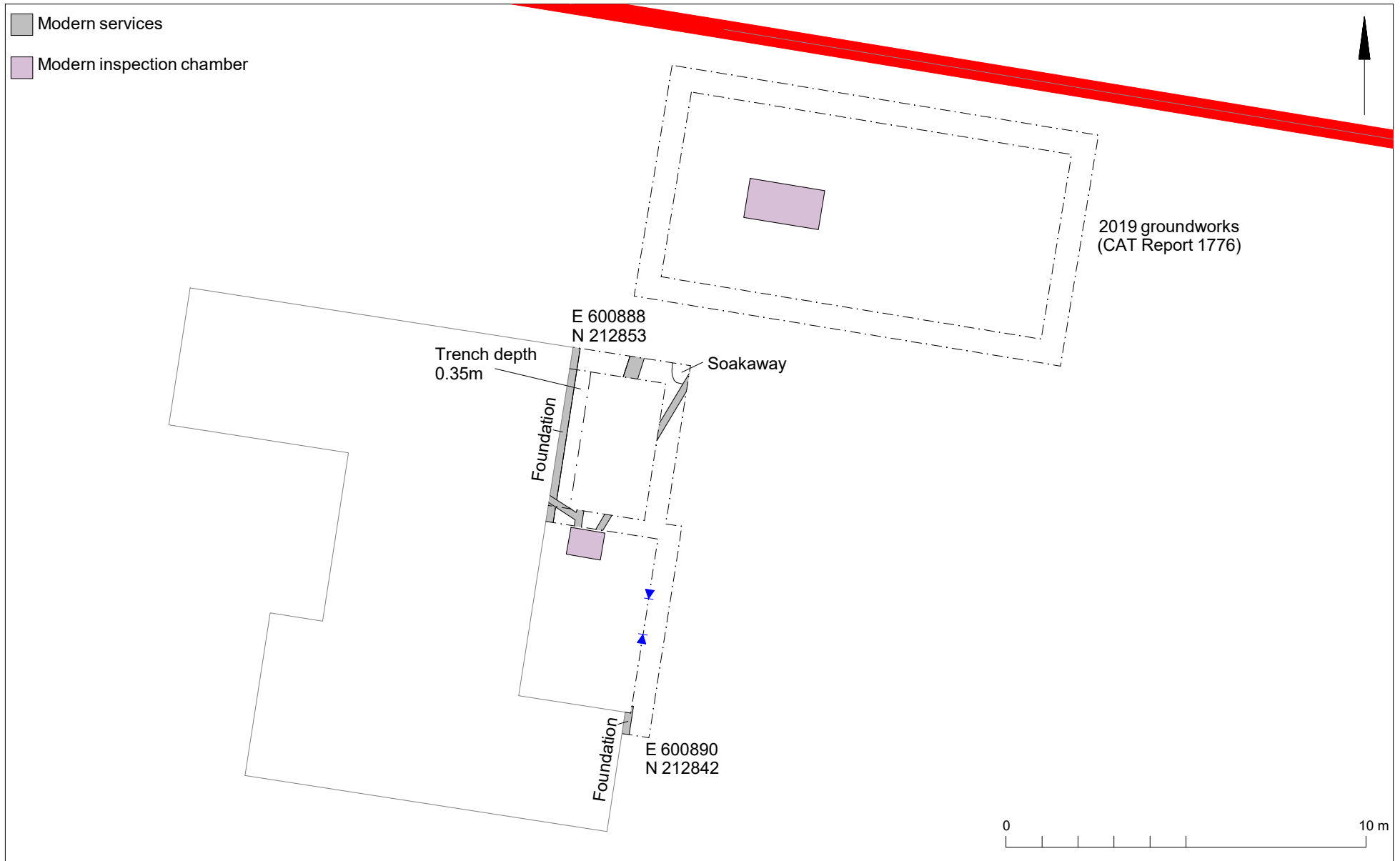


Fig 2 Results.

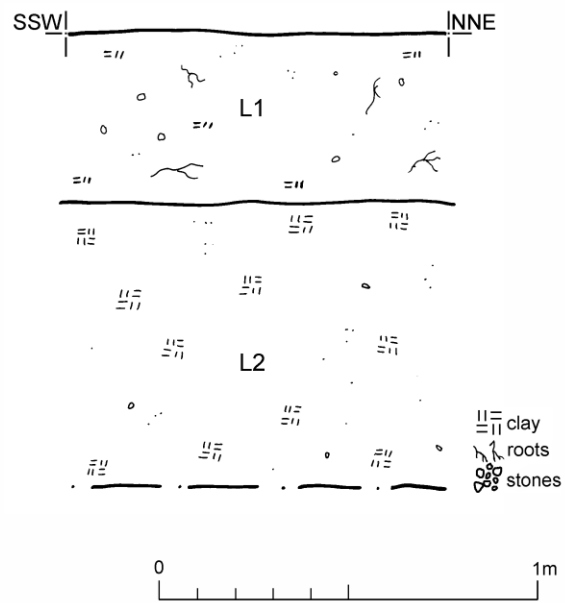


Fig 3 Representative section.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: 46 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8QN	
Parish: West Mersea	District: Colchester
NGR: TM 00884 12847 (centre)	Site code: CAT project ref.: 2019/03c CHER ref: ECC4783 OASIS ref: colchest3-515132
Type of work: Monitoring	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 11th-13th April 2023	Size of area investigated: 0.21ha
Location of curating museum: Colchester Museum	Funding source: Owner
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related CHER/SMR number: ECC4313
Final report: CAT Report 1925	
Periods represented: -	
Summary of fieldwork results: Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 46 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex during groundworks for a single-storey rear extension. Despite being in an area of Roman archaeology, no archaeological features or finds were exposed by the groundworks.	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Report 1776	
CBC monitor: Dr Richard Hoggett	
Keywords: -	Significance: -
Author of summary: Bronagh Quinn	Date of summary: April 2023

**Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)
for continuous archaeological recording at
46 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex,
CO5 8QN.**

NGR: TM 00884 12847 (centre)

Planning references: 182881

Commissioned by: Philip J Conway
On behalf of: Sue Cullum

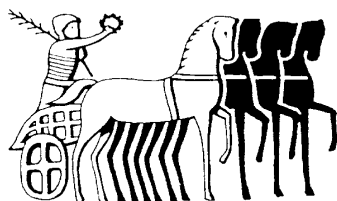
Curating museum: Colchester
Museum accession code: tbc

CHER number: ECC4313
CAT project code: 2019/03c
OASIS project number: colchest3-345013

Site manager: Chris Lister

CBC monitor: Jess Tipper

This WSI written: 07/03/2019 (revised)



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Site location and description

The proposed development site is located on the southwestern edge of Mersea Island at 46 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8QN (Fig 1). The site is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) TM 00884 12847.

Proposed work

The development involves the construction of a new single storey rear extension with a new garage and home office and any associated groundworks.

Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive, the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) accessed via the Colchester Heritage Explorer (www.colchesterheritage.co.uk):

The proposed development lies within an area of high archaeological potential, specifically, within an area of Roman occupation, revealed by multiple sightings of wall foundations and floors and medieval remains related to the nearby church and priory. Development along the High Street have included a small excavation at Bonheur in 1922, which revealed a Roman stone wall set in *opus signinum* (CHER MCC8837). Further work by Hull in 1927 revealed Roman pottery, a bone pin and an iron knife (CHER ECC3540, **VCH** vol 3 p161). To the immediate east of the current site on land between the High Street to Captains Lane a possible Roman wall was recorded (CHER MCC8860). Adjacent to this in 2016 a Roman ditch was recorded during a watching brief by Britannia Archaeology (CHER MCC10065). A University of Cambridge Higher Education Field Academy outreach project in the area involved a series 1m² test pits (TPs) in open spaces (mostly private gardens). At 5 Mersea Avenue c110m to the northeast, TP5 found a sherd of Roman and eight sherds of post-medieval pottery (MCC5729). TP3, at the rear of 32 St Peter's Road recovered Middle Iron Age and post-medieval pottery (MCC5727).

Approximately 344m to the south is West Mersea parish church (Church of St Peter and St Paul). The church is constructed of re-used Roman Kentish ragstone walls with Roman, and later brick. The earliest evidence (the lower part of the tower) appears to be 11th century in date (CHER MCC8909 & MCC4666). The area around the churchyard has had a number of sightings of finds. Cromwell Mortimer recorded seeing a mosaic and Roman remains in 1730 (**VCH** vol 3 p158-9). In 1896 Henry Laver observed a Roman wall (CHER MCC8858). CAT excavated three trial pits in 1991 prior to extensions to the church. Only some residual Roman finds were recorded (CAT Report 1000 vol 3).

To the west of the church is thought to be the location of a medieval priory. Although the exact location is uncertain, it was recorded to have been established in 1046 AD (CHER MCC8835). Within this area Roman pavement and tesserae have been noted on more than one occasion (CHER MCC8838, CHER MCC8858 & MCC8909). On the southern side of Coast Road a well is thought to relate to the priory (CHER MCC9356).

On land to the north of Church Road CAT was called out by the Curator of West Mersea Museum to record where workmen had uncovered human remains in trenches for a sewerage trench for a new bungalow. Although the workmen had removed all the bone (?3 partial skulls, some limb and vertebrae bones) before the first visit, on the second visit the location of a human skull was recorded. The skeletal remains were interpreted as medieval in date. It was also noted fragments of daub as well as Roman tile/brick fragments were seen in the backfill (CAT Report 1000 vol 3).

CAT carried out a series of work c 377m to the southeast at 20 Yorick Road. The rear of the property includes the location of a Roman *mausoleum* (CHER MCC8355 Scheduled Monument no. 1002195). An exploratory trench was undertaken to assess the exact location and condition of the *mausoleum* (CHER MCC2973, CAT Report 255). Followed by a watching brief exposing part of a Roman wall foundation (CHER MCC5406, CAT Report 330).

Several sites CAT have overseen during watching briefs in the area have proven devoid of any archaeological features or finds, including 63 Churchfields (CAT Report 1152), 6 High Street (CAT Report 576), 4 Meadow Lane (CHER MCC5553, CAT Report 420), 6 Meadow Lane (CAT Report 629), The Blackwater Hotel Church Road (CHER MCC5291, CAT Report 223), Howard's Cottage, 12a Church Road (CAT Report 1000 vol 3). It has been noted in some of these reports however that the land appeared to have comprised of made-up ground thought to be dated to the 1960s (8 High Street, CAT Report 118).

Planning background

A planning application was made to Colchester Borough Council in November 2018 (application No.182881) *proposing single storey rear extension and new garage and home office.*

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 2018).

Requirement for work

The required archaeological work is for continuous archaeological monitoring and recording of all groundworks. Details are given in a Project Brief written by CBCAA (CBC 2019).

Specifically:

The monitoring and recording 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.

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 2018)
- the Project Brief issued by the CBCAA (CBC 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 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 alongside a project or site code from the curating museum. This code will be used to identify the project archive when it is deposited at the curating museum.

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.

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

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. EH Regional 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 or CBCAA. 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 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.

Matthew Loughton (CAT) normally writes our finds reports. Some categories of finds are automatically referred to other CAT specialists:

small finds, metalwork, coins, etc: Laura Pooley

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

flints: Adam Wightman

or to outside specialists:

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

environmental processing and reporting: Val Fryer / Lisa Gray

conservation of finds: staff at Colchester Museum / Laura Ratcliffe (LR Conservation)

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

Roman brick/tile: Ernest Black / Ian Betts (MOLA)

Roman glass: Hilary Cool

Prehistoric pottery: Stephen Benfield / Paul Sealey / Nigel Brown

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 absolute dating of appropriate finds/deposits

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* (English Heritage 2006).

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

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.

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

Brown, D	2007	<i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i>
CAT	2018	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 118	2001	An archaeological watching brief at 8 High Street, West Mersea, Essex: December 2000. By K Orr
CAT Report 223	2003	An archaeological evaluation at the Blackwater Hotel, Church Road, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex: March 2003. By L Pooley
CAT Report 255	2004	An archaeological evaluation at 20 Yorick Road, West Mersea, Essex: November 2003. By B Holloway
CAT Report 330	2005	An archaeological watching brief at 20 Yorick Road, West Mersea, Essex: July 2005. By B Holloway
CAT Report 596	2010	An archaeological watching brief on land to the south of 'Serenity' 6

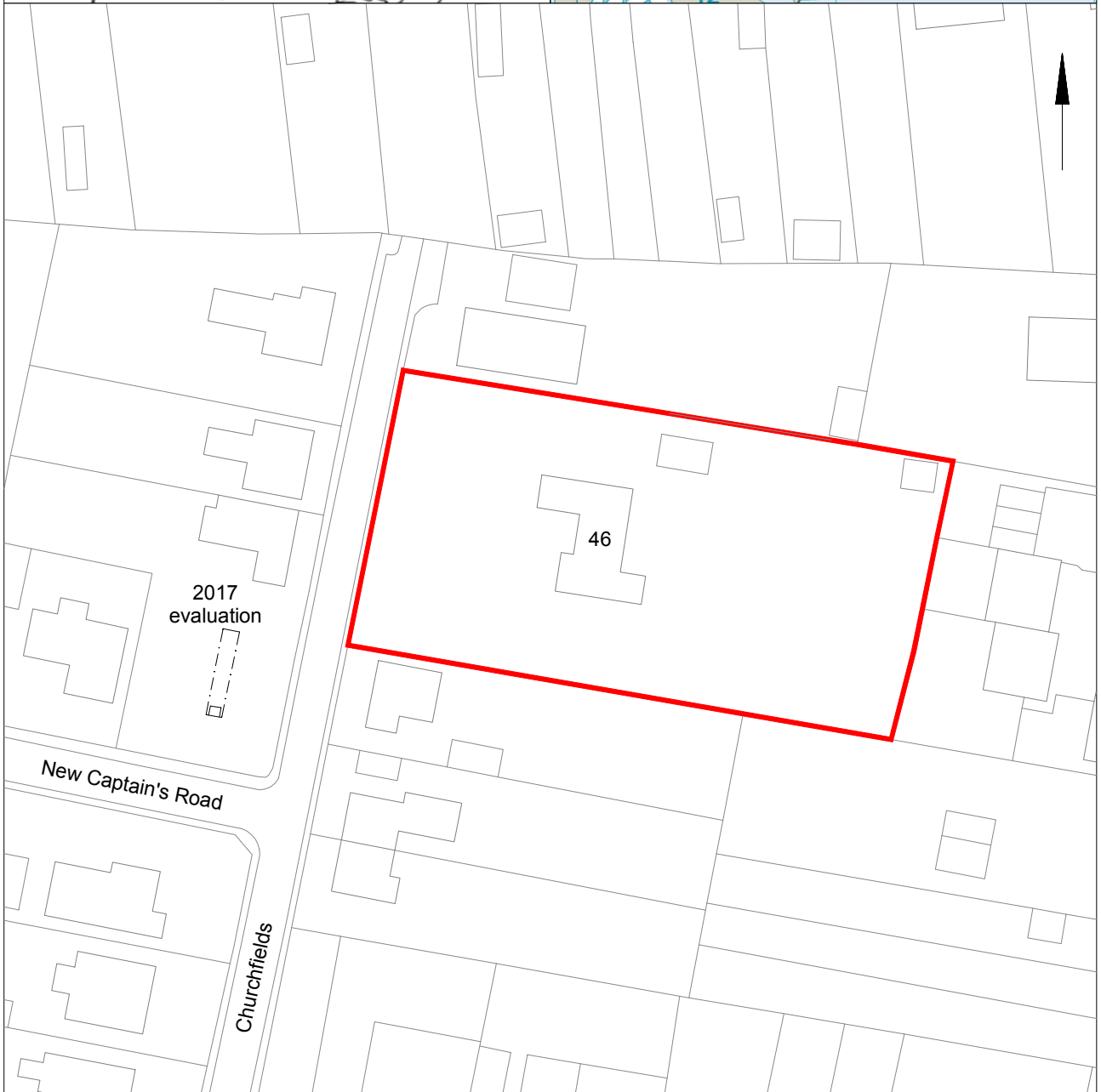
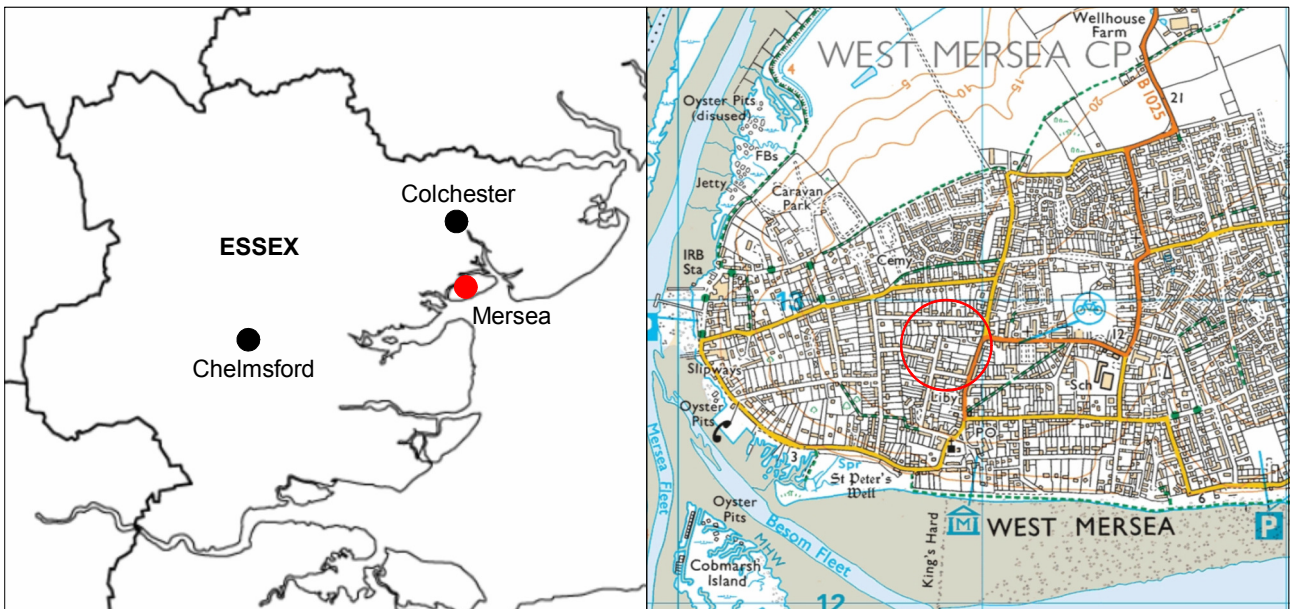
CAT Report 629	2012	High Street, West Mersea, Colchester: July 2010. By A Wightman Archaeological monitoring (watching brief) At 6 Meadow Lane, West Mersea, Essex September 2011 – February 2012. By B Holloway
CAT Report 1000	forthcoming	<i>A miscellany of unpublished Colchester and Essex sites: 1984-2000</i> (sites not published in any Colchester Archaeological Report, or in the CAT Report Series from 1997) by H Brooks
CAT Report 1152	2017	<i>Archaeological evaluation at 63 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8QN-August 2017.</i> By E Hicks
CBCAA	2019	<i>Brief for continuous archaeological monitoring and recording at 46 Churchfields, West mersea, CO5 8QN.</i> By J Tipper
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
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
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.

E Holloway



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Fig 1 Site location.



Summary for colchest3-515132

OASIS ID (UID)	colchest3-515132
Project Name	Archaeological Monitoring at 46 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8QN
Sitename	46 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8QN
Activity type	Field Observation (Monitoring)
Project Identifier(s)	19/03c
Planning Id	182881
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	11-Apr-2023 - 13-Apr-2023
Location	46 Churchfields, West Mersea, Essex, CO5 8QN NGR : TM 00884 12847 LL : 51.7782232116053, 0.910619685371702 12 Fig : 600884,212847
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Colchester Parish : West Mersea
Project Methodology	Archaeological monitoring was undertaken in line with the Brief and Written Scheme of Investigation.
Project Results	The foundation trenches for the extension totalled 16.3m long, 0.45-0.6m wide and 1.2m deep. An area measuring 3.8m long, 0.6m wide and 0.35m deep was also excavated along the house wall to expose a service. Two horizons were observed, a modern topsoil (L1, c 0.7m thick) sealed natural geological deposits (L2, identified at a depth of c 0.7m below current ground level). Nothing of archaeological significance was found, only modern services.
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	Colchester Borough Council - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	B, Quinn
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - ECC4783
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;