

**An archaeological evaluation at  
19 Beverley Road, Colchester, Essex  
February 2003**

**report prepared by  
Carl Crossan**

**on behalf of  
Mr G and Mrs H Prince**

NGR: TL 98655 24844  
CAT project ref.: 03/2d  
Planning application no: F/COL/02/1822  
Colchester Museums accession code: 2003-85



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**CAT Report 224**  
April 2003

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## **1 Summary**

A small evaluation trench was dug at the rear of 19 Beverley Road, Colchester, Essex, and a Roman gravel surface was observed. This lies on the projected course of the main west road from Roman Colchester (Road 1 in *CAR 11*, fig 2.32). In relation to previous plots, the area exposed during this evaluation appears to belong to the northern track of this three-track road.

## **2 Introduction**

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching which was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) at the rear of 19 Beverley Road on 24th and 25th February 2003.
- 2.2 This report follows a brief written by the Archaeological Officer for Colchester Borough Council in December 2002.
- 2.3 The site is located approximately 700m to the west of Colchester town centre, on the east side of Beverley Road (Fig 1: NGR TL 98655 24844). The property, a private residence, is currently undergoing renovation (planning application no F/COL/02/1822).
- 2.4 The evaluation was prompted by a proposal to build a rear conservatory and steps from the lower ground floor to the rear garden of the property.
- 2.5 This report follows the standards set out in the Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1999, updated 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996, updated 2002), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation* (1999).

## **3 Archaeological background**

The site is located within the area of the 'West Cemetery' of the Roman town, adjacent to the main road to London, which would have been lined with funerary monuments. The northern edge of this road traverses the southern corner of the garden affected by this development. The immediate area has produced many of Colchester's more spectacular remains, ranging from early Roman military gravestones to later cremations. An outstanding example was the discovery, in 1868, of the tombstone of the Roman centurion Facilis (UAD no 992 and ESMR 11857) in the front garden of 17 Beverley Road. These discoveries are described in Hull (1958) and *CAR 9*.

## **4 Aim**

The aim of the archaeological investigation was to locate, identify and assess the quality and extent of any surviving archaeological remains prior to the determination of the planning application for the site.

## **5 Methods**

- 5.1 A single L-shaped trench, 1m wide and extending 2m in each direction, was excavated by hand to a maximum depth of 1.55m at the location shown in Figure 2.
- 5.2 Individual layer and feature records were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.3 Original plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and trench sections at 1:10.
- 5.4 Finds were registered on CAT record sheets and assigned numbers according to context. Finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context.
- 5.5 Ordnance Datum levels for the trench were established using the 35.46m Ordnance Survey benchmark at the north-west corner of 20 Beverley Road, Colchester, Essex.
- 5.6 Colour archival photographs were taken with a digital camera.

## 6 Results

The trench stratigraphy is listed in section 13 and illustrated in Figures 3-4.

A modern deposit of garden topsoil (Layer or L1) was removed to reveal the base of a modern north-south brick wall running across the centre of the trench (Feature or F1). Excavation continued to either side of the wall, exposing modern make-up (L2 and L7) above a 0.5m-deep layer of greyish brown sandy loam (L3) which appeared to be a long-term soil accumulation with occasional Roman tile fragments in the lower part of the layer. Beneath this was a compacted deposit of coarse sand with occasional stones and oystershell inclusions (L4), probably dumped make-up. This material was found at overall depths of 0.85m to 1m and seems to be the uppermost surviving Roman layer. L4 had been laid on a 3cm-thick layer of compacted gravel metalling (L5) which lay at an overall depth of 1.3m. Excavation in the area east of the wall F1 ceased at this point. To the west of F1, the compact gravel (L5) was found to seal a 6cm to 8cm deposit of coarse sand (L8). Below this was a thin layer of pale grey silt (L9), resting on natural sand subsoil (L10) which was exposed at an overall depth of 1.45m. An east-west linear feature (F2), possibly a ditch, was revealed by the removal of the post-Roman accumulation L3.

## 7 Finds

### 7.1 Pottery

by Stephen Benfield

Context	Find no	Notes
L1	1	Very small quantity of Roman pottery (3 sherds): 1 sherd samian Drag form 18/31 or 31 - 2nd-3rd century 1 sherd Cam 37 bowl with bead rim - later 2nd-3rd century 1 sherd Roman coarse oxidised ware (Fabric DJ)
L3	2	Quantity of Roman pot (21 sherds): 2 sherds samian, 1 footring and 1 sherd Drag form 33 - probably 2nd century 1 sherd mortaria (Fabric TZ) 1 sherd fine oxidised ware (Fabric DZ) 3 sherds black-burnished ware type 2 (Fabric GB): 1 Cam 37 bead rim - later 2nd-3rd century 1 Cam 40A - early 2nd-mid to late 3rd century 1 bowl with grooved rim - probably late 2nd-3rd century 1 sherd Cam 199 cheese press base - 1st-early 3rd century (Fabric DJ)  coarse grey ware (Fabric GX): 1 sherd jar probably large Cam 268 - early 2nd-late 3rd/early 4th century 1 sherd bowl with triangular bead rim 2 sherds (Fabric HZ)
L4	4	Small quantity of Roman pottery (8 sherds): 1 sherd Dressel 20 amphora - 1st-early 3rd century (Fabric AJ) 1 sherd Cam 498 mortaria - late 2nd-3rd century (Fabric TZ) 1 sherd black-burnished type grey ware Cam 40B - early 2nd-mid to late 3rd century (Fabric GX) 1 sherd grey ware folded beaker, probably Cam 401 - 2nd-3rd century (Fabric GX) 2 sherds from large storage jars - 1st-3rd century or later (Fabric HZ) 2 other Roman grey ware sherds (Fabric GX)
L6, fill of F2	7	Small quantity of Roman pottery (8 sherds): 1 sherd mica-dusted Fabric ON - probably 1st-2nd century 1 grey ware rim sherd, Cam 268 jar - early 2nd-late 3rd or early 4th century (Fabric GX) 6 other Roman grey ware sherds (Fabric GX)

**Notes:** Vessel form numbers refer to the Camulodunum Roman pottery type series (Hull 1958; Hull 1963). Letter fabric codes refer to *CAR 10*:

AJ	Dressel 20 amphora
DJ	coarse oxidised and related wares
EZ	other fine colour-coat wares, mostly white/buff
GB	black-burnished ware, type 2 (BB2)
GX	other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares
HZ	large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares
ON	mica-gilt wares
TZ	Colchester mortaria and mortaria imported from the Continent

Form and fabric dates refer to *CAR 10*.

## 7.2 Small finds

*by Nina Crummy*

Finds no 5. L3. Illegible copper-alloy coin, weight 4.61 g, diameter 22.5 mm. Probably a 1st century AD *as*, but possibly later.

Finds no 6. L4. Damaged copper-alloy stud, the shank having been forced through the cap. The cap is flat, with a short rim, angled outwards slightly. Diameter 14 mm, length 7 mm.

## 8 Discussion and conclusions

The evaluation trench lies immediately to the east of the site of larger-scale excavations in the grounds of the Colchester Royal Grammar School, carried out by Mr A F Hall in the 1930s (summarised in Hull 1958, pp 4-8). Of particular relevance to the results of this evaluation is the work at Gurney Benham House (*ibid*, pp 6-7), where a Roman three-tracked east-west road (Road 1 in *CAR 11*, fig 2.32) was examined and its course projected to extend across the garden of 19 Beverley Road. In relation to the earlier road plots, the metalling (L5) revealed in the evaluation trench appears to belong to the northern track, which is thought to have been a footway. This metalling is stratigraphically early and lay below a dumped compacted coarse sandy material (L4), possibly make-up for a later phase of metalling which was subsequently stripped. The metalling and underlying soils produced no datable finds, but pottery from the dumped L4 suggests that its deposition did not occur before the later 2nd century AD.

The linear feature F2 is presumably a ditch which was cut between the northern and central tracks of the road, although other interpretations are possible since the profile revealed in the evaluation trench is incomplete and seems steep for a ditch: a similarly steep profile was recorded at the north side of the central track at Gurney Benham House, where evidence of wooden revetting was also recorded (Hull 1958, fig 2, section III).

The uppermost level of archaeological sensitivity was found to lie at an overall depth of 0.85m (34.66m OD).

## 9 Acknowledgements

The Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank the site owners, Mr and Mrs Prince, and their architect Andrew Claiborne of Plaiter Claiborne, for commissioning and funding the evaluation; also Martin Winter of Colchester Borough Council for monitoring the work. The excavation and recording was carried out by Nigel Rayner in conjunction with Howard Brooks of Colchester Archaeological Trust.

## 10 References

- CAR 9** 1993 *Colchester Archaeological Report 9, Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-88*, by N Crummy, P Crummy & C Crossan
- CAR 10** 1999 *Colchester Archaeological Report 10, Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-1986*, by R P Symonds & S Wade
- CAR 11** 1995 *Colchester Archaeological Report 11, Camulodunum 2*, by C F C Hawkes & P Crummy
- Hull, M R 1958 *Roman Colchester*, RRCSAL, **20**
- Hull, M R 1963 *Roman potters' kilns of Colchester*, RRCSAL, **21**

## 11 Glossary and abbreviations

context	specific location in the ground, especially where finds are concerned
modern	19th and 20th centuries
NGR	National Grid Reference
OD	Ordnance Datum: height above mean sea level mark established by the Ordnance Survey at Newlyn, Cornwall
residual	something out of its original context (eg a Roman coin in a Victorian pit)
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 430
septaria	local stone used as building material in the Roman period
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database

## 12 Archive deposition

The archive will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museums where it will be held under museum accession code 2003-85.

## 13 Site context list

Context	Description	Period
L1	Dark grey sandy loam with occasional small stones.	modern
L2	Mixed reddish brown sandy gravel and greyish brown sandy loam.	modern
L3	Greyish brown sandy loam with common small stones and occasional Roman tile fragments in the lower half of the layer.	post-Roman to modern
L4	Compact brownish yellow sand with common grit, oystershell fragments and occasional small and medium stones.	Roman
L5	Compact small and medium rounded stones.	Roman
L6	Dark brown slightly loamy sand with common oystershell and charcoal flecks and minute fragments of tile. Fill of F2.	probably Roman
L7	Dark yellowish brown slightly clayey loam with occasional small and medium stones.	modern
L8	Yellowish brown coarse sand.	Roman
L9	Pale grey silt.	natural?
L10	Pale yellowish brown silty clay.	natural
F1	Red brick on concrete foundation.	modern
F2	Linear feature, fill is L6.	probably Roman

**Distribution list:**

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Martin Winter, Archaeology Officer for Colchester Borough Council  
Essex Heritage Conservation Record (EHCR), Essex County Council

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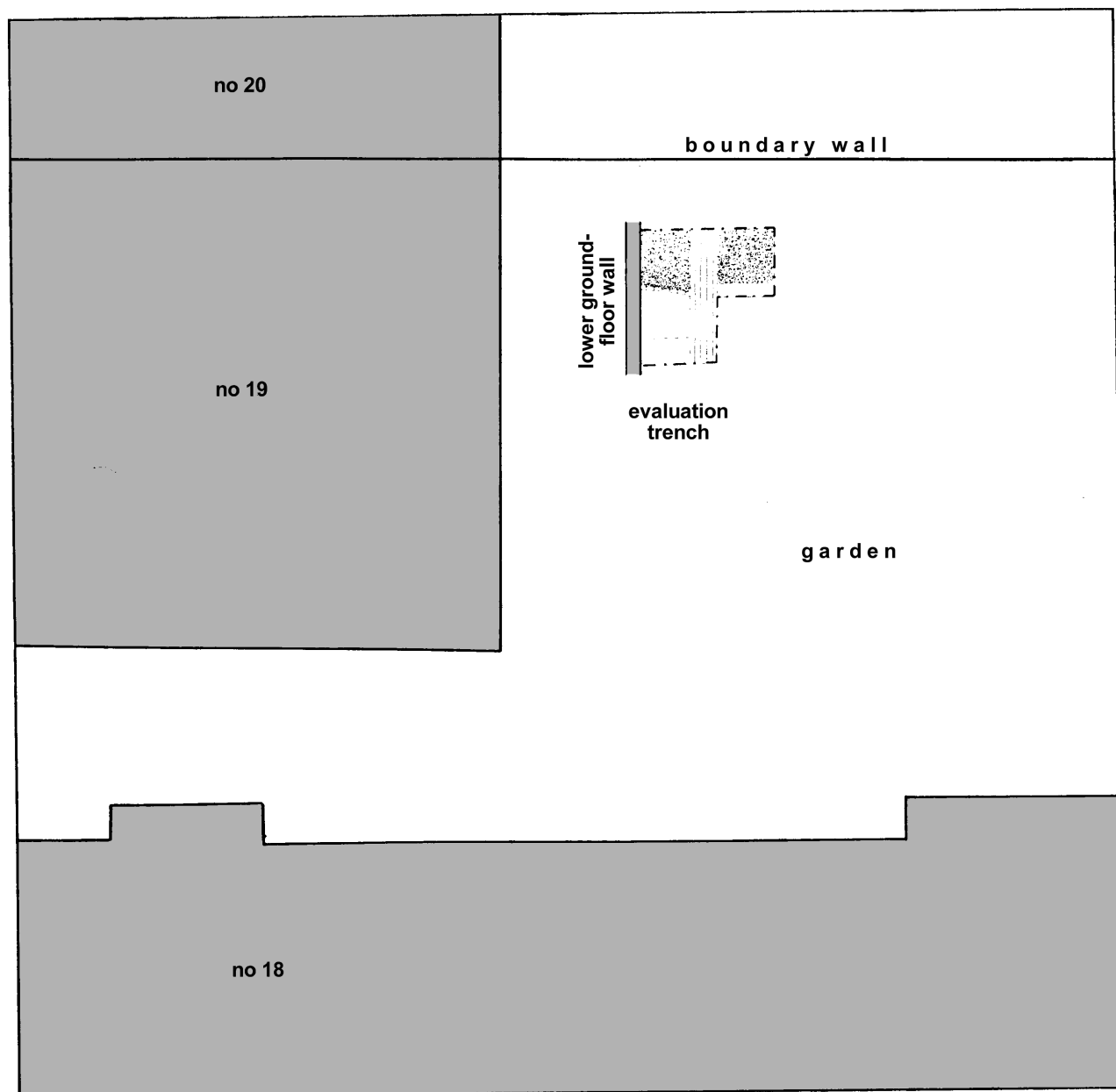
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Fig 1 Site location plan.





0 1 2 3  
metres



**Fig 2 Trench location plan.**

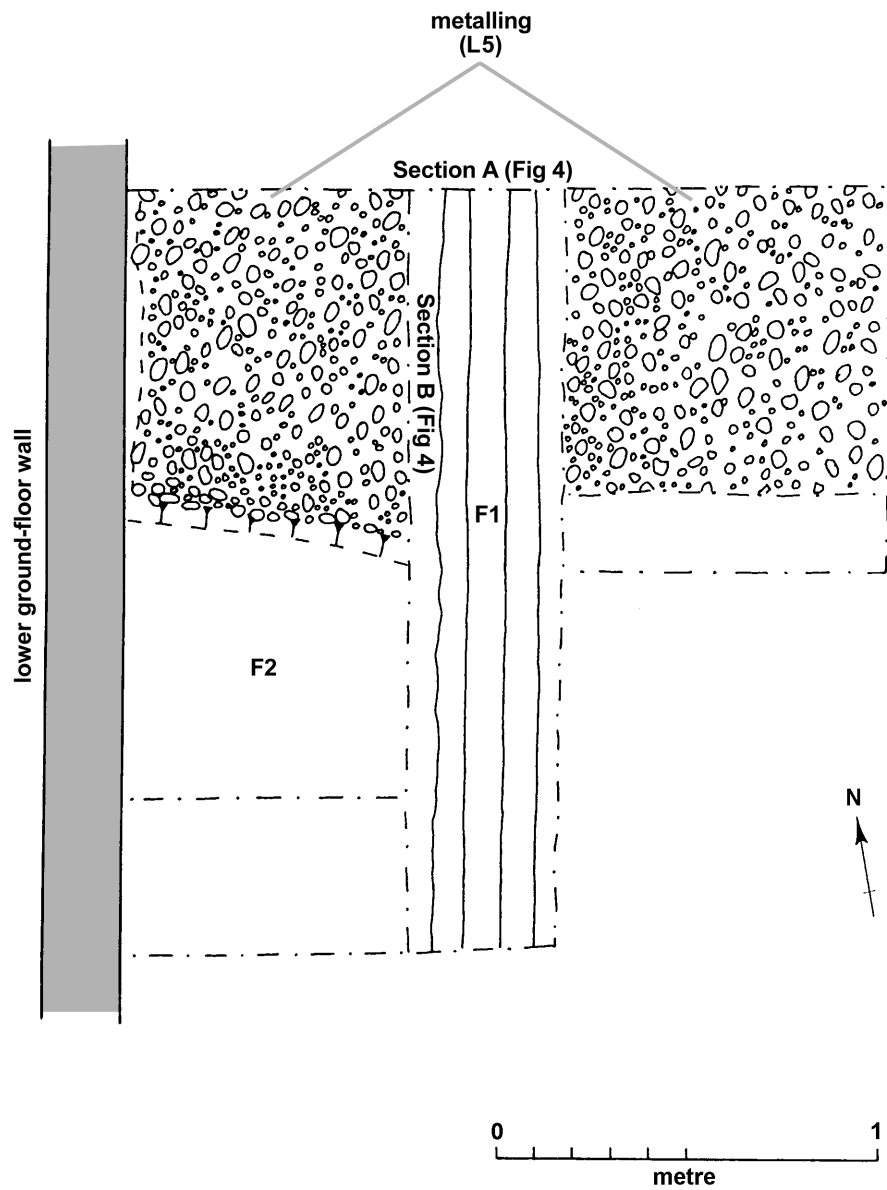
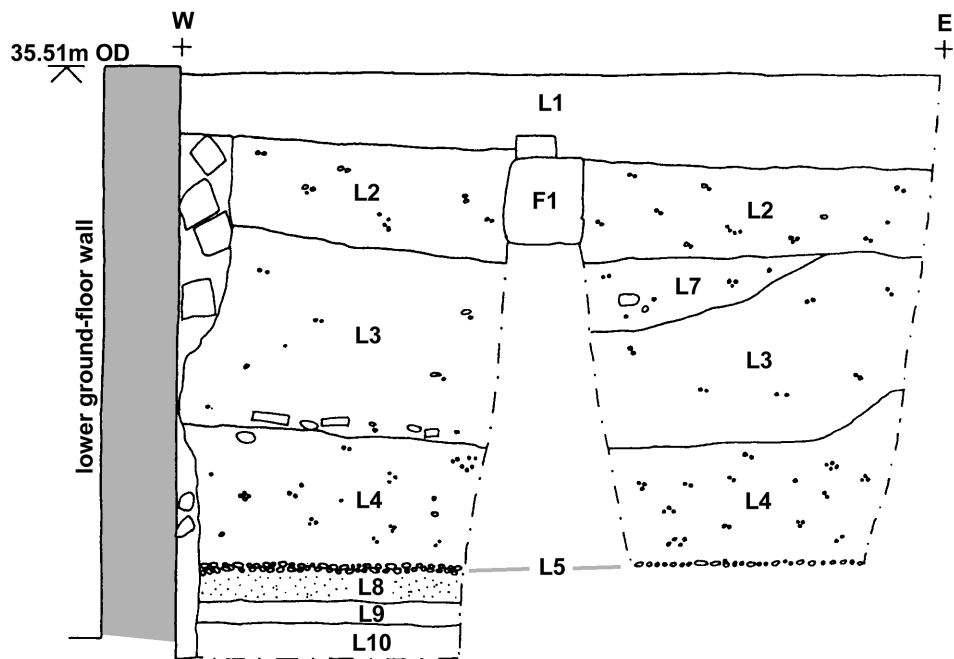
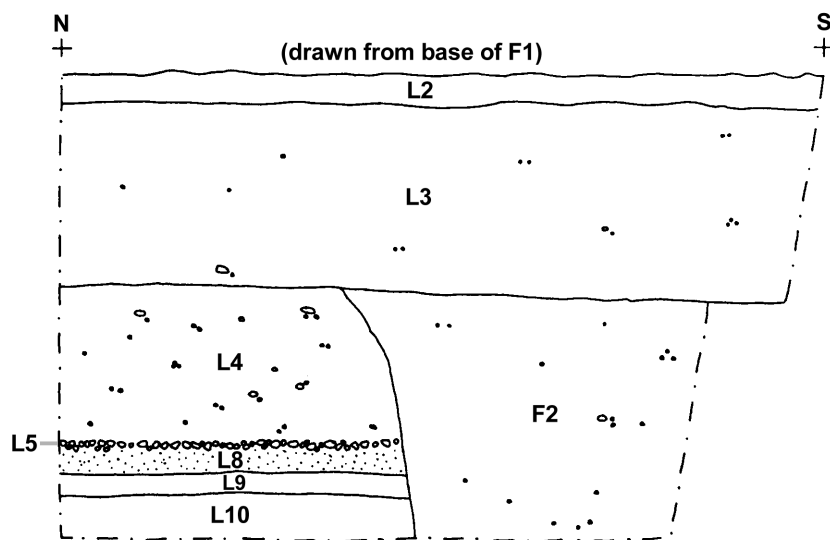
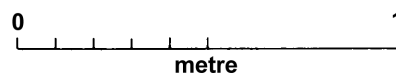


Fig 3 Trench plan.



Section A



Section B

Fig 4 Trench sections.

# Essex Heritage Conservation Record/ *Essex Archaeology and History*

## Summary sheet

<b>Site name/address:</b> rear of 19 Beverley Road, Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b>	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TL 98655 24844	<b>Site code:</b> 2003-85
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> February 2003	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 3 sq m
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Colchester Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHCR nos:</b> 11854
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 224 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Roman	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> A small evaluation trench was dug at the rear of 19 Beverley Road and a Roman gravel surface was observed. This lies on the projected course of the main west road from Roman Colchester (Road 1 in <i>CAR 11</i> , fig 2.32). In relation to previous plots of the road, the area exposed during this evaluation appears to belong to the northern track of this three-track road.	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of summary:</b> Carl Crossan	<b>Date of summary:</b> 1st April 2003