

**An archaeological evaluation
at 3 Oxford Road,
Colchester, Essex
January-February 2006**

**report prepared by
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**commissioned by
Architecture and Design Partnership, Colchester**

**on behalf of
the Royal National Lifeboat Institution**

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1 Summary

The site lies approximately 0.5km to the south-west of the walled Roman town, on the projected course of the major Roman approach road to the Balcerne Gate. An evaluation in the garden of the property revealed Roman road metalling and adjacent structural features with indications of several phases of early activity. The investigation was too limited to establish the function of the structures, but possible interpretations include roadside houses, workshops and monuments.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at 3 Oxford Road, Colchester, Essex. The site is located on the west side of Oxford Road, 80m to the south of Lexden Road and approximately 0.5km south-west of Colchester's walled town centre (National Grid Reference TL 9883 2486). The property comprises a house with gardens to the south and west.
- 2.2 The investigation was prompted by a need to assess the archaeological implications of a forthcoming planning proposal to build a house in the garden to the south of the existing house.
- 2.3 The work was commissioned by the Architecture and Design Partnership, Colchester, on behalf of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. The fieldwork was undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between the 24th January and 13th February 2006. All work was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) agreed with Colchester Borough Council's Archaeological Officer (CBCAO).
- 2.4 The work has been carried out in accordance with Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines for the standards and practice of archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CM 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (CM 2003), and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001). Other sources used are *Management of archaeological projects*, second edition (MAP 2), and *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1* (EAA 3), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2* (EAA 8), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14).

3 Archaeological background (Fig 1)

The garden of 3 Oxford Road lies on the course of a major Roman road leading north-east to the Balcerne Gate. Metalling belonging to this road was recorded during the Balcerne Lane excavations of 1973-76 (CAR 3, 93-154) and at Crowhurst Road (CAR 9, 263; Hull 1958, fig 1). The road joins up with a junction of five Roman roads, the remains of which lie in the grounds of the Royal Grammar School (CAR 9, 262-3).

Roman law forbade the burial of the dead within city limits. As a result, cemeteries developed on the fringes of settlements and are often found adjoining the approach roads to Roman towns. Roman Colchester was no exception. Local discoveries from the early 19th century onward show that large areas to the south of the modern Lexden Road and Southway were occupied by Roman cemeteries. The burials in the Oxford Road area are of particular interest for the quality of their funerary monuments, including the 'Colchester sphinx' found when the County Hospital was being built in the 1820s (Hull 1958, 253) and the military tombstones of Longinus and Facilis (*ibid*, 254). More recently, a temple-tomb was uncovered during building work at the Royal Grammar School (CAT Report 345, in preparation).

4 Aims

The overall aims of the evaluation were to identify any surviving archaeological features or deposits and assess their date, nature, state of preservation and importance. In relation to the archaeological background (section 3), the specific aims were to locate the Roman road and seek evidence of early activity fronting onto the road. This will enable the CBCAO to form an opinion on the necessity for any further archaeological work or for mitigation strategies to preserve the remains.

5 Methods (Fig 2)

- 5.1 The main investigation took the form of a 30m-long x 1.5m-wide trench extending west from the Oxford Road frontage to the rear of the garden (Area 1 in Fig 2). The trench was excavated down to archaeologically sensitive levels.
- 5.2 In addition, an adjoining area of 108 square metres within the probable footprint for a new house was stripped of topsoil to a predetermined depth of 30cm (Area 2 in Fig 2).
- 5.3 Exposed early features were selectively examined to achieve the aims set out in section 4 above.
- 5.4 Details of the excavation and recording methods and standards are set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation, a copy of which is included in the appendix to this report (section 12).

6 Results

- 6.1 In the following sections, numbers prefixed by an 'L' or 'F' refer to ground layers or features which were individually recorded and selectively investigated. The recorded stratigraphy is listed below in Tables 1 and 2 (section 6.4).

6.2 Area 1 (Figs 3-4)

Archaeologically sensitive material was exposed throughout the length of this trench. The highest clearly defined point was a septaria boulder (F7) near the eastern end, the tip of which lay 30cm below the present ground-level. Elsewhere in the trench, post-Roman and possibly late Roman dark topsoils extended to 60cm depth before any soil change was clearly discernible.

Roman road

Gravels were found at both the eastern and western ends of the Area 1 trench. At the eastern end, a light gravelly soil (L5) was sectioned (Fig 4, Sx 2) and found to be 14cm thick. Pottery from L5 and an underlying pit (F18) points to a 1st- or early 2nd-century date for the deposition of this material which was composed mainly of loamy sand with approximately 30% gravel. The character and relationships of L5 seemed to be more consistent with that of a light gravel spread rather than road metalling. Stronger evidence for a roadway was recorded at the western end of the trench, where more substantial gravel deposits (L12, L14) extended across the area beyond the north-east to south-west orientated wall (F5). Ruts (F12) were apparent in the gravel (L12) adjoining F5. The metalling was cut by at least two linear features (F13 and F20) on a parallel course to that of the wall (F5). F13 was not fully examined but is possibly a ditch. F20 is complex and included a feature with the characteristics of a robbed wall foundation (Fig 4, Sx 3), which may represent a structural encroachment onto the edge of the road. Although speculative, an intrusion onto the road of the type suggested by F20 would not be unusual if it were associated with a decline in traffic. The road's status may well have declined in the late Roman period as current evidence suggests that the road's destination, the Balcerne Gate, went out of use about AD 300 (CAR 3, 113).

Roadside activity

Short stretches of three foundations were exposed in the area to the east of the road. Fronting the road was an intact wall foundation (F5) constructed of mortar, stone and tile fragments supporting the 40cm-wide base of a standing wall with one surviving course of complete bricks (40cm x 28cm x 5cm thick). A second, less substantial foundation (F4) lay 2.5m to the east of F5. F4 was represented by a shallow unmortared stretch of septaria and tile fragments that continued north beyond the limit of the excavation. It extended south for a length of 1.25m to the mid-point of the trench, where it either terminated or (given its superficial character) was lost to erosion. The third foundation was represented by a 60cm-wide robber trench (F3) that lay at right-angles to F5 and F4. In the area between the walls F5 and F3, excavation ceased on reaching a late Roman deposit (L10), the surface of which included occasional *tesserae* and very small quantities of white wall-plaster. To the east of the robber trench F3 lay deposits containing light scatters of building material (L4 and L11), traces of a mortar floor (F9 and F11), and, at an earlier level, the tile base of a hearth or similar structure (F10) surrounded by heavily burnt clay soil. This feature continued north-east into Area 2 and is associated with the tile flue described in section 6.3.

Roman burials

No intact burials were found. However, three features were noted as possible indicators of burial activity. At the eastern end of the trench, an exploratory section cut into L6 revealed a pit (F19) which contained the base of a Roman coarse ware pot (Fig 4, Sx 1). The base lay in fill 15cm above the bottom of the pit and was found in association with one minute fragment of burnt bone. This may be a cremation burial which has been disturbed at some point in the past. Elsewhere, crushed pottery F2 (a jar, possibly a mid 2nd-century or later form) and F17 (a 1st-century bowl) were incomplete but may represent vessels displaced from burials.

Post-Roman

The only insecurely phased structural feature was F6, a shallow linear mortared feature at the extreme western end of Area 1. It incorporates Roman material but lies on a different orientation and appears to be stratigraphically late. This is provisionally assumed to be a garden feature of 19th-/20th-century origin.

Natural

Natural subsoils were exposed in two places. An exploratory cut through L7 revealed clean silty sand (L21) at 90cm depth. At the western end of the trench, the section across F20 exposed a firm pale brown silty sand (L17) at 1.0m depth.

6.3 Area 2 (Figs 3-4)

The area stripping over the proposed site for a new house was limited to a depth of 30cm. Over most of the 108 square metres examined, the stripping exposed only topsoil which was devoid of features other than modern intrusions. At a depth of 30cm, Roman tile fragments were exposed in several places. Most of the tile at this depth appeared to be residual (isolated loose material displaced from earlier levels). One exception was found in the central part of Area 2, where further investigation revealed part of an underlying tile structure (F21). The structure was examined to overall depths of up to 90cm. It is a minimum of 1.6m wide and 2.5m in length and shares the same orientation as the major Roman structural features found in Area 1 (F3, F4, F5). It had been partly rebuilt at least once during its period of use. The southern part was cut by later activity but survived at a lower level, where it continued further south as the burnt tile feature (F10) which was partly revealed in Area 1. The structure was not investigated to its full extent since this was beyond the scope of the evaluation. In plan, the feature appears to consist of a hearth/stoking area (part uncovered in Area 1) leading to a substantially-built 30cm-wide flue to the north-east (exposed in Area 2).

6.4 Stratigraphy

Table 1: feature list.

| Feature no | description | provisional period | Area |
|------------|---|-------------------------------|--------|
| F1 | tree pit | modern | Area 1 |
| F2 | crushed pot – from disturbed burial? | Roman | Area 1 |
| F3 | robber trench? | Roman/post-Roman | Area 1 |
| F4 | foundation | Roman | Area 1 |
| F5 | wall | Roman | Area 1 |
| F6 | foundation | post-Roman, possibly modern | Area 1 |
| F7 | septaria boulder | Roman | Area 1 |
| F8 | gully | Roman | Area 1 |
| F9 | mortar floor (associated with F14) | Roman | Area 1 |
| F10 | hearth/stoking area (associated with F21) | Roman | Area 1 |
| F11 | mortar floor | Roman | Area 1 |
| F12 | ruts | Roman | Area 1 |
| F13 | linear feature | Roman | Area 1 |
| F14 | mortar floor (associated with F9) | Roman | Area 1 |
| F15 | depression | indeterminate, possibly early | Area 1 |
| F16 | pit | Roman | Area 1 |
| F17 | crushed pot – from disturbed burial? | Roman | Area 1 |
| F18 | pit | Roman | Area 1 |
| F19 | disturbed burial? | Roman or later | Area 1 |
| F20 | robber trench | Roman or later | Area 1 |
| F21 | tile structure (associated with F10) | Roman | Area 2 |
| F22 | pit | modern | Area 2 |

Table 2: layer list.

| Layer no | description | provisional period | Area |
|----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| L1 | garden topsoil | modern | Area 1, Area 2 |
| L2 | topsoil accumulation | post-Roman | Area 1, Area 2 |
| L3 | early topsoil | late Roman/early post-Roman | Area 1, Area 2 |
| L4 | burnt silty clay | Roman | Area 1 |
| L5 | stony deposit | Roman | Area 1 |
| L6 | dump/make-up | Roman | Area 1 |
| L7 | dump/make-up | Roman | Area 1 |
| L8 | dump/make-up | Roman | Area 1 |
| L9 | part fill of F20 | Roman | Area 1 |
| L10 | make-up (similar to L11 and L12) | Roman | Area 1 |
| L11 | make-up (similar to L10) | Roman | Area 1 |
| L12 | make-up? (similar to L10) | Roman | Area 1 |
| L13 | dump/make-up | Roman | Area 1 |
| L14 | gravel | Roman | Area 1 |
| L15 | make-up? | Roman | Area 1 |
| L16 | make-up | Roman | Area 1 |
| L17 | natural (at west end of trench) | natural | Area 1 |
| L18 | metalling | Roman | Area 1 |
| L19 | make-up for L18 | Roman | Area 1 |
| L20 | metalling | Roman | Area 1 |
| L21 | natural (at east end of trench) | natural | Area 1 |

7 Finds

7.1 In addition to the reports reproduced below, the site archive includes quantified lists of building materials and bone.

7.2 The Roman pottery

by S Benfield of CAT

Just over 11 kg (11,342 g) of Roman pottery was recovered from the site. This pottery was spot dated by numbered finds bag. The pottery fabrics and vessel forms were recorded together with their date ranges, and also the quantity of sherds per fabric type by weight and the approximate number of sherds present. The fabrics were recorded using the Roman pottery fabric type series devised for *CAR 10* in which the fabrics are recorded as two-letter codes. An additional fabric code is used for grog-tempered wares (Fabric GTW). The full fabric names for each of the lettered codes are given in Table 3 below. The pot forms were recorded using the Camulodunum (Cam) Roman pottery form type series (Hawkes & Hull 1947 and Hull 1958). Samian vessels are recorded using Dragendorff (Dr) form numbers. The primary value of the Roman pottery from the site is assisting with dating the archaeological contexts. In respect of this, a summary of the pottery and an overall spot date for each context by numbered find bag is set out in Table 4.

Table 3: Roman pottery fabric codes and fabric names used in this report (after *CAR 10*).

| Fabric code | Fabric name |
|-------------|--|
| AA | amphoras, all excluding Dressel 20 and Brockley Hill/Verulamium amphoras |
| AJ | amphoras, Dressel 20 |
| BA | plain samian forms |
| SG | South Gaulish plain samian |
| CG | Central Gaulish plain samian |
| EG | East Gaulish plain samian |
| BX | decorated samian forms |
| SG | South Gaulish decorated samian |
| CH | oxidised Hadham wares |
| CZ | Colchester and other red colour-coated wares |
| DJ | coarse oxidised and related wares |
| EA | Nene Valley colour-coated wares |
| EC | early Colchester colour-coated ware |
| FJ | Brockley Hill/Verulamium oxidised ware |
| GA | BB1: black-burnished ware, category 1 |
| GB | BB2: black-burnished ware, category 2 |
| GR | fine grey wares imitating samian and <i>terra nigra</i> -type forms |
| GTW | grog-tempered wares |
| GX | other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares |
| HZ | large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares |
| KX | black-burnished ware (BB2) types in pale grey ware |
| MP | Oxfordshire-type red colour-coated wares |
| MQ | white slipped fine wares and parchment wares |
| ON | mica-gilt wares |
| TZ | mortaria, Colchester and mortaria imported from the Continent |

Pottery quantification

Table 4: Summary of Roman pottery by numbered find bag.

Sherd quantity: VSQ = 2-5 sherds, SQ = 5-10 sherds,
Q = 10-20 sherds, LQ = 20-50 sherds.

| context | find bag | Fabric CAR 10 | form | sherd quantity | weight (g) | comments | feature/ note | date |
|---------|----------|--|--|----------------|------------|---|------------------|---|
| L1 | 36 | AJ GX CH | | SQ | 639 | amphora handle | | late 3rd-4th, probably 4th century |
| L2 | 37 | CZ DJ EA GB GX | Cam 39 ?Cam 266 Cam 305 Cam 407 | SQ | 273 | | | mid 3rd to mid-late 4th century |
| L3 | 3 | AJ BA(EG) BX DJ GX HZ TZ | Dr 37 Cam 195 Cam 266 Cam 268 | SQ | 2762 | Dr 37 form dated Flavian-early 3rd century, possibly Fabric BX(SG) and 1st century but not certain | | later 1st-mid 2nd century |
| L5 | 18 | AJ BA(SG) DJ EC? FJ GX | Cam 155 | Q | 844 | Fabric AJ Dressel 20 rim (1st-century ?Claudio-Neronian) | | 1st-early 2nd century, ?pre-Flavian |
| L6 | 14 | AJ BX(SG) GX HZ | Dr 37 ?Cam 108 | VSQ | 1263 | | | late 1st-early 2nd century |
| L7 | 30 | BA(CG) | Dr 18/31 Dr 27 | 2 | 51 | | | early-mid 2nd century |
| L7 | 31 | AJ GX HZ | ?Cam 108 Cam 266 Cam 407 | Q | 648 | includes single sherd from a Cam 407 (dated mid 3rd-4th century) | | 1st-early 2nd century (although possibly mid 3rd-4th century) |
| L9 | 9 | GA GX KX MP | Cam 279C | SQ | 145 | one sherd possibly Mayen or Speicher ware (dated late 4th century+) | | 4th, probably later 4th century |
| L10 | 6 | AJ BA(CG) BA(EG) EA GB GX TZ | Dr 38 Cam 268 Cam 278 | SQ | 360 | pottery predominantly 2nd-3rd century | | mid 3rd to mid-late 4th century |
| L12 | 8 | BA(SG) GX | Ritterling 12 | VSQ | 87 | | | Roman, ?pre-Flavian |
| L12 | 11 | GX | | 1 | 17 | surface encrusted with sand | | Roman |
| L12 | 23 | BA(SG) GX | | VSQ | 55 | Fabric BA large rouletted samian platter with fragment of potter's name stamp, burnt Fabric GX softer sandy fabric of probable 1st-century type | | 1st century |
| L12 | 34 | AJ | | VSQ | 669 | | | 1st-early 3rd century |
| L13 | 24 | DJ GX | | 2 | 9 | Fabric GX unusually contains some fragments of burnt flint | | Roman |

| context | find bag | Fabric CAR 10 | form | sherd quantity | weight (g) | comments | feature/ note | date |
|---------|----------|--------------------------------|---|----------------|------------|---|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| L14 | 29 | DJ GX | ?Cam 243-244/246 | SQ | 97 | | | Roman, ?1st-early 2nd century |
| L16 | 28 | AA AJ BA(CG) DJ GB TZ | Cam 37A Cam 157-159/366 Cam 195 Cam 278 | 1 | 368 | | | 2nd century |
| L20 | 32 | BA (SG) | ?Dr 27 | 1 | 18 | base with potters stamp, stamp appears to read :ERRIM(A) or more probably OFRRIM(A) so that the stamp could be OF PRIMIA , the potter primus, dated c AD 45-65 (CAR 10 , p 128) but this is far from certain | | 1st century, ?c AD 45-65 |
| L20 | 33 | GX | | VSQ | 67 | | | Roman, ?1st-2nd century |
| F1 | 1 | DJ GTW GX ON | Cam 46/311 ?Cam 218 ?Cam 266 | Q | 351 | Fabric DJ sherds are from a pre-Flavian collared flagon | | 1st century |
| F2 | 4 | GX | ?Cam 280-281 | SQ | 380 | much of lower part of a jar in large sherds, ?displaced from burial | | ?mid-late 2nd+ century |
| F8 | 16 | GX HZ | | VSQ | 87 | | | Roman |
| F13 | 10 | DJ GX | | SQ | 103 | Fabric GX burnished sherd, may be Fabric KX | | Roman, possibly early 2nd century+ |
| F13 | 22 | AA GX | ?Cam 243-244/246 | SQ | 87 | possibly Fabric AJ sliver | | Roman, possibly 1st-early 2nd century |
| F17 | 15 | DJ GX | Cam 326/331 | Q | 359 | Fabric DJ, most of pot in sherds, Cam 326/331 although no handles on this example, ?displaced from burial | | 1st century |
| F18 | 17 | AJ BA(SG) DJ GX HZ | Dr 18 Cam 140 Cam 241/242 Cam 266 Cam 273 | Q | 260 | | | 1st century |
| F19 | 25 | GX | | 2 | 178 | pot base, possibly cut down with black vitreous substance on exterior and interior surface and one sherd from different pot (also tiny | | Roman |

| context | find bag | Fabric CAR 10 | form | sherd quantity | weight (g) | comments | feature/ note | date |
|---------|----------|-----------------------------------|--|----------------|------------|--|---------------|--|
| | | | | | | fragment of burnt bone), possibly from a ?cremation burial | | |
| F20 | 21 | BA(EG) CH GA GB GX KX MQ | Dr 31 Cam 37B ?Cam 207 Cam 278 Cam 305B | 1 | 536 | | | late 3rd-4th, probably 4th century |
| F20 | 26 | BA(EG?) GB GP? GR GX | Dr 45 Cam 37A Cam 37B Cam Cam 268 Cam 278(small) Cm 330? | Q | 302 | | | late 2nd to early-mid 3rd century |
| F20 | 27 | BA(?SG) DJ GX | Cam 108 Cam 243-244/246 | Q | 293 | scorched fabric looks like BA(SG) but form is possibly Dr 31 (dated later 2nd-early 3rd century) | | 1st-early 2nd century+, possibly mid-late 2nd century+ |
| F22 | 39 | GA | Cam 39 | 1 | 34 | | | early 2nd-4th century |

7.3 The small finds and bulk metalwork

by Nina Crummy

This small assemblage ranges in date from Roman to modern. The Roman objects consist chiefly of a variety of fittings, including iron nails, but also include an unidentified iron object that may be part of a damaged hipposandal. The modern objects include a child's toy lancer that still retains much of its painted surface.

Nails classified according to Manning 1985. In this table, L = length, H = height, W = width, D = diameter.

Table 5: summary of the small finds and bulk ironwork.

| SF | Find | Feature /Layer | Description | Period | Material | Identification | Dimensions (mm) | Date |
|----|------|----------------|----------------|--------|--------------|---|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | F1 | tree pit | modern | iron | narrow strip, ?machine part | L 68 | ?modern |
| 2 | 2 | F1 | tree pit | modern | copper alloy | shaft with corroded and disintegrating upper element | L 64 | - |
| - | 12 | F9 | mortar floor | Roman | iron | nail, Manning type 1b | L 80 | Roman + |
| 4 | 35 | L1 | garden topsoil | modern | lead | mounted lancer; top of lance, part of ?shako, and lower legs of horse missing; traces of paint on man and horse | L 65, H 71 | 20th century, or perhaps later 19th |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|-----|------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|-------------|---------|
| - | 3 | L3 | early topsoil | late Roman/ early post-Roman | iron | nail shank | L 69 | Roman + |
| - | 18 | L5 | stony deposit | Roman | iron | nail, Manning type 1b | L 74 | Roman + |
| 5 | 19 | L6 | dump/ make-up | Roman | copper alloy | U-section binding strip with one rivet surviving | L 100, W 9 | Roman |
| - | 6 | L10 | make-up | Roman | iron | nail, Manning type 1b | L 70 | Roman + |
| 6 | 6 | L10 | make-up | Roman | iron | bent plate with narrow extension at one end; in two pieces; possibly a damaged hipposandal | L 102, W 72 | ?Roman |
| 3 | 20 | L14 | gravel | Roman | copper alloy + lead-tin solder | flanged boss, damaged; probably a box fitting | D 28 | Roman |

8 Discussion and conclusions

- 8.1** The area excavated to Roman levels (Area 1) amounted to 45sq m which represents a 5% sample of the garden. The evaluation located the edge of a Roman road and uncovered remains of one or more roadside buildings with indications of several phases of early activity. The course of the road crosses the north-western half of the property and fits projections based on nearby observations that have established it to be the major Roman route leading to the Balcerne Gate from the south and west. More extensive excavation would be necessary to determine the function of the structures found fronting the south-eastern side of the road, but possible interpretations include roadside houses, workshops and monuments.
- 8.2** The purpose of the tile-built structure F10/F21 is uncertain. The exposed feature consisted of a probable stoking area (F10) at the southern end (partly removed by a later feature) leading to a 30cm-wide, 1.75m-long flue (F21). The combined external dimensions of F10 and F21 appear to be 3.5m x 1.6m, although more extensive excavation would be required to fully reveal the structure within its immediate surroundings. No pottery wasters (rejected misfired pottery) were found in the vicinity and no slags or vitrified material were recovered. Of the possible interpretations, a dryer or oven seem more likely than a pottery kiln or furnace.
- 8.3** Although the sites of Roman cemeteries lie in the vicinity, the current evidence for burials on the site is inconclusive and limited to the crushed pottery (F2 and F17, possibly displaced from burials) and a disturbed feature (F19) which lies 20m behind the road frontage
- 8.4** Datable finds from Area 1 indicate the earliest deposits to be of the 1st century AD. Roman activity extended to at least the late 3rd/4th century, as evidenced by pottery among the later features and layers containing destruction material.
- 8.5** The lack of post-Roman features and finds suggests that the site remained open ground from the end of the Roman period until the 19th-century development of Oxford Road.
- 8.6** In terms of future development, the results indicate that groundworks would affect archaeologically sensitive levels if they exceed a depth of 30cm from the present garden ground-level. In Area 1, this horizon was marked by the top of the septaria boulder (F7) and in Area 2 by the uppermost surviving level of the tile structure (F21).

9 References

- | | | |
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10 Acknowledgements

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11 Archive deposition

The site archive, consisting of finds, paper and digital records, is currently held by Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester. This will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museums under cover of museum accession code 2006.13.

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12 Appendix

Written Scheme of Investigation
for
archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at
3 Oxford Road, Colchester, Essex

January 2006



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation at 3 Oxford Road, Colchester, Essex. Planning permission is about to be sought to erect a dwelling within the garden of no 3. The evaluation is required to provide information to be considered prior to be submitted with the planning application.
- 1.2 This WSI sets out proposals for the evaluation which will lead to post-excavation work and the production of archive and (if necessary) publication texts
- 1.3 The site is located on the western side of Colchester, less than a kilometer from the town centre, near the junction with Lexden Road.
- 1.4 Any variations in this WSI will be agreed beforehand with the Colchester Borough Council Archaeology Officer (CBCAO).

2 Archaeological background

- 2.1 The development site lies alongside a Roman road leading south-west from Balkerne Gate. Metalling of this road has been recorded during the Balkerne Lane excavations of 1973-76 (CAR 3, 93-154) and at Crowhurst Road (CAR 9, 263, Hull, 1958, fig 1). The road joins up with a junction of five other Roman roads under the grounds of the Royal Grammar School., found by AF Hall (CAR 9, 262-3). It is expected that road metalling will be present on the site of no 3 Oxford Road. The investigation should be able to pinpoint the course of the road.
- 2.2 The road was lined with burials, some of which featured tombstones or lead coffins. Several such monuments have been recorded within the immediate vicinity and it is likely that more will be present within the development site.

3 Aim

The aim of the evaluation is to locate, identify, and assess the quality of any surviving archaeological features.

4 Evaluation methodology

- 4.1 A single long trench will be dug diagonally across the plot in order to locate the Roman road. (Fig 1). Once the edge of the road has been ascertained and any other archaeological features within the trench have been recorded the trench will be filled in. Next, an area will be stripped to expose up to 3m of the road edge plus the entire area fronting the road (i.e. this will probably equate to stripping a triangular area at the south eastern corner of the plot). This will expose any tombs alongside the road. Again, features will be recorded as normal.
- 4.2 The mechanical excavator will be equipped with a toothless bucket which will progressively strip the topsoil down to the uppermost surviving level of archaeological significance. All further investigation will be carried out by hand to an extent necessary to achieve the aims set out in section 3. Fast excavation techniques involving (for instance) picks, forks and mattocks will not be used on complex stratigraphy. If no archaeologically significant deposits are exposed, machine excavation will continue until natural subsoil is reached.
- 4.3 Individual records of excavated contexts, layers, features or deposits will be entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets. Registers will be compiled of finds and samples.
- 4.4 The normal recording scale will be feature plans at 1:20 and sections at 1:10.
- 4.5 A metal detector will be used to check spoil heaps and any suitable strata, and the finds recovered. This will not normally be done on demonstrably modern strata.
- 4.6 The photographic record will consist of general site shots, and shots of all archaeological features and deposits. Standard 'record' shots of contexts will be taken on a digital camera. Colour transparencies will be used for overall site shots and all important contexts.
- 4.7 The trenches and features will be surveyed using a Total Station and will be tied into the National Grid.
- 4.8 The trenches will not to be backfilled without prior agreement with CBCAO.
- 4.9 The policy for environmental sampling will be as follows; any features which appear to be organically rich should be sampled, but only if they can be dated. If advice is required J Heathcote at English Heritage will be consulted.
- 4.10 Levels tied into Ordnance Datum will be taken at regular intervals across the site.

5 General Methodology

- 5.1 All works will be undertaken by professional archaeologists employed by CAT. The field officer(s) will have a level of experience appropriate to the work.
- 5.2 Prior to excavation, CAT will seek information about existing service locations from the developer.
- 5.3 All the latest Health and Safety guidelines will be followed on site. CAT has a standard health and safety policy, which will be adhered to (CAT 1999). The site will be made safe after each working day.
- 5.4 For purposes of deposition of the archive, a museum accession code will be obtained through Colchester Museums. All codes will be quoted in any reports arising from the work.
- 5.5 The relevant document of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) will be followed, i.e. *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (1999), including its 'code of conduct'. The Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1999, updated 2002), and *Guidelines on the preparations and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996, updated 2003) will be adhered to throughout the course of the project. Other guidelines followed are those published in EAA 3, EAA 8 and EAA 14.

6 Finds

- 6.1 If any human remains are exposed, the coroner, CBCAO and the client will be notified. All human remains will be left and recorded *in situ*. A Home Office license to remove the remains will be sought if this is the appropriate course of action. Due attention will be paid to Health and Safety.
- 6.2 All finds of archaeological relevance will be retained. Policies for later disposal of any finds will be agreed with CBCAO and the site owner.
- 6.3 All finds, where appropriate, will be washed.
- 6.4 A policy of marking for pottery and other finds will be agreed with Colchester Museum. Marking will include the site code and context number.
- 6.5 The site archive will be presented to Colchester Museum in accordance with their requirements
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 Finds work will be to accepted professional standards as presented in *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001).
- 6.8 A list of specialists available for consultation is given at the end of this WSI.

7 Results

- 7.1 Notification will be given to CBCAO when the fieldwork has been completed.
- 7.2 The full report, including full reports on artefacts, will be submitted to the CBCAO officer within a length of time not exceeding 1 month from the end of fieldwork, with one copy supplied to the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) and Colchester Museums.
- 7.3 This report will include:
 - The aims and methods adopted in the course of the evaluation.
 - Location plan of the trenches, with 10-figure grid references at two points on the trenches.
 - A section drawing showing the depth of deposits including present ground-level.
 - The evaluation methodology and results with a suitable conclusion and discussion.
 - All specialist reports and assessments. Recommendations for further work will be kept separate from the results.
 - A concise non-technical summary of the project results.
- 7.4 An appropriate archive will be prepared to minimum acceptable standards outlined in *Management of archaeological projects* (English Heritage 1991).

- 7.5 Within four weeks of the end of fieldwork, CBCAO will be supplied with a summary of the project suitable for inclusion in the EHER. A summary will be supplied even if the project has a negative result.
- 7.6 If, after discussion with CBCAO, the results are considered worthy of publication, a report (at least at a summary level), will be submitted to *Essex Archaeology and History*.

8 Archive deposition

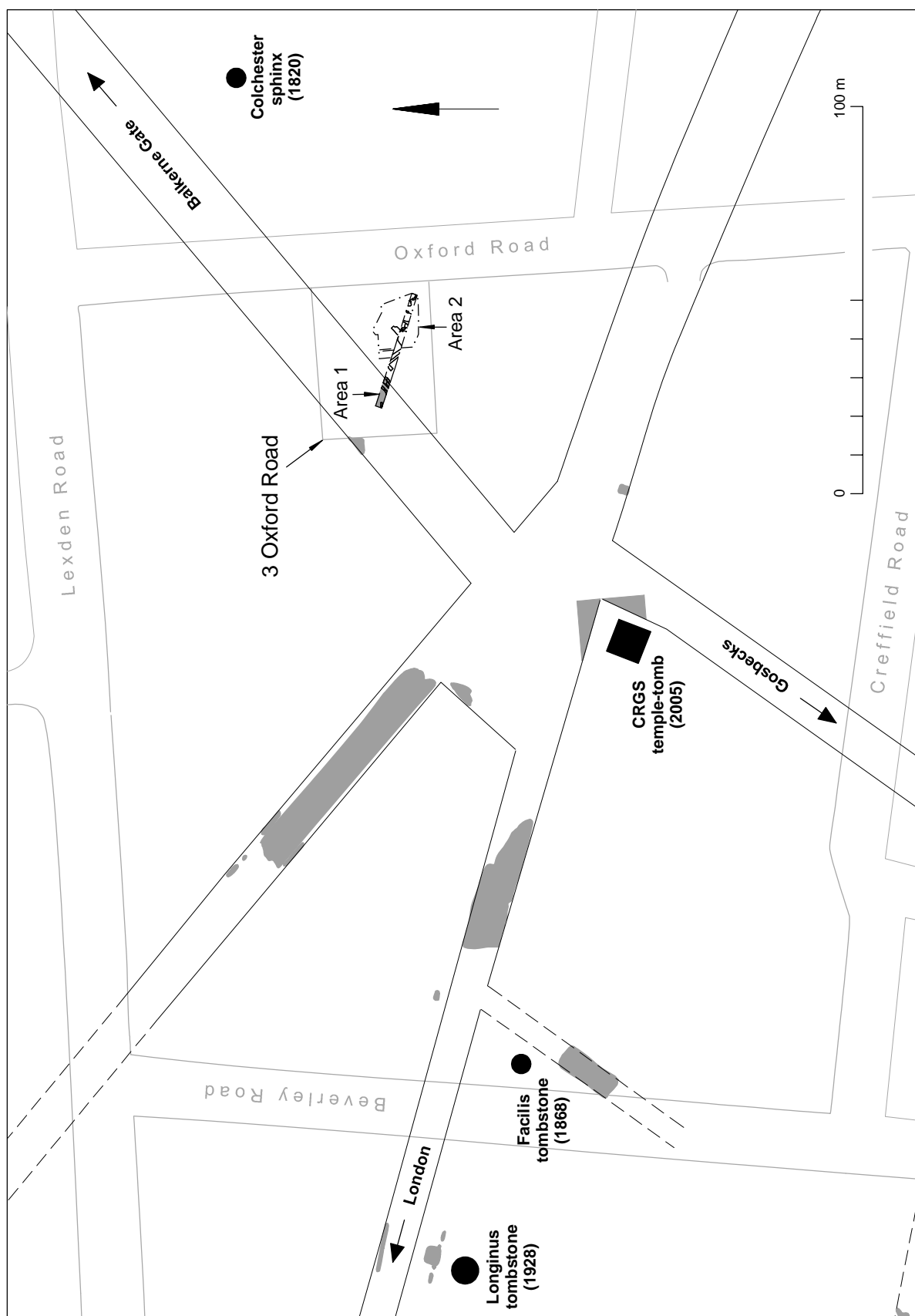
- 8.1 The full archive will be deposited at Colchester Museum within 6 months of completion of final publication report on the project, and confirmed to CBCAO.
- 8.2 Finds (and other retained materials) will be bagged and boxed in the manner recommended by Colchester Museum. The storage of the archive will accord with Colchester Museum's guidelines.
- 8.3 A summary of the contents of the archive shall be supplied to CBCAO at the time of deposition at the museum.

9 Monitoring

- 9.1 CBCAO will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project, and will be kept regularly informed during fieldwork, post-excavation and publication stages.
- 9.2 Notification of the start of work will be given to CBCAO one week in advance of its commencement.
- 9.3 Any variations of the WSI shall be agreed with CBCAO in writing prior to them being carried out.
- 9.4 CBCAO will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.
- 9.5 The involvement of CBCAO shall be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

Kate Orr 9/1/06

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Fig 1 Site in relation to Roman roads and funerary monuments. (Roman road metalling shaded in grey.)

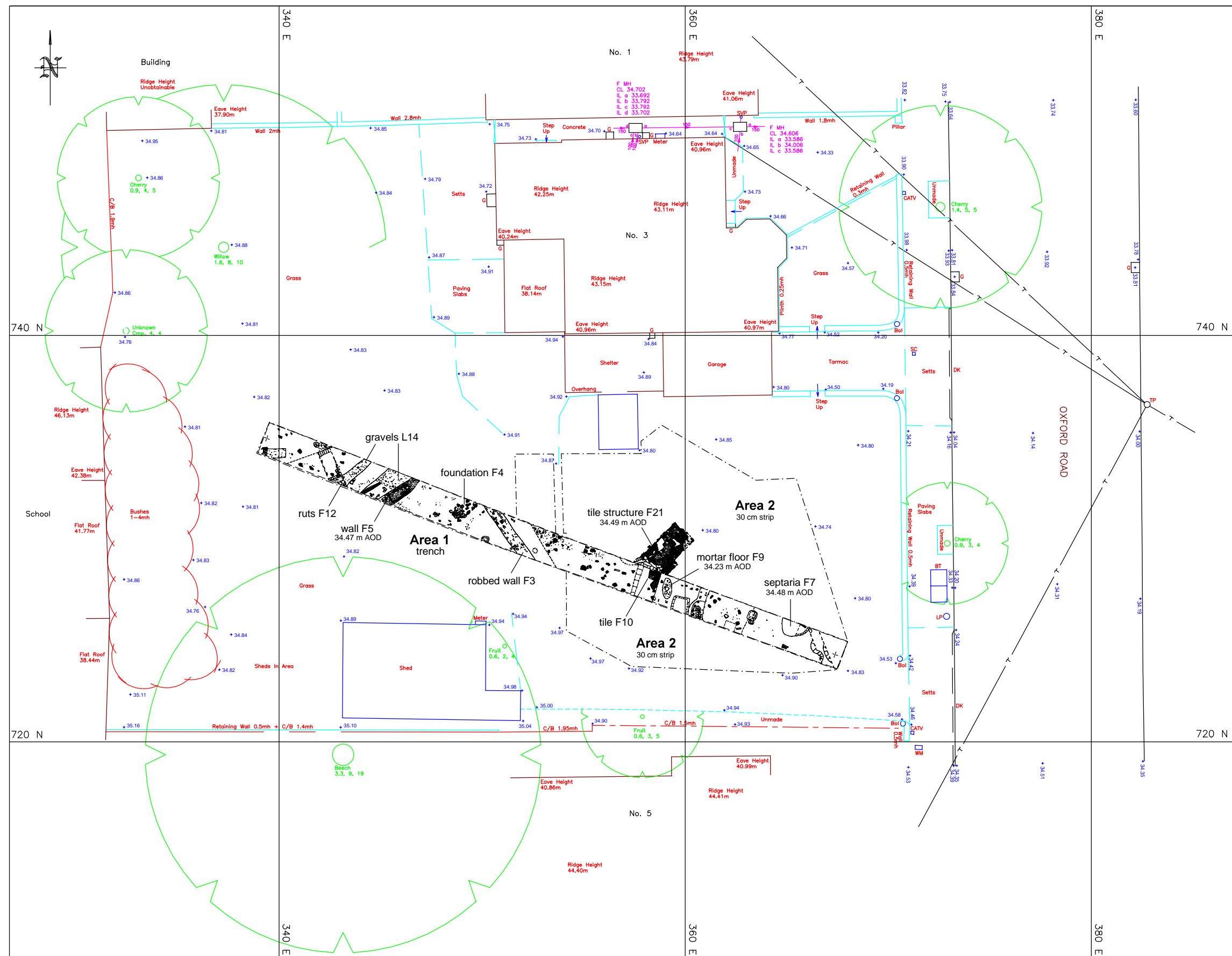




Fig 3 Areas 1 and 2: detail plan.

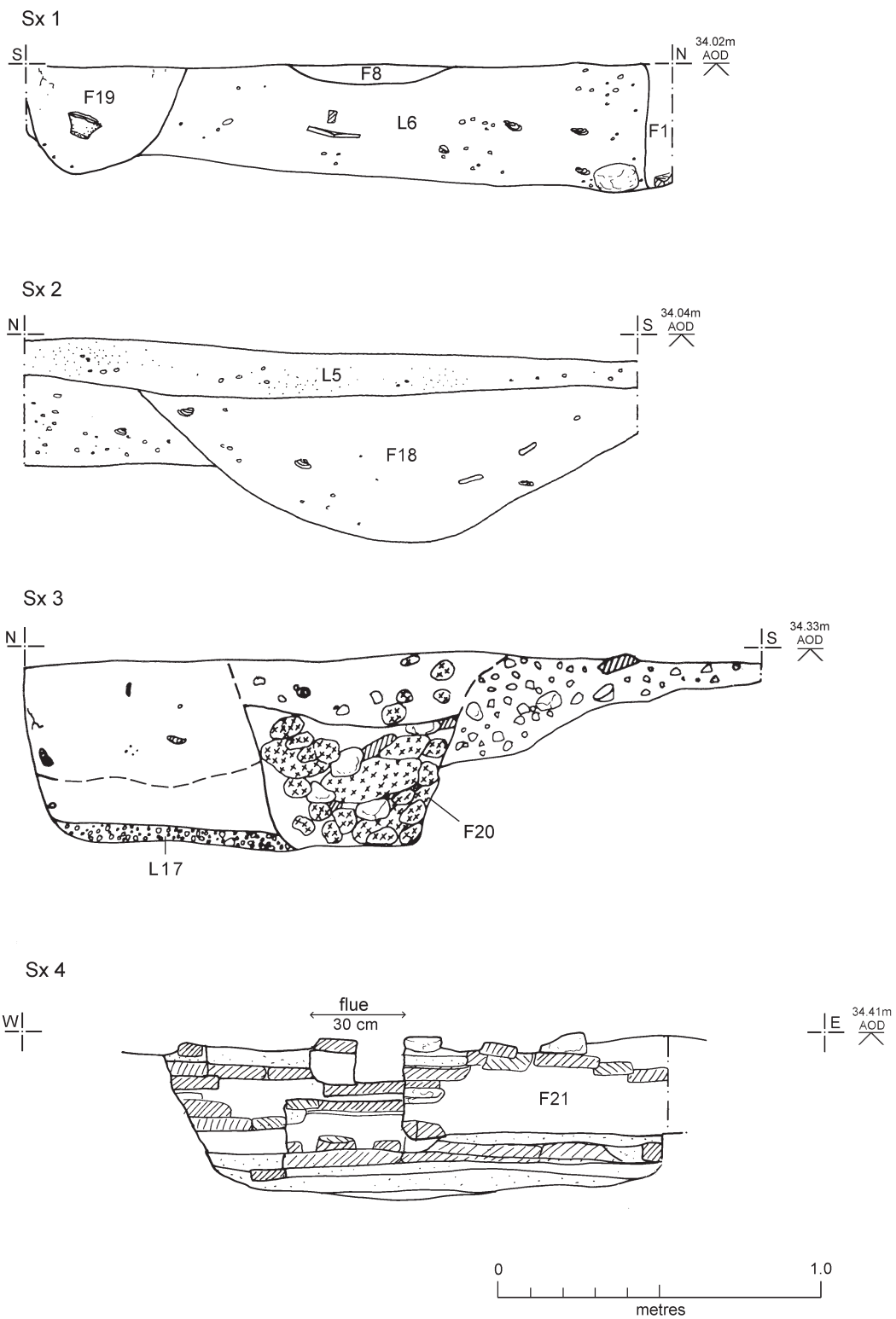


Fig 4 Sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ *Essex Archaeology and History*

Summary sheet

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| Site address: 3 Oxford Road, Colchester, Essex | |
| Parish: Colchester | District: Colchester Borough |
| NGR: TL 9883 2486 | Site code: 2006.13 |
| Type of work: Evaluation | Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Date of work: January-February 2006 | Size of area investigated: 45sq m trench and 108sq m topsoil-stripping |
| Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums | Funding source: Royal National Lifeboat Institution |
| Further seasons anticipated? Yes | Related EHER nos: - |
| Final report: CAT Report 362 and summary in <i>EAH</i> | |
| Periods represented: Roman | |
| Summary of fieldwork results: <i>The site lies approximately 0.5km to the south-west of the walled Roman town, on the projected course of a major approach road to the Balcerne Gate. An evaluation in the garden of the property revealed Roman road metalling and adjacent structural features with indications of several phases of early activity. The investigation was too limited to establish the function of the structures, but possible interpretations include roadside houses, workshops and monuments.</i> | |
| Previous summaries/reports: None | |
| Author of summary: Carl Crossan | Date of summary: July 2006 |