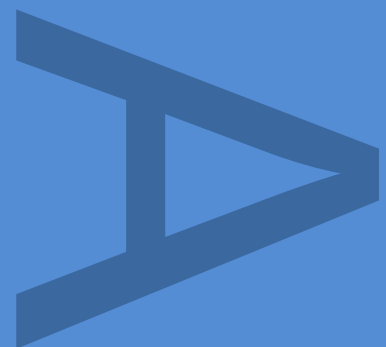


**Land at Essex County Hospital,
Colchester, CO3 3NB: An
Archaeological Test Pit
Evaluation**

January 2016



Land at Essex County Hospital, Colchester, CO3 3NB:

An Archaeological Test Pit Evaluation

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS	2
ABSTRACT	3
1 INTRODUCTION	4
2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	5
3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	6
4 METHODOLOGY	13
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE	15
6 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE	25
7 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS	33
8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	37
9 BIBLIOGRAPHY	38
10 APPENDIX 1: PLATES	46
11 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX	50
12 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM	52
FIGURE 1 SITE LOCATION	40
FIGURE 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEST PIT LOCATIONS	41
FIGURE 3 TEST PITS AND GEOTECHNICAL PITS	42
FIGURE 4 DEPTH OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS	43
FIGURE 5 DEPTH OF TRUNCATIONS	44
FIGURE 6 TEST PIT PLANS AND SECTIONS	45
PLATE 1: TEST PIT 1, VIEW SOUTH	46
PLATE 2: TEST PIT 2, VIEW NORTH	46
PLATE 3: TEST PIT 3, VIEW NORTH SHOWING MODERN TRUNCATION	47
PLATE 4: TEST PIT 4, VIEW NORTH	47
PLATE 5: TEST PIT 5, VIEW NORTH	48
PLATE 6: TEST PIT 6, VIEW NORTH-WEST MID EXCAVATION	48
PLATE 7: TEST PIT 6, VIEW NORTH	49

ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of an archaeological test pit evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Essex County Hospital, Colchester, CO3 3NB (NGR TL 9892 2488) between the 3rd and 6th August 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by Linden Homes Eastern prior to the potential redevelopment of the hospital. The aim of the work was to provide preliminary data to begin to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.

A previous Desk Based Assessment of the site (PCA report R12173) indicated that the site has a high potential for significant archaeological remains of Romano-British date associated with the walled town at Colchester. The test pits were located within available areas of green space and were intended to test the presence/ absence and preservation status of remains highlighted in the DBA report, including possible roads, tessellated pavements, high status burials and pottery kilns.

The test pitting revealed the presence of stratified deposits associated with high quantities of Roman material, as well as areas of Roman pitting along the western boundary of the site. The finds included Roman building material, pottery of 1st-3rd century date, animal bone indicative of domestic activity and some high status metal artefacts. The findings are in keeping within the known Roman activity previously recorded in the area, although no direct evidence for in situ kilns, high status buildings or mausoleums was seen in the test pits.

When the results of the test pitting are considered alongside recent geotechnical work the preliminary impression of the site is that in deposits of archaeological significance are present across much of the site, having been disturbed in places by the construction of the hospital and any associated landscaping.

The test pitting exercise has also served to highlight the presence of a significant density of currently uncharted live services across all parts of the development area.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological test pit evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land at Essex County Hospital, Colchester, CO3 3NB (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 9892 2488) from the 3rd to the 6th August 2015 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Linden Homes Eastern prior to the potential redevelopment of the hospital.
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Taleyna Fletcher of PCA (Fletcher 2015).
- 1.4 The test pits were located around the perimeter of the site on areas currently accessible and on soft ground (Figure 2). They did not look to provide a representative sample of the proposed development area, but to allow an insight into the extent, survival, depth and character of remains within these parts of the site. The aim of the test-pit evaluation was to provide information to better inform the formulation of a suitable management/investigation strategy for the site's heritage assets, in light of the current redevelopment proposals.
- 1.5 A total of six hand dug test pits (1.5x1.5m) were excavated and recorded.
- 1.6 No environmental samples were taken at this time, with samples to be taken in subsequent phases of work.
- 1.7 This report describes the results of the test pit evaluation and aims to inform the design of an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

2.1.1 The underlying geology comprised sedimentary bedrock (clays and silts) of the Thames Group, laid down between 34 and 56 million years ago during the Palaeogene period. This is overlain by superficial deposits of windblown cover sand.

2.2 Topography

2.2.1 Colchester is located on the gravel terraces of the River Colne, which flows 1.2km north of the site. The site is located close to the centre of Colchester on fairly level ground at approximately 36m AOD, sloping very slightly downwards to the north toward Lexden Road.

2.2.2 A total of ten window samples (geotechnical boreholes) have been dug across the site and identified the natural geology between 0.5m and 2.6m below present ground level (Figure 4). However, it is important to note that where the geotechnical report refers to 'made ground' this term is used to describe all deposits between topsoil and bedrock geology. The test pits were small (120mm diameter), although evidence of "brick, mortar, pottery and animal bones" were found in WS10, which is located on the alignment a known east-west aligned Roman road indicating that archaeological deposits could still be identified. WS02 was also located within the projected route of this road and it is possible that the 'made ground' comprising gravels and sands with flint and brick could represent the road agger. WS04 is located over a known tessellated floor surface. This window sample identified 'made ground containing mortar, shell and 'brick' (probably Roman CBM).

2.2.3 The remaining geotechnical holes refer to brick within the 'made ground' deposits it is likely that much of this is in fact Roman material and not modern. The 'made ground' within each window sample should not be taken as evidence for modern disturbance but rather seen as potential archaeological (Roman) deposits within or above the superficial drift geology.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 General

3.1.1 A full search of the Essex HER as well as the Colchester Urban Archaeological Database was commissioned by PCA and a desk-based assessment has been produced (PCA report R12173). All historical background data will be presented alongside the results of the investigation and in all subsequent investigation reports in order to understand the site in its wider historic setting.

3.2 Prehistoric

3.2.1 The river terraces on which Colchester has been established would have been favourable for occupation and activity during the prehistoric period. A number of Palaeolithic flint tools (EHER12209, EHER12211, EHER12417), including six Acheulian handaxes, have been recovered from the local gravels and flints of uncertain prehistoric date have also been found in the area (EHER11599, EHER12421). A polished stone axe of probable Neolithic date was found 250m northeast of the hospital (EHER 11600) and additional Neolithic axes and flints have been recovered from Oaks Road (Site 7 MCC1195) and in the wider vicinity (EHER11595, EHER12210, EHER12212, EHER12213, EHER12420, EHER17395, EHER17396). A Grooved Ware pot (late Neolithic) was found in a pit at Culver Street and was considered to represent ritual activity (see Wood & Henderson 2014). Early Bronze Age pottery (EHER11596, EHER12215), flint tools (EHER12214) and stone artefacts (EHER12208) have been found across this general area of Colchester. Additional Middle Bronze Age vessels (Deverel-Rimbury pots) containing some cremated bone fragments (EHER11876) and a bronze axe (EHER12217) have also been found attesting to activity across Colchester during this period.

3.3 Iron Age

3.3.1 During the Iron Age this part of Essex fell within a large, defended area (oppidum) of the Trinovantes tribe. The Trinovantes dominated much of what is now Essex and Suffolk, although this oppidum was defined by the River Colne to the north, the Roman River to the south and by a series of roughly

north-south aligned defensive dykes dug between the river systems. The oppidum was known as Camulodunon to the native people, meaning 'fortress of Caulos' (the Celtic god of war) and its Romanised form reads Camulodunum.

- 3.3.2 A number of major sites have been recorded within the oppidum, including Sheepen (700m north of the hospital site, ref. EHER11673, SAM1002173) and its associated cemetery (ref. EHER13149) and the Lexden tumuli (1.4km to the west). The principal centre was located at Gosbecks, 1km southwest of the hospital, with a significant burial site at Stanway just west of this (www.british-history.ac.uk).
- 3.3.3 Although Colchester falls within the defined limit of the oppidum, there have been few finds of Iron Age date from within the immediate vicinity of the hospital. Sherds of Belgic pottery have been found at the adjacent Colchester Royal Grammar School (MCC2681) and a coin of Late Iron Age date was found at the adjacent Grammar School (EHER46046). A coin of Cunobelin has also been found at Beverley Lodge (MCC1860) to the west and a Carthaginian bronze coin has also been found in the area (EHER12218).

3.4 Roman

- 3.4.1 The Iron Age oppidum of Camulodunon was an important strategic location for the invasion of the Roman army. A fort was built at Gosbecks but the Romans established a major legionary fortress at Colchester, which occupied an area of high ground overlooking the Colne. The fortress was one of the earliest in Roman Britain, with construction starting in AD 44 (www.british-history.ac.uk). There is some evidence for an earlier military camp having been established, suggested by a deep, north-south aligned ditch and a large east-west rampart (ibid). In AD 49, the Roman legion was withdrawn and a colonia was founded, thus maintaining a military presence.
- 3.4.2 The colonia was sacked during the Boudican revolt of AD 60-61 although much of the fortress survived and was incorporated into the large walled town, the building of which was begun following the revolt. From this time on,

Colchester developed as a significant administrative centre in Roman Britain. The town was accessed by several gates located along the walls, the most substantial of which was the western Balcerne Gate.

- 3.4.3 The hospital is located just 350m southwest of the walled Roman town (EHER13112 and EHER13113; SAM1003772); the road leading from the Balcerne Gate runs from northeast to southwest (linking the town at Colchester to the fort at Gosbecks), crossing the site in the northwest corner (MCC475, MCC2529) and was partially investigated at the neighbouring Royal Grammar School (MCC2117). The main Roman road connecting Colchester to London is located along the southern edge of the site (the present Gray Road) and is aligned east-southeast to west-northwest. The road has been recorded in several locations to the west of the hospital, at the school and beyond (MCC1928). The junction of this road and the road leading from Balcerne Gate has been recorded at the Grammar School. A section of an additional east-west road has also been found on the eastern side of the hospital site (MCC2180/EHER 36916) and a possible trackway has been recorded immediately east of the hospital (MCC3016).
- 3.4.4 In line with Roman customs, burials were not placed within the main walled town. At Colchester, burials (cremations and inhumations), cemetery sites, coffins and tombs have been found along Lexden Road and along the aforementioned Roman roads within the site area and beyond. This general area of Roman Colchester is known as the West Cemetery, which incorporates what is now the hospital site. The West Cemetery is described as a large burial ground (or series of burial grounds) used over a considerable timespan.
- 3.4.5 Within the site itself, evidence for burials including inhumation graves (MCC1517, MCC2427), cremations (MCC1081, MCC2498) and tombstones (MCC1366, MCC2676) have been found during construction of the hospital and numerous more examples have been recorded in the immediate vicinity (see below). Votive items including a bronze sphinx (EHER 11859) and a stone sphinx (MCC2133/EHER17345) were also found during the early construction of the hospital, undoubtedly associated with tombs/burials or

perhaps even shrine sites. The stone sphinx was found close to a human tibia and bones of oxen, deer and pigs and fragments of Roman pottery. The precise locations of some of these finds were not recorded at the time of discovery, however they were listed as being found within the hospital grounds during building works.

3.4.6 Aside from the funerary remains at the hospital, at least two kilns have been recorded within the site (MCC1812/EHER11851 and EHER13139) as well as several pits (MCC1632, EHER12521, EHER13301), although the precise locations of these are not clear. Remains of at least two walls have also been recorded (MCC1086, MCC1834) and tessellated floors have been noted within the central and western areas of the hospital (MCC1079). These remains indicate the presence of former buildings although it is not apparent if this structural evidence relates to funerary, industrial or other activity on site. Tessellated surfaces have also been recorded nearby at Papillon Road (MCC1069; MCC1080) to the northeast of the site.

3.4.7 Additional burials have been recorded to the immediate east of the hospital site (MCC3017, MCC3018) adjacent to the aforementioned trackway (see above). Excavations at the adjacent Royal Grammar School (west of the hospital, ref. EHER11852) found significant funerary evidence including a 3rd century temple-tomb (MCC2791/EHER46046) at the aforementioned road junction and part of a Purbeck marble tombstone (MCC2675). Several cremations have also been excavated, many of which are thought to relate to the temple-tomb (MCC1365, MCC1844, MCC2792-2797) and at least one inhumation (MCC1444) is known. An array of pottery and other artefacts have been recovered, indicative of grave goods and high status activity. The remains of three furnace structures (MCC2164, MCC2165, MCC2166/EHER 13157) thought to have been used for cremating the deceased were also investigated at the school. Additional burials within a late 1st/early 2nd century walled cemetery were also found at the school (MCC1897/EHER 11854) and fall within the West Cemetery.

3.4.8 As well as the burials and funerary evidence at the school, a number of pits (MCC1790, MCC2172) and ditches (MCC1787, MCC2160, MCC2169,

MCC2798, MCC2803) have been discovered and have mostly been attributed to the early Roman period. Finds have included pottery (MCC1776) and coins (MCC1791) as well as a carved head and marble inscription (MCC1817), although this may have been originally associated with a burial or tomb. Structural evidence including foundations, a wall, a hearth and a pit were found to the north of the site at Manor Road (MCC1075, MCC1686, MCC1688, MCC1910, MCC2565) and a stone-lined well and building remains have been recorded to the south at Maldon Road (MCC463, MCC1868, MCC2307). At Crouch Street to the northeast, substantial structural remains, numerous features and an array of high status finds, pottery and metalwork have been recovered (EHER12414, MCC2789).

- 3.4.9 Evidence for the West Cemetery has been found along Lexden Road and Crouch Street. Numerous inhumation burials (MCC464-466, MCC1420-1426, MCC1785, MCC1811, MCC1903, MCC1913-1919, MCC2862), cremation burials (MCC1418, MCC1419, MCC1905, MCC1911, MCC1912), a wooden coffin (MCC1920) and two lead coffins (MCC1414 and MCC1417) have been found either side of this route. Both sites are within 100m of the hospital. Further cremated remains and objects including pottery and glass vessels were discovered at The Oaks (MCC1504, MCC1782 and MCC1784) 170m northwest of the hospital and additional cemetery evidence has been recorded to the east at Wellesley Road where a tomb and lead coffin were uncovered (MCC1368 and MCC1369) as well as an additional five inhumations burials (MCC1437, MCC1439, MCC1440, MCC1441, MCC1442) and four cremations (MCC1507, MCC2518, MCC2521, MCC2522). A tombstone was found at Manor Road (MCC1367) close to The Oaks and evidence for burials (both cremations and inhumations) has also been found further south at Creffield Road (MCC2494, MCC2500), southeast at Beaconsfield Road (MCC2497) and a 'cemetery' has been listed at Maldon Road (MCC462, MCC1624).
- 3.4.10 Roman pits and 'several' kilns (EHER 11851) have also been recorded from within the hospital site and highlight some localised industrial activity either pre- or post-dating the use of the area as a burial ground. Additional kilns of

mid-late 2nd century date have been investigated northwest of the hospital at Oaks Drive (MCC1226-1228), at least two more kilns are known from Hospital Lane to the north (MCC2302 and MCC2303) and pottery possibly associated with a kiln has been found at Crouch Street (MCC2175, MCC2688, and EHER13140). Three pottery vessels were found at Hospital Lane (EHER11856), although it is not clear if these were funerary urns.

3.5 Saxon

3.5.1 Colchester continued to be an important settlement during the Saxon period and was at some time seized by the Danes only to be recaptured by the Saxons in 917. Although no Saxon finds or occupation is recorded within the search radius (300m) of the hospital, finds of Romano-Saxon pottery have been found relatively nearby in Colchester (EHER12216).

3.6 Medieval

3.6.1 Within the site boundary, there are no medieval finds or features recorded in the HER or CUAD. A Norman castle was built over the site of a vaulted Roman temple and a number of religious houses were established, many of which have survived in part today; the gateway of the Benedictine Abbey of St John the Baptist and the ruins of the Augustinian Priory of St Botolph can still be seen. A friary, The House of the Crouched (or Crutched) Friars was established by 1251 AD and although this was demolished during the Dissolution, remains of this religious house have been discovered at Crouch Street approximately 200m northeast of the hospital (MCC467, MCC472, MCC2860). St Catherine's hospital was established in the 14th century (MCC449), north of Crouch Street (itself a former medieval road, MCC2199) and whilst the Friary burial ground has been recorded close to this (Site 153 MCC468), further inhumations found in the area may relate to the friary or the hospital. (MCC2790). There is some evidence to suggest some later post-medieval re-use of the friary foundations (MCC2861) although the extent of this is not clear.

3.7 Post-Medieval and Modern

3.7.1 Within the site boundary, a house is marked on the 1777 map, located at the northeast corner and set within a large garden or orchard. Following the

demolition of this house sometime in the late 18th or early 19th century, the first hospital here was built in 1819 (EHER31290/EHER15632) and comprised a large rectangular building, still seen today, set back from Lexden Road, with auxiliary buildings to the rear. Over the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century the hospital was added to and modified although the southern third of the present site area remained devoid of buildings. There is nothing in the HER or CUAD to indicate any other activity occurred on site during the post-medieval period. The hospital was listed as Grade II in 1971 (LB ref. 1337724). The Royal Grammar School to the west of the hospital was first built in 1853 and is also Grade II listed (EHER31291, LB ref.1123591).

- 3.7.2 A Royalist Army was besieged in Colchester in 1648. Barkstead Fort was built as part of the Parliamentary siege works (MCC2259) and a gun platform found at Oaks Drive 300m northwest of the hospital may have been used during this siege. Some limited post-medieval finds and features have been found at Crouch Street (EHER12416) and a number of listed buildings of 18th and 19th century date are documented within the search radius (EHER31101-31105, EHER31274, EHER31325, and EHER31417). In the wider area, anti-tank ditches are visible as linear earthworks to the south and west of Colchester (ref. EHER 16485).

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Excavation and Sampling

- 4.1.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation proposed the excavation of six machine excavated test pits, distributed across the site on accessible green space avoiding standing buildings and live services (Figure 2).
- 4.1.2 Due to constraints including these live services and the current usage of the land as Essex County Hospital, machine excavation was not possible, as a result six 1.5mx1.5m hand dug test pits were excavated and recorded (Figure 2).
- 4.1.3 Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed natural geological deposits or to the depth at which potential archaeological deposits or features could be observed and recorded.
- 4.1.4 Exposed archaeological features and deposits were cleaned by trowel and hoe as appropriate to define their extent. No further excavation was carried out at this stage.
- 4.1.5 Overburden deposits were set aside beside each test pit and examined visually and with a metal-detector for finds retrieval. Archaeological features and spoilheaps were also scanned by metal-detector as they were encountered/ created.
- 4.1.6 Field excavation techniques and recording methods are detailed in the PCA Fieldwork Induction Manual (Operations Manual I) by Joanna Taylor and Gary Brown (2009).

4.2 Recording Methodology

- 4.2.1 The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.
- 4.2.2 All features exposed were hand cleaned and recorded in order to understand

their nature, depth, survival and character.

- 4.2.3 Manual plans and section drawings of archaeological features and deposits were drawn at an appropriate scale (1:20).
- 4.2.4 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a unique record number (often referred to within British archaeology as ‘context numbers’) and recorded on individual pre-printed forms (Taylor and Brown 2009). Archaeological processes recognised by the deposition of material are signified in this report by round brackets (thus), while events constituting the removal of deposits are referred to here as ‘cuts’ and signified by square brackets [thus]. The record numbers assigned to cuts and deposits are entirely arbitrary and in no way reflect the chronological order in which events took place. All features and deposits recorded during the evaluation are listed in Appendix 2. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.
- 4.2.5 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process. Digital Photographs were taken of all archaeological features and deposits.
- 4.2.6 Artefacts were collected by hand and assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from the site (ClfA 2001; Walker 1990; Watkinson 1981).
- 4.2.7 A metal detector was used during all stages of excavation in order to enhance finds recovery.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The test pits are described below in numerical order, with technical data tabulated. Features and deposits are described from west to east or south to north depending on the alignment of the test pit. Archaeological features and deposits were sealed by the subsoil, unless otherwise stated. The results of the test pit evaluation are in keeping with the known archaeology of this part of Colchester.

5.1.2 The test pits were located in areas of available green space, away from live services and standing buildings. Test Pits were intended to be put along the Lexden Road and Gray Road frontages, however CAT scanning of these areas identified a complex series of live services, and as a result these test pits were not excavated.

5.1.3 Due to the restraints all the test pits were located along the western limit of the site along the Oxford Road frontage (Figure 2).

5.1.4 The test pits were intended to test the presence or absence of remains highlighted within the DBA including junctions of Roman roads (Test Pit 4), tessellated pavements (Test Pits 1 and 5), high status burials and pottery kilns.

5.2 Test Pit 1

5.2.1 Test Pit 1 was positioned in green space in the gardens of the Nurses Home (Figure 2) located to investigate the potential tessellated pavement, identified in previous investigations as well as in the DBA. Results from the Geotechnical Investigations in this area identified deposits of 'made ground' likely referring to archaeological deposits.

5.2.2 Test Pit 1 contained a potential Roman quarry pit, two possible pits and two deposits rich in Roman artefacts. The quarry pit is likely related to the construction or repair of one of the number of Roman roads present in the immediate area. However given the small window defined by the test pit identification and interpretation of features is difficult.

- 5.2.3 Test Pit 1 contained the largest assemblage of Roman pottery, weighing 9034g, dating from the mainly from the 1st to 3rd centuries AD.
- 5.2.4 Topsoil (118) was a dark grey-brown silty sand produced 282 sherds (3410g) of Roman pottery (AD120-400) as well as 201 fragments (11264.5g) of CBM, as well as bone and metal objects.
- 5.2.5 Pit [140] (Figures 2 & 6) was located in the south-west corner of the test pit. It was in excess of 0.26m long, 0.24m wide, excavation stopped when the feature was identified. It contains a fill (139) of grey-brown silty sand. This feature was not fully excavated.
- 5.2.6 Quarry Pit [136] (Plate 1; Figures 2 & 6) was located in the eastern part of the test pit. It was in excess of 1.5m long and 1.1m wide, excavated to a depth of 0.32m. It contained a fill of greyish brown silty sand (135). This feature was not fully excavated.
- 5.2.7 Pit [138] (Figures 2 & 6) truncated quarry pit [136] and was located in the north eastern corner of the test pit. The pit was in excess of 0.26m long and 0.52m wide excavated to a depth of 0.26m. It contained a fill of dark grey brown silty sand (137). This feature was not fully excavated.
- 5.2.8 Deposit (119) was rich in Roman material and consisted of dark grey brown silty sand 0.18m deep. This deposit contained 55 fragments (4511.5g) of CBM, 94 sherds (2110g) of Roman pottery (AD120-400), as well as fragments of bone and metal objects.
- 5.2.9 Deposit (133) was rich in Roman finds and consisted of mid grey brown silty sand 0.22m deep. This deposit contained 143 sherds (3513.5g) of Roman pottery (AD120-300), 74 fragments (6953g) of CBM, as well as bone and metal objects.
- 5.2.10 The features identified in this test pit are likely to be quarry pitting, with the quantity and variety of finds (pottery, animal bone, CBM) reflecting proximity to settlement or areas of intensive activity. The quarry pitting is likely related to the construction or repair of one of the nearby Roman roads. The pottery

from the test pit is of predominantly 1st-3rd century date.

5.2.11 The tessellated pavement was not identified within this test pit. No tesserae were recovered from this test pit which could cast doubt on the recorded location of this pavement.

TEST PIT 1	Figures 2 & 6	Plate 1	
Test Pit Alignment: N-S	Length: 1.5m	Level of Natural (m OD): 33.61m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		North Section	South Section
Topsoil	(117)	0.18m	0.18m
Subsoil	(118)	0.38m	0.40m
Deposit	(119)	0.16m	0.18m
Deposit	(133)	0.22m	0.2m
Natural	(107)	n/a	n/a
Summary			
<p>Test Pit 1 was located close to the western boundary of the site.</p> <p>The test pit contained a quarry pit, with two further pits and two deposits, all dated to the Roman period and containing a range of finds (Roman Pottery, CBM, bone, metal).</p>			

5.3 Test Pit 2

5.3.1 Test Pit 2 was located within the gardens of the Nurses Home (Figure 2) positioned to identify the limits of the possible tessellated pavement identified in the DBA, as well as looking into the presence or absence of Roman burials in this area.

5.3.2 The test pit contained no archaeological features, but deposits of Roman date were identified. This does not mean that archaeological features are not present, merely that they are located at a depth which was not reached by a 1.2m deep test pit.

5.3.3 Topsoil (126) was a mid-brown grey sandy silt, 0.22m deep, produced 32 sherds (228.5g) of Roman pottery along with 3 fragments (132g) of CBM and fragments of bone.

5.3.4 Subsoil (127) was a dark grey-brown sandy silt, 0.25m deep, produced 62

sherds (467g) of Roman pottery in addition to 10 fragments (557g) of CBM, and animal bone.

5.3.5 Subsoil (128) was a mid-brown grey sandy silt, 0.28m deep, contained 82 sherds (1017g) of Roman pottery, 24 fragments (1157g) of CBM, and fragments of animal bone.

5.3.6 Deposit (129) was a mid to light grey brown sandy silt, containing occasional sub-rounded stones. This deposit was 0.27m in depth and contained fragments of bone, 12 fragments (429g) of CBM and 4 sherds (31g) of Roman pottery.

5.3.7 Deposit (132) was a mid to dark grey brown sandy silt, containing rare sub-rounded stones. The deposit was in excess of 0.32m in depth containing 20 sherds (181g) of mid-2nd-3rd century Roman pottery, 10 fragments (691.5g) of CBM, and fragments of bone.

5.3.8 Layer (131) was present in the northern part of the test pit. This could be a lens of material slumping into a larger, as of yet unidentified, feature such as a quarry pit. It was 1.38m long, 1.35m wide and 0.11m deep. It consisted of mid brown-orange silty sand.

5.3.9 The quantity of pottery and other finds recovered could suggest that this test pit was located within a larger feature which could not be identified within the small sample area.

5.3.10 No tesserae were recovered which indicates that the tessellated pavement does not extend this far south.

TEST PIT 2	Figures 2 & 6	Plate 2	
Test Pit Alignment: N-S	Length: 1.5m	Level of Natural (m OD): 35.73m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		North Section	South Section
Topsoil	(126)	0.2m	0.22m
Subsoil	(127)	0.24m	0.24m
Subsoil	(128)	0.22m	0.28m
Deposit	(129)	0.26m	0.44m

Subsoil	(130)	0.14m+	n/a
Layer	(131)	0.11m	n/a
Deposit	(132)	0.34m+	n/a
Natural	(107)	n/a	n/a
Summary			
<p>Test Pit 2 was located in the south-west of the site.</p> <p>There were no archaeological features in the test pit. A number of deposits which could be archaeological in nature were encountered, which contained a range of finds (Pottery, Bone, CBM and metal).</p>			

5.4 Test Pit 3

5.4.1 Test Pit 3 was positioned in accessible green space in the north-west of the site (Figure 2). The test pit contained no archaeological features or deposits. It was heavily truncated on the eastern side by modern foundations relating to a basement for the hospital.

5.4.2 Topsoil (120) was a dark grey-brown silty sand which produced 4 sherds (25g) of Roman pottery.

5.4.3 Deposit (124) was a fill of construction cut [122] which formed part of the foundations for the hospital. This deposit contained 52 sherds (387g) of Roman pottery (AD100-200) as well as 27 fragments (1346.5g) of CBM. Although this material is likely to be redeposited it is a good indication that there is Roman activity nearby.

TEST PIT 3	Figures 2 & 6	Plate 3	
Test Pit Alignment: N-S	Length: 1.5m	Level of Natural (m OD): 31.69m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		West Section	South Section
Topsoil	(120)	0.1m	0.22m
Subsoil	(121)	0.24m	0.24m
Buried Soil	(125)	0.24m	0.34m
Natural	(107)	0.54m+	0.64m+
Summary			
<p>Test Pit 3 was located towards the north-west corner of the site.</p>			

The test pit contained no archaeological features or deposits.
 The test pit was heavily truncated by modern foundations relating to a basement for the hospital.

5.5 Test Pit 4

- 5.5.1 Test Pit 4 was located on the western side of the site, along the Oxford Road frontage (Figure 2). This test pit was located to investigate the presence, or absence, of a potential junction of two Roman roads. The test pit contained no archaeological features or deposits. The eastern part of the test pit was disturbed by root activity and also from the construction of foundations for the hospital.
- 5.5.2 Subsoil (104) was a dark grey-brown sandy silt contained 59 sherds (663g) of Roman pottery (AD150-300) as well as 11 fragments (1468g) of CBM.
- 5.5.3 The lower deposit of subsoil (106) was a mid- grey-brown sandy silt which contained 10 sherds (140g) Roman pottery (AD120-300) and 22 fragments (1485g) of CBM and bone.
- 5.5.4 A deposit of modern Made Ground (105) was present in the test pit. This was made up of mid reddish yellow sand and gravel 0.28m in depth. This deposit is related to modern landscaping for the hospital.
- 5.5.5 No evidence was recovered for the presence of either of the roads. Although there is a significant amount of truncation from the construction of the hospital and modern landscaping, some evidence for road gravels or roadside ditches would be expected. It is likely that the proposed line of these Roman roads is inaccurate.

TEST PIT 4	Figures 2 & 6	Plate 4	
Test Pit Alignment: N-S	Length: 1.5m	Level of Natural (m OD): 32.58m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		North Section	South Section
Topsoil	(103)	0.12m	0.16m
Subsoil	(104)	0.2m	0.22m
Made Ground	(105)	0.28m	0.22m

Subsoil	(106)	0.1m	0.06m
Natural	(107)	1.2m+	1.2m+
Summary			
<p>Test Pit 4 was located western part of the site.</p> <p>There were no archaeological features or deposits present in this Test Pit.</p> <p>The Test Pit was disturbed by root activity and from the construction of foundations for the hospital.</p>			

5.6 Test Pit 5

5.6.1 Test Pit 5 was located in the gardens of the Nurses Home (Figure 2) positioned to investigate the reported presence of a tessellated pavement. However the test pit was heavily truncated by modern drains and services. Below the level of these modern truncations deposits of undisturbed, possibly Roman, material were present. The results of Geotechnical Investigations in this area identified deposits of 'made ground' which likely refer to archaeological deposits.

5.6.2 The topsoil (114) was a dark grey-brown silty sand which produced 8 sherds (545g) of Roman pottery, as well as fragments of bone and metal objects

5.6.3 Subsoil (115) was a mid grey-brown sandy silt which contained 25 sherds (330g) of Roman pottery, 23 fragments (1861g) of CBM, as well as animal bone and metal objects.

5.6.4 Deposit (116) was a mid to dark grey-brown silty sand, with common rounded stone inclusions, 0.44m deep. It contained the largest assemblage of Roman pottery which included 129 sherds (1520.5g) of pottery (AD150-250), fragments of bone, metal objects, and 57 fragments (3562g) of CBM.

5.6.5 Deposit (134) was a mid-grey brown silty sand, with occasional sub-angular stones, in excess of 0.25m in depth. It contained 11 sherds (247.5g) of Roman pottery (AD100-200), fragments of bone, and 2 fragments (306g) of CBM.

5.6.6 These deposits of material could be part of the upper fills of a larger, as of

yet unidentified, feature perhaps related to the quarry pit identified in Test Pit 1. It is difficult to identify features within a such small sample area, as a result these deposits could be unrelated, or even be part of a deeper sequence of Roman stratigraphy not visible at this stage of investigation.

5.6.7 No evidence for the tessellated pavement was identified in this test pit, although the truncations from the modern services may have removed this evidence. However it would be expected that, if a tessellated pavement had been truncated, a number of tesserae would be present in the backfill of these services. As no tesserae were recovered it is likely that either the recorded location of the pavement is inaccurate or that it survives intact at a lower depth.

TEST PIT 5	Figures 2 & 6	Plate 5	
Test Pit Alignment: N-S	Length: 1.5m	Level of Natural (m OD): 33.88m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		North Section	East Section
Topsoil	(114)	0.22m	0.24m
Subsoil	(115)	0.66m	0.64m
Deposit	(116)	0.42m	0.44m
Deposit	(134)	0.24m+	0.2m+
Natural	(107)	n/a	n/a
<p>Summary</p> <p>Test Pit 5 was located south-western part of the site.</p> <p>There were no archaeological features present, but two deposits were identified which are likely to be archaeological in nature. These could be related to the quarry pit which was identified in Test Pit 1 to the north-west.</p> <p>The Test Pit was heavily truncated by a modern drain and other services.</p>			

5.7 Test Pit 6

5.7.1 Test Pit 6 was positioned in the south-western corner of the site on the frontage of Oxford Road (Figure 2). It was located to investigate the presence or absence of Roman activity, specifically potential high status Roman burials.

5.7.2 Two pits and a deposit of Roman material were identified in the test pit.

- 5.7.3 A number of sherds (1333.5g) of Roman pottery (AD150-300) were recovered from the subsoil (101) a mid to dark grey brown sandy silt 0.34m deep. A number of fragments (4330g) of CBM were also recovered from this deposit along with fragments of bone and metal objects.
- 5.7.4 The lower deposit of subsoil (102) was a light grey brown sandy silt which contained 153 sherds (1460.5g) of Roman pottery (AD70-200). This deposit also contained 39 fragments (2873.5g) of CBM, as well as fragments of bone and metal objects.
- 5.7.5 Pit [111] (Plate 7; Figure 2) was 0.7m long 0.56m wide and 0.48m in depth with steep sides and a concave base. Its excavated fill was a mid to dark brown-grey sandy silt (110) which contained 10 sherds (173.5g) of Roman pottery.
- 5.7.6 Pit [113] (Figure 2) was 0.94m long 0.31m wide with moderate to steep sides and a rounded profile and a single fill of mid brown-grey sand silt (112). This feature was not fully excavated. No finds were present in this feature.
- 5.7.7 Deposit (109) was a mid to light grey-brown silt sand with occasional sub-rounded stones, in excess of 0.4m deep. It contained fragments of bone, fragments of CBM and metal objects.
- 5.7.8 These pits are present relatively high in the sequence truncating the lower deposit of Roman material (109). This could suggest longevity to the site with a substantial depth to the stratigraphy; conversely it could indicate slumped deposits present in the top of a larger unidentified features.
- 5.7.9 No evidence for high status burials were identified in this test pit, however a maximum depth of only 1.2m was reached with the probability that these deposits are only the upper layers within a deeper more complicated stratigraphy.

TEST PIT 6	Figures 2 & 6	Plate 7	
Test Pit Alignment: NW-SE	Length: 1.5m	Depth of Test Pit (m OD): 33.5m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		North Section	South Section

Topsoil	(100)	0.16m	0.16m
Subsoil	(101)	0.28m	0.32m
Subsoil	(102)	0.18m	0.34m
Layer	(108)	n/a	0.06m
Deposit	(109)	0.42m+	0.3m+
Natural	(108)	n/a	n/a

Summary

Test Pit 6 was located in the south-western corner of the site.

There were two pits and a deposit of Roman material identified within the test pit. These produced a large quantity of finds including Roman pottery (AD70-300), CBM, animal bone and metal objects.

6 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Roman Pottery

By Katie Anderson

Introduction

- 6.1.1 A large assemblage of Roman pottery was recovered from the six test pits, weighing 17,758g. All of the material has been scanned and notes made of the most diagnostic sherds from each context.

Assemblage Composition

Test Pit 1

- 6.1.2 Test Pit 1 contained the largest assemblage of Roman pottery from the test pits, weighing 9034g with material deriving from three of the contexts, although there was a no difference in date between the fills, with several being mixed in date suggest pottery had been redeposited. Sherds from lower fill (133) included a sherd from a beaded, flanged bowl dating AD250-400, a sherd of Baetican amphora and a wall-sided mortaria. (119) immediately above (133) included a greyware beaded rim bowl (AD120-300) and a sherd from a Colchester mortaria (AD140-200). Sherds from fill (118) included several fresh sherds which could be refitted and included an imitation black-burnished triangle rim bowl (AD120-300), sherds from a Nene Valley whiteware mortaria (AD110-400) as well as several Samian sherds.

Test Pit 2

- 6.1.3 Roman pottery was collected from four of the fills identified within Test Pit 2 (1925g). Pottery from upper fill (126) included a Colchester colour-coated sherd (AD 150-250). Fill (127) immediately below (126) contained a Dragendorff 45 mortaria dating AD170-250. Pottery from (128) included a sherd from a Colchester mortaria and an East Gaulish Dr33 cup dating AD150-250. Lower fill (132) contained pottery dating mid-2nd-3rd century AD including a late Colchester colour-coating sherd and a triangular rim dish (AD120-300).

Test Pit 3

- 6.1.4 A small quantity of Roman pottery weighing 387g was recovered from (124)

in Test Pit 3, which included a Central Gaulish Samian sherd (AD100-200).

Test Pit 4

- 6.1.5 Test Pit 4 contained a small quantity of pottery weighing 803g, from two fills. Material from fill (104) included sherds from an indented beaker (AD150-300), while an imitation black-burnished ware beaded rim dish was identified from (106), dating AD120-300.

Test Pit 5

- 6.1.6 Four fills within Test Pit 5 contained Roman pottery weighing a total of 2643g. Material from lower fill (134) included a sherd from fine greyware beaker with impressed dot decoration (AD100-200). Fill (116) directly above, comprised the largest assemblage of material from this test pit, including a sherd from a Dr31 dish (AD150-250). A sherd from a Colchester colour-coated ware was identified in fill (115), and a sherd of amphora was amongst the sherds from upper fill (114).

Test Pit 6

- 6.1.7 Test Pit 6 contained the second largest quantity of Roman pottery after Test Pit 1, weighing a total of 2968g. The material was recovered from three fills. Fill (101) contained sherds from a Colchester colour-coated indented beaker and beaker with barbotine scale decoration, both dating AD150-300. A small quantity of sherds were recovered from (110) including several sandy greyware sherds. A sherd of Colchester colour-coated ware was collected from fill (102) along with a sherd of Samian and a greyware flanged dish, dating AD70-200.

Discussion

- 6.1.8 The large quantity of pottery recovered from the test-pits suggests activity occurred throughout the Roman period, although there was a peak between the mid-2nd and mid-3rd century AD. That being said, many of the contexts were mixed in date with earlier sherds (mid-1st-2nd century AD) occurring alongside later sherds, suggests a degree of residuality to the assemblage, supported by the fragmented nature of the pottery from many of the contexts. It is noteworthy that there was no obvious difference in date

between layers within each of the test pits, with none of the test pits standing out as being either later or earlier than the others.

6.1.9 In terms of assemblage composition, the pottery included a range of different vessels used for the storage, preparation and serving of food and drink, including amphora, jars, dishes, beakers and mortaria.

6.2 Animal Bone

By Kevin Reilly

6.2.1 This site provided 398 bone fragments which resulted in a total of 371 after refitting. These were taken from 18 deposits, the majority of the bones arising from just 5 contexts (see Table 1). All but three of these deposits were described as subsoil, the exceptions being pit fill (110), foundation level (124) and topsoil (126). The great majority of this assemblage was well preserved, with just 16 abraded pieces. These bones were all recovered within 4 of the 5 large collections described in Table 1, with the exception of (133). The level of refitting is a subtle indication of the limited level of fragmentation. In addition none of the site collections can be described as heavily fragmented. A limited phasing has been applied to these collections, suggesting that the majority of the material is dated to the Roman era. As shown in Table 1, there would appear to be a concentration of material dated to this period from Test Pit 1.

Period:	?	R	?	R	R	
Deposit:	102	116	118	119	133	All
Test Pit:	6	5	1	1	1	1-6
Species						
Cattle	5	12	18	10	15	81
Equid						1
Cattle-size	33	13	18	11	30	139
Sheep/Goat	5	12	9	2	14	51
Pig	4	3	6	4	9	33
Sheep-size	5	6	18	3	5	56
Dog					1	3
Hare		1	1			2

Rabbit						1
Chicken						2
Mallard	1		1			2
Grand Total	53	47	71	30	74	371

Table 1. The species distribution from selected deposits as well as from the combined site assemblage referring to counts of bones following refitting with Period divided into R – Roman and ? - unphased.

6.2.2 The species range is heavily biased towards the major mammalian domesticates, although there is also a slight representation of domestic birds (chicken and duck - assuming the latter is a domesticate) and game (hare and rabbit). The equid is represented by a tooth fragment, this from (101) - unphased; while the other small mammal and bird bones not taken from the larger collections detailed in Table 1 were taken from:- dog (129) - Roman and (128) - unphased; rabbit (126) - unphased; and chicken (109) - Roman and (128). Notably the general and indeed the larger individual domesticate collections feature a diverse range of skeletal parts suggestive of general domestic waste. Each of these domesticates is represented by a number of ageable bones, which, depending on the phase division of these collections, may allow for a moderately detailed review of exploitation practises. In contrast, there were very few measurable bones – a consequence perhaps of the presence of a number of bones with heavy butchery. A small number of domestic bones were clearly from rather large animals, possibly indicative of later post-medieval collections – these representing examples of the improved breeds/types entering the meat markets from the latter part of the 18th century (Rixson 2000, 215). These were found in contexts (101), (102), (109), (119) and (133). Clearly as a proportion of these deposits were dated to the Roman era, it can be surmised that some of these larger cattle may represent large imports.

6.3 Ceramic Building Material and Painted Wall Plaster

6.3.1 A total of 646 pieces of ceramic Roman building material (weighing 45257.5g) was recovered from the test pits, with notable concentrations from Test Pit 1 (330 pieces, 22729g), Test Pit 5 (82 pieces, 5729g) and Test Pit 6 (115, 9535.5g). A few post-medieval and modern fragments were found

alongside the Roman material, presumably deriving from later disturbance.

6.3.2 A single piece of painted wall plaster was also found in Test Pit 1 (context (133) and in conjunction with the large quantity of tile from this test pit, could highlight its proximity to a high status Roman building.

6.3.3 Among the ceramic material were several pieces that could be identified as wall cavity tiles (probably box-flue tiles) and other tile fragments associated with hypocaust systems (such as the tiles that form pilae stacks) and roof tiles (tegula and imbrex fragments) although no complete artefacts were found. The hypocaust material is indicative of villas and bathhouses whilst the roof tiles indicate high status domestic or civic buildings.

6.4 Metalwork

By Ruth Beveridge

Introduction

6.4.1 Table 2 summarises the quantities of metalwork collected from the excavation. It is a small assemblage of finds that all date to the Roman period. The finds consist primarily of iron nails from the subsoil of the Test Pits. The overall condition of the few copper alloy objects is fair with occasional encrustation of dirt, however the ironwork is corroded and often encrusted. The most noteworthy finds are a copper alloy Roman mount with enamel inlay, found in the subsoil layer (102) of Test Pit 6 and a copper alloy toilet spoon found in the same layer.

Find type	Number
Copper Alloy objects	4
Iron objects	48
Slag	3
Total	55

Table 2: Metalwork finds quantities

Copper alloy objects

6.4.2 SF 1 is a flat, discoidal object from subsoil layer (102) in Test Pit 6. It is worn with damaged edges. It is most likely a boss, comparable to an example in

- Crummy (1983), pp119, Fig 124, No. 4049. Such bosses, with no central shaft were probably attached using lead solder. They were often used for decorating wood, leather or metal items.
- 6.4.3 SF 2 is an incomplete cast copper-alloy and inlaid millefiori enamel Roman mount retrieved from subsoil layer (102) in Test Pit 6. The mount is circular and flat with a rearward facing lip around the perimeter. On the reverse is an integral circular sectioned shaft that projects from the centre.
- 6.4.4 The front of the mount is decorated with two concentric bands of enamel around one central circle of enamel. Each band is held within a metal framework. The bands and the central area are inlaid with repeating millefiori motifs that consist of small square chequer boards of alternating blue and white enamel, each one five squares across by five squares wide. These miniature chequer boards are approximately 2 - 2.5mm apart with the gaps being in-filled with blue enamel.
- 6.4.5 One half of the mount has suffered damage and wear with much of the enamel on this part absent or degraded. It can only be assumed that the repetitive millefiori pattern would have continued around the mount.
- 6.4.6 The exact use of this type of mount is uncertain, however it is likely that it formed a decorative part of harness gear, leatherwork or possibly even furniture. It can be dated to between AD 100 - 300, in line with other objects decorated with millefiori work.
- 6.4.7 Examples of similar mounts have been found in Nocton, Lincolnshire (Daubney 2014) and Ludford, Lincolnshire (Burrill 2013).
- 6.4.8 SF 3 is a cast copper-alloy cosmetic or toilet spoon of Roman date. It was recovered from the subsoil layer (102) from Test Pit 6. SF 3 is missing the terminal end due to old breaks but is otherwise complete. The shaft is circular in section and increases in diameter until just over halfway, after which it tapers towards the bottom, where the implement terminates in an oval, flat-sectioned head. The head is set at a slight angle to the shaft. Similar spoons can be seen in Stead and Rigby (1986), pp132, Fig 56, No.

249 and Blagg et al (2004), pp117, Fig 77, Nos 103 and 104 where they are referred to as a Colchester Type 1 spoon.

6.4.9 Toilet spoons were used throughout the Roman period and likely utilised for a variety of functions ranging from extracting cosmetics from flasks, boxes and small pots to pushing back the nail cuticles (Crummy, 1983, pp59).

6.4.10 SF is a complete copper alloy coin recovered from subsoil layer (128) in Test Pit 2. It is a 4th century nummus. On the obverse is the helmeted head of Constantinopolis. The reverse is too concreted with dirt so all detail is masked. It is an AE3 nummus of the House of Constantine dating between AD 330 and 335; Reece period 17.

Iron objects

6.4.11 A complete, coiled iron ox-goad was recovered from subsoil layer (115) in Test Pit 5. A strip of iron forms the coiled socket which tapers to a prong, set at a right angle to the socket itself. It is corroded. A similar example, dating to AD120-150 was found at Baldock (Stead and Rigby, 1986, pp152, Fig 66, No. 515).

6.4.12 An elongate object was recovered from subsoil layer (118) of Test Pit 1. It has a square sectioned shank that tapers and flattens towards one end. At the opposite end there are the remnants of a loop. It is possibly part of a tumbler lock lift key such as the example in Hinchcliffe and Green (1985), pp58, Fig. 34, No 73.

6.4.13 A strip of iron was retrieved from subsoil (119) of Test Pit 1 with associated Roman pottery. It is rectangular in plan with a rivet in situ at one end. It is a fitting, possibly used on furniture.

6.4.14 A further three elongate objects were recovered, two from subsoil layer (101) in Test Pit 6 and one from subsoil (115) in Test Pit 5. These all have shanks that are square in section. One could be a tool, the others could be nails.

6.4.15 A total of 42 nails were recovered from the Test Pits. All are from subsoil layers with the exception of one nail recovered from pit [111], fill (110).

Whilst iron nails are difficult to date to a particular period, some of the nails recovered here are from layers that have associated Roman pottery - layers (116), (119) and (133) - and are of types commonly found during that period. These nails are primarily of Manning Type 1B (Manning, 1985, Fig. 32, 133). There is also an example of a Manning Type 3 nail from subsoil layer (119). The remaining nails do not have Roman pottery associated with them, however all are of forms consistent with Manning Type 1b with two more examples of Manning Type 3 from subsoil layer (115) and a possible Manning Type 1a from subsoil layer (101).

Discussion

- 6.4.16 The enamelled mount is an uncommon find and if attached to a harness would more likely have been as part of an item of prestige for ceremonial purposes. A small range of harness mounts are recorded from Colchester in Crummy (1983), pp 137, Fig. 157, and whilst one is likely to have been inlaid with enamel it is of a different form.
- 6.4.17 Overall, the metalwork confirms a strong presence of Roman occupation debris on the site, with an emphasis towards a higher status presence.

7 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 The principal result of the test pit evaluation was the discovery of some surviving Roman features such as quarry pits and a number of deposits associated with large quantities of Roman pottery and building material. In general, the Roman building material and pottery was in good condition and is considered to have derived from a nearby primary context, i.e. the assemblage suggests Roman buildings in the immediate vicinity. The pottery was predominantly of 1st-3rd century AD date; however, this dating may only show the site at its peak, with 'quieter' phases of activity not represented within the small sample provided by the test pitting. Disturbance associated with construction of the hospital, as well as Victorian investigations in the area was also noted (Test Pits 3 and 4), and may have caused some re-deposition of Roman material from their primary contexts.
- 7.1.2 In addition to the evidence provided by the test pits, a Geotechnical Survey was undertaken which identified evidence for the potential depths of archaeology in areas of the site which could not be accessed during this evaluation phase. Many of these noted deposits of 'made-ground' which produced brick, mortar, pottery and bone. Although some modern material was indeed recovered, it is considered that this 'made ground' is likely referring to in situ archaeological horizons such as demolition layers associated with the former town of Colchester.
- 7.1.3 The presence of a piece of painted wall plaster (Test Pit 1) alongside roof tiles and tiles associated with hypocausted buildings, (especially from Test Pits 1, 5 and 6) suggest that the test pits in the south-western corner of the site are in close proximity to former Roman buildings. Although no complete tiles were recovered, some pieces are relatively large and indicate they may not have been transported far from their original context. However, the clear evidence for modern disturbance does cast some doubt on this.
- 7.1.4 The animal bone assemblage from Roman contexts showed a clear bias towards larger domesticates such as cattle and sheep/goat although some pig, chicken/ duck and hare bones were also found. The assemblage

- 7.1.5 This likely presence of such buildings in or to the southwest of the hospital is accentuated when viewed alongside the reported presence of a mosaic floor in this area of the site (Test Pits 1 and 5 were positioned to try to locate this floor), which could suggest an important or 'high status' structure. Test Pits 1 and 5 were located to identify the potential tessellated pavement or mosaic floor, originally identified during the construction of the Nurses Home. No in situ floor was revealed and no tesserae were found in the backfill to indicate the presence of a mosaic. This suggests that either the recorded location is inaccurate, or that it survives at a lower depth not reached in the 1.2m deep test pits.
- 7.1.6 The presence of higher status activity in the area is also indicated by the metalwork recovered from the test pits. Although only a few copper alloy objects were recovered, the types of artefacts (a cosmetic spoon, decorative boss, 4th century coin and especially the enamel mount) are indicative of higher status possessions. Of the 42 iron nails, many could be positively identified as typical Roman types, although it is possible that some were of a considerably later date. The nails further attest to structural activity in the vicinity. None of the Test Pits produced evidence for high status Roman burials, but there is the potential for a small number of sherds of pottery and CBM which may relate to the reported presence of Roman kilns on the site. Both kilns and high status burials have been recorded in the immediate vicinity of the hospital.
- 7.1.7 The projected Roman roads were also not identified, with Test Pit 4 specifically positioned to investigate the projected alignment of one of these roads. This however did not produce any evidence for a road surface or flanking ditches, indicating either that the projected alignment is inaccurate, that the construction of the hospital has truncated the road or that evidence for the road lies at a greater depth than achieved in the Test Pits.
- 7.1.8 Test Pit 1 revealed features which represent large quarry pits. It is possible that quarrying of localised gravels and sands served to make or repair the road surfaces of known and conjectured roads crossing the area. However given the limited areas of investigation afforded by the test pitting, it is not

possible to accurately interpret the negative features identified.

7.1.9 Distinct deposits, rich in Roman material culture were recorded primarily in the southwest area of the site (Test Pits 1, 2, 5 and 6) and it is thought that many of these deposits relate to fill sequences of larger features, not wholly exposed by the test pits.

7.1.10 The largest assemblages of Roman pottery were recovered from Test Pits 1 and 6, which also yielded the greatest building material quantities. Test Pit 1 produced 519 sherds (9033.5g) of pottery, and Test Pit 6 310 sherds (2967.5g). The high volume of finds in this area again reiterates the notion of buildings and activity nearby.

7.1.11 The preservation of stratified Roman contexts appears to be relatively good, with layers and deposits surviving in the stratigraphic sequence as well as a number of negative features. Significant overburden in all but Test Pits 3 and 4 have clearly also served to protect some of these archaeological horizons. Stratified deposits rich in pottery and building material are commonly found in close proximity to or even within former buildings and highlight the potential survival of some building remnants beneath the present hospital.

7.1.12 The apparent lack of archaeology present in Test Pits 3 and 4 could also be misleading with this area subjected to modern landscaping as well as being truncated by modern foundations. It is likely that similar archaeological sequence had formerly been present within these areas, prior to the modern disturbance.

7.1.13 The results of the evaluation are in keeping with findings from Roman Colchester.

7.2 Conclusions

7.2.1 The test pit evaluation has identified deposits and features of Roman date on the site (1st-4th century AD).

7.2.2 The archaeological features and deposits from the Roman period are relatively well-preserved and associated with moderately large finds

assemblages.

- 7.2.3 Although the densest concentration of archaeology appears to be in the south-west of the site (Test Pits 1, 2, 5 and 6), in view of the limited sample of the site's area, it is likely that this level of Roman activity is present throughout the rest of the site with pockets of modern truncation associated with the construction of the hospital and associated landscaping.
- 7.2.4 The character of the Roman features and the associated finds is in keeping with high-status buildings and activity in the area, especially when viewed alongside the archaeological discoveries previously recorded on and around the hospital site and the site's proximity to the walls of Roman Colchester.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Linden Homes Eastern for commissioning the work. PCA are also grateful to Jess Tipper the Archaeological Advisor to Colchester Borough Council for his advice and for monitoring the work. The author would like to thank Mark Hinman for managing the project. The author would also like to thank the project team: Lawrence Morgan-Shelbourne and Sam Corke for their extremely hard work, and finally Mark Roughley of PCA's CAD department for preparing the figures.

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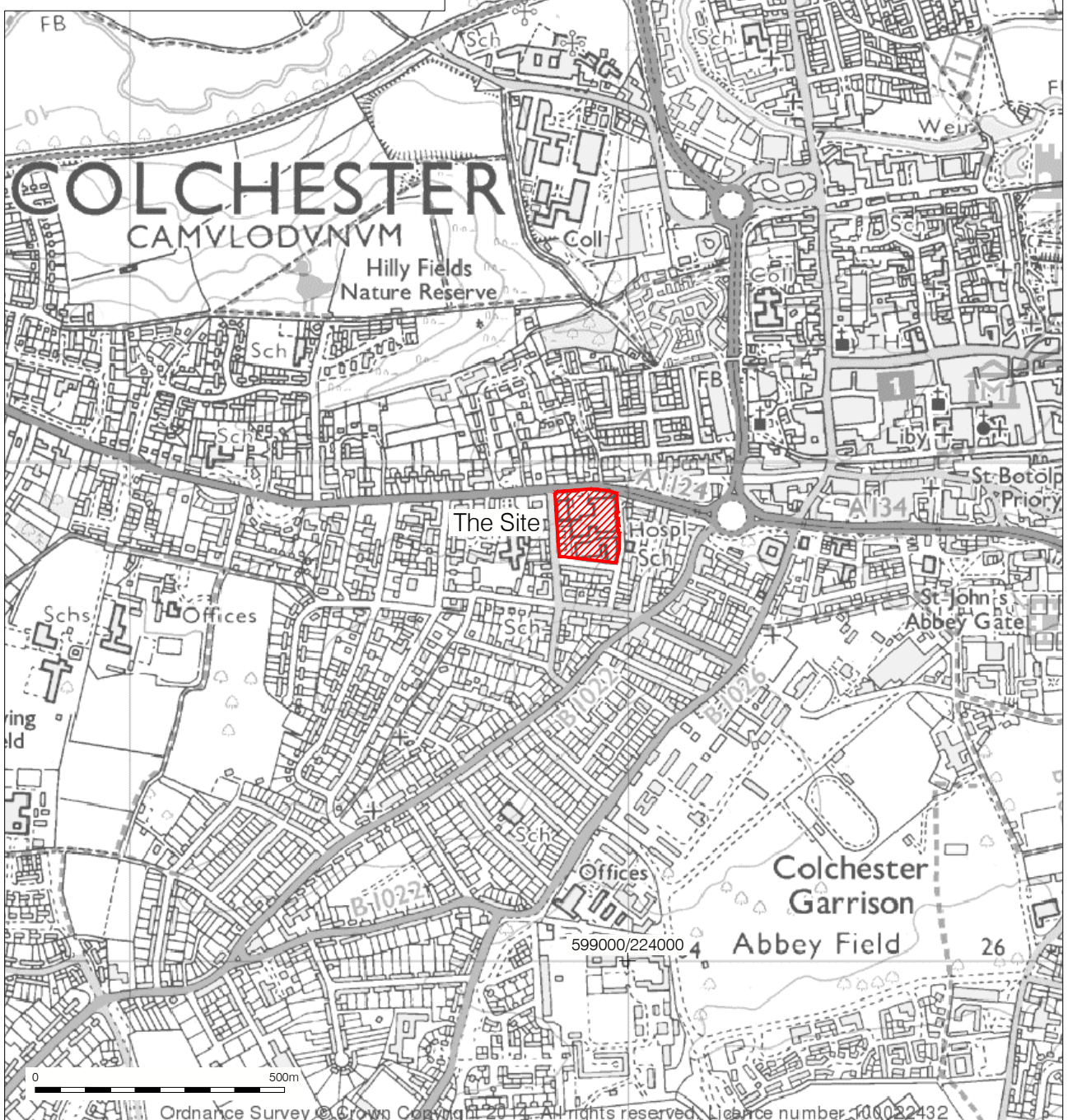
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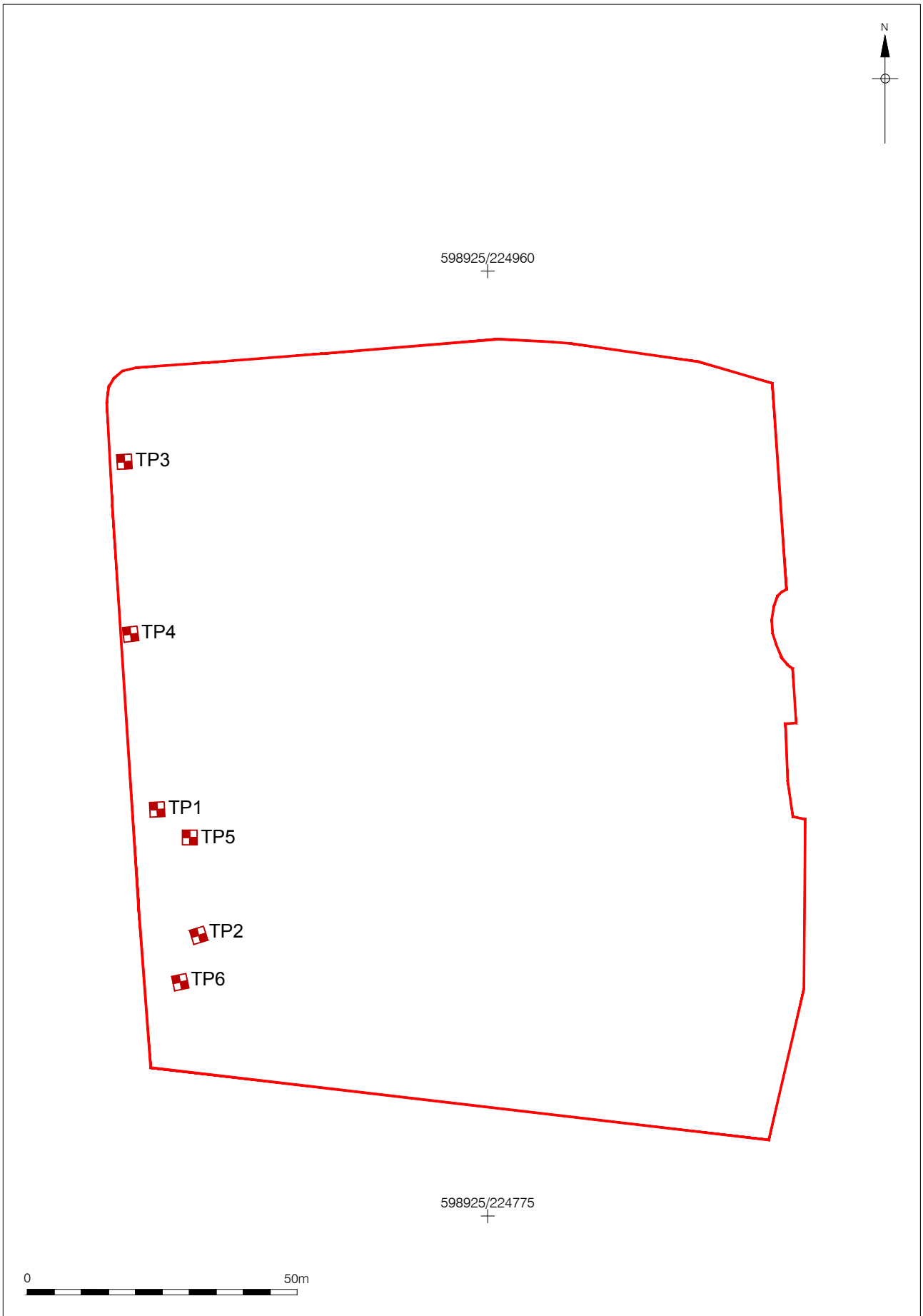
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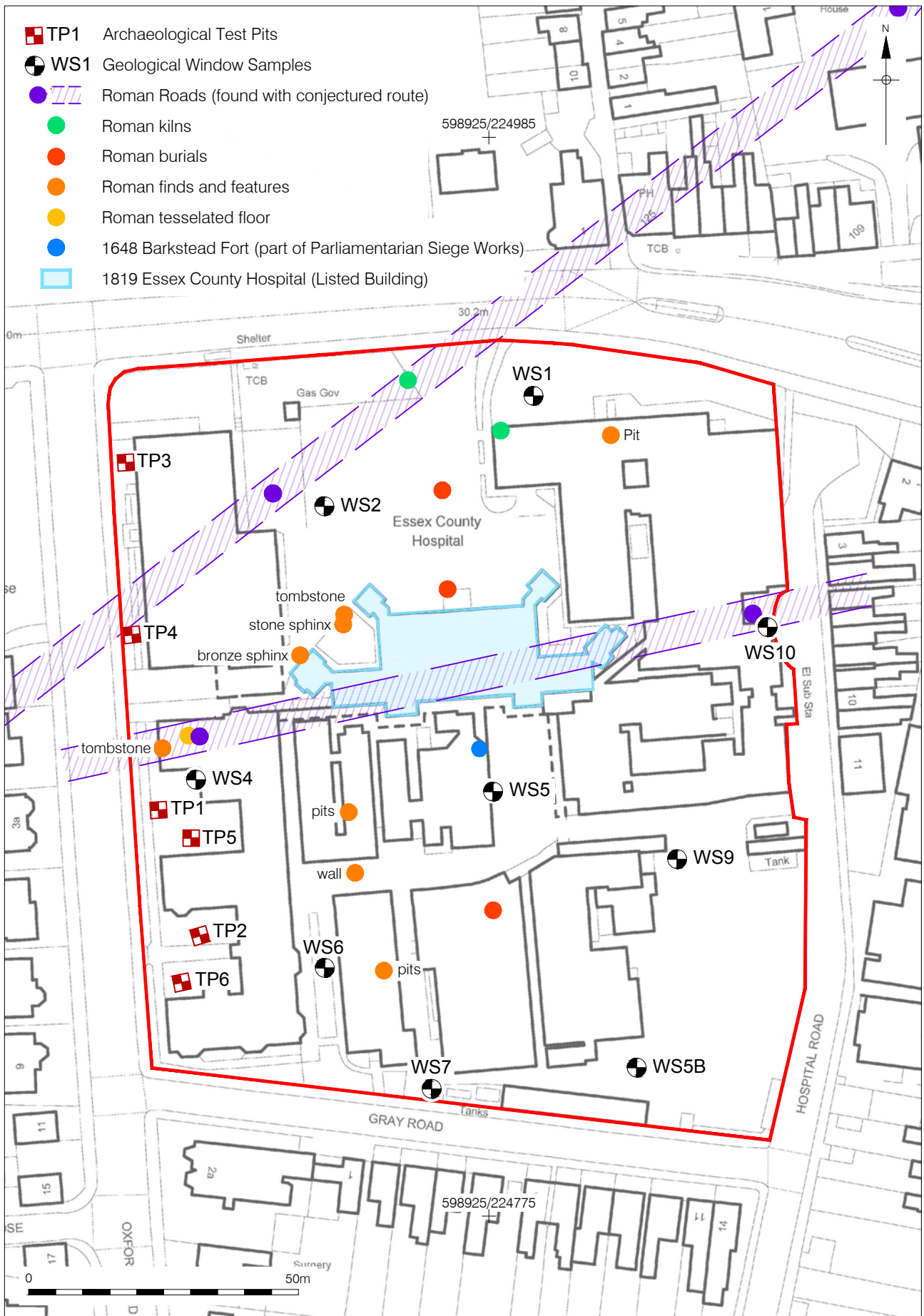
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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:2,000,000; 1:12,500 at A4



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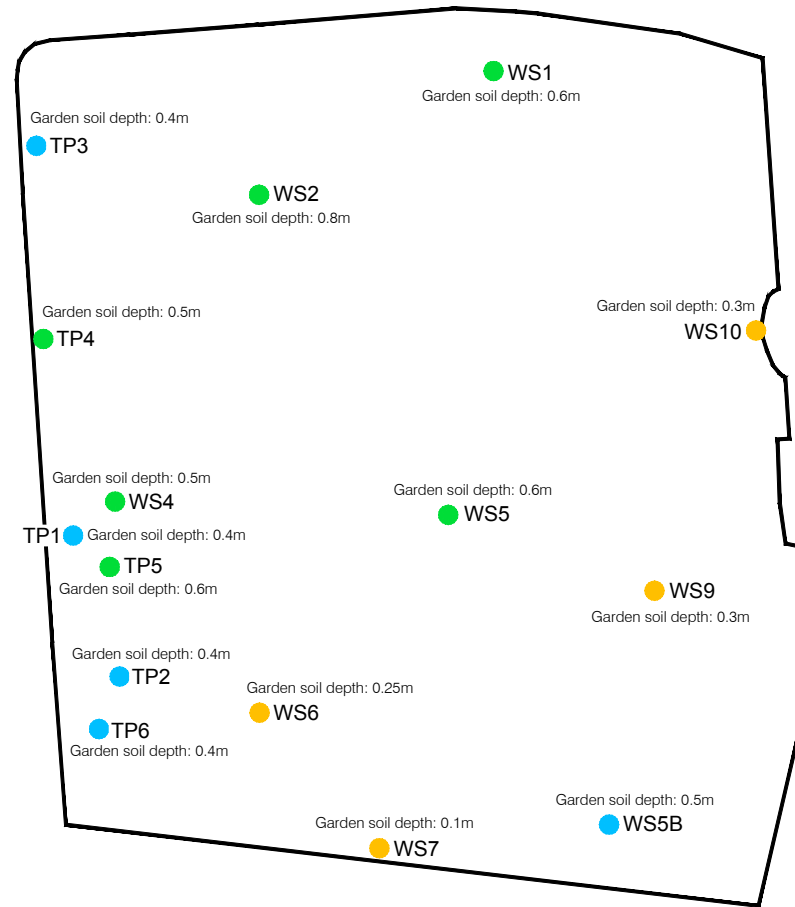
Figure 2
Detailed Site plan showing the locations of Archaeological Test Pits
1:1,000 at A4



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Figure 3
 Detailed Site plan showing the Archaeological Test Pit and Geological Window Sample locations in relation to locations of known archaeology
 1:1,000 at A4

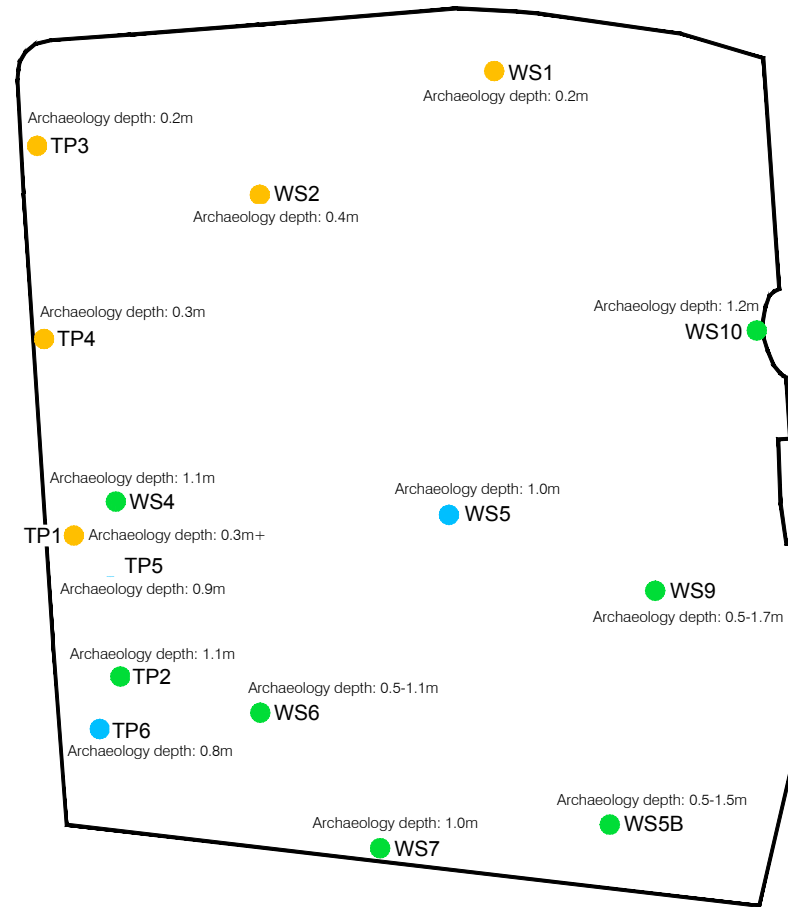
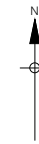
Garden soil depth (thickness)



- Range:
- 0.1-0.3m
 - 0.3-0.5m
 - 0.5m+



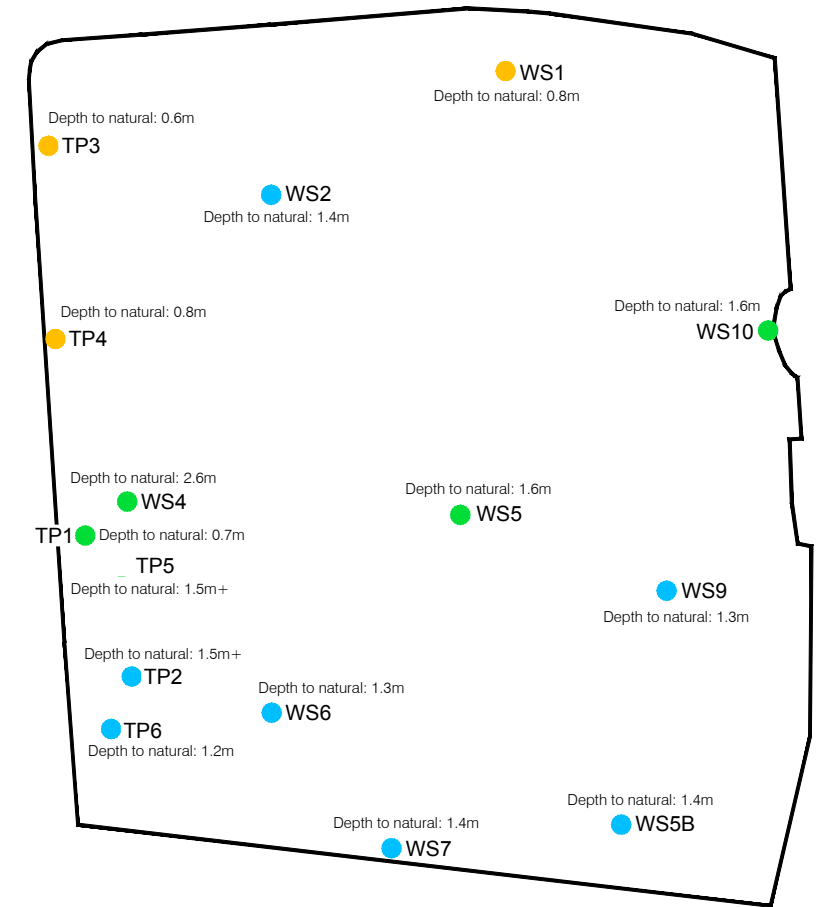
Depth of archaeological deposits (thickness)



- Range:
- 0.2-0.4m
 - 0.5-1.0m
 - 1.0m+



Depth to natural (Below ground level)



- Range:
- 0.6-1.0m
 - 1.0-1.4m
 - 1.4m+

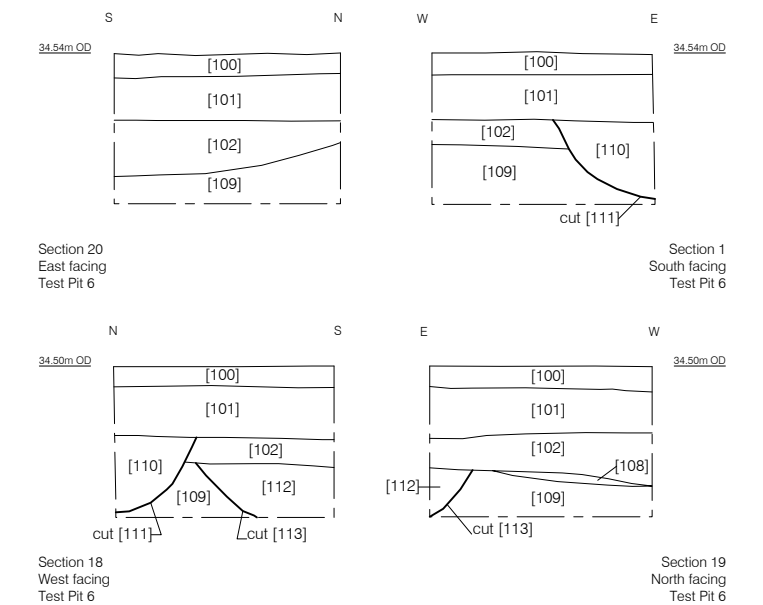
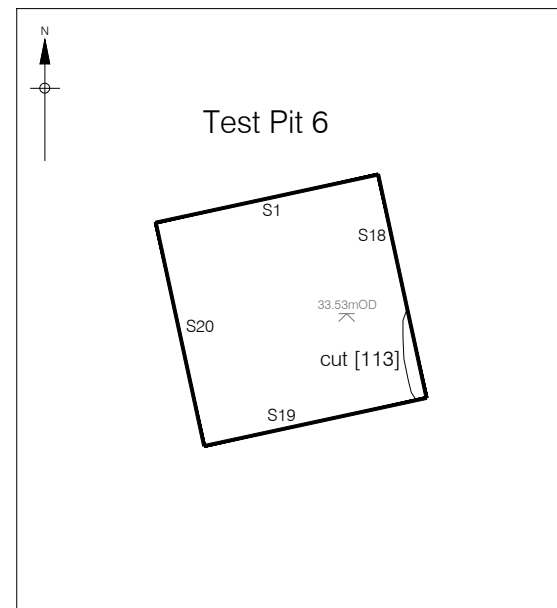
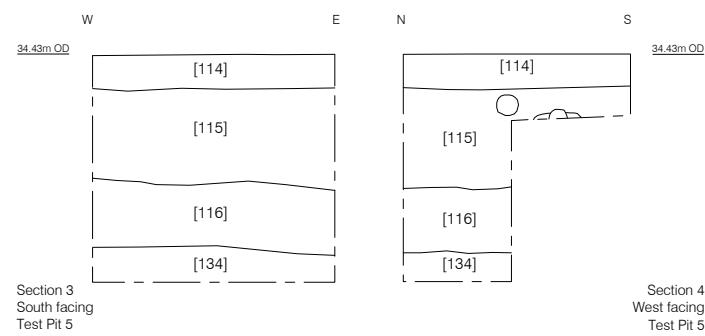
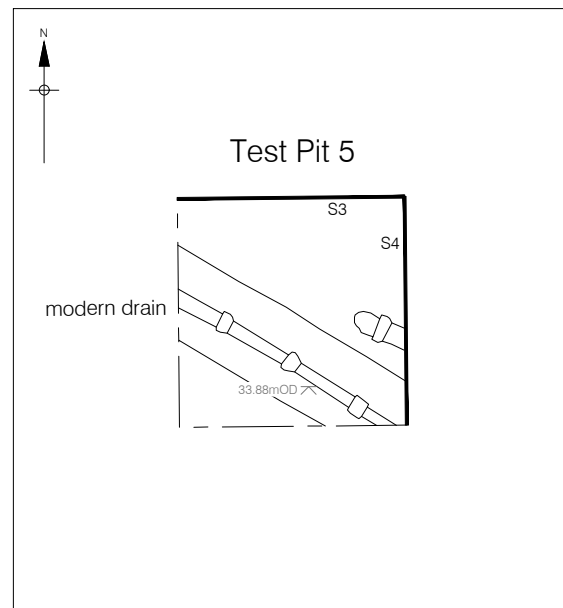
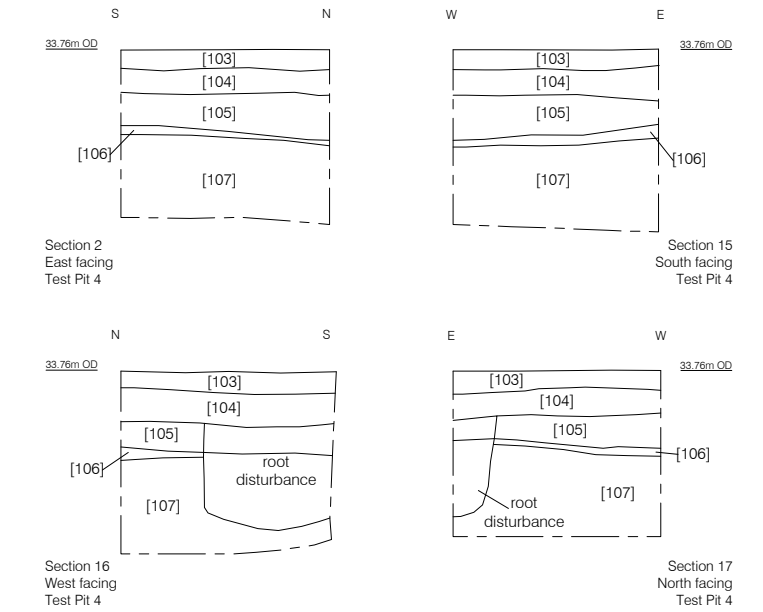
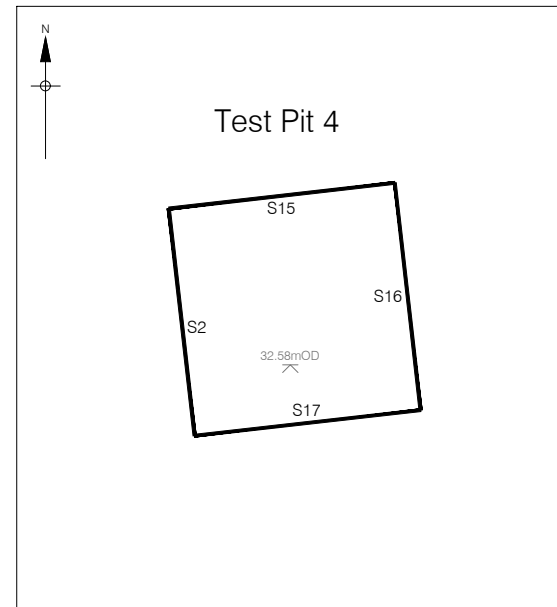
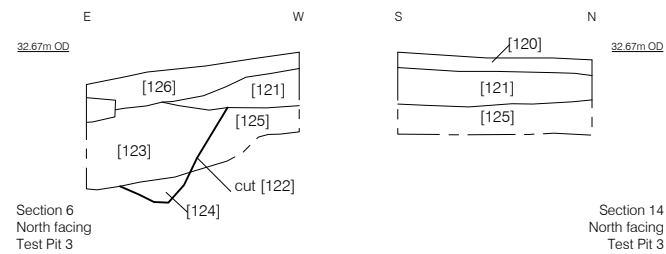
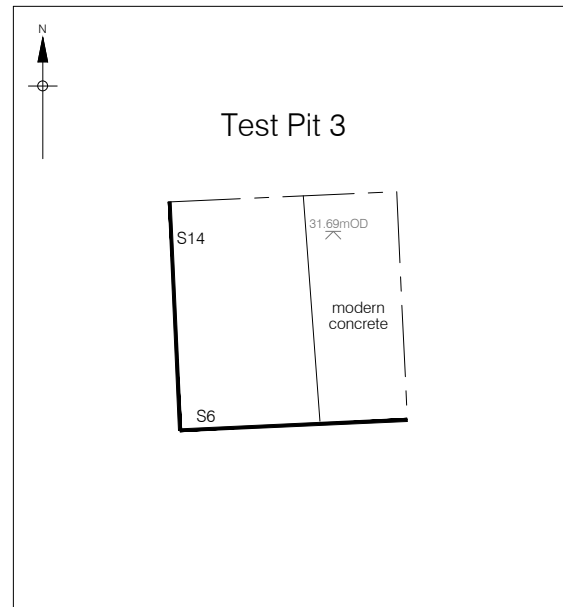
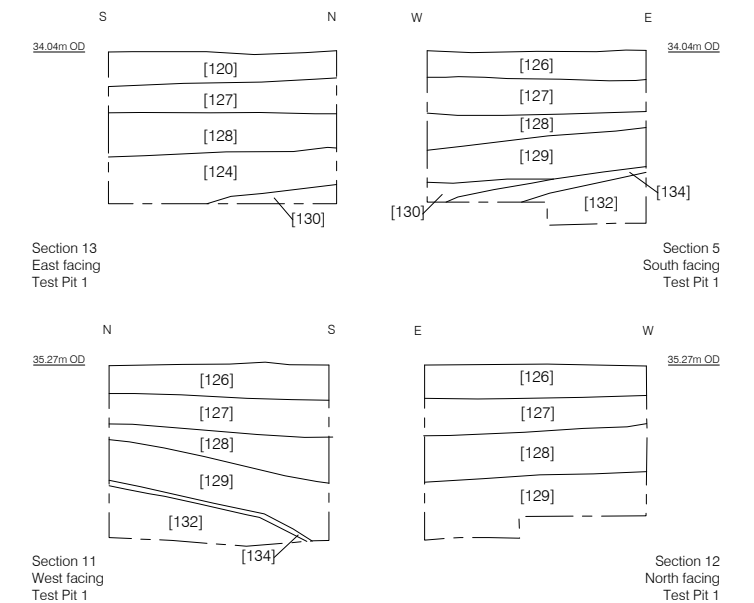
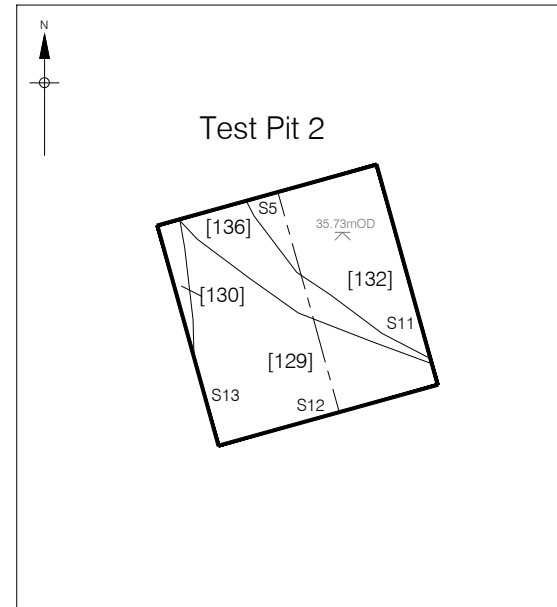
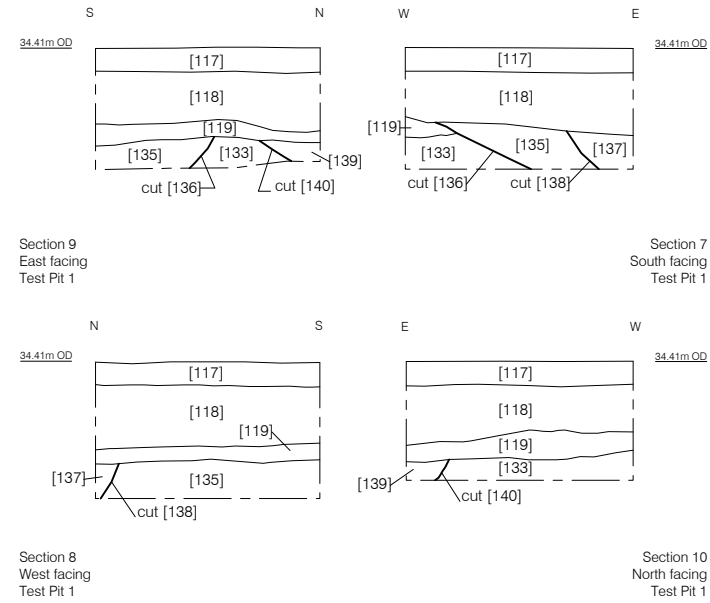
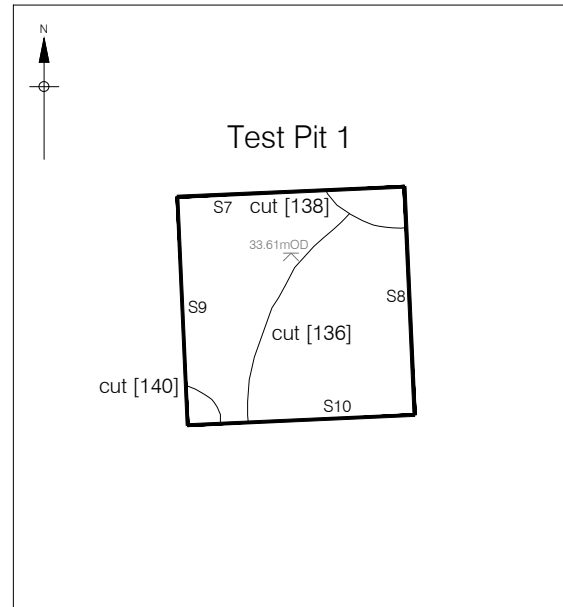


Figure 4
 Detailed Site plan showing depth of deposits across the site
 1:1,250 at A3



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Figure 5
 Detailed Site plan showing Areas of Truncation
 1:1,000 at A4



10 APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: Test Pit 1, view south



Plate 2: Test Pit 2, view north



Plate 3: Test Pit 3, view north showing modern truncation



Plate 4: Test Pit 4, view north



Plate 5: Test Pit 5, view north



Plate 6: Test Pit 6, view north-west mid excavation



Plate 7: Test Pit 6, view north

11 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Cut	Type	Category	Interpretation	Test Pit
100	-	Layer	Topsoil	Overburden	6
101	-	Layer	Subsoil	Overburden	6
102	-	Layer	Subsoil	Overburden	6
103	-	Layer	Topsoil	Overburden	4
104	-	Layer	Subsoil	Overburden	4
105	-	Layer	Made Ground	Modern Made Ground	4
106	-	Layer	Subsoil	Overburden	4
107	-	Layer	Natural	Natural Geology	4
108	-	Layer	Subsoil	Overburden	6
109	-	Layer	Deposit	Roman Deposit	6
110	111	Fill	Pit	Fill of [111]	6
111	111	Cut	Pit	Pit	6
112	113	Fill	Pit	Fill of [113]	6
113	113	Cut	Pit	Pit	6
114	-	Layer	Topsoil	Overburden	5
115	-	Layer	Subsoil	Overburden	5
116	-	Layer	Deposit	Roman Deposit	5
117	-	Layer	Topsoil	Overburden	1
118	-	Layer	Subsoil	Overburden	1
119	-	Layer	Deposit	Roman Deposit	1
120	-	Layer	Topsoil	Overburden	3
121	-	Layer	Subsoil	Overburden	3
122	122	Cut	Foundation	Modern Foundations	3
123	122	Fill	Foundation	Modern Foundations	3
124	122	Fill	Foundation	Modern Foundations	3
125	-	Layer	Natural	Natural Geology	3
126	-	Layer	Topsoil	Overburden	2
127	-	Layer	Subsoil	Overburden	2
128	-	Layer	Deposit	Roman Deposit	2
129	-	Layer	Subsoil	Overburden	2
130	-	Layer	Slump	Possible Roman Layer	2
131	-	Layer	Deposit	Roman Deposit	2
132	-	Layer	Deposit	Roman Deposit	2
133	-	Layer	Deposit	Roman Deposit	1
134	-	Layer	Deposit	Roman Deposit	5
135	136	Fill	Pit	Fill of [136]	1
136	136	Cut	Pit	Pit	1

137	138	Fill	Pit	Fill of [138]	1
138	138	Cut	Pit	Pit	1
139	140	Fill	Pit	Fill of [140]	1
140	140	Cut	Pit	Pit	1

12 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-220376

Project details

Project name Land at Essex County Hospital, Colchester, CO3 3NB: Archaeological Test Pit Evaluation

Short description of the project This report describes the results of an archaeological test pit evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Essex County Hospital, Colchester, CO3 3NB (NGR TL 9880 2492) between the 3rd and 6th August 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by Linden Homes Eastern prior to the potential redevelopment of the hospital. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area. The principal result of the evaluation was the presence of a number of Roman deposits/ layers as well as areas of quarry pitting. These were associated with moderate to large quantities of finds including animal bone, pottery of Roman (1st-3rd century) date and ceramic building material (CBM) including hypocaust tile, and box flue tile suggesting the presence of a building with a hypocaust heating system in close proximity. The finds indicate domestic, with several indications of relatively high status. The findings are in keeping with the results of previous investigations in this part of Colchester, with a number of high status artefacts and burials already recorded in the area as well as on the site.

Project dates Start: 03-08-2015 End: 06-08-2015

Previous/future work Not known / Not known

Any associated project reference codes EVT 4313 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes COLEM:2015.76 - Museum accession ID

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Listed Building

Current Land use Community Service 1 - Community Buildings

Monument type QUARRY PIT Roman

Monument type PIT Roman

Monument type PIT Roman

Monument type PIT Roman

Monument type PIT Roman

Monument type PIT Roman

Monument type PIT Roman

Significant Finds POTTERY Roman

Significant Finds CBM Roman

Significant Finds BONE Roman

Significant Finds METAL Roman

Methods & "Test Pits"
 techniques

Development type Rural residential

Prompt Voluntary/self-interest

Position in the Not known / Not recorded
 planning process

Project location

Country England

Site location ESSEX COLCHESTER Land at Essex County Hospital, Colchester,
 CO3 3NB: Archaeological Test Pit Evaluation

Postcode CO3 3NB

Study area 1.70 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 9880 2492 51.8868098772 0.889121559043 51 53 12 N 000 53 20
 E Point

Lat/Long Datum Unknown

Height OD / Depth Min: 31.69m Max: 34.54m

Project creators

Name of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.

Organisation

Project design Mark Hinman
originator

Project Mark Hinman
director/manager

Project supervisor Matthew Jones

Type of Developer
sponsor/funding
body

Name of Linden Homes Eastern
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive Colchester Museum
recipient

Physical Archive ID EVT 4313

Physical Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics","Glass","Metal"

Digital Archive Colchester Museum
recipient

Digital Archive ID EVT 4313

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media "Database","Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
available

Paper Archive Colchester Museum
recipient

Paper Archive ID EVT 4313

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media "Context sheet","Drawing","Plan","Report","Section","Survey"
available "","Unpublished Text"

Project

bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

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