

**KINGSWODE HOE SCHOOL
SUSSEX ROAD
COLCHESTER
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



**Essex County Council
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT
February 2010**

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Prepared By: Philippa Sparrow	Signature:
Position: Supervisor	Date:
Checked By: Patrick Allen	Signature:
Position: Project Manager	Date:

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As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or the presentation of this report.

Please contact the Archaeological Fieldwork Manager, at the
Field Archaeology Unit,
Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 3YQ
Tel: 01376 331470
Fax: 01376 331428

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

Client: Atkins acting for Kingswode Hoe School

FAU Project No: 2154

NGR: TL 9835 2528

Planning Application No.: CC/COL/92/09

Scheduled Monument No.: 57

Site Code: COLEM 2009.92

OASIS No: essexcou1-69490

Date of Fieldwork: 21/12/2009

An archaeological trial-trenching evaluation was conducted at Kingswode Hoe School before the proposed construction of an extension to the north-east of the main school building. The school lies at the south-western edge of the nationally important Late Iron Age settlement at Sheepen, the pre-Roman capital of the Catuvellauni, which is protected as a scheduled monument (SM 57). Previous excavations conducted in the 1930s (Hawkes and Hull 1947) revealed a major Late Iron Age settlement north-east of the school, defended on its western side by the Sheepen Dyke, a large earthwork constructed in c. AD 10 and levelled following the Roman conquest of AD 43. An extension to the Sheepen Dyke, thought to have been added shortly before the Roman invasion, was projected by Hawkes and Hull as running immediately to the south-east of the proposed development area.

One trench measuring 6m x 1.2m was excavated at right angles to the projected line of the Sheepen Dyke extension. The trench recorded a prehistoric pit and the south-eastern edge of a large Late Iron Age ditch whose fill contained pottery dated to the first half of the 1st century AD. This ditch is identified as part of the Sheepen Dyke extension, running 10m to the north-west of its projected line and across the south-east of the proposed extension. Despite the presence of modern disturbances, the Late Iron ditch has survived largely intact.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological trial-trenching evaluation at Kingswode Hoe School, Sussex Road, Colchester, Essex, conducted prior to the proposed construction of a new outreach centre as an extension to the north-east of the existing main school building (Fig. 1). The evaluation was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on the instructions of Atkins, acting for Kingswode Hoe School.

The proposed development is located within the area of the nationally important Late Iron Age settlement and Romano-British industrial site at Sheepen, designated a Scheduled Monument under the Ancient Monuments Act, 1979 (Essex SM No. 57). For this reason the archaeological evaluation was carried out under the terms of a Scheduled Monument Consent granted by the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, following advice from Debbie Priddy, English Heritage's Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Essex. It was also undertaken in response to a pre-determination condition placed on the planning application (CC/COL/92/09) by Martin Winter of the Colchester Borough Council Museums Service, in line with Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (DoE 1990). The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by the Colchester Borough Council Museums Service (2009) and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ECC FAU (2009), and was monitored by the Colchester Borough Council Museum Service on behalf of the Local Planning Authority and English Heritage.

Bound and digital copies of this report will be supplied to Kingswode Hoe School, Atkins, their agent, Colchester Borough Council Museum Service and English Heritage. A digital copy of the report will be uploaded on the online access to the index of archaeological investigations (www.oasis.ac.uk). The full site archive will be deposited with the Colchester and Ipswich Museum.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, and Topography Geology

The site lies 1km to the west of Colchester town centre, north of Lexden Road and on the west side of Sussex Road (Fig. 1; NGR TL 9835 2528). Kingswode Hoe was originally a Victorian suburban house set in its own grounds and was converted into a school in the

1950s. The Victorian house survives, with 1950s and later additions. Three relocatable classrooms are situated to the east of the main school building, separated from it by a car park surfaced in tarmac. The car park extends to the south of the main building, and the area to its west is a playing field. Plans of underground services indicate that a gas main, a mains sewer and a network of foul water drains cross the northern and western areas of the proposed extension (Fig. 1). The location of the sewer and drains has been confirmed by a detailed local survey and by a site inspection.

The local drift geology consists of glacial sands and gravels, overlying London Clay.

2.2 Archaeology and History

This archaeological background is based on the evidence of previous large-scale excavations of the Late Iron Age settlement and Romano-British industrial area at Sheepen (Hawkes and Hull 1947; Hull 1963; Niblett 1985).

Colchester was originally the capital of the *Catuvellauni*, the leading tribe of south-eastern Britain before the Roman conquest. It was a major Late Iron Age settlement which extended across a wide area to the west and south-west of the later Roman walled town of *Camulodunum* (the modern town centre), and was protected by a series of defensive dykes. The central area of the settlement, near Sheepen Farm, lay a short distance to the north-east of Kingswode Hoe School. The settlement lay within a naturally defensible position bounded by the river Colne to the north and a tributary stream to the east and south. The north-western and south-western sides of the settlement were protected by the Sheepen Dyke, a large earth bank and ditch that extended for 1km to the south of the river Colne (Fig. 1 inset, shown in green). The south-west gateway of the Sheepen Dyke lay 200m north-east of the school. The tributary stream that formed the settlement's southern boundary is now a drain, but its course is visible as a sharp dip in Sussex Road to the south of the school.

A later addition to the Sheepen Dyke ran across the south-eastern corner of Kingswode Hoe School and the proposed extension lies marginally outside the projected line of this earthwork (Fig. 1). This was recorded by Hawkes and Hull (1947, 109-12 and fig. 27) as Ditch 1A, a large ditch with a V-shaped profile, 24ft (7.3m) wide and 5-8ft (1.5-2.4m) deep, which ran south-west from the main dyke system, before turning to join the tributary stream 100m south-west of the school. Hawkes and Hull dated the construction of the main Sheepen Dyke to c. AD 10 and argued that ditch 1A was added at a later stage, possibly shortly before the Roman invasion, to form a defensive work outside the south-west gate.

The Sheepen Dyke and its extension were levelled and the ditches infilled following the Roman conquest of AD 43 (Hawkes and Hull 1947, 109-12). Sheepen became an industrial suburb of the Roman town, with evidence of Roman pottery kilns in the general area of the school (Fig. 1 inset), including the playing fields to its west (Hull 1963, 155-7).

The area of the school remained undeveloped until the late 19th century, when a suburb developed along Lexden Road. The only known post-Roman archaeological evidence in the area is related to the siege of Colchester by Parliamentary forces in 1648.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to establish the survival, character, date, condition and significance of any archaeological remains within the footprint of the proposed outreach centre extension.

3.2 Objectives

The research objectives for the project will be in line with those laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties*, 2. research agenda and strategy (Brown and Glazebrook 2000).

The specific objectives of the evaluation were as follows:

- To record and evaluate any remains related to the Late Iron Age Sheepen Dyke and its extension;
- To record and evaluate any remains related to Roman pottery manufacture or other activity;
- To provide a sufficient level of evaluation to inform a future decision on whether or not further recording is required in mitigation of any disturbance of archaeological remains by the proposed development.

4. METHOD

The site was investigated by the targeted excavation of a 6m x 1.2m trench, aligned north-west to south-east, within the south-eastern area of the proposed development (Fig. 1). The trench was excavated by a mini-excavator under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist to ECC FAU standards. The tarmac car park surface was broken out using a cutting tool and a breaker. The ballast beneath and other modern deposits were removed to the level of the archaeological horizon using a toothless ditching bucket.

The trench represents just over 3% of the site area. The original trench layout specified in the archaeological brief could not be practicably adhered to due to the presence of a gas main, a sewer and several drains. As a result an alternative trench location was agreed with Colchester Borough Council Museum Service and English Heritage, and was included in the Written Scheme of Investigation. All identifiable archaeological deposits were investigated and recorded. The presence of a buried electricity cable prevented the archaeological investigation of the south-eastern end of the trench for a distance of 1.6m (Fig. 2). Levels were taken and although they were not reduced to Ordnance Datum (OD), OD values can be obtained by measurement to a local benchmark on the main school building.

The ECC FAU is approved as a Recognised Archaeological Organisation by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). The archaeological fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (IFA 1999) and the Association of Local Government Officers' *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003). The ECC FAU uses its own recording system (ECC FAU 2006).

5. FIELDWORK RESULTS

The evaluation trench revealed a prehistoric pit and a large Late Iron Age ditch, partially truncated by modern services and other disturbances, and overlain by the modern car park surface. The archaeological features were cut into natural orange-yellow coarse sandy gravel. The trench (Figs 2 and 3; Plate 1) is described below from south-east to north-west. Full details of the archaeological features and deposits are set out in Appendix 1.

The tarmac and concrete car park surface (1) and its base of coarse ballast (2) were 0.25m thick overall and extended over the full area of the trench. The car park surface was cut into topsoil and followed the natural slope of the ground, and therefore does not represent a major truncation of underlying deposits. At the south-eastern end of the trench, the car park surface overlay a large modern pit (3). The pit's north-western edge was overcut by machining, but it extended for c. 3.5m over the south-eastern half of the trench, including the unexcavated south-eastern end (Fig. 2). Its recorded edge sloped gradually down to a depth of 0.4m in the south-east (Fig. 3, section 1). Its fill (4) contained a large amount of brick, large fragments of a Victorian sewage pipe and a concrete post pad amongst other finds, none of which was retained. The pit represents an area of modern disturbance probably associated with the construction of the modern kitchen extension to the east of the main school building.

Pit 7 (Plate 2) was located towards the south-eastern end of the trench, cutting the natural gravel, with its southern half extending beyond the trench's south-western edge. Its south-eastern edge was impossible to define as it was cut by a modern water pipe trench (5). It was also heavily truncated by modern pit 3, with a surviving depth of 0.6m at its north-western edge, but only around 0.4m to the south-east (Fig. 3, section 1). Its only fill (8) comprised silty sand and contained one sherd of undiagnostic prehistoric pottery, tentatively dated to the Bronze Age or Early Iron Age.

Ditch 9 (Plate 3) was located at, and extended beyond, the north-western end of the trench. The ditch cut the natural gravel immediately below the base of the car park surface. Only the south-eastern edge of the ditch lay within the trench, and it was recorded for a distance of 1.9m. The ditch had an uneven stepped profile, with its deepest part cutting down to a depth of 0.65m at the north-western limit of the trench (Fig. 3, section 2; Plate 4). The bottom of the ditch was not recorded, however, as its edge continued to slope down beyond the trench limit, and the ditch would have been much wider and deeper than the section recorded. A small, irregular gully ran inside the south-eastern edge of the ditch, roughly parallel to it, and is interpreted as erosion of the side of the ditch through weathering. The ditch and the gully at its edge were both filled with a uniform deposit of loosely compacted light greyish brown slightly silty pebbly sand (10). The top of the ditch fill was disturbed by an area of roots (11) and by two small modern disturbances. Twenty-nine sherds of Late Iron Age pottery dated to the first half of the 1st century AD were recovered from fill 10 of ditch 9. A few sherds of Late Iron Age pottery were also recovered from root disturbance 11, consistent with this being a natural disturbance of the ditch fill.

6.0 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL

6.1 Finds

Small quantities of finds were recovered from three contexts; all have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details can be found in Appendix 2. Except for a flint blade in the fill of ditch 9, all of the finds comprise pottery (totalling 33 sherds, weight 166g). This is described by context below.

Worked flint by Hazel Martingell

A single, probably Early Neolithic, blade was examined. This is a punch-struck removal from a core and is slightly patinated.

Pottery

The small body sherd from the fill of pit 7 is flint-tempered and of probable Bronze or Early Iron Age date.

The fill of ditch 9 produced twenty-nine sherds, some quite small, of locally-made Late Iron Age grog-tempered pottery, most of which is from the same *Cam 218* jar (Hawkes and Hull 1947, pl. 77). Sherds from a second cordoned jar are also present. Both fabric and form indicate a date in the first half of the 1st century AD.

Pottery from adjacent finds-spot 11 comprises three joining body sherds from a large cream-slipped flagon. These vessels were imported from Central Gaul during the last quarter of the 1st century BC up to c. AD 25. Although rare in much of Late Iron Age Britain, they occur in relatively large numbers at *Camulodunum* and presence here is thus not unexpected.

Comments on the assemblage

Although fragmentary (average sherd weight 5.1g) the pottery is unabraded and, except perhaps for the flint-tempered sherd, has probably not travelled far from the point of deposition. Further work is not required at this stage.

6.2 Environmental Material

No deposits with the potential for the preservation of charred or waterlogged macrofossils were identified during the evaluation and no bulk soil samples were consequently collected for environmental analysis. The archaeological deposits consisted of sterile sand-based fills.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

The archaeological evaluation identified a prehistoric pit, probably of Bronze or Early Iron Age date, and a large Late Iron Age ditch dated to the first half of the 1st century AD. A residual flint blade, probably of Early Neolithic date, was also recovered.

The prehistoric evidence is of interest but adds little further information on prehistory in the Colchester area, as prehistoric settlement and activity has been widely attested upon the higher land along the sides of the Colne valley.

The Late Iron Age ditch is interpreted as a section of the ditch of the later extension to the Sheepen Dyke, recorded by Hawkes and Hull (1947, 109-12, and fig. 27) as ditch 1A. This ditch was projected by Hawkes and Hull as running 10m to the south-east of the ditch recorded in the evaluation (Fig. 1), but this discrepancy could result from only a minor error in the earlier projection. In addition, Hawkes and Hull state that the ditch cut was irregular within each excavated length, and the ditch might not have run on an entirely straight course. Only a 1.9m width of the ditch was recorded in the evaluation trench, with its deepest part beyond the trench limits. The recorded ditch section represents less than half of the overall profile, and it would undoubtedly have been much wider, most likely over 5m wide. Hawkes and Hull (1947, 111) state that ditch 1A was, at its narrowest point, 17ft (5.2m) wide, which would suggest that just over a third of the ditch's profile was revealed within the evaluation trench. The ditch sections recorded by Hawkes and Hull generally had broad V-shaped profiles, but were often irregular, with evidence of slippage of the sides. In this respect the profile of the ditch recorded in the evaluation trench is typical of the previously excavated evidence.

The pottery recovered from ditch 9 dates to the first half of the 1st century AD and therefore conforms to that found within ditch 1A during the previous excavations. Only one fill was identified within the ditch, in contrast with ditch 1A which contained at least two fills (Hawkes and Hull 1947, 109). Any lower fills would not have been identified during the evaluation, as it was impossible to excavate down to the base of the ditch, which lay beyond the trench limits.

An alternative interpretation is possible, that Hawkes and Hull's ditch 1A was plotted correctly and the ditch recorded in the evaluation represents a second, parallel ditch contemporary

with the first. This interpretation is unlikely, however, as no evidence of a second ditch was recorded during the earlier excavations.

Either way, the Late Iron Age ditch is a highly significant find which relates to the Sheepen scheduled monument. The revised projection of the Late Iron Age ditch line crosses the south-eastern half of the proposed new extension (Fig. 1).

Evidence from within the evaluation trench supports that of the preliminary survey of underground services, suggesting that there has already been extensive disturbance of archaeological deposits from modern construction and service trenches sealed beneath the car park surface. The evaluation trench contained a large pit filled with construction rubble, an electricity cable and a water pipe within a small area, and there is also known evidence of a gas main, main sewer and drains across the remaining area of the proposed extension. These are likely to be destructive of superficial archaeological features, but within the evaluation trench only the upper part of the Late Iron Age ditch suffered later disturbance. It is suggested that the ditch, being wide and deep, should partially survive most modern disturbances, and would be totally destroyed only by the deepest and most substantial modern features, such as the mains sewer.

The aims and objectives of the evaluation have been achieved. Although the evaluation trench was small and located only in the south-eastern area of the proposed extension, it was deliberately targeted to evaluate whether any part of the major archaeological feature in the area, the Late Iron Age Sheepen Dyke extension, was located within the development area. The evaluation suggests that there is an error in the plotting of the ditch of the Sheepen Dyke extension, and that this now crosses the south-eastern half of the footprint of the new extension. However, the evaluation recorded only about one-third of the ditch profile, and recording the full width of the ditch would be desirable. No evidence of Roman pottery manufacture or other activity was found, not even residual pottery sherds.

The evaluation has provided sufficient information to enable the implications of the proposed development for archaeological remains to be discussed further with English Heritage and Colchester Borough Council's Museum Service.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Essex CC Field Archaeology Unit would like to thank Kingswode Hoe School, and Atkins their agents, for commissioning the archaeological evaluation. The assistance of Jude Jelly and Eleanor MacMillan of Kingswode Hoe School, and Victoria Weeder of Atkins, is gratefully acknowledged.

The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken by Phillippa Sparrow and Patrick Allen. The finds were processed, analysed and reported upon by Joyce Compton. The figures were drawn by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Patrick Allen. The archaeological work was monitored by Martin Winter of the Colchester Borough Council Museum Service, on behalf of the local planning authority, in consultation with Debbie Priddy, English Heritage's Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Essex.

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APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK DATA

Context	Category	Details	Period
1	Car park surface	Tarmac on concrete. Located across the site area.	Modern
2	Car park base	Sand and gravel ballast. Located directly beneath the tarmac/concrete	Modern
3	Pit	Cut of modern pit located in south-eastern end of trench. 2.17m+ x 1.2m+ x 0.43m. Truncated top of pit 7 and cut through the top of an older, early 20 th century water pipe trench.	Modern
4	Fill of pit 3	Loose dark brown silty sand with frequent gravel. No finds retained.	Modern
5	Service trench	Cut for modern water pipe located in south-eastern end of trench. 1.2m+ x 0.10m x unexcavated. Cut through the south-eastern edge of pit 7.	Modern
6	Fill of trench 5	Loose grey silty sand with occasional gravel.	Modern
7	Pit	Cut of prehistoric pit located in south-eastern end of trench. 0.98m+ x 0.66m+ x 0.48m. Steep, near vertical edge and flattish base. Cut by service 5 and pit 3.	Prehistoric
8	Fill of pit 7	Loose mid orange grey gravelly sand. Contained one sherd of prehistoric pottery.	Prehistoric
9	Ditch	Aligned north-east to south-west, located in north-western end of trench. Comprised contemporary parallel gully and ditch. 1.2m+ x 1.8m+ x 0.68m+. The full depth of the large ditch could not be determined due to its proximity to the edge of the trench.	Late Iron Age
10	Fill of ditch 9	Loosely compacted light greyish brown slightly silty sand with abundant pebbles and pea grit.	Late Iron Age
11	Finds	Three sherds of pottery recovered from an area of root disturbance in the top of the south-eastern end of feature 9.	Late Iron Age

APPENDIX 2: FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL

Finds data

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
8	7	1	4	Pottery; body sherd, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
10	9	1 29	2 138	Worked flint Pottery; jar rim, base and body sherds, and crumbs, Cam 218 (at least two vessels represented), grog-tempered	- Late Iron Age
11	Finds	3	24	Pottery; body sherds, Central Gaulish cream-slipped ware (sparse mica)	Late Iron Age

APPENDIX 3: ARCHIVE INDEX

KINGSWODE HOE SCHOOL, SUSSEX ROAD, COLCHESTER, ESSEX (COLEM 2009.92)

Index to the Archive:

File containing:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brief for Evaluation
- 1.2 Written Scheme of Investigation for Evaluation

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Evaluation Report
- 2.2 Analytical Reports
 - 2.2.1 Pottery Report
 - 2.2.2 Flint Report
- 2.3 Catalogues
 - 2.3.1 Context Finds Record
 - 2.3.2 Pottery Catalogue

3. Site Archive

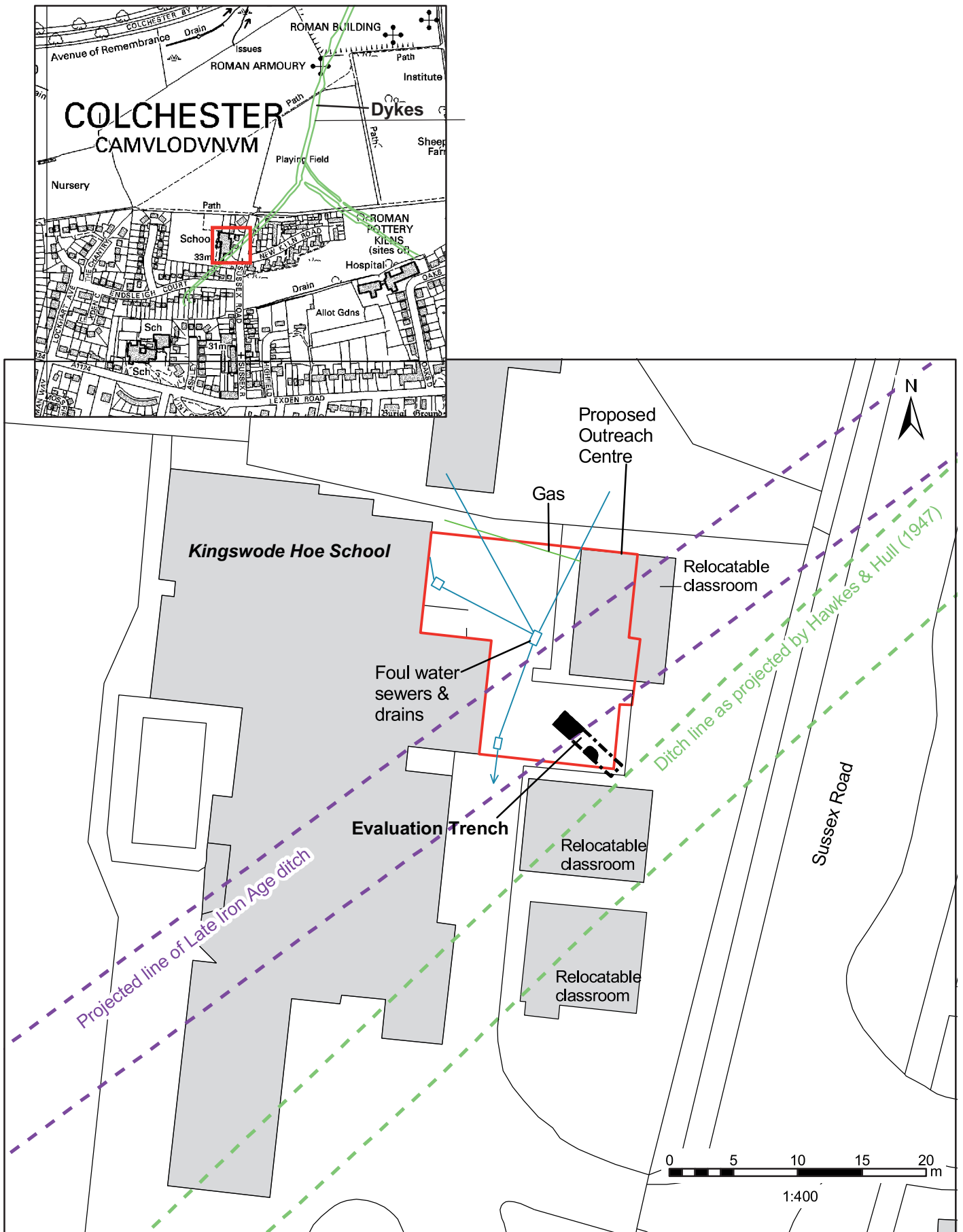
- 3.1 Original Trench Record Sheet
- 3.2 Original Context Records 1 to 11
- 3.3 Levels Register
- 3.4 Photographic Register
- 3.5 Photograph Contact Sheet (+ digital photos on CD)
- 3.6 Miscellaneous maps and plans
- 3.7 Site drawings, 2 sheets of A3 permatrace

Not in Files:

Collected artefacts (pottery and flint)

APPENDIX 4: COLCHESTER HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site Name/Address: Kingswode Hoe School, Sussex Road, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9835 2528	Site Code: COLEM 2009.92
Type of Work: Archaeological Evaluation	Site Director/Group: Phillippa Sparrow, ECC Field Archaeology Unit.
Date of Work: 21/12/09	Size of Area Investigated: 1 trench 6m x 1.2m x 0.88m (3%)
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Colchester Museum	Funding Source: Kingswode Hoe School
Further Work Anticipated? Yes	
Final Report: EAH	OASIS Ref: essexcou1-69490
Periods Represented: Prehistoric Late Iron Age	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>An archaeological trial-trenching evaluation was conducted at Kingswode Hoe School before the proposed construction of an extension to the north-east of the main school building. The school lies at the south-western edge of the nationally important Late Iron Age settlement at Sheepen, the pre-Roman capital of the Catuvellauni, which is protected as a scheduled monument (SM 57). Previous excavations conducted in the 1930s (Hawkes and Hull 1947) revealed a major Late Iron Age settlement north-east of the school, defended on its western side by the Sheepen Dyke, a large earthwork constructed in c. AD 10 and levelled following the Roman conquest of AD 43. An extension to the Sheepen Dyke, thought to have been added shortly before the Roman invasion, was projected by Hawkes and Hull as running immediately to the south-east of the proposed development area.</p> <p>One trench measuring 6m x 1.2m was excavated at right angles to the projected line of the Sheepen Dyke extension. The trench recorded a prehistoric pit and the south-eastern edge of a large Late Iron Age ditch whose fill contained pottery dated to the first half of the 1st century AD. This ditch is identified as part of the Sheepen Dyke extension, running 10m to the north-west of its projected line and across the south-east of the proposed extension. Despite the presence of modern disturbances, the Late Iron ditch has survived largely intact.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: Hawkes, C.F.C. and Hull, M.R., 1947 <i>Camulodunum. First Report on the Excavations at Colchester 1930-1939</i> Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London Vol. XIV Oxford University Press	
Author of Summary: Phillippa Sparrow	Date of Summary: 07/01/10



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Fig.1. Location of archaeological evaluation trench

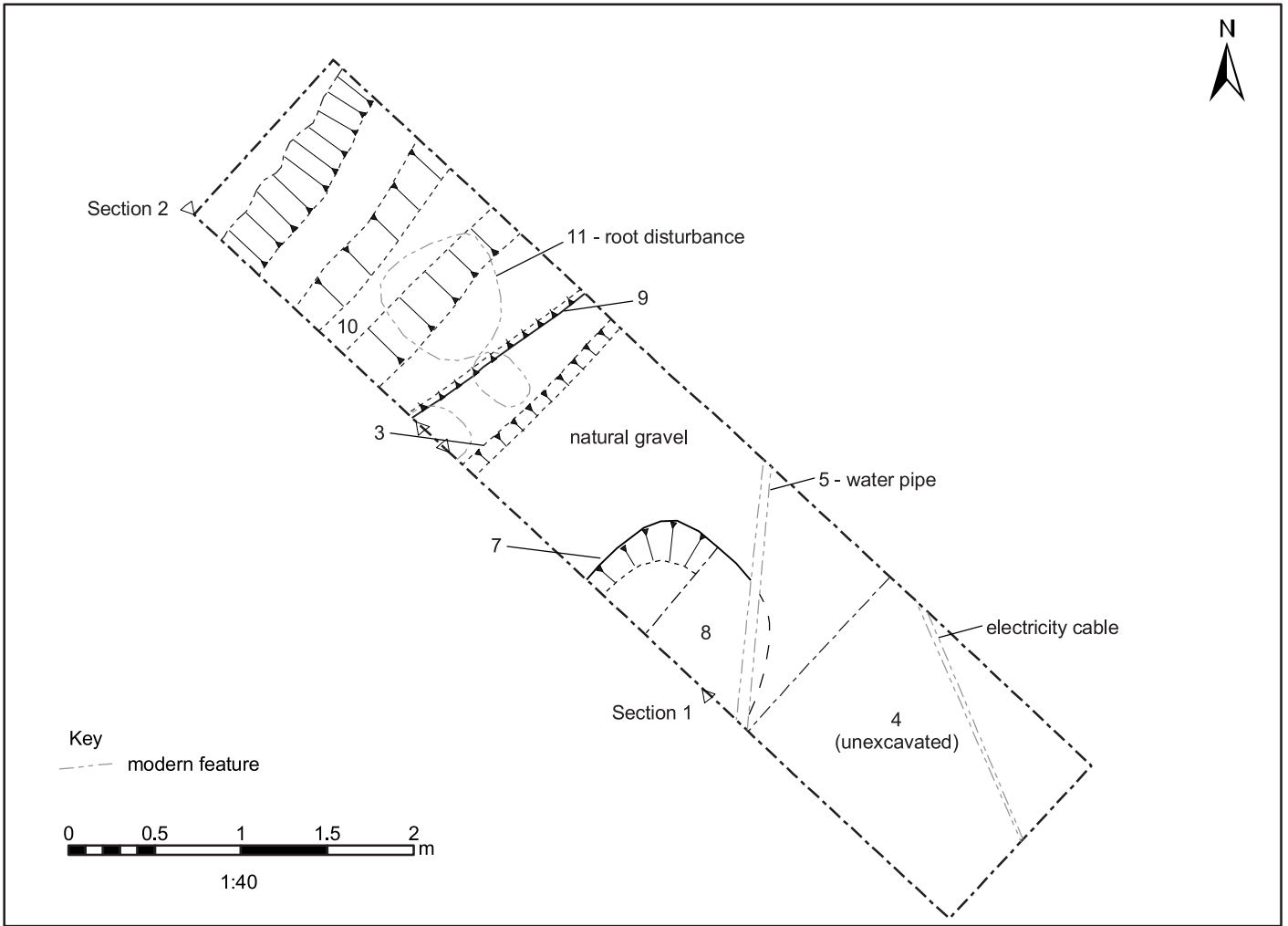


Fig.2. Evaluation trench plan

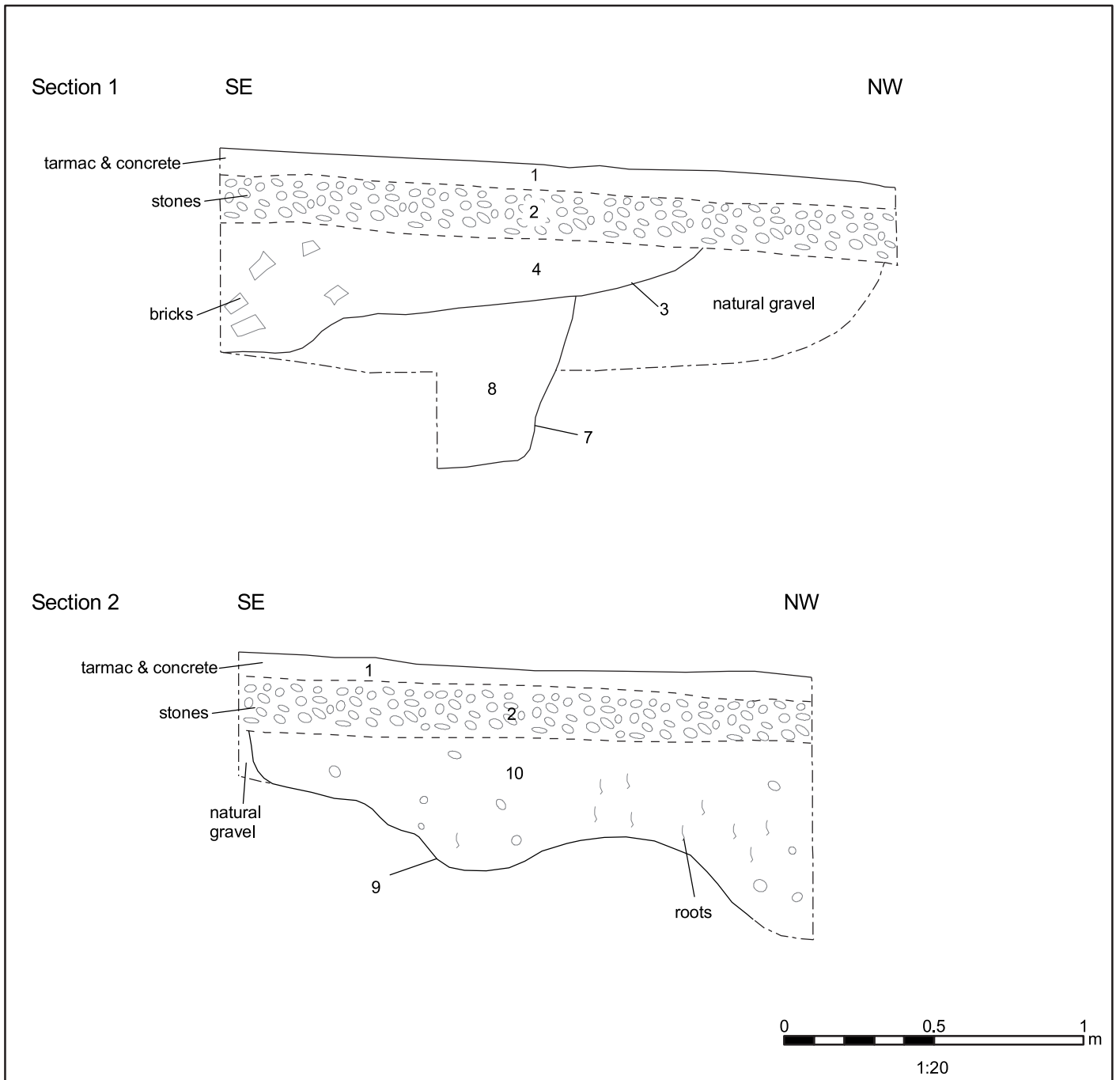


Fig.3. Sections 1 & 2



Plate 1. Trench after excavation, Late Iron Age ditch 9 in background. View north-west, scale 1m



Plate 2. Prehistoric pit 7, with modern water-pipe 5 in left background. View south, 1m scale



Plate 3. Late Iron Age ditch 9, showing its stepped profile. View west, 1m scale



Plate 4. Late Iron Age ditch 9, detail of its deeper north-western end. View south-west, 0.5m scale