

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

**The Friary Wall
Adult Community Learning
Carmelite Way
Maldon
Essex**

ASE Report No: 2015370



October 2015

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Adult Community Learning
Carmelite Way
Maldon
Essex**

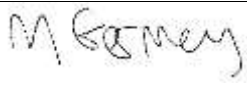
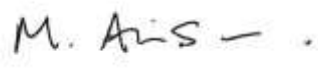
NGR: TL 85006 06875

Planning Ref: None

**ASE Project No: 8392
Site Code: MD52**

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with
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Date of Issue:	October 2015		
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Abstract

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring carried out by Archaeology South-East at The Friary Wall, Adult Community Learning, Carmelite Way, Maldon, Essex.

The archaeological work comprised two site visits and involved monitoring of the digging-out of the foundations of a section of brick wall running between the back gardens of Friary House and The Friary Youth Centre and Evening Institute, in order to facilitate its rebuilding. This work was recommended by Essex County Council Place Services and was commissioned by Rose Builders Ltd.

The gardens of both properties occupied part of the grounds of a former Carmelite Friary, founded in c.1300 and dissolved in the late 1530s, which formerly stood in the historic town core of Maldon.

The digging-out of the wall's foundations exposed modern deposits, but no archaeological features or finds. Monitoring of these groundworks established that the site's topsoil was deeper than the wall's foundations and that the west side of the garden of the youth centre may have been terraced into an east-facing slope.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 In August and September 2015, Archaeology South-East (ASE) undertook archaeological monitoring and recording of the removal of the foundations of a 34m long section of a brick wall, near the Adult Community Learning Centre, Maldon, within a plot of land which was formerly part of a Carmelite Priory. Essex County Council Place Services recommended the archaeological work in its capacity as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority. The archaeological work was funded by Rose Builders Ltd.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The geology of the site consists of London Clay. It outcrops the surface has no overlying superficial deposits (BGS Viewer – accessed 01/06/2015)
- 1.2.2 The Community Learning Centre is located within the historic heart of Maldon and sits immediately above the crest of the south side of the Valley of the River Chelmer, c.500m to the north (Fig. 1).
- 1.2.3 The Friary Wall runs north-south and separates the gardens of Friary House to the west and The Friary Youth Centre and Evening Institute to the east. Its basal height from north to south falls from 33m to 29m OD (Fig. 2).

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 In April 2015, Essex County Council Place Services (ECC PS), in its capacity as archaeological advisor to the local planning authority, recommended that a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording should be undertaken in connection with rebuilding of part of the friary wall at Maldon Adult Community Learning Centre. ECC PS's recommendation accorded with guidance presented by the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).
- 1.3.2 A brief was subsequently issued by ECC Place Services (2015) and a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by ASE (2015) and approved prior to the commencement of works.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The aim of the archaeological work was to monitor the contractor's groundworks for the rebuilding of the designated section of friary wall and to investigate and record any disturbed archaeological remains, thereby ensuring their preservation by record.

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 This report presents and assesses the results of the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks for the removal and replacement of a 34m- long section of a 75m-long, brick-built, garden wall within the former grounds of the Maldon Carmelite Friary.
- 1.5.2 The fieldwork was carried out between 18 August and 10 September 2015.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 Historical development of towns and their roles as centres of supply and demand has been highlighted by Medlycott (2011, 70) as in need of further study.

2.2 Summary

- 2.2.1 The town of Maldon lies near the mouth of the Blackwater Estuary and is probably a Saxon foundation. It existed by 913 and was provided with a burh in 916 (Medlycott 1999).
- 2.2.2 Numerous worked flints have been found as residual finds within and around Maldon and attest to human activity having been carried out within its area since at least the Late Mesolithic (Wallis and Waughman 1998; Atkinson and Preston 2001; Wilkinson *et al.* 2012).
- 2.2.3 The earliest known long-lasting occupation site within the area of Maldon dated to the Early Iron Age period and composed an extensive settlement on the crest of the hill (Bedwin 1992; Medlycott 1999, 3).
- 2.2.4 A settlement developed within the low-lying ground between Heybridge and Maldon during the Late Iron Age period (Atkinson and Preston 1998), before developing into a Roman small town, complete with metalled roads, a market, a temple and a cemetery to its east. It declined during the 3rd and 4th centuries, but managed to exist into the early part of the 5th century (Atkinson and Preston forthcoming).
- 2.2.5 Maldon was probably a major town during the medieval period since it had a royal mint and it and Colchester were the only boroughs in Essex. Its coastal location enabled it to flourish since it was easier for inland towns such as Chelmsford and Billericay to tranship goods to and from London via Maldon rather than by the more direct overland route. Wealth generated by this enabled Maldon to support three churches during a period when most towns in the county had only one. High Street and Market Hill were other vital components of the town's economy, together with the Hythe, c.800m to the east, which served as a quayside (Medlycott 1999).
- 2.2.6 The grounds of Maldon's Carmelite Priory (HER 7728 and 7729) lay south of properties fronting the south side of the High Street. A gate leading off High Street enabled them to be accessed and traces of that gate were possibly encountered during an archaeological investigation in 1985. Licence to construct the friary was granted in 1293, and it seems probable that the friary was in place by the beginning of the 14th century. Acquisition of a plot of land immediately adjacent enabled the friary to expand in 1304 (Medlycott 1999).
- 2.2.7 Little was known about the form of the friary until relatively recently, since few of its documents survived the Dissolution and no part of its standing fabric survived above ground. A deed regarding the selling of the friary grounds in 1543 mentions various structures including a church, a bell tower, lofts, outhouses, gardens, courtyards, lodgings and storage places. Although the

friary was noted for its learning, it was possibly not a wealthy establishment since written sources frequently refer to its poverty (Isserlin 1999).

2.3 Previous Archaeological Investigation

2.3.1 Archaeological excavations in advance of construction of a car park and Maldon Library in 1990-1 uncovered robbed-out foundations of stone buildings, including a square cloister with a number of rooms arranged around it and possibly a church on the north side (Fig. 2, MD9 and MD10). To the south-west of the cloister were remains of a large rectangular structure, probably a barn. The latter part of the site's stratigraphic sequence included part of the garden of a mansion which was constructed over the former friary buildings between 1565 and 1570-74. Existing properties Friary House and Friary Youth Centre replaced this in turn during 1805 to 1807 (Isserlin 1999). The Friary Wall, the wall separating Friary House from Friary Youth Centre, is likely to have been first constructed during that period.

HER No.	Location	Description
7728	White Horse Lane	Maldon Carmelite Friary
7729	White Horse Lane	Maldon Carmelite Friary, Mansion House

Table 1: Summary of HER/SMR data

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 The archaeological work monitored the emptying of the foundation trench of a 34m-long stretch of the north-south brick wall separating the back gardens of Friary House and The Friary Youth Centre and Evening Institute (Fig. 2). The portion of the wall to be replaced lay to the south and was to be reconstructed because it was no longer sound. Brick buttresses intermittently supported the wall's west side.
- 3.1.2 Rose Builders Ltd dismantled the relevant part of the wall to ground level and then used a mechanical excavator, equipped with a small toothed bucket and a concrete breaker to remove the wall's underlying foundation support and backfill deposits. The resulting trench was largely straight-sided but inconsistent in its dimensions, varying from c.0.5m to 0.7m wide and c.0.7m to 0.8m deep.
- 3.1.3 Exposed surfaces were visually inspected for archaeological features and finds during the monitoring; the findings were then recorded on pro-forma Watching Brief Record Sheets. A photographic record of digital photographs was maintained. No spot heights were taken.
- 3.1.4 Exposed surfaces and spoil heaps were visually inspected for pre-modern, datable artefacts. Selected artefacts were retrieved sufficient to characterise the site assemblage and retained for off-site study.

3.2 Fieldwork Constraints

- 3.2.1 The archaeological work was confined to the monitoring of the re-excavation of the relevant section of the wall foundation trench. As such, there were no other constraints on this trench except for the limited depth of the contract's excavations.

3.3 Site Archive

- 3.3.1 The site archive is currently held at ASE's offices at Witham. ASE will make arrangements to deposit the site archive with Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service, subject to agreement with the legal landowner.

Number of Contexts	7
Watching brief record sheets	4
Plan and sections sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	16
Permatrace sheets	0
Trench Record Forms	0

Table 2: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Wall foundation trench

- 4.1.1 The contractor's re-excavation of the contents of the wall's foundation trench [1005] revealed a supporting base of random flint nodules and infrequent lumps of unworked limestone bonded together with concrete [1004]. It also exposed the below-ground, lower courses of the brick wall and its buttresses [1003], a backfill of dark greyish brown loose sandy silt [1002] and adjacent/overlying layers of topsoil [1000 and 1001] (Fig. 2, Section 1). The foundation trench sat within topsoil, apart from its northern end, which cut into subsoil [1006]. The topsoil measured 0.8m thick and consisted of loose greyish brown sandy silt; the subsoil comprised mid-greyish brown firm clay silt.
- 4.1.2 The removal of the existing wall revealed that the gardens of Friary House and Friary Youth Centre were separated by a vertical drop of up to c.0.6m, making it likely that one or both properties had been landscaped or terraced.
- 4.1.3 Artefacts from the trench mostly comprised fragments of brick, the majority of which had probably been part of the wall. Lumps of unworked limestone and small amounts of modern porcelain and bottle glass were present within the surrounding topsoil.
- 4.1.4 Other than the wall foundation cut and the deposits contained within it, no archaeological features or deposits were identified.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Depth /Thickness m
1000	Layer	Topsoil	34	0.7	0.80
1001	Layer	Topsoil	34	0.7	0.22
1002	Layer	Backfill	34	0.7	0.15
1003	Structure	Wall	34	0.36	0.7
1004	Fill	Hard core	34	0.7	0.45
1005	Cut	Wall trench	34	0.7	0.7
1006	Layer	Subsoil	13	0.7	0.13+

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 The ground works revealed no artefacts other than fragments of post-medieval / modern ceramic building material and small amounts of modern porcelain and bottle glass. No artefacts were retained for analysis beyond basic identification.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Discussion

- 6.1.1 The demolished section of wall is likely to have been constructed or at least underpinned within the last two centuries, as its underlying supporting foundation includes modern concrete. If it replaced an earlier wall in the same location, no trace of that wall has survived or been able to be identified by these monitoring works. A posited date of origin for the wall is that it was constructed at the same time as the two houses which now form Friary House and Friary Youth Centre, both of which were erected during the early part of the 19th century.
- 6.1.2 The foundation trench of the wall is unlikely to have disturbed any underlying archaeological deposits present, since its depth is mostly less than that of the topsoil it is cut through. However, it is possible that some of the substantial thickness of topsoil is due to later landscaping and has been deposited against the wall.
- 6.1.3 If archaeological deposits survive at a greater depth, below the wall trench and the topsoil, then some of these may have been truncated by landscaping or terracing as evidenced by the c.0.6m disparity in ground level between the garden of Friary House and that of Maldon Youth Centre, either side of the wall. However, no archaeological remains were observed within the subsoil exposed at the northern end of the monitored groundworks.
- 6.1.3 The monitoring encountered lumps of limestone, none of which appeared to have been worked or sculpted. These lumps are likely to be rubble deriving from the friary buildings' fabric, the demolition and robbing of which began after the Dissolution. No other artefacts were recovered that relate to the medieval or early post-medieval use of the site, or indeed to the earlier occupation of this part of Maldon.

6.2 Conclusions

- 6.2.1 The groundworks for the replacement of this section of the Friary Wall have had negligible impact upon the heritage resource of this location within the historic town of Maldon.

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The archaeological work was recommended by Essex County Council Place Services and was commissioned by Rose Builders Ltd. ASE thanks all concerned, in particular Maria Medlycott of the former and Mick Simpson of the latter. The archaeological monitoring involved two site visits and was undertaken by Adam Dyson and Mark Germany respectively. Figures 1 and 2 were drawn by Andrew Lewsey. The fieldwork was project managed by Andy Leonard and the post-excavation work by Mark Atkinson.

HER Summary

Site name/Address: The Friary Wall, Adult Community Learning Centre, Carmelite Way, Maldon	
Parish: Maldon	District: Maldon
NGR: TL 85006 06875	Site Code: MD 52
Type of Work: Monitoring	Site Director/Group: Mark Germany
Date of Work: 18/8/15 and 10/9/15	Size of Area Investigated: 24 sq m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: ASE / Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service	Funding source: Rose Builders Ltd
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Numbers: 7728 and 7729
Final Report: Essex Archaeology & History roundup	OASIS No: 225177
Periods Represented: Medieval and modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: <p>Archaeological monitoring of the removal of the foundations of part of the dividing garden wall between the back gardens of Friary House and The Friary Youth Centre and Evening Institute, Carmelite Way, Maldon revealed modern deposits relating to the wall and deposition against it, but no archaeological features or finds, other than masonry rubble incorporated into the foundations.</p> <p>The gardens of both properties occupied part of the site of the former Carmelite Friary.</p> <p>The archaeological work established that the site's topsoil was mostly deeper than the wall's foundations and that the west side of the garden of the youth centre had possibly been cut into an east-facing slope.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: - None	
Author of Summary: Mark Germany	Date of Summary: October 2015

OASIS Form

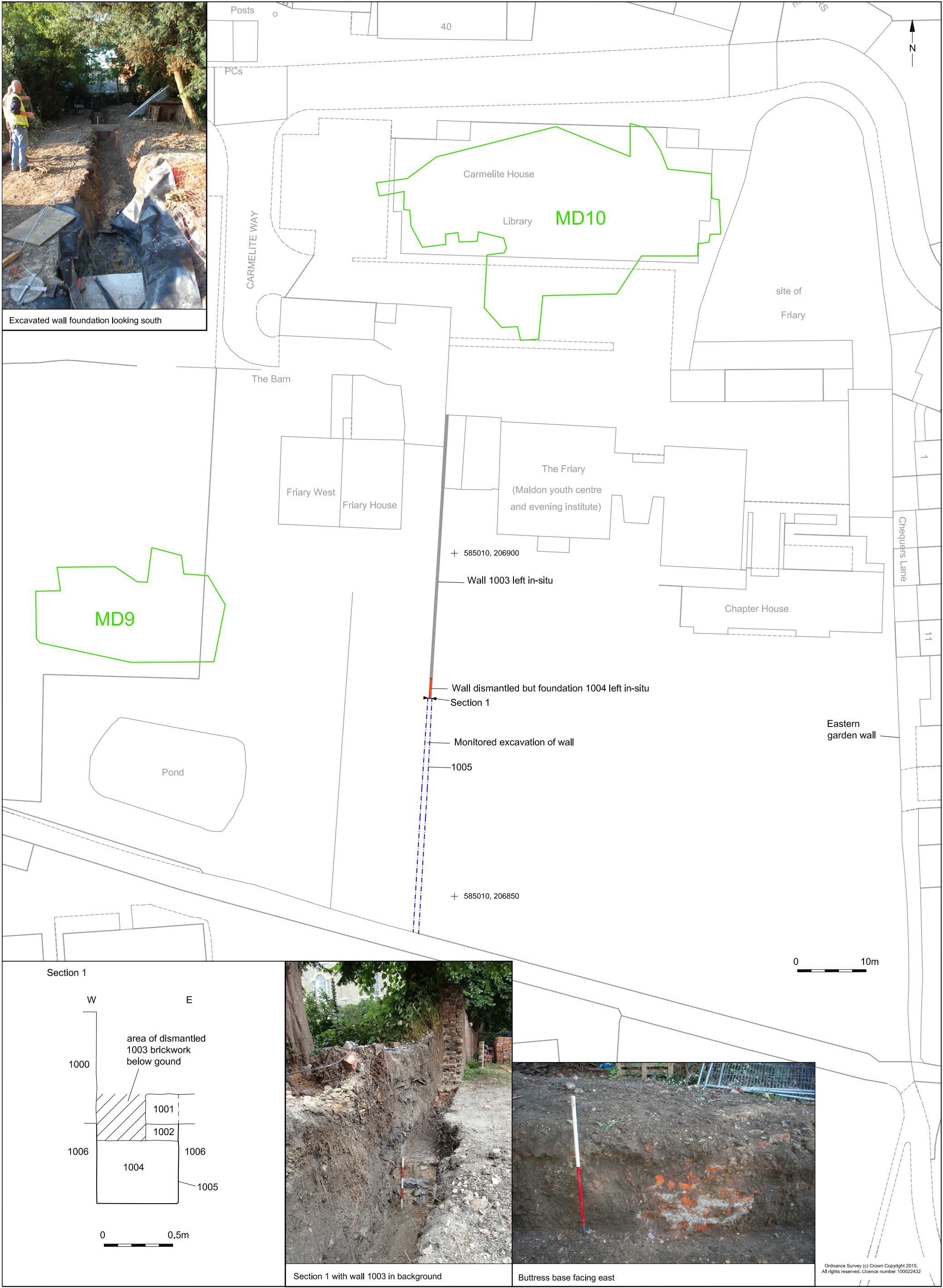
OASIS ID: 225177	
Project details	
Project name	The Friary Wall, Carmelite Way, Maldon
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring of the building contractor's digging out of the foundations of a garden wall within the site of the former Carmelite Friary at Maldon revealed only modern deposits, but no archaeological features or finds except from masonry rubble in its foundations.
Project dates	Start: 18-08-2015 End: 10-09-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Associated project reference codes	MD52 – Site code
Associated project reference codes	8392 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	FRIARY Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE
Investigation type	Watching Brief
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	ESSEX MALDON The Friary Wall, Carmelite Way, Maldon
Study area	24 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 85006 06875
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Essex County Council Place Services
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Adam Dyson / Mark Germany
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of	Rose Builders Ltd

sponsor/funding body	
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service
Digital Contents	Stratigraphic
Digital Media available	Images raster / digital photography, Text
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service
Paper Contents	Stratigraphic
Paper Media available	Context sheet, Drawing, Photograph, Plan, Report
Project bibliog	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief, The Friary Wall, Adult Community Learning, Carmelite Way, Maldon, Essex
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Entered by	Mark Germany (mgermany@ucl.ac.uk), 1 October 2015



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Project Ref: 8392	Aug 2015	Site location	
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Fig. 1



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