

**An archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching  
and borehole watching brief at  
the Sixth Form College,  
North Hill, Colchester, Essex  
June 2011**

**report prepared by  
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**on behalf of  
the Sixth Form College**



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**CAT Report 596**  
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## 1 Summary

*An evaluation by two trenches has identified the uppermost significant archaeological horizon of Roman date on the site of the proposed development adjacent to the 'north site' complex of buildings at the Sixth Form College.*

*The highest Roman deposits - containing fragments of building material and pottery - are demolition layers dating to the early-mid 3rd to 4th century, when a Roman building in this area was probably demolished. The Roman deposits are almost all sealed by a thick layer of late medieval or post-medieval topsoil, and are universally at a depth that should not impede further development.*

*The finds from the evaluation are dominated by fragments of Roman brick and roof tile, with lesser quantities of mortar, opus signinum, and pottery. This material must derive from the demolition of Roman buildings in the vicinity.*

*During the watching brief on three boreholes, no material of archaeological significance was uncovered.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1a)

This is the archive report on an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching and borehole watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on behalf of and at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex on the 31st of April and 1st June 2011. The site lies to the west of Colchester town centre, and is centred at NGR TL 9925 2545.

At the time of the evaluation, the site was open ground which had, until recently, been occupied by temporary classrooms. The site lies within the wall of the Roman town in the north-western corner of Insula 1a (Fig 1a). The proposed development involves the construction of new teaching facilities as part of the 'north site' Phase 2 project.

A brief (CBC 2011) detailing the required archaeological work, ie an evaluation by trial-trenching and borehole watching brief, was produced by the Colchester Borough Council Archaeology Officer (CBCAO). All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a WSI (Written Scheme of Investigation) produced by CAT in response to the CBCAO brief and agreed with the CBCAO (CAT 2011).

In addition to the WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with the Colchester Archaeological Trust's *Policies and procedures* (CAT 1999, updated 2008), Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CIMS 2008a) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester and Ipswich Museums* (CIMS 2008b), and the Institute for Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008b). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) were also followed.

## 3 Archaeological background (Figs 1a-1b)

The historical and archaeological background is based on information held in the Urban Archaeological Database (UAD), the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held by ECC at County Hall in Chelmsford, and on records of recent archaeological projects held by CAT.

The Sixth Form College (formerly the Gilbert School and, before that, the Technical College) occupies a sizeable proportion of the north-western corner of the walled Roman town. Within the walled Roman town, metalled streets aligned north-south and west-east defined a number of *insulae* (blocks of land, usually occupied by buildings; see Fig 1a). Modern scholars have numbered these Insulas 1-40, and they are often subdivided (eg Insulas 1a and 1b: CAT Report 247).

In the college grounds, the lines of Roman streets pass north-south under the eastern edge of the old college building and below the centre of the 'mid-site' complex, and west-east under the 'south site' extension. Thus the college grounds overlies Insulas 1a, 1b, 9a and 9b, and 17a and 17b of the Roman town, and Insulas 1a and 9a are wholly within the college grounds (EHER nos 12341 and 13108).

The southern half of the college grounds also lie within the site of the Roman legionary fortress, founded c AD 44 (CAR 3, 3-9; EHER nos 3530 and 12341). The northern edge of the fortress lies under the new 'mid-site' complex, with the fortress rampart to its south (coinciding mainly with the grassy slope between the 'south site' buildings and the 'mid-site' complex).

Normally, the *insulae* were occupied by buildings, usually town houses. In fact, a large part of a Roman building was discovered on the site of the Technical College in 1865 and observed again in 1910. This building (the outline of which is shown in grey tone on Fig 1b) had tessellated and possibly mosaic floors, and painted walls, and is likely to have been constructed in the 2nd or 3rd century AD (Hull 1958, 93-4: EHER nos 12433-12437).

In 1984-85, there was a major excavation by CAT on the area now occupied by the 'south site' buildings. Parts of the *contubernia* (men's quarters) of a barrack-block of Roman fortress were excavated (CAR 6, 134).

In January 2000, an evaluation within the footprint of the proposed new computer block was conducted by the ECC FAU. This uncovered between 1.4m and 2m of topsoil covering a deposit which probably derived from the demolition of a Roman building in the vicinity (ECC FAU 2000).

In 2003, five evaluation trenches were dug by CAT in the college grounds for the proposed 'mid-site' development. These exposed Roman tessellated and mortar floors, as well as the robbed-out foundations of a large Roman building (probably a town-house) covered by between 0.6m and 1.1m of topsoil. The Roman buildings appear to have been demolished and the area turned over to agricultural or horticultural use at the end of the Roman period (CAT Report 260).

Additional evaluation work by CAT in 2005 in what was then the tennis courts, now the 'mid-site' complex (CAT Report 309), confirmed the earlier evaluation findings and produced useful data on the possible extent of the town-house identified in 2003 (CAT Report 260).

Further archaeological work was conducted by CAT between August 2005 and March 2006 (CAT Report 347), during the groundworks associated with the 'mid-site' complex. Investigation revealed a Roman metalled street surface, which divided Insulas 1a and 1b, and two large Roman buildings. The first building, in Insula 1b, was a Roman town-house with surviving *in situ* masonry wall foundations and *opus signinum* floor surfaces. The second building, in Insula 1a, was an extremely large and high-status building consisting of surviving *in situ* masonry wall foundations, robbed-out wall lines, and floors of mosaic, tessellation and *opus signinum*, and a well-preserved room which appears to have been part of a bath complex. The size of this building, its high-status decoration consisting of large quantities of elaborate painted wall-plaster (some of which was designed to imitate imported marbles), and the presence of a bath complex all suggest that this may well have been part of a *mansio*.

In 2008, CAT undertook an evaluation which identified the uppermost significant archaeological horizon of Roman date on the site of the extension to the 'south site' buildings. It became apparent that the Roman levels showed no clear evidence of terracing on this site, but instead broadly reflect the natural north-south slope of the land today. The Roman material must derive from the demolition of Roman buildings, specifically of the Roman building first discovered in 1865 and investigated further in 1910 when the Technical College was constructed (CAT Report 483).

There appears to have been very little post-Roman activity on the land now occupied by the Sixth Form College. Recent excavation and evaluation work has shown that a substantial depth of topsoil accumulated over the area of the college grounds in this period. The usual interpretation of this phenomenon, often found in Colchester, is that the land was left open and was probably used for small-scale agriculture or horticulture.

Apart from the construction of the Technical College (the buildings of which were later occupied by the Gilberd School and then the Sixth Form College) in 1910, building work seems to have been confined in the medieval and post-medieval periods to the properties lining North Hill. Many of these buildings are still standing and are listed.

#### **4 Aim**

The aim of the evaluation and borehole watching brief was to establish the height of the uppermost significant archaeological layer within the footprint of the proposed development and, as far as possible, to record its character, extent, date, significance and condition.

#### **5 Results of the fieldwork** (Figs 1a-1b)

All heights given here are above Ordnance Datum (AOD), unless stated otherwise.

##### **5.1 Evaluation**

The evaluation site encompassed the footprint of the proposed development, with the town wall immediately to the north and west (Figs 1a-1b). At the time of the evaluation, the site was open ground that had, until recently, been occupied by temporary classrooms.

A total of 30m of trenching was undertaken, with one 10m-long trench (T1) extending east-west across the evaluation site and one 20m-long trench (T2) extending north-south. The intention was to give a complete assessment of the relationship between modern ground-level and the uppermost significant archaeological horizon.

Two archaeological features were identified in the two evaluation trenches. T2 exposed substantial modern concrete foundations (F1) to the north, while T1 cut through a post-medieval pit (F2).

An archaeological summary of both evaluation trenches is given below.

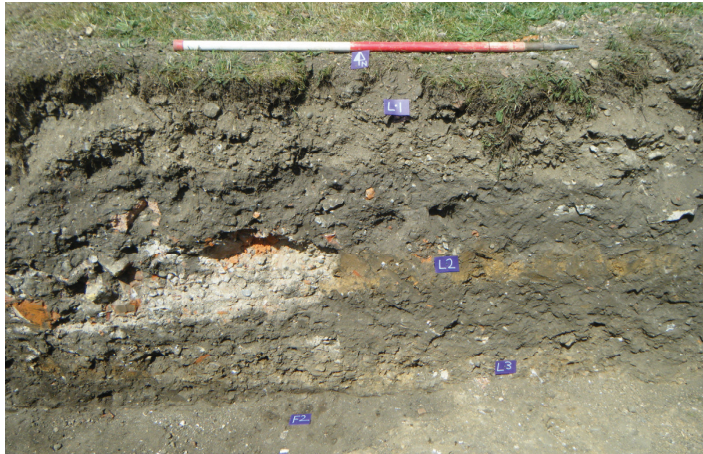
##### **Trench 1: summary** (Figs 2, 4; Plate 1)

T1 was excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator, through four layers (Fig 4). A thin layer of topsoil containing occasional hardcore and CBM fragments (L1) overlay a substantial deposit of modern builders' waste (L2), which sealed a thick deposit of post-Roman topsoil (L4). L4 in turn sealed a mortar-rich deposit of Roman demolition material (L3). This is the layer resulting from the demolition of Roman buildings, and it contained several large fragments of Roman roof tile and brick, along with lesser quantities of mortar, *opus signinum*, and pottery.

As in previous evaluations and excavations at the Sixth Form College (CAT Reports 260, 309, 347, 483; CAR 6, 127-37), the dark post-Roman topsoil (L4 in this report) was not found at a consistent depth across the current site. This is partly due to the effects of modern landscaping, but it is also because of the natural slope in ground-level down from south to north, which is quite pronounced in the college grounds. Unsurprisingly, this natural slope mirrors the archaeological horizons in the college grounds.

In T1, however, the effect of landscaping and natural sloping on L4 was very prominent. The top of L4, as exposed in T1, only appeared on the western side of the trench (Fig 2). To the east, the Roman demolition material (L3) was directly sealed by the modern builders' waste (L2) at a depth of approximately 1.1m (Plate 1). The implications of this, in relation to the proposed development, are discussed in section 7 below.





**Plate 1: north-facing representative section of T1, showing pit F2.**

One feature was identified within T1. In the centre of the trench, protruding from the northernmost baulk, there was a post-medieval pit (F2) cutting both the Roman demolition layer and the dark post-Roman subsoil (L3 and L4 respectively). This pit contained residual artefacts from L3 and L4 that were of little of archaeological interest and these were not retained.

Natural geological ground was not identified in T1, the objective being to locate the uppermost significant archaeological horizon (in this case, of Roman date). This was L3, the top of which was at 11.05m AOD, 1.1m below current ground-level. The western end of the trench was cut through post-Roman topsoil (L4) to a depth of 11.0m AOD, 1.2m below current ground-level. The excavation stopped at this point.

**Trench 2: summary** (Fig 3; Plates 2-3)

T2 was excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator. The archaeological sequence was generally similar to T1 (Fig 4; Plate 2). Modern topsoil (L1) sealed a layer of loosely-compacted modern building debris (L2), which is almost certainly associated with the demolition of the old 'north site' temporary classrooms in the early 2000s.

As in T1, L2 sealed dark post-Roman topsoil (L4) but, unlike in T1, the Roman demolition layer (L3) was not visible at any point along the trench's length. As noted in the T1 summary above, this is due to the varying heights of L4 throughout the college grounds because of the natural slope of the land and modern landscaping.

At the northern end of the trench, L4 had been cut by a series of large concrete foundations and associated disused drains (F1). These extended in a broad east-west alignment across the trench (Plate 3). Where possible, the trench was excavated to a depth of 1.2m below current ground-level between these foundations and drains but, in some cases, the spacing of them was such that maximum depth could not be achieved. The highest level that the trench was left at between these foundations was 1m below ground-level (11.24m AOD).



**Plate 2: representative section of T2, looking west.**

Natural geological ground was not identified in T2, the objective being to locate the uppermost significant archaeological horizon. This horizon was not located, but L4 was excavated, where possible, to an average depth of 11.5m AOD, ie 1.2m below current ground-level, at which point the excavation was halted.



**Plate 3: T2, looking north. Modern concrete foundations (F1) are visible.**

## 5.2 Watching brief

In addition to the trenching, geotechnical boreholes were observed to a depth of between 2m and 5m across the evaluation site. No material of archaeological significance was observed in the upcast from the boreholes.

## 6 Finds General

Finds consisted of a large quantity of Roman material, mainly from the layer of Roman demolition material (L3). There was also a substantial volume of Roman material which was residual in post-Roman contexts, notably in the post-Roman topsoil (L4). As well as the residual Roman material, post-medieval CBM was also recovered from L4.

### 6.1 Small finds

**Table 1: summary of small finds.**

Finds no	Trench and context	Description	Finds date	Context date
5	T1, L4	1 fragment of Purbeck marble, 236g. No surfaces survive. This is a fragment of a larger Purbeck marble object.	Roman	post-medieval (there is peg-tile in this context)

The only small find recovered during the evaluation was a sizeable fragment of Purbeck marble residual in the post-Roman topsoil L4. It appears to be a fragment of a larger object and that no worked surface remains.

### 6.2 Roman pottery *by H Brooks*

There was only a small quantity of Roman pottery (14 sherds, weighing 202g). This is listed and dated by finds number for each trench and context (Table 2).

**Table 2: catalogue of Roman pottery.**

Finds no	Trench and context	Description	Finds date	Context date
1	boreholes, U/S	1 sherd of samian ware, 8g.	Roman	-
2	T2, L4	1 rim sherd of Fabric GB (BB2 - black-burnished ware), 19g 1 body sherd of Fabric GX, locally-produced grey ware, 7g.	Roman, mid 2nd century or later	post-medieval (there is peg-tile in this context)
3	T1, L4	1 Roman sherd (unclassified), 17g.	post-medieval, with residual Roman	post-medieval (there is peg-tile in this context)
4	T1, L3	1 sherd from base of flagon, probably Fabric DJ (coarse oxidised and related wares), 102g. 5 body sherds of grey ware (probably locally-produced Fabric GX), 24g. 1 body sherd of Fabric GB (BB2 - black-burnished ware), 7g. 1 lid fragment with upward-hooked rim, gritty, pale brown surfaces with grey core (probably locally-produced Fabric GX), 10g. 2 other Roman sherds (unclassified), 8g.	Roman, mid 2nd century or later	Roman, probably 2nd-3rd century



As in previous evaluations and excavations at the Sixth Form College (CAT Reports 260, 309, 347, 483; *CAR 6*, 127-37), the pottery recovered from the top of the Roman demolition layer (L3) and residual in the layers above (L4) seems to date from the mid 2nd century onwards.

### 6.3 Building materials

Building material was the commonest type of find by weight (3.4kg). The majority of the material consisted of Roman roof tile, ie *imbrex* and *tegula* fragments (Table 3). This material was recovered from the majority of the excavated contexts, and in bulk from both the Roman demolition layer (L3) and as residual material in the later context of L4.

**Table 3: quantification of building materials only.**

Finds no	Trench and context	Description	Finds date	Context date
1	boreholes, U/S	1 brick/tile scrap, 2g ( <b>discarded</b> ).	post-medieval	-
2	T2, L4	9 Roman tile fragments, including flue tile with cut-out, 449g ( <b>8 discarded, 295g</b> ). 1 greensand lump (no obvious finished surfaces), 277g.	Roman, mid 2nd century or later	post-medieval (there is peg-tile in this context)
3	T1, L4	5 fragments of Roman tile, 251g ( <b>3 discarded, 81g</b> ). 2 fragments of box-tile, combed surfaces, 30g. 3 fragments of peg-tile (2 with peg-holes), 216g ( <b>1 discarded, 40g</b> ).	post-medieval, with residual Roman	post-medieval (there is peg-tile in this context)
4	T1, L3	1 Roman brick, 402g. 7 Roman tile fragments, 1,472g ( <b>5 discarded, 812g</b> ).	Roman, mid 2nd century or later	Roman, probably 2nd-3rd century

In addition to the roof tile, one large and two small fragments of flue tile were recovered. The flue tiles derive from an underfloor heating system (hypocaust).

Flue tile was 'keyed' to allow plaster to adhere to its surface. The two small fragments from this evaluation have simple comb-marks incised on them where plaster would have been applied, whereas the larger fragment has a cut-out on its side where another tile would have been affixed, with no surviving evidence of 'keying'.

The flue tile indicates that a nearby Roman building had a hypocaust heating system, and so was of a reasonably high status. A further find of building stone from L4 suggests that it had been a substantial, well-appointed building.

### 6.4 Other finds

This list (Table 4) excludes small finds, pottery and building materials (see above).

**Table 4: list of other finds.**

Finds no	Trench and context	Description	Finds date	Context date
1	boreholes, U/S	1 piece of <i>opus signinum</i> , 12g 1 clay tobacco-pipe stem (31mm long, 3mm-wide bore), 2g 1 <i>tessera</i> , 22g.	post-medieval, Roman	-
2	T2, L4	2 septaria fragments, 210g ( <b>discarded</b> ).	Roman, mid 2nd century or later	post-medieval (there is peg-tile in this context)

3	T1, L4	1 bone fragment, <i>Bos</i> phalanx, 4g ( <b>discarded</b> ). 1 oyster shell, 18g ( <b>discarded</b> ). 1 piece of <i>opus signinum</i> , 31g. 1 fragment of septaria, 290g.	post-medieval, with residual Roman	post-medieval (there is peg-tile in this context)
4	T1, L3	1 septaria fragment, 636g ( <b>discarded</b> ). 1 mortar lump, 17g ( <b>discarded</b> ). 1 unfused femur, proximal end, medium-large mammal, 16g ( <b>discarded</b> ).	Roman, mid 2nd century or later	Roman, probably 2nd-3rd century

## 7 Discussion

The principal aim of this evaluation was to determine the depth of the uppermost significant archaeological horizon, so that the results could be fed into the design for the proposed development. As was expected, the highest significant archaeological horizon was Roman, 2nd century or later (L3 in T1), and at the height of 11.05m AOD, 1.1m below the modern ground-level. Given the extensive landscaping on the site, however, the depth of the Roman demolition layer (from the modern ground-level) does vary. Outside the evaluated area, this layer could be found closer to the surface.

The college grounds have been heavily landscaped, although modern ground-level still follows the natural fall in ground-level from south to north across the area of the grounds. The landscaping of the open ground where T1 and T2 were cut has most recently occurred in the form of deposition of modern builders' waste from the demolition of temporary classrooms (L2). This has had the effect of further reducing the level of L4 in some places, to the degree that, as noted above, in the eastern end of T1 it had been reduced entirely, with the modern debris of L2 directly sealing the Roman demolition layer (L3) beneath.

Even with the reduction of L4 in this one part of the site, however, there still remains no obstacle to successful completion of the proposed development with negligible archaeological impact. There appears to be a minimum of 1m of post-Roman dark soil and/or modern demolition debris sealing the Roman layer.

No material of archaeological significance was observed in the upcast from the three boreholes during the watching brief.

As long as any groundworks for the proposed development are designed to be and are placed above the level of L4, no significant destruction of archaeological material will occur.

## 8 Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by Ben Holloway and Mark Baister. Figures by Mark Baister. CAT is grateful to the Sixth Form College for commissioning and funding the work and for their co-operation, and to Colchester Borough Council for their help.

## 9 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in .pdf format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

- |       |      |   |
|-------|------|---|
| CAR 3 | 1984 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 3: Excavations at Lion Walk, Balkerne Lane, and Middleborough, Colchester, Essex</i> , by P Crummy            |
| CAR 6 | 1992 | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 6: Excavations at Culver Street, the Gilbert School, and other sites in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by P Crummy |

CAT	1999	<i>Policies and procedures</i> (updated 2008)
CAT	2011	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological trial-trenching at Colchester VI Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex</i> , by B Holloway
CAT Report 260		'An archaeological evaluation at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex: December 2003-January 2004', by B Holloway, 2004
CAT Report 309		'Archaeological monitoring and recording at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex: February 2005', by H Brooks, 2005
CAT Report 347		'Roman buildings, the rear face of the Roman town wall and archaeological investigations in Insulas 1a, 1b, 9a and 9b, at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex: April 2005-March 2006', by H Brooks <i>et al</i> , 2009
CAT Report 483		'An archaeological evaluation of the proposed extension to the "south site" buildings at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex: May 2008', by B Holloway and H Brooks, 2008
CBC	2011	<i>Brief for an archaeological evaluation: the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex</i> , by Martin Winter
CIMS	2008a	<i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i>
CIMS	2008b	<i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester and Ipswich Museums</i>
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Paper No. 14, by D Gurney
ECC FAU	2000	Report 830: <i>Archaeological evaluation at Colchester Sixth Form College North site, North Hill, Colchester, Essex</i>
Hawkes, C F C, & Hull, M R	1947	<i>Camulodunum</i> , RRCSAL, <b>14</b>
Hull, M R	1958	<i>Roman Colchester</i> , RRCSAL, <b>20</b>
IfA	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation</i>
IfA	2008b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
MoRPHE	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (English Heritage)

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

AOD	above Ordnance Datum
BP	Before Present era, alternative to BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCAO	Colchester Borough Council Archaeology Officer
CBM	ceramic building material, eg tiles and brick
context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
ECC	Essex County Council
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by Essex County Council
FAU	Field Archaeology Unit
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
fill	the soil filling up a hole such as a pit or ditch
flue tile	tile commonly used in hypocausts
hypocaust	Roman underfloor heating system
IfA	Institute for Field Archaeologists
<i>imbrex</i>	(plural <i>imbrices</i> ) curved roof tile placed over the junction between two <i>tegulae</i>
<i>insula</i>	(plural <i>insulae</i> ) a block of land within a Roman town
<i>mansio</i>	an stopping place on a Roman road maintained by the central government for the use of officials and those on official business whilst travelling
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity

NGR	National Grid Reference
<i>opus signinum</i>	Roman mortar, usually pink due to admixture of crushed Roman brick
post-medieval	after around AD 1500 to around AD 1800
post-Roman	after AD 430
Roman	the period from AD 43 to around AD 430
<i>tegula</i>	(plural <i>tegulae</i> ) flat Roman roof tile with edge flanges, which were covered by <i>imbrices</i>
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database

## 11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museum under accession code COLIM 2011.40.

## 12 Appendix 1: contents of archive

One A4 document wallet containing:

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Copy of the evaluation brief issued by the CBCAO
- 1.2 1 x A3 site plan provided by the developer
- 1.3 1 x A4 proposed trench location plan by CAT
- 1.4 Copy of the WSI produced by CAT

### 2 Site archive

- 2.1 Digital photo. record
- 2.2 Context sheets (L1-L4, F1-F2)
- 2.3 Attendance register
- 2.4 Finds register
- 2.5 Site photographic record on CD
- 2.6 1 x A4 sheet with two representative section drawings

### 3 Research archive

- 3.1 Monitoring (client) report

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### Distribution list:

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*Adams x c:/reports 11/Sixth Form College north site/final/report596 final x.doc*



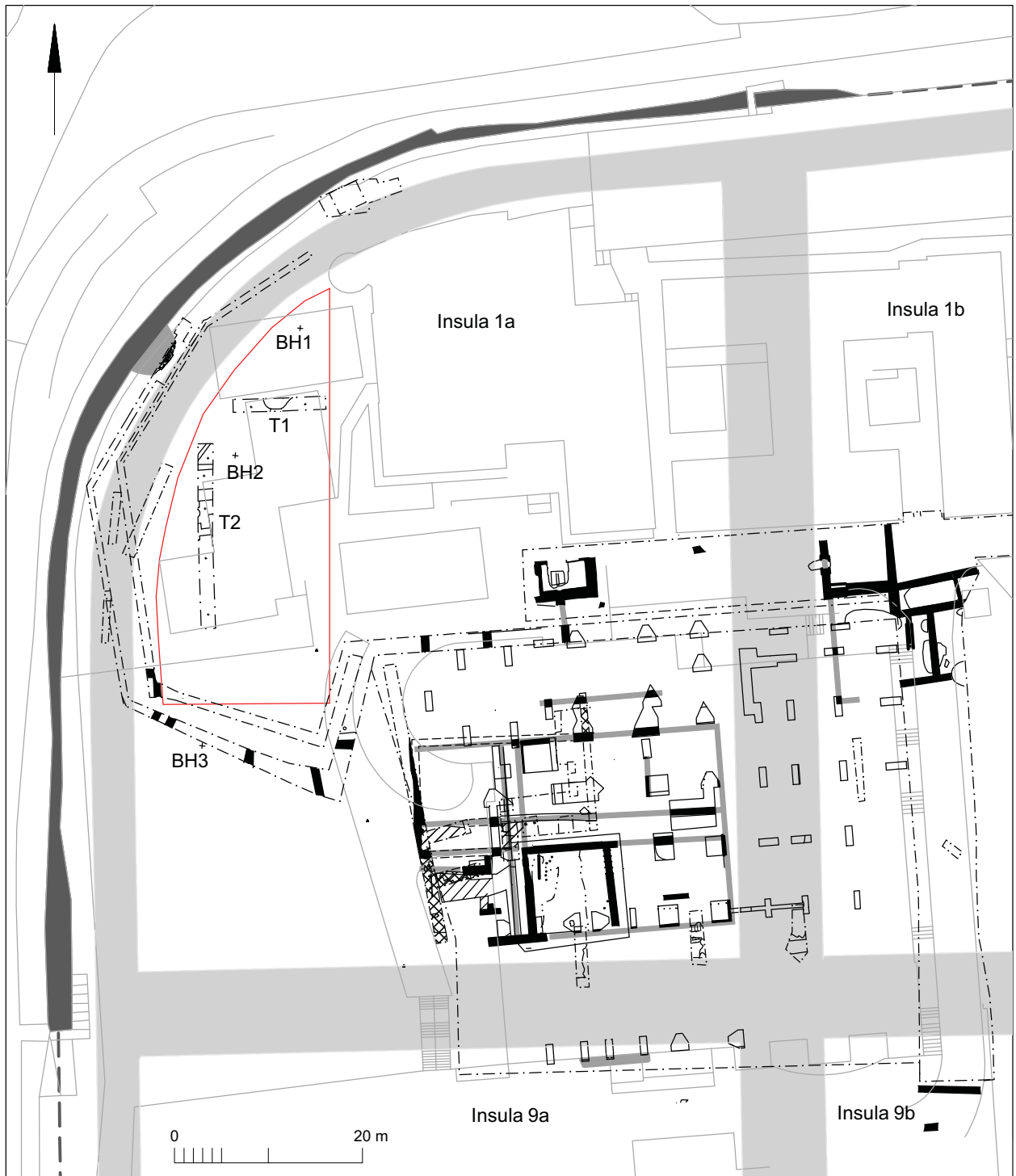




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Fig 1a Site location, with overlaid Roman street plan and *insula* numbers.



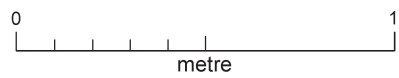
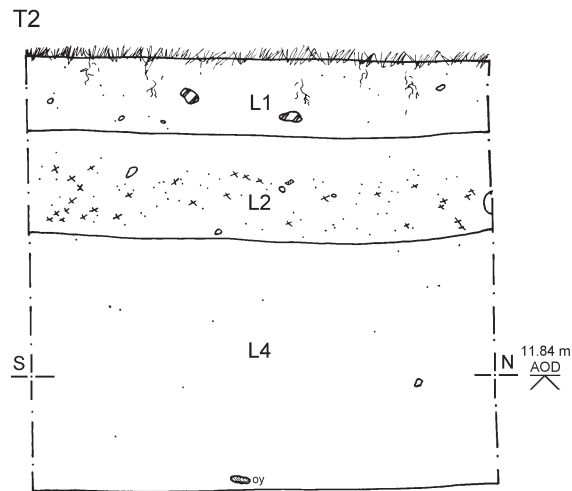
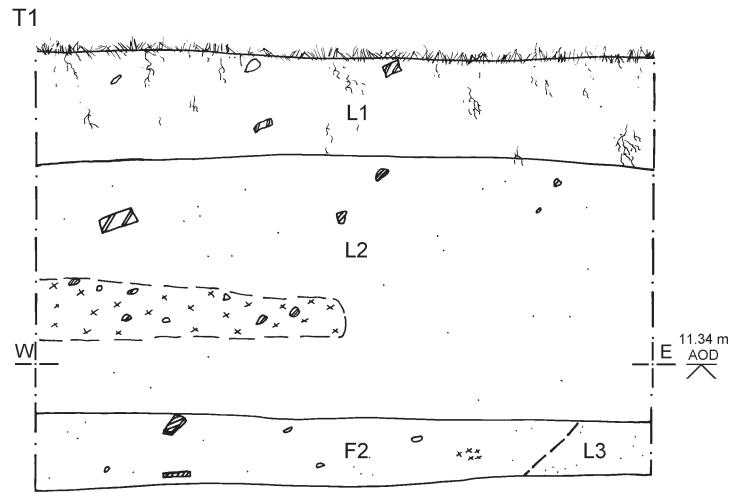


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Fig 1b Site location, showing trenches T1-T2 and boreholes BH1-BH3, and previous excavations at the Sixth Form College.

- / evaluation site
- wall
- - - projected wall
- . . . limit of excavations
- town wall
- Roman streets





- sand
- small stones
- post-Roman brick and tile
- Roman brick and tile
- mortar
- oyster shell
- roots

Fig 4 T1 and T2: representative sections.



**Essex Historic Environment Record/  
Essex Archaeology and History**

**Summary sheet**

<b>Address:</b> Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TL 9925 2545 (c)	<b>Site codes:</b> CAT project - 11/5e Museum accession - COLEM 2011.40
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation by trial-trenching and borehole watching brief	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 1st June 2011	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 48m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> the Sixth Form College
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHER numbers:</b> 43530, 12341, 12433-12437, 13108
<b>Final report:</b>	CAT Report 596 and summary in <i>EAH</i>
<b>Periods represented:</b>	modern, post-medieval, Roman
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b></p> <p><i>An evaluation by two trenches has identified the uppermost significant archaeological horizon of Roman date on the site of the proposed development adjacent to the 'north site' complex of buildings at the Sixth Form College.</i></p> <p><i>The highest Roman deposits - containing fragments of building material and pottery - are demolition layers dating to the early-mid 3rd to 4th century, when a Roman building in this area was probably demolished. The Roman deposits are almost all sealed by a thick layer of late medieval or post-medieval topsoil, and are universally at a depth that should not impede further development.</i></p> <p><i>The finds from the evaluation are dominated by fragments of Roman brick and roof tile, with lesser quantities of mortar, opus signinum, and pottery. This material must derive from the demolition of Roman buildings in the vicinity.</i></p> <p><i>During the watching brief on three boreholes, no material of archaeological significance was uncovered.</i></p>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>Keywords:</b> Roman, demolition, Sixth Form College	<b>Significance:</b> *
<b>Author of summary:</b> Mark Baister	<b>Date of summary:</b> July 2011