

Archaeological test pits at St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex

November 2014



report prepared by **Ben Holloway**

on behalf of **Ingleton Wood**

CAT project ref.: 14/9c
Accession code code: 2014.
NGR: TL 9835 2587



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CAT Report 804
December 2014

St Helena School 2014 Archaeological test pits summary

St Helena School is located in an area of high archaeological potential – the Sheepen site, which is the trading depot of late Iron Age Camulodunum. A large part of the Sheepen site (including most of the St Helena school grounds), is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. There is a Romano-Celtic temple beneath the main school building. Its precinct wall is approximately 45m west of the nearest test-pit.

Following instruction from St Helena School and Mr Steve Bennett of PlayFootball, Colchester Archaeological Trust dug four 1m x 0.5m test pits (TPs), one in each corner of the proposed new sports pitches. As one on the test pits was within the Scheduled area (Essex no 46: List Entry 1002173), Scheduled Monument Consent was applied for, and granted by English Heritage.

The aim of the TPs was to establish the level at which archaeological remains were present – the ‘archaeological level’. This information would inform the design of the sports pitches.

Although there were Roman finds in the topsoil in each TP, there were no Roman features (walls, pits, etc) in the small area exposed at the base of each TP – only ‘natural’ ground. Nevertheless, previous experience on this site shows that this is the level at which archaeological remains are present and might be anticipated.

Working clockwise from NW to SE, the ‘archaeological level’ in the four TPs was 540mm, 580mm, unclear, and 550mm respectively below present ground level.

Allowing a ‘buffer zone’ of 150mm to protect the archaeological levels, it follows that approximately 400mm **in total** could be removed from this site without unduly impacting the archaeological level. For more detail, see the attached two figures.

3rd December 2014



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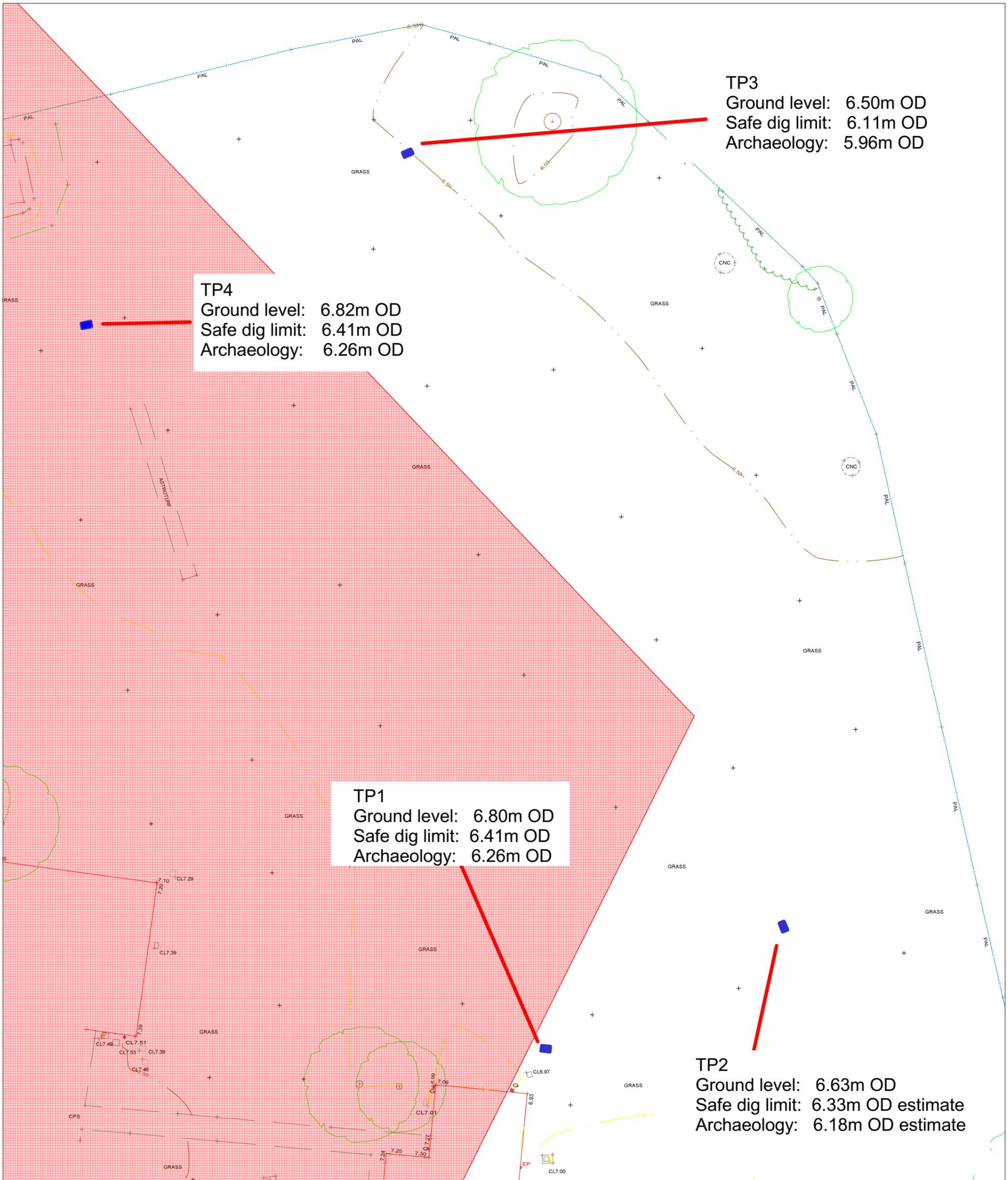


Fig 1 St Helena School 2014 archaeological test pits (blue) with relevant OD heights. Area of Scheduled Ancient Monument is shown in pink.

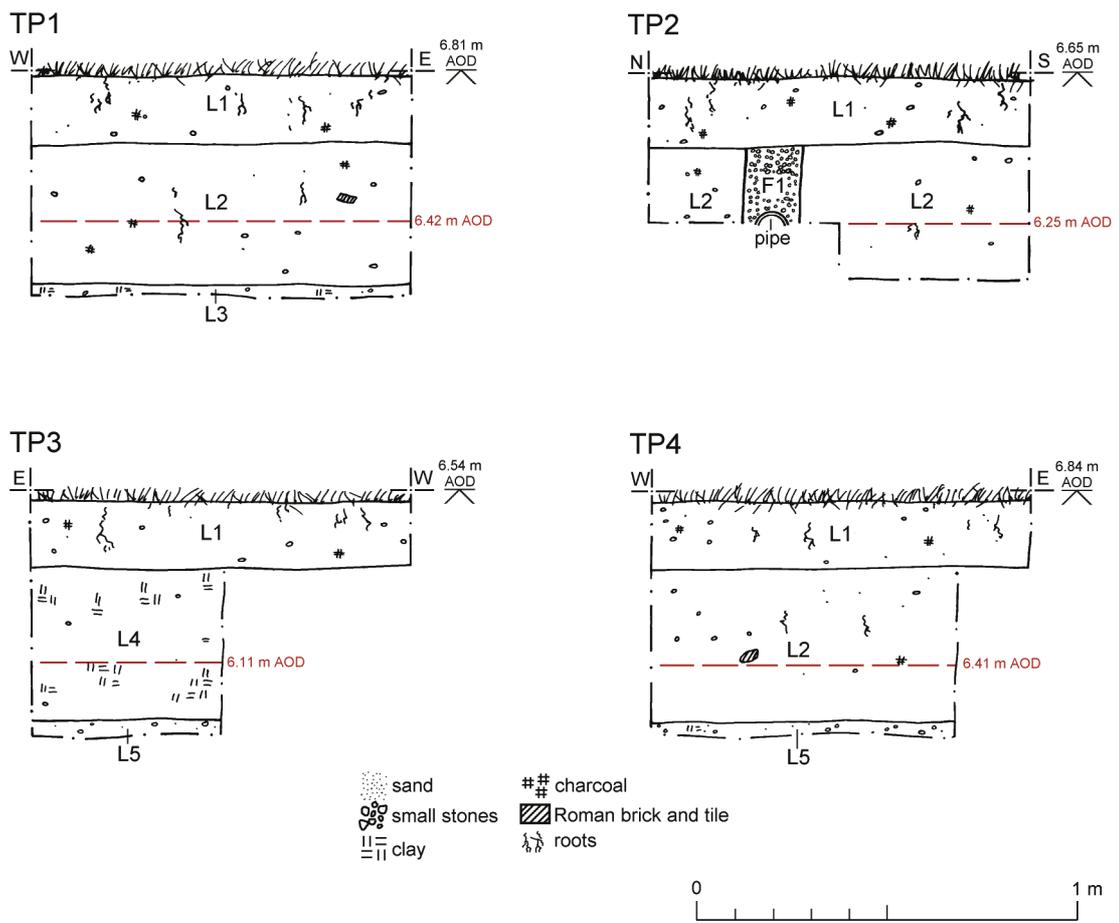


Fig 2 St. Helena 2014 test pits: representative sections (safe dig limit is shown in red).

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: St Helena School, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9835 2587 (c)	Site codes: CAT project code - 14/9c
Type of work: Test Pitting	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: November 2014	Size of area investigated: 4 x 1m test pits
Location of curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museums accession code 2014.	Funding source: Developer
Monitored by: Sarah Poppy English Heritage	
Further seasons anticipated? Yes	Related EHER numbers: SAM 1002173
Final report:	CAT Report 804
Periods represented:	Roman
<p>Summary: <i>Located to the north of the historic town within an area of high archaeological potential within an extensive scheduled ancient monument area (Essex no.57), the site consists of a rectangular area of open ground currently used edge of the sports field currently used as a football pitch. Four 1m test pits were located within the area of a new all weather sports facility including pitches and a pavilion.</i></p> <p><i>The project is currently pre planning, with application in process. The investigation work was commissioned to establish the depths at which archaeological material was likely to be encountered, to allow for foundation design schemes to be developed</i></p> <p><i>There was no archaeological features identified during the investigation or evidence directly relating to the Romano-British temple complex to the west of the investigation area. Residual Roman Ceramic Building Material (CBM) was identified and maybe associated with the temple complex, however it may also be associated with the 1st century industrial complex at Sheepen, to the south of the St Helena investigation area.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports:	CAT Report 188, CAT Report 349, CAT Report 351, CAT Report 384, CAT Report 414, CAT Report 451, CAT Report 544, CAT Report 699
Keywords: Roman	Significance: *
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