

**Archaeological monitoring and recording at
5-6 St Nicholas Street and 60 Culver Street East,
Colchester, Essex, CO1 1DW**

August 2016



by Laura Pooley
figures by Chris Lister and Emma Holloway

fieldwork by Alec Wade

**commissioned by Adam Edwards (Purcell)
on behalf of Colchester Borough Council**

NGR: TL 99818 25176 (centre)
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Colchester Archaeological Trust
Roman Circus House,
Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex, CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785
email: archaeologists@catuk.org

CAT Report 1014
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1 Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at 5-6 St Nicholas Street and 60 Culver Street East (the former Jacks Store), Colchester in advance of the creation of a café space at ground floor level with seven one bed residential units. Two very small test-holes were excavated by the contractors under archaeological supervision. The trial-hole was excavated through 1.1m of modern and post-medieval layers. The borehole was excavated through 320mm of modern layers but none of the subsequent layers but could be accurately dated; natural was recorded at 3.2m below current ground level. Medieval pottery from the borehole would suggest that some of the layers are of a medieval date but we cannot be certain which one(s).

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring and recording at 5-6 St Nicholas Street and 60 Culver Street East, Colchester, Essex which was carried out on the 24th-25th August 2016. The work was commissioned by Adam Edwards of Percell, on behalf of Colchester Borough Council, in advance of a change of use with the creation of a café space at ground floor level, with seven one bed residential units at first and second floor level and to the rear of the ground floor. Work was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In order to design the foundations for the building the structural engineer requested a series of trial holes to be carried out to ascertain the soil bearing. In response to consultation with Colchester Borough Council Planning Services (CBCPS) and the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor Jess Tipper it was advised that the trial holes be monitored and recorded for archaeological remains. A brief was not issued by the CBCAA and CAT were advised that a written scheme of investigation (WSI) did not need to be prepared.

All fieldwork and reporting was done in accordance with English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006), and with *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England (EAA 14 and 24)*. This report mirrors standards and practices contained in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluation (ClfA 2014a)* and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (ClfA 2014b)*.

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the major published sources for Colchester archaeology (listed below), the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) (previously the Urban Archaeological Database (UAD)), and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER).

Numbers 5-6 St Nicholas Street comprises two timber-framed ranges connected by a single peg-tile roof. It is thought to date from the seventeenth century, though has been successively altered during its lifetime. The building is locally listed and is recognised for the contribution the external elevations make to the character of the Colchester Town Centre Conservation Area. To the rear, number 60 Culver Street East is a brick-built building. The development site is currently in A1 use as a charity shop, though it was the home of 'Jacks Famous Supplies Store' from 1946 to 2013 (Henderson and Mulhearn, 2016).

The development site is also located within the Roman walled town of *Camulodunum*. Evidence for archaeological remains from Culver Street East, between Queen Street and St Nicholas Street/Long Wyre Street, includes approximately six north-south foundations, an east-west one, and possibly part of a tessellated pavement (Hull 1958, 203-6), which probably belonged to buildings in Insula 30. Further evidence for these

was found on the south side of Culver Street East in a shaft dug in 1948 (*ibid*, 206) and in watching briefs under Sainsbury's and Caters (now Savers/ Poundland) (Crummy 1971), and also on the north side of Culver Street East at 61-2 High Street (CAR 6, 995-6). The discovery of a north-south drain at 65 High Street in 1976 (CAR 6, 820) may indicate that Insula 30 was subdivided by a north-south street. At least one large public building may have occupied Insula 30, although the evidence for this is very limited (Crummy 1971, 107). Gas replacement works in 2008 along Queen Street and Culver Street East revealed early Roman daub-block walls, burnt during the Boudican uprising of AD 60/1, and post-Boudican foundations and floors, street metalling, and a drain, as well as post-Roman pits and robber trenches (CAT Report 498).

Evidence from Culver Street East to the west of St Nicholas Street/Long Wyre Street included several Roman foundations and many fragments of marble (Hull 1958, 202-3). The north-south street between Insulas 29 and 30 was located on the St Nicholas' Church site in 1955 (Hull 1960, 315-16). The west end of Culver Street East lies immediately to the north of the extensive Lion Walk excavations of 1971-4 (CAR 3, 31-92).

The development site originally stood opposite St Nicholas' Church, a twelfth century church rebuilt in the 14th century and restored in the late 19th century to designs by Sir George Gilbert Scott. The original church contained Roman walls in its foundation.

A full archaeological background can be found in *Jacks, 5-6 St Nicholas Street and 60 Culver Street East Heritage Impact Assessment, Issue 2* (Henderson and Mulhearn 2016).

4 Results (Figs 2-3)

As the ground floor of the development site was still in public use only one trial-hole (out of four) and one windowless sampler borehole (out of five) were excavated. All groundworks were undertaken by the contractor under archaeological supervision. It is important to note that as both holes were very small and narrow it was extremely difficult to ascertain the differences in the layers.

Trial-hole

The trial-hole measured 0.33m by 0.33m by 1m deep. It was excavated through c 140mm of modern floor layers (L1: concrete, c 70mm thick; L2: plastic sheet/membrane, c 10-15mm thick; L3: old concrete and rubble, c 60mm thick) which sealed a layer of sandy-silt containing post-medieval brick/tile (L4, c 100mm thick). Beneath L4 was a thick layer of dark brownish-grey sandy-silt that became more clayey towards the bottom of the hole (L5, at least 750mm thick but not bottomed). It contained fragments of post-medieval brick/tile, peg-tile, mortar (none retained) and over 100 fragments of clay-pipe (sample only retained for analysis).

The trial-hole was excavated against a wall. The wall foundation was made up of regular brickwork to a depth of c 400mm below current ground level (bcgl), at which point the brickwork became more irregular with rubble patches to a depth of 1.1m bcgl. Was the wall foundation built on top of the foundation of an earlier building?

Windowless sampler borehole

The borehole measured 0.33m in diameter and 0.74m deep. It was excavated through modern concrete (L1, c 120mm thick) and old concrete and rubble (L3, c 150-160mm thick) onto a layer of powdery white mortar (L6, c 25mm thick). This sealed a thick layer of greyish-brown sandy-silty clay (L7, c 310mm thick) containing mortar flecks and butchered/cut animal bone (not retained). Beneath L7 was a layer of dark greyish-brown silty-clay containing *opus signinum* and building debris (L8, c 110mm thick) that sealed a dark sandy-silty clay (L9, c 1.08m thick) with what appeared to be fragments

of pottery, brick/tile and animal bone in section. Natural sands were encountered at a depth of 3.2m below current ground level.



Photograph 1 Trial-hole, looking NW



Photograph 2 Borehole, looking E

5 Finds

All of the finds were retrieved from the general spoil of the two holes.

Finds from the trial-hole

Five clay-pipe stems and bowls (62g), 18th-19th century, three with initials – WB, IA and II
Two fragments of post-medieval glass (36g), 1) green window glass, 2) dark olive green bottle glass
One rim sherd of glazed red earthenware (14g), 19th-20th century

Finds from the borehole

One body sherd of grey sandy ware with shell inclusions (8g), 10th-12th century
One body sherd of grey sandy ware (2g), c 13th century
Two sherds of red sandy ware (10g), 14th-15th century
One fragment of <i>opus signinum</i> (2g)

6 Discussion

Due to the size of the trial-hole and sample-hole it was very difficult to draw any firm conclusions. The trial-hole was excavated through 1.1m of modern and post-medieval layers revealing a possible earlier wall foundation beneath the current building. The borehole was excavated through 320mm of modern layers. Unfortunately, none of the layers recorded below this depth could be dated. Medieval pottery from the borehole would suggest that some of the lower layers (from L7, 320mm bcgl, onwards) are of Medieval date, but we cannot be certain which layer(s) the pottery came from.

7 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Adam Edwards of Percell and Colchester Borough Council for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister and carried out by A Wade. Figures were prepared by CL and E Holloway. The project was monitored for the CBCPS by Jess Tipper.

8 References

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

Brown, D	2007	<i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i>
CAR 3	1984	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 3: Excavations at Lion Walk, Balcerne 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	2014	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
CAT Report 498	2008	<i>An archaeological watching brief on trenches for gas mains in Queen Street and Culver Street East, Colchester, Essex: April-November 2008</i>
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological evaluation</i>
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives</i>
CIfA	2014c	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Crummy, P	1971	'Insula 30', <i>Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society 3, 3rd series, part 1</i> , 107-111

Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).
DCLG	2012	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>
English Heritage	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>
Henderson, A and Mulhearn, H	2016	<i>Jacks, 5-6 St Nicholas Street and 60 Culver Street East Heritage Impact Assessment, Issue 2</i> , Percell
Hull, M R	1958	<i>Roman Colchester</i> , RRCSAL, 20
Hull, M R	1960	'St Nicholas Church site, Colchester', <i>Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society 25 (1955)</i> , 301-328
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and archaeology revisited: A revised framework for the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)

9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCAA	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor
CBCPS	Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record (previously UAD)
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
feature (F)	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain: can contain 'contexts'
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry VIII
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
post-medieval	from Henry VIII to c AD 1800
residual	something out of its original context, eg a Roman coin in a modern pit
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
Section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database (now CHER)
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

10 Contents of archive

Finds: none retained

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1014)

CBCPS Evaluation Brief, CAT Written Scheme of Investigation

Original site record (Feature and layer sheets, Finds record, plans)

Site digital photos and log, Architectural plans, Attendance register, Risk assessment

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museum under accession code: COLEM 2016.93.

Distribution list

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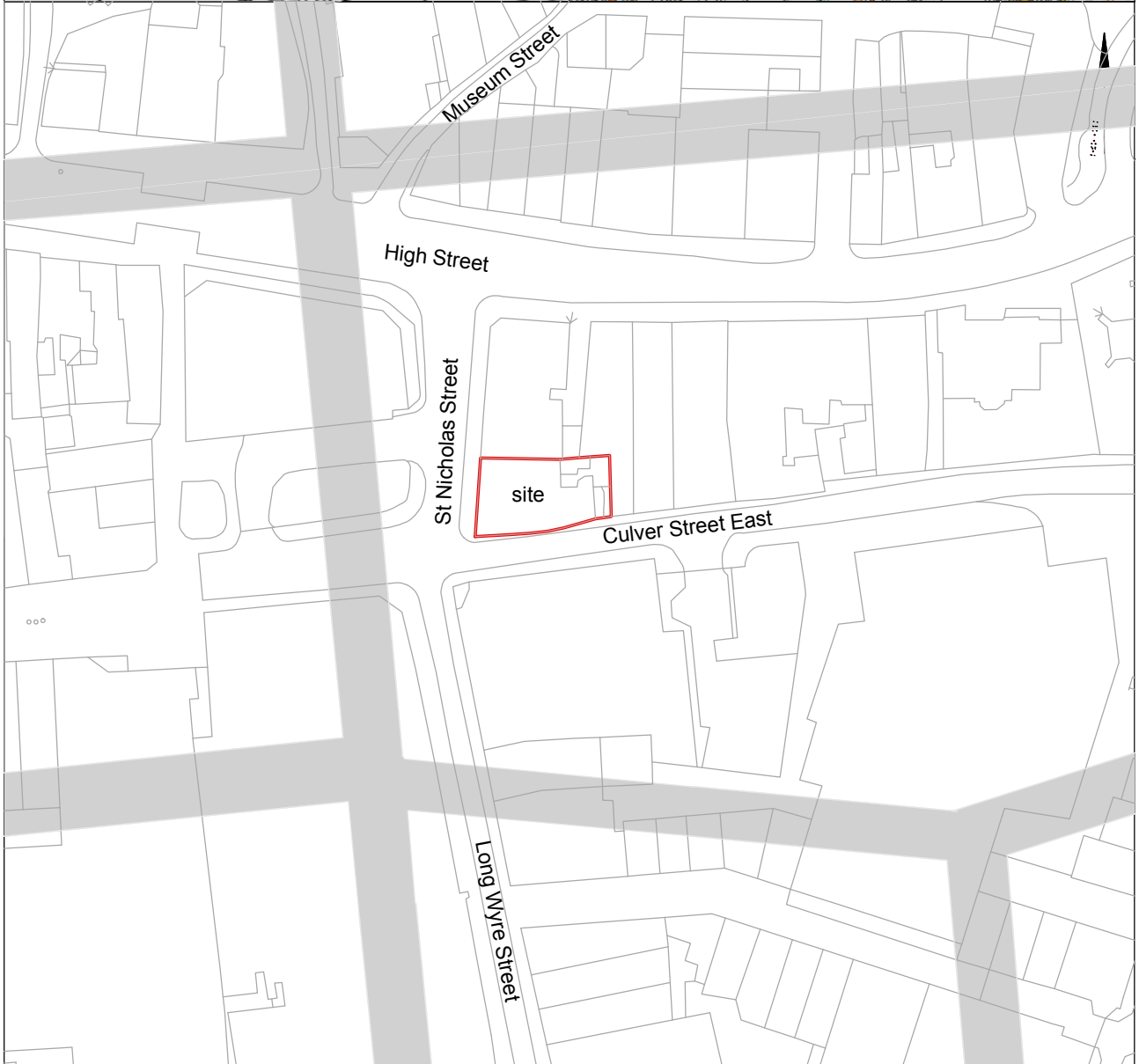
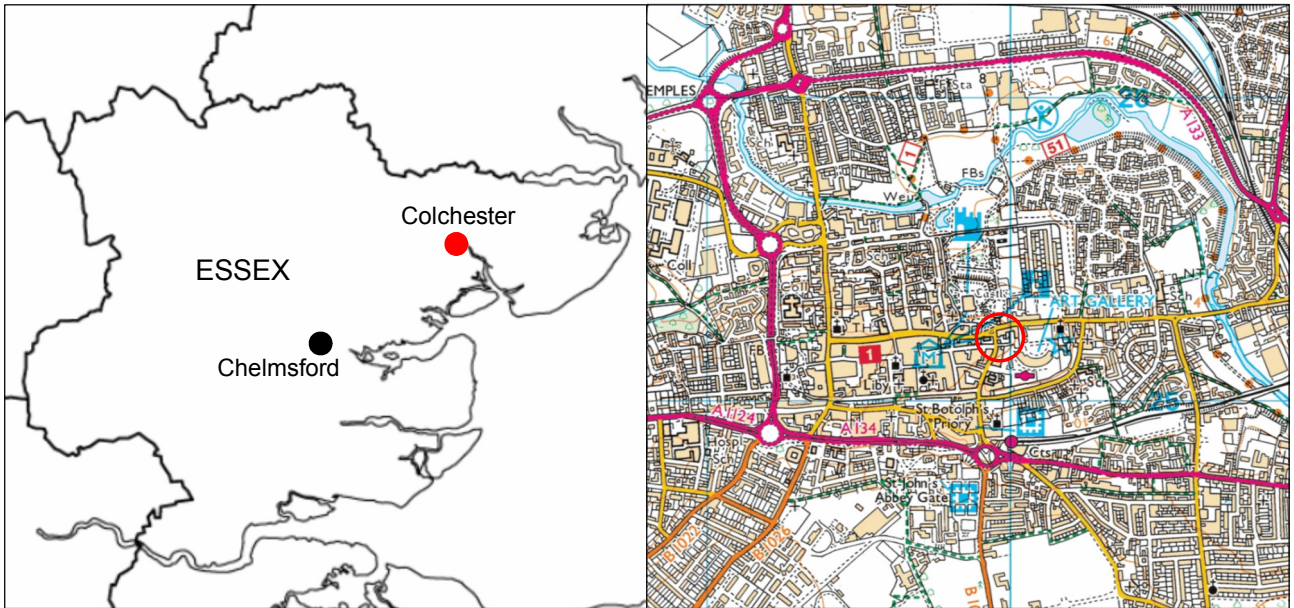
Roman Circus House
Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785

email: archaeologists@catuk.org

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Fig 1 Site location.



Roman street layout



Fig 2 Results

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Fig 3 Representative sections.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: 5-6 St Nicholas Street and 60 Culver Street East, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1DW	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 99818 25176 (centre)	Site code: CAT project ref.: 16/08o UAD ref: ECC3877 OASIS ref: colchest3-261961
Type of work: Test pit evaluation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 24th-25th August 2016	Size of area investigated: Two test holes – 1) 0.33m by 0.33, 2) 0.33m in diameter
Location of curating museum: Colchester museum accession code COLEM: 2016.93	Funding source: Colchester Borough Council
Further seasons anticipated? Not known	Related UAD/SMR number:
Final report: CAT Report 1014	
Periods represented: modern, post-medieval, Roman	
Summary of fieldwork results: Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at 5-6 St Nicholas Street and 60 Culver Street East (the former Jacks Store), Colchester in advance of the creation of a café space at ground floor level with seven one bed residential units. Two very small test-holes were excavated by the contractors under archaeological supervision. The trial-hole was excavated through 1.1m of modern and post-medieval layers. The borehole was excavated through 320mm of modern layers but none of the subsequent layers but could be accurately dated; natural was recorded at 3.2m below current ground level. Medieval pottery from the borehole would suggest that some of the layers are of a medieval date but we cannot be certain which one(s).	
Previous summaries/reports: –	
CBC monitor: Jess Tipper	
Keywords: –	Significance: –
Author of summary: Laura Pooley	Date of summary: September 2016

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OASIS ID: colchest3-261961

Project details

Project name	Archaeological monitoring and recording at 5-6 St Nicholas Street and 60 Culver Street East, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1DW
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at 5-6 St Nicholas Street and 60 Culver Street East (the former Jacks Store), Colchester in advance of the creation of a café space at ground floor level with seven one bed residential units. Two very small test-holes were excavated by the contractors under archaeological supervision. The trial-hole was excavated through 1.1m of modern and post-medieval layers. The borehole was excavated through 320mm of modern layers but none of the subsequent layers but could be accurately dated; natural was recorded at 3.2m below current ground level. Medieval pottery from the borehole would suggest that some of the layers are of a medieval date but we cannot be certain which one(s).
Project dates	Start: 24-08-2016 End: 25-08-2016
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	16/08o - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	161296 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	ECC3877 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM: 2016.93 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing
Monument type	N/A None
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	CLAY PIPE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	GLASS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER 5-6 St Nicholas Street
Postcode	CO1 1DW
Study area	1 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 99818 25176 51.888743158051 0.904043795079 51 53 19 N 000 54 14 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	none
Project design originator	none
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Alec Wade
Type of sponsor/funding body	Borough Council

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	COLEM: 2016.93
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	COLEM: 2016.93
Paper Media available	"Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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