

# Archaeological monitoring at 4 Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AT

May 2019



**by Dr Elliott Hicks**

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fieldwork by Nigel Rayner

**commissioned by Jake Young (LPS Group)  
on behalf of Mr and Mrs Unwin**

NGR: TL 9864 2450 (centre)

Planning reference: 180167

CAT project ref.: 19/02n

Colchester Museum accession code COLEM: 2019.17

CHER ref: ECC4310

OASIS reference: colchest3-343930



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**CAT Report 1426**

June 2019

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CAT WSI

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## 1 Summary

*Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 4 Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex, during the erection of side and rear extensions. Two ditches, which produced a small assemblage of Roman pottery and building materials, were uncovered during the groundworks. These features may be of modern origins, or alternatively, they might possibly represent the remains of a Roman trackway.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring at 4 Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex which was carried out between 7th to 10th May 2019. The work was commissioned by Jake Young of LPS Group on behalf of Mr and Mrs Unwin and took place during groundworks for single-storey side and rear extensions. This work was undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Colchester Borough Council Planning Services (CBCPS), the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor Jess Tipper advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this application, the applicant should be required to commission a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2018).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Continuous Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*, detailing the required archaeological work, written by Jess Tipper (CBCPS 2018), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with CBCPS (CAT 2019).

In addition to the brief and WSI, 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 watching brief* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014b).

## 3 Archaeological background (Fig 2)

The following archaeological background draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive, the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) accessed via the Colchester Heritage Explorer ([www.colchesterheritage.co.uk](http://www.colchesterheritage.co.uk)):

The development site is situated within the Late Iron Age *oppidum* of Camulodunum, to the southwest of the Roman walled town and just outside of an area of Roman cemeteries termed 'the western cemetery' by Hull (1958), but more generally known as the Lexden cemetery and the area of Colchester Royal Grammar School (CHER MCC7525-9 and MCC7647). The Lexden cemetery area encompasses a number of Iron Age and Roman burial grounds on both sides of Lexden Road (the main Roman road leading from the walled town towards London and Braughing) leading out of Balkerne Gate as far west as The Avenue (Hull 1958 and CAR 11). A number of Roman cremations, inhumations and tombstones have been discovered in the immediate vicinity (Hull 1958), a full discussion of which can be found in CAR 9.

Of particular note is a high-status rectangular walled cemetery which lay immediately north of and adjacent to the Roman road (Hall 1946) and in 2005 CAT excavated the remains of a Roman temple tomb at the Colchester Royal Grammar School (CHER MCC2791, CAT Report 345). Roman burials were discovered in 1819-20 along with the famous 'Colchester Sphinx' when the Essex County Hospital was constructed (CAR 9, 258). A number of burials have been recorded along Wellesley Road (Hull 1958, 203-5), with eighteen Roman inhumation burials excavated in 1971 on the west side of the

Maldon Road roundabout before the construction of Southway (CAR 9, 261). To the northeast, over 700 Roman inhumations were excavated during 1976-9 in advance of the construction of the Police station on Butt Road (CAR 9, 4-202, CHER MCC2799-MCC2801).

To the east of the site CAT has undertaken a series of watching briefs, evaluations and excavations over the last 18 years as part of the Colchester Garrison Urban Village development. These revealed hundreds of Roman burials to the northeast and east of the site (CAT Report 412 (Area J1 North CHER, MCC2765); CAT Report 1033 (Area H, CHER MCC10199-MCC10200)). Burial features range from the 1st-4th century AD and include inhumations, urned and unurned cremations, *busta* and pyre sites, and evidence of at least one *mausoleum*. A Roman trackway bounded the cemetery area to the south, with the Roman circus (CHER MCC5549, Scheduled monument 35614, NHLE no.1021426) c 725m to the east.

Roman cemeteries tend to cluster around the Roman roads radiating out of Colchester. One of these roads, linking the town to Gosbecks, runs along Cambridge Walk, parallel to Cambridge Road (c 70m northwest of the site) (MCC2529). A Roman cremation urn was found at the corner of Maldon Road and Constantine Road, in close proximity to the site (CHER MCC1505). Roman burials have also been uncovered in Honywood Road (MCC2514), Beaconsfield Avenue (CHER MCC1901, MCC2436 and MCC2501), and on Errington Road (CHER MCC1451, MCC7686).

To the southeast of the site (c 430m), a substantial Roman temple complex (Temple 6) was partly excavated in 1947 (MCC1959/MCC8407) in the playing fields of the Colchester Royal Grammar School (Hull 1958). Two votive plaques and a figurine of a stag found during excavations show that the temple was erected to Silvanus, god of war and hunting (Crummy 1997, 107).

#### **4 Aim**

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which were exposed by the groundworks.

#### **5 Results** (Figs 3-4)

All groundworks were carried out by the contractors under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist.

Foundation trenching totalling 18m in length and 0.5m wide was excavated to a depth of 1-1.2m. The area bounded by the foundation trenching, measuring 19.5m<sup>2</sup>, was then reduced by 0.2m below current ground level.

Excavations occurred through two layers. Modern topsoil (L1, c 0.5m thick, soft, moist dark grey/brown sandy-loam with CBM flecks and frequent stones) sealed natural sands (L2, soft, moist light/medium yellow/orange/brown sand with frequent stones).

Ditch F1, which was of 2nd-century date, was observed in section at the western end NE-SW branch of the foundation trenching. It lay on a NW-SE alignment. The feature extended beyond the limit of excavation, and so its full dimensions could not be determined, but its exposed extent was 1.25m wide and 0.66m deep.

Roman ditch F2 was observed in section in the two NE-SW aligned sections of the eastern end of the foundation trenching. It too was aligned NW-SE and was 1.58m wide and 0.58-0.62m deep.



**Photograph 1** F1 sx – looking southeast

## 6 Finds

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The watching brief uncovered 34 sherds of Roman pottery and ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) with a weight of 7,385g (Table 1). The majority of this material came from ditch F2 (3, 5) with rare sherds from ditch F1 (1) (Table 2). The Roman pottery was classified according to the fabric groups (Table 3) outlined in *CAR 10* (1999) and the vessel types via the Colchester (*Camulodunum*), henceforth Cam, type series (Hawkes and Hull 1947; Hull 1958; *CAR 10*, 468-87).

Ceramic material	No.	Weight (g)	MSW/g	No. Rim	Rim EVE	Rim EVREP
Roman	6	339	57	1	0.22	1
Ceramic Building Material (CBM)	28	7,046	252	-	-	-
<b>All</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>7,385</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>1</b>

**Table 1** Details on the main types of ceramics and pottery

Context	Context Type	No.	Weight (g)	MSW/g
F1	Ditch	2	218	109
F2	Ditch	31	7,145	230
L1	Topsoil	1	22	22
<b>Total</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>7,385</b>	<b>217</b>

**Table 2** Number and weight of pottery and CBM and baked-clay from features and other contexts

### Roman pottery

There were only six sherds with a weight of 339 g from two wares (Table 3). Four sherds from large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares (Fabric HZ) were recovered from ditches F1 (1) and F2 (3). This ware is common in contexts dating from the mid 1st until the early 2nd century AD although later reduced production continued into the 3rd and possibly the 4th century ( *CAR 10* 1999, 447). There were two sherds of coarse locally-produced grey ware pottery (Fabric GX): a

base from ditch F1 and from topsoil L1 (1) a rim sherd from the Cam 108. The Cam 108 dates from the Claudian period until AD 130/140 although this form remains common until c 200 AD (Bidwell and Croom 1999, 472).

Fabric code	Fabric description	Fabric date range guide
GX	Other coarse, principally locally-produced grey wares	Roman
HZ	Large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares	Mid 1st-2nd/3rd century AD

**Table 3** Roman pottery fabrics recorded

### Ceramic building material (CBM)

There was a small collection of Roman tegula and imbrex with 28 sherds with a weight of just over 7 kg (Table 4). There was no post-Roman CBM. All of the CBM came from F2 (3, 5). One notable piece was a large fragment of roof tile with a lower cut-away (LCA) of type C5 dating to AD 160-260 (Warry 2006, 63), as well as a signature of Warry's type S (Warry 2006, 149) and two small animal footprints, possibly from a cat. A second piece of tile from F2 (5) is also marked with a cat (?) footprint.

CBM code	CBM type	No.	Weight (g)	MSW
RT	Roman tegula	11	3,828	348
RI	Roman imbrex	17	3,218	189
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>7,046</b>	<b>252</b>

**Table 4** Roman CBM by type

### Summary

Table 5 provides a brief dating summary for the features and layers which produced datable ceramic finds. These features and the layer can be approximately dated to the 2nd century AD.

Feature	Roman Pottery	CBM	Overall date approx.
F1	HZ	LCA C5	AD 160-260
F2	GX HZ	-	Roman
L1	GX (Cam 108)	-	Modern with residual Claudian finds

**Table 5** Approximate dates for the individual features and layers

## 7 Conclusion

In spite of being located in a known area of Roman cemeteries, no burials were encountered. Rather, groundworks at this site exposed two large ditches, one yielding material dating to the 2nd century, the other yielding material dating to the Roman period more broadly. These ditches run parallel to the boundaries of the property, and at right-angles to Ireton Road, suggesting that they are modern. No post-Roman finds were retrieved from the features, however, and the ditches also lie at right-angles to the Colchester-Gosbecks Roman road (Fig 2). Another possibility, therefore, is that they form the remains of a Roman trackway.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Jake Young of LPS Group and Mr and Mrs Unwin for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister and carried out by N Rayner. Figures were prepared by C Lister, B Holloway and S Carter. The project was monitored for CBCPS by Jess Tipper.

## 9 References

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

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Brown, D                 | 2011 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. | <i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation</i>   |
| CAR 9                    | 1993                     | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 9: Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-85</i> , by N Crummy, P Crummy and C Crossan   |
| CAR 10                   | 1999                     | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86</i> , by R Symonds and S Wade  |
| CAR 11                   | 1995                     | <i>Colchester Archaeological Report 11: Camunlodunum 2</i> , by CFC Hawkes and P Crummy  |
| CAT                      | 2018                     | <i>Health &amp; Safety Policy</i>  |
| CAT Report 345           | 2005                     | <i>A Roman temple-tomb at Colchester Royal Grammar School, Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex: August-September 2005</i> , by H Brooks   |
| CAT Report 412           | 2011                     | <i>Report on the archaeological investigations carried out on Areas C1, C2, E, J1, O, Q and S1 of the Alienated Land, Colchester Garrison, including the Time Team trenches and the Alienated Land watching brief: May 2004-January 2005</i> |
| CAT Report 1033          | 2011                     | <i>Roman burials: Archaeological excavation (Stage 2) on Colchester Garrison 'Alienated Land' Area H, off Butt Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 2DL September 2012 – February 2013</i> , by L Pooley   |
| CBCAA                    | 2019                     | <i>Brief for continuous archaeological monitoring and recording at 4 Ireton Road, Colchester, CO3 3AT</i> , by J Tipper  |
| ClfA                     | 2014a                    | <i>Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i>  |
| ClfA                     | 2014b                    | <i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>  |
| Crummy, P                | 1997                     | <i>City of Victory. The Story of Colchester – Britain's first Roman town</i>   |
| Gurney, D                | 2003                     | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14).  |
| Hall, AF                 | 1946                     | 'A Roman walled cemetery at Colchester', <i>Archaeological Journal</i> , <b>CI</b>   |
| Hawkes, CFC and Hull, MR | 1947                     | <i>Camulodunum: First Report on the Excavation at Colchester 1930-1939</i> , RRCSAL, <b>14</b>   |
| Historic England         | 2006                     | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>  |
| Historic England (HE)    | 2018                     | <i>The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project</i> , by S Mays, M Brickley and J Sidell   |
| Hull, MR                 | 1958                     | <i>Roman Colchester</i> , RRCSAL, <b>20</b>  |
| 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)  |
| MHCLG                    | 2018                     | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.   |
| Warry, P                 | 2006                     | <i>Tegulae: Manufacture, typology and use in Roman Britain</i>   |

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBCAA	Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor
CBCPS	Colchester Borough Council Planning Services
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record
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'
Iron Age	period from 700 BC to Roman invasion of AD 43
layer (L)	distinct or distinguishable deposit (layer) of material

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, <a href="http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main">http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main</a>
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
wsj	written scheme of investigation

## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** none retained

### **Paper record**

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1426)

CBC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Original site record (feature and layer sheets, finds record, sections)

Site digital photos and log

### **Digital record**

The report (CAT Report 1426)

CBC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Site digital photographs, thumbnails and log

Graphic files

Survey data

## 12 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: 2019.17.



**Distribution list**

Jake Young, LPS Group

Mr and Mrs Unwin

Jess Tipper, Colchester Borough Council Planning Services

Essex Historic Environment Record



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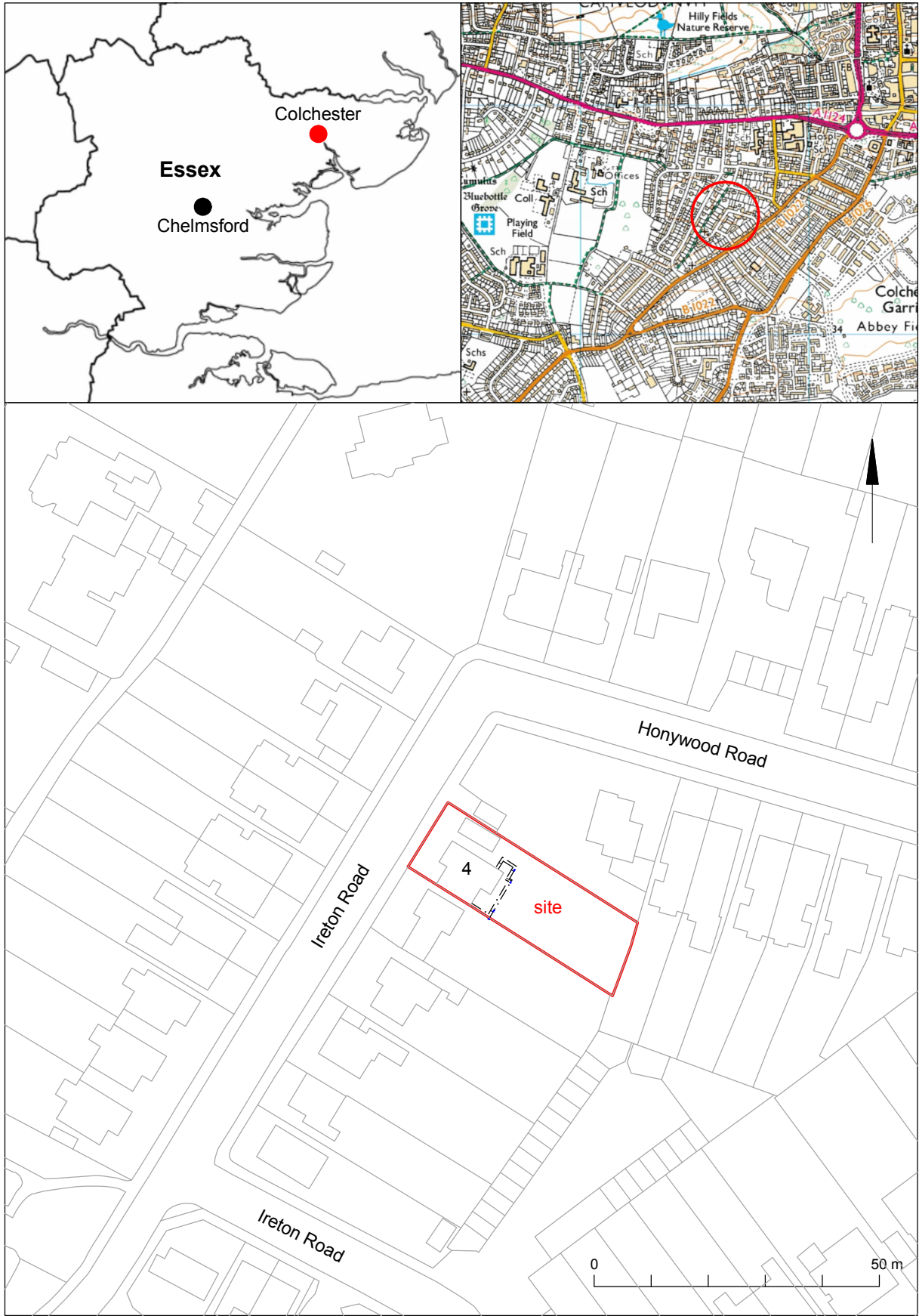
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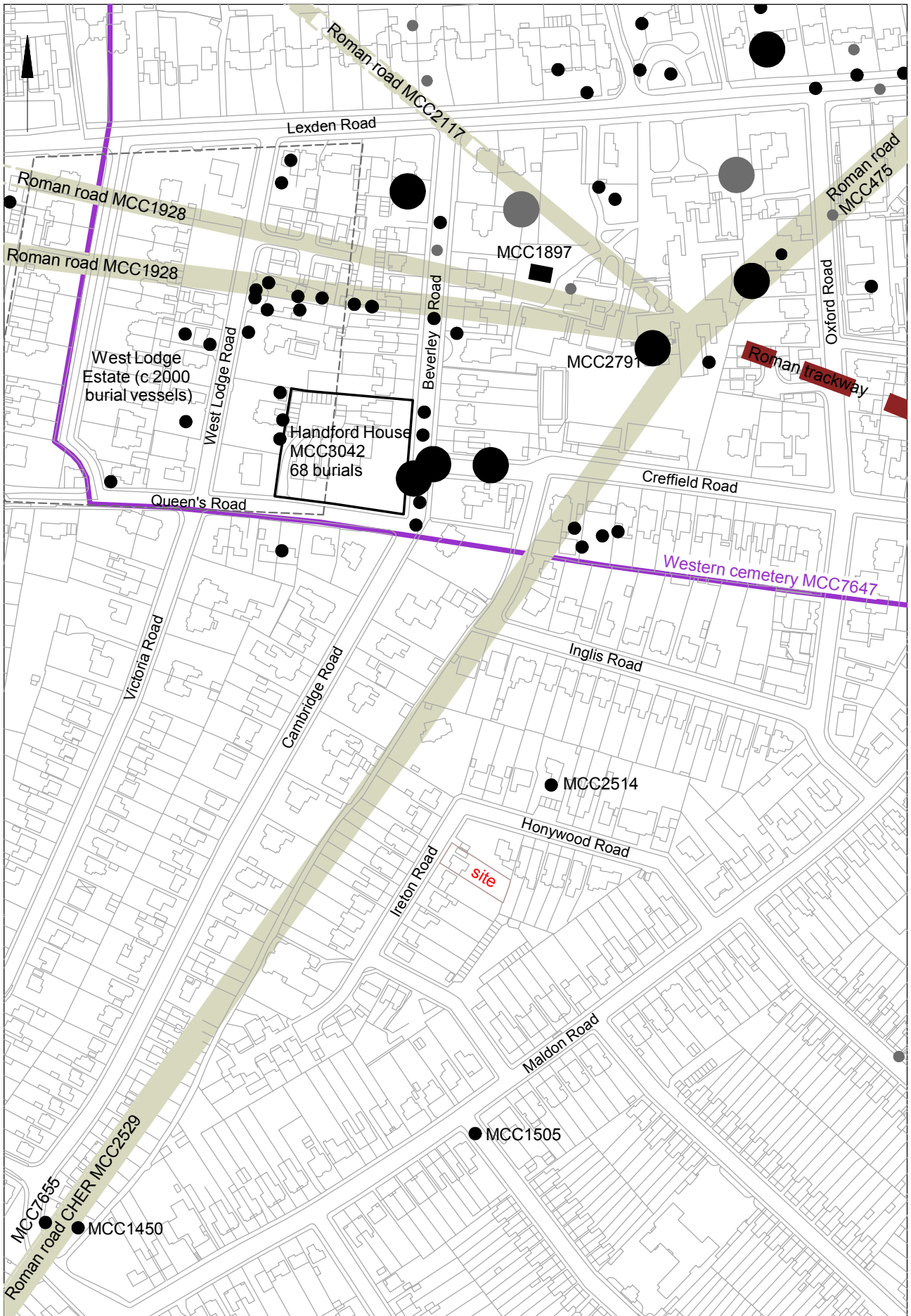
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Date: 18.06.2019



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Fig 1 Site location.



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Fig 2 Development site shown in relation to nearby Roman roads and burials



● Roman burial ● many Roman burials (approximate locations in grey)



Fig 3 Monitoring results.

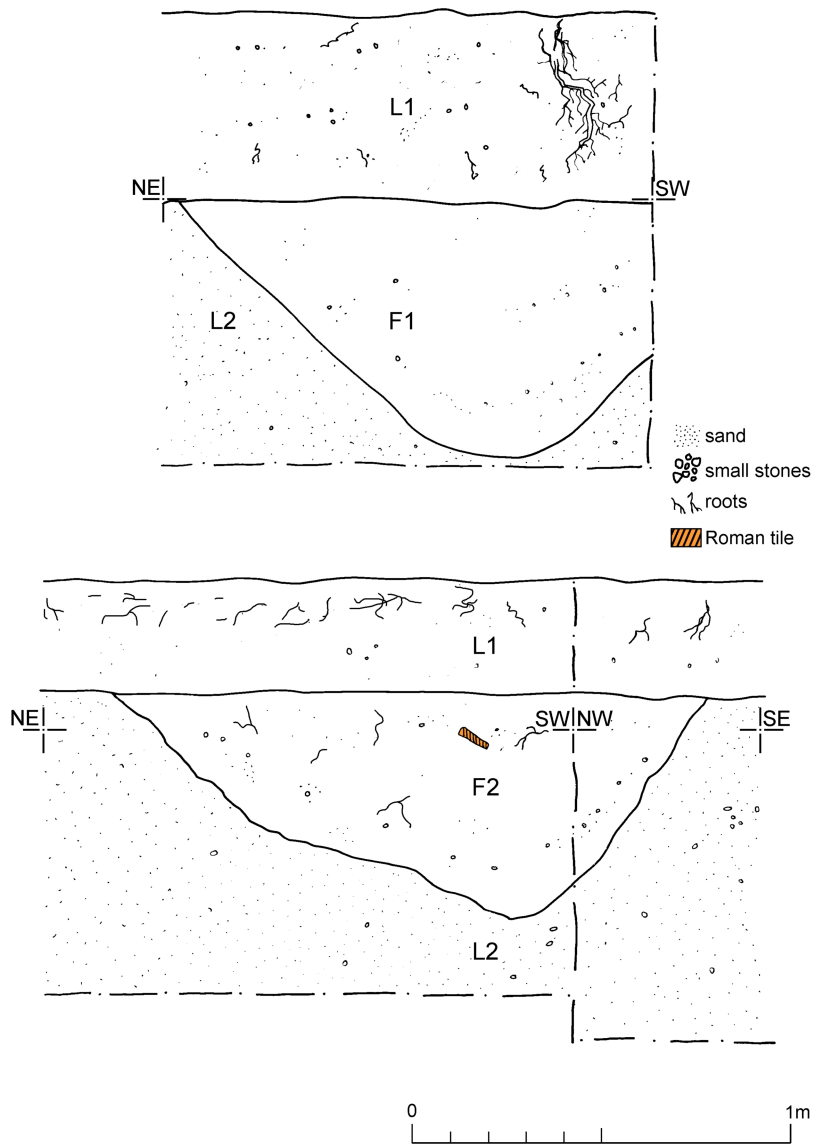


Fig 4 Feature and representative sections.

## Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

### Summary sheet

<b>Address:</b> 4 Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AT	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b> TL 9864 2450 (centre)	<b>Site code:</b> CAT project ref.: 19/02n CHER ref: ECC4310 OASIS ref: colchest3-343930
<b>Type of work:</b> Monitoring	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> 7th to 10th May 2019	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 0.05h
<b>Location of curating museum:</b> Colchester museum accession code COLEM: 2019.17	<b>Funding source:</b> Owner
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> no	<b>Related CHER/SMR number:</b> CHER MCC1451, MCC1505, MCC1901, MCC1959, MCC2436, MCC2501, MCC2514, MCC2529, MCC2765, MCC2791, MCC2799, MCC2800, MCC2801, MCC5549, MCC7525, MCC7526, MCC7527, MCC7528, MCC7529, MCC7647, MCC7686, MCC8407, MCC10199, MCC10200
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 1426	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Roman	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> <i>Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 4 Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex, during the erection of side and rear extensions. Two ditches, which produced a small assemblage of Roman pottery and building materials, were uncovered during the groundworks. These features may be of modern origins, or alternatively, they might possibly represent the remains of a Roman trackway.</i>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> none	
<b>CBC monitor:</b> Jess Tipper	
<b>Keywords:</b> –	<b>Significance:</b> *
<b>Author of summary:</b> Dr Elliott Hicks	<b>Date of summary:</b> June 2019

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**OASIS ID: colchest3-343930**

### Project details

Project name	Continuous archaeological monitoring and recording at 4 Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AT
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 4 Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex, during the erection of side and rear extensions. Two ditches, which produced a small assemblage of Roman pottery and building materials, were uncovered during the groundworks. These features may be of modern origins, or alternatively, they might possibly represent the remains of a Roman trackway.
Project dates	Start: 07-05-2019 End: 10-05-2019
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	180167 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	2019/02n - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM: 2019.17 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	ECC4310 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	DITCH Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	CBM Roman
Significant Finds	BAKED CLAY Uncertain
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

### Project location

Country England

Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER 4 Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex
Postcode	CO3 3AT
Study area	0.05 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 9864 2450 51.883095404657 0.886557682223 51 52 59 N 000 53 11 E Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	CBC Archaeological Officer
Project design originator	Emma Holloway
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Nigel Rayner
Type of sponsor/funding body	Owner
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr & Mrs Urwin

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	COLEM: 2019.17
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	COLEM: 2019.17
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Photograph","Report"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological monitoring at 4 Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AT: May 2019
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Hicks, E.
Other bibliographic details	CAT Report 1426
Date	2019
Issuer or publisher	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Place of issue or publication	Colchester



Description	A4 loose-leaf ring-bound
URL	<a href="http://cat.essex.ac.uk">http://cat.essex.ac.uk</a>
Entered by	Dr Elliott Hicks (eh2@catuk.org)
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