

**An archaeological watching brief at
the new primary care centre on the site of
the south lodge of the former Turner Village
hospital, Turner Road, Colchester, Essex
July-October 2004**

**report prepared by
Kate Orr**

**on behalf of
Gleeson Construction Services Ltd**

CAT project ref.: 04/7c
Colchester Museums accession code: 2004.351
NGR: TL 99707 27081



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Fig 2 Plan of site showing areas monitored,
with dates of monitoring visits.

1 Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during works to demolish the south lodge of the former Turner Village hospital and construct a new primary care centre. No features or finds of archaeological significance were observed.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1** This is the archive report on an archaeological watching brief carried out during groundworks for a new primary care centre, Turner Road, Colchester, Essex by the the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT). Planning permission was given with a condition for an archaeological watching brief (planning application no O/COL/04/0080). The watching brief was carried out during soil-stripping, the digging out for piling mats, and the excavation of one service-trench.
- 2.2** The 2.08 hectare development site was formerly occupied by the south lodge of Turner Village, a redundant psychiatric hospital. The empty premises were demolished before the construction of a three-storey primary health care building with car-parking. The site is situated 2km north of Colchester town centre on the west side of Turner Road. It is centred at National Grid Reference TL 99707 27081. The site occupies a slight south-facing slope, where the land starts to fold into a small valley (CAT Report 2).
- 2.3** The work was carried out by CAT between the 16th July and the 6th October 2004.
- 2.4** All fieldwork was done in accordance with a specification agreed with the Archaeology Officer of Colchester Borough Council. This report mirrors standards and practices contained in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines for the standards and practice of archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1999) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996, updated 2002), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1** The Essex Heritage Conservation Record (EHCR) records two Roman burials which are part of a Roman cemetery discovered by CAT during the Asda development on Turner Rise in 1996-7 (Shimmin forthcoming). During this investigation, a Roman road which headed north towards Colchester General Hospital was also discovered (EHCR no 11799).
- 3.2** During a field evaluation on the route of the proposed Northern Approach Road in 1997, two main areas of archaeological significance were recorded (CAT Report 2). Late Iron Age and early Roman field-ditch features indicating the site of a farmstead were observed immediately west of Colchester General Hospital. They were also found to the south, where they extended from the Turner Village hospital to Turner Road. Subsequently, desktop assessments were prepared in May 2000 (CAT Reports 78 and 79), placing the earlier finds within a broader archaeological context.
- 3.3** Evaluation by trial-trenching was carried out in 2001 on land to the west of Colchester General Hospital. Widespread linear features were revealed directly below the ploughsoil. These features mainly consisted of pits and gullies contemporary with those found on the route of the Northern Approach Road (CAT Report 165).
- 3.4** A watching brief was carried out within the area to the west of Colchester General Hospital in 2002. Ephemeral and shallow pits and ditches were recorded which were similar to those observed during the evaluation (CAT Report 165). Three out of four of these features contained Roman tile and/or Late Iron Age-early Roman pottery. The features were extremely shallow and either they are the bottom of pits and ditches which have been truncated or they represent areas of burning. Their presence indicates Late Iron Age and Roman occupation on the site or nearby (CAT Report 186).

4 Aim

The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any archaeological remains that were exposed during the construction of the new primary care centre and to assess the quality and extent of any remains that were encountered.

5 Methods

- 5.1 The topsoil-stripping, the digging out of the piling mats and excavation of the service-trench were carried out using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothed bucket. The new building is to be a piled structure.
- 5.2 Four monitoring visits were made by a CAT archaeologist. The sides of the stripped areas and trenches were checked for features and soil types were noted.
- 5.3 Spoil heaps were checked for artefacts.
- 5.4 Sketch plans were made of features.

6 Results (Fig 2)

6.1 Car-parking area

A walkover was carried out on the site on the 16th July, and visits were made on the 10th and 13th September after topsoil had been stripped off the southern area. The area had been tracked over by plant, making it very difficult to see anything.

6.2 Piling mats

The footprint of the new building was dug out to 1.6m depth in order to create a flat base for the piling rig. On the 13th September, the southern part of the new building footprint was viewed. 300mm of topsoil was seen to overlie 350mm of stony subsoil. At 650mm below ground-level, natural sand and gravel was encountered, graduating into orange and grey sand further down.

On the 6th October, a visit was made after the remainder of the footprint of the new building had been dug out. There was little topsoil and subsoil. Modern rubble from previous hospital buildings overlying natural sand, with gravel in places, was observed.

6.3 The service-trench

The excavation of a service-trench aligned east to west through the new car-parking area was monitored on the 6th October. This trench was dug to a depth of 1.1m. Clay material only, possibly imported, was observed.

7 Discussion

No features or finds of archaeological significance were observed during the watching brief. In the northern part of the site this may be due to disturbance caused by previous building foundations. In the car-park area, possible features may have been obscured by subsoil or by the tracks of plant moving over the site.

CAT Report 79 states that there had been modern dumping of soil to give an artificially high ground-level on the western boundary of the Turner Village hospital site, where the Northern Approach Road has now been constructed. This may also have been the case in the southern part of the watching brief area.

8 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited with Colchester Museums under accession code 2004.351.

9 Acknowledgements

CAT is grateful to Gleeson Construction Services Ltd for funding the work and allowing access to the site. The fieldwork was carried out by Kate Orr.

10 References

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- CAT Report 78 A desk-based assessment of the archaeological remains on NHS estates: land west of the General Hospital, Colchester, Essex, unpublished CAT archive report, by Howard Brooks and Kate Orr, 2000
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- CAT Report 186 Report on an archaeological watching brief on the line of the Northern Approaches Road phase 2a and on land to the west of the Colchester General Hospital, Colchester, Essex, unpublished CAT archive report, by Kate Orr, 2002
- Shimmin, D forthcoming Excavations at Turner Rise, Colchester, Essex in the *Journal of the Colchester Archaeological Trust*, **3**

11 Glossary

context	specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
Late Iron Age	c 50 BC to the Roman invasion c AD 43
NGR	National Grid Reference
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
Roman	the period from AD 43 to AD 410 approximately

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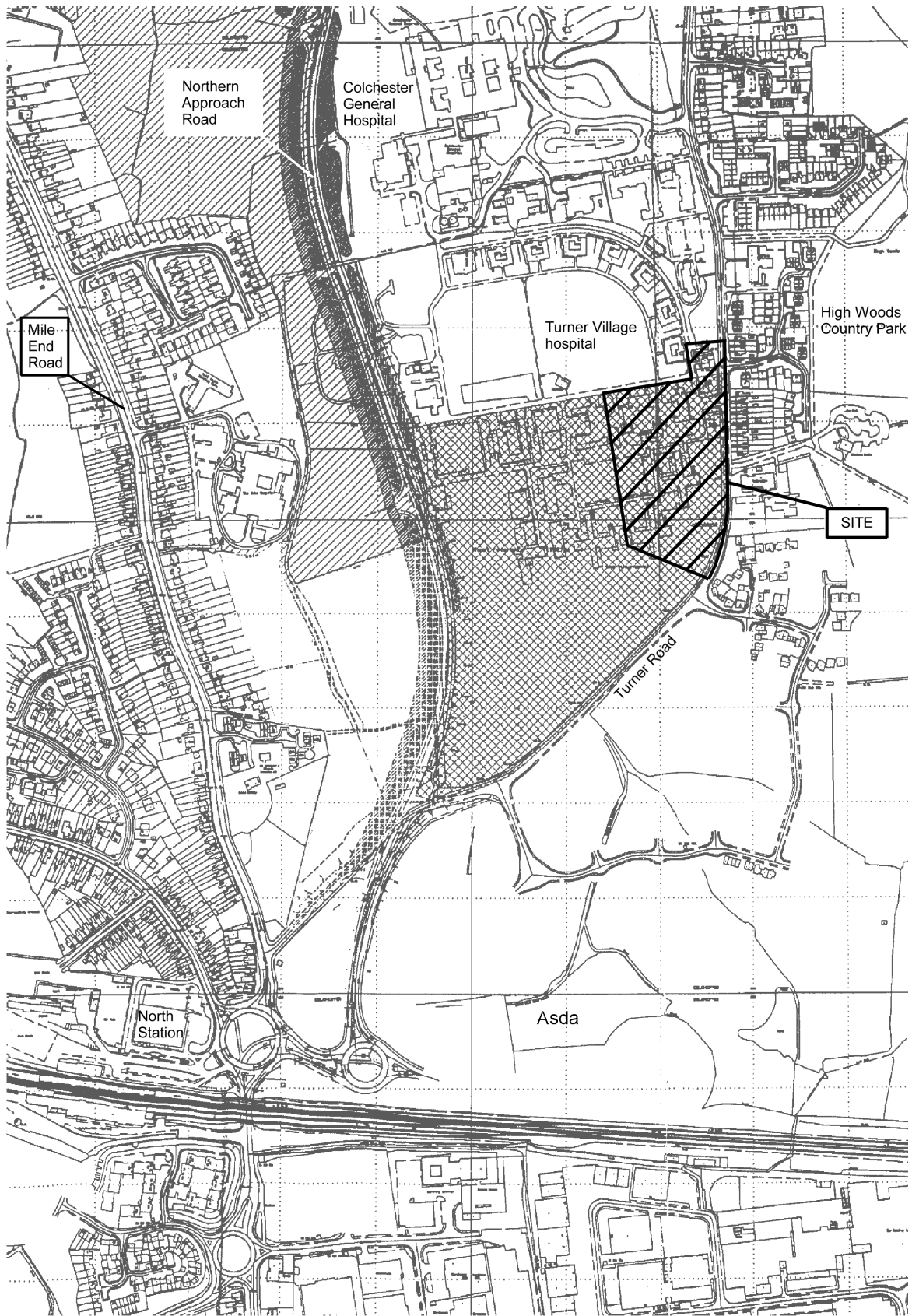
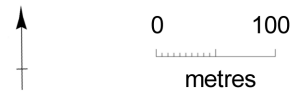


Fig 1 Site location.

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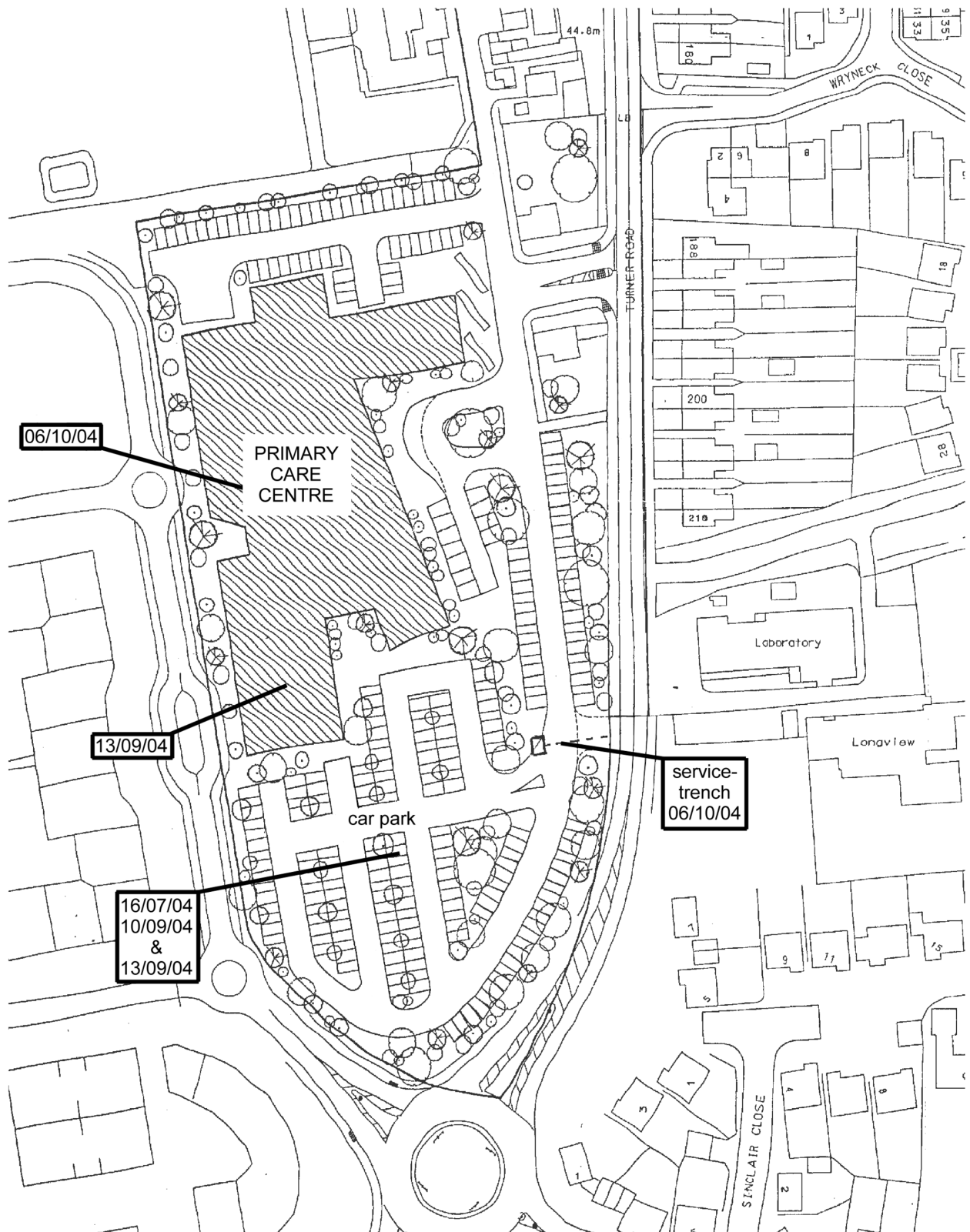


Fig 2 Plan of site showing areas monitored, with dates of monitoring visits.

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Essex Heritage Conservation Record/ *Essex Archaeology and History*

Summary sheet

Site address: the new primary care centre on the site of the south lodge of the former Turner Village hospital, Turner Road, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 99707 27081	Site code: Museum accession code 2004.351
Type of work: Watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: September-October 2004	Size of area investigated: 2.08 ha
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: Gleeson Construction Services Ltd
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHCR nos: 11799
Final report: CAT Report 294 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>An archaeological watching brief was carried out during works to demolish the south lodge of the former Turner Village hospital and construct a new primary care centre. No features or finds of archaeological significance were observed.</i>	
Previous summaries/reports: none	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: December 2004