

# Archaeological monitoring and recording at Crouch Street, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HH

October 2017



**by Dr Elliott Hicks**  
with contributions by Stephen Benfield

figures by Emma Holloway  
fieldwork by Ben Holloway

**on behalf of Essex County Council Place Services**

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**Colchester Archaeological Trust**  
Roman Circus House,  
Roman Circus Walk,  
Colchester,  
Essex, CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785  
email: [lp@catuk.org](mailto:lp@catuk.org)

**CAT Report 1189**  
November 2017

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## 1 Summary

*Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at Crouch Street, Colchester during the installation of a drainage intercept and the reduction of an area to accommodate nine tree planting pits. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.*

## 2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring and recording at Crouch Street, Colchester, Essex which was carried out on the 16th-20th October 2017. The work was commissioned by Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS) in advance of the installation of a drainage intercept and the reduction of an area to accommodate nine tree planting pits, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with ECCPS, Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor Richard Havis advised that in order to establish the archaeological implications of this work, a scheme of archaeological investigation in accordance with paragraphs 128, 129 and 132 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012) should be undertaken.

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* (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), and also on the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER).

The development site is located immediately to the southwest of Colchester town centre within the Late Iron Age *oppidum* of Camulodunum, to the southwest of the Roman walled town and within an area of Roman cemeteries termed 'the western cemetery' by Hull (1958), but more generally known as the Lexden cemetery (EHER 11713, 11714). 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 Balcerne Gate as far west as The Avenue (Hull 1958 and *CAR 11*), including a high-status rectangular walled cemetery immediately north of and adjacent to the Roman road (Hall 1945).

To the south-west, several Roman burials were discovered in 1819-20 when the Essex County Hospital was constructed (*CAR 9*, 258) along with the famous 'Colchester Sphinx', and many others have been found since. Over 700 Roman inhumations were excavated in the 1970s and 1980s in advance of the construction of the Police station on Butt Road (*CAR 9*, 4-202). Eighteen Roman inhumation burials were excavated in 1971 on the west side of the Maldon Road roundabout before the construction of Southway (*CAR 9*, 261). In 2005 CAT excavated the remains of a Roman temple-tomb at the Colchester Royal Grammar School (CAT Report 345) 300m to the WSW.

The remains of Roman buildings and burials have been recorded in the immediate vicinity of the site, including the following:

At least eighteen inhumations of 4th-century and possibly late 3rd-century date and part of a Flavian-Trajanic building were excavated in 1971, 100 m to ESE of the site, in advance of the construction of Southway (CAR 9, 236-44).

Parts of another Roman house, including a hypocaust, were uncovered in 1925 and 1973 under Crouch Street, 150 m ENE of the site (Hull 1958, 243; CAR 6, 340-41). Two large ?defensive ditches were found sealed beneath the building in 1973 (*ibid*).

Several Roman burials were excavated in 1988 at the southern end of 42 Crouch Street (CAR 9, 245-56).

Some possible Roman inhumations were noted in 1981 in stanchion holes during the construction of an office block at 32 Crouch Street, 100 m ENE of the present site (CAR 6, 975-6).

Part of a shallow, tightly-packed medieval cemetery was also discovered close to the street frontage at 42 Crouch Street during a watching brief in 1977 (CAR 6, 854) and a small excavation in 1988 in advance of the construction of an office block (CAR 9, 245-56). Also uncovered in 1988 were medieval foundations, probably from a large east-west friary building (*ibid*). In 2007, the eastern half of this building, the medieval church of Crouched Friars, and an associated cemetery, as well as the possible remnants of a Roman road, a Roman building, and a Roman inhumation burial were uncovered during excavations at 38-40 Crouch Street (see CAT Report 434).

#### 4 Aims

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken to identify and record any surviving archaeological deposits that may exist on site.

#### 5 Results

Monitoring of this site began in 16th October 2017, after both the installation of the drainage intercept and excavation of three of the tree planting pits had already been undertaken.



**Photograph 1** Planting reduction – looking north-west

Over the period 17th-20th October, a CAT archaeologist attended the reduction of an area to accommodate a further six tree planting pits. The area measured 148.36m<sup>2</sup> and

was excavated to a depth of c 1m. The excavation occurred through two layers. L1 (c 0.3-0.4m thick, mix of sand, hoggin and type 1) sealed L2 (firm, moist, dark brown/black silt with charcoal fleck inclusions).

An array of Roman pottery, tile, bone and quernstone was recovered from a spot on the eastern side of the excavation area (see fig 2). The finds might be residual material in L2, but the context suggests that they might derive from the upper fill of a pit, the edges of which could not be defined.

## 6 Finds

by Stephen Benfield

### Introduction

A quantity of finds, primarily of Roman date, was recovered from the soil layer L2. These were concentrated in one small area, suggesting an unrecognised feature or discreet dump of material. The finds consist of Roman pottery and ceramic building material (CBM), animal bone, part of a quernstone and a metal rod. The Roman pottery fabrics refer to the Colchester Roman fabric series (*CAR 10*) and Roman pottery vessel forms refer to the *Camulodunum* (Cam) Roman pottery type series (Hawkes & Hull 1947, Hull 1958). Samian vessel forms follow Webster (1996). The pottery fabrics are listed together with sherd count and weight in Table 1. All of the finds are listed and described in Table 2. The animal bone was identified by Adam Wightman.

Fabric code	Fabric description	sherds	Wt/g
AJ	Amphora Dressel 20	2	242
BACG	Central Gaulish plain samian	2	34
CB	Colchester colour-coated roughcast ware	1	2
CZ	Colchester colour-coated ware	5	28
DJ	Coarse oxidised wares (general)	1	72
GB	BB2: Black-burnished ware, category 2	6	138
GX	Other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares	32	682
MQ	White-slipped fine wares & parchment wares	1	8
TZ	Colchester mortaria	4	764
	<i>Total</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>1970</i>

**Table 1** Pottery fabrics by sherd count and weight

Ctxt, ctxt type and find no.	Type/ description	Finds Spot date
L002, soil layer, 1	<p><b>Pottery: Roman</b> (total: 54 sherds, 1970 g) Fabric AJ (2 sherds, 242 g) from two pots; Fabric BACG (2 sherds, 34 g) Dr 31, Dr 33; Fabric CB (1 sherd, 2 g); Fabric CZ (5 sherds, 28 g) sherds from beakers including indented beaker; Fabric DJ (1 sherd, 72 g); Fabric GB (6 sherds, 138 g), Cam 37A, Cam 37B, Cam 40B; Fabric GX (32 sherds, 682 g) Cam 243-244/246, Cam 268, Cam 37, Cam 306, also a lid seated jar (see <i>CAR 10</i> fig 6.80 nos 730 &amp; 733, misc lid seated jars); Fabric MQ (1 sherd, 8 g) white slipped sandy red ware sherd; Fabric TZ (4 sherds, 764 g) inc large rim section from a mortarium with curving rim wall and grooved top (see <i>CAR 7</i> fig 4.14 no 271 and fig 4.15 no 267).</p> <p><b>CBM Roman</b> (14 pieces, 2398 g) <i>tegula</i> (5 pieces) includes cream/buff tile with part of a lower cut-away (bases: three 20 mm thick inc the cream/buff tile, one 18 mm thick, one 15 mm thick), <i>imbrex</i> (4 pieces), brick (1 piece), brick/tile (4 pieces) includes one yellow-buff piece.</p> <p><b>Post-Roman:</b> (2 pieces, 404 g) one piece probably from a peg-tile (11-12 mm thick) (dated medieval or post-</p>	Two pieces <b>post-medieval or modern</b> (CBM) otherwise pottery all <b>Roman</b> late 2nd-early 3rd century

Ctxt, ctxt type and find no.	Type/ description	Finds Spot date
	<p>medieval) and one small piece probably from a red brick (dated probably post-medieval or modern)</p> <p><b>Stone:</b> Flat sandstone piece, part of a floor or flag stone 30 mm thick (1400 g), moderately large broken piece (220 x 130 mm).</p> <p><b>Animal bone:</b> (17 pieces) <i>Cattle</i> metatarsal, tibia and horncore frag; <i>Deer</i> pelvis with butchery chop mark and antler tine; <i>Non diagnostic large mammal:</i> various including fragments of skull, mandible, scapula, longbone, tibia and axial bone, some of the longbones have butchery chop marks on them</p>	
L002, soil layer, 2	<p><b>Quernstone:</b> Imported lava quernstone, almost certainly from the Rhineland quarries around Mayen in Germany. Three joining pieces, (two large) making up about 20% of the original circumference of the stone (dia of stone c 360 mm, thickness at edge 45-50 mm). Surfaces abraded and flaking (stone in poor condition). Faint traces of vertical tooling on edge and slight indication of an edge collar - part of an upper grinding stone.</p>	Roman
L002, soil layer, 3	<p><b>Metal object:</b> Plain, round metal (?iron or ?steel) rod (lgth 145 mm, dia c 6 mm) relatively heavy in relation to its size (wgt 32 g), broken at both ends, appears to have a greenish surface patina, slightly corroded with light encrustation of soil/sand on surface. <i>Not closely dated but appears not to be of any great age.</i></p>	Not closely dated (post-medieval/modern?)

**Table 2** Finds catalogued by context and finds number

### Discussion

While only a relatively small group of finds recovered during monitoring, the assemblage is not without interest. They were recovered from a small area of the more extensive soil layer L2 and it seems likely that they represent an otherwise unlocated feature or discreet deposit of material. This is possibly of mid-Roman (late 2nd-early 3rd century) date. Joining large pieces from a degraded and fragile Roman lava quern would also seem unlikely to have survived well outside of a relatively protected context. A piece of post-medieval brick and a large piece from a peg-tile of medieval or post-medieval date were also among the group of finds suggesting a possible later date, while a length of metal rod is probably of relatively recent date. However, given the circumstances of recovery of the finds (monitoring on contractor's workings), these two pieces are not necessarily directly associated with the group of Roman finds and might be part of a wider spread of post-Roman material in L2.

Although a modest assemblage, the Roman pottery appears to form a relatively homogeneous group. In relation to the currency of the various types present, most could be encompassed in a date range of early 2nd-early 3rd century. All of the colour-coated pottery is Colchester colour-coated ware of 2nd-3rd century date. There is no Nene Valley colour-coated ware, which appears at Colchester from the early 3rd century, although most is of late 3rd- or 4th-century date. Likewise, the black-burnished ware sherds are mostly from bead rim bowls of 2nd century and 3rd century date and there are two 2nd-century samian sherds, one of which can be dated to the late 2nd century. Recognisable residual pottery among the group is limited to a rim sherd from a Cam 243/244-246 reed-rim bowl of late 1st- to early 2nd-century date and none needs date to after the late 3rd or early 4th century. The sherd size is not particularly small or the pottery very broken up and could indicate a relatively homogeneous group deposited in the late 2nd or early 3rd century.

Of note is a rim sherd from a Cam 306 bowl. The form is current in the period of the mid/late 2nd to late 3rd/early 4th century (CAR 10, 482). It can be noted that sherds from a large number of rims from these vessels were recovered from the Butt Road

Roman cemetery, located a little to the southeast of the present site (CAR 9, 25-26). There they are considered to represent waste from an otherwise unlocated kiln in that area which was producing this bowl form.

## 7 Conclusion

Archaeological monitoring at this site detected a scatter of Roman finds which might indicate the presence of a pit.

## 8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks ECCPS for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister. Fieldwork was carried out by B Holloway. The project was monitored for the ECCPS by Richard Havis.

## 9 References

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

- |                         |       |   |
|-------------------------|-------|---|
| CAR 6                   | 1992  | <i>Excavations at Culver Street, the Gilbert School, and other sites in Colchester 1971-85</i> , Colchester Archaeological Report 6, by P Crummy  |
| CAR 9                   | 1993  | <i>Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-88</i> , Colchester Archaeological Report 9, by Nina Crummy, Philip Crummy and Carl Crossan |
| CAR 10                  | 1999  | <i>Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86</i> , Colchester Archaeological Report 10, by Robin Symonds and Sue Wade   |
| CAR 11                  | 1995  | <i>Camulodunum 2</i> , Colchester Archaeological Report 11, by CFC Hawkes and P Crummy  |
| CAT                     | 2017  | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for monitoring and recording of the removal of two tree stumps in Colchester Castle park (a Scheduled Monument, NHLE no.1002217)</i>                   |
| 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>  |
| DCLG                    | 2012  | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>   |
| English Heritage        | 2006  | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>   |
| Gurney, D               | 2003  | <i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers <b>14</b> (EAA <b>14</b> ).  |
| Hall,                   | 1945  | 'A Roman walled cemetery at Colchester', in <i>Archaeological Journal</i> , 101 (1944), 69-90   |
| Hawkes, C. and Hull, R. | 1947  | <i>Camulodunum, first report on the excavations at Colchester</i> , RRSCAL 14   |
| Hull, M.R.              | 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 <b>24</b> (EAA <b>24</b> )                            |
| Webster, P.             | 1996  | <i>Roman samian pottery in Britain</i> , Practical handbook in archaeology 13   |

## 10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
CHER	Colchester Historic Environment Record (previously UAD, <b>Urban Archaeological Database</b> )
ClfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
ECC	Essex County Council
ECCHEA	Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor
ECCPS	Essex County Council Place Services
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record

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 of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
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>
peg-tile	rectangular thin tile with peg-hole(s) used mainly for roofing, first appeared c AD1200 and continued in use to present day, but commonly post-medieval to modern
post-medieval	period from c AD 1500 to c 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 sc or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
wsj	written scheme of investigation

## 11 Contents of archive

**Finds:** n/a

### **Paper and digital record**

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1189)

Original site record

Site digital photos and log, attendance register

## 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: 2017.144



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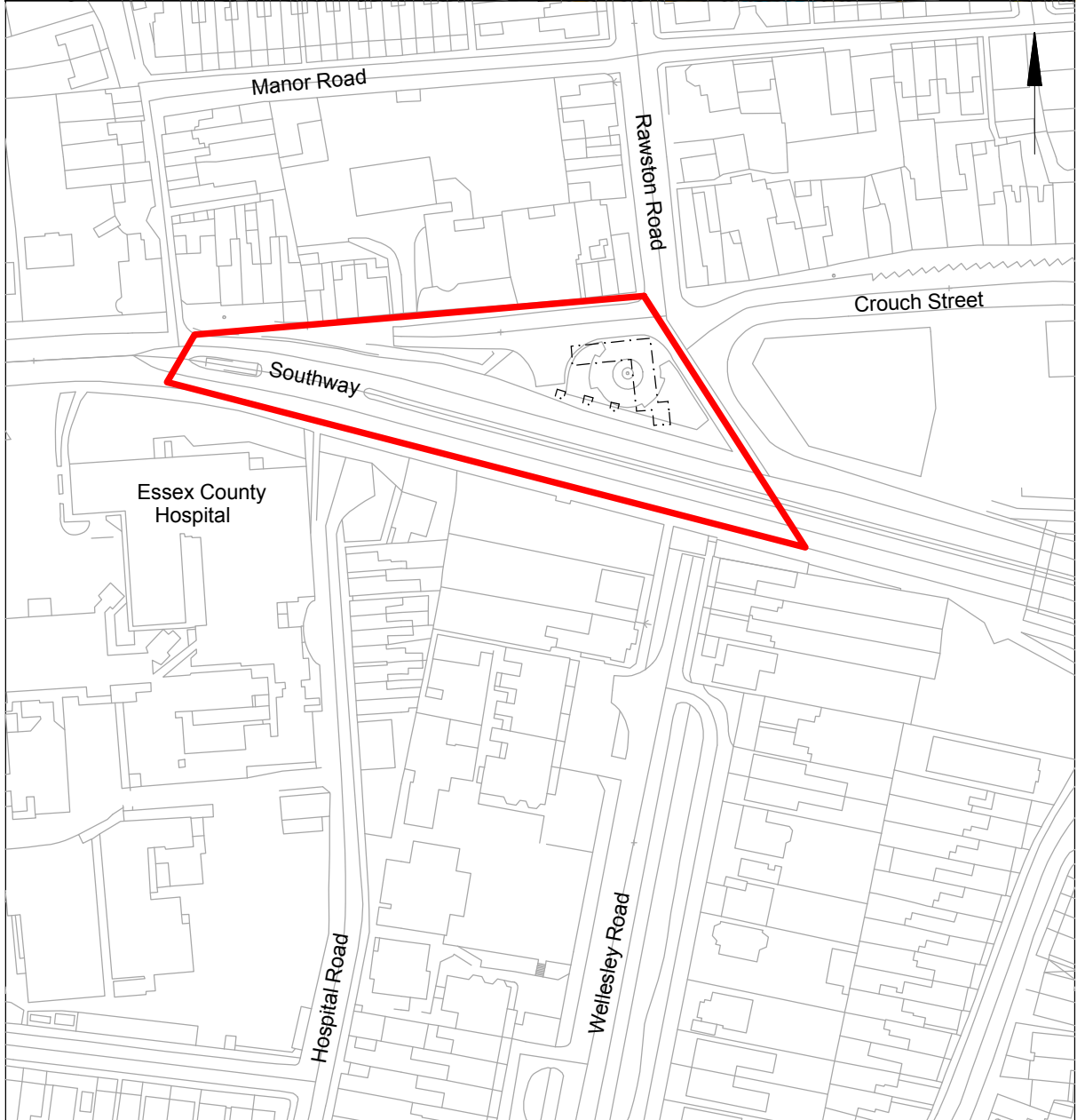
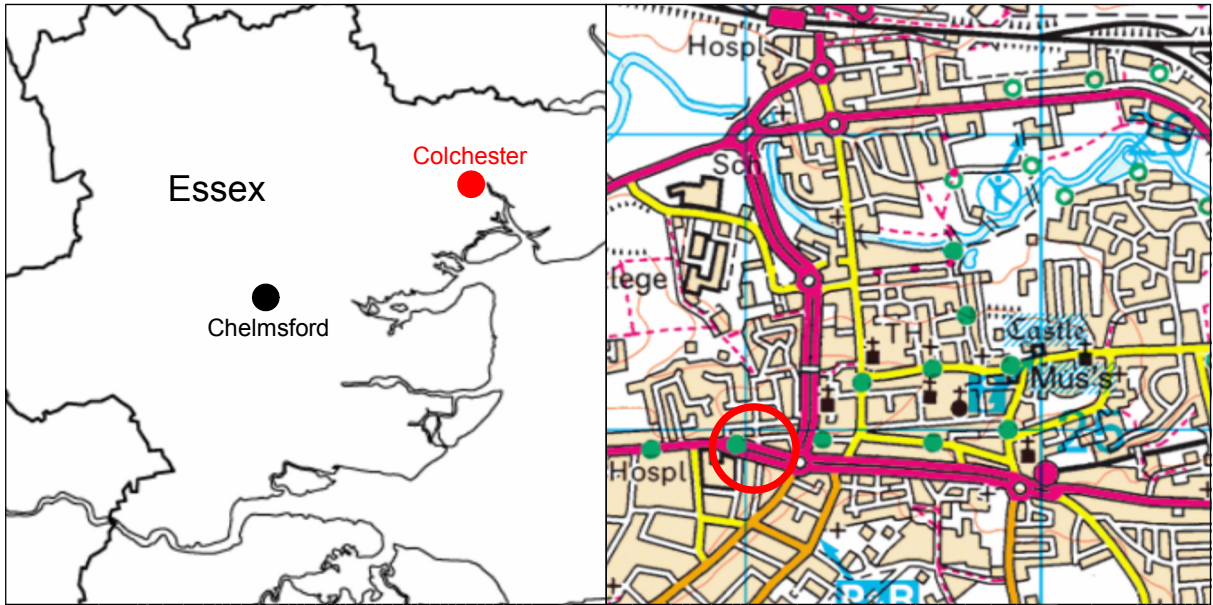
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Fig 1 Site location.



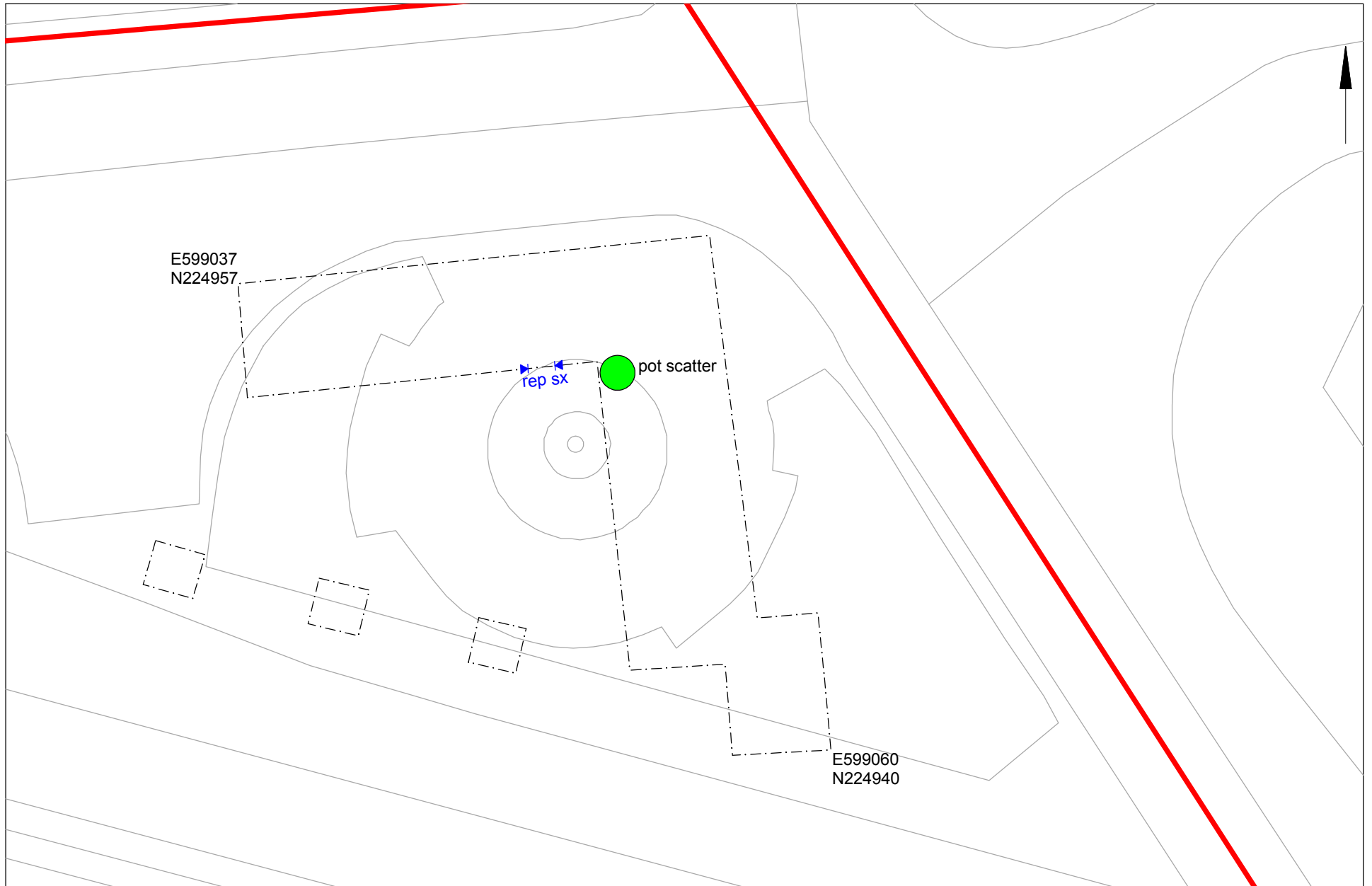


Fig 2 Monitored areas of proposed tree planting

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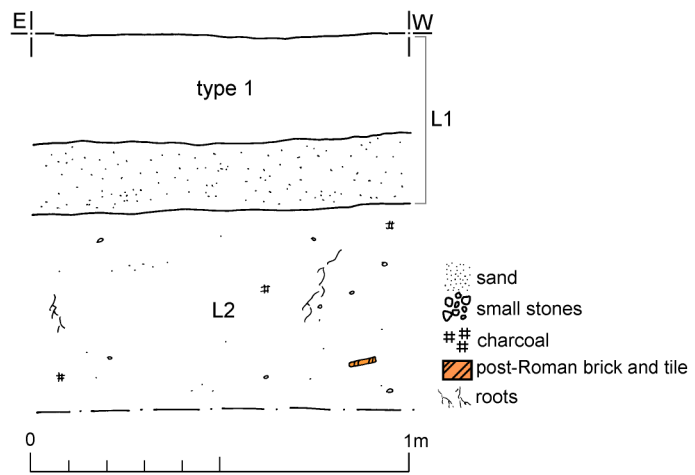


Fig 3 Representative section.

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**OASIS ID: colchest3-299547**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological monitoring and recording at Crouch Street, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HH: October 2017
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at Crouch Street, Colchester during the installation of a drainage intercept and the reduction of an area to accommodate nine tree planting pits. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered.
Project dates	Start: 16-10-2017 End: 20-10-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	17/10h - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM 2017.144 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	ECC4094 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Other 11 - Thoroughfare
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	CBM Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Roman
Significant Finds	QUERNSTONE Roman
Significant Finds	METAL OBJECT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	METAL OBJECT Modern

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER Crouch Street

Postcode	CO3 3HH
Study area	0.38 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 599053 224956 51.877592972496 0.323311295605 51 52 39 N 000 19 23 E Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	Richard Havis
Project design originator	Richard Havis
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Ben Holloway
Type of sponsor/funding body	County Council

### Project archives

Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	COLEM 2017.144
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	COLEM 2017.144
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Report"

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