

**Historic building recording of
the precinct wall of St John's Abbey
along Flagstaff Road, Colchester, Essex
CO2 7EZ**

October 2018



**report prepared by
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fieldwork carried out by
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**commissioned by
Rob Masefield, RPS Group
on behalf of
Taylor Wimpey**

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1 Summary

A programme of historic building recording was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust of the precinct wall of St John's Abbey along Flagstaff Road, Colchester, Essex in October 2018.

Like the rest of the circuit, this section of wall has been heavily altered and repaired since its construction in the late 11th-/early 12th-century. Large segments have been replaced entirely by brickwork and it has lost a metre or more in height. Of the surviving fabric nothing remains that can be confidently identified as the original medieval face of the wall. Several sections have been refaced in the post-medieval period, incorporating worked ragstone from the demolished abbey into the walls make-up.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report on a historic building recording of the precinct wall of St John's Abbey along Flagstaff Road, Colchester, in advance of conservation and repair work prompted by its partial collapse. The recording work was commissioned by RPS Group on behalf of Taylor Wimpey and carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) in October 2018. The section of the precinct wall detailed in this report is along Flagstaff Road, on the west side of the wall circuit, to the north of the entrance into Athena Place. Specifically it is at NGR TL 99671 24682 (Fig 1).

As the wall is part of a scheduled monument, Historic England (HE) advised Colchester Borough Council (CBC) that a Historic England Level 3 building survey of this section of wall would be required prior to any conservation or repair work taking place. A brief was prepared by the CBC Archaeological Advisor (AA) detailing the requirement (CBC 2018). This recommendation is based on the guidance given in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

In response to the brief, a written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT 2018) and agreed with the CBCAA. All work was carried out in accordance with the CBC brief and CAT WSI.

All work was carried out according to standards and practices contained in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (2014a), *Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2014b), *Management of research projects in the historic environment* (Historic England 2015), *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) and *Research and Archaeology Revised: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (EAA 24). In addition, the guidelines contained in *Understanding Historic Buildings, A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016) were followed.

3 Aims

The aims of the building recording were to provide a detailed record and assessment of the section of wall prior to conservation. The building recording was carried out to Level 3 (Historic England 2016) which is defined as:

“Level 3 is an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis.

The information contained in the record will for the most part have been obtained through an examination of the building itself. The documentary sources used are likely to be those which are most readily accessible, such as historic Ordnance Survey maps, trade directories and other published sources. The record may contain some discussion the building's broader stylistic or historical context and importance. It may form part of a wider survey of a number of buildings which will aim at an overall synthesis, such as a thematic or regional publication, when the use of additional source material may be necessary as well as a broader historical and architectural discussion of the buildings as a group.”

In particular the record considered:

- Plan and form of the site.
- Materials and method of construction.
- Date(s) of the structure.
- Function and layout.
- Original and later phasing, additions and their effect on the fabric and the level of survival of original fabric.
- The significance of the site on a regional level.

4 Methodology

Prior to the building recording survey scaffolding was erected around the east side of the section of wall that had collapsed.

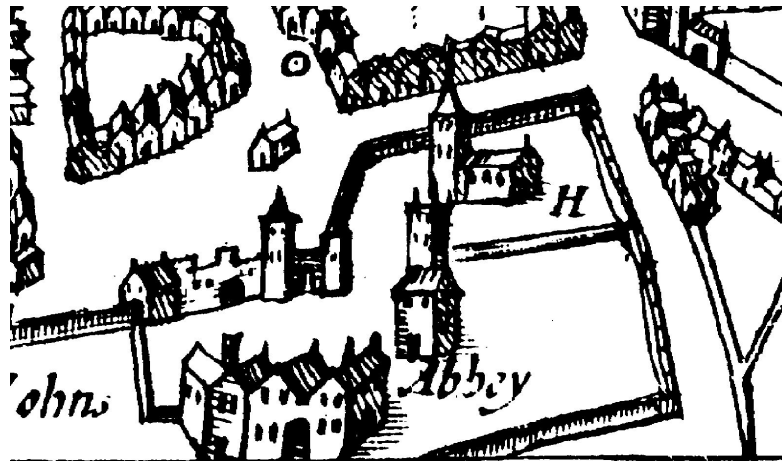
The following are included in this report:

- A documentary, cartographic and pictorial survey of the evidence pertaining to the history and evolution of the precinct wall of St John's Abbey.
- A large-scale block plan of the site.
- Annotated elevations of the wall at a scale of 1:50.
- A detailed description of the wall. The description addresses features such as materials, dimensions, method of construction and phasing.
- A photographic record, comprising digital photographs of both general shots and individual features. Selected examples of the photographic record are clearly tied into the drawn record and reproduced as fully annotated photographic plates supporting the text. The photographic record is accompanied by a photographic register detailing location and direction of shot (Appendix 1).

5 Historical background (Fig 1)

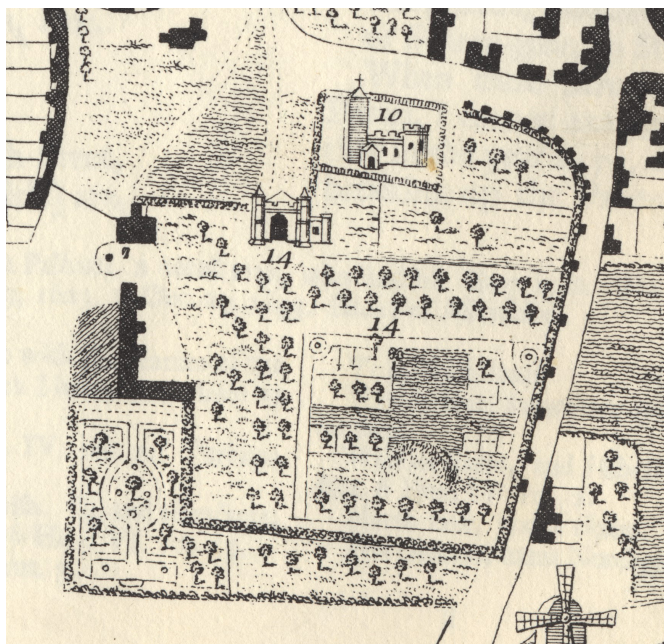
The following archaeological background draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive, the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) accessed via the Heritage Gateway.

The subject of this report is the surviving western section of the precinct wall of St John's Abbey (scheduled monument NHLE no. 1015015). The wall was built after the foundation of the abbey in 1095 and prior to the destruction of the abbey by fire in 1133 (CAR 1, 40-41). The abbey was rebuilt after the fire and the parish church of St Giles was constructed to the north of the abbey in 1171 (Crummy 1997, 149). The abbey's subsequent dissolution in 1539 was followed by its demolition over the course of the late 16th and early 17th centuries.



Map 1 1610 map by John Speed.

The earliest known map of Colchester, published in 1610 by John Speed, shows the precinct wall of the abbey with the church of St Giles to the north and the (still standing) tower of the abbey in the centre of the precinct (Map 1). The rest of the abbey building has been demolished by this point. The building to the south-west of the abbey is a large house that was being constructed as the abbey was being demolished, presumably using stone from the abbey (Morant 1748, 2, 36-7).



Map 2 1748 map commissioned by Philip Morant.

In 1648, during the English Civil War, Colchester and the abbey grounds were occupied by the Royalists. During the siege of the town, the Royalists were driven out of the abbey, and the Parliamentarians destroyed the house, as well as causing damage to the abbey walls, gatehouse and St Giles church (*ibid*).

This damage is evident 100 years later on a map from 1748, commissioned by the local clergyman and historian Philip Morant for inclusion in his *The History and Antiquities of Colchester* (Map 2). On the map, the house and the abbey tower are both no longer standing, leaving just St Giles church and the abbey gatehouse. The rest of the grounds appear to be landscaped gardens.



Map 3 1848 map by E. Monson.

A map printed in 1848 by E. Monson (Map 3) shows the abbey grounds to be much the same. Both St Giles church and the gatehouse are depicted, and the grounds are labelled as "Pinnacle Garden". A series of buildings are shown adjacent to the abbey wall on the west side of the circuit. Evidence that may be associated with these buildings was observed during this survey (see below).

The first edition 6-inch OS map shows the abbey grounds with several more buildings to the south-west, with diminishing evidence of the precinct wall visible (Map 4).

Subsequent mapping through the 19th and 20th centuries shows the abbey grounds being incorporated into Colchester Garrison and the precinct wall becoming less apparent.



Map 4 1875 6-inch OS map.

The site today has a large number of buildings and has recently been the subject of a housing development (Fig 1). St Giles church (NHLE no. 1123520) to the north of the complex was made redundant in 1952 and has been in private ownership since. The abbey gatehouse (NHLE no. 1337765) also survives to the north with stretches (largely rebuilt) of abbey wall to either side. The eastern and south-eastern segments of wall are the most intact (although with many modern alterations). The only part of the southern precinct wall to survive is a short section which forms the gable end of a garrison building (previously detailed in CAT Report 995).

The segment of wall detailed in this report is the only section still standing on the west side of the circuit.

6 Descriptive record and discussion (Figs 2-12)

The section of abbey wall which was recorded is 52m long and survives to a height of between 2.7m and 3.2m above the current ground level. It is aligned north-south along Flagstaff Road with its southern point at the corner with Londinium Road and its northern point at the start of the Flagstaff House complex (Fig 1). The eastern elevation of the wall is the most exposed and readily observable, with only a small section to the north hidden by a modern electricity substation. The western elevation, however, is much more obscured with a large amount of overgrowth both on and in front of the wall including several large trees (Photograph 1). Consequently the recording of the western elevation was more difficult, to the extent that several segments of the wall to the north could not be photographed sufficiently to allow for rectification (such areas are labelled as obscured on Figs 3-8).



Photograph 1 West elevation of wall prior to recording, showing level of overgrowth. Photograph taken facing north-east.

This recording was prompted by the partial collapse of this section of abbey wall (Photographs 2-3). Prior to the recording taking place, the area of partial collapse had to be stabilised and made safe. As a result, the wall was reduced down to 1m in height, with all the loose material above this point being removed. In the collapsed and removed material were seven large pieces of worked stone with remnants of lime mortar attached (Figs 9-12). These pieces of worked stone are similar to ones present in the refacing to the south (see below) and several examples were also recovered in various contexts during the recent excavation and monitoring of the adjacent housing development within the abbey grounds (CAT Report forthcoming). They have been interpreted as originating from the abbey and associated buildings within the abbey grounds, and having been added to the wall as part of a refacing episode carried out subsequent to the abbey's demolition. The initial collapse, prior to stabilisation and further reduction, appeared to be the result of the (rebuilt) face of the wall coming away from the lime mortar and septaria core (Photograph 3).

It has previously been postulated (CAT Report 995) that when the abbey wall was constructed it was initially made up of about 50% septaria and 50% ragstone, excluding a relatively small amount of brick. It is likely that all of this material (certainly the brick and septaria) was reused from earlier Roman buildings. The remains of the Colchester's Roman circus (NHLE no. 1337765) are within the abbey complex and so could be assumed to be a source for this building material. However, as CAT has previously noted, "*the presence of such a substantial quantity of septaria suggests that it is unlikely that the precinct wall was built using stone robbed from the Roman circus, since the circus is built entirely of Kentish ragstone*" (CAT Report 995). It is therefore

considered more likely that another building or buildings were the source for the material, presumably located in the Roman town to the north.



Photograph 2 Collapsed section of wall prior to recording and reduction in height for stabilisation. Photograph taken facing east.



Photograph 3 Collapsed section of wall prior to recording and reduction in height for stabilisation. Photograph taken facing north-east.

This section of wall would originally have been taller; although by how much is uncertain. The longest surviving section of abbey wall, on the eastern side of the precinct standing along Mersea Road, survives in some places to a height of over 4m.

The collapsed wall segment along this section exposed the original medieval core of the wall, which is constructed entirely of mortar and septaria, with no brick or ragstone visible (Fig 4).

This western section of wall, like the other surviving sections around the circuit, has been heavily altered in the ensuing 900 years since its construction. Most prominently, large segments have been entirely replaced by several different phases of English-bond, post-medieval/modern brickwork (Figs 3-8). Even in-between these segments, where the wall has not been replaced, it contains several areas of patching and repair consisting of both brick and peg-tile. Most of these repairs are attached to the septaria and lime mortar core of the wall; there is nothing surviving that could be confidentially identified as the original medieval face.

The southern segment of this wall section has been entirely refaced on both the east and west elevations (Figs 5 and 6). This refacing comprises large segments of Roman and post-medieval brick, septaria and ragstone, all closely bonded with lime mortar. Also of note within this section of refacing are several large worked ragstone pieces. Like the worked stone recovered from the collapsed section of wall (see above), this stone presumably originated from the abbey buildings, meaning this refacing must

post-date the abbey's demolition. The high amount of worked stone on the face of this section of wall is noted in the 1922 RCHME survey (pg 48).

Visible on the western elevation of the wall are three arches, close to the ground-level, made of reused Roman tile (Fig 3). These may be the remains of culverts in the wall that have since been blocked, although without any below-ground investigation, it is difficult to be certain. Alternatively they could be providing additional support for this section of wall, or are simply decorative elements added to the wall during an episode of refacing.

The north of the eastern elevation has a peculiar feature; at the base of the wall is a shallow recess, measuring about 1m in height by 1.3m wide with a wooden lintel above (Fig 7). Superficially this resembles a fireplace opening although clearly, without a chimney, it wouldn't have functioned as one. To the north of this recess is a large timber post partially built into, and bolted to, the wall (Fig 7). The purpose of these features is uncertain, but it seems likely they are in some way associated with the buildings built up against this section of wall shown on the 1875 OS map (Map 4).

The repair of the collapsed section of wall was carried out subsequent to this recording project being undertaken. Photographs of the repaired section are reproduced below (Photographs 4 and 5).



Photograph 5 West elevation of wall after repair work. Photograph taken facing east.

7 Acknowledgements

Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank RPS Group for commissioning and Taylor Wimpey for funding the historic building recording.

The recording was carried out by Mark Baister and Robin Mathieson.

Figures are by Mark Baister with assistance from Sarah Carter and Robin Mathieson.

The project was monitored by Deborah Priddy for Historic England and Dr Jess Tipper for Colchester Borough Council.

The report was edited and revisions suggested by Philip Crummy, director of CAT.

8 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in .pdf format at

<http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures</i>
CAR 1	1981	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 1: Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester</i>
CAT	2018	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for historic building recording along part of the precinct wall of St John's Abbey, Flagstaff Road, Colchester, Co2 7EZ</i>
CAT Report 995	2016	<i>Historic building recording at St John's Abbey Wall, Flagstaff, Napier Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7GA</i> By Pooley, L.
CBC	2018	<i>Brief for Historic Building Recording at Precinct Wall of St John's Abbey, Flagstaff Road, Colchester</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>
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> East Anglian Archaeological occasional papers 14 by Gurney, D.
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeological occasional papers 24 by Medlycott, M
Historic England	2015	<i>MoRPHE: Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i>
Historic England	2016	<i>Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice</i>
Morant, P.	1748	<i>The History and Antiquities of Colchester</i>
RCHME	1922	<i>Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England): Essex (North-East)</i>

9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
context	specific location of finds on an archaeological site
culvert	a tunnel allowing water to flow under an obstruction (such as a wall)
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by the ECC
HE	Historic Environment
medieval	the period from 1066 - 1500
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	O nline A cces S to the I ndex of A rchaeological I nvestigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
post-medieval	the period from 1500 - 1800
ragstone	a hard sandstone or limestone used for building purposes
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
septaria	a compacted clay used as building material by the Romans

10 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 2018.74).

11 Contents of archive

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1402)

Original site record

Site digital photos and log, attendance register, risk assessment

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Distribution list

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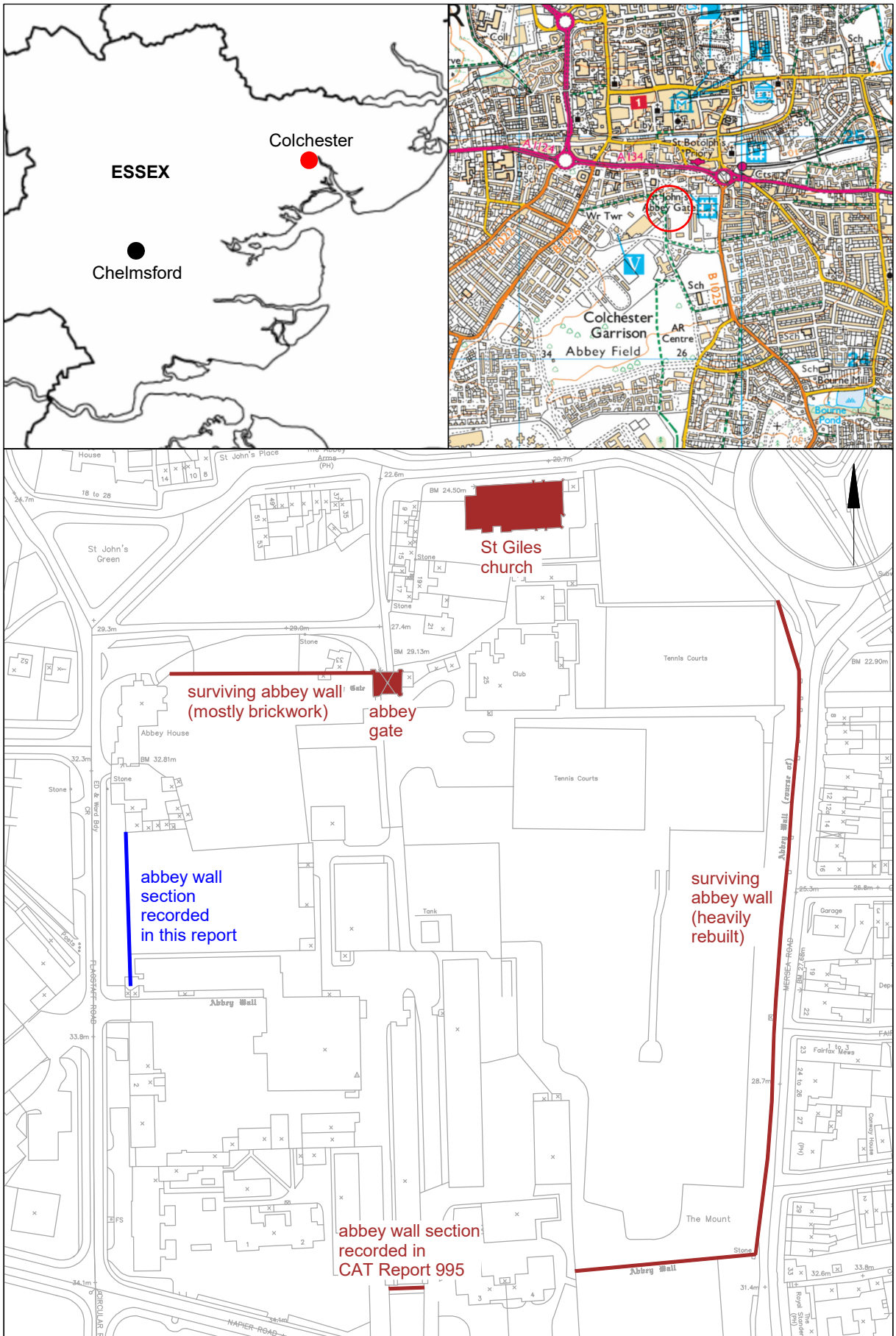
date: 23/04/2019

Appendix 1:
Full digital photographic record
(images on accompanying CD)

COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_001.JPG	Photo of worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall. Stone A.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_002.JPG	Photo of worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall. Stone B.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_003.JPG	Photo of worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall. Stone C.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_004.JPG	Photo of worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall. Stone D.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_005.JPG	Photo of worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall. Stone E.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_006.JPG	Photo of worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall. Stone F.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_007.JPG	Photo of worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall. Stone G.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_008.JPG	Photo of worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall. Stone H.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_009.JPG	Photo of worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall. Stone I.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_010.JPG	Photo of worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall. Stone J.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_011.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_012.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags and 2m scale. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_013.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_014.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_015.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_016.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_017.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_018.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_019.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_020.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_021.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_022.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_023.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_024.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_025.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall showing modern brickwork. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_026.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall showing modern brickwork. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_027.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall showing modern brickwork. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_028.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall showing modern brickwork. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_029.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall showing modern brickwork. Photograph taken facing south-west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_030.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall showing modern brickwork. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_031.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall showing modern brickwork. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_PhotoGraph_032.JPG	Eastern elevation of wall showing modern brickwork. Photograph taken facing north-west.

COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	Eastern elevation of wall showing modern brickwork. Photograph taken facing north-west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	Detail of recess on eastern elevation (possible fireplace?). Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	Eastern elevation of wall with rectified tags. Photograph taken facing south-west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	Eastern elevation of wall behind electric station. Photograph taken facing north-west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	Eastern elevation of wall. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	Eastern elevation of wall. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	Detail of recess on eastern elevation of wall (possible fireplace?). Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall, showing recess and wooden post. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall, showing recess and wooden post with scale. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall, showing brick repairs. Photograph taken facing south-west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall, showing peg-tile repairs. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall, showing wooden post with scale. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall, showing hole and damage to wall. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall, showing refaced section. Photograph taken facing north-west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall showing modern brickwork. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall. Photograph taken facing north-west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall. Photograph taken facing south-west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall showing brick repairs. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall during erection of scaffolding after collapse.. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	West elevation of wall, showing overgrowth prior to recording. Photograph taken facing north-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	West elevation of wall, showing collapsed area and overgrowth prior to recording. Photograph taken facing east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	West elevation of wall, showing collapsed area and overgrowth prior to recording. Photograph taken facing south-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	West elevation of wall, showing collapsed area and overgrowth prior to recording. Photograph taken facing north-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	West elevation of wall, showing overgrowth prior to recording. Photograph taken facing south-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall during erection of scaffolding. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall during erection of scaffolding. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall during erection of scaffolding. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall during erection of scaffolding. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo	East elevation of wall during erection of scaffolding. Photograph taken facing west.

COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_065.JPG	Detail of west elevation showing collapsed section of wall prior to stabilisation. Photograph taken facing east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_066.JPG	Detail of west elevation showing collapsed section of wall prior to stabilisation with scale. Photograph taken facing north-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_067.JPG	Detail of west elevation showing collapsed section of wall prior to stabilisation with scale. Photograph taken facing north-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_068.JPG	Detail of west elevation showing collapsed section of wall prior to stabilisation with scale. Photograph taken facing east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_069.JPG	Detail of west elevation showing collapsed section of wall prior to stabilisation. Photograph taken facing north-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_070.JPG	Detail of west elevation showing collapsed section of wall prior to stabilisation with scale. Photograph taken facing north-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_071.JPG	East elevation of wall during erection of scaffolding. Photograph taken facing west.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_072.JPG	West elevation of wall after erection of scaffolding and reduction of collapsed section. Photograph taken facing east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_073.JPG	West elevation of wall after erection of scaffolding and reduction of collapsed section. Photograph taken facing east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_074.JPG	West elevation of wall after erection of scaffolding and reduction of collapsed section, showing brickwork. Photograph taken facing east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_075.JPG	West elevation of wall after erection of scaffolding and reduction of collapsed section. Photograph taken facing south-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_076.JPG	West elevation of wall after erection of scaffolding and reduction of collapsed section. Photograph taken facing south-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_077.JPG	West elevation of wall after erection of scaffolding and reduction of collapsed section. Photograph taken facing north-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_078.JPG	West elevation of wall showing refaced section. Photograph taken facing north-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_079.JPG	West elevation of wall. Photograph taken facing north-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_080.JPG	West elevation of wall. Photograph taken facing south-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_081.JPG	West elevation of wall. Photograph taken facing east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_082.JPG	West elevation of wall showing brickwork. Photograph taken facing north-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_083.JPG	West elevation of wall showing brickwork. Photograph taken facing east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_084.JPG	West elevation of wall showing brickwork and peg tile additions. Photograph taken facing north-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_085.JPG	West elevation of wall showing brickwork additions. Photograph taken facing south-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_086.JPG	West elevation of wall showing possible blocked culverts. Photograph taken facing east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_087.JPG	West elevation of wall showing detail of possible blocked culverts. Photograph taken facing east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_088.JPG	West elevation of wall. Photograph taken facing east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_089.JPG	West elevation of wall showing brick additions. Photograph taken facing south-east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_090.JPG	West elevation of wall. Photograph taken facing east.
COLEM2018.74_ECC4257_Photo graph_091.JPG	West elevation of wall after clearing of collapse. Photograph taken facing east.



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Fig 1 Site location.





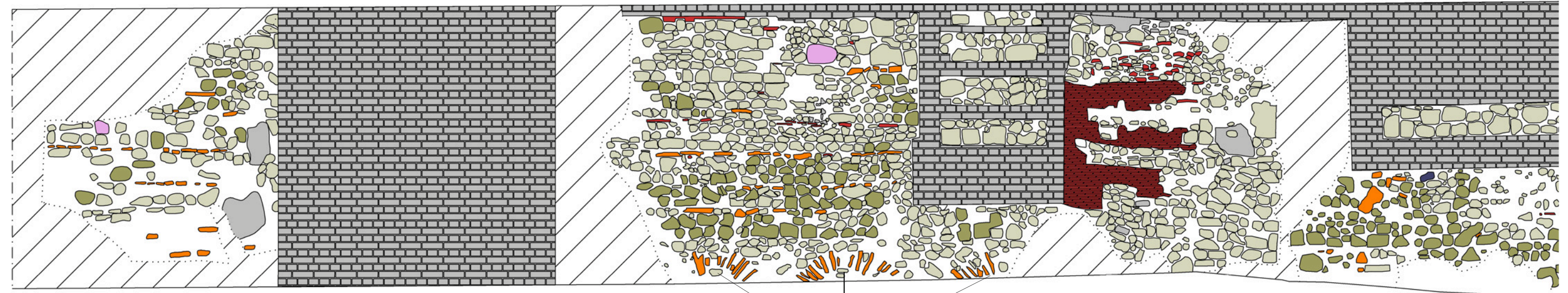
Fig 2 Detailed plan showing sections of wall shown in subsequent figures.

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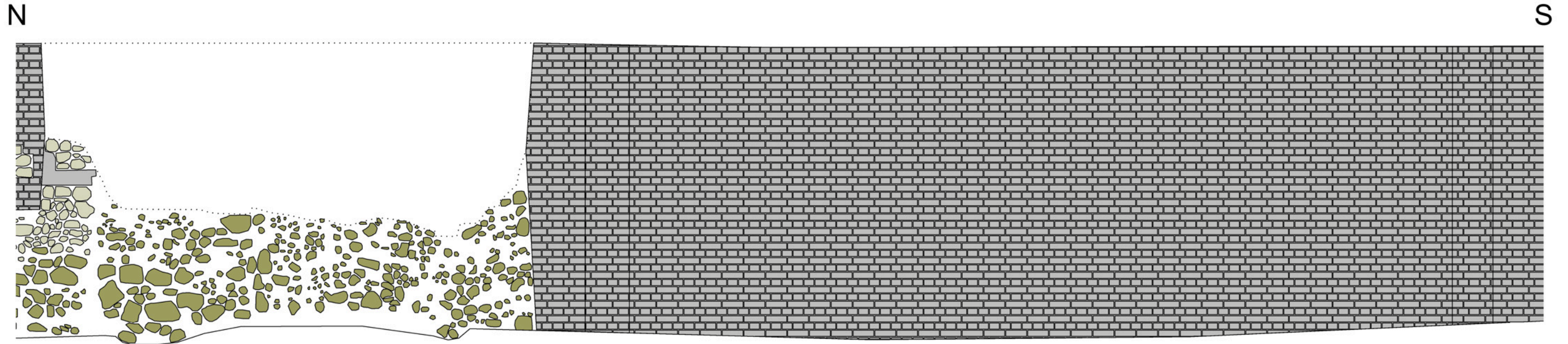
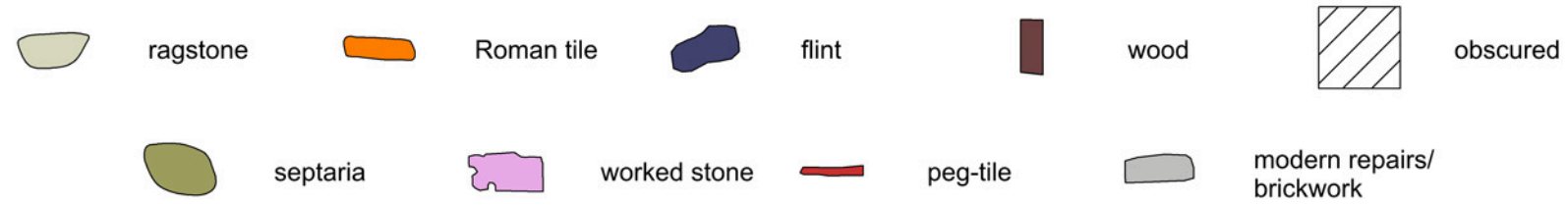
blocked culverts?



Fig 3 Western elevation of abbey wall 1 of 3. Rectified elevation above, photo below.



key



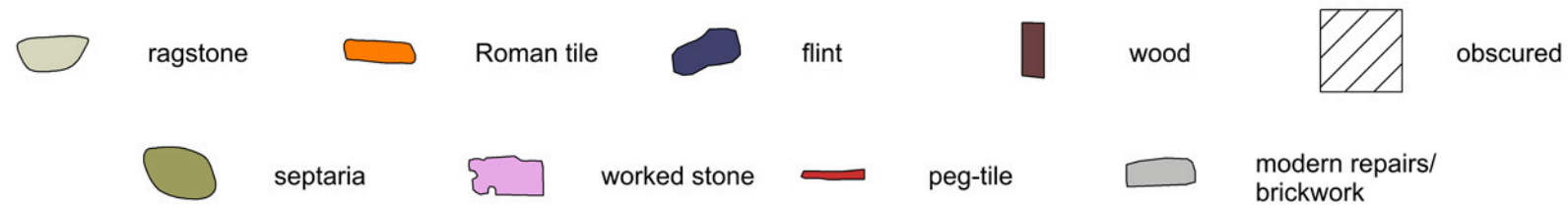
collapsed section of wall



Fig 4 Western elevation of abbey wall 2 of 3. Rectified elevation above, photo below.



key



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S

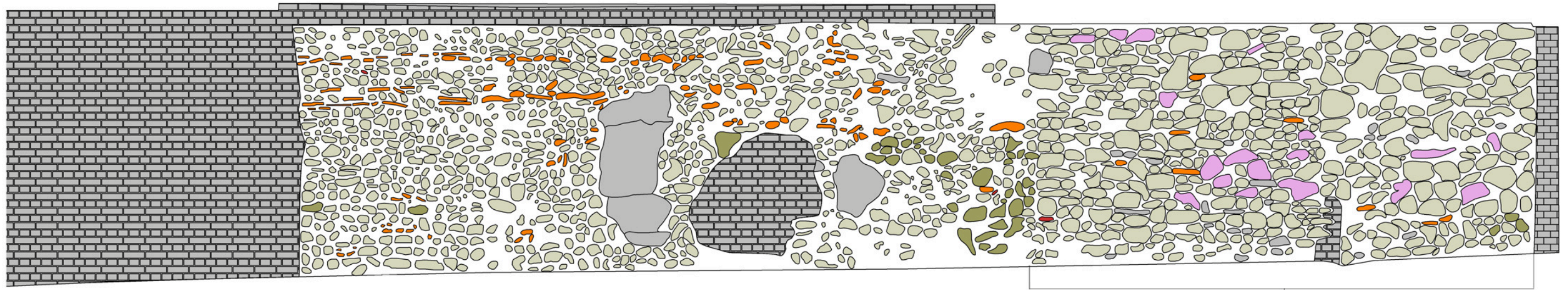


Fig 5 Western elevation of abbey wall 3 of 3. Rectified elevation above, photo below.



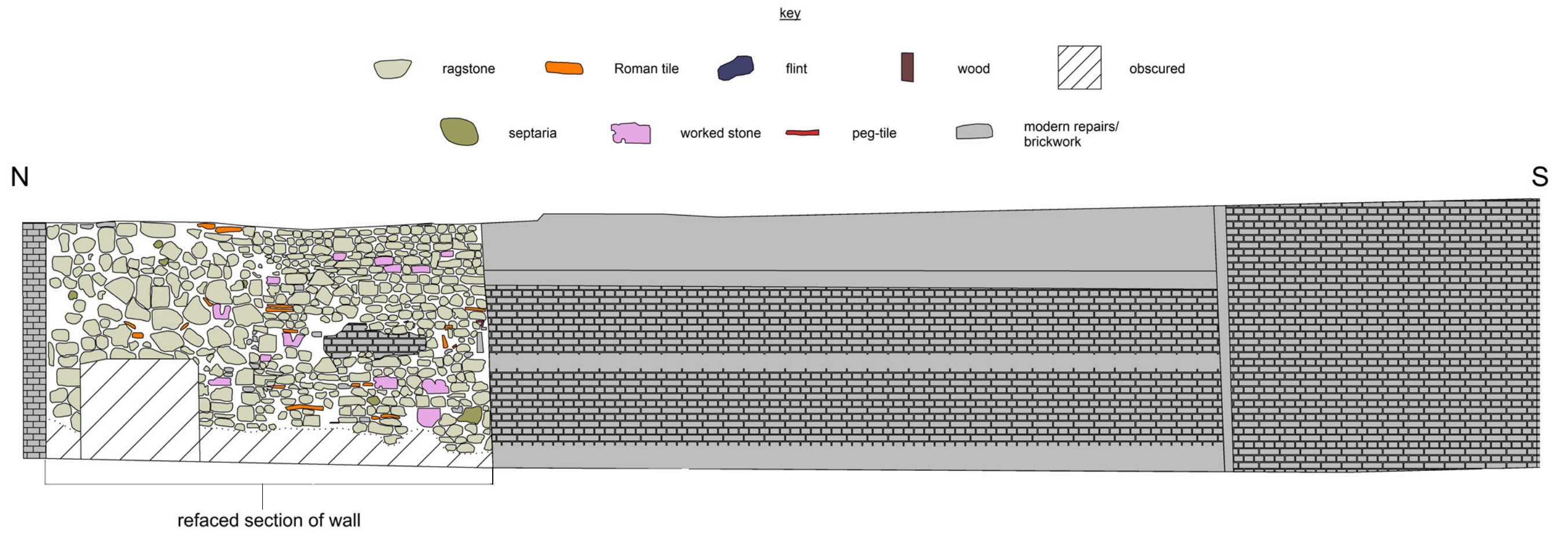


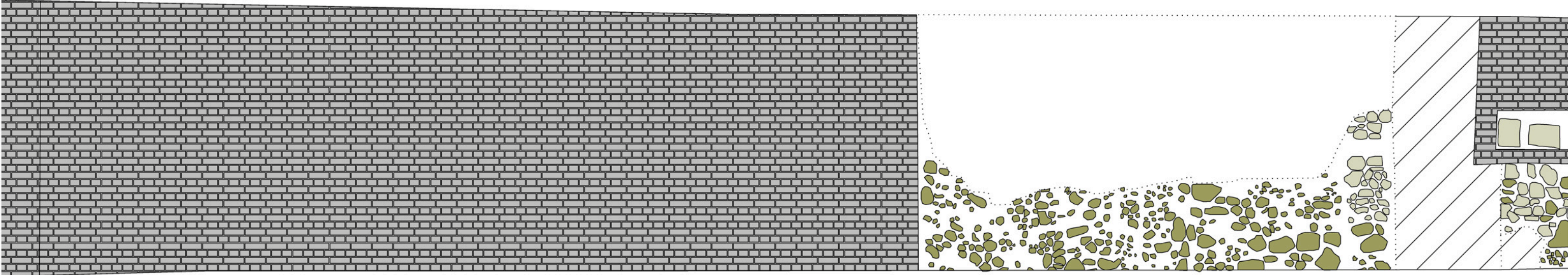
Fig 6 Eastern elevation of abbey wall 1 of 3. Rectified elevation above, photo below.

key

- ragstone
- Roman tile
- flint
- wood
- obscured
- septaria
- worked stone
- peg-tile
- modern repairs/brickwork

N

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


obscured during recording



Fig 7 Eastern elevation of abbey wall 2 of 3. Rectified elevation above, photo below.

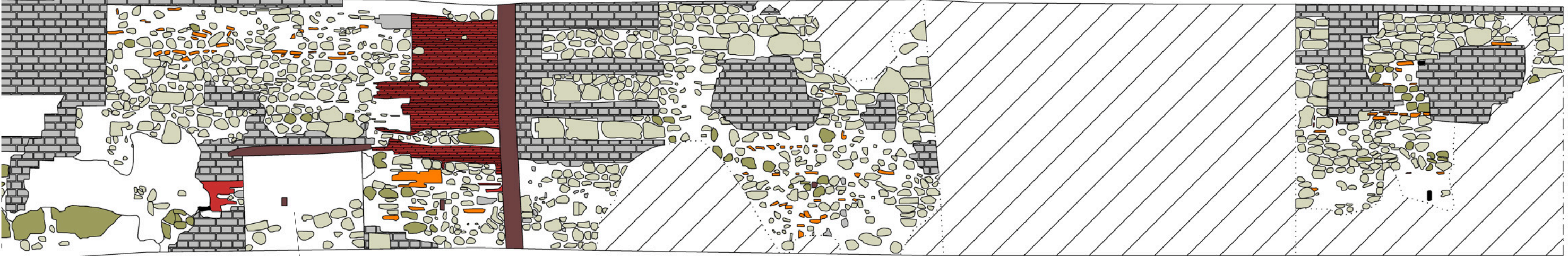


key

-  ragstone
-  Roman tile
-  flint
-  wood
-  obscured
-  septaria
-  worked stone
-  peg-tile
-  modern repairs/
brickwork

N

S



recess in wall

electricity substation



Fig 8 Eastern elevation of abbey wall 3 of 3. Rectified elevation above, photo below.

0 2m



Fig 9 Worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall.



Fig 10 Worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall.



Fig 11 Worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall.



Fig 12 Worked stone recovered from collapsed section of wall.

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Address: Flagstaff Road, Colchester, Essex CO2 7EZ	
Parish: Colchester	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 99671 24682 (centre)	Site code: CAT project ref.: 18/08g CHER ref: ECC4257 OASIS ref: colchest3-326985
Type of work: Historic Building Recording	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: October 2018	Size of area investigated: 55 square metres (approximately)
Location of curating museum: Colchester museum accession code: 2018.74	Funding source: Taylor Wimpey
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related CHER/EHER number(s): MCC7930
Final report: CAT Report 1402	
Periods represented: Medieval, Post-Medieval	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: A programme of historic building recording was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust of the precinct wall of St John's Abbey along Flagstaff Road, Colchester, Essex in October 2018.</p> <p>Like the rest of the circuit, this section of wall has been heavily altered and repaired since its construction in the late 11th-/early 12th-century. Large segments have been replaced entirely by brickwork and it has lost a metre or more in height. Of the surviving fabric nothing remains that can be confidentially identified as the original medieval face of the wall. Several sections have been refaced in the post-medieval period, incorporating worked ragstone from the demolished abbey into the walls make-up.</p>	
Previous summaries/reports: CAT Report 995	
CBC monitor: Jess Tipper HE monitor: Deborah Priddy	
Keywords: abbey wall	Significance: **
Author of summary: Mark Baister	Date of summary: April 2019

Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for historic building recording along part of the precinct wall of St John's Abbey, Flagstaff Road, Colchester, CO2 7EZ

NGR: TL 99671 24682 (centre)

Planning reference: n/a

Commissioned by: Rob Masefield, RPS Group

Client: Taylor Wimpey East London

Curating Museum: Colchester

Museum accession code: [tbc](#)

CAT Project code: 18/08g

CHER Event number: [tbc](#)

OASIS ref: colchest3-326985

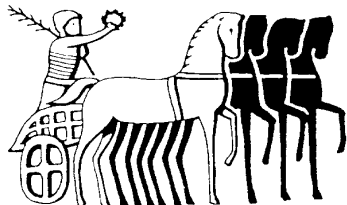
Scheduled monument consent: S00201258

Site manager: Chris Lister

CBC monitor: Jess Tipper

Historic England monitor: Debbie Priddy

This WSI written: 29.08.2018



COLCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST,
Roman Circus House,
Roman Circus Walk
Colchester,
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tel: 01206 501785
email: lp@catuk.org

Site location and description

This proposal concerns the repair and maintenance of the Precinct Wall of St John's Abbey along Flagstaff Road, Colchester, specifically the section to the north of the Flagstaff Road entrance to Athena Place (Fig 1). The site is centred on NGR TL 99671 24682.

Proposed work

The proposed work comprises the repair and maintenance of this section of the wall.

Archaeological background

The following archaeological background draws on the Colchester Archaeological Trust report archive, and the Colchester Historic Environment Record (CHER) accessed via the Colchester Heritage Explorer:

The Benedictine Abbey of St John is a scheduled monument, NHLE no. 1015015.

In 1095 the abbey was measured out on the site of a small church. Construction work began the following year and in 1115 the abbey church was dedicated. In 1133 the monastery and a large part of Colchester were burnt, and all the offices and the monks' dwellings which were originally on the north side of the abbey church were transferred to the south side. The operation involved much earth-moving, the spoil from which was used to create a cemetery to the north of the abbey church. The parish church of St Giles was founded in the cemetery sometime between 1133 and 1171 (*CAR 9*, 203).

St John's Abbey and St Giles' Church were surrounded by a precinct wall with towers. Sections of the abbey wall survive along Mersea Road, Flagstaff Road and within the new Athena Place development.

Archaeological work in the 1970s indicates that the wall dates from before the 13th century and was refaced in parts in the 16th century. The following is taken from *CAR 9*, 219:

About 140m of the surviving abbey wall was destroyed in 1972 as part of the works for the new (St Botolph's) roundabout. The wall stood to a height of about 2.75m and tapered in width from about 1m at the base to about 0.6m at the top. It had been thought that the wall was of 16th-century date because it appeared to have been built of stone and 16th-century brick. However, what had previously been visible of the wall turned out to have been a refacing about 0.5m thick added to a wall of much older date. The original structure was built entirely of reused Roman building materials, namely tile, septaria and Kentish ragstone. The rear face was well preserved and contained many original put-log holes. (Observations made in 1971-2 showed that the dump of 1133 appeared to have been deposited directly against the rear face of the wall implying that the wall was probably an original feature of the monastery. The absence of peg-tile suggests that the wall predates the late 13th century.

The surviving Abbey gatehouse was built in the 15th century as the main gatehouse, giving access to the town. The upper storey was blown up during the Siege in 1648 and was rebuilt, probably in the 1840s. The building is Grade I listed and scheduled.

The Abbey was dissolved in 1538 and turned into a grand family residence. During the Siege of Colchester in 1648, most of the buildings were destroyed and/or damaged.

Planning background

As a scheduled monument, the Colchester Borough Council Archaeological Advisor (CBCAA) and Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments (HEIAM) advised that an archaeological impact assessment would be required in the form of a Historic England Level 3 building survey of this section of the wall. This specification is laid out in a brief for the required archaeological work, to be undertaken in advance of the conservation work. This recommendation is based on the guidance given in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

Colchester Archaeological Trust has prepared this Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) in response to the CBCAA's brief, and with the approval of the CBCAA and HEIAM, for submission to Colchester Borough Council Planning Department.

Any variations to this WSI will be agreed beforehand with the CBCAA/HEIAM.

Requirement for work

The required archaeological work is a Historic England Level 3 historic building recording to fully record this section (front and back) of the precinct wall and to assess and record the significance of the remains in advance of repairs and maintenance (see Fig 1 for location). Details are given in a Project Brief written by the CBCAA (*Brief for historic building recording – CBC 2018*).

The Level 3 analytical recording will be carried out on the wall, which has not previously been the subject of recording, in advance of dismantling and repairs.

The wall will be viewed, described, photographed (rectified high resolution digital images) and measured drawings produced along with analytical and interpretative drawings, including any structural detail. Any distinctive features will be both described and photographed.

In addition to the recording of the wall in advance of repairs, the repair works will be monitored and recorded by an experienced archaeologist. Any worked stone discovered during dismantling works will be separated and recorded (identified and catalogued, drawn and photographed, where necessary).

A historical document search (documentary, cartographic and pictorial) will undertaken to situate the history of this section of the wall within its immediate local context.

General methodology

All work carried out by CAT will be in accordance with:

- professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a, b, c)
- Standards and Frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011)
- relevant Health & Safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2017)
- the Project Brief issued by CBC Archaeological Adviser (CBC 2018)

Professional CAT archaeologists will undertake all specified work, for which they will be suitably experienced and qualified.

Notification of the supervisor/project manager's name and the start date for the project will be provided to the CBCAA one week before start of work.

Vegetation will need to be cleared from the wall to facilitate good recording. Any plants will be cut back to face of the masonry but the roots left intact to avoid damage to the scheduled monument.

At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. At the end of the project all parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to EHER. This will include an uploaded .PDF version of the entire report.

A project or site code will be sought from the CBCAA and/or the curating museum, as appropriate to the project. This code will be used to identify the project archive when it is deposited at the curating museum.

Staffing

The number of field staff for this project is estimated as follows: one building recorder and one surveyor for one day.

In charge of day-to-day site work: Mark Baister

Building Recording Methodology

A Historic England Level 3 survey will be undertaken.

A documentary, cartographic and pictorial survey of the evidence pertaining to the history and evolution of the section of wall will be made. Sources consulted will include:

- Essex Historic Environment Record.
- Colchester Historic Environment Record.
- Essex Records Office.
- The site owner.

A large-scale block plan will be made of the site using the current OS 1:2500 map extract.

Plans and elevations at a scale of 1:100 will be made of the wall, tied into the descriptive text and accompanying photographic record.

The wall will be viewed, described and photographed. The description will seek to address materials, dimensions, method of construction and phasing.

A full photographic record will be made comprising colour digital photographs. This record will include both general shots and details of features (ie structural detail). A photographic scale will be included in the case of detailed photographs. Rectified photographs will be created of the entire section of wall. The photographic record will be accompanied by a photographic register detailing (as a minimum) location and direction of shot.

The completed plans will be clearly annotated to show the location and orientation of photographs taken as part of the survey.

Fully annotated photographic plates supporting the text will be reproduced as colour laser copies.

The guidelines contained in *Historic England: Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice (2016)* will be adhered to. In addition, RCHME: *Descriptive Specification 3rd Edition*, ClfA's *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures (2014)* and the appropriate sections of the *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (East Anglian Archaeology occasional paper 14, 2003)* and *Research and Archaeology Revised: A Revised Framework for the East of England (EAA 24, 2011)* and *Management of research projects in the historic environment (MoRPHE)* will be used for additional guidance in the design of the project specification, the contents of the report, and for the general execution of the project.

Results

Notification will be given to the CBCAA/HEIAM when the fieldwork has been completed.

An appropriate archive will be prepared to minimum acceptable standards outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (English Heritage 2006)*.

A report will be submitted within 6 months of the end of fieldwork, with a copy supplied to the CBCAA/HEIAM as a PDF.

The report will contain:

- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the investigation.
- A brief history of this section of the precinct wall
- Location maps, plans and annotated drawings tied into the OS Grid.

- Labelled re-productions of a representative sample of the photographs.
- Detailed results including a suitable conclusion and discussion and results referring to Regional Research Frameworks (Medlycott 2011).
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results.

An EHER summary sheet will also be completed within four weeks and supplied to the CBCAA.

Results will be published, to at least a summary level (i.e. round-up in *Essex Archaeology & History*) in the year following the archaeological field work. An allowance will be made in the project costs for the report to be published in an adequately peer reviewed journal or monograph series.

Archive deposition

It is a policy of Colchester Borough Council that the integrity of the site archive be maintained (i.e. all finds and records should be properly curated by a single organisation), with the archive available for public consultation. To achieve this desired aim it is assumed that the full archive will be deposited in Colchester Museums *unless otherwise agreed in advance*. (A full copy of the archive shall in any case be deposited).

By accepting this WSI, the client agrees to deposit the archive at Colchester & Ipswich Museum.

The requirements for archive storage will be agreed with the curating museum.

The archive will be deposited with Colchester & Ipswich Museum within 3 months of the completion of the final report, with a summary of the contents of the archive supplied to the CBCAA.

Monitoring

The CBCAA/HEIAM will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project, and will be kept regularly informed during fieldwork, post-excavation and publication stages.

Notification of the start of work will be given to the CBCAA/HEIAM one week in advance of its commencement.

Any variations in this WSI will be agreed with CBCAA/HEIAM prior to them being carried out.

The CBCAA/HEIAM will be notified when the fieldwork is complete.

The involvement of the CBCAA/HEIAM will be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

References

CBC	2018	<i>Brief for Historic Building Recording at Precinct Wall of St John's Abbey, Flagstaff Road, Colchester</i> by Jess Tipper
CIfA	2014a	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
CIfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures</i>
CAR 9	1993	<i>Colchester Archaeological Report 9: Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-88</i> , by N Crummy, P Crummy and C Crossan
CAT	2017	<i>Policies and procedures</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>

Historic England	2015	<i>MoRPHE: Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i>
Historic England	2016	<i>Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice</i>
Gurney, D.	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeological, occasional papers 14 (EAA 14)
Medlycott, M	2011	<i>Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeological Occasional Papers 24 (EAA 24)

L Pooley



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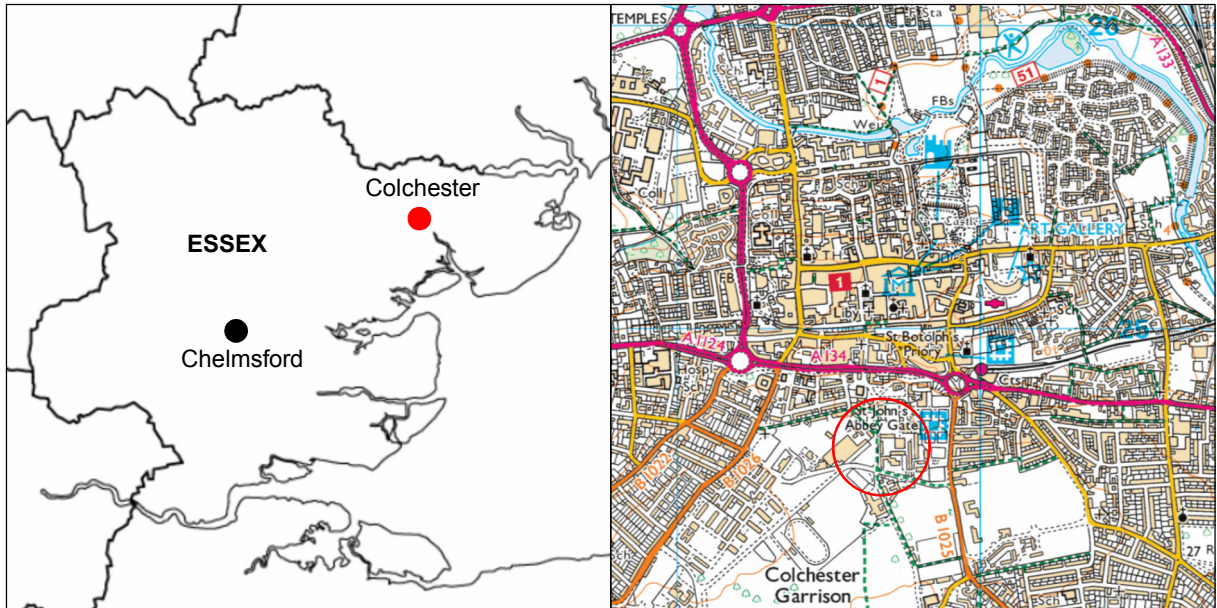


Fig 1 Site location. Abbey wall to be recorded shown green.

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Printable version

OASIS ID: colchest3-326985

Project details

Project name	Historic Building Recording at Precinct Wall of St John's Abbey, Flagstaff Road, Colchester, CO2 7EZ
Short description of the project	A programme of historic building recording was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust of the precinct wall of St John's Abbey along Flagstaff Road, Colchester, Essex in October 2018. Like the rest of the circuit, this section of wall has been heavily altered and repaired since its construction in the late 11th-/early 12th-century. Large segments have been replaced entirely by brickwork and it has lost a metre or more in height. Of the surviving fabric nothing remains that can be confidentially identified as the original medieval face of the wall. Several sections have been refaced in the post-medieval period, incorporating worked ragstone from the demolished abbey into the walls make-up.
Project dates	Start: 12-10-2018 End: 24-04-2019
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	18/08g - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	COLEM:2018.74 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	ECC4257 - HER event no.
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Other 8 - Land dedicated to the display of a monument
Monument type	PRECINCT WALL Medieval
Significant Finds	WORKED STONE Medieval
Methods & techniques	""Photographic Survey"", ""Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure""
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER St John's Abbey Precinct Wall, Flagstaff Road
Postcode	CO2 7EZ
Study area	55 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 99671 24682 51.884359817727 0.901624415674 51 53 03 N 000 54 05 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	CBC Archaeological Officer

Project design originator	Laura Pooley
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Mark Baister
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	2018.74
Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"Text", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	2018.74
Paper Contents	"Survey", "other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Miscellaneous Material", "Notebook - Excavation", ' Research', ' General Notes', "Plan", "Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Historic building recording of the precinct wall of St John's Abbey along Flagstaff Road, Colchester, Essex CO2 7EZ
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Baister, M.
Other bibliographic details	CAT Report 1402
Date	2019
Issuer or publisher	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Place of issue or publication	Colchester
Description	A4 bound report with clear plastic front and opaque black card back.
URL	http://cat.essex.ac.uk/summaries/CAT-1402.html
Entered by	Mark Baister (mb@catuk.org)
Entered on	24 April 2019

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