

Archaeological evaluation and geoarchaeological investigation at 6 Nelson Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 1LU

January and October 2020



by Dr Elliott Hicks

with contributions by Dr Matthew Loughton

figures by Chris Lister, Robin Mathieson, Ben Holloway, Sarah Carter and Emma
Holloway

fieldwork by Adam Wightman and Ben Holloway with Robin Mathieson and Nicholas
Pryke

**commissioned by Dan Lane
on behalf of Lane Homes Construction**

NGR: TM 1710 1421 (centre)

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CAT project refs.: 20/01d & 20/09a

ECC code: CSNR20

OASIS refs.: colchest3-380966 & colchest3-403359



Colchester Archaeological Trust

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

tel.:

email:



CAT Report 1516

October 2020

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Interim report on the quaternary geoarchaeology at 6 Nelson Road, Clacton, Essex, by P Allen

OASIS summary sheet

List of photographs, tables and figures

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1 Summary

Archaeological evaluation (four trial-trenches) and geoarchaeological investigation was carried out at 6 Nelson Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex in advance of the construction of a nine new dwellings. The investigation was undertaken due to the concentration of prehistoric remains previously uncovered in the vicinity but no material of this date was found. Instead, a Roman ditch was excavated, yielding pottery sherds and building material which suggests that a site of Roman settlement is located nearby.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the report for an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching and geoarchaeological investigation at 6 Nelson Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex which was carried out on 29th January and 1st October 2020. The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Birch on behalf of Nelson Seaview Homes in advance of the construction of nine new dwellings, and was undertaken by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT).

In response to consultation with Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS), Historic Environment Advisor Teresa O'Connor 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 2019).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a brief detailing the required archaeological work, written by Teresa O'Connor (ECCPS 2019), and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by CAT in response to the brief and agreed with ECCPS (CAT 2020).

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 field evaluation* (CifA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CifA 2014b).

3 Archaeological background

The following archaeological background is based on the ECC Brief and Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessible to the public via <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>. EHER numbers mentioned below are the SMR record numbers).

The Historic Environment Record shows that the proposed development lies within a region of very high potential for both Palaeolithic archaeological remains and early prehistoric archaeological remains. Sediments from a former river channel laid down by the ancestral Thames before it was diverted have yielded internationally significant Palaeolithic remains and Pleistocene faunal remains within the area. Approximately 125m east northeast of the site, two boreholes excavated in 1979 found evidence of estuarine and marine beds overlaying freshwater beds from which Clactonian artefacts were recovered (EHER 2830, see WSI Appendix 1 for more details). There is the potential for significant Pleistocene sediments to be present below the surface geology which may contain Palaeolithic archaeological remains as well as buried prehistoric land surfaces which may be impacted by the proposed development.

In 1902, a Neolithic axe was found on the beach southeast of the Martello Tower (EHER 2909). Pits, cooking holes and hearths, as well as wooden paddles and a large quantity of Mesolithic lithic tools – including axes, maceheads, blades and microliths –

have also been recorded at Lion Point and Jaywick Sands, approximately 980m southwest of the development site, (EHER 2854, EHER 2862-6 and EHER 47245).

A red hill has also been recorded some 445m to the southwest of the site (EHER 2912). Red Hills are sites where salt was extracted by evaporation from sea water, using clay pans over hearths. The earliest excavated example of red hills in Essex appear to be Middle Bronze Age in origin (Germany, 192-5), but the majority can be dated to the Late Iron Age and Roman periods. Some sites were re-used during the medieval period. For an overview of salt-making sites see *The Red Hills of Essex* (CAG 1990).

Surrounding the area, parallel to the shore, are numerous World War II-era defences. Concrete anti-tank pimples and a Dannert barbed wire road barrier, all now destroyed, were located in the road between the current site and 9 Nelson Road (EHER 21212).

4 Aims

Geoarchaeological surveying was undertaken to investigate the Pleistocene sediments thought to underlie the site, and which have been identified as having a high potential for containing Palaeolithic artefactual remains and palaeoenvironmental material. The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to record the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits, and to assess the archaeological potential of the site to allow the ECCHEA to determine if further investigation is required.

5 Results (Figs 2-6)

5.1 Evaluation results

Four trial-trenches were machine-excavated under the supervision of a CAT archaeologist. Trenches T1, T3 and T4 were 15m long and 1.8m wide; T2 was 8m long and 1.8m wide. The evaluation was carried out in two phases due to site restrictions.

Three layers were recorded. Trenches T1 and T2 were cut through modern topsoil (L1, c 0.1-0.13m thick, soft, dry dark grey/brown loam with occasional stones) sealed subsoil (L2, c 0.28-0.41m thick, firm dry medium/dark grey silty-clay with occasional stones) beneath which lay natural clays and gravels (L3, firm/hard, dry light grey clay with frequent gravel, encountered at a depth of 0.41-0.52m below current ground level). Trenches T3 and T4 were excavated following the removal of the topsoil and much of the subsoil from across the site. They were cut through the remnants of L2 (c 0.11-0.16m thick) onto L3.

No significant archaeological remains were identified in trenches T2, T3 or T4.

Trench 1 (T1): 15m long and 1.8m wide

Roman ditch F1 lay on a NW-SE alignment and was 0.8m wide and 0.14m deep.



Photograph 1 T1 trench shot – looking east



Photograph 2 T2 trench shot – looking south southeast

5.2 Geoarchaeological investigation results

A geoarchaeological test-pit was excavated and a borehole record was taken. As a consequence of the current restrictions on laboratory access due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, however, the results of the geoarchaeological investigation have only been compiled in preliminary form. These are appended to this report.

6 Finds

by Dr Matthew Loughton

The evaluation produced three sherds of Roman greyware pottery (fabric GX) and eight sherds of Roman ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) (one sherd of tile and seven sherds of brick) totalling 11 sherds with a combined weight of 1,327g (Table 1). All of this material came from gully/ditch F1.

Ceramic material	No.	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	EVE
Roman Pottery	3	118	39	0.00
Roman Ceramic Building Material (CBM)	8	1,209	151	-
All	11	1,327	121	0.00

Table 1 Details on the main types of ceramics and pottery

7 Conclusion

Archaeological evaluation was undertaken at this site due to the concentration of prehistoric remains previously uncovered in the vicinity. While no evidence of prehistoric activity was uncovered during the investigation, a Roman ditch was excavated. The feature was not detected in trench T3, to the northwest, and so must either deviate to the east or west or else was truncated by modern disturbance, evidence of which was detected in this trench. The ditch yielded some sherds of pottery and fragments of CBM, suggesting that a site of Roman settlement, possibly a villa or a farmstead, lies nearby.

8 Acknowledgements

CAT thanks Mr Dan Lane and Lane Homes Construction for commissioning and funding the work. The project was managed by C Lister with fieldwork carried out by A Wightman and Ben Holloway with R Mathieson and N Pryke. Figures are by C Lister, R Mathieson, B Holloway, S Carter and E Holloway. The project was monitored for ECCPS by Teresa O'Connor.

9 References

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

Brown, N & Glazebrook, J	2000	<i>Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8 (EAA 8)
Colchester Archaeological Group (CAG)	1990	<i>The Red Hills of Essex: salt-making in antiquity</i> , by A Fawn, K Evans, I McMaster & G Davies
CAT	2019	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>
ClfA	2014a	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation</i>
ClfA	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
ECCPS	2019	<i>Brief for geoarchaeological evaluation at 6 Nelson Road, Clacton On Sea</i> , by T O'Connor
Germany, M	2004	'Middle Iron Age red hill at Tollesbury Creek, Tollesbury, Essex', <i>Essex Archaeology and History</i> 34 , 192-195
Gurney, D	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England.</i> East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14 (EAA 14)
Historic England (HE)	2015	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i>

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	2019	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> . Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

10 Abbreviations and glossary

Bronze Age	period from c 2500 – 700 BC
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CBM	ceramic building material, ie brick/tile
CIfA	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 (layer) of material
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c 1500
Mesolithic	period from c 10,000 – 4000BC
modern	period from c AD 1800 to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
Neolithic	period from c 4000 – 2500 BC
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
Palaeolithic	period c 800,000 BC to c 10,000BC
prehistoric	pre-Roman
Roman	the period from AD 43 to c AD 410
section	(abbreviation sx or Sx) vertical slice through feature/s or layer/s
ws	written scheme of investigation

11 Contents of archive

Finds: part of one box

Paper record

One A4 document wallet containing:

The report (CAT Report 1516)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Site digital photos and log

Site section drawings

Inked section drawings

Digital record

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

The report (CAT Report 1516)

ECC evaluation brief, CAT written scheme of investigation

Graphics

Site digital photos and log

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 project reference no. CSNR20.

Distribution list:

Mr Richard Birch
Nelson Seaview Homes
ECC Place Services Historic Environment Advisor
Essex Historic Environment Record, Essex County Council



Colchester Archaeological Trust

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

tel.: [REDACTED]
email: [REDACTED]

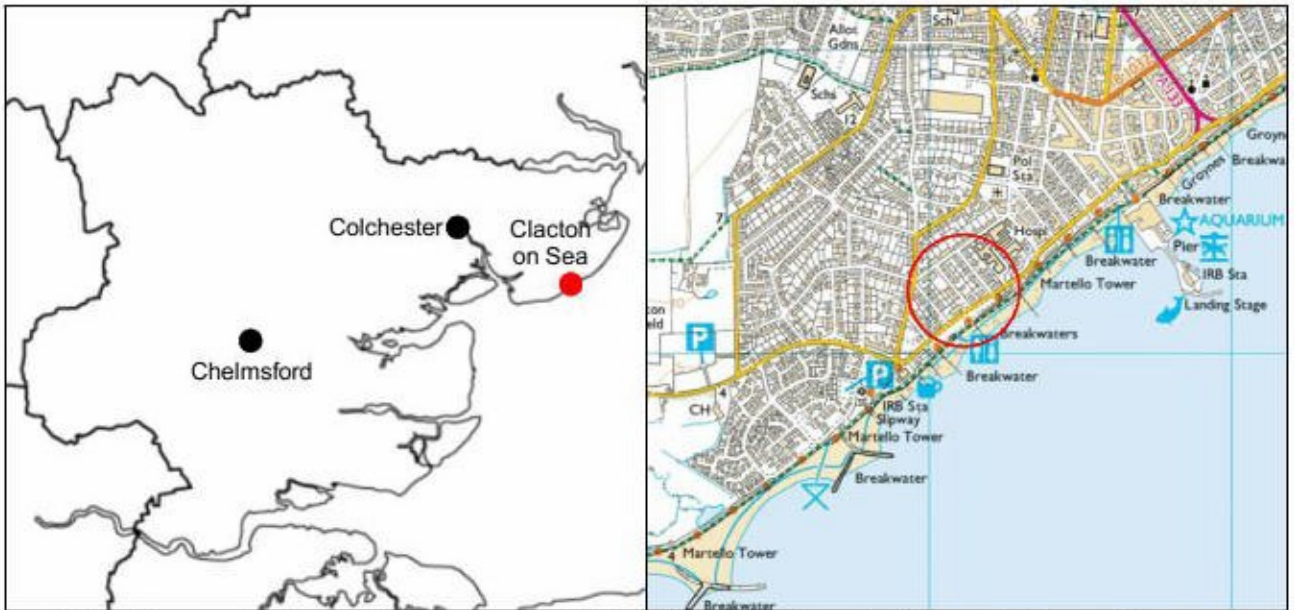
Checked by: Philip Crummy
Date: 09.10.2020

Appendix 1 Pottery list

Site	Name	Site Code	Country	Cat	Feature type	Find no.	Find Type	Nr	Wg	MSW	Discard	Rim	Handle	Base	Decoration	STAMP	GRAF Pre-F	GRAF Post-F	Mud Int	Mud Ex	Soot Int	Soot Ex	Burn Int	Burn Ext	Ovenfired	Residue	Straslab	Wear (wood)	Impregnated mud	Repair hole	Handle	Glaze	Polishing	Fabric Gr/p	Typology	Vessel Function	ENE	Diam.	Max. cal height	Comments	Date		
Clacton-on-Sea	6 Nelson Rd	CSNR20	Essex	F1	Gully	1	Pottery	1	90	90												X	X																			Roman	
Clacton-on-Sea	6 Nelson Rd	CSNR20	Essex	F1	Gully	1	Pottery	1	14	14																																Roman	
Clacton-on-Sea	6 Nelson Rd	CSNR20	Essex	F1	Gully	1	Pottery	1	14	14												X	X																			slightly micaceous	Roman

Appendix 2 CBM list

Site	Name	Site Code	Country	Cat	Feature type	Find no.	N	Wg	W SW	Discard	Typology	Sub-type	Flange	Cut always	Marks 1	Marks 2	Flux tile	Pop tile	Disc.			Comments	Date		
													Flange corner												
													Flange In Left												
													Flange In Right												
													Flange Back Left												
													Flange Back Right												
													NR Flange												
													LR												
													LR												
													LCA												
													LCA Length												
													LCA												
													LCA length												
													FL height												
													FL width												
													FL thickness												
													STAMP												
													Signature												
													Tally Mark												
													GRAFF POC.F												
													Animal print												
													Tree print												
													Scored												
													Combed												
													Roller stamp												
													Cuts, Vene												
													Swat. Wrat												
													Blocked vent												
													Pop tiles round												
													Pop tiles square												
													2 Pop tiles												
													lined pop tile												
													Length												
													Breadth												
													Thickness												
													Marlar												
													Barrel												
													Ovenrind												
													Abraded												
													Wear (scuff)												
Clacton-on-Sea	6 Nelson Rd	CBNFCO	Essex	F1	Gully	1	1	174	174	X	RT													Roman	
Clacton-on-Sea	6 Nelson Rd	CBNFCO	Essex	F1	Gully	1	7	1035	448	X	RE														Roman



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Fig 1 Site location and secondary trenching layout in relation to the proposed development (dashed blue lines).



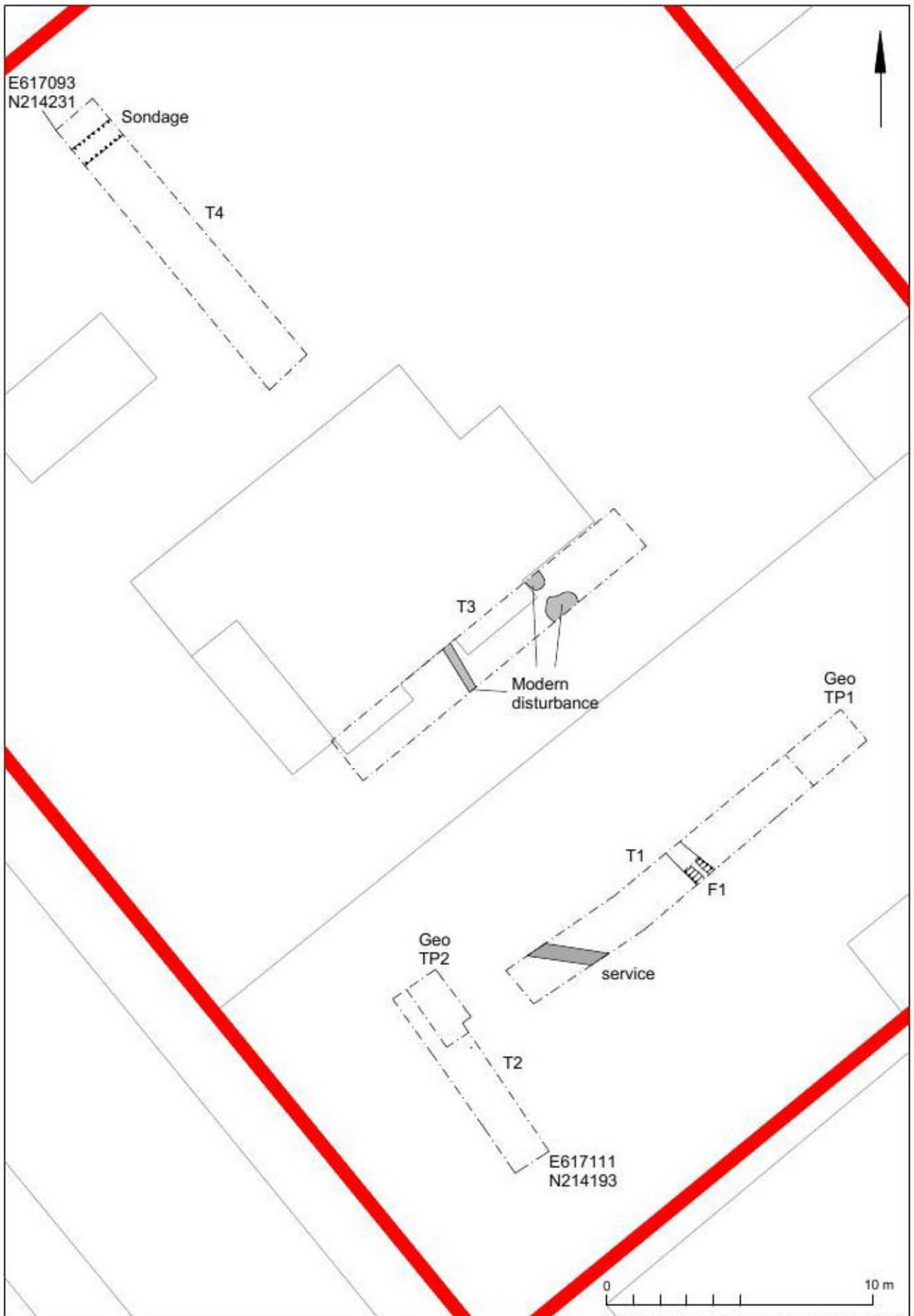


Fig 2 Results.

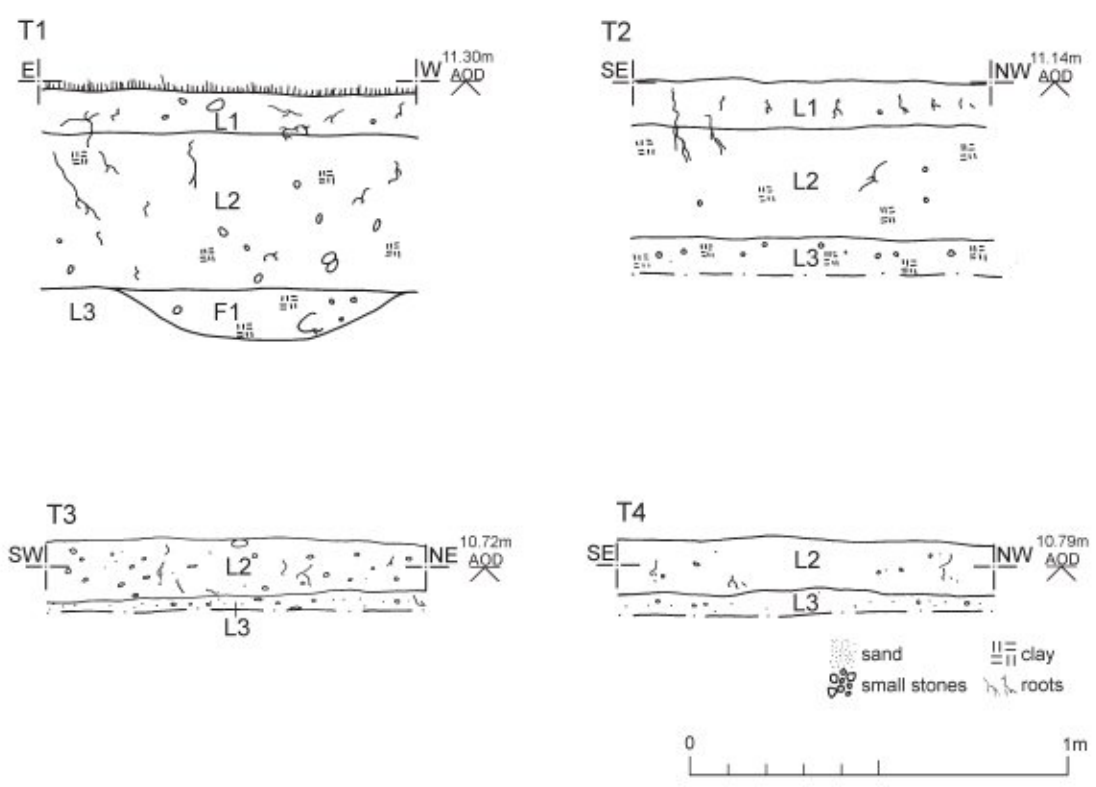


Fig 3 Representative sections.

**INTERIM REPORT
ON THE QUATERNARY GEOARCHAEOLOGY
AT 6 NELSON ROAD,
CLACTON, ESSEX**

Site Visit 25 January 2021

P. Allen

GeoArcheol

13 Churchgate, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Herts EN8 9NB

01992 630661

6 NELSON ROAD, CLACTON, ESSEX

SITE INVESTIGATION (PART) REPORT

As part of a geoarchaeological assessment at 6 Nelson Road, Clacton, a borehole was sunk on 25 January 2021 at NGR TM 1709 1422 (3.90 m from boundary at pavement to south and 8.30 m from boundary fence to north) to a depth of 7.5 m below ground surface (bgs), c.3.5 mOD.

The geology of the site is known to comprise estuarine clays, silts, sands and gravelly sand to depth of c.8 m bgs (+3 mOD) and freshwater interglacial sands and clays from c.8 to 15 m bgs (+3 to -4 mOD) (Bridgland, 1994; Bridgland et al., 1995). The interglacial Clacton Channel deposits are of Hoxnian age (c.400,000 years ago) and are of international importance.

As the bore went only to 7.5 bgs, the interglacial zone of interest was not reached.

However, the most recent data from the Estuarine Beds are from 1955 (Warren, 1955) and lack the detail that can be obtained with modern research methods. Samples from the estuarine beds were recovered and sub-samples are being distributed, to various research laboratories at the Universities of Durham, Greenwich, and York and the Natural History Museum and to other interested experts, to establish whether further investigation of the cores will yield significant results. Currently Covid precautions are restricting access to the laboratories. When sufficient analyses have been carried further reports will be submitted.

Dr Peter Allen

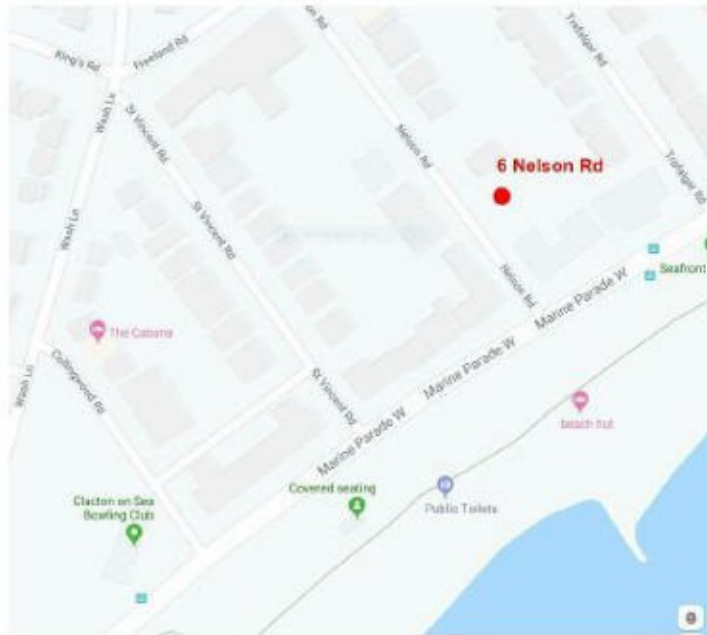
References

Bridgland, D.R., 1994. *Quaternary of the Thames*. Geological Conservation Review Series 7. London, Chapman and Hall.

Bridgland, D.R., Field, M.H., Holmes, J.A., McNabb, J., Preece, R.C., Selby, I., Wymer, J.J., Borcham, S., Irving, B.G., Parfitt, S.A., Stuart, A.J., 1999. Middle Pleistocene interglacial Thames-Medway deposits at Clacton-on-Sea, England: reconsideration of the biostratigraphical and environmental context of the type Clactonian Palaeolithic industry. *Quaternary Science Reviews* 18, 109–146.

Warren, S.H., 1955. The Clacton (Essex) channel deposits. *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society of London* 111, 283–307.

Figure 1. Location of Nelson Road Site.



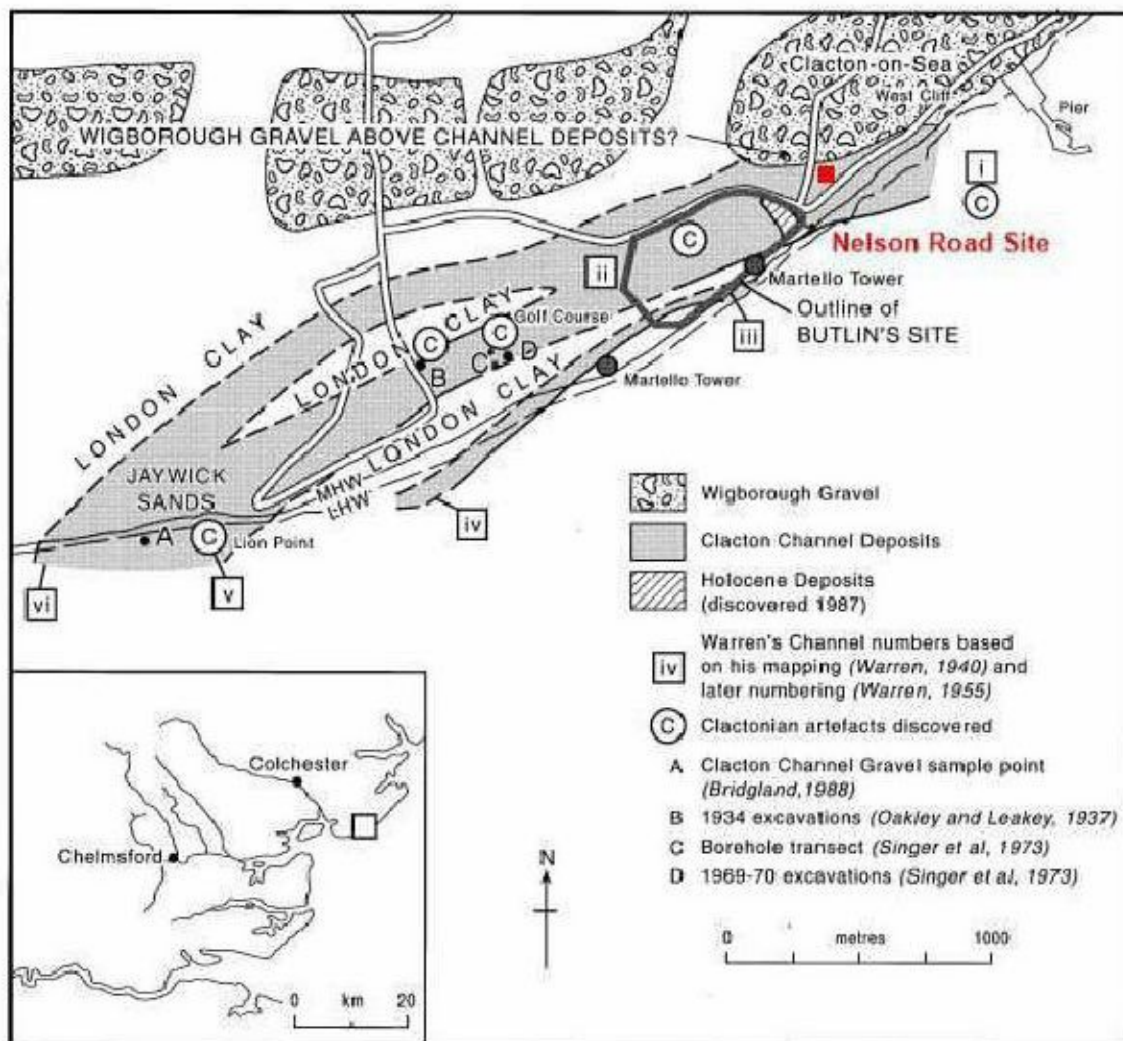
(Google)

Figure 2. Location of Borehole.



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Figure 3. Geological setting.



(Bridgland et al., 1999)

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OASIS ID: colchest3-380966

Project details

Project name	An archaeological and geoarchaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at 6 Nelson Road, Clacton on Sea, Essex, CO15 1LU.
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation (two trial-trenches) and geoarchaeological investigation was carried out at 6 Nelson Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex in advance of the construction of a nine new dwellings. The investigation was undertaken due to the concentration of prehistoric remains previously uncovered in the vicinity but no material of this date was found. Instead, a Roman ditch was excavated, yielding pottery sherds and building material which suggests that a site of Roman settlement is located nearby.
Project dates	Start: 29-01-2020 End: 29-01-2020
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	18/00888FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	2020/01d - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	CSNR20 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	GULLY Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	CBM Roman
Methods & techniques	""Targeted Trenches"", ""Test Pits""
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX TENDRING CLACTON ON SEA 6 Nelson Road, Clacton on Sea, Essex
Postcode	CO15 1LU
Study area	0.18 Hectares
Site coordinates	TM 1710 1421 51.783792216559 1.147937190958 51 47 01 N 001 08 52 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 10.62m Max: 10.76m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Project brief originator	HEM Team Officer, ECC
Project design originator	Emma Holloway
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Adam Wightman
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Nelson Seawiew Homes

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Physical Archive ID	CSNR20
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Digital Archive ID	CSNR20
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Colchester Museum
Paper Archive ID	CSNR20
Paper Media available	"Photograph","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

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