



## **TOUCHSTONE ARCHAEOLOGY**

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment in Advance of the proposed  
development at the site of Cowdray Centre, Cowdray Avenue, Colchester,  
Essex CO1 1BX

NGR: TL 99906 26249

Report for Persimmon Homes, Essex

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**Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment in Advance of the proposed development at the site of Cowdray Centre, Cowdray Avenue, Colchester, Essex CO1 1BX**

NGR: TL 99906 26249

**1. SUMMARY**

**1.1** *TOUCHSTONE Archaeology has been commissioned by Persimmon Homes, Essex to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment on the site of Cowdray Centre, Cowdray Avenue, Colchester, Essex CO1 1BX.*

**1.2** *The proposed development comprises of a residential development with associated access routes and landscaping.*

**1.3** *The proposed development area (PDA) is located in the east of England, in the north of the county of Essex and the town of Colchester. The PDA (NGR: TL 99906 26249) is situated to the north of the town in an urban area between Colchester town and the village of Mile End. The site comprises of a rectangular plot of c. 5.1 Ha. of industrial land that once formed the Cowdray Centre. It is bounded north by the railway line, west and east by industrial units and south by Masons Lane and the gardens of houses that front Cowdray Avenue. (Fig.1-2).*

**1.4** *This Desk Based Assessment has examined the wide variety of archaeological data held by EHER and other sources (section 10.2). Based on this data the potential for archaeological sites either on or in the near vicinity of the proposed development can be summarized as:*

- *Prehistoric: **moderate***
- *Iron Age: **low***
- *Romano-British: **high***
- *Anglo-Saxon: **low***

- *Medieval: low*
- *Post-medieval: high*
- *Modern: high*

*The Desk Based Assessment concludes that the site has a **high** potential for archaeological discoveries.*

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

**2.1** The PDA is centered on the National Grid Reference: TL 99906 26249.

The report has accessed various sources of information to identify any known heritage assets, which may be located within a c.500m vicinity of the Proposed Development Area.

**2.2** Archaeological investigations, both recent and historic have been studied and the information from these investigations has been incorporated into the assessment.

**2.3** This report is a desk-based appraisal from known cartographic, photographic and Archaeological sources and is a research led statement on the archaeological potential of the proposed development.

**2.4** It may be that intrusive investigations, such as a Geophysical Survey and/or an Archaeological Evaluation, with machine cut trial trenching, may be requested by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) as a Planning Condition.

### **3. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

#### **3.1 Geology**

**3.1.1** The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the PDA is set on Thames Group –Clay, silt and sand; Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 34 to 56 million years ago in the Paleogene Period in a local environment previously dominated by deep seas.

**3.1.2** To the west there are superficial deposits of Head and to the east are river terrace deposits of sand and gravel, both formed up to 3 million years ago in the quaternary period in an environment dominated by rivers and subaerial slopes.

#### **3.2 Topography**

**3.2.1** The PDA sits at an average height of 12m AOD. It is located in the Colne Valley, an area of down land between the higher ground of Colchester town c.1.25km south and Mile End c.1.6km north. The Greater Anglia railway line, which runs from London to Norwich, follows the north boundary and the River Colne flows southeast to the estuary at Brightlingsea, c.360m south (Fig.1-2).

#### **3.3 Historic Hedgerows**

The PDA is located in an urban part of the town that is mixed development of industrial and residential. Cartographic evidence suggests that any vegetation was removed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century development process. It is unlikely that the site would have vegetation that qualifies as 'important' as defined by Schedule 1 of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 (Plate 1). The proposed development will have no impact on the vegetation.

## **4. PLANNING BACKGROUND**

### **4.1 The Proposed Development**

The proposed development area comprises of c.5.1 hectares of industrial land with a planning application for a new residential development with associated roads and landscaping.

### **4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) Policy 12**

The NPPF (2012) paragraphs 126 – 141 is the relevant policy for the historic environment, particularly paragraphs 126 and 128:

#### **4.2.1 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment**

Paragraph 126. Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

**4.2.2** Paragraph 128. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significant.

As a minimum, the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation (NPPF 2012).

### **4.3 Planning Policy Guidance**

Planning Policy Guidance that help to preserve the built and archaeological heritage are:

- PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment
- PPG16 Archaeology and Planning

### **4.4 Statutory Protection**

Both above and below ground archaeological remains that are considered Nationally can be identified and protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

Any works affecting a scheduled Monument should be preceded by an application to the Secretary of State for Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC). Geophysical investigation or the use of a metal detector requires advance permission from Historic England.

The legal requirements on control of development and alterations affecting buildings, including those which are listed or in conservation areas (which are protected by law), is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

## 4.5 Regional Policies

4.5.1 Colchester's Archaeology and Development Strategy (Adopted 2015) recognises that Heritage is a key priority in Colchester Borough's Strategic Plan 2015/2018.

Colchester's Heritage Strategy defines the following themes relating to archaeology:

*Promote best practice in terms of conservation and stewardship of Colchester's heritage assets, supported by key stakeholders and national and local government policy and guidance.*

*Promote positive initiatives that secure the conservation, beneficial management and enhancement of Colchester's assets and maximise the contribution of heritage to sustainable development.*

*Promote high quality design in new development that respects and enhances heritage assessments, local distinctiveness and the character of Colchester Borough's townscape and rural landscape*

*Promote Colchester Borough's rich heritage at local regional and international levels showing the borough as a good place to visit, live, work and invest in.*

*Identify opportunities to support the council's ambitious regeneration agenda through positive intervention initiatives within the historic environment.*

*Identify opportunities presented by new development to promote greater understanding and local heritage within local communities.*

*Identify opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in heritage initiatives, maximising its contribution to health, wellbeing and learning.*

*Identify opportunities to display new heritage discoveries in a range of appropriate community settings.*

*Maintain, enhance and promote the historic environment record, which is a key resource and the evidence base for all heritage assets, for the whole Borough.*

*Promote the long-term curation of important archaeological archives and collections and make them available for display and study.*

*Promote an integrated approach between different services, organisations and sectors to increase the impact and audience of Colchester's Heritage assets.*

**4.5.2** The South-East Research Framework (SERF) is on-going with groups of researchers producing a Resource Assessment, which will identify research questions and topics in order to form a Research Agenda for the future.

**4.6** This Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Good Practice Advice notes 1, 2 and 3, which now supersede the PPS 5 Practice Guide, which has been withdrawn by the Government.

The Good Practice Advice notes emphasizes the need for assessments of the significance of any heritage assets, which are likely to be changed, so the assessment can inform the decision process.

Significance is defined in the NPPF Guidance in the Glossary as “the value of the heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historical. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also it’s setting”. The setting of the heritage asset is also clarified in the Glossary as “the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve”.

This Desk-Based Assessment therefore forms the initial stage of the archaeological investigation and is intended to inform and assist in decisions regarding archaeological mitigation for the proposed development and associated planning applications.

## **5. PROJECT CONSTRAINTS**

No project constraints were encountered during the data collection for this assessment.

## **6. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

**6.1** The Desk-Based Assessment was commissioned by Persimmon Homes, Essex, in order to supplement a planning application for the proposed construction of a residential development with associated roads and landscaping, to establish the potential for archeological features and deposits.

### **6.2 Desktop Study – Institute for Archaeologists (revised 2011)**

This desktop study has been produced in line with archaeological standards, as defined by the Institute for Archaeologists (2014). A desktop, or desk-based assessment, is defined as being:

*“a programme of study of the historic environment within a specified area or site on land, the inter-tidal zone or underwater that addresses agreed research and/or conservation objectives. It consists of an analysis of existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify the likely heritage assets, their interests and significance and the character of the study area, including appropriate consideration of the settings of heritage assets and, in England, the nature, extent and quality of the known or potential archaeological, historic, architectural and artistic interest. Significance is to be judged in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate”. (CiFA 2014)*

## **7. METHODOLOGY**

### **7.1 Desk-Based Assessment**

#### **7.1.1 Archaeological Databases**

The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) provides an accurate insight into catalogued sites and finds within both the proposed development area (PDA) and the surrounding environs of Colchester. The Archaeology Data Service Online Catalogue (ADS) was also used. The search was carried out within a 500m radius of the proposed development site and relevant HER data is included in the report. The Portable Antiquities Scheme Database (PAS) was also searched as an additional source as the information contained within is not always transferred to the local HER.

#### **7.1.2 Historical Documents**

Historical documents, such as charters, registers, wills and deeds etc., were considered not relevant to this specific study.

#### **7.1.3 Cartographic and Pictorial Documents**

A cartographic and pictorial document search was undertaken during this assessment. Research was carried out using resources offered by Essex County Council, the Internet and Ordnance Survey Historical mapping (Figs. 3-10).

#### **7.1.4 Aerial Photographs**

The study of the collection of aerial photographs held by Google Earth was undertaken (Plate 1).

#### **7.1.5 Geotechnical Information**

To date, no known geotechnical investigations have been carried out at the site.

### **7.1.6 Secondary and statutory resources**

Secondary and statutory sources, such as regional and periodic archaeological Studies are considered appropriate to this type of study and have been included within this assessment where necessary.

## **8. RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS**

**8.1** The report has accessed various sources of information to identify any known heritage assets, which may be located within the vicinity of the Proposed Development Area.

Archaeological investigations, both recent and historic have been studied and the information from these investigations has been incorporated into the assessment.

### **8.2 Archaeology**

**8.2.1** The site is located in an area characterised as Colchester and Environs (G4). The PDA is located in a setting of residential and commercial development on the north side of the Colne valley. To the south is the ribbon of green space that makes up the valley floor of the River Colne and beyond on higher ground, the historic town core. To the north is the railway track.

The site was historically farmland belonging to Mercer Farm. The area has been subject to archaeological finds since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, although some of the earlier finds were not comprehensively recorded.

The geology of the area is brickearth and consequently there is substantial evidence within the local vicinity for kilns as early as the Roman period continuing through to the post medieval period; the Poplar Lane Brickworks (MCC5280) operated by William Woods from 1894 to c.1940, was located on the west boundary and it is possible that evidence of the brickworks remains below the surface.

There are several HER records located within the PDA. In 1984 an early Bronze Age scraper, of a type usually found in burials, was discovered towards the centre of the site at Unit 22 (MCC2132/ECC2354/MCC7060/ MCC2297). A hexagonal pillbox, recorded on aerial photos from 1946, located at Gordon Works (MCC5075) and a Spigot Mortar emplacement (MCC5076) recorded at Arklight were sited to the east boundary; an ammunition shelter (MCC5541) was also located at the Arklight Factory further towards the centre of the site (MCC5076). It is possible that evidence of these features may survive beneath the ground.

The site is surrounded by evidence of Roman funeral sites. A Roman cremation cemetery (ECC1639/MCC1898) was discovered in 1927 within the Poplar Lane brickworks on the western boundary of the PDA in which the museum recovered c.18 burials. A second Roman cemetery (MCC7059) in use from C1st to the late C3rd or early C4<sup>th</sup> was discovered to the north of the railway line. No inhumations were recorded, however, a necklace suggests that there was at least one present. While the railway divides the two monuments, they may have been one prior to the installation of the railway in the C19th. A Roman grey cinerary urn with cremated bone (ECC1191/MCC2131) was found during a field walking survey just off of the southwest boundary of the PDA, suggesting an extension of the recorded cemetery or the presence of further cemetery sites.

### **8.2.2 0-100m Radius:**

In 1983, twenty-three trial pits excavated by Norman & Dawbarn Consulting Engineers on the western boundary of the PDA produced a negative result (ECC2191). In 1990 a Roman cremation burial was found c.25m southwest of the PDA during a field walking survey by Mr. P Bowers (MCC2131/ECC1191).

### **8.2.3 100-200m Radius:**

The Colchester SMR file has several handwritten notes from the late C19th and early C20th regarding archaeological finds.

In 1845, William Wire, during works to the railway cutting, noted that a kiln had been found in the brickyard near North Station and a Roman amphora was found in the railway cutting (ECC409/MCC1096/MCC8418).

In 1907, a tiled tomb and a second burial, dating to the Roman period, were found in a field, c.150m southwest. The first grave had two cinerary urns and a buff water drinking bottle or flagon, two small paterae of grey ware and two drinking cups of pinkish buff painted a deep chocolate brown. The second burial had fragments of a cinerary urn of brown ware with a polished surface and traces of a black coating and beadings on the neck (ECC2424/MCC2515/MCC2516). In 1909, a Roman burial with three jet and eight glass beads and the teeth of a young person was found nearby, c.150m southwest of the PDA (ECC2425/MCC2517).

A Roman cremation urn was found at Serpentine Walk in 1926/27 (MCC1410) and between 1926-1930 a Roman cremation cemetery, from which c.18 burials were recovered by Colchester Museum, was recorded c.125m west of the PDA (ECC1898/ECC1639/ECC1641).

In 1934, a Roman amphora and mortaria pottery stamped by *Martinus* was recorded in field 1074 at Serpentine Walk, and a possible kiln site dating to c.200AD was thought to be located at the corner of Margaret Road c.125m southwest of the PDA (ECC1216).

Roman Claudian pottery was found during field walking to the south of Serpentine walk in 1937 (ECC1431).

In 1943, fragments of Roman pottery were recovered c.150m southwest (MCC1332).

In 1956, the excavation of a water trench on nursery grounds at Margaret Road and Catchpole Road, uncovered Roman pottery of brown native LCP and an almost white copy of a buff beaker F113 along with sherds of vessels (ECC1645/MCC1899).

In 1960, sherds of pottery thought to be potters waste of mostly mortaria were found in the nursery gardens at Strowgler's Ground (ECC2359).

A Roman Cemetery, in use from 1<sup>st</sup> to late 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century, was recorded in the area of the brickfields. No inhumations were found but the recovery of a necklace suggests that an inhumation was present (MCC7059).

Burnt earth and brick rubble found on the site of what is now Leisure World is thought to be the remains of a burnt out Roman building constructed from clay blocks (MCC8419).

Excavations in 1997 by Colchester Archaeological Trust uncovered the remains of a 19<sup>th</sup> kiln (MCC5281/MCC5194/MCC3526).

Recent archaeological evaluations have also produced Roman deposits. In 2007, to the south of Jarmin Road, Roman ditches and pits containing domestic waste and one cremated

human bone were discovered (ECC2786). In 2008, three test pits uncovered ditches, burnt daub and brick tile from the Roman period c.150m southwest (ECC3608).

Brick Kiln Lane, Mile End Lane or Poplar Lane as it was later known, passed north under the railway to North Station where a brickworks is recorded, c.150m northwest.

A spigot mortar emplacement is recorded on an aerial photograph in 1948 on Cowdray Avenue (MCC5082).

#### **8.2.4 200-300m Radius:**

In 1889, several objects of antiquity were found on a brickyard to the north of the railway, some of which were sold in 1912, although the provenance was questionable (ECC1638).

In 1927, a grey Roman urn was found on Serpentine Walk (ECC1333).

In 1943, a 1<sup>st</sup> century Roman amphora and fine wares pottery were recorded at the site of the new Fire Station, c.200m southwest of the PDA (ECC1207) and a scatter of Roman cremations were found in the near vicinity (MCC7690).

#### **8.2.5 300-400m Radius:**

In 1846, William Wire noted a large Roman amphora containing a cinerary urn with bone and lid and several urns also containing bones during work on the railway cutting at Turner Rise (ECC1334) and an Roman amphora containing six glass vessels and an earthen lamp were found near North Station, c.350m northwest (ECC1633/MCC1894).

In 1923, PG Laver recorded a possible metalled crossing or ford, in line with Duncan's Gate at the River Colne (ECC694).

In 1856, ground boring was carried out at Colchester Castle Park revealing evidence of archaeology deposits. A tessellated pavement was found in a field behind the castle in 1892 and in 1906, the outline of houses were visible as parch marks on the ground, which lead to an excavation of Roman stone houses and part of the street grid (MCC7876/MCC7877)

#### **8.2.6 400-500m Radius:**

In 1844, William Wire noted several Roman funeral urns containing calcined bones in a grave or pit with a large quantity of charcoal, opposite a barn near the station (ECC1634).

The possible site of Fort Rainsborough, built in 1648 by Parliamentarian forces, is located at a distance of c.400m northeast. Field walking and metal detecting surveys have produced a

quantity of clay pipe, sherds of 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century Roman sandy grey ware and 17<sup>th</sup> Century westerwaled stoneware, four powder measures, casting spillage, lead sheet and musket balls dating to the civil war (ECC2438).

### 8.2.7 Established stratigraphy

A soil survey carried out towards the centre of the site, confirmed a clayey sand/gravel at approximately 1m in depth (ECC2132) and twenty five trial pits to the boundary of the PDA revealed a clayey soil fill, overlying sand and silt or clay with organic matter, underlain by sandy silts, over sand and gravel (ECC2191).

## 9. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

### 9.1 Table of Historical Periods

Paleolithic	c. 500,000 BC – c.10,000 BC
Mesolithic	c.10,000 BC – c. 4,300 BC
Neolithic	c. 4,300 BC – c. 2,300 BC
Bronze Age	c. 2,300 BC – c. 600 BC
Iron Age	c. 600 BC – c. AD 43
Romano-British	AD 43 – c. AD 410
Anglo-Saxon	AD 410 – AD 1066
Medieval	AD 1066 – AD 1485
Post-medieval	AD 1485 – AD 1900
Modern	AD 1901 – present day

*Table 1 Classification of Archaeological Periods*

**9.2** This section of the assessment will focus on the archaeological and historical development of this area, placing it within a local context. Each period classification will provide a brief introduction to the wider landscape (500m radius centered on each site of the PDA), followed by a full record of archaeological sites, monuments and records within

the site's immediate vicinity. Time scales for archaeological periods represented in the report are listed on page 14 in **Table 1**.

### **9.3 Introduction**

The Archaeological record within the assessment area is diverse and should comprise possible activity dating from one of the earliest human period in Britain through to the modern period.

The geographic and topographic location of Colchester is within a landscape that has been the focus of trade, travel, settlement, industry and communication since the Paleolithic.

### **9.4 History of the Locality**

**9.4.1** In the Palaeolithic period human activity was focused towards Marks Tey (8km W) which lay at the easternmost edge of the ice sheet that covered most of Britain. Palaeolithic hand axes were found beneath Colchester, within the Anglian and Ipswichian glaciation levels that pre-dated the River Colne (*CAR 6, 320-1; Wymer 1985, 255-6; Niblett 1985, microfiche 3:F12*).

**9.4.2** Once the ice had retreated, Britain became a fertile hunting ground of forests. The PDA lies in the valley and on the floodplains of the River Colne. Stray finds of tools from the prehistoric period have been recorded in this area but settlement seems to have been located on the higher ground at Culver Street, to the north side of the town, where pits containing two ritually placed Neolithic grooved ware vessels, Deverel-Rimbury bucket urn fragments, sherds of pottery bowls, flint flakes and quern fragments (*CAR 6, 37*) have been excavated; cropmarks of a long Neolithic mortuary enclosure and possibly two cursuses have been identified in the Cone Valley from aerial photography and a Neolithic henge is located at Tendring (14km E).

**9.4.3** Due to its location and trade routes to Europe, Essex became the leading force behind social and economic development during the Bronze Age. At Head Street, Bronze Age pottery, flints and a bronze awl were recovered (*Brooks 2004b, 2, 35*) and there have been a scattering of Bronze Age palstaves and flint axes from the gravel terrace, several urn

burials to the west of the town and a bronze cauldron found at Sheepen (*Hawkes and Hull 1947, 3; CAR 11, 3, 134-5*) to the southwest close to the settlement of Sheepen Hill. Several key sites can be found in the landscape surrounding Colchester; a complex of 37 Bronze Age ring ditches were excavated between 1960 and 1974 at Ardleigh (7km NE) producing evidence of an enclosed roundhouse (*Brown 1999, 26-30*), a cemetery containing a number of Deverel-Rimbury cremations was excavated at Chitts Hill (6km SW), a cemetery containing 22 barrows is found at Brightlingsea (11km SE) and two other cemeteries at Dedham (6km NE) and Langham (9km NE).

**9.4.4** The Iron age saw the settlement pattern of southeast Britain became more nucleated and two powerful tribal groups emerged; the *Catuvellauni* of Hertfordshire and the *Trinovantes* of Essex and southern Suffolk.

In c.25-15BC coins were minted by *Tasciovanus* at *Camulodunon*. This settlement is located to the southwest of the town in the area of Lexden and Gosbecks (3km SW) and was named for *Camulos* the 'god of war' and *dunon* meaning 'the high place or fortress', becoming the stronghold or *Oppidum* from which his son *Cunobelin* united both tribes and ruled large swathes of southern and eastern Britain. A network of earthwork banks, built to protect *Camulodunon*, and a series of burial sites, among which is the Lexden Tumulus thought to contain the grave of *Cunobelin*, still survive. *Cunobelin* was considered by the Roman biographer Suetonius to be *Britannorum rex* or 'King of the Britons' and his sons *Caratacus* and *Togodumnus* led the resistance against the Romans.

**9.4.5** The Romans invaded Britain in 43AD and four legions under the command of *Aulus Plautius* made *Camulodunon* their primary objective. The Romans were victorious and established a military camp on the higher ground (where the present town now stands) from which they received the submission of several British kings. By 49AD *Camulodunon* had become a civilian settlement known as *Colonia Claudia* and the capital of Roman Britain. The legionary defences were dismantled and large public buildings were constructed.

In 60AD Queen Boudicca of the Iceni tribe led a rebellion against the Romans and joined forces with the *Trinovantes* to attack and destroy the town and slaughter its residents. The Romans recovered and by 80AD had rebuilt the town with defensive walls and a gateway. In 2004 Colchester Archaeological Trust uncovered the remains of a Roman Circus (Chariot

race track) beneath the Garrison, the only one of its kind in Britain. The town sits to the south of the River Colne and a ford leading north across the river was identified in the early C20th. By tradition, the Romans buried their dead beyond the sacred walls of their towns; cemeteries, burials and isolated funeral urns have been discovered north of the river around the area of North Street, a road leading north from the town of *Camulodunum*.

The area around Colchester rests on geology of brick earth and consequently there is evidence of several kilns, also to the north of the river.

**9.4.6** Towards the end of the Roman period crops were being grown within the town suggesting that occupation was focused within the walls, possibly because of the threat of Saxon raids and invasions. There is little written documentation of Colchester following the departure of the Romans and evidence of Saxon presence within the town is limited. It is probable that the town remained under British rule for some time and archaeological evidence suggests that public buildings were abandoned. In the *Historia Brittonum*, written in the C9th, Colchester is listed as one of the twenty-eight fortified Roman cities in Britain, known as *Cair Colun* or '*Fort Colonia*'. For a brief period, c.880-917AD, it came under Danelaw, until Edward the Elder, expelled the Danes, strengthened the walls and re-established the town.

The town took on the Saxon name *Colneceaster* meaning 'Fortress on the Colne' and the great estates of the Saxons were divided into manorial holdings; churches and manorial chapels were built and village greens established. The Holy Trinity Church was built in c.1000AD and a water mill named Stokes Mill, dating to possibly c.1100 and demolished in 1610 is recorded on the River Colne (MCC2292).

**9.4.7** The victory of William the Conqueror brought the town to prominence once again with the establishment of a busy port and market town and the construction of one of the first stone castles in England to act as a defence from any seaborne invasion from Scandinavia. The castle was built on the foundations of the Roman Temple of Claudius and was the largest Norman castle to be built.

The Domesday Book records a small but wealthy town that received its first Royal Charter from King Richard I in 1189. This began a series of successive charters that allowed the town to manage its markets, fisheries and judicial arrangements. Beyond the town was an area of

dispersed settlement of isolated farmsteads and scattered hamlets built around heaths or commons and connected by a network of roads, footpaths and tracks.

A number of religious foundations and churches were founded during this period; notably the Augustinian Priory of St Botolph, the first in England, built towards the end of the C11th, from which only the ruined remains of the nave survive and the Benedictine Abbey of St John the Baptist, built during the C15th and demolished during the reformation with the exception of the gatehouse with vaulted interior which provided the entrance to St John's Abbey precinct.

In 1348 the Black Death claimed the lives of almost a quarter of the town's population, however, the town survived and by the late C14th had developed into a prosperous centre for the woollen cloth industry that was famous for russet textiles, fabrics of a grey-brown colour.

**9.4.8** By 1500 ribbon development had occurred along the major roads leaving town including North Street that ran to the west of the PDA. Decay of the town buildings had become noticeable by 1520 and this continued, particularly after the reformation, when ecclesiastical buildings were dissolved. During the reign of Queen Mary, 40 Protestants, a larger proportion than any other town in Britain, were burnt at the stake as heretics.

Boosted by immigration from Flanders in the C16th and C17th and the skills they brought to the town in the production of 'Bays and Says' cloth, the town became one of the most prosperous towns in Britain and the area of town they inhabited known as the Dutch Quarter can still be seen today. In addition to the cloth industry the town became famed for its oysters and the growing population is evidenced in the new houses being built and the number of houses divided in two. Many of the cloth makers lived to the north of the town where the river provided a water source. In the early C17th folding shops and 'tenters', drying areas for the cloth after fulling, were set up in the fields around North Street.

In 1642 Colchester experienced one of the first incidents in the Stour Valley Riots or the Anti-Poppery riots, when a large crowd attacked the home of Sir John Lucas, a suspected Catholic. The crowd, reported to be several thousand people, continued through a 20-mile radius attacking the homes of clergymen and gentry. Parliament used the riots as a reason to confiscate weapons from known Royalists and to raise a militia of local parliamentarians to calm the people. In preparation for the civil war the town defences were improved and

forts were added; Fort Bloyes (MCC2243), a square fort with corner bastions, now destroyed but located northeast of Middle Mill and Fort Rainsborough (ECC2438) thought to be located at Highwoods. In the siege of 1648, when Royalist occupied the town for eleven and a half weeks, many of the population starved or were killed and some 193 houses within the suburbs were burnt to improve lines of fire and reduce cover for the enemy. The Royalists surrendered on 27<sup>th</sup> August and a small obelisk marks the spot where Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle were executed in the castle grounds.

In 1665 the country was again hit by the plague and Colchester lost more than half its residents. The town recovered once again, but only for a short period before the C18th, when the cloth industry went into decline.

**9.4.9** During the C19th the town became known for its clockmakers and as a result of the Napoleonic wars large numbers of soldiers were garrisoned within the town in temporary barracks. Later, permanent barracks were erected on Abbey fields.

**9.4.10** Towards the end of the C18th the opening of a new corn exchange in 1820 marked a boom in Essex agriculture following a demand for wheat for bread, barley for brewing, land drainage and experimentation in farming techniques.

**9.4.11** The Eastern Counties Railway opened Colchester Station in 1843; locally it became known as Colchester North Station to distinguish it from Colchester town station. It links to the Sunshine Coast Line, which runs south to Clacton on Sea. Originally it was intended that the railway would run from London to Norwich but funds could not be raised, however, three years later the line was extended to Ipswich by the Eastern Union Railway. In 1913 an express passenger train collided with a light engine due to a signalman's error and part of the passenger train was derailed. The driver, guard and fireman were killed and 14 passengers injured.

The natural geology of Colchester is brick earth and as a result there are several brickyards within the vicinity of the PDA dating to the Post-Medieval period. Two of the brickyards are sited adjacent to the railway and probably supplied London during a time of expansion.

**9.4.12** In 1850 a former hotel near North Station was converted into a branch of the Park House Hospital for idiots located in Highgate, Middlesex. It was known as Essex Hall. In 1859 it became the Eastern Counties Asylum and was the second of its type in England. It served the counties of Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire and was financed partly by voluntary subscriptions and partly by the patients themselves. It was gradually expanded as the inmates rose from 66 in 1862 to 245 in 1897. The patients were mostly children and were admitted for a period of five years with up to 20% being offered a permanent home. The asylum focused on education and training and “higher” grade patients were taught reading, writing and arithmetic and others learned tailoring, housework, gardening and laundry work. There were recreational activities of cricket, football, croquet, watching magic lantern shows and keeping animals. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the patients were responsible for making staff uniforms, repairing shoes, clothing and bedding and mattresses and carrying out carpentry work. In 1892 Poplars Hall Farm was taken over to provide agricultural work for the men and boys and in 1894 Crossley House at Clacton was bought to use as a seaside holiday home. In 1922 it began to operate as an industrial school, taking children who had been committed by magistrates under the Mental Deficiency Act. At this time it had over 600 places. In 1933 it became a special approved school (an approved school was for juveniles in need of care or protection – a child could be admitted to an approved school if they were guilty of an offence that an adult would be sent to prison for or in need of care, protection or control, had run away from the care of the local authority. It closed in 1985 and the buildings were demolished.

**9.4.13** In the C20th the landscape around the PDA was dominated by the railway and the River Colne, intersected by the ribbon development of North Street leading to Mile End, with the area between largely taken up by farmsteads. The PDA formed part of Mercer Farm, located south of the railway, north of the river and east of North Street. Mercer farm was part of the investment portfolio of The Worshipful Company of Mercers. In 1834 the farm was let for 46L (*W. Herbert, 1834, A history of the twelve great livery companies of London, Volume I*). The Mercers are a livery company that dates back 700 years. The term Mercer comes from the Latin term *merx* which means ‘merchandise’ and in England this came to refer to the trade in luxury fabrics such as silks, linens, velvets and other fine textiles and dress accessories imported from abroad.

In the C21st the area was developed for industrial use.

## **9.5 Regression 1869 – 1992**

### **9.5.1 Historic maps**

**9.5.1.1** In an extract from the Map of the County of Essex by John Chapman and Peter André 1777 (1:31,680), the PDA is located to the north of Colchester town and the Colne River in an unpopulated downland area. North Street, located to the west, is so named because it leads north from Colchester to the village of Mile End in ribbon development style. A tributary of the river Colne is found to the east and runs north to Mile End Hall where patches of woodland (Highwood and Soame wood) still survive. The surrounding area is populated with hamlets and heaths connected by a network of roads interspersed with smallholdings, farms and windmills. Middle Mill is found on the south bank of the River Colne (Fig 3).

### **9.5.2 The Ordnance Survey Maps**

#### **9.5.2.1** Historic OS map 1876 1:2500/1:1250

The PDA is located in a rural area and forms part of the fields of Mercers Farm, the farmyard of which is located west and is an L-Plan with additional detached elements. A footpath runs from Mercer's farmyard across the northwest corner of the PDA to a crossing at the railway line, which forms the north boundary. Colchester lies on brickearth and to both the west boundary, the north side of the railway track and to the south of the river are brickfields. The River Colne is to the south and is the site of Middle Corn Mill and a Public Bathing Place. North Street, to the west, leads from North Bridge on the river to North Station on the railway line and onwards to Mile End and is the focus of settlement. Poplarhall Farm, Golden Acre, North Nursery and Beulah Cottages are on the east side and St Paul's Church, Hollybrook, the Gospel Hall and Essex Hall Asylum (for idiots) is on the west side. The railway Tavern Public House is to the north of the station (Fig.4).

#### **9.5.2.2** Historic OS map 1896 1:2500/1:1250

By 1896 the Castle Park has been developed and the Public Bathing Place has moved further west adjacent to St Paul's Church on North Street. Clay pits are sited to the west of Mercers farm and the North Nursery has become the Norfolk Hotel. Two schools have opened on North Street and the Essex Hall Asylum has become the Essex Counties Asylum. Roman remains and a Roman amphora have been found to the south of the river and the west of North Street (Fig.5)

#### **9.5.2.3** Historic OS map 1924 1:2500/1:1250

Mercer's Farm is still in situ but parts of the fields surrounding the PDA have been given over to Allotment Gardens. A subway has been installed to the west, south boundary where the footpath meets the crossing point of the railway. Essex Counties Asylum has become the Royal Eastern Counties Institution (Fig.6)

#### **9.5.2.4** Historic OS map 1946 1:2500/1:1250

By 1946 the development of the PDA is underway. A large rectangular building and several smaller buildings have been built on the site and Cowdray Avenue has been constructed to the south boundary. The urban development around North Street is spreading east where there has been some residential development to the south of Cowdray Avenue around Jarmin Road and Catchpool Road (Fig.7)

#### **9.5.2.5** Historic OS map 1950-51 1:2500/1:1250

A row of semi-detached properties has been built along the south boundary facing on to Cowdray Avenue (Colchester By-Pass Road). The west of the site has escaped the urban development and remains open land with some orchard and scrubland to the northwest corner. Allotment gardens and a refuse heap are on the western boundary. To the east of the site is another undeveloped area before the railway makes a turn to the south. To the southeast of Cowdray Avenue are the allotment gardens and the River Colne, which marks the ward boundary. The coal yard and engine shed are found northwest around Brick Kiln Road that leads north across the railway track to more allotment gardens (Fig.8).

#### **9.5.2.6** Historic OS map 1964-65 1:2500

Industrial buildings now take up the east of the PDA while the west remains largely undeveloped, providing a track way to the works (Fig.9).

#### **9.5.2.7** Historic OS map 1971-94 1:2500

The west of the PDA has been developed into additional industrial units and development has continued to the south of Cowdray Avenue with the construction of Government offices and a Sports Centre (Fig.10).

### **9.6 Aerial photographs**

#### **9.6.1** 2000-2006

The PDA forms an industrial site of buildings of various shapes and sizes set around Mason Road. The railway track is to the north boundary, Cowdray Avenue is to the south and further industrial developments are to the east and west. The south of Cowdray Avenue is largely residential development with sporadic areas of parkland around the River Colne. To the north of the railway the landscape is similar but slightly more rural.

#### **9.6.2** 2009

A large central area of the PDA has been demolished to ground level.

#### **9.6.3** 2017

The PDA remains unchanged (Plate 1).

### **9.7 Scheduled Monuments; Listed Buildings; Historic Parks & Gardens and Conservation Areas**

**9.7.1** There is one find spot and three monuments recorded within the confines of the proposed development area (PDA). There are twenty-three monuments, fourteen find spots, eighteen elements and two industrial sites recorded within the assessment area (Appendix I).

## **9.8 Setting of Listed Buildings**

**9.8.1** One of the tasks of the site visit was aimed to identify any designated heritage assets within the wider context of the PDA in accordance with The Setting of Heritage Assets – English Heritage Guidance (English Heritage 2011).

This guidance states “setting embraces all of the surroundings (land, sea, structures, features and skyline) from which the heritage asset can be experienced or that can be experienced from or with the asset” (The Setting of Heritage Assets, English Heritage 2011).

**9.8.2** There are no listed buildings recorded within the assessment area.

## **10. ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

### **10.1 Walkover Survey**

**10.1.1** The walkover survey is for the purpose of:

1. Identifying any historic landscape features not shown on maps
2. Conducting a rapid survey for archaeological features
3. Making a note of any surface scatters of archaeological material
4. Constraints or areas of disturbance that may affect archaeological investigation

**10.1.2** The walkover survey is not intended as a detailed survey but the rapid identification of archaeological features and any evidence for buried archaeology in the form of surface scatters of lithic or pottery artifacts.

**10.1.3** The site has historically been farmland until the mid C20th when it was developed for industrial use and now consists of an industrial site that once formed the Cowdray Centre. The site and the surrounding area have undergone significant development

throughout the C20th and consequently the surface consists of road surface, hard standing and building foundations. (Plate 1).

**10.1.4** Colchester has been widely studied and any historic landscape features are well documented. The site is no longer in use and planning proposals call for complete redevelopment, which will leave no constraints for archaeological evaluation. There are no listed buildings within the vicinity to share intervisibility with the site and due to the nature of the site and the surrounding area there is no possibility of identifying archaeological features or surface scatters of archaeological material, therefore, a walkover survey was deemed unnecessary.

## **10.2 Essex Historic Environment Record**

See Appendix I

### **10.2.1 Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age**

The Palaeolithic period represents the earliest phases of human activity in the British Isles, up to the end of the last Ice Age. The Essex HER has no records from this period within the assessment area. Therefore, the potential for finding remains that date to this period within the confines of the development site is considered **low**.

The Mesolithic period reflects a society of hunter-gatherers active after the last Ice Age. The Essex HER has no records from this period within the assessment area. Therefore, the potential for finding remains that date to this period within the confines of the development site is considered **low**.

The Neolithic period was the beginning of a sedentary lifestyle based on agriculture and animal husbandry. The Essex HER has two records from this period within the assessment area; a late Neolithic to early bronze age scraper, usually found in burials, was found within the PDA in 1923 (MCC7060/2297/2132/2354), an early Neolithic to early Bronze Age lithic implement was found c.200m southeast of the PDA (MCC6285). Therefore, the potential for

finding remains that date to this period within the confines of the development site is considered **moderate**.

The Bronze Age was a period of large migrations from the continent and more complex social developments on a domestic, industrial and ceremonial level.

The Essex HER has two records cited above dating to this period within the assessment area, therefore, the potential for finding remains that date to this period within the confines of the development site is considered **moderate**.

### **10.2.2 Iron Age**

The Iron Age is, by definition a period of established rural farming communities with extensive field systems and large 'urban' centres (the Iron Age 'Tribal capital' or civitas of the Cantiaci). Despite the location of the tribal capital to the southwest of the town, the Essex HER has only two records dating to this period; in 1943 late Iron Age to Roman pottery fragments were found at the fire station c.150m southwest (MCC1332) and in 1956 late Iron Age to early Roman pottery was found at Margaret Road and Catchpole Roads, c.225m southwest (MCC1899). Therefore, the potential for finding remains that date to this period within the confines of the development site is considered **low**.

### **10.2.3 Romano-British**

The Romano-British period is the term given to the Romanised culture of Britain under the rule of the Roman Empire, following the Claudian invasion in AD 43, Britain then formed part of the Roman Empire for nearly 400 years. The Romans occupied the town for several centuries and there are twenty-eight Essex HER records from this period within the assessment area; a Roman cremation was discovered c.50m southwest on Cowdray Avenue (ECC1191/MCC2131) and Roman pottery was recovered at Margaret Road and Catchpole Road c.125 southwest (ECC1645/MCC1899).

A Roman coin of Emperor Tacitus 270-273AD was found in a garden on Cowdray Avenue c.150m west (ECC3426/MCC1252) and a kiln was recorded at the brickyard near North Station c.150m northwest (ECC409/MCC1096/MCC8418).

Burnt daub and brick tile were uncovered on Jarmin Road (ECC3608), and Roman ditches and pits with domestic waste were excavated south of Jarmin Road (ECC2786/MCC2923),

kiln waste was recorded in the nursery gardens (ECC2359/MCC2305), Roman pottery was recovered on Serpentine Walk (ECC1216/MCC1341), a tiled tomb and a burial were discovered at Serpentine Walk (ECC2424/MCC2515/MCC2516) and a Roman burial with three jet and eight glass beads were found (ECC2425) c.150m southwest.

Claudian pottery was recovered on Serpentine Walk (ECC1431/MCC1797/MCC7061) and a Roman coin of Emperor Vespasian 69-79 AD was found at Kings Meadow Road c.175m southwest (ECC1131/MCC1255).

Kiln waste was recovered at Cowdray Avenue in a garden c.200m southeast (ECC2360/MCC2451/MCC8419) and a Roman copper alloy pin was found c.200m south (MCC6772). Roman tile was discovered at Cowdray Avenue (ECC3978), Roman pottery was found at the fire station (ECC1207/MCC1332), a grey urn was discovered on Serpentine Walk (ECC1133/MCC1410) and a scatter of Roman cremations were found c.200m southwest (MCC7690). Numerous burials were uncovered in the brickyard at Cowdray Avenue c.200m west (ECC1639/ECC1641/MCC1898).

Excavations at Colchester Castle Park uncovered Roman stone houses, part of the street grid and a tessellated pavement, c.300m northeast (MCC7876/MCC7877) and a patch of crushed Roman tile was found on Clarendon Way c.300m west (ECC568).

A Roman cemetery, an amphora containing a cinerary urn and nine fragments of Roman tile and pottery were recorded at the former British Railway car park site, Turner Rise (MCC4940/MCC4937/ECC1334/MCC1411) and an amphora containing six glass vessels and an earthen lamp were found near North Station c.350m northwest (ECC1633/MCC1894).

A fjord is recorded at the River Colne c.400m south (ECC694/MCC8495) and Roman pottery was found at Highwoods c.400m northeast (ECC2438). Roman funeral urns were found at North Station c.500m west (ECC1634/MCC1895/MCC7059). Therefore, the potential for finding archaeological features or deposits from this period is considered **high**.

#### **10.2.4 Anglo-Saxon**

There are no Essex HER records from this period within the assessment area; therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the potential for finding remains dating to the Anglo-Saxon period in the PDA is considered **low**.

### 10.2.5 Medieval

There are two Essex HER records from this period within the assessment area. Stokes Mill is an early medieval fulling mill dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> Century and demolished by 1610 recorded c.250m southeast (MCC2292/ECC2351/ECC1853), a Henry III penny was found at Castle Park c.225m south (MCC7875). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the potential for finding remains dating to the medieval period in the PDA is considered **low**.

### 10.2.6 Post Medieval

There are nine records held at the Essex HER from this period within the assessment area. Poplar Lane brickworks are recorded near North Station Road c.75m northwest (MCC5280) and a clay pipe was found at Catchpole Road c.75m southwest (ECC2139). A second brickworks (MCC5281) and a brick kiln is recorded at Brick Kiln Road, north of the Railway, c.150m northwest (MCC5194). Serpentine Walk brickworks are recorded at c.200m west (MCC5278) and a windmill is recorded at North Station Road c.275m southwest (MCC5716). Poplar Hall Farm is recorded c.400m west (MCC7735), civil war siege ditches are recorded at Turner Rise c.400m northwest (MCC4940) and measures, lead sheet and musket ball of civil war date were found at the probable site of Fort Rainsborough c.400m northeast (ECC2438). Therefore, the potential for finding remains dating to this period is considered **high**.

### 10.2.7 Modern

There are five records in the Essex HER within the assessment area from this period. A pillbox, now destroyed, was recorded at Gordon Works within the PDA (MCC5075) and a spigot mortar emplacement (MCC5076) and an ammunition shelter, now destroyed, are recorded at the Arklight factory within the PDA (MCC5541). A spigot mortar emplacement, now destroyed, was recorded at Cowdray Avenue, c.100m southwest (MCC5082) and a World War I pillbox was recorded on the south bank of the River Colne c.250m southeast (MCC4758). Therefore, the potential for finding remains dating to this period is considered **high**.

### **10.2.8 Farmsteads**

There is one farmstead recorded within the assessment area. Poplar Hall Farm was a 17<sup>th</sup> Century farmstead building of typical plan of three bays and a central chimney stack now demolished c.400m west (MCC7735).

### **10.2.9 Undated Records**

There is one undated record within the assessment area; a burial found to the east side of the town (MCC7108).

## **10.3 Summary of Potential**

**10.3.1** The PDA is located in an urban area to the north of the town, south of the railway, north of the River Colne and east of North Station Road.

The area has been subject to several archaeological evaluations and has produced numerous archaeological finds from at least the C19th.

There is scant evidence for the prehistoric period within the assessment area, however, a random surface find on site of a late Neolithic to early Bronze Age scraper has increased the potential from low to moderate.

While the Iron Age settlement of Camulodunum was located to the southwest of the town there are only two records for the recovery of Late Iron Age pottery sherds creating a low potential for this period.

The Roman period saw the defeat of Cunobelin, the construction of the first town and major road links, the destruction of the town during the Boudicca rebellion, the reconstruction of the town and periods of peace and prosperity. There are twenty-eight records dating to this period, largely focused to the west of the PDA, evidencing intense Roman activity that spread beyond the town walls. Cemeteries sited outside of the sacred walls in accordance with Roman funeral rites have been discovered and kiln sites that took advantage of the natural brickearth geology have been recorded. Numerous vessels and sherds of pottery have also been recovered and the potential for further archaeology from this period is high.

The Saxon period is not represented within the assessment area to date and it is possible that occupation was focused within the town walls at this time due to the threat of raids and invasions.

Colchester castle was constructed during the medieval period and saw the population decline during social and economic hardship and grow due to immigration, peace and prosperity. The landscape beyond the town was one of small hamlets and farmsteads and mills constructed on the River Colne. There is little evidence within the assessment area for this period and the potential is low.

During the post-medieval period cloth merchants with tenter fields and kilns making brick, tile and pottery inhabited the area around the PDA. There may be archaeological evidence to the west boundary of one such brickworks that was located in the field to the west.

At this time the site was farmland relating to Mercer farm, which was owned by the Worshipful Company of Mercers.

A gun emplacement, pillbox and ammunition shelter recorded in aerial photographs on the site testify to the defensive measures taken during the first and second world wars.

Therefore the site has a moderate potential for the prehistoric and a high potential for the Roman, Post-Medieval and modern periods.

**10.3.8** The desk-based assessment has considered the archaeological potential of the site. Archaeological investigations in the vicinity, map research, the historical environment record results and recent archaeological investigations have shown that the PDA may contain archaeological sites and these can be summarised as:

- Prehistoric: **moderate**
- Iron Age: **low**
- Roman: **high**
- Anglo-Saxon: **low**
- Medieval: **low**
- Post-Medieval: **high**
- Modern: **high**

## 11. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 11.1 Introduction

Cartographic Regression, Topographical Analysis, and Historic Research have provided evidence for the historic use of the site. By collating this information, we have assessed the impact on previous archaeological remains through the following method of categorisation:

- **Total Impact** - Where the area has undergone a destructive process to a depth that would in all probability have destroyed any archaeological remains e.g. construction, mining, quarrying, archaeological evaluations etc.
- **High Impact** – Where the ground level has been reduced to below natural geographical levels that would leave archaeological remains partly in situ either in plan or section e.g. the construction of roads, railways, buildings, strip foundations etc.
- **Medium Impact** – Where there has been low level or random disturbance of the ground that would result in the survival of archaeological remains in areas undisturbed e.g. the installation of services, pad-stone or piled foundations, temporary structures etc.
- **Low Impact** – Where the ground has been penetrated to a very low level e.g. farming, landscaping, slab foundation etc.

### 11.2 Historic Impacts

**11.2.1** Cartographic regression (8.5), Topographic analysis (3.2) and Historical research (8.4) indicate that the PDA was farmland until the mid C20th century when it was developed for industrial use, therefore, previous impacts to archaeological remains from construction are considered to be **high**.

**11.2.2** Agriculture became gradually more intense over time and by the modern era it was mechanised. Although the farming process rarely penetrates below the upper layers of the ground, plough truncation can have a significant impact on preserved shallow deposits. The

PDA was subject to the agricultural process until the mid C20th, therefore, the damage to archaeological remains from the agricultural process is considered to be **low**.

### **11.3 Summary of Impacts Both Historic and Proposed**

**11.3.1** Evidence suggests that the site historically formed part of Mercer's farm and has been the subject of agriculture and cultivation. The railway, was constructed on the north boundary prior to its opening in 1843 and would have had considerable, albeit contained, impact on the north boundary of the site. In the early C20th there were several defensive features relating to WWI and WWII, located on site to the east boundary and towards the centre of the site. In the mid C20th the site underwent development for industrial use and at this point, the construction process would have superseded any damage from the agricultural process.

**11.3.2** A soil survey carried out in 1982 revealed clayey sand/gravel at approximately 1m depth (ECC2132).

## **12. MITIGATION**

The purpose of this archaeological desk-based assessment was to provide an assessment of the contextual archaeological record in order to determine the potential survival of archaeological deposits that may be impacted upon during any proposed construction works.

The assessment has generally shown that the area to be developed is within an area of **high** archaeological potential and the periods that have the highest potential for survival are the Roman, Post-Medieval and Modern period. The western boundary has the potential for the remains of the Roman cemetery found to the west and features and deposits from the post-medieval brickyard and the eastern boundary for modern defensive features.

## **13. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **13.1 Archive**

Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, two copies of this desk-based assessment will be submitted to Essex County Council within 6 months of completion.

### **13.2 Reliability/Limitations of Sources**

The sources that were used in this assessment were, in general, of high quality. The majority of the information provided herewith has been gained from either published texts or archaeological 'grey' literature held at EHER, and therefore considered as being reliable.

### **13.3 Copyright**

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**Zoe Schofield**

**Touchstone Archaeology**

#### **14. REFERENCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Colchester Archaeology and Development Strategy (Adopted 2015)

Colchester Borough Strategic Plan (2015/2018)

IFA (2014) STANDARD AND GUIDANCE for historic environment desk-based assessment

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Data provided by Essex HER

## Appendix I

<b>KHER</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Description</b>
ECC3203	Intervention	c.200m S	Undated	Part excavation by Wheeler REN 1920
ECC3526	Field survey	c.300m S	Undated	1997 brick kiln on Brick Kiln Road. Field survey carried out by Shane Gould.
ECC3426	Watching brief	c.300m S	Undated	1983 Colchester Archaeological Trust observation and limited excavation during the laying of a sewer pipe.
ECC1128	Intervention	c.150m W	Roman	1970 18 Cowdray Avenue. Roman coin Antoninarius of the Roman Emperor Teticus 270-3 AD found in the garden.
ECC1131	Intervention	c.175m SW	Roman	15 Kings Meadow Road. Roman coin of Emperor Vespasian 69-79 AD.
ECC1153	Survey	c.400m W	Negative	1974 watching brief on pipeline at Clarendon Way negative result.
ECC1191	Intervention	c.50m SW	Roman	1984 Cowdray Avenue. Roman cremation 43-200 AD with bone sherds and a dark grey cinerary urn and Romano British sherds.
ECC1207	Intervention	c.200m SW	Roman	1943 fire station Cowdray Avenue. Pottery from a Roman amphora and fine wares AD 5-60 noted in records
ECC1216	Intervention	c.150m SW	Roman	1934 Serpentine Walk. Roman pottery of amphora and mortaria noted in records. Possible presence of Roman kiln.
ECC1333	Intervention	c.200m SW	Roman	1927 Serpentine Walk. Grey urn found on south side of road.
ECC1334	Intervention	c.350m NW	Roman	1846 Turner Rise. During work on the railway cutting William Wire recorded a large sized amphora containing a cinerary urn with bone and lid and several urns nearby also containing bone.
ECC1393	Survey	c.200m W	Undated	1982 watching brief at Cowdray Centre by Colchester Archaeological Trust during construction of new factory units possible brickworks or quarry debris.
ECC1431	Intervention	c.175m SW	Roman	1937 south of Serpentine Walk. Claudian pottery of a terra nigra dish and amphora fragment.
ECC1437	Survey	c.400m W	Negative	1984 watching brief at the GPO Clarendon Way by Colchester Archaeological Trust during construction of an office block – negative result.
ECC1633	Intervention	c.350m NW	Roman	1846 south of railway cutting near North Station. William Wire records finding an amphora containing six glass vessels all broken and an earthen lamp.
ECC1634	Intervention	c.500m W	Roman	1844 North Station Colchester William Wire notes several Roman funeral urns containing calcined bones were found opposite the barn in the grave or pit apparently dug for the purpose but they were broken to pieces by the weight of the super incumbent earth. The workmen informed me that in the pit was a great quantity of charcoal.

ECC1638	Intervention	c.200m NW	Undated	1889 brickyard north of railway. In 1912 Mr H Money sold a collection containing objects of glass, jet, gold, bronze and ceramic of suspicious provenance. The objects were not fake, however one was identified as being Indian.
ECC1639	Intervention	c.200m W	Roman	Brickyard off Cowdray Avenue 1930. The museum uncovered numerous burials in the clay diggings north of present Cowdray Avenue.
ECC1641	Intervention	c.200m SW	Roman	1927 brickyard off Cowdray Avenue. At least 18 burials were collected from the brickyard by the museum.
ECC1645	Intervention	c.125m SW	Roman	1956 Margaret Road and Catchpool Road a water main trench was cut from nursery grounds. Roman pottery of brown native LCP and an almost white copy of butt beaker F.113 and chips of vessels.
ECC1853	Survey	c.300m SE	Medieval	1225 AD A documentary record for stokes mill belonged to St Johns Abbey, which was leased to Nicholas son of Geoffrey Spencer for 10 shillings a year. The mill stood on the Colne at the end of Land Lane.
ECC1890	Survey	c.400m NW	Negative	1997 watching brief at 9 Queens Road – negative report.
ECC2026	Interpretation	c.150m NW	Unknown	1997 Turner Rise. An evaluation was carried out on a retail site to the east of Asda Superstore – report missing.
ECC2132	Survey	On site	Negative	1982 The Cannons, Layer Road. Five trial holes were dug in the gardens as part of a soil survey. Each of the holes revealed clayey sand/gravel at approximately one metre depth. No archaeological finds.
ECC2139	Survey	c.75m SW	Post Medieval	1985 2 Catchpool Road. A single trial pit was excavated. Topsoil 150ml deep overlying sandy clay, which became sandier with depth. A 100mm clay pipe was found at a depth of 1.7 metres.
ECC2191	Intervention	c.10m W	Negative	1983 land to the north of Cowdray Avenue. 23 trial pits were excavated revealing clayey soil fill overlying sand and silt or clay with organic matter. This was underlaying by sandy silts over sand and gravel. No archaeology found.
ECC2213	Intervention	c.200m S	Negative	Indoor swimming pool site 1969. 10 boreholes were drilled between 12 feet and 30 feet. The stratification was topsoil was 6 inches to 1 ft. 6 inches. Alluvial clays between 1 ft. 3 inches and 3 ft. 6 inches. River gravels at 15.5 to 18.3 metres and London clay between 6 and 17.1 metres. Standing water levels in wells on local allotments were 17.04 to 18.30. No archaeology.
ECC2351	Survey	c.300m SE	Medieval	1225 AD Stokes Mill.
ECC2354	Intervention	On site	Bronze Age	1983 Mason Road. A bronze age, straight-sided, flint scraper was recovered as a

				surface find by Mr P J Vines. Usually found in burials.
ECC2359	Interpretation	c.150m SW	Roman	1960 kiln at Strowgler's Ground in the nursery gardens. The sherds were potters waste and were mostly mortaria.
ECC2360	Intervention	c.200m SE	Roman	1908 kiln waste at Cowdray Avenue. Burnt earth and brick rubble found in Mr Wallace's garden. A deposit of 50 yards long by 20 ft. wide and 3 ft. thick at a depth of 2 ft. below the surface comprised of burnt ballast intermixed with thin pieces of brick flue tiles and Roman roof tiles.
ECC2424	Intervention	c.150m SW	Roman	1907 Serpentine Walk. A tiled tomb and a second burial were found in a field belonging to Mr Wallace. One grave is listed as fragments of two cinerary urns and a buff water drinking bottle (a flagon), two small paterae of grey ware and two drinking cups of pinkish buff ware painted a deep chocolate brown. The second burial had fragments of a cinerary urn of brown ware with polished surface and traces of a black coating and beadings on the neck.
ECC2425	Intervention	c.150m SW	Roman	Serpentine Walk 1909. A Roman burial with three jet and eight glass beads and teeth of a young person.
ECC2438	Survey	c.400m NE	Roman/Post Medieval	2000 The Boatfield, Highwoods. A field walking and metal detector survey produced a quantity of clay pipe and a few shards of c2-4 Roman sandy grey ware and 17 <sup>th</sup> century sherds of westerwaled stoneware. Four powder measures casting spillage lead sheet and musket balls of civil war date. Possibly the site of Fort Rainsborough built in 1648 by Parliamentarian forces.
ECC2786	Intervention	c.150m SW	Roman	2007 trial trenching to land to the south of Jarmin Road. Seven trenches - 20 features recorded. seven modern, four Roman and four undated, four natural and one post Roman period consisting of two ditches, pits containing domestic waste and one cremated human bone.
ECC3606	Interpretation		N/a	2015 DBA by Colchester Archaeological Trust.
ECC3608	Survey	c.150m SW	Roman	2008 watching brief at the former CBC depot Jarmin Road. 13 test pits natural sub soil reached at approximately 0.5 metres below ground to just over 1 metre. Burnt daub and brick tile from the Roman period and ditches.
ECC3946	Intervention	c.200m S	Negative	2017 Leisureworld Cowdray Avenue. 18 pits were excavated - negative result. Natural sand and gravel between 0.6 and 0.9 metres.
ECC3978	Interpretation	c.200m SW	Roman	2017 61 Cowdray Avenue. Negative result. two small fragments of Roman tile and 20 <sup>th</sup> century brick. Natural depth of

				approximately 1 metre.
ECC409	Interpretation	c.150m NW	Roman	1845 Mile End. William Wire noted that a kiln was found in the brickyard near North Station and an amphora was found in the railway cutting.
ECC568	Intervention	c.300m W	Roman	1979 GPO Sorting Office, Clarendon Way. Two trenches by Colchester Archaeological Trust. A patch of crushed Roman tile was found.
ECC694	Intervention	c.400m S	Roman	1923 a possible fjord at River Colne. P G Laver noted road metal in line with Duncansgate.
ECC807	Intervention	c.200m SW	Negative	1930 Kings Meadow exploratory trenches were cut but produced a negative result.
MCC1096	Monument	c.150m NW	Roman	1845 North Station brickyard William Wire records a kiln site.
MCC1252	Find Spot	c.300m W	Roman	1970 18 Cowdray Avenue Roman coin of Teticus.
MCC1255	Find Spot	c.300m SW	Roman	15 Kings Meadow Road Roman coin of Emperor Vespasian.
MCC1332	Find Spot	c.150m SW	Late Iron Age – Roman	1943 Fire Station Cowdray Avenue pottery fragments.
MCC1341	Find Spot	c.250m SW	Roman	Serpentine Walk Roman pottery.
MCC1410	Element	c.150m SW	Roman	1926 Serpentine Walk Roman grey urn.
MCC1411	Element	c.275m NW	Roman	1846 Turner Rise Roman cremation burial.
MCC1797	Find Spot	c.300m SW	Roman	1937 Serpentine Walk Roman pottery.
MCC1894	Find Spot	c.275m NW	Roman	1846 North Station Roman amphora and glass vessels.
MCC1895	Element	c.275m NW	Roman	1844 North Station Roman cremation burial.
MCC1898	Monument	c.125m W	Roman	1926 North of Cowdray Avenue Roman cremation cemetery.
MCC1899	Find Spot	c.225m SW	Late Iron Age – early Roman	1956 Margaret Road and Catchpool Roads Iron Age and Roman pottery.
MCC2131	Element	c.25m SW	Roman	1984 Cowdray Avenue Roman cremation burial.
MCC2132	Find Spot	On site	Late Neolithic – early Bronze Age	1984 Cowdray Centre Cowdray Avenue early Bronze Age scraper.
MCC2243	Monument	c.300m SE	Civil War	1648 AD Fort Bloyes Parliamentarian Siege Fort located near Middle Mill. Square fort with corner bastions located to fire across the River Colne at the northeast corner of the walled town.
MCC2292	Monument	c.250m SE	Early Medieval to post Medieval	1610 Stokes Mill Watermill of 11th Century origin. A fulling mill demolished by 1610.
MCC2297	Find Spot	On site	Bronze Age	Surface find by Mr P J Vines Bronze Age flint scraper.
MCC2305	Monument	c.225m SW	Roman	Strowgler's Ground (Cowdray Avenue) Roman pottery kiln recorded 1959-60.
MCC2451	Find Spot	c.200m S	Roman	1908 Serpentine Walk Roman kiln waste recorded.

MCC2515	Element	c.175m SW	Roman	1907 Serpentine Walk Roman cremation burial.
MCC2516	Element	c.175m SW	Roman	1907 Serpentine Walk Roman cremation burial.
MCC2517	Element	c.175m SW	Roman	1909 Serpentine Walk Roman human remains.
MCC2923	Element Group	c.225m SW	Roman	Roman features of ditches and pits with domestic waste found in 2007 on Jarmin Road.
MCC4758	Monument	c.250m SE	Modern	World War II pillbox on the south bank of the River Colne type FW3/22 facing northwards across the river.
MCC4937	Find Spot	c.350m NW	Roman	Turner Rise, nine fragments of Roman tile, Roman pottery and a tegular roof tile found at a watching brief.
MCC4940	Monument	c.400m NW	Roman – Post Medieval	Turner Rise former British rail carpark site. Evidence of a Roman cemetery area and civil war siege ditches.
MCC5075	Monument	On site	Modern	Pillbox destroyed at Gordon Works hexagonal entrance to south side.
MCC5076	Monument	On site	Modern	Spigot mortar emplacement destroyed east of Masons Arklight Factory.
MCC5082	Monument	c.100m SW	Modern	Spigot mortar emplacement destroyed at Cowdray Avenue. Aerial photograph 1948 shows central pedestal for ammunition alcoves and a L shaped trench on the west side.
MCC5194	Industrial	c.150m NW	Post medieval	Brick kiln at Brick Kiln Road. Rectangular structure with fire boxes at either end.
MCC5278	Industrial	c.200m W	Post medieval	Site of Serpentine Walk brickworks. Operated by Henry Money. Three kilns and two clay pits destroyed but may remain below ground.
MCC5280	Monument	c.75m NW	Post medieval	Site of Poplar Lane brickworks North Station Road operated by William Woods from 1894 to World War II. One kiln destroyed.
MCC5281	Monument	c.150m NW	Post medieval	Site of brickworks north of Great Eastern Railway. Operated by William Alston from 1830 to 1911. Excavated in 1997.
MCC5541	Monument	On site	Modern	Ammunition shelter at Arklight Works destroyed. Large Nissen hut.
MCC5716	Monument	c.275m SW	Post medieval	Site of windmill North Station Road – unknown type – no information.
MCC6285	Portable Antiquities Scheme	c.200m SE	Early Neolithic to early Bronze Age	Neolithic lithic implement
MCC6772	Portable Antiquities Scheme	c.200m S	Early Roman to late Roman	Roman copper alloy pin
MCC7059	Monument	c.100m W	Roman	Brickyard near North Station Roman cemetery. 1 <sup>st</sup> Century to early 3 <sup>rd</sup> or late 4 <sup>th</sup> Century.
MCC7060	Find Spot	On site	Early Bronze Age to late Bronze Age	East of North Station Bronze Age straight-sided scraper found by Mr P J Vines.
MCC7061	Find Spot	c.500m N	Roman	North of Castle Park 1937 Claudian pottery.
MCC7108	Monument	c.500m S	Undated	East side of Roman town possible burial.

MCC7690	Monument	c.200m SW	Roman	North of Castle – scatter of Roman cremations in urns found between Kings Meadow and the railway.
MCC7735	Monument	c.400m W	Post Medieval	Poplar Hall Farm demolished but surveyed and found to be 17 <sup>th</sup> Century building of typical plan of three bays and a central chimneystack.
MCC7875	Find Spot	c.225m S	Medieval	Castle Park recorded by William Wire a penny of Henry III.
MCC7876	Monument	c.300m NE	Roman	Colchester Castle Park excavations uncovered Roman stone houses and part of the street grid. Excavation in 1920 foundations traced by boring in 1856. By 1906 outline of houses were visible as parch marks.
MCC7877	Monument	c.300m NE	Roman	Colchester Castle Park a red tessellated pavement was found in a field behind the Castle in 1892. Eighteen square feet.
MCC8418	Monument	c.100m W	Roman	Colchester brickyard near North Station William Wire reported a kiln.
MCC8419	Monument	c.125m S	Roman	Roman occupation kiln or building at Cowdray Avenue.
MCC8495	Monument	c.400m S	Roman	Traces of Roman road crossing at the River Colne north of the northeast gate.

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**OASIS ID: zoeschof1-305060**

### Project details

Project name	The Cowdray Centre, Cowdray Avenue, Colchester, Essex CO1 1BX
Short description of the project	Desk Based Assessment
Project dates	Start: 01-11-2017 End: 30-11-2017
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	CCC17 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Desk based assessment
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Documentary Search"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX COLCHESTER COLCHESTER The Cowdray Centre, Cowdray Avenue
Postcode	CO1 1BX
Study area	5.1 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 99906 26249 51.898347264449 0.905942983664 51 53 54 N 000 54 21 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	TOUCHSTONE ARCHAEOLOGY
Project brief originator	Contractor (design and execute)
Project design originator	Zoe Schofield

Project director/manager	Zoe Schofield
Project supervisor	Zoe Schofield
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Essex HER
Digital Archive ID	CCC17
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Zoe Schofield
Paper Archive ID	CCC17
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Miscellaneous Material"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Desk Based Assessment at The Cowdray Centre, Cowdray Avenue, Colchester, Essex CO1 1BX
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Schofield, Z
Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	touchstone Archaeology
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## OASIS:

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Touchstone Archaeology Ltd  
 Historic Environment Record  
 Summary Sheet  
 Appendix I

Site Name/Address: Cowdray Centre, Cowdray Avenue, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1BX	
Parish: -	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 99906 26249 (centre)	Site Code: CCC17
Type of Work: Desk Based Assessment	Site Director/Group: Zoe Schofield, Touchstone Archaeology
Date of Work: November 2017	Size of Area Investigated: 500m radius
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museum	Funding source: Owner
Further Seasons Anticipated? No	Related HHER No's: -
Final Report: Schofield, Z., HEDBA, Cowdray Centre, Colchester, Touchstone Archaeology Ltd., 2016	OASIS number: zoeschof1 - 305052
Periods Represented: None	
Summary of Fieldwork Results:  An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment at Cowdray Centre, Colchester concludes that the site has high potential for any archaeological discoveries.	
Previous Summaries/Reports: None	
Author of Summary: Zoe Schofield	Date of Summary: November 2017