

Brief for Archaeological Excavation (v2.0)

at

The Former Queen Street Bus Depot, Colchester, CO5 8LJ

PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER: 202780

GRID REFERENCE: TL 99910 25041

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Date: 19 August 2021

Summary

- 1.2 In accordance with paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Local Planning Authority has attached the following conditions relating to archaeological investigation:

Condition 3: No works shall take place until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The Scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- a. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording.
 - b. The programme for post investigation assessment.
 - c. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording.
 - d. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation.
 - e. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation.
 - f. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works.
- The site investigation shall thereafter be completed prior to development, or in such other phased arrangement, as agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied or brought into use until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: To safeguard archaeological assets within the approved development boundary from impacts relating to any groundworks associated with the development scheme and to ensure the proper and timely investigation, recording, reporting and presentation of archaeological assets affected by this development, in accordance with Colchester Borough Council's Core Strategy (2008).

Condition 4: No works shall commence until a foundation design has been submitted to and agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved foundation design. Reason: To minimise the impact upon archaeological assets within the approved development boundary.

- 1.3 The archaeological contractor must submit a copy of their Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) or Method Statement, based upon this brief of minimum requirements to the Archaeological Advisor of Colchester Borough Council (CBC) for scrutiny.
- 1.4 The WSI should be approved before costs are agreed with the commissioning client, in line with Institute for Archaeologists' guidance. Failure to do so could result in additional and unanticipated costs.
- 1.5 The WSI will *provide the basis for measurable standards* and will be used to establish whether the requirements of the brief will be adequately met. A copy of the WSI should be included as an appendix in the final report.

Archaeological Background

- 2.1 The former bus depot lies on the east side of Queen Street. It was built in 1920 on the site of the Theatre Royal which burnt down around 1917. It lies within the southeast angle of the Roman walled town (HER ECC9314), immediately to the northeast of the South Gate (HER ECC2332) and to the north of the Roman town wall (HER ECC1039). One side of the depot building incorporates c. 100m of the Roman town wall, which is a Scheduled Monument (NHLE 1003772).
- 2.2 The bus depot itself is in insula (town block) 38b of the Roman town. Prior to 2017, there were no archaeological excavations inside the bus depot, the nearest being a trench dug by Rex Hull in 1931, 15m to the rear (east) of the depot building, in which Roman wall lines and a drain were uncovered. Other discoveries of Roman walls and floors within 20m of the development site have indicated that insula 38b was built-up with Roman townhouses.
- 2.3 In 2017, CAT excavated five large test-pits on the development site (CAT Report 1106). Three test-pits were excavated inside the bus depot, uncovering significant modern, post-medieval and Roman remains c 0.45-0.5m below current ground level. Modern wall foundations and demolition debris associated with the Theatre Royal and its destruction by fire in 1917 were uncovered, along with post-medieval remains consisting of two large pits and a ditch. The ditch is probably part of the Royalist defensive position behind the town walls during the English Civil War. Roman remains included two possible phases of Roman street/road metalling, a small section of the Roman rampart, and a mid to late Roman ditch cut through an earlier pit and posthole.

- 2.4 Two test-pits (TP4-TP5) excavated to the rear (east) of the building revealed modern and post-medieval layers to a depth of c 1.25-1.65m below current ground level, underneath which were significant Roman structural remains. Hull's 1931 archaeological trench was identified cutting through both test-pits. Within TP4, a tile-lined Roman drain aligned NNW--SSE was observed.
- 2.5 In July 2020, a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey was carried out inside the former bus depot (Magnitude Surveys 2020) revealing the remains of the projected Roman road, the Civil War ditch and the foundations of the Theatre Royal.
- 2.6 In September 2020, an archaeological evaluation (one test-pit) was carried out at the former bus depot (ECC4557). It revealed significant archaeological remains including a Roman street, a possible Royalist defensive ditch from the English Civil War, and wall foundations and demolition debris from the Theatre Royal. Significant Roman remains were encountered c 0.31m below current ground level immediately beneath the modern concrete floor of the bus depot. Within the test-pit was a Roman metalled street surface and roadside ditch, two Roman pits and a pit/posthole, a possible Anglo-Saxon pit and two undated features.
- 2.7 Groundworks relating to the proposed development will therefore cause significant ground disturbance which has potential to damage any archaeological deposits that exist.

Requirements for Archaeological Excavation

- 3.1 Following demolition of the existing buildings down to ground level only, the existing concrete slab should be broken out under archaeological control and a full archaeological excavation is to be carried out across the entire footprint of the new building. This should also incorporate all groundworks related to service runs, which have the potential to damage and disturb archaeological remains.
- 3.2 If used, machinery for all topsoil/subsoil stripping is to be fitted with a back-acting ditching bucket and is to be under the supervision and guidance of the archaeological contractor stopping at the archaeological horizon to ensure hand excavation and recording by the archaeological contractor. Care must be taken to ensure that any buried and stratified soil horizons are fully and carefully hand excavated, while providing close spatial resolution to finds/spreads of material. Deep archaeological deposits are likely to be encountered and provision should be made for shoring to facilitate the archaeological investigations on this site.
- 3.3 Construction machinery will need to be prevented access to/across the site during and after topsoil and subsoil stripping, and until areas have been signed off, in order to ensure damage does not occur to underlying any exposed archaeological remains.
- 3.4 Metal-detecting, undertaken by an experienced detectorist, should be undertaken during all stages of the fieldwork, across the both the surface and spoil generated by the investigations.
- 3.5 The WSI should provide a clear statement of the research potential and also the research objectives of the excavation.

- 3.6 A communications and outreach strategy should be provided for the presentation and promotion of the project during (and also following) fieldwork, in order to maximise public benefit.
- 3.7 Provision should be made for adequate scientific assessment and analysis of archaeological remains encountered in the excavation, e.g. absolute dating, scientific analysis of human remains and scientific analysis of artefacts (and associated residues).
- 3.8 The WSI must make adequate provision for the excavation, recording and scientific assessment and analysis of palaeoenvironmental remains. The WSI must show what provision has been made for specialist environmental assessment of the site and must provide details of the sampling strategies for retrieving artefacts, biological remains (for palaeoenvironmental and palaeoeconomic investigations), and samples of sediments and/or soils (for micromorphological and other pedological/ sedimentological analyses).
- 3.9 Provision should be included for column or core samples to be taken and for assessment (and where necessary full analysis) of the column samples, and for absolute dating of the sequence. The core/column should be assessed for pollen and plant macrofossils. In addition, the sample may be assessed for molluscs.
- 3.10 If unexpected remains are encountered Colchester BC's Archaeological Advisor must be informed immediately. Amendments to this brief, and the WSI, may be required to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording. In the exceptional circumstances that important, well-preserved mosaics floors (or similar remains) are discovered, which cannot otherwise be avoided (and satisfactorily preserved *in situ*), a contingency will be required for the block-lifting of these archaeological remains and for subsequent conservation and presentation. A decision about the need for conservation and lifting of important archaeological remains will be made in consultation with specialist stakeholders (e.g. Historic England and Colchester Museum). In addition, trenches may need to be widened in localised areas if important archaeological remains such as burials are encountered.

Post-Excavation Assessment, Reporting, Publication and Archival Requirements

- 4.1 The project manager must obtain a Colchester HER Event number from CBC's Archaeological Officer for the fieldwork; this will be the unique reference number for the work in the Colchester HER.
- 4.2 Within eight weeks of the end of fieldwork a written timetable for post-excavation assessment and updated project design must be produced subject to approval by Colchester BC's Archaeological Advisor. Following this, a written statement of progress on post-excavation work – whether assessment, analysis, report writing and publication or archiving – will be required at six monthly intervals.
- 4.3 The post-excavation assessment (PXA) and updated project design (UPD) should be prepared in accordance with the principles of *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006). The PXA will act as a critically assessed audit of the archaeological evidence from the site; see *East Anglian Archaeology Advice Note for Post Excavation Assessment* (2015).

- 4.4 In certain instances a full PXA might be unnecessary. The need for a full PXA or otherwise should be discussed and formally agreed with Colchester BC's Archaeological Advisor within eight weeks of the end of fieldwork.
- 4.5 The PXA must present a clear and concise assessment of the archaeological value and significance of the results, and identifies the research potential, in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3, 8 and 24, 1997, 2000 and 2011). It must present an Updated Project Design, with a timetable, for analysis, dissemination including publication appropriate to the significance of the results, and archive deposition. The PXA will *provide the basis for measurable standards* for the LPA to monitor this work.
- 4.6 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared, consistent with the principles of *MoRPHE*. It must be adequate to perform the function of a final archive for deposition with Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service.
- 4.7 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with guidelines from *The Institute of Conservation* (ICON).
- 4.8 The project manager should consult the intended archive depository (Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service) before the WSI is prepared regarding the specific requirements for the archive deposition and curation, and regarding any specific cost implications of deposition; agreement in principle for deposition should be obtained prior to approval of the WSI. The intended depository must be prepared to accept the entire archive resulting from the project (both finds and written archive) in order to create a complete record of the project. A clear statement of the form, intended content, and standards of the archive is to be submitted for approval as an essential requirement of the WSI. A clear statement of the form, intended content, and standards of the archive is to be submitted for approval as an essential requirement of the WSI. The WSI should include a Selection Strategy (<https://www.archaeologists.net/selection-toolkit>).
- 4.9 Arrangements for long-term storage and deposition of the archive, including all artefacts, must be agreed with the landowner and the recipient museum prior to the commencement of fieldwork. CBC's Archaeological Advisor should be notified when the archive has been deposited Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service.
- 4.10 The PXA should offer a statement of significance for retention, based on specialist advice, and - where it is justified – the PXA should propose a retention and discard strategy. This should be agreed with the intended archive depository.
- 4.11 The PXA should state proposals for the deposition of the digital archive relating to this project with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), or similar open access digital archive repository with expertise in curating digital archaeological archives, and allowance should be made for costs incurred to ensure proper deposition (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>). CBC's Archaeological Advisor should be notified when the archive has been deposited with the preferred digital archive repository. The WSI should also include a Data Management Plan.
- 4.12 Where appropriate, a digital vector plan should be included with the report, which must be compatible with MapInfo GIS software, for integration in the UAD. AutoCAD files

should also be exported and saved into a format that can be imported into MapInfo (for example, as a .dxf or .TAB files).

- 4.13 A digital and hard copy of the PXA (or grey literature report if otherwise agreed), clearly marked DRAFT, must be presented to Colchester BC's Archaeological Advisor for approval within six months of the completion of fieldwork unless other arrangements are negotiated. Following acceptance, a digital copy of the report should be presented to the Colchester HER. A hard copy of the report should be deposited with the archive.
- 4.14 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. When the project is completed, all parts of the OASIS online form must be completed and a copy must be included in the final report and also with the site archive. A .pdf version (in PDF/A or PDF/Archive format) of the entire report should be uploaded and also supplied to Colchester BC, for inclusion in the HER. A copy of the OASIS online form should be included as an appendix to the report.
- 4.15 A copy of the report shall be also supplied to the Essex HER, with an EHER summary sheet, on completion. A copy of the EHER summary sheet must be included in the final report.

Standards and Guidance

Standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, 2003.

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation* (December 2014) should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

The following Historic England Guidelines are directly relevant to this project (although this list is not exhaustive):

Geoarchaeology. Using earth sciences to understand the archaeological record (2007),
Environmental Archaeology (2011),
Animal Bones and Archaeology. Guidelines for Best Practice (2014),
Archaeometallurgy. Guidelines for Best Practice (2015),
Organic Residue Analysis and Archaeology. Guidance for Good Practice (2017),
Science and the Dead. A guideline for the destructive sampling of archaeological human remains for scientific analysis (2013),
The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project (2018).

Notes

This brief remains valid for 12 months. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the brief may need to be revised and re-issued to take account of new discoveries, changes in policy and techniques.