

LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

COLCHESTER DISTRICT



CoG4 Greenstead Puddingstone

Site location: A very fine, puddingstone boulder, sits on a concrete plinth in the communal garden of a block of flats in Avon Way, only a few metres from the pavement. It is now enclosed within the communal garden and a hedge obscures it from view.

Grid Reference: TM 0216 2481

Status: Still in place, but overgrown

Summary of the geological interest:

This very fine and colourful puddingstone is in mint condition and shows no sign of being transported by a river or an ice sheet. It was presumably found when the housing estate was constructed in the 1960s. The fact that it was placed on a plinth clearly means that it was valued at the time and it is therefore very sad that it is no longer visible from the road.

This is not the only important boulder in Greenstead. About 150 metres to the east of the puddingstone a large sarsen stone sits next to a bus stop in Avon Way



Site Assessment. Local Geological Sites (LoGS) in Essex are assessed using criteria based on DEFRA guidance. An assessment form is used which asks key questions under four value categories: scientific, educational, historical and aesthetic. This site has been assessed and qualifies under these criteria.

Scientific interest and site importance

Puddingstone was formed around 55 million years ago when the climate of Britain was hot and a layer of pebbles beneath the surface of the ground became cemented with quartz. They are thus very resistant to erosion and have survived the rigours of the Ice Age. They originated on the Hertfordshire – Essex border, and were probably carried by the River Thames when it flowed north of its present course.

The formation of silcretes (which includes sarsens and puddingstones) has been the subject of recent scientific debate. Research has compared the conditions under which sarsens and puddingstones may have been formed with the present day climate in the Kalahari Desert and parts of Australia.



The Greenstead puddingstone in its original setting. It has now been completely obscured.