

Northern Archaeological Associates

**12 CAVE ROAD, BROUGH-ON-HUMBER
EAST YORKSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
REPORT**

**PREPARED FOR
MR M VODDEN**

December 1997

NAA 97/81

12 CAVE ROAD, BROUGH-ON-HUMBER

EAST YORKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks for an extension to 12 Cave Road, Brough-on-Humber. The site lies just outside the northwest corner of the defences associated with the Roman town and military fort at Brough and close to the supposed line of a Roman road leading north. Evidence of Roman occupation in the vicinity is known through previous discoveries of burials, traces of timber buildings and quantities of pottery

Groundworks for the current development revealed the remains of a substantial Roman stone building which extended beyond the site. It seems more likely that this was a range of outbuildings rather than domestic quarters. It had been occupied for a relatively short period, probably during the first half of the fourth century AD. The remains of a newborn infant were found in the filling of a ditch parallel to the building on its north-west side. Pottery from an earlier pit sealed by a wall of the building, together with residual material in later levels, show that occupation on the site goes back at least to the mid-second century AD.

There was no trace of the anticipated Roman road, although the orientation of the building may give a clue to its alignment. Equally the building may be aligned with a beck which runs by the site to the south-east.

It is clear from this watching brief that important and extensive Roman remains exist outside the Roman town in this vicinity.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report represents the results of an archaeological watching brief on an extension to 12 Cave Road, Brough-on-Humber, East Yorkshire (SE 9386 2716). The watching brief was undertaken by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) on behalf of Mr M Vodden during October 1997. The development lay on the north side of the existing house.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken as a condition of planning consent for the development (application 322-10022). The archaeological condition was attached to the planning permission by the East Riding of Yorkshire Council on the advice of the Humber Archaeology Partnership SMR office due to the anticipation that groundworks might encounter archaeological deposits of the Romano-British period. The size and nature of the development proposals were such that the requirement for any recording could be accommodated by a 'watching brief'.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1 The natural subsoil within the area of the development consists of an orange-red sand with lenses of fine chalky gravel, all of glacial origin. This falls towards the south-east more steeply than the modern surface.
- 2.2 The overlying deposits increase in thickness over the site from 0.6m at the northwest corner to 1.2m at the south-east. This slope forms the edge of a broad valley, currently drained by a stream running from the north-north-west into the Haven at Brough (Fig. 1). Cave Road rises to the north-west along a spur of higher ground and may approximately follow the line of the Roman road to York and Malton.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The development is located within an area of archaeological interest just over 100m outside the north-west defences of the Roman town (Petuaria) and earlier military fort at Brough (Wacher 1969). The Roman town served as the civitas capital or administrative centre for the region. The fort probably dates to AD 71, with the town defences being constructed soon after the removal of the garrison in AD 125 (Ramm 1978). New defences were built about AD 200 and converted to stone at the end of the third century. The town was largely abandoned before AD 370, probably as a result of increasing flooding.
- 3.2 The Roman road from Brough to York and Malton runs close to the development site but its exact line is not known. Casual finds indicate the existence of extramural settlement along the road to the north of the town. Evidence of settlement in the vicinity of the development include the remains of timber buildings and quantities of pottery. Two Roman burials were discovered almost opposite the development in the 1930's, one of which was accompanied by a number of artefacts suggesting that the individual may have been a religious figure.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The foundation trenches for the building extension were dug 0.6m wide and 0.9m deep using a mini-excavator. Archaeological monitoring was made difficult by the intermittent and unpredictable way in which the contractor carried out the groundworks (which was spread over a 12 day period).
- 4.2 Time was available to fully investigate and record the features in the first trench for the south-east side of the extension, but subsequent trenches were only seen after machining was complete and recording was based upon observing the sections and spoil. Trenches for the south-west end and up to the rear of the existing house were dug after the watching brief ended and were not therefore monitored. Walls recorded within the first trench were subsequently removed at the request of the local authority building inspector.

5.0 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

- 5.1 The remains of a substantial Roman stone building (Fig. 2), orientated north-east to south-west were recorded. These extended beyond the site on the north-east, northwest and south-east sides, and possibly also on the south-west. It was first encountered at the south-east corner where three walls (4, 5 and 6) intersected (Plate 1). Wall 4 was 0.8m thick and survived to a maximum of seven courses high. All three walls were similarly built of flat slabs of undressed oolitic limestone up to 0.4m across. None of the courses were mortared or faced. The lowest may have been laid in a shallow cut but equally they could have stood on the contemporary land surface and subsided with the weight of the building. The lowest course of all showed that wall 4 had been laid first with the other two butting up to it, but subsequent courses overlapped, indicating that all three walls had been built together. Quantities of dislodged stone formed a destruction layer (3) running from the top of the walls down to the associated floor surfaces, and showed that at least five courses had survived above ground. There was no trace of a constructed floor on either side of wall 4, but merely compacted brown earth, rich in iron flecks.
- 5.2 Two metres south-west of this wall junction a less regular foundation (7) was encountered, with two stake holes close to its east side (Figs. 2 and 3a; Plates 2 and 3). One of the holes (16) formed a void, and the other (17) contained the end of sharpened stake, some 4cm in diameter. These features may be part of an internal structure.
- 5.3 The trench for the north-west side of the extension was examined after machining and remains were only seen in section. Towards its north-eastern end wall 6 had been cut and further to the south-west where the trench dog-legged more foundations were evident. Courses of laid stone (wall 18) were clear in the north side, but on the south only dislodged rubble showed. The existence of wall 19 (Fig. 2) is therefore more speculative.
- 5.4 A shallow ditch (15) ran along the outside of wall 18 (Figs. 2 and 3b). It contained pottery contemporary with the occupation of the building, and the destruction layer (3) dipped into its upper fill. The remains of a newborn infant were found in the upper fill (12). It was not possible to determine whether this had been properly buried or simply discarded.
- 5.5 Evidence for earlier Roman occupation on the site came from a deeper section cut beneath the wall intersection at the south-east corner (Figs. 3a and 3c). A small pit (11) had been cut from an horizon 0.4m below the lowest courses. The complete half of a dish, dating to the second century AD, was recovered from its fill (Plate 4).

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The stone building is one of substantial size with several rooms. Where its walls survived above ground level, they were built of dry undressed stone with no constructed floors in the rooms examined. Comparatively little pottery was found in the associated levels. It is therefore unlikely that this was a domestic building. A large tile fragment,

possibly of box-flue, may indicate the presence of a more sophisticated building close-by. The remains found on this site could be a range of outbuildings associated with it.

- 6.2 Pottery from pit 11 and residual material found in later levels show that Roman presence on the site goes back at least to the second century AD. Two sherds of plain samian (Drag. 79 and 31) imported from Central Gaul can be dated to the latter half of that century.
- 6.3 Dating evidence for the stone building is fairly clear. Part of a flanged bowl from beneath wall 4 should be no earlier than the late third century AD in date, whilst the latest sherd from the site, the rim of a large Huntcliffe jar, dates from the mid-fourth to early fifth centuries. The lack of any buildup on the floor levels and the small quantity of pottery associated with them suggest that the building had a relatively short life. Perhaps it was constructed not long before the middle of the fourth century, when much of the town at Brough appears to have been abandoned following a withdrawal by the Roman military.

7.0 ARCHIVE

- 7.1 The context, illustrative and photographic archive associated with the archaeological watching brief has been deposited at the Hull and East Riding Museum in Hull (KINCM. 1997.133).
- 7.2 With the permission of the landowner, Mr M Vodden, the finds recovered during the watching brief have been donated to the museum as part of the site archive.

REFERENCES

- Gillam J P 1970 *Types of Roman coarse pottery in Northern England* (Newcastle)
- Ramm H 1978 *The Parisi* (Duckworth: London)
- Wacher J S 1969 *Excavations at Brough on Humber, 1958-61*, Research Report of the Society of Antiquaries, **25** (London).

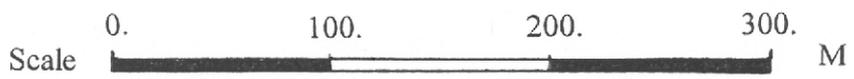
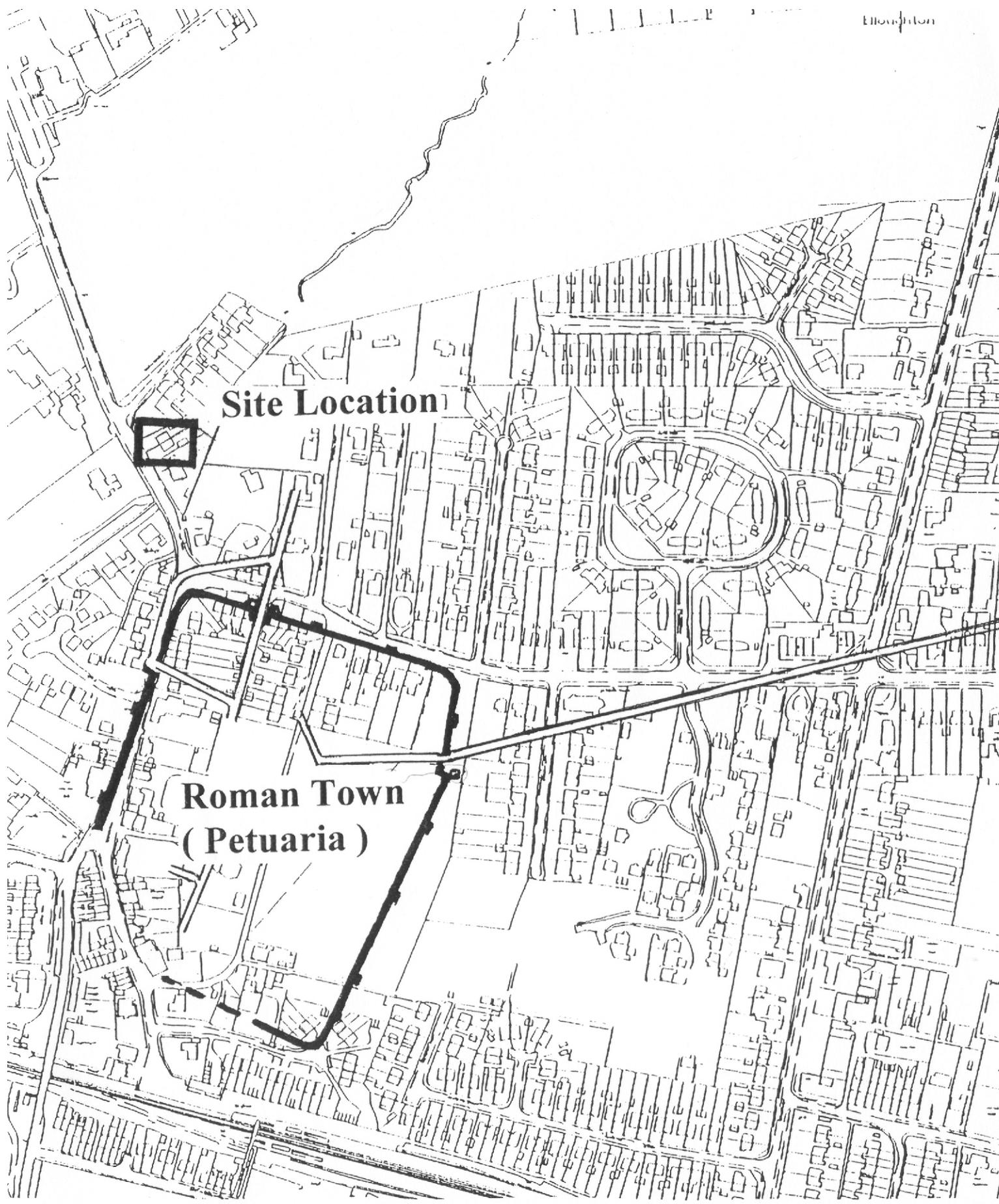


Fig. 1 Site Location Plan
Showing Relationship with the Roman Town Defences
and Roman roads. (after Wachter).

Key



Masonry removed by machine
Recorded in section only



Masonry recorded in situ

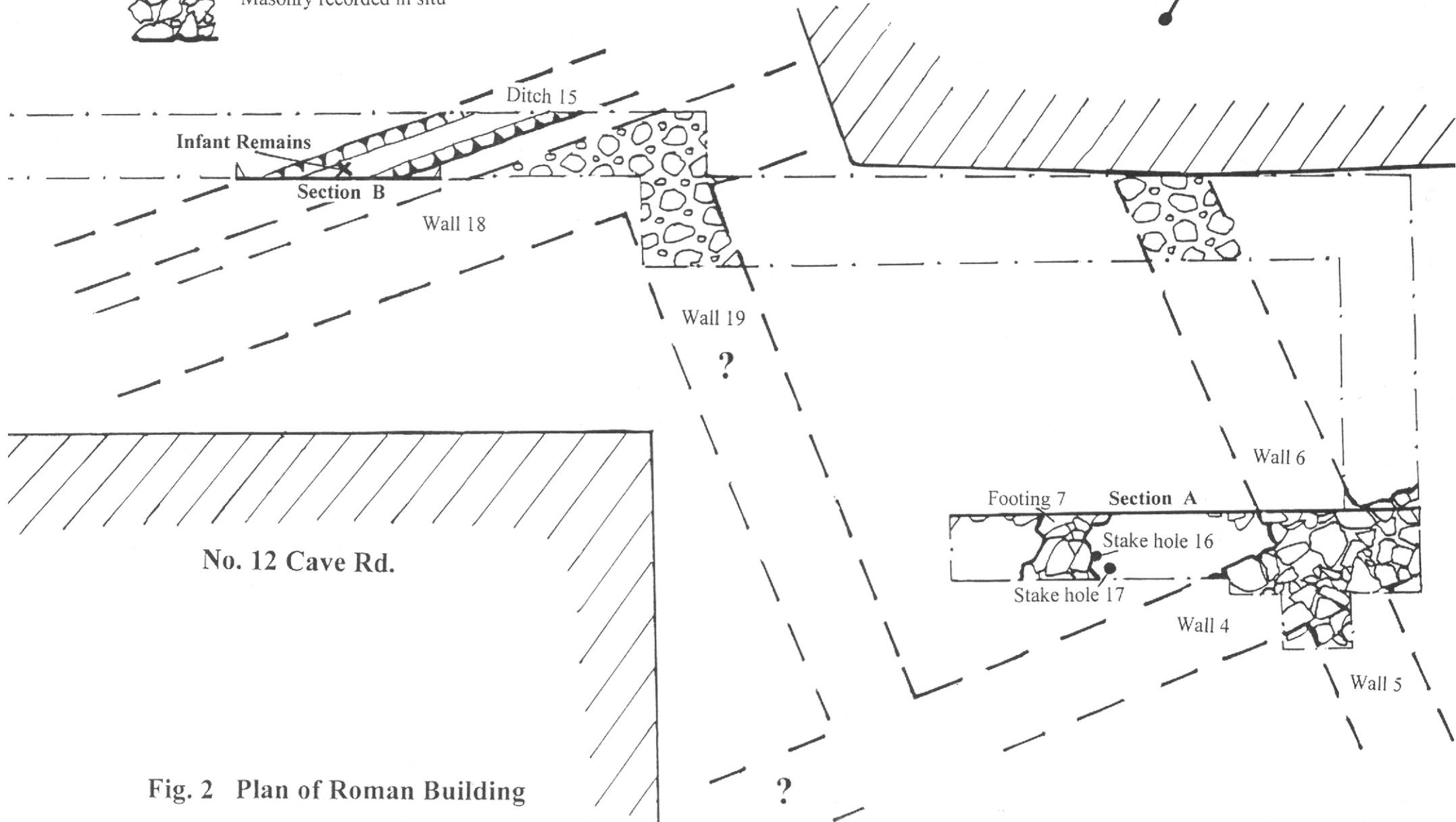
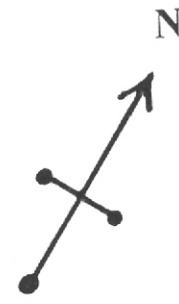
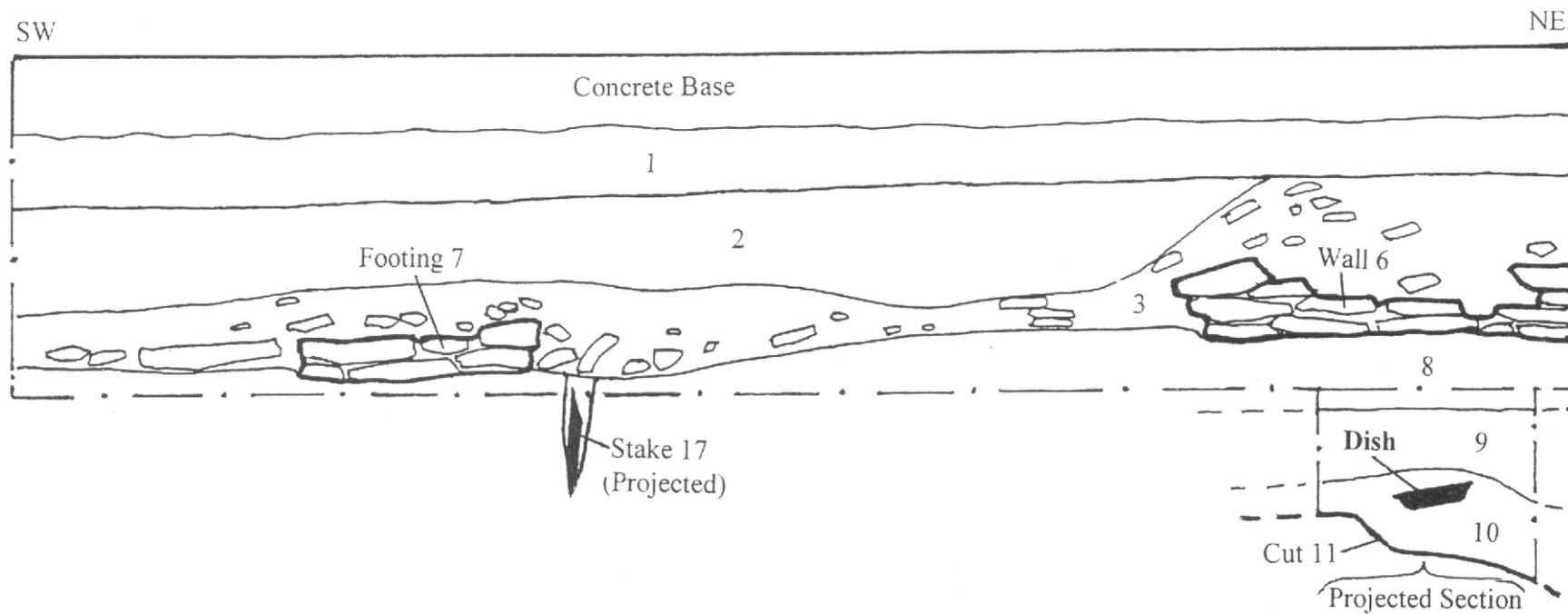
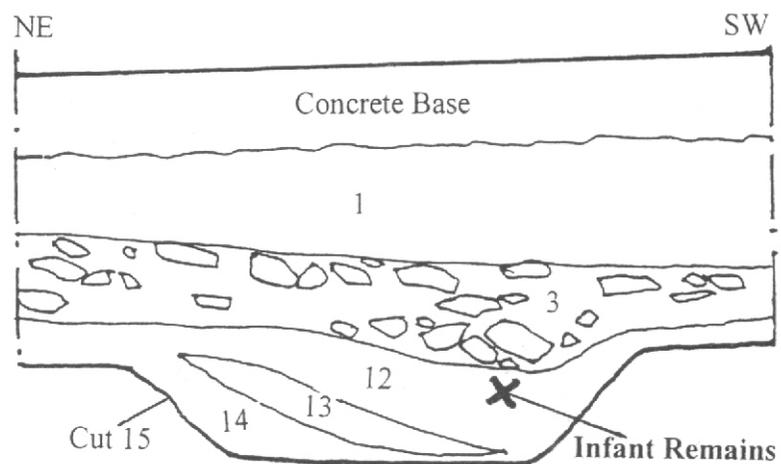


Fig. 2 Plan of Roman Building

(a) Section A



(b) Section B - Ditch 15 (Oblique Section)



(c) Plan of pit 11 beneath wall 4

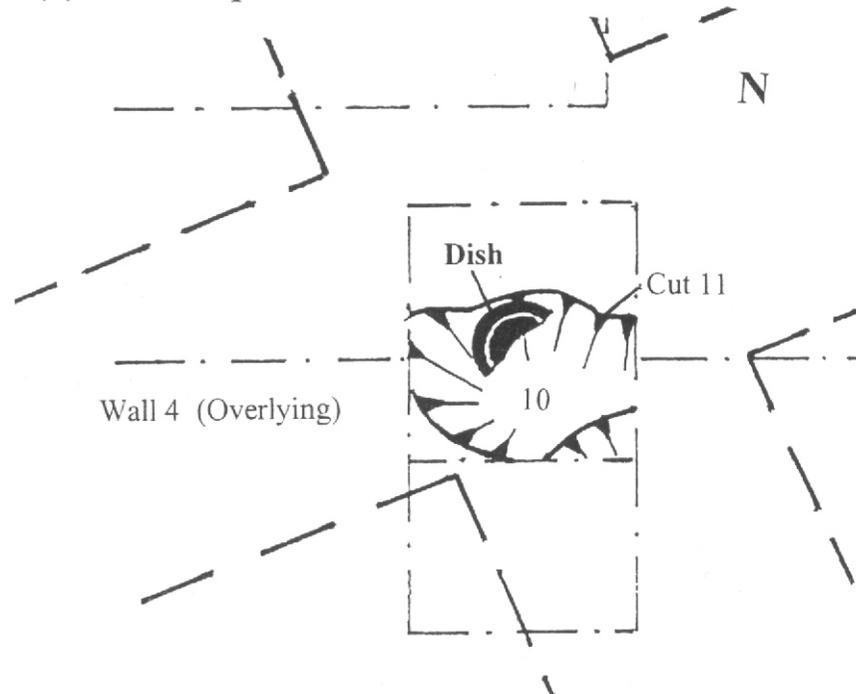


Fig. 3



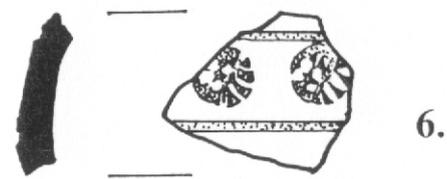
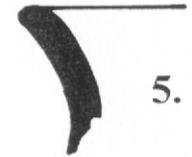
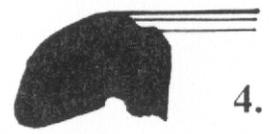
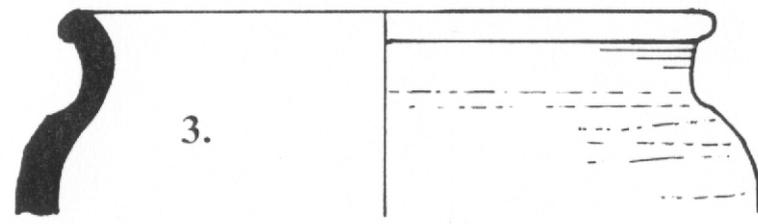
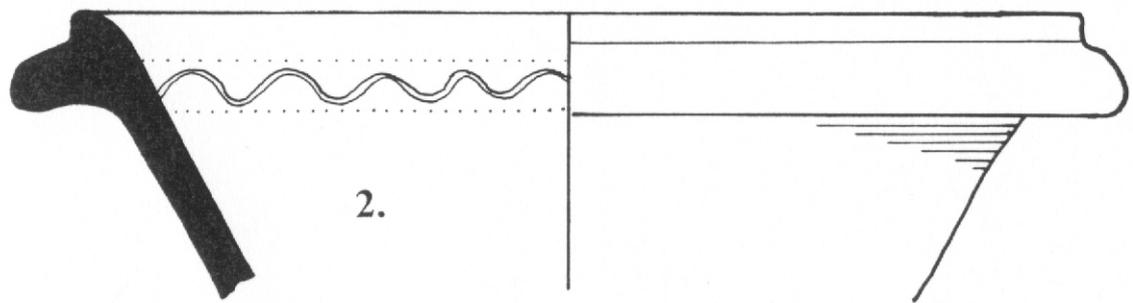
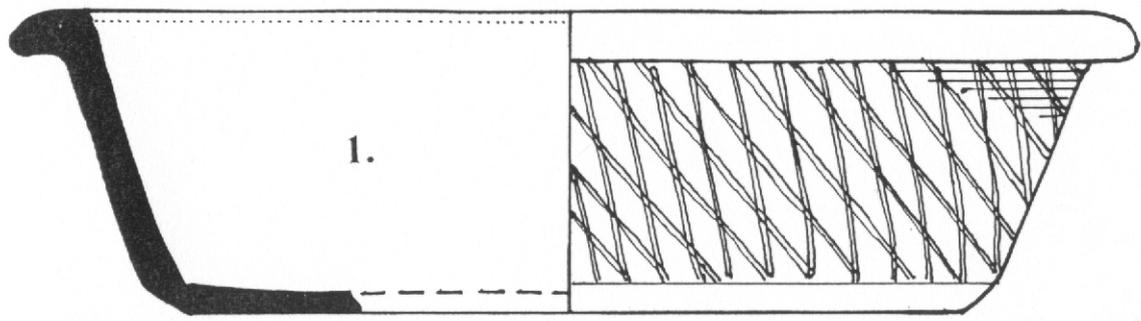


Fig. 4 Coarse Pottery

Scale 0. 5. Cms.



Plate 1: Junction of walls 4, 5 and 6 from the south



Plate 2: Footings 7 (foreground) and walls 4, 5 and 6 from the west



Plate 3: Footings 7 and stake-holes 16 and 17



Plate 4: Pit 11 below wall 4 (with part of dish *in situ*)

APPENDIX I

CONTEXT CATALOGUE

Context Description

01 Garden soil	Dark brown sandy loam beneath concrete base
02 Post-Roman buildup	Brown sandy loam. Below 01
03 Destruction layer	Dark brown sandy loam with large quantity of oolitic limestone rubble. Below 02
04 Stone wall	Dry stone wall of oolitic limestone of two colours, pale cream and deep yellow. Measures 0.8m thick, up to 7 courses high. Flat undressed slabs up to 0.4m across. Orientated NE - SW
05 Stone wall	Joins 04 from SE. Same construction. Orientated NW - SE
06 Stone wall	Joins 04 from NW. Same construction. Orientated NW -SE
07 Stone footing	Dry stone footing of oolitic limestone. Constructed like 04. Up to 3 courses high. Orientation uncertain. Possible corner
08 Floor level	Compacted brown sandy loam with dense iron flecks. Below 03
09 Mid-Roman buildup	Dark brown sandy loam. Below 08
10 Fill of pit 11	Light brown sand. Below 09
11 Pit cut	Irregular cut. Sloping sides descending beyond trench to SE
12 Upper fill of ditch 15	Dark brown sandy loam with sparse limestone rubble (some burnt). Below 03
13 Middle fill of ditch 15	Light brown sand. Formed a wedge between 12 and 14 (?slip from upcast)
14 Lower fill of ditch 15	Dark brown sandy loam. Below 13
15 Ditch cut	Shallow with sloping sides and flat base. Up to 0.25m deep and 0.5m wide. Orientated NE - SW. Parallel to wall 18 on NW side of building
16 Stake hole	Void, Up to 10cm in diameter. Adjacent to footing 07

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 17 Stake hole with stake | As 16 but with stake preserved |
| 18 Stone wall | Constructed like 04 but less well preserved. Orientated NE-SW |
| 19 Stone wall | Possible wall. Only disturbed rubble surviving |

APPENDIX II

FINDS CATALOGUE

Context

Pottery

03

4 sherds - Wheel thrown. Hard fine sandy fabric with frequent inclusions of rounded black grits. Mid-grey (1 sherd with dark grey external surface). Holme-on-Spalding Moor region. 3rd to early 4th century AD

1 sherd - Wheel thrown. Medium-hard sandy fabric with frequent small chalk inclusions. Mid-grey with lighter core

2 sherds - Including base of small jar. Probably handmade. Soft coarse fabric with inclusions of small oolitic limestone and shell. Orange brown with dark external and light internal surface. Late 3rd to early 4th century AD

2 sherds - Handmade. Medium-hard coarse fabric with frequent medium-sized inclusions of chalk and flint. Black. Probably Huntcliffe ware. AD 340 - 410

Other

3 fragments of brick or tile

3 animal bones

08

Pottery

2 sherds - Wheel thrown. Thin, hard sandy fabric. Medium grey (1 with dark surfaces). ?North Lincolnshire. ?2nd century AD

2 sherds - Wheel thrown dish. Medium-hard fine sandy fabric with micaceous inclusions. Very smooth surface. Black with brown core. No parallels found

Other

1 iron object

2 animal bones

1 oyster shell

Pottery

1 sherd - Plain samian rim (Drag. 31). Central Gaulish. Mid to late 2nd century AD

1 sherd - Rim of flanged bowl. Wheel thrown. Hard sandy fabric with occasional chalk inclusions. Burnished surfaces with internal wavy line on unburnished zone. Grey. Similar to Gillam 231. ?Holme-on-Spalding Moor region. Late 3rd century AD. Fig. 4 (2)

1 sherd - Small jar. Wheel thrown with stamped decoration. Round (?vine) motif. Hard smooth fabric. Grey. 'Parisian' ware. Early 2nd century AD. Fig. 4 (6)

1 sherd - Dish with bevelled base. Wheel thrown. Hard sandy fabric with burnished surfaces. Grey. 2nd to early 3rd century AD

1 sherd - Wheel thrown. Smooth grey fabric, subsequently oxidised red

1 sherd - Small jar. Handmade, wheel finished. Hard sandy fabric with occasional erratic inclusions. Black. Form like Gillam 154 but different fabric (also paralleled at North Cave and Welton Wold in BRI fabric). ?2nd century AD. Fig. 4 (3)

1 sherd - Handmade. Calcite gritted fabric. Black.

Other

5 animal bones

Pottery

1 sherd - Wheel thrown. Hard sandy fabric. Grey. ?2nd century AD

2 sherds - Near complete half of a dish. Wheel thrown with bevelled base. Hard sandy fabric with smoothed surface and external lattice decoration, Black. Regional version of BBII type. Form like Gillam 224 but with decoration like 309. Mid 2nd to early 3rd century AD. Fig 4 (1).

Other

1 animal bone

12

Pottery

1 sherd - Narrow base of beaker. Wheel thrown. Hard orange-pink fabric with brown-black colour coat. ?Nene. ?Late 3rd century AD

1 sherd - Wheel thrown. Hard sandy fabric. Buff with grey external surface

1 sherd - Wheel thrown. Hard smooth micaceous fabric with occasional red sandstone inclusions. Buff with black external and grey internal surface

3 sherds - Including base. Wheel thrown. Hard fine sandy fabric with frequent very small rounded black inclusions. Grey with darker external surface.

1 sherd - Handmade. Medium hard shell gritted fabric. Buff with black surface. Dalesware. Late 3rd to early 4th century AD

2 sherds - Handmade. Medium hard coarse shell gritted fabric. Orangered. Dalesware. Late 3rd to early 4th century AD

Other

1 animal bone

1 oyster shell

17

Other

End of a wooden stake (4cm in diameter)

Unstratified

Pottery

1 sherd - Plain samian rim (Drag. 79). Central Gaulish. Mid to late 2nd century AD

1 sherd - Rim of small flared-necked jar or beaker. Wheel thrown. Hard sandy fabric. Grey. Late 2nd to 3rd century AD. Fig. 4 (5)

2 sherds - Wheel thrown. Hard sandy fabric

1 sherd - Rim of large jar. Handmade. Calcite gritted fabric. Black. Huntcliffe ware. AD 340 to 410. Fig 4 (4)

Other

1 large fragment of tile (possibly box-flue)

1 animal bone