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**56 CHESTER STREET
CIRENCESTER
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

A.S. REPORT: 02/02

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FEBRUARY 2002

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SUMMARY

In January 2002 Archaeological Solutions carried out an archaeological evaluation at 56 Chester Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire. Roman walling and part of a tessellated pavement were identified and pottery from associated deposits suggests they are of mid-late 4th century AD or later date. These deposits are probably associated with further walling and mosaic panels previously uncovered in the garden of the same house, and probably belong to a substantial late Roman building which fronted a road approximately 15m to the north.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out in January 2002 at 56 Chester Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire at NGR SP 027015 (Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Rupert and Joc Marchington as part of a planning condition attached to the construction of a single-storey extension to the rear of the house.

1.2 Topography and Geology

1.2.1 The proposed development lies to the rear of the house in an area currently occupied by a stone-slab patio (Fig. 2). The garden itself is relatively flat at approximately 109.43m OD although there is a noticeable rise in ground level to the boundary wall between the house and St. Michaels Park to the south-west. The natural gravel substrate was not encountered in the evaluation.

1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 The site lies within *insula IX* of the Roman town of *Corinium Dobunorum*. Chester Street and the surrounding area has been the subject of several small-scale archaeological interventions. This includes archaeological work in June 1999 in the garden of 56 Chester Street where a corridor wall and an external courtyard with two mosaic panels of 4th century AD date were uncovered. Demolition material overlying the floors yielded late 4th century AD pottery and coins. These remains presumably lie within a substantial house which fronted a street located in a trial trench to the north at 50 Chester Street (Hirst and Holbrook 2000).

1.4 Methodology

- 1.4.1 A detailed project design was prepared by Archaeological Solutions in accordance with a brief issued by the Archaeology Service, Environment Department, Gloucestershire County Council. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1994) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects II* (English Heritage 1999).
- 1.4.2 The evaluation trench was excavated by hand and was recorded using standard recording procedures. After the completion of the excavation all finds were analysed and catalogued also using standard archaeological procedures. The archive will be deposited at Corinium Museum, Cirencester.

2. RESULTS

- 2.1 At a depth of 1.2m below present ground level (108.23m OD) part of a north-east to south-west aligned wall (14) was encountered. A mortar bed (11) for part of a tessellated pavement (10) had been laid against this wall. This pavement consisted of five stone tesserae which were still *in-situ* (Fig. 3 & Plate 1).
- 2.2 The pavement was covered by a 0.18m thick layer of demolition debris (9) which consisted of plaster (some with traces of white and dark-red paint) and mortar in a grey-black silty clay matrix. Two Roman potsherds of post AD270 and post AD360 date were also found within this layer along with 1 stone and 2 fired clay tesserae.

- 2.3 Demolition deposit (9) was cut by the foundation trench (12) for another wall (13), which was 0.44m wide. This later wall had been laid directly on top of wall (14) and consisted of a single foundation layer and two surviving thin courses. The uppermost surviving course of this wall lay at a depth of 0.84m below present ground level (108.59m OD). No floor levels associated with this wall survived. The fill of the foundation cut was identical to a 0.34m thick layer of stony grey-black silty clay (8), which otherwise covered demolition debris (9) (Fig. 3 & Plate 2). No artefactual material was recovered from layer (8).
- 2.4 Wall (13) and layer (8) were covered with a 0.48m thick layer of mid-brown silty clay which was relatively stone-free apart from occasional small stones and gravel. This was excavated in arbitrary spits (7, 6, 5 and 4). A piece of 18th-19th century china and 2 clay pipe stems were recovered from the lowest spit (7) along with 2 Roman potsherds, one of which dates to post AD360, and three possible Roman tile fragments. The overlying spits all contained 18th-19th century potsherds and other post-medieval material. The latest spit (4) was in turn covered by a 0.2m thick garden soil (3), which was in turn sealed by a 0.1m thick concrete bed (2) for the present patio (1) (Fig. 3).

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 Two phases of a Roman building were encountered in the evaluation trench. The presence of the tessellated pavement accords well with the findings of a previous trench excavated at the south-western end of the garden in 1999, and it is probable that the walling and mosaics in both trenches belong to the same substantial building which fronted a road found in an evaluation trench approximately 15m to the north (Hirst & Holbrook 2000).

- 3.2 The Roman deposits probably date to the mid to late 4th century or later as a potsherd of post AD360 date was recovered from demolition layer (9) and another of the same date was recovered from layer (7).
- 3.3 The evaluation achieved its aim of identifying the depth and nature of undisturbed archaeological deposits. These consist of wall (13) and layer (8) which lie at a minimum depth of 0.84m below present ground level (108.59m OD). The layer (7) directly above produced post-medieval as well as Roman material. The proposed development will consist of a concrete raft foundation which will be excavated to a depth of 0.75m below present ground level.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Charles Parry, Senior Archaeological Officer of Gloucestershire County Council for his advice and assistance during the course of this project. The assistance of the Marchington family was also much appreciated. The pottery was identified by Jane Timby.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hirst, K, and Holbrook, N, 2000 Chester Street, Cirencester, *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* **118** p220-1

IFA, 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*. Institute of Field Archaeologists.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

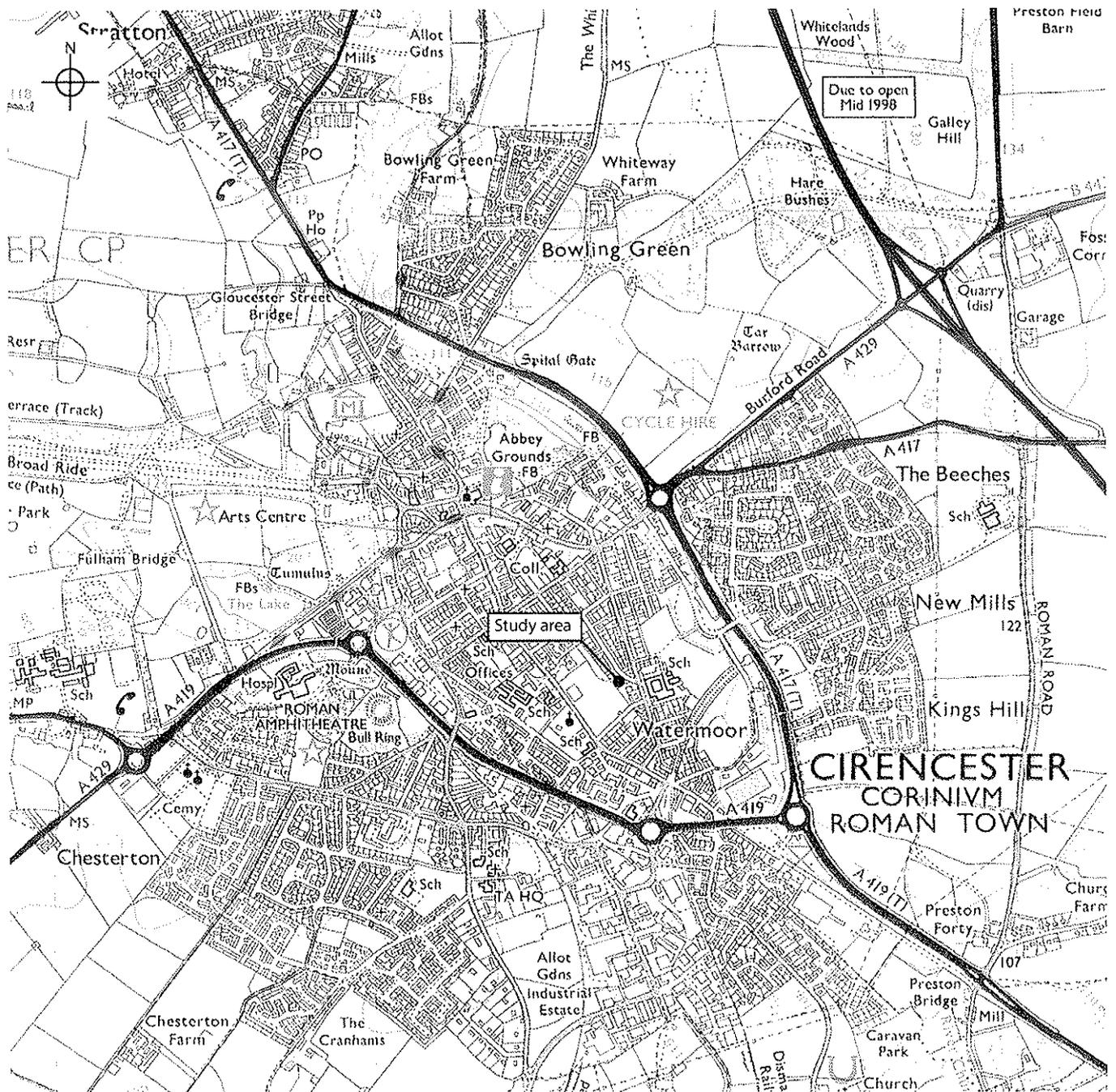
Context	Description
(1)	Patio slabs, 0.06m thick.
(2)	Concrete bed for patio (1), 0.1m thick.
(3)	Black garden soil, 0.20m thick.
(4-7)	Mid-brown silty clay, relatively stone-free but with frequent gravel and some smaller stones. This deposit was 0.48m thick but was excavated in 0.1m thick arbitrary spits (4, 5, 6 and 7).
(8)	Grey-black silty clay, 0.34m thick, containing frequent sub-angular stones (eg. 15cmx10cm in size) and gravel. This deposit also formed the fill of foundation trench (12).
(9)	Demolition deposit, a maximum of 0.18m thick, of plaster (some with traces of white and dark red paint), and mortar in a grey-black silty clay matrix.
(10)	Tessellated pavement consisting of 5 stone tesserae each about 2-3cm square.
(11)	Mortar bedding for pavement (10).
(12)	Foundation cut for wall (13).
(13)	Wall, aligned NE-SW, 0.44m wide and faced on both sides with rubble core. Two courses on a single offset foundation survived. The stones of the upper course measured approximately 27cm x 17cm across. No evidence of bonding material.
(14)	Part of a wall seen at the base of the trench and contemporary with mortar bed (11) and pavement (10). This wall was on the same alignment as, and directly covered by, wall (13) and as such its full dimensions could not be measured.

APPENDIX 2: FINDS TABLE

Context	Finds
(3)	6 potsherds.
(4)	10 potsherds; 2 clay pipe stems; 2 fragments of dark-green bottle glass.
(5)	8 potsherds; 6 tile fragments; 1 clay pipe stem; 3 fragments of dark-green bottle glass; 3 animal bone fragments.
(6)	11 potsherds; 1 tile fragment; 1 clear and 1 light green glass fragment.
(7)	3 potsherds; 3 tile fragments; 2 clay pipe stems and one animal bone fragment.
(9)	2 potsherds; 5 plaster fragments, with traces of white and dark-red paint; 1 oyster shell and 1 stone and 2 fired clay tesserae.

APPENDIX 3: THE CERAMICS

Context	Fabrics
(3)	1 English stoneware; 1 flowerpot; 2 china; 1 glazed miscellaneous (all 18 th -19 th century) plus 1 Dorset BB1 flanged bowl (late 3 rd -4 th century)
(4)	6 china; 1 streaky iron-glazed ware; 2 red earthenwares (all 18 th -19 th century) plus 1 Dorset Black-Burnished ware (Roman)
(5)	5 china; 1 post-medieval glazed red earthenware; 1 iron glazed ware (all 18 th -19 th century) plus 1 Roman greyware (3 rd -4 th century). Also 5 fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material and 1 post-medieval oven tile
(6)	7 china; 2 post-medieval glazed earthenware (all 19 th century) 1 Westerwald stoneware; plus 1 Dorset Black-Burnished ware (Roman). Also 1 fragment Roman roof tile
(7)	1 china (18 th -19 th century); 1 Dorset Black Burnished ware and 1 late Roman shelly ware (post c. 360AD). Also 3 fragments of possible Roman tile
(9)	1 Oxfordshire ware (post AD270) and 1 rim of a late Roman shell-tempered ware (post c. AD360). Also 2 fired clay tesserae



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Fig. 1 Location Plan

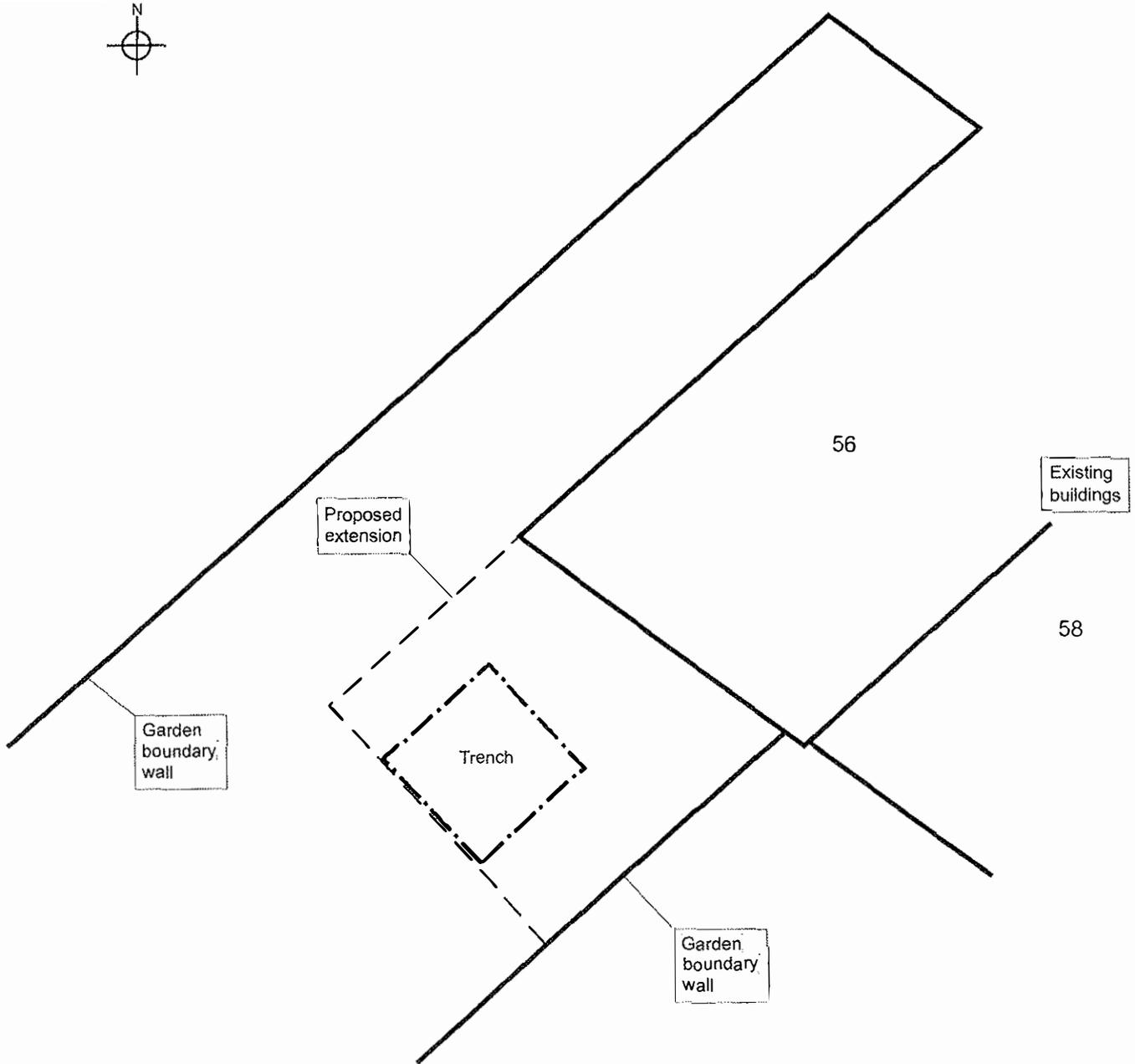


Fig. 2 Trench Location Plan

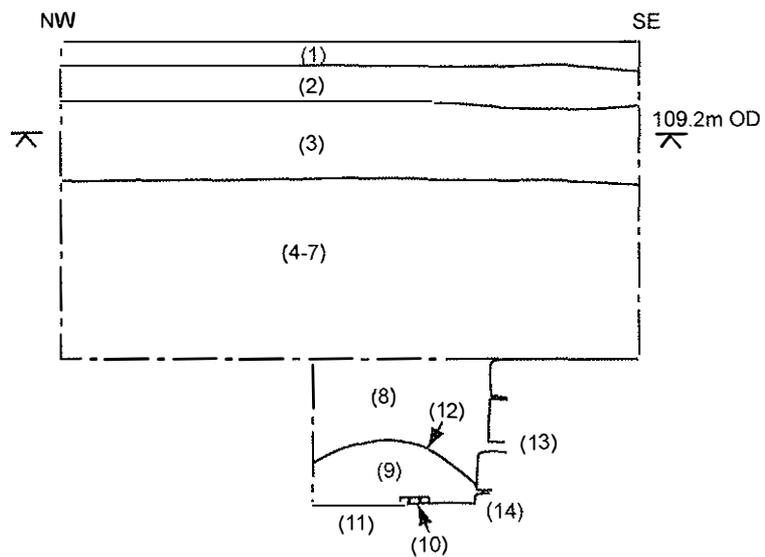
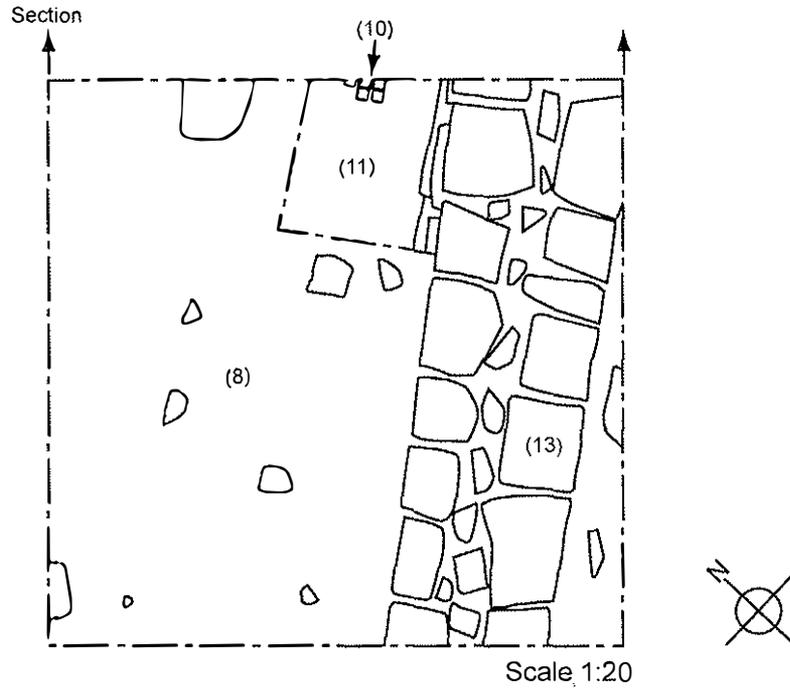




Plate 1, Tessellated pavement (10) and mortar bed (11)



Plate 2,