

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

EVALUATION REPORT

NORWICH ROAD, WATTON

1991



NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

at

NORWICH ROAD, WATTON

by

Heather Wallis

May 1991

Frontispiece (facing) Excavation of a Romano-British feature.

\* \* \* \* \*

Location: Norwich Road, Watton

Grid Ref: TF 9262 0090

Date of work: April-May 1991

SMR number: 25014

\* \* \* \* \*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In April 1991 the Norfolk Archaeological Unit were contracted to carry out an evaluation on the site of a proposed housing development fronting the Norwich Road, Watton. (Fig. 1) The work was funded by Mr. V. Summers.

1.2 The site had been identified as having archaeological potential as a result of metal detecting in the surrounding area over the last two years. A total of 48 Romano-British coins and 11 broches (some incomplete) dating from the 1st to 4th centuries have been recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record.

1.3 The evaluation work was planned to establish the extent and depth of the archaeological deposits, if any. It was hoped that the evidence recovered would indicate the date and nature of the site. Excavation was undertaken according to a brief set by the Norfolk Landscape Archaeology Section.

1.4 Initially three trenches were excavated by machine, T1, T2, and T3. In response to the number of archaeological features revealed, especially in T3, it was agreed that further trenches, T4, T5, and T6, would be excavated to help in the assessment of the quantity of the archaeology. (Fig. 2)

## 2. Metal Detecting Survey

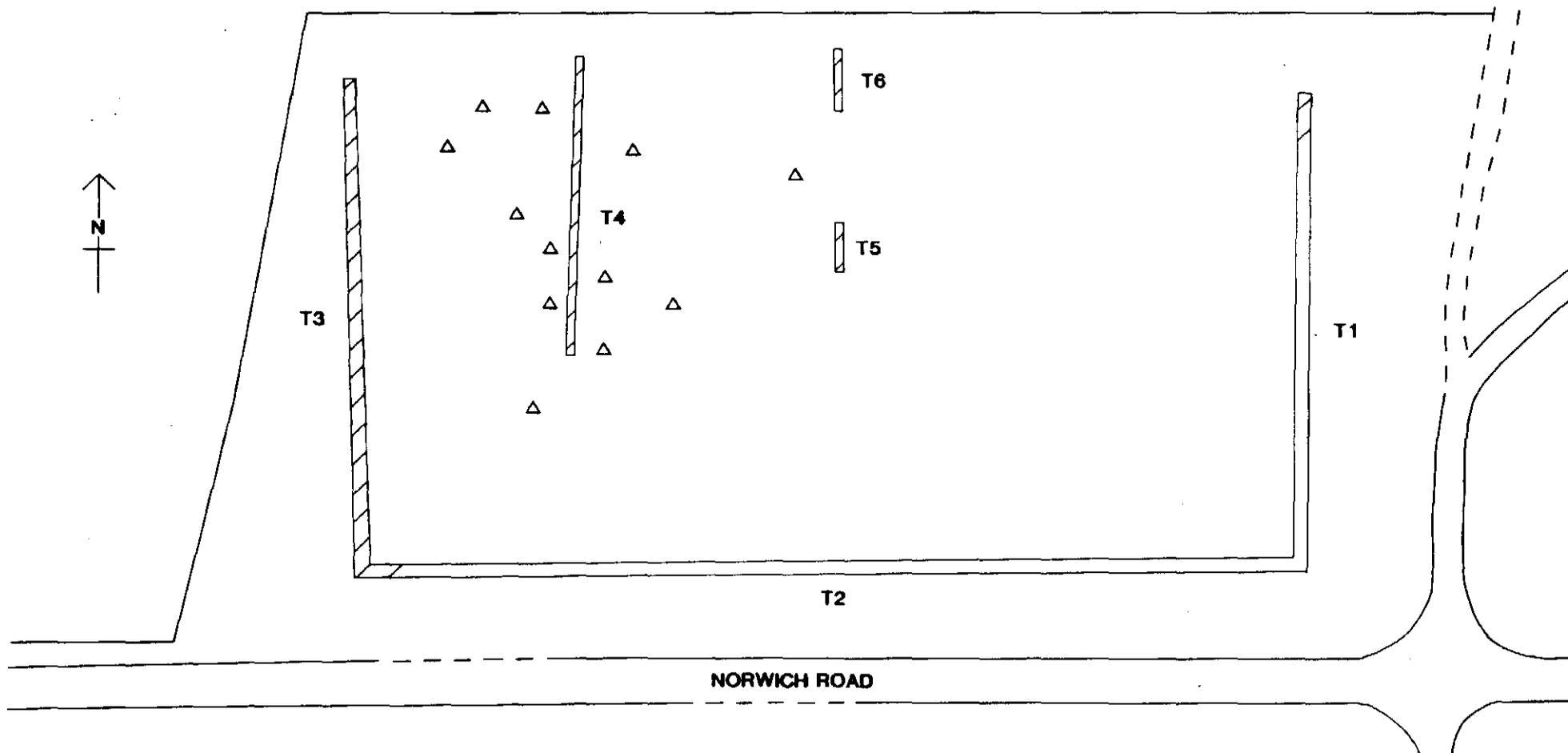
2.1 During the week commencing the 15th April 1991 Mr. G. Nunn and Mr. N. Phillips undertook a systematic metal detector survey across the site. All the finds were located within a 25m grid across the area. The result of the survey can be seen in Fig. 3 and are summarized below by grid square reference.

A6 - 1 Romano-British coin  
A9 - 4 Romano-British coins, 1 medieval jetton  
A10 - 2 Romano-British coins  
A11 - 1 Romano-British coin  
A15 - 3 Romano-British coins  
A16 - 1 Romano-British coin  
A19 - 1 Romano-British coin, 1 medieval bowl rim  
A20 - 1 medieval jetton  
A29 - 1 medieval object  
A35 - 1 medieval jetton



Fig 1

WATTON Norwich Road 1991 Site 25014



H Excavated areas of archaeological interest

△ Romano-British finds from metal detector survey

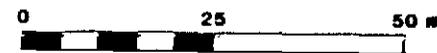


Fig 2

2.2 During the excavation the trenches and spoil heaps were also detected. The topsoil from T3 produced four unidentified bronze objects, that from T4 six Roman coins and one medieval jetton, while three Romano-British coins were recovered from sealed contexts in T3 and T4.

2.3 Many of the coins are in poor condition; those that can be positively identified show a date range from the 2nd to the 4th century.

### 3. The Excavations

3.1 The deposits revealed by excavation are described below in trench number order. All the trenches clearly showed disturbance by modern agricultural activity. Because this obscured any possible features it was removed by machine leaving the archaeological features clearly defined although slightly truncated in places; depending on the depth of the subsoil.

3.2 Trench 1 was 2.2m wide and 80m long running along the east side of the area at right angles to Norwich Road. Originally this was machined to a clean orange/brown subsoil at a depth of 0.40m from the surface. This subsoil was not apparent in the north end of the trench where the topsoil appeared directly over the orange clay natural. Two ditches were noted at this end of the trench, both of which contained Romano-British pottery. To ensure that there were no features sealed below the subsoil layer this was removed for the north 50m of this trench. No further features were revealed.

3.3 Trench 2 was 1.5m wide, 155m long and located along the south edge of the site parallel to Norwich Road. This was stripped to a clean orange/brown subsoil at a depth of 0.50m. Two small areas were taken deeper, to the natural clay in response to the deeper stratigraphy of T.4 and T.5 (see paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9). The only archaeological feature noted was a small pit at the extreme west end of the trench. This contained predominantly late Iron Age pottery.

3.4 Trench 3 was 2.2m wide, 84m long and ran parallel to T.1 but at the west end of the site. This was machined to the natural clay as no clear subsoil deposit was present due to agricultural disturbance (see 3.1). Archaeological features were identified along the full length of this trench. In total there were thirteen pits and twelve ditches all of which were half-sectioned and recorded. The major features and those containing more conclusive dating evidence are discussed below. All features and contexts are listed in Appendix A.

3.5 Feature 049 was a ditch 2.35m wide and 0.40m deep crossing the trench at an angle of about 45°. This contained a single fill from which a Romano-British coin was recovered (small find 19).

3.6 A large regular pit was excavated (026), 2.5m wide and extending beyond the east edge of excavation. This was 0.27m deep with steep sides and flat base. Within its fill was an amount of late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery.

3.7 At the north end of Trench 3 were three ditches running parallel to each other across the trench (Fig. 3). The earliest of these (017) contained a relatively large amount of Iron Age pottery. This ditch was cut on its north side by 014, and on its south by 018 (Fig. 4).

3.8 Trench 4 was situated 32m to the east of T.3, was 50m long and parallel to T.3. This trench was machined to the natural revealing features along the length of the trench. The most northern feature, a ditch, was excavated. This ditch was 1.65m wide and 0.60m deep (Fig. 4) and produced an amount of Romano-British pottery. No other features were excavated in this trench. The section for the central area of the trench showed an additional soil horizon c. 0.20m deep.(Fig. 4) This produced two Romano-British coins (small finds 27 and 30) and some Romano-British pottery.

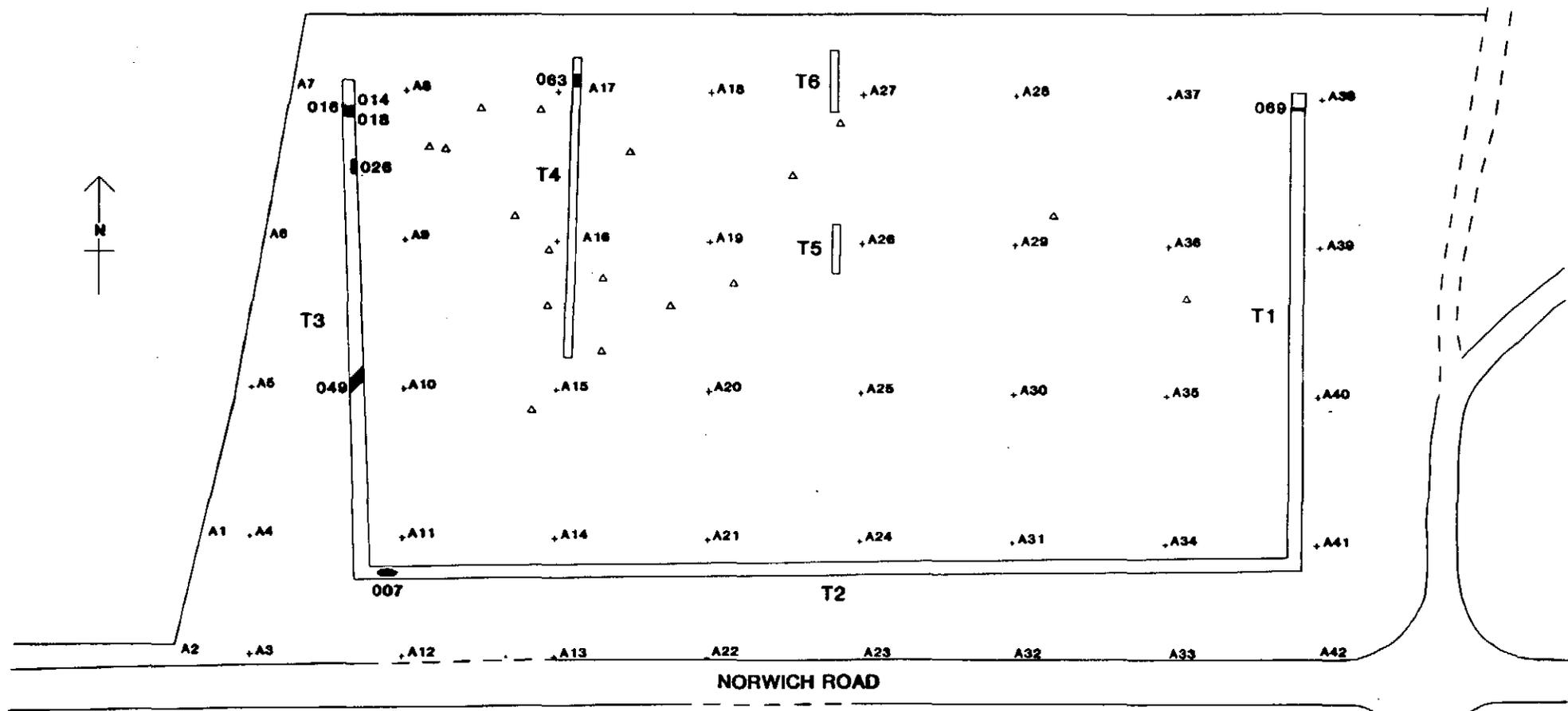
3.9 In response to this continued archaeological presence two smaller trenches were excavated 42m further east (Fig. 3). Trench 5 was excavated to a depth of 1.2m and appears to be cutting through a large feature as natural was not evident in the east facing section (Fig. 4). In the west section the natural sandy clay was seen at a depth of 1.00m. Trench 6 was excavated to the natural at a depth of 0.50m a single ditch was located.

#### 4. DATING

4.1 The dating of the features on this site relies on the coins and pottery. Many of the features produced such dating evidence, although due to the small sections excavated this was not always in great quantity.

4.2 All the coins date from the 2nd to 4th centuries, the majority being 4th-century. The pottery, however, is of an earlier date. The two features discussed in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 contained 1st century B.C Iron Age pottery, the main fragments being from a hand-made pot. All the other pottery is of a 1st and 2nd century date. (See Appendix B for further details of all finds).

WATTON Norwich Road 1991 Site 25014

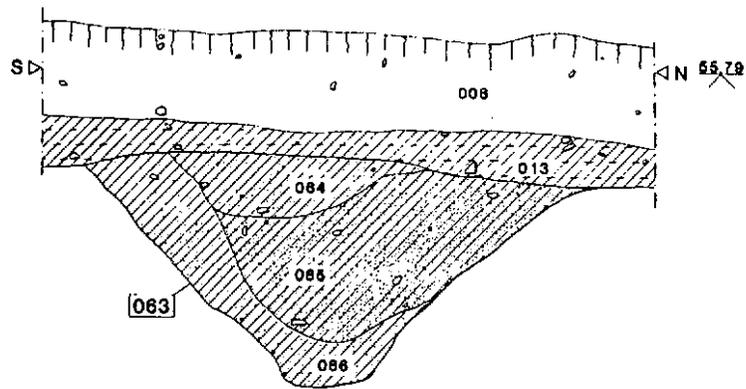


A21 Metal detector survey areas

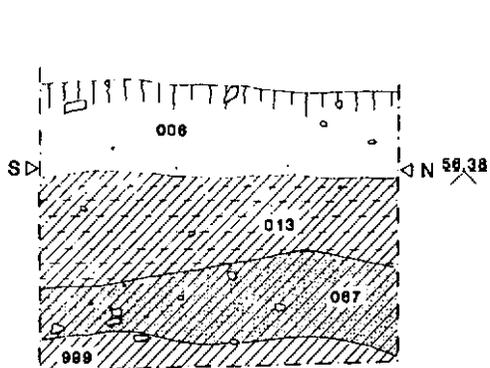
△ 13 Finds from metal detector survey



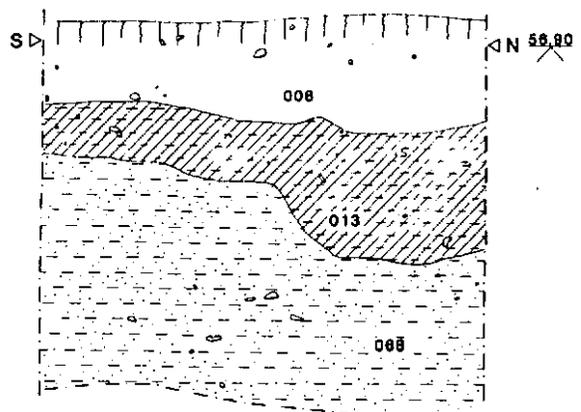
Fig 3



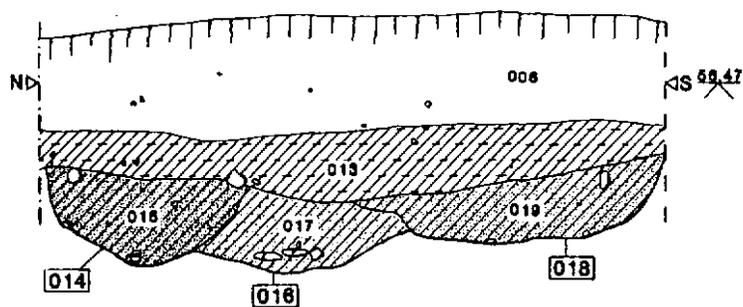
East-facing section of ditch 063



East-facing section of Trench 4



East-facing section of Trench 5



West-facing section of ditches 014 016 018

-  pottery
-  topsoil
-  clay
-  silt
-  sand

Heights in metres above sea level



Fig 4

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 It can be seen from the descriptions given above that the depth of topsoil/subsoils across the site is in no way consistent, varying from 0.40m at the north end of T1 to 1.00m at the south of T5. This appears to correspond to a slight rise visible on the ground and is the result of accumulated soils rather than a rise in the natural clay. The additional soil horizon (067), visible in T4 and to a lesser extent in T1, is datable to the Romano-British period (see Appendix B) and therefore of archaeological interest.

5.2 From the evidence recovered from this small trial excavation it is not possible to confirm the nature of the site although the type of material recovered suggests that the site is of a domestic nature.

5.3 Overall the site has produced a significant number of archaeological features and finds. It can be seen from Fig. 2 that all the Romano British material is concentrated in the north and west of the site, while any evidence of activity is totally absent from the south and east. It is therefore probable that the majority of the archaeology is within the north-west 50% of the site.

5.4 In summary, the evaluation indicates that a site of late Iron Age and Romano-British date exists in the north-western part of the development area. It is not possible to characterise this site from the available evidence although the probability exists that it was domestic in nature. Deposits have been truncated by ploughing although discrete features such as ditches and pits survive as well as a soil horizon in T4 and T1. The depth of topsoil varies considerably with artefacts being recovered from both the topsoil and the discrete features.

APPENDIX A

List of Contexts

|     |                    |          |
|-----|--------------------|----------|
| 004 | Pit Cut            | Trench 3 |
| 005 | Fill of 004        |          |
| 006 | Deposit Topsoil    |          |
| 007 | Pit Cut            | Trench 2 |
| 008 | Fill of 007        |          |
| 009 | Fill of 007        |          |
| 010 | Ditch Cut          | Trench 3 |
| 011 | Fill of 010        |          |
| 012 | Fill of 010        |          |
| 013 | Deposit Subsoil    |          |
| 014 | Ditch Cut          | Trench 3 |
| 015 | Fill of 014        |          |
| 016 | Ditch Cut          | Trench 3 |
| 017 | Fill of 016        |          |
| 018 | Ditch Cut          | Trench 3 |
| 019 | Fill of 018        |          |
| 020 | Pit Cut            | Trench 3 |
| 021 | Fill of 020        |          |
| 022 | Ditch Cut          | Trench 3 |
| 023 | Fill of 022        |          |
| 024 | Ditch Cut          | Trench 3 |
| 025 | Fill of 024        |          |
| 026 | Pit Cut            | Trench 3 |
| 027 | Fill of 026        |          |
| 028 | Fill of 026        |          |
| 029 | Fill of 026        |          |
| 030 | Pit Cut            | Trench 3 |
| 031 | Fill of 030        |          |
| 032 | Ditch Cut          | Trench 3 |
| 033 | Fill of 032        |          |
| 034 | Ditch Cut          | Trench 3 |
| 035 | Fill of 034        |          |
| 036 | Pit Cut            | Trench 3 |
| 037 | Fill of 037        |          |
| 038 | Pit Cut            | Trench 3 |
| 039 | Fill of 038        |          |
| 040 | Pit cut            | Trench 3 |
| 041 | Fill of 040        |          |
| 042 | Ditch Cut          | Trench 3 |
| 043 | Fill of 042        |          |
| 044 | Pit Cut            | Trench 3 |
| 045 | Fill of 044        |          |
| 046 | Pit Cut            | Trench 3 |
| 047 | Fill of 046        |          |
| 048 | Modern Field Drain |          |
| 049 | Ditch Cut          | Trench 3 |
| 050 | Fill of 049        |          |
| 051 | Pit Cut            | Trench 3 |
| 052 | Fill of 051        |          |
| 053 | Pit Cut            | Trench 3 |
| 054 | Fill of 053        |          |
| 055 | Ditch Cut          | Trench 3 |
| 056 | Fill of 055        |          |
| 057 | Pit Cut            | Trench 3 |
| 058 | Fill of 057        |          |
| 059 | Irregular Cut      | Trench 3 |

|     |             |          |
|-----|-------------|----------|
| 060 | Fill of 059 |          |
| 061 | Ditch Cut   | Trench 3 |
| 062 | Fill of 061 |          |
| 063 | Ditch Cut   | Trench 4 |
| 064 | Fill of 063 |          |
| 065 | Fill of 063 |          |
| 066 | Fill of 063 |          |
| 067 | Deposit     | Trench 4 |
| 068 | Deposit     | Trench 5 |
| 069 | Ditch cut   | Trench 1 |
| 070 | Fill of 069 |          |
| 071 | Ditch Cut   | Trench 1 |
| 072 | Fill of 072 |          |

## Appendix B

### List of finds

#### CONTEXT

- 008 - 4 flint flakes  
5 prehistoric sherds  
Brick/tile
- 015 - 1 Early Medieval sherd  
2 Iron Age sherds  
Animal bone
- 017 - 11 Iron Age sherds  
1 Romano-British sherd  
Animal bone
- 027 - 6 Iron Age sherds  
1 Romano-British sherd  
Brick/tile  
Animal bone
- 028 - 3 Romano-British sherds  
Animal bone
- 031 - 1 Romano-British sherd  
Animal bone
- 045 - 4 Romano-British sherds  
Animal bone
- 062 - 3 Romano-British sherds
- 065 - 22 Romano-British sherds  
Brick/tile  
Animal bone
- 066 - 9 Romano-British sherds  
Animal bone
- 067 - 31 Romano-British sherds  
Brick/tile  
Animal bone  
2 iron nails
- 070 - 19 Romano-British sherds  
1 iron nail
- 072 - 1 Romano- British sherd

List of Small Finds

|    |                     | GRID<br>SQUARE | TRENCH<br>NUMBER | CONTEXT<br>NUMBER |
|----|---------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1  | Medieval jetton     | A35            |                  |                   |
| 2  | Unidentified object | A29            |                  |                   |
| 3  | Romano-British coin | A16            |                  |                   |
| 4  | Romano-British coin | A 9            |                  |                   |
| 5  | Romano-British coin | A 9            |                  |                   |
| 6  | Medieval jetton     | A 9            |                  |                   |
| 7  | Romano-British coin | A 9            |                  |                   |
| 8  | Romano-British coin | A10            |                  |                   |
| 9  | Romano-British coin | A10            |                  |                   |
| 10 | Romano-British coin | A10            |                  |                   |
| 11 | Romano-British coin | A19            |                  |                   |
| 12 | Medieval bowl rim   | A19            |                  |                   |
| 13 | Romano-British coin | A20            |                  |                   |
| 14 | Romano-British coin | A15            |                  |                   |
| 15 | Romano-British coin | A15            |                  |                   |
| 16 | Romano-British coin | A15            |                  |                   |
| 17 | Romano-British coin | A11            |                  |                   |
| 18 | -----               | ---            |                  |                   |
| 19 | Romano-British coin |                | T3               | 050               |
| 20 | Romano-British coin |                | T3               |                   |
| 21 | Romano-British coin |                | T3               |                   |
| 22 | Medieval object     |                | T3               |                   |
| 23 | Pinhead             |                | T3               |                   |
| 24 | Medieval object     |                | T3               |                   |
| 25 | Unidentified object |                | T3               |                   |
| 26 | Medieval jetton     |                | T4               |                   |
| 27 | Romano-British coin |                | T4               | 067               |
| 28 | Romano-British coin |                | T4               |                   |
| 29 | Romano-British coin |                | T4               |                   |
| 30 | Romano-British coin |                | T4               | 067               |
| 31 | Romano-British coin |                | T4               |                   |
| 32 | Romano-British coin |                | T4               |                   |

### Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Mr. V. Summers who provided the finance for the evaluation exercise and to Plandescil Ltd. especially Julian Riley, who facilitated the progress of the project.

To Mr. N. Phillips and Mr. G. Nunn for their cooperation and help in undertaking the metal detecting survey of the site.

The project could not have been completed without the skill of the archaeological excavators and Andy Crowson who produced the illustrations.

Fig. 1 Site Location Plan

Fig. 2 Site Plan Showing Areas of Archaeological Interest

Fig. 3 Site Plan Showing Location of Metal Detector Finds  
and Major Features