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Watching Brief

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Excavation

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

Ramsden

BRIZE LODGE, LEAFIELD,

OXFORDSHIRE:

AN INTERIM REPORT.

SP 3395 1529

On behalf of

The Hon. Charles Cayzer

DECEMBER 2002

REPORT FOR The Hon. Charles Cayzer.

C/O: Johnston Cave Associates,
Henwood Studio,
Wootton Boars Hill,
Oxford.
OX1 5JX

PREPARED BY Diccon Hart

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ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Long White Cloud
Waterperry Road
Holton
Oxfordshire
OX33 1PW

Tel. 01865 876637

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Summary

Investigations on this site were conducted by John Moore Heritage Services between 9th October and 7th November 2002. This work comprised an evaluation in advance of proposed development at the northern end of site (Area A), a watching brief during the stripping of topsoil in advance of landscaping along the western side of the site (Area B) and a small excavation on the site of a proposed extension to the current building (Area C). Natural clay was encountered at a maximum height of c. 151.38m OD, falling away to 149.00m OD to the southwest. Three trenches were excavated in Area A, revealing a sequence of east-west ditches in Trench 2, a potential pit to the southwest in Trench 1 and a small gully in Trench 3, directly to the east.

Work in Area B was largely limited to cursory recording supplemented by surface collection of finds, though limited excavation has provided definitive evidence for the survival of Roman masonry in the southwest of the site, presumably representing the remains of a farmstead or villa complex.

The excavation of Area C uncovered remains of Iron Age, Roman and post-Medieval date. Iron Age activity was restricted to a substantial ditch and parallel gully and Roman activity seems very much a continuation of this, albeit related to the newly founded buildings to the west, comprising ditches, pits and plough furrows. A possible clay chest may allude to a potential pottery in the vicinity, though little evidence for production was found. Post-Medieval remains on the site are dominated by those of a large rectangular building, cut into the subsoil of the site and initially constructed of timber but later replaced with masonry. A handful of postholes attest to the presence of timber structures on the site, though little sense could be made of these features and they are likely to represent structures extending beyond the limits of excavation. The building had been demolished and heavily robbed by the 19th century and was subsequently sealed by the topsoil of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site at Brize Lodge is located 1.4km west of Finstock on the south side of a lane running south from the B4022 Finstock to Leafield road (NGR SP 33951529). The underlying geology is Oxford Clay. The site lies at approximately 151 metres above Ordnance Datum (henceforth OD).

1.2 Planning Background

West Oxfordshire District Council has granted planning permission to extend the existing farmhouse at Brize Lodge. In addition, landscaping of the garden and construction of a swimming pool and tennis court are proposed. Due to the presence of potential archaeological remains in the area, an archaeological watching brief was required during the period of groundworks that may have an impact on any remains present. An initial *Brief* for such a watching brief was issued by the County Archaeological Services and a *Written Scheme of Investigation*, which would satisfy the requirements of the brief, was subsequently prepared by John Moore Heritage Services. In the light of the proposed additional work on the site, however, this document was revised to include the investigation of the area of the garden proposed for raising of the levels and the evaluation of the area proposed for the new swimming pool and tennis court.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Brize Lodge is a Grade II listed building dating to the later part of the seventeenth century. It is currently a farmhouse although the evidence suggests that it was a hunting lodge and that its name derives from the foresters responsible for its upkeep. It is possible that it replaced an earlier lodge.

Large quantities of Romano-British pottery and roof tile have been found around the farmhouse, mostly within a spread of dark earth. This has led to suggestions that there was either a villa or a farmstead here during the Romano-British period. A bronze figurine of a bird, possibly an eagle or dove, has also been found. This may be a votive object, possibly from a family shrine. The monitoring of a new water main in 1985 revealed the presence of ditches and shallow features, which were dated to the first century AD.

Geotechnical test pits were monitored. Two walls were found to pre-date the existing farmhouse, lying under the west wall foundations. A Romano-British sherd of pottery was recovered from one of the walls although this does not necessarily date the wall to this period. Three test pits (within 2m of each other) in the field to the northwest of the farmhouse also located what were originally thought to be masonry elements, though these subsequently proved to comprise nothing more than a fine example of a natural limestone pavement. The monitoring work also produced a quantity of 16-17th century pottery.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the different areas proposed for development.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any such archaeological remains encountered.
- Either to make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains, or if considered to be of major significance then to consider an alternative mitigation strategy perhaps through resign.
- In particular to record any further evidence of Romano-British settlement with a view to establishing the type and duration of occupation.
- An aim will be to establish whether a building pre-dated the existing one and, if so, from what date.
- The results of the investigations will be made public.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Brief* issued by Oxford County Council a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with the Council and the applicant. This scheme comprised four main phases of work, each incorporating several elements of the mitigation strategy.

Phase 1 (to which this document pertains) involved the evaluation of the sites of the proposed swimming pool and tennis court (Area A), the recording of any remains in the area of the proposed landscaping (Area B) and the excavation of the cellar area of the proposed extension (Area C) (Fig. 2).

The remaining phases are yet to be undertaken but are anticipated to comprise the following: Phase 2 will involve the monitoring of all ground works during the construction of the extension. Phase 3 will be partly dependent upon the analysis of the results of Phase 1 and will involve the monitoring of ground works to the south of the existing building, including excavation or recording of any archaeological remains present. Phase 4 will involve the monitoring of ground works associated with the construction of the tennis court, including the removal of the slab and the recording or excavation of any archaeology present as appropriate.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work

was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

The evaluation of the sites of the proposed swimming pool and tennis court (Area A) was achieved through the excavation of three trenches; a 25.00m long trench in the area of the swimming pool (Trench 1) and two 15.00m trenches in the area of the tennis court (Trenches 2 and 3). All trenches were 1.65 m wide and were excavated by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand prior to limited hand excavation of any identified archaeological deposits.

The area of garden that will be raised (Area B) was mechanically stripped of topsoil using a 5 foot ditching bucket. The resulting surface was then hand cleaned sufficiently to be able to record by drawn, written and photographic means any archaeology present. Any artefacts seen in the top of features was collected in order to date features/deposits. Limited excavation was undertaken to establish the presence of masonry structures on the site.

The area of the cellar part of the extension to the existing building (Area C) was mechanically stripped of topsoil by JCB using a toothless bucket. All archaeological deposits and features in the footprint of the cellar were wholly excavated by hand.

All artefacts were collected and retained except for concentrations of building material where only a representative sample were retained.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced. A continuous running sequence of context numbers was employed with nos. 01-38 assigned to Area A, 40-45 to Area B and 100 onwards to Area C. The work was monitored by Mr. Hugh Coddington of Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Services

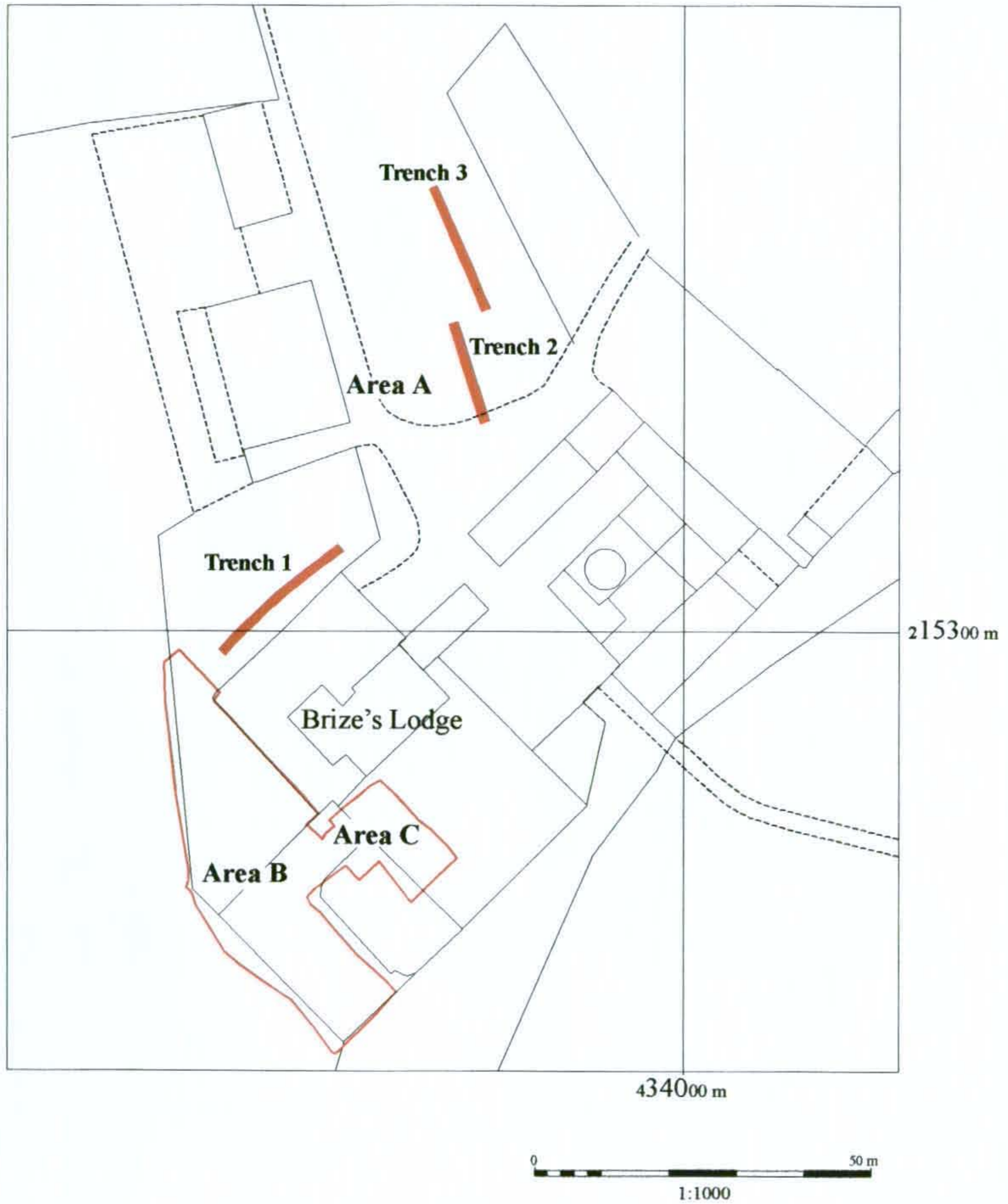


Figure 1: Site Plan showing areas of Investigation

4 RESULTS

Natural Geology

The natural geology of the site comprised limestone bedrock with a capping of light brownish yellow clay (03), (14), (36). This was seen to slope down to the south and west across the entire site from a maximum height of c. 151.38m above Ordnance Datum (henceforth OD) at the northern limits of the site (Area A, Trench 1) and 150.47m OD in the east (Area C) to 149.00m OD in the southwest (Area B).

4.1 Area A

Trench 1 (Figure 2)

A single potential archaeological feature was encountered within this trench. This was cut into the underlying natural clay (03) and comprised an irregular sub-rectangular cut [04] filled with mid brown silty clay with moderate pebbles and occasional cobbles (05), (06). This was initially thought to represent a posthole though it is perhaps more likely to constitute the horizontally truncated base of a pit.

This was sealed by a layer of dark reddish brown silty clay containing moderate pebbles, ceramic building material (henceforth CBM) and animal bone. This comprised the subsoil of the site and was in turn sealed by topsoil (01), composed of dark brown clayey silt with frequent poorly sorted pebbles, moderate CBM and rooting.

Trench 2 (Figures 3 & 4)

Archaeological features revealed within this trench all comprised ditches and gullies cut into the underlying natural clay (14) and were all aligned roughly east west. The largest of these ditches [21] measured almost 3.00 metres wide on a SW-NE orientation. Three fills could be discerned; an accumulative primary fill of yellowish brown silty clay with occasional pebbles and charcoal flecking (24) overlain by a fill of mid brown silty clay with frequent pebbles (23) in turn sealed by a deposit of dark brown silty clay (22) with occasional pebbles, charcoal flecks, pot and animal bone. This ditch may be dated to the post-Medieval period on the basis of pottery found within the fills.

Gully [38] was located immediately north of ditch [21]. Orientated almost exactly east west this gully displayed a slightly rounded profile and was filled with light grey brown silty clay with moderate limestone pebbles (37).

Approximately 2.5m north of gully [38] a further gully was encountered. This comprised a roughly "V" shaped cut with flat base [27], aligned east west and filled with an accumulative deposit of mixed light greyish brown-yellow clay (26), and sealed by light greyish brown clay with moderate limestone (25), containing several sherds of undiagnostic Roman grey ware.

The northernmost ditch in this trench was also aligned east west. Two sections were excavated across this ditch to reveal a steep by regular sided and flat-bottomed cut

[013], [020]. A primary fill of light yellowish grey clay (16) was sealed by a thin layer of burnt yellowish brown clay with frequent charcoal (19) to the west, in turn overlain by a fill of light greyish yellow/brown (12), (18), from which a post-medieval gaming token was retrieved.

Modern field drains on a north-east/south-west orientation were seen to partially truncate both gully [27] and ditch [13].

All the features described above were sealed by a layer of loose light greyish brown silty clay (11). This appeared to constitute a plough soil of some kind and it is of note that, in contrast to Trench 1, the sequence of well-defined sub- and topsoil is apparently absent from this trench. Concrete footings (15) and a surface of crushed clinker and topsoil (10) denote the remains of a modern farm building on the site.

Trench 3 (Figure 5)

The only potential archaeological features encountered within this trench consist of two shallow gullies cut into the natural clay (36). The southernmost gully [33] was aligned north west/south-east and comprised a well-rounded profile with a fill of mid greyish brown silty clay with moderate pebbles (32). To the north, on a roughly north-east/south-west orientation was gully [35]. In contrast to [33], however, the fill of these features was composed of light grey silty clay containing frequent medium-large limestone slabs set on edge. Such fills are typical of land drains formed by deep ploughing and it is likely that this feature constitutes such a drain.

Both these features seemed to be sealed by the subsoil of the site (31), which was in turn sealed by topsoil (30).

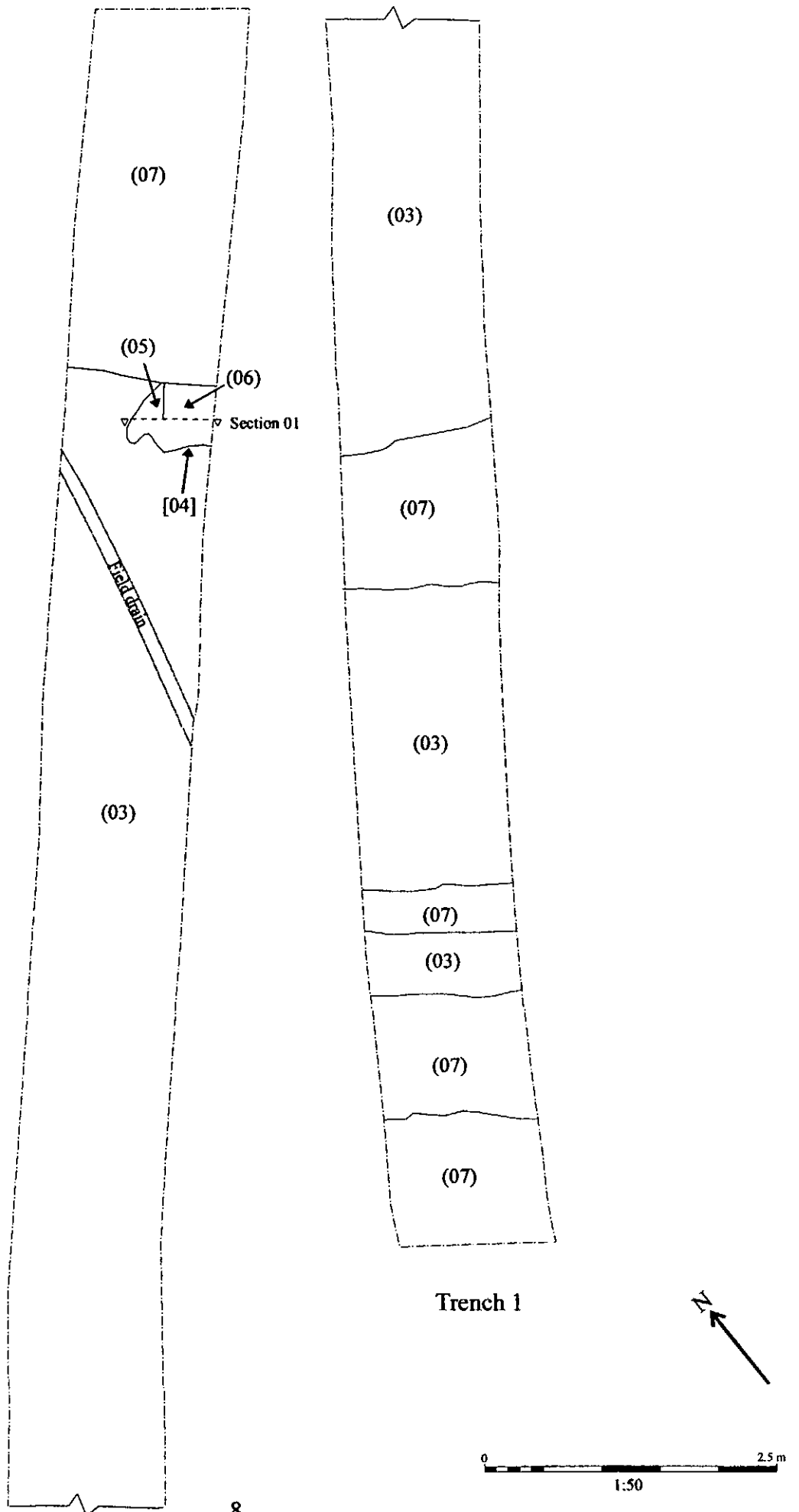
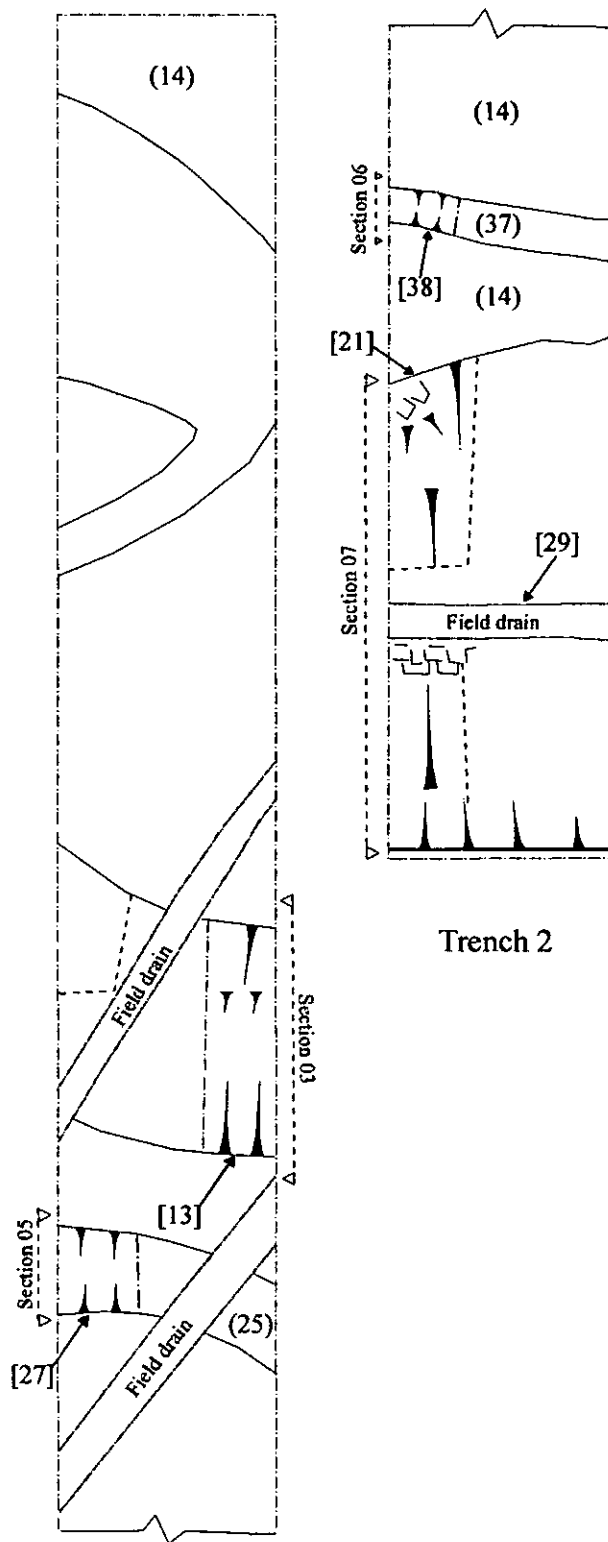
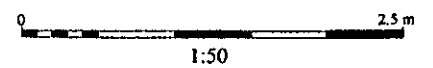


Figure 2: Trench 1 Plan



Trench 2

Figure 3: Trench 2 Plan



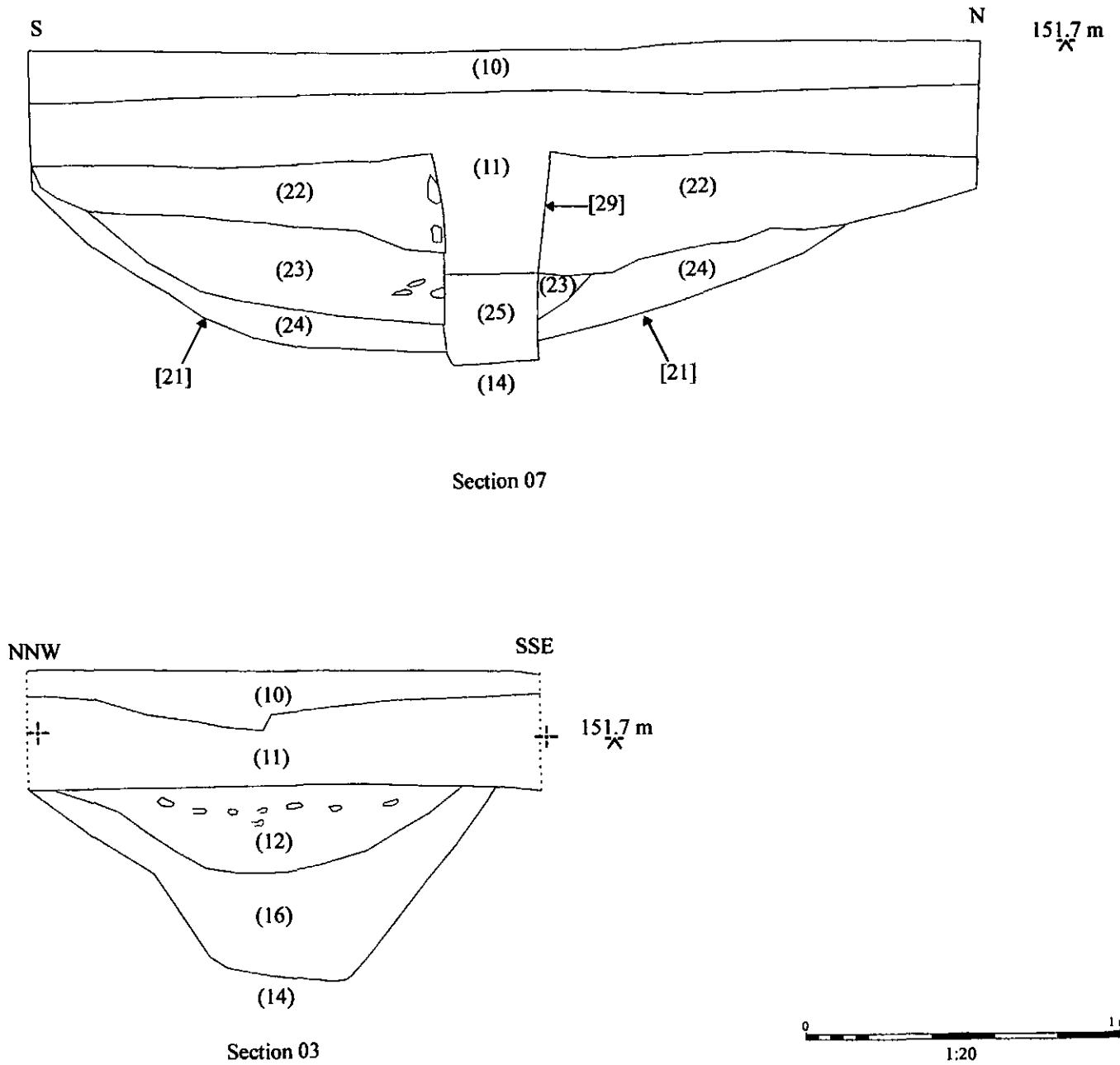


Figure 4: Trench 2 Sections

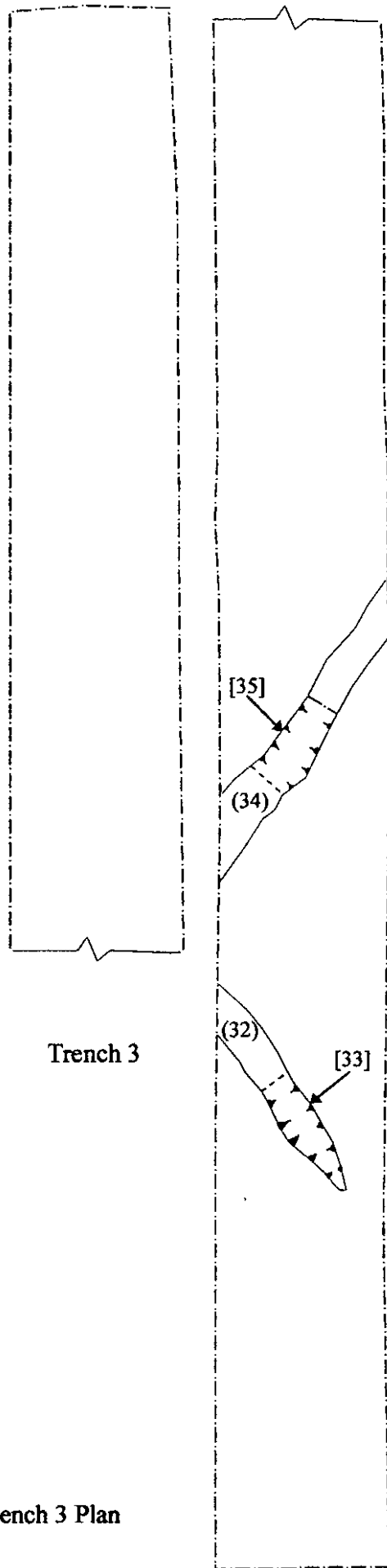
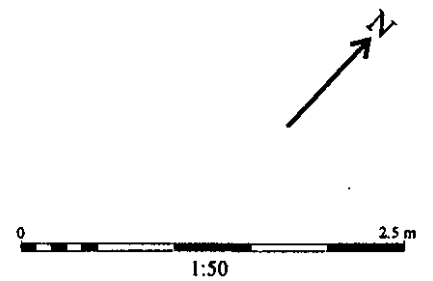


Figure 5: Trench 3 Plan



4.2 Area B (Fig. 6)

Investigations in this area of the site were limited to a combination of cursory recording and collection of pottery by 5.0m grid, supplemented by the hand excavation of two small sondages in selected areas.

Sadly, due to the restrictions of the research strategy, the majority of archaeological remains in this area were obscured by the subsoil of the site and thus archaeological recording in this area was of limited value. Nevertheless, changes in the colour and texture of this subsoil were found to broadly reflect archaeological remains that lay beneath and consequently it proved possible to position the trenches with an unusual degree of foresight.

The largest sondage comprised a trench measuring 4.00m by 1.00m and was located across a band of dark soil similar in consistency to the topsoil of the site. Upon excavation, this soil proved to constitute the latest infilling of the cut for a cellar structure of Roman date [229].

Extending to a depth of 148.49m OD (1.10m below level of topsoil strip), this rectilinear cut appeared to comprise a large principle room extending beyond the limits of excavation to the north-west, with a narrower portion to the south-east, which may or may not have afforded access into the structure proper.

Two walls uncovered in the eastern and southern corners of the trench served to delineate and define these cellared areas. Both were aligned northeast-southwest and built of a combination of roughly hewn limestone and fragments of brick and tile, the latter of which, given its generally fragmentary nature was probably reused. Wall (199), to the northeast, stood upon an un-truncated area of the natural limestone, whereas wall (200), to the south appeared to extend to the floor of the structure. Both these structural remains and the exposed limestone beneath exhibited evidence of fairly intense burning. Moreover, it proved possible to trace the line of wall 200 as a line of rubble for a further 10.0m to the southwest.

A layer of sooting and charcoal (198) formed the primary fill of this cellar structure and on the basis of this and the burnt walls described above it is tempting to postulate the existence of a hypocaust structure here, though such burning is perhaps as likely to represent the destruction of a building as much as indicate its use.

Much of the remaining sequence of infilling was composed of layers rich in broken CBM (197), (196), (195), (194), (193), (192), (191), (190) and thus clearly represents the demolition and levelling of a Roman masonry building. The remainder of the infilling comprised deposits derived from subsoil and is likely to be of post-Roman date.

That the findings in this trench indicate the existence of a cellared area is clear from further investigations immediately to the southeast. Here natural clay was encountered at a height of 149.29m OD, as were the remains of several potential walls. One of these walls (231), composed of roughly hewn blocks of limestone, was seen to run parallel to those described above, whereas a further two walls (232) and (233) were positioned perpendicular to them. The southernmost of these walls (232), like wall

(231) to the east, was composed of roughly squared limestone blocks, whereas wall (233) directly to the north was far less substantial, comprising little more than a linear distribution of river cobbles. This last feature may constitute merely a pad of cobbles for more substantial masonry that no longer survives.

4.3 Area C

Phase 1: Iron Age (Figure 7)

The earliest activity on the site appears to be of Iron Age date, though at present this seems to be restricted to a handful of features concentrated in the southwestern corner of the site, comprising a substantial pit and a large ditch running north-west/south-east. A small gully [157], though undated, runs parallel to this ditch and may be thus attributed to this phase.

Partial excavation of the pit showed it to consist of a large sub-circular cut [161], with several fills, some of which were seen to contain fragments of animal bone and pottery. Two slots were excavated across the ditch to reveal a substantial cut [155], [169] with several fills and at least one re-cut, though few finds were retrieved. Cut through the clay and well into the underlying limestone bedrock, it is clear that a great deal of time and effort was put into the cutting of this feature, though defining the purpose of the ditch is perhaps a little less clear.

Given the effort devoted to both the construction and maintenance of this ditch it seems probable that it served to delineate an enclosure of some form, though the scarcity of associated features makes it difficult to illuminate the nature of such an enclosure. Nevertheless, given the proximity of features such as pit [161], with typically domestic refuse such as bone and pottery within the fills, it is tempting to postulate the existence of a small Iron Age settlement to the southwest of Area C.

Phase 2: Roman (Figure 7)

The character of initial Roman activity on the site seems very much a continuation of that which preceded it. Although ditch [155] finally went out of use and was seemingly deliberately backfilled with rubble containing Roman pottery, a new ditch was cut immediately to the east. Though on a slightly different alignment (more east-west) and much less substantial than its predecessor, it is probable that this new ditch served a similar function.

Three slots were excavated across this ditch, exposing a shallow cut [137], [148], [170]. Breaks of slope in the sides of this ditch may hint at possible re-cuts though no differentiation could be found in the fills to support such a notion. Nevertheless, given that the ditch appears to widen considerably to the northwest it is possible that earlier cuts did exist.

Possible evidence of agricultural activity on the site may be found in a handful of small linear features exposed at the extreme western limits of the excavation area. At least one of these features [185], filled with the subsoil of the site (101) constitutes a plough furrow on a comparable orientation to ditch [170]. Two further features [179] and [173] are closely comparable in size and shape, though, in contrast to [185], they

possess discreet fills and may thus represent shallow gullies rather than plough furrows.

Several pits may also be attributed to this phase of activity. To the north a sub-rectangular pit [133], containing domestic refuse including animal bone and pottery, was encountered. Localised burning of the surrounding limestone bedrock indicates that some of the material within this pit was deposited whilst hot.

A further pit that may be dated to this phase was of a very different nature. Comprising a large ovoid cut [175] with a fill of stiff greyish blue clay (176), this feature may represent a potters 'clay chest'. Little evidence of pottery production was encountered, however, and although it is difficult to envisage another purpose for such a feature this premise should be advanced with some caution.

The only other feature that may be attributed to this phase is a large spread of demolition material (165) within a shallow irregular ovoid cut [222]. Prominent among this material were roof tiles (*tegula* and *imbrex*), box flue tiles and brick, though high quality flooring materials such as *opus signinum*, *tesserae*, etc. were seemingly absent from the assemblage.

Phase 3: Post-Medieval (Figure 8)

Though difficult to date accurately, it would appear that the subsoil of the site was a result of post-Roman ploughing and thus the majority of later remains are cut through this plough soil.

The most significant remains of this phase of activity were undoubtedly those of a sizeable rectangular structure aligned south-west/north-east and situated towards the northern end of Area C. Two distinct phases of construction were identified.

The first phase comprised a structure built in timber and manifest as six massive postholes arranged in two lines of three to create a building c. 6.90m by 5.00m (Fig. 8). The posthole cuts [109], [111], [128], [204], [208], [210] all measured around 1.00m sq. and were cut down into the underlying bedrock. Four of the six exhibited post pipes (the infilled voids created by the removal or rotting of the timber posts), representing square posts approximately 0.25m sq.

Each posthole was backfilled with mixed grey-yellow clay with frequent large pebbles and cobbles, though only the westernmost posthole [109] & [111] displayed post pads of limestone in their bases. In addition, posthole [111] displayed an elaborate packing of limestone slabs set on edge, presumably to support a post situated in the very northwestern corner of the cut and rectify an error in the positioning of the posthole.

The second phase of this building saw not only the replacement of the original timber structure in stone but the addition of a cellared extension to the east to create a building a full 10.00m in length. The external walls were of one build and comprise wall (121) to the north, (120) to the south and (122) to the east, the lattermost of which also served as the eastern wall of the cellar. A further central wall, (123) served to define the western limits of the cellar, which was accessed by means of two steps

(124), seemingly from outside, given the worn threshold stone in wall (121). The western limits of the building were defined by the partial remains of wall (223).

All walls and steps were constructed of roughly hewn limestone slabs bonded with yellow sandy clay. The floor of the cellar comprised nothing more than the bedrock into which the cellar was cut. A small square cut into this floor directly in front of steps (124) is difficult to interpret but may have been intended to receive the down stands of a timber installation of some design.

It appears that the western room of the building may have been floored with beaten clay (141), essentially little more than a compaction of the subsoil (101) through which the construction cuts were dug. A small hearth composed of an irregular shallow cut [140] lined with red unfrosted bricks (139) was situated towards the western end of the room, cut through this possible floor. A small drip gully of limestone slabs (224) set vertically against the sides of a shallow cut [113] ran along the south wall of the building.

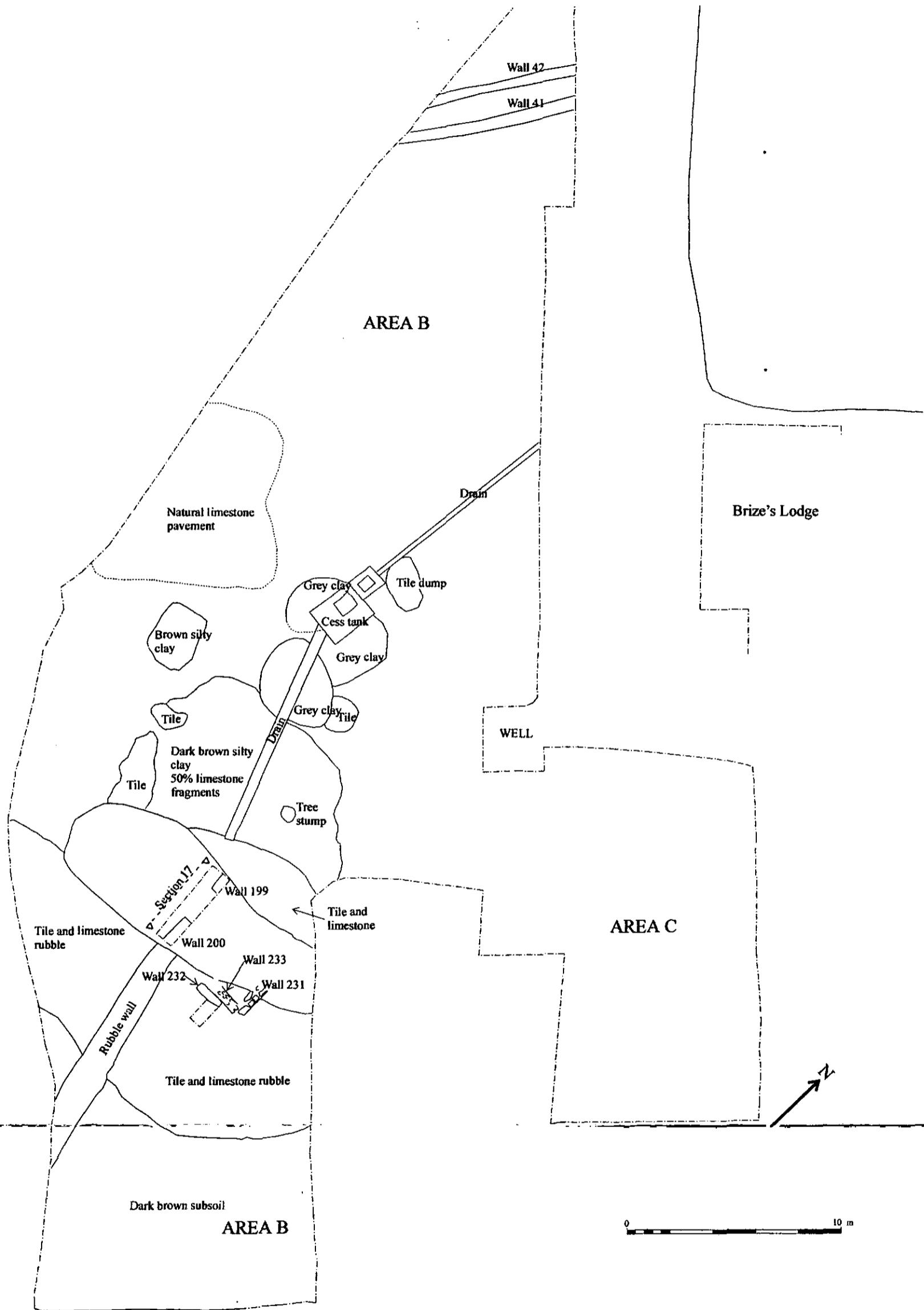
A period of disuse prior to the robbing of the walls is perhaps represented by the partial backfilling the cellar with dumped garden soil (119). However, it was not long before an event of extensive robbing [118] reduced the surviving fabric of the building to just one or two courses. The remainder of the structure was backfilled with a mix of re-deposited clay and rubble (108), though piecemeal robbing such as [103] continued to reduce the fabric of the building even further.

The only other features which may be attributed with any certainty to this phase are two small postholes; [106] with a packing of large pebbles and cobbles (105) to the east of Area C and [183] to the west, also filled with a packing of large pebbles and cobbles (182). Both contained fragments of post-Medieval pottery.

Features of Indeterminate Date

Three features did not yield any dating evidence and thus cannot be fully incorporated into the site phasing. These all comprise postholes sealed by the subsoil of the site (101) and include two examples with packing; [212], [214] and one without; [218].

Figure 6: Plan of Area B



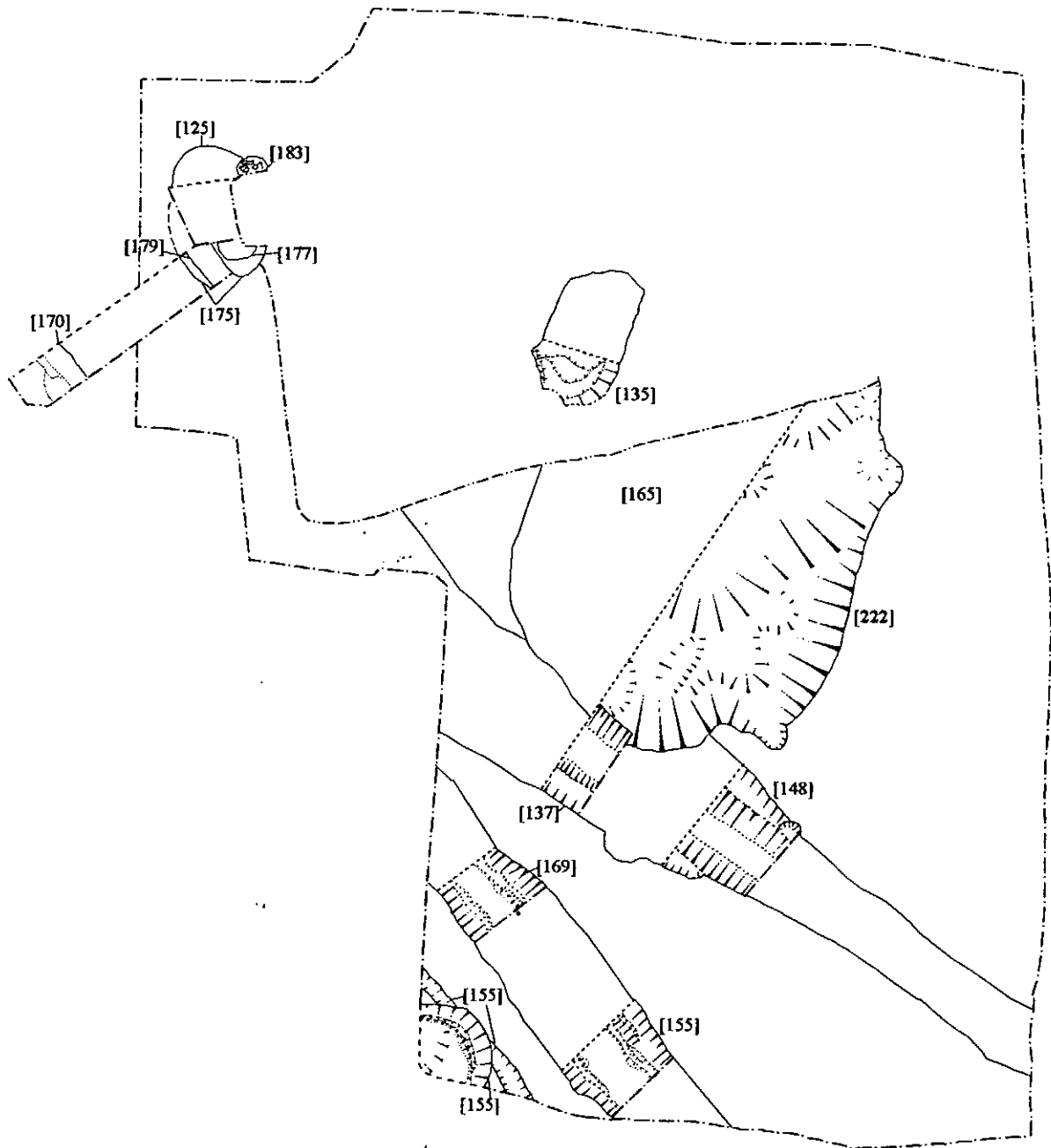
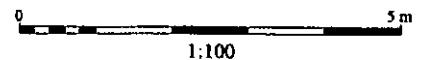


Figure 7 Area C: Iron Age and Roman features



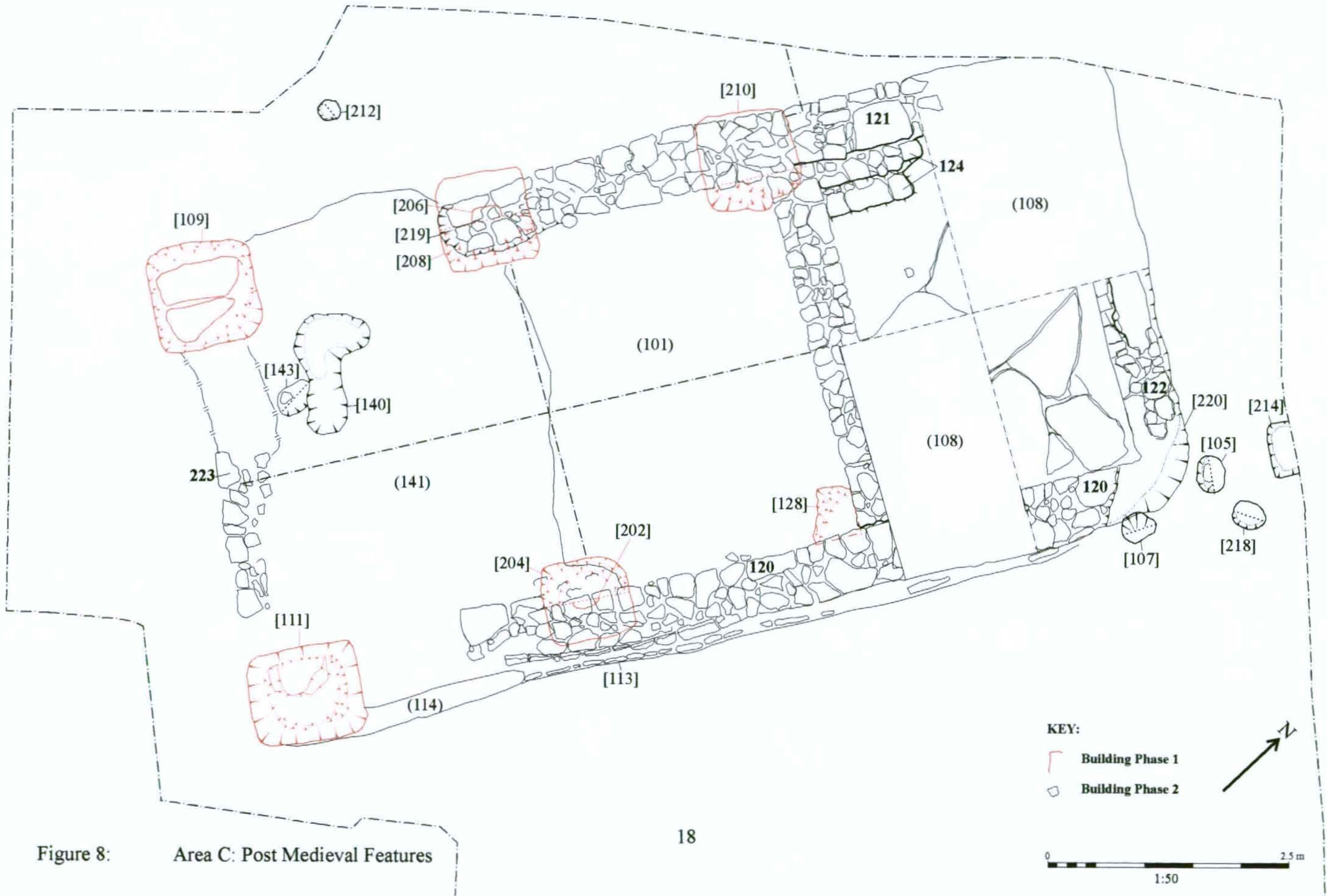


Figure 8: Area C: Post Medieval Features

5 FINDS**Pottery** Edward Biddulph (Oxford Archaeology) and Paul Blinkhorn.

Only pottery from selected contexts in Areas A and C has so far been examined. Post Medieval dates supplied by Paul Blinkhorn.

Context	Sherds	Weight	Comments	Spot date
2	20	208	Mortarium Young type M22; fabrics F51, C11, R30, O11	4th century
16	3	31	Quartzite/flint tempered pottery	E-MIA
21	4	93	Earthenware	Post-med
22	3	28	Limestone tempered, quartzite/flint tempered pot	E-MIA
25	3	45	Fabric R30	ROM (?2nd c.+)
30	2	8	Fabric R30; ?tile	ROM (?2nd c.+)
112	1	59	Sand-tempered sherd with incised decoration	EIA
134	24	253	Fabrics R30, R94, C11, F65, B10, W12	4th century
135	20	315	Fabrics B11 (plain dish), R20, O20, R30	Early 3rd century
136	4	26	Fabrics R94, O20, flint-tempered (IA)	ROM (?2nd c.+)
146	69	752	Fabrics F65 (?F51 flagon), C11, O11, Q20, R30	4th century
147	6	69	Fabric R30	ROM
149	16	178	Shell-tempered jars	E-MIA
150	3	83	Flint-tempered and grog-tempered fabrics	EIA
152	7	91	Shell-tempered	EIA
160	4	54	Shell-tempered	E-MIA
209	1	11	Fabric C11	4th century

The small collection of pottery recovered from the site was of mixed date. Pottery from contexts 112, 150 and 152 is almost certainly of early Iron Age date. An incised sherd from 112 and rims from the other contexts are typical of the period. The pottery from early-middle Iron Age contexts (e.g. 16 and 160) may also belong specifically to the early period, but, lacking diagnostic traits, has been assigned a wider date range.

The dating of the Roman pottery is less certain. A 4th component to the assemblage appears to be present (contexts 2, 134, 146 and 209), though the groups themselves are chronologically mixed. Among the largest sherds in 134 was a black-burnished bead-rimmed 2nd/3rd century dish. Shell-tempered fabric C11, which dates the context comprises two very small sherds. Similarly, context 146 contains 2nd/3rd century pottery among later 4th century material (colour-coated flagon sherds and shell-tempered ware). Nominally 3rd century context 135 included a plain-rimmed, undecorated black-burnished dish. The lack of decoration possibly indicates a late 4th century date, though the form is closer to mid Roman examples. A number of colour-coated sherds that could not certainly be identified as Oxfordshire colour-coated ware (although this ware is likely to be correct) have been labelled F65.

Glazed red earthenware from context 21 cannot be dated closely, though is likely to fall within a 17th-19th century date range.

6 DISCUSSION

The results of the recent work at this site clearly demonstrate the presence of Iron Age, Roman and post-Medieval remains on the site. For the purposes of this document each area of the site will be considered in turn.

Area A

The results of the evaluation of Area A clearly show that despite the presence of ditches in Trench 2, the archaeological potential of Trenches 1 and 3 appears to be very low. Though widely varying in size, the ditches uncovered in Trench 2 were all of such similar alignment as to suggest a similarity of function and it seems likely that they denote boundaries of some form, albeit ones seemingly ranging in date from Roman to post-medieval.

Excavations to the south in Area C have uncovered good evidence for both occupation and agricultural activity of Iron Age, Romano-British and post-medieval date (see below) and doubtless the ditches of Trench 2 are associated with at least some of this activity. Certainly, it seems that the focus of occupation from the Iron Age to the present day lies to the south in Areas B and C respectively and thus it is not inconceivable that features such as [25], [37] and [12] served to delineate field boundaries of both Roman and post-Medieval date.

With regards to ditch [21], however, reaching an adequate understanding of its use is perhaps a little more difficult. Certainly, it is hard to envisage a three metre wide field boundary and it is perhaps more likely that a feature such as this functioned more as a property boundary than anything else.

Area B

Work undertaken in this area was both minimal and of limited value. Yet the results of these investigations are of paramount significance in understanding the precise nature of Roman activity in the site, for it is here that the first definitive evidence for a Roman masonry building has been uncovered. Given the restrictive nature of the work it is difficult to formulate a meaningful interpretation of the findings. Admittedly, it is tempting to view a burnt cellar with intensive sooting on the walls and floors as part of a hypocaust structure. However, diagnostic hypocaust elements such as *pilae* stacks or even the tiles from which they are built have not been positively identified and any such interpretation must remain questionable until further evidence is forthcoming.

Whatever the precise nature of the buildings in Area B, the various spreads of building material noted in the area would seem to suggest that such buildings cover much of the southern half of the area and survive relatively undisturbed.

The real value of these findings, therefore, lies not in illuminating the exact character of the Roman settlement on this site but in reaching a greater understanding of the nature of the ancillary activities upon which the majority of the archaeological work was focussed.

Area C

Excavations in this area produced good evidence of Iron Age, Roman and post-Medieval activity on the site. Though scant the Iron Age remains, comprising an impressive boundary ditch and a small gully are likely to represent agricultural activity peripheral to a settlement. Initial Roman activity seems very much a continuation of that of the preceding Iron Age, and is marked by the backfilling of the preceding Iron Age ditch and its subsequent replacement upon a slightly different orientation. Agricultural activity is well represented by probable plough furrows or gullies running parallel to this new ditch, though pits such as the potential clay chest [175] allude to some very different activities in the vicinity.

That these remains are in some way associated with the structural remains uncovered in Area B is suggested by their comparable alignments. It is difficult to characterise the nature of this building though given the proximity of agricultural activity an interpretation as a farmstead or villa complex is not untenable.

The Medieval timber structure and its post-medieval masonry replacement is similarly difficult to understand. The replacement of timber buildings with stone is a familiar sequence in English vernacular architecture during the post-medieval period and its practice here would imply that this building was of some significance. A cursory search of the Oxfordshire records office, however, has not yielded any further information regarding the structure. It does seem a likely contender for a postulated earlier hunting lodge on the site, however, and though the probable clay flooring is perhaps more reminiscent of a barn, it is hard to conceive of a purely agricultural building possessing a cellar.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, excavations on this site clearly demonstrate the presence of Iron Age, Roman medieval and post-medieval activity on the site. The focus of much of this activity appears to lie towards the southern end of the site, where buildings of Roman and post-medieval date have been found. It seems the Roman settlement favoured the slightly lower ground to the southwest, whereas the post-medieval buildings were sited on higher ground – a pattern that continues into the present day with the location of the current building.

Given that the core of the Roman and post-Medieval settlements are located towards the southern end of the site it seems probable that the comparatively isolated ditches and gullies exposed in Area A (Trench 2) lie on the periphery of, if not delineate these settlements. Any decision regarding further work in Area A must, of course lie with Mr. Hugh Coddington of the Oxford County Council Archaeology Services. However, it is the opinion of JMHS that a program of monitoring works similar to that already detailed in Phase 4 of the proposed mitigation strategy would be sufficient to detail the relationship between these outlying ditches and the settlements to the south.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
AREA A							
Trench 1			0.50	1.65	25.00		
001	Layer	Topsoil	0.15	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
002	Layer	Subsoil	0.35-0.40	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
003	Deposit	Natural clay	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
004	Fill	Pit fill	0.70	0.70	0.10	-	-
005	Fill	Pit fill	0.70	0.70	0.10	-	-
006	Cut	Pit cut	0.70	0.70	0.10	-	-
007	Deposit	Natural limestone	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
008	<i>Unused</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
009	<i>Unused</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trench 2			0.50-0.65	3.00 max	18.00		
010	Layer	Mod. surface	0.10	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
011	Layer	Plough soil	0.28 max	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
012	Fill	Ditch fill	0.30	1.20	1.65	-	-
013	Cut	Ditch cut	0.60	1.45	1.65	-	-
014	Deposit	Natural clay	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
015	Masonry	Concrete	0.05	0.40	0.40	-	-
016	Fill	Ditch fill	0.36	1.46	1.65	-	-
017	<i>Unused</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
018	Fill	Ditch fill	0.22	0.78	1.65-	-	-
019	Fill	Ditch fill	0.10	0.68	0.50 exc.	-	-
020	Cut	Ditch cut	0.32	0.80	1.65	-	-
021	Fill	Ditch fill	0.70	3.02	1.65	Pot, bone	-
022	Fill	Ditch fill	0.35	3.02	1.65	Pot, bone-	-
023	Fill	Ditch fill	0.30	1.40	1.65	-	-
024	Fill	Ditch fill	0.16	2.60	1.65	-	-
025	Fill	Gully fill	0.30	0.62	1.65	Pot, bone	-
026	Fill	Gully fill	0.06	0.18	0.50	pot	-
027	Cut	Gully cut	0.35	0.62	1.65	-	-
028	Fill	Pipe trench fill	-	0.28	1.65	-	-
029	Cut	Cut of pipe trench	-	0.28	1.65	-	-
037	Fill	Gully fill	0.12	0.30	1.65	Pot, bone, cbm	-

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
038	Cut	Gully cut	0.12	0.30	1.65	-	-
Trench 3			0.30	1.65	18.00		
030	Layer	Topsoil	0.20	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
031	Layer	Subsoil	0.10	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
032	Fill	Gully fill	0.14	0.33	2.10	-	-
033	Cut	Gully cut	0.14	0.33	2.10	-	-
034	Fill	Fill of prob. field drain	0.10	0.35	2.80	-	-
035	Cut	Field drain?	0.10	0.35	2.80	-	-
036	Deposit	Natural clay	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
AREA B							
39	Layer	Topsoil	0.30	Site	Site	-	P med
40	Layer	Subsoil	Unexc.	Site	Site	Pot, fl	Post Roman?
41	Masonry	Wall	Not fully exc.	0.55 max	6.00	-	P med.
42	Masonry	Wall	Not fully exc.	0.30	5.50	-	P med
43	Layer	Burnt layer	0.01	0.80	0.80	-	P med
44	Layer	Dump?	0.06	Unknown	Unknown	Pot	P med
45	???	???	???	???	???	???	Roman
187	Layer	In possible hypocaust	0.08	5.00	12.00	Pot, bn, CBM	Post-Roman?
188	Layer	In possible hypocaust	0.10	1.00	5.00	Pot, bn, CBM	Post-Roman?
189	Layer	In poss. hypocaust	0.12	1.00	5.00	Pot, CBM	Post Roman?
190	Layer	Demolition	0.25	1.00	5.00	Pot, bn, CBM	Roman
191	Layer	Demolition	0.25	1.00	1.80	Pot, bn, CBM	Roman
192	Layer	Backfill in Hypocaust	0.25	1.00	0.85	CBM	Roman
193	Layer	Backfill in hypocaust	0.10	1.00	1.55	Pot, bn, CBM	Roman
194	Layer	Demolition	0.40	1.00	1.25	Pot, CBM, oBM	Roman
195	Layer	Demolition	0.30	1.00	1.50	Pot, CBM	Roman
196	Layer	Demolition?	0.18	0.50	0.50		Roman
197	Layer	Infilling in hypocaust	0.10	0.50	0.50		Roman
198	Layer	Burning in Hypocaust	0.10	0.45	0.45		Roman
199	Masonry	Hypocaust Wall?	0.80	0.55	1.50	-	Roman
200	Masonry	Hypocaust Wall	0.45	0.45	1.35	-	Roman
215	Layer	??	0.60	1.20	0.15		Roman
216	Layer	??	0.60	1.20	0.10		Roman

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
230	Cut	Cut of hypocaust	0.92	1.00 (exc.)	0.50 (exc.)	-	Roman
231	Masonry	Roman wall?	0.20	0.50	1.60	-	Roman
232	Masonry	Roman wall?	0.20	0.40	1.40	-	Roman
233	Masonry?	Roman wall?	0.15	0.45	1.30	-	Roman
AREA C							
100	Layer	Topsoil	0.30	Site	Site		Post-Medieval
101	Layer	Subsoil	0.30	Site	Site	Pot, bn, CBM	Post-Roman
102	Fill	Fill of 103	0.25	0.72	1.35	Pot	P. Med.
103	Cut	Robber cut	0.25	0.72	1.35	-	P. Med.
104	Fill	Fill of 105	0.14	0.30	0.35	Pot	P. Med.
105	Cut	Posthole cut	0.14	0.30	0.35	-	P. Med.
106	Fill	Fill of 107	0.10	0.30	0.35	-	P. Med.
107	Cut	Posthole cut	0.10	0.30	0.35	-	P. Med.
108	Fill	Fill of 118	0.40	3.70	5.00	Pot, gl, CBM	P. Med.
109	Cut	Posthole cut	0.54	1.10	1.10	Pot, bn, CBM	P. Med.
110	Fill	Fill of 109	0.54	1.10	1.10	-	P. Med.
111	Cut	Posthole cut	0.50	1.08	1.10	Pot, bn, CBM	P. Med.
112	Fill	Backfill in 111	0.34	1.08	1.10	Pot, bn, CBM	P. Med.
113	Cut	Drain cut	0.20 max	0.20		-	P. Med.
114	Fill	Drain fill	0.20	0.20			P. Med.
115	Fill	Fill of 109	0.45	1.10	1.10		P. Med.
116	Masonry	Packing in 111	0.30	1.00	1.00	-	P. Med.
117	Masonry	Foundation?	0.15	0.85	1.13	-	P. Med.
118	Cut	Robber cut	0.38	3.70	5.00	-	P. Med.
119	Fill	Infilling of cellar	0.36	2.60	3.86		P. Med.
120	Masonry	Foundation wall	0.25 max	0.70		-	P. Med.
121	Masonry	Foundation wall	0.54 max	0.65		-	P. Med.
122	Masonry	Foundation wall	0.40	0.55	1.70	-	P. Med.
123	Masonry	Foundation wall	0.40	0.50	3.86	-	P. Med.
124	Masonry	Steps	0.36	0.60	1.14	-	P. Med.
125	Fill	Fill of 126	0.56	0.36 (exc.)	0.94		P. Med.
126	Cut	Posthole cut	0.56	0.36	0.94	-	P. Med.
127	Fill	Fill of 128	0.27	0.36	0.38	-	P. Med.
128	Cut	Posthole cut	0.27	0.36	0.38		P. Med.
129	Fill	Fill of 130	0.27	0.10 (exc.)	0.10 (exc.)	-	P. Med.

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
130	'Cut'	Post pipe	0.27	0.10 (exc.)	0.10 (exc.)	-	P. Med.
131	Fill	Fill of 133	0.15	1.24	2.00		Roman
132	Fill	Fill of 133	0.18	1.00	1.24		Roman
133	Cut	Pit cut	0.32	2.00	1.24	-	Roman
134	Fill	Fill of 137	0.15	0.75	1.40	Pot, bn	Roman
135	Fill	Fill of 137	0.08	0.55	0.75	Pot	Roman
136	Fill	Fill of 137	0.08	0.80	0.75	Pot	Roman
137	Cut	Ditch cut	0.27	1.60	0.75 (exc.)	-	Roman
138	Fill	Fill of 140	0.04	0.80	1.24	-	P. Med.
139	Masonry	Hearth	0.07	0.30	0.46	-	P. Med.
140	Cut	Cut for hearth	0.05	0.80	1.65	-	P. Med.
141	Layer	Floor	0.12	3.00	5.20		P. Med.
142	Fill	Fill of 143	0.10	0.45	0.28	-	?
143	Cut	Posthole cut	0.10	0.45	0.28	-	?
144	Fill	Fill of 145	0.10	0.43	0.80	-	?
145	Cut	Tree throw	0.10	0.43	0.80	-	?
146	Fill	Fill of 148	0.23	1.25	1.43 (exc.)	Pot	Roman
147	Fill	Fill of 148	0.20	1.25	1.25 (exc.)	Pot	Roman
148	Cut	Ditch cut	0.43	1.95	1.25 (exc.)	-	Roman
149	Fill	Fill of 155	0.20	0.78	1.00 (exc.)		Iron Age
150	Fill	Fill	0.25	0.65	1.00 (exc.)		Iron Age
151	Fill	Fill	0.20	1.10	1.00 (exc.)		Iron Age
152	Fill	Fill	0.25	1.07	1.00 (exc.)		Iron Age
153	Fill	Fill	0.35	0.40	1.00 (exc.)		Iron Age
154	Fill	Fill	0.50	0.65	1.00 (exc.)		Iron Age
155	Cut	Ditch cut	0.80	1.55	1.00 (exc.)		Iron Age
156	Fill	Fill of 157	0.10	0.28	2.60		Iron Age?
157	Cut	Gully cut	0.10	0.28	2.60		Iron Age?
158	Fill	Fill of 161	0.34	0.60	0.60?		Iron Age?
159	Fill	Fill of 161	0.38	1.00	1.00		Iron Age?
160	Fill	Fill of 161	0.26	0.45	1.00		Iron Age?
161	Cut	Pit cut	0.46	1.00	1.00		Iron Age?
162	Not used	-	-	-	-	-	-
163	Not used	-	-	-	-	-	-
164	Not used	-	-	-	-	-	-
165	Layer	Demolition (in cut 222)	0.12	5.00	6.00	Pot, CBM	Roman
166	Fill	Fill of 169	0.30	1.00	1.00		Iron Age
167	Fill	Fill of 169	0.43	0.90	1.00	Pot	Iron Age
168	Fill	Fill of 169	0.10	0.43	1.00	-	Iron Age

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
169	Cut	Ditch cut	0.75	1.25	1.00		Iron Age
170	Cut	Ditch cut	0.32	1.10	0.65 (exc.)	-	Roman
171	Fill	Fill of 170	0.32	1.10	0.65 (exc.)	Pot, bn	Roman
172	Fill?	Fill of 170?	0.34	1.20	0.65 (exc.)	Pot, bn	Roman
173	Cut	Gully? Cut	0.18	0.40	0.65 (exc.)	-	Roman
174	Fill	Fill of 173	0.18	0.40	0.65 (exc.)		Roman
175	Cut	Clay chest?	0.40	1.40	2.10	-	Roman?
176	Fill	Fill of 175	0.40	1.40	2.10	Pot, CBM	Roman
177	Cut	Pit cut	0.12	0.50	0.50	-	?
178	Fill	Fill of 177	0.12	0.50	0.50	Pot, bn	Roman?
179	Cut	Gully? Cut	Unexc.	0.38	0.65	-	Roman
180	Fill	Fill of 179	Unexc.	0.38	0.65		Roman
181	Layer	Subsoil?	0.08	2.20	?	Pot, bn, gl, CBM	Post-Roman?
182	Fill	Fill of 183	0.20	0.24	0.40	Pot	
183	Cut	Posthole cut	0.20	0.24	0.40	-	
184	Fill	Same as 110	0.54	1.10	1.10	-	P. Med.
185	Cut	Plough furrow?	0.16	0.30	0.65	Pot	Roman
186	Fill	Same as 225		0.25	0.25		P. Med.
201	Fill	Fill of 202	0.41	0.24	0.24	-	P. Med.
202	'Cut'	Post pipe	0.41	0.24	0.24	-	P. Med.
203	Fill	Backfill of 204	0.45	1.00	1.00		P. Med.
204	Cut	Posthole cut	0.45	1.00	1.00	-	P. Med.
205	Fill	Fill of 206	0.20	0.22	0.22		P. Med.
206	'Cut'	Post pipe	0.20	0.22	0.22	-	P. Med.
207	Fill	Backfill of 208	0.45	0.85	0.94		P. Med.
208	Cut	Posthole cut	0.45	0.85	0.94	-	P. Med.
209	Fill	Backfill of 210	0.50	0.85	0.94		P. Med.
210	Cut	Posthole cut	0.50	0.85	0.94	-	P. Med.
211	Fill	Fill of 212	0.14	0.25	0.25		P. Med?
212	Cut	Posthole cut	0.14	0.25	0.25	-	P. Med?
213	Fill	Fill of 214	0.18	0.25 (exc.)	0.50		P. Med.
214	Cut	Posthole cut	0.18	0.25 (exc.)	0.50	-	P. Med.
217	Fill	Fill of 218	0.12	0.32	0.32	-	?
218	Cut	Posthole cut	0.12	0.32	0.32	-	?
219	Cut	Cut for wall 121	0.12	0.68		-	P. Med.
220	Cut	Cut of cellar	0.38	3.70	5.10		P. Med.
221	Cut	Cut for wall 120	0.10	0.65	4.30	-	P. Med.

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
222	Cut	Shallow cut filled by 165	0.20 max.	5.00	6.00	-	Roman
223	Masonry	Foundation wall	0.10			-	P. Med.
224	Masonry	Drain lining	0.20	0.28	6.00		P. Med.
225	Fill	Fill of 226	0.25	0.25	0.25	-	P. Med.
226	'Cut'	Post pipe	0.25	0.25	0.25	-	P. Med.
227	Fill	Same as 228?	-	-	-	-	-
228	Fill	Fill of 229	0.15	0.30	0.30	Pot	Roman
229	Cut	Pit cut?	0.15	0.30	0.30	-	Roman