2006/104

Excavations at the Former Oldfield Boys' School Site, Bath (ST 7460 6433): A Post-Excavation Assessment

By

Derek Cater
(With Contributions by John Clarke, Lisa Brown, Dr Ian Betts, David Jordan, Heather Tinsley, Julie Jones and Paul Davies)
Bath Archaeological Trust
Unit 13
Brassmill Enterprise Centre
Brassmill Lane
Bath
BA1 3JN

August 2000

EVENT BN 2716
SOURCE BN43367
MONUMENT BN 30113

Contents

1.0.	**Summary**	1
2.0.	**Background**	2
2.1.	Introduction	2
2.2.	Planning History	3
2.3.	Location, Land Use and Geology	4
2.4.	Project Aims and Objectives	5
2.5.	Fieldwork Methodology	7
2.6.	Summary of Work to Date	10
2.7.	Integrity of Archaeological Remains	13
3.0.	**The Assessment**	16
3.1.	Introduction	16
3.2.	A Note on Data Quality	16
3.3.	A Note on the Phasing of the Remains	16
3.4.	Quantitative and Qualitative Data	18
3.5.	The Excavations	25
3.5.1.	Evaluation Excavations	25
3.5.2.	Mitigation Excavations	31
3.6.	Material Culture	39
3.7.	Environmental Data	42
4.0.	**Discussion**	45
4.1.	Roman Structures	45
5.0.	**Specialist Reports**	54
5.1.	Small Finds	54
5.2.	Roman Pottery	67
5.3.	Building Materials	69
5.4.	Pollen	80
5.5.	Plant Macrofossils	86
5.6.	Snails	88
5.7.	Soils	89
6.0.	**Updated Project Design Specification**	113
6.1.	Statement of Potential	113
6.2.	Revised Research Aims	115
6.3.	Method Statement	115
6.4.	Publication	118
7.0.	**Estimate of Costs and Timetable of Proposed Scheme of Post-Excavation Analysis and Publication**	121
7.1.	Estimate of Costs	121
7.2.	Estimated Timetable to Production of Finished Report	124
8.0.	**References**	125
9.0.	**Illustrations**	127
10.0.	**Appendices**	143
10.1.	Specification for Mitigation Excavations	143
10.2.	Table of Finds by Category and Context	152
10.3.	Evaluation Excavations Context Data (Floppy Disc)	159
10.4.	Mitigation Excavations Context Data (Floppy Disc)	159

1. Summary

1.1. *A proposal for the residential development of land at the former Oldfield Boys' School, Bath, led to the commissioning of Bath Archaeological Trust to conduct a phased programme of archaeological investigations. The remains of a high status Roman building, almost certainly a Roman villa, were revealed during evaluation excavations, and subsequent mitigation investigations revealed an additional Roman building range. The mitigation excavations were designed to address specific research aims: namely to ascertain the function and date of the buildings, their mode of construction and landscape setting. Investigations by a soil micromorphologist and subsequent excavation revealed that the integrity of the archaeological stratigraphy had been compromised by extensive robbing of the Roman structures for reusable materials, and by natural soil processes. This report addresses the extent to which the recovered data sets will allow the research aims to be addressed, proposes revised aims and outlines a programme of analysis to meet these. The form and content of the academic publication are also discussed.*

2.2. Planning History

2.2.1. In October 1996 consultations between Paul Whitley Architects (of 251 Camden High Street, London NW1 7BU), acting on behalf of W.D.King Ltd. (of 120 High Street, Edgware, Middlesex), and Vince Russett, the Archaeological Officer for North Somerset Council, who was acting for Bath and North East Somerset Council in the absence of an equivalent officer in post, in advance of submitting a planning application for the residential redevelopment of land formerly occupied by Oldfield Boys School, Bath, led to the recommendation of a scheme of prior archaeological investigations. The acting Archaeological Officer recommended that an archaeological desktop assessment, building survey and evaluation excavations be conducted prior to determination of any future application relating to the site. He produced a site-specific project brief for the developer (ref: Oldfield Boys School: The Archaeology Project Brief / vjr / WfW 95 09 October 1996). Bath Archaeological Trust were requested by Paul Whitley Architects to submit a project design and quotation for the works outlined in the project brief. The project design was completed on the 11th of March 1997 and was submitted to and accepted by the acting Archaeological Officer for Bath and North East Somerset Council.

2.2.2. In March 1997 Bath Archaeological Trust was commissioned by Paul Whitley Architects firstly to collate and interrogate all known archaeological and historical sources relating to the proposed development site and to produce a desk-top assessment, secondly to conduct a photographic survey of the external elevations of the former school buildings, and thirdly to conduct a series of small-scale evaluation excavations. The results of the desk-top assessment, the building survey and of the first eleven trial trenches were integrated into a single report (Beaton 1997).

2.2.3. In January 1998 Bath Archaeological Trust was commissioned by Paul Whitley Architects to conduct a watching brief during the demolition of certain of the school buildings and associated structures. A specification was produced for this work (Bath Archaeological Trust 1998).

2.2.4. In October 1998 Bath Archaeological Trust was commissioned by Paul Whitley Architects to excavate two additional trial trenches (Trenches 12 and 13). A report on the results of these was subsequently published (Beaton 1998).

2.2.5. In May 1999 Bath Archaeological Trust was commissioned by Paul Whitley Architects to conduct mitigation excavations in the area of the earlier (evaluation) Trench 13 and also to conduct a watching brief during the subsequent enabling groundworks, working to a specification written by the developer's archaeological consultant, Jim Hunter, CGMS Consulting (Hunter 1999).

school took over the vacant buildings and its name was changed to *Oldfield Council Boys' School*. In 1971, after an amalgamation with the *City of Bath Boys' School*, it became *Beechen Cliff Annexe*. Additional school buildings were added over the period of use by the several schools. The buildings became redundant when *Beechen Cliff Annexe* closed in the mid-1980s and a few years later they were severely damaged by fire. They remained vacant and derelict up to and beyond the commencement of archaeological investigations.

2.4. Project Aims and Objectives

2.4.1 Desktop Assessment, Evaluation Excavations, and Standing Building Recording

2.4.1.1. The broad objective of this phase of archaeological works was that, 'The assessment should determine the nature, extent and degree of survival (where possible) of archaeological sites, structures and deposits within the study area, and provide contractors advice concerning the nature of the archaeological constraints identified, and appropriate archaeological programmes for the sites identified in the event of development...Particular attention should be given to the estimation of the likely depth from the current surface at which archaeological structures and deposits are likely to occur, as this will have a direct bearing on the possibility of preservation *in situ*' (Russett 1996).

2.4.1.2. In addition, the brief required that a photographic record be made of the exteriors and interiors of all buildings on site prior to their demolition (Russett 1996). On 28th July 1997, the then appointed Bath and North East Somerset Council Archaeological Officer, Bob Sydes, conceded in a letter to Paul Whitley Architects that a photographic survey of the building interiors would not be required where this could not be safely accomplished.

2.4.2. Demolition Works Watching Brief

2.4.2.1. The broad objective of this phase of archaeological works was the, 'Monitoring of site clearance, demolition and groundworks and the recording of archaeologically significant deposits revealed thereby'. In addition, 'The principle aim of the archaeological watching brief is to create an ordered and accessible archive of recovered materials and records which can be related to what was recorded in the evaluation report and which can ultimately be deposited with an appropriate local museum'(Bath Archaeological trust 1998).

e) to record all of the above, keeping in mind at all times that the information recovered from this excavation may be crucial to the opportunity presented to future generations who may consider it appropriate to investigate the Roman building itself (Section 3.1.2., Hunter, 1999).

2.4.3.4. At an early stage of the excavations it became clear that an unanticipated Romano-British building range lay within the area of excavations. This necessitated the modification of the specific research priorities. The focus of the excavations moved away from an intensive interrogation of the rubble collapse layers to the excavation of structural features and associated layers, . Therefore although research priorities a and b were retained, their relative importance was reassessed downwards. Research priorities c and d were also addressed according to this adjusted focus. This change in approach was approved by the Bath and North East Somerset Council Archaeological Officer, Bob Sydes, and the developer's archaeological consultant, Jim Hunter, CGMS Consulting, at the first progress meeting, held on site on May 15th 1999.

2.5. Fieldwork Methodology

2.5.1. Evaluation Excavations

2.5.1.1 The modern tarmac school playground surface, the nineteenth-century levelling clay dump and buried topsoil, and the post-Roman hillwash deposits were removed by means of a tracked mechanical excavator using a wide toothless bucket, under the close supervision of the archaeological project manager (Mark Beaton, Bath Archaeological Trust). Machining ceased wherever destruction rubble or structural features were revealed. The base and at least one of the sections of each trench were hand cleaned and a sufficiently large sample of archaeological features and layers were then excavated to meet the project objectives whilst at all times keeping the disturbance of the archaeological resource to a minimum. These were then recorded using elements of Bath Archaeological Trust's recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. The minimum record for each trench or feature was a 1:20 scale plan and 1:20 section drawing, both related to OS datum and grid; a context record of physical characteristics and stratigraphic relationships, employing a unique number sequence by trench; and monochrome and colour slide photographs in 35mm format. All finds (with the exception of Roman tile and obviously modern pottery, of which a representative sample was kept) were retained and referenced to the context from which they were recovered. Small finds were given a unique sequential reference number, were located according to the layer from which they were recovered, and their height in relation to OS datum was established.

this robber trench ran the full length of the extended Trench 13. At this point it was clear that the remains of a substantial building were located within the area of excavation. These conclusions were communicated to the Bath and North East Somerset Council Archaeological Officer, Bob Sydes, and to the developer's archaeological consultant, Jim Hunter, CGMS. As a result, excavation of the deposits within the 1.5m wide slot as discrete units was abandoned, and thereafter excavation proceeded stratigraphically on a trench-wide basis. The focus of the excavations also broadened out from an investigation of the Romano-British building primarily through an analysis of its collapse materials (of which those located within the 1.5m slot were believed to be a representative sample) to an investigation of multi-period deposits and features, including *in situ* Roman structural remains and robber trenches which marked the positions of robbed out Roman walls (as outlined in section 2.4.3.4, above) .

2.5.3.5. The specification had requested that 50 per cent of any unanticipated substantial linear feature should be excavated. In the event the robber trenches within the area of excavation were excavated in their entirety, to ensure that the complete network of walls was revealed. Archaeological deposits were then excavated down to the natural substratum across the site, except in areas adjacent to the tall shored sections at the southeastern end of the site, where safety considerations precluded this.

2.5.3.6. All features were hand cleaned and hand excavated and recorded using elements of Bath Archaeological Trust's recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. The minimum record for each context was that outlined in section 2.5.1.1, above.

2.5.3.7. Site visits made by the project specialists were encouraged and facilitated. A visit was made by David Jordan (soil micromorphologist) on 18th May 1999, by Heather Tinsley (pollen), Julie Jones (plant macrofossils) and Paul Davis (snails), in the company of Vanessa Straker (English Heritage's environmental archaeology coordinator for the southwestern region), on 26th May 1999, and by Dr Ian Betts (building materials) on 27th May 1999. All specialists outlined the types of contexts with the greatest potential for analysis. David Jordan and Paul Davis took their own samples during their site visits. Other samples were taken by the author during excavations. Only four sealed contexts with potential for environmental analysis were encountered and these were sampled. A judgement sample of the more complete pieces of ceramic building material (particularly examples of combed box-flue tile), and tufa and marble pieces composing collapse layer 1306 were identified by Ian Betts. These were later supplemented by a judgement sample of other sizable pieces of CBM made by the author during excavations.

2.5.3.8. With the exception of obviously modern sherds revealed during machining, all stratified pottery sherds, identified by the number of the context from which they were recovered, were retained. A judgement sample of the more complete

2.6.2. **Evaluation Excavations**

2.6.2.1. Five evaluation trenches (Trenches 1-5) were excavated in the initial scheme of works, with the aim of ascertaining the location, nature, date, degree of preservation and significance of any archaeological remains revealed on site (for the location of all evaluation trenches see fig.2). These were excavated between 5th and 7th of March 1997. Masonry collapse or demolition material, a series of truncated masonry walls and robber trenches, fragments of painted wall plaster and associated Romano-British pottery sherds revealed in and recovered from trenches 3, 4 and 5 indicated the presence of the remains of a substantial Romano-British building.

2.6.2.2. The scheme of works was extended and a further six evaluation trenches (Trenches 6-11) were excavated between May 27th and June 16th 1997, in order to characterise the remains and to establish their extent. These additional evaluation trenches revealed the collapsed and partially robbed walls of a building with a minimum east-west length of 30m and a minimum north-south width of 11m. The remains of a tessellated pavement in Trench 9 confirmed the high status of the building. The presence of archaeological remains in certain trenches and their absence from others indicated that the structural remains were concentrated towards the northeastern corner of the site. Broadly speaking, those in Trench 3 defined the eastern- and those in Trench 9 possibly the south-eastern limits of the building. How far to the north, south and west the structural remains extended had not at this stage been ascertained. The results of the excavations of Trenches 1-11 were incorporated in a report (Beaton 1997).

2.6.2.3. During a watching brief monitoring the demolition of the main east-west, nineteenth-century retaining wall (RW1), which formed the northern edge of the school playgrounds, an east-west aligned Roman wall was revealed. The Roman wall ran almost parallel to and approximately 25cm to the south of RW1. Despite favourable conditions, no evidence was observed to suggest that any walls extended northwards from this wall, and this, in conjunction with the information obtained from Trench 4, was taken to suggest that the east-west Romano-British wall represented the north wall of the east-west range of rooms, and marked the northern extent of the building range (Beaton 1998).

2.6.2.4. In order to ascertain the southern and western extent of the structural remains (the footprint of the development did not extend to the area to the north of the revealed archaeological remains and it was therefore judged that excavations in this area to definitively establish the northern extent of the building were not required), two further, and final, evaluation trenches (Trenches 12 and 13, respectively) were excavated, in October 1998. Trench 12 revealed the junction of additional north-south and east-west oriented walls, defined by robber trenches. The former wall extended beyond the limit of excavation to the south, indicating that the structural remains extended further to the south than the southern limit of Trench 12.

2.7. Integrity of the Archaeological Remains

2.7.1. Mitigation Excavations

2.7.1.1. The archaeological and 'natural' stratification were found to be poorly preserved for three reasons. The first was the natural process of expansion and contraction characteristic of clayey deposits and identified on site during an examination of the soils and other geology by a consultant soil micromorphologist (David Jordan, Terra Nova) on 18th May 1999. This, coupled with the action of frost at the surface, produces a well-defined soil structure composed of small angular blocky peds near to the surface and larger peds forming columns of soil separated by deep fissures at greater depth. An ongoing process then ensues in which peds and other debris fall from the ground surface into the fissures, to be incorporated into deeper strata. Over time such deposits are thoroughly mixed, destroying fine stratification. By these means, the clay hillwash deposits on site had been thoroughly homogenized. Because of their different mineralogy the archaeological deposits were found to be less strongly structured than the 'natural' clay deposits above and below, though to the degree that they had a clay component they had also been affected. Additionally, the process of expansion and contraction causes the ground surface to heave up, which further disturbs the archaeological stratigraphy. It was therefore found that although the fine structure of the hillwash clays had been destroyed by mixing, the essential structure of the thicker archaeological strata had been preserved, although here also finer detail had been lost (Jordan this report). Subsequent excavation essentially bore out this observation: finer archaeological detail survived poorly. This detrimentally impacts upon our ability to develop a clear understanding of the pre- to post-Roman landscape setting (research priorities c and d).

2.7.1.2. The second cause of the poor preservation of the on-site stratigraphy was the erosion and redeposition downslope of the mobile clay strata. This process was clearly neither temporally nor spatially uniform. The pre-Roman soil was a heavy and mobile clay which had perhaps been redeposited through erosion from up slope (Jordan this report), which would seem to indicate that the site was receiving rather than losing soil through erosion and redeposition during this period. During the late Roman or earlier post-Roman period the site appears to have been losing material through erosion, because the rubble of the collapsed building was oriented with the slope rather than following its presumed original random arrangement, which indicates a gradual levelling due to soil movement. The Roman layers towards the southern and northeastern ends of the site had been particularly badly affected, and had in places been completely eroded away. Erosion may have been exacerbated by the robbing process, as stabilising vegetation was cleared away and the ground was disturbed. There was, however, no evidence for the wholesale down-slope movement of archaeological strata (Jordan this report). At a later date clay eroded from the upper slopes (perhaps as a result of medieval and later cultivation) once again started to accumulate on site. Taken together, these

2.7.2. **Evaluation Excavations**

2.7.2.1. Because of the more limited aims of the evaluation excavations the revealed archaeological features and layers were less intensively investigated and as a result their integrity is less well known. The poor state of preservation of the Roman-period remains revealed through soil micromorphological investigations and mitigation excavations is likely to be broadly applicable to archaeological deposits throughout the site. However, there are exceptions to this rule. Although building walls further to the east had been heavily robbed and in places survived only as robber trenches, in places the footings of building walls survived *in situ*. In addition, extensive remains of the *opus signinum* and mortar bedding for a tessellated pavement (of which small groups of tesserae remained *in situ*) survived. However, in the context of the Roman-period remains elsewhere on site, this appears to be an exceptional survival.

this limited analysis, the analysis of the recovered small finds (see section 5.1., below), on-site pottery identification and subsequent stratigraphic analysis have facilitated a provisional phasing of the remains.

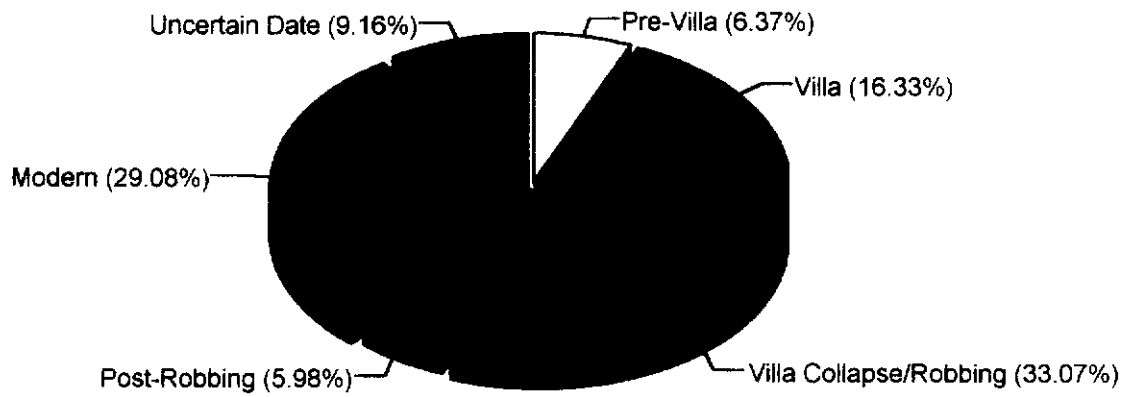
3.3.2 It is anticipated that fuller analysis of the recovered pottery sherds will allow a more definite and precise phasing of the archaeological remains to be arrived at. However, certain problems standing in the way of the construction of an entirely satisfactory phasing scheme are likely to remain. The first challenge here is the poor preservation of the archaeological deposits and structures encountered during all phases of work, but particularly during the phase of mitigation excavations (see sections 2.7.1.1- 2.7.1.6, above). Much of the fine stratigraphic detail required for accurate phasing has survived poorly or not at all. Thus although it will be possible to discern broad phases of activity, sub-phases will be less evident. To a certain extent analysis of the plan of the Roman building will enable building phases to be postulated on structural grounds. The limiting factor here, however, is the incomplete sample of the building excavated and the fact that the Roman building remains were revealed in a series of spatially discrete trenches. To date only a partial ground plan of the building has been recovered, and it is not clear how the individual building elements related. Thus we cannot be certain of the spatial and temporal relationship that existed between the northern and western Roman building ranges, as the area of their possible junction lay beyond the limit of the mitigation excavations. Nor is it clear how the room revealed in Trench 12 related to the north range, nor whether it was of the same constructional phase.

3.3.3. The contexts recorded during the **evaluation excavations** have been grouped into five broad phases: Pre-Villa, Villa, Villa Collapse/Robbing, Post-Robbing and Modern. A sixth category, of 'uncertain date' has also been employed. As all datable materials were recovered from Roman or later layers, the earliest phase was defined in relation to the later villa. The majority of layers of this phase were derived from 'natural' processes, i.e. colluviation, pre-dating the phase of villa construction. The label 'natural' or 'geological' for this phase has been avoided as true natural (i.e. blue lias clay) was at no point sighted and these 'natural' hillwash layers need have been of no great antiquity. All contexts associated with the floruit of the villa have at present been placed into a single phase of activity. It is very possible that the structural elements grouped into this phase would need to be subdivided into further sub-phases of construction had the excavations been more comprehensive, or had the archaeological sequence in those areas examined been less disturbed. A broad period grouping of 'Villa Collapse/Robbing' was chosen because although this is likely to have been a long drawn out process of decay and fitful robbing, lasting perhaps several centuries, the quality of the surviving data will not convincingly support a more precise phasing of these events. The 'Post-Robbing' period encompassed all activity on site between the end of the robbing phase and the construction of the Victorian school buildings, here grouped as 'Modern' activity. Certain contexts were of 'Uncertain Date'. The majority of these were hillwash layers recorded in trenches from which villa or villa collapse layers were absent. The period of their accumulation was therefore unknowable

3.4.3. **Table 1: Summary of Context Records by Period and Type as Recorded in the Field During the Phase of Evaluation Excavations**

	Pre Roman Villa	Roman Villa	Villa Collapse/ Robbing	Post-Robbing	Modern	Uncertain Date
Hillwash	11		6	7		8
Buried Soil		1			15	
Topsoil					4	
Burnt Area	1					
Hearth		1				
Construction Layer		3				
Foundation Trench		5			2	
Wall Foundations		5				
Faced Wall		4			1	
Hypothetical Wall		2				
Hypothetical Foundation Trench		2				
Other Structural Features					3	
Miscellaneous Layer	2	6	7		3	
Op. Sig. Floor		1				
Tessellated Pavement		1				
Floor Bedding Layer		2				
Surface		1			9	
Track/ Path						
Post-hole			1			
Post-hole Fill			1			
Pit					1	
Miscellaneous Cut Feature	3	1	1		5	1

3.4.5. **Chart 1: Evaluation Excavation Contexts Grouped by Period**



3.4.6. Chart 1 makes clear the relative proportions of contexts, grouped by period. It will be noted that only 16.33 per cent of contexts relate to *in situ* Roman deposits and structures. The single largest period grouping relates to the period of collapse and robbing (33.07%); an understanding of the form and function of the building will clearly require close study of these contexts. Very few of the post robbing, pre-modern contexts (which in total only accounted for 5.98% of all recorded contexts) produced datable materials. This has implications for the study of post-Roman landscape development on site.

Stake-hole				1					
Stake-hole Fill				1					
Misc. Cut Feature				1	2	1		2	
Fill of Misc. Cut Feature				2	1	1			2
Collapse/ Demolition Layer			1		21				
Collapse/ Demolition Rubble					10				
Robber Trench			1		13				
Robber Trench Fill			5		42	2			
Make-up Layer									2
Totals	5	3	9	56	102	7	7	2	17

3.4.8. For a brief discussion of the phasing see section 3.3.4., above. The points made regarding the distinction drawn between a 'collapse/demolition layer', 'collapse/demolition rubble, and miscellaneous layers of the same phase, in section 3.4.4., above, apply with equal force here. If we present the information contained in Table 2, undifferentiated by context type but grouped into phases, in graphical form, we get the following:

3.5. The Excavations

3.5.1. Evaluation Excavations

3.5.1.1. Pre Roman Villa

3.5.1.1.1. Evidence of activity predating the construction of the Roman building range was recorded in Trench 3. Clay hillwash layers 343 and 335 were cut by two north-south oriented linear cut features (342 & 334, respectively), whilst layer 343 was also cut by a shallow scoop, 336. Cut 342 had an asymmetrical V-shaped profile, which might suggest that it was created by an ard or heavy plough (Rees 1981, Pl.8); however, at 15-20cm deep and approximately 40cm wide the feature is possibly too large to have been created by either. Cut 334 had been truncated by robber trench 308, but its original measurements would have been approximately 2m wide by 0.4m deep. Its western side had a shallow, slightly concave slope and it had a flattish base. It was possibly a ditch, although the profile of the feature might suggest otherwise. It was filled with small angular limestone chippings in a clay matrix (332), which were interpreted by its excavator as debris derived from the construction of the Roman building. It seems more likely, however, that both the cut and its fill predated the villa construction period: fill 332 was sealed by clay layer 331, which was cut by foundation trench 314 (and foundation trench 310 if 331 was equivalent to layer 339, as recorded by the excavator). Layer 331 was originally interpreted as a deliberately deposited levelling layer, laid at the time of the construction of the Roman building. However, fuller analysis of similar deposits elsewhere on site made possible by the mitigation excavations has indicated that these clean, firm light-yellowish brown clay layers were the result of ongoing colluviation rather than deliberate human deposition. This implies the elapse of a period of time between the filling of the cut and the construction of the Roman building. Furthermore the fill of this feature, which was definitely cut by robber trench 308, was probably, given the form of the robber trench, also cut by the foundation trench 310. Too little survived of the shallow scooped feature, 336, to allow a firm interpretation to be made, but an agricultural origin would not seem out of place here too. These features were not investigated in detail and their interpretation remains uncertain, however it may be observed that none of the recorded features predating the construction of the Roman building need imply anything other than that at this earlier date the site was under agricultural exploitation. Elsewhere, a series of light-yellowish brown clay layers indicate that before (as well as after) the construction of the Roman building, because of its location on the toe-slope of Lyncombe Hill, colluvium was being deposited on site.

3.5.1.2. Roman Villa

3.5.1.2.1. The oolitic limestone rubble foundations of two approximately north-south oriented structural walls were located in Trench 3. Those of the easternmost wall (309) were not fully excavated and later robbing and associated disturbance have obscured the then current ground surface; however they were probably in excess

may have been preceded by a timber wall. This wall extended beyond the northern limit of the trench. Despite favourable conditions, no evidence was recovered that any walls ran westwards from walls 1315 and 1330, within the limits of excavation.

3.5.1.2.5. In August 1998, a watching brief conducted during the dismantling of the eastern end of Retaining Wall 1, which defines the southern side of the service corridor, recorded the remains of an east-west oriented Roman wall. This ran almost parallel to and approximately 0.3-0.5m to the south of the nineteenth-century retaining wall. A 5.5m length of Roman wall survived, running west from a point 19.5m west of the eastern terminus of the retaining wall, at the western side of the nineteenth-century playground steps. The wall was again constructed in *opus vittatum* with an *opus caementicium* core. Only a single course of facing stones was revealed- although the wall was not exposed down to foundation level- however a further three rough courses of rubble core survived. The southern face of the wall was not revealed. No walls running north from this wall were observed, despite favourable conditions, which supports the interpretation that this could be the north wall of the northern building range.

3.5.1.2.6. If this wall is projected towards the east and west, rooms of 4.8-5m deep would be indicated in the central section of the northern range, as revealed in trenches 3 and 5. Were this to form the north wall of the range, then the range's overall external dimensions, as revealed during by the evaluation excavations, would be approximately 38.5m east-west by approximately 7.5m north-south, excluding the room revealed in Trench 9 .

3.5.1.2.7. A wing, perhaps only a single room deep, returned south from the presumed eastern end of the north range. This was recorded in Trench 9 and was defined by robber trenches 912, 914 and 916. The position of its north wall will be marked by robber trench 316, recorded immediately to the north, in Trench 3. Within the limits of Trench 9 it could not be definitively ascertained whether or not there were further rooms to the south (nor to the east and west). The revealed room contained the very fragmentary remains of a tessellated pavement, 909. This was constructed of limestone tesserae of two sizes, and large, neatly squared pennant sandstone tesserae. Of especial interest was the very thin red skim, presumably of ceramic material, possibly *opus signinum*, on the upper surface of some of the limestone tesserae. This material was far too fine to have constituted a surface in its own right, and must have performed a purely decorative function. Although the pavement survived in too fragmentary a condition to reconstruct any decorative scheme, that three colours of tesserae were used possibly indicates that a geometric design was originally present, or at least that the pavement comprised blocks of colour. It is not certain why skimmed limestone tesserae should be preferred to ones of ceramic building material. Limestone tesserae could have been more freely available than those of ceramic material, but why the latter should have been in short supply is unclear. Similar expedience in the face of shortage has been noted frequently elsewhere (Ling 1998, 13). The pavement was bedded upon a mid-brownish yellow lime mortar, 910. In places, the impressions in the upper surface of the mortar left by the robbed tesserae were clearly visible.

interpretation was derived from the close positioning of a hearth, 1207, to the east wall of the room, as defined by robber trench 1209. The south side of the hearth did not survive, but it was clearly square or rectangular in plan and approximately one metre wide. It was composed of irregular limestone rubble pressed into the natural clay substrate. The clay within and around this structure was burnt to a purplish-red. No evidence was recovered to suggest that the hearth was part of an industrial process, and so it must be assumed that it functioned as a domestic heat source, indicating an internal space. That the axis of the hearth was not aligned with the walls of the room and that it was positioned close to the east wall, and perhaps towards the corner of the room, does not invalidate this interpretation, as eccentrically placed hearths are common in villa structures- and have been used as a key to the interpretation of social structure in villa communities (Smith 1997).

3.5.1.2.11. The floor surface contemporary with the hearth did not survive. A mortar-rich layer 1206, which partially overlay the hearth, was possibly a bedding layer for a later floor. However, this was far softer, friable and more localised than the bedding layer of the tessellated pavement recorded in Trench 9 and could be the collapsed and decayed remains of a plaster wall covering.

3.5.1.2.12. No other certain evidence of the internal arrangements and floor surfaces of the structures revealed during the evaluation excavations survived to be recorded. A layer of large limestone cobbles, 340, with a level upper surface could have been of an external yard surface. However, this layer was only seen in the eastern section of Trench 3 and consequently there are doubts as to how extensive the layer might have been and how representative a view the section might have provided. All that can be said about post-hole 320, recorded in Trench 3 to the immediate west of wall 313, in the absence of its excavation, is that it cut the natural clay substrate and was presumably sealed by collapse/robbing debris. It could be of any date from before the construction of the roman building to the period of robbing, and perhaps even beyond. Finally, rubble layer 507, interpreted as a construction period deposit, could just as well be a collapse/demolition period layer.

3.5.1.2.13. The only certain floor surfaces surviving to be recorded during the evaluation excavations were the opus signinum (911) floor and the tessellated pavement (909), and it will be noted below (see section 3.5.2.4.5.) that the only floor surface recorded during the mitigation excavations was a crude layer of limestone chippings (1455) rammed into the clay substrate in Room 1581. The evident absence of floors in the other excavated rooms and their original form calls for comment. There are several possibilities as to the original form of these floors, and, moving from higher to lower status; these would appear to be: a suspended floor accommodating underfloor heating, probably including a mosaic or tessellated pavement; a tessellated pavement without a hypocaust; an *opus signinum* or other concrete floor; flagstones; cobbles; timber; earth. It is probable that several of these techniques were employed in the various rooms of the villa, the choice reflecting the status and use of the rooms.

identified within Trench 12 possibly originally had an earthen floor, since the surviving hearth presumably rules out a timber floor, and its survival argues against a more elaborate flooring material now completely robbed away- however it is entirely possible that the hearth is a late feature post-dating the robbing of an earlier floor.

3.5.1.3. **Villa Collapse/Robbing**

3.5.1.3.1. Many recorded contexts, such as robber trenches and their fills and rubbly and mortary layers overlying these, clearly date to the extended period of collapse and robbing. Many more contexts were of less certain provenance. All that can safely be said about many is that they overlie or cut the natural clay substrate and are sealed by a deep blanket of post-Roman and pre-Modern colluvium. Wherever the date of these contexts is uncertain, they have been assigned to the latest possible phase. Fuller study of the recovered ceramics might facilitate a more accurate phasing of these deposits.

3.5.2. **Mitigation Excavations**

3.5.2.1. **Phase 1: Pre-Roman**

3.5.2.1.1. The natural substrate was a light-yellowish brown clay, which was encountered across the site. In composition this was identical to the thick band of colluvium that accumulated in the post-Roman, pre-Modern period across the site. In origin, the natural substrate was clearly itself a colluvial deposit. True natural, blue lias clay, was at no point observed during the mitigation or evaluation excavations, but it was located during piling operations for the new buildings on site. A localised patch of small limestone chippings with a very regular upper surface, 1541, recorded in Test Pit 1, and a gritty clay, 1548, observed in Test Pit 2, were probably also natural deposits. A localised layer of diffuse small limestone fragments set in clay, 1570, which was visible in the south side of the phase-4 foundation trench 1478 at a low absolute height, was probably a natural deposit. The hillwash layer 1388, which was also later cut by foundation trench 1478, was probably also of this phase.

3.5.2.2. **Phase 2: Roman**

3.5.2.2.1. Two adjacent irregular patches of purplish-red burnt natural clay, 1421, one of which was later cut by the foundation trench for the phase-4 wall 1403, were probably of this phase, and probably relate to the clearance of vegetation from the site prior to construction works or its agricultural exploitation.

3.5.2.2.2 A north-south oriented wall was constructed across the centre of the site. Its southern terminal was located, but its northern end lay beyond the limit of

discussion of the possible floor surfaces used see section 3.5.1.2.13 and 3.5.1.2.14, above.

3.5.2.4.3. Room 1580 was defined by foundation trench 1393 to the west, which contained a length of truncated limestone rubble foundations, 1392, foundation trench 1404, containing rubble footings 1403, to the north, and by 1406 to the south. Trench 1393 was cut 0.93m into the natural substrate and was 0.7m wide at the base, whilst 1404 was 0.98m deep and 0.72m wide. Only part of the north and south walls and none of the east wall of this room fell within the limits of excavation. This room would have had internal dimensions of approximately 3.2m north-south and at least 3m east-west. Again, nothing survived of the contemporary floor surfaces or internal structures within room 1580.

3.5.2.4.4. Room 1581, to the north of room 1580, was defined by foundation trench 1404 to the south and1433 to the west. Trench 1433 was 0.78m deep and 0.65m wide at the base, and contained a short length of surviving foundations (1432), three courses thick. These were of ascending fineness, from large limestone rubble to small limestone fragments, all bonded with a gritty clay matrix. Foundation trench 1565 defined the eastern wall of the room. This was not excavated and lay only partially within the limits of excavation. It was at least 0.84m wide and 0.8m deep, and contained truncated limestone rubble foundations, 1564. Two contiguous walls defined the room's northern limit. To the south foundation trench 1478 contained footings (1479). In their composition these were identical to and joined seamlessly with footings 1564, suggesting that they were of the same constructional phase. Immediately to the north of 1479 a wall of more massive proportions was built. Of this only two limestone rubble foundation stones, 1561, survived *in situ*, pressed into the base of foundation trench 1562. Both of these walls have been comprehensively robbed, disturbing the surrounding stratigraphy in the process, making it no longer possible to identify the point from which each of these foundation trenches was cut. It was therefore not possible to demonstrate the sequence of construction on stratigraphical grounds- although it can be demonstrated that wall 1479 was robbed before 1561. Structural considerations, however, would suggest that wall 1479 was the earlier of the two. The foundations of wall 1479 were approximately 0.8-0.9m deep and 0.64m wide; those of wall 1561 were at least 1.02m deep and 1.24m wide. The building was constructed on a slope and countering the forces that would have caused it to rack downslope must have been a major consideration. With this in mind, it seems unlikely that a more massively founded wall would be replaced by a slighter one. If these forces necessitated the buttressing of a failing wall then the additional support would be constructed against the downslope face. Similar considerations would rule out the possibility that this was a cellar room: apart from its constricted dimensions, cut 1562 completely removed the northern (downslope) side of the foundation cut for the up slope wall, 1479, leaving it vulnerable to collapse. If the sequence suggested above is correct then it is possible to speculate why wall 1479 needed to be buttressed. One possibility is that structural alteration, such as the heightening of the range increased the thrust on the walls. Against this is the consideration that apparently none of the other walls excavated on site had been required to be

form of its foundations mirrored those of the individual segments of the west wall, so the wall was clearly of load-bearing potential.

3.5.2.4.7. Room 1582 was defined by foundation trench 1458 to the west, cut approximately 0.9m into the natural clay and approximately 0.7m wide. Its foundations had been completely robbed away. The position of the east wall could not be established within the limits of excavation, although the east wall of Room 1581 might indicate an internal width of 4.4m throughout the range. The room was in excess of 12m long, although its precise length could not be established as the northern limit of the west wall lay beyond the northern limit of excavation. The robber/foundation trench of the west wall was completely excavated, and it was clear that this space had not been subdivided by a founded wall, though an insubstantial partition wall might not have been visible in the trench side. The dimensions of the room 1582 are worthy of note. It is significantly larger than the other rooms identified on site- and is at the larger end of the size range of villa rooms- which suggests a functional difference in room usage.

3.5.2.4.8. Towards the southern end of room 1582 a short length of insubstantial walling (1500) was recorded. This ran parallel to, and 1.1m to the north of, wall 1561. It had a width of approximately 0.4m and was composed of a single course of limestone rubble. It was bedded in a very shallow foundation cut, 1502, only 11cm deep, terraced into the slope. The foundation trench cut a gritty clay construction layer 1573. At its western end- and located approximately on the central axis of the room if the line of the east wall 1564 is projected northwards- wall 1500 butted a second insubstantial wall, 1497. This was bedded in a gritty clay matrix, 1498, and filled a rudimentary bedding trench (1499), cut only 2cm into the natural clay. Only a single line of six flat limestone blocks survived, though a discontinuous line of smaller rubble adjacent to the west perhaps indicates that the feature was originally more substantial. The evidence did not survive to ascertain whether it continued to the north of wall 1500 and south as far as wall 1561. In plan, as recorded these walls would appear to define a small lobby. They were far more shallowly founded and less substantial than all other excavated walls of this constructional phase, and were possibly the remains of sleeper walls supporting stud and plaster partitions.

3.5.2.4.9. Two one metre square sondages were excavated through collapse layer 1306, within room 1582. Sondage 2 revealed a small drain (1544) on a southeast-northwest alignment. It was constructed of tabular limestone rubble and had a V-shaped profile with a cross section of 180cm^2. It was capped by a limestone slab and sealed by a thick deposit of clay, 1578. It was completely filled with three gritty clay fills (1546, 1547 and 1576), containing charcoal fragments. The position of this drain makes it likely that it served the putative bathhouse, suggested by the composition of collapse layer 1306, through which the sondages were excavated.

3.5.2.4.10. A small room, 1583, possibly a porch, was constructed against the west face of the west wall, located approximately centrally to the west range as excavated. It had

to the linear depression, 1523, might provide the answer. There is evidence from elsewhere in the empire that, as one might expect, villa buildings were served by a private access road, giving access to the local road network (Chevallier 1976, 65-66). With its shallow dished profile it is possible that the apparently linear depression was a holloway, later superseded by a paved road, although it survived in too attenuated a form (a section only 4.4m long survived) to confirm the feasibility of this hypothesis. The limestone rubble surface 1344 would have constituted an uncomfortable surface to use for both pedestrians and wheeled traffic, and in common with all of the stone on site, soil movement has meant that the rubble of surface 1344 now presents a flatter upper surface than when originally constructed. This need not necessarily indicate its impracticability for its proposed function as an irregular upper surface would also cast doubt on its practicability to fulfill alternative roles, such as a floor surface. The rubble surface could have been a foundation layer, topped with a gravel upper surface, and many of the layers excavated on site contained a high proportion of imported limestone gravel, which had clearly been used in the construction of the building or for hard standing. Puzzlingly, however, one of the few areas from which this was absent was in the area of surface 1344. The precise function of this surface must therefore remain in doubt.

3.5.2.4.14. Surface1344 sealed a sequence of preserved subsoil (1436), sealed by a loamy topsoil (1418), from which environmental samples 1&2 were taken. This was cut by a small stake-hole(1434), which had a loamy topsoil fill (1435).

3.5.2.5. **Phase 5: Post-Roman**

3.5.2.5.1. This phase is likely to have embraced an extended period of dereliction, collapse and purposive robbing for re-usable buildings materials. The structures were so extensively robbed and the surrounding stratigraphy so heavily disturbed, however, that it has not been possible to subdivide this broad phase into more precise sub-phases: the stratigraphic sequence will not support greater precision.

3.5.2.5.2. It is not proposed to discuss individual contexts of this phase systematically and in detail in this section. For a fuller description and discussion of these please see Table 2, section 3.4.7., above, and the context description database table included as appendix 10.4., on floppy disc.

3.5.2.5.3. Many of the contexts which have been assigned to this phase unquestionably derive from the collapse and robbing process. Such is the gritty clay collapse layer 1559, which built up against the west wall of room 1379, before this was robbed by means of trench 1396. Such also are the layers composed of a large proportion of angular rubble, such as 1453, 1452, 1494, 1555, 1306, and the robber trenches and their fills. Holloway 1363 and its crudely metalled surfaces 1483 and 1364override robber trench 1395 and so these, and track metalling layers 1529, 1531/1542, 1530 and 1569 were also clearly formed during, and maintained to facilitate the robbing process. The attribution of many other layers and features to this phase is less

3.5.2.7. **Phase 7: Post-Roman**

3.5.2.7.1. During this phase a thick layer of clay hillwash was deposited. Only in the section at the northeastern end of the trench could a sequence of deposition be discerned. Elsewhere the clay mineralogy entailed that these soils were strongly structured, destroying stratigraphic detail (Jordan this report). Nevertheless, enough detail did survive to indicate that the clay had been deposited gradually as hillwash rather than as a result of a single catastrophic event, such as massive slumping; though whether this accumulated gradually throughout the post-Roman period or as a result of a more circumscribed period of cultivation could not be said (Jordan this report).

3.5.2.8. **Phase 8: Modern**

3.5.2.8.1. Two shallow terraces, 1354 and 1355, cut into the upper surface of the accumulated hillwash, possibly relate to the early modern market garden cultivation of the site, discussed in the desk-top assessment (Beaton 1997).

3.5.2.9. **Phase 9: Modern**

3.5.2.9.1. A series of retaining walls, 1340, 1341 and 1350, with their associated cuts and fills, were constructed as part of the extensive terracing of the site prior to the construction of the late nineteenth-century school buildings. Other layers of this period included the current topsoil and subsoils.

3.6. Material Culture

3.6.1. Small Finds

3.6.1.1. To date, 188 small finds have been recovered during all phases of excavation on site. During the evaluation excavations the absolute height in relation to Ordnance Survey datum of the find spot of all small finds was established. Additionally, each small find was located according to the context from which it was recovered. During the mitigation excavations this information was supplemented by a two dimensional coordinate, established in relation to the site grid. For a full description and an analysis of each of these small finds, see section 5.1, below.

3.6.1.2. Of those finds to which it has been possible to assign a period of manufacture and use, only 10 (5%) are certainly or almost certainly of post-Roman date- and these all date to the post-medieval period. Roman small finds particularly illustrative of the nature and status of occupation on site include: 88 coins, remains of two copper alloy finger rings, nine armlets, four spoons and two medical/toilet instruments, a bone/antler knife handle, 2 bone pins, 9 sherds of vessel glass (one decorated), 1 fragment of window glass, a glass bead, a stamped mortarium rim,

3.6.2. **Roman Pottery**

3.6.2.1. The combined evaluation and mitigation excavations recovered three large boxes of pottery from stratified contexts, 96-97 per cent of which is of Roman date. The condition of the pottery is generally fair-to-good. Several production sites are represented within the group, including the New Forest and Oxfordshire potteries. A preliminary analysis of the relative frequency of Oxfordshire colour-coated and New Forest colour-coated wares suggests a similar intake pattern as has been observed for the late Roman phases of other sites in Bath; fuller analysis will allow the confirmation or contradiction of this pattern. Coarse wares include BB1, New Forest reduced wares, and small quantities of a wheel-thrown shell-tempered ware. Closer inspection will be required to confirm the presence of Alice Holt and Savernake wares. A small quantity of *terra sigillata* was recovered, but other obvious examples of early fine wares were entirely absent. The presence of third century colour-coated sherds within Phase 2 contexts and throughout the stratified sequence suggests that there was no significant presence on the site prior to the mid-third century. The assemblage as a whole indicates that the site was a focus of occupation in the third-fourth centuries (Brown this report). Fuller analysis of the assemblage will allow the detailed confirmation or modification of these preliminary findings. The heavy disturbance of the site provides a strong argument for a complete quantification of Roman pottery sherds, at a basic level, including those from contexts containing later material, to allow a fuller understanding of the period, nature and status of occupation and the period of collapse and robbing to be achieved.

3.6.3. **Ceramic Building Material**

3.6.3.1. Ten boxes of ceramic building material (CBM) and some stone have been collected from all excavations on site to date. The range of Roman building material includes roofing tile, various varieties of brick, box-flue tiles with combed, finger-scored and relief-patterned keying, half box-flue and probable voussoir tile with combed keying. Roman tiles in at least nine different fabric types imply that building material was brought in from different sources. Of particular importance are the flue and voussoir tiles, which clearly came from the walls and vault of a room heated by a hypocaust, almost certainly part of a bath-house. Tufa was probably also used in this vaulted roof. Two different types of cavity wall heating are present in the villa, normal box-flue tiles which formed square channels within the walls and half-box flue which would have covered the entire wall. It seems unlikely that these were used together. More likely such tiles were installed in different rooms, or one type superseded the other. The presence of white marble, in with the flue and voussoir tile suggest the bath house incorporated marble cladding. It indicates that the villa owner must have been a person of some wealth (Betts this report).

3.6.3.2. This group of material which provides vital information as to the mode of construction and the appearance of the building- and is all the more of value

3.7.2.3. 'The low concentration of material recovered from all these samples does not really allow any interpretation to be made. It is possible to say that wheat and barley were present on the site, but little more than this. In view of the location of the villa complex on a north-facing slope overlooking Bath, it is likely that any cereals arrived at the site already processed and ready for use' (Jones this report).

3.7.3. **Snails**

3.7.3.1. Four samples were taken from the phase-7 colluvial sequence. None contained sub-fossil Mollusca or any other biological material.

3.7.4. **Animal Bone**

3.7.4.1. A very small quantity of highly abraded animal bone fragments was recovered, almost exclusively from post-Roman contexts. It was judged that analysis of these had no significant potential to advance an interpretation of the site, and consequently no analysis has been commissioned.

3.7.5. **Soils**

3.7.5.1. A soil study was commissioned to provide a general understanding of the geological and soil context of the archaeological remains on site. The southern and eastern sections were examined and four cores were taken by a consultant soil micromorphologist, David Jordan of Terra Nova.

3.7.5.2. In brief, the pre-Roman soil was found to be a heavy, mobile clay, which may have been redeposited by erosion and slumping from upslope; the gravel which was a common component of many excavated layers had been imported from lower down in the Avon valley; the stones composing road foundations/ hard-standing 1344 had been imported to the site, probably from a side valley of the river Avon; soil movement subsequent to the abandonment and collapse of the building has caused the building debris to tip downward until they lay nearly flat against the slope, but had not caused major relocation of archaeological deposits; and the thick layer of clay which accumulated above the archaeological strata did so gradually as hillwash rather than as a result of a single catastrophic event.

3.7.5.3. It was evident that the clay deposits above and below the archaeological strata had been subject to expansion and contraction as a result of seasonal climatic conditions. Coupled with frost action at the surface, this had produced a well-defined soil structure, with fine angular fragments near to the surface and columns of soil separated by deep fissures with depth. Such soils tend to be self-mixing, as smaller particles fall into the fissures and become incorporated into lower strata.

4. Discussion

4.1. Roman Structures

4.1.1. Ground Plan

4.1.1.1. Although many of the individual elements of the ground plan of the Roman building have been recovered, much doubt still surrounds how these cohered, and therefore how the building can best be characterized and interpreted. The mitigation excavations uncovered a western wing, composed of a linear arrangement of at least four rooms. It is not certain whether the east wall (or rather the robber trench of this) revealed in room 1381 projected to the north and south and whether this was an external or an internal spine wall- however the former is more likely. Also unknown- because it lay outside of the limits of the mitigation excavations- is whether the west range was joined to the northern range- revealed during the evaluation excavations- or whether it was freestanding. Interpretation of the partial plan of the north range, as revealed in trenches 3, 5, 8, 12 and 13, also presents difficulties. It is unclear whether the east-west wall revealed in trenches 3, 5, 8, and terminating in Trench13, was an external or an internal wall. Again, the former would seem more likely, otherwise a range two rooms deep would be implied with its attendant problems of roofing, lighting and ventilation. If this was an external wall then the small square room revealed in Trench 8, in projecting beyond it, would make the roofing of the range as a single structure impossible. This might suggest that this room and the other walls revealed in trenches 8 and 13 were part of a range of rooms extending southwards and roofed separately to the rest of the north range. Such a range might have contained the bath house, evidenced by collapse layer 1306, which must have been situated in the near vicinity. This hypothesis could not be tested within the limits of trenches 8 and 13.

4.1.1.2. A second area of uncertainty as to the original disposition of the north range concerns its relationship to the structure indicated by the right angled walls (again revealed by robber trenches) in Trench 12. The presence of a hearth within the angle of these walls strongly suggests that if it and the walls were co-existent (the stratigraphy did not survive adequately to resolve the question), then this was an internal space. If it was an internal space then the ground between this room and the north range must presumably have been external, otherwise a range a minimum of three rooms deep would be indicated. But if the north range and the structure revealed in Trench 12 were discrete co-existing structures, being less than 3.5m apart, they would have been uncomfortably close together. Alternatively, if the walls within Trench 12 defined an external space, then the hearth would have to be accounted for and a function for the space to the north and east proposed. That to the north could have functioned as a corridor on the south side of the northern range. The space to the east, however, was far too broad to have functioned in this way, being wider than the room excavated in Trench 9. It is of course possible that this space was bisected by a north-south wall located in the unexcavated area

been part of a private inn or hostel). It may be observed that Bath almost certainly did have a *mansio*. Bath features (as *Aquis Solis)* in *Iter XIV*, in the British section of the Antonine Itinerary (Margary 1973). This was a road book, which was probably compiled in the late third century and much copied later, which divided the provinces of the empire into a series of routes and listed all the *mansiones* along these, togther with the distance between each and the next one on the route. The precise disposition of the road network around Bath- is unknown and is the subject of much discussion (Bird 1991). This notwithstanding, the Roman structures excavated at the former Oldfield Boys' School could not have been associated with the *mansio* indicated at Bath along *Iter XIV*, for it ran from Caerleon to Silchester and would therefore have taken a course to the north of the Avon, and they are situated, of course, to the south. The most likely location for a *mansio* at Bath would be at the route node in the vicinity of Cleveland bridge, or (less likely) close to or within the walled area.

4.1.2.1.2. **Sanctuary**

4.1.2.1.2.1. Similar ranges of buildings, often grouped into a courtyard plan, have been excavated at rural sanctuaries, where they have been interpreted as hostels for pilgrims and supplicants. Such buildings have been located at Nettleton, Wilts. (Wedlake 1982), Uley and Lydney, Glos. (Woodward 1992) and perhaps Springhead, Kent (Burnham and Wacher 1991). The nature of the small finds recovered from the excavations here under discussion would not support a religious interpretation of the Roman structures at the former Oldfield Boys' School site. The assemblage as a whole was suggestive of a domestic context, and no objects with definite ritual associations were recovered (see section 5.1, below).

4.1.2.1.3. **Villa**

4.1.2.1.3.1. **Definitions**

4.1.2.1.3.1.1. Two types of definition of the villa exist in the literature on Roman Britain: one based on textual- and the other upon archaeological evidence (Hingley 1989; Dark and Dark 1997). The former seeks to draw analogies between the institution defined and discussed in the *Digest*, and the works of Cato, Varro, Columella and Pliny the Younger, and the high-status Romanized structures recovered through excavation in Britain and the northern provinces (Rivet 1964 & 1969). The latter is used because of doubts as to which (if any) of the excavated structures in Britain would have been regarded as *villae* by a visitor from one of the more Romanized areas of the empire (Millett 1992), and by commentators who have more fundamental reservations about the applicability in detail of a model derived from the practices of a Mediterranean society distant from Roman Britain and the other northern provinces (Hingley 1989; Reece, undated; Smith 1997).

The Latin authors make it plain that villa estates could be bought and sold by anyone who could pay the price, however the money had been acquired, and that if they had sufficient resources they could own several. This, coupled with the urban lifestyle of the rich, meant that the bailiff (*vilicus*) was a key figure in the exploitation of such estates (Rivet 1969).

4.1.2.1.3.1.4. Much of this is of doubtful applicability to Roman Britain. In the standard of their construction and decoration villas in Britain exhibit a higher degree of Romanization than their urban counterparts until the mid-second century, and villa planning influenced town-house planning in a manner contrary to the sequence of development exhibited in the Mediterranean provinces, as discussed above (Walthew 1975). We may also add that, unlike in the Mediterranean provinces, urbanism was shallowly-rooted in Britain, and that the heyday of the villa in Britain (the later third- and fourth centuries) occurred at a time when social and political control was increasingly being exercised by the elite from their rural seats rather than from the *civitas* centres (Millet 1992). It would seem unlikely, therefore, that British villa owners were primarily urban residents who left the running of their rural estates to their bailiffs.

4.1.2.1.3.1.5. There are also sound reasons for believing that many British villas (as indeed many villas in the northern provinces) were not occupied by the nuclear family groups which the literary sources indicate were resident in the Mediterranean villas. Arguing that whereas villa facades were designed to project a social and political message, villa plans are more likely to conform to contemporary social organisation, J.T. Smith has identified two plan types which, in their deviation from the classical canons of axiality and symmetry, arguably demonstrate the residence of extended family groups: hall houses and unit system houses. Hall houses comprise a dominant central room, with smaller subsidiary rooms at either or both ends, all under a continuous roof. Such structures resemble medieval hall houses, and in their form and their size are suggestive of an extended family group living a largely communal life. Unit system villas comprised two or more discrete residential units, sometimes contained within a single building and comprising a lobby and one or more larger rooms, and sometimes housed in separate buildings. Smith has also identified a number of recurrent elements such as a central space shared by two or more units, and water features at the boundaries of units- which he identifies as shrines protecting cross-boundary contacts. Smith argues that such buildings are indicative of Celtic (partible) inheritance patterns (Smith 1997), though others doubt that a Celtic legal system could still have been in operation after the grant of universal citizenship by Caracalla in 212 (Rivet 1969, 184-5). Other suggested explanations that might account for unit system villas are the maintenance of separate houses by the proprietor and his heir, and the provision of separate accommodation for a bailiff. Neither of these suggestions, however, can convincingly explain villas composed of three or more units (such as Chedworth), and neither can account for what is a widespread residential pattern (Millett 1992). Those villa estates which were exploited by extended families were hardly likely to have been the rural seats of those who remained at heart citizens,

1980). This examined the change in the density of villas with distance from towns. Both the steepness and the shape of the distribution curve for each town was examined, and the results indicated that the Public Towns had shallower and more concave distribution curves than did the Small Towns. It was argued that this indicated that the attraction to villas of the Public Towns declined more slowly with distance than applied with the Small Towns. Given that the Public Towns had been equalled and perhaps surpassed by the Small Towns as economic centres by the third and fourth centuries (the floruit of the villa system), this pattern was taken to indicate that it was primarily the political and administrative functions of towns, rather than their marketing role, that attracted villa occupiers; and because the Small Towns did not exercise these functions to the same degree, they were less attractive to villa owners. It was noted that although an exceptional number of villas clustered around Bath, the profile and shape of its distribution curve are typical of those of Small- rather Formal Towns.

4.1.2.1.3.2.2. Even if the distribution pattern is clear, its explanation is perhaps open to question. At least part of this differential fall off of villas with distance can be accounted for by the fact that there was a zone around the Public Towns within which very few villas were built, but a similar pattern is not observable at the Small Towns. Thus of the 26 villas located within 16km of Cirencester, only 7 of these fell within 8km of the city. Conversely, 22 of Bath's 40 villas lay within this closer band (Branigan 1976, 27). Wacher has also observed this pattern applying at Cirencester, where only one villa is located within 6.5km of the city, and that Dorchester and Silchester exhibit similar patterns (Wacher 1978, 124). He argues that there was probably a zone of land around the Public Towns controlled and exploited from the centre, and that there would have been restrictions placed upon development within this zone. Small Towns would not have had similar control, and consequently this pattern is not observed there. Therefore, at least part of the reason why fewer villas were built between, say, 8 and 16km of Small Towns than of the Public Towns might be that, in the absence of any restriction on siting closer to the urban centre, they had no need to.

4.1.2.1.3.2.3. This might explain why villas **could** be built close to Small Towns (such as Bath) but not why they **were**. Millett, who argues that the distribution pattern of villas indicates that it was the administrative and political functions of towns that attracted villa settlement, argues that Small Towns were the personal power bases of decurians or of minor magnates who controlled the local subdivisions (*pagi*)of the *civitates* (Millett 1992, 150). Todd has noted a recurrent pattern of one or two villa estates within several hundred yards of the centres of Small Towns, and gives Great Casterton, Margidunum and Ancaster as examples. He argues that where this relationship exists, the villas probably exercised tenurial control over the Small Town, and used it as a service centre and probably a dormitory town for the estate workers (Todd 1970). The sheer size of the concentration of villas around Bath, its status as a healing sanctuary of international standing, and its position on the margins of the *civitas*, are not consonant with an interpretation of these villas as the seats of power of *decurians* or a controlling lesser elite, although some

27. AE4. Illegible. 4th century. SF41. Context 1310.
28. As 27. SF42. Context 1310.
29. AE4. Obv: diademed head r. Rev: standing figure. 4th century. SF44. Context 1305.
30. AE3. Illegible. 4th century. SF45. Context 1315.
31. AE4. Illegible. 4th century. SF46. Context 1306.
32. AE4. Obv: diademed head r. 4th century. SF50. Context 1315.
33. AE3. Illegible. 4th century. SF52. Context 1310.
34. As 33. SF53. Context 1310.
35. AE3. Illegible. 4th century. SF59. Context 1304.
36. As 35. SF 56. Context 1305.
37. As 35. SF67. Context 1343.
38. As 35. SF71. 1300.
39. AE4. Illegible. 4th century. SF74. Context 1343.
40. As 39. SF76. Context 1300.
41. As 39. SF77. Context 1300.
42. ?coin fragment. SF78. Context 1372.
43. AE4. Illegible. 4th century. SF80. Context 1369.
44. Fragment. Illegible. SF81. Context 1376.
45. AE3. Illegible. 4th century. SF88. Context 1300.
46. As 45. SF91. Context 1305.
47. AE4. Illegible. 4th century. SF94. Context 1409.
48. AE4. Rev. standing figure l. 4th century. SF95. Context 1409.
49. Fragment. Illegible. SF96. Context 1381.
50. AE4. Rev: ?figure with standard. 4th century. SF99. Context 1345.
51. Fragment. Illegible. SF101. Context 1415.
52. AE3. Rev: ?standing figure l. 4th century. SF103. Context 1345.
53. AE4. Rev: ?standing figure l. 4th century. SF105. Context 1345.
54. AE3. Rev: ?standing figure. 4th century. SF107. Context 1409.
55. AE3. Illegible. 4th century. SF110. Context 1345.
56. AE4. Illegible. 4th century. SF112. Context 1345.
57. AE3. Illegible. 4th century. SF113. Context 1418.
58. AE3/4. Illegible. 4th century. SF118. Context 1418.
59. Fragment. Illegible. SF119. Context 1426.
60. AE4. Illegible. 4th century. SF120. 1426.
61. As 60. SF122. Context 1305.
62. Two fragments. Illegible. SF 124. Context 1409.
63. AE4. Rev: standing figure l. 4th century. SF126. Context 1454.
64. AE4. Illegible. 4th century. SF129. Context 1454.
65. As 64. SF131. Context 1454.
66. As 64. SF136. Context 1454.
67. Fragment. Illegible. SF137. Context 1454.
68. ?AE3. Illegible. 4th century. SF138. Context 1305.
69. AE4. Rev: standing figure l. 4th century. SF139. Context 1454.
70. ?AE4 fragment. Illegible. 4th century. SF140. Context 1305.
71. ?Coin fragment. SF141. Context 1305.

so identified in the hinterland of Bath. The materials used in its construction and the form that the building took would have been chosen to satisfy certain standards of comfort, but would also have been intended to project an image of cultured wealth, to further the owner's social and perhaps political goals. As such, it is evidence for the expenditure- and not the production- of surplus wealth, need not have been the centre of an agricultural estate, and may even have been constructed from the proceeds of industry or commerce. Its construction was perhaps made possible by the sale of imperially owned land, and the concomitant relaxing of controls. The shape of the distribution curve of Bath's surrounding villas mirrors those of other Small Towns, but if Bath was merely the administrative centre a *pagus*, and if villas were architectural statements designed to further the political ambitions of an elite, it is hard to believe that it could have held such an attraction to decurians or a lesser aristocracy (Millett's thesis). The sheer number of villas clustering around Bath, and its status as a healing sanctuary of international standing, would also seem to rule out the possibility of the suburban setting of the villa at the former Oldfield Boys' being accounted for by a model of tenurial control exercised by one or two adjacent villas, as has been proposed for other Small Towns (Todd's thesis). It is possible that Bath exercised more administrative control over its hinterland than did other Small Towns. Bath lay within a *civitas* governed from Winchester, 80km distant, which may always have necessitated that the town exercised a degree of devolved power (Cunliffe 1971; Davenport 1994). It is also possible that any imperial estates in its vicinity may in part have been administered from Bath, which would have been well placed to assume the civil administration of these lands when the imperial estates were sold off, though this is speculation. It is possible, though unproven, therefore, that the distribution of villas around Bath can in part be explained by a model stressing the political and administrative role of the town. Nevertheless, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that although many of these factors, which were common to other towns in Britain, may have been at play- and we are reminded of the presence of hall-type and unit system villas in the vicinity of the town- Bath held a unique attraction to villa owners. The medico-religious facilities which Bath offered were unique in Britain in their access to hot thermal springs, and in their degree of Romanization, and they attracted a cosmopolitan clientele probably unknown at other shrines in Britain. This may have been an attraction in itself, but would certainly have provided opportunities for commerce. Parallels for Bath and its surrounding villas may therefore need to be sought outside of Britain, and perhaps amongst the large Gallo-Roman healing sanctuaries. Perhaps, therefore, the classical texts might be of use in understanding the lifestyles and mind-sets of some of the villa owners in the Bath area, even if they are of doubtful utility elsewhere in Britain. It would therefore follow that building types which have hitherto not been identified in Britain but which have been noted elsewhere within the empire, such as *villae suburbana*, might be expected around Bath.

is a rectangular motif. Length: 20mm, width: 4mm, thickness: 1mm. SF31. Context 1305.

98. Two rectangular-sectioned fragments, broken, possibly at the fastening, which is obscured by corrosion. The motif consists of transverse grooves between plain borders. The longer section is almost straightened out. Length: 63mm, width: 3mm, thickness: 1mm; length: 32mm, width: 2mm, thickness: 1mm. SF48. Context 1315.
99. D-sectioned, almost straight fragment decorated with transverse grooves interspersed with plain sections. Length: 31mm, width: 2.5mm, thickness: 1mm. SF51. Context 1304.
100. D-sectioned fragment, tapering towards the missing terminals. The edges of the surviving ends are notched, the central section has faint diagonal grooves. It has been almost straightened out. Length: 128mm, max. width: 4mm, thickness: 2mm. SF128. Context 1454.
101. Two fragments of armlet with a scalloped outer edge. Int. diam: c.40mm, width: 4mm, thickness: 1mm. SF144. Context 1454.
102. Hooked terminal and part of the central section of an armlet decorated with transverse grooves. Length (straightened): c.50mm, max. width: 3mm, max. thickness: 1mm. SF167. Context 1305.
103. Fragment decorated with transverse grooves. Length: 15mm, width: 4mm, thickness: 1mm SF168. Context 1305. The largely complete examples from Colchester are from the Butt Road cemetery (Crummy 1983, 36) and dated between the 2nd century and c.450 (at latest). A three-strand example similar to no.95 (ibid. 39, no.1611) is dated c.320-c.450 (at latest). Twisted examples from Lullingstone (Meates 1987, fig.26, nos 85 & 86) are of 4th and late 3rd century date respectively, one from Caerleon (Brewer 1986, fig.62, no.162) is of late 3rd century date and two from Exeter (Allason-Jones 1991, fig.113, nos 79 & 80) are dated ?3rd century and the last quarter of the 4th century respectively. The Lankhills cemetery in Winchester examples are of 4th century date (Clarke 1979). No.101 may not be an armlet due to its thinness, but a somewhat similar example from Castleford (Cool 1998, fig.19, no.191) is one of the commonest late 3rd and 4th century light bangle types.

5.1.2.3. Spoons

104. The oval bowl is damaged and distorted and has the remains of tinning present. The stepped junction between the bowl and tapering handle has semi-circular cut-outs at the top and front and a small step at the top. Length: 152mm, width: 39mm. SF69. Context 1343.
105. Part of the handle and eight bowl fragments. The junction between the handle and bowl is a simple semi-circle. Length: 38mm. SF102. Context 1415.
106. Handle and part of the bowl of a tinned spoon. The stepped junction between them has an oval cut-out at the front and a slightly raised section

5.1.2.6. **Miscellaneous**

112. Distorted spiral ring with overlapping ends, as in a key-ring. A short length of chain is attached to it by means of a circular link with a smaller loop on either side, through which pass the ring at one side and the chain on the other. Probably Victorian or later. Ring diam: 17mm, overall length: 52mm. SF1. Context 905.
113. Domed fragment, possibly the head of a stud. Diam: 12mm. SF7. Context 907.
114. Small oval disc. Length: 9mm, width: 7mm. SF22. Context 1307.
115. Small, bun-shaped fragment. Diam: 7mm, thickness: 5mm. SF29. Context 1205.
116. Curved sheet fragment. Length: 8mm, width; 5mm, thickness: c.0.5mm. SF34. Context 1305.
117. Complete T-shaped bow brooch with a hinged pin and solid catch plate. The bow has a plain central section flanked by fine grooves at right angles to the axis. A raised, sub-rectangular section with three grooves runs a short way down the bow from the head. The terminals of the head have a groove at their ends. Length: 37mm, width across head: 20mm. SF47. Context 1321. T-shaped brooches are derived from the Colchester type, appearing possibly early in the third quarter of the 1st century and continuing until around the middle of the 2nd century (Hattat 1985, 87). However, a somewhat similar example from Exeter (Mackreth 1991, fig.100, no.9) is dated c.275.
118. Small, plain ring with slightly overlapping ends. Diam: 15mm. SF49. Context 1315.
119. Three sheet fragments. Thickness: c.0.5mm. SF54. Context 1310.
120. ?Pin fragment. Length: 19mm, diam: 2mm. SF61. Context 1304.
121. Sheet fragment. Length: 11mm, width: 11mm, thickness: 1mm. SF63. Context 1305.
122. Ring fragment. Int.diam: 30mm. SF64. Context 1305.
123. About half of a lozenge-shaped strap-mount with four ring-and-dot motifs and a pierced oval terminal. Length: 23mm, max. width: 8mm, thickness: 1mm. SF65. Context 1305.A similar example from Castleford (Bishop 1998, fig.23, no.268) is dated c.85/90-c.135/40 and is of a military type.
124. Fragment of possible bell with a circular suspension loop and what was probably a cylindrical body. Surviving length: 18mm, diam: c.10mm. SF66. 1343.
125. Two sheet or strip fragments, the larger with a slightly curved surviving edge. Length: 20mm, width: 7mm, thickness: c.0.5mm. SF114. Context 1418.
126. Two small sheet fragments. SF135. Context 1454.
127. Curved strip. Length: 11mm, width: 8mm, thickness: 0.5mm. SF148. Context 1454.
128. Sheet rolled into a tube. Length: 28mm, diam: 4mm. SF160. Context 1454.
129. Sheet fragment with one edge surviving. Length: 51mm, width: 8mm, thickness: 1mm. SF162. Context 1454.

141. Fifty seven small ?lead alloy discs, possibly shot. Diam: generally c.7mm, thickness: generally c.2mm. SF8. Context 927.
142. Tube, broken at both ends, with a raised collar near one end. Length: 52mm, diam: 10mm. SF9. Context 300.
143. Dribble. Length: 19mm, width: 13m, thickness: 4mm. SF10. Context 813.
144. Waste sheet fragment. Max. length: 18mm, width: 15mm, thickness: c.3mm. SF18. Context 805.
145. Dribble. Length: 72mm, max. width: max. thickness: 6mm. SF35. Context 1305.
146. Offcut. Length: 40mm, max. width: 9mm, thickness: 2mm. SF37. Context 1305.
147. Bent strip pierced by an iron nail. Length: 55mm, width: 28mm, thickness: 2mm. SF38. Context 1305.
148. Four dribbles. SF39. Context 1305.
149. Disc with small central hole. Diam: 20mm, thickness: 1mm. SF68. Context 1343. A somewhat thicker example with a larger hole from Usk is dated to 2nd/3rd century (Manning 1995, fig.101, no.9).
150. Hemispherical ingot from a crucible. Diam: 50mm, ht: 12mm. SF82. Context 1300.
151. Dribble. Length: 56mm, width: 45mm, thickness: 8mm. SF83. Context 1343.
152. Offcut strip with a bevelled edge. Length: 21mm, width: 13mm, thickness: 3mm. SF84. Context 1305.
153. Dribble. Length: 22mm, width: 22mm, thickness: 6mm. SF85. Context 1305.
154. Dribble. Max. length: 36mm, max. width: 26mm, max. thickness: 7mm. SF86. Context 1305.
155. Plug or stopper, roughly oval and slightly domed, with flat oval "shank" beneath. Length: 36mm, width: 28mm, thickness: 13mm. SF89. Context 1300.
156. Sheet fragment, folded at one end. Length: 29mm, width: 18mm, thickness: 2mm. SF90. Context 1300.
157. Two dribbles connected by an iron nail. Length: 73mm, max. width: 43mm, thickness: c.3mm. SF92. Context 1305.
158. Roughly oval sheet with an irregular groove around its edge. Probably a plug or stopper. Length: 70mm, max. width: 45mm, thickness: 5mm. SF106. Context 1343.
159. Dribble. Length: 59mm, max. width: 17mm, max. thickness: 7mm. SF132. Context 1454.
160. Two fragments of rod, possibly the shank of a rivet. Total length: 22mm, diam: c.4mm. SF134. Context 1454.
161. Tapering rod, possibly a rivet. Length: 46mm, max. diam: 5mm. SF164. Context 1474.
162. Three dribbles. SF 174. Context 1306.
163. Four dribbles, one pierced sheet and one large, irregular ingot. SF180. Context 1300.
164. Tube with a slightly flanged end, possibly the seal for a small pipe. Length: 13mm, width: 24mm, max. thickness: 20mm. SF183. Context 1434.

5.1.7. BONE/ANTLER

5.1.7.1. Pins

175. Type 2 fragment with two grooves below the conical head. They fail to meet and continue in a spiral. Length: 35mm. SF62. Context 1315.
176. Type 3 fragment with an approximately spherical head. Length: 62mm. SF153. Context 1434. Type 2 pins have one to four transverse grooves below a conical head, with two being the commonest number. Dating of the examples from Colchester is from ?pre-Flavian deposits, with an absence from late Roman deposits, implying a terminal date of c.200 (Crummy 1983, 21). Also on the Colchester evidence, Type 3 pins have a starting date of c.200, continuing until the end of the Roman period, the later dates being born out at other sites. However, assemblages of both types from Caerleon (Greep 1986, 199-202) are dated after 100/110 and c.160-230 and Type 2s can also occur in later deposits. An example from Exeter (Allason-Jones 1991, fig.123, no.12) is dated to the last quarter of 3rd century and from Lullingstone (Meates 1987, fig.59, no.423) to the late 3rd century.

5.1.7.2. Miscellaneous

177. Pierced disc with chamfered edges and parallel grooves on one side. The other has faint concentric turning marks. Diam: 11mm, thickness: 1.5mm. SF19. Context 1102. This is almost certainly the former for a cloth-covered button of Georgian date.
178. Tapering square-ended ?antler strip, broken at the narrow end. It has two ring-and-dot motifs along the centre line, with a circular hole between them. Length:28mm, max. width: 19mm, min. width: 11mm, thickness: 3mm. SF40. Context 1305. It is likely that this object is part of a plate of a two-piece handle, probably for a knife. Examples from Colchester (Crummy 1983, fig.111, nos 2933-36) range in date from mid-1st century to c.400+.
179. Bone die with chamfered corners. Two opposing sides have an incised and painted figure 3, two a figure 4 and two a letter V. Victorian or later. 16mm cube. SF70. Context 1300.

5.1.8. STONE/SHALE

180. Lozenge-shaped pennant roof shingle with nail-fixing hole. Length: 25.3cm, width: 15cm, thickness: 3cm. SF16. Context 1002. Shingles of local stone were a common alternative to tiles throughout the Roman period.
181. ?Quartz marble. Probably Victorian or later. Diam: 17mm. SF93. Context 1300.
182. Plain, oblong-sectioned shale armlet fragment. Int. diam: 40mm, width: 4mm, thickness: 5mm. SF121. Context 1442. Similar examples from

5.1.10. **Recommendations**

5.1.10.1. The coin assemblage is sufficiently large to allow statistically valid inferences to be drawn from further study. There would be benefit in assigning coins to time periods, such as those proposed by Reece (Reece 1987). Certain of those coins which are too corroded to be dated precisely may still be assignable to a wider chronological grouping. The pattern of coin loss by period can then be compared with those of other excavated sites, as an aid to the interpretation of the nature of occupation on site.

5.1.10.2. The following small finds should be illustrated: SFNos.6, 19, 20, 24, 30, 31, 40, 43, 47, 48, 51, 62, 65, 69, 70, 102, 109, 121, 128, 144, 149, 153, 154, 167, 168, 170, 175.

5.1.10.3. The small find data should be entered into Paradox database.

5.1.11. **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Allason-Jones, Lindsey 1991 in Holbrook, Neil & Bidwell, Paul T. *Roman Finds from Exeter*. Exeter Archaeological Reports 4

Bidwell, Paul T. 1979 *The Legionary Bath-House and Basilica and Forum at Exeter*. Exeter Archaeological Reports 1

Bishop, M.C. 1998 in Cool, H.E.M. & Philo, C. Roman *Castleford Excavations 1974-85 Volume I The Small Finds*. Yorkshire Archaeology 4

Brewer, Richard J. 1986 in Zienkiewicz, J. David *The Legionary Fortress Baths at Caerleon II The Finds*. National Museum of Wales & Cadw

Clarke, Giles 1979 *Pre-Roman and Roman Winchester Part II The Roman Cemetery at Lankhills*. Winchester Studies 3

Cool, H.E.M. 1998 in Cool, H.E.M. & Philo, C. *Castleford Excavations 1974-85 Volume I The Finds*. Yorkshire Archaeology 4

Crummy, Nina 1983 *The Roman Small Finds from Excavations in Colchester 1971-9*. Colchester Archaeological Report 2

_____ 1988 *The Post-Roman Small Finds from Excavations in Colchester 1971-85*. Colchester Archaeological Report 5

Cunliffe, Barry 1971 *Excavations at Fishbourne 1961-1969 Volume II: The Finds*. The Society of Antiquaries of London

5.2. Assessment of Roman Pottery from Excavations, 1997-1999 by Lisa Brown

5.2.1. Summary of the Assemblage

5.2.1.1. The excavations produced three large boxes of pottery, most of which is of Roman date, with a small (three-four percent) component of post-medieval and modern date. Much of the Roman pottery derives from deposits which have suffered both from natural processes of ground slippage and soil rotation and from man-made disturbance in the form of structural modification and robbing.

5.2.1.2. The condition of the pottery is generally fair-to-good and some context groups include relatively large sherds. Surface abrasion has affected parts of the assemblage, but this applies mostly to Oxfordshire colour-coated wares, which are particularly susceptible to effects of weathering and adverse soil conditions. Other fine wares, such as New Forest colour-coated wares and *terra sigillata*, are in generally good condition, although sherd size tends to be small within this group. Coarse wares, such as Black Burnished 1 Ware (BB1) and New Forest reduced wares, are in fair-to-good condition overall.

5.2.1.3. Several production sites are represented within the group, including the New Forest and Oxfordshire potteries. On the basis of a cursory examination of the pottery Oxfordshire colour-coated wares are approximately three times more common than New Forest colour-coated wares. This intake pattern has been observed for the late Roman phases of other sites in Bath (Green 1985). Coarse wares include BB1, New Forest reduced wares, and small quantities of a wheel-thrown shell-tempered ware. Closer inspection may confirm the presence of Alice Holt and Savernake wares. A small quantity of *terra sigillata* was recovered, but other obvious examples of early fine wares are entirely absent. The presence of third century colour-coated sherds within Phase 2 contexts and throughout the stratified sequence suggests that there was no significant presence on the site prior to the mid-third century. The assemblage as a whole indicates that the site was a focus of occupation in the third-fourth centuries.

5.2.1.4. Despite the high level of disturbance to the archaeological deposits on the site, several substantial pottery assemblages from apparently reasonably secure contexts were recovered. Coherent assemblages of this type exist within each of the stratigraphic phases, with the exception of phase 1. Context groups which exhibit the best potential for examination and analysis are listed below:

Phase 2: 1477 and 1481 (fill of foundation trenches)
Phase 3: 1468, 1496, 1516 & 1506 (fill of enclosure wall robber trench).
Phase 4: 1436 (buried subsoil) and 1418 (buried topsoil); 1344 and 1345 (road make-up/ hard standing); 1524 (primary fill of holloway); 1484 (buried subsoil); 1487, 1467 and 1454 (fills of garden terrace).
Phase 5: 1305, 1343, 1369, 1527 and 1343 (robbing and destruction).

5.3. Building Materials Assessment

by Ian M. Betts, Museum of London Specialist Services

5.3.1. Areas Examined

5.3.1.1. The building material was recovered from the north-south wing at the western end of an east-west building. This L -shaped building has been interpreted as a suburban villa. Other tiles were found associated with what appear to be garden features and a north-south road lying to the west of the villa.

5.3.1.2. The material from contexts 204-1112 are under site code BCS97.
The material from contexts 9 and 1204-1540 are under site code 0BS98 and 0BS99.

5.3.2. Quantity of Material

5.3.2.1. The total quantity of stored ceramic building material comprises seven roughly square boxes (42 x 33 x 24mm) and three thin rectangular boxes (59 x 32 x 14mm). All the material was fully recorded from this assessment with the exception of few small undiagnostic fragments (tiles lacking either upper and lower surfaces) and a small quantity of post-Roman material, the latter was scanned.

5.3.3. Provenance of the Material

5.3.3.1. A small quantity of Roman building material was found associated with activity on the site before the construction of the villa (Period 2). Most of the remaining building material was either found associated with various phases of the villa or was found in overlaying destruction deposits. The villa was probably constructed in the 3rd century, although a small amount of 1st and 2nd century material indicates some sort of earlier activity.

5.3.4. The Range and Variety of the Material

5.3.4.1. A fragment of shelly ceramic was noted in context 1454. This is very similar to Iron Age material recovered from the site at Lower Common allotments (Betts 1999).

5.3.4.2. The Roman building material comprises roofing tile, brick, box-flue tile (both combed and relief-patterned) and what are almost certainly voussoirs. A rare tile type, the half box-flue, is also present in small quantities.

5.3.6.5. **Fabric 5**

Frequent small black iron oxide inclusions (up to 0.3mm) and fairly common quartz in many tiles (up to 1mm).

5.3.6.6. **Fabric 7**

Fine fairly sandy fabric with common quartz (up to 0.2m) with a scatter of red iron oxide (up to 2mm) and cream silty bands. [Possibly a sandy version of fabric 2]

5.3.6.7. **Fabric 16**

Fine micacous clay. Certain tiles have red iron oxide inclusions (up to 2mm) and silty bands. Normally fine moulding sand present (up to 0.2mm).

5.3.6.8. **Fabric 17**

Fairly sandy, with varying amounts of quartz (up to 0.5mm). Occasional calcium carbonate and iron oxide inclusions in certain tiles (up to 1mm).

5.3.7. **Tile types present**

5.3.7.1. **Roman**

5.3.7.1.1. Most of the building material is highly fragmentary, although a few tiles, particularly the box-flues, have surviving length or breadth measurements.

5.3.7.1.2. There does not appear to be any obvious differences in fabric type between different phases. More fabric types are present in phases 5 and 6 because this is where most Roman tile was found. These phases represent the disuse and robbing of the villa.

5.3.7.1.3. **Roofing Tile**
(fabric types 2, 4, 5, 7, 16, 17)

5.3.7.1.3.1. Both tegula and imbrex are present, indicating that the building was at least partly tiled during some period in its life. Only one tile is substantially complete (fabric 4), this has a complete breadth of 328-332mm with a thickness of 17-24mm (excluding the flange area). Cutaways, where they survive, are all Brodribb type 5 (1987, 16).

flues came from destruction deposits above the villa, none can be related to any specific room.

5.3.7.1.5.2. The majority of box-flue tiles are in fabric type 16, including a number with complete dimensions. A wide variety of different combs seem to have been used for keying, with everything between 4 and 8 teeth. There are also flue tiles with combing from a two tooth (the teeth being widely spaced) and a 12 tooth comb. Certain of the former show part of the combing pattern (contexts 1310, 1507). There is no indication as to the length of the combed sides although one incomplete combed face measures 170mm. Nor is there any indication as to the height of any of the box-flues used.

5.3.7.1.5.3. The plain sides are between 111-112mm wide with vent holes in each side. These vents are around 48-c.53mm wide by between 53-89mm tall, which would make them either rectangular or square in shape. Some of the vent holes have been cut to a sloping angle (sloping out towards the front face), whilst others are horizontal. The thickness of these flue tiles measures around 17-25mm.

5.3.7.1.5.4. One box-flue tile in fabric 16 (context 1306) is unusual in having the keying added by the tips of the fingers rather than a comb.

5.3.7.1.5.5. The combed box-flue tiles in other fabric types are more fragmentary. Those in fabric 1 were keyed with 8 teeth combs and measure 16-18mm in thickness, whilst those in fabric 2 are keyed with 9 teeth combs. The flue tiles in fabric 2 are unusually thick, and what is more unusual is that the plain sides are thicker than the keyed faces. The keyed sides being between 22-27mm, whilst the plain sides are 35-36mm. Another unusual feature is that the vent in the plain side reaches to the tile edge. It is possible that these are not box-flue tiles, but some other type, such as half box-flue. The latter are found at OBS98/99, but these are thinner and from a different kiln source (fabric 16)

5.3.7.1.5.6. There is also a fragment of combed tile in fabric 12 measuring only 13mm thick. This at least is almost certainly a box-flue.

5.3.7.1.5.7. Thin combed box-flue tiles in fabric 5, which were used extensively in the building a Lower Common allotments (Betts 1999) are noticeable by their scarcity. Only a very few fragments were recovered from the Oldfield Boys school site.

5.3.7.1.5.8. The solitary relief-patterned tile came from a layer of clay hillwash in Period 5 (context 1343). The tile has what appears to be the very edge of a diamond and lattice pattern (perhaps die 56). The tile is in fabric 16 which, significantly, is different from the sole relief-patterned tile from the Lower Common allotments building.

5.3.8. **Markings**

5.3.8.1. **Signature Marks**

5.3.8.1.1. A number of bricks and tegula roofing tiles have signature marks made with the tips of the fingers on the top surface. These are normally located near the tile edge. At least three types are present:

- Three semi-circular lines (fabric 4)
- Four semi-circular lines (fabric 2)
- Three vertical lines (fabric 17)

The semi-circular type are the most common variety of signature mark found on Roman tiles in Britain.

5.3.8.2. **Keying**

5.3.8.2.1. A number of bricks in fabric 16 have straight finger-scored lines which are probably keying rather than signature marks. An imbrex in fabric 9 (context 1409) has what also appears to be keying (possibly to help attach the overlaying imbrex).

5.3.8.3. **Tally Mark**

5.3.8.3.1. These are knife-cut marks found on the edge of Roman tile, particularly tegula and brick. These are thought to represent numerals differentiating different batches of tile waiting to be fired. An abraded tally mark is present on the side of a brick in fabric 2 (context 1345).

5.3.8.4. **Other Marks**

5.3.8.4.1. Other marks present include claw marks down the side of an imbrex (fabric 2, context 1448), rain drop prints (probably from a leaking roof covering) (fabric 4, context 9) and a possible faint paw print (fabric 2, context 1427).

5.3.8.4.2. An imbrex tile in speckled black fabric type 5 has a mark near the bottom edge, possibly decoration or keying (context 1310).

5.3.9. **Post-Roman**

5.3.9.1. A small scatter of post-medieval pantile roofing, brick and tile of uncertain type was found in contexts 709, 913, 1001, 1002, 1311 and 1343. Another possible

was undertaken at different periods at the two villa sites. Different tile assemblages could also reflect reuse of building material from earlier buildings.

5.3.11.6. In summary, the Roman building material from Oldfield Boys school provides vital information as to the appearance and function of the villa building.

5.3.12. **Recommendations**

5.3.12.1. The post-medieval material should be fully quantified and the information added to Excel database.

5.3.12.2. The signature marks, tally mark and relief patterned tile should be illustrated.

5.3.12.3. The material should be compared with Roman tile from known kiln sites in the West Country and well dated assemblages from sites around Bath.

5.3.12.4. The tile assemblage should be compared with that from Lower Common allotments (Betts 1999).

5.3.12.5. Further investigation should be undertaken in an effort to suggest the possible location of the heated rooms/ bath-house which contained the voussoir and box-flue tiles.

5.3.12.6. The white marble used should be examined in more detail to determine the quarry source and country of origin.

5.3.12.7. More detailed study should be made of the material used to make up the vaulted heated room/bath-house. This should be compared with that used in similar buildings elsewhere in Roman Britain.

5.3.12.8. The ceramic building material should be linked in with discussion of other items which give an indication as to the appearance of the building, notably any stone roofing and wall plaster.

5.3.15. **References**

Betts, I M, 1999 *Lower Common allotments, Upper Road, Bath. Assessment report on ceramic building material.* Unpublished archive report

Betts, I M, Black, E W, & Gower, J, 1994 'A corpus of Roman relief-patterned tiles in Roman Britain' Journal of Roman Pottery Studies, 7

Brodribb, G, 1987 *Roman Brick and Tile*, Gloucester.

are very low, it is considered unrealistic to attempt a count of 100 pollen grains. The slides are traversed until at least 50 of the added *Lycopodium* spores have been recovered and at least 10 traverses of the slide completed. In all the samples from the Oldfield Boys School site, pollen concentrations were very low, counts ranged from 23 grains to 11 grains with the counts being stopped when at least 50 *Lycopodium* had been recovered. (see Table 1 for pollen sums from all the samples).

5.4.2.4. Pollen preservation in these samples was very poor. Of the few grains recovered, all were thin and degraded and many were broken. There has certainly been differential loss of less robust pollen taxa, and as a result the recovered assemblages are heavily biased towards resistant types, particularly the Lactuceae (dandelion and related Asteraceae). Poor pollen preservation is characteristic of sedimentary environments were the pH is high, therefore, in view of the calcareous nature of samples 3 and 4, the state of the pollen grains in these two samples was not surprising. Table 2 records unidentified grains, generally these were grains which were degraded to the extent their morphology was lost. In these sediments it is presumed that most of the original assemblage of pollen grains has disappeared altogether.

5.4.2.5. In addition to pollen and spores, charcoal fragments > 30 μ in length were counted.

5.4.2.6. Plant nomenclature follows Stace (1991) and pollen types generally follow Bennett (1994). A note about the pollen types is to be found at the end of this report.

5.4.3. **Results**

5.4.3.1. The results of the assessments are presented in the accompanying tables. In Table 1 the pollen taxa have been divided up into groups in terms of their habitat preferences. However, it is important to note that some taxa grow in more than one habitat type. For instance, the group of disturbed ground plants could be associated with the edges of paths, roads and with abandoned ground generally. However, many of these plants could also grow as weeds in cultivated fields. The groups are not mutually exclusive, and are only a general guide to habitat type.

5.4.3.2. **Sample 1. Context 1418** (possible buried top soil beneath Roman access road)

5.4.3.2.1. Only 11 pollen grains were encountered during 12 traverses of this slide. The pollen concentration was very low, 5885 grains/cc. One grain of Apiaceae (carrot family) pollen was found, poor preservation meant that this could not be identified more specifically. This pollen taxon represents herbaceous plants from a wide variety of habitats. The other grains are from taxa typical of disturbed ground, 1 grain of *Plantago lanceolata* (ribwort plantain), 2 grains of *Solidago virgaurea*

5.4.3.5. **Samples 4. Context 1547** (Fill 2 from Roman drain, gritty clay with frequent charcoal flecks)

5.4.3.5.1. The recovered pollen assemblage in this sample is similar to that of Sample 3. One grain of Poaceae pollen was found, 1 of Cyperaceae, 1 of *Lotus* type (bird's foot trefoil) and 16 Lactuceae. In addition this sample contained 35 spores of *Pteridium,* 2 spores of undifferentiated ferns and one of Polypodiaceae. A single spore of *Sphagnum* (bog moss) was found. Charcoal fragments were occasional / frequent in this sample. The pollen concentration was very low, around 6900 grains/cc.

5.4.4. **Microfossil Taphonomy and Preservation.**

5.4.4.1. The state of pollen preservation in these sediments is disappointing, all the assemblages have suffered a loss of taxon diversity, due to differential decay of less robust taxa. This is a feature which seems to be common in material from urban sites (Greig, 1982, Tinsley 1999). In the Oldfield Boys School samples pollen concentrations are very low and this is almost certainly a result of decay of pollen due to the characteristics of the sedimentary environment. The calcareous nature of the drain fills has resulted in a high pH (probably in part, at least, due to the presence of mortar and other building debris) which is not conducive to pollen preservation. In addition, pollen in urban and suburban sediments is likely to degrade quite quickly unless anaerobic conditions prevail. In well aerated soils oxidation of the outer coat of the pollen grain (the exine) will occur. (Faegri and Iversen, 1989).

5.4.4.2. The sources of the pollen in sediments such as soils, and in particular drain fills, is likely to be complex (Greig, 1982, Dimbleby, 1985) When such sediments were forming they would have received pollen from the atmospheric pollen rain. Any tree pollen deposited may have been local, or may have come from some distance, having been dispersed on atmospheric air currents. Herbaceous pollen, which is released close to the ground, is only likely to have travelled a short distance before being incorporated into the accumulating soil or sediment. In addition, all urban and suburban sites are likely to receive pollen associated with dumped waste material. This could have included domestic refuse (e.g. food waste, thatch, floor coverings such as reeds etc.), animal bedding and remains of fodder from stables, human and animal faeces (either deposited as cess or used as manure on garden plots) and also waste from industrial crops. The drain could contain pollen which originated from the erosion of surrounding soils and/or pollen that had washed off surrounding hard surfaces.

5.4.4.3. The weed pollen and bracken spores found in these Oldfield Boys School samples may, therefore, have originated from weedy plant communities growing in the area adjacent to the site, or from animal fodder (hay) or bedding. However, the

5.4.7. **Note on Pollen Types**

5.4.7.1. The taxonomic level to which pollen grains can be identified varies, some can be identified to species level, others to family and others to group. This report follows the conventions used by Bennett (1994). The following notes may be helpful:-

5.4.7.1.1. *Solidago virgaurea* type includes *Filago, Antennaria dioica, Gnaphalium, Inula, Pulicaria, Solidago virgaurea, Aster, Erigeron, Bellis perennis, Senecio, Tephroseries, Tussilago farfara, Petasites hybridus, Bidens, Eupatorium cannabinum.*

5.4.7.1.2. Lactuceae includes *Cichorium intybus, Lapsana communis, Hypochaeris, Leontodon, Picris, Lactuca* (some spp) *Cicerbita alpina, Taraxacum, Crepis, Pilosella, Hieracium.*

5.4.8. **References**

Bayer Pharmaceutical, 1968 The Microscopic Diagnosis of Tropical Diseases. Bayer, Germany

Bennett, K. D., 1994 *Annotated catalogue of pollen and pteridophyte spores of the British Isles.* Department of Plant Sciences, University of Cambridge.

Cater, D. 1999 *Excavations at the site of the former Oldfield Boys School - OBS99.* Unpublished Report, Bath Archaeological Trust.

Faegri, K and Iversen, J., 1989 *Textbook of Pollen Analysis IV Edition.* John Wiley

Greig, J., 1982 The interpretation of pollen spectra from urban archaeological deposits. in *Environmental Archaeology in the Urban Context* Edited by A.R. Hall and H.K. Kenward. CBA Research Report 43.

Mcphail, R. 1981 Soil and botanical studies of the dark earth. in *The environment of man: the Iron Age to the Anglo-Saxon period* edited by M. Jones and G. Dimbleby British Archaeological Reports. British Series 87

Moore, P.D., Webb, J.A., 1991 *Pollen Analysis 2nd edn.* Blackwell Scientific and Collinson, M.E., Publications.

Stace, C., 1991 *New Flora of the British Isles.* Cambridge

Tinsley, H.M., 1999 *Pollen assessment of samples from the Tramsheds Site, Walcot, Bath.* Unpublished report for the Bath Archaeological Trust.

1418	2	10.2/20	Grain *Triticum* sp (wheat) 8 *Hordeum* sp (barley) 2 Cereal indet. 2	20+	<10 small bone frags. 1 frag. oyster shell 10 sherds pottery 1 ?iron nail	Float: 20ml Residue: 0.9kg
1546	3	36525		5	1 burnt bone frag. 1 tooth frag.	Float: <1ml Residue: 350g
1547	4	1.5/1.5		<10	1 tooth frag. 4 snails	Float: 2ml Residue: 800g

5.5.3.2. The floats produced were very small and contained mostly small charcoal fragments with only the sample from the buried soil producing any charred plant macrofossil remains.

5.5.3.3. The possible buried topsoil (context 1418) lay beneath a surface of densely packed water-worn oolitic limestone rubble, which followed the natural slope of the ground and has been interpreted as the foundation of a private access road into the villa. This deposit was sampled in two locations. A low concentration of charcoal and charred plant macrofossil remains was preserved in this deposit. These included cereal grains of both wheat (*Triticum* sp) and barley (*Hordeum* sp) with a single wheat glume base and a single weed seed (*Rumex* sp- dock). A few small fragments of animal bone were also present, including some small mammal limbs and teeth, the latter thought to be rodent teeth. There was also a tooth fragment of possible sheep/goat, plus one oyster shell fragment. 16 sherds of pottery and an iron nail were also recovered.

5.5.3.4. The two fills from the limestone drain relate to the silting up of this feature once it went out of use at some point during the life of the villa. Context 1546 was a light-brown gritty clay that was sealed by 1547, a similar deposit, but with a greater concentration of charcoal flecks. Both samples only produced occasional small charcoal fragments but no other charred plant material. A couple of animal tooth fragments and a single burnt bone fragments were also present.

5.5.3.5. The low concentration of material recovered from all these samples does not really allow any interpretation to be made. It is possible to say that wheat and barley were present on the site, but little more than this. In view of the location of the villa complex on a north-facing slope overlooking Bath, it is likely that any cereals arrived at the site already processed and ready for use.

5.7. Soils Assessment
by David Jordan, Terra Nova

5.7.1. Brief

5.7.1.1. This study was commissioned to provide a general understanding of the geological and soil context of the remains of the Roman villa at Oldfield boys school. The site was thought to lie on slopes which had been subject to both erosion and slippage since the Roman occupation and the study was principally concerned with evidence of the effects that these may have had on the archaeological remains. Other relevant information was also to be sought.

5.7.2. Background

5.7.2.1. Oldfield Boys' School lies at about 25m above OD on the north-western toe-slope of Lyncombe hill. The river Avon flows about 200m to the north and 5m below where it emerges westward onto a small floodplain from its confinement below the Beechen Cliff. Modern buildings surround the site making it difficult to identify the original topography. Foundations and levelling have greatly altered the slope while the debris of recent occupation has been mixed into the surface soils.

5.7.2.2. The site covered a rough rectangle of about 30 by 20 metres aligned with the slope. The original ground surface descended steeply northwards from the top to the middle of the site and then more gently to the northern limit of the excavation.

5.7.2.3. The rock beneath is a clay of the lower Jurassic Lias while the Midford sands are mapped as outcropping less than 500 metres to the south-east. These strata, the clay and the oolitic limestone above, are widely found to have slipped and eroded downhill. Landslide debris derived from them mantle many of the slopes around Bath while the products of erosion are found well downslope of the strata from which they originate. Thus we may expect archaeological remains to be found in parent materials which have slipped, eroded or both- and thus to show the characteristics of this secondary deposition rather than the stratigraphy of the parent rock.

5.7.2.4. Most of the soils formed on these strata around Bath are mapped as Typical Calcareous Pelosols. These are slowly permeable clayey soils with a calcareous horizon but without mottling- which indicates waterlogging- near the surface. At this site the soil was found to lack any calcareous enrichment and is better described as a Typical Non-calcareous Pelosol, most probably of the Evesham 3 Association. The Lias clay minerals which form the bulk of this soil expand greatly when wet and contract when dry. This produces strongly structured soils in which deep fissures open in dry weather. Such soils can also be eroded when wet, especially when disturbed by agriculture, and may slip on steep slopes when saturated.

part of the site and some isolated areas downslope had only occasional, scattered remains while elsewhere they formed a continuous stratum of varying composition. Almost all of the flat pieces of tile and stone were oriented with the slope, rather than in the more random arrangement in which they are likely to have been originally deposited. This suggests that they had been gradually levelled by soil movement since the site was abandoned. There was no evidence, however, that the archaeological strata had moved downslope and the soil movement seems limited to rearrangement in situ. It is possible that finer clay soil, which may have originally formed part of these Roman strata, has been eroded causing the larger stones and tile to "deflate" into a thinner and more concentrated horizon as found today. On the other hand, it is more likely that the Roman ground surface, on this lower, shallower slope had been gradually acquiring rather than losing soil since it is now covered with soil eroded from upslope.

5.7.4.4. A high proportion of the Roman strata was made up of small water-worn stones which were very similar in shape and rock-type to that found in the bottom of the Avon valley nearby. Most of the stones were of hard Jurassic limestone- now partly decayed through natural weathering with a few of chert, flint and other resistant rocks. Such gravel is unlikely to have been deposited naturally on the hillside and traces of adhering Roman mortar confirm that it almost certainly formed part of the Roman constructions.

5.7.4.5. A layer of well rounded cobbles on the western side of the lower site was equally unlikely to have been deposited naturally and there was no evidence that the rounding had occurred through weathering in-situ. It seems more likely that the cobbles had been quarried from a natural deposit nearby-possibly from the bottom of a dry side-valley of the Avon into which larger limestone blocks had been eroded- and thus rounded from the limestone strata uphill. Such cobbles may have been deposited under the quite different drainage regime of the late Devensian glaciation before being abandoned as drainage patterns changed at the beginning of the current Flandrian interglacial.

5.7.4.6. The Roman strata were sometimes found to include a horizon of slight organic enrichment which had a combination of granular and small angular blocky ped structure. This might be the remains of the pre-Roman topsoil which became incorporated into the Roman strata during and after occupation although the more recent addition of organic matter and formation of structure may have obscured everything that preceded it. Elsewhere any pre-Roman buried soil surface had been reworked and destroyed by more recent soil formation.

5.7.4.7. The clay which formed the bulk of the site expands and contracts very considerably as it wets and dries during the year. This, and the action of frost at the surface, has lead to the formation of a very well-defined soil structure. Near to the surface the soil is broken down into fine, angular fragments, more properly described as small angular blocky peds. At greater depths the peds become larger and from a depth of 50cm become increasingly prismatic with columns of soil about 20cm in diameter separated by fissures which open in dry weather to more than im deep.

showed evidence of former fissures a few points showed fine horizontal laminae of fine sand, silt and clay which appeared to have been laid down by water running downslope. There were also a few lines of small stones and horizontal strata which appeared to indicate former surfaces over which clay layers had accumulated. There was no evidence of massive slumping or of rapid deposition through direct human actions .which tend also to mix coarser debris into the soil.

5.7.4.12. Taken together this evidence suggests that the clay has been deposited gradually as "hillwash" since the Roman site was abandoned, although this might have taken place, for example, in a single prolonged period of cultivation rather than being a continuous process over the last 1700 years. It is not clear why this clay layer is so much deeper at the top than at the bottom of the site but this could only be resolved by soil studies outside the area of this excavation. The lack of stones, artefacts or even much material coarser than fine sand suggests that the hillside above the site was not occupied after the Roman abandonment until most of the clay layer had been deposited.

5.7.4.13. The uppermost natural soil was a typical organic Ah surface horizon which, in places, had been truncated and elsewhere buried by dumped soil and modern debris. This horizon contained between 5 and 10% of coal, ash, clay pipe, bone and other small domestic debris which gave it a rather darker and greyer appearance than might be expected. The structure consisted of rounded granules, due to faunal activity, which had replaced the more angular ped structure due to the clay alone. Such soils appear most typically in urban gardens and horticultural plots on the margins of towns and we may therefore speculate that the site was in small-scale cultivation before it was buried by the most recent phase of levelling and building.

5.7.5. Conclusions

5.7.5.1. Our observations on the site and on samples in the laboratory lead us to the following, tentative conclusions:

5.7.5.2. The pre-Roman soil was probably a heavy and mobile clay which may have been redeposited by erosion and slumping from upslope. The clay had a well-developed organic surface Ah horizon and a strong angular structure, becoming columnar and prismatic with depth. On this the Romans built a villa, cutting wall foundations into the clay and levelling up the hillside- which may have required some careful engineering to keep the building stable. This was then abandoned and collapsed, leaving wall and roof debris, including locally derived gravel, tile, cobbles and building stone, which became incorporated into the soil through worm mixing, the action of roots and the natural movement of the soil. The original collapse will have left this debris scattered at all angles but gradual soil movement *in-situ* caused the flatter stones and tiles to tip downward until they lay nearly flat against the slope.

5.7.6. Appendices

5.7.6.1 SOIL SAMPLE, HORIZON OR CONTEXT DESCRIPTION FORM

Site Name: *Oldfield Boys' School, Bath* **Site Code:** *OBS99*
Sample Location: *Section 1*

Sample or Context No.	1
Soil Munsell colour	10YR 5/3
Texture	clay
Moisture	moist
Mottles	yes
Mottle abundance	5%
Mottle size	5mm
Mottle colour	7.5YR 5/6
Roots	yes
Root type	fibrous
Root abundance	very few
Root size	very fine
Stones (+ stone relics)	no
Stone size	
Stone shape	
Stone abundance	
Stone lithology	
Magnetic susceptibility	
Organic matter- humose	non-humose
Peds	yes
Ped size	coarse
Ped shape	prismatic
Ped grade	moderately developed
Voids	yes
Fissures	yes

5.7.6.2. **Sample Location:** *Section 1*

Sample or Context No.	2
Soil Munsell colour	10YR 4/4
Texture	clay
Moisture	moist
Mottles	no
Mottle abundance	
Mottle size	
Mottle colour	
Roots	yes
Root type	fibrous
Root abundance	very few
Root size	very fine
Stones (+ stone relics)	no
Stone size	
Stone shape	
Stone abundance	
Stone lithology	
Magnetic susceptibility	
Organic matter- humose	non-humose
Peds	yes
Ped size	medium
Ped shape	prismatic
Ped grade	moderately developed
Voids	yes
Fissures	yes
Fissure size	fine
Macropores	no

5.7.6.3. **Sample Location:** *Section 1*

Sample or Context No.	3
Soil Munsell colour	10YR 3/2
Texture	clay
Moisture	moist
Mottles	yes
Mottle abundance	5%
Mottle size	5mm
Mottle colour	7.5YR 5/6
Roots	yes
Root type	fibrous
Root abundance	very few
Root size	fine and very fine
Stones (+ stone relics)	no
Stone size	
Stone shape	
Stone abundance	
Stone lithology	
Magnetic susceptibility	
Organic matter- humose	slightly humose
Peds	yes
Ped size	fine and medium
Ped shape	compound granular and angular blocky
Ped grade	strongly developed
Voids	yes
Fissures	yes
Fissure size	very fine
Macropores	yes

5.7.6.4. Sample Location: *Section 3*

Sample or Context No.	1
Soil Munsell colour	10YR 5/3
Texture	clay
Moisture	moist
Mottles	no
Mottle abundance	
Mottle size	
Mottle colour	
Roots	
Root type	
Root abundance	
Root size	
Stones (+ stone relics)	yes
Stone size	small and very small
Stone shape	sub-angular to sub-rounded
Stone abundance	slightly stony
Stone lithology	limestone and other river gravel derived stone types
Magnetic susceptibility	
Organic matter- humose	non-humose
Peds	yes
Ped size	coarse
Ped shape	prismatic
Ped grade	moderately developed
Voids	yes
Fissures	yes
Fissure size	very fine
Macropores	yes

5.7.6.5. Sample Location: *Section 3*

Sample or Context No.	2
Soil Munsell colour	10YR 5/3
Texture	clay
Moisture	moist
Mottles	no
Mottle abundance	
Mottle size	
Mottle colour	
Roots	no
Root type	
Root abundance	
Root size	
Stones (+ stone relics)	yes
Stone size	very small to medium
Stone shape	sub-angular to sub-rounded
Stone abundance	slightly stony
Stone lithology	limestone and other litholgy
Magnetic susceptibility	
Organic matter- humose	non-humose
Peds	yes
Ped size	medium to fine
Ped shape	angular blocky with weakly developed compound granular
Ped grade	moderately and weakly developed
Voids	yes
Fissures	yes
Fissure size	fine
Macropores	yes

5.7.6.6. **Sample Location:** ***Section 3***

Sample or Context No.	1
Soil Munsell colour	10YR 4/4
Texture	clay
Moisture	moist
Mottles	no
Mottle abundance	
Mottle size	
Mottle colour	
Roots	no
Root type	
Root abundance	
Root size	
Stones (+ stone relics)	yes
Stone size	small to medium
Stone shape	sub-angular to sub-rounded
Stone abundance	very slightly stony (5%)
Stone lithology	limestone and other river gravel derived stone types
Magnetic susceptibility	
Organic matter- humose	non-humose
Peds	yes
Ped size	medium
Ped shape	prismatic
Ped grade	moderately to strongly developed
Voids	yes
Fissures	yes
Fissure size	fine and medium
Macropores	yes

5.7.6.7. Sample Location: *Section 3*

Sample or Context No.	4
Soil Munsell colour	10YR 3/3
Texture	clay
Moisture	moist
Mottles	no
Mottle abundance	
Mottle size	
Mottle colour	
Roots	no
Root type	
Root abundance	
Root size	
Stones (+ stone relics)	yes
Stone size	small and very small
Stone shape	sub-angular to sub-rounded
Stone abundance	slightly stony
Stone lithology	limestone and other river derived stone types
Magnetic susceptibility	
Organic matter- humose	non-humose
Peds	yes
Ped size	medium and fine
Ped shape	compound angular blocky and granular
Ped grade	moderately and weakly developed
Voids	yes
Fissures	yes
Fissure size	very fine
Macropores	yes

5.7.6.8. Sample Location: *Section 3*

Sample or Context No.	5
Soil Munsell colour	10YR 3/2
Texture	clay
Moisture	moist
Mottles	no
Mottle abundance	
Mottle size	
Mottle colour	
Roots	no
Root type	
Root abundance	
Root size	
Stones (+ stone relics)	yes
Stone size	small and very small
Stone shape	angular to sub-rounded
Stone abundance	very slightly stony
Stone lithology	limestone and other river gravel derived stone types
Magnetic susceptibility	
Organic matter- humose	slightly humose
Peds	yes
Ped size	medium and fine
Ped shape	compound angular-blocky and granular
Ped grade	moderately and weakly developed
Voids	yes
Fissures	yes
Fissure size	very fine
Macropores	yes

5.7.6.9. **Sample Location:** ***Section 3***

Sample or Context No.	6
Soil Munsell colour	10YR 5/2
Texture	clay
Moisture	moist
Mottles	yes
Mottle abundance	10%
Mottle size	2-5mm
Mottle colour	10YR 5/6
Roots	yes
Root type	fibrous
Root abundance	very few
Root size	very fine
Stones (+ stone relics)	yes
Stone size	very small
Stone shape	sub-angular to sub-rounded
Stone abundance	very slightly stony
Stone lithology	limestone and other river gravel derived stone types
Magnetic susceptibility	
Organic matter- humose	non-humose
Peds	yes
Ped size	medium
Ped shape	angular blocky
Ped grade	weakly developed
Voids	yes
Fissures	yes
Fissure size	very fine
Macropores	no

6. Updated Project Design Specification

6.1. Statement of Potential

6.1.1. Five research priorities were identified in advance of the mitigation excavations (see section 2.4.3.3, above). Research priorities a and b were to investigate the deposition and taphonomy of the rubble deposit 1306. Priority c was the multi-period investigation of the site's morphology, and d was to investigate date and function of the building. Research priority d was more explicitly formulated in the two evaluation reports as an investigation into whether the building was a suburban villa (i.e. that it was overwhelmingly a residential building) or the *pars urbana* of a farming unit (see section 2.4.3.2., above). It was proposed that this might be evidenced by an absence of agricultural buildings and in the precise make-up of its material culture.

6.1.2. Research priorities a and b were to be addressed by means of the excavation of a 1m-wide slot through layer 1306. This was initiated but abandoned at an early stage when it became evident that the remains of a Roman building lay within the footprint of the building (see section 2.4.3.4., above). These priorities were not thereafter addressed by excavation, and the recovered data sets are therefore not adequate to fulfill these research objectives.

6.1.3. The multi-period study of the site morphology has been addressed by means of a soil study, and by snail, pollen and plant macrofossil analysis. The soil study revealed that hillwash was being deposited on the site in the pre- and post-Roman periods, however it also demonstrated that rotational processes within the clay strata have effectively homogenised these, destroying fine stratigraphy. This has destroyed successive land surfaces making it impossible to recover the development of the landscape over time. The post-Roman colluvial deposits were also sampled by the snail specialist in an attempt to interpret past landscape development, but none of these samples contained sub-fossil Mollusca or any other biological material. An additional problem to understanding landscape development over time was the absence of cultural material contained within the pre-villa and post-collapse hillwash deposits. Only three (phase-4) contexts, were encountered during excavations, which were thought to have potential for a pollen and plant macrofossil analysis, and these yielded four samples. Both of these analyses revealed, however, that the ecofacts which had survived were restricted in range and number. Consequently, although these analyses have produced a greater understanding of the ongoing soil formation processes on site, and have furnished a limited understanding of the plant communities present on site at the time of the occupation of the villa, unfortunately they have no significant potential to contribute to a detailed understanding of the changing landscape over time, and consequently further analysis of these data sets is not recommended.

6.1.4. The various data sets will allow research priority d to be addressed. Many of the walls had been completely robbed away, but the depth to which the foundations of the Roman building had been cut, the thick blanket of hillwash protecting the

6.1.8. It is unlikely that fuller analysis of the recovered data sets will allow a **definitive** resolution of the question of whether the building was a *villa suburbana* (i.e. an essentially residential building). Although no buildings with a clearly agricultural function were discovered, the almost complete absence of surviving internal floor surfaces and other fittings has made it impossible to ascribe any function to the majority of the revealed rooms; and even had it been possible to demonstrate that all of the revealed structures had been of a domestic character, that might mean nothing more than that the *pars rustica* had not been located and tested through excavation. A fuller analysis of the coins might cast some light on this matter.

6.2 Revised Research Aims

6.2.1. To inquire into the mode of construction of the building through an analysis of recovered building materials.

6.2.2. To inquire into the function and status of the building by means of an analysis of its situation, ground plan, building materials used, small finds (already complete), pottery and coin assemblages, and through a comparison of these with similar assemblages recovered from other sites within the region and wider provinces of Britain.

6.2.3. To provide both a broad date range for the construction, occupation and destruction of the building complex, and to date the individual phases of activity, by means of a comparison of tile fabric types with those from other well-dated sites within the region, and through an analysis of the small finds (already complete), pottery and coin assemblages.

6.2.4. To inquire into the availability of goods and consequently trade patterns through an analysis of the relative proportions of pottery sherds from different production centres.

6.2.5. To explore the possible interpretations of the function and siting of the building, to enquire to what extent the results of the analysis phase can help in the resolution of this matter, and to enquire into the nature of the attraction of Bath to this and the other villas within its hinterland.

6.3. Method Statement

6.3.1. Building Materials

6.3.1.1. Any securely dated kiln sites in the West Country and well dated assemblages from sites around Bath will be identified by Bath Archaeological Trust and the location of the materials will be communicated to the building materials specialist. Assemblages judged by the specialist to be of significant potential for the

6.3.2.3. A report, incorporating data and analysis and publication standard illustrations of key contexts and context groups, will be produced. The results of the analysis will be communicated to the other specialists, and will be incorporated into the overall site report.

6.3.3. **Roman Coins**

6.3.3.1. A definitive coin list should be produced. This would record, as far as possible, denomination, emperor, reverse design and legend, and period and place of minting. Additionally, because the size of the assemblage (88 Roman coins) will allow statistically valid observations to be made, it is proposed to group the listed coins into standard coin periods, such as those proposed by Reece. This will allow the period of use of the villa to be established, and will facilitate a comparison of the pattern of coin loss on site with that from other type site sites.

6.3.3.2. The above data and the results of its analysis will be incorporated into a report. The results of the analysis will be communicated to the other specialists, and will be incorporated into the overall site report.

6.3.4. **Soils, Pollen, Plant Macrofossils and Snails**

6.3.4.1. It has been argued that further analysis of the environmental data would not yield a significant increase in knowledge and so cannot be justified. However, it is recommended that the pollen and plant macrofossil reports contained within this assessment report should be included within the final publication, *but with the addition of a short note explaining that these were commissioned to meet the limited objectives of an assessment report.* It is recommended that the soil report should be revised for inclusion in the published report. The revised report would be more formal in tone and would seek to discuss and explain (rather than predict, as was the remit of the original study) the degree of preservation of the on-site stratigraphy.

6.3.5. **Publication**

6.3.5.1. The various specialists will be apprised of the results of each specialist analysis, so that discoveries made in each field can be incorporated into each report.

6.3.5.2. The results of the specialist analyses will be drawn upon in the interpretation of the excavated structures and their landscape setting. They will be fully integrated into the published report.

6.3.5.3. The published report will be written with reference to Appendix 7 of MAP2.

- The Excavations
  - Research Objectives
  - Excavation Methodology
  - Sampling Strategy
  - Stratigraphic Integrity and Data Quality
    - Implications for the Phasing of the Site
- The Results by Phase
- Specialist Reports
- Discussion
- Acknowledgements
- Note on Scope and Location of Archive
- Bibliography

Estimated Supporting Illustrations and Plates

- 13 A4 plans
- 30 A4 sections
- Overall Site Matrix
- 10 monochrome plates

6.4.4.3. **Breakdown of Contents**

6.4.4.3.1. **Project Background**

6.4.4.3.1.1. This section will include a brief discussion of the evolving planning history of the project, and the archaeological response to this. The site will be located in relation to the modern urban topography and its geology will be discussed. A brief outline of the historical background of the site, as revealed through the desktop assessment will be given.

6.4.4.3.1.2. The abstract and this section will together comprise approximately one A4 page of text, and a full A4 page location map.

6.4.4.3.2. **The Excavations**

6.4.4.3.2.1. The pre-excavation research objectives will be outlined, and how these evolved from an investigation of the phase-5 rubble deposits to a more conventional excavation of *in situ* structural remains, as a result of discoveries made during the early stages of the mitigation excavations, will be discussed. The revised post-excavation research objectives will also be outlined. The excavation methodology and sampling strategy designed to meet these objectives will be outlined. The effects that the attested level of disturbance to the stratigraphy through natural soil processes and purposive robbing of building materials, and that the identified building elements were revealed in a series of spatially discrete trenches excavated in differing degrees of completeness, have on the quality of recovered data and

7.0 Estimate of Costs and Timetable of Proposed Scheme of Post-Excavation Analysis and Publication

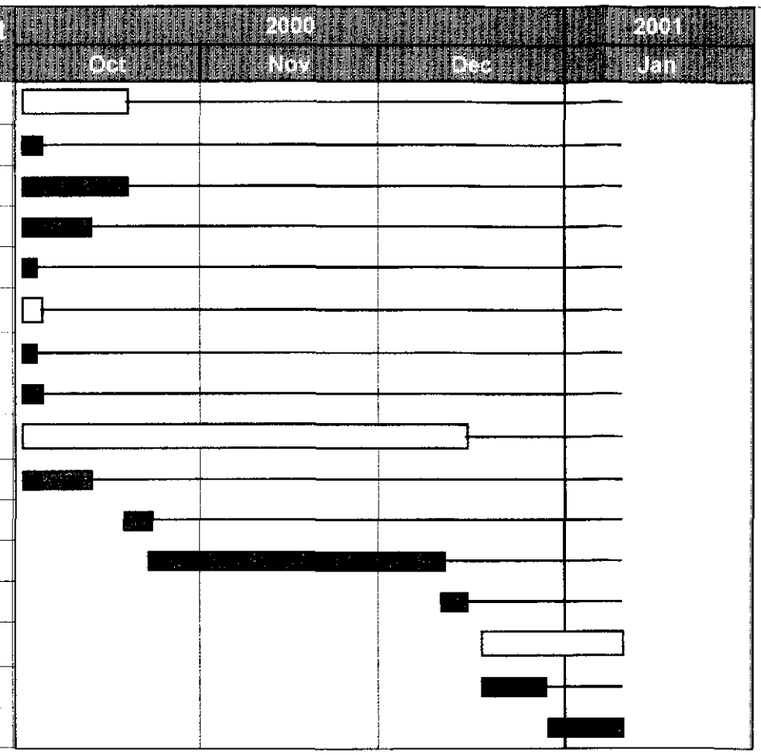
7.1. Estimate of Costs

Roman Pottery (Lisa Brown)				
Basic recording			8 days @	£150 + VAT per day
Analysis and report writing			3 days @	£150 + VAT per day
Illustrations to publication standard			3 days @	£130 + VAT per day
		Totals	14 days	£2040 + VAT
Building Materials (Dr Ian Betts)				
Quantification of post-medieval tile and entry on Excel database			0.5 days @	£170 + VAT per day
Examination of marble to establish quarry source and country of origin			0.5 days @	£170 + VAT per day
Study of material from vaulted heated room and inter-site comparisons			1 day @	£170 + VAT per day
Comparison of tile fabrics with those from other dated sites in the region			2 days @	£170 + VAT per day (plus travel)
Analysis of BM data with site phasing and all dating evidence			2 days @	£170 + VAT per day
Writing report for publication, checking illustrations and proofreading text			3 days @	£170 + VAT per day
Isolating material for- and producing estimate of cost of illustrations			1 day @	£170 + VAT per day
Illustrations to Publication Standard			4 days @	£170 + VAT per day
		Totals	14 days	£2380 + VAT
Coins (Mark Corney)				
Basic recording, analysis and report writing				£600 + VAT

For an academic referee to read and comment on the report and any				
suggested revisions thereto			1 day @	£250 + VAT per day
Publication cost of the monograph will be between £3,000 and £5,000.				£900-£1500
The Oldfield Boys' School Site will be one of five sites reported on in				
the volume, but its report will be much the largest and will form				
approximately 30% of the volume.				
Sundry time for liaising with interested parties and answering queries			2 days @	£150 + VAT per day
		Totals		£1450- £2050 + VAT
Site Archive				
To compile a site archive to MAP2 standards, including compiling			8 days @	£150 + VAT per day
database tables for the various data sets and the production of an archive				
report				
To produce digital copies of all reports to date			8 days @	£150 + VAT per day
		Totals	16 days	£2400 + VAT
Estimated total cost up to and including final publication				£16,540- £17,890

7.2. Estimated Timetable to Production of Finished Report and Production of Research Archive.

Task Name	Resources	Start Date	Effort	Duration	End Date	Total Cost (EAC)
Specialist Analyses		**10/2/2000**	**27.00d**	**14.00d**	**10/19/2000**	
Coins		10/2/2000	0d	4.00d	10/5/2000	
Pottery		10/2/2000	14.00d	14.00d	10/19/2000	
Building Materials		10/2/2000	10.00d	10.00d	10/13/2000	
Soils		10/2/2000	3.00d	3.00d	10/4/2000	
Illustration		**10/2/2000**	**6.50d**	**4.00d**	**10/5/2000**	
Small Finds		10/2/2000	2.50d	2.50d	10/4/2000	
Building Materials		10/2/2000	4.00d	4.00d	10/5/2000	
Publication		**10/2/2000**	**53.00d**	**54.00d**	**12/15/2000**	
Prepare AutoCAD Illustrations		10/2/2000	10.00d	10.00d	10/13/2000	
Study Specialist Reports		10/19/2000	3.00d	3.00d	10/23/2000	
Produce Finished Text		10/23/2000	35.00d	35.00d	12/11/2000	
Academic refereeing of report		12/11/2000	5.00d	5.00d	12/15/2000	
Research Archive		**12/18/2000**	**16.00d**	**16.00d**	**1/10/2001**	
To compile archive to MAP2 Standards		12/18/2000	8.00d	8.00d	12/28/2000	
To produce digital copies of all reports to completion		12/29/2000	8.00d	8.00d	1/10/2001	



8.0. **References:**

Adam, J.-P. 1999 *Roman Building: Materials and Techniques*, London.

Beaton, M. 1997 *Excavations at the Site of the Former Oldfield Boys' School, Westmoreland Station Road, Beechen Cliff, Bath. Vol. I.* (unpublished B.A.T. report).

Beaton, M. 1998 *Interim Report on the Excavation of Trenches 12 & 13 at the Former Oldfield Boys' School, Westmoreland Station Road, Beechen Cliff, Bath* (unpublished B.A.T. report).

Bird, S. 1991 'The Roman Roads around Bath' in P Davenport (ed) *Archaeology in Bath 1976-1985*, 138-145, Oxford.

Branigan, K. 1976 *The Roman Villa in South-West England*, Bradford on Avon.

Burnham, B.C. & Wacher, J. 1990 *The 'Small Towns' of Roman Britain*, London.

Crossley, D. 1994 *Post-Medieval Archaeology in Britain*, Leicester.

Cunliffe, B. 1971 *Roman Bath Discovered*, London.

Dark, K. & Dark, P. 1997 *The Landscape of Roman Britain*, Stroud.

Davenport, P. 1994 'Town and Country: Roman Bath and its Hinterland' in *Bath History* Vol.5, 7-23.

Elkington, H.D.H. 1976 'The Mendip Lead Industry' in K. Branigan & P.J. Fowler (eds) *The Roman West Country*, 183-197, London.

Hingley, R. 1989 *Rural Settlement in Roman Britain*, London.

Hodder, I.R. and Millett, M. 1980 'Romano-British Villas and Towns: a systematic study', *World Archaeology* 12 (1), 69-76.

Johnson, P. 1995 *Romano-British Mosaics*, Princes Risborough.

Johnston, D.E. 1979 *Roman Villas*, Princes Risborough.

Ling, R. 1998 *Ancient Mosaics*, London.

Margary, I.D. 1973 *Roman Roads in Britain*, London.

McKay, A.G. 1998 *Houses, Villas and Palaces in the Roman World*, London

Meates, G.W. 1979 *The Roman Villa at Lullingstone , Kent.* Vol. 1: *The Site*.

Millett, M. 1992 *The Romanization of Britain,* Cambridge.

Percival, J. 1988 *The Roman Villa,* London.

Pliny 1963 *The Letters of the Younger Pliny* (ed E.V. Rieu), Harmondsworth.

RCHME 1976 *Ancient and Historical Monuments in the County of Gloucestershire. Volume One: Iron Age and Romano-British Monuments in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds*, HMSO, London.

Reece, R. 1988 *My Roman Britain*, Cirencester.

Reece, R. 1987 *Coinage in Roman Britain*, London.

Reece, R. (undated) 'Coins and Villas', in K. Branigan and D. Miles (eds) *The Economies of Romano-British Villas*, 34-41, Sheffield.

Rees, S. 1981 *Ancient Agricultural Implements,* Princes Risborough.

Rivet, A.L.F. 1964 *Town and Country in Roman Britain*, London

Rivet, A.L.F. 1969 'Social and Economic Aspects', in A.L.F. Rivet (ed) *The Roman Villa in Britain,* 173-216, London

Smith, J.T. 'Villas as a key to social structure', in M. Todd (ed) *Studies in the Romano-British Villa,* 149-186, Leicester.

Todd, M. 1970 'The Small Towns of Roman Britain', *Britannia* 1, 114-130.

Smith, J.T. 1997 *Roman Villas*, London.

Vitruvius, 1960 *The Ten Books on Architecture*, New York.

Wacher, J. 1974 'Villae in Urbibus?', *Britannia* 5, 282-284.

Wacher, J. 1976 *The Towns of Roman Britain*, London.

Wacher, J. 1978 *Roman Britain*, London.

Walthew, C.V. 1975 'The Town House and Villa House in Roman Britain', *Britannia* 6, 189-205.

Wedlake, W.J. 1982 *The Excavation of the Shrine of Apollo at Nettleton, Wiltshire, 1956-1971,* London.

Woodward, A. 1992 *Shrines & Sacrifice*, London.

9.0. Illustrations

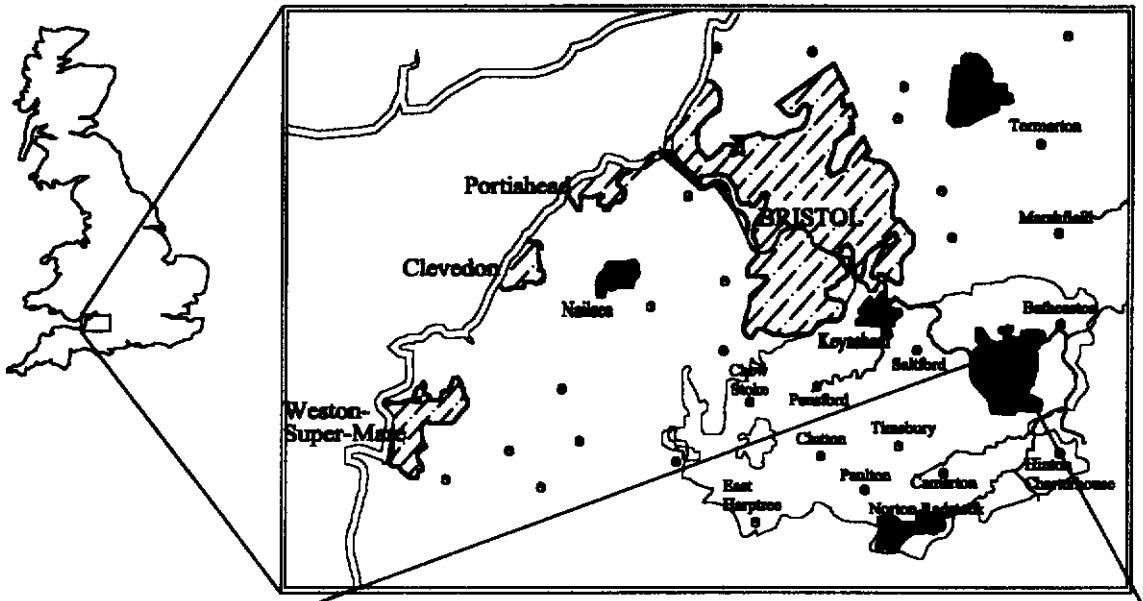
9.1.

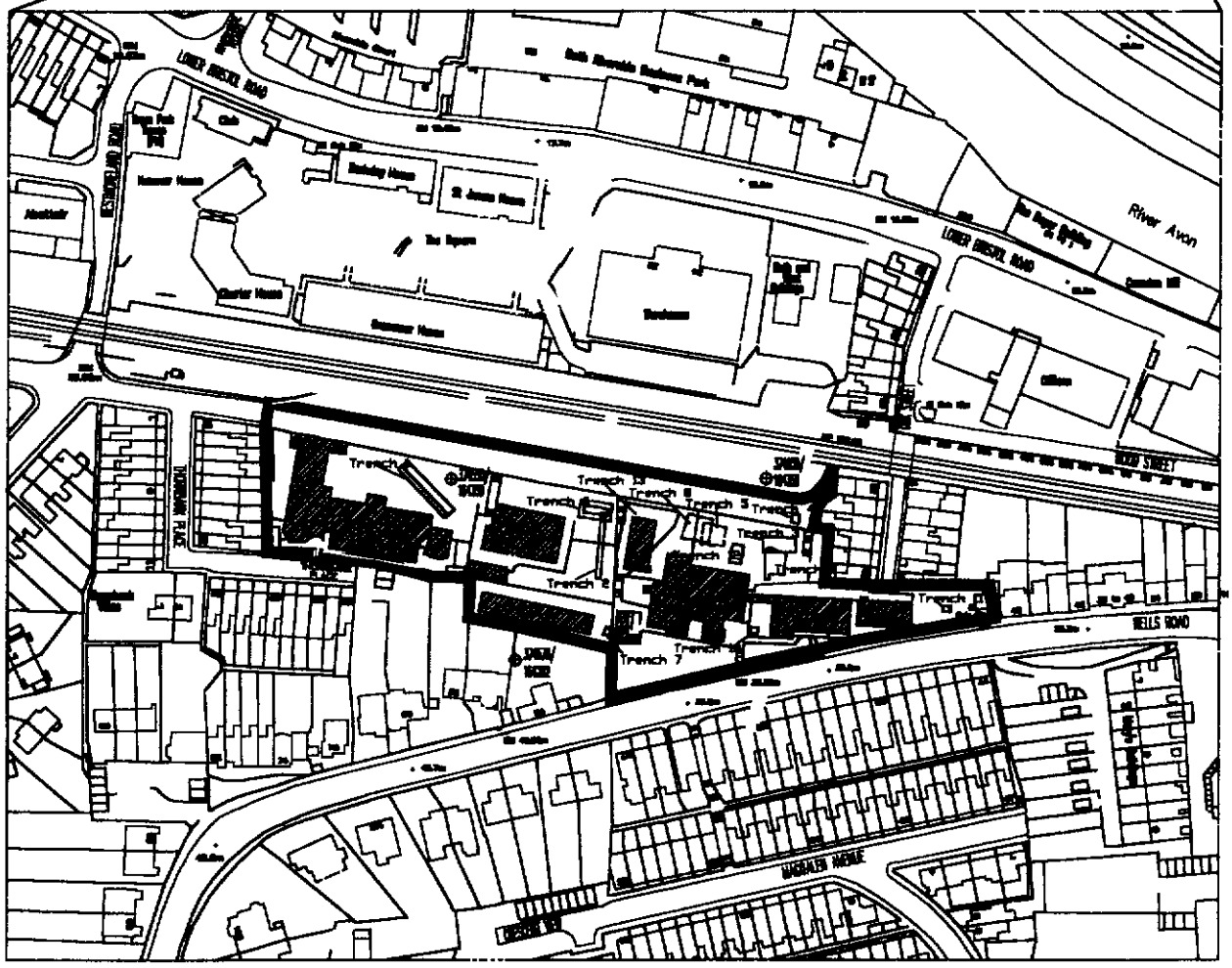
Figure 1	Site Location Plan
Figure 2	Trench Location Plan
Figure 3	Phased Plan of Roman Walls and Associated Features
Figure 4	Plan of Archaeological Features in Trench 3
Figure 5	Plan of Archaeological Features in Trench 5
Figure 6	Plan of Archaeological Features in Trench 8
Figure 7	Plan of Archaeological Features in Trench 9
Figure 8	Plan of Archaeological Features in Trench 12
Figure 9	Plan of Archaeological Features in Trench 13
Figure 10	Plan of Archaeological Features in Recorded During Mitigation Excavations
Figure 11	Phased Matrix of Mitigation Excavations

9.2.

Plate 1	Floors 909 and 911, looking east.
Plate 2	Rubble surface 1344, looking south.
Plate 3	Roman walls in Trench 3, looking east.
Plate 4	Foundations of west wall of western range, investigated during mitigation excavations. Looking south.
Plate 5	Phase 4 wall 1375, looking west.
Plate 6	Phase 4 drain 1544, seen from above southwest.
Plate 7	View of mitigation excavations, from southwest.
Plate 8	Roman wall revealed by dismantling of modern 'Retaining Wall 1'. Looking east.

Fig. 1 Site Location Plan





0 100 200 300 400 500 metres

Reproduced from the 1994 Ordnance Surv
1:1250 map with the permission of the
Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Offi
Crown Copyright

Fig.2 Trench Location Plan

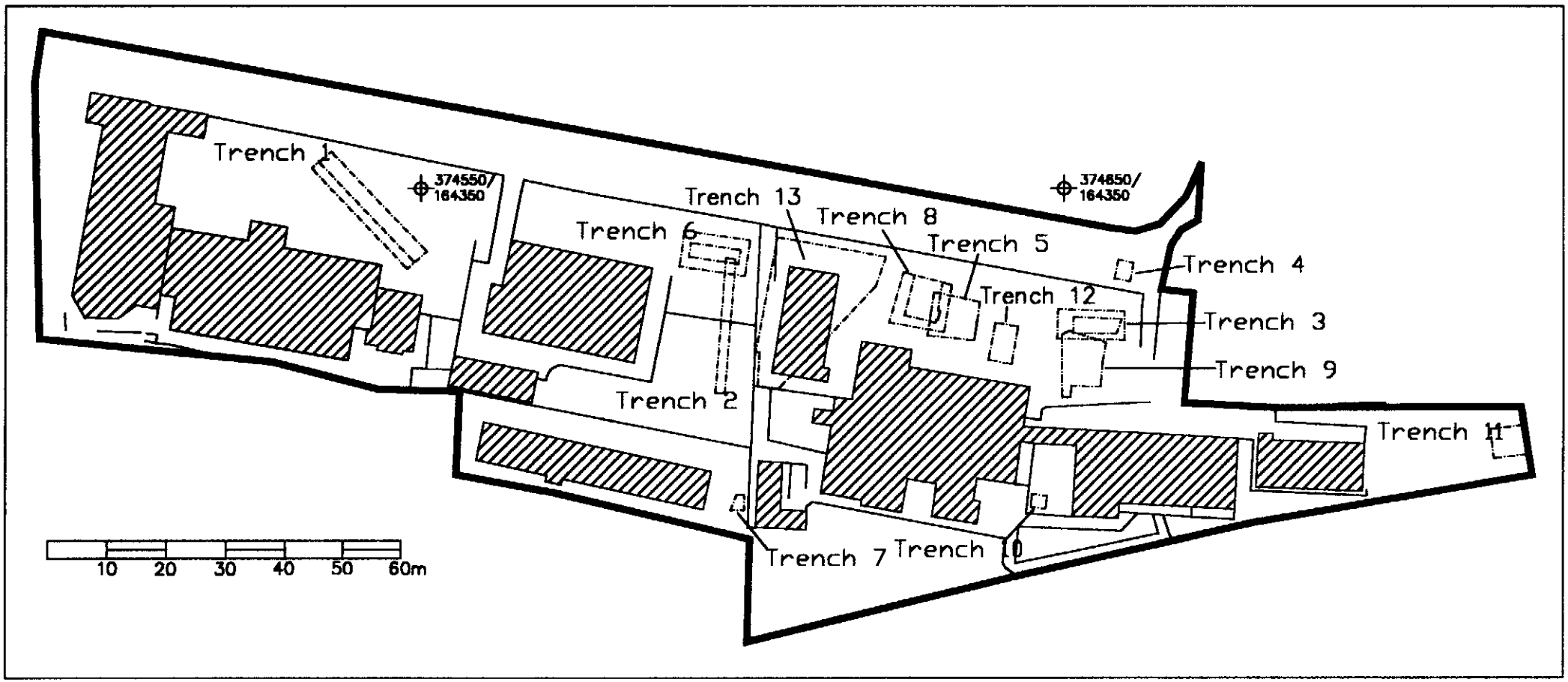


Fig. 3 Phased Plan of Roman Walls and Associated Features

Fig. 4 Plan of Archaeological Features in Trench 3

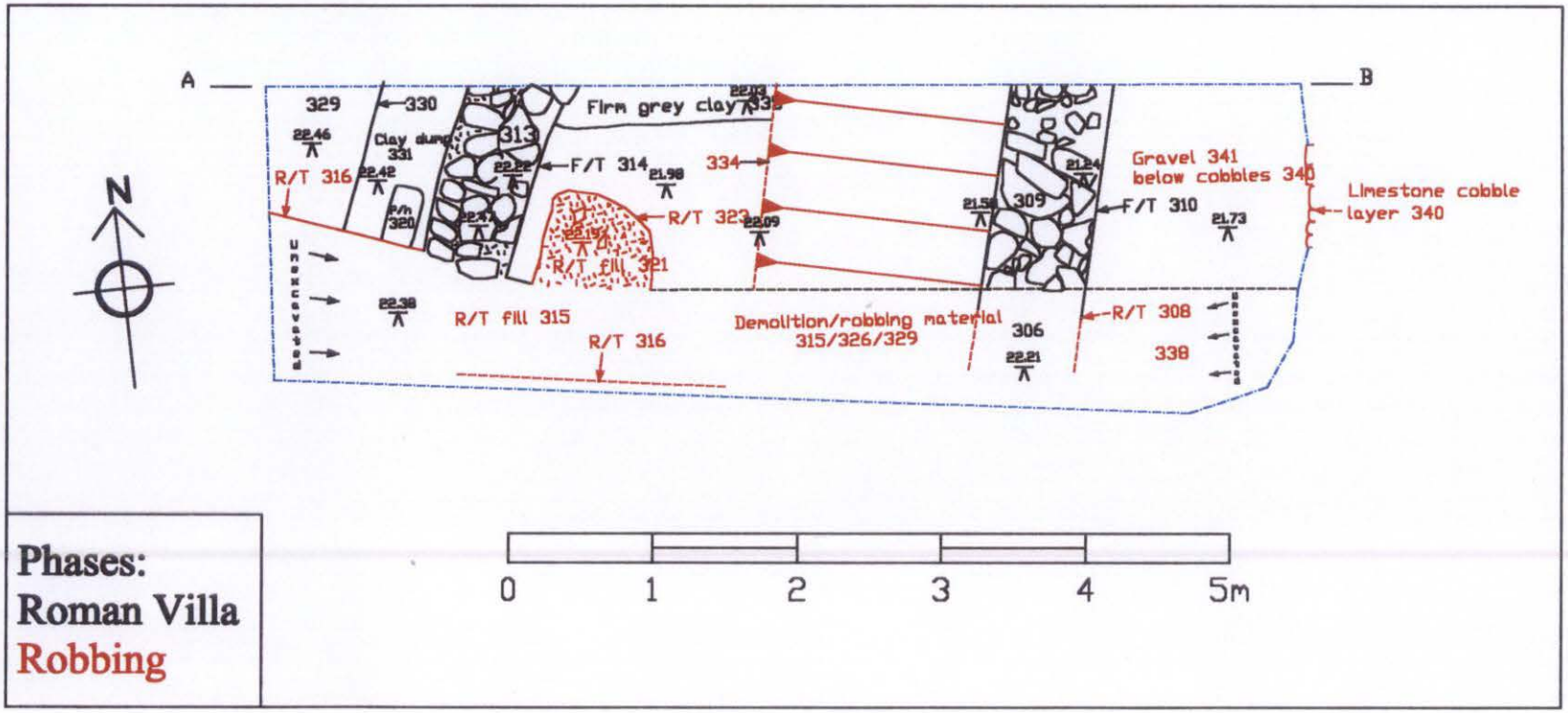


Fig. 5 Plan of Archaeological Features in Trench 5

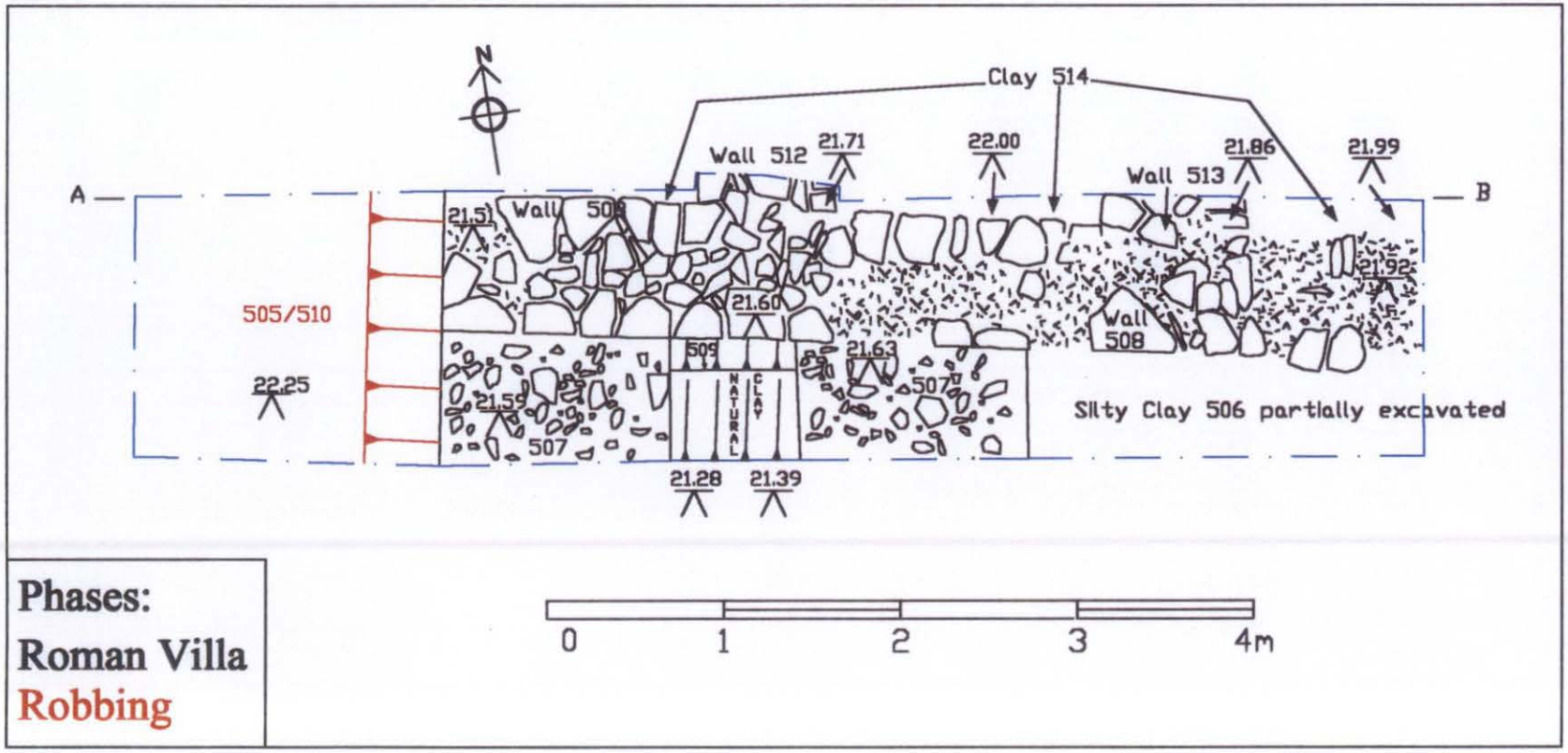


Fig. 6 Plan of Archaeological Features in Trench 8

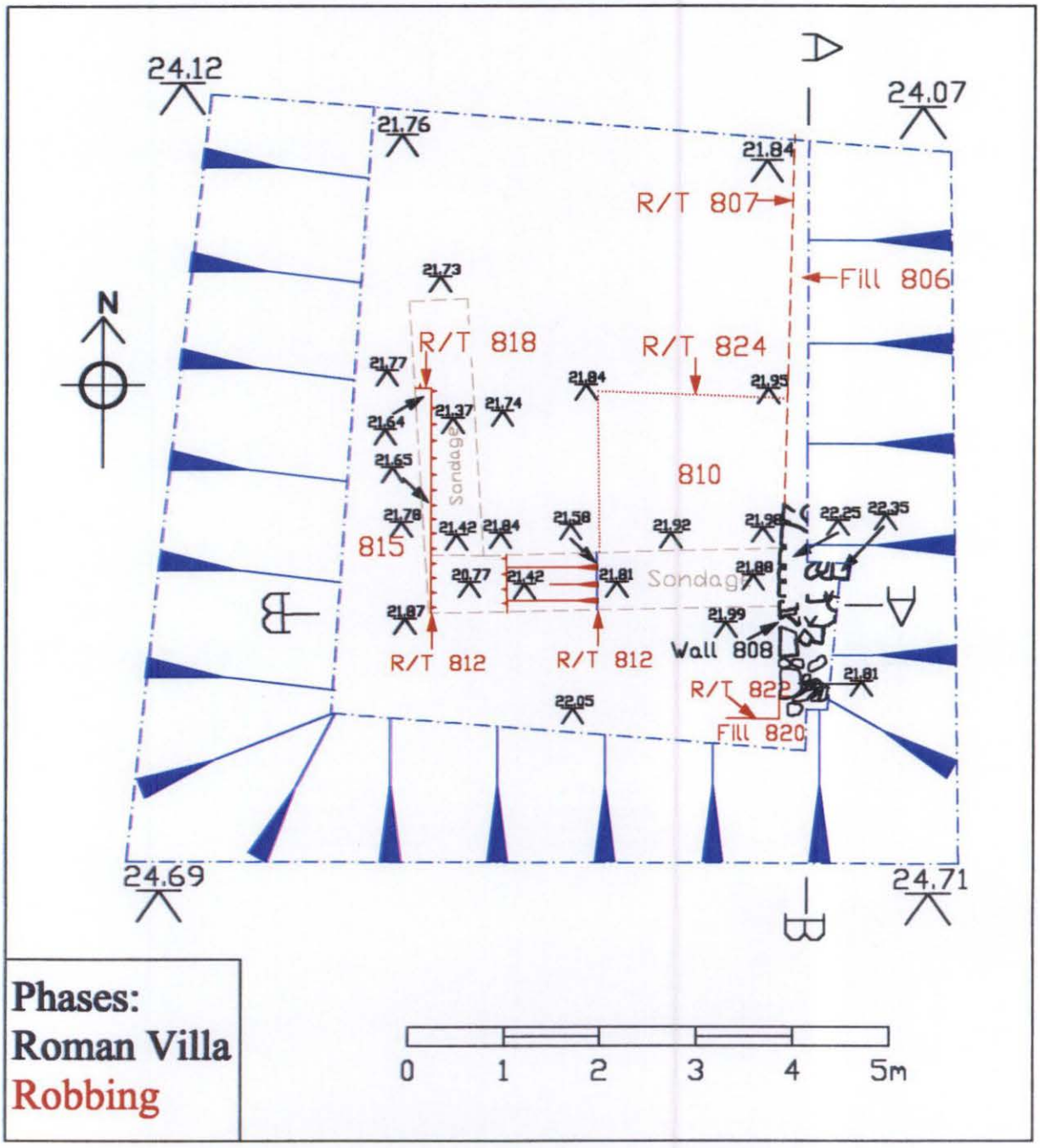


Fig. 7 Plan of Archaeological Features in Trench 9

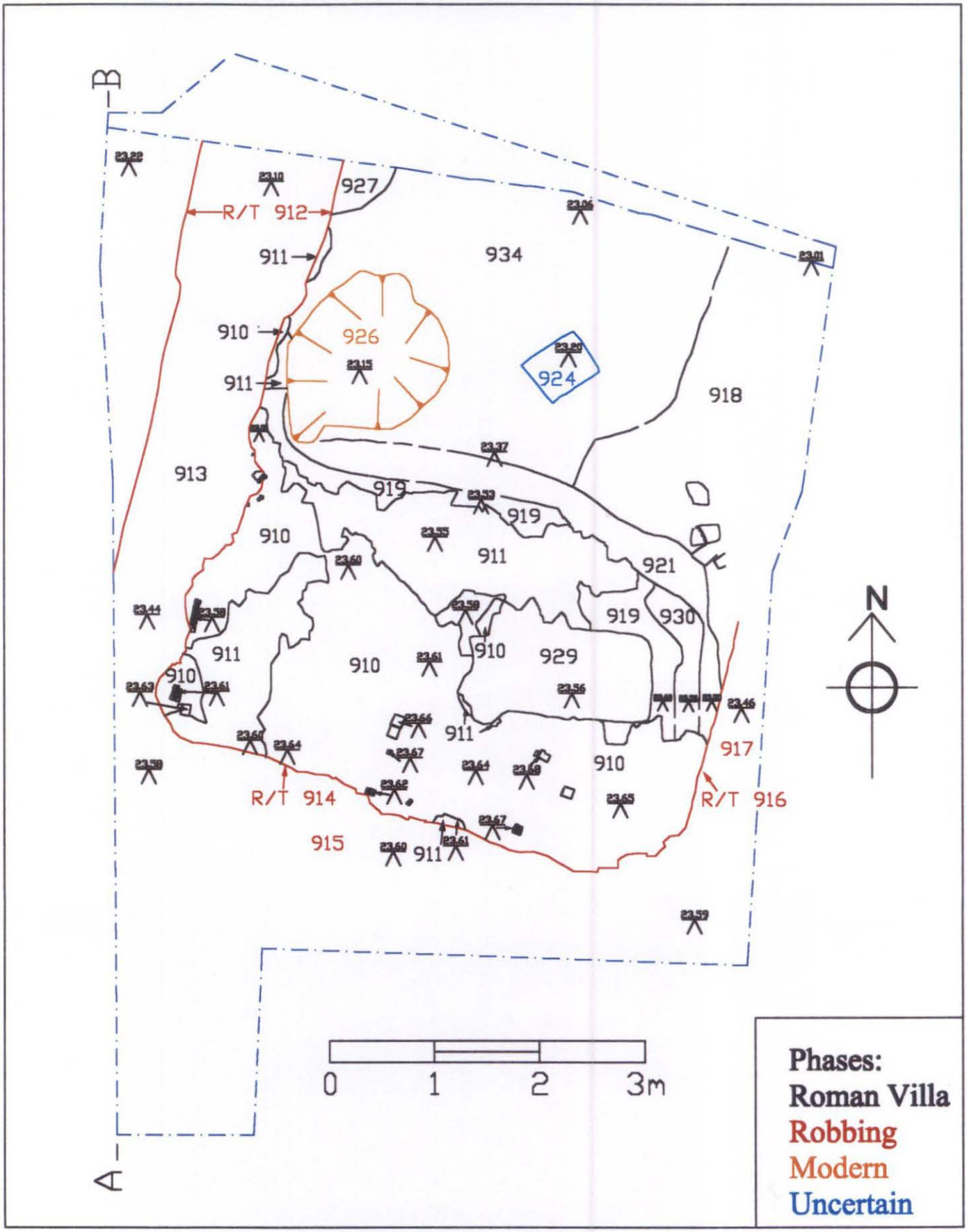


Fig. 8 Plan of Archaeological Features in Trench 12

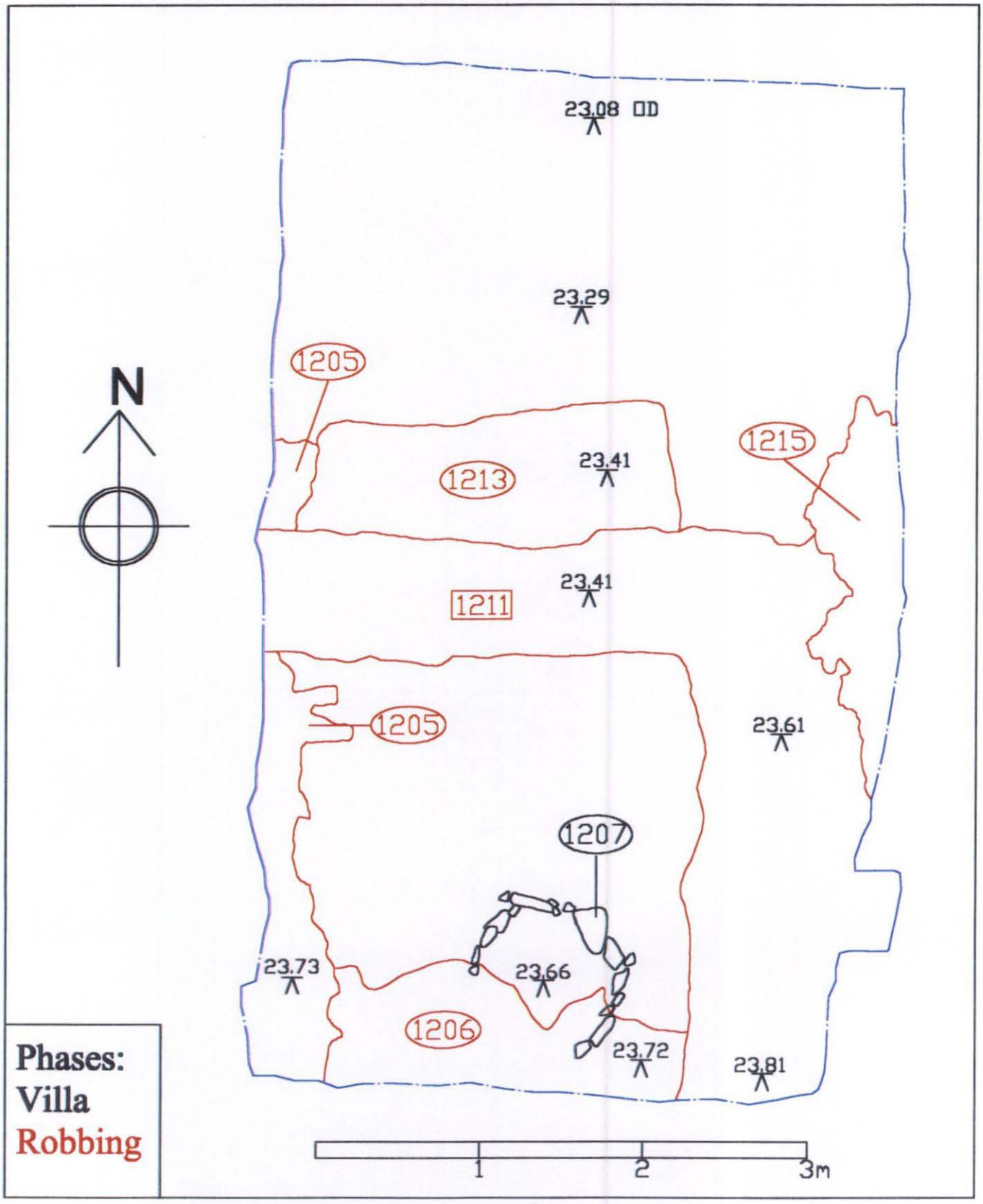


Fig. 9 Plan of Archaeological Features in Trench 13

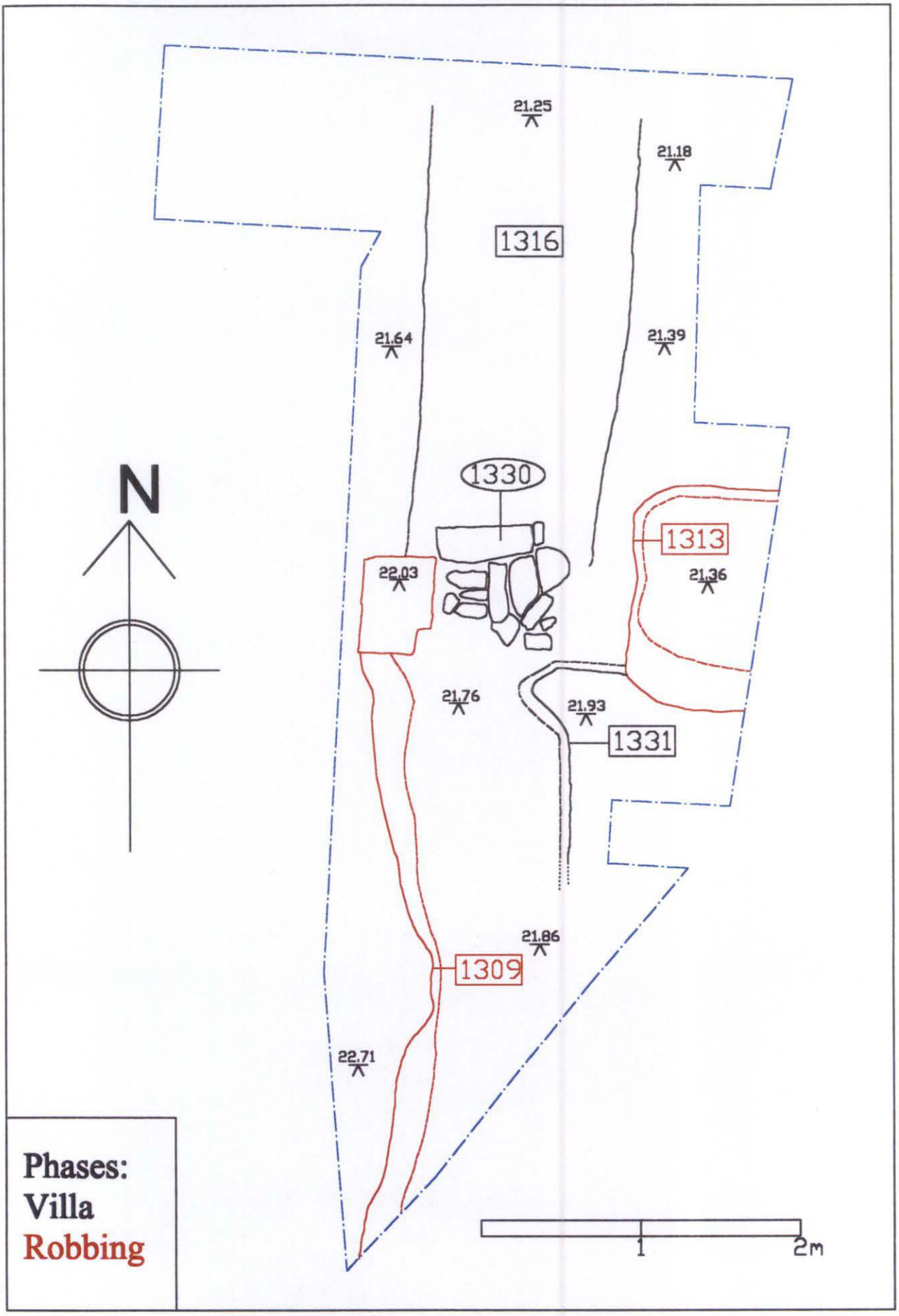


Fig. 10 Plan of Archaeological Features Recorded During Mitigation Excavations

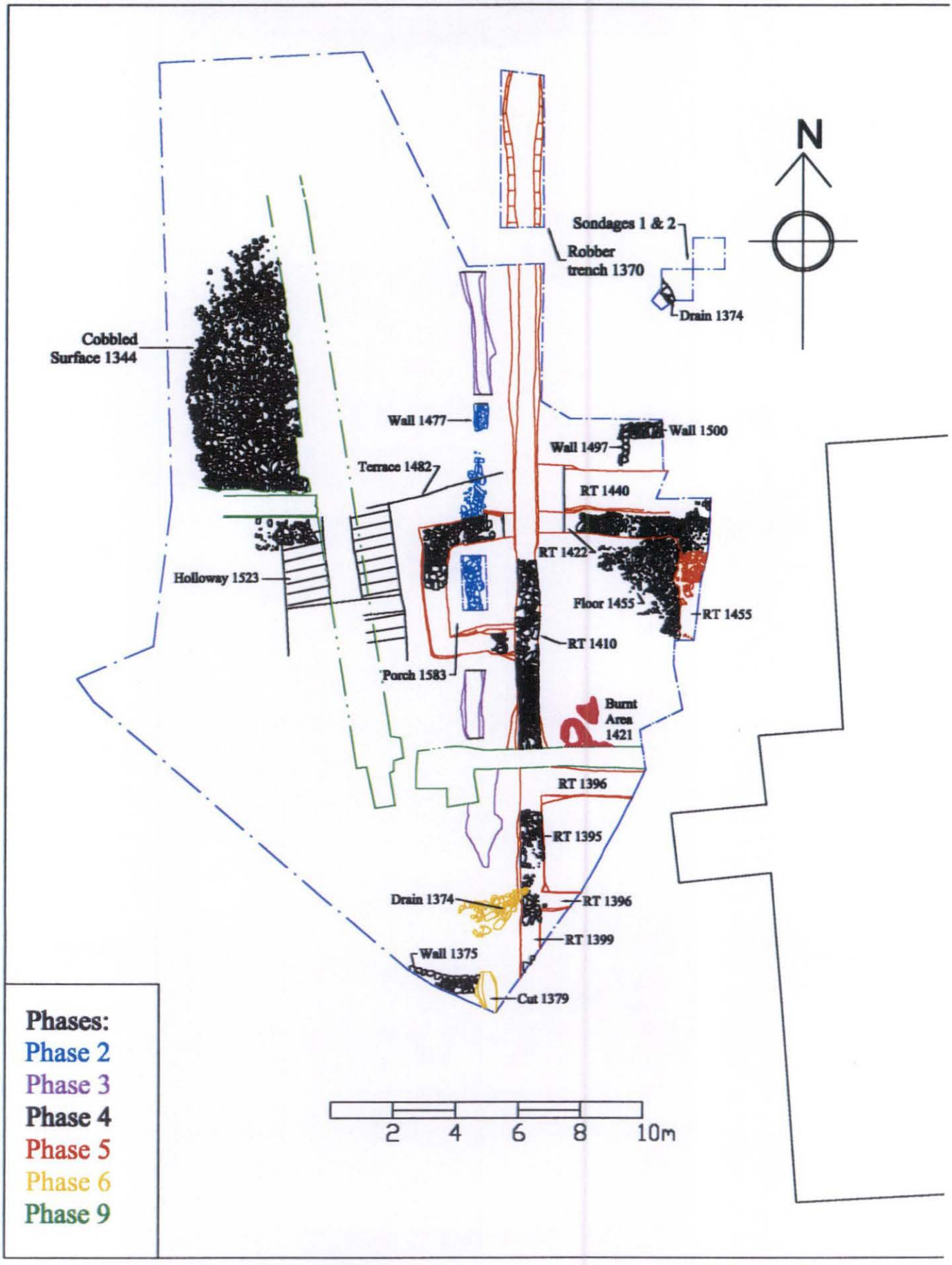


Fig. 11 Phased Matrix of Mitigation Excavations

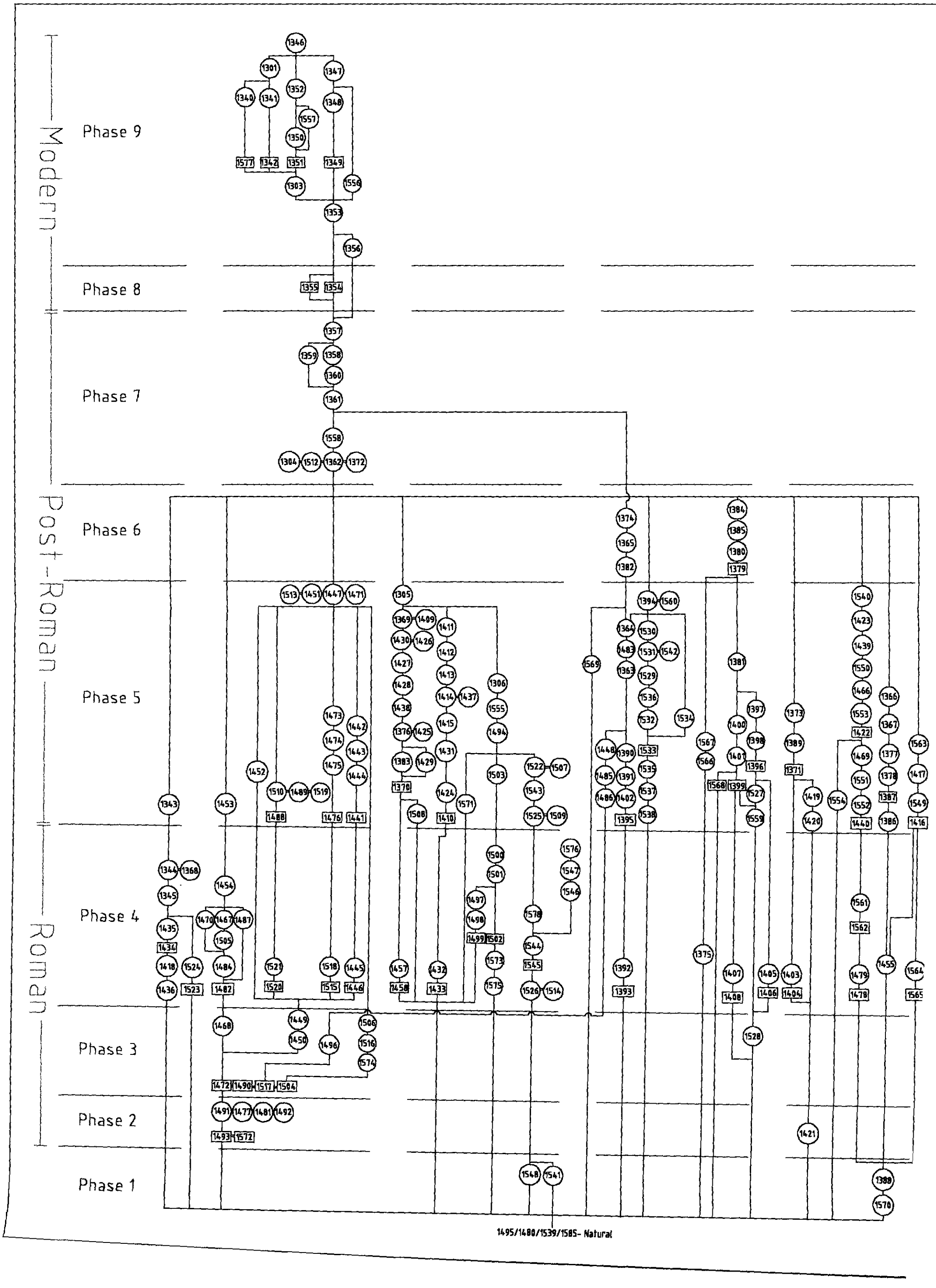


Plate 1 Tessellated pavement 909 and *opus signinum* floor 911, looking east.

Plate 2 Cobbled surface 1344, looking south.

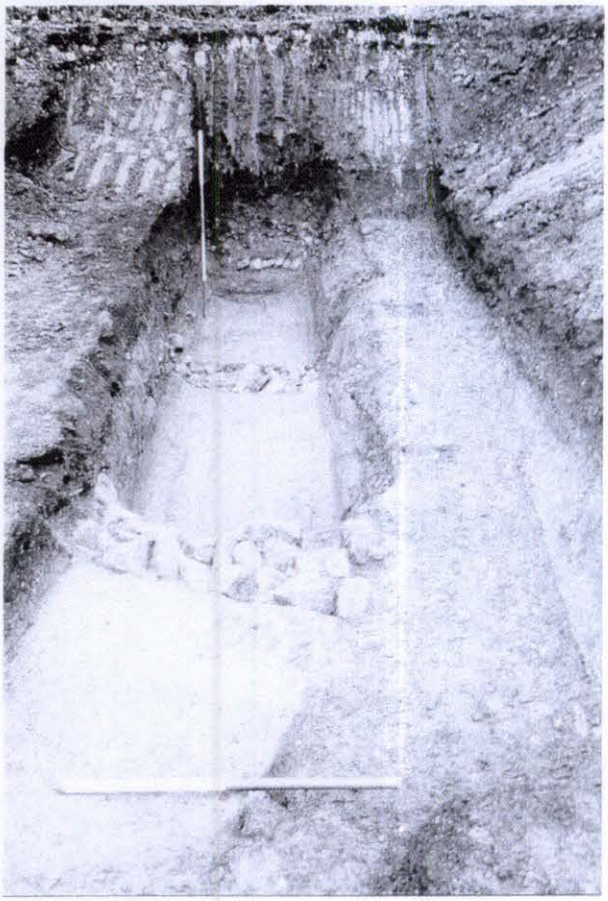


Plate 3
Roman walls in Trench 3, looking east.

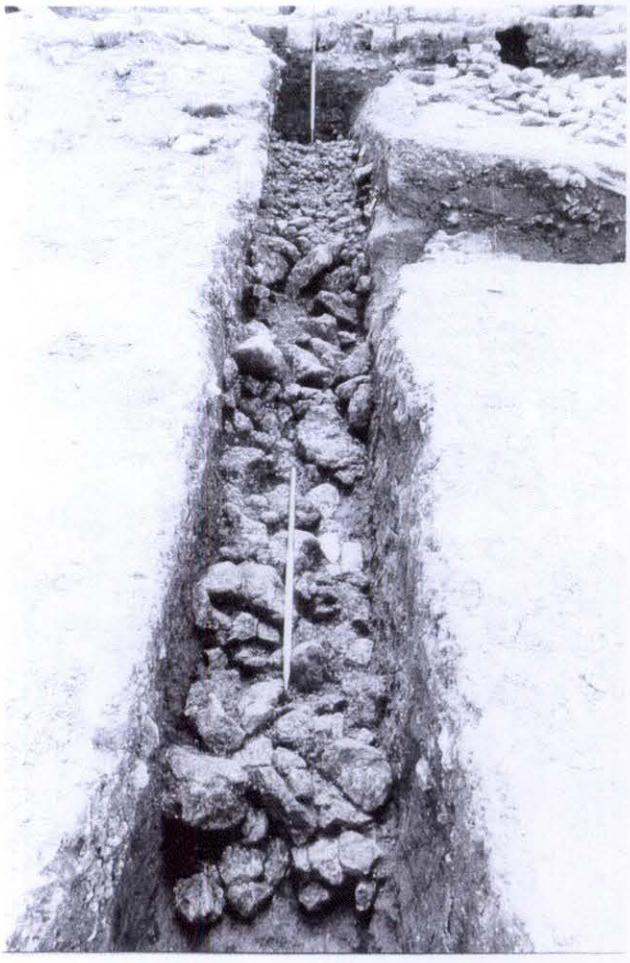


Plate 4
Foundations of west wall of western range, investigated during mitigation excavations. Looking south.

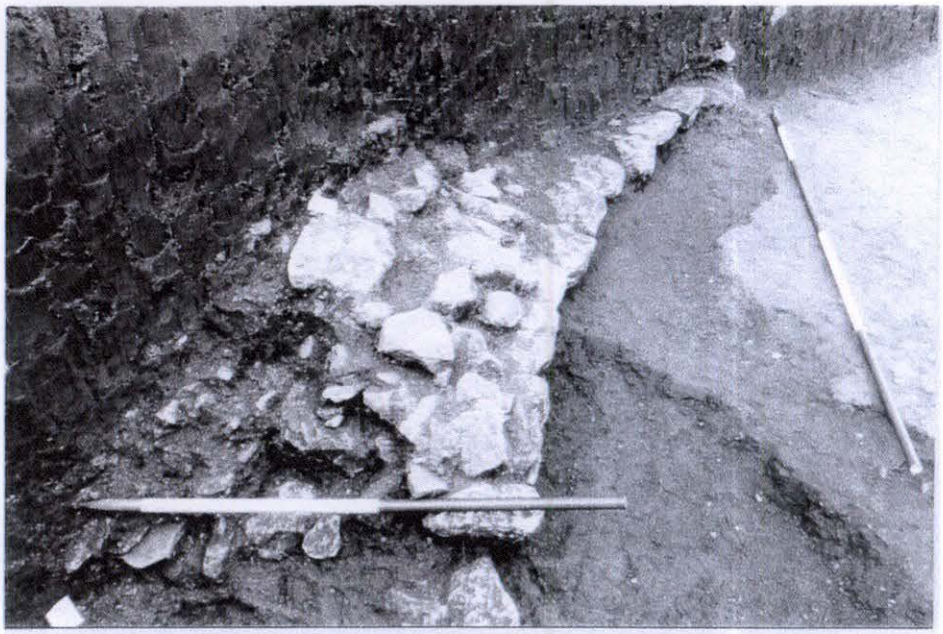


Plate 5
Phase 4 wall 1375, looking west.

Plate 6
Phase 4 drain 1544, seen from above northwest.

Plate 7 View of mitigation excavations, from northwest.

Plate 8 Roman wall revealed by dismantling of modern 'Retaining Wall 1'. Looking east.

10.0. **Appendices**

10.1. **Specification for a Programme of Archaeological Work at the Former Oldfield Boys' School Site, Westmoreland Station Road, Beechen Cliff, Bath.**

Jim Hunter, CgMs Consulting, MA AIFA

Contents:

Introduction

Archaeological and Historical Background

Excavation

Sources Consulted

List of Illustrations

Fig. 1 Site location

Fig. 2 Proposed Trench

Please note that the original number scheme of the document has been retained

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This document presents the archaeological background and a specification for a programme of archaeological work at Prospect Place, Bath (figures 1 and 2). The site currently has planning permission for a development consisting of student residences. The permission includes a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work.

1.2 The site comprises that of the former Oldfield Boys School. It lies between Wells Road Thornbank Place, Oak Street and the Railway line. It sits on a steep north facing slope on the south bank of the River Avon. It thus lies on the opposite bank to the historic centre of the city. The underlying natural substratum consists of a yellow silty clay.

1.3 A Field Evaluation has been undertaken (Beaton 1997, 1998) which concluded that the remains of a Roman sub-urban villa are present on the site. The findings are summarised in Section 2 below. Whilst the structure of the building is sufficiently significant to require its preservation in situ, a deposit of Roman rubble material apparently arising from the demolition of the building is not.

1.4 Preservation in situ will be achieved in the area of the most significant remains. However, in the area of the rubble deposit preservation will be achieved by record in the form of an archaeological open area excavation. In other areas where the development is likely to disturb potentially archaeological deposits record will be in the form of a watching brief.

1.5 Whilst the development will preserve in situ the remains of the Roman building found on the site the adjacent deposits will be affected by the piling and groundworks for the new buildings and the landscaping around them. Although these deposits will not be entirely destroyed it is nevertheless possible that their integrity (and thus their sustainability) will be affected. It is therefore proposed to excavate the rubble deposit and any archaeological features which may lie below it. Record the archaeological deposits and sample them for analysis.

1.6 Following its endorsement by the Archaeological Officer of Bath and North East Somerset Council this document will be used by an archaeological contractor (Bath Archaeological Trust) as a basis for a costing.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The regional and local context of the site has been discussed elsewhere (Beaton 1997, 62-7) and it is not proposed to reiterate that detail in this document. However, the site appears to be an example of a high status dwelling in the vicinity if the Roman settlement but away from its centre. As such it represents a class of monument recognised elsewhere in the environs of Bath but unknown elsewhere in the country. The monument thus has considerable regional significance and, given its rarity, some national significance as well.

2.2 The Field Evaluation work indicated the presence of archaeological remains relating to a substantial Roman building interpreted as a sub-urban villa. The building seems to have been at least 30m (east-west) by 11m (north-south). The high status of the Roman building is avouched by a tessellated pavement over an earlier *opus signinum* floor, fragments of painted wall plaster and box flue tiles.

2.3 Adjacent to the Roman villa was a deposit of rubble apparently consisting of demolition material derived from the villa (1305 and 1306) (figures 3 and 4). This material may well hold information about the structure of the villa and its contents.

2.4 Apparently colluvial deposits (1303 and 1332) were respectively stratigraphically later and earlier than the rubble deposit (1305 and 1306).

3.0 EXCAVATION

3.1 Aims and Objectives

3.1.1 The excavation aims to record the archaeological remains which will be affected by the construction of the student residential block and the landscaping.

3.1.2 The primary objective of the excavation is to preserve by record archaeological evidence within the site which may be affected by development and to attempt a reconstruction of the history of the use of this part site. The following research priorities are identified:

a) to investigate the deposition of the rubble deposit;

b) to investigate the taphonomy of the rubble deposit;

c) to inquire into the history of the site's morphology and use before, during and immediately after the Roman period with particular attention to the degree to which deposition has resulted from natural decay or human agency;

d) to inquire through the above into the nature of the building itself in terms of date, nature and function by all means of analysis available;

e) to record all of the above keeping in mind at all times that the information recovered from this excavation may be crucial to the opportunity presented to future generations who may consider it appropriate to investigate the Roman building itself.

3.1.3 The excavation will provide a full record of the archaeological features preserved in the area and undertake detailed excavation of an appropriate proportion of the remains.

3.2 Field Methodology

General

3.2.1 The excavation will be undertaken in accordance with the guidance of the Archaeology Officer of Bath and North East Somerset Council. It will comprise of the following stages.

3.2.2 Initial machine clearance of area under archaeological supervision to top of interface between contexts 1303 and 1304 (Beaton 1998) to allow an opportunity for soil micromorphological observations to be made. Excavation will then proceed by machine down to the interface between contexts 1304 and 1305.

3.2.3 However, at the eastern limit the excavation area runs close to a sewer pipe. Where the excavation is closer than 3m to the line of the sewer all excavation will be undertaken in accordance with the method agreed with the client's consulting engineers.

3.2.4 Manual cleaning of 1305.

3.2.5 Excavation of 1m wide slot through contexts 1305/6 following the slope of the deposit. Excavation will be stratigraphic but where no obvious differences such as tip lines can be seen within the deposits spits will be removed of a depth no greater than 100mm. All material within the slot will be three- dimensionally recorded.

3.2.6 Any features cutting 1305 will be 100% excavated except in currently unanticipated case of a substantial linear feature where 50% will be excavated. All features will be excavated at least to the point that date and function can be confidently determined. Particular attention will be given to how any data retrieved may address research priorities c) and d).

3.2.7 Following the completion of the above (which will have allowed research priorities a) and b) to have been addressed) the remains of the rubble layer to the west of the slot will be stratigraphically excavated by mini-digger (Kubota or similar) and all material so excavated recorded and retained.

3.2.8 The deposits beneath will be hand-cleaned and any features revealed will be recorded as described in 3.2.5. Particular attention will be given to how any data retrieved may address research priority c).

3.2.9 Some of the deposits to the east of the slot are not threatened by the development as permitted. Therefore, the remainder of 1306 will be removed only if it becomes clear that it is necessary in order for any features revealed beneath the western half of 1305/6 to be properly understood. Any such excavation will proceed as described in 3.2.5 to 3.2.7 above. Particular attention will be given to how any data retrieved may address research priorities c) and d). The final excavation area in this and any other parts of the site which will not be subjected to piling should be covered with terram or a similar permeable membrane prior to backfilling.

3.2.10 The archaeological contractor or their surveyor will accurately survey and set out the trench.

3.2.11 Topsoil and other overburden will be removed by machine (working under archaeological supervision) as described above. The machine will be a tracked 360 degree excavator utilising a wide blade (ditching bucket or similar) with no teeth.

3.2.12 Machine clearance will be followed by hand cleaning across the site to define the extent and distribution of all archaeological features and the subsequent hand excavation of those features.

3.2.13 A base plan, using a total station theodolite or equivalent, of all archaeological features and deposits will then be produced at an appropriate scale.

3.2.14 The first monitoring meeting will be held after the initial clean. Subsequent monitoring meetings may be held at each of the stages outlined in 3.2.4-8 above. These will be arranged during the course of the project.

3.2.15 Recording will be carried out by means of unique numeric based context records and by written, drawn, photographic, audio-visual and all other appropriate means. Palaeoenvironmental and technological samples will be taken where appropriate (see 3.1.3 above). This will be in consultation with Vanessa Straker of the University of Bristol who co-ordinates environmental archaeology in the region on behalf of English Heritage. Samples will be taken for faunal, floral and soil micromorphological analysis. All specialists will have been engaged prior to the start of the fieldwork and will visit the site at appropriate stages of the work. The timetable for such visits will be agreed with each specialist individually. All site plans will be surveyed and co-ordinated with the Ordnance Survey National Grid and prepared for a suitable form of digitisation. Standardised, functionally specific recording forms will be used and drawn records will normally be at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. Photography will employ colour slides, selective colour prints and medium format monochrome coverage. A relational database in common usage must be used for recording purposes. This database must be compatible with Microsoft Access, Foxpro or Dbase, to allow for the integration of data with the SMR which includes the Bath City UAD. Key plans will be digitised as part of the post-excavation assessment

3.2.16 All artefacts recovered will be collected. The appropriate cleaning marking and packaging of these will be carried out in a standardised form in consultation with the recipient Museum in preparation for assessment, possible further analysis and long term curation. In the case of ceramic building material all finds will be washed, a type series established in consultation with the specialist, quantified and a representative sample kept.

3.2.17 All relevant health and safety regulations must be followed. A risk assessment must be carried out ensuring that all potential risks are identified and minimised. A copy should be sent to CgMs and the BANESAO.

3.2.19 The excavation team shall consist of one project supervisor, Derek Cater, at least four excavators and one finds person. They will be under the overall supervision of a project manager, Mark Beaton. The project will run on site for five weeks with a contingency of up to one extra week to allow for unanticipated discoveries/ bad weather. C.V.'s of the project manager and supervisor and other team members are available on request.

3.2.20 A post-excavation assessment of the research potential of the resulting site archive will be undertaken.

3.2.21 A programme of post-excavation analysis will also be undertaken, production of a full archive report and publication of the project results in accordance with MAP 2 (see 3.4 below). This will integrate the results of the above excavation and the watching brief (3.3 below).

3.3 **Watching Brief**

3.3.1 The following activities will be undertaken in the course of the development which may affect archaeological deposits: removal of remaining groundslabs, walls and foundations; formation of site levels and contractors working areas; excavations for all services including drains, chambers, sumps and ducts; excavation for ground beams and slabs; piling works.

3.3.2 The impact of the above works will be mitigated by a watching brief.

3.3.3 At least one archaeologist shall be present on site to monitor all groundworks which will produce an observable face. The contractors on site should be notified by the developer of the need to allow the site archaeologist conducting the watching brief reasonable access to their works for the purpose of recording archaeological remains. In some circumstances, if important archaeological remains are found, works may have to cease for a period of up to two working days, in a particular area, while archaeological recording/sampling is completed. This will constitute a temporary deferment of specific tasks and will permit the contractor to continue working elsewhere on site.

3.3.4 Once the final piling scheme is adopted a representative sample of piles will be chosen for observation if appropriate.

3.3.5 All recording, processing (as described in 3.2 above) and post-excavation assessment and analysis (as described below) will be undertaken in accordance with the methods described in 3.2 above in so far as is possible.

3.4 Post Fieldwork Analysis

3.4.1 A research archive for the site (i.e. all the previous evaluation work, the excavation and watching brief) will be produced in accordance with MAP 2 Appendix 3 (English Heritage 1991) and *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for long term storage* (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation 1990) and *Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission 1992).

3.4.2 Specialist assessment reports will be produced. The following external specialist services are likely to be required: animal bone; Roman and medieval pottery; ceramic building material; soil micromorphology. The names of the specialists will be provided prior to the start of the excavation.

3.4.3 The above archive will be used to produce a report including narrative, illustrations and plans as appropriate. It will give details of the background to the project, the archaeological evidence recorded during the excavation and the archaeological conclusions which can be drawn.

3.4.4 Following completion of the above a review of the post-excavation programming will be held in consultation with the BANESAO and the relevant specialists. At this review stage a timetable including a Critical Path Analysis and the aims of specialist research will be identified and agreed. This timetable will also contain agreed monitoring points.

3.4.5 After that review all specialist reports will be commissioned and the full post-excavation programme implemented through to full archive report and publication.

3.4.6 Data will be prepared for accession to the BANES Sites and Monuments Record.

3.4.7 The material archive and one copy of the site archive will be prepared for accession to the BANES Museum Service. Agreement for the long term curation of the archive must be made with them prior to the commencement of works.

3.4.8 The written archive in microcopy will be submitted to the National Archaeological Record.

4.0 SOURCES CONSULTED

English Heritage 1991 Management of Archaeological Projects (2).

Beaton, Mark 1997 Excavations at the site of the former Oldfield Boys School, Westmoreland Station Road, Beechen Cliff, Bath.

Beaton, Mark1998 Interim report on the excavation of trenches 12 & 13 at the former Oldfield Boys School, Westmoreland Station Road, Beechen Cliff, Bath.

Museums and Galleries Commission 1992 *Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections.*

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation 1990 *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for long term storage.*

10.2. **Table of Finds by Category and Context**

Context	Pottery	Samian	Bone	Tile	Fe	Wall Plaster	Clay Pipe	Glass	Flint	Slag	Sample	Other
U/S	Yes						Yes					
1	Yes						Yes					Painted Plaster
2	Yes											
3	Yes	Yes										
4	Yes		Yes									
5	Yes	Yes							Yes	Yes		
8	Yes		Yes									
9	Yes			Yes								
208				Yes								
300	Yes			Yes								Op.Sig.; Stone
306	Yes											
315				Yes								Tesserae
327						Yes						
409	Yes											
508	Yes											
510						Yes						

700							Yes					
704	Yes						Yes	Yes				
706							Yes	Yes				
707	Yes						Yes	Yes				
709	Yes			Yes			Yes	Yes				
805				Yes								Tesserae
813				Yes								Tesserae
814				Yes								
815	Yes											
816	Yes		Yes	Yes								Op.Sig.; Oyster; Tesserae
905	Yes								Yes			Tesserae
906	Yes			Yes				Yes				Tesserae
907	Yes			Yes					Yes			Tesserae; Mortar
908	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes				Tesserae; Mortar; Stone
913	Yes			Yes								Tesserae
914												Marble
917	Yes			Yes			Yes					
927												Tesserae
931				Yes	Yes	Yes						
933	Yes											
1000							Yes					

1001	Yes			Yes			Yes					
1002	Yes			Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes			
1102	Yes						Yes					
1103	Yes						Yes					
1107	Yes						Yes	Yes				
1112				Yes								
1113									Yes			
1200							Yes					
1203	Yes											
1204	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Oyster
1205	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes			
1207	Yes				Yes				Yes			
1208	Yes				Yes							Tesserae
1210	Yes				Yes							
1212	Yes											
1214				Yes								
1300	Yes				Yes			Yes				Tesserae
1304	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			Tesserae
1305	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Tesserae; Oyster; Pennant
1306	Yes			Yes								Pennant
1307	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes			Op.Sig.

1310	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes			Op.Sig.; Oyster; Pennant
1311	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes				
1315	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes		Yes		Tessera; Limpet
1318	Yes				Yes							
1321	Yes			Yes						Yes		
1322	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes				Yes		Limpet
1323	Yes											
1327	Yes		Yes	Yes								
1329	Yes		Yes	Yes					Yes			Tessera
1343	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes				
1344	Yes											
1345	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes				Tessera
1357	Yes		Yes	Yes								
1361	Yes			Yes	Yes							
1362	Yes		Yes	Yes								Oyster
1364	Yes		Yes	Yes								
1365								Yes				
1366	Yes	Yes		Yes								
1367	Yes		Yes	Yes					Yes			
1369	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes				Tesserae; Op. Sig
1371	Yes		?Ivory									
1372	Yes			Yes								Oyster
1373	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes			Tesserae
1376	Yes		Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes			Tesserae

1377	Yes	Yes			Yes							
1378	Yes	Yes	Yes						Yes			Mortar
1380	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes							Pennant
1381	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes			Tessera
1382	Yes		Yes	Yes								Tessera
1385	Yes			Yes	Yes							
1386	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes			Tessera
1391	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes							Tessera
1401	Yes											
1402	Yes			Yes								
1409	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes				Tesserae; Op. Sig
1411	Yes			Yes								Oyster
1413	Yes		Yes	Yes								Oyster
1414	Yes											
1415	Yes		Yes	Yes						Yes		
1417	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes			Oyster
1418	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes			Yes	Tesserae
1423	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes			Op.Sig.; Tessera
1424	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes			
1425	Yes											
1426	Yes		Yes	Yes								Stone
1427	Yes		Yes	Yes								
1428	Yes			Yes								Tesserae
1429	Yes			Yes								

1430	Yes											
1431	Yes			Yes	Yes				Yes			
1432	Yes			Yes								
1434	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes		Oyster; Tesserae
1437	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes							Tesserae
1439	Yes		Yes	Yes					Yes			Oyster; Tesserae
1442	Yes		Yes	Yes				Yes				Shell; Tessera
1444	Yes				Yes							
1447	Yes			Yes	Yes							Tesserae
1448	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes							Stone; Tesserae
1451	Yes											
1452	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes				
1453	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes							
1454	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes		Op.Sig.; Tessera; Oyster; Stone
1466	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes			Tessera
1467	Yes											
1468	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes				Tesserae
1469	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes							Oyster
1471	Yes											Tessera
1473	Yes											
1474	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes				
1477	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes							Pennant Shingle
1481	Yes			Yes				Yes				
1483	Yes			Yes					Yes			Oyster

1484	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes							Tessera
1485	Yes		Yes					Yes	Yes			Oyster
1486					Yes							
1487	Yes			Yes								
1489	Yes			Yes								
1494	Yes			Yes		Yes						Stone; Snail
1496	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes			Tessera
1497	Yes			Yes								
1500			Yes	Yes								
1503	Yes		Yes		Yes							Oyster
1506	Yes		Yes		Yes							
1507	Yes		Yes	Yes								
1509	Yes											
1514	Yes			Yes								
1516	Yes		Yes									
1522	Yes		Yes	Yes				Yes				Snail
1524	Yes		Yes	Yes								Tesserae
1525				Yes								
1526	Yes		Yes	Yes								
1527	Yes			Yes	Yes							
1534	Yes											Tessera
1540	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes							
1546											Yes	
1547											Yes	

10.3. Evaluation Excavations Context Data

Included on disk within back cover

10.4. Mitigation Excavations Context Data

Included on disk within back cover