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Excavations at 46–50 High Street, Ewell, 1994

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with contributions by
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A small archaeological excavation at 46–50 High Street, Ewell identified features of predominantly Roman date. They consisted of a large pit of 1st–2nd century date, a probable well of 3rd–4th century date, and other pits and layers of various dates. The associated pottery and small finds suggested that these related to domestic activity, while the ceramic building materials clearly indicate the presence of substantial, and well appointed, building(s) at or near the site. A few finds of prehistoric date point to Neolithic and Bronze Age activity. More interestingly, finds, of a piece of window glass and part of a Purbeck marble engaged column, suggest a nearby high-status medieval building.

Introduction

The proposed redevelopment of 46–50 High Street, Ewell aroused considerable archaeological interest because of the prolific quantity of archaeological remains, particularly of Roman and Saxon origin, already known from the village (figs 1 and 2). The redevelopment involved replacing the existing buildings on the site (excluding the listed ones on the west side) with new commercial premises and associated car parking. As the construction of the new buildings would cause some below-ground disturbance (this to consist for the most part of a number of narrow foundation trenches), it was considered that a limited archaeological examination should be carried out in conjunction with the development. This was undertaken by the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU) on behalf of Fleetwood Developments Ltd. Following some observations made during an early visit to the site, the work consisted of a small excavation, which took place after the existing buildings had been cleared from the site (11–15 July 1994), and observation with recording and minor excavation, which took place at appropriate opportunities thereafter during each phase of foundation trench preparation. The site archive has been deposited at the Bourne Hall Museum, Ewell under site code HSE 1994.

Geology

The site of the development lies in an area of varied geology which includes Woolwich & Reading Beds, Thanet Beds and Upper Chalk. The British Geological Survey 1:50,000 map (sheet 270) indicates that the site is underlain predominantly by the Upper Chalk.

This geology has had a strong influence on the village of Ewell, resulting, among other things, in the long, thin shape of the parish, designed to take in the varied landscape resources stretching south to the North Downs (it even had 'outliers' in the Weald to take advantage of the good pasture). The place-name of Ewell means 'river spring', and the mixture of sand and gravel layers between the Chalk and London Clay gave rise to the formation of springs which, in turn, became one of the sources of the Hogsmill river. These springs became an important feature of the village, influencing the choice of settlement for many generations, from as early as the Iron Age to the present day.

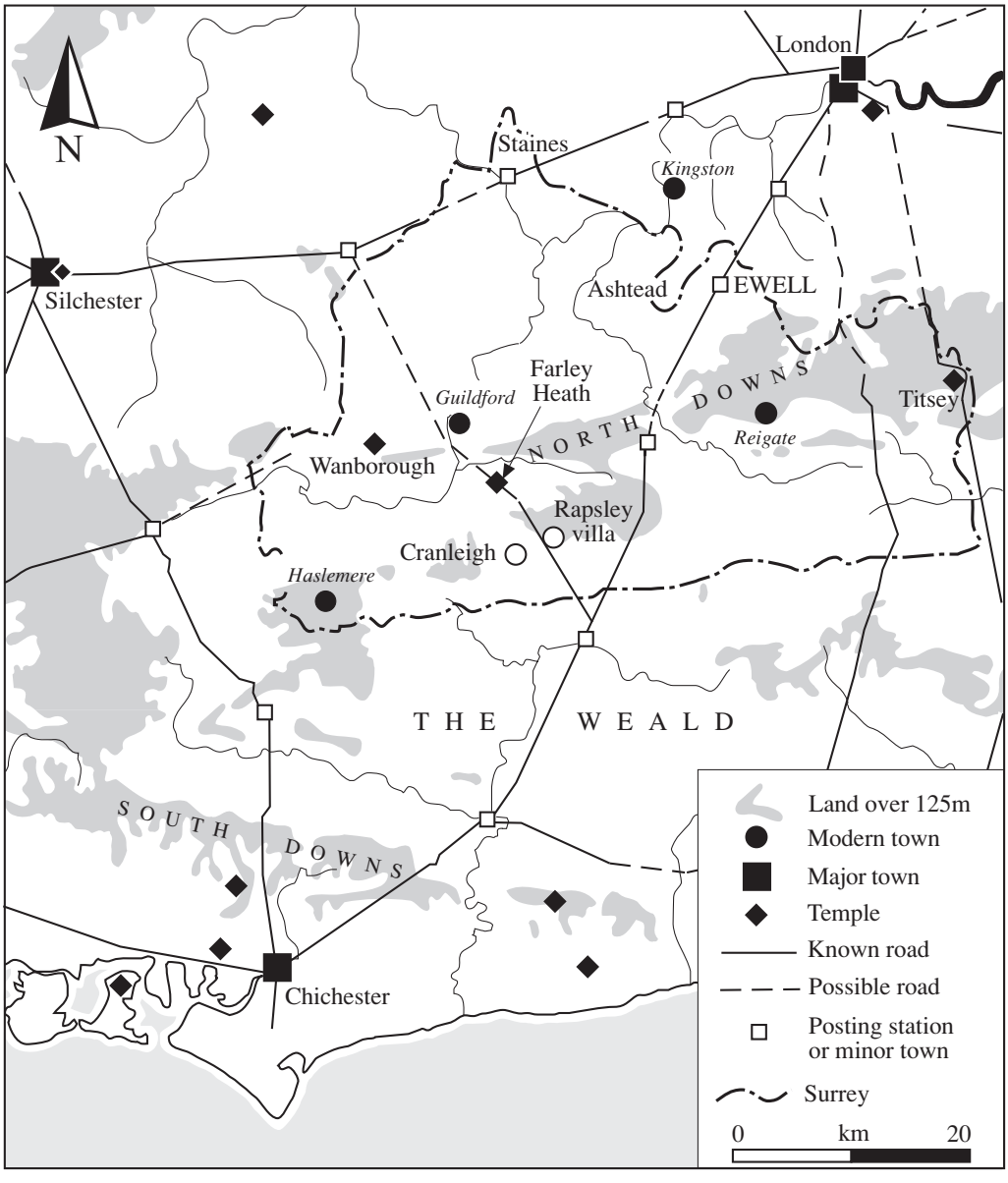

Fig 1 46–50 High Street, Ewell. Location of Ewell, showing some of the principal elements of the Roman occupation of this part of south-east England.

Initial site observations (fig 3)

During a visit to the site on 26 May 1994 three trial pits were partially or fully open for inspection. At 'A' it was only possible to observe the hole to a depth of *c* 0.30m, which was wholly taken up by modern disturbance. At 'B' *c* 0.30m of modern make-up overlay *c* 0.50m of apparently undifferentiated grey/brown sandy soil, with a hint of an occupation surface below. The soil included a piece of Roman brick, but its precise date should be regarded as uncertain. At 'C' *c* 0.30m of very mixed (modern) soils overlay *c*1m of chalk rubble, which included some modern brick. Beneath this were obvious Roman deposits including quite a few sherds of Roman pottery.

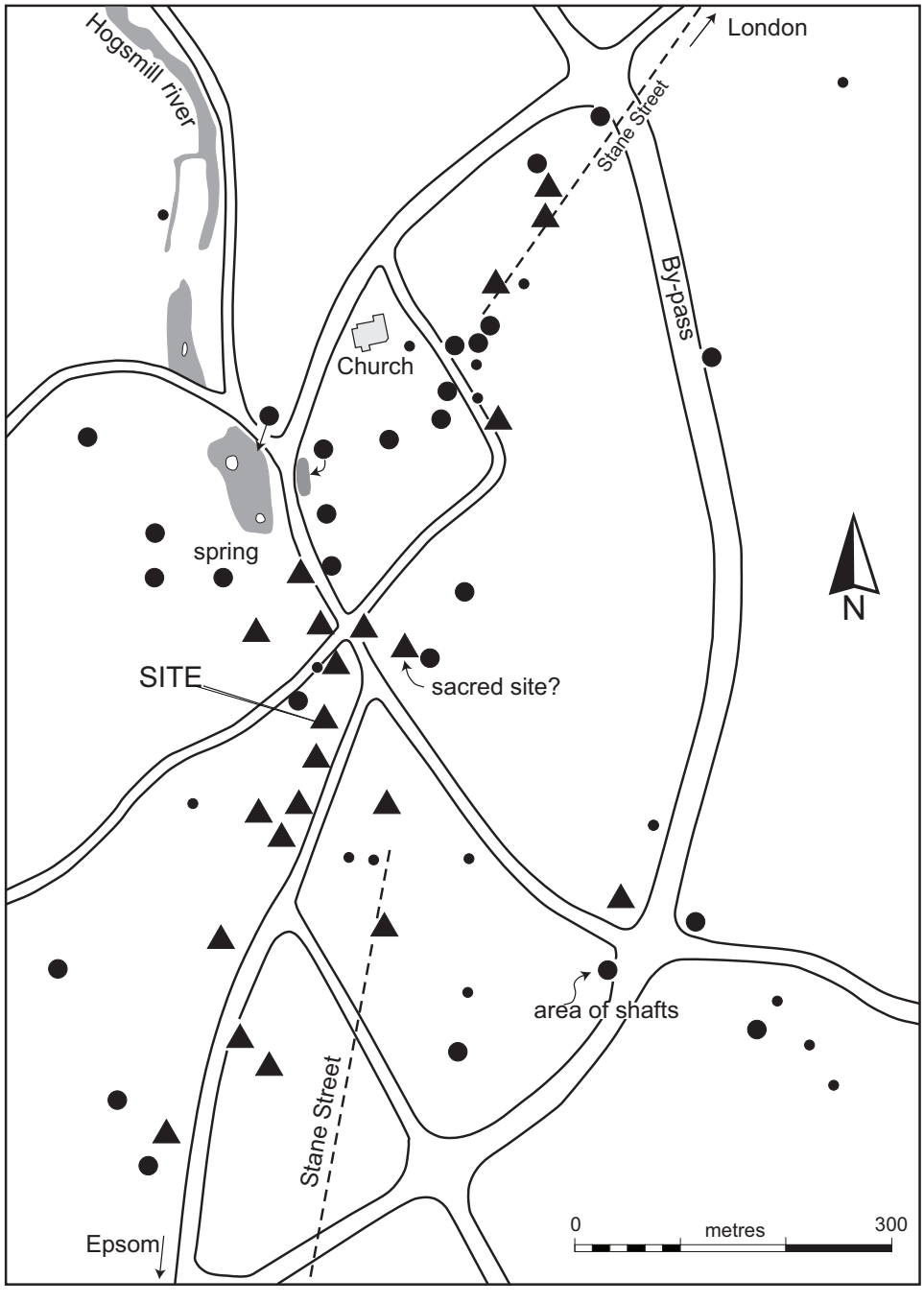

Fig 2 46–50 High Street, Ewell. Location of site relative to other Roman occupation evidence in Ewell. Triangles indicate presence of building materials, larger dots show finds of features, pottery etc, small dots are coin finds only. Based on figure 23 of Bird 2004 (drawn by Audrey Graham and David Bird, after Abdy & Bierton 1997, fig 1)

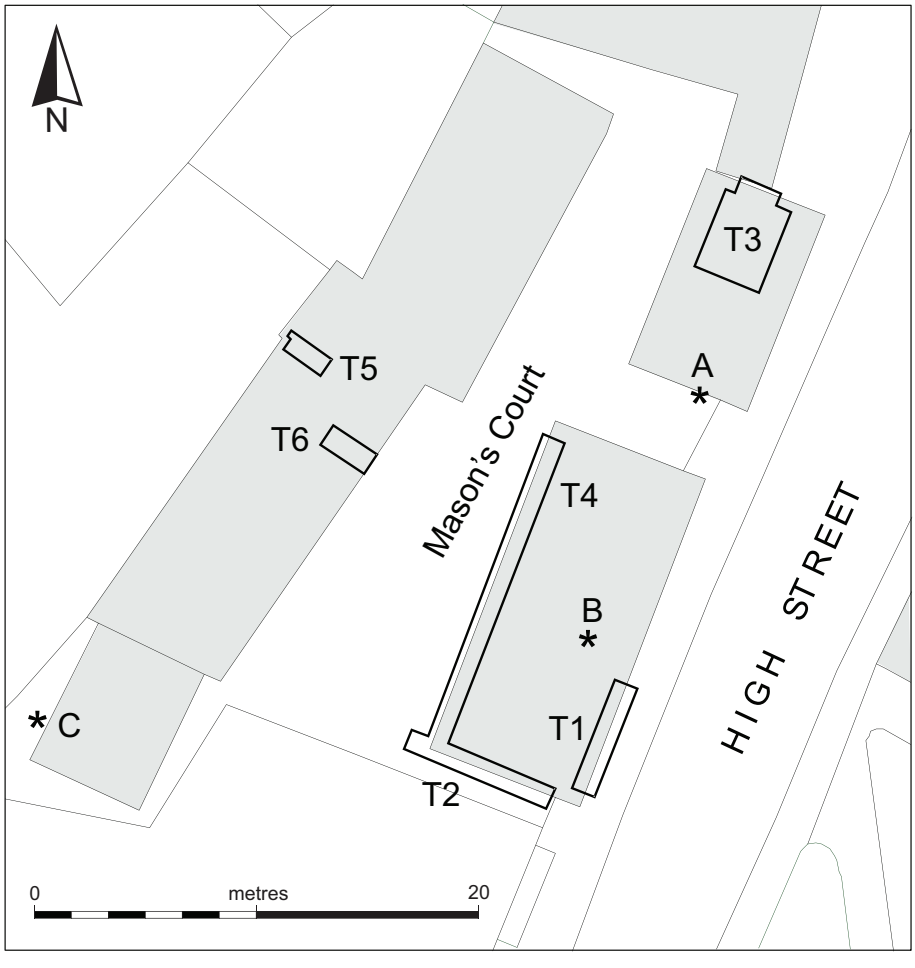

Fig 3 46–50 High Street, Ewell. Location of trenches and observations within the site.

The excavation

Three trenches (nos T1–T3 on fig 3) were excavated at suitable locations along or close to the intended line for the new foundations; these provided adequate sample coverage of the limited area that was threatened by major ground disturbance. The upper levels of these trenches, which consisted of modern soils, levelling deposits and other disturbed ground, were removed under archaeological supervision by a JCB mechanical excavator. The remaining deposits were examined by hand and were removed, where possible, to the level of the natural geology.

TRENCH 1 (fig 4)

With the removal of the modern stratigraphy (100–102) from this trench a soil layer (103) was revealed. Sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the surface of this layer so mechanical excavation ceased at this point and the soil was removed by hand. This produced numerous sherds of Roman pottery, which were mainly of 3rd and 4th century date but included some earlier material, some Roman brick and tile, and two Roman copper-alloy

coins (subsequently identified as a radiate of Victorinus, dated 268–270 and a coin of Arcadius, dated 388–402). Throughout most of the trench, 103 overlay a layer of densely packed fist-sized flint nodules (125), though at the northern end it was of variable depth and overlay a deposit of chalk and flint (126) and a layer of redeposited chalk (127). The removal of these layers revealed an orange/brown clayey layer (128/129) at the northern and southern ends of the trench, and an orange clayey layer (130) and another layer of redeposited chalk (131) in the middle. The pottery recovered from layer 125 is possibly of 2nd or early 3rd century date; no finds were recovered from layers 126 or 127.

The removal of 103 had revealed a pronounced hollow in the centre of 125 and with the removal of 125 itself the hollow was still present, suggesting that both layers had subsided into a large underlying feature. Continued excavation showed that this was indeed the case and led to the discovery of 'pit' 140 (fig 4) which cut layer 128/129. This feature was found to contain various lenses and layers in the upper part of its fill (layers 130–138 inclusive) and one main layer of green/grey soil with charcoal (139) towards the bottom (fig 4, section 1). The excavation of this feature was made difficult by its depth and the narrowness of the trench. To allow access for continued excavation, 'steps' had to be left in the fill and the area in which excavation was possible became progressively smaller. At a depth roughly 3m beneath the present ground level, chalk – thought to be natural – was discovered beneath 139. The excavation of this feature was abandoned at this point for safety reasons . Finds, mainly pottery sherds, were recovered in small quantities from layers 130, 134, 138 and 139 and in all cases the datable material was of 1st–2nd century date.

Finally, the subsoil layer (128 and 129 could now clearly be seen as the same layer) was removed from the trench. The only finds recovered from this layer were pieces of struck flint of prehistoric origin.

TRENCH 2 (fig 4)

After the removal of layers 105 and 106 and much of a 19th century pit (107) by machine, a dark soil layer (108) was revealed. This layer was equivalent to 103 in trench 1 and was removed by hand in two spits (108A and 108B). The finds recovered from 108 consisted of pottery sherds, fragments of Roman brick and tile, several small finds (including a Roman copper-alloy coin subsequently identified as an As of Faustina II dated 161–180), and several pieces of struck flint. The pottery recovered was mainly of Roman date, consisting of a mixture of 1st–4th century date, but included several intrusive sherds of 17th–18th century date from the upper part of 108A. The removal of this layer exposed a spread of flints (124), which was similar to and presumably part of the same layer as 125 in trench 1, the upper fill of feature 123, and an orange/brown subsoil (144) which was equivalent to 128/129 in trench 1. The surface of 124 may have been cut by a small irregularly shaped feature, 118 – the fill of which produced pottery sherds of 3rd–4th century date and a small unidentified strip of copper alloy – but this did not look at all convincing in section and it is perhaps more likely that this was no more than a hollow caused by subsidence into pit 148, which was later found to lie directly below it. The removal of 124 produced pottery and building materials of 1st–4th century date, exposed more of 144, and revealed an area of ground disturbance that marked the location of 148. Pit 148 was not excavated at this stage but was recorded in section (fig 4, section 3) after further work by the developers. A number of sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the section (from layer 148D), but it was not possible to be more specific about the date of this material.

The excavation of feature 123 was attempted, but had to be abandoned at a depth approximately 2m below the present ground surface because of the threat of collapse. More of the soft fill of this feature was removed by the developers at a later date in an attempt to reach more stable ground, but at a depth *c* 3.4m below that of the present ground surface they had abandoned their attempt. The base of the feature had not been reached and groundwater was seeping in at this level. The fill of 123 appeared to be an undifferentiated

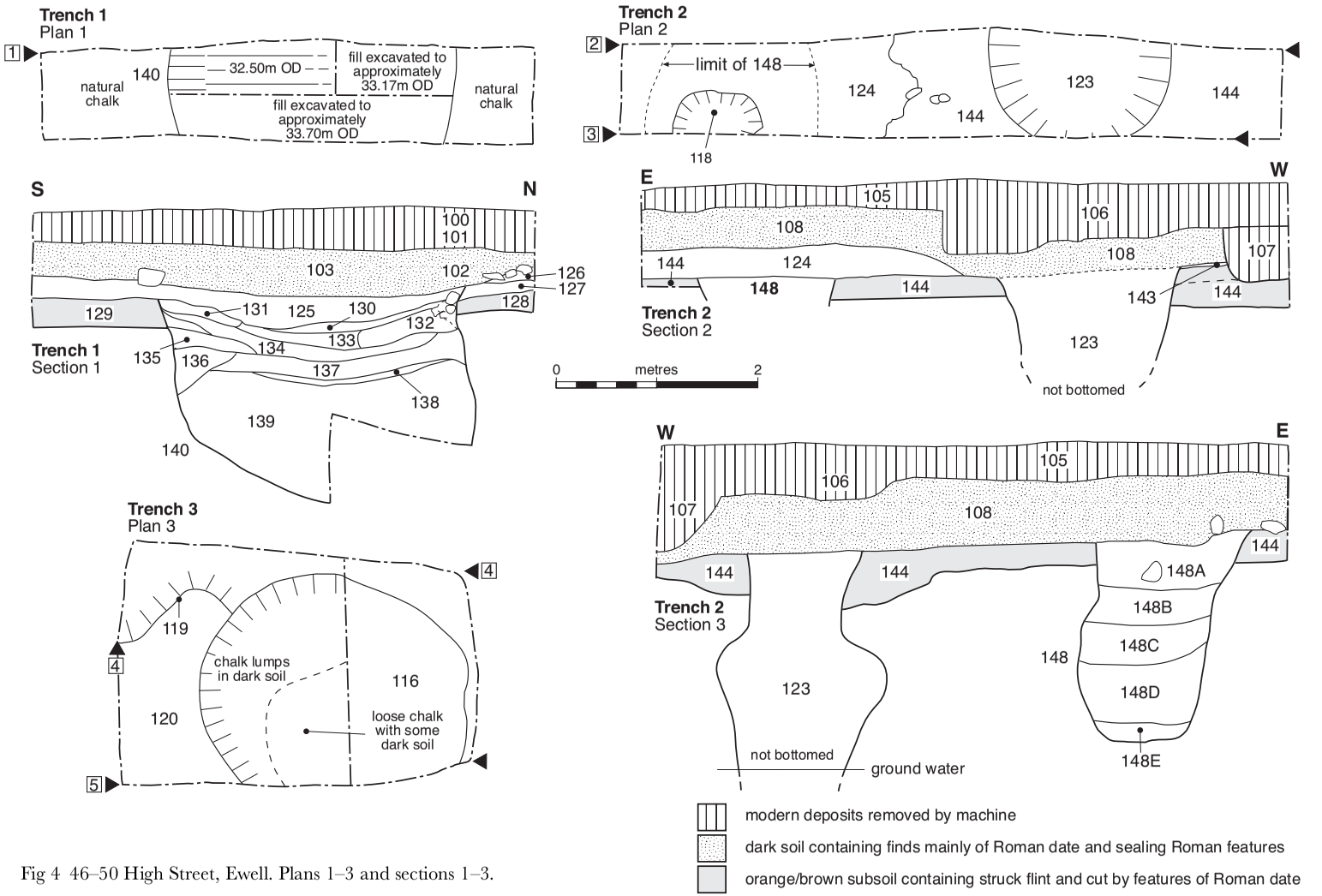

Fig 4 46–50 High Street, Ewell. Plans 1–3 and sections 1–3.

layer of green/grey silty soil that was excavated in a series of spits (123A–123F) and yielded finds which include pottery sherds of 3rd–4th century date, Roman building materials, a copper-alloy coin of Valentinian I, dated 364–375, a copper-alloy belt fitting, two bone pins, some slag, and several pieces of struck flint. Both feature 123 and pit 148 clearly cut layer 144 (which again produced only finds of struck flint), and the layers of natural geology also cut by them consisted of various bands of clean clay and loose chalk. The nature of these layers presumably gave rise to the undercut profile of 123 (and to a lesser extent 148), which was probably caused by slumping of the sides. The shape and depth of 123 indicate that this feature was most probably a well.

TRENCH 3 (figs 4–5)

With the removal of layers 112–115 it was clear that most of this trench was occupied by a single large pit (116), which cut an area of dark soil (117) present to the north and east of it. The pit was sampled to a depth of *c* 1.75m below the present ground surface (fig 5, section 5) and was found to contain a central area of loose degraded chalk, with some brick and tile fragments, surrounded by a dark soily fill with larger chalk lumps and more fragments of brick and tile (fig 4, plan 3). The tile fragments recovered were of indistinguishable medieval or post-medieval type, but the brick was clearly of post-medieval date. A single sherd of medieval pottery of 13th or 14th century date was also recovered from the (outer) fill of this feature but the presence of post-medieval brick indicates that this sherd was present residually. No further excavation of this feature was undertaken once it had been established that it was of post-medieval origin.

Soil layer 117, which was clearly equivalent to 103 and 108 in trenches 1 and 2, was removed and again produced fairly numerous sherds of Roman pottery, mainly of 3rd–4th century date, together with three sherds of 17th–18th century date assumed to be intrusive. Below this, layer 120 (equivalent to 128/129 and 124 in trenches 1 and 2) overlay the natural geology and yielded a small quantity of struck flint when removed. In the eastern part of the trench, 120 appeared to have been cut by a shallow feature (119), but the fill of this was indistinguishable from layer 117 in section (fig 5, section 4). Any finds belonging to this possible feature were collected along with those from layer 117.

Subsequent excavations

Following the main excavation the site was regularly monitored by SCAU and this allowed sections 3 (directly associated with trench 2 and described above), 6 and 7, and pit 159 to be recorded.

TRENCH 4 (fig 5, section 6)

Section 6 was difficult to record properly as it formed one side of a deep, narrow (machine-cut) foundation trench – it was not possible to enter the trench or to clarify the layers observed by trowelling or spading the face. A similar sequence of stratigraphy to that noted in the excavation trenches was observed, however, with 152 being equivalent to 103, 108 and 117, and 153 being equivalent to 128/129, 144 and 120. Context 151, present towards the northern end of the trench, appeared to be a levelling layer of chalk rubble and was probably part of the same layer as that observed in pit C (see above), which was found to contain modern brick and to seal deposits containing finds of Roman date. The subsoil layer (128/129 etc) found elsewhere to underlie the dark ancient soil was only identified at intervals along this section (153), but the apparent absences may be because it was not recognised at certain points. Beneath these layers the natural geology was cut by at least one feature (154).

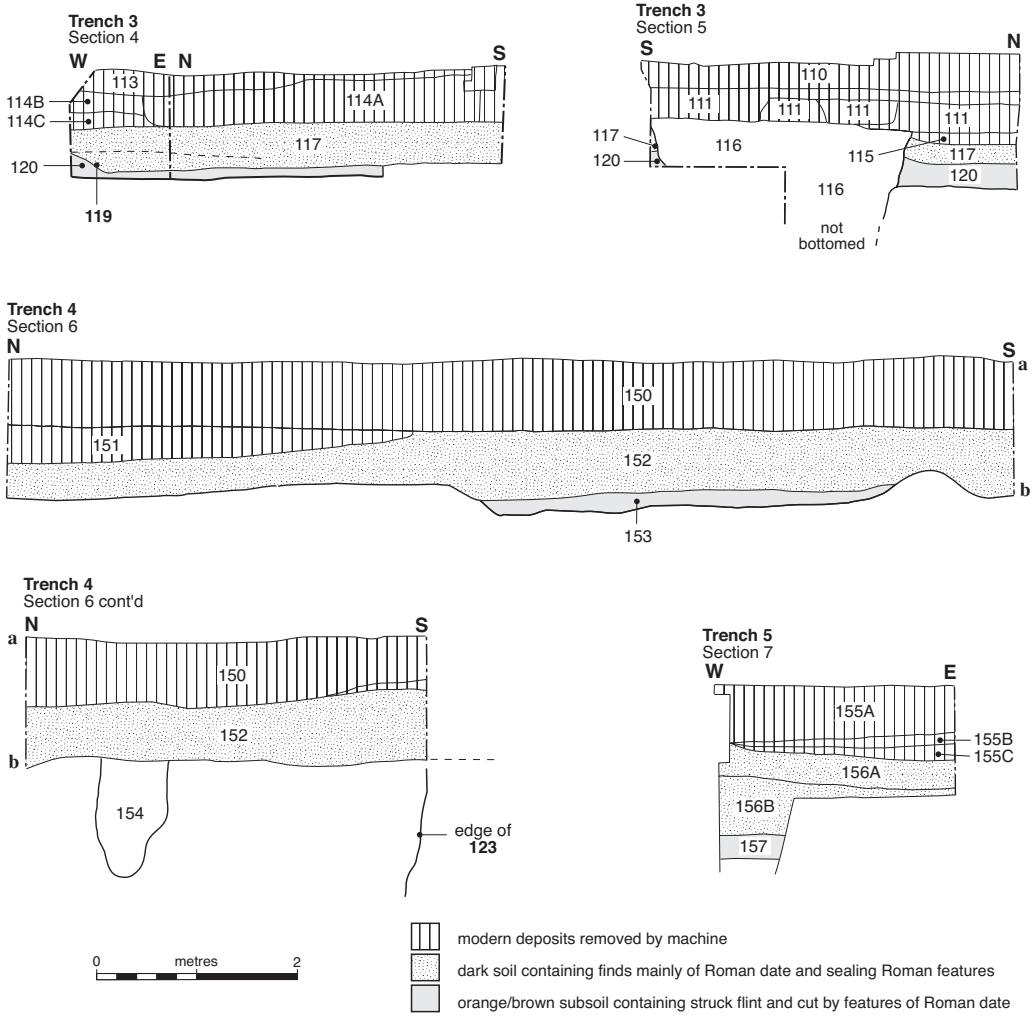

Fig 5 46–50 High Street, Ewell. Sections 4–7.

TRENCH 5 (fig 5, section 7)

Section 7 was recorded inside one of the buildings to be retained on site and formed the north-facing side of a trench dug by the developers to examine the foundations of an upstanding wall. The section shows a similar stratigraphy to that noted elsewhere, with modern layers (155) sealing a dark soil (156 – equivalent to 103 etc), and overlying an orange/brown subsoil (157 – equivalent to 128/129 etc).

TRENCH 6: PIT 159 (fig 3)

This trench was observed within one of the buildings to be retained on site. The dark conditions inside this building meant that this trench could not be satisfactorily recorded, but it is probable that, beneath modern deposits, the upper fill of a large pit was exposed as well as a layer equivalent to 103 etc. The fill of this probable feature appeared similar to that described for pit 123. The limited excavation of this feature that was possible recovered a considerable quantity of bone, several sherds of pottery (possibly of 2nd century date), some Roman tile, and a small lump of fuel ash slag.

The Roman pottery, Suzanne Huson

INTRODUCTION

The excavations produced a small but interesting assemblage of Roman pottery dating from the 1st–4th centuries AD. The majority of this consisted of large, unabraded sherds with a high proportion of rim sherds, suggesting that the material was mostly recovered from contexts of primary deposition.

The total site assemblage was 673 sherds, *c* 13kg and *c* 11 EVEs (estimated vessel equivalents); table 1 shows that features of later date, mid-3rd to 4th centuries, dominate the site and account for *c* 74% of the whole collection. The features include one pit (140) of 1st–2nd century date and a large later pit (123), dated to the mid-3rd–4th centuries, details of which are given below.

METHODOLOGY

All sherds were allocated to a ware or fabric group and are listed below, with references where they are well known and a description where the attribution is problematic. They were then counted, weighed and measured for an EVE within each fabric/ware group. The material was then grouped into early features, 1st–early 3rd centuries, later ones, mid-3rd–4th centuries and unstratified or residual pottery in post-Roman contexts. These groups are summarised in table 1 and full details by context and fabric are given in tables 2–4 (see *Endnote*).

FABRICS/WARE TYPES

Alice Holt/Farnham greywares: 481 sherds; 7290g; 8.49 EVEs
A range of fabrics from the early and late industries was recovered from the site, all fully discussed in Lyne and Jefferies (1979, 18). All the form types from this industry referred to in this report will be preceded by the initials 'AH'.

Grog-tempered ware: 14 sherds; 241g; 0.04 EVEs
Brown surfaces with a grey core and a soapy feel. There is often some burnishing on the exterior. Tempered with numerous grog inclusions up to 3mm and sparse sand and iron minerals of 0.2–0.3mm. Possibly produced at the Alice Holt kilns (fabric G: Lyne & Jefferies 1979, 18).

Shell-tempered ware: 11 sherds; 275g; 0.18 EVEs
Brown/grey surfaces with a grey core. It contained numerous crushed shell plates up to 2.5mm long and sparse quartz sand and iron minerals of 0.1–0.2mm, which are probably in the clay body rather than an added temper. Sparse muscovite mica flakes are visible on the surface.

Coarse Brown sandy ware: 1 sherd; 127g; 0.08 EVEs
A brown fabric with a pale grey surface (possibly self-slipped). Quartz sand inclusions occur in moderate amounts at 1mm and sparsely at <1mm. There are sparse iron mineral inclusions of 0.3mm and sparse to moderate amounts of chalk up to 5mm. Possibly the same sand fabric used for AH Class 9 handmade storage jars (Lyne & Jefferies 1979, 33).

Verulamium region white ware: 11 sherds; 351g; 0.45 EVEs

Dressel 20 Amphora: 53 sherds; 3797g; 0.11 EVEs
All amphorae sherds recovered from the site were of this South Spanish olive oil ware type, discussed in Peacock and Williams (1986, 136–140).

Fine grey: 6 sherds; 22g; 0 EVEs
A pale grey fabric with few inclusions, but sparse amounts of quartz sand and iron minerals of 0.1–0.2mm do occur.

Fine grey and ?gypsum: 5 sherds; 30g; 0.09 EVEs
A pale grey fabric with frequent amounts of white quartz sand of 0.2–0.3mm, rare iron minerals of 0.1–0.2mm, some muscovite mica flakes and moderate quantities of possible gypsum (or some other white mineral that is non-reactive with hydrochloric acid), up to 2mm in size.

Oxidised wares
These divide into a finer (fine oxidised) and a coarser (oxidised) component, although there is some variation in the amount of the tempering in each fabric type.

Oxidised: 37 sherds; 343g; 1.3 EVEs

An orange to dark orange body containing moderate amounts of quartz sand up to 0.5mm and sparse iron minerals of 0.1mm. Some sherds have moderate quantities of muscovite mica flakes up to 0.1mm long, while others have greater amounts of quartz sand, which is of a much more uniform size range of 0.1–0.2mm and is well rounded and sorted. Surface treatments include a white slip, burnishing and, less commonly, a mica slip.

Fine oxidised: 13 sherds; 80g; 0.12 EVEs

An orange/cream body with little visible tempering, although there are sparse iron minerals and rare quartz sand grains of 0.1–0.2mm. Surface treatments include white slip, mica-slip and barbotine dots.

Oxfordshire red colour-coated ware: 2 sherds; 21g; 0.08 EVEs
The fabric is described in Young 1977, 123.

Oxfordshire white ware: 1 sherd; 169g; 0.08 EVEs
See Young 1977, 56.

Cologne colour-coated ware: 2 sherds; 6g; 0 EVEs

Nene Valley colour-coated ware: 3 sherds; 12g; 0.07 EVEs

Colchester type colour-coated ware: 1 sherd; 2g; 0 EVEs

Samian: 32 sherds; 188g; 0.23 EVEs
See below for a catalogue of this material by Joanna Bird.

Table 1 Quantities and percentages (of total assemblage) of Roman pottery

	Early Roman		Late Roman		Unstrat		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No
Sherds	73	10.8	502	74.6	98	14.6	673
Weight (g)	1349	10.4	10209	79.0	1366	10.6	12924
EVEs	1.7	15.1	7.81	69.7	1.7	15.2	11.2
Average		12.1		74.4		13.4	

FORMS

The assemblage is composed of a limited variety of forms. The Alice Holt forms were allocated to their individual type number for the purpose of dating the collection (full details in the site archive), but here are only discussed by their general class for the sake of brevity, except where a type is unusual or very uncommon.

Jars

The early Roman (1st–early 3rd century) material from the site is dominated by cordoned (AH Class 1) jars, and everted rimmed jars (AH Class 3B), in the Alice Holt greywares. There are also two flat-rimmed jars (AH Class 3A) and two bead-rimmed jars (AH Class 4). There are also two large storage jars, one with an everted rim in Coarse Brown Sandy ware and a bead-rimmed jar in Shell-tempered fabric. There is a single jar in Verulamium white ware.

Only two late cordonned jars are found on the site, both AH 1.32 and both from the late pit 123. Approximately half the everted-rimmed jars from the site are from the late Alice Holt industry. However, during the late period flat- and bead-rimmed jars are replaced by hook-rimmed jars and a single example of a necked jar. Other late jars occur in the Grog-tempered fabric.

Bowls/dishes

These form a large proportion of all the AH vessels represented by rim sherds; 38% compared with 55% jars. The early assemblage is a combination of Surrey bowls (AH Class 5), and flat- and triangular-rimmed dishes (AH Class 5A). The straight-sided or 'dog' dish form AH Class 6A, straddles the two periods, the types found on the site being dated AD180–270. The later material consists solely of flanged bowls of AH Class 5B type.

Other forms

The Alice Holt material has examples of a butt-beaker of early date (AH Class 3) and a late flagon (AH Class 8), as well as three lids of AH Class 7 types. The other wares yield two Verulamium white ware mortaria with bead and flange rims dated AD100–140, and a late Oxford white ware mortarium (Young type M17) with an upstanding rim and hooked flange, dated AD 240–300. Among the coarse oxidised fabrics are two bowls and three flagons, one

of which is ring-necked and two with pulley necks. Beakers are represented by body and rim sherds in Nene Valley colour-coated ware, fine oxidised and fine grey/gypsum fabrics.

THE PHASED GROUPS

Early (mid-1st to early 3rd century)

The early material is dominated by the local products of the early Alice Holt/Farnham kilns, mostly in cordonned and everted-rimmed jars, with some Surrey bowls. Regional trade was already taking place in Ewell from an early date as indicated by the presence of Verulamium white, and Colchester colour-coated wares, and internationally traded products were reaching the site, such as the samian, Cologne colour-coated ware and Dr 20 amphorae from southern Spain.

The early assemblage contains a single pit (140) (contexts 130, 134, 138 and 139), in which the pottery, from the unabraded nature of the sherds, would seem to be of primary deposition. It contains mostly greywares and Verulamium products with some amphorae sherds. The fine wares are represented by fine oxidised and samian sherds.

Late (mid-3rd to early 4th century)

A small proportion of the late assemblage is comprised of earlier wares and forms, which are residual in the later features. These are the Verulamium white wares, amphorae, oxidised and samian wares. The majority of the grey wares are from the later Alice Holt industry and the late fine ware imports include the Oxford red and white wares and the Nene Valley colour-coats.

The late material is dominated by a single pit (123 A–F). Very little of this material is residual, mostly the traded wares, samian and the Dr 20 amphorae. The grey wares are dominated by late Alice Holt forms, the everted and hook-rimmed jars, there being only five early types among the material. These can be accounted for by the digging of this late feature through earlier deposits. The late sherds are large and unabraded and the feature would seem to be of primary deposition.

SAMIAN CATALOGUE, by Joanna Bird

Museum reference numbers are shown as eg <1.1>

Decorated

123E Dr 37, EG (Rheinzabern), and probably by Regulinus. <1.1>
He is recorded for the ovolo (*LRF* E26), female figure (*LRF* M246b) and the rosette (*LRF* O47); the other figure is not apparently identifiable. Regulinus' ware is rare in Britain (there is a single bowl from the late group of samian at Shadwell, East London), and his motifs and general style would suggest he belongs among the later potters exporting from Rheinzabern. The thick wall and the untidy turning of the interior of this piece would indicate a date in the second quarter of the 3rd century.

125 Dr 29, SG <1.2>
Rosette is one found on bowls stamped by Aquitanus, from Vindanissa, eg Knorr 1952, Taf 3, C. Hound and hare occur on stamped bowls of several potters, eg Felix, Knorr 1952, Taf 23, A, from Meinz. *c* AD50–65.

Plain

103 Dr 30 or 37, CG, Antonine

104 Dr 45, EG, late 2nd–early 3rd century
Dr 31R/Ludowici Sb, EG (Trier), late 2nd–first half 3rd century

108B Dr 18/31 or 31, CG, Hadrianic–early Antonine. Burnt

117 Dr 31, CG, Antonine
3 sherds, CG, 2nd century

123B Dr 45, EG, late 2nd–early 3rd century. Burnt

123E Dr 31, CG, Hadrianic–early Antonine
Sherd, CG

123F Dr 31 sherd, CG, Antonine
Sherd, CG

123F/G/H Dr 45, EG (Trier), late 2nd–first half 3rd century
Dr 35, SG, Flavian
Sherd, CG, closed form, ? Ritterling 13 (inkwell), Hadrianic–Antonine

124 Dr 27, CG, Hadrianic–early Antonine
Dr 27, CG, Hadrianic–early Antonine (5 sherds, probably all 1 vessel)
Dr 27, SG, Flavian–Trajanic (7 sherds, probably all 1 vessel. Inside worn away at bottom – used for mixing)
Dr 33 sherd, CG
2 sherds, CG
125 Dr 37, SG, early to mid-Flavian
Dr 37, SG, early to mid-Flavian

The other finds, by Suzanne Huson

Museum reference numbers are shown as eg <2.1>

WORKED FLINT

Sixty-one humanly struck flints were recovered from the site (table 5: see *Endnote*), only two of which are tools – an awl (context 117 <2.1>) and a scraper (context 108B <2.2>). The collection is generally poor and undiagnostic, but most pieces probably date to the Bronze Age.

COINS, by Peter Guest

Copper alloy

1 Penny of George III, dated 1807 (101) <3.1>
2 Radiate of Victorinus, dated 268–270 (103) <3.2>
3 Coin of Arcadius, dated 388–402 (103) <3.3>
4 As of Faustina II, dated 161–180 (108B) <3.4>
5 Coin of Valentinian I, dated 364–375 (123A) <3.5>

DRESS ACCESSORIES

Copper alloy

6 Belt fitting (108A) <4.1>
Flat, thin cast plate, which widens to one end and this wider end has 4 studs along its length. The tapering end is plain.
L. 39mm; W. (max) 54mm; Th. 1mm
7 ? Belt fitting fragment (123D) <4.2>
Triangular strip of sheet with a rivet in one corner and broken along the opposing side. Quite corroded.
L. 15mm; W. (max) 19mm; Th. 1mm

Bone

8 Pin, Crummy type 3C (123F) <4.3>
Roughly spherical head with a semi-circular lower half and slightly conical upper half. The shank is slightly thickened in the centre.
L. 78mm; D. 3mm
2nd–4th century
(cf Crummy 1983, 21 no 288)
9 Pin, Crummy type 3D (123F) <4.4>
Hemispherical head with the shank slightly thickened in the centre.
L. 79mm; D. 4mm
2nd–4th century
(cf Crummy 1983, 21, no 309)

EQUIPMENT

Copper alloy (108A)

10 Handle, ? from knife <5.1>
Circular in section, tapering to the junction with the iron ?blade, where it is now broken. Circular collar at the junction.
L. 63mm; D. 8mm
11 ? Spatula (123F) <5.2>
Tang of circular section, tapering to the end, where there is a flat, stepped down blade/dish of rectangular section.
L. 76mm, D. 5mm, W. 8mm, Th. 2mm
1st century
(cf Goodburn 1984, 58, no 216)

Stone (103)

12 Whetstone fragment <5.3>
Fine grained, mica sandstone.
L. 35mm; W. 26mm; Th. 14mm
13 Quernstone fragment (123E) <5.4>
? Upper stone with tooled grinding surface.
175g; Th. 36mm

MISCELLANEOUS

Copper alloy

14–15 Two unidentifiable strip fragments. (118; 123B)
(full details in site archive)

Iron

16–18 Three badly corroded and unidentifiable fragments (108A; 123F; 125
(full details in site archive)

STRUCTURAL FINDS

Iron

19 Hook (108B)
Strip bent at one end to form a hook with a rounded end. Broken at the other end.
Possibly structural.
L. 157mm; W. 37mm, Th. 5mm
20–32 Nails (table 6: see *Endnote*)
Nine are of Manning (1985, 134) type 1b, one of type 5, and three are shank fragments.

Window glass

33 Small fragment (103)
Medieval

SLAG

Small quantities of slag and hearth lining were recorded from context 123, and a possible further piece from context 130 (table 7: see *Endnote*).

BUILDING MATERIALS, by Suzanne Huson

Table 8 (see *Endnote*) gives the weights for the various types of building materials, both Roman and medieval/post-medieval that were recovered on site. Although the absolute quantities are relatively small (*c* 10.6kg of Roman and *c* 2kg medieval/post-medieval), a full range of Roman tile types is represented, and includes *tegula*, *imbrex*, floor and box-flue tiles. These probably originate from a building of some status, particularly the box-flue tiles, which represent a quite sophisticated heating system.

The medieval/post-medieval material is a mix of peg-hole roof tiles and brick. A single block of Purbeck marble, in a trefoil shape and probably originating from an engaged column, is also of medieval date <6.1>. In addition, 960g of stone, which may or may not have been used for building purposes, was retained (see archive for details).

ANIMAL BONE, by Jane Robertson

The bones were identified to species where possible with reference to the comparative collection at the University of London Centre for Extra-Mural Studies, Russell Square. Ribs and vertebrae were not identified to species, but were assigned to 'cow size' or 'sheep size'. All identifiable ovicaprid bone was assigned to sheep, with no distinction made between sheep or goat.

A total of 388 fragments of animal bone was recovered from nineteen different contexts of Roman date. Although the contexts can be broadly divided into earlier and later Roman, the small size of the assemblage and the problems of residuality mean that further division of the animal bones is not appropriate. Two hundred and sixty one fragments (67.3%) were unidentifiable to species of which 167 (43%) were cow size and 71 (18.3%) were sheep size. One hundred and twenty seven fragments (32.7%) were identified to species representing cow (27.6%), sheep (26.8%), horse (26%), pig (11%), bird (including chicken) (5.5%), dog (2.3%) and deer (0.8%).

There was some evidence of butchery in the form of chop and cut marks on cow, sheep and pig bones and evidence of dog gnawing. The lower tusk of a boar displayed evidence of wear associated with animals kept in a pen (compared with the sharp tusks of a wild pig). Two fragments from context 139 showed signs of mineralisation, giving them a stone-like appearance.

Discussion, by Graham Hayman and Rob Poulton

The archaeological work undertaken at 46–50 High Street, Ewell has identified features of Roman date sealed beneath a dark soil layer containing numerous finds which, save for a few pieces believed to be intrusive, are all of Roman or earlier date. This layer was overlain by a variable modern stratigraphy that included a levelling layer of redeposited chalk lumps in the western part of the redevelopment area, and itself overlay an orange/brown subsoil, which only contained finds of prehistoric (probably Neolithic and Bronze Age) origin and was cut by the features of Roman and later date.

The Roman features consisted of a large pit of 1st–2nd century date (140), a deep feature of 3rd–4th century date which is thought to be a well (123), two further pits of non-specific Roman date (148) and (159), and two pits which remain undated but seem likely to have been of Roman origin because of their stratigraphic location (119 and 154). In addition to these features the localised stony layer (124/125) was clearly deposited during the Roman period, though exactly when remains uncertain. The layer clearly sealed pits 140 and 148, the former being securely dated and the latter perhaps most probably belonging to the earlier part of the Roman period because of this relationship, so a 2nd–4th century date is most likely and is supported by the finds recovered. It was initially thought possible that this layer might have been deposited as part of a trackway or other 'surface', especially given that it was on the east side of the site, closest to where the putative line of Stane Street might be expected (fig 2); however, as it was only discovered in trenches 1 and 2, it now seems more likely that it was deliberately dumped over the top of pits 140 and 148, probably to counteract subsidence, and sank into these features (creating surface hollows) as the fills of each settled.

Owing to the small size of the excavation, little can be said about the overall significance of these features, but they do indicate that this part of Ewell was being used at different times throughout the Roman period. Furthermore, the presence of deep pits/wells on the site is a phenomenon familiar from other locations within the Ewell settlement – as at the King

William IV site a short distance to the north-west (Orton 1997) – though its significance remains unclear. The small finds and pottery from these features point to predominantly domestic activity, with the inclusion of dress accessories such as: a belt fitting and hair pins; personal equipment like the spatula; and more general domestic equipment such as the pottery, a whetstone and a quern. There is, however, some slag, which is indicative of iron smithying processes on or near the site. The ceramic building materials clearly indicate the presence of substantial, and well appointed, building(s) at or near the site.

The remaining features discovered on the site all appeared to be of post-medieval date. The only one of these to be sampled by excavation was 116, which was by far the largest and may have been a well. Ideally it would have been desirable to continue the excavation of this feature until a more secure date for it had been established than that indicated by the presence of post-medieval brick in the upper levels. This was not a practical option, however, because of its depth and the circumstances surrounding the excavation. It is interesting to note that one of the very few medieval finds recovered from the site was a sherd of 13th or 14th century pottery present residually in the fill of this feature. Other medieval finds include a piece of window glass and part of a Purbeck marble engaged column. These are slight, but probably significant, indicators of the presence of a high-status medieval building nearby.

Endnote

The tables listed below are available on the Archaeology Data Service website (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/surreyac/v95.cfm). Copies of this material will also be deposited with the Society's library, Guildford and the Historic Environment Record, Woking. Photocopies can also be supplied by post – enquiries should be addressed to the Hon Editors, Surrey Archaeological Society, Castle Arch, Guildford GU1 3SX.

TABLE

2 Quantities by fabric and context of early Roman pottery
3 Quantities by fabric and context of later Roman pottery
4 Quantities by fabric and context of unstratified or residual Roman pottery
5 Types of struck flint by context
6 Nail types by context
7 Slag weights by context
8 Building materials types by context

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