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## Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in March 2003 by Foundations Archaeology at 1 Cripps Road, Cirencester (NGR: SP 022 018). The evaluation involved the archaeological excavation of a single test trench within the footprint of the proposed development, to enable an assessment of the archaeological remains prior to the determination of a planning application.

Archaeological deposits dated to the Romano-British period were identified.

## GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### *Archaeology*

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

### *CBM*

Ceramic Building Material.

### *Medieval*

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500.

### *Natural*

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

### *NGR*

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### *OD*

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

### *OS*

Ordnance Survey

### *Post-medieval*

The period from *circa* AD 1500 onwards

### *Romano-British*

Term used to define the fusion of indigenous Iron Age traditions with invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated AD 43 to *circa* AD 410.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In March 2003 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation at 1 Cripps Road, Cirencester (NGR SP: 022 018). The work was commissioned by the landowner Mr Leigh Chapman.
- 1.2 A programme of archaeological works was required in advance of the determination of a planning application for a change of use on the ground floor to shop/office. A small extension will also be constructed to provide a first floor flat.
- 1.3 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994, revised 2001). The Project Design prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2003) was produced in accordance with a brief supplied by Charles Parry of Gloucestershire County Council (1996/2000), in order to comply with Planning and Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) and the archaeological policies of Cotswold District Council. The code of conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists was adhered to throughout.
- 1.4 This document presents the findings of the archaeological evaluation.

## 2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 No. 1 Cripps Road is located in the centre of Cirencester and within the occupation area of the Roman town. The site is situated at a height of *circa* 109m OD. The area of the extension is positioned on the western side of the building, on ground currently used as a car park.

## 3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The town of Cirencester lies in southeast Gloucestershire towards the southern end of the Cotswold Hills. The geology within the town perimeter is predominately Quaternary gravels (Darvill & Gerrard, 1994).
- 3.2 Cirencester is widely recognised as being of archaeological and historical importance, with extensive archaeological remains.
- 3.3 Cirencester was an important Romano-British town (*Corinium*), which is believed to have become a provincial capital or *civitas*.
- 3.4 A site background will be available once a full search of SMR information has been completed; this will be included in the full report.

## 4 AIMS

4.1 The aims of the evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains.

4.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the following specific objectives as stated in the Project Design (Foundations Archaeology 2003).

i) to define, identify and record any archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible.

ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site.

iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 A single trench measuring 1.5m by 1.5m, was excavated by hand within the footprint of the proposed extension (Figure 2).

## 6 RESULTS

6.1 The evaluation trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.21m below the existing ground level (108.20m OD). Natural deposits were not revealed as sufficient depth for the foundations had been reached. A wall, two cuts and a series of layers dated to the Roman period were identified. These were overlaid or cut by Post-Medieval and modern deposits.

### *Romano-British deposits*

6.2 Layer (112) was the earliest deposit revealed within the evaluation trench. It was an orange brown/mid brown friable clay silt sand with lenses of 'pea' gravel. It contained fragments of limestone, Roman pottery, CBM, oyster shells and charcoal. This layer was cut by [110] and [113].

6.3 Feature [113] was a steep sided linear orientated southwest-northeast. The cut was visible within the trench for a length of 0.70m, a width of 0.48m and a depth of 0.35m. The northwestern edge of the feature was highly disturbed and could not be clearly determined. The cut contained (114), a mid to dark brown clay silt fill, with frequent limestone fragments, animal bone, oyster shells and Roman pottery. The linear was overlaid by layer (104) and it was also slightly overlaid and possibly cut by wall [107].

- 6.4 Feature [110] was a possible pit cut, with a width of over 0.86m and depth of 0.30m, which was present in the western corner of the trench. Due to the small sample present within the trench, it was not possible to confirm the exact nature of this feature. It contained (111), a dark brown clay sand silt, with frequent limestone fragments, Roman pottery, animal bone and CBM. The feature was cut by wall [107] and overlaid by layer (105).
- 6.5 Wall [107] was orientated northeast east-southwest west and was visible for a length of 1.06m, with a width of 0.42m and a height of over 0.20m. The wall cut had straight sides with a slightly curved base. The wall was constructed of large sub-rectangular limestone blocks on the north, west and south sides, with an inner limestone rubble core (108). The eastern part of the wall had been removed by a Post-Medieval/modern cut [115], probably during the construction of the extant building. The wall was of dry-stone construction and no evidence of mortar was present. The wall survived only one course deep and was set onto a dark brown/grey brown silt clay fill (109), which was present for a depth of 0.20m. Fill (109) contained Roman pottery, animal bone, a small piece of copper alloy wire and CBM. The wall was cut into the top of feature [110] and sealed by medieval layer (104).

#### *Medieval/Early Post-medieval*

- 6.6 Layer (105) consisted of a brown/grey brown silty clay, which contained frequent limestone fragments and gravel inclusions, with animal bone, CBM residual Roman pottery sherds and a sherd of 17<sup>th</sup> century imported German stoneware. The layer was present for a depth of 0.25m, was overlaid by layer (103) and abutted layer (104).
- 6.7 Layer (104) consisted of a limestone rubble deposit, with a dark brown/grey brown silty clay fill, with medieval pottery, CBM and animal bone. The layer was present for a depth of up to 0.30m and was overlaid by layer (103).

#### *Post-Medieval/modern*

- 6.8 The eastern side of the trench contained cut [115], which was parallel to the side of the house. The cut was present for a width of up to 0.26m and depth of 0.32m. The cut contained (106), a dark brown silty clay fill, with Post-Medieval and Roman pottery, CBM and animal bone.
- 6.9 Layers (104), (105) and cut [115] were all sealed by (103), a dark brown silty clay make-up layer, up to 0.42m thick, with occasional limestone fragments and gravel inclusions. The layer contained a mix of residual Roman pottery, Post-Medieval and modern pottery, animal bone and CBM. This was in turn sealed by (102), a compact limestone rubble/concrete hardcore layer, up to 0.15m thick. This was overlaid by a layer of tarmac (101), up to 0.10m thick.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Romano-British deposits of 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century date were revealed within the evaluation trench.
- 7.2 The partial wall [107] present within the trench was a large substantial construction, most probably the lower course of a foundation for a Roman building.
- 7.3 The function of [110] and [113] can not be determined from the small sample present within the trench. However, both of these features are Roman in date and pre-date wall [107].
- 7.4 The site contains significant Roman deposits, present from a depth of 0.55m from the modern ground surface. The proposed foundations will be excavated to a maximum depth of 0.9m and will, therefore impact on the surviving features.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## APPENDIX 1

### Pottery Report by Dr J R Timby

A small assemblage of 27 sherds of pottery and four fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) was recovered during the archaeological work. The material is quite well preserved with an overall average sherd weight of 15 g. Most of the sherds date to the Roman period accompanied by two Medieval and one post-medieval sherd. The Roman material is typical of that to be expected from Cirencester with a mixture of local, regional and imported wares. The material ranged in date from the 2nd through to the 4th century. Amongst the continental imports were Samian and a sherd of Gallic wine amphora. Regional wares include examples of Dorset black burnished ware, Savernake ware, Oxfordshire colour-coated ware and New Forest colour-coated ware.

The Medieval sherds, both from context 104, are from the Minety industry, whilst a piece of imported German stoneware was recovered from context 105.