CHAPTER 5

MAPPING THE INTERIOR

INTRODUCTION

The insula numbering system that has been applied to Silchester derives from the sequence in which the Society of Antiquaries excavated the site in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, which was in a far from systematic order. The atlas presented here is in geographical order (fig. 5.2); however, for ease of finding features referenced in other works, this concordance is provided between the insulae numbers and each map sheet:

TABLE 5.1. CONCORDANCE OF INSULA NUMBER, INTERIOR MAP SHEET AND FIGURE REFERENCES

<table>
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<th>Insula</th>
<th>Interior</th>
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<td>II</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Figs 5.28–30</td>
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<td>III</td>
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<td>IV (Forum)</td>
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<td>Figs 5.50–52</td>
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<td>IX</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Figs 5.15–17</td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Figs 5.12–14</td>
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<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Figs 5.12–14</td>
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<td>XII</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Figs 5.3–5</td>
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<td>XIII</td>
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<td>Figs 5.25–27</td>
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<td>XIV</td>
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<td>Figs 5.25–27</td>
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<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Figs 5.25–27</td>
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<td>XVI</td>
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<td>XVIII</td>
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<td>XIX</td>
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<td>XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>XXI</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Figs 5.19–21</td>
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<tr>
<td>XXIIa/b</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>XXIII</td>
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<td>Figs 5.6–8</td>
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<td>XXIV</td>
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<td>Figs 5.6–8</td>
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<tr>
<td>XXV</td>
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<td>Figs 5.3–5</td>
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<td>XXVI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Figs 5.3–5</td>
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<tr>
<td>XXVII</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Figs 5.19–21</td>
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<tr>
<td>XXVIII</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Figs 5.32–34</td>
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<tr>
<td>XXIX</td>
<td>10 and 11</td>
<td>Figs 5.32–37</td>
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The images

The images are orientated to the street-grid, which is 4.1 degrees off National Grid North. Three plans are shown of each area. The first in each set shows the Antiquaries’ plans (positionally adjusted) superimposed over the modern OS Carto plan of the town and some smoothed contour lines derived from the LiDAR data, at 0.25 m intervals, to give an impression of the topography of the interior. The Antiquaries’ plans as originally published showed the walls of the buildings in multiple shades of black and grey; sometimes comparison with the text suggests these represented phases, sometimes they represented walls that had or had not been robbed out. No consistent interpretation can be drawn from the shading except for some kind of relative difference, be it chronological or structural. In the digitisation and reproduction here the differential shades have simply been reproduced. The text is that of the Antiquaries’ plans, so there are various archaisms such as calling the Mansio the Hospitium. The location of other post-Antiquaries excavations has also been shown. Also the Antiquaries gave each building within an insula a sequential number that started afresh for each insula; so an image containing two insulae may contain two ‘House 1’s. In the text these are referred to with their insula number as well for clarity (e.g. House IX.1).

The second plan shows the fluxgate gradiometry results on a greyscale of ±7 nT for the interior and ±2 nT outside the walls where the magnetic contrast in readings is much lower. This is superimposed onto the same OS Carto image as the above.

The third plan shows an interpretation of the fluxgate gradiometry with the Antiquaries’ plans and also additional RCHME aerial photographic evidence. The interpretation of RCHME has been preferred above that of Boon (1974); but where he did suspect there were significant additional buildings, this is indicated in the text. The background here is the LiDAR data, again to give a feeling for the topography without having modern features from the OS intrude.

History of interventions

This section lists the dates and directors of all the known interventions in that area within the Town Walls. Those excavating sections outside are dealt with when discussing the exterior plans. Reference is made to the primary excavation report, if there is one, or the most extensive description, if there is not.

Additional near-contemporary accounts

This section cites additional near-contemporary literature. Some are interim reports, but there are other types of report as well. During the Victorian and Edwardian excavations the works received great publicity. The directors gave lectures to learned local societies which were noted and transcribed in proceedings, and visitors came and were guided around the site. Sometimes a small amount of additional information can be found in these accounts that supplements the final reports.
Description
The objective in this section has been to give a short succinct description, without repeating the significant room-by-room detail that appeared in the Antiquaries’ reports, drawing out indicators of sequence and development, even if dating may be highly problematic. So, if a building plan can be analysed and a phasing has been suggested, this is highlighted. If new features have been revealed by the geophysical survey, these are highlighted. Secondary literature where the remains featured is also cited here, particularly in relation to debate over interpretation. If there is a short unreferenced quotation, it is from the primary Antiquaries’ report for that insula.

![Atlas Key Diagram](image-url)

**ATLAS KEY**

**Fieldwalking Ceramics**
Numbers refer to Corney's pottery groups
- Tile scatter
- PC:13 - Pre-Claudian
- CN:21 - Claudio-Neronian
- FH:36 - Flavian-Hadrianic
- AE:96 - Antonine/Early 3rd century
- LR:76 - Late Roman

**Aerial Photography**
Based on Bewley & Fulford, Corney & NMP
- Buildings
- Small ditches
- Major ditches
- Hard surfaces (roads, banks)

**Earlier Cartographic Features**
Features now gone which can be last seen on the following maps:
- The Silchester tithe map 1841
- MacLauchlan's survey 1850
- From OS maps during 1850-1899
- From 1970s plan of amphitheatre
- Structures demolished in 20th c.

**Earlier Excavations**
- Reasonably accurately located
- Precise location unknown

**Modern Cartographic Features**

**Fluxgate Gradiometry Results**
- Interior sheets
- Exterior sheets

**Fluxgate Gradiometry Interpretation (on LiDAR background)**
- Spikes, dipoles with readings >10 nT
- Features / Pits > 10 nT
- Features / Pits > 7 nT (interior only)
- Features / Pits > 2 nT
- Modern disturbance from fences, cables, pipes etc.
- Linear feature positive and major linear
- Linear feature negative
- Roads and central drains
- Antiquaries’ trenches
- Cemetery area
- Noise indicative of buildings
- Modern features, such as recent field boundaries
- Possible buildings (exterior only)
- Antiquaries’ excavation plans, locationally adjusted
- Additional walls from geophysics (interior only)
- Additional walls from aerial photography (interior only)

FIG. 5.1. Key.
The Antiquaries divided their finds into ‘houses’ and ‘blocks’. While Joyce, Monro and Langshaw had used the term ‘block’ to refer to their trenches, the Antiquaries meant by it simple houses or strip buildings, as opposed to more complicated houses. Their method of numbering the houses, block buildings and pits varied from season to season. Sometimes Arabic numerals were used, sometimes Roman. The pits usually had letters, though sometimes nothing at all. These have been faithfully reproduced in all their variety on the plans. To create a measure of consistency in the text all are referred to by the troika of ‘feature class’-‘insula’-‘number or letter’, e.g. House XVII.1, Pit I.A or Block XXIII.III. Where mosaics have been referred to the citation in Neal and Cosh is given, as this volume represents the latest scholarship, and also reproduces in colour the original mosaic paintings by Fox now stored in the archive of the Society of Antiquaries. Additional buildings have been given new numbers in the Antiquaries’ sequence. The only variation in this is within Insula IX where Fulford and Clarke’s excavation references have been given to the new buildings discovered there.

Notable finds

The reporting of finds from the Antiquaries’ excavations was notably variable, just like the retention of the finds, so this section is unavoidably slightly haphazard and inconsistent, as are the original reports.

FIG. 5.2. Index to the Interior.
INTERIOR 1: INSULAE XII, XXV AND XXVI (FIGS 5.3–5)

HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS

1866  House XXVI.3 was excavated as ‘Block IV’ (Joyce 1881a).
1894  Excavation of Insula XII (Fox 1895, 457–9).
1900  Excavation of Insula XXV (Fox and St John Hope 1901, 241–2).
1900  Excavation of Insula XXVI (Fox and St John Hope 1901, 242–3).

ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

‘Block IV’: lectures (Joyce 1873, 15; 1867a, 494); a discussion (Hilton Price 1887).
Insula XII: a lecture (Fox 1894; Fox et al. 1895a); a note (Fox 1899b, 84).
Insulae XXV–XXVI: a note with some details (Anon. 1901); a lecture (Fox et al. 1901).

DESCRIPTION

The road between Insulae XXV and XXVI was said to be very ill defined.

Insula XII

Insula XII comprised only a small triangular segment, having been seriously truncated by the town defences (see Exteriors 9 and 13). The Antiquaries’ trenching only revealed a circular furnace and two squarish buildings at the north-east corner; Block XII.I to the north was paved with square tiles, while south of it Block XII.II had a hypocaust (Boon 1974, hypocaust 160, 258; plan 189). They appeared to be entirely detached, though the geophysical survey hints that they may be part of a larger building. A pit at the south-east angle of the insula, infuriatingly not shown on the Antiquaries’ plan, was reported to contain a dozen complete pots.

Unfortunately the fluxgate gradiometry in this area was totally dominated by metallic noise from tent pegs, bottle tops and other material from the campsite used for the 1997–2014 Insula IX excavations. Additional structures have been added from the RCHME aerial photographic evidence (Bewley and Fulford 1996). Boon, however, thought he saw even more and included an additional south-facing corridor building half-way along the eastern side and three buildings on the southern side perpendicular to the road (Boon 1974, foldout plan). These have not been included as the source images which led to the interpretation could not be verified.

Insula XXV

Insula XXV was one of the Antiquaries’ least productive areas; there were ‘hardly any’ pits and it contained only two blocks along the main north–south road. Traces of a linear feature inset and parallel to the Town Wall could be seen here which may indicate an intra-vallum road.

Blocks XXVI.I and II were both simple rectangular structures perpendicular to the road. The most northerly, Block XXVI.I, had long flues in it which the Antiquaries associated with dye works, whereas Boon just called them ‘sheds’ and associated them with a large barn on the north-west corner of House XXIV.2 on the other side of the road (Boon 1974, 256). The geophysical survey suggested a series of major pit-like features with strong readings in the south-east corner, on the main north–south road.

The Inner Earthwork showed itself clearly here, and two of the features the Antiquaries identified as pits close to Block XXV.II may have gone down into it although this elicited no further comment.

Insula XXVI

Insula XXVI was fairly sparsely occupied, and the Antiquaries found ‘hardly any’ pits in their trenching. Boon linked all the buildings in the north-west part of the insula together with those on the other side of the road in XII to form in his mind an agricultural farmyard. House XXVI.1
FIG. 5.3. Interior 1 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
FIG. 5.4. Interior 1 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
FIG. 5.5. Interior 1 – interpretative plan.
lay at its heart with the ‘threshing floor’ to the south (Block XXVI.II) superseded by Block XXVI.III, and associated with them the square building or granary (Block XII.I) and hypocaust (Block XII.II) on the other side of the road (Boon 1974, 261). House XXVI.1 was a simple corridor house with a portico and pavilions on the south-facing side (later single-corridor type, Berry 1951) (Boon 1974, layout 189, 191).

House XXVI.2 comprised insubstantial remains, though aerial photography suggested this might be related to the more substantial House XXVI.3 to the east.

House XXVI.3 lay at an angle to the street-grid which had previously been excavated by Joyce (his ‘Block IV’). This was his least interesting building excavated yet, ‘which may well be consigned to oblivion’ (Joyce 1881a, 330). In origin it probably began as just the north–south range; this then had an east-facing portico added to it; this itself then turned eastwards adding another set of rooms. Finally a porch was added at a different angle linking the complex to the street which was on a different alignment (Boon 1974, 192). The mosaics within the rooms do not help clarify the date (Mosaics 321.90–2, Neal and Cosh 2009, 231–2). Both geophysics and aerial photography suggest the addition of a few walls indicating that the structure is a lot more complicated.

Block XXVI.1 was a small square structure in the north-east corner. Aerial photography suggests there were others in the vicinity and perhaps a two-roomed building adjacent to the road. The geophysical results also suggest this building is a two- to three-roomed corridor building, aligned to the north–south road.

Blocks XXVI.II–III: Block XXVI.II was an 8.2 m diameter circular feature of flint rubble sealed by opus signinum, with a 0.22–0.30 m wide vertical-sided gully around it. This may be the remains of an earlier roundhouse with a Romanised flooring, although alternative interpretations as a dovecot (Chambers 1920, 191) and a threshing-floor (Boon 1974, 257) have been suggested. This structure was later sealed by Block XXVI.III, a simple two-room rectangular building.

**NOTABLE FINDS**

The 1900 season finds in Reading Museum have better provenance records than many. Pit XII.B yielded a dozen complete pots, deposited deep down in three distinct layers.

**INTERIOR 2: INSULAE XXIII AND XXIV (FIGS 5.6–8)**

**HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>House XXIII.1 excavated as ‘Block III’ (Joyce 1876b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Excavation of Insula XXIII (Fox and St John Hope 1901, 229–37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899–1900</td>
<td>Excavation of Insula XXIV (Fox and St John Hope 1901, 237–41).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>In Insula XXIII: Trench B across Inner Earthwork (Boon 1969, 6–9).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS**

‘Block III’: lectures (Joyce 1867b; 1873, 15); a review of work undertaken (Hilton Price 1887). Insulae XXIII–XXIV: a note (Anon. 1901); a lecture (Fox et al. 1901.

Trench B: an interim report (Boon 1958a, 13–14).

**DESCRIPTION**

**Insula XXIII**

Insula XXIII had two main buildings in its southern half together with a series of smaller structures; the Antiquaries found a ‘considerable’ number of pits, and the southern half appeared to be walled from the street. The aerial photography and the geophysical survey revealed a couple of additional small buildings on the western side; otherwise only a few additional walls to
FIG. 5.6. Interior 2 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
FIG. 5.7. Interior 2 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
FIG. 5.8. Interior 2 – interpretative plan.
House XXIII.2 were added. The northern half had fewer features, and the edges of the road were less well defined in the Antiquaries’ excavation.

**House XXIII.1**, in the south-west corner, had been excavated by Joyce, though the plan was enhanced by the Antiquaries. In origin it had two main ranges, to the north and east, which were unified by a portico to create a courtyard house adorned with a large number of mosaics and tiled flooring; one mosaic was considered to be possibly second century (Mosaics 321.73–6, Neal and Cosh 2009, 226–7; Williams 1971, 180; Cosh 2001, 235–6). Walthew commented upon the similarity in layout to the north wing of the villa at Lantwit Major (Glam.) where the heated and well-furnished rooms projected out into the main courtyard (Walthew 1975, 202–3). Apart from the mosaics, Joyce observed one other curious feature which he interpreted as the remains of a strong-box built into the floor of one of the rooms (Joyce 1876b; Boon 1974, 197, 206). An imaginative reconstruction can be found in Liversidge (1968, 80). See also Boon (1974, Joyce 25, 73, photograph 34, gaming-board 151, layout 192, decorative columns 200, tile flooring 208, barn and pigstye 256, 260).

**House XXIII.2**, in a central eastern location, comprised three ranges which had been brought together by a unifying portico. All three were irregularly aligned to the grid by about 18 degrees (Fox 1948, 175). One mosaic in the northern range was potentially second century in date, while another in a pavilion off the western range is possibly later second century (Mosaics 321.77–80, Neal and Cosh 2009, 227–8). Walthew made parallels with the east wing of Ditchley villa or the wing rooms of periods 2 and 3 at Boxmoor in the furnished and heated pavilion (room 18) projected out into the courtyard (Walthew 1975, 202). In origin it perhaps developed out of the western range, in essence a double-corridor building (early double-corridor house type, Berry 1951). The geophysics suggest the northern range also once had a double portico. Just to the south within the courtyard was **Block XXIII.I**, a possible shrine — a small building with a raised wooden floor and blocks suggestive of columns — though Boon at another point thought it might be a granary (Boon 1974, 160, 257). It had been built on top of a similar building on a fractionally different alignment which had a coin of Marcus Aurelius in its flooring. It was noted that the possible shrine was aligned with the western and earlier range of House XXIII.2, so imagined as being contemporary. Perring discussed Block XXIII.I suggesting its position meant it was a clear focal point in the garden. ‘Gardens are appropriate locations for small outdoor shrines, in which the dialogue between nature and order, established in the layout of peristyle and garden, could sensibly be extended’ (Perring 2002, 182).

Overall Boon considered the collection of buildings to have an agricultural function, with the granary (or shrine) to the south, the blocks to the north (which included a possible hypocausted drying-floor), and the Ironwork hoard from Well XXIII.2 which contained agricultural tools (Boon 1974, 260). See also Boon (1974, alignment 47, mosaics 73, 216–17, 345, 347, design 96, extension to link to street 190, layout 189, 192).

**Insula XXIII south-east corner**: Pit XXIII.I, to the south of House XXIII.2, cut through the rubble and plaster remains of an earlier building. This pit and Pit XXIII.III appear to be substantial on the geophysics, and there is a comparable pit-like feature due south. It may be these relate to a substantial post-pit-built structure on the corner of the insula.

**Blocks XXIII.II–IV**: the north-east corner had three small blocks within it, of which Block XXIII.II had a channelled hypocaust. The excavators thought all these might form part of a house whose upper layers had been obliterated. The geophysics gave no indication of any other walls.

**Insula XXIII north-west corner** had a number of hearths recovered within it, possibly associated with a small roadside building revealed by the geophysics. The traces of the Antiquaries’ diagonal trenches are also very strong here.

**Insula XXIV**

**Insula XXIV** was identified by the Antiquaries as a long triangular area, and they failed to find traces of the short north–south road on its eastern side which is suggested by the geophysics and also appeared on Boon’s plans. In the western section there were two houses. The Antiquaries found no pits in their trenching.
**House XXIV.1** was on the eastern side of the insula. It was a corridor house including a hypocaust with *pilae* (Room 10); traces were seen of an earlier building underneath it. The house was built over the levelled bank and filled-in ditch of the Inner Earthwork. Boon perceived that the Town Wall was constructed especially to include both this house and House XXIV.2, bowing to the north in an otherwise unnecessary fashion (Boon 1974, 50).

**House XXIV.2,** on the western side of the insula, began as a very symmetrical east–west range with two southerly projecting wings, though significant additions were made over its history. The porch and long entrance corridor were discussed by Perring (2002, 148–51) who observed that it is a peculiarly distinctive feature of Silchester. The building was particularly noted for its pavements and fragments of coloured plaster: ‘brilliant red panels with purple borders … while other fragments showed grounds of gold colour, blue, and green’ (Mosaics 321.81–9, Neal and Cosh 2009, 229–31). Like House XXIV.1, this building was positioned on top of what was once the bank of the Inner Earthwork. Boon saw it as an agricultural establishment with the large structure on the north-west corner being a barn, with the complex linking it to the ‘sheds’ across the road in Insula XXV (Boon 1974, 256, 261). See also Boon (1974, relation to Town Wall 50, mosaics 73, layout 189, 191, upper storey 193, garden 198, polygonal tile flooring 208, wall-plaster 212, extension to link to the road 307, construction 341) and Perring (2002, 189–90) who conducted an analysis of the functional use of space within the building.

The **Inner Earthwork** passes through this area. During the time of the Antiquaries’ excavations this feature had not been recognised, but they excavated a ‘pit’ (Pit XXIII.XXV) which clearly went into it, descending 6.7 m. Towards the bottom they found the remains of a ladder. Boon excavated a trench across the bank and ditch which suggested this inner section had been filled-in during the Claudio-Neronian period.

**NOTABLE FINDS**

The 1900 season finds in Reading Museum have better provenance records than many. A bronze patera came from Pit XXIII.X together with a brass rosette and hinges from a first-century segmental cuirass (Boon 1974, 67; Webster 1970, 183; Boon 2000, 583; 1969, fig. 5; Bishop 1991, 21). Well XXIII.1 contained a bronze bucket with multiple patches. An ironwork hoard was found in Well XXIII.2. This was a late fourth-century deposit, containing: 2 striking hammers, 10 small hammers, 2 pairs of tongs, 2 states, 1 drift, 1 chisel, 1 hand wringer or hand leaver, 2 pairs of dividers or compasses, 2 instruments for making nails, 4 iron bars, 1 axe head, 1 centre bit, 1 anvil or shoemaker’s hobbling-foot, 3 plough coulters, 1 coulter, 2 forks(?) and 8 mower’s anvils; also knives, choppers, bucket handles, 2 files, 2 saws, 1 spearhead, a huge padlock and fragments of another (Fox and St John Hope 1901, 246; Boon 1957, 235, n. 35; Manning 1972, 236). The votive nature of these hoards in pits is discussed in Fulford (2001, 204, 206). A Venus figurine was found in House XXIII.2.

Additional unallocated finds from these two insulae, but also possibly from XXV or XXVI, included: ‘a terracotta lamp … two wheel-shaped and two enamelled brooches, and others of the bow form; the enamelled lid of a little pear-shaped box; a small plaque of bronze inlay with a slice of figured glass; a large bronze ring with paste gem, the gilt bezel of another ring, also with a paste gem; and a red carnelian gem with a figure bearing some object, also from a ring; an elaborate key handle; a little toy axe; a weight; a bell; and the usual array of tweezers, pins, spatula, spoons, etc.’

**INTERIOR 3: INSULAE XXIIa AND XXIIb (FIGS 5.9–11)**

**HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Excavation of Insula XXIIa (St John Hope and Fox 1900, 98–101).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Excavation of Insula XXIIb (St John Hope 1902, 17–18).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Sites B, C and E: section in the back of the Town Wall (Cotton 1947).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>In Insula XXIIa: Trench B across Inner Earthwork (Boon 1969, 6–9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992–3</td>
<td>Trench 1: into a subsiding part of the Town Wall (Fulford 1984).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS
Insula XXIIa: finds shown at Burlington House (Anon. 1900); a short report (Anon. 1902b); a
lecture (St John Hope and Fox 1901).
Insula XXIIb: a note (Anon. 1902a); a society visit (Ditchfield 1902); a lecture (St John Hope
1903b).
Interim report on Trench B (Boon 1958a, 13–14).

DESCRIPTION
The Antiquaries failed to detect the north–south road on the eastern side of XXIIa, so did
not divide Insulae XXIIa and XXIIb. Since the road can be seen on the aerial photography
and geophysics, the division into A and B established by Boon has been maintained. Along
the northern side of both insulae on the geophysics was a linear inset from the Wall, possibly
suggesting a roadway or cleared area adjacent to it; or it could be an old field-boundary along
the edge of the walls further out than the current metal fence.

Insula XXIIa
Insula XXIIa did not extend completely up to the Town Wall on the west side; the Antiquaries
identified an east–west road on its northern boundary cutting off a tiny triangle of ground, but
they could not find the eastern limiting north–south road. No boundary walls were observed.
Within the ‘open area’ they reported finding hardly any pits at all. The buildings discovered were
largely confined to the southern area. Traces of additional structures were clearly missed by the
Antiquaries, though in the central to south-east corner of the site ‘doubtful traces’ of a building
were apparently uncovered but not planned. Geophysics have enlarged House XXIIa.2, and
suggested the traces of perhaps three additional buildings, though none in complete plan, and
also none coinciding with the Antiquaries’ ‘doubtful traces’.

House XXIIa.1, towards the south-west of the insula, is another possibly early house that may
have been truncated by the roadway to the west. In origin it is a roughly east–west series of
rooms with a portico to the south, but much adapted. There was a large heated apsidal room at
one end. The presence beneath a thick-walled room projecting south of the portico of a fragment
of coarse red mosaic is indicative of a yet earlier building. See also Boon (1974, possible cattle
byre 259, flour milling 367).

House XXIIa.2 lay a little north of House XXIIa.1, and was differently aligned, again almost
but not quite perpendicular to the street (Boon 1974, 47). It was a simple four-roomed row-
house, though the geophysics suggest there was at least one additional room to the east.

House XXIIa.3 was situated on the eastern side of the insula and partly above the Inner
Earthwork. The plan is not particularly coherent with a corridor-like passageway, only half of
which is actually fronting rooms. All three recognised rooms apparently had hypocausts, but the
floors had all been ploughed away; this could be a bath suite. It is likely that the building continued
all the way to the roadway, and the geophysical response is consistent with the projected area
having the heightened magnetic responses common in building interiors, though specific walls
were not observable. The three pits identified XXIIa.D, E and F were all in locations that lay
directly above the inner enclosure ditch, and may have cut into its fill.

House XXIIa.4 was a small chamber in the north-east corner of the insula which contained a
hypocaust, with a wall running off as if there was more to the plan than was discovered.

Insula XXIIb
Insula XXIIb is divided from Insula XXIIa by a north–south road which shows clearly on the
geophysics leaving a small triangular space once the Town Wall was built.

House XXIIb.5 was a three-roomed row with a portico on the south-south-west side. A small
apsidal extension had been added to one end. An additional wall is seen trailing off on the
Antiquaries’ plan, but there is no help interpreting this from the Fluxgate Gradiometry since
FIG. 5.9. Interior 3 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
fig. 5.10. Interior 3 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
fig. 5.11. Interior 3 – interpretative plan.
this particular building shows up especially poorly. Nonetheless, to the east of it there is a series of fairly large sub-rectangular features which could be the fills of the rooms of a fairly large unidentified house. It is aligned with a long negative ditch-like linear anomaly which correlates with little else.

Block XXIIb.I stood over the road from House XXIIa.4. It was a simple single-roomed hall-type strip-building, but had a flue in the middle of the long northern side (Perring 2002, 57).

Block XXIIb.II was in the south-west corner, identified only by the remains of an isolated mosaic floor in a building otherwise not revealed. It was also on the edge of the filled-in Inner Earthwork ditch, so the building is likely to have suffered from significant subsidence. Beneath the floor was a pit within which were found six complete pots (Boon 1974, 160).

The Inner Earthwork ditch crosses both these insulae, and was dug into, without recognising what it was, in the south-east quarter of Insula XXIIa, where the Antiquaries described it as a large cesspit 3.9 m deep of uncertain limits. Their excavation of it spread over more than 6.1 m square. The description of its contents was: ‘It contained a good many fragments of pottery, but not in sufficient number to enable whole vessels to be recognised from them, and at the bottom was a stratum of animal bones, below which was a malodorous layer of decayed animal and vegetable matter.’ This matter was sent off for Mr Clement Reid to analyse and report on in a later paper, but unfortunately not in a way separating out details from this deposit.

Peripheral enclosures appeared in the geophysics parallel and perpendicular to the Inner Earthwork. The traces of them are faint, but their orientation in relation to the Inner Earthwork suggests they respect this, and therefore predate the Claudio-Neronian filling in of the ditch.

NOTABLE FINDS

Architectural fragments included a piece of coping, possibly from the Town Wall (from Insula XXIIa); a fragment of fluted pilaster in Purbeck marble, a fragment of white marble, and a fragment of an arch of a window ornamented with foliage and scroll work (Insula XXIIb).

Various animal bones mentioned included a horse jaw bone, a cat skull, a red deer skull devoid of its antlers, and the leg bones of cocks with large developed spurs.

Objects in glass included a Gnostic Gem (Abraxas with a shield and whip) and millefiori glass. Metalwork included an enamelled disc brooch, and another of ‘peculiar form’, a large pewter bucket (Pit XXIIb.VIII, actually a well) and lead weights. In addition, a bowl of Kimmeridge shale was found.

INTERIOR 4: INSULAE X AND XI (FIGS 5.12–14)

HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS

c. 1740s  John Stair southern edge of both insulae (Taylor 1759).
1894  Excavation of Insula X (Fox 1895, 450–4).
1894  Excavation of Insula XI (Fox 1895, 454–7).

ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

Insulae X and XI: lectures (Fox 1894; Fox et al. 1895a); a note (Fox 1899b, 84).

DESCRIPTION

These insulae are primarily characterised by the small end-on houses along the main east–west road, with a large front room for a workshop or sales space, and smaller residential rooms towards the back. These are the familiar kind of strip-houses found in Roman London. The plans of many of these have been enhanced by the geophysics with the completion of the outer walls of Blocks X.III, X.IV and XI.

Behind these there are relatively few structures which led the Antiquaries to wonder if the
fig. 5.12. Interior 4 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
FIG. 5.13. Interior 4 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
area was used for some industrial activity, perhaps dyeing cloth (discussed pp. 421–3). Two pieces of metallic debris from a hearth from the 1894 excavations (probably from Block XI) rather suggested it related to silver refining (Gowland 1900); unfortunately it was very unclear specifically where Gowland’s sample had come from, and it could have been from Insula IX.

**Insula X**

*Insula X* contained a series of buildings along the main east–west road on the south, but otherwise the Antiquaries found it largely open, with a number of circular furnaces (X.I, J and K) on the eastern side and a couple of roughly square buildings on the western side, alongside another circular furnace (X.L). The geophysical results from Insula X broadly correlate with the Antiquaries’ excavations, with an apparent scarcity of buildings in the northern half of the insula. The geophysical data from this area have, however, unfortunately been affected by the existence of the modern campsite used by the archaeologists while excavating Insula IX.

*Blocks X.I–V* were all similar buildings along the main east–west street, simple rectangular buildings with a large room on the street and evidence of smaller rooms or partitions at the back.

Within Block X.III was a single long flue in close association with a round furnace or oven bottom (Boon 1974). Within Block X.V was found a 0.44 m diameter quern apparently in situ in the front room with the charred remains of part of an original frame (Boon 1974, 238). It is also likely that this block was first excavated by Stair in the 1740s as it appears on Taylor’s map of Hampshire (fig. 3.3).

To the rear of Block X.II was a square building that has been interpreted as a tower granary (Boon 1974, 189, 256).

*Block X.VI* was situated a little back from the southern street frontage, and may not have been contemporary with Block X.III or the others. It was a simple rectangular building divided up into seven rooms, but on a slight angle to the grid. Fragments of quern were found, as was a circular furnace.

**Insula XI**

*Insula XI* was truncated into a triangular area by the town defences (see Exterior 13). The main buildings consisted of a series of blocks along the main east–west road, between two of which ran a north–south lane running up to a small square block, and past a couple of burnt patches. The Antiquaries reported that there were few finds from the pits in the area.

*Blocks XI.I–IV* ran from the south-east to south-west corner of the insula along the main east–west road; they were similar in form to those in Insula X, and included a number of long flues and circular furnaces and also from Block XI evidence potentially relating to silver-working (Boon 1974). The enhanced magnetic responses in this area lend this interpretation support. The Antiquaries suggested they found traces of an earlier building underlying Block XI.III; however, the geophysics suggested additional walls which might simply have been subdivisions within the same building.

**Central insula**: the geophysics revealed additional buildings situated within the middle of the insula. In this area there were both zones of enhanced magnetism (within the vicinity of Pit XI.D) and traces of walls.

**NOTABLE FINDS**

Coins: a hoard came from near Pit XI.D containing 253 denarii from Marc Antony to Septimius Severus (Fox 1895, 455, 473–94); an arm purse was found in a pit in Insula XI (Fox 1895, 469), though no mention is made of coins from it; and Fox noted that a high proportion of that season’s coins were of the Early Empire, which is unusual, suggestive of a bronze dispersed hoard.

Metalwork from among the rubbish between buildings around Block XII.II included a sword blade. A Late Roman ring came from the inner face of the Town Wall near the West Gate (Fox 1895, 468); an intaglio from another ring was also found that season. Other finds from the season (which could also come from Insula IX) included a bronze hinge of pierced work with symmetrical
scroll-work, a small piece of enamelled work, a small bronze bell, ‘sundry brooches, buckles, rings ..., pins of various sizes and patterns, needles, ligulae ..., keys, a perfect and a broken scale-pan, and two pieces of a bronze scale-beam with the divisions marked by silver studs. The handle of a pewter vase was also found, terminating in a well-modelled lion’s head’ (Fox 1895, 471).

INTERIOR 5: INSULAE I AND IX (FIGS 5.15–18)

HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS

- c. 1740s John Stair, southern edge of Insula IX (Taylor 1759).
- 1864–6 House I.1 excavated as ‘Block II’ (Joyce 1876b, 404–6; Joyce 1881a).
- 1890–1 Excavation of Insula I (Fox and St John Hope 1890; Fox 1892, 264–9).
- 1893 Excavation of Insula IX, ogham stone (Fox and St John Hope 1894).
- 1894 Completion of Insula IX (Fox 1895, 440–50).

ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

Block II: lectures (Joyce 1867b; a, 494–6; 1873, 16–20); a report (Hilton Price 1887); notes: (Fox 1899b, 81; Anon. 1866); discussions of visits (Anon. 1864b, 360; Roach Smith 1865; 1866).
Insula I: a summary (St John Hope 1890b); lectures (Anon. 1891b; Fox and St John Hope 1891a; b; Fox 1893; Fox et al. 1895a); society visits: (Anon. 1891c; 1890–3b).
Insula IX (Antiquaries): lectures (Fox 1894; Fox et al. 1895a; b); notes (Fox 1899b, 83–4; Le Schonix 1894).
Insula IX (Town Life Project):
- Major articles (Fulford 2012b).
- Interim reports in ‘Archaeology in Hampshire’ (Fulford and Clarke 1998; 2000; 2001; 2002a; 2003; 2009a; 2010; Clarke and Fulford 1999b); CBA Wessex News (Clarke 2002a).
- Reviews of final reports (Holbrook 2007; Burnham 2009; Wilson 2008; Cool 2008; Booth 2012).
- Popular interims (Fulford and Clarke 1999; 2002b; 2011b).

DESCRIPTION

Continuing along from Insulae XI and X, Insulae IX and I also had strip-buildings, end-on, along the main east–west road. However, the premises here, closer to the centre of town, were slightly more elaborate and larger. Behind these in Insula IX we have richer contextual information from the recent excavations which have revealed a sequence of early features and buildings at an angle giving way to later Roman houses aligned with the north–south road; while in Insula I we have two substantial major houses.

Insula I

Insula I was surrounded by a continuous wall, with a series of detached houses running off it. There were strip-buildings on the southern side, but the larger main buildings were House I.1 in the north-west corner and House I.2 in the north-east corner. Between them and the
fragmentary remains of the strip-buildings, cut through now by the modern droveway, there was a relatively open area which correlates with the geophysical data. Originally Joyce had imagined that in this expanse between the lavish House I.1 and the Forum stood ‘a temple, or, if not a temple, certainly an altar and a precinct to the Hercules of the Segontiaci’ (Joyce 1881a, 331). Fox rejected this idea after trenching the whole area and finding little. However, he noted that the dedicatory inscription (RIB 67) had indeed been found some time before 1744 from the north side of the Forum, though whether from Insula I or not was unclear; Taylor’s plan suggested not (fig. 3.3; Taylor 1759).

House I.1, in the north-west corner, had been excavated as ‘Block II’ by Joyce who had been explicitly looking for the northern corner of this insula by the side of the ‘great north road’ (Joyce 1881a, 330); and it was here too that the Antiquaries decided to commence their excavations, expanding out from the house to trench the entire insula. House I.1 had three ranges linked by a portico. It had developed out of an earlier building with a northern range on a slightly different alignment. Two mosaics were identified, 321.1 and 321.2, the former stylistically second century (Neal and Cosh 2009, 192–3). A southern room contained a small hoard of 42 bronze coins, largely Carausian in date (Joyce 1881a, 340).

The earliest evidence came from the south-west corner of one of the rooms by the road where the floor had sunk into a soft hole which went down at least 1.8 m. Its contents included ‘rotten debris of a building, mortar, flints, wall-plaster, still bearing fresh colours, some fragments of iron, broken bits of ornaments of Kimmeridge clay, and among them a curious knife, and, lastly a coin struck in honour of the then deceased Antonia, the celebrated sister of Marc Antony, the mother of the noble Germanicus’ (Joyce 1881a, 340). The evidence suggests the extensive early activity seen in the neighbouring Insula IX spread across into this insula as well.

It is noticeable that early walls, elaborated from Joyce’s plans by Fox’s excavations, are on a slightly different alignment, comparable with that of the Forum and the east–west road running east from the Forum (fig. 5.28), again suggestive of an early date. The northern east–west wing then was re-built on alignment with the later Roman streets to create Joyce’s second-phase house which he dated to around the time of Commodus on the basis of a single coin-find (Joyce 1881a, 340). The house’s size and longevity gave Joyce scope to speculate that it may have been the official residence of one of the duumviri of Silchester (Joyce 1881a, 340).

More recent literature about the house has also discussed: multiple aspects (Boon 1974, Joyce 25, layout 95, 193, columns 200, barns 256, earlier building 59, 306, adjustment to grid 307, fireplaces 343, mosaics 215, 346); column bases (Fox and St John Hope 1890, 734; Blagg 2002, 114; Joyce 1881a, 339); column capitals (Fox and St John Hope 1890, 734; Blagg 2002, 127; Joyce 1881a, pl. XV.2); associations with Bacchus in the imagery of Mosaic 321.1 (Mo-39, in Hutchinson 1986, 431); and buildings and measurement units (Walthew 1987, 203, 205, fig. 1a).

House I.2, in the north-east corner of the insula, was essentially an L-shaped building with a portico on either side. In origin it may have started as the north–south range with a portico on the east, followed by the addition of a second east–west range to link it to the street and create a courtyard. A heated block was added to the rear of the north–south range. Also, at its southern end, a deep horseshoe apsidal room was added, which has been discussed by Perring (2002, 165) in the context of the development and elaboration of reception rooms in Romano-British housing. The geophysics and aerial photography have added a number of walls to the building plan on the southern side creating a courtyard, and some additional walls to the north as well.

Many of the walls were covered in plaster, and many painted fragments came from the house, mainly from simple panel schemes, but some showing golden-coloured draperies and imitations of yellow and grey marbles. The flooring included mosaics and some opus signinum. Five mosaics were identified, one of which (321.3 in the inner portico) may have been the layout for a game (Mosaics 321.3–7, Neal and Cosh 2009, 194–6; Rainey 1973, 136; Boon 1974, 217).

The square building just to the south was considered to be for water storage, but the fact that it appeared to be unlined militates against this. Perring suggested it was a tower granary (Perring 2002, 183).

A possible additional building is suggested by the geophysics just to the south of this at an angle to the road; however it is very faint, which could mean it is either deep down or illusory.
fig. 5.15. Interior 5 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
fig. 5.16. Interior 5 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
Fig. 5.17. Interior 5 – interpretative plan.
Of the notable finds, Pit I.C, just north of the building, contained many pieces of painted wall-plaster and a small fragment of column 0.19 m diameter.

It is likely that there were earlier buildings in this location. In more than four places former floor levels were found around 0.45–0.55 m below the tessellated pavements of the north corridor, though there was no sign of this further south within a trench cut into the semi-circular room. Two pits, both sealed by mosaics, contained potentially early material: Pit I.R contained two fibulae, other bronze objects, glass, pseudo-Arretine plain and figured ware and several dog skulls; whereas Pit I.P contained near the bottom two pots (one flint-tempered), painted wall-plaster and a copper coin of Nero.

Subsequent discussion of these buildings includes Boon (1974, layout 95, 190, 192, 194, 260, isolated square building 257, barn 259, adaptation to grid 307, mosaics 345, granary 358).

House I.3 lay in the south-west corner of the insula. ‘Here there were confused but very scanty indications of buildings lining the street down to the edge of the modern road, and many objects of various kinds were turned up’ (Fox and St John Hope 1890, 734). Three hypocausts could be found in and around House I.3, but no clear sense made of the plan.

Insula I: other smaller buildings lay along the rest of the frontage on the main east–west road through the town. One with five rooms with a shared yard at the back Boon considered was likely to be a series of small rented out shops (Boon 1974, 54, 188). Found amongst these buildings were fragments of one of the carved foliage capitals from the demolition of the Forum to the south, as was some fine marble (possibly Campan Vert from the Pyrenees). The Antiquaries noted that one of the walls was made of substantial blocks of ironstone, and it is worth noting that this shows up less well than the more normal flint walls in the Fluxgate Gradometry results.

An Ironwork Hoard was found in Pit I.N. A brief report was provided by Fox and St John Hope, and then elaborated upon by Evans. Apart from containing a late fourth-century pot, it comprised an iron sword, 2 iron bars, axe, hammers, gouges, plough coulter x 2, anvil, tongs, files, rasp, hippo-sandal, lamp, gridiron, carpenter’s plane (Evans 1894; Fox and St John Hope 1890, 742; May 1916b, 129, pl. LVI, 104; Manning 1972, 236; Fulford 2001, 206; Hingley 2006, 250). Specific objects which have generated additional discussion include the anvils (Rees 1979, 731–3) and an object Evans described as being a carriage axle. However, Manning re-interpreted the latter as the pivot of a large geared mill, transmitting power from a toothed wheel through the central hole in the stationary lower millstone, to the upper stone. Manning noted that there was no evidence for water supply sufficient to power it in the immediate vicinity, so thought animal power more likely than the alternative that it was just there as scrap (Manning 1964).

Insula IX

Insula IX was first delimited by Stair as he traced the roads. Two walls, presumably from his excavations, show on Taylor’s map of 1759 (fig. 3.3). So the insula has records of both the earliest excavations known and the most recent, since it has been the site of the long-running excavation by Fulford and Clarke. The extensive literature derived from that project is cited above, and much of the early material is still being worked on, so only a brief summary will be provided here after reviewing the other areas untouched by the ‘Town Life’ project. The ongoing excavation, spoil mounds and other obstructions did, however, mean that geophysics could not take place here. This means the locational accuracy of the Victorian plans could not be modified in the same way by adjusting them to the geophysical plot, so this has been done using the aerial photographic plots and aligning the road-lines, which suggests the Victorians positioned a few buildings too far to the north by a few metres.

South of the modern droveway lies a series of strip-houses perpendicular to the east–west road (Blocks IX.II–IV) as well as one larger house (House IX.3).

House IX.3 was situated on the main east–west road, though constructed at a slight angle to it. The Antiquaries thought it partly encroached on the street by about 1 m, which might be the case if the street genuinely had a perfectly straight edge. In origin it was a double-row block building which had an east-facing corridor added on to it with extensions at the north and south, though not quite pavilions (early single-corridor type, Berry 1951). Walthew envisaged it slightly
differently as a double-corridor building, where the rear corridor had been subdivided into smaller rooms as in the villas at Farningham and Ditchley (Walthew 1975, 199). The south-east extension was considered by the Antiquaries to be a self-contained shop and counter. It looks as if the southern end was adapted to align the building with the street-grid (Boon 1974, 47, 93). From Pit IX.P sealed beneath this room came a quern, and close by fragments of imported marble and metal-working residue possibly associated with silver-working (Boon 1974, 275–6; Gowland 1900); see also Perring (2002, 67).

Block IX.II lay in the south-east corner of the insula; it was a one-room rectangular structure with an extension on the back. Simple though the building was, without any obvious flooring, it had solid brick quoins on its street frontage. The geophysical survey has added a possible internal division to the main section, and it is also possible that the extension to the north-west was complemented by a similar one to the south-west where there is a large geophysical anomaly which could be caused by a particular room fill, though the wall-lines are uncertain. This would create a pair of pavilions.

Block IX.III lay along the southern street frontage of the insula. It was a rectangular house with a large room at the front and a suite of five behind including a hypocaust; it was interpreted as a shop. See also Boon (1974, 188–9, 193) and Perring (2002, 57).

Block IX.IV lay in the south-west corner of the insula, it was a hall-type strip building with two rooms to the rear (Perring 2002, 57).

North of the modern droveway our information has been transformed by Fulford and Clarke’s excavations. Their interpretation will be summarised, but first existing knowledge before they began will be reviewed.

House IX.1 from the Antiquaries’ plan would perhaps have been described as a double-corridor building, with possible extension to the south-west (early double-corridor house, Berry 1951, 190; Boon 1974; Mosaic 321.37, Neal and Cosh 2009, 207). One of the most famous finds from these excavations (and one which drew Fulford to dig here) was the ogham stone. This was found in 1893 in a well cut through House IX.1, possibly either 2.74 m down (Fox and St John Hope 1894, 233) or 1.5–1.8 m down (Fox 1895, 441) above a pewter jug. It was first reported in the Antiquary (St John Hope 1893b). Early discussions of it included one by Rhys (1893), a popular account (Anon. 1894), and a mention in a discussion about the end of the town by Haverfield (1904, 628). Contradicting earlier suggestions of an Oxfordshire (Boon 1959, 87) or north Berkshire origin (Boon 1974, 77), analysis by Fulford and Sellwood (1980) suggested the sandstone came from further west, potentially from the late Jurassic sandstones (Portland Beds) of Swindon. Boon responded in classic fashion (Boon 1981a). The distant westerly origin of such poor building stone led to some doubts as to its authenticity, though Fulford later laid these to rest (Fulford et al. 2000; Fulford 2000b). The stone is discussed within the context of a review of all ogham inscriptions from the British Isles in Crawford (1945, 207), while an analysis by Wright and Jackson (1968, 299) suggested the ogham dated to no earlier than c. a.d. 500. Various authors used the stone to argue for a post-Roman Celtic revival in lowland Britain (Haverfield 1923, 82–3; 1924, 283; Collingwood and Myres 1936, 316; Boon 1974, 77–8).

House IX.2 comprised two ranges discovered by the Antiquaries which they believed must be associated with each other. The eastern one had a corridor on its north-east-facing side, and the floors were of opus signinum; built into the foundation of the eastern range was inserted a much-worn capital and the base of a column from an earlier building (Fox 1895, 442, fig. 1; Blagg 2002, 127). Also from this area came a slab of Purbeck marble, 0.91 x 1.60 x 0.12 m, which Boon thought probably came from the Basilica (Boon 1974, 115).

Block IX.I lay halfway up the east side of the insula, perpendicular to the street. The section excavated by the Antiquaries was just the north-facing corridor and pavilions of a larger building (Boon 1974, 191); its real extent was revealed by Fulford and Clarke.

The summary above was extant knowledge but this has now moved on considerably. Two volumes dealing with the Mid- to Late Roman material have been published (Fulford et al. 2006; Fulford and Clarke 2011a), while the full reports on the earliest layers of the ‘Town Life’ project are awaited soon. Nonetheless, the overall sequence is now fairly clear (Table 5.2).
FIG. 5.18. Simplified phasing of Insula IX, Fulford and Clarke 1997–2014. Periods 0–2 are only provisional based on interim reports until final report is published.
MAPPING THE INTERIOR

TABLE 5.2. PHASING SUMMARY FOR INSULA IX EXCAVATIONS (EARLY PHASES PROVISIONAL)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Period</th>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>(40 B.C. – 25 B.C.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>(25 B.C. – A.D. 10)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>(A.D. 10 – 40/50)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>(A.D. 40/45 – 70/80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td>Phase 1</td>
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<td>(A.D. 200 – 250/300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(A.D. 250/300+)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>(TPQ A.D. 287)</td>
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<td>Phase 6</td>
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NOTABLE FINDS FROM INSULA I

Two infant burials were found in Insula I — one in a pit, another in a small urn within a pit (Fox and St John Hope 1890, 743) — and an adult skull was found on the south side of Insula I (Fox and St John Hope 1890, 744). Oysters were found all over the insula; bone included red deer, roe buck and perhaps fallow deer (identified by Dr Woodward) (Fox and St John Hope 1890, 741). Two coin hoards were recovered: Joyce found one in House I.1 in the room to the west of the triclinium, a hoard of 40 radiates down to Carausius (Joyce 1881a, 340–1); while a small hoard of 18 FEL TEMP REP aes was found in an alleyway on the southern side of Insula I (Fox 1892, 269). A bronze roundel (0.07 m diameter) with an eagle in the middle came from Pit I.V; the eagle holds a thunderbolt in its claws; beneath is a globe. Around an inscription reads OPTIME [MAXI]ME CON(serve) (cf. Bishop and Coulston 2006, 162). A roundel of similar design came from Bremenium north of Hadrian’s Wall (Fox 1892, 268). A bronze goat figurine also came from the south of Insula I, from the alley between the south-central courtyard...
building and the long hall to its west. A tile had the imprint of a hobnail boot on it, and another was inscribed with the word ‘puellam’ (‘girl’, ‘maiden’ or ‘sweetheart’) (Joyce 1881a, 340). Also from the insula was an iron knife ‘of curious construction, with ring attached, which has been considered to be the knife of the haruspex’ (Joyce 1881a, 342). From the duct of the southern hypocaust of House I.1 came: a bronze ring with a key; a stylus; a needle; some pins with the heads cleanly cut into ornamental facets; some fibulae ‘with springs formed by coils of wire tightly twisted, and with a shield to protect the point’ (Joyce 1881a, 342).

NOTABLE FINDS FROM INSULA IX
See Britannia Monographs on the Town Life Project.

INTERIOR 6: INSULAE XXI AND XXVII (FIGS 5.19–21)

HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS

1864  House XXI.1 excavated as ‘Block I’ (Joyce 1876b, 404–6).
1899  Excavation of Insula XXI (St John Hope and Fox 1900, 87–98).
1901  Excavation of Insula XXVII (St John Hope 1902, 18–29).

ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

‘Block 1’: lectures (Joyce 1873; 1867b); a discussion (Hilton Price 1887).
Insula XXI: finds shown at Burlington House (Anon. 1900); a lecture (St John Hope and Fox 1901).
Insula XXVII: description of the three houses (Anon. 1902a); short report (Anon. 1902b); description in a local journal (Ditchfield 1902); a lecture (St John Hope 1903b).

DESCRIPTION

The Inner Earthwork cut across this area, and the ditch shows up reasonably clearly in the geophysics. Alongside this a number of other linear alignments show as well which may represent earlier features.

Insula XXI

Insula XXI was notable to the Antiquaries because of the large number of pits within the centre of the insula, and the density of discrete geophysical features does appear to be higher here than in many. Within some were found groups of complete pots; this aspect of votive deposition in some of the pits and wells is discussed by Fulford (2001, 203–4).

House XXI.1, in the north-west corner of the insula, was an east–west block with a portico to the south having an additional room added to the east and a wing to the south-west. A space projecting from the portico had a mosaic (Mosaic 321.64, Neal and Cosh 2009, 222–3). Joyce commented upon the preponderance of oyster shells in the north-westernmost room as well as just inside the courtyard. Oyster shells are not uncommon at Silchester, and, as this was Joyce’s first season, it is difficult to know if these were really significant deposits like the massive one he was to discover under the Forum a few years later, or whether they just struck him as unusual at the time. An additional wall revealed itself in the geophysics which divides this house off from the area to the east where Block XXI.IV is, creating a separate yard for House XXI.1.

Neal and Cosh incorrectly state that this building had been partially examined by Coles in 1833 and Stair in 1744. This is based on a misreading of Joyce who had initially considered re-excavating Coles’ villa which was to the south of the droveway and actually part of what we now call ‘the Mansio’ or a building close by (actually located in Insula VIII, Interior 16), but this proposal had been rejected by the Duke of Wellington who had preferred Joyce’s third idea of
Fig. 5.19. Interior 6 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
FIG. 5.20. Interior 6 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
FIG. 5.21. Interior 6 – interpretative plan.
excavating in ‘virgin ground to the archaeologist’ where Mr Cooper, the farmer, had been hitting remains with his plough (Joyce 1876b, 403–4). See also Boon (1974, domestic shrine 161, layout 192, kitchen 195).

Block XXI.IV was situated a little bit to the south-east of House XXI.1; it was a single-cell building which was differently aligned to the house. It was imagined as the woodshed for the house’s hypocaust.

Block XXI.V lay perpendicular to the east–west road on the northern side. While its floor had been lost, the interior gave an enhanced magnetic response. A wall along the street-front linked this building to House XXI.2.

House XXI.2, in the north-east of the insula, comprised two parallel series of rooms with a portico added to the south; two projecting wings had been added to the east and west to create a courtyard, and the geophysics revealed additional missed rooms attached to both. The portico included the remains of a mosaic (Mosaic 321.65, Neal and Cosh 2009, 223).

House XXI.3 lay on the central-eastern side of the insula, and comprised a number of curiously aligned ranges. It presumably began with the northerly east–west range which in the Antiquaries’ plan looks like a single-corridor row-building, but geophysics revealed there was a northerly portico as well. At some point it looks like the eastern end of this house was truncated by the north–south road, with some earlier walls perpendicular to the length of the building being replaced by ones at a slight angle to adjust the gable end to suit the roadway and at the same time filling in the remains of a hypocaust. The building was at some point extended with the addition of a western range running north–south, and a southern range linking back to the street. The portico from the northern range was swung round to unify all three, and the passageway in the southern section provided the new entrance to the house. The western range itself has traces of a predecessor on the same alignment in walls found under Room 7 and the portico. The mosaics do not offer any dates which help elucidate the sequence (Mosaics 321.66–70, Neal and Cosh 2009, 223–4). Within the enclosed courtyard were a well and a particularly well-preserved hearth. See also Boon (1974, barn and hearth 259, 287).

House XXI.4, towards the south-east corner of the insula, was an east–west range of five rooms with a portico and pavilions to the south (later single-corridor type, Berry 1951). One room contains a second-century style mosaic (Mosaic 321.71, Neal and Cosh 2009, 224–5) (Boon 1974, 215). Neal and Cosh related the design to that of 321.1 (House I.1) and 321.48 (House XIV.2). The house was fractionally misaligned to the grid. It was observed that a lot of the mosaics were slumping into earlier pits, attesting to longevity of use of the location.

House XXI.5 was only represented in the excavations by the faint remains of two rectangular spreads of flooring at an angle to the grid. However, the geophysics give a little more form, adding a few walls to the structure, but by no means a complete plan.

Temple or Schola: Block XXI.VI lay at the south-east corner of Insula XXI. It was a plain rectangular building with a northerly apse and two doors in the southerly ends of the side walls. The Antiquaries thought it may have been a small church or guild meeting place. Boon played with three competing ideas: that it was the centre of a mystery cult and the head of Sarapis found in a back garden might have originated from here; that it was the centre of a guild, such as the Collegium peregrinorum; or even that it was the centre of the urban administration, the Forum-Basilica being the centre of governance of the civitas (Boon 1973; 1974, 58, 158, 167). Lewis favoured the former: ‘it is possible that the side doors being more secret than a front entrance, indicate an esoteric cult’ (Silchester 5, in Lewis 1966, 73–4).

Block XXI.I lay in the south-west corner, and was largely covered by the modern droveway. The remains might be a single-room house perpendicular to the street or part of a larger building, as there are hints in the geophysics that it continued north.

Block XXI.II and Block XXI.III on the western side of the insula and non-aligned to the grid were isolated single-cell structures; no purpose for them was proffered, though just to the west of Block XXI.II was a hearth with a long flue which the Antiquaries had come to associate with the dyeing industry.
Insula XXVII

Insula XXVII was a regular block; nonetheless, the Antiquaries had difficulty delimiting the eastern side, though the road shows up clearly enough in the geophysics in the presence and absence of features. On the southern side the street was walled and there is a curious in-turn at the eastern end, the angle of which looks as if it is respecting the presumably filled-in ditch of the Inner Earthwork; indeed its buttressing may be because of the possibility of subsidence into the ditch.

House XXVII.1, in the north-west corner of the insula, is a sprawling complex arrangement, possibly originating in an L-shaped building which was then extended significantly to the east. Within what might have been the original L-shaped core, the eastern range had a large tripartite suite with an apsidal section. The mosaic within here was dated to the early fourth century on the basis of similarities with one at Sparsholt, although whether this implies the entire residence is very late, is unclear (Mosaics 321.93–100, Neal and Cosh 2009, 232–6). Walthew commented upon the tendency for better living rooms to be in the new wings of houses, and how these sometimes projected out into the main courtyard; he cited this house as one of many examples (Walthew 1975, 202–3). Rooms 10 and 11 were situated directly above the Inner Earthwork ditch. ‘The most curious feature about the room was the deposit of bones and vessels of pottery under the floor in the angles and along the walls. The original outer room (10) had a pot embedded in the south-west corner, and deposits of bones in the two northern corners. The inner room (11) had along its eastern side a deposit of bones and three pots, and there were two other pots along the north wall to the left of the fireplace. The pots had their mouths flush with the floor and contained nothing but earth. Similar pots, but singly, have been found in like circumstances in other houses in the town, but never before has such a series been found’ (St John Hope 1902, 19). The bones were groups of lambs, birds or fowl. See also Boon (1974, mosaics 73, 216, 220, domestic shrine 161, 164, layout 192, 194, vessels sunk in floor 195, earlier charred building 199, wooden threshold 204, wall-plaster 212, fireplace 343) and Perring (2002, 188–9) who conducted an analysis of the functional use of space within this building.

House XXVII.2, in the centre of the western edge of the insula, was another courtyard house, with two main ranges on the northern and eastern sides. A unifying portico joined the front of these and was extended to the west along the roadside to form the courtyard. Both ranges may have started as double-corridor houses, but establishing a sequence is not easy. It is likely the additional heated rooms at the end of the southern range are later. Behind this were a number of rectangular block buildings: Block XXVII.I was on a similar alignment and may have been related; Block XXVII.III was earlier than the extension to House XXVII.2, while Block XXVII.II was on a very different alignment, and sat directly on and parallel to the ditch of the Inner Earthwork. Blocks XXVII.I and III were considered to be agricultural store buildings by Boon (1974, 259). See also Boon (1974, alignment to grid 307, fireplaces 343).

House XXVII.3, in the south-western corner of the insula, was in essence a double-portico house, but with a wider portico on the western side. Various additions were made to it at the rear and southern end (later double-corridor type, Berry 1951).

Block XXVII.IV is a small three-room rectangular building. The original Antiquaries’ plan had this at a significantly different angle to the grid, but the geophysics do not appear to bear that out and it has been repositioned.

NOTABLE FINDS FROM INSULA XXI

An unarticulated human leg, arm and skull came from a pit. Other finds included a white clay model of a cock (Pit XXI.L), and a glass bowl together with, much further down, some ‘pseudo-samarian’ and other glass fragments from Pit XXI.JJ which predated House XXI.4. The location of many finds was not separated between Insulae XXI and XXII, see XXII (Interior 3) for details.

NOTABLE FINDS FROM INSULA XXVII

Generally there are better provenanced records of objects in Reading Museum from this insula.
The Antiquaries reported architectural fragments, two decayed stone finials, a flue tile inscribed with ‘Fecit tubum Clemetinus’, another tile which may have a gaming-board pattern drawn on it, an axe head, a pewter jug and a pair of iron tyres, all from Pit XXVII.VI; an iron hook, the hoop from a barrel and a staple, all from Well XXVII.XXV. An engraved piece of glass with a fish and a palm branch (Christian emblems), a plated gold Iron Age coin, and a moulded glass cameo, probably of Arethusa, patron goddess of Syracuse, possibly late Republican in date, were found in 1971 just east of House XXVII.3 (Greenaway and Henig 1975).

Fulford discussed the votive nature of many of the pits from Insula XXVII (Fulford 2001, 204).

**INTERIOR 7: INSULAE XXXVI AND XXXVII (THE RICKYARD) (FIGS 5.22–24)**

**HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS**

- **1893** Excavation of Insula XXXVII east part (St John Hope 1893b; Fox and St John Hope 1894, 237).
- **1908** Excavation of Insula XXXVI (St John Hope 1909a, 479–83).
- **1908** Excavation of Insula XXXVII west part (St John Hope 1909a, 483–4).

**ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS**

Insula XXXVII: a note (Le Schonix 1894); a lecture, details of the trenching and finds from the Rickyard (St John Hope 1909c).

**DESCRIPTION**

Both insulae were truncated by the Town Wall. When excavated by the Antiquaries, they observed, during their 1893 season trenching the Rickyard, that a broad strip lining the bank might be a street (Fox and St John Hope 1894, 237). The geophysics again show, as elsewhere around the town, a slight negative feature or line set back from the bank which may corroborate this, although it may also be a more modern field edge boundary.

The other major feature of this area is that Boon significantly ‘tidied it up’ when he constructed his overall site plan. Block XXXVI.I, House XXXVI.1 and the road between the insulae were adjusted to align with the main street-grid, which the geophysics make clear they did not.

**Insula XXXVI**

**Insula XXXVI** was bounded on the east by a lane, hypothesised by the Antiquaries and showing clearly in the geophysics and aerial photography.

**Block XXXVI.I** was a single-cell building within its own large rectangular enclosure, though the north-east corner of the latter had been angled for no obvious purpose. The enclosure was cut off by a lane from the rest of the insula. Only two pits were found within it despite the ‘many trenches’ cut across it and the geophysics suggest no additional buildings. Adorned with wall-plaster, the building was assumed to be a small temple or shrine, perhaps of the *lares*, or perhaps more public. Boon discussed the shrine and pits within the enclosure, and also the size and shape of the enclosure, in his attempt to divide up the layout of Silchester into neat building plots (Boon 1974, 98, 152–3). The strongly-enhanced magnetic anomalies within the enclosure relate to a former north–south field-boundary (the alignment across the field of these magnetic ‘spikes’ can be seen in the geophysics, and the boundary appears on earlier maps and aerial photographs, see FIG. 6.14), but it is worth noting that there is a reasonably large anomaly in approximately the middle of the enclosure (3–4 m in diameter), and the temple or shrine, if it is that, is slightly offset. This is reminiscent of the Folly Lane and Gosbecks enclosures, with central dug features, and offset temples. The image of the anomaly close-up appears to have a slightly rectangular
fig. 5.22. Interior 7 – Antiquaries' plans and modern topography.
Figu 5.23. Interior 7 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
Fig. 5.24. Interior 7 – interpretative plan.
north side though resolution is poor. There is a potential match between this feature and ‘Pit 4’ excavated by the Antiquaries (see discussion on burial enclosures, p. 383).

House XXXVI.1 was to the north of this shrine, barely visible on the geophysics except for the magnetic room-fills. There appear to be two ranges round a courtyard, one to the north and another on the east side. Immediately to the north-east of this was a pit containing around 60 horn-cores, a coin of Domitian and an enamelled bronze lid from a seal-box (St John Hope 1909a, 480; Fulford 2001, 207). Here were also found two bronze bowls (Boon 1974, 237, fig. 35.5).

Block XXXVI.11 was situated towards the north-west of the insula. Only a heated hypocaust room with an apsidal extension was excavated by the Antiquaries, though a far larger complex is revealed by the geophysics, which suggest it is part of a much larger courtyard building linking it to the road. To the east of this there was also the hint of a large semi-circular anomaly, c. 13 m diameter, though without clear walls associated with it. Given that, it has not been drawn as a clear building on the interpretative plan.

Insula XXXVI south-west: two additional buildings have been revealed here, one from aerial photographs and another from the geophysics, both small rectangular affairs. There are also a couple of potential linear anomalies which do not align with the later grid, but may be features related to the earlier Inner Earthwork.

Insula XXXVII (including the Rickyard)

Insula XXXVII straddles Interior Sheets 7 and 11, but all the elements within it are discussed here. The irregularly shaped area caught between the farmyard and the corner of the wall had been used as a rickyard or stackyard and for other purposes (five long parallel sheds were noted there on mid-twentieth-century OS maps and aerial photographs, perhaps for housing fowl, see buildings on Exterior Plan 14). Fortunately these superficial structures seem to have impacted minimally on the geophysics; while the fence-lines show as two alignments of spikes, the sheds do not. The eastern half was trenched in 1893 revealing nothing, and the western half was the last part of the interior to be dug in 1908.

House XXXVII.1 lay towards the north of the insula, perpendicular to the Town Wall, and possibly pre-dating it, as the building appears to disappear under the Town Wall bank. Unfortunately fragments of mosaic do not help establish the date or sequence (Mosaics 105–6, Neal and Cosh 2009, 238). It appears to be a corridor building facing east-south-east, with an additional pavilion on the northern end with a thickened wall perhaps to support a raised floor (Boon 1974).

The Enclosure in the southern half of the insula was delimited by a wall on two sides which the Antiquaries marked, and by a third on the southern side which remained only as ‘an abundance of loose flints along the line’. It may have contained an area off the street which could, as the Antiquaries suggested, have been used for cattle markets and other activities. The eastern edge of it aligns directly with the Amphitheatre Gate, so it is likely that on this side there was a roadway, though the Antiquaries did not suggest it, nor was it within the area surveyed by geophysics, nor was it in land conducive to aerial photography. It has been placed on the plan but exceptionally is entirely speculative based on alignment rather than evidence.

NOTABLE FINDS

Two bronze bowls in perfect condition came from House XXXVI.1. While Pit XXXVI.12 yielded ‘litle of importance’ except for three silver coins (two of Antoninus Pius and one of Gordian the Younger).
INTERIOR 8: INSULAE XIII, XIV, XV AND XVI (FIGS 5.25–27)

HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS

- Pre-1759 John Stair in Insulae XIII, XIV and House XVI.3 (Taylor 1759).
- 1894–5 Excavation of Insula XIV (St John Hope and Fox 1896, 219–53).
- 1895 Excavation of Insula XIII (St John Hope and Fox 1896, 216–19).
- 1896 Excavation of Insula XV (St John Hope 1897a, 409–15).
- 1896 Excavation of Insula XVI (St John Hope 1897a, 415–22).

ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

Insulae XIII, XIV, XV and XVI: a note (Fox 1899b, 84–5); lectures (St John Hope 1897b; St John Hope and Fox 1897a; b).

Insulae XV and XVI: an extensive report of a contemporary visit on 23–4 June 1896 (Richardson 1897).

DESCRIPTION

Insula XIII

Insula XIII lay just inside the West Gate. No direct evidence was mentioned from the excavations to say if there was a roadway between the town defences and the insula, though the Antiquaries clearly thought it a possibility; the geophysics only hint slightly at one (St John Hope and Fox 1896, 216). Five buildings were discovered within the area, mostly simple rectangular structures (Boon 1974, 187). The general openness and the discovery of a variety of hearths and flues meant that the Antiquaries suggested that this was also part of the ‘dyeing industry’ area, along with Insulae X and XI excavated the previous season. ‘In two of the buildings were flues or furnaces of the kind previously noted as possibly used in dyeing, and the remains of four others were scattered about in the insula’ (St John Hope and Fox 1896, 216). On the northern side the Antiquaries found nothing except in the north-east corner, but Taylor’s map of 1759 shows a number of buildings dug by Stair (Fig. 3.3), and these imperfectly corroborate additional walls suggested by the geophysics and aerial photography.

House XIII.1 was orientated north–south along the eastern side of the insula. In origin it was perhaps a row of four rooms with a portico on the west-facing side, to which a couple of larger rooms (or yards) had been added to the south and a heated room to the north, and from the quantity around clearly roofed with hexagonal stone slabs, which are not uncommon on the site. The Antiquaries wondered if some of the rooms facing the street had been used as shops, but there was no primary evidence to confirm this. Boon noted the building was fractionally out of alignment with the grid (Boon 1974, 307), though the difference is marginal; what is perhaps more interesting is that the geophysics hint at the building significantly encroaching onto the road, with east–west walls possibly crossing the road. However, if there had been walls trailing off in this direction along the street-facing wall, it would have been strange for the Antiquaries not to notice them.

Block XIII.1 was initially a simple two-room block situated alone in the north-west part of the insula at a slight angle to the grid, though the geophysics added two additional internal divisions; adjacent was a long flue or hearth. Just to the south-east of this was an area of burnt remains and fragmented roof tiles as if a house had burnt and collapsed. The Fluxgate Gradiometry certainly showed heightened responses here.

Block XIII.11 was a single-room rectangular building in the middle of the southern side of the insula, like Block XIII.1 at an angle to the grid. The flue within it meant that it was interpreted as a drying place for cloth and yarn from Fox and St John Hope’s hypothesised dyeing industry; whereas Boon interpreted it as being related to corn-drying which would be more commonly accepted now (Boon 1974, 256).

Block XIII.111 and Block XIII.1IV were rectangular buildings gable-end and perpendicular to
the main east–west street. Had they been excavated a couple of years previously they might have been described as shops, though now with the dyeing industry fixation they were pressed into the service of this interpretation by the Antiquaries; so in Block XIII.III a ‘patch of gravel near the middle of its area may indicate the site of a drying hearth’, and in Block XIII.IV the hearth and flues present were complemented by ‘a pit, which perhaps was used as a water-hole’ (St John Hope and Fox 1896, 217).

Insula XIV

Insula XIV was largely surrounded by a wall, so very private. It contained two big houses, both of which were accessed through major gateways on the main east–west road (opened the season before the main area was excavated), though House XIV.1 also had access into the main courtyard from the south. It is curious that both the original blocks from which Houses XIV.1 and XIV.2 developed should have been constructed so close together, House XIV.2 seemingly blocking the view from House XIV.1. Some of the northernmost walls were shown on Taylor’s map of 1759 (Fig. 3.3) and correlate well with the Antiquaries’ plan of about 150 years later.

House XIV.1 was the largest courtyard house at Silchester, other than ‘the mansio’, occupying about the western two-thirds of the insula. It probably began life as a row-building sandwiched between two porticoes and embellished with projecting pavilions on the east-facing side. This was eventually to become the eastern range, to the west of which were added three others to create a courtyard, all unified by an internal and external peristyle. The building was richly adorned with mosaics. The floors from two of the rooms in the eastern range showed that the original thresholds to the rooms were on the eastern side, suggesting these were the earlier more important entrances, rather than from the courtyard to the west, which may have risen in importance once the courtyard became complete. Both these floors were stylistically early in date (321.40 and 321.42); in their corpus Neal and Cosh suggested second century, whereas in an earlier article Cosh related the black and white chequered mosaic to the Period 2 ones from Fishbourne, usually considered later first century (Cosh 2004, 233). These variable estimates give us a potential terminus post quem for the extension to the house (Mosaics 321.38–42, Neal and Cosh 2009, 207–13), though even these mosaics were later additions to these rooms since the excavators noted that they abutted the plaster on the walls, which continued down for some inches, as if they had been inserted later above an earlier flooring. They are also discussed by Johnson (1993, 152–4).

From Pit XIV.J came the stock of a wooden force-pump with leaden seals, assumed to be for pumping water out of a well into a storage tank, or from a tank at ground level to an overhead cistern for a bathhouse (St John Hope and Fox 1896, 233–4); it is further discussed in Ditchfield (1897), Gowland (1901, 415), Liversidge (1968, 51), Boon (1974, 86–7), Oleson (1984, 266–8), and most recently re-analysed by Stein (2012; 2014, 304–14).

The building has also been extensively discussed by Ling, focusing his analysis on the wall-plaster from the eastern range. The wall decoration had been reconstructed from fragments of plaster by Fox in what was pioneering work in the field, but he thought they came from a dado rail which Ling criticised first in Davey and Ling (1982, 153–5) and then in Ling (1984). Within the latter he offered his own interpretation of the sequence of the building of the entire house, seeing adaptations to the original structure in the later second or early third century.

Boon used the house to suggest that the early property qualification for governance in the town must have been modest, since even the grandest houses, like this one, took a long time to grow out of smaller origins. He also thought the simpler Late Roman mosaics and their patching illustrated how investment declined in the Late Roman period as the ruling classes moved out of the towns (Boon 1974, 59–60, 192). See also Boon (1974, layout 190–4, domestic shrine 164, mosaics 73, 215, 221, other flooring 209, plan 189, wall-plaster 211–12, 219, outbuildings 256, assumed agricultural function 260).

MacMahon wondered if Rooms 2 and 3 on the southern side were tabernae (MacMahon 2003, 34).

House XIV.2 occupied the eastern third of the insula. It was a complex building, perhaps
Fig. 5.25. Interior 8 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
Fig. 5.26. Interior 8 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
MAPPING THE INTERIOR

Fig. 5.27. Interior 8 – interpretative plan.
originating from the western range: a north–south row-building with a portico on the eastern side. In the middle of this was an off-set chamber with a fine mosaic and a ‘delicate blue’ wall-plaster, possibly serving as a lararium. The earlier use of this possible shrine as a kitchen is discussed by Perring (2002, 192) in the context of looking at ritual deposits such as infant burials in kitchen spaces. One of the mosaics in this range is stylistically second century (321.48). An eastern range was added via a gallery with a lavishly decorated fourth-century-style panelled mosaic (321.49, Mosaic 1 in Reading Museum). A photograph of Fox drawing the mosaic can be seen in Boon (1974, 34). This late dating for the mosaic in the gallery was diametrically opposed to that envisaged by Fulford and Allen, who considered that the corridor might be later first or second century and wished to see a much earlier date for the mosaic in their analysis of the lithology of early tesserae from various sites (Allen and Fulford 2004, 17–18). The gallery led to a presumably later range which contained within it a large bipartite room (Cosh 2001, 235–6), (321.43–51, Neal and Cosh 2009, 214–18).

The northern outbuilding (the yard and Rooms 25–8) was interpreted as a possible dairy on the basis of the large, 0.9 m diameter, mortarium within it by Boon (1974, 238, 260); though having a herd of cattle coming daily into the centre of the town does seem a little extraordinary. See also Boon (1974, mosaics 73, 216–17, 220, 345, privy 90, domestic shrine 161, 201, triclinium 194, fireplace 343, tiled roof 203, slab-table 340).

A large earlier building or enclosure occupied a large part of this insula. Two long walls on a slightly different alignment forming a right-angle pass under the northern and eastern ranges of House XIV.1 and then under the western range of House XIV.2. A short parallel wall also just peeps out under the eastern range of House XIV.2. So, if the dating evidence for House XIV.1 suggests the eastern range is second century at the latest from the mosaics, then we can be fairly confident this earlier structure is first century. The Antiquaries also noticed that there had been a lot of subsidence into much earlier pits, particularly in House XIV.1; many had little material in them, but one contained ‘pseudo-samian bowls of an early type’ and a marbled pillar-moulded glass bowl, an early Italian import (from Pit XIV.I, under the south-west corner of the building).

### Insula XV

Insula XV contained several larger buildings and less open space than Insulae IX, X, XI, XII and XIII; but the presence of circular hearths and long flues meant that the Antiquaries associated it with the dye-works industrial zone, the idea for which had emerged during the 1884–7 seasons. Indeed, the absence of pits or anything else in the central northern part of the insula meant that the Antiquaries concluded that ‘it is therefore not improbable that this formed a bleaching ground’ (St John Hope 1897a, 413).

**House XV.1** was in the north-west of the insula, adjoining at a very slight angle the east–west street at the gable end. It was a four-chamber row with a portico on the east-facing side (early single-corridor type, Berry 1951). Traces of wall suggest some kind of extension along the street frontage to the east.

**House XV.2** was in the central-southern part of the insula, on the same orientation as House XV.1, so not quite perpendicular to the street. In essence it was a double-corridor building sandwiching a row of five or more rooms, with extensions having been made to the north, central and southern part of the eastern side. This was used as an example of a ‘double-corridor house’ by Walthew (1975, 199), or ‘later double-corridor house’ in the case of Berry (1951) where the rear corridor would often end up being subdivided into rooms. Walthew drew parallels with rural villas such as Farningham and Ditchley. Close by was a circular hearth of the type the Antiquaries had been associating with dye-works. See also Boon (1974, layout 192, adjustment to align with grid 307).

**Block XV.I** in the western part of the insula was a simple isolated square building, though there are hints from the geophysics that this is the northern end of a row-building continuing south.

**Block XV.II** was approximately perpendicular to the north–south street on the eastern side. It was a large rectangle, but may have had a corridor on the south-facing side; it was described by the Antiquaries as a barn. Similarities with Block XXVII.III and House XXVII.2 were observed by Boon (1974, 259).
Block XVIII was earlier than and overlain by Block XVII and was at an 18-degree angle to the street-grid, orientated north-east to south-west (Fox 1948, 175). It had four chambers with a corridor on the south-east-facing side. The monolithic threshold stone drew comment from Boon (1974, 204) because of its rarity at Silchester. Perring (2002, 190) used this building as an example in his functional analyses of the use of space in Romano-British housing.

Block XVIV was a single square room with a wall running off it, suggestive of a very incomplete plan; the geophysics hint at further walls to the south, but these are very unclear.

Insula XVI

Insula XVI was dominated by three houses; however, the Antiquaries did come across a number of large very solid gravel areas with the impression of floor-joists, and they wondered if they were missing wooden buildings of which these comprised the floors, which is highly likely (Boon 1974, 208). One of the main findings of this season, which was then traced back into Insula XV, was that of a water-pipe. This emerged during the excavation of Pit XVI.LL in the south-east corner of the insula, in which the cut section of an earlier trench could be seen. This was chased and proved to be a pipe trench, at times 0.9 m wide and 1.8–2.1 m deep. There were regular iron collars for the pipe c. 2.13 m apart which had an internal diameter of 0.12 m. The pipe trench continued under the Town Wall and into the ditch, terminating 5.5 m from the Wall ‘against a rough mass of flint masonry’. Levels suggested the trench bottom was indeed level, even if the depth of the collars varied alarmingly. The pipe continued on into Insula III, first turning north-east for a while then curving back eastwards, terminating c. 13.7 m from House III.1, though in this stretch it is less level. Chasing it the Antiquaries re-excavated part of Insula III, only to find evidence for a new building at a deeper level (so unplanned) which they had totally missed the first time. Fulford associated this with an early palatial building in Insula III (Fulford 2008, 4); however, given it runs precisely parallel to the east–west road, it rather depends on how early that roadway is.

The insula also gained early attention from the find of a gold coin of Allectus by a ploughboy in 1746 in its south-east corner, one of the first ever reported finds from the site (Boon 1974, 24). This was published by Ward (1748, 609–13) and indicated on the Wright/Stair’s maps of the site (fig. 3.2). ‘The place where it was found, is marked in the plan by the letter P; which of late years has gained the name silver hill, because more silver coins have been found there, than in any other part of the city’ (Maclauchlan 1851). The 1740s excavations were reasonably extensive, revealing on Taylor’s 1759 map of Hampshire quite a bit of the plan of what was later to be christened ‘House XVI.3’ (fig. 3.3).

House XVI.1 occupied the north-west of the insula. It had perhaps started out as an east–west double-corridor building which had been extended to the south at both ends to create three sides of a courtyard. Evidence for a fourth comes from the geophysics. The house lay at a slight angle to the grid, in common with House XVI.3 and both houses in Insula XV. The hearth and furnace (for brewing or baking), along with the sunken earthenware container for raking out the ashes next to it, drew comment from Boon (1974, 195, 343).

House XVI.2 in the north-east corner originated as a row-building with a portico to the east (early single-corridor type, Berry 1951); this was misaligned to the street-grid by about 16 degrees (Fox 1948, 175), though a later extension which was added to the north brought it more into line, but still not quite. A possibly second-century mosaic in the original building had been subsequently covered and replaced by a later plain tessellated pavement in red (Mosaic 321.52, Neal and Cosh 2009, 218).

House XVI.3 in the south-east corner, with a very incomplete plan, was an L-shaped building. However, the remains of a mosaic came from an imperfectly known extension to this (Mosaic 321.53, Neal and Cosh 2009, 218–19). It was probably first excavated by Stair judging by Taylor’s map (fig. 3.3), while on Ward’s plan ‘Money Hill’ is placed in exactly this location confirming excavations or discoveries were being made here (Ward 1748; Taylor 1759; Brayley and Britton 1805, 249). The building, like all those in the insula, is slightly misaligned to the grid. From just in front of this house in Pit XVI.KK came a significant quantity of sheep-bone-
working residue, possibly from making bone rings from shoulder blades (Fulford 2001, 207; St John Hope 1897a, 421–2). See also Boon (1974, 259).

Block XVII was a simple rectangular structure in the north-east corner of the insula. No purpose was proposed for the building.

NOTABLE FINDS FROM INSULA XIII
‘Practically no objects of interest were found in it.’

NOTABLE FINDS FROM INSULA XIV
Finds included the wooden water pump (Pit XIV.J) mentioned above; a glass marbled pillar-moulded bowl (Pit XIV.I); numerous bone pins, needles, and ornamental inlay; in bronze were brooches, a ‘curious mass of nails’, an ‘exceptionally perfect stylus’, tweezers, several ligulae, a narrow boat-shaped vessel; in iron were an iron plate with bronze studs, the bottom of a hanging-lamp stand, knives, styli, keys, shears, trowel, hammer, a pair of compasses, a small anvil, the head of two javelins; and also, lead weights.

NOTABLE FINDS FROM INSULAE XV AND XVI
Objects in bronze include a bronze jug with a handle terminating in a comic mask (from the well next to Pit XVI.M) (St John Hope 1897a, 418; Me-134 in Hutchinson 1986, 342); as well as ‘a delicately made strainer with the perforations disposed in a fret pattern, two bells, a flattened body inlaid with niello, part of the bronze plating of an ornamental casket, a ring with what may be a Chi-Rho on the bezel, a charm against the evil eye in the form of a bull’s head with a phallic emblem in the mouth, and four oval brooches once gilt, of which two retain their imitation glass gems [and] the usual series of brooches, pins, spoons, tweezers, keys, spatula etc.’. In addition there was in lead the tripod foot of a candlestick; in iron ‘a pair of compasses, the end of a cart pole (?), two lamps of different shapes, a candlestick, and a number of knives, styli, keys of various patterns etc.’.

INTERIOR 9: INSULAE II, III AND IV (FIGS 5.28–31)

HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS

1730s/40s  John Stair revealing Forum and RIB 67 (Ward 1748; 1744–5; Taylor 1759).
1866–73  Excavation of Insula IV Forum ‘Block V’ (Joyce 1881b, 349–65).
1890  Insula IV excavation of basilica northern apse (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 557).
1891  Excavation of Insula II (Fox 1892, 269–80).
1891  Excavation of Insula III (Fox 1892, 280–4).
1892  Excavation of Insula IV (Fox and St John Hope 1893a).
1896  Excavation in Insula III following a pipeline (St John Hope 1897a, 423–4).
1908  Recovery of objects as Forum-Basilica is filled in (St John Hope 1909c).
1961  ‘Church’ re-excavated by Collingwood (Frere 1976).
1977, 80–6  Excavation of the Basilica (Fulford and Timby 2000).

ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

Insulae II and III: notes (St John Hope 1891; Fox 1899b, 82); society visits (Anon. 1891c; a; 1890–3b; Rutland 1890–1); a lecture (Fox 1893).
Forum excavation by Joyce: a lecture (Joyce 1867a, 496–7; 1873, 21–6; 1876a, 56–7); interim report (Joyce 1876a, 56–7); society visits (Thompson 1874; Anon. 1867, 288); a discussion (Hilton Price 1887); a note (Anon. 1866).
Forum and ‘church’ excavation by the Antiquaries: a note (St John Hope 1893a); photographs of the ‘church’ under excavation (Anon. 1893a, 313; Young 1894); a note (Fox 1899b, 82); lectures (St John Hope 1909c; Fox and St John Hope 1893b; Fox et al. 1893).

The ‘church’ by Collingwood: interim statements (Richmond 1962, 185–6; Boon 1974, 32, 173–84).

Basilica excavation by Fulford: reviews (Esmonde Cleary 2001; Millett 2001; Mason 2001; Niblett 2001; White 2001; Guest 2003); interim reports (Fulford 1985a; 1987a; 1993; 1983; 1985c; 1987b; 1986a; 1987c; 1986b); interim notes 1977 (Goodburn et al. 1978, 464–5); 1980 (Grew et al. 1981, 362); 1981 (Rankov et al. 1982, 389–91; Selkirk and Selkirk 1981); 1982 (Frere et al. 1983, 330–1; Fulford 1982b); 1983 (Frere et al. 1984, 324–6); 1984 (Frere et al. 1985, 311); 1985 (Frere et al. 1986, 421); 1986 (Frere et al. 1987, 348–9).

DESCRIPTION

These insulae have seen the greatest investigation as they contain the Forum-Basilica and the supposed church amongst other features. Insulae II and III took position behind the basilica, which was in Insula IV, the largest rectangular insula in the centre of the town. They were divided by the main north–south street between the North and South Gates.

Insula II

Insula II was excavated early in the Antiquaries’ campaign; it was totally walled off, containing four main buildings, one in each corner.

House II.1 lay in the north-east corner of the insula. Two north–south ranges on a slightly different alignment were revealed by the Antiquaries in 1891, but additional walls from the geophysics make clear that this was part of a larger courtyard house developed over time. From a hypocaust in the north-east of the building came a fragment of imported marble, possibly Campan Vert from the Pyrenees and originating from the remains of the Basilica. A small bit of painted plaster came from the north-west part of this house; the only painted plaster to be remarked upon in this insula. House II.1 appears to overlie an earlier structure on a fractionally different alignment which had three or more rooms containing two mosaics (321.89, Neal and Cosh 2009, 196–7) (see also Boon 1974, 213, 347).

House II.2 was in the south-west of the insula. It was a simple row-building with a portico to the east, with the addition of larger heated rooms to the north (Berry 1951). It contained two mosaics (321.101–11, Neal and Cosh 2009, 198–9). The geophysics showed a possible additional range on the street corner. Fox and MacMahon thought that several of the rooms (3, 4, 7 and 8) could be tabernae (MacMahon 2003, 34). Fox’s reasoning was that the street-corner room lacked an obvious wall to the street. However, tabernae built as an integrated part of a more elite building rarely had a door giving access through to the larger dwelling, so while possible this is not compelling evidence. Fox also thought the associated small square building to the east might be an ash-pit. See also Boon (1974, shrine 160, layout 190, raised hearth 195, mosaic 217).

House II.3 (originally unnumbered) in the south-east corner survived only as fragmentary traces and isolated elements of hypocausts (Fox 1892, 269; Boon 1974, 259). It is barely visible in the geophysics.

House II.4 (originally unnumbered) in the north-west corner is a four-room rectangular house with a possible unrecognised extension to the east, here the remains of a hypocaust were found. Underneath all of this were the remains of an earlier house on a different alignment; this included one mosaic (321.12, Neal and Cosh 2009, 199).

An additional isolated square building has also been identified in the geophysics in what had been described as the ‘open ground’ just south of House II.1.

Insula III

Insula III was originally dug in 1891, but the Antiquaries re-excavated here in 1896, chasing the water-pipe they had discovered in the insulae to the west. The insula was totally walled off.
House III.1 and Baths lie on the southern side of Insula III. It was a three-row house with a portico on the west and portico and pavilions on the east (Berry 1951; Boon 1974, 191, 306). The latter appeared to adjoin to the east a block of buildings described as a bathhouse, because of the hypocaust and the large drain; in contrast, Boon interpreted the four rooms aligned north–south and fronted by a colonnade as shops (Boon 1974, 54). RIB 76 came from here, a fragment of Purbeck marble, which contained only a few letters from the bottom-right corner of an inscription; however, one of the words started ‘AT…’ which was taken to be Atrebatum. It could have been a dedicatory inscription of the baths or from the Forum or an earlier building. This corner was partly re-excavated by Fulford in 2013–14, and an updated assessment will no doubt appear soon.

House III.2 (originally unnumbered) is a south-facing winged corridor, containing one mosaic (321.13, Neal and Cosh 2009, 199).

House III.3 (originally unnumbered) lies in the north-east corner and is a small house which includes a channelled hypocaust under a mosaic (321.14, Neal and Cosh 2009, 199).

House III.4 is a new addition in the north-west corner of the insula. This comprises a series of walls from the aerial photographic and geophysical data. Several rooms can be noted in the interpretative incomplete plan, and immediately to the south-east of the clearest room traces of a hypocaust were noted by the Antiquaries.

The houses in both insulae were used in a discussion of buildings and measurement units by Walthew (1987, 206, fig. 2c).

While few structures were observed by the Antiquaries in the northern and western parts of the insula, remains of partial floors gave them reason to think this absence might be illusory. When Pit III.H in the central-northern area was excavated, 0.9 m down the remains of a hard rammed chalk floor were discovered; and in Pit III.M in the middle were the remains of a fine mosaic of ‘excellent workmanship’ from demolition or refurbishment in the vicinity (Mosaic 321.15, Neal and Cosh 2009, 199). However, the greatest evidence came as part of the insula was re-excavated when a water-pipe was chased across from the southern sides of Insulae XV and XVI into Insula III. It led to a building at a much lower level that they had ‘entirely overlooked’ when they first excavated. ‘This is to be accounted for by the fact that besides its greater depth it is overlaid by a hard layer of gravel which has been intentionally deposited above it, and further, because it partly underlies House No. 1. So far as the building could be traced it appears to contain at least two well-made drains built of tiles, as well as one or more hypocausts, and a chamber with a tile floor … That our pipe conducted water to it from the city ditch there can be little doubt’ (St John Hope 1897a, 424). Alas no plan was published of these remains, and the geophysics add only a few walls which are more likely only to relate to the later House III.1.

Fulford considered that this might be the focal point of a pre-Flavian monumental building, possibly the source of the Neronian stamped tiles found on the site, and also of a broad scatter of early architectural elements re-used in Flavian and later buildings in this area. He interpreted this hypothesised building as being a palace of Cogidubnus (idea touched upon in Fulford 2003, 99; and developed in Fulford 2008). In 2013 he began excavations to test this idea.

NOTABLE FINDS FROM INSULAE II AND III

A terracotta lamp embellished with a figure holding a cornucopia, from Pit II.A (within House II.1). A hoard in a pot concealed in the foundations in the south-eastern part of Insula III, containing coins ‘of later emperors’ (Fox 1892, 284). Pellet moulds from Insula II, immediately north-west of the insula containing the Forum-Basilica (Boon 1954b). A statuette in terracotta (image of Lucina or Latona?) and another fragment (Venus?). More than 20 dog skulls came from the area (Herbert Jones in Fox 1892, 285–8) and twenty fragments of quern (Shaffrey 2003).

DESCRIPTION OF INSULA IV (THE FORUM, THE ‘CHURCH’ AND SURROUNDINGS)

Insula IV overview

The Forum-Basilica lay at the centre of Insula IV, but left space for blocks of buildings separated
Fig. 5.29. Interior 9 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
by additional smaller streets to the north, east and south. The insula is surveyed from north to south and then the Forum-Basilica and ‘church’ are discussed.

**Northern strip:** to the west was a courtyard building. The central area was ‘riddled by pits’ and two wells. Objects included a small bronze figure, perhaps of an infant Hercules, a bronze bowl and part of an antefix with a face on it. One pit included the necks of 39 flagons, another contained infant remains. To the east there are the outline walls of three sides of a building.

**Eastern strip:** to the north-east of the Forum entrance was a house with four shops to the north; to the south a tile floor remains of what may have been another house.

Immediately to the east of the Forum entrance was a notable deposit: ‘The centre of this side of the Insula is underlain by an extensive bed of oyster shells, from [0.45–0.60 m] thick. This bed is [15.2–18.3 m] wide, and extends eastward from near the Forum entrance for at least [30.5 m]. The streets at this point are laid upon it’ (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 562). They considered it might be a dump for conversion into lime. It was noted that this spread conjoins with that observed by Joyce in his excavations in the south-east corner of the Forum, mentioned below.

Another curious deposit said to be from the same kind of area was the large number of stag’s antlers ‘found in the space immediately east of the Forum; and not in pits, but on the Roman surface’ (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 572; see also Fulford 2001, 207).

To the south-east of the Forum entrance there were no buildings identified in the excavations, though a structure appeared in the geophysics which overlay the street. A bronze figure of a winged seated victory or genius was found around here.

**Southern strip:** to the south-west of the Forum ‘there was unquestionably a house, but only a few fragments of its floors and hypocausts remain, of so indefinite a character that the plan cannot be recovered’. To the south-east was the supposed ‘church’ described separately below.

**INSULA IV: THE FORUM-BASILICA**

**History of excavations**

The earliest recorded excavations were those of John Stair in the 1730s and 40s. A letter describing the works from John Collet to John Ward was published by Boon (1974, 23–4). While Ward’s and others’ publication of Stair’s plan gave the first accurate overall layout of the site, it was Isaac Taylor’s 1759 Map of Hampshire that showed the features that Stair had actually excavated (fig. 3.3: Taylor 1759). The general topography is very good, so it is likely to be as faithful an understanding of what Stair found as was possible. The open area had been identified and the eastern entrance dug. In the west, the southern apse of the basilica had been revealed, but the area was identified as a temple. The findspot of *RIB* 67 (dedication to Hercules of the Segontiaci) was also shown on the northern side of the complex.

Joyce began excavating here in 1866 and opened up the entire Forum-Basilica. ‘It yet remains, ruined as it is, to this hour a conspicuous and significant memorial of that wonderful people who carried their own order and discipline to the ends of the world’ (Joyce 1881a, 330). The excavation remained open and the Antiquaries did little further work, though they re-planned the site. Collectively both created the iconic plan of what we now recognise as the Hadrianic-Antonine Forum-Basilica (Period 6). They recognised that what they were looking at might have been a later phase to an earlier building: ‘It is possible that the inner ambulatory of the Forum was rebuilt at a late date, as fragments of the bases of large columns with mortar adhering to them, such as might have adorned the principal gateway, were dug out from the rubbish of the foundation walls’ (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, pl. XXXIX, fig. 15).

In 1908 the Forum-Basilica was finally filled in, paid for by the fourth Duke of Wellington, after having been open for thirty years. Even during this operation, fragments of Purbeck marble and new pieces of inscription were recovered (St John Hope 1909c).

The Forum lay at rest until the post-War era meant that new deep-ploughing raised fears about the survival of strata within the town. The initial excavation of 1977 by Fulford sought to investigate the level of the damage, and the results led to the launch of the 1980–6 campaign a year after the site came into Hampshire County Council’s ownership.
**Periods 1–3: Later Iron Age occupation, including earlier streets, c. 25 B.C.–A.D. 50/60**

*Description*

Fulford divided his early features into three phases. Period 1 (c. 25–15 B.C.) showed the traces of what might be three or four roundhouses inferred from curvilinear eaves-gullies. Period 2 (c. 15 B.C.–A.D. 40/50) and Period 3 (c. A.D. 40–50/60) were dominated by the layout of two slightly metalled streets at an angle of 106.5 degrees (not 90 degrees, see FIG. 11.1), with the area to the west divided into three blocks perpendicular to the road. Within these areas were several possible buildings and wells. Period 3 saw a new palisade protect the entire area from the road; subsequently pits were dug behind the fence-line containing a rich array of imported artefacts.
as well as bronze-, silver- and tin-working residue including terret-moulds. This palisade appears to unite the preceding three plots. The road to the south-west was re-metalled after the palisade was constructed. Across the area a 0.05–0.10 m-thick layer of dark earth associated with the Iron Age deposits formed, and there is the possibility of the development of a turf-line over this and the road before Period 4 in the southern area of the excavation.

**Period 4: two timber buildings, terminus post quem: Tiberio-Claudian**

**Description**

Two ranges of timber buildings were built set on a cardinal alignment. The west range (building 2) was a cellular structure of ten rooms fronted by a portico. The partial evidence for the north range (Building 1) has been suggested to show a more substantial structure, but the sections of its foundation trenches (F623 and 560) are little different to those of the main west range (e.g. F591) (0.7 m wide and 0.9 m deep vs. 0.5 m wide and 0.9 m deep). The construction trenches of the west range show signs of a re-cut. Once the building was built, the Periods 1–3 Iron Age pits behind it continued to accumulate material within them. It is to be noted that the west range is not axially aligned on the east–west road heading to the temples in Insula XXX.

**Dating**

The initial report suggested a Neronian date (Fulford 1985b, 45), but a major rebuild and re-cutting of the construction trenches meant that the Neronian terminus post quem could only relate to this activity and not the original building. However, the structure did seal pits which included Tiberio-Claudian material and this provides the only confident terminus post quem. A date in the 40s is likely, while the absence of sealed Claudio-Neronian pottery present elsewhere would make a later date unlikely. Fulford acknowledged the possibility of a pre-a.d. 43 date, and was careful not to rule it out, acknowledging a construction under Epaticcus or Caratacus was possible, but he preferred to see it as post-conquest (Fulford and Timby 2000, 566; Fulford 2003, 98; Creighton 2006, 64–7).

**Interpretation**

A number of possible interpretations have been provided for this building. Early on it was imagined as a military principia building, though the final report settled on seeing it as a proto-Forum. This is discussed in detail below (pp. 358–62).

**The oyster deposit**

A massive oyster deposit underlying the Forum existed in the south-east corner, originally leading Joyce to interpret one of the rooms as an oyster bar. The scale of the deposit was evocatively described by him: 'Here deep in the floor everywhere, outside it in the ambulatory, and extending from it up to the very corner of the exterior wall of that side, is a great bed of oyster-shells underneath the level. It is the accumulation one would suppose of many generations of deceased oysters, and must be seen to be fully credited' (Joyce 1881b, 355). It is unclear how early in date this was in relation to Periods 1–4.

**Period 5: Flavian timber Forum-Basilica**

**Description and dating**

The Period 4 ranges were replaced by a large timber hall with nave flanked by aisles, bisected by a cross feature interpreted as an entranceway providing access into the Forum. This central feature was axially aligned with the east–west road leading to the temples in Insula XXX. Its final demolition appears to have been planned, with no burning amongst the debris; and with the colonnade foundation of the masonry successor running hard-up against the inside face of
the north wall, it is likely this was a very well planned staged upgrading. The wall-plaster found in the demolition layers suggests the interior was largely plain with decoration reserved for the northern and southern ends. A slightly-worn to worn coin of Vespasian a.d. 77–8 provides a *terminus post quem*. A construction period spanning a.d. 80–5 or 80–90 was argued for.

**Interpretation**

This has almost universally been accepted as a Forum-Basilica on the basis of its co-location with the later masonry Forum. Architectural reconstructions have been undertaken by Sunter (Fulford and Timby 2000, 535–8), with an alternative by de la Bédoyère (1991, 85). However, Esmonde Cleary (2001) queried this interpretation as the basilica seemed to have a cross-hall passing through the middle of it, which had caused problems in Sunter’s reconstruction. Instead he viewed it as being one large basilican hall, rather than a passage with two basilican reception-rooms going off it to the north and south. He has drawn attention to various other early ailed halls in high-status buildings, such as at Fishbourne (north-east corner) and the two in the ‘legate’s palace’ at Xanten. Without knowing the rest of the plan the interpretation as a timber basilica-forum rather than a large private residence cannot be taken as a given, but it is still quite likely.

**Period 6: Hadrianic-Antonine masonry basilica**

**Description and dating**

The basilica was rebuilt in stone. It had columns around 9 m high with ornate Corinthian capitals. At either end of the hall were raised apses where the magistrates could sit and dispense justice. In the middle was another apsidal room originally referred to as the *curia*, though as Frere observed it was too small to house a nominal *ordo* of 100. He imagined it as a shrine for the deity of the *civitas*. The Forum itself was approximately square with internal and external porticoes. Construction in the Hadrianic period with perhaps some revisions down to the early Antonine period (a.d. 150) was suggested. A *Legio XX* stamped tile was allegedly found at Silchester which Warry associated with the Hadrianic re-building of the Forum (Warry 2010, 143).

**The eastern entrance** to the Forum contained a major arch, demonstrated by the significant additional foundations found for it. This was not, however, quite in the centre, but shifted c. 1.5 m to the south to align the entrance with the east–west street in front of the building, which ran at a slight angle (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 542–3). This curious lack of symmetry and the slight misorientation of the entire Period 6 Forum-Basilica and this road are notable features in the layout of the town (Boon 1974, 92–6, 108–20).

**Function of rooms** within the Forum was attributed by Joyce on the basis of the finds. In one he observed recesses in the wall which he took to serve as receptacles for strong-boxes; this together with all the coins found there led him to conclude they were the *tabernae argentariae* (Joyce 1881b, 353–5). Butcher’s shops were identified by the number of hooks, and another was identified for game (curiously containing four dog skulls buried under the floor). Next to this was the ‘favourite luncheon bar of the Forum’ serving oysters (misunderstanding that this was actually an earlier pre-Forum deposit). Other rooms were given functions such as offices for the aedile, quaestor, *vectigalia*; and the *Collegium sacerdotum* (Joyce 1881b, 358, pl. XVI). The Antiquaries were rightly more cautious about such identifications, as was Boon (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 547; Boon 1974, 111).

**Reconstructions**

Decorative stonework from the Period 6 Forum-Basilica was not only found in this insula, but also in adjoining ones. From Insula I came a shaft of a column (0.56 m diameter; 0.2 m high), and close to that a stone carved with foliage and some fine marble, possibly Campan Vert from the Pyrenees (Fox 1892, 265). From Insula XXXV came fragments of two pieces of Doric capital which judging by their size were thought to come from the Forum (St John Hope 1908, 207). The Corinthian capitals and others have been discussed extensively (St John Hope 1909a,
474; Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 541, 559, 569); including their association with Rhenish masons (Liversidge 1968, 39, 41; Boon 1974, 108 n. 3); setting them in their national context (Blagg 1976, 152, 162, 165, 171; 1977; 2002, 22–5, 139, 256–60; Cunliffe and Fulford 1982, fig. 84); parallels to Form C capitals from Caerwent and Cirencester (Blagg 1979, 102; Kähler 1939). New stonework from the basilica excavation was reported on by Wooders (Fulford and Timby 2000, 90–100).

Many reconstructions have been created of the Period 6 complex over the years: Fox and St John Hope (1893a, 540–59); Liversidge (1968, 38); Boon (1974, 112–16, 208, 213); de la Bédoyère (1991, 90); with Sunter providing the most comprehensive view (Fulford and Timby 2000, 538–43).

**Period 7: Late Roman occupation of the basilica**

*Description*

There were a large number of negative features, including one well which may have been later second century; many of the later pits contained traces of metal-working. It was envisaged that the absence of later second- and third-century features related to there having been solid flooring such as Purbeck marble, which had subsequently been robbed in the Late Roman period. Occupation continued perhaps into the fifth century. The late occupation and industrial use of basilicas is discussed in a national context in Rogers (2010, 70–2; 2011, 135, 142).

*The interior of the Forum square*

This revealed nothing. ‘Trenches were sunk from wall to wall, running east–west, and these were in every case dug quite down to the natural gravel beneath. These trenches were then intersected by others from north to south, dividing the whole into little squares. The work proved more barren of result than any other that has been attempted at Silchester’ (Joyce 1881b, 352). The area was partly excavated again by the Antiquaries, though little was found. The square appeared to comprise a 0.6 m depth of gravel on a mortar base. No remains of gutter stones or other features were found (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 544). However, the large expanse of compacted gravel and the large roof-space necessitated significant drainage, which was provided by a drain c. 0.38–0.44 m wide and 1.04 m deep, taking water out eastwards through the main entrance (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 545). This flowed into a trench 0.6 m wide and c. 0.6 m deep down the street to the east.

In theory part of the Period 4 north range timber building should have been found within the square, but it either lay sealed by the gravel, or the projected reconstruction is inaccurate, or Joyce and the Antiquaries simply did not recognise it. There were only two features within the square: a pit or well in the north-east angle, c. 4.6 m deep, containing pottery, a stylus and bones, principally of dog with sheep and pig (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 544); and near the centre a single pit, also 4.6 m deep, containing two cattle jaw bones.

**INSULA IV: ‘THE CHURCH’**

*History of excavations*

The building was first discovered on 10 May 1892 and claimed as a small basilican church the following year by Fox and St John Hope (1893a, 565). In 1953 Toynbee pointed out the lack of conclusive evidence for this interpretation (Toynbee 1953), so Boon proposed re-excavation in 1959. This took place in 1961 directed by Boon and Richmond, though Boon withdrew early on. An interim note of the works was published by Richmond (1962, 185–6), but he unfortunately died before the site was written up, leaving drawings but no text. Boon published a ‘provisional and personal’ account of the work in his Silchester volume (Boon 1974, 32, 173–84), but it was Frere who finally wrote up the site, based on: one field note-book by Miss Wilson, Cotton’s recollections, the *Journal of Roman Studies* interim account, and his own recollection of Richmond’s lecture to the Society of Antiquaries (Frere 1976).
Description

The building had a long central, red-tessellated ‘nave’ (8.9 x 3.1 m, 0.6 m thick), semi-circular at the west end and rectangular at the other. At the western end was a square black and white mosaic panel which at some point had been covered with opus signinum. There were narrow rectangular ‘aisles’ to the north and south, each 1.52 m wide. Both of these widened at their western ends to create a northern and southern portico. The northern portico was partitioned off in wood and then at some point in stone. At the eastern end of the ‘nave and aisles’ was a ‘vestibule’, 7.4 x 2.1 m, with a red-tessellated area at its northern end with a 0.7 m diameter hole in it. This description is based on Fox and St John Hope (1893a), Frere (1976) and King (1983); the mosaic is No. 321.16 in Neal and Cosh (2009, 200). Ford attempted a reconstruction of the architectural detail (Ford 1994).

The ‘church’ sat within a large open gravelled area. To the east of the building was a 3.5 m square flint foundation with a square trough within it ‘on which doubtless stood the fountain, and a small pit in front of this seems to have been made to carry off the water. Close to the opposite or western end of the church is a large well carefully lined with wood, but no remains of a baptistery have yet been uncovered’ (St John Hope 1892). Upon re-excavation by Richmond, the pit ended up being 0.5 m wide and 1.0 m deep, and was subsequently suggested to be the base of a baptismal font; and thereafter a baptistery of slight construction was imagined to have occupied the vicinity.

To the south was a 18.3 m long row of holes set about 1.4 m apart, with flints laid round them as if to steady posts. Since they were not parallel to the ‘church’ they were thought to post-date it. Little or any of this shows in the geophysics.

Subsequent discussion – was it a church?

Even when the Society of Antiquaries set out upon their excavations, one of their original hopes was to find evidence for Christianity; a quotation from the original plea to set up the project states: ‘If Calleva, as to some would seem likely, had a continuous existence down to and even beyond the date of the withdrawal of the Roman government from this island, there might be some chance of discovering the remains of buildings dedicated to Christian rites’ (Fox and St John Hope 1889–91, 91). In 1892 that expectation was apparently fulfilled (St John Hope 1892).

St John Hope’s interpretation of the building was unequivocal. ‘From a comparison of the plan and surroundings with those of a similar character in Italy and other parts of the Roman Empire, there seems to be little, if any, doubt that we have here a small church of the basilican type’ (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 565). However, even then they recognised that the lack of distinctive Christian iconography meant the identification would be questioned by some (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 567). News of the find was made public early on and led to many visitors and local discussion (St John Hope 1892; Presbyter 1892).

Some clergymen were immediately persuaded. The Revd G. Minns concluded there was much evidence to support its identification as a church (Minns 1890–3). Another visitor, Mr Herbert Jones, was so taken by it he reproduced the small mosaic pavement in the building within the Church of All Saints, Blackheath (Anon. 1893b). In an article about another pre-Norman church, Erwood drew uncritically on Silchester as a parallel for a Christian building and baptistery (Elliston Erwood 1921, 224). Others were more sceptical cautioning against the parallel (Allcroft 1923; 1924, 201–3; St John Hope 1893a).

While the identification became firmly established in narratives of Roman Britain (Haverfield 1924, 206–8; Collingwood 1922, 95; Collingwood and Myres 1936, 272), Toynbee’s survey of early evidence for Christianity in Britain was more hesitant citing comparable plans of temples to other deities (Toynbee 1953, 9). Lewis was similarly cautious in his survey of temples (Lewis 1966, 109). The building was re-excavated in 1961 to obtain better stratigraphic and dating material (Richmond 1962, 185–6; Boon 1974, 173–84; Frere 1976), with Frere again concluding on the balance of probability that it should be considered as a Christian church; contemporary syntheses reflected that (Liversidge 1968, 458–9). For Boon, after having expressed earlier reservations, it was the presence of the transept that clinched the identification of the building.
as a church (Boon 1957, 130; 1974, 175). While some fears were allayed, subsequent syntheses accepted the identification, but had qualms about the dating (Wacher 1978, 237; Thomas 1981, 214–16). The evidence was examined in detail by King (1983) who reviewed the dating evidence (a mid-third-century terminus post quem) and the range of potential parallels. He concluded that while it possibly was a church, the early date made that unlikely unless the dating evidence was entirely residual. Other eastern cults were also contenders, but no matches were perfect. From a different angle Neal and Cosh considered the mosaic to be stylistically late second century, which would make the church interpretation untenable, but they too did not totally rule out that it could be fourth century (Cosh 2004; Neal and Cosh 2009, 199). This has led more recent syntheses to equivocate over the identification (de la Bédoyère 1991, 196; Millett 1995, 119; Casey 2002, 94; Mattingly 2006, 348), while others have continued to dismiss the critique (e.g. Frend 1992, 124), or appear to be unaware of it (Irby-Massie 1999, 198).

NOTABLE FINDS FROM INSULA IV

Two chip-carved table slabs came from the Forum, one in Bath stone and one in Purbeck marble (Fox ND, box 4, sheets 37 and 67; Solley 1979; Boon 1974, 116, 323 n. 28). From the northern Basilica apse came a bronze furniture fitting with a lion’s head in relief (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 557–8).

Along with the usual array of brooches, rings and keys, many miniature items were found, which the Antiquaries interpreted as children’s playthings. These included ‘a tiny bear, a spread eagle, a quaint rocking-horse 4 inches long, a toy anchor, a very infantine gridiron, and securiculae or small axes’. Other finds included ten fragments from six pewter moulds from the Forum (Fox ND, box 4, sheet 64; Bush 1909; Goodall 1972; Boon 1974, 274; Blagg and Read 1977); a bronze statuette from just north of the Forum (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 561; Hutchinson 1986, 208; Durham 2011, no. 62); and from Room 25 Joyce found a lead seal with a Chi-Rho monogram, inscribed [P]MC (Boon 1974, 183; Frere et al. 1989, 345; Mawer 1995, 94); for a wider contextual discussion (Pearce 2008, 201).

Some fragments of human skull were found near the south-east corner of the Forum on the upper surface of the gravel by the Antiquaries; Joyce had also found several skulls.

INTERIOR 10: INSULAE V, VI, XXVIII, XXIX, XXXI AND XXXIV (FIGS 5.32–34)

HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS

1873–4  House XXXIV.1 excavated as ‘Block VI’ by Joyce (Hilton Price 1887, 2).
1892  Excavation of Insula V west of fence-line (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 569).
1892  Excavation of Insula VI west of fence-line (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 569–70).
1901  Excavation of Insula XXVIII north of track (St John Hope 1902, 29).
1902  Excavation of Insula XXVIII south of track, east part (St John Hope 1903a, 420–1).
1902  Excavation of Insula XXIX south of track, west part (St John Hope 1903a, 420).
1905  Excavation of Insula V east of fence-line (St John Hope 1906, 149–54).
1905  Excavation of Insula VI east of fence-line (St John Hope 1906, 154–61).
1906  Excavation of Insula XXXIV and XXXI west of brook (St John Hope 1907a).
1907  Excavation of Insula XXVIII south of track, west part (St John Hope 1908, 199–202).

ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

‘Block VI’: local society visit (Anon. 1872–80); a lecture (Joyce 1873, 15, 27, mislocating the buildings as being to the south of the forum).
Insulae V and VI: notes (Fox 1899b, 83; Anon. 1906); lectures (Fox and St John Hope 1893b; Fox et al. 1893; St John Hope 1907b); society visits (Ditchfield 1905; Anon. 1905, 155).
Insula XXVIII: a lecture (St John Hope 1909b).
Insula XXXIV: lectures (St John Hope 1907c; 1909b); a society visit (Hanbury 1906); a report (St John Hope 1907d); notes (Anon. 1907b, 440; 1908b).

DESCRIPTION

Insula V

Insula V was excavated across two widely separated seasons. Towards the east the depth of overburden was commented on, in places it was as much as 1 m. This largely comprised ‘black earth’, which also covered much of the rest of the south-west quarter of the town. This depth is probably why the Antiquaries’ excavation trenches show so clearly in the geophysics within Insulae V and VI. Apart from the existing buildings, the geophysics did not reveal any new unambiguous structures, though a number of magnetic anomalies exist in the south-east corner. Also a long diagonal linear feature crossed the insula on a south-west to north-east alignment. Since it crossed the street-grid, the presumption is that it either pre-dates the grid or post-dates the demise of the town, though it bears no relation to any known later field divisions.

House V.1 was along the mid-western side of the insula and aligned east–west, perpendicular to the road. There was a portico on the street frontage, with a large room behind, then the building was subdivided behind that. A small column capital was found in the portico in 1892, but was not thought to belong to the building. House V.1 was either demolished or largely remodified as a later wall coming off House V.2 overlies many of the backrooms.

House V.2 was in the south-west corner of the insula. The main building was orientated east–west, with a large hall with two narrow chambers at either end, fronted on the south by a portico. The house had been extended both at the back on the eastern side, and also with the addition of the three-room Block VII to the east. The Antiquaries considered the large hall to be a yard, and the narrow rooms to the side to be stabling; they wondered if it might not be an inn with Block VII being a latrine, though both conjectures were based on little primary evidence. Like House V.1, the back extension must have been demolished at some point and replaced by another rectangular structure of which only three sides are known.

House V.3 was situated on the northern side of the insula; it was a row-building with a portico on the south side rather than on the street frontage (later single-corridor type, Berry 1951). It contained mosaics in four of the rooms (Mosaics 321.17–20, Neal and Cosh 2009, 201); see also Boon (1974, raised hearth 194). Just to the south of it lay Block V.III, a solitary single-cell building with an entrance on the east side not shown on the plan; around it were fragments of painted wall-plaster and tiles (Boon 1974, 212). Directly east of the building and its entrance the geophysics show a large pit, and there is also a hint in the geophysics of a sub-rectangular to oval enclosure around the two, though this is so tentative it is not shown as a hard linear in the interpretative plan. The enclosure, if it is genuine, is about 30 x 30 m with the pit just off-centre.

Block V.I was a north–south-aligned block of five rooms with a portico on the street front to the west and a small extension at the back on the northern end in the north-west corner. It is described as a corridor-and-hall-type strip-building by Perring (2002, 60). Within the main hall was a substantive 6.1 x 2.3 m structure with flues which led to this being interpreted as a dyeing-house, with Fox considering that Room 4, which contained a mosaic, could be the dyer’s office.

On the line of the street, close to the west wall of Block V.I, lay a square-section tile-and-brick drain running from the street intersection southwards for at least 36.6 m (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 569).

Insula VI

The drain out of the Forum was traced running down the middle of the street between Insulae V and VI. Here it was excavated, revealing it to be a trench about 0.9 m wide, and varying from 0.3 m deep in the west to 0.15 m in the east.

House VI.1 occupied the north-eastern part of the insula and appears to have been a west-facing winged-corridor building in origin, with a peristyle and eastern range added to the back
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(early double-corridor house type, Berry 1951; a two-range courtyard house, Perring 2002, 70). Four mosaics were noted, one in the eastern range having samian tesserae indicative of a second-century date (Mosaics 321.21–24, Neal and Cosh 2009, 202). Of particular note is the presence of a large wood-lined tank, sunk deeper than most of the floor levels in Room 21; and also a human skeleton in a 1.2 m deep grave in Room 17, parallel with the south wall, suggesting it was contemporary rather than earlier in date. Just to the south of the house, and on the same alignment is Block VI.III, a large hall of which three sides are known. See also Boon (1974, skeleton 82, layout 191–2, conduit 368).

House VI.2 stood on the southern side of the insula. It appears to have been a three-row building with a west-facing portico, to which extensions, including a southern range, had been added resulting in an L-shaped building (Mosaics 321.25–26, Neal and Cosh 2009, 202–3). Under House VI.2 were the curious remains of a wooden trough, carrying water south away from a well just to the north; the exact purpose of this arrangement remained a mystery; see also Boon (1974, trough 88, layout 192).

Block VI.I occupied the north-west corner of the insula and was an unusual building. On both edges of the corner were two rows of rooms joining in an L-shape, fronted by a portico on the street-side. This had been extended to the south by a more substantial row of rooms, though this time set further forward and lacking the portico. The building was generally thought to be a range of shops. One set of rooms produced a number of fragments of thin veneers of Egyptian red porphyry, which led the Antiquaries to suggest that a lapidary or marble-worker lived here. Red Imperial porphyry is known from mid-first-century contexts in Colchester and Rivenhall Villa, and later in London (Pritchard 1986, 188). Part of a 12–14-year-old human skull was found in a well in this quarter. It is to be noted that the portico alignment is much straighter than the east–west road leading out of the Forum generally takes. It can also be noticed that the range is overlain by House VI.1. See also Boon (1974, interpretation as shops 55, 188, adaptation to the grid 307, plan 189).

Cattle bone deposit: a massive deposit of cattle bones was found underneath Block VI.I Rooms 7–10, and extending east to House VI.1. It comprised almost entirely lower jaws and a few scapulae. Lyell calculated the area to be about 15.2 by 7.6 by 0.36 m. Since 0.83 m² (9 sq. foot) yielded 70 jaws representing 35 oxen, he calculated there might be 4,865 jaws in all, or less if the deposit thinned at the sides, and his final estimate of oxen represented was 2,520. The Antiquaries sought a utilitarian explanation, wondering if the thinner part of the jaws perhaps could be used for making buttons, though no evidence for this was cited, while Boon related the deposit to leather-making (St John Hope 1906, 156, 165–7; Boon 1974, 90, 290; Fulford 2001, 207).

Block VI.II was in the south-west corner, but no great sense was made of the fragmentary set of walls. The geophysics hint at a continuing range of shops with a rear extension.

Insula XXVIII

Insula XXVIII was excavated over a large number of seasons, and was bisected by the modern droveway. The Antiquaries could observe no definite trace of a road on the eastern side, nor could one be found on aerial photographic records (Bewley and Fulford 1996), nor did the geophysics show any unambiguous evidence. The eastern side appears to directly relate to the ditch of the Inner Earthwork.

House XXVIII.1 (called House 2 on the second season’s plan) was believed to be the earlier of the two houses in this area. It was a six-room row-building with a portico on the southern side. It was not quite aligned with the street-grid and set back from it, though linked to it by a couple of larger rooms or enclosures.

House XXVIII.2 (called House 1 on the second season’s plan). The building had two simple ranges, a row of five rooms at right-angles to a corridor linking up to the street frontage. The two framed a courtyard completed by House XXVIII.1 on the eastern side. On the street is a possible range of shops and a square building which Boon thought might be a shrine (Boon 1974, 160, 188–90). The geophysics show the building also had two additional rows of rooms added to it to the north, extending up to and under the modern droveway.

House XXVIII.3 was situated in the north-west of the insula. The northern wall of the block
Fig. 5.32. Interior 10 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
FIG. 5.33. Interior 10 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
Fig. 5.34. Interior 10 – interpretative plan.
had a large gateway suggesting there would be a grand house, but only ephemeral traces were found, which the Antiquaries thought suggestive of an east–west-aligned house with a corridor on the southern side. All sorts of other configurations are possible if Blocks XXVIII.I and II are part of the same complex. However, the Antiquaries considered Block XXVIII.I to be a separate range of shops, and Block XXVIII.II to be a later structure altogether, though the two blocks appear to be contemporary as they formed the sides of a stone-drain which ended up in a sump in the south-west corner of the complex. No purpose was identified for the building.

It is possible that there was another building between House XXVIII.3 and House XXVIII.1. The geophysics show a number of magnetically enhanced areas which could be room-fills, though no clear walls appear.

Insulae XXIX and XXXI

These insulae straddle Interior Sheets 10 and 11. The only buildings on this Sheet are two blocks in the south-west corner of Insula XXIX. These are described with the rest of the insula under Interior Sheet 11.

Insula XXXIV

Insula XXXIV supposedly contained within it the site of a ‘Roman fountain’. This appeared in the south-east part of the insula on plans from Wright’s onwards; on his a letter ‘M’ was said to show where some ‘stones, with which this fountain was inclosed, are still to be seen’ (Ward 1748, 609). It is difficult to make a correlation between Wright’s plan and either the bathhouse or any other building, and once the Antiquaries excavated the area the fountain was quietly dropped off later maps.

Joyce was the first to excavate here, digging ‘Block VI’ to reveal part of what became the northern range of House XXXIV.1, though few details came through to publication (Hilton Price 1887); Fox and St John Hope, however, drew from his diary entries in their report. One of the mosaics was removed to adorn Stratfield Saye (Joyce 1881a, 336).

The insula is occupied by one large walled enclosure containing a single house. On its eastern side, close to the brook, the Antiquaries came across no signs of a road. None was visible from the aerial photographs (Bewley and Fulford 1996), and the geophysics reveal that this side was marked by the Inner Earthwork ditch, the signal of which dominates so could potentially be masking signs of a road. So, prima facie, the road does not appear to exist on this side of Insula XXXIV.

That the Inner Earthwork ditch in this section seems to define the edge of the insula suggests it had a longer history than the stretch of the ditch in the northern part of the town, which is clearly overlain by the street-grid and which Boon’s excavation demonstrated had been filled in by the Claudio-Neronian period. The ditch may have been open to promote drainage in this area below the spring, which today can still get a bit boggy. Just to the south, around the Public Baths, wooden piles were used in a number of places to firm-up the soft ground. The Antiquaries also continually referred to the open area of the insula as ‘boggy’.

House XXXIV.1 took up the western half of the walled insula. It probably originated as a north–south range which was added to by two wings projecting westwards to create the courtyard, all unified by a portico on the interior and a wall to the west. A small room projected into the courtyard which was suggested to be a lararium.

Extending to the east and south were other buildings and enclosed areas interpreted as workrooms and yards. A fourth-century date was suggested for one of the mosaics (321.103–104, Neal and Cosh 2009, 237–8). From the excavation came several hollow voussoir tiles (later cuneatus), curved box-flue tiles from a free-standing vaulted roof structure and a large monolithic threshold stone (St John Hope 1907a, 442; Boon 1974, 112, 197, 128, 160, 204; Brodribb 1979, 148; Perring 2002, 121). Also, in 1973 a brick-stamp was found in the field reading [IVC] DIGNI (Goodburn et al. 1976, 384).

The building appeared to incorporate the remains of an earlier timber structure which had
burnt down. Various upright posts on a fractionally different alignment were found within the wall dividing Rooms 18–19 from 20–23; beneath the floor remains of various charred joists were found. An underground water-course fed House XXXIV.1 from the other side of the road, seeming to originate in the sunken wood-lined Room 21 of House VI.1. Originally this water-course was protected by wooden side-planking, and was 0.15 m wide. After crossing the road it passed obliquely through the courtyard of House XXXIV.1, where it fed a sunken water-butt, and continued up to the northern range, where it was now 0.88 m wide, and under the building to the open air on the eastern side, where it simply ended. As it passed through the house it was thought to be an open trough. No obvious function could be determined for it. Another large trough to the south of the house was imagined as being for steeping; this drained off to the east into the open area. To the east of this were found a number of horse and ox skulls without their lower jaw bone, so thought to relate to hides ready to be steeped before tanning, though the Antiquaries stated ‘no trace ... of tan or tan-pits could be found in the boggy ground to the south and south-east’. However, several large magnetic anomalies do exist in the north-central area of the large yard which comprises most of the insula. Boon concurred with the tanning interpretation, though also wondered if the narrow building which fills the south side of the western yard might not be a pigsty (Boon 1974, 260–1).

While House XXXIV.1 showed poorly in the geophysics, a cluster of strong major anomalies showed on the northern side towards the east, potentially being the results of a series of room-fills from an unidentified building in the north-eastern quarter.

See also Boon (1974, mosaics 73, 214, 216, wide entrance from the street 192, strong-room 200, wooden conduit 368).

NOTABLE FINDS

From either Insulae V or VI came a ‘short length of fine gold chain, part of a figure of Venus in white clay, portions of some large trays of Kimmeridge shale, and a fragment of a small white marble statuette’.

Finds from Insula V included a large mortar, a ‘curious little object carved in chalk’, several good specimens of glass and a quantity of plum and cherry stones. Architectural elements included an unfinished winged altar and an unfinished stone figure of a couchant lion (St John Hope 1906, figs 2–3).

INTERIOR 11: INSULAE XXIX, XXX, XXXI, XXXII AND XXXVII (FIGS 5.35–37)

HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS

1890 Insula XXX (Fox and St John Hope 1890, 744–9).
1893 Insulae XXXVII and a building within XXX (Fox and St John Hope 1894, 237).
1896 House XXXII.3: churchyard southern extension (St John Hope 1897a, 428–30).
1902 Insula XXX excavation within barn and northern area (St John Hope 1903a, 413–15).
1902 Excavation of Insula XXIX south of droveway (St John Hope 1903a, 415, 420).
1902 Excavation of Insula XXXI east of stream (St John Hope 1903a, 416–17).
1902 Excavation of Insula XXXII east of stream (St John Hope 1903a, 417–19).
1908 Excavation of Insula XXIX north of the droveway (St John Hope 1909a, 476–9).
1980 Insula XXX excavation prior to development (Fulford 1984, 26, 37–41).
1995 Insula XXX excavation prior to putting down solid flooring in the Barn.
2004 Insula XXX excavation of porch of Old Manor House.
2005/7 Insula XXX/XXXII excavation prior to an extension to the Church.
ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

Antiquaries: a note (Fox 1899b, 81), lectures (Fox and St John Hope 1891a; Fox and St John Hope 1891b; St John Hope 1903c; 1909c).

DESCRIPTION

The insulae are described from north to south.

Insula XXIX

Insula XXIX straddled the modern droveway and Interior Sheets 10 and 11, but is for convenience all described here.

Roads: the various alignments of roads caused much confusion as they gradually emerged. The Great Plan showed two roads of different periods running towards the East Gate with the main east–west road providing the northern edge to Insula XXIX. An original street, perpendicular to the gate, was initially hypothesised and trenches dug to see if there was a counterpart to the northern boundary wall of Insula XXX on the northern side of XXIX. ‘No such wall, however, could be found, and a continuous sheet of gravel underlying the top soil made it impossible even to define the roadway which must have existed here. Further trenching revealed another disturbing factor in the shape of three detached buildings, each of which overlay the assumed course of the main road’ (Blocks XXIX.V–VII, St John Hope 1909a, 476). Since neither they, nor the aerial photography (Bewley and Fulford 1996) nor the geophysics provide evidence for this road, it must be considered highly speculative, even though a road along the northern edge of the Temple temenos does not seem improbable. It could, however, be that the Antiquaries simply missed it, just as they did the street between Insulae XXXVI and XXXVII. Here again they just saw a sheet of gravel but no road. The line which they thought to be the later link between the east–west street and the East Gate they revealed in trenching in 1908, calling it unmistakeable ‘owing to its gravel layers being somewhat raised above the general surface’ (St John Hope 1909a, 484).

House XXIX.1 was a small L-shaped building with a portico joining the two wings on the southern and western sides (Boon 1974, 192). It is just possible that Block XXIX.I made up a western range of this structure to enclose a courtyard.

Block XXIX.II lay parallel to Block XXIX.I and to the west of it. There was no speculation about its function, though it too could have formed part of an unrecognised western range to House XXIX.1.

Block XXIX.III was on the far western edge of the insula and was a row of three small rooms, one of which had been added, on the street corner; while Block XXIX.IV lay just north of this and was only revealed by the remains of two mosaic floors (both are shown on Interior Sheet 10).

Block XXIX.V lay both on the hypothesised earlier road-line linking the main east–west road with the East Gate, and on an interpolated north–south road, but was aligned to neither of them. It was a single chamber with walls continuing south suggesting there was once more to it. A square pit within it which notionally should have been under the hypothesised road-line did not lead to any comments about rammed packed gravel.

Block XXIX.VI lay just to the west of Block XXIX.V, again on the projected road-line. It was a larger rectangular building perpendicular to the curved street, with two smaller rooms at the southern rear, one of which was heated. The Antiquaries considered the larger room might have been an open yard.

Block XXIX.VII lay just to the west of Block XXIX.VI, again on the projected road-line. This was a tripartite rectangular house gable-end-on to the main east–west road, with which it is more or less aligned. Boon wondered if it might be a restaurant (Boon 1974, 188). Within it was found a small Constantinian coin hoard (Hoard 1231, Robertson 2001).
FIG. 5.35. Interior 11 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
FIG. 5.36. Interior 11 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
Fig. 5.37. Interior 11 – interpretative plan.
Insula XXXVII

Insula XXXVII straddles both Interior Sheets 11 and 7 since the main east–west road bent to the south-west. An opportunity arose in 1980 to excavate amongst the former farm buildings where a swimming-pool was being constructed. This was a 10.5 by 5.5 m opening on the line of the main road, though there was little sign of this as the ground level had been truncated in modern times. The earliest feature was a truncated sub-rectangular pit, c. 1.0 x 0.9 m, the main fill of which was Claudio-Neronian rather than pre-conquest. The other significant find was a major ditch positioned as if it ran along the northern side of where the road should have been. It was 4.2 m at its deepest (though a full section was not achieved), with a terminus post quem of around A.D. 75 from the primary silts; a palisade trench was cut along its edge after A.D. 90/100; the ditch was filled in by A.D. 150 or a little earlier.

The most obvious explanation of this feature was as a roadside ditch, but that interpretation was not unproblematic. Fulford discounted it for a number of reasons: first because it was so deep; secondly because it was so early, and in his concept of the development of Silchester the road heading east out of the Forum should originally have cut right through the temple enclosure joining with the road to London, and only later was the temple area enclosed and the road diverted to the north. This early ditch would therefore have conflicted with this hypothesis (Fulford 1999, 164). He also dismissed the idea it might be an early temenos boundary as in that case it should have been on the southern side of the road (if the road was early). He concluded it must be part of an early defensive work, though extrapolating the feature in both directions showed nothing it might be a part of. I would suspect it was part of the early temenos enclosure subsequently realigned and built of stone.

Insula XXX

During 1890, the very first season of the Society of Antiquaries’ excavations, grave-diggers in St Mary the Virgin’s churchyard uncovered substantial buildings which turned out, after a little investigation, to be two Romano-Celtic temples (St John Hope 1890a). They lay within a very irregularly shaped temenos which was only resolved in 1902 when the northern curved angle of the enclosure was revealed to be heading directly back to the East Gate and the road to London. At times a direct line from the Forum entrance, along the road through Insula XXX and down the London Road eastwards, has been conceptualised then rejected. Fox (1948, 174) thought that the presence of the temenos would have prevented such a direct line ever existing. Boon (1974, 55) imagined the original plan had meant the road should have passed through the temenos, but that it did not in fact do so. Fulford (1999, 164), in contrast, imagined the original road had actually existed and gone through the temenos, but as the town grew, along with traffic levels, the traffic was diverted north to what became the main east–west street, and this was fossilised in the later town gate. All that can be said with certainty is that no direct evidence for such a stretch of road has yet been found.

The temenos wall was well built of flint with continuous bonding courses of tiles. It was 0.6 m thick where recorded by the Antiquaries and this was confirmed in an evaluation within the barn in 1995. There were no signs of entrance ways along its entire length, nor of cross walls of other buildings.

The Northern Temple was the largest Romano-Celtic temple in Britain when Lewis conducted his survey (Silchester 1, Lewis 1966, 3, 12–29; Smith 2001, 205). It is 22.3 m square, 2.3 m high, within which is a 12.8 m square cela (11.0 m square internally). The outer walls were 0.9 m thick on strong foundations of flint and concrete, although some parts of the above walls were of a much lesser quality, as if it had been rebuilt (and the rebuild did not contain tile courses). It was externally plastered in bright red. Despite this, it is doubtful that it significantly towered above the town. The cela walls of Autun’s ‘Temple of Janus’, one of the best still standing, are 2.1 m rather than 0.9 m thick, though it is about 50 per cent larger again in plan.

The ambulatory was almost 4.0 m wide and filled in with sandy clay and loam; this was capped with a 0.05 m thick layer of opus signinum, based on a hard pink cement. This flooring was 2.3 m above the original ground surface. The cela had a flooring at the same elevated level, but of
a curious composition: ‘This was about [0.13 m] thick and consisted (1) of a hard concrete of lime with lumps of brick, upon which was (2) finer layer [0.05 m] thick, formed of fragments of brick mixed with pieces of hard stone, the most conspicuous being a streaked limestone of a dark colour, seemingly from the Purbeck beds. The upper surface had been ground down level and then smoothed and polished’ (Fox and St John Hope 1890, 746).

The Southern Temple was 15.2 m square (walls 0.6 m thick), and survived to 0.9 m in height; it was built of flint, though with the use of tiles in the corner. It also originally had a plastered exterior, painted bright red. The interior wall was 7.3 m square and 0.9 m thick (Silchester 2, Lewis 1966, 3, 12–29; Smith 2001, 205).

The Temples had no traces of steps leading up to their entrances. North of the Southern Temple were found some red tesserae which may have paved the temple’s ambulatory (Mosaic 321.101, Neal and Cosh 2009, 236). There was also worked Purbeck marble, some so thin as to be likely wall-linings, but one thick enough to be a paving slab; the marble was found by both buildings. They were neither perfectly aligned with the grid nor with each other, both being about 10 degrees off (Fox 1948, 174). Finds included pins of bronze and bone, an iron stylus, some pseudo-Aretine, a small bone comb, a coin of Valens, an imitation of Tetricus and two terracotta lamps. A Durotrigian coin is also reported from close to the precinct (Bartlett 1854, 57; Boon 1974, 156). For general discussion see also Boon (1974, 155–7) and Muckelroy (1976).

Block XXX.I and II comprised a series of rooms along the northern edge of the insula, nuded into the curved angle. At the western end was an apsidal chamber. The Antiquaries believed these were two entirely separate buildings. Because of the apsidal feature Lewis wondered if it might not be a temple comparable to the Corbridge Schola 3 (Lewis 1966, 74).

Block XXX.III was first discovered in 1893; it is a large building or enclosure with walls 0.6 m thick, of which only three sides are known.

The Church of St Mary the Virgin is situated above the Romano-Celtic temple area in a co-location redolent of continuity, though with no direct evidence of such. Fox and St John Hope observed that the church was not aligned with any of the four sides of its surrounding churchyard, but was exactly parallel with the sides of the Southern Temple. This could have been a coincidence, or the current church may have been founded upon an earlier related building. Page (1911) considered the building originated with an aisled nave in the twelfth century, with a north aisle added at the end of the twelfth century and the chancel added in c. 1230. Ditchfield, writing a little later, concluded the chancel was built c. 1230 in the Early English period, and was probably an enlargement of an earlier one; he went on to discuss later embellishments (Ditchfield 1929). An early engraving of the church can be found in Wright and Fairholt (1845).

Insula XXXI

Insula XXXI has ill-defined borders. It was imagined that there should be a road on the southern edge of it, just above House XXXI.2, but the Antiquaries found no trace of it beyond a bed of gravel, and the geophysics only give a slight hint of one.

House XXXI.1 is on the northern edge of the insula. It possibly developed out of a tripartite north–south block perpendicular to the road, which was then extended by a southern range and other additions. The furnace in one of the rooms is mentioned by Boon (1974, 258). Perring (2002, 151) observed the heating in the small square room attached to the porch. He noted the phenomenon of such rooms at Silchester which had been identified as offices, waiting-rooms, gatehouses or porters’ lodges; however the hypocaust suggests a significant role in the reception activities of the residence.

House XXXI.2, in the south-east corner of the block, is only known from traces to which the geophysics add nothing.

Insula XXXII

Insula XXXII contains perhaps the steepest slope within the Town Walls; some of the house walls were particularly thick as the houses were built into the slope.
House XXXII.1 was a north–south-aligned structure of two rooms with porticoes on each side (double-corridor house, early type, Berry 1951). Since the building was on a slight misalignment with the grid, but the northern gable-end had been twisted around to correct for this, it was perceived to be an early building. Within it there were pots buried into the floor. The quantity of charcoal suggested the house had burnt down. See also Boon (1974, construction details 199, 200, 340, fireplace 343) and Boon (1974, 340) contesting Berry’s (1951) description of this as an early double-corridor house.

House XXXII.2 is similarly misaligned to the grid, and respects more the hillslope, though it is not totally in harmony with that either; but it is perpendicular to the newly-discovered Inner Earthwork extension ditch. It appears to be another double-corridor building with a hypocaust added on to the southern end. The hypocaust included a re-used fragment of an inscription with the letters: A…/M F (RIB 81).

House XXXII.3 was excavated in 1896 in advance of the enclosure of a southerly extension to St Mary the Virgin’s graveyard; it consisted of a north–south-aligned row with a portico facing west and a pavilion on the southern end (early single-corridor type, Berry 1951). Curiously for there to be a pavilion on the northern end would suggest that this abutted the temenos wall rather than left space for the roadway. A small piece of worked porphyry came from the house, probably deriving from one of the temples to the north. Boon wondered if this was not the residence for the chief priest of the temple (Boon 1974, 156, 344).

Block XXXII.I was just a small patch of red tesserae, between Houses XXXII.1 and 2, which formed part of a now lost house. The geophysics gave no additional information.

Block XXXII.II, just behind House XXXII.2, was an unusual structure, appearing to be a free-standing portico with six bays; while Block XXXII.III close by was similarly a free-standing apsidal building. In each case it is probable there were additional rooms, perhaps obscured by a cover of hill-wash. Well XXXII.A close by included within it horse, sheep and cattle skulls. Boon wondered if these curious buildings might not be nymphaea or shrines to water deities, though at another point he pondered whether Block XXXII.II might not be a row of ox-stalls (Boon 1974, 156, 259).

Inner Earthwork extension: a new large ditch was revealed by the geophysics, appearing to be an extension or annex to the main Inner Earthwork; this traverses the insula on a north-east to south-west alignment. It is possible that it bifurcates to form a smaller ditch which may have been an earlier temenos enclosure before the shape of the latter was regularised with the Roman street system.

NOTABLE FINDS

Finds from Insula XXXII included inscription RIB 81 (from House XXXII.2). Architectural fragments included an Attic base with part of a shaft along with moulded fragments of Purbeck marble and wall linings, perhaps from the adjacent temples (found close to House XXXII.1). Also from this insula came a lava quern, upper millstone (Shaffrey 2003), and a polished Neolithic stone axe.

From the general area (Insulae XXIX, XXXI, XXXII) came numerous coins, and a coin hoard of 87 Constantinian coins (predominantly VICTORIA.D.D.AVGGG.N.N. and GLORIA EXERCITVS) from the side of the main room of Block XXIX.VII (St John Hope 1909a, 478–9).

Metalwork included two brooches, a miniature axe, a bell, a torque of debased silver, needles, pins, a three-legged iron candlestick, a few keys, and a Civil War iron rowel spur. In bone there were pins, needles and flat counters. In other materials there were shale trenchers (a type of plate) and bracelets, and a mutilated figure of Venus in pipeclay from 1.2 m down in Pit V; unfortunately the pit numbers were unmarked on the published plans for this season.
MAPPING THE INTERIOR

INTERIOR 12: INSULAE XIX AND XX (FIGS 5.38–40)

HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS

1898 Excavation of Insula XIX (St John Hope and Fox 1899a).
1898 Excavation of Insula XX (St John Hope and Fox 1899a).

ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

Insulae XIX and XX: notes (Fox 1899b, 86; Ditchfield 1899a; b; Anon. 1899).

Insula XIX

Insula XIX was one of the few completely enclosed by walls. The western area was open ground and ‘singularly free from rubbish pits’, which the Fluxgate Gradiometry agrees with. To the north was a small House XIX.1, but the insula was dominated by a much larger courtyard House XIX.2. Seemingly unrelated to these buildings was a series of linear features unaligned with the Roman street-grid which may pre- or post-date the town.

House XIX.1 stood back from the street within the enclosed insula. It was a large rectangular hall with opus signinum flooring; it had been extended with a row of rooms both north and south of it, one of the southerly rooms having a hypocaust. The building was imagined as potential labourers’ accommodation for the larger House XIX.2 by Boon (1974, 256, 260).

House XIX.2 was the largest building within this walled insula, occupying the central eastern side. It clearly overlay an earlier building which House XIX.2 may have been built around before it was demolished, similar to the way a new villa was built at Gorhambury adjacent to the old one before its demolition (Neal 1990). The earlier building itself sealed a pit. These are dealt with in turn.

Pit XIX.F was the earliest feature and contained within it a ‘long bodied amphorae’. Sealing the pit was an early building comprising a row of rooms with a portico to the east. With a sill-beam structure rather than stone walls it is likely to be early in date. Two mosaics came from it which were thought to be late first or early second century in date, one of exceptionally good workmanship (321.58–9). The best surviving mosaic (321.58) is preserved in Reading Museum and received comment in a discussion of early mosaics from southern Britain by Allen and Fulford (2004, 17) and its relation to imagery linked to Bacchus was discussed by Hutchinson (Reference MO-24, 1986, 424) (see also Thomson 1924, 508; Toynbee 1964, 259; Boon 1974, 214, 217–21; Smith 1977, 113; Witts 2005, 107; Fulford 2003, 99).

The later house began as a double-corridor house with pavilions on the western side (Berry 1951). Presumably once the earlier building was removed, the northern and southern wings were added to the eastern side to create a central courtyard. The later courtyard house was less richly decorated than the former building in terms of its flooring (Mosaics 321.60–62, Neal and Cosh 2009, 220–2). See also Boon (1974, private bath suite 197, hypocaust 125, 287, ceiling heights 199, threshold 204, wall plaster 212) and Perring (2002, 70, 190, 194); the latter includes a functional analysis of the use of space.

To the east was a small square building which had exceptionally thick walls. The Antiquaries thought this might be a water-tower, but Perring (2002, 183) thought a tower granary more likely; whichever, it would have blocked the view from the western portico.

Another yard area was enclosed to the south. This area was interpreted as a tannery by the Antiquaries on the basis of the identification of several water-tanks which could be used for steeping skins, and one large possible tanning-pit, though admittedly the scale was small so this would only be for goats and sheep. A couple of large pits appear on the geophysics within the yard. On the other hand, Boon perceived the entire walled insula more as a plush building with a farm: a barn in the south wing; industrial and corn-drying plants in the walled yard to the south; a wider entrance to allow carts or livestock through; a granary to the west; and a building for potential labourers’ accommodation in House XIX.1 (Boon 1974, 192, 256, 258, 260).
Block XIX.I and Block XIX.II lay to the west of House XIX.2, both seemingly isolated with several rooms. No conjectures were offered by the Antiquaries as to their purpose. Perring described Block XIX.I as a strip-building with projecting rear wings (Perring 2002, 60); while Boon thought Block XIX.II had elements of its plan which could be interpreted as a narthex, chapel and sanctuary alcove of a typical small mithraeum (Boon 1973; 1974, 159); he cited a parallel to the possible Maryport mithraeum (see Lewis 1966, 193). Close by a cremation was found in the south-west corner of the insula in a large black vessel.

Insula XX

Insula XX was unwalled with no clear limits on any side. No east–west road was noted to the south continuing on from that between Insulae XIX and XVIII, but the geophysics do hint at the road continuing north-west from the east–west street and parallel to the Town Wall. There were various small buildings scattered throughout the area with no consistency in orientation. As with Insula XIX, there were several long linear features crossing the insula at various angles unrelated to the street-grid.

Block XX.I was in the northern area and appeared to be an enclosed yard or large hall perpendicular to the road with a few rooms at one end. To the east of this was Block XX.II. Together, these were interpreted as a small house with attached yard and associated square drying-floor or granary by Boon (1974, 260).

House XX.1 was also in the northern area, and was a three-chamber house orientated north-east to south-west. The especially thick foundations of the northern wall were considered to be the base of a staircase. In its vicinity, in the north-north-east of the insula, there is a very distinct cluster of large pits revealed in the geophysics, with a clear cut-off line suggesting a tenement boundary.

Block XX.III on the central eastern side was only a small floored isolated room, but evidence suggested that the walls projected further and a larger building may have gone unseen. It was oblique to the street-grid.

Block XX.IV was a more substantial structure perpendicular to the north–south road on the eastern side, though only one row of it is clearly understandable. The building sealed a rather curious Pit XX.Q which was 1.8 m in diameter and 4.6 m deep, containing within it ten stakes of silver birch, 0.9–2.7 m long, set in rows. This was imagined as an animal trap dating to before the town. In its vicinity were the remains of two smaller square structures: one heated (Block XX.VI) and the other not (Block XX.V). The former was interpreted in two very different ways by Boon: first, as a heated room of a building plan otherwise not recorded, and then later on as an isolated corn-drying building (Boon 1974, 160, 258).

Block XX.VII had walls of two distinct phases, one on alignment with the grid, and another, presumably earlier, oblique to it with a hypocaust at its northern end.

House XX.2 was in the southerly ‘extension’ of the insula, and was a three-room block parallel and adjacent to the Town Wall (Mosaic 321.63, Neal and Cosh 2009, 222).

NOTABLE FINDS

Few distinctions were made in find locations during the Antiquaries’ ninth season. An upper quern of Lodsworth stone with its wooden handle intact came from Pit XIX.A next to House XIX.1; a lower quern of old red sandstone came from Insula XX (Shaffrey 2003). Bronze objects included the usual pins, brooches and rings, together with a hemispherical bell, a length of well-made chain, a pin in the form of a snake with an inlaid silver eye and three enamelled brooches. Other metalwork included a crushed pewter jar, a pair of iron handcuffs, sundry keys, stylus, the beam of a steelyard and a steelyard lead weight, part of a hipposandal, and a pair of iron slings or canhooks (used to sling a cask by the ends of the staves). Within a trench in Insula XVIII was a small leaf cut out of gold, perhaps dress ornamentation.
FIG. 5.38. Interior 12 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
FIG. 5.39. Interior 12 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
Fig. 5.40. Interior 12 – interpretative plan.
INTERIOR 13: INSULAE VII AND XVII (FIGS 5.41–43)

HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS

1873 Polygonal temple excavated as ‘Block VII’ by Joyce (1881b, 344, no details).
1878–84 House VII.3 dug as Monro and Langshaw’s ‘Block VII’ (Hilton Price 1887).
1892 Excavation of Insula VII started but not reported (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 570).
1893 Excavation of Insula VII completed (Fox and St John Hope 1894, 200–10).
1897 Excavation of Insula XVII (St John Hope and Fox 1898a, 103–10).

ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

Joyce’s excavations: lectures (Joyce 1873, 15, 27; 1876a, 55); a note (Fox 1899b, 83); Antiquaries’ lectures (Fox et al. 1895b; St John Hope and Fox 1898b).
Insula XVII: note of finds (Fox 1899b, 85–6).

DESCRIPTION

Insula VII

Insula VII had been amply started off by the attentions of Joyce, Monro and Langshaw before the Antiquaries began on it. The latter discovered little new except that this was the first time they had encountered a large number of row-houses that had not been developed into a larger courtyard building. They also specifically noticed that many of these buildings were at a slight angle to the grid, or had their gable ends on the street-front rather than their long side, but they ventured no explanations as to why this might be the case (Fox and St John Hope 1894, 200).

Insula VII is divided a third of the way down by an east–west lane, though it is unclear if the roadway made it fully across to the western edge, as several features and a building in the way seem to prevent its complete passage. In their interpretation of the aerial photographs, Bewley and Fulford represented it as turning south, effectively to mark out a temenos for the polygonal temple, and it has been represented this way on the sheet (Bewley and Fulford 1996, 388); however, a wall on the Antiquaries’ plan means that if the lanes did ever join they were cut off at some point.

The northern part of the insula appeared to have two large apparently relatively empty enclosures to the east, interpreted by the Antiquaries as gardens, though the westernmost one has traces of buildings showing in the geophysical data. To the west was a sequence of buildings: House VII.1 which had been succeeded by Houses VII.2 and VII.3. To the south was the much larger enclosure containing the polygonal temple, with the remains of a series of buildings to the west of it. Only House VII.4 was recovered in plan, though there were remains of others both to the north (including red tesserae) and to the south.

House VII.1 is only known from a fragmentary plan as it was overlain by later structures, but it appears to be a row-building with a portico on the southerly side, so not facing the street. One room may have opened up on the north side to the street. This was a small apsidal room which Fox suggested might be a wayside lares compitales, while Boon wondered if it might not be the seat of some collegium or a shrine (Boon 1974, 158). The building may have been added on to by a western wing with an eastern portico but the details are unclear.

House VII.2 overlay House VII.1 and comprised a north–south row of rooms with a portico on both sides and a possible bath suite added to the south-west. It lay at a slight angle to the street (Fulford 2003, 100). The building was rebuilt on a similar plan at some point; this included an adjustment to the gable end of the building so that it was on alignment with the street frontage.

Three mosaics belong to the buildings, one potentially retained from one phase to the next (Mosaics 321.27–29, Neal and Cosh 2009, 203–4). Curiously the southerly wall of this building and that of the lane wall continuing eastwards were exceptionally thick, though what they were supporting is unclear.
FIG. 5.41. Interior 13 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
Fig. 5.42. Interior 13 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
Fig. 5.43. Interior 13 – interpretative plan.
House VII.3 was excavated by Monro and completed by Langshaw, and was not re-excavated by the Antiquaries as it had already been covered over. It was a row-house with a portico on the southern side. It presented its gable end to the road and was again at a slight angle to it. See also Perring (2002, 67). The geophysical data suggest there may have been an additional room on the southern side.

House VII.4 began in origin as an east–west row-house with a portico on the southerly side, again presenting its gable end to the road at a slight angle. To the east had been added rear reception wings, including a heated larger room which was enlarged at some point (Perring 2002, 67). The building had a much thicker gable-end wall which Perring (2002, 112) observed was in common with many aisled buildings in the Nene valley, and Smith (1982, 9) argued might illustrate a weakness in roof construction. Boon wondered if this might not be the priest of the polygonal temple’s residence (Boon 1974, 157).

The 16-sided Polygonal Temple was first excavated by Joyce, but there was no published report. It was later re-excavated by the Antiquaries in 1893. Of the two concentric walls, the exterior was polygonal (19.8 m diameter), while the interior was circular. The base of a column which came from not far away in Insula VIII may be related. The foundations of the walls were slight, which Muckelroy thought could mean that they were not solid walls and that the roof had been supported on columns in an open structure, though the evidence was not conclusive. On the other hand Boon thought the cella might have been as much as 11 m high (Silchester Temple 4, Lewis 1966, 3, 13, 30; Boon 1974, 157–8; Muckelroy 1976; Smith 2001, 206). Fragmentary evidence suggests it may have had a black and white floor mosaic (Mosaic 321.30, Neal and Cosh 2009, 204).

Joyce’s journal mentioned a worn as of Vespasian embedded in the cella wall, but there are many examples of coins being forced into cracks in the walls of shrines, so this cannot be used as conclusive dating evidence.

The deity of the temple was unknown. At the time Professor Freeman had considered this might be a circular church, though that argument was not sustained (St John Hope 1893b, 163; Freeman 1883). Other suggestions linked it to the dedicatory inscription to Hercules of the Segontiaci (RIB 67), although this was found to the north of the Forum and not here. Another possibility explored, particularly by Boon, was that it might be associated with an eastern cult. In 1893, from a trench close to the temple, a portion of an oil bottle or alabastron possibly of Egyptian alabaster was found. These are very unusual, although parallels from Caerwent and Trier were known to Boon (1957, 123; 1974, 158; 1981b). Given the lack of finds from bathhouses, he suspected them of being associated with rituals in the temple (Boon 1981b).

The head of a large cult statue of Serapis had also been discovered in the garden of Lt-Colonel Karslake in the village of Silchester, and Boon wondered if this might have come from the temple (Boon 1973).

The Temenos enclosure wall sealed three pits (Pits VII.N, O and P); the interior did not display any significant pitting on the geophysics. Soffe, who undertook some of the early digitisation of the aerial photographic plots for the Royal Commission, considered there were signs of a large ditched enclosure under Insula VII, but this interpretation did not make it to the final published version (Soffe 1994, 139; Bewley and Fulford 1996).

Insula XVII

Insula XVII was bounded on the east by the main north–south street. Two houses took up the entire frontage along the east–west street, while the rest was rather less densely occupied. The insula also straddled the area where the projected Late Iron Age road from the Forum should have been heading and might have been traceable. As it happens there is a slight north-east to south-west feature in the north-west corner which would align fairly well.

House XVII.1 was situated in the north-west of the insula. While the plan appears to be that of a courtyard building, it is very difficult to interpret. Two piers on the street frontage which should indicate a gate or doorway appear to lead into an end-on wall, and the Antiquaries’ solution of positing two doors, one leading into a house and another into a corridor, is a very
curious arrangement. More likely, multiple building phases have been conflated. Potentially at its
core was an east–west-orientated single-corridor house with a portico to the south. The rooms
immediately to the south-west were considered to be stabling. See also Perring (2002, 70) and
Boon (1974, layout 192, ledge or stand for a dresser 195, fireplace 343).

**Block XVII.I** was just south of House XVII.1 but on a different alignment. It comprised a large
square with walls running off it; just to its west was a similarly aligned piece of *opus signinum*
flooring. All this indicated a potentially early, larger unrecorded structure.

**House XVII.2** in the north-east of the insula was a complex palimpsest which probably relates
to a number of phases and multiple houses. Two courtyards divided the structure into three main
blocks, although various walls look as if they were intended to draw them together. Room 16 on
the far eastern edge had the remains of a mosaic from an early phase (Mosaic 321.54, Neal and
Cosh 2009, 219) and also a flue similar to others which Fox and St John Hope elsewhere related
to the dyeing industry; whereas Boon associated it all with agriculture, having a barn on the
south, agricultural buildings on the east and an isolated tower granary (Boon 1974, 256, 260).

**House XVII.3** on the lower eastern side of the insula was misaligned to the grid by 11 degrees
(Fox 1948, 175), and two of its northern walls almost look as if they had been truncated by the
north–south street. The building was a double-corridor house of Berry’s early type (Berry 1951).
The Antiquaries thought it was particularly early in date because of the thinness of the walls.
However early it was, there were already pre-existing pits or wells which the wall foundations
subsided into (e.g. Pit XVII.T under the north-west corner of the building).

**Houses XVII.4 and XVII.5** represented a range of walls and rooms on the central-southern
side of the insula. House XVII.4 was a coherent set of four rooms in a row, almost but not quite
perpendicular to the street. The additional walls of House XVII.5 may have been extensions or
different phases of buildings. One room on the street with columns or posts on either side, was
considered to be a possible shop by Boon (1974, 339). See also Perring (2002, 64).

Around these were three smaller buildings, two of which had furnaces and heated rooms (**Block
XVII.II** and **Block XVII.IV**), while one was a simple rectangle (**Block XVII.III**). The two heated
rooms were pressed into service in the dyeing industry model the Antiquaries envisaged for the
town (St John Hope and Fox 1898a, 109).

**NOTABLE FINDS**

Few finds for Insula VII were reported beyond stating that the usual small objects of various
kinds were found. A tile with a *Bos longifrons* sketched on it was remarked upon.

In the reports the finds for Insulae XVII and XVIII were combined (see entry for Insula XVIII,
Interior 15); however, we can identify a large circular base of a millstone from Insula XVII (Fox
1899b, 85–6), as well as a Corinthian capital probably from the Basilica (St John Hope and Fox
1898a, 120; Blagg 2002, 22–5, 256–60).

**INTERIOR 14: INSULAE XXXIIIa AND XXXV (FIGS 5.44–46)**

**HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS**

1892 Part of XXXV trenched with no results (Fox and St John Hope 1893a, 571).
1903–4 Excavation of Insula XXXIII (St John Hope and Fox 1905a).
1907 Major part of Insula XXXV (St John Hope 1908, 202–9).
1908 Insula XXXV, minor follow-up in front of the temple (St John Hope 1909a,
474).

**ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS**

Insula XXXIII: a visit (Ditchfield 1904); lectures (St John Hope and Fox 1905b; St John Hope
1905).
Insula XXXV: notes (Fox and St John Hope 1894, 232; Anon. 1908b); lectures (St John Hope 1909c; b); a society visit (Anon. 1907a, 195–6).

DESCRIPTION

This area contains a regularly shaped insula (XXXV) to the west and an irregularly shaped insula (XXXIIIa) to the east, within which the layout was distorted by both the early Inner Earthwork and the stream.

Insula XXXIIIa

Insula XXXIII was an exceptionally irregular shape running down from the Public Baths to the southern Town Wall, and bounded to the east by the stream. Various roads have been discovered in this area but they do not conform to the neat grid, largely because of the topography. Boon divided it into XXXIIIa and b on the basis of an east–west road, and that distinction is maintained here (so House 1 is in XXXIIIb).

House XXXIII.2 was a classic double-corridor house aligned north–south, with a pavilion-like heated room added on to the south-eastern side (early double-corridor house type, Berry 1951). The house is positioned at the end of one of the roads, and also just outside the Inner Earthwork, so would not have suffered from subsidence. This is probably the most ‘invisible’ house on the Fluxgate Gradiometry results from the site, though the building is described as being made of the usual flint rubble with tile or stone quoins, so there is no clear explanation for this other than depth. Block XXXIII.2 could have been a northern range associated with the house. This east–west-aligned block included a furnace and additional rooms, and does show clearly in the geophysics. It has been interpreted as a workshop for the main building. It included within it the remains of one of the long-flue hearths the Antiquaries had convinced themselves were for dye-vats, while outside to the south-east was found the base of a round furnace. So the Antiquaries interpreted the structure as one in which to dry fabrics dyed in the large workshop. See also Boon (1974, 343).

House XXXIII.3 was interpreted as an L-shaped block of three rooms, with a hypocaust-heated semi-circular room added to one end, though curiously slightly detached according to the plan. It also had a yard to the north, although this could also be another room. The position and alignment of the building seem to suggest awareness of the Inner Earthwork Extension, which it sits just outside. See also Boon (1974, 340), contesting Berry (1951) who described this as an early single-corridor building.

House XXXIII.4 was a simple rectangular building with a corridor built all the way around it. This was subsequently extended marginally to the south and to the north-east with the addition of another range (Boon 1974, layout 189–90, structural detail 199, alignment with the baths 305); the latter extension was built over later by a double-room rectangular building, Block XXXIII.VIII. Fox (1948, 175) observed the original range was 10 degrees off the street-grid, and therefore supposed the original building to be earlier.

House XXXIII.5 comprised a three- or four-chamber middle block which had a continuous corridor erected around it. Along with House XXXIII.4, this surrounding corridor is a feature which has been discussed alongside other early building types in the report on the exceptionally early villa at Ditches, near Bagendon (Trow et al. 2009). The early house was aligned east–west, off alignment to the grid by about 9 degrees (Fox 1948, 175), but an additional western range was built which brought it into alignment with the road. Just to the south of House XXXIII.5 and also on the street frontage was Block XXXIII.IX, another apparently isolated small square building.

Block XXXIII.III was a large rectangular building subdivided into three rooms. Within it was a T-shaped corn-drying oven of a type unknown at Silchester in the early twentieth century. The oven is discussed as part of a larger survey by Goodchild (1943, 152) and Boon (1974, 258, 287). However, again the Antiquaries interpreted it in relation to their dyeing-industry paradigm, so despite it being novel and unusual in character, ‘the arrangement can have had nothing to do with any metallurgical process, but could well have sustained a long boiler or vat
Fig. 5.44. Interior 14 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
FIG. 5.45. Interior 14 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
Fig. 5.46. Interior 14 – interpretative plan.
for dyeing stuffs of some such purpose, and so would take its place with the remains of the many other furnaces found within the town’ (St John Hope and Fox 1905a, 336).

Block XXXIII. IV was a simple rectangular structure adjacent to the brook.

The Public Baths

The baths represent an early building on the site, which was notable for its misalignment to the street-grid, and for the fact that part of its front colonnade subsequently had to be knocked down to make way for the east–west road; an act which sealed the early colonnade with a 0.46 m deposit, with a new threshold being placed above.

Fox eloquently described the baths and the extraordinary aspect of the porch’s demolition: ‘From the first the Baths were on a major scale, with a portico and palaestra fronting the usual range of rooms arranged in a transverse row (Reihentypus). The portico in particular was of a monumental character, with 8 Doric columns with a double roll moulding at the base and a pronounced necking (toros) below the cap, a type that can be matched on other Romano-British town sites like Cirencester or Wroxeter. The stone has been kindly identified for me by Dr Wallis as an Oolite, of the type known as Bath Oolite: he adds that this rock was extensively used in the Roman buildings at Bath; and is found at Corsham and Box nearby. The Silchester columns are evidence for the opening up of the Bath quarries on a considerable scale at an early date. Even allowing for the wooden architrave, the [19.8 m] façade must have been imposing; yet this portico was ruthlessly destroyed, the columns hacked down and their stumps buried in [0.45 m] of gravel, and a plain front with protruding latrine block built in its place’ (Fox 1948, 172–3).

The Baths’ phasing

The Antiquaries came up with a six-phase development for the building showing constant adaptation, which may be briefly summarised as:

Phase I: main construction with a portico on the front.
Phase II: demolition of the portico and adaptation of the front of the building to create a new court and a revised latrine block.
Phase III: enlargement of the latrine block along with significant enlargements to the main baths, with an unctorium being added on to the west of the apodyterium, and an additional caldarium being added on to the southern end.
Phase IV: an increase in the width of the baths to the east, involving widening the entrance peristyle, and adding a service-room and an additional small area to the caldarium and consequent changes to the drainage flow.
Phase V: several structural internal re-organisations and changes in room use, including extending the caldarium to the south and east, and the addition of an apse.
Phase VI: the removal of some interior walls, the demolition of the southern rooms of the caldarium with the remaining part reconfigured, and a slight extension to the tepidarium and removal of several interior walls.

This phasing is a collation of about 26 substantive changes to the original baths, and doubtless different phasings could have been created. An excellent review of the evidence with additional parallels is provided by Boon (1974, 121–30).

In terms of architectural detail, the frigidarium had at a later stage a black and white mosaic floor. This was laid over some opus signinum, itself overlying herringbone tiles (Mosaic 321.102, Neal and Cosh 2009, 237). They suggested that for this usage, by analogy with other cases, a date no later than the Antonine period would be expected.

Subsequent discussions of the baths include Atkinson (1942, appendix B), Liversidge (1968, 43–5), and Boon (1974, 88–91, 121–31).

Dating

The dating of the baths is difficult; all that is secure is that it predated the road. Often a Neronian
tile stamped NER.CL.L.CAE.AVG.GER (a.d. 54–68) is mentioned in association with this building, but only one was found and it was not in situ, instead coming from the cesspit which the latrine flowed out into. Nonetheless, it has been accepted by many as dating the baths to the Neronian period (e.g. Cotton 1947, 127, 135; Perring 2002, 173). Wilson (2006) thought it could be as late as the early Flavian period; he noted that the baths lay over the course of the Inner Earthwork, implying that the rampart had already been demolished by that date. Discussion of the early column bases from the portico can be found in Blagg (2002, 112, 543, 559).

**Location**

The position of the Baths indicated that it was cut into where the bank of the Inner Earthwork would have been, and its south-eastern end is where the Inner Earthwork Extension joined. The Bath’s latrine was fed with water from the west by a stream which flowed under the portico. The outflow was in the north-east corner of the building complex, into a pit about 1.2 m square lined with wood, the overflow of which the Antiquaries imagined went into the stream on its current course. However, the discovery of the true line of the Inner Earthwork means that it is clear this outflow went directly into where the early ditch was, suggesting this was open at the time the Baths were built; whether the outflow was re-directed into the stream at a later date when the ditch was backfilled is unknown.

**Insula XXXV**

**Insula XXXV** was a rectangular insula, with a temple in the north-west and two other major building complexes in the north-east and south-west, but little revealed in the south-east.

**The Temple** had a low podium, 10.7 x 11.1 m, with a *cella* measuring internally 3.7 x 4.3 m with a wall 0.6 m thick, angled 13.5 degrees off the street-grid (Fox (1948, 174) calculated it as 10 degrees off). The entrance was on the east and a little in front of it was an altar discovered in follow-up excavations the next season (Silchester 3, Lewis 1966, 3, 12–29; Smith 2001, 255). Aileen Fox observed the way the temple in effect turned its back on the nearby north–south street, having an external altar on its eastern side, which suggested to her a pre-street-grid date in origin (Fox 1948, 174). Liversidge (1968, 438) provides a reconstruction.

Several fragments of deliberately broken life-sized statuary were found in the *cella* carved in coarse ooliote. The collection comprised: ‘a bearded chin, a left hand grasping the end of a cornucopia, parts of two legs, with the fronts covered with greaves ornamented with lions’ heads, and apparently an arm partly covered in drapery’ (St John Hope 1908, 208); some drapery from a cloak was also attached to a leg. St John Hope thought the god Mars was a not unlikely identification, as did Liversidge (1968, 443); Haverfield, however, thought Mars holding a cornucopia unusual, and considered an Imperial statue from Hadrian onwards more likely (Haverfield 1908).

E. and J. Harris thought it could be a temple of Isis, although Boon thought this was skating on thin ice (Boon 1973; Harris and Harris 1965), not least because three inscriptions were found there (*RIB* 69 and 70 within the temple, *RIB* 71 just outside) which were presumably affixed to statue bases of Peace, Victory and Mars respectively, set up by a member or members of the *Collegium peregrinorum* at Silchester. The nature of this college was discussed in a wider context by Frere and Fulford (2002) and also Eckardt (2012). They considered it to be late first or early second century in date, largely from the use of the Purbeck marble. They also observed that the alignment is off the main street-grid, but similar to the bathhouse, so suggested this might be a pre-Flavian temple.

Frere and Fulford conjectured a specific context for the temple: ‘if we follow Boon in recognising in *RIB* 70 the dedication of a statue of Victory and of subordinate celebrations both of Pax and Mars on the other two, then perhaps the context was the final victory of Agricola in a.d. 83 and the establishment of peace in the province: a peace which was to last some thirty years and which was recognised almost at once by the erection of the great monumental arch at Richborough as a symbol of conquest completed’ (Frere and Fulford 2002, 174). See also Boon (1974, inscription
and the chartered status of the town 58, destruction under Christianity 72, overall 153–5, size in relation to baptistery 182).

House XXXV.1 occupied the north-eastern corner of the insula, and was an east–west-aligned row of rooms with a southern corridor; perpendicular to it a western range was added. There were piles under some of the walls. Boon also commented upon the manure pit and a hearth (Boon 1974, 90, 343). Block XXXV.I was an isolated red mosaic just south of House XXXV.1, so thought to relate to a timber structure, now lost. It could have been a contemporary additional range.

House XXXV.2 occupied the central western side of the insula. It was believed in origin to be a north–south row of five rooms with a portico on the east, and thereafter subsequently developed into a courtyard building. See also Boon (1974, barn 256, alignment to bathhouse 305).

Block XXXV.II was another isolated mosaic to the east of House XXXV.2; both this and Block XXXV.I were commented upon by Fulford (2003, 99) in a discussion of early timber houses and the pre-Flavian town plan. The geophysics add nothing in terms of context to these mosaics as no buildings reveal themselves around them.

Block XXXV.III, near the south-west corner, comprised a series of very thick walls, but no function could be ascribed to them.

NOTABLE FINDS

From Insula XXXV came fragments of two pieces of Doric capital which judging by their size were thought to come from the adjacent Forum. Various bases and capitals found in the baths, as well as the tile stamped NER.CLL.CAE.AVG.GER, came from the cesspit east of the latrine at the north-east of the building. In terms of metalwork, a gold earring, a broken gold-headed pin and lead weights also came from there.

INTERIOR 15: INSULAE XVIIIa AND XVIIIb (Figs 5.47–49)

HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS

1890  Section through the Town Wall (Fox and St John Hope 1890, 754).
1897  Excavation of Insula XVIIIa – eastern part (St John Hope and Fox 1898a, 110–20).
1898  Excavation of Insula XVIIIb – western part (St John Hope and Fox 1899a).

ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

Insula XVIII: a note (Fox 1899b, 85–6); lectures (St John Hope and Fox 1898b; 1899b).

DESCRIPTION

Insula XVIII is wider than many, largely because the Antiquaries’ excavations failed to find traces of the north–south road which divides it. Their trenches can be seen in the geophysics crossing its location, but they failed to notice it. Nonetheless, traces of the road can be seen on the aerial photographic plot and also in the geophysics, although it is not as clear as elsewhere. Boon divided the space into XVIIIa and b, and his nomenclature has been followed here.

Insula XVIIIa

Insula XVIIIa was dominated by two buildings along the northern street frontage, and a third house situated further south close to the South Gate.

House XVIII.1 in the north-eastern corner of the block is a sequence of at least three buildings on the same spot. All three appeared to have a predominantly east–west alignment, the latest
FIG. 5.47. Interior 15 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
Fig. 5.48. Interior 15 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
Fig. 5.49. Interior 15 – interpretative plan.
incarnation having a portico on its south-facing side (a later single-corridor building, Berry 1951). Two fragmentary mosaics were found which were stylistically late second or third century in date, but it was unclear which phase building they belonged to (Mosaics 321.55–6, Neal and Cosh 2009, 219). See also Perring (2002, 67).

House XVIII.2 in the north-west corner also has a multi-phase plan, though in origin appears to be a double row of rooms with a portico and a projecting room added to the east. Fragments of a mosaic were found in this projecting room (Mosaic 321.57, Neal and Cosh 2009, 219). The building underwent significant additions with what is assumed to be a large yard extending to the south, and an additional range to the north-east along the east–west road. One notable find from it was a late New Forest ware pot with the graffito VI= measuring its 6\frac{1}{2} modii capacity (Boon 1974, 196–7). Block XVIII.I was a simple rectangular block tucked behind House XVIII.2 and on a different alignment. A strong diagonal feature appears to lie underneath both this and the house.

House XVIII.3 was identified as a mill-house with the potential settings for six millstones. Only one fragment of quern was actually found there, but the six circular foundations, each c. 1.0–1.3 m in diameter and 1.2 m high, did look significantly more substantial than a set of post settings for a hall would need to be; the rubble matrix was also thought too unstable to support major columns or timbers. An upper stone of a mill, 0.7 m diameter, was found in Insula XIV, demonstrating that such large stones were in operation in the town (St John Hope and Fox 1898a, 113–14). This mill-house was close to the South Gate; this and the East Gate were the main entrances leading in from the lower fields which were more likely to be used for arable. Ultimately without millstones the identification is problematic, and post-pads at 1.3 m diameter are not impossible. Fox (1948, 175) pointed out the residential wing was 9 degrees off the street-grid, so suggested it was early in date. See also Boon (1974, adjustment to align to grid 47, 305, L-shaped houses 192, flour milling 289) and MacMahon (2003, 65).

South of House XVIII.3 and closer to the South Gate, there were traces of several additional large rectangular buildings in the geophysics, though no interior divisions could be identified within them.

Nothing was apparently found in the area south of House XVIII.2, and west of House XVIII.3 ‘nor was even a rubbish pit met with’. The geophysics also show an area relatively clear of features. A discussion of the houses was included in Walthew’s article on buildings and measurement units (Walthew 1987, 204).

Insula XVIIIb

Block XVIII.II (unnumbered originally) lay in the north-west of the insula and was excavated in 1898. It was a simple two-room block.

NOTABLE FINDS

From Insula XVIII came a small leaf cut out of thick gold foil, perhaps for attaching to a dress. From either Insula XVII or XVIII (no distinctions were made in find locations during the Antiquaries’ eighth season) there came a fragment of a large Corinthian capital, part of a moulded cornice, the base of a square pedestal, a piece of a large stone ball, part of a terracotta antefix, three inscribed wooden tubs from wells and three incised tiles. In terms of metalwork two enamelled plate-brooches, a bow-brooch with a sliding ring on the pin, several chains and a staff head(?) with the head of an eagle and perhaps a swan neck were found. From a fourth-century well came a bronze steelyard weight.
INTERIOR 16: INSULA VIII (FIGS 5.50–52)

HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS

c. 1714 Excavation of a large ‘miserably broken’ mosaic (Hearne 1813, 189).
1833 Coles excavated the Mansio bathhouse and nearby structures (Kempe 1833).
1876–80 The Mansio, excavated as ‘Block IX’ by Joyce, Monro and Langshaw (Hilton Price 1887).
1892–3 Excavation of Insula VIII (Fox and St John Hope 1894, 210–32).

ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

1833 excavations: newspapers (Coles 1833; Kempe 1833; S.H. 1833); an article (Wright and Fairholt 1845, 152).
Joyce et al: a note (Fox 1899b, 83–4).
The Antiquaries: a note (Le Schonix 1894); a discussion (Anon. 1894); a lecture (Fox et al. 1895b).

DESCRIPTION

Insula VIII

Somewhere close to the South Gate was the location of some early excavations which had taken place in the 1710s; it may have been these excavations that first brought Coles then Joyce to dig what is now known to us as the Mansio. Further buildings to the west were explored by the Antiquaries as well. Apart from the main street-grid, which left this as a ‘double’ insula block, there was also a suggestion of a road, 8.2 m wide, running to the south behind the Town Wall (Fox and St John Hope 1894, 210).

House VIII.1 was a north–south range with a portico on the eastern side with a central room added in the middle. Significant additions were added on to the east, particularly a range to the south, creating a courtyard (Mosaics 321.31–34, Neal and Cosh 2009, 206–7). Mosaic 321.31 may be the ‘large miserably broken mosaic’ excavated shortly before 1714.

Walthew used this house as an example to illustrate the notion that villas and town-houses were sometimes similar, in that they often had their best decorated rooms in their later wings (Walthew 1975, 202); however, it is difficult to see this qualitative difference between the original section and the wing in this particular case. Perring (2002, 49–51, 156, 188) used the house as an example to illustrate the guiding principles of elite architecture, including providing an interpretive access-map for this building in his discussion of the function of porticoes and corridors in Romano-British architecture.

House VIII.2 was adjacent to House 1. It may be a totally separate structure, or it may be an eastern range added on to House VIII.1. It is described as a later double-corridor house by Berry (1951), although the western corridor, as is often the case, has been divided up into several rooms, leaving only the open portico and pavilions on the eastern side. Walthew observed that this kind of subdivision of one corridor was a frequent development at villas, citing Farningham and Ditchley as examples (Walthew 1975, 199). See also Boon (1974, layout 95, 193, shrine 161, plan 189, entrance 192, reception-room 194, porch columns 200).

House VIII.3 was represented by the remains of several walls at a significant angle to the street-grid. The house-form is unclear, as one element looks like a south-south-west-facing portico and attached pavilion, whereas another fragment on a different alignment also looks like it might have a south-south-west-facing portico. No details were provided.

House VIII.4 started as an east–west-aligned block with a portico added to the southern side, to which was added an additional range to the east. Evidence of possible metal-working came from Room 9. One sample appeared on analysis to be argentiferous lead which had not yet had the silver taken out of it; while the other appeared to be the result of smelting together lead and
copper ores, which Professor Roberts-Austin relayed was a way used since the sixteenth century to remove silver from copper alloys (Cox 1895, 37). See also Boon (1974, hearth 195, silver-working 275).

House VIII.unnumbered, lies south-west of Mansio; no details are known.

The ‘Mansio’

Excavation history

The Revd John Coles excavated four or five buildings at Silchester in 1833 after remains were dug up by workmen putting a drain in the field. Alas only plans of the baths were published, believed to be those belonging to the Mansio. Excavations did not last long and were discontinued after a complaint to the first Duke of Wellington about the damage being done to the land.

In some reports there was confusion about the location of these excavations which remains to this day. Early descriptions state them as being south-west of the church where the Mansio bathhouse is indeed located; however, a plan of the site by Kempe (1838) placed them west of the church, which was then popularly reproduced by Wright and Fairholt (1845, 152). Maclauchlan made efforts to clarify the situation when he drew up his map: ‘The position of the bath has been fixed on the map by the concurrent testimony of three persons residing at Silchester, who saw the excavation open. Though the rector had carefully fenced in a way to the remains, so as to protect the farmer’s crops, such was the destruction committed by persons crossing the fields in every direction, that at the earnest request of the tenant, the proprietor desired that the foundations should be covered in’ (note 7, Maclauchlan 1851, 230). Hilton Price also obtained similar local testimony to confirm the baths’ location, as well as the location of another excavation by Coles just to the north-east, which had been marked on some plans as the ‘site of Roman Villa’ (Hilton Price 1887, 275).

Excavation of the Mansio proper commenced under Joyce in 1875, and after his death was continued by Langshaw and Monro, although the building was covered in about 1880 without it having really been completed, but not before Hilton-Price had commissioned a detailed survey of it by the Ordnance Survey (Boon 1974, 27). The exploration of the baths continued a little longer into 1881 (Fox 1899b, 83–4). The Antiquaries decided to rely on the earlier plan, rather than re-excavating the building.

Description

Corridors on three sides of a courtyard were backed by a series of chambers; unifying the building there was also a corridor on the outside. In the lateral range there were three rooms with hypocausts. To the south-east were the baths, which had both their own water supply (a spring in the north-west corner of Room 3 of the baths and another on the north side of Room 4) and wastewater outflow which went through the Town Wall (Fox and St John Hope 1894, 231–2). Boon noted the duplication of rooms in the bath-suite and suggested that the baths had been divided to provide for both sexes (Boon 1974, 138–44). While some red tesserae were found, there were no substantive remains of mosaics (Mosaics 321.35–36, Neal and Cosh 2009, 206–7).

Within the baths were found a human skeleton and a coin hoard: ‘in the natatio, or water-bath, was found a human skeleton, and in the leaden pipe connected with it, upwards of two hundred Roman coins. The body could never have been deposited in such a spot in the ordinary mode of sepulchre. What then is the obvious inference? When Silchester was stormed, one of its inhabitants had sought refuge in this place, hastily throwing his treasure, for concealment, into the bath; here he fell by the Saxon sword, or was crushed under the falling ruins of the building; a faithful dog, whose skull was discovered near him, had shared his fate’ (Kempe 1833, 125).

Interpretation

The interpretation of the building has varied through time. Generally the lack of hypocausts has militated against seeing the building as being a private residence; also the size of the bath-block
FIG. 5.50. Interior 16 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
FIG. 5.51. Interior 16 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
FIG. 5.52. Interior 16 – interpretative plan.
was seen as too large just for private use. So, Joyce thought it might be a barrack for cavalry. By the time the Antiquaries re-investigated the site they wondered if it might not be a *hospitium* (Fox and St John Hope 1894, 211, 224). The use of this term continued for a long while (e.g. Fox 1948, 177); however, the use of the associated term for a guest-house, *mansio*, gained greater currency through the later twentieth century. Its closest parallels are the *mansio*es at Caerwent, Chelmsford, Kempton and Hedernheim. Their interpretation as inns serving the *cursus publicus* would explain the multiplicity of rooms which are poorly decorated, the twin-suite baths with sections for each sex, the large latrine and the granary. Positioning close to the Town Wall was also seen as indicative (easy access to paddocks). Boon, however, preferred the slightly more flexible word inn or *praetorium* (Boon 1974). Contrasting views of the interpretation of *mansio*es and the *cursus publicus* can be found in Black (1995) examining Britain, and Corsi (2000) looking at the evidence from Italy. See also Liversidge (1968, 59–60) and a reconstruction by de la Bédoyère (1991, 111).

**NOTABLE FINDS**

None reported.

**INTERIOR 17: INSULAE XXXIIIa (PART) AND XXXIIIb (FIGS 5.53–55)**

**HISTORY OF INTERVENTIONS**

- c. 1833 ‘Villa’ excavation indicated (Joyce 1881b).
- 1903–4 Excavation of Insula XXXIII (St John Hope and Fox 1905a).

**ADDITIONAL NEAR-CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS**

A visit in 1903 (Ditchfield 1904).

**DESCRIPTION**

*Insula XXXIIIb*

*Insula XXXIIIb* is triangular in shape in the south-east corner of the town. One detail of the road-system is worth noting: the curved street bending round in the south of the insula appears to be respecting the interior of the Inner Earthwork, and it is positioned as if it was just inside the bank (the feature in the geophysics represents the ditch). The implication would be that this section of the earthwork remained open longer than the section Boon excavated in Insulae XIIa/XXIII, at least into the Flavian period when the other well-metalled roads were established.

Coles excavated in this area in 1833. Apart from a fragment of the *Mansio* bathhouse, he also dug parts of ‘a villa’, though no plan of it was ever published. Local memory placed it just to the east of the *Mansio*, though precisely which of the buildings here is unclear. None of the Antiquaries’ excavation reports noted disturbed ground or modern finds.

House XXXIII.1 was a very partial plan perhaps of a corridor house, though the details are uncertain. For House XXXIII.2 see Interior Sheet 14.

Block XXXIII.I is a large rectangular room with a narrow corridor attached suggestive of an incomplete plan. It was aligned and built on the infill of the Inner Earthwork which the road also curves around to respect.

Block XXXIII.V was a simple square structure nestled up close to the Town Wall, but at an angle to it. It was set behind the remains of a much larger new house on a different alignment which was revealed in the geophysical data. Only elements of the plan can be made out, but it was aligned to the southerly section of the curved street and features continued back onto what
FIG. 5.53. Interior 17 – Antiquaries’ plans and modern topography.
Fig. 5.54. Interior 17 – fluxgate gradiometry image (± 7 nT).
Fig. 5.55. Interior 17 – interpretative plan.
would have been the Inner Earthwork bank at one time, so this had presumably been levelled by the time the house was built.

Block XXXIII.VI was described as an oblong block of chambers with a structural sequence noted by the Antiquaries, described as ‘a workshop or factory of some sort’.

Block XXXIII.VII was a simple rectangular structure, perpendicular to Block XXXIII.VI just to the south.

NOTABLE FINDS
None reported.