



Borough Gardens, Dorchester, Dorset

Interim Report on the Archaeological Field Evaluation of Former Bowling Green



Report No. 53463/2/1

March 2017

Borough Gardens, Dorchester, Dorset

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March 2015

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Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
OASIS Reference	terraina1-279729		
Project Title	Former Bowling Green, Borough Gardens, Dorchester		
Short Description of Project	Terrain Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of the proposed site of new tennis courts on the site of the former bowling green in the Borough Gardens, Dorchester. Two trenches were excavated which revealed the upper parts of three large parallel ditches running roughly N-S, which have been identified as part of the Roman town defences of <i>Durnovaria</i> . The remains of an old ground surface formerly preserved below the bank of the Roman defences or the earthworks of West Walks, was found in the southeastern part of the site. This soil layer sealed a prehistoric, possibly Neolithic, ditch.		
Project Dates	Start: 28-02-2017	End: 10-03-2017	
Previous/Future Work	No/Not known		
Project Code	53463		
Monument Type and Period	Boundary Ditch (prehistoric), Town Defences (Roman)		
Significant Finds	Worked Flint		
Project Location			
County/District/Parish	Dorset/ West Dorset/ Dorchester		
Site Address	Bowling Green, Borough Gardens, Dorchester DT1 1RE		
Site Coordinates	SY 6897 9032		
Site Area	64 m ²		
Height OD	68.5 m		
Project Creators			
Organisation	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Brief Originator	None		
Project Design Originator	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Supervisor	Mike Trevarthen		
Project Manager	Peter Bellamy		
Sponsor or Funding Body	Dorchester Town Council		
Project Archive			
Archive Type	Physical	Digital	Paper
Location/Accession No	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with Dorset County Museum.	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with Dorset County Museum.	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with Dorset County Museum.
Contents	Pottery, flint,	Digital photography	context sheets, diary, photographs, plans, report

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project introduction

Dorchester Town Council proposes to replace the extant disused Bowling Green within the Borough Gardens with two new all-weather tennis courts. A planning application for the works (WD/D/17/000259) was submitted on 20 February 2017.

The Borough Gardens are Grade II listed in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens for its special historic interest (National Heritage List Entry No: 1001559). The eastern side of the gardens are within the Dorchester Roman Walls Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Heritage List Entry No: 1002449).

A programme of archaeological works to support the planning application and to comply with the statutory requirements of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended) regarding the Scheduled Monument was developed for the town council by Phil Clarke of Arrowhead Archaeology in consultation with Historic England. This consisted of an initial desk-based archaeological assessment, followed by geophysical survey of the site to inform an archaeological evaluation strategy.

The desk-based assessment was undertaken by Phil Clarke of Arrowhead Archaeology, who also applied for Scheduled Monument Consent for the project and S42 licence for the geophysical survey, on behalf of Dorchester Town Council. The geophysical survey was undertaken by Bournemouth University in October 2016 (Monteith *et al.* 2016).

Due to illness, Arrowhead Archaeology was unable to continue with the project and Terrain Archaeology was asked by Dorchester Town Council to undertake the archaeological evaluation of the site instead.

The fieldwork was carried out between the 28th February and 10th March 2017 by Peter Bellamy and Mike Trevarthen.

This interim report has been produced to present the basic stratigraphic information revealed by the evaluation, as soon as possible after the completion of the fieldwork. The full evaluation report will be produced after the finds analyses are complete and the specialist report on the soils has become available.

1.2 Brief

No written brief for the works was produced by or on behalf of the Client, but the scope of the works was discussed with Keith Miller, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England.

1.3 Site Location

The Borough Gardens, Dorchester are bounded to the north by Albert Road, to the west by Cornwall Road, to the east by West Walks and to the south by a footpath linking Bowling Alley Walk with Cornwall Road. The site itself is located at the southern end of the Borough Gardens (centred at SY 6897 9032). It comprises a now-disused bowling green, which is terraced into the landscape with its southern edge below the level of the path to the south, and its northern edge retained by a stone revetment wall about one metre above the level of the gardens to the north.

1.4 Geology

The solid geology is mapped as chalk of the Portsdown Chalk Formation. No Superficial Deposits are recorded (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

1.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site lies in an area of significant prehistoric remains. However, the major prehistoric monuments are focussed on the River Frome and along the E-W chalk ridge to the south. The area of Dorchester itself appears to have been part of an agricultural landscape with fragments of Bronze Age fields found at a number of sites including Greyhound Yard, Merchant's Garage and County Hall (Bellamy 1991; Smith 1993; Woodward *et al.* 1993) and an extensive pre-urban agricultural soil layer has been found on many of the sites investigated in Dorchester.

The Site lies just outside the Roman town of *Durnovaria*, founded about AD65. The earliest element of the town appears to be the street pattern, which was laid out on top of the pre-Roman agricultural soil. The full street pattern is not known, but the alignment of a number of streets can be determined, although the precise location of the entry of the approach roads into the town is yet to be determined. In the early Roman period, the town appears to have had a relatively low density of buildings and the street frontages were developed with small timber buildings set within relatively large enclosures with further enclosures behind the street frontages (Woodward *et al.* 1993; Trevarthen 2008). Towards the end of the second century AD many of the timber buildings were replaced by buildings with stone footings that are extended and developed by the late 3rd and into the 4th century and include large courtyard town houses and aisled buildings including possible urban farms, which continued to be built up until the end of the 4th century.

Durnovaria was provided with town defences, probably some time in the late 2nd century AD. The precise form and dating of the defences is uncertain, nevertheless a summary of the likely sequence can be suggested. The main source for our understanding of the defences remains the work done by R.A.H. Farrar for the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments Inventory published in 1970 (RCHME 1970), together with a number of later observations and relatively small-scale excavations.

Many Romano-British towns gained earthwork defences probably in the second half of the second century AD, and many of these were modified with stone walls in the third century (Jones & Mattingly 1990, 161). Dorchester appears to follow this pattern. The first phase of defences appears to consist of a relatively small earthen bank and perhaps a single external ditch and is unlikely to be earlier than c. AD130 and may be as late as the end of the second century or early third century (RCHME 1970, 535). However, there also appears to be a possibly earlier abandoned phase to the defences as the remains of a massive unfinished wall footing about three metres wide has been traced along the south side of the town where it was first noted at the Lee Motors site (RCHME 1970, 547) and subsequently also found at South Grove House, Bowling Alley Walk and in the South Walks Tunnel Sewer (Startin 1981, Putnam *et al.* 1970, Davies & Farwell 1990). It has also been found on the west side of the town beneath 1 West Walks (Trevarthen 2012). This wall footing lay behind the primary rampart (suggesting it pre-dates it) and was sealed by the later enlargement of the bank. This abandoned phase of the defences remains poorly understood and not securely dated.

At some time after the late second century AD, but perhaps more likely in the late third or early fourth century AD, the defences were enlarged and elaborated with the construction of a stone wall and the enlargement of the earthen rampart behind it (RCHME 1970). The ditch system may have been enlarged from a postulated single ditch to a triple ditch system with counterscarp bank, at least along the south and west sides of the town. The most complete section across the ditch system was made in 1896 across the southern line of the defences, close to the southwest corner, just to the south east of the site (RCHME 1970). The ditches were about 15 m wide and up to 4 m deep with V-shaped profiles. These ditches were also observed during works in the car park of the Great Western Hotel in 1994 (Woodward 1994). The inner edge of the middle ditch of this system was observed in the garden of Appian House, 22 Great Western Road in 2006 (Tatler and Bellamy 2006). The bank was investigated near the western end of Bowling Alley Walk in 1969–70, which revealed a primary bank about 15 m wide, later enlarged to a width of twenty-

seven metres (Putnam *et al.* 1969 and 1970). The counterscarp bank lies under the houses on the south side of Great Western Road and has not been investigated.

The western side of the town defences appear to be similar to those on the south. The two phases of bank and the stone wall footings were investigated at Colliton Park, providing the most complete section through the bank (RCHME 1970). The standing remains of the stone wall in Albert Road were investigated in 1951 (Farrar 1953). The bank still survives as an earthwork along West Walks, though flattened and spread by later activity, it appears still to be over two metres high. The ditches have been observed in a number of places to the north of the Borough Gardens. The outer two ditches have been observed at Christchurch Court/Physiques and Shapes and the outer ditch and the counterscarp bank at Dorford Church (Bellamy 2004). There are antiquarian accounts that the course of the ditches was visible in the area of the Borough Gardens until the mid nineteenth century (Farrar 1953). The presence of the ditches crossing the bowling green area of the Gardens is implied by the subsidence of the eastern part of Borough Gardens House, which necessitated some rebuilding, and which has been assumed to be the result of the settling of the fill of the outer ditch of the defences. The projected line of the triple ditch system in the south west corner of the town is shown on Figure 1.

A number of Roman burials have been recorded in the northern part of the Borough Gardens and are probably associated with a roadside cemetery along the western approach road into the town. A number of burials found at 8 Albert Road were cut into the outer face of the counterscarp bank (Stacey 1986). Roman burials were also found dug into the counterscarp bank on the south side of the town at Beggars Knap (RCHME 1970, 580) and these are likely to be associated with a roadside cemetery along the Roman road to Radipole.

During the medieval period, the bank was part of the borough of Dorchester and the ditches were within the manor of Fordington, part of the lands of the Duchy of Cornwall. During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were frequent disputes over the boundaries of the borough and the respective rights of the townspeople of Dorchester and the tenants of Fordington over the 'ditches', as recorded in the borough records and the Court Rolls of the Manor of Fordington. The borough had encroached on the area south of Bowling Alley and what is now the southern end of the Borough Gardens by 1723 (Pope 1918). West Walk and Bowling Alley Walk were laid out as a tree-lined walk in about 1712 with a gravel path along the flattened out top of the remains of the Roman rampart (Pope 1918). Simpson's 1779 map of Fordington shows a trackway running diagonally across the Borough Gardens area with the area between this track and the walks is shown as a plantation or orchard. On the western side of the track are a series of open strip fields. The 1844 Fordington Tithe Map shows a similar layout, but the eastern part is divided into a series of meadow closes described as Fairground of Fair Plot. The strip fields to the west were under arable.

By the mid nineteenth century, the southern half of the Borough Gardens was a nursery garden owned by S. R. Harris, who built what is now Borough Gardens House and a series of glasshouses. The northern part of the Borough Gardens comprised a series of closes owned by the Duchy of Cornwall. The Corporation of Dorchester purchased this parcel of land from the Duchy and also the nursery garden in 1895, in order to lay out a new public park. This was designed by William Goldring and was opened in 1896. The bowling green was laid out sometime between 1902 and 1925, probably in about 1906 when the Dorchester Bowling Club was established in the Borough Gardens.

1.6 Previous Archaeological fieldwork

Exeter Archaeology undertook some archaeological investigation and recording during the restoration and refurbishment of the Borough Gardens in 2006/7. The details of this work do not appear to have been made publicly accessible, but it is known that part of the counterscarp bank was exposed and possibly part of the ditches.

Geophysical survey of the bowling green was undertaken by Bournemouth University in October 2016. The survey identified a number of anomalies, but none were confidently identified as part of the Roman defences and most were attributed to more recent nineteenth century features associated with the former nursery garden and with features within the Borough Gardens (Monteith *et al.* 2016).

1.7 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the field evaluation is to understand, record and make available information on the archaeological resource existing on the site to enable the archaeology on the site to be characterised, in order to assess the impact and significance of the new development. The evaluation will aim to place the archaeological results within the local, regional and national context, as appropriate, and advance understanding of the archaeology of the site and its surroundings.

Its objectives were:

- To investigate and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed to an appropriate professional standard.
- To determine the depth of the existing Bowling Green structure.
- To 'ground truth' the results of the geophysical survey.
- To determine whether the ditches of Roman town defences exist on the site.
- To provide sufficient data to enable an informed decision to be taken on the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets on the site.
- To present the results in a report to the appropriate standard.

1.8 Proposed Development

The existing levels of the bowling green will be reduced by 325–350mm by machine. The new tennis court will then be built on this reduced level, with a 225mm thick aggregate sub-base laid over a geotextile membrane, over which a 65mm thick porous tarmac binder tennis court surface will be constructed. New paving will be laid round the course to match the existing paving. Areas of the retaining walls will be modified to provide new access points and steps.

A fence will be erected around the court area. The fencing will be 50 x 50mm minimum rolled weld mesh with high tensile wires set to a minimum height of 2.8 m. The mesh fencing will be attached to minimum of 50 x 50mm angular galvanised steel posts / bracing, set at a maximum of 3 m centre to centre, to a height of 3m. The posts are to be set in concrete in holes of a minimum surface diameter of 300mm, and 500mm deep. There will be approximately 46 posts in total.

1.9 Methods

The methodology, scope, aims and objectives of the works was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Terrain Archaeology in February 2017 (Terrain Archaeology document no. 3463/0/1). All archaeological works were carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2014a).

The evaluation comprised intrusive investigation in the form of trial trenching. Two trenches (Trench 1 and 2, Figure 2; Plate 1), measuring 31.2 m by 0.9 m and 32.1 m by 0.9 m, were mechanically excavated using a 1.5-ton mini-digger fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Machining was halted at the level of the natural chalk in Trench 1 and in Trench 2 at the limit of the reach of the bucket of the mini-digger. The east end of Trench 1 was extended by hand to expose a buried soil layer and an early feature initially seen in the east end of the machine trench.

The base and sides of the trenches were cleaned and narrow sondages were dug into the exposed edges of the Roman defensive ditches. All deposits revealed, irrespective of their apparent archaeological significance, were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. These have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current guidelines (Brown 2011; CIfA 2014b) and the requirements of the receiving museum. A photographic record of the work was maintained in digital format, and includes aspects of its setting, conduct and technical detail.

1.10 Archive and Dissemination

The project archive, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and appropriate background documentation, is currently stored by Terrain Archaeology under the project code 53463.

A copy of this report will be lodged with Dorset County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER is a publicly funded and accessible resource, and deposition of the report will place it, and the project results, in the public domain.

A digital summary of the archive will be placed with the OASIS project (www.oasis.ac.uk) under the reference code *terraina1-279729*. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded for inclusion in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) online 'grey literature' library.

A brief report of the project will be published by Terrain Archaeology in the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*.

2. Results

2.1 Introduction

The evaluation trenches were excavated across the southern and northern part of the site and were aligned to run perpendicular to the presumed alignment of the Roman Town defences (Figure 2). A number of features and deposits could be traced across from one trench to another and these are considered together in this section rather than describing each trench individually. The features and deposits revealed in each trench are described in detail in Appendix 1.

2.2 Natural Deposits

The natural chalk bedrock (105, 210) was exposed in a number of places in both Trenches 1 and 2. Across most of the two trenches, the chalk had been truncated by later activity. It is only in the eastern end of Trench 1, where the chalk survived at what is likely to have been its original Roman level. The chalk survived beneath an old ground surface which had been protected by the former presence of the bank of the Roman town defences. The top of the chalk was at a height of 68.26 m above Ordnance Datum.

2.3 Prehistoric Features

A ditch (108) running roughly WNW-ESE was found at the east end of Trench 1 (Figure 2: Plate 3). It was cut into the natural chalk and sealed beneath an old ground surface (107). It had a V-shaped profile about 1.05 m wide and 0.47 m deep (Figure 4). It appears to have silted up naturally with a series of yellowish-brown silty clay soils with varying quantities of chalk and flint (144, 145, 146). The only finds recovered from this ditch were worked flint. None were diagnostic but all were thin waste flakes, perhaps fitting best within a Neolithic industry.

Ditch 108 appears to cut another possible feature or disturbance (151), which wasn't investigated as part of the evaluation and its form, date and interpretation remain unclear

2.4 Old Ground Surface

At the east end of Trench 1 was a 0.10 – 0.20 m thick deposit of reddish-brown to yellowish-brown silty clay soil with varying amounts of chalk and flint nodules (106, 107, 147, 149) overlying the natural chalk and sealing Ditch 108 (Figures 2 and 3; Plate 2). The upper part was disturbed and contained some post-medieval finds.

2.5 Roman Town Defences

The upper parts of three large parallel ditches (114, 126, 208, 227, 232) were exposed and have been identified as part of the triple ditch system of the Roman Town defences. The full width of the inner ditch (114) was exposed in Trench 1 (Plate 4) and the western part (232) in Trench 2. The middle ditch was exposed in both Trenches 1 (126) and 2 (227) (Plates 5 and 7) and the outer ditch was partly exposed in Trench 2 (208) (Figures 2 and 3; Plate 6).

2.5.1 Inner Ditch

The inner ditch measured about 11.5 m across. The upper part of both sides of this ditch cut (114) were exposed in Trench 1. It had a shallow sloping eroded upper edge becoming steeper with depth (Figure 2). The lowest fill exposed on the eastern side was a pale greyish-brown silty clay layer (117), which contained a small quantity of abraded Roman coarseware sherds and limestone pieces. This layer was sealed by a series of tips of weathered chalk rubble and soil (116). No dating evidence was found within this chalky deposit, but the character of this layer suggests it may have been derived from the levelling of the Roman bank in 1712 to form West Walks and Bowling Alley Walk.

On the western side, the lowest fill was a mid brownish-grey clayey silt (119), which contained a small quantity of post-medieval finds. The upper part of this layer was cut by a disturbance (138) filled with a dark greyish-brown clay loam (137) containing some post-medieval finds and a chalky layer (118) over.

In Trench 2 the inner ditch was not exposed, but the western edge of the ditch cut (232) was located by probing. This indicated there was a shallow eroded upper lip with a relatively sharp angle dropping down to a more steeply sloping side (Figure 3). The fill of the ditch was not exposed.

2.5.2 Middle Ditch

The middle ditch measured about 10.0 m across and was separated from the inner ditch by a flattened ridge of chalk about 3.45 m wide. The upper part of the ditch cut was exposed in both Trench 1 (126) and Trench 2 (227) and it had a similar stepped profile in both exposures with an eroded shallow sloping upper lip leading to a steeper cut about 0.3 – 0.5 m deep before flattening out into a more shallow shelf (Figure 3). It is unclear whether this is part of the original design of the ditch or is a later modification.

On the eastern side of the ditch, the stepped part is filled with a mid greyish-brown silty clay (140), becoming chalkier with depth (139), which contains post-medieval finds. A similar fill (141) to layer 140 was found on the western side of the cut and is probably part of the same deposit.

In Trench 2, the fill was only exposed on the western side of the ditch. This was a mid greyish-brown silty clay (228) very similar to the fills exposed in Trench 1.

2.5.3 Outer Ditch

The full width of the outer ditch was not exposed. It was at least 7.2 m wide and has been estimated to be about the same width as the inner ditch. This ditch lay beyond the eastern end of Trench 1 and only the upper part of the eastern edge of the cut (208) was exposed in Trench 2. It had been partly disturbed by a later feature (204) but had a moderately sloping, slightly irregularly stepped upper profile (Figure 3). Only a single fill was exposed within this ditch, a mid greyish-brown clayey silt (209).

2.6 Post-medieval Features and Deposits

2.6.1 Soil Layer overlying Roman Ditches

The upper parts of all three Roman ditches were filled with a similar mid brownish-grey silty clay loam (115, 127, 207, 212, 225), containing some post-medieval finds. This layer was not excavated to its full depth but was over 0.35 m thick. This deposit has been interpreted as being the remnants of the soil development over the Roman ditches in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. It appears to post-date the early eighteenth century as it overlies the chalky deposit 116, which is thought to have derived from the creation of West Walks in 1712. The upper part of this soil was truncated by the construction of the Bowling Green in 1906.

2.6.2 Ditches 111, 122 and 124

On the ridge of chalk between the inner and middle Roman ditches, two similar small flat-bottomed ditches 122 and 124 were found cut into the natural chalk running along the eroded upper edge of the Roman ditches. Ditch 124 was truncated by the construction of the bowling green and Ditch 122 appears to lie below the eighteenth/nineteenth

century soil layer 115. Both were filled with similar mid greyish-brown silty clay (123, 125). A fragment of clay tobacco pipe was recovered from 123, the fill of ditch 122.

Another two ditches (111, 113) were found east of the inner Roman ditch. Ditch 113 was flat-bottomed with steeply sloping sides surviving about 0.25 m deep and filled with dark greyish-brown clay loam (112), which contained some nineteenth century finds. Immediately to the east was another ditch (111), also flat-bottomed, which survived 0.25 m deep. Its east side was destroyed by Drain 102 and it was also truncated by the construction of the bowling green. It had a lower loose chalk rubble fill (110) and an upper mid greyish brown silty clay fill (109). The lower chalky fill may have been derived from the Roman bank as this ditch probably cut through the tail of the earthwork.

The function and precise date of these various ditches is unclear but may have been associated with the post-medieval agricultural or horticultural use of this area.

2.6.3 Service Trenches

A number of service trenches were identified crossing Trenches 1 and 2. In Trench 1, two chalk-rubble-filled trenches 104 and 120 were found and are probably nineteenth century drain trenches, perhaps joining up with the extant nineteenth century drain which crosses E-W through the middle of the bowling green between Trenches 1 and 2. Neither was fully excavated. In Trench 2, another drain trench (221) containing a ceramic drain was exposed, which may be part of this same drainage system. Another possible service trench (219) was found just west of drain 221. It was not bottomed and was filled with layers of flint gravel (220).

A further trench containing a ceramic drain (130) was found just below the bowling green in the western end of Trench 1. This drain does not appear to be part of the drainage system described above as it is at a much shallower depth.

2.6.4 Other Features

A number of other features of unknown function but of probable nineteenth century or later date were identified in Trench 2. These may be associated with the former nursery garden or with the early phases of the Borough Gardens, but are poorly understood.

At the western end was a flat-bottomed ditch (204) running roughly N-S, which cut through the eastern edge of the outer Roman ditch. Ditch 204 was about 1.1 m wide and 0.5 m deep, filled with a lower fill of loose mixed greyish-brown soil (205) and an upper fill of loose small chalk rubble (206).

About three metres to the east was a rather confusing series of features and deposits, which appear to have been gradually deposited during the formation of the terrace for the bowling green. Feature 213 was a 1.2 m wide shallow flat-bottomed linear cut oriented roughly N-S dug into the top of soil layer 212 over the middle Roman ditch (Figure 3; Plate 7). It was filled with a layer of broken brick rubble (214) over which were a series of layers of compact flint gravels (215, 216), which appear to have been deposited during the course of the deposition of levelling layer 202 (see below). On the eastern side is another flat-bottomed cut 217 within layer 202 and filled with gravelly soil (218). The precise relationship between 213 and 217 is unclear, but 217 is probably the later of the two. These features may be the remnants of paths within the nursery gardens or the pleasure gardens.

Further east is another shallow flat-bottomed cut (222) of unknown plan shape. It measured at least 4.7 m across and was 0.4 m deep. It was filled with a deposit of black, mainly vitrified, industrial waste including partially melted bricks, possible furnace lining and other burnt material (223) (Plate 8). The origin of this material is not known and the function of feature 223 is unclear, but may be associated with the former nursery or the creation of the Borough Gardens.

2.7 Bowling Green

The construction of the bowling green appears to have begun with the removal of the existing garden soil, as represented by cuts 148 and 203. This was followed by the deposition of a levelling layer of mixed greyish-brown clay loam to form the flat terrace for the bowling green. In Trench 1 This layer (102) measured up to 0.35 m thick

infilling the hollow formed by the Roman ditches. In Trench 2, this deposit was over 0.95 m thick and two main units (202/230, 226) were identified and included a number of clay and chalky lenses (229). The upper surface of this layer exhibited traces of trampling and disturbance (143). Above this was laid a thin layer of clinker or cinders (101, 201), which petered out towards the western edge of the area. Above this was formed the bowling green surface which consisted of a series of topsoil layers with lenses of sand and with a build-up of top dressing sand over to form the existing turf. This bowling green surface had settled into the top of the Roman ditches in Trench 1 and was no longer perfectly level.

3. Finds

3.1 Finds Assemblage

For the purposes of this interim statement, the finds recovered from the evaluation have not been properly assessed or described, but are tabulated by context below in Table 1. No systematic sampling for finds was undertaken.

Context	Iron	Roman Pot	Med. Pot	Post-med. Pot	Clay Tobacco Pipe	CBM	Stone	Plaster	Flint	Glass	Slag	Animal Bone	Shell
102				10/176	3/10	3/141	3/64	1/8		4/312			
103				1/39									
106					1/1		2/1		2/5				
112				2/18		5/144	3/154	1/26		1/345		2/11	
116							3/660		1/2				
117		3/20					4/1154		2/21				
119				4/23	1/1							2/12	2/20
123					1/14								
137	1/11				1/3	7/344	6/45	7/250		4/100	1/43	5/20	
140	2/26		1/2	2/16			4/5		3/27			3/18	1/15
141						2/174	1/1		1/26	1/5		2/12	
146									9/45				
149				5/26			13/21		9/184	2/6			2/1
150												2/29	
151									3/190				
202				14/421	1/5/					2/11			
207				1/1	1/8	4/134	1/3				2/5		
209			1/4						4/107				
225	1/19			4/18		2/96	1/11					4/15	
Total	4/ 56g	3/20g	2/6g	43/ 738g	9/42g	23/ 1033g	41/ 2121g	9/ 284g	34/ 607g	14/ 799g	3/ 48g	20/ 126g	5/ 36g

Table 1: Quantification of finds by context (count/weight in grams)

4. Discussion

4.1 Preliminary Discussion of Results

This section outlines the initial discussion of the results of the evaluation excavation. A more complete assessment of the nature and significance of the results will be presented in the forthcoming evaluation report.

A small part of the original ground levels have been preserved, if slightly truncated, in the south east corner of the site. This part of the site was originally sealed beneath the Roman town bank (and/or the flattened spread bank of the town walks). The old ground surface in this area appears to have been partially disturbed by post-medieval activity. It seals a prehistoric boundary ditch, which although is not closely dated, the flint recovered from the fill suggests a Neolithic rather than Bronze Age date.

Parts of all three of the Roman Town defensive ditches were revealed. Excavation did not reach to sufficient depth to reveal the true profile of these ditches, only the eroded upper part of the cut. It is assumed that they will have had a V-shaped profile similar to that recorded close by in 1896 (RCHME 1970). It is clear that none of the ditch fills

exposed were Roman in date, but this is not unexpected as the ditches in this area survived as significant earthworks until the eighteenth century and may have still been well over a metre deep at this time. The chalky fill 116 tipping down the eastern side of the inner ditch in Trench 1 has been interpreted as having formed as a result of the flattening of the Roman bank during the formation of West Walks in 1712. If this is true, then most of the ditch fills exposed were eighteenth or nineteenth century in date.

Evidence for the construction of the terrace of the bowling green was obtained, which showed that the terrace deposits over the Roman ditches were between 0.25 m and over 1.1 m thick, above which the 0.25 m thick bowling green turf was formed. In the south east corner of the site, the bowling green turf lay directly over the old ground surface.

4.2 Mitigation

The groundworks of the proposed tennis courts will not penetrate below the early twentieth century terrace build-up for the bowling green, except for the south east corner of the site. In this area the old ground surface lies at a higher level. With the current groundwork proposals, this soil would be partly disturbed by the initial ground reduction. Any underlying prehistoric or Roman features are likely to be disturbed by the fencing and drainage works.

Therefore, it is recommended that mitigation measures be put in place to prevent damage of the archaeology in the area to the east of the inner Roman ditch. Potential damage would also include the compaction and compression of archaeological deposits through use of machinery running over this area. Mitigation measures could include the archaeological excavation of the vulnerable area prior to commencing the tennis court groundworks or some form of engineering solution to prevent damage by machine.

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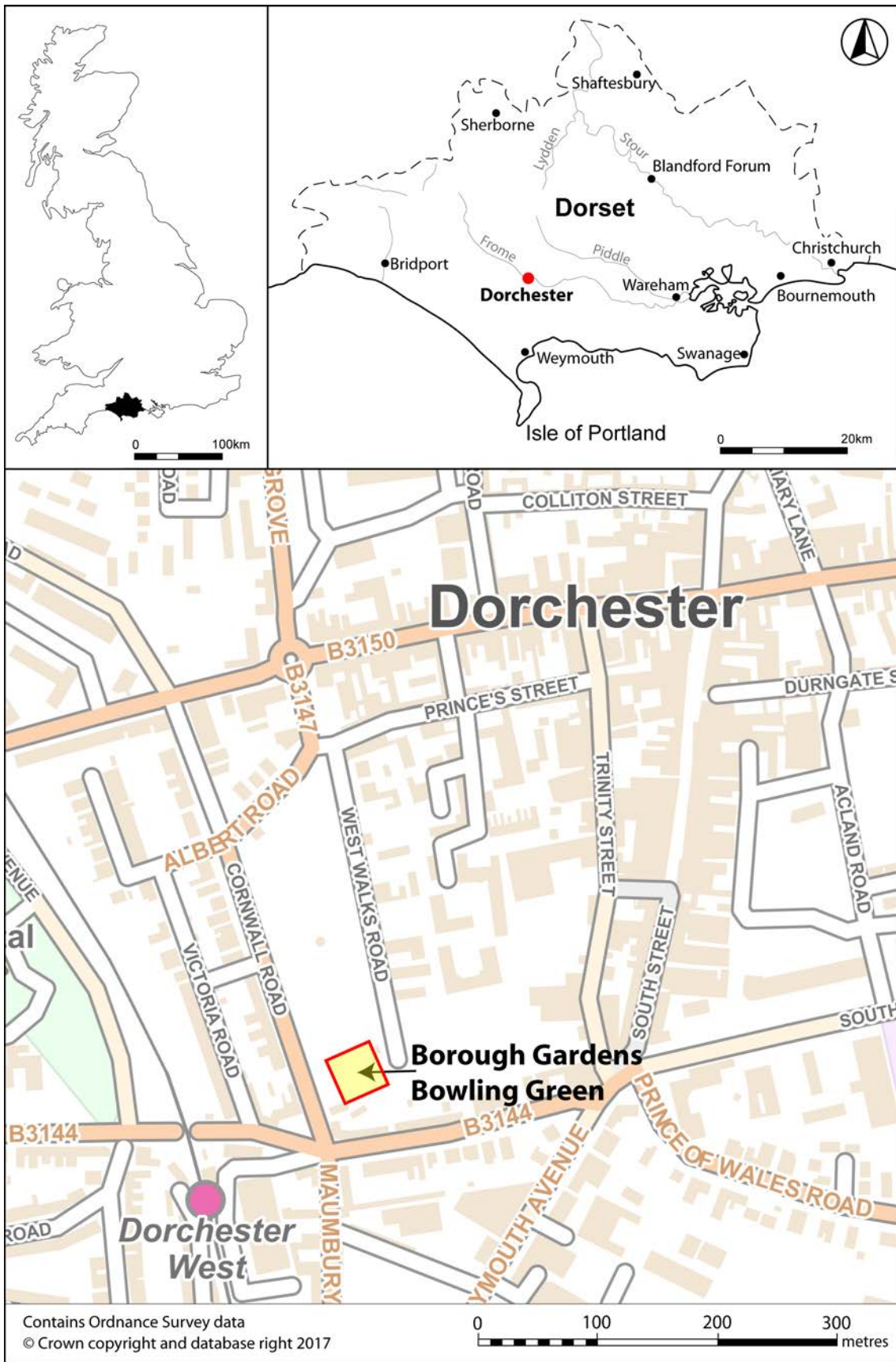


Figure 1: Site Location.

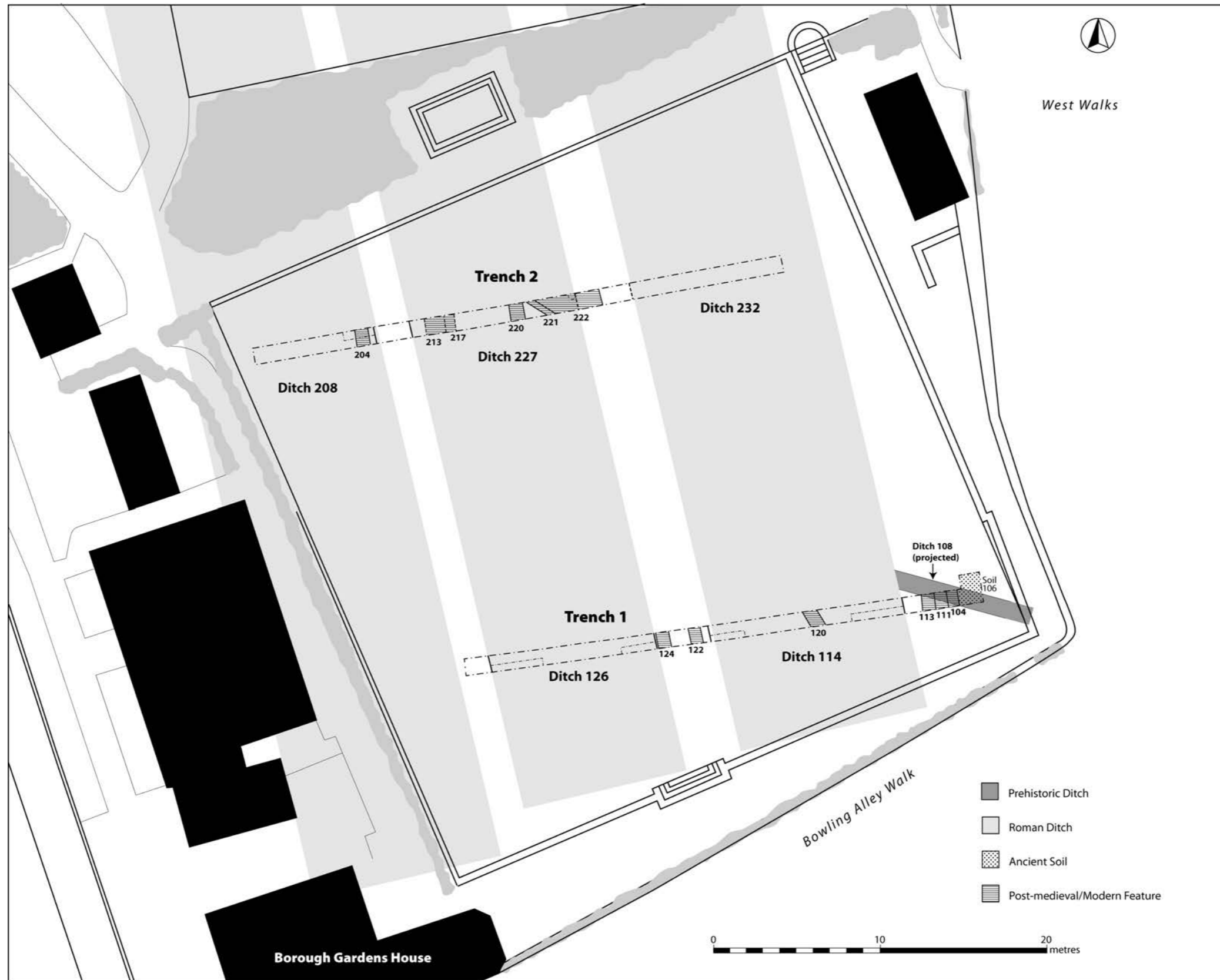


Figure 2: Plan of Trenches showing projected line of Prehistoric Ditch 108 and ditches of the Roman Town Defences.

Z

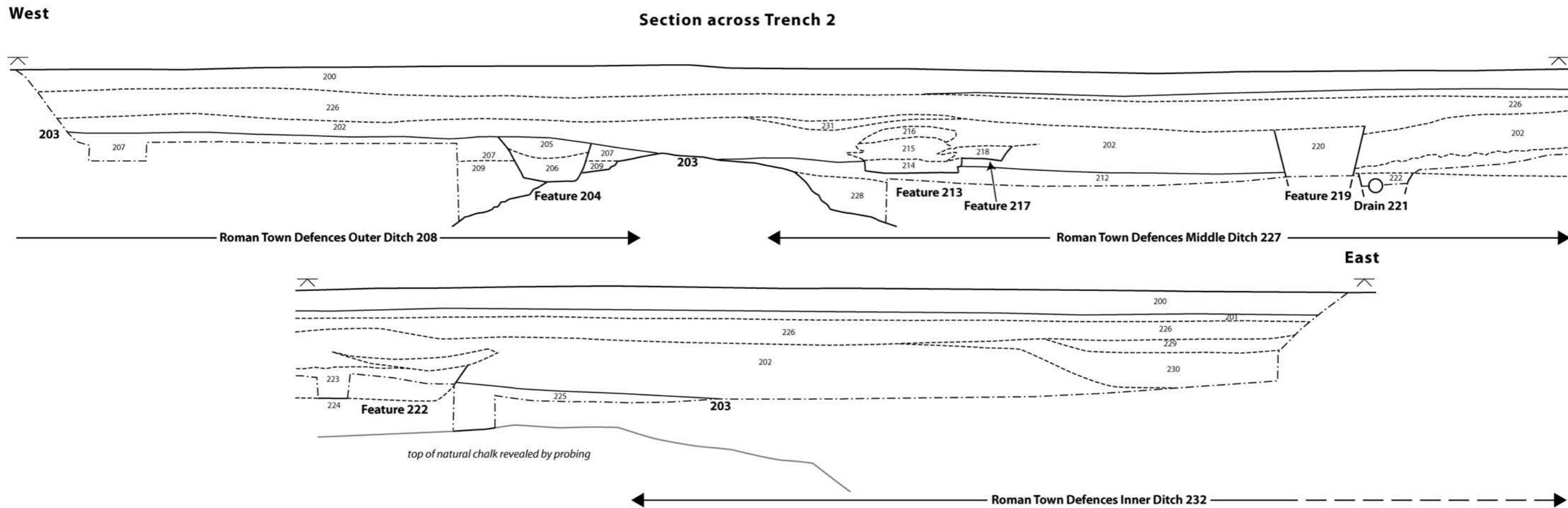
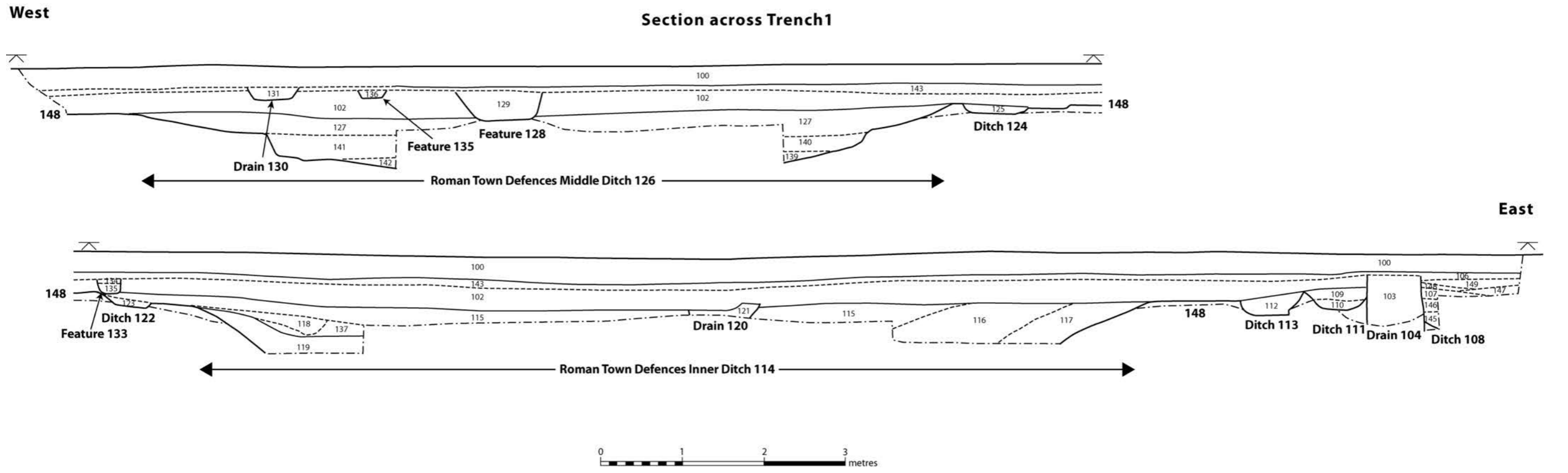


Figure 3: Sections across Trenches 1 and 2.

BOROUGH GARDENS, DORCHESTER
WNW-facing Section through Ditch 108

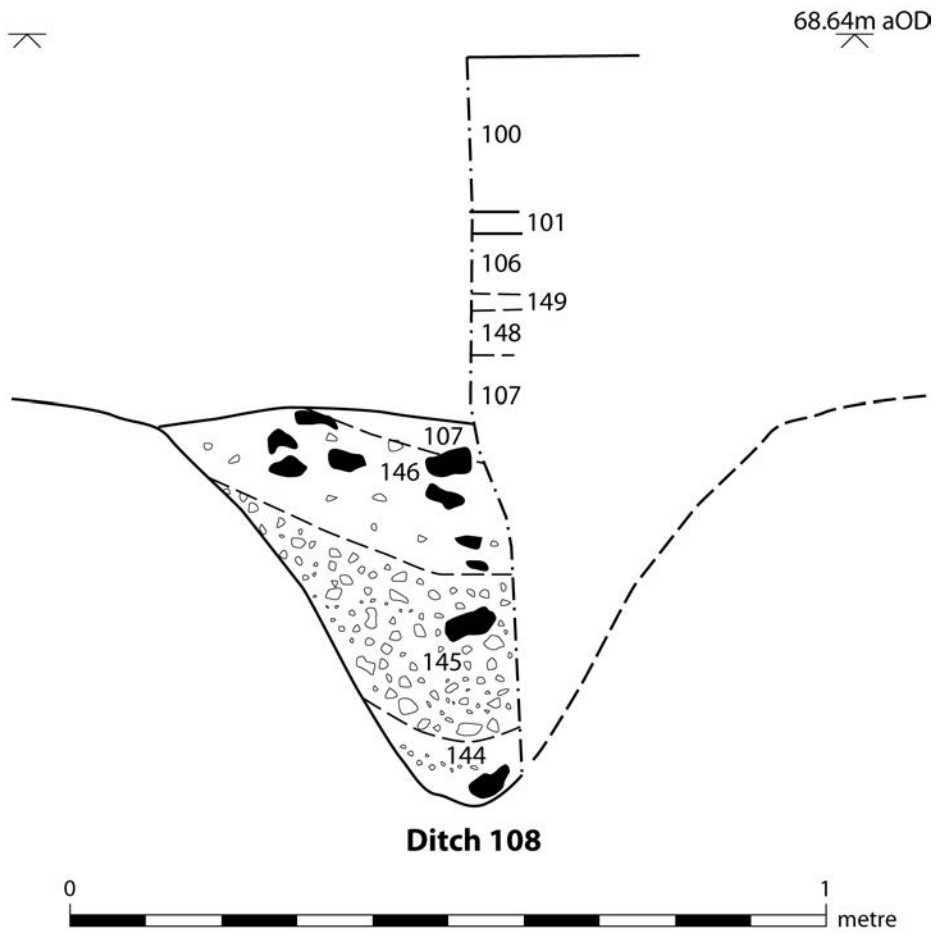


Figure 4: Section through Prehistoric Ditch 108.



Plate 1: General view of site from south east, with Trench 1 in foreground.



Plate 2: Trench 1 after initial cleaning with old ground surface in foreground and Inner and Middle Roman ditches beyond. Viewed from east.



Plate 3: Ditch 108. 1m scales.



Plate 4: Inner Roman ditch 114, with the chalk tips 116 below the scale. Viewed from east. 1m scales.



Plate 5: Middle Roman ditch 126, viewed from east. 1m scales.



Plate 6: Outer Roman ditch 208, viewed from east. 1m scales.



Plate 7: Western edge of Middle Roman ditch 227, with Feature 213 and 217 in section above, viewed from south. 1m scale.



Plate 8: Burnt fill of feature 222, viewed from west. 1m scale.

Appendix 1: Trench Summary

Trench 1

Length: 31.2 m; Width 0.9 – 1.75 m; maximum depth 1.25 m.

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
100	Bowling Green: The bowling green turf comprised a series of layers or lenses. At the base was a c. 110mm layer of humic brown silty clay soil containing a number of thin lenses of yellowish-brown sand. This was sealed by a thin layer of dark brown humic silty clay soil, above which was a 100mm thickness of sandy grey and brown sand top dressing and turf.	0.00 – 0.25m
101	Base of Bowling Green: Thin layer of black clinker or cinder between 5–50mm thick, which tapers out towards the west end of the trench.	0.25 – 0.30m
102	Levelling Layer: Fairly firm mixed layer of greyish-brown clay loam, with moderate chalk lumps, occasional patches and lenses of charcoal, and occasional flint pieces.	0.30 – 0.55m
103	Fill of Service trench 104: Fine chalk rubble fill. Contained nineteenth century pottery.	0.25 – 0.85m+
104	Drain Trench: Vertically-sided linear cut running roughly N-S across eastern end of trench. 0.7 m wide. Not bottomed.	0.25 – 0.85m+
105	Natural Chalk.	0.35m+
106	Disturbed Ancient Soil: Firm mid reddish-grey brown silty clay with occasional to moderate flint nodules and sparse to moderate small chalk pieces. Immediately below 101. Possible ancient soil protected by the bank of the Roman Town Defences, but disturbed by later activity as contains small fragments of slate and clay pipe.	0.23 – 0.33m
107	Ancient Soil: Firm mid to dark reddish-brown silty clay with moderate to frequent flint nodules up to 100mm across found in the top of ditch 108, immediately below 106. Probably part of ancient soil development surviving where settled into top of ditch 108.	0.42 – 0.55m
108	Field Boundary Ditch: Linear ditch found in east end of trench. It measured about 1.05 m wide and 0.47m deep oriented roughly WNW-ESE, cut into natural chalk and sealed below ancient soil 106/107. Filled with 144, 145, 146. Possibly a prehistoric field boundary ditch.	0.50 – 1.95m
109	Upper Fill of Ditch 110: Fairly soft mid greyish-brown silty clay with moderate small chalk lumps and flecks and small flint nodules. Fill of feature 111.	0.40 – 0.58m
110	Lower Fill of Ditch 111: Fairly loose chalk rubble in a small quantity of very pale brown silt matrix. Found at the base of Feature 111.	0.58 – 0.70m
111	Ditch: Linear cut into natural chalk in east end of trench. Oriented roughly N-S with straight steeply sloping sides and flat base. Truncated by drain trench 104. Original projected width of 1.05m and 0.25m deep. Filled with 109 and 110. Ditch of unknown function and date.	0.40 – 0.70m
112	Fill of Ditch 113: Friable dark greyish-brown clay loam with moderate chalk flecks, occasional flint and sparse charcoal flecks. Contains nineteenth century finds.	0.45 – 0.75m
113	Ditch: Linear ditch oriented roughly N-S at east end of trench. Concave sides and flat base, cut into natural chalk. Filled with 112.	0.45 – 0.75m
114	Inner Roman Town Ditch: Large linear feature about 11.5m wide oriented roughly N-S, cut into natural chalk. Only the upper part of the ditch cut was exposed. It has a shallow sloping lip becoming steeper with depth. Not fully excavated. Filled with 115, 116, 117, 118.	0.60 – 1.25m+
115	Soil in top of Ditch 114: Fairly soft mid greyish-brown silty clay loam with occasional small chalk lumps, sparse charcoal flecks and small and medium flint. Relatively chalk-free layer filling the top of ditch 115, possibly the remnants of the pre-bowling green soil within ditch 114. Contains nineteenth century material	0.55 – 0.80m+
116	Chalky fill in Ditch 114: Fairly firm mid brown silty clay with very frequent small chalk lumps and flecks and occasional flint nodules and limestone fragments. This layer consists of a series of tips of small chalk rubble on the eastern side of Ditch 114. It contains a number of lenses of clay soil. Possibly deposited during the formation of West Walks in 1712. Below 115 and above 117. Not fully excavated.	0.65 – 1.15m+
117	Fill in Ditch 114: Fairly soft pale greyish-brown silty clay with occasional small chalk lumps and small flint pieces, occasional larger flint nodules and limestone pieces. Fill lies on eastern side of ditch below chalky fill 116 and is stonier in its lower part. Not fully excavated.	0.60 – 1.15m
118	Fill in Disturbance 138: Fairly firm mid grey silty clay with frequent small chalk lumps and occasional flint nodules. A chalk rubble layer forming the upper fill of disturbance 138 in Ditch 114. Above 137.	0.65 – 1.0m
119	Fill in Ditch 114: Soft mid brownish-grey clayey silt with occasional to moderate small chalk lumps. Fill in western side of Ditch 114. Not fully excavated. Cut by disturbance 138.	0.70 – 1.25m+

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
120	Drain 120: Linear cut with near vertical sides running roughly NNW-SSE, cutting through the top of ditch 114. Filled with 121. Nineteenth century drain.	0.55 – 0.75m+
121	Fill of Drain Trench 120: Loose chalk rubble fill of drain 120. Upper part disturbed.	0.55 – 0.75m+
122	Ditch: Shallow linear ditch with steeply sloping sides and flat bottom, 0.65m wide and 0.18m deep, cut into the natural chalk along the western lip of ditch 114. Filled with 123. Ditch of unknown date and function, but possibly associated with post-medieval agricultural activity or nursery garden. Similar to ditch 124.	0.50 – 0.78m
123	Fill of Ditch 122: Soft mid greyish-brown silty clay with occasional small chalk lumps and sparse charcoal flecks.	0.50 – 0.78m
124	Ditch: Shallow linear ditch with steeply sloping sides and flat bottom, 0.8m wide and 0.15m deep, cut into the natural chalk along the eastern lip of ditch 126. Filled with 125. Ditch of unknown date and function, but possibly associated with post-medieval agricultural activity or nursery garden. Similar to ditch 122.	0.47 – 0.60m
125	Fill in Ditch 124: Soft mid greyish-brown silty clay with occasional small chalk lumps and small flint nodules, sparse charcoal flecks.	0.47 – 0.60m
126	Middle Roman Town Ditch: Large linear feature about 10m wide oriented roughly N-S, cut into natural chalk. Only the upper part of the ditch cut was exposed. It has a shallow sloping lip with a stepped profile. Not fully excavated. Filled with 127, 139, 140, 141, 142.	0.47 – 1.25m+
127	Fill in Ditch 126: Moderately firm mid greyish-brown silty clay with occasional small chalk lumps and sparse larger chalk pieces, occasional flint and sparse charcoal flecks. Uppermost fill of ditch 126 representing post-medieval soil development in top of ditch.	0.55 – 0.9m+
128	Feature 128: Feature of unknown plan shape with steeply sloping sides and flat bottom, 1.1m wide and 0.45m deep. Cuts layer 102. Unknown function, but probably a disturbance as part of the construction of the bowling green.	0.30 – 0.68m
129	Fill of Feature 128: soft dark greyish-brown silty clay loam with occasional chalk lumps and small flint nodules, moderate charcoal flecks and occasional clinker.	0.30 – 0.68m
130	Cut for Drain: linear cut for ceramic drain pipe, oriented roughly NE-SW. Filled with 131.	0.25 – 0.45m
131	Fill of Drain Trench 130: Soft dark brown silty clay with occasional chalk and charcoal flecks. Contains ceramic drain pipe.	0.25 – 0.45m
132	Linear Feature: Small shallow linear feature running roughly N-S, 0.35m wide and 0.25m deep. Cuts layer 102. Filled with 133 and 134. Part of bowling green construction?	0.30 – 0.55m
133	Lower Fill of Feature 132: Dark greyish-brown silty clay with very frequent charcoal and moderate clinker.	0.30 – 0.40m
134	Upper Fill of Feature 132: Dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent small chalk pieces and moderate charcoal flecks.	0.40 – 0.55m
135	Linear Feature: Small shallow linear feature running roughly N-S, 0.35m wide and 0.10m deep. Cuts layer 102. Filled with 136. Part of bowling green construction?	0.30 – 0.40m
136	Fill of Feature 135: Dark greyish-brown silty clay with frequent charcoal flecks and moderate clinker.	0.30 – 0.40m
137	Lower Fill of Disturbance 138: Friable mid to dark greyish-brown clay loam with moderate small chalk lumps, occasional flint nodules and limestone pieces, moderate charcoal flecks and lumps.	0.85 – 1.0m
138	Disturbance in Top of Ditch 126: Irregular cut into the top of ditch 126, over 2.9m wide and 0.3m deep. Its full size and shape not known. Not fully excavated. Cuts 119. Filled with 118 and 137.	0.65 – 1.0m
139	Fill in Ditch 126: Mid greyish-brown silty clay with frequent small chalk lumps and flecks. Lowest exposed fill on eastern side of ditch 126. Not fully excavated. Below 140.	1.05 – 1.25m
140	Fill in Ditch 126: Mid to dark greyish-brown silty clay with occasional small chalk lumps, occasional flint and sparse charcoal flecks. Fill in eastern side of ditch 126, above 139 and below 127.	0.85 – 1.05m
141	Fill in Ditch 126: Mid to dark greyish-brown with occasional to moderate small chalk lumps and moderate flint nodules. Lies on western side of ditch 126 below 127. Not fully excavated. Sits within steeper stepped part of ditch cut. Above 142.	0.80 – 1.10m
142	Fill in Ditch 126: Fairly firm pale yellowish-brown silty clay with very frequent chalk rubble. Only exposed in base of sondage in western part of ditch 126. Probably mainly derived from eroded top of natural chalk.	1.10 – 1.25m+
143	Trampled Surface: Greyish-brown silty loam with occasional small chalk and flint. Extensive thin layer 0.06-0.08m thick immediately below 101. Probably disturbed upper part of levelling for the bowling green.	0.25 – 0.35m
144	Primary Fill of Ditch 108: mid yellowish-brown clay silt with thin lenses of finely particulated chalk and sparse small flint nodules. In bottom of ditch 108.	0.87 – 1.0m
145	Fill of Ditch 108: Firm mid/dark yellowish-brown silty clay with very frequent small chalk	0.60 – 0.90m

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
	lumps and flecks, sparse small flint nodules. Fill of ditch 108, above 144, below 146.	
146	Upper Fill of Ditch 108: mid/dark yellowish-brown clayey silt with moderate chalk flecks and brecciated and nodular flint. Above 145.	0.48 – 0.68m
147	Ancient Soil above Ditch 108: Firm mid reddish-brown silty clay with frequent small chalk lumps overlying ditch 108, dipping down to south and east. Overlies 146 and 149. Below 107.	0.38 – 0.55m
148	Truncation Horizon for Bowling Green: Truncation horizon representing notional removal of former nursery/pleasure gardens topsoil prior to construction of bowling green terrace.	
149	Ancient Soil: Firm reddish-brown grading to yellowish-brown silty clay with moderate to frequent small chalk lumps and occasional to moderate flint nodules. Part of same soil unit as 106.	0.33 – 0.40m
150	Weathered Top of Natural Chalk: Thin firm buff clayey silt layer with frequent chalk lumps. This context represents the weathered interface between the natural chalk and the base of the ancient soil 149.	0.32 – 0.38m
151	Disturbance cut by Ditch 108: A patch of firm reddish-brown silty clay with sparse small chalk lumps and occasional small flint on northern side of Ditch 108. Appears to be cut by ditch. Not excavated.	0.35m+

Trench 2

Length: 32.1 m; Width 0.9 m; maximum depth 1.9 m.

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
200	Bowling Green: The bowling green turf comprised a series of layers or lenses. At the base was a c. 110mm layer of humic brown silty clay soil containing a number of thin lenses of yellowish-brown sand. This was sealed by a thin layer of dark brown humic silty clay soil, above which was a 100mm thickness of sandy grey and brown sand top dressing and turf.	0.00 – 0.25m
201	Base of Bowling Green: Thin layer of black clinker or cinder 30mm thick, which peters out towards the west end of the trench.	0.25– 0.28m
202	Levelling Layer: Fairly firm mixed layer of greyish-brown to brownish-grey clay loam, with moderate chalk lumps, occasional patches and lenses of charcoal, and occasional flint. Lower part of terracing deposits associated with the construction of the Bowling Green. Below 226.	0.50 – 1.25m
203	Truncation Horizon for Bowling Green: Truncation horizon representing notional removal of former nursery/pleasure gardens topsoil prior to construction of bowling green terrace.	0.80 – 1.25m
204	Linear Feature or drain: Linear straight-sided cut with steep sides and flattish base, oriented roughly N-S. Cuts eastern lip of ditch 208. Filled with 205 and 206. Possibly a feature related to nursery/pleasure gardens.	0.90 – 1.40m
205	Lower Fill of Feature 204: Loose mixed greyish-brown silty loam with moderate chalk flecks and occasional small chalk lumps and small flint gravel and clinker.	1.10 – 1.40m
206	Upper Fill of Feature 204: Loose small chalk rubble.	0.90 – 1.10m
207	Pre-Bowling Green Soil: Moderately firm homogeneous mid brownish-grey silty loam with occasional chalk flecks, rare chalk lumps and limestone pieces, sparse flint gravel and charcoal flecks. Post-medieval soil in uppermost part of Ditch 208. Maybe reworked upper part of 209.	0.80 – 1.15m
208	Outer Roman Town Ditch Cut: Large ditch oriented roughly N-S with irregular, slightly stepped, moderately sloping profile. Cut into natural chalk. Only eastern part of this ditch revealed in trench. Not fully excavated.	1.15 – 1.90m +
209	Fill of Outer Roman Town Ditch 208: Firm mid-light greyish-brown calcareous slightly clayey silt with moderate chalk flecks and small lumps and occasional small flint. Below 207.	1.15 – 190m +
210	Natural Chalk.	1.60m +
211	Not Used.	
212	Pre-Bowling Green Soil: Moderately firm homogeneous mid brownish-grey silty loam with occasional chalk flecks, rare chalk lumps and limestone pieces, sparse flint gravel and charcoal flecks in uppermost part of Ditch 227 (the middle Roman Town Ditch). Post-medieval soil similar to 207 in outer ditch.	1.20m +
213	Linear Feature (Path?): Shallow linear feature about 1.2m wide and 0.2m deep vertical sides and flat base. Oriented roughly N-S. Cuts layer 212. Possibly remains of a path or other feature related to nursery/pleasure gardens. Filled with 214.	1.10 – 1.30m
214	Fill of Feature 213: Flat-laid broken red brick within cut 213, with more random broken	1.10 – 1.30m

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
	brick and nodular flint in dark greyish-brown silty clay matrix over.	
215	Gravel Path?: Compact mid to light yellowish-brown flint gravel in a sandy matrix overlying brick rubble 214. Appears to be laid down at the same time as 202.	0.85 – 1.10m
216	Gravel Path?: Compact dark grey fine flint gravel in a sandy matrix overlying gravel layer 215. Appears to be laid down at the same time as 202.	0.70 – 0.85m
217	Feature: Shallow flat-bottomed cut within 202, on east side of 213. Uncertain relationship with 213 and gravel layers 215 and 216. Only visible in northern edge of trench. Unknown size, plan shape and function. Filled with 218.	0.95 – 1.10m
218	Fill of Feature 217: Moderately loose mid greyish-brown loamy silt with common flint gravel. Fill of feature 217.	0.95 – 1.10m
219	Service Trench?: Linear cut 1.1m wide and over 0.6m deep, oriented roughly N-S, with steeply-sloping, almost vertical sides. Not bottomed. Cuts layer 202. Filled with 220.	0.70 – 1.30m+
220	Fill of Service Trench 219: Moderately firm lenses of dark to mid brown small flint gravel, with some chalk. Fill of 219.	0.70 – 1.30m+
221	Drain Trench: Linear cut oriented roughly NW-SE. Contains 4-inch ceramic drain and backfilled with mid greyish-brown soil. Below 222.	1.30 – 1.45m+
222	Feature: Large flat-bottomed cut, 0.4m deep. Of unknown plan shape and function. Cuts 212, 224, 225. Filled with 223.	1.0 – 1.40m
223	Fill of Feature 222: Ill-sorted deposit of black/dark grey mainly vitrified industrial waste including partially melted bricks, possible furnace lining and amorphous vesicular vitrified material. Origin of waste unknown. Fill of 222.	0.95 – 1.40m
224	Pre-Bowling Green Soil: Moderately firm homogeneous mid brownish-grey silty loam with occasional chalk flecks, rare chalk lumps and limestone pieces, sparse flint gravel and charcoal flecks. Exposed only in a small sondage below 222. Probably the same as 212 and 225	1.40 – 1.80m
225	Pre-Bowling Green Soil: Moderately firm homogeneous mid brownish-grey silty loam with occasional chalk flecks, rare chalk lumps and limestone pieces, sparse flint gravel and charcoal flecks. Post-medieval soil recorded east of 222 in the eastern edge of ditch 227 and into the western part of ditch 232. Probably the same as 224.	1.35 – 1.75m+
226	Levelling Layer: Fairly firm mixed layer of mid to dark slightly yellowish-brown silty clay loam, with moderate to abundant chalk lumps, occasional flint, clinker and charcoal. This extensive layer lies over 202 to form the terrace for the bowling green. It is of variable thickness and contains one clay lens.	0.35 – 0.70m
227	Middle Roman Town Ditch Cut: Large ditch oriented roughly N-S with irregular, slightly stepped, shallow sloping profile, becoming steeper with depth. Cut into natural chalk. Only the upper part of the western edge of this ditch cut was revealed. The eastern edge was partially investigated by probing. Not fully excavated.	1.25 – 1.9m +
228	Upper Fill of Roman Town Ditch 227: Firm mid greyish-brown silty loam with occasional small chalk and flint and containing scarce larger snail shells. Seen only in sondage in western edge of the ditch.	1.25 – 1.9m +
229	Levelling Layer: A 0.15m thick layer of light to mid brownish-grey silty clay loam with abundant small chalk flecks and lumps. A layer found only in eastern edge of the trench over the line of the Inner Roman Ditch. Below 226 and above 230. Part of the terrace to form the bowling green.	0.80 – 0.75m
230	Levelling Layer: Layer of fairly firm dark greyish-brown silty clay loam with common small chalk lumps and occasional charcoal and clinker. Found only at the eastern end of the trench over the line of the Inner Roman Town Ditch. Below 229 and over 202. Part of the terrace to form the bowling green.	0.75 – 1.2m +
231	Levelling Layer: A localised layer of fairly firm mid brownish-grey silty loam with common small chalk flecks and lumps in the area of the Middle Roman Town Ditch, over layer 202 and below 226. Part of the terrace to form the bowling green.	0.60 – 0.75m
232	Inner Roman Town Ditch Cut: The cut was not exposed in the trench, but its western edge was located by probing. It had a very shallow profile in its upper part becoming steeper with depth.	2.15m+