

AREA M PHASING

This area was a 20m wide transect running north-to-south across Area A2 and comprising the area between grid lines 5030E and 5050E. Of the 30 ten-metre squares within this area, 8 saw reasonably complete excavation, and a further 12 saw at least some excavation. There was also a slight digression into a 5m wide strip in 5050/8020. Unlike the other areas of excavation in Area A2, Area M crossed both Tracks 3 and 4 (most Areas stopped at the southern edge of Track 3). Conveniently, the tracks divided the archaeology, both physically and functionally, into three zones which are used here:

The area north of Track 4 (north zone)

The area between Tracks 3 and 4 (central zone)

The area south of Track 3 (south zone)

None of the zones was fully explored. The northern and central zones saw the most complete coverage by area, with the southern zone only partially explored. It is estimated that no more than 30% by area saw some excavation. (The whole area narrative could do with revamping as the only meaningful division marked by the tracks is that either side of Track 3)

Area summary

The Period descriptions follow the division into three zones, based on the land divisions suggested by boundary ditches/fences and the tracks which they mirror. These zones do seem to reflect continuing differences in land use and development. Only in the north zone were prepared artificial surfaces encountered. As the aerial photographs clearly show (Fig M), the northern zone of Area M occupied an area where the natural was the brickearth, while the south shows continuous gravel. It is very likely that where gravel formed the natural surface, it was exposed and used in its own right, with no need for artificial construction. Although the upper of two artificial surfaces was removed over quite a large area, excavation did not penetrate below the lower, and in areas where the top surface was not removed, it is impossible to be sure if it what had survived was the upper or lower one. The lack of early features in the north can probably be attributed to lack of excavation below these surfaces.

Differences in the landuse of the three zones, established in the LIA or LIA/early Roman transitional period continued until the later 3rd or even the 4th century. The south zone was occupied throughout the life of the site, as a domestic plot like those in neighbouring Areas. The north and central zones were kept clear of buildings, pits and other features, and served as open space. It is assumed that this reflects their importance as part of an impressive approach corridor to the temple area from the east, and highlights the central role the temple played in the life of the settlement from its earliest layout. This essential continuity lasted until a building was erected in the north zone (middle or late Roman), with a fence which may just have impinged on the north of Track 4, but which essentially avoided encroaching into the central zone, keeping the two tracks still clear. Only at the end of the Roman period was there any sign of building on the central zone (and then it is unclear) and a couple of pits encroaching on it.

The lack of surfaces to the south is also important from the point of view of tracing the history of the road layout. Road/Track 5 would have passed north of the excavated area, and it is possible that we do have some roadside runoff from it and even a roadside ditch. However, there was no sign at all of surfaces which might make up either Track 3 or Track 4. While there is a ditch whose line suggests it may be a roadside ditch for Track 3, it does not much look like one, nor was there any ditch to accompany Track 4. So it does appear there was no metalled road this far east. However, it is possible that the natural gravels served as ready-made surfaces throughout the south zone.

There were rather few features other than pits which could be well dated. This area seems to have more indications of late activity than the areas to the east, although there was also a lot of activity in the 1st century. The periods between, particularly the mid-Roman period, show a marked lack of activity.

Phasing Summary

Period	Period description	Sub-period	Date
I	-		MIA/LIA transition
II	Occupation? and ritual activity	A B	LIA & transition
III	Occupation		Early Roman
IV	?occupation and manufacture		Mid Roman
V	Occupation at north end, pits elsewhere		Late Roman
VI	Continued occupation? & pits		Latest Roman/Saxon transition
VII	-		Post early Saxon

Period I:

No features of this date have been identified.

Period II (Fig. M1):

Amend to reflect a division into BC/early AD and e-mid/later AD

The earliest features in Area M were of late Iron Age date. Unlike other areas, there was a lack of linear boundary features with which to define sub-phases, even in the latter part of this Period. To an extent, this was due to the arbitrary positioning of the 20m-wide strip, which happened to fall largely within a single enclosure in the the north and central zones. However, the lack of excavation undertaken elsewhere in Area A2, i.e. north of Track 3, makes it difficult to be sure that there were such land divisions present there in the first place; it is possible that the land between Tracks 3 and 4 and between Tracks 4 and 5 was not further sub-divided. *Adjust this in line with ‘open area’ theory.* The south zone was divided by ditches, on the same lines as the areas further east.

There is no structural reason to subdivide the late Iron Age in this area. There are chronological differences visible in the pit fills, but it has been decided not to base sub-phasing purely on ceramics from pits without some actual change in the nature of the site to accompany them.

Despite the lack of boundary features in the northern two-thirds of the area, there were the lines of Tracks 3 and 4 which seem to have been real boundaries in themselves and provided some structure north-to-south, if not east-to-west. There were also real differences between the areas they defined. It seems that the whole of the area between Tracks 3 and 4 formed one land plot, as did the whole area between Tracks 4 and 5. Lateral divisions occurred only south of the tracks.

Most of the features of this phase were pits, however. Their distribution alone is quite interesting, none being further north than pit 15004, leaving a blank area running at least 35m to the north edge of excavation. And 15004 was the only pit north of fenceline Structure 31. South of this was clearly the ‘pitting zone’.

North of Track 4, much of what may be going on in the LPRIA was obscured by a substantial gravel surface (see Period III) which ran up to the track side, surfacing over the area where the underlying natural changed from gravels to a mixture of gravel and brickearth. Where this surface was removed (a very limited extent), no archaeological features were found below. It is likely that the gravel surface was contemporary with Track 4’s earliest use. This may make the gravel surface contemporary with the earliest surfacings as seen in Areas H, I and J. Just like them, this surface was laid directly on top of natural (in this case brickearth or, in places, gravel), with no intervening soil layer, suggesting widespread removal of topsoil before the laying of the surface. The only feature belonging to this period, known to cut this lower surface, was a fragment of roundhouse gully (Building 6), located close to Track 5. There were no pits of this date in the vicinity, the closest (15005) being over 30m to the south.

In the central area, between Tracks 3 and 4, there was no evidence of artificial gravel surface, nor any sign of Tracks 3 and 4 themselves ever being metalled. The edge of Track 4 was

marked by fence Structure 31. There was otherwise only a single pit in this zone, strongly suggesting that it was kept deliberately clear. This was probably because, even this far east, the corridor leading towards the temple area was the dominant element in the site's layout. It is even possible that 'tracks' 3 and 4 were not discrete thoroughfares at all, but merely marked the edges of this wide, and here naturally-surfaced, approach corridor, that is, that the whole central zone of Area M was set aside as an approach road.

In the **south zone**, to the south of Track 3, boundary features were present. Ditch 25082 broadly conformed to the prevailing NNW-SSE alignment of early enclosure boundaries in adjacent areas, although its dating is problematical.

Towards the centre of the south plot, in the midst of the pits, two partial roundhouse gullies (Buildings 4 and 5) suggested that the area was occupied. The south zone was clearly the pitting area, reflecting its use as a domestic occupation plot. Interestingly, although very little of the area fell into the western of the two plots separated by ditch 25082, there was no discernible difference between the activity east and west of this ditch, reinforcing the impression that the important divisions were between north and south, and the lateral divisions were between plots of similar uses. Here there were plenty of pits, including some huge examples, basically falling into two distinct clusters. While most of these related to the domestic use of the area, some contained significant ironworking waste and indicate more than just farming activities. Moreover, a ritual function for at least some pits seems very likely, including the pit 15417, some 14m south of Track 3, and probably pit 15641. If this area was regarded as part of the start of the approach to the temple precinct, then 15417 at least would be in a significant location, and give another hint of the importance of the channel leading towards the shrine from the eastern edge of the site. There were also two features thought to be cremation burials in this vicinity: this is very questionable, but if true would add to this impression. **Event pit too early – rewrite this stuff. – incorp its current interp as a pyre waste pit.**

The different land use zones established in this period continued to influence activity in this Area until into the 4th century.

Sub-period II A (late 1st BC to early 1st AD)

Intro blurb

Building 3 (segs. 24389, 24400, 24407, 24409) (Fig. M4)

Only at most one sixth of this roundhouse gully could be traced, and even that was truncated by Gully 25087. Segments 24389, 24400, and the small post holes 24407 and 24409 set within these, clearly belong. The pre-excavation plans show another stretch of gully curving almost on the right line to extend 24400 to the north. Any of the numerous post holes within this very partial circumference could be associated, of which 24379 could perhaps be posited as a central post. This would give a radius of approximately 4m. The fills contained no finds except a very few sherds of LIA pottery. This building must remain largely conjectured.

Building 3 (24389, 24400, 24407, 24409)

24400	Pottery fabrics GROG BSW
24407	Pottery beaker <i>Cam</i> 102 (CGMIC), fabric GROG.

The contexts associated with this building contained mainly grog-tempered pottery. The Central Gaulish beaker provides an early 1st century AD date.

Building 4 (Segs. 24159, 24167) (Fig. M4)

Building 4 was a slightly irregular penannular gully, located in the middle of the south zone of Area M. The foundation gully was 0.4m wide and 0.1m deep with a U-shaped profile. It was cut by **late?**enclosure boundary ditch 25081 and contained a small quantity of pottery sherds. It is possible, though not demonstrated, that, as ditch 25081 ran on the same line as 25082, the latter could also have cut this building, hinting that it should be dated early in the Period. **Note that it would have intersected with Building 3 – sequence unknown.**

Building 4 (24159, 24167)

24167	Pottery fabric GROG
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A small amount of grog-tempered pottery was recovered, providing a Late Iron Age date.

Pit 15417 (Fig. M5)

Feature 15417 was a large elongated pit, 3.67m long by 1.7m wide, and 1.04m deep, with steep sides and a generally flat base. Lower fill 15420 occupied the majority of the depth of the cut. This grey-brown silty gravel contained only a few pieces of ironwork, including a punch (SF 7413) and pottery.

Cut into the top of this deposit were nine small stakeholes, eight of which could be construed to form the larger part of rough circle (**diameter?**). All were filled with a yellowish brown silty clay in clear contrast to 15420. While the function of this stake-built structure is undetermined, it would seem that its disuse or removal was followed by the deposition of a highly significant fill, 15416, which signals a very different use of the remaining (or newly excavated?) void of this feature.

A large quantity of broken and burnt pottery was deposited in the cut, which was then backfilled with a mid-brown sandy silt 15490=15418. This backfill was very different from the underlying deposit, containing a puddingstone quern fragment, iron rod fragment (SF 6649) briquetage and metalworking mould fragments. The only pottery present were amphora sherds which probably derived from 15416.

Fill 15416 was, by far, the most significant aspect of this feature and the key to understanding its function and importance. This deposit of broken and burnt pottery included an unusually high proportion of fine wares, together with the remnants of at least three amphorae. The fineware, which includes fragments of platters, beakers and jugs, mainly imports, constitutes the remains of a table service and the Dressel I amphorae indicate the consumption of wine (on site?). There were, however, further vessels of coarseware - jars and beakers, a mortarium and a bowl.

Almost all of the pottery had been burnt and the heat had caused severe fracturing and/or distortion. The significance of this deposit, in terms of wealth, society and power in the late Iron Age, are discussed elsewhere (Vol.1, Sections 4 and 5). In addition to this special finds component, 15416 yielded baked clay, mould fragments, briquetage, a flint scraper (SF6107) and a copper-alloy object (SF 6639). All but the latter are thought to be incidental to this deposit and perhaps derived from the overlying backfill 15490=15418.

It is conjectured that this was a pyre-related deposit, most likely that part of the pyre remains left following the selection and extraction of material incorporated into the burial itself (assuming that there was a body present to make a formal interment worthwhile). This is not to say that the deposit was merely discarded waste; 15416 may well have been the product of careful selection and its disposal perhaps accompanied by its own rites.

Purely as a landscape feature, pit 15417 was probably not particularly special. However, having received deposit 15416 it attained and, possibly, subsequently retained an influence on land use in the vicinity. It is noteworthy that this feature was never encroached upon by later features. Considering the high density of pitting over much of the south zone of Area M, and indeed specifically in the immediate vicinity, it is possible to suggest that some memory of its location was maintained and that the feature was respected for some considerable time. It is tempting to identify undated post-hole 15511, which just clips its western edge, as the remains of a marker post. In addition, there were other undated post-holes in the vicinity which could equally have been associated.

The pottery assemblage from 15416 is dated to the last quarter of the 1st century BC. Most of the types present were established by c.15BC and this date may well be a conservative estimate for this assemblage. That this is by far the earliest secure date in the area need not mean that this feature was isolated, but, rather, leads to questions about the dating of smaller, less distinctive pottery assemblages. Other early pits in this vicinity included 15818, 15596, 15815, (see below)

each of which by contrast, had very few finds, though 15818 had interesting ironwork. All of these were early or early-mid 1st century, still making them presumably later than the 'event' pit.

Event pit 15417

15417*	Amphora Dr.1 (AITAB AITAC AITAD) Other pottery platters <i>Cam 1</i> (TN(M)) <i>Cam 2</i> <i>Cam 5A</i> <i>Cam 5B</i> (TR) \$ (PR), mortarium <i>Cam 191</i> (IBUFM), jar <i>Cam 255</i> (ESH), beakers cf. <i>Cam 112</i> (TRCG) <i>Cam 113</i> (NGWF), flagon <i>Cam 165</i> (CGFCS), fabrics GROG MICW
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This pit contained a large amount of pottery (key pottery group 5), most of which has been severely burnt and is considered to be a deliberate deposit, probably pyre-related. The amphora and other early fineware types present provide a date towards the end of the 1st century BC or beginning of the 1st century AD.

Pits 15004, 15818, 24181, 24184, 24186

Write some stuff

Pits 15004, 15818, 24181, 24184, 24186

15004	Pottery jar \$ (GROG), fabrics GRS ESH
15818	Pottery platter <i>Cam 5</i> (TN), jars \$ G20 (GROG), beaker <i>Cam 102</i> (CGMIC), fabric NGWF
24181	Amphora Dr.1/Dr.2-4 (AITAL) Other pottery jars <i>Cam 254</i> (ESH), G19 (GROG) Brooch Langton Down (SF 7820)
24184	Pottery jar <i>Cam 254</i> (ESH), fabrics GROG GRS
24186	Pottery bowl <i>Cam 52B</i> (TN(M)), jar \$ (GROG)

The pottery recovered from these pits ranges in date from the late 1st century BC to the late 1st century AD, although the majority can be dated to the early to mid 1st century AD. This date is supported by the brooches and [the coin](#). [There are sherds in Roman fabrics present and the samian, as yet undated, may confirm the date range.](#)

Review this blurb.

Sub-period II B (early/mid 1st to later 1st AD)

Intro blurb

Track 3

Although Track 3 was not evidenced by the presence of gravel surfaces in Area M, there was enough evidence in the form of adjacent roadside features and structures to be reasonably sure of its existence and course. Structure 31, described below, probably constituting a fence running along the 'front' of an enclosure, was the main indicator of the south edge of the 'track'. This slot has been traced westward into Area L and was aligned on the more tangible Road 3, between Areas J and K. Although there was no boundary feature defining the north edge of Track 3, neither were there any contemporary features to the north of slot 25160. Even though Track 3 lacked a clearly defined northern edge, it is likely that traffic tended to flow along the enclosure frontages.

Track 4

As was the case with Track 3, this thoroughfare is only inferred rather than demonstrated by the presence of a metalled surface. It is conjectured that its northern edge was more or less perpetuated by later ditch 25078, although the southern terminal of later Roman feature 25079 may be a more accurate indicator of the actual northward extent. While there was an absence of formal surfacing, the natural to the south of ditch 25078 was firm gravel and, as such would perhaps be adequate foundation for a dirt track. The low incidence of Period II and III features at the north end of the central zone suggests that this vicinity was respected and kept free of obstructions. There was little indication of a south edge of this thoroughfare, although undated slot 15158 *et al.* could perhaps be construed as a flanking feature to hint at such a limit, making Track 4 some 5-7m wide. However, on the basis of evidence from adjacent Area L, it is more likely that, as is thought to be the case with Track 3, there was no clear edge and that the 'track' merged into the central zone, most or all of which may have used the natural gravel as sufficient surface for a routeway

There are probably good reasons why no recognisable road surface was present; the main one being that it was simply not necessary, the underlying natural gravel being substantial enough

and free from pockets of brickearth. It is likely that, this far east of the settlement centre, it was not considered necessary to have metalled road surfaces (ref to Scole? and Pakenham?). This in itself, says something about how the settlement was perceived and about the probable status of occupation adjacent to the track (ref to discussion elsewhere?).

Ditch 25081 (Segs. 15527, 15897, 24070, 24429, 24430, 24442, 24445) (Fig. M2) **rework as a LIA ditch (Lrom pot dumped along foot of hedge?)**

This ditch must be mentioned here, even if it has been **phased late Roman** (see Period VI). In terms of the logic of site layout, as displayed throughout the eastern Areas, this ditch seems as if it should belong to the early planning of the site. Only segment 15527, however, contained finds which would allow this (early-mid 1st century pottery, but even then there was some cbm and a late coin). Both 15897 and 24070 included both LIA and late 4th century pottery (with nothing diagnostic in between) and a late coin each. 24430 had largely undiagnostic Roman pottery, while 24445 had mainly 3rd century pottery but with some late 4th century. All segments had cbm. The possibility of contamination from later features, and of mis-recorded stratigraphy certainly cannot be discounted, but it requires too much of both to make this into a LIA ditch. It is likely that there was a LIA ditch here, and that 25081 managed to duplicate its course and obliterate all trace of it.

Ditch 25081 (15527, 15897, 24070, 24429, 24430, 24442, 24445)

15527	Pottery fabrics GROG TN(M) GRS
15897	Pottery fabrics GROG GRS BSW
24070	Pottery fabrics GROG BSW GRS
24430	Pottery fabrics GROG GRS
24445	Pottery fabrics BSW GRS

The pottery recovered from these ditch sections consists mainly of bodysherds in both grog-tempered and Roman fabrics. There is a large quantity of later material, including coins. Dating evidence is inconclusive, although an early Roman date is indicated.

Ditch 25082 (Segs. 15526, 15992, 24428) (Fig. M2)

Ditch 25082 was the only major late Iron Age boundary feature present south of Track 3. Though its spacing was similar to that seen elsewhere in the ditches across Area A2, its alignment was subtly different, being nearer to a north-to-south (bearing 336) alignment rather than the prevailing NNW-SSE (bearing 330). This may simply be due to the distance separating it from the feature on which it probably was aligned (Track 3), which was some 40m to 45m further north than the sections of this recovered. The ditch survived to a maximum of 0.9m wide and 0.25m deep, though much of its east edge had been truncated by a later ditch 25081. Ditch 25082 was traced for 11m before being lost amongst truncating features at either end. It is probable that the ditch originally extended north to Track 3 and south as far as the edge of the gravel terrace and, in support of this, a further surviving length is visible on the pre-excavation plan to the south of truncating feature 15530.

Most fills of excavated segments of the ditch contained early to middle 1st century AD pottery and the ditch was cut by late Iron Age pit 15968. Ditch segment 15992 contained a mixed Roman assemblage including 4th century pottery which is deemed to be intrusive.

Gully 25082 (15526, 15992, 24428)

15526	Amphoras Dr.1/Dr.2-4 (AITAL) Dr.20 (ABAET) Other pottery bowl <i>Cam</i> 51 (TN(M)), fabrics TR NGWF GROG
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Most of the pottery from this feature dates to the early to mid 1st century AD. The few sherds from section 15992 are mostly late Roman and probably intrusive.

Pit/Ditch 15530 (Fig. M2)

Feature 15530 appeared to be the terminal of a relatively substantial cut which truncated the end of ditch 25082. As excavated at its north end, this cut was 2.0m wide and 0.7m deep. Its full extent was not precisely traced, but the pre-excavation plan shows its rough outline, establishing it not less

than 25m in length. A parallel may be found in ditch 177 at Sough House Farm (Wallis and Waughman 1998, 34).

Although interpreted in the field as a ditch terminal, it might rather have been an elongated pit which overlay and was aligned upon ditches 25081 and 25082, with the southwards continuation actually being those ditches. Although this feature interrupted the enclosure ditch, it also constituted a perpetuation of its boundary significance – albeit in a modified form. This boundary feature dates to the early-mid 1st century AD (although it also contained intrusive late Roman pottery and an apparently Roman iron tool (SF6650) possibly derived just from its surface).

Comparison with ditch 177 at Sough House Farm (Wallis and Waughman 1998, 34) could be made. This feature looks very similar in both plan and section and, was dated to the LIA.

Pit/Ditch 15530

15530	Amphoras Pascual 1 (ARCAT) Dr.1/Dr.2-4 (AITAG) Other pottery bowl <i>Cam</i> 51 (TN(M)), jar G3 (GROG), beaker <i>Cam</i> 113 (NGWF)
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Most of the pottery recovered provides an early to mid 1st century AD date. The amphora forms are both dated late 1st century BC to early-mid 1st century AD. Some intrusive late Roman sherds are also present.

Ditch 25088 (segs. 15471, 15799, 15909, 24176) (Fig. M2)

Feature 25088 was a uniformly 1m wide and 0.4-0.6m deep linear which ran on a NNW-SSE alignment. It had a slightly bulbous terminal to the south but was truncated at its north end by later pits. It is thought to have curved sharply westward at this point, although this was never substantiated and it remains possible that it actually terminated below the truncating pit 24178. Interpreted as a ditch, 25088 did not fit comfortably within the enclosure defined by 25082. As only 7m of its length was traced, it may have been a relatively minor subdivision of the frontage of the plot onto Track 3. The possibility of an unrecognized feature cut into fills of segment 15471 adds to the uncertainty.

Ditch 25088

15471	Pottery jars G3 (GROG), beaker <i>Cam</i> 113 (NGWFS), fabrics TN BSW
15909	Pottery jars <i>Cam</i> 254 (ESH) \$ G3 (GROG), fabric NGWF
24175	Pottery platter <i>Cam</i> 2 (TN), fabrics CGFCS GROG

The pottery recovered from these ditch sections consists of fabrics and forms dating to the early to mid 1st century AD.

[Context 15476 (in segment 15471) contained a jar in sandy greyware of a type dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries; the base is present, in pieces, and part of the jar rim, also in pieces - all fresh breaks. Was this jar buried complete, with the backfill comprising the original ditch contents? The top fill contained mostly 1st century fabrics and forms and can be dated to the early to mid 1st century AD, but the greyware jar appearing in the bottom fill is anomalous]

Structure 31: Slot 25160 (inc.15451, 15452, 15453, 15454, 15455, 15456)

Feature 25160 marked the northern limit of the south zone of Area M. It was an interrupted shallow linear slot running ENE-WSW averaging 0.26-0.34m wide and 0.15-0.2m deep. Within Area M, it was recorded for a length of 11m but its intermittent line could be clearly traced to the west into adjacent Area L. Within the bases of the shallow lengths of slot were post-holes 15451, 15453, 15454. Although originally recorded as a short length of slot, feature 15455 could have been the remains of an elongated post-hole within a particularly shallow and ephemeral part of the slot. Conversely, slot fragment 15456 could equally have been the remains of another post-hole. The slot and post-holes contained a single fill which yielded only a single, residual flint flake.

Structure 31, with its integral post-holes, seems to be the remains of a fence. Not only did it mark the northwards extent of the rectilinear plots in this area of the settlement, but it also defined the south edge of Track 3. This slot was aligned upon other boundary features which marked the edge of Track 3 and enclosures in Areas A2, A3 and Area A4. It is unclear whether it was a discontinuous boundary or if, due to the shallowness of its foundation, the apparent breaks along its line may be simply due to non-survival through truncation. It cannot be confidently dated by itself,

but inference from further parts of the same feature in other areas (e.g., Structure 19 in L, 25090 in N) allow us to suppose a broadly 1st century date, perhaps extending into Period III.

Gravel surface(s) 15034, 15048, 15176, 15202, 15203, 15279, 15481, 15558, 15937 (Fig. M3)

Gravel surfaces were absent in the south and central zones of Area M. The only gravel surfaces were those which covered the majority of the north zone, running no further south than later ditch 25078. Layers 15176, 15202 and 15203 were contiguous deposits; they merely represented variations in gravel used in the construction of a single surface. All these pebble/gravel surfaces were laid directly on patches of brickearth or clean natural gravel with no trace of ancient soils identified between. The pebbles seem to have been fairly uniform, averaging approximately 20mm diameter, and may have been graded. The pebbles were bedded in silty sand forming compacted deposits some 2-10cm thick.

The date of construction of this surface is difficult to determine. The general lack of Period II and III features in this north zone means that a reliable *terminus ante quem* is not available from features cutting it, while nothing at all was excavated below it. This is compounded by the likelihood that the small amount of dating evidence gathered was lying its surface rather than incorporated within it. The one possible exception is the amphora from 15558 which was noted as forming part of the structure of the surface. Relying upon the evidence for similar surfaces in areas such as Areas H and L, it is likely, though not conclusive, that this surface belongs to Period II. From the fact that it does not seem to have extended to the south of the line of Track 4, it may be conjectured that it was laid at the same time as, or shortly after, the imposition of the road and track system.

Consideration of the nature of the surface geology, which changed from river terrace gravels in the central and south zones to brickearth in the north zone, may well be a practical reason for the siting of this surface only to the north of Track 4. The surface was necessitated by the poorly draining nature of the ground in this part of the settlement.

The lack of features cutting this surface may also suggest that, like the central zone, this area was deliberately kept open and clear. This may hint that the approach to the open space of Area H was as important to the layout of the site as the approach to the more obvious focus of the temple in Area J.

Cobbled surface 15034, 15048, 15176, 15202, 15203, 15279, 15481, 15558, 15937

15176	Pottery fabrics GRS BSW
15203	Pottery fabrics GRS BSW
15558	Amphora Dr.1 (AITAL AITAF)

The pottery associated with this cobbled surface consists mainly of bodysherds in Roman fabrics, although only three of the contexts contained pottery. Dating evidence is inconclusive. Context 15558 produced late 1st-century BC Dressel 1 amphora sherds, presumably these are residual

Building 5: 25083 (24201, 24209, 24275, 24277, 24285, 24287) (Fig. M4)

Building 5 was represented by a curving length of gully located in the south zone of Area M. Gully 25083 describes approximately half of the foundation slot of a circular building of almost 6m diameter (*c.*28m² area). The south half of this structure was removed by later pitting. There was a 1m wide gap in the west side of the surviving gully, the terminals of which were marked by a pair of post-holes 24277 and 24285. These presumably marked the positions of door posts. There were a number of undated post-holes in this vicinity both within and without Building 5, some of which could have been related.

The single fill of gully 25083 contained a small quantity of late Iron Age pottery while post-hole 24285 yielded a few sherds of early Roman pottery. Building 5 is accorded a late Iron Age construction date and it may be possible to conjecture an early Roman disuse or destruction.

It is worth noting that Buildings 4 and 5 occupied a distinctly clear zone amidst the mass of pits, separating the south zone pits into two distinct clusters. At least the south cluster, if not both, may be presumed to be associated with the activities carried on in these buildings.

Building 5 25083 (24201, 24209, 24275, 24277, 24285, 24287)

24275	Pottery fabrics GROG ESH
24277	Pottery fabrics BSW GROG
24285	Pottery fabrics GROG BSW

The contexts associated with this building contained mainly grog-tempered pottery. There are sherds present in Roman fabrics, these probably indicate a date towards the mid 1st century AD.

Building 6 (Fig. M4)

Building 6 was represented by a curving gully, 15437, located on the north edge of Area M. The 0.4m wide feature averaging 0.22m deep, formed approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of a circle, the remainder of which extended beyond the edge of excavation. The undulating base was perhaps the result of unrecognized post settings within the gully. Within the building were two post-holes, 15519 and 15521, which had no obvious structural purpose but could be related to this. The diameter of Building 6 was an estimated 8-10m (giving an area of at least 50m²). The gully and post-holes were cut into a cobbled/gravel surface, which covered the north zone. Unfortunately it is not clear whether this was the upper or lower surface. However, it is likely that Building 6 constituted the only occupation of this surfaced area in the late Iron Age.

The single fill of the gully yielded a small assemblage of pottery and briquetage for which only a general late Iron Age date can be given. There were also 3 flint flakes and a barbed and tanged arrowhead from the gully fill. It was cut by an early Roman ditch 15045 which provides a *terminus ante quem* for this building's use. Given that the gravel surfacing is likely to have been laid relatively late in the period, a mid 1st century construction date for the building is postulated.

Building 6 (15437, 15519, 15521)

15437	Amphora Dr.2-4 (ABSAN) Other pottery jar G3 (BSW), fabrics COLB GROG
15521	Pottery fabric GROG

The pottery recovered from the gully 15437 provides the best dating evidence for this building. Both the jar and the amphora are mid to late 1st century AD forms.

Pits 15289, 15306, 15309, 15385, 15588, 15591, 15593, 15594, 15596, 15641, 15815, 15842, 15850, 15882, 15968, 24115, 24134, 24151, 24153 (Fig. M6)

Pits were a significant component of Period II in Area M. Both in terms of distribution and content, they were important indicators of the different natures and functions of the various 'zones' delineated by Tracks 3 and 4.

At the south end of the **south zone** the pits (15842, 15882, 15968, 24115, 24134, 24151, 24153) were largely of firmly late Iron Age, rather than transitional, dates. Pit 24115 is the only one whose infilling extended into the middle third of the 1st century AD, with a Claudian copy coin and a Colchester BB brooch. These pits tend to be large, at around 1.5m to 2m diameter, with 24115 and 24134 very large indeed. In relation to the large volumes of these pits, finds were fairly sparse, and assemblages not particularly varied. 24134 and 24115 did include more varied finds, but then they were by far the largest in volume.

The north end of the **south zone** (pits 15392, 15588, 15591, 15593, 15594, 15596, 15815) had a greater mix of pits in terms of both date and size, with distinct groups of both late Iron Age and transitional date evident among the features excavated. A few of the transitional, mid-1st century, pits could be seen as belonging in Period III. However, these seem to fit in to the late Iron Age patterning better than into the early Roman. Some, particularly 15591, 15593, 15588, 15594, may cluster around the earlier pit 15417, though this could be coincidence. However, pitting activity, while apparently attracted to this location, clearly respects this feature.

Within this northern cluster in the **south zone**, the pits divide into two general types: large and rounded; small and square. The larger pits varied from 1.5m to 4.5m wide and from 0.42m to 0.83m deep. They contained similar artefact assemblages, dominated by pottery. A much greater diversity of finds types was noted in those of transitional date, and indeed overall quantities also increased in these. Although the largest pit, 15594, simply had more finds than its earlier counterparts, one exceptional aspect was its three brooches, which look slightly odd as just 'normal rubbish'. The earliest pits in this vicinity include 15596, 15815, each of which might be approximately 2m diameter (the extent of 15596 was very unclear due to truncation). These, by contrast, had very few finds, and were early/mid 1st century.

A distinct group of small square pits, 15289, 15306, 15309 and 15385, clustered in the north part of the south zone, within 10m of the postulated edge of Track 4 at slot 25160. These were distinctly different from the larger cuts, some 0.75m to 0.9m wide, nearly square, the deepest being only 0.4m. All contained above-average amounts (especially considering their small volumes) of metalwork debris or metal objects, both iron and copper-alloys, along with slag, hammerscale and at least one mould fragment. As a group, these features are very similar to 11197 *et al.*, located in Area N. They could have been seen as post holes, but their finds contents indicate they were definitely used for disposal, presumably related to metalworking in the vicinity.

Somewhat set apart was pit 15641, which may have been cut as early as the early-mid 1st century AD, but which continued to receive fills into the later part of the century. Its final fills may perhaps be regarded as falling at the end of this period or just into Period III. It was triangular, almost bell-shaped in plan, with maximum dimensions of 3.86m by 3.86m, and 1m deep. The progression of dates up through the sequence of fills in this feature (and its recut, 15993) suggest it remained open and was filled progressively, although there may not be very much between the dates. Its bottom fill appeared to have been a deliberate lining of gravel and pebbles set in clay, not unlike the surfacing layers elsewhere. The lower fills (those of the early-mid 1st century) were covered by a layer of grey-white ash (15611, not seen on section) and a layer of dark grey ashy silt (15602), before 15555 filled the rest of the pit (mid-late 1st century). The ashy layers contained notable iron content, including at least 4 iron sheet fragments and a stylus. At least some of the pottery in these layers was burnt. Then at least two post holes were cut into these fills, and subsequently (late 1st century) the pit was mostly re-excavated as cut 15993, retaining the exact shape of the original. The fills of 15993 contained nothing of great note. This sequence suggests some activity similar to the 'Event' pit but taking place perhaps over a longer timespan, later, and of course, lacking the distinctive ceramics. Post-hole 15517, which is cut by this pit, may well also have been associated; as a marker of its intended location, for example.

The recut pit 15993 itself contained nothing out of the ordinary and its contents would not look out of place among the other pits of this Period or the early part of Period III; some of its pottery must be 2nd century. Only its shape and the fact that it appears to perpetuate the activity of 15641 mark it out.

Interpretation of this feature remains obscure. A tentative suggestion that the post-holes within the cut housed some sort of mortuary chamber cannot really be sustained from the internal evidence of this feature alone. However, there was very little remarkable about most of the central shaft at Folly Lane, Verulamium, for example (Niblett, 1999, 5), and it must be remembered that only a slot through this pit was excavated.

North of Track 3, late Iron Age pitting was represented by only a single pit 15004. This large oval cut, some 2m by 1.3m wide and almost 1m deep, contained a fairly typical domestic rubbish assemblage dominated by pottery but also including baked clay, animal bone and a ceramic disc cut from a ?**grog-tempered jar** (SF 4954).

There are also a few undated pits (**15336, 15337, 15849, 24247, 24427**) which cannot be any later than 1st century and which show no positive signs of being prehistoric, which might be included in this Period. None has any finds. Of these, 15336 and 15337 were cut by slot 25160, while the others fell within the southern pit clusters.

Pits 15004, 15289, 15306, 15309, 15385, 15588, 15591, 15593, 15594, 15596, 15641, 15815, 15818, 15842, 15850, 15882, 15968, 24115, 24134, 24151, 24153, 24181, 24184, 24186

15004	Pottery jar \$ (GROG), fabrics GRS ESH
15289	Pottery fabric GROG
15306	Pottery fabric GROG
15309	Pottery jar \$ (GROG)
15385	Pottery fabric GROG
15588	Samian fabric SGSW Other pottery beaker <i>Cam</i> 113 (NGWF), fabrics IMIC ESH GRS BSW GROG
15591	Pottery fabrics GROG BSW
15593	Amphora Dr.1/Dr.2-4 (ABSAN) Other pottery fabric GROG
15594	Pottery platter <i>Cam</i> 2 (TN), mortarium D1.3 (BUFM), jars G17 G16 (GROG), beakers <i>Cam</i> 91 (TR) <i>Cam</i> 119 (TR), fabrics NGWF CAMF BSW GRS COLB Brooches Plate (SF 7410), Hod Hill (SF 7421)
15596	Amphora Dr.2-4 (AWINC) Other pottery jar G16 (GROG), flagon <i>Cam</i> 154 (NGWF)
15641	Samian cup Ritt.8 (SGSW) Other pottery platters <i>Cam</i> 16 (TN) A2 (BSW), bowl C1 (BUF), jars G3 (BSW) G20 (GROG), beaker <i>Cam</i> 113 (NGWF), fabrics TR ESH COLB VRW
15815	Pottery platter <i>Cam</i> 5 (TN), cup <i>Cam</i> 57 (GROG), jars \$ (MICW) G3 \$ (GROG), fabrics NGWFS ESH GRS
15818	Pottery platter <i>Cam</i> 5 (TN), jars \$ G20 (GROG), beaker <i>Cam</i> 102 (CGMIC), fabric NGWF
15842	Pottery fabric GROG
15850	Pottery jar G19 (GROG)
15882	Pottery jar \$ (GROG), fabric ESH
15968	Amphoras Dr.1/Dr.2-4 (AITAL) Dr.2-4 (AITAL) <i>salazon</i> (ASALA) Other pottery fabrics NGWF GROG MICW CGMIC TR
24115	Amphora Pascual 1 (ARCAT) Other pottery platter <i>Cam</i> 2 (TN), jars G19 G20 (GROG), fabric GRS Coin As copy (SF 7828), 41-64 Brooch Colchester BB (SF 7817)
24134	Samian bowl f29 (SGSW) Amphoras Beltran 1 (ASALA) Dr.1 (AITAL) Pascual 1 (ARCAT) Other pottery platter <i>Cam</i> 2 (TN), jars G20 \$ (GROG) G3 (GRS), beaker \$ (SILT), fabrics CGFCS ESH
24151	Amphoras Dr.1/Dr.2-4 (AITAL) Dr.1/Dr.2-4 (ABSAN) Other pottery fabrics GROG MICW
24153	Amphora Dr.1/Dr.2-4 (ABSAN) Other pottery jar \$ (GROG)
24181	Amphora Dr.1/Dr.2-4 (AITAL) Other pottery jars <i>Cam</i> 254 (ESH), G19 (GROG) Brooch Langton Down (SF 7820)
24184	Pottery jar <i>Cam</i> 254 (ESH), fabrics GROG GRS
24186	Pottery bowl <i>Cam</i> 52B (TN(M)), jar \$ (GROG)

The pottery recovered from these pits ranges in date from the late 1st century BC to the late 1st century AD, although the majority can be dated to the early to mid 1st century AD. This date is supported by the brooches and the coin. There are sherds in Roman fabrics present, but the samian confirms the date range.

Period III (Fig M7):

Early Roman activity in Area M demonstrated broad continuity of land use from the preceding Period. Land divisions remained static though the form of the boundaries may have changed. In addition to continuing to function as thoroughfares, Tracks 3, 4 and no doubt 5 endured as important boundaries. As was the case in the Late Iron Age, the functions of the three zones defined by the tracks differed significantly. The north zone continued to be kept free of pits and it is likely that its metallised surface was still in use. However, circular Building 6 ceased to occupy this space during this period. There was little evidence for its replacement with another building; indeed, there was little evidence of any occupation features in either the north or central zones, which perhaps suggests that they continued to function as surfaced, but open, spaces throughout the 1st and 2nd centuries AD

In the south zone, north-to-south boundaries, or minor linear features denoting additional sub-divisions, were conspicuously absent. It is likely that, as in other areas of the southern outer zone, the original late Iron Age boundary as defined by ditch 25082 passed out of use, but its line was perpetuated in some way which has left little mark; perhaps a hedge.

Note that the impression from the phase plan might be that there were not many features occupying the south zone, just lots of open space as further north. However, there were unexcavated pit clusters and the likelihood is that at least a proportion of these were of Period III. The number of clearly dated pits of this period was somewhat reduced from the previous period, but the activity they represent certainly continued.

Building 6, the roundhouse to the north of Track 4, may have survived into the early Roman period, or at least through the transition period of the mid 1st century AD. However, it was no longer in existence by the end of the 1st century, being cut by a ditch 25157. Little is known about this ditch because much of its length was obscured below a second gravel surface which seems originally to have covered the same extent as its predecessor. If the early cobbled surface did not belong in Period II, it certainly was in existence by this period, and in any case would have continued in use into this phase. The second surface also probably fits best into this phase, though perhaps in the early 2nd century rather than the later first.

Oddly, there was almost no evidence for early Roman features and structures to occupy this surface. Perhaps there were some amongst the unphased post-holes, though these were also few in number at this end of the area. Little confidence can be expressed in the existence of the posited fence line. It may have run parallel to Ditch 25158, although this may be later. The significance of this is that we may well have had the full north-to-south extent of a plot between Tracks 4 and 5, but one that was empty!

Equally, there was then absolutely nothing else for at least 50m to the south. Not until south of gridline 8020 were there any features clearly attributable to this Period. Here we find Building 40 and Building 41 associated with one another, and a series of pits.

The extreme south of the strip again had almost no features, just two ?cremation burials (**are they? – or structured deposits?**) and one pit which the excavator thought might be a kiln foundation. This cannot be demonstrated to be a kiln, though it clearly seemed to include lots of burnt material: it is tempting to wonder if it might have been a pyre site.

Ditch 25263 (seg. 15605) (Fig. M8)

Although excavated as a pit extending beyond the edge of site, feature 15605 has been reinterpreted as part of a more substantial, under-excavated, ditch which was clearly depicted on the pre-excavation plan. This feature is likely to be a ditch which ran along the south side of Track 5. As recorded on the pre-excavation plan, it was aligned on other, excavated, parts of this trackside boundary. This feature cut the Period II cobbled surface 15034 *et al.*, and pottery from its excavated fill gives only a mid 2nd to mid 3rd century AD date range for its infill. It may, therefore have been of Periods III or IV. **How about it connecting with Period IV ditches 25115 or 25259, in Area H?**

Ditch 25263 (15605)

15605	Pottery dish B4 (GRF), jar G5 (GRS), fabric BSW
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The pottery recovered dates this feature to the mid 2nd to mid 3rd centuries. There is residual pottery also present.

Ditch 25157 (seg. 15045) (Fig. M8)

Feature 15045 was the short excavated portion of a length of ditch 25157, much of which was not traced below the upper cobbled surface which covered the north zone of Area M. It was a 1.8m wide and 0.5m deep, irregular-sided, linear cut running on an ENE-WSW alignment. It can be dated by its vaguely early Roman pottery and the fact of its being under the upper cobbles, which locates it firmly in this period. It is just feasible that this could have been the roadside ditch of a widened Track 5 (or, if Track 5 had meandered southwards somewhat), or it could have been the northern limit of a plot which stopped a couple of metres short of the trackway. **There is a hint of a west end on the pre-ex plan.**

Ditch 25157 (15045)

15045	Pottery fabrics GROG GRS BSW
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The pottery recovered from this ditch section consists mainly of undiagnostic bodysherds. A probable early Roman date is indicated.

Ditch 25158 (seg. 15183) (Fig. M8)

Roughly parallel with, and 4.5m south of, 25157 was feature 25158; a 10.5m length of ditch which extended beyond the edge of excavation. It averaged around 0.75m wide and 0.25m deep. It is only dubiously assigned to this phase, though its small pottery assemblage is early as is the coin it contained (SF 6647). It looked like the sort of feature which marked out boundaries elsewhere in the LIA phase, but it appears a bit anomalous in this context. Its proximity to Building 6 suggests the two may be related, and thus that the building may have survived into the early Roman period.

The line of post holes (15561-15600-15546-15536-15534-15190), running just north of this gully and parallel to it, may have been an accompanying fenceline, which may be presumed contemporary, but there is no real reason to date them here and they were not wholly convincing as a related group.

There was no apparent boundary marker anywhere in the area south of this until the extreme south and the enclosure corner (see below). However, the fact that land-use seems to have been zoned just as it had been in Period II suggests that boundary markers did exist, in forms which did not survive. Perhaps the mixture of LIA and Latest Roman pottery in ditch 25082, for example, provides a hint about the actual life of that ditch rather than just an annoying amount of either residuality on the one hand or intrusion on the other? (**ref to Dating Problems discussion**).

Ditch 25158 (15183)

15183	Pottery fabrics GROG BSW Coin AE unit, Cunobelin (SF 6647)
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The pottery dating evidence is inconclusive, but the coin provides an early to mid 1st century AD date.

(To period II then? And assoc with Building 6?)

Structure 29: Enclosure corner slots 25084, 25085, 25086 (Fig. M9)

Three shallow slots 25084, 25085 and 25086 were located in the south zone. Slots 25084 and 25085 were parallel features running on an ENE-WSW alignment, some 2m apart. Though their eastwards extents were not determined, due to truncation by later pitting, both had rounded terminals to the west and were of similar proportion, averaging 0.3m wide and 0.10-0.15m deep. Slot 25086 ran at right angles to these slots. It is interesting that its bearing (330) was parallel to minor slot 23385 and more major linear feature 23209 in Area N, some 20m to the east, rather than to ditches 25081 and 25082 which ran on bearing 336. There was a similar corner arrangement running off 23385, also of this date. 25086 was traced, intermittently, for a distance of approximately 35m before being lost amongst truncating, unexcavated features. It is conjectured that all three slots were associated, with

25084 and 25086 perhaps originally forming the corner of a subdivision within the 'rear' of a larger enclosure.

The fills of the slots contained few finds, the majority of the pottery being undated Roman, though that from 24249 was early Roman and 24217 contained a single sherd of Late shell-tempered ware, presumed to be intrusive among otherwise probably early Roman pot. It is therefore likely that these slots dated to the later 1st century AD and constituted a development within the broad outline of the existing Late Iron Age land division scheme. This arrangement may not have lasted long, as 25087 cut through 25086, probably sometime in Period IV, but conceivably earlier. This may give some support to the notion that this was a minor internal arrangement within a plot rather than a major land division in itself.

Gully 25084 (24139, 24307)

24139	Pottery fabrics GROG BSW GRS
24307	Pottery fabrics VRW GRS

The pottery recovered from this ditch section consists of bodysherds, mainly in early fabrics. A probable early Roman date is indicated.

Gully 25086 (24143, 24147)

24147	Pottery fabric GRS
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This gully produced very little pottery. Dating evidence is inconclusive.

Gully 25085 (24215, 24217, 24218)

24217	Pottery fabrics GRS BSW
24218	Pottery fabrics GROG GRS BSW

The pottery recovered from this ditch section consists of bodysherds, mainly in early fabrics, although there was one intrusive late Roman sherd present. A probable early Roman date is indicated.

Building 40 (Fig. M10)

This rather speculative building consisted of a central aisle or corridor set in slots and a post-built room either side of this, perhaps with a porch leading into the aisle from the south. It is a bit of a mixture of sizes of post, and conspicuously lacks all its corners, and its entire east wall (though it may be possible to rope in slot 24211 in this role). It was also a bit weak on internal furnishing, though hearth 15465 could have belonged to it. If it was anything like the shape envisaged, it consisted of a 6m long (7.5m with porch) corridor, aligned on the site's major NNW-SSE axis, with a room on the east of internal dimensions 5.2m by anywhere from 5m to 9m; and a western room perhaps only 5.2m by 4m. This western room had the hearth. The building cannot have stood very long, as several early Roman pits encroached into the western room and the corridor. It was built over the foundations of roundhouse Building 5 and may have been a direct replacement for it. If so, its possible useful interior space (excluding porch and corridor) of at least 46m² and perhaps as much as 67.6m² represented a considerable increase over its predecessor, and the idea of interior subdivisions was clearly a radical departure from previous practice. If 15465 actually was a hearth, it is possible the western room was a workshop; though, of course, it could equally be a kitchen or living area too, each of which might be provided with a hearth. Post-hole 15466 contained several pieces of iron strip, some slag and hammerscale and a copper alloy boss, which might be taken to strengthen the case for some sort of metalworking here. Nearby pit 15641 contained fills which could support this notion.

Building 40 (15466, 15690, 15729, 15752, 15788, 24007, 24011, 24061, 24063, 24065, 24083, 24117, 24203, 24205, 24239, 24261, 24263, 24269, 24279, 24285)

15466	Pottery fabrics GROG BSW
15752	Pottery fabric GRS
24011	Pottery fabric GROG
24061	Pottery fabrics GROG BSW
24063	Pottery fabrics GRS BSW
24117	Pottery dish B1 (BSW), fabrics GRS GROG VRW
24239	Pottery fabric GROG

24261	Pottery fabric GROG
24285	Pottery fabrics GROG BSW

The dating evidence recovered from the contexts associated with this building is inconclusive, although an early Roman date is suggested by the fabrics present. The 4th century coin in posthole 24205 must be out of place.

Building 41 (Fig. M10)

Post-holes 15472, 15623, 15625, 15627, 15629, 15642, 15644, 15646, 15648, 15650, 15674, 15676, 15679, 24294

Set some 3.5m to the north, and aligned on the north wall of Building 40, is Building 41. This involved a definite overload of postholes, even allowing that some of them might be posts set so close as to amount to a continuous slot. As revealed, it cannot have been much bigger than 3m by 3m. One possibility is that it represented a northwards extension of Building 40 (or at least, its east side), but the posts are much more closely set than for Building 40, and it seems more likely to be an out-building of some sort. As usual, no clues as to function, but similarly proportioned close-set posts for such a small building seem often to be interpreted as supporting raised floors for granaries. (e.g., Danebury (Cunliffe and Poole, 1991), **others, refs**).

Building 41 (15472, 15623, 15625, 15627, 15629, 15642, 15644, 15646, 15648, 15650, 15674, 15676, 15679, 24294)

15472	Pottery fabrics GRS BSW
15625	Pottery fabric GROG
15642	Pottery fabrics GRS BSW
15644	Pottery fabric GROG
15646	Pottery fabric GROG

The dating evidence recovered from the contexts associated with this building is inconclusive, although an early Roman date is suggested by the fabrics present.

Cremations 15017, 15040 (Fig. M11)

In the south zone of Area M were two small, isolated, features which contained cremated human bone. Each was a small circular cut of around 0.45m diameter and surviving depth of 0.2m. Feature 15017 contained a jar which held a small amount of cremated bone in its fill and was accompanied by a flagon and probably a lid (the greatest part of which had been removed by truncation). The cremation urn in 15040 was accompanied by a miniature necked-jar and a platter **[dish?]** (fig. Mxx). 15017's backfill included what looks like an ordinary rubbish deposit which would not look out of place in any small pit. **Was the dish used as a lid?**

Although neither of these simple cremation burials can be well dated an early Roman date is posited. Their relative isolation and juxtapositioning is of interest as examples of 'informal' burial but again apparently within a defined, albeit tiny, zone. Their positioning close to Period II ditches 25081 / 25082 is significant. It is likely that while the ditches had passed out of use by the end of Period II, this boundary was now marked in some other way and continued to function. The cremation burials were then deliberately sited in this peripheral location.

15017	Pottery jar G (GRS), fabrics BSW NVC BBI
15040	Samian fabric SGSW Other pottery dish B1 (BSW), jar G (BSW), fabrics NVC GRS

Pits: 15573, 15687, 15744, 15757, 15773, 15917, 15918, 15922, 15993, 24013, 24130, 24188, 24242, 24303, 24312, 15465, 15880, 15902, 24075, 24121, 15641 (Fig. M12)

The general distribution of the early Roman pits was generally similar to that of Period II, in that none occurred north of Track 3 and those to its south were distinctly clustered, with only three towards the extreme south and all the rest around the north side of (and encroaching into) Building 5. However, although the broad locations were similar, the actual position of the main Period III cluster markedly avoided the Period II clusters, showing a shift southwards.

The majority of these pits, in contrast to the earlier group, were relatively small and circular to oval in plan, generally between 1.0 to 2.3m wide. Depths vary, from under 0.2m to 0.9m, but most cluster around 0.4-0.5m deep. The exceptions in terms of size were 15773 and possibly truncated pit 24188 which were as much as 5.0m wide.

The artefact assemblages from these pits, whether large or small, were similar and indicate similar patterns of activity to those seen earlier. Even pit 15773 had relatively few finds compared to its large size. There may be a little more metalwork around than in most of the earlier pits (excluding the ‘industrial’ cluster of smaller pits), while the BSM bracelet in 15744 was notable. There may be more animal bone, and perhaps stone and ceramic building materials were a little more common. Otherwise, there was little difference in content. There was still a smattering of evidence for metalworking, including an iron ingot (SF?). Nearly every one had some residual LIA pottery too. None of these is dated later than early-mid 2nd century. 15993 has been discussed in relation to 15641 in Period II, above.

One pit of particular note is 15573. It contained a range of iron artefacts including ‘shackles’ (SF6670), ring (SF6673), chisel (SF6668) and various nails, along with pottery, animal bone and over 2.3kg of tile. In addition, iron bloom (SF2676) (ref to report), found during machine removal of the topsoil, directly overlay this feature and was almost certainly derived from it.

Pits 15017, 15040, 15465, 15573, 15641, 15687, 15744, 15757, 15773, 15880, 15902, 15917, 15918, 15922, 15993, 24013, 24075, 24121, 24130, 24188, 24242, 24303, 24312

15017	Pottery jar G23 (GRS), fabrics BSW NVC BB1
15040	Samian fabric SGSW Other pottery dish B1 (BSW), jar G24 (BSW), fabrics NVC GRS
15465	Pottery fabrics GRS BSW
15573	Pottery dish B1.3 (BSW), fabric GRS
15641	Samian cup Ritt.8 (SGSW) Other pottery platters <i>Cam</i> 16 (TN) A2 (BSW), dish B2/B4 (BSW), bowl C1 (BUF), jars G20 (GROG) G3 (BSW), beaker <i>Cam</i> 113 (NGWF), fabrics VRW COLB GRS
15687	Samian cups f24 (SGSW) Ritt.8 (SGSW) Other pottery dish B2/B4 (BSW), jar G3 (BSW), fabrics COLB GRS
15744	Pottery dish B1 (GRS), fabric NVC
15757	Samian platters f15/17 (SGSW) f18 (SGSW), bowl f29 (SGSW), cups f24 (SGSW) Ritt.8 (SGSW) Amphora Dr.20 (ABAET) Other pottery platters A4.5 (BSW) A2 (GRS), bowl C1 (BSW), jars G3 (STOR) G17 (GROG), fabrics COLB VRW
15773*	Samian dish f18/31R-31R (CGSW), fabric COLSW Amphora salazon (ASALA) Other pottery platter A2 (GRS BSW), dishes B2.2 (GRS) B2/B4 (BSW), bowl C1 (BSW), mortarium D1.3 (VRWM), jars G5 G17 G18 G23 (GRS), beakers H20.2 (COLC) H4 (BB1), flagon J3 (RED), fabrics MIC NKG COLB Coin Dupondius, Domitian (SF 7934), 95-96
15880	Pottery platter A2 (GROG), bowl C20 (BSW), jar G18 (BSW), beaker H1 (GRF)
15902	Pottery fabric BSW Brooch Aucissa (SF 6425)
15917	Samian dish f31 (CGSW) Amphora Dr.2-4 (AITAL) Other pottery dishes B1 (BSW) B2/B4 (GRF), bowl C1 (GRF)
15918	Pottery dish B1 (BSW), fabric GRS
15922	Samian platter f18 (SGSW), bowl Ritt.12 (SGSW) Other pottery fabrics VRW BSW
15993	Amphora Dr.20 (ABAET) Other pottery platter A2 (GRS), jars G19 (GRF) G23 (GRS), flagon J3.2 (COLB), fabrics BSW
24013*	Amphora Dr.20 (ABAET) Other pottery platters A2 (GRS) A4 (BSW), dish B8 (BSW), mortarium D1 (VRWM), jars G20 (GRF) G3 (GRS), beaker H1 (GRS), fabric COLB
24075	Samian platter f18 (SGSW) Other pottery jar G3 (BSW), fabrics NKG VRW GRS
24121	Pottery platter A2 (GRS), dish B1 (BSW), jar G23 (GRS), fabrics VRW NGWF
24188	Samian fabric SGSW Other pottery fabrics GRS BSW
24242	Samian fabric SGSW Amphora Dr.20 (ABAET)
24303	Pottery fabric GRS
24312	Samian dish f31 (CGSW) Other pottery dishes B2/B4 B7 (BSW), mortarium D1.6 (BUFM), jars G16 (BSW) G5 (GRS)

Most of the pottery recovered from these pits ranges in date from the mid 1st to the mid 2nd centuries, although the bulk can be dated to the late 1st to early 2nd centuries. There is residual material, mostly grog-tempered, present throughout, and late Roman sherds are also present in pit 15744. The pottery in 24130 is inconclusive for dating purposes.

Period IV (Fig. M13):

There was little direct evidence of boundaries which can be dated to this mid-Roman period in Area M. Only 25087 even offered a hint of being of this date. However, as noted in the Period III discussion, the presence and patterning of other features may well permit us to infer that older

boundaries, marked in some way other than by ditches, still continued to function. Large pit 15514 together with late Roman pits 15755 and 24004, were located alongside Period II land divisions, hinting that these were marked by other means by this time. It is assumed that Tracks 3, 4 and 5 continued to function as both thoroughfares and land divisions within this area.

Although pits were present, they were few in quantity in comparison with preceding periods. This decline in the number of features of the mid Roman period was a general one. Indeed, these few pits accounted for almost all of the dated features in the south zone, the exceptions being two tile-built ovens.

There were no recognized mid-Roman features in the central zone, between Tracks 3 and 4, and apart from a single pit 15271, features of this date in the north zone were limited to post-holes. Even then, post-built Building 57 is highly speculative.

It is tempting to interpret this evidence as indicative of a decline in occupation in this area, with the south zone perhaps being given over to either pasture or cultivation. Interpretation of the hearths as drying floors, with connotations of crop processing, would seem at least to hint at ruralization.

However, such assumptions based only on the dated features could be misleading: there were many undated features, particularly post-holes, which could be the remains of further mid-Roman activity in this area.

Building 57 (Fig. M14)

15131, 15136, 15142, 15143, 15159, 15161, 15171, 15284, 15432, 15439, 15603, 15633

A series of posts forming two sides of an **abbreviated** rectilinear building, consisting of a central aisle leading off a south-facing porch, and a room either side. The west side is much more convincing than the east, or even the aisle. The posts of the west wall were all between 2.25 and 2.5m apart, and the walls were aligned NNW-SSE as usual, and extending at least 7.5m along that line, while the south frontage could be 8m either side of the 2.7m wide aisle, for a total width of 18.7m, of which 16m was visible. If 15215 were included, the aisle ran at least 8.5m back from the frontage.

The aisle walls consisted of smaller and less regular posts than the west room. However, the posts included here were all considerably larger than those excluded. It seems likely that the east wall of the west room was real and had simply suffered more disturbance than the west. However, the posts of the opposite walls of this room did not stand in neatly aligned pairs. This suggests that the aisle posts must be supporting internal walls only, and the exterior posts supported the roof.

There seems to be little chance that any more posts could have existed which were not recorded, within the area of those which were, but there is scope for this structure to have extended further north, as the west exterior wall would be lost to pit 15227 (and ultimately the edge of excavation) while the east wall of the aisle might be lost to ditch 15045 and the edge of trench. It should be noted that this form leaves many posts in the vicinity still unaccounted for, and other building plans may be possible.

The fills generally included small amounts of building materials and bone, and a single piece of strip lead. Although not technically dating evidence, there is a hint at a tendency for all of these materials, especially in post hole fills, to be more common later than earlier.

So, if we assume, optimistically, that all of this does fit together, we get a west room some 8.2m wide by anything from 8.4m to 16m long, opening off a corridor or aisle to its east, 2.7m wide by at least 8.4m long, aligned NNW-SSE, leading from a porch which extends it for another 1.5m to the south. More dubious is the eastern room, but it might have been at least 5.2m wide and probably symmetrical with the western room, some 8m wide; its extent northwards is unknown as it ran out of the excavated area.

15131 had some late 4th century (or later) pottery. Only 'Roman' pot came from 15136, 15142, 15171, 15284, early-mid 3rd in 15143, mid 2nd to mid-3rd in 15159. 15142 also yielded an unidentified 1st/2nd century coin. All of these cut the upper gravel surface, which makes them

probably mid 2nd century or later. A late date is thus rests entirely on 15131. The late sherds here are from both fills and a little hard to dismiss as intrusion, but could perhaps still derive from destruction. Relationships to the linear boundary features were unfortunately unclear. It was not certain whether slot 25158 cut or was cut by the post holes along its line (it may have cut 15603, but 15256, 15185, 15619 almost certainly were cut into it). It might be possible to allow this Building to have been constructed in the 3rd or early 4th century (probably early in this range) and the later dated finds to derive from destruction/backfilling deposits in the 4th century, while still allowing the reorganisation implied by the boundary to occur in the 4th century.

Just south of Building 57, it might just be possible to pick out another arrangement of two parallel lines of posts (15177, 15165, 15169, 15134, 15211, 15208, 15217, 15200) which could form a rectangle 7.5m by 9.25m, but this was too tentative even to assign a Building number. Its south side, if any, would have been lost do ditch 25078, and it must never have possessed a north side. Its alignment, due north-to-south, does not fit with anything else anywhere on site, and, as usual, it leaves more posts unaccounted for.

Building 57 15131, 15136, 15142, 15143, 15159, 15171, 15284, 15432, 15439, 15603, 15633

15131	Pottery bowl-jar E2 (BSW), fabrics GRS COLC
15136	Pottery fabric GRS
15142	Pottery fabrics BSW GRS NVC Coin Sestertius, Marcus Aurelius (SF 5922), 161-162
15143	Samian bowl f30 or f37 (CGSW) Other pottery dish B2/B4 (BSW HAB), fabrics NVC HAX
15159	Pottery dish B2.1 (GRS), beaker H28 (CGRHN), fabrics NVC BSW
15284	Pottery jar G5 (GRS), fabrics COLC BSW
15439	Pottery fabric BSW
15633	Pottery dish B1 (BSW), fabric GRS

Most of the pottery from these contexts generally dates to the mid 2nd to mid 3rd centuries. The coin provides a mid 2nd century date. The pottery from 15171 is wholly residual and that from 15136 and 15439 is inconclusive for dating purposes. A late Roman sherd is also present in 15131.

Structure 48: Gully 25087 (segs. 24145, 24391, 24403, 24434) (Fig. M15)

This was a very insubstantial gully/ditch line, only some 0.48m wide at most and no more than 0.22m deep. It ran ENE-WSW, discontinuously, with a clear terminal at 24391, and terminated at 24434 to the east. Pre-excavation plans show it quite clearly for at least 21m, and suggest a right-angled turn to the north at about 5021/7977, but this was not explored.

This was thought to be a structural slot on site. It could have been, but it appears out of place if it were a large building, and out of character with anything else on site. The shape of the cut would not rule out its being for a sleeper beam, but there is nothing that really demands such an interpretation. It did not run parallel or perpendicular to anything else in the vicinity, so it cannot easily be ascribed to any particular system of divisions, and as it is no better dated than any of the other gully lines here, it poses something of a problem, as it implies yet another remodelling of the land divisions (even if it were only a drainage gully).

Finds were rather sparse, and very mixed in date (though there is nothing but building materials and pottery). The pottery from 24145 and 24403 may be LIA, that from 24391 may be late 3rd century or later; there was also box flue tile in 24403, however, so that a LIA date looks unlikely for it. Stratigraphy shows this above Building 3, gully 25086, pit 24153, and below ditch 25081. None of those is wonderfully securely dated, either, but on this basis, this gully this cannot be much earlier than mid 2nd century, and we ought to consider it mid- to late Roman. As is little reason to require special pleading, we may take the late 3rd century date at face value for the filling, and thus posit a cutting in Period IV. This implies a new subdivision of the land unit here, although with so few other features in this south plot, any functional differences remain invisible. **I don't like this – consider moving back to Period IIB**

Slot 25087 (24145, 24391, 24403, 24434)

24145	Pottery fabric GROG
24391	Pottery dish B6.3 (BB2), fabrics GROG GRS

24403	Pottery fabric GROG
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The pottery recovered is mainly grog-tempered, but there is a dish, and other Roman pottery, in section 24391 which provides a late 3rd century+ date. Most of the other pottery present is therefore residual. **No, intrusive dish**

Hearths 15638 and 15984 (Fig. M16)

15638 was the truncated remains of a tile-built structure. It consisted of a *tegula* set on a clay bed and associated with an adjacent spread of tile debris. No construction cut was discerned. It is possible that this structure was no more than a domestic hearth.

Construction cut 15984 contained the base and lower walls of a 1.3m square tile-built structure. It would possibly have been L- or T- shaped when complete, but all that remained was the leg and hints of a corner, some 0.90m by 0.4m; this portion gives the appearance of being a flue for the (lost) main chamber. It consisted of a floor of two tiles laid flat on a clay base, in a 0.20m deep cut, and walls of at least 4 courses of tiles (and some stone) also laid flat to line the sides of the cut up to ground level. Above ground level another course was laid overlapping the sub-ground courses and extending out onto the surrounding surface (which, by the way, shows the level of the ground surface at this date, 3.24m OD). The structure contained some mortar but does not seem to have been fully bonded. There is a suggestion of some clay forming a facing, but it looked rough-and-ready. The northern end was plugged with a clay seal, while an area of scorched clay (15893) at the southern end may indicate the position of the stoke hole. The whole has a slight slope down from the north. Most of the surviving material represented collapsed superstructure, generally having been pushed or fallen to the south. The remainder of the finds assemblage from the disuse fills and the collapse deposits was similar to those of surrounding pits and provided no clear evidence for the specific function of the structure, but it seems likely to have been the flue for a drying floor or oven, which must have been above-ground. **Disuse date - extending thru V, poss into VI?**

Oven construction 15984

15984	Pottery dish B2 (BSW), beaker H27/28 (CGRHN), fabrics BB1 GRS
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The oven construction produced pottery which is dated to the late 2nd to early 3rd centuries.

Pits 15227=15271, 15368, 15514, 15731, 15811, 15826, 24072, 24197=15977, 24213 (Fig. M17)

Pits of mid-Roman date were few and far between in Area M. The majority were large and circular cuts, some 2.0m to 5.0m in diameter, with only a few being under 1m wide. Only a single mid-Roman pit, 15227/15271, was excavated in the north zone of this area. It contained very few finds for the volume excavated, **although two fills each contained a single human bone**. As in preceding Period III, no pits were dug into the central zone between Tracks 3 and 4.

All other pits dated to the mid-Roman period were located in the south zone. These divided into large round examples and small oval ones. As noted previously, large pit 15514 was located in close proximity to earlier boundary ditch 25081/25082. As it is postulated that this boundary still functioned in some form, the pits seem to show that a peripheral position was favoured for their digging. Small pit 15368 conformed to this pattern of peripheral pit location and may be the most significant of them; occupying a near-roadside position and containing only a bronze flagon (SF2996), the deposition of which may have had a ritual significance. This feature lay outside the sampled strip, however, so it cannot easily be placed in any context beyond existing along the north edge of the south plot.

None of the larger pits was fully excavated, and only 15514 saw much excavation. It contained a larger and more varied finds assemblage than earlier pits, including quantities of ironwork and characteristically large amounts of pottery, tile (including voussoir) and animal bone. Approximately 8.5kg of oyster shell were also collected. Less extensive excavation of pit 24179 and only surface collection from 24213 produced correspondingly smaller finds assemblages. The small pits contained few finds. Pottery from nearly all of the pits included residual material, often in

quantity. This may reflect the fact that by this time it would have been difficult to dig a pit in this south zone without disturbing earlier features.

Pits 15227=15271, 15368, 15514, 15731, 15811, 15826, 24072, 24197, 24213

15227	Samian cup f33 (EGSW) Other pottery dishes B1 (BB1) B2/B4 (BSW) B3.2 (GRS) B6.2 (BSW GRS), mortaria D9.1 (OXWM) D13.2 (BUFM), jars G9 (BB1) G24 (GRS), fabrics RET HAX HAR EGRHN NVC COLC Coin Radiate, Carausius (SF 5937), 286-293
15271	Samian bowl f37 (EGSW) Other pottery dishes B1.3 B4.2 (BSW) B5.1 (GRS), jar G5.4 (GRS), fabrics BB1 NVC
15368	Pottery beaker H20.2 (COLC)
15514	Pottery dishes B1 (HAB) B4 (GRF), jars G5.5 (GRS) G42 (BSW), fabrics HAX NVC BB1 RET BB2
15731	Pottery dish B2/B4 (HAB)
15811	Pottery fabrics GRS NVC
24072	Samian dish f31 (EGSW) Other pottery dishes B6 (BB1) B2/B4 (BSW), jars G9 (BSW) G5 (GRS) Coin Radiate, Gordian III (SF 7804), 238-244
24197	Samian bowl f38 (CGSW) Other pottery dishes B6.2 (GRF) B1 B3 (BSW), fabrics COLC NVC HAX

The pottery recovered from these pits has a broad date range of mid 2nd to mid/late 3rd century. There is residual material present to a varying degree, but the samian may not be. Late Roman pottery is present in the top fills of pits 15227 and 15514, and pit 24213 contained two 4th-century coins only. The single fill of 24197 contained a few abraded, intrusive late Roman sherds.

Period V (Fig. M18):

The previously occupied north zone, between Tracks 4 and 5, underwent a change of use in the late Roman period. Building 57 had almost certainly passed out of use, as indicated by the intrusion of 4th century pits into its space. It is unlikely that the earlier gravel surface was still in use; patches of silty layers that overlay it suggested that it was no longer exposed. The imposition of gully 25079, a probable fence foundation, seems to confirm that the surface was no longer respected and that the north zone was subdivided. It is likely that the south end of this gully ran to the edge of Track 4 which served to indicate that the track itself still functioned into the 4th century. Although late Roman pits in the north zone were few in number, some were distinctly located alongside Track 4. In contrast to earlier pitting practice, and indeed contemporary practice in other Areas, almost all were isolated and well dispersed which may imply either a change in pit-use or that less intensive use of this vicinity compared to the southern zone simply negated the need to cram the pits into specific locations. Almost all occupied peripheral locations in relation to Track 4 and gully 25079. The very existence of these pits is taken to indicate at least some occupation within this north zone.

Late Roman pitting did encroach upon Track 3, with pits 15229 and 15231 clearly in its path. South of Track 3, late Roman features were similarly restricted to just a few dispersed pits, the locations of which perhaps hint at the continuing visibility of the NNE-SSW aligned plot boundaries until this late date.

Gully 25079 (Segs.15010, 15055, 15098, 15145) (Fig. M19)

Feature 25079 was a 15m length of shallow gully/slot running NNW-SSE (bearing 340) across the north zone of Area M. It was a maximum of 1.0m wide with rounded terminals at either end. Its southern end terminated right at the edge of Track 4. It contained 4th century pottery, tile, animal bone and three coins (SFs 4957, 5895 and 5909) and is likely to have passed out of use in Period VI. In plan it is tempting to associate this with 25158, as 25079's north end appears to respect the line of 25158, but it is difficult to see quite how they would be associated, and 25158's few finds suggested an early Roman date.

This feature may have been part of a major replanning at this date, associated with 25081 further south, which shares its orientation. However, no other area shows any signs of such a change at this date, and it may be that 25079 and 25081 were not specifically linked.

Ditch 25079 (15010, 15055, 15098, 15145)

15010	Pottery bowls C18 (NVC) C7.2 (GRS), jar G40 (GRS), fabrics OXRC MEK LSH
15055*	Pottery dish B6.2 (BSW GRS), bowl-jar E5.4 (GRF), jar G27.2 (LSH), fabrics OXW OXRC BB1 Coin AE3, House of Constantine (SF 5895), 330-335
15098	Pottery dish B6 (GRS GRF), fabrics OXRC NVC LSH Coin AE2 (SF5909), C3-C4

Three of these ditch sections contained varying amounts of late 4th-century+ forms and fabrics, and there is one 4th-century coin and one which is late Roman. There is residual material present including a mid-3rd century coin. Ditch section 15145 contained pottery which is inconclusive for dating purposes.

Pits 15068, 15206, 15227, 15229, 15231, 15241, 15738, 15755, 15856, 15868, 24004, 24094 (Fig. M20)

Pits account for the majority of late Roman features within Area M. In the north zone, these are mostly fairly small and round to oval in shape (e.g. 15068, 15206 and 15241). Pit 15206 may have been located in relation to the north end of ditch/gully 25079, while 15068 and 15241 were positioned alongside Track 4. The only large pit excavated in the north zone, 25227 was possibly a recut of Period IV pit 15271. **Check all zoning attributions**

Further south, large pits were in the majority. Intercut pits 15229 and 15231 were apparently cut into Track 3, unless it had significantly narrowed by this time. They certainly marked a departure from the previous respect afforded this corridor. Across the south zone, large pits accounted for all of the late Roman activity. The few pits identified were located in close proximity to Period II ditch 25081/ 25082 which, by this time, was long defunct, **though significantly, about to**

be redug (?). As discussed previously, it appears that the boundary continued to be marked in some other way and that the pits were deliberately sited in relation to it.

Although pit 24004 contained mid-to-late 2nd century pottery, the presence of two mid-4th century coins suggests that it was indeed a late pit containing residual material. Its shape and proportions mirrored those of other pits of this period and may support its later date. It may have cut into the top fill of 24072 (Period IV), though the truncation if any was slight and the relationship was not entirely secure.

The pits continued the trend of large and diverse finds assemblages from Period IV and included a significant metalwork content (both iron and copper alloy) as well as large quantities of pottery, tile and animal bone. Little variation in artefact assemblage composition can be discerned from one zone to another and all appears to be the product of domestic occupation in the vicinity.

Pits 15068, 15206, 15227, 15229, 15231, 15241, 15738, 15755, 15856, 15868, 24004, 24094

15068	Pottery dish B1.3 (BSW), fabrics NVC RET
15206	Pottery dishes B1.4 (BB1) B6.2 (GRS), jar G9 (BSW BB1), fabrics HAX RET NVC
15227	Pottery dishes B1 (BB1) B6.2 (BSW GRF), bowl C8 (OXRC), mortarium D9.1 (OXWM), jars G9 (BB1) G24.2 (RET), fabrics HAX LSH NVC Coins Radiate, Carausius (SF 5937), 286-293
15229	Pottery dishes B1.3 (HAB) B6.2 (GRF), jar G40 (BSW), beaker H39 (BSW), fabrics OXRC NVC
15231	Pottery dishes B1 (HAB) B5.1 (BSW) B6 (GRF), fabrics OXRC NVC
15738	Pottery bowl C8 (NVC), mortarium D14 (NVM)
15755	Pottery dishes B5.2 B6.3 (BB1), beaker H39 (GRF), fabrics RET NVC
15856	Pottery dish B5 (GRF BSW), fabric NVC
15868	Pottery dishes B1 (BB1) B6.2 (BSW HAB), fabric NVC
24004	Pottery jar G40 (GRF) Coins AE3, Constantine II Caesar (SF 7797), 330-335, AE3 (SF 7800), 330-340

The pottery recovered from these pits dates mainly from the mid 3rd to the mid 4th centuries. This date is supported by the coin evidence. Some pits contained late 4th century+ sherds, which may extend the date range. There is much residual material and pit 24094 contained pottery which is wholly residual.

Period VI (Fig. M21)

In terms of activity and land use, there was probably little real difference between Periods V and VI in Area M (the change was largely restricted to the ceramic assemblages). The distribution of pits across the northern zone indicated continuity of locational trends, but pits of this date were absent from the south. The only discernible change may be a slight northwards shift in the line of Track 4 as evidenced by the imposition of sinuous ditch 25078.

Gully 25079 clearly ceased to function in this period as it was cut by 25078. This new ditch, while indicating a minor alteration to the existing arrangement, provided strong evidence of continuity, reaffirming the general line of Track 4 and demonstrated its survival to the very end of the Roman period and probably beyond. This ditch could be traced right across Area A2 and was one of the major features of the late site. This may suggest that Track 4, rather than Tracks 3 or 5 to either side, was the major eastern thoroughfare for the late settlement. *But it has a building on top of it in Area L! – more important as a boundary than a thoroughfare?* At the south end of the Area, ditch 25081 appeared to be a late reinstatement of a division along the same line as ditch 25082 in Period II. This may have been part of the same reorganisation as the Period V gully 25079, though it was filled in later.

Features of specifically early Saxon date were very rare. Irregular slot 15688 may hint at the presence of a structure although it also had a special aspect in the form of a complete ceramic vessel (pot ref xxxx) in its fill. Two small pits 15423 and 15354 were the only other features. The remainder of early Saxon material occurs within the upper fills of latest Roman features, both in pits and in ditch 25078.

Ditch 25081 (Fig. M22) no, no, no – its got to be Period II, though perpetuated this late by a hedge along the foot of which small pits are dug and general late crap is deposited. Revamp this.

Ditch 25081, 1.1m wide, very closely followed the line of Period II ditch 25082, running at least 20m and plausibly as much as 50m. It seems very difficult to allow (a minimum of) a three century gap followed by such a close duplication, but the finds from several segments of 25081 insist that it was filled in the late 4th century. Some of this could be dismissed as contamination, but the pattern was too consistent, and actually there were no late features which clearly truncated this ditch which might have introduced such contamination, while the stratigraphy did show this as the latest feature wherever a relationship was established (e.g., layer 24080, pit 24072, slot 25087, to name but the later things it cut).

A number of possibilities suggest themselves to explain this coincidence of ditch lines, none of which is hugely convincing. A ditch could have been open here for four centuries, with recuts and cleanings-out, of which only two cuts survived. This is made difficult by the early Roman slot which must cut across the line (25087). The line of 25082 could have been marked (by other means) all through the life of the site, as suggested consistently above in relation to pit locations. 25081 was then a reinstatement in ditch form of an existing fence or hedge line. There are certainly plenty of undated post holes which might have served this purpose, and of course, 25081 itself may have removed traces of whatever was marking the line prior to its digging.

The pottery within 25081's fills (a mixture of latest Roman and late Iron Age or very early Roman, with nothing from the intervening periods) suggests another possibility. An upcast bank from the digging of the ditch, throwing up LIA/early Roman pottery may have stood through the life of the site, with the ditch consistently cleaned out and emptied of all material until the slighting of the bank and final backfilling in the late 4th century. This seems unlikely, and there is no blank space along the ditch line to indicate where such a bank may have stood.

It is possible that all the stratigraphy is wrong and that all the latest material (not just pottery but coins (SF 6661, 7796, also, less crucially, 7426 from context 15897), cbm, and a BSM bangle, which almost all seem to be late) is contamination, but this seems overly pessimistic. It is simpler to see the LIA pottery as incorporated into these fills from the underlying 25082 and other early features which this ditch cut through.

Finally, it is possible that both ditches 25081 and 25082 were laid out by reference to some long-lived outstanding cardinal feature(s) of the landscape and that similar needs at different periods simply produced a similar result. The natural lie of the gravel terraces is one possibility, the road lines another. It is also worth reiterating that neither 25081 (bearing 340) nor 25082 quite matches the line of the plot boundary ditches of Period II further east in and between Areas N and P (bearing mostly 330). (Compare also Period V, gully 25079 has a bearing of 340.) Given the line of the various long-lived precinct boundary walls (bearing 340) in Area J, and even the post-medieval fence following the same line (actually bearing 347), these, or something connected to them seem the likeliest source for an orientation.

So overall it seems that ditch 25081 was backfilled in the late 4th century, and presumably was dug not very much earlier, probably within the 4th century. If it was as late as it appears, then there is very little else that might belong to the same scheme, and it remains a somewhat isolated feature. Possibly it belonged to the reorganisation that included gully 25079 at the extreme north of the area, these two perhaps forming the eastern (25079) and western (25081) sides of one land plot, or perhaps the corresponding boundaries of separate plots which could still have been divided by the Track lines. 25079 would have been filled slightly earlier than 25081, but there is no reason why they could not have been cut at around the same time. There was nothing else to support the idea of a large-scale reorganisation at this time, and its similarity to the Period II layout is peculiar to say the least.

Ditch 25078 (segs. 15049, 15102, 15107, 15223) (Fig. M2)

Feature 25078 was a sinuous ditch running broadly NE-SW across Area M. Segments excavated across this feature revealed a variation in width between 1.5m and 2.0m and an undulating base which reached a maximum depth of only 0.4m. Both its origin and subsequent ‘life’ seemed to be bound up with a number of latest Roman pits which underlay, cut or flanked the ditch. It is likely that the irregularity of this feature was due to its imposition along a line of pre-existing, though already backfilled, pits which were located alongside Track 4 (e.g., 15068, 15241). The ditch was itself constructed in the latest Roman period and rapidly accumulated fills, including dumps of structural material, mainly tile. The practice of siting pits on or near this boundary feature continued, with pits 15245, 15042, and 15225 being cut into the presumably still partially open ditch.

Ditch 25078 (15049, 15102, 15107, 15223)

15049	Pottery dishes B1.3 (BSW) B6.2 (GRF), jar G42 (GRF) Saxon Coins AE2 (SF 4947), 200-399, AE3 (SF 4948), 200-399
15102	Pottery dishes B6 (GRF GRS), jar G42 (GRS), fabrics OXSWM OXRC Coin AE3, Valens (SF 5898), 364-367
15107	Pottery Dish B6 (BSW), bowl C8 (OXRC), jar G27.2 (LSH), fabric OXWM
15223*	Pottery dishes B6.1 (GRS) B6.2 (GRF GRS), mortaria D12.2 (OXRCM) D12.3 (HAXM), jars G42 (GRS) G40 (GRF)

This feature contained pottery dating to the late 4th century+, and one ditch section produced a Saxon sherd. There is one 4th century coin and two which are late Roman. There is much residual material.

Pits 15005, 15042, 15078, 15094, 15100, 15225, 15232, 15245, 15354, 15356, 15421, 15423, 15664, 15966, 24456, 25159 (Fig. M23)

As mentioned previously, both Period V and VI pits seemingly underlie the sinuous ditch 25078, showing that the practice of siting such features alongside tracks is a continuous feature of this area. The latest Roman pits are moderately sized, round and oval, cuts at between 1.0 to 2.5m maximum width. They contain apparently domestic finds assemblages which are very similar to those of the Period V pits; large quantities of pottery, tile and metalwork, together with occasional stone fragments, indicating similar activities in the area throughout the 4th century and perhaps into the 5th.

Some, such as pits 15005, 15354 and 15423, contained occasional sherds of early Saxon pottery in addition to their latest Roman assemblages. This may indicate that the pits themselves continued to be filled this late, or that slump hollows which later developed in the tops of these Roman pits accumulated scattered Saxon material. Indeed, the latter appears to have occurred in some earlier features too; large Period III pit 15773, in the south zone, contained Saxon pottery in a slump hollow, 24456. The rest of the finds assemblages from these ‘Saxonising’ features were the same as those of plain latest Roman date.

Pits 15005, 15042, 15078, 15094, 15100, 15225, 15232, 15245, 15354, 15356, 15421, 15423, 15664, 15966, 24456

15005	Pottery fabrics OXRC ALH
15042	Pottery dish B6 (NVC), bowl-jar E6 (HAX), jar G27 (LSH), fabric OXRC Coins AE3, House of Valentinian (SF 4950), 367-378, AE3 (SF 5893), 200-399
15078	Pottery bowl C8 (NVC), jar G27.1 (LSH) Coin AE3, Gratian (SF 5887), 367-375
15094	Pottery jar G27 (LSH), fabric OXRC
15100	Pottery fabric LSH Coin AE3, House of Valentinian (SF 7436), 364-378
15225	Pottery bowl-jar E6.1 (HAX), fabric OXRC
15232*	Pottery fabrics LSH OXRC
15245	Pottery dishes B1 (LSH) B1.2 (NVC), bowl C25 (HAX), bowl-jar E4 (GRS), jar G27.2 (LSH), fabrics OXRC OXSWM
15354	Pottery fabrics OXSW LSH OXRC Saxon
15356	Pottery fabric OXWM
15421	Pottery fabric LSH
15664	Pottery fabric OXP
15966	Pottery fabric LSH
24456	Pottery Saxon

These pits contained late 4th century+ pottery to a varying degree. There are late coins and Saxon sherds also present. Pit 24456 contained a quantity of Saxon pottery rendering all the accompanying Roman pottery residual. Pit 15423 contained wholly residual pottery, **although the Saxon pottery once recorded for its fill appears to be no longer extant. (If the Saxon is no more, perhaps this pit is 3rd century after all?)**

Structure 56: Slot 15688 (Fig. M24)

Feature 15688 was a shallow, irregular, slot which formed a rough right angle. Interpreted as a possible fragment of a building foundation, it contained what must be a deliberate foundation deposit of a complete (miniature) early Saxon vessel. No other features in the vicinity can be reliably associated with this slot, the only candidates being undated post-holes 15187 and 15090 to its south. How this structure may have related to either ditches 25078 or 25079 is unknown, although 25079 could comfortably have provided a fence bounding a land plot around it, except that it must already have passed out of use before the deposition of Saxon pottery is generally believed to have commenced.

Slot 15688

15688	Saxon
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This slot segment contained a complete, hand-made, miniature Saxon vessel. The fragmentary Roman pottery also in the feature is therefore residual.

Building 66 (15269, 15273, 15250, 15247, 15234, 15236, 15052, 15126, 15066, 15116, 15138, 15122, 15063, 15060, 15219) (Fig. M24)

South of ditch 25078, a building might tentatively be posited across the line of Track 4, in the vicinity of small pits 15021 and 15094. Indeed, these diminutive pits could be structural features themselves and be used to create tentative alignments with the undated post-holes in the immediate vicinity. It is only a guess that these post-holes must be late (on the grounds that nothing else disturbs this track/surface until the late periods). Some of these were so irregular as to be dubious as the remains of human activity at all.

Building 66 15269, 15273, 15250, 15247, 15234, 15236, 15052, 15126, 15066, 15116, 15138, 15122, 15063, 15060, 15219

15250	Pottery fabric GRS
15234	Pottery fabric OXRC
15116	Pottery fabrics GRS RET
15060	Pottery dish B1 (BSW), fabric GRS

The contexts associated with this building produced small amounts of pottery, some of which is inconclusive for dating purposes. There are some late Roman sherds present, including Oxford red colour-coat which provides a late 4th century+ date.

Period VII

No features of this date have been identified.

Notes on dating

(include in a section specifically on chronology or even formation?)

It may be worth adding a note here about some technical problems in dating features, especially ditches. In a large number of instances, particularly in this area (M), where there appears to be a late (4th century) upsurge in activity after a bit of a lull, ditches that look topographically early, have late Roman pottery in their fills. Numerous attempts have been made to explain this, largely in the hope of 'explaining away' the late pottery. Of course, excavator error and numbering errors may explain away some, but it seems to be too persistent a trend. We've tried to argue that the boundaries these ditches define were marked in some way after the ditches had silted up: banks, fences and hedges being the possibilities, and hedges being our favoured mechanism. Bits of pottery being swept/ blown/ trampled/ kicked in under standing hedges could well accumulate over a long period, and settle down into the ditch below. Most of the sherds in question are very small and usually abraded (often more so than the earlier pottery in the same features) and thus stand out as possible intrusions. But sometimes they derive from deep within the feature, so far as we can tell. Such information was not actually recorded, but some come from lower fills (e.g., 15476 the bottom fill of 15471), albeit these are not always sealed, and some from soil samples, and samples ought to have been taken only from clearly sealed locations.

It is thus important to be flexible in dating 'features'. The latest material need not necessarily represent a fixed and unarguable dating horizon. Nor is it necessarily sufficient to dismiss the late material as anomalous, intrusive or contamination, implying someone's error in one of the many stages of the process between excavation and report. In fact, the whole range of dates of material present in a feature can be giving important information. Late pottery and early pottery alone in a ditch, with nothing from the intervening centuries, might actually tell us about landuse (or lack of it) throughout the range of dates covered, while still allowing the ditch, *qua* ditch, to be an early feature, and *forcing* us to postulate a hedge (or fence or bank) serving the same purpose.

From a methodological point of view, this raises several problems. Especially when we are trying to deal with our data in digital form; giving each feature a date or a range (e.g., mid-1st to early-2nd century in our scheme is 14-17, mid 1st century is 14-14) forces the data into less flexible form. A 1st century ditch with 4th century material would turn out to be (for all intents and purposes) undated if listed 14-24. And, using the arguments above, the ditch itself is not of this date: but it stands as the only archaeologically visible, and therefore the only recorded, indicator of a line which may have lasted 14-24. Should we invent 'context numbers' for these invisible features? Should we have feature dates and virtual dates? It is all very fine for us to realize that the computer is just a tool and that interpretation is going to be more complex, but it is the tool which we use to draw up our site phase plans, and to provide lists of phased contexts to a team of specialists, not all of whom are as familiar with the site as we are, and who might expect to dismiss evidence from a feature with a very broad date range, or even from one with a tight range but the notation "(+ intrusive)" alongside the entry.

It is also worth noting that the same problem (while still present) seems less common in pits, possibly because we are better at separating slump-hollow fills from 'main' fills?