

AREA Q PHASING

Area Q consisted of a tiny area excavated in the middle of the easternmost field of the development area (A4). It comprised a 20m square trench in an area totally dominated by brickearths and clays, which proved very difficult to excavate. Of the sixteen 5m squares in the targeted area, 3 were left virtually untouched in the end. Over much of the rest, very little progress was made into the levels 'below' the widespread brickearths; one clean lower layer and one more mixed 'upper' layer. These layers provided the basic stratigraphy for virtually all the features; *i.e.* the three definable bands, above the lower, between the two or above the upper, although there were also features above the lower which had no relationship to the upper because it did not cover as much of the area. However, the phasing has not been based on this stratigraphy, for reasons outlined below and discussed in full elsewhere (ref.).

In general, feature definition was remarkably difficult in the field, with many fills being very similar to the surrounding brickearths, and edges were not always clear-cut, so that even where features are believed to have been sealed below surfaces and brickearth deposits, this was not always secure. The brickearths were generally removed only in relatively small parts even of the excavated area, and features may commonly have been wholly obscured by them. The picture for this area is thus at least as incomplete as elsewhere on site.

Phasing Summary

Period	Period description	Sub-phase	Date
I	-		MIA/late Iron Age transition
II	Enclosure and ?occupation	A: enclosure, well	late Iron Age
		B: new enclosure	late Iron Age-Roman transition
III	continued occupation	A: disuse of enclosure, pits	Late 1st century
		B: rectangular building, pits?	early 2nd century
		C: square building	2nd century
IV	abandonment & westward shift?		Mid Roman
V	-		Late Roman
VI	-		Latest Roman/ Saxon
VII	Post-medieval quarrying		Post-Saxon

Area summary

Area Q's importance as the most easterly of the excavated areas comes from its early decline. The late Iron Age period here can be clearly subdivided by the replacement of an early land division by a later one, which endured into the post-conquest era. Both of these sub-phases seem to have seen occupation, although sub-phase II B's evidence is equivocal. Due to the masking of the brickearth layers, the picture of early activity is very partial.

The ditches of this system were backfilled, around the last third of the first century, and the lines thus abandoned played no further part in defining land-use in this Area, unlike other areas where even when ditches filled in, the lines they had marked continued to influence alignments. In the later first century, a building was erected over one of the ditch lines, and this was replaced during the second century.

There was virtually no evidence of use of this area much beyond the middle of the second century, with just a handful of features of the later second or possibly into the third century. The Area seems to have had soil cover forming over it from this point forwards. Later features would not have been missed if present, so this abandonment must have been real.

Period I:

No features of this date have been identified.

Period II:

The late Iron Age period in Area Q can be subdivided into two sub-phases on the strength of ...

The first of these encompassed activity up to and including the early 1st century AD, while the second covered activity accompanying a change in land division around the mid 1st century AD; *i.e.* the late Iron Age to early Roman transition.

Although the Iron Age features in Area Q were found to have *apparent* stratigraphic relationships with the two brickearth horizons which covered much of the area of excavation, further study of these deposits ([ref. soil micromorphology](#)) has led to revision of the recorded stratigraphy and the abandonment of the brickearths as a reliable indicator of relative chronology ([see brickearth discussion elsewhere](#); NB no Q deposits were included in this). Division of features into the sub-phases has therefore been undertaken principally on the criteria of ceramic dating evidence and association between each other.

Sub-phase II a

This earlier phase of late Iron Age activity was represented by north-to-south ditch 25098 and east-to-west ditch 25268, along with small number of other features with pre-conquest pottery or stratigraphy that places them earlier than the ditches of the next sub-phase. Period IIa features tended to have been filled with similar material to the brickearth into which they were cut and were consequently difficult to recognize in excavation. The reworking of the brickearth, which resulted in the creation of the 'upper' deposit seems to have taken place after the disuse and infilling of these features, although it is possible that this reworking process was happening before ditch 25268 had completely filled as this brickearth apparently formed a fill within the ditch.

The ditches hinted at regular division of this part of the gravel terrace, perhaps the corner of a rectilinear enclosure. However, they were of markedly different characters and it is speculated that 25098 constituted the major boundary and 25268 a subdivision, or even a drainage channel, within a wider system. Material collected from their fills indicated domestic occupation along with some metalworking. The supposition that the area was occupied was supported by the presence of well 17155 and pit 17329 ([but does it really belong in IIb?](#)), although structural remains were absent. The lack of further excavated features of this date was almost certainly due to the obscuring effects of the brickearth layers which were not removed over the whole of the 20m square.

The end of this sub-phase was marked by the activity which produced the 'upper brickearth', whether this involved its actual deposition or merely its churning up as suggested above. All the finds recovered from this layer were clearly mid-1st century AD (including nearly 350 sherds of pot, fragments of loomweight, flints, a quern fragment, etc.) This would include layers **17080, 17194, 17244, 17294, 17319, 17201, 17245**. If the transformation undergone by the surface of this layer was indeed so well defined (in time), it seems imply that the surfaces (both above and below) were continuous and protected this layer from further reworking/trampling through the later occupation.

Layers (17080, 17194, 17244, 17294, 17319, 17201, 17245)

17194	Samian platter f18 or Ritt.1 (SGSW) Other pottery beaker H1 (CGGLZ)
17244	Amphora salazon (ASALA) Other pottery fabrics GROG GRS MICW TR TN
17294	Pottery fabrics COLB BSW GROG
17319	Pottery fabric GROG
17201	Pottery fabrics GROG COLB BSW
17245	Pottery fabrics BSW GRS

The pottery was recovered in generally small quantity, but sufficient to provide a range of fabrics. These suggest that the layers were deposited between the early and mid 1st century AD. Context 17194 contained the latest pottery and is likely to have been formed at the end of this date range.

Ditch 25098

Linear cut 25098 was the only excavated major feature which ran on a due north-to-south alignment. It survived as two short, shallow lengths of interrupted ditch, 1.2m to 1.2m wide and up to 0.52m deep, separated from one another by a gap of 0.6m between two rounded terminals. This is unlikely to have represented an entrance. No further parts of this interrupted ditch were located to the north or south. It is likely that it continued no further south and probably formed a corner to an enclosure with east-west ditch 25268.

Both parts of this feature contained fragments of loomweight, pottery and animal bone in small quantities. Also present was ostensible evidence of metalworking in the form of slag, ?hammerscale and a 'lump' of copper alloy.

Ditch 25098 (17208, 17353, 17362)

17208	Pottery fabrics GROG MICW
17353	Pottery jar <i>Cam</i> 229 (GROG), fabric MICW

The pottery evidence, principally comprising grog-tempered pottery, is consistent with a Late Iron Age date.

Ditch 25268

East-to-west aligned linear feature 25268 was exposed in two slots (17401, 17324) through the overlying reworked brickearth deposit. Although slighter than ditch 25098, at only a maximum of 0.8m wide and 0.25m deep, it is likely that it formed the corner of a land division with 25098 and continued further east. However, the full extent of 25268 was not clear, being obscured 'within' the brickearth. Indeed, the nature of its fill suggested that it was still open when the reworking of the natural brickearth was going on. This feature contained a similar finds assemblage to ditch 25098.

Ditch 25268 (17401, 17324)

17324	Pottery jars <i>Cam</i> 256 (GROG) <i>Cam</i> 263 (MICW)
-------	--

A small amount of Late Iron Age pottery was recovered from this feature.

Well 17155

Circular cut 17155 was almost certainly a well, although it was not excavated to its full depth to be entirely certain. The 1.7m diameter cut was excavated to a depth of 1.73m and its size and profile compared favourably with the more certain example of a late Iron Age well (7220 in Area G; p xxx and Fig. Gxx). No internal timber structure was encountered, although its relatively complex fill sequence defined a gravel packing deposit around a 'shaft' of silt fills, implying the original presence of a square box-lining. The upper fills seemed to be a mixture of deliberate attempts to cap the shaft and slump accumulations, the latter implying some further, unexcavated, depth to the cut. No use fills were encountered, all deposits representing disuse. These contained large quantities of pottery, together with small amounts of bone. Along with a copper alloy brooch fragment (SF 5963), cast waste and slag were also collected. A complete pot (ref) was found in shaft fill (17070), but it is unlikely that this single artefact constituted a 'structured deposit'.

Well 17155

17155*	Amphora <i>salazon</i> (ASALA) Other pottery platter <i>Cam</i> 1 (TN(M)), fabric GROG Brooch Nauheim Derivative (SF 5963)
--------	---

In addition to the large quantity of grog-tempered pottery, a *salazon* amphora and Gallo-Belgic pottery were recovered, and suggest that filling commenced during or after the late 1st century BC. The absence of Roman wares suggests that deposition is unlikely to have continued beyond the middle of the 1st century AD.

Pit 17329

Cut 17329 was the only pit belonging to this sub-phase. Over 2m in diameter and apparently bottomed at 0.8m, it post-dated ditch 25098, cutting its northern terminal. It may be suggested, on the evidence

of its appearance in section (ref.), that this feature may have been the top of an under-excavated well, similar to adjacent well 17155. The excavated fills produced little material other than late Iron Age pottery and a clearly intrusive later 3rd century coin (SF 7455).

Pit 17329

17329	Amphora Pascual 1 (ARCAT) Other pottery beaker <i>Cam</i> 112 (NGWF), fabric GROG
-------	---

The pit contained a predominance of grog-tempered pottery, which, supported by the amphora and Gallo-Belgic pottery, dates the filling of the pit to the late 1st century BC to the early 1st century AD.

Surfaces (17074, 17143, 17231, 17232, 17233)

Small expanses of gravel which occurred between the brickearth horizons gave an appearance of being deliberately constructed, although they are not completely dismissed as being of natural origin. Late Iron Age pottery was collected from within and on top of these apparent surfaces. Survival of these deposits was too patchy to speculate on whether they were originally one surface, or on its function.

Layers 17074, 17143, 17231, 17232, 17233

17143	Amphora <i>salazon</i> (ASALA) Other pottery fabric GROG
17231	Pottery fabric GROG
17233	Pottery fabric GROG

The pottery recovered from these deposits can be given a broad late Iron Age date, probably no earlier than the late 1st century BC.

Sub-phase II b

Sub-phase II b has been defined primarily on the basis of changes in major landscape features, and features apparently associated. The phasing is supported by the absence of post-conquest finds assemblages from the fills of these.

The ditches of sub-phase II a were replaced by a distinctly different pattern of land-division, which consisted of two, repeatedly recut, substantial ditch lines, 25099 and 25181, running almost east-to-west, 15m apart. The paucity of contemporary features occupying the area between the ditches suggests that this was not the location of occupation by the mid 1st century AD, although it need not necessarily have been the case that Area A4 as a whole was empty. Small fragments of gravel surfaces were again found. It is possible that ditch 25181 bounded the eastwards course of converged Tracks 3 and 4. (Fig Q.xx) If this were the case, then the various post-holes and slots which occurred alongside the ditch could be construed to be parts of roadside fences. Contemporary ditch 25099 may then have marked Track 5's edge. This would give a 12m wide space between the tracks, with precious little sign of any artificial surface, but at least it might explain the paucity of activity in such a narrow space. If this were the case, the lines for the tracks would have converged just at the east edge of Area A4, some 400m east of Road 1. However, the lack of positive evidence for surfaces leaves this hypothesis somewhat speculative.

Oddly, there were no pits of this sub-phase (although 17329 may still have been partially open into this phase), which elsewhere on site usually saw the greatest density of pitting; it is likely that this was a reflection of the small area opened, given the distinct clustering noticed among pits within sub-phases, but it should be considered as possible support for the idea of the Area's not being occupied.

Ditch 25099 and recuts 25184, 25183

Cut 25099 was the earliest phase of a major east-to-west aligned ditch in the north part of Area Q. Although heavily truncated by later recuts 25184 and 25183, it survived to a maximum width of 1.15m and depth of 0.5m. Its original extent is estimated to have been in the region of 1.4m.

More substantial east-to-west linear cut 25184 was as much a re-establishment of the original cut as a simple recut. While largely following the northern edge of ditch 25099, it represented a massive enlargement, widening the ditch eastwards to approximately 3.0m and increasing its depth

slightly to between 0.6 and 0.85m. 25183 was a relatively minor recut within ditch 25184. A terminal was planned but not excavated, its presence indicating that this feature probably constituted a partial cleaning out rather than a full recutting operation. The finds from the fills of recut 25184 were dominated by pottery, with only small amounts of briquetage, daub and loomweight. Latest recut 25183 contained a significantly larger, though similar, assemblage supplemented by a brooch (SF 5970) and iron nail, glass sherd and 72g of *imbrex*. These latter inclusions, together with some pre-Flavian pottery, indicate a Romanizing influence toward the end of the life of this boundary.

The eastern extents of these features were not determined, having been removed by Victorian quarrying. Nor were the western extents of 25099 and 25184. However, together they constituted the remains of a major boundary feature which has actively been maintained for a period of time; perhaps as late as the later 1st century AD. Some fills were noted to have been waterlain which may suggest a drainage, as well as boundary, function. As discussed elsewhere, its principal importance is conjectured to be as a boundary feature, defining the line of converging Tracks as they left the eastern edge of the settlement (ref.).

Ditch 25099 (17318, 17343, 17364), **25183** (17257, 17314, 17412), **25184** (17315, 17340, 17344, 17348)

17318	Pottery fabric GROG
17343	Amphora Dressel 2-4 (ABSAN) Other pottery fabric GROG
17257	Pottery fabrics BSW GRS
17314	Amphora <i>salazon</i> (ASALA) Other pottery beaker <i>Cam</i> 94 (COLCE), fabrics COLB GROG Brooches Dolphin (SF 5970) Colchester B (SF 7872)
17412*	Samian bowl f29 (SGSW) Other pottery platter <i>Cam</i> 1 (TN(M)), mortarium D (VRWM), fabrics COLB NGWF
17315*	Pottery fabric GROG
17340	Pottery jar G3 (BSW), fabrics COLB GROG
17348	Samian Other pottery fabrics TR BSW NGWF GROG

Ditch 25099 contained small amounts of pottery, although of sufficient quantity to allow a Late Iron Age origin. The main episodes of filling occurred during the middle of the 1st century AD. This date is suggested by the overwhelming presence of grog-tempered pottery, and supported by smaller quantities of Gallo-Belgic and Roman wares, and brooches.

Ditch 25181 and recut 25179

Linear ditch 25181 ran slightly off a due east-to-west line along the southern edge of the excavated area, broadly parallel to, and 15m distant from, ditches 25099, 25184 and 25183. This original ditch, although severely truncated by recut 25179, was probably originally only 1.1m wide and survived to only 0.35m deep. A terminal, truncated by a later pit was found at the west end while the ditch was truncated to the Victorian quarrying 20m to the east.

The line of the ditch seems to have been re-established by recut 25179, a more substantial ditch, at 1.4 to 1.9m wide, although no deeper than 25181. This recut was not recognized in all of the segments excavated across this feature and it remains possible that this boundary had a more complex history than has been possible to reconstruct, as suggested by the differing fill sequences between the recorded sections. It is possible that recut 25179 did not extend to the very end of its predecessor. Although its precise limit was not determined, it may have terminated in a broadly parallel location to that of 25183, to the north.

Both phases of this ditch seem to have accumulated fills derived from the reworked brickearth. Whether this was due to weathering and slippage of this deposit into the partially open features, or to the brickearth being actively reworked and moved around during their life, is unclear.

Ditch 25181 (17055, 17086, 17410, 17411), **25179** (17009, 17055, 17183, 17185, 17195, 17198)

17055	Pottery platter <i>Cam</i> 22 (TN), jars G3 (BSW) G19 (BSW)
17086*	Samian Bowl Curle 11 (SGSW), cup f27 (SGSW) Amphora <i>salazon</i> (ASALA) Other pottery platter A2.4 (BSW), jars G19 (GRF) G20 (GRF), beaker H1 (GRS)
17009	Amphoras <i>salazon</i> (ASALA) Dr.2-4 (ABSAN) Other pottery platter A2 (GRS), beaker H1 (GRS), fabrics CGMIC PR GROG
17183	Samian beaker f67 (SGSW) Other pottery platter A2 (BSW)

17198*	Samian platters f15/17 (SGSW) f18 (SGSW) Amphora Dr.1 (AITAF) Other pottery platter A2.2 (BSW), dishes B7 (GRS) B8 (BSW), jars G3 (BSW) G18.2 (BSW) G19 (BSW) G20 (GRS) G22.1 (GRS) G29.3 (BSW), beakers H1.3 (BSW) H7 (BSW) H10.1 (NKG)
--------	---

The pottery from 17055, 17086 and 17009 can be dated to the mid 1st century AD, although the samian evidence from the latter suggests that these features may have continued to accumulate material into the later part of the century. A late 1st century date is given to 17183 and 17198, by which time the Dressel 1 amphora and grog-tempered ware are probably residual.

Structure 18: features 17135, 17129, 17121, 17119, 17162, 17141,

Few other features of this date were found within the excavated area. A small cluster of post-holes in the south-west corner of possible late Iron Age date may hint at the presence of a small structure just north of Ditch 25181. There were also post- and stakeholes along either edge of this southern boundary, some dated to the late Iron Age and cutting the first phase of ditch, others undated but occupying similar positions. From these, fairly flimsy fencelines could be construed.

By and large, the 12m wide area between the two major ditches was clear of discrete features such as post-holes and pits, indicating that their tentative identification as trackside boundaries is a tenable one.

17121 also appears in Building 43! – dubious structure.

Surfaces

Gravel deposits (17187, 17325, 17346, 17374, 17399), although fragmentary, were probably remnants of a single surfacing overlying the soft brickearth. It contained large pottery sherds deliberately included among its constituents, possibly as hardcore, which may suggest that these patches of surfacing were rather the remnants of the infill of holes and ruts along the track..

Layers 17187, 17325, 17346, 17374, 17399

17187	Pottery jar <i>Cam</i> 202/3 (GROG)
17346	Amphora Dr.1 (AITAH) Other pottery platter <i>Cam</i> 1 (TN(M)), fabric GROG

Pottery was recovered from just two deposits, and in small amounts. Context 17346 is the best dated; the amphora and Gallo-Belgic pottery providing a late 1st century BC to early 1st century AD date.

Brickearth

Include discussion of it here? At least allude to its 'strat' position.

Period III:

Although patches of gravel surface occurred within the sequence of Period III features, they were too fragmentary to use as a reliable sub-phasing criterion; it is not certain that this was a single event. A sub-phasing could be based on the existence of two, fragmentary post-built structures, Buildings 48 and 53, but neither was sufficiently certain to justify any division of the period, and no other features could have been associated with one rather than the other.

The layers recorded as a gravel surface formed an attempt at surfacing the area, not so substantial in its components as that in Period II, and surviving even more patchily, but recognized over a wider area. As this 'surface' included far more artefacts than did the previous one, one can only presume these were part of its original constituents rather than later accumulating in it.

The Period II b southern ditches were finally backfilled in the later 1st century, perhaps just into the 2nd, but both lines were essentially 1st century features.

The two major east-to-west ditch lines were still open, and accumulating material, though probably not actually recut, into the early Roman period. In fact, the area underwent another complete change of layout, with at least two successive buildings set across the southern ditch line. Sub-phasing here is based on these buildings, although it is not actually quite clear what the sequence between them is! There is also a clear sub-phase which must predate both.

Even if the details of the structures can be argued about, there can be little doubt that there were at least two buildings here of this date. If there was a building in the middle of an area which has no trace of any in the previous period, and where the ancient boundaries have recently been disregarded, we can see a fundamental change taking place.

The excavated pits of early Roman date do seem to occur in the vicinity of the defunct ditchline and adjacent to Buildings 48 and 53. These rubbish pits belong to the occupation in the area demonstrated by the buildings, but they do not give many clues as to the nature of the activities carried out, which are presumed to be basically domestic. Finds are chiefly pottery, though there is some other material, including bone, briquetage, cbm and a little slag. There is no real basis for sub-phasing the pits, as the pottery tends to be quite mixed among the fills of each one. They may appear more likely to be basically early in this period with slightly later top fills, but this may be a false impression.

Building 48

With the recut ditch 25179 now levelled, tentative Building 48 was constructed above. Its presumed plan shows it spanning the whole width of the plot previously defined by the parallel east-to-west ditches of Period II. Although superseding ditch 25179, Building 48 retained a similar alignment; this presumably being a reflection of this building's position and alignment along the edge of Track 3 / 4 and another indication of the latter's continuance.

Building 48 was a rather speculative structure comprising two opposing walls defined by post-hole and slot alignments. The north wall was defined by a line of post-holes all of which contained a distinctive clay packing material. The south wall comprised slot 17027, together with post-holes, none of which contained clay packing.

Together, these have been inferred to define a square building, perhaps with some kind of adjoining structure suggested by post-holes 17283 and 17134 which extended off at right angles to the north wall. Clay packing in 17134 would suggest that it is an integral part of the construction of the north wall. Admittedly there was little, if any, sign of east and west walls (except for 17389) and the association of the north and south 'wall' alignments are not certain. However, if these associations can be accepted, these structural features may be taken to form a single-roomed structure 8.5m square (72.25 m² floor area).

The pottery collected from the component features of this building suggests a 2nd century date and thus the later of the two buildings at this location. However, Post-hole 17291 (in Building 53) was cut into 17289, while post-hole 17238 was sealed by a gravel patch which might have been flooring

within Building 53, making Building 53 the later. Much of the pottery from post holes in both buildings reflects the contents of the layers into which they were dug, rather than being contemporary with construction.

Building 48 (17017, 17027, 17034, 17114, 17116, 17123, 17134, 17205, 17238, 17243, 17283, 17289, 17293, 17309, 17389)

17017	Pottery fabric BSW
17027	Pottery fabrics GRS GROG
17114	Pottery jars G5 (BSW), fabric NKG
17205	Pottery dish B4 (BSW), fabric COLC
17238	Pottery fabrics GRS NKG BSW GROG
17243	Pottery fabric GROG
17293	Pottery fabrics COLB GRS

Small amounts of poorly dated pottery were recovered from these features. Post-hole 17205 contained the best dating evidence; the presence of Colchester colour-coated ware and a dish form provides a date up to the mid 2nd century for the construction of the building. The remaining pottery is undiagnostic; the grog-tempered pottery and *terra nigra* ware in 17134 are almost certainly residual.

Gravel surfaces 17020, 17190, 17197, 17234, 17345, 17373

It is possible that some of the fragments of gravel deposits may have functioned as flooring within this building, or as external surfaces around it. It also seems that at least some of these patches of gravel were probably later, and more likely to be associated with Building 53.

Prepared surfaces 17020, 17190, 17197, 17234, 17345, 17373

17020	Pottery dish B2/B4 (BSW) jar G19/G20 (GRS), beaker H20 (LRC)
17190	Samian cup f35 (SGSW) Other pottery platter A2 (BSW)
17197	Samian cup f27 (PULSW) Other pottery dish B2 (GRS), beaker H1 (BSW)
17234	Pottery platters A2 (GRS), beaker H1 (GRS), fabric BB2

The pottery evidence provides a late 1st to early 2nd century AD date for the deposition of these surfaces. Context 17020, containing Lower Rhineland colour-coated ware and a dish, is among the latest. Most deposits yielded grog-tempered pottery, some of which was abraded and probably residual.

Building 53

Building 53 was a rectilinear structure construed to be some 22m long by 8m wide. Its remains comprised three linear arrangements of short shallow slots and post-holes. The slots were irregular and may originally have been created by the multiple replacement of posts in separate, or slightly intercut, post-holes, the successive creation of which ‘eroded’ away the edges to make them slot-like (or even burrowing animals making runs along the lines of standing walls? – discuss?).

The west wall was defined by slots and post-holes. The south wall, fronting on to Track 3 / 4, comprised a slot and more post-holes, with a possible doorway between 17125 and 17311. The north-east corner of this building may be marked by post-hole 17403.

Internally, a bisecting wall was defined by large post-holes dividing the building into two rooms each roughly 11m x 8m in area. Speculative east and north walls were defined only by the extent of these features.

Substantial post-hole 17230, which formed part of the interior partition wall, was the only component feature of this building packed with unworked stone. Located at the centre of Building 53 it could be construed to mark the position of a central load-bearing roof support.

Building 53 (17165, 17157, 17269, 17052, 17049, 17321, 17271 17030, 17083, 17125, 17311, 17291, 17357, 17370 17372, 17125, 17311, 17403, 17220, 17230, 12360, 17380, 17108)

17164	Pottery fabrics GRS GROG
17156	Pottery jars G19.2 (GRS)
17269	Pottery beaker <i>Cam</i> 112 (TR), fabrics GRS CGMIC

17051	Pottery fabrics GROG GRS
17049	Pottery fabrics GROG BSW
17320	Pottery jars G20.1 (GRS) G22 (BSW)
17271	Pottery fabric GROG
17125	Pottery fabrics STOR GROG
17357	Samian cup f33 (CGSW) Other pottery fabrics GRS NKG GROG
17210	Pottery fabric (GROG)
17230	Samian bowl f37 (CGSW) Other pottery fabric GROG
17360	Pottery fabric BSW
17107	Samian cup f33 (CGSW) Other pottery jar <i>Cam</i> 220 (GROG)

Much of the pottery recovered from these features could not be dated closely, although it is consistent with a 1st century AD date. A number of features contained samian and other Roman wares, which suggests that, on balance, building 53 was constructed during the second half of the 1st century. **Actually, the samian is coming out at early 2nd cent.**

Pits 17026, 17100, 17175, 17177, 17193, 17288, 17276 and 17297

All of the Period III pits lay to the west of Buildings 48 and 53. Most lay on or alongside by now defunct ditch 25181 and, perhaps more relevantly, alongside Track 3 / 4 in a small, intercutting, cluster. The earliest, pit 17297 may well have purposely been dug into the slumped terminal of the ditch. The others lay along the line of ditch 25184, cutting into its fills. Pits 17175 and 17297 were of similar proportion at around 1.4 m diameter and 0.3-0.4m depth. Pit 17177 was a more substantial oval cut of 3.0m maximum width and 0.9m deep. Pit 17026 was a an isolated sub-rectangular cut 1.8m long, 0.9m wide and only 0.16m deep. Feature 17193 was the largest discrete feature in Area Q; a roughly sub-rectangular oval cut some 2.4m by 2.15m and 0.55m deep. Its irregular base was covered with a deposit of gravelly clay which has been tentatively interpreted as a lining, rather than a fill, even though it did not extend up the sides of the cut. Whether this feature had a distinct primary function is unclear, though it was subsequently used as a rubbish pit. Its assemblage was principally composed of modest amounts of pottery and tile. Shallow intercutting pits 17288 and 17276 were both sealed by gravel surface 17234, north of ditch 25184. No finds were recovered from either of these.

These pits produced the bulk of the Roman material from this area. The finds assemblages were of a domestic character, composed mainly of pottery and animal bone, but also briquetage, tile, slag and a lead dribble (SF5975) from 17177.

Pits 17026, 17100, 17175, 17177, 17297

17026	Pottery jars G19.4 (BSW) G20 (BSW) G23 (GRS)
17100	Samian cup f27 (SGSW) Other pottery platter A1 (BSW), dish B7.1 (BSW), bowl C16.5 (GRS), jars G8.1 (GRS) G17.1 (GRS) G20.1 (BSW) G23.2 (BSW), flagon J3 (MWSRS)
17175	Pottery fabrics BSW GRS
17177	Samian platter f18 (SGSW), bowl f37 (SGSW), cup f27 (SGSW), beaker f67 (SGSW) Other pottery platter A2.3 (GRS), dish B7 (BSW), bowl C33.1 (BSW), jars G3 (BSW) G19.4 (BSW) G20.1 (BSW) G22.1 (GRS), beakers H1.6 (VRB) H10 (BSW)
17297	Samian platter f18 (SGSW), bowl f36 (SGSW) Other pottery dish B2.3 (BB2), jar G23 (BSW)

The pottery provides a late 1st to early 2nd century AD date for the filling of all pits, except 17297, which appears to date exclusively to the 2nd century, based on the presence of a BB2 dish.

Pit 17193

17193	Pottery jar G19 (BSW), beakers H1.6 (BUF) H34 (BSW), fabric BB2
-------	--

This feature contained a large amount of pottery dating from the late 1st to late 2nd century AD. Mid 1st century pottery in the clay-lining fill probably derived from ditch recut 25184 below, while that from the fill above dates this feature more reliably to the late 1st - 2nd century. Given that the pit cut gravel surface 17234, the early 2nd century is likely.

Other Structures

Slots and post-holes immediately west of tentative Buildings 48 and 53 may be the remains of two further structures (Buildings 42 and 43). However, their full form and relationship to the other buildings is unknown.

Building 42

It is possible that the slot and post-hole alignment defined by 17066, 17068, 17147 and 17097 was the surviving part of potentially the earliest building in this sequence. It apparently retained the north-south alignment of Period Ila ditch 25098, or else at least ran roughly at right angles to the Period IIb ditch 25099 rather than to converged Tracks 3 and 4.

Building 42 Beamslots 17066, 17068, 17097, 17147

17068	Pottery fabric GRS
17097	Pottery jars G20 (BSW) G24 (BSW), beaker H20 (UCC)
17147	Pottery fabric GRS

Beamslot 17097 contained the most and best dated pottery, providing an early to mid 2nd century date for deposition. The remaining pottery is undiagnostic, but consistent with the offered date.

Building 43

The second possible structure was a roughly rectangular arrangement of post-holes (17006, 17094, 17304, 17121, 17078, 17022, 17117, 17029 and 17296). However, if this was a real building, its alignment was at odds with anything else in this area.

Building 43 Post-holes 17006, 17094, 17304, 17121, 17078, 17022, 17117

17094	Pottery beaker H20 (COLC)
17078	Pottery fabric GRF
17022	Pottery fabrics BSW GRS
17117	Pottery fabrics BSW

Small quantities of largely undiagnostic pottery were recovered from most post-holes. A Colchester colour-coated ware beaker dates 17094 to the 2nd century.

Period IV (later 2nd to mid 3rd century):

The lack of Period IV features was in clear contrast to the preceding early Roman period. Evidence of activity in this mid Roman period was restricted to just one pit 17038, an isolated slot 17253 and a small number of post-holes. The ditches of preceding periods seem not only to have been filled in but, as was not always the case elsewhere, totally disappeared from the landscape and exerted no recognisable influence over patterning of features of this period. The virtual total absence of features later than the end of the 2nd century AD is very different from every other excavated area across the settlement. This may well signify either a westward shift or contraction of the occupied area, towards the centre of the settlement (in the vicinity of Areas H, I and J). Area P also evinces a similar, though less dramatic decrease in mid Roman activity, but its abandonment seems likely to have been a little later. This picture of abandonment of Area Q as an area of occupation may be reinforced by the presence of clayey-silt deposits overlying earlier features. These were distinct from the accumulated subsoil and topsoil and appear to indicate that soil formation of some sort was occurring at any time from the early 3rd century onwards, although it has not been possible to date these layers closely. This may have been as a result of the Area's abandonment and conversion to arable or pasture.

Pit 17038

Pit 17038 was a small, oval, cut 1.2m diameter and 0.6m deep. It contained a clay lining and a charcoal-rich fill at its centre. In view of the nature of its fills, it is possible that this feature was a very substantial post-hole rather than a pit. However, the finds assemblage included a substantial quantity of pottery and animal bone, and 2 human bones (juvenile femurs), together with tile, daub and quern fragments, in what appeared to be a deposit of domestic rubbish.

Pit 17038

17038*	Samian dish f31 (CGSW), cup f33 (CGSW) Other pottery dishes B1 (BSW), B2 (GRF), jar G5.6 (GRS), beakers H20 (COLC) H35 (GRF), fabrics NVC EGRHN
--------	---

A large volume of pottery was recovered and dates the filling of this feature to the late 2nd or early 3rd century.

Structural features (?Structure xx?)

Structural features recognized to be of Period IV date were scattered and lacked any patterning. Post-holes 17094 and 17064, with 17108 above the latter, contained later 2nd to 3rd century AD pottery. Post-holes 17132 and 17138 and short slot 17072, all cut into the top of pit 17193 may well be of similar date.

17064, 17094, 17108, 17132, 17138, 17072

17064	Pottery dish B2 (BB2)
17094	Pottery beaker H20.3 (COLC)
17108	Samian cup f33 (CGSW) Other pottery fabrics GRS BSW
17131	Pottery BSW GRS
17138	Pottery fabrics BSW GRS COLB
17072	Pottery fabrics BSW GRS COLB

The pottery, mostly comprising body sherds in undiagnostic fabrics, can not be closely dated. A dish provides a broad mid 2nd to mid 3rd century date for pit 17064, while post-hole 17094 is dated to the second half of the 2nd century.

Structure 49

The only other period IV feature was slot 17253. At 2.5m long, this minor slot contained a line of stake-holes in its base. This isolated structural feature was at variance with any prevailing alignments demonstrated by earlier features and remains uninterpreted.

Slot 17253

17253	Pottery fabrics BSW GRS
-------	--------------------------------

Undiagnostic Roman pottery was recovered from the feature.

Layers 17058, 17059, 17109, 17182, 17196, 17200, 17259, 17331 and 17322

Although fragmentary and to some extent differing in composition, these clayey silt deposits all overlay features of the preceding Periods. Together, they may constitute the remains of a soil which developed across Area Q from the 3rd century AD onwards.

Layers 17058, 17059, 17109, 17182, 17196, 17200, 17259, 17331, 17332

17058	Pottery fabrics BSW GRS
17109	Amphora Dr.2-4 (ABSAN) Other pottery fabrics GROG BSW
17196	Pottery fabrics GRS
17259	Pottery fabric STOR
17331	Pottery fabrics BSW GRS

These deposits yielded Roman pottery that can not be closely dated.

Period V:

No features of this date have been identified.

Period VI:

No features of this date have been identified.

Period VII

The whole eastern half of Area A4, in which Area Q was located, was found to have been quarried away in the post-medieval period. Large north-to-south aligned ditch 17179 (25182) seems to have delineated the western extent of this quarrying activity. Although the quarry was not archaeologically excavated, much of its fills were removed during the machine stripping of Area A4. This established that the ground had been dug out to a depth of at least 0.70m and that no traces of earlier archaeological remains survived below. The fills of ditch 17179 contained 19th and possibly early 20th century rubbish as did the quarry fills, albeit to a lesser extent. Judging from the nature of the surface geology in this area of the site, it appears that brickearth was the principal material exploited in this quarry. Extraction appears to have ceased as the underlying gravel was reached. The quarry covered an area in excess of 785sq metres - the north, south and eastern limits of which were not established. The edge of a similar quarry, a later 19th century gravel pit, was located within Drury's Crescent Road site (Wickenden 1986, 17 & 55).

The brickearths:

A note added to the Area Q phasing. The issues which surround the formation of these deposits have a great deal of bearing on the phasing of archaeological features in this area.

The two brickearth deposits covered the majority of Area Q. This is probably the best place to record thoughts on their nature and significance as their major importance here is their use as a means of separating out early features into sub-phases. In fact this sub-phasing was attempted but abandoned because the recorded relationships cannot be taken at face value and, even where technically 'true', may actually be misleading.

The fact is that the brickearths as soil deposits do not really belong in the late Iron Age, which is where they have been previously dated and discussed in reference to. They are not laid by human agency but are geological deposits. Their archaeological significance is that they display evidence of being reworked - probably in the late Iron Age, perhaps before and after too. In essence the lower brickearth, at least, should be viewed as a natural deposit pre-dating human activity on the site. The upper brickearth is really just the upper part of the lower deposit - it is the part which has undergone reworking by animals plodging about on it and perhaps people farming it and overlying soils.

Many Area Q features have been recorded in terms of being below, within, or above one or more of these brickearths. While this is, as mentioned above, technically true, analysis of the mechanism of the creation of the deposits shows that this relies on a simplistic concept of deposition and reworking taking place very rapidly - surely, this cannot be true. As recorded numerous times, definition between the two brickearths and with the features in/over/under them was very poor. I (MA) suspect that in many cases, particularly for smaller features with clayey, light-coloured fills the perceived relationships cannot be taken for granted.

I seriously doubt that any features really predated these brickearths. Erosion, backfilling with brickearth previously dug out and reworking of fills along with the reworking of the top of the brickearth all may produce this apparent relationship of being under, between or within them.

The presumed reworking of the surface of the brickearth, along with the soils on top, must have taken place at the same time as some features were being cut, used and backfilled. This would have aided the creation of indistinct contrasts between deposits.

Big features with coarse and/or dark fills may have survived this reworking better than others, thus while not being crystal clear they were able to be spotted as cutting through one or both the brickearths.

In conclusion, it is probably rather dangerous to base phasing of early features in Area Q on recorded stratigraphic relationships with this/these brickearth(s) unless we have an accurate date for the reworking of the upper brickearth and are absolutely sure of above and below relationships with it. In my view, features cannot be within or under the brickearths, they can only pre- or post-date its reworking (?or else be contemporary with this process?) - unless some or all of the brickearth is redeposited. However, it does appear a remarkable coincidence that all the features previously thought to be below the upper brickearth are earlier than all the features supposedly above it.

N.B. This all applies to the northern areas of A1 as well.

Further notes:

There are also gravel surfaces apparently below the early brickearth! It is all very well for cut features to have lost their upper parts but the incidence of layers is something else. Can these be natural deposits underlying the brickearth horizon? (They have pot!)

Addendum (SP); As a discussion of the mechanics of how the brickearths got there, the above is fine; however, their use as a stratigraphic horizon should not be lightly dismissed. The problems arose during debate about whether these deposits were deliberate human actions or 'natural'. It seems to me that although of course it is important to know how they got there, they are still important, and more importantly, dateable, either way. Every feature recorded as being below the upper brickearth (or, 'predating the reworking of the surface', as we now call it) is late Iron Age (mid 1st century at latest) which is also invariably the date of the finds within this upper layer (an exception is 17294 which is the feature that provoked much of this argument in the first place: I do not have any quick solution for it). No feature recorded as cut into the upper layer need be earlier than mid-late 1st century. As a dating horizon, I think the upper layer at least can still be used. It seems unlikely that the reworking episode could really have been continuous throughout the occupation of the area, and not produce a much more mixed finds assemblage within the layer itself and in the features (supposedly) under it. Quite what form the 'reworking' might take remains unclear. I do not see it as a deliberate deposit to level up the area, as was usually suggested on site. It may have been cultivated, however, or just subjected to an intensive amount of trampling, perhaps while flooded? But then this stops: why? A partial answer may lie in the apparent remains of gravel/cobble surfaces: if these were one solid surface, then perhaps the surface of the brickearth was no longer exposed after the conquest?

The lower layer might provoke more argument, except that excavation almost never got under it, so it really does not become an issue. However, away from Area Q, this issue may arise. The 'reworking' of the surface is an archaeological event, even if the soil that is being reworked is a geological deposit. And anyway, geological events can occur in archaeological time (Vesuvius erupting for instance) and still might require explanation, and affect the lives of the people living through them.

Nevertheless, the Q phasing now makes no reference to dividing out the features according to relationships to brickearth layers; as it happens, little difference is noticed between phasing on this (rejected) stratigraphy and the broad phasing using pot dates as the basis, nor in the sub-phasing which uses structural definitions.