

# Newnham College Buttery Cambridge

Archaeological Investigations and Recording



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**NEWNHAM COLLEGE BUTTERY**  
**Cambridge**

**Archaeological Investigations and Recording**

**NCB 05**

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*Between 20th June 2005 and 30<sup>th</sup> January 2006 a series of archaeological investigations were undertaken in advance of and during development works at the site of the former Kitchen and Buttery at Newnham College. The excavations revealed a buried medieval plough soil covering substantial earlier Romano-British ditches, the latter possibly representing several phases of an enclosure dateable by two distinct phases of pottery dumping circa. 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century and 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD. This implies Romano-British or Roman occupation within the close vicinity, perhaps associated with a nearby farmstead or settlement.*

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Figure 1. Site location

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## Introduction

Between 20th June 2005 and 30th January 2006 a team from Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook a series of archaeological investigations in advance of and during development works at Newnham College on Sidgwick Avenue (Figure 1). This took the form of an initial watching brief within the western car park of the college in June 2005 during the construction of a push-boring shaft and soak-away, plus a pit for the location of piling for a crane base at its eastern end. Following the discovery of a buried medieval soil and Roman features, the former construction pit was widened as part of an archaeological evaluation (Figure 5: *Trench 3*).

Subsequent watching briefs were undertaken between 31<sup>st</sup> August and 5<sup>th</sup> September 2005 during the excavation of a trench under the car park for the installation of service pipes to the south of the soak away (*Trench 4*), from 31<sup>st</sup> October and 9<sup>th</sup> November as contractors then began to dig a series of small hand-excavated and larger machine-cut pits for the foundation pilings of the new building, and then again on the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> December, during the excavation of another service trench across the college lawns to the east of the Clough Dining Hall. A final watching brief took place between the 26<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> January 2006 at the eastern end of the site during the cutting of several trenches for the installation of service pipes beneath the new kitchens.

All of the above work was carried out at the request of the college in order to fulfil the planning consent placed on the consent to develop. The development works involved the demolition and re-development of the former kitchen and buttery.

### *Location and Topography*

The development area (Area B) comprised the existing 1960's/70s buildings of the buttery and kitchen at Newnham College, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge (TL 4410 5787). An additional area that included the college car park (Area A) immediately to the west of the building site and fronting upon Sidgwick Avenue was looked at, the latter being the location for the temporary siting of a construction crane and the permanent siting of drainage and a soak-away (Figure 5: *Trench 3*). Immediately to the south-west of the new buttery building, and beneath the college garden lawn, lay another services trench.

The site ground surface here lay at an elevation of between 9.7 and 10.1m OD, the archaeological layers underneath being at depths of between 400 and 600 mm, with geology (natural) between 0.5 and 1 m deep. The latter consists of gravels of the Second Terrace deposits of the River Cam. At depth these gravels overlay Gault Clay (Figure 2).

### *Archaeological Background*

A desktop assessment undertaken by the CAU in advance of the Newnham College Library redevelopment outlines the history of land use at Newnham College, and indicates the high potential of finding Roman and Anglo-Saxon archaeology on site (Whittaker 2000). Following this an assessment of the Sidgwick Site, just 200 m to the west of the Newnham College Buttery and on the north side of Sidgwick Avenue was undertaken in March 2001, in advance of further development of this 'campus' (Hall 2001). The latter study outlined the potential for archaeology in the light of recent discoveries and excavations in West Cambridge, such as that of the 7<sup>th</sup> century Saxon burial ground at King's Garden Hostel, West Road and the Roman settlement off the



- A. Alluvium
- 4. 4th terrace gravel
- 3. 3rd terrace gravel
- 2. 2nd terrace gravel
- 1. 1st terrace gravel
- Lc. Lower chalk
- G. Gault clay



Figure 2. Simplified geological map of West Cambridge



Madingley/Clerk Maxwell Roads (Figure 3). Earlier records of Roman, Saxon and Early Medieval finds within the Newnham College area have been compiled from a variety of different sources including the catalogues of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (Cambridge), and from the work of Fox (1923), Browne (1974) and Liversidge (1977).

### Prehistoric

The gravel terraces of the Cam appear to have been favoured for settlement within the prehistoric period (Fox 1923). Locally this is supported by the discovery as stray finds of a Mesolithic flint axe or adze on Newnham Terrace and a Neolithic stone axe within the garden of 'The Loft', both sites to be found on the outcrop of the 1st. Terrace Gravel. A single flint scraper was recovered from the spoil of an evaluation excavation carried out by CAU on the site of the Law Faculty Building, Sidgwick Site (Dickens 1993). This was an area of the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Terrace Gravels much disturbed by post-medieval quarrying (Figure 2).

Dated Bronze Age finds and areas of activity are more rarely found in this area of West Cambridge. A single Bronze Age pit was found at King's Garden Hostel, West Road (Dodwell 2001), close to the junction of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Terraces, but otherwise the nearest areas of Bronze Age activity are those reported from New Hall (Evans 1996) and Jesus College (Whittaker 1999). A stray find of a Bronze Age rapier was found somewhere along Grange Road during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Museum id. No. Z29091).

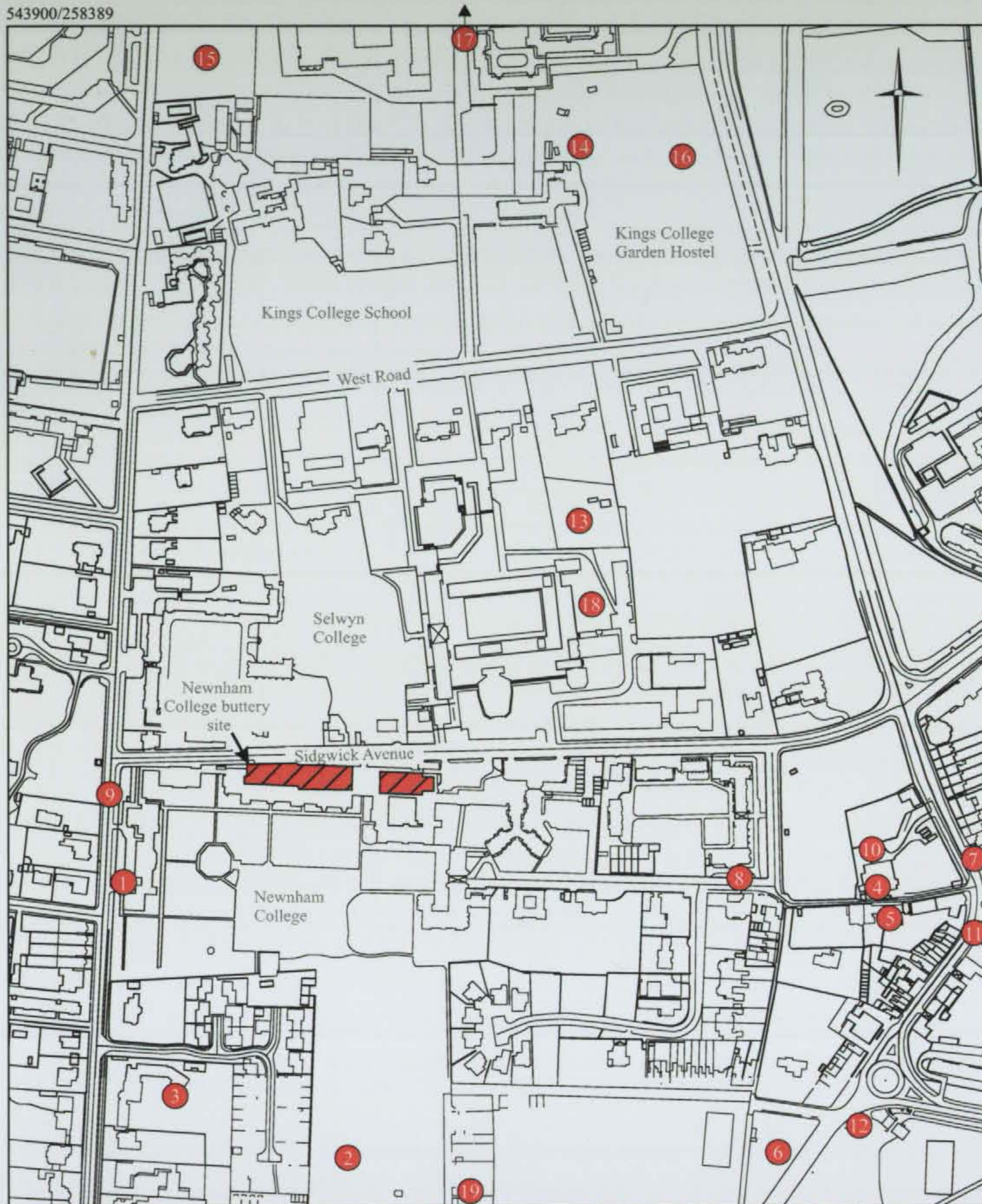
Although the main focus of Iron Age activity in Cambridge appears to be confined to the high ground around Castle Hill and Huntingdon Road, where excavations have revealed evidence for a Late Iron Age settlement (Evans 1996, Mortimer & Evans 1997), there are at least some indications of an Iron Age presence within Newnham, and along the western edge of the Cam. At Newnham Croft, some 400 m south of Newnham College, within the grounds of St. Mark's Church on the Barton Road, a richly endowed Late Iron Age (3<sup>rd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) burial was discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fox 1923). In addition, supposedly prehistoric (Iron Age?) as well as Saxon burials have been reported from the Newnham Playing Field (Browne 1974), but no precise details of these finds are known. Just to the north of here at Burrell's Walk 'prehistoric activity' has also been encountered (Gdaniec 1992), whilst on the University Library site, a possible Late Iron Age/ Romano-British ditch was found during an archaeological evaluation preceding the construction of the Western Bookstack Range (Gibson 1996). However, as yet, no clear picture has emerged of Iron Age settlement within this area of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Terrace bounded by the Gault lands of Barton Farm to the west and the Cam to the east.

### Roman

Quite a different picture emerges of Roman activity within the immediate area of Newnham College. The fair scatter of Roman finds may be representative of several small settlements within the hinterland of the Roman town, some perhaps associated with a river crossing in this area (Hall 2001), whilst others might be associated with the course of Akeman Street which is thought to run in a NE-SW alignment to the west of King's Garden Hostel on West Road (Evans 1991). Recent excavations at Vicars Farm on the Madingley Road, for example, has revealed evidence for an important Roman settlement occupied from the late 1<sup>st</sup> – early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, the latter consisting of a rectilinear system of ditched enclosures and semi-open fields, with an aisled building, timber post circle (possibly a shrine) and an inhumation and cremation cemetery (Lucas and Whittaker 2001). Such evidence would appear to suggest a much higher density of



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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Roman burials and pottery (cemetery?)      | 11. Newnham Hall   |
| 2. Iron Age pottery and burials               | 12. Neolithic axe  |
| 3. Roman pottery                              | 13. Flint scraper  |
| 4. Medieval pit                               | 14. Bronze Age pit   |
| 5. Neolithic stone axe                        | 15. Iron Age / R. B. ditch (Univ. library)                       |
| 6. Roman coins                                | 16. Anglo Saxon cemetery   |
| 7. Roman coins                                | 17. Romano British settlement / farmstead (Burrell's field)      |
| 8. "Froshlake Way" Medieval and earlier route | 18. Roman pottery (2nd - 4th Century) and Saxon settlement       |
| 9. "Long Balk" Medieval and Roman(?) route    | 19. Iron Age / Romano British and Saxon burials at Newnham Croft |
| 10. Medieval Manor (Mortimer House)           | 20. 14th Century pottery (24-38 Newnham Road)                    |

Figure 3. Site map after Whittaker (2000) and Hall (2001) based on O.S. 1:2500 map



occupation surrounding the central 'hub' of Castle Hill than previously thought. In spite of this, in West Cambridge we appear to have a much more diversified Roman landscape.

The Newnham settlements are suggested by a number of finds. Roman burials were uncovered during the building of 'Saxmeadham', 71, Grange Road, some 200 yards from the St. John's raquets courts (Walker 1912), whilst on the same road approximately 300m to the south-west of Newnham College, Roman pottery was found in 1954 (Whittaker 2000: ref. artefacts in Museum Arch. & Anth.). From gardens on the Newnham Road within the vicinity of the college a number of Roman coins have been uncovered. This includes a 3<sup>rd</sup>. Brass of Maximum (Museum id No.1927.1696) from 'Dr. Joan Cooper's house' (Whittaker 2000). Roman pins and a bronze brooch key were unearthed somewhere within Newnham at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but no precise find spots for these are known (Museum id. No. 1899.114/115 & 1927.1696). At Newnham Croft, 400m to the south of the College, various other Roman finds have been made. To the north of West Road, excavations at Burrell's Field in 1992 revealed a density of finds (most of it 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD pottery) associated with a series of boundary and drainage ditches indicating a significant Romano-British settlement somewhere within the vicinity. A farmstead was suggested, perhaps extending beneath the present day Robinson College (Gdaniec 1992a).

Roman 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century pottery, glass and tile were recovered during excavations undertaken in 2002 at the 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> century AD Saxon settlement on the site of the Institute of Criminology (Sidgwick Site), less than 200 m to the north-west of the present Newnham College Buttery development (Dodwell et. al. 2004). Whilst no actual Roman structures were identified here, these finds do however suggest the presence of settlement within this general area.

A considerable amount of poorly localised Roman pottery and other finds have been recovered from the grounds of Newnham College itself, much of which has been catalogued by the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. This includes finewares such as Castor, Samian and New Forest Wares, as well as 'domestic' coarse-wares and colour-coated fabrics, some including rims from large storage jars (Museum id. No.Z23009-Z23013). Metalwork finds from the College include some bronze vessel fragments and a 3<sup>rd</sup>. Brass of Constantine (Museum id. No.Z26379). Museum catalogue records suggest that these finds, along with some of the pottery, came from 'excavations' carried out in 1939 linked to the construction of the College air raid shelters (Whittaker 2000).

It seems probable that both Roman burials and associated pottery assemblages were found approximately 100m south-southwest of the investigation area during the construction of these air raid shelters. Labels attached to some of this pottery, such as 'Trench II, below 27 ft.' (Museum id. No. Z23010), now appears misleading in the absence of any other documentation. Rather than actual depth, this probably relates to the lateral extent of the trenches (Whittaker 2000). Although no further detail relating to these graves appears to have been recorded officially, an account of the discovery of burials within 'A Newnham Anthology' (Philips 1979) is probably referring to the same event. Within this an old student of the college writes of cleaning the bones (on Whitsunday 1939) of skeletons recently recovered from excavated burials found at the front of Piele Hall (located along the western side of the college fronting onto Grange Road). One of these graves contained two adult skeletons intermingled, whilst another contained the body of a man, woman and child lying side by side. It seems reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the artefacts (pottery) donated to the museum in 1939 and recorded as having come from 'Trenches I & II', may actually have been found at the same time, and in the same location as the burials described above (Whittaker 2000). Liversidge (1977) spreads a little

bit more light on this. She describes four skeletons that were found at Newnham College in 1938, close to *but not directly associated* with Romano-British pottery. Despite the inconsistency in the date, it seems possible that these two separate references to the graves actually relate to the same event/excavation.

Yet another example of Roman fineware from Newnham includes a collection of Samian sherds deposited within the Museum and labelled simply as being from the 'Foundations of Newnham College' (Whittaker 2000). One of these sherds was stamped with the letters ANTICVI (Museum id. No. Z25207). If this discovery had been made at the time of the laying of the college foundations, this recovery of material could date from some of the earliest building on-site (post-1875). However, the vagueness of this reference doesn't really provide us with any clues as to its probable findspot location.

### Saxon

The occurrence of Anglo-Saxon settlement is extensively recorded along the terraces of the River Cam (Pollard 1995), and recent archaeological work in the close vicinity of Newnham College indicates the potential for finding either settlement or cemetery remains. Excavations at the site of the Institute of Criminology in 2002 discovered a hitherto unknown Anglo-Saxon settlement of the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, located some 300m to the north east of the investigation area (Dodwell et al 2004). It is thought that this settlement may be associated with a small cemetery of probably 7<sup>th</sup> century date, located 600m to the north east of the investigation area on the site of King's College Garden Hostel, West Road (Whittaker 1999). A total of 21 graves, some with grave goods were excavated during 2000. Also on the west bank of the Cam, some 500m to the north of here, another important cremation and inhumation cemetery dating from the mid 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD has been located under St. John's College Playing Field. Inhumations of possible Saxon date have also been found beneath the Newnham Playing Field, just to the south of the College grounds (Browne 1974). No detail of exactly where these remains were found, or of the graves themselves was ever provided. However, 300-400m south of here, another Saxon cemetery was located at Newnham Croft on the Barton Road. The overall picture here is one of burial grounds located along this strip of land to the west of the River Cam, but relatively little evidence of settlement in this quarter.

Given the ephemeral nature of Anglo-Saxon material remains it seems unlikely that chance discoveries of finds from this period would be noticed or recorded within the grounds of Newnham College, and as yet no potsherds appear to have found their way into the existing pottery collections. However, the possibility remains that at least some of those undated burials found within the college grounds belong to this period.

### Medieval

The site of Newnham Mill, approx. 400m to the east of the College, is known to have been pre-conquest in date, originally owned by Ediva the Fair, with Count Alan of Brittany named as the mill owner at the time of the Domesday survey (Hall & Ravensdale 1976). During the Saxo-Norman period this area is still sparsely populated, although settlement begins to nucleate around the mill and the area of the Malting Lane and Newnham Road junction. By contrast, those lands to the east of the river enclosed by the King's Ditch were rapidly becoming a proto-urban complex.



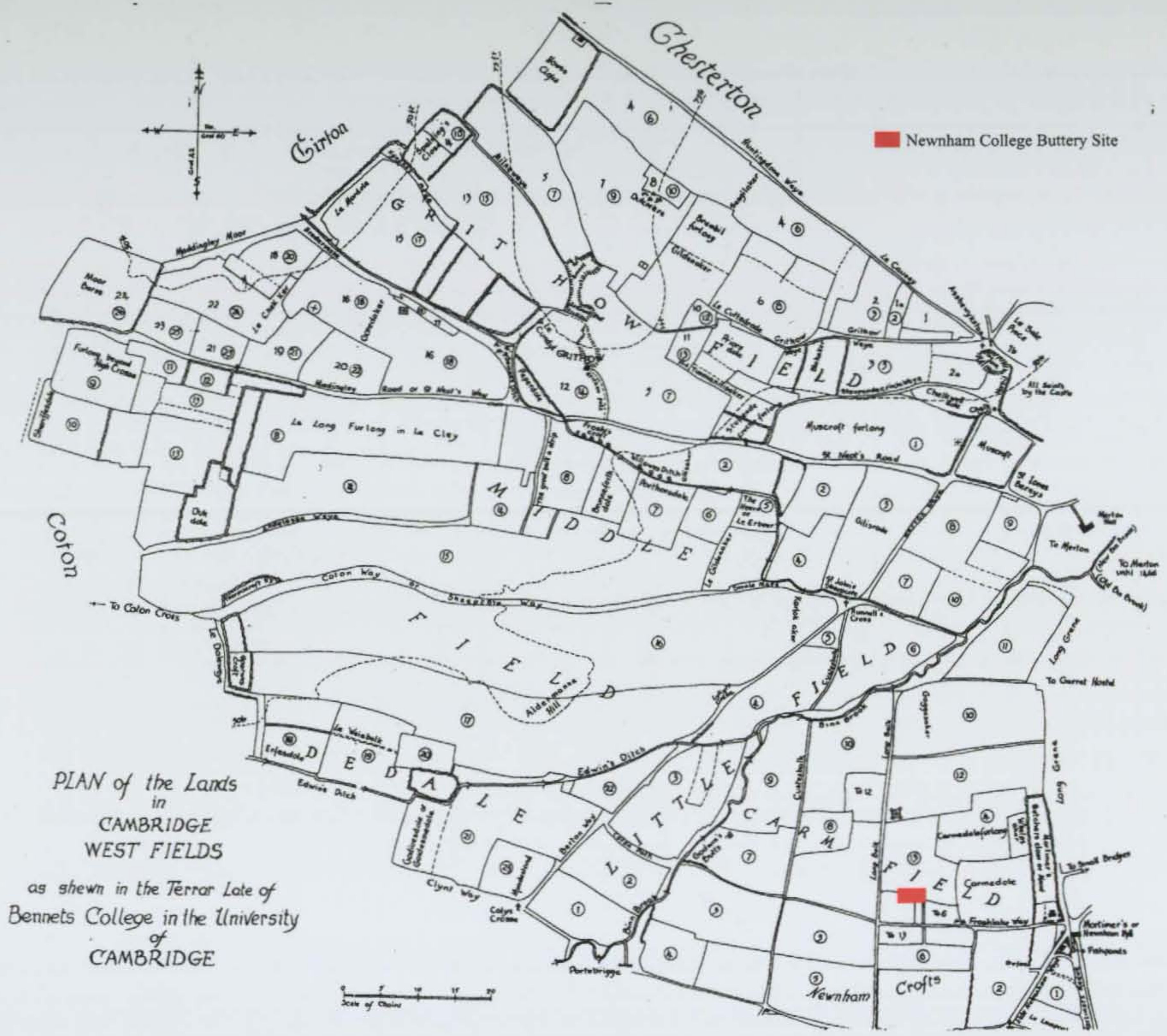


Figure 4. Plan of the Land in Cambridge West Fields in the 14th Century. (Hall and Ravendale 1976)



At the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century a manor house, Mortimer Manor (Hall & Ravensdale 1976), had been built in early Newnham, close to the site of the mill. Later on during the 13<sup>th</sup> century this was occupied by the religious order of the Carmelite Brothers. Although they relinquished the site in 1311, returning this to the Mortimer family, the evidence of their brief presence here continued in the form of field names such as 'Carm Field' (mentioned in the Hundred Rolls of 1279). The use of this name continued up into the 14<sup>th</sup> century and described a large area of extensive open-field agriculture underlying present-day Newnham College. This was part of the 'West Fields of Cambridge', a plan of which was produced by Hall & Ravensdale (1976) based on the 'Corpus Terrier', a document listing the titheable lands belonging to Corpus Christi College in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 4).

Some of the modern lay-out of Newnham, in terms of boundaries and lanes, can be recognised within this medieval field plan. Both Newnham Walk and Malting Lane were originally part of a Medieval track known as 'Froshlake Way'. This east-west track passes through the grounds of Newnham College, as it did right up until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the College closed it off with the development of Piele Hall and the frontage to Grange Road. Grange Road itself follows the course of the Medieval track 'Long Balk'. This was an area once owned by St. John's Hospital; land which was later passed onto St. John's College, subsequently to Newnham. Excavations were carried out within the grounds of Ashton House and Newnham House in 1991 looking for the foundations of Mortimer Manor. No evidence of this was found, although medieval pits with 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century pottery were encountered, suggesting that Malting Lane was probably an established Medieval street (Gdaniec 1992b). A recent archaeological investigation undertaken at 34-38 Newnham Road, some 50m to the south of Malting Lane and just to the west of Newnham Mill suggests the presence of an established medieval 'place' outside of the cultivated West Fields (CAU 2006 forthcoming). A pond or large cess pit here produced evidence of 14<sup>th</sup> century pottery and had been infilled from the northeast, suggesting the dumping of occupation refuse from around Malting Lane and the former area of Mortimer Manor.

#### Post-Medieval

The development of the land during the post-Medieval period in the area known as West Fields can be traced cartographically from 1574 and 1575, the dates of the earliest productions of maps by Lyne and Braun. Prior to that, we have evidence from the 15<sup>th</sup> century land registers that a number of tenements stood along the road frontage of the Manor and paid rental to Mortimer (Gdaniec 1992). The area now covered by Newnham College is not shown, but the area to the east of it is depicted as open fields with animals grazing. On D. Loggan's map of 1688, Newnham appears little changed, although the settlement around the Manor and Mill has grown and is now partly enclosed by gardens and orchards. All the land to the west of here is now shown as cultivated, or at least put to the plough. This has the appearance of a ridge and furrow system, the orientation of this being west-southwest to east-northeast. It seems likely that this area of cultivation also covered those lands now occupied by Newnham College, the site of which lay another 300-400m beyond the western edge of this map.

The first map of the latter area appears in 1830 (R.G.Baker's map of Cambridge), following the land enclosure awards of 1801-7. The area on which the College now stands is still shown as arable or pastoral land, with an east-west field boundary along the line of the current Sidgwick Avenue, whilst the former medieval track of 'Froshlake Way', later to become Newnham Walk, is shown as a footpath (Whittaker 2000). The College moved to its present site in 1875, the first building being the South Hall, followed by the North Hall in 1880, on the opposite site of



Newnham Walk. This could still be driven down as late as 1884, thus the Piele Building must post-date its closure. The construction of Sidgwick Avenue dates from around 1890-1900, as on the 1901 O.S. revised version it is shown as completed.

## **Overall Methodology**

The investigations were carried out in accordance with a specification of work by R. Standring (ECB 1954) following a design brief for archaeological evaluation produced by the office of Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning & Countryside Advice (Gdaniec 2005). The progress of the evaluation and subsequent watching briefs of the site were monitored by the County Archaeological Office (CAO) of Cambridge County Council. All features and sections were cleaned by hand and recorded using the CAU modified MOLAS recording system (Spence 1990). Plans were drawn at 1:50 and sections at 1:10. Work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory Health and safety legislation and with recommendations of SCAUM (Allen and Holt 2002). The site code was NCB05.

The work was undertaken in four phases :

*Phase 1* consisted of an archaeological evaluation carried out within the College car park to the west of the old Buttery. This work was undertaken by Nick Armour for CAU between 20<sup>th</sup> and June 2005.

*Phase 2* consisted of a continuing watching brief within the same car park following the cutting of pipe trenches for the insertion of services to the new Buttery. This work was undertaken by Dave Webb between 31<sup>st</sup> August and 5<sup>th</sup> September.

*Phase 3* consisted of a two further watching briefs; the first undertaken during the cutting of a series of machine-cut pits and small hand-dug pits for the foundation pilings of the new Buttery (31<sup>st</sup> October – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2005), the second associated with the cutting of a service trench across the lawn of the College to the east of the Clough Dining Hall (7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> December 2005). The work was undertaken by Dave Webb for CAU.

*Phase 4* between 26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2006 consisted of a final watching brief undertaken by Dave Webb at the eastern end of the site during the cutting of several further trenches for the installation of service pipes.

Figure 5 shows the locations of Phases 1-4 evaluation and watching briefs.

## **PHASE 1 EVALUATION**

### *Methodology*

As part of the archaeological evaluation a single trench 3.50m x 4.00m was to be excavated within a car parking area outside of the building footprint in order to test the location of a soak-away and push-boring shaft. Having removed the asphalt and overburden underlying the surface of the car park, a mechanical excavator was utilised to excavate down to the top of the

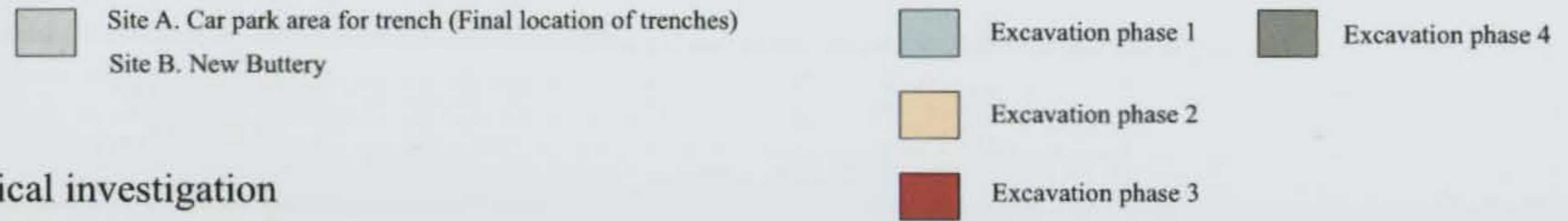
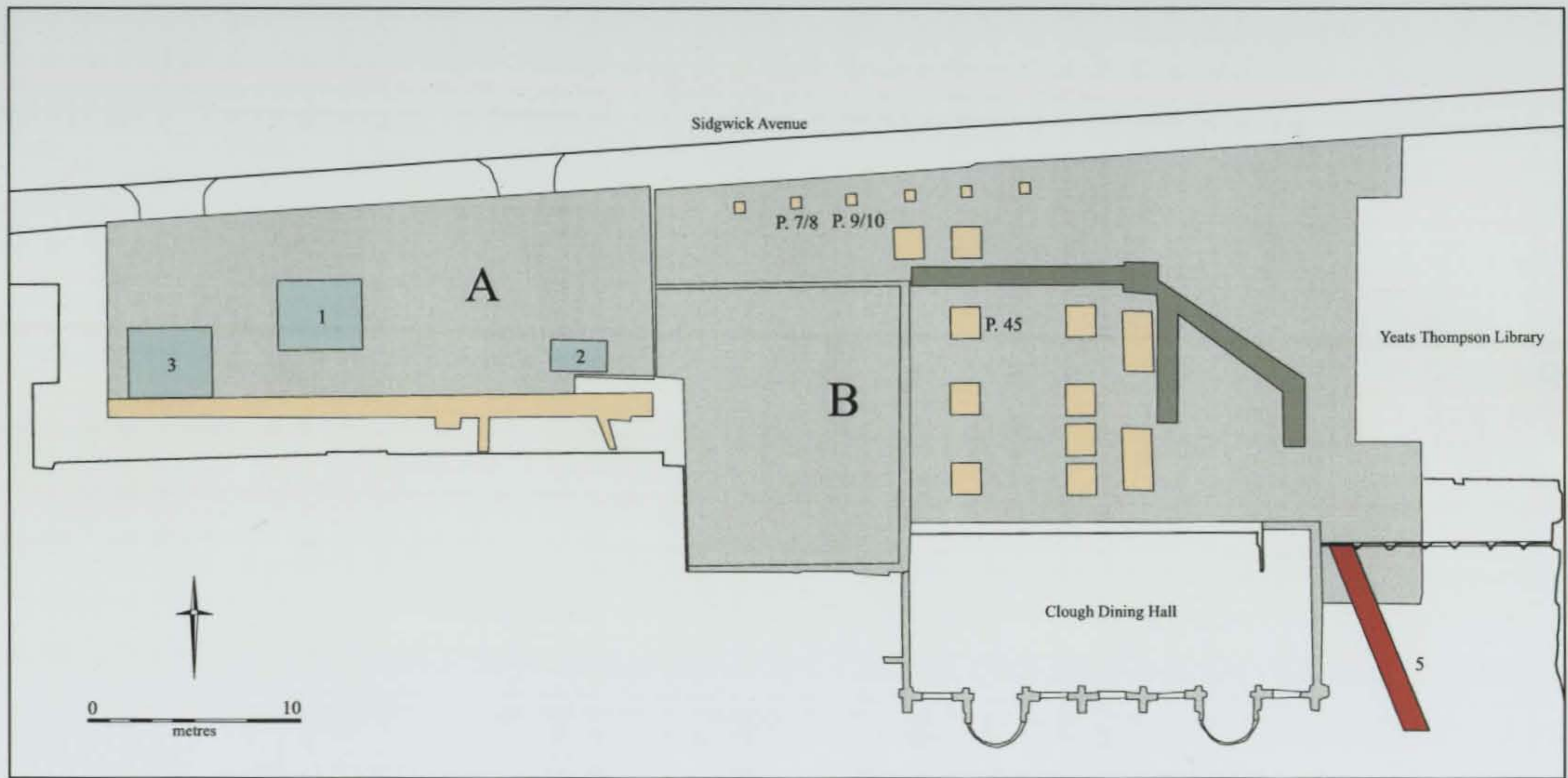


Figure 5. Areas of archaeological investigation



archaeological horizon. A baulk approximately 1.00m x 1.50m x 0.15m was to be left *in situ* to enable the hand excavation of a possible buried soil. Soil samples were taken to enable the recovery of environmental data. An additional 2m<sup>2</sup> trench was to be dug some 12 m to the west of the evaluation in advance of the insertion of the pilings for the base of the crane.

## **Results**

### **Trench 1**

Trench 1, as the intended archaeological evaluation, was opened up in an area indicated by the Tree Preservation Officer as less likely to impact upon the root systems of adjacent trees. Once the asphalt and underlying hardcore base of the car park had been removed it soon became clear after some initial investigation that a significant number of tree roots were present. Following a meeting with the Tree Preservation Officer this trench was abandoned. However, some impact had been made approximately 0.20 m into a deposit thought to be a post-medieval plough soil, context [101]. Finds recovered from this layer indicated a soil mixed with post-Medieval ceramic building material and occasional residual sherds of Romano-British and post-Medieval pot. Several iron nails or pieces of ferrous material were recovered through metal detecting the trench spoil. Having been examined, the tree roots were protected with soil and the trench was backfilled with class one aggregate.

### **Trench 2**

Trench 2 was excavated to ascertain the nature of tree roots in the vicinity of the temporary crane base to the eastern side of the car park. A machine slot approximately 1.20m x 2.00m was opened up through the car park asphalt and underlying rubble to a depth of 1.00m. This impacted on a post-Medieval plough soil [201], dated through the inclusion of a sherd of Babylon post-Medieval pot and other contemporary pot and clay tobacco pipe fragments and beneath this, a possible buried Medieval soil [202]. The only finds recovered from this latter layer were Romano-British grey ware potsherds, all of which were clearly residual in this context.

### **Trench 3**

Trench 3 was located within an open area about 3m to the west of Trench 1, and was chosen as an alternative location for the soak-away and push-boring shaft. Given its greater distance from the base of the protected tree(s), there seemed a much better chance that the hole could be dug here unhindered, and the archaeology properly examined. The eventual size of the trench was 3.90m x 3.30m.

On removing the asphalt and hard-core rubble base, the underlying deposits were then excavated by machine to a depth of approximately 1.00m, at which level both natural sands and archaeological deposits were encountered. As previously identified in Trenches 1 and 2, the post-medieval and medieval buried soils were also located in Trench 3. For this reason a baulk approximately 1.00m x 1.50m x 0.15m was left here *in situ* to enable hand excavation for the recovery of finds. The north-west corner of the trenched area contained a drain and tree roots, so it was decided to leave this area untouched.



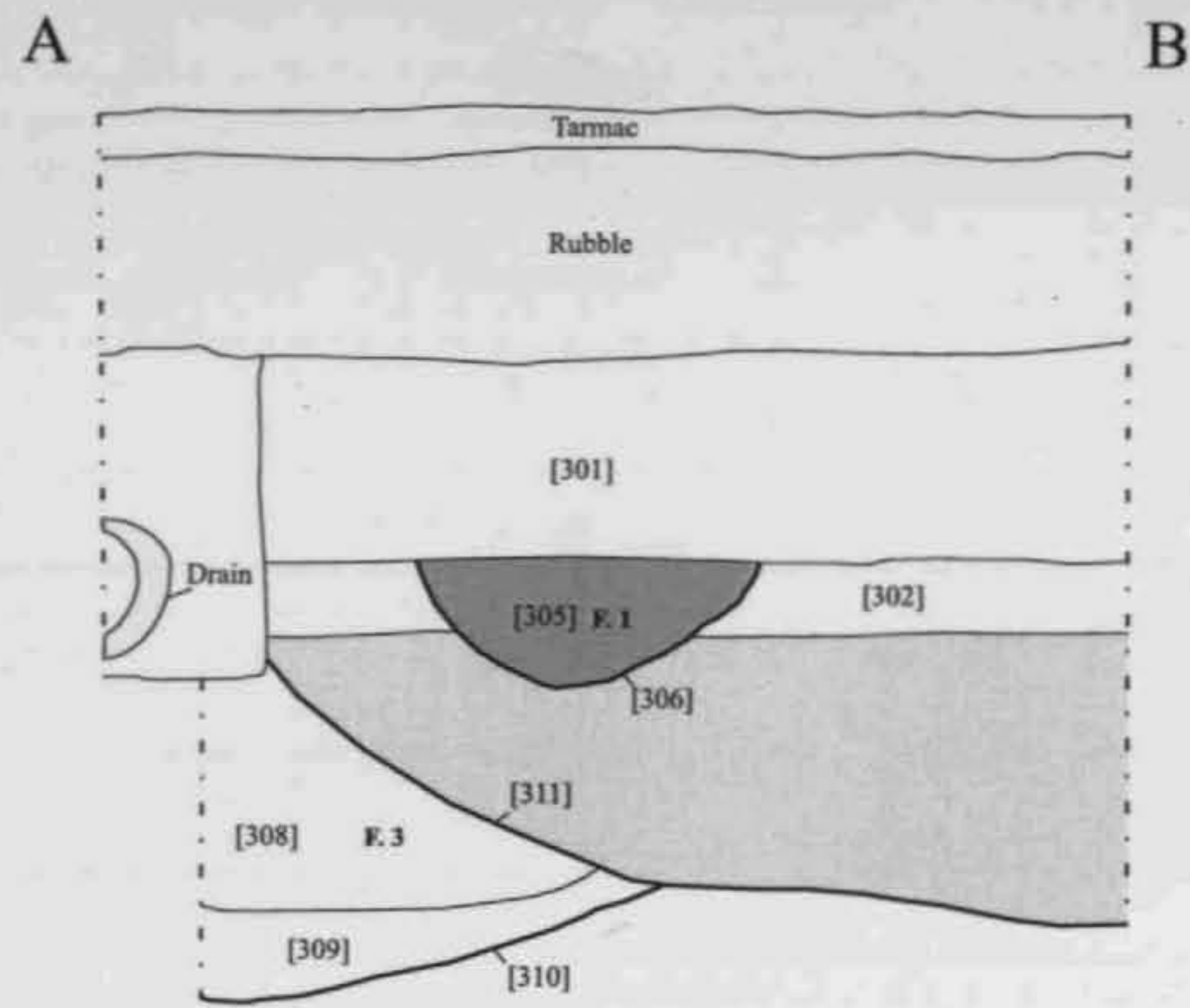


Figure 6a. Section of Trench 3

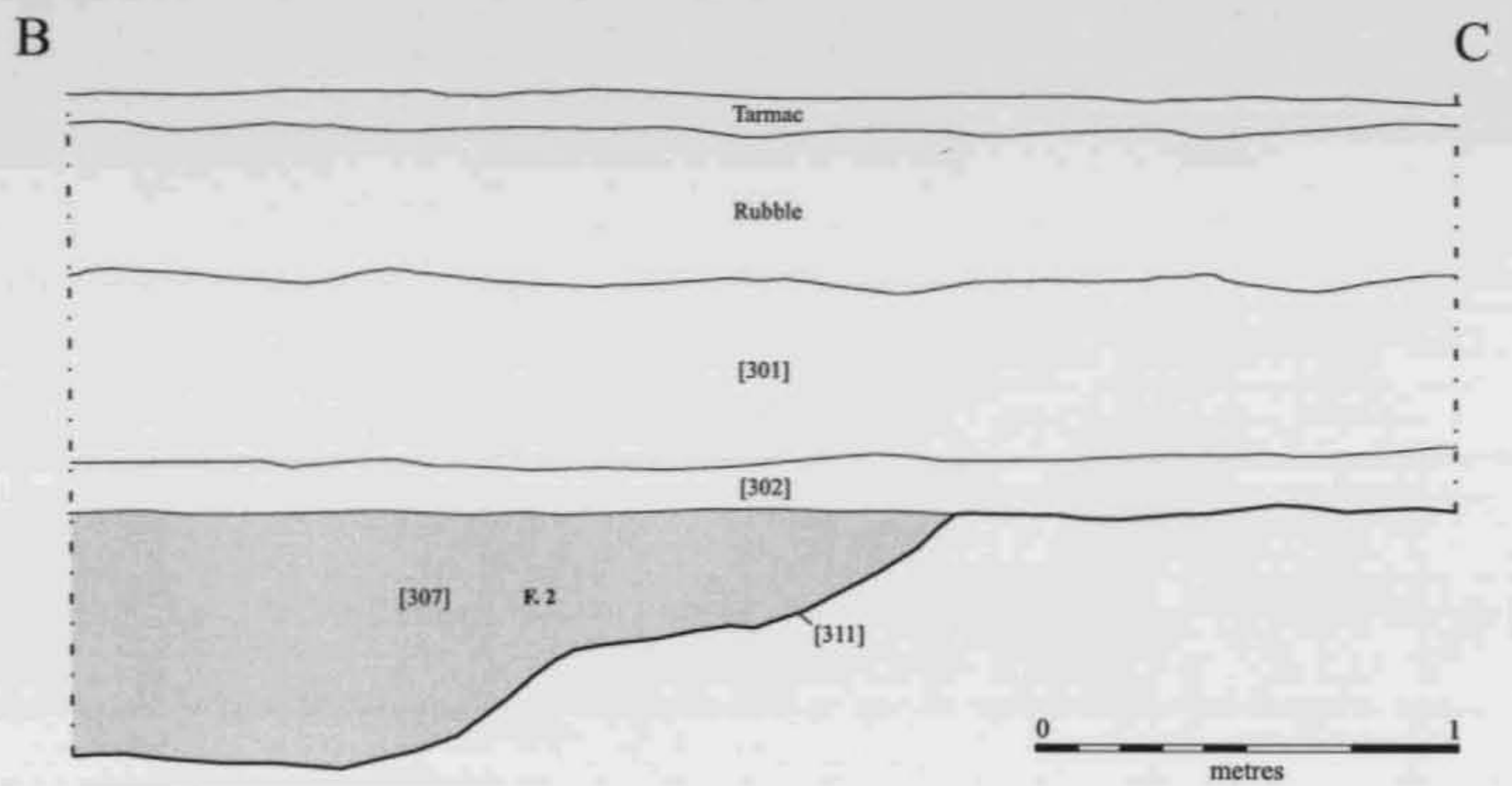
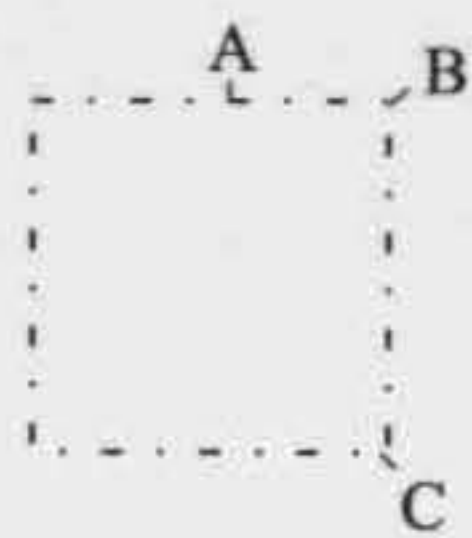


Figure 6b. Section of Trench 3



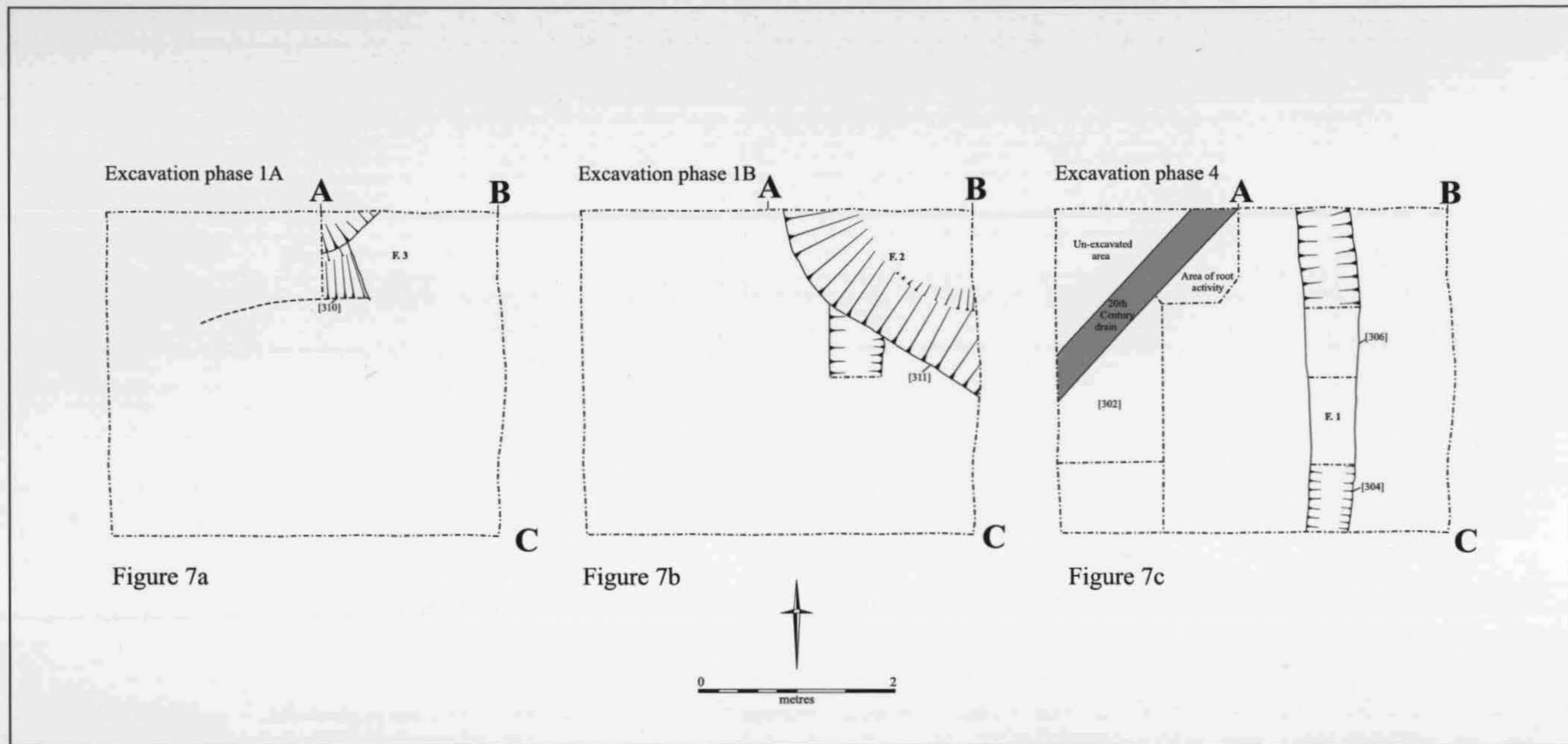


Figure 7a-c. Plan of Trench 3 : Phases 1a - 1b and phase 4





Figure 8. West facing section of Trench 3 showing ditch F. 2



Layer [302] was comprehensively sampled for finds by systematically hand sifting an approximate 10% area of the deposit. This resulted in the recovery of 14 sherds of Romano-British pottery and 2 intrusive sherds of post-Medieval pottery, the latter probably derived from the insertion of a field drain through the sample area. The small and abraded nature of the sherds suggests a heavily utilised soil. It appears likely therefore that this represents the remnants of a (Romano-British and) Medieval plough soil. Whilst this same area (*Trench 3*) was being cleaned prior to excavation, five sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered including the base of a *Terra Nigra* dish with a makers stamp. This type of pottery is typically found in Britain during the Late Iron Age and early post-conquest periods, suggesting therefore the presence of early occupation nearby.

Upon examination of the remaining area of Trench 3, three discrete archaeological features were identified and excavated.

Feature F.1 was a linear cut [304/6] aligned north to south with shallow concave sides and a base which cut across layer [302] and truncated deposit [307] (Figures 6a + 7c). The cut was filled with [303/5] which consisted of a mid-brown silty sand with occasional inclusions of small sub-angular stones. The pottery recovered from this fill gives an early post-Medieval date to this feature which correlates well with its cutting of the earlier relict plough soil and so helps verify the stratigraphic sequence of Trench 3.

Feature F.2 was interpreted as a ditch terminal end comprising of cut [311] and fill [307], which was a mid brown sandy silt with a yellowish green hue and moderate inclusions of soft white limestone fragments (Figure 6a-b + Figure 7b). This deposit was seen in section to underlie layer [302] which meant a probable pre-Medieval date. The well defined cut of this ditch can be seen in the west-facing section (Figure 8). Five potsherds dated to the Romano-British period included a sherd from a flagon and another from an Amphora. The animal bone recovered from this fill comprises the remains of cow, sheep and pig.

Feature F.3 was thought to be another (earlier) ditch terminal end which consisted of cut [310] and fills [308] and [309] (Figures 6a + 7a). The basal fill was [309], a mottled greyish yellow slightly silty sand with a large component of pea-grit and gravel that was probably derived from the natural weathering of the sides. The recovery of four sherds of pottery from the same grey ware vessel suggests a contemporary date for this deposition and probably dates this feature to the Romano-British Period. The upper fill was [308], a light to mid brownish grey sandy silt with occasional orange mottling and charcoal fragments, which had been heavily truncated by F.2. No finds were recovered from [308]. The ditch terminal cut [310] had been largely removed by the later creation of F. 2, yet the remnants of this suggested steeply sloping sides with a sharp curving break of slope at mid-point. The base of this ditch lay outside the limit of excavation. An overall width of this feature might be estimated to be around 2m overall, and this appeared to be curving in a west-southwest direction.

## PHASE 2 WATCHING BRIEF

### *Methodology*

A single 1m x 25m long trench was excavated in the car park area to the south of the previous investigations (Figure 5: *Trench 4*). The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.20m below the car



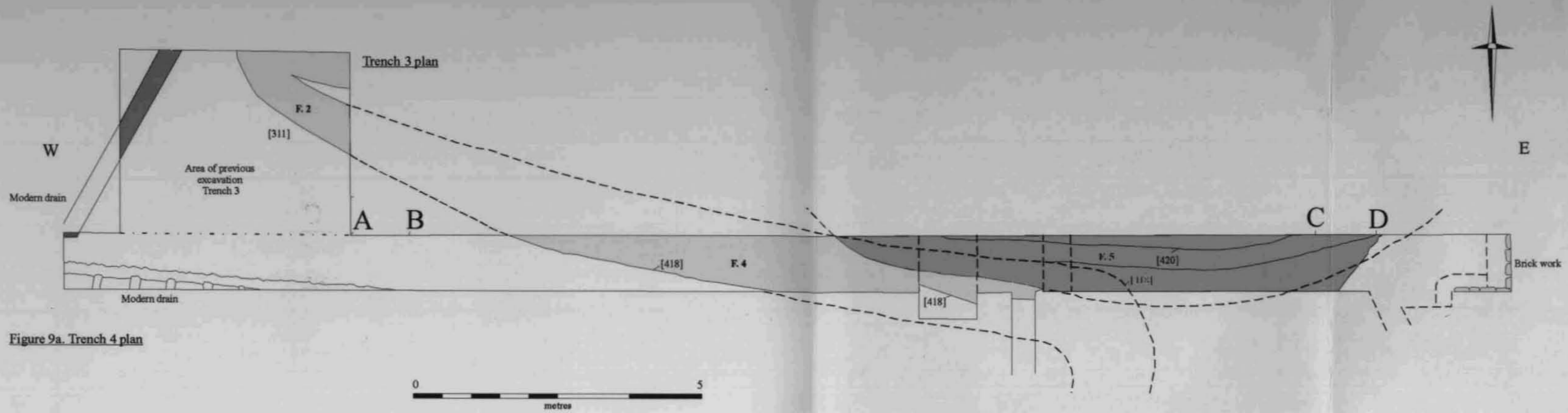


Figure 9a. Trench 4 plan

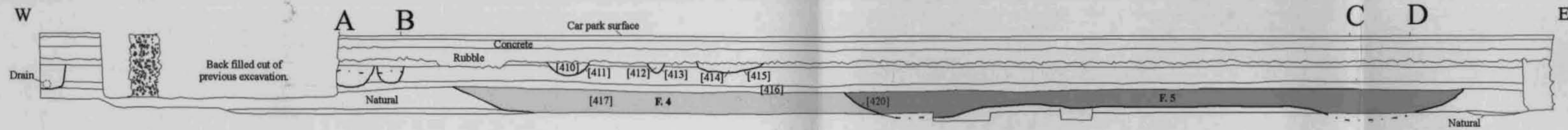


Figure 9b. Trench 4 section

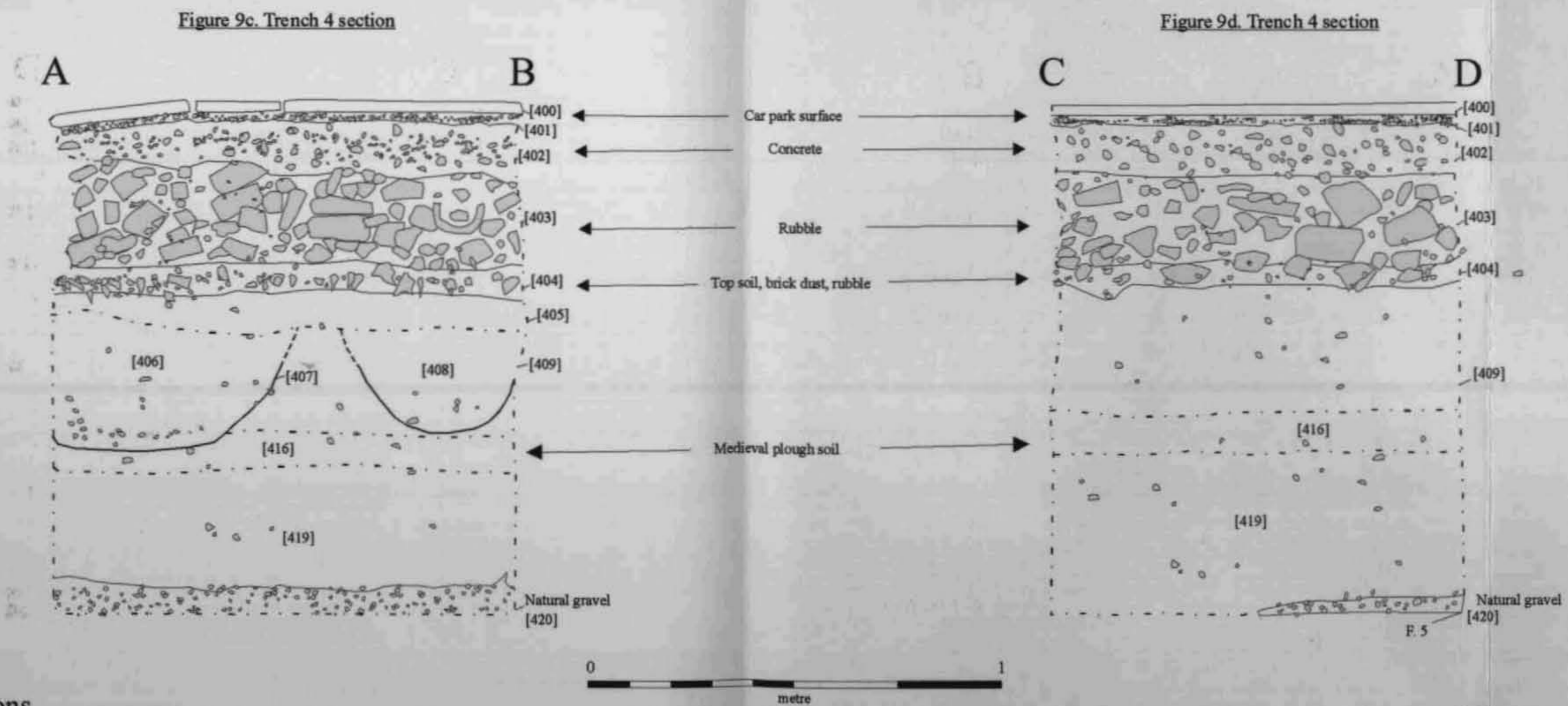


Figure 9a-d. Trench 4 plan and sections





Figure 10. Floor of Trench 4 showing cut of ditch F. 5 through earlier ditch (F. 4)

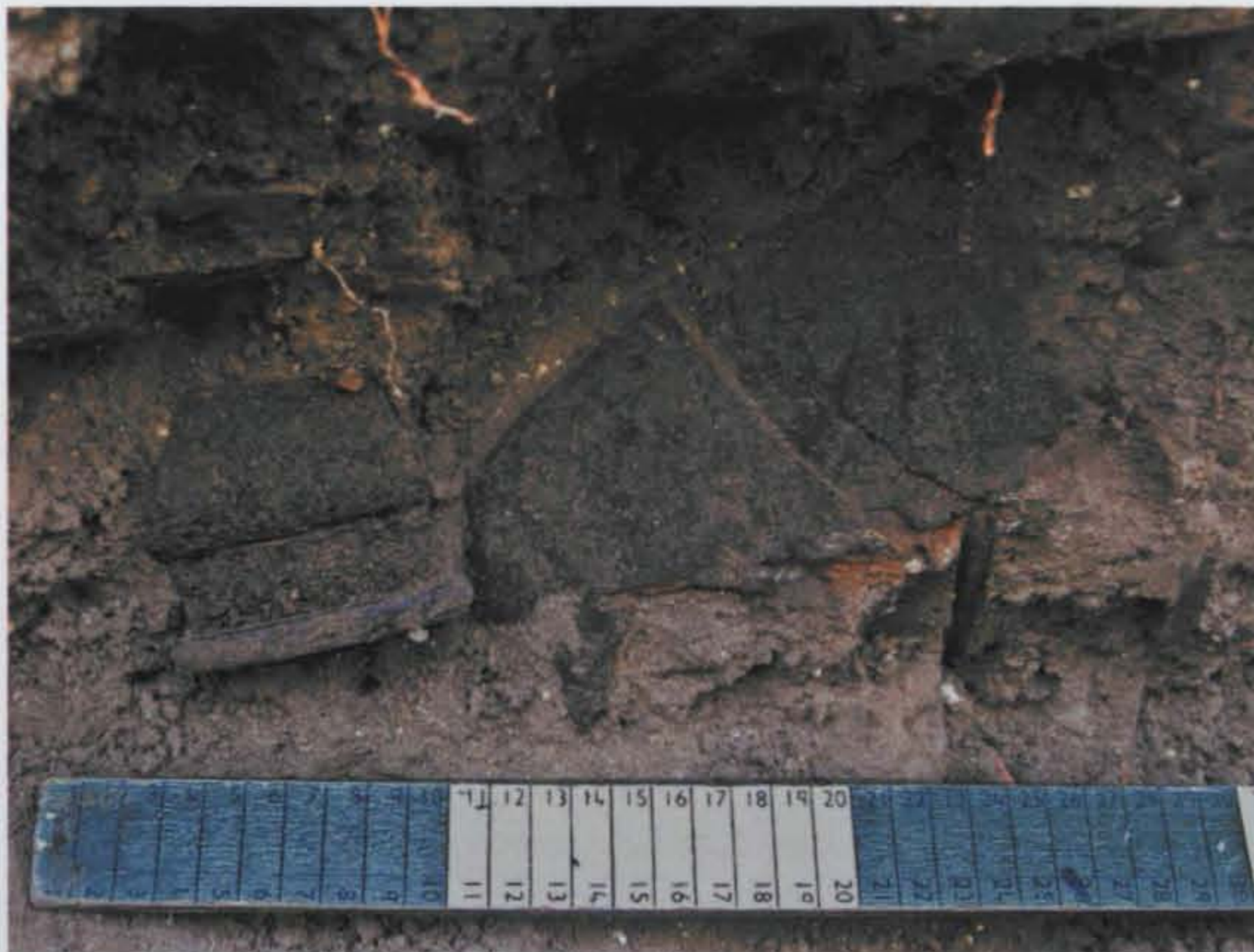


Figure 11. Adjoining sherds of broken wide and flanged black-burnished ware in section (F. 5)



## PHASE 3 WATCHING BRIEF

### Machine Cut Pits

(Figure 5)

#### *Methodology*

A series of pits measuring 1.5 x 1.5 x 1m were excavated by a 360° machine with a toothed bucket for the placement of pilings and footings for the new construction. This was located within the footprint of the former kitchen and buttery. Some sections were cleaned by hand and recorded, whilst others were examined but not recorded.

#### *Results*

Pits cleaned by hand and recorded:

*P27-29.* Modern made up ground [500] to a depth of 0.80m, beneath which lay a natural yellowish brown gravelly sand [501] with horizontal bands of lighter and darker material (0.80 – 0.90m). Beneath the banded layers was a dark yellowish brown sand [502] (0.90 – 1.10m L.O.E).

*P30-32.* Modern made up ground [503] to a depth of 0.80m, below which natural consisting of yellowish brown gravelly sand [504] with horizontal bands of lighter and darker material was encountered (0.80 – 1.00m). Underlying the banded layers was a dark yellowish brown sand [505] (1.0m L.O.E).

*P45-47.* Modern made up ground [506] to a depth of 0.25m where a moderately sloping broad V shaped ditch [509] could be seen in the section aligned E-W. The ditch existed to a depth of 1m from the current surface. The ditch was filled with a greyish brown sandy silt loam [507] with occasional small gravel inclusions above a brownish grey sandy silt [508] with more frequent small gravel inclusions. No archaeological material was recovered from the feature. However, this was considered to be modern, or at least post-Medieval/Medieval rather than Roman. The ditch was cut into a sandy clay gravel on the south side and was truncated by recent made up ground to the east.

*P65-67.* Modern made up ground [512] to a depth of 0.50m, at which depth a mottled reddish grey brown clayey sand and gravel [513] (0.50 – 0.70m) overlaid a natural consisting of yellowish brown gravelly sand [514] with horizontal bands of lighter and darker material (0.70 – 0.90m). Beneath the banded layers was a pale brown sand [515] (0.90 – 1m L.O.E).

*P77-79.* Modern made up ground [516] to a depth of 0.70m where a natural consisting of yellowish brown gravelly sand [517] with horizontal bands of lighter and darker material was encountered (0.70 – 0.90m). Beneath the banded layers was a dark yellow coarse sand [518] (0.90 – 1.10m L.O.E).

Pits examined but not recorded in detail:

*P48-50.* Modern made up ground to approximately 1m over yellowish-brown sand natural.

*P51-56.* Modern made up ground to approximately 1m over yellowish-brown sand natural.

*P68-71, 80, 81.* Modern made up ground to approximately 1m over yellowish-brown sand natural.

*P82-85* Modern made up ground to approximately 1m over yellowish-brown sand natural.

*P86-91* Modern made up ground to approximately 1m over yellowish-brown sand natural.

## Hand-cut pits

### *Methodology*

A series of six pits (0.50 x 0.50 x 1m) dug by hand to investigate the frequency and extent of any tree roots within the area that will be affected by the works. The initial excavation of the test pits was carried out by the contractors. The sections were cleaned by hand and recorded by CAU staff. Pit P9/P10 was extended by CAU archaeologists following the discovery of Roman pottery.

### *Results*

*P5, 6.* Modern made up ground to a depth of 0.45m over a firmly compacted dark greyish silty clay loam with moderate sub angular inclusions. At 1m a compacted gravel was encountered similar to the gravel encountered at the east end of Trench 4.

*P7, 8.* Modern made up ground to a depth of 0.50m (including services) over a firmly compacted dark greyish silty clay loam with moderate sub angular inclusions. At 1m a yellowish brown sandy gravel natural was encountered. Roman pottery was recovered from the spoil adjacent to the test pit. However, some post-Medieval material (fragments of tobacco pipe stem and bowl) was mixed up with this.

*P9, 10.* Modern made-up ground to a depth of 0.45m overlay a firmly compacted dark greyish silty clay loam with moderate sub angular inclusions. Roman material including 15 sherds of pot and some bone was recovered from the lower fill (contexts [049] [050] [051]) of this pit. As no natural sand or gravels were encountered at the base of this test pit, the hole was extended (Figure 12). This was widened to 1.0 x 0.80 x 1.20m, with the hope of defining whether any actual features could be defined. Further Roman material was recovered but no feature could be seen. From the lower fills (referred to above) one fragment of coal was picked up. This came from a context which otherwise consisted *only* of Roman material; as such the presence of the former was considered to be intrusive. By contrast, the finds from the upper fills contained both Roman *and* post-Medieval pottery, as well as bone, mortar and clay-pipe fragments.

*P11, 12.* Modern made up ground to a depth of 0.45m over a firmly compacted dark grey silty clay loam with moderate sub angular inclusions. At 1m a yellowish brown sandy gravel natural was encountered. Roman material was recovered from the spoil adjacent to the test pit.

*P13, 14.* Modern made up ground to a depth of 0.30m over a compacted dark grey silty clay with frequent charcoal flecks and occasional small angular gravel. This overlay a lens of pale grey ashy-coloured silty clay (0.55 – 0.60m). Underlying this was a firmly compacted dark grey silty





Figure 12. Hand cut test pit P. 10 showing lower Roman fill of feature

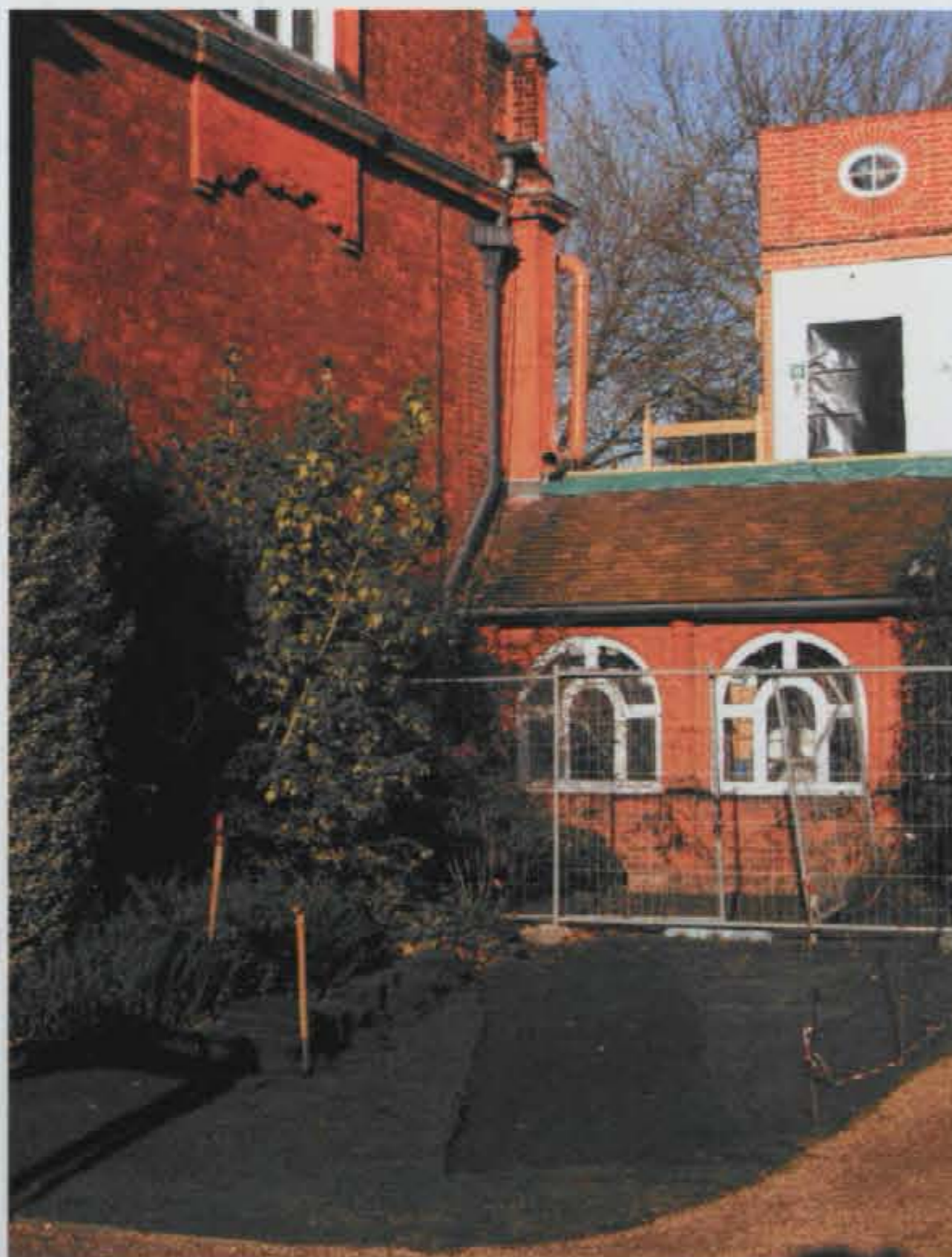


Figure 13. Trench 5 - College lawn to East of Clough Dining Hall



clay loam with moderate sub angular inclusions. At 1m depth a yellowish brown sandy gravel natural was encountered.

*P15, 16.* Not observed.

### **Service trench across College Garden lawn**

#### ***Methodology***

A single NE–SW trench, 11.5m long by 0.9m wide, was excavated across the lawn located just to the south-east of the Clough Dining Hall (Figure 5 + Figure 13). The work was to provide for the instillation of services. The lawn was de-turfed by Newnham College groundstaff, following which excavation of the trench was carried out using a mini 360 digger with a toothless bucket. Numerous service pipes were encountered during excavation, resulting in the north end of the trench only being dug to a depth of 0.60m, whilst the southern section was excavated to a depth of 1.20m. At this depth natural sands and gravels were encountered.

#### ***Results***

##### *Trench 5*

Once the turf had been removed a very dark grey brown sandy loam top soil was revealed which continued to a depth of 0.35m. Beneath the top soil was a brown sandy clay silt sub soil with occasional gravel inclusions. The sub soil became progressively lighter and sandier with depth reaching natural sands and gravels at 1.2m. No archaeological material was recovered although the upper levels of soil appear to have been well worked and turned over.

### **PHASE 4 WATCHING BRIEF**

#### ***Methodology***

A watching brief of further work undertaken within the footprint of the New Buttery to the east of the Clough Dining Room. This included the cutting of a service trench to the base of a lift shaft, and a 2m wide shallow E-W trench for the base of the building footings along the north side of the site. The 10 m long trench for the services and drains was excavated using a 360° digger with a 0.5m flat-edged bucket to a depth of 1.5 m. The trench sections were measured and quickly recorded.

#### ***Results***

No archaeology was observed in either of the two trenches. As section through the E-W trench for the building footings revealed a modern made up gravel core overlying a natural sequence of yellow brown sandy silt with gravel inclusions, a grey brown silty sand and gravel, a light grey rounded gravel, patches of yellow brown sand, with a yellow brown sandy gravel at the base. The top 1 metre of the services trench consisted of made up ground with rubble hardcore. This overlay a truncated natural consisting of sandy gravel with lenses of white marl (between 1 and 1.5 m depth).



## DISCUSSION

### SITE A

Within the area of the west car park the evaluations have provided us with a more cohesive picture of a buried Medieval plough soil sealing earlier Romano-British features. Later post-medieval farming activity had created a deep layer of soil over the top of these earlier horizons. The earlier Romano-British features and deposits therefore are well protected by approximately 0.5m of soil. The Medieval tillage of land within this area fits well with the model of Hall and Ravensdale for the extensive system of open field agriculture in Cambridge's West Fields.

Despite the small sample area, excavations within Trenches 3 and 4 revealed substantial ditches (Figure 8 + 9) with contained evidence for Romano-British and later Roman occupation within the immediate area.

The following phasing model has been used in the interpretation of the site:

The earliest Period **Phase 1a** in *Trench 3* is represented by a 2m wide west south-west aligned steep-sided ditch terminal end (F.3) cut into the natural gravels. The upper part of this has been infilled with weathered material derived from its sides, but beneath this a basal deposit was found containing four small freshly-broken adjoining sherds from the same early Roman (mid 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD) sandy greyware necked-jar. This probably indicates the dumping of broken pot from somewhere close-by, suggesting this was once part of an enclosure ditch around a farmstead or other small settlement, quite possibly within the vicinity of a north or south-facing enclosure entrance (Figure 7a).

Period **Phase 1b** within *Trench 3* consists of a slightly later and altogether more substantial ditch terminal end (F.2). This both cuts and truncates the earlier phased ditch (SEE Figure 6a), yet contains similar early Roman pottery. One of these sherds was from an early Baetican amphora of the mid-late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, whilst another of around the same date consisted of an oxidised sandy sherd with a red painted horizontal line decoration. Other coarseware pottery types found included both straight ring-necked and grooved-neck forms dating to the mid 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

There appears to be little chronological difference between these two phases based on pottery type alone, although the inclusion of imported ceramics such as the amphora within the domestic pottery waste of this later phased ditch might in some way be significant. The base of a Terra Nigra platter with an illegible cartouche (Figure 14 a+b) was recovered from amongst unstratified material collected during the cleaning of the area around Trench 3. This may well come from the same feature and phase as the amphora, and as such represents the only other example of 1<sup>st</sup> century imported fineware pottery.

Unless retention of earlier pottery types was being practised at this site, it would seem reasonable to suppose a mid-late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD date for both of these two ditches, therefore the two different phases (Phase 1a + 1b) of associated Romanised settlement. The presence of a later ditch here may just represent the re-establishment of a similar ditched enclosure around the same settlement/farmstead area, perhaps even during the same 50 year period

The base of this ditch (F.2: Phase 1b) was again picked up in *Trench 4* where its wide flat-bottomed profile has been established by excavation (here referred to as F.4). No stratified





Figure 14 a.



Figure 14 b.

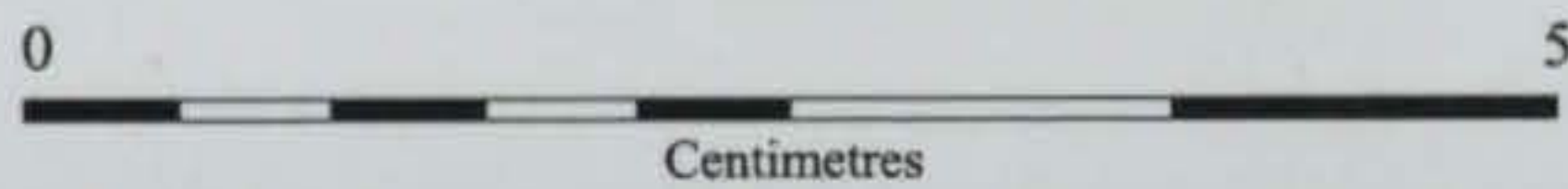


Figure 14 a and b. Underside of sherd of Terra Nigra platter (Circa. 1st Century AD) with detail of makers cartouche (reverse) Found Trench 3



pottery was recovered from this feature over a 10 metre section of the trench, yet its curvilinear outline in a west north-west to east south-east alignment, which changes to a north-south alignment some 18 m from the west end of the trench, suggests the sort of square to rectangular enclosures with rounded corners typically associated with Romano-British settlements or field systems.

Period **Phase 2** is represented by a broad V-shaped ditch (F.5) which cuts the earlier curvilinear enclosure ditch (F.4) 12m from its west end, following the same east-west alignment, but continuing eastwards after the earlier ditch changes direction towards the south. The outline of this ditch (F.5) then becomes lost at the east end Trench 4 where this feature hits the rubble-filled cut for the modern building foundations.

Pottery found associated with the basal fill of this feature F.5 [419] proved distinctly different to that within the Phase 1 ditches. This consisted of 92 sherds of mostly freshly broken pot, all of which were mid-late Roman (2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> century AD) in date, with apparently no earlier material. The assemblage was dominated by coarseware types (85%), the greater part of which consisted of black slipped ware, most of which was probably locally made. Some of this pot was burnished, therefore may have been an imitation of Dorset Black Burnished Ware (BB1), whilst other fabrics consisted of shell-tempered, sandy greywares and coarse oxidised sandy ware sherds, of which approximately 70% were non diagnostic. Of those that were, the greater part of vessels represented consisted of narrow or wide necked jars with beaded rims, though there were also some large sherd fragments from a globular jar dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD, and sherds from at least two bowls, including a deep flanged black slipped bowl dating from the same period (SEE Figure 11) . Finewares consisted of Nene Valley colour coated ware (of the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD) plus several good examples of Hadham red slipped ware (later 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD). The latter included adjoining sherds of a wide mouth jar (SEE front cover of report). Soot coatings present on some of the coarseware pots suggested their use in cooking. Similarly, the presence of animal bone and oyster shell indicates kitchen or culinary waste.

Both the assemblage and its context suggest nearby domestic activity, perhaps carried out over a hundred year period, and possibly associated with the same settlement focus as Phase 1.

A plough-soil [302] (*Trench 3*) and [416] (*Trench 4*) truncates and seals the Roman horizons and represents Period **Phase 3**; the establishment of Medieval open-field agriculture within the area of the West Fields following the abandonment of the early settlements in this area. The intensive cultivation of the West Fields to the west the community of Newnham (Figure 4) would have supported the growing Medieval town of Cambridge. However, the precise dating of this cultivation is a problem, since abraded and re-deposited Roman sherds, but no medieval sherds were recovered. Suffice it to say, within an open-field environment and above an earlier settlement, this is perhaps what is to be expected. More significant here is the lack of post-Medieval pot. This same plough-soil horizon has been recognized at numerous other locations in West Cambridge.

**Phase 4** consists of a post-Medieval garden soil or plough soil ([301] and [405]) plus a number of shallow pits and trenches (such as F. 1 in Trench 3). All of these cut the earlier 'Medieval' plough soil referred to above . The fill of the linear trench F.1 [303/5] in Trench 3 contained post-Medieval pot, nails and mortar, whilst the uniform soil layer contained post-Medieval pot, fragments of clay tobacco pipe, brick and nails, plus the occasional abraded fragment of Roman pot. From this same layer within the abandoned Trench 2 came a sherd of probable 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century Ely-made Babylon ware, suggesting that these soils and various ditch cuts range in date

from the early to late post-medieval period. Mortar and brick inclusions may suggest the presence of buildings in the vicinity, unless of course this material was introduced during the manuring of the fields.

## **SITE B**

The area beneath the footprint of the Kitchen and Buttery appears to have been severely disturbed by recent building work with little or no archaeology surviving. The only feature noted within the area was found at a depth of 20 cm below the present ground surface within the piling excavation P 45-47, and is most likely to be modern ditch or pit relating to the original construction of the Buttery. However, no datable material was recovered to confirm this.

Between the footprint of the kitchen and buttery and the pavement along the south side of Sedgwick Avenue a series of *hand dug test pits* revealed only a shallow sequence of recent made up ground with proportionately less truncation of the underlying archaeology. Within at least one of the pits (P9-10) a surviving post-Medieval topsoil (equivalent to Period **Phase 4** in Site A) sealed what appeared to be an earlier Roman feature. However, neither the sides nor function of this lower feature could easily be defined. Nevertheless, the lower dark grey silty loam fill [526] of this test pit contained 21 sherds of Roman pottery. Another six sherds came from the test pits on either side of this. A single Iron Age sherd was recovered— yet this was very abraded and in all probability residual. The bulk of the pottery here ranged in date from the mid 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3rd century AD, with most of the sherds belonging to the earlier Roman (mid 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD).. The latter included several sherds of Horningsea greyware storage jars. Amongst the latest sherds identified were those from a straight-sided shallow dish which has been dated to *circa* 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. It is possible, therefore, that all this pottery *could* be 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century in date. As such we might be looking at a similar ‘early’ phase of Roman occupation here comparable to that of **Phase 1a** (Site A). Spatially this may all relate to the same or adjacent enclosure ditch(es) and pits associated with a single site, parts of which may extend northwards beneath Sidgwick Avenue.

The lack of archaeological material within *Trench 5*, in an area that has seen little truncation or major disturbance, suggests a limit in this direction to the Roman settlement activity previously observed in Trenches 3 and 4. However, the exact situation is difficult to assess with any confidence due to the limited size of the sample area, and also because of the amount of bioturbation and re-working of the upper soils within this area of lawn and College gardens. It is perfectly possible that regular deep digging in the past has brought to the surface pot and other artefacts which have since been collected and removed from site. However, the complete absence of finds, abraded or not, would seem to suggest that there was never much archaeology in this area.

Despite the ‘key-hole’ nature of the archaeological evaluations carried out at this site, both the ditch sections recorded and the pottery evidence from here are comparable with other sites situated on the periphery of Roman Cambridge such as those under New Hall and Trinity Hall (Wills 2004). This fits with the picture of the Newnham College site being a Roman farmstead and/or loose string of dwellings and fields occupied from the 1<sup>st</sup> through to at least the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.



### *The overall picture*

In the context of the work carried out as part of Cambridge Archaeological Unit's West Cambridge Hinterland research programme (SEE Evans in Lucas & Whittaker 2001), the confirmation by means of excavation at Newnham College of what has long been suspected to be yet another important locus for Roman settlement close to the Roman town should be seen as an important development. In March 2001, when referring to the growing number of Iron Age and Roman settlements recently discovered on this side of Cambridge and the rapidly changing picture, Evans predicted that the "...end result [of]...the West Cambridge investigations will produce amongst the most nuanced and thorough understandings of an historical town's hinterland in Britain". Excavations at Trinity Hall (Wills 2004) and now Newnham College have added to this picture of a largely agricultural landscape with a fairly dense grouping of settlements within a 1-2 km radius of Castle Hill, strung along, or near to a road system linking the small fortified town of DUROLIPONTE (Roman Cambridge) with the lands to the north-west and south-west.

The picture which now seems to be emerging is one of quite early, well established agricultural settlements dating from the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD with Romano-British farmsteads, enclosures and field systems aligned on the Roman Road network. This perhaps includes a whole series of minor roads and tracks to the west of Cambridge that once linked the major routes (Via Devana, Ermine Street and the Roman Road to Barton (the present A 603)) emanating from the hub of Castle Hill. The existence of these minor roads, which appear to have supported rather than truncated existing agricultural systems and alignments, has come to light both at New Hall (Evans 1996) and Trinity Hall. Meanwhile, credible contenders for metalled roads or tracks in Newnham might include, for instance, the long straight north-south stretch of Grange Road which once may have linked the line of the Roman 'Barton Road' with Grantchester to the south. Still more speculatively, there is the possibility of an east-west route through what is now Newnham College, linking Grange Road via the easiest fordable river crossing at Lammas Land or Newnham Croft with a westerly branch off of the Via Devana somewhere in the area of Brooklands Avenue. The existence within Newnham of Medieval trackways on these alignments (Long Baulk, Cutter Baulk and Froshlake Lane) gives added substance to ideas of pre-existing routes, but otherwise it is the overall pattern of Roman activity, such as the strung out evidence for Roman finds along Grange Road, under Newnham College, at Newnham Croft, and east of the river between Chaucer Road/ Latham Road and Trumpington Road which is suggestive of a slightly more complex, underlying pattern of Roman/ Romano-British roads and settlements (hidden within the existing literature can be found references to this; for example the discovery in 1910 of a 'Roman' road and settlement on Latham Road (Browne 1974)). Associated with the above may have been river crossings at Newnham Croft/ Barton Road (east end) as well as over to the Trumpington sites of Latham and Chaucer Road.

Changes in use and organisation of some of these Roman hinterland settlements appears to have come about in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. At New Hall and Trinity Hall this was referred to as a decline rather than an abandonment of the agricultural uses of land (Wills 2004), and yet it is tempting to link this to the decline and shrinkage of the Roman town during the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, other West Cambridge settlements such as Vicar's Farm seem to have expanded (c. 220 AD), although here, as a consequence of the expansion, the overall simplicity and organisation of the settlement was lost. At the other end of the scale, Burrell's Field Romano-British farmstead appears to have all but ceased at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. These changes are also recorded in the pottery assemblages, as some ditches (deposition sites) are abandoned and filled in, whilst other ones open up. In all probability, we are seeing exactly this same pattern at Newnham



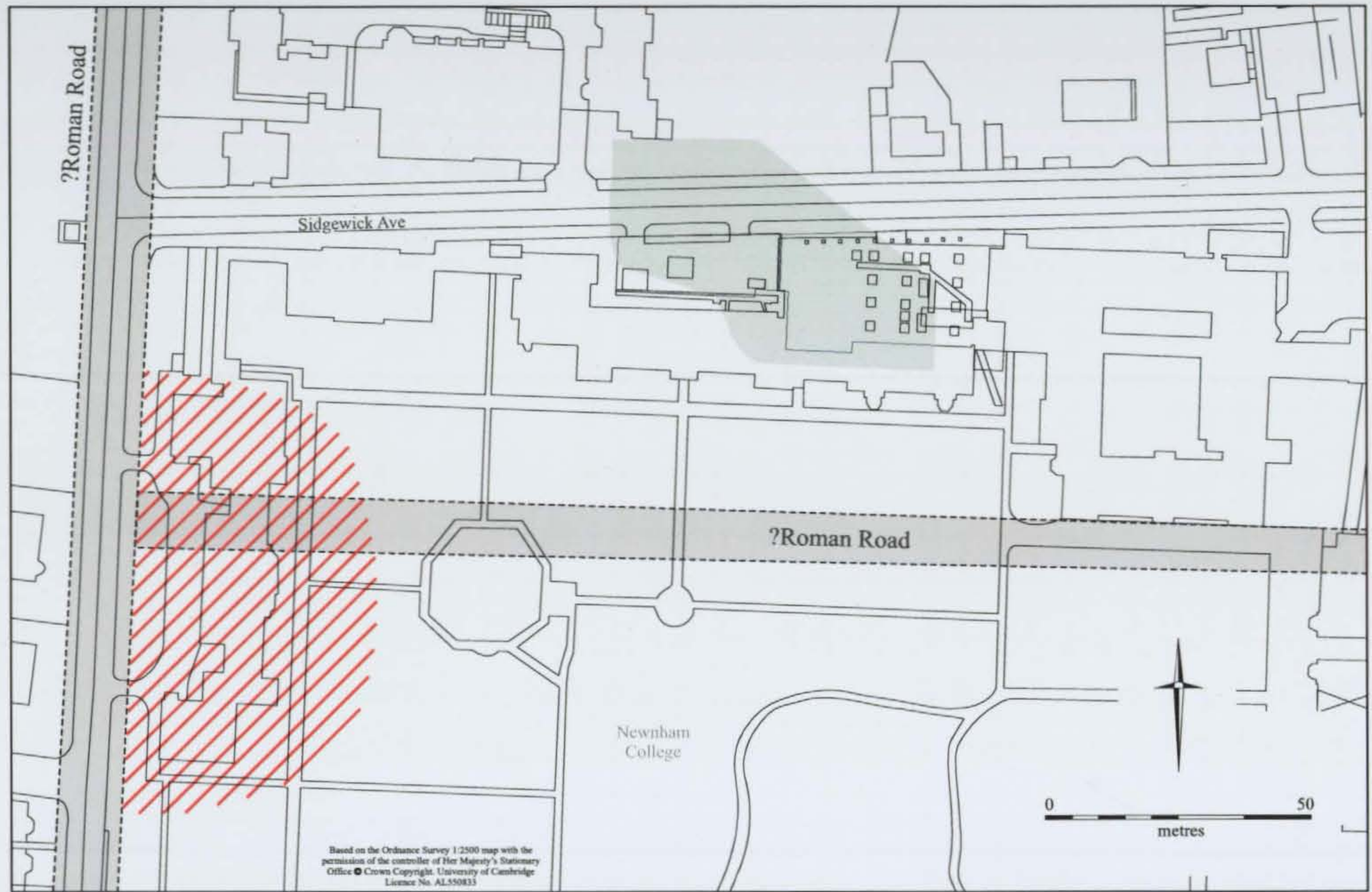


Figure 15. Suggested area of Roman settlement cemetery and possible roads / tracks within vicinity of Newnham College, Grange Road and Sidgwick Avenue

- Roman Road/ Track
- Ditched enclosure and farmstead
- ▨ Roman Cemetery



College. The site is not being abandoned, yet it is perhaps entering a new phase of use or re-organisation sometime during the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. In the absence of any evidence for further archaeological features, it is obviously quite difficult to suggest what changes there might have been.

The discovery of Roman burials at the west end of the College fronting Grange Road suggests the presence of a Roman cemetery in this area. This location straddling the road is perhaps what one might expect within the context of a rural settlement (Figure 15). Little more can be said of these burials at the moment, since no proper record of their excavations appears to have survived. However, the presence of imported fineware pottery such as Samian suggests a date for this prior to 250 AD. War-time aerial photos taken by the Luftwaffe in 1940 and by the USAF in 1944 failed to reveal the location of the Newnham College air raid shelters, and hence the approximate position of these burials, although the 1939 account suggests that these lay in front of the Piele Building, probably under the short stretch of lawn fronting Grange Road. The continuation of the cemetery and/or any other Roman/ Romano-British features eastwards from Piele Hall beneath the former course of Newnham Walk and the gardens of Newnham College, is something that might easily be revealed nowadays through geophysics (magnetometer and resistivity survey). Given the potential importance of this site, this is something that seems worth flagging up for the future.

Despite the difficulties of interpretation and extrapolation based on key-hole archaeology, there seems little doubt that parts, at least, of an important Roman/ Romano-British site of the Cambridge hinterland survive beneath the buildings and grounds of Newnham College. Recent evaluations have shown that despite extensive tree rooting, laying of services, and the truncation of soils by foundations, archaeological features have survived beneath layers of made-up ground and disturbance. Therefore any future building work or ground investigations carried out within the College perimeter will more than likely reveal further important evidence as to the nature of this settlement and its immediate hinterland.

## CONCLUSIONS

- One of West Cambridge's hinterland Roman/ Romano-British settlements underlies the buildings and grounds of Newnham College.
- The settlement and associated fields appear to be defined by ditched enclosures. It is possible that these enclosures straddle the alignment of Sidgwick Avenue/ Newnham Walk, and abut the alignment of Grange Road.
- Freshly-broken and dumped domestic pottery within the fill of these ditches suggests the presence of dwellings nearby, perhaps associated with a moderately wealthy farmstead.
- Two distinctive phases of pottery have been identified (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD), suggesting decline or abandonment followed by re-occupation or re-organization at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. This fits a similar pattern for other sites in the Cambridge area



- Roman finds and activity along the alignment of Grange Road, and to the west and east of this, suggests the presence of a former north-south Roman road or track in this general area. There may also have been a link between this and a river crossing at Newnham Mill/ Newnham Croft; the area occupied by Newnham College is at the junction of these two routes.
- Roman burials discovered within the area of Piele Hall hint at the presence of a Roman cemetery adjacent to Grange Road. Currently there are no indications whatsoever of its extent. However, this may extend eastwards beneath the college grounds and gardens and along the line of the former Newnham Walk.
- Geophysics carried out within the area of the gardens might reveal areas of former cemetery or settlement.
- Despite extensive truncation of the archaeology in some areas as a result of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century levelling for foundations, the potential for archaeology surviving outside of these building footprints is still good. As little previous work has been undertaken in the area, the possibility remains that future archaeological investigation will establish the presence of a large and important Roman settlement on this site.

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## APPENDIX:

### SPECIALIST STUDIES

#### Roman Pottery – Katie Anderson

159 sherds of Roman pottery were collected from the excavations, weighing 1955g. The majority of the pottery was collected from the trenches, with 31 sherds coming from the test pits. All of the pottery was examined and details of fabric, form, decoration, usewear, date and estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), where possible, were recorded.

#### *Trenches*

83% (132 sherds, 1606g) of the pottery from the site came from the trenches, including several unstratified finds. Context [419] (Trench 4 Feature 5) contained the largest quantity of material, consisting of 92 sherds, weighing 1319g. The pottery from this context was all mid-late Roman (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD) with no apparent earlier material. This included a variety of coarseware vessel types and a small number of finewares, consisting of Nene Valley colour-coated sherds and Hadham oxidised wares.

Ten sherds weighing 127g were recovered from [307] (Trench 3 Feature 2), all of which were early Roman in date. This included two flagon rims, one from a straight ring necked, white-ware and one grooved necked rim, in an oxidised sandy fabric, both dating mid 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. One sherd from an early Baetican amphora was also found, dating mid-late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. There was also an oxidised sandy sherd with red painted horizontal line decoration, dating mid-late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

Context [302] (Trench 3) contained 13 sherds, weighing 49g and dating 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD. This included two jars, one which is lid-seated and one with a beaded rim. This feature also contained Medieval pottery, implying the Roman material is likely to be residual.

Four sherds were recovered from [202] (Trench 2), weighing 13g and dating 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD. All of the sherds were non-diagnostic sandy greywares.

Context [309] (Trench 3 Feature 3) contained four sherds (13g) from a single vessel, a sandy greyware necked jar, dating mid 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

A single oxidised sandy sherd was recovered from context [101] (Trench 1). This sherd could only be dated Romano-British and was also in the same context as several Medieval sherds, thus suggesting it is residual.

Four unstratified sherds were collected from Trench 4, including two micaceous sandy greyware base sherds. A further four sherds were recovered from Trench 3, including one base from a Terra Nigra platter with an illiterate stamp dating mid-late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

#### *Test Pits*

27 sherds, weighing 349g were recovered from the test pits, with the vast majority (21 sherds, 255g) coming from Test Pit 10. The remaining six sherds came from the spoil of Test pits 8,9 and 10.



The pottery ranged in date from the mid 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, with most of the sherds belonging to the earlier Roman period (mid 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD). Several sherds from Horningsea greyware storage jars were identified along with a number of fine sandy black slipped wares. One of the latest dating sherds was from a straight-sided shallow dish, dating 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

The condition of the sherds recovered from the test pits is comparable with the material from the trenches, suggesting that these sherds had not been redeposited but probably came from a feature within Test Pit 10.

### *Assemblage Composition*

The assemblage consisted of small sherds with a mean weight of 12.3g and with only 2.3 Eves represented. Although most of the sherds were small in size, the level of abrasion was relatively low, with only a few examples which could be described as being heavily abraded.

Coarsewares dominated the assemblage representing approximately 85% of the total assemblage, most of which were probably locally made. The most commonly occurring fabric type was black slipped ware, of which there were 30 sherds in total, weighing 356g. Some of these sherds were burnished and therefore may have been imitations of Dorset Black Burnished ware (BB1). Sandy greywares also featured heavily in the assemblage, with a total of 29 sherds (587g), ranging from relatively fine to coarse sand inclusions. The remaining coarseware fabrics consist of eight shell tempered wares and ten coarse oxidised sandy wares.

Three different fineware fabrics were present in the assemblage. Nene Valley colour coated wares were the most common, with a total of ten sherds, weighing 139g. Five sherds of Hadham red slipped ware were also recovered, weighing 43g. There were no imported wares such as Samian in the assemblage. Both of these fabrics date 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD, with the only example of an early fineware coming from the Terra Nigra platter from the unstratified material of Trench 3. This along with the amphora sherd represents the only imported wares in the assemblage, which suggests that in the early Roman period the site had access to imported goods.

Approximately 70% of the sherds in this assemblage are non-diagnostic, which is not unexpected considering the average sherd size. Of the remaining sherds, necked jars with beaded rims were the most frequently occurring, with at least six different vessels, of varying size, represented. Most of these forms were coarsewares and date 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD, with the exception of one Hadham red slipped wide mouth jar, which dates 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD.

The only other diagnostic Hadham sherd was from a straight sided, shallow dish, which is also 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD in date. Two other similar vessel forms were identified, although these were coarse sandy greywares, and are slightly earlier, with a 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD date.

Three sandy greyware sherds came from a large, globular jar, dating 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Two bowls were identified in the assemblage, consisting of one black slipped, deep flanged bowl dating mid 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD. One sandy greyware beaded bowl dating 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD was also recovered. Several Horningsea sandy greywares were also recovered from the evaluation.

Four of the Nene Valley colour-coated sherds were diagnostic, three of which were from a cornice rim beaker and date mid 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, while the remaining sherd was from a plain rim beaker, also dating mid 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

### *Discussion*

The Roman pottery found on the site ranges in date from the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD and within this the bulk dated 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. There are several good examples of early and late Roman material, for example the material from the test pits is distinctively 'earlier' Roman in date, with the pottery from [419] (Trench 4 Feature 5) being noticeably later in date. This suggests occupation spans the majority of the Roman period, though perhaps are varying levels. The pottery is indicative of a domestic assemblage and the evidence of pre-depositional sooting on some of the sherds suggests that they had been used for cooking.

Overall the quantity of pottery recovered is not enough to get a complete understanding of the nature of the site, especially because so much of the pottery came from one feature. However, this in itself is significant because this many sherds from a single feature implies that there is the potential for finding more evidence of activity in the surrounding area.

### **The Faunal Remains - C. Swaysland**

A small assemblage of animal bones numbering 55 fragments and weighing 1215 grams was recovered from a watching brief and a number of test pits. The condition of the bones was fair.

### *Methodology*

The animal bones were identified using the reference collection of the Cambridge Archaeological Unit. The assemblage was quantified using a modified version of the methodology of Serjeantson (1996), a 'zonal' approach. Results are presented by NISP (Number of Identified Specimens) only. No attempt has been made to distinguish between the remains of sheep and goat; these bones are recorded as sheep/goat.

The assemblage is dated to the later Romano-British period (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD) however some bones were recovered from sub-soil features so there is a high probability of later material being included within the assemblage.

### *Results*

<b>Species</b>	<b>NISP</b>
Cattle	10
Sheep/goat	7
Pig	2
Horse	3
Medium sized mammal	2
Large sized mammal	4

Table 1: species distribution

No specimens showed evidence of pathological conditions; two bones showed evidence of carnivore gnawing.



### *Discussion/Conclusion*

Clearly this is a very small assemblage, the species proportions (Table 1) are however in keeping with what might be expected from an assemblage of this period and location.

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### **Metalwork - Andrew Hall**

A total of eight metal finds were recovered from four excavated contexts [101, 302, 303, 419] with an additional single find recovered from the spoil of trench 3. Of the finds from contexts, seven are heavily corroded iron nails ranging between 20 -50mm in length. Without the diagnostic information provided by x ray, it is impossible to provide any firm dating based on typology.

In addition, a coin of Constantine the Great (AD 307-337) with a campgate surmounted by star on reverse, was recovered from the basal fill of a Late Roman linear feature (F.5 [419]) in Trench 4 (Figure 16).

The unstratified artefact recovered from Trench 3 consists of a machine-made copper alloy hollow shaft with a screw thread into which is set a ceramic terminal or finial. It could be an incomplete tuning peg from a stringed instrument, or possible part of an electrical component. A late 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century in date is appropriate.





Figure 16. Coin of Constantine I, found within base of later ditch (F. 5) in Trench 4