

**LAND ADJACENT TO WHITE PIT FARM,
SHILLINGSTONE, DORSET (centred on NGR ST830106)**

Results of archaeological trench evaluation

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation of a proposed development of land adjacent to White Pit Farm, Shillingstone, Dorset (NGR ST830106) was carried out by AC archaeology during November 2001. No previously recorded archaeological sites or monuments are known within the proposed development area and a geophysical survey by magnetometry revealed only moderate results.

Three fields (Plots 1-3) were evaluated, initially comprising the machine excavation of eight trenches. In the majority of these largely negative results were revealed, but included the identification of undated boundary or drainage ditches in Trenches 3 and 5. There was also a general paucity of artefacts recovered from overlying layers. Significant structural remains and associated features were, however, identified in Trench 2, Plot 1. On the basis of the initial excavation the trench was extended in various directions by a further 38m in order to define the extent and nature of deposits.

The present evidence suggests that a high-quality Romano-British building has been identified within the trench, which may comprise a square structure 15m x 15m in plan, constructed using flint and sandstone walling, with evidence for intact opus signinum and tile floors, with at least two phases of construction represented. With the exception of truncation by modern sewer pipes, the preservation appears remarkably good, although to some extent robbing of walls, probably in antiquity, has taken place. Evidence from artefacts suggests that at least in parts, the building had tessellated floors, painted plaster walls, a combination of stone and tile on the roof and underfloor heating, although there was in-situ evidence for re-use of Bessales bricks as flooring. The artefact evidence also indicates occupation on the site dating from the AD 2nd -to 4th century. The building is bounded by a substantial ditch on its west side and possibly also on its south side. The Romano-British structural and associated evidence appears to be confined to the NW portion of Plot 1.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological field evaluation on land adjacent to White Pit Farm, Shillingstone, Dorset (NGR ST830106). The work was carried out by AC archaeology during November 2001. The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by the landowners of the site Dorset County Council, who are seeking to submit a planning application for development. The evaluation has been requested by North Dorset District Council as advised by the Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council.

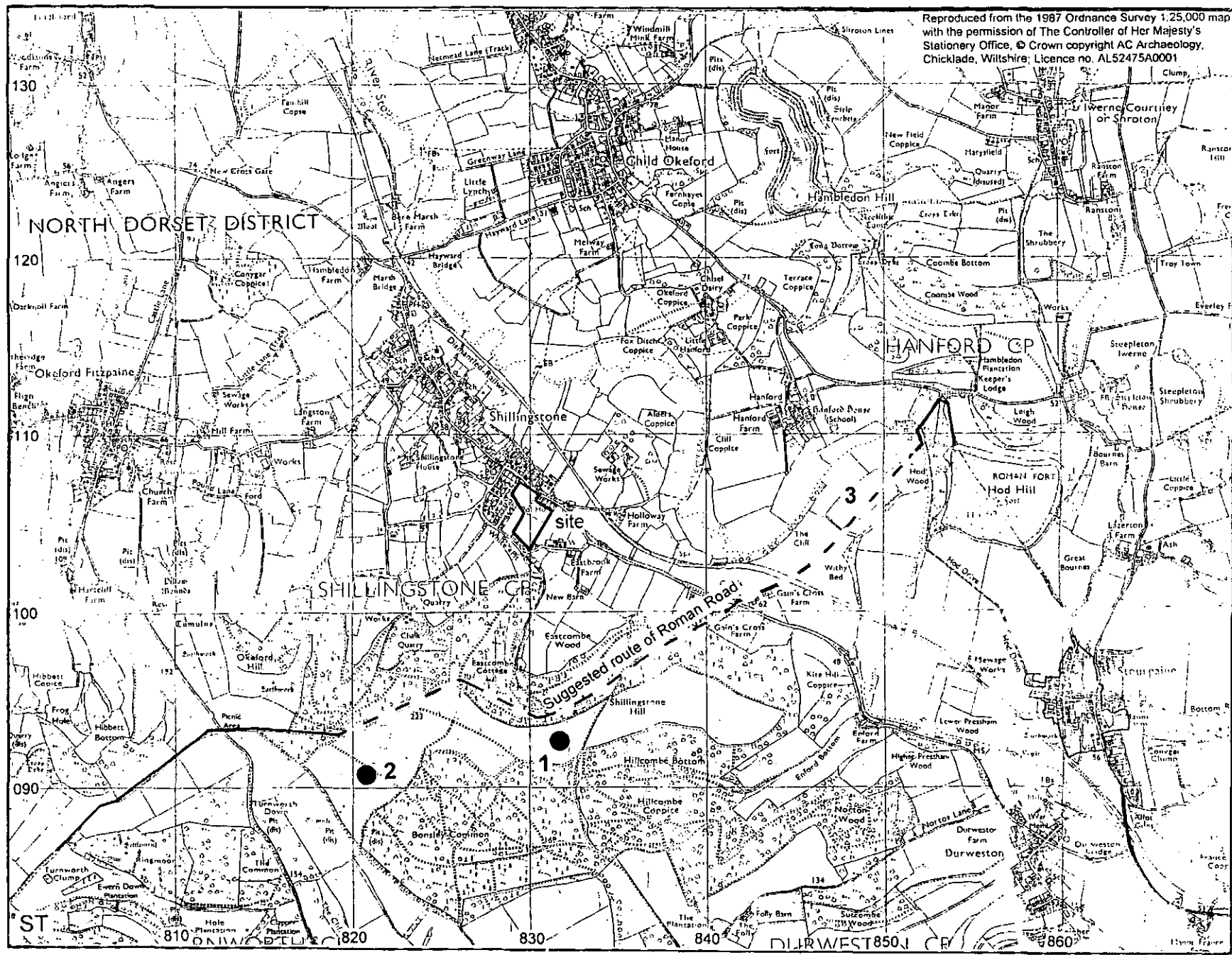


Fig 1. Site Location

1.3 The proposed development area incorporates three fields (Plots 1, 2 and 3 on Fig. 2). At the time of excavation these fields were all pasture for cattle grazing. The site lies within the wide level valley of the River Stour at around 50mOD. The surrounding general topography comprises a gentle slope down to the north, with the River Stour situated around 800m in this direction. The underlying geology consists of chalk, although excavation showed a drift of derived water worn chalk in a silty clay matrix.

1.4 The aims of the excavation were :

i) to identify the presence or absence of archaeological deposits or features (by the least destructive means) and to determine their date, nature and function;

ii) to determine the level and potential for the survival of any archaeological deposits, and;

iii) to assist in determining whether the investigated areas contain any overriding archaeological constraints to development, thus forming the basis on which any mitigation proposals could be developed.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 There are no previously recorded sites and monuments within the proposed development area. However, the site lies in a broad area containing two important Iron Age hillforts (Hambledon Hill and Hod Hill). At the latter site a Roman Fort was constructed in the NW corner. A Romano-British settlement has been recorded at Shillingstone Hill (RCHM 1970) and on Bonsley Common (ibid.). Both these sites are shown on Fig. 1 as Sites 1 and 2 respectively. In addition, the projected alignment of a Roman Road from Hod Hill to Rawlsbury Camp (Field 1992) crosses c. 1km south of the present site (Site 3 on Fig. 1).

2.2 A settlement is recorded at Shillingstone in Domesday (1086) where it was known as *Alford* (Mills 1991). The name as a precursor to its modern form dates from as recently as the 15th century (ibid.).

2.3 A geophysical survey of the site carried out by Oxford Archaeotechnics (ref. 2380501/WPD/DCC, May 2001) identified some evidence for linear features, although most consisted of modern services such as gas and water pipes. A possible structure was also identified, but was initially thought to be modern.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a written specification prepared by the Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council (Dorset County Council 2001) on behalf of the landowners of the site. This brief also included for the excavation of trenches in fields immediately adjoining White Pit Farm, which were not excavated as part of the current work. The fieldwork therefore initially comprised the machine-excavation of eight trenches each 20m x 1.50m in plan. Plot 1 contained four trenches, Plot 2 one trench and Plot 3 contained three trenches. All trenches were 20m long by 1.5m wide. Following the

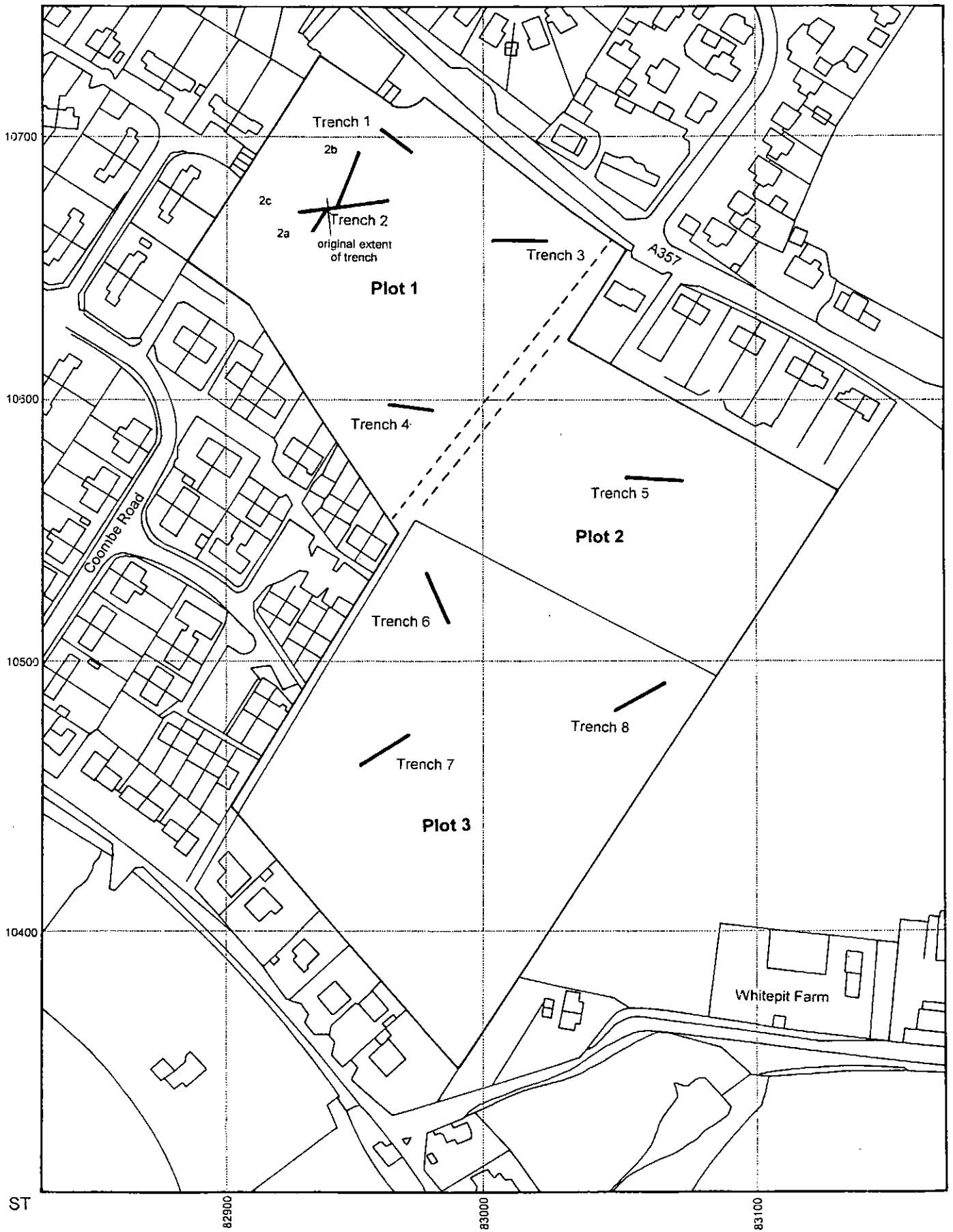


Fig 2. Trench Layout Plan

identification of Romano-British remains in Trench 2 (see below), and in accordance with a prior agreement with the Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council, a further 38m length of trench was excavated to define the extent and nature of deposits.

- 3.2 In all trenches, excavations involved the machine-removal of topsoil and soil overburden in level 150mm spits, which could be demonstrated to be of later post-medieval or modern date. Machining was carried out under constant archaeological supervision using a JCB mechanical excavator equipped with toothless grading bucket. Machine-excavation ceased on the top of archaeological deposits or natural subsoil, whichever was encountered first. Clarity of archaeological deposits, where present, was generally good, and in these locations full hand-cleaning was carried out. All spoilheaps were scanned for the recovery of displaced pre-modern finds.
- 3.3 The site was recorded in accordance with AC *archaeology's* standard recording system. Trench plans were produced at 1:20, with sections of features drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 dependent on the level of detail required. Sections showing the full layer sequence for each trench were either produced at 1:20 or on trench record forms. A full colour transparency and monochrome print photographic record was also taken. All levels relate to Ordnance Datum.
- 3.4 The archive is currently being prepared using the site reference AC720.

4. RESULTS: PLOT 1

4.1 Introduction

This plot was located on the SW side of the A357 road and comprises an approximately rectangular field which is generally level and currently used as pasture. Four trenches (1 - 4) were excavated in this field.

4.2 Trench 1

This trench was oriented NW-SE and situated in the NW corner of Plot 1 (Fig. 2). A sondage was dug at the NW end of the trench (1.5m deep) to confirm that the underlying subsoil was a natural geological deposit and not hill wash or alluvium, which if present, may have masked archaeological deposits. The only intrusive cut features encountered were two ceramic sewerage pipes running across the centre of the trench aligned NE-SW.

Table 1: Summary of the layer sequence for Trench 1

Context No	Context type	Depth below surface	Description and interpretation
100	Layer	0-0.05m	Turf line for present grass, mid brown sandy silt with common root activity
101	Layer	0.05-0.25m	Mid - dark brown sandy clay loam with occasional roots, occasional flint fragments (1-5mm size), occasional rounded chalk (<5mm)
102	Layer	0.25-0.55m	Loose light - mid orange-brown sandy clay with frequent small flint fragments (<50mm), common rounded chalk fragments (< 5mm). Subsoil
103	Layer	0.55-0.60m+	Frequent degraded rounded chalk fragments (<5mm) and occasional flint nodules (< 150mm) in an off white/brown clay matrix. Natural subsoil

4.2 Trench 2 (Detailed plan Fig. 3, sections Fig. 4, Plates 1 and 2)

Introduction

Originally this trench was 20m long, but the identification of Romano-British structural and associated deposits meant that additional trenching leading from the trench was undertaken. The extensions are shown on Fig. 2 as 2a, 2b and 2c. The purpose of further machining was to define the limit of the archaeology. The presence of extensive remains resulted in comprehensive hand-cleaning and recording, with only limited hand-excavation carried out to clarify the date and function of deposits.

The layer sequence for this trench comprised turf and topsoil (contexts 200 and 201) in most places directly overlying intact archaeology. Natural subsoil (context 203) was identified in places within the trench, the deposit containing a number of variations (shown on Fig. 3 as 253, 259, 262), which may be periglacial in origin.

One modern feature was identified within the trench - F205 - a cut containing two ceramic sewerage pipes running across the trench on a projected alignment of N-S and almost certainly associated with the houses at the southern end of the plot.

Results

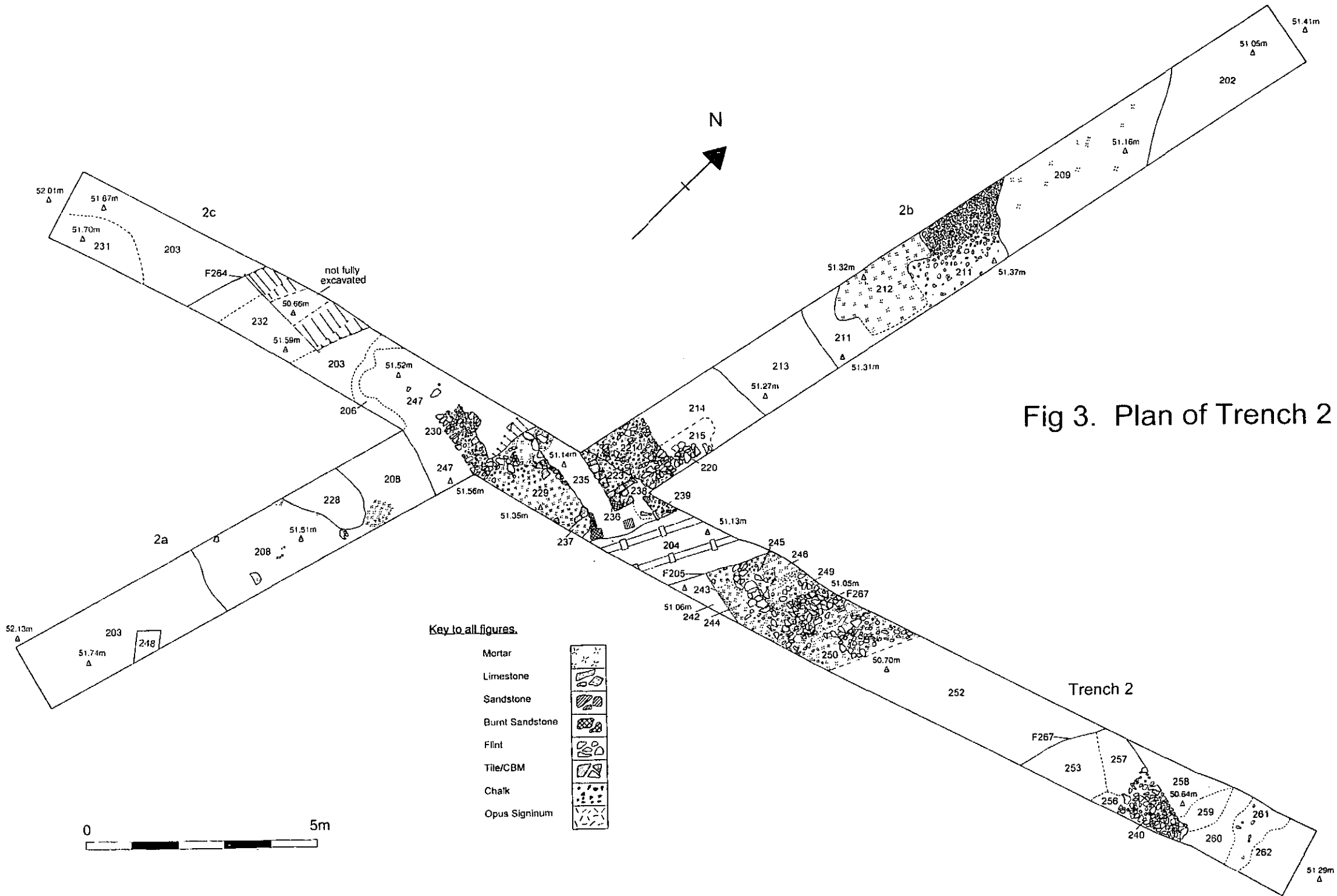
For the purposes of this report, deposits identified in Trench 2 are described using the following sub-headings:

- i) Structural remains of the Romano-British building (two phases identified)
- ii) Demolition deposits
- iii) Other Romano-British features
- iv) Undated features

Structural remains: Phase 1

Limited investigation of the structural remains has established two probable phases for the Romano-British building. The earlier phase consists of floors and floor foundation (223 and 229) which were constructed using complete ceramic tiles and mortar. There were also indications for earlier wall alignments in the form of probable wall robber trenches (235 and 242). Also present were small rectangular mortar and tile structures (236, 237 and 239), which are probably associated with 223 and 229.

Unfortunately, the sewerage pipe cut (F205) removed any relationship between the structural elements described above and the mortar area (244 - 246, 249 and 250) immediately to the east of the pipe trench. The deposits east of F205 are composed entirely of mortar and large flint nodules which have been laid in obvious layers. Several differing mortars are used of a very similar nature but some show pink discolouration. In situ *opus signinum* render (243) is also present. All the deposits in this area lay at the base of a large cut (F267) which may be a later robber trench which has removed the upper levels of structural deposits. The fills of this



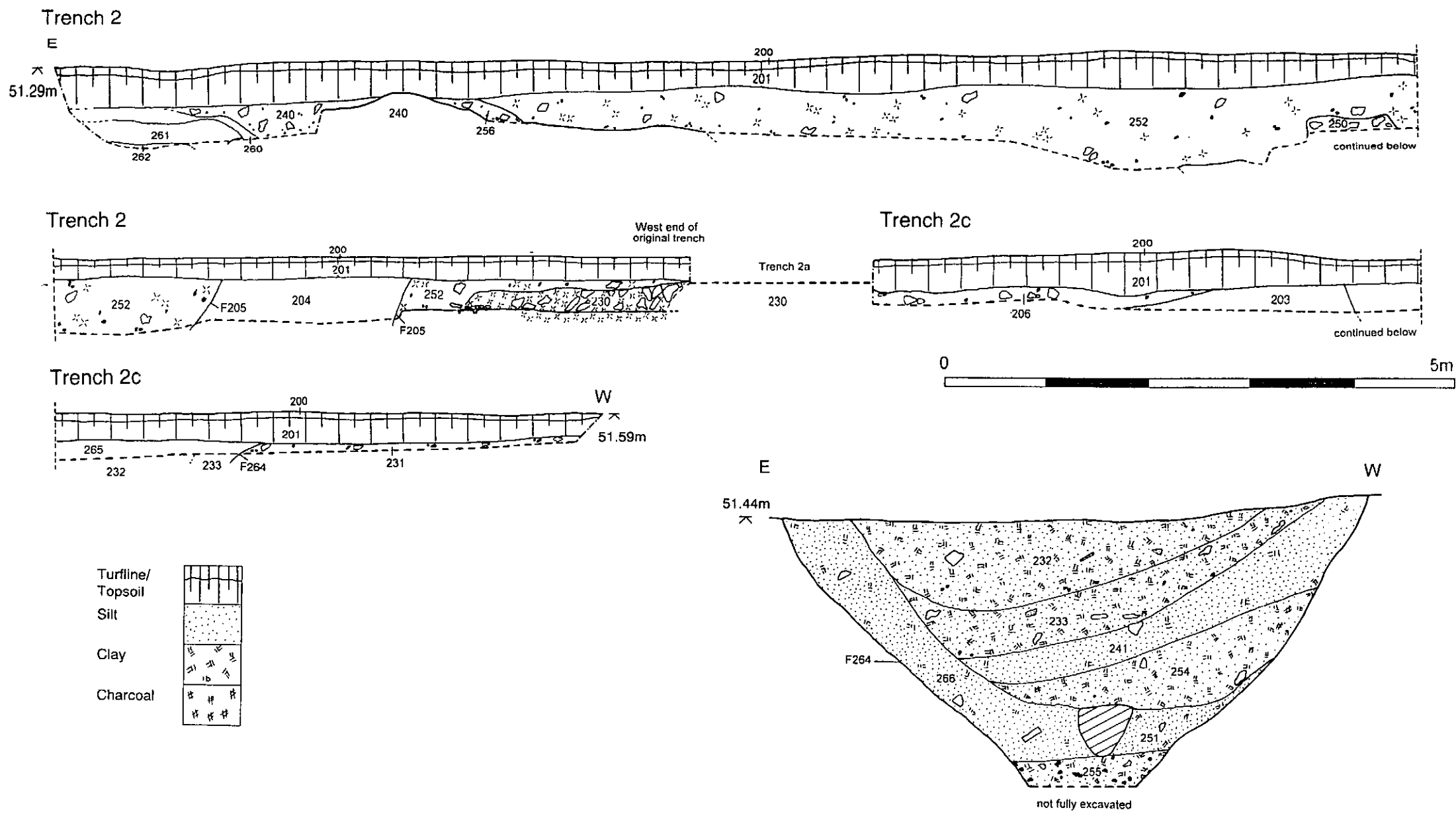


Fig 4. Sections of Trench 2



PLATE 1: STRUCTURAL REMAINS FROM E. OF TRENCH 2



PLATE 2: DETAIL OF STRUCTURE FROM S. OF TRENCH 2b

cut (252, 256) was not fully removed to the east, but contained significant quantities of demolition rubble.

Structural remains: Phase 2

The later phase of building lies directly over 223 and 229 and is composed of flint and mortar walling with flint facing (220, 221 and 230). Wall 230 shows evidence of having been partially robbed or cut away to the west.

Demolition deposits: Phase 3

This phase is composed of a series of similar dumps and spreads of material (206, 208, 209, 211 - 215, 228 and 247) which have significant quantities of building material as part of their coarse components. Within some of these layers fragments of red and white painted mortar, *opus signinum*, stone tile, ceramic tile, undressed sandstone and *tesserae* were recovered.

Other Romano-British features

A substantial approximately N-S aligned ditch was present within Trench 2c and was subjected to hand-excavation. F264 was 2.30m wide and was excavated to a depth of 1.10m but not bottomed. The profile (Fig. 4) showed as moderate to steep-sloping with a probable cleaning out slot towards the base (not fully exposed). It contained multiple fills, the upper levels (265, 232 and 233) composed of greyish-brown silty clays containing frequent demolition rubble and artefacts. Context 265 was only exposed in the trench section (Fig. 4). The lower fills (241, 254, 266, 251 and 255) were composed of clay silts and sands also containing demolition debris and artefacts, but in lesser quantities.

A probable wall (240) with associated construction trench fills (256 and 257) was present at the E end of Trench 2. Investigation was limited to defining the structure in plan, revealing that it was constructed using large sub-angular flint nodules, possibly bonded with a compact greyish-brown silty clay. It was on an approximate E-W alignment continuing beyond the trench edges, surviving to a height of 0.15m.

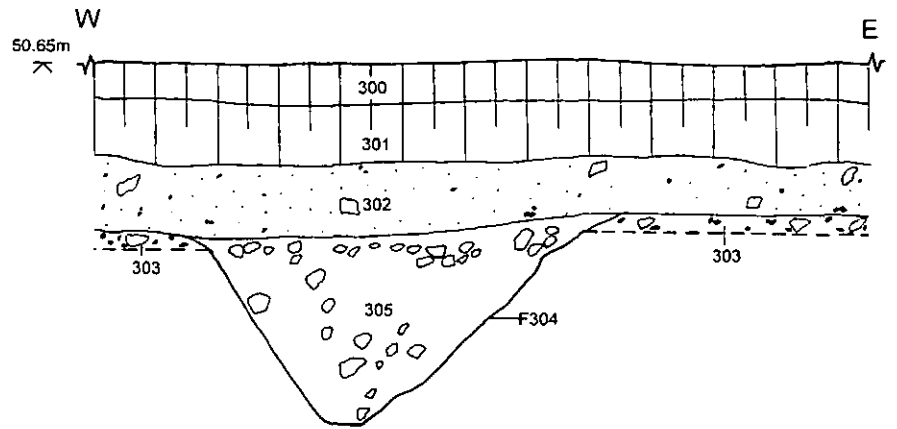
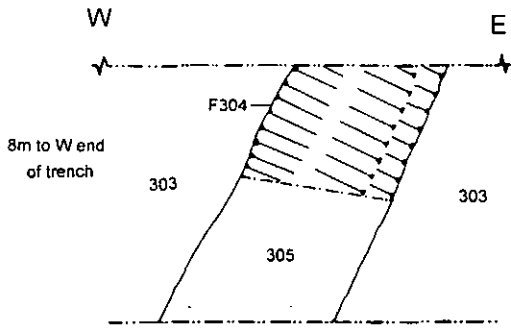
Undated features

Within Trenches 2, 2a and 2c a number of features (represented by layers 231, 248, 258 and 260/261) which had broadly similar fills - mid orange brown clay with occasional flint fragments and rare rounded chalk - was present. Feature 248 was present running under the E edge of Trench 2a and had a regular rectangular form which may suggest an archaeological origin. Feature 231 lay at the very west end of Trench 2c running under the S edge of excavation, This may have been circular in plan. Neither feature was excavated and so no date has been assigned. Features 258 and 261 were situated at the very east end of Trench 2 and were not fully defined. The nature of the fills of these features may suggest a natural origin.

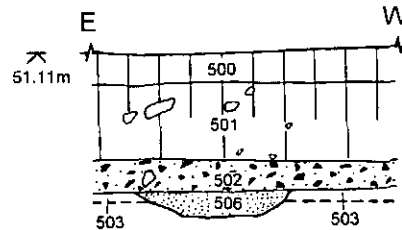
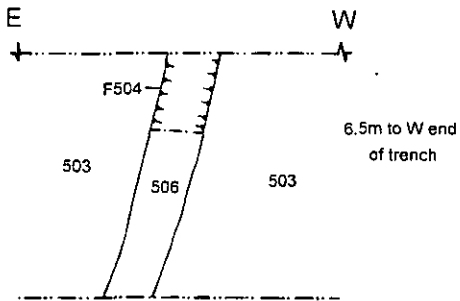
4.3 Trench 3 (Plan and section on Fig. 5)

This trench was aligned E-W and lay in the NE corner of Plot 1 (see also Fig. 6). It was excavated on to the top of the water worn chalk 'natural' (303) which showed one linear feature (F304), a probable ditch, running across the W end of the trench with a projected NE-SW alignment. No finds were recovered from its fill (305) and as such the feature cannot

Trench 3



Trench 5



Trench 7

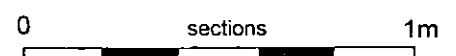
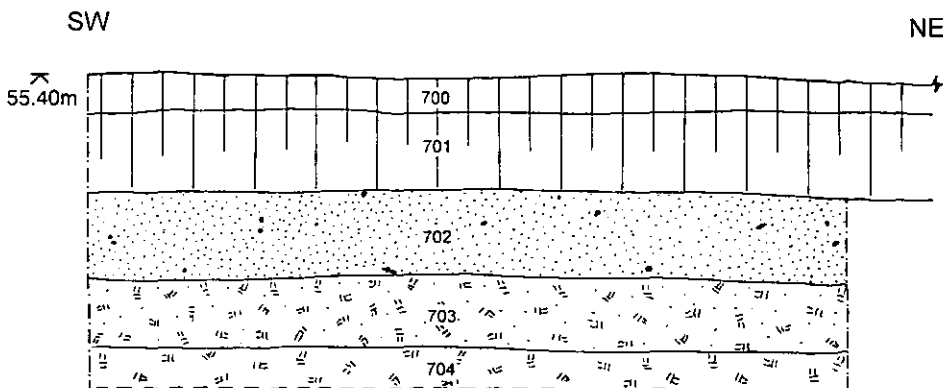


Fig 5. Plan and sections, Trenches 3, 5 and 7

be dated. The feature is described in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of the layer sequence and archaeological deposits in Trench 3

Context No	Context type	Depth below surface	Description and interpretation
300	Layer	0-0.10m	Turf line for present grass, mid brown sandy silt with common root activity
301	Layer	0.10-0.25m	Mid - dark brown sandy clay loam with occasional roots, occasional flint fragments (1-5mm size), occasional rounded chalk (<5mm). Topsoil
302	Layer	0.25-0.45m	Loose light - mid orange-brown sandy clay with frequent small flint fragments (<50mm), common rounded chalk fragments (< 5mm). Subsoil
303	Layer	0.45-0.5m+	Frequent degraded rounded chalk fragments (<5mm) and occasional flint nodules (< 150mm) in an off white/brown clay matrix. Natural subsoil
F304	Ditch	-	Located approximately 2m from the W end of the trench and with a projected alignment of NE-SW. Dimensions: 1.05m wide x 0.5m deep, the profile showing as steep-sloping on to a narrow base.
305	Fill of F304	-	Dark reddish brown silt with c 10% flint fragments (<150mm). Single fill of ditch

4.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 lay in the S corner of Plot 1 on a near E-W alignment. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Table 3: Summary of the layer sequence for Trench 4

Context No	Context type	Depth below surface	Description and interpretation
400	Layer	0-0.10m	Turf line for present grass, mid brown sandy silt with common root activity
401	Layer	0.10-0.35m	Mid - dark brown sandy silt with occasional roots, rare rounded gravel (1-5mm size), occasional rounded chalk (<5mm). Topsoil
402	Layer	0.35-0.55m	Loose light - mid orange-brown sandy clay with frequent small flint fragments (<50mm), common rounded chalk fragments (< 5mm). Subsoil
403	Layer	0.55m+	Frequent degraded rounded chalk fragments (<5mm) and occasional flint nodules (< 150mm) in an off white/brown clay matrix. Natural subsoil

5. RESULTS: PLOT 2

5.1 Introduction

This plot was located to the rear of houses fronting the A357 and consisted of a rectangular, level field currently used for cattle grazing. A single trench (5) was excavated in this plot.

4.4 Trench 5 (Plan and section on Fig. 5)

This trench was located fairly centrally within the plot on an E-W alignment. A single undated probable ditch (F504), which ran across the middle of the trench, was identified and is shown on Fig. 5. It had a projected alignment of N-S and is described in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Summary of the layer sequence and archaeological deposits in Trench 5

Context No	Context type	Depth below surface	Description and interpretation
500	Layer	0-0.10m	Turf line for present grass, mid brown sandy silt with common root activity
501	Layer	0.10-0.30m	Mid - dark brown sandy silt with occasional roots, rare rounded gravel (1-5mm size), occasional rounded chalk (<5mm). Topsoil
502	Layer	0.30-0.40m	Loose light - mid orange-brown sandy clay with frequent small flint fragments (<50mm), common rounded chalk fragments (< 5mm). Subsoil
503	Layer	0.40m+	Frequent degraded rounded chalk fragments (<5mm) and occasional flint nodules (< 150mm) in an off white/brown clay matrix. Natural subsoil
F504	Ditch	-	Narrow linear feature aligned N-S and positioned approximately half way along trench. Dimensions: 0.4m wide x 0.07m deep
505	Fill of F504	-	Dark reddish-brown silt with c 10% flint fragments (<150mm). Single fill of ditch

6. RESULTS: PLOT 3

6.1 Introduction

This plot was located to the rear of houses and consisted of an approximately rectangular field which is generally level and currently used for cattle grazing. Three trenches (6-8) were excavated in this plot. No archaeological features or deposits were identified in any trench, although the recorded layer sequence in Trenches 7 and 8 was different to that in Trench 6 and trenches excavated in Plots 1 and 2. Those deposits lower down in the sequence may have been formed as a result of colluvial activity.

6.2 Trench 6

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and was positioned in the NW corner of the plot. The recorded layer sequence is described in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Summary of the layer sequence for Trench 6

Context No	Context type	Depth below surface	Description and interpretation
600	Layer	0-0.10m	Turf line for present grass, mid brown sandy silt with common root activity
601	Layer	0.10-0.40m	Mid-dark brown sandy silt with occasional roots, occasional angular gravel (1-5mm size), occasional rounded chalk (<5mm). Topsoil
602	Layer	0.40-0.50m	Frequent degraded rounded chalk fragments (<5mm) and occasional flint nodules (<150mm) in an off white/brown clay matrix. In plan, this layer was observed to peter out about 5m from the NW end of the trench. Natural subsoil
603	Layer	0.50m+	Yellowish-brown fine silt with rare rounded chalk inclusions. Natural subsoil

6.3 Trench 7 (Section on Fig. 5)

This trench was aligned approximately NE-SW and was positioned in the NW portion of Plot 3. A sondage was excavated at the SW end of the trench to confirm the full layer sequence, which is described in Table 6 below and shown on Fig. 5.

Table 6: Summary of the layer sequence for Trench 7

Context No	Context type	Depth below surface	Description and interpretation
700	Layer	0-0.10m	Turf line for present grass, mid brown sandy silt with common root activity
701	Layer	0.10-0.30m	Mid - dark brown sandy clay loam with occasional roots, occasional angular gravel (1-5mm size), occasional rounded chalk (<5mm). Topsoil
702	Layer	0.30-0.55m	Yellowish-brown sandy silt with occasional rounded gravel. Colluvium
703	Layer	0.55-0.75m	Dark yellowish-brown sandy clay with very rare fine gravel inclusions. Colluvium
704	Layer	0.55m+?	Dark yellowish-brown clay with iron panning. Natural subsoil

6.4 Trench 8

This trench was aligned approximately NE-SW and was positioned in the NE corner of the plot. The recorded layer sequence is described in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Summary of the layer sequence for Trench 8

Context No	Context type	Depth below surface	Description and interpretation
800	Layer	0-0.10m	Turf line for present grass, mid brown sandy silt with common root activity
801	Layer	0.10-0.30m	Mid - dark brown sandy clay loam with occasional roots, occasional angular gravel (1-5mm size), occasional rounded chalk (<5mm). Topsoil
802	Layer	0.30-0.50m	Light yellowish-brown sandy silt with very rare fine gravel inclusions. Colluvium
803	Layer	0.50m +	Dark yellowish-brown silty clay with flint fragments and rounded chalk inclusions. Occupied approximately 5m at the SW end of the trench. Colluvium
804	Layer	0.50m+	Very light brown sandy silt with rounded chalk fragments. Situated in the middle of the trench about 10m visible. Colluvium
805	Layer	0.50m+	Frequent degraded rounded chalk fragments (<5mm) and occasional flint nodules (<150mm) in an off white/brown clay matrix. Natural subsoil

7. THE FINDS by M. Laidlaw with contributions by Mark Corney and Joe Whelan.

7.1 Introduction

The finds assemblage consists of a moderate range of material types. The most common categories represented are pottery and ceramic building material, plus lesser quantities of plaster, animal bone, metalwork and shell. The assemblage is predominantly Romano-British in date with only a small quantity of post-medieval artefacts recovered. The later material was collected from overburden contexts in various trenches. The bulk of the Romano-British finds assemblage was recovered within the excavated section of ditch F264.

All the finds have been cleaned and quantified by material type within each context. Spot dates have been recorded for the pottery and other finds have been scanned in order to ascertain broad details of their nature, date range, condition and potential significance to the site. The finds are briefly discussed by material type below and finds totals are presented in Appendix 1.

7.2 Metalwork

A total of 84 objects of metalwork was recovered which comprise two copper alloy coins and 82 fragments of ironwork.

Copper alloy coins by Mark Corney

Two Roman coins were submitted for preliminary identification. Both coins are not cleaned and further detail will be dependent on additional treatment.

SF 1 232 Æ 3 House of Valentinian.
Obv. Head right. legend illegible.
Rev. 'Securitas Reipublicae' type.
Mint period: AD364-78.

SF 2 233 Æ 3 'Constantinopolis' commemorative issue.
Mint period: AD 330-335.

Iron

The iron assemblage consists exclusively of nails ranging from 59 hobnail fragments found within the ditch fill 251 of F264, and small quantities of round flat headed nails and horseshoe type nails dispersed in small quantities within a number of features. On the basis of the associated coins and pottery the bulk of the nails may be attributed to the late Romano-British period.

7.3 Pottery

With the exception of one post-medieval glazed earthenware sherd and one modern industrial white ware, the ceramic assemblage is Romano-British in date (126 sherds weighing 1509 grammes). On the basis of fabric types present and vessel forms, albeit scarce, the assemblage may be broadly dated to the AD 2nd-4th centuries. The majority of sherds are small non-diagnostic body sherds.

The bulk of the assemblage consists of coarsewares; only four fineware sherds were recovered. The finewares consist of two very abraded samian sherds and two colour coated sherds, including one from the New Forest production centre. The coarse wares are dominated by Black Burnished Ware fabrics from the Wareham/Poole Harbour region and a small quantity of the variant south-western Black Burnished Ware fabric as identified at Dorchester (Seager Smith and Davies, 1993). The remaining coarseware fabrics include a small range of greywares probably derived from a number of local sources. A summary of fabric types is included in Table 8.

Diagnostic vessel forms are limited and only occur in Black Burnished Ware fabrics. These include a jar with short upright rim, four everted rimmed jars, one plain rimmed dish and one drop flanged bowl. All forms which can be broadly dated to the AD 2nd-4th centuries.

The bulk of the Romano-British assemblage (105 sherds, 79% of the pottery assemblage by weight) was recovered from ditch F264. The remaining sherds were dispersed in small quantities within a number of layers and features, the largest concentration was nine sherds from probable robber trench fill 252.

Table 8: Summary of pottery fabric types

Fabrics	No. of sherds
<i>Romano-British:</i>	
Samian	2
Finewares	2
Black-Burnished ware	97
Coarsewares	23
Sub total	124
<i>Post-medieval:</i>	2
Overall total	126

7.4 Building Material

A moderate quantity of building material was retained from the evaluation and comprises a representative sample of ceramic brick and tiles, stone tiles and plaster/mortar fragments.

Ceramic building material

The ceramic building material has been divided into diagnostic forms and grouped by broad fabric types. The forms defined comprise *tegula*, *imbrex*, *tesserae* flue tile, brick, undiagnostic tile, and tile or brick fragments. No detailed fabric analysis was undertaken but macroscopically, four fabric groups could be identified. These range from fine sandy fabrics (pink fabric 1 and orange fabric 3) to a hard more compact, red fabric (fabric 2), and a coarse, sandy, buff fabric (fabric 4). A summary by fabric and type is included as Table 9.

The most common form recorded was tile fragments particularly in the fine sandy fabric types 1 and 3, including 13 fragments derived from *tegulae*. The *tegula* fragments are mainly flanged with three lines of finger impressions running adjacent to the flange. Four of the *tegulae* are cut away, one has a square nail hole and one has had its flange removed, which suggests it may have been reused. Also in the fine sandy fabrics are five fragments derived from *imbrices*. Other forms identified include two flue tile fragments, both with keying for plaster, one complete brick and 17 brick fragments. The complete brick in the hard red fabric (fabric 2) measures 215mm x 210mm x 45mm, dimensions which conform to the small square *bessales* bricks used to create *pilae* which support the floor above the hypocaust (Brodrigg 1987), although in this case have been (re) used for a level surface. On the basis of surviving dimensions, the remaining brick fragments are also likely to be derived from *bessales*. The bulk of the ceramic brick and tiles were recovered from ditch F264.

Other ceramic building materials comprise two ceramic *tesserae* recovered from structure 240 and ditch 264, and one fragment of fired clay also recovered from ditch 264. The fired clay fragment, possibly daub or a fragment of oven/hearth lining, is in a fine sandy fabric with one squared edge and a curved internal surface.

Stone building material

The stone recovered includes four complete square tiles and two tile fragments, all in a moderately fine sandstone. The stone tiles are similar in size, average 205mm x 205mm x 28mm). They were recovered from spoilheap context 210.

Plaster/mortar

A total of 76 fragments of plaster/mortar was recovered which mainly consists of a moderately coarse, well-sorted pink or buff mortar with common small fragments of crushed tile. The majority of fragments have a flat surface and two fragments have red painted surfaces. The painted fragments were recovered from layer 214 and structure 240 and the remaining fragments mainly from ditch F264 and rubble spread 211.

Table 9: Building material by fabric (nos. of fragments).

Ceramic Fabrics	1	2	3	4	No fabric attributed	Total
Tegula	5	1	7			13
Imbrex	4		1			5
Flue tile			1	1		2
Bricks		8	6		4 (1 glazed post med)	18
Tile fragments	15	7	25		5	52
Fragments	13	2	11	1	8	35
Tessera		1	1			2
Daub					1	1
Total						128
Stone tiles						6
Plaster/mortar						76

7.5 Worked and Burnt Flint

One worked flint flake was recovered from the spoil heap adjacent to Trench 1 and three fragments of burnt, unworked flint were recovered from ditch F264.

7.6 Animal Bone by Joe Whelan

A total of 103 fragments of animal bone was recovered and with the exception of eight fragments recovered from layer 213 and 1 from structure 240, the remaining fragments were all found within ditch F264. Although the assemblage is mainly fragmentary, species represented include sheep/goat, pig and bird. Two fragments from sheep/goat have traces of butchery marks.

7.7 Shell

A total of 72 fragments of shell was recovered from the evaluation, which comprises principally oyster fragments, but a small quantity of scallop shells was collected as well as one limpet and one mussel shell. The majority of shells were recovered from ditch F264.

7.8 Other finds

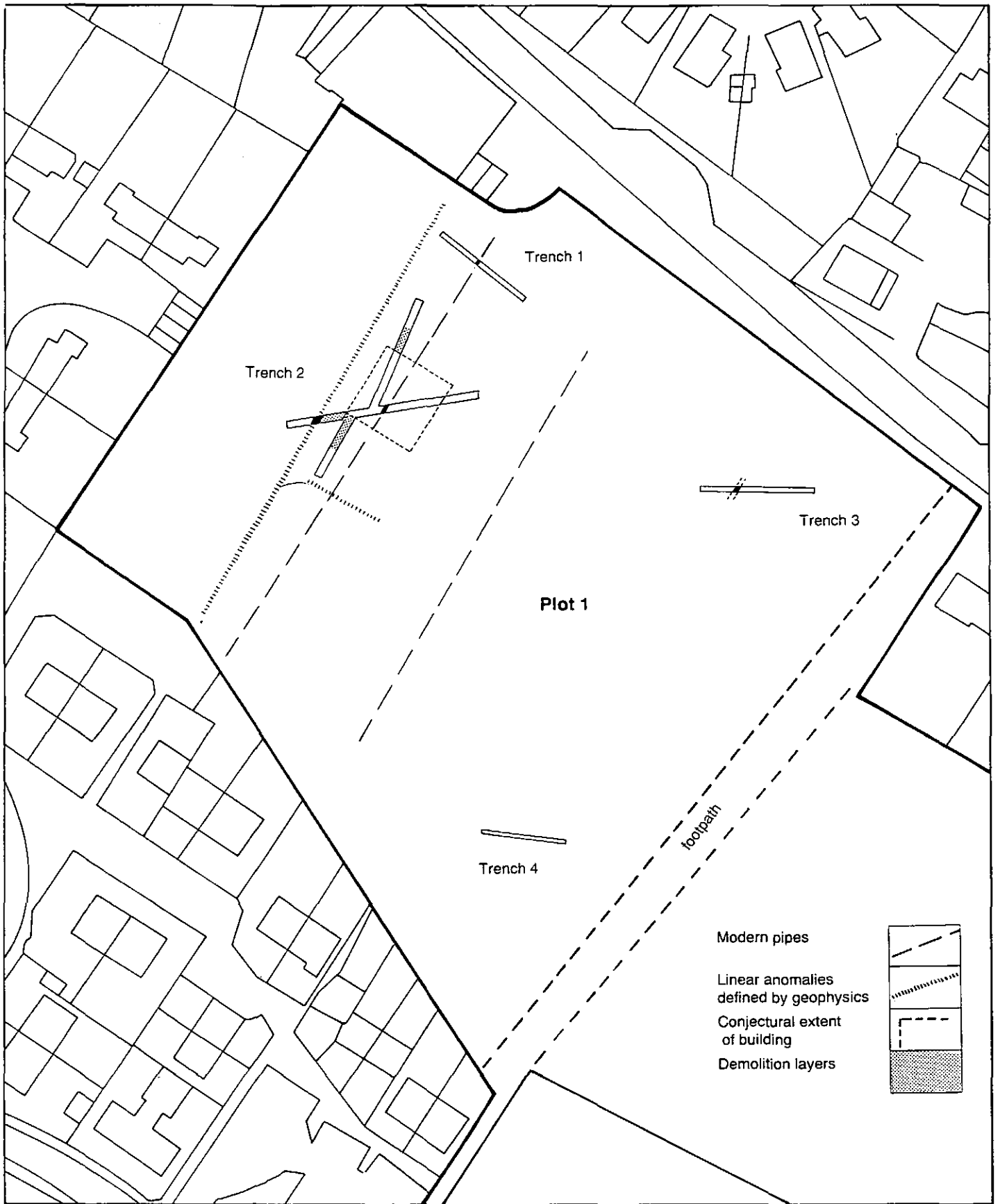
Other finds recovered comprise one small fragment of slag, one pale blue Roman glass fragment and two burnt stone fragments, all found within ditch F264.

8. THE EXTENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL ACTIVITY

- 8.1 Because additional trenching was undertaken around Trench 2, it is now possible to suggest some limits to the extent of archaeological activity. This information is presented on Fig. 6, which also incorporates data from the earlier magnetometer survey of the site.
- 8.2 A large, approximately N-S ditch (F264) may form the western edge of Romano-British activity, with the identified structural remains unlikely to continue beyond this feature. It is not known, however, whether associated cut features or other structural remains are located on the west side of the ditch. The earlier geophysical survey has identified sub-surface anomalies in this area which have been interpreted as ferrous material rather than cut features. It is likely that the Romano-British building has been almost fully defined in plan within the vicinity of the trench. The limits are seemingly defined by the eastern edge of robber trench cut F267 in Trench 2, wall 230 in Trench 2c, and the northern edge of demolition layer 211 in Trench 2b. In plan, this would form a square structure on an approximate N-S and E-W axis with dimensions of c. 15m x 15m. The only uncertainty is the eastern end, where a separate wall (240) was identified.
- 8.3 Beyond the edges of the building in Trenches 2a, 2b and 2c demolition deposits were present, as well as other features which are more likely to have been naturally formed. A possible E-W aligned linear cut feature was identified during the geophysical survey immediately south of the building. However, this was not confirmed during the trenching.
- 8.4 In summary, therefore, it appears that with the exception of the continuation of ditch F264, the limits of activity have been defined to the north (Trench 1 contained wholly negative results), although there is still some uncertainty whether associated deposits are present to the east, south and west. The geophysical survey has not identified any further sub-surface features in this plot with certainty.
- 8.5 The horizontal extent of the building has mostly been defined, but its vertical extent is more difficult to predict. The structure appears to have been terraced in, as natural subsoil was recorded at the ends of Trenches 2a, 2b and 2c. It can be suggested that intact archaeology is present to a depth of at least 0.80m below the topsoil, but its extent beyond that is unknown.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 Based on present evidence, the Romano-British activity on the site comprises a probable square structure constructed using flint and sandstone walling, with evidence for intact *opus signinum* and tile floors. There are almost certainly internal divisions within the building, but as hand-excavation was limited to resolving the obvious questions of date and function, no attempt has been made to define the internal layout.
- 9.2 The intact structural remains and associated artefacts are characteristic of a high-quality Romanised building. With the exception of truncation by modern sewer pipes the preservation appears remarkably good, although to some extent robbing of walls, probably in antiquity, has taken place. Evidence from artefacts suggests that at least in parts, the building had tessellated



Scale 1:1000

Fig 6. Interpretive plan based on results of evaluation and geophysical survey results.

floors, painted plaster walls, a combination of stone and tile on the roof and underfloor heating, although there was in-situ evidence for re-use of *Bessales* bricks as flooring. The artefact evidence also indicates occupation on the site dating from the AD 2nd -to 4th century. This extended timescale is also confirmed in the excavated evidence, where perhaps two phases of construction were identified.

- 9.3 The ground plan of the building appears somewhat small for a 'villa', but this function cannot be discounted, nor can the possibility that the structure may represent the other main types of building of this date found within the countryside, such as a high-status farm, a bathhouse or even a temple.
- 9.4 As discussed in section 2, the site lies in an area known to contain important archaeological sites and monuments of Romano-British date. There is a Roman Fort on Hod Hill, and the present site lies within 1km of the suggested route of Roman Road from Hod Hill to Rawlsbury Camp (Field 1992). Other important Romano-British buildings are known close by, seemingly suggesting that the Stour Valley was a favourable location at this time for the siting of high-quality Romanised buildings. These would include the buildings identified at the base of Hod Hill and at Hinton St. Mary, and there is also thought to be a villa at West Stour. A substantial villa is also recorded at Iwerne Minster less than 4km NE of the present site. The Iwerne Minster structure lying close to the River Iwerne, a tributary of the Stour.
- 9.5 The remaining trenches on the site provided largely negative results. Former ditches were identified in Trenches 3 and 5, but they remain undated and are likely to be early boundaries and not associated with the structure and its associated deposits identified in Trench 2. There was also a general paucity of artefacts recovered from overlying layers.

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APPENDIX 1

Table 10: Overall finds table by deposit type. No=number, wt = weight in grammes. CBM = ceramic building material. RB=Romano-British. Pmed= post-medieval. Fe=iron, Cu=copper alloy

Feature	Context	Animal Bone		Burnt Flint		CBM		Glass		RB Pottery		P.Med Pottery		Plaster		Metalwork	Shell		Worked Flint		Other
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt		No	wt	No	wt	
Layers																					
Layer	206					3	2			2	6					2 Fe nails					
Layer	208					2	234			1	4			10	456		2	10			
Layer	209					14	724			3	80			4	79	3 Fe nails					
Rubble spread	211					3	77			1	19			13	713	2 Fe nails					
Layer	213	8	50			3	59			2	98						1	1			
Layer	214													1	119						
Layer	252					7	110			9	106			1	9	2 Fe nails	15	285			
Structure	240	1	26			2	124							2	172		1	116			
Ditch 264																					
Ditch fill	207									1	1										
Ditch fill	232	57	610	3	182	17	485			51	568			4	29	1 Cu Alloy coin, 5 Fe nails	12	357			
Ditch fill	233	17	124			23	825			33	398			17	232	1 Cu Alloy coin, 6 Fe nails	34	871			2 x cinder-6g
Ditch fill	241	6	50			3	671			2	16			6	485						2x f.stone-141g
Ditch fill	251	3	13			2	6			1	5					59 Fe hobnails	4	226			
Ditch fill	254	10	120			14	72	1	2	12	180			9	80	1 Fe nail					1xslag-39g
Ditch fill	255	1	2			9	204			5	18						1	36			
Ditch 264 subtotal		94	919	3	182	68	2263	1	2	105	1186			36	826	71 Fe nails; 2 coins	51	1490			
Subsoil/spoil																					
Subsoil	202									1	1					1 Fe nail					
Spoil	105																		1	16	
Spoil	210					23	25770							9	43	1 Fe nail	2	4			6 stone tiles
Spoil	300					1	7														
Spoil	604					1	1														
Spoil	705											1	7								
Spoil	806					1	7					1	2								
Overall Total		103	995	3	182	128	29378	1	2	124	1500	2	9	76	2417	82 nails, 2 coins	72	1906	1	16	