



**NEW EXTENSION, 49 BLANDFORD ROAD,
HAMWORTHY, POOLE**
Archaeological Observations and Recording



Report No. 53169.1

December 2004

New Extension, 49 Blandford Road, Hamworthy, Poole

Archaeological Observations and Recording, Sept 2004

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SUMMARY

In September 2004, Terrain Archaeology carried out observations during the construction of a new extension to the rear of 49 Blandford Road, Hamworthy (NGR SZ00269028). This site lies within the area of the Roman 'fort' or supply base on the Hamworthy peninsula.

Three small ditches, a pit and two postholes were recorded. These features all date to the 1st century AD. The small quantity of pottery recovered included flagons and amphorae and strongly suggests a Roman military assemblage.

INTRODUCTION

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Roger Comben to undertake archaeological observations and recording during the construction of a new extension to the rear of 49 Blandford Road, Hamworthy, Poole, as part of the conditions for Planning Consent.

'Archaeological Observations and Recording' (or 'watching brief') is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, within a specified area or site where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.

The development comprised the construction of a new extension to the rear of the existing house at 49 Blandford Road, Hamworthy. This was founded on continuous strip footings. A new garage to the rear was not included within the observations, as the groundworks associated with its construction would not reach sufficient depth to impinge on any potential *in situ* archaeology.

The site lies to the rear of 49 Blandford Road, Hamworthy, at NGR SZ00269028 (Figure 1). The topography is flat, with a very slight drop to the south and lies about 2.4 m above Ordnance Datum. The area of the site had been cleared, various small extensions to the rear of the existing house had been demolished and the rear wall of the house had been underpinned, prior to the first site visit.

The underlying geology is mapped as the Poole Formation deposits of the Bracklesham Group overlain by drift and man-made deposits (British Geological Survey 1:50000 Sheet 329 *Bournemouth*, 1991). The Site is shown as lying on Second level River Terrace deposits of flint gravel, often very sandy, with the Oakdale Clay and sand deposits underneath.

The fieldwork was carried out between 13th–21st September 2004 by Peter Bellamy.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge Roger Comben, the groundworkers, Steven Wallis (Dorset County Council), and Jane Timby for their help and cooperation during this project.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This site lies within the interior of a large Roman military 'fort' or supply base surrounded by double defensive ditches. This 'fort' is oriented roughly NNW–SSE and the course of the defences on the SW and NW sides have been determined by excavation and observation at Shapwick Road (Bellamy 2000) and Rigler Road (Bellamy 2003). The defences on the SW side are about 140 m SW of the present site (Figure 1). Evidence for a large number of small ditches, pits, salt boiling

hearths, and other features has been found within the interior of the 'fort' (Bellamy and Pearce 2001; Bellamy and Tatler 2003).

The closest archaeological investigation to the present site was at 45 Blandford Road, the adjacent property to the east. An 8 m by 2 m wide excavation trench was excavated along the western side of this property, just to the south of the area of the present observations (Figure 1). A 0.65 m wide ditch, oriented NW-SE, and terminating to the west was found in this trench (Collins 1989). A small quantity of Roman pottery and briquetage was recovered from the ditch.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the archaeological observations was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

The archaeological works aimed to observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.

METHODS

The work was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct and *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*, although there was no written brief issued for this work.

The groundworks comprised the machine excavation of the footings trenches for the extension (Figure 2). The extension covered an area of 9.0 m north to south and 9.5 m west to east. The trenches were between 0.7-1.0 m wide and up to 1.4 m deep.

The observations of the footings trench was partial, as defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, with a suitably qualified archaeologist present as and when seemed appropriate.

All deposits exposed in the trenches were recorded using elements of Terrain Archaeology's recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. The position of the footings trench was located on a plan provided by the client. All depths recorded were below existing ground surface.

The records have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines and the requirements of the receiving museum. The archive will be deposited with the Poole Museums Service.

RESULTS

Introduction

The footings trenches were dug down into the top of the natural sands. However, the unstable nature of the soils meant that the sides of the footings trenches had to be shored soon after excavation, thus limiting the time available for archaeological investigation. This was particularly true of the western, middle, and southern footings trenches. Only the eastern part was available for more detailed archaeological recording. The western side of the site was noticeably more disturbed, with much modern disturbance down into the top of the natural deposits.

Natural deposits

The natural deposit encountered at the base of the footings trench was a yellowish- to reddish-brown coarse sand (106), which is quite variable and contains quantities of flint gravel. All the features described below were cut into this deposit.

Roman features and deposits

Buried Soil

Immediately overlying the natural sand 106 was a layer of soft yellowish-brown clayey sand (105) with sparse flint nodules and sparse charcoal flecks. This layer was about 0.2 m thick and a single 1st century AD potsherd was recovered from it (Table 1). A number of the features described below were cut through this layer, which has been interpreted as a buried soil of early Roman date.

Pits

A single pit (111) was found in the southeast corner of the site (Figure 2, Plates 2 & 4). It was only partly within the footings trench, so its full size and shape were not exposed. It appeared to be subrectangular in shape with steeply sloping sides and a flat base and measured 1.2 m by over 0.5 m across and 0.8 m deep. It cut through soil layer 105 into the natural sand below (Figure 3). The upper part of the pit was removed by machine, but the lower 0.3 m was excavated by hand, though this was hampered by the rapid ingress of ground water.

The pit was filled with light brownish-grey clayey sand (110) with moderate charcoal flecks and occasional flint gravel and a 0.2 m thick layer of compact brownish-grey sandy clay with frequent flint gravels (109) above. A small quantity of 1st Century pottery and briquetage was recovered from the lower part of the pit (Table 1). A fragment of limestone and a large lump of baked clay, similar to the clay from the salt boiling hearths found about 150 m to the southwest on the Shapwick Road site (Bellamy and Pearce 2001), were also found in this pit.

Ditches

In the northeast corner of the site, the remains of a ditch (107) oriented roughly NNW–SSE was exposed cutting into the natural sands (Figure 2, Plate 3). This ditch may have also cut through the buried soil layer 105, but the similarity between the fill of this ditch layer 105 meant that this was not determined with certainty. It had shallow concave sides in the upper part and more steeply sloping sides towards the base. It measured about 1.5 m wide and 0.6 m deep. It was filled with yellowish-brown clayey sand (108) with occasional flint nodules and flint gravel and sparse charcoal flecks. A small quantity of 1st century AD pottery and briquetage was recovered from this ditch.

A small ditch (119), oriented roughly WNW–ESE, was observed in the sides of the middle footings trench (Figure 2). This feature had been completely removed by machine within the trench itself. It had steeply sloping sides and a flat base and measured about 0.75 m wide and 0.55 m deep (Figure 3). The edges of this feature were clear where it cut through the natural sand 106, but the relationship with soil layer 105 was much less certain. It was unclear whether it cut through soil 105 or was sealed by it. The ditch was filled with yellowish-brown clayey sand (118). No dating evidence was recovered. No trace of the ditch was observed in the east and west footings trenches. It is possible that all trace of it had been removed by later disturbance to the west, but to the east it appears to have terminated at some point between the central and eastern footings trench.

Another small ditch (121), oriented NNE–SSW, was exposed in the southern footings trench (Figure 2, Plate 5). This ditch was similar to ditch 119, about 0.9 m wide and 0.55 m deep, with steeply sloping sides and flat bottom (Figure 3). It is unclear whether it cut through soil 105 or was

sealed by it. It was filled with yellowish-brown clayey sand (120) with moderate flint gravel nodules and sparse charcoal flecks. It contained a single Roman coarseware sherd and a very small quantity of briquetage (Table 1).

Postholes

In the northeast corner of the site, two postholes (115, 117) were exposed in section (Figure 3). They were not seen in plan and it is not known if other postholes had existed within the trench and had been machined away. To the south was a small posthole (117), 0.12 m wide and 0.25 m deep, filled with yellowish-brown clayey sand (118). It was cut by the northern side of ditch 107. Immediately to the north was a larger posthole (115), 0.4 m wide and 0.4 m deep, with a 0.2 m wide postpipe (113) in its northern part. Both the postpipe and posthole were filled with similar yellowish-brown clayey sand (112, 114). This posthole cut through soil layer 105.

Later Deposits

All of the archaeological deposits and features described above were sealed beneath a layer of dark brownish-grey clayey sand (104) with sparse flint nodules, which was up to 0.65 m thick. This layer probably represents post-Roman build-up of agricultural soils.

Along the eastern edge of the site was a pipe trench (103) filled with dark greyish-brown sandy loam (102) with flint gravels, overlain by a gravel garden surface (101).

A number of pits, service trenches and other disturbances, all of post-medieval/modern date were encountered in the western part of the site. These were not recorded in detail.

Finds

The finds retained from the excavation are tabulated in Table 1 and each material type is briefly described below.

Context	Roman Pottery		Briquetage		Baked Clay		Stone	
	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)
105	1	10						
108	4	73	4	72				
110	4	136	1	8	1	234	1	439
114	1	17						
120	1	7	2	17				
<i>Total</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>243</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>234</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>439</i>

Table 1: All finds by context

Pottery by Jane Timby

The archaeological watching brief recovered a small assemblage of 10 potsherds weighing 243 g, of Roman date and one indeterminate fragment of abraded pot or ceramic building material (CBM). Pottery was associated with five defined contexts all of which would appear to date to the 1st century AD. The sherds were in moderately good fresh condition with an overall average sherd weight of 22 g.

Table 2 summarises the sherds recovered. The assemblage comprises eight bodysherds and two rims, the latter both from jars of early Dorset black burnished-type ware. Context 105 sealing the Roman layers produced a single sherd from a whiteware flagon, which may be a North Gaulish import. A further sherd of an oxidised flagon (fresh break) from pit 111 (110) may also be an import or locally made. The same feature produced a sherd of Dressel 20 amphora (BAT AM) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 84) and one of DOR BB1 (*ibid.* 127) along with a fragment of pot or CBM.

Context	Fabric	Form	Wt (g)	No	Comment
105	whiteware ?imported	flagon	10	1	1st century
108	DORBB1	jar	47	3	1st century
108	?CADAM	amphora	26	1	1st century
110	BAT AM	Dr 20	86	1	
110	OXID	flagon	22	2=1	1st century
110	DOR BB1		19	1	1st century
110	?pot/cbm		9	1	
114	DOR BB1	bead rim jar	17	1	1st century
120	DOR BB1		7	1	
<i>Total</i>			243	11	

Table 2: Pottery Assemblage

Ditch 109 (108) produced three sherds of DOR BB1 and one amphora sherd, possibly a Cadiz fabric (CAD AM) (ibid. 91) and thus potentially from a fish sauce amphora Peacock and Williams (1986) class 17. Single DOR BB1 sherds were recovered from posthole 114 and gully 120.

Although the assemblage is too small to draw any meaningful conclusions the presence of at least two flagon and two amphorae strongly intimate a 1st-century military assemblage, which would be commensurate with the site falling within the area of the Roman fort/supply base.

Briquetage

Seven small sherds of briquetage were recovered (Table 1). These were all small abraded pieces with no rims, bases or corners present.

Other finds

One lump of orangey-brown burnt clay with some sand temper and occasional larger pieces of flint gravel was recovered from pit 111. It had one original flattish surface. It is very similar in character to the material used to construct the brine boiling hearths on the adjacent Shapwick Road site (Bellamy and Pearce 2001) and probably comes from a similar structure.

The only other find was an eroded fragment of Purbeck limestone 162 mm long. It had no worked surfaces.

CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to interpret the remains from such a small area of excavation with any degree of certainty. However, the stratigraphic position of the features and the finds recovered from the ditches and pits suggest that they are part of the 1st century Roman military activity. It is pertinent to note that Ditch 107 is on the same alignment as the Roman defences. Ditch 119 was similar in size and profile and had a similar alignment to the ditch found in the adjacent property at 45 Blandford Road (Figure 1).

Although by themselves, the results of this project are not of great significance, they add another piece towards our understanding of the Roman military presence on the Hamworthy peninsula.

PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive (Terrain Archaeology Project No. 53169) will be deposited with Poole Museums Service, which has agreed in principle to accept the archive, subject to fulfilment of the Museum's requirements of the preparation of archaeological archives. A copy of the microfilmed archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record.

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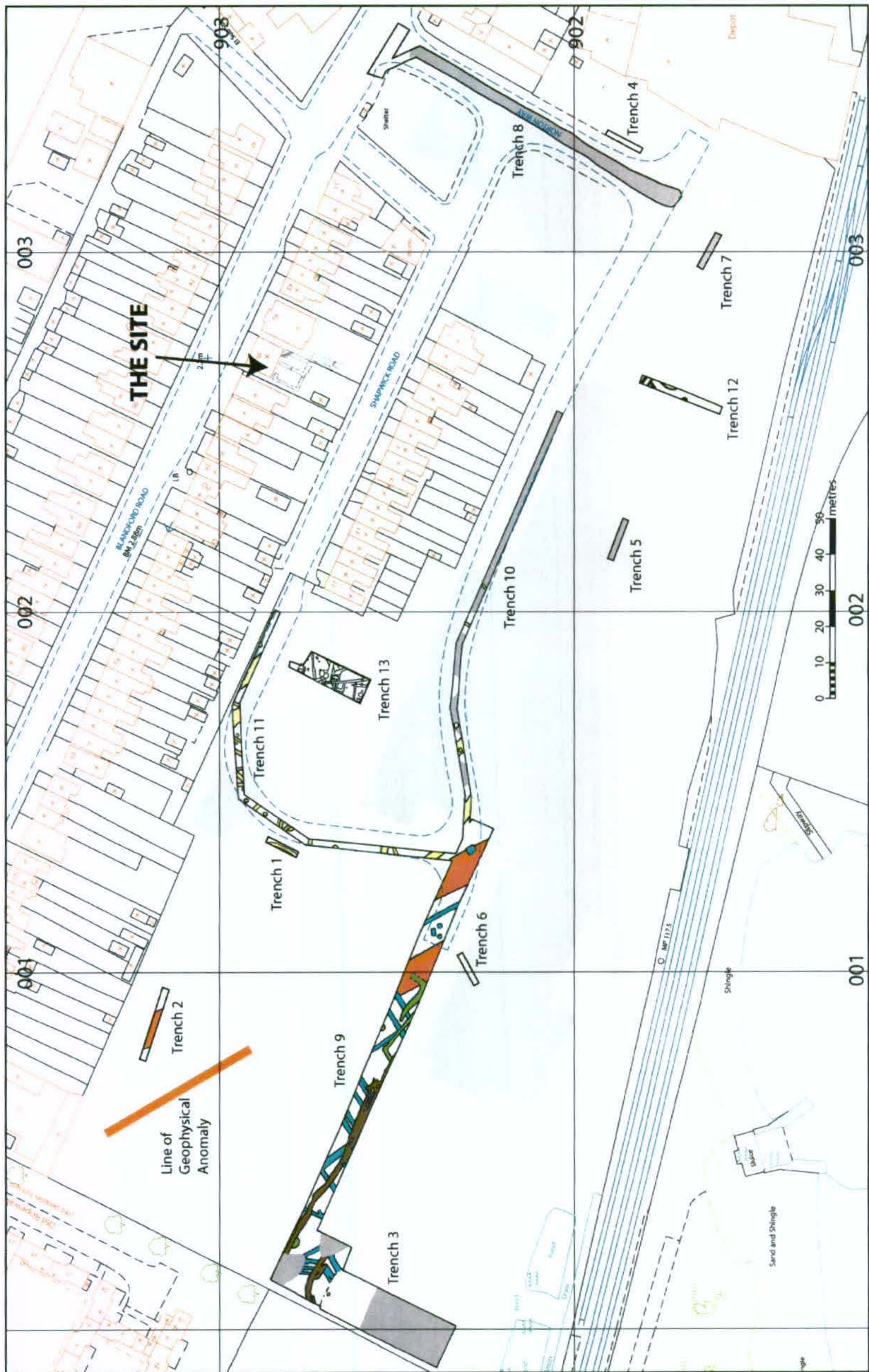


Figure 1: Location Map showing other excavated Roman features in the immediate vicinity of the site.

49 BLANDFORD ROAD, HAMWORTHY

Plan of Observations

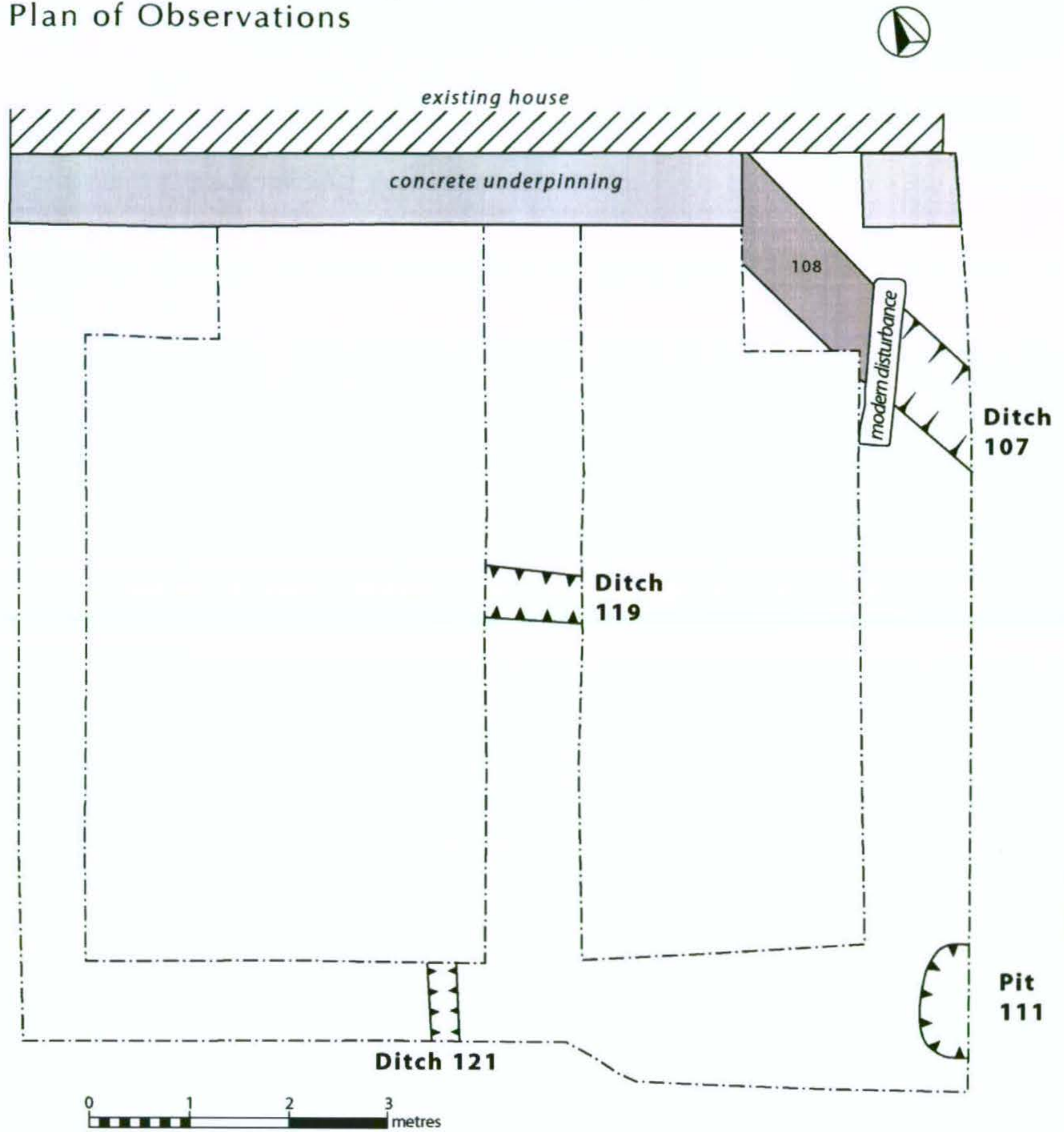
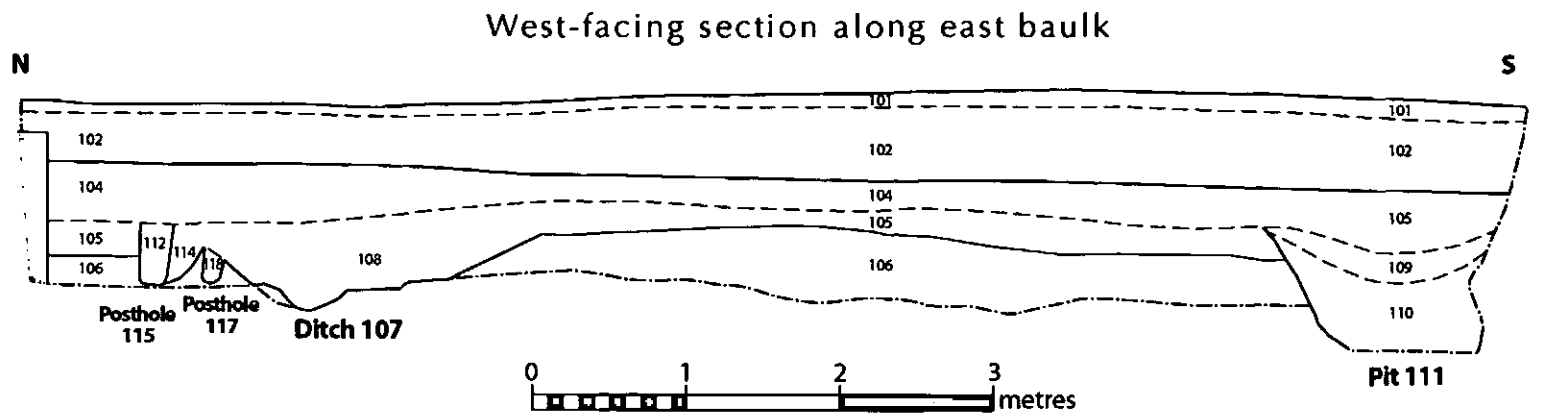
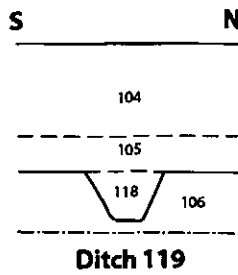


Figure 2: Plan of archaeological features exposed in footings trench.

Figure 3: Sections.



East-facing section of Ditch 119



North-facing section of Ditch 121

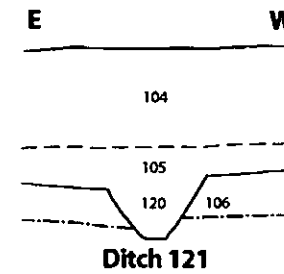




Plate 1: General view of site looking north.



Plate 2: View along east footings trench with Pit 111 in foreground and Ditch 107 in background.



Plate 3: Ditch 107, looking north.



Plate 4: Pit 111 after excavation.



Plate 5: Ditch 121, looking south.



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