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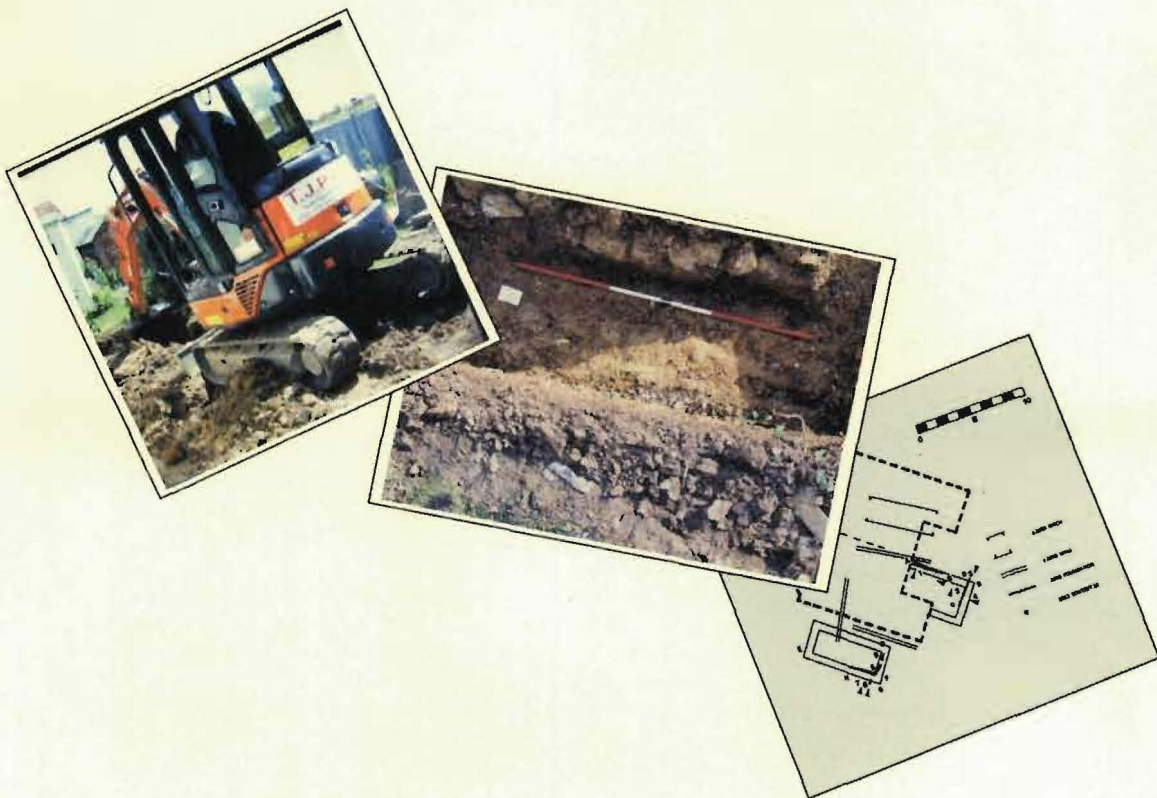
at

**GLOUCESTER AND DISTRICT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
RESEARCH GROUP**



**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT
NO.1 ASHWOOD WAY, HUCCLECOTE,
GLOUCESTER, JUNE 2012**

(Commissioned by Mr Khalil Solimani)



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Nigel Spry

(Commissioned by Mr Khalil Solimani)

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. In April 2012 approval was granted by Gloucester City Council to Mr Solimani (the client) to construct a family room extension at the rear of his semi-detached bungalow home at No1 Ashwood Way, Hucclecote, Gloucester, GL3 3JE. This approval was conditional upon a programme of archaeological monitoring (a 'watching brief') during ground works relating to the development proposal, with provision for appropriate archiving and public dissemination of the findings.

1.2. On the basis of a project brief ¹ approved by Mr C Parry of Gloucestershire County Council's Archaeological Service, on behalf of the City Council, the watching brief was conducted by Mr N P Spry and other members of the Gloucester and District Archaeological Research Group (GADARG).

1.3 Using a medium size mechanical digger, the contractor carried out excavation for foundations of the family room on the morning of 19 June 2012 and excavation of the foundations for the garage followed in the afternoon. GADARG members remained on site for two further days. The City Archaeologist visited on the first and second days.

2. THE SITE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

2.1 The site of this work (at NGR SO 8685 1685) adjoined the client's home. The building to the south, (Nos 3/5 Ashwood Way), was the location of the fragmentary 'Trevor Road' Hucclecote Roman bath-block excavated by Gloucester Museum in 1957. The published report of this earlier work ² indicates that walls were encountered by the then builder during the construction of No 1 Ashwood Way. One of these seemed to be on the line of the party wall with contiguous No 37 Trevor Road; two others were close to the building or under it at the south west - see Figure 1.

2.2 The site is also near the find spot of a Roman stone sarcophagus, containing a skeleton, in front of No 20/22 in the same road.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the watching brief were as follows:

a. Monitor potentially sensitive ground works liable to expose, damage or disturb archaeological deposits, ensuring in the process that any significant finds encountered were promptly noted.

b. Notify the City Archaeologist of any significant archaeological remains discovered so that their importance and the required level of excavation and recording could be assessed.

c. Carry out hand excavation, cleaning and recording on such finds to the level agreed.

d. Produce appropriate records of discoveries to approved standards and to disseminate these to interested parties.

e. Arrange for the deposition of any resulting finds and archival material with the appropriate museum or other authorised body.

3.2 These objectives were achieved, despite the fact that the contractors started mechanical excavation of the foundation trenches for the family room without warning to the client and GADARG. With this exception, the contractors were cooperative and allowed adequate time and access for archaeological observations.

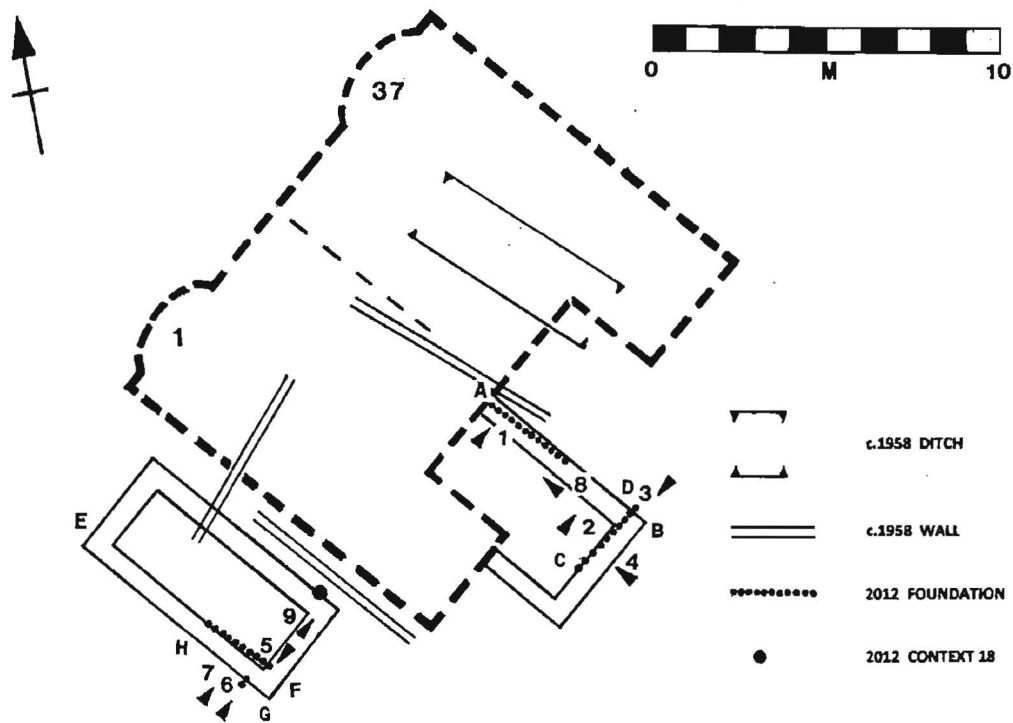


Figure 1. Outline of No 1 Ashwood Way, Hucclecote and the adjoining 37 Trevor Road showing the position of the excavated trenches for a replacement Garage (left) and Family Room (right). Features noted by the original builders in c.1958 and during the 2012 watching brief are indicated, together with the location of archaeological sections A-B, C-D, E-F and G-H. Also shown are photograph numbers and directions.

4. EXCAVATION RESULTS

4.1 The Family Room

4.1.1 At the north west end of the excavated trench, a line of foundation stones was found intruding into it from below the rear wall of the existing property. This feature, (context 4), shown in drawn section A-B, appears to relate to the wall identified in the late 1950s, mentioned in the published report on the Roman bath-block. It was not described at this time although its position was indicated on a similar alignment in the report plan, but a little to the north - see Figures 1 & 2(a), Photographs 1 & 8.

4.1.2 Some 4.5m beyond the rear wall of the property, small loose un-mortared oolitic limestone blocks were encountered. It was not possible or safe to enter the trench to investigate these *in-situ* but subsequently the section showed that they were at the lower limit of a backfill deposit (context 3a) over the remains of stone rubble foundations of a wall crossed by the trench (context 5) - see Figure 1 & 2(a), Photographs 2 & 3.

4.1.3 The line of this wall foundation continued south west for at least a further 3m (contexts 8 & 9) - see Figure 1 & 2(b), Photograph 4.

4.1.4 Nothing was identified that necessitated undue delay or the involvement of others.

4.2 The Garage

4.2.1 No formal planning conditions seem to have been attached to excavation of the garage trenches, however, the GADARG watching brief was extended to cover this activity. Nothing especially significant was identified that required intervention.

4.2.2 A 2.6m length of rubble foundation (context 15), exposed in drawn section E-F, running parallel with the wall shown close to the side of the property on the original published report plan, and some 3.0m from this wall, was found at the southern corner of the intended garage - see Figure 1 & 2(c), Photographs 6 & 7. The width of this new wall foundation and any structure originally above it was not determined.

4.2.3 The section opposite here at the south showed the remains of a probable wall at right-angles to this (context 16), in the direction of the Roman bath-block below Nos 3/5 Ashwood Way, and some evidence for a backfilled robber trench (context 17) - see Figure 1 & 2(d), Photograph 5.

4.2.4 Just to the south west of the location of the wall beside the property on the original report plan a mixed deposit containing sandstone tiles, CBM and pottery in a dark loam matrix was encountered (context 18). This was interpreted as the infill of a robber trench for the wall to the north east, or destruction associated with another Roman feature - see Figure 1, Photographs 9(a) & 9(b).

5. RECORDING

5.1 Each archaeological context was recorded on pro-forma context sheets and photographed in colour. Significant trench sections were drawn to scale. In all, the documentary site archive includes 18 context sheets, 4 section drawings, 33 photographs as JPG images on disk, as well as photocopies of reference material and correspondence.

5.2 The Family Room contexts are listed below:

1. Surface disturbance within and over trenches, including unstratified material finds - equals 11.
2. Topsoil.
- 3 & 3a. Stony brash, stone with some clay, backfill of stone robbed wall/foundations.
4. Unshaped oolitic limestone rubble, foundations of robbed wall.
5. Irregular oolitic rubble, (plus piece of lias and of sandstone), foundation of robbed wall.
- 6 & 6a. Stony brash and loam, with areas of obvious stone, backfill/disturbance of robber trench.
7. Backfill of 1950s foundation trench.
8. Stone rubble or voids, stony clay and decayed yellow mortar, foundation of robbed wall
9. Stone rubble in loam, disturbed upper level of wall foundation trench.

The Garage contexts are listed below:

11. Surface disturbance within and over trenches, including unstratified material finds - equals 1.
12. Mixed gravel and cultivation soil, disturbed post-Roman to modern context.
13. Stony loam over wall foundation, probable wall robbing trench.
- 14 & 14a Thin spread and patches of orange gravel, higher infill of backfilled robbing trench.

15. Oolitic limestone with few lias stones in loamy rubble set in natural clay, wall foundations.
16. Dense oolitic limestone rubble in clay natural, surviving wall foundation or packing.
17. Sandy rubble (with clay), probable initial infill of robber trench
18. Deposit of stone, CBM and pottery in loam, infill of robber trench or other destruction feature.

5.3 The site archive has been offered to Gloucester City Council's archaeology service.

6. DRAWN SECTIONS

6.1 The reference level used in the sections of the Family Room trenches was the junction of the combed surface bricks and the lower smooth surface bricks in the rear wall of the building – see Photograph 8. The reference level used in the sections of the Garage trenches was the top of the existing concrete garage driveway.

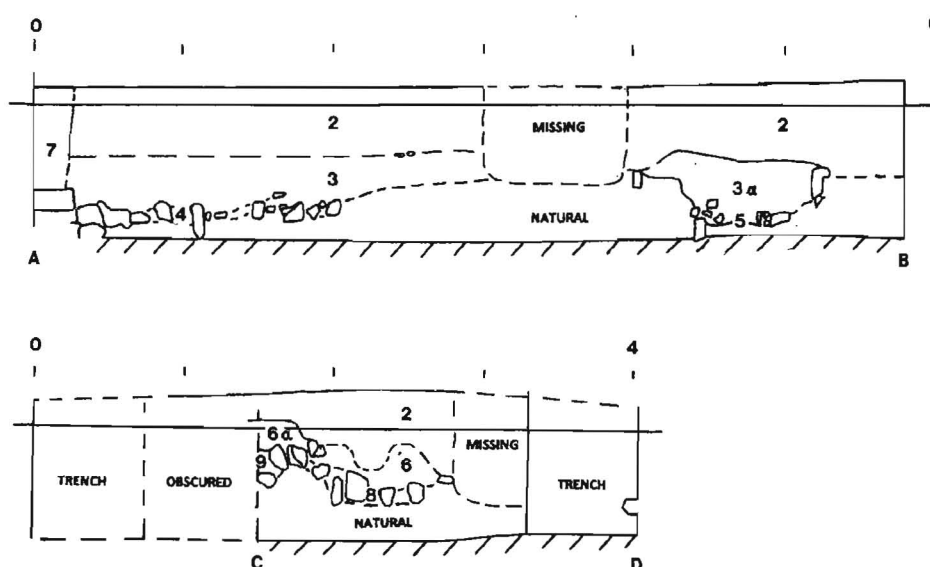


Figure 2 (a) The north east external section A-B of the foundation trench for the Family Room - see Figure 1.

(b) The north west internal section C-D of the foundation trench for the Family Room - see Figure 1.

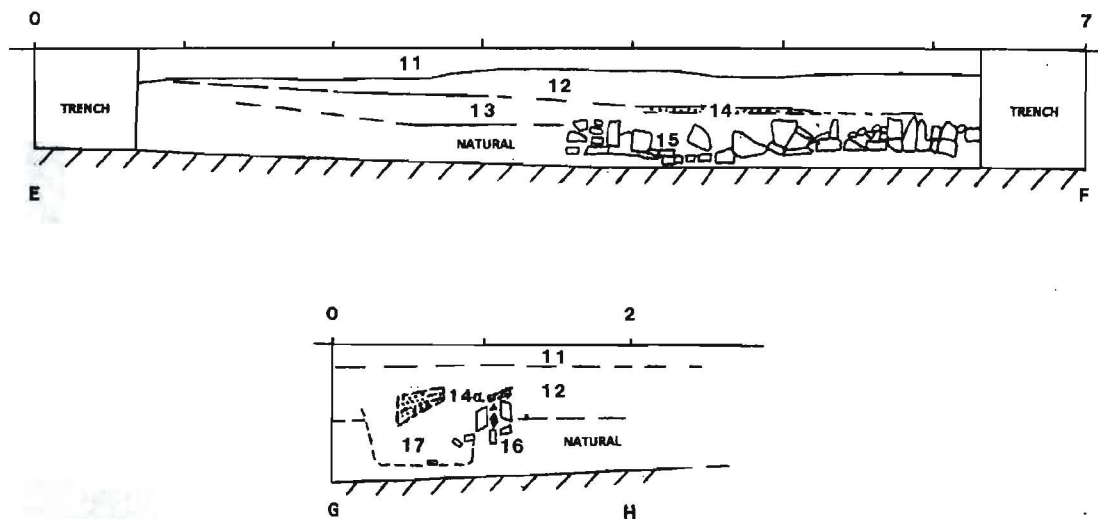


Figure 3 (a) The north east internal section E-F of the foundation trench for the Garage - see Figure 1.

(b) The north east external section G-H of the foundation trench for the Garage - see Figure 1.

7. PHOTOGRAPHS

7.1 The scale shown in the published photographs has 0.5m divisions. See Figure 1 for numbers and directions.



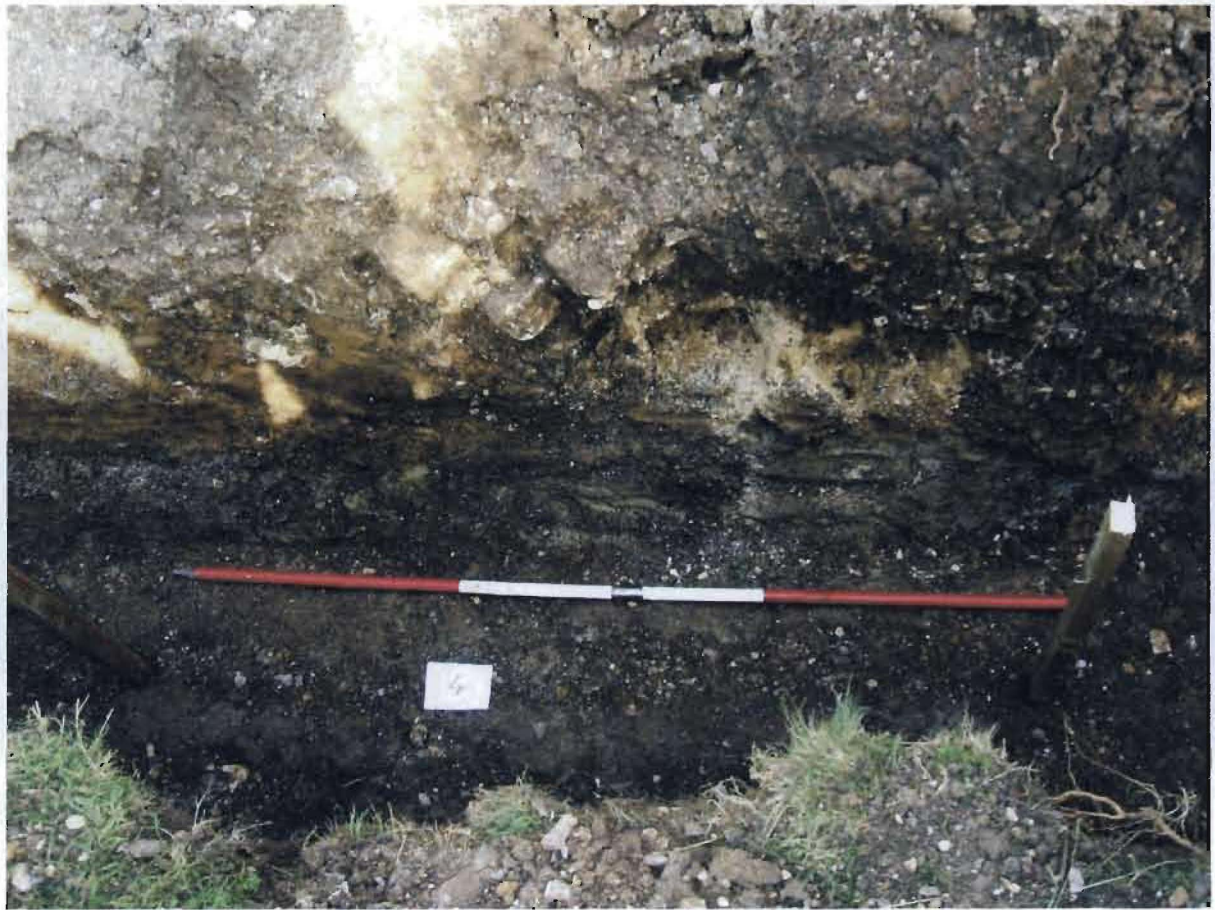
Photograph 1. Roman foundation at the rear of the building, possibly relating to the wall observed c.1958`



Photograph 2. Wall foundation entering the trench from the garden of 37 Ashwood Way.



Photograph 3. Wall foundation showing in the trench section opposite Photograph 2.



Photograph 4. Continuation towards the south west of the foundations shown in Photograph 3.



Photograph 5. Robber trench and wall foundation at the south corner of the excavation for the garage.



Photograph 6. Wall foundation running north west exposed at the south end of section E-F in the garage trench.



Photograph 7. Wall foundation running north west at the south of the garage trench - see Photograph 6.



Photograph 8. Wall foundation looking towards the rear of 1 Ashwood Way - see Photograph 1



Photograph 9 (a). Roman context 18 in garage trench, south west of the house, before excavation.



Photograph 9 (b). View as in photograph 9 (a) after excavation of context 18

8. FINDS

8.1 Material finds were limited in quantity and related to contexts 12 (disturbed post-Roman to modern) : fragmentary CBM and some 2nd/3rd century pottery, context 18 (post- Roman): fragmentary CBM including imbrex tile, sandstone tiles, 2nd/3rd century pottery, bone, teeth and iron nail fragments and from contexts 1 & 11 (surface disturbance and unstratified): CBM and Roman pottery.

8.2 Material finds were offered to Gloucester City Museum. However, due to their lack of any particular significance they were declined and are likely to be returned to the client in due course.

9. CONCLUSIONS

9.1 The wall foundations encountered in the watching brief were on the same alignments as the walls and robber trenches found in the 1957 rescue excavation of the Roman bath-block on the site of Nos 3/5 Ashwood Way, but none were continuations of the walls shown on Figure 1 of the original published report by A G Hunter, the excavator.

9.2 He suggested that the bath-block may have formed part of a small villa mainly underlying No 1 Ashwood Way / No 37 Trevor Road, but he remained uncertain whether the bath-block was separate from its villa or attached to it. The current work has not clarified the situation.

9.3 Similarly the existence of a former villa here has not been confirmed. The builders in the late 1950s reported that no walls were found north of the centre line of No 1 Ashwood Way / No 37 Trevor Road, so the wall foundation observed at the north east of the excavated trench for the new family room may represent the limit of the proposed villa.

9.4 The dates of late-2nd century to mid-4th century proposed for the bath-house by the excavator, may also apply to its adjoining villa. The few pottery sherds recovered during the watching brief at No 1 Ashwood Way did not include any distinctively 1st century wares or later colour-coated ones, which suggests Hunter's dating is likely to be correct.

10. DISTRIBUTION OF THIS REPORT

10.1 Three copies of this report will be supplied to Mr A Armstrong, the Gloucester City Archaeologist, one supplied to Mr C Parry of Gloucestershire County Council's Archaeological Service, together with one to Mr K Solimani, the client.

10.2 Summaries will appear in GADARG's annual review *Glevensis* and in the 'Archaeological Review' in *Trans. Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

11.1 The contributions made by GADARG members Angela Newcombe , Les Comtesse and Terry Moore-Scott are gratefully acknowledged

12. REFERENCES

- 1 Spry N & Moore-Scott T, Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief at No 1 Ashwood Way, Hucclecote, Gloucester GL3 3JE. Spring 2012.
- 2 Hunter A G, 'A Romano-British Bath-Block at Trevor Road, Hucclecote, Glos' in *Trans. Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, LXXIX (part II), 159-173