Ellesmere Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

NGR SJ 4960 1418

Archaeological Excavation

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

January 1996

ELLESMERE ROAD, SHREWSBURY, SHROPSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

JANUARY 1996

LIST OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 6: Roman pottery

1 SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out as part of the pre-determination consideration of the planning application for a residential housing development on land off Ellesmere Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire. The archaeological evaluation comprised documentary research, geophysical survey, walkover survey and trial trenching. The discovery of archaeological remains on the site necessitated a programme of archaeological work in the form of excavation to be carried out prior to the commencement of development. The results are detailed in this report.

ENCLOSURE: PRN04713

A rectilinear enclosure dated to the Roman period was identified at the W end of the development area during the evaluation. This has been investigated by both evaluation and excavation at the request of Architectura on behalf of Fairclough Homes Midlands Limited, in advance of the proposed residential development. Excavation took place in the last two weeks of May 1995. The western portion of the enclosure lay beyond the development area and is probably located beneath the back gardens of the properties of Ellesmere Road. A date range between mid· 2nd-mid 4th centuries was tentatively assigned during the evaluation phase. This was confirmed by the pottery assemblage recovered during excavation (see pottery report below).

2 INTRODUCTION

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) were asked by Architectura on behalf of Fairclough Homes Midlands Limited to carry out a desktop appraisal and a geophysical survey in advance of a proposed development. Following results obtained from a geophysical survey carried out by Stratascan on behalf of the OAU, a targeted field evaluation was considered necessary by the County Archaeological Services, to elucidate discrete magnetic anomalies thought to have an archaeological potential. The results of the evaluation are detailed elsewhere (OAU 1995). A brief summary appears below.

The evaluation comprised an initial phase (trenches 1-4) which was supplemented by a second phase (trenches 5-6). The result of the first phase evaluation revealed a linear ditch in trench 1 which corresponded with a N-S aligned linear negative anomaly identified during the geophysical survey. The geophysics plot seemed to suggest that the ditch returned at its N end, possibly enclosing an area to the W. Two evaluation trenches were requested to confirm the date and extent of the ditch. An E-W aligned linear feature (representing a western return of the ditch identified in trench 1) had steep sides and an irregular base. It contained three fills. The secondary fill contained Roman pottery including a sherd of stamped Samian and a large rim sherd of Severn Valley ware.

Subsequently, excavation was deemed necessary and the aims of this phase of work as outlined in the WSI were fourfold:

i to determine the morphology and extent of the enclosure
ii to establish a chronological framework for the site
iii to elucidate the function of the site
iv to compare the results of this excavation with those from similar regional sites eg Sharpstone Farm

3 SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site lies at NGR SJ 4960 1418 and comprises 2.3 hectares of permanent pasture, situated about 1 km N of the centre of Shrewsbury. It is bounded on its S side by an area of allotment gardens, on its N and W by housing development, and to the E by open ground. The site occupies part of a level river terrace overlooking the old course of the River Severn, now followed by the line of the Bagley Brook to the E (fig. 1). A N-S aligned footpath or track connects the new housing estate to the N of the site with Greenfields school off Ellesmere Road to the S. An existing public footpath lies across the site and this had to be maintained during excavation.

4 METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGY

An area measuring 40 m in length and 34 m in width was stripped under archaeological supervision by a JCB sitemaster equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil and medieval ploughsoil were removed to a depth of 0.60 - 1.00 m. Soil was removed down to the first significant archaeological horizons The resulting surface was then cleaned by hand, establishing the exact limits of the enclosure within the development area and defining the first significant archaeological horizon. All site recording used the single context undertaken in accordance with the requirements and practices of the OAU Field Manual (OAU 1992). All archaeological features were hand dug. Discrete features such as pits and postholes were half sectioned; linear features and the enclosure ditch were excavated as indicated on figure 4.

5 BACKGROUND TO THE EXCAVATIONS

The results of the desktop appraisal, geophysical survey, walkover survey and evaluation are detailed elsewhere (OAU 1995). However, in order to provide a comprehensive document the results of this earlier work are considered here. → MARCH 1995 = ESA 3450

5.1 Walkover survey

The E/W-aligned hedge between the northern and southern two sectors of the development area is well-developed and consists of small trees. There is a gap in the hedgerow to make way for a N/S-aligned footpath/track, which connects the new housing estate to the north of the site with Greenfields school off Ellesmere Road to the south. The hedgerow sits on a well-developed field boundary, visible as an earthwork at the point where the hedge is breached. The main northern area of development slopes gradually from east to west, this gradient increases at the western end of the site as it approaches the former course of the river Severn. A prominent N/S-aligned earthwork is visible at the boundary between the allotment plots and the southern area of development.

5.2 Geotechnical investigations

Geotechnical ground investigations were carried out by WSP Kenchington Ford Consulting Engineers on behalf of Fairclough Homes Midlands Limited, and comprised 20 trial pits excavated to depths of 3 metres. The results from these investigations indicate that the development area is sited on a complex sequence of drift geology.

The natural geological sequence within the area broadly consists of a red sandstone dated to the Upper Carboniferous period overlain by periglacial boulder clay. The trial pit excavations did not identify sandstone, although boulder clay was recorded in trial pits TP1, TP2, TP8, TP9, TP10 and TP15 at depths between 0.6 m (TP1: nearest the course of the river Severn) and 1.5 m (TP15: in the south-eastern corner of the southern portion of the development area) below ground surface (BGS). Where boulder clay was not encountered a light brown sandy clay was recorded, overlying a gravelly sand (TP3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14). The natural identified in Trenches 1, 2, 3, and 4 was a pocketed light brown sandy clay with pockets of gravelly clay.

5.3 Desktop appraisal: archaeological and historic background

Sources consulted are listed in the bibliography. The Shropshire Sites and Monuments Record was examined, as was the National Archaeological Record in Swindon. Aerial photographs held by Shropshire County Council and the National Archaeological Record were consulted. Map sources were obtained from the Local Study Centre.

5.3.1 Early Shrewsbury

The only evidence of prehistoric settlement within the town centre of Shrewsbury is the finding, in 1886, of a Bronze Age axe (NMR SJ 41 SE 37). Roman coins have been found in and near the town centre (NMR SJ 41 SE 3, 8, 27 and 41) but these are likely to have originated in Wroxeter, the site of the Roman town of Uriconium, and later lost in Shrewsbury.

Although there is no archaeological evidence of the period immediately following the Roman departure, 12th century sources record that the town was built on the site of an earlier British settlement named Pengwern, later destroyed by the Saxons. The first written evidence of Shrewsbury in a charter dated from AD 901 refers to Scrobbesbyrig; the `Scrobbes' element of the word probably referring to the scrub-covered hill. Anglo-Saxon Shrewsbury was wealthy, symbolised by its five churches dated from between the 8th and 10th centuries.

5.3.2 A summary of early settlement evidence within Shropshire's rural landscape

The key to understanding prehistoric and Roman Shropshire lies in the interpretation of aerial photographs. Although very few sites have been excavated, the number of undated enclosures shown on the aerial photograph coverage (NMR SJ 41 SE 107, 155, 159, 163, 165, 166, 168, 171, 173, 174 and 175, examples within Shrewbury's encompassing rural landscape taken from 187 recorded sites in Shropshire) would seem to suggest that the area was fairly heavily settled in the Iron Age and that this probably continued into the Romano-British period.

5.3.3 Lowland settlement patterns

`The use of the river Severn as a routeway may be reflected by the locations of findspots of Neolithic stone axes which coincide with the river corridor.' (Carver 1991) This statement may imply that occupation spread from the initial settlements on the banks of the river Severn (Ellis *et al* 1994). However, the failure of aerial photography to locate earlier occupation sites and the lack of evidence from excavation is likely to distort the overall distribution of

settlement, and it is possible that the network of early sites will become more complex as more evidence is collected.

Aerial photographs and limited excavation of Bronze Age sites within Shropshire indicates that the river Severn remains an important factor in their placement, although more extensive evidence from this period shows them extending away from the river. Hundreds of enclosures known from aerial photographs predominantly represent agrarian settlement through the Iron Age and Roman periods. This settlement pattern begins to resemble the modern pattern of dispersed farmsteads which can be traced back to the early medieval period (Carver 1991).

5.3.4 Previous excavations of prehistoric and Roman settlement in Shropshire

The limited archaeological investigations within Shropshire have focused on the Roman town of *Viroconium* (Wroxeter), which originated as a fortress and then developed as the civitas capital of the *Cornovii*. Until recently, excavation of lower status sites have been confined to the Sharpstone Hill enclosure (Barker *et al* 1992) which revealed a group of five sites, primarily prehistoric, centred around Sharpstone Hill which lies about 5 km to the SW of Shrewsbury.

The results of archaeological investigations along the line of the A5 Shrewsbury bypass and associated A49 link road in the 1980s are referred to as the Wroxeter Hinterland Project (Ellis *et al* 1994). Archaeological work was carried out by the Birmingham University Field Unit (BUFA). The project involved a programme of geophysics, fieldwalking and trial trenching of cropmark sites along the line of the road. This was then followed by large scale excavation of four of the sites: these included two prehistoric enclosures, a Romano-British field system and enclosure at Duncote Farm and a Romano-British roadside settlement at Meole Brace. The cropmarks sites excavated during the hinterland project represent only two percent of the prehistoric and Roman cropmark sites identified by aerial photography. One of the aims of the project was to provided an excavation context for the aerial photographic evidence.

5.3.5 Map sources and the development area

The post-medieval history of the development area can be fairly accurately traced from the study of the 18th and 19th century map sources. The earliest detailed maps of the area (Rocque 1752) which probably reflect the medieval topography of the site, show it to be situated in an area of open fields, between the surviving routes of Ellesmere Road and Castle Foregate road adjoining St. Michael's Street. Rocque's map shows that the S area, closest to the Castle Foregate suburbs, was arable land, whereas the N area, beyond the settlement of Greenfield, was pasture. It is difficult to establish with accuracy whether the location of the site would have been on either arable or pasture, but the name of the settlement adjoining the development area `Greenfield' could perhaps be suggestive of a pastoral based economy within the area.

Early 19th century maps show little variation in land use within the development area. Hitchcock's map (1832) of Shrewsbury shows the settlements of Greenfields and Upper Greenfield in closer detail, and reveals a garden to the NW of Greenfields and adjacent and E of Upper Greenfields. The proposed development area is to the N of the garden, and the

S land-parcel was at this time used as an orchard. The principal N part of the development area remains open fields.

The Tithe Map of 1850 shows that the site lies in four separate fields, the S field remains orchard. The three other fields are called `lower Devies Piece', `North Beacalls Piece' and `South Beacalls Piece'. The site therefore contains two field boundaries that are not reflected in the current field pattern.

By 1822 the history of the site can be traced from the OS 25" maps. These indicate that the orchard represented on Hitchcock's map (1832) has been removed and the S portion of the development area returns to open field. The detail on the 1882 OS 25" series map shows the gardens below to form an L-shape, with pathways running along its borders and placed regularly within its enclosed area. The 1902 OS 25" map displays a new residential development which incorporates Greenfields Road, Percy Street, Hotspur Street and Falstaff Street to be below Greenfields. The garden no longer exists, although pathways running along it border are still in use. The only change exhibited on the 1927 OS 25" map is that the open fields immediately below the development area and NE of Greenfields have become allotment gardens.

More recent changes within the area include the construction of a school on the site of Greenfields and a further residential development N of the development area, incorporating Ellesmere Drive, Coldridge Drive and Chelwood Drive.

5.3.6 Archaeological background of the development area

There is very little recorded archaeology in the vicinity of the proposed development area. SMR and NAR records show nothing from within the area, although finds have been made to the immediate S within the allotment gardens and to the W in Falstaff Street. SMR record number 01579 (NAR no. SJ 41 SE 13/67957) describes a `brown' worked flint found by Rev. Lawson between 1934-7 in the topsoil of an allotment in the second filed, N of Falstaff Street. Analysis by Professor Shotton described the flint as a core-chisel possibly dated to the Neolithic period. NAR records (No. SJ 41 SE 14 /67960: SMR record no. 01582) mentions a conical-butted stone axe found during pipe-laying operations in Falstaff Street. The axe is of hard bluish-grey stone and was dated to the Early Bronze Age. The most recent find within the area was a four ribbed bronze socketed axe (SMR No. 02619; NAR No. SJ 41 SE 160 / 68381) found in 1956 in one of the allotments. The axe was identified in river gravel, and wood was observed to survive within its socket, inferring potentially good environmental preservation within the area.

The lack of aerial photographic coverage of the area is disappointing. Vertical and oblique aerial photographs held in the Shrewsbury record office and in the National Records Office in Swindon were consulted. No aerial photographs were identified covering OS grid SJ 4914 which covers the proposed development area; although photographs from OS gird SJ 4913 were identified, no features of archaeological significance were detected.

5.3.7 The results of the desktop appraisal

The most significant findings from the archaeological and the historical records are the finds

recovered from Falstaff Street and the adjacent allotment plot. These indicate that evidence of human activity dating back to the Neolithic period could potentially survive close to the site. If the SMR account of the finding of the socketed axe is correct (SMR no. 02619) and wood survived intact within the axe socket it would infer that environmental preservation within the vicinity of the site is good. Findspot and aerial photographs of sites within Lowland Shropshire suggest an initial concentration of sites along the course of the river Severn in the Neolithic and Bronze Age period.

Tithe map evidence shows that the site contains two field boundaries which are not reflected on the current field pattern Historic maps suggest that the development area had been used predominantly as pasture throughout the medieval and post medieval periods. This would imply that if archaeological remains were to exist on the development site, they would not have been subjected to disturbance from intense cultivation and would therefore remain well preserved.

6 THE EXCAVATION RESULTS

Details of all contexts can be found in Appendix 1.

The natural subsoil in the vicinity of the excavation was a light brown-yellow sand containing approximately 20% small-large pebbles (113). This was overlain by a yellow-grey sandy silt containing gravel and small pebbles which has been identified as dirty natural (112). All of the Roman features cut layer 112. The visible extent of the enclosure measured 33 m in length (E-W) and 30 m in width (N-S) with two entrances (on the N and S sides). Three phases of activity have been identified and these are described in detail below. Two phases of ditch digging were identified in the enclosure ditch itself, with a later phase dividing up the rectangle on a N-S alignment. A small cluster of post-medieval and modern features were also identified of which four postholes and a small pit were excavated. The pit contained two articulated sheep skeletons which were left *in situ*. All excavated ditch sections have been illustrated (fig. 5).

The enclosure ditch was originally identified in evaluation trenches 1 and 5. Pottery was recovered from three fills (102, 103 and 505). Ditch cut 104 had shallow sides and a flat base which measured 1.79 m in width and 0.28 m in depth. The pottery in 103 was severely abraded and there was only one rim sherd of Severn Valley ware (102)

6.1 Pre-enclosure activity

Stratigraphically the earliest features seen on the site were a series of three shallow linear gullies. Two of these were aligned SW-NE (121, 171/173) and the third was aligned W-E (139/142/145). The SW-NE gullies were seen in the central area of the enclosure (171/173) and again extending beyond the NE corner of the enclosure ditch (121). The two lengths of gully may originally have been continuous across the site and subsequently removed by medieval ploughing although the terminal of the central gully appears distinct in plan. The W-E aligned gully was located approximately in the centre of the enclosure and at its E end it was seen to disappear below the central N-S baulk which was retained.

The date of the three gullies is somewhat problematic. Both of the SW-NE gullies were cut

by enclosure ditches. The centrally located of the two is cut by the phase 3 ditch (153/229/162/213/211) while the gully in the NE corner is cut by a section of the phase 1 ditch (123). No artefacts were recovered from the SW-NE aligned gullies. A total of 13 sherds were present in the upper fills of the W-E gully (141, 144, 147) and these were assigned a date after approximately AD 120. It is conceivable therefore that these ditch sections relate to the initial phase of enclosure activity.

6.2 Phase 1

The phase 1 enclosure was presumably rectangular in form. This is uncertain because its western extent lay beyond the limits of the excavation, as determined by the proposed development. The enclosure had at least one entrance in this phase. An entrance on the N side measured approximately 2 m in width while another possible entrance was located on the S side. On the northern side both west and east ditch terminals were identified with a gap between them of approximately 2.8 m. Directly opposite this entrance on the S side it was only possible to identify the eastern ditch terminal, the western terminal apparently having been entirely dug away by the recutting of the ditch in phase 2. The dimensions of the enclosure in this phase were approximately 34 m (W-E) and 32.5 m (N-S).

Eight sections through the enclosure ditch were excavated (cuts 123, 126, 137, 149, 167, 189, 200, 222). In the majority of these the ditch was seen to have gently sloping sides and a rounded bottom, although in the case of 170 the profile was seen to be irregular. The phase 1 ditch had a depth range of 0.12- 52 m and a width of 0.42-1.00 m. Three or four fills were identified in most of these sections with the exception of 167 which was very shallow and had only one fill. There is no evidence to suggest that the ditch was deliberately backfilled and the pattern of silting does suggest that it was a fairly gradual process.

The E-W aligned gully (139/142/145) may have been associated with this phase (pottery dates would suggest so). The gully measured 11.50 m in length and was seen to extend under the footpath baulk although it did not reappear beyond it. It had a "V shaped" profile with a flat base and measured 0.65 m in width and 0.40 m in depth. A small quantity of brick and tile was recovered from its fill.

6.3 Phase 2

In this phase the original enclosure ditch was recut, apparently throughout its length and the N entrance was moved some 3.5 m. to the W from its position in phase one. Only the eastern terminus was seen of this entrance which could have been larger than in phase one with the western terminus could be just beyond the western limits of the excavation. The ditch terminal had a "V shaped" profile with a flat base and it measured 1.0 m in width and 0.70 m in depth. The entrance on the S side was blocked in this phase.

The original rectangular form and extent of enclosed area was maintained during this phase. Eleven sections through this ditch were examined (cuts 129, 134, 159, 161, 169, 178, 182, 186, 217 and 225) and the profile was consistent with sloping sides and flat or rounded bottom. At least two and usually three fills were identified. The ditch varied in depth from 0.32-0.60 m and in width from 0.62-1.19 m. During this phase the enclosure may have had an entrance on its western side.

6.4 Phase 3

The third and final phase of activity comprised the digging of a completely new length of ditch which was aligned N-S and located within the enclosure. It was positioned in such a way that it separated the enclosure into two rectangles of unequal size. This activity seems to have taken place when the phase 2 ditch had completely silted up. Six sections through this ditch were excavated. The ditch profile was somewhat variable with sloping or irregular sides and a flat or rounded bottom. It varied in depth from 0.31-0.85 m and in width from 1.10-1.27 m. The ditch fills were variable with one to five being recognised. Five sections through this ditch were excavated (cuts 153, 162, 211, 213 and 229).

A solitary circular feature (175) was located within the enclosure. A large slab of stone had been placed horizontally in the top of the feature. There were no dateable artefacts although the fill of the feature did contain charcoal and fragments of hazelnut shell. These could be appropriate to a prehistoric date but as hazel nut is also present in some of the Roman samples it seems reasonable to conclude that this feature is Roman in date.

6.5 Post-Roman activity

Inspection of the two ditch sections within trenches 1 and 5, which have depths of 0.28 m and 0.5 m respectively, suggests that they had been truncated by later agricultural activity. Historic maps suggest that the northern land-parcel has been permanent pasture from the 18th century. Any ploughing activity probably predates the 18th century. This truncation has serious implications for the potential recovery of more discrete features, such as postholes which may have been destroyed without trace by ploughing. No medieval features were seen on the site, suggesting that the land was used solely for agricultural purposes. The medieval ploughsoil (111) was cut by a number of later post-medieval features. Three small rectangular postholes (205, 207, 209) were seen within the enclosure and investigated although they clearly did not form part of any structure. It is conceivable that they may have formed a fence line aligned NE-SW. A further rectangular posthole (114) was located immediately outside of the enclosure to the S. Pottery and glass from the fills of these feature suggests a post-medieval date. The existing southern hedge boundary ditch was investigated, along with a small gully which runs parallel to it and both these features (cuts 198 and 238) contained post-medieval pottery and glass.

Feature 220 was a post-medieval feature which contained two articulated sheep skeletons.

7 THE POTTERY BY P BOOTH

7.1 Introduction, quantification and methodology

Some 224 sherds of Roman pottery (3662 g), ranging in date from the 2nd perhaps to the early 4th century, were recovered. This total includes material from post-Roman and topsoil contexts. Twenty six Roman sherds (229 g) deriving from the initial evaluation trenches have been incorporated. Fifty six medieval and post-medieval sherds (36 from the evaluation) were also recovered.

The pottery was recorded by context using the standard OAU recording system. The sherds

were assigned to fabrics and vessel types, identified by alphanumeric codes. Details of rim typology and decoration were also noted. Quantification was by sherd count, weight and EVEs (rim percentage). Full details of the recording system can be found in the project archive.

The pottery was generally in moderate condition, with some sherds poorly preserved. The character of the soil meant that the surfaces of sherds were often eroded, leaving little, if any, trace of surface treatments such as burnishing. In some cases sherds were very small as well as eroded, which hampered identification. All such problem pieces were oxidised. It is therefore possible that some very small fragments recorded as Severn Valley ware were in fact of tile, and confident distinction between small sandy oxidised pottery sherds of Roman and medieval date was also problematical. This was particularly the case since it can be demonstrated that the upper fills of some Roman features did contain the occasional sherd which was definitely of medieval date. (Note: references in the following text to Webster are to Webster P 1976 unless otherwise specified)

7.2 Fabrics

Twelve fabric groups were defined. Identification of fabric was at a fairly generalised level, usually at an intermediate stage of the fabric/ware definition hierarchy used in the OAU recording system. The major ware groups represented in the Shrewsbury assemblage were:

S - samian ware
A - amphora fabrics
M - mortarium fabrics
W - white wares
Q - white-slipped wares
O - oxidised `coarse' wares
R - reduced `coarse' wares
B - black-burnished ware
G - coarse gritted `native type' wares

Most sherds were assigned to subgroups of these categories (eg O40, a general grouping for Severn Valley wares), though some were identified at the level of specific fabric (eg M23, Mancetter-Hartshill white ware mortaria). The fabrics of coarse ware sherds not from specific known sources (eg the Severn Valley wares, only assigned to a generalised source) were recorded in more detail, in terms of their principal inclusion types, but this did not seem to produce meaningful results so these data are not used extensively below.

Brief descriptions of the fabrics present in the group, or familiar names of well-known wares, are given below. Fuller descriptions can be found in the documentation of the recording system contained in the project archive. The quantities of each fabric are then tabulated (Table 1).

S30. Central Gaulish samian ware.
A11. South Spanish amphora (eg Dressel 20).
M23. Mancetter-Hartshill white mortarium.
W13. Mancetter-Hartshill white ware (not mortaria).

W21. Verulamium region white ware.
Q10. Fine oxidised white slipped fabric.
O20. Coarse sandy oxidised fabric(s).
O40. Severn Valley ware (oxidised).
R20. Coarse sandy reduced fabric.
R30. Moderately sandy reduced fabrics.
B11. Dorset black-burnished ware (BB1).
G21. Malvernian metamorphic rock fabric (Group A, Peacock 1968, 415-417).

Table 1: fabric quantifications

FABRIC	No.sh.	% sh.	Weight g	% weight	EVEs	% EVEs
S30	12	5.4	149	4.1	0.16	5.3
A11	7	3.1	283	7.7	-	-
M23	2	0.9	66	1.8	0.05	1.7
W13	3	1.3	56	1.5	-	-
W21	1	0.4	56	1.5	-	-
Q10	1	0.4	7	0.2	0.05	1.7
O20	8	3.6	65	1.8	0.12	4.0
O40	157	70.1	2426	66.2	2.01	66.8
R20	1	0.4	3	0.1	-	-
R30	3	1.3	36	1.0	-	-
B11	21	9.4	352	9.6	0.50	16.6
G21	8	3.6	182	5.0	0.12	4.0
TOTAL	224		3662		3.01	

Most of these fabrics represent sources of supply which would be expected in this region. Central Gaulish samian and South Spanish amphora were the only continental imports, the latter represented only by body sherds. White ware mortaria (fabric M23) and flagons (fabric W13) both came from the Mancetter-Hartshill industry, a major supplier to the West Midlands. A single sherd from the Verulamium region represents a more distant but still a relatively common source. The white slipped fabric Q10 was somewhat arbitrarily separated from the remainder of the oxidised fabrics because of its surface treatment, but the body of the only sherd thus categorised was indistinguishable from Severn Valley ware, and Q10 may be seen as a Severn Valley ware variant. The assemblage was dominated by Severn Valley ware (O40). The Severn Valley ware (O40) sherds exhibited some variation in fabric, but it was unclear if this was significant. Most sherds contained a combination of quartz sand, iron ore, mica and (to a lesser extent) clay pellet inclusions. Small voids were also a common feature. Only in a few cases was it clear that these had contained organic inclusions. In four O40 sherds organic inclusions were the principal inclusion type, and in a further three sherds

irregular voids were noted as more common than other inclusions. If these also originally represented organic inclusions a maximum of 4.5% of the Severn Valley ware sherds might have been of the `organic' variant of the fabric generally considered to be of early (1st-2nd century) date. In any case, none of these sherds was as heavily loaded with organic material as the classic early organic fabric type (cf Timby 1990, 249). In most cases the most obvious variation in the Shrewsbury Severn Valley fabrics was in the amount of sand which they contained. Nevertheless, the majority of these sherds were quite fine and the difficulty of distinguishing between them and other sandy oxidised wares (O20) referred to by Evans (1994, 78) was rarely encountered in this assemblage. Calcareous Severn Valley ware (ibid) was not present.

Sandy oxidised ware (O20) only formed a small part of the assemblage. The size of this group and the limited evidence for vessel types within it preclude meaningful discussion of its source(s) and chronology, though a relatively local origin may be presumed.

There were only four reduced ware sherds. One of these, in a sandy fabric (R20), might perhaps have been a poorly preserved fragment of black-burnished ware, but the appearance of the fabric was more like that of the sandy oxidised (O20) sherds. All three sherds of R30, of variable (but moderate) sand content, could have been reduced Severn Valley ware.

The remaining coarse ware fabrics were black-burnished ware, which amounted to about 9.5% of sherd count and weight, but was considerably better represented in terms of EVEs, and the Malvernian metamorphic fabric (G21). The eight sherds in this fabric might have been from a single vessel, but this is uncertain.

7.3 Vessel types

The EVEs total for the site (3.01) was too small to permit extensive analysis, but despite this there was in general an encouragingly close correspondence in the representation of different fabrics in terms of all methods of quantification, so that some confidence can be placed in the admittedly limited data. The EVEs figures are from a maximum of 30 rim sherds. The correlation of fabric and broad vessel types is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: vessel types by fabric and quantification by EVEs

		FABRIC								
CODE	TYPE	S30	M23	Q10	O20	O40	B11	G21	TOTAL	%
CB	Barrel shaped jar							0.12	0.12	4.0
CC	Narrow mouthed jar					0.47			0.47	15.6
CK	`Cooking pot type' jar						0.20		0.20	6.6
CM	Wide mouthed jar					0.93			0.93	30.1
C	Jar, subtype uncertain				0.09	0.31			0.40	13.2
D	Jar/bowl				0.03	0.14			0.17	5.6
FC	Conical cup (Drag 33)	0.13							0.13	4.3

HC	Curving sided bowl			0.05		0.16			0.21	7.0
HD	Necked bowl (Walters 81)	0.03							0.03	1.0
IA	Straight sided bowl/dish						0.13		0.13	4.3
JA	Straight sided dish						0.17		0.17	5.6
KA	Hook rimmed mortarium		0.05						0.05	1.7
TOTAL		0.16	0.05	0.05	0.12	2.01	0.50	0.12	3.01	
%		5.3	1.7	1.7	4.0	66.8	16.6	4.0		

Jars constituted the bulk of the assemblage, as would have been expected. If the vessels assigned to the indeterminate jar/bowl category (D) were in fact jars, as is likely, these vessels would have totalled 76% of the assemblage. The most common types, narrow and wide mouthed jars, the latter generally with rims of the long hooked type, occurred exclusively in Severn Valley ware. The lesser jar types were single examples of barrel-shaped and cooking pot type jars in Malvernian and black-burnished ware respectively. A Malvernian base may have come from the same vessel as the jar rim, or may represent a second, similar vessel. Additional black-burnished ware cooking pots were represented by body sherds. Jars of unspecified type (C - though these examples were probably of medium mouthed forms) were most commonly found in Severn Valley ware. The only two double lipped rims in the assemblage occurred in vessels of this type. There was also a single example of type C in sandy oxidised fabric. The uncertain jar/bowl types were also confined to these fabrics, all of these being vessels with simple thickened outcurving rims.

Other vessel types were of relatively minor significance and occurred for the most part in fabrics other than Severn Valley ware. The only exception to this was the curving sided bowl, both examples of which, if it is accepted that Q10 was a Severn Valley ware variant (see above), were in this fabric. The latter vessel was not only white-slipped, but had red painted decoration over the slip, X motifs on the flange and dots on the upper internal body wall. One of the most common Severn Valley ware types, the tankard, was represented only by a recessed base, a handle fragment and a body sherd with burnished lattice decoration. A less common form, a bag-shaped beaker with roughcast decoration, of which only a base survived, seems also to have been in Severn Valley ware.

There were two examples of cups (Drag 33) in samian ware. A less common samian ware form was Walters 81, with a stamp on the body wall. Fragments of bowl/dish forms (?Drag 18/31 or 31) also occurred in samian ware. All other bowl/dish and dish forms were straight sided types in black-burnished ware. (The uncertain bowl/dish designation, class I, was used where insufficient of the profile survived to determine the height:diameter ratio crucial to determining the precise form of the vessel, cf Webster G 1976, 17-18). Black-burnished ware dishes occurred in both flat-rimmed and straight rimmed (`dog dish') forms, with one example of the former and two of the latter. The two indeterminate bowl/dish rims were both of flat-rimmed types and therefore of 2nd century date. The only mortarium rim was of a type datable to the second half of the 2nd century. Indeed, both sherds of fabric M23 may have been from the same vessel.

7.4 General chronology

The pottery indicates that the emphasis of occupation on this site was probably in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. There were no components of the assemblage which necessarily indicate a commencement date before the 2nd century. Although the Verulamium white ware, some of the Severn Valley ware and the Malvernian sherds could have been of 1st century date these sherds would also be quite consistent with a 2nd century assemblage. The low proportion of the organic tempered Severn Valley fabric and the absence of characteristic early Severn Valley ware forms support the view that there was no significant 1st century presence on the site (cf Evans 1994, 78). The only evident exception to this is the fragmentary Severn Valley ware tankard base mentioned above, of a type most easily accommodated in the later 1st century (cf Rawes 1982, no 142; Lee, Lindquist and Evans 1994, 57 and 72, no 261, etc), though this sherd occurred in a context (163) for which at least a mid 2nd century date seems certain.

Chronological precision is rendered particularly difficult by the lack of close dates for many Severn Valley ware forms. A rough correlation of rim forms with jar types, cross-referred to P Webster's (1976) typology (Table 3), shows that there were four vessels of types generally dated to the 3rd-4th centuries (Webster type 10) or later 3rd-4th centuries (Webster types 27/28 and 28), as against ten for which an earlier date is probable or possible. Some of the rims assigned to the general jar category could, however, have been of late types, but the sherds were too small for certainty.

Table 3: Severn Valley ware, correlation of rim type with vessel type (number of rims) (type nos. as in Webster, P 1976)

	JAR TYPE				
RIM TYPE	Narrow Mouthed (CC)	Wide mouthed (CM)	General (C)	Jar/bowl (D)	TOTAL
Simple everted		1 (Webster 22)			1
Thickened everted	1		1	2	4
Hooked	1 (Webster 5)	5 (Webster 25 (2), 26?, 27/28, 28)	1		7
Double lipped			2 (Webster 10 (2))		2
TOTAL	2	6	4	2	14

The sample size is very small, but does suggest a 4th century component in the assemblage, though it is possible to argue that the latest vessels were all no later than the late 3rd century. Some distinctive late Roman Severn Valley ware forms, such as wide flaring tankards, for example, were completely absent from the assemblage, but with a group of this size the argument from negative evidence is a dangerous one. Moreover, since tankards seem to have been relatively rare in the much larger assemblages from Merle Brace and Duncote Farm (where they constituted only 3.1% of the total EVEs (Evans 1994, 79)), this suggests that this distinctive form was less common in the Severn Valley ware repertoire of the Shrewsbury area than in other parts of the region and that it may therefore not be a good guide to chronological trends. For what it is worth, the total absence of typically late Roman fabrics such as shell-tempered ware, Nene Valley colour-coated ware and all Oxfordshire products

may indicate that 4th century activity was limited.

The other chronologically diagnostic component of the assemblage was black-burnished ware. Again there were no pieces which need have been of 4th century date. The illustrated cooking pot (No 16) is likely to be of later 3rd century date. Of five dishes or bowl/dishes represented by rims, three were of flat-rimmed forms and two had simple upright rims. The former date to the 2nd century, the latter from about the end of the 2nd century to the 4th. Both examples of the plain rimmed dish have well executed intersecting arc decoration which suggests, but does not prove, a 3rd century rather than a 4th century date.

On balance, therefore, the pottery suggests that activity on the site perhaps began in the early 2nd century and continued up to the end of the 3rd and perhaps into the early 4th or even a little later.

7.5 The site sequence

The breakdown of fabrics by phase, the latter based on the excavated sequence, is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: incidence of fabric by site phase, quantification by sherd count and weight

FABRIC	PHASE							
	1		2		3		Post-Roman	
	No.sh.	Wt. (g)	No.sh.	Wt. (g)	No.sh.	Wt. (g)	No.sh.	Wt. (g)
S30	3	8	3	66	4	35	2	40
A11			1	68	6	215		
M23			2	66				
W13			2	41	1	15		
W21					1	37		
Q10					1	7		
O20	1	8	1	3	5	46	1	8
O40	8	186	69	1001	73	1168	7	71
R20					1	3		
R30			1	8	2	28		
B11			7	37	12	286	2	29
G21		8	182					
TOTAL	12	202	94	1472	106	1840	12	148
Medieval			2	11	1	13	2	9
Post-medieval							51	

Phase 1 features produced only 12 sherds, including three fragments of Central Gaulish samian. Two of these came from the primary fill (150) of ditch cut 149. They therefore indicate a date after c AD 120 for that fill, since the sherds presumably relate to the main export period of Lases, dated from about that time. The only substantial part of a vessel from any of these features was the Severn Valley ware bowl (No 1), very close to Webster's type 50 dated late 2nd-3rd century principally on the basis of examples from Wroxeter (Webster 1976, 32-33). This vessel was from feature 167, with a single undifferentiated fill (168), so it is unclear to what part of the phase this relates.

Phase 2 feature fills produced 94 Roman sherds (23 from the evaluation trenches), plus two medieval fragments from the uppermost fills of the component ditches. These sherds were presumably intrusive from ploughing over the tops of the ditches after they had become completely filled. Unfortunately the presence of this intrusive material means that the other pottery from these uppermost fills cannot be regarded as completely reliable for dating this phase. Only 13 sherds were recovered from lower fills in the ditch sequence, of which the only rim was from the Malvernian barrel shaped jar and the remainder were a single sherd of black-burnished ware with acute angled lattice decoration and Severn Valley wares, including the roughcast beaker base. This material need not date much after the mid 2nd century, though it could have been later. The sherds from the equivalent evaluation contexts 102 and 505, all apparently from the middle of the Phase 2 ditch fill sequence, present a somewhat different picture as they included a sherd of black-burnished ware with obtuse angle lattice decoration and a Severn Valley ware wide mouthed jar (No 4) having similarities to Webster forms 27 and 28, dated late 3rd to 4th century. Both these sherds were from 505. The uppermost fills of the Phase 2 ditches contained material dating at least to the early 3rd century. This included a double lipped rim jar, which could have been of 3rd or 4th century date (see above). The material from 505, if correctly phased, would suggest a later 3rd century date for this fill of the Phase 2 ditch sequence, rather later than is suggested by the other evidence from this phase.

The pottery from features assigned to Phase 3 was similar to that in Phase 2. The proportion of the material from the lower fills of these ditches (there was no pottery from primary feature fills in either Phase 2 or 3) was similar to that in Phase 2, about a third of the sherds in this phase (35 sherds, with 71 Roman and one medieval sherd from the upper fills). Again, diagnostic material was largely confined to the upper fills, with the exception of fill 215 in cut 213, which contained the white slipped segmental bowl (No 10) and a Severn Valley wide mouthed jar rim. All but one of the amphora sherds on the site also came from this context. The upper fills contained material datable at least to the later 3rd century. While some pieces may have been introduced by ploughing, along with a probable medieval sherd in context 230, this is very unlikely to have been the case with vessels such as No 16, a black-burnished ware cooking pot, several quite large and unabraded sherds of which were found.

Despite the small size of the assemblage and the occasional problem of intrusive material the pottery generally can be used to suggest a plausible chronological sequence for the site as follows: Phase 1 perhaps originated in the early 2nd century (or a little later) and its ditches were probably filling up by the later 2nd century; Phase 2 ditches may have followed on directly from Phase 1 features, but may not have filled up until the later 3rd century and perhaps later; Phase 3 was presumably continuous from Phase 2, and component features were filling in the later 3rd century or (again) possibly a little later (on ceramic evidence). This

phase would appear to have been of shorter duration than the previous two if the dating evidence from the Phase 2 fill 505 is taken at face value (see above). This chronology is offered with the proviso that the uppermost fills of ditches do not necessarily indicate their latest use, but may very well relate to a period of disuse after they have been replaced by other features. The dates proposed above should be regarded at best, therefore, as a flexible framework.

7.6 The illustrated vessels

Despite the lack of a good stratigraphic sequence from the site the illustrated vessels are presented by site Phase to complement the discussion of chronology above. The context number appears in brackets at the end of each entry.

Phase 1 ditch fills
1. Fabric O40. Bowl as Webster no. 50 (168).

Phase 2 lower/middle ditch fills
2. Fabric O40? Base of beaker with overall roughcast decoration (130).
3. Fabric O40. Narrow mouthed jar cf Webster no. 5 (102).
4. Fabric O40. Wide mouthed jar similar to Webster nos 27 and 28 (505).
5. Fabric G21. Barrel shaped jar cf Peacock (1968) no. 10 (196).

Phase 2 upper ditch fills
6. Fabric S30. Necked bowl (Walters form 81) with stamp CRESTIO.OF (Crestio of Lases). Antonine (131).
7. Fabric M23. Flattened hook rimmed mortarium (226).
8. Fabric O40. ?Narrow mouthed jar cf Webster no. 10 (226).
9. Fabric O40. Wide mouthed jar (226).

Phase 3 lower/middle ditch fills
10. Fabric Q10. Segmental bowl with white slip and red painted decoration (215).
11. Fabric O40. Wide mouthed jar (215).

Phase 3 upper ditch fills
12. Fabric O40. Narrow mouthed jar (230).
13. Fabric O40. Small wide mouthed jar (163).
14. Fabric O40. Wide mouthed jar (230).
15. Fabric O40. Wide mouthed jar (163).
16. Fabric B11. Cooking pot type jar (230).
17. Fabric B11. Flat rimmed dish (163).
18. Fabric B11. Plain rimmed dish (119).

7.7 General discussion

This assemblage, though limited in size and range, forms a useful addition to the corpus of Romano-British groups from rural sites in Shropshire. The size of the group is significant in itself. With some 224 sherds it is comparable to assemblages from Sharpstones Hill site E (? c 280 sherds, calculated from Barker, Haldon and Jenks 1991, 40) and Hay Farm, Eardington,

near Bridgnorth, with 166 sherds (Booth forthcoming a). These figures, all from enclosed settlement sites, contrast with the rather larger assemblages from the sites at Merle Brace and Duncote Farm (Evans 1994, 78), though the sherd total at the latter site was boosted by a substantial number of wasters (17% of the 1130 sherds (ibid, 91)) and the close proximity of a kiln or kilns would clearly augment the quantity of pottery occurring on the site. The relatively small numbers of sherds deriving from some of these sites seems to be a recurring pattern and may relate inter alia to factors such as site chronology, status and access to the road network and market centres. The validity of the assemblage comparison is supported by the fact that the excavated areas of most of the sites mentioned above were quite similar, generally within a range from c 1600-2100 sq m, except for Sharpstones E, where the excavated area is calculated at roughly 600 sq m (for assemblage comparison to have real value it would be necessary to compare the volume of earth excavated from each site, but such data are not available).

The small numbers of sherds cannot, however, be used to suggest that the site was not a domestic settlement, as was the case in the earlier phases at Duncote Farm where the scarce material was thought to represent manuring (ibid, 89). A feature of the Ellesmere Road assemblage, despite the presence of a number of very small fragments, mentioned above, was a relatively high average sherd weight, maintained through the Roman phases and only declining in the post Roman period, as would be expected. Moreover, this figure was consistent through all three Roman phases (Phase 1, 16.8 g; Phase 2, 15.7 g; Phase 3, 17.4 g; post-Roman, 12.3 g (this is the average weight of the Roman sherds only)) and even discounting the amphora sherds the site average sherd was still well above 15 g. This material therefore clearly derives from immediately adjacent settlement.

The 2nd century commencement date for the Shrewsbury assemblage contrasts with the earlier date proposed for the Roman component of Sharpstones E ` at least....to the end of the 1st century AD' (Barker, Haldon and Jenks 1991, 43, though the illustrated material clearly indicates that the assemblage extends well into the 2nd century at least) and with the 1st century BC-2nd century AD range for Hay Farm, Eardington. In this respect it is much closer to Duncote Farm and Merle Brace, and despite the possibility of an early 2nd century inception, Shrewsbury could fit the pattern of both these sites, for which an initial date of the mid 2nd century seems likely on ceramic evidence (Evans 1994, 89). There is potentially, therefore, a contrast between settlements which originate in the Iron Age and continue into the early Roman period, terminating in the 2nd century (Sharpstones E and Hay Farm), and those sites which only develop in the 2nd century and then survive into the later Roman period, though not, on present evidence, up to the end of the 4th century (Shrewsbury, Merle Brace and Duncote Farm).

Meole Brace is of course in most other respects a completely different type of settlement, with a roadside location and trade functions indicated by substantial quantities of amphorae and samian ware. It is notable, however, that small amounts of these commodities occur at both Duncote Farm and Shrewsbury. The presence of samian ware on these sites is not particularly remarkable since this material is ubiquitous, but the occurrence of amphorae, even in small quantities, suggests that they had at least some links with the trading patterns implied by the Merle Brace assemblage, presumably connected to a distribution network based ultimately on Wroxeter. Otherwise, as has already been noted, the range of material at Shrewsbury is much as would be expected. The one fabric here which was not encountered at Merle Brace and

Duncote Farm was Malvernian ware. Its presence may possibly indicate a slightly earlier component in the assemblage than at these two sites, though such material could certainly occur in mid 2nd century and later contexts (Peacock 1967, 16). Evans (1994, 90) suggests that Malvernian cooking pots, present in 2nd century contexts at Wroxeter, were completely supplanted in this function by black-burnished ware by the middle of the 2nd century AD.

The sources of the dominant fabric on the site, Severn Valley ware, remain unknown. There is no clear evidence that Duncote Farm products occurred here and insufficient is known of the postulated production at Merle Brace to allow characterisation of the repertoire of forms there (ibid, 91).

The question of status is still unclear. Evans (ibid, 90) has discussed the distinctive characteristics of the assemblage from Merle Brace in terms of the model of marketing systems proposed by Griffiths (1989). This works well for that site, but equally a status related model may be of value in considering variations between contemporary rural assemblages, as was tentatively suggested for a number of Warwickshire sites (Booth 1991) and can be more convincingly demonstrated with a larger dataset from the Upper Thames Valley (Booth forthcoming b). There are insufficient comparative data from the Wroxeter region to enable conclusions to be drawn, however. As discussed above, the presence of samian ware and amphora sherds (and black-burnished ware) at Shrewsbury indicates some connection with a wider marketing network. This could simply have been a consequence of ease of access to that network (though the site was at some distance from major roads), or there may have been an element of choice involved, perhaps itself a consequence, if not of middling socio-economic status, at least of aspirations in that direction. Tile was also present on the site (as at Meole Brace and Duncote (Bevan 1994), implying the presence of a building of Romanised, or at least rectilinear, plan. This contrasts with the evidence from the early Roman sites such as Sharpstones E and Hay Farm, Eardington, in which circular buildings of Iron Age type occurred. The introduction of rectilinear structures on rural sites may simply have been a natural progression observed universally across the region, or it may again have been a selective decision, based on a desire to adopt more of the external symbols of Romanised life.

In itself the pottery from Shrewsbury does not occur in the quantity or range that would indicate a site either of high socio-economic status or with a wide range of trading contacts. The fact that such contacts existed at all may be significant, however, and combined with the limited evidence for a Romanised structure on the site suggests that this may not have been typical of the settlements of the lowest tier of rural society in the region.

The environmental remains by M Robinson

Twenty seven samples of between 7 and 33 litres were floated onto a 0.25 mm sieve to recover charred plant remains. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope and the remains identified, along with an estimate of their abundance, are listed in Table 1. Charcoal was only examined at up to x50 magnification, so the identifications of the diffuse-porous taxa (all apart from *Quercus* and *Fraxinus*) must be regarded as tentative.

The majority of the contexts from which charred plant remains were recovered are mid-Roman, being from a rectilinear system of enclosure ditches. A single sample from an undated

pit (175) within the enclosure contained charcoal and a couple of fragments of *Corylus avellana* (hazel) nut shell. While this would be appropriate to a Neolithic date, hazel nut shell fragments are also present in some of the Roman samples. Two samples from ditch section 142 contained a similar range of charred remains, including *Triticum spelta* (spelt wheat), to the Roman samples. The small number of sherds from this ditch are indicative of a date of AD 120 or later.

The quantities of charred remains from the samples suggest there to have been Roman settlement in the vicinity of the site rather than it being part of a field system remote from any settlement. The charcoal is unexceptional, with *Quercus* (oak) predominating, but with a range of other taxa, including scrub or hedgerow species also present. The *Rhamnus*/Leguminosae tp. charcoal may derive from *Rhamnus catharticus* (purging buckthorn), a tree of calcareous soil, or *Cytisus scoparius/Ulex* spp.(broom/gorse), shrubs of acid soil.

Some of the samples contain high concentrations of charred cereal remains, with in excess of 1000 chaff fragments and grains in the sample from ditch fill 227. The most abundant remains are glume bases of *Triticum spelta* (spelt wheat). Spelt wheat grain is also present in quantity. All the remaining wheat chaff and grain examined could be spelt. Samples from ditch fills 226 and 227 also contain significant quantities of *Secale cereale* (rye). Each sample has about 30 rachis fragments and 10 grains. There is a slight presence of *Hordeum* sp. (barley) and a couple of the grains can be identified as *Hordeum vulgare* (hulled six-row barley). Since the site is Roman, it is assumed that the trace presence of *Avena* sp. (oats) is the result of wild oats growing as a weed rather than oats being grown as a crop.

The predominance of spelt wheat is much what would be expected for a Roman settlement. Six-row hulled barley was also a widely grown cereal crop in Roman Britain. The occurrence of rye, however, is unexpected. A slight presence of rye has been recorded from some Roman sites in the Brecklands of Suffolk (Murphy 1984, 17). The only other Roman site in the West Midlands to have produced rye is Tiddington, an unwalled town in Warwickshire (L. Moffett, pers comm). The concentration of rye remains at Tiddington was very low, with single rachis fragments in a few samples. It seems possible that the rye at Shrewsbury represents a regional variant of the usual Roman crop pattern in response to the infertile free-draining sandy soils on the gravels of the River Severn.

Few other charred plant remains were found. A few nut shell fragments of *Corylus avellana* (hazel) were probably waste from food consumption. The remaining seeds, such as *Fallopia convolvulus* (black bindweed) and *Bromus* sp. (brome grass, chess) are all arable weeds with large seeds that are not readily separated from grain during crop cleaning. The high proportion of spelt wheat glumes and the absence of small weed seeds suggest that the main source of the charred crop remains on the site could have been the de-husking of spelt wheat spikelets, with the earlier stages of crop processing being carried out elsewhere.

The results give some distributional information about the charred plant remains. The main concentration of cereal remains is in the NW corner of the site at the junction of ditch 213 and ditch 225 (fills 226, 227 and 215). There are also two smaller concentrations in the northern half of the site in ditch 142 (fill 144) and ditch 126/129 (fills 127, 130 and 131). The main concentrations of wood charcoal are also in these three localities. The southern half of

the site yielded few cereal remains although there is a concentration of charcoal from this area, from ditch 182 (fill 183).

Table 5: charred remains

Sample	Context	Sample volume (litres)	Charcoal						Cereal grain					
			Rhamnus/ Leguminosae tp. (buckthorn, broom etc)	cf.*Prunus* (sloe etc)	cf.Pomoideae (hawthorn etc)	*Alnus*/ *Corylus* tp. (alder/hazel)	*Quercus* (oak)	*Fraxinus* (ash)	*Triticum spelta* (spelt wheat)	*Triticum* sp. (wheat)	*Secale cereale* (rye)	*Hordeum vulgare* (hulled six-row barley)	*Hordeum* sp. (barley)	c. in
1			-	-	-	-	+++	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2			-	-	++	-	+	-	++	++	-	-	-	+
3			-	-	-	-	+	++	-	-	-	-	-	
4			-	-	-	-	++	-	-	-	-	-	-	
100	130	10	+	-	+	-	++	-	+	+++	-	-	-	
101	131	16	-	+	-	-	++	+	-	-	-	-	-	
102	127	10	-	-	-	-	+	-	++	++	-	-	-	
103	128	10	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
104	176	12	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
105	226	17	-	-	+	-	++	-	+++	+++	++	+	++	
106	227	18	-	-	+	-	++	-	+++	+++	++	-	-	+
107	191	22	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
108	187	7	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
109	215	15	+	-	-	++	-	-	-	++	-	+	++	
110	177	15	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
112	144	36	+	-	++	++	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	
113	143	10	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	++	-	-	-	
114	230	16	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
115	231	33	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
116	232	16	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
117	185	18	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
118	184	15	-	-	++	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
119	183	14	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	
120	193	17	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
121	194	15	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
122	195	15	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
123	214	17	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	

Charcoal recorded on a relative scale of + present to +++ abundant
Seeds recorded on a scale of + 1-2, ++ 3-10, +++ 11-50, ++++ 51-400

Sample	Chaff				Other seeds etc				
	Triticum spelta (spelt wheat) glume bases	*T. spelta* or *dicoccum* (spelt or emmer wheat) glume bases	*Secale cereale* (rye) rachises	*Avena* sp. (oats) awns	*Fallopia convolvulus* (black bindweed)	*Corylus avellana* (hazel) nut shell frags.	*Bromus* (brome grass)	*Avena* sp. (oats)	Gramineae indef. (grass)
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	+	++	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
3	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
100	++	++	-	-	-	+	-	-	+
101	+	++	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
102	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
103	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
104	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
105	++++	++++	+++	+	-	+	+	-	-
106	++++	++++	+++	+++	-	-	-	-	-
107	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
108	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
109	+++	+++	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
110	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
112	+++	++	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
113	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
114	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
115	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
116	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
117	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
118	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
119	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
121	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
122	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
123	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-

Charcoal recorded on a relative scale of + present to +++ abundant
Seeds recorded on a scale of + 1-2, ++ 3-10, +++ 11-50, ++++ 51-400

9 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As already stated in section 2 (above) the aims of the excavation were fourfold. The fulfilment of aim 1 was partially curtailed by the extent of the development area as the W extent lay beyond it. The remainder of the enclosure probably lay beneath the back gardens of the property of Ellesmere Road. A chronological framework for the enclosure has been provided by an analysis of the stratigraphy and of the pottery assemblage. Three phases of activity have been identified spanning the period from the mid or earlier 2nd century through to the 4th century. The pottery indicates that the emphasis of occupation was probably in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. There was nothing in the assemblage to indicate commencement before the 2nd century and the absence of characteristic early Severn Valley ware supports the view that there was no significant 1st century presence on the site. The total lack of late Roman fabrics such as shell-tempered ware, Nene valley colour-coated ware and all Oxfordshire products may well indicate that 4th century activity was quite limited.

It has been argued that due to the relatively high average sherd weight the pottery clearly derives from an adjacent settlement. Certainly the presence of tile in the assemblage implies a building of Romanised or at least rectilinear plan nearby. The pottery indicates that the site was not a high status one but a certain level of trading contacts was evidenced.

The environmental evidence would seem to indicate that the enclosure was used as a crop processing site for a nearby settlement. The quantities of charred remains from the samples do suggest that there was a settlement in the immediate vicinity rather than the enclosure being part of a remote field system. Spelt wheat and spelt wheat grain were most abundant and this is as would be expected given the date range of the enclosure. Less expected was the presence of significant quantities of rye and it has been suggested that it may have been adopted as a regional variant because of the infertile free draining sandy soils (section 8) The presence of many spelt wheat glumes suggests that the main activity being carried out on the site was the de-husking of spelt wheat spikelets and that earlier stages of processing occurred elsewhere.

As already stated quite heavy Iron Age and Romano-British settlement is evidenced by aerial photographic coverage for Shropshire and much of this activity is represented by hundreds of enclosures. However, only a very small percentage have been excavated (eg Barker *et al* 1991; Ellis *et al* 1994) and the opportunities for comparison is therefore correspondingly limited. Although in form the Shrewsbury enclosure compares well with site such as Sharpstones Hill (Barker *et al* 1991) and Hay Farm (Davison and Hunn forthcoming) it would appear that these sites were falling out of use in the second century. Thus the date range for the site is more in keeping with Meole Brace and Duncote Farm (Ellis *et al* 1994).

Environmental preservation on the site was generally good and additionally the remains were only minimally disturbed by later activity. Documentary sources demonstrated that the land was pasture and that intensive cultivation had never taken place.

Bibliography

Barker, P A, Haldon, R, and Jenks, E, 1991, Excavations on Sharpstones Hill near Shrewsbury 1965-71, in M O H Carver (ed), Prehistory in Lowland Shropshire, *Trans Shropshire Archaeol and Hist Soc* **67**, 15-57

Bevan, L , 1994, The brick and tile, in P Ellis, J Evans, H Hannaford, G Hughes and A Jones, Excavations in the Wroxeter hinterland 1988-1990: the archaeology of the A5/A49 Shrewsbury bypass, *Trans Shropshire Archaeol and Hist Soc* **69**, 1-119 (92)

Booth, P, 1991 Inter site comparisons between pottery assemblages in Roman Warwickshire: ceramic indicators of social status, *J Roman Pottery Stud* **4**, 1-10

Booth, P, forthcoming a, The pottery, in Iron Age and early Romano-British settlement at Hay Farm, Eardington, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, in D Davison and J Hunn (eds) *Excavations and evaluations 1992-3 by Tempus Reparatum*, Brit Archaeol Rep

Booth, P, forthcoming b, Quantifying status, some pottery data from the Upper Thames Valley, *J Roman Pottery Stud*

Evans, J, 1994, The Roman pottery, in P Ellis, J Evans, H Hannaford, G Hughes and A Jones, Excavations in the Wroxeter hinterland 1988-1990: the archaeology of the A5/A49 Shrewsbury bypass, *Trans Shropshire Archaeol and Hist Soc* **69**, 1-119 (76-91)

Griffiths, K E, 1989, Marketing of Roman pottery in second-century Northamptonshire and the Milton Keynes area, *J Roman Pottery Stud* **2**, 67-76

Lee, F, Lindquist, G, and Evans J, 1994, Romano-British coarse pottery, in S Cracknell and C Mahany (eds) *Roman Alcester: Southern extramural area 1964-1966 excavations, Part 2* CBA Res Rep **97**, 3-92

Murphy, P. 1984 Environmental archaeology in East Anglia, in Keeley, H.C.M. ed, *Environmental archaeology: a regional review*. London: Department of the Environment, Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings Occasional Papers **6**.

OAU 1995 *Ellesmere Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, Archaeological desktop appraisal and field evaluation*, Oxford, unpublished

OAU 1992 *Field manual* (ed D Wilkinson)

Peacock, D P S, 1967, Romano-British pottery production in the Malvern district of Worcestershire, *Trans Worcestershire Archaeol Soc* **1**, 15-28

Peacock, D P S, 1968, A petrological study of certain Iron Age pottery from western England, *Proc Prehist Soc* **13**, 414-427

Priestley, E J and Acham 1989 *An illustrated history of Shrewsbury*, Shrewsbury Boroguh Council

Rawes, B, 1982, Gloucester Severn Valley Ware, *Trans Bristol Gloucestershire Archaeol Soc* **100**, 33-46

Timby, J, 1990, Severn Valley wares: a reassessment, *Britannia* **21**, 243-251

Webster, G, 1976 (ed), *Romano-British coarse pottery: a student's guide*, CBA Res Rep **6**

Webster, G 1991 *The Cornovii*

Webster, P V, 1976, Severn Valley ware: a preliminary study, *Trans Bristol Gloucestershire Archaeol Soc* **94**, 18-46

Primary Sources

Tithe Map 1850

Maps of Shrewsbury: Rocque 1746, 1752; Hitchcock 1832; Wood 1838; Tisdale 1859; OS 25" Series 1882, 1902, 1927

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF THE STRATIGRAPHY

Context no.	Context type	Depth (m)	Level (OD) Top	Comments
110	layer	0.30	54.63	topsoil, dark brown grey loam
111	layer	0.30	54.35	medieval ploughsoil, mid brown silty sand
112	layer	0.08	53.65	yellow grey sandy silt
113	layer		53.57n	natural
114	cut	0.09		posthole
115	fill	0.09		fill of 114, mid brown sandy silt
116	finds ref.			
117	finds ref.			
118	context group			
119	finds ref.			
120	fill	0.15	53.37	fill of 121, yellow grey silty clay
121	cut	0.15	53.37	gully
122	fill	0.20	53.35	fill of 123, mid brown silty clay
123	cut	0.70	53.40	ditch
124	fill	0.20	53.06	fill of 123, mid blue grey silty clay
125	fill	0.15	53.40	fill of 123, yellow brown silty clay
126	cut	0.50	53.20	ditch
127	fill	0.33	53.13	fill of 126, pale brown clay
128	fill	0.28	53.20	fill of 126,brown sandy clay
129	cut	0.41	53.18	ditch
130	fill	0.30	52.94	fill of 129, pale brown clay
131	fill	0.25	53.18	fill of 129, pale brown sandy clay
132	fill	0.32	52.81	fill of 126, pale brown sandy clay
133	fill	0.20	52.88	fill of 129, pale brown sandy clay
134	cut	0.53	53.24	ditch
135	fill	0.20	52.83	fill of 134, orange brown silty sand
136	fill	0.33	53.24	fill of 134, orange brown silty sand
137	cut	0.44	53.14	ditch
138	fill	0.44	53.14	fill of 137, mid orange brown silty sand

Context no.	Context type	Depth (m)	Level (OD) Top	Comments
139	cut	0.27		gully
140	fill	0.06		fill of 139, mid grey silty sand
141	fill	0.20		fill of 139, mid brown sandy loam
142	cut	0.30		gully
143	fill	0.12		fill of 142, mid grey silty sand
144	fill	0.18		fill of 142, mid brown sandy loam
145	cut	0.35	53.68	gully
146	fill	0.10	53.49	fill of 145, mid grey silty sand
147	fill	0.25	53.68	fill of 145, mid brown sandy loam
148	context group			
149	cut	0.70		ditch
150	fill	0.20	53.44	fill of 149, mid grey sandy silt
151	fill	0.27	53.66	fill of 149, mid grey brown sandy silt
152	fill	0.10	53.79	fill of 149, mid brown sandy silt
153	cut	0.72	53.79	ditch
154	fill	0.10	53.16	fill of 153, mid grey sandy silt
155	fill	0.50	53.32	fill of 153, mid grey sandy silt
156	fill	0.10	53.38	fill of 153, mid grey sandy silt
157	fill	0.30	53.66	fill of 153, mid brown clay silt
158	fill	0.13	53.79	fill of 153, mid brown sand silt
159	cut	0.55		ditch
160	fill	0.10		fill of 159, mid grey sandy silt
161	fill	0.30		fill of 159, mid grey brown sandy silt
162	cut	0.66	54.01	ditch
163	fill	0.55	54.01	fill of 162, light brown clay sand
164	fill	0.15	53.83	fill of 162, pale brown silty sand
165	fill	0.15	53.68	fill of 162, pale brown sandy clay
166	fill	0.15	53.55	fill of 162, pale brown sandy silt
167	cut	0.18	54.59	ditch
168	fill	0.12	54.59	fill of 167, mid brown sandy clay
169	cut	0.42	53.47	ditch

Context no.	Context type	Depth (m)	Level (OD) Top	Comments
170	cut	0.38	53.47	ditch
171	cut	0.11	53.96	gully
172	fill	0.11	53.96	fill of 171, mid orange brown silty sand
173	cut	0.04	53.82	gully
174	fill	0.04	53.82	fill of 173, mid orange brown silty sand
175	cut	0.19	53.58	post-pad?
176	fill	0.19	53.58	fill of 175, mid orange brown silty sand
177	fill	0.45	54.26	fill of 211, mid brown silty clay
178	cut	0.40	54.07	ditch
179	fill	0.05	53.76	fill of 178, mid grey sandy silt
180	fill	0.15	53.85	fill of 178, mid grey brown sandy silt
181	fill	0.25	54.07	fill of 178, mid brown sand silt
182	cut	0.60		ditch
183	fill	0.06		fill of 182, mid grey sandy silt
184	fill	0.25		fill of 182, mid grey brown clay silt
185	fill	0.29		fill of 182, mid brown sandy silt
186	cut	0.70	54.04	ditch
187	fill	0.20	53.90	fill of 186, grey sandy silt
188	fill	0.25	54.04	fill of 186, grey brown clay sand
189	cut	0.44	54.01	ditch
190	fill	0.15	53.88	fill of 189, mid brown grey silty sand
191	fill	0.35	54.01	fill of 189, mid brown sandy silt
192	fill	0.14	53.47	fill of 169, yellow brown silty clay
193	fill	0.12	53.31	fill of 170, mid brown silty clay
194	fill	0.13	53.24	fill of 170, grey brown silty clay
195	fill	0.13	53.14	fill of 170, reddish brown sandy silt
196	fill	0.18	53.37	fill of 169, dark brown silty clay
197	fill	0.15	53.22	fill of 169, reddish brown silty clay
198	cut	0.28		ditch

Context no.	Context type	Depth (m)	Level (OD) Top	Comments
199	fill	0.15	54.04	fill of 186, mid brown sandy silt
200	cut	0.47	54.27	ditch
201	fill	0.13	53.92	fill of 200, pale brown clay sand
202	fill	0.16	54.00	fill of 200, light brown clay sand
203	fill	0.27	54.27	fill of 200, light brown clay sand
204	fill	0.16	53.98	fill of 205, mid yellow brown sandy silt
205	cut	0.16	53.98	posthole
206	fill	0.14	53.99	fill of 207, mid yellow brown sandy silt
207	cut	0.14	53.99	posthole
208	fill	0.08	53.95	fill of 209, mid brown clay silt loam
209	cut	0.08	53.95	posthole
210	layer	0.04		overlain by 111
211	cut	0.65	54.26	ditch
212	fill	0.10	53.79	fill of 159, mid brown sandy silt
213	cut	0.70	54.18	ditch
214	fill	0.13	53.62	fill of 213, mid brown clay silt
215	fill	0.09	53.73	fill of 213, grey brown sandy silt
216	fill	0.44	54.18	fill of 213, mid brown silty clay
217	cut	0.58		ditch
218	fill	0.04	53.72	fill of 217, dark medium brown silty clay
219	fill	0.54	54.18	fill of 217, mid borwn silty clay
220	cut	0.20+		pit
221	fill	0.20+		fill of 220, mid brown silty sand
222	cut	0.35	53.86	ditch
223	fill	0.24	53.86	fill of 222, mid brown sandy silt
224	fill	0.16	53.77	fill of 222, mid brown sandy silt
225	cut	0.64	53.86	ditch
226	fill	0.30	53.86	fill of 225, mid grey brown sandy silt
227	fill	0.20	53.86	fill of 225, mid brown sandy silt

Context no.	Context type	Depth (m)	Level (OD) Top	Comments
228	fill	0.05	53.35	fill of 225, grey brown sandy silt
229	cut	0.80	53.99	ditch
230	fill	0.17	53.99	fill of 229, mid grey brown sandy silt
231	fill	0.30	53.99	fill of 229, mid grey brown sandy silt
232	fill	0.40	53.81	fill of 229, pale grey brown sandy silt
233	cut	0.30+	54.19	ditch
234	fill	0.30+	54.19	fill of 233, mid brown silty clay
235	fill	0.15	53.87	fill of 211, mid brown sandy silt
236	fill	0.22	53.04	fill of 169, mid brown sandy silt
237	fill	0.05	53.14	fill of 170, light brown sandy silt
238	cut	0.20		gully
239	fill	0.20		fill of 238, mid brown sandy silt
240	fill	0.15	53.40	yellow brown silty clay
241	fill	0.16	53.47	yellow brown silty clay

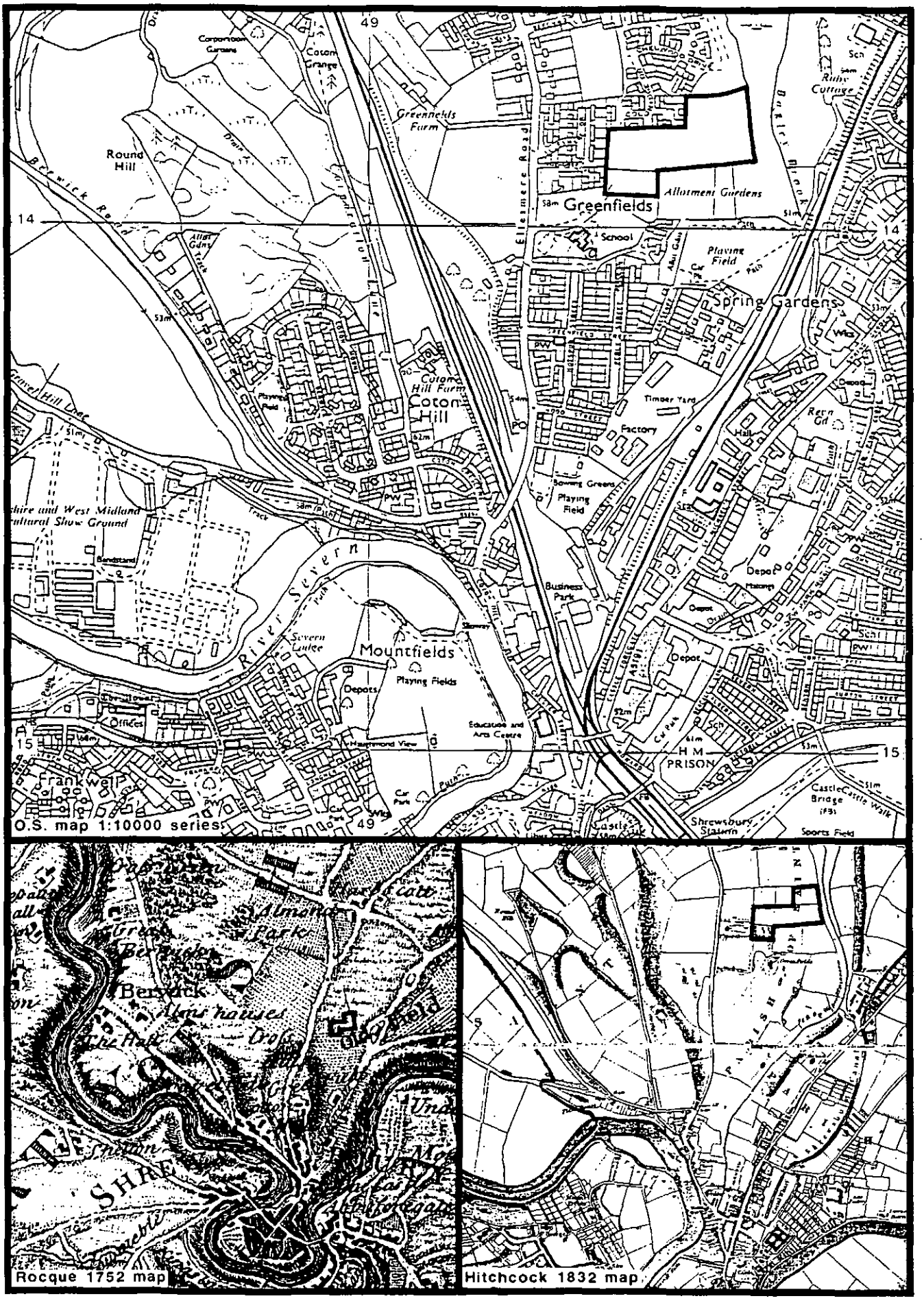
O.S. map 1:10000 series
Rocque 1752 map
Hitchcock 1832 map
Greenfields
Allotment Gardens
Spring Gardens
Coton Hill
Mountfields
Playing Fields
Depots
Business Park
H M PRISON
Castle
Shrewsbury Station
Sports Field
Round Hill
Greenfields Farm
Coton Grange
Coton Hill Farm
Ellesmere Road
Berwick Road
River Severn
Frankwell
Factory
Timber Yard
Depot
Bowling Greens
Playing Field
School
Offices
Educational and Arts Centre
Castle Bridge
Castle Walk
Berwick
Almond Park
Bog Field

figure 1

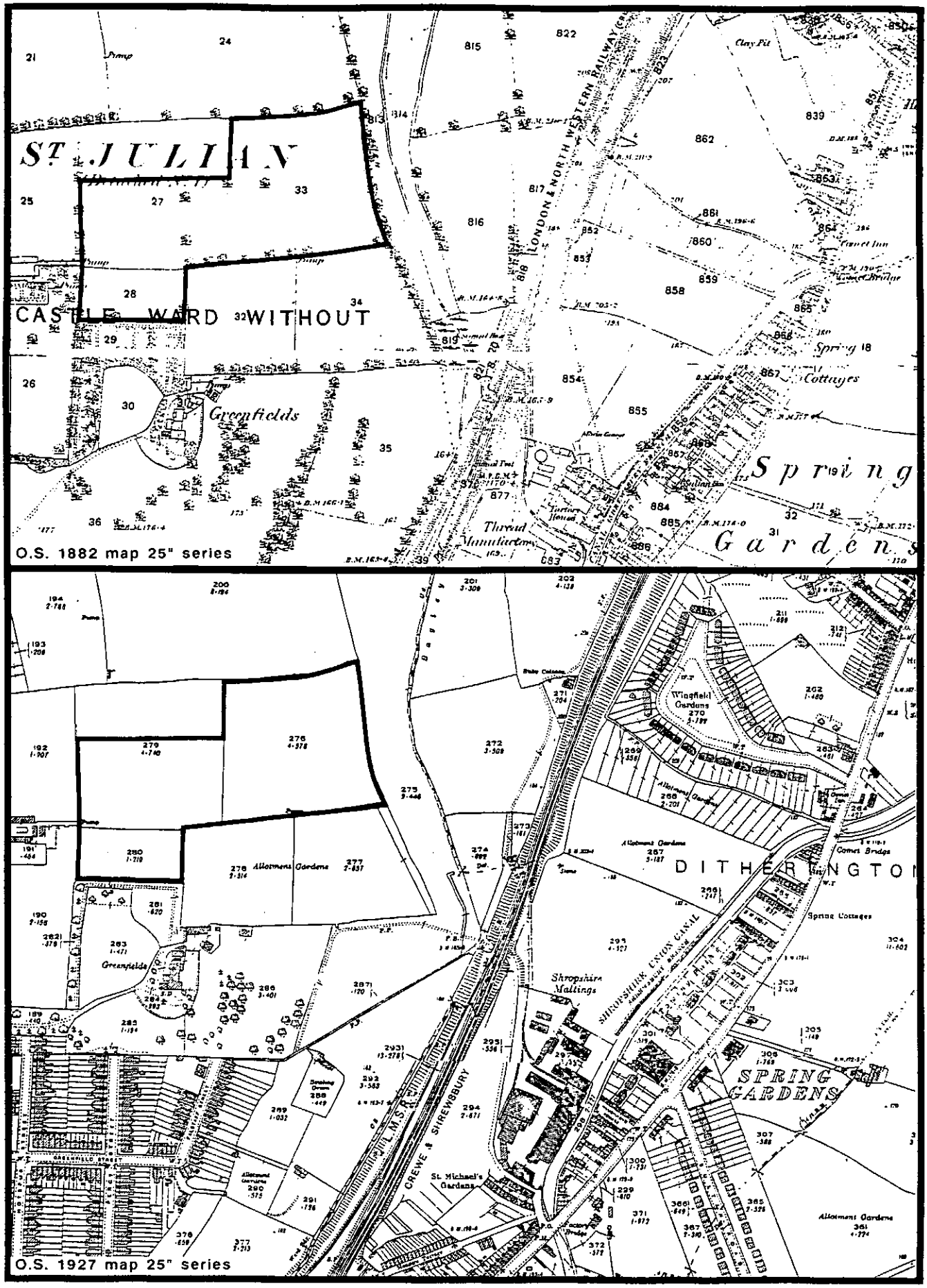
ST. JULIAN
CASTLE WARD
WITHOUT
Greenfields
Spring Cottages
Spring Gardens
O.S. 1882 map 25" series
DITHERINGTON
Shropshire Maltings
SHROPSHIRE UNION CANAL
CREWE & SHREWSBURY
L.M.S.R.
SPRING GARDENS
Wingfield Gardens
St. Michael's Gardens
Allotment Gardens
O.S. 1927 map 25" series

figure 2

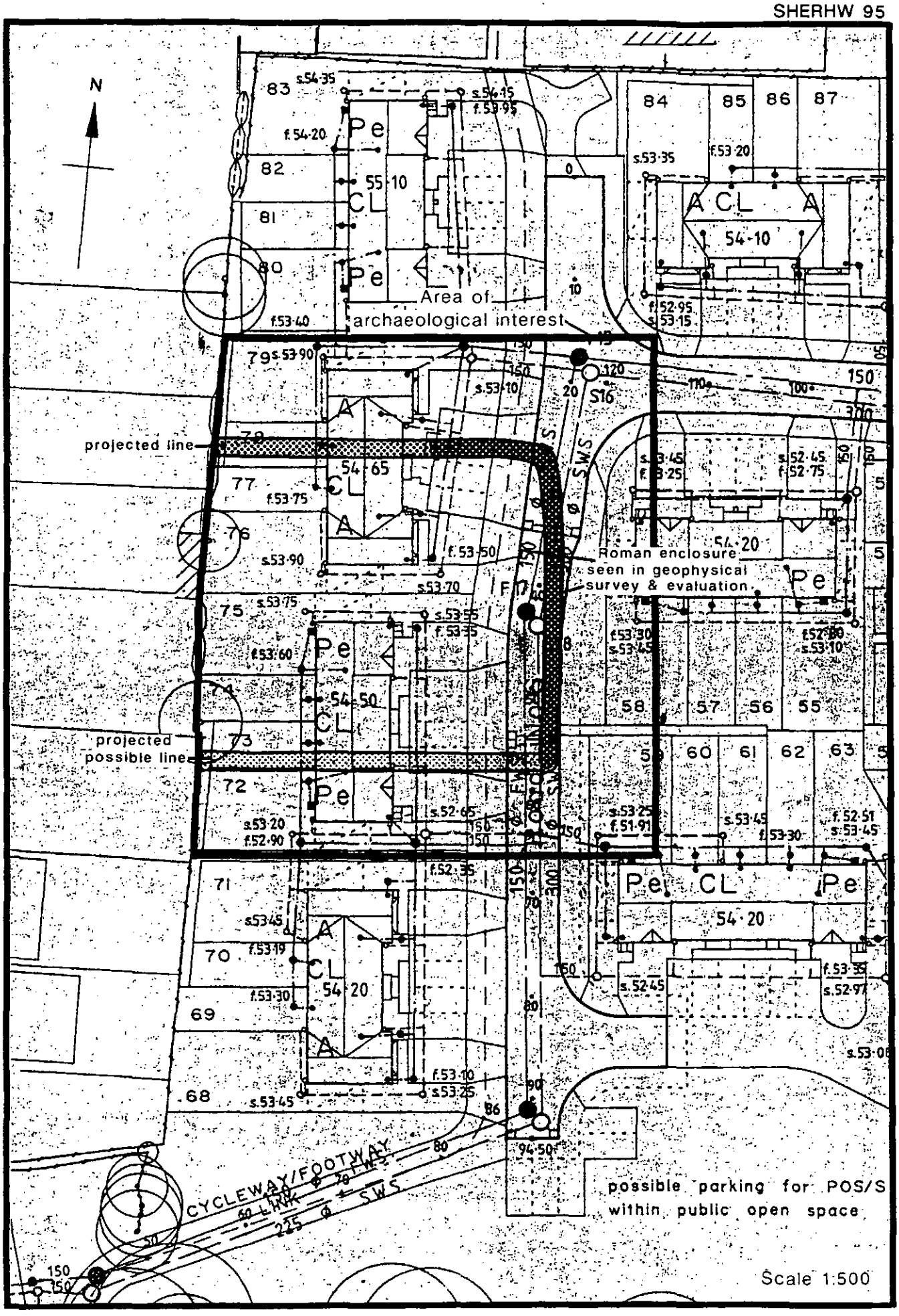
N
Area of archaeological interest
projected line
projected possible line
Roman enclosure seen in geophysical survey & evaluation
possible parking for POS/S within public open space
CYCLEWAY/FOOTWAY
Scale 1:500

figure 3

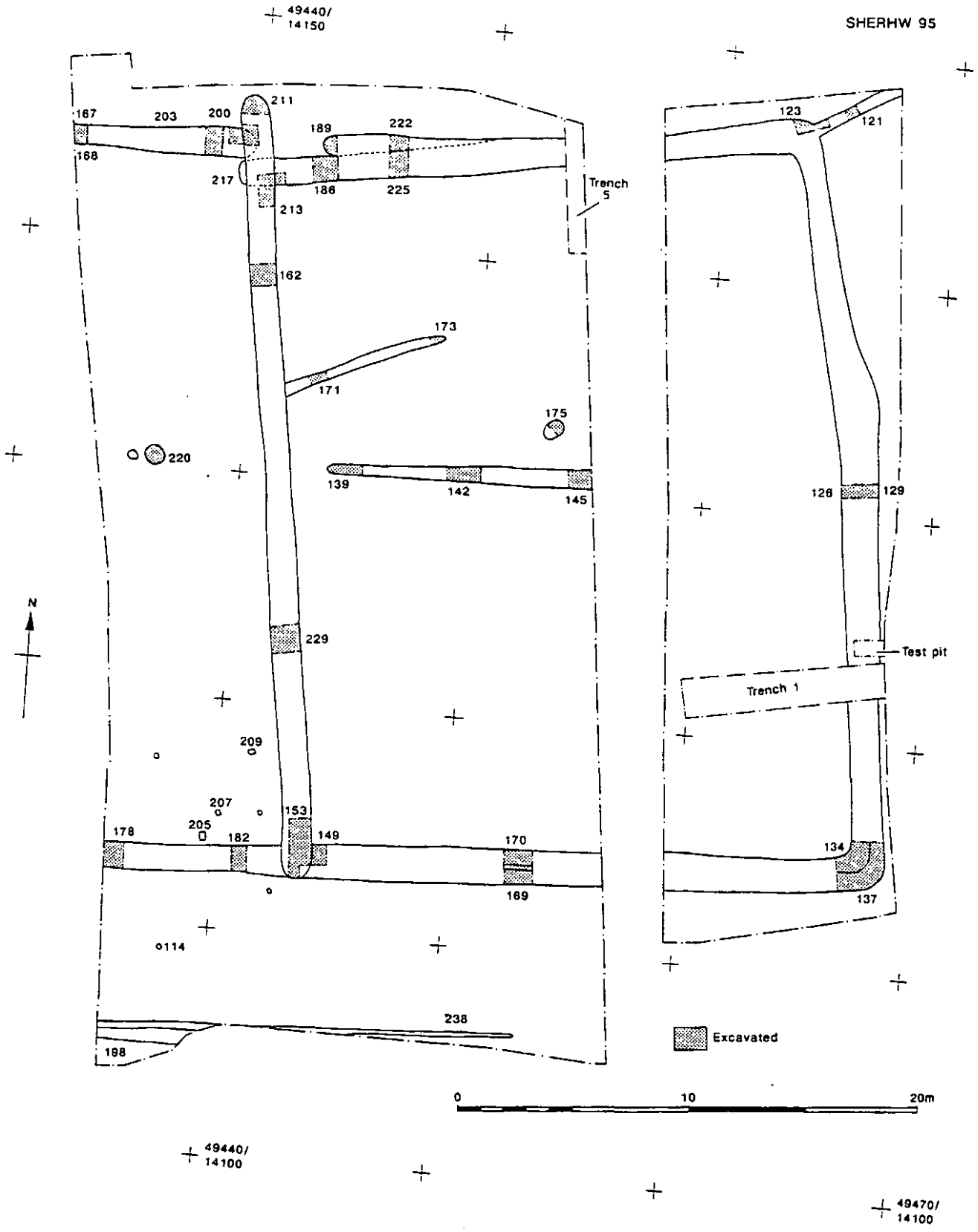
49440/
14150
SHERHW 95
167
203
200
211
189
222
168
217
186
225
213
Trench
5
162
173
171
175
220
139
142
145
123
121
128
129
N
229
Test pit
Trench 1
209
207
153
178
205
182
149
170
134
169
137
114
238
198
Excavated
0
10
20m
49440/
14100
49470/
14100

figure 4

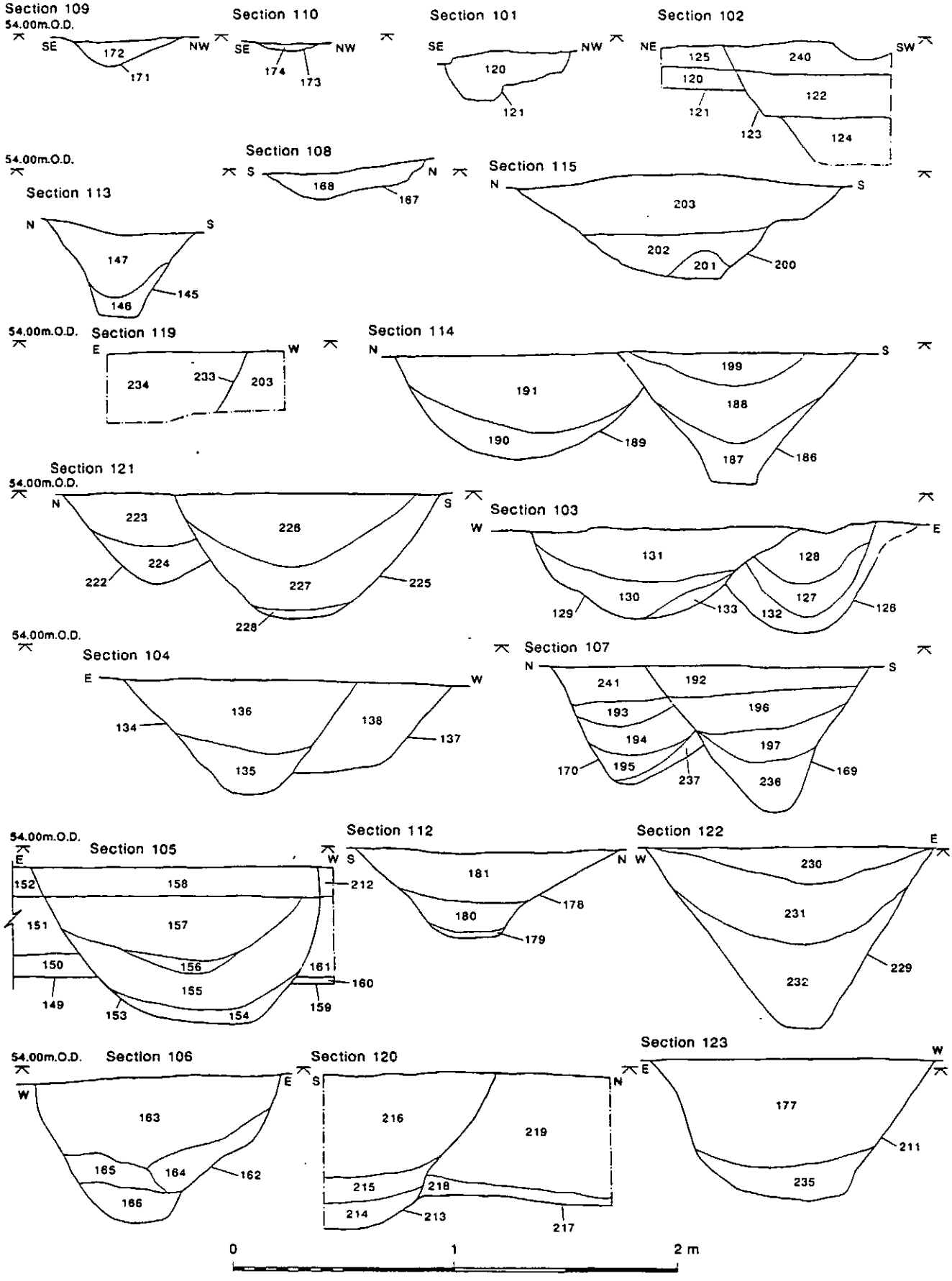
Section 109
54.00m.O.D.
SE
NW
172
171
Section 110
SE
NW
174
173
Section 101
SE
NW
120
121
Section 102
NE
SW
125
240
120
122
121
123
124
54.00m.O.D.
Section 113
N
S
147
145
146
Section 108
S
N
168
167
Section 115
N
S
203
202
201
200
54.00m.O.D.
Section 119
E
W
234
233
203
Section 114
N
S
199
191
188
190
189
187
186
Section 121
54.00m.O.D.
N
S
223
226
224
222
227
225
228
Section 103
W
E
131
128
130
133
132
127
129
126
54.00m.O.D.
Section 104
E
W
136
138
134
137
135
Section 107
N
S
241
192
193
196
194
197
170
195
237
236
169
54.00m.O.D.
Section 105
E
W
152
158
212
151
157
150
156
161
160
155
149
153
154
159
Section 112
S
N
181
178
180
179
Section 122
W
E
230
231
229
232
54.00m.O.D.
Section 106
W
E
163
165
164
162
166
Section 120
S
N
216
219
215
218
214
213
217
Section 123
E
W
177
211
235
0
1
2 m

figure 5

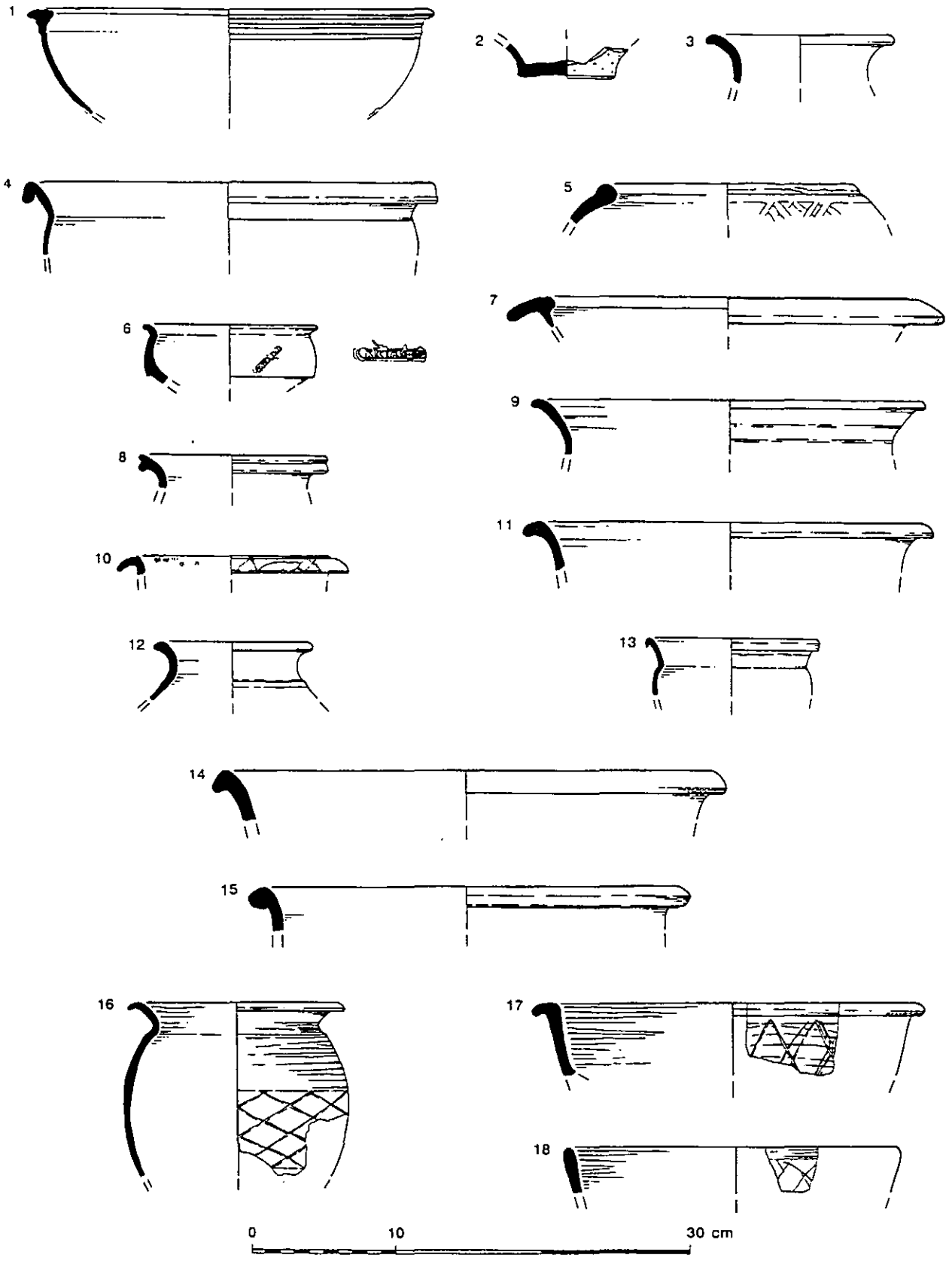

figure 6

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

46 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, OX1 2EP

Head Office Tel: 01865 243888 Fax: 01865 793496

Post-Excavation Tel: 01865 204642 Fax: 01865 204637

Director: David Miles B.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.

The Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited. Registered Charity Number: 285627

Private Limited Company Number: 1618597 Registered Office: 46 Hythe Bridge Street